

# **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE**

St. John's United Church of Christ  
Newport, Kentucky 41071

Designated Pastor  
or  
Settled Pastor

Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ  
Southern Ohio Northern Kentucky Association  
July 31, 2020

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

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**LISTING INFORMATION**

**Church name:** St John's United Church of Christ

**Street address:** 415 Park Avenue, Newport, Kentucky 41071

**Supplemental web links:** <https://stjohnsuccnewport.org>

**Conference:** Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ

**Association:** Southern Ohio Northern Kentucky Association

**UCC Association Staff Person:**

Rev. Carl E. Robinson

Designated Association Minister

937-438-8050

[crobinson@sonkaucc.org](mailto:crobinson@sonkaucc.org)

## Summary Ministry Description:

Currently our church seems to be at a standstill. We have undergone some unfortunate situations in the past few years which have divided the congregation and resulted in a loss of many members. Over the past 8 years, we have had only one settled pastor. He was not a good match for our congregation and left after 2 1/2 years. Though we have had remarkable interims during this time, not having a settled pastor has had a detrimental effect on the life of our church. Our church has healed somewhat but is still in need of someone who will be committed to finalizing the healing process and who will be eager and willing to bring the congregation together in a spirit of love, unity, and fellowship. We are searching for someone who can guide us in our worship of God, help us create a strategic plan for the future, and strengthen our presence in the community. Our next minister should be someone who can help us move forward, who can lead us in our spiritual journey, and bring new energy into the life of our church.

## Photographs:





**What we value about living in our area:**

We are located in the historic East Row Mansion Hill neighborhood, across the Ohio River from Ohio, which allows us to enjoy events and activities in both states, such as Newport on the Levee, Newport Aquarium, BB Riverboats, Music Hall, major league sports-Cincinnati Reds baseball, Cincinnati Bengals football, Cyclones-hockey, FC Cincinnati-soccer, and Labor Day fireworks on the river. The Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati area has excellent schools and universities, highly rated hospitals, a diverse array of restaurants, theaters, and shopping areas, with easy access to Interstate 75, 71, and 74. We enjoy a moderate cost of living and have many lovely residential areas.

**Current size of membership:**

246

**Languages used in ministry:**

English

**Position title:**

Settled Pastor

**Position duration:**

Designated Pastor

Even though the position duration is formally listed as “designated pastor”, we are conducting this search with full intent of entering into a covenant that we anticipate will be long term. In fact, with the support of the association, we are engaging in a hybrid search (between designated and settled), in the hope that the number of profiles we receive will be significantly larger than the number typically received during a search for a settled pastor. We have faith that this widened search will enable us to find a long-term match.

**Compensation Level:**

Full time

**Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?**

Yes

## **SCOPE OF WORK:**

### **The scope of work includes:**

- Being the Spiritual leader of the congregation.
- 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 music staff, 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.
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry.
- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs.
- Pastoral care in collaboration with lay people.
- Counseling, listening and referral.
- Energizing and deepening spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.
- Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills to lead, teach, and preach better.
- Attending meetings and giving leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership.
- Administration responsibilities (unless designated) such as email, website, church supplies, and more.
- Responsibility for supervision of staff.
- Faithful financial development and stewardship.
- Conducting funerals, officiating at weddings, and performing baptisms for participants in the worshiping community.
- Community engagement and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love.
- Availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations.
- Participation in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings.

**Core competencies:**

**Experience in-**

- Strategic planning
- Conflict management
- Systems analysis

**COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT**

**Salary base:**

Will be determined according to UCC guidelines; the current budget allows \$60,000/year-includes cash salary plus housing allowance.

**Benefits:**

Will be determined according to UCC guidelines; the current budget includes \$32,000/year for the employer portion of Social Security, annuity, health insurance, and life insurance.

**Living situation:**

Living nearby with a housing allowance.

**Residential/commuting expectations:**

Ideally should live within 30 minutes of church. If already lives in area, we will be flexible.

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

There is a local minister's group that meets weekly-now on Zoom. They do a mix of case studies, book studies, fellowship, and support.

The Heartland Conference offers one day training events twice a year for interims and other ministers.

Educational and informational resources are available from SONKA and the Heartland Conference.

We have a close relationship with two other UCC churches in neighboring cities, and along with a local Presbyterian church, the ministers, musicians, staff, and some members have joined together to present online worship services during the pandemic.

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

N/A

## **WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?**

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

- Our congregation, with the guidance of skilled ministerial leadership, desires to change our approach to conflict management, engage in systems analysis and strategic planning
- Our congregation seeks a spiritual leader who joins us in our spiritual journey.
- Our congregation seeks a pastor who can demonstrate vision and passion in their ministry.
- Our congregation seeks a pastor to guide us as we strive to unite as a congregation in a spirit of dialogue, understanding it is okay to disagree with each other in a respectful way.
- Our congregation seeks a pastor with self-confidence and calm, with the ability to control their own emotions in the midst of turmoil.
- Our congregation seeks a pastor who will offer compassionate and appropriate pastoral care to hospitalized patients, homebound members, and those seeking counseling.

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

- The minister should be sociable and able to lead the congregation to be more involved in the community; examples-meeting with the local superintendent to ask how we can help in the local school system, participating in local events, being involved in the East Row neighborhood.
- He/she should be willing to build connections with local clergy, churches, and agencies.
- He/she should willingly collaborate with the local churches in developing continuing projects geared to helping the community.
- By participating in One Great Hour of Sharing.
- By representing us in various settings of the UCC association and conference.

### **Language requirements:**

English. Spanish might be helpful, but not necessary. There is a strong Spanish speaking population in the Northern Kentucky area.

**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.**

1. Building transformational leadership skills.
  - Working collaboratively with staff and lay leadership to create a strategic plan for the church's future.
  - Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
  - Developing and encouraging leadership skills among the people.
  - Actively seek the trust and confidence of the congregation in order to be an effective leader.
  - Effectively organizing time and programs.
2. Strengthening inter-and intra-personal assets.
  - Continue to develop and grow in a personal relationship with God.
  - To be a person of integrity and strong moral character.
  - To be empathetic and understanding of all God's people at all stages of their life's journey.
  - To communicate clearly and honestly.
  - To become familiar with the personal and spiritual lives of the members of the congregation.
3. Engaging sacred stories and traditions.
  - Knowledgeable in the history of the Christian church, from biblical times to now.
  - Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship.
  - Knowledgeable and understanding in the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament.
4. Caring for all creation.
  - Taking care of self both physically and emotionally.
  - Nurturing spiritual life of self.
  - Understanding of human nature and psychology.
  - Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
  - Empathetic and caring for those in need physically, mentally and spiritually.

# WHO ARE WE NOW?

*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)*

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS  
CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS  
PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING  
CHURCH FINANCES  
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## CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

### **Describe your congregation's life of faith.**

Membership vows are similar to Baptismal vows. The congregation shares in a community with the individual to support them in their Christian life through the church.

### **Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation:**

1. St. John's is a resilient church.
2. We are committed to the church-the building and the people.
3. We are hardworking and willingly do whatever is needed to maintain the life of the church.
4. Many have been members for decades and some are lifetime members.
5. We are supportive of ministries and programs, such as the food pantry, choral scholars, musical programs like the yearly Christmas concert, HEARTS tutoring program, and Brighton Center.
6. We have an outstanding musical program consisting of a Chancel Choir and a handbell choir, the Chancel Ringers. The Director of Music is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and is a longtime member and exceptionally talented on the organ and piano. Our choir/bell director is a young man from Korea who is pursuing his doctorate in piano at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Not only is he a piano maestro, he plays the organ beautifully and is vocally talented. We have several students from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory

of Music who sing in our choir and play handbells. They routinely sing solos during worship services.

7. We have substantial financial resources and no church debt.
8. We have a large, beautiful, well maintained building. We have a rich history. In 1847, German immigrants had to travel to Cincinnati to attend church, so land was purchased, and a church and school was built. By 1858, the congregation had grown so much that there was a need for more space. Another parcel of land was bought at a different location and a two-story church was built. In 1873, the public-school system was begun and there was no longer a need for a school within the church. In 1915, a monthly newsletter was started called the Visitor, which is still published today. In 1937, St. Johns held the first Christmas Eve service by a protestant church south of the Ohio River. In 1939, a fire destroyed the building, and a new church was built on the current site and opened 2 years later. A few items from the burnt church were salvaged and remain in use in the current church today: the tower bell, pews in the balcony, the baptismal font, the cross and candlesticks on the altar in the chapel, the altar in the chapel, and the stained glass window in the front of the church that depicts Jesus knocking at the door with no handle from the outside. In 1957, on the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church, they voted to join the United Church of Christ Denomination. In 1960, the Easter service was televised live, the first time a protestant church in the area televised a church service. 1971 began a radio ministry and 1982 brought videotaping services on cable.
9. We have a strong history of providing community outreach programs.

### **Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers:**

We gather for worship in a beautiful sanctuary, with a lovely chancel area and an incredibly old, treasured stained glass window at the front. Announcements are made, usually by the minister, re: births, birthdays, anniversaries, deaths, ill and hospitalized members and their families, and impending surgeries. Members often make announcements asking for support and/or volunteers for certain activities and offer invitations to special events. We have Sundays when we recognize graduates, confirmands and new members. Baptisms are performed when requested.

Children are welcome to remain in the sanctuary with their families, however there is a nursery for ages newborn to 4. Older children stay in the sanctuary with their families until after the choir sings their first anthem and they hear a

short children's sermon, then are excused to go to their Sunday School class if they wish.

Beautiful music is presented by the choir and organist, with frequent solos by our choral scholars and choir director. Guest instrumentalists join us many times throughout the year to enhance our service. During the summer months when the choir is off, featured guests and members perform solos and provide instrumental selections. Our Choir Director often offers vocal selections and he and our Music Director offer inspirational pieces on the piano and organ.

The service is traditional, and the sermons are based on scripture. The Lord's Prayer is prayed aloud at every service and each service ends with a prayer and a benediction sung by the choir. The Music Director/organist offers the postlude, and the choir director often joins him with the piano. Volunteers serve as liturgists and ushers, and children serve as acolytes and ushers. Communion is offered the first Sunday of each month and on special church holidays and is open to all.

We celebrate All Saints Day by reading the names of those who have died during the year. We have a service on Ash Wednesday with the imposition of ashes. We have a moving service on Maundy Thursday depicting the last supper with members of the congregation acting as disciples. Easter morning brings a glorious gathering with handbells, choir, brass orchestra and an uplifting sermon. Pentecost Sunday is celebrated by everyone wearing red. A Christmas concert is performed every year in mid-December that always draws a large crowd. Our choir is joined by friends who sing with us at times throughout the year. The last two years, the choir has been joined by members of a local Korean church, and a Korean children's choir has also been part of the concert. This past year we had a 21-piece orchestra to accompany the choir, the largest we have ever had, with most of the musicians being from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. On Christmas Eve there is a family, candlelight service that ends with the congregation holding up lighted candles and singing Silent Night as the church lights are dimmed.

The Sunday services last approximately an hour, being somewhat longer on communion Sundays and days with baptisms.

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

Young people lead in worship and help with Sunday School. People continue to form their faith through volunteering, serving, participating in worship and in our music program (choir and handbells), in prayer groups, fellowship and study groups. Recently we offered a yearlong study group using the book, "We Make the Road by Walking", by Brian D. McLaren. This provided insightful discussions, sharing and reflection, a perspective of our faith journey, and knowing each other better.

## **Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission:**

We struggle with communication because we have both old school and current culture which makes it difficult to meet all needs in communication. Our leadership is organized yearly by a voted upon group of volunteers (Leadership Team). Committees are formed as needed. We struggle to identify and work toward a vision due to a lack of pastoral leadership and our congregation's challenges in being able to "live out" a vision (issues of age and health).

## **CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Active members:** 246

**Active non-members:** 88

### **Number of total participants by age: Active membership**

We have many missing birth dates in Power Church. This is an incomplete and very rough estimate.

**0-11:** 10

**12-17:** 2

18-24: 9  
25-34: 8  
35-44: 6  
45-54: 12  
55-64: 21  
65-74: 24  
75-99: 75

### **Household types: Estimates**

**Single under 35:** 5%  
**Households with minors:** 10%  
**Single 35-65:** 5%  
**Joint households no minors:** 40%  
**Single over 65:** 40%

### **Employment types: Estimates**

**Employed:** 24%  
**Retired:** 75%  
**Not fully employed:** 1%

### **Education levels: Estimates**

**High school:** 8%  
**College:** 45%  
**Graduate school:** 45%

**Specialty training:** 1%

**Other:** 1%

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

We have no records as to the occupations of our members.

**Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in the congregation, and the overall racial make-up:**

White with one Korean descent.

**Ethnic heritages in the congregation:**

We are not a diverse or large congregation. The congregation is mostly Caucasian, however our choir director is Korean, as are some of our choral scholars.

**Has the congregation had a conversation recently about welcoming diversity:**

We discuss “welcoming” regularly. New membership is a repeated conversation as we would love to increase membership and would welcome new members but struggle to create an active ‘vision” as mentioned previously.

**Ways of gathering, estimated number of participants, who plans each of the gatherings:**

Adult Groups or Classes:           25 participants-Pastor plans

Baptisms:                               No baptisms for 2019  
Four baptisms for 2020 as of May 12, 2020

Children’s classes:                   5-7 participants-Educator plans

Christmas Eve and Easter:	150+ participants-Pastor and Music Director plan
Choirs and music programs:	17 participants in choir, 7 handbell ringers-Music Director and Choir Director plan
Thursday and Good Friday	
Services:	Led by the pastor, planned with lay leaders, music director, choir directors
Communion:	Offered monthly. Volunteers take communion to homebound members.
Confirmation:	4 participants -Volunteers plan and lead, pastor Performs the confirmations
Funerals:	12 individuals-Pastor plans with family, music director. 4 funerals as of May 12, 2020
Prayer group:	8 participants, meet weekly-Prayer Group Leaders plan, pastor attends.
Weddings:	1 non-member couple in 2019-Pastor and wedding coordinator plan 1 non-member wedding planned for November 2020
Worship:	70-90 participants weekly, planned by Pastor and Music Director
Youth Group:	3 participants-work with sister UCC churches through the Illumination Youth Group-planned by volunteer leaders 4 confirmands for 2019: no confirmands for 2020

Churchwide meals are provided in Fellowship Hall occasionally with congregational meetings or other special occasions.

**Members in the congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers:**

**Henry Marksberry**-retired and living in an assisted living facility and is unable to attend church.

**Current staff, including ministers:**

<b>Administrative Secretary</b>	Kelli Taylor
<b>Music Director</b>	Michael Sullivan
<b>Choir Director</b>	Dobin Park
<b>Custodian</b>	Donnie Carr

## **CHURCH FINANCES**

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

<b><u>SOURCE</u></b>	<b><u>AMOUNT</u></b>
<b>Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving</b>	\$208,441.68
<b>Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within Spending policy, such as a cap typically 4.5%-5% on total return)</b>	\$0.00
<b>Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted By spending policy, “drawing down the Principal”</b>	\$0.00
<b>Fundraising Events</b>	\$0.00
<b>Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose</b>	\$35, 687.31
<b>Grants</b>	\$1500.00
<b>Rentals of Church Building</b>	\$4,330.00
<b>Rentals of Church Parsonage</b>	\$0.00
<b>Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women’s Group)</b>	\$0.00

<b>Transfers from Special Accounts</b>	\$64,874.20
	Not included in total below, as it was not "income"
<b>Other (specify): Sale of Property</b>	\$195,764.75
<b>Other (specify): Bequest</b>	\$32,172.16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$481,283.37</b>

This does not include income on the investment fund.

**Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):**  
\$307,683.72 (2019)

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

30.7%

**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.)**

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%)**

It is not a percentage, but a figure determined by the budget committee when proposing the budget.

**What is the church's current indebtedness?**

None

**Total amount of loan debt:**

\$0.00

**Reason for debt:**

N/A

**Are capital and other payments current:**

Yes

**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:**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>GOAL</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>IMPACT</u>
2008-09	Roof replacement	\$225,000	\$225,000	70-year old roof

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

N/A

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

The roof desperately needed replacement. Damage to the sanctuary would have ensued had we not replaced the roof.

**Does the church have an endowment?**

Yes

**What is the market value of the assets?**

\$909,878.50 as of 12/31/19. \$748,334.38 as of 3/31/2020.

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

Under specific circumstances.

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

0% last year. In 2015 the draw was approximately 8%.

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

None in 2019 or 2018. \$35,000 each year of 2015, 2016, 2017.

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

We are authorized to draw as much as \$100,000 for 2020. At that rate, the funds would last 5-7 years. We have not drawn any funds YTD.

**Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:**

Some of the funds in the investment accounts are dedicated to specific purposes, so would not be available for draw-down.

**Other assets:**

**Reserves (savings): \$**

Savings are in the investment accounts.

**Investments (other than endowment): \$**

All investments are in the same account.

**Does your church have a parsonage?**

No

**Fair market value of the parsonage:**

N/A

**How is the parsonage used?**

N/A

**Number of bedrooms, bathrooms?**

N/A

**Assessed real estate value:**

N/A

**Available for minister residence:**

N/A

**Expected minister residence:**

N/A

**Condition of structure, systems, and appliances:**

N/A

**Describe all buildings owned by the church:**

We have a single large building that includes the sanctuary, fellowship hall, offices, and multiple classrooms.

There is a small 2-story building located behind the church called the Scout House which is currently unused.

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

N/A

**Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?**

There is an elevator that stops at all levels of the building. However, the pulpit, chancel area, and balcony are not accessible.

**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? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?**

Budgeting is done by a committee consisting of the treasurer, pastor, and members from the Leadership Team. The most recent new initiative has been participating in a tutoring program for at risk students in the Newport School system. We are facing a major budget change now since our income is not matching our expenses.

## **BUDGET PROPOSAL 2020**

### **2019 for comparison**

2019 Income (12/31/19)	\$213,774
Total 2019 Pledges (12/31/2018)	\$164,700
2019 Expenses (12/31/19)	\$313,448

### **2020 Income Projection**

Pledges (as of 1/23/20)	\$101,525
Non-Pledge Income	\$ 90,000
Total as of 1/23/2020	\$191,525
Total Budget Target	\$317,911

The budget target is roughly \$126,000 more than total pledges plus anticipated non-pledge income. There are 35 families that pledged last year and for whom we have no pledge cards to date. Pledges from these families could make up some of the difference. The Leadership Team will be contacting these folks over the next few weeks.

However, we do have a problem! I am proposing an interim solution, but the Leadership Team needs to work on longer term approaches to our budgetary situation.

## PROPOSED BUDGET

CATEGORY	Actual 12/31/19	2019 Budget	2020 Proposal
Education	\$5,312	\$2,000	\$1,900
Enrichment	\$969	\$1,500	\$1,800
Missions	\$5,300	\$8,315	\$7,800
Office Operations	\$47,040	\$31,446	\$31,646
Worship	\$5,562	\$5,450	\$7,550
Music	\$5,040	\$5,005	\$5,100
Personnel	\$153,340	\$171,849	\$167,301
Buildings	\$94,408	\$82,109	\$94,814
Totals	\$317,972	\$307,674	\$317,910

## Personnel Detail

Pastor	\$60,000
Pastor Fringe Benefits	\$32,024
Music Staff	\$36,754
Office & Other Staff	\$21,840
Child Care	\$4,000
Other	\$9,683
Pastoral Search	\$3,000
Total General	\$167,301

- “Pastor” includes the pastor’s cash salary plus housing allowance
- “Pastor Fringe Benefits” includes the employer portion of Social Security, annuity, health insurance, and life insurance.
- “Music Staff” includes Choir Director, Music Director.
- “Office Staff” includes Administrative Secretary.
- “Child Care” is the amount we pay Sunday childcare.
- “Other” includes Worker’s Compensation, Social Security for staff, web coordinator, and our contribution to the Illumination Youth Group.
- “Pastoral Search” is for potential expenses for the search.

## **HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation.**

- In the 1960’s, our Pastor at that time, Reverend Harold Barkhau and members of our congregation, along with other local ministers and churches, were instrumental in fighting and eradicating the racketeering, gambling, and prostitution that was rampant in our community by gangsters.
- We serviced the children of Newport with Camp Sunshine, Park Avenue Club and Vacation Bible School. Currently we provide a weekly food pantry for 100-125 families, totaling approximately 250-300 people.
- In 2007, our minister’s daughter went to the Presbyterian College in Rubate, Kenya as a chaperone for a Southwest Ohio Youth Immersion. Through her relationship with the college, she learned they needed a medical clinic. St. John’s responded with a gift of \$10,000 for the clinic and many other Southwest Ohio churches brought the amount up to \$70,000. The clinic was built with local labor and materials, and in 2010 our minister Steve Hecky, was invited to attend the dedication of the clinic. Seven other UCC folks went along as well as Association Minister Ruth Brandon. Later, Steve’s daughter joined the Peace Corps after doing social work in Eastern Kentucky. She was assigned to Lifiso Child Care Support, an organization helping AIDS orphans in a small village 4 hours north of Johannesburg, South Africa. It was during her 27 months of work with these kids that she returned home for a Christmas break and shared her experiences with the congregation. She asked if we would support financially, a well to be dug for fresh water for the children at the local school. Once again, the people of St. John’s responded with a sizable donation to help in getting the well project off the ground and operational.

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

Specific changes we have managed recently have been the up and down and in and out of pastoral leadership through the past decade. This has been difficult for the church as a whole and has left us without strong leadership.

**Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict. Describe a recent conflict and how your congregation learned from it. Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well.**

A recent conflict occurred when the past leadership was considering merging with a startup church of another denomination, without informing the congregation of the possibility. Word spread from their church to ours and it began a major onslaught of anger, suspicion, distrustfulness, and hurt feelings.

The result was the congregation voted not to pursue this merger, and several members of the leadership team resigned their positions and left the church. Some of these people will attend worship on occasion.

**Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.**

We have a 3-step conflict management policy that is based on scripture.

## MINISTERIAL HISTORY

### Staff members name

### Years of service

John Gantt, Settled Minister	March 1990-June 1998
Steve Hecky, Settled Minister	September 1, 2000-June 30, 2012
Tom Nordberg, Interim	October 1, 2012-November 30, 2013
David Schwab, Interim	December 1, 2013-January 26, 2014
Daniel Meister, Settled Minister	November 17, 2013-October 9, 2016
Andrew Bierken, Interim	February 20, 2017-September 30, 2018
Houston Hall, Interim	May 12, 2019-June 30, 2020

\*Daniel Meister did not actually start his duties until February 2014 since he had arranged a sabbatical with his previous church, thereby the overlap between him and David Schwab.

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

We have learned that relationships between a congregation and its ministerial leadership require trust.

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

A settled pastor resigned after 2-1/2 years. We are willing to discuss the details with any candidate.

### **Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?**

No

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

No

## WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)*

### COMMUNITY VISION

### MISSION INSITE

#### COMMUNITY VISION

To be His light that shines on others

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

While we strive to achieve our mission statement, it has fallen short in recent years due in part to a lack of a settled pastor and the inability to construct a strategic plan for our future. Some of the activities we have been able to sustain are:

- Our church has a food pantry which serves 100-125 families per week, which is approximately 250-300 people.
- We participate in local Trash Bash-helping to clean up the streets of Newport.
- We participate in the East Row Garden Walk by allowing vendors to use our parking lot and church lawn for displays and we were the starting point of the tour where individuals could buy tickets and begin the tour.
- We participate in the East Row Yard Sale by allowing individuals to use our church lawn to sell their items. We also participate by giving away bottles of water and hotdogs to anyone attending the event.
- We collaborate with local UCC churches to provide Bible studies, youth groups, and confirmation classes.
- Alcohol Anonymous, Al Anon and Narcotics Anonymous hold meetings weekly in our building.

- A local Montessori school uses part of our space for some of their classrooms.
- We provide monetary support to:
  - Camp Washington UCC Mission
  - Council of Churches, SONKA, Chicago
  - Theological Seminary
  - Brighton Center Utility Program
  
- We provide home communion.
- We have a weekly prayer group.
- We provide music, band, and choral community concerts.
- We work with and support community tutoring programs.
- We join with other local citizens for tree planting in Newport.
- We open the church for the yearly Victorian Christmas Tour, providing snacks, beverages, and a warm place to get in from the cold. We give tours of the church building, have games for kids, and at times have provided seasonal music by our handbell choir and other musicians.

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

We have been more involved in these ministries when we had settled ministers and have struggled to remain so during the times of our interims.

**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.**

Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community:

- Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking
- Border and Immigration Justice
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- Other UCC Designations
- Designations from other denominations
- None

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

- During the Lenten season we had combined bible studies with the local UCC Churches in Bellevue and Ft. Thomas.
- We had combined Ash Wednesday service with two local UCC churches.
- We had plans to have combined Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services with these 2 local churches, but had to cancel due to the pandemic.
- In collaboration with two local UCC churches and a local Presbyterian church, we have video services every Sunday morning of our combined worship due to the quarantine.

- For several years, some of our members attended the Montreat Worship and Music Conference in North Carolina, where they expanded their knowledge of worship procedures and music. Through worshipping and sharing with people of other denominations from across the country, and the many workshops they attended, they gained new ideas for enriching our worship.

**If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?**

Mission statement: To be the Light that transforms lives.

St. John's Church strives to be the light that guides our members closer to God in their beliefs and their actions. We do this in our worship service, Sunday School, prayer group, our giving through the food pantry, music program, as well as other community programs we support that have been mentioned previously.

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

We expect the pastor to have a commitment with community involvement and will leave the amount of time spent in this endeavor to his/her discretion.

## MISSION INSITE

**Comment on your congregation's Mission InSite report with data from your neighborhood or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?**

The city of Newport, Kentucky has a population of 14,796, and has been declining by -0.75% annually. The population has declined by -3.12% since the 2010 census.

Out of 12,312 adults-1907 are seniors.

Breakdown by race:

White	84.51%
African American	11.27%
Other	2.37%
Two or more races	1.58%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.13%
Asian	0.13%
Native American	0.01%

The median household income has increased in the past 10 years from \$35,731 to \$39,515 and is expected to increase to \$46,126 by 2024.

The median age of Newport residents is 35.9 for males and 35.8 for females with a ratio of male to female 1:1.

The overall poverty rate is 31.72%. 42% of households include children under 18, with an increase in single parent homes which is estimated to stay roughly the same in 2024. This information validates the need for our food pantry and provides opportunities to aid families in other areas of need. The median ages being 35.9, 35.8 reflect an age group we would like to attract to our congregation, especially those with children under 18, which could be accomplished through solid youth programs.

Of importance to note is the percent of people active in a religious congregation, now compared to 10 years ago:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Active in religious congregation	34.99%	65.01%
10 years prior	46.69%	53.31%

48% of denominational affiliations in the city are comprised of:

American Baptist	11.25%
Roman Catholic	26.44%
United Methodist	10.26%

Important reasons given for non-participation in a religious congregation are:

- Disillusionment with religion.
- Do not trust organized religion.
- Do not trust religious leaders.
- Do not believe in God.
- Religion too focused on money.
- People too judgmental.
- Strict/inflexible beliefs.
- Not relevant to my life.

These trends show there is a decrease in participation in organized religion. The reasons given provide many opportunities and will require hard work and some changes to show people that our congregation is welcoming, honest, and trustworthy. With a strategic plan in place, we could plan innovative ways of appealing to people that are more compatible with the current times.

**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 congregation is primarily Caucasian and most of our members live outside of Newport, though many grew up in Newport in this church, but have since moved to other surrounding cities. Most of the inhabitants of Newport and surrounding cities are Caucasian with a mix of African Americans. Most of our members are over 75 while the median age of adults in Newport is 35.9.

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

With the overall poverty rate being 31.72%, there is a need for financial assistance and help with food, which we provide. The number of children in the area certainly benefit from an increase in youth programs as well as our HEARTS tutoring program, and vacation Bible School.

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

Local leaders remember us for the major impacts we have had on the community. From working with other churches in Newport to eradicate gambling, racketeering and prostitution, to delivering food to those in need, providing community music programs, vacation bible school for all, and our support of Brighton Center, community leaders know of the impact we have made.

## 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 feel God is calling us to seek changes that will lead us to a path of 21<sup>st</sup> century ministry.
- We feel God is calling us to become a congregation that is loving, accepting, and united in purpose of worshipping God and doing his work.
- We feel God wants us to collaborate on all things important in the life of the church and to be able to disagree in a dignified and respectful manner toward each other.
- We feel God is calling us to be a source of light and hope for the community by expanding our community outreach.
- We feel God is calling us to be welcoming to all.
- We feel God is calling us to provide a Christian environment of discipleship.

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

Challenges within our congregation:

1. We are an aging church-we need to attract young families and youth.
2. We are a church with declining membership-we need to increase our numbers.
3. We are a church that is weary from not having a settled minister-we need to find the person God has planned for us.
4. We are a church that tends to cling to the past and the "way things used to be"-we need to be open minded to change, realizing that is the only way to survive.

### **Challenges within our community:**

1. We need to understand that commitment and involvement in church life is declining among many people.
2. We need to determine what the needs of our community are and strive to meet those needs in innovative ways.
3. We need to find ways to attract people to our church and devise methods for getting them involved in the life of the church.

## CLOSING PRAYER

*In this time of great need, our congregation has a core of love and gratitude. This "Prayer of Gratitude for Our Church" speaks to God from the heart of our congregation.*

Lord, thank you for all you do in our lives. We are grateful for all you provide. You bless us in ways we can't imagine or completely understand, but we feel blessed. Today we lift up to you our church. It is the place we go to worship you. It is where we learn about you. It is where you are present with us, and so we ask for your blessing over it.

Lord, our church is more than a building to us. We are a group that lifts one another up, and we ask that you give us the heart to continue in that way. We ask you to bless us with the desire to do more for the world around us and for one another. We ask that those in need are identified by the church and are given a helping hand. We ask that we reach out to the community where you see fit to help. Most of all, we ask that you bless us with the resources to fulfill your mission for our church. We ask that you give us the ability to be great stewards over those resources and that you guide our hand in using them.

Lord, we ask that you give us a strong sense of your spirit in our church. We ask that you fill our hearts with all that you are and direct us in ways that are always living in your will. We ask that you bless us in our direction and point us toward how we can do more in you. We ask that when people enter our church that they feel you all around them. We ask that we remain hospitable to each other and to outsiders, and we ask for your grace and forgiveness when we slip up.

And Lord, we ask for the blessing of wisdom on our church leaders. We ask that you guide the messages that come out of our leader's mouths. We ask that the words uttered among the congregants be ones that honor you and do more to spread your Word than to harm relationships with you. We ask that we all be honest yet uplifting. We ask that you guide our leaders to be examples to others. We ask that you continue to bless them with servant's hearts and a sense of responsibility to those they lead.

Lord, our church is a most important part of our lives because it brings us closer to you. We ask for your blessings on it, and we lift it up to you. Thank you, Lord, for allowing us to be this congregation and therefore a part of you.

In your holy name, Amen.

*(A Prayer of Gratitude for Your Church, Kelli Mahoney, LearnReligions.com, 2019)*

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## 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 a 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 healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

Individuals and groups in the church who contributed to the contents of the Local Church Profile:

Chuck Hawkins, Church Treasurer

Michael Sullivan, Director of Music

Kelli Taylor, Administrative Secretary

Congregation of St. John's UCC Newport

Leadership Team Members

Pastor Steve Hecky, past minister at St. John's UCC Newport

Pastoral Search Committee:

Tim Barber

Laura Haas

David Stamm

Kyle Taylor

Pat Goins, Chairperson

**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:



## BRIGHTON CENTER A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

PO Box 325 • Newport, KY 41072-0325 • 859.491.8303 • Fax 859.491.8702 • [www.brightoncenter.com](http://www.brightoncenter.com)

June 26, 2020

Re: Letter of Reference for St. John's UCC

St. John's UCC has had a long relationship with Brighton Center within the Newport community. Brighton Center is a local non-profit social service organization whose mission is to create opportunities for individuals and families to reach self-sufficiency through family support services, education, employment and leadership. We offer 40 different programs and services including early childhood education, youth services, emergency assistance and case management, financial wellness, workforce development and job training, recovery services for women, and volunteer opportunities. Find out more at [www.brightoncenter.com](http://www.brightoncenter.com).

St. John's strengths have been in their support of the community. They are active members of the Safety Net Alliance and serve on the Food Committee, which helps to coordinate food assistance across various pantries in Northern Kentucky. They also operate a significant food pantry for residents. They have worked with Brighton Center to set up an emergency assistance fund where they can refer people to us to assess, help with the immediate need, and then connect people with services that can lead to self-sufficiency. This holistic way of helping families has been very effective. Over the last 14 years, general donations and donations to this specific fund have totaled \$15,437.

St. John's has also been very generous with the use of their space in Fellowship Hall. They have allowed our child development centers to have annual graduations at the church as well as allowed Brighton Center to have our annual Christmas Holiday lunch for staff at the church. The Church has always been responsive to any requests we have made.

In looking to the future, the Church may want to consider their role in social justice issues such as racial equity and affordable housing. There is also room for coordination of the churches in Newport. Years ago, there was a Newport Ministerial Association that increased communication between churches, coordinated events and assistance, and worked to create a collective voice for the church community.

Brighton Center looks forward to a continued strong working relationship with St. John's UCC and would welcome a new Pastor to this community.

Sincerely,

Tammy Weidinger  
President & CEO

[tweidinger@brightoncenter.com](mailto:tweidinger@brightoncenter.com)

859-491-8303, ext. 2416



510 Linden Ave.  
Newport, KY. 41071

30 June 2020

Ms Pat Goins  
7 Springside Dr.  
Alexandria, KY 41076

Dear Pat:

As Shakespeare wrote in *King Henry the Fourth, Part Two*, “Uneasy rests the head that wears the crown.” So, I think, for chairs of Pastoral Search Committees. That task on behalf of a dear congregation in 2020 is all the more a challenge.

Describe some areas of strength in the ministry of St. John’s

Community engagement going back many many decades — a leader in the quality of life for Newport and its residents;

Care for the community outside the doors as represented by the Food Pantry with its leadership and volunteers;

Participation in tutoring and after school programming for Newport Public Schools;

Location in the heart of the Mansion Hill Historic District — a place that has seen great personal investment in revived sense of community;

Facility that is in good shape physically (no significant deferred maintenance) and with an abundance of meeting/classroom space;

Sanctuary that is warm, inviting, and spiritual — with supportive technology to assist those with sight and/or hearing impairment;

Congregation that is supportive and appreciative of thoughtful preaching;

Sustained appreciation of a quality program of music both for worship and for the greater community through concerts. The joy derived from the musical scholar program has brought channels of musical talent and diversity; and,

Cooperation with other area churches as demonstrated during this time of Covid-19 pandemic and virtual worship — a sustained involvement.

Describe specific areas for improvement in the ministry of St. John's

Congregational identification that it is an urban beacon for the ministry of Christ. Members live elsewhere, but the ministry's outreach is the urban Newport poor

Change in the membership demographics — older with energy and transportation issues. Folks can no longer volunteer as they did years back;

Lack of a designated person serving in the role of pastoral services — called to visit home bound, nursing homes, and such. And does so with love and delight; and

Open to changes — hard though they be — for Christ's ministry to flourish in 2020

Describe a significant experience you have had of the ministry of St. John's

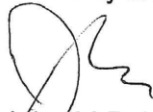
Being embraced by membership who were homebound or in hospitals and nursing homes, including Hospice Care. This was humbling and encouraging;

Concerts of Christian, music eg., The Messiah, were very spiritual. One left with a closer walk with Jesus;

Participation in the tutoring program and Vacation Bible School — very encouraging; and,

Food Pantry leadership was inspiring.

Sincerely and with prayers of hope,



John M Robson  
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