PLEASE READ

Please be aware:
This Draft version of the South Church Profile assumes:

1) The congregation will votes in the affirmative to become a Racial Justice Church. If the congregation does not, this draft will be edited accordingly.

2) All financial information currently blank or marked TBA (to be added) will be updated after the 2023-2024 budget church budget is finalized at the Church Annual Meeting on May 21.

3) This Draft South Church Profile will be edited in response to feedback the congregation shares during their review between April 23rd and May 7th.

South Congregational Church

Concord, NH

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Pastor

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
New Hampshire Conference

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Position Posting

Listing Information

South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
27 Pleasant Street, Concord NH 03301
www.southchurchconcord.org

New Hampshire Conference UCC (NHCUCC)
Merrimack Association

Conference Contact:
The Rev. Gordon Rankin
Conference Minister
603-715-9527
grankin@nhcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

We are searching for a partner and leader who will help us live into our vision, nurture our spiritual growth, and walk beside us, encouraging us to do God's will. We are an Open and Affirming (ONA), Racial Justice congregation that is passionate about our rapidly changing city – one with a long history of political vitality that has recently begun getting younger and more diverse. It is our hope that we will find a pastor who, like the congregation itself, cares about:

- Spiritual depth - A leader who is interested in joining us on our journey towards deeper faith
- Relational orientation - A facilitator who shares our desire to continue building an inclusive, emotionally healthy congregation.
- Community engagement - A partner in our social justice work within our broader community, and a willing leader to represent us in our city's interfaith dialogue.

What We Value About Living in Our Area

We live here because Concord, NH offers:

- Incredible access to God's creation – with forests, rivers, ponds, hills, and mountains close by
- A community that is big enough to be diverse and challenging, but small enough that one person can make a difference
- A city that has a heart, where people truly care about one another and work to improve life for all
- A large community of civically engaged residents, who are thinking about questions larger than their own lives or immediate neighborhood. They are looking statewide, even nationwide, at issues and how they can have an impact.

Current Size of Membership

542

Languages Used in Ministry

English

Position Title

Minister

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time
The total support package meets the NHCUCC Conference Compensation guidelines.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work for our new pastor will include but will not be limited to:

Spiritual Leadership

- Prepare and lead the Sunday Worship service
- Encourage the congregation's faith formation, growth, and development
- Provide pastoral care, counseling, and listening in collaboration with members of the congregation, including making referrals for those in need

- Engage in leadership development within the congregation for identified ministries and programs, especially youth and inter-generational ministries
- Engage and connect with church committees and boards, in collaboration with lay leaders

Church Administration

- Oversee and manage the administration of church staff and volunteers
- Oversee publicity, website, and social media
- Encourage faithful financial development and stewardship of church resources
- Lead church in strategic planning

Wider Community Outreach

- Nurture the congregation's community engagement
- Serve as a representative of the church to local organizations
- Encourage and lead the congregation in new initiatives to further social justice and increase diversity
- Perform weddings and funerals for members of the church and the wider community
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings and Synod gatherings

Core Competencies

Our next minister will display the following foundational competencies, shaping their contributions to our collective ministry.

- Empathetic understanding – A natural emotional sensitivity and caring that allows them to connect with a diversity of people, independent of background or where someone finds themselves in their spiritual journey.
- Creative curiosity – A posture of openness to people, ideas, and experiences that promotes healthy change and evolution.
- Enthusiastic facilitator – A table-setting leadership style that empowers others to utilize their passions to further the church's ministries through delegation (versus direct oversight).

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis

The salary that we offer will be consistent with Conference Guidelines.

Benefits

Benefits will also be consistent with Conference Guidelines.

Expected Living Situation for Incoming Minister

South Church does not have a parsonage. We would prefer that our minister live in Concord or a surrounding community, but we are open to discussing reasonable commuting options. Benefits include a housing allowance.

Incentives

Sabbatical and continuing education fund.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in NHCUCC Conference

Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund
The Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund is provided to assist ordained commissioned and licensed ministers with standing in one of the Associations of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, with defraying costs for continuing education programs.

Clergy Convocation
An opportunity to attend an annual three-day retreat at the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford, Maine.

Pastoral Leadership Development Groups (PLDG)
Managing stress, loneliness, and hurting parishioners places great demands on clergy. Pastoral Leadership Development Groups (PLDG) provide a safe place and encouraging context to deal with the demands of contemporary ministry. The New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ has contracted with Pastoral Counseling Services (PCS) in Manchester to provide Pastoral Leadership Development Groups for those who serve in our associations.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

We are looking for a partner and leader who will help us live into our vision, nurture our spiritual growth, and walk beside us, encouraging us to do God's will.

As previously mentioned, social justice is a significant part of our congregation's calling, including racial justice. We are seeking a minister who will have the cultural capacity to support our ongoing efforts to promote equity and justice.

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

We aspire to engage our community in a variety of ways, and we have a track record of outreach to build upon. One piece of our vision involves playing an active role in the day-to-day work of healing our immediate community. In the past, that has included hosting Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings, fundraising dinners for the homeless, and opening the use of our church building to community music events and meetings. In the future, we hope we are a living example of a redeemed Christianity: more inclusive, just, and equitable in the simple ways we relate to our neighbors and steward our resources. We hope our future minister will partner with us in this work.

We have a long history of collaborating with secular organizations to expand the impact of our ministry. Examples include engagements with the Crisis Center of New Hampshire (our male clergy and some congregants "Walk a mile" in women's high-heeled shoes in a demonstration of solidarity) and the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. We have specifically enjoyed working with partners who serve our New American neighbors, including Ascentria Care Alliance and Overcomers Support Services – most recently to sponsor the resettlement of Afghani refugees in our neighborhood. Through service projects we have supported our local mental health center, Families in Transition, and CATCH Neighborhood Housing. We hope our new minister can advocate for further contributions to these types of ministries, and expand our collective belief about what is possible.

We also hope to continue our contributions to our community's ongoing interfaith dialogue. We have long-standing relationships with Temple Beth-Jacob (a local Jewish congregation) and the Greater Concord Interfaith Council, where we work alongside our brothers and sisters from other traditions to advance God's kingdom in Concord. Our past efforts have included joint vigils, protests, and celebrations for the oppressed and disadvantaged as well as service projects like Family Promise (where we – alongside Temple Beth-Jacob – temporarily host unhoused families as part of a rotating shelter). We hope our future minister can feed those relationships, and help us find new ways of working across divisions for the sake of God's vision for renewal.

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

There are no specific language requirements, but Concord is increasingly diverse, and our minister should be comfortable ministering to and collaborating with people from diverse cultures.

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 that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

1. *Spiritual Depth* A nurturer who is committed to the growth of both their own and our collective faith, including through sermons that challenge and inspire us.
2. *Relational Orientation:* A consensus-building and empathetic listener who prioritizes connection and unity amidst diverse opinions.
3. *Community Engagement:* A connector who values our wider community's interfaith and secular organizations and advocates for our involvement in missional collaborations.
4. *Humility:* A sacrificial leader who brings joy to our service to God and has a sense of humor that endures when things do not go as planned.

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?

Our congregation recently completed the process of developing a new Mission, Vision and Values Statement for our future. The Statement below was approved by an overwhelming majority of the congregation on June 22, 2022.

Our Mission:
We are a Christian community seeking to be living examples of radical hope and extravagant love, connecting our community with God and with each other.

Our Vision:
We will create opportunities for spiritual growth, build a welcoming community of diverse relationships, serve our neighbors, and work for a just world.

Our Values:
We value:

- Active involvement in our greater community;
- The need to spark spiritual growth and creativity;
- Being welcoming and open to all people;
- Nurturing each person's faith journey;
- Advancing social justice issues;
- Intergenerational worship and activities; and
- Faithful stewardship of our resources in support of our Mission and Vision.

As a result of this Mission, Vision and Values process, we now believe that God is calling us to become:

- Spiritual searchers who desire to deepen our spiritual practices and our relationships with God;

- Evangelical emissaries of God who are actively involved in the betterment of the lives of all in our community through the practice of radical hope and extravagant love;
- Spiritually motivated advocates of social justice in the world;
- A growing and thriving diverse and multigenerational faith community that welcomes all who enter our doors; and
- Responsible stewards who leverage our secular assets to achieve our faith-inspired goals.

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

Our Mission, Vision and Values process has also shown us that God is calling us to be the following:

- *Spiritual searchers*
    - To be nourished and challenged spiritually at regular worship.
    - To offer our members varied opportunities to develop their own understanding of their relationships with God.
    - To encourage our members to engage in group practices to share in the faith journeys of others.
- *Evangelical emissaries*
    - To be actively involved in hands-on relationships with those in our community who may be in need, including New Americans, the elderly, members of the BIPOC community, and other underserved populations.
    - To engage in interfaith activities, including a continued cooperative partnership with Temple Beth Jacob.
    - To expand our partnerships with local community organizations which support vulnerable community members and resume service projects, such as Service Sunday, which were paused during the COVID pandemic.

- *Advocates for social justice*
    - To learn how the teachings of Jesus encourage us to support social justice for all.
    - To provide our members with opportunities to become advocates for social justice as an extension of our faith.
    - To leverage our status as an ONA Church to remain open and welcoming to all marginalized groups.
    - To find new ways of expressing our values as a Racial Justice Church in the communities we serve.
- *A growing, thriving, and diverse congregation*
    - To provide opportunities for spiritual and social development and nurturing for people of all ages and backgrounds.
    - To become a community that outsiders want to join because they see us live lives that are guided by the teachings of Christ's love for all.

- *Responsible stewards*
    - To manage our properties and assets to support our faith-driven initiatives.
    - To maximize the impact that we have on our members and community through the assets with which we have been blessed.
    - To consider our responsibility to the earth, particularly in how we make decisions regarding the management of our church building, as well as our individual lives.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

We strive to be open to all people, no matter what faith tradition they come from or where they are on their faith journeys. We are a congregation of seekers who embrace the comma in the "God is still speaking," initiative. We seek to understand the context and meaning behind Bible passages, instead of just the literal words on the page. We want to be involved with helping our neighbors in need throughout the community. We strive to live by the words of Micah, which are painted on the wall of our sanctuary: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

One of the first things people visiting on a Sunday morning hear, or scrolling our website see, is our welcome: "Whoever you are, whatever your faith tradition, whatever creed you profess, whatever your age, ability, race, sexual orientation, gender expression: you will find a warm welcome here!" And many visitors confirm that their experience matches that aspiration. South Church is a place striving for radical inclusivity, with warmth and caring extended to people of all backgrounds. That inclusivity extends beyond the first visit - a general openness to wherever someone finds themselves on their spiritual journey.

We are also a church that prides itself on its flexibility and willingness to change. The phrase "joyful discombobulation" was used to describe our attitude years ago when a plan for a service went sideways, and it has become an informal motto.

And as a congregation, we are people with a diverse set of passions - from music and photography, to a long list of social and environmental causes - and we share those passions with each other and with God. The vibrancy of our community is enriched by the uniqueness of our individual gifts.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Historically we have had two Sunday services. Our 8 AM service in our chapel is smaller and more intimate. This service draws a small but dedicated group of early birds. The 10 AM service is our main sanctuary service. This service tends to attract more families, as it features a children's message, childcare, and church school.

Worship at both services centers around scripture and the sermon. The congregation is active and engaged in worship. The congregation regularly offers up prayers of joy, support, and sorrow. Also, congregants often share from the pulpit their experiences exploring and expressing their faith in the world.

Music is an important part of our worship. At the 8 AM service, we typically have hymns and piano accompaniment and occasional offerings by guest musicians or vocalists. The 10 AM service frequently includes similar music, as well as offerings by the choir, bell choir, and the organ. Both services include the monthly serving of communion

While the 10 AM service is somewhat formal, we do not take ourselves too seriously. When things go awry, we laugh. Our services often find a balance between solemnity and joyfulness. Especially after the disruption of the pandemic, the congregation genuinely enjoys being together and meeting new people.

We understand that a new pastor will have new ideas about how we worship, and we are excited about exploring new ways of gathering.

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

We value faith formation and Christian education for everyone in the church in a range of different formats. In addition to a multi-age children's Sunday School program, confirmation class, and Jr. and Sr. High youth groups and youth mission trips, our church also offers many growth opportunities for adults. These include a Wednesday morning prayer group, a Spiritual Practices group, a Labyrinth group, Genesis Circle (for women), and SAGES (for older adults). Clergy and lay members offer periodic adult bible studies as well as book and video discussions. We also engage in community-building activities such as Service Sunday, local hikes, and the Black History walk and social justice actions. Prior to COVID, church members enjoyed participating in several annual retreats geared to different demographics (men, women, families, and spiritual practices) – and we look forward to resuming those gatherings in the near future.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

The Church Council acts as the executive council of the church, oversees its operations, and acts as the coordinating body for all interests and activities of the church and its organizations. It interprets and implements the will of the members of our church between annual and special meetings. Eight standing committees and ministries are represented on the council. Our missions are undertaken through these committees and ministries as well as several long-standing service groups (e.g. Lay Ministry, Relief Society). Approximately 110 positions are currently filled by members actively serving on 16 committees and ministries.

Communication takes several forms. There is direct communication between the pastor, church council and various ministries and committees. Communication to the wider congregation occurs in the pulpit, on our website, through our weekly email newsletter, and via text messages.

We have recently completed a Mission, Vision, and Values Statement as included earlier in the profile and we are now working on living into our vision.

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

The Church Council meets monthly from September through June and meetings are 1.5-2 hours. Other ministries and committee meetings vary, with most meeting monthly while others meet quarterly or as needed.

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

With real estate changes partly attributable to COVID, a building purchased in the 1990s and primarily rented to a counseling practice was no longer financially beneficial to the church. In the fall of 2022, our Property Stewardship Ministry (PSM) considered sale options that would further the church's wider mission and proposed selling the building to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) to establish permanent supportive housing ("Housing First"). The church council met with CCEH on 10/25/22 and agreed to the sale proposal. In order for the purchase to be viable however, CCEH needed to apply for and receive a grant from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NH HFA) – all within the period of several weeks – and receipt of the grant was dependent upon a signed purchase option agreement. The council, PSM, and CCEH were able to notify the congregation, organize an informational session, and hold a special congregational meeting – all by 11/20/22 when the purchase agreement was passed and the grant was secured.

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.

11-YEAR REPORT

The attached 11-year report was generated by the UCC with information on attendance and giving (among other things) from the recent past. Please note that in our reviewing of this document, we identified significant inaccuracies in this report – including miscalculated membership totals and giving information. For example, in 2021 membership was 522, and not the listed 482. In 2018 and 2021, pledges were $333,000 and $350,000 respectively, not $0 as reported. If any other figures prompt questions, please contact us for clarification.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church#: 440360

Assoc: 500 **Schedule:** 0 South Congregational UCC Concord NH 03301

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2011	575	225	101	9	1	3	6	27	-20
2012	532	225	95	2	4	13	22	33	-36
2013	453	225	85	8	6	4	8	89	-79
2014	453	208	90	5	1	9	17	2	-4
2015	442	216	102	4	4	14	12	21	-11
2016	424	213	102	0	0	8	13	13	-18
2017	451	184	103	6	3	21	3	0	27
2018	471	173	65	6	2	12	8	0	12
2019	475	150	68	3	0	9	8	0	4
2020	481	131	25	7	0	2	3	0	6
2021	482	70	40	9	0	1	9	0	1

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2011	$478,693	$0	$14,210	$12,148	$26,358	$3,711	$30,069	2.97	$508,762	$429,713
2012	$524,711	$0	$13,919	$2,984	$16,903	$6,580	$23,483	2.65	$548,194	$397,787
2013	$514,652	$0	$13,767	$7,604	$21,371	$0	$21,371	2.68	$536,023	$371,988
2014	$480,276	$0	$13,734	$26,363	$40,097	$6,077	$46,174	2.86	$526,450	$382,943
2015	$523,293	$55,438	$14,900	$8,555	$23,455	$3,325	$26,780	2.85	$605,511	$357,810
2016	$484,105	$0	$14,540	$8,410	$22,950	$5,146	$28,096	3.00	$512,201	$331,008
2017	$494,595	$24,073	$14,000	$23,200	$37,200	$7,148	$44,348	2.83	$538,943	$340,090
2018	$494,595	$0	$15,000	$3,500	$18,500	$0	$18,500	3.03	$513,095	$0
2019	$548,520	$9,543	$15,000	$19,347	$34,347	$1,905	$36,252	2.73	$584,772	$364,138
2020	$431,490	$3,800	$15,000	$17,092	$32,092	$5,781	$37,873	3.48	$469,363	$361,152
2021	$431,490	$0	$15,700	$3,900	$19,600	$0	$19,600	3.64	$451,090	$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2016-2021	13.68	-67.14	-60.78	25.00	-65.38	-10.87	-14.60	-11.93
2011-2021	-16.17	-68.89	-60.40	-23.08	-72.73	-9.86	-25.64	-11.34

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

Type of Participant	Number	Notes
Number of active members	533	
Number of active non-members	14	Estimate
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above)	547	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

Length of church membership	Percentage	Is this number an estimate? (X=Yes)
More than 10 years	60%	X
Less than 10, more than 5 years	25%	X
Less than 5 years	15%	X

Number of total participants by age (percentages are estimates):

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
2%	5%	6%	9%	9%	10%	20%	25%	14%

Percentage of adults in various household types:

Household Type	Percentage	Is this number an estimate? (X=Yes)
Single adults under 35	5%	X
Joint household with minors	10%	X
Single adults age 35-65	15%	X
Joint household with no minors	45%	X
Single adults over 65	25%	X

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

Education	Percentage	Is this number an estimate? (X=Yes)
High school	4%	X
College	47%	X
Graduate School	42%	X
Specialty Training	7%	X

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

Category	PErcentage	Is this number an estimate? (X=Yes)
Adults who are employed	40%	X
Adults who are retired	55%	X
Adults who are not fully employed	5%	X

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

We are a well-educated congregation with a significant number of people with graduate degrees, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. Since we are in the state capital, our members also include many state and municipal employees and individuals who work for non-profits, NGOs, and other groups that interact with the government.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

We are overwhelmingly white, reflecting the demographics of New Hampshire as a whole. The congregation is less racially/ethnically diverse than Concord. You can see details at: https:www.census.gov/quickfacts/concordcitynewhampshire

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?

Diversity continues to be an integral part of our shared spirituality and faith commitment. While we are a predominantly white, middle/professional class, liberal congregation, we also represent a diversity of gender expressions, sexual identities, and ages. We are integrating persons of differing physical abilities. We build relationships and community with our neighbors of multiple religions,

and ethnic/racial backgrounds. We study, learn, and attempt to live out the call to diversity as best we can, given our cultural location.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future?

Our Racial Justice Action Group was formed in November of 2020 after a smaller group of members (called "South Church Reads") read and discussed the book *How to Be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi. This group now holds ongoing discussions and educational events on topics including systemic racism, white privilege, and antiracism. The group continues to engage the congregation with thoughtful speakers, readings, and learning opportunities with discussion. At our recent annual meeting, members voted affirmatively to formalize our status as a Racial Justice Church.

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 AND IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS?
ADULT GROUPS OR CLASSES	50	Pastors, lay volunteers
BAPTISMS (NUMBER LAST YEAR)	5	Pastor
CHILDREN'S GROUPS OR CLASSES	30	Director of Christian Education, Director of Music
CHRISTMAS EVE AND EASTER WORSHIP	Christmas: 600 Easter: 370	Pastor, Director of Christian Education, music staff
CHURCH-WIDE MEALS	60 per	Lay volunteers
CHOIRS AND MUSIC GROUPS	38 in Chancel and Handbell Choirs	Director of Music
CHURCH-BASED BIBLE STUDY	5-15	Pastor
COMMUNION (ONCE A MONTH)	100-125	Pastor, Guild, Worship and Spiritual Life Ministry

Community Meals	N/A	
Confirmation	11 last year	Pastor, lay volunteers
Drama or Dance Program	30	Director of Christian Education, music staff
Funerals	30-350 attendees per funeral	Pastor, Guild, organist
Intergenerational Groups	12 attendees per	Director of Christian Education
Outdoor Worship	60 per service	Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	10	Pastor and/or members
Public Advocacy Work	Varies	Pastor and/or members
Retreats	Not since COVID	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	
Weddings (number last year)	0	
Worship (8 AM)	25	Pastor, Director of Christian Education, organist, lay volunteers
Worship (10 AM)	90	Pastor, Director of Christian Education, organist, choir, lay volunteers
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	
Youth Groups or Classes	10-15	Volunteer Advisors/Pastor
The Sages (Senior Group)	12	Volunteers/Pastor

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). 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:

NAME	THREE- OR FOUR- WAY COVENANT? (3 OR 4 OR NO)	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED? (YES OR NO)
KRIS BOWEN	4-way	Hospital	Chaplain	No
MICHELLE DECOSTE	4-way	UCC-related retirement community	Chaplain	No
DUANE BAILEY	4-way	Hospice chaplain	Chaplain	No
JOEL EATON	4-way	UCC-related retirement community	Chaplain	No
CHERIE SHAW	4-way	UCC-related retirement community	Chaplain	No

Nineteen additional members are also pastors

Active UCC Pastors:
Rev. Evelyn Eddy, Rev. Dr. Emily Geoghegan, Rev. Dr. Calvin Genzel, Rev. Jared Rardin

Retired UCC Pastors:
Rev. Cam Borton, Rev. Dr. William Brown, Rev. Dr. John Buttrick, Rev. Faye Buttrick, Rev. Gray Fitzgerald, Rev. Linda Gray, Rev. Susan "Andy" Jepson, Rev. Chris Lanzara, Rev. Celeste McQuarrie, Rev. Carol Meredith, Rev. Chris Owen, Rev. Dr. J. Yorke Peeler, Rev. Dr. Leanne Tigert

Ordained Clergy Members of South Church (Not UCC):
Rev. Rachelle Eaton—ABC
Rev. Dr. David Reynolds—DOC

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	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of tenure of current person in this position
Administrator	Full time	Pastor	1.5 years
Director of Music	Part time	Pastor	7 years
Director of Christian Education	Part time	Pastor	21 years
Organist	Part time	Music Director	10 years
Handbell Program Director	Part time	Music Director	9 years
Sexton	Part time	Office Administrator	8 years

Reflection

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

We are a well-established downtown church with a long history in the UCC. We continue to attract new members from greater Concord and our congregants are known for being enthusiastic and active participants in the life of the church and our wider community. We have a high degree of participation in both church life and community activities relative to the size of our membership.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

SOURCE	AMOUNT
ANNUAL OFFERINGS AND PLEDGED GIVING	TBA
ENDOWMENT PROCEEDS As permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return	TBA
ENDOWMENT DRAW Beyond what is permitted by spending policy "drawing down the principal"	TBA
FUNDRAISING EVENTS	TBA
GIFTS DESIGNATED FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE (NOT REALLY BUDGETED)	TBA
GRANTS	TBA
RENTALS OF CHURCH BUILDING (THIS WILL CHANGE)	TBA
RENTALS OF CHURCH PARSONAGE	TBA
SUPPORT FROM RELATED ORGANIZATIONS	TBA
TRANSFERS FROM SPECIAL ACCOUNTS	TBA
TOTAL	TBA

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

[To be provided after the church budget is finalized during the upcoming Annual Meeting]

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

Overall personnel expenses are approximately [placeholder] of the budget. This includes a full-time pastor and interim associate pastor. These costs should come down with only one full-time pastor. We are working towards a target for personnel expenses of closer to 50% of the budget.

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No.

Is your church 5-for-5? Does it include each of the following contributions during the church year (Our Church's Wider Mission – Basic Support, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund)?

Yes, South Church is a 5-for-5 church annually.

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

South Church contributes a fixed amount of $15,000 per year.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: [Placeholder]

Reason for debt:

Heating system upgrade

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes, and they should be paid off by Fall 2024.

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.

We have done some work on the stained-glass windows funded through donations.

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

The Church has not had a capital campaign in the last ten years.

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes.

What is the market value of the assets?

[Placeholder]

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

Regularly.

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

We have recently drawn [placeholder] of the fund, above an average of 4% in earlier years. In the current fiscal year, we have not made any draws on the fund.

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

All funds drawn from the endowment in the recent past have been used to pay operating expenses.

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

We are in the process of selling a building owned by the church, which should allow us to reduce the annual draw on the endowment going forward. We do not intend to deplete the endowment.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates.

We based the above on our historical draw on the portfolio and assuming the assets will continue to grow at or in excess of our withdrawal percentage. This assumption is based on the current asset allocation and conservative market return expectations.

Other Assets:

Reserves (savings):
Fluctuates

Investments (other than endowment):
[Placeholder]

We have multiple other funds created by donors over the years. These are generally for a specific purpose (music, outreach etc.) and have their own restrictions and uses. We are able to use the income from many funds for church expenses. The value of these funds is approximately [placeholder].

Does your church have a parsonage?

No.

Describe all buildings owned by the church.

The church owns our main church building which contains the sanctuary, and an attached Parish House which includes Fellowship Hall, a chapel, a kitchen, offices, and a lower level with classrooms, meeting rooms, and a library. We also own an adjacent rental property that is in the process of being sold with the proceeds going to our endowment.

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

None.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

South Church is wheelchair accessible. The front and side entrances both have stairs and ramps. The sanctuary also has integrated wheelchair seating in a variety of locations. The Fellowship Hall, the offices, classrooms, library and all five restrooms are also in full compliance with the federal accessibility standards. An independently operable wheelchair lift provides full access to all three levels of the building. The lone exception is the pulpit area, which is four steps above the sanctuary floor. It has been evaluated by an experienced accessibility consultant and determined to have significant historical features that would be substantially impaired by ramping or otherwise providing accessibility directly to the pulpit and choir areas. Therefore, the pulpit and choir areas have a historical features exemption from compliance. However, there is full programmatic access for all people, regardless of physical ability, to lead worship or to participate in the choir. When a participant is unable to access the pulpit area, the area in front of the communion table on the main floor is utilized. That same area is also used for communion, baptisms, weddings, children's sermons, the choir, the bell choir and much more. Use of that accessible area is an integrated part of South Church worship.

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

We have always tried to put our "money where our faith is" even when finances are tight. The endowment and number of other funds shows that our community values the work and mission of the church. We invest in the UCC wider church mission by being a 5-for-5 church and also invest in our local community. We work to balance long-term financial stability with our needs for today. For example: A few years ago, we increased the salary of our associate pastor to better reflect his contributions to our church. That decision strained the budget, but was fair and equitable based on his many significant contributions to the congregation.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation.

1. *Open and Affirming Vote:* When our congregation undertook the process of becoming an ONA Church in the early 1990s, the outcome was by no means certain. While the hearts of many members welcomed the idea, few of us had the knowledge, training, or confidence to overcome years of cultural conditioning – hearing that this or that behavior was a sin or unacceptable in the eyes of God. The process started when our Board of Deacons undertook a multi-week study program. Over the course of the program, they read books, reviewed Biblical texts, and studied Biblical scholarship on the subject in light of the entirety of Jesus' teachings. One of the most compelling parts of the study process was a face-to-face meeting with a lesbian couple. For many members, it was the first time they had

interacted with members of the gay and lesbian community (the term LGBTQIA+ had not even been coined at that time!), and they left with an understanding that these folks were neither threatening nor sinful, but were truly children of God.

After the Deacons completed their study, they urged the Church Council, all other Boards and Committees, and members of the congregation to engage in similar study programs. Over the course of these study groups, we learned that being an ONA Church was not limited to gay and lesbian issues, but encompassed all persons who might be seen to be "different." By the end of this multi-month process, a significant percentage of the members of the congregation had participated in one of the study programs, and the way was clear to take a resoundingly favorable vote to become an ONA Church.

As important as the ONA vote was, an equally important benefit of the process was that we all learned not to be afraid of the Bible. We learned how the personal and social biases of the translators can have a huge impact on the various versions of the Bible. We were taught to use our minds to critically approach the messages contained within the Bible, and to discover the contemporary voice of God within those ancient texts. Finally, we were reminded that Jesus did not say "Love *some* of thy neighbors"; instead, our community of neighbors includes everyone.

2. *Parish House Fire:* In the late 1990s, a fire severely damaged the interior of our attached Parish House, which at the time housed the church office, ministers' offices, a chapel, a kitchen, and a large dining area that doubled as church school classrooms on Sundays. Instead of simply rebuilding what had been destroyed, we asked our Rebuilding Committee to think strategically and programmatically. We asked ourselves what our buildings could or should be used for and how we could plan to facilitate those uses.

   As a result of this introspection, we created a number of welcoming multi-purpose rooms that support our church school, youth, and adult education programs. In the off-hours, these spaces are available for use by church boards and committees as well as community organizations, such as AA, and local singing groups. We moved the church office to a more welcoming location within the building, and we replaced the obsolete kitchen with an up-to-date facility. We added modern lighting to the Fellowship Hall, and the chapel became an open concept flexible space equally suited to prayer as to other uses, as needed. We also added a ramp and lift that made the two floors of the parish house handicap accessible to our members and guests for the first time. All these years later, the foresight of the congregation is still being appreciated as the church and the wider community enjoy and discover new uses for these redesigned facilities.

3. *COVID/Remote Worship:* When COVID shut down the world, we experienced the same disruptions, disconnections, and sense of loss as all other communities of faith. The separation and isolation of the early pandemic illuminated what is precious in our congregational community. We missed seeing and connecting with one another. Our church leadership realized that, as our members and friends isolated in their homes, they desperately needed a means to interact with and support each other. Early efforts were made to help people stay connected including outreach phone calls and video "hellos" from members' front porches.

Within a few weeks of the shutdown, despite having little experience or training in using on-line meeting platforms, our leaders figured out a way to offer Zoom services so that we could again gather as a church community. Our initial efforts were rocky and imperfect, but we laughed at our mistakes and carried on as best we could. Over the past three years, we have updated (and continue to update) our equipment to improve the online worship experience.

Experiencing the temporary loss of direct face-to-face contact has intensified the joy of re-connecting both in meetings and in the sanctuary as more members return to in-person gatherings. It is now clear that remote worship has been a positive addition to our worship experience and is here to stay. While many of us now worship in-person, a significant number of our members and friends still prefer to join us via our online channels. Shut-ins who previously might have been limited to pastoral or lay ministry visits can now be with us every Sunday. Similarly, members who might be out of town can still worship with us from wherever they are.

In addition to remote worship, our COVID experience has shown us how a larger number of members are able to participate in group, board, and committee meetings when online channels are available. This has facilitated greater congregational participation in overall church affairs. In sum, this experience has reminded us that we are nimble to change how we worship and gather without taking away from the sacredness of our time together.

Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

South Church has been blessed by dynamic, caring pastors over the years and, like many congregations, was comfortable in a traditional dynamic of ministerial leadership. This changed when our pastor developed health issues. Over a period of several years, we traveled an uncertain journey with our pastor, including vague symptoms, uncertain etiology, devastating diagnosis, frustration with unsuccessful treatments and, thankfully today, improved health. What changed for South Church during this period was the congregation's resolve and dedication to the leadership of our church and committing ourselves to being the Christian fellowship we envisioned. Rather than withdraw from the community when we were not being "ministered to" in the same ways from the past, members started ministering to each other and to our pastor. This took both concrete and intangible forms: More active leadership by non-staff on committees, care and hospitality extended by members to each other, and deep collective prayer for our pastor at key medical milestones. Today, the congregation has a dynamic confidence in our ability to weather adversity and grow spiritually from tribulation.

Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

A strong community foundation has helped South Church weather some conflicts set in motion by differing passions among our congregation. One example: For a period spanning 11 years, South Church undertook the project of hosting a cold-weather shelter for local unhoused people. This ministry gave much of the congregation a new energy and enthusiasm for volunteering. It brought new members to our congregation and overall gave the church a sense of purpose in furthering God's vision in the world. This mission – providing a warm, welcoming place to sleep for the homeless community from late December through March – was a calling the congregation was justifiably proud of. Despite that pride, there was not universal agreement regarding the terms of our support.

The congregation had to work through concerns about logistics, safety, and sustainability. Over the 11 years, it took a huge commitment in volunteer hours and was a meaningful undertaking for many members. On the other hand, some members chose to serve in other ways at other organizations. As a community, we had to wrestle with the fact that there are many ways to serve God. Also, over 11 years, the wear and tear on the church building itself became significant – and debate about when what was initially a "Band-Aid" solution should become a permanent fixture were ongoing.

As time passed, it became clear that our "temporary" solution was enabling the city of Concord to deprioritize longer-term permanent solutions. As a community, we ultimately chose to end our cold weather shelter. This was a very difficult decision which took a lot of discussion and processing, but ultimately the congregation came to a consensus. In 2008, we helped found the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) – a freestanding organization that could continue the necessary work of supporting our unhoused brothers and sisters. CCEH's first operations were based in one of our buildings and we continue to provide them support, including through the recent sale of our community building which will enable them to build permanent supportive housing.

A more recent arena of potential conflict occurred after the 2016 presidential election. Like the rest of the country, members of our congregation had very strong feelings about the results and in the first few weeks after the election, there was significant risk of alienation and division between members of different political parties. The congregation was cautioned about where this division could lead, and listening sessions where members could safely share their opinions and feelings were conducted. Thankfully, over the next few months, tempers cooled, and we were able to move forward as a Christian community.

In more recent years, South Congregational Church has generally been conflict free. The most significant area of healthy tension revolves around money and finances. The tension is not intense, but it is persistent. The congregation has struggled to meet its expenses without withdrawing money from its endowed funds. Specifically, there has been recurring tension regarding the proportion of the church's budget that should be allocated to personnel costs. The tension has been healthy, in that the conversation is always respectful. Furthermore, it has been a useful proof point to demonstrate the congregation's engagement in the church's affairs – specifically in the push-and-pull between a desire to fully fund the present and a commitment to preserving the church's long-term vitality.

In 2022, our Mission, Vision, Values Team explored this issue while working on our mission

statement. Their motion, passed at our annual meeting, was the result of extensive, respectful debate and reflected a compromise position: "The Church will adopt a goal of reducing our personnel expenses to no more than 50% of our annual income during the following 3 years on a phased-in basis. We leave to the Church Council and future leaders of the Church to determine how these goals will be reached. We also do not envision that these percentage reductions must necessarily come at the expense of existing staff positions. Should annual giving be increased substantially through increased giving by our existing members or growth in membership, the need for reductions would be lessened."

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

In mid-June 2018, our Associate pastor shared with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) dissatisfaction with his salary. This raised a classic conflict experienced in many churches; we wanted to value and appropriately remunerate a beloved clergy but maintain fiscal responsibility and appropriately steward church resources. Within one week, PPRC called a special meeting of the church council and a subcommittee was formed to investigate options. Nicknamed the "Octoberfest" committee (for its commitment to present a solution to a special church meeting in October), the committee met throughout the summer and over 2 months had done an extensive review of all of the church's accounts, revenues, expenses, and an in-depth study of comparable clergy salaries. A proposal was presented and accepted by the church council at the end of August and over the next 6 weeks, numerous "neighborhood meetings" were held to educate the congregation about the issues. On October 21, 2018 a special church meeting was held and members voted to significantly raise his salary and elevate his position to co-clergy. While the decision was fraught with potential conflict, by the end the congregation had come together and joyfully committed to "do the right thing".

Ministerial History

Include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years

STAFF MEMBER'S NAME	YEARS OF SERVICE	UCC STANDING (Y/N)
Rev. Sean Dunker-Bendigo, Interim Associate	2021-2023	Y
Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight, Co-Pastor	2006-2020	Y
Rev. James Norman, Interim Assoc. (Deceased)	2004-2006	N
Rev. Jared Rardin, Pastor	2001-present	Y
Rev. Gayle Whittemore, Interim	2000-2001	Y
Rev. Luther Durgin, Interim (Deceased)	1999-2000	Y
Rev. Gayle Murphy, Minister of Volunteers	1991-1999	Y
Rev. Elizabeth French, Interim Minister of Volunteers	1997-1998	Y
Rev. Richard Malmberg, Associate Pastor	1995-1998	Y

Rev. Greg Turner, Pastor	1991-1998	Y
Rev. Peter Allen, Associate Pastor	1989-1994	Y

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

Through our relationships with several varied ministers, we have learned that we must be good communicators with and caring advocates for our called clergy. At the same time, we seek to hold our leadership accountable in providing excellent spiritual and congregational care. Maintaining this balance requires commitment to the covenant relationships for us all.

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

South Church is the spiritual hub from which multiple avenues extend for members to engage with God. This includes inspiration from the pulpit, opportunities to witness, peacefully protesting, and advocating for the oppressed. Our Faith in Action (FIA) ministry is very active in connecting members to outside organizations as volunteers or financial supporters, and organizes monthly "Moment for Missions" donations. Prior to COVID, one of FIA's most popular activities was Service Sunday, where the entire congregation volunteered at local various nonprofits – painting, doing yard work and facility clean up, and otherwise serving. Accessible options like letter writing were also available. Over the years, we have regularly provided goods and financial support to multiple organizations, including: the NH Food Bank, Families in Transition, the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, Overcomers Refugee Services, Ascentria Care Alliance (a refugee resettlement agency), summer camps for low-income youth, and Family Promise to name a few. FIA also provides opportunities to donate to various UCC Global Ministries organizations.

Because Concord is the state capital, South Church members have many opportunities to witness and advocate for the oppressed and harassed at the local government, state legislature, and the wider community. After almost 30 years of being an ONA congregation, members often provide support for the LGBTQIA+ community, most recently regarding transphobic legislation and community baiting. Issues related to justice and peace are also of passionate interest to members. While serious

in their commitment, members' service is marked by their joy. Case in point: Men from the congregation donned extravagant high heels to "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" to raise funds for the local crisis center.

South Church also opens its physical doors, allowing low-cost facilities rentals to Alcoholics Anonymous and other support organizations. We regularly host Family Promise weeks with Temple Beth Jacob, welcoming homeless families to sleep in our building.

Our Middle and Senior High School Youth Groups pre-pandemic were highly involved in our community locally and across the country. Examples included hosting an ice cream social at the local women's shelter and volunteering at the Friendly Kitchen (a local soup kitchen). Groups ventured to Boston and Virginia to volunteer with relief agencies and social services non-profits. The aforementioned Service Sunday program, in fact, began after adults were inspired by the excitement of our youth in their various service projects. Post-pandemic, the Youth Groups continue to be involved in and host various service projects – including an annual mission trip. Funds for the mission trip are raised through bake sales, the sale of plastic flamingos for members' lawns, and days spent raking leaves in the Fall. This year youth traveled to New Orleans to assist with ongoing Hurricane Katrina clean-up.

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

Members of our congregation have been active in many committees and significant events in the life of our Conference, the Merrimack Association and the wider United Church of Christ. Our members have participated in and/or chaired Conference committees. The current NHCUCC Peace with Justice Advocates is chaired by a member of our congregation. Many congregation members are residents of Havenwood-Heritage Heights, a UCC-founded retirement community. Generations of our young members have gone to our New Hampshire UCC camp at Horton Center on the top of Pine Mountain and worshiped at the Outdoor Ministry Site which was founded by and is staffed through the NHCUCC.

The NHCUCC holds Prepared to Serve conference each February. Members of South Church regularly participate, with a number of them leading workshops.

We fully support our membership in the Merrimack Association and have been appointed to leadership positions. Our Delegates and other South Church members regularly attend the Association quarterly and annual meetings, Ecclesiastical Councils and Ordinations. We also have delegates attend General Synod, and members participate in UCC Women's Groups such as the NH Women's Fellowship (World Day of Prayer) and the Women Leaders of New England (Women's Celebration held every four years). South Church is an active member in the Greater Concord Interfaith Council, the NH Council of Churches, the NH Voices of Faith, and the Concord Area Clergy Group.

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

STATEMENTS THAT APPLY TO OUR CONGREGATION ARE MARKED WITH AN X TO THE RIGHT			
ACCESSIBLE TO ALL (A2A)		JUST PEACE	
CREATION JUSTICE		GLOBAL MISSION CHURCH	
ECONOMIC JUSTICE		OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA)	X
FAITHFUL AND WELCOMING		WISE CONGREGATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH	
GOD IS STILL SPEAKING (GISS)		OTHER UCC DESIGNATIONS	
BORDER AND IMMIGRANT JUSTICE		RACIAL JUSTICE	X
INTERCULTURAL/ MULTI-RACIAL (I'M)		DESIGNATIONS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS	

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community.

In a process that took many years, meetings, conversations, prayer, and careful thought, in 1996 South Church voted to become an ONA congregation. Our statement declaring us to be ONA was approved on May 8, 1996 making us the second UCC ONA congregation in the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC.

Our identity as an ONA congregation is core to who we are as a community. Our values of "Radical Hope and Extravagant Love" find expression in the warmth of our welcome to people of all backgrounds and identities – specifically those from the LGBTQIA+ community. Our congregation includes diverse representation from people with a range of gender identities and expressions, as well as sexual orientations. Furthermore, the diversity of our membership and our appreciation for all types of human difference has become core to how our neighbors understand us. They recognize us by the permanent rainbow plaque installed near the church's front entrance and note our civic participation in issues of diversity and inclusion. In short, our affiliation as an ONA congregation is one of the primary things that makes us who are.

Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

In 2023, we voted to become a Racial Justice church. The confirming vote was the culmination of an extended process of learning and self-reflection. Led by a Racial Justice Action Group, members from across the congregation reviewed and discussed books, films, and lectures on the topics of systemic racism and white

privilege. Self-reflection has fed continued discussion about the presence of racial prejudice at the level of individuals, the congregation, our community, and broader systems – in preparation for a collective commitment to being an racial justice church. The final vote marks the end of one process, and the beginning of another (much longer) one: Living out our call to stand up against racial injustice.

In the coming year, we will also apply for the A2A (Accessible to All) designation. Our congregation has worked diligently to ensure that every area of our church is as accessible as possible. We recently had a successful fundraiser to purchase assisted listening devices. We intend to continue to apply for recognition in other UCC designated areas in the future.

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

South Church has a long history of being involved in Interfaith and Ecumenical activities and relationships. We are active members in the NH Council of Churches and the Concord Area Clergy Group. Prior to the pandemic, a group of members were meeting regularly with members of the local Mosque and Temple to build friendships and learn about one another's faith journeys. We exchange child care with the Temple on high holy days, and join across religious lines for justice, mission, and witness events, including work on homelessness, hunger, immigration, and LGBTQIA+ rights.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

In 2021 and 2022, our congregation completed an extensive visioning process and adopted a new Mission, Vision, and Values Statement which is quoted earlier in this profile. Following the vote to accept the new South Church Mission Statement, all church boards and committees provided input about how their work fits in with our Mission, Vision, and Values, and what types of support they will need to continue this work.

Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out. Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s).

We expect our new pastor to be fully employed and busy both within the life of the congregation and in its mission and outreach activities within the wider community. Because our new Mission, Vision and Values Statement is ambitious, our new pastor, with the help and support of lay leadership, will be expected to develop and encourage volunteer engagement from among the members of the congregation to help us to achieve our goals.

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?

The Scope of Work set out earlier in this profile anticipates that our new pastor will be actively engaged in the wider community and the wider church. We expect that our new pastor, with input from the PPRC and the Church Council, will manage his/her/their time in a manner so as to maintain an appropriate balance among the various responsibilities of the position.

MISSION INSITE

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

The 2020 InSite data offers both challenges and opportunities. We expect this data to have limited predictive value regarding the ways our community will evolve in the coming decade. As individuals and families have migrated away from larger cities in favor of more space and lower costs of living, states like New Hampshire (and Concord specifically) may experience improving demographics versus what the historical data might suggest. This dynamic is already playing out; New Hampshire has the second largest population gain of any New England state from July 2021 to July 2022.

Our community does confront several legitimate headwinds going forward. New Hampshire is among the "least religious" states in the country, and our local population is not expected to grow quickly in the coming decade. The data suggests we are a predominantly white and aging population.

All these factors inform who we are being called to become in this next chapter. Of our church's life. The congregation is committed to becoming an increasingly diverse, growing, and vibrant spiritual community amidst the broader demographic dynamics. New Americans and young families are a growing part of the broader Concord population. Learning new ways to serve these communities will be important to the continued vitality of our church.

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?

South Church is a "downtown" church. We are physically located a block from downtown Concord, a dynamic and varied location. Concord's Main Street has experienced a renaissance in the past decade with the introduction of new housing, restaurants, art, and music spaces – and as a result, it has become more of a live/work/play destination. New development has posed questions about the future of the area: Most recent residential projects cater to affluent residents, while downtown is also home to multiple organizations that support people struggling with mental health and substance abuse challenges. The neighborhoods around the church are made up of generally older homes with people of varied socio-economic backgrounds. This includes lower income residents, as well as newer transplants enjoying the proximity to downtown. The same areas are also "home" to many people experiencing homelessness.

It is difficult to compare our demographics to this varied mix of people. South Church's congregation may skew older, more educated, less racially diverse, and possibly more affluent than

the "average" neighbor – but definitive categorizations are elusive. Independent of demographics, as a community, we are defined by our posture of welcome and openness to all people. Our neighborhood offers many opportunities for connection, community, and ministry and those opportunities should only grow over the years.

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

As a church, we have always tried to put our faith into action and support marginalized members of the community. The cold weather shelter mentioned earlier in the profile is a concrete example of this. Our decision to become an ONA Church is another example of our commitment to welcome all people.

As our Concord community has become more diverse, we have unfortunately seen an increase in racist ideology and attacks on minority groups. Discrimination based on race, gender identity and sexual orientation are on the rise both here and across the country. We recently completed the process of officially becoming a Racial Justice Church. We both want to use our voice to speak out against racism in the community but also ensure we are creating a welcoming church environment for all people. In the past, South Church has always been ready to respond with aid and support to those in our community who have asked for assistance. Our future ministries will have to be more proactive about understanding how we can help and support our neighbors.

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

Many community leaders say that South Church leadership and membership are actively engaged in the concerns and life of the local community, both as individuals and as an organization. This leads to South Church being known as the "go-to" organization for community leaders seeking outreach, engagement, and volunteers for a variety of organizations and activities. Several of our members have served in roles of elected government positions over the years, along with active involvement on boards and councils of many nonprofits. As a church, we have opened our doors for concerts, hospice remembrance services, AA, and other uses, as well as a strong presence for downtown events.

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

New Members and visitors often cite first coming to South Church because they liked our stance on social justice and the work we do in the community. They find South Church appealing due to our active work for social justice, including both hands-on and financial support. They share that they heard about South Church due to the public positions we take on issues of racial justice, and supporting the rights of misunderstood or persecuted neighbors including those from the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants and refugees, and the homeless community. They also say they got to

know about South Church because of our visible support for other non-profits.

They tell us that after they walk in the door what keeps them returning and deciding to become members is the warm and welcoming atmosphere. They also appreciate the inspirational messages, music, and joy in our worship services. They mention the permanent LGBTQIA+ signage at the front entrance and other colorful banners welcoming all inside. Recurrent comments describe the warm and sincere welcome they receive from others in the congregation and how they were made to feel at home and accepted from their first visit.

REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1:

Timothy J. Wildman, D.Min., *Friend of the Congregation*
Email: wildhov@comcast.net
Phone: 603-568-5331

January 28, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been blessed with a long and significant relationship with South Congregational Church, UCC, in Concord, NH dating back to the 1970's when I joined the First Congregational Church in Concord, the church that originally birthed South Church and two other UCC churches in town. As a pastoral psychotherapist in town, I have known many active and retired UCC pastoral counseling and other clergy colleagues who are and have been members of South Church. Through music and worship, I have also participated frequently in the life of South Church.

South Congregational Church has a significant place in the fabric of community in Concord. Many members hold significant positions of leadership in the community, and the church itself has a strong history of witnessing to God's love and "radical hospitality" in the city, the state of NH, and beyond. While I have personally found a connected place in my own "First Church," I have long admired this witness, and this witness is certainly one of South Church's significant strengths. As an example, our two churches participated for a decade in providing shelter for housing insecure folk in our church buildings during the coldest four months of each winter. During those years our churches were an integral part of birthing and developing the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, a non-profit that now significantly addresses housing insecurity in Concord. As a "shelter volunteer" I was proud of our churches' joint ministry - radical hospitality indeed.

South Church also has a strong history of providing meaningful, imaginative, and diverse worship experiences. Having become a local jazz musician in my last 20 years, I was blessed to be a part of South Church's periodic jazz worship Sundays that included musicians from both our churches. The congregation welcomed this music and liturgy with enthusiasm. and appreciation, and these were significant experiences for me and for First Church, which has subsequently developed a regular monthly "Jazz Sanctuary Ministry." Again, the spiritual energy from the collaboration between the churches has made a significant impact on both churches and on the wider community.

The stress of changing times for mainline Protestant churches is obviously impacting both our congregations. As a smaller congregation, our First Church has sold our beautiful, large old building and is nesting with another congregation. As a church with more members and staff and a larger organizational structure, South Church's challenges are complex, and I sense from my perch outside the daily workings of the congregation that developing a structure and staffing pattern that can respond to the Holy Spirit's current call will be an ongoing area of work for the church. Ministering within our aging congregations while growing authentic, witnessing ministries in the world is indeed

the work of virtually all our churches these days, and South Church doubtless has its own work to do here.

South Congregational Church has significant spiritual resources with which to minister in these times, and I hold them in prayer in this process to eventually covenant with new ordained leadership. Despite the many challenges, these are exciting times to be in ministry, and I'm confident that this church will continue to have its own uniquely responsive place in the ministries of God's Holy Spirit in the 21st Century.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. Wildman, D.MIn.

REFERENCE 2:

Rabbi Robin Nafshi, Temple Beth Jacob, Concord NH, *Interfaith Partner of South Church*
Email: ravnafshi@gmail.com
Phone: 603-545-2384

February 21, 2023

To the Search Committee at South Congregational Church:

I have been asked to write a letter so that candidates for the senior pastor position at South Congregational Church can have an understanding of the nature and importance of SCC's relationship with Temple Beth Jacob.

That relationship is a long one, and predates my start at TBJ (July of 2010). The two communities have helped one another at our most holy times (Christmas, Easter, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur) by providing reciprocal babysitting. But there is much more to the relationship.

On and off for more than 20 years, the two communities have engaged in dialog on many issues of faith and social justice. These conversations have led to deep friendships, heartfelt exchanges, broadening of views, and so much more. With the past associate pastor, SCC and TBJ opened our doors to each other to share in a worship exchange. We have worked closely on interfaith issues both on the Greater Concord Interfaith Council and outside of it, including collaborating on several AIDS Awareness Day services, Holocaust Memorial services, services on the anniversary of 9-11, and other services following national tragedies.

We also work closely together in the Concord Family Promise program. Family Promise provides housing and meals to families experiencing homelessness, rotating among houses of worship one week at a time. TBJ and SCC are a team – two representatives from each community chair and coordinate the effort, soliciting and training volunteers, and scheduling the week of hosting. Some weeks, the families (referred to as guests) stay at TBJ; other weeks, they stay at SCC. Together, the chairs represent the team to the Family Promise program in Concord. The chairs have access to each other's building, an indication of the deep and inherent trust that exists between SCC and TBJ.

The Jewish community is small, and antisemitism is on the rise. TBJ knows it can always depend on our friends at SCC to support us and have our backs. I cannot overstate the importance of the relationship.

I wish you all the best on your search for a new senior pastor. As we say in my tradition, may you go from strength to strength.

With admiration,
Rabbi Robin Nafshi

REFERENCE 3:

Ignatius MacLellan, Non-member spouse of South Church member
Email: igpax@comcast.net
Phone: 603-203-6677

March 2, 2023

To Those Considering South Church:

I have been connected with South Church for over 30 years. I say "connected" because I am actually not a member; my wife is a member. Nonetheless, South Church holds a special place in my faith life. I am a Catholic who belongs to Christ the King Parish down the street from South Church. Thankfully, I have learned, worshiped and lived with South Church.

South Church is wonderful church community. As an ONA Church, it also means that folks like me—being of another denomination—are welcomed and nurtured. To use a South Church expression, the community is "radically welcoming." That is what Jesus asks of us. We have to nurture and encourage each other to become more loving. We have to be supportive and persevere in the tough times. We have to embrace joy. All of this starts with being invitational. South Church is a welcoming beacon of joy and a place of comfort, for members, ministers and the larger community.

South Church serves the greater world community with an inviting and comforting approach. The church's many ministries are rooted in social justice and action. For example, I volunteer at my church's food pantry. When one of our clients passed away, our church was not available. South Church hosted the memorial service, inviting the Concord community to pay respects to a child of God. Members of the homeless community had a warm place to remember a friend, say a prayer and share a hug. We were privileged to be part of that.

When I first attended South Church, we would sing: "We give thee but thine own, whatever the gift may be; all that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee." That is South Church, a generous and giving church. Each person is encouraged and invited to share their gifts. The same goes for the church itself, as a building and as a people. Everything is shared. Many times, when I have been upstairs at an event, our neighbors who are struggling with substance abuse are meeting downstairs. South Church firmly holds on to its beliefs of love while holding the church's blessings and resources with the light touch of generosity.

Finally, I am forever grateful to South Church, its members and its ministers. As with any good church, South Church is a center for life events, which has included weddings (including mine), baptisms, funerals, retreats, prayer services, and other gatherings. I have grown in my faith at the Men's Retreat, and our children were part of the impactful Youth Group. Annually, I am uplifted on Christmas Eve, when we lift our candles, and the minister invites us and exhorts us to "Go be a light in your life and in the world." South Church is a light, a warm, challenging and comforting light to its members and to the larger community. If this kind of community of faith appeals to you, please give South Church your highest consideration.

With every good wish,

Ignatius MacLelllan

Closing Thoughts

Closing Prayer

The search for a new pastor can be a fraught journey, challenging a congregation to reevaluate itself, its future, and where it is going on its spiritual journey. The long discussions and reflections about our community that were necessary to complete the 22-page UCC Profile template has turned what was initially a committee of acquaintances into a unified group that feels proud and positive about our church, and optimistic about our future with a new pastor. We pray that there is a pastor whose "envisioning" process leads them to South Church.

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.

Individuals and groups who contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile:
Search Committee Members: Shanka Boudreau, Betsy Clardy, Aiden Ciminesi, Peter Imse, Helen McGlashen (co-chair), Steve Murray, Jill Smart, Leanne Tigert, Joe York, and Janet Zeller (co-chair).
The South Church congregation also reviewed and discussed the draft profile.

Signed:
Name / Title / Date:

Conference/Association Validation:

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.
Staff Comment:
To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

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

My signature below attests to the above three items.
Signature:
Name / Title:
Email:
Phone:
Date:

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.
"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" – Mark 11:22