

SAINT STEPHENS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

903 E 2nd Street
Merrill, Wisconsin 54452

715.536.7322
www.ststephensucc.net

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU'RE WELCOME HERE!

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Council and Church and Ministry Committee are working together on preparing the profile so that when the Search Committee is named that group will have a head start on the work involved in finishing the profile.

We cannot overstate the importance of the Church Profile. It is the first introduction candidates have to St. Stephens UCC. Pastors and Associate Pastors spend a great deal of time in self-assessment. They look for a church that will be the best use of the gifts they have discerned are their strong points and will nurture those gifts they seek to grow and refine in their ministry. The best Church Profiles are about vision, that elusive hope we have for the future of St. Stephens UCC.

The UCC Church Profile focusses on 3 key questions:

Who we are—what is our history, how has that history shaped us, how has our community and our relationship with the wider church shaped us, and what missions give us life?

Who is our neighbor—how do we interact with the community, what is our relationship with other churches, what local ministries do we support and what is our sense of the wider world, that is, how wide a circle do we draw to define our “neighbor”?

Who is God calling us to be—what hopes do we have for the future of the congregation, what skills do we want to develop within our congregation, what educational opportunities do we feel we need, how do we want to grow in mission, fellowship and outreach?

The structured dialogue groups—think facilitated discussion groups—are designed to help us give honest answers to those questions so that a potential candidate can assess if St. Stephens is a place where they can flourish and grow in their ministry.

Once the profile is completed and interviews begin, the process must become more confidential. Candidates currently serving a church will not risk letting their wider congregation know of their desire to move to another setting. Confidentiality is expected. Secrecy, however, surrounding the process is not necessary. We will share with you the process—the number of profiles we receive, the disappointments, the excitement over a candidate, the sense of having “missed something” when a good candidate chooses to serve another church, and finally the candidate that will be presented to the congregation.

We need your help!

Rev. Michael Southcombe, Senior Pastor

mike@ststephensucc.net

Please sign-up for one of the Dialogue Groups:

March 4 at 4pm or 7pm.
March 11 at 4pm or 7pm.
March 20 at 1pm, 3pm or 5pm.

Sign up through the website:
www.ststephensucc.net or by calling
the church office.

Pastor Mike will facilitate these discussions. These opportunities will be of the greatest help to the subcommittee working on the Church Profile. Pastor Mike will be able to ask follow-up questions, help you put words to the ideas that you are finding difficult to express, connect your ideas to others that have been shared and search for all the possibilities for filling this pastoral staff position. A member of the Profile Sub-committee will be present as a recorder.

If you cannot attend one of these sessions, we invite you to submit your answers to the following questions in writing, either by email to church@ststephensucc.net, by hard copy mail to the church or drop it off in the office. Please note that any submission must be signed. Unsigned or unattributed responses will be discarded. Written or emailed responses are due by March 22.

The questions are:

1. What are your greatest joys in being a member of St. Stephens UCC?
2. How is your faith expressed in the worship, missions and outreach of St. Stephens UCC?
3. What opportunities or needs do you see in the next 5 years?
4. Who is God calling us to be in Merrill, in the Northwest Association and in the wider community?
5. Based on your answer to Question 4, what responsibilities do you envision for the person called to the new position?

The office staff is working on compiling the information needed for the “numbers” part of the profile. The Profile Sub-committee will use the information gathered in these dialogue groups and in the answers submitted to work on putting the rest of the profile together. In April, we will be asking the congregation to nominate the “at large” members of the actual Search Committee and our Association Minister will then set up a training session with that committee. Once the Association approves the profile and the Search Committee is trained, they will start receiving Ministerial Profiles to prayerfully consider. We hope to be at that point by the middle of May.

Please sign up for one of the dialogue groups!

Yours in Christ,

The Profile Sub-committee

Cheryl Buck

Bill McIntyre

Paula McIntyre

Jennifer Porath

Pastor Mike