First Congregational United Church of Christ
Washington, DC

Senior Minister

Central Atlantic Conference

September
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“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)
POSITION POSTING

Listing Information
First Congregational United Church of Christ
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Conference: Central Atlantic
Association: Potomac
UCC Conference Contact Person:
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Summary Ministry Description
First Congregational United Church of Christ is a forward-looking church, confident that God is still speaking. Founded by abolitionists who invited African Americans into the full life of the congregation, we are a church rich with history. Our forebears repeatedly expanded the church’s understanding of the beloved community in their time. We follow their model, seeking to hear God in new ways, in our relationships with each other and with the changing world around us. God calls on us to be a beacon of that beloved community, to demonstrate an extravagant welcome, to be radically inclusive.

We are located in the heart of the nation’s capital and have a long history of social action and urban ministry. We act locally, nationally, and globally on behalf of and in partnership with the vulnerable and persecuted. We are a Just Peace church (1985), Open and Affirming (1987), and Multiracial Multicultural (2003).

We seek a Senior Minister who lives a life of discipleship. We desire someone made wise through a breadth of experiences and exposure to the rich diversity of humankind. The Pastor will cultivate the church as a spiritual home for congregants, nurture us individually as we need it, and nourish us all each week so that we may do God’s work in the world. We desire, specifically, a senior pastor who can shepherd the congregation through the transformation needed to be truly multi-racial and multicultural. We seek someone who is comfortable and compelling in the pulpit, with a confidence drawn from an ongoing practice of theological reflection and community leadership. The right candidate will have a naturally collaborative style. Finally, it is our hope that a kind and joyous individual will shepherd our congregation into its next chapter of our history.
**Living in Washington, DC**

Washington DC is both a manageable city with a community feel and a center of national and international activity. There are myriad events geared to the diverse local community as well as four sports teams with supportive fans. The international presence (for example, embassies and the World Bank) draws interesting people from all over the world. There are many opportunities for cultural and intellectual activities, in museums (many of them free), a broad range of performances (from soul and go-go to classical), and intellectual, political, and educational forums. The city has an East Coast ethos and four seasons (though it does get muggy in the summer).

**The Position**

We are seeking a full time Senior Minister in a settled position. The total support package will meet Central Atlantic Conference compensation guidelines. The official number of adult members on the rolls at the end of 2016 was 217. The number of active members and regular visitors is closer to 185 adults plus 35 children and youth. Although the primary language of the congregation is English, we are open to a bilingual or trilingual candidate, as many in our congregation do speak a second language.

**Scope of Work**

**Sunday Worship** by planning and leading in collaboration with the Worship Commission, Director of Music, Minister of Faith Formation, and other lay worship participants. Foster, support, and coordinate efforts to maintain and expand lay participation in worship. Sermon preparation, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, offering of prayers, etc. Preach on average in three quarters of the worship services each month, while recruiting others to preach the remaining Sunday each month.

**Faith formation and vitality** through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them. Nurture the prayer and spiritual life of the congregation. Work with Commissions to bring the congregation together for events such as spiritual life retreats. Work with Minister of Faith Formation and the Christian Education Commission to offer quality educational ministry and pastoral care to children and youth, and to ensure quality adult formation and educational opportunities.

**Leadership development** by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs. Promote congregational involvement and leadership by encouraging open and inclusive communication among Council, Commissions, task forces, committees, and the wider congregation.

**Pastoral care** in collaboration with lay people. Work with Care of Parish and foster the spirituality of pastoral care – inviting and training both clergy and laity as caregivers. This includes maintaining a welcoming relationship with the homeless neighbors who seek out the church throughout the week.
**Community engagement** and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God’s love. In consultation with the Social Action and Awareness Commission, support the congregation’s participation in local programs and associations such as Washington Interfaith Network, Pathways to Housing, Downtown Cluster of Congregations, Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association, and Shaw Community Ministries.

**Special services for members.** Conduct and provide special services such as weddings, memorial services, and baptisms for members.

**Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry.** Serve as an *ex officio* member of the Council and work collaboratively with the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, and the council members in planning and implementation.

**Attend meetings and give leadership** as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership and Assistant Ministers.

**Participate in wider church** activities such as conference and association meetings. Maintain an active presence and participates in the Potomac Association, Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC and the national and global ministries of the UCC.

**Faithful financial development** and stewardship. Understand and participate in developing the annual operating budget, the stewardship campaign, and systems of financial management and accountability.

**Supervision of staff.** Build, encourage, and effectively manage a staff team focused on and reflective of the congregation’s goals. Conduct annual staff reviews.

**Counseling, listening and referral.** Visit and counsel parish members and friends to bring prayerful and needed care.

**Study and prayer** to increase faith and improve skills so as to lead, teach, and preach better.

**Energizing and deepening the spiritual connections** and faith understandings of others in all they do.

**Membership development.** Support the Outreach and Membership Commission and the Care of Parish Commission in nurturing opportunities for membership development and sustaining church membership.

**Building use.** Be familiar with and maintain working relationships with groups and companies that lease the building on an ongoing basis.
Compensation & Support

Salary and Benefits

In developing a total support package (including salary, benefits, and a housing allowance), the church will strive to respond to the successful candidate’s personal circumstances while meeting the Central Atlantic Conference compensation guidelines.¹ For a minister with 5 years experience, the CAC guidelines translate to approximately $47,000 cash salary for a church our size; for 20 years experience, it means approximately $54,000 cash salary. The total support package will include a fair and reasonable housing allowance that reflects the cost of living in Washington, DC, where we anticipate the minister to reside. Benefits will conform to the CAC guidelines, including Social Security offset; 14% contribution to the UCC annuity fund; health, life, and disability insurance; professional malpractice insurance; vacation, sick, and other forms of leave; and professional expenses.

Peer and Professional Supports

The Potomac Association usually has a monthly ministerium from September through June. First Church often hosts the gathering. It is a time to share a meal, enjoy fellowship, check-in with one another, and often listen to a speaker. UCC ministers participate in other local ecumenical groups such as the Clergy Soul Group and group spiritual direction. The Central Atlantic Conference is also beginning the program “Communities of Practice” in Fall 2017 to intentionally provide a network of support for clergy.

¹ See the detailed guidelines for 2016-2017 at http://www.cacucc.org/files/fileshare/2016-17+ministers+comp+guidelines.pdf. The official number of adult members on the rolls at the end of 2016 was 217. The number of active members and regular visitors is closer to 185 adults plus 35 children and youth.
WHO GOD IS CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US
The next minister for FCC should be mature, emotionally intelligent, and caring. Strong candidates must demonstrate the ability to lead an urban, social-justice-oriented church and the capacity to be a loving and spiritual Senior Minister to a close-knit congregation.

Ministry Goals
We seek a minister who combines leadership with tenderness. In many ways the minister we seek is similar to a battlefield military chaplain. We are a church filled with front-liners: people who are tackling some of the most difficult issues facing our society: homelessness and gentrification, immigration and refugee management, racism and homophobia, environmental degradation, restorative justice, and the list goes on. Here at First Church we jump in, we are doers, we put ourselves and our small congregation on the line for the causes we believe in. We require a pastor who is resident in the field with us, and one whose tent is a place of encouragement, prayer, renewal and nurturing. One who is tender with our seniors, is an empathetic ear to our youth, and who will, endowed with an active intellect and imbued with the holy spirit, fire up the troops to face our difficult journey each week starting on Sunday morning.

As committed to the struggle as we are, there are times when we falter. We recognize that a pastor alone cannot tend to all who are wounded or provide consistent companionship to those who are shut-in and lonely, thus, pastoral care and care of the parish is a goal of our congregation that we pray our minister can collaborate with us to strengthen. Each of us, if made aware, can do more to be our brother’s and sister’s keeper.

We recognize that our effectiveness on all of these fronts is now and has been, since our founding, hampered by our lack of ethnic and class diversity. A primary ministerial goal that looms large is our hope to become a diverse church where a variety of people feel welcomed and nurtured. Our worship service needs to speak to the intellectual and spiritual needs of everyone in our congregation. We recognize that for many in our nation, Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours of the week, but we also know that this is changing and we want to be true to our vision of being a multiracial, multicultural church. We need a pastor who will help stretch us to get there.

Vision for Impact Beyond Our Walls
We are a caring people. We want to make a noticeable difference in the lives of the oppressed and marginalized, both in our everyday lives and collectively with the church community. We are also busy; many of us have family responsibilities as well as demanding careers.
We yearn each week for our spirits to be nurtured and buoyed, with spiritual food that heals us when we are wounded, and fuels us for the good fight for justice. We want the minister to engage both our minds and souls. We expect inspiring, challenging and prophetic preaching, expanding the congregation’s sense of mission.

Beyond Sunday mornings, we seek someone to support the Minister of Justice Formation in efforts to engage our historical commitment to the most vulnerable on the streets of DC. The Senior Minister should help the congregation focus on contemporary social concerns; strengthen our collaboration, relationships, and connections with other organizations in the District; and foster uses of our building that advance mission.

**Desired Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry**

Of the UCC’s eight “Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry,” it is difficult to narrow our desired characteristics to just four. We would want them all! However, our prioritization of the eight is instructive. **The marks that resonate strongest for First Church are “Participating in theological praxis” and “Working together for justice and mercy.”** The first, regarding theological praxis, speaks to the orienting and motivational words we seek from the pulpit. This includes an emphasis on “practicing theological reflection and engagement; integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching and community leadership; articulating a theology and practice of ministry; participating in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC, and experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.” The second strikes a chord with some of the most deeply held convictions of our congregation. Indeed, we desire a minister who will lead the church as we “confront injustice and oppression, practice radical hospitality; identify and work to overcome explicit and implicit bias; understand community context and navigate change with a community; engage in mission and outreach; and build relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.”

**First Church also seeks a minister who will “Exhibit a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice.”** As the leader of our congregation, we look to our minister to embody a life of discipleship. Just as we as a congregation aspire to a “lifelong spiritual development” and a “continuing discernment of [our] call in the community,” so too we desire a minister who is engaged in a continuous conversation with God about how best to reflect God’s vision in our world. We seek a Senior Minister who can provide spiritual nourishment to our congregants, and we have found that this nourishment is best provided by a spiritual leader who engages deeply with our faith in a way that is both grounded in the tenets of our faith and dynamic in how it is reflected outwardly.

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2The eight Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry are: (1) Exhibiting a spiritual and ongoing spiritual practice; (2) Nurturing UCC identity; (3) Building transformational leadership skills; (4) Engaging sacred stories and traditions; (5) Caring for all creation; (6) Participating in theological praxis; (7) Working together for justice and mercy; and (8) Strengthening inter-and intra-personal assets. A full description of the marks, can be found here: http://www.ucc.org/ministers_marks
Finally, we will look to our next minister to “Strengthen our inter- and intra-personal assets.” We desire a minister who can provide pastoral care for the congregation. The next Senior Minister for First Church should equally “understand and minister” to confirmands wrestling, for the first time, with what it means to truly be Christian, and to church members wrestling with end-of-life concerns, and who can nurture to church members as they experience all life’s tribulations between these bookends.

WHO GOD IS CALLING US TO BECOME

First Church is an urban church. In many ways the demographics of this city and the dynamics of race, poverty, privilege and power provide a special calling for our church. God calls us to meet the needs of our community as a whole, to be multicultural and multiracial, and to be a place of inclusion for all - a place for all forms of families. We are committed to being a congregation that crosses the divides that separate us in our day-to-day lives. We are called to address homelessness and racism, and to be a strong advocate for social justice. The congregation has a strong commitment to not just identifying social injustice, but taking action through its programs and outreach to the community. In doing so we embrace spiritual transformation, stand for justice and peace, and strive to heal our city, nation and world.

Recent Responses to Challenges and Opportunities
Since 2012 the church has articulated and reaffirmed several priorities, including becoming more multiracial and multicultural, ministering to the city’s most vulnerable, and being a spiritual resource to the community. Three examples demonstrate how the church has responded recently to emerging or resurging challenges in these areas.

Anti-racism Strategy
In 2016, Council set anti-racism as a high-priority for the church. Council called on the congregation to engage in a process to (1) identify “what a truly inclusive and diversity-affirming church looks like” and (2) take concrete steps toward being an increasingly anti-racist and a multi-cultural/multi-racial congregation

The church has drafted an anti-racism strategy document that lays out recommendations for actions the church can take to tackle this difficult issue. The creation of this document was itself an act of discernment and reflection. Labels such as “racism” and “white privilege” stoke vigorous and important discussion.
We recognize that becoming truly anti-racist is a difficult, ongoing journey. But it is a journey we have committed to as a congregation.

As part of this process, the congregation has screened films relevant to this topic. We have also begun a discussion series on white privilege for white members of the church, based on the UCC’s new curriculum. This nascent group allows white people to explore their sense of whiteness and acknowledge the ways in which they benefit from white privilege.

We recognize that becoming truly anti-racist is a difficult, ongoing journey. But it is a journey we have committed to as a congregation.

**Downtown Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth**

In August 2016, First Church launched the Downtown Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth. Our Minister of Justice Formation, James Ross, provides strong leadership to the project in collaboration with clinical and professional staff from Sasha Bruce Youthwork, a local nonprofit that works with homeless youth.

The program was developed in response to the emergent crisis of homeless youth in the District. The neighborhood around First Church is a place where homeless teenagers congregate, and we felt compelled to create a space where they could find safe shelter.

After discussions with the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), we agreed to open a pilot drop-in center for the summer and entered a planning process with the BID and Sasha Bruce Youthwork. The center was opened in August 2016, with the goals of responding to some of the immediate needs of this population; demonstrating the care of a loving community and the consistent presence of stable, caring adults; and establishing trust and relationships that will empower guests to take advantage of Sasha Bruce’s case management services.

The center is open inside First Church on Monday nights from 6 until 9 p.m. Attendance at the center averages 50 or more guests each week. The vast majority of guests are African American and many identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. First Church members and friends provide volunteer staffing, financial support, and special initiatives (such as Thanksgiving Dinners) for the program.

In launching this program, we sought to demonstrate the potential of this approach and to encourage other churches and organizations to launch similar efforts.

**Wednesday Break Away**

The neighborhood around First Church has evolved into one of the busiest parts of the city during working hours. Twenty-four percent (24%) of all the jobs in the District are located in our area. To be a resource to the professionals that surround us, First Church launched the weekly 30-minute “Break
Away” sessions for meditation and silence in our chapel. The sessions are an opportunity to set aside the whirlwind of everyday life. They provide a time apart and offer an opportunity to be in communion with others. The Break Away sessions regularly draw 15-30 participants. These individuals can then return to their work lives re-centered and rejuvenated.

OUR HISTORY
Having a church that is over 150 years old, rooted and grounded in the nation’s capital, provides a rich history of “significant happenings.” The overarching theme of these happenings is Faith in God’s core vision for the human family despite the leanings and norms of the day. First Church has always been and will always will be our brother’s and sister’s keeper. This radical inclusivity has caused the Church turmoil, near-financial ruin and rebirth, and a loss of some beloved members over the years. Over the course of our history, a few episodes stand out. They reflect different ways our Church has wrestled with how we would be perceived, the Church for Blacks, the Church for Gays, the Urban Church. Together, they are representative of our quest for the beloved community.

The Church’s Founding and Early Fissure
Our church was founded in 1865 by abolitionists determined to uphold the ideals of equality. In 1867, the church played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. All seemed well until actual children of color were invited to worship at the Church and a backlash of exclusivity arose. The Church had no issue with the abolition of slavery, but to have former slaves and their descendants sit in the pews next to their own children was unthinkable to many members. On April 22, 1869, Dr. Charles Boynton, our first minister, and ninety-nine members (over half of the congregation), severed their connection with the Church. The ninety-four remaining members, including General Oliver Otis Howard, faced an unfinished building and $60,000 of debt. By faith, and a loan backed by the University, the Church survived. This ordeal at the church’s founding was the first of what has become 150 years of near-continuous wrestling with the difficult challenge of being a truly inclusive community.

Remaining an Urban Church
Over several decades the Church has grappled with the issue of location, location, location. In 1953, the original church building, nearly 100 years old, was condemned. The Church faced this crisis with limited funds and a congregation that, like many at the time, was becoming increasingly suburban. A church building committee was appointed and received permission to put the church property on the market, but there were few interested buyers. When an offer substantially lower than the asking price came in, a congregational meeting was called for a vote on whether to accept the offer and use the proceeds to build elsewhere. All the leadership of the church -- the trustees, the Council, the ministers, and the Church Planning Committee -- recommended that the church accept the offer and move. But the congregation voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer and stay at the 10th and G Street location. As a result of this vote most of the trustees resigned, and some members left. The congregation voted to remain at 10th and G because they believed that the mission of the Church belonged in the heart of the city. This required sacrifice. Many other churches took advantage of cheaper property outside the city and escaped the urban blight that had gripped D.C. We took on substantial loans and drew down on our endowment to stay in the city. In the decades since, the congregation has validated the benefits of remaining downtown as well worth the costs.

**Becoming Open and Affirming**
A century later, during the 1970’s, the Church suffered a parallel cultural crisis. The Metropolitan Community Church in Washington had asked to use our chapel for Sunday afternoon services. The Metropolitan Community Church (“MCC”) was a church denomination established in California by Troy Perry and was primarily a ministry to gay and lesbian people. Our church council authorized this use without dissent. All went well until the local MCC congregation began to grow and needed more room. They requested that their church be granted the use of the main sanctuary on Sunday afternoons and some rooms for a church office. Although church council thought that this was quite feasible they decided that an issue like this should go to a congregational meeting. To the council’s surprise, the resolution that would have rented requested space to the MCC failed. At that point there were strong feelings on both sides of the issue. The Church hosted a series of workshops, dialogues, and lectures regarding conflict and sexual identity. After a full summer of intensive congregational involvement, there was another congregational meeting. This time the outcome favored the arrangement. Many in our congregation were encouraged. Some were angry. Two families left the church. Nevertheless, First Church was one of the first UCCs to fully embrace “Open and Affirming.”

**Returning to Our Historic Home**
In our more recent history, one event stands out as being particularly significant: in January 2012, after a long and difficult redevelopment, First Congregational United Church of Christ returned to our
historic site at 10th and G Street, NW. Our award-winning building\(^3\) is in constant use, responding to the needs and opportunities of our city. In addition to Pathways to Housing, we are home to FreshFarms, a local nonprofit that promotes sustainable agriculture and improves food access and equity, and to the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, a planning advocacy organization. Our sanctuary, with its outstanding acoustics, is in great demand for musical and theatrical performances,\(^4\) and many nonprofit groups meet here.\(^5\)

There are many other significant moments that reveal how this Church has been pushed out of its comfort zone to come out on the side of Faith in our common humanity. We hold these stories near as both reminders of how challenging it can be to truly embrace Jesus’s radical hospitality, and how strong our forebears were in their commitment to inclusivity.

\(^3\) First Congregational UCC is the only building in Washington, DC designed by the National of Arts Medal winning firm of Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects of New York.

\(^4\) The sanctuary’s stunning acoustics and our downtown location make our space a sought after location for Washington’s top chamber and choral groups, including the Washington Bach Consort Chamber Series (and their Wunderkind Projekt), New Orchestra of Washington, Georgetown Chorale, Thomas Circle Singers, and The Capital Hearings. In addition to these groups who return several times each year, this fall we’ll also see Sahara Dance, Spilling Ink Arts, the Choral Arts Chamber Singers, The Thirteen, and the Yunus Emre Institute. Our Facebook page can give you a fuller sense of all of the arts performances that take place in our sanctuary. During the 2013 federal government shutdown we were honored to host the Ford’s Theater production of *The Laramie Project*. Ford’s made a powerful video about going forward with the show despite the shutdown (available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9o2DnS5wlNQ).

\(^5\) Meeting space for Mayor’s Faith Based Economic Summit, Shalem Institute, Chorus America, the Mayor’s Interfaith Council, Bread for the World, AARP, DC for Democracy Election Forums, Starting Bloc, DC Statehood Strategy Summit, Balkan Nights: Chicago Adventure, Association for Preservation Technology and DC Front Runners, Potomac Association ministeriums, American Guild of Organists Executive Committee, Creation Justice Ministries Board, DC Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement Planning Meeting, and International Youth for Climate Justice to name a few.
WHO WE ARE NOW

We are a progressive church in downtown Washington, DC. In many ways, we remain rooted in our congregational, mainline Protestant history. We have the tradition of a strong pulpit and liberal, Protestant worship.

While we have many of the trappings of the mainline Protestant tradition, we often push the boundaries of the traditional. We wrestle with how we describe and talk about God so that we can keep the language of church relevant for both old and young, churched and unchurched, and build a just and loving community. While we often draw on the New Century Hymnal, we recognize the important spiritual role of music, and its power to speak to different people in different ways. We have responded to this by broadening the styles and cultural roots of the music used in the service.

Our worship space is another example of both our commitment to tradition and our impulse to hear how God is speaking. While still on our original site, the sanctuary is anything but traditional. We are located in a new Gold LEED standard building, spacious, accessible, full of light, with wonderful acoustics and movable chairs, conducive to different worship configurations and other public meetings and music programs.

We strive to have an inclusive life of faith. As we say during our communion ritual, “no matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, all are welcome at this table.” Our efforts to be inclusive are formal, including being intentionally a Just Peace, Open and Affirming and Multiracial and Multicultural congregation. They are also informal, such as the inclusive language and multicultural influences in our communal and worship life and practice.

The congregation comes from a wide range of religious backgrounds, discovering at First Church openness, diversity, freedom of conscience, and a place committed to progressive values, theology and social justice. In May 2016, approximately 35 members participated in a 50-question survey designed to illuminate the theological/spiritual dynamic that most profoundly motivates us. The participants clearly fell into two of the four faith views, (1) God as loving energy: God is not distant but is experienced right now as the “Life” that animates this world and fills it with exciting possibilities and (2) God as liberator: that God takes sides in this world, being committed to the poor and the oppressed, and spiritual satisfaction is found by participating in the struggle for justice. The other two faith views are present but less prominent -- God as almighty (that our struggle is with temptation, sin, and guilt) and God as
parent (that the problem is the experience of feeling lost, abandoned, isolated, unprotected, and insecure).\textsuperscript{6}

Most congregants ascribe to a progressive theology, and this is reflected in many of the theologians we admire, such as Marcus Borg. Borg speaks of God as a God of love and justice, revealed to us in the person of Jesus and experienced as a presence or grace engaging us at our deepest levels. We are called to respond as followers of Jesus Christ. Borg is one of the theologians read by the theology reading group. His 2014 memoir “\textit{Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most},” was the subject of a three-part nurture in 2015. Other authors read by the Theology Reading Group include Reggie Wilson, John Dominic Crossan, Shelby Spong, Karen Armstrong, Howard Thurman, Paula Fredriksen, Lloyd Geering, James Cone, Paul Knitter, William Barber, Walter Wink, Brian McLaren, Robert Funk, Walter Brueggemann, and Henri Nouwen.

**Experiencing the Holy Spirit in Our Presence**
The Holy Spirit is experienced in our midst in our strong sense of caring community and our Covenant with one another, and also in our broader experiences of connectedness, compassion and concern for justice:

\textit{In grateful response to the call of Jesus Christ, we covenant with God and with each other to be a Church of Christ. We bind ourselves, in God’s redeeming presence, to walk together in ways revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in sacrament and Word, study and prayer, fellowship and mission.}

We experience the Holy Spirit when we celebrate communion, forming a large intergenerational circle around the sanctuary, making it possible to see all the faces of those with whom we are in community, affirming God’s love and our love for one another. Indeed, there are many ways that congregants feel the Holy Spirit in their lives, but in the words of a favorite hymn, \textit{For the Fruit of All Creation}, “most of all because love has found us.”

**Strengths of the Congregation**
We have identified five strengths of the congregation. **The first is the extravagant welcome we try to extend to each other and visitors.** One form of the welcome to each other is our inclusive process for governance, discernment, and deliberations. We currently limit terms on council and commissions to two years; this poses a challenge for continuity but a proactive nominating process fosters a high level of lay involvement. As issues arise, they are discussed and processed such that, for the most part, people feel they have been heard even if the outcome is not what they prefer. This inclusive process, along with other non-church-business opportunities for getting to know each other better, has served to create a strong sense of community and a generally cohesive congregation. The welcome to visitors is reflected in a genuine openness to people whoever they are and wherever they

\textsuperscript{6} The inventory and full descriptions of the four faith views are by W. Paul Jones, Lee Barrett, and Holly MillerShank.
are on life’s journey. We value freedom of conscience and diversity and strive very hard to live up to this.

The extravagant welcome can be attributed, in part, to our church’s long history of inclusiveness. First Church was founded in 1865 by abolitionists and helped found Howard University two years later. Our rich history reminds us from whence we came, and what values have been carried forward by our forebears. In each major decision point the church has emerged stronger, with a deeper commitment to values such as inclusiveness, openness, social justice. From the first defining crisis in 1869 – during which its first (segregationist) pastor and more than half the congregation departed -- to the 1985 decision to become a Just Peace church, to the 1987 decision to become Open and Affirming, to our 2003 decision to declare ourselves a Multiracial-Multicultural church, we have made a commitment to go beyond welcoming the stranger to understanding ourselves as one with the stranger; to move beyond creating a more diverse community to becoming one with the whole community of God.

The third strength we would elevate is a continuation of this history: a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy. It is important for us to stay informed about and involved in the issues facing our city, nation, and the world. This commitment is bolstered by the progressive theology and preaching that we prefer – that God is a God of love and justice, and we are called to be radically inclusive and bring justice to the oppressed.

The church’s programming is strong and consistent with our extravagant welcome and commitment to social justice. The Senior Minister coordinates and guides the array of programs. The Minister of Faith Formation supplies education programming for adults, and for children and youth, which is in a period of rapid and exciting growth and involves hands-on experience in social justice. The Minister of Justice Formation, on staff since mid-2015, supports the social action and awareness focus of the church, which is currently very active in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness, anti-racism, and the sanctuary movement.

Finally, our physical space is a true strength. It is the third building constructed on our site in downtown Washington DC since 1868. The downtown location is easy to reach by five Metro lines (Red, Yellow, Orange, Blue, and Silver). It is close to the National Mall, making the church a logical choice as a gathering point for advocacy. New in 2012, the modern, light-filled, non-traditional sanctuary is at once surprising and comforting. It invites visitors to reimagine their relationship to the church. The space represents a fresh perspective of God, still speaking, in the city. When not in use for services, the building has become a significant venue for the arts. We have become a home for musical concerts,
theater works, lectures, and visual art exhibits, and are increasingly recognized as a desired venue for exhibitions and performances.

**How We Worship**
Worship has been key to much of the growth that we have experienced. Like our focus on social justice, meaningful worship is often the doorway into the church.

The church gathers on Sunday mornings for one service of worship at 10:30 a.m., drawing members and visitors from the city, suburbs and beyond. Our homeless neighbors also join us. Worship is preceded by choir practice and Bible Workbench, a lay-led adult Bible discussion group following the lectionary scriptures of the day. Congregants often gather in the narthex before worship to drink a cup of coffee and catch up with each other.

We worship in an accessible sanctuary space. The space is open and versatile, with chairs instead of pews, and very little that is bolted to the ground. On any given Sunday, the sanctuary space may look slightly different to accommodate the needs of that service. In an attempt to make our services welcoming, the Outreach and Membership Commission ensures that all members and all second-time visitors have name tags available.

Children are present initially in worship. Almost weekly, during “children’s time,” they are engaged with the adults in a special way, such as dancing Sarah’s circle. Our young people show a comfort during the service that is distinctive from other church settings. After ‘children’s time’, most young people go to the Education Suite for Sunday school, though they are welcome to stay in the sanctuary if they like. On communion Sundays, children rejoin the gathered congregation and their families for communion.

The service is conducted in English, occasionally incorporating hymns and choir music in other languages, pursuing multiracial-multicultural inclusion. There are periodic baptisms, given our growing congregation of young families and several newborns. It is always a moving experience of welcoming children and others into the church family.

Worship is planned by clergy and music staff with our Worship Commission and other interested laity. It generally follows the liturgical calendar though worship is also tailored to themes and special events specific to our congregation. For example, the service on January 22, 2017 --the day after the Women’s March on Washington -- celebrated women’s leadership and equity.

First Church is committed to the use of inclusive language in our worship services, including use of the New Century Hymnal and other sources. The service is led by both lay members and our clergy, preaching on the lectionary scriptures and relating to our life together and in
society. The pastor preaches and/or arranges for other preachers, including other ministerial staff, guest preachers and lay members.

Throughout each worship service, music inspires us. A dedicated all-volunteer choir of 15-20 members sings every Sunday. Their contribution to worship is deeply valued by the congregation. Many of us are in awe of their performances. Our Director of Music also invites talented guest musicians to participate. We have a 37-rank Casavant pipe organ and a grand piano in the sanctuary.

We expect inspiring, challenging and prophetic preaching, expanding the congregation’s biblical knowledge, interpretation and sense of mission. After the weekly sermon, we reserve time for prayers of the community that include celebrations and concerns. Congregants are invited to share their prayers out loud with the community, or to simply hold them in their hearts. This sharing is often very moving, forging strong connections among the members of the community as they share their private concerns as well as their responses to the events in our city, nation, and world.

Service is followed by fellowship in “coffee hour” that nearly the entire congregation participates in. All are welcome at coffee hour, and it draws visitors, including our homeless neighbors.

Our Vision for Faith Formation
The educational program at First Church is in a stage of rapid and exciting growth. After a period of transition, we have a Minister of Faith Formation, Sam McFerran, who has breathed energy and direction into the educational program for children and youth. Our Sunday School has an infant room, with 3-5 infants in attendance each Sunday, as well as three classrooms - young children, children and tweens - each with 5-10 young church members in attendance each week. Participation peaked last year with 37 children and youth participating in the annual Christmas Pageant. This marks substantial growth over where the youth program was only a few years ago.

The children are taught by members of the congregation, using a team teaching model that pairs 6 adults with each classroom, and has them rotate in pairs, so that each teacher is with the youth approximately once a month. We use the “Growing in Grace and Gratitude” curriculum for the children and young children and “Seasons of the Spirit” for the tweens, and have complemented these with a two-part Sunday School curriculum on developing empathy. The youth also initiated a pen pal relationship with the children and
youth of Mount Zion Presbyterian Church of Accra, Ghana. Youth at First Church preach from the pulpit and design worship services.

Activities for the youth extend beyond the walls of the church, as well, including service opportunities with Seabury Resources for the Aging; a two-day youth retreat exploring Urban Ministry Themes with youth from Memorial UCC from Wisconsin; and a week-long Habitat for Humanity mission trip to West Virginia.

In 2017, we had a confirmand class of five youth between the ages of 13 and 16. Each confirmand is paired with an adult mentor who guides the youth through a 4-month confirmation process, at the end of which the youth can choose to become confirmed or not. This is the largest class to go through the confirmation process in recent history, and in fact is the first class in the last three years. We are hopeful that the confirmation process will become more regular as the larger group of younger children grow in the church.

Faith formation, of course, is a lifelong pursuit. Formal adult faith formation occurs primarily in three settings:

- **Adult Nurtures**, after-church lecture and discussion serie, planned by various staff and lay leaders. These cover a range of topics of interest to the congregation, from “Spiritual Wounds: Paths to Healing from Religious Trauma” and “Sacred Conversations about Hospice and Compassionate Care” to “Open that Door! Come Home! : Affordable Housing in 2016” and “White Privilege;”
- **Bible Workbench**, a lay-led group that meets weekly before church to discuss individual pieces of scripture; and
- **Theology Reading Group**, a lay-led book club that selects theology books to read and discuss monthly. Authors for the most part reflect progressive theology.

Together, from infants to adults, we all strive to follow God and discern what it means to be a Church, a Sunday school, a witness of light to the world, and a builder of beloved community.

**Our Mission and Priorities**

Our church’s mission reads:

*We are a UCC congregation in the heart of Washington, D.C., led by the Spirit and in covenant with God and each other. We seek to understand and experience God and respond to the call of Christ as reflected in our heritage and today’s experiences.*

*We welcome people of all ages, abilities, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, and beliefs to share and grow in faith through worship, prayer, education, mutual support, and social action.*
In so doing, by God’s grace, we nourish each other, embrace spiritual transformation, stand for justice and peace, and strive to heal our city, nation, and the world.

Since 2012 the church has articulated and reaffirmed several priorities:

- Strengthen our prophetic voice in DC
- Broaden outreach and hospitality to be more welcoming of a multicultural, multiracial, multi-generational, and diverse community
- Provide inspirational, challenging, and welcoming worship, music, and preaching
- Expand our children and youth ministry as we strengthen adult education and faith formation
- Minister to the city’s most vulnerable, including advocating for affordable housing
- Strengthen our collaboration, relationships, and connections with other organizations in the city through action
- Expand use of our building for social action, and offer our building to engage the community through music and the arts
- Live in covenant, unity and fellowship with one another in ways that facilitate open and loving communication
- Examine and evaluate the relationships among clergy, staff, members and friends to achieve our shared vision and effectively carry out the work of the church

How We Organize Ourselves for Ministry and Mission

The church is organized for ministry and mission through staff, in conjunction with the Council (Officers), commissions and task forces. Our Senior Minister is the only full-time staff member for the church. The church is supported, however, by a strong team of part-time staff, including the Minister of Faith Formation, the Minister of Justice Formation, the Director of Music, the Building Manager, and an Administrative Assistant.

Our congregation is led by the Council, composed of a Moderator (chief lay officer), Assistant Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, two at-large members and commission representatives. The Church commissions include:

- Standing commissions in the bylaws
  - Finance
  - Facilities
  - Investment
- Chartered commissions
  - Care of Parish

The Minister of Justice Formation, hired in 2015, has had a dramatic and important impact on our sense of mission and has helped bring some order to our actions. Where before our social action identity was narrow and deep with the Dinner Program for Homeless Women, now greater numbers of members are more engaged across a wider variety of issues. As a small church we feel stretched thin, but we have trouble saying no to new ideas or issues that arise and we risk being overextended with only a diffuse impact.
○ Christian Education
○ Outreach and Membership
○ Social Action and Awareness
○ Worship

In addition to these chartered commissions, we also have several task forces and other positions. This includes the Ministerial Relations Team, composed of Moderator, Assistant Moderator, immediate past moderator, and chair of the Personnel Committee. This team is designed to act as a sounding board for the Senior Minister and as a place for feedback from the congregation. We also maintain representatives to civic and denominational groups, a Personnel Committee, a Nominating Committee, the Home for All Advocacy Task Force, an Archivist, and, currently, the Pastoral Search Committee. In the Spring 2017 Congregational Meeting, the church also voted to form a task force to guide our efforts in supporting the Sanctuary Church movement.

The Church Council and seven commissions meet approximately monthly for 1.5 to 2 hours each; the Investment Commission meets quarterly. There are also Council-appointed committees meeting as the need arises. Out of the commissions emerge discerned policy and program needs that are brought before Council for approval and subsequent recommendation for votes of approval at congregational meetings.

The church’s bylaws provide that between congregational meetings the Church Council may act on behalf of the congregation. If this occurs, the decision is brought to the next regular congregational meeting for ratification. Sometimes there are matters that warrant calling a special congregational meeting instead; these meetings require a week’s notice to the congregation.

In recent years, all congregational concerns have been able to be managed in either of these ways. For example, in 2007 - 2009, during the site development process, relatively fast-moving adverse changes in the economy caused us to adjust the development plan and thus the deal with the developer. The Site Development Committee, which included a legal team, quickly developed options and, through Council, brought them to the congregation in a special meeting for decision. More recently, quick action was needed in response to sudden departures of key staff. In 2014 the music director resigned. The Senior Minister, with the support of the Ministerial Relations Team, quickly responded and communicated the change to the congregation, and prepared a plan for hiring an interim, whose contract was approved by Council and the congregation. If a decision from Council is needed between its monthly meetings, the moderator will poll the Council by email.

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8 The church’s most recent annual report and bylaws are available on our website.
**Congregational Demographics and Financial Trends**

From 2006 through 2016 formal membership increased almost 20%, from 183 to 217. Weekly average attendance dipped during the period the church building was under construction and we were in interim space, but it is back up to 2006 levels. Total spending is up 22%. See the Appendix B for the full 11 year report.

We estimate that 185 adults currently actively participate in our church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of active members:</th>
<th>135 resident</th>
<th>5 non resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of active non-members:</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total of adult church participants (sum of the numbers above): 185

We estimate that the 185 adult participants have been in the church:

The 185 adults and 38 children and youth fall approximately into these age categories:
We estimate the 185 adults live in these types of households:

![Household Types of Members](image-url)

Nearly all participants are professionals with college degrees or higher. Many have graduate degrees, and there have always been a relatively large number of ordained ministers in the congregation. We estimate that more than 75% are employed, 20% are retired, and less than 5% are not fully employed. The majority of working adults are professional. Also, being in Washington DC, many are involved in government and in public-sector-oriented nonprofits.

At present, roughly 20 percent of the participating adults are not Western European American, with roughly 10 percent African American and 10 percent Hispanic, Asian American, and African. Almost half of the latter congregation members have arrived since early 2012.

**Aspiring to Diversity**

We have engaged in a years-long process of structured self-reflection on the diversity of our congregation. In response to the approval at the 1993 General Synod of the UCC’s Multiracial Multicultural (MRMC) initiative, since the mid-1990s First Church has intentionally considered how to be more racially and culturally diverse, asking questions such as what should our paid staff and lay leadership look like, or how can we diversify our worship and music.

In 1996 one of the ministers coordinated and wrote First Church’s case study for the initiative. The case study addressed a broad array of questions: demographics of the church and the city (the “parish community”); changes in each over the previous ten years; efforts to become MRMC; tensions and points of stress; etc.

In 2000 we established an MRMC task force. In 2001 a facilitated three-session discernment process led to the creation of a Beloved Community Task Force and steps to keep the MRMC concern intentional and infused in the life of the church. In 2003, after prolonged study, we voted to affirm a vision to be a more Multiracial Multicultural church.

In 2004, when we knew the longtime pastors planned to retire in 2007, a staffing task force studied churches that were MRMC to learn what made them so, especially with respect to staffing models. The task force found that several factors helped a church become MRMC. The entire leadership’s racial composition is key, as is the totality and tone of worship, clarity of mission and self-identity, and a demonstrated commitment to working on racism and unexamined assumptions and building trust.
The task force, though, did not recommend that the next senior pastor necessarily needed to be a person of color, as many expected it would. The task force also concluded that diversity in music contributes significantly to the MRMC identity of a congregation. Subsequent programming from 2005 to 2008 focused on attempts to diversify the crucial element of music in worship. Many in the congregation welcomed the programmatic changes; others felt uncomfortable with the new and unfamiliar aspects of their Sunday worship.

In the face of this resistance, and with much of the congregation’s energy focused on the consuming matters of its deteriorating church building and changes in pastoral leadership, the congregation was not ready to fully tackle the difficult MRMC work.

More recently, however, First Congregational has returned its attention to becoming more truly multiracial and multicultural. During our 150th anniversary year of 2015, we focused on the abolitionist roots of the church and the reaffirmations over time to be anti-racist. This led to a resurgence of desire to do the hard work on being fully, truly anti-racist. During 2016 an anti-racism strategy was drafted and in 2017 it provides a framework for various efforts to break through the system of structured relations into which we are all socialized and which makes racial bias unconscious, to make the church a safe space for people of color, and act in the world to make society less racist and more just.

**Participation and Staffing**

We have a broad range of activities and groups for members and visitors to engage in the life of the church:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of Gathering</th>
<th>Estimated number of people involved in attendance</th>
<th>Who plans each of the listed gatherings?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Groups or Classes</td>
<td>People of Color Affinity Group (10)</td>
<td>Lay Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theology Reading Group (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>Five last year</td>
<td>Senior Minister and Worship Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Groups or Classes</td>
<td>Nursery Care (14)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Children (8)</td>
<td>and Christian Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tweens (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Eve and Easter Worship</td>
<td>Easter (200 for 2015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christmas Eve (135, 2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christmas Day (16, 2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church-wide Meals</td>
<td>Monthly Potlucks (60 to 80)</td>
<td>Care of Parish, Worship Commission, and Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maundy Thursday Service (75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choirs and Music Groups</td>
<td>Choir (18)</td>
<td>Minister of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Leader/Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church-based Bible Study</strong></td>
<td>Bible Workbench (5)</td>
<td>Lay Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communion</strong></td>
<td>Served monthly Maundy Thursday Service</td>
<td>Staff and Worship Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Meals</strong></td>
<td>Drop in Center for Homeless Youth, weekly meal (provided by our partners); we provide snacks to go (40 to 60 weekly)</td>
<td>Minister of Justice Formation and Social Action and Awareness Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmation</strong></td>
<td>Class of six started March 2017, five finished</td>
<td>Senior Minister and Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funerals</strong></td>
<td>One in 2016</td>
<td>Staff and Care of Parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intergenerational Groups</strong></td>
<td>No formal group, but purposeful activities, e.g., volunteering with Seabury Resources for the Aging</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Worship</strong></td>
<td>Blessing of the Animals (15)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prayer or Meditation Groups</strong></td>
<td>Break Away Meditation Group (15-30)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Advocacy Work</strong></td>
<td>Affordable Housing Anti-Racism Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) Shaw Community Ministry</td>
<td>Social Action and Awareness Commission WIN representative lay member of church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retreats</strong></td>
<td>Spring Spiritual Life Retreat at Camp Wabanna</td>
<td>Senior Minister and Minister of Faith Formation Worship Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weddings</strong></td>
<td>None in 2016 for Church Members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>One Service at 10:30 am Sunday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young Adult Groups or Classes</strong></td>
<td>Tweens Sunday Class (6) Confirmation Class (6)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation Christian Education Commission Members of congregation as teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Groups or Classes</strong></td>
<td>Child Sunday School Class (8) Young Sunday School Class (8) Nursery Care (14)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation Christian Education Commission Members of congregation as teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Share Iftar dinner for the breaking of Ramadan fast at Ezher Bloom Mosque in Fairfax, VA; Ad hoc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mobilizations such as letters to US officials advocating for Colombia; Women's march; Interfaith prayer service following massacre in Orlando; Community gathering (July 2016) in response to police shootings of blacks; Periodic inquirers’ gatherings.

At present, 17 members are ordained clergy. Not all who are formal members are active in the life of the church. Several maintain their membership at First Church to retain their standing within the conference. Twelve are currently active, five of whom are retired from ministry. Two have four-way covenants with the church. In addition, two are members-in-discernment.

One of the 17 members who are ordained clergy is Barbara Gerlach, former minister (1985 – 2007) and widow of John Mack (senior minister 1984 – 2007). John retired in June 2007 and died in January 2008 as a result of illness incurred while trekking at high altitude in Nepal. At the request of the church and with the Conference’s endorsement, Barbara re-joined the community and remains a member, along with her two adult children. Two others were former ministers many years ago: Jean Alexander was the Assistant Minister from 1976-1984, and Bruce Hanson was Assistant Minister 1962-1964. Jean rejoined the church in 2012; Bruce was a member into the 1990s, and rejoined in 2012.

The current staff are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Position</th>
<th>Compensation (full time, part-time, volunteer)</th>
<th>Supervised by</th>
<th>Length of Tenure for current person in this position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Dr. Sidney Fowler, Senior Minister (head of staff)</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Sam McFerran, Minister of Faith Formation</td>
<td>Part-time (25 hours/week)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. James Ross, Minister of Justice Formation</td>
<td>Part-time (15 hours/week)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Horman, Director of Music</td>
<td>Part-time (15 hours/week)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron Adams, Building Manager</td>
<td>Part-time (30 hours/week)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Dobbs, Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Part-time (30 hours/week)</td>
<td>Senior Minister</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Staffing and Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luis Murillo, Child Care Worker</td>
<td>Part-time (3 hours/week)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora Parisi, Child Care Worker</td>
<td>Part-time (3 hours/week)</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timur Murillo, Child Care Worker</td>
<td>Substitute</td>
<td>Minister of Faith Formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reflections on Demographics and Staffing

First Church is a small church. The number of active members and other participants has hovered around 200 for many years. Given the small size, a relatively large number of volunteers work with the small paid staff to carry out the functions and mission work of the church.

The recent level of membership, participation, and interest is something to be optimistic about. After spending five years offsite in interim space while the building was demolished and rebuilt (2007 - 2011), since our return to 10th and G net membership is up more than 50 from the end of 2011 to the end of 2016 and average worship attendance has increased (after dropping to a low of 58 in 2011):

Our growth in the last five years has been diverse by age and household - for example, there are currently 38 children and youth up to 17 years old, the most in several decades. A quarter of the adult members and participants are 65 or older and represent retention of long-time members.

The Church entered a new period in 2012 with the return to our own site. We had a new transition minister, a new building and an almost palpable sense of new hope. New members with more diversity...
are joining and creating groups and participating in the life of the church from commissions to outings and the many varying needs that arise from an active and socially engaged church.

First Church has many ordained members, most are regular members who are either retired or aren’t currently in a religious setting and a few who are active in other religious settings. This seems to speak to the wider activities of the church, such as social justice issues, that attracts clergy to our congregation.

Washington DC, a transient hub with the federal government being one of the largest employers in the area, does have some impact on our membership. Some members join then, through circumstances they don’t control, transfer when they leave the region.

Looking at the demographics there are ways we do well in diversity and in ways we need to improve. We recognize the many different ways to be diverse, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, income, and education. We do some well, others not as well, but always try to make an effort.

**Church Finances**

Current annual income (actual income in 2016, most recent fiscal year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving</td>
<td>$302,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Proceeds</td>
<td>$125,000 for general operations (3% of average endowment value over last 8 quarters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$12,995 for mission, based on earnings on a particular bequest (cumulative amount over 3 years, frequent annual amount = $3,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Draw</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentals of Church Building and parking spaces (not including a parsonage)</td>
<td>$209,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Prior Year Surplus</td>
<td>$7,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Monthly and special offerings that go to designated mission beneficiaries</td>
<td>$14,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: various</td>
<td>$12,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$677,564 (compared to $665,000 budgeted for 2016)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): $665,000 budgeted in 2016; $626,443 spent in 2016. The 2016 budget vs. actual and 2017 approved budget, and balance sheet as of December 31, 2016 can be on the FCUCC website.

The church has no debt, capital and other payments are current, and no building program is planned. Ministerial support in the 2017 budget represents 32.5% of the total. It covers compensation for the full time Senior Minister, the 25 hours/week Minister of Faith Formation, the 15 hours/week Minister of Justice Formation, and the 15 hours/week Music Director, and guest preachers, as well as pastoral coverage late in 2017 during the Senior Minister’s sabbatical. The church has never failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church.

Our church is 5-for-5 in supporting the UCC. Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support) was budgeted in the unified budget, not subject to a special offering, at $25,000 each year 2005 - 2016. In 2016, OCWM was 4.6% of current local expenses, down from 5.4% in 2006. For One Great Hour of Sharing we collected $3,433 in a 2016 special offering, $840 for Strengthen the Church, $1,928 for Neighbors in Need, and $1,427 for the Christmas Fund.

The church has no debt, capital and other payments are current, and no building program is planned. The current building was new in 2012. There was no campaign in the last ten years and none is underway or anticipated.

**New Building in 2012, Financed with Proceeds from Sale of Air Rights**

The most recent prominent capital investment was the development of our current building, though it did not involve a traditional capital campaign. It was constructed 2007 - 2011 with the proceeds from the sale of air rights to a developer and opened in 2012. The church building completed in 1960 was torn down in 2008 and a new building constructed. The new 25,000-square-foot building was totally financed through the proceeds of the sale of air rights to a developer. In addition to funding the $18 million building, the proceeds of the sale added $3.4 million to the church’s endowment. The goals of the total redevelopment of the site included: a new, accessible structure for the next 50+ years; a sanctuary for both worship and use as a public venue for community fora, concerts, performances, etc.; a healthy endowment to provide significant income to each annual budget.

As plans to redevelop the First Church site began to take shape in 2004, the congregation had every intention of providing space for the Dinner Program for Homeless Women (DPHW) in its new facility. That hope was dashed when the worst economic downturn since the Depression forced changes to our development partner and plans, and the new arrangement meant that the congregation could no longer house the program.

The redevelopment project started during a hot market for residential condos. As the market changed, the project changed in 2007 from condos to an office building and it looked as if the church would realize only $4 million at most for the endowment fund. When it became apparent in 2008 that
the economy was headed for recession, potential lenders for the project set terms that made the deal far less profitable for the developer and lowered the church's expectations for the final payout even further. Banks were concerned that having DPHW on site would make it much more difficult to attract top-paying tenants to the office building and would not make for smooth relations among the occupants. So in August of 2008, in order to secure financing to complete construction, the church reluctantly accepted restrictive terms governing DPHW operations, making it much more difficult to continue those operations – but not impossible. In November the expected financing disappeared from the project completely and construction was suspended.

Just when the situation seemed hopeless a solution presented itself, although it would prove to be a bitter pill to swallow. In June 2009 the developer found an equity partner willing to finance the delayed construction at 10th and G but only if there were no homeless meal program on site. At the same time it became clear that the financial viability of the church’s long-term occupation of the site depended on selling the planned 10,000 square feet of social service space (though there had been growing concern that 10,000 square feet would be insufficient for the program). In another development, First Trinity Lutheran Church, where the church and DPHW relocated in 2007 during rebuilding, needed to reclaim the space leased to DPHW’s administrative offices, which had expanded in 2007 to implement the grant from DC, so the dinner program needed to move. The thirty-year partnership between First Church and the Dinner Program, recently renamed ThriveDC, came to an end in 2009.

**Healthy Endowment Since 2012 with Proceeds from Sale of Air Rights**

The church’s endowment was $4,235,273 as of December 31, 2016. The bulk of the endowment is the result of proceeds from the sale of air rights to a developer in 2009. In 2012 and early 2013, $3,394,636 of the proceeds not needed for the construction of the church went into the endowment.

Funds are drawn regularly for general operations. The church’s bylaws allow drawing the equivalent of 4% of the average value over the last eight quarters. The practice has been to draw 3%. Roughly $3,500 (0.08%) on average is drawn each year in response to the terms of a particular bequest in 2007, asking that half the earnings on the bequest each year be used for mission.

In 2012 - 2015, a combined total of $210,423 was drawn to finance the construction expenses remaining or desired after the close-out of the project in April 2012.

In 2012, the congregation’s first full year in the newly constructed church building, $103,543 was drawn to balance budget operations because the projected building income was not yet in place to balance the budget.

Since 2013 the endowment proceeds transferred for general operations have been:

- 2013 - 3% for operations
- 2014 - 3% for operations
2015 - 3% plus 0.24% for operations
2016 - 3% for operations
2017 - 3% for operations

Under the current investment policy the endowment will last indefinitely.\(^9\)

During 2016 the Investment Commission reviewed the impact of different levels of and vehicles for socially responsible investing. The result was to affirm a relatively low level of investment in a socially responsible vehicle (roughly 4% of the church’s total portfolio) and moving that investment to a more efficient vehicle, thus opting to maximize returns and increase resources for the church to spend directly on mission.

The church has a solid financial foundation.

In addition to the endowment, as of December 2016 $215,647 was in a reserve for a 50-year capital replacement plan, funded with regular annual budget appropriations ($37,000 in 2017); $44,934 was in unrestricted general fund operating reserves; and $56,412 was in a fund collected for furnishings in the newly constructed sanctuary.

The church has no investments other than the endowment, its accessible 25,000 square foot building, and 20 parking spaces, and we do not own a parsonage.

**Reflections on Finances and Assets**

The church has a solid financial foundation. Pledging is very stable and the number of pledgers is slowly rising. We have been able to integrate newer members with long-time members and bridge the generational gap, though a few long-time members pledge a disproportionate amount. Even a cautious use of endowment contributes 17-19% of total income. Building income is very healthy. And budgeting practices are sound. For example, the annual church budget includes an amount to fund a reserve for a comprehensive 50 year capital replacement plan.

The share of the budget spent on staffing levels is on the low end of the range. In 2013 the Alban Institute advised the church that the usual share should be 50-63%. At First Church the share is 50%, including the costs of janitorial and engineering staff procured through a property management contract.

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\(^9\) The investment policy adopted by the church in 2012 provides: “The primary goals of the FCUCC Investment Commission will be 1) to preserve the capital of the Endowment Fund, 2) to provide a significant income contribution to each year’s annual budget, 3) to protect the endowment from inflation, and 4) to grow the size of the endowment. Where consistent with the goals stated above, the Investment Commission will seek to integrate concern for the Church’s mission and socially responsible investing into its management of the endowment investments.”
Mission spending is 10% of total spending, not including the value of the overhead (staff supervision and facility costs) that support mission, as well as the value of subsidies. This has been pretty steady since 2009. In 1979 - 2009, mission spending was higher (perhaps 25% of total) when the church started, grew, and housed a dinner program for homeless women.

There is some disappointment that spending on mission is not higher than 10%. In the hot real estate market at the time of the initial site redevelopment proposal (2006), the church hoped that it would have resources to invest meaningfully in mission as well as support operations. As the economic conditions changed dramatically and the forecast payout dropped, the first task for the endowment became to support operations. As experience with the endowment grows, it is perhaps time for the church to expand its thinking about mission spending and consider some responsible use of the endowment to increase spending on mission without undermining the other objectives.

Budget requests are gathered in the early fall and compiled into an asking budget. The pledge campaign occurs in November and December, budget review in early January, and final budget approval in late January.

In general, church leaders are attentive to and cautious about finances. Substantial analysis went into planning for operations once the church returned to the new building in 2012. We do not want this asset to deteriorate like the old building had (thus the 50 year capital replacement plan), and we want to treat staff fairly and invest in mission and parish programs wisely. A prudent use of endowment fund principal was necessary in 2012 - 2013 while the church transitioned to a new steady-state budget supported by pledges, the endowment fund, and building income.

An Example of How We Manage Change

Managing a Growing Congregation

When First Church moved back to the corner of 10th and G in 2012 after five years in a transitional location, the average weekly attendance was quite low. The 58 weekly worshippers represented a solid core of mostly long-term congregants who had seen the church through years of uncertainty. The congregation hoped that the new, beautiful, modern sanctuary would usher in a period of growth for the congregation. This hope soon became a reality. From one year to the next, attendance at a normal Sunday service grew by 50%. In the years since arriving in the new sanctuary, the church has added 56 new members. The congregation today is markedly more diverse, younger, with more families and many more children.

The act of trying so many different methods for communion was a reflection of the unsettling change we were going through as a congregation.

The growth of the congregation has been welcomed by all, although the influx of new faces was so fast, and so significant, that it caught many in the congregation off guard. One example
of how the church worked through this change was in the handling of the rite of communion. Historically, when the congregants at First Church took communion, they did so while standing in an intimate circle. For many members, the ritual was a deeply important signal of the congregation’s closeness, but some thought this might be a bit too much intimacy for prospective members. By standing in a circle, would we force unwanted attention on guests? Would First Church feel like an unsafe space?

These concerns, which resonated with the congregation’s desire to be inclusive, triggered close to a year of experimentation with the rite of communion. We tried stations; we tried a single line down the middle of the sanctuary; we tried passing the bread and wine around the rows of seats. There seemed to be an endless number of possible permutations. In a way, the act of trying different methods was a reflection of the unsettling change we were going through as a congregation. After months of trying new approaches that would be welcoming to guests many seemed most comfortable with the original communion in the round. It is an important ritual, symbolizing who we are as a congregation.

**An Example of Our Values and Practices in Conflict**

**Extending the Contract of our Transitional Minister**

An example of a recent conflict was the extension of Pastor Sidney Fowler’s contract to remain as our transitional minister for a period of time. Two years into Sid’s tenure, some thought it was time for a search for a new called pastor while others thought Sid should stay for another few years to provide more stability before initiating a search. The policies and protocols in place allowed members to express their thoughts on the matter and hear other members’ thoughts. In the end, a proposed four-year contract extension was addressed at a congregational meeting and every member was given an opportunity to speak and vote. The process was democratic and transparent, which allowed those who felt that we should initiate the search for a new called pastor to know their thoughts and concerns were taken into account. The values of transparency, respectful discussion and democracy are paramount to how we deal with conflict at First Church.

**Ministerial History**

Since 1984, First Church has had four Senior Ministers (including interim and transitional ministers), and eight assistant ministers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member’s name</th>
<th>Years of service</th>
<th>UCC Standing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Ministers (Full-time)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen London</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Clark</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>Yes (transferred to CT Conference in 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Dennebaum</td>
<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>Yes (transferred to NY Conference in 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sid Fowler</td>
<td>2011-present</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Ministers (Part-time)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Gerlach</td>
<td>1985-2007</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roz Smith Withers</td>
<td>1989-1996</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjani Deli</td>
<td>1996-1999</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Hopson</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbra (Bonnie) Hardy</td>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Henderson</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam McFerran</td>
<td>2015-present</td>
<td>No UCC standing; authorized in Presbyterian Church. Is currently pursuing dual standing in the UCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Ross</td>
<td>2015-present</td>
<td>No UCC standing; authorized in American Baptist Church. Is currently pursuing dual standing in the UCC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our church has not been involved in a Situational Support Consultation, and no past leader has been the subject of a Fitness Review while here. One leader left under pressure. Peter Dennebaum was called in the fall of 2009. By the fall of 2010, attendance, pledge payments, and pledges for 2011 all were down, and church members expressed concerns about membership, service on commissions, and pledging.
Then, according to the moderator’s annual report, “the Personnel Committee first undertook in October [2010] to engage the congregation in an evaluation of how [the church] is doing in accomplishing its missions. It reported its findings at a nurture program in November.”

In early January 2011 “Council undertook an evaluation via survey questionnaire of Peter Dennebaum… Responses to the evaluation instrument… greatly assisted both Council and Peter in a discernment process that led to a productive conversation between Council and Peter regarding the circumstances and a range of proposals and options for going forward in a mutually agreeable, constructive way. Through this process, Council and Peter came to an agreement that there was a better way forward for both Peter and the church which would include an end to Peter’s relationship as Pastor.…”

Peter’s last day at church was March 6, 2011. He was paid through June 4, 2011. He received support beyond June 4, 2011 from both the church and the Central Atlantic Conference (in the form of continuation of health insurance through Sept 30, 2011). The separation agreement was three-way, among Peter, the church, and the Central Atlantic Conference.

**Reflections on Our Relationship with Ministerial Leaders**

True to our congregationalist traditions, First Church is in many ways lay-driven. Members of the congregation have strong ideas for what they want to see in their church, and they are not shy in expressing them. The Council, its supporting committees, and the members themselves, are the foremost decision-makers in church policies and initiatives. Still, as a growing church, we increasingly value ministerial leadership that can help harness, focus, and execute the large ambitions of our small church.

In recent years we have expanded our ministerial staff, adding part-time ministers to support our Social Action ministry in 2015 and our Christian Education ministry in 2010. These additions reflect a growing church with a sound financial footing. They also serve as a recognition that while we as a congregation want to have greater impact on many different fronts, we are limited by members’ ability to lead these initiatives on their own. We look to our larger ministerial team to galvanize the congregation’s energy. Even with the additional staff on payroll, our ambition can outstrip the staff’s capacity. The church regularly engages in conversations to better balance its staff’s work and set appropriate expectations for the congregation.
With a growing staff, the senior minister’s role as the administrative leader of church staff is increasingly important. We look to the senior minister to promote staff cohesion, coordinate activities, and provide overarching direction for the team. In 2014 we increased the authority of the senior minister, giving the role direct supervisory authority over the rest of the church staff, to enable this leadership role.

**What Brought Us to First Church and Why We Stay**

In 2016 the Advanced Working Team held a series of Holy Conversations, conducted a survey, and held individual interviews. In these sessions, we asked people what brought them to first Church, and what keeps them coming. We received a wide range of responses:

**What brought you to First Church?**

1. **A Personal Invitation from Someone, the Welcome of a Community.**

   The prevalent response pointed to a relationship with someone who either invited folks, or introduced them to First Church. Invitations came from friends, family, a member of the staff, co-workers, or a casual mention of First Church by someone who knew someone who knew First Church through the UCC network. Once here, many mentioned the welcome they experienced as making them want to return.

2. **Location – A Ministry in the Heart of DC.**

   People mentioned the proximity of the church to where they lived or worked— it was close by. Convenient! Close to the Metro! Many, including those who did not live in DC, mentioned the importance to them of an urban ministry that was centered in downtown DC. Some mentioned the beauty of the new building.

3. **A United Church of Christ Congregation.**

   Several participants mentioned they sought out a UCC congregation because they had grown up in the UCC, had heard about the UCC, or after trying other denominations/local congregations wanted a “congregational” church. One participant said she wanted to be part of a church “that stood for something.” Some mentioned the importance of finding a church where leadership is shared among laity and clergy – that everyone’s opinions really matter. There are a number of people who have been involved in the national UCC and they have invited and welcomed others to First Church.

4. **Explicit Evidence of Progressive Values and Theology.**

   Similar to the interest in finding a UCC congregation, many sought out a progressive congregation that held commitments similar to their own. Inclusive language, commitment to being open and affirming, women and gay clergy, posters that expressed opinions about gun control or “Black Lives Matter,” openness to different theological perspectives, a multiracial diverse community, the linking of spirituality with social justice, the meditation group open to downtown folks on Wednesdays were examples mentioned.

5. **A Commitment to Social Justice.**

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, DC
Many mentioned their search for a congregation that was engaged in social justice. They looked for a church with a mission. Some mentioned specific programs that drew them to First Church as the Women’s Dinner Program or our engagement with Washington Interfaith Network. Some knew of the congregation’s history of social justice involvement.

6. A Safe, Progressive, Caring, and Engaging Place for Our Children.
Many newer members mentioned how they were drawn to the church through their children and their children’s interest in what was going on for kids.

7. A Place for Healing and Spiritual Care.
Some people sought out First Church during a time of need. “I was dealing with dying parents, saw the sign, and decided to take a chance on it.” Others came during a health crisis or sought spiritual support during a particularly difficult time. One participant mentioned that First Church cared both about being a “a voice for the oppressed and a spiritual home.”

8. Signs, Banners, and Internet.
The website continues to be a primary medium by which people learn about First Church. However, signage is also significant. Some mentioned the phrase “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” One person said, “I saw the sign and it was a sign!”

What keeps people coming to First Church?

1. Participation in a Caring Community
“It’s not the building, it’s the people!” Many expressed that the community here keeps them involved in First Church – deepening relationships, people open to others even when we differ, sense of family, and the support they get in times of crisis. A caring relationship with the pastor or other staff was seen by many as also key to their ongoing participation in First Church.

A couple of participants emphasized that she is ‘known here” or he is “known and loved.” One participant expressed it this way. “The place is welcoming and challenging at the same time – a safe place to explore who we are, what we are becoming, and who we want to become.” Yet some wondered about what difference it might make as we continue to grow as a congregation – “the nature of community and what it requires may be changing.” There are “unfamiliar faces.” Still some responses valued the ability of the congregation to bridge differences in people – people who come from all walks of life.

2. The Way We Make Decisions
The community values our way of governance, a congregational and covenantal way of making decisions. The gifts of members are valued (“incredibly talented and accomplished people”). Rather than a hierarchical church, the community values the entire congregation including both laity and the gifts of staff and pastoral leadership. We are not afraid of addressing tough issues together. “We are intentional, the way we think through things.” Several also expressed the importance of greater opportunities and perhaps new forms of governance that will involve newer members.

3. Thoughtful Reflection on Our History and Heritage
As a result of the recent 150th anniversary, we acknowledged “the past – for good and ill – but also looked to a future that celebrates our legacy of social justice.” In our past, “who we have been has laid a foundation for who we are becoming.”
4. Worship, Music, and Preaching: Gift and Challenge
For many, worship is connected to strengthening them for their day-to-day lives. It is a unique space in the week to “broaden my perspective and place in the world.” One person expressed the importance of worship that supports us to be a progressive voice in the world. Another desired worship to be the one time of the week to step back and reflect. It is a peaceful place. Many stressed the significance of the music ministry as well as a particular pastors preaching that is intellectually challenging, connecting with current world concerns, and personally meaningful. Even as worship is valued by so many, there is a variety of hopes for or about style, music, informality and formality, theological perspective, and lay or clergy involvement.

5. The Opportunities to Critically Explore Theology and Beliefs
“God is calling us to be a place for searchers.” Many participants valued opportunities for deeper growth in their faith. Adult Education experiences as Nurtures, theological book group, sharing of spiritual journeys, and challenging sermons are valued. The opportunity to do such exploration in community, learning from and challenging one another, is vital. This emphasis on searching and spiritual journey was also expressed in a faith-style inventory at the Consultation on Shared Ministry. Given four different styles of faith, about half of those participating in the consultation described their faith as ongoing exploration and journey.

6. The Faith Formation of Our Children and Youth
Repeatedly participants voiced thanks for the children’s ministry, age diversity, families with children. “Kids want to come to church.” The children’s ministry also motivates adults to be engaged in the wider church.

7. Engagement in Social Action
The commitment to social action in the city sustains many in the congregation. Others mentioned our opportunities to be engaged in national issues as well. Several mentioned their interest in and commitment to direct service with those who are homeless. Ministries such as the One Congregation One Family program, the Youth Drop-in Center, and our remaining a welcoming congregation to those who are in need as well as those without homes are critical. One participant emphasized an engagement in social action that got at “some of the root causes of our broken community; a strong voice for peace and healing conversations in which no one is an outcast.”
OUR NEIGHBORS

As residents of the nation’s capital, our perspective on who constitutes our neighbors spans from the local, to the national, to the international.

Relationships and Activities that Extend Outward

First Church has relationships with and engages in activities over a range of issues and in a variety of ways, both advocacy and direct service.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing Advocacy

The church participates in the advocacy and demonstration efforts of Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), which focuses on housing, jobs, and gun safety. We connect primarily on the issues of affordable housing and homelessness. For example, WIN coordinates attendance at DC budget hearings and organizes phone banking to lobby for funds to increase affordable housing in an increasingly gentrified city.

In October 2016 the Church Council approved the charter of “Home for All Advocacy Task Force.” Members of the task force advocate for affordable housing through, for example, support of inclusionary zoning before the Zoning Commission, improvements in rent control before the City Council, and federal legislation to expand and strengthen the affordable housing credit.

Since August 2016 FCC has hosted a weekly drop-in center for youth who are homeless or experiencing housing instability. Many of these youth congregate in the church’s immediate downtown neighborhood. The center is operated in partnership with the Downtown Business Improvement District and the nonprofit Sasha Bruce Youthwork. Services are offered 6 pm - 9 pm each Monday, and 40-60 guests ages 14 to 26 typically attend each week. This program is an important part of the church’s ministry, and we are seeking to establish long-term funding. More than 20 church members and friends have trained to serve as volunteers in the center, providing hospitality, welcome, friendship, and support to the guests. Each month members donate packages of snack foods that guests can take with them. Volunteers organized, prepared, and served a special dinner the Monday before Thanksgiving, and they donated hats, scarves, and gloves for these individuals who face harsh winter weather out-of-doors.

Direct Service to Low-Income Persons

Church members volunteer at Shaw Community Center (SCC), ten blocks from the church, tutoring participating low-income elementary school children in reading and math. The SCC was founded (as Shaw Community Ministry) in 1991 by the Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference. Two members are on the board of SCC, and one member is helping develop a strategic plan.
In addition, we rent office space in the main church office suite and provide parking to Pathways for Housing DC, a nonprofit organization that promotes the Housing First program. Pathways serves clients at the church, including the provision of showers.

An intergenerational group volunteers a few times a year for Seabury Resources for the Aging Age-in-Place Program, doing yard work and other household services designed to help older adults stay in their homes as long as possible.

Sanctuary Movement
The church is actively involved in the burgeoning Sanctuary movement to support efforts designed to protect the immigrant, refugee, Muslim, people of color, and other threatened populations. For example, members who are lawyers donated their services to travelers arriving at nearby airports when the first Executive Order banning travel from seven Muslim countries caused chaos and uncertainty. The Church Council created a task force to discern how the church can effectively respond to the current crisis and serve as a Sanctuary faith community in Washington DC. The group reported to the congregation on May 21, 2017 and the congregation voted to be a Sanctuary Congregation and work with partner organizations to resist any harmful or unjust policies that undermine due process, lead to discrimination based on identity, or otherwise violate Constitutionally protected rights.

Global Engagement
The church has a history of advocacy on behalf of Colombia, the homeland of the former long-time ministers’ adopted children. Members have travelled to Colombia, and the church raises funds each year for the Global Ministries’ missionary to Colombia, who serves with the Restoration, Life and Peace Commission of the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) in Bogota. The Peace Commission works with pastors, lay leaders, Christian organizations and entire congregations from many different denominations to meet the needs of the communities they serve as they struggle with the effects of violent conflict.

More recently the children and youth created a pen pal relationship with the children and youth of Mount Zion Presbyterian Church of Accra, Ghana.

Using Our Building for Outreach
The church’s very location in downtown Washington DC fosters a sense of responsibility to use the site as the community of faith and action that we strive to be, providing a venue for a variety of community gatherings. For example, the church hosts a midday “Breakaway” gathering of mostly silent reflection each Wednesday, for those who work in the downtown. The church jointly organizes prayer services for the community (e.g., following the massacre at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando FL) and conversations in response to issues of concern (e.g., xenophobia and Islamophobia, police shootings of unarmed blacks), and provides hospitality for marchers.
Connections to the Wider United Church of Christ
First Church maintains its ties to the wider UCC in a number of ways both locally and nationally. FCC clergy and various members participate in the Potomac Association and Central Atlantic Conference gatherings, including quarterly Association and annual Conference meetings, ordination examinations and installations and synods. At these meetings FCC has periodically sponsored resolutions concerning matters such as social justice and climate change. The church cosponsored such a resolution at the 2017 Synod in Baltimore, marking the 30th anniversary of the UCC Just Peace Pronouncement. Each year, First Church hosts the Everett C. Parker Ethics in Telecommunications Lecture and Awards Ceremony sponsored by the UCC’s Office of Communication. Finally, FCC participates in the annual area UCC Ash Wednesday and Thanksgiving Day services.

First Church clergy and members serve the wider church in other ways:

Service and Leadership
As staff members of the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries on Capitol Hill; as members of the Potomac Association Church and Ministry Committee; as Pastoral Advisors to persons “In Care” toward ordination; serving on the Potomac Association’s LGBTQ Task Force; serving weekly with other UCC volunteers in the Shaw Community Center, an urban ministry founded by Potomac Association churches to provide educational and social support services for school children and families in D.C.’s Shaw Community. Two FCC members also serve on the SCC’s Board of Directors, and another is spearheading the Shaw Board’s long-range planning efforts.

Hospitality
First Church has a long history as a gathering place, hosting UCC folk and others for meetings, rallies and marches in the nation’s capital for civil rights, peace and social justice. On January 21, 2017 FCC provided hospitality for approximately 600 people in DC to attend the Women’s March.

Theological Education
First Church values its ongoing relationship with the Divinity School of Howard University, which was founded by abolitionists from FCC in 1867. In conjunction with the Church’s 150th Anniversary celebration it raised the funds to help endow a Ph.D. program at the Divinity School. FCC also provides internship opportunities for UCC divinity students at both Howard Divinity School and Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.

Witness
First Church helps support the Central Atlantic Conference’s Mission Partnership with Colombia in South America, as well as our own member. Michael Joseph, who serves with the
Restoration Life and Peace Commission of the Council of Evangelical Churches of Colombia. In 2013 three FCC members traveled to Columbia for 10 days with members of the Connecticut Conference to meet with the Global Ministries’ missionary to Colombia and learn more about the long conflict and the peace negotiations.

**Other Service to the Wider Church**

Each year First Church generously contributes to all five of the UCC’s denominational special offerings. Clergy and members participated in the Central Atlantic Conference’s workshop on Combating Racism in our churches and communities. FCC youth participated in the Potomac Association Youth Mission in West Virginia with Habitat for Humanity.

**UCC Statements of Witness**

Three of the UCC “statements of witness” apply to our UCC faith community: Just Peace (approved in 1985), Open and Affirming (approved in 1987) and Multiracial and Multicultural (approved in 2003). These three statements express a range of affirmations and aspirations. The overarching Statement on Being a Just Peace Church commits us to discerning and acting on the links between justice and peace in all settings and issues. The Open and Affirming Statement represents our early commitment to be radically inclusive of and to advocate for persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The Multiracial and Multicultural Vision recommit us to working to extinguish racism and cultural biases from our midst, to not just welcome the stranger but know ourselves as one with the stranger. While statements affirming other commitments have not been formally adopted, the church’s strong emphasis on social action and awareness is certainly consistent with the full scope of the UCC’s progressive positions.

First Church is engaged as well with other churches and faith communities. The Church is a founding member church of the Downtown Cluster of Congregations with clergy and lay representatives participating in this nonprofit, ecumenical association established in 1972 to cooperatively meet pressing human service needs in the District of Columbia.

**Ecumenical, Interfaith, and Other Relationships**

First Church is also a founding member (1996) of the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), a multiracial, multifaith city-wide, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) citizens’ organization of 50 plus churches, synagogues and mosques that develops local leaders, addresses community issues and advocates for the city’s budget and a response to homelessness and the needs of affordable housing, public schools and employment opportunities. FCC members also participate in the One Congregation One Family Program of the city, linking churches with homeless families.

The Church participates in the annual Capital Pride Interfaith service and fundraising march, supporting the Whitman Walker Health Clinic, hosts other interfaith services for social justice,
Our pastor serves on the DC Mayor’s Interfaith Council and on the Howard University Divinity School’s Board of Visitors. First Church members and clergy are invited annually as guests at the Breaking of the Ramadan Fast at the Ezher Bloom Mosque in Fairfax, Virginia. Our children and youth have a pen pal relationship with the children and youth of a Presbyterian Church in Ghana, and also volunteer their services at the Seabury Resources for the Aging program of the Episcopal and UCC denominations. Additionally, the Church collects annual special offerings for the St. Paul’s Foundation and for Interfaith Power & Light, and supports the annual Pillar of Faith Awards Luncheon at the Howard Divinity School.

The Church also partners with non-faith organizations. We are a member of the Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association in our area of downtown DC, including businesses, churches, and other organizations. In partnership with the Downtown Business Improvement District and the local Sasha Bruce organization First Church hosts a weekly drop-in center for youth who are homeless or experiencing housing instability. Between 40 to 60 guests, ages 14 to 26 typically attend and enjoy food, friendship and support, games, movies, case management and medical and other referral services. The program is staffed by Sasha Bruce personnel, an Associate Minister and more than 20 trained volunteers.

**Church Staff’s Work Beyond the Walls**

The pastoral staff combined provide approximately 100 hours a week to all the work of the church (full-time Senior Minister and part-time Minister of Faith Formation and the Minister of Justice Formation). As the head of staff, the Senior Minister encourages and supervises the entire staff team, including this aspect of their ministries. He is also the first face of the church to community. While the Minister of Faith Formation’s focus is primarily within the church, among his responsibilities is to develop and coordinate middle and high school programs including activities in the Potomac Association and in outreach opportunities. The entire scope of work of the Minister of Justice Formation involves the church’s ministry in the community, the wider church, and other organizations such as Washington Interfaith Network, Downtown Cluster of Congregations, Black Lives Matter, Pathways to Housing, and Sasha Bruce Youthwork. Together, roughly one third of their time is involved in the community and the wider church.
Demographics of the Wider Community

First Church is located in the heart of the nation’s capital, six blocks east of the White House and ten blocks northwest of the Capitol. In 1968 nearby blocks were among the sites of rioting that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Until 1997 the church’s immediate neighborhood was still pretty desolate and full of eyesores. The old convention center one block north of the church was non-functioning and the area was full of surface parking lots. In 1997 the new basketball arena, the MCI (now Verizon) Center, opened three blocks to the east and kicked off a massive revitalization of the area. Soon thereafter a new convention center opened four blocks north. The new Secret Service building was constructed on G Place behind the church, where the church once had free Sunday parking. By mid-2015 most of the new upscale City Center mixed-use development was completed and open for business where the old convention center had stood.

Thirty years ago much of the church’s mission was dictated by the presence of a homeless population that congregated in the nearby area. Now our surroundings are dramatically different – so upscale that a new Prada store is part of the high-end retail presence just one block away. The residential population is much larger than it was, younger, more affluent, and less diverse. Thus the changes in our immediate community and the city almost work in opposition to our ministry. What hasn’t changed is our location six blocks from the White House and five blocks from the Washington DC City Hall, and the platform it furnishes us.

City-wide, Washington DC as a whole provides a context for the church and its mission. Homelessness in Washington DC is twice the national average. Affordable housing is an increasingly critical problem in Washington DC as many areas of the city gentrify. The racial demographics of the city have dramatically changed since 1990, changing from 65% to 51% black between 1990 and 2010, and in 2011 becoming less than 50% black.

See the Appendix A for a detailed discussion of the community’s demographics.

Our Internal Demographics Compared to the Community

The church’s demographics by no means match those in the new, upscale residences in the immediate neighborhood, nor do they match the demographics in the nearby Shaw neighborhood where church members volunteer at the Shaw Community Center, nor the city as a whole. As a downtown church, we draw members from various parts of the city as well as the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. As can be seen in the congregational demographics, the majority of members are professionals (or retired professionals), with many working in the government or nonprofit sector. Roughly 80% are white, 10% African American, and 10% other people of color.
How the Demographics of the Community Currently Shape Our Ministry

The current demographics of Washington DC are shaping the church’s justice ministry, in many ways similar to the last several decades, but also in some new ways.

Homelessness and the need for affordable housing have become even more critical issues. As Washington DC becomes more and more gentrified, housing prices rise and long-time, lower-income residents are displaced. As the number of affordable housing units declines, there are many fewer realistic opportunities for people to move from homelessness to housing in the area. From 1979 to 2009 the church started, grew, and housed the Dinner Program for Homeless Women, which relocated to another site in 2009. We continue to focus our justice work now on homelessness, both in direct service (e.g., by housing the weekly drop-in center for homeless youth) and in advocating for systemic change in the provision of adequate affordable housing.

The church’s location in the increasingly upscale downtown, with disappearing affordable housing and no requirements for developers to include it, confronts us directly with the need for this advocacy work. It also encourages us to forge and strengthen a partnership with the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID). Starting in 1999 the church was the site of the BID’s downtown services center. This was discontinued when the building was vacated in 2007 to be demolished and rebuilt but without the space that could be devoted to social services. As discussed elsewhere, BID is one of our partners for the current weekly Drop-In Center for Homeless Youth, and the BID hopes to re-establish a downtown services center in the future.

Enormous income disparities continue, both relatively nearby and in Washington DC as a whole. As a result, the church continues its involvement in nearby Shaw Community Center and looks for other opportunities for service in the city, such as the Seabury Resources Age-In-Place program.

The city’s persistent racial divisions are a stark reminder of the need for the church to remain focused on its multiracial and multicultural vision (adopted in 2003). To live out this vision means to cultivate a worship environment where people from all backgrounds feel welcome, and confront and act against racism and white privilege in our city, nation, and world, and also to examine the church’s practices, policies, and structures and make them anti-racist.

The civil wars in Latin America in the 1980s led to the rise of a Sanctuary movement in which US faith communities provided safe haven to undocumented refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and poverty in their homelands. In 1986 the church voted COMADRES, the Committee of the Mothers of the Disappeared in El Salvador, a part of the ministry of the church and provided free
office space. The continuing diversity of the population in the neighborhood, city, and wider region leads the church again to support the current Sanctuary movement to protect vulnerable populations.

Located in the redeveloped and still-growing downtown, a hub for urban professionals, the church has taken the opportunity to minister to these downtown workers by holding a weekly “Breakaway” for 30 minutes in the middle of the day. This has drawn up to 35 people to the peaceful setting of the chapel for meditation, silence and prayer.

Regardless of how the neighborhood’s and city’s demographics change, the church remains located in the downtown of the nation’s capital. This fact helps shape the church’s ministry to be a community of faith and action, as a prophetic voice and a gathering place for the community. This is truly a place where God is still speaking.

**What Community Leaders Say About First Church**

In reaching out to leaders in the city, the themes that came through strongest are that First Church is a small, progressive, inclusive, action-oriented, and resilient church. We are not perfect, but strive with intentionality to be a welcoming, open congregation. We are proud of this reputation, and appreciative of the community leaders who also reflected back to us areas where we can strengthen our place in the community.

First Church is known for opening its doors to all. Terry Lynch, Executive Director of the Downtown Cluster of Congregations, described First Church first and foremost as a “welcoming neighbor in the downtown.” We are seen as welcoming both for our work with the marginalized and homeless, and because we seek a diverse worshipping community. Our reputation as welcoming marginalized groups is founded in the dinner program for homeless women. For many community leaders, this program was their first contact with the church.

Neil Albert, Executive Director of the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), says, “First United Congregational Church embodies active ministry. Their knowledge of and support for the most vulnerable among us strengthens the downtown DC community and gives it heart.” Mr. Lynch noted how First Church “housed and continues to house, homeless related service programs.” Dr. Alton Pollard, Dean of the Divinity School at Howard University, is particularly struck by this component of our congregation:

First Church is a rarity: a congregation of means that more often than not practices selflessness.… You have a concern for the neighbors not in the abstract or the theoretical.… In particular, when talking to people who are of color, people who are not of means, people who are self-identifying as on the margins of our civic society, they are very appreciative of the commitment, effort and dedication that is part of First Church.
First Church’s reputation as welcoming is also seen in the makeup of its congregation. Dr. Pollard noted:

The demographics of the church is itself an endeavor. You are very intentional as a church to be inclusive, affirming, welcoming, in a way that does not exclude “the other” in the process of being inclusive…. You walk into church on a Sunday morning, and you see that the population that is part of the church is not monolithic…. Especially since you are known to be historically a white congregation, you have have been painstaking in working hard to expand that label, to change that definition.

Dr. Pollard and others acknowledge, of course, that the church is by no means perfect in this regard. The greatest challenge in this quest to invite in the marginalized is to achieve an “inclusivity that is not exclusive,” to use Dr. Pollard’s words. Mr. Lynch says, “I believe [First Church] is perceived as a very progressive congregation, hopefully not to the detriment of not reaching out to and including persons of more conservative views.” Dr. Pollard adds,

The realm of the divine is far larger than any one of us, or any community can adequately encase. So we are called on to engage with each other across those lines. When your inclusivity is broad enough to include the people who would exclude you, then you are onto something. First Church isn’t perfect, but the intentionality it brings is what is most important.

The church, with its new space, is seen as having an opportunity to expand its welcome in other ways, too. The church’s structure may cause the unfamiliar to overlook it entirely. In Mr. Lynch’s words, “the Church’s essential nature itself - that it is a Church - is sometimes obscured to the public by the architecture of the building.” But, he went on,

Given [your] space, [you welcome] a variety of users who need space - be it performances, speaking, and otherwise. This would seem to me to be a particular area of opportunity for the Church; there is a dearth of ‘Community space’ in central downtown, so close to metro center.

The church’s modern sanctuary is a symbol to others of the Church’s resilience. This characteristic was at the top of the mind for Roger Gench, Senior Pastor at New York Avenue Presbyterian, a neighboring congregation. He told us that when he thinks of First Church, he can’t help but remember when we “went through a difficult period, trying to rebuild everything during an iconic meltdown. It was amazing that you survived. The transition to the new building couldn’t have had a harder time, but you survived, and now are are thriving.”

While we are known for welcoming others into our unique space, First Church is is also known for reaching out beyond our walls. Dr. Pollard told us, “First Church is not perfect - there is no such thing - but one that seeks to extend its ministry beyond itself and the confines of its walls, and be relevant to the issues and concerns of our time.” Pastor Gench commented that we are well suited to be active our community. He reflected that this is an “advantage of being small - you can move quicker, you can
mobilize quicker, you know the community better…. That combination makes a really beautiful combination for the church and that I think you have.”

The scope of our ambition, however, can stretch our capacity. Mr. Lynch reflected that “to some extent the Church is challenged by having so many issues it wants to deal with - so many national issues to be addressed given its location, but also a desire to translate its faith into action on local issues of race, poverty and justice.” Our church’s representative to the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), acknowledged that First Church’s reputation in that city-wide group is as “a supporting organization, rather than a leading one.” We don’t bring the largest numbers to WIN events, but we are almost always present and accounted for.

In the end, we at First Church endeavor, in fits and starts, to realize the beloved community in our city, in our time. This ongoing struggle can be tiring for our members. So it is heartening to hear that our effort is recognized by others in the community.
REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. 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.

REFERENCE 1
Alton B Pollard, III, PhD
Professor of Religion and Culture
Howard University
School of Divinity
(202) 806-0500
abpollard@howard.edu

REFERENCE 2
Terry Lynch
Executive Director
Downtown Cluster of Congregations
(202) 347-7015
clusterdc@juno.com

REFERENCE 3
Barbara Brown Zikmund
324 Woodland Drive
Chelsea MI 48118
H: 734-593-7020
bbzikmund@gmail.com
CLOSING PRAYER

For our closing prayer we lift up the words of the hymn that was commissioned by the members of First Church in celebration of the 2012 dedication of our new building, the third building on the same site since 1865.

God, Who Called Us through the Prophets
© 2011 Mary Nelson Keithahn

God, who called us through the prophets to be merciful and fair, and, in Jesus, walked among us, teaching us to love and care, send your Spirit now, renew us, that together we may be one in faith and one in mission, one in our diversity.

When we ponder sacred scriptures, when we come to you in prayer, let us see with new-found vision what we’re called to do and dare. As more truth and light are springing daily from your Holy Word, and your thoughts invade our thinking, help us act on what we’ve heard.

Fill us with your grace and wisdom, give us courage that we may, like the saints gone on before us, meet life’s challenges today. Help us trust in one another, even when we disagree, show respect in hard decisions, work for peace and harmony.

God of mercy, God of justice, we give thanks that we belong to a people, loved and loving, rich and needy, weak and strong. You have blessed our past and present, bless the future we await. Keep us faithful to our mission, as your love we celebrate.
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 a 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.)

The primary authors of this document were the six members of the Pastoral Search Committee. The committee drew from existing narratives and policies from other contexts, such as written histories of the church, annual committee updates, and program descriptions solicited from the program leads. The document was reviewed by the church Council, which provided editorial feedback to the committee. An individual congregant served as copy-editor. All members of the congregation were given an opportunity to review the document prior to submission to the Central Atlantic Conference.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

None.

Signed:

Anthony Gurucharri Saudek

CHAIR OF THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2017
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:

   Name / Title: David Popham, Associate Conference Minister
   Email: dpopham@cacucc.org
   Phone: (973) 748-7772
   Date: September 23, 2017

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

   “Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22
APPENDIX A: Demographics of the Wider Community
The church is located in the center of two overlapping planning areas. One is the so-called Neighborhood Cluster. For planning purposes, Washington DC’s neighborhoods have been grouped into 39 clusters. The church is located in a cluster that spans 15 blocks east to west and 7 – 10 blocks north to south, composed of the downtown, Chinatown, Penn Quarter, Mt. Vernon Square, and N. Capitol St. The other is the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), specifically established to provide services to enhance cleanliness and safety for the area’s businesses, which pay a special fee. The BID overlaps most of the Neighborhood Cluster and is roughly the same size, but excludes some outlying residential areas (and thus a fair amount of residential population) and includes more businesses.

Neighborhood Cluster
Data over time for the Neighborhood Cluster are available and show the effects of the massive revitalization of the area that started in the 1990s. The Cluster is the fastest growing in all of Washington DC and much more residential since 1990, making the downtown truly livable. The Cluster’s population rose 63% from 1990 to 2010 to 13,560, compared to no growth in all of DC. Since 2010 DC’s population has increased 13%, so it is likely that the Cluster has grown even more as well.

During this period of huge growth the diversity of the Cluster has changed dramatically. The area is evolving into a hub for urban professionals with an uptick in apartments and condominiums. As a corollary to this, the proportion of children declined by half, as did the share of seniors. The Cluster’s population is much whiter than in 1990, and is now...
whiter than all of DC. The proportion of foreign-born residents grew faster and is larger compared to all of DC.

The Cluster’s population is much more affluent than it was in 1990. The poverty rate has declined by half, and the average family income has tripled. The population in the Neighborhood Cluster has a higher education and employment status than in 1990. The Cluster’s unemployment rate compared to city-wide changed from worse to better. Crime rates have dropped, but they are still higher than in all of DC.

While the population in the Neighborhood Cluster has exploded since 1990 and become more affluent,
there is still a large proportion of children in poverty in the residential areas several blocks away from
the church. The Cluster’s share of children in poverty is virtually unchanged, and is still higher than
the city-wide proportion.

The adjacent cluster, where the Shaw Community Center resides, is also worth looking at briefly. The
trends here have been the same -- population growth (to 24,000 in 2010), changing racial composition,
fewer children and seniors, higher levels of education and employment, a doubling of the average
family income. The share of children in poverty has declined by a third and is now lower than it is city-
wide.

**Downtown Business Improvement District**

The BID is roughly the same size as the Cluster, but its residential population in 2016 was 9,831, just
two-thirds or so of the population of the Cluster. The BID is focused on the development of the
businesses in the area and provides core services to maintain cleanliness and safety, and maintains
parks and public spaces.

To show the scale of development since 1997, there were 111 surface parking lots and redevelopment
sites in the BID in 1997; there are just 10 in 2017. The employers in the BID represent 40% of the
private/government office space and generate 24% of all the jobs in DC. The area also has 25% of
DC’s performing arts seats, 26% of the Metrorail exits, and 35% of the hotel rooms.

Upscale development continues. The modernization of the main DC Public Library, right next door to
the church, started in March 2017 and will be complete in 2020. Homelessness continues to be a
challenge, and the BID hopes to have a daytime services center sometime in the near future for the
homeless population who congregate in the area.

**City-wide**

Washington DC as a whole is a context for the church and its mission. Homelessness in Washington
DC is twice the national average. The Community Partnership (TCP) has conducted the HUD-
required Point-in-Time (PIT) count of homeless persons since 2001. In 2016 the total number of
homeless persons in Washington DC was 8,350, up 14.4% from 2015. This translates to 124 for every
10,000 residents, more than twice the national average (NYT, 1/1/2017). Roughly a quarter are
homeless despite being employed.

Affordable housing is an increasingly critical problem in Washington DC. According to the DC Fiscal
Policy Institute, Washington DC now has half as many low-cost housing units as it had in 2002. Some
26,000 households are both extremely low income and are spending more than half of their income in
rent. Only 2,100 received help in the last six years in the form of new units of housing or new rent
vouchers.

The racial demographics of the city have dramatically changed since 1990. The population changed
from 65% to 51% black between 1990 and 2010, and in 2011 became less than 50% black. Ward 3,
the westernmost ward, remained 5-6% black between 1990 and 2010. Ward 2, where the church is
located, dropped from 19% to 10% black between 1990 and 2010. Wards 7 and 8, east of the Anacostia River, are 95% and 94% black. Here are the changes in the percentage of black population, by ward, from the west to the east.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westernmost ward…</th>
<th>One ward to the east…</th>
<th>One ward to the east…</th>
<th>Easternmost wards…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>Ward 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 4.9%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 5.6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City-wide, the poverty rate has remained steady at 17-18% (a bit above the national rate of 15.9% in 2011) and average family income rose by a third from 1990 to 2011, from $93,000 to $124,000. The change has been uneven, however:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty rate</th>
<th>Westernmost ward…</th>
<th>One ward to the east…</th>
<th>One ward to the east…</th>
<th>Easternmost wards…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>Ward 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 6.5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 9.6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average family income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>$163k</td>
<td>$114k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>$100k</td>
<td>$82k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>$73k</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$141k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>$83k</td>
<td>$57k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 6</td>
<td>$61k</td>
<td>$55k</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 7</td>
<td>$49k</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 8</td>
<td>$100k</td>
<td>$123k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B: 11 Year Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members (as of end of year)</th>
<th>Average weekly attendance excl Christmas and Easter</th>
<th>Confiramands</th>
<th>Confession</th>
<th>Transfer or Reaffirm</th>
<th>Deaths or Transfers out</th>
<th>Other losses</th>
<th>Net members, adds - removed</th>
<th>Current expenses</th>
<th>Capital payments</th>
<th>Special support (other UCC offerings)</th>
<th>Total OCWM</th>
<th>Other gifts (other benevolences and offerings)</th>
<th>Wider mission</th>
<th>Basic support as % of Curr local</th>
<th>Basic support</th>
<th>Pledges and offerings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$465,374</td>
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<td>184</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>$354,519</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$5,516</td>
<td>$32,514</td>
<td>$10,664</td>
<td>$41,180</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$395,699</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>61</td>
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% Change

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<th>Confiramands</th>
<th>Confession</th>
<th>Transfer or Reaffirm</th>
<th>Deaths or Transfers out</th>
<th>Other losses</th>
<th>Net members, adds - removed</th>
<th>Total OCWM</th>
<th>Other gifts (other benevolences and offerings)</th>
<th>Wider mission</th>
<th>Basic support as % of Curr local</th>
<th>Basic support</th>
<th>Pledges and offerings</th>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>150%</td>
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<td>-14%</td>
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<td>114%</td>
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