

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Atkinson Congregational Church
Atkinson, NH

Full-Time Settled Pastor, Shared

New Hampshire Conference

Validation Date: June 25, 2026

Atkinson Congregational Church is pastor-sharing with Hampstead Congregational Church. Hampstead's separate profile can be [viewed here](#).

*“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)*

POSITION POSTING

LISTING INFORMATION; SCOPE OF WORK; COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Atkinson Congregational Church

Street address: 101 Main St., Atkinson, NH 03811

Supplemental web links:

www.atkinsoncc.org

<https://atkinsoncc.org/about-us/what-we-believe/>

Additional ecumenical affiliations:

(e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships)

Conference – New Hampshire Conference

Association – Granite State Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name: Gordon Rankin

Title: Conference Minister

Phone: 603-715-9527

Email: GRankin@nhcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

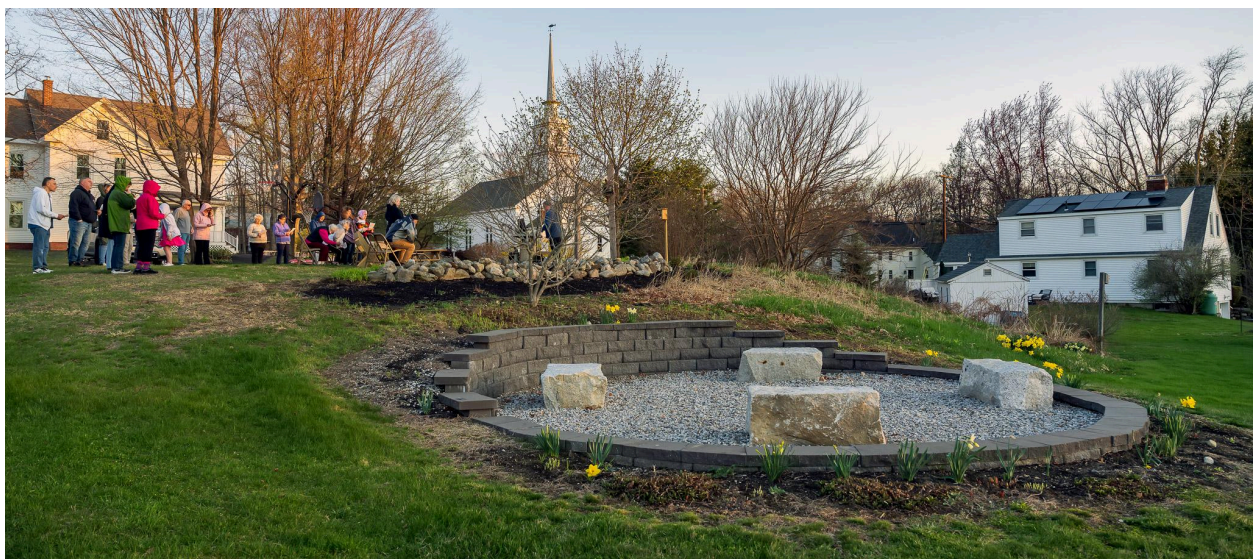
Atkinson Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming, multigenerational church seeking a full-time, shared pastor with Hampstead Congregational Church. At Atkinson Congregational Church, our focus is to inspire through worship, music, and growing faith. We envision a future where more people find hope, belonging, and spiritual nourishment among us. Located in the southern New Hampshire seacoast region, our welcoming campus—including a parsonage for our next pastor—supports both ministry and community programs that offer safe, inclusive space. We seek a pastor whose gifts will help us grow our congregation, strengthen our ministry to people of all ages, and reach people locally, online, and through community engagement. At the heart of all this is our desire to follow Jesus more closely—to love as He loved, welcome as He welcomed, and serve with committed passion. We pray for a leader who offers relatable, relevant preaching; is proficient with digital communication; values both contemporary and traditional music in worship; and brings compassionate, patient, and approachable

leadership—with a sense of humor—as we move forward together, along with [Hampstead Congregational Church](#).

Photographs:

Click here to view a brief, photo presentation of our church.

https://atkinsoncc.org/mt-content/uploads/2026/04/acc_pastoral_search_photo_journey.pdf



Tuthill House Sunday school is far left, parsonage is far right (sunrise service)

What we value about living in our area (2 - 3 sentences):

Living in Southern New Hampshire, we value our small-town feel, while residing in an economically strong area of the state, which is known for its lack of state sales and income tax, good schools, and proximity to major cities, including Boston. Atkinson Congregational Church is a predominant landmark in town, affectionately known as the “light on the hill.”

Current size of membership: Approximately 200 members (including active and inactive members). Later in the document, we note 130 members—denoting active members and active non-members only (and not counting inactive members like we do in this section). All numbers are estimations.

Languages used in ministry (other than English): N/A

Position Title: Shared 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 (50% at Atkinson Congregational Church; 50% at Hampstead Congregational Church)

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes.

SCOPE OF WORK (add Scope of Work developed using Call Agreement Workbook)

- Prepare and lead worship services, including crafting of liturgy, sermons, and scripture reading selections. With help from the office manager, develop bulletin and PowerPoint slides for worship services. Contribute articles for the church’s e-newsletter.
- Plan music for services in coordination with the music director and volunteers.

- Lead faith formation through prayer, Bible study, and Sunday school; identify and connect members to helpful resources and opportunities (i.e. curriculum resources, volunteering opportunities).
- Lead church-wide activities, including special services and events (such as Ashes to Go and Blue Christmas), as well as weddings and funerals.
- Provide pastoral care in collaboration with lay people, particularly for those who are sick, grieving, or in need of support.
- Together with lay leaders, develop and lead congregational life and community engagement activities, including local ecumenical programs.

Core Competencies: (List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church.)

1. Compelling, Spirit-Led Preaching and Communication

We seek a pastor who can craft and deliver sermons that are thought-provoking, rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and connected to 21st-century life. For many in our congregation, inspirational preaching is a central reason to attend worship, and it often leads to greater engagement in ministry and service. We believe that a pastor who is led by the Holy Spirit and communicates effectively—both in the pulpit and across digital platforms—will help fuel growth in worship participation, volunteerism, and spiritual formation. Further, in today's politically divided climate, we are sensitive to the reality that we are a "purple" church (both red and blue political representations). Therefore, we seek a pastor who can straddle this mix tactfully should politically charged topics arise.

2. Vision-Guided Leadership for a Growing and Evolving Church

Over the past five years, we have experienced modest yet meaningful growth, shaped by becoming an Open & Affirming church, expanding our Kids Club youth ministry, and added digital technology that now brings many new worshippers to us online before attending in person. We seek a pastor who can accelerate our momentum and shepherd our church forward with creativity, adaptability, and enthusiasm. At the same time, we recognize the shared needs of our sister church, Hampstead Congregational Church, and desire a pastor who can foster collaboration, and share ideas and programs that will enrich both congregations.

3. Passion for Community Engagement and Service

Serving those in need is essential to our vision, whether through financial or hands-on support, personal visits, or offering our campus as safe space for recovery groups and community programs. We envision a future where this outreach becomes even more impactful. We are fortunately poised to grow in this area, thanks to the strength of our internal team structure, particularly our Community Engagement team, which has fostered a strong culture of outward service. We seek a pastor who can equip, encourage, and inspire us to serve others following the example of Jesus in acts of compassion, presence, and love.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis *(from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance):*

As previously noted, we intend to share a pastor with Hampstead Congregational Church, and we expect to follow the 2026 Ministerial Compensation Guidelines published by the New Hampshire UCC (https://14357287-a0c2-4bc6-9405-a884110dcd30.usrfiles.com/ugd/143572_a0a8f827dc6f4915b5389ebf724fcd1f.pdf).

Further, total offered compensation will be based on the selected candidate's education, experience, housing needs and the like. Given the added challenge of serving two congregations, split 50/50, and that Atkinson and Hampstead have slightly higher living costs than Rockingham County as a whole, we expect to reflect those considerations in our offer(s).

Benefits—Salary includes Optional Benefits:

We will prepare an offer of salary and benefits to fit the needs of the selected candidate. For example, an offer would typically include family UCC Health and Dental from the UCC Pension Boards. However, a given candidate may have coverage under alternate circumstances (spouse's employment, military retirement plan, etc.) and choose to waive church-provided coverage. In these cases, the churches' savings would be reflected in a negotiated base salary.

Additional Benefits include:

- Parsonage provided. See housing section for full details
- Annuity contributions amounting to 14% of base salary
- Life / Disability Insurance
- FICA Allowance (to cover half of the Pastor's FICA and Medicare obligation as those are not withheld due to pastors considered "self-employed" by the IRS)
- Education / Publications allowance
- Expense reimbursement for church-related travel
- Paid time off, aligned with the compensation guidelines set by the NH UCC

What is the expected living situation for your next minister

Atkinson Congregational Church will provide its existing 3-bedroom, 2-bath cape-style parsonage adjacent to the church at 99 Main Street in Atkinson. The church will pay all utility and maintenance costs of the parsonage including heat, electricity, water, basic telephone/internet service, lawn care, refuse service, and snow removal. The clergy must pay self-employment tax on the fair rental value of the parsonage, determined in advance by our church in comparison with similar rental housing in the community. That fair rental value is estimated to be \$2,500 monthly or \$30,000 per year. However, when a candidate contemplates an offer from Atkinson Congregational Church and Hampstead Congregational Church, the true fair market value of the parsonage should be considered. A candidate wishing to have an alternate housing arrangement could be considered, but the churches would recognize this as a less favorable situation, since that would leave the church with a home that would need to be rented on the open market. Negotiated accommodations can be made for a candidate who chooses to waive any benefits.

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

We strongly prefer a candidate who would reside in the provided parsonage adjacent to Atkinson Congregational Church.

State any incentives:

After each five years of service, Atkinson Congregational Church and Hampstead Congregational Church intend to provide a paid sabbatical (without obligation) of up to three months at a negotiated time period. While summer months tend to be favored due to historically lower levels of church activity, the timing is flexible and will be determined collaboratively with both churches.

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

The Granite State Association/Conference provides peer and professional support for ministers.

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

It is expected that serving both churches on a half-time basis (each) will constitute a pastor's full-time employment. We are not able to accommodate bi-vocational arrangements.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

- **To be a church of extravagant welcome.**
We want to make it easy for people to feel valued and experience genuine hospitality. Many newcomers find us first through our digital presence or are drawn by our beautiful campus. We want that first impression to carry through to lasting belonging. A measurable goal for our next pastor would be to lead efforts to increase church membership and/or worship attendance by at least 5% each year.
- **To be a church grounded in compassion and faithful ministry.**
We seek a pastor who places God first and inspires deeper faith, spiritual curiosity, and a desire to walk as Jesus walked, living out our faith beyond Sunday mornings. Together, we hope to continue offering Bible studies, prayer opportunities, ecumenical and special services, children's programming, community engagement events, and volunteer initiatives.
- **To be a church that builds, equips, and prays.**
We envision a pastor who helps lead and support existing ministry teams and assists in creating new ones—such as a visitation team for shut-ins or members experiencing crisis or hospitalization. We pray for a pastor who loves Scripture, values prayer, nurtures staff and volunteers, is empathetic and attentive to different points of view, and helps strengthen

our spiritual walk—while doing the same for Hampstead Congregational Church.

- **To be an innovative, vibrant, and adaptable church.**

As technology and culture evolve, we seek a pastor who is comfortable with digital tools and who leads us through change with joy and grace. We hope to continue building momentum in offering worship, programs, and outreach that meet the needs of our community and the wider world.

- **To be a church committed to outreach.**

Working with lay leaders, we hope to identify new ways to extend our mission, grow our outreach ministries, and make full use of our campus for the benefit of the wider community—including opportunities that may generate revenue. This aligns with our intention to revisit our vision every five years and to develop a 3–5 year strategic plan with the congregation and our next pastor.

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

We envision a pastor who will help us discern, define, and carry out charitable initiatives that align with our faith, mission, and resources. Our Community Engagement team has built a strong foundation, currently serving or helping approximately 30 non-profit organizations locally. We envision our next pastor helping to expand our reach and make a meaningful difference in people's lives—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. We believe that as we extend God's love through service, more people will be moved to join in this work, including those who may not yet be part of a church community. We also hope to help remove barriers and hesitations some may feel about attending worship, creating a spirit of welcome that reflects Christ's love in action.

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 is required.

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.

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice

We seek a pastor whose deep spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice inspire and strengthen the faith of our congregation. We think that a leader grounded in prayer, guided by the Holy Spirit, and devoted to following Jesus Christ will help us grow more spiritually centered and responsive to God's call. We believe such spiritual depth will naturally flow outward, encouraging greater involvement within the church and in the broader community. Active prayer, a commitment to spiritual growth, and a heartfelt love for God are essential qualities we hope to find in our next pastor.

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

We seek a pastor who can bring the sacred stories of Scripture to life in ways that speak to the challenges of today's world. We expect our pastor to help deepen faith formation and nurture lifelong spiritual growth across our congregation's generations and life experiences. Grounded in deep knowledge of Christian history—from its earliest roots to the present day—we anticipate our next pastor preaching in uniquely compelling ways that spark dialogue and reflection, as well as new understandings.

Caring for All Creation

We seek a pastor whose empathy and compassion reflect Christ's love for all people and all creation. In a world where many are hurting, we want our pastor to offer hope, encouragement, and care rooted in faith. Recognizing every person as a beloved creation of God, we want our pastor to honor the divine image within each individual. We also value a pastor who demonstrates good stewardship of their own well-being—and lets us know when they need support, rest or renewal. We understand that a pastor who is well cared for will care well for others.

Building Transformational Leadership Skills

Although the congregation has had strong leaders who have helped the church grow modestly and live its current vision, the world and where God wants us to be is always evolving. One of our greatest strengths is our team-based structure—featuring dedicated teams leading worship components, finances, facilities, communications, faith formation, community engagement, and visioning. This framework means our next pastor inherits a congregation that is already organized, engaged, and capable of carrying out significant ministry.

We anticipate our new pastor working within this arrangement, helping our teams and leaders grow.

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

We believe God is calling us to grow in our capacity to welcome and embrace people of all backgrounds, ages, and life experiences. We seek to become ever more compassionate, generous, and trusting—a community that celebrates differences and actively lives out God’s work in the world. As part of this growth, we feel called to deepen our theological and biblical understanding so that we become more comfortable praying together, discerning God’s word, and following Jesus more faithfully in our daily lives.

On a typical Sunday, two groups can be seen anchoring our congregation—faithful adults who have built our church over decades, and young families laying a spiritual foundation for their children. While both are gifts, we also see gaps—the young adults, middle-aged professionals, and people who haven’t found their way to us yet. We sense God summoning us to see this imbalance as an invitation—to become more fully what we are at our best: a community where everyone is genuinely welcomed and integrated into our church family.

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

A primary challenge has been financial—balancing our commitment to serve with several years of budgeted losses. While reserves have sustained us, they have diminished to about \$158,000.

In response, we believe God is calling us to reimagine how we serve. We have shifted from primarily financial giving to a more service-based model—providing tangible items like food, clothing, and personal essentials—and focusing on increasing its impact.

Our financial realities have also opened the door to deeper collaboration. We are seeking to call a shared pastor with Hampstead Congregational Church, renewing a partnership we held successfully from 1946–1965. We see this as a

Spirit-led opportunity to combine strengths, share ministry, and expand our reach in ways that neither church can currently do alone.

Our sense of call remains grounded in our commitments to serve those in need, provide inclusive safe space, and inspire through worship, music, and growing faith. These guiding commitments continue to lead us into our next era of faithful, transformative presence in our community.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

Our life of faith centers on a loving, all-knowing, compassionate, and forgiving God—Creator, Lord, Emmanuel—revealed in the risen Christ and present through the Holy Spirit.

We have seen Jesus' presence among us, particularly in times of need, as we strive to walk as He walked—caring for one another and trusting that what is needed will be provided. For example, a capital campaign completed in 2022 enabled livestreaming and audio, extending our worship beyond our walls during and after the pandemic. We also encounter Christ through people, both within and beyond our congregation, who embody His love through acts of service—from maintaining our grounds to preparing fellowship. Many who once felt hurt or unwelcome in other churches have found renewed belonging among us, reflecting the warm welcome Jesus offered. Together, these experiences remind us that Christ is alive among us, calling, sustaining, and shaping our shared life as we seek to follow in His way.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our congregation is marked by deep and active lay leadership. In times of pastoral absence, members confidently lead worship and preach, reflecting a

shared trust in hearing God's word through one another. This spirit of shared leadership allows us to work collaboratively and faithfully without heavy dependence on a pastor, while also honoring the pastor's leadership. We see this as a major asset as we enter a partnership with a new pastor who will be serving two congregations.

Music is another vital strength, with the singing of hymns, a bell choir, flute ensemble, and other musicians enriching worship through both traditional and contemporary styles.

Our commitment to service is evident in strong volunteer engagement within the church and the wider community, as well as in our growing Kids Club program, which supports faith formation for children and families.

We are a forward-thinking, adaptable congregation, organized around a team-based structure that shares leadership and responsibility across dedicated groups. In recent years, we have completed the foundational work to support that structure—updating our bylaws, modernizing our Safe Church handbook, and articulating a vision that guides our decisions. Together, this work positions a new pastor to more quickly take the reins and partner with us in leading the congregation forward.

Finally, we take pride in our historic church grounds, caring for them as a welcoming and meaningful space for both our congregation and the broader community.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Sunday worship is rooted in tradition yet open to expression. Services are held in our historic sanctuary, with leadership from the pulpit and active participation from congregants. Projection screens support engagement both in person and via livestream. During warmer months, we sometimes worship outdoors. Occasionally, we hold joint worship services and programs with Hampstead Congregational Church at either of our locations. We hope to develop and increase these gatherings in the future.

We generally follow the UCC lectionary, with preaching that connects the Gospel to contemporary life. Baptisms are especially meaningful, involving the full congregation's participation and unique traditions, including the use of Jordan River water, as well as a handmade, Norwegian cloth, introduced by a

congregant several years ago. This is given to the one who is baptized, or their family.

Music is woven throughout each service in a deliberately varied mix of contemporary and traditional forms—sometimes brought to life through video.

Worship blends sacred space, thoughtful preaching, and cherished rituals, including children's messages. Services close with a hymn sung while making eye contact with fellow churchgoers, which reinforces community, followed by socializing and refreshments.

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

Faith formation remains central to our church's life, even as its forms have evolved. We have learned to adapt at every phase, including during the pandemic when we pivoted to self-paced online learning to keep our congregation connected and growing. While youth participation has fluctuated, our commitment to nurturing faith across all ages endures.

For children, Kids Club meets most Sundays in Tuthill House, adjacent to the main church building, today serving about 10 children ages 2-11. Led by a youth director and supported by volunteers, the program uses the Cokesbury *Big Faith All Ages* curriculum, blending Bible stories, crafts, videos, and games. Children regularly begin in worship for a message from the pastor and join the congregation for communion. Summer offerings include periodic Kids Club gatherings and a Vacation Bible Camp. Children attend from the church as well as local communities, giving many families their first meaningful connection with Atkinson Congregational Church.

Adult faith formation also remains active, with weekly Bible study groups of 8-12 participants. In recent months, we've been exploring joint programs with adults from Hampstead Congregational Church. We are grateful for these ministries and feel called to continue growing our educational programs to strengthen faith across generations.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our congregation is organized through a collaborative, team-based structure supported by volunteers and a small staff, including the pastor, office manager, sexton, music director, and youth director. This model encourages shared ownership of ministry while maintaining steady leadership.

Core teams sustain our ministries: Deacons support worship and spiritual life; Treasurers oversee finances; Church Support manages facilities and communications; Congregational Engagement fosters faith formation, fellowship, music, and scholarships; the Vitality Team leads visioning and new initiatives, including Open and Affirming work; and Community Engagement coordinates outreach, such as food and clothing support for those in need.

Teams focus on specific areas of church life and make decisions within their scope, while broader matters are addressed by the Church Council, which includes the pastor, a representative from each team, and key officers.

Guided by our vision “to serve, provide, and inspire,” we continue to adapt during this pastoral transition, seeking renewed energy as we grow our membership and ministries.

- **When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?**

Most but not all teams meet once a month for between one and two hours. A good guess would be 12-14 hours per month overall. Prior pastors managed their attendance at these meetings based on the nature of the agenda items and expected discussion. Attendance at every team meeting is not expected.

- **Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?**

Our most significant test of rapid response revolved around Covid-19—and we met it. Within days of shutdown, we switched to live weekly Zoom worship, launched self-paced online faith formation, and maintained community outreach for those in need, all while socially distancing. What that season revealed was a congregation that could move quickly, adapt creatively, and keep its priorities straight under pressure. The livestreaming and audio infrastructure we built during the pandemic continues to serve us today as one of our most important ministry tools.

Smaller moments reflect the same instinct—a last-minute pianist stepping in during a technical disruption, rapid snow day communications through social media—responding calmly, communicating clearly, and keeping ministry moving.

- 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

11-YEAR REPORT



United Church of Christ
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED
IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church: 90 - Atkinson Congregational Church UCC - Atkinson, NH

Assoc/Conf: Granite State Association in New Hampshire
 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
2014	330	101	100	0	3	7	37	24	-51
2015	230	106	59	0	2	3	7	98	-100
2016	230	106	59	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	224	80	39	0	0	0	6	0	-6
2018	202	80	39	3	0	1	1	25	-22
2019	206	60	20	0	0	5	1	0	4
2020	204	60	36	0	0	1	3	0	-2
2021	197	29	5	0	0	0	7	0	-7
2022	197	34	0	0	0	3	7	0	-4
2023	196	38	3	0	1	3	5	0	-1
2024	197	44	22	0	0	4	3	0	1

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
2014	\$234,068.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$24,048.00	\$24,048.00	0%	\$258,116.00	\$139,343.00
2015	\$206,293.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$17,492.00	\$17,492.00	0%	\$223,785.00	\$157,651.00
2016	\$206,293.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$206,293.00	\$0.00
2017	\$183,448.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,842.00	\$10,842.00	1%	\$194,290.00	\$159,340.00
2018	\$183,448.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	1%	\$183,448.00	\$0.00
2019	\$230,404.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,323.00	\$2,323.00	0%	\$233,127.00	\$147,620.00
2020	\$202,715.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	0%	\$205,490.00	\$111,803.00
2021	\$205,986.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$16,235.00	\$16,235.00	1%	\$224,771.00	\$121,722.00
2022	\$206,488.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,600.00	\$10,600.00	1%	\$221,050.00	\$127,447.00
2023	\$225,106.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,125.00	\$10,125.00	1%	\$237,431.00	\$149,318.00
2024	\$208,126.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,980.00	\$2,980.00	1%	\$214,144.00	\$160,582.00

% Change	Members	Avg Weekly Attendance	CHR ED/ Faith Form	Total Additions	Total Removals	CURR Local Expenses	Total OCWM	Total Expenditures
2019 - 2024	-4.37	-26.67	10.00	-20.00	200.00	-9.67	0	-8.14
2014 - 2024	-40.30	-56.44	-78.00	-60.00	-95.08	-11.08	0	-17.04

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

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of <u>active</u> members:	110	Yes
Number of <u>active</u> non-members:	20	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	130	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	70%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	15%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	15%	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
10	0	5	5	5	25	40	40	Yes, and note we have 5 ages 35-44

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	5%	Yes
Joint household with minors:	5%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	15%	Yes
Joint household with no minors:	50%	Yes

Single adults over 65:	25%	Yes
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Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	90%	Yes
College:	50%	Yes
Graduate School:	10%	Yes
Specialty Training:	25%	Yes
Other (please specify):		

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	35%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	50%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	15%	Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types: 35%

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

Our congregation is approximately 60% retired or nearing retirement. Among working adults, we have a wide range of congregants in a variety of professions, including teachers, software developers, engineers, remote professionals, as well as individuals in healthcare, science, retail, administration, banking, accounting, sales, marketing, IT, administration, and childcare. We also value the contributions of parents who work inside the home in full-time caregiving roles.

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?

Our congregation reflects New Hampshire’s broader demographics and is largely white, consistent with the state’s status as one of the least racially diverse in the nation, with about 90% of the population being white. While even our own membership is probably more than 90% white, we are mindful that the population of people of color and Hispanic residents in New Hampshire is increasing. Further, we are a congregation bordering Massachusetts, where regional demographics tend to be more ethnically diverse. Some of our members live in Massachusetts, and some of our ministry work is targeted there.

In our context, diversity means a deep commitment to extravagant welcome—embracing, supporting, and celebrating people from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, and creating space where different perspectives, traditions, and experiences can be honored. We remain eager to grow in this area and to welcome more people from a wide variety of heritages into our church family, as we believe God calls us to do.

List the date your congregation has had or will have a conversation using a resource such as the Welcoming Diversity Inventory. Comment on the results.

We have not yet held a conversation using the Welcoming Diversity Inventory or a similar resource. However, we hope to grow awareness of the importance of this work and engage in it in the future. Our past experiences give us insight into how such a process might unfold. For example, when we explored becoming an Open & Affirming congregation, many members were initially unfamiliar with LGBTQ+ terminology and perspectives. Through intentional study, dialogue, and education, understanding deepened and acceptance grew, ultimately leading to a congregation-wide vote and the adoption of our ONA covenant. We hope that a structured conversation about racial and ethnic diversity would follow a similar pattern of learning, reflection, and growth.

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

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	6	Pastor and lay leaders
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	6	Pastor and office manager
Children's Groups or Classes	10	Youth director and lay leaders
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	275	Pastor and diaconate
Church-wide Meals (such as Rally Sunday, held annually, typically at the beginning of the school year)	40+	Pastor and Church Support team
Choirs and Music Groups	3 Diff (40)	Music director and lay leaders
Church-based Bible Study	8-10	Pastor
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	30	1st Worship of Month, Pastor
Community Meals	50-100	4-6 x year Congregational Engagement team
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Pastor and lay leaders
Drama or Dance Program	n/a	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	4	Pastor and office manager
Intergenerational Groups	n/a	
Outdoor Worship	20+	Pastor and office manager
Prayer or Meditation Groups	n/a	
Public Advocacy Work	n/a	
Retreats	n/a	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	n/a	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	0	Pastor and office manager
Congregational Workshops	2-4	Pastor and specific teams

Worship (time slot: 10:30 a.m.)	20-100	Pastor & diaconate
Worship (time slot: _____)	n/a	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	n/a	
Youth Groups or Classes - VBC	40	Youth director, pastor
Other		

Additional comments:

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
Paige Besse-Rankin	Interim Pastor	Full-time, shared with HCC	Church Council	6 months
Kelsey Iani	Admin	Part-time	Pastor/Church Council	1 yr
John Sirois	Sexton	Part-time	Church Support/Pastor/Church Council	1 yr
Carol Boudreau	Music Director	Part-time	Pastor/Church Council	1 yr
Ann Chalk	Pianist	Volunteer	Pastor/Church Council	5 yr
Phyllis Hanson	Youth Director	Part-time	Pastor/Church Council	2 yr

REFLECTION

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

Our congregation reflects the typical demographic profile of many southern New Hampshire Congregational churches—predominantly white adults, with a significant portion who are retired or nearing retirement. At the same time, we are encouraged by the growing presence of school-age children and their parents since the pandemic, signaling renewed energy and engagement among

younger families. Our adoption of an ONA covenant has also expanded our cultural diversity, drawing both members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies who value a church that openly affirms all people. Underneath all this is a team-based ministry structure that keeps our congregation organized, engaged, and resilient through every season of change.

CHURCH FINANCES, 2025

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving (pledge, non pledge, and loose)	\$148,217
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>) Richmond Trust Income	\$15,218
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$0 in 2025
Fundraising Events	\$4,377
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose (Giving Tree and Fund Gifts)	\$16,860
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$2,303
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts (Fund Spending)	\$11,361
Other (specify): Endowment Investment Gains	\$14,861
Other (specify): Kitchen Grant, Furnace Capital Drive, Solar Project Rebate from IRS, Goodwin Trust	\$ 49,443
TOTAL	\$ 262,640

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

The Atkinson Congregational Church current year 2026 budget is available here:

https://atkinsoncc.org/mt-content/uploads/2026/04/by2026_acc-budget_annrpt.pdf

Budgeting for 2026 shows a significantly lower pastoral expense, due to our shift to a shared (interim) pastor in September of 2025, resulting in a near break-even projection. As with most financially well-run churches, we can project expenses very closely. Income is the unknown variable that most affects financial outcomes.

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

$\$96,473 / \$183,973 = 52.4\%$

This includes utility and upkeep parsonage expenses but does not include fair-market rental value of the parsonage.

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

For as long as records have been kept, we have fulfilled our financial obligations. However, the church was established in the late 1700s. No records indicate failures to pay the church's financial obligations.

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? *(indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)*

- Y Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM - Basic Support)
- Y One Great Hour of Sharing
- N Strengthen the Church
- Y Neighbors in Need
- Y Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? *(recommended 10%)*

\$3,038 in 2025—based on membership figures—about 1½%.

What is the church’s current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? N/A

Our only indebtedness is a contractual lease-purchase agreement on our photocopier. Payments are only \$275 per month, and we are current.

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.

We are fundraising and grant-seeking to update our kitchen. \$10,000 has been received thus far towards a goal of \$38,250. Additional grant applications are outstanding. Work will commence (piecemeal based on priorities) when at least \$20,000 has been raised.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2021-2022	Technology update	\$52,000	\$52,000	Livestreaming, projection
2023	Solar panels	\$54,179	\$59,773	Reduced electricity costs

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2025+	Kitchen Updates; fundraising active now	\$38,250	\$10,000	Badly needed upgrades to make the kitchen more “commercially equipped”

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

Our most recent capital campaign focused on installing solar panels on Tuthill House (Sunday School) and parsonage. While practical in nature, the project

reflects our vision to serve others and provide a safe, sustainable space for ministry. It was driven by rising energy costs and a desire to strengthen long-term financial health while reducing our environmental impact. Panels were not added to the main church in order to preserve its historic character.

More recently, capital efforts have turned toward upgrading our kitchen to meet commercial standards. Because the space serves both church and community groups, such as Scouts, recovery meetings and family events, these improvements will expand opportunities for outreach, hospitality, and community use.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$121,619

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

Historically, funds have been drawn when needed to cover an operating cash shortfall. When operating under a deficit the past few years, this occurred with some regularity. Going forward with a half-time pastor and the associated expense reduction, we hope to rebuild our endowment.

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

\$274,443 as of Dec 31, 2019

\$153,767 as of Dec 31, 2024

\$ 121,619 as of Dec 31, 2025

So \$152,824 drawn over 6 years is an annual average draw-down of \$25,471

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

We hope and expect our endowment will last indefinitely and grow as the recent move to a shared, full-time pastor (halftime for each church) puts us on a surplus budgetary track.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?
self-explanatory

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$

As of Dec 31, 2025 we have \$51,954 in our Money Market and Checking accounts. Of that, \$34,540 is in various savings funds owned by various committees for their special needs (off-budget).

Investments (other than endowment): \$0

Does your church have a parsonage? Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: \$2500/month (est.)

How is the parsonage used? As a home for the pastor and family

Street / City / State / Zip: 99 Main St., Atkinson, N.H. 03811

Finished square footage: 1300 (est)

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: 3 / 2

Assessed real estate value: \$144,000 for parsonage building only. (Note that assessed value is always lower than market value, which could be in the range of \$450,000-\$525,000 based on similar homes in the area.) The parsonage is on our 3.8 acre campus which has two other buildings. These include the church, assessed at \$734,400, and the Victorian-era Tuthill House, assessed at \$173,700. The entire campus land value is assessed at \$258,700.

Available for minister residence: Yes

Expected minister residence: Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances: The parsonage is in move-in condition. That said, some updates are planned before move-in, including new carpeting, some paint, etc.

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs:

Church Support Team

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Our campus has three buildings. The main church building, built in the early 1800s, includes a narthex, sanctuary, parlor, offices, and function hall. The sanctuary can seat more than 100 people. Seen from the outside, the aesthetics of the white church building and steeple reflect their New England heritage. Next to the church building, adjacent to the parking lot, is Tuthill House, which is a late-1800s, two-story farmhouse, used in its early years as a parsonage. For the past 70 years, it's been used primarily for Sunday School. Our third building is the parsonage, noted earlier in this section, which is expected to be the home for our settled pastor and their family.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

Our main church building is wheelchair accessible from the parking lot through the sanctuary, fellowship area, and restroom facilities. The church offices, Tuthill House (our Sunday School building), and the parsonage are not ADA accessible, reflecting the age and original construction of these buildings.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry? *For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change?*

Our finances reflect both challenge and opportunity in our mission. Seeking a shared full-time pastor with Hampstead Congregational Church—our first such partnership since 1965—represents a major, forward-looking investment in sustaining and strengthening ministry.

Like many churches, we have experienced long-term attendance decline. At the same time, we are seeing signs of renewal through online engagement and modest growth among young families.

These realities call us to steward resources wisely and creatively, aligning our budget with Spirit-led priorities: strong pastoral leadership, meaningful connection, and ministries that engage both current members and the wider community.

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.

Two significant developments have shaped our congregation's identity in recent years. First, the Covid-19 pandemic led us to invest in livestreaming and upgraded technology, allowing us to remain connected and extend our worship beyond our walls. What began as a necessity has become a lasting and meaningful part of our ministry.

Second, the congregation adopted an Open and Affirming (ONA) covenant in 2022 after a period of study, reflection, and prayer. In doing so, we publicly

affirmed our commitment to welcome and include people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions in the full life of the church.

Together, these milestones reflect both our outward growth and our deepened sense of identity, continuing to shape how we live out our faith and mission.

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

One significant recent change has been the revitalization of our Vacation Bible Camp after pandemic disruptions. Following a full pause in 2020 and ongoing challenges with volunteers and participation, sustaining the program proved difficult.

In 2025, we made a renewed commitment by reorganizing volunteer roles, improving communication, and rallying support. The result was a successful return, with strong participation from children, adults, and teen helpers, making it one of our most encouraging recent ministries.

This experience strengthened our ability to adapt and rebuild post-pandemic, and we hope to sustain camp as a vibrant part of our ministry moving forward.

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. *For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it?*

We do not have a formal written conflict-resolution policy. When needed, concerns may be brought to the Pastoral Relations team or Church Council, with the understanding that wider UCC support is available if necessary.

A recent conflict emerged through a pastoral search survey, when some members expressed concern about the relocation of the American and Christian flags within the sanctuary. The differing perspectives reflected deeper questions about tradition, symbolism, worship focus, and how we express our identity as an Open and Affirming congregation.

From this experience, we have learned that while not all conflicts lead to full consensus, ministry continues when people feel heard and respected—particularly as we are a church that has mixed political affiliations. It has reinforced our commitment to open dialogue, careful listening, and balancing tradition with change as we seek to follow God’s guidance together.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/No)
Rev. Paige Besse-Rankin (interim)	1	Y
Rev. James M. Thomas	8	Y
Rev. Robert Macfarlane (interim)	1	Y
Mrs. Caroline Anderberg (associate)	1	Y
Rev. William R. Wildman, Jr. (associate)	2	Y
Rev. Paul H. Dionne	16	Y
Rev. Robert S. Borden (interim)	2	Unknown

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

Our congregation has a long history of pastoral leadership, dating back to Rev. Stephen Peabody, who became our first permanent minister in 1772. We also successfully experienced a period of shared ministry in the 20th century with Hampstead Congregational Church due to financial constraints. Over time, ministers have guided Atkinson Congregational Church through seasons of growth, change, and adaptation.

More recently, our last two settled pastors have significantly shaped our identity. Rev. Paul Dionne (called in 1999) was a compassionate and steady presence whose leadership deepened relationships and grew the congregation. His departure was difficult and required us to rely more on lay leadership and adapt to change.

Rev. Jim Thomas (called in 2018) brought new perspectives, particularly around LGBTQ+ inclusion and public witness, helping lead us to become an Open and Affirming congregation. His leadership also strengthened worship, expanded programs, and introduced new technologies, especially during the pandemic.

Through these experiences, we have learned to embrace change, trust God through transitions, and grow more flexible, open, and grounded in our identity as a congregation seeking to follow God's leading in every season.

**Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?
Y/N/Ask us**

Yes. In the distant past, two individuals serving as pastors were involuntarily terminated, including a pastor who was recognized by the congregation and himself that he was a mismatch for the church, and another who had an issue that caused a problem in the church and was given the opportunity to leave.

**Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?
Y/N/Ask us**

We are not aware of this happening.

**Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?
Y/N/Ask us**

We are not aware of this happening.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION INSITE

COMMUNITY VISION

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

For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice?

Atkinson Congregational Church extends its care beyond the church through consistent service to neighbors who are unhoused or food insecure. Led by our Community Engagement team through its relationships with about 30 non-profits locally, the congregation regularly collects food, toiletries, and household items for local pantries, highlighted by a monthly worship ritual in which filled shopping carts are blessed before distribution.

Additional outreach includes drives for eggs, blankets, clothing, and holiday gifts, as well as hands-on efforts like preparing meals and making sandwiches for local organizations. We also host community events such as pancake

breakfasts, bingo, spaghetti suppers, and seasonal gatherings that foster connection and hospitality.

Globally, we support relief efforts through financial contributions, including organizations like Church World Service, while focusing most of our energy on local service.

Through these practices—especially the visible act of giving in worship—we have come to value service that is both tangible and deeply connected to the needs of our neighbors.

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

Our previous pastor was active in his role as president and chair of the board of directors of the N.H. Conference, United Church of Christ. The end of his tenure coincided with his retirement in 2025 from Atkinson Congregational Church. Our previous pastor participated in “General Synod” conferences. We have also participated with events such as “Prepared to Serve”, and Horton Center activities.

Check all of the following “statements of witness” that apply to your UCC faith community. (Find more information on these statements at ucc.org.)

- Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- Immigrant Welcoming
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church
- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- Other UCC designations:
- Other similar designations in affiliated 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?

Our decision to become an Open and Affirming congregation grew directly from our vision to serve, provide an inclusive and safe space, and inspire faith. Beginning in 2021, our Vitality Team engaged in a process of months-long prayerful discernment, study, and conversation, which led to the adoption of our ONA covenant in 2022—publicly affirming the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in the life of our church.

This experience has opened us to the possibility of embracing other UCC Statements of Witness, such as A2A. As with ONA, any future steps would involve thoughtful discernment, pastoral leadership, and careful consideration of the resources needed to support them faithfully.

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

Musicians from our congregation regularly take part in annual ecumenical, multi-church concerts. We provide grocery items to local, ecumenical food pantries. We also participate in the yearly CROP Hunger Walk, which Atkinson Congregational Church hosts on a rotating basis with local churches.

In previous years, our pastor has preached at ecumenical services honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We have also hosted an interfaith community discussion and prayer vigil on substance abuse, bringing together participants from local schools, law enforcement, and faith leaders from neighboring churches. Additionally, we co-hosted an event with another area church to help parents learn how to support their children's mental health, facilitated by local mental health professionals.

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.

Our mission is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the love of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In recent years, we have leaned primarily on actions that are at the heart of our vision statement: to serve those in need,

provide inclusive safe space, and inspire through worship, music, and growing faith.

While we seek to center these values in all we do, much of congregational life necessarily involves planning, administration, and governance. Though these tasks do not always reflect the language of our mission directly, they are essential to sustaining it.

When we move from preparation into action, we live most fully into our calling. We see it in filled shopping carts blessed before distribution, in Kids Club on a Sunday morning, in a livestream reaching someone who hasn't yet walked through our doors, and in a congregation that shows up for each other week after week. In this way, our mission reflects the heart of how we spend our time, even when not every activity explicitly names it.

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?

Community ministry and ministry in and on behalf of the wider church have long been important to our congregation. While our previous pastor was expected to devote time to these areas, he felt called to serve above and beyond. In fact, his retirement coincided with the end of his tenure as president of the NH Conference, UCC, as well as chaplain of the Atkinson police and fire departments, and the Atkinson Veterans Group, and board member of the local Lions Club. During his tenure, our previous pastor also served on the executive committee of the New Hampshire Council of Churches and was on the board of directors of the NH Conference, UCC.

Looking ahead, we recognize that our new pastor, shared with Hampstead Congregational Church, cannot be expected to come close to matching the same level of engagement. We plan to engage in prayerful, collaborative conversations with our incoming pastor to discern realistic and mutually healthy expectations for their time in community and wider-church ministry.

MissionInSite

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

Our QuickInsite (from MissionInsite) report for the area within five miles of the church shows that both population size and the number of school-aged children are expected to remain relatively stable over the next decade. The most notable shifts appear in household composition. The traditional married-couple structure is projected to continue declining—by approximately 8% from 2010 to 2028—while households led by single mothers and single fathers are expected to increase by nearly 5% and 3.5%, respectively. In terms of life-stage changes, the largest growth is anticipated among families & empty nesters, and adults aged 65 and older.

A second report focusing on a 2.5-mile radius around the church reflects similar overall trends but with a noteworthy difference. Closer to the church, the population is more racially and ethnically homogenous.

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 internal demographics generally align with those of the neighborhoods surrounding our church, although there are some differences. Our congregation is older than the nearby population overall, though this is fairly consistent with Atkinson's higher median age of 52.5. Racially and ethnically, our church is over 90% white, which mirrors the surrounding communities, except for Haverhill, Mass., which is more diverse at roughly 65% white and 20% Hispanic.

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

Our ministry largely reflects the expectations of a predominantly white, older, and financially stable congregation. At the same time, we recognize shifting demographics in the wider community and the need to adapt. Some changes are already underway, most notably our adoption of an Open and Affirming covenant, though their impact is not yet fully felt by all members.

With new pastoral leadership, we expect to continue reshaping our ministry to remain responsive, welcoming, and current, as our community and our congregation evolve.

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

We often hear that our church is known for its beauty—“the light on the hill.” Visible from Main Street as it rises into view, the warmly lit building has become a familiar and cherished local landmark.

Many in the community, including non-members, speak of it as “their” church. This shared sense of ownership is reflected in their support, including participation in capital campaigns such as technology upgrades and solar panels. People feel connected to and take pride in the church.

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

Newcomers often say they were first drawn by the church’s appearance, which feels familiar and inviting. What leads them to stay is the congregation’s welcoming, friendly spirit and the ease of getting involved through music, volunteer teams, and programs like Kids Club. Many also point to the pastor’s relatable preaching as a key factor.

Inclusivity is another meaningful draw. The church’s public commitment to welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities has resonated not only with LGBTQ+ individuals but with others who value an open and affirming community.

REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. 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

**Marie and Joe Farren / Coordinators / St. Luke’s Food Pantry
(603-819-4949/ No Email / Food Pantry Donations)**

This letter is in response to a request from your pastoral search team to highlight how your church community helps our organization and coordinates with us to help those people and families who use our pantry to supplement them with food insecurity needs and other family needs.

Our pantry is located on the Plaistow Atkinson line on 8 Atkinson Depot Road, which is the continuation of Main Street, Atkinson, on the Plaistow side. Our pantry services the towns of the Timberlane and Sanborn school districts and includes the towns of Plaistow, Atkinson, Sandown, Danville, Kingston, Newton, Brentwood, East Hampstead and Hampstead. We do not receive any federal, state or town funding, but rather depend on the support of individuals and local community organizations including Atkinson Congregational Church to keep our shelves stocked and raise funds to support the pantry needs and programs, such as holiday meal programs, our back to school program (which provides shoes, school supplies and clothing certificates to families with school age children).

The ACC has helped us every Christmas season by adopting some of our kids' wish lists or by taking tags from our giving tree, both of which provide gifts to local children.

The ACC continuously coordinates food drives that benefit our pantry among others. We depend on and very much appreciate the support and generosity of the ACC community so that we can continue to help those individuals and families in our community.

One area that we are open to suggestions for helping others is something that would specifically benefit the senior citizens that come to us for help with food. Over the last five years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of seniors whose income is stretched thin with rising costs, and they use the pantry to supplement their budgeted shopping, which is fine, which is why we are here. I was just reaching out to see if anyone had other ideas for a program or some other way we could help them out.

ACC has always responded to our food pantry any time we have reached out to ask for assistance, for which are truly grateful.

I hope this helps your faith community in your search for a new pastor. I have faith that our gracious God will continue to guide your church and will provide you a vibrant and energetic spiritual leader for your church community.

Let me know if there is anything else I can do for you. For years we have adopted the quote, "Together we can make a difference for all."

REFERENCE 2

**Ralph Steere/Atkinson Lion and Melvin Jones Fellow-Top Lions award/Lions International
(603) 401-0787, ralph.steere@gmail.com, community engagement**

To whom it may concern:

I have watched the Atkinson Congregational Church over the years and have been impressed with their leadership and service to the Atkinson community. I am an Atkinson Lion and appreciate the Service both our Organizations provide. Your previous Pastor, Jim Thomas, was an outstanding member of the Atkinson Lions and I'm sure made a big contribution to the Church. I respected him greatly. The Church has always had strong leadership. The one thing I would mention is that the Congregational Church brings the Community together for its many activities. This is a common bond the Lions has with the Church. To make our Community better by coming together.

REFERENCE 3

**Christine Fudala, Executive Director, Sonshine Soup Kitchen
603-437-2833, ext. 2 / director@sonshinesoupkitchen.org**

For several years, the congregation volunteers to serve free food to those in need in a nearby community

The church has a group come in and volunteer with us once a month. They prep, cook and serve a meal and then clean up the area. They are joy to all.

Sometimes, volunteer numbers are low, and the group leader has a hard time getting more to come in to volunteer.

The group leader is always helpful, loving and a pleasure to work with. She is a blessing to the staff and guests she serves, we are very thankful for her long-time service.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

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:

We ask you Lord to guide our houses of worship during this period of transition. May it be your will, not ours, that leads us to our next Pastor with the hope and trust that we will be an inviting and safe space for all. Fill us with

unity and love, truth and respect, and authenticity and grace. May our church body reflect a mosaic of values, cultures and backgrounds all of whom want to know You better, learn Your word, and live a life that glorifies You. May our Spiritual leader be filled with the Holy Spirit and blessed with the passion and gifts to grow our congregations. God, please give us patience and faith during this process. In Jesus name, Amen.

Isaiah 43:18-19

New International Version

¹⁸ “Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.

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.)*

Atkinson Congregational Church Pastoral Search team

- Tim Briggs
- Julianna Hale
- Michelle Wunderlich
- Vikki Quick

Treasurer

- Hank Riehl

Office administrator

- Kelsey Iani

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: The Atkinson Congregational Church is a church in good standing in the Granite State Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Atkinson Congregational Church currently functions in a yoked relationship with the Hampstead Congregational Church

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

Staff Comment: To the best of my knowledge, the ministerial history information provided is presented thoroughly and accurately.

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

Staff Comment: To the best of my knowledge, the church financial information provided is presented thoroughly and accurately.

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: 

Name / Title: Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister

Email: grankin@nhcucc.org

Phone: (603) 225-6647

Date: 6/25/2026