

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA**

COMMUNITY OF FAITH PROFILE

Prairie Spirit United Church

Prairie to Pine, Region 5

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Our Mission Statement

Prairie Spirit United Church is an inclusive Community of Faith, walking the path of Jesus as we worship God. We do this by engaging with our community, by offering our gifts to aid where we can, and by telling our faith stories to all generations.



Our Roots

Prairie Spirit United Church became an amalgamated faith community on October 1st, 2018. One of Prairie Spirit's founding churches was a Methodist congregation prior to Union in 1925. The other two were churches formed in the great expansion of the 60's. Building on vibrant histories, vision, courage, and commitment, the three founding Communities of Faith formed PSUC.

The amalgamation process began in 2010 with the formation of a committee called Open Doors. There was representation from six United Churches in the St. James community and leadership from Winnipeg Presbytery as well as an EDGE representative. After years of studies, workshops and many opportunities for discussion and input at the congregational level, a decision was made in the Fall of 2017 that 3 congregations; Kirkfield Park, Silver Heights and Sturgeon Creek United Churches move toward amalgamation. In April of 2018, a joint meeting was held to approve the amalgamation and Prairie Spirit United Church was founded. This decision necessitated the sale of two of the church homes and the keeping of one to be used by this new Community of Faith. The sale of these two buildings provided financial stability to this new faith community.

As a new Community of Faith we embarked on a relationship with our Intentional Interim Minister who worked with the transition team. In addition, we had a part time ordained minister to assist with worship and to lead in pastoral care. On July 1, 2021 we began a pastoral relationship which ended by mutual agreement in September, 2022. Since that time, our Worship Team has been coordinating pulpit supply and lay leadership which has held our faith community together while we focused on determining future needs, directions and resources.

About Us

We are a welcoming Community of Faith and there is a small, committed group of involved, capable volunteers who share their significant gifts. Recently, our official roll was reviewed determining we have about 250 persons listed as members with about 110 attending worship each Sunday in pre-COVID times. Since we reopened after COVID closures, attendance has been 45 - 55 people each Sunday, 180 on Christmas Eve, with others viewing the online recording of special services. We are mostly an older, middle-class congregation, and the majority are in their 70's and 80's. We have a small group who are in their 90's and 100's, a small number between 40 to 69 and a few under 40. Most of the congregation are retired from a wide variety of professions. We are beginning to see some cultural diversity in our area and the congregation aspires to nurture this transition and see it reflected in our Community of Faith.

About Our Community

Our catchment area is defined as St. James-Assiniboia. This is an older middle class suburban community composed of single-family homes, apartments, schools, restaurants and small businesses. Originally there were seven United Churches in this area and now there are only two, Prairie Spirit United Church and Crestview United Church, both located in the west end of

the catchment area. St. Charles-Headingley United Church is located west of the city just outside the Perimeter Highway but does draw some of its members from within our boundaries. Other Christian denominations are also represented in the St. James-Assiniboia community.

Our community demographic trends older with many retired couples still in their homes. Although there is turn over in home ownership there are fewer young families with children than in the newer areas of the city.

Our Church Building:

Our facility was rebuilt after a fire in 1992 which destroyed most of the building. The oldest section of the building was saved, and a new structure was added. The significant renovations brought the church up to code in all areas.

Located in the new section of the building, the Sanctuary has comfortable seating for 460 people. It has excellent acoustics as it was designed for choral music. It is equipped with a computer through which the recorded and livestreamed worship services are possible, a projector and large retracting screen, 12 channel digital sound board, Wi-Fi, FM assisted hearing system, pipe augmented electronic organ and grand piano.

The Narthex is a place for meeting and mingling before or after worship. The grand piano located in this area makes it suitable for small musical events and parties. Along the left side of the Sanctuary and Narthex there is a meeting room, library, and lounge. The Chapel adjacent to the Sanctuary, provides a quiet, secluded setting for smaller groups of up to 25 people.

Located on the lower level, the Rainbow Room, has a seating capacity for 250 people. Adjacent to the Rainbow Room there is a spacious, well-equipped kitchen with commercial dishwasher, fridges, cooler and two stoves. The Sturgeon Room, also on the lower level, provides a more intimate setting for groups of 50 to 75 people. There are two washrooms with stalls on the lower level – women's and men's.

On the main level of the renovated older section, there is a large general office area and two private offices with large windows plus a storage room. The office has a photocopier/printer, high speed internet with an internal LAN and Wi-Fi available in most parts of the building. Also on the main level, situated behind the office area, the Sunrise Room is a popular, bright meeting room with modest kitchen facilities. There is a fully accessible washroom adjacent to the Sunrise Room.

Our building is accessible on all levels with:

- accessible parking spaces
- a ramp on the south side
- main doors having a level approach and an accessible, powered access door button.
- accessible washroom stalls on the main floor in both men's and women's facilities, and
- a fully accessible elevator to the lower level.

The church also has off-street parking for 80 vehicles.

Human Resources:

Office Administrator

We currently have an Office Administrator: providing administrative, bookkeeping, and general building support, working six and a half hours per day, Monday through Friday.

Rental Coordinator

Our Rental Coordinator handles short and long-term building rentals and receives a monthly honorarium.

Music Leader

A music specialist is hired for 6 hours per week and is expected to collaborate with the minister in planning music in support of our worship services.

Custodian

We have a custodian responsible for maintenance and setting up for events at the church working 20 hours per week.

Production Team

Audio and visual support for our Sunday services as well as other events are coordinated by this team who work approximately 4 hours per week.

Governance:

A new Governance model was approved by the Community of Faith on 02-April-2023 which includes an Oversight Council that meets quarterly, an Executive that meets monthly and six Standing Teams. As a living document, the Governance document is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the current policies and practices that best meet the needs of our Community of Faith. A Community of Faith meeting was held on 24-Sept-23 to revise the Governance model to include two Members at Large to the Council.

Ministry and Mission Profile

Our Worship and Faith Formation Team works collaboratively with our Minister in all aspects of worship and christian education planning. We look for ongoing leadership which enriches worship and spiritual lives. At Prairie Spirit United Church, we understand the need to make our worship more relevant to those who are attending in person and to our on-line viewers. The Worship Team welcomes feedback from the Community of Faith to ensure our services meet their needs. It is our desire to have services which are inspiring, thought provoking and relevant. Since September 2022, the Worship Team has been arranging pulpit supply or providing lay leadership in the absence of a Minister.

As of January 2023, the Christian Education and Faith Formation Team was folded into the Worship Team to collaborate and share resources and efforts. Our Faith Community values opportunities for faith formation. We expect our new Minister to develop and lead christian education opportunities for the Community of Faith with support from the Worship & Faith Formation Team.

PSUC is privileged to offer the services of a Funeral/Wedding Coordinator who works collaboratively with the Minister, support staff, and Production Team and offers hands on support to the family's planning efforts.

Our Social Justice and Outreach Team is active in supporting outreach ministries in the city and other community justice issues such as homelessness, food insecurity and Indigenous reconciliation. We currently work with 1Just City which supports three inner city ministries, inclusive of Indigenous programming. We host the Portage Avenue Food Bank on behalf of Harvest Manitoba, provide significant support to the Canadian Food Grains Bank, regularly use Mission Stories in our services and have been active on the region's refugee initiatives. Within the St James community we attend meetings of the Neighbourhood Resource Network (NRN) which helps us to stay in touch with the activities of other nonprofits. It is our hope that in living out our faith and finding ways to address needs within our community, we will show that our mission is one of action.

Our Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Team is a three person team which meets quarterly and as necessary. The team members, as liaisons, meet regularly with all staff. Annual staff evaluations provide feedback for professional development. As per the terms of employment, the M&P Team will collaborate with the Minister on scheduling holidays, study leave and any other absences. Additionally, the M&P Team collaborates with the lay staff on contractual and policy matters. As required, all team members have taken the United Church M&P training and will update as offered by the Prairie to Pine Region.

Our Congregational Wellness Team provided a variety of opportunities for the Community of Faith to come together in fellowship and be supported prior to COVID. Since the Fall of 2022, they have resumed the coordination and provision of coffee before and after the services as well as hosting several lunches throughout the year for the entire congregation to foster a deep sense of community and belonging. Coming from three separate congregations, we believe fellowship

will encourage a sense of community within our church. We look forward to having creative new ideas shared by our Minister in the interest of having even more opportunities to have fun together going forward.

As of January 2023, the Pastoral Care Team was folded into the Congregational Wellness Team to collaborate and share resources and efforts.

The Congregation Wellness Pastoral Care Team members maintain regular and as needed contact, through cards, phones calls and when possible, home visits with our congregation. This includes those who are ill, homebound, or suffering a loss.

The team offers a prayer shawl ministry which is very appreciated by the community. The Pastoral Care Team members have hosted workshops with outside speakers which were open to the congregation and the community. Pastoral Care is a valued part of wellness within our Community of Faith.

Our Property and Building Sustainability Team (Property) are a committed group tasked with maintaining all aspects of our physical plant and grounds. They have developed a strategic plan for necessary upgrades to our building inclusive of maintaining our government building code status and the reduction of our carbon footprint. The team members provide innumerable volunteer hours.

The Property Team is the policy owner for rentals and building maintenance besides being the liaison for the Rental Coordinator, Custodian, and Office Administrator (on building and contractor activities).

Our Finance Team oversees all financial matters for the Community of Faith assuring that recognized financial practices are adhered to.

Our Board of Trustees are a team of four charged with:

- holding all properties, real and personal, in trust for the Community of Faith
- overseeing all financial transactions and recording
- ensuring the Community of Faith maintains adequate insurance

Council initiatives already in progress or desired:

1. continuing the process of building connections within the Community of Faith to create a cohesive, caring entity called Prairie Spirit United Church
2. exploring ways to become a more diverse and inclusive Community of Faith
3. continuing the foundational work already done in becoming an Affirming Congregation and we wish to complete this process

4. being more present and welcoming to our surrounding community actioning ways we can make a difference
5. exploring ways to use technology and social media to enhance our presence in the St. James area
6. identifying initiatives and opportunities to support children, youth and their families in our surrounding community