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## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF KEYSTONE

The First Congregational Church of Keystone is searching for a part time, settled pastor for our small but mighty church. The right candidate will set the spiritual tone of the church, provide leadership for the administrative board and make disciples of the congregation through the preaching of God's word. The candidate should be willing, enthusiastic and committed to the betterment of the church, the congregation, our youth and the surrounding communities.

**POSITION TITLE:** Part-time minister

**POSITION DURATION:** Settled - a settled minister who is "Called" by a congregation to serve as the minister of that congregation. The Minister has overall responsibility for the direction of the congregation. It is a ministry with an indefinite tenure.

**COMPENSATION:** \$24,000 annual salary

This amount covers all benefits including but not limited to salary, housing, mileage, telephone expenses and health insurance. The Pastor is encouraged to spend this compensation in a manner that best fits his/her needs and tax situation.

**Note:** We understand that there may be a need to seek additional employment. We are supportive of that provided the contractual obligations of the church are fulfilled.

### SCOPE OF WORK:

**Preaching-** The minister is responsible for preparing and presenting engaging and relatable as well as biblically relevant Sunday services as well as special occasions such as Ash Wednesday, Christmas Eve, confirmations, weddings, baptisms and funerals and creating a corresponding bulletin. The minister will coordinate and assist the laity for scripture readings, music, and children's sermon. On Communion Sunday, the pastor will administer the sacrament.

**Leadership-** The minister will serve as the spiritual and organizational leader of the congregation, partnering with the administrative board towards a unified vision for the future of the church.

**Pastoral Care-** The minister will provide a timely, spiritual direction and pastoral care for those seeking baptism, profession of faith, church membership, marriage, visitations, and encouragement, as well as for those suffering a loss.

**Public Presence:** The Pastor represents the First Congregational Church of Keystone and has the opportunity to be involved in the community and providing local outreach.

Youth Ministry: The Pastor is expected to take an active role in promoting, overseeing, and participating in the growth and nourishment of a youth ministry within the Church and local community.

Administrative: The Pastor is expected to attend administrative board meetings as possible. They are also responsible for presenting an annual "Report for the Pastor."

#### **WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR:**

We are searching for someone who will help to guide our church in a positive way, to help set new goals and objectives and to lead us in attaining them. Ideally, that individual will be able to contribute ideas for community outreach as well as be proactive in the church and community to build relationships and help grow the church. We value someone who is committed to the church, its congregation and surrounding communities. We are eager to "do more" and with the right leadership, we can make big things happen from a small church.

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT:**

Sunday service starts at 10am. All who enter are welcome and guests are greeted warmly. Many gather early to enjoy a few minutes of fellowship, a cup of coffee and a treat from the refreshment table. Once the bell rings and the prelude begins, the congregation makes their way to their seats. Worship takes place in the beautiful 127-year-old sanctuary as the sunshine leaks through the alluring stained-glass windows. After birthdays and anniversaries are celebrated and prayer requests taken, worship begins. Worship is based on sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, music and prayer. A special children's message offers an age-appropriate lesson to our younger audience and almost always provides a heart-warming moment or an amusing anecdote. Holy Communion takes place the first Sunday of each month.

Our Congregation is a diverse group of individuals who offer acceptance, love and support for one another **within the context and belief that the Holy word of God is the absolute and final Truth which guides our Faith!** As a group we strive to provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere to members and guests alike. We work together to keep the church running smoothly, serving on the boards and committees, helping with fundraising efforts, maintenance projects, and providing support to attendees as well as those in the community. We are invested in our youth and encourage personal and spiritual growth through Bible Study, Youth Group and Sunday School.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION:**

Our administrative board is the backbone of the church. The group as a whole are responsible for the majority of the planning, executing and decision making on behalf of the church. This board, to the best of their ability, uphold the church's organizational structure, following the by-laws and church constitution. Board members are selected and voted in through a Democratic process. While all are welcome and encouraged to attend administrative board meetings, only those holding offices are allowed to vote on matters at hand. The minister is an ex officio member of all committees. Copies of the organizational structure, bylaws, constitution, or annual reports are available to explain the pattern of the church's activity and governance if interested.

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE:**

Our church has suffered through a couple of tough years, starting with COVID, retiring our last settled minister 3 years ago, and making the decision to withdraw our affiliation from the UCC. Our church has suffered in membership and attendance. Our church is proudly back on its feet and looking for ways to grow in all areas. We are optimistic that the right Minister can help grow our attendance and active members again.

An estimate of our current numbers would be:

Total Members: 60, Active Members: 30, Non-Active Members: 30, Associate Members and Friends: 128.

### **WHAT MAKES OUR CHURCH UNIQUE:**

We are blessed to be located in small town Keystone, South Dakota, in the heart of the Black Hills. We pride ourselves in having warmly welcomed guests for 127 years. Many families attending our church have had multiple generations as members of the church. Historically, and to this day our church has been a part of the Easter Sunrise Services at Mt. Rushmore National Monument. The service draws thousands of people to attendance and the offering is shared with local missions. We hold an annual Buffalo Dinner each year that has proved to be a great fundraiser as well as community outreach. Many area residents look forward to the delicious food and fellowship year after year. The people of our congregation are active members of the community, offering help and support in any way they are able.

### **CHURCH HISTORY:**

(Provided by our church historian – Eileen Roggenthen)

#### **Shaping the identity of our church**

The closing of the Holy Terror Mine in 1903 devastated our church membership since so many church men worked there. Their families left the community and the church. Affording a pastor had always been a struggle; now it was next to impossible. Church members, and especially the Ladies' Aid sustained the church without much available permanent pastoral guidance. Some current members have ancestors who kept the struggling church afloat, and they continue to pitch in where needed.

The church was barely active for 25 years, yet an invaluable set of records survived, being passed from lady to lady as they moved away or became older, or eventually died. For a small church, our members have an amazing sense of duty and loyalty to the church and maintain a strong commitment.

Our Administrative Board and core group continue to play a significant part in the church, and these dedicated people are indispensable to the pastor.

In the winter of 1997, we had three Sundays where we had 7, 9 and 7 members in attendance. Indifference, apathy, in-fighting, and even death had taken a toll on our members' faith and commitment. We faced the same loss of membership as the church did in 1903.

In spring 1997, Wanda Wilhelms took it upon herself to revitalize our church, inviting her family and friends to also join. Those of us who were among the seven or nine recognized how easily members can stray, lose interest or be affected by infighting. Many of those who chose to join and help us again be a vital church recognized, as well, how important maintaining a vibrant, engaged congregation is to growth. We are a loving church family very cognizant of the need for comity, and the need to avoid disputes and feuds.

Sunday school and Youth Group have been important to the church from the very beginning. Even when no regular pastor was available, the church held Sunday school classes for all ages. Interestingly, the Sunday school offerings were a significant contribution to the church budget in the early years. A number of years ago, the Administrative Board voted to pay full camper fees for our young people to attend Placerville Church Camp each summer. The decision strengthened youth involvement and commitment. Grand Camp has become exceedingly popular and gets our kids in the camper mode early. As camp tuition has risen, we have had to ask families to share more of the cost, but still budget for this important part of our young people's Christian life.

#### **Most important event in the last 20 years**

In 2008, both churches in the Hills' Parish felt they could support their own part time pastor. This was after nearly 60 years of sharing a pastor. There was not a lot of trepidation, but rather enthusiasm and excitement about this new phase of our growth. There is just something about forging ahead that entices others to join in. Just like in 1895, we were taking on the burden of our own parish. Fortunately, we chose a fine pastor who was especially instrumental in building our youth program. The pastor who followed continued the growth and vitality. The decision to maintain our own church and pastor has put us where we now are at our 128<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a church family.

#### **Most important event in the last five years**

COVID-19. The pandemic struck three months after our pastor retired. To protect our congregation, we closed the church at various times. Our interim Pastor suffered from health and family pressures. We have been fortunate to have devoted guest pastors during the past two years.

While the pandemic challenged our church. It also gave us a priceless gift in our wonderful Watson Park outdoor services, held on property once belonging to March Baird Watson, a young lady who helped revitalize the church in 1916. Instituted as a somewhat desperate measure to draw parishioners and visitors safely back to our Church, the tradition continued for a third summer with the help of dedicated volunteers. We all look forward to again worshipping outdoors in our beautiful Black Hills.

#### **Specific change your church has managed in the recent past.**

Leaving the United Church of Christ denomination and returning to our roots as First Congregational Church of Keystone has brought a sense of peace to our congregation. The move to independence removed tensions over national policies. It also brought an appreciation for just how important our church family is, and of a renewed dedication to our Church, and its purpose in the community.

Our world has changed, Changes in our world can be good or bad, and how one deals with and manages the changing world events says so much about who you are.

While a change to an unaffiliated church is significant, the specific and significant change we see has been for the most part outside our church, in a country becoming increasingly divided, during continued change. As a church family, we recognize that we each see the world differently. We respect each member's viewpoint and strive to not inflict our feelings on others.

We have managed as a church to not bring hot-button issues inside our church where we have to argue about just what side God is on. We are a small, diverse church unwilling to argue about issues where hard-held beliefs on either side will probably not change. We leave these divisive opinions at the church door.

**REFERENCES**

## REFERENCE 1

Chuck Landon

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Retired minister of the KUCC

## REFERENCE 2

Becky Fleming

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Friend of the church and part-time lay minister

## REFERENCE 3

Judy Dalton

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Active Member of 1st Congregational Church of Keystone

## CHUCK LANDON REFERENCE, FORMER PASTOR

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

Outstanding lay leadership – women and men.  
 Welcomes new people.  
 Accepts people as they are.  
 Strongly supports Pastor.  
 Careful financial stewardship.  
 Careful building maintenance.  
 Provides adult leadership and appropriate activities for children and youth.

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

Occasional over stress on fund-raisers.  
 May need to contemporize music, worship and preaching styles to attract younger people/families.  
 Build on church's opportunity as "only church in town" with (semi-)resident pastor and ministries for all ages.

### 3. Describe a significant experience you have had in this church's ministry.

Though I was (and am!) an American Baptist Pastor, I was called to serve this Church in December 2006, to begin January 2007. At about the same time I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. After preaching and pastoring two or three Sundays, the chemotherapy rendered me too weak to continue. The Church leadership offered to continue me on salary while recovering, using my professional expense fund to cover the cost of guest pastors until I was able to return. Such unrequested, unexpected grace and generosity! That was repeated when I fell and broke several ribs a few years later.

When a church in the Minneapolis area offered to send a team of youth to lead a community Vacation Bible School at Keystone UCC, the church leadership agreed to provide an evening meal for everyone – guest team, local team, children, whoever! -- each night of the VBS. Church leadership also assisted in securing free lodging and meals and visits to tourist attractions for the Guest Team. The Church continued that for four summers!

Because Keystone, home to Mount Rushmore, is a tourist attraction community, Sunday service guests may come from all over the world. The congregation includes people with a wide diversity of political viewpoints, some held and expressed strongly. One Sunday we were visited by a couple from India, beautifully garbed in their native dress. I learned that the man was a Pastor. I invited him to share leading the Lord's Supper observance with me. He did so beautifully, and the congregation was overwhelmingly delighted! Only after the service did I learn his wife is also a Pastor; I wish I had known that so I could have included her as well. One of the members posted on Facebook that "today Keystone UCC had World Communion Sunday right in our own Church!"

### 4. Anything else you wish to share.

My years of pastoral ministry have included seven congregations of various sizes and settings, service on a denominational state staff, and a decade leading a metropolitan ecumenical ministry. My years serving as Pastor of Keystone United Church of Christ, though all too brief, were in many respects the most rewarding, and clearly the most enjoyable of my career. This is a congregation that loves to be loved and responds lovingly, generously and heartwarmingly. I hope all those who follow me experience as I have!

### REFERENCE FROM BECKY FLEMING, GUEST MINISTER

Keystone UCC is amazing at supporting children in their community. They actively seek out families in need and use their varying skills to engage the children in Christianity through meals, activities, Sunday School. This congregation supports Placerville Church Camp at a much higher rate than one would expect of a church this size. They fundraise for scholarships so everyone who wants to go to camp can. This congregation has a long-standing history in their community and is always looking to new ways to help their community.

I was doing pulpit supply a number of years ago. While I was preaching, someone struck my vehicle and left the scene with no note. When I got to my vehicle, I was upset and unsure how to go about reporting this. Members from their church helped me call the Sheriff's department, waited with me until the report was complete and I was successfully on my way. The culprit was never found. When I came to the church the next week to preach, the church presented me with a check to pay the deductible on the repairs.

This congregation has a history to be proud of. They are a warm group of people with members in all age groups.

### REFERENCE FROM JUDY DALTON, ACTIVE MEMBER OF 1st CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF KEYSTONE

1. **Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry:** Our biggest strength is our people. Our members are like a family and always work well together. When needed, everyone comes together as a team to serve a meal for a funeral or a family in need, etc. Our members step up to volunteer for fund raisers such as the annual Victorian Christmas and Buffalo Dinner and other activities within the community and church. We have recently resumed a weekly morning Sunday School class for children, and a weekly ladies bible study group.
2. **Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry:** Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other circumstances, several of our families with young children left our church leaving a large void and an end to our weekly youth group meetings. This along with reduced church attendance during the pandemic resulted in not having enough people to start up the youth program again. I pray that we will hire a full or part-time pastor who will help increase membership and bring back this much needed asset, more young people within our church family.
3. **Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry:** I was raised in this church, and I have wonderful memories of the people and events associated with it. I was blessed to be a part of organizing a Variety Show fund-raiser in 2018 and 2019. This was a well-attended event and raised funds to send kids to Placerville Camp. During the Covid-19 pandemic when our church was closed, pastor Jodi Olson, my husband Steve, and myself, kept the church going every Sunday with on-line church services. Steve was instrumental in bringing live-streaming technology to our church and continues to use his talents and abilities to provide this service every Sunday via our church Facebook page. My husband and I are currently on the pastoral search committee.
4. **Other thoughts to share:** I have always loved this church and church family. My mom, Lois Halley was the church organist for over 70 years. I have attended as an adult, with my husband Steve for the past 20 years and we both joined First Congregational Church of Keystone in 2022. Following in my mother's footsteps, I am currently the music director, and I am also responsible for completing and printing out the weekly church bulletin. My prayer is for our church to hire a pastor who will primarily bring salvation to the lost through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and help our membership to increase and to bring youth back into our congregation. Through these efforts, I pray that the legacy of our church will continue for many years to come.

Submitted in Christian love,  
Judy Dalton