

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who
are
we

Who
is our
neighbor

Who is
God calling
us to
become?

?

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

United Church of Christ, Congregational
Vermillion, SD

Settled Pastor

Tri-Conference Ministries UCC

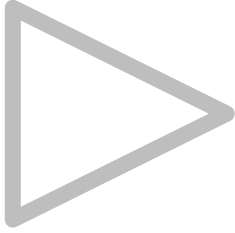
[Validation Date]

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?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: United Church of Christ, Congregational

Street address: 226 E. Main St., Vermillion, SD 57069

Supplemental web links:

<https://uccvermillion.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/UCCVermillion>

Conference: Tri-Conference Ministries

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person: Rev. Roberto Ochoa

Summary ministry description.

We are a welcoming, progressive, curious, joyful, artistic, engaged, multigenerational congregation searching for a full-time Settled Pastor due to the relocation of our current pastor. We are being supported in this time of transition by lay leaders as well as a part-time pastor with strong ties to our congregation. We seek an inspiring Settled Pastor who will assist us in:

- Ministering to our members and the greater community through our thriving children's, youth, adult, and music programs
- Maintaining existing relationships and building new ones, both within and beyond our church walls
- Translating our goals of diversity and inclusiveness into concrete actions
- Learning about our faith stories through engaging preaching and teaching
- Managing the church's human, physical, and financial resources

What is your church's mission?

The United Church of Christ, Congregational of Vermillion, SD is a family of faith who seeks to discover and follow the way of Christ, and to share the love of God with each other and the world.

Who are we now?

We are an active growing church congregation that continually seeks to encounter our spirituality in new and insightful ways. While our humble roots are rural, we are also a college town where Midwest hospitality abounds. The church is home to individuals and families of all ages with active members in all age groups. Given our proximity to the University of South Dakota (USD), we have many faculty and students involved in our church life. Our church family has a large heart for diversity and a long history of working with disenfranchised groups. We have intentionally cultivated close relationships with the local indigenous community and regularly allow them to use our space for their spiritual traditions. Our congregation is rooted in tradition yet open to creative and experimental ideas and programs. We come from diverse backgrounds forming an active church family in the Vermillion community, engaged in our own personal ministries, striving to be welcoming, and embracing the promise "*No Longer Strangers.*"

Who is our neighbor? Our church has a long history of supporting local, regional and global communities. We are located in Clay County, which has a 24.4% poverty rate, and we are active supporters of community service programs including the local Food Pantry, The Welcome Table (weekly free community meal and other services), Salvation Army, Scouts, Angel Tree, etc. We are located on Main Street near both the town center and the university campus, in a largely residential area, so we literally try to be good neighbors. We deeply value our relationships with our indigenous brothers and sisters as well as those of other faith traditions.

Who is God calling us to be? God is calling us to live our values.

OUR VALUES

Because we believe that all life is sacred, that the divine character is reflected in us, and that integrity is vital to our world, we choose to:

- Live each day gratefully and gracefully
- Practice compassion
- Be lifelong learners
- Creatively serve not only our community, but the world as well
- Practice radical, inclusive hospitality

- Be a home for all, from start to finish
- Worship and pray in a variety of ways
- Create great art, music and theatre
- Laugh and maybe even dance at times!

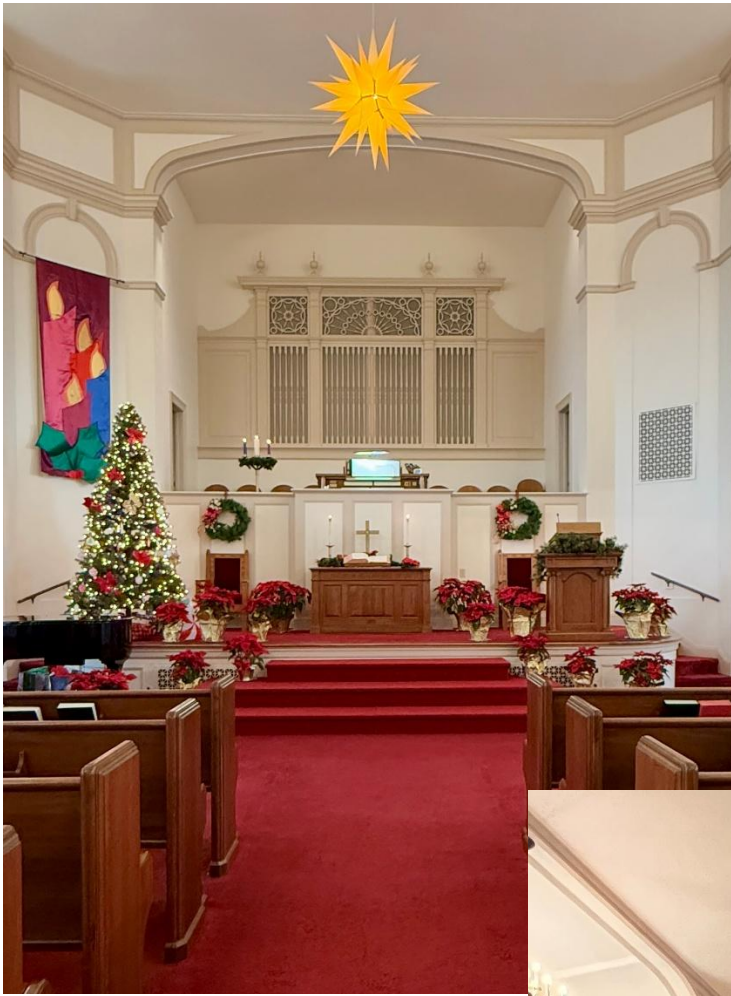
What we value about living in our area. Vermillion, a growing and vibrant town of 12,000, is home to the University of South Dakota and the National Music Museum located in the southeast corner of South Dakota. Although we are a predominantly homogenous community and congregation, the town of Vermillion does offer many opportunities to expand our cultural awareness, experiences, and thinking. We are only a few miles from the Missouri National Recreation River, a free-flowing stretch of the Missouri River offering numerous outdoor opportunities. State and regional parks are within minutes' drive of the church, and we are close to the larger urban areas of Sioux City, IA and Sioux Falls, SD and about two hours from Omaha, NE. In 2025 and 2026, Vermillion was voted "Best Small Town Art Scene" in USA Today and in 2026, Vermillion won South Dakota's Community of the Year for the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development.



UCCV Photographs:









Current number of active participants: 250

Position Title: Settled Pastor

Compensation Level: Full Time

SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

We seek a pastor who is **inquisitive** and seeks to understand both ancient and modern texts from Christian and other religious backgrounds to guide our spiritual journeys.

We seek a pastor who is **empathetic** to people of all backgrounds and ages; someone who engages people where they are and helps them move forward.

We seek a pastor who **delegates**, as we are an active church with lots of talented, willing participants looking to be engaged in a wide variety of activities.

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

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

- Improving our ability to build and maintain meaningful connections within our congregation as well as with the larger community
- Being creative (art, music, drama) in worship and education settings
- Supporting those in crisis

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

We expect that our new minister will bring their own strengths and talents to the position. Bringing their perspective to the role may help us identify opportunities we have overlooked or even chosen not to pursue in the past. (Are we truly practicing diversity, inclusiveness, and meaningful connection?)

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

Given the importance of music to our congregation, if the new minister is not a musician themselves, they should recognize and appreciate good music.

We have a significant relationship with the Wase Wakpa, our local indigenous community, which took a long time to cultivate. Our new minister doesn't necessarily need to be familiar with the Native American culture, but they need to have the willingness, patience, and humility to learn and continue to foster that important relationship.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Below we list our primary Church Ministries and a brief description of each.

Christian Education

Youth education for the United Church of Christ in Vermillion is divided into three age groups: LAF (Loaves and Fishes) for preschool through 5th grade students, BC (Before Confirmation) group, for 6th & 7th grade students, and Confirmation I (8th grade) and Confirmation II (9th grade) groups. LAF and BC meet weekly with a college intern as the mentor, in collaboration with the Pastor. Confirmation I and II meet weekly with the Pastor. An additional adult church member serves as a mentor for each age group. In 2024-2025, 52-64 youth participated in youth education.

Our church also offers adult education programming. A weekly Bible study discussion precedes each Sunday Service focused on the service scripture. Wisdom studies are held regularly each year with differing topics to allow a wider discussion and interest in understanding faith from a variety of perspectives and practices. If a fit for the next called pastor, adult education is an area of opportunity to increase offerings in the future.

College Internships

Beginning in 2016, the cabinet approved using the budget line supporting the previous associate pastor to be dedicated to supporting college internships. These interns were assigned a wide variety of roles to support the work of the church and help to relieve some of the responsibilities that might otherwise fall on the pastor. Over the past several years, we have annually recruited 6-12 University of South Dakota undergraduates to a wide variety of roles. Some roles have been consistent throughout the program's history: Nursery, LAF coordinator (elementary school level programming), BC (middle school level programming), and visitation. Other roles have been suited to particular interests and needs of the church such as: Art, Science, Graphic Artist, and Social Media. Overall, the program is viewed as widely successful. It has had many predictable benefits of providing the necessary support for our many programs. The program has also had many unforeseen benefits by explicitly including undergraduates into the church staff. For instance, interns often recruit their friends to participate in events to gain community service hours. These friends then often become involved in many ways, sometimes even becoming interns in the following year. The congregation also enjoys interacting with the students and seeing their talents being displayed to both the children and to adults. In exit interviews, the interns themselves also generally express a very positive experience and typically highlight significant ways in which the experience expanded their own faith.

Media Team

The media team is led by an excellent paid staff member (Emmy award winning director in his time at SD Public Broadcasting) and a paid college intern. The team was created in April of 2020 as a response to canceling in person services due to COVID-19 and has been providing streaming and video services to the church community ever since. Our Sunday services are streamed to Facebook and YouTube. Additionally, other events and happenings in the church are streamed as requested. The media team has also produced videos to help promote special happenings within the church community.

Music Ministry

Music is core to our identity and plays a vital role in our services. The music team consists of paid staff including: an adult choir director, bell choir director, an organist, and a pianist. A wide variety of musical opportunities for every age with music repertoire from styles ranging from the most classical to the newest of settings are performed. The youngest singers participate in a youth choir throughout the year. Those in high school and beyond are invited to participate with the adult choir, sharing an anthem each Sunday and featuring two extended works a year, often with a

chamber orchestra. We have recently done a major restoration on the church organ and purchased a grand piano for Sunday services. A state-of-the-art sound system allows for great audio both in the sanctuary and broadcasted online. The regular hiring of university student musicians to act as interns to sing, direct, and/or play organ has been successful. Additionally, the close connection with the USD Music department has afforded regular and numerous solos, as well as remarkable performances by the USD Chamber Choir.

Prayer Team and Easter Vigil

Praying for our congregants, community and global members is sacred work at UCCV. The prayer team is notified of confidential prayer requests and the entire congregation is notified of individual requests. Each service includes special prayers for those listed in the bulletin. During Holy Week, congregants sign up for hourly slots to hold a continuous prayer vigil.

Stewardship

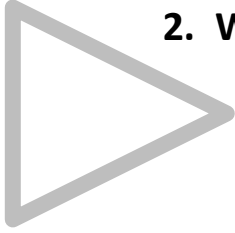
The UCC Vermillion has a long history of working with a balanced budget. Each year an earnest stewardship campaign is led to ensure sufficient pledges and contributions to satisfy the budgetary requirements each year. The stewardship process is led by members of the congregation and members and friends contribute joyfully. This fundraising follows a careful process to ensure that the needs of the church and local community are being met. Considerations for the congregation's giving are paired with this effort and the Trustees and Stewardship Coordinator work together to achieve a target goal. In years where the goal has not been met or pledges have exceeded the goal, adjustments to the budget are made to ensure a yearly balanced budget.

World Service and Social Concerns

The purpose of the UCCV World Service and Social Concerns is to involve the congregation in the mission of the Church locally, regionally, nationally, and world-wide. Besides the on-going local giving via Giving Tree, Welcome Table, Salvation Army, Backpack Program, and prayers in response to those in need. The UCC congregation is consistently responsive to needs as they arise. This includes Christmas bell ringing for the Salvation Army, and important events like buying school year supplies for the Back-to-School Backpack program, to everyday tasks like contributing food to the local Food Pantry, providing meals for the Welcome Table and Meals on Wheels delivery.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary: The UCC Vermillion is prepared to provide a generous salary and housing allowance commensurate with education and experience that exceeds conference guidelines.



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)

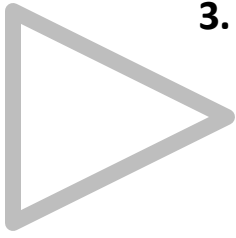
Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

We see ourselves as an inclusive congregation that lives to be “No Longer Strangers” with our neighbors. As a church, we officially are heavily engaged in many aspects of the community and continue to seek out further opportunities. We seek to be a place of refuge for all people and a place where we can engage intellectually with important questions, but primarily lead through love and empathy.

We seek to continually reach out to better serve those that are a part of our congregation and those in the wider community.

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

We have the opportunity to show up for our neighbors, community, and congregation as public witnesses in the midst of a changing world. As issues get bigger, people’s worlds tend to get smaller, and our church can continue to create an environment of showing up for one another. We can grow our ability to promote this through social media and events that we support or partner with.



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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith. In the tradition of the Congregational Church, we do not bind ourselves to an absolute doctrine, but rather walk side by side along with each other in our individual journeys of faith. We are a church that finds value in education and careful thought, finds joy in music and children, and finds fulfillment in helping those that have fallen upon difficult times.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation. Our church is known to be welcoming to all, with a growing vibrant children’s program, excellent music, and a progressive and inclusive ministry.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers. As mentioned above, we have various ways in which to encounter one another that can help meet different folks in different ways. Worship occurs on Sunday mornings and follows a traditional liturgical flow. Music is performed by talented musicians and hymns are regularly sung by the congregation. Messages are provided by the pastor first geared at the children and then to the rest of the congregation. Several members of the church gather before Sunday services for a Bible Study of that week’s passage. These gatherings are thoughtful and intellectually engaging. Following Sunday Service, coffee and treats are provided by congregation members. This gathering is much more social and unstructured. Wednesday evenings are for the youth programs and as such are generally very high energy and creative. Gatherings begin with after school programs for older elementary children following a large group meal prepared for all children groups and their parents. This is a more energetic and lively interaction of the congregation with the children as they break into different age groups for education and arts.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission. The central organizing body is the cabinet which consists of representatives of the major organizing entities of the church (diaconate, trustees, stewardship, education, music, etc.). The diaconate is the primary group to oversee the needs in the church. While they have specific duties for Sunday worship, their primary role is to recruit parishioners for specific ministries or events. The trustees budget expenses to support ministries and consider requests to meet needs of the congregation and community. Additionally, there are several coordinators that serve on the cabinet that oversee several ministries and recruit help from the congregation. These include the education coordinator that oversees the children's programs and works with the respective interns, the music team which works to provide a wide range of experiences including both trained musicians and the congregation, a world services coordinator to oversee the efforts to support those outside of the community, and the media coordinator that ensures broadcasting of streaming services. Additionally, there is a trust fund committee that fosters a growing endowment to provide ongoing funds to maintain the church building. Historically, our pastor has had an important hand in all these groups, providing leadership, guidance and coordination. The loss of a pastor will leave the church without a driving force. While the congregation has a shared vision, we do require leadership to help us focus on ministry and mission and not be pulled away by the busyness of our everyday lives.

Below are links to our organization structure, our recently updated constitution, and bylaws and last year's annual report to provide additional insight of the church's activity and governance.

[United Church of Christ, Congregational Vermillion Constitution](#)

[United Church of Christ, Congregational Vermillion By-Laws](#)

[United Church of Christ, Congregational Vermillion Organizational Chart](#)

[United Church of Christ, Congregational 2025 Annual Report](#)

11-YEAR REPORT

Year	Total Expenses	Capital Payments	OCWM Basic Support	Total OCWM	Local Giving	Total Revenue Pledge + Gifts
2015	\$239,959.00	\$10,856.00	\$6,000.00	\$8,242.00	\$3,076.00	\$260,804.00
2016	\$254,669.00	\$14,113.00	\$3,000.00	\$5,003.00	\$6,280.00	\$276,643.00
2017	\$265,956.00	\$13,027.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,210.00	\$6,805.00	\$300,907.00
2018	\$284,392.00	\$14,027.00	\$6,500.00	\$8,313.00	\$6,615.00	\$300,986.00
2019	\$278,810.00	\$14,025.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,959.00	\$3,963.00	\$284,483.00
2020	\$274,608.00	\$14,394.00	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00	\$3,671.00	\$315,841.00
2021	\$290,790.00	\$33,962.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,240.00	\$4,749.00	\$303,710.00
2022	\$267,364.00	\$31,132.00	\$6,500.00	\$7,260.00	\$6,116.00	\$258,169.00
2023	\$291,377.00	\$33,962.00	\$3,000.00	\$4,791.00	\$4,086.00	\$298,538.00
2024	\$298,768.00	\$31,132.00	\$4,000.00	\$5,647.00	\$2,979.00	\$307,038.00
2025	\$316,910.00	\$33,962.00	\$2,000.00	\$4,541.00	\$5,908.00	\$308,428.00

YEAR	MEMBERS	CONFIRMANDS	LAF ATTENDANCE	SERVICE ATTENDANCE
2015	580	10	Unknown	154
2016	586	5	Unknown	135
2017	609	6	Unknown	139
2018	621	9	Unknown	136
2019	653	10	Unknown	137
2020	651	0	Unknown	119
2021	655	7	50	77
2022	671	11	52	81
2023	685	10	58	91
2024	688	9	55	102
2025	684	9	43	98

Started virtual service 3/15/2020
Virtual Service until 5/16/2021

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Number of active members:	250	yes
Number of non-active members:	434	yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	684	yes

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Church Admin		part time	Pastor	2 years
Church Secretary		part time	Pastor	2 years
Media Director		part time	Pastor	6 years
Bell Director/Pianist		part time	Pastor	22 years
Choir Director		part time	Pastor	29 years
Organist		part time	Pastor	1 years
Custodian		part time	Pastor	35 years
College Interns		part time	Pastor	8 months

CHURCH FINANCES

2026 Proposed Budget

The Vermillion UCC is a financially sound church. We have met our stewardship and capital improvement goals over the past twenty years, growing the budget and making improvements needed to the almost 100-year-old building and equipment.

UCCC Vermillion chooses to give to the following: *(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

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt is \$219,277

Reason for debt: Capital improvements

Are capital and other payments current? yes

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? The current market value of our endowment is \$519,493.

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Payout from earnings is calculated over a moving average and drawn out for requests by the Board of Trustees for designated capital improvement needs. The endowment committee reserves the right to refuse specific requests from the trustees (although this has yet to happen) but is required to provide regular funds for capital improvements.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? A recently renovated elevator allows access to worship space, fellowship hall, and bathrooms.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The United Church of Christ Congregational has just started its 155th year. Founded before statehood in 1871, the church has been home to community and university leaders throughout its years. The current church building, dedicated in 1929, was deliberately designed to evoke the faith community's New England Congregational heritage.

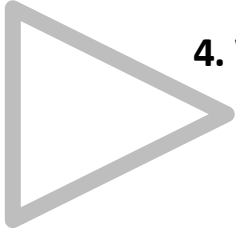
In the absence of a pastor, our members preached, taught, and cared for each other in a way that others have found to be remarkable.

A jewel in the crown of the church's programs is its youth program. "Loaves and Fishes" (LAF) children's program debuted in 1999 with a focus on pre-school and younger grade school children. LAF now provides an integrated youth program structure from 2nd grade, through middle school, to confirmation for 8th and 9th graders.

The church constitution and by-laws underwent a significant revision in 2014 and again in 2018. The revisions position the church for the realities of life in the second decade of the 21st Century.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Katie Miller, Head Pastor	3	
Jean Morrow, Interim Pastor	1	
Stephen G. Miller, Head Pastor	26	
Paul Opsahl, Interim Associate Pastor	2	
Ann Bolson, Associate Pastor	2	
Elaine Miller, Assistant Pastor	5	
Jill Warner, Interim Pastor	1	
Robert Inglis	9	



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?

We seek to more strongly engage the community outside the walls of our church building. There is a desire to meet the need of community groups in the midst of where they are at by recruiting our congregation to regularly contribute to ongoing organized efforts. We do this currently with activities such as Salvation Army and Meals on Wheels and seek to expand this effort.

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

We have consistently contributed financially to the conference and maintain a budget line to maintain this important connection. We also have consistently sent a representative to the UCC association meetings.

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

We regularly welcome interfaith activities and opportunities to collaborate with groups from different faiths. We explicitly opened our doors to Muslims from varying backgrounds during times of national persecution. Local Native American groups use our basement space for funeral rituals (which traditionally are held underground). In our self-study, there is a strong desire to continue relationships with different interfaith groups, from both our congregation and those from other faiths. We participate in a community Ecumenical Pride service and in the Vermillion Ministerial Association Lenten Prayer Services and Soup Lunch, among other community activities.

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?

We have provided a very flexible workload for our pastors. Our congregation is happy to support a balanced workload that embraces the strength of a new pastor to use their talents in the best way possible.

4b. MISSION InSite

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 racial makeup of both our town and our congregation is predominantly Caucasian (83%): the town's largest minority, Native Americans, are only around 4.5% of the population.

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

Vermillion has a surprisingly high poverty rate (over 24.4%) for a town whose largest employers include the university, a hospital and doctors' clinics, and the public school district. That does drive our commitment to assist those in need.

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

Our church is known for its liberal and open outlook. We are known to have relatively more University faculty than other denominations. We are also widely known to support the LGBTQ+ community and be widely involved with many local non-profit organizations that support those in need.

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

Many are introduced to our church via our strong children's program held on Wednesday nights. Others are associated with the University and begin attending based on colleague recommendations. Others appreciate the reputation of the church to be one focused on being engaged in the community and being open minded and widely inclusive.

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.

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.)

Cabinet members all contributed to different aspects of the profile. The search committee was given the opportunity to review and provide input.

Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

This profile was created after the reflection of church leadership on the findings of an extensive self-study exercise conducted in the late summer/early Fall of 2022 and revised by the church leadership, cabinet, and search committee in Spring of 2026.

Signed: 

Katey Ulrich, Moderator, 3/30/2026

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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