

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Black Forest Community Church
Black Forest, Colorado

Settled Pastor

UCC Rocky Mountain Conference
Southeast Association

29 August 2017

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Position Posting

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Consent and Validation

*"God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work."
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Black Forest Community Church
Street address: 6845 Shoup Road, Black Forest, CO 80908
Supplemental web links: blackforestcommunitychurch.org

Conference: UCC Rocky Mountain Conference
Association: Southeast Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name: Rev. Sue Artt
Title: Conference Minister
Phone: (303) 984-9118
Email: sue@rmcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

We are a church with a long history that is ready for and working toward a new beginning. We have recently become an ONA congregation and embrace a wide range of ages, backgrounds and outlooks but all share the vision of being a strong force for fellowship and spiritual growth within our community. We are dedicated and hard-working people, with strong lay leadership and a “family” atmosphere. In recent years we have been challenged by misunderstandings and disagreements that have lead to a large loss of membership. However, the members who remain want our church to grow and thrive, to learn from our experiences and to move forward with purpose and enthusiasm. But we need a dynamic spiritual leader who will love who we are and recognize our potential to be a stronger church, expand our community impact and lead us as we “seek the vision of Christ and make it our own”.

Photographs:



The Historic Old Log Church is currently home to our Church office.



Our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.



Our Sanctuary.

What we value about living in our area:

Black Forest is located in a beautiful pine forest characterized by rural tranquility and abundant outdoor recreation options. Being close to both Denver and Colorado Springs offers proximity to award winning schools, modern medical facilities and easy access to vibrant city amenities. The climate is generally mild (we do have the occasional winter storm), the community is close knit and friendly.

Current size of membership:

85 total

50 active

40 regular contributors

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration: Settled.

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes, but it is at the low end and will include opportunities to grow as the church grows.

SCOPE OF WORK

We seek a pastor who is prepared to lead and energize the congregation in spiritual worship, welcome the diversity of worshipers who enter into covenant with us, lead the study of scripture, guide our lay liturgists, plan music in coordination with the music director, provide prayer and pastoral care to congregants and help us to create positive enthusiasm and engagement within our congregation.

Our pastor must be willing and able to assist other church leaders in clarifying our vision and developing a strategic plan for the church, participate with us as our lead representative in wider church activities such as Conference and Association meetings, be a visible representative of the church to the local community and outside organizations and work with other

church leaders to grow our membership and expand our various mission and ministry programs.

The pastor will be responsible for supervising paid staff and working with the church committees and lay leadership to develop programs and resources for achieving the long-term goals of the church.

Core Competencies:

1. The ability to confidently craft and deliver worship services that inspire, challenge and engage the congregation with earnest compassion and scriptural theological context.
2. The self-assurance to work collaboratively with the lay leadership to pro-actively identify and resolve issues and problems, and effectively and constructively manage conflict and disagreement.
3. An entrepreneurial spirit that can effectively translate our vision and opportunities into action and results, and is able to provide, solicit and accept feedback on the journey.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: \$40,000.00

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

There are many housing alternatives and opportunities both within Black Forest itself and in the nearby communities of Colorado Springs, Falcon and Monument. Our expectation is that our Pastor will choose the housing situation that best suits him or her and their family. The base salary may be allocated between salary and housing allowance at the Pastors discretion.

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

We expect that our Pastor will live within the greater Colorado Springs area, but would leave the choice of location to him or her. Factors such as cost, location, environment, commuting distance, etc. are personal decisions

based on the preferences of the called pastor. Accessibility is important but we are flexible and willing to work together to find the most suitable living situation.

State any incentives

We are happy to discuss possible performance-based incentives, financial and otherwise.

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

The Black Forest community hosts nearly a dozen churches of various denominations from Roman Catholic to various mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations to Latter Day Saints.

There are over a dozen UCC congregations within the Southeast Association, which also hosts a Ministry Cluster, and the Minister will have many opportunities to participate in Association meetings and activities. There is also the opportunity to be involved in the diverse programs and activities sponsored by the LaForet camp and conference center, which is only a mile from our church.

Additionally, we are within an hour's drive of the Rocky Mountain Conference in Denver, which offers training, programs and activities as well.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

1. To promote a positive image and active presence for our church in Black Forest and neighboring communities.
2. To partner with the congregation in developing a long term strategic plan for the future of our church.
3. To significantly grow our membership and increase the involvement and activity of our members with their church.

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

The minister we now seek is someone who is steadfast in support of UCC principles, unafraid of the challenges associated with exploring and forging new paths for this congregation, and willing to embrace the opportunity of extending outreach within and beyond the Black Forest. We are willing to support this minister to the very best of our abilities. To this end, the collective talents, mutual respect, and shared responsibilities of building upon the historical legacy of BFCC will be acknowledged, even as we write a new chapter in the life of the BFCC.

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

1. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS: We are looking for a strong and innovative leader. A leader with vision and ideas who will work collaboratively with our present and future lay leaders. A leader who will stimulate and act like a spark plug to develop and encourage the leadership of self and others.

2. ENGAGING SACRED STORIES AND TRADITIONS: We need a leader who will guide us in our spiritual journey by giving thought-provoking sermons. Sermons that will relate to the congregation and to real life experiences. Sermons that will help us understand how to take the Bible and apply it to our daily living in meaningful ways. We also need a leader that will offer other opportunities beside sermon time to help all age levels grow in their faith, perhaps adult study groups and supporting the volunteer Christian Education Director.

3.WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY: We have a history of strong mission and outreach work in our community and beyond. We want to continue and extend this work. We hope for a leader who will work with us and is willing to roll up his/her sleeves and help us with our projects and make them (and us) better.

4.NURTURING OUR UCC IDENTITY: We need a leader who knows and appreciates UCC history, polity and theology and will communicate it to us and help us understand and appreciate who we are.

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

We feel that God has called us to be an open, loving, forgiving, embracing, non-judgmental, welcoming congregation. We believe that we are engaged in community outreach, however we need to find new ways to touch the lives of those in our community that don't participate in our current community outreach events. This will require our congregation and community outreach team to think outside of the box we are used to encasing ourselves in.

We have made a lot of progress this year by embracing the open and affirming statements of the United Church of Christ. Now we need to take this to the Black Forest community and beyond so that those seeking a place to find Christ and fellowship know who we are and what God has to offer them through BFCC and its congregation.

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

During the annual Black Forest Festival the church opens its doors to all attendees for a place they can come in and rest. Information is made available relative to the church and its activities. The church also enters a float in the parade to raise the awareness our presence and involvement in the community. These activities are well attended but have not appreciably increased our membership.

We have no strategic plan however there was a Congregational Assessment done by the UCC in 2013 that could be used to assist in the formulation of a strategic plan. Development of a strategic plan would be a useful tool to help the church enhance our sense of community, commitment and vision of our future.

We are called to become more fully engaged in the life of our church first, and then to extend a welcoming hand to those in our surrounding communities both in our attitudes and our actions.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

Our worship liturgy is structured and yet exhibits an informality that is both engaging and interactive. Music is a central feature of our worship and our members, including our youth, participate actively in preparing for worship, choir, scriptural readings, and special programs.

As a congregation, we seek to understand and embrace the vision of Christ, making it our own.

We are committed to being an accepting, welcoming and meaningfully active community of faith, and to making an impact not only within our worship but within the wider community as well.

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” - James 2:14-17.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- A small but very active and dedicated lay leadership;
- An outstanding music program;
- A friendly, welcoming family atmosphere at Sunday worship;
- A genuine sense of shared community and fellowship;
- Active and impactful missions programs;

- While we now have too few members and need to grow, we value our small size and the closeness and community it fosters; and
- Attractive, well maintained facilities in a lovely, forested rural setting.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

“So here is what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you is to be prepared with something that will be useful for all. Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, or provide insight.” - 1 Corinthians 14:26

For the believer, worship begins in the heart from the knowledge of Christ’s love for us. This awareness is a central part of every worship service. For the seeker it occurs when they come to a church and see a congregation that comes together with the pastor inspiring a time of worship through music, message and prayer. We strive to be such a gathering.

(The following description of a recent baptism service was written by a relative of the child being baptized.)

“The baptism was refreshing and open, allowing flexibility for the parents and child being baptized. This created an atmosphere of genuine joy where God was able to touch the hearts of those participating and attending. This open and inviting setting made it a very meaningful experience for all who were there. The joy of the child easily spread to all who were there.”

We seek to make our worship a God-inspired message delivered with love and passion in which all participate, and which strikes a chord in the seeker while strengthening the heart of the believer.

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

We believe that each individual must form and nurture their own personal relationship with God and His church. Presently we lack any regular adult education and spiritual development programs and conduct these on an occasional basis as interest and time permit. Establishing more regular programs is of great interest. Our youth education programs are vibrant, active and strong, including Sunday School, Youth Nights, “hands on” mission work, thematic holiday programs and youth-lead worship services. An issue for us is that when we lose any of our youth – to college or moving on – it has a big impact because we are small.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

We are organized in a traditional manner for a congregational UCC Church. Policy and operating decisions are delegated to a Church Board presided over by a Moderator, all of whom are elected by the Membership. The pastor is a member of the Board. Various committees manage different aspects of church life (missions, development, diaconate, Christian education, etc.) and financial affairs are overseen by a Trustee Committee. All Committee members are elected by the Members.

Major policy decisions and budgets are decided by the Members at an Annual or Special Meeting.

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

Considering the Church and Pre-school Boards, and our six (6) permanent committees, this amounts to about 10 hours per month of regular meetings. Obviously many more hours are devoted to the work of the church and making our events (Sunday School, Christian Education Programs, Vacation Bible School, Holiday celebrations, Community participation) happen. But these are “get it done” hours more than decision making time.

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

First Step Preschool (FSP) is a licensed, non-profit learning entity which is owned by Black Forest Community Church (BFCC) and serves the Black Forest and surrounding communities. This partnership has been in place since 1991, and constitutes a major component of BFCC’s community outreach efforts.

In 2015, BFCC board members became concerned about the lack of interaction and collaboration between BFCC and FSP, as well as recognizing the need to provide more direct oversight through a required Pre-school Board. Despite repeated attempts to engage fully with the FSP director (Director) regarding BFCC activities and events, the Director failed to attend contractually required monthly BFCC meetings and demonstrated an unwillingness to communicate with FSP families regarding BFCC activities and events. Additionally, the Director failed to provide requested financial information to the BFCC board of directors (Board). These issues caused great concern, and gave rise to the Board undertaking an investigation into FSP operations.

Repeated requests, by the Board, for the Director to furnish all financial records detailing FSP revenues and expenses went partially unanswered. Those records that the Board did finally receive revealed inappropriate and excessive expenditures, erroneous bank information, and the Director making personal purchases with FSP funds.

Attempts to resolve the problems identified through the investigation included meetings between the Board and Director; deadlines established to provide financial and operational FSP documents; discussions with affected families and FSP staff; and paid administrative leave. However, the Director refused to provide some requested financial documents and, instead, disclosed sensitive personnel information to FSP staff and students' families. The subsequent resignation of the entire FSP staff led to the premature closure of FSP in May of 2016. Thereafter, the Director's employment was terminated.

The turbulence which surrounded these events continued to reverberate, as many in the relatively small Black Forest community knew the Director and some BFCC congregants decided to leave the church after the dispute became public, and the legal proceedings (including a criminal investigation) were initiated.

Happily, FSP continues to thrive under new leadership with purpose, consistently higher enrollment and a capable, creative and enthusiastic new Director. The new Director has shown a willingness to work with the congregation to engage young families attending FSP with the life of the church. The pre-school children performed at Christmas, participated in the Easter service and events and a majority of them attended Vacation Bible School this year.

Serious gaps in BFCC oversight of FSP daily and financial operations were also identified through the investigation. As a result, BFCC now controls the finances of FSP through a dedicated Board that regularly communicates with the Director to identify concerns, promptly addresses FSP needs, and strives to make this partnership as foundationally solid as possible.

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

Yes. Upon request.

11-YEAR REPORT

Attached.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	50	
Number of active non-members:	35	
Total of church participants (includes inactive members who wish to remain members):	85	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	30	X
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	20	X
Less than 5 years:	30	X

Number of total participants by age:

0- 11	12- 17	18- 24	25- 34	35- 44	45- 54	55- 64	65- 74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
6	7	6	4	3	34	6	7	7	X

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	6%	X
Joint household with minors:	18%	X
Single adults age 35-65:	18%	X
Joint household with no minors:	29%	X
Single adults over 65:	29%	X

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this percentage an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	10%	X
College:	70%	X
Graduate School:	20%	X
Specialty Training:	?	Not known.

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	50%	X
Adults who are retired:	25%	X
Adults who are not fully employed:	25%	X

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

Our members are engaged in a wide range of professional and employment activities including various trades, sales, retail, professional and self-employment/business ownership – both full and part time.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

While we are blessed to have a few African-American, Asian and Hispanic members, our congregation is predominantly of white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant background. We seek to be a diverse and welcoming community of faith. However, our current membership very much reflects the homogeneous, mono-cultural makeup of the local and surrounding communities.

Black Forest and, in particular, the surrounding communities are experiencing significant and rapid population growth. El Paso County is often the fastest growing county in the the State of Colorado (population). In Black Forest itself we see more high density housing and, for the first time ever, multi-family housing. While this may well alter the nature of our community over time, it also represents an opportunity to become a larger and more diverse community and congregation.

List the date your congregation has had or will have a conversation using a resource such as the Welcoming Diversity Inventory. Comment on the results.

We have had extensive congregational chats, discussions and meetings during the process of becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. Our vote to do so was held in January, 2017 and had a 95% affirmation.

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	6	Irregular and poorly attended.
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	1	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	10	CE Dir., Sunday School
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	80 - 89	Pastor and Diaconate Comm
Church-wide Meals	20 - 25	Church Development Comm
Choirs and Music Groups	12 - 20	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	6	Unsuccessful attempts.
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	Monthly	Pastor and Diaconate Comm
Community Meals		N/A
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	0	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	0	N/A
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	15 - 20	Family Night dinners/activities
Prayer or Meditation Groups		Informal "prayer chain"
Public Advocacy Work	0	N/A
Retreats	0	Have in the past, not recently
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	N/A
Weddings <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:00am Sun)	40 - 50	Pastor, Music Director, Diaconate Committee
Young Adult Groups or Classes	6	Have in the past.
Youth Groups or Classes	12	CE Director
Other - Mission Trips	12 - 15	Youth; 1 or 2 per year usually

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers.

Name	Three-Way or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Lance Haverkamp	No	2 Seminary Degrees	Lay Worship Leader	N

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

Rev. Jim Reid – Former interim Pastor. Not active.

List all current staff, including ministers.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation	Supervised** by	Length of Tenure
Rev Susan Hartley	Y	Part-time	Board	15 months
Sheryl Salter	N	Part-time	Susan Hartley	10 months
Sherri Ramsay	N	Part-time	Board	7 years
Debbie Putney	N	Volunteer	Board	2 years
Pre-school Staff	N	Part-time	Pre-school Board	1 year
Housecleaning	N	Part-time	Trustee Committee	5 years

** Day to day supervisor. Matters of compensation, performance, contracts, etc. are supervised by the Personnel Committee, Trustee Committee and the Church Board.

REFLECTION

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

Our worthy goals are often not well reflected in our accomplishments. While we consider ourselves to be an open and welcoming congregation, we need

to be more effective in our outreach efforts and more focused in our desire to become a more diverse congregation. Because we are a small church community, the percentage of young families (12%) and youth members (16%) has varied widely over time and is presently quite low. We expect to work closely with our new pastor to attract this important demographic.

The changing demographics of Black Forest – growing population, greater numbers of people moving here from other places, high proportion of transient military families – offer both opportunities and challenges.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$64,700
Fundraising Events	\$1,500
Grants	\$16,000
Rentals of Church Building	\$6,700
Other (specify): Pre-School	\$22,700
Other (specify): Interest Income	\$125
TOTAL	\$111,725

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):
\$95,812

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

25%

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?

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Designated offerings.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: None

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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

Our original log church building and our sanctuary and fellowship hall have recently (April 2017) been designated as a Colorado Historical Site and we have been awarded a grant of \$16,000 to be used for necessary exterior maintenance of the old log church. This will most probably be undertaken in in late 2017. As a requirement for receiving the grant, the Church must contribute \$5,500 to the project, which we are working to raise from within the wider community.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$26,000

Does your church have a parsonage? No.

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

We have three distinct buildings on our small campus. The middle building is the original log church built in the 1930's by the labor and love of our charter members. It currently is home to our offices. The brick and stone building is our sanctuary and fellowship hall built in 1962. The sanctuary is beautiful and worshipful with stained glass windows and wood carvings depicting Biblical passages. The third building built in 1996 houses our weekly pre-school and classes for church children and youth.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

The Sanctuary (worship space), Fellowship Hall and Morast Hall (upper level).

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

While our finances have been stabilized by the efforts of our Board and Members over the past 2 years and are no longer precarious, our small size limits our income. This in turn limits our options for mission work, community engagement and church programs.

We have had discussions about transitioning to a "unified budget", and in fact received membership approval to do so, but we have not as yet been able to make the transition.

Our budgets are prepared by the Trustee Committee, approved by the Board and then submitted to the Members for final approval at a special congregational meeting held for that purpose, typically in late November or early December.

We remain committed to our mission efforts, including funding the UCC 5-for-5 program and our Youth Mission Trips. We are fortunate that our members always step up to volunteer when needed and that the generosity of current and former members allows us to maintain adequate financial reserves, but our operating finances are a constant concern and limitation.

We are convinced that the solution to this problem is to open our arms to the wider community and become a larger, more active and fully engaged congregation.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation.

The most important, impactful and significant event for our church within the last 10 years has been our achieving designation as a UCC Open and Affirming Congregation. This was in many ways a painful process, requiring deep self examination and costing us a number of prominent and longtime members.

Other significant happenings include:

1. Designation of the original church building as a Colorado State Historical Site.

On September 28, 2016, our original Church log building (now the Church Office) and our sanctuary and fellowship hall building were honored as State of Colorado Historic Buildings by the Colorado State Registrar of Historic Properties. What a fitting honor to those hearty and determined pioneers who cut, skinned, hauled and then used the logs to create the community's first Church! The designation has also resulted in our receipt of a grant to be used for the repair and maintenance of the log building.

2. Longstanding, ongoing relationship with LaForet.

Black Forest Community Church had a humble beginning during the depression years of the 1930's. A small group of neighbors, wishing to express their faith in a more concrete way, began meeting in the one-room schoolhouse for Sunday School classes with lay leadership. When the Congregational Church was gifted with a 500 acre Black Forest estate called LaForet to be used as a camp and conference center, it employed clergy as managers. The camp is located less than a mile from the old log school and the managers offered their services to the existing Sunday School group. Soon a log building was erected by the members to give this emerging congregation its own church home. The Log Building church was dedicated in 1942. Through the leadership and influence of the LaForet ministers, the Black Forest Community Church became a faith partner of the Congregational Church.

In the late 1950s the forest was changing, especially due to the construction and opening of the US Air Force Academy nearby. Property owners began selling 5 acre parcels, roads were paved, schools were built and the area became more populated and more prosperous. The Log Church was changing too. A parsonage was built, and a full-time pastor was called.

The Congregational Church merged and became the United Church of Christ, which continued the stewardship of LaForet. In 1962 BFCC built a new sanctuary and fellowship hall and allowed other fellowships developing in the forest to use the Log Building and new Sanctuary while their own buildings were erected.

We continue to engage actively with LaForet and to promote our mutual vision of unity and fellowship.

3. The 2013 Black Forest Fire.

Our Church sits in the middle of a large Ponderosa pine forest. Due, in part, to several years of extreme drought conditions, a devastating wildfire ravaged our community in June of 2013. Thanks to the heroic effort of the firefighters our Church buildings were spared. But over 500 families lost their homes, including 12 from our congregation. Our congregation, along with our neighbors from all faith traditions, went straight to work to provide those affected with monetary, material, spiritual and personal assistance as they recovered and rebuilt their lives. This experience has drawn us closer to our community and renewed our commitment to making a difference in it.

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

Designation as a UCC Open and Affirming congregation (Jan 2017).

Our Statement of Welcome, as approved by a vote of the membership:

“Who is welcome here?

If you are Asian, Hispanic, Black or White.....

If you are male or female or transgender.....

If you are three days old, 30 years old, or 103 years old.....

If you've never stepped foot in a church; or if you are Buddhist, Muslim, agnostic or are a life-long Christian.....
If you are single, married, divorced, separated, or partnered.....
If you are straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.....
If you are Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, or not registered to vote.....
If you are an immigrant, a refugee, or lived here your entire life.....
If you have, or had, addictions, phobias, abortions, or a criminal record.....
If you have tattoos, piercings, or purple hair.....
If you own your home, rent, live with your parents, or are homeless.....
If you are fully-abled, disabled, or a person of differing abilities.....

YOU are welcome here!

This congregation is committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith, centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in faithfulness to the Gospel and our heritage, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide programs, ministries, and pastoral care to ALL who seek God in this place.

Black Forest Community Church, United Church of Christ, stands as a light in the forest. We, in the spirit of Jesus' great commandments to love God, and our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:28-34), and Paul's teaching of acceptance of one another (Romans 14:1-15: 13), feel called to welcome, affirm, and support all persons of every race, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, economic status, nationality, sexual orientation or identity into the full life and ministry of this community of faith, including membership and leadership. We welcome and embrace the God-given gifts that each person brings to the life of our congregation, regardless of where they are in their faith journey. Our goal is to become a more welcoming church.

As an Open and Affirming Church, we join our sisters and brothers in the United Church of Christ and all persons who are committed to the struggle for justice, love and inclusiveness, with the example and teachings of Jesus Christ as our guide."

Achieving this status required over a year of meetings, conversations, votes and engagement, managed by our designated "Welcoming Committee" but involving every Member.

Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We are guided by scripture when it comes to conflict resolution. Several bible verses that best sum up our values and practices in dealing with conflict are:

Philippians 2:4. *"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7. *"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*

That being said, we are often challenged with managing conflict in a loving and effective way, and we are hopeful that our new pastor will have the skill and experience to help us become better. We need to work harder to make our values match our deeds, and to "let go with love".

We do have formal processes in place for addressing conflicts - mediation, a Pastoral Relations Committee - but too often they are not utilized and we have a tendency to deal with issues by "whispering in the corner". This has perhaps improved recently but clearly it remains an area where we can (and want to) improve.

Ministerial History:

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/No)
Rev Susan Hartley - Interim	1 year 3 months	Presbyterian
Rev Diane Martin - Settled	1 year 9 months	Yes
Rev Jim Reid - Interim	8 months	Yes
Rev Burl Kreps - Interim	8 months	Methodist
Rev Sam Fisher - Interim/Settled	7 years	No
Rev Nick Natelli - Interim	*	Yes

Rev David Knight - Settled	2 years	Yes
Rev Frank Jopp - Interim	1 year	Yes
Rev Maureen Hale - Settled	2 Years (Illness)	Yes
Rev Don Laue - Interim	1 year	Yes
Rev Nick Natelli - Settled	25 years*	Yes

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

Our past has shown us the importance of sharing the same vision, mission and goals and the need for clarity and flexibility in working together toward achieving them. When there is honest disagreement and conflict it must be addressed quickly, in good faith and mutual respect. Conflict is always present and does not just go away on its own. We must be open to alternate ways of working together and accepting of different problem-solving styles. There must be give and take as we strive to find consensus.

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

Yes. Called Pastor (2005), CE Director (2015), Pre-school Director (2016)

Some of this is ancient history now, some more recent. We are happy to discuss any of the details with serious candidates.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No.

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

No.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION INSITE

COMMUNITY VISION

Our small church is centrally located which promotes the use of our property for community services and events. Occasionally the parking area is utilized by vendors selling local honey and for parking by the Community Club Arts & Crafts shows and other events. We are a prominent participant in the annual Black Forest Festival, which uses our parking lot for the review stand. The church's location makes it an excellent stop for a rest or bathroom break during and after the Festival.

Other churches have utilized our sanctuary while their own facilities were being built. Our choir members, many of whom are also members of the Community Club, have participated in events at the Latter Day Saints church across the street.

We regularly donate food items to Care & Share with our neighboring Lutheran Church's Community Outreach Program. We also host community service groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Alanon.

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

Our community vision is to welcome everyone to worship and enjoy church life with us - no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. We strive to follow the guidance of Matthew 22:39, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*".

Locally, the following efforts attest to our community commitments:

1. We provide Thanksgiving food baskets and Christmas gift cards to needy families;
2. Our pre-school continues to offer excellent educational opportunities to enrolled students;

3. BFCC's Vacation Bible School (VBS), offered free of charge, successfully engages community families;
4. The community Halloween Fall Festival allows church volunteers to support safe and fun activities for children at LaForet;
5. Congregation members with nursing backgrounds provide counseling and leadership for our mission to provide heart health education, encourage participation in Race for the Cure events, and address end-of-life concerns; and
6. Sponsorship of garage sales allows us to have community neighbors visit and learn about BFCC.

Our church's wider mission has evolved to include outreach to communities beyond the Black Forest, Colorado Springs and surrounding communities. In this vein, BFCC actively supports La Puente Home, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing emergency shelter, food assistance, transitional housing, self-sufficiency services, and other resources to residents of the San Luis valley in Alamosa, CO - possibly the poorest county in the State. Whenever financial resources permit, BFCC partners with leaders of other church's to assist with resident's home repairs. Finally, the BFCC supports the Tutaweza Mission School Program, which provides supplies for and educates students in Tanzania, Africa.

Missions work: La Puente, Tutaweza, LaForet, Black Forest Cares, Wolford Elementary School, annual Youth Mission Trip.

Community Support: Annual Black Forest Community Festival, Tri-Lakes Cares, Community Pre-school, Vacation Bible School, Family Halloween (with LaForet)

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

We are a longtime participation in Conference and Association meetings and training and usually send representatives to these events.

Longtime involvement with supporting LaForet.

Check all of the following “statements of witness” that apply to your UCC faith community.

- _3_ Accessible to All (A2A)
- _2_ Creation Justice
- _2_ Economic Justice
- _2_ Faithful and Welcoming
- _2_ God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- _2_ Immigrant Welcoming
- _2_ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M)
- _2_ Just Peace
- _3_ Global Mission Church
- _1_ Open and Affirming (ONA)
- _2_ WISE Congregation for Mental Health

1 = Yes

2 = No

3 = Yes but not formally

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community.

Our good intentions perhaps exceed our practical efforts. As a community of faith we are very interested in being more meaningfully involved in many of these “statements of witness”. We recognize that we live in a conservative and homogeneous community and that this presents special challenges. We seek a pastor who can work with us to prioritize and realize our aspirations in these areas.

Describe your congregation’s participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities

Our involvement has been rather limited, although we do engage strongly and meaning fully with other local churches in responding to emergencies (the Black Forest Fire) and specific mission activities (food drives, etc).

Recently the Board has authorized the exploration of establishing a “sister church” type of relationship with local Jewish and Islamic communities of faith. This effort is only just getting underway.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

The purpose of this congregation is to bind together followers of Jesus Christ to share in the worship of God, individually and collectively, as God's will is set forth in the life, teachings, death, and living presence of Jesus Christ. Our mission is to proclaim the gospel, to exalt God in worship, to seek the reign of peace, and to uphold the ideals of community.

Black Forest Community Church is a small congregation that worships individually and collectively. Together we have tirelessly put in time planning, volunteering and financing needs that bind us as followers of Jesus Christ through our ministries. Our outreach has served our community and others in times of need (Black Forest fire, local food pantry, La Puente missions, special Christmas and Thanksgiving projects) and celebrations (Black Forest Festival and La Foret Fall Festival). We look forward to expanding our ministries as our congregation grows.

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

We fully expect that the lay leadership and the congregation as a whole will step forward and assist the pastor to ensure that the following priorities are met:

First, we expect our Pastor to put the needs of our members as his/her primary ministry emphasis - worship events, pastoral care, counseling, etc. This would include preparation for worship and working with our Boards and Committees.

Second, we need a more active and visible presence in our community of Black Forest and perhaps surrounding areas that are currently growing rapidly. These communities need to be more aware of us, who we are, what we stand for and all that we have to offer. This would certainly include interaction with other area churches.

Finally, we expect that our minister would be in attendance at Southeast Association events and represent us within the wider Rocky Mountain Conference. This would include the pastor's personal growth, enrichment and fellowship with other clergy.

MissionInSite

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

Black Forest is a community with deep roots going back to the 1920s and earlier. For most of its history it has been a stable, rural and homogeneous community. Following the opening of the US Air Force Academy in 1954, the area experienced a surge of growth which began to alter the insular nature of Black Forest. Still, we remain largely uniform culturally, with a population that is 89% white. In general we are an older (48 years vs 37 statewide), more affluent (70% above the statewide average household income) and asset rich (59% higher home value than the statewide average) community.

We are currently experiencing population growth that is bringing wealthier people to the community, increasing traffic and construction and bringing changes to the very fabric of the community that are not uniformly welcomed.

As is always the case, change presents both challenge and opportunity. As Black Forest becomes larger, wealthier and more diverse, there will be greater opportunity for us to serve God in our community, to attract more members and to increase and expand our mission work.

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

By and large, our congregation closely reflects the demographics of Black Forest. We are mostly older, white and with deep roots. But we have a growing number of members from surrounding communities which tend to be younger, more diverse and more liberal.

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

Our church faces many of the same demographic change issues as the local community. Our loss of members over the past several years is largely the result of conflict between "why do things have to change" and "why can't things change faster", between tradition and the new, between those with

deep roots in the community and new arrivals, between a conservative theological outlook and a more liberal UCC view.

The future of our church will be in adapting to the changes around us, not losing sight of our fundamental purpose of making the vision of Christ real and meaningful in our lives and embracing the opportunities of growth and change without losing the connection to our history and values.

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

In the past, our church has had a more prominent and visible role in the community. Community members with a long history in Black Forest remember that, and our practical support for other churches as they established themselves here.

Our difficulties in 2016 over the pre-school situation (described in detail elsewhere) caused some bad feelings that seem to have largely been resolved and overcome.

Others have told us that we are known as being a generous congregation and one that always steps forward to be of practical help in times of need.

More recent arrivals have, for the most part, not heard much about us and have no vivid impression of us one way or another.

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

There are, of course, many factors that influence an individual's decision to become a part of our Church. Among the most common reasons given are:

- We wanted a UCC Church.
- The small size and "family" atmosphere.
- The friendliness and welcoming nature of the people we met there.
- The way the Church helped me/my family in a difficult time.
- A good experience when I attended.

REFERENCES

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

REFERENCE 1

Susan Hartley
Interim Pastor
(719) 495-2207 (O)
(585) 7554486 (M)
susanwhartley@gmail.com

August 26, 2017

Dear Pastor or Candidate for Pastoral Ministry,

Black Forest Community Church UCC is a high commitment congregation where most everyone of all ages shares their various gifts, love of God and neighbors, openness to new people, creativity, energy, enthusiasm-- and great food! They enjoy getting together and reaching out to people in need one-on-one or as a group in a variety of local and regional ministries and activities. Lots of smiles!

In the 15 months I have served as their part time Interim Pastor, church leaders and members have re-vitalized the long time church sponsored pre-school, led a caring process that resulted in the congregation declaring themselves Open & Affirming, welcomed 5 new members, successfully applied for historical register designation for church buildings and received a restoration grant to maintain our vintage log church building. They are good stewards.

I have also seen the congregation as a whole meet some significant challenges with calm, mature wisdom, responsibility and grace. These included: determining the church's realistic financial situation and making needed changes, and dealing with the uncooperative and hostile former pre-school staff. The Holy Spirit was evident in their midst. It was not

easy but the pain has been acknowledged, and trust in God's presence and purpose has helped people feel God's love, acceptance and forgiveness for all involved, so they can move forward with hope. The former habits of conflict have been transformed and there is a new spirit and energy. The congregation is truly poised to continue transformation working together with a new settled pastor.

BFCC worship is truly the work of the people. Lots of people participate in reading scripture, music, leading children's messages, even preaching, praying and sharing joys and concerns, and assisting with monthly Communion. Folks are generally easy going and don't mind trying something new.

Serving God as the BFCC pastor has been a joy. I hope you feel God's call to serve with these great people and join them in sharing God's inclusive love, serving a rapidly growing neighborhood.

I am delighted to recommend to your consideration Black Forest Community Church UCC. I will be glad to speak with you and share additional information or answer questions.

In Christ's Love,

Rev. Susan Wesley Hartley
Interim Pastor
Black Forest Community Church UCC
Email. Susanwhartley1@gmail.com
Cell phone 585-755-4486

REFERENCE 2

Lance Cheslock
Director, La Puente Home
(719) 589-5909 (O)
(719) 580-1592 (M)
lancecheslock@gmail.com

August 23, 2017

Greeting Black Forest Community Church Prospect:

I have had a relationship with Black Forest Community Church since 1990 in the context of their involvement with the mission of La Puente Home. La Puente is a ministry serving Colorado's San Luis Valley providing emergency shelter, food assistance, homeless prevention services, and community outreach services for the homeless and community members in crisis. La Puente endeavors to meet immediate needs and empower people to live independently with dignity.

My first venture with Black Forest Community Church was in response to an invitation to speak on behalf of our mission. I was invited their pastor Nick Natelli to tell stories and engage members who were inspired to get involved.

What I experienced then has maintained itself for the past 26 years! I was welcomed as a friend and fellow Christian by a church who was eager to do hands-on mission work. With the thought of cultivating compassion, the members of the church family stepped up to get involved in a wide range of ways, all for the purpose of engaging a gospel of loving neighbor, while learning and growing in the challenges of what that means. The church began sending work groups to assist us, adult learning groups to engage closely with our story, and then initiated drives for food, hygiene kits and more to assist the front-lines of our mission. At least once a year, one of our volunteers or staff speak and share stories with the church family on a Sunday morning.

The churches involvement also included individual congregants reaching out to us on their own. In time, Black Forest Community Church became a household word at La Puente. We have supported each other in a common mission: Sharing and learning Christ's love together.

Through BFCC's efforts, alongside of other Rocky Mountain Church of Christ's partners, we started and sustained our Gleaning Project, which to this day invites and engages over 15 faith groups to come to the San Luis Valley and glean produce left behind after the harvest. Over the years, hundreds of

children and adults have gathered tens of thousands of pounds of produce to give to the poor, including sharing the bounty with Tri-Lakes Community Center.

As I'm writing this, I've been thinking of what BFCC will be doing on their next work venture here, just a few weeks away. The church's many years of involvement has provided so much for us, and has allowed church members to witness how we have grown and changed. Black Forest Community Church has been a true sustaining partner for us. I have had the blessing to get to know each and every pastor, many of whom I'm still in touch with. I feel I know the story of Black Forest Community Church very well. Any prospective pastor will find a church ready to engage in hands-on mission work with La Puente and others.

Please call me for any additional information! I am truly eager to share more of my experiences with the faith community of Black Forest Community Church!

Blessings,

Lance Cheslock
Director

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

The BFCC Search Committee is a singular body, consisting of congregants with different experiences, backgrounds, ages, genders and races. You have seen in all other parts of this church profile our collective effort to fully inform you of our challenges, history, financial status, vision, mission, opportunities and hopes for the future. For this reason, we have now chosen to share with you our individual thoughts, scripture passages, prayers and musical selections in closing this profile.

CLOSING PRAYERS/THOUGHTS

Mark B.

A message, some scriptures and a prayer for our future minister.....

We know that God has chosen you. He chose you for Black Forest Community Church long before we knew we would need you. Follow the path that has been set before you, because amazing things await those who honor God's calling.

Isaiah 41:10.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Steve M.

Galatians 6:9.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Ashleigh P.

Philippians 4:19

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Sharon G.

Colossians 4:5-6.

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Margaret N.

A hymn that speaks to me, as a mission statement for BFCC, is "We Are One in the Spirit".

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, and we pray that
all unity may one day be restored:
And they will know we are Christians by our love, by our love; yes
they'll know we are Christians by our love.
(pg. 386, Red Hymnal, 1st stanza) (MN)

Carlene P.

We have a reason to be a viable church so may we be searching for a shepherd to lead us. Those of us who gather to follow God's teachings in His name are all commissioned to build His church. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1.

Matt 18:19

"For where one or more are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Matt 18:19

Barbara L.

Prayer from Mother Theresa for family. My family is Black Forest Community Church.

Heavenly Father,
You have given us the model of life in the Holy Family of Nazareth.
Help us, Oh Loving Father, to make our family another Nazareth,
where love, peace and joy reign.
May it be deeply contemplative, intensely Eucharistic, revived with joy.

This is my prayer for my family church.

A Prayer for the Minister:

Dear God, bless the one you have chosen to lead our church, our congregation, our families and our loved ones. Lord, please give us the wisdom and open minds to know that You have provided Your chosen one with the knowledge and strength to be our Shepherd and lead Your flock. Let us remove our preconceived notions and ideas of what a pastor needs to do for us. Let us instead, seek to know what You would have us do for the pastor You chose. So that they feel respected, loved and embraced into our congregational community. Lord, remove the obstacles that would impede this pastors calling for our church. Protect them and place encouraging people in their lives that would buffer them from those who would do them harm.

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 opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

The Pastoral Search Committee

Sharon Grady and Steven Murtagh, Co-Chairs

Ashleigh Putney, Mark Bissell, Barb Lehman, Carlene Peters,

Margaret Natelli, Greg Ramsay

The Church Board, Clerk and Treasurer

All Members of Black Forest Community Church through Congregational Chats, interviews, surveys and conversations.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We have made every effort to be complete, accurate and honest. We believe that only through openness will we find the Pastor that God has chosen to lead us into the future. We are entirely open to discussing any issues, answering any questions, that interested candidates may wish to bring forward and seek candidates who feel the same.

Signed: Sharon Grady

Sharon Grady, Co-chair, Pastoral Search Committee

Date: 29-August-2017

Signed: Steven J Murtagh

Steven Murtagh, Co-chair, Pastoral Search Committee

Date: 29-August-2017

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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

"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" - Mark 11:22