INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who are we
Who is our neighbor
Who is God calling us to become
?

The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. All congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

St. John’s United Church of Christ
Norwood-Young America, MN

Solo Pastor

Minnesota Conference

Validated: 8/4/2021

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

➢ Position Posting
➢ Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
➢ Who Are We Now?
➢ Who Is Our Neighbor?
➢ References
➢ Consent and Validation

“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”

(2 Corinthians 9:8)
LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: St. John’s United Church of Christ
Street address: 12984 Co Rd. 51, Norwood Young America, MN  55368
Supplemental web links: www.stjohnsuccnya.org  and www.bongardsmarket.com

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

Conference: Minnesota
Association: n/a

UCC Conference Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):
Rev. Cindy Mueller
Steward of Search & Call and Congregational Legacy Planning
for the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
cindym@uccmn.org

Tel. 612/230.3367 (office)
763/439.3952 (cell)
763/515-3281 (home) - preferred

Summary Ministry Description:
We are a 155-year-old congregation in the community. We strive to warmly embracing those new to community and longtime residents. We are seeking a solo pastor to join us in celebrating multi-generational families and their heritage, while welcoming new arrivals as long-time family.
Photographs:
What we value about living in our area:
We value friendships, being connected to one another, and a close connection to our rural roots and the environment. Members take great pride in our communities.

Current size of membership: 105

Languages used in ministry (other than English): English

Position Title: Solo 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 MN Conference

Compensation Level:
½ Time – 20-25 hours a week
In the past, we have had ¾ time and full-time pastors. We currently have ½ time interim minister.

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? No

SCOPE OF WORK
These are a prioritized in order of importance and as time allows:
● Strategic planning and evolution for current and new directions in ministry
● Energizing and deepening the spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do
● Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship – crafting the liturgy, scripture study, sermon prep, including bulletin preparation, music choice, finding and guiding lay liturgists, preaching, prayers, etc.
● Consultation and coordination with boards, committees, and program leaders
● Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them
● Lead pastoral and congregational care innovation, collaboration and coordination with lay people (visits, cards, phone calls, coffee meet-ups)
● Weddings and funerals for participants in the worshipping community
● Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills so as to lead, teach, preach better
Core Competencies:
- A generalist and people-person who is comfortable with all functions of a pastor: counselor, preacher, teacher, and administrator.
- A good communicator who is approachable, a great active listener, and able to manage people’s anxiety during a change in processes.
- Able to provide pastoral care to all congregational members; homebound, pastoral emergencies, hospitalization, those dealing with grief, etc. Able to create a lay program to engage and nurture lay members in providing care for other members.
- Understands the complexity of blending existing multi-generational member families with new member families.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT
Compensation: $30,000/year (which includes the social security off-set)

Benefits:
- Salary to be applied as pastor desires
- Additional non-health care benefits negotiable (paid time off, continuing education time off/turns, etc.)

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?
Our parsonage is currently being rented. The pastor may live in another home and commute as needed. If you’re interested in living in the parsonage when the current lease expires, we will offer the same compensation package plus the parsonage and utilities.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister’s bi-vocational employment:
Currently, we have a bi-vocational interim pastor. This arrangement is currently working well for us.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?
Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.
- Innovatively engage new residents and established members to share their faith with others
- Find ways for “Church” beyond Sunday worship with a variety of ways to engage folks outside of the church walls. We currently have a seasonal farmers market. This serves the community and is a growth opportunity.
● Create opportunities that engage the multi-generational congregation and help the different generations communicate their wants and needs with each other, and discern together where God is calling us to go in the future.

● Engage all ages in worship

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.  
We are searching for a minister who will work alongside us and help us discern how we might make a bigger impact within our 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.
We’re an English-speaking congregation

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
● Building transformational leadership skills
● Engaging sacred stories and traditions
● Strengthening inter- and intra- personal assets
WHICH 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?

*God is calling the church to become a congregation that learns how to reach out, and grow in relationship with newcomers to the area and appreciate their ideas, hopes and vision of the church, in order to provide a sense of an extended, multigenerational family, providing support through life’s celebrations, transitions, and challenges.*

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

- We are committed to having a permanent pastor who helps us discern God’s vision for our future.
- We are committed to continue to serve our community with our seasonal farmers market with Power of Produce (PoP) Club (4-12 age), youth activities, and Power of Produce (PoP) Plus (65+ age). More information about the PoP Clubs is available on our website. [https://bongardsmarket.com](https://bongardsmarket.com)
- We have on-going partnerships with other groups in the area (See Community Vision, Page 21).
- We are committed to continue and expand communication and engagement with cards, letters, emails, and social media alongside the monthly newsletter to keep members and the greater St. John’s community informed.
WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

● A strong belief in family and traditions
● Basic Christian values

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

● Supportive of youth taking part in the life of the church
● Willing to help when asked

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

● Worship is traditional, following the liturgical year or an established sermon series
● Scripture, with pastoral meditations applied to real-life, day-to-day situations

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

● Re-inventing a more engaging Confirmation program for our youth
● Expand education offerings for adults for continuing faith deepening

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Decisions are communicated in a variety of formats: Bongards Buzz (eNewsletter), email, regular mail, social media, and website. A Consistory Team leads the church, with some additional specialized teams and committees to support specific ministry areas. We struggle with having enough folks in leadership roles vs. supporting team roles.

https://stjohnsuccnya.org/staff-and-leadership/

● When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
Consistory Team Meetings are held monthly, for approximately 1 1/hrs to 2 hrs. Communications are also done by email.

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

  During COVID, we used email and online conferencing tools to meet and make decisions quickly. Our team has embraced the flexibility of online meetings.

- 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. We’re experimenting with a different organizational structure to see what may better fit our needs and vision for the future. Additional information, such as meeting minutes, are also available online and by request electronically.

11-YEAR REPORT

**AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST IN FULL PROFILE**

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of active members:</td>
<td>105 Members per 11 year report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of active non-members:</td>
<td>15 YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years:</td>
<td>90% Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years:</td>
<td>10% Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of total participants by age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-11</th>
<th>12-17</th>
<th>18-65</th>
<th>65+</th>
<th>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*AVAILBLE UPON REQUEST IN FULL PROFILE**
Percentage of adults in various employment types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults who are employed:</td>
<td>67% Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults who are retired:</td>
<td>33% Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation: *professional, technical, and agricultural*

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. 
*Our congregation is mostly white or European descent, with limited diversity which is also representative of Carver County residents.*

[https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/carvercountyminnesota/PST045219](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/carvercountyminnesota/PST045219)

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)?

*Conversations about diversity were held among the Consistory Team members while conducting the Interim Pastor Search. We would like to continue these conversations.*

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of Gathering (Description of the event)</th>
<th>Estimated number of people in attendance</th>
<th>Who plans each of the listed gatherings?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Groups or Classes (Women’s Guild and Bongards Book Club) PRE-COVID</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Women’s Guild President and Pastor, respectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms (number last year)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Pastor with Worship Ministry Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Groups or Classes PRE-COVID</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>This program may or may not continue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Eve and Easter Worship PRE-COVID</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Pastor with Worship Ministry Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church-wide Meals</strong> (Monthly Sunday Coffee Hour with Donuts, Mardi Gras Potluck, Maundy Thursday Soup Supper, and Easter Breakfast) PRE-COVID</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Consistory Team with Pastor and/or the Womens Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choirs and Music Groups</strong> PRE-COVID</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Organist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communion (served how often?)</strong> (Served monthly and on Maundy Thursday) PRE-COVID</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Pastor with Worship Ministry Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Meals PRE-COVID</strong> (Pork Chop Dinner &amp; Worship with Johnny Cash BBQ Dinner)</td>
<td>200/100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmation (number last year)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funerals (number last year)</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pastor with Consistory Team. Any meal served in Fellowship Hall after the funeral is coordinated with the Women’s Guild President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Worship (During COVID)</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pastor with Consistory Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weddings (number last year)</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship (time slot: 9:15am) (POST-COVID)</strong></td>
<td>25 to 30</td>
<td>Pastor with Consistory Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Groups or Classes (number last year) (Confirmation Classes)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other – Bongards Farmers Market (POST-COVID)</strong></td>
<td>175/weekly</td>
<td>Bongards Market Team Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff. 
*The Consistory President serves as the Head of Staff. Aside from the Pastor, all staff positions are held by volunteers.*  
[https://stjohnsuccnya.org/staff-and-leadership/](https://stjohnsuccnya.org/staff-and-leadership/)
Music: Organist, Guitarist, Violinist
Consistory Team: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, 2 At Large members
Committees and Clubs: Bongards Market Lead and Women’s Guild President

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

- We could do a better job of reaching out, caring for each other, and engaging with our communities.

Church Finances
**Available upon request in full profile**

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.

The History of Our Church
Only 10 years prior to the organization of the congregation, Carver County was organized. Carver County was known as one of the “big woods” counties, because of its dense forests. German families from Rheinland, Germany had immigrated and settled in Benton Township. Others followed from Wisconsin and neighboring states.

It was January 2, 1866 that a meeting was held for the purpose of found and organizing a Reformed Church in the Township of Benton, Carver County, Minnesota. Prior to this, services were conducted in homes by the Rev. J. Romeis, who had come to this territory in 1865. At this meeting, a constitution was adopted and signed by sixty members.

This newly organized congregation was to be named the “Deutsch-Evangelish Reformierte St Johannes Gemeinde.” Later, it was changed to “St. John’s Evangelical and Reformed Church.” In 1958, it was again changed to “St. John’s United Church of Christ,” which it is known as today.

At this meeting, Gerhard Bongard and Heinrich Bergmann were elected as elders and Frederick Lemke and Theodore Spicier as deacons. It was decided to build a frame log church with the members furnishing the logs. Two acres of land were purchased from Arnold Willemsen, with part of it to be used for cemetery purposes.
After its organization, for a short time, St. John’s congregation was affiliated with the Sheboygan Classis. However, during the year 1866, a Minnesota Classis was organized of which it became a charter member. After the merger of the E and R and CC denominations, St. John’s congregation became a member of the Northern Synod.

In 1883, the current framed church was erected and in the late 1890’s the church’s first organ was purchased. In 1937, the church was enlarged and moved to a full basement which included an office, restrooms, meeting facilities, and a kitchen.

Our cherished, stained glass windows were installed in 1943. By In 1969, a new entry way was constructed. Throughout the years, St. John’s has taken great pride in maintaining the history of the church, parsonage, and grounds, while making improvements including an elevator for handicap accessibility.

**The Language of Our Church**

During the year 1928, the English language was introduced and utilized once a month. By the time the church celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1941, two sermons were given, one in German one in English.

Church records, including the Constitution written in 1866, were penned in German. In 1946, it was the first time the annual congregational meeting was recorded in English. During the years of 1948 to 1950, the congregation wrestled with German-English language problem, which resulted in the ratio of two sermons in English to one in German.

By the late 1950’s all sermons were in English, but many life-long members remember these services and/or spoke German in their homes.

**Recent Events**

The summer of 2012 was our inaugural year for our seasonal farmers Market. In 2016, we celebrated our 150th anniversary. [An electronic copy of the celebration included]

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

During the COVID pandemic, we worshipped in-person outdoors during July, August, and September 2020. In October 2020, we moved indoors for in-person worship with a COVID Response Plan in place, which successfully kept members and friends safe. We also implemented Facebook live-streaming, and continue to do so, for in-person events and have a YouTube channel as online repository for services.

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.

There was conflict with Pastor Kolwey. We engaged the MN UCC Conference staff for guidance and assistance with mediation.
Ministerial History (include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member’s name</th>
<th>Years of service</th>
<th>UCC Standing (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shuji Moriichi- interim</td>
<td>2020-present</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy Kolwey</td>
<td>2016-2020</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Westrich</td>
<td>2012-2016</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Mark</td>
<td>2006-2011</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney Schlessor</td>
<td>1998-2006</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Zenke</td>
<td>1960-1996</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:
Everyone believes they have the best interests of the church in mind when making decisions. We need to work on better communication with one another and be able to work through conflict openly. We need to embrace change with an open mind in relation to the new pastor and congregational expectations. A minister who works side-by-side, collaborates with the Consistory team, and engages the congregation will be successful.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? No, we began one with our last settled pastor, and then she tendered her resignation and then it didn’t go any further.

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

- An excerpt from our 2020 Annual Report:
  - Successful season for Bongards Farmers Market  [https://bongardsmarket.com/](https://bongardsmarket.com/)
  - Provided weekly online activities and recipes in lieu of the in-person PoP Club
  - Coordinated Little Dresses for Africa (LDFA) program with 80 dresses donated
  - Partnered with His House Foundation on their Essentials Collection Drive
  - Supported the Southwest Carver Food Shelf with cash and food donations
  - Supported the Carver County Homeless with a cash donation
  - Supported UCC’s Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) with cash donation
  - Supported Central schools “Operation Christmas” program with cash donation
  - Coordinated Blessings Advent Calendar, collecting food for local shelves during December
  - Supported Feed My Starving Children with Christmas Eve loose offering donation

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

In 2020, the Consistory president attended the online MN UCC Annual conference meeting. We budget for attendees every year.

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) __ Global Mission Church
__ Creation Justice __ Open and Affirming (ONA)
__ Economic Justice __ WISE Congregation for Mental Health
__ Faithful and Welcoming __ Other UCC designations:
__ God Is Still Speaking (GISS) __ Designations from other denominations
__ Border and Immigrant Justice __ X OTHER Sponsor and host Bongards Farmers Market with outreach activities PoP Club and PoP Plus
__ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M)
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 are open to building on our community efforts.*

Describe your congregation’s participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional). *We don’t have anything established, but are open to participating in these activities.*

If your congregation has a mission statement:

*St. John’s United Church of Christ Mission is to...*

**Love God,** by providing a welcoming atmosphere to grow your faith in a beautiful country setting.

**Connect with Others,** by giving you the opportunity to be more than just a face in a large congregation by fostering an environment that allows you to easily meet new people, make new friends, and share in the life changing love of Jesus Christ.

**Serve Others,** by offering heart-warming community service opportunities, fun and engaging youth activities, and a relevant and relational worship service.

**Live Abundantly,** by celebrating the time, talents, and treasures God has given us and returning a portion in support of the local work of St. John’s and the wider church and community.

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. *The mission statement seems to hold up well, and propositional to the time spent gathering and governing. Going out is an area for improvement.*

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? *Participation in community ministry that is church-sponsored is expected, such as being part of the Bongards Farmers Market.*
MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation’s Mission Insite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown? Attached is an overview of the report. We are open to discussing the findings of the MISSION InSite report in more detail with our next pastor to look for ways to use this information effectively.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? We are known as being the picturesque country church in “Bongards” with the funny sign sayings and host of a seasonal local farmers market.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved? Contributing musical talents to worship and serving on the Consistory Team with new ideas.
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
Shuji Moriichi
612-462-1726 / smoriichi43@gmail.com / Interim Pastor

REFERENCE 2
Erin Rolf
612-207-5196 / erinnrolf@aol.com / Raised in the church, former member

REFERENCE 3
Charles Spigner
702-493-5981 / cmspigner@gmail.com / Friend of the church

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES
Describe some areas of strength in this church’s ministry.
Describe some areas for improvement in this church’s ministry.
Describe a significant experience you have had of this church’s ministry.
Anything else you wish to share.
CLOSING PRAYER

“This is My Father’s World” by Maltbie Davenport Babcock

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world:
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world:
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass, I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world:
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world:
Why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let earth be glad!
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.)
   Pastoral Search Committee, Consistory Team, and congregational surveys

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:
   *We know it is going to take wisdom, open minds, and faith to find that person to help us grow to meet the many opportunities that exist.*

Signed:

Michelle L. Bachmann  
Consistory President  
July 27, 2021

Attachments:
Letters of Reference

**AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST IN FULL PROFILE**

2020 Annual Report  
150th Anniversary celebration booklet  
SJUCC Constitution and Bylaws
Greeting Pastor Candidate,

I grew up being baptized, raised going to Sunday school, confirmed, and had 3 children baptized at St John's Church. The church holds many cherished memories for my family. It also holds many memories of closure as my family also has many family members who are buried in the church cemetery.

St John’s Church is a family. You walk into the doors and feel welcomed as members greet you by name. You are treated as if you are their child and younger children as if they are grandchildren. St John's consists of many older generation members which can be a challenge when it comes to change. But, I think the church motto states the church perfectly - "Rooted in Tradition. Thriving in Life. The older generation likes tradition while the younger generation helps make changes. I feel that the older members have witnessed how young members thrive and their ideas and inspiration only helps to spread growth and keep the church growing and alive. The St John's Farmer's Market is a perfect example of helping the church. It is not only a fundraiser for the church but helps promote growth in the community.

St Johns' Church is unique which makes it so special. A little country church with so much to offer and so much love. I led a group that helped parents have a night out while church members provided supper and free child care for their children. I lost count of the number of people who drove by and asked what was going on at St John’s last Friday night? I lost count of the number of milk trucks (St Johns is located across the highway from the creamery) that honked their blow horns for fun at the kids as they played in the church parking lot riding bikes and scooters. I lost count of all the smiles and hugs from the kids. I lost count of the number of times parents thanked our church for providing the service. I lost count of the number of kids who said they couldn't wait for the next event. The church helped so many families whose parents needed a night to reflect on their own relationships and for children to have fun in Christian environment. I will never forget one Mom who said as soon as her 3 year old little boy would see our church sign as they passed by on Highway 212 he would say "Bongard's Church....Bongard's Church....Bongard's Church" It is those moments that you know GOD IS GOOD and one little country church can make all the difference.

As a child I also have many memories of Sunday school, youth programs, and volunteer events that were lead by the church. I participated in Christmas and Easter programs. I volunteered at pancake and pork chop dinners as a child and continued into adulthood. The church provides many events for fellowship which makes it so special.

As an adult I left the church to become a member at the church that my husband grew up. The church we now attend also helps support the school where my children have gone since pre-school. It was the right decision for our family but St John's will always hold a place in my heart. It is the church that raised me and helped sculpt my faith. It made me the daughter, sister, grandchild, wife, mother, and friend I am today. I will never be able to express the gratitude for the members who supported me as an infant, child, teenager, and into adulthood.

I believe St John’s Church can thrive with the right leader. I hope as you read this letter you can feel how much the church means to me and so many others. I hope you consider the position at St John’s Church.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me via email or phone. My contact information is below.

Erin Rolf
612-207-5196
erinnrolf@aol.com
Dear Future Pastor,

Below is my letter of Reference for St. John’s United Church of Christ.

Describe some areas of strength in this church’s ministry.

● St. John’s congregation is friendly and has an inviting atmosphere. People know me by name.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church’s ministry.

● St. John’s needs to appeal to a younger audience and be more upbeat. I grew up as a southern Baptist. Being at St. John’s I don’t feel spiritually uplifted. The worship setting tends to be subdued and unengaging. I have pre-teen children and would like them to be excited about attending worship.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church’s ministry.

● One Christmas Eve, I participated in the Nativity as a wiseman since one of the children was sick. My children enjoyed having their Dad be part of the play.

Feel free to contact me with any additional questions or for clarification.

Charles Spigner

cspigner@gmail.com

702-493-5981
To: Michelle Bachmann, interim president of the consistory, St. John’s UCC, NYA, MN

From: (Rev.) Shuji Moriichi, interim minister, St. John’s UCC, NYA, MN

Date: 7/24/21

Re: Reference Letter for the Congregational Profile

I came to the congregation approximately a month and a half after the previous pastor’s resignation. Since then, the lay leadership (the consistory) has taken various efforts in preparing the congregation for the next phase appropriately, in order to undertake its ministries under the guidance of the next permanent minister.

Over all, I have observed that the congregation has regained sufficient stabilization and consistency in its communal practices since I became on board. In many areas of its collective life, I recognize that the congregation has reached its prior “baseline” functions and even higher in some areas. At this time, I believe that the congregation deserves solid (settled) pastoral leadership to explore its future farther.

I wish all the best to the congregation, its lay leadership body, and the new pastor to be on board.

Please feel free to contact me for additional questions.