

2007 LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Welcome

to the

***First Congregational Church
of Ridgefield Connecticut***

Index

Christ-centered church seeks experienced leader to shepherd lively congregation on its next stage of spiritual journey. Visit us at www.firstcongregational.com

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May 28, 2007
Date

Senior Minister
Position to be filled

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE
FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING NEW LEADERS

Local Church
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 opinion 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.

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

Date: May 28, 2007

Church

Name: *The First Congregational Church of Ridgefield, Connecticut, Inc.*
Address: *103 Main Street*
City, State, Zip: *Ridgefield, CT 06877*

Search Committee Chairperson or Contact Person

Name:	<i>Holly Bergeron</i>	<i>Tom Corry</i>
Address:	<i>77 New Street</i>	<i>109 Limekiln Road</i>
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May 28, 2007
Date

Senior Minister
Position to be filled

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING NEW LEADERS

Please return the completed document to your conference or association office.

1. Church: *The First Congregational Church*

2. Address: *103 Main Street*
City, State, and Zip: *Ridgefield, CT 06877*

3. Name of Search Committee Chairperson:

Name: *Holly Bergeron*
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4. Conference Staff Person Assisting Our Church: *Susan Townsley*

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City, State, and Zip: *Norwalk, CT 06851*
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STATEMENT ON LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY

We believe the Senior Pastor of First Congregational Church must understand and be able to build upon our past, our present condition and, most importantly, our hopes for the future. Our history is long and our congregation is complex. Leading our congregation in accordance with God's will, and helping us become a more vibrant, committed Christian community, will require a Senior Pastor who has a mature, secure personal faith foundation and great skill in working with the congregation and its lay leadership in fulfilling God's will.

During our interim period, we are engaged in a process of congregational discernment. This process has included a variety of tools and techniques, including cottage meetings, a comprehensive congregational questionnaire, historical discussions, reference to denominational and other external resources, individual and corporate prayer. This process is ongoing, and will continue to challenge the congregation to address differences in constructive, Christian ways.

As a result, our understanding of leadership in ministry is clearer and we can state with greater confidence that our ministerial requirements are aligned with God's will and the needs of our congregation, and not just an accumulation of our individual likes and dislikes.

Our Recent History

Although we trace our gathering history to 1712 and count many important events and milestones, our critical recent history starts in the mid 1980's when the church experienced tremendous growth under a dynamic Senior Pastor. During this period we moved from a moderately-sized church to a large multi-staff church with four varied services. The congregation became more diverse in its members' faith backgrounds, accommodated a variety of worship practices and embraced a moderate to conservative biblical view. Our growth was fueled by a spiritually gifted and engaged lay leadership and broad congregational engagement in the worship and mission of the church. However, we soon learned that while a talented and inspirational ministerial team can lead our church to remarkable spiritual growth and discipleship, such growth does not come without risk, uncertainty and the potential for conflict.

When our Senior Pastor accepted a call to a church with larger ambitions than ours and abruptly left in 1994, we were grieved and ill-prepared. A lengthy and difficult interim period in the mid to late 1990's ensued, which included a failed call of a Senior Pastor. This period was characterized by conflict about the direction of the church, its openness to a range of theological perspectives, and how we should behave towards each other in dealing with congregational issues. During this period, a significant number of members left or ceased actively participating in the church. One contributor to this conflict was the fact that the Senior Pastor's departure followed our decision to remain "on campus" and renovate the historic sanctuary in 1993, (versus building a new facility) a decision which signaled that the church had reached the limits of its desired growth.

A degree of stabilization was achieved in 1998 when a settled Senior Pastor was called, but tensions within the congregation continued, focusing on his pastoral skills and his leadership style. Continued budgeting issues and loss of members brought these tensions to the surface, old wounds were reopened, and a new period of conflict ensued until he left in 2005.

As a result of our recent history we are smaller and less diverse in our theology, worship practices and programs than ten to fifteen years ago. These changes have not come without individual and corporate pain as we have struggled to balance staff needs, programs, and mission priorities with financial reality. We have also had to work at changing the way we, as a congregation, deal with conflict. Our experience has shown us that people of integrity can have honest disagreements and that such disagreements do not have to lead to destructive conflict. We have also seen that decision making needs to be more inclusive and transparent.

In the fall of 2004, a seven-member Task Force accepted the mission of deciding whether the church was ready for small group ministries, and, if so, how best to implement the ministry. We decided to use the ChristCare Small Group Ministry model developed by Stephen Ministry. After training of three Equippers followed by training twelve group leaders, we began small groups in early 2006. Today, there are twenty four groups with nearly 150 members involved. Of the groups, five are for youth. Topics range from walking, gospel music, bridge and art, to Christian book studies, busy dads, mothers with young children, Bible studies and other topical issues. We believe the early success has had and will continue to have a positive influence on the church and our members.

The church's expectations of its members

The United Church of Christ statement of polity states that "all members of the United Church of Christ are called to minister to others and to participate as equals in the common worship of God. Recognition is given to those among us who have received special training in pastoral...functions, but these persons are regarded as servants—rather than as persons in authority. Their task is to guide, to instruct, to enable the ministry of all Christians rather than to do the work of ministry for us."

Though we come from many traditions, our aspiration as a congregation is to engage in an equal and covenantal relationship with those it calls to serve as pastors. We have the following leadership expectations for the members of our church:

- *Support a diverse faith community in collective worship and individual faith journeys*
- *Maintain and build our missions and outreach both locally and globally*
- *Minister to and nurture one another with integrity and in Christ-like love*
- *Enable all members, young and old, to love and serve God through faithful involvement in the church*

The church's expectations of its pastoral leadership

Accordingly, the individual called by the Holy Spirit to become the Senior Pastor of First Congregational Church must be thoroughly experienced as a pastor, be spiritually and emotionally secure in his/her personal faith foundation, and skilled in working with the congregation and its lay leadership in discerning and fulfilling God's will. Specifically, we expect the Senior Pastor to:

- *Provide spiritual leadership and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the members of First Congregational Church.*
- *Have inspiring worship presence, including the ability to lead more than one style of worship.*
- *Be comfortable and effective in resolving conflict.*

- *Be able to sustain the church in a transient community by continuing to bring in new members and inspiring existing members to give of their time and treasure.*
- *Engage people in their faith lives and inspire us to carry our faith into the world outside the church doors.*
- *The Senior Pastor should be familiar with an effective youth ministry and be experienced in supporting and encouraging the ministry.*

The Senior Minister we seek will be the leader of the pastoral team and staff, which currently consists of an Associate Minister, Minister of Music, Children's Minister, Parish Nurse, Office Administrator/Assistant to the Pastors, Administrative Assistant and Sexton. The position of Youth Minister is currently vacant and a leadership team is examining various options for this position. In addition, a number of lay volunteers supplement the staff, in particular the Parish Social Worker and Stephen Ministers.

Finally, in articulating the skills and characteristics being sought in a Senior Pastor, the Search Committee is well aware that we are seeking a human being, with all that implies. We have tried to be candid about whom we are as a community of faith, and have not sought to minimize where we have fallen short of God's, or our own, expectations. We are confident that the Holy Spirit is at work at First Congregational Church and we seek to be in covenant with a pastor who welcomes the joys and challenges this ministry offers.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

**Please note: Certain statistical data in this profile (as noted in the responses) is derived from a survey of the congregation conducted using the Hartford Institute for Religion Research Pastoral Search Inventory rather than from First Congregational Church records. The Inventory also served as a basis for other, non-statistical, profile responses. The Inventory results are subject to the limitations described by the Institute, including specifically "It is typical of nearly every congregation who has used our inventories that the respondents over-represent those who attend quite often, are older, are long-time members, and hold leadership positions in the church."*

5. Membership: (if information is not available, put **n/a** or estimate and put **est.**)

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
a. # Church members	1,007	1,100	1,200
b. Average attendance at worship (except summer)	254	370	489
c. Average participation of children/youth in C.E.*	70	125	196
d. Average weekly participation in adult education	**	**	**
e. # Members who are ordained clergy (excluding staff)	1	3	4

*K-5 only, middle school and high school have separate programs

** Participation in weekly adult education is not tracked. Note that the ChristCare program (with nearly 150 participants) is a principal provider of Adult Education opportunities.

6. Profile of Congregation:

Estimate percentage of congregation. Each category should add up to 100%

a. Adult Age: (from survey results)*

_____ % ages 0 - 24
 1 % ages 25-34
 10 % ages 35-44
 32 % ages 45-54
 29 % ages 55-64
 16 % ages 65-74
 11 % ages 75 +

c. Family units: (from survey results)

 45 % couples with children at home
 44 % couples without children at home
 8 % single
 2 % single parent with children at home

- b. Education level of adults: (survey)
- 0 % completed less than high school
 - 0 % high school graduates
 - 12 % some college/vocational school
 - 45 % college graduates
 - 43 % graduate school
- *Typical Sunday School attendance is 70.
- Recent confirmation class is 21
- d. Occupation of adults: (survey)
- 18 % business
 - 9 % clerical
 - 0 % farmer/rancher
 - 0 % laborer/manufacturing
 - 55 % professional
 - 0 % student
 - 0 % tradesperson
 - 18 % other
- e. Employment: (survey)
- 58 % employed (full and part time)
 - 15 % not currently employed
 - 28 % retired
 - 19 % are self-employed
- f. Describe the racial-ethnic makeup of your congregation: *FCC racial make-up is 97% white, reflecting the racial-ethnic makeup of Ridgefield, which is 92% white, 3% Asian, 2% Hispanic and 1% Black.*

CHURCH FINANCES

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
7. Total Church Income	\$ 724,563	\$ 784,619	\$ 643,236
a. Members offerings and pledges	684,707	726,134	605,751
b. Interest from investment or endowments	20,000	8,000	4,094
c. Principal reduction (endowments or investments)	0	0	0
d. Rentals	4,670	485	3,810
e. Special Fundraising	70,000	0	29,581
f. Other		Prior year carry over 50,000	0

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
8. Total Operating Budget	\$ 716,004	\$ 781,460	\$ 650,063
a. Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support	52,566	55,000	35,063
b. Our Church's Wider Mission Special Support	4,024	12,300	30,034
c. Other gifts			
d. Current local expenses	657,174	662,803	584,966
e. Annual capital payments	2,240	2,240	0
f. Other debt			

9. Identify special offerings the church has throughout the year and the amounts from last year:
One Great Hour of Sharing - \$525 Veterans of the Cross- \$352.50 Blanket Appeal- \$2,064
Neighbors In Need-\$ 832 Heifer Project- \$5,029 Deacon's Fund-\$5,359

10. Name the most significant local missions/ministries or agencies that were financially supported by your local church last year and the amount of support: (Note: Recipients and amounts will vary significantly year to year given changing mission priorities)

Name	Amount
1. Local Mission Fund	\$23,648
2. Habitat Team and Building Fund	17,371
3. Tsunami Relief	6,005
4. Katrina Relief	5,033

11. Indebtedness

- a. Total amount of capital debt:
\$ 72,424 Ongoing loan for sanctuary renovation with new organ in 1995
\$ 170,000 Mortgage on West Lane Property with apartments

e. If the church owns a parsonage, describe it: *Not Applicable*

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Number of Rooms:

Number of Bedrooms:

Number of Bathrooms:

Description:

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF MINISTERIAL LEADERS

14. If your conference has compensation guidelines, do you follow them?

_____ yes _____no

a. If the compensation package offered falls below conference guidelines, are you willing to have a pastor who is bi-vocational having a part-time position to supplement income?

_____ yes _____no

b. Are you willing to help bi-vocational candidates locate other employment?

_____ yes _____no

15. Salary History

To provide a profile of salaries for the position you are seeking to fill, indicate salaries at the beginning and ending of the ministers' tenure. Do not include interim positions. If a parsonage is provided, insert the letter "P" in the space provided. Provide information for the last 3 leaders or the last ten years.

	Start Date				End Date			
	Year	Salary	Housing	Parsonage	Year	Salary	Housing	Parsonage
a. Last								
b. Previous								
c. Next previous								

16. During the above period, has your church failed to fulfill its financial obligations to its pastor?

_____ yes _____no If yes, please comment:

17. Salary, Benefits, and Expenses Offered

a. Cash salary offered \$

Conference recommended salary range: \$

b. Housing: \$

_____ Housing allowance only: _____ Parsonage only: _____ would offer either

c. Customary benefits:

- _____ Vacation: _____ weeks annually after _____ (date)
- _____ Maternity/paternity leave
- _____ UCC retirement annuity: (14%); _____ other retirement plan (_____%)
- _____ UCC Life and Disability Insurance Benefits; _____ other life/disability insurance
- _____ UCC Health Benefits; _____ other health benefits
- _____ UCC Dental Benefits; _____ other dental benefits
- _____ Social Security
- _____ Continuing Education Funds:
- _____ Continuing Education Time:
- _____ Sabbatical Leave:
- _____ Books
- _____ Other Benefits, Specify
- _____ Study Leave:

d. _____ Travel Reimbursement;

e. Meeting Expense Reimbursement;

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

18. Population

- a. Population of total city or town in which your church is located: *24,841*
- b. Describe the population by racial-ethnic category and identify the source of the information:
White- 22,755; Asian- 700; Hispanic- 590; Black- 336; Native American 40; Other- 420 (US Census)

19. Economic Factors

Identify major sources of employment/income in your community:

- a. *Ridgefield's major employers include the Town of Ridgefield (school, police and fire departments, etc.), Boehringer-Ingelheim and Laurel Ridge Health Care Facility.*
- b. *Major corporations in the Fairfield and Westchester County area, (including more than 25 Fortune 1000 companies such as GE, IBM, and PepsiCo) and professional services such as law firms, financial services companies and accounting firms that support them. Significant numbers of people commute to New York City and beyond for employment.*
- c. *Significant numbers of self-employed individuals and small ventures in service areas such as finance, consulting, real estate, etc.*

20. General Description

- a. Describe three distinctive attributes of your community:
 1. *High quality of life. Many rankings of "#1" for Connecticut towns, with excellent schools, health care, and cultural and leisure activities close at hand. New York City is 50 miles away.*
 2. *Wealthy community with low unemployment.*
 3. *People tend to be "overly scheduled" and many families are transient.*
- b. Identify major trends you envision in your community during the next five years:
 1. *Growing interest in "giving back" with significant volunteer force that is passionate and caring.*
 2. *Increased congestion as development continues and Ridgefield becomes a regional destination point for shopping and leisure.*
 3. *Cost of living may start limiting young families' ability to live in Ridgefield.*

- c. List three or four problem areas confronting your community that members feel your church should address:

1. *Lack of activities for youth.*
2. *Family relationships, divorce and separation, and personal support needs and networks.*
3. *Partner with other churches to address local poverty. Although poverty level is low in Ridgefield (2.4%) nearby communities in Danbury and Norwalk have greater levels of poverty.*
4. *Outreach to new families coming into the community.*

- d. Indicate Mission Activities

1. In which your church participates as a part of its mission in the community:

The missions supported by the church include: AmeriCares, Amos House, Angel Tree, Blanket Tree, Dorothy Day, Elizabeth House, Habitat for Humanity Local/International, Heifer Project, H.O.M.E., Midnight Run, and Pivot House.

2. In which your church expects the leader you are now seeking to participate:

We believe the primary responsibility of our ministers regarding mission activities is to support and empower the congregation. Our most recent senior pastor had a personal passion and interest in leading overseas housing mission trips, which interest we fully supported.

- e. Describe how your church facilities are now being used by the community:

National League of Charities, Men's AA, C.O.D.A., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, AARP, and Ridgefield Men's Club.

- f. Indicate the number of school districts from which members of your church are drawn:

_____ one _____ two X three or more

Ridgefield has a single school district with one high school, two middle schools and six elementary schools. There are two private schools in town offering grades k-8 and several others nearby private schools attended by Ridgefield families. Approximately 15% of FCC's members reside outside of Ridgefield.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

21. Identify major trends you envision in your church in the next five years

During the previous five years, FCC has experienced decreased attendance and participation by its members. It has also moved towards a standardized approach to worship which emphasizes liturgical elements. While there are some who are neutral to positive regarding many of these trends, others would like to see them reversed: specifically, to grow the church in membership and participation, return to a more diversified worship program and feel more engaged as a broad congregation. For example, the church no longer has an alternative service to Sunday morning, which existed for several years using a contemporary format.

We divide trends into two categories- (1) structural needs and priorities, and (2) spiritual callings of the church

Structural needs and priorities include:

- continued development of the church campus, including use of the stand alone church house and re-construction of the razed barn.*
- addressing the financial stability of the church through capital campaign*
- planning for the 300th anniversary observance in 2012*

Spiritual callings of the church include:

- continued growth in small groups through our Christ Care program*
- finding unity within the diversity of the church*
- mission outreach, both locally and globally*
- attention to the needs of children and youth*

22. Planning

- a. All churches do planning. How would you characterize the way planning is done in your church?

Planning is a frequent activity, which is usually led by motivated individuals. These individuals usually engage with a relatively small group of individuals to conduct the planning activity. As a largely "corporate" church culture, delegation of action plans usually occurs and hoped for results of planning activities not always achieved. In the recent past, the church has had broader-based planning retreats. More recently, planning has become more budget driven and reactive.

- b. What expectations do you have of the person you are seeking in relation to the planning that takes place.

The senior pastor should understand a corporate mode of planning and decision making. There is an expectation that the senior pastor will provide input, but ultimate decisions on actions will be a consensus matter between the senior pastor and church leadership. The senior pastor needs to be a facilitator, skilled in leadership through empowerment and bring strategic, spiritual and inspirational thought.

23. Reflections on Congregational Life

Comment on the following with what you believe to be the generally-held responses of the congregation. (If more space is needed, use additional pages.)

- a. Identify the most important events in the history of your church and the year:

Event

Year

1. *The destruction of the church house by fire in 1979, which was fully funded and rebuilt within a year.*
2. *Decision to stay "on campus" and renovate the historic sanctuary 1993*
3. *Departure of Bill Nigh, a failed search process and subsequent conflict July 1994-Feb 1996*
4. *Ordination of Mark Allan, our Associate Minister, April 2005*
5. *Decision by the church to support small group ministries based upon the ChristCare process of Stephen Ministry*

- b. Identify the most challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years and what the church learned from it:

The circumstances surrounding Rev. Rosenberger's departure pushed into the open the church's approach to conflict. Until this event, the church tended to approach conflict from a "winner takes all" perspective. The church has learned that people of integrity can have honest disagreements and that such disagreements do not have to lead to conflict. The church has learned that it is bigger than its pastors. The church has also learned that decision making needs to be more inclusive and transparent.

- c. Identify what the congregation intends to accomplish during the next three years:

The church needs to resolve its direction in a number of ways: to grow or maintain status quo, to embrace a diverse congregation or to erect bright lines of comfort and acceptance, to have a single style of worship or more than one.

There is strong interest in more contemporary and innovative worship, and a continued interest in alternative worship to Sunday morning.

The congregation places particular importance on financial stability and getting our "financial house" in order is a priority.

- d. Describe how the church expects the person you are seeking to help your church reach these goals:

Guide, advise and lead the congregation in understanding its options, and the consequences and implications of the various courses of action. Ours is a diverse congregation, which necessarily means that not everyone's personal interests and expectations can be met. It is important that the senior pastor understands, appreciates and respects the diversity of the congregation in a non partisan manner, especially for those whose personal preference on a particular matter is not followed.

- e. Chose the statement that most accurately describes the theological/faith stance of your church:

There are two views here: We are pretty tightly bounded around a moderate to conservative biblical. Or, we are quite diverse as evidenced by the range of denominations represented in our members' backgrounds.

- 3% We tend to be theologically conservative .
63% We tend to be theologically moderate to conservative.
29% We tend to be theologically moderate.
6% We tend to be theologically moderate to liberal.
0% We tend to be theologically liberal.
 _____ We tend to be quite diverse theologically.
 _____ Other

Based on the survey of the congregation's Biblical views as follows:

Members were asked which one of the following best expresses their view of the Bible.

Percent

- 0 (1) *The Bible is an ancient book of history, legends and cultural stories recorded by man. It has little value today except as classic literature.*
 6 (2) *The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good people, but I do not believe it is really God's Word, but it can teach us many moral precepts.*
 29 (3) *The Bible is the record of many different people's response to God and because of this, people and churches today must interpret for themselves the Bible's basic moral and religious teachings.*
 63 (4) *The Bible is the inspired Word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it reflects some human error.*
 3 (5) *The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally.*

Members were involved in the following denominations when they were growing up:

Denomination	Percent
Baptist	8
Disciples of Christ	1
Episcopal	4
Lutheran	8
Methodist	9
Presbyterian	26
United Church of Christ	18
Unitarian Universalist	4
Other Protestant	6
Roman Catholic	13
Other	4
None	1

f. Describe the educational program of your church:

1. Identify the curriculum/a used in your church school and the person or committee responsible for selection of curriculum:

K-5th Grades- Gospel Light International Bible Society. Selected by the Children's Minister and Children's Board.

6th-8th Grades- Middle School (Fusion): Various topics and preparation for Confirmation. Selected by Youth Board and Middle School Teachers.

9th Grade- Confirmation (see f(2) below).

10th-12th Grades- High School Various topics (e.g., Parables and Revelations for fall/winter '06/'07). Selected by Youth Board with input from teachers and participants. Organization of a new lay-led Youth Ministry is underway. This ministry addresses middle and high school youth, and is based on five tenets: worship, mission, evangelism, fellowship and discipleship (Acts 2:42-47). This new program will offer training for all volunteers working with youth and all content/curricula will be approved by Youth Ministry Leadership Team.

2. Indicate resources used for Confirmation and the person or committee responsible for the selection of these resources:

The Quest video series, portions of the UCC Confirmation Curriculum, Young Life Sex & Dating video and guest speakers. Selected by Deacons, Youth Board, Pastors and parents.

g. Describe how the church expects the person you are seeking to participate in the congregation's educational programs:

It is expected that the senior pastor will be able to "connect" with children and youth of all ages. In general, the Children and Youth Ministries of the church do not require specific participation in the programs as these programs are led by other staff and lay leaders. The church does expect the senior pastor's visible support of these programs, including assistance in identifying and inspiring congregants to volunteer for Children and Youth Ministries. Specific senior pastor participation in these programs is as follows:

***Children-** Lead communion class, present homily for children on Good Friday, lesson on Ash Wednesday, short lesson for children at Sunday services, and support occasional inclusion of children in worship and other children's projects. The senior pastor also typically participates in some fashion in Vacation Bible School and in the Christmas Pageant.*

***Middle School-** General advisor, resource and encourager of involvement within larger church*
***Confirmation-** General advisor, resource and motivator of adult leaders and mentors, and occasional participation in Confirmation Class*

***High School-** General advisor, resource and encourager of involvement within larger church*

h. Describe how programs or ministries of your church are evaluated:

In general, individual Boards and Committees are responsible for the oversight and review of their specific programs.

i. Describe the strengths or positive qualities of your church:

FCC has a large group of remarkably talented individuals.

External political intrusion and agendas tend not to be present, including a tradition of a non-politicized pulpit.

People rise to the occasion.

- 24.** Indicate major boards, committees, groups, and organizations that are a part of your church, the frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.), and expectations for leadership. For leadership role use: 1 = pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility; 2 = pastor and laity share responsibility; 3 = laity takes primary initiative and responsibility. **From 2006 Annual Meeting Reports**

Group	Purpose of Group	# Members	Frequency	Role
<i>Family/Children's Ministries</i>	<i>The Board of Children's Ministries shall organize, supervise and direct the children's Christian education programs including Sunday School, VBS, and other related activities promoting Christian faith in children and families. The Board shall be responsible for the selection curriculum, the recruitment and training of teachers and others.</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Board of Deacons</i>	<i>They shall assist and support the Ministers in the spiritual affairs of the Church. They shall take heed to the high calling of their office, guarding faithfully the spiritual interests of the Church, maintaining order in the house of God, visiting the sick and ministering to the edification and comfort of all.</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Board of Trustees</i>	<i>They shall have the care and custody of the property of the Church as a sacred trust, whether real or personal, in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and these By-laws and under the direction of the Church Council.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Board of Missions</i>	<i>They shall be responsible for a continuing program of Mission education and will endeavor to creative an understanding of not only the purpose and theology of Mission but of the actual World and Home Missions of the UCC and local Church. The Board shall suggest projects for all dept's of the Church, help organizations fulfill special undertakings, and coordinate all such projects.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Board of Music Ministries</i>	<i>They shall organize and supervise the Church's Ministry of Music in worship and fellowship working in cooperation with the Music Minister/Director and other music Staff to ensure that all endeavors under its jurisdiction are directed consistently toward the glory of God and the edification of the Congregation. The Board sets policy and provides support for the Music Minister and other musicians in the music programs.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>3</i>

<i>Board of Adult Ministries</i>	<i>Responsible for providing adult study groups and special events to further participants' knowledge of the Bible and the Christian faith. The ministry also organizes other Christian-based education projects.</i> <i>Classes are usually held 2-3 times a year with 10-15 attendees in each session. The Adult Ministry Board is currently setting up classes for 2007. In the past the ministry has sponsored weekend activities (e.g. ChristCare and Transforming the Church), Saturday discussions (e.g. on forgiveness and David), and classes (e.g. Spiritual Gifts).</i>	12	Monthly	3
<i>Board of Youth Ministries</i>	<i>They shall work with the Youth Minister in planning and organization and executing the Middle and High School Youth programs of the church. They shall provide leadership and support for various aspects for the Youth Ministry, including retreats, mission projects and trips, fundraising, communications, review of curriculum as well as recruitment and training of teachers/leaders.</i>	9	Monthly	3
<i>ChristCare Small Group Ministry</i>	<i>There are currently 110 members in the ChristCare groups, including Group Leaders and Equippers. We expect 40 more members by the 2nd quarter, including youth in the Youth ChristCare Groups. The Groups meet once a week, semi-monthly or monthly, depending on the type of group.</i>	24	<i>ChristCare leadership (Equippers) meet as needed</i>	3
<i>Stewardship Committee</i>	<i>They shall stimulate, encourage and promote within the membership and to all parish families, Christian concern for responsible support of the Church and its mission her and beyond, especially through the State Conference of UCC Board of World and Homeland Ministries.</i>	11	Monthly	3
<i>Chancel Guild</i>	<i>They shall maintain the Chancel ready for regular and special Church services of worship.</i>	11	As needed	3
<i>Hospitality Committee</i>	<i>They shall be responsible for an organized program to maintain and promote hospitality and to encourage the growth of our fellowship. They shall be responsible for enlisting newcomers in the cause of Christ in the Church and for their assimilation into the church membership.</i>	10	As needed	3
<i>Stephen Ministry</i>	<i>Stephen Ministry at First Congregational began in 1991 and provides care receivers with a well-trained listening presence</i>	12	As needed	3
<i>Congregational Care Ministry</i>	<i>Providing input and guidance for the Parish Nurse, Parish Social Worker, Parish Career Counselor and Stephen Ministry by providing job descriptions, establishing standards and guidelines for activities and programs and periodic review. Developing a methodology to access the ongoing needs of the congregation.</i>	12	As needed	3

<i>Personnel Committee</i>	<i>To work with the Clergy, Staff and relevant Church bodies to assure that up-to-date definition of goals and responsibilities and job descriptions are developed and maintained for all personnel; to establish the annual performance appraisals process for Clergy and Staff; Establish and maintain personnel policies, benefits, procedures and files; oversee and administrative process for the hiring of Clergy and staff, and compensation arrangements.</i>	7	As needed	3
<i>Parish Relations Ministry</i>	<i>They shall provide a forum for dialogue, discussion and resolution of issues.</i>	5	As needed	3
<i>Welcoming Task Force</i>	<i>Engaged in making our physical facilities and campus more welcoming to members and visitors</i>	9	As needed	3

25. Conflict

Most churches experience conflict at various times. Characterize your church's experience with conflict given the following possibilities. Indicate the extent to which each statement describes your church: C = closely; S = somewhat; N = not at all.

S as a church, we respect and listen to each other and work things through without generating divisiveness

C as a church, we try to respect and listen to each other, but it is not uncommon for differences of opinion to be a problem and for some people to choose sides

C some have left our church because of conflict

S conflict hurts our sense of unity, but we tend not to talk about it

S painful experience with conflict has been present, but it has been worked through, and we have learned from the experience

C we have had some painful experiences with conflict, and they linger in the background

(1) open conflict is present, and we need a minister who can help us deal with it

_____ other Specify:

(1) The after affects of conflicts continue to be felt, including financial and other priorities. Should conflicts emerge, we need a minister who can help us deal with it.

26. Worship

a. Identify how worship is planned on a regular basis in your church:

- by a worship committee
 by the pastor
 by the pastor in consultation with the church musician
 other. Specify:

We focus on creating and sustaining diverse and intimate worship opportunities. We are open, inviting and attractive to members, guests, and the community at large and seek appropriate worship experiences for children, youth and adults. An abundance of engaging and inspirational music is a part of our worship and we seek and try new worship formats and styles that both broaden and deepen the worship experience. The Board of Deacons is reviewing the current configuration and times of the worship schedule.

We currently have three Sunday morning worship services:

8:00 – 8:45 a.m. Worship Service

- *Brief word and weekly sacrament*
- *The service is more quiet and contemplative*

9:00- 10:00 a.m. Worship Service

- *Word (full sermon) and weekly sacrament*
- *Service is somewhat more traditional and liturgical in feel*
- *Special music is often shared at this service, with the Chancel Choir singing monthly*

10:45-11:45 a.m. Worship Service

- *Word (full sermon) and monthly sacrament*
- *Service is somewhat more contemporary and less liturgical in feel*
- *Chancel Choir regularly sings in this service*

We also have a Wednesday Night Church Night, which provides a spiritual reminder and oasis during the workweek. Following dinner brief Evening Prayers occur in the Sanctuary. Additional services occur during Advent and Lent, including Hanging of the Greens, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Service of Healing and Remembrance and occasional other services as the congregation's needs and interests change.

There continues to be interest in reviving the Contemporary Service, which the church recently discontinued after some fifteen years.

On a week to week basis, the senior pastor has historically assumed primary responsibility for planning worship. Planning for special services has significant input from the deacons and church musician. Changes in worship format are generally suggested by the senior pastor and worked through with the deacons.

b. Describe the style and content of preaching valued by your congregation:

We come from many different church backgrounds, and different segments of the congregation value different preaching styles. All would agree that the Senior Pastor's preaching needs to be genuine, and that it should connect effectively with the congregation in ways that inspire them to deepen their faith. Further, all would agree that the content needs to be Christ-centered.

The congregation has responded well during the interim period to dynamic preaching which effectively links biblical passages to their lives. We want a preacher whose style is energetic and engaging, but always well prepared and grounded in faith. The congregation has not responded well to preaching which is overly intellectual and difficult to follow. People value sermons that connect to their faith and their lives, but do not enjoy being lectured from the pulpit. Some seek sermons which challenge their view of their faith and its role in their lives, while others seek a more reassuring message and style. The church does not have a tradition of welcoming preaching which brings politics (from any perspective) or a call for social action into the pulpit.

c. Describe the role in worship of the person you are seeking:

Many in the congregation are interested in expanding its worship experience, including a return to more diverse forms of worship the church had in prior years. The senior pastor should be comfortable in a variety of worship styles and understand how to obtain input from the church musician and other groups (such as the deacons) and individuals who are interested in worship.

d. What hymnal(s) are currently used by your congregation in worship?

FCC is a long-time user of the Pilgrim Hymnal. Hymn inserts outside of the Pilgrim Hymnal were regularly used. In 2006 we purchased the Worship and Rejoice Hymnal and now use both. There are no plans to retire the Pilgrim Hymnal.

WIDER CHURCH CONNECTIONS

27. United Church of Christ

- a. Association, conference, or other denominational settings in which church members participate:

FCC is a member of the Fairfield West Association of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. It joined the UCC soon after it was founded in 1957 and has no other affiliations or alliances.

- b. Association, conference, or other denominational settings in which your church expects the leader you are now seeking to participate:

The church does not consider its denominational ties particularly strong. It has drawn on UCC resources on a regular basis, particularly in dealing with conflict issues. Although the church does not necessarily require that the senior pastor currently serve a UCC church, it expects him/her to have standing with the UCC.

- c. Choose the word that best describes how lay leaders of your church consciously identify with the United Church of Christ:

___ closely ___ moderately ___ nominally ___ other

Comment:

Although some members feel moderate to close ties with the UCC, most members only nominally identify with the UCC.

28. Ecumenical and Interfaith Activities

- a. Describe ways your church participated in ecumenical and interfaith activities during the last three years:

Sharing of the church hall for one year with Temple Shearith Israel while that congregation engaged in a remodeling program.

Ecumenical Thanksgiving service

Sister Lucy from the H.O.M.E. organization in Orland, Maine visits at least annually to speak from the pulpit. Members of her community bring local crafts for re-sale. Our church sponsors an annual work week in Maine, largely attended by youth.

Emmaus

Community wide ecumenical services: Good Friday

Ridgefield Clergy Association

- b. Describe how your church expects the leader you are now seeking to participate in ecumenical and interfaith activities: *Engage with the Ridgefield Clergy Association*

RELATIONSHIP WITH MINISTERIAL LEADERS

29. Relationship With Prior Leaders

- a. Characterize your church's experience with pastoral leaders over the last 10 years. You may check more than one response:

We have had solid relationships with persons providing pastoral leadership.

We have had some fairly rocky moments, but we have worked them through, and relationships with pastoral leaders have grown in significant and important ways.

We have some tough times and things did not always work out.

Other. Specify:

Comment: We had a solid relationship with Bill Nigh, 13 years ago, the last settled pastor before Dale Rosenberger. Dale brought about mixed feelings among the congregation and left because he concluded it was not working out for him to continue to be an effective leader of our church.

- b. Indicate the tenure of the last three installed persons who filled the position you are seeking to fill. Do not include interims:

Name	From	To
1. Rev. Clayton R. Lund	1956	1986
2. Rev. William Grant Nigh	1987	1994
3. Rev. Dale Rosenberger	1998	2005

- c. If a previous pastor is currently a member of the church, describe his or her role in the life of the congregation:

N/A

- d. In addition to financial support, describe how your church supported the most recent person to hold the position you are now seeking to fill:

The church understands that its pastors must maintain their spiritual lives and professional skills through study leave, sabbatical leave and attendance at conferences. We also understand pastors have personal interests and other "life objectives" which require support and nurturing. The Deacons and the Personnel Committee actively support and enable these important priorities.

e. Involuntary Terminations :

Have any of the last three persons serving in the position you are seeking to fill left involuntarily?

yes no: If “yes,” respond to the following:

1. Choose all the issues that may have contributed to the minister’s departure: You may check more than one. (not applicable)

conflict of personalities in the church
 inadequate performance
 pastoral style inappropriate for this church
 ethical issues
 other. Specify:

The circumstances surrounding Dale Rosenberger’s divorce brought other conflicts into the open that had been more latent. These essentially involved personality conflicts and pastoral style. Dale believed in the authority of the pastor and when confronted by those with whom he disagreed often little common ground could be found which caused conflict at an individual level. He was also introspective in personality, which caused many to find him difficult to approach. For example, the congregation had been used to an “open door” policy for pastors, which Dale was not comfortable with.

2. Indicate, if you can, which of the following best describe the congregation’s behavior toward that person prior to her or his leaving: You may check more than one.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> civil	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> kind
<input type="checkbox"/> compassionate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> supportive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> harsh	<input type="checkbox"/> indifferent

3. Describe what your church has learned from the experience about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

We have learned to be more tolerant of human frailty and differences and to have respect for diversity among points of view and our expectations of a pastor. We have also learned the value of open and transparent communications and the need for mechanisms to deal with issues before they reach the level of conflict.

- 30.** Does the church have a Pastoral Relations Committee? yes no

If yes, describe its purpose and how it functions:

The church has periodically had a Pastoral Relations Committee. When Dale Rosenberger was first called, the existing PRC was dropped in favor of a Personnel Committee, which assumed many of its duties. When conflict escalated over his divorce, the PRC was reconstituted in the Fall of 2005. Following Dale’s resignation and departure, the PRC has not been active.

31. If there is periodic assessment of the nature of the work and of the performance of that work for the position you are seeking to fill, describe it:

An annual performance review and evaluation is performed by the Board of Deacons in conjunction with the Personnel Committee.

32. Leadership Expectations

- a. A list follows of 43 items which represent a range of qualities in the ministry of the church. Place an "X" beside the 12 items which your church feels are the most important aspects of ministry for your church at this time. All the qualities are important. However, please mark those 12 which you feel need first priority at this time. **Do not rank the items.** If the aspects you consider to be important are not included in the list, place them at the end in the blanks provided.

Mark only 12 of the following items. Do not rank the items.

Our church needs a person who...

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is an effective preacher/speaker | 24. <input type="checkbox"/> regularly encourages support of Our Church's Wider Mission |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills | 25. <input type="checkbox"/> reaches out to inactive members |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> helps people develop their spiritual life | 26. <input type="checkbox"/> works regularly in the development of stewardship growth |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> helps people work together in solving problems | 27. <input type="checkbox"/> is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate |
| 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is effective in planning and leading worship | 28. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is a person of faith |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry | 29. <input type="checkbox"/> writes clearly and well |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> regularly encourages people to participate in United Church of Christ activities and programs | 30. <input type="checkbox"/> works well on a team |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice | 31. <input type="checkbox"/> is effective in working with youth |
| 9. <input type="checkbox"/> is a helpful counselor | 32. <input type="checkbox"/> organizes people for community action |
| 10. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ministers effectively to people in crisis situations | 33. <input type="checkbox"/> is skilled in planning and leading programs |
| 11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes | 34. <input type="checkbox"/> plans and leads well-organized meetings |
| 12. <input type="checkbox"/> makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes | 35. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives |
| 13. <input type="checkbox"/> is a good leader | 36. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is accepting of people with divergent views |
| 14. <input type="checkbox"/> is effective in working with children | 37. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> encourages others to assume and carry out leadership |
| 15. <input type="checkbox"/> builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works | 38. <input type="checkbox"/> is mature and emotionally secure |
| 16. <input type="checkbox"/> helps people develop their leadership abilities | 39. <input type="checkbox"/> has strong commitment and loyalty |
| 17. <input type="checkbox"/> is an effective administrator | 40. <input type="checkbox"/> maintains confidentially |
| 18. <input type="checkbox"/> is effective with committees and officers | 41. <input type="checkbox"/> understands and interprets the mission of the church from a global perspective |
| 19. <input type="checkbox"/> is an effective teacher | 42. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is a compassionate and caring person |
| | 43. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deals effectively with conflict |
| | 44. _____ |
| | 45. _____ |

20. has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church
21. is effective in working with adults
22. inspires a sense of confidence
23. works regularly at bringing new members into the church

PASTORAL ATTRIBUTE	WHAT WE MEAN
Is an effective preacher/speaker	<i>Relates faith to everyday life, is Bible-based and Christ-based, challenges and teaches us, speaks clearly (enunciates), has inspired delivery with substance, is clear, relevant and inspirational</i>
Helps people develop their spiritual life	<i>This church currently has many "seekers"; needs to discern where people are in their individual spiritual lives and enable diverse paths of spiritual growth.</i>
Is effective in planning and leading worship	<i>Able to plan and lead diverse worship styles which meet the needs of diverse congregational interests and priorities</i>
Ministers effectively to people in crisis situations	<i>Immediate and reliable responder; is able to work with church resources, e.g. Stephen Ministers, to help those in personal crisis situations</i>
Makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes	<i>Able to balance pastoral calling with other pastoral care priorities, including making use of church resources</i>
Has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church	<i>Particular support for programs and education relating to children and youth</i>
Works regularly at bringing new members into the church	<i>Is able to work with the growth priorities defined by the church; at minimum, able to maintain the church in a "steady state" which means members who leave need to be replaced</i>
Is a person of faith	<i>"Walks the walk", firmly seated in Jesus Christ, comfortable speaking of his/her faith</i>
Encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives	<i>Does this through preaching, in supporting programs within the church and in setting mission priorities which do this; asks first: "Where is God in this?"</i>
Is accepting of people with divergent views	<i>We are quite diverse- see survey question on page 23 on Religious Heritage for one measure of congregational diversity</i>
Encourages others to assume and carry out leadership	<i>The pastor can't do it all and in key areas like Stewardship and Outreach others need to be mentored and empowered, not just to do but to lead</i>
Is a compassionate and caring person	<i>The church desires greater compassion and caring for each other; the Pastor must lead by consistent example, even in the face of conflict.</i>
Deals effectively with conflict	<i>Recognizes that the congregation has divergent views which are strongly felt, and can quickly identify when conflict may emerge and appropriately address it. Is loving and tolerant. Follows Christ-centered conflict resolution; able to accept criticism and does not add to conflict. Not afraid to act.</i>

GENERAL

33. Does your church search committee or governing body have a policy against discrimination?

yes no

34. a. Describe the functions and duties of this position:

The functions and duties of this position in accordance with the Church's bylaws are as follows:

The Senior Minister shall be the spiritual leader of the Church, the administrator of the Church program and director of the Church Staff consistent with their job descriptions. It shall be his/her duty and privilege to preach the gospel, conduct the worship and administer the sacraments. As Pastor he/she shall be counselor and friend of the parish. He/she shall seek to promote the welfare of the Church and those whom it serves. Other duties and areas of special responsibility shall be described in the Letter of Call issued by the Council.

b. Does your church have a personnel policy covering this position? yes no

35. List the titles of other paid staff positions for whom this person provides supervision and indicate whether these positions are full-time (FT) or part-time (PT).

Title:	Associate Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> PT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FT
Title:	Minister of Music	<input type="checkbox"/> PT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FT
Title:	Children's Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> PT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FT
Title:	Parish Nurse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> FT

- 36.** Name three people who have agreed to serve as references. Make sure they are not members of your church, but know your church well enough to be helpful to final candidate seeking more information about your church, e.g., previous pastor, conference staff, person in community:

Name	Telephone	Relationship to Your Church
a. Rev. Susan Townsley	(203) 847-8421	Area Minister
b. Rabbi Jon Haddon	(203) 438-6589	Ridgefield Clergy person (whose congregation used our facility during remodeling of their facility)
c. Ray Freeman	(508) 945-9587	Former member of our congregation
d. Rev. Anne Coffman	(203) 333-7259	Former Associate Pastor

- 37.** What groups or individuals in your church have contributed to, reviewed, and/or approved this profile for circulation?

Area Minister
Interim Pastor
Chair of Church Council
Chair of Board of Deacons
Chair of Board of Trustees
Board of Missions
Youth Task Force

**Conference or Association
Descriptive Reference**

Church Name: **The First Congregational Church of Ridgefield, CT, Inc.**

Location: **103 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877**

Conference: **Connecticut Conference**

Association: **Fairfield West**

Name of Staff Assisting in the Search: **Rev. Susan Townsley**

Signature of Staff Assisting in the Search

Date