

<b>Name of Church</b>
First Christian Congregational UCC
<b>Address</b>
1113 GAR Highway and Maple Ave. Swansea, MA 02777
<b>Conference:</b>
Southern New England
<b>Association:</b>
Old Colony
<b>Title</b>
Pastor
<b>Start Date</b>
n/a
<b>Description</b>
FCC Swansea Pastor Search

### Church Contact Information

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No contact information has been added to this profile.

### Listing Information

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#### Web Presences

<https://uccswansea.org/> *Type: Professional*

<https://www.youtube.com/@fccswansea7844> *Type: Professional*

#### Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

n/a

#### UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

**Name:**

Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut

**Title:**

Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region MA, RI

**Phone:**

508-244-4416

**Email:**

kogutp@sneucc.org

### Summary Ministry Description

The First Christian Congregational Church (FCCC) Swansea seeks to live according to our motto: *a church where faith is active in love*. FCCC Swansea is a Spirit-filled, welcoming congregation seeking a pastor who can help us grow and deepen our outreach into the community. We are embracing a team-based structure for church leadership that is helping us work more efficiently to meet our ministerial goals. We are seeking a partner in faith to expand upon what we do well - showing God's love to one another and members of the community.

### Church pictures



### What we value about living in our area.

We value the history of this town and our congregational church, which has been at the heart of this tight-knit community since 1680, the members of our community, and our relationships with one another. The amenities in town include peaceful 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

135

### Average in person attendance

55

### 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?

21

### Languages used in ministry

English

### Position Title

Pastor

### Position Duration

Settled

**Compensation Level**

3/4 Time (approximately 30-32 hours/week)

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

No

**Scope of Work**

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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:

We are seeking a minister who is compassionate and cares deeply for others.

Second:

We are seeking a minister who is creative and brings forward-thinking goals to support our goals and missions as we grow.

Third:

We are seeking someone who is skilled in collaborative leadership. They should foster teamwork and connection within our church and community.

**Compensation and Support**

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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)	<b>64500</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 64500			
Pension/Annuity	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	<b>0</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

The total package is \$64,500 and can be allocated according to the candidate's preferences and needs.

Benefits:

Salary includes Optional Benefits, four (4) weeks of paid vacation per year, and 2 weeks of study leave per year.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

We are seeking a minister who either resides nearby or is willing to commute as needed to fulfill the role effectively. We would prefer the settled pastor to live within an hour's commute of our church.

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

*No response*

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

We have previous experience in and can provide support to accommodate a pastor's bi-vocational employment.

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

Cell Phone and/or Internet.

Criminal background checks.  
Community of Practice Participation.

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

Previous pastors have enjoyed an informal relationship with other pastors in neighboring towns as well as the local Council of Churches gatherings. There is also 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.

**Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?**

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

We are seeking a minister who will partner with us to deepen our faith, serve our community, and grow our church membership. We have faced every challenge since the pandemic by strengthening our relationships and increasing care for one another, and we are now seeing the fruits of that growth. Through personal invitations and word of mouth, we have welcomed new visitors and added new members to our congregation, a testament to the joyful movement of the Holy Spirit among us.

At the same time, our youth ministry is growing! We have dedicated leadership in this area who are generating interest and excitement through their teaching and by building relationships with the youth and their families. 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.

Additionally, our new task-based leadership structure includes two ministers who oversee service areas: Outreach (to the community) and In-reach (serving our congregation). Together, we aim to focus our time and energy on putting our faith into action and fulfilling God's work. Our outreach efforts remain strong. We are active in initiatives for people who are in need such as collecting food and hygiene items, preparing and serving food, and providing laundry services, as well as providing other acts of service in our community. We also have active in-reach initiatives including our care team, fellowship and men's support Group, with an energy and desire to expand.

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

We are seeking a pastor who will inspire and guide us in extending our community outreach, while fostering greater involvement across our congregation. Though we have a dedicated group of active members, we aim to broaden this vital work and faith experience so that every individual feels encouraged to share their God-given talents. By doing so, we can illuminate our collective light and strengthen our mission: Our faith is active in love. We hope our pastor's experience and vision will uplift us, equipping us to grow spiritually and continue building upon our impact within the community and beyond.

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 for the next ministerial leader.

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 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?

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"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.

We want to continue providing a warm and welcoming church environment. In October 2024, we voted to accept our Open and Affirming (ONA) covenant and are proud to be an 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.

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

One challenge we faced was an organizational structure that was cumbersome and out of date. Our committee-based structure required many people and work hours to accomplish tasks and projects. In order to work more efficiently we explored an organizational framework that was more streamlined. 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 are presented to the board for approval and delegated to one of these leaders or congregation members. For on-going tasks and longer projects, more members are involved and one or two people serve as leaders. We have an excellent leadership group on the Church Board and we have found success using this new task-based model.

This model has made it easier for church members who are inspired to do a project to get approval and resources from the Church Board. The revised model has encouraged new people to become more involved with the workings of the church. We are in the process of writing new bylaws that incorporate this new leadership structure.

A second example of how we've responded to God's call is inclusivity. We feel strongly that God wants us to be inclusive in caring for each other. When we returned to in-person worship after COVID, we continued recording our services. We offer virtual services on cable TV and online. We want to ensure our homebound folks and the wider community can continue participating in worship. Many members have shared their gratitude for this outreach and report feeling connected to our church.

## Congregation Reflections

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

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

When asked which part of the Trinity we most connect with, the majority of the congregation identified the Holy Spirit. 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. God and Jesus are also integral parts of our faith experience/tradition.

**Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.**

The kindness and caring of our congregants are always recognized by community members and visitors. This was particularly 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. These individuals, who had been very involved in the life of their church, were faced with uncertainty about where they would now worship. Members of FCCC warmly welcomed this group with faith and love amidst their feelings of pain and loss and provided them with a sense of being "home" again. Over the years, these members have been active congregants and have fully integrated into the life of the First Christian Congregational Church. Our congregation continues to be supportive, caring, and welcoming to members and newcomers alike.

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

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.

**What worship is like when our congregation gathers.**

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 readings 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 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. Prayers are collected prior to the worship service and read by the pastor. 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. We value our children's engagement in worship and natural spontaneity. During one recent baptism, the congregation found great joy in the child splashing the baptismal water during the ceremony.

**The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.**

Our Christian Education Director and volunteers have found a way to connect with our youth that makes them enthusiastic about being in church. 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 and sometimes lead our services! It is important to us 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 chosen name. This exemplifies how we are a church whose faith is truly active in love.

We have done multiple recent bible studies, showing great excitement with an average of 30-40 members, including both youth and adults. A new bible study begins this fall. 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.

**How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.**

A few years ago, we discovered our committee-based structure required many people and work hours to accomplish tasks and projects. In order to work more efficiently we explored an organizational framework that was more streamlined. 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 are presented to the board for approval and delegated to one of these leaders or congregation members. For on-going tasks and longer projects, more members are involved and one or two people serve as leaders. We have an excellent leadership group on the Church Board and we have found success using this new task-based model. This model has made it easier for church members who are inspired to do a project to get approval and resources from the Church Board. The Church Board approves most day-to-day decisions, bringing higher-level decisions to a meeting of church members. In emergency situations, we have used emails, Zoom or in-person meetings to discuss and resolve issues.

When it comes to decision-making, 2 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...

A few years ago, the church had a newer member who was extremely disruptive, abusive and instigated significant conflict in the life of the church. The church board (formerly e-council) and pastoral relations committee collaborated with our pastor to compassionately address this issue. Support was sought from the Assistant Conference Minister and Conference on Ministry chair. The church board counseled the member by way of a behavioral covenant, invited them 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 not to participate in the life of the church until he could adhere to the behavioral covenant. A letter was sent to all congregants informing them of the incident and decision. This challenging situation demonstrated the leadership's ability to come together in a time of crisis and make decisions rooted in Christ's love and concern for the well-being of our congregants.

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

[Behavioral Covenant FCCC 8.2023.docx](#)

[Annual Report 2024.pdf](#)

## 11-Year Report

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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

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Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	81
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	4
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	85

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	29%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	45%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	26%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

**Number of total participants by age:**

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	2
12-17	4
18-24	4
25-34	2
35-44	8
45-54	10
55-64	20
65-74	16
75+	24

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

**Percentage of adults in various household types:**

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	0%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	18%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	10%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	38%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	34%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

**Education level of adult participants by percentage:**

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	35%
COLLEGE:	26%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	26%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	13%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

**Percentage of adults in various employment types:**

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	47%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	47%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	6%

**ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?**

Yes

**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, healthcare, science, technology, labor, transportation, culinary arts and social work.

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

The majority of our congregation is Caucasian, but we do have some members who identify as people of color. As is common within the Southcoast region of Massachusetts, we have many congregants of Portuguese and French-Canadian descent.

**What diversity means in our context?**

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

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

Yes

**Comment after the exercise:**

Our ONA journey was a response to God's call to embrace diversity and inclusivity. We began this journey in Summer 2023. Over the next year and a half, we held a bible study, hosted a speaker from an ONA church, shared personal stories, screened a TED Talk followed by a congregational discussion and learned and grew together as a church family. Our ONA covenant was accepted on October 13, 2024 and welcomes and affirms people of any age, cognitive or physical ability, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity or expression, marital status, nationality, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic standing, or spiritual tradition — no exceptions, no exclusions. We look forward to seeing where God will lead us as we live out this covenant. This spring, we will share God's extravagant love and affirmation of everyone at a local Pride celebration.

**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)	22	Lay Fellowship Leader/
Children's Groups or Classes	7	Christian Ed Director, CYM Team and Pastor
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	67	Pastor, Music Director and Deacons
Church-wide Meals	50	Lay Leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	16	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	30	Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	60	1x month, Pastor
Community Meals	50	2x year (lay leaders/volunteers)
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	4	Christian Ed Director and Pastor
Funerals (number last year)	6	Pastor and Music Director
Outdoor Worship	40	1-2x/year, Pastor and Music Director
Public Advocacy Work	10	Lay leaders
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	55	Pastor, Music Director, CE Director - edited and posted online/cable access tv by Music Director
Other	200	Veteran's Supper (outreach meal and fundraiser for local veterans) - Lay Leaders and Volunteers

### Worship Times

*No Response*

### Additional comments:

*No response*

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.

*No Response*

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

*No response*

List of all current staff:

*No Response*

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

Our congregation is diverse and is comprised of families – young and old, families of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, various religious backgrounds, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our activities bring people together for food, fundraising, and learning. Caring for one another and our community are strengths in our ministry. We are an active congregation who wants to attract members of the community to join us. We have recently become much more involved in community outreach and this is providing us with an opportunity to invite others to our church.

### Church Finances

**Current Annual Income**

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	86132
Fundraising Events	1559
Rentals of Church Building	68002
<b>Total</b>	<b>175693</b>

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

173944

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?

38

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Budgeted expense.

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

10

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
2016	Pipe Organ Refurbishment	42054	42054	Historical organ functionality and aesthetics restored
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 pipe organ was refurbished to restore function and preserve it's historical significance. It is an 1868 Hook pipe organ that is now listed on the National Registry of Historical Organs.

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

**Other Assets**

*No response*

**Reserves (savings):**

22000

**Investments (other than endowment):**

230000

**Does the church have a parsonage?**

No

**Description of 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.

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

n/a

**Accessibility features of our building(s):**

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

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 except the Pastor's office and main office. There is also an elevator which provides access to fellowship hall, the sanctuary as well as the Thrifty Shoppe.

#### Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

The treasurer sits on the board and, with the collaborative guidance of the board, is responsible for the budget and authorization of payment of bills.

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

Our finances and assets reflect our commitment to ministry and outreach. One significant initiative we have invested in is our virtual worship service, ensuring accessibility for both our congregation and the broader community. This effort required acquiring digital licenses, technology, and allocating a portion of our Music Director's hours to production. We also have a narrative budget, presenting financial information in a more engaging and mission-focused way, highlighting the four primary ways we serve God: spirit-filled worship, welcoming all, community outreach, and faith formation.

## Historical Information

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

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. The Pastor lost the vote, resigned on the spot during worship. The Sunday School shut down, the split divided families, and the church endured financial struggles.
2. In 2012, FCCC welcomed a group of UCC members who were unjustifiably removed from another church over a power struggle in that congregation. While this was a very traumatic event for this group of people, their arrival was, and continues to be, a huge blessing.
3. In July 2024, we called the Rev. Robert Nolan as our settled pastor. He began in October 2024. Over the next three months we determined that this was not a good fit and we parted ways in January 2025. See "most recent conflict" question below for

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

A specific change our church managed recently was the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent building shut down. We handled the instant shut down 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....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We have a behavioral covenant approved by the congregation in July 2023 that serves to remind us that we are called together to be the body of Christ and to show Christ's love for one another in our actions.

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 unless he could abide by the behavioral covenant. Different leadership groups within the church were involved including Pastor Relations and the church board (formerly E-Council). A letter was sent to all congregants informing them of the incident and decision. Support was sought from the Assistant Conference Minister and Conference on Ministry chair.

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

Between October 2024 and January 2025, many concerns regarding our last settled pastor were brought to the church board. The board came together and listened to all concerns. Guided by our behavioral covenant, they worked diligently and prayerfully as they addressed multiple issues and met directly with him to discuss them. Despite these efforts, we unfortunately found it was in the best interest of our church and our congregants to part ways. In many churches, this could have caused a great divide. Instead, we leaned on one another, offering support and unity as we discerned the best path forward. Truly, the Holy Spirit is alive within us - in our worship, in the way we care for each other and the way we show God's love to others.

**Ministerial History:**

*No response*

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people 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 organized, has strong collaborative 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?

Yes

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

**Community Vision**

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

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 frequently holds food and clothing items drives that support a local food bank and an outreach to the homeless. We support an Angel Tree that benefits local children or seniors in need of Christmas gifts. We serve at the local Bridge Supper where they hold a twice weekly dinner for people who are unhoused or underserved. When a group of migrant families arrived in Massachusetts and were living in a nearby motel, we spent two months working with the local community to collect clothing and personal hygiene items. We collected non-perishable foods and delivered them to 35 migrant families using the help of the National Guard.

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

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. Our music director attends the national UCC Music Association conference.

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

*No response*

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.

*No response*

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

Our Pastor and some lay members have participated in the Greater Fall River Council of Churches. We participate in the joint Community Thanksgiving Service, a Good Friday 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 and vacation bible study. We've also joined neighboring churches in outreach such as food banks, laundry for the underserved and Christmas gift wrapping for children in need.

We also support our community through the following outreach activities: Veterans Supper, Thanksgiving baskets, Laundry Love, the Branch

Supper, Christmas gift collection, animal shelter donations coordinated by our kids, back-to-school supplies collection, and food drives.

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

Our church motto, "Where Faith is Active in Love", shines through our extraordinary Care Team. This team was started 8 years ago consisting of about 6 members. The concept of the group is to keep watch over our church family.

The team sends cards and calls those in need. During the pandemic, we even had one team member who called a member every day for a year. We did grocery shopping and errands for those alone and isolated from families and some of that still continues today. We have also pulled together to cook meals for those in need, and several members bring our elderly to worship weekly. When an 87-year-old member was injured on the ski slopes, it took just one call for a team to convene to bring her home from the hospital and care for her in the coming months. These examples 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. We believe that we are doing God's work here at FCCC.

**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.**

Recognizing that our settled pastor will have limited time, we are looking for someone with vision who can partner with us, so we can be the hands and do the work God is asking us to do.

## **The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection**

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ARDA/MI File

No response

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

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.

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 and a continuing opioid epidemic in our area. Recent socioeconomic challenges have affected everything from staffing and ongoing police reform to services for elders that combat housing issues, food insecurity, and isolation.

**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.**

Our congregation largely reflects the demographics of the neighborhoods adjacent to our church. We are very engaged with our local community, but also do outreach in a nearby city, with more socioeconomic diversity.

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

Our community needs shape our outreach. This year, we worked with the Swansea Council on Aging to provide Christmas gifts for low-income senior residents. We collected gifts with an "angel tree" in our narthex and then spent a beautiful Sunday afternoon caroling and handing out gifts. The neighboring city of Fall River has many people who are unhoused and underserved. Our church regularly volunteers to staff Branch Super (for those in need), Laundry Love (free laundry and lunch for those in need), and School on Wheels (tutoring and one-on-one interaction for students experiencing poverty).

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

Local leaders are aware that our church has been present and active in the community for over 350 years. Over the last year, we have rented our educational wing to the Swansea Free Public Library as they renovate their buildings. This has made our church even more visible in our community. We are known as a warm and welcoming church.

**What 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

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*None contacted yet*

## Closing Prayer

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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, nation, church, search committee members and the Pastor that will come into our presence soon. A church where your faith is active in love - where all are welcomed and embraced in your love.

Amen

## Statement of Consent

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### 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. The church board 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:

*No response*