

# INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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!

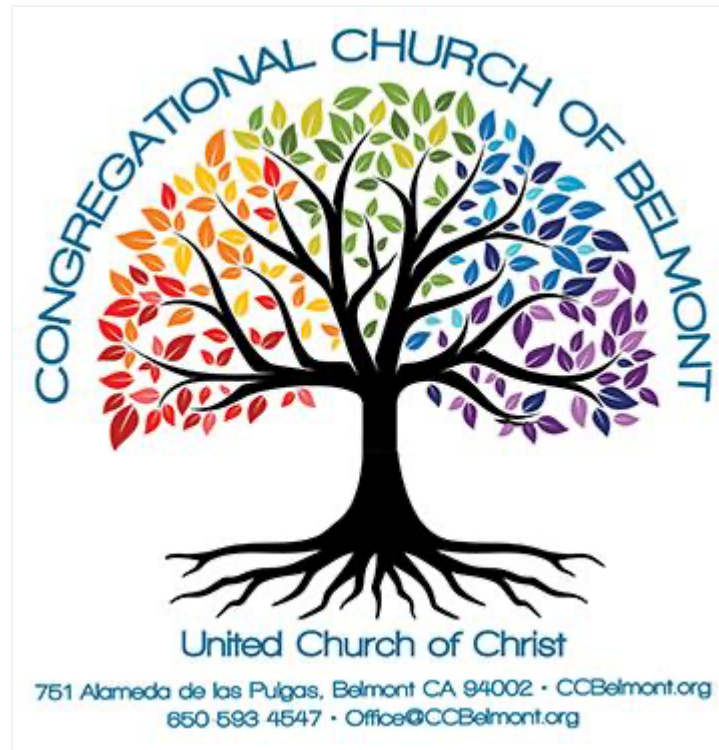
Rachel Hackenberg

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Congregational Church of Belmont  
Belmont, California

Solo pastor

Northern California Nevada Conference

July 6, 2022

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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)*

## INSTRUCTIONS

The new Local Church Profile supports the calling and discernment of United Church of Christ congregations with their current or future pastoral leadership.

For many congregations, the interim time between ministers is an intentional season that is guided in part by the preparation of a Local Church Profile. Using the Profile, the church can discover its data and express its story for the reliable discernment of a search committee and the beginning of a new pastorate. Searching ministers will want to see this document in its entirety.

The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – WHO ARE WE NOW, WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR, and WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known together as the "Discovery Document," these three sections can be completed by a visioning group, a governing body, a transition team, or other group – not just the search committee – in order to draw forward the gifts and imaginative possibilities of a congregation. The church's engagement with the "Discovery Document" might not have the same sequence as the completed Local Church Profile that is read by candidates.

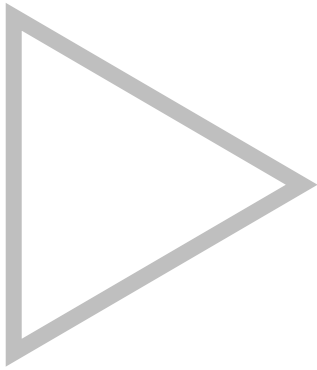
Some questions are easy to answer. Some are not so easy. Prompts are provided to stimulate narrative response if needed; these italicized prompts are merely examples from which to choose or to inspire your own. Efforts to answer the questions will prompt conversations and explorations and story-tellings and many prayers. As the Spirit moves throughout the process, congregations will shape a collective articulation of Christ's leading (WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME). This last question to be answered becomes the first section to be read by searching ministers in the Local Church Profile, and it is boldest and most actionable piece for faithful leadership into the future.

Your conference can provide materials referenced in the Local Church Profile, such as the 11-Year Report containing data as reported by your congregation annually to the UCC Data Hub, and Mission InSite reports containing demographic information on your community. More information on types of pastorates in the United Church of Christ can be found in the Call Agreement Workbook. Be sure to use the Call Agreement Workbook's Scope of Work to describe in this Local Church Profile the position being sought.

When it is time for ministerial search, the conference can counsel you on posting the Local Church Profile together with your public listing at UCC Ministry Opportunities (<http://oppsearch.ucc.org>).

The last page of the Local Church Profile contains a statement that parallels the consent statement signed by ministers in the UCC Ministerial Profile. In keeping with the covenantal relationship between a church and those it seeks to call, this statement encourages an open, honest exchange of information. On behalf of the United Church of Christ, and based on the best knowledge

available to them, your conference staff will validate your completed Local Church Profile when it is ready to be shared in relationship with prospective new leaders.



## 1. POSITION POSTING

a. LISTING INFORMATION

b. SCOPE OF WORK

c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

### 1a. LISTING INFORMATION

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Church name: Congregational Church of Belmont UCCs

Street address: 751 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont, CA 94002

Supplemental web links: [www.ccbelmont.org](http://www.ccbelmont.org)

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*):

Conference: Northern California Nevada Conference

Association: Golden Gate Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):

Davena Jones, Associate Conference Minister, (510) 359-7208, [davena@ncnccucc.org](mailto:davena@ncnccucc.org)

Summary Ministry Description:

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

The Congregational Church of Belmont seeks to create safe spaces for spiritual growth within our community. We pursue this mission through our key ministries: our youth, social action, and music, by creating a Sunday worship experience open to all, and optimizing the use of our biggest tangible asset, our historic building.

To fulfill this mission, we need a leader who will help us shape what church means for 21st Century, post-pandemic Silicon Valley — a community in need of spiritual safe havens, but full of folks who may or may not have been raised in a mainline Protestant tradition.

We love our music program and want to continue to embrace music of all genres as one of our greatest gifts and sources of spiritual renewal and healing.

We want to leverage our building to create connections to benefit our local community.

Families are key to our church: We need a leader to help sustain our youth ministry and rebuild our children’s program, which has tapered off during the pandemic. The ideal candidate will be willing to dig into the work of the church and pitch in as necessary.

And we need a charismatic leader who will lead an engaging worship service that speaks to the needs of our community and to be consistent with our progressive, Open and Affirming theology.

Photographs:







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

Our Belmont community is geographically beautiful with gorgeous weather, a lovely and accessible city park and a community center that serves all ages. Belmont is on the San Francisco Peninsula where an Open and Affirming church is welcome and our progressive approach serves the community well.

*Current size of membership:*

66 members (Clerk's report, submitted to 2021 Annual meeting)

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

*Position Title:* Pastor

*Position Duration*

Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

*Compensation Level (choose one, delete the other options listed):*

Full-time, but we are open to three-quarter time if a candidate wishes more flexibility in his/her/their schedule.

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes, we will strive to meet the conference compensation guidelines.

## 1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

*(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented, and time-conscious person.)*

- Experienced in church transformation and growth
- Comfortable working with youth
- Works well to provide pastoral care to wide range of personalities
- Inclusive, open to spiritual diversity and to multifaith or “spiritual but not religious” congregants

*Top five areas for church energy:*

- Rebuilding a strong youth group/children's program
- A worship experience with variety, spirit, and engagement
- Community-building events
- Opportunities to interact with our church family and local church communities
- Maintaining and growing our strong music program

## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

*Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance): \$63,000-\$84,000 (combined housing allowance and salary) plus health benefits, as well as the option to live in our 3 bed/1 bath parsonage on church property.*

*Benefits (choose one):*

Salary plus Benefits

*What is the expected living situation for your next minister (e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)?* At the candidate's choice, we have a three- bedroom apartment on the upper floor ("penthouse suite!") of our church. Typically, compensation is reduced by a commensurate amount of the rental value of the apartment. Alternatively, the candidate may choose to live elsewhere with a housing allowance provided as part of the compensation package.

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

*State any incentives (e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position):*

We have a housing fund which can be loaned to the pastor to use toward the purchase of a house, should the pastor prefer not to live in our three-bedroom apartment on site.

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

- Northern California Nevada Conference — pastoral support
- Northern California Nevada Conference — Committee on Ministry B
- Golden Gate Association — confidential peer support
- Golden Gate Association — social support with local clergy
- Peninsula Multifaith Coalition — CCB is a founding member and faith leaders meet to support each other and collaborate

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

We are happy to support a minister's bi-vocational employment with a three-quarter time schedule and flexible hours, except for Sunday mornings.

## **1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?**

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

We seek someone:

- Who can attract a diverse audience (children and youth, people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, young parents, seniors, etc.)
- Who can grow our work within our community by forming partnerships with surrounding congregations and organizations.
- Who can bring our worship practices into the 21st Century to broaden our appeal to our community
- Who is organized and able to offer worship themes two to three months in advance, who can present a well-researched, well-structured sermon which our educated congregation has come to expect.
- Who is a strong community leader who can help with administration of our building.
- Who can help us find our NorthStar, that passion that will ignite us, inspire us to grow, and give us energy. How we envision our future and how our minister will best co-collaborate with us may be an evolving topic. We need our next minister to be fluid enough to adapt and grow with us.
- Who appreciates good music and is excited to support our strong music ministry.

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

We are seeking a candidate to engage our community to create a safe space for spiritual healing for all, and to put into action our image of a little church on a hill, reaching out, embracing our community, and drawing it closer.

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

Our church is English-speaking and values the use of inclusive language. We routinely alter the words of the anthems we sing to make them more inclusive or to bring them in line with our progressive Christian beliefs.

*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.*

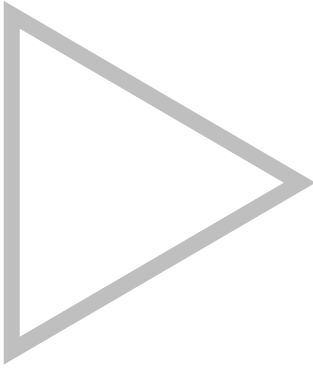
Transformational Leadership Skills: We are looking for a pastor to lead us to discover what church will look like in 21st Century Silicon Valley, a place where secularism dominates. We

would like to keep evolving our mission to provide a safe space for spiritual healing to all our neighbors, while staying true to our roots and maintaining our strong music, youth, and social action programs. For this, we need a leader strong in *transformational leadership skills*, who can help strategically create the future of our church. This person will have strong program management skills while leading collaboratively and with strong “EQ” and sensitivity to the diverse personalities that embody any congregation.

Caring for all Creation: Since our mission is to provide safe space for spiritual growth and healing, our next leader must be strong in *caring for all creation*, both in pastoral care to our own congregation as well as providing hope and healing to our wider world. We are also a congregation that feels strongly about being a “green church” and wishes to nurture these values.

Working together for justice and mercy: This person will help us to steward the resources of our church and turn it from a shrinking congregation to a flourishing organization. To fulfill this mission, our leader must be strong in *working together for justice and mercy*. This work can only be fulfilled through outreach and building trusting relationships in our community while demonstrating radical hospitality and navigating change.

Strengthening inter- and intra-personal assets: Finally, to transform our congregation to a flourishing 21st Century organization, we need a leader who is skilled in *strengthening inter- and intra-personal assets*. Our congregation spans a wide range of life experiences, with ages ranging from 5 to 100! We need someone with strong communications skills who will provide a vibrant and engaging worship service for all ages. Welcoming all people into our congregation, this person will model strong personal integrity and respect.



## 2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

*Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?*

We are a little church on the top of a hill, rooted in love and called to extend our arms farther out into our community to spread love and healing and hope. We strive to be a “sanctuary for the soul,” a safe space for spiritual growth for all.

We would like to engage more broadly with our community,

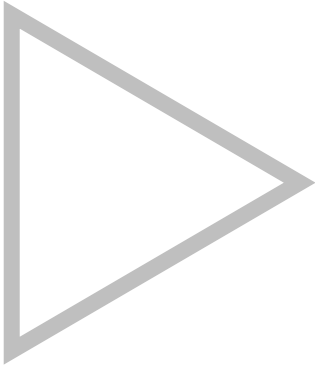
- Working in partnership with local churches, non-profits, educational institutions, performing arts organizations and others.
- Leveraging our strength in social action, youth programs and music.

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

*For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?*

- Eighteen months of an experiment with an interim minister during the pandemic:
  - Online streaming, worshiping outside
  - Lay worship leaders
  - Creating a Reparations for Spirituals donation project
  - Partnering with another congregation using our building for resource sharing (A/V, tech)
  - Youth program format
- Mission/service project (canceled due to the pandemic)
- Innovative programs to reach youth (new format for Christmas program, Zoom youth group, discussion with a WWII veteran in our congregation, whitewater rafting trip, pizza garden.)
- We do not currently have a multi-year strategic plan but have launched seven projects to live out our goal to be a safe space for spiritual growth in the coming one to two years. These projects are wide-ranging including:
  - A Master plan to remodel the sanctuary
  - A sports court for local youth

- Hosting a multifaith music festival
- Launching a multicultural speaker series
- Building “prayer box” at the street
- Installing solar panels on our roof
- Working to erase medical debt



### 3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

b. 11-YEAR REPORT

c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

e. CHURCH FINANCES

f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### 3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

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*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 are an Open and Affirming, progressive Christian congregation that firmly believes that “all are welcome here.”
- We are non-creedal; we do not ask our congregation to check their brain at the door.
- We value questioning.
- We prize inclusive language and routinely rewrite the lyrics to choir anthems to remove references to gender-specific pronouns for God as well as lyrics that focus on humanity's sinful nature.
- We find the Holy Spirit through the love that we show one another.
- We are a Micah 6 church and print the Eight Points of Progressive Christianity in our bulletin each week.

*Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.*

- We have a very strong music program and enjoy singing with each other.
- We have a vibrant youth program for the size of our church.
- We are open to diverse views and accepting of people of all backgrounds.
- We have a very wide range of ages in our congregation and enjoy multigenerational community.
- We have a strong sense of social justice and encourage engaging in service to the community. As an example, one of our youth group built a Blessings Box, a food pantry, in our front yard that has served our local community for the past four years. Our church adopted it and has kept it stocked (with especially high use through the pandemic).

- We are a founding member of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition.
- Our Sanctuary is a safe place for all ages to learn and grow.

*Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.*

*For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around? What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?*

Our current worship service follows a fairly traditional pattern on Sunday mornings at 10:30 AM. We have been live streaming since March 2020. Typical worship services are available [here](#). (The services from May 2021 to the present are more representative of our everyday life as we emerge from Covid restrictions.)

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

*For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?*

- Our youth lead worship twice a year, Children's Sabbath in October and our annual Christmas Pageant during Advent. You can see the 2020 pageant [here](#).
- Our youth choir sings frequently in service.
- Several of our youth are employed in various tasks related to Sunday morning worship, including videography and sound management.
- Before the pandemic, our children would stay in worship for the first 20 minutes through A Time with Children and then would be excused to Sunday School. However, most of the youth who attend now have outgrown Sunday School, and we have not been able to restart Sunday School since March 2020. We are currently attempting to restart this program.
- We have been doing a bi-weekly youth group on Saturday afternoons through the pandemic which has kept some of our youth engaged in activities with the congregation. They planted a pizza garden in spring 2021 and harvested the organic vegetables in the fall (and learned how we can care for people and the earth by growing food — as well as how to use power tools!).
- Traditionally we have offered confirmation classes for early teens and tweens every two to three years. This introduces our children to other faiths and puts our own worship experiences in context. We would love to start a confirmation class as soon as we have a new pastor - we have at least three youth ready for confirmation.
- We had a wonderful river rafting day trip for 24 youth and adults in June 2021 and our weekend Family Camp near Santa Cruz is a beloved tradition which we were excited to bring back in July 2021.
- Our current Sunday School Curriculum is Whole People of God.

*Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.*

*For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?*

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

Five to 10 hours on average for the pastor. We have monthly Council meetings and committees meet on average about once every two months, with business conducted over email in between 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/No]*

Yes, Our Constitution and Bylaws are [here](#). However, this document is under review, and we would like to shape it to fit our current size and mission in the coming years.

### **3b. 11-YEAR REPORT**

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

<https://uccfiles.com/pdf/CARDD/California-Nevada-Northern.pdf>

### **3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	66	N
Number of active non-members:	4	N
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	70	N

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>

More than 10 years:	45	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	12	Yes
Less than 5 years:	15	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
1	11	2	0	1	10	16	12	19	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	0	yes
Households with minors:	40%	yes
Single adults age 35-65:	0%	yes
Joint households with no minors:	30%	yes
Single adults over 65:	30%	yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	5%	yes
College:	75%	yes
Graduate School:	20%	yes
Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	30%	yes

Adults who are retired:	60%	yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	10%	yes

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

We have a wide range of occupations of the working adults.

*Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?*

While we see ourselves as welcoming and accepting, more than 80% of our congregation is white, in a city that is 67% white and a county that is 53% white. We would welcome finding ways to attract a more diverse community. We try to be accepting of diverse opinions although most of our congregation leans liberal — in alignment with our surrounding community.

*Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one soon (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:*

No, we have not engaged specifically in diversity ministry. We would be interested in learning more.

### 3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	5	Sanctuary Choir, led by Elizabeth Mye. In the past, we have had book groups, Bible Study and, for a while in 2020, we had a Tai Chi class.
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	

Children's Groups or Classes	1-10	
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	40	
Church-wide Meals	3-4x per year; typically, 20-40	It varies. It can be Trustees, Deacons, Council, Board of Christian Ed
Choirs and Music Groups	10	Elizabeth Mye, Choir Director
Church-based Bible Study	had in past	led by pastor
Communion ( <i>served how often?</i> )	Monthly, with 30-40 in attendance	Pastor and Deacons
Community Meals	Despite Covid, we had our annual harvest dinner over Zoom	
Confirmation ( <i>number confirmed last year</i> )	0	3 in 2019
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	
Funerals ( <i>number last year</i> )	1 last year	Several have been delayed due to Covid
Intergenerational Groups	no formal groups	
Outdoor Worship	Annual at Family Camp with 30 attending	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	We have an email prayer chain	Deacons, pastor
Public Advocacy Work	No formal program, but we're very open to congregants bringing their personal involvement to church	

Retreats	Annual Family Camp with 30 attending	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	Before the pandemic, we visited the boys at our local Juvenile detention center	
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	1-2 average	
Worship (time slot: 10:30 am Sundays)	20-40 on average	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	None	
Youth Groups or Classes	4-8	Board of Christian Education
Group Walks	Monthly; 10	Keith and Linda Howard

*Additional comments:*

*List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).*

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Thomas Crosby	4-way covenant	Chaplain at the Palo Alto VA Hospital as well as pastor of the Protestant congregation at the Menlo Park VA Hospital		N

Warren Dale	No	Retired pastor / interim pastor for another church		Y (but is actively leading another congregation right now)

*If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:*

Warren Dale is an associate member of the church and guest preaches occasionally. He is currently serving another local UCC church.

*List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.*

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Office Administrator	N	Part Time	Personnel Committee	1.5 years
Minister of Music	Y	Part Time	Music Committee	>5 years
Musician	N	Part Time	Choir Director	> 5 years
Sunday Morning Workers (3)	N	Part Time	Personnel Committee	<1 year
Groundskeeper	N	Part Time	Personnel Committee	<1 year

## REFLECTION

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

We would like to shift our ministry more toward serving our multicultural community. We also struggle with our mission as a church in a very secular area. While many people in our community could benefit from a safe space for spiritual growth, we need to understand how to present our progressive Christian message in a way that may be more relevant to their lives.

## 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount (2019)	Amount (2020)	Amount (2021)	Amount (2022) budget
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$69,213	\$62,310	\$75,327	\$65,910
Endowment Proceeds <i>(as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Endowment Draw <i>(beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”)</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Fundraising Events	~\$9000 Choc Fest	\$1800 Choc Fest ~\$800 Pi(e)	\$3263 Choc Fest \$727 Pi(e)	
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0
Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$155,401	\$109,909	\$114,371	\$139,114
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$33,600	\$33,600	\$2500	\$30,000
Support from Related Organizations <i>(e.g. Women’s Group)</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$	\$	\$	
Other (specify):	\$	\$		
Other (specify):	\$	\$		
TOTAL	\$	\$		

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

\$204,111

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

Our 2021 annual report is located [here](#).

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

Our current budget reflects the ministerial pay for our current 50%-time interim pastor. The ministerial expense budget represents 29% of our overall expenses and over 100% of our pledged and unpledged giving. The majority of our income, over 70%, comes from building use.

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%)

Roughly calculated based on number of members and percentage of operating expense

What is the church’s current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? N/A

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

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
N/A		\$	\$	
N/A		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
N/A		\$	\$	
N/A		\$	\$	

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

N/A

*Does your church have an endowment? No*

*What is the market value of the assets?*

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

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

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

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

*Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:*

#### *Other Assets*

Our building is a significant asset which we could mortgage should we have a need for a significant expenditure. We have not invested in a firm valuation but it is likely above \$5M.

- Reserves (savings): Of our roughly \$250,000 cash, approximately \$200,000 is kept in Cornerstone Fund CDs with six-month terms staggered by three months, so that \$100,000 would be accessible within three months should any large expenses arise. We keep approximately \$50,000 cash on hand in our bank account.
- Investments (other than endowment): \$0 other than the Cornerstone CDs described above.

*Does your church have a parsonage?* Yes, there's a three-bedroom apartment on the upper floor of the building that can be used as a parsonage

- Fair market rental value of the parsonage: \$33,600 annually
- How is the parsonage used? Either rented to an unaffiliated tenant, or by pastor
- Street / City / State / Zip: 751 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont, CA 94002
- Finished square footage: 1400
- Number of bedrooms, Number of bathrooms: 3 bedrooms, 1 bath
- Assessed real estate value: Unknown - this is not a separate building so we're unable to value it separately from the church building
- Available for minister residence: Y
- Expected minister residence: Optional
- Condition of structure, systems, and appliances: Modern appliances, older plumbing/wiring. Some plumbing upgrades were performed in 2021.
- Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs: Board of Trustees

*Describe all buildings owned by the church:*

- Single church building, three floors, roughly 18,000 square feet.
- The lower floor is largely rented out by both long-term renters (a nursery school, an occupational therapy organization, and an art therapist), and single-use renters such as birthday parties. There are multiple rooms in the lower floor, with one large multiple purpose room (Fireplace Room), with attached kitchen. There are also a few storage closets on this floor
- The middle floor has the Narthex, Sanctuary, Dining Room, Parlor, two restrooms, and kitchen. There are covered and uncovered verandas on this floor.
- The upper floor has separate offices for the pastor and the church administrator. There's another small office, that is rented out, and a restroom. Additionally, there is a large apartment/parsonage on this floor that is rented by either the pastor or, if the pastor does not choose to use it, to outside renters.
- The building is a historic building built in 1925 as the clubhouse of the Belle Monti Country Club. It has significant charm, but its official historic status limits the renovation possibilities for the space.

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

*Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (Worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)* The middle floor where church services are held is accessible via an exterior elevator and a ramp. The ground floor is 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?*

Our church's finances have been stewarded conservatively, and we have had a break-even budget for at least the past 20 years. However, the bulk of the budget now comes from building rentals. The pledged and unpledged giving has been in decline for many years. In 2021, for the first time in memory, we passed a deficit spending budget instead of a break-even budget. We do have sufficient savings to deficit spend and invest in our future for a while, but the ship must be turned around into a growth phase for the long-term. We would like to invest in a pastor who will help us transform our ministry to a growth trajectory.

### 3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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*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.*

- Choosing to become Open and Affirming after a period of discernment (over 20 years ago)
- Managing through the Covid-19 pandemic
- Rev. Kristi Denham retiring after 20 years

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

*Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...." Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.*

*For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols, or structures for dealing with conflict?)*

We experienced a recent crisis just before worship. The choir was rehearsing in the Sanctuary and a longtime member (60 years!) arrived to sing with the choir for the first time in two years. He was welcomed enthusiastically and informed that the choir has been singing with masks as part of the church's Covid policy. He said he was vaccinated but refused to put on a mask despite several people (choir director, moderator, and other choir members) imploring him to do so. He continued to refuse. We realized that if we demanded that he leave, he would never return, and it was likely that other members of the congregation would leave as well in support of him and his history with the church if not for his refusal to wear a mask. We might have had a schism on our hands. So, we opened all the

windows to optimize circulation, positioned him on the far end of the choir group and proceeded to sing. In retrospect, we wished that we would have made an announcement from the pulpit that one of the singers that morning would be singing without a mask and urging people who were uncomfortable with that to move farther away or outside where we have seats available. We regret that we didn't. However, no one complained; they were mostly thrilled to have this person back among us. Since then, we have discussed this issue extensively in Church Council and Board of Deacons meetings and resolved to involve a public announcement in church in the future.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Sally Train	1	Y
Elizabeth Clement	1.25	Y
Kristi Denham	20	Y
Lee Cruise	2	Y
Wendy Taylor	10, 5 of which were joint with John Brooke	Y
John Brooke	13, 5 of which were joint with Wendy Taylor	Y

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

Our members come from diverse backgrounds, but we have many engineers, scientists, educators, professionals, and other pragmatic people. We are questioners and debaters who respond well to evidence-based rational arguments. We seek to explore Christian teachings, consider their wisdom, and use them to help make better choices in our own lives. We apply Christian teachings in the same way that we would apply wisdom from other religious faiths, or the teachings of secular philosophers and teachers. We consider what is said, and then decide how to apply it to ourselves. It's an approach that emphasizes personal agency. It's rooted in our responsibility to learn and make choices that will improve ourselves and our world. The most effective ministerial leader at CCB will be one who embraces this mindset. A good sermon can be like a thought-provoking college seminar, or a TED Talk. "Here are some

insights into life. Here's what the great thinkers of the past have to say about it. What do you think? How could we put these ideas into practice in our lives today?"

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

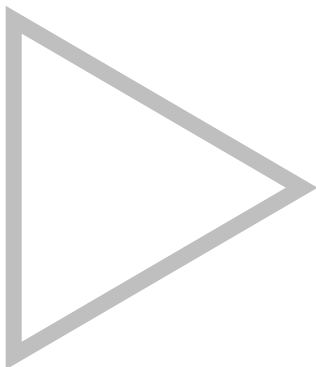
No, although we called an interim pastor in 2019 who accepted our call, but did not show up. We later learned that he had already accepted another call and lied about it. We rescinded his call.

*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?*

Not while at our church. The interim minister mentioned above did lose his standing with the Southeast Conference of the UCC.



## 4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

### a. COMMUNITY VISION

### b. MISSION InSite

## 4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

*For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church’s engagement with neighbors near or far?*

- Our annual Chocolate Fest is a community event and fundraiser for our Social Action Fund and Capital Improvements for our building.
- Our Social Action team disburses monies to designated charities in our community and organizes events to support social action such as:
  - Our Blessings Box at our street supports “no need to ask” food ministry in our community and is always stocked.
  - We work with the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition and support their broader service into the community such as MLK Day.
  - We support the work of the San Francisco Night Ministry and provide 100+ lunches for their Open Cathedral service for the homeless four times a year.
  - We participate in the Crop Walk annually in conjunction with the Ecumenical Hunger Project of East Palo Alto.
  - We support the Guardian Scholar Program for foster youth attending San Francisco State University.
  - We work with Samaritan House each Christmas to sponsor several families, support their backpack drive every summer, and generally fundraise in support of their funding requests.
  - We have supported Home and Hope and Life Moves, shelters for homeless families in our community.
- Our building also serves as a “ministry” to support our community. We rent to a Brazilian congregation to share our worship space throughout the week. We rent to the local Narcotics Anonymous group and host a “NARAThon” several times a year that provides the NA group a safe, sober place for people to congregate on holidays. Our building also houses a preschool and a couple of organizations that provide therapy programs for children and families.

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

• CCB has a long history of involvement with both the Northern California Nevada Conference and the national setting of the UCC. During John Brooke's pastorate, members of CCB served as conference moderator and chair of the Annual Gathering several times. Our choir and our folk singing group, Caz Chorale, regularly performed at Annual Gathering. A CCB member participated in the NCNC Peace Exchange with the Soviet Union twice in 1988 and 1990. From 1991 until 2017, two members attended every General Synod as volunteers in the press office, and one member served on the denomination's Communications Board for several years.

*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](http://ucc.org).) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming                  | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations:               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice            | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reparations for Spiritual  |

*Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?*

Our church works in many of the areas above but has not sought the specific designations. We have invested in disability accessibility, with hearing assistance, handicap assistance, and large-print bulletins available to all and were recognized at General Synod for that work. We certainly align with the God Is Still Speaking movement in our theology, and often say "you don't have to check your brain at the door" when entering our church. We have a team working on putting solar panels on our church and have invested in many energy-saving and water-saving practices to support our near-continuous state of drought in California. We have a history of supporting immigrant justice. Our previous pastor, Rev. Wendy Taylor, left our church to found Puente de la Costa Sur, supporting farm laborers in our nearby coastal regions, and we have supported this organization in the 20+ years since its founding. We provide our sanctuary for a local immigrant Brazilian congregation in our community. For a few months, we had a

Latino congregation as well. However, we have put more effort into our actions rather than “checking the boxes” to achieve specific designations.

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

Pastor Kristi Denham was a founding member of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition, and we have been a member congregation since its founding. Through PMC, we cooperate with other congregations in leading an annual Martin Luther King Day of Service, a multifaith song festival, and other youth and adult spiritual growth activities. Through our Social Action work, we also support many other activities in our community, as described above.

*If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.*

Our formal mission statement, as written in our bylaws, is as follows:

As members of the Congregational Church of Belmont, United Church of Christ, we accept each other's diversity and remain open to one another's spiritual interpretations as we strive to:

- Worship together seeking spiritual growth, inspiration and inner peace;
- Develop a close relationship with God;
- Experience the joys and risks of allowing God to work within each of us;
- Be aware, with humility and love, of the individual struggles and joys within our collective lives;
- Minister faithfully and effectively to one another as an extended family within the local community;
- Do justice in the world God loves;
- Practice inclusiveness and openness to provide a sense of worthiness and acceptance of all people;
- Enable each of us to live a meaningful life.

We undertake this mission with the help of Jesus Christ.

The more succinct mission we have developed in our visioning process is to provide a “safe space for spiritual growth,” and it applies across all our boards and ministries. Our Trustees make sure the space is available for our work in the community! Our Deacons invest their time in making sure our worship environment and experience is meaningful. Our Music ministry creates a safe and enriching space through beautiful music, both for our listeners as well as our performers young and old. Our Board of Christian Education creates safe space programs which

allow our youth to find their voice. Our Social Action team works to spread love through our community and wider world. And our Communications team spreads our message with social media, banners, advertising, and press releases.

However, we would like to spend those hours in the most efficient way possible! With the current size of our church, many of our church leaders wear multiple hats on these boards. That creates a lot of emails in inboxes as well as many hours spent in meetings. A common thread in our congregation is members wishing to step down from boards so they can spend more time “doing the work of the church” and less time in meetings. We would like to find ways to operate more efficiently, including restructuring our organization, so that we can direct our energy outside the church.

*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?*

Currently, we have a half-time bridge pastor, whose role is to support weekly worship service along with pastoral support to the congregation.

From March 2020-July 2021, we had a three-quarter time interim pastor, whose role was to support weekly worship service, spiritual support to the congregation (half time), as well as lead the church leadership through our visioning process (quarter time).

Before July 2019, we had a full-time pastor, whose role was to support weekly worship service, provide spiritual support to the congregation, lead faith formation programs for our youth every other year, as well as lead activities in our community such as serving as a Belmont Police Chaplain and serving on the board of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition.

We would like to refocus the externally focused portion of our previously called pastor’s role into investing in church growth: rebuilding our church’s programs for youth, building programs that invite people in from our community to see all that we have to offer, and ensuring that our safe spaces are available to all who need them.

## **4b. MISSION InSite**

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*Comment on your congregation’s Mission InSite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?*

The population of our surrounding neighborhood is very highly educated, compared to the state average, and sits within an area of very large wealth inequality. This drives housing prices up and makes the cost of living very difficult for blue-collar workers. Much of our social action goes towards trying to help those in our community in the lower end of the economic spectrum.

Today the percentage of households with young children seems relatively flat, whereas 10-15 years ago the schools were growing beyond their capacity. The number of middle-aged people is the fastest in decline, while the number of seniors is growing.

Our congregation sits within an area where a large and growing portion of our population identifies as nonreligious.

*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 church is predominantly white or multiracial, while the surrounding community is approximately 50% white, 30% Asian, and 12% Hispanic or Latino.

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

The large and growing segment of nonreligious people in our community is making us rethink what it means to be a church in 21st Century Silicon Valley. We may need to rethink our programs to reach out into the community to serve the spiritual needs of people who would never consider stepping foot in a "church." Our programs do not currently cater specifically to the highly paid tech workers prevalent in our community, as our community has a bit more diversity in its background and a large number of fixed-income retirees.

Despite these demographics, there are two others small UCC churches within our Mission Insite Rectangle and several others not too much farther away. There are five UCC congregations within a five-mile radius of CCB that all have congregations of fewer than 50 people in worship each Sunday. It is an opportunity to see how we could work together possibly to merge and streamline our efforts.

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

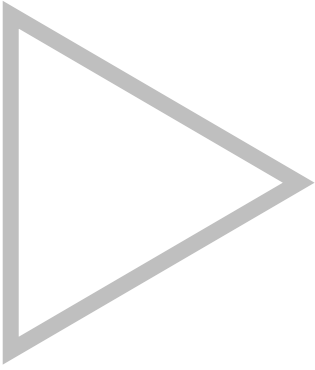
Our church is mainly known in the community as The Chocolate Church. Our annual Chocolate Fest (nearing its 40th anniversary) is a much-enjoyed tradition in our community, bringing about 500 guests into our building and raising more than \$10,000 (in non-Covid years) for our capital improvement and social action funds.

However, there is a lot more to us than Chocolate. We want to be a safe space in our community for all. We want to spread the word out about the work we do — and not just the sweet stuff!

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

1. Welcoming to different beliefs, views, faiths, and interpretations; non-judgmental,
2. Child-friendly/ strong children's program,
3. The pastor/sermons,
4. Overall warmth of welcoming,
5. The music programs

## 5. REFERENCES



*Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”*

*Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.*

### REFERENCE 1

Rev. Valerie McEntee / Former minister-in-training and director of Christian Education / Now serving a non-profit  
(650) 787-1416 / [justme@sanbrunocable.com](mailto:justme@sanbrunocable.com)

To the NCNC and those reading this profile,

I am delighted to write a letter of reference for the Congregational Church of Belmont. I had the pleasure of being an intern there during the 2005-2006 church year and serving as the Minister of Christian Education from June of 2009 until September of 2013.

One of CCB's great strengths is the warm welcome it provides for all who come through its doors. Every person, long time member and first-time attendee was greeted warmly as they came through the door each Sunday.

There were no cliques of 'old timers' and everyone was welcomed to participate fully in the life of the church as well as hold leadership positions. Another area of strength is the church's willingness to try new things. When I began as Minister of Christian Education, I made some changes very quickly and the church rolled with them graciously.

The Board of Christian Education was always full of new ideas and willing to do the work to make them happen. The church as a whole took ownership of major church events as well as the routine tasks necessary to keep the church running. On a couple of occasions when the Sr. Pastor had to be absent on short notice, the congregation was right there to make worship and other events happen without a

hitch. The first time I saw this I was a new intern and it all happened without me doing any of it. I thought at the time, this is healthy church.

In terms of an area for growth, actual growth in the size of the congregation would serve CCB well. I know this is an area where many churches struggle. I am not often there these days but believe the church school has shrunk quite a bit since I left. Reinvigorating that program would, I believe, help grow the church. A deeper focus on the wider world would also serve CCB well in this regard. CCB has a lot to offer, and it is sad to see so few people taking advantage of it.

The third prompt asks for a significant experience I have had of CCB's ministry. This could be a very long paragraph. I'll confine myself to two instances, one internal and one external. While I was there, we learned that one of our former interns had been indicted on multiple counts of child pornography and molestation. I was the first to learn of it. I sent an email to the Sr. Pastor and president of the church council stating what I'd learned and my first thoughts for dealing with the situation. I then stepped away from my computer so I could do a little personal freaking out before diving back in. When I went back to email shortly afterwards, the whole council was in on the situation and starting to brainstorm what the first steps should be. Over the next year, the church handled a fraught and difficult situation steadily and with faithfulness, from notifying the congregation rapidly and sensitively, providing space for all that this knowledge sparked in the congregation, to strengthening the safe church policy (though we found no evidence that any of the children at the church had been harmed).

Another experience that has touched me is the CCB's support of Night Ministry, where I was working per diem while I served them and full time from 2018-2021. CCB has faithfully provided lunches every fifth Sunday for Night Ministry's open air worship service as well as having many donations drives for blankets, socks, and other items of use to those Night Ministry serves. Though they no longer have the personal connection to Night Ministry through me, their steadfast generosity has continued, and I am very grateful for it

Finally, I'll add that CCB treats it's pastors well. They were good to the Sr. Pastor while I was there and very generous with me. I went through a divorce during my tenure with them. I shared very little about it with the congregation, of course, but they were supportive and caring toward me during that time.

I believe CCB is a church where many pastors could be happy.

Sincerely,

Rev. Valerie McEntee

## REFERENCE 2

Rev. Kristi Denham / Former pastor / Now retired  
(650) 218-3126 / [Revkristi@aol.com](mailto:Revkristi@aol.com)

**Rev. Kristi Denham**  
**5 Little Creek Lane**  
**Novato, CA. 94945**  
**650-218-3126** [revkristi@aol.com](mailto:revkristi@aol.com)

May 14, 2022

Congregational Church of Belmont  
751 Alameda de las Pulgas  
Belmont, CA. 94002

Re: Recommendation

Dear Church Profile Team,

I am honored to be asked to provide a general reference for your church that for nearly 20 years was my church as well. I arrived in Belmont in 1999 after two years of an intense Associate Pastor position in Atlanta, Georgia, ready to be back in California and to serve as a solo pastor. You believed in me and gave me the chance to grow quickly into that position. After serving and growing with you for those many years, I retired in June of 2019, just before the pandemic hit, deeply grateful for the work we were able to do together. I have watched your journey from a short distance up in Marin County now and can share my perspective on who you are and all that you have accomplished as a community of faith.

*Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.*

You are a progressive and diverse community full of people with incredible gifts for service as well as wisdom to share with the wider world. San Mateo County is a center of science and technology but also of the arts. Your members span the spectrum of brilliant scientists and creative artists as well as leaders in education and literature.

Your members have been so active at the conference level that you knew more about the wider church and its workings and served it in practical as well as financial ways that taught me much about our United Church of Christ and why I could be so proud of it.

Your music ministry is beyond compare. So many gifted individuals! So many ways for children to explore their gifts and use them in a supportive environment!

And you know how to have fun. Your annual Chocolate Fest had been around for more than ten years when I arrived. A community wide event, it was only temporarily slowed down by the pandemic. I loved being in the church of the Sacred Chocolate!

Service to others through the Home and Hope Homeless Shelter Network, Samaritan House Christmas family's adoption program, and active participation in the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition that you helped found with me after the events of 9/11 made it clear that we needed to better understand and support our neighbors of all faiths and none, made me deeply proud to be your pastor.

Your commitment to the wider community and your ability to support a full-time pastor at a time when so many smaller churches are cutting way back on hours and expectations for their ministers made my years with you a time of rich growth for me personally and for our faith community. You set a high mark and I continue to measure all other faith houses by your high standard. I still miss you and I am only thankful I live far enough away that I can no longer make you my home church (although I am aware that our Minister Emeritus Rev. John Brooke continued to travel all the way from Cotati which is another 30 minutes north of me to keep his membership at CCB).

*Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.*

Church Council meetings were always a challenge for me. I suspect this is true in many churches, but I wish that when I arrived those 22 years ago that I had had the foresight to establish some simple rituals to set the tone of meetings on a more spiritual footing. One of the things I did early on was invite anyone interested in the format of our worship services to attend a meeting of the Deacons after church to share their thoughts and opinions. I used a "talking rock" (my version of the Native American "Talking Stick") to invite everyone to share their point of view without cross talk or discussion. Sixteen people attended that meeting and by the time the rock got back to me we all realized that one person's "must have" was another's "no way." We made gradual changes but always honored the fact that diversity was our bedrock. Council, on the other hand, had always been a long meeting. An agenda might be followed but the importance of hearing every voice, no matter how long it took, meant that in the early days those meeting often went until 10 at night on a weeknight. We managed to shorten then over the years as younger members with full time jobs began to insist on some efficiency, but everything was run like a corporate business meeting and the spirit was assumed but seldom acknowledged except with bookend prayers. I wish I had found a way to infuse more gentleness and deep listening into those meetings. They wore me out.

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

I love working with children and like most smaller churches by the time I arrived after a year's interim, the youth were quickly growing up and disappointed that I wasn't just like their previous minister. I had one young teen who attended with her mother, so I invited her to invite her friends and we started an after school "Sacred Circle" that eventually had anywhere from 6 to 16 regular attendees meeting with me once a week. I listened. They shared their struggles and joys. Again, I used that "talking rock". Soon I will be attending the wedding celebration of one of the last of them (now 29) to marry.

The church youth group also began to grow with younger children and teens participating in so many of our events -- from Chocolate Fest to the Martin Luther King Day of Service. I see some of them at community events now and am proud of the strong and gifted young adults they are rapidly becoming. After one of our first Peninsula Multifaith Coalition MLK Days of Service, several of our teens took me aside and said they wanted to work with the interfaith teens they had met there; so, with their help we founded the Teen Interfaith Leadership Council of San Mateo County. They met with other teens in the community, rotated leadership, and planned service projects. They shared at a College of San Mateo Youth event about the value of interfaith community building. I was so proud!

*Anything else you wish to share.*

The Congregational Church of Belmont is vibrant and strong. It can be challenging if you come in expecting them to change quickly. They are always open to new ideas, and they deeply care for each other and the wider world. If you can practice loving them unconditionally, just as they are, I am sure you'll be pleasantly awed at all you can accomplish and share with them. They nurture ministers in training and currently have a member in discernment. It is a joy to know they are a congregation committed to following the teachings and guidance of Jesus, the Christ. If you are blessed to serve them, you will grow and so will they!

With warmest regards,

Rev. Kristi L. Denham  
Retired Pastor

### REFERENCE 3

Rev. Elizabeth Mitchell Clement / Former interim minister / Serving another church  
(404) 593-3217 / emc2k5@gmail.com

### REFERENCE LETTER:

Congregational Church of Belmont, United Church of Christ  
Belmont, CA  
01 June 2022

- A Significant Experience of CCB's Ministry

I spent the first year of the Covid pandemic and California lockdown at CCB—quite literally, in the church building. Everything about my experience with them was significant. A week after my start date, the world changed. Everyone was shaken by the abruptly imposed isolation and starting our work together in extreme circumstances. Yet, with warm hearts and strong leadership, CCB was able to adjust as needed and continue the congregation's ministry, all the while finding ways to assure me their warmest welcome and readiness to look to their future in ministry. With all its challenges, I consider the time I served with CCB a time of growth and blessing in my own ministry, as I trust it was in theirs.

The assembly of gifts in CCB is extraordinary. Aside from their faith and dedication to the church, there is a wide range of experience and abilities among the people there. In worship, study, and service, CCB bears strong witness as "a Micah 6 church." I came to admire and deeply respect the dozen or so members who make up the core leadership. Their work in congregational life is beyond anything I had experienced before. They are outstanding faith leaders. (That one among them should enter seminary on my watch is a special blessing.) I had not expected to find such open, loving hearts and dedication to their faith and life together in a Silicon Valley church. Oh, and they make such beautiful music!

In the “futuring” work we did together in this interim, they proved exceptional, also. They did the slow and difficult work of discerning how God calls CCB to DO and HAVE with the gifts and resources they HAVE. They have articulated their ministry goals so as to clarify who they wish to call to partner in their ministry. They can feel confident, as I am, that CCB is ready to take this next, important step. I will be praying with them.

- Areas of Strength in Ministry

Surely the commitment and quality of the leaders in CCB is a major source of strength (see above). I would add to that their desire to explore possibilities that reach out into the community they live in, surely essential as what we understand to be “the church” is emerging. Their hope to collaborate in significant ways with other UCC congregations nearby is a strength, one they may be the key to the future for many of them. And CCB has children! Their strong commitment to and aspirations for the next generation of the faithful empowers this congregation in significant ways. In truth, the strengths assembled there are an embarrassment of riches. We may not yet have uncovered them all.

- Areas for Improvement in Ministry

In truth, there is just one area of improvement I see and which I have expressed to CCB. They will do well to improve their capacities for seeing what is going on together and to learning together through dialogue for decision-making and taking action. (The dreaded Council meetings are where the limitations of their current practice show clearly.) Without doubt, this group would take a small amount of coaching in this area and run away with it.

- Anything else

CCB has my highest respect and admiration at a time when and in a location where church life is certainly challenged, if not in peril. They continue to be strong is their identity while adjusting as living things must, able to revisit and rethink established traditions. CCB also has my gratitude. We lived and served together in very difficult circumstances and I, for one, came through it feeling blessed and highly favored. I trust the next pastor will find the same, and I wish blessings on them all.

Rev. Elizabeth Mitchell Clement  
Interim Pastor  
Church of the Isles UCC  
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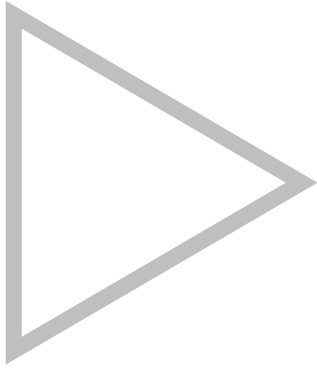
## *PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES*

*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.*



## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

a. CLOSING PRAYER

b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

*Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:*

We pray to find a pastor who will help fulfill our vision, as envisioned visually below:

The tree diagram features the following elements:

- Leaves (Values/Qualities):** Small, Strong, Mighty; Humor; Fellowship Hanging out Together; Family Camp; Being Together outdoors; Music; Adaptive, Alive, Moving; Helping People; Baking; Openness; Personal Transformation to Find one's Calling; Following Christ's Love; Support; Branching Out; Community Building Connections & Staying Connected; Worship Contemplative Spiritual/Faith Practices; Micah 6:8.
- Fruits (Vision/Goals):** Small, Strong, Mighty; Helping People; Personal Transformation to Find one's Calling; Following Christ's Love; Support; Branching Out; Community Building Connections & Staying Connected.
- Decorative Elements:** A treble clef on the top left, a bass clef on the bottom left, and a musical note on the right.

*In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

In words, we want a leader to help us be “A little church on the top of a hill that extends its arms out into its community and spreads love and healing and hope.”

## 6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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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 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.)*

- Church Council
- Pastoral Search Committee
- Futuring Committee

2. *Additional comments for interpreting the profile:*

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: **The Congregational Church of Belmont is in good standing with the Golden Gate Association of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ.**

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

Staff Comment: **The ministerial history and provided information is complete best of my knowledge.**

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

Staff Comment: **Yes, best of my knowledge, the financial information present is accurate.**

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Davena L. Jones*

Name / Title: Rev. Davena L. Jones/ Associate Conference Minister

Email: [davena@ncnucucc.org](mailto:davena@ncnucucc.org)

Phone: (510) 359-7208

Date: July 6, 2022

**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST



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

*"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" – Mark 11:22*