

CONGREGATION OPPORTUNITY FORM – United Church of Christ
Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Team (MESA)
Search and Call Tools made possible by your gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission.

Congregations seeking UCC leadership are welcome to list openings on the UCC's Ministry Opportunities searchable website, found by the public at <http://oppsearch.ucc.org>. If the church you represent is a member of the United Church of Christ and seeking a pastor, use this form under the direction of your UCC Conference, returning it directly to your UCC Conference office.

For UCC churches –

UCC Conference: Northern California Nevada Conference

UCC Association: Sequoia

Church Name: First Congregational Church of Tulare City School District

Website: UCCTulare.org

City: Tulare

State: California

Church Size: 110 membership, around 45 in church attendance each week

Seeking (choose one from each category)

Short-Term OR Settled

Full-Time OR Part-Time

Salary: UCC Conference Guidelines

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

Housing: Housing Allowance

Type of Position: Part- Time Pastor

Ministry Description:

What does Tulare have to offer?

Tulare can be found in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, just about equally spaced North to South and East to West within the fabulous state of California. We are about two hours to the coast and a little over an hour to the famous Giant Redwoods in the Sequoia National Forest. We are within hours of the two largest cities, San Francisco, home of the Golden Gate Bridge and Los Angeles where you can visit the happiest place on Earth – Disneyland.

We are in a highly agricultural area, providing produce shipped around the world. We grow just about everything here in the Valley. We are home to Land O' Lakes, one of the largest milk processing plants for the many dairies in the area and J.D. Heiskell and Company, which is the fourth largest feed manufacturing plant in the country. We also have Haagen Daas ice cream and Kraft and Zuputo cheese factories.

We are home to the World Ag Expo, the world's largest trade show. Every year during the second week of February, the town is full of visitors from around the world. The show grounds also offer an Antique Farm Equipment show in April and maintains an antique farm equipment museum.

There are lots of sports programs available for youth and adults as well as several minor league baseball teams in the area.

We have 15 elementary and middle schools, 3 high schools, one of which has a stadium proudly named after US Senator and Olympic decathlon winner – home town grown, Bob Mathias.

We have a UC Davis extension program for veterinary students and a junior college (College of the Sequoias) in nearby Visalia. Fresno State University is about 45 minutes away.

We have a community theater, Encore Theater Company that puts on five plays a year and offers youth programs, providing training and direction in the theater arts.

Our church is the oldest and the first church built in the developing area back in the late 1800's. The Railroad was instrumental in making that happen. We can be found on Tulare's Main Street. We are the church with the large white steeple and stained glass windows. We have a very special pipe organ, a vocal choir and a bell choir and lots of musical talent in the congregation. We may be the oldest but we are certainly the most progressive church in the area as we are one of two churches that is an Open and Affirming congregation in the county and are very supportive of local L,B,G,T programs. We are a very warm and loving church, welcoming everyone. We have a very active Youth program and ministry, that includes kids in the neighborhood. We have expanded our Outreach programs and are continually seeking new opportunities to connect with the community.

We are excited to welcome a new pastor eager to share their knowledge, biblical teachings, faith and passion to serve.

The First Congregational Church, Tulare, U.C.C.

7/1/2016
Date

Pastor
Position to be filled

United Church of Christ

**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

7/1/2016
Date

Church

Name: **First Congregational Church of Tulare**

Address: **220 West Tulare Avenue**

City, State, Zip: **Tulare, CA. 93274**

Search Committee Chairperson or Contact Person

Name: **Susan Burley**

Address: **1126 North Gem Street**

City, State, Zip: **Tulare. CA. 93274**

Telephone: **559-289-2994**

E-Mail: Shaggysue52@yahoo.com

7/1/2016
Date

Pastor
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:** First Congregational Church of Tulare

- 2. Address:**
City, State, and Zip: 220 West Tulare Avenue, Tulare, CA. 93274
Church Website: ucctulare.org

- 3. Name of Search Committee Chairperson/Contact Person:** Susan Burley
Address: 1126 North Gem Street
City, State, and Zip: Tulare, CA. 93274
Telephone: 559-289-2994
Email: Shaggysue52@yahoo.com

- 4. Conference/Association Staff Person Assisting Our Church:** Rev. Daniel Ross-Jones,
Associate Conference Minister for Northern California Nevada
Address: 401 Roland Way, Suite 260
City, State, Zip: Oakland, CA 94621
Telephone: 650-937-9010
Email: daniel@ncnuc.org

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- 5. Membership:** *(as reflected in the eleven-year UCC Statistical Report for our church;
"est." indicates the figure is an estimate.)*

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
a. # Church members	78	80	90
b. Average attendance at worship	35	45	50
c. Average participation of children/youth in C.E.	9	12	16
d. Average weekly participation in adult education	12	16	NA
e. # Members who are ordained clergy	0	1	1

6. Profile of Congregation

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

a. Age:

3 % ages 0 - 5
24 % ages 6-18
10 % ages 19-34
11 % ages 35-49
31 % ages 50-64
7 % ages 65-74
14 % ages 75 +

b. Education level of adults:

4 % completed less than high school
12 % high school graduates
24 % some college/vocational school
32 % college graduates
28 % graduate school

“So we who are many,
 are one body
 in Christ . . .”
 Romans 12:5a

c. Family units:

20 % couples with children at home
46 % couples without children at home
27 % single
7 % single parent with children at home

d. Occupation of adults:

18 % business
0 % clerical
6 % farmer/rancher
0 % laborer/manufacturing
64 % professional
6 % student
0 % tradesperson
6 % other

e. Employment:

55 % employed
5 % not currently employed
4 % retired

f. Describe the racial-ethnic makeup of your congregation:

A great deal of diversity comes through the doors of our church although the membership and leadership tends to be ethnocentric with a growing membership of people of color.

CHURCH FINANCES

(Figures reflect the eleven-year UCC statistical reports as well as the church's annual reports.)

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
7. Total Church Income			
a. Members offerings and pledges	\$148,372.74	\$101,344.03	\$82,067.20
b. Interest from investment or endowments	N/A	N/A	N/A
c. Principal reduction (endowments or investments)	N/A	N/A	N/A
d. Rentals	N/A	N/A	N/A
e. Special Fundraising	N/A	N/A	N/A
f. Other	N/A	N/A	N/A

If the church has conducted an annual stewardship campaign, list results for the past two years:

Goal: **\$135,711.00** Pledges: **\$83,332.00** Actual Received: **\$148,372.74**

Goal: **\$188,847.00** Pledges: **\$159,595.50** Actual Received: **\$169,884.61**

	Last Year	5 Years Ago	10 Years Ago
8. Total Operating Budget	FY 13/14	FY 09/10	FY 04/05
a. Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support	\$6,000	\$4,238	\$1,129
b. Our Church's Wider Mission Special Support	\$428	\$1,109	\$2,085
c. Other gifts	N/A	N/A	N/A
d. Current local expenses	\$141,595	\$125,740	\$117,384
e. Annual capital payments	N/A	N/A	N/A
f. Other debt	N/A	N/A	N/A

2015 – 106,403

9. Identify UCC special offerings the church receives throughout the year and the amounts from last year:

- One Great Hour of Sharing **\$186.00**
- Neighbors in Need **\$310.00**
- Christmas Fund **\$390.00**
- Strengthen the Church **\$70.00**
- Basic Support for Our Church's Wider Mission (only if received through special offerings and not included as a regular (**budget item in #8 above.**))

10. Mission

a. Beyond your contributions through the UCC, name the most significant local or global missions/ministries or agencies that were financially supported by your local church last year and the amount of support:

Name	Amount
1. Tulare Emergency Aide	\$1,500.00
2. Living Waters	use of Facility
3. Blanket Drive	\$500.00
4. Food Give Away	volunteers/use of facility
5. Dental / Health Clinic	volunteers/use of facility
6. Manuel Torres Resource Center	use of facility
7. Angels – Salvation Army	\$1,000.00
8. Elections	use of facility
9. Read to Succeed	use of facility
10. AA program	use of facility

b. What mission projects has excited your church the most in the past three years? Why?

Living Water, Dental Clinic, and Read to Succeed had the greatest impact on our congregation for many reasons. First, because they involved local and international outreach that members of the church can participate in and experience firsthand. Secondly, the social programs that they provided are a perfect fit for our churches mission. Thirdly, through participation in social outreach the church was able to build relational connections with the surrounding community. Last, the leadership were beloved members and friends of our congregation and we had the opportunity to watch them grow observing through these blessed anointed ministries. At this time, the Manuel Torrez Foundation which ran the Read to Succeed and Dental Clinic programs has moved on to do greater things and we wish them well.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF MINISTERIAL LEADERS

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

_____ yes X yes for some compensation items but not all _____ no

Does the church consider this position to be full time or part time?

_____ Full Time X Part Time (specify)

We are open to many options including the possibility of a full-time minister as we grow, either through covenantal relationship, by joining with another congregation, or through social justice evangelistic efforts currently in operation. We are willing to communicate the most relevant circumstances in correspondence with candidates as changes occur.

How will church members be supportive of a part time or bivocational pastor who may need another job to supplement the church salary?

Our congregational structure is such that the majority of responsibilities for church maintenance and ministry are the charge of the lay leadership and only a few of the most vital responsibilities are essential to the Pastor. However, there are some committees that are in need of leadership, including outreach ministries. Despite these setbacks, and the overall desire for a full time minister, we see a necessity for a part-time or bi-vocational minister at this time. (See question 24 for details)

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	12/02	21,600	18,400	Benefits *25,131	9/2014	27,900	21,600	Benefits 23,506
b. Previous								
c. Next previous								

***Benefit amount used from 6/06 included health and dental and life insurance, pension, social security offset.**

16. During the above period, has your church ever failed to fulfill its financial obligations to its pastor? _____yes X no

17. Salary, Benefits, and Expenses Offered : Total \$36,000

We are proposing a lump sum amount that is flexible to minister’s discretion of dispersal of compensation.

- a. Cash salary offered **\$22,800 (our current part-time interim’s salary)**
Conference recommended salary range: **\$ 25,000 – 37,000**
- b. Housing:
 Housing allowance only Parsonage only Would consider offering either
- c. Customary benefits:
 Vacation: 7 days
 Maternity/paternity leave
 Social Security/Medicare Offset
 Continuing Education Funds
 Continuing Education Time: 7 days
 Sabbatical Leave

A flexible benefit compensation to be negotiated. These are the flexible salary and benefit items of compensation package to be negotiated.

- UCC Retirement Annuity (14 % of salary and housing)
- UCC Life and Disability Insurance Benefits
- UCC Health Benefits (other health benefits)
- UCC Dental Benefits (other dental benefits)
- Other benefits (specify) _____

- d. Ministry Expenses
 Travel Reimbursement
 Meeting Expense Reimbursement
 Books and Periodicals
 Reimbursement of Criminal Background Check Fee
 Moving Expenses

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

18. Population

- a. Population of total city or town in which your church is located: **61,000**
- b. Describe the population by racial-ethnic category and identify the source of the information:
34% Caucasian
57% Hispanic
4% Afro- American
2% Asian
3% Other

19. Economic Factors

Identify major sources of employment/income in your community:

- a. **Land of lakes (manufacturers)**
- b. **Healthcare**
- c. **Agriculture**

20. General Description *(Add *** if the information came from a survey of the congregation)*

- a. Describe three distinctive attributes of your community:
 - 1. **Agriculturally based**
 - 2. **Close family knit dynamic**
 - 3. **Culturally diverse**
- b. Identify major trends you envision in your community during the next five years:
 - 1. **Healthcare**
 - 2. **The Arts and Education**
 - 3. **Infrastructure improvements to enhance and revitalize community**
- c. List three or four problem areas confronting your community that members feel your church should address:
 - 1. **Low SES Factors (Hunger, illiteracy, health issues)**
 - 2. **Homelessness**
 - 3. **Drought impact on local agriculture**

d. Indicate Mission Activities

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

We are prayerfully seeking missionary activities in many different avenues. Many individual members are involved in missional outreach including providing bread and care packages to the local women's shelter, Alcoholic Anonymous run by one of our long time members, and an international clean water filter installation ministry known as Living Water. The congregation also has a historical presence with the Tulare Association of Churches and has many ecumenical outreach works. Current, local outreach includes a community night walk in which we seek relationship with our community and a cooperative food ministry between several members and friends of the church. We also host a girl scouts troop, as our youth ministries continue to grow.

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

We would encourage the Pastor to be involved in community outreach programs, including as a delegate to Tulare Association of Churches in as much as it is possible. The minister would be expected to initially participate in formation of social justice and evangelistic outreach projects but would have capacity to pursue personal social justice projects as well.

- e. Describe how your church building is now being used by the community:

- **AA program**
- **Elections**
- **Musical Concerts,**
- **Interdenominational fellowship and study small groups**
- **Girls Scouts**

- **LGBT+ resource library**
- **Bible study**
- **Youth ministries**

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

_____ one _____ two **X** three or more

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

*(Add *** if the information came from a survey of the congregation)*

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

- **Expand involvement especially from within the neighborhood*****
- **Expand opening and affirming relationships with the LGBTQ community*****
- **Ecumenical partnerships with other churches for community outreach*****
- **Continued growth of youth ministries*****

22. Planning

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

Ideally, all planning is efficiently done through committees and Church Council. We are a group of highly active and loving volunteers with a strong core of lay leadership that are open to the different perspectives of volunteers eager to step into leadership roles.

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

- **direction and inspiration**
- **motivational skills**
- **collaboration**
- **participation (be a team player)**
- **mentoring role**

c. When is the last time your church undertook a period of discernment and long-range planning in an intentional way?

2014 and 2015.

d. What were the outcomes of your intentional long-range planning?

As a result of the vacancy due to a long-term pastorate we started a process of discernment through congregational workshops the result of which indicated interest in community outreach and youth programs. (See question 20 for list of programs)

e. Does your church have any plans to undertake a period of intentional long-range planning in the future?

We intend to continue the current process of annual workshops, through seeking congregational feedback upon reflection as interactions with the community through current outreach ministries as begun by the interim minister. We are hopeful that the next minister will direct the planning process.

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. *(Add *** if information came from a survey of the congregation.)*

- a. Identify the four most important faith experiences or events in the history of your church and the year each took place:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Year</u>
1. Opening and affirming	2004
2. Accept female minister	2002
3. Youth minister	2013
4. Outreach Collaborations	2013

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

Losing the relationship provided by having a long-term pastor and other stronger members who moved or passed away. We learned the need for open communication and team work.

- c. What is God calling your church to do/become over the next few years?

The possibilities seem boundless as God provides opportunities to build upon youth ministry, LGBTQ alliances, food ministry and other interfaith collaborations for community and world outreach.

- d. Describe how the church expects the person you are seeking to help your church reach these goals: **Vision and direction through sermon and mentorship through pastoral support and care, as membership expands.**

- e. Chose the statement that most accurately describes the theological/faith stance of your church: *You may check more than one.*

- We tend to be theologically conservative.
- We tend to be theologically moderate to conservative.
- We tend to be theologically moderate.
- We tend to be theologically moderate to liberal.
- We tend to be theologically liberal.
- We tend to be quite diverse theologically.
- Other

- f. Describe the educational program of your church:

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

Our board of Christian education and family ministry in collaboration with the Pastor creatively develop lessons of bible topics following the liturgical year choosing from many resources. We use a variety of materials including UCC based material, Teen Bible curriculum online, Deep Blue curriculum and Bibles.

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

Pastor has led confirmation classes based on available UCC materials

Are there educational opportunities for all ages? **Yes**

Does your church have a written Safe Church Policy?

____ Yes No (If No, has a group worked on this issue in the past? What was the outcome?)

We have had participation with the most recent minister in a healthy boundaries workshop, and the Trustees had initiated the process in the past.

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

To be an advisor to our study groups and ministries. We have Sunday school for preschool through high school, adult bible study on Sunday mornings, men's fellowship bible studies every other week in the morning, and another adult. To be an advisor and have an active role in at least one of our bible studies. study/task group on Monday evenings. Along with our growing and active youth group on Wednesdays.

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

Everything goes through committee and reported to Church Council for approval through friendly and helping members who are willing to step in and get the job done.

- i.** Describe the strengths or positive qualities of your church: (Add *** if information came from a survey of the congregation.)

We function as family and what attracts people to our church are the people and feeling of being excepted and needed. The congregation works hard to serve God's call in many ways and are strengthened by fellowship, music and a liberal theology.

24. Indicate major boards, committees, small 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 take primary initiative and responsibility; 4 = the pastor's presence is expected periodically/occasionally.

Board/Committee	Purpose	# Members	Frequency	Leadership
The Diaconate	In as much as possible serves the church within the biblical and historical traditions of the office of Deacon	5 with 2 alternates	Monthly	3-4
The Board of Trustees	Entrusted with the care and custody of the property of the church and have charge of the financial affairs	7	Monthly	3-4
The Board of Christian Education	Responsible for the supervision and direction of the educational work of the church, including all Sunday School Teachers, the Youth Ministry, and Adult Education and for the development of the curriculum.	6	Monthly	2
The Pastoral Relations Committee	Advise the Minister on the congregation's evaluation of his or her service	3	Quarterly and as needed	3
The Worship Committee	Coordinates and implements the music and worship program and is responsible for the hiring of salaried employees of the music department	10	Monthly	2
The Nominating Committee	Prepares an annual list of officers, new board members, standing committees, and Association and Conference delegates.	3	Annually	3-4
The Memorial Committee	Manages the account set aside for memorials. Studies and approves proposals involving expenditure of funds.	3	As needed	3-4
The Outreach Committee	To research opportunities for service and evangelism within the community. Plans for and organizes all special offerings.	5	As needed	2
Ongoing Small Groups	Purpose		Frequency	Leadership
Women's Fellowship	Fellowship and ministry		Monthly	4
Men's Bible study group	Fellowship and discipleship		Monthly	4
Women in leadership study group	Fellowship and discipleship		Weekly	1
Monday Night Bible study group	Fellowship and discipleship		Weekly	4
AA meetings	Support group		Frequently	N/A

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.

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

S 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

S some have left our church because of conflict

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

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

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

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

___ other Specify:

Comment:

We endeavor to love all of God's people by working through issues to reach a point of forgiveness and mutual respect. "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it," Nelle Harper Lee author of To Kill a Mockingbird. Although, there is truth in her words out of compassion and deference we can try to understand. Despite this we understand that we cannot always win every heart, or be everything to everyone. As Abraham did for Lot we respect our loved ones wishes and pray for their blessings

26. Worship

a. Describe the weekly worship schedule (number of services, times, languages in which the services are conducted, frequency with which communion is included, special emphases such as healing services, contemporary worship, etc.)

- **Sunday worship every Sunday at 11:00 am**
- **Communion is included once a month, and with special services.**
- **Special services include Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Evensong**
- **Plus, we have an Advent concert, Community concert, Children's Christmas musical, Youth Sunday, Graduation and Recognition Sunday.**

b. Are your worship services or church gatherings sign language interpreted?

___ Yes X No

Are there particular ministries with persons with developmental disabilities or mental illness?

Pastor and Diaconate make pastoral care home visits for those who are unable to attend. An intentional effort is made that those with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses are included in every aspect of worship.

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

X by a worship committee

X by the pastor

X by the pastor in consultation with the church musician

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

Inspirational and motivational bible based sermons relevant to our lives and today's conflicts.

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

To have a strong understanding of the scriptural foundation of our call to serve God, to provide a fresh vision and enthusiasm through interactive, expressive worship and liberally theological illustrative sermons that help us grow with energy and hope.

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

**Contemporary
The New Century Hymnal**

- g. Have you considered using another hymnal?

We have supplemented with additional music as available.

- h. Churches have a variety of practices related to the use of Inclusive Language in worship services. (Some churches have made the decision not to change any language in worship; others are intentionally inclusive in their references to people avoiding words such as "mankind". Some avoid exclusively male references for God and seek to include male and female images as well as a variety of metaphors; other churches exercise care in the words of the liturgy but still utilize "traditional" hymns.) How important is this issue to your church?

We are committed to all inclusive language but remain flexible and loving.

WIDER CHURCH CONNECTIONS

27. United Church of Christ

- a. Association, conference, or other denominational programs and activities in which church members participate:

Do you send delegates to association and conference meetings?

Regularly X Occasionally _____ Never _____

Have members of your church ever served as delegates or visitors to General Synod?

Yes X No _____ Not Sure _____

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

Sequoia Association, Northern California Nevada Conference-UCC, Tulare Association of Churches

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

 X closely _____ moderately _____ nominally _____ other

28. Ecumenical and Interfaith Activities

- a. Describe ways your church participated in ecumenical and interfaith activities during the past three years:
 - Collaborations Disciples of Christ Visalia, the Igelsia Baptista Templo Christiano (Christian Temple Baptist Church), Sunrise Community Church and Tulare United Methodist church.
 - Special speakers and services from the Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh faith communities
 - Dental clinics/Health Fairs opened to the community through civil agencies
 - Food giveaway with community agencies

- c. Describe how your church expects the leader you are now seeking to participate in ecumenical and interfaith activities:

Ecumenical and interfaith activities are an important part of our local and global church mission. We were a founding part in the Tulare Association of Churches and we continue to be a strong gospel presence. We are actively looking to partner with other churches in ministry and build interfaith relationships. We would want the minister to take up a vital role reaching across ecumenical and interfaith lines.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MINISTERIAL LEADERS

29. Relationship With Prior Leaders

- a. Characterize your church’s experience with pastoral leaders over the past 15 years.
You may check more than one response:
 In general, our lay leaders have a history of strong, cooperative relationships with the church’s 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 had some tough times and things did not always work out.
 Other. Specify:

- 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. Stephanie Bingham Doss	2002	2014
2. Hugh Floyd	1999	2000
3. Jim Bowser	1982	1998

- c. If a previous pastor or pastor emeritus/a is currently a member of the church, describe his or her involvement in the life of the congregation: **None are members**

- 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:

Supported sabbatical and maternity leave, pulpit support, conference attendance, educational growth, regular meeting with moderator and pastoral relations, pastoral relations and evaluations.

- e. Involuntary Terminations:

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

yes no: If "yes," respond to the following:

- Choose all the issues that may have contributed to the involuntary termination. *You may check more than one or indicate "not applicable."*

conflict of personalities in the church

inadequate performance

pastoral style inappropriate for this church

ethical issues or issues of fitness for ministry

financial stresses

Specify:

- 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.*

civil

kind

compassionate

supportive

harsh

indifferent

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

Better communication, clearer directions and a responsibility to mutual respect and active listening.

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

If yes, describe its purpose, functions and how often they meet: To address congregational and pastoral needs and facilitate open communication between pastor and congregation.

31. If there is periodic assessment/evaluation of the nature of the work and of the performance of that work for the position you are seeking to fill? Describe it:

Administrative evaluation performed by pastoral committee consisting of three members.

Is the periodic ministerial evaluation coordinated with a regular assessment of the overall ministry of the congregation?

6 months then annually after that.

32. Leadership Expectations

A list follows of 45 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. _____ regularly encourages support of
Our Church's Wider Mission |
| 2. _____ continues to develop his/her
theological and biblical skills | 25. _____ <i>reaches out to inactive members</i> |
| 3. _____ <i>helps people develop their
spiritual life</i> | 26. _____ works regularly in the development
of stewardship growth |
| 4. _____ helps people work together in
solving problems | 27. _____ is active in ecumenical relationships
and encourages the church to
participate |
| 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is effective in planning and leading
worship | 28. _____ <i>is a person of faith</i> |
| 6. _____ has a sense of the direction of
his/her ministry | 29. _____ writes clearly and well |
| 7. _____ regularly encourages people to
participate in United Church of
Christ activities and programs | 30. _____ <i>works well on a team</i> |
| 8. _____ helps people understand and act
upon issues of social justice | 31. _____ <i>is effective in working with youth</i> |
| 9. _____ is a helpful counselor | 32. _____ organizes people for community action |
| 10. _____ ministers effectively to people in
crisis situations | 33. _____ 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. _____ plans and leads well-organized
meetings |
| 12. _____ makes pastoral calls on members
not confined to their homes | 35. _____ <i>encourages people to relate their faith
to their daily lives</i> |
| 13. _____ is a good leader | 36. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is accepting of people with divergent
views |
| 14. _____ is effective in working with children | 37. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> encourages others to assume and
carry out leadership |
| 15. _____ <i>builds a sense of fellowship among
the people with whom he/she works</i> | 38. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is mature and emotionally secure |
| 16. _____ helps people develop their leadership
abilities | 39. _____ has strong commitment and loyalty |
| 17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is an effective administrator | 40. _____ maintains confidentially |
| 18. _____ is effective with committees and
officers | 41. _____ understands and interprets the mission
of the church from a global perspective |
| 19. _____ is an effective teacher | 42. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is a compassionate and caring person |
| 20. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has a strong commitment to the
educational ministry of the church | 43. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deals effectively with conflict |
| 21. _____ is effective in working with adults | 44. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>is involved in local outreach efforts</u> |
| 22. _____ inspires a sense of confidence | 45. _____ |
| 23. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> works regularly at bringing new
members into the church | |

If there are other comments you wish to make about expectations, include one or more paragraphs here on an additional sheet.

GENERAL

33. Does your governing body or your search committee have a well-defined policy against discrimination? Yes No Comment:

We, as the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Tulare, California proclaim that we are an Open and Affirming congregation. That we welcome all who seek to follow Christ, irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, political persuasion, and/or life experiences. And we boldly proclaim a Christ-like love for all God’s children, no matter where they are in life’s journey.

34. Has your congregation participated in an ONA (Open and Affirming) study/discernment process?
 Yes No Comment:

Although, our church body committed our discernment toward ONA 10 years prior, we completed the Open and Affirming study process and made a proclamation on October 4, 2009.

35. Is there a position description of the pastor’s role and responsibilities?
 Yes No

Specify: (In development, may see question 32 as a springboard to deliberations)

Does your church have a personnel policy covering this position? Yes No

Specify: (In development through organizational meta-analysis by committee)

36. 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:	Youth and Family Minister	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> FT	
Title:	Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> FT	
Title:	Accompanist (Piano. Organ)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> FT	
Title:	Office administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> FT	

37. 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 a final candidate seeking more information about your church, e.g., conference staff, person in community, neighboring pastor:

	Name	Telephone	Relationship to Your Church
a.	Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent NCNCUCC	(559) 227-8489 or (559) 275-5057	Dean, Sequoia Association
b.	Rev. Dr. George Fry	(559) 740-6163 or (559) 635-9025	Presbyterian minister, emeritus
c.	Rev. Russ Siders	(559) 686-5345	Sunrise Community Church

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

Search committee, Church Council, Congregation, Associate Conference Minister.

STATEMENT ON LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY

We are a loving, understanding, compassionate, forgiving, welcoming and diverse family. Our vital congregation consists of a majority of educated professionals from educational, medical, mental health and business backgrounds. As an oasis of welcome in a desert of not we have always had a passion to witness lives changed. The last two long term ministers were taken right out of seminary out of a passion to help others grow. We have a strong sense of history as the first congregation to be established in Tulare since 1874. Our connection with the greater denomination and our connection with the local history gives our services an interesting mix of liberal theology and traditional services and hymns. Of the things that our congregation is most passionate about service, music and fellowship are at the forefront.

Although the building is over 100 years old and the community around it has existed within the confines of stereotypical reputation, most in the congregation would not be any other place. We recognize the need for life changing hope when others within the community might rebuff the west side as the “wrong side of the tracks”. Yet, when others say that no growth can ever come from a church downtown, we hold true to our mission and continue to work hard to serve God’s call to the people of Tulare. We are not visitors in the community we have always been here. A “salt of the earth folk” holding up the proverbial light on a hill.

Most importantly, we are tied deeply to our community and congregational roots. As such, we rely on lay leadership as the engine that drives our organization, firmly fueled by our unification with God. The ministers of the congregation have fulfilled the role of lay leadership development to the best of their abilities. Yet, from time to time, there has been strong pastoral leadership from clergy who have provided the administrative drive, planning, and organization to accomplish some of our historical works within the community. As a congregational church, we value congregational initiative and lay leadership. In addition to our congregational structure, we have several additional part-time paid staff positions which include a youth minister, a secretary, and an office administrator.

The minister’s role is one of spiritual guidance, and support of laity to assume collaborative leadership. The pastor takes the lead in the direction of the overall worship style and direction of the worship service. The governing body of the church is fulfilled in the role of the Church Council. It consists of a Moderator who serves as the chairperson, the pastor who serves as a non-voting member, up to six church officers, representatives of church organizations and youth, and the chairperson of each board and committee.

Committees serve as task-oriented groups of the church that serve to accomplish both fellowship and ministry of the church. The pastor is expected according to bylaw to attend, report to, and offer input in monthly council meetings, meet with the Christian Education Board regularly, and meet with Pastoral Relations quarterly and upon request of either the committee or Pastor. The minister shares responsibility with the worship and outreach committees as a non-voting advisor. The Pastor is not expected to attend meetings with diaconate but ongoing communication is vital as they tend to work jointly. The diaconate is available to assist the minister in preparing and administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; making calls upon those in hospitals, nursing homes and those confined to their homes; calling upon new members and introducing them into the life of the church; giving leadership to the congregation in the enlisting of new members; and the administration of membership records.

Two fellowship and study groups meet on a regular basis. Although the minister’s involvement is welcome, these groups are the primary responsibility of the laity. The Pastor is

welcome to be involved in any formation of new small group meetings including faith formation or discipleship groups. The interim pastor has led an ongoing women in leadership fellowship and study group and mentors the community night walk. Several Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held throughout the week and are the sole responsibility of the laity.

The council and search committee along with the congregation agree that the expectations that we have for a minister must fit within the demands of a part time position. The minister is open to pursue additional ministry passion, seek employment within the secular market, or to work as a joint minister between two congregations. Reasonably, we can expect 40-50% of the minister's time being preparation for worship service. Then 15-20% of the time would be given to the Sunday service itself. This leaves 35-40% of his or her time devoted to everything else.

If our congregations minister has 20 hours each week, this allots to 8-10 hours preparation, 3-4 hours for Sunday Service, and 7-8 hours for all other responsibilities. This would seem next to impossible in any other church governance except one that is congregationally governed with a strong cooperative lay leadership, which we endeavor to always be. We recognize that we have weaknesses like any other organization, and we are developing written procedures and protocols for ministries and staff positions. Even now, the Spirit is leading us in positive directions.

Our expectations center on a minister with strong faith, and scriptural understanding. We desire an ability to allow the Spirit to lead us to the recognition of our shared call to serve God within our community. He or she should be effective in leadership development, as well as planning participatory and culturally unique worship services that feed the congregation with vision and enthusiasm. We wish to go forth with new energy and hope of the promise that Christ is always with us. We respond well to sermons that encourage us to relate our faith to our daily lives and inspire us to greater spiritual works based on a liberal theology.

Given our clerical needs, the minister that would empower our congregation will be an effective administrator willing to encourage others to assume and carry out leadership. Last, such a minister must understand that Tulare is not only referred to as a land of milk and honey but also as the bible belt of California. Our minister must be emotionally mature, accepting of people with divergent views and able to deal effectively with conflict. We would like to see our minister continue be an active presence with the Tulare Association of Churches and take initiative with ecumenical activities. We are searching for a minister who can inspire us to keep lit a beacon of hope, strong voice of justice for the LGBT+, and lead us in being a bridge across sociocultural borders.

Conference or Association Descriptive Reference

Church Name: First Congregational Church
Location: Tulare, California
Conference: California, Nevada Northern
Association: Sequoia

Name of Staff Assisting in the Search:
Rev. Daniel Ross-Jones, Associate Conference Minister

Staff Comments:

A wonderfully warm congregation, the people of Tulare's First Congregational Church are eager to explore how God is calling them in this place surrounded by farms and agrarian lifestyle in California's Central San Joaquin Valley. Serving as a beacon of social justice and inclusivity, this church's place in the Tulare community is of particular importance as a diverse, spiritual refuge and ministry of action. Yet, as one of the older congregations in our Conference – and in a state where most everything is somewhat “new” – the Tulare church also occupies an importance place in the center of a community with a long, rich history of care, nurture, and spiritual growth.

The transition from full-time to part-time ministry has stretched this congregation, but the pastor who finds a calling here will encounter people renewed in carrying out mutual ministry, members who are empowered to do the work of church and look to their pastor for teaching, caring, and nurturing rather than programmatic overfunctioning. Equally, the ideal pastor in this setting will possess great ideas to serve as a catalyst for what creative, progressive Christian ministry looks like in the midst of “California's Bible Belt.”

A look on the map will identify Tulare as being hours away from the major urban centers around the San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles, or San Diego – but a rich community exists in the valley below the stunning Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks. Don't overlook First Congregational Church in Tulare for its geography; one will find ministry opportunities here as rich and richer than anywhere else in the Golden State.



Signature of Staff Assisting in the Search

June 30, 2016
Date