

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

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!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

First Christian
Congregational
Church UCC

Swansea, MA

Settled Pastor

Old Colony Association,

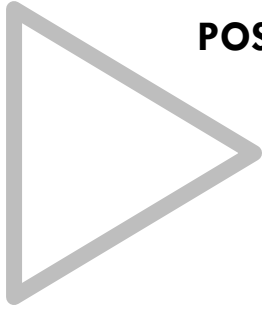
Southern New England Conference

December 11, 2023

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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- References
- Consent and Validation

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



POSITION POSTING

LISTING INFORMATION

SCOPE OF WORK

COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: First Christian Congregational Church, UCC

Street address: 1113 Grand Army of the Republic Highway, Swansea MA 02777

Supplemental web links: <http://www.uccswansea.org>

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

Conference: Southern New England Conference

Association: Old Colony

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

Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut, Associate Conference Minister, Southeast Region

kogutp@sneucc.org 508-244-4416

Summary Ministry Description:

We are a Spirit-filled, welcoming congregation seeking a pastor who can help us grow and deepen our outreach into the community. We are in the midst of trying a new, task-based structure for church leadership. We are seeking to expand upon what we do well: showing God's love for one another and members of the community who join us for worship.

Photographs:





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

We value the history of this town and our congregational church which has developed into this small tight-knit community. We value the members of our community and our relationships with each other. The amenities in town include wooded trails to walk or bike on and a beautiful beach to enjoy. We are located less than 15 minutes from Providence, one hour south of Boston, and one hour west of Cape Cod. These locations offer an array of activities for all ages and interests.

Current size of membership: 148 on rolls; average worship attendance: 55

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*)

Position Title: Pastor

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

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*):

$\frac{3}{4}$ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes.

SCOPE OF WORK

(add here the Scope of Work developed by your church using the Call Agreement Workbook)

Three-quarter time Pastoral Position—30-35 hours weekly/8-10 units

- Worship preparation, bulletin, sermon preparation, coordination with staff, preaching, prayers, etc.
- Pastoral care with help from the Care Team and other lay volunteers to those who are sick, elderly, home-bound, grieving or going through hard times
- Strategic planning and new directions in ministry and leadership development for congregants
- Staff collaboration and administration
- Adult study and confirmation when time allows
- Study and prayer to increase faith and improve skills to lead, teach and preach
- Community engagement with local community organizations
- Attend select meetings and participate in wider church activities as time permits

Tasks and ministries that will not be the responsibility of the three-quarter time pastor:

- Leading outreach and mission efforts
- Counseling, listening and referral
- Financial stewardship, resource development and faithful financial giving and spending
- Weddings and funerals for non-church members

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.)

We are looking for someone who is caring, forward-thinking, and has good collaborative management and team building skills.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$ 64,500

Total package is \$64,500 and can be divided up based on the needs of the candidate.

Benefits (*choose one*):

Salary plus Benefits

Salary includes Optional Benefits X

No Benefits

Four (4) weeks of paid vacation leave per each 12 months of service

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*)?

We seek a minister who either lives nearby or is willing to commute as needed.

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

We would like the settled pastor to live no more than an hour away. A commute of less than 45 minutes would be preferable to account for situations requiring emergency pastoral care.

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

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

Past pastors have enjoyed an informal relationship with two other pastors in the neighboring town as well as the local Council of Churches gatherings.

The conference provides Communities of Practice for various pastoral demographics that are peer facilitated.

There is a plethora of educational and spiritual opportunities offered by the Association and the Conference on diverse topics as well as two major educational gatherings a year.

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

We can be flexible to accommodate a pastor's bi-vocational employment.

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 are looking for a minister who will work with us to grow in our faith, focus on serving our community, and increase our church membership. During the pandemic, we grew stronger in our relationships by increasing the care we offered each other. When we re-opened our church building and started in-person worship services members returned and we saw some new faces! Through personal invitations and word of mouth, several new people visited, and we have had three new members join our congregation. The Holy Spirit is moving among us and we are joyful!

At the same time, our youth ministry is growing! We have awesome leadership in this area who are generating interest and excitement through their teaching and by building relationships with the youth and their parents. We want younger folks and children to join our church, and this is working! Our youth participation on Sunday mornings and in extra activities is increasing, as the youth invite their friends to join them.

Our work in the community has continued with our food and personal hygiene collections, donating the items to the homeless and a local food pantry, as well as assisting refugees. In our new task-based structure we have designated two ministers who will lead us in two service areas called: Outreach (to the community) and In-reach (serving members in our congregation). With this leadership, we hope to focus more of our time and energy putting our faith into action and doing God's work.

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

We seek a pastor who will encourage and guide us in our community outreach and assist us in increasing the number of congregation members involved in this work. We have some very active members, but we want to spread this work and faith experience throughout the congregation. We believe every person has God given talents to share and this is how we can shine our light and continue to build upon our mission - Our faith is active in Love! We are looking for the pastor's guidance using their experience and talents to raise us up.

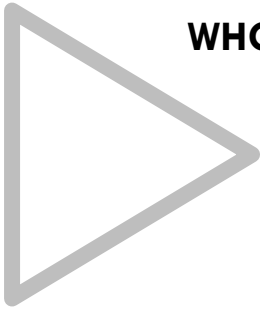
Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

At this time, we do not have any specific language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in the next ministerial leader.

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.

We chose these four themes:

- Encouraging collaboration and working together across ages, theologies, and experiences
- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit
- Strategically working on the future of God's church amidst changes in the community—both inside and outside
- Having a healthy sense of self while practicing self-care and work-life balance



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 want to continue providing a warm and welcoming church environment. We have recently begun exploring the process to becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. ONA Bible study was led by our interim pastor and attended consistently by 14-16 people. The study began with a history of the versions of the Bible, differences in the language used, and how to interpret them with history and context. Most importantly, Jesus did not ever exclude anyone and most often included and reached out to those people living on the edges of society. Additionally, we would like to be more present in the community and be of greater service to those in need.

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?

One challenge we faced was finding our organization structure cumbersome and out of date. It took many people, many work hours on committees to accomplish tasks and projects. Today, our lives are busy and there are fewer people available to get the work done. In order to work more efficiently we explored an organization framework with less people involved in deciding what to work on. We suspended our bylaws and committees and began working under a new leadership model in 2022. The new task-based model has a Church Board consisting of nine congregation members who represent the leadership of the church and act as the decision making body. Tasks will be presented to the board for approval and may be done or led by one of these leaders or delegated to congregation members. For on-going tasks and longer projects, more members will be involved and one or two people will be the leaders. This will share more of the work with congregation members. We have an excellent leadership group on the Church Board and they have been progressing in making this work.

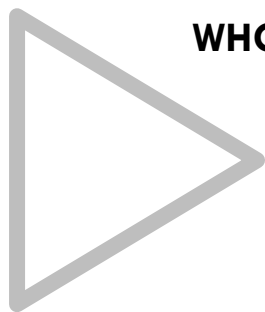
Our hope is to make it easier for church members who are inspired to do a project to get approval and resources from the Church Board. This new structure has released us from a 60+

elected positions structure that we could no longer fill. We hope the revised model will encourage new people to become more involved with the workings of the church. We discussed this type of model for most of 2021 which included a presentation from a UCC pastor who has specialized knowledge and experience with changes to bylaws. The proposed leadership change was voted on at the Annual Meeting. The new structure will be adjusted as we work with it and will be reassessed in 2024 before deciding to make it permanent.

A second experiment where God has called us:

We feel strongly that God wants us to be inclusive in caring for each other. While we returned to in-person worship, we continue recording our services to offer virtual services on cable and online. We want to ensure our homebound folks, those impacted by Covid, and the wider community can continue participating in worship.

We have feedback from congregation members who watch the virtual services indicating they are thankful for this and feel connected to their church.



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.

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?

God is described in various ways in liturgy, especially in the Interim time: Creator, Compassionate, Loving, Holy, Father, Faithful, Forgiving.

The congregation most identifies with the Holy Spirit when asked which member of the Trinity we connect with. We feel the Spirit is very present in worship and with us when we are not together. Congregants consider the Spirit an active part of their lives. We also identify God and Jesus as part of our faith experience/tradition.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

The kindness and caring of our congregants was evident when members of the First Christian Congregational Church (FCCC) warmly welcomed about twelve people from another church who suddenly found themselves displaced and without a church. A hostile takeover of their church had taken place by a couple of families who had gained leadership positions and wanted complete control of the church. They terminated the Interim Pastor and all but a few of the church members. A dozen or so displaced churchgoers, people who had been very involved in the life of their church, were faced with uncertainty about where they would now worship. They experienced a great deal of pain and feelings of loss. Members of FCCC warmly welcomed this group with faith and love, and provided them with a sense of being “home” again. Over the years, many of these individuals have taken on leadership roles and have become an active presence in the life of the First Christian Congregational Church.

Our congregation continues to be supportive, caring, and welcoming to members and newcomers alike. During this time of COVID, FCCC was blessed with the addition of eight new people who decided to join our church and become part of our faith community.

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?

Worship takes place in the sanctuary: an open, well-lit space with clear glass windows, a small balcony and a raised altar area. Worship follows a traditional style UCC liturgy with reading led by the pastor and lay members and congregational responses. Hymns are a mix of old and new, including responses sung after scripture readings and prayer time. Worship currently is lectionary based (mostly) with sporadic intergenerational services. The atmosphere is casual and members are welcoming to new folks who enter the building to worship. Prayers are heartfelt and include a wide diversity of concerns including struggles with addiction, illness, and joys for God’s guidance. Pre-Covid we would pass the mic around for prayer requests. Currently, the prayers are collected prior to the worship service for the pastor to read. Good preaching includes interpreting scripture to speak to modern life and challenges and using real life examples. This makes scripture accessible and gives folks something to think about during the week. A recent baptism included a 1-year-old child lifting the baptismal bowl out of the font which everyone was fine with. The baptismal ceremony always includes the pastor carrying the child around the sanctuary for all to welcome.

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 congregation is excited about what is happening within our youth program. Our Christian Education Director has found a way to connect with our youth that makes them enthusiastic about being in church. We have our children who attend regularly, but often our kids invite friends to attend Sunday school with them. Our Sunday school consists of a few volunteers that work with the Christian Education Director to ensure that he and the children receive the support that they need. The team recognizes that the children's experience in Sunday school is laying down the foundation for their relationship with God in the future. Our youth occasionally have events outside of Sunday school that allow the children and their caregivers a chance to connect outside of the church walls. Events include apple picking, watching their peer perform in a school musical, watching a movie, and a pizza and cookie decorating party. These events further demonstrate that our church is not just the building. As a congregation, it is important that our children feel safe, feel heard, and feel loved. We recently had one of our students inform the congregation that he is transgender. Throughout the week, he received multiple cards in the mail showing love and support. The following Sunday, he was presented with a new name tag displaying his current name. This would not have happened if our children were not safe, heard, and loved and if we were not a congregation where faith is active in love.

The Sunday school class is small but growing. The curriculum is topic based around liturgical themes. The Sunday school studied what it means to be the church and learned about caring for people within and outside our church community. As an extension to this lesson, students wrote cards to those who are unable to be in worship. The Sunday school class also studied prayer and worship, which included the children in several intergenerational services.

A new Bible Study session has begun, showing great excitement with an average of 30-40 members, including both youth and adults. The program we're following is called "Claiming the Promise". Using this program, we are exploring different ways to interpret the Bible.

New attendees who express an interest in joining the church attend a new member information session which includes information about the church, education about the UCC, and what it means to be part of a church led by its congregation.

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

We spend about 2 hours per month in meetings.

Any congregant can bring ideas and issues to the Board which are then discussed. The Church Board approves all decisions. In emergency situations, we have used emails, Zoom or in-person meetings to discuss and resolve issues.

We can provide an organizational structure and an annual report.

11-YEAR REPORT

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



Church#: 781885
 Assoc: 940 Schedule: 0 First Christian Congregational UCC Swansea MA 02777

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2012	90	40	21	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	146	90	28	0	12	2	2	6	6
2014	148	90	16	7	13	0	4	14	2
2015	163	100	30	0	0	15	5	1	9
2016	152	95	65	3	0	13	8	19	-11
2017	152	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	174	95	65	0	0	28	6	0	22
2019	174	85	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	172	70	40	0	0	3	5	0	-2
2021	166	45	30	0	0	0	6	0	-6
2022	153	40	30	4	6	0	23	0	-13

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2012	\$94,483	\$0	\$0	\$467	\$467	\$0	\$467	0.00	\$94,950	\$0
2013	\$115,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$1,697	\$1,697	\$4,552	\$6,249	0.00	\$126,249	\$81,615
2014	\$143,000	\$0	\$100	\$1,746	\$1,846	\$6,152	\$7,998	0.07	\$150,998	\$97,936
2015	\$141,500	\$0	\$1,290	\$707	\$1,997	\$10,000	\$11,997	0.91	\$153,497	\$93,000
2016	\$148,815	\$0	\$1,500	\$2,600	\$4,100	\$10,000	\$14,100	1.01	\$162,915	\$101,226
2017	\$148,815	\$0	\$1,800	\$693	\$2,493	\$0	\$2,493	1.21	\$151,308	\$0
2018	\$163,252	\$0	\$1,800	\$1,005	\$2,805	\$0	\$2,805	1.10	\$166,057	\$128,539
2019	\$163,252	\$0	\$2,000	\$725	\$2,725	\$0	\$2,725	1.23	\$165,977	\$121,873
2020	\$164,946	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	1.21	\$166,946	\$121,573
2021	\$157,759	\$0	\$2,000	\$867	\$2,867	\$0	\$2,867	1.27	\$160,626	\$104,092
2022	\$145,914	\$0	\$1,650	\$0	\$1,650	\$0	\$1,650	1.13	\$147,564	\$101,593

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2017-2022	0.66	-57.89	-53.85	0.00	0.00	-1.95	-33.81	-2.47
2012-2022	70.00	0.00	42.86	0.00	0.00	54.43	253.32	55.41

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

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	81	
Number of active non-members:	4	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	85	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	29	Numbers are estimated based on congregational survey
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	45	
Less than 5 years:	26	

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
2	4	4	2	8	10	20	16	24	Yes, based on survey

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	0	Based on congregation survey
Joint household with minors:	17	
Single adults age 35-65:	10	
Joint household with no minors:	38	
Single adults over 65:	34	

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	35	From congregational survey
College:	26	
Graduate School:	26	
Specialty Training:	13	
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	47	From congregational survey
Adults who are retired:	47	
Adults who are not fully employed:	6	

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

Our congregation is comprised of adults working in a wide range of occupations including education, health care, science, technology, labor, transportation, culinary arts and social work.

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 the congregation is primarily Caucasian, we also have members who identify as people of color. We are diverse in age, socio-economic backgrounds, special needs abilities, mental health status, illness, loss, marital status, and prior religious backgrounds.

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: No.

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation. (For 2021)

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	15	Fellowship group (lay leader) Card Writing Sessions
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	1	
Children’s Groups or Classes	7	Christian Ed Director, CYM Team and Pastor
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	57 – Christmas Eve 75 - Easter	Pastor, Music Director, Deacons
Church-wide Meals	2 meals, 50 people	Lay Leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	10	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	8--20	Pastor or Retired UCC Pastor/Member

Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	1x/month as part of worship	Pastor and Deacons
Community Meals	2	1 Breakfast & 1 Supper (lay leaders & volunteers)
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	4	
Drama or Dance Program		
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	6	Pastor, sometimes with Music Director

Intergenerational Groups		
Outdoor Worship	1-2x/yr usually 20-40	Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service, (Pastors)
Prayer or Meditation Groups		
Public Advocacy Work	5 occasionally, 1 faithfully	Lay participation in United Interfaith Action
Retreats		
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)		
Worship (time slot: 10am__)	55	Pastor, Music Director, CE Director
Worship (time slot: virtual)	Unknown—on cable TV and online	Music Director
Young Adult Groups or Classes		
Youth Groups or Classes		Pastor and CE Director
Other: Veteran's Supper	200	Outreach meal and fundraiser for local veterans

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? <i>(3 or 4 or No)</i>	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? <i>(Y or N)</i>
Rev. John Wilson	No			Retired

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:

Rev. Wilson is a regular participant in the life of the congregation. He is aware of the UCC guidelines for retired pastors and follows them beautifully. He is very considerate and has demonstrated excellent boundaries with previous pastors over the years.

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	No	Part time (~ 18 hrs a week)	Pastor	12 years
Director of Music	No	Part time (~ 17 hrs. a week)	Pastor	4 years
Director of Christian Education	No	Part time—6 hours a week	Pastor	2 years

REFLECTION

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

Our congregation is diverse and is comprised of families – young and old, families of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our activities bring people together for food, fundraising, and learning. Caring for one another and sharing with our community are strengths in our ministry.

Overall, our ministry needs to have more active members. We feel the congregation could be doing more to inspire younger members of the community to join us. Becoming more involved in our community would provide us with an opportunity to invite others to our church. By doing so, our church membership could increase.

It is important that our next minister be made aware of the church’s history, where we currently are in our journey, and lead us in a progressive way to the future.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$103,600
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$
Fundraising Events	\$2,041
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$
Grants	\$
Rentals of Church Building	\$32,190
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$25,000
Other (specify):	\$
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$162,831

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$173,704.00 (2023)
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? 37%

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? Church lay leaders decide amount
If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? (*recommended 10%*)

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

Total amount of loan debt:

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current?

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.

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2016	Pipe Organ Refurbishment	\$42,054	\$42,054	Organ functionality and aesthetics restored
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

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

Handicap Accessibility was not a capital campaign, but was funded in 2011 by the Thrifty Shoppe on premises which gave money to install a lift that made most, but not all, areas of the church accessible.

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

Reserves (savings): \$22,000

Investments (other than endowment): \$230,000

Does your church have a parsonage? No.

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

How is the parsonage used?

Street / City / State / Zip:

Finished square footage:

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:

Assessed real estate value:

Available for minister residence: Y/N

Expected minister residence: Y/N

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Historic, 2 1/2 story clapboard sided church which includes a large basement level Fellowship Hall, large upper level Thrifty Shoppe space, medium-sized sanctuary, basement level education wing, 2 upper offices and storage. The church is situated on a large lot with ample parking and has a front lawn and side yard.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: Not Applicable

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) All areas of the church are wheelchair accessible except the Pastor's office and main office. There is also an elevator which provides access to the sanctuary as well as the Thrifty Shoppe.

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?

The church funds a virtual worship service. This necessitated acquiring new, digital licenses, making small technology purchases, and allocating part of the Music Director's hours to producing online services every week. The virtual service is sent to five local communities to run on local cable access channels and is also available on our church website, YouTube and Facebook.

This year our interim pastor helped develop a narrative on our budget. This displays financial numbers in a new and creative way – showing the four ways in which we serve God: in spirit-filled worship, by welcoming all, in reaching out in our community, and through faith formation. It is tied to our mission statement – “Where Faith is Active in

Love”. This language was incorporated in a flyer and used for our stewardship this year.

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.

1. In 2009 the church split when the settled Pastor, Rev. Lyle Wicker, demanded a revote of his call to ministry at the church and full control over appointing church leadership. Leading up to this, he had bullied much of the elected leadership, many people had left, and he voiced particular disdain for women in leadership. A group of 10 lay members met together to determine how to move forward and how to hold the church together. They report that they called the Conference but there was no help at that point from the UCC.

The Pastor lost the vote, resigned on the spot during worship, and took a large portion of the church with him to start another church in town. The Sunday School shut down, the split divided families, and the church endured financial struggles. It is likely that Rev. Wicker was experiencing significant mental health challenges when this occurred.

This history is not known to most people in the congregation as many of the congregants have moved on since the conflict.

2. FCCC welcomed a group of UCC members who were unjustifiably removed from another local church over a power struggle in that congregation. In 2012, a group of members were removed from their church without notice due to internal church politics. These were active, energetic, faith-filled people and a large group of them found a home at our church and joined. In the years since they have become a core part of our leadership, outreach efforts, and in one case, our Music Director. While this was a very traumatic event for this group of people, their arrival was, and continues to be, a huge blessing.
3. In 2012 Pastor Holly came and brought positive energy to the congregation for the next 8 years. She delivered excellent messages that reached all generations of our congregation. The last three years of Pastor Holly’s ministry in our congregation was challenging, as Pastor Holly faced personal challenges of her own. We managed these changes with strength and unity but it took a toll on us.

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

A specific change our church managed recently was the COVID-19 pandemic and building shut down.

We handled the instant shutdown and transition to virtual worship with the knowledge from both Pastor Holly and Music Director, Danielle. We met via Zoom as several people had technology skills to set this up and teach others. We had to come together in short notice and

make hard decisions. We held fellowship check-ins twice per week - one after virtual worship and one midweek. Members called each other frequently, helped arrange vaccine appointments and made sure no one felt isolated or needed assistance.

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 have been working on learning how to disagree and respect each other’s opinions to improve communication. Sometimes we have struggled with returning to a topic already voted on and approved. We discovered this wastes time and energy and divides people. We have a behavior covenant approved by the congregation in July 2023. A copy is available upon request.

A recent experience with conflict:

The church had a newer member who was extremely disruptive, abusive and instigated significant conflict in the life of the church. This member was counseled by way of a behavioral covenant, invited into mediated conflict resolution meetings with other members, and their behavior was documented. After a threatening incident, the police were involved, and the member was asked to no longer participate in the life of the church. Different leadership groups within the church were involved including Pastor Relations and E-Council. A letter was sent to all congregants informing them of the incident and decision. Support was sought from the Associate Conference Minister and Conference on Ministry chair.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Andrew Overman (Interim)	1988-1989	unknown
Revs. Malcolm Brummitt and Peter Howe (Interims)	1989-1990	unknown
Rev. Timothy Forrester	1990-1993	unknown
Rev Malcolm Brummitt (Interim)	1994-1995	unknown
Rev. Richard Anderson	1996-2003	unknown
Rev. Fred Rhines	2003-2005	unknown
Rev. D. Hayes (Interim)	2005	Y
Rev. Lyle Wicker	2005-2009	Y
Rev. Beverly Edwards (Interim)	2009-2011	Y
Rev. Kathleen Henry (Interim)	2011-2012	Y
Rev. Holly Norwick	2012-2020	Y
Rev. Karen Gale (Interim)	2020-	Y

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

We have had several Interim Pastors in our church's history. Some of the reasons for this include taking a long time to call a settled Pastor and changing life situations for the pastor. A strong attribute this congregation has developed is that we are able to pull together in difficult situations.

We do well with a pastor who is very organized, has strong leadership skills and firm personal boundaries. This provides us with a healthy working environment.

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

Y/N/Ask us

Yes – see page 28 for explanation

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us

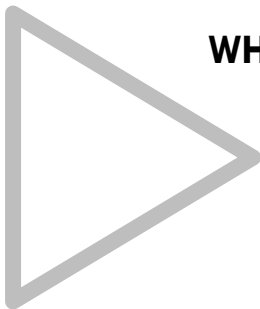
Yes in 2009 but did not receive the support needed.

Yes, in 2021.

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

Y/N/Ask us

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?

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?

We host a huge Veteran's Supper that benefits the veterans in the Swansea area. This is a freewill offering dinner, supported by church members and local businesses. The event raised \$7,000 last year. Our pastor speaks and prays at the community veterans services on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. These events pull together the church in service to others.

The church holds a bi-monthly food and personal items drive that supports a local food bank at an Episcopalian church and an outreach to the homeless. We gift Thanksgiving

baskets and support an Angel Tree that benefits local children in need of Christmas gifts. We have several members who serve at First Baptist Church in Fall River where they hold a twice weekly free dinner. Members help with set up, serving the meal, and clean up.

We have spent the last two months working with the local community to collect clothing for migrants living in a nearby motel. We collected non-perishable foods for 35 boxes and last week delivered them to 35 migrant families using the help of the National Guard.

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

Lay delegates attend both Association and Conference meetings. Often lay leaders attend Super Saturday events. In the past, youth have gone to a National Youth Event.

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

We have one member going to meetings on social justice - United Interfaith Action (UIA) - with occasional participation by other members.

Our Pastor and some lay members have participated in the Greater Fall River Council of Churches on occasion. We participate in the joint Community Thanksgiving Service and have hosted in the past.

We have an informal church partnership with a UCC and American Baptist congregation in a neighboring town where we have shared worship and fellowship together, including the local Easter Sunrise service.

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.

This church has an extraordinary gift in its Care Team. This team was started 6 years ago consisting of about 6 members. The members have changed over the years, but the mission has not. The concept of the group was to shepherd, or keep watch over, our church family. Our church motto, "Where Faith is Active in Love", shines through in this team.

Never did we see this more in action than in the last two years with the pandemic. The team sent cards and made calls to check in, see how people were, and if they needed help. We even had one team member who called a member every day for a year. We helped members get signed up for COVID vaccinations and brought them to the free

clinics. We did grocery shopping and errands for those alone and isolated from families and some of that still continues today. This team has also pulled together to cook meals for some newly widowed men, and several members bring our elderly to worship weekly. The people on this team represent a small amount of the love and care this congregation has for one another. It is one of the many things that draws people to this church. I am assured that we are doing God's work here at First Christian Congregational Church.

Where Faith is Active in Love.

We put our faith into action by supporting our community through the following outreach activities: Veterans Supper, Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas toy collection, back-to-school supply collection, and food drives.

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?

Understanding that our settled pastor will have limited time, we are looking for vision and guidance so we can be the hands and do the work.

MISSION InSite

We have not reviewed Mission InSite but have interviewed community leaders in Senior, Emergency (police, fire, EMT), and Veteran's services to learn more about our community. We look forward to working on Mission InSite as we prepare for our next settled pastor.

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

Our area is aging with more elders and seniors moving in and making up a greater proportion of our immediate Swansea community. We've learned that local leaders recognize a huge mental health crisis in our area as well as a continuing opioid epidemic. COVID has affected everything from staffing and ongoing police reform to services for elders that combat housing issues, food insecurity, and isolation.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Our congregation reflects the demographics of the surrounding community.

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

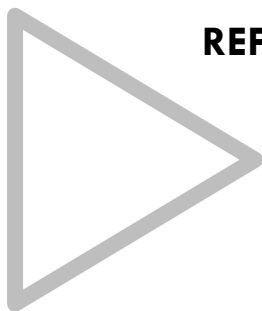
This past year the church has started a bi-monthly food and personal needs drive. All items collected benefit the food pantry in a neighboring Somerset church and the homeless in our neighboring city of New Bedford. We are exploring the possibility of working with the Council on Aging to learn how we can serve the elderly.

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

Local leaders are aware that our church has been present and active in the community. This church has been part of Swansea for over 350 years. We are a warm and welcoming church.

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

Many new people in the church say that the invitation to fellowship was the opening to get them involved. This is a church where there is a wide diversity of life experiences and where members really support one another. Congregants talked with them, introduced them to others, and made them feel at home. This experience encourages new members to stay and participate in ministries of the church.



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

Bob Bain / Leader / AA Group

(774-319-0875 / robertbain26@comcast.net/ renter)

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this in support of First Christian Congregational Church in Swansea Massachusetts. Our Twelve Step Fellowship Group has called FCCC our home for 11 years now. FCCC, its congregation, administration and Pastors have support our group in every way throughout our tenure. Our groups founder, "Pastor Rick C" came to FCCC with a vision of providing a place for those in recovery, their friends, and families could find safe harbor from their suffering and most importantly find a solution in God that would solve all their problems. FCCC readily agreed and from its humble beginnings and sparse attendance has grown to counsel thousands of those seeking solace. FCCCs commitment to community outreach has made it possible for these once hopeless members of Society to become useful and whole again.

In addition to this, FCCCs Congregation has many programs supporting the community, Veterans, and The Church year-round.

On a personal level, I'd be glad to answer any questions in writing or in person from any potential congregation member or Pastor.

TY

Bob Bain

Steel On Steel Group

robertbain26@comcast.net

774-319-0875

REFERENCE 2

Christopher Carreiro / Town Selectman/Real Estate Agent/Lawyer / Setting

(508-812-0210 / chris@carreiolawoffice.com / Relationship to the Congregation)

To Whom it May Concern:

I have had the opportunity to learn about the First Christian Congregational Church ("FCCC") from several different perspectives. As a member of the Swansea Board of Selectmen, I have witnessed the dedication of the Congregation's volunteers in coming together to hold its highly anticipated annual fundraiser to benefit Veterans in Swansea. This annual fundraiser generates the largest charitable donation the Town of Swansea will receive in a calendar year, raising tens of thousands of dollars that are donated to our Swansea Veterans Department to purchase gift cards, which are distributed throughout the year to our needy veterans.

Furthermore, I have had the privilege of assisting FCCC in my capacity as an attorney and most recently as a real estate broker. In assisting FCCC's leadership team in selling their vacant land, I have had the opportunity to engage with E-Council and navigate complicated legal matters. I have found E-Council to be comprised of excellent stewards of Church resources, who take their decision-making process seriously. E-Council and Church Officers are dedicated to ensuring FCCC's long term stability and make prudent decisions that are not shortsighted.

Although I have had the pleasure of working with FCCC in my official and professional capacity, the most important perspective I can offer is my personal insight. In the last 5 years, I have had the opportunity to make friends with members of the Congregation and the Church's leadership group. I can genuinely represent that the caliber of folks FCCC attracts and retains as members is remarkable and is a testament to the long-term success of the Church and its ability to continue to exist since 1693. FCCC is a staple to the Swansea Community with historical significance, as likely the first church in New England to admit all Christians to membership regardless

of their theological believes.

Very truly yours,
Christopher R. Carreiro, Esq.

Carreiro Law Office, PLLC
Swansea Professional Park
1010 G.A.R. Highway, Suite 12
Swansea, MA 02777
Phone: (508) 812-0210
Fax: (508) 809-7465
E-mail: Chris@CarreiroLawOffice.com
Licensed Attorney in Massachusetts and Rhode Island
Admitted in United States Federal District Courts for: MA and RI
Licensed Real Estate Broker in Massachusetts and Rhode Island

REFERENCE 3

Jamie Beane / Veteran Employee / Veteran's Services
(508-567-6226 / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

1. Describe some areas of strength in our church's ministry.
As a non-church member my experiences with the ministry revolve around Veteran related topics. I work for the Town of Swansea's Veterans Services and the church's ministry has always been willing to help at events held at the Veterans Memorial Green. We ask the Pastor to speak and say an opening and closing prayer at ceremonies. Both Pastors I've worked with over the past 4 years in my position have always been willing to help the moment we ask. They understand the importance of Veterans and usually hold a special place in their heart for Veterans as their own family members are veterans. In addition to speaking at ceremonies the ministry has opened up their parking lot (without hesitation) to our office during the pandemic so we can put on a drive thru food pantry event. The biggest event for our office is an annual meat pie supper organized by the church's volunteers and held at the church around Veterans Day with all proceeds to be donated in the form of gift cards to the Swansea Veterans office. The veterans office has the pleasure of handing the gift cards out throughout the year to veterans and dependents in need. This is a huge help to veterans to help offset the rising cost of living. Their community involvement does not stop at veteran related topic either. They hold events like spaghetti dinner, craft fairs, thrift shops and more.
2. Describe some areas for improvement in our church's ministry.
I feel as if I cannot personally speak about improvements in the church's ministry as I am not involved in the everyday operations. I assume, and could be wrong, that all church's may be facing the same issues some veteran organizations face today which is getting younger demographics more involved and willing to volunteer. Am I correct in assuming this?
3. Describe a significant experience you have had of our church's ministry.
Please see question # 1 answer 😊
4. Anything else you wish to share.
Thank you for always being willing to help our office, the veteran community and the community as a whole. I hope the next Pastor continues on the great path you have laid.

Thank you,

Jamie Beane

Veteran's Services
Council on Aging
260 Ocean Grove Ave.
Town of Swansea, Massachusetts
(508) 567-6226

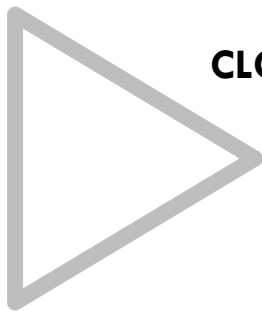
PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.



CLOSING 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:

Dear Lord,

We give thanks for your guidance and comfort. Your constant presence strengthens us to be one of your many churches now and in the future. A church where your love, grace and mercy are exemplified. Your mission is bigger than any conference, church or Pastor. We now embark on a search for a new Pastor with limited earthly resources but endless love and caring. We pray for our world, our nation, our church, our search committee members and the Pastor that will come into our presence soon. Your place where your faith is active in love. A church where all are welcomed and embraced in your love.

AMEN

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.)*

All church members/subscribers on the email list were invited to share thoughts via an electronic and paper survey. Church school children filled out a survey together with our Christian Education Director. E-Council leaders worked on the profile in their monthly meetings, particularly the reflection questions. Finance worked on the salary information. Our Church Administrator, Deb Gray, gathered the demographic and historical information. The Search Team revised the profile in preparation for publication.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: Not Applicable

Signed: Church Search Committee

December 10, 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. Patricia Kogut*

Name / Title: Rev. Patty Kogut, Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region, SNEUCC

Email: kogutp@sneucc.org

Phone: 508-244-4416

Date: December 11, 2023

**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