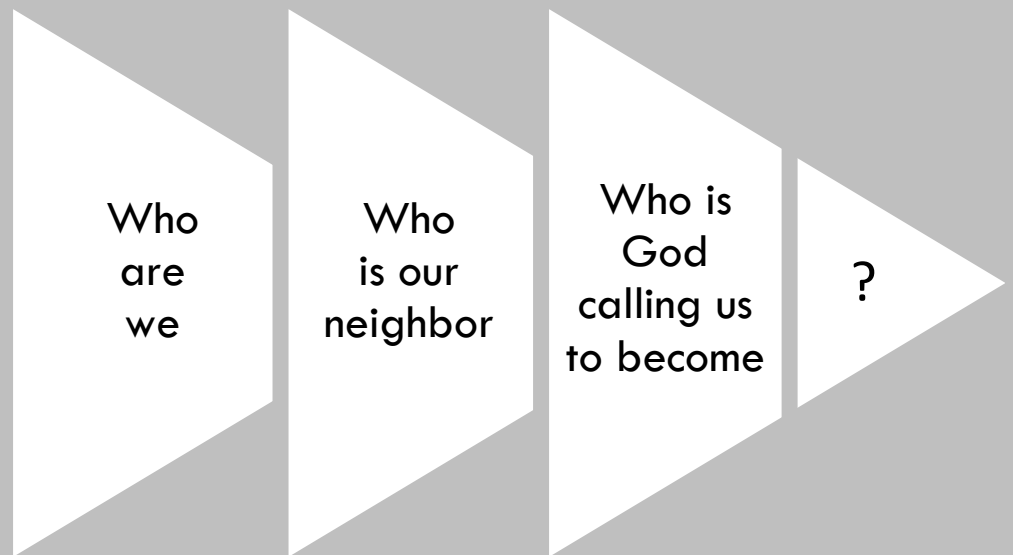


Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

First Congregational Church
Lewis, Essex County, New York 12950

Pastor

United Church of Christ
Essex Association

May 18, 2021

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- References
- Consent and Validation

*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

First Congregational Church Of Lewis
8557 US Rte 9
Lewis, New York 12950

Additional ecumenical affiliations: United Church of Christ, Elizabethtown, NY 12932

Conference: UCC New York Conference

Association: Essex Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Rev. David Gaewski, UCC NY Conference Minister, Phone: 315-446-3073

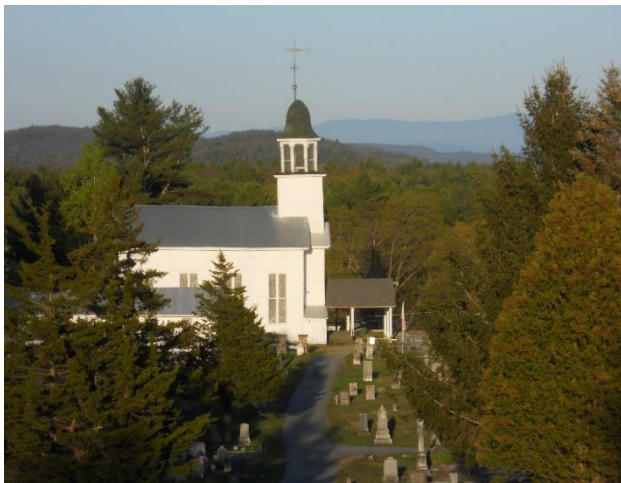
Email DavidGaewski@uccny.org

Summary Ministry Description:

The First Congregational Church of Lewis is a historical institution (church) that sits on a hill overlooking the Town of Lewis. Our protestant ministry is open to the small community where we provide Sunday worship, Sunday School, wedding and funeral services to the community wanting such services.

Lewis is located in the foothills of the Adirondack Park, where mountains invite hiking enthusiasts of all capabilities and Lake Champlain ready for water sports. There are many local lakes and ponds for outdoor activities during all four seasons. Tourism is one of the main industries for not only fun seekers traveling to our area, but for our local families to enjoy. The four seasons give us changing beauty and living conditions.

A more beautiful area is not to be found!



Church from Cemetery



Interior of Church

What we value about living in our area:

Living in a small rural community in the Adirondacks is where we know our neighbors and our community needs. We all come together when there is a need.

Current size of **membership**: Approximately 78 members of which 20 are active.

Languages: English Only

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration

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

Compensation Level: Full Time, sharing pastoral duties with Elizabethtown UCC.

Does the total **support package** meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

The Pastor prepares and leads Sunday worship services, prepares the Bulletins and plans music for worship; participates in weddings, funerals and special worship programs in the worshipping community; and attends church meetings and participates in UCC Conferences and District Association Meetings.

Core Competencies:

1. Ability to adapt to rural living as urban conveniences are not always close at hand.
2. Ability to listen to people, a caring/sensitive minister able to allow people to turn to for support and guidance.
3. The congregation of the Lewis Congregational Church embraces traditional roles of Christian principles, but can be accepting of change when change comes with understanding.
4. The ability to infuse humor into his/her services.
5. Having the ability to prioritize and understand the dynamics of providing religious services to two distinct congregations.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis \$40,000 divided between the Elizabethtown UCC and First Congregational Church of Lewis.

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

Expected living situation: Parsonage in Elizabethtown next to UCC Church. Five miles from the Lewis Congregational Church.

Residential/commuting expectations: Parsonage is about 5 miles from Lewis's church. One local Hospital (Elizabethtown Community Hospital), Plattsburgh Hospital about 35 miles north for visitations. Rural area for home visitations. UCC Essex District Association.

Peer and professional supports available: Essex District Association leaders meet on a semi-regular basis. Pre-COVID the group met every two months for lunch.

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

First off, God wants pastors to want to do the work. He wants pastors who happily give of themselves in this emotionally taxing work, “not reluctantly or under compulsion” ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)). God loves a cheerful pastor. Desire for the work has a role to play in the calling to church office that it may not in other work. Your day job may be something you’re able to do, but don’t enjoy, and God can work with that for a season. But a fundamental difference between pastoral ministry and every other kind of work is the necessity of desire. Such desire is often the beginning of a pastoral calling, but it is never the entirety. *Aspiration* is a great place to start, but desire in and of itself does not amount to a calling. God then gives us two layers of confirmation: the *affirmation* of others and the real-life *opportunity*. Peter may say it most powerfully. Christ wants elders to shepherd (pastor) his flock “not under compulsion, but willingly, *as God would have you*” ([1 Peter 5:2](#)). How remarkable that pastoring from aspiration and delight, not obligation and duty, would be “as God would have you.” This is the kind of God we have — the desiring (not dutiful) God, who wants pastors who are desiring (not dutiful) pastors. Such a happy God means for the leaders of his church to do their work “with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage” to the people ([Hebrews 13:17](#)). God wants pastors who want to do the work, not pastors who do it simply out of a sense of duty. He grabs pastors by the heart; he doesn’t twist them by the arm

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

We need more middle and high school youth involvement as the next generation will be our church members. Our Sunday School Superintendent is excellent for children up through the sixth grade. There is no religious education beyond that. We need new ideas and fresh eyes to see our weaknesses and encourage our strengths; as much as we love our retiring pastor, 30 years is way too long – keeps our religious journey status quo.

Continue to keep our doors open to the community. Our Pot Luck Suppers are open to the public to show that our church is not just Sunday Worship. We Adopted A Highway (highway pick up) that allowed a NYS sign to be posted to make people aware of our Church community contribution. Our Election Day Dinner is open to the public and the community looks forward to it each year.

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

How a minister portrays himself/herself in the position will lead to acceptance. Hoping to see willingness to work with us in sharing our ministry both within the church and in the community. Seeing a pastor’s enjoyment, compassion, willingness and spiritual leadership will assist us with our church goals and visions.

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

Ability to speak English well is a strong asset. When people in the congregation struggle to understand the pastor, it drives them away. Looking for caring/compassionate person that the congregation/members can turn to in times of need.

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.

Four areas of importance that the First Congregational Church of Lewis would like to see in our next minister would include ability to lead faith formation effectively across generations; nurturing care and compassion for God's creation; demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC; and demonstrating excellent communication skills.



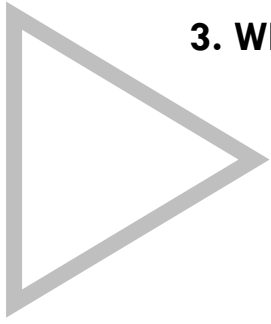
2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“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?

As a congregation, we have become somewhat complacent in identifying and responding to our responsibilities, because we found it to be easier when the minister stepped up and took on our responsibilities. For many it was easy and become more the norm. The church members need to understand that the only way their church will remain viable and continue in the coming years is to help grow the church through their active participation, bringing in new members spreading the message of God and accepting the offices of the various positions that help to maintain the church structure. Recently because of the COVID pandemic, our congregation after a long and arduous Church Council meeting decided that we would hold outdoor church services as a way to meet NYS requirements. This worked for us during the warm weather and many of the members enjoy this approach. When the weather turned cold, those attending the service had a new set of rules to comply with, such as having their temperature taken, answering questions about their health, wearing masks and social distancing. As church we should have a vision statement or a multi-year plan, which we do not. It would be of great benefit to the church if a new pastor coming on board would be open to working with us in that need.

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



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

The beliefs and commitments of the First Congregational Church of Lewis can be summed up by our purpose statement: The purpose of our Church is to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God and making his will prevail in the lives of all people individually and collectively, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death, and living presence of Jesus Christ. It is from this purpose statement that the members of our church see and understand what their role is and how energized it has created a small congregation.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

1. Our members are friendly and welcoming to all who enter the church.
2. Our members are giving of not only their monetary resources, but of their time as well to be involved. Members do not say no, they say, what can I do to help.
3. Our members are involved with the area churches in the operation of a thrift store that many people are using that need this kind of assistance.
4. Our members have always reached out during time of need or grief to the community at large.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Our church members, because of their rural heritage, age and consistent practices tend to be traditional in their religious views. Having said this, we are not a congregation without the ability to look at change in our lives and finding fulfillment by embracing this change. Yes, it may be more difficult for some. Most of our worship services takes place inside the church, with much interaction between the members, the minister and other members

prior to the start of the service. Laughter has always been a way of life for those attending. Because of COVID, services were held outside during the past summer. Over the years there have been a number of special services held outside, including services that were held at a Civil War Reenactment. Although the worship services tend to coincide with the church calendar of the UCC church, the members enjoy deviation from this in what has been called laughter Sunday, or greeting your neighbors with a hug or handshake during the service. Several words that describe good preaching are: **Genuine** – lives by the tenants of the church, but yet is human with human needs. **Interesting** – Is able to keep the attention of all who attend church. **Friendly** – Will extend themselves to all people, member, non-members, community at large. A smile and encouraging words go a long way to cement relationships. **Understanding** – Not only will the minister understand his topic, the minister should understand the needs of the church and be able to deliver to a diverse congregation. **Educate** – A minister should be able to set a tone for the members to open their minds to what is being said and for them to leave with an understanding of their own responsibilities to fertilize, cultivate and harvest.

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

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

In the First Congregational Church of Lewis, it has always been the minister that will organize and deliver the church services. There have been times when members would agree to doing lay services. The missions are a united member/minister process. The women's organization has adopted a female student in Brazil, providing support for her for school clothing and other school needs. The women's group also gives to a missionary doing work on an Indian Reservation (NAIM) They also do a Mother's day blanket drive, in which members donate money to buy a blanket in memory of a mother or loved one and blankets are sent overseas to people of need. The church members donate to One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need. The Sunday School, with assistance from the church members and community at large participates in the Christmas Shoe Box program. Over 100 shoes boxes filled with gifts for needy children overseas has been filled by this endeavor of the Sunday School.

We are a church that does not look at scheduled meetings as a necessary structure of the Church. We do have a Church Council that meets once a year and as needed throughout the year. The Board of Trustees meet 4 times a year to make financial decisions. If something comes up that need immediate attention, we schedule meetings to address the issue. This has worked for us for the past 30 years and the members agree to this. When concerns confront the Church, such as capital projects, or special events like celebrations we form a committee to work out the details including fund raising if necessary. There have been events in the church history when we had to confront a crisis. Most were temporary in nature and positive outcomes came fairly quickly. A recent crisis was damage to the exterior protection of our stained glass windows that left the windows vulnerable to damage from weather. We had to address finding a contractor to repair damage and funding to pay for labor and materials. Work was done and paid for. Any

ministerial candidate will be to view organizational structure of the church, bylaws and annual reports that will reflect the church's activities and governance.

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

We are a church that does not look at scheduled meetings as a necessary structure of the Church. We do have a Church Council that meets once a year and as needed throughout the year. The Board of Trustees meet 4 times a year to make financial decisions. If something comes up that need immediate attention, we schedule meetings to address the issue. This has worked for us for the past 30 years and the members agree to this. When concerns confront the Church, such as capital projects, or special events like celebrations we form a committee to work out the details including fund raising if necessary. There have been events in the church history when we had to confront a crisis. Most were temporary in nature and positive outcomes came fairly quickly.

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

A recent crisis was damage to the exterior protection of our stained glass windows that left the windows vulnerable to damage from weather. We had to address finding a contractor to repair damage and funding to pay for labor and materials. Work was done and paid for. Any ministerial candidate will be a to view the organizational structure of the church, bylaws and annual reports that reflects the church's activities and governance.

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**

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

Church#: 461570

Assoc: 520 Schedule: o First Congregational Church Lewis NY 12950
of Lewis

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS- REMOVED
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2009	14	26	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	13	20	11	0	0	0	1	0	-1
2011	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	13	20	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	20	24	8	0	0	10	3	0	7
2019	19	25	5	0	0	0	1	0	-1

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2009	\$21,437	\$0	\$1,047	\$534	\$1,581	\$165	\$1,746	4.88	\$23,183	\$24,777
2010	\$36,278	\$0	\$1,039	\$339	\$1,378	\$360	\$1,738	2.86	\$38,016	\$23,136
2011	\$36,278	\$0	\$951	\$379	\$1,330	\$0	\$1,330	2.62	\$37,608	\$0
2012	\$36,278	\$0	\$1,225	\$237	\$1,462	\$0	\$1,462	3.38	\$37,740	\$0
2013	\$36,278	\$0	\$1,186	\$397	\$1,583	\$0	\$1,583	3.27	\$37,861	\$0
2014	\$36,278	\$0	\$1,293	\$221	\$1,514	\$0	\$1,514	3.56	\$37,792	\$0
2015	\$36,278	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$36,278	\$0
2016	\$36,278	\$0	\$2,991	\$489	\$3,480	\$0	\$3,480	8.24	\$39,758	\$0
2017	\$36,278	\$0	\$1,734	\$335	\$2,069	\$0	\$2,069	4.78	\$38,347	\$0
2018	\$36,522	\$0	\$1,484	\$440	\$1,924	\$0	\$1,924	4.06	\$38,446	\$22,857
2019	\$36,522	\$0	\$1,169	\$355	\$1,524	\$0	\$1,524	3.20	\$38,046	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
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2014-2019	46.15	25.00	-54.55	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.66	0.67
2009-2019	35.71	-3.85	-58.33	0.00	0.00	70.37	-3.61	64.11

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	20	x
Number of active non-members:	6	x

Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	26	x
--	----	---

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	65	x
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	25	x
Less than 5 years:	10	x

Number of total participants by age:

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

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	0	x
Households with minors:	3	x

Single adults age 35-65:	1	x
Joint households with no minors:	20	x
Single adults over 65:	2	x

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

High School	70	x
College:	20	x
Graduate School:	5	x
Specialty Training:	5	x
Other (please specify):	0	

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	40	x
Adults who are retired:	50	x
Adults who are not fully employed:	10	x

Because of our location within the Adirondack Park, employment has been a concern for providing good paying jobs for our children after they go off to college and migrate into the work world. Many of our members are retired from Civil Service type of employment, school districts, law enforcement, state, county and town government jobs. It should also be noted that the Town of Lewis is a bedroom community with most people driving to other locations for employment. The range of occupations of church members tend to be mostly blue collar with a few from the professions such as teachers and from the specialty areas such as carpenters, electricians and plumbers and nurses.

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

The First Congregational Church of Lewis members are all WASP. Our diversity comes from our decision of 30 years ago to invite an African American pastor to our church and community. As Christians we believe that all should be treated with dignity and respect and have conducted ourselves in that manner. Yes, we do understand that biases are part

of the human makeup and not all will be accepting of diversity, but compromise is part of our rural heritage.

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

At this time the members of the First Congregational Church have not held a scheduled conversation to discuss diversity within the church or community. There has been and will continue to be informal discussions about diversity. Should our church have a formal conversation on diversity, understanding the members may not embrace certain fundamental changes, we will reach out to the conference for assistance in using the Welcoming Diversity Inventory.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Minister using dedication
Children's Groups or Classes	10	Sunday school staff
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50	Pastor and Lay leaders
Church-wide Meals	0	

Choirs and Music Groups	0	
Church-based Bible Study	0	
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	6 time a year	Pastor and Deacons
Community Meals	30-40	Monthly Community Pot Luck Dinners

Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	
Drama or Dance Programs	2	Sunday School pageants
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	16	
Intergenerational Groups	0	
Outdoor Worship	20 -30	Easter Sunrise service, COVID outdoor church services
Prayer or Meditation Groups	0	
Public Advocacy Work	0	
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	4	
Worship (time slot:		Weekly Sunday Church Service
___9:30AM___)	15-20	Pastor or Lay people
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	0	
Other	0	

Additional comments:

At the time of the completion of our Church Profile, the Lewis Congregational Church has no members that are ordained, license or commissioned ministers.

REFLECTION

After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities, it does not take a rocket scientist to understand that The First Congregational Church of Lewis has been around for over two hundred years and with the right amount of perseverance by members and community support, the church can be viable for another two hundred years, but only with hard work and the right attitude will this occur. We MUST grow the membership if our church is to grow and prosper

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$30,615
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$21,251
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$20,659
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$1112
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$0
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$1325
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$4765
Other (specify):	\$0
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$79,727

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$73,354

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. See Annual Report

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 44%

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

Is your church 5-for-5? No

Does it include each of the following contributions during the church year?

Yes Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

Yes One Great Hour of Sharing

No Strengthen the Church

Yes Neighbors in Need

No Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Donations and fund raising

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: - No debt

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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

No Building or Capital projects are planned

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2014	Porch & wheel chair ramp	\$6,600	\$6,600	No Debt
2019	Protection of stained glass windows	\$3,600	\$3,600	No Debt

In October of 2020, the church belfry was re-shingled at a cost of \$900 for labor. The cost of the lift and the materials was paid for by two Church members. The contractor who installed the shingles, although not a church member lives in Lewis and did the work at a reduced rate.

Does your church have an endowment?

The church has 7 small endowment funds in which only one can be used for a specific need, which is earmarked for the youth of the Town of Lewis. The others, only the interest is used, usually to offset church budget needs. The church also has five operating accounts which are invested CD's.

What is the market value of the assets? \$32,231

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Usually drawn to help balance the budget.

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

Little Change

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years – Funds will be drawn as need to offset budget.

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

Can only draw interest from endowments.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Our members are very giving and provide much of the maintenance needed to maintain the church building, grounds and parish hall.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$93,693

Investments (other than endowment): None

Does your church have a parsonage? No –

Parsonage is owned by the United Church of Christ located in Elizabethtown.

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: N/A

How is the parsonage used: N/A

Street / City / State / Zip: N/A

Finished square footage: N/A

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: N/A

Assessed real estate value: N/A

Available for minister residence: Y/N N/A

Expected minister residence: Y/N N/A

Condition of structure, systems and appliances N/A

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs N/A

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Church structure, Parish Hall

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? Both church and parish hall.

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

The church has struggled for years, but has dedicated members and a community that supports the church and has kept the church viable as not only a religious institution, but a focus for community events. The First Congregational Church of Lewis is not only the oldest Congregational church in Essex County, it is the only church in Lewis, New York. The church is the location for the community gardens, and hosts community pot luck dinners from May through September. The Women's Group put on an annual Election

Day Pork dinner for the community. During times of need, the church has always obtained financial assistance from community non-members.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

There have been significant happenings in the history of the First Congregational Church of Lewis throughout the history of our church. The complete history of our church has been written for the 150th year celebration and updated for the 200th year celebration. In 1923, the church grounds had over 1000 people attending the funeral of Inez Millholand, a young woman who was very instrumental in the women's suffrage movement and is buried in the church cemetery. The most recent event that helped to shaped our identity would be our bicentennially celebration during the summer of 2012. It was a special weekend event with activities, food and culminating with a memorial service in the cemetery celebrating the life of Cyrus Comstock, the father of Congregational Churches in Essex County and the inventor of the Comstock wagon. Probably the most significant change in our church was the retiring minister. Not only did he bring diversity, he brought longevity to our church, something that the church had never experienced.

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

In 1986, a committee was formed to look at the feasibility of selling the old Parish Hall that was not on church grounds and building a new parish hall, attached to the church. Many meetings later, the changes came to fruition. The old parish hall was sold, fund raising was accomplish and members of the building committee actually constructed the new parish hall. The new hall was dedicated one month before our current retiring minister took over in July of 1989.

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

Without conflict, changes will never be made. It is our belief that although conflict has the potential to be divisive, it has been the catalyst for welcomed change in our congregation. The resolution of change may differ depending on the ages of the members looking for change, but this is where we have been able to come together in compromise. The members of our church understand there must be give and taken on our part if we are to keep the church on track and viable for future generations. The church does not have any written policies dealing with conflict. It has always been an unwritten protocol, that

should a member have a concern with the direction the church is taking or not approve of a certain change, discussion will ensue with the board overseeing the change or the Church Council. This works for us and we plan on not changing this approach to conflict.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Fred Shaw	32	Yes

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

The church was accepting of calling an African American pastor with a Caucasian wife to lead a church with no diversity. It is evident after 32 years that the fit for our church and the pastor worked much better than the congregational may have thought from the onset.

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

Y/N/Ask us – No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us – No

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

Y/N/Ask us – No



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

The women’s organization has adopted a female student in Brazil, providing support for her for school clothing and other school needs. The women’s group also gives to a missionary doing work on an Indian Reservation (NAIM) They also do a Mother’s day blanket drive, in which members donate money to buy a blanket in memory of a mother or loved one and blankets are sent overseas to people of need. The church members donate to One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need. The Sunday School and the members of the First Congregational Church has for five years been involved in the Christmas Shoe Box program. Shoe size boxes are filled with appropriate items and sent to underdeveloped countries. Not only are the boxes filled, members provided shipping cost for the boxes.

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

No activities in the past five years.

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M) | |

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

We are a very small and rural congregation with little knowledge of more global issues. It is our belief that we need to care for our friends and neighbors that impact us the most. We do believe in peace, equality and understanding.

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

Other denominations we share activities with: Church of the Good Shephard (Episcopal), St. Elizabeth's church (Roman Catholic), and of course our sister church, UCC in Elizabethtown. Our own Boquet Valley Central School Baccalaureate services in June rotates through the four local churches; Easter Sunrise Services open to all in the community tho conducted by our UCC. The four churches also share volunteering at our local Thrift Shop.

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

We have no written mission statement. Our Purpose Statement, which is repeated in unison at each weekly worship service, guides our members/congregation.

*The purpose of our church shall be
to bind together followers of Jesus Christ
for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God
and in making his will prevail in the lives of all people,
individually and collectively,
especially as that will is set forth
in the life, teachings, death, and living presence of Jesus Christ.*

With our small membership, our activities, governance, etc. is actually carried on by a small number of dedicated members. However, when there is need of help or volunteers (e.g. Annual Election Day Dinner, working at the Ecumenical Thrift Shop), members of the congregation step up to the challenges.

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

The church membership expects any pastor that accepts a call to pastor our church to become part of not only the church community, but the wider secular community as well. It is our belief that pastors set their own agenda within the parameters of the mission and goals of their church, and allow trust to become the norm for relationships. Should a minister accept the call, who has a family, we do not hold any expectations for his family as far as church involvement.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

The information on our community demographics as indicated by the MissionInsite forwarded to the search committee by the conference has nice information, but unfortunately the information has a lot of holes in it. For instance the population of Lewis was put at 900 at the present, the recent census places the population at about 1500. The report stated the town has over 20 African Americans, when we have 5. I am not critiquing the report, just reflecting how we should never use a single source of information to determine what a community may or may not be like. The Township of Lewis established in 1805 has actually gained residents in the past 10 years, but we are losing our children as employment is so very limited in this area. Last year two school districts, Elizabethtown/Lewis and Westport merged. At this time the merged districts are discussing a capital project, which will place all students under one roof in a central location. This will in no doubt increase taxes, but will provide for better education with more modern facilities and a better curriculum.

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?

The adjacent and nearby towns are very similar as the Town of Lewis. Until last year, there were no light traffic stop lights in this area. The rural area of Essex County is attractive to people who want or desire a quiet and fairly crime free place to live and raise a family. Most communities have but two churches, one Protestant and one Catholic. A universal theme of the area churches is they are struggling for members.

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

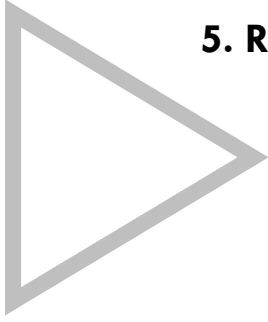
The community of Lewis tends to be a bedroom community, with most working citizens traveling to other areas to work. The loss of our children leaving for college and then finding employment outside the area has made the township one of older citizens. I know county government is concerned with the loss of our children and have been trying to create incentives for business to come to Essex County.

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

The First Congregational Church of Lewis happens to be the only Church in the township. The church is open for the community and is used for meetings that need space for a large gathering. The church and cemetery has a lot of history that is important to the town. Both the town bicentennial in 2005 and the church bicentennial in 2012 were well attended with many people extending their thanks in words and gifts for the church being open and viable for such celebrations.

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

They will say they were welcomed by the congregation, and felt that they were part of the church from the first Sunday they attended. They were introduced during the service, which helped to set the tone for coming back. Having monthly pot luck dinners is one good way of breaking the ice with new people who may be looking for a church. Getting new people involved is the key. Once they feel they are part of the church, they will stick around.



5. REFERENCES

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

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

James Monty, Supervisor, Town of Lewis
518-873-6777 Supervisor@lewistownhall.com - Friend

REFERENCE 2

Jay Heald, Undertaker, Heald’s Funeral Home
518-873-6713 healdfuneralhome@westelcom.com – Funeral Director

REFERENCE 3

Sharon Martin, Friend of the church
518-873-2698 – Non member, but ardent supporter

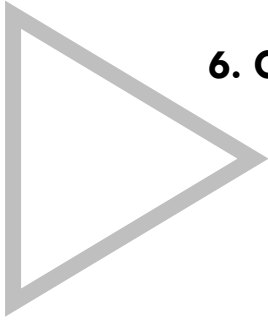
PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord my God, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; yet you have called your servant to stand in your house, and to serve at your altar. To you and to your service I devote myself, body, soul, and spirit. Fill my memory with the record of your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of your Holy Spirit; and may all the desires of my heart and center in what you would have me do. Make me an instrument of your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and grant that I may faithfully administer your holy Sacraments, and by my life and teaching set forth your true and living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of your holy Word, all the world may be drawn into your blessed kingdom. All this I ask for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen*

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (*for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.*)
Church Council Moderator & Church Clerk
Same two are long standing Trustees of the Church
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: Yes

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

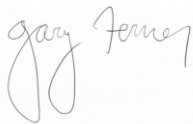
Staff Comment: Yes

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

Staff Comment: Yes

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gary Ferner". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Name / Title: Rev. Gary Ferner, ACM for Search and Call UCCNY

Email: gferner@uccny.org

Phone: 315-882-8627

Date: May 18, 2021

**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