

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Westminster Congregational

United Church of Christ

Spokane, WA

Senior Pastor

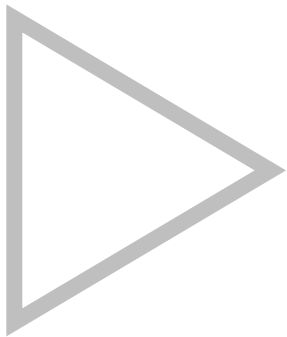
Pacific Northwest Conference
of the United Church of Christ

[Validation Date]

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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



1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. WHO WE ARE AND WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME
- c. SCOPE OF WORK
- d. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ

Street address: 411 S. Washington Street, Spokane, WA 99204

Supplemental web links:

- Church website: <https://www.westminsterucc.org/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/westminsterucc>

Conference: Pacific Northwest Conference

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Rev. Mike Denton, Conference Minister of the Pacific Northwest Conference, UCC

206-725-8383 ext. 102

mike@pncucc.org

Position Title: Senior 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 the Pacific Northwest Conference.
- Westminster is interested in a succession model, which would mean overlap with the current pastor through 8/2022; but understand that circumstances may dictate pursuing other options.

Compensation Level: Full Time

Current size of membership: 120

Languages used in ministry: English

What we value about living in our area:

The Spokane area is home to numerous unpretentious, good-hearted, and generous people. We celebrate the increasing diversity of the population and aspire to be a beacon of progressive thought and culture in a region which is more characteristically conservative. Education is valued and supported; the region has good school districts and is home to several universities and two medical schools. The natural beauty of the Inland Northwest is priceless! Through a marvelous park system, we appreciate

access to God’s creation of the nearby mountains, lakes and rivers. From spectator sports to active participation, recreational opportunities abound in this 4-season climate. This region is blessed with a rich arts culture, from the visual arts to stage productions and the extraordinary Spokane symphony.

Summary Ministry Description:

Westminster is a historic downtown church addressing the issues and challenges of this moment in time. We are seeking a pastor inspiring us to do God’s work in this world, a person willing to walk with us and help guide our journeys of faith and justice.

1b. WHO WE ARE AND WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

WHO WE ARE:

We are a joyful, loving, and intentionally inclusive community of people who grow in faith and understanding of God’s unconditional love through the teachings of Jesus. To experience how God is still speaking in today’s world, we explore questions, nurture our spirituality, and support each other in our joys and struggles. We strive, through church action and community partnerships, to advance social justice, stewardship for God’s creation, and equity for everyone. *Statement adopted by full congregational vote, Feb 2021.*

OUR COVENANT:

I covenant with you, members, and friends of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ:

- To create and sustain an open, inclusive Christian community where we can each discover our unique relationship with God;
- To lovingly work through our disagreements;
- To express our faith by sharing talents and resources with others; and
- To celebrate with you the power of God’s call and God’s Love.

Statement adopted by full congregational vote, Feb 2021.

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

We want to continue our covenantal journey of becoming a faithful community of God’s Children, rooted in love and grounded in hope. We want to be a sustainable, vibrant downtown church where everyone is welcome no matter where each individual is on their faith journey. We want to be a community of Christians where continual learning and understanding guides us in navigating our daily lives and in support of each other and our community. We want to be a community that supports

others through service and social justice. We want to better utilize our assets to attract and maintain a stable membership, further our mission, and partner creatively with the community around us.

We have two new covenants: Our Covenant with People of Color on Racism in America ([Appendix A](#)) and Our Covenant with the Environment (in process) ([Appendix B](#)). We are called to find ways to live into these commitments as best we can. We are also called to find our way to a financially sustainable future for our church. We have underway our Ekklesia Project, engaging everyone in the church in exploring our options for a new way forward.

1c. SCOPE OF WORK

The following list identifies the range of activities that Westminster's next pastor can expect to lead, guide, support, participate in, learn from, and bring inspiration to:

- Provide leadership for worship services including planning and execution.
- Lead and support church vitality: financial, growth in attendance and membership.
- Collaborate with and empower others to lead the work of the church in its many forms and expressions.
- Complete administrative duties such as report writing, meeting preparation, and staff supervision.
- Provide pastoral care. Officiate weddings and funerals.
- Support faith formation and spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, and service.
- Cultivate community connections to support church involvement in the community.
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference meetings and clergy groups.
- Practice self-care, nurture personal spiritual practice, and participate in professional development including continuing education.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

We are looking for a pastor who has:

A deep Christian faith manifested in spiritual growth, compassion, and inspirational ministry to the congregation.

...will join us on the journey as we learn, grow, worship, and serve together.

...will share and help us grow our deep commitment to extravagant welcome.

...has a solid background in scripture and the ability to facilitate opportunities for learning, understanding, and faith development.

A collaborative leadership style for a progressive Christian Community.

...is a collaborative, adaptive leader with the ability to adjust to changing circumstances, to listen well, and to build confidence, community and connection amidst diverse opinions and perspectives.

...shares our commitments to social justice and progressive Christianity and will serve as a representative of those commitments within the church and in the greater Spokane community.

Strong yet adaptable organizational and administrative skills.

...will assist in growing our membership and building a sustainable future for our congregation.

...will help utilize the assets of the church facilities and members of the congregation efficiently and effectively.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

Salary Basis includes housing allowance: \$60,000 - \$70,000

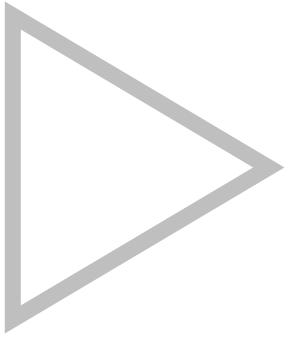
Other Benefits : annuity, health package family rate (medical, dental, vision, and life insurance), Social Security/Medicare reimbursement.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister: Live in the greater Spokane area, or within 15 miles from the Church.

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

Communities of Practice through the Pacific Northwest Conference, ecumenical groups in the Spokane area

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment: Our posting is listed as full-time. If in the future it becomes evident that a bi-vocational employment is of mutual benefit to the candidate and to Westminster, we are open to considering it.



2. 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

2a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith. For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation’s purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

We believe that our “Who We Are” statement best describes our commitment to living a life of faith. We believe in and speak frequently of God’s unconditional love, using Jesus as a model to live out love and compassion for others. We also support the freedom to explore our spirituality in a manner that includes questioning and nurturing our personal growth. We see the Holy Spirit in the form of our “extravagant welcome” giving us creative energy and power in both good and bad times.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

We embrace the UCC position of “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here;” striving to be a welcoming, accepting, nonjudgmental community, sharing sadness and joy in our collective lives. We are not afraid of hardship or challenges. We are supportive of the disenfranchised, and try to have many options for outreach, service, and community partnerships.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

We participate actively in singing, responsive readings, answering questions, and thoughtful listening. We appreciate a service that challenges us yet is comforting and hopeful; and inspires us to action. We are not a demonstrative group during the service. That does not mean we do not care; we are just reserved. We seem to prefer a more traditional liturgical service with hymns but are open to some contemporary choices. There are many congregants who contribute to the service in various ways. The development of Zoom worship involved many of us in the past 2 years and continues to serve an important role today.

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

In this pandemic season, Zoom Sunday School is offered for the children of the church, utilizing Progressive Christianity curriculum and material by Desmond Tutu. Youth group participants meet in person (all are vaccinated) for service projects and programs/studies on current justice issues. One

youth serves on the Diaconate and another is a camera operator for Zoom worship. “Tuesday Night Talks” (TNT) provides adult studies on historical and current justice issues; this group meets on Zoom.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- Diaconate and Music and Arts Committees: work with the pastor on planning worship and music.
- Serving Our Neighbors (SON) Committee: conducts research and identification of organizations in the community that fit our mission, who need support of monetary gifts and donations; then organizes drives to help fulfill those needs.
- Westminster Christian Action Team (WestCAT): works with the Spokane Alliance and other community partners on long-term policy issues for the common good: environment, employment, health care, childcare, food, housing, mental health, justice.
- The members of the Joanna chapter engage in volunteer ministry opportunities to host receptions for memorial services, weddings, and funerals, conduct social mixer events, send birthday cards, recognize volunteers of the year, and support community projects.

How are decisions communicated in your church?

- Electronically: weekly email, church newsletter, immediate message if critical, Facebook
- Verbally—announcements at close of worship service, or on Zoom
- Mail—occasional mailings, and limited mailing of church newsletter

How are teams or committees organized?

Most are elected for specific terms for specific purposes, as outlined in our By-Laws. Task Forces are formed for specific purposes, with a limited time frame, and do not have a vote at Council.

Chairpersons/leaders are chosen by a consensus of each group and comprise the majority of Council members.

Where does your church struggle for vision?

For many in the church, justice work is essential. Recent work on covenants with neighbors of color and on environmental issues reflects this justice priority. For others it is felt that the emphasis on justice work overshadows our equally important priority of addressing the needs of the congregants and supporting spiritual growth. We continue to struggle to achieve the right balance between these two very important issues and look for assistance in this area.

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

15-20 hours. Meetings include Trustees, Diaconate, Education and Spiritual Growth, Church Council, Music and Arts, Personnel, Serving Our Neighbors, Pastoral Relations, and the Westminster Christian Action Team.

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

As winter approached in 2018, a request came from the city of Spokane to house homeless neighbors. The church council discussed the request, and some members met with city officials to learn details. The council then met and voted unanimously to serve as a shelter for the winter. Church volunteers did prep work under a tight deadline (remodeling bathrooms and replacing some doors). During the cold winter of 2018-2019, we hosted homeless neighbors for 4 months.

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.

We are a church blessed in this moment with little conflict. We talk well with each other to work out our small differences. We are very supportive and appreciative of our lay leaders. We have a Pastoral Relations Committee to whom congregants can turn if they have an issue with the pastor. We have a step-by-step procedure in our Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook for employees with a grievance. Several years ago, when we had a conflict with an intern pastor, we called upon the Committee on Ministry of the Pacific Northwest Conference to assist us. Our Covenant with each other calls us to lovingly work through our disagreements.

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. Organizational structure is available at this link: [Westminster Organizational Structure](#). By-laws and constitution document is available at this link: [Westminster By-Laws and Constitution](#).

Life of the Church

<https://youtu.be/2WzIsg7IqMM>



2b. 11-YEAR REPORT

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED
ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS**



Church#: 840990

Assoc: 820 Schedule: 0 Westminster Congregational UCC Spokane WA 99204

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2010	192	95	38	0	0	12	15	0	-3
2011	192	95	38	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	199	70	48	0	12	3	8	0	7
2013	197	78	48	0	8	0	7	3	-2
2014	193	56	38	15	0	0	7	12	-4
2015	133	81	36	6	0	0	1	65	-60
2016	138	81	34	0	1	7	3	0	5
2017	143	42	26	0	0	19	4	1	14
2018	139	45	26	6	0	0	2	1	3
2019	137	80	27	6	0	2	2	0	6
2020	120	63	22	3	0	0	0	0	3

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2010	\$241,879	\$0	\$6,000	\$3,776	\$9,776	\$8,756	\$18,532	2.48	\$260,411	\$148,703
2011	\$241,879	\$0	\$6,000	\$5,664	\$11,664	\$0	\$11,664	2.48	\$253,543	\$0
2012	\$228,061	\$0	\$6,000	\$3,948	\$9,948	\$6,445	\$16,393	2.63	\$244,454	\$0
2013	\$175,349	\$0	\$5,000	\$4,058	\$9,058	\$12,167	\$21,225	2.85	\$196,574	\$157,574
2014	\$239,960	\$0	\$4,000	\$2,280	\$6,280	\$0	\$6,280	1.67	\$246,240	\$121,511
2015	\$277,687	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,467	\$6,467	\$25,147	\$31,614	1.08	\$309,301	\$109,813
2016	\$265,983	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,462	\$5,462	\$6,475	\$11,937	1.13	\$277,920	\$128,019
2017	\$290,978	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,750	\$5,750	\$15,863	\$21,613	1.03	\$312,591	\$125,318
2018	\$268,130	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,139	\$5,139	\$13,283	\$18,422	1.12	\$286,552	\$125,749
2019	\$212,216	\$27,396	\$3,300	\$2,428	\$5,728	\$14,197	\$19,925	1.56	\$232,141	\$148,325
2020	\$111,264	\$0	\$3,360	\$279	\$3,639	\$11,515	\$15,154	3.02	\$126,418	\$146,861

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2015-2020	-9.77	-22.22	-38.89	-50.00	-100.00	-59.93	-43.73	-59.13
2010-2020	-37.50	-33.68	-42.11	-75.00	-100.00	-54.00	-62.78	-51.45

Please note: Zero values ("0" or "\$0") may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2007.

Please note: this data is based on conference statistics. Local church information recognizes some discrepancies in the reporting. More information available upon request.

2c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Numbers are based on participants in a November 2021 congregational survey. Approximately 20-40 people didn't complete the survey.

Describe those who participate in your church.

Number of active members:	66
Number of active non-members:	8
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	74

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

More than 10 years:	51%
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	23%
Less than 5 years:	26%

Number of total participants by age*:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
7	6	0	2	7	6	13	23	23

* Those 17 and under did not complete surveys to be included in the demographic count.

Percentage of adults in various household types:

Single adults under 35:	2%
Households with minors:	15%
Single adults aged 35-65:	7%
Joint households with no minors:	50%
Single adults over 65:	26%

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

High school:	7%
College:	44%
Graduate School:	45%
Specialty Training:	2%
Other (please specify):	2%

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

Adults who are employed:	26%
Adults who are retired:	58%
Adults who are not fully employed:	16%

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

We have a wide range of occupations and life experiences; there is no consistent theme except that the majority are retired and live all over the metropolitan area. Ninety percent of people attended college and beyond but being a downtown church, we have people attend from all walks of life.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

We are a mostly white church in a mostly white city, and we long for more diversity.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future?

We recently completed an extensive study of and adopted a position statement on racism in 2021. We are currently seeking ways to work together with people of color in our community to live out this commitment.

2d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people	Who plans each of the listed gatherings?
Adult Groups or Classes	41	Lay leaders <i>Tuesday Night Talks prepared and presented by volunteers via Zoom</i>
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	2	Pastor
Children’s Groups or Classes	13	Lay leaders
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	110	Pre-covid number
Church-wide Meals	70-100	Lay leaders <i>Easter and Thanksgiving meals, occasional potlucks</i>
Choirs and Music Groups	30	Paid and volunteer leaders, bell choir
Church-based Bible Study	24	Pastor, 2-3 annually

Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	1x/month	Pastor - monthly and Maundy Thursday Diaconate prepares and serves communion
Community Meals	20	Community leaders <i>Easter dinner provided for 140 homeless at Family Promise shelter and Easter baskets for 70 kids</i>
New Members	8	Pastor leads two new member classes/year
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	4	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	Unspecified	Except for youth groups, all are welcome to attend any group
Outdoor Worship	50	Pastor and lay leaders, open to all. We try to do this twice a year
Prayer or Meditation Groups	N/A	Not currently active
Public Advocacy Work	46	Pastor appears at events approximately every two weeks. We attend a number of marches and community events.
Retreats	39	Pastor and lay leaders
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	Not currently active
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:30 am)	74	Pastor and lay leaders
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	Not currently active
Youth Groups or Classes	8	Lay leaders <i>Program suggestions come from both youth and adults</i>
Joanna Chapter (women's group)	6-8	Lay leaders
Westminster Book Group	6-8	Participants take turns facilitating monthly studies
Small Group Ministries	14	Lay leaders
Public Speaking Engagements	4-6/year	Pastor

Additional comments:

The pandemic has affected every aspect of church life. Worship is now offered on Zoom as well as in-person (thanks to vaccinations and masks). We adhere to Washington State guidelines.

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers.

Name	Retired? (Y or N)
Lew Hinshaw	Y
Linda Crowe	Y
Beth Plumbo	Y
Joan Sulser	Y

List all current staff, not including ministers.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Janitor	No	\$16.50/hr, 25 hrs/week	Pastor	2010 to present
Music and Choir Director	No	806.17/month	Pastor	2010 to present
Pianist/Organist	No	782.50/month	Pastor	2013 to present
Office Manager	No	21.13/hr, 20 hrs/week	Pastor	2012 to present
Office Assistant	No	\$15/hr, 20 hrs/week	Pastor	New in 2021

2e. CHURCH FINANCES

2020 Annual Income

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$116,879
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$15,000 <i>Interest earned in prior year</i>
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	By specific vote
Fundraising Events – Annual FUNraiser	\$6,500
Designated Gift for General Use – one-time gift (Donna Simanton)	\$101,917
Grant – Pacific Northwest Conference for COVID Assistance – one time grant	\$20,000
Grant – Payroll Protection from the Federal Government – one time grant	\$28,200

Rentals of Church Building	\$11,670
Rentals of Church Parsonage	N/A
TOTAL	\$353,662. *

* This total includes \$203,545 of annually budgeted income, and \$150,117 of unexpected income that we cannot expect to see again in future years. When compared to the expenses incurred in 2020 (see below, \$283,400), it should be noted that the unexpected income enabled us to finish the year \$70,000 in the black, whereas without those windfall grants and gifts we would have seen a deficit of nearly \$80,000, which was more in keeping with the budget for 2020. Operating at a deficit has been the norm for the past 15 years, pulling out of reserves to meet our budget requirements.

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$283,400

See the 2022 narrative budget at this link: [Westminster Narrative Budget 2022](#)

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 34% in 2020

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?

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 budgeted. In 2020 it amounted to just over 1%.

What is the church’s current indebtedness? \$0

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

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

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

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$800,000 (Second Century Fund)

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Funds are not currently being drawn but could be drawn under certain circumstances by congregational vote.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? It is the same each year: only interest income is withdrawn.

Reserves (savings): \$102,000: drawing from this fund to cover deficit, 1+ years left

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church: The church owns the building and eight parking spaces in an adjacent lot.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? Worship space, fellowship space in the basement, classrooms, offices, common areas. The pulpit/chancel area is accessible using a temporary ramp. One set of restrooms is designated as wheelchair accessible and meets all ADA criteria. We have elevator access to all floors.

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 be good stewards of our resources and facilities. We are entrusted with care of the oldest church building in the city and are aware of the need to preserve and protect its great architecture, stained glass windows, and acoustics. We are a downtown church who understands the need to be open and available for the residents of this city. We are available for local groups to gather safely and rent space at a modest price. We have cut our budgets and downsized wherever we felt it was possible to reduce costs.

Despite the financial burdens, we choose to carry out our mission to serve our congregation and our community. This begins with offering to our staff a decent living wage, to which we added a 6% COLA this year to match Federal guidelines. We use our resources for mission and ministry by supporting local advocacy groups like the Spokane Alliance, supporting the Pacific NW Conference of the UCC, using our Stevenson Fund to provide \$10,000 in donations annually to various agencies in the Spokane area, offering shelter for the homeless when the need was urgent.

We have been blessed with substantial savings from a period when our members could create our "Second Century Fund" endowment. As we face the time when we may need to begin to draw from this fund, we choose not to "circle the wagons" and prepare for inevitable decline, but rather hold fast to our commitment to be a light in this community and have faith that we will find our way.

2f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

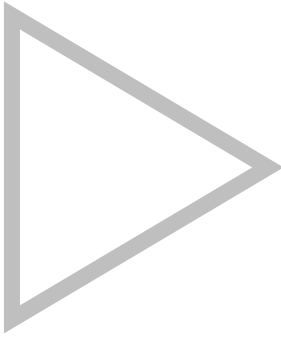
- In 1999 we were a founding member of the Spokane Alliance; a non-profit, nonpartisan organizing alliance, and we have continued to increase our involvement in social justice efforts.
- We voted to become an Open and Affirming congregation in 2007.
- In 2014 we began to look seriously at our congregation's sustainability with emphasis on building use, finances, and spiritual growth.
- For a historical timeline of Westminster, please see [Appendix C: A Brief History of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ](#).

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

The biggest change we have dealt with in recent years is, as for many, a worldwide pandemic. Within a couple of days of our state shutting down everything in the spring of 2020, we pivoted our services to Zoom. With the help of many sectors of our congregation, we quickly got our congregants up and running on Zoom, enhanced our a/v equipment and focused on providing a beautiful and integrated worship experience on-line, including lovely music, artistic graphics, and social hour breakout rooms. We actually never missed a beat and have had exceptional attendance and giving during this period. We have now pivoted to hybrid worship, with the same focus on excellence.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Andrea CastroLang (current), 2002-2021	19	Yes
Rev. Ron Baer, 1992-2000	8	Yes
Rev. Louis Wargo, 1983-1991	8	Yes



3. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

3a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

We participate in annual meetings and have also hosted gatherings. Our pastor and three representatives from the congregation typically attend. We are a designated Open and Affirming congregation.

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

We participate in interfaith services for specific occasions.

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?

We are accustomed to a pastor being very active in the community and in the Conference.

How does your 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.

Spokane is familiar with our church simply because they have seen us at work. We place a strong emphasis on acting upon the demands of our faith, and that naturally leads toward service and advocacy. As a downtown church we can’t help but become involved in alleviating some of the needs we see right outside our doors. We’re also involved in the world at large: when catastrophe strikes, Westminster helps provide relief, sometimes monetarily, sometimes in the form of supplies, or by organizing and marching.

Vital ministries of service, and seeking justice, warm hospitality, creativity, beauty, dialogue, questioning and discussion, are all valued at Westminster. Our members are very active in various projects and services to the community such as serving meals to shelters, marching in MLK Parades, Pride Parades, and Women’s Marches. We have received a “Community Ally” award from the Inland

Northwest Pride Foundation. Our pastor has received awards from Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ community. Our SON committee (Serving Our Neighbors) has the primary mission of meeting the basic needs of our vulnerable downtown population, and coordinates numerous projects to help our neighbors. WestCAT is our organizing committee that works alongside the Spokane Alliance (a community organizing agency) to address local concerns around housing, healthcare, childcare, union and labor rights.

In a region of Washington that is generally more conservative, Westminster is known as a leader of progressive Christianity, with members who act out our faith in service and love to the most vulnerable in our community. Below is a listing of community agencies that partner in ministry with Westminster:

Faith Action Network

Family Promise (Shelter)

Fig Tree

Inland Northwest Development Council

LGBTQ+ Rights Clinic (Gonzaga University)

Meals on Wheels

Odyssey (LGBTQ+ youth)

OutSpokane

Shalom Ministries

Skills'kin (Disabilities Advocacy)

Spokane Alliance

Spokane FaVS

Spokane Preservation Advocates

Transitions (Women and Children's Shelter)

Tree of Sharing

Volunteers of America: Hope House (women's shelter) and Crosswalk (youth shelter)

Women's Healing and Empowerment Network (WHEN)

Much of our service is directed outward to the larger community, but we also focus a great deal of time and energy on ministering to one another through fellowship, gathering, recreation, caring and friendship. In times before Covid we celebrated birthdays, organized Thanksgiving and Easter feasts, held talent shows, organized baby showers, gathered in small home groups or went hiking and camping together. During Covid our creativity led to Wednesday night Zoom Happy Hour, letter mailing, delivering meals and shut-in visits (socially distanced). Our members even created a virtual Coronavirus Christmas Pageant, which you can view on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/jOFVFT3Q3us>

3b. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

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? How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not? What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

We are the oldest church in Spokane, built on a hill four blocks from the center of town. The city grew up around us. Our neighborhood now is made up of hospitals, medical buildings, churches, small businesses, and apartment buildings serving mostly low income and retired people. We are next to the oldest high school in Spokane. Across the street is the elevated I 90 freeway viaduct, and we park underneath it. We have homeless people in the area, and most of the community service organizations we work with are within a mile of the church in the downtown corridor. Most of us live throughout the greater Spokane area and drive or take the bus to church. We choose to commute long distances to this church because of our commitments to UCC principles, each other, and to the community. Our church is well known for its stand and action on social justice issues. Many people visit and join us because of our visibility and position on these concerns. They also feel at home because of our extravagant welcome, caring and friendship.



4. REFERENCES

The following people have agreed to serve as references for Westminster during our pastoral search process. Each of them is familiar with our congregation and our context and has agreed to be available for conversation with candidates who would like more information.

References will be provided upon request to preferred candidates.



5. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

5a. CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious and generous God, as we seek a new pastor for Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, please open our minds and hearts. Grant us wisdom and discernment as we look at pastoral profiles. We pray that the right pastor will be found to lead our congregation through this season of life and into the future. O God, with gratitude and hope, we ask for your guidance and blessing. Thank you. Amen.

5b. 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?
 - a. Pastoral Search Team
 - b. Church Moderator
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Current Pastor
 - e. Congregation at large for demographics

Signed: Kelvin (Kelly) Cox, Westminster Pastoral Search Team Chair, Jan 4, 2022

5c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.
To the best of my knowledge, this information is accurate and true

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.
To the best of my knowledge, this information is accurate and true

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.
To the best of my knowledge, this information is accurate and true

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: **Rev. Michael Denton (added with permission on Jan 4, 2022)**

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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

6. Appendices:

Appendix A: Our Covenant with People of Color Against Racism in America

The people of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ in Spokane commit to stand with Black People, Indigenous People, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic/Latinx People, and all People of Color against interpersonal, societal, and institutional racism.

As a majority white congregation, most of us have not experienced the pain and trauma of racism. We recognize that apathy and silence contribute to racism and hinder progress toward racial equity. We want to challenge our complacency and understand those attitudes and assumptions that lead to prejudice and discrimination. We encourage each of us to become aware of our thoughts and actions that enable racism to persist. We strive to listen, learn and act to dismantle interpersonal, social, and institutional racism.

In that light:

We recognize the history of inhumane and violent actions toward the Indigenous peoples of America, including stolen lands, broken treaties, wars, genocide, and systemic cultural erasure.

We recognize the cruel history of enslavement of Black people in America with its legacy of racism that was re-shaped into Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and legislation that denied Black people in America full human and civil rights guaranteed in the United States Constitution.

We recognize a legacy of racism furthered by public policies and legislation that continue to deny many People of Color in America full human and civil rights guaranteed in the United States Constitution.

We recognize the resulting institutional racism that impacts People of Color every day through discrimination in housing, employment, health care, voting, education, services, and the criminal justice system. This discrimination compromises the financial, physical, and social well-being of generations of People of Color in America.

We stand with and support organizations that work to diminish and end interpersonal, social, and institutional racism and we join in working on policies, initiatives, and legislation for those purposes.

We stand in solidarity at rallies and protests. We resist racism in rhetoric, jokes, comments, stereotyping, and tokenism which dehumanize others based upon race.

We lend support to candidates who speak out against racism and who bring true representation to our local, state, and national governmental bodies.

In our lives, we are taught and led every day by Jesus, a Person of Color. With God's help and with the confidence that nothing truly separates any of us from the love of God, we seek to do our part to overcome racism and heal the injustices in our society. We, at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, are ready to show up with open eyes, open hearts, and open minds to be instruments of transformation for justice and healing.

Appendix B: Environmental Covenant

Please note that this Covenant was presented to the congregation in December 2021, opening a time period for comments and feedback. A vote to adopt this Covenant will be taken at the Westminster Annual Meeting on February 27, 2022.

- WE AFFIRM the presence of God, the Creator of the entire cosmos, giving it life and order and connecting everything. We affirm the goodness and the sacred nature of God's Creation, and the fundamental human connection with all biological life and the whole natural world. In faith we covenant to follow Jesus whose teaching and example provide the foundational values of our life and work as stewards of the environment.
- WE RECOGNIZE that humans cannot be separated from the natural environment. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, all depend on a functioning, healthy environment.
- WE RECOGNIZE that humans have been altering the natural environment since the dawn of agriculture (clearing forests, building canals/irrigation ditches, terracing hillsides, flooding fields etc.)
- WE RECOGNIZE the overwhelming scientific consensus that global warming is real and caused by greenhouse gas emissions that are inextricably linked to advanced, industrialized economies.
- WE RECOGNIZE that the impact of human industrial civilization has destroyed massive swathes of habitat and driven millions of species (most unknown) to extinction.
- WE RECOGNIZE that fires, floods, hurricanes, heat waves and rising sea levels will contribute to needless suffering and deaths in the future.
- WE RECOGNIZE that unless we make significant changes to our current systems of energy production, transportation, housing, agriculture, manufacturing, waste disposal etc. even the wealthiest nations and individuals will have difficulty surviving.
- WE RECOGNIZE that the people, communities, and nations who have created the least of the problems will suffer the most from the coming collapse of environmental systems. Racism, poverty, and inequality require environmental justice to correct centuries of abuse.
- WE RECOGNIZE that current trajectories of environmental destruction threaten social chaos, even collapse, and the possible extinction of all humanity.
- WE KNOW that solutions to the climate change crisis will be costly in terms of taxes, prices of goods and services, sacrifices or other adjustments to our current quality of life. But over time,

effective solutions will also be beneficial in terms of new technologies, job creation, and sustainability.

Therefore, we commit to basic action: education, advocacy, and spiritual nurture to sustain our level of care for Creation. These actions include but are not limited to:

- We support action on an individual level, such as “meatless Mondays” or “No-Driving Days” or other actions in support of climate stewardship.
- We support continued action by our church congregation to practice sustainability, such as reducing the use of paper cups, plastic utensils, and non-toxic cleaning products.
- We are ready to join with other congregations, faith communities, and other organizations, such as Earth Ministry/WAIP (Washington Interfaith Power & Light) or Creation Justice Ministries, etc.
- We support community efforts by schools, hospitals, and businesses to implement policies and procedures to widen environmental responsibility and sustainability.
- We support the City of Spokane 2021 Sustainability Action Plan, which calls for policy changes and action goals in these areas:
 - Buildings and energy
 - Transportation and land use
 - Waste diversion
 - Water resources
 - Economic prosperity
 - Natural environment
 - Health and well-being
- We will hold elected officials and other leaders at all levels accountable to take comprehensive steps needed to prevent or reduce future impacts of the climate crisis, such as wildfires, floods, droughts, and hurricanes.

Appendix C: A Brief History of Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ

May 22, 1879 – First Congregational Church is chartered at the home of Rev. Henry Cowley with 12 People present.

1881 – Our First church building is built at Sprague and Bernard for \$50.00

August 189 – After the Great Fire of Spokane, building are in great demand and the church building and the land was sold. Lots at 4th and Washington are purchased from the Spokane Indian Tribe for \$5.00.

1890 – Work is started on our present building.

1893 – The First Congregational Church merged with Westminster Presbyterian Church to form Westminster Congregational Church.

1908 – The Social Hall and Kitchen is excavated by wheelbarrow.

1924 – Westminster merges with Corbin Park, Pilgrim and Plymouth Congregational churches.

1927 – The church building is enlarged with a two-story addition along the back south side. The round turret is taken out and two square towers put in. The balcony is also installed at this time.

1929 – Westminster celebrates the First 50 Years!

1946 – 1947 Our chancel is remodeled and the Joel Harper Memorial Organ pipe is installed. The installation was completed in 1951.

1954 – Westminster celebrates the First 75 Years!

1958 – The Westminster Cowley Youth Building is built and dedicated to Rev. Cowley. A school for the church Sunday school children and also a school of developmentally disabled children is open.

1963 – Westminster votes to become part of the newly formed United Church of Christ. The vote passes by only a slim margin precipitating the resignation of the pastor and a rift in the congregation.

1978 – Our church is put on the Washington State National Registries of Historical Building.

1979 – The 100th Anniversary is celebrated with a march through the streets to Cowley Park, where a memorial gazebo is dedicated to the Rev. Henry Cowley.

1982 – Westminster started the Tree of Sharing. Today it serves over 50 non-profits and distributes 8,000 Christmas gifts to the often forgotten.

2004 – The 125th Anniversary is marked with an anniversary service with previous pastors and with a blessing from the Spokane Tribe.

2005 – The Cowley building, Connell apartments, Parking lot and the vacant lot (RAPP) were sold to Spokane Housing Ventures.

2006 – Westminster went through a yearlong process of becoming Open and Affirming. In 2007 the church voted yes to be certified as an Open and Affirming church.

2019 – Westminster, the oldest church in Spokane, celebrates its 140 Year Anniversary with a year of special events.