

**Search and Call Tools for Congregations**  
Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

# INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who  
are  
we

Who  
is our  
neighbor

Who is  
God  
calling us  
to become

?

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

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,  
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Minden United Church of Christ  
106 Lincoln Street  
Minden, IA 51553

Settled/Designated Term

United Church of Christ  
Disciples of Christ  
Presbyterian Church  
Reformed Church of America

March 28th, 2022

### LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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

*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that  
having all sufficiency in all things always,  
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.

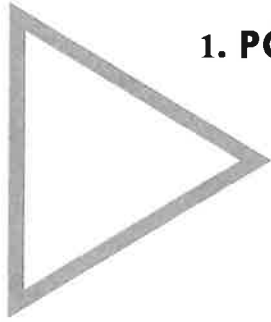
The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – **WHO ARE WE NOW**, **WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR**, and **WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME** – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. 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 story-telling and many prayers. 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 based on 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.



## 1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

### 1 a. LISTING INFORMATION

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Church name: Minden United Church of Christ  
Street address: 106 Lincoln Street Minden, IA 51553  
Supplemental web links: FB Minden United Church of Christ  
Website: [www.MindenUCC.com](http://www.MindenUCC.com)

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*):

Conference: United Church of Christ  
Association: United Church of Christ  
UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):  
Sarah Jones Associate Conference Minister

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?*

Minden United Church of Christ is a leader of faith in our community. We are looking to increase opportunities for ministry beyond Sunday worship and the four walls of our church to remain a welcoming place of faith and worship. We need a pastor who prioritizes building relationships with the congregation and guides us with their preaching. We seek a pastor who is caring, sensitive and sociable. We welcome a leader in our church to help bridge generational gaps, encourages and supports our central committees to build connections within our congregation. We want, with every age group, to be lead from the Bible. We are eager for growth and change that enables us to better serve as messengers of the Christian faith.

Photographs:

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





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

Our community really embraces the “small town” lifestyle. We are friendly and help our neighbors, friends, and family. We take pride in supporting our community through service projects and the school to make our town a great place to live in.

Current size of membership: 150

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): none

Position Title: Settled/2<sup>nd</sup> choice Designated Term

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

Designated-Term – a called position for a designated time period for a defined purpose, in which the pastor may move church membership to the congregation served and may move standing to the related association

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

Full Time

½ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

## 1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

### 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.)*

We are seeking a pastoral care minister who can build multi-generational connections, uses God's word and message in relatable ways/forms to apply to daily lives. Has creative leadership qualities and great interpersonal skills. We desire someone that shows compassion and empathy, along with being sociable and professional.

## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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Salary Basis *(from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance)*: Based on experience per UCC guidelines

### Benefits *(choose one)*:

Salary plus Benefits, negotiable

What is the expected living situation for your next minister *(e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)*?

4 Bedroom parsonage provided

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister. 30-50 miles

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

Open discussion with the contract from the search committee and board

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:  
UCC and other churches gather for lunch and fellowship. UCC Conference meetings

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

We are open to discussion on adjusting our schedule.

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

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

We have grown as a church in population and would like to keep the momentum going. We have a youth group of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders called 3:16. This is a joint effort with the Presbyterian church in Neola. This group has been a great asset to both churches, with the pastors and the parents helping, it's a growing staple in both churches. We want to keep our very young engaged in Sunday school and have tried different times to accommodate the parents. Our older church members are the foundation of our church and would like to see pastoral home and hospital visits. Being part of the community outreach is a big part of belonging to our community.

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

Our community is versed in the needs of their citizens. We have a volunteer fire department, an awesome school district, café, bowling alley, pharmacy, grocery store, post office, hair salon, meat market/catering and other home businesses. We like seeing our minister at school events, eating at the café, talking and engaging with the community.



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

English and no specific culture

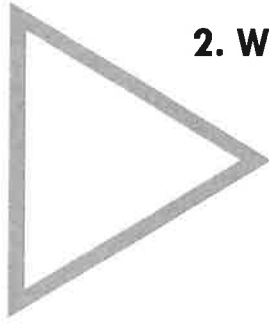
Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's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

Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing practice

Caring for others

Engaging sacred stories and traditions

Strengthening inter and intra personal assets



## 2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

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

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

Be more caring, welcome everyone, be compassionate, spread our faith in the community and be available to help anyone in need, member or not.

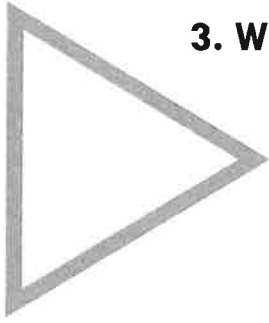
Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

*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 Covid progressed, we found ourselves viewing church online and in the community center parking lot. We gathered as one but at a distance. We slowly came back to church with masks on and distanced seating, it was so good to be back in church. We are in a much better spot now for coming to church on a weekly basis.

When there is a crisis in the community, you can always find someone who is able to help in some way. That's why this community is great to live in.

We would love to grow our church more and are open to new ideas of thinking.



### 3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

#### 3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

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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?*

Our church believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, he died to forgive our sins. Our church has been a strong cornerstone in our community that supports families with difficult loss, whether it be a loss of a loved one or financial/encouraging help. We serve the ministry of Jesus Christ and follow the spirit to live a life of love and forgiveness. We are called to love God, live with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

We have a great foundation in our older generation who have built this church from the ground up. They help in so many ways and even in their 80’s still bring desserts for every event we have. Our youth group is growing and we are keeping them busy with fellowship and service projects. Our youngest come to church, Sunday school and attend Vacation Bible school. When the church or community needs help, they are always there to give of their time and talents. At big events, the congregation volunteers and are always there to help. There is so much love in the church, we are very friendly, open our doors to everyone, and we are about community because we are the community.

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?*

In the sanctuary, we gather with light chatter, friendly smiles and waves. We love seeing our church family and watching the children during children's message, our Bible reading and then the message. We sing modern and traditional hymnal songs and gather as a family, leaving with a better feeling in our heart.

Baptisms are always a happy occasion with plenty of love and support. Preaching from the heart and scriptures is what our congregation likes.

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?*

The kids are like sponges and they love coming to Sunday school. We tried a new program a few years ago that was repetitive, but the young kids really responded to it because of that. It wasn't something new every Sunday.

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?*

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

On average, 3-5 hours a month

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

When we had water in our church basement, people from the congregation along with the volunteer firemen, helped with cleanup. We had a tornado in our community.

Church members and members of the community came together to help put the church back together. Covid came. We adjusted so we could have church either online, in the community center parking lot and at Arrowhead Park.

- 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/No] Yes

### **3b. 11-YEAR REPORT**

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

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	150	Yes
Number of active non-members:	25	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	175	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	75%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	15%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	10%	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? (check if yes)</i>
15	30	10	10	40	20	10	20	20	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	5%	Yes
Households with minors:	50%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	5%	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	25%	Yes
Single adults over 65:	15%	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	95%	Yes
College:	50%	Yes
Graduate School:	10%	Yes
Specialty Training:	25%	Yes
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	75-80%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	20-25%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	5%	Yes

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

Agriculture, teachers, doctors, IT, white and blue collar, business owners

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?

We are predominantly Caucasian church, but our doors are open to everyone.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)?

Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

We have an open door to everyone.

### 3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	None	Pastor and others
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	10	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Sunday School/Superintendent
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50-100	Pastor
Church-wide Meals	60-70	Board-Soup supper
Choirs and Music Groups	None	
Church-based Bible Study	None	
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	30-40	3 prepare once a month/Pastor
Community Meals	150-250	Auction, Chicken Dinner, Ice Cream Social
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	7	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	None	
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	7	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	None	
Outdoor Worship	20-30	Covid/Community Center and Park/Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	None	
Public Advocacy Work	45	Food Pantry and Back Pack Program
Retreats	None	
Theology or Bible Programs in the	None	

Community		
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	1	Covid/Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:00)		Pastor
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	None	
Youth Groups or Classes	40-60	3:16 Pastors/Parents
Other		

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	Retired? (Y or N)
Bonnie Dollen	Licensed	Congregation Confirmation Visit our older congregation	Interim	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: None



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
Dana Martens Pam Danker	Co chairman for the board	Volunteer	Congregation	3-year terms
Gayle Wedel Rod & Michele Olsen	Custodians	Paid/Volunteer	Board	No term
Ellie Brazeal Suzanne Wedel	Pianist	Paid	Pastor	No term

### REFLECTION

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

We are at a new beginning and seek direction on our path forward.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$95,000
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$0
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i> )	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$22,000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$0

Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations <i>(e.g. Women's Group)</i>	\$1,200 Food pantry
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other (specify):	\$0
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$118,000+

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$ 132,000 budget

*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.*

# Minden United Church of Christ

Receipts and  
Expenses for 2021 Full Year

Balance in Bank	1/1/2021	\$ 26,839.05
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**Income:**

Envelopes & Loose Offerings	\$	81,482.00
Electronic Tithes	\$	13,190.52
Fellowship/Coffee Hour	\$	-
Interest Building Fund	\$	-
Misc	\$	2,713.15
Bank Loan/PPP	\$	-
Chicken Dinner	\$	-
Auction	\$	21,554.00
Auction Dinner	\$	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>118,939.67</b>

**Expenses:**

OCWM	\$	-
Church Insurance	\$	9,760.00
Salaries	\$	45,732.29
Insurance - Pastor	\$	21,151.16
Annuity	\$	6,731.41
Social Security - Pastor	\$	4,403.55
SS & Medicare - Secretary	\$	268.38
SS & Medicare - Custodian	\$	222.90
Workmans Comp	\$	641.00
Church Utilities	\$	6,852.03
Postage	\$	572.00
Copier	\$	292.43
Supplies	\$	-
Office	\$	120.54
Kitchen	\$	16.98
Custodian	\$	-
Worship	\$	779.96
Maintenance	\$	-
Church	\$	4,325.22
Grounds	\$	2,911.57
Parsonage	\$	4,175.13
Misc*	\$	6,689.51
Brian Reimbursements	\$	2,725.16
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>118,371.22</b>

Balance in Bank	12/31/2021	\$ 27,373.45
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**Minden United Church of Christ**

Approved  
2022

**Outreach Ministry**

OCWM	\$0
M.O.P.S ( <i>discontinued</i> )	\$0
Misc ( <i>donations, special events</i> )	\$1,000
<i>Misc (donations, special events)</i>	<u>\$1,000</u>

**Ministerial Support**

Based on last ministers comp package

Base Salary	\$40,080.00
Social Security/Medicare Offset ( <i>7.65% base salary \$ housing</i> )	\$4,056.00
Pension/Annuity	7600.00
Health Insurance	\$21,060
Dental Insurance	\$1,130
Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit	\$700
Continuing Education (books, periodicals, etc.)	\$300
Housing Allowance & Utilities	<u>\$10,230</u>
<i>Support</i>	\$85,876

**Administration**

Workman's Compensation	\$750
Church Phone	\$400
Copier Maintenance	\$750
Supplies (kitchen, office)	\$800
Postage	\$1,200
Worship Supplies (Upper Room, etc.)	\$800
Association & Conference	\$0
Youth Camp	\$600
Secretary Salary (based on 11 hour week @ \$14.50 per hour)	\$3,600
Travel Allowance	\$200
Pulpit Supply	\$600
Social Security & Medicare	<u>\$1,600</u>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>\$11,300</b>

**Property**

Custodian Salary (current \$250 per month)	\$3,000
Custodial Supplies	\$250
Insurance (church & parsonage)	\$12,000
Church Utilities	\$8,000
Grounds Maintenance (snow removal & lawn care)	\$2,500
Maintenance (church & parsonage)	\$5,000
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<i>Property</i>	\$30,750

**Music Department**

Organist's Salary	\$600
Music	\$200
	<hr/>
<i>TOTAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT</i>	\$800

**Christian Education Department**

Curriculum Materials (Sunday School)	\$1,000
Vacation Bible School	\$500
Bibles	\$200
Confirmation	\$200
	<hr/>
<i>TOTAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT</i>	\$1,900

**TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET** **\$131,626**

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 66.35%

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—local family

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

None

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: None

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current? NA

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. None

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2016-2018	Parking Lot	\$80,000	\$80,000	Raised money and used CD from the Estate Fund to pay off
		\$	\$	

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.

Our past and present donors. We had a great company to work with for the church parking lot.

Does your church have an endowment? No

What is the market value of the assets?

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

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

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

#### Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$ 40,000

Investments (other than endowment): \$ none

Does your church have a parsonage? Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: \$1200

How is the parsonage used? Rental now/Pastor can live there

Street / City / State / Zip: 110 Lincoln Street Minden, IA 51553

Finished square footage: almost 1900

Number of Bedrooms 4, Number of Bathrooms: 2.5

Assessed real estate value: \$160,000

Available for minister residence: Y/N Yes

Expected minister residence: Y/N your choice

Condition of structure, systems and appliances up to date

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs Church board

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Church and parsonage

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: 2 acres across the road

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

Most—lower level can be accessed from the outside

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

*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?*

We are able to meet our monthly and yearly expenses. In the past, we've had to adjust our budget to reflect increases in health and property insurance.

### 3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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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.

Our youth group was started 16 years ago and has brought more families to our church. We have an annual church auction at the community building where we gather for food, bidding on items and fellowship.

The board had a rough going with some land across from the church that someone wanted to buy. Some wanted to sell, some didn't, and the board needed to be better prepared for questions and answers first, before bringing it to a vote. A few people left our church, most stayed and we have learned from this event.

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

Covid has been a big crisis from going to church full time to watching online. We had leadership that made it possible to receive the word for the week.

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?)*

We have a congregational meeting, with a 2-week notice, where we can vote with a quorum of 35. Just last year, we had someone approach us about purchasing the land across from the church for development. The board asked the congregation about their desires of this land and some of the congregation were against selling it.

Some opinions were heard and some were not heard. Some were angry over the board not being prepared enough and some were negative from the get-go.

We board learned to be better prepared with big issues, have an informational meeting first, 2 weeks later have a discussion meeting/vote. We have learned a lot about people and our by-laws.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Brian Wohlhuter	16 years	N/A
Denny Peterson	7 Health/retired	N/A deceased
David Borden	2 years	N/A
Isaias Paniamogan	1 year	N/A
Norman E Meyer	6 years	Deceased

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

They have provided us a way to be more open and volunteer for activities in and out of the church. You can talk to them about anything and give very good advice and not judge the circumstance. We are an open door church and have many new families. They have helped start 3:16 our youth group, cultivating many community relationships.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? Yes, 40 years ago, Ask us

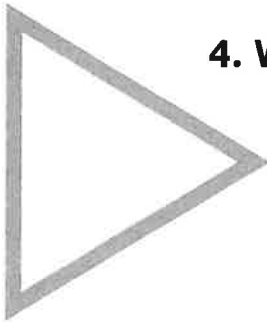
Y/N/Ask us

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? Situation from above

Y/N/Ask us

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church? No

Y/N/Ask us



#### **4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?**

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

a. COMMUNITY VISION

b. MISSION InSite

#### **4a. COMMUNITY VISION**

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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?*

We need the ongoing leadership to promote these activities. We have groups in our church that have gone on mission trips and we would like to promote more of these connections. We connect with nearby towns for youth activities and different community meals. We have served the Back Pack program at school, we charter the Boy Scouts, we have hosted the MOPS (Moms of Preschoolers) group, we are the home to the Food Pantry, and host community Vacation Bible school with another church.

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

The local ministers will have lunch and fellowship with each other. They also have gone to the conference meetings with other church members and have reported back to the congregation about what is going on in the UCC family.

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.

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

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? Yes, we believe the congregation would be interested in the above and we would support this with a great leader.

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

We have initiated youth and community meals/services with other churches in the community. The Presbyterian church in Neola responded and this has been a great experience with them. Our pastors have participated in Baccalaureate, services for Carstens Farm Days, Confirmation, FCA (Fellowship Christians of Athletes), and Vacation Bible School.

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.

Our mission statement is that our members have been many and varied, each adding their personal strengths to our religious heritage. As we move into our next decade, we realize there will be many more changes in the future. We pray that the faith which built this church will continue to sustain and nourish us.

We still live by this!

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

We are open to the pastor having community outreach either by neighboring communities or a wider reach. We can work with them on time-based items as they come up. The congregation would like a pastor to have office work hours from the parsonage or office, to welcome those that need the pastor's support or stop in to say Hi.

#### **4b. MISSION InSite**

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

The trend for Minden United Church of Christ and the surrounding area has seen a slight decline in membership and attendance. Our long time members are aging. After Covid, some have fallen out of the routine in coming back to church. While we have attracted new families, we would like to increase the capacity for new members. The new members have been a huge help in all of our events and contribute to the church family. We will continue to invite anyone to come worship and visit with us. We are open to new ways to continue to grow.

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?

We are a rural community. Some travel over 30 miles for church and Sunday school with others that live just down the street. There will be new housing development in our town soon. We have a café, bowling alley, pharmacy, meat processing, catering business, grocery store, bank, gas station, post office, greenhouse, vet supply and an antique store.

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

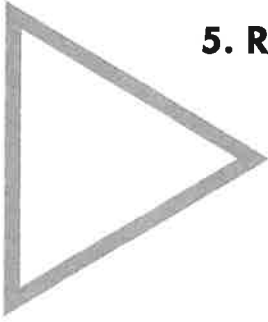
We come together as one either in everyday life or in a crisis. Church has taught us to be giving and forgiving. We strive to share that with others in our everyday lives. We are close knit community and help others in need or sharing our faith.

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

A safe place for families to learn and grow with God. We are a welcoming and supportive church family along with outside of our church and always helping others.

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

**Like all of us, hesitation, but we make it fun and soon they are volunteering to help with church activities and events. They want to be included, we just need to ask. We are welcoming and might give you a hug or two.**



## **5. REFERENCES**

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

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

## REFERENCE 1

Dan Elliott

Life-long community member and teacher at local high school

Member of First Presbyterian Church of Neola (neighboring town)

[danielelliott1972@gmail.com](mailto:danielelliott1972@gmail.com)

402-206-6295

The thing I appreciate most about the Minden United Church of Christ is their willingness to work with other local churches. Several years ago, Minden UCC and First Presbyterian Church of Neola (my church) started Group 3:16, a middle-school youth group for grades 6-8. This group, which typically meets bimonthly alternating between the two churches, has been an amazing success. Members from both churches work together and give in a variety of ways to ensure Group 3:16 is a success. While some organize the meetings and teach and lead lessons and small groups, others provide the meal and/or provide monetary donations, and many or all provide prayers. The two churches have also joined forces for Vacation Bible School, for which members again play various roles in the success. It has been wonderful to see these two churches work so closely together for a great cause.

Just like many or most small town churches, an area in which Minden UCC could work to improve is recruiting and maintaining members. Before and especially during and after the pandemic, people left their churches. This has been an ongoing struggle for Minden UCC as well. Getting a new pastor will surely be a step in the right direction to growing the church.

Besides helping with Group 3:16 and VBS, another great experience I have had at the Minden UCC is the Ash Wednesday services. Some of those services have been very moving and inspiring, and it has been a wonderful way to start the Holy season. I also really enjoy going to all of the community dinners the church hosts. This church is welcoming to all, not just their members.

Finally, the Minden UCC has a beautiful and useful building. They also have a strong core of members who want to see their church and church family continue to thrive and grow even stronger.

## REFERENCE 2

### Letter of Reference

#### Minden United Church of Christ

March 22, 2022

From: Mike Eikenberry | 402-980-2018 | mle-personal@outlook.com  
21-year resident of Neola, Iowa  
18-year employee at Midstates Bank, formerly Farmers & Merchants State Bank  
Elder – First Presbyterian Church of Neola (FPCN)

It is with great pleasure that I furnish a letter of reference supporting the Minden United Church of Christ's (UCC) pursuit of a new pastor. I served as Chairman of the FPCN's Pastor Nominating Committee in 2018-2019 and know firsthand the challenges of recruiting a pastor to a smaller church in a rural setting.

I have grown familiar with Minden UCC through multiple avenues. For over ten years, FPCN and Minden UCC have jointly run a youth group called Group 3:16 and co-presented Vacation Bible School. My wife, Rachel, was a co-founder of Group 3:16 and worked closely with Pastor Brian Wohlhuter, his wife, Tracy and other members of Minden UCC. Admittedly, a disproportionate share of the burdens of youth group and Vacation Bible School often fell on Minden UCC, a responsibility it readily accepted with grace and enthusiasm. For many years I attended Ash Wednesday services at Minden UCC, carried out by Group 3:16, and many other fundraisers hosted by the church (most involving food as is the norm for most of the churches in the area).

As is typical of smaller churches in Iowa, a strength of Minden UCC lies in its people. A strong core of members is warm and welcoming and participate in the various duties in running a church organization. Over the years the congregation has taken pride in maintaining its facilities and handled financials frugally. Living in the area, I count several of their members as friends and know many others personally.

Minden UCC is no stranger to the challenges all small rural churches face. The demographic trends are headwinds to attracting membership, generating funds, supporting a full-time pastor, and remaining active and vibrant in the church and community. The Minden community has revitalized its downtown in recent years and generating increased esprit de corps through the growing popularity of the town's annual celebration, Minden Fun Days. It is well positioned between the larger Neola and Avoca to offer the best of all three.

I am confident that prospective pastors and their family who are interested in a rural small town ministry and lifestyle within an easy drive of amenities that Omaha-Council Bluffs can provide can find a good fit at Minden UCC.



## REFERENCE 3

### Letter of Reference

#### Minden UCC, Minden, Iowa

From: Joe Munch  
Elder, First Presbyterian Church of Neola Iowa  
25-year community member  
[joemunch35@gmail.com](mailto:joemunch35@gmail.com)

To whom it may concern,

While my family does not enjoy membership with Minden UCC, many friends and loved ones do. We have had the pleasure and privilege to participate in a multitude of services, events and ministries Minden UCC has hosted or partnered in.

The church has been a fantastic leader in our community. Its congregation is made up of strong enthusiastic members who consistently look for opportunities to work, worship and support the Christian faith in our community. Minden UCC has partnered with First Presbyterian Church of Neola for many years to lead our local youth group 3:16. The congregation of MUCC has tirelessly worked to support and celebrate this ongoing ministry to educate and introduce the adolescent population to the teachings of Jesus Christ in a fun and loving environment. Another effort Minden UCC has undertaken is to house the area's food pantry. A number of years ago the food pantry was housed in my town's city hall. I was on the City Council at the time and we had decided to sell the building. The thought came to me to inquire if Minden UCC would be interested in taking the challenge of the pantry and without hesitation it was an enthusiastic YES! Whatever the call, the fine members of Minden UCC are there to meet the need.

Like so many churches today, Minden UCC is contending with dwindling membership and an ascending average membership age. The members, in spite of their willingness, are beginning to feel volunteer fatigue. That coupled with the loss of Brian Wohlhuter as minister of the church, has left feelings of disillusionment and murk. The church needs a strong enthusiastic leader that can help restore direction and stoke the fire that Minden UCC has in leading the community.

There are two services Minden UCC hosts each year that my family loves. Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. These two simple and beautiful services have always provided a respite from the commercialization, too frequently associated with Christ's resurrection, and help to reinforce the Lord's sacrifice and promise to us. Another significant experience many years ago, our community suffered the loss of a well-loved young man. Minden UCC partnered with First Presbyterian Church of Neola and St Patrick's Catholic Church of Neola to host a night of prayer, remembrance and mourning. The ministry given that night was beautiful and glorious. It provided desperately needed solace and reflection. Numbering in the hundreds every individual left with a full heart and knowledge they were not alone in their loss.

Minden United Church of Christ is a wonderful testament to faith and a rock of the community. It welcomes all who enter and offers a hand to those in need. The faith, strength and charitable spirit of our community is in no small part due to the hard work, love and leadership found within its doors.

God bless,  
Joe Munch

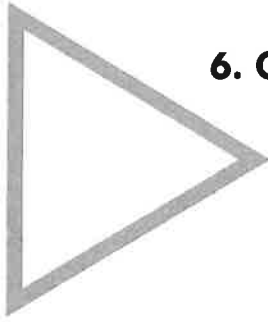
#### PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.



## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

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*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:*

Almighty and loving God: we are asking you for a pastor that can help us grow through our faith by teaching us what you have taught us all along. We pray for you to give us wisdom, pray for our congregation to not grow weary in this search, that we may find a match for all our church family, to love and embrace. We pray for patience and discipline as we continue our search.

We pray that you send someone that would increase our passion for the Word of God, that they would love our church as we love our church, that they would begin new relationships in our church. We pray that they will be a true shepherd, leading us to be united and be whole, in our church through trials and blessings we all will face, and we pray, as a congregation, for them and their family.

We know everything happens for a reason, so we are continuing to look to you for answers each and every day. Amen

## 6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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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.*)  
Search Committee: Consisting of 2 from the board and 7 from the congregation.  
Tracey Roane, Pam Danker, Bruce Campbell, Laura VanNordstrand, Sara Arnold, Joyce Olsen, Kaylee Schneckloth, Rhonda McKenzie, and Cindy Manhart
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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

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