

College Street Congregational Church

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



College Street Congregational Church
Burlington, Vermont

Full-time Pastor

Vermont Conference, Champlain Association

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1. POSITION POSTING

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1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: [College Street Congregational Church](#)
 Street address: [265 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401](#)
 Supplemental web links: <https://www.collegestreetchurch.org/>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*): [N/A](#)

Conference: [Vermont Conference UCC](#)

Association: [Champlain Association](#)

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):
[Lynn Bujnak, Conference Minister, \(802\)505-8727, lbujnak@vermontucc.org](#)

Summary Ministry Description:

In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

[Located in the heart of Burlington, we are a warm, welcoming congregation committed to deepening our impact both within and beyond our membership. We are eager to become a more vibrant church in our community, known for our exuberant welcome, where Sunday mornings are filled with music, joy, and soulful reflection, and where we work with our neighbors to embody justice in a world of pain. Music is a foundational gift of our worship life; we value diverse musical traditions and collaboration among those who convey the spirit through worship. As the faithful stewards of a beautiful, historic downtown building, we view our property as a sacred asset for community connection and spiritual growth. We enjoy partnering with the various community groups both in our space and out in the world. We are confident others will want to join us along this path, both young and older, and we are devoted to becoming a more diverse church community along the way.](#)

Photographs:



What we value about living in our area:

We value the juxtaposition of a city with rich cultural offerings and the open spaces of the rural areas that make up the rest of the state. We are blessed with theater, music, the arts, annual festivals, international music ensembles, and musical venues that provide a hub for local talent. We enjoy the natural beauty of our surroundings, including Lake Champlain for boating and swimming, rivers and creeks for paddling, mountains with ski resorts, and ample walking, hiking, and biking opportunities. We enjoy a slower pace of life than is found in many other areas of the country. The cooperation that is characteristic of most of the residents gives even the more densely populated areas, e.g., the Burlington area, the feeling of a small town. We appreciate that Burlington ranks as one of the country's safest cities, despite the urban challenges that have been increasing in complexity in recent years.

Current size of membership: 117

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

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? Yes.

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

- energizing and deepening the spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do
- preparation and leadership of Sunday worship, including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding and sometimes finding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities, and helping lay persons take advantage of them
- leadership development by working with lay leadership and Ministry Team Leaders
- pastoral care in collaboration with lay people
- community engagement and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love
- weddings and funerals for participants in the worshipping community, and the wider community, as time allows
- strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry, in collaboration with lay leadership
- attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership
- participate in wider church activities such as Conference and Association meetings
- administration oversight
- faithful financial development and stewardship in collaboration with the Finance Ministry Team
- responsibility for the supervision of all staff
- a representative of the church to local service organizations
- spiritual counseling, pastoral care, and referral of those needing therapy to area professionals
- study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills to better lead, teach, and preach

Core Competencies: Collaborative, community-minded, inspirational, sense of humor.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$65-80,000

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister: Housing allowance, living nearby

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

We would expect our pastor to live within a 30 minute drive.

State any incentives: Church-supported Sabbatical every 5 years

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference: Continuing education support, reimbursable travel expenses, including IRS rate for mileage, weekly clergy support groups, affinity groups

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.

- Increase active participation in our church community, specifically through outreach to youth, young adults, and young families. Finding ways to reclaim our intergenerational identity will have at least two significant impacts: we will be enriched by the vibrancy of a diverse faith community, and we can offer community connection and faith formation. In the several years preceding COVID, we had a large and thriving church school program. Yes, there were smiles and giggles and the noises of children getting antsy, but the biggest smiles were on the faces of the adults seeing, hearing, and interacting with those kids. It is important that we can offer the space for children, youth, college students, and young families to feel connected through faith and to hear how they are valued as they are and loved by God. These connections can be profound and can also lead to our blind spots about conditions in the world being challenged by the perceptions of our youth. One of our members has expressed more than once how meaningful it was to be a mentor to a confirmand; this was a partnership between a person in their 70's and a middle schooler, and it continues to be an important connection for both of them. Another member recently expressed gratitude on the occasion of a child's graduation for the role of our church's extended family in helping to raise her kids to be the morally grounded and service-oriented people they are.
- Continue our focus on our strong music ministry. One of the strongest draws for people coming through our doors is the spirited and faithful music-making that happens here. Our Music Director has a strong desire to make participation in the choir as low-barrier as possible. He holds choir rehearsal just on Sunday mornings before the service, and anyone is welcome to join on any given Sunday morning. Also, several folks who started attending CSCC first joined one of our choirs and stayed for the connection and care of our community.
- Increase opportunities for participation in small group ministries. Small groups have enabled those involved to develop a deeper connection with others around a common

interest or focus on faith. Some of our new arrivals have been drawn to church by small group activities.

- Expand our focus on being an Open & Affirming church, providing a welcoming space to all people. We hope that painting our front steps in rainbow colors makes it abundantly clear who we are, and we look forward to exploring new ways to demonstrate this to those around us.
- Expand and deepen our social justice work, including migrant justice work and a renewed focus on working with Vermont Interfaith Action to bring about systemic change. During our interim period, we discussed how we might identify unique direct service projects that are realistic for our resources, engage youth and families, and distinguish us as a congregation. We welcome inspiration from our settled pastor in this effort.
- Explore additional ways to show our love for God's earth (in building and grounds maintenance, educational programs, and community activism)
- Nurture and grow our opportunities to engage with and beyond our church community. We have hosted events like our Parking Lot Dance Party and Karaoke & Games nights. These have been quite well-received and it would be lovely to expand on these types of opportunities.

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

- Assist us in connecting and communicating with local organizations, city government, and area churches to address the needs of our community, such as aiding those facing housing and food instability, addiction and mental health challenges.
- Help us lift up organizations supporting youth and adults who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

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

Possessing a sensitivity for immigrant communities in Burlington while working with local organizations who advocate for them.

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
- Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions
- Working Together for Justice and Mercy
- Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets

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?

We believe that God is calling us to grow into a larger and more spiritually connected congregation. Our vision is to deepen our spiritual lives and increase our participation within the community. By doing so, we will be able to make a meaningful impact both within our congregation and in the broader community around us. We hope to nurture our lay leadership, anchored by a strong model of pastoral guidance, ensuring that our congregation remains vibrant and well-supported.

We will keep sharing our historic building with the community by hosting Headstart, music rehearsals, concerts, and by encouraging other groups like 12-step programs to use our facilities. We will host community events such as the parking lot dance party, and use such occasions to highlight the work of partner social service organizations. In the spirit of community participation, we will continue to support the the Pride Parade, community services such as the Committee On Temporary Shelter (“COTS”), the Joint Urban Ministries Project (“JUMP”), Outright Vermont, Street CATS (the Street Community Action Team), Steps to End Domestic Violence, and Vermont Interfaith Action (“VIA”).

See also the answers to Question 4.f

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

For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps?

- A recently launched program called Miracle Messages connects congregation members with unhoused individuals, helping them reconnect with people from their past. Two volunteers attend a local homeless lunch each Tuesday, provide Christmas cards and postage, and have assisted some individuals in reuniting with their families. We plan to continue and expand this program.
- Approximately 5 years ago, a committee began work on creating a new governance structure for CSCC. It was quite a departure from the structure we’d had for decades, in that it was designed to eliminate most of the long-term leadership commitments, and make getting involved in the life and service of the church more accessible to more people. The membership voted to pilot this new structure in 2024 and then reaffirmed this vote in 2025. The structural changes have allowed members to suggest and

implement new and creative initiatives, and that has created fantastic opportunities for people to take on leadership roles and encourage others to get involved. We are still following the updated By-laws, while acknowledging we need to make some adjustments in practice. Some of the difficulty has been in creating operational practices that support these new by-laws, for example, building effective lines of communication among the Ministry Teams, the Executive Board, and the congregation, especially when it comes to decision-making. In 2026, we agreed to pause work on the new structure until after welcoming a settled pastor.

Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?

College Street Church Visioning Statements

We value God's love for all people and the way God's love is expressed through relationships – those within the church, those with the Burlington community, and those that transcend boundaries. As a congregation, we find that our heart bends especially toward children and youth. We value human rights and justice, and we value worship and service as two important faith formation ways in which we experience and share God's love.

God has blessed us with gifts of skilled music and deeply compassionate hearts; God has provided us a beautiful building in a central location in which our music and our hearts might resonate. God has filled our congregation with wise and generous people, many of whom have been given the gift of leadership.

We believe God is calling us to use our gifts to bear witness to the boundlessness of God's love by working for equality and justice for all people, especially those whose experience of society is one that is dominated by experiences of economic and social injustice; we hear a special call to support the LGBTQ community. We believe that we are called to use God's gift of our building and location for the good of the broader Burlington community, sharing it in service. We also believe that God is calling us to proclaim God's love not only for God's people, but also for God's earth.

We believe that God calls us to imagine a future in which our church mirrors the beautiful variations of God's glorious creation; a future in which all of God's children feel welcome and wanted and served by College Street Church, where all the people of Burlington know from our actions that not only does God love them, but the people of College Street Church love them as well.

These statements were created about 11 years ago, through a facilitated, multi-step process. In congregational meetings during this interim process, our congregation has reaffirmed them as representative of what we aspire to be and do. As part of our work to determine the current priorities and wishes of our church community, we found that members want to become a more intergenerational congregation, live into our aspirations of being a welcoming church to all

people, providing faith formation for all through meaningful worship, kids and youth programs, small groups and bible study. Music is greatly important to us, and we envision that continuing to bloom in our building, both by our choirs and by other groups bringing people into our Sanctuary. Outreach to our wider community remains a priority. This could involve direct service, collaborating with local groups and churches on existing projects, and giving financial support to local organizations.

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.

“The purpose of [College Street] Church shall be to worship God, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to celebrate the Sacraments; to promote Christian fellowship, development, and unity within this congregation and the Church universal; to render loving service toward humanity; and to strive for justice and peace.” (CSCC Constitution & By-Laws, 2023)

College Street Church affirms the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ. We also affirm the following Covenant as our own distinct Statement of Faith, which is included in our Constitution and Bylaws and recited as a membership vow by new members:

In light of God's covenant with us, we, the members of College Street Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, promise that, with the help of God, we will seek spiritual growth through Bible study, prayer and personal devotion; join faithfully in the worship, sacraments, and work of the church; promote the spirit of Christian love among all people and work for peace and justice in the world. Through faithful giving and participation, we promise to support the mission of this Church and that of the United Church of Christ in Vermont, in the nation, and in the world. We promise one another our prayers, our mutual support, and Christian love, and engage to walk with one another as disciples of Jesus Christ. (Adopted 1985, amended 2023.)

In our worship and liturgy, we most often describe God as an omnipresent, forgiving, and compassionate love. We tend toward seeing the Holy Spirit through music, personal caring for each other, and in our inclusive nature.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- **Music Ministry:** Members of our community identify our music program as a significant strength. Our program includes a high-caliber vocal choir, a handbell choir, and various instrumental groups. Members have said that our music is an integral part of outreach into the community. In the last few years, we started our folk band, Pluckers and Strummers, which has been a welcome addition to our worship service. The band is open to any members who would like to bring an instrument and join in. Pluckers and Strummers expands the variety of music we can offer for worship, and has been a really joyful expansion of our music ministry.
- **Building Community:** We genuinely enjoy each others' company, and cherish opportunities to build community with low barriers to entry. This was the impetus for our Karaoke & Games Night recently. The reward was seeing folks from multiple generations crowd around a microphone to belt out Sinatra and perform a haphazardly arranged kick-line. We have also hosted 3 Parking Lot Dance Parties, where a community Big Band plays rousing tunes while a local swing dance group teaches us to dance. Because of where we are, people walking to the downtown area will stop by and dance with us! During Lent, we have created a tradition of Soup & Bread lunches - bring soup or a loaf of bread, or just bring yourself, and let us get to know you. Everyone sets up and cleans up and there is always great conversation in between.
- **Community Warmth and Interpersonal Care:** Our congregation values authentic, non-judgmental relationships. There is a strong sense of family in our congregation, and we often describe each other as compassionate, welcoming, and dedicated to supporting one another. Our prayer shawl group has knitted dozens of blankets and shawls that the congregation has blessed and bestowed on people in difficult situations to comfort them and remind them of our love for them. One of our knitters shared this reflection on the importance of this work: "God, the creator, is my model. When I create something beautiful, I feel more 'Godly', and I seek out ways to do this. Knitting prayer shawls empowers me to feel good about myself. Giving the prayer shawl to someone who is going through a crisis, or illness, or struggle represents the love and support of the church congregation. The recipient is appreciative, and I feel good again. The best benefit is receiving a prayer shawl. At the time of my husband's sudden death from a stroke, I was at my lowest point, and the soft, warm wrap represented the love of my church. When I was hospitalized for major heart surgery, I took the shawl and kept it in bed with me, a reminder that College Street Church cared about me and included me in their prayers.
- **Open and Affirming:** Our church's identity as an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation is a core positive quality. Our members value a dedication to welcoming

and supporting our LGBTQ+ community, embracing diverse political and personal viewpoints, and a curious approach to faith. Our decision to paint our front steps in rainbow colors felt like an act of courage and witness, expressing loudly to all those who pass them who we are. People walking by often stop to take a picture, and rich conversations have happened on the steps. We've started to become known as the church with the rainbow steps!

- **Lay Leadership and Congregational Commitment:** At College Street Church, there is a high level of engagement among the laity. Members are professionally competent and willing to "pitch in" by serving on Ministry Teams.
- **Social Justice and Mission Outreach:** The congregation emphasizes community justice and mission work, both historically and currently. Members prioritize following the example of Jesus by embracing the marginalized. One of the outreach activities that has engaged a large number of us and has been quite joy-filled is our Service Service. On a designated Sunday, we have an abbreviated worship service and then break into small groups to perform community service projects.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Worship at College Street Church takes place in our Sanctuary. Our Sanctuary layout is traditional, with rows of pews facing the altar at the front. Each Sunday, a lay member of the congregation serves as worship host and leads the congregation in responsive readings. The choir often leads hymns from the front of the church. Music programming at the offering rotates from week to week among the choir, a bell choir, and small ensembles with more contemporary music and acoustic instruments. Our children's ministry leader gathers our children and youth (or those who are young at heart), engaging them with questions or games related to the day's scripture reading. A lay member reads the scripture from the lectern, after which the pastor shares a reflection. Prayer time is pastor-led and interactive, including the sharing of joys and concerns. We take monthly Communion in a variety of ways; currently, we come to the front and receive bread and a blessing from our pastor and juice from lay leaders.

We have many members and friends who have shared reflections and testimony as part of lay-led services, at times when we need pulpit supply. These offerings have included deeply personal stories, including one member's tale of his journey from addiction to helping others who struggle with addiction. We often invite leaders of local social service organizations to talk about their work and needs, and opportunities to be of service. Occasionally, our lay worship leaders will share readings that illuminate the spirit moving among us (like ee cummings' *I thank you God for this amazing day* ("for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes... how should any human...merely being doubt unimaginable you?"))

We are open to trying new things while balancing meaningful traditions and rituals. During a Maundy Thursday service, our Pastor sat and ate with the kids up on the altar and they talked about the Last Supper. When it's warm enough in the summer, we have held an outdoor service at a nearby park. We have blessed our pets in the sanctuary in the past, and are planning another outdoor blessing later this summer. We've enjoyed coming to worship the Sunday after Christmas Eve in our pajamas, abbreviating the formal part of worship so we could break up into small groups and go out to serve the community, and engaging in very interactive reflections that could be meditative or conversational.

Members at College Street describe good preaching in the following ways:

- Making the Gospel feel alive and applicable to the challenges of the 21st century.
- Bible-centered preaching that provides intellectual depth and messages for self-improvement that can carry us through the next week .
- We want to hear about social justice concerns, the teachings of Jesus on love and justice, and how to respond to what is going on in our country and world.
- We prefer energetic preaching, incorporating humor and wit, and a level of comfort stepping away from a script.

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

Faith formation at CSCC is a critical part of the life of our church. Whether it is presented through church school lessons on Sunday mornings, occasional bible study meetings, a 6-week book study, or when we are invited to understand scripture through a new lens during the worship reflection, it remains a priority in our church community to examine our own personal faith and reflect on our faith journeys. Although most of our youth did not return after COVID, and we do not currently have an active church school program, we are committed to keeping the needed resources in preparation for our desired future.

Our current Faith Formation activities include the following:

- We strive to include younger members as “at large” members of the Executive Board and in other ministry teams and committees.
- We work in partnership with First Congregational Church of Burlington to offer a youth program. Our youth director has facilitated youth-led services throughout the year, and there is a youth mission trip each summer.
- Also in collaboration with First Church, we run an intergenerational Peace Camp during the summer. It's an evening program that includes a shared meal, music around a “campfire” and cabin sessions for all ages.
- Members of our congregation actively participate in Bible Study groups, book study groups, and small groups.

- Our children's ministry leader is launching a new program geared toward engaging children in the community, offering games, faith and spiritual development, a family-style meal, and community service.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

The governance structure of our church has been reorganized in the last 2 years; in January 2024, the congregation voted to pilot this new structure, and we are continuing to pilot and adjust at this point in time. We have a 5-person Executive Board, consisting of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Clerk, and Member-at-large, and 7 Ministry Teams: Worship, Faith Formation, Congregational Care, Finance and Administration, Communications, Outreach, and Property. Each Ministry Team has a Ministry Team Leader who reports the actions of the Team to the Vice President. All the members of the Executive Board and the Team Leaders are elected at the Annual Meeting for one-year terms with the option of being elected for additional one-year terms as needed, though the President and Vice President can serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms, with the option to serve again after a one-year hiatus.

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

The Executive Board, the Property Team, and the Worship Team each meet monthly. There is a quarterly meeting of the Ministry Team Leaders and the Vice President. These meetings last approximately 2 hours. All the other teams meet as needed, depending on the activity of the church. For example, the Finance and Administration Team meets at least monthly during the stewardship season in the fall.

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

COVID struck when our last pastor was on sabbatical. We managed to continue worship on our own, missing only one Sunday. A small group of very skilled lay leaders was able to get us up and running to carry on worship on Zoom. Though our Music Director was sequestered in his home in Canada, he organized a "virtual choir": he assisted singers in recording themselves singing their individual parts, and then he stitched together each recording so all the singers could be seen and heard as an ensemble. We have heard from multiple sources that the beautiful music performed by our virtual choir sustained many churches in the Vermont Conference during the early days of COVID, especially those who had not yet figured out how to do online worship.

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 to all.**

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

(add here the 11-Year Report developed with the help of your conference staff, UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite)

[11-Year Report](#)

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	117	
Number of active non-members:	22	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	139	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	72	X
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	15	X
Less than 5 years:	13	X

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
1	4	3	5	10	20	50	30	X

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	10	X
Households with minors:	12	X
Single adults age 35-65:	10	X
Joint households with no minors:	40	X
Single adults over 65:	28	X

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	2	x
College:	34	x
Graduate School:	60	x
Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):	4	Some college

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	35	x
Adults who are retired:	60	x
Adults who are not fully employed:	3	x
Adults who are part-time or full-time students	2	x

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

Adults in our congregation are employed in or retired from a range of occupations, including business, clergy, education, and other professionals, office, and retail positions.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial makeup. 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?

Like most Vermont congregations, we are almost exclusively white. We have been honored by the participation of a thoughtful African American elder during our transition work sessions and at special services. Most of us share similar political views. There has been more diversity among some of our newer and younger members and friends with regard to income, employment, housing situations and education. Diversity here includes religious background, gender identity, and expression. We are an ONA church.

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:

We have not had an explicit and formal conversation about welcoming diversity, but we discussed the topic informally at the congregational meetings during this transition period,

which informed the writing of this profile. We talked about welcome at each of the several meetings held, recognizing the ways we are welcoming and thinking about how we could become more welcoming, including extending a more intentional welcome to those who come from other faith traditions, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and those who are seeking and questioning. Some examples of our efforts over the years to cultivate welcome include:

- A congregational vote in 2022 to share our worship space with a Congolese Pentecostal church. Our partnership began with a shared worship service in two languages, attended by members of both churches, and visions of a deepening relationship. Unfortunately, members of the Pentecostal church were uncomfortable sharing space with an ONA church and ultimately withdrew.
- Painting our front steps in rainbow colors.
- We are learning language and conversation starters to help us more deeply engage with folks who visit us. Members of our worship team volunteer to greet everyone at the door each Sunday. One member in particular has made it her mission in church to greet every new person who walks through our doors into the sanctuary, including unhoused friends who venture in to hear music and share coffee hour snacks. With a warm, welcoming smile, she puts each newcomer at ease, asking their name and what brought them here. She makes each person feel this is the place where they need to be! After worship on Sundays, there is always a large group of people gathered around the back tables of the Sanctuary (whether or not there are treats!), and it's lovely to witness the connections blossoming.

We know this welcome is appreciated because people come back and express appreciation for the sense of community they feel here. LGBTQ+ members tell us we “walk the talk.” Recently, a new member shared during prayer time that she was grateful to be part of a church community where she could bravely share out loud that she is a trans woman.

3d. 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	25-30	Lay leaders and Pastor
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	7	Children's Ministry Leader
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	80	Pastor, Director of Music, Worship Ministry Team
Church-wide Meals	40	Lay leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	40	Director of Music
Church-based Bible Study	7	Lay Leaders
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	once/month	Pastor, Worship Ministry Team
Community Meals	10	Lay Leaders
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	0	
Drama or Dance Program	0	
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	0	
Intergenerational Groups	0	
Outdoor Worship	0	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	0	
Public Advocacy Work	2	
Retreats (1)	25	Pastor, Lay leaders
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	

Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Pastor, Director of Music
Worship (time slot: __10 am____)	55-60	Including virtual & in-person attendees
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	10	Youth Coordinator
Other		

Additional comments:

We have a number of small groups, including Caring For Loved Ones, Discussions for the Heart and Soul, Prayer Shawl Group, and Men's Group.

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. Marjorie MacNeill	No	Interim Consultant	Member	No
Rev. Carole Carlson	No	Former Conference Minister	Member	Yes
Rev. Debbie Ingram	No	Clergy At Large	Member	No

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:

Rev. Carole Carson has assisted with revisions of the church bylaws and serves on the Pastoral Relations Committee. Rev. Debbie Ingram has provided liturgy training to lay worship leaders, acts as a substitute pastor when needed, and has served as a resource in the church's participation in the work of Vermont Interfaith Action. Rev. Marjorie MacNeill is co-chair of the Outreach Ministry Team and has led book group discussions.

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 Admin.	No	PT	Pastor	1 year
Director of Music	No	PT	Pastor	5 years
Children's Ministry Leader	No	PT	Pastor	Less than one year
Youth Ministry Leader	No	PT	Pastor	1.5 years
Sexton	No	PT	Pastor	8 years
Bookkeeper/Acc ountant	No	PT (contracted)	Pastor	Less than one year

REFLECTION

We are blessed with the wisdom of retired ministers and the energy of devoted ministry leaders. We have learned that we could be better about communicating the work of the Ministry Teams to the congregation. We have talked about having more “mission moments” in worship, during which Ministry Leaders could describe ongoing ministry work, perhaps in the context of the day’s scripture reading.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 251,185
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>) * <i>See note below</i>	\$22,870
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$7,130
Fundraising Events	\$ 4,287
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$

Grants (Vermont Community Foundation)	\$ 2,733
Rentals of Church Building	\$ 45,288
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$
Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group)	\$
Transfers from Special Accounts (Capital to Operating)	\$ 5,009
Other (specify): Parking	\$ 15,960
Other (specify): Concert rentals, other	\$ 7,770
Other (specify) Beneficiary of Ethel Scott Trust	\$ 13,000
TOTAL	\$ 375,232

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): **\$377,411**

* Except for the question below about ministerial support, all figures are 2025 actuals as reported in our 2025 Annual Report.

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? **30% (based on 2025 budget). (2025 actuals would not provide a representative percentage figure because we did not have a full time pastor for the full year.)**

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? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year) **Yes**

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

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

We have historically tried to give 10% of our pledged income, but in recent years we have contributed a flat amount of \$20,000.

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

Total amount of loan debt:

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments 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. N/A

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

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

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

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

Does your church have an endowment?

The \$482,726 figure we show as an "endowment" in our 2025 UCC Yearbook Report is held in a fund we call the "Permanent Fund", which in actuality includes undesignated bequests and does not impose restrictions on the use of funds for operating expenses. Historically, this Fund has been used to make up any shortfalls in meeting operating budget expenses. We have an informal policy to cap withdrawals from this fund each year to 5% of the fund's market value.

What is the market value of the assets?

See above. The market value of the Permanent Fund at the end of 2025 was \$482,726.

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

See description of budget process below.

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

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

In 2025, we withdrew \$30,000 from the Permanent Fund, about \$7,130 more than the 5% cap based on last year's market value (but \$25,000 less than the fund's annual gains).

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

There are too many variables to predict this.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Draw will depend on our approach to expenses in future years, and how much money is taken from the Capital Funds Account.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): Capital Funds Account: \$288,987 at the end of 2025 (approximately \$100,000 of which represents undesignated bequests); \$41,286 (undesignated Operating Account balances). Last year we withdrew \$5,009 from our Capital Funds Account for designated expenses. To meet expenses for the 2026 budget year, will use \$20,000 from the Permanent Fund, and \$43,900 from the Capital Funds account (\$3,900 of which are designated for specific use in 2026).

Investments (other than endowment): None.

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Our church is a beautiful Gothic revival style building erected between 1863-1866 during the Civil War. This unique church is located within the College Street historic district and is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. It is centrally located near the Fletcher Free Library, the YMCA, the Burlington Waterfront, and the University of Vermont campus.

The sanctuary and the assembly room total 25,879 sq. ft. This includes 2,800 sq. ft. added in 1954 for the Perkins Room (gathering space and kitchen) on the ground level and offices below. The downstairs classroom addition of 3000 square feet, added in 2010, also includes ample space for gatherings like church meals.

The lights on the reconstructed steeple are beautiful at night, and the bells, which sound on the hour, resonate through the downtown area of Burlington and beyond, offering a reassuring presence for residents and visitors. The sanctuary has excellent acoustics and is known throughout the area as a perfect venue for concerts and ensemble performances.

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

The Sanctuary (with cutouts to allow for wheelchairs); the Perkins Room, and the downstairs fellowship space. Each level must be accessed separately from the outside. There is no elevator. There are accessible restrooms on each level.

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

We endeavor to use our building to welcome our community, raise spirits and awareness, and draw attention to the needs of our community and the work of our church. We try to be flexible in managing our financial assets in a manner consistent with our mission, to respond to changes, and to seize new opportunities.

Budget process:

Each year the leaders of the ministry teams are asked to make budget requests to cover their needs for the coming year. These requests are evaluated against pledge receipts, fund balances, staffing needs, cost of living adjustments, and anticipated property expenses. If preliminary budget requests exceed available resources, the Finance and Administration team addresses the shortfall through some combination of requests for additional giving, program adjustments, and transfers from the church's Capital Fund or its Permanent Fund (made up of undesignated bequests).

Budget changes

We share the salary of the Youth Ministry Leader with First Congregational Church. In 2024 the position moved from our payroll to First's. The position is billed to us as a contracted expense.

New initiatives

In 2025, we hired a Children's Ministry Leader.

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.

Three Significant Happenings

- Formation of Vermont Interfaith Action. Our church was a founding member of Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA), a multifaith, grassroots community organizing network, incorporated in 2004, that builds collective power to advance justice, equity, and human dignity. VIA works to challenge the systems that cause injustice and to stand with those most impacted. It does this by advocating for legislation in Montpelier. The church's focus on social justice actions builds on its origins in the mid-1800s as an abolitionist church. Our abolitionist history informs our current orientation to social justice work, which includes work to help the poor and marginalized meet their basic needs as well as advocacy for systemic social change.
- Decision to become Open and Affirming. The formal decision in 1994 to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation is a defining identity marker. This includes participation in Pride events, symbolic actions like painting the church steps with rainbow colors, and a general shift toward radical inclusivity.
- Children of Abraham Program. In 2017, we worked with Rabbi Amy Joy Small of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue and Imam Hassan of the Islamic Society of Vermont to host a week-long program devoted to learning about our faiths, texts and cultures; building trust and relationships; discussing difficult topics; sharing meals and worshipping together. Following the October 7 attacks on Israel, we reached out to the Synagogue and the Islamic Society to explore the possibility of resuming this dialogue. At the time, the hurts felt too raw to allow for meaningful exchanges. We hope our new settled pastor can help us keep this connection alive and be alert to new opportunities.

Most Important Event in Last 10 Years

Steeple fire. An arsonist set fire to our steeple in 2013 just before our last settled pastor arrived. The incident required immediate crisis response, collaboration with other religious groups (such as Temple Sinai) to arrange for an alternate worship space, and physical restoration efforts. We had a series of congregational meetings about whether to restore the steeple or do a more limited restoration (would it be better to devote our funds to mission work?) The discussion was civil and engaged. Ultimately the congregation voted to restore the steeple as closely as possible to its original condition, while maintaining its focus on community engagement work.

Long-time members spoke about the history and role of the steeple in the life of the congregation and the community, about the steeple as a symbol of faith and a beacon of hope through multiple global conflicts, about the bell as a voice calling out to welcome people to

worship, to announce special holidays, and to command respect as they toll to observe the loss of a member. They also described it as a visual focal point to keep community memories alive. And not to be overlooked, to keep people on time.

Now lovingly restored and maintained, our elaborate clock system, controlled without electricity through weights and wires and springs, projects the time on 4 clock faces controlled by interlocking gearsets, and rings the bells every hour on the hour. The member who winds our clock each week takes pride that it is more accurate than the clock at City Hall. He has nicknamed the beautiful winding mechanism “Mary Ann” after the character in the kids book “Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel” who helps build a town hall and becomes an energetic and integral part of its life. Our clock winder gives occasional tours of the steeple, its bell, clock system, and its views, filling participants with awe about how our church is put together in a physical sense, as well as in the personal dimension of the many hands involved in its faithful care and maintenance.

Another aspect of the experience that was meaningful to our members was the decision to pardon the arsonist, a person with mental illness who had been researching how to get into multiple clock towers in the downtown in the belief it would grant him access to treasures. Rather than bring charges, we decided to forgive him, and deepened our faith by doing so.

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

The COVID pandemic led to a period of isolation and dispersed community. The slow transition back to in-person services left some in the congregation feeling “shaken in faith” and less centered. We showed our resilience by developing an interactive zoom worship service, during which we greet our remote participants, invite them to read the lessons, and to voice their joys and concerns. After returning to in person worship, we have maintained the zoom interface in a hybrid service, which has helped us restore, maintain and build community.

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.

In our discernment, we discovered that, when we have disagreements and conflict, we tend toward pragmatic solutions and don’t always lean into talking more deeply about the nature of the differences of opinion. This has sometimes led to hurt feelings and, on occasion, members deciding to leave the church. We genuinely care for each other and want everyone to feel welcome to share their ideas and opinions, and we realize this is an area we could grow in.

We don’t have specific policies for resolving conflict. We do have a Pastoral Relations Committee and we reaffirm a set of Communication Guidelines (similar to a behavioral covenant) at every Annual Meeting. We have looked hard at how conflicts arise and how we

deal with them. We are working our way towards a better way of avoiding and managing conflict.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Ken White	11	Y
David Wright	19	Y

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

We have learned that there can be differing opinions about who has ultimate authority over certain matters. We are learning that early and open communication among ministry teams and the pastor is essential for us to navigate potential conflicts.

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

Y/N/Ask us No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us No

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

Y/N/Ask us 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?

- We provide weekly meals to the youth who attend Friday Night Group at Outright Vermont, a local organization that supports LGBTQ+ youth. We have participated in donating clothing and outdoor supplies for Street Cats, a local organization that provides supplies and resources to people who are experiencing homelessness.

- Several members participate in Miracle Messages, a program that helps people experiencing homelessness rebuild their social support systems.
- Our church offers a Little Food Pantry that resides at the side of our church, members sign up to fill this pantry as they are able.
- We march annually in Burlington's Pride Parade, a tradition for 20 years
- We painted our steps in rainbow colors to represent our support and welcome for those in the LGBTQ+ community.
- We have participated in community cleanup days in downtown Burlington.
- Many of our congregants are involved in volunteer activities outside the church. Our Outreach Team has distributed a survey that will allow us to share a list of these activities so that churchgoers can collaborate and mentor one another.

We are a UCC "5 for 5" Congregation.

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

- Our congregation participates regularly in our Vermont Conference Annual Meetings. We typically send 4 delegates along with 3-5 other interested members.
- We participate in Champlain Association Meetings.
- We participated in the UCC's Vitality Conference and have formed a working group to carry the energy and inspirations of that meeting forward.

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) | ☐ Just Peace |
| ☐ Creation Justice | ☐ Global Mission Church |
| ☐ Economic Justice | ☒ Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| ☐ Faithful and Welcoming | ☐ WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| ☐ God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | ☐ Other UCC designations: |
| ☐ Border and Immigrant Justice | ☐ Designations from other denominations |
| ☐ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M) | ☐ 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?

We have been an ONA church since 1994 and continue to be committed to demonstrating this. It has become clear in our congregational conversations that our members aspire to be welcoming to all, have a focus on economic justice, the health of God's creation, and migrant justice. Our interim pastor has begun to lean into migrant justice work, and there is hunger in the congregation for more of that.

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

- In 2017, we worked with a synagogue and a mosque to learn about our faiths, texts, and cultures. See description of the Children of Abraham program under "Significant Happenings" in Section 3.f.
- We recently participated in an ecumenical Good Friday service in Essex, Vermont, during which pastors from eight area churches and denominations reflected on Christ's seven last words from the cross. Following an evocation of the Peaceable Kingdom from Isaiah, the pastors related the seven last words to the suffering of people in today's world (people killed by ICE agents, Iranian drones, aggressive police practices, denial of abortion care, and transgender suicide). Each reflection was followed by a musical response from the assembled congregations. Participants found it extremely moving. We renewed connections and began to make plans to repeat the service next year.
- As a congregation, we commit financial support to Vermont Interfaith Action and the Joint Urban Ministry Project, and members of the congregation are involved in the work of those organizations.
- We serve and worship with our neighboring UCC Church, annually for Ash Wednesday, World Communion Sunday and through youth and children's programming.

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.

While we do not have a formal mission statement, our Visioning Statements (shown in Section 2) describe how we believe God is calling us to use our gifts. In recent years, our direct involvement in mission work has focused more on addressing the essential needs of our downtown neighbors, and less on advocacy work to address systemic injustices. We are working to re-energize our work with Vermont Interfaith Action. Apart from grounds management and neighborhood cleanup efforts, we have not spent much time showing our love for God's earth. We welcome creative thoughts about how to do this.

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?

A key element of the scope of work we have developed for our new pastor is to work with us to deepen our engagement with our community. Our Executive Board and Outreach Ministry Team will work closely with our settled pastor on this priority.

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 did not use MissionInSite; we've gathered data through other means. In the sections that follow, we provide general demographic information for the Burlington area and the State of Vermont, and then zoom in to the neighborhoods surrounding our church.

Burlington is located in Northwestern Vermont on the eastern lakeshore of Lake Champlain, approximately 45 miles south of the Canadian border. The population of Burlington is ~**45,000**, with a yearly influx of 15300 college students at the University of Vermont and Champlain College.

The Burlington area has approximately **17000 households** with **2.1 persons per household**, with the census likely influenced by the UVM student housing.

- **43%** of our population is **married**.
- The area's male-to-female ratio is 48%:52%
- The Ethnicity breakdown is: White: 83%, Asian: 6% Black: 3%, Hispanic:3%, Other:5%

Burlington has become home to refugees from around the world, including major populations of Bosnian, Vietnamese, Somali, Somali Bantu, Burundian and Butanese people. Recent news reports say that members of this population contribute to the growth of the health care industry.

- Average per capita income is \$49,000. Average household income is \$91,000. 9.1% live below the poverty line
- The poverty line is ~**\$21,150** for a combined household of 2.
- **Vermont's** median age:**42.7** compared to the **U.S.** national median age of **38**.

According to recent articles about our community's **trends and concerns**:

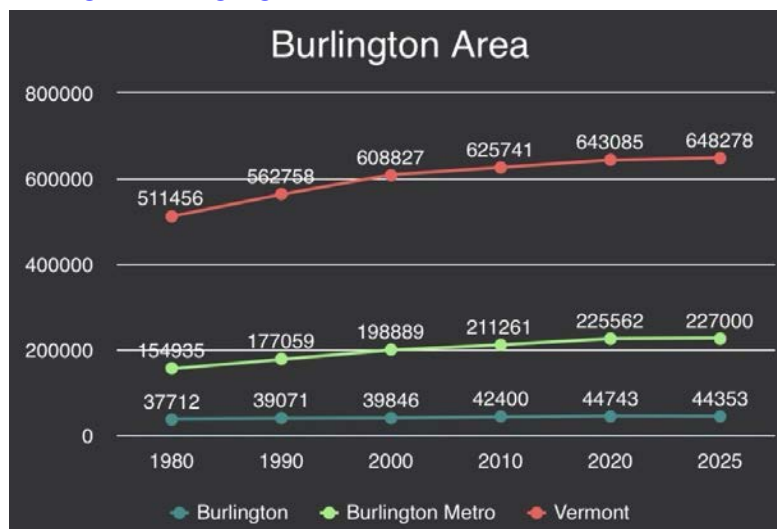
- Over the last 10 years, the price of homes has increased by 90-100%, rent by about 70%

- Housing shortages: Studies cite a need for 36,000 new homes by 2029: the construction rate isn't keeping up with the greater metro area demand.
- Fading Remote Work
- Labor shortages
- Vermont is an aging state with the lowest birth rate in the country.
- Cost of living has far outpaced wage increases

It's important to note that many of these issues are congruent with general metropolitan trends across the United States

The state of Vermont is aging and rural, and Burlington and its greater metro area consist of approximately half of Vermont's total population.

Downtown Burlington is struggling with issues common to many US metropolitan areas, including homelessness, the opioid addiction crisis, crime, and an overloaded mental health system drive. These issues drive much of the conversation when it comes to mission work among our congregation.



Our population had a relatively small jump in size during COVID, which waned and diminished after COVID.

Websites of churches in the area provide limited information about demographics and income, but do provide a glimpse into the local religious landscape.

Religiosity: According to a Sept 17th 2025 NewsWeek article: “the least religious state was Vermont with 13 percent of adults <considered> ‘highly religious,’ followed by New Hampshire (15 percent) and Maine (17 percent).”

Religion in VT fell 9 percentage points between 2014 and the most recent survey in 2023-24. Most decline consisted in a drop in total Christians, other religions including Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam, membership and attendance has remained stable.

Denomination breakdown Vermonters:

- Non religious : 46% - 50%
- Roman Catholicism : 18%
- Protestant 17-18%
- Non-Christian : ~7%

Websites of churches in the area provide limited information about demographics and income, but do provide a glimpse into the local religious landscape.

The trends toward a general decline in Christianity and the rural nature of our state present challenges for growing our congregation and youth program.

The political leanings of our surrounding congregations are:

- Right-leaning: 56%
- Left-leaning: 44%

Our Surrounding Neighborhoods

College Street Congregational Church is located in the center of downtown Burlington. Our most prominent neighbor to the West is the Fletcher Free Library. We are a block away from Edmonds Elementary and Middle Schools. Two blocks to our west is the Church Street Marketplace, a pedestrian only zone flanked by approximately 100 shops and restaurants, and the site of frequent urban festivals. Close by are City Hall, City Hall Park, the Superior Court, and the Flynn Performing Arts Center. Farther down the hill is the Lake Champlain lakefront, the Burlington Greenway bike path, and ECHO (the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain). East and uphill are the University of Vermont, Champlain College, and the University of Vermont Medical Center.

Our community is struggling with issues common to the US, especially in metropolitan areas. Homelessness and the opioid addiction crisis, increased crime, and an overloaded mental health system drive much of the conversation when it comes to mission work among our congregation.

Housing types in our area are a mix of single family homes, student apartments, and various other rental apartments (increasing in rent as you get closer to the lake). Residents of the area include people employed by the local educational and medical institutions, as well as employees of technology and internet marketing business, small scale manufacturing companies, retail companies, real estate companies, law firms, and social service organizations, as well as artists, artisans and crafts people.

The physical location of our church has seen challenges over the past 10 years. The Memorial Auditorium to the South and former YMCA to the North have been vacant. The vacancies have made the church feel less inviting to some churchgoers, and have made the area more inviting to the unhoused community. The Fletcher Free Library to the West of College St UCC has been a safe space for the unhoused to get warm and use the internet.

The good news: the YMCA building to the North is actively being rebuilt and upgraded, retaining the historical facade of the original building. Potential new uses for the Memorial Auditorium to the South are discussed frequently at town meetings and a plan is in the works. Pedestrian infrastructure in the downtown area has been upgraded. New businesses like a micro-cinema, wine bar, and bakery have opened down the block.

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?

Many of our church members live outside of the city of Burlington. Residents of the surrounding towns are more affluent and older than those in the neighborhoods around our church. Like most churches in our denomination, our church is predominantly made up of people 55 or older. Many of our members work or formerly worked in academia and in businesses similar to those of the surrounding communities.

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

We have worked with the Fletcher Free Library, other churches, and neighborhood partners to engage with the unhoused community in a way that makes them feel seen, while also setting boundaries for acceptable behavior around church and the Headstart program it houses. The number of people experiencing homelessness has increased in the downtown area over the past few years. During the summer of 2024 in particular, many of these folks chose to gather on and around areas of our church. Our pastor at that time and the sexton spoke with people who were sleeping, hanging out, and engaging in unsafe activities, such as using substances outside the window of the Headstart program. They greeted them by name, showing compassion for their situation, seeing their humanness, and asking them to understand how their activities could frighten the young families coming to Headstart, and put others at risk. Our congregation engaged in conversations about how to respond in this way in our interactions as well, and how to connect those in need with local resources. This compassionate response and setting of boundaries resulted in an expression of appreciation from the unhoused folks, and they have respected the boundaries that were set. We continue to work on this.

We are increasing our outreach to the university community. Many members of this community pass through our doors episodically. The student population is transient and busy, which can make it a challenge to connect. We are working to build relationships with students and

university employees and involve them in the church community through music and small groups.

Burlington's migrant population and the social service organizations that support it offer us opportunities for engagement in welcome, support, migrant justice, and broadening of cultural understanding. Our interim pastor has been active in migrant justice demonstrations. Members of our congregation have borne witness at ICE hearings and have supported families whose family members have been held pending deportation proceedings.

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

- We are generally known for the quality and participation in our music program.
- One person we interviewed responded that they had limited recent knowledge of College Street UCC but noted a decline in church activities, possibly due to the pandemic.
- We would note that there's another UCC church about two blocks away called First Congregational with which we have a warm and friendly relationship. We have a joint youth ministry program, typically we join services a few times throughout the year. We also co-host a 3-day "Peace Camp" during the summer held at their church.

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

Some mention the music program and our rainbow-painted front steps. One person spoke of our Service Service (a day when we convene in church with a focus on service and divide into groups to work on a variety of projects in and around the church). Another was drawn in by an interesting art exhibit hosted by one of our members. Someone else mentioned they stayed for our annual budget meeting one Sunday and were impressed with our discussions, passion, and engagement of the many congregants attending.

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

Name / Position / Setting

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

[Rev. William Neil, has provided Pulpit Supply](#)

Phone: 413-717-5943, Email: wmrneil05461@gmail.com

REFERENCE 2

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

[Rev. Ken White, former pastor of CSCC](#)

Phone: 512-947-9971, Email: kwhite.home@gmail.com

REFERENCE 3

Name / Position / Setting

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

[Kelly Wells, Director of Headstart](#)

Phone: 802-735-5790 (Headstart Office), Email: kwells@cvoeo.org

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

a. CLOSING PRAYER

b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body

*love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.*

I Hear Them All - lyrics by David Rawlings & Ketch Secor

I hear the crying of the hungry in the deserts where they're wandering
 Hear them crying out for heaven's own benevolence upon them
 Hear destructive power prevailing, I hear fools falsely hailing
 To the crooked wits of tyrants when they call
 I hear them all, I hear them all, I hear them all

I hear the sounds of tearing pages and the roar of burning paper
 All the crimes and acquisition turn to air and ash and vapor
 And the rattle of the shackle, far beyond emancipator
 And the lowliest who gather in their stalls
 I hear them all, I hear them all, I hear them all

So, while you sit and whistle Dixie with your money and your power
 I can hear the flowers a-growing in the rubble of the towers
 I hear leaders quit their lying, I hear babies quit their crying
 I hear soldiers quit their dying, one and all
 I hear them all, I hear them all, I hear them all

I hear the tender words from Zion, I hear Noah's waterfall
Hear the gentle Lamb of Judah, sleeping at the feet of Buddha
And the prophets, from Elijah, to the old Paiute Wovoka

Take their places at the table when they're called
I hear them all, I hear them all, I hear them all

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.)*

[Transition Team, Search Team.](#)

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

College Street Church is in good standing and a valued partner in ministry in both the Association and Conference.

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: Lynn L Bujnak

Name / Title: Conference Minister

Email: lbujnak@vermontucc.org

Phone: 802-505-8727

Date: 8/26/2026



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



View of CSCC from College Street



Burlington Pride Parade



Downtown steeples (l to r):
First Unitarian Society, First
Methodist, Cathedral of St. Joseph,
First Congregational



View of Lake Champlain and downtown Burlington from our steeple



Blessing the Prayer Shawls



Welcome at our front door



Rainbow steps painting crew!



Soup & Bread Lunch



Zoom Volunteer



CSCC Choir



CSCC handbell choir



Strummers & Pluckers



Parking Lot Dance Party



Peace Camp with
First Congregational Church