

Southwest Conference United Church of Christ Profile



Greetings from the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ!

The Southwest Conference encompasses a vast expanse of geography that includes Arizona, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. We are known as a large geography/small membership Conference, which means a lot of travel to be together as Church.

Small membership does not mean small goals or small work! Moved by the Spirit and our passion for a Just World for All, our work

together is forward-looking, expansive, and full of hope. Southwest Conference staff collaborate with the Executive Board and Standing Committees toward a goal of equipping Leaders from all corners of the Southwest Conference to do excellent ministry.

We have done some very good work revising Church 2.0 models of ministry while offering an inclusive theology and sense of radical community. We are in conversation about future ministry models for churches, camp, and life-span spiritual formation.

Standing committees are accessible, service-oriented, and strive for transparency and information sharing. Standing Committees wrestle with all of the 'isms' of our society: moving to require anti-racism training for authorized ministers, looking at how to address sexism, and responding to the General Synod resolution implementing diversity training for clergy as a condition of standing.

The most recent several years in the Southwest Conference have seen many changes, precipitating the need for strategic planning and visioning our future. The Associate Conference Minister will have an opportunity to contribute early and substantially to that process.

We are searching for an Associate Conference Minister who is driven by a passion for all that the Church can be while caring deeply for her people and those of our communities across the Southwest Conference.

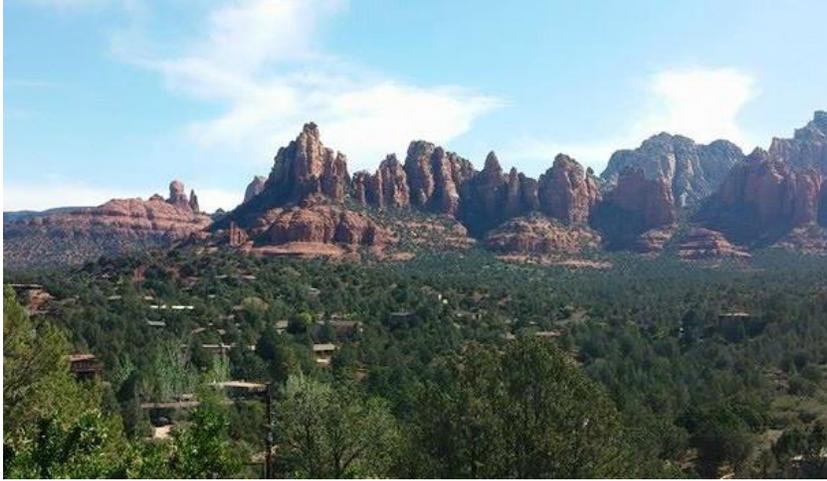
Visit the website at www.uccswc.org for so much more information than we are able to present here. Your application letter and ministerial profile should be submitted to our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Bill Lyons, by March 1, 2018.

Shalom,

Rev Liana Rowe
Conference Moderator



About the Southwest Conference



The Southwest Conference covers a stunning region of the United States. It is punctuated with breathtaking geography and rich social diversity. Within the region are multiple ecosystems from forested mountains, plateaus, grasslands and a wide variety of deserts. We have more water than you imagine, but it is a precious resource.

As a conference, we have one of the largest geographic footprints yet few churches. Of our 48 local churches, 21 are in Central Arizona; 10 in Southern Arizona, 4 in Northern Arizona; 8 in Northern New Mexico; 5 in Southern New Mexico/El Paso. The Southwest Conference also spans 567 miles of Borderlands with Mexico which has its own unique culture and struggles. Open space and long drives through awe-inspiring landscapes are a pleasure, but also a requirement for the Associate Conference Minister.

Our communities are culturally rich. Native Americans, Latinos/as and people of European descent, African Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders all share the Southwest, sometimes and in some places with great mutual appreciation, and at other times and places with great intolerance. That places the Southwest Conference in a distinctive position to help build a more inclusive and diverse church as we live into the UCC's tradition of social justice.



Our History

Arizona and New Mexico had long been home to Native Americans when Spanish settlers arrived in the 17th and 18th centuries as part of New Spain. Later, the United States took the region in the settlement of the U.S.-Mexican War near the middle of the 19th century, bringing settlers of other European and African American descent. Asians, particularly Chinese and Japanese, were early settlers in Arizona too. Congregational missionaries arrived in the Southwest in the 1890s to train leaders to work with the existing Native and Spanish-speaking populations. First Congregational Church (Prescott, AZ) and First Congregational Church in Albuquerque opened within one week of each other in 1880.



The Southwest Conference was part of the Southern California Conference until 1965. As we explained to General Synod in 1965 “Since we will be experimental, nothing we do will be considered wrong except if it doesn’t work; and if it doesn’t work, we’ll stop it.” We learn from our challenges. Our gift to the UCC is experimentation. That was true then and now.

The Southwest Conference consistently has focused on supporting local churches and developing new ones. In recent years, the Conference has offered financial and other support to revitalizing older churches and birthing new ones. In early 2017 fifteen listening sessions were held across the Southwest Conference to hear and analyze the strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats. What we heard is shaping the conference as we move forward and moving us into a new phase of strategic planning.

Our Churches

The Southwest Conference has 48 congregations, including two churches in formation and one new church start. Our 6,385 members live in Arizona, New Mexico, and El Paso. We have urban, suburban, and small-town congregations. Seven of our churches are ethnic congregations (2 Samoan, 3 Marshallese, 2 Latinx); the remainder are overwhelmingly white. Half of our churches have fewer than 100 members. Most were formed after the UCC merger and strongly identify with the UCC. In 2017 the congregations most clearly articulating strong UCC identity to their communities enjoyed significant growth.



The Southwest Conference is officially Open and Affirming, as are 31 of our churches, including two in retirement communities. One retirement-community congregation is currently engaged in an ONA process. At 64%, the SWC has one of the highest percentage of ONA churches. The conference also is officially immigrant-welcoming and a sanctuary conference as are several of our congregations.

The SWC office enjoys strong relationships with our congregations. We are visible and active in the lives of our churches and make it our mission to equip our congregations and clergy for their best possible ministry.

While we number among the smaller UCC conferences, our churches are creative, engaged, exhibit the best of UCC polity, worship in diverse ways, represent the theological and political spectrum in their members, and are committed to incarnating “Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”



Our Mission



SWC's mission statement reads, "Extravagantly welcoming and affirming followers of Christ called to embody God's unconditional justice and love." We live into our mission by allying ourselves with marginalized peoples, speaking truth to power, working collaboratively with ecumenical and interfaith partners whose values and goals align with our own, and by doing our best to overcome systemic racism, sexism, and privilege within our own structures.

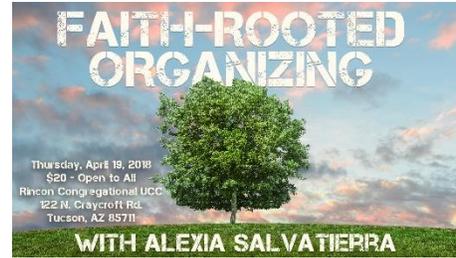


In 2016 SWC hosted UCCers from around the country for the first School of the America's Watch 'Border Convergence' as a co-sponsor of that event. Our Conference is deeply involved immigration and border justice issues, and in providing sanctuary or hospitality to ones facing deportation despite being denied full due process under the law.

In 2017 the SWC became a sanctuary conference. Many churches participate in a variety of immigrant-welcoming or border-related activities, providing food, water, and shelter to ones in need. Some churches have formally become "immigrant welcoming," and/or 'sanctuary' congregations, are in the process of doing so, or are supporting sister churches in these efforts.



The Conference office's functional mission is equipping our congregations and clergy for their best possible ministry. We accomplish this through support during search and call, clergy training opportunities, cost-sharing for Member-in-Discernment education, and a variety of other programs. In 2018 the SWC will host a children and youth faith formation summit, faith-rooted organizing training at our annual meeting, a local church leadership development event geared to best practices, and a conference-wide retreat focused on the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers.



We support new churches through funding, training, and facilitating partnerships with covenanted churches. And we are launching new efforts to support our revitalization congregations. We hope to attract bi-vocational and bi-lingual authorized ministers to our churches and to consider new church development in the SWC.

Our Facility



The Conference office moved from standard corporate offices to a mission-oriented venue in an urban neighborhood several years ago. We provide a home to one of our churches in formation, a fluctuating number of our Samoan and/or Marshallese congregations, and have incubated several new church starts, not all of whom were UCC. SWC rents space to the Regional Office of the Disciples of Christ and to a wide array of community organizations. A full, professional kitchen, two large meeting rooms, and shower facilities make possible ministry to homeless ones, and to asylum-seekers newly released from ICE detention.

While our main office is in Phoenix, about half of our churches are not. The theater-size movie screen mean zoom meetings are larger-than-life, literally! It also means our conference minister and our acting associate conference minister are often on the road.

A financial audit challenged us to think about the need for such a large building given our small staff. In our upcoming strategic planning conversations, we will be weighing the costs and benefits of owning a building, deploying our staff, and other considerations God has yet to show us.

Our Governance



The Southwest Conference has voted in the past several years at its Annual Meetings to restructure its governance. The goal was to maximize input of all local churches and create flexibility for day-to-day governance. Our Conference Minister fully participates in all Boards, Committees and Teams. This new structure has worked well for us.

Mission and Church Vitality Committee (MCVC) is comprised of a representative from every church in the Conference, the officers of the Conference, and any SWC representative serving the National structure of the Church and meets at least twice a year.

MCVC has the responsibility to:

- ✓ celebrate what's working in our congregations;
- ✓ encourage one another to go beyond our comfort zones;
- ✓ support one another in our advocacy;
- ✓ listen to and appreciating our differing perspectives;
- ✓ discover new ways to address our common and differing challenges; and
- ✓ advise the Executive Board regarding the mission of the Conference.
- ✓ undertake an annual evaluation to discern both whether that mission is in keeping with the call of the Holy Spirit in our time, and whether that mission maintains our relevance as an agent of transformation.
- ✓ ensure that every available resource, all covenant partnerships, and all entities created by the Conference are being utilized to enhance, ensure, and enable the mission of the Conference.





Executive Board (EB) manages the business of the Conference. It is comprised of four officers and five at large members. It is a separate and independent body from the Mission & Church Vitality Committee (MCVC) and not a subsidiary body of the MCVC, though it takes strong direction from them to ensure that the assets they manage are utilized for our shared mission and long-range goals. EB meets at least six times a year; its Primary Purpose is to resource the Mission of the Conference and to manage the business of the Conference.



Committees and Ministry Teams: The Conference has only a few standing committees: Committees on Church and Ministry (one for churches and one for pastors), Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, and Endowment Fund Management Committee. We have many active ministry teams including Youth and Outdoor Ministry, Justice and Witness Ministry, to name a few.

Officers and Staff: The Annual Meeting of the Conference elects a moderator, moderator-elect, treasurer and secretary, all of whom serve as officers. The Conference has two part-time and two full time dedicated staff, in addition to the Conference Minister who serves as the conference's chief executive officer.



Associations: The Southwest Conference does not have any formal Associations, but we are deliberate in recognizing our geographical regions. The Conference acts in the role of an Association.

Clergy: Authorized ministers in the SWC are actively involved in our standing committees and gather annually for a retreat in Tucson. A zoom call monthly with our Conference Minister invites clergy feedback on conference programs and life. Several clergy peer groups meet monthly.



Our Finances

The Southwest Conference is blessed with more than \$4.5 million dollars in total investments, and fixed assets worth half a million dollars. A large part of this reserve was provided by the generosity of South Mountain Community Church and First Congregational Church of Tempe UCC, two congregations that closed in 2016-2017 respectively. Some of these assets are restricted. In the coming year we plan to shift to donor-center philanthropy best practices and begin a friends-of-the-conference campaign. The Eleven Year Report and our narrative budget are included to give you an operational picture of the Southwest Conference.

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2006	9737	4964	1859	65	143	435	381	382	-120
2007	9773	4689	1976	59	116	310	359	661	-535
2008	9297	4419	1999	45	180	376	321	756	-476
2009	9019	4462	2376	65	153	342	318	563	-321
2010	8808	4441	1962	44	218	306	385	544	-361
2011	8019	4192	1763	37	92	349	349	918	-789
2012	7592	4074	1842	21	179	304	338	593	-427
2013	7541	3901	2146	56	86	397	285	330	-76
2014	7087	3724	1938	16	89	339	263	635	-454
2015	6747	3647	2557	33	51	382	320	486	-340
2016	6385	3604	2374	7	46	180	215	364	-346

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	SPECIAL SUPPORT	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2006	\$8,455,676	\$306,344	\$373,083	\$604,184	\$977,267	\$357,334	\$1,334,601	4.41	\$10,096,621	\$7,721,805
2007	\$8,987,815	\$239,248	\$396,459	\$249,585	\$646,044	\$466,064	\$1,112,108	4.41	\$10,339,171	\$8,270,307
2008	\$9,298,947	\$242,853	\$378,192	\$235,892	\$614,084	\$398,475	\$1,012,559	4.07	\$10,554,359	\$7,384,268
2009	\$9,818,929	\$282,395	\$346,288	\$212,213	\$558,501	\$427,477	\$985,978	3.53	\$11,087,302	\$7,560,567
2010	\$8,850,766	\$288,268	\$310,693	\$259,070	\$569,763	\$306,932	\$876,695	3.51	\$10,015,729	\$6,575,920
2011	\$8,757,901	\$426,126	\$282,392	\$237,975	\$520,367	\$426,582	\$946,949	3.22	\$10,130,976	\$6,929,982
2012	\$8,731,252	\$1,475,791	\$260,665	\$220,693	\$481,358	\$332,253	\$813,611	2.99	\$11,020,654	\$6,719,927
2013	\$9,144,378	\$501,047	\$265,985	\$1,253,170	\$1,519,155	\$578,560	\$2,097,715	2.91	\$11,743,140	\$7,410,773
2014	\$9,453,256	\$978,947	\$265,580	\$264,334	\$529,914	\$518,456	\$1,048,370	2.81	\$11,480,573	\$6,870,433
2015	\$9,063,949	\$1,784,906	\$260,519	\$194,189	\$454,708	\$693,494	\$1,148,202	2.87	\$11,997,057	\$6,846,384
2016	\$8,988,003	\$245,920	\$263,452	\$276,855	\$540,307	\$326,939	\$867,246	2.93	\$10,101,169	\$4,897,844

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2011-2016	-20.38	-14.03	34.66	-51.26	-54.30	2.63	3.83	-0.29
2006-2016	-34.43	-27.40	27.70	-63.76	-24.12	6.30	-44.71	0.05

We, the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, are extravagantly welcoming and affirming followers of Christ called to embody God's unconditional justice and love.

Contact Us

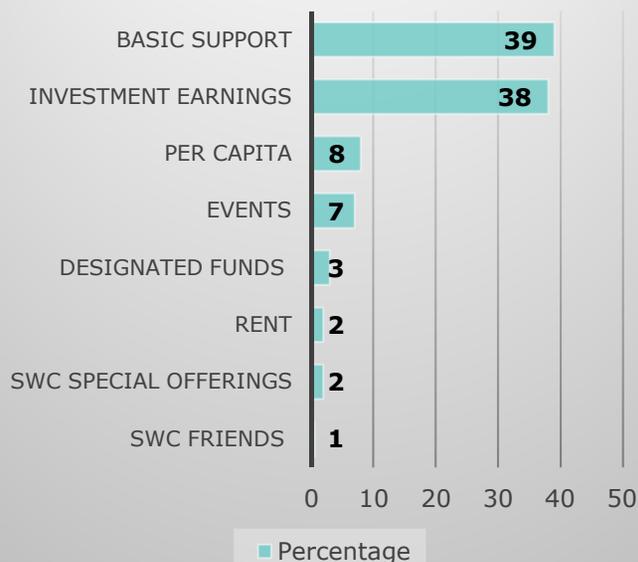
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FY 2017-18 Revenue \$613,521



REVENUE NOTES

Investment Earnings are significantly increased because of legacy gifts received from First Congregational Church of Tempe (UCC) and South Mountain Community Church. We gratefully acknowledge their generosity. Revenue without these gifts would be \$403,000 – the same as the 2016 final budget.

Not all church pledges had been received at the time of this printing.

Called Together

Mission Spending Plan
Southwest Conference UCC





Equipping Covenant

\$126,770.82

Events & Gatherings
Annual Meeting
Philanthropy & Stewardship
Communications Networks
Technology
Personnel Committee
Executive Board

Supporting Leaders

\$136,315.54

Committee on Church & Ministry A
Education/Training
Consulting & Support
Retreats
Staff visits

Nurturing Local Churches

\$124,490.56

Search & Call
Mission & Church Vitality Committee
Committee on Church & Ministry B
Consulting & Support
Staff & Committee visits

Next Generation Church

\$76,725

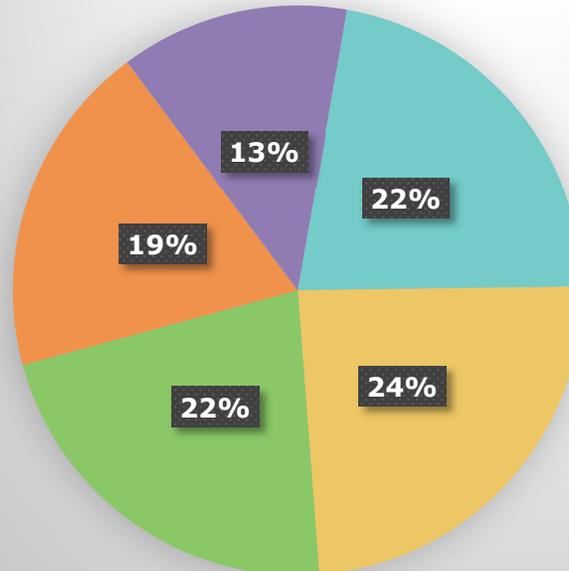
Youth & Outdoor Ministry
National Youth Event
Western Region Youth Event
New Church Starts
Camp
Campus Ministries
Nominating Committee

Uniting for Mission

\$112,131.26

National Setting Basic Support
General Synod
Arizona Faith Network
New Mexico Conference of Churches
Council of Conference Ministers
Social Actions/Justice & Witness
Staff visits

Total Operating Budget: \$576,433.42



- Equipping Covenant
- Supporting Leaders
- Nurturing Churches
- Uniting for Mission
- Next Generation Church

From the Conference Minister

Have I been praying for *you*? Let's dream together for a moment. Opportunities for creative and innovative ministry abound in the Southwest Conference. Are you being called to turn opportunities like ours into realities?

Outdoor Ministry for children, youth and young adults has long been a passion for the Southwest Conference. While we celebrate everything that camp has meant to us in past decades, we wonder if a new, as yet unimagined paradigm for youth and outdoor ministry awaits the future church. Could it be interfaith peace camps in the heart of our cities? Could it be intergenerational mission camps in rural and underserved communities? How is your imagination energizing you for youth and outdoor ministry? Is the place to test your dreams the Southwest Conference?



We envision progressive Christian ministry on the campuses of Arizona State University, New Mexico State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of New Mexico. There are part-time UCC church opportunities in those cities. Is God calling you to bi-vocational ministry that pairs local church and university ministry?



Three of our progressive congregations need bi-lingual, bi-vocational pastors. Two of them are in borderlands towns. One of them is in a university town. Is God calling you to share the progressive message of Jesus with Spanish-as-a-first-language communities?

Community organizing is presenting itself as a critical ministry tool in the Church of the twenty-first century. The whole of the Southwest Conference will take Faith Rooted Organizing training in April 2018 in advance of our annual meeting. Are you a community organizer at heart who is looking for a ministry?

If you have a skill set that could be best used turning one of these dreams into reality, are passionate about the Gospel, and have a heart for youth, young adults, university students, and marginalized families, I've been praying for you to join our ministries. I have been praying for bi-lingual and bi-vocational people of faith and authorized or authorizable ministers to join us as we live into our mission as extravagantly welcoming and affirming followers of Christ called to embody God's unconditional justice and love. May God bless you as you reply to our invitation for discernment.

Position Description for Associate Conference Minister, Southwest Conference UCC

Overview:

The responsibilities of the Associate Conference Minister for the Southwest Conference UCC include: staff and administrative support for COCAM A; provide administration of and support for certain programs in the life of the Conference, including Youth & Outdoor Ministry. The Associate Conference Minister reports to the Conference Minister.

Essential Functions:

- Provide Staff support, and Administrative support, for COCAM A (Committee on Ministry).
- Develop, Schedule, Oversee and Monitor Boundary and Diversity Trainings for Active and Retired Clergy to ensure compliance with the requirements established by COCAM A, as well as trainings for Lay Persons, as appropriate.
- Create, coordinate and resource new models of spiritual formation for implementation throughout the conference including:
 - Children, youth, young adults, adults, seniors
 - Explore and develop transformational experiences
 - Administrate the conference camping program
- Serve as a Profile Coach during search processes, and as a Local Church Discernment Committee trainer as congregations work with Members in Discernment.
- Cultivate relationships with and manage transfers of standing for authorized UCC ministers during search and retirement transitions, as well non-UCC clergy seeking ministry positions within the Southwest Conference.
- Meet regularly with the Conference Minister; and also with Conference staff, as needed
- Attend standing committee meetings as assigned
- Willingness and ability to travel, sometimes extensively
- Attend and participate in the UCC Network for Associate Conference Ministers.
- Assist the Conference Minister on other tasks as needed

Education/Experience Requirements:

The ACM will be an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ in good standing or able to obtain authorized ministerial standing.

Competencies:

The ACM will be a person of deep and evident Christian faith, with the following strengths

- Scripturally grounded and theologically articulate;
- Exhibits understanding of and passion for the local church;
- Knowledgeable about the diverse settings and the operations of the United Church of Christ;
- Able and will commit to function as a staff associate and team member;
- Effective communicator
- Demonstrate a strong pastoral, non-anxious presence

Skills & Abilities:

- Shows self-awareness, integrity, and respect in relationships
- Translate ideas (their own or of others) into realized programs
- Exhibits the courage to face challenge and change
- Is approachable and accessible
- Maintains appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- Conflict Resolution
- Team Building
- Problem Solving
- Organization and Administration
- Technologically competent and proficient (Microsoft Office, Basecamp, Data Hub, etc.) and willingness to learn others as they emerge
- A good sense of marketing, fundraising, and evaluation
- Bilingual (Spanish) strongly desired
- Flexibility and adaptability to the changing needs of the position based on the changing needs of the conference

Administrative Details of the Associate Conference Minister position:

- Location: Phoenix, AZ
- Status: Full-time; Exempt
- Benefits:
 - Salary + Housing Allowance,
 - Pension contribution by employer;
 - Employer-paid health insurance;
 - Vacation and Sick Leave

Call Process



According to the Southwest Conference Bylaws, professional associates of the Conference Minister shall be called and elected by the Executive Board upon nomination by a subcommittee in consultation with the Conference Minister. Such Associates serving under specific job descriptions will be supervised by the Conference Minister and accountable to the Conference Minister and the EB. Professional Associates shall serve for an indefinite period of time which shall end with two months' notice only by either the Professional Associate submitting a letter of resignation to the Executive Board, or by the recommendation and approval of the Conference Minister and the Executive Board.