



Name of Church

Saint John's UCC

Address

1934 Bridge St NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Conference:

Michigan

Association:

Grand West

Title

Pastor

Start Date

Apr 1, 2025

Description

St. John's UCC in Grand Rapids, Michigan is looking for their next pastor.

Church Contact Information

pastorsearch@stjohnsuccgr.org (Primary Email Address)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://stjohnsuccgr.org>

Type: Professional

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsuccgr>

Type: Professional

<https://www.youtube.com/@stjohnsuccgr>

Type: Professional

<https://www.instagram.com/stjohnsuccgrandrapids/>

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

None

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Rev. Dr. Lawrence T. Richardson

Title:

Associate Conference Minister of Church Vitality and Transitions

Phone:

1-517-295-3637

Email:

lawrence@michucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

St. John's is a resilient, justice-minded congregation known for our radical hospitality—a place where all are truly welcome. We offer spiritual refuge to those who have been hurt or disillusioned by church, and are committed to thoughtful worship, shared leadership, and courageous inclusion. Our community is grounded in compassion, theological curiosity, and a deep sense of belonging. We are small but mighty—unafraid to ask hard questions, stand for justice, and offer care that is honest and bold.

We are in a season of discernment and slow, intentional growth. We envision a future where more families and individuals find a spiritual home with us; where our congregation is financially stable, spiritually vibrant, and deeply connected to the needs of our wider community. We hope to continue expanding our lay-led model of ministry, deepen spiritual formation, and strengthen systems of care and connection. Recent years have tested and transformed us—through pastoral transitions, the pandemic, and financial hardship—but we have emerged stronger, more transparent, and more grounded in our values.

We are seeking a pastor to love us as we listen for God's voice and shape our next chapter. This leader will walk with us—not above us—bringing spiritual depth, emotional intelligence, and a collaborative spirit. This person will embrace our identity as a justice-driven, radically welcoming church and help us grow in faith, presence, and purpose. Together, we hope to become a sanctuary of healing and hope—a community where authenticity and courageous love guide us forward.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

As the second largest city in Michigan with an array of industries for employment and a diverse population, Grand Rapids offers multiple cultural opportunities to enjoy while still maintaining a smaller town, family-friendly feel: museums, theater, concerts, Art Prize, vocal and dance performances, as well as historic home tours.

Grand Rapids offers great work/life balance with its proximity to natural beauty: the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Blandford Nature Center, John Ball Zoo, the Grand River, a well developed system of parks and hiking/biking trails, Lake Michigan, fruit orchards, cider mills, state parks, and fishing sites.

Grand Rapids is known for its Medical Mile downtown- a center for excellent healthcare, acclaimed hospitals, the Van Andel Research Institute, and university level medical education.

Grand Rapids is a growing and evolving city that offers a unique balance of opportunity, community, and culture. With a cost of living that is lower than the national average, strong and diverse economy, and a commitment to the arts and public green spaces, it's easy to see why so many people choose to call it home. Grand Rapids has something for everyone. It's a city in bloom-welcoming, dynamic, and full of potential.

Current size of membership

99

Average in person attendance

87

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.**Video Hosting Platform**

On average, how many views are received per service?

24

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Pastor

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

1/2 Time (approximately 20-22 hours/week)

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines[🔗 Download compensation guidelines](#)**Scope of Work**

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

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

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

[🔗 Download scope of Work](#)

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

First:

Collaborative Leadership We seek a pastor who embraces and strengthens our lay-led, team-based model of ministry. This leader should partner with us in a spirit of mutual respect, not top-down direction, and bring wisdom from past experiences to help guide and support without overriding our unique identity. The pastor will help nurture shared leadership by empowering others, offering structure where needed, and helping us build on the foundation we've created without having to start from scratch. A collaborative pastor will walk with us, listen deeply, and help us live out our shared calling with clarity and purpose.

Second:

Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence We value a pastor who leads with compassion, humility, and self-awareness. This person should be grounded in their own spiritual life and be able to meet people with warmth and grace wherever they are on their journey. Emotional intelligence will be essential in creating

safe space for vulnerability, healing, and growth. We seek someone who can recognize the gifts in others, delegate thoughtfully, and help foster a community rooted in empathy, authenticity, and shared trust.

Third:

Strong Communicator and Preacher Preaching is a vital part of our spiritual life. We seek a pastor who offers thoughtful, engaging sermons that challenge and inspire. This person should have a solid foundation in scripture, theology, and church history, with the ability to carry that knowledge lightly and make it accessible to a theologically curious congregation—including several ordained ministers and many lifelong learners. Strong communication across all aspects of ministry is important, from worship to care to leadership, helping foster clarity, connection, and community.

Compensation and Support

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

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	27500	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 27500			
Pension/Annuity	3850	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	76	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	7673	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	413	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Not included in the above worksheet are two line items that are included in our budget:

- Business Expenses \$500.00
- Auto Reimbursement / Mileage \$6,084.00

The total compensation package (salary + benefits) would range between \$42,000 and \$46,000. The variable would be the cost of the benefits needed. The salary is budgeted for \$27,500 including the housing allowance. The pastor can determine what portion is allocated to housing.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

St. John's UCC does not provide a parsonage; instead, the pastor is expected to live in the Greater Grand Rapids area. The pastor may designate a portion of their compensation as a housing allowance, as appropriate. While there is no formal requirement regarding distance or commute time, we have found that pastors who reside within 10–15 minutes of the church often experience greater ease in fulfilling pastoral responsibilities, especially when it comes to emergency care and attending events. Ultimately, the specific location within the region is left to the pastor's discretion.

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary

Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

n/a

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

We have carefully evaluated our church's needs to ensure this part-time role is sustainable and compatible with bi-vocational employment. Our goal is to call a pastor who finds the position life-giving and appropriately aligned with the time and compensation offered.

Strong lay leadership enables shared responsibilities. We seek a pastor to walk alongside us in the vision we've already mapped out, not to overhaul or pioneer new efforts. This role focuses on meaningful, high-impact areas and includes one Sunday off from preaching each month for rest or other priorities.

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

No response

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

We envision a minister who will partner with us to deepen our identity as an inclusive, justice-oriented, and spiritually grounded congregation. At the heart of our ministry goals is a deep desire to **increase engagement, welcome more families and individuals, and cultivate a vibrant, multigenerational community** where every voice is valued. We want St. John's to be a spiritual home where people at all stages of life and faith feel they belong, can grow, and are invited into meaningful connection and leadership.

To get there, we hope to collaborate with a pastor who can help us listen to and engage with the needs, hopes, and spiritual questions of emerging generations—while honoring the wisdom and presence of long-standing members. We are looking for creative, accessible ways to nurture belonging, provide relevant spiritual formation, and shape worship that reflects the diversity of age, background, and experience within our community.

Strengthening our **lay-led model of ministry** is also a central goal. Our next minister will walk with us in deepening shared leadership—empowering members, helping us build supportive systems, and offering guidance as we balance collaboration with clarity and care.

We are also working toward **financial and organizational stability**, ensuring our resources support long-term sustainability and mission impact. And we remain deeply committed to **community engagement**, especially through justice-centered outreach and partnerships that help us live out our call to be a bold, healing presence in the world.

In all this, we seek a minister who will journey with us—grounded, compassionate, and collaborative—as we grow into the church God is calling us to become.

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

St. John's has long understood church to be more than a building—it's a presence, a witness, and a force for healing and justice in the wider world. We are deeply committed to social justice and community outreach, and we believe our faith is most fully lived out when it engages the needs, struggles, and hopes of our neighbors. Our long-standing partnerships with organizations like **UCOM and Feeding America**, our **Veteran Friendly** designation, and our efforts to share our space for community use reflect our desire to be not only a spiritual home but also a hub of care and compassion.

We are seeking a minister who will help us **deepen and expand this outward-facing mission**. This leader will model community engagement in their own life and ministry, encouraging us to build meaningful relationships across boundaries of race, class, age, and belief. They will walk alongside us as we discern how best to respond to the challenges of our time—including economic inequality, political division, and spiritual disconnection—with humility, courage, and love.

We envision a pastor who helps us ask bold questions: Where is the Spirit calling us to show up? Whose voices do we need to hear? How can we offer sanctuary and solidarity in ways that matter? They will help us connect our **inclusive theology** to tangible acts of service, advocacy, and welcome. We want to grow not just in charitable action but in **transformative engagement** that reflects the radical love of Christ.

This minister will also help us engage new generations by demonstrating that church can be a space of relevance, integrity, and impact—a place where justice and joy meet. In partnership, we hope to build a community that is known beyond its walls for showing up with open hearts, thoughtful faith, and a willingness to work for the common good.

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

While English is our primary language, we seek a minister with strong cultural awareness, inclusive language practices, and openness to diverse identities and experiences. As an Open and Affirming, Veteran Friendly congregation, we value a leader who can speak authentically across generational, political, and social divides. This capacity is essential to our call to be a healing, hospitable, and justice-minded spiritual home for all.

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

these areas.

- 1. Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice**We seek a minister who is grounded in a deep and authentic spiritual life—someone who leads from the inside out. In a community that values sincerity, reflection, and meaningful connection with God, we long for a pastor who nurtures their own soul and invites others into practices that deepen faith, resilience, and spiritual growth. This spiritual grounding will be essential for guiding us through growth, healing, and change.
- 2. Caring for All Creation**Our next minister should embody justice, compassion, and care for the whole of creation—including individuals, systems, and the earth itself. We need a pastor who understands community ministry as both a spiritual and civic calling: someone who can help us engage the world around us with humility and courage, especially in a time of division and disconnection. Awareness of mental health and the importance of holistic well-being will be critical to fostering healing and wholeness in our church and neighborhood.
- 3. Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets**We value emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and healthy boundaries in leadership. Our next minister will be someone who listens deeply, communicates clearly, and relates with authenticity and grace. As a lay-led congregation, we need a partner who honors shared leadership, fosters trust, and helps cultivate the gifts of others with patience and clarity.
- 4. Building Transformational Leadership Skills**We are a church in transition—spiritually strong, but evolving. We need a minister who can lead through change with steadiness and hope, helping us imagine what it means to be a small but bold presence in today's world. This leader will support us in shaping a sustainable future, deepening our impact, and embracing transformation rooted in faith and love.

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling St. John's to continue becoming a spiritually grounded, radically welcoming, and justice-driven congregation—a sanctuary for those who have been hurt, excluded, or disillusioned by church. We are called to be a bold witness for inclusion, compassion, and community care, not just within our walls, but in a world that is hungry for authenticity and hope.

We believe God is inviting us to grow—not only in numbers, but in depth, trust, and courage. We envision a church that more fully reflects the diversity of God's beloved community, particularly through increased engagement with families and those seeking meaningful spiritual connection. We are called to be a multigenerational congregation where every person, no matter their background, age, or identity, is seen, valued, and nurtured.

We sense the Spirit leading us to deepen our shared ministry—strengthening our lay-led model with care, creativity, and collaboration. As we grow, we seek to remain rooted in thoughtful worship, inclusive theology, and practices that sustain both personal and collective transformation.

God is also calling us outward—to be a healing and courageous presence in our local community. Through continued partnerships, justice advocacy, and radical hospitality, we are becoming a church that shows up with open hearts and steady faith, especially in the face of polarization, pain, and uncertainty.

Though small in size, we feel called to be mighty in presence: grounded, generous, and ready to respond with love. With God's help, we hope to embody the kind of church we ourselves once longed to find—and now strive to become for others.

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

We feel called to respond creatively and compassionately to the evolving needs of our members and neighbors. Over the past year, we've engaged in several intentional experiments that reflect this calling. First, we've deepened our commitment to **lay-led ministry**, empowering more voices in worship, care, and decision-making. This shift has strengthened our sense of shared leadership and revealed the spiritual gifts within our congregation. Second, we recently became a **Veteran Friendly Congregation**—a new designation that reflects our desire to be a welcoming and spiritually supportive community for veterans and their families. Our VMFC team is actively discerning how we can live into this commitment with purpose and authenticity.

We've also leaned into **community connection** through broader use of our building, visible outreach efforts, and neighborhood partnerships like UCOM's food ministry and our Little Free Library. These actions help us extend our ministry beyond Sunday worship and into the daily lives of those around us.

As we look to the future, we recognize the need for a more coordinated and intentional approach to sustainability and mission. While we do not yet have a formal multi-year strategic plan, we are beginning to **envision how best to evaluate and align all areas of church life**—including staffing, worship, formation, outreach, and financial health—to support our long-term vitality. This process will require deep listening, honest assessment, and faithful imagination.

We are also identifying areas where greater alignment is needed between what we offer and what our community longs for. These insights present both a challenge and an opportunity to build a strong foundation for responsive and impactful ministry.

Congregation Reflections

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

Mission: It is the mission of this congregation to live God's presence, love our neighbors, and practice the values of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Vision: Seeking the fulfillment of the Realm of God already in our midst, St. John's UCC envisions a just and peaceful community.

Welcome: All are invited and welcomed to participate in the full life and ministry of St. John's whatever your race, age, sex, marital status, financial status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, or ability.

Identity: St. John's is a progressive *Christian community with deep roots and open arms*, striving to build *a just world for all* through *extravagant hospitality, authentic community, reverent worship, and passionate activism*.

Calling: We are an *open and affirming* congregation, welcoming people of all gender identities/expressions and sexual orientations into full life and leadership. We are called to be accessible to all, anti-racist, a reconciling presence, and caretakers of the earth.

During worship liturgy, God is described as both "God our Father" and "God our Mother".

The Holy Spirit is in our midst with the passion we feel in serving each other & our greater community.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

An extravagant welcome is one of St. John's most defining strengths and is the quality most often named by visitors. This spirit of hospitality reflects our deep commitment to inclusion and belonging. Another visible strength is the multigenerational makeup of our congregation, with individuals and families across all ages contributing to the life of the church.

As people grow more connected to St. John's, they discover a high degree of engagement and compassion among members. Our community is deeply caring—eager to listen, support one another, and share life together with authenticity and grace.

Less visible, but just as vital, are our congregation's resilience and self-reliance. In recent years, we've faced challenges that could have deeply fractured our community—including a major embezzlement by a council president, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unexpected departure of a settled pastor. Yet in each instance, our members responded with prayerful discernment, steady leadership, and hopeful resolve—emerging stronger, more unified, and more spiritually grounded than before.

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

One of our growing edges as a congregation has been strengthening internal communication and transparency—particularly in the aftermath of the embezzlement. In response, we've made intentional efforts to ensure that information is clear, accessible, and shared widely.

Minutes from leadership meetings are posted both in the Fellowship Hall and on our website. A monthly "Church Chat" led by a Council member provides space to review decisions, share updates, and answer questions. We publish a weekly newsletter available both online and in print, reviewed by team leaders to ensure accuracy. Announcements are also shared via pre-service slideshow, from the lectern when timely, and at our two annual business meetings.

Our website offers tools for communication: leaders can message the congregation, post to the calendar, update the outdoor sign, and schedule reminders. We maintain a public Facebook page, a private "Family" page for members, and an Instagram account. All indoor worship services are livestreamed via Facebook and YouTube.

We continue refining our systems to ensure members feel informed, engaged, and valued.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Our worship takes place in our 70 yr old building, where there is quite a degree of tradition to our church. However, the makeup of the congregation has changed dramatically over the last decade from a primarily mature adult group to a multigenerational gathering that celebrates all ages.

Liturgy and traditional hymns predominate in the services, but the heart of every service is the message. Timely, thought-provoking, relevant preaching that expresses the all-inclusive nature of God and the role of God's people in the current political, social, and ecological environment has been and will be our expectation. Our services have recently been led by a team of four ministers who preach in a variety of styles and voices. A recent baptism was a time of joy & unity.

The service in the sanctuary is followed by fellowship time, often thought of as the extension of the service. Members gather at tables in the Fellowship Hall to chat and enjoy refreshments. In fact, food plays a large part in our fellowship- a bread auction for our education program, a chili cook-off, a Mother's Day brunch, a spaghetti dinner by the children, an outdoor picnic for Father's Day, and a Heritage Month potluck.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Our Education Team, members of which are experienced teachers, have developed their own curriculum that is based on the Gospel readings from the common lectionary. Children from 3yrs old through 7th grade participate in Worship Centers that begin after the children's message. They share peace, sing, read a Bible lesson, discuss its meaning, and engage in an activity. The children put on an annual Christmas pageant.

During the summer, some members of the congregation provide the whole group of children with a lesson, usually about some aspect of the church. Topics have included the bell choir, the stained glass windows, the church organ, how to be an acolyte, greeter, or usher.

The Education Team also conducts a VBS program each summer. The team developed its own program which includes a light dinner, a short worshipful opening, story time, crafts, games, songs, and usually a mission project.

Confirmation age children each choose a mentor from the congregation to accompany them through their faith journey. Study of the church history and beliefs is coupled with visits to a synagogue & retreats. They've become ushers, liturgists, screen operators, VBS leaders & Worship Center helpers.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

St. John's organizes its ministry and mission through a series of collaborative leadership teams, each focused on a key area of congregational life: Caregiving, Education, Fellowship, Membership, Property, Stewardship, Worship, and our new VMFC (Veteran Friendly) Team. These teams typically meet monthly for 1-2 hours via Zoom and also connect informally during Sunday fellowship time. Team leaders meet monthly with the Moderator to coordinate efforts, share updates, and address cross-team needs. Our Church Council also meets monthly to support oversight, communication, and congregational alignment.

Decisions and updates are shared through team reports, worship announcements, and direct conversations. Much of our communication happens relationally—reflecting our culture of trust, openness, and shared responsibility.

In addition to team work, passionate individuals lead specific ministries like our monthly mobile food pantry and 'friends' book discussion group. This flexible, relational approach allows us to respond to needs with creativity, collaboration, and care.

When it comes to decision-making, 2 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

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

In March of 2020, the governor ordered a shutdown of all gatherings. We were able to begin broadcasting our church services the very next Sunday on our Facebook page. Soon after, we also broadcast on YouTube. Children's moments were recorded by various members and added to the service, as was music. Our Education Team put together on-line lessons for children, and even conducted VBS over Zoom. At Christmas we had a children's pageant compiled from short videos made by parents. Though we lost some members during the pandemic, we also gained several new members and our services are still widely viewed on-line.

Last summer, 2024, our settled pastor left abruptly for a full-time ministry position. Immediately, our Worship Team contacted the two ordained and two licensed ministers in our congregation, who willingly began filling the void. We felt that seeing familiar faces in the pulpit would be more comforting than having an unknown person lead our worship during this time of pain and confusion. Soon those four voices will be joined by two more. During this time of congregational leadership, our numbers have not declined, we still have full programming, and we frequently have visitors.

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

[📎 St. John's UCC Bylaws Grand Rapids MI.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

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

[📎 Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	99
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	30
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	129

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	50%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	20%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	30%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	20
12-17	7
18-24	5
25-34	10
35-44	25
45-54	12
55-64	12
65-74	21
75+	17

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	10%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	30%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	20%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	10%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	30%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	20%
COLLEGE:	50%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	5%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	25%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	54%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	44%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	2%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Our congregation includes a wide range of working adults across many professions, including teachers, healthcare workers, accountants, human resources specialists, marketing, retail employees, a veterinarian, small business owners, community service professionals, a travel agent, truck drivers, food sales representatives, and IT professionals.

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

The majority of our congregation is of European descent, primarily reflecting Western and Northern European heritage. While we are largely mono-racial, we are aware of this and continue to explore ways to become more welcoming and inclusive to people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. We recognize that true diversity is more than demographics—it's about creating a culture of belonging.

What diversity means in our context?

While our congregation is largely mono-cultural, we value and reflect diversity through a wide range of ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religious traditions. Two of our greatest strengths are the deep connection across generations and the full participation of our LGBTQ+ members. We are also an open and affirming church and strive to create a welcoming, inclusive space for all people. Diversity in our context means showing up for one another and continuing to grow into the kind of community that reflects the radical hospitality of Jesus.

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

No

Participation and Staffing



Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	12	Book Group (Lay Leader), Potluck Group (Lay Leader)
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Education Team
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	133	Worship Team
Church-wide Meals	91	Fellowship Team
Choirs and Music Groups	13	Worship Team/ Music Director, Education Team
Communion (served how often?)	75	Worship Team (served twice a month and all of Advent and Lent)
Community Meals	30	Lay Leader
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	7	Education Team
Drama or Dance Program	0	Worship Team (dramatic readings on occasion)
Funerals (number last year)	4	Pastor
Outdoor Worship	50	Worship Team (Usually Father's Day plus on a camp weekend)
Prayer or Meditation Groups	6	Have had midweek prayer service by Bill Newsom
Retreats	34	Camp weekend in July, Confirmation group has a retreat
Weddings (number last year)	1	Wedding Coordinator / Pastor / Music Director
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	5	Worship Team / Pastor / Music Director
Other	400	Mobile Food Pantry (Lay Leader)

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10am	87	Worship Team / Pastor / Music Director

Additional comments:

No response

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

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Barb Huitema	none	Local Church	Worship Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bill Newsom	none	Local Church	Worship Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeffrey Dick	none	Local Church	Worship Leader, Confirmation and some pastoral care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marcus Little	none	Local Church	Worship Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

During this time of pastoral transition, our retired and affiliated ministers are actively involved in supporting the life of the congregation. They regularly serve as pulpit supply and contribute to special projects such as confirmation and unique worship elements, including coordinating dramatic readings and other creative service offerings.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Administrative Assistant	Pastor	part	Co-Moderator	14 years
Music Director	Pastor	part	Co-Moderator	10 Years

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

The information reflects that we are a multi-generational congregation made up of people who are deeply committed to community and service. While we recognize there is room to grow—particularly in expanding our external programming and outreach—this also highlights a congregation that continues to show up, work together, and live out our faith as we are able.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	142077
Fundraising Events	1717
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	29055
Donation from a funeral service	800
Total	173649

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

168337

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget—list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

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

15

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

A flat dollar amount is put in the budget and individuals give voluntarily.

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

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

No response

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

We are in the midst of a 2025 capital campaign titled *Pave the Way for a Stronger Future!* to raise \$25,000 for resurfacing and repairing our church parking lot. This project will improve safety and accessibility for all who visit St. John's UCC. Work will begin once fundraising is complete. We are currently receiving individual contributions and have also raised over \$3,400 through a successful church-wide garage sale.

Pictures



Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2019	Organ Repair or New Organ	242000	242000	A new digital organ was purchased
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2025	Parking lot repairs	25000	0	Ongoing campaign
0		0	0	

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

The new organ greatly improved the sound of the music. It also provided for a wider range of music to perform. Music is a strong part of our worship service and it can be a deciding factor in attracting new members

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

430839

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

Funds are budgeted for the education and mission teams.

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

No response

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

No response

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

No response

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

No response

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

90904

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

The property and building located at 1934 Bridge St NW Grand Rapids MI 49504

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

None

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces

Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Handrails on all stairs
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

The worship space and all lower-level areas by use of the elevator (kitchen, office, library, classrooms, fellowship space)

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Administrative Office Assistant

- Bookkeeping
 - *Verify all bills that are received for payment.
 - *Print checks for bill payment and place in cabinet for signatures.
 - *Mail signed checks and file all documentation appropriately.
 - *Create folders for billing receipts for vendors as needed and documents left by Treasurer to be filed.
 - * Handle billing inquiries. If unable to solve the issue, refer to the treasurer

Financial Secretary

- The person in this position, if appointed, is responsible for the recording of all pledged income and special gifts in a proper manner. Statements shall be prepared and sent to donors on a timely basis.

Finance Team

- The Finance Committee will prepare a yearly budget, soliciting the recommendations of the appropriate Ministry Team in September, to be presented to the Council the month before the Fall Annual Congregational meeting.
- The Finance Committee consists of four people: the Council Moderator and treasurer, and two congregation members not already on council.

Treasurer

- The person in this position is responsible to receive all monies and contributions on behalf of the church, use such depositories as the Council shall direct, disburse such funds as the Council shall authorize, maintain appropriate accounting records and prepare such financial reports as requested by the Council.

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

In early 2020, church leaders discovered a large embezzlement by a former leader that occurred over several years. Though we were in the early months of the COVID-19 shutdown and the 2020 budget was unusable, we had to decide how to move forward. The pastor resigned (for personal reasons) at the end of 2021, and we moved ahead with a part-time pastor. The 2022 budget included cuts to mission projects and in-house programs so we could focus on restructuring finances and covering essential expenses. We're grateful for strong member support and growth. Our 2025 budget has most programs restored.

Historical Information

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

Three significant events that have shaped St. John's identity include: - **Becoming an Open and Affirming congregation in 2008**, boldly committing to full inclusion in a politically and socially conservative area. - **Changing our wedding policy in 2007** to celebrate same-gender marriages—well before legal recognition in 2015—demonstrating a consistent witness to justice, hospitality, and courage. - **The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2023)**, during which the congregation adapted faithfully to online worship and creative community connection, strengthening resilience, flexibility, and care.

The most important event in the past 10 years was the **embezzlement of a significant portion of our endowment in 2020**. This painful betrayal by a trusted lay leader tested our faith, trust, and organizational systems. Through prayer, legal counsel, transparency, and support from the Michigan Conference, we began to heal and rebuild—emerging stronger, more accountable, and more committed to one another.

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

In recent years, St. John's navigated a major transition to lay-led leadership during a period of pastoral vacancy and shifting resources. This change required reimagining how ministry is shared, how worship is led, and how decisions are made. Teams restructured, new leaders emerged, and members took on expanded roles in pastoral care, preaching, and administration. The congregation stepped up with grace, creativity, and deep commitment—embracing a collaborative model that honors the gifts of its people. While the shift brought challenges, it also renewed energy, deepened trust, and strengthened our identity as a community shaped by shared responsibility and mutual care. This experience laid a strong foundation for future co-leadership with a new pastor—one who will walk beside us, not above us, as we continue growing into a sustainable, Spirit-led future.

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

St. John's values honesty, compassion, and shared responsibility when conflict arises. We view disagreement as a natural part of healthy community life and strive to navigate it with transparency, grace, and open dialogue.

Following the 2020 financial betrayal, we leaned into clear communication, outside guidance, and prayerful reflection—deepening our commitment to accountability and trust. We've also faced tensions around pastoral turnover, which we addressed through listening sessions and small group conversations that fostered mutual understanding and healing.

Importantly, we have a formal conflict resolution policy that outlines steps for raising and resolving concerns. This structure—paired with our relational culture—helps us address challenges with love, clarity, and care. We're learning that good process, grounded in compassion and spiritual maturity, builds stronger community and helps us remain faithful even when tensions arise.

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

The most recent major conflict St. John's faced was the unexpected and abrupt departure of our newly settled pastor, who accepted a full-time local position just months after beginning his part-time call with us. While we respect his personal and financial reasons, the sudden transition deeply shook our congregation. We had already weathered significant upheaval in recent years—navigating COVID-19, financial betrayal, and leadership changes—so his departure reopened wounds and raised feelings of grief, uncertainty, and disappointment. Yet, our response was marked by grace, honesty, and care. Through open conversation and pastoral support, we recommitted to our identity as a resilient, lay-led congregation. The experience reaffirmed our need for stability and clarity in future calls, and strengthened our resolve to build a sustainable foundation for shared ministry.

Ministerial History:

Name: Rotating Pulpit Fill-In by four current church members: Barb Huitema (licensed minister), Bill Newsom (licensed minister), Jeffrey Dick (ordained minister), and Marcus Little (ordained minister)

Years of service: 1

Name: Rev. Nathan Dannison

Years of service: 2

UCC Standing

Name: Rev. Dr. Wesley Jamison

Years of service: 3

UCC Standing

Name: Rev. Dr. Robyn Gray (Bridge Interim)

Years of service: 2

UCC Standing

Name: Rev. Bob Bond (Interim)

Years of service: 2

Name: Rev. Dr. William Lyons

Years of service: 12

UCC Standing

Name: Rev. Dr. Norman Bendroth

Years of service: 4

UCC Standing

Name: Rev. Dr. Michael Ott

Years of service: 12

UCC Standing

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

St. John's has learned that while pastoral leadership is important, our strength lies in shared ministry. Our recent use of rotating pulpit supply has been a meaningful and effective solution during this transition, reminding us that our identity is not dependent on one person. We've discovered a deep well of gifts within our congregation and a strong commitment to walking together in faith. We value leaders who journey with us—honoring our lay-led model, nurturing our spiritual life, and helping us grow with compassion, connection, and courage.

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

No

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

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

No

Community Vision

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

St. John's extends its mission outward through both hands-on service and visible advocacy. Since 2003, we've sponsored a monthly mobile food pantry and supported UCOM's Client Choice Food Plan through special collections. Members also volunteer with Kids' Food Basket, assembling sack suppers for children to ensure evening meals.

Members have knit and crocheted hats, mittens, and prayer shawls for those in need. We also prepare and serve meals at Renucci Hospitality House, which offers low-cost lodging to families with loved ones receiving medical care downtown.

With approval, our building is available free of charge for community use—reflecting our commitment to being a resource and refuge for our neighbors.

St. John's is a public advocate for inclusion and dignity. A Pride flag flies year-round above our most visible entrance, and we participate in the Grand Rapids Pride Festival. In 2022, members helped support a newly arrived Afghan refugee family during their transition to the U.S.

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

St. John's actively participates in the wider United Church of Christ through the Michigan Conference and our regional body, the Grand West Association. Two members of our congregation currently serve as Secretary and Vice Moderator of the Association, and both are also part of our rotating pulpit team. Our church council encourages more members to attend association meetings and engage in the life of the wider church. We value these relationships as a source of mutual support, learning, and accountability.

In July 2025, five members of St. John's attended the UCC's biennial General Synod in Kansas City, Missouri, participating in worship, workshops, and national decision-making. Their presence reflected our commitment to the larger UCC mission and to being a voice for justice, inclusion, and collaborative ministry. Our participation in association, conference, and national gatherings continues to deepen our understanding of what it means to be the church together—locally and beyond.

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

Our church's greatest organized community effort has been to fight food insecurity. St. John's UCC has been in partnership with Feeding America West Michigan since 2003. During the pandemic in 2020 we developed a partnership with Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church to provide food access for our neighbors. St. John's and Sudanese Grace worked together to move a walk in food pantry at St. John's to a drive through mobile food pantry at Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church. The first drive thru mobile food pantry was established in September of 2020. St. John's remains in partnership with Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church in 2025, and both churches are planning to remain in partnership in the future. During 2024, together we served 1,887 households and 5,302 individuals. We are expecting to see an increase of need in supplemental food for household and individuals in 2025. St. John's, Sudanese Grace, and UCOM remain dedicated to alleviating hunger by creating access to food for our neighbors.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

God is Still Speaking (GISS)

Other UCC designations:

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

The above checked statements reflect the core of our community. The UCC "God is Still Speaking" designation emphasizes that God continually is speaking to all of us through nature, people, and experiences. It involves hearing God communicating through each other- sharing experiences of sorrow and joy. Our weekly services always include a beautiful time of sharing where the presence of God is intensely felt. People of our congregation trust each other with their deepest concerns and allow themselves to be vulnerable enough to share openly about addictions, mental illness, losses, health issues, and family strife. We also lift our joys together about good life experiences. It is always moving and inspiring.

Our church embodies the ONA designation. Gay marriages were allowed in our church in 2007, one year before officially becoming Open and Affirming in 2008- profound for our geographic region of mixed views. These dates were much earlier than the 2015 legal approval of gay marriages.

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

Our congregation partners with Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church, whose large outdoor space hosts our monthly mobile food pantry—an ongoing act of shared mission and community care.

St. John's sermons often acknowledge the experiences of people from other faiths, especially those facing trauma or persecution. We lift them in prayer during worship.

Confirmants engage in interfaith learning, including visits to a synagogue and discussions about various traditions as part of their preparation.

Grand Rapids also hosts meaningful interfaith services each year, including a Good Friday experience and a shared Thanksgiving celebration at rotating downtown churches. We would welcome a pastor who actively promotes and participates in such efforts.

Another important local resource is the **Kaufman Interfaith Institute** at Grand Valley State University, which sponsors lectures and events to foster interfaith understanding. We see great potential for deeper engagement with this organization and its mission.

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

Our mission statement: "It is the mission of this congregation to live God's presence, love our neighbors, and practice the values of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

St. John's lives out this mission with authenticity and care. Our congregation is motivated by the Christian message and guided by thoughtful pastoral leadership and the personal commitments of our members. We divide our time fairly equally among worship and gathering, governance and meetings, education and formation, and local outreach.

In addition to worship, time is spent in team meetings, youth and adult education (including book groups and online classes), and property care. Our lay teams lead and serve in meaningful ministries: visiting the homebound, organizing a monthly mobile food pantry, volunteering at local pantries, providing meals to families facing health challenges, and preparing seasonal gift bags for delivery.

These activities reflect a faithful engagement with our mission—both inside our walls and beyond.

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

Our goal is to create a sustainable and life-giving part-time pastoral role that honors the boundaries of a part-time commitment. We recognize that no one pastor can meet all congregational needs alone, and our strong lay leadership supports pastoral care, education, and outreach.

We estimate that about 20% of the pastor's time may be dedicated to community ministry or engagement with the wider church, with flexibility based on their interests and gifts. This could include involvement in existing outreach efforts or introducing new ones that align with the congregation's mission.

We propose a regular rhythm that includes one Sunday off per month, allowing space for rest, outreach, and deeper fellowship. Our model also supports time for sermon preparation, spiritual care, worship planning, adult education, staff check-ins, attendance at key events, and space for the pastor's own spiritual growth and renewal.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

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

Our area's ethnicity is primarily White (non-Hispanic), followed by Hispanic, Black, & Multi-Racial. The first three races have decreased, while Asian & Other(non-Hispanic) races increased.

Increased diversity gives us an opportunity to welcome all.

Those who are married decreased, while those who are separated, divorced, never married increased.

We can welcome those who may have experienced pain or need support.

Those below the poverty level decreased, but our area is still higher than the national average.

Our efforts to help those with food insecurity must continue.

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

Our church helps to serve the neighborhood where United Church of Christ Outreach Ministry is located.

The house prices and annual incomes are lower in that neighborhood.

Those below the poverty level are 23.3% vs our level of 17.2%.

Those working from home are 7.4% in UCOM's neighborhood, while ours is 11.8%.

Those achieving at least a Bachelor's degree in UCOM's neighborhood is 21.7% vs our level of 38.6%.

UCOM's neighborhood race demographics: White (non-Hispanic) 44.7% vs 72.5% St John's, Hispanic 37.9% vs 14.6% St John's, Black 13.4% vs 6.1% St John's, and Multi-Racial 4.6% vs 3.8% St John's.

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

The demographics of the community are definitely shaping our ministry. As we move east and south of the St. John's campus, we find that the income levels and educational levels decrease while those in our community who fall below the poverty level increases. The racial diversity also increases in those directions. Through our associations with Feeding America and UCOM we will continue to reach those who are struggling economically. Our awareness and study of the root causes that create those differences also makes our church a place of welcome and refuge for those who need support.

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

To quote our former mayor, George Heartwell (also a UCC clergy who guest preached at our church years ago), St. John's is a congregation that "embraces the social-gospel dimensions of acceptance, care and advocacy". He appreciated the church's outreach to the low income of the community. Bruce Roller, who recently retired from his position as Executive Director of UCOM, appreciated St John's forthright stand for the LGBTQ community, including sponsorship of the first worship service honoring Coming Out Day. He also has noted our efforts to provide monthly food to the local community.

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

People who are new to St. John's offer a variety of reasons for becoming involved: our open and affirming stance, our online presence explaining progressive Christianity, our welcoming nature after visiting, our mission statement that presents an expanded view of marital unions, and the appeal of our children's program.

References



☒ Erik Keener

Completed: Wednesday, Aug 20, 2025

Erik Keener - Executive Director, UCOM

UCOM is a social service center working with families in need. St John's is a partner in our work and mission.

Primary Email Address: erik@ucomgr.org

Business: 6162414006

Reference Response

It is my pleasure to write this letter of reference on behalf of St. John's United Church of Christ as they call a new pastor. As Executive Director of United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM), I have witnessed the generous and faithful partnership of St. John's in support of our neighbors in the greater Grand Rapids area.

St. John's has been a consistent, compassionate partner. They give financially, provide for our Healthy Choice Food Pantry, send volunteers, and support events with genuine care. Their food drives stand out for asking what neighbors truly need before acting. The people of St. John's embody steady faithfulness, collaboration, and humility. They welcome growth and new leadership with open hearts. Any pastor who joins them will find a thoughtful, compassionate, mission-driven congregation eager to do good and grow in faith together.



☒ Rev. Zachariah Jok Char

Completed: 2 days ago

Rev. Zachariah Jok Char, Rector

Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church

Cell. Phone 616 328 3752

Email: rector@sudanesegec.org

Primary Email Address: rector@sudanesegec.org

Mobile Phone: 6163283752

Reference Response

My name is Rev. Zachariah Jok Char. It is my pleasure to offer a reference for St. John's UCC as they are in search of a shepherd who will take good care of God's mission in this community. I have the opportunity to know the community of St. John, UCC since 2022. The Sudanese Grace Episcopal have been partners with St. John is sharing the parking lot for food distribution every first Wednesday of the month. The partnership of St. John and Sudanese Grace is a blessing ministry



☒ Mary Beth Quillin

Completed: 3 days ago

Board Member and Production Chairperson, Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids

We have used space at St. John's for auditions and rehearsals.

Primary Email Address: marybethquillin@gmail.com

Mobile Phone: 616-717-0137

Reference Response

As a community theatre, Jewish Theatre has limited financial resources, and no venue. We have always felt very welcome at St. John's. We have been happy to make a donation to the church, but have not been required to pay a fixed amount of rent, which has been very helpful in maintaining our bottom line for each production.

That St. John's is Open and Affirming has been important to us, as we try to reach and provide theatre experiences to a broad cross section of Grand Rapids, including the LGBTQ+ community. Many of our participants are not Jewish, and knowing that "All are Welcome" provides a safe space for all of our participants.

The leadership team have all been very helpful in accommodating our needs, and the building is a clean, secure space with ample, well-lighted parking for our cast members.

We are grateful for our relationship with St. John's UCC.

Shalom,

Mary Beth Quillin

Closing Prayer

A Prayer for the Minister We Are Waiting For Lord, prepare the heart of the pastor who is on their way to us. You know our hopes—for connection, for purpose, for a shared future. When our paths meet, may they not only feel called to serve—but called to stay. To plant roots here. To grow with us, dream with us, and discover, year after year, new reasons to call this place home. May we welcome one another with joy and grace, recognizing each other as fellow travelers on a sacred journey. Ground us in love, faith, and trust as we begin a new relationship together in your presence. Amen.

Statement of Consent

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

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

St. John's UCC Pastor Search Committee

Jenna Grooms, Chairperson
Donna Proulx, Secretary
Teresa Markoski, Member
Rebecca Tiedt, Member
Mike Tooley, Member
Marcus Little, Member
Dan Busman, Member

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

No response