

# Prairie Spirit United Church

## Living Faith Story

Final 12-Oct-23



### **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.

Prairie Spirit United Church (PSUC) became an amalgamated faith community on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Building on vibrant histories, vision, courage, and commitment, the three founding Communities of Faith formed PSUC. 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. We are passionate about our faith. Our focus has been on strengthening our sense of being members of one faith community, however, because of our COVID-19 experience, there continues to be a need to build community by re-connecting and growing together.



*Our amalgamation quilted banner.*



*Welcoming our new Minister during COVID.*

## **About Us**

We are located in the St. James-Assiniboia area within Winnipeg, Manitoba. 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. Post 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.



*Good Friday*



*Easter Sunday*



*Easter Sunday*

We've opened our doors to our community and are the location where AA, Al-Anon, Guides, Embers, Sparks, Boy Scouts, TOPs and Hands of Hope who meet weekly. We also host a school of music, the vocal group 'Sisters of the Holy Rock' and a junior musical theatre group.

Additionally, we are a sought after music and performance venue for community performing groups with the St. James School Division hosting their seasonal concerts with us and being a Provincial ChoralFest site.

## **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.

PSUC is blessed to have a full leadership team for the Council and the Standing Teams. We are challenged with the depth of our volunteers but many are willing to assist even if not officially on a team.

## **Our Social Justice and Outreach Team**

We are a socially conscious and justice active congregation building on our originating churches' histories of supporting the United Church of Canada (UCC) Mission and Service Fund and other United Church Ministries in Winnipeg all of which Prairie Spirit has continued. PSUC 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.



*Portage Avenue Food Bank*





### *UCW Grab & Go Tables for Advent at the Portage Avenue Food Bank*



*PSUC Habitat for Humanity Team coordinating donations and volunteer hours in support of our Custodian who is working toward a Habitat home for his family.*

### **Our Congregational Wellness Team**

The team provides a variety of opportunities for the Community of Faith to come together in fellowship such as 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. We love to party and share food and conversation, so these times are very popular.

As of January 2023, the Pastoral Care Team was folded into the Congregational Wellness Team. The Congregation Wellness Pastoral Care Team members maintain regular and as needed contact, through cards, phone 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 to share comfort and prayer with those they visit. Pastoral Care is a valued part of wellness within our Community of Faith.



*Coffee after service*



*A portion of our meat pie team.*

### **Worship and Faith Formation Team**

At PSUC we understand the need to make our worship more relevant to those who are attending in person and to our on-line viewers. 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 and our worship experience has been rich and diverse.

Music is very important to Worship at PSUC. We have a dedicated Music Leader and a small choir who are augmented with soloists and additional musicians for special Sundays.

With Faith Formation an integral part of the team we offer intentional times for Mission Stories and 'For the Child in All of Us' segments throughout the month. We are actively working on Reconciliation with our Social Justice Team partners and have redeveloped our Land Acknowledgment, produced a Creation Time banner based on the Ojibwe creation story and received stories from community Indigenous leaders for Orange Shirt Sunday. We've held Lenten bible study and plan to do so again in 2024.



*Christmas 2022*



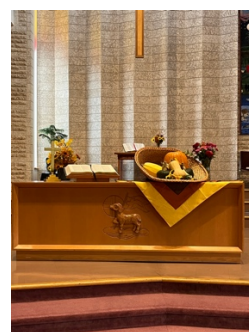
*Creation Banner 2023*



*Thanksgiving 2021*



*Thanksgiving 2022*



*Thanksgiving 2023*