

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who
are
we

Who
is our
neighbor

Who is
God
calling us
to become

?

The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Grace United Church
289 North Main Street
Wellsville, New York

Part-time Minister

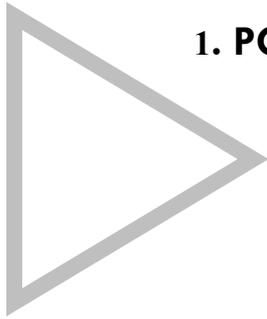
NY Conference UCC & GVA
Northeastern Region DOC

February 18, 2019

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us to Become?
- Who Are We Now?
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- References
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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*



1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1 a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Grace United Church

Street address: 289 North Main Street, Wellsville, NY 14895

Supplemental web links: www.grace-united.church

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships):

First Congregational Church (UCC) and Christian Temple (DOC) were longtime ecumenical “friends” across town from each other for many decades. Our two churches began the yoking process in 2011 and became a merged congregation of our two denominations in 2015. After filing legal paperwork, we adopted our identity together as “Grace United Church” in 2016.

Conference: New York UCC Association: Genesee Valley Association
UCC NY Conference Minister Contact: Rev. David Gaewski, 315-446-3073

Summary Ministry Description

Grace United Church is an enthusiastic, loving, and welcoming family of believers seeking to share our message of warmth and acceptance with greater intent throughout our wider community. We are a dedicated congregation that shares our faith in service, outreach, and mission work throughout our community and world. With a long history of supporting missions and individuals in Haiti and Kenya, we pray that an inspiring and caring pastor will help empower us to be a church that lives out the gospel in fresh new ways for all people.

Photographs:



Worship Center



Sanctuary



Mission Center

What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):

Set in the scenic foothills of the Allegheny Mountains, Wellsville is a charming small town with many outdoor recreation opportunities nearby: hiking trails, biking, boating, hunting & fishing, camping, downhill & cross-country skiing, and all-terrain vehicle activities. We value our community hospital affiliated with the University of Rochester (a major medical center/teaching hospital) and we enjoy the benefits of an outstanding community library:

<https://davidahowelibrary.org> Five accredited academic institutions of higher education are 15-35 miles away, one with its applied technology campus in town. Proximity to Alfred University's School of Art & Design has fostered a community of artisans in our area: <https://www.alleganyartisans.com> Our state-of-the-art schools are progressive and our residential real estate is diverse and reasonably priced. Small-town friendliness is an added value in our community.

Current size of membership: 86 (active members)

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):

No other languages are used in our ministry.

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration:

Settled Pastor

Compensation Level:

Part-time – negotiable terms

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

Three core competencies we envision in our next minister's relationship with us are:

- The individual will engage us in thought-filled, biblically-relevant sermons.
- We seek a confident, caring, people-oriented pastor who will lead, support, and communicate without judgment.
- We are hopeful the new pastor will share our enthusiasm for mission activities and outreach programs in our diverse rural population.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance):

→ Our anticipated part-time salary base is a \$45,000 package (with flexible options)

Benefits:

→ Salary will include optional benefits (e.g. insurance, pension)

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)?

→ We are open to negotiation regarding housing options, ranging from use of a parsonage to a housing allowance, and/or living elsewhere and commuting, as desired.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

→ Flexible residential/commuting arrangements are open for discussion to allow the best arrangement for both the pastor and the church. We will work with the pastor regarding on-site expectations.

State any incentives (e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position):

- After five years of service, a one month paid sabbatical leave is available.
- Paid continuing education incentives are available.
- Vacation time and other incentives will be negotiable.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association or conference:

→ Both the Genesee Valley Association (GVA), NY Conference of the UCC, and the Northeastern Region of the DOC sponsor annual gatherings and periodic workshops for professional support and development. We heartily support the pastor's attendance at these events.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

→ Our congregation is open and adaptable to a variety of vocational arrangements in order to acquire a "good fit" for our church family. We have a strong group of lay leaders and Elders in place and we are prepared to negotiate the best options for both the pastor and the church. We anticipate adjustments in the amount of office time and meeting time expected of the minister will be made. We are willing to craft a unique employment situation for our pastor.

1 d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We picture our next minister engaging in a strong partnership with our church to help us grow in faith and service to others and to build a diverse and welcoming community of faith. We seek a confident, approachable pastor, willing to offer fresh ideas for our worship experience and community life. To accomplish this, the pastor should be a good listener and an effective communicator of innovative ideas, and have the desire to be an equal partner in the activities of the congregation, as able. We'd like our minister to visit the sick and elderly and help our lay leaders and members develop skills for this endeavor as well.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We are a dedicated congregation that shares our faith in service and mission work throughout our community and world. Historically, our congregation has reached out to help others in our local community and we have supported mission programs in Haiti and Kenya for many years. We envision our next minister playing a role in our work as a supporter, advisor, encourager, communicator, and participant as he or she is able. Beyond the outreach we have in place, we seek encouragement and inspiration for how we might expand our "extravagant welcome" and message of love and acceptance to greater numbers in our community. Having a pastor who could expand our visibility through pastoral and chaplaincy visits, and other forms of outreach would be a real asset. (See **Section 4 a. Community Vision** for ways we make an impact beyond our walls.)`

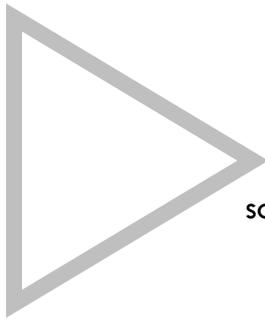
Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

→We have no special language requirements, but in serving a diverse socio-economic population in a rural setting, we recognize that sensitive and effective communication is essential as we share God's message in our community.

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

The four areas of excellence we hope our next minister will display to further our ministry are:

- 1) Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice
- 2) Engaging sacred stories and traditions
- 3) Working together for justice and mercy as we care for all creation
- 4) Strengthening inter- and intra-personal assets



2. 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 is God calling you to become as a congregation?

We believe God is calling us to be a congregation that is open to adaptation in an ever-changing world. In many ways, we have responded to that call by merging two congregations and resources into one church body (2015). Throughout this merger process, we have chosen flexibility over rigidity and cooperation over conflict as we build a fresh identity in the community. Maintaining the Christian values rooted in our UCC and DOC traditions, our worship is traditional, yet open to innovation and new ways of being a congregation with a unique identity. We recognize the need to embrace change as we share our church in a world that often struggles to find time for worship and faith development.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation. *For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?*

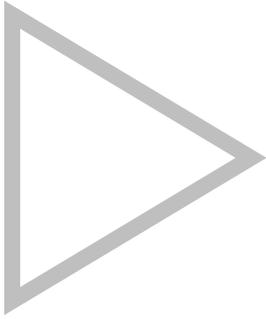
#1 – A few years ago, a church member left a large bequest and our members agreed that 10% of the funds should be dedicated to missions. The church chose two areas – helping children and helping older adults. For the latter, we consulted with Office for the Aging (OFA) for input on an unmet community need and they suggested we consider accessibility ramps. We knew nothing about building ramps, but accepted the challenge and initiated a conversation with Directions in Independent Living (DIL) for some basic “how-to” guidance. Coincidentally, one of our church members had increased mobility issues and a group of church volunteers pooled their time and tools to construct a solid, functional ramp for her. It was an opportunity to test our skills. But the story doesn’t end there. The experience moved the group to share their newly-developed expertise with the marginalized citizens in Allegany County. With DIL advisement on ADA code specifications and screening help from OFA, the “Ramps Project” of Congregational Samaritans was born. Utilizing private donations and grant funds to purchase materials, the team has built over 35 ramps in the past five years with the intentional mission to help others in need. The program enables residents with disabilities to achieve greater independence, and it enriches our volunteers’ faith as they fulfill God’s call to serve others. *This is Grace United.*

#2 – Another “leap of faith” for Grace United Church occurred when our church opened its worship center doors to two community agencies seeking space in a central community location. Putting aside minor concerns over liability and the use of our worship facility during daytime hours, we opened our fellowship hall to Office for the Aging so they could operate a community lunch site at our central location four days a week. Likewise, we reached out to Directions in Independent Living, a peer advocacy organization, by renting unused space in our mission center so the agency could provide much-needed services for the marginalized in our county. Stretching our comfort zone by opening our doors to feed the elderly and support those with disabilities reflects our intentional, bold steps to be the church God wants us to be.

Grace United Church Vision Statement:

“We strive to be a welcoming, Christian community – celebrating, searching, and serving God with heart, soul and mind.”

In the past four years our members have focused on bringing two churches with unique traditions and histories together as one church body at Grace United Church. Now that our shared ministry is firmly established, we are eager to plan our future together and we look to new leadership to help us develop a multi-year strategic plan.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3 a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

We describe our congregation as welcoming, celebrating, searching, and serving God with heart, soul, and mind. To honor our two traditions, and diverse theological views, God is described in many ways in our worship – Creator God, God the father, God our mother, Holy God, God of Love, Lord, even “Daddy.”

The Holy Spirit is seen in each smile and handshake offered during the passing of the peace – the careful touch of an 85-year-old and the joy of a 10-year old offering a fist bump. The Holy Spirit has infused our presently pastor-less congregation with a will to continue as God’s hands in the world, loving and serving our neighbors, community, and world. The Holy Spirit enables us to be the church. We care for each other and the stranger in the name of Jesus.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our congregation is comprised of enthusiastic and positive people who celebrate diversity and welcome all individuals, regardless of their life’s path. We have a strong focus on local and global missions and we embrace the use of our worship and mission facilities by many community organizations. When differences surface, we work things out in a civil manner without divisive struggles.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

At Grace United we worship in a simple, serene New England style sanctuary with a chancel window of Jesus in Gethsemane serving as an inspirational focal point. Music is a significant part of our worship with pre-service praise music, hymns, an adult choir, and piano and organ music in every service. A bell choir shares occasional selections. We share laughter, prayers of concern, prayers of thanksgiving, and weekly communion together. We observe an exuberant “passing of the peace” and the pastor offers a children’s message. Lay leaders participate throughout the service in such roles such as welcoming, reading scripture, ushering, delivering “mission moments” and making announcements. We appreciate sermons that deliver a timely and inspirational message reflecting keen discernment, preparation, and scriptural connections.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

We have a Sunday school program for all ages. There is a multi-age class for our children using the lectionary-based, Whole People of God curriculum, “spiced up” with crafts or special projects. Youth are also involved in outreach projects such as Heifer International. Presently, there is not a program for teens. After worship, we gather for coffee and fellowship. An adult education group also meets for discussion on timely topics. A well-attended midweek Bible study is led by church members. One recent study of the disciples James and John produced a meaningful discussion responding to the disciples’ desire to sit on the right hand of Jesus. Jesus’ response, “No, go and serve” validated a strong commitment to serving and helping others. Many elderly church members stay and simply enjoy the fellowship with friends, some of whom have been members and friends for many decades.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- *When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?*
Our current governance is organized into seven committees that spend approximately 1.5 hours per month in meetings. The chairs of these committees meet with officers and trustees once a month in a General Board meeting lasting 2-3 hours. Subcommittees meet as needed and report to one of the seven committees, which in turn, report to the General Board. All committees make an effort to meet on the same evening as the General Board, a practice found to foster timely communications and decision-making.
- *Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?*
With God’s grace, we have not experienced a serious crisis or disaster. A minor crisis occurred last year when a water pipe burst in the worship center basement. A quick round of text messages called for help and several church members arrived with buckets, mops, fans, and a plumber.
- *Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church’s activity and governance?*

YES

3 b. 11-YEAR REPORT

Grace United/UCC 11-year data:

Church#: 463670
 Assoc: 524
 Schedule: 0
 Grace United Church
 Wellsville
 NY 14895

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS



YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2007	109	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	109	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2009	109	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	109	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	109	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	63	32	7	0	0	0	4	42	-46
2013	63	32	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	44	50	22	0	0	0	6	15	-19
2015	44	50	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	44	50	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	44	50	22	0	0	0	0	0	0

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2007	\$101,644	\$0	\$500	\$585	\$1,085	\$0	\$1,085	0.49	\$102,729	\$0
2008	\$101,644	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$101,644	\$0
2009	\$101,644	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,023	\$2,523	\$0	\$2,523	1.48	\$104,167	\$0
2010	\$101,644	\$0	\$1,500	\$478	\$1,978	\$0	\$1,978	1.48	\$103,622	\$0
2011	\$101,644	\$0	\$1,500	\$525	\$2,025	\$0	\$2,025	1.48	\$103,669	\$0
2012	\$85,530	\$0	\$1,500	\$1,005	\$2,505	\$0	\$2,505	1.75	\$88,035	\$65,790
2013	\$85,530	\$0	\$1,500	\$719	\$2,219	\$0	\$2,219	1.75	\$87,749	\$0
2014	\$92,568	\$0	\$1,200	\$546	\$1,746	\$0	\$1,746	1.30	\$94,314	\$60,900
2015	\$92,568	\$0	\$1,200	\$485	\$1,685	\$0	\$1,685	1.30	\$94,253	\$0
2016	\$92,568	\$0	\$1,200	\$1,079	\$2,279	\$0	\$2,279	1.30	\$94,847	\$0
2017	\$92,568	\$0	\$1,200	\$476	\$1,676	\$0	\$1,676	1.30	\$94,244	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2012-2017	-30.16	56.25	214.29	0.00	-100.00	8.23	-33.09	7.05
2007-2017	-59.63	0.00	57.14	0.00	0.00	-8.93	54.47	-8.26

Christian Temple (DOC)/10-year data:

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NA41

Office of General Min. and President
DOC (Christian Church)
Ten Year Summary

GRACE UNITED CHURCH - 330091
Wellsville, NY

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION										
Total Members	228	228	116	100	100	0	54	46	207	126
Participating Members	85	85	54	42	42	0	35	46	45	43
%Change from Last Year	0	0.00%	-36.47%	-22.22%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%	31.43%	-02.17%	-04.44%
Worship Attendance	0	0	40	40	25	0	35	40	30	46
%Change from Last Year	0	00.00%	00.00%	00.00%	-37.50%	-100.00%	00.00%	14.29%	-25.00%	53.33%
Church School	0	0	3	2	5	0	10	15	9	6
Participating CWF	0	0	0	0	12	0	1	1	0	0
Baptisms	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Additions	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	6

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
GIVING RECORD										
Total Giving	83,310	92,598	69,937	58,470	93,089	839	77,400	61,525	63,236	64,466
%Change from Last Year	0	11.15%	-24.47%	-16.40%	59.21%	-99.10%	9125.27%	-20.51%	02.78%	01.95%
Local Operating	80,682	91,046	62,348	56,745	91,254	0	68,000	57,600	60,900	49,730
Local Capital	0	0	5,300	1,87	60	0	7,800	610	370	12,306
Total Outreach	2,628	1,552	2,289	1,538	1,775	839	1,600	3,315	1,966	2,430
%Change from Last Year	0	-40.94%	47.49%	-32.81%	15.41%	-52.73%	90.70%	107.19%	-40.69%	23.60%
Disciples Outreach	2,628	1,552	1,440	1,440	918	839	267	1,098	0	2,430
Basic Mission Finance	641	0	336	0	0	492	0	540	0	520
%Change from Last Year	0	-100.00%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%
BMF from CWF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Week of Compassion	1,060	264	451	0	25	75	82	55	0	1,205
Reconciliation	5	0	55	0	0	53	0	124	0	12

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
PER CAPITA GIVING (based on Worship Attendance)										
Total Giving	0.00	0.00	1,748.00	1,462.00	3,724.00	0.00	2,211.00	1,538.00	2,108.00	1,401.00
%Change from Last Year	0.00	00.00%	90.00%	-16.36%	154.72%	-100.00%	00.00%	-30.44%	37.06%	-33.54%
Local Operating	0.00	0.00	133.00	5.00	71.00	0.00	223.00	15.00	12.00	268.00
Local Outreach	0.00	0.00	57.00	38.00	86.84%	0.00	46.00	83.00	66.00	53.00
%Change from Last Year	0.00	00.00%	00.00%	-33.33%	86.84%	-100.00%	00.00%	80.43%	-20.48%	-19.70%
Disciples Outreach	0.00	0.00	36.00	0.00	37.00	0.00	8.00	27.00	0.00	53.00
%Change from Last Year	0.00	00.00%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%	-100.00%	00.00%	237.50%	-100.00%	00.00%

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
PERCENT OF TOTAL GIVING										
Local Operating	96.85%	98.32%	89.15%	97.05%	98.03%	00.00%	87.86%	93.62%	96.31%	77.14%
Local Capital	00.00%	00.00%	07.58%	02.63%	00.06%	00.00%	10.08%	00.99%	00.59%	19.09%
Total Outreach	03.15%	01.68%	03.27%	00.00%	01.91%	100.00%	02.07%	05.39%	03.11%	03.77%
Disciples Outreach	03.15%	01.68%	02.06%	00.00%	00.99%	100.00%	00.34%	01.78%	00.00%	03.77%
Basic Mission Finance	00.77%	00.00%	00.48%	00.00%	00.00%	58.64%	00.00%	00.88%	00.00%	00.81%

3 c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	86	
Number of active non-members:	12	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	98	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	65	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	30	Yes
Less than 5 years:	5	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
4	4	0	4	11	5	14	14	42	98 Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	1	Yes
Households with minors:	8	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	4	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	25	Yes
Single adults over 65:	19	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	35	Yes

College:	36	Yes
Graduate School:	27	Yes
Specialty Training:	2	Yes
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	15	Yes
Adults who are retired:	75	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	10	Yes

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation: Occupations represented by our working adults include college professor, medical transcriptionist, engineer, library assistant, funeral director, copy editor, grocery manager, computer technician, corporate executive, business consultant. Many retirees continue part-time and/or volunteer work as: substitute teacher, Red Cross volunteer, hospice coordinator, and volunteers with Hart Comfort House (hospice), Purple Heart Homes, and other veteran service organizations.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

Although we cannot claim the diversity present in more urban settings, we are inclusive and unique in our own ways. Grace United is a predominantly mono-cultural congregation, many with European roots. Diversity for us exists in varied socio-economic and educational backgrounds, a wide range of political viewpoints and theological leanings, varied rural vs urban backgrounds, and broad range of life experiences.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

Our congregation has not formally discussed welcoming diversity (ONA), yet we are an open and accepting congregation that is welcoming to all. Our General Board is open to having the ONA conversation in the future with the help of a new pastor and/or assistance from the Association or Conference.

3 d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	20	Pastor, lay leaders, church members
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Pastor, worship committee
Children's Groups or Classes	4	Christian Ed committee, SS teachers
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	80 & 65	Pastor, Worship leaders, Music staff
Church-wide Meals	50	Fellowship leaders, special committees, church members
Choirs and Music Groups	85	Choir director, Bell choir leader, Organist, Pianist, Soloists
Church-based Bible Study	8	Lay leaders, pastor, participants
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	Weekly	Weekly, pastor, elders, worship committee
Community Meals	80	General Board, Outreach & Missions committee, church members
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	0	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	20	Outside organization
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Family with pastoral assistance
Intergenerational Groups	0	
Outdoor Worship	65	Worship committee, pastor & priest from Episcopal church
Prayer or Meditation Groups	15	"Prayer Blast"
Public Advocacy Work	+/- 25	Outreach & Missions, Gen. Board

Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	1-3	Christian Education with church members (Lenten programs)
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Family with pastoral help
Worship (time slot: <u>10:00 a.m.</u>)	Avg. 48	Pastor, Worship Committee, Music staff
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	Religious Education Committee
Youth Groups or Classes	0	
Other		

Additional comments:

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Ralph O. Wagner	No	Intentional Interim	Church member	Y

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation: N/A

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Church Secretary	No	P/T	Gen. Board Chair & Bldg./Grounds Chair	2 years
Administrative Assistant	No	P/T	General Board Chair & Assistant Treasurer	12 years
Custodian	No	P/T	Bldg. & Grounds and Assistant Treasurer	12 years
Organist	No	P/T	Personnel and Worship Committees	32 years
Pianist	No	P/T	Personnel and Worship Committees	19 years
Choir Director	No	Volunteer	Worship Committee	32 years
Nursery Supervisor	No	P/T	Chair of Christian Ed.	12 years

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s overall ministry?

Yes, we are a relatively small congregation, but we embrace big ideas! We inspire each other to be positive thinkers as we plan for the future of our church in the community. The Holy Spirit is alive and well at Grace United church as evidenced by the projects we initiate, undertake, and complete. We are a resourceful, spirit-led congregation.

3 e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year):

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 91,770
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$0

Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$ 0
Fundraising Events	\$ 6,000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$
Grants	\$ 3,100
Rentals of Church Building	\$ 7,860
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$ 10,200
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$
Other (specify):	\$
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$118,930.

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): **\$137,725**

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? **40%**

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

No, the church has never failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister.

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
- For DOC: Basic Mission, Special Offerings, Covenant

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? *(recommended 10%)*

OCWM for UCC = 8.7% Support for DOC = 3.8% (named above)
Total = 12.5%

What is the church's current indebtedness? None

Total amount of loan debt: **\$0** Reason for debt: **N/A**

Are capital and other payments current?

No capital payments. Other payments are all met.

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget. – **None** –

Recent improvements to our Worship Center include: steeple renovation (9/18) window replacement in fellowship hall (9/18), painting, cleaning, and multiple minor improvements used designated funds on hand for such improvements.

Total budget = \$13,444.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe: **NONE**

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: **NONE**

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign. **Not applicable.**

Does your church have an endowment? **Yes**

What is the market value of the assets?

Approx. \$293,650. (2/11/19)

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

Prior to our merger, both churches drew from the interest on their endowments as needed. As a merged congregation, funds are now drawn only under certain circumstances.

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

The rate of draw in 2018 was 0%, compared to approx. 3% five years ago.

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

Our goal/policy has been to refrain from drawing down our investment principal, and only utilize interest gained if absolutely necessary.

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

Since we do not practice drawing from our investment principal, we expect the endowment to last indefinitely, unless dire circumstances should arise.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): **\$7, 074.57**

Investments (other than endowment):

\$8,855.32 (Memorial Account)

\$15,848.30 (Seminary Account)

Mission Funds

Christian Sojourners: Grace United Church sponsors an international mission fund that primarily focuses on clean water projects and a medical clinic in Haiti.

Current fund balance is \$12,229.00.

Congregational Samaritans: Grace United has a local mission group that has a history of assisting county residents who experience a critical financial need.

More recently, the Samaritans are focusing on building accessibility ramps for individuals with mobility issues. Current fund balance is: \$16,608.

Does your church have a parsonage? **Yes**

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: **Currently rented @ \$850/month**

How is the parsonage used? **Rental property**

Street / City / State / Zip: **101 Maple Avenue, Wellsville, NY 14895**

Finished square footage: **1785 sq. feet**

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: **4 bedrooms, 2 bath**

Assessed real estate value: **\$69,000**

Available for minister residence: **Yes**

Expected minister residence: **Pastor's decision**

Condition of structure, systems and appliances: **Very good**

Entity in the church responsible for review & needed repairs: **Building & Grounds**

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Worship Center – Our church is a well-maintained brick building built in 1969 in the New England style of Congregational churches. The bright, comfortable sanctuary holds 200 and has a pipe organ and choir loft on a rear balcony. Separate church and pastor's offices are off the narthex. Our fellowship hall has a dining area with separate kitchen, a meeting area, and a homelike library sitting area. The entire space can be partitioned with moveable walls. The church school wing features a nursery, three classrooms and four rest rooms. The basement has a separate outside entrance, bathroom and stairway leading to the church office. This large, painted space has been rented in the past to a nursery school and a community action agency. It is now used for constructing accessibility ramp modules, rummage sales, and occasional music rehearsals. A paved parking lot accommodates 60 parking spaces.

Mission Center – This brick building was built in 1913, featuring a sanctuary with raised altar space, an electronic organ, choir loft, and full immersion baptistery, all in the front. There is a kitchen and adjacent fellowship hall on the sanctuary level, and a library and chapel at this level also. Surrounding the sanctuary area is a balcony with eight rooms and three offices. The lower street level includes another kitchen, a gymnasium (or social hall), offices, four bathrooms, and a lift/elevator providing access between the lower and first levels. The building has a carillon that continues to play every evening. The facility is presently rented to two community support agencies and is also the location for the weekly soup kitchen organized by Accord Community Action Agency.

Parsonage – (details stated earlier)

The parsonage is a two-story Cape Cod home built in 1900. It has 10 rooms, including 4 bedrooms and 2 full bathrooms. It has relatively new siding, a back deck with a fenced in yard, a detached garage, and a working fireplace. The home is currently rented, but will be made available to the pastor if desired. If our pastor prefers alternative housing, the parsonage will remain rental property.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*)

The following spaces are accessible to wheelchairs: sanctuary worship space, fellowship hall, Sunday school rooms, Mission Center lower level (elevator). The pulpit and worship center rest rooms are not totally accessible.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?

Grace United Church practices intentional stewardship of our time, resources and assets. We budget conservatively, yet support our missions and service projects abundantly. We seek to be a tithing church by allocating 10% of all church bequests to missions. Conscientious financial decisions are based on directing our resources to meet the greater good.

3 f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

The joining of our two churches into one worshipping body in 2015 has been the most significant and joyful experience for our congregation’s identity. Formerly known as Christian Temple and First Congregational Church, we are now Grace United Church. Our merger has been like the development of a strong marriage. For years we were good friends in the same town and after years of pondering a deeper relationship we began dating every Sunday in worship together. Confirming a shared vision and a firm resolve to thrive and grow as one body of Christ, our two churches became “engaged” in the process of yoking and merging our resources and properties. Now joined as one, Grace United is a marriage in which we respect each other’s unique denominational histories and practices, employing the same mutual respect, (i.e. “give & take”), of a successful union.

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

As our churches merged together beginning in 2015, we faced decisions regarding our church properties. We resolved the situation by creating a Worship Center and a Mission Center with our two buildings. The decision to vacate the space occupied by Christian Temple (DOC) was difficult for many older members who had “grown up” in that church building. By exhibiting patience in the process and embracing change as a necessary step in our church’s growth, the decision became a blessing with the merger.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Our congregation values peaceful resolution and consensus over conflict. Everyone’s point of view is heard without judgment. When consensus cannot be met in a General Board meeting, an ad hoc committee or task group is assigned to study the issue and report evidence-based findings back to the Board. After shared fact-finding and prayerful consideration, consensus and resolution are found.

Ministerial History *(include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)*

Staff member’s name (Grace United Church)	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
David A. Potts (settled pastor)	2	N
Michael P. Friday (interim)	1	N (ABC)
Ralph O. Wagner (intentional interim)	2	Y

Staff member's name (UCC/First Congregational Church)	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
William B. Jones	17	Y
Bonnie Beaupre	3	Y
Earl Crecelius	5	Y
Staff member's name (DOC/Christian Temple)	Years of service	DOC Standing (Y/N)
Anna Shirey	5	Y
Michael Malone	7	Y
Philip Smith	3	Y
Timothy Bancroft	4	Y

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

In our ministerial relationships with both settled pastors and supply ministers, we understand the importance of open and frequent dialogue between the pastor, staff, and personnel committee. In our current transitional period, we have taken great care to discern the type of pastoral relationships that work best for us. (e.g., inspirational leadership and guidance rather than micro-management). As our church continues to forge its new identity in the community, our Transition Team has sought evidence-based input from our members and committees to obtain honest feedback on all aspects of our church: the worship service, the ministerial staff, and use of our buildings and resources. For our search, we will continue to utilize intentional questioning, thought-filled discussions, and prayerful discernment to find an appropriate “fit” for both pastor and congregation.

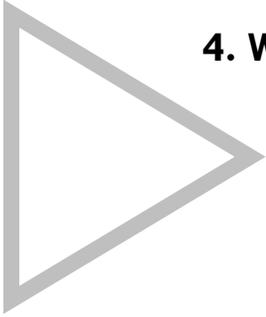
Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? **No.**

If a pastor’s tenure raises questions, please ask us for further insight.

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.**

Our review process consists of monthly pastoral relations meetings and annual performance reviews.



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy? *For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church’s engagement with neighbors near or far?*

For several years our Congregational Samaritans group has discreetly assisted many citizens experiencing a financial crisis. This local mission group has more recently developed a team that builds accessibility ramps for marginalized residents throughout our county. Grace United Church also has a strong volunteer presence in local hunger initiatives with three community programs: Community Kitchen (weekly meals), Salvation Army food pantry and our church is a lunch site for Office for the Aging (4 times per week). Our members have served on the hospital board, the library board, the Allegany Senior Foundation, and the board of Youth for Christ. Our volunteers work and support Hart Comfort House (hospice facility), Red Cross emergency response, and Community Action Angels. We conduct a bi-annual rummage sale that raises funds for church projects and provides free coats to the needy. We also support area veterans with our ramp building work through Purple Heart Homes.

Globally, we provide global support to Church World Service and Heifer International Project. More personally, we have a well-established Christian Sojourners group focused on supporting sustainable clean water initiatives in Haiti and Kenya and sustainable healthcare in Pignon, Haiti through Life Spring. With a personal connection to the leadership of Haiti Outreach, our continued engagement and support of our friends and family in Haiti has been a transformational relationship over an extended period of time.

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

Our congregation regularly sends conference delegates to the bi-annual assemblies of the Genesee Valley Association and to the annual meeting of New York Conference/UCC. Our church hosted the 2018 luncheon at the Disciples of Christ denominational house at Chautauqua Institution.

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. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- * Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- X God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- Border and Immigrant Justice
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)

**Almost*

- Just Peace
- ** Global Mission Church
- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- X Other UCC designations: "5 for 5"
- Designations from other denominations
- None

***Inquiry initiated*

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

Our congregation has taken measures to become accessible to most, and we will continue to explore future modifications. In our short history together as a merged congregation (3 years), we have concentrated on strengthening our visibility in the community with a strong emphasis on established church, local and global outreach and mission programs: Ramps Project, Congregational Samaritans, Christian Sojourners, community hunger initiatives (Meals on Wheels, Community Kitchen), Church World Service, Heifer Project International, and others. Although there is much more we could do to achieve recognition of our faith community with the above designations, we take great care to apply careful utilization of our people and resources to become an open, accepting, mission-oriented church as we are able.

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

Grace United Church welcomes everyone in our wider faith community to an annual Lenten light supper program series and we co-host an ecumenical garden service and luncheon every June with St. John's Episcopal Church. Our congregation also participates in a Thanksgiving service with other community churches and hosted this event in 2018.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

As we strive to be a welcoming Christian community, we gather for worship, Sunday school, and Bible study to celebrate our faith in Jesus. We spend several hours each month making intentional decisions on how to do that best and we go out into our community to share God's love. We support activities and decisions that share our talents, events, and facilities with the public. Our congregation's typical range of activities includes:

Gathering (22 hrs./month) – 8 hours in worship + 7-8 hrs. rehearsal time, 6 hours in Bible study

Governance (12 hrs./month) – General Board, committees, personnel management

Going out (searching and serving, 40-60 hrs./month *minimum*) – providing community service in many organizations: building ramps, visiting the elderly, serving home communion to the housebound, serving meals to the hungry, initiating concerts for a cause, and much more.

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

Detailed conditions for a part-time position will be negotiated, but we have expectations that our pastor will be involved to some degree in the congregation's community activities, will develop congenial relationships with area pastors, will participate in joint services, and will have interest in the hospital's chaplaincy program.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's MissionInSite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

MissionInSite data in our study area is consistent with national trends. As the nature of families and household groups changes, our church has an opportunity to welcome and minister to these groups in non-traditional ways. The stability of our UCC and DOC denominations at both the national and local levels indicates that as we embrace individuals and families in an open and accepting way we have an opportunity for mutual growth. The data showing a national trend of denominational stability is encouraging.

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

Our congregation's internal demographics are similar to the settled, residential areas adjacent to our church (older, settled neighborhoods), yet we draw members and participants from rural and outlying areas as well. We draw several church members from a 15-mile radius, rather than the 10-mile radius assigned to the study area. There are no expectations or limits to the populations we are willing to serve.

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

The low-income demographics of our community provide many service and fellowship opportunities that shape our ministry in the community. Our involvement with the ramps ministry and our work with agencies that address food insecurity are evidence of this. As with national trends, we have a large unchurched population that presents opportunities for church growth. The MissionInSite report demonstrates that Christian education, and adult religious experiences in our study area could be strengthened to align more closely to national trends.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? **Our church is known for opening its doors to a wide array of community activities from blood drives to community meals to music and special interest clubs. We're recognized as a church dedicated to serving others in the community. Our members are also very active community volunteers.**

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

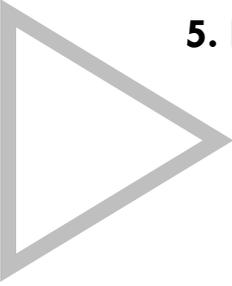
"This is a such a warm and welcoming church."

"People here are so friendly. It feels like home."

"You do so much in the community!"

"I love it here. You have a great congregation!"

"The Harvest Dinner is always so special!"



5. REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1

Reverend Dr. Michael P. Friday, Pastor and Organizational Leadership Specialist
860-305-4303 (mobile)
Email: rev_manfriday@hotmail.com
Relationship: Former Interim Pastor at Grace United Church

REFERENCE 2

Madeleine Gasdik, Director, Allegany County Office for the Aging
585-268-9390 (office) 585-610-5732 (mobile)
Email: gasdikm@alleganyco.com
Relationship: Professional associate of Grace United Church, friend, community member

REFERENCE 3

Rev. Peter F. Bryant, Educator & Retired Priest (Episcopal Church, Diocese of Rochester)
585-593-3209 (home)
Email: bryantpfb@gmail.com
Relationship: Ecumenical relationship between our parishes & longtime friend, community member

REFERENCE 4

Rev. Carol W. Stewart, Priest-in-Charge, St. John's Episcopal Church (Diocese of Rochester)
585-593-5592
Email: revcarolstewart@gmail.com
Relationship: Ecumenical partner, pastoral care associate, longtime friend, community member

(Letters attached below.)

The Rev. Dr. Michael P.L. Friday

93 Graham Ridge Road
Naugatuck Connecticut 08770-1583
United States of America

Phone (860) 305-4303
rev_manfriday@hotmail.com
www.fridayleads.org

February 10, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the honor of serving the Grace United Church of Wellsville, New York, between January and September 2015 as their Interim Pastor. It was an enjoyable time, cut short only by the combination of my promise at the start to offer eight months, and the difficulty of my being domiciled in Connecticut for the entirety of this tenure.

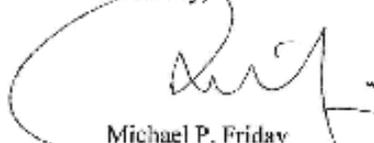
Among this congregation's virtues that readily meet one is their genuine friendliness, perhaps because of the warmth that villagers tend to exude more readily than large city dwellers. Grace's membership is comprised of mostly adults over age 55; and one finds that this demographic is sufficiently "confident in their own skin" as to forge disarming friendships. I found an act of worship in this congregation that I have not encountered anywhere else in my whole life of visiting myriad numbers of churches to be most engaging and of significant value: the Bread of Friendship – where a loaf of bread is distributed by someone in the congregation to another congregant as a form of blessing for the week ahead. Having been both a recipient and giver, there is a special kind of blessing in this, making Grace quite unique.

Grace is blessed with many talented musicians: organist, pianist, bell choir, contemporary musicians and singers, all of whom enrich worship and concert events. Grace is also blessed with an appetite for organizational excellence: during my time, the governing board spent copious amounts of time examining, critiquing and fine-tuning their organizational structure to facilitate the church's ministry more efficiently. Among the persons offering their leadership gifts at this level are some of Grace's finest people: wise, gracious, welcoming, and resourceful, whom I found to be excellent servants.

Amid all this, though, are prevailing challenges. There is room for Grace to add young families with children and youth. Despite Wellsville's demographics, Grace might examine how much room remains for becoming a little more ethnically diverse than she is. (This is certainly not to belittle the theological diversity with which Grace teems, given her congregational genesis and amalgamation! Of course, due to this composition, parishioners need to exercise great latitude, tolerance and elasticity of patience for others' positions [even in sermons] with which they might not share immediate resonance.)

I believe that Grace shall thrive marvelously should she secure, as her next pastor, someone who appreciates the church's potential for reaching the village with authenticity and friendship, and who wishes to partner and grow with them for a reasonably lengthy pastoral tenure. I am confident that this shall be immensely rewarding for pastor and congregation, alike.

Sincerely,



Michael P. Friday
Organizational Leadership and Interim Specialist with
Transition Ministries American Baptist Churches, USA

Remaining a Student of – and Recruiting Others for – the Jesus Example



Office for the Aging

6085 State Route 19N
Belmont, NY 14813
Ph: 585-268-9390
Ph: 866-268-9390
FAX: 585-268-9657

2 January 2019

NY Conference/UCC
5575 Thompson Road
Dewitt, NY 13214

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my sincere pleasure to serve as a phone and written reference for the Grace United Church in their efforts to find a new pastor. I have both personal and professional knowledge of the many wonderful ways they serve our community.

For many years they have supported our local Soup Kitchen, built ramps for the elderly and disabled in our community, supported the Salvation Army Food Pantry, and support many more global missions.

Most notably, they allow many outside organizations to use their facilities. The Office for the Aging has Luncheon Centers where individuals over 60 can socialize around a nutritious meal served by volunteers and staff, meet people with shared interests, and join in other activities the church and the community offers. In December 2017, we moved our Wellsville Luncheon Center into the Grace United Church, and we have been very happy there. We also hold Growing Stronger classes there, which is a strength training program for older adults. They have Directions in Independent Living in their building, allowing the disabled an ease and dignified access to services to help them succeed in life. They also allow their space for support groups for persons battling substance abuse. It is a beautiful, accessible, and well maintained facility, and we always feel welcomed when we are there.

The Grace United Church embraces and reflects the promise of community partnership and support. When asked for assistance to serve the elderly and disabled most in need, Grace United is a ready and willing partner. This has been a successful and mutually beneficial partnership for all involved and has helped us collectively serve those most in need.

Please consider this my most enthusiastic endorsement of Grace United Church. Please feel free to contact me at 585-268-9390 or 585-610-5732 if you would like to discuss this further.

Respectfully,

Madeleine M. Gasdik
Director



Rev. Peter F. Bryant
4160 Back River Rd. Scio, NY 14880
585-593-3209 bryantpfb@gmail.com

January 18, 2019

I am writing on behalf of Grace United Church in Wellsville New York. As a retired priest at St. John's Episcopal Church in Wellsville, I have had many contacts with Grace United and the two parishes (Christian Temple and The First Congregational Church) that merged to form Grace United (2015). I know the people and spirit of Grace United by: participating in our annual joint outdoor garden services; once acting as the photographer for the Congregational Church's summer Vacation Bible School; attending several services; and through personal relationships with church members.

First among the several strengths of Grace United is their clear commitment to share and live Christ's message of love and service to all inside and outside the church both locally and globally. The "Be The Church" banner hanging in front affirms their commitment to: "protect the environment, care, for the poor, reject racism, forgive often, fight for the powerless share earthly and spiritual resources, embrace diversity, love God, Enjoy Life." They have a rich community life of community suppers, fund-raisers, trainings, and projects. One project team builds and installs ADA- compliant ramps at no cost to the recipient.

Members and fortunate visitors to Grace United delight in the fruits of their excellent music program. The congregation is blessed to have many accomplished musicians, a bell choir, and excellent music director, all of whom enrich services.

Their third strength is a commitment to listen to and find common ground among the varying tastes and concerns of all members. This was abundantly evident in the careful process that led to the successful formation of Grace United.

I am not aware of any steps needed to improve the Church's ministry.

In summary, Grace United is a very welcoming congregation that takes outreach seriously,

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter F. Bryant". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Rev. Peter F. Bryant (retired)



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

12 E. Genesee St. Wellsville NY 14895
Phone: 585-593-5592 Email: sjw14895@gmail.com
Website: www.sjw14895.wix.com/stjohnschurch
The Rev. Carol Stewart, Priest-in-Charge

February 19, 2019

To: Grace United Transition Team
Grace United Church
289 North Main Street
Wellsville, NY 14895

As priest at St. John's Episcopal Church down the street, I have worked with Grace United for several years. Our congregations have shared an annual "Garden Service" for many, many years, and while Grace has been without a pastor, I have filled in for several funerals. In addition, I have lived in Wellsville for over 30 years, so I know some of the members as friends and neighbors.

One of the major strengths of Grace United is its outreach ministry in the community. Not only does Grace sponsor and staff the Community Kitchen, which serves a meal to anyone who comes each Saturday, they hold community-wide fund raisers for several local efforts to feed the hungry in our midst. Musical concerts include choirs and bands from other churches, as well as Grace's own excellent musical groups. Another significant ministry to the community is their ramp building efforts. Many homes in our area now have safe access for their older or mobility-limited residents thanks to the men of Grace United. There are also dinners and rummage sales to support our community. When I think of church and community, Grace United comes first to my mind.

Another strength is the ability of the people of Grace to work together. I know that building the federated church has been a long process. I was pleased to watch Christians from two different denominations learn to work together in love, to live out that which unites us instead of being divided by differences. The members manage to focus their energy, and there is a lot of it, so that Grace is truly one congregation.

This implies that there are a number of strong lay leaders at Grace, and that is certainly true. Those leaders do not stumble over each other or generate conflicts among themselves, but cooperate in faith and love. While this is a strength, especially in times when there is no pastor, it can also present challenges when a new pastor arrives. In my experience this strength is a hallmark of a vibrant rural church; a wise pastor will carefully channel the energy and experience and leadership that is already present at Grace.

A challenge which is common to all the churches in our area is the 'graying' of the congregation. Our community is declining, having lost a major industry and a K-Mart in the past year. We are part of Appalachia, and we look more and more like the popular images of that region. That means, of course, fewer employment opportunities for younger people, which increases the proportion of people living on government assistance, and also increases the exodus of young adults. Both present increasing financial issues for churches. All in all, growing a church in these conditions is a definite challenge.

A significant experience I have had in Grace's ministry is the welcome I have experienced as the priest of another congregation. When the annual Garden Service is held at Grace, I have been invited to be part of the planning process, not only for worship, but also for the CROP Walk that used to be part of that day. Episcopal polity requires that I celebrate Holy Communion when we gather together since our denominations are not in full communion, and Grace has been very supportive of that. When I have been called to do a funeral, the members of Grace have been most helpful and supportive. We have tried a joint Bible Study with our two parishes, and routinely invite each other to fund raisers and other community functions—and we actually attend them, confident in the welcome that we will receive.

If you have any questions for me, please feel free to contact me at:

revcarolstewart@gmail.com [fastest response]
St. John's Episcopal Church
12 E. Genesee St.
Wellsville, NY 14895
585-593-5592

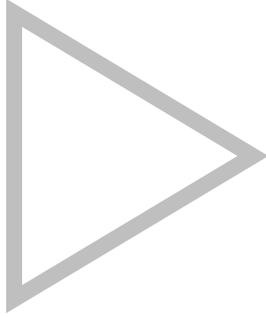
May God bless you throughout this search process.

Yours in faith,



Carol W. Stewart+
Priest-in-Charge
St. John's Episcopal Church

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS



- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6 a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

The choir at Grace United Church sometimes sings the Prayer of St. Francis, an appeal for peace that begins within each of us. The “Peace Prayer” echoes the hope and love we seek to share with our neighbors near and far as we go about doing Christ’s work.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord make me an instrument of your peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled, as to console;

To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

6 b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

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.)*

A Transition Team comprised of three members from the General Board and one member-at-large representing the congregation prepared the bulk of this document. Those individuals are: George Johnson, Robert Shook, Janice Riley, and Carol Flurschutz, respectively. Through a process of careful discernment, the transition team gathered input for this church profile from our congregation and multiple documents. Specialized data and input was provided by committees, officers and church leaders to insure content accuracy.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: **None**

Signed:

Carol H. Flurschutz, Co-chair / Date: February 18, 2019

George E. Johnson, Co-chair / Date: February 18, 2019
Search Team, Grace United Church

This document is created through support to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22

