



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

St. Thomas United Church of Christ
902 E Macada Road
Bethlehem, PA 18017

Full Time Pastor

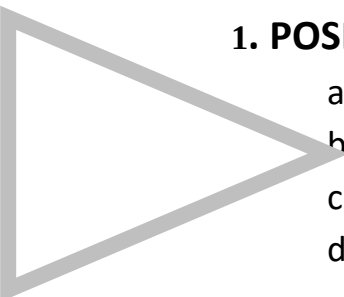
Keystone Conference, Mountain Valley Association

May 22,2026

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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*



1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: **St. Thomas UCC**

Street address: **902 E Macada Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017**

Supplemental web links: stthomasuccbethlehem.com

Additional ecumenical affiliations:

none

Conference:

Keystone Conference

Association:

Mountain Valley Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Rev. Dr. Nora Foust - Transitional Regional Conference Minister – Region 2

717-652-1560 ext. 323

nora@keystoneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

St. Thomas United Church of Christ (St. Thomas) is a church in the midst of exciting times. After 19 years of dedicated service and guidance, our former pastor took a much-deserved retirement. Within the last three years, two local churches have closed their doors and many from their congregations have joined St. Thomas. We are now three churches becoming one, desiring guidance as we traverse this new inspiring era of St. Thomas. St. Thomas is ready for continuing growth as we look to further blend our traditions, both new and old, and keep moving forward in Christ.

It is our desire to seek a pastor who will walk with us through this transition and help us discover who St. Thomas is destined to be. We are searching for a pastor who can bring ideas and counsel as we journey together, united on this path as faithful servants of Christ.

Photographs:



Exterior of St. Thomas



Interior of Sanctuary



Sanctuary decorated for Easter



Sanctuary during Christmas Eve service



Bible Boy and Friends puppet ministry

What we value about living in our area:

Bethlehem, known as the Christmas City for being founded on Christmas Eve by the Moravians and its rich Christmas tradition, is part of the greater Lehigh Valley. The Lehigh Valley offers a wide range of opportunities to explore, including a long and interesting history, an active and diverse arts and cultural scene, and nearby proximity to major metropolitan areas including New York City and Philadelphia. The area has two award winning healthcare systems and is home to multiple universities. The area also has minor-league ice hockey, baseball, and soccer teams and hosts a variety of world-class festivals, such as Musikfest, Celtic Classic, Oktoberfest, Christkindlmarkt in Bethlehem, the Great Allentown Fair, and PA Bacon Fest, and Garlic Fest in Easton. In addition, the area is rich in outdoor activities. One can bike or walk on the many trails in the area, hike on the Appalachian Trail and other trails, fish, raft or canoe in the Lehigh and Delaware rivers, hunt in the many game preserves nearby, and ski in the winter at several resorts; all within an hour's drive of our church!

Current size of membership: **261**

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):

English

Position Title:

Pastor

Position Duration:

Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

Compensation Level:

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

The total compensation package offered meets current conference guidelines.

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Scope of work for full-time Pastoral Position:

- **Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with the music director, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.**
- **Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs**
- **Strategic Planning for current and new directions in ministry**
- **Participate in wider church activities such as Conference and Association meetings**
- **Faithful financial development and stewardship**
- **Responsibility for supervision of staff**
- **Availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations, at the pastor's discretion**
- **Counseling, listening and referral**
- **Energizing and deepening the spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do**
- **Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them**
- **Attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership**
- **Administration responsibilities (unless delegated) such as email, website, church supply purchasing, more**
- **Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills so as to lead, teach, preach better**

Core Competencies:

A congregational survey resulted in the following top qualities desired for our future pastor:

- **A good listener who is attentive to their congregants and easy to talk to**
- **Ability to connect with the congregation by bringing meaning to scripture and relating to current events and everyday life**
- **A pastor who is caring and compassionate in providing pastoral care to their members and community**
- **Has a good sense of humor**

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis:

Current budget assumes a pastor with 15 years' experience and includes a total salary package of \$133,783 with a base compensation of \$91,125. Salary will be adjusted based on years' experience and will align with current conference guidelines.

Benefits:

Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

Living nearby with a housing allowance

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

At the pastor's discretion, provided contractual duties are being met

State any incentives:

To be discussed on a candidate-by-candidate basis

Describe peer and professional support available for ministers in your association/conference:

Communities of Practice group through the Conference and other support as provided by the Keystone Conference and Mountain Valley Association

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

N/A

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

At St. Thomas, we desire a pastor who can help with strategic planning for congregational growth and provide leadership in transitioning the three churches to become one by maintaining the momentum that is underway. We are seeking a pastor who will join us on this journey as we follow God's plan for our combined congregation.

Another area we envision for our next pastor is providing guidance with youth retention and engagement. This includes assisting and equipping congregational leaders to develop new initiatives that encourage our youth to become active, connected members of our faith community.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

St. Thomas is seeking a pastor who will help engage the congregation in mission beyond the church. We wish to blend the traditions of the three congregations that now make up St. Thomas by giving back to the community in various ways. We desire to have lasting community impact through our mission endeavors.

Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

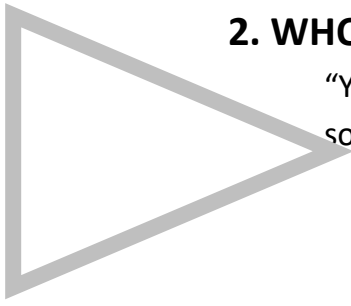
English speaking

Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

St. Thomas is looking for our next pastor to display the following:

- **Exhibit a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice**
 - **Sharing their strong faith with others**
 - **Exhibiting a commitment to their calling to ordained ministry**

- Nurturing spiritual growth in themselves and helping others to do so as well
- **Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions**
 - Exhibiting a commitment to teaching scripture and explaining the word of God to others
 - Ability to relate scripture to current events and bring relatable meaning to the congregation
 - Leading faith formation effectively across all generations
- **Caring for All Creation**
 - Care and compassion for all God's creation
 - Provide hope and healing to a hurting world
 - Maintain basic understanding of mental health and wellness as a WISE designated congregation
- **Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets**
 - Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity
 - Respecting the dignity of all God's people
 - Understanding and ministering to all stages of life, from infant to elderly
 - Strong Communication skills
 - Openness to new ideas



2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

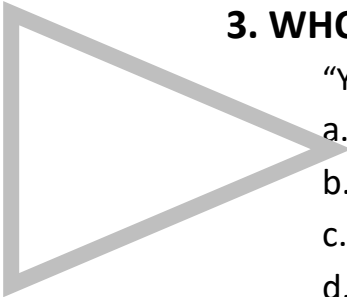
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

To become one united St. Thomas UCC as we journey forward in the love and service of Christ.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

St. Thomas’ current challenge involves the blending of three congregations as we evolve into one unified congregation. We are learning who we are becoming and how we are meant to serve. While many congregations are closing, we are in the midst of a season of growth. We are looking to be a safe place where all feel welcome and we can serve others in Christ’s mission.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

We believe in the Triune God. In liturgy, God is described in many ways such as God of Love, Peace, Forgiveness, and Compassion. The Holy Spirit is present in and around us and working through us through our missions and ministry.

Our mission statement is: “To be a safe place where we Encourage, Equip, Engage, Educate, and Empower, in God’s love, Christ’s mission and ministry.”

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Based on a survey of the congregation, the top strengths/qualities of our congregation are:

- **A strong music program**
- **Welcoming and accepting of visitors and new members**
- **Active membership in program participation and volunteering**
- **Friendly and approachable**
- **Congregation has come together with a common purpose**

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Worship occurs in the sanctuary at 10:15 am with some participants joining virtually via Zoom. Worship is led by the pastor with assistance by a worship leader volunteer and the music/choir is led by the music director. Services could be described as “traditional”. Each worship contains hymns, prayers, scripture (based on the 3-year lectionary cycle), sermons that typically focus on the Gospel reading,

choral anthem/special music, children's message typically lead by the pastor, offering, morning prayer, and closing hymn. On a monthly basis we have a puppet ministry with "Bible Boy and Friends" and the children's choir performs.

Two volunteers from the tech team are assigned each week to manage the worship projection as well as Zoom and the camera which is used to allow Zoom participants to get the best worship experience from wherever they are participating.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

St. Thomas has a paid part time Faith Formation Director position who leads the youth classes, which include youth ages 3-12. The youth attend worship through the children's message and then exit the sanctuary to go to their classes. Classes are broken into two groups based on age with a curriculum designed by the Faith Formation Director. In addition to weekly classes, a summer vacation bible school program is offered, along with several events throughout the calendar year.

Youth entering 7th grade are eligible for Confirmation. The confirmation program has primarily been led by the Pastor.

Adult classes are held on Sunday mornings prior to worship beginning at 9am. These classes are attended by approximately 10-15 adults each week and several members take turns in teaching the lesson. Each week's lesson can vary depending on the curriculum currently being worked on, the season, or the teacher's preference. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, special lessons/studies are typically offered.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
 - **The Governing Board meets monthly for approximately 2 hours each month**
 - **Care Team meets once a month after worship**
 - **Property Committee meets as needed**
 - **Worship Team meets every other month**
 - **Finance Team meets as needed**
 - **Prayer Shawl Ministry meets quarterly after worship**
 - **Music Ministry meets weekly for choir and hand bell/chime rehearsal**

- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?
 - **During times of crisis, the Elders and Governing Board were involved in all decision making and addressed any issues in a timely fashion at the best interest of the congregation and staff.**
- Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?
 - **Yes, will be made available upon request, currently the Constitution and Bylaws are under revision.**

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

See Appendix A for 11- year reports for St. Thomas UCC, Trinity UCC and Church of the Manger.

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	168	yes
Number of active non-members:	6	yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	174	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	73%	Estimate based on survey data from 135 participants
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	7%	Yes, see above
Less than 5 years:	20%	Yes, see above

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
7	6	9	2	2	17	2	32	39	Estimate based on survey results returned by 116 participants

Percentage of adults in various household types: **Unknown, data not available**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:		
Households with minors:		
Single adults age 35-65:		
Joint households with no minors:		
Single adults over 65:		

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	33%	Estimated based on survey data returned by 106 participants
College:	30%	Yes, see above
Graduate School:	22%	Yes, see above
Specialty Training:	13%	Yes, see above
Other (please specify):	2%	No additional information provided by survey participants

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	28%	Estimated based on survey results results submitted by 99 participants
Adults who are retired:	60%	Yes, see above
Adults who are not fully employed:	12%	Yes, see above

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

The congregation includes a wide range of occupations including medical, education, engineering, legal, clergy, trades, retired, and students.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

St. Thomas has a mono-cultural congregation.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

No, but we would be open to conversations in the future.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	10-15	Volunteer teachers
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Children’s Groups or Classes	20	Faith Formation Director
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Christmas Eve: 6pm - 45 8pm - 90 Easter: 8:15am - 63 10:15 am - 110	Pastor

Church-wide Meals	75	Care Team
Choirs and Music Groups	25	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	10-12	Pastor
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	Monthly, attendance varies	Pastor
Community Meals	80	Volunteers provide bagged lunches for Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering program, typically done quarterly
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	9	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	N/A	
Outdoor Worship (1 held in 2025)	60	Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups (Prayer Chain)	26	Volunteer
Public Advocacy Work	N/A	
Retreats	N/A	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	2	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:15am)	95	Pastor
Worship (time slot: _____)	N/A	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	
Youth Groups or Classes	N/A	
Other - 50+ Group	25-30	Volunteer

Additional comments:

In addition to the above, St. Thomas has a monthly shoo-fly pie fundraiser, annual Peach Festival, annual Animal Blessing, and active Prayer Shawl Ministry.

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. Dr. Don Quayle	No		None	Yes
Rev. Dr. C. Walter Long	No		None	Yes

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

They are retired pastors and attend worship regularly.

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staffperson serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Office Manager	No	Part Time	Pastor	25+ years
Music Director	No	Part Time	Pastor	17 years
Faith Formation Director	No	Part Time	Pastor	2 years
Custodian	No	Part Time	Pastor	1 year

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's overall ministry?

We are an active congregation with many dedicated volunteers who are hardworking and make St. Thomas is an enjoyable place to worship and grow.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$176,100
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	N/A
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	N/A
Fundraising Events	\$39,500
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$20,600
Grants	N/A
Rentals of Church Building	\$13,500
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$11,100
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$
Other (specify): Transfers from Investment Accounts	\$22,000
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$282,800

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): **\$282,195 (see Appendix B for 2026 Budget)**

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

For current year 2026: Total Ministry support (salary package) = \$133,782 (based on current Keystone conference guidelines assuming 15 year's experience)
Total Budgeted expenses (2026) = \$282,195 (47.41%)

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year?

X Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

X One Great Hour of Sharing

X Strengthen the Church

X Neighbors in Need

X Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage?

Collected offering during the calendar year. \$3,500 was budgeted for 2026. OCWM is not calculated as a percentage of our operating budget.

What is the church's current indebtedness? **N/A**

Total amount of loan debt:\$0

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? N/A

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget. **N/A**

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe: **N/A**

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: **N/A**

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	

		\$	\$	
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Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign. **N/A**

Does your church have an endowment? **No**

What is the market value of the assets? **N/A**

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? **N/A**

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? **N/A**

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: **N/A**

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? **N/A**

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: **N/A**

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): **\$15,522.18**

Investments (other than endowment): **\$426,811.65 (When the state approves the merger of Trinity UCC, St. Thomas will receive an additional \$425,000.)**

Does your church have a parsonage?

No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Church building (902 E Macada Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017)

The church building includes Pastor and secretary offices, music room, fellowship hall, Sunday school wing with 2 large classrooms and a library, social hall in basement level, sanctuary located on second floor above the Sunday school wing. The church building includes a small kitchen on the main level and a large industrial kitchen on the basement level which is certified and inspected by the local health bureau and used for fundraising and social events that involve food preparation.

Grange Building (900 E Macada Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017)

This is currently rented by the Black Diamond Society of Model Engineers which is a model railroad club.

Rental Home (922 E Macada Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017)

Pavilion/grove and shed behind church

The pavilion/grove space is used for events like our Peach Festival and is utilized for outdoor services which are typically held several times each summer.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*)

The church is wheelchair accessible, however, there are stairs within the building that make access from one wing to another only wheelchair accessible via outside. The sanctuary is located on the second level, with access via stairs or elevator. The pulpit and altar are located on the same level as the main sanctuary, however, there are risers for the choir area. An ADA accessible restroom is located on the first floor.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?

The church budget has been changing in the last 2-3 years. Mergers occurred with two UCC Congregations resulting in the financial ability for a full-time pastor at conference guidelines. The Finance Team meets annually in early October to create the next calendar year operating budget. Insight from the Governing Board and historical expenditures and income are used to calculate the draft budget. Once a draft budget is created, it is then reviewed by the Governing Board before being presented to the congregation for approval at the annual congregational meeting in November.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

See Appendix C

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

Refer to the church history in Appendix C.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Fortunately, this relatively new entity, the merged St. Thomas United Church of Christ, where three have become one, has been with minimal conflict. Of course, the process of closing Church of the Manger, and Trinity UCC, was a painful process. For these congregations, even after the merger process was completed, there has been a sense of loss and mourning. Initially, there was some conflict that involved questioning by the members of the original St. Thomas UCC about the benefits and risks of the proposed mergers. Those have been resolved.

Ministerial History *(include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)*

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Robert D. Harting	1989-1996	Yes
Rev. Dr. Donald Esslinger (Intentional Interim)	1997-2005	Yes
Rev. Debra K Hess	2006-2025	Yes
Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith (Intentional Interim)	2025-present	Yes

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

The congregation has learned to trust and lean on our pastoral leaders over the years, and we are truly grateful for everything they do. Their guidance has helped us overcome challenges and has strengthened our sense of unity. As we rely on our pastor's support, we also strive to support them wholeheartedly. Together, we continue to grow and look forward to working alongside them as we move forward.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

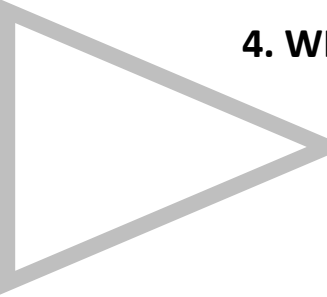
Yes, but not recently.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

- **St. Thomas, Trinity and Church of the Manger have all had a long history of involvement with Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering (BES), which provides temporary housing and assistance for the homeless in our area.**
- **We have areas of the church that we have rented to various daycare/preschools.**
- **We have hosted animal blessings for the congregation and community.**
- **St. Thomas hosts a monthly 50+ group with various activities and guest speakers which is attended by both congregants and community members.**
- **A new tradition is a Friendship Tea for the women of the congregation and community.**
- **Annual Peach festival, which brings in many from the community.**
- **Shoo Fly pie fundraiser which draws in many from across the Lehigh Valley.**
- **Regular food collection for distribution to local organizations.**

Describe your congregation’s participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

The Pastor and a representative(s) from the congregation attend the annual association and conference meetings. Prior pastors were involved in conference committees and attended General Synod.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

☒ **Accessible to All (A2A)**

☐ Creation Justice

☐ Economic Justice

☐ Faithful and Welcoming

☐ God Is Still Speaking (GISS)

☐ Border and Immigrant Justice

☐ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)

☐ Just Peace

☐ Global Mission Church

☐ Open and Affirming (ONA)

☒ **WISE Congregation for Mental Health**

☐ Other UCC designations:

☐ Designations from other denominations

☐ None

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

There have been no current discussions about pursuing other designations.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

- **Our participation in Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering (BES).**
- **Pre-Covid there was a rotation of worship amongst the Bethlehem UCC churches and we would be open to bringing this tradition back.**

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

St. Thomas' mission statement is:

"To be a safe place where we Encourage, Equip, Engage, Educate, and Empower, in God's love, Christ's mission and ministry."

We live up to this mission by being a place that welcomes all who come through our doors. We are present in the community through our mission and service to others, and we grow our faith and friendship through our various programs and events.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

There is no defined expectation, however, the church supports and encourages the pastor in all endeavors they feel called to.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's MissionInsite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

We are a growing area, with an ethnically diverse population.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Our congregations' demographics compare to the neighborhood with most members residing greater than a mile from the church.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not?

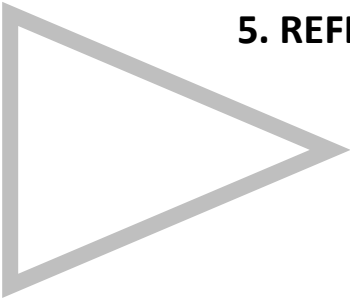
There are no identifiable needs of the community immediately adjacent to the church; therefore, we provide service to Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering which serves the wider community.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

**Shoo fly pies!
Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering
Music ministry
Peach Festival**

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

The welcoming congregation!



5. REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”

Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.

REFERENCE 1

Bernadette Hay - spouse of active member of St. Thomas congregation
610-360-9705
sayhay@ptd.net

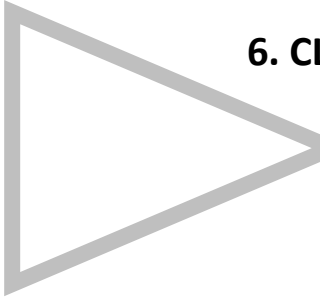
REFERENCE 2

Rev. Robert T. Rapp Jr. – Pastor Christ Church UCC
610-865-6565

REFERENCE 3

Steve Samuelson – State Representative, 135th District
610-867-3890
ssamuelson@pahouse.net

See attached reference letters in Appendix D.



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

Dear God,

Waiting is hard, but we know Your timing is perfect. Help us to rest in Your promises and not rush ahead of Your plan. Teach us to pray more than worry, to trust more than we doubt, and to hope more than we fear.

You are the true Shepherd. As we seek the pastor You have already prepared for us, guide our steps and open our hearts to Your will. Give us wisdom, discernment, and unity of spirit. Close the doors that are not from You, and open wide the ones that lead to the shepherd You have chosen. May we trust Your timing and Your plan.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*

Search & Call Committee with assistance from the Governing Board, Finance Team, Church Office, and input from the congregation via surveys.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:



Amy Rohrbach

Search & Call Committee Chair

5/21/2026

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment: *yes -*

Mountain Valley

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

yes

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

yes

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Nora D. Joust

Name / Title:

Transitional Regional Conference Minister

Email:

Nora@KeystoneUCC.org

Phone:

717-652-1560

Date:

5/21/20

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" – Mark 11:22

Appendix A

Combined 11-year reports

St. Thomas UCC, Church of the Manger, and Trinity UCC



United Church of Christ

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church: 0211 - St Thomas UCC - Bethlehem, PA

Assoc/Conf: Mountain Valley (Keystone) in Keystone

Schedule: 0 - UCC Church

Year	Members	AVG Weekly Attendance	CHR ED / Faith Form	Confirmation	Confession	Transfer Or Reaffirm	Death Or Trans Out	Other Losses	Net Membs Adds-Removed
2015	213	62	23	0	0	7	5	0	2
2016	222	67	21	2	0	9	2	0	9
2017	230	63	22	1	0	8	1	0	8
2018	227	62	29	0	0	3	6	0	-3
2019	236	66	30	4	0	7	2	0	9
2020	240	44	24	5	0	2	3	0	4
2021	150	36	25	0	2	1	2	91	-90
2022	152	43	24	5	0	4	3	4	2
2023	220	53	28	0	0	71	3	0	68
2024	229	81	30	3	0	12	6	0	9

Year	Current Expenses	Capital Payments	Basic Support	Additional UCC Giving	Total OCWM	Other Support	Wider Mission	Basic Supp % Curr Local	Total Expend	Pledges And Offerings
2015	\$145,379.00	\$0.00	\$1,930.00	\$378.00	\$2,308.00	\$718.00	\$3,026.00	1%	\$146,097.00	\$93,733.00
2016	\$136,948.00	\$0.00	\$2,680.00	\$213.00	\$2,893.00	\$425.00	\$3,318.00	2%	\$137,373.00	\$97,010.00
2017	\$143,766.00	\$0.00	\$2,265.00	\$650.00	\$2,915.00	\$1,906.00	\$4,821.00	2%	\$145,824.00	\$99,515.00
2018	\$144,912.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$481.00	\$2,481.00	\$1,641.00	\$4,122.00	1%	\$146,706.00	\$81,132.00
2019	\$161,333.00	\$0.00	\$2,514.00	\$295.00	\$2,809.00	\$947.00	\$3,756.00	2%	\$162,390.00	\$99,877.00
2020	\$136,431.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,927.00	\$3,927.00	1%	\$138,358.00	\$93,067.00
2021	\$153,578.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$435.00	\$2,435.00	\$1,272.00	\$3,707.00	1%	\$154,850.00	\$92,801.00
2022	\$179,164.00	\$0.00	\$2,104.00	\$365.00	\$2,469.00	\$924.00	\$3,393.00	1%	\$180,088.00	\$93,011.00
2023	\$209,158.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$208.00	\$2,208.00	\$1,089.00	\$3,297.00	1%	\$210,247.00	\$85,023.00
2024	\$312,434.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$876.00	\$2,876.00	\$212.00	\$3,088.00	1%	\$312,936.00	\$136,110.00

% Change	Members	Avg Weekly Attendance	CHR ED/ Faith Form	Total Additions	Total Removals	CURR Local Expenses	Total OCWM	Total Expenditures
2020 - 2025	-4.58	84.09	25.00	114.29	100.00	129.01	43.80	126.18
2015 - 2025	7.51	30.65	30.43	114.29	20.00	114.91	24.61	114.20

For more information about report data, please visit [Data-Hub-Church-Field-Guide.pdf](#)



United Church of Christ

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church: 330 - Church of the Manger UCC - Bethlehem, PA

Assoc/Conf: Mountain Valley (Keystone) in Penn Northeast

Schedule: 3 - Removed Church

Year	Members	AVG Weekly Attendance	CHR ED / Faith Form	Confirmation	Confession	Transfer Or Reaffirm	Death Or Trans Out	Other Losses	Net Membs Adds-Removed
2015	179	50	24	0	0	0	9	0	-9
2016	175	50	20	0	0	0	4	0	-4
2017	107	50	20	0	2	0	5	0	-3
2018	122	50	16	3	4	3	4	0	6
2019	112	50	18	3	0	0	3	0	0
2020	109	52	18	0	0	2	5	0	-3
2021	103	40	0	0	0	0	6	0	-6
2022	94	35	0	0	0	0	6	0	-6
2023	78	35	0	0	0	0	8	0	-8
2024	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Year	Current Expenses	Capital Payments	Basic Support	Additional UCC Giving	Total OCWM	Other Support	Wider Mission	Basic Supp % Curr Local	Total Expend	Pledges And Offerings
2015	\$167,425.00	\$33,035.00	\$358.00	\$2,451.00	\$2,809.00	\$9,318.00	\$12,127.00	0%	\$209,778.00	\$126,401.00
2016	\$151,243.00	\$33,035.00	\$2,477.00	\$2,462.00	\$4,939.00	\$4,223.00	\$9,162.00	2%	\$188,501.00	\$113,148.00
2017	\$150,846.00	\$33,035.00	\$411.00	\$6,575.00	\$6,986.00	\$0.00	\$6,986.00	0%	\$188,692.00	\$101,244.00
2018	\$120,611.00	\$33,035.00	\$666.00	\$1,874.00	\$2,540.00	\$881.00	\$3,421.00	1%	\$154,527.00	\$105,848.00
2019	\$120,611.00	\$33,035.00	\$452.00	\$1,301.00	\$1,753.00	\$872.00	\$2,625.00	0%	\$154,518.00	\$101,045.00
2020	\$121,796.00	\$27,734.00	\$1,090.00	\$1,358.00	\$2,448.00	\$1,695.00	\$4,143.00	1%	\$151,225.00	\$89,217.00
2021	\$119,070.00	\$33,387.00	\$1,124.00	\$1,391.00	\$2,515.00	\$1,495.00	\$4,010.00	1%	\$153,952.00	\$97,675.00
2022	\$118,750.00	\$33,387.00	\$360.00	\$1,110.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,413.00	\$2,883.00	0%	\$153,550.00	\$84,000.00
2023	\$55,000.00	\$33,385.00	\$500.00	\$1,556.00	\$2,056.00	\$0.00	\$2,056.00	1%	\$89,085.00	\$69,000.00
2024	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00

% Change	Members	Avg Weekly Attendance	CHR ED/ Faith Form	Total Additions	Total Removals	CURR Local Expenses	Total OCWM	Total Expenditures
2020 - 2025	-28.44	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00
2015 - 2025	-56.42	-100.00	-100.00	0	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00

For more information about report data, please visit [Data-Hub-Church-Field-Guide.pdf](#)



United Church of Christ

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church: 380 - Trinity UCC - Bethlehem, PA

Assoc/Conf: Mountain Valley (Keystone) in Penn Northeast

Schedule: 3 - Removed Church

Year	Members	AVG Weekly Attendance	CHR ED / Faith Form	Confirmation	Confession	Transfer Or Reaffirm	Death Or Trans Out	Other Losses	Net Membs Adds-Removed
2015	229	62	20	3	1	0	6	27	-29
2016	184	50	19	0	0	0	10	35	-45
2017	185	53	11	5	0	0	4	0	1
2018	183	49	11	0	0	1	3	0	-2
2019	176	45	8	0	0	0	7	0	-7
2020	171	35	7	0	0	0	5	0	-5
2021	168	20	6	0	0	1	4	0	-3
2022	146	25	6	1	0	0	4	19	-22
2023	144	25	6	0	0	0	2	0	-2
2024	144	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Year	Current Expenses	Capital Payments	Basic Support	Additional UCC Giving	Total OCWM	Other Support	Wider Mission	Basic Supp % Curr Local	Total Expend	Pledges And Offerings
2015	\$134,517.00	\$49,810.00	\$1,449.00	\$853.00	\$2,302.00	\$3,744.00	\$6,046.00	1%	\$188,071.00	\$178,548.00
2016	\$124,906.00	\$10,310.00	\$1,004.00	\$534.00	\$1,538.00	\$7,203.00	\$8,741.00	1%	\$142,419.00	\$116,914.00
2017	\$125,649.00	\$5,267.00	\$2,090.00	\$2,284.00	\$4,374.00	\$5,347.00	\$9,721.00	2%	\$138,300.00	\$133,266.00
2018	\$97,016.00	\$0.00	\$1,054.00	\$4,873.00	\$5,927.00	\$0.00	\$5,927.00	1%	\$101,459.00	\$91,488.00
2019	\$134,670.00	\$0.00	\$952.00	\$341.00	\$1,293.00	\$3,415.00	\$4,708.00	1%	\$138,085.00	\$101,307.00
2020	\$135,687.00	\$0.00	\$1,073.00	\$325.00	\$1,398.00	\$0.00	\$1,398.00	1%	\$135,687.00	\$97,710.00
2021	\$126,000.00	\$0.00	\$887.00	\$2,057.00	\$2,944.00	\$3,800.00	\$6,744.00	1%	\$131,272.00	\$113,600.00
2022	\$145,954.00	\$0.00	\$988.00	\$427.00	\$1,415.00	\$0.00	\$1,415.00	1%	\$145,954.00	\$97,769.00
2023	\$134,936.00	\$0.00	\$833.00	\$1,855.00	\$2,688.00	\$0.00	\$2,688.00	1%	\$136,291.00	\$77,059.00
2024	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	\$0.00

% Change	Members	Avg Weekly Attendance	CHR ED/ Faith Form	Total Additions	Total Removals	CURR Local Expenses	Total OCWM	Total Expenditures
2020 - 2025	-15.79	-100.00	-100.00	0	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00
2015 - 2025	-37.12	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00

For more information about report data, please visit [Data-Hub-Church-Field-Guide.pdf](#)

2026 Proposed Budget				
	Category:	2025 Budget	Proposed 2026 Budget	Increase/ Decrease
	INCOME:			
1	Black Diamond	5,504.00	6,500.00	996.00
2	Christian Ed \$			0.00
3	\$ Christian Ed	800.00	600.00	(200.00)
4	\$ Christian Ed Fund Raiser	1,000.00	0.00	(1,000.00)
5	Church & Ministry \$			0.00
6	\$ Altar Flowers	1,000.00	1,500.00	500.00
7	Earnings from Other Investments	12,000.00	22,000.00	10,000.00
8	Events \$			0.00
9	\$ Craft Fair	1,200.00	0.00	(1,200.00)
10	\$ Luncheons	100.00	100.00	0.00
11	\$ Peach Festival	6,000.00	5,500.00	(500.00)
12	Fifty Plus \$		300.00	300.00
13	Giving Tree	4,500.00	6,500.00	2,000.00
14	Grocery Cards \$	12,000.00	15,000.00	3,000.00
15	Holiday Pies \$	3,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
16	Joyful Noise/ Property Offering (savings)	500.00	1,200.00	700.00
17	Loose Plate	4,500.00	8,500.00	4,000.00
18	Misc. Fund Raisers \$	5,000.00	4,000.00	(1,000.00)
19	Misc. Offerings	4,000.00	5,000.00	1,000.00
20	Mission Offering Envelope	2,000.00	4,000.00	2,000.00
21	Music Ministry \$	200.00	200.00	0.00
22	Non-Budgeted Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
23	OCWM \$	800.00	1,500.00	700.00
24	Other Income - Donations	2,000.00	3,000.00	1,000.00
25	Other Mission & BES \$	500.00	1,000.00	500.00
26	Precious One's Daycare		6,000.00	6,000.00
27	Rental House \$	11,100.00	11,100.00	0.00
28	Seasonal Flowers \$	800.00	1,300.00	500.00
29	Shoo Fly Pies \$	11,000.00	11,000.00	0.00
30	Use of Church \$	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
31	Weekly Envelopes	135,000.00	162,000.00	27,000.00
32	Total Income	225,504.00	282,800.00	
33				
34	EXPENSES:			
35	Christian Ed			
36	Christian Ed	3,317.00	2,545.00	(772.00)
37	Christian Ed Fund Raiser	600.00	0.00	(600.00)
38	Church & Ministry			

2026 Proposed Budget				
	Category:	2025 Budget	Proposed 2026 Budget	Increase/ Decrease
39	Altar Flowers	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
40	Altar Guild	400.00	600.00	200.00
41	Pastoral Ministry Expense	250.00	250.00	0.00
42	Custodial Supplies	100.00	250.00	150.00
43	Employee Compensation			
44	Christian Ed Coordinator	2,318.00	3,091.00	773.00
45	Custodian	0.00	3,750.00	3,750.00
46	FICA excludes Minister	2,622.00	3,041.00	419.00
47	Groundskeeper	1,972.00	2,031.00	59.00
48	Minister			
49	CEs, Retreats, Meetings	750.00	750.00	0.00
50	Compensation	75,000.00	91,125.00	16,125.00
51	Life & Disability	1,125.00	1,367.00	242.00
52	Medical	4,500.00	19,812.00	15,312.00
53	Transportation Reimbursement (Mileage Reim)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
54	Pension	6,400.43	12,758.00	6,357.57
55	Social Security FICA	6,001.34	6,971.00	969.66
56	Music Director	17,505.00	18,030.00	525.00
57	Secretary-Office Manager	12,480.00	12,854.00	374.00
58	Supply Organist	400.00	400.00	0.00
59	Supply Pastor	600.00	800.00	200.00
60	Evangelism	200.00	0.00	(200.00)
61	Events			
62	Craft Fair	300.00	0.00	(300.00)
63	Luncheons	150.00	300.00	150.00
64	Peach Festival	900.00	1,000.00	100.00
65	Fifty Plus		300.00	300.00
66	Grocery Cards	11,400.00	14,250.00	2,850.00
67	Holiday Pies	1,000.00	1,600.00	600.00
68	Insurance	8,200.00	8,500.00	300.00
69	Misc. Fund Raisers	500.00	500.00	0.00
70	Mission			
71	OCWM	3,000.00	3,500.00	500.00
72	Other Mission & BES	1,500.00	4,000.00	2,500.00
73	Music Ministry			
74	Music Purchases	100.00	100.00	0.00
75	Organ Maintenance	375.00	375.00	0.00
76	Piano Tuning	320.00	320.00	0.00
77	Non-Budgeted Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
78	Office Machine Maintenance	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00

2026 Proposed Budget				
	Category:	2025 Budget	Proposed 2026 Budget	Increase/ Decrease
79	Office Supplies	100.00	300.00	200.00
80	Other Expenses	200.00	700.00	500.00
81	Payroll Fees	1,500.00	1,225.00	(275.00)
82	Postage	600.00	700.00	100.00
83	Property Maintenance Church			
84	Building Maintenance	10,000.00	12,000.00	2,000.00
85	Elevator	5,000.00	3,000.00	(2,000.00)
86	Equipment Repairs	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00
87	Property Maintenance	5,000.00	10,000.00	5,000.00
88	Rental Property			
89	Real Estate Taxes	4,200.00	4,500.00	300.00
90	Rental Property Maintenance	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
91	Seasonal Flowers	800.00	1,700.00	900.00
92	Shoo Fly Pies	3,200.00	3,000.00	(200.00)
93	Stewardship & Weekly Envelopes	800.00	1,000.00	200.00
94	Use of Church	200.00	200.00	0.00
95	Utilities			
96	Electric	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.00
97	Exterminator	500.00	500.00	0.00
98	Garbage	576.00	600.00	24.00
99	Gas	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00
100	Internet & Phone	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00
101	Water & Sewer	1,600.00	1,600.00	0.00
102	Total Expenses	224,561.77	282,195.00	
103				
104	Income or (Loss)	942.23	605.00	

Appendix C

3f. Historical Information

In 2023 St. Thomas UCC celebrated a significant milestone in the history of the church, its 175th anniversary. The church traces its historical creation to 1848 when Christians from the Altonah section in north Bethlehem met to discuss establishing a new place of worship. The cornerstone for the present structure housing the sanctuary is dated 1892. What the members of St. Thomas who celebrated that 175 th anniversary year did not know at the time, was that a new significant chapter was about to be written in the history of the church.

Toward the end of 2023, the leaders of the Church of the Manger, another Bethlehem UCC church, and their attorney, approached then Pastor Debra Hess and the Governing Board of St. Thomas to propose a legal merger of the two congregations with the Church of the Manger being the “merging organization” and St. Thomas being the “surviving organization.” After deliberation, investigation, negotiation, and prayer, a formal Plan of Merger was agreed to by both congregations and completed in December 2024.

While the Church of the Manger and St. Thomas merger process was taking place, another church in Bethlehem, Trinity UCC, approached St. Thomas about a similar merger. Trinity retained the same lawyer that Church of the Manger used for its merger proposal. With the template of the Church of the Manger-St. Thomas UCC Merger Agreement, this second merger proceeded more quickly. In August 2025, St. Thomas UCC sent the executed Plan of Merger to counsel for Trinity. Shortly after that, Trinity signed the agreement and this second merger is soon to be finalized (awaiting final state approval).

In her 2025 Intentional Interim Pastor’s Annual Report, Rev. Dr. Becky J. Beckwith outlined the rewards and challenges of the recent mergers as follows:

“So much has happened at this church. The coming together of Church of the Manger and Trinity has brought more members, money, traditions and ideas. It has also brought challenges. How can we together become one united church? Each church did things a bit differently and this can be a challenge but also an opportunity.”

Pastor Becky also proposed a title to describe this ongoing merger process: “Three Become One.” With the input of the Governing Board, the phrase “And Then Some” was added to this title in recognition of members from other struggling churches who had joined St. Thomas UCC, without a merger agreement. This title “Three Become One . . . And Then Some” was the theme of a Sunday service and celebration on January 4, 2026. Accordingly, in providing historical information about the present

St. Thomas UCC, we must address the history of the three churches that have become one.

Church of the Manger

Church of the Manger remained an active House of God for only a brief 70 years. Within that time-1952 to 2023-Pastors & Covenant members endeavored to make their beloved “Manger” an extension of the Gospel in this world. A keen awareness of her name, Church of the Manger, significantly impacted personal interactions, relationships, work, and community outreach. The rugged beauty of limestone walls, a 15-foot hand hewn cross, and manger facsimile altar went well beyond mere mid-century modern architecture and rose to an aesthetic that nurtured our spiritual journey in striving to follow Jesus Christ. We tried to live our informal motto “love grows here.” Ours was not a perfect church, but one steeped in a deep and abiding commitment to carrying out God’s work in the here and now.

Church of the Manger began as the Kaywin Community Mission Church of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of the East Pennsylvania Synod in 1952, in the midst of the burgeoning west Bethlehem community. The church was renamed Church of the Manger in 1954 upon dedication of our facility. Its Bethlehem location and a commitment to sharing Jesus’ message with the large numbers of children residing close by at that time, made it an appropriate name choice. Church of the Manger became part of the United Church of Christ in 1957.

The Manger (as we endearingly referred to our church home) was blessed with two long term (20+ years) spirit-filled full-time pastors and several interim pastors, who served us on our journey. We were encouraged and led to build opportunities for faith development. Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, vocal and bell choirs, Bible study groups, prayer chain, a God Squad during the Pandemic, Parish visitors, and various woman’s and men’s groups were in place. Our doors were open to community groups that ranged from exercise to AA, from being a voting site to AARP tax preparation. Our outreach extended to numerous groups caring for “the least of these” in our community and world at large.

We shared our Manger facility, through lease agreements, with two diverse congregations: St. Jude’s Old Catholic congregation and the Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley. Over many years, the relationships developed with these fellow Christians brought new cherished perspective to our Christian lifestyle. Weary from relentless soul searching, prayer, and discernment, we initiated the process of closing our Church of the Manger doors in 2023. Led, yet again by Pastors who have accepted the call to serve in Jesus’ name, we were led to St. Thomas UCC. Here, we are grateful for their welcome! It is a place where we are engaged with another recent church closing, Trinity UCC, Bethlehem, PA, and St. Thomas in Christ’s mission as “Three Become One.”

Trinity UCC

Ironically, the history of Trinity United Church of Christ ALSO begins when “Three Became One”. This joining, which was several years in planning, occurred when three UCC congregations (St. Paul’s, Zion, and Calvary) came together and formed a single congregation on January 1, 1972. Each of these churches had been founded as a Reform Church between 1888 and 1917. After the joining, Calvary and Zion sold their buildings and joined St. Paul’s at their church on Center and North streets.

Trinity was again blessed in 2006 when many of the members of First UCC in South Bethlehem joined our church family, after their congregation made the painful decision to close. The addition of our friends from First UCC gave Trinity a much-needed boost of energy and vision.

Shortly after the members of First Church UCC joined Trinity, leaders of the enlarged congregation met to discuss how we could better serve our community. A suggestion was made that Trinity could host a food pantry. With financial backing from the National UCC organization, the Trinity Food Pantry opened in October 2006 and has been actively serving the community since.

However, by 2015, Trinity was, like many churches, struggling with the challenges of keeping a congregation operating with an aging membership. The restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic caused further hardships. After the Covid restrictions were lifted, it became clear that the congregation could not continue without change. In 2021, an effort was made to merge with other congregations in the area. Although several discussions were held with other churches, there was insufficient interest in merging from the other churches to move forward. Finally, in 2024, the members of Trinity agreed to begin the closure process.

The church properties were sold to Riverbend Community Church in August. Riverbend agreed to lease the property back to Trinity for the remainder of 2024. The congregation of Trinity then agreed to give approximately \$360,000 (approximately 45% of the assets remaining after closure) to a variety of community organizations that had been supported by both Trinity and First Church. This was done to continue the legacies of Trinity and First Church in carrying out Christ’s commandment to love thy neighbor. On January 5, 2025, many of the members of Trinity were warmly welcomed by the congregation of St. Thomas as new members. We are very grateful for the love and hospitality shown to us by our new church family members.

BERNADETTE HAY
3051 SHAKESPEARE ROAD
BETHLEHEM PA 18017
Cell (610) 360-9705
Email sayhay@ptd.net

April 12, 2026

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter as a non-member reference for St. Thomas United Church of Christ.

I am born and raised and a lifelong member of the Roman Catholic Church. My husband is a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ. We are of different faiths but fully support each other in our spiritual lives.

St. Thomas UCC is a very special church. The congregation is welcoming and caring and truly looks out for one another. The members of St. Thomas have welcomed me with open arms. I have helped out with the shoo fly pie fundraiser (their pies are the best). My husband and I have attended their 50 Plus group functions and are going on two upcoming trips.

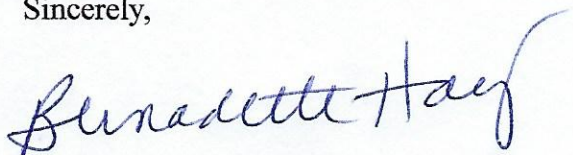
St. Thomas has two talented choirs – a chancel choir and a chime choir. Both choirs are excellent and very well directed. They perform two cantatas each year – one in the Winter and the other in the Spring.

St. Thomas also has a well-run Sunday School for both children and adults.

St. Thomas is a wonderful church. If you have any questions about the church, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Bernadette Hay



*Called to Know Christ
and to Serve in His Name*

4/30/2026

To whom it may concern,

This letter is written as my support for St. Thomas UCC, located at 902 E Macada Rd. in Bethlehem, PA. My affiliation with St. Thomas began with serving alongside them in support of the operation of Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering, Inc. For many years the facility at St. Thomas was utilized to house homeless individuals during the coldest months of the year.

It was during this time that I met Rev. Deborah Hess. Her pastoral and missional work alongside the folks at St Thomas inspired me. Pastor Hess became a mentor, and a colleague and I consider her to be a great friend. Over the years we have shared worship, bringing congregations together and always have a welcome and meaningful time.

When the shelter system moved to a permanent location, the members of St. Thomas continued to volunteer with the shelter to cook meals and assist with the shelter work. The faithful members of this church continue to support other ministries in the city of Bethlehem serving many with housing challenges and food insecurity.

For a Pastor who is looking for a church home that offers worship and teaching as part of worshipful experiences through hands on service to the community I would recommend St. Thomas as a great place to continue to grow in the word, to serve the greater community, and to those in need.

I look forward to continuing service with the great folks at St. Thomas and their new Pastor.

PS: The folks at St. Thomas make a dog-gone good Shoo- fly pie!

In Christian Love,

Rev Robert T. Rapp Jr.

STEVE SAMUELSON, MEMBER
135TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES
FINANCE
DEMOCRATIC CHAIR

May 11, 2026

Mr. Michael P. Shay
c/o St. Thomas UCC
902 East Macada Road
Bethlehem, PA 18017

RE: St. Thomas Church Profile Reference

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

As the State Representative for the 135th Pennsylvania House District, it is my distinct honor to offer my support to you as you prayerfully consider your next full-time pastor to lead your congregation. Especially now, as your congregation has grown with the addition of the membership from the Church of the Manger and Trinity UCC, it is important to continue to be blessed with a minister who can work with your lay leadership to create a new vision for St. Thomas that is bright. I hope you stay rooted in your history of capably blending traditional and modern elements of worship, an inspiring music ministry that has been lauded and the continuation of activities that foster intergenerational activity and communication – they have been key to inspiring the congregation and the wider community.

For more than one hundred and seventy five years St. Thomas has been the beneficiary of strong examples of faith, determination, generosity and stewardship; that should of course continue into the future, but with others from your merging congregations coming into the fold, it will be important not only to ensure that your traditions are upheld but also to affirm and include the traditions and experiences your newest members bring with them from their past and their own demonstrations of faith. Remember to offer both deference to and attune yourselves with the testimony your new blended congregation can offer to strengthen the overall spiritual nature of your work together.

I was so pleased to be able to recognize your church for its history and longevity of work in the community, on the occasion of its 175th Anniversary, to meet your members and thank them for the vital work of your service to God and the neighborhood, and I look forward to welcoming the new leader you will choose together as they, and you, together, will forge a new and exciting way forward in worship, fellowship, and community outreach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Samuelson".

Steve Samuelson
State Representative, 135th District