

# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Community of Reconciliation Church, Pittsburgh PA

Pastor

Penn West Conference

Pittsburgh Association

January 18, 2023

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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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)*

## INSTRUCTIONS

The new Local Church Profile supports the calling and discernment of United Church of Christ congregations with their current or future pastoral leadership.

For many congregations, the interim time between ministers is an intentional season that is guided in part by the preparation of a Local Church Profile. Using the Profile, the church can discover its data and express its story for the reliable discernment of a search committee and the beginning of a new pastorate. Searching ministers will want to see this document in its entirety.

The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – **WHO ARE WE NOW**, **WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR**, and **WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME**

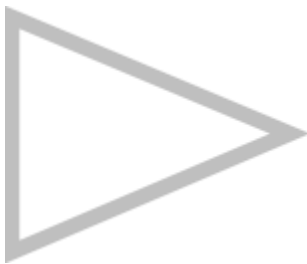
– are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known together as the “Discovery Document,” these three sections can be completed by a visioning group, a governing body, a transition team, or other group – not just the search committee – in order to draw forward the gifts and imaginative possibilities of a congregation. The church's engagement with the “Discovery Document” might not have the same sequence as the completed Local Church Profile that is read by candidates.

Some questions are easy to answer. Some are not so easy. Prompts are provided to stimulate narrative response if needed; these italicized prompts are merely examples from which to choose or to inspire your own. Efforts to answer the questions will prompt conversations and explorations and storytellings and many prayers, and as the Spirit moves throughout the process, congregations will shape a collective articulation of Christ's leading (**WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME**). This last question to be answered becomes the first section to be read by searching ministers in the Local Church Profile, and it is boldest and most actionable piece for faithful leadership into the future.

Your conference can provide materials referenced in the Local Church Profile, such as the 11-Year Report containing data as reported by your congregation annually to the UCC Data Hub and MissionInsite reports containing demographic information on your community. More information on types of pastorate in the United Church of Christ can be found in the Call Agreement Workbook. Be sure to use the Call Agreement Workbook's Scope of Work to describe in this Local Church Profile the position being sought.

When it is time for ministerial search, the conference can counsel you on posting the Local Church Profile together with your public listing at UCC Ministry Opportunities (<http://oppsearch.ucc.org>).

The last page of the Local Church Profile contains a statement that parallels the consent statement signed by ministers in the UCC Ministerial Profile. In keeping with the covenantal relationship between a church and those it seeks to call, this statement encourages an open, honest exchange of information. On behalf of the United Church of Christ, and on the basis of the best knowledge available to them, your conference staff will validate your completed Local Church Profile when it is ready to be shared in relationship with prospective new leaders.



POSITION POSTING  
LISTING  
INFORMATION  
SCOPE OF WORK  
COMPENSATION & SUPPORT  
WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

## LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Community of Reconciliation Church

Street address: 100 North Bellefield Avenue,

Pittsburgh PA 15213 Supplemental web links:

[www.corchurchpgh.org](http://www.corchurchpgh.org)

*Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships):* Formally associated with United Church of Christ; Presbyterian Church (USA); United Methodist Church; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Conference:

Penn West

Association:

Pittsburgh

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):

Rev. David Ackerman, Conference

Minister (724) 834-0344

david@pennwest.org

*Summary Ministry Description:*

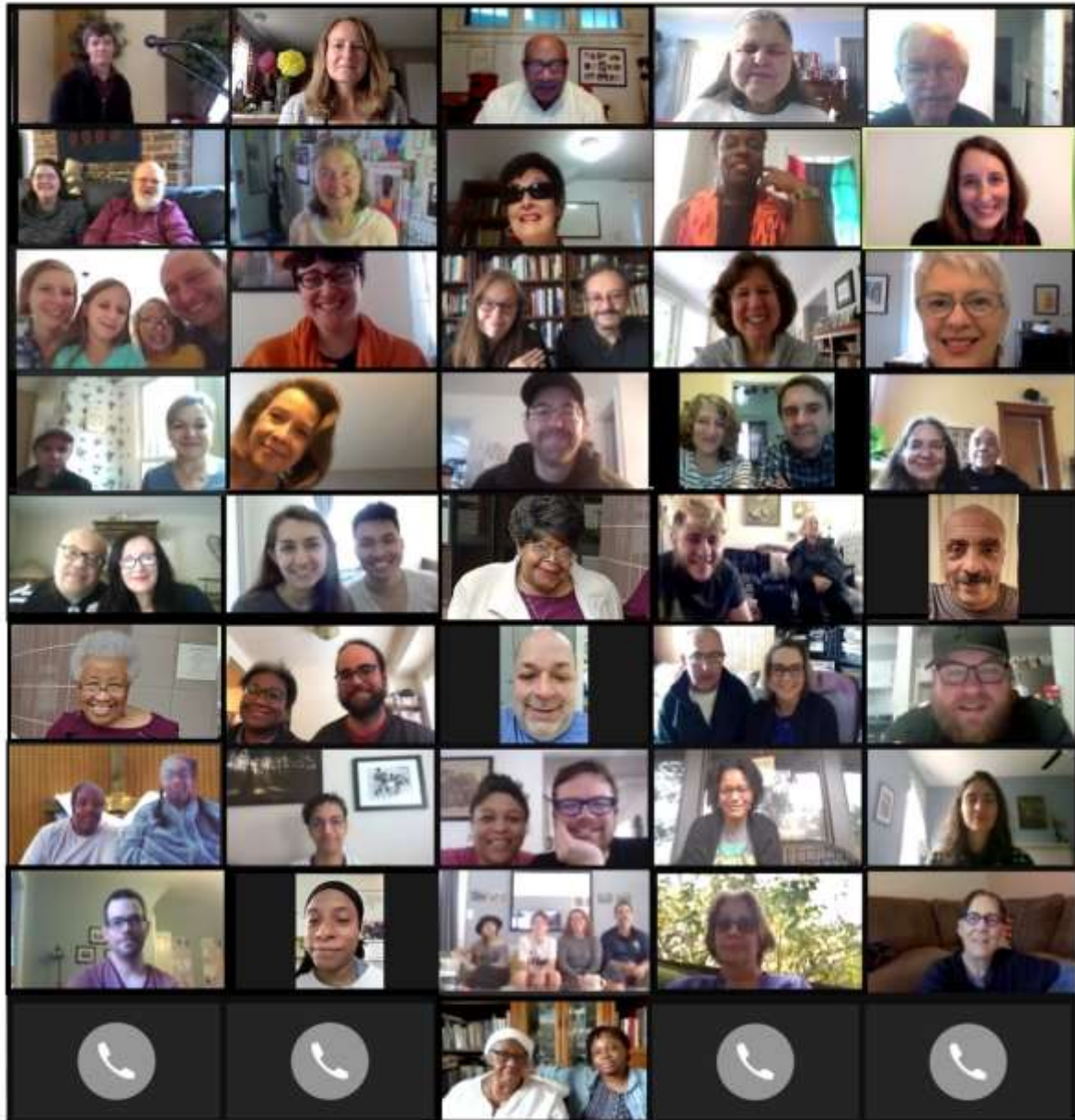
*In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?*

We believe that God is calling us to be a beacon of God's love and mercy, providing Light to the World through our radical inclusivity and social justice for all. We will continue as a welcoming and affirming community that embraces diversity in all forms. We will continue to grow the membership and attract families and young adults. We believe that God is calling our congregation to be a voice for social justice and an active participant in aiding the community. We are led to become a congregation that can recognize and use our gifts to assist our Pastor to complete the work of the church. We want to grow our budget so we can fulfill more of God's mission for us. COR seeks to call a Pastor with a deep passion for inclusivity and demonstrated experience with diverse populations to help us live out this mission.

Photographs:

*Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering*







*What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):*

We appreciate the history of our city. Pittsburgh is a thriving city that has rebuilt its image and industry after the fall of the steel industry in the early 1980s. The area is now known for innovations in healthcare, education and technology, as well as exceptional museums, cultural and art events. Yet Pittsburgh still has a small town feel with vibrant neighborhoods and long-standing traditions.

*Current size of membership:* 80 members

*Languages used in ministry (other than English):* None except for hymns in other languages

*Position Title:* Pastor

*Position Duration (choose one, delete the other options listed):*

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

*Compensation Level (choose one, delete the other options listed):*

**3/4 Time**

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

Yes. COR is committed to fair compensation based on the conference guidelines.

## SCOPE OF WORK

*(add here the Scope of Work developed by your church using the Call Agreement Workbook for half time)*

- Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, planning of music in coordination with employed musicians, and seasonal worship themes and preparation with laypersons and lay ministry.
- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, new member classes, and identifying helpful resources for laypersons.
- Leadership development by supporting Church Council, supervising church staff, and coordinating with committees.

- Pastoral care especially for hospitalized and ailing members
- Participation in the wider church and community activities as time permits and encouraging member participation

*Core Competencies:*

*(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented and time-conscious person.)*

- Strong worship leadership centered on making our Christian faith and the Bible relevant to our lives.
- Upholds the value of diversity and inclusivity through enabling and affirming the gifts of all members, participants, and friends
- Collaborative leadership style that facilitates lay leadership

## COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

*Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance): **\$42,042** (salary and housing for ¾ time position)*

*Benefits (choose one):*

Salary plus Benefits

*What is the expected living situation for your next minister?*

Living where the minister chooses with a housing allowance.

*Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.*

COR members come from all over Pittsburgh and the surrounding area. Our Pastor can choose where to live while considering the commute to the church building. Worship, church events, and church planning are all centered at the church building.

*State any incentives (e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position):*

None

*Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:*



*If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:*

COR has a strong team of trained laypersons who assist with planning and leading worship.

COR Leadership will develop communications structures so the pastor is not the primary conduit of information among committees and a church council.

While worship, church events, and church planning all take place at the church building, Zoom Platform, the pastor does not need to be in the office daily during the week. The pastor will need to coordinate with other staff members to meet when necessary.

## WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

COR would like to collaborate with our next minister to:

1. guide spiritual formation of the community and individuals through prayer, preaching, and education
2. be a beacon for radical inclusivity and a welcoming and accepting worshipping community
3. continue growth in membership and involvement of members and participants in all aspects of church life.
4. become even more involved in the community, particularly in peace and justice activities

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

COR strives to be a witness to the world that the human race is one family and that Christ's church is one. COR seeks to call a Pastor with a deep passion for inclusivity and demonstrated experience with diverse populations to help us live out our Covenant.

Our Pastor will encourage Social Justice Advocacy and collaboration with other organizations to pursue justice by serving God and God's humanity.

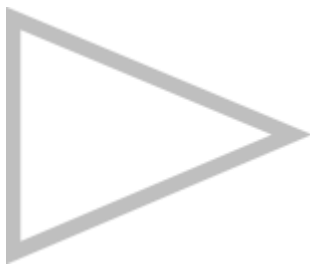
*Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in the next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.*

COR is a racially diverse community with a commitment to inclusivity. We need a Pastor who is committed to working with people from various ethnic and racial groups, with different sexual orientations and gender identities, and from many religious backgrounds.

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

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing  
Spiritual Practice Building Transformational  
Leadership Skills  
Working Together for Justice and  
Mercy Strengthening Inter- and Intra-  
Personal Assets

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?



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

*Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?*

We believe that God is calling us to be a beacon of God's love and mercy, providing Light to the World through our radical inclusivity and social justice for all. We will continue as a welcoming and affirming community that embraces diversity in all forms. We will continue to grow the membership and attract families and young adults. We believe that God is calling our congregation to be a voice for social justice and an active participant in aiding the community.

We are led to become a congregation that can recognize and use our gifts to assist our Pastor in completing the work of the church. We want to grow our budget so we can fulfill more of God's mission for us. And we would like more educational opportunities and programming for our members.

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

*For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?*

As our congregational membership covenant states, we believe that God is calling us at COR to be 'radically inclusive ministers in action' both within our church family and out in the greater community. We are called to be stewards of God's love and grace and champions of social justice for all. We feel that we must remain open and flexible to new opportunities that allow us to connect with those outside our church walls and in the virtual community in order to respond to God's call. While COR is rooted in great history, we have very few traditions that we follow to the letter year after year. We prefer to adjust and enhance our activities that address emerging challenges and opportunities and the greater community as necessary and utilize the gifts of our members.

The first experiment started with Rev. Elizabeth Michael Ross forming the Jubilee committee after our congregation received \$10,000 to fund endeavors in economic justice and mutual aid in 2022. The committee took a unique initiative to call the congregation to discuss how the funds would be used. A series of three sermons followed by a small group discussion was integrated into morning worship to explore the biblical foundations of Economic Justice. The following is an outline of each session:

Session #1 – Sermon Topic: Mammon vs. Manna Economy: Introduction to Sabbath Economics Scripture Readings: Exodus 16 & Leviticus 25 Preacher:

Elizabeth Michael Ross Discussion Questions: What personal experiences have shaped your perspective on financial matters?

Session #2 – Sermon Topic: Naboth’s Vineyard; Ruth & Naomi: Seizing vs Gleaning Scripture Readings: I Kings 21 & Ruth Preacher: Grace Young Discussion Questions: How have you or people you know experienced economic challenges due to circumstances beyond your or their control? How did you or they work through that situation?

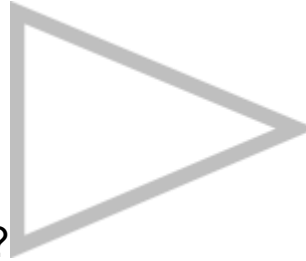
Session #3 – Sermon Topic: The Body of Christ & Mutual Aid: Practices of Economic Mutuality Scripture Readings: I Corinthians 12 & II Corinthians 8 Preachers: Elizabeth Michael Ross & Leah Bowers Discussion Questions: What gifts might you contribute, if COR created a mutual aid “bank” like the one that Leah Bowers described? All of these sessions closed with the thought: “See how much abundance we have to share with each other!” We celebrate that, too!

Currently, the Jubilee committee is working on a mission statement that includes a series of principles to foster a culture of mutuality and economic justice within the COR congregation and its circle of influence. To be as transformational as possible. To be especially receptive to the needs/dreams of households that have suffered historical discrimination. To respond and experiment in collaboration with COR’s Mutual Aid Bank and Pastoral Care Team.

Our second experiment was our response to Covid was to hold services on Zoom until October, 2021. Worshipers could participate in offering prayers, reading scripture, making announcements and providing music leadership from any location. Proof of the efficacy of this method is that our membership actually grew during this period. Several members joined without ever having seen the inside of our building. To maintain the enrichment provided by those attending from far away, we have continued our Zoom presence and now have a thriving hybrid service which at present has as many online attendees as there are members in person. We conducted a joint worship service with a church in Canada, and have also partnered with local congregations.

We have also shared our building, meals, and worship with a congregation founded to minister to the local student and homeless populations.

Community of Reconciliation does not have a current strategic plan or multi-year vision plan. Such plans have been utilized in the past, but not currently.



## WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL  
REFLECTIONS 11-YEAR  
REPORT  
CONGREGATIONAL  
DEMOGRAPHICS  
PARTICIPATION AND  
STAFFING CHURCH  
FINANCES  
HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

*Describe your congregation’s life of faith.*

*For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation’s purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?*

COR’s Covenant affirms our faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ and commits us to living out our faith in an inclusive community.

### **COMMUNITY OF RECONCILIATION CHURCH COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP**

In the presence of God, each other, and other communities, we unite ourselves as a people of reconciliation.

In love, obedience, and faith, we give ourselves joyfully and completely to the service of God.

As our response to the grace of God, we join in the public celebration of community through word and sacrament.

Since we belong to God, we are committed to our fellow human beings to be involved in and serve God's humanity.

We bind ourselves to continuing inquiry into the meaning of our Christian and secular community, in order to be a creative and dynamic force in our society.

Being made free by God's grace, we commit our time, energy, and money to be used for the strengthening and extending of services to God and all people.

We strive to develop ourselves as an interracial community – a witness that the human race is one family created by God and redeemed by Christ.

We affirm that God created human beings of all genders as equals in the service of Christ and strive to uplift a diversity of voices in leadership.

As radically inclusive ministers in action, we invite the full participation of all people in the life and ministry of our church, whatever their sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or worldly condition may be.

We strive to develop ourselves as an ecumenical people – a witness that the Church is one: holy, catholic and apostolic.

It is not possible to completely understand God, so we use many ways to describe God, including Trinitarian images, gender inclusive language, and images from the Bible. The Holy Spirit is present in worship, in fellowship, in service, in caring, and in the everyday interactions of the congregation. We believe in hard work to further the realm of God, and we also believe in allowing the Holy Spirit to act in our midst.

*Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.*

1. Our diversity is one of our strengths. Through listening to each other, we are stronger in our individual and collective lives.
2. Our commitment to social justice for all is evident in our words and our practice.
3. Our community is warm and welcoming with greeters who reflect our diversity. Members often talk with visitors after worship and include them in invitations to fellowship meals and special events. Online attendees chat with each other before and after worship.
4. We have an active, committed lay leadership who assists in all aspects of worship.
5. We attract new members and participants to join us in worship, fellowship, and service. Many people have been at COR for a long time, but we always welcome new people to our fellowship. The university community in Pittsburgh where COR is located has a more transient population, so we often welcome new members for only a few years before they move to other places.



*Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.*

*For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around?*

*What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?*

Worship occurs in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. While we have experimented with different worship times and worship orders in the past, our current worship service at 11 am Sunday mornings throughout the year has a consistent flow and feeling. Preaching the Word is based on the Revised Common Lectionary readings, and the sermon reflections from chosen scriptures on the context of living Christian lives today with educational, challenging, and spirit-filled sermons. Weekly e-mail updates keep the congregation aware of events in the life of the church as well as community happenings that may be of interest. Our music draws from many traditions, including European-American hymns, African-American traditional and contemporary music, and contemporary Christian music. We sing the old time religion, and we sing to the Lord a new song. Our church employs several musicians with strengths in various areas of liturgical music. The congregation may be led to sing traditional hymns as well as gospel and contemporary Christian music, and guitar, piano and organ are all important instruments. Members and guests are welcome to share their musical gifts. Our worship has included liturgical dance, voice, stringed, wind and brass instruments and drums. Everyone in the congregation is invited to submit inspiring and uplifting songs for consideration. Our prayer time includes prayers from worshipers in the sanctuary and those attending on Zoom.

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

*For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?*

We have had adult educational programs of short series held at different times (e.g., Advent and Lent) and on different topics ( womanist and queer Bible study) . COR encourages the use of *Disciplines* as an individual resource for daily study and prayer in addition to using *The Upper Room* and *Our Daily Bread* devotionals.

COR strives to be a racially and economically just community, and partners with various community organizations to provide financial and volunteer support, and participate in learning exchanges. For example, we have hosted guests from local police accountability, transgender justice, and immigrant rights groups and participate in local social justice marches, community forums, and projects as they arise.

We also are attentive to the work that needs to be done within our congregation to deepen our own understandings of racial and economic justice. In response to the uprisings of 2020, congregants participated in Anti Racist Discipleship groups, which included book discussions, race affinity groups, and small group reflections and discussions.

From our youngest to our oldest members, we do want to increase and enhance our educational opportunities to keep growing in our faith.

One of our members has written a number of plays featuring musical selections, dealing with significant historical events as well as religious themes such as Christmas and Easter. Members of the congregation collaborated with the author and members of the community to produce online readings of these plays, with the last few being performed in the sanctuary.

Our Christian education program has not resumed since Covid.

*Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.*

*For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?*

Church Council meets monthly and oversees the financial decisions, policy decisions, and strategic planning for the congregation. COR currently has active committees responsible for worship, Finance, Social Justice Advocacy, and Hospitality which meet regularly to organize the everyday operation of the church. A Personnel Committee meets with the Pastor to oversee personnel issues and establish personnel policies. Ad hoc committees are often established to meet a specific need. For example, we have a committee looking into visible symbols to be put in place to celebrate our diversity as well as a pastoral search committee.

Decisions are communicated through congregational gatherings, email, and announcements at the end of the worship service. Information and announcements are printed in the COR Communicator that accompanies the printed weekly worship bulletins. Print mailings are sent during stewardship and at other times when print material seems appropriate. Those who do not use email receive printed documents. Formal congregational meetings are held at a minimum two times a year to pass the budget and elect members of the church council.

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

8 hours: 2 hour Church Council; 4 hours ad hoc committees; 2 hours finance.

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

For a quick decision, the Pastor would contact the Executive Committee of the Church Council for input and resolution. In some cases, the Pastor would poll all Church Council members for their support for a specific action.

*Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance? Yes*

COR has three key documents that guide its organization: Covenant of Membership, By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation, and Plan of Recognition and Union. We submit Annual Reports to all four denominations.

## 11-YEAR REPORT

*(add here the 11-Year Report developed with the help of your conference staff, UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite)*

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED  
IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church#: 621615 Assoc: 656

Schedule: 0 Community of Reconciliation UCC Pittsburgh PA 15213

Year	Mem bers	Weekl y Att	Chr. Ed.	Confir mation	Confes sion In	Trans. In	Out	Losses	Net
2006	97	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	106	58	34	2	4	20	4	13	9

2008	111	58	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	111	64	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	111	64	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	120	46	14	0	4	11	6	0	9
2012	130	62	20	0	17	12	10	9	10
2013	134	70	21	0	23	8	9	18	4
2014	138	55	20	0	2	6	4	0	4
2015	141	63	28	0	2	5	1	3	3
2016	141	63	28	0	0	0	0	0	0

Year	Basic Support	Special Support	Total OCWM	Other Gifts	Wider Mission	Basic Support %
2006	\$468	\$132	\$600	0	\$600	0.34
2007	\$600	\$392	\$992	\$5,939	\$6,931	0.37
2008	\$650	\$100	\$750	0	\$750	0.40
2009	\$300	\$100	\$400	0	\$400	0.19
2010	\$600	\$352	\$952	0	\$952	0.37
2011	\$270	\$200	\$470	\$7933	\$8,403	0.15
2012	\$600	\$1,050	\$1,650	\$7989	\$9,639	0.34
2013	0	0	0	0	0	0.00

2014	\$200	0	\$200	\$9,591	\$9,791	0.12
2015	\$550	\$850	\$1,400	\$6,159	\$7,559	0.30
2016	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
2017	\$152,243		\$152,243	\$138,541		
2018	\$142,735		\$142,735	\$141,385		
2019	\$142,556		\$142,556	\$150,211		
2020	\$130,269		\$130,269	\$163,573		
2021	140,233	\$30,930	\$171,163	\$162,602		

Year	Current Exp.	Capital Pay.	Total Expend	Pledges/Off.
2006	\$138,241	0	\$138,841	0
2007	\$161,493	0	\$168,424	\$148,695
2008	\$161,493	0	\$162,243	0
2009	\$161,493	0	\$161,893	0
2010	\$161,493	0	\$162,445	0
2011	\$180,247	\$2,382	\$191,032	\$137,837
2012	\$178,016	\$3,600	\$191,255	\$150,146
2013	0	\$3,600	\$158,566	\$147,818
2014	\$169,904	\$3,600	\$183,295	\$159,288
2015	\$180,877	\$2,650	\$191,086	\$137,352

2016	\$180,877	0	\$180,877	0
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% Change	Mem	Wkly Att.	Chr. Ed.	Add.	Out	Local Exp.	Total OCWM	Total Exp.
2011-16	17.50	36.96	100.0	-100.00	-100.00	0.35	-100.0	-5.32
2006-16	45.36	0.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	30.84	-100.0	30.28

Please note: Zero values may reflect missing information in some years.

## CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

*Describe those who participate in your church.*

Numbers are estimates based on reviewing church directory.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (yes)</i>
Number of active members:	75	
Number of active non-members:	12	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	87	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	52%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	30%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	12%	Yes



## Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? ( yes)</i>
3	3	7	7	14	11	12	19	11	Yes

## Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	8%	Yes
Joint household with minors:	16%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	14%	Yes
Joint household with no minors:	43%	Yes

Single adults over 65:	19%	Yes
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## Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	16%	Yes
College:	52%	Yes
Graduate School:	32%	Yes
Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):		

## Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	55%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	28%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	17%	Yes

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

university professor, accountant, bank employee, administrative assistant, loading dock worker, research scientist, social worker, teacher, physician, sales person, non-profit administrator, computer scientist, customer service specialist, writer, aerospace engineer, university administrator.

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

COR is approximately 68% European-American and 32% African-American (Pittsburgh racial demographics for 2022 is 22.98% African-American)

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

COR was founded as an intentionally interracial congregation. We strive to maintain that balance through having our leadership (pastor, staff, and congregation) reflect diversity and through purposely including culturally relevant elements in our worship and music. We also maintain relationships with non-profit organizations that promote racial equality and understanding.

## PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering 2021-2022 information	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? ( <i>list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff</i> )
<b>Adult Groups or Classes</b> New Member classes (2); Training classes and one-on-one mentoring for new worship leaders; Lay-led Ministry Teams in Christian Education, Worship, Finance, Giving, Hospitality, and Social Justice Advocacy	8 completed new members' classes to join church; 4 new worship leaders trained; approx. 18 members actively involved in ministry teams	Pastor plans and leads new member classes, and works with committees are Church Council.
<b>Baptisms (1)</b>	50	Pastor
<b>Children's Groups or Classes (0)</b>	Discontinued due to Covid.	
<b>Christmas Eve &amp; Easter Worship</b> Evening worship on Christmas Eve; Morning worship on Easter	72 Christmas Eve, 90 Easter	Pastor, Musicians, and Lay Leaders.

<p><b>Church-wide Meals</b> Weekly lunch during Lent as well as the extremely popular potluck luncheons celebrating Palm Sunday, Christmas, Consecration of annual pledges and other events (which regularly have 60+ attendees), were all on hiatus due to COVID-19 precautions. Four outdoor picnic events at a congregant's home were well attended.</p>	20-40 picnics	Hospitality team working with Pastor and Church Administrator.
<p><b>Choirs and Music Groups</b> Weekly choir was on hiatus due to COVID-19 precautions. Three employed musician leaders provide music for worship with soloists for special services.</p>	8 soloists	Pastor and musicians coordinated in music planning
<p><b>Church-based Bible Study</b> Two multi-session weekly Bible study programs were held via Zoom in 2021 (Advent) and 2022 (Lent).</p>	12-20 per session	Student pastor led both Bible studies.
<p><b>Communion</b> (<i>served how often?</i>) Served weekly during Advent and Lent; monthly in other seasons. Participation is available for those worshiping in the church, and for those on Zoom, who use bread and beverage from home.</p>	40-70	Pastor and lay leaders
Community Meals		
<p><b>Confirmation</b> (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)</p>	0	Pastor
<p>Drama or Dance Program Plays on topics of social and racial justice are written, directed and cast by a COR member monthly during the lockdown period of COVID.</p>	15-20 per performance  50-60	Initiated and carried out by congregational and community members.

Sacred dance was featured for Christmas Eve and Indigenous' People Sunday celebrations.		Pastor in conjunction with music leaders and liturgical dancer.
<b>Funerals (4)</b>	110	Pastor in conjunction with family; worship leaders assist in service
<b>Intergenerational Groups</b> 2 tabletop games events, open to the community	6-12 each session	Social Justice Advocacy Team
Outdoor Worship (0)		
<b>Prayer or Meditation Groups</b> Weekly prayer workshops were held via Zoom in March-June 2021	12 each week	Student Pastor
<b>Public Advocacy Work</b> Members involved in advocacy and service through Summit against Racism, Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, Gay Christian Network, denominational LGBT activities, Thomas Merton Center, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Crop Walk for local and global food security, appearances at city and county governmental hearings, assistance with petitions for clean water and jail reform, presentations by organizations that support immigrants and gun safety.	10-50 per initiative	Some in coordination with Social Justice Advocacy Team; other opportunities initiated by individual members

<b>Retreats (0)</b>		

<b>Theology or Bible Programs in the Community (0)</b>		
<b>Weddings (1)</b>	100	Pastor in conjunction with the couple and members of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
<b>Worship (time slot: Sunday 11am)</b>	50-70 Hybrid worship technology provides for simultaneous in person and remote attendance..	Planning by the Pastor with the musicians; worship leadership is also provided by lay leaders (4 lay preachers, 4 lay ministers, 10 liturgists) and ordained members of the congregation.
<b>Young Adult Groups or Classes (0)</b>		
<b>Youth Groups or Classes (0)</b>		
<b>Other</b> Movie nights via Zoom feature themes of diversity, and accomplishment in the face of adversity.	approximately 4 times a year, 20-35 per event	Organized and hosted by a Social Justice Committee member in consultation with the Pastor.

Additional comments:



List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role at COR	Retired ? (Y or N)
Rev. Shannon Garrett-Doege	No		Acting Pastor	No
Rev. Deirdre King Hainsworth	No		Guest Preacher	No
Rev. Tom Johnson	No		Pastoral Associate	No
Rev. Linda Lawson	No		Preacher	No
Rev. Don Hammonds	No		Guest Preacher	No

*If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:*

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Acting Pastor	yes	part-time		Acting Pastor since June 2022; She was granted Lay Ministerial standing by the Pittsburgh Association of UCC to serve COR and has been approved for ordination pending call by the Pittsburgh Association of UCC.
Church Administrator		part-time	Pastor	6 years
Building Manager		part-time	Pastor and Church Administrator	15 years
Musicians		contracted	Pastor	3 years

## REFLECTION

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

COR is a small, but very active congregation. We value a collaborative pastoral leadership style that equips members of the congregation to actively participate in the life and mission of the church. We value the skills and abilities of our pastor as we seek to fulfill our promise as a Community of Reconciliation.

Our addition of hybrid worship capabilities (which provide simultaneous in-church and remote attendance) in early 2020 has enabled our congregation to remain vibrant, active and engaged with each other and for our church to be fiscally sound throughout the pandemic years.

## CHURCH FINANCES

## Current annual income (2021 most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$154,651
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i> )	\$
Fundraising Events	\$ 2,000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$10,000
Grants	\$ 4,000
Rentals of Church Building	\$1,450
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$
Support from Related Organizations ( <i>e.g. Women’s Group</i> )	\$
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$
Other (Mission Giving):	\$3,585
Other (Capital Fund):	\$4,366
Interest/Refund	\$700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$178,752</b>

Current annual expenses (2021 dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):  
*Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer’s report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.*

	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	YoY Differences:	
				2022 Actual	2023 Budget
<b>Income</b>					
Pledges & Donations	\$154,651	\$139,387	\$144,000	(\$15,264)	\$ 4,613
Miscellaneous	544	191	0	(353)	(191)
Congregational Fundraiser	0	0	0	0	0
Rent	1,450	730	2,500	(720)	1,770
Interest	156	391	370	235	(21)
Program Grants	14,000	0	0	(14,000)	0
Designated Giving:					
Mission (Select Sundays)	1,760	2,636	2,500	876	(136)
Pastor's Discretion/Friends in Need	1,825	1,000	1,000	(825)	0
Building Fund	4,366	6,630	3,000	2,264	(3,630)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>178,752</b>	<b>150,964</b>	<b>153,370</b>	<b>(27,788)</b>	<b>2,406</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Programs	46	642	350	596	(292)
Office and Technology	10,126	10,132	9,000	7	(1,132)
Facility and Insurance	13,323	14,082	14,271	759	189
Lay and Guest Preachers	3,300	2,450	2,450	(850)	0
Lead Pastor					
Salary + Housing	27,846	14,957	31,532	(12,889)	16,574
Expenses	3,409	2,029	2,625	(1,380)	596
Benefits	14,342	7,230	11,250	(7,112)	4,020
Acting Pastor	5,640	18,487	10,546	12,847	(7,941)
Building Staff	10,621	12,429	11,910	1,808	(520)
Office Administration	31,918	33,495	35,508	1,577	2,013
Tech Staff	0	4,460	4,400		
Worship & Music	9,709	11,428	10,940	1,719	(488)
Fellowship and Outreach	0	0	500	0	500
Designated Giving:					
Mission	1,575	2,640	2,500	1,065	(140)
Wider Church	4,165	5,000	6,000	835	1,000
Pastor's Discretion/Friends in Need	2,028	550	1,000	(1,478)	450
Building Fund	30,930	7,559	3,000	(23,371)	(4,559)
Grant Spend/Other	2,186	0	0	(2,816)	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>171,163</b>	<b>147,570</b>	<b>157,781</b>	<b>(23,593)</b>	<b>10,211</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>7,589</b>	<b>3,393</b>	<b>(4,411)</b>	<b>(4,196)</b>	<b>(7,805)</b>

*Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 2021 with a half-time pastor 33% of the total budget was allocated to pastor compensation*

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

No

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

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

In the past COR has tried to include special offerings from our wider church, such as One Great Hour of Sharing.

*In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)*

Our 2021 mission giving to the wider church, and other organizations is 4.7% of our income.

*What is the church's current indebtedness?*

*Total amount of loan debt: \$0*

*Reason for debt:*

*Are capital and other payments current? See our 2022 Budget*

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

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2014	Replace Carpet and fund building maintenance	\$15,000	\$16,000	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

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

*Does your church have an endowment?* No

#### *Other Assets*

*Reserves (savings):* \$76,000

*Investments (other than endowment):* None

*Does your church have a parsonage?* No

*Describe all buildings owned by the church:*

COR does not own any building. COR has a three floor facility with its own entrance that is part of an office building owned by the University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh Presbytery has air rights to our space. COR owns and maintains the interior of the facility.

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

None

*Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)*

Our church space is accessible to wheelchairs with elevator access to all three floors

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

COR has always budgeted to spend all of its income. We have built up a reserve for building expenses, and we have an operating surplus. We have big goals here for what we can accomplish inside our walls and in the community. We are looking for ideas, support, and enthusiasm from a new Pastor to achieve financial growth.

*For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?*

Our congregation has wanted to increase our mission giving. We have tried different ways to fund mission giving: budget line item; pledges to mission budget; and special offerings. Most recently we have decided to put mission giving to the wider church as a line item in the budget and to fund giving to other organizations via special offerings. Our congregation received \$10,000 to fund endeavors in economic justice and mutual aid.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

Founded in 1968 as an intentionally interracial congregation, COR strives to fulfill its covenant statement to be radically inclusive, ministers in action. COR began with the merger of people from three Presbyterian congregations--two with predominantly white members and one with predominantly black members. Since our beginning, COR has expanded its inclusivity by using gender inclusive language and naming men and women as co-partners, by formally joining four protestant denominations in 1982 (Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and by inviting our LGBT brothers and sisters fully into our ministry. In the last ten years we have lived out our mission to be ministers in action by planning two outreach efforts--our free weeklong summer camp experience for children in our neighborhood and our Saturday block party for our church folk, students at the nearby universities, and people in our neighborhood.

Another significant change in the life of our church was the move from an old church building to a modern church space located in an office building. Our facility is a unique arrangement with the church responsible for interior maintenance and furnishings, and the building owner responsible for outside maintenance. We have our own entrance, signs and outside presence. We have a formal relationship with the building owner which provides free access to the attached parking structure.

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

COR's navigation through the ongoing COVID pandemic was managed collectively by our pastor, Church Council, and participating members. The congregation adapted quickly to virtual church services with the use of the Zoom to meet weekly. At the height of the pandemic participating members frequently checked in with each other through phone conversations, email, and sending cards to encourage one another. Our pastor resumed the practice of people openly sharing prayer requests during virtual services to enable a deeper sense of community when we were required to practice social distancing. As COVID restrictions are loosened, Zoom opened up new opportunities to stay connected with participating members, especially those members that moved out of state, disabled members, elderly members, and immuno-compromised members through the use of the application. Furthermore, the church received funds to enhance our technological capabilities within the sanctuary to connect members that come to church in person to interact with those that attend on Zoom. Both the church council and the pastor continue to monitor infections in our geographic region to decide rather the church should not have in-person services and move service to Zoom worship only and rather masks are required for those attending worship in person. The overall response to COVID enabled COR to become more flexible with worship options for participants. Nevertheless, the success of hybrid worship amid the challenges of navigating is punctuated by one drawback, emotional burnout. Even though hybrid Worship is a blessing for COR and enhances relational connection, it has not eased the collective distress the world is feeling under the seemingly constant pressure coming from within our communities, families, and political crises abroad. We believe these pressures have impacted member participation in ministry, committees, and Church Council.

COR's diverse membership means we grew up with and relate to different worship styles and music. In the past, this diversity of experience has created some controversy over which kind of music to sing. Through listening to each other and prayer, the church was able to realize the importance of diversity of musical traditions. We were able to call a Minister of Music with the ability to play both the organ and the piano. OR no longer employs a Minister of Music. COR employs several musicians that rotate the responsibility to provide worship music, namely the COR Praise Band which plays contemporary gospel, and Jett Downey who plays a broad spectrum of musical genres, specializes in sacred music, world music, and featured soloists.



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

*For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)*

COR has always lived and budgeted on faith. Our foundational hymn is: “We’ve Come This Far By Faith, Leaning on the Lord.” Whatever resources we have through pledges and giving, grants, and rent, we spend on being a Christian witness to the world. This practice of moving forward on faith has enabled COR to be bold in its hopes and dreams. However, it has also led to disagreement and conflict. Most recently, COR held a very successful capital campaign which raised funds to replace the worn-out church carpeting. At the same time the congregation passed a faith budget which assumed fundraising to meet our operating budget obligations (salaries, utilities, supplies). This time we did not meet our income projections, and we ended up spending the capital funds on operating budget. The Finance Ministry Team and Church Council have resolved to implement more transparent financial practices, so the congregation can be aware of our resources and make more conscious choices about our budget. COR has engaged in a very deliberate process to decide on our ability to sustain support for our Pastor and support staff.

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

COR started its ministry in 1968 with a co-pastor model. COR and University and City Ministries (UACM) funded and shared two pastors. The co-pastor model allowed COR to have diverse leadership. When UACM ended its ministry in 1993, COR continued as a congregation with a single pastor. We have had pastors affiliated with all four of our denominations.

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Elizabeth Michael Ross (PCUSA)	3.5 years; 2018-2022	Yes
Rev. Deirdre King Hainsworth, Interim (UCC)	1.5 years; 2017-2018	Yes
Rev. Denise Mason Bullitt (UCC)	16.5 years; 2000-2016	Yes

Rev. Bruce Swenson, Interim (PC-USA)	1 year; 1999-2000	Yes
Rev. Janet Edwards and Rev. Peg Yingling, Interims (PC-USA) (PC-USA)	1 year; 1998-99	Yes
Rev. Willis Ludlow (UMC)	5 years; 1993-98	Yes
Rev. Kathy Clark, Interim (UMC)	2 years; 1991-93	Yes
Rev. James Faltot, Co-Pastor (PC-USA)	3 years; 1990-93	Yes
Rev. Melana Nelson-Amaker, Co-Pastor Interim (Baptist)	½ year; 1989	Yes
Rev. Kristine Light Branaman, Co-Pastor Interim (Disciples)	2.5 years; 1986-89	Yes
Rev. Martha Orphe, Co-pastor (UMC)	3 years; 1988-91	Yes
Rev. Gail B. King, Co-pastor (PC-USA)	18 years; 1971-89	Yes

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

COR values collaboration and sharing leadership. We want our Pastor to work with the congregation to discern our call to ministry. In the past, we have had some conflict between Church Council leadership and Pastor direction. During the isolation of the pandemic, our previous Pastor's gift for pastoral care became a necessary bridge between ministerial leadership and the congregation. Pastor's call to congregants to reach out to one another helped bond congregants to one another during the lockdown period.

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

No

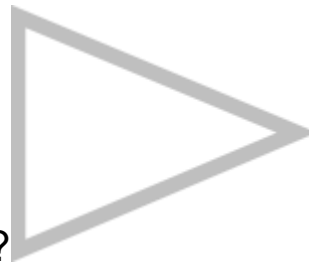
*Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?*

No

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

No

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?



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

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION In Site

## COMMUNITY VISION

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

*For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church’s engagement with neighbors near or far?*

1. During the Spring of 2017, COR served as a host site for International Tabletop Games Day. This event, organized by a student pastor associate, engaged individuals from all walks of life, from both inside and outside the congregation, and provided opportunities for relationship building, entertainment, and storytelling. Our participation was an intentional statement to our community that COR is made up of ‘regular folks’ who enjoy one another's company, and welcome nontraditional gifts of joy. The event was well attended by individuals from COR and the greater community, providing a natural opportunity for engagement. The event was such a success that an additional Tabletop Games Day was hosted in November 2017. This second event also served as a giving event where we collected donations for One PA: The Education Network, a statewide charity working to build a broad-based group of parent leaders to achieve inclusive, high-quality, success-focused education for PA children and youth. Due to COVID no event of this scale has been held at the church. However various members of the church and broader community have met to play games or test new games created by one of our congregants. The congregant created social justice theme game that explores the work of Gandhi.
2. Rev. Don Hammonds participates in several outreach ministries with the LGBTQI + community to bridge gaps of misunderstanding and resistance in church congregations, especially in rural and suburban regions.
3. Members participate and support the annual Church World Service CROP walk.
4. Members are deeply involved in Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), a statewide group interested in peace, justice, equity, and equality throughout the state but especially in Pittsburgh. Several members of our church are in leadership roles in PIIN and many members attend and lead their yearly education advocacy conclave held this year at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.
4. Many members attend and some spearhead the annual Summit Against Racism, a multicultural initiative of the Black & White Reunion. The Summit is an education and advocacy day centered around racial and economic justice, as well as LGBTQI+, and environmental justice.
5. Social Justice Advocacy Ministry, currently the congregation is specifically focused on Anti-racist teachings and deeply engaged conversations about Economic Justice through the work of our Jubilee committee. These programs and outreach avenues are transformational to those who are involved, to our church body as those members bring back word and energy, and to the world, as these actions and interactions are radically different from the dominant worldview of our region, nation, and world.

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

COR holds standing in four denominations: Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and The United Methodist Church. We maintain contact with each and send representatives to some of the regional and national meetings for each denomination. In the last few years, we have sponsored two ordination candidates under the care for the United Church of Christ: Jon Mathieu and Don Hammond. Our last pastor was from the PC-USA tradition. Our present acting Pastor is from UCC tradition. We have had Methodist and UCC pastors in the past.

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

Under the UCC we have official recognition as an Open and Affirming congregation. We are an accessible church with an elevator to all levels and ADA compliant bathrooms on two floors. COR is close to many public transit bus lines. Under other denominations we also are recognized as “More Light”, “Reconciling” and GLAD alliance. These all recognize our understanding that God’s love extends to all.

We are an “intentionally interracial Protestant Christian community” and as such clearly embrace diversity, equity and inclusion of all as the core of what describes our Christian church.

Accessible to All (A2A)

Creation Justice

Economic Justice

Global Mission Church

Open and Affirming (ONA)

WISE Congregation for Mental Health

Faithful and Welcoming      \_\_\_\_\_ Other UCC designations:

God Is Still Speaking (GISS)

Designations from other denominations

Border and Immigrant Justice

X Inter-cultural/Multiracial (I’M)

Just Peace

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

COR is very interested in the issues raised by the UCC statements above. As part of our commitment to the wider church, Church Council has spent time reading and discussing resources from all of our member denominations. The congregation has also engaged in church wide programs using denominational resources.

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

Our church has participated in dinners with Muslims at the Oakland mosque. We have had a "break the fast dinner in our church at the end of Ramadan."

We have preachers from each of the four denominations preach in our pulpit from time to time. We constantly negotiate the slight difference in the practice of the four denominations we are a part of. For example we have Holy Communion once a month (typical in Methodist, Presbyterian and UCC practice) during most of the year but during lent and advent we have communion every Sunday (in accordance with Disciples' practice).

COR has combined Ash Wednesday Service with the Commonwealth of Oakland a Presbyterian Church (USA). The Commonwealth of Oakland is nested within the COR building and congregants are welcome to attend community dinners and service. COR has combined Palm Sunday Worship with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for the past several years.

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

In a small congregation, much of the time spent in the greater glory of God is spent by one or two going out. Some spend many hours per week advocating in groups like PIIN and the Black & White Reunion's Summit Against Racism. The faces of COR are the faces seen at Thomas Merton Center events and works, TNA, PIIN, Black & White Reunion, Gateway Medical Society, and small mission trips. Council meets every month for three hours. Choir practices weekly for two to three hours. Often there are meetings

after church for various Ministry Teams, Congregational Gatherings or for other purposes.

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

The members of the church have a tradition of activism outside the church walls. A pastor's role can range from a cheerleader, enabler, and the one who helps us understand this activism in a paradigm of God's will on earth to a role of one who inspires us to even greater action by example. Both ends of this spectrum would be appreciated, but even if leading by example, the pastor needs to lead us by helping us understand the biblical basis of social justice action.

## MISSION InSite

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

The top ten groups within a five-mile radius of COR are comprised of city dwellers with low to mid-income and somewhat older people. Two of the ten groups are considered racially diverse. The groups are primarily singles or empty nesters. As a city church, COR faces a challenge in attracting families to our church. During COVID one of our congregants wrote and directed several plays made specifically for the Zoom platform that included children and actors from the area. We will need to continue to be intentional about providing family-oriented worship, faith formation, and fellowship in order to find a diverse group of people to join with us in our Christian life together.

*How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?*

COR's internal demographics differ slightly in comparison to the adjacent neighborhoods. The City of Pittsburgh area population is roughly 67% White, 27% Black 4% Asian and 2% Hispanic, while COR is approximately 50% White and 50% Black.

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

COR has never been a "neighborhood" church because our members come from the surrounding area, East End of Pittsburgh, and from north, south, east and west of

Pittsburgh and even from surrounding counties because of the uniqueness of our Covenant and diverse congregation.

Because our church is in the center of a university area, we have at times shaped our ministries and outreach to address the needs of a transient student population.

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

COR is known for its commitment to social justice and racial equality. We are a church that is welcoming and active in many organizations and supportive of those listed previously, such as PIIN and the Black & White Reunion's annual Summit Against Racism.

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

Most new people in the church found out about COR via the website and social media. They are drawn to COR because of the inclusive community that welcomes all to participate in the life of the church. The people who remain at COR welcome the opportunity to be involved in a small, active congregation. On the recent congregational survey, most people cited the welcoming, friendly environment as a key characteristic of COR.



## REFERENCES

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



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

## REFERENCE 1

Rev. Kathy Clark

Retired United Methodist Minister; worked for Church World

Service Telephone: 412-867-5849

Email: [rev.Kathy.Clark@gmail.com](mailto:rev.Kathy.Clark@gmail.com)

Relationship to Congregation: Served as COR Interim Pastor.

## REFERENCE 2

Rev. Dr. Johnnie Monroe

Pastor Emeritus, Grace Memorial Presbyterian

Church Telephone: 412-781-8165 (H) 412-303-

3144

Email: [jmon5611@gmail.com](mailto:jmon5611@gmail.com)

Relationship to Congregation: Friend of Congregation; Grace is the mother church of COR.

Two reference letters are included below:

Rev. Kathy Clark

Rev. Dr. Johnnie Monroe

### **Reference: Community of Reconciliation**

#### **Areas of strength in COR:**

I would like to lift up four areas of strength that I see in the Community of Reconciliation:

--- a vibrant history rooted in living out the Gospel;

- strong lay involvement and leadership;
- an acute awareness of social and ethical responsibility of today's people of faith;
- a response to the pandemic.

#### A vibrant history rooted in living out the Gospel:

The very roots of COR's founding took hold in the Gospel message of God's unconditional love for all and in the call to God's people to reflect that love in our everyday lives. Finding power in the relevance of the moment and the need for Scripture to be alive and clearly evident in the living out of faith in the present has been a unique factor of the history of COR. This household of faith creates history rather than living on the grounds of a past created by others. Being a fairly "young" congregation certainly makes this mindset easier, but it is also a teaching tool for the doing of faith in one's own time. I have always believed that our history as a people of faith, particularly through Scripture, must be relevant to our present. COR has great strength in helping people of faith find that relevance while respecting and remembering what has gone before.

#### Strong lay involvement and leadership:

The laity of COR take initiative and responsibility for the congregation's ministry and witness. New members are encouraged to use their gifts and graces. There is a strong sense of ownership of what the congregation is called to be, even in times when that might not seem so clear! Diverse voices are welcome in the planning and fulfilling of the goals of ministry.

#### An acute awareness of social and ethical responsibility of today's people of faith:

This awareness was the very catalyst for COR's founding. This strength again reflects the knowledge that Christ's incarnation is to be lived and not just remembered, relevant and life-changing in the now. Not everyone agrees, or has agreed, on current issues or movements. However, the conversation has always been powerful. Finding balance in diversity now is as important as it was in 1968.

#### A response to the pandemic:

I have been consistently impressed and uplifted by the way in which COR has responded to being church in the midst of a pandemic. From the very beginning reassurance and a consistency of presence were offered to the membership through regular fellowship and worship, the two most grounding elements of any congregation. In the early months of the pandemic, before my own appointment to another church, I attended Sunday worship with COR through Zoom. I learned from my COR friends that we could still share in fellowship, still address injustice, still be present in care to one another, and most importantly, still and always lift up relevant and spirit-filled worship to God. COR. Provided me with the model I began using in my own church, a model which invited a tremendously personal aspect to worship we do not always have sitting in rows together in a building. A testament to COR's lasting presence in people's lives could be seen in how many of us from past walks with COR joined in these services. Throughout the pandemic, this community has focused on what it can be rather than what it cannot, defining itself in the context of this global event rather than being defined by it...never questioning the community's ability to BE church without full access to a building. In the years following the care and deliberation taken by the membership to continue to care for the most vulnerable among them while expanding in ministry has been inspirational and absolutely faithful.

#### **Areas for improvement in the ministry of COR:**

As I am serving my own church, I have not been able to actively participate at COR. Therefore, I would find it presumptuous to offer needs for improvement. However, I can respond to some of those needs I addressed when last asked to write a reference. I previously recommended improving in the areas of sustained growth, improved mutuality of leadership (between clergy and laity), and greater use of intergenerational strengths within the congregation. I have no knowledge of the financial strength of the congregation at present, but will still offer this arena for improvement, which indeed applies to nearly every church. While I know that every congregation needs to evaluate rooms for growth and improvement, I am confident that COR has a healthy sense of introspection and a leadership team that will seek the best for the household.

Sustained growth allows any congregation to share the work of ministry without burning each out as well as providing a strong financial base for the future. While I would be the last to suggest that the purpose of growth is to become stronger financially, I know the exacting toll that worrying about money takes on a household of faith. Sustained growth also brings in new generations and new ideas. While I am aware that the household has embraced many new members over the years, I believe there is room for improvement in the area.

#### **Significant experience of ministry at COR:**

Since moving to Pittsburgh in 1979, I have had a long-standing relationship with COR, more active in some years than others. COR was the congregation I attended when I first arrived. I have served as an interim pastor on two occasions: one for three years in the early 90's and again for 3 ½ months in 2017 when the pastor was on sabbatical. This household of faith was the church home for my children for several years of their lives. I count several of my oldest Pittsburgh friendships among the members of COR. On two occasions my office has been located at COR. Throughout these many years, I have found an authentic faith and unconditional love in the household of faith.

Contact information:

Name: Kathy Clark  
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TO: Whom It May Concern

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY OF RECONCILIATION

In 1968, not long after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared that "the eleven o'clock hour on Sunday morning was the most segregated hour in America," a group of justice seeking religious leaders led by Rev. Dr. Harold Tolliver, pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, set out to change that concept in Pittsburgh.

Five protestant denominations-Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ and United Methodists- came together to form an outreach, named University and City Ministries, to reach college and university students and to form a congregation, The Community of Reconciliation. UCM and COR were designed to be inter-racial, inter-denominational, and inter-generational.

The African Americans, who were challenged to form this new congregation, were the members of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church. That is why we say, "Grace, at the age of 100, gave birth to The Community of Reconciliation-a new baby."

My family and I moved to Pittsburgh in 1986 and the Community of Reconciliation was the first congregation we worshiped in. For more than 30 years and through several pastors, I have watched COR as she has tried to be faithful to and live out her origin. For the most part, she has succeeded. However, because of age, diminishing financial resources and the lack of continuous leadership, some of the enthusiasm has gone.

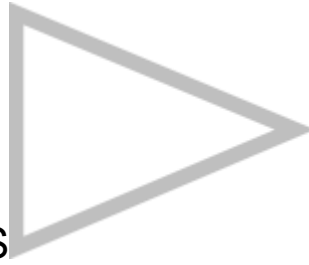
I am convinced that after fifty years, The Community of Reconciliation has a place in and a role to play on the religious stage. It is a good church with a loving core of people. With the right leader, one that is a visionary, hard working, people loving and Christ-centered, COR can continue to be a leading, teaching church among the supporting denominations.

If anyone wishes to speak with me further about my thoughts regarding COR, I can be reached at-412-781-8165; 412-303-3144 or [johnnie@cor-pittsburgh.org](mailto:johnnie@cor-pittsburgh.org).

Very kindly yours,



Johnnie Monroe, B. A., M. DIV., D. Min.



## CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER  
STATEMENT OF  
CONSENT  
CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:*

II Corinthians 5:18-20

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to God's self and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to God's self, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making God's appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

(Inclusive-Language Lectionary of Revised Standard Version)

## STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. *Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)* The three member Pastor Search Committee wrote the document with input from the congregation. Members of the Pastor Search Committee also serve on Church Council and Ministry Teams.

0. *Additional comments for interpreting the profile:*

Name	Ceinwen King-Smith
Preferred E-mail	ceinwen@comcast.net
Phone Number	412-521-1633

## 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.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is cursive and reads "David J. Ackerman".

Signature:

Name / Title: David J. Ackerman / Conference Minister

Email: [david@pennwest.org](mailto:david@pennwest.org)

Phone: 724-834-0344

Date: January 18, 2023

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

***“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark  
11:22***