



Name of Church

First Congregational Church

Address

125 Elmer St
Westfield, NJ 07090

Conference:

Central Atlantic

Association:

New Jersey

Title

Associate Pastor for Congregational Life

Start Date

Apr 6, 2026

Description

First Congregational Church of Westfield is a welcoming, open-hearted Christian community that has discovered the freedom and joy a spiritual life offers. Love is our common language and welcome is more than a word - it shapes how we worship, serve, and walk alongside one another. Our community includes parents and children, teens and seniors, lifelong members and those new to faith or returning after time away. Rooted in Christian tradition and open to God's still-speaking voice, we understand faith not as a checklist, but as a living journey - one we walk together with curiosity, grace, and hope.

Our Credo names who we are and how we seek to live out God's love together:

At First, we're different.

At First Congregational Church of Westfield, difference isn't just noticed - it's cherished. Whatever your story - your age, race, gender, identity, ability, family, or faith journey - you are invited to worship, to share in friendship, to grow in faith, and to take part in the life of our church family. Here, affirmation is given freely and love is our common language.

At First, love is genuine and 'welcome' is more than a word. We love because God loved us first; and so, by God's grace, we seek to create a community where every person is embraced, celebrated, and reminded that they belong.

At First, faith is not a checklist - it's a living journey. Together, we aspire to nourish each person on their spiritual journey and to follow in the steps of Christ who has shown us the way. Rooted in tradition, yet open to God's still-speaking voice, we laugh, learn, serve, and pray together - walking side by side through life's joys and challenges.

We're hopeful. We're vibrant. We're affirming. Above all, we're a community where God's love is lived out every day.

At First, we're different. We don't just say it. We live it.

Church Contact Information

(908) 233-2494 (Church Primary Phone)

office@fccwestfield.org (Church Email)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://www.fccofwestfield.org/> *Type: Professional*

<https://www.facebook.com/FCCWestfield> *Type: Professional*

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

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

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

Rev. Craig Peterson

Title:

Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Development

Phone:

(609) 929-7585

Email:

cpeterson@cacucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

First Congregational Church of Westfield is a welcoming, open-hearted Christian community that has discovered the freedom and joy a spiritual life offers. Love is our common language, and welcome is more than a word - it shapes how we worship, serve, and walk alongside one another. Our community includes parents and children, teens and seniors, lifelong members and those new to faith or returning after time away. Rooted in Christian tradition and open to God's still-speaking voice, we understand faith not as a checklist, but as a living journey - one we walk together with curiosity, grace, and hope.

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Living Our Renewal

We are on a path of revitalization with hope for the future. Our transformation is marked by milestones that demonstrate our growth:

- Spring 2022: Calling of our new Senior Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Testa Hrynyk
- Fall 2022: Redefined mission and vision
- Feb 2023: Trial launch of a new governance model
- Spring 2023: New vision for music that elevates worship
- Summer 2023: Officially designated Open and Affirming (ONA)
- Summer 2024: Adoption of a new style of summer worship—Breakfast Church
- Fall 2024: Innovative Sunday School model
- Summer 2025: Rebranding with a new logo and credo

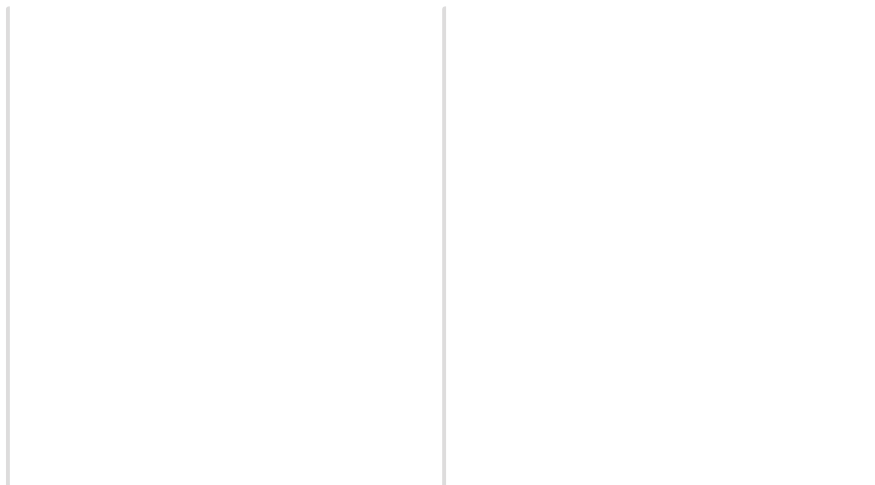
We seek an Associate Pastor to join us in this living journey, helping expand our reach and ensuring all feel embraced, celebrated, and affirmed.

About the Position

This role is ideal for someone who finds joy in connecting people and fostering a warm, inclusive community and will:

- Offer collaborative spiritual leadership alongside our Senior Pastor
- Foster deeper connections with God and one another
- Create meaningful opportunities for relationship-building and spiritual growth

We welcome applications from part-time and full-time candidates and are open to shaping this role in a way that best serves the church and the pastor called to it.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

About Westfield, NJ

In keeping with our commitment to being one with the communities in which we live, we cherish our location in Westfield, NJ. This quintessential suburban community, with its rich colonial history, provided the architectural inspiration for our beautiful church building. Westfield is highly regarded as an ideal place to raise a family, drawing people of all ages – including those returning home to "roost" in the town where they have fond memories of growing up.

The town's many draws include:

- Highly rated schools and diverse houses of worship.
- A vibrant downtown with many dining establishments.
- Excellent parks and a recognized symphony.
- An energetic population that engages deeply in civic and sports activities, and favors community outreach.

The town's prime location offers easy proximity to:

- The cultural hub of New York City.
- The beautiful Jersey Shore towns.
- The lakes and mountains in Northwestern New Jersey.

Our church is unique in that our ministry and membership extend well beyond Westfield, drawing heavily upon the surrounding vibrant communities, including Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Cranford, and Garwood. The beneficence of our members and our impact on the surrounding towns truly make First Congregational Church an inspired and welcoming presence in our area. Our members embrace this spirit by actively participating in church-sponsored outreach programs that serve individuals and families both within Westfield and in surrounding communities.

Current size of membership

358

Average in person attendance

78

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

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

Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

0

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Associate Pastor for Congregational Life

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

Some fields reference *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ* .

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

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the Call Agreement Workbook.

[Download scope of Work](#)

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

First:

Come alongside our Senior Pastor as the spiritual leadership for our church

Second:

Foster connections with God and one another

Third:

Create opportunities for relationship, reflection, and deepening of our spiritual lives

Compensation and Support

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

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

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

Total package starts at \$85,000 and is commensurate with experience. Pastoral Candidate determines individual values.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Living nearby with a housing allowance

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

No

No response

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

No response

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

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.
Conference and/or Association meeting registrations
Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

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

An annual budget for continuing education; active Westfield Interfaith Clergy Association; multiple association/conference sponsored gatherings

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

This position is perfect for someone who finds joy in bringing people together, fostering deep connections, and creating a warm, inclusive community!

We are seeking someone who will:

- come alongside our Senior Pastor as a spiritual leadership for our church
- foster connections with God and one another
- create opportunities for relationship, reflection, and deepening of our spiritual lives.

We are in a season of growth, as we welcome new faces into our community on a regular basis. One of the concerns of our leadership is to preserve relationships that foster the smaller, intimate feel of our church, while growing into who we are becoming. This position was created to do just that - nurture relationships in the congregation so that we can continue to feel connected to one another while our membership grows.

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

We describe ourselves as, "A Different Kind of Church," which means that we stand out among other faith communities in our extravagant welcome and open doors. Many of our members are "spiritual refugees" from other denominations that no longer fit with what they believe or who they are. Therefore, the person in this position will aid us in continuing to reach out to those beyond our walls so that everyone will have a place where they can explore faith while being accepted for the path they have walked and who they are today.

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

English

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

#1: Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice

We believe that a life of faith and actively participating in spiritual practices are the foundation for the life of any child of God. For the person who we look to for spiritual guidance and care, it is fundamental. We anticipate these to be expressed through a strong commitment to worship, prayer, and nurturing our connections with God and one another.

#3: Building Transformational Leadership Skills

The role of the Church is in flux in today's world. We rely on our pastor(s) to help navigate us through these waters, while remaining faithful to God's vision for our church and the world. Being able to administrate programs that serve God's vision for our congregation and understanding the wider culture are key to a successful pastoral partnership.

#5: Caring for All Creation

A central message of all our worship experiences is that God knows and loves every one of us. As a community of faith, we strive to support each other in good times and bad. That caring is not limited but is expansive, as we seek to find ways to serve those beyond our walls, even to the earth itself. As a congregation we support and encourage our ministers' interest in continuing education, collegial affiliations, and self care. We know that the demands on our clergy can be all consuming and want to be partners in the ministry.

#8: Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets

At FCC, we recognize and respect that everyone's faith journey is different. Some members of our congregation have grown up at FCC, others found us after pivotal life moments, and others simply sought us out because they wanted a different faith option for themselves and their families. Regardless of their starting point, their journeys led them to FCC. And so we're now a stronger INTRAFaith community because of those individual INTERFaith journeys. Our strength is based on respect, trust, communication and a high sense of moral integrity.

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

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

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

Our congregation recently adopted new vision statements and an ONA covenant. These describe the vision we believe God is calling us to become.

Our Foundation:

- FCC was built on the foundational concepts of:
- Gathering in faith;
 - Self-governance;
 - and Service to God and community.

Our Purpose:

We are a welcoming, inclusive, open-minded Christian community that has discovered the freedom and joy a spiritual life offers. Our ministry is committed to sharing God's love through service to others, thought-provoking worship, and fostering faith among generations.

Our Vision:

We aspire to:

- Nourish the individual on their spiritual journey;
- Explore the intersection of community and faith;
- Remain faithful to God's vision in a changing world.

Our ONA Covenant:

By God's grace, we will be an inclusive church. We commit ourselves to be a church for all people. And, in Christ, we celebrate, affirm, and embrace the rich diversity of God's good creation. To that end, we welcome all people into our worship and membership.

In all aspects of its life and mission, FCC welcomes and affirms people of every race, age, gender, marital circumstance, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical or psychological ability, economic condition, ethnic origin, and theological tradition. All people are invited to fully share and participate in leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our church family.

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

Our leadership recently engaged in a series of Leadership Retreats, designed to honestly assess the current state of our church and chart an ambitious, faithful vision for our future together. These retreats created space for prayerful reflection, candid conversation, and shared discernment. We affirmed that while we cherish our small-church feel, remaining an effective, visible, and present voice in our community requires growth.

We have strategically embarked on this vision, and this Associate Pastor position represents a significant investment in both our present and future. This role is designed to nurture current relationships and spiritual connections while anticipating future growth through expanded, impactful programming that serves more individuals, families, and the wider community.

This intentional approach has been exemplified by two recent programs:

1. High-Impact Outreach We recognized that our historical approach—making a small impact across many large, external organizations—diluted our effectiveness. We have shifted to a “large impact, small organization” model by adopting a public school in a nearby underserved community and directing nearly all outreach efforts there. This change has reinvigorated our outreach programming and clarified that members and newcomers alike are eager to put their faith into hands-on action. We are now incorporating these concrete outreach projects into programming across all ages and demographics, deepening both service and connection.

2. Relationship-Focused Worship (Breakfast Church) Recognizing the common summer dip in attendance, our Senior Pastor introduced Breakfast Church. This innovative model offered a new way to worship (At *First*, it's different!), while gathering around a breakfast table fostered deeper interaction and relationship-building among participants. These services also included a dedicated outreach project—integrating faith in action directly into worship and strengthening bonds within the congregation.

Congregation Reflections

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

Our Purpose reflects the core values and beliefs that guide our church. The language reflects who we are when we gather for worship: “We are a welcoming, inclusive, open-minded Christian community that has discovered the freedom and joy a spiritual life offers. Our ministry is committed to sharing God's love through service to others, thought-provoking worship, and fostering faith among generations.

Chosen intentionally, the words “welcoming, inclusive, open-minded Christian community” express our belief that love is our common language, making welcome more than a gesture—it is a practice. “The freedom and joy a spiritual life offers” challenges restrictive approaches to faith. At *First*, it's different: faith is a living journey shaped by grace rather than dogma. Worship as “thought-provoking” means we bring our whole selves—questions, experiences, and curiosity—into our time together. We are not asked to check our minds at the door or blindly accept doctrine. Instead, we're encouraged to wrestle with how life shapes faith and how faith shapes life. Ultimately, this reflects how we understand God: a loving presence who welcomes us as we are, with open arms of grace.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

We are a congregation dedicated to creating an environment that fully nurtures and champions each member's individual faith journey. This strength is a direct result of our diverse church family, composed of individuals and families across a broad range of ages, socioeconomic statuses, and religious traditions – a community where difference is truly cherished. Having not only recovered from the pandemic but now exhibiting modest growth beyond pre-pandemic participation levels, our foundation and legacy are strong. Our path ahead, while hopeful and vibrant, is not yet fully defined. This provides an amazing opportunity for a passionate Associate Pastor who wants to help us write the next chapter in FCC's ongoing story and build a long-lasting legacy.

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

Following the pandemic, FCC has experienced significant growth in the participation of young families with children of preschool and elementary school age. This exciting development presents a challenge that our Personnel Committee is actively addressing: building the proper infrastructure – specifically, growing our Sunday School staff – to fully support these children and families on their living faith journey. Another key area of opportunity facing our congregation is the identification, or creation of, local outreach programs that can effectively channel our church family's large desire to serve and help us put our faith into action in hands-on ways.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship at FCC is dynamic and designed to be welcoming to all. While we most often gather in our beautiful Sanctuary, we embrace flexibility and intimacy. This is evidenced by our much-loved summer "Breakfast Church" which is held in our large gathering space. On occasion, we've even moved worship outdoors, setting up chairs and an altar on the front lawn.

Our worship services and sermons are welcoming, joyful, comforting, and inspiring, carrying the recurring theme of God's love for all people. Rooted in the elements and structure of a traditional service, our Senior Pastor and Music Director have refreshed and revitalized the experience, making it welcoming to a broader demographic. This commitment to thought-provoking and inclusive worship is visible in every detail. For example, during a recent baptism, a slightly older sibling was invited to help the minister fill the font from a pitcher while the significance was explained – a beautiful way to affirm family and community involvement. It is a cherished FCC tradition for the minister to walk a newly baptized baby down the center aisle for all to see and welcome, another reminder that 'welcome' is more than just a word here.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

We believe faith is a living journey at every age. Our revamped education programs provide a vibrant foundation for lifelong learning. Young children explore Bible stories through age-appropriate activities and crafts in a fun, nurturing environment. Elementary kids engage in deeper conversations and participate in youth-led worship. Middle schoolers meet weekly during worship for hands-on mission projects, an approach that ensures that our youth are not just learning *about* faith, but are powerfully integrating faith in action. Students take on leadership roles, mentoring younger kids and strengthening cross-age relationships. We also attract young families through programs like Vacation Bible Camp and refreshed offerings referenced above which have yielded promising results..

Our Adult Education program nurtures inquiry through weekly Bible Study and short-term courses. Led by our Senior Pastor, Bible Study explores the foundations of faith with lively discussion and questioning. Recent forums have helped participants consider how to engage the political process as faithful children of God, bringing their whole selves to the conversation without favoring any one issue or candidate.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our governance structure ensures intentional planning and alignment with our purpose, vision, and foundation. The Board of Worship supports our pastoral staff in the planning and execution of meaningful, thought-provoking worship services throughout the year. The Board of Ministries champions our commitment to service and spiritual growth, overseeing all outreach programs, Christian education initiatives, and the organization of church mission trips. The Board of Finance ensures we are responsibly funding our mission. The Board of Community Life connects our congregation with social and sunshine opportunities.

The Boards meet monthly to discuss and plan upcoming events which are then approved by the Leadership Council (which also meets monthly) to ensure alignment with our Vision and to identify key synergies across the different ministry areas.

Upcoming worship and events are communicated to the congregation frequently and broadly, ensuring all members can easily participate in living out their faith journey. We share information through email, church bulletins, announcements from the pulpit, timely posts on our social media platforms, and message boards in the fellowship hall.

When it comes to decision-making, 5 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

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

Shortly after the October 2023 Hamas attack on Israeli citizens, a congregant alerted Leadership Council of UCC social media posts that were unbalanced, insensitive to our Jewish colleagues in the surrounding area, and inconsistent with our view of the conflict that the UCC should be calling for peace. Our Senior Minister took immediate action by speaking with the local rabbi and assuring him that our leadership would meet quickly to determine next steps. Council met to discuss the situation, became concerned that FCC would be unfairly linked to the posts' sentiments, and asked to meet with UCC conference staff to share our concerns and learn more about the process of social media post creation. Following that meeting, Council voted to alert the UCC of our concerns. The Moderator was tasked with drafting a letter in response. Council agreed that given the expediency required for our response that the entire congregation would not be engaged in the discussion and preparation of the response. The draft was reviewed, edited and approved by Council, and sent to the UCC. The congregation was then invited to a meeting where the posts and Council's response was shared.

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

[Governance Pilot Program 2022-2024.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

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

[Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	358
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	172
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	530

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	70%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	15%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	15%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	75
12-17	57
18-24	39
25-34	32
35-44	24
45-54	83
55-64	70
65-74	100
75+	50

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	15%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	25%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	10%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	40%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	15%
COLLEGE:	60%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	25%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	0%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Congregants (those retired and those currently working) have worked across many industries and occupations with an estimated 30% holding positions in Management/sales; 20% working in Finance; 20% working in Legal/Accounting fields; 10% working in Pharmaceutical/Health Technologies; 10% working as Educators/Instructors; and 10% working in Art/Design/Media.

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

An estimated 80% of congregants identify as White; 8% as Hispanic; 6% as Asian; 4% as members of one or more race; and 2% African American.

What diversity means in our context?

While FCC is not racially diverse, our community is richly varied in spiritual background, including many Protestant denominations, Catholic, Jewish, and a few Unitarian members. Some families represent three to four generations, while many others have relocated from around the country. Difference is cherished here, and fostering a warm, inviting community is essential. We strive to create a space where every member, regardless of spiritual history, feels affirmed, embraced, and celebrated as a vital part of our congregation.

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

Yes

DATE COMPLETED: May 30 2024

Comment after the exercise:

In 2023, FCC members drove a movement to step-up our covenant to be an inclusive church. This movement resulted in a rewarding unanimous congregational adoption of an Open and Affirming covenant.

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Senior Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	25	Sunday School Teachers
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	509	Senior Pastor, Music Director
Choirs and Music Groups	35	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	15	Senior Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	12	Senior Pastor, Board of Worship
Funerals (number last year)	4	Senior Pastor, Music Director
Outdoor Worship	73	Senior Pastor, Music Director
Weddings (number last year)	2	Senior Pastor, Music Director
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	8	Senior Pastor
Youth Groups or Classes	20	Pastors, volunteers

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10am	85	Senior Pastor, Music Director

Additional comments:

No response

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

No Response

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

No response

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Senior Pastor	Yes	full	Congregation/Personnel	2.5 years
Office Manager	No	full	Senior Pastor	3 years
Music Director	No	part	Senior Pastor	3.5 years
Building Manager	No	part	Senior Pastor	less than 6 months
Director of Children's Music	No	part	Senior Pastor	1 year
Sunday School Teacher	No	part	Senior Pastor	1 year
Sunday School Teacher	No	part	Senior Pastor	less than 6 months
Organist	No	part	Senior Pastor	3 years
Worship Vocalist	No	part	Senior Pastor	less than 6 months

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

We have a very new-to-the-church staff serving a congregation with many long-standing members. Institutional knowledge typically is carried over by members, not staff, and our staff relies on the congregation to . We also have recently added a number of part-time staff members to start supporting the needs of the congregation, as competing for time of volunteers is at its most difficult.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
No Response	

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

No response

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

No response

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

No response

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

No

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

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

OCWM Basic Support is a budgeted line item under our Board of Ministries. One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need and the Christmas Fund are communion collections done during specific months of the year, voted on by the Board of Ministries.

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

0

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

No response

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

We are considering a capital campaign leading up to our sesquicentennial celebration in 2030 to make improvements to our church buildings. We anticipate starting the campaign during the five years prior to our sesquicentennial celebration.

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

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

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

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

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

No response

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

No response

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

No response

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

No response

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

No response

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

No response

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

No response

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

No response

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

We own 3 buildings that are interconnected. One houses our staff offices, meeting rooms, and our Sanctuary. Another is a hall we use for social gatherings (such as Coffee Hour) or special events. The third building is rented out to a preschool.

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

No response

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance	Accessible bathroom on each floor
Accessible parking spaces	
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)	
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids	
Wheelchair access in bathrooms	
"Quiet room" with worship viewing and listening availability	
Handrails on all stairs	
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)	
Curb cuts	

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

No response

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Our Board of Finance is responsible for ensuring (i) the financial integrity of the church through an annual budget and management of its endowment, and (ii) the care and maintenance of all church property, so that there will always be a sound financial foundation and safe environment for our spiritual community to come together and worship. The Treasurer is a voting member of this board and oversees the payment of bills. All invoices are approved by our Senior Pastor and by our Chair of the Board of Finance or our Treasurer prior to payment being issued.

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

Our church was built on the foundational concepts of gathering in faith, self-governance, and service to God and the community. Our Board of Finance, working together with the other boards of the church, assures that our finances are in line with our mission.

Historical Information

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

ONA: In 2023, we unanimously voted to become ONA. Even though we didn't see the need for the label before (we had an ONA statement), we discovered that the label would be a sign that this is a safe space.

Temple: In 1950, the town didn't support building a Jewish temple. FCC signed a petition in favor of the purchase of land and invited the congregation to use our space for their services. We continue to value our good relationship with Temple Emanu-El, sharing in educational and spiritual opportunities, as well as lending our space from time-to-time.

School: We have had a nursery school program for over 40 years, which has grown and changed from a church sponsored program to a privately run school, renting space. There was a period of adjustment as the school expanded and sought to use more of our facility and modify it to their needs. We have successfully worked through the conflicts, and enjoy a very good relationship with our nursery school tenants, feeling that both are benefiting.

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

After a two-year long spiritual discernment process designed to help our church members assess our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to success, the congregation agreed to pilot a revised board leadership structure. In late 2022 and early 2023, a working group was formed to evaluate the existing board leadership structure and review other leadership models from UCC churches across the country. The goal was to reimagine a structure which would address some of the pressing issues of FCC including:

- The challenge of filling board openings as prescribed by by-laws;
- The desire to provide more manageable volunteer opportunities; and
- The identified need to become more transparent and improve how we communicate decision making.

In 2025 we will have piloted the new board structure for two years. We will collectively review the results and begin to formalize and document the structure in updated by-laws.

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

We've adopted the following principles, which are noted on the agenda of every Board/Council meeting:

1. Keep God in the room
2. Respect every individual
3. Demonstrate humility
4. Listen more than you speak (two ears, one mouth)
5. Hold your desires and opinions even your convictions lightly
6. Encourage other perspectives
7. Ensure every voice is heard
8. Respect people's time
9. Be accountable
10. The right job for the right person - ask "does this fulfill your sense of ministry?"

When we have conflict, whether on a large or small scale, we remind ourselves of these values, and they help us to work through the conflict.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic was a uniquely challenging time for FCC. Beyond navigating a global health crisis, the congregation was in transition after the departure of our long-tenured and well-loved Senior Minister. Our Interim stepped into this role during lockdown, tasked with leading change without the benefit of in-person relationships that are central to our community. This challenge came into sharp focus with a proposal to install sanctuary monitors to improve technology and accessibility, sparking strong, varied opinions. While Zoom meetings were held, the Interim Minister's initial desire to "push the matter through" was met with significant opposition.

We prize our democratic structure and the value of bringing our whole selves to communal decisions. The strength of this democratic commitment led to the proposal's eventual retraction, reaffirming our governance model and the importance of nurturing relationships and shared ownership on our living faith journey.

Ministerial History:

<i>Name:</i> Rev. Dr. Jennifer Testa Hrynyk	<i>Years of service:</i> 4	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Joy E. Mounts (Associate)	<i>Years of service:</i> 17	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Kyle Reaka (Assistant)	<i>Years of service:</i> 1	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. John G. Wightman	<i>Years of service:</i> 10	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Linda Kreil	<i>Years of service:</i> 2	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Christopher D. Atwood	<i>Years of service:</i> 3	
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Marc Trister (Associate)	<i>Years of service:</i> 4	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Harry Taylor (Interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 1	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Sandra Hulse (Interim Pastoral Associate)	<i>Years of service:</i> 0	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Pamela Gilchrist (Associate)	<i>Years of service:</i> 7	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Keith E. Jones (Interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 2	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Mark Boyea	<i>Years of service:</i> 14	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Joel Biggers (Interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 1	UCC Standing

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

Our church has learned the importance of collaborative leadership, where ministerial guidance empowers our community to articulate and achieve our own vision. We value a pastor who listens, supports, and provides insightful direction without overshadowing our collective voice. This approach fosters growth rooted in shared goals and strengthens our sense of purpose as a congregation working together toward spiritual and communal aspirations.

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

Yes

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?

Yes

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

Yes

Community Vision

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

FCC has been home to several developmentally disabled adults. Some had grown up in the church. As these individuals graduate high school, they experience a need for more socially interactive programs. In 2003, a program called Waysharers was started. Waysharers is a faith-based interdenominational outreach program for adults with developmental disabilities. The program has grown from a 7 member group to 24 members with a volunteer team of 14. The Waysharers meet regularly two Fridays a month are supported by our congregational with funding and volunteers.

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

Our clergy regularly participate in wider UCC activities, including attending meetings, serving on boards, and participating in events. Church delegates are also elected to attend meetings as official representatives of FCC.

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

After the restructuring of the boards, the Board of Ministries thought it was more beneficial if we concentrated on making a large impact in a smaller area vs making a small impact in a big area. FCC has partnered with Chaplain Charles Watters School, a public elementary school where 100% of the students receive free breakfast and lunch. Over the last year we have collected school supplies, made Buddy Bags (healthy snack bags), food drives, Thanksgiving baskets, held an alternative gift market for school uniforms, and a holiday toy drive.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

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

Many people - especially young people - are trying to understand their identity and where they fit in in their community. Though FCC had been functioning as an ONA congregation for many years, objections to becoming ONA were not in opposition to the fundamental purpose and identity of being ONA, but rather in the "need" for a label. The congregation recently undertook the hard work of examining this position, and we discovered that while label or no label might not matter to us, it definitely does matter to those who are looking for an ONA congregation. Ultimately, in 2023, the congregation unanimously voted to adopt an official ONA designation in order to to publicly declare the church's commitment of welcome and acceptance to all.

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

Our clergy and congregation regularly participate in ecumenical and interfaith activities. Our senior minister, The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Testa Hrynyk, is currently the chair of the Westfield Clergy Association, which is very active, bringing together the clergy from the 15+ houses of worship in Westfield, including Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations.

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

Our Vision: We aspire to:

1. Nourish the individual on their spiritual journey;
2. Explore the intersection of community and faith;
3. Remain faithful to God's vision in a changing world.

We meet weekly for coffee after worship where we look forward to getting to know new people, finding everyone to be welcoming and interested in getting to know each other and other new attendees. Our boards and Council oversee our activities to ensure they meet with our vision, including outreach work, fundraisers, and fun family events for the congregation. An example of how we explore the intersection of community and faith is a recent post-service discussion about how to approach the upcoming presidential election. The purpose of the discussion was to consider how we talk to our neighbors, family and friends when we don't necessarily agree with their opinions on topics such as politics. Our Senior Pastor based the discussion in biblical texts and the vision of God for the world.

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

Our pastors actively engage with the wider community as part of the interfaith Clergy Association Network of Westfield, which fosters collaboration among local faith institutions. This network meets regularly, organizing interfaith events, including annual Thanksgiving services and a celebration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Through these efforts, our ministers are an integral part of the town's interfaith work, reflecting our commitment to broader community ties. Additionally, our church leadership facilitates communication between the congregation and the United Church of Christ, ensuring that our ministry's local and wider commitments are balanced with our expectations for pastoral involvement.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

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

A walk in our community reveals that the ARDA report information is accurate.

TRENDS

1. Small population decrease
2. Predominately white (73%)
3. Cost of housing continues to rise
4. Affluent (60% earn more than \$125k/year)
5. Increase in remote workers and shorter commutes
6. Population trends younger (25% under 18, 70% under 55)

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Many nearby religious denominations with opportunity to learn from one another
2. Connect with remote workers with religious programming offered during lunch hours or before/after traditional work hours
3. A need to bridge gap in economic disparity

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

While the directly adjacent neighborhoods are demographically very similar to our church, just five to ten miles from our community are urban centers, which are more racially and socioeconomically diverse, which is not reflected in our congregation.

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

Given the large number of young families in our community, significant ministerial focus has been placed on building a nurturing children's program. In addition, the pastoral care needs of older congregants and families struggling with illness, divorce and death are a priority for our ministry. Outreach programs work to provide needed resources to neighboring communities.

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

Our church is known for being proactively involved in community issues particularly during periods of community stress. Our ministers serve on the Interfaith Clergy Association and our church has shared its physical space with the local synagogue.

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

Many of our newest members say they are attracted to the children's programming with its growing Sunday School and music program. Others point to the warm and welcoming congregation and the acceptance of individuals at all stages of their faith journey.

References

Ethan Prosnit

Completed: Tuesday, Nov 19, 2024

I'm the Senior Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, the reform synagogue in Westfield. We work closely with FCC clergy and church

Primary Email Address: eprosnit@tewnj.org

Business: 9082326770

Reference Response

FCC has been a steadfast partner to TEE for 75 years. When TEE began building a congregation, FCC opened its doors both physically & metaphorically, supporting the first Reform Jewish community in town. At a time when others in the community were unwelcoming, FCC provided space for TEE. This relationship continues today, with FCC offering support during holidays and standing in solidarity against anti-Semitic incidents. FCC's leadership has been impactful. Under Rev. Hrynyk, FCC plays a key role in the interfaith association, contributing to vigils, Thanksgiving services, & joint learning programs. FCC pursues social justice with commendable mission work. TEE and FCC refugees in New Jersey, raising funds and awareness. FCC members volunteer weekly at the Westfield Fun Club, providing crucial support to refugee families with English instruction, homework help, & other essential needs.

 Mark Boyea

Completed: Monday, Dec 2, 2024

I served as FCC's Senior Minister from July 2005 - January 2020

Primary Email Address: mark@sanibelucc.org

Mobile Phone: 9084775426

Reference Response

My time at First Congregational Church of Westfield was one of the great blessings of my life. They were, and remain, a spiritual community with energy and enthusiasm for serving God and God's people. They have a clear commitment to issues related to economic and social equality, as well as having a unique relationship with the Jewish community of Temple Emanu-El. In addition, they are an open-minded, generous, forgiving community with a great sense of humor.

They are also willing to work through struggles and needed changes, as has been demonstrated both during my tenure and that of their current Senior Minister. Perhaps most impressive is how they emerged not just intact, but with renewed spirit after the less than desirable circumstances of 2020, as right after my departure, COVID arrived. But they persevered, and with God's help found their way to renewed spirit and purpose.

 Jane Westerhold

Completed: Wednesday, Nov 27, 2024

I was a member of FCC for 40+ years before moving to Colorado, serving on many committees and boards and on the Search Committee for Rev. Hrynyk.

Primary Email Address: jane.westerhold@gmail.com

Business: 9084001704

Reference Response

From the very beginning, this church welcomed me and my family as well as the many people who came through the doors. We were part of a large group of active members and felt grounded and instructed in our UCC faith. There were activities for all age groups and interests. We shared what we had with others and were open to all. Believing, sharing, and caring were themes the congregation lived by. It was very hard for us to leave these lifelong friends. FCC of Westfield continues this welcoming warmth and commitment, from the minister to the congregants, and is a very special place.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank you for blessing our congregation with the ability to come together in respect for our mutual faith and for each other and that you unite us through our shared rituals and connections. Be with us as we grow and evolve, ensuring that we stay true to your vision for our church and the world.

We pray for the person you are calling to minister among us, knowing that your divine hand has been upon us as we prepare to covenant with one another. Guide us in our journey toward each other, that we might be open to your inspiration and wisdom.

In the name of Christ we pray, amen.

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

Leadership Council
Personnel Committee
Search Committee
Senior Pastor
Members of the Congregation

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Financial information has not been publicly disclosed but will be made available to candidates with whom we are in conversation.