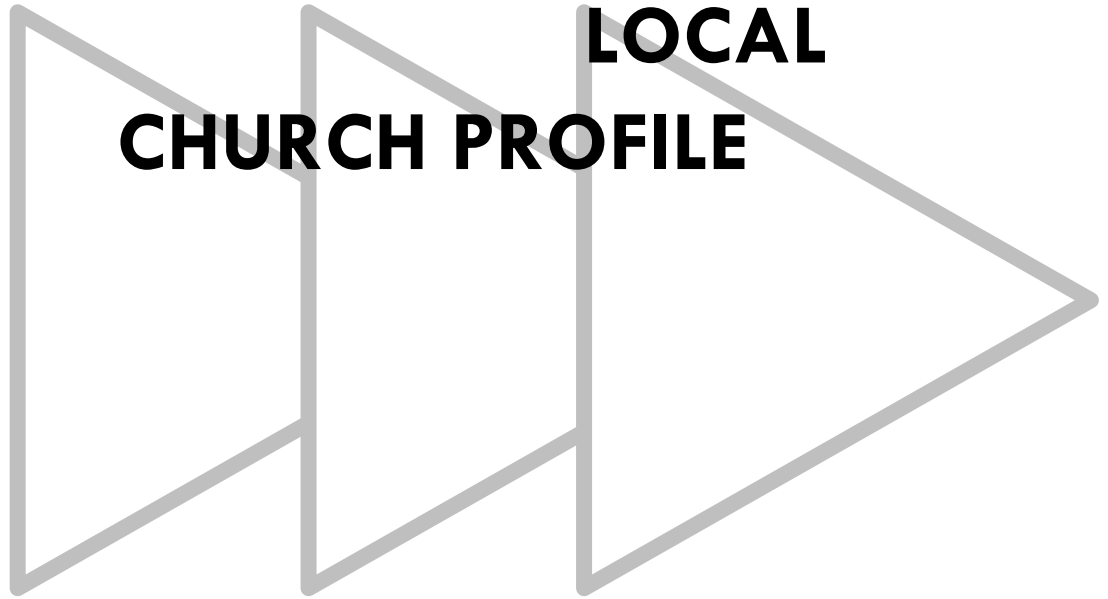


Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW

**LOCAL
CHURCH PROFILE**





POSITION POSTING

LISTING INFORMATION

SCOPE OF WORK

COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Central Congregational Church

Street address: 296 Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906

Supplemental web links: <https://www.centralchurch.us/>

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

Conference: UCC Southern New England

Association: Rhode Island

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

Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut, Area Conference Minister, Kogutp@sneucc.org, 508-244-4416

Summary Ministry Description:

Central Congregational Church is a vibrant, education and mission-oriented congregation of over 300 members on the east side of Providence near Brown University. Central's outreach extends beyond its walls to include local, state, national, and global mission activities. Central is an open and affirming church. Youth and adult education is provided and encouraged, including Sunday morning classes, book clubs, and guest speakers. We seek the leadership and inspiration of a Senior Minister who will equip us for individual and collective ministries and growth in our faith.





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

Central’s location in Providence, Rhode Island offers access to Southern New England cities and sites. Central’s members come from across Rhode Island, and southern and eastern Massachusetts. The church is located close to Brown University and The Rhode Island School of Design in an area known as College Hill, surrounded by historic homes. There is easy access to mission opportunities in Providence.

Current size of membership:

Central’s membership is 536.

Languages used in ministry (other than English):

English is the only language spoken in ministry.

Position Title:

The position title is Senior Minister.

Position Duration (choose one, delete the other options listed):

The position duration is “settled” calling for a longer-term ministry.

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

The compensation is for Full-Time.

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

We are looking for a Senior Minister to work with us according to our "Organization Statement of Purpose And Covenant". The purpose of the Church is to work for the increase in love of God and neighbor in Jesus Christ through sharing, caring, outreach, and worship. We covenant with the Lord and with one another and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all the ways which are revealed to us by God, as the Word is made known to us.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- 1) Strong preacher and an excellent worship leader.
- 2) Visionary leader and strong communicator.
- 3) Be welcoming and serve faithfully.

Job Description:

- Developing and implementing strategies to grow and maintain our membership.
- Lead staff and volunteers in developing and implementing strategies to build our youth programs across all ages.
- Preparation and leadership of worship services, including inspiring sermons, scripture readings, crafting liturgy and identifying lay liturgists, formation of the weekly bulletin, and planning of music with the organist.
- Pastoral care to members and especially those who are sick, elderly, or grieving.
- Project faith and vitality through prayers, services, and bible studies.
- Identifying and cultivating lay leadership within the church.
- Attend meetings and provide leadership to church committees and groups.
- Officiating weddings, confirmations, baptisms, and funerals for members and the community.
- Environmentally responsible use of the church resources.
- Faithful and responsible steward in the raising and expenditure of funds.
- Maintain Central's strong tradition of multi-faceted community engagement.
- Responsible for administration and supervision of church staff.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

Central Congregational Church offers a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with the responsibilities of the position and the experience of the applicant.

Benefits (choose one):

- Salary and Benefits
- Salary includes Optional Benefits No 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)?

Central expects our Senior Minister to be a resident of the local community.

Central does own a parsonage, the use of this residence is not mandatory and the church has been historically flexible with housing support.

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

See above.

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

Negotiable as part of the overall compensation package.

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

Members of the deacons are available to serve in the capacity of “pastors to the paster” as needed and other support may be available through the UCC. However, the details of those options are unknown as they have not been required in the past.

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

N/A

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

- Grow the congregation through new membership and increase attendance.
- Growing and increasing financial support for the church and its programs.
- Increase Youth attendance and youth programs.
- Outreach to local communities.
- Maintain our position that all are welcome.

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

The new minister should assist the congregation in continuing to make an impact in the community, building on our long-standing tradition of outreach, cooperation, and service.

Examples can be found on the Central Church website at

<https://www.centralchurch.us/mission-and-action-local/> and

<https://www.centralchurch.us/volunteer/>

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

While there are no requirements, the congregation would welcome candidates with multi-lingual / multi-cultural skills.

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.

The search committee evaluated the Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry and selected the following four areas of excellence we seek from our new Senior Minister.

- Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice
- Building transformational leadership skills
- Engaging sacred stories and traditions
- Working together for justice and mercy



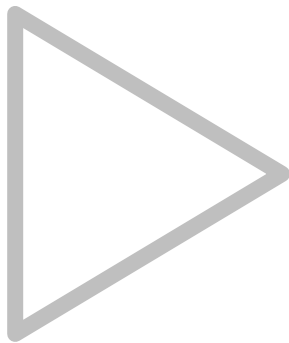
WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“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?

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

- To be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Be a child of God. Love our neighbors as ourselves.
- To be kind, and caring, feed the hungry, and love others as we have been loved.



WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

Central’s Statement of Faith on the website, and on the front page of the Order of Worship:

Christianity is the name of a journey, a journey not solely of personal contemplation, but one of communal venture that is the Church.

It is a journey open to everyone, regardless of their condition, regardless of their past. All that is required is a decision to follow Him.

Also from the website, but very much in keeping with the tone of worship and other gatherings and functions of the church:

In coming to know the people of this community, you will discover an amazing array of faith journeys and perspectives – and uncover your own relationship with God.

Central is open to all regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental facility, economic circumstance, or physical condition. Our ministry exists to serve others, spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, comfort and challenge one another, and share our joys and concerns.

We strive to be a community of God's people in a way that calls each of us to active discipleship through worship, caring, sharing, and outreach. Our mission work reaches out to our local community and the world through our members' action and stewardship.

We look forward to meeting you and sharing God's Word.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

The congregation is engaged and connected. The clergy has a long and deep knowledge of the individuals that make up the congregation, and through a variety of vehicles and processes, they help us to connect with each other. Whether the weekly Prayer Tree or the signing of cards wishing well and expressing sympathy or email messages sharing the joys and sorrows of our members, Our church encourages all members to stay connected and to deepen our relationships. As one member of our search committee shared, "The meals that arrived in the hands of a fellow congregant after the birth of our youngest son will always be a treasured memory, as will visits from clergy in both joyous and frightening moments in the hospital."

Central is intellectually engaged and connected as well. New projects, missions, and endeavors are thoughtfully introduced and effectively nurtured throughout the development process. The recent Reimagining Chapel Hall capital project is an excellent example. Having identified that this space which is so central to us (literally and figuratively) was in need of reinvigoration and update, leadership held a series of thoughtful and inclusive conversations about who we were, and what we needed this space to do for and say about us. The result was a renovation that truly captured that shared vision of a lively and engaged congregation welcoming the future.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Worship takes place in our truly wonderful sanctuary, a space of artistic and architectural splendor that immediately invokes a sense of both familiarity and awe. In general, services are led with a strong sense of tradition, but without rigidity. Visitors and friends are invariably welcomed with warmth and invitation. Examples of this inclusiveness and invitation include the sacrament of Communion, which is administered with deference and tradition by the clergy and the board of deacons, but which is preceded by the statement, "This table is open to

all; our only requirement is that you find meaning in it.” Similarly, baptisms are carried out by the font in the chancel, not just with family, sponsoring deacons, and supporting family, but also surrounded by the youth of the congregation, who are invited to the chancel in order to get up close to these special events, to have a more personal experience of the sacrament and embody the message that we are all children of God.

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

The Youth Education program has always been a core strength of Central Church. Its robust offerings on Sunday mornings for children of all ages have helped nurture and develop a strong sense of family-forward community. Although it has taken different forms over the years, the Confirmation process for 8th and 9th graders has been meaningful, and significant without being intimidating. Their Statements of Faith delivered from the pulpit to the Congregation, whether or not they choose to proceed with receiving Confirmation, are always inspiring.

Educationally, the Youth Education program takes its cues for content from the liturgy going on within the Worship Service itself, so that the family heading home on Sunday can discuss and share reflections on what went on that morning.

The church recognizes that a variety of factors including churn in youth ministry leadership and the pandemic has put this important program in decline. Among the highest priorities of the congregation is to rebuild these vital programs.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

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

There are over twenty committees, boards, and groups that are tasked with the operations and development of the full array of Church activities, engagement, growth, and sustainment. The charge of each committee is fully outlined in Central’s bylaws, and guided by the collective wisdom and experience of both our clergy and the lay leadership. These groups not only continually advance our church but also serve as outstanding educational resources for those newly called to serve on them. In most cases, these committees include both clergy and representative from the board of deacons that serve with the committee members, keeping connection and communications effective and focused. The nominating committee is tasked with, and very successful at, identifying the strengths within our membership so that these committees can carry out their charges effectively. Lastly, our prudential committee meets monthly to manage the physical and financial aspects of Central.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic obviously brought in-person gatherings and worship to a halt around the world, but the return to in-person gatherings actually took more effort and thought than entering lockdown. In the case of Central Church, the Head Usher, who, according to the Bylaws, is “immediately responsible at all regular and special worship services of the congregation for the safety, well-being, and comfort of the congregation,” convened a task force to investigate the safest ways to return to worship. This task force, comprised of both medical and nonmedical professionals from within our membership, carefully evaluated the situation, including local infection rates, safe occupancy levels, social distancing concerns, and modifications to the Communion practices to maximize safety for even our most vulnerable parishioners. With increasing rates of vaccination, and decreasing infection rates, we have systematically restored normal activities, including singing, serving coffee, and just recently, regular bread-and-wine service for communion. We kept contact/tracing information, and, to our knowledge, no cases of COVID transmission occurred within our building.

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. Our bylaws, and the thoughtful care that went into developing and maintaining them, are significant assets to our congregation. This document of twenty-two pages, most recently revised and approved by a vote of the congregation at large in the spring of 2023, reflects both the deepest traditions and the most modern sensibilities of the organization and its membership.

11-YEAR REPORT

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

Central Church does not maintain an 11-year report.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	536	Actual
Number of active non-members:	30	Actual
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	566	Actual

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
More than 10 years:	77%	Actual
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	13%	Actual
Less than 5 years:	10%	Actual

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)
36	40	30	30	40	90	100	100	70	Estimate

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Single adults under 35:	10%	Estimate
Joint household with minors:	25%	Estimate

Single adults age 35-65:	20%	Estimate
Joint household with no minors:	30%	Estimate
Single adults over 65:	15%	Estimate

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

Based on the tithing necessary to support a church of our scale, it is evident that the majority of our congregation is affluent, well-educated, and hold successful vocations. That said, Central does not track the education levels or employment information of our members.

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

Our congregation covers a broad spectrum of vocations including Medical, Law, Education, Arts, and Social Service/ Non- Profit in both the private and public sectors.

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 Central exhibits certain diversity within the scope of LBGTQIA, and age, we remain homogeneous in terms of cultural and social economic diversity.

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

Central’s immediate priorities remain growing overall membership and we recognize the importance of diversity in that challenge.

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	100	Associate Minister, Volunteers, Choirmaster, Senior Minister
Baptisms (number last year)	8	Associate Minister, Senior Minister
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Youth Minister
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Easter 400 Christmas Eve 175	Associate Minister, Choirmaster, Senior Minister
Church-wide Meals	300	RLS, Associate Minister, Membership, mission & action, and social committees
Choirs and Music Groups	50	Choirmaster, adult, and children
Church-based Bible Study	30	Associate Minister
Communion (served how often?)	150	10 First Sun. each Liturgical Season plus a few (World-Wide Comm., Ash Wed, Maundy Th.) deacons
Community Meals	300	Senior Minister Muslims/Interfaith
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	5	Youth Minister, volunteers, deacons
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	
Funerals (number last year)	10	Senior Minister, with the participation of Associate Minister and Choirmaster
Intergenerational Groups	100 – all groups are intergenerationally welcoming	Various lay leaders, Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Youth Minister Egg dying, Game nights – religious education committee, Blessing of Animals, Music Comm. Trim-a-Tree,
Outdoor Worship	40	Youth Minister, Associate Minister Easter vigil, sunrise service
Prayer or Meditation Groups	85	Senior Minister, Associate Minister Prayer tree, Lenten Meditations
Public Advocacy Work	50	Senior Minister and lay leaders, gun violence work, marriage equality, Mission and Action Comm. Bread for the World

Retreats	20	Associate Minister
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	unknown	All welcome ..many friends attend
Weddings (number last year)	10	Senior Minister, Associate Minister
Worship (time slot:)	150	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Choirmaster
Worship (time slot:)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	5	Youth Minister
Youth Groups or Classes	10	Youth Minister
Other		

Additional comments:

N/A

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)
Janet Cooper Nelson	4	Brown Univ.	Chaplain	N
Claudia Demick	3	Central Cong. Church	Assoc. minister	N
Patricia Hazeltine	3	Counseling	Counselor	Y
Caroline P. Inlow	4	W & I Hospital	Chaplain	Y

Name	Three- or Four- Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Sally McLean	3	Local church	Pastor	Y
Mary Beth Marshall	4	Hospice	Chaplain	N
Judy Martowska	3	Central Cong. Church	Youth Ministry	N
Peter McGinnis	3	Local church and mission		Y
Elyn McGinnis		Episcopal Church		Y
Russell Miller	3	Interim Ministry		N
Weldon Palmer	3	Local churches		Y
Rebecca Spencer	3	Central Cong. Church	Senior Minister	N

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:

None

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

The Senior Minister serves as the head of the staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Antonia Greco Church Administrator	No	FT	Senior Minister	2 years

Steve Heywood PR/Communications Asst.	No	PT	Church Administrator	1 ½ years
Ron Almeida Sexton	No	PT	Church Administrator	½ yr.
Patrick Aiken Choirmaster / Organist	No	PT	Senior Minister	30 years
Claudia Demick Associate Minister	No	FT	Senior Minister	17 years
Judy Martowska Youth Minister	No	FT	Senior Minister	3 years

REFLECTION

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

Despite the concerns Central faces about membership retention and growth – something we share in common with other mainline Protestant churches – we recognize the strength of our congregation resides in the talents and dedication of our ministry team.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

Annual income to the church for our last fiscal year was \$960,034.

We respectfully choose not to disclose a detailed breakout of our revenues. The church looks forward to addressing questions regarding our excellent financial health directly with candidates as needed.

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

\$1,002,710 (Includes Parsonage Expenses; excludes achieved expense reductions)

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

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

35%

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%)

\$10,000 plus 3.6% of income

What is the church's current indebtedness? None

Total amount of loan debt: N/A

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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

- Campaign to Reimagine Chapel Hall:
 - Authorized 2020, construction began 2021, completed 2023
 - Project Budget, \$1,300,000; Estimated Final cost \$1,413,000

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

No previous campaigns in the last 10 years.

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
See Above		\$	\$	Conversion of Chapel Hall and Church Gallery into warm and welcoming spaces for the congregation and the larger community

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

10% of donated funds contributed to 3 designated charities

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes.

What is the market value of the assets?

We respectfully choose not to disclose this information. The church looks forward to addressing questions regarding our excellent financial health directly with candidates as needed.

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

Withdrawals are made as needed subject to the budget cap. To facilitate the Capital Campaign, funds were advanced from the endowment to be repaid as proceeds are received. The approved endowment draw rate for f/y/e 2022 is 3.12%; rate for f/y/e 2018 was 3.9%

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

We respectfully choose not to disclose this information. The church looks forward to addressing questions regarding our excellent financial health directly with candidates as needed.

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

Indefinitely.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Since the projected rate of return exceeds historic withdrawal rates the fund should never be exhausted.

Other Assets:

Reserves (savings): \$815,612 as of 2/24/23

Investments (other than endowment): \$0 (None)

Does your church have a parsonage? Yes

- **Fair market rental value of the parsonage:**
 - \$2800-3,000/month
- **How is the parsonage used?**
 - Rented to unrelated third party
- **Street / City / State / Zip:**
 - 24 Diman Place, Prov., RI 02906
- **Finished square footage:**
 - 2,932
- **Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:**
 - 5 bedrooms, 2.5 baths
- **Assessed real estate value:**
 - \$982,300
- **Available for minister residence:**
 - Yes, if desired
- **Expected minister residence:**
 - Not necessarily
- **Condition of structure, systems and appliances**
 - Fair to Good
- **Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs**
 - Plant and properties and design committee provides immediate oversight; expenses approved by prudential committee

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

- Church Buildings include Sanctuary, Chapel Hall, and Church School wing.
- Parsonage described above.
- The Church also owns Hamilton House adjacent to the Church which is used as a nonprofit adult learning community.
- **Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:**
 - None
- **Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)**
 - Worship space and fellowship space are wheelchair accessible

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

The Church's commitment to the Reimagining Chapel Hall campaign demonstrates its willingness to finance substantial renovations that will benefit the larger community that uses the space and help to grow the church in future years.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

An interactive timeline of Central's history can be found at <https://www.centralchurch.us/news/history/>

Formation of the Social Action Committee: In 1935 the church formed The social action committee. The goal of the new group was to promote social justice through local and national community service. Social Action set a new standard for Central's activism, a tradition that has continued throughout the decades. Key events that stemmed from this step include Central's involvement in refugee resettlement starting in the 1950s, our policy to welcome all persons, regardless of race or color adopted in 1964, the formation and hosting of Hospice Care Rhode Island in 1976 and adoption of the inclusion policy "This church is open to all and welcomes everyone who chooses to worship here. We affirm that all of us are created in God's image regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental facility, economic circumstance, or physical condition." In 1999.

Central's mission is to build loving relationships across all boundaries, both within and beyond the church continues. The church remains committed to diverse projects - locally, nationally, and internationally - in human services, child welfare, health care, education, and spiritual support. We seek to tie our faith to social justice and shape cutting-edge theology and service in an ever-changing world - always trying to provide aid and resources to those who need it most.

Now called the mission and action committee, the group coordinates and volunteers hundreds of hours to a range of mission projects, with a focus on supplying basic needs to the individuals we serve. The committee provides hands-on volunteer opportunities, organizes mission trips, sponsors after-church Mission Lunches and Lenten Mission Suppers, and spearheads UCC-wide fundraisers, including One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need. In addition, the committee oversees Central's annual benevolence to both the local and global mission partners we support financially.

The installation of the Aeolian-Skinner organ in 1964: This magnificent instrument with its 3,356 pipes solidified our church's commitment to offering a strong musical program to celebrate the glory of God. In the earliest days of the church, a professional quartet performed

hymns during the service. The congregation stood and faced the choir loft as they sang. Once congregational singing was introduced in 1858, a full choir of volunteers joined the quartet, leading the congregation in singing hymns and chanting psalms.

Although the quartet became a duo of contralto and bass singers during the Great Depression, it remained a fixture at Central through the 1960s. Today, our choir's section leaders have assumed the role filled by the quartet.

In the early '60s, organist Frederick MacArthur established many musical traditions we still enjoy. When Patrick Aiken, our current organist, and choirmaster, came to Central in 1993, he continued and enhanced the most beloved traditions: performing the "Hallelujah Chorus" at Easter, "As the Leaves Fall" on Veteran's Day, and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" for Thanksgiving - when the congregation once again stands and faces the choir loft, as it did in the early years of the church.

Today, Central is known throughout Rhode Island for its ambitious music program. The annual Christmas Carol and Good Friday services, Easter's Lessons and Carols, and the occasional "pops concert" are must-see/must-hear events for church and community members alike.

Covid 19: The most important event in the last 10 years is undoubtedly the pandemic as outlined in the next section.

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

Few events in the long history of Central instituted as much change in such a short amount of time as the Covid 19 pandemic. In the memories of even our eldest members, there had always been in-person Sunday worship at the church regardless of weather or global conflict. In March of 2020, in the final week of Lent, in a time that the church was most needed, in-person services at Central were suspended.

Work was already underway to ensure that while the church was physically closed, it remained spiritually open. Weekly email updates were sent to the full congregation, with both practical information as well as bible verses and thoughts to keep members inspired and engaged despite the dark times.

The church rapidly recruited members with experience in video to capture and upload our traditional Lenten meditations to Central's YouTube Channel, our choirmaster engaged with soloists one on one to be sure that our streamed services had a virtual choir, volunteers helped to safely deliver vital supplies to those members in need. Deacons recorded biblical readings

on their cell phones. These clips were edited together to make sure that our long-standing Maundy Thursday was not interrupted.

That Easter, the congregation was asked to submit their own video “Halleluiahs” that were weaved into a past recording of our choir singing Handel’s masterpiece for the end of our virtual Easter Service, ensuring again that while the world had changed, the many traditions of central continued.

Throughout 2020 Central adapted not just the way we worshiped, but the day-to-day operations of the church. Design work for our project to Reimagine Chapel Hall, among the largest capital improvements ever undertaken by the church and approved just before the pandemic, continued via Zoom meetings and email. A system of proxy voting was implemented to ensure that everyone had a voice at our annual meeting in May.

Central Church is blessed with a variety of members with medical backgrounds. A special committee was formed to leverage the talents of these healthcare professionals, along with church staff and other committee leaders to guide the church through the pandemic. The committee not only advised the church through day-to-day decisions but also implemented policies that were strictly followed once in-person worship was reinstated.

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.

While Central is not immune to conflict, the well-tenured members of the search committee charged with drafting this document were hard-pressed to identify any event in our memory that even threatened to fracture our congregation. A check with our church archivist confirmed that the last significant conflict within Central was regarding the funding of the Fountain Street Mission in 1908.

This is not to say that all agree with all decisions. We have each experienced minor conflicts between members which is expected given our passion for the church. Examples include how our traditional blessing of the animal service is challenging for those with allergies, the way a certain project might be funded or if security cameras should be installed in the church. Another disagreement occurred in the 1990s and involved the placement of the American and Rhode Island flags hung near the choir loft in the sanctuary. The flags were especially important to those members of the congregation that had served their country. A special meeting was convened and a compromise was reached. The flags would be placed in the front of the sanctuary on Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day during the rest of the year, displayed in

Chapel Hall.

The church has also not been completely immune to the political and social divisiveness which has permeated our country over the past decade. While the majority of the church would be placed on the more liberal side of the center, those ideologies are by no means universal to all members. Moreover, the degree of how progressive, and more importantly, how public the church should be in taking political positions on key social issues is often the subject of debate within the church. Historically, our leadership has been very successful in navigating the narrow gap between these diverse viewpoints but maintaining the harmony of members with different opinion or how large or minimal the church's role should be in these debates will undoubtedly continue to be a challenge.

Fortunately, Central has a variety of structures in place that serve as checks and balances to resolve disagreements and mitigate conflict. The board of deacons and prudential committee are each comprised of a diverse selection of tenured members. The deacons are charged with the spiritual well-being of the church and ministerial staff while prudential focuses on the practical operations of the church including, non-ministerial staff, and managing the budget. These two groups work in tandem – each sensitive to the responsibilities of the other and their combined pledge to support the congregation as a whole.

Each committee is appointed a Deacon representative who is responsible for relaying both ideas and issues back to the board. Prudential has multiple sub-committees including those specifically charged with managing the building, stewardship, and a finance committee charged with formulating our early budget.

Although uncommon, there have also been events involving conflict within the paid staff at the church. In those rare cases, both The deacons and prudential are typically involved. The deacons will evaluate any adverse impact the conflict might have on our ministerial leaders as prudential focuses on the staff member or members involved.

Additionally, the church has a unique leadership development committee. This group meets regularly with committee chairs to share best practices in subjects ranging from how to conduct productive meetings to ensure that committee heads understand our bylaws and how we can all work together to build a stronger, unified church.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rebecca L. Spencer, M. Div. Senior Minister	1988-Current	Yes
Todd Weir, Associate Minister	1989-1992	Yes
Kurt Kirchhoff, Associate Minister	1992-1997	Yes
T. Michael Rock, Associate Minister	1997-2006	Yes
Dr. Claudia Demick, Ph.D, Associate Minister	2006- Present	Yes
Derek White, Youth Minister	2007-2009	Yes
Kat Townes, Youth Minister	2009-2012	Yes
Aidan Kelley, Youth Minister	2012-2019	Yes
Judy Martowska, Youth Minister	2020-Present	Yes

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

We have a great affection for those leaders willing to serve long-term and establish deep roots both within our membership and our community.

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

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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

No



WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION InSite

COMMUNITY VISION

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

Central is involved in many local service organizations. Our involvement includes financial support (benevolences), in-kind support, and member volunteering. These organizations include: Mt Hope Learning Center, Sojourner House, Amos House, Crossroads Rhode Island, Sandwich Brigade, Camp Street Ministries, RI Community Food Bank, Edesia, Families in Need in Providence, Hamilton House, the Nonviolence Institute and Dorcas International Institute. Our mission and action committee distributes church funding, but also organizes participation by our members in regular volunteer support of organizations that meet basic needs in the community.

Central also financially supports: a Haiti Mission Clinical Work, One Egg Haiti, and Higher Ground Women’s Missionary

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

Central’s Associate Minister is very active with the Southern New England Conference of the UCC. She currently serves as chair of the volunteer development committee and the chair of the committee on the Ministers of RI Association. Many members of the congregation have been involved in the conference as well, serving in various capacities including on the board of directors.

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.)

Central is designated by the UCC as a Global Mission Church as well as Open and Affirming (ONA). Although not UCC designated for any of the other statements, the church has done

work in keeping with the associated ideals, brief examples are below.

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

Accessible to All (A2A)

formally designated by UCC

Creation Justice

Just Peace

Economic Justice

Global Mission Church

Faithful and Welcoming

o designated by UCC

God Is Still Speaking (GISS)

Open and Affirming (ONA)

Border and Immigrant Justice

o designated by UCC

- o sponsored a refugee family for 2 years – not formally designated by UCC

WISE Congregation for Mental

Health

Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)

Other UCC designations:

- o diverse membership with members from around the world – not

Designations from other

denominations

None

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

We look forward to working with our new senior minister to identify the focus of our continued service to our local community.

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

Central participates in, and often hosts, the Interfaith Thanksgiving celebrations which brings together Episcopal, Baptist, and Jewish congregations, local Black churches, Catholic parishes, and the Vedanta Society. We have also hosted Iftar to share the tradition of Ramadan across the Providence faith community. Our Chapel Hall has also been the home for the Eid Celebration (end of Ramadan).

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.

We do not have a formal mission statement, but we put the following into our order of worship every Sunday:

At Central, we are committed to living the words of Jesus, "Love one another."

This church is open to all and welcomes everyone who chooses to worship here.

We affirm that all of us are created in God's image, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity,

sexual orientation, mental facility, economic circumstance, or physical condition.

These statements are reflected in the activities of the church and church members. In addition to time spent at Sunday worship, members of the congregation serve on committees and engage with each other in regular activities that support the building of community among our members. We also reach out into our neighborhoods with service and advocacy, some led by our ministers and much led by congregation members in support of the needs in our broader community. Central has been an advocate on public issues that support our deep commitment to being open and affirming. We also seek to improve the lives of those in need in our state and in our world, with defined work both in Providence and in Haiti.

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?

Our pastors have balanced their time across service to the congregation, to the community, and to the conference, with their focus varying based on the needs of each. The strengths of the individuals in those roles have also helped define the scope of the minister's work. All has been done in collaboration with the Deacons and with the church membership more broadly as we seek to respond to needs within our membership and in our community.

MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's MissionInsite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

Central gathers information on neighborhoods from our support of various agencies in the Providence area including Amos House, Camp Street Ministries, and Crossroads. Through volunteers, speaking engagements, and contributions, Central can access available data from these agencies. An example is a speaking engagement on March 29, 2023, when Adopt Rhode Island spoke to a group of over 30 members about how they support children in foster care with housing, education, and jobs.

Each Wednesday during Lent, our Lenten Supper Series focuses on a theme that addresses a public need. The simple soup and bread gathering includes a subject matter expert as a guest speaker.

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?

Central's diversity of members compares favorably to surrounding neighborhoods. Central has numerous secondary and college teachers and administrators as members as well as members of color. Over the years there have been programs and dinners shared with the nearby black Olney Street Baptist Church. Providence is a community of villages with churches sprinkled in the neighborhoods.

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

Central is an open and affirming church. It is a haven for groups to meet who have difficulty finding or paying for space to meet. These groups include: AA groups, Compassionate Friends, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Providence Singers, visiting musicians and singers, homeless sleep-out, mission trips, etc.

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

Central is known for its excellent preaching, education opportunities, music program, outside speakers, making space available for outside organizations, the work of its volunteers, and for its financial support.

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

Many new members first come to Central on the recommendation of another member. Other strong attractions include our well-known excellence in both our music and youth programs.

Individuals are also drawn to Central by its ministers and church services and by Central's continued financial and volunteer support of community local, national, and global action programs (e.g. Amos House, Crossroads, Camp Street Ministries, New Orleans relief, and the Haiti Task Force).



REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1

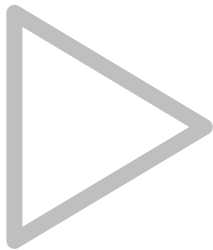
Leslie Y. Gutterman rabbi emeritus of Temple Beth-El in Providence.

REFERENCE 2

Crossroads Rhode Island, Tracey Mahoney, Director of Corporate Relations

REFERENCE 3

Jessica Healey - Hamilton House



CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

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:

"I will lift up my eye unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which makes heaven and earth". Psalm 121: Verse 1-2

O Lord we hand over this completed profile of the Senior Minister that our heart desires as a Church. We ask that you go ahead and perfect all that concerns this search for us. And search from the North, South, East, and West, your servant that you have prepared, ready, to lead our

church, Central Congregational, to be the citadel of the glory of your name. Take glory, Lord.. This we ask in your name, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A long Journey

Many questions
Searching the soul of Central
Much to be proud of
Still more work to do
Gratitude to our retiring senior minister
Thanks to the congregation for their participation
Outlook for the future positive

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)

This profile was created by the Central senior minister search committee under the supervision of Mark McLaughlin, chair of the permanent diaconate as charged by our bylaws with the support and input of our congregation.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Mark McLaughlin / Chair of the permanent diaconate / May 5th, 2023

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut*

Patty Kogut, Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region, Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ, kogutp@sneucc.org, 508-244-4416

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

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

