



Williston-Immanuel United Church

United Church of Christ
American Baptist Churches USA
Prospectus

Our Community

Portland is the largest city in Maine. It is diverse and progressive and provides us with access to cultural and arts events, colleges and universities, minor league sports teams, world-class restaurants, and the ocean, lakes, and mountains. Portland is home to an ever-growing population of immigrants, refugees, and asylees and is the service hub for much of Southern Maine for mental health treatment, addiction, developmental disabilities, elderly, homeless, and troubled youth. We are called to minister to our diverse community through our actions and resources, and it is an ongoing challenge.

Our Congregation

With roughly 200 members and active attendees, Williston-Immanuel United might be considered a small church, but we act like a big one. We aspire to be a compassionate, dynamic, 21st Century church community in our corner of Portland, Maine.



Our congregation is home to many faithful and contributing members of different abilities, orientations, backgrounds, and countries of origin. We know that our diversity and care for each other makes us stronger. We are committed to gender and racial equality, and have been for decades. There is a pervasive sense of gratitude that in 2012 Williston-West UCC and Immanuel Baptist Church found each other and have become one church community.

Williston-Immanuel United Church is proud of our outreach into the community. Our three most active programs are our Community Assistance Program, which provides food and other essentials to the local immigrant community, the Wayside Food Program, which provides a meal at the church every Thursday for anyone in the community, and Family Promise, which is a national program we participate in, providing housing to families experiencing homelessness. One significant tension point in our congregation that requires ongoing collective work is the push and pull between outreach needs and financial sustainability. Our building upkeep needs are substantial, and there is deep awareness that overdrawing from the endowment is a path to avoid.

Our Pastoral Needs

Williston-Immanuel United Church seeks

- a leader who knows when to listen and when to share his or her own vision for the church;
- an individual who can hear and see the needs of the congregation and the needs of the community and weave them together, both in worship and community;
- a caring and empathetic person with a deep love of diversity and social justice;
- and a worship leader who can empower and challenge the congregation, who appreciates traditions and creates space for innovative ideas and new traditions.



Over the last year, our interim pastor has led our congregation in six three-hour dialogue sessions, each working to discuss and define who we are and who we want to be. Our next pastor will collaborate with us on that vision as it continues to emerge.

These are our core values:

- We will continue to take care of each other, offering fellowship and building relationships among all our congregation, as **Pastoral Care and Community** are vital at all stages of life.
- We will continue to serve the growing needs of our surrounding urban community through our



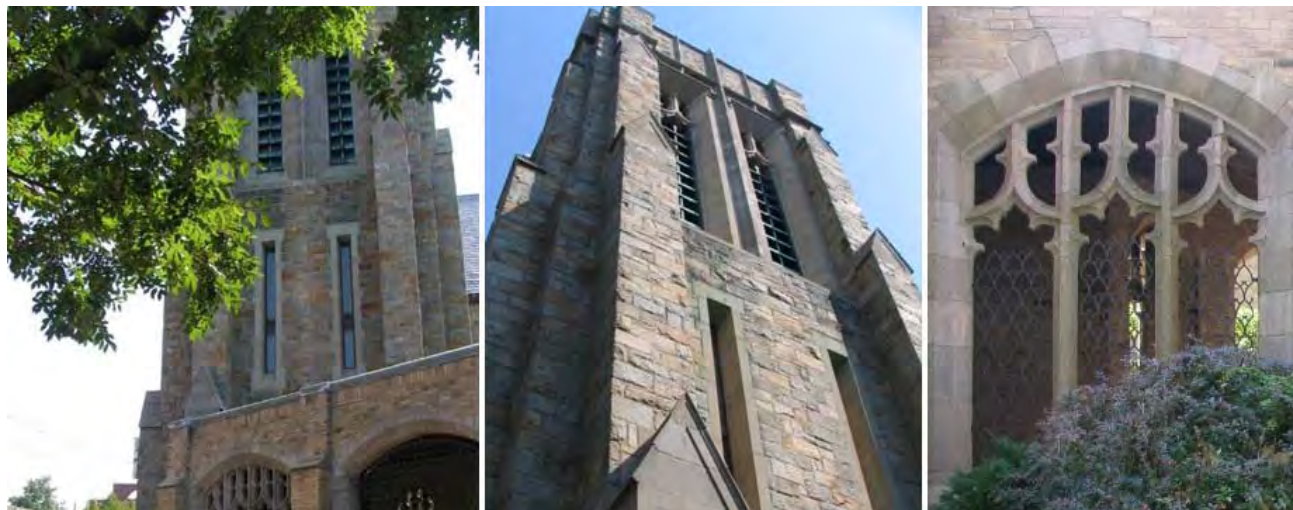
Outreach Programs and be a voice for love and justice in our city and beyond.

- We will grow our **Youth and Children's Programs** and find more ways for our children and youth to be active, engaged members of our community, including in Sunday worship.
- We will bring new traditions into our **Worship and Music Programs** while respecting those we already have, knowing that worship, music and other arts are vital to our spiritual growth.

- We will continue to seek a balance between spiritual growth, ministry, and **Financial Sustainability**, specifically addressing building and other non-programmatic costs.
- We will search for more ways to be a truly **21st Century church**, an innovative, progressive Christian community that **communicates our mission widely**, welcomes all, and is relevant in our contemporary world.

Our Building

The sanctuary building is lovely. It is classic granite with slate roof in Gothic style and a vaulted ceiling with oak trusses. All parish level and clerestory windows are beautiful stained glass, each donated by members in the 1940-60 period. The 5-level parish house was built first, about 1927, followed the next year by the sanctuary building. It was built at a time when it was a very prosperous and much larger congregation. It is an imposing stone structure in a 'high church' style more often seen in large city churches.



Our church edifice is large, historic, and handsome; this is both a source of pride and a challenge. We are planted in downtown Portland with no possibility of expansion. Fortunately the structure is solid and well made. Many sister churches have closed their buildings that are now restaurants, community centers, etc. We believe God has work for us to do where we are. Our immediate neighborhood and immigrant population cry out for assistance. We fill the need for an inclusive and welcoming Christian congregation here in downtown Portland. We attract those seeking thoughtful and ecumenical fellowship. Rather than relocate to the suburbs, we have made the conscious decision to use our building and location as a tool for ministry.

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