

Name of Church

Mystic Congregational Church UCC

Address43 E Main St
Mystic, CT 06355**Conference:**

Southern New England

Association:

New London

Title

Mystic UCC AP Search

Start Date

n/a

Description

Mystic CC AP Search

Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://www.mysticucc.org/>

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

Mystic Area Ecumenical Council

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person**Name:**

Rev. Isaac Lawson

Title:

Area Conference Minister, South Central Region

Phone:

860.761.7188

Email:

lawsoni@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

Mystic Congregational Church is a community of faith in which "Hope is alive and love is visible". Our church's mission is "to joyfully bring the Christian principles of faith, hope and love to all through quality worship, education, fellowship and outreach." It is through these four prongs of our mission that we attempt to organize most of our ministry activities. The Faith and Spiritual Formation programs envision and plan continuous experiences for children, youth and adults, including Advent and Lenten studies for adults as well as intergenerational programs. Our fellowship events are fun, varied and well-attended given the size of our congregation. We are open to different ways to connect with each other more deeply as we journey together toward a closer walk with God. We engage in mission and outreach beyond our church walls at many levels. Examples include an annual youth service trip, the ongoing donation of food, blankets and clothing to local agencies, preparing and serving meals at local shelters, supporting about 30 local agencies through annual contribution. "Hands-on" mission has become a priority for us and we are always listening for new opportunities.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Mystic is a waterfront village located on the Mystic River and within the towns of Groton and Stonington. It is an important tourist destination with a long history of shipbuilding and sailing. It is home to the Mystic Seaport Museum and Mystic Aquarium, two of Connecticut's foremost tourist destinations. Our church is located in the center of the downtown area within walking distance of the seaport museum and numerous shops, boutiques and restaurants.

Mystic is a beautiful area in all four seasons. The local community values education, social and cultural activities for all ages. Mystic benefits from the fact that it is halfway between Boston and New York with all they have to offer and yet enjoys all the amenities of a small town.

Current size of membership

456

Average in person attendance

416

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.

Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

50

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Mystic UCC AP Search

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines<https://www.sneucc.org/compensation-guidelines>**Scope of Work**

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

Faith and Spiritual Formation- Lead adults, youth (including confirmation), and children to deepen their understanding of God's Word.

Second:

Preach and lead worship once a month, including sacraments. Prepare weekly children's messages.

Third:

Provide pastoral care to families and lead funerals and weddings when needed.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	80000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 80000			
Pension/Annuity	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

The approved total compensation package in the churches budget is between \$80,000 and \$87,000 based on experience level. This total compensation package can be allocated among salary, health benefits, and housing as necessary to best suit individual circumstances.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

The associate pastor will be responsible for providing housing. The associate pastor is expected to reside within daily commuting distance of the church in order to participate in the life of the church and community, hold regular office hours, and to be available to provide pastoral care as needed.

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

No, however we recognize its importance in helping pastors build long-term financial security and are open to future discussions on this matter.

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

This is a full-time position; the associate pastor is expected not to have a second job.

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

The Southern New England Conference, Community of Practice group, local collegial support, as well as support from Mystic Area Ecumenical Council Pastors.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

Our associate pastor will play a critical role in the faith and spiritual formation of our congregation and our neighbors.

We have the capacity, the attitudes, the desire and the openness needed to excel as we serve God and minister to God's people in new and robust ways.

We expect that the minister we are now seeking will inspire, engage and walk with us as we "dream big" to make an impact beyond our walls.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We seek an **Associate Pastor** who will inspire and equip our congregation to **live out our faith beyond Sunday mornings**, extending God's love into our community and the world.

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

Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Practicing the radical hospitality of God. Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.

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

EXHIBITING A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION AND ONGOING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- Loving God, following Jesus Christ and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
- Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
- Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.
- Continuing discernment of one's call in the community.
- Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.
- Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. Strategically creating the future of God's Church. Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

- Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
- Practicing the radical hospitality of God. Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church.
- Working within the community to bring about social change.
- Engaging in mission and outreach.
- Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA-PERSONAL ASSETS

- Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.
- Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church. Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
- Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
- Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the lifespan. Demonstrating excellent communication skills.

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 God is calling us to become as a congregation.

In the past years we have witnessed in the world around us an increase in exclusionary attitudes and actions which directly challenge our understanding of love as Jesus taught.

Now, more than ever, we need to fulfill the Greatest Commandment of loving God and loving neighbor and to pass on that commandment to our children.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

Open and Affirming

"We the Members of Mystic Congregational Church, in the spirit of our commitment to honor all persons, declare ourselves to be a welcoming, Opening and Affirming church. Following the commandment of Christ to love one another and with God's grace, we seek to be a faith community that invites into its midst all persons regardless of opinions, age, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, family structure, marital status, economic abilities and conditions, as well as mental, emotional, and physical capacities.

We welcome all to fully share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of participation in our congregation.

This means that you are welcome, no matter who you are, no matter where you are on the journey of life, for each one of you is a beloved child of God, and this household of God was not complete until you arrived."

2025 Community Mission Partners:

Church World Service
A Sacred Place
Clean Up Sounds and Harbors
Community Speaks Out
Covenant Shelter of New London, Inc.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship
Trust Fund
Eastern CT Community Garden
Association
Expressions Cultural Center
Fresh of New London
Girls On the Run SE CT
Habitat for Humanity of SE CT
H.O.P.E. Inc.
Immigration Advocacy & Support Center
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
IRIS Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Service
Little Pink Houses
Madonna Place
Martin House
New London Homeless Hospitality Center
New London Community Meal Center
Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center
Riverfront Children's Center
Safe Futures
SE Community Center of the Blind Start
STEPS, Inc.
Thames River Community Services, Inc.
Town of Groton Human Services
United Way of SE CT
TVCCA Housing and Homeless Service
Warm Center
Work Vessels for Veterans
Parish Care
Visitations, communication, fellowship

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

We are a thoughtful and practical congregation dedicated to God's church and Christ's work in the world and to the passing on of the good news of Jesus Christ to our children and youth. We are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in us and among us. We value tradition while at the same time remain eager to see what "new thing" God may be doing (and calling us to do!) in the radically changing institution of the church.

We hope that by including a variety of music, sharing scripture, prayer and relevant sermons and by engaging our children in leadership whenever possible, our worship services are creative, spiritually renewing for the congregation, and most of all pleasing to God.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

Our congregational strengths include high morale, committed participation by those agreeing to be on committees, creative and shared decision making, active engagement and readiness for lay ministry, appreciation of worship and music, and flexibility in resolving differences and conflicts.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

As a church, we are deeply committed to our faith and our community, but we recognize that growth requires reflection and intentional effort.

1. Strengthening Community Outreach & Engagement

- Develop stronger **partnerships with local organizations**.
- Engage more members in **hands-on mission work**.
- Find creative ways to **connect with those who may not yet feel comfortable in a traditional church setting**.

2. Enhancing Internal Communication & Connection

- Finding more **effective ways to share church news, events, and decisions**.
- Ensuring all voices are **heard and valued** in church discussions.
- Strengthening our use of **technology and digital tools** to connect more effectively.

3. Clarifying & Strengthening Our Vision for the Future

- Define a clear vision that guides **our mission, programs, and leadership development**.
- Ensure our ministries are **sustainable and relevant** to the evolving needs of our community.
- Encourage **innovation and new ways of being church**, while honoring our history and core values.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Mystic Congregational Church has one Sunday service at 9:30 a.m., in person and virtually.

Children play an important role in our services. One rings the church bell ahead of services. Sometimes, a child acolyte begins the service by bringing the light into the sanctuary and lighting the altar candles. Often a child leads the congregation in a responsive reading at the start of service.

The children gather at the front of the church for a children's message before going to their classes. They stay behind for communion, which occurs on the first Sunday of each month. Communion is served in the pews, though occasionally by intinction at the front of the church in keeping with a continual effort to bring freshness and spontaneity to the services.

The congregation is blessed by thoughtful and inspiring sermons and music that gives heart to the worship service.

Services end with the congregation reciting its common commission to go into the world and do good. The services are carefully planned by the pastor, her staff and deacons to excite in the congregation the same spirit of Christian service.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Our church offers faith formation for all ages. Children are an essential part of our ministry and mission. They participate in the worship services as readers, acolytes, sometimes bell choir ringers, and are included during Communion Sundays. Our younger children have embraced the Godly Play program, while our middle school children have transitioned to a new curriculum called Echo, which they have found engaging and meaningful.

Faith Formation is also provided through our Middle School and High School youth programs and our two-year confirmation program co-led by our Senior Pastor and Director of Faith Formation. Traditionally, a major Faith Formation emphasis for youth has been the annual service trip. In the summer of 2024, the annual service trip was at the Horton Center in NH. In the summer of 2023, our youth went to New York City and worked in preparing and distributing meals directly into the hands of migrants and homeless people. They also prepare essential meals for the WARM Shelter in Westerly, Rhode Island.

Our church has a vibrant Adult Faith and Spiritual Formation program led by the associate pastor and the Adult Faith Formation Committee.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our Bylaws are on our website, in the section "About Us". The governing body of the Church is the Congregation in the Annual Meeting. Between Church meetings, the governing body is our Church Council. Meetings are organized and run by our Moderator. Members of the Council are the heads of the following Committees:

Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, Stewardship Committee, Christian Mission Committee, Adult Faith Formation Committee, Children's Ministries Committee, Music Committee, Youth Ministries Committee. Each Committee prepares a detailed report in our Annual Report.

The Treasurer is also a member of the Council, as is the Pastor (ex-officio), Associate Pastor (ex-officio), Moderator, and Clerk.

When it comes to decision-making, 18 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

We reacted quickly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic moving services on-line, shifting to outdoor meetings and activities. A phasing forward committee was established to review and recommend changes to church policies on a regular basis as the health situation changed.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[2023-2024 Annual Report.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	416
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	0
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	416

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	80%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	11%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	9%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	20
12-17	10
18-24	10
25-34	0
35-44	0
45-54	0
55-64	10
65-74	20
75+	60

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	0%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	0%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	0%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	0%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	0%
COLLEGE:	0%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	0%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	0%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

With the proximity of the Groton Submarine Base and the Coast Guard Station New London and the Coast Guard Academy, a few of our folks are active military stationed nearby or have retired from the U.S. Navy or Coast Guard. The Electric Boat division of General Dynamics and Pfizer Pharmaceutical are both large employers in the area so our members include both employed and retired engineers, chemists and human resource professionals. We have among us active and retired teachers, college professors, investment professionals, attorneys and health care professionals.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

While Mystic Congregational Church welcomes people of all races, nationalities, sexual orientations, and economic circumstances, it is predominantly Caucasian and middle class. This may reflect the demographics of the community: More than 95 percent of Mystic residents are Caucasian, and fewer than 1 percent are African American and Asian.

What diversity means in our context?

We are approximately a 98% white congregation, largely college-educated, and from various other non-UCC Christian denominations. Our mission statement is: To joyfully bring Christian principles of faith, hope, and love to all through quality worship, education, fellowship, and outreach.

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

No

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	18	Pastor
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	12	Interim Education Director
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	200	Pastor
Church-wide Meals	40	Various Committees
Choirs and Music Groups	29	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	18	Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	12	Pastor
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	8	Pastor
Funerals (number last year)	12	Pastor
Outdoor Worship	2	Pastor
Retreats	8	Pastor
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	54	Pastor and Audio-visual Team
Youth Groups or Classes	8	Interim Education Director

Worship Times

No Response

Additional comments:

Inspiring worship services through sermons, prayers, children's time, and music.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Rev. Connie Young	3	local church membership	none	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rev. Janice Day	3	local church membership	none	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Rev. Lynn McCracken (UMC), Rev. John Webster (PC/USA), both retired with membership in Mystic Congregational Church.

List of all current staff:

No Response

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

There may be the potential for a new ministry to single adults in the 25-45 age range.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	425012
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	26298
Rentals of Church Building	2475
Total	453785

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

419389

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.

[Download church budget](#)

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

48

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
 Neighbors in Need
 Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Proportional giving is 6 percent of the Operating budget. Local charities are 5% of the Operating budget. Proportional giving percentage was set in 2019 as: (Conference dues + OCWM / Total Income). Additionally, we budget \$1,400 NL Assoc/MAEC fees.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

6

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

NA

Are capital and other payments current?

No

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

No response

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2017	Steeple painting and repair	30000	39140	maintain historic structure
2021	Congregational communication	32000	30165	Modernize MCC Website and A/V system. Ad video streaming capability for MCC services

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2035	175th anniversary	0	0	
0		0	0	

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

Improved communication with the congregation.

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

1707058

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

We developed a total return policy in 2015 that allows us to withdraw more than just dividends and income if needed. A large part of the Endowment is invested in the CT UCC Trust Funds, and we seek Conference advice on financial issues as needed.

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

1 to 2%

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

We have different classes of endowment for different purposes and generally do not make withdrawals of capital. We have an investment subcommittee of the Trustees. It is chaired by the Treasurer. It meets periodically to review endowment investments and possible withdrawals.

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

We are very conservative in withdrawing from the Endowment. It has grown over the last 10 years.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Generally, we add to the endowment when bequests are received.

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

190522

Investments (other than endowment):

347348

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Our Church building was completed in 1860. As Membership grew the Church built a Parish Hall. In 1970 the Parish Hall was moved across the street to the current location, and the Church acquired the Moran building which now houses the Church offices. In 1985, a connector was built to incorporate all 3

structures and a Church library was a part of the construction. In 2003, with funds raised in the Faith in Our Future campaign as part of our sesquicentennial celebration (150 years) we expanded the Parish Hall to a full two story building creating a space for youth and a redesigned music room.

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

No response

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
 Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
 Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
 Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
 Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
 Wheelchair access in bathrooms
 Handrails on all stairs

Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
 Curb cuts
 Accessible bathroom on each floor
 Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

We have handicapped access to the Sanctuary, bathroom, parish hall and office. We have an elevator giving access to parts of the second floor. We have removed a pew so we have designated wheelchair seating in the middle of the sanctuary as well as in the front. The choir loft is not handicapped accessible at this time.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Our structure lives out our unwritten policy for transparency, which includes:
 Treasurer who does the big financial picture as well as pay some bills and payroll.
 Assistant Treasurer who pays most bills as well as staff expenses and reconciles the credit card bills with receipts.
 Contributions treasurer who is the only person who knows what anyone pledges or contributes and sends out all contribution statements as well as track non-pledge income.
 A member of our Finance Committee does monthly checkbook reconciliations. An Investment Committee oversees Endowments and draw down formula.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

We have a generous church. Members pledge annually and support special capital needs and our mission work. Our stewardship campaign and the generosity of church members has enabled us to re-establish the position of Associate Pastor. We did not cut mission spending. The Trustees and the Congregation work prayerfully and diligently to be sure the budget reflects our priorities and mission.

We are aware that some of our strongest financial supporters are our longtime members who are now passing. We try to educate all new members about the importance of pledging annually.

Historical Information

Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

- The Church called Pastor Ann Aaberg to serve after a period of transition. Her strong leadership left a legacy of stability and growth.
- The church has been fortunate to have recruited a talented Director of Music who is also the Director of the Westerly Chorus. The elevation of music as a central part of worship and our church life has added great depth to the quality of our services.
- The congregation decided in 2016 to become an Open and Affirming church.

- The church called Christa Swenson as part-time Associate Pastor. Her leadership has already shown results in the vitality of the youth program, an example of the importance we place on Faith Formation and the overall Youth Program.
- The church called Pastor Christa to be the full-time Pastor in 2018, when Pastor Ann Aaberg retired.
- The church established the position of Director of Faith Formation in 2019.
- The church continues to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic through our virtual church services.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

The church dealt with and continues to respond to the changing health conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Details of the response can be found in the 2020-2021 Annual Report, which is available from the church office.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Our congregation has a healthy tolerance for differing opinions and beliefs, and disagreements between individuals or groups are usually resolved through respectful and open communication.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

A congregational vote was required when we had an unusual surplus post-COVID (in part due to government funding and in part due to generous members). There were differing views about how to spend those funds. One camp wanted to stash it away in our endowment and building maintenance; another wanted to entrust our Missions Committee to allocate the funds to mission organizations that were most in need of their funds. A congregational vote landed on a mix: 25% was placed in endowment, 35% in building maintenance, and 40% to our Missions Committee for distribution.

Ministerial History:

No response

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

It is important that we have mutual ministry goals and support our Pastors in being our leaders, but also maintain work/life balance. There is a Pastoral Relations committee of members chosen by the Pastor to address any concerns that the Pastor may have. We have high expectations for worship and parish care. We are fiercely independent as a Congregation and some members chafe against UCC expectations, while others welcome UCC leadership and inspiration.

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

Yes

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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

Yes

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

MCC supports local food pantries, holiday meal programs, and HOPE (which it helped found). It aids Meals on Wheels, hosts AA and caregiver groups, partners with Little Pink Houses, and sponsors the MLK Jr. Scholarship. MCC is a founding member of the Eastern CT Faith Coalition, backs the Walk to End Homelessness, joins the annual Pride Festival, and opens its facilities to community organizations. The associate and head pastor collaborate to lead these efforts with specific mission committees. The associate pastor will have opportunities to further expand and engage in community outreach as desired.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

MCC elects two members annually to represent us in the Southern New England UCC, actively participating in Annual Meetings and leadership trainings. Our Senior Pastor has attended National Synod, and youth attended in 2015. We have strong ties with the New London Association, with two members on its Executive Council. MCC enjoys relationships with SNEUCC staff, Yale Divinity, and Andover Newton; one member is now serving an inner-city parish after graduating from Yale.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

Currently, our church is not formally engaged in any community-organizing movements.

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, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Accessible to All (A2A).
Open and Affirming (ONA).
Green church
Other UCC designations:

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

We are in an exploratory phase with our Parish Care team to become a WISE Congregation for Mental Health.

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

MCC actively engages in ecumenical ministry, participating in the CWS/MAEC CROP Walk and Good Friday Walk for decades. We collaborate with St. Mark's Episcopal Church for children's ministry through the "Godly Play" program. Through MAEC, we help provide emergency aid for the homeless. Our youth also prepare monthly meals for the WARM shelter, living out our mission of compassion and service.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

Our Mission Statement is "To joyfully bring the Christian principles of faith, hope and love to all through quality worship, education, fellowship and outreach." We estimate our time spent per month as follows:

- Worship and Music— 8 hours
- Education (Adult and Youth)—12 hours
- Fellowship—8 hours
- Outreach— continuous, refer to monthly mission meetings

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

Our pastors scope of work includes congregational care and extends into community outreach. The head pastor and associated pastor will collaborate to share these responsibilities while also supporting personal growth and development of the AP.

In previous work arrangements the associated pastor focused more on faith formation and children's ministry's due to living farther outside of the community. They could more effectively support and engage in these initiatives. We are open to alternate arrangements to best support the AP's personal situation (including growth and development).

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

No response

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

Our community is primarily Caucasian, and our congregation membership reflects that. The Mystic area population is also older than the state average; however we have a wide range of ages represented in our membership, including young families.

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

No response

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

We are known for the quality of our Sunday School and our youth programs. We are known for our outreach - both in service to local missions and generous financial support. The community appreciates our well-maintained historic church building. Our church is known for personal, well-presented funerals and lovely weddings. Our Parish Hall is used by many community groups: AA twice a week, Mystic Garden Club, and Mystic Historical Society. Our annual Holiday Bazaar and Tea is well known. Additionally, our members are or have been leaders in the community and local corporations.

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

Uplifting worship services, consistently excellent sermons, strong children's and youth ministry, mission work, excellent music program, inclusive.

References



☒ Tricia Cunningham

Completed: Tuesday, Mar 11, 2025

Tricia Cunningham
Executive Director, Always Home, Inc

Business: 8605142562

Reference Response

We are thankful for the positive and impactful relationship Always Home has shared with Mystic Congregational Church, who has been an essential partner in advancing our mission, Preventing Family Homelessness. We are grateful for the deep and meaningful contributions your congregation has made to our work. MCC has demonstrated a genuine commitment to our organization's vision and goals. Through financial support, exposure through programs and advocacy, the Church has consistently helped not just our organization, but the community at large. MCC's emphasis on compassion, inclusivity, and service aligns seamlessly with Always Home's values, creating a strong and natural partnership. We appreciate being welcomed into the Church for Mission Sunday and speaking to the Women's Fellowship. And we are thrilled to now have your pastor, Christa Swenson, serve on our Board of Directors.



☒ Susan Sedensky

Completed: Wednesday, Mar 26, 2025

Mystic Congregational Church provides:

1. Monetary donations
2. Meals on Wheels delivery
3. Holiday food packing
4. Food donations

Primary Email Address: susan@thepnc.org

Business: 860 599 0264

Reference Response

The church could do more in the following ways:

1. Our food pantry served more than 2,000 people last year. As a result, we need a lot of food. Monthly food drives collecting soups, canned fruit and canned meat or monetary donations are the best way to help in that area.
2. We provide diapers on a weekly basis. This is quite costly, so donations to the diapers fund or donations of bigger diapers, size 5 and pull-ups are always needed. Smaller diapers are not needed.
3. Some churches provide a group of volunteers on a monthly basis (e.g., on the 3rd Thursday of the month) If you would like to start something like that, then please let me know. It would have to be the same time each month and the volunteers would need to be trained



☒ Jillian Wassmer

Completed: Wednesday, Mar 26, 2025

Jillian Wassmer, Director of Administration

Primary Email Address: jwassmer@warmcenter.org

Business: 401-596-9276

Reference Response

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to write this reference for Mystic Congregational Church, a faith-driven community dedicated to serving those in need. The unwavering commitment to supporting WARM Center as a whole and specifically, Anita's Kitchen - our community soup kitchen - is truly commendable.

Through the congregation's generous donations of time, money, and food, MCC has played a vital role in ensuring that individuals and families facing hardship receive the care and nourishment they desperately need. The church's dedication to outreach embodies the spirit of compassion and selflessness, making a meaningful impact on the lives of many. Their dedication to our clients truly embodies WARM's values of compassion, hope and dignity.

I highly support and recommend MCC as a valuable and compassionate partner in the fight against hunger and homelessness.

Closing Prayer

Micah 6:8 - What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Statement of Consent

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 and Call Committee: Rev. Lynn McCracken, Michael Palmer, Alan Banister, Merin Toutman, Kate McCarney, Martha Blake, and Jim Doherty

Pastor Christa, our church secretary (Elisha), Members of the Finance Committee, Missions Committee Laura Perry), Education Interim (Karly Mareka), and Trustees.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Our profile incorporates material from a variety of resources including committee and staff reports in our Annual Report for 2024, Anchor Newsletter articles, and correspondence to the congregation from the Pastor, staff, and committee leaders. We are appreciative of these thoughtful and inspiring contributions to our profile.