

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Union Church in Waban
Waban, MA

Senior Pastor

Southern New England Conference, Metropolitan Boston Association

December 5, 2022

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WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: The Union Church in Waban

Street address: 14 Collins Road, Waban, MA 02468

Supplemental web links: www.ucw.org, <https://www.facebook.com/The-Union-Church-In-Waban-140438821719>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships):
American Baptist Churches

Conference: Southern New England

Association: Metropolitan Boston

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

Rev. Alex Shea Will, Area Conference Minister, (508) 244-4769, sheawilla@sneucc.org

American Baptist Church contact:

Rev. Dr. Loretta Saint-Louis, Stillman Association Resource Coordinator, Ph:617-835-6767, StillmanARC@gmail.com

Summary Ministry Description:

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

Union Church in Waban (UCW) was founded in 1908 as an inclusive, interdenominational church, priding ourselves, and pushing ourselves, to welcome all. We are intergenerational, child cherishing, outreach and mission-minded. The church embraces worship, fellowship, discipleship and service. We are seeking a senior minister that speaks easily about the love of Jesus and faith in God, and who inspires and shares a vision for a ministry that nurtures a thriving village of believers and servers of all ages.

We welcome all, whether they are clear in what they believe or not sure what to believe, to experience, practice, and share the love of God, and our overall ministry is based on a core belief in the love taught by Jesus, enhanced by intellectual curiosity and personal faith development.

As a faith community, God is calling UCW to live even more deeply into being a welcoming congregation who sees, loves and serves all people and all of creation. We seek to embody this love through acts of service to each other, to our neighbors geographically near and far, and for the planet we call home. We see the role of the senior minister as our partner in this ministry of service, providing encouragement, sharing wisdom, and supportively challenging us when necessary.

Our senior minister is supported by, and supports, talented and committed lay leaders, an associate pastor for youth and families, a musical minister, and administrative staff. Our senior minister will play an active role in robust Christian education and youth programs, pastoral care, adult education, communities of fellowship, and mission efforts, both international and local.

Photographs:

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.





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

Newton, Massachusetts is a thriving small city (88,000 residents) nestled between Boston, Brookline, Needham, Wellesley, Waltham and Watertown. Known as the Garden City for its green trees and conservation lands, it is home to a highly-educated, progressive population drawn to the area by the strong public schools, connections to mass transit that enable us to widen our welcome, walkable villages, and historic homes. We value Newton's relatively strong

diversity with 26% of residents identifying as a race other than white, more than half of that Asian. An estimated 30% of the city's residents are Jewish which also contributes to cultural and religious diversity. The city has an interfaith clergy organization that connects and supports numerous synagogues, catholic and protestant churches and catalyzed a number of interfaith activities for youth and mission.

Current size of membership: 229

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):

English, occasionally Spanish during special Nicaragua focused services.

Position Title: Senior Pastor

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

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

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

Preferably Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Church leadership acknowledges that the compensation package does not meet UCC guidelines, due to the high cost of living in Newton.

SCOPE OF WORK

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

- Engage Sacred Stories and Traditions** from the Christian faith perspective as one grounded in a strong spiritual foundation who models spiritual practice. Partner with staff, particularly the Associate Pastor, and lay-leadership to engage adults, youth, children and families so that they may become more grounded in their own faith and connect and anchor us in God's love.
- Work Together for Justice and Mercy:** Lead the church to remain active in ecumenical and interfaith activities in this community, metropolitan Boston, and through work with our friends in other US communities, in Nicaragua, and elsewhere as love would guide us in making the

world a better and more just place. Extend our partnerships with the communities that share our building, like the Riverside Children's Center, the Taiwanese Church, and the Scouts (BSA) and the religious, spiritual, and civic leaders in our community.

3. **Welcoming and Inclusive:** Assist the Church in sustaining and expanding a commitment to the welcoming and inclusive love of Jesus. Call the church to live more fully into its Covenant.
4. **Worship:** Prepare and lead Sunday worship including scripture study, sermon, administration of the sacraments and special services as needed, craft liturgy and bulletin, guide and sometimes find lay liturgists, plan music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, offer prayers, etc.
5. **Spiritual Guidance:** Exhibit a spiritual foundation and practice ongoing faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service; identify helpful resources and opportunities and help lay persons take advantage of them.
6. **Pastoral Care:** Strengthen relationships through counseling, small groups, hospital and home visitation in collaboration with lay people.
7. **Staff supervision:** Provide administrative oversight for the daily affairs of the church, including staff supervision and participate with the Human Relations Team annual reviews.
8. **Administrative support:** Attend as needed and resource meetings of church teams and committees and provide leadership and training for members regarding congregational self-study, future planning, membership outreach, and stewardship.
9. **Special Religious Services:** Lead weddings and funeral services for participants in the worshipping community.

Core Competencies:

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

- Relational - intra and inter relational
- Comfortable with inclusive language
- Child cherishing and youth and family oriented

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

Total Compensation Package

\$ 100,000.00

Benefits (*choose one*):

Salary includes Optional Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (*e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed*)?

No parsonage, housing allowance is included in total compensation.

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

We do not expect our pastor to live in Waban. We do expect the pastor to connect in-person with the congregation, as well as with the wider community in Newton.

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

None

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference: Both the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist denominations offer clergy support programs and care as well as Continuing Education opportunities.

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

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

Over the past two-plus years, plans, traditions, a sense of security, and our faith have often been shaken, if not dislodged. We envision a minister who works with us to illuminate God's constant, unwavering love and presence in our lives. We envision walking with a pastor who is able to remind us that God is with us no matter where we are on our journey, a pastor who helps us move forward without fearing the way forward.

Our congregation is abundant in love, leadership, talent, skills (both professional and practical), and economic means relative to most of our neighbors. We envision collaborating with our new pastor to act from this place of abundance, to take leaps of faith, to re-invest in living, and to unlock the potential in each of us, especially those who have trouble seeing the potential in themselves. We hope to build better, stronger bridges between our church and those both in and outside of our community.

And finally, we envision a pastor with the ability to be fully present with us, thereby helping us to be more present with ourselves.

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

We envision our new pastor supporting and helping our congregation as we seek to be a force for good (materially, through partnerships, by sharing ourselves and actively caring for those outside our church walls). We would appreciate a pastor who helps us widen our knowledge of potential partnerships and who, themselves, values connections with other religious, spiritual, and civic leaders in the area.

We look to extend our partnerships not just beyond the physical walls of our building, but also with the communities that share our building, like the Riverside Children's Center, the Taiwanese Church, and the Scouts (BSA).

We hope our new pastor will assist us in sustaining our commitment to being welcoming and inclusive and who helps us expand welcoming and inclusive reach.

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

Our congregation desires a pastor who is comfortable using inclusive language, particularly gender-inclusive pronouns. Though not required, a pastor who speaks, or has some knowledge,

of Spanish would be beneficial due to our close partnership with the people of Nicaragua and our mission work there. A Taiwanese church shares our building/space, so a pastor's willingness to know or learn some Taiwanese would be important and life-giving to our partnership.

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

Strengthening Inter-and-Intra Personal Assets

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

Working Together For Justice and Mercy

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice

Based on our congregational survey, small group discussions with our congregation, and conversations with members of our community, the four areas of excellence listed above are important for our next pastor to display. We are looking for a pastor who guides and empowers us to reach our potential as individuals and as a congregation. We are abundant in resources, leadership skills, talents, love, and a call to make the world a better and more just place. We desire a pastor who will be grounded in a strong spiritual foundation, someone who can model spiritual practice so that we may become more grounded in our own. We believe in the value of sacred stories and traditions and their power to connect us and anchor us in God's love.

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

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

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

We are still in a time of transition after the pandemic and departure of Pastor Stacy. We are coming out of “survival mode” but are living in a liminal space, where parts of our ministry are still unknown. We believe God is calling us to step forward in faith, to build our strength back, to love fearlessly despite the loss and disappointments we have recently endured.

Our congregation is steadfast in its commitment to being welcoming/inclusive, outreach and mission minded and intergenerational. We strive to be an inviting space for all who enter to practice and share the love of God.

Yet, we feel God is calling us to take a deeper dive into what this means. How can we be more welcoming and what does it mean to be truly inclusive? How can we continue to strengthen our ministry to youth and families? How can we educate ourselves further and explore our blind spots? How can we discover and step beyond the boundaries of our comfort zone?

God is calling us to consider our abundance and to close the gap between what we “could do” and what we are doing. We feel called to explore how we can bring the abundance of our gifts to the needs we see. We want to find a pastor who is willing to walk with us step by step, as we try to clear the noise and listen to what God is calling us to do and see where the path leads us. We feel individually and collectively called to go more deeply rather than spread more widely.

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

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

God has been calling (and continues to call) us to widen our reach. Our hybrid worship has seen numerous iterations as we’ve dealt with the challenges of the pandemic. While we

haven't drawn in many new members, we have enabled access to our worship services for people who hadn't been able to participate in person.

While our strength and tenacity have been tested, we have been called to share testimonials during worship as part of our words of welcome. Individuals have shared their stories of discovering UCW, the welcome they experienced, and the impact the church has had in their lives. These testimonials were used as an experiment – to see how telling stories could inspire and welcome others and to buoy our faith as we highlighted the strengths of our congregation.

While we do not have a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement at this time, our community conversations have inspired us to learn more about the needs of our community and to consider the possibility of creating new partnerships. A larger question that may require a multi-year strategic plan is: How do we draw people back into church at a time when religiosity is declining, especially among mainline congregations, and when the pandemic has disconnected us from each other?

WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation's purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

The Union Church in Waban (UCW) was founded in 1908 as an inter-denominational Protestant church. While we are currently associated with the United Church of Christ and the American

Baptist Church, we remain true to our founders' vision of being a fully welcoming and affirming church for all persons.

We believe in the inclusive love of God and therefore believe that all are loved regardless of where they are on their spiritual journey – whether they are sure in their beliefs or surely do not know what to believe. Our life of faith compels us to welcome and include the full spectrum of God's children, from those who have a strong Christian identity to those who have difficulty identifying with Christianity or who have been brought up in different faith practices altogether. We are welcoming and inclusive to all persons without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, nationality, ability or economic circumstance. We invite all to full participation in our worship, membership, leadership and church life. Congregants do not need to be baptized or confirmed in order to become members, for example. The UCW offers fluidity within our religious practices, the encouragement to wonder, and a commitment to be non-judgemental of others.

In addition to our inclusive beliefs, our congregation's life of faith is enriched and sustained by our commitment to mission and outreach. Mission and Outreach activities at UCW include providing food and participating in services at Common Cathedral (a congregation of unhoused people in Boston), stocking the Newton Community Freeedge, advocating for more housing for a greater diversity of people in Newton, advocating for changes in Boston and in Massachusetts through our involvement in the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, serving at our partner church in San Juan del Sur in Nicaragua, and serving Thanksgiving dinner to people in our local community. A majority of our members participate in at least one mission/outreach project each year, with many of our congregants participating on a monthly/ongoing basis. Sharing God's love, doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God are cornerstones in the life of faith at UCW.

Our life of faith is also built on being intergenerational, warmly embracing both our youngest and oldest in the community. We cherish our children, honor our elders, and recognize that everyone in every stage of life has a God-given gift to share. A number of our congregants attended The Union Church in Waban as children and now watch their own grandchildren participating in the life of this church. Children are welcome in service. This is not a church that "shushes" our little ones.

While the teachings of Jesus are the central component to our worship service, we are more likely to pray "in the name of God" or "in the name of Love." The language of our liturgy leans towards inclusivity. At times, God has been referred to using female pronouns in addition to

the traditional male pronouns. Participants in our church life most often feel the Holy Spirit moving among them when they are engaging with each other, serving our neighbors, helping to make the world a brighter and more just place, during our robust reception time after worship, when an elder dresses as a shepherd and participates in our children's Christmas pageant, or when one of our littlest ones dances in the chancel during a hymn.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our congregation's strengths are largely relational. We are a warm congregation that finds joy in caring for each other and those out in the world, and these relationships are highly valued. During the "Time for Prayer" in worship, we invite each other to lift up prayers and celebrations. This time is often extensive. People feel safe to express their pain or share their worries. They also share their hopes and celebrations. Our congregation holds each other in both good and bad times.

The congregation's gift for connection can also be experienced during the "Passing of the Peace." Instead of just quietly turning to the person next to them, people in the sanctuary regularly leave their pews to greet others, offer hugs, and welcome visitors. We often chuckle when the pianist needs to play a verse or two to bring us back to order and signal us to return to our pews. When pandemic safety measures were not an issue, coffee hour after worship was a robust time for connection where people were genuinely glad to spend time with one another.

Shoveling snow for our elderly members, sending care packages to our young people who are away at college for the first time, or preparing meals for the sick/injured are also common practices within our community. We rally around each other and come together easily when offering support within our church walls or doing mission work out in the world.

Members of our church community have appreciated the many opportunities we have had to connect with each other and with our pastor through individual walks and cups of tea and through our small fellowship groups (our Book Club, a woman's group called "Lunch Bunch" and another called "Wellspring," a men's group called "Java Gents", and through Bible study).

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

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

Worship at UCW takes place in our main sanctuary (and over Zoom) every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. from September through June. During July and August, worship services are less formal and take place in a small chapel adjacent to the sanctuary. Our Summer worship services incorporate more lay participation and focus on shared reflection. In addition to Sunday worship services, several special evening services are provided particularly around the holidays (Blue Christmas service for those experiencing sadness and loneliness during the holiday, Ash Wednesday service, Maundy Thursday service, and reflections on the stations of the cross on Good Friday, to name a few). More recently we have varied our opening prayer and offered more introductions on our scripture readings. In past listening sessions with members, some have asked for more time for prayer and contemplation and we have tried to accommodate that.

Sunday Services are typically structured in the following way:

Call to Worship

Words of Welcome

Opening Hymn

Prayer for God's Grace/Assurance

Passing of the Peace

Children's Time

Scripture Readings

Sermon

Sermon Response (Music)

Time for Prayer

Service of Sharing/Offering

Sharing of Life and Ministry/Announcements

Closing Hymn

Benediction

Communion is held monthly, typically on the first Sunday of the month. The congregation is comfortable with changing the content of worship and, to some extent, varying its structure.

According to a recent congregational survey, good preaching is described by our congregation as challenging and thought provoking as well as comforting, carefully composed, skillfully delivered. Congregants have a desire to hear words about "How to walk the right path" and "Be a better person," and also express the need to feel grounded and replenished before beginning a new work week. During the pandemic, sermons reflected themes of finding hope in times of uncertainty and exploring our dreams and the dreamers around us.

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

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

UCW puts a lot of passion and energy into our Sunday School and youth programming. Our primary goals are to have children feel safe, loved, and connected with God, with each other, and with the congregation as a whole. Sunday School is available for children from pre-K through high school, with youth group opportunities for middle and high schoolers. Sunday School and youth groups are led by volunteers from the congregation. It can be challenging to recruit volunteers to lead Sunday School as it currently meets during the worship service. Older children and teens also find it challenging to attend Sunday School, as youth sports and activities in and around Newton often take place on Sunday mornings. We know this is a challenge felt by many congregations.

In 9th/10th grade, youth are invited to join a confirmation class called “Exploring Our Faith” (EOF). In addition to exploring Christian beliefs and what it means to be confirmed at the UCW, youth learn about and attend other faith services (Shabbat Service at a temple, the Islamic Center of Boston, Agape church, etc.). Each EOF student is paired with a mentor from the congregation who shares their own lives of faith and listens and talks with youth about where they are on their journey. We take care not to pressure youth to be confirmed or to conform to beliefs they are not comfortable with. Instead, youth are encouraged to explore, grow, think, and feel loved wherever they may be on their spiritual path.

True to our intergenerational values, people of all ages are welcome to help lead worship services. There are two services each year that are completely led by youth: the Palm Sunday service and one service during Advent. Youth often read scripture, play music in church, and lead/participate in mission trips and community events.

Bible study groups for adults have been held on Sunday mornings prior to worship and other theology programs have been formed when there is interest. Our prior Senior Pastor offered the “Exploring the Bible” program by the Mass Bible Society and also a study course written by William Willimon. One member of our congregation formed a “Faith and Doubt” group that met in members’ homes. The UCW book group often chooses works that offer insights on spirituality or inspirational lives. Our Worship Team meets regularly to ensure that we are

continually reflecting the views of our congregation and exploring new ideas for worship consistent with our faith and mission.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision? When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?

Council, Deacons, Co-Moderator’s group each meet once a month for two hours = 6 hours.

Union Church has engaged in experimentation with its governance and organization over the past four years. Covid interrupted implementation of the fullness of those ideas. Currently the church is structured for mission and ministry with a Church Council, Co-Moderator Group (Executive Committee), Deacons and Ministry Teams. The Co-Moderators Group (Executive Committee) is the newer piece whose inception was aborted by Covid. The Council has committed to the model through the calendar year of 2022 with evaluation to follow.

The intention is for the Council to meet less and decide more. The Co-Moderators group holds the strategic vision and response to shorter term needs responsibilities. The Council meets every other month and the Deacons and Teams generally meet once a month except for the summer time.

The Senior Pastor meets with staff collectively on a weekly basis in season and separately with individual staff persons as scheduled, but generally on a weekly basis as well.

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

When the pandemic hit in the spring of 2020 and the church building was essentially “closed,” our first actions were to form a Phase Forward team (which included an epidemiologist) to help shape church-wide policies, and to recruit a “tech team” to help us transition worship services and other church meetings to Zoom. We were on Zoom the following Sunday and have continued to fine-tune our technical capabilities (such as putting a large screen in front of the sanctuary to display Zoom members during worship and adding a PTZ camera for higher quality video). The members of our congregation are very practiced at putting teams and committees together to tackle challenges and find solutions. On the fly, it has often been the

senior pastor who has known who to reach out to and call on first, and she often set things into motion. The pastors led the way in responding to the pandemic, and in retrospect we worry about the burden they carried. But we greatly appreciated their energy and inspiration, and we are glad that they were supported by the Deacons, committee leaders, and members of a "Phase Forward" team led by a congregant who is an epidemiologist who helped us to determine our health protocols.

Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?

Yes. (See Appendix for annual report and bylaws.)

There has been a recent effort to make things more flexible and responsive in our ministry. Rather than the whole council meeting each month, smaller subgroups (children's ministry team, mission, worship team) focus on specific issues, allowing the church council to focus on policy making, fiduciary, and conflict resolution. There has been an effort to make ministry teams smaller but flexible so people could be added; some of that is a work in progress especially due to Covid.

Church/council decisions are communicated in person, through written mailed letters, and in a weekly Friday email blast. Some sentiment in our survey suggests that there is some work to be done to include more people in leadership and decision-making, but this does not appear to be a big issue.

Teams for ad hoc purposes are organized informally with outreach to individuals. The same is true for congregation wide tasks such as garden work, volunteers for the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, etc. Recruitment is confirmed with online sign-up software.

11-YEAR REPORT

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

(Please see Appendix for 11-Year Report.)

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	204	Yes
Number of active non-members:	25	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	229	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	134	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	75	Yes
Less than 5 years:	20	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
9	28	2	2	8	60	60	45	15	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	2%	Estimate but from survey!
Joint household with minors:	41%	
Single adults age 35-65:	3%	
Joint household with no minors:	37%	

Single adults over 65:	17%	
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Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	10%	
College:	21%	
Graduate School:	67%	
Specialty Training:	2%	
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	60%	
Adults who are retired:	24%	
Adults who are not fully employed:	16%	

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

The congregation at UCW is largely professional and highly educated. Occupations range from doctors, lawyers, jobs in the financial or technology sectors, field of education, non-profit work or those who are retired. UCW does not have a high degree of diversity in terms of education level/class. Largest demographic is 45-64; however, we have a lot of people with different expertise.

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

Our congregation is predominantly white and, as with occupations, reflects the location of UCW (in Waban, considered a “super zip code” in the town/state), an affluent mostly white

community. Our congregation welcomes anyone of any background and thinks of our diversity in broader terms to include those with whom we do missionary work and engage with to improve lives such as the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. About 40% of our congregants live within 1 mile of the church, ~65% of congregants live within 3 miles, and ~85% of people live within 9 miles.

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

Not yet.

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	35	Pastors and lay leaders. In the past year, lay leaders took more responsibility
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	1	Pastors
Children’s Groups or Classes	5-7	Associate Pastor, Children and Youth Ministry Team
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	145	Pastors, Minister of Music, Deacons, Worship Team. We had two Christmas Eve services- one was held outside on the Common.
Church-wide Meals	7-30	Senior Pastor, lay leaders, “Sundaes on Wednesdays” summer series
Choirs and Music Groups	10-12	Minister of Music
Church-based Bible Study	<i>Suspended during Covid,</i>	

	<i>may be resurrected</i>	
Communion (<i>served once a month</i>)	62	Pastors, Deacons
Community Meals	25, serving 60-70 people	We host an annual Thanksgiving meal (or take out)- lay leaders plan and execute. Also weekly sandwich-making for Common Cathedral.
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year – 1, but 7 total joined the church</i>)	12	Associate Pastor, Mentors
Drama or Dance Program		
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	2	Pastors, Deacons
Intergenerational Groups		
Outdoor Worship	5-25	Pastors, Minister of Music, Deacons, Worship Team (In Covid, we held “Forest Church”) We also do an Easter Sunrise service outside.
Prayer or Meditation Groups	2	Lay leaders
Public Advocacy Work	15	Pastors and lay leaders – primarily through GBIO (Greater Boston Interfaith Organization) and NICHE (Newton Interfaith Coalition for Housing Equity)
Retreats	20-60	Pastors and lay leaders (suspended during Covid, planning for the Fall 2022)
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)		
Worship (time slot: 10:00 a.m.)	62	Pastors, Music Minister, Deacons, Worship Team, Tech Team
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	20	Associate Pastor, Youth Team

Other- Nicaraguan partnership	50	Pastors, NICA Team
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Additional comments:

The size of the church increased under Stacy, our previous pastor. As a pastor-centered church, it was difficult for her to sustain her level of participation in activities outside of worship as the size of the church grew. Congregants have stepped up to lead programming she once developed. Due to her departure, as well as the pandemic, we are now grappling with the question of what size church we are. According to our congregational survey there is modest interest in growing the church.

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

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Bart Kelso				Yes
Brita Gill-Austern	Yes			Yes
Bob Pazmino				Yes

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

Rev. Kelso is active in racial justice matters and retreat planning. Rev. Gill- Austern serves on HR. Rev. Pazmino lives on the Cape and is active on Zoom for worship.

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Amy Clark Feldman, Associate Pastor	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	8 years
Aidan Cunningham, Office Manager	No	Part Time	Senior Pastor	7 years

Mijin Choi, Director of Music	No	Part Time	Senior Pastor	1 year
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REFLECTION

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

In normal times, our church is an active one. We welcome all to experience, practice, and share the love of God, and our overall ministry is based on a core belief in the love taught by Jesus enhanced by intellectual curiosity and personal faith development.

One thing to note is that we have historically hosted interns on a yearly basis. This program is on pause right now, however the intern program has brought wonderful new leaders to our congregation over the years. Bringing in fresh voices allows a mutual opportunity for learning and teaching.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$167K \$194K (2019)
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$18K
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$3K
Fundraising Events	\$5K
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$97K \$121K (2019)
Rentals of Church Parsonage	n/a

Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	n/a
Other (specify): Plate and non-Pledge donations	\$20K
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$310K \$361K (2019)

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$310K, \$370K (2019)
 See Appendix for most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

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

54% of the budget is dedicated to ministerial compensation, though this is probably lower than it needs to be.

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? No.

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)

The amount is calculated as a percentage, roughly 13% of church income.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

- Total amount of loan debt: 34K
- Reason for debt: Historical line of credit
- Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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

Recently completed major renovations and new slate roof on the order of \$600K

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

Included as an appendix to this profile (financial questionnaire)

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2018	Stewarding our Past Shepherding the Present Strengthening our future:	\$650K	\$703K	Large structural improvements Interior improvements— classrooms for children and youth, improvements to kitchen mission outreach, with a particular focus on youth
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

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

Approximately 20% of the capital campaign was targeted at mission outreach, with a particular focus on youth

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? 484K

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

Annual option to draw 5% of average balance over the past 5 years. We do not tend to exercise that option fully.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? No change - 5% max.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: 5% – approximately 15K / year.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? Currently, endowment is growing at the current draw rate.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: Currently, our endowment portfolio has a fairly traditional structure. We are considering restructuring the portfolio to focus on socially responsible investments.

Other Assets: None

Reserves (savings): \$0

Investments (other than endowment): \$0

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: No parsonage

How is the parsonage used?

Street / City / State / Zip:

Finished square footage:

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:

Assessed real estate value:

Available for minister residence: Y/N

Expected minister residence: Y/N

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

None

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

14 Collins Road, Newton Ma. Large church structure built in 1912. Expanded in 1952. This building is held in trust by independent trustees.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.) Worship space (not pulpit), two floors of meeting space/classrooms.

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

For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?

Several years ago, our church made the major budgetary decision to add the Associate Pastor for Youth and Families position in order to fulfill our vision of better serving our children, youth, and families. Amy Clark Feldman was hired to fill this new role. This position replaced the former part-time position of Christian Education Director. The adaptation of this position and the hiring of Amy was the result of a church-wide visioning about a more robust youth ministry and beyond. We wanted to provide support and education for not only our Children in Sunday School, but the intergenerational members of their families and the congregation as a whole. Amy was an intern when the last CE Director left; she was the internal candidate. Although the position was originally part-time, it became clear that our vision required a full-time position and the congregation was asked to increase pledges to support this vision. This decision also involved affiliating with the American Baptist Church so that Amy could have ministerial standing.

Our members explored the needs of our church and took a leap of faith when creating the Associate Pastor position. It has proven to be highly successful, spiritually rewarding, and life-giving to our church.

Our 2022 / 2023 budget reflects the uncertainty associated with the return to normal and our plans to call a new senior pastor. Given that our level of pledging is significantly down from pre-pandemic levels, our income levels are lower as well. Our goal is to run a balanced budget, but this year, given what we know now, we believe we will run a deficit of close to \$27,500. Though we don't want to run a significant deficit for an extended period, we do have the resources to do so this year. This year is the right time to run such a deficit in order to fund our recovery from the pandemic.

Like last year, this year is a transitional year, and it calls for an unusual budget. We have stewarded our financial resources carefully in good times to ensure that we are strong during times like this. While there is a significant proposed deficit, it is based on conservative assumptions and a commitment not to reduce our investment in the communities that we serve. While we can support this in the coming year, structural changes would be required if we were to run deficits like this in future years.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

There have been many significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation. One includes widening our definition of what it means to be an “inclusive church.” About 15 years ago, our church led a capital campaign to raise money for an elevator so that inclusion in our church Covenant embraced all people regardless of ability. More recently (within the past year) we again expanded the wording of our Covenant to welcome all regardless of gender identity and expression.

Another significant event was the UCW’s decision to become affiliated with American Baptists. While we are an interdenominational church, we have always been affiliated with the UCC and that has been part of our practice. It is interesting to note that the founders of the UCW as an interdenominational church, made a board of trustees “duty bound” to remove any congregation from its building that became too closely affiliated with one denomination.

It is widely agreed upon, however, that the most important event in our church’s previous 10-year history has been the Covid-19 pandemic. This (ongoing) event not only rocked our church life, but tested the faith and resilience of each of its members. Local to national-level structures and policies were strained and tested. The fact that the loss of our beloved Senior Pastor coincided with this challenging time shook our identity. Who were we without our trusted leader? Why would God allow so much death and suffering? When will it end? Can we sustain our faith?

Our congregation found logistical solutions quickly. Even with our church building closed, we did not miss a Sunday worship. We transitioned to Zoom. We found creative ways to connect and care for each other. We formed a trusted “Phrase Forward” team who guided us through

health protocols clearly and calmly. Yet, understandably, our faith and fellowship has felt fragile, and there is a vulnerability to our church identity and membership numbers/participation that was not there pre-pandemic.

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

One recent change our church managed was to change the wording of our covenant. Our previous covenant read: “We are welcoming and inclusive to all persons without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability or economic circumstance. We invite all to full participation in our worship, membership, leadership and church life.” After feedback from congregants and conversations within our community, we unanimously voted to add the words “gender identity and expression” to the covenant. This change was not only motivated by our commitment to be an inclusive community, but also reflects our ability to learn about our blind spots and make changes accordingly. We recognize that there is still work to do living into the words in our expanded covenant.

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

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

A recent conflict arose when our primary tenant (Riverside Children’s Center) needed an alternate space for a classroom within our church building. Space is limited and so after some consideration, there were only two options, each with significant draw-backs: our Reception room that holds a lot of memories and allowed for so many groups to meet, or Little Hale that serves as our main Sunday School /Youth Room and that had recently been renovated. There were a lot of people involved in this, but there was insufficient communication, and also no single gathering / meeting to come to a shared understanding of the various pros and cons of each option. Since there was no clear good option and no good overview, people felt individually very torn about this choice. Because of the tight deadline of Riverside a decision was forced in the end. While it was a shared decision that the council approved, both the process and the outcome left a lot of people disappointed and soured.

This experience brought up governance questions that are still being worked on currently. For this calendar year, we are experimenting with meeting as a full council more frequently and in person to facilitate more team-building and better communication. Also we are meeting monthly with a smaller co-moderators group (Executive Committee) to streamline strategic thinking and decision prioritization.

Lastly, the council is working to clarify the role of the liaisons we have for each tenant, so that we can become aware of potential issues more early on.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Stacy Swain	11	Yes
Rob Asinger (Interim)	1	Yes
Wayne Pruitt	8	Yes
Yvonne Schaudt	4	Yes
Nancy Rockwell (Interim)	1+	Yes
Ned Parker (Interim)	1+	Yes
Mark Welsh (Interim)	1+	Yes

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

We have learned the importance of the Senior Pastor's role in engaging our members in initiatives to offer opportunities for fellowship and spiritual development for our community. Whether encouraging a member to start a men's group, a book group or small study group, a senior pastor can greatly enhance the life of our community by moving individuals toward greater spirituality in smaller groups or projects as well as moving our whole congregation. At the same time, we realize that, for these initiatives to be sustainable within the limits of a

senior pastor's time, our new senior pastor will have to be willing to let our members carry forward our efforts to follow God's calling without feeling the need to always be closely involved. In that sense, as in any growing organization, the leader measures success by what they have created and the broader leadership they have inspired from the larger congregation.

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

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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

No

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION InSite

COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

Our church has a history of doing mission and outreach both locally and internationally. Whether big or small projects, the majority of congregants report that the relationships formed through this work are what is most transformational and spiritually fulfilling. The list below includes both recent and long-held partnerships:

1211

Boston Warm/Common Cathedral

Newton Freedge

Youth Mission Trips

Mentoring an incarcerated person (two?) through Partakers

Thanksgiving Dinner

Service for members of our congregation (leaf raking)

Book Buddies

Newton Interfaith Coalition for Housing Equity

Nicaragua (service trips, scholarships, local church support, etc)

Deep Roots Farm in Maryland (most recent youth mission trip)

Norwood Health, Project Care and Concern (Mitten Tree)

Scouts BSA

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

The UCW’s previous pastor was the moderator of the Metropolitan Boston UCC Association and our current Associate Minister for Youth and Families is active in TABCOM. We have a parishioner who has been involved with the UCC at a committee level and we have provided space for Metropolitan Boston Association meetings and gatherings.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

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

In keeping with our covenant to be welcoming and inclusive, the Open and Affirming (ONA) designation above is very important to our congregation. We believe that all people should be welcomed into the full life and ministry of our church. While we aren’t currently working toward any of the other above statements, a large contingent of people in our congregation are actively working on racial justice (Advocates for Racial Justice-ARJ), including Engine 6 and Newton Interfaith Coalition on Housing Equity and Book Buddies. Our work in Nicaragua and past work in Zambia may also lead us toward the Global Mission Church designation in the future.

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

The following is a list of ecumenical and interfaith activities our congregation recently participates in:

GBIO

Advocates for Racial Justice, work with Engine 6 and on Newton Interfaith Coalition on Housing Equity

Common Cathedral

Book Buddies partners with a school in Alabama

Community wide services at Union Church and elsewhere - multi congregational concert at church in Waltham.

Relationship with Taiwanese Church

Our community interviews suggest that perhaps we can scan the community regularly to identify unmet needs that could fit with our mission orientation or in partnership with other faiths. Service to the elderly, victims of substance abuse and mental health are needs that were mentioned frequently in our community interviews.

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

We describe ourselves as “inclusive, intergenerational and outreach and mission minded.” Our covenant also states that we welcome all to practice and share the love of God, and that is accurate!

Our mission/covenant is not a set of words that lives on a dusty shelf in a church office. Instead it is a living, guiding work that informs our ministry efforts, outreach activities and governance.

During one of our appreciative inquiry sessions, a parishioner commented, “One of the things I love about our church is that someone sees a need in our church and they jump in to do something.” We aim to live out our mission with intention and thoughtfulness. Therefore, our mission and outreach work includes projects/activities for people with a lot of time and energy and those who want to do smaller projects that take less time and energy. Our mission projects include both long-standing commitments as well as newer ones. We are open to new projects but are careful not to stretch ourselves too thin. We ended a partnership with the Russell School when there was not enough parishioner interest, and recently decided not to sponsor a refugee from Ukraine as we didn’t think we had the energy to do it well.

Budget decisions and governance is also directly informed by our mission statement. Capital campaigns have raised money for an elevator and for youth programming which reflect commitments to being inclusive and intergenerational. Our decision to add the Associate Pastor of Youth and Families position was also a direct result of our commitment to intergenerational ministries.

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

In the past, our senior pastor was very involved in areas beyond the scope of work “assigned” to her (leading worship, pastoral care, participating in leadership meetings). She was involved in church mission projects, planning and leading church retreats, creating and co-leading various church groups (book group, Lunch Bunch, Bible study, Exploring Our Faith group), and supervising ministerial interns. Our previous pastor was also the president of the Newton Interfaith Clergy Association and moderator of the UCC Metro Boston Association.

Our pastor's wide-ranging activities were associated with an expectation, or at least a desire, by the congregation for her to be involved in much more than was probably sustainable. In retrospect, many congregants feel it would be healthier for a pastor to share information and highlight opportunities for members of the congregation to serve the community and each other. Although we do not know for certain, we wonder if burn-out was part of our previous pastor's decision to move on from our church.

Our Associate Pastor for Youth and Families has also been widely involved beyond the scope of their expected work – helping with church retreats, planning and accompanying youth on Youth Mission trips, and leading and/or participating in mission and outreach projects like Common Cathedral. Both pastors have gone on the Nicaragua trip (though it's generally been organized by members of the congregation), but many agree that their presence felt integral for building connections and inspiring reflection on what our church is being called to do.

MISSION InSite

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

Waban is a largely wealthy, highly educated, and white neighborhood. It is one of the two wealthiest villages in Newton, which is among the wealthiest cities in Massachusetts. However, Newton as a whole is more diverse by income, race, and ethnicity than Waban is.

According to MISSIONInSite, Waban's population can be categorized by the term "American Royalty." This grouping includes a population that: has philanthropic attitudes; strong aesthetic preferences; lots of leaders and not as many followers; may see church membership as a social status; has sporadic church attendance; and is globally aware. Spiritual concerns tend to revolve around feeling lost or lonely, and anxieties over aging and dying.

MISSIONInsight suggests that the major reason people don't come to church is that they haven't found a church with a strong child and youth program or that their previous church didn't provide strong support during a time of crisis.

UCW can meet the needs of families looking for strong child/youth programming. We are committed to supporting the whole family and feel our programming and commitment to youth and families can be a draw for families in and around Waban.

The tendency for people to feel lost or lonely within this population may have been even more heightened due the pandemic/social distancing. This offers our church an even greater opportunity to reach out to our neighbors and foster connection. Our commitment to be a welcoming and inclusive church is one way to accomplish this. Yet we are still looking for ways to live out this commitment more deeply. The UCW also values being a strong community that provides support and care for each other. Making meals for congregants who are recovering from surgery, giving rides to those who need them, and doing yard work for our older members are all examples of how we care for each other.

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

Our internal demographics are similar to our immediate neighborhood but wealthier than other parts of Newton (Nonantum, Newtonville, etc) and adjacent towns (Waltham, Watertown). Our congregation's lack of racial diversity is consistent with our immediate neighborhood, and we are less diverse than other areas of Newton and surrounding towns. We have tended to partner and connect with people/organizations outside of our immediate

neighborhood where we feel there is more need. Common Cathedral in Boston is an example as well as our previous partnership with the Russell School in Dorchester and San Juan del Sur in Nicaragua.

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

Newton is becoming more diverse, especially with regard to the Asian population, and the senior population is growing. By 2030, one-third of Newton residents will be 60 and older. Despite being a wealthy community, there is hunger in Newton, and people struggle to afford housing here. The current Newton mayor has prioritized creating affordable housing options and most new residential developments must include a percentage of affordable housing in their plans. The hope is to bring more diverse residents to the city of Newton.

These factors have shaped our ministry in several ways: through our commitment to intergenerational worship/participation in our church; our participation in the Newton Freedge; and our advocacy for affordable housing.

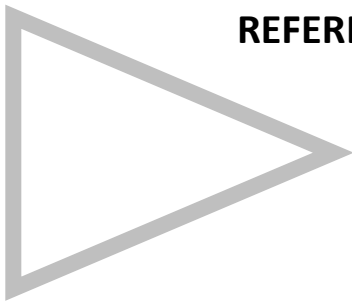
As we consider how to more deeply extend our welcome to the community, the shifting demographics will be important to consider.

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

In conversations with a range of community leaders, a few have heard of us and one knew about our community Thanksgiving dinners.

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

Most new people attest to feeling warmly welcomed as the reason they were first drawn to our church. Once here, new people talk about our inclusive nature, one that invites them and accepts them regardless of their beliefs, race, religious background, and sexual orientation (to name a few). People have spoken of their attraction to our vibrant youth programming (weekly Sunday school, youth group, Exploring Our Faith program, youth mission trips, etc) as well as the numerous opportunities for mission and outreach involvement.



REFERENCES

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

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

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.

REFERENCE 1

Jane Mirandette

President/Treasurer, The Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries For All Program

In the interest of respecting privacy, we will gladly provide contact information for Jane upon request.

We have worked closely with Jane through our long-term relationship with del San Juan Del Sur in Nicaragua.

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

As a visiting missionary and friend over many years I have found them Inclusive, welcoming, dedicated to world service, inclusive, nonjudgmental, open to diversity, did I mention inclusive? I see dedication to faith and willingness to serve.

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

I have, over the years, only seen positive areas as they welcome me as a visitor speaker and as they are faithful in their dedication to service in San Juan del Sur Nicaragua and providing support for third world communities in a consistent and long term way.

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

Over the course of my recent time in Nicaragua, I had the opportunity twice to spend a week with this church group. I had hosted them in the past and enjoyed them then however, the two weeks working together gives me a chance to share my impressions here. During their mission trip in February 2000, their 2nd project with me, they responded to a need my educational ministry had, which was hands on work in a remote rural school to paint and repair a school with the local community and they went beyond to create a playground and overhaul the unusable cafeteria and picnic area. On both trips the pastors shared in a service at a local church, the group offered vacation bible class for the many children and hosted a dinner for the pastora and the elders of the church. The pastors both embraced the pastora of this little, longstanding church with respect, grace and delight.

Anything else you wish to share.

During my many years hosting mission groups in Nicaragua and supporting local churches there I have seen the good, the bad and yes the ugly – UCW mission group leaders and pastors have always been outstanding ambassadors of true Christianity. One impressive fact is the longevity of their congregation in the sense that through the years the same faces, the same people coming on missions with young people I've gotten to see grow up nicely. Their consistency over the years, their respect for everyone and the generosity of the individual members, their true and lasting friendships with me and my team and the many locals they interact with there have impressed me. I can also honestly say pastor Amy is a delight to work with in every way. This is a real church with real people serving God with an awareness of needs beyond their own community Any pastor of like mind would be blessed to lead this congregation.

Jane Mirandette, President/Treasurer

The Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries For All Program

REFERENCE 2

Sarah Drummond

Founding Dean, Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School

Sarah was a member of Union Church in Waban before she left to become Dean of Andover Newton at Yale.

In the interest of respecting privacy, we will gladly provide contact information for Jane upon request.

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

Union Church of Waban is warm, welcoming, unassuming, and supportive. It is serious about mission and outreach. A family with a variety of belief systems could all find a place there.

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

Inclusivity is such a high value that defining what the church stands for theologically requires a great deal of thoughtfulness.

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

As a minister who serves in higher education, I always have a church connection. My spouse and daughter were reluctant participants in every church they have known except for Union Church in Waban. They both were very happy there, which of course was happy for me.

Sarah Drummond

REFERENCE 3

Adam Hearlson

Position / Setting

In the interest of respecting privacy, we will gladly provide contact information for Adam upon request.

Relationship to the Congregation

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

The United Church of Waban is a strong neighborhood church with a heart for service and superlative gifts of hospitality. Parish ministry is always seeking a balance between serving the community's internal needs and the world's external needs. UCW has struck a fine synergy of these two postures. They are devoted to each other, but not at the expense of serving the world. They bring Christ into the world as a community.

Additionally, I have been impressed by the lay leadership of UCW. The congregation is invested in its mission and works diligently to see it flourish.

Finally, the church has a wonderful coffee hour. I sincerely believe you can tell much about a church by how it convenes *after* worship. At UCW, the coffee hour is an extension of worship, and it is the way that the table of God is made present in a new sanctuary. At the coffee hour table, the old and young eat together. They spend time caring for each other. They feed each other. It is a beautiful thing.

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

UCW is a unique place, but it cannot escape the cultural forces shaping church life in 2022. The pandemic has accelerated the downward trend of attendance in churches across the country, and few churches will be able to pick up where they left off pre-2020. Ministry at UCW will involve innovation, creativity, sensitivity, and courage. Ministry in 2022 is not for the faint of heart. As with most churches, the church will need to figure out how to engage younger generations and grow ministries that impact the specific needs of the wider Boston-metro area. The next minister will also need strong pastoral skills, especially as the church continues to sort through the collective trauma of a global pandemic. Finally, the church could use new energy in its preaching ministry.

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

I have two deeply cherished memories from this church.

First, was my 3-year-old son running through the living room and vestry holding pool noodles that some wise adult had previously glued to a sharp ledge to prevent injury. He was chasing some older kids and having so much fun. Eventually, I felt the need to intervene and told him that I needed to put the noodles back on the ledge so that if someone fell, they wouldn't hurt themselves. This made him very sad--inconsolably sad. All the older kids he was chasing saw him crying and went to the pastor and asked if they could buy some noodles so that my son could play with them next week. She agreed, and the next week, those kids presented the noodles to him after church. He smiled, and then I was the one crying.

The second memory involves Libby Dell. Libby had lived her whole life at UCW. She still sang in the choir well into her 90s. I am not sure Libby could see the music, and I know I couldn't hear her sing. But nonetheless, she stood up with the choir as she had for nearly 75 years. When Libby started to die, the church began to mourn. This woman embodied the spirit of UCW. Then, we received word that she was close to death. So the choir gathered once more by her bed. And one last time, they sang together. I cry every time I think about this gesture of care and love. I am crying now.

Anything else you wish to share.

UCW is a remarkable church. I am grateful for all that it taught me and for traveling with it for a time. It remains ever and always in my prayers.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Gracious God, thank you for calling us to know you, to serve and enjoy you. Help us to cherish the opportunity that is before us, to be led into a place of greater growth, of increased usefulness, of bolder faith in Jesus Christ. Please guide us, Holy Spirit, as we give ourselves to you, as we seek to identify a leader to serve your people with all the gifts you graciously inspire, especially with ENERGY, INTELLIGENCE, IMAGINATION, and LOVE, to their good and to your glory. AMEN.

APPENDICES

For additional documents mentioned in this profile, please click [here](#).

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (*for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.*)
Transition Team and Search Committee
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed: The UCW Search Committee
Carol Bascom-Slack
Committee co-chair
Dec. 4, 2022

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: N/A

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

Staff Comment: N/A

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

Staff Comment: N/A

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: 

Name / Title: Rev. Alex Shea Will / Area Conference Minister

Email: SheaWilla@sneucc.org

Phone: 508-244-4769

Date: December 5, 2022

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

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

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