

**Sierra Vista Community Church
Of Sacramento a
federated Church
of the
United Church of Christ /
Presbyterian Church (USA)**

**Local Church Profile
Settled Pastor $\frac{3}{4}$ time**

Content:

Introduction

Who Is God Calling Us to Be

What We Believe

Our Worship Service & Spiritual Approach

Scope of Work & Core Competencies

Staff and Lay Leadership

Classes and Education

Mission Programs

Our Church Campus

Local & Regional Demographics

Housing Costs

Compensation for 3/4 Time Pastor in a Three-Way Covenant



Introduction

Sierra Vista Community Church is a unique blend of two progressive Christian communities. One previously known as University Presbyterian Church (UPC) was an offshoot of a long-established local Presbyterian church that voted to leave the PC(USA) and affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Some of the members committed to a more inclusive vision of Christianity left to form UPC. Our other branch was known for over 50 years as Sierra Arden UCC. In 2018, following the retirement of our pastor of 15 years, the Reverend Ginny Curinga, Sierra Arden began a year long process of discernment which eventually led to the creation of a new church, Sierra Vista Community, a federated church. The newly created church called Reverend Robert Azzarito, the pastor of UPC, as our settled pastor. He retired at the end of 2024.

Our new bylaws call for the rotation of pastors, PC (USA) to UCC, so currently we are seeking a pastor with standing in the United Church of Christ, although experience with Presbyterian polity is welcome. Our commitment to honor both traditions extend to our organization which mandates that every committee include a co-chair from both the historical Presbyterian UPC and the historical Sierra Arden UCC community. We celebrate the vitality that both traditions bring to our federation, and we share a common commitment to active ministry and a vision of an inclusive Christian community.



We have a congregation of approximately 110 members with 40-50 attending regularly on Sunday and approximately 10 viewing the service on the live stream. We also have a relationship with the Sacramento Ugandan fellowship which uses our facility for their fellowship and some of whom are members of our church.

Who is God Calling Us to Be

The mission of Sierra Vista Community Church is to be an inclusive, loving, progressive and serving Christian congregation that is accepting of all people. We follow Christ's example by working for justice, showing loving kindness and tolerance of a wide range of beliefs and we are receptive to new ideas. We extend a welcome to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the LGBTQIA+ community. Our church includes people

from Africa and other countries, and we foster a sense of belonging to all who enter our doors.

What We Believe

We believe in God, the creator of everything, and because of that, we strive to see the sacred in the wonder and mystery of the universe, in nature, in the loving kindness people show one another and in the beauty of our amazing diversity. We believe that Jesus Christ lived his life as God would have each of us live our own and set an example of how we are to strive to treat one another - by reaching out to all our neighbors with a caring and accepting spirit. We believe that racial justice, addressing homelessness and hunger, and questioning unjust policies are our essential Christian responsibilities. And we believe that prayer takes many different forms and makes a difference, connecting us to the wonder and mystery that is God in the world, in ourselves and in each other.

Because of that, we are especially dedicated to mission programs that support the hungry, the homeless, a neighborhood low-income school, and three foreign missions. Plus, we are an earth-friendly congregation, dedicated to finding ways to live more lightly on our planet, at home and at church.

Our Worship Service and Spiritual Approach



Our current approach to worship is traditional, although we are open to new ways of worshipping. We value preaching, especially when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is tied to the challenges we face. We value choral and instrumental music and use both the Presbyterian and UCC hymnals. We offer communion on the first Sunday of the month and believe in an open table with

attendees coming forward to be served by both the Pastor and others. Our services are live streamed on YouTube and posted on the SVCC website.

Scope of Work & Core Competencies of our Pastor

- Prepare and lead Sunday worship every Sunday, except when on vacation, in coordination with the Worship Committee, including scripture, liturgy, preparation of the Sunday bulletin, sermon preparation, plan music in coordination with music staff, preaching and offering prayer.

- Supportive of faith formation for adults and children through prayer, Bible study, identifying helpful resources and opportunities, and helping lay people take advantage of them.
- Pastoral care in collaboration with lay people.
- Weddings and funerals upon request.
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in church ministry.
- Attend meetings and provide leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership and committees.
- Participation in wider church activities such as conferences and association meetings of the UCC and Presbytery as time allows.
- Faithful financial development, guidance, and stewardship in conjunction with the Finance Committee.
- Responsibility for supervision of staff in coordination with the Personnel Committee.
- Counseling, listening, and referrals as needed.
- Guide the congregation towards a sustainable future.

Core Competencies

Committed to diversity and inclusivity.

Have and can express deep faith in work and action.

Responsive to congregational needs and pastoral calling.

STAFF AND LAY LEADERSHIP

SVCC staff currently includes:

Interim Pastor (currently half-time)

Church Administrator (part-time)

Christian Education Leaders

Facility Rental Manager

Wedding Coordinator

Pianist

Worship Sound Technician

Lay Leadership

We are committed to shared leadership from the UPC and UCC traditions that make up our federation. When possible, we have one member from each tradition serving as coleaders of our major committees, and we elect co-moderators. We also have a treasurer/financial secretary.

CLASSES AND EDUCATION



- **Sunday School** - We have a class for primary age children on Sunday mornings led by a retired professor of early childhood education. Each year the children put on a Christmas pageant and participate in Easter activities, Earth Day, work on gardening activities, go on field trips, and have swim

parties in the summer.

- **Bible Study** - We currently hold a virtual adult Bible study class a few times a year, led by a retired history professor as the lay leader and a regular Bible study and adult exploration class is led by the pastor.
- **Conferences on Racism and Social Justice** - Each April SVCC holds a 2-day community-wide conference that focuses on racism and immigrant rights. A grant provided by the UCC and PCUSA is aimed at finding paths forward to improving lives.

MISSION PROGRAMS

Mission is important to our church and a reflection of how God calls us. Sierra Vista supports a wide range of mission projects, both locally and internationally. Some we support in spirit and prayer, some with financial resources, and some we support with our time. Below are summaries of the mission projects we are currently supporting.

- Sierra Arden Food Closet

For more than 40 years, our church has housed a food closet for two local zip codes with many of our members and other churches actively involved. Statistics show that in 2024 approximately 7,200 families from the surrounding neighborhoods and beyond were provided with 3 days of groceries.

- HART (Homeless Assistance Resource Team) - Lunch Program

Every Monday, regardless of holidays or weather, church volunteers from Sierra Vista make and deliver 40 sack lunches and water to local members of our homeless community. With help from other programs, we also provide seasonal clothing, hygiene kits, tents, tarps, blankets, and sleeping bags. Over 2,000 meals are provided each year, along with dog food as needed. Also, each month church volunteers provide for a free laundry day at a local laundromat.



- Greer School

Our church supports the students and families at Greer School, a Title I neighborhood elementary school, by providing backpacks at the beginning of the school year and knit caps, gloves, scarves, socks and jackets in the colder months. In December, we provide gift cards to a local supermarket and to a gas station.

- Bicycles for Work Program

For several years our church has worked with the local International Rescue Committee office providing financial support to purchase bicycles and necessary accessories for the breadwinner of refugee families living in our community so they can find work beyond their local neighborhoods. In 2024, with a grant from the Presbytery of North Central California Committee on Mission Support and donations from church members, we purchased 24 new bicycles for the program.

- Earth Care Team (ECT) - Recognizing our responsibility to help protect the planet, the ECT was formed in 2022. The team shares information through the church newsletter on ways to reduce waste, the use of plastics, and harmful household products. It initiated a "bags to benches" plastic recycling project, a "Meatless Monday" recipe project, planted two native oak trees and added a pollinator garden to part of the church landscape and have migrated our heating and cooling system to heat pumps.

- Students Helping Honduras

The Church has supported this program since before we federated. Some of our members traveled to Honduras to help build a school while others have provided financial support.

- Burundi Education Mission

Funds are donated to the Burundi education mission which has a wide focus from raising rabbits for food to providing IT training in schools. There are an annual in-person and online conference held in Bujumbura, Burundi as well as a mission trip with some church members attending.

- Little Children of Jesus (LCJP) Project

Located in the Wakiso district of Uganda, LCJP works to equip orphans and other youth with a pre-primary education, advancing into self-supporting survival and practical skills

such as farming and ranching as they grow older. The church provides funds to help support this.

OUR CHURCH CAMPUS

SVCC is a beautiful mission style church located on the corner of Morse Avenue and Northrop in the Arden/Arcade neighborhood. The campus includes four buildings, two parking lots, a grassy quad area courtyard, two play areas and room for a community garden.

- **SANCTUARY** Our newly refurbished ADA compliant sanctuary, built in 1956, seats 200 congregants. It features stained-glass windows created by church members, a pipe organ, and a grand piano. Accessibility improvements include livestreaming equipment, a hearing-aid loop, and an ADA-compliant ramp to the chancel.



- **COMMUNITY ROOM BUILDING**

This building located directly across from the Sanctuary includes restrooms and is used for choir rehearsals, meetings and wedding preparation.

- **OFFICE/CLASSROOM/FELLOWSHIP HALL WING**

The Pastor's office, with attached patio, is adjacent to the office of the administrative assistant and a workroom. There are four classrooms, 2 restrooms (one is ADA compliant). And a large fellowship hall with a complete kitchen is at the other end of the building.

-CHAPEL/FOUNDER'S WING

The church's first building (1949) was recently remodeled for flexible use. The Founder's wing includes a chapel, classrooms, a small fellowship room with kitchen, the food closet, and a small office at the end of the building with a separate entrance.

We currently host four other churches on our campus and four pre-school classes from the public charter school across the street. We also host AA and music groups.

Local and Regional Context

Sacramento, the state capital of California, is a diverse city known for its tree-lined streets and cultural opportunities, including major museums, theatres, and professional sports teams. It is approximately 2 hours from the both the Bay Area and Lake Tahoe. The church is close to Sacramento State University, two community colleges, and the University of California at Davis.

While Sacramento's median age is 37 (with 15% over age 65), our congregation's median age is closer to 60. Approximately 20% of our church community is of African heritage or other ethnicities. Many members are current or retired employees of the State of California or Sacramento State University. Most live close to the church, but some live as far away as 15 miles.

Housing costs

We are aware that housing costs are a major issue in any congregational search process, including ours. Our church sits between two starkly different neighborhoods, one with multimillion dollar homes, and the other with modest homes in the \$350,000-\$450,000 range. Almost all our members and church friends live outside our zip code as did our former pastors.

To support our new pastor, we are committed to being flexible regarding housing arrangements. One initial suggestion is for the pastor to consider renting during their first year. This would provide time to explore local neighborhoods and housing options. After the first year, we may be able to assist with a loan for a down payment and/or co-signing a mortgage, depending on individual needs and circumstances.

Compensation for a 3/4th time Pastor in a Three-Way Covenant

We will adhere to the UCC guidelines within the context of a three-

fourths-time commitment. We will fully fund our Pastor’s health care. Also, we are willing to consider a loan or other assistance towards a home purchase after the first year.

In 2025 our percentage for Pastoral support has been low by our historic standards. Our number of pledging units did shrink last year which affected our income. We are currently in our fall stewardship campaign, and the number of pledges has increased, although we do not anticipate being able to support a full-time pastor at this time.

We will be able to provide a total package of \$95,000 per year for a ¾ time pastor. This includes salary, housing, full health benefits, pension contribution and social security offset.

The most recent year church income and expenditures are as follows:

2025 Annual Income	\$350,060
Pledges	40.4%
Rentals	55.6%
Other	<u>4.0%</u>
	100.0%
2025 Annual Expenses	\$333,229
Pastor, compensation & Benefits	20%
Support Staff	26%
CE, Office Admin, A/V, Pianist	
Contractors:	
Wedding Coordinator, Rental Manager, Janitor, and Gardner	13%
Insurance & Utilities	19%
Program Support	11%
Curriculum, Guest Musicians, Office, Worship supplies	
Direct Mission	1%
Facilities & Equipment	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Our budget does not reflect our direct or designated mission giving, which averages approximately \$18,000 per year.

In addition, our net fund balance and Endowments are more than \$250,000



References

Reverend Virginia (Ginny) Curinga ginnycuringa@gmail.com

916.202.0825

Reverend Curinga was called as a Designated Term Interim in 2000 and was then issued a call to be the permanent minister 2 ½ years later. She served the Sierra Arden UCC church for 15 years.

Reverend Michael Dack

mbdack@gmail.com

585.478.7411

Reverend Dack served Sierra Arden UCC as an Interim during the time we were in discernment with University Presbyterian Church regarding Federation. He was an integral part of the process, and, essentially, the mid-wife of our Federation.

Reverend Charlotte Asher charasher@yahoo.com

530.317.7982

Reverend Asher is our current interim pastor.

