

Part Time Pastor Description

Name: **First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

Location: 77 Main Street, Springfield, VT 05156

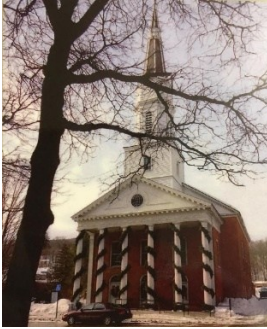
Web Site: <https://firstchurchspringfield.org>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fccuccspringfield/>

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“We are a community in Christ, called to act with love toward our neighbors.”

Position:

Part Time Pastor-This is a new part time (approximately 1/3 time) position for three to five years during which both the pastor and the congregation will evaluate the progress made toward meeting the stated goals (see page 4) of this ministry. The evaluation process would be determined by both parties prior to acceptance of this position.

Our church community is in a season of reflection and transition. With deep roots and a rich history, we find ourselves facing the realities of declining membership and evolving needs. As we discern the future of our ministry and the stewardship of our large church building—including the possibility of repurposing or selling—we are seeking a part-time minister to walk with us through this journey.

We are looking for someone who brings spiritual depth, compassionate leadership, and a collaborative spirit. This role is not about maintaining the status quo, but about helping us reimagine what faithful presence looks like in this moment. The ideal candidate will be comfortable with change, energized by possibility, and committed to nurturing a community that is open to transformation.

If you feel called to guide a congregation in flux—one that is honest about its challenges and hopeful about its future—we invite you to explore this opportunity with us.

Date of Vacancy: January 1, 2026

Compensation: Ministerial Compensation Guidelines of the Vermont Conference UCC will be used as a guide.

What are we looking for:

Precipitating factors leading to this Pastoral need:

- Decision of our full time (second career) licensed Pastor to retire from the ministry to pursue more personal and family commitments. He has agreed to act as a part time pastor until we can find a suitable replacement.
- There is significant anxiety among the members and friends (we use that term because we have some folks who never formally joined) about our future both immediately and extended. It is difficult to fully participate in making a choice for our future when we don't have the certainty of pastoral care for what might happen today.

Where we are now:

Our church has a rich history:

- *In 1781 the Congregational Church was organized twenty years after a charter was granted to the town of Springfield.*
- *In 1789 Springfield voted to build a meeting house on The Common. The building was used for town meetings and our church services until 1833.*
- *Rev. Robinson Smiley was called to be our first settled pastor in 1801. He ministered to a growing congregation for almost 24 years.*
- *In 1833 the new church building at 77 Main Street was dedicated. Major remodeling occurred in 1869 with the addition of the tall spire that has become an icon for the town of Springfield. Curved pews replaced the family-owned box pews.*
- *In 1869 the building was changed to reflect a colonial appearance. Columns were added both inside and outside. Tall windows let in light. The stained-glass windows were moved to the chancel.*
- *Our church family history is reflected in the history of the town. We saw business opportunities flourish (using the power of the Black River). as well as fires, floods, epidemics, depression and wars. We stood fast to our faith and belief in the future.*
- *Today we are again challenged to acknowledge that God is still speaking in our hearts, soul and community. A step into the future is our faith in action. We take it together with prayers and rejoicing that we are indeed all God’s children.*

Activities during the past decade:

Revised the Bylaws and organization of the Church governance structure.
 Worked with consultant Paul Nickerson on revitalizing the Church.
 Continuous Facebook live stream of Sunday worship services.
 Created a public Green Space with benches and picnic table funded through grants and local fund raising.

Membership:

Number of Current Members: 58
 Number of Members five years ago: 80
 Number of Members ten years ago: 120

Number attending weekly worship services: Avg: YTD: 30 Ten years ago: Avg: 60

Worship Services:

Weekly Sunday worship has continued since October 2017 with a bridge pastor, our bridge pastor transitioned to our full-time licensed pastor in November 2020 and a part time pastor on January 1, 2026

What do you value in your worship:

The message, scripture, theme and music.

We have a high-quality pipe organ built into the church sanctuary. Music at worship services is led on alternate weeks by a guitar player who has an excellent singing voice and an organist/pianist.

Christian Education:

Current Christian education opportunities:

Sunday School through 6th grade is available during worship service

Number participating in Christian education: Children: 0 to 4

Other opportunities

One regular weekly Bible Study session have been conducted for the past years attended by 4 to 6 individuals

Seasons of the Spirit curriculum are used for the elementary school level. The pre-school curriculum was written by the previous Christian Education committee and Director of Christian Education.

Fellowship Opportunities:

Sunday coffee hour: This is an important time of fellowship.

Semi-annual grounds and building clean-up. We work and eat together.

Free Community lunches had been offered to the community on the third Wednesday of the month from September through May with 60 to 80 attendees (this activity is currently on hold)

Acoustic Worship once per month Wednesday afternoon (Music sing along and scripture).

While this Acoustic Worship service has had limited in person attendance, it is live streamed on Facebook and widely viewed following the event

Santa's arrival town wide event early December – cookies and cocoa served to 100 +/-

Church opened for Annual Alumni for restrooms and water

Governance structure:

Leadership Council:

Council consists of nine people as described in our By Laws. There are eight lay people: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer along with Team Leaders for Administration/Finance, Property, Outreach, Worship/Education and Congregational Care. The Pastor is the ninth person. We make decisions by consensus and begin each meeting with a Covenant. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month. Most of the members of this Council have been in their positions for many years

We have an active Pastoral Relations committee that meets at least quarterly

Methods of communication:

Our history has been using e-mails, phone calls, face to face meetings, and conversations during Leadership Council meetings.

Relationships with local churches in the Community

Some informal coordination with coverage for Hospital and local Skilled Nursing/Rehab facility
Coordination for emergencies when Pastors are unavailable

Recent Blue Christmas and Ash Wednesday services combined with the Methodist church pastor

Recently there was a historic organ recital using the organs at three downtown churches
Charlestown 7th Day Adventist rent our chapel and have been holding their Saturday Sabbath services there for going on 3 years

Windham Union Association activities this year:

One delegate usually attends. This Association has become more active in recent years.

Vermont Conference activities this year:

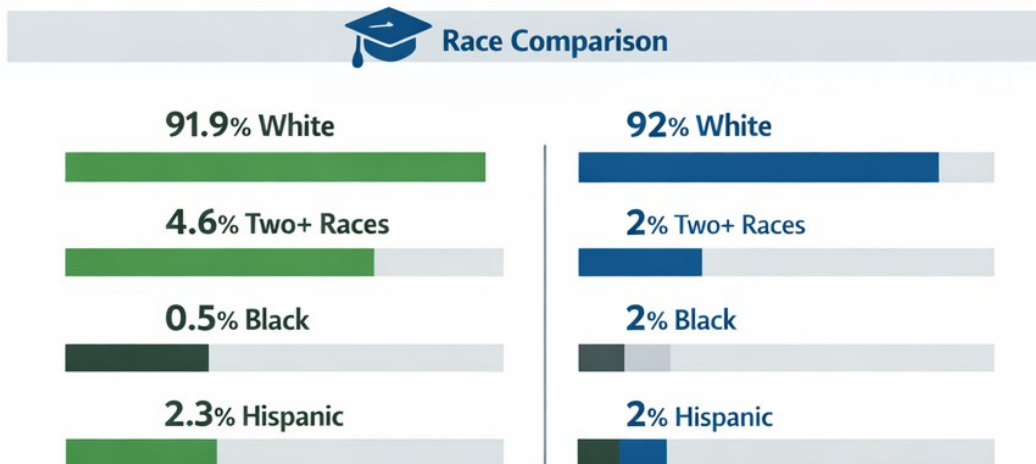
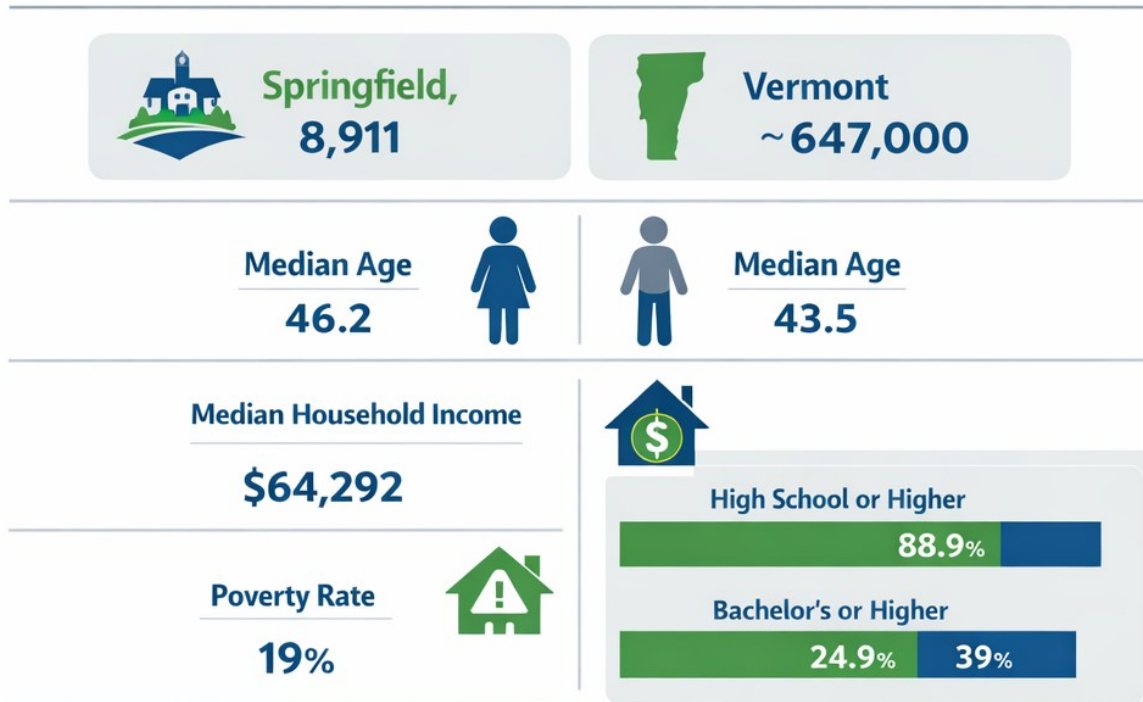
Two to three members attended the annual conference as delegates



Our community: :

Population:

9,028 residents as of **July 1, 2024**, according to the **U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts**



Sources of income:

Largest employers are the hospital, other medical care services, and the public school system. Manufacturing industries, town management, state services, social services and other small diversified businesses make up the remainder of sources of income.

Education:

Community college, Howard Dean Education Center, the River Valley Technical Center and adult education along with our public school system

Opportunities:

Springfield's unemployment rate is 3.3% compared to the overall state rate of 2.5%. With 3.0% considered full employment, there are jobs available for most who want to work.

Ways the church interacts with the community:

Church offers space for numerous groups within the community. Both non-profit and groups with minimal income as well as other agencies within town. Our church building is listed with emergency services as shelters and "safe spaces" when needed. Our sanctuary is a good environment for concerts as the acoustics are very good.

Main Mission Activities:

Mission projects completed in the last few years have most notably been the addition of serving a free community meal once a month to our neighbors. We are completing our first decade of this event. It is based on having our members/friends be hosts and sit at the tables together with our guests. Our attendance was between 70-80 guests including our members and friends. We are struggling each month to fill co-chair positions to organize the meal, but we do not struggle with the number of attendees or the number of workers! Our most obvious skill is hospitality, but we have recently lost some strong supporters of these efforts through death and illness. We try and use this strength as often as we are able. Our guests are appreciative and we usually have some stories to share among us about who came along with their stories. We have become more intentional neighbors. We have been able to cover the cost of these meals through donations from members, friends and guests. Some of the food is donated or reduced in price. (This outreach activity is currently on hold while we explore options on how to continue)

Locally we join in community events organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Springfield On-the-Move such as the annual holiday visit with Santa when we offer hot chocolate and cookies to families strolling the streets. We have joined in an end-of-summer town event involving closing part of the main street for music, games, food and other events. We open our church for tours of the sanctuary, use of restrooms, while setting up tables under our trees and providing water and rest. We opened the church for water and restrooms during the annual Alumni parade which passes directly in front of the Church building.

We support our Springfield Family Center with food and volunteer time.

We send School kits to Church World Service.

We have a very active Quilt Group that does not require being a member of the church. This group sews the school bags while the church members and friends fill them.

We participate in the Five National Offerings. Our OCWM is in our budget at 10% of our pledges. We cannot increase this amount as encouraged by the Vermont Conference as we go deeper into the principal of the endowment to simply meet our budget.

Green Space:

Recently a public green space was created in the courtyard adjacent to the Church containing benches, a picnic table and native plants. This space created a restful space available to all in the downtown. This project was funded through grants and donations.

Is there unresolved conflict in your Church: Some

Level of conflict: (Low 1,2,3,4,5 High) 2

The church voted to be “open and affirming” many years ago. This decision was quite divisive at the time and is still not fully embraced by all. Our congregants hold a whole range of faith beliefs from agnostic to fundamental.

- There is a long history of differences of opinion. These differences include how to use our endowment and the building.
- There will be differences of opinion as we work toward implementing the decision for our future...

Primary goals for this time:

- Implementation of the goal chosen by the congregation for which includes a repurpose of the church building
- Continuity in worship, pastoral care, outreach, education and exploration of faith.
- Providing opportunities for continuing discussion of the impact of our decision to reach out for growth.
- Administrative leadership especially in working with social media

Finances:

Current CY 2026

Income budget \$ 110,000+ \$23,000 from the endowment

Expense budget \$133,000

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) \$5000

3 year Capital Campaign (2024-25) for building improvements

Pledged \$120,000

OCWM: \$5000 (10% of our pledged income)

(CY 2026) Number of Pledging Units: 31 Average pledge amount: \$1677 Total: \$ 52,000

Perceived issues and challenges facing the congregation:

Action on the choice of repurposing the building

Challenge of changing the perceived lack of faith within the congregation that opportunity and growth can be ours.

Financial situation is another issue with the congregation split over deficit budget and use of endowment. Our beautiful downtown church building is very large and expensive to heat and maintain.

