

Name of Church

First Congregational UCC

AddressPO Box 6303
Great Falls, MT 59406**Conference:**

Montana-Northern Wyoming

Association:

Montana-Northern Wyoming Assoc. and Conf.

Title

Minister

Start Date

Nov 1, 2025

Description

Solo Pastor for combined UCC (ONA)/UMC in Great Falls, MT.

Church Contact Information

(406) 453-4316 (Business)

greatfallsucc@bresnan.net (Church Email)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://www.greatfallsucc.org>

Type: Other

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

CUMC- Mountain Sky Conference

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person**Name:**

Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, Conference Minister

Title:

UCC-Montana-Northern Wyoming

Phone:

406-656-8688

Email:

UCC@mnwcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

Our church is a vibrant community that values spiritual growth, inclusivity, and a deep commitment to our faith. As we navigate the journey of unification, we envision a future where our diverse congregations come together as one, enriched by our unique traditions while embracing a shared mission. We seek a minister who will be in charge of our spiritual welfare, guiding us as an ex-officio member of all boards and committees, planning and preparing worship services, preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, and coordinating activities in collaboration with the Church Council. This compassionate and caring leader will not only lead us but also walk alongside us—sometimes guiding, sometimes supporting, and at other times allowing us to discover our own paths. To reach our vision, we need a minister who can help us discern God's call for our unified church, nurturing our faith journeys while honoring our pasts. We are reaching out to individuals who are eager to join us on this transformative journey, committed to fostering a strong church family that thrives on mutual support and spiritual enrichment. Together, we will cultivate a loving environment where everyone feels valued, and where our collective faith can flourish.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Great Falls, Montana, offers city amenities with small-town charm. Just 90 miles from Montana's state capital, Helena, it provides easy access while maintaining a peaceful feel. Nestled between the Great Prairie and the Rocky Mountains, it's a haven for outdoor lovers, with skiing, fishing, hiking, and hunting. Artists find endless inspiration in the stunning scenery. Our historic downtown features unique shops, diverse dining, and a thriving arts scene.

The city honors its First Nations heritage and its role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Charlie M. Russell Museum showcases the Old West, while the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center offers interactive exhibits on their journey.

Great Falls' economy is expanding. Employers like ADF and Dick Anderson Construction provide high-paying jobs, while Malmstrom Air Force Base ensures economic stability. The Sentinel Project will bring skilled workers to modernize missile infrastructure. Great Falls College/MSU, and Touro and Providence Universities prepare workers for careers in agriculture, oil, gas, medicine, education, and manufacturing. The city also serves as a key distribution hub for major brands.

Families enjoy year-round activities, from the Children's Museum to library events. Parks and trails offer outdoor fun, while downtown hosts parades, festivals, and food truck events. The seasonal farmers market is a local favorite. Public and private schools provide strong academics and extracurricular opportunities.

Current size of membership

299

Average in person attendance

85

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.

Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

35

Languages used in ministry

English and ASL (American Sign Language) if needed

Position Title

Minister

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.**First:**

Effective Preacher/Speaker: The ability to communicate the message of faith clearly and engagingly is vital. A minister who is an effective preacher can inspire and motivate the congregation, helping them to deepen their understanding of spiritual teachings and apply them in their lives.

Second:

A successful minister should be adept at connecting with adults, children, youth, and individuals from various life situations. This competency fosters inclusivity and ensures that all members of the congregation feel valued and understood, enhancing community engagement and support.

Third:

Compassionate and Caring: A minister who demonstrates compassion and care can provide essential emotional and spiritual support to congregants. This competency is crucial for building trust and fostering a nurturing environment where individuals can seek guidance and comfort during challenging times.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	47000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	17100	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 64100			
Pension/Annuity	8974	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	4782	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	100	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	351	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	351	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	188	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

Experience Level	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26+ years
Cash Salary	\$47,000	\$51,000	\$55,000	\$59,000	\$63,000	\$67,000

Salary is based on 1-5 years of experience. For each five years of experience add \$4,000 per year. (see chart)

We pay 100% of medical and dental insurance for the pastor and eligible family members. Cost depends on who is going to be covered.

Housing Allowance is calculated at 30% of salary plus \$3,000 added for 1% of the median house price in Great Falls.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Living within 20 minute-drive with a housing allowance

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

Median house price is \$320,000

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

We are seeking a full-time pastor

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Criminal background checks.
Community of Practice Participation.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

The Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference has a cadre of clergy who support one another informally. Following the pandemic, the Church and Ministry Commission (our Committee on Ministry) has had to restart formal support programs such as a clergy retreat and clergy periodic vocational support interviews, with the hopes that these will again become regular events. The Conference is also looking to sponsor educational events with academic institutions like an ecotheology raft trip directed by faculty and staff from Rocky Mountain College and national UCC staff.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We seek one who will guide us through the process of unifying our two congregations to continue as a loving, inclusive, and growing church, helping us to build on our strengths.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

Deepen and enhance our current ministry within our church and community. We desire a minister who has or develops an awareness of opportunities to lead us into ministries in the community. One who can help us move into the future with hope and joy doing the work that God would have us do despite any differences.

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

Our congregation appreciates language that is culturally sensitive, gender neutral and relevant to our day.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

We need effective proclamation and preaching that brings to life the sacred stories and traditions, making them applicable to our daily lives. We seek the ability to lead faith formation effectively across generations, making God's presence felt in the sacraments and worship.

Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation. The next minister needs to truly care about all the parts of God's creation—people, community, and the world that God is creating.

Work together to draw us into the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression. We are proud of our life as an open and affirming congregation, engaging in mission and outreach. Help us to build relationships of mutual trust and interdependence with the pastor, congregations, and the local and larger communities.

Exhibit a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives. In unifying with Christ United Methodist Church, we are marrying our comparable beliefs and will rely on our minister to continue to develop these in response to what God expects of us all.

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 God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling us to continue to be a unified congregation that is open and welcoming to all. This includes our progress in joining with our CUMC siblings to become one voice for all seeking God.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

As we emerge from the chaos that COVID created for all congregations, we continue on our path to be open to all. We first joined with our UMC colleagues by uniting to share the building and some joint worship services in 1975. Then COVID necessitated changes in how we gather for worship. An online worship service was created jointly. This online worship service still continues today with an average of 35 participants for the fourth quarter of 2024 and 37 for YTD 2025. This has now progressed to our exploration of truly joining our congregations as a federated church.

Family Promise, FISH, St. Ann's Kitchen, Mitten Makers, and Thanksgiving Day dinners are programs we participate with to provide for unhoused families and local food pantries.

We join forces to provide continued outreach missions through the adoption of a local school that represents the underserved of our community with food, clothing, school supplies, and reading with children.

We reach out to the LGBTQIA+ community helping with World AIDS Day and the rededication of the Great Falls AIDS Memorial Rock. We support LGBTQIA+ Prom and Pride Week worship service. We have also worked in the community by helping to remove stickers promoting white supremacist views.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

The faith life of First Congregational United Church of Christ (FCUCC) and Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC) is rooted in following Christ and serving God. We seek to create a welcoming community where all can find spiritual nourishment and belonging. Through worship, service, and discipleship, we strive to be agents of transformation in our community and beyond.

Our congregation values theological diversity, believing there is always more light and truth to discover in God's Word. We cherish freedom of interpretation, allowing individuals to explore and live out their faith authentically. Life is a gift, and we celebrate and share its blessings with one another and the world.

As an Open and Affirming church and a Reconciling Ministry affiliate, we fully welcome people of all sexual and gender identities, ages, races, abilities, and family structures. We believe every person is a beloved child of God. Our commitment also extends to caring for creation as stewards of the earth.

Together, CUMC and FCUCC embody Christ's love through worship, fellowship, and service, fostering an inclusive and impactful witness to God's love in the world.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

Our congregation is a strong, welcoming, and faith-driven community with several key strengths:

1. Open and Affirming—We embrace diversity, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, feels welcome and valued. Our commitment to inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging.
2. Vibrant Worship and Music—Music plays a central role in our worship, with a talented choir, bells, organ, and piano enriching our services. We celebrate faith through meaningful sermons and uplifting musical offerings.
3. Strong Fellowship—Our congregation is a close-knit family, offering numerous opportunities for connection through fellowship events, potlucks, and small groups.
4. Active Service and Community Involvement—We are deeply engaged in serving others, from mission projects to local outreach efforts, always seeking ways to support those in need.
5. Dedicated Leadership and Volunteers—Our members are committed to the church's mission, serving on boards, committees, and ministries.
6. Progressive and Faithful—We uphold a theology rooted in love, faith, and social justice, always striving to make a positive impact in our church and community.

Through these strengths, we remain a beacon of faith, compassion, and service.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

A growing edge in our congregations is the journey we are taking to unify our efforts of worship, faith formation, service, fellowship, and all aspects of church life. In the past, we have done some work jointly, for example, shared worship on Ash Wednesday and during the summer and combined food drives. But with our recent exploration of unification, our extravagant welcome and inclusivity has shifted to include each other's congregations as well as those outside of our church walls. We are imagining new ways to be church together in all aspects of our programs and ministries from leadership to paying the bills. But as we the members of First Congregational United Church of Christ and Christ United Methodist Church travel into uncharted territories, we strive to achieve the highest level of unity that helps us serve God as best we can while still preserving our individual denominational identities. We pray to be one while praying for the on-going ability to be ourselves; a goal we feel is truly attainable.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

When our congregations gather for worship, the experience is welcoming, uplifting, and centered on connecting with God and one another. Worship is enhanced by our multifaceted music program, which features talented musicians. Music is a vital role in the service down to the sanctuary's design, with the Choir singing each Sunday, the handbell choir performing on select Sundays, and various instrumental and vocal soloists enriching the worship experience. Our recently refurbished pipe organ adds beauty to our music.

The atmosphere is casual and friendly, with greeters welcoming you. Services typically last an hour and offer padded chairs instead of pews, allowing for a more adaptable worship space. Large-print bulletins and hearing devices are available to ensure inclusivity, and our facility is fully handicap accessible. We offer Christ Kids bags and a pray ground for our young worshippers

Our worship space is visually enhanced with colorful tapestries, stained glass windows, and projection. Communion is an open table where all are welcome. In all aspects of worship, we seek to create a space where people feel welcomed, spiritually nourished, and connected to God's love and grace.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Our vision for faith formation nurtures a lifelong love of God, scripture, and service in an inclusive community. Faith is a joyful, ongoing journey that helps all ages grow spiritually, deepen biblical understanding, and live out their faith.

For Children & Youth: Children (4-12) begin worship with their families before attending Sunday School. Nursery care is available for children under 5. Youth (6th-12th grade) stay in worship and can join our Youth Group, a partnership with the United Methodist Church, meeting Wednesdays for service, fellowship, and study. Activities include service projects, games, and discussions, fostering faith and friendships. Scholarships are available for summer camps. As an Open and Affirming church, we provide inclusive, justice-centered programs like Our Whole Lives (OWL), a human sexuality curriculum.

For Adults: Faith formation continues through Bible studies exploring topics like Revelation, the Gospel of John, and biblical history. The United Women in Faith meet monthly for mission-focused programs and fundraising. Special-topic discussions connect faith to modern issues, fostering inclusivity and spiritual growth.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our ministry is guided by the Church Council, which provides leadership, planning, fiscal oversight, and governance. The Council includes representatives from both the UCC and UMC, ensuring diverse perspectives.

Several Permanent Boards and Committees support our mission:

- **Business Affairs Board** – Manages finances and administration.
- **Christian Education Board** – Oversees faith formation.
- **Christian Service Board** – Leads outreach and service.
- **Church Growth and Vitality Board** – Encourages engagement.
- **Fellowship Board** – Strengthens community bonds.
- **Worship Board** – Enhances worship experiences.
- **Stewardship Board** – Promotes giving and resource management.

Our Vision: We live out our faith through:

- **Worship** – Creating sacred spaces for renewal.
- **Study** – Encouraging lifelong learning.
- **Community** – Fostering inclusion and relationships.
- **Service** – Advocating for justice and helping others.

Through shared dedication, we strive to embody God's vision in our church and beyond.

When it comes to decision-making, 12 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our church adapted quickly and effectively to ensure the safety of our congregation while continuing to foster community and worship. We transitioned to virtual gatherings, utilizing platforms such as Zoom and Facebook Live for worship services. These included pre-recorded music and an abbreviated televised worship service to maintain engagement and connection.

Once in-person gatherings resumed, we implemented strict safety measures based on case data. We ensured proper ventilation, required face masks, maintained physical distancing, and temporarily suspended fellowship time. Creative, touchless alternatives were encouraged, such as dropping off meals on doorsteps, hosting online fellowship while dining individually at home, and gathering for virtual fellowship events.

We also embraced digital worship as a long-term component of our church life, recognizing its value in expanding access and connection. This required ongoing creativity and flexibility from pastoral leadership and other church members, who worked together to maintain an inclusive and meaningful worship experience. We have hired a full time tech person to assist with this transition.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[FCUCC-GF Bylaws Approved 5.5.19 \(rev jan 2023\).pdf](#)

[FCUCC-CUMC Annual Report 2025.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	131
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	30
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	161

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	80%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	10%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	13
12-17	28
18-24	3
25-34	2
35-44	10
45-54	7
55-64	8
65-74	38
75+	52

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	2%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	10%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	8%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	40%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	40%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	11%
COLLEGE:	25%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	42%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	2%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	20%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	24%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	74%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	2%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Members of First Congregational United Church of Christ and Christ United Methodist church have a wide range of occupations. The majority work in a professional capacity with some of them owning their business. We have farmers and ranchers, trades people, retired and active clergy, people who work in the nonprofit sector, educators, clerical workers and military personnel.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

The overall racial diversity of our congregation largely reflects the makeup of the area we live in. While being a predominately white congregation, we have members from all races. Our ethnic heritages are shared in conversation and in the food provided for gatherings. Great Falls is home to ethnic rich Malmstrom Air Force Base. Many choose to retire here and remain members of local faith communities. Our church benefits greatly from the ethnicities of service members who select FCUCC/CUMC as their faith home.

What diversity means in our context?

Where diversity occurs is the backgrounds of our congregants. Some identify as LGBTQIA+, others bring their ethnic background to the mix and even more contribute by having grown up in different faith backgrounds or UCC and Methodist churches in other areas of the United States. We welcome several neurodivergent and differently abled individuals of all ages and have large differences in socio-economic status. All are equal. Although we lack racial diversity, we have strengths in other areas, making us a welcoming and progressive congregation.

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

No

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	20	Volunteers
Baptisms (number last year)	6	Minister, families
Children's Groups or Classes	17	CE Coor, CE board, teachers
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	207	Minister, Worship Board, choir and handbell direct
Church-wide Meals	115	Fellowship Board, Women in Faith, Volunteers
Choirs and Music Groups	29	Choir & Handbell Directors
Church-based Bible Study	38	Minister, ret. Minister
Communion (served how often?)	15	Minister, Worship Board
Community Meals	25	Christian Service Board, Volunteers
Drama or Dance Program	24	CE Coordinator, CE Board
Funerals (number last year)	6	Minister, families
Outdoor Worship	3	Minister, Worship Board
Prayer or Meditation Groups	15	Minister, lay members
Public Advocacy Work	15	Congregants
Retreats	12	Church Growth and Vitality
Weddings (number last year)	2	Minister, families
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	35	Minister, Worship Board
Youth Groups or Classes	20	Lay volunteers

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10:00 am	85	Minister, Worship Board

Additional comments:

The minister works closely with the Worship Board to plan regular services. Also involved are the choir director, handbell director, and the organist/pianist. For special services such as Praise Service, a group of musical volunteers assist in the planning. Taizé, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Blessing of the Animals are examples of worship we implement to enrich our congregation's spiritual journey.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Rev. Sara MacGivra Branom	4	Benefis Health System	Hospice Chaplain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Timothy Seery	3	Congregational Church	Minister	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Ginny Bettendorf	none	NA	Former Pastor-UMC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Sami Patrick-Toner	none	Children's Home	Chaplain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rev. James Petersen	none	NA	Minister	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Paul Holland	none	Methodist Church	Pulpit Supply and Bible Studies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Rev. Paul Holland offers Bible Study on a regular basis. Rev. Sara MacGivra Branom serves as pulpit supply. She is currently serving as a Hospice Chaplain locally.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Office Manager	no	part	Minister	18 years
Music Director	no	part	Minister	1 year
Accompanist	no	part	Minister	8 months
Handbell Director	no	part	Minister and Music Director	23 years, 15 paid
Custodian	no	part	Minister and Joint Facilities	9 years
Media/Tech Coor	no	part	Minister	3 years
Minister (Methodist)	no	part	District Superintendent	4
Youth Group Leader	no	part	Minister	8
Youth Group Leader	no	part	Minister	4
Youth Group Leader	no	part	Minister	3
Christian Ed Coordinator	no	part	Minister	11 years
Nursery Staff	no	part	Christian Ed Coordinator and Minister	8 months
Nursery Staff	no	part	Christian Ed Coordinator and Minister	4 months

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

The ministry of our congregation is active and flourishing. We engage in local initiatives and spread our contributions across the demographics of our church and community. Having several paid staff positions, many who are long term, also indicates we are willing to invest in the church's mission and support it both financially and spiritually. The united congregations support and prioritize continuity in a wide range of elements of worship, praise, and service.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	263080
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	88000
Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")	12000
Rentals of Church Building	2000
Parsonage Offset	17264
Interest	500
Total	382844

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

379751

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.

[Download church budget](#)

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

27

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
Neighbors in Need
Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

We calculate 9% of the operating budget and this year, since we created a unified budget with the Christ United Methodist Church, we subtracted out Methodist specific expenses before calculating our OCWM contribution.
CUMC participates in an equivalent program called MissionShare.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

9

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

N/A

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

N/A

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

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

The most recent capital campaign FCUCC held was for our pipe organ which took place 13 years ago. There was a need to refurbish our 100+ year old organ which is used in all worship services and is a community outreach and asset. We offer concerts and instruction to community members by an invited organist. The first capital campaign for the purchase of the organ took place as a remembrance for soldiers lost in World War I.

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

1784148

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

Funds are drawn annually to support the budget and on an as needed basis.

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

5% of the earnings, about the same as 5 years ago

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

The last two years, we have taken 5% of the earnings from the previous twelve quarters to meet operating expenses. We did not take anything for operating expenses in the previous three years.

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

Should last the church for many, many years to come.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

The principal of the endowments are never touched. There are three separate funds established by two families and one individual; each has different criteria for use.

Other Assets

Sanctuary and office area, land, pipe organ, grand piano and handbells

Reserves (savings):

7453

Investments (other than endowment):

723341

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

When FCUCC and CUMC churches began sharing spaces, CUMC had built the multi-purpose fellowship hall with kitchen and the classrooms below it. FCUCC built the sanctuary, narthex, church offices, nursery, parlor and choir room. Over the years we have remained responsible for our own areas. Now

that we are working on unifying, the two churches are accountable for the entire building and property it sits on. The details of how ownership will look in the future are still being hammered out with a special committee working with legal experts.

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

N/A

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
Large print bulletins
Wheelchair access in bathrooms

Handrails on all stairs
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

All areas of the church are wheelchair accessible. We currently have children who utilize wheelchairs and adults with walkers. There are no issues with access.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

The Unified Business Affairs Board creates the budget each year which is presented at the Annual Meeting for approval by the congregation. When payments are needed, a form is completed and is signed by two members of the Business Affairs Board or Treasurer. Each check is also signed by two members. There are four tellers each Sunday who record the receipts for the week and create the deposit.

The endowments and other investments are overseen by the Memorial Corporation Board. They determine if money is being spent in the way the endowments outline. CUMC's Leadership oversees their endowment.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

We are a fiscally sound church and are good stewards of our finances. Members include the churches in their estate planning and trust us to use their gifts as intended. We believe in the mission and ministry of our churches, and it shows by the giving nature of our congregations.

2025 is the first year for a unified budget and both congregations contribute through pledges, investment draws, and loose offerings. We are keeping our endowments and investment funds separate. The amounts of the endowments and investments listed are only the FCUCC accounts.

Historical Information

Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

In 1975, Christ United Methodist welcomed First Congregational, selling us half their lot for \$1. We built a sanctuary and shared space, costs, and worship for 50 years.

In 2014, we began our journey to become an Open and Affirming congregation. We worked for two years, using the process outlined by the Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC. A strong leadership team led Bible studies, discussions, met with individual members and drafted our Welcoming statement. With much prayer and communication, we discerned the call to become an ONA congregation, culminating in a "yes" vote in 2016. We continue to strive to provide an extravagant welcome to all. The CUMC congregation completed the process to be a Reconciling Church in 2023, living into the same welcoming relationship with all.

During COVID, we closed our doors for safety but stayed connected through Zoom, YouTube, and broadcasts. Though we lost members, our faith endured, and we remain an active, faithful community.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

The most significant change that has happened to our congregation took place in the fall of 2023 when our partner church, Christ United Methodist, approached First Congregational with the idea of becoming a unified congregation. After much prayer and discussion, we have begun the process to become one congregation comprised of members of two denominations. We now share unified worship with our UCC pastor, unified church boards and unified church council. And on January 19, 2025, we held our first unified Annual Meeting and passed our first unified budget. Our next step is to explore legal actions necessary to truly become one, while still acknowledging both Congregational and Methodist identities. The work may be hard, but we have felt a new energy, excitement and joy in the process. It hasn't all been easy, but we know with cooperation, communication, compromise and God's help, we will achieve God's dream for us.

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

We are Congregationalists and as such, we are allowed to have and voice our opinions. When conflict occurs, we try to listen to concerns and work through them without judgement. If the conflict is larger, meetings are held (we love church meetings) and the Minister, the Moderator, Boards and the Council would get involved. If needed, the Conference Minister can be utilized. Sometimes a vote is what solves the conflict, other times it is getting the two parties to reach an understanding. Typically, we have very few major conflicts, and the minor ones are usually easily solved. Our brothers and sisters in the Methodist Church have less autonomy than the UCC does, and their conflicts often are solved at a higher level.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

The most recent conflict through which both congregations navigated would have to be the unification of those congregations. The desire is there, and there are long-held beliefs and traditions to be honored, respected, and represented on both sides. Through open communication with both congregations, voting processes along the way, and sensitive discernment, both congregations have met in a place of singular purpose: living and sharing the love of God.

Ministerial History:

<i>Name:</i> Rev. Jim Petersen	<i>Years of service:</i> 32	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. David Munson (Interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 2	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Lynne Spencer-Smith	<i>Years of service:</i> 10	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Ginny Bettendorf (Methodist)	<i>Years of service:</i> 2	
<i>Name:</i> Susan Otey (Methodist)	<i>Years of service:</i> 3	
<i>Name:</i> Dawn Skerritt (Methodist)	<i>Years of service:</i> 4	

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

We have only had two called ministers in the last 44 years at FCUCC and an interim for two of those years. We build a great relationship with our ministers and trust them to lead and guide us in spiritual, missional, developmental, collaborative, and financial ways. CUMC has an appointment system for ministers with a limited amount of time spent at a church, but connections are cemented as well. Throughout the many transitions of Methodist ministers, the two churches have created cooperative, amicable relationships which is a major reason why we both feel comfortable uniting as one.

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

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

We actively support the LGBTQ+ community by providing refreshments at the LGBTQ Prom. We have raised money for Family Promise through donated items for a silent auction; donated diapers, wipes, blankets, and related supplies for charities established for at-risk children; and raised money for the Great Falls Mercy Home Shelter through the YWCA in Great Falls. We worked closely to support West Elementary School by preparing and serving meals at Parent/Teacher Conference Days, as well as volunteering to read with children, enhancing their literacy, enjoyment of learning, and providing children with nurturing one-on-one attention they may not otherwise get. Our united congregations donated nearly 4,000 non-perishable food items to various food pantries around Great Falls. We donate financially to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), Neighbors in Need (NIN), Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), and CUE, a collaborative fundraising foundation supporting Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

Members of our congregation are very active in the wider United Church of Christ. The past two moderators of the Montana Northern Wyoming conference are from our congregation. Members currently serve on conference boards. The Conference Disaster Coordinator is from our congregation. We had our full allotment of delegates to the past year's conference annual meeting. Our congregations send both campers and counselors to camp in the summer. We have had a member serve on a national board. Three members attended the last General Synod. Several members of the congregation are alumni of UCC institutions of higher education. The CUMC congregation has many people who attend area conferences as delegates as well.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

Our church actively engages with community organizing movements by advocating for social justice and inclusivity. We proudly participated in the "Hate Has No Home Here" movement, demonstrating our commitment to creating a welcoming environment for all. Additionally, we collaborated with local public library leadership to secure funding for equal access to materials, ensuring that diverse voices are represented. Our efforts also include supporting local LGBTQI initiatives, fostering a community where everyone feels valued and respected. Through these actions, we strive to make a positive impact and uphold the principles of love and acceptance that are central to our faith.

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, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

Open and Affirming is very important to FCUCC and being a Reconciling Church is to CUMC. It is what has brought new congregants through our doors. Several members of our congregations are LGBTQIA+, and they enjoy the safety of our sanctuary. Our church would not be the same without the contributions of these individuals and couples who serve on boards, offer their musical talents, teach Sunday School, and engage in all the church has to offer. We participate in PRIDE events, assist with LGBTQIA+ initiatives, and our ministers have led PRIDE week church services. Being a welcoming church is not just words we say, it is what we do.

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

There are two ecumenical associations in Great Falls. The Progressive Ministerial Association (PMA) and Great Falls Interfaith Association (GFIA). The former consists of progressive mainline protestant pastors, directors of local non-profits and a hospice chaplain, who meet monthly. The UCC pastor is involved with this association. PMA works together on social justice concerns affecting our community and Montana. Time is allowed at each PMA meeting to support one another with the challenges of ministry in a confidential collegial environment.

Great Falls Interfaith Association is made up of conservative evangelical pastors. The GFIA supports the work of the Great Falls Rescue Mission and efforts toward ending childhood hunger.

Great Falls does not have a synagogue or mosque or an organized Muslim community. There is a Jewish community, the Great Falls Hebrew Association which is active with 20 families participating. A rabbi travels to hold services held at a Lutheran Church in town.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

Our congregation's mission statement emphasizes worship, study, community, and service, and we strive to live out these values in our activities. We dedicate significant time to worship through our active music program, choir, bells, and worship committee, ensuring that our gatherings are vibrant and spiritually enriching. In terms of study, we engage in various Bible studies and a confirmation class and Sunday school class for kids, fostering a deep understanding of our faith. Our commitment to community is evident in our active coffee fellowship and social events, which strengthen our bonds. Lastly, we prioritize service by participating in numerous community activities, allowing us to make a meaningful impact. Overall, the time spent in these activities aligns closely with our mission statement, reflecting our dedication to living out our faith in every aspect of church life.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor encompasses both community ministry and responsibilities within the wider church. As the face of the church in our community, our pastor is expected to engage actively with local initiatives, fostering relationships that extend our church's mission beyond its walls. This includes attending community events, collaborating with local organizations, and advocating for social justice. Within the congregations, expectations for their time also involve leading worship, providing pastoral care, and facilitating church governance. Balancing these roles requires effective time management, and we recognize the importance of supporting our pastor in this multifaceted ministry. By encouraging a collaborative approach and providing resources, we ensure that their community engagement and wider church responsibilities are both prioritized and valued, allowing our pastor to thrive in their calling.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

The area surrounding our church is predominantly white, slightly lower than middle-class households. There are a lot of families. We also have a large commercial area because we border the main East-West route through Great Falls. The demographics have not changed much and are not expected to. CUMC has created opportunities for teens, including non-church members who live in the area. They have an active youth group that meets on Wednesday evenings for food, fellowship and mission. Both churches have sought missional opportunities outside the neighborhood because it is not an area with needs.

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

We really match the area surrounding us in diversity. One misnomer though is the age of our congregation. Like many churches, we are mostly 65 and older. The neighborhood is predominantly ages 35 to 54. Because Great Falls is not a large city, we have the capability to connect with all areas. Many in our congregations travel across town or even from adjacent towns to attend church and participate in social activities and service work.

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

Great Falls has a large, unhoused population. We have been granted the opportunity to serve those who need a place to warm up, families trying to establish a home, and to feed the hungry. The location of our church is not convenient for homeless to get to, so we join forces with First United Methodist Church located downtown to offer assistance. We feed the hungry with St. Ann's Catholic Church on Fridays and work at the food bank several times a year. We would love to have ministry of our own and have brainstormed in the past, but our location is hindrance to accessibility for those in need.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

We are known as the Dairy Queen Churches because we are located directly across the alley and our reader board provides messages to those waiting in the drive thru for their Blizzards. More importantly, we are known for standing up for marginalized members of our community. Both the CUMC and FCUCC ministers have been frontline in speaking out for the LGBTQIA+ and the unhoused communities. Community leaders know our doors are open wide to all. Of greater significance to us, Great Falls' citizens know we are a caring, involved, and welcoming church.

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

New people say they got involved because of the church's welcoming and friendly atmosphere, meaningful worship, and strong sense of community. Many appreciate the inclusive ONA and Reconciling Ministry designations, music programs, and opportunities for involvement like choir, Bible study, and service projects. Some were invited by friends or drawn by the church's values, excellent preaching, and sense of belonging. Others felt at home right away, appreciating the hospitality, acceptance, and engagement in the wider community.

References



☒ Jasmine Taylor

Completed: Thursday, Apr 3, 2025

Former community partner, nonmember

Primary Email Address: jasmine.taylor.mt@gmail.com

Business: 406 231 9995

Reference Response

As an Lgbtq+ person and activist, I have had wholly positive experiences with this church. The congregation has provided refreshments for our inclusive teen prom since its inception. They have always respected our requests, and they take tangible effort to be fully inclusive towards the LGBTQ+ community. I maintain high standards for which organizations I will affiliate with. First UCC has earned my respect and friendship. I am not a religious person, but I happily refer this congregation to those seeking a loving community.



☒ Lindsey Stulc

Completed: Wednesday, Mar 12, 2025

Lyndsey Stulc- Elementary Principal at West Elementary School
Community partner with First Congregational UCC

Primary Email Address: lyndsey_stulc@gfps.k12.mt.us

Business: 4062687200

Reference Response

First Congregational UCC has been an invaluable partner with West Elementary for the past several years. I have been principal at West for 6 years, and the church has reached out for partnership and charity yearly during that time. Congregation members have been reading with young students and working on phonics skills weekly this school year. This is something our high poverty students really look forward to and enjoy. The church also provides dinner for teachers who are working late during parent teacher conferences. They have provided delicious meals that are very appreciated and encouraging to our staff. In addition, they have held food drives to help provide our school pantry with more food, and provided full meals to families during the holidays. At the beginning of the school year, piles of school supplies were donated to our school for students in need.



☒ Gary Owen

Completed: Thursday, Apr 10, 2025

United Way of Cascade County
We work with over 50 local non profits in our community so all can thrive.

Primary Email Address: djardee@uwccmt.org

Mobile Phone: (406) 727-8671

Reference Response

United Way of Cascade County is proud to partner with First Congregational United Church of Christ and Christ United Methodist Church —two faith communities deeply committed to serving others in our community. Their long-standing commitment to giving back is visible in everything from providing warm meals and emergency shelter to sewing over 200 mittens each year for our unhoused neighbors and supporting a local Crisis Nursery for parents who need respite. They support key efforts in our community that reflect their faith-driven mission to meet basic needs with compassion. Their acts of kindness make a real difference. These churches embody what it means to care for the community, and we're grateful for their ongoing dedication. We could not do our philanthropic work without people like those who attend these selfless churches.

Closing Prayer

We open each meeting with lighting a candle, a devotional, and reciting this prayer:

Gracious God,

We come to you asking for greater discernment. Your Word says that if any of us lacks wisdom, we should ask You, who gives generously to all without finding fault. Lord, life is filled with choices, and we desire wisdom to make decisions that align with Your will. Give us a discerning heart and mind. Help us to see situations, people, and opportunities through Your eyes. Amen

God, please grant wisdom to those seeking to minister. May they be led by an open heart and mind.

Statement of Consent

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.

The Search and Call Committee consists of members from both FCUCC and CUCM congregations. They are Liz Lee, Chair; Dale Dahlman, Vice Chair; Noel Walker, secretary; Rev. Sara MacGilvra Branom, spiritual leader; Janet Koostera; Dean Jardee ; Rev. Paul Holland; and Marilyn Sheffels. Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, MNW Conference Minister and Rev. Karen McRae, Methodist District Superintendent also provided advice and information.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Our profile may look a little different. Searching for a new minister along with unifying two congregations isn't the norm. It has been decided the merged/federated church will use the United Church of Christ's method of Search and Call to fill its open pastoral position. There will be one full-time minister. Information on federated churches can be found in the UM Book of Discipline Section III, Paragraph 208. Merged churches are covered in UCC Manual on Local Church Ministry, page 31. Church leadership from both denominations support a merger/federation.