

## Welcome to Woodridge Congregational United Church of Christ



546 Budlong Road, Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

**Church website:** [Woodridge Congregational United Church of Christ  
\(woodridgechurchri.org\)](http://woodridgechurchri.org)

**Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/WoodridgeCongregational>

**Conference:** Southern New England Conference

**Association:** Rhode Island Association

**UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:** Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut,  
Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region, 508-244-4416, [kogutp@sneucc.org](mailto:kogutp@sneucc.org)

## WHO WE ARE

Woodridge is an open and affirming church welcoming everyone no matter where they are on life's journey. We are passionate about God's word, our community, and social justice issues. When you enter Woodridge, you can feel the fellowship, faith, and community. We believe our most important work happens after Sunday morning worship, in our day-to-day lives. The community at Woodridge can't be described but can only be felt; seldom do we have a visitor who leaves and doesn't return.

## WHAT WE VALUE ABOUT OUR AREA

In gathering information many factors came into play as to why folks value living in R.I. Some grew up here and never moved away. Others came by way of education or vocation, while a few immigrated from other countries. Overall there are common values: the close proximity of most things; the excellence of schools and health care; the value of housing. Because we are close to the big cities of Boston and New York, we are able to live in small towns or cities and still reach out to those places. We enjoy year round vacationing, from the winter wonderland that is northern New England to the vast opportunities available through the ocean, so close by. Overall many enjoy year round fun close by while maintaining our small community status.

Current size of membership: 161

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): We enjoy occasional joint worship services with First Korean Church of Rhode Island UCC, which are partly in Korean. Our pastor is not required to speak or understand Korean.

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration: Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association.

Compensation Level: Full Time

Total package available: \$100,665 – \$110,665. Salary includes optional benefits.

## SCOPE OF WORK

Weekly worship: The overall development and coordination of all parts of the order of worship/ bulletin in conjunction with the Minister of Music (currently a weekly phone call and a monthly face to face meeting) and the final printing on Friday by the office

administrator. In addition, the pastor would be the primary preacher each week and communion celebrant monthly and for special services.

Special worship services: The pastor would be responsible for the overall development and coordination for special services, such as Ash Wednesday; Maundy Thursday; Easter Sunrise service; and Christmas Eve.

Weekly communication: The pastor would work with the office administrator to produce the weekly online newsletter (Thursday) and announcement inserts for Sunday morning.

Monthly visitation: Nursing home residents, “shut – ins” and hospital visits as needed.

Funerals; Baptisms; Weddings: Including all preparation meetings and visits. Currently no Baptisms or Weddings are scheduled for 2024.

Administrative Meetings (currently all done on Zoom – with an occasional in person meeting):

Executive Board (monthly – except July and August))

Worship Team (on average 5 – 6/ year)

Christian Education (on average 5 – 6/ year)

Sunday school/ Christian Education for children and youth: Because of its critical importance to the health and future of the church - the pastor would be asked to provide on-going and intentional support to the children and youth ministry in conjunction with the CE Team and its chair.

This would include:

- Weekly children’s sermons
- Confirmation program as needed
- Attendance at all CE meetings
- Informal support to parents; grandparents; teachers and helpers through pastoral “check ins” before and after church and sometimes via email/ text/ call
- Some communication with older youth – who will serve as liturgists; communion servers; help with Sunday school; mission and service projects
- Additional involvement and support as needed

New member and Visitor Outreach: The pastor would coordinate membership exploration classes each year and take primary responsibility for reaching out to visitors to our community.

Other areas of responsibility, which are important to the church and have taken various forms according to the interests of the pastor and congregation:

- Adult Education/ Bible study (currently done on Zoom)
- UCC Conference and Association meetings and events, including RI Association clergy gathering
- Social justice/ Mission and Service beyond the Woodridge community
- Local clergy associations and gatherings
- Other interests of the pastor

## CORE COMPETENCIES

Our congregation appears to agree on very similar core competencies. These relate to our pastor being able to offer guidance that is easily understood and that is connected with our daily lives.

**1-Compassionate** Being an open and affirming community, our parishioners seek a pastor who is humble and caring, a pastor who listens to parishioners and who can collaborate between parishioners or committees in a non-judgmental manner.

**2-Welcoming/Friendly** Our parishioners want a pastor who is genuine and interested in everyone in the parish, who has some relationship with each member. Our pastor should provide visits to those parishioners who are in nursing homes; those who are not able to go out because of health reasons; and those experiencing short-term illnesses or following a hospitalization. We seek a pastor who reaches out to newcomers to our church.

**3-Relatable** This is perhaps the most important trait our parishioners seek in a pastor. We want a pastor who provides sermons that are easily understood and that relate to our lives, however individualized those lives may be. We seek modern interpretations of the Bible and current insights into scripture. We seek a “take-home” message each week, one that we can be reminded of in our daily lives, yet not feel as though we are being judged. Humor and personal stories are welcome! Our ideal pastor is one who supports lay participants in worship without judgment or expectation of perfectionism. The ability to relate to our children and youth through children’s messages is an important piece of our services.

## COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Total package available: \$100,665 – \$110,665. Salary includes optional benefits.

Benefits: Annuity, health insurance, dental, life, and disability insurance, FICA allowance, auto allowance, education allowance.

We do not have a parsonage. We would like our pastor to live within a commute that facilitates easy attendance at evening meetings and other activities at church, and for emergencies.

Due to our location in the center of Rhode Island, our pastor can choose from many cities and towns in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut that are within an easy commute. Both Massachusetts and Connecticut have income tax reciprocity with Rhode Island.

## **Peer and Professional Supports Available for Ministers in this Association Conference:**

The Area Conference Minister hosts a weekly video support call for ministers in the Southeast Region; some clergy are “regulars” and others drop in as schedules allow or needs arise. There are also affinity groups forming about twice each year in the conference as well as retreat days for clergy wellness, boundary training, and racial justice training. The resources of the Center for Transformational Leadership are available for clergy and lay leaders alike. In 2024, the Southern New England Conference will be inviting participants to join the Lilly Grant funded Compelling Preaching Program, which will include opportunities for course work and coaching from some of America’s best preachers.

## **WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?**

We seek a minister who is committed to the spiritual growth of our congregation, who will help us to continue to strengthen our youth ministry programs, who recognizes and encourages our music ministry, and provides leadership as we live out our Christian values in service to our community. With the help of God, our new minister will work in collaboration with us to grow and strengthen Woodridge.

The minister we are seeking will play a pivotal role in guiding our congregation to make a meaningful impact beyond the church walls. As a dynamic individual committed to the spiritual growth of our congregation, the minister should inspire and empower our members to embody Christian values in their daily lives. This will serve as the foundation for our external impact. The minister's commitment to youth ministry development will engage the younger members of our community, instilling in them a sense of purpose and service. By maintaining the quality of our music ministry, the minister will leverage the power of music to create a welcoming and spiritually uplifting space, drawing in the broader community. Additionally, the minister's leadership in community service initiatives will strategically position our congregation as a force for positive change. Through active involvement in existing projects like the interfaith food pantry, Thanksgiving baskets, and partnerships with other churches, the congregation will contribute tangibly to addressing local needs. The minister's collaborative approach will foster relationships of mutual trust and interdependence, strengthening our ties with the broader community. Ultimately, the new minister will work alongside and guide our congregation to translate our shared values into impactful actions, making a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve beyond the church walls.

**Four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas:**

**Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice**

We desire a pastor who is a good listener, welcoming, makes time to get to know people, and engages in pastoral care. These traits reflect a commitment to spiritual practices and discipleship. The importance of spiritual foundation is reflected in the inclusion of scripture reading, prayers, and sermons as some of our favorite parts of worship.

Proactive Implementation

- Regular Spiritual Practices: The minister can lead by example, actively engaging in regular spiritual practices, fostering a culture of prayer, and emphasizing the importance of a personal spiritual journey.
- Pastoral Care Initiatives: Actively visiting members for pastoral care, listening to their concerns, and providing spiritual guidance can demonstrate a commitment to the spiritual well-being of the congregation.
- Interactive Scripture Engagement: Incorporating interactive scripture readings during worship, encouraging thoughtful reflection, and connecting biblical teachings to everyday life can enhance the spiritual foundation of the congregation.

**Nurturing UCC Identity**

A pastor who works well with the executive board, engages young people and families, and collaborates with leaders of other faiths displays a commitment to the values and identity of the UCC. Active participation in various settings of the UCC, including local churches and conferences, is also a part of nurturing UCC identity.

Proactive Implementation

- Active Participation: The minister can actively participate in various UCC settings, such as local churches, conferences, and global ministries, fostering a sense of connectedness and shared identity within the broader UCC community.
- Interfaith Collaboration: Actively seeking opportunities to engage with leaders of other faiths and promoting interfaith dialogue can strengthen the church's commitment to inclusivity and understanding.
- Youth and Family Engagement: Implementing programs and initiatives that specifically engage young people and families can contribute to the vibrancy of the congregation and align with UCC values.

## **Building Transformational Leadership Skills**

We seek a pastor who sets the tone, empowers the church, strategically shapes the future, and collaborates with intercultural awareness. These qualities demonstrate a focus on building transformational leadership skills, including strategic visioning and collaborative leadership.

### Proactive Implementation

- **Visionary Leadership:** Setting a compelling vision for the future of the church and involving the congregation in strategic planning processes can empower the church to be faithful to God's call.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Actively collaborating with the executive board and fostering a culture of teamwork and inclusivity can strengthen the leadership dynamics within the church.
- **Community Engagement:** Proactively engaging in the broader community, participating in interfaith and social justice initiatives, and witnessing in the public square can showcase transformative leadership in action.



Woodridge members serve at Church Without Walls in downtown Providence

## **Working Together for Justice and Mercy**

A commitment to social justice and mercy is reflected in the pastor's participation in the Interfaith Coalition Against Poverty, involving young people in service projects outside the church walls, and holding worship services at an assisted living center.

Additionally, the church's involvement in various activities like the interfaith food pantry and support for non-profit groups aligns with a commitment to justice and mercy.



## Proactive Implementation

- **Community Involvement:** Actively participating in community organizations and initiatives that address issues of justice and mercy, aligning with the church's values and mission.
- **Emphasis on Social Justice:** Incorporating themes of justice and mercy into sermons, prayers, and various church activities to instill a sense of social responsibility within the congregation.
- **Building Relationships:** Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence within the community, fostering a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility for addressing societal challenges.

## **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)

We are passionate about who God is calling us to become as a congregation and we believe our next pastor will be integral in helping us achieve this. We are a diverse congregation and have many goals for the future, which center on the Bible, our open and affirming statement, and addressing social injustices and community issues, while living out God’s words in our lives as individuals and as a community. God is calling us to continue on this path, while continuing to attract young families and children by living out our belief - no matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.

With this as our foundation, it is important to us that our church leaders, committee members, and pastor partner closely to promote transparency around the work that needs to be done at the church and into our community, at large. We are excited to work together to identify this needed work and how to accomplish our goals. Some examples of this would be our work with the food pantry, our mission projects with Goodrich Presbyterian School in Sierra Leone, or membership and fellowship events within our own church.

Families and children are so important to Woodridge and our community. Over the years, we have worked together as a church to include children in every aspect of our community. We have also been growing our family and youth populations and expanding the programming that we offer, as a church, for this important population. It is clear to us that God is calling us to continue this vital work, spreading His Love, Word, and Acceptance to everyone. Our ideal pastor will attract younger members and families into the church while working with our Christian Education Team to fulfill this foundational goal of our congregation. One of the most important parts of our Sunday



Worship is the Children's Message. It is important to our congregation to see this continue with our new pastor.



Confirmation Class 2023

Learning about God's word and studying it, deepens the faith of many in our congregation and brings us closer to Him. As a church, we feel called to hear God's word and love. This is key to our faith development. We are excited to continue and expand these adult Bible studies, both virtually and in person, with our new pastor.



Adult Bible Study on Zoom

Music is also integral in our worship service, where we feel God's presence. God has blessed our congregation with some immensely talented members and friends. From our choir, soloists, Adult Chimers, and Prime-Time Chimers to our friends from the

Rhode Island Sax Quartet, we are often hearing a joyful noise during Sunday Worship. We are excited to continue and deepen this ministry, in partnership with our new pastor, regardless of his/her/their musical talents.



Woodridge Choir with added Chimers.

Our open and affirming statement defines us as a congregation. We feel rooted in this statement and it is published weekly on the cover of our bulletin as a reminder to ourselves and a testament to visitors about who we are. We are proud of it and know that this is the path that God is leading us to continue down. We have close ties to RI Pride, as well as other denominations and faiths, including our close friends at the First Korean Church and throughout the Jewish community. Our worship services often have recognition of many of these different elements throughout.



Pride Sunday 2023



Rhode Island Sax Quartet

Finally, we are a community who enjoy each other and spending time with one another. Both inside and outside the church, we love getting together for time of praise and fellowship. The pandemic definitely impeded our ability to have some of our beloved fellowship traditions, such as Dinners for 8, a Halloween party and/or Trunk or Treat, and the ever-popular All-Church Birthday Party. We feel God present when we gather and all agree God is driving us to continue or restart some of these fellowship opportunities.



All-Church Birthday Party

God's plans for our congregation are exciting and inspiring. We know that God has great plans for our congregation and the community through our outreach. The future is bright and our next pastor will play a vital role in helping us fulfill our shared purpose.



## How God Is Calling Us To Reach Out To Address The Emerging Challenges And Opportunities Of Our Community And Congregation

With the COVID-19 pandemic came many challenges, but also new ways of doing things. During the shutdown, a worship service was recorded and accessed through You Tube weekly. We now livestream the worship service through YouTube, with an opportunity for our virtual audience to participate in the shared prayer requests of the church. Many committee meetings are conducted virtually, with the option to meet in-person when the topics warrant it.

Our church participated in an outreach to a Goodrich Presbyterian School in Sierra Leone, coordinated by one of our church members who has connections with that school. It is an all-church service project that includes children in Sunday School as well as members of the congregation. The project was begun in 2022 and featured during Advent 2023.

### WHO ARE WE NOW? CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

#### Our Life of Faith

The Holy Spirit's presence is most deeply felt when we are involved in service projects, such as working in the food pantry, collecting for the Goodrich Presbyterian School in Sierra Leone, packing Thanksgiving baskets, or cooking meals for members of our congregation who are facing challenges and need support. We are open to the influence of the Holy Spirit and possibilities for the future.



Sunday School members and Service Team packing Thanksgiving baskets

## **Strengths of Our Congregation**

The congregation's strengths or positive qualities fall into several categories: The church receives community support as well as being involved in the community. The church is all inclusive, open and affirming, and displays acceptance of all. The church is hard working. "Everyone comes together to get things done." There is "a willingness to step up and come together when needed". The congregation prides itself on "great programs for children" as well as an "appreciation for the importance of music in worship". The congregation is family. It is welcoming, friendly, genuinely caring, helpful, and warm. "We are what our bulletin says - caring and welcoming."

## **Our Congregation Gathers for Worship**

Worship takes place on Sunday mornings at 10 am. Ushers welcome and greet worshippers as they arrive. The service is planned by the pastor in consultation with the minister of music and generally follows the lectionary with special sermon series topics during the year. Volunteer liturgists participate in the service, assisting with welcome and announcements, call to worship, and scripture reading. Hymns and choir anthems are selected by the music minister to enhance and coordinate with the message and are a combination of traditional and more contemporary pieces. Our hand chimes choirs and guest musicians frequently provide special music during our worship services. The pastor invites the children and "young in spirit" to the front of the church to sit with him for the children's message before they leave for Sunday school. The sharing of joys and concerns by the congregation is an important part of our worship service, as is the Passing of the Peace when we do move from our pews to greet each other with the peace of Jesus Christ. We often need gentle reminders to return to our seats! There is continued fellowship after the service during coffee hour in the fellowship hall, where the various committees provide coffee, juice and baked goods each week.



Outdoor Worship – we sang outdoors weather permitting during pandemic.

Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month, and during special services. It is usually served to the congregation by ushers or by our youth, but sometimes is served by intinction. Upon return to in-person worship during the pandemic, we used prepackaged communion cups. We now are back to the traditional serving of communion but continue to provide prepackaged cups for those who prefer them.



Easter Altar



Baptisms are special occasions in our church life, with visitors and extended family joining the service. After the baptism and congregational vow, the parents and child are presented with a white rose and a white blanket, hand made by one of our members. Our pastor carries the infant up and down the aisle presenting the child to the congregation.



Baptism

During a recent congregational survey, many worshippers identified the sermon as their favorite part of the service. The following words were used to describe an effective and desirable preaching style: relevant, engaging, inspiring, thought provoking, good storytelling, a bit of humor, and relating the Bible to present life.

### **Educational Program/Faith Formation Vision of Our Church**

Faith Formation and the youth of Woodridge are a central part of our church and something that we would look to our minister to continue to focus on building and strengthening, in partnership with the Christian Education Committee.

We actively seek to engage our youth in all aspects of our church. We invite older students to serve as liturgists, utilize youth as “helpers” in Sunday School, and have them assist with service-based activities, such as the Thanksgiving Baskets and Advent/Lenten service projects. The first Sunday of every month is also an Intergenerational Church Service, where our students stay in church and participate in the service.



We believe our youth programs are strong. Our Sunday School has approximately 25 students registered, with 12-16 students attending every Sunday. We offer Pageants at Christmastime and Easter. We provide a Communion Class every other year and have recently started offering a Bible Class for youth. We provide multiple opportunities throughout the year that are focused on or involve the youth.



Christmas Pageant

Our goal at Woodridge is to offer opportunities for youth of all ages to be able to deepen their faith, learn about Jesus' teachings, and contribute to the church and our wider community. We are committed to building upon what we already have and developing further opportunities for our youth.



Sunday School fall 2023

### **Ministry and Mission**

Woodridge Church has strong lay leaders and several teams that work closely with the minister in support of church operations. The Executive Board is made up of the chairpersons from each of the teams, as well as the Minister, Music Minister, Moderator, Clerk, Member at Large, and Treasurer. The Executive Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month. Once approved, meeting minutes are distributed via email or mail to the congregation. The teams include:

Pastoral and Staff Relations

Christian Education

Stewardship, Buildings and Ground

Worship

Membership and Fellowship

Service

Each team meets as needed throughout the year. The Worship Team and Christian Education Team meet more regularly than the other teams.

We can provide our 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.

Updates and important information are communicated during the service on Sunday mornings and through weekly emails. The Woodridge Word (Thursday email) lists

upcoming events, services, announcements from the various teams, covid precaution reminders, and other useful information about the life of the church. A separate email (currently on hiatus) is sent weekly called God Moments which informs the congregation of prayer requests, joys and concerns that have been shared in the service or communicated to the Minister.

Special email messages can be sent for urgent announcements. When the covid pandemic occurred in 2020, Woodridge Church responded quickly to cancel in person worship. The Minister, Music Minister, and several members of the Executive Board worked quickly to set up video recordings of weekly services for viewing on YouTube. Three choir members met weekly with the music minister to record hymns to include in the service. Other members of the congregation recorded special music to include as well. One of our members who is proficient with recording and editing volunteered his time and expertise each week to produce the videos.

The Worship Team met regularly with the Minister and Music Minister to develop protocols for safe return to in person worship. Many changes were made to the service to ensure the safety of the congregation, which was our primary focus. These changes have been gradually returning back to the pre-pandemic paradigm over the past year. Recommendations for changes are brought to the Executive Board for discussion and approval, and the congregation is kept informed throughout.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

| Church:   | 782772           | Schedule:             | 0                  | Worship:               | Congregational UCC | Canon:               | RI                  | 0300                   |                         |                       |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Assoc:    | S44              |                       |                    |                        |                    |                      |                     |                        |                         |                       |
| YEAR      | MEMBERS          | AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE | CHR EDV FAITH FORM | TOT OTHER CONTRIBUTION | CONFESSION         | TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM | DEATHS OR TRANS OUT | OTHER LOSSES           | NET MEMBS ADDED/REMOVED |                       |
| 2012      | 193              | 90                    | 22                 | 5                      | 13                 | 0                    | 5                   | 1                      | 02                      |                       |
| 2013      | 198              | 81                    | 18                 | 0                      | 7                  | 1                    | 3                   | 0                      | 5                       |                       |
| 2014      | 191              | 85                    | 18                 | 1                      | 13                 | 0                    | 7                   | 14                     | -7                      |                       |
| 2015      | 190              | 89                    | 18                 | 0                      | 0                  | 8                    | 3                   | 7                      | -1                      |                       |
| 2016      | 198              | 95                    | 69                 | 0                      | 1                  | 13                   | 6                   | 0                      | 8                       |                       |
| 2017      | 185              | 90                    | 69                 | 0                      | 0                  | 7                    | 0                   | 0                      | 7                       |                       |
| 2018      | 190              | 97                    | 48                 | 0                      | 15                 | 0                    | 3                   | 0                      | 02                      |                       |
| 2019      | 192              | 88                    | 40                 | 0                      | 0                  | 4                    | 2                   | 0                      | 2                       |                       |
| 2020      | 192              | 92                    | 46                 | 7                      | 5                  | 1                    | 3                   | 0                      | 0                       |                       |
| 2021      | 192              | 76                    | 34                 | 0                      | 0                  | 0                    | 0                   | 0                      | 0                       |                       |
| 2022      | 191              | 78                    | 55                 | 0                      | 0                  | 0                    | 1                   | 0                      | -1                      |                       |
| YEAR      | CURRENT EXPENSES | CAPITAL PAYMENTS      | BASIC SUPPORT      | TOT OTHER UCC GIVING   | TOTAL OCWM         | OTHER GIFTS          | WIDER MISSION       | BASIC SUPPL CURR LOCAL | TOTAL EXPEND            | PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS |
| 2012      | \$166,398        | \$16,202              | \$4,942            | \$3,938                | \$8,280            | \$878                | \$9,758             | 2.61                   | \$185,788               | \$103,984             |
| 2013      | \$176,069        | \$10,236              | \$4,690            | \$3,799                | \$8,467            | \$430                | \$8,697             | 2.06                   | \$185,782               | \$86,988              |
| 2014      | \$182,813        | \$10,280              | \$3,709            | \$3,694                | \$7,393            | \$1,446              | \$8,800             | 1.82                   | \$211,676               | \$86,829              |
| 2015      | \$182,841        | \$10,260              | \$482              | \$2,778                | \$3,270            | \$583                | \$3,793             | 0.38                   | \$206,094               | \$100,914             |
| 2016      | \$182,284        | \$12,760              | \$135              | \$4,387                | \$4,522            | \$973                | \$5,485             | 0.67                   | \$200,539               | \$105,788             |
| 2017      | \$189,270        | \$10,260              | \$0                | \$4,540                | \$4,540            | \$730                | \$5,280             | 0.00                   | \$194,470               | \$113,026             |
| 2018      | \$200,169        | \$19,873              | \$84               | \$3,797                | \$3,881            | \$797                | \$4,648             | 0.09                   | \$204,817               | \$116,742             |
| 2019      | \$184,891        | \$0                   | \$1,000            | \$775                  | \$1,715            | \$1,675              | \$3,384             | 0.91                   | \$184,885               | \$116,170             |
| 2020      | \$184,795        | \$0                   | \$1,800            | \$1,438                | \$3,228            | \$973                | \$4,141             | 0.99                   | \$182,939               | \$113,229             |
| 2021      | \$182,257        | \$0                   | \$3,600            | \$1,182                | \$4,782            | \$1,328              | \$6,110             | 1.87                   | \$184,967               | \$104,661             |
| 2022      | \$202,799        | \$13,281              | \$3,600            | \$400                  | \$4,000            | \$648                | \$4,648             | 1.78                   | \$207,437               | \$105,762             |
| % CHANGE  | MEMBERS          | AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE | CHR EDV FAITH FORM | TOTAL ADDITIONS        | TOTAL REMOVALS     | CURR LOCAL EXPENSES  | TOTAL OCWM          | EXPENDITURE            |                         |                       |
| 2017-2022 | -2.42            | -22.00                | -20.29             | -100.00                | 0.00               | 7.18                 | -11.89              | 6.67                   |                         |                       |
| 2012-2022 | 0.23             | -13.39                | 190.00             | -100.00                | -83.33             | 21.87                | -91.09              | 11.67                  |                         |                       |

Please note: Zero values (‘0’ or ‘00’) may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2017.

## CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Those who participate in our church:

|  |     | <i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>   |
|--|-----|---|
| Number of active members:  | 70  | Based on Dec-2023 survey plus Sunday School records.  |
| Number of active non-members:                                    | 9   | Based on Dec-2023 survey.   |
| Number of active nursery and unconfirmed Sunday School students: | 21  | Based on Sunday School records.   |
| Average number who worship via online worship service            | 30  | Membership status unknown. Some may have completed the Dec-2023 survey and be included in categories above. |
| Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):         | 130 |   |

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

|                                  |     | <i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>            |
|----------------------------------|-----|--|
| More than 10 years:              | 52% | All are based on Dec-2023 survey plus Sunday School records. |
| Less than 10, more than 5 years: | 19% |  |
| Less than 5 years:               | 29% |  |

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>                                      |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---|
| 16   | 10    | 1     | 1     | 4     | 8     | 18    | 27    | 15  | Based on Dec-2023 survey plus Sunday School records. Does not include online worshippers. |

Percentage of adults in various household types:

|   |       | <i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i> |
|---|-------|---|
| Single adult, no children:                  | 16.2% | All are based on Dec-2023 survey                  |
| Single adult, with children:                | 4.1%  |   |
| Married/ Partnership/ no children           | 28.4% |   |
| Married/ Partnership/ with children         | 32.4% |   |
| Multiple adults, no children in household   | 9.5%  |   |
| Multiple adults, with children in household | 4.1%  |   |
| Other (please specify)                      | 5.4%  |   |

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

|                     |       | <i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i> |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| High school or GED: | 13.5% | All are based on Dec-2023 survey                  |
| Specialty Training: | 6.8%  |   |
| 2 Year Degree:      | 17.6% |   |
| 4 Year Degree:      | 29.7% |   |
| Graduate Degree:    | 28.4% |   |
| Other:              | 4.1%  |   |

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

|   |       | <i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i> |
|---|-------|---|
| Adults who are employed full/ part time or multiple jobs: | 51.4% | All are based on Dec-2023 survey                  |
| Adults who are currently seeking employment:              | 0%    |   |

|  |       |  |
|--|-------|--|
| Adults who are not currently employed: | 0%    |  |
| Adults who are retired:                | 48.6% |  |

The range of occupations of adults in the congregation:

- 20.2% of adults in the congregation are working in or retired from healthcare/ medicine.
- 13.5% are working in or retired from education.
- 9.5 % are working in or retired from business/ finance.
- 8.1% are working in or retired from government.
- 6.8 % are working in or retired from office/ administration
- 6.8 % are working in or retired from professional/ specialty.
- 5.4% are working in or retired from law/ legal.
- 4.1% are working in or retired from architecture/ engineering.
- 4.1% are working in or retired from arts/ design/ entertainment.
- 4.1% are working in or retired from community and social services.
- 4.1% are working in or retired from production/ factory/ etc.
- 4.1% are working in or retired from other (please specify).
- 2.7% are working in or retired from construction.
- 2.7% are working in or retired from managerial/ executive.
- 2.7% are working in or retired from sales.
- 2.7% are working in or retired from service industry/ food.
- 2.7% are working in or retired from transportation.
- 1.4% are working in or retired from building maintenance.
- 1.4% are working in or retired from non-profit.
- 1.4% are working as student.

### **Diversity**

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up: Woodridge’s congregation is primarily white of European descent. We are diverse in our religious backgrounds. Nearly 34% of us were Roman Catholic before joining Woodridge. About 23% of us are lifelong UCC/ Congregationalists, while 24.3% came to Woodridge from another mainline Protestant denomination. About 4% of us were non-denominational Christians, and another 4% were evangelical Christians. We are an open and affirming congregation and are somewhat diverse in our sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. However, though we may not be diverse statistically, we are accepting of diverse backgrounds. We are Open and Affirming as of March 23, 2014 and living up to this covenant is part of our mission.



## PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

| 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> ) |
|---|---|---|
| Baptisms ( <i>number last year</i> )                      | 3   | Pastor  |
| Children's Groups or Classes                              | 10 - 14 weekly<br>Sunday School                   | CE Team; teachers and helpers   |
| Christmas Eve and Easter Worship                          | 100 - 124   | Pastor; Minister of Music; Worship Team   |
| Church-wide Meals   | 35 avg/ twice a year                              | Various leadership teams  |
| Choirs and Music Groups                                   | 20 - 22   | Minister of Music; lay conductor of intergenerational chimes  |
| Church-based Bible Study                                  | 10 - 12   | Pastor  |
| Communion   | monthly   | Pastor and Worship Team   |
| Food Distribution to Community                            | monthly food pantry                               | Leadership Team   |
| Thanksgiving Baskets to Cranston Community Action Program | 35 - 40   | Service Team  |
| Confirmation ( <i>number confirmed last year</i> )        | 5   | Pastor  |
| Annual Christmas and Palm Sunday pageants                 | 20  | Christian Education Team and Minister of Music  |
| Drama or Dance Program                                    | 9   | Minister of Music   |
| Funerals ( <i>number last year</i> )                      | 8   | Pastor  |
| Intergenerational Groups                                  | 12 - 14   | Chimes group led by lay conductor   |
| Outdoor Worship   | 10 - 15   | Easter Sunrise Service  |

|   |                               |   |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Prayer or Meditation Groups                             | grief support/ weekly/ 15     | Hospice Chaplain                        |
| Weddings ( <i>last year</i> )                           | 3                             | Pastor                                  |
| Worship (time slot: 10 AM)                              | avg 80 plus 30 online viewers | Pastor; Minister of Music; Worship Team |
| Annual Bazaar   | 400                           | Leadership Teams                        |
| Almost-May Breakfast                                    | 150                           | Leadership Teams                        |
| First Communion Class every other year (held last year) | 5 - 7                         | Christian Education Team and Pastor     |

## REFLECTION

Participation in the various ways of gathering captures all of the members and active non-members of the congregation regardless of family composition, age, education level, etc. We have been successful in attracting and engaging younger members with families. We live our faith both inside and outside of the church building.

Members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Included are 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) |
|-------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Rev. Scott Spencer      | No  | Our pastor who retired January 21, 2024     |                       | Y                 |
| Rev. Dr. A. Bill Comeau | No  |   |                       | Y                 |
| Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose | No  | Hospice                                     | Hospice chaplain      | N                 |
| Rev. Dianne Dugan       | No  | Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker |                       | N                 |

Rev. Bagby-Grose and Rev. Dugan are members of our church and occasionally serve as pulpit coverage.

Current staff, including ministers:

| Staff Position             | Head of Staff? | Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer) | Supervised by              | Length of Tenure for current person in this position |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Bridge Pastor              | no             | Part Time                                      | Executive Board            | 1 month  |
| Minister of Music          | no             | Part Time                                      | Executive Board            | 3 years  |
| Administrative Assistant   | no             | Part Time                                      | Executive Board            | 12 years   |
| Sunday School Coordinator  | no             | Part Time                                      | Executive Board            | vacant   |
| Contracted cleaning person | no             | Part Time                                      | Buildings and Grounds Team | 15 years   |

## CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (actual 2023):

| Source  | Amount                    |
|---|---------------------------|
| Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving   | \$ 124,104                |
| Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> ) | \$ not included in budget |
| Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i> )                   | \$0                       |
| Fundraising Events  | \$10,041                  |
| Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose   | \$0                       |
| Grants  | \$0                       |
| Rentals of Church Building  | \$87,650                  |
| Support from Related Organizations  | \$0                       |
| Transfers from Special Accounts   | \$0                       |
| Coffee Hour:  | \$246                     |
| Thrivent funds:   | \$284                     |
| Wedding, funeral and baptism special offerings  | \$100                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$222,425</b>          |

Current annual expenses (2024 budget figures): \$208,818

Our 2023 budget and actual plus 2024 budget are available upon request.

Actual percentage of expenses for total ministerial support in 2023: 44%. 2024 is budgeted differently, in anticipation of 0.75 bridge pastor for 6 months.

The church has never failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church.

Our budget includes the following contributions during the church year:

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

The amount given to OCWM is an approved amount put into each year's budget. In 2023 it was \$3600, plus \$400 for our local association dues. The same is budgeted for 2024.

The church's current indebtedness/loan debt is \$0.

No building program is projected or underway currently.

Capital campaigns in the last ten years:

| Year(s) | Purpose   | Goal     | Result   | Impact   |
|---------|---|----------|----------|--|
| 2018    | Replace sanctuary pews, floor tiles and carpeting | \$60,000 | \$55,733 | Installing new pews gave the sanctuary a whole new updated look. The campaign was well supported, and the final product was well received by the congregation. The final cost of the project was \$55,599. |

No capital campaign is currently underway or anticipated.

The prominent mission components involved in the most recent capital campaign: Replacing the worn pews and carpeting was needed to enhance our warm welcome and the comfort and safety of the congregation.

The church has an endowment.

Market value of the assets: \$431,177 as of 12/31/2023

It is not our policy or practice to draw down our endowment funds.

## **Other Assets**

Reserves (savings): \$93,045 in money market funds,  
\$16,372 in checking account.

The church does not have investments other than the endowment.

Buildings owned by the church:

The church does not have a parsonage. The sanctuary was built in 1958 and is attached to a two-story Parish house by an enclosed walkway. The upper level of the Parish House contains a large multi-purpose room with a stage, several offices, conference room, music room, rest rooms, a full kitchen, and storage space. The lower level is currently used by a privately-run day care facility. The church building contains the Sanctuary, Narthex, several small rooms, two restrooms, and a loft used for storage. There are parking lots available next to the Parish House, and in a lot across Woodridge Road. There is reserved parking for the minister. Each of the buildings is accessible to wheelchairs and each has an accessible restroom. However, there are stairs in the walkway between the buildings, so a wheelchair has to go outside to move between the buildings. The pulpit currently is not accessible to a wheelchair.

The church does not have any non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church.

## **Reflection**

Our congregation is committed to sustaining our building, worship, Christian education, music and ministry. Charitable outreach to the community, such as food bank, Thanksgiving baskets, diapers for children in foster care, and donations to the Goodrich Presbyterian School in Sierra Leone are non-budgeted. They are funded by specifically designated donations from the congregation.

## **HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

Founding of Woodridge Church in 1950

Calling of first female minister in 1996

Services accessible online in 2020, live streaming in 2023

Most important: Open and Affirming status as of March 23, 2014

## Recent Significant Change

The pandemic caused us to think creatively. Several of the changes that were necessitated by the pandemic have continued. We recorded the worship service during the height of the pandemic, and we now livestream it for those in our congregation and community who are unable to attend in person. Many committee meetings continue to be held on Zoom as they have been found to be as effective as in person without the travel time.

Our numbers at worship (in person attendees plus livestream viewers) are at pre-pandemic levels. We attribute this success to communication during the pandemic, and to our emphasis on keeping everyone safe in church.

New ways of keeping in touch were initiated during the pandemic. The weekly God's Moment email was started to share prayer requests and celebrations. It was a continuing email, displaying several previous weeks, so we could follow the progress of members of the congregation experiencing health and other challenges. Periodic social gatherings, such as Trivia Night, and Cooking with the Italian Chef, were led by members and held via Zoom.

The Worship Team was charged with developing protocols for safe re-opening of the church. Safety was our number one priority. We created a Covid Control Plan, as required by the governor. We opened in the fall of 2020, requiring reservations, using social distancing, open doors, singing outdoors only, individual prepackaged communion servings, Plexiglas panels in front of the pastor and liturgist, requiring masks, and wiping down the pews, rest rooms, and other touch points after the service. We made and emailed to the congregation a training video demonstrating our new procedures! Attendance was light but joyous! A Covid resurgence caused us to suspend in-person worship after a couple months. We started Sunday morning Zoom worship services, in addition to the weekly pre-recorded service on YouTube. Our Christmas Eve service was held outdoors and was well-attended. Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services were held via Zoom. Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services were held outdoors. We re-opened on April 11, Baseball Sunday. We resumed our previous protocols. As the state eased restrictions, we decided whether to follow suit, and communicated with the congregation. We polled the congregation re: their comfort level and took a "baby steps" approach to changing our protocols. Sunday School began outdoors, moving inside with the agreement of all parents. Children were not eligible for vaccinations at that time, so the congregation resumed masking when the children joined us for intergenerational worship. We very gradually returned to our normal procedures and order of worship.

On September 11, 2022, we held a well-publicized "Welcome Back" Sunday, including music by the Rhode Island Saxophone Quartet, celebrating our return to normal worship and activities. September 18 was Rally Day, with a Sunday School open house and the choir's first performance! We resumed Fellowship Hour with coffee and pastry! Some members of our congregation continued watching services remotely, but most returned.



## Conflict

Our congregation's first attempt at Open and Affirming in the early 1990s was creating two factions within the church. Rather than lead to a church split, it was voted to table the issue at that time. Later, in 2012, the Open and Affirming issue was again brought forward. This time, on March 23, 2014, it passed with very little dissension.

Our church has two Members at Large that have seats on the Executive Board. It is encouraged to have feedback both positive and negative brought to these members who, in turn, present the issue to the Executive Board.

Our church also has a Pastoral and Staff committee which meets periodically with all paid staff members to receive their input and feedback. It is the hope that "brewing" issues would be addressed timely and early to avoid escalation.

Ministerial History, including all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years:

| Staff member's name   | Years of service | UCC Standing (Y/N) |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Rev. Scott Spencer    | 2011-2024        | Y                  |
| Rev. Charlie Simonson | 2008-2011        | Y                  |
| Rev. Sharon Key       | 2002-2008*       | Y                  |
| Rev. Diane Samuels    | 1996-2002        | Y                  |
| Rev. Kenneth Ferguson | 1988-1995        | Y                  |

\*Pastor Sharon served as interim starting in 2002 and, with special permission from the RI Conference UCC, was called to be our full time pastor in 2004.



## **Relationship with Pastoral Leaders**

We are a stable congregation with strong lay leaders. We have chosen our pastors well. Our pastors have stayed with Woodridge for a good length of time and been respected and valued. We have worked well together to reach our common goals for Woodridge.

About 40 years ago, a pastor was asked to leave under pressure. The interim who followed worked with the congregation to help us become a healthy church. We have not been involved in a Situational Support Consultation and no pastor has been the subject of a Fitness Review during their tenure with us.

## **WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?**

### **Community Vision**

#### **Outward Service and Advocacy**

Our service activities in this past year include participation in the Cranston Interfaith Food Pantry, to which we donate food and which we staff one Saturday per month; Thanksgiving meal baskets which we donate to needy families; annual diaper drive for families of foster and adoptive children; participation by members of our Confirmation Class and others in Church Beyond the Walls, a weekly outdoor worship service and meal provided to Providence unhoused people as a mission of the Episcopal Diocese of RI; and an Advent collection by the Sunday School for the Goodrich Presbyterian School and church in Sierra Leone, with whom we shared photos and began a relationship, which we plan to continue.

We further support community organizations by sharing our space. Our church is centrally located in Rhode Island and easily accessed from Interstate 95. Our building is thus attractive to various organizations, who pay zero or minimal fees to us for its use. Another congregation, the First Korean Church of Rhode Island UCC, uses our sanctuary for worship. Two Alcoholics Anonymous groups, two Narcotics Anonymous groups, a Boy Scout troop and three Girl Scout troops meet weekly in our building. The churches pay minimal rent, as do AA and NA. The other groups do not pay us. In addition, a for-profit preschool, part of a national chain, rents space and is a substantial funding source for us.

#### **Wider UCC Participation**

Some of us attend our Conference's Annual Meeting. Some of us attend our annual Association picnic. Some of us have attended online classes offered by our Conference. On Pride Sunday we collect an offering for the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition, in grateful appreciation for the assistance they provided as we worked to become an Open and Affirming congregation.

## Transforming Lives

- Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- Border and Immigrant Justice
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church
- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- Other UCC designations:
- Designations from other denominations
- None

### Reflection

Becoming Open and Affirming has been transformational for our congregation. It began as a welcome to people of all sexual orientations but over time has grown to embrace all diversity. Our congregation is committed to inclusion, to seeing each person as a beloved child of God, to giving a gracious welcome. This embrace has become an integral part of our culture, part of who we are. We're not perfect, but we pay attention and strive to improve.

When polled recently about interest in pursuing additional Just World covenants,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the 28 respondents said they are not ready. Twenty-eight respondents is about half the number who responded to our other questions, so this was a small response rate. The remaining third identified one or more covenants they are interested in exploring. Just Peace received the most votes, followed by WISE, A2A, and Creation Justice. Conclusion: at this time there is not enough commitment to explore another Just World covenant, but there may be in the future.

### Ecumenical and Interfaith Connections

We enjoy worshiping with our neighbors and shared worship in 2023 with other congregations as follows: Cranston clergy ecumenical Thanksgiving service, services with First Korean Church (Worldwide Communion Sunday, Maundy Thursday), Hate Has No Home Here service with Temple Sinai and First Korean. In past years we have celebrated Martin Luther King Day with Temple Sinai.



Combined choir of Woodridge and First Korean on  
Worldwide Communion Sunday, October 1, 2023.

### **Mission Embodiment**

Our mission statement below is basic to our identity. It is who we are and undergirds all we do.

The mission of this church shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ in the spirit of adventure and fellowship to worship God, to preach and to teach the gospel, to render service toward humankind, and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace among all people.

As a caring and welcoming community, using the Bible as a resource and the teachings of Jesus as a guide, we joyfully welcome everyone into God's covenantal community. We believe that: "No matter who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here," regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, mental status, family structure, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender status or gender expression. We invite all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our congregation. We are called as Christian disciples to strengthen community, nurture hope, promote wholeness, foster healing, seek justice and build God's kingdom as we strive to live up to our mission statement.

### **Scope of Pastoral Work**

Our pastor follows his/her own interests in community ministry and feels supported by the congregation in that work. We expect this to continue with future pastors. For example, our pastor who retired in early 2024, Scott Spencer, served as chair of the Cranston Interfaith Clergy Association, which helped him get to know Rabbi Goldwasser of Temple Sinai. The Cranston Interfaith Clergy Association is affiliated with the legislative lobbying group, the Interfaith Coalition Against Poverty. Scott spent time at the statehouse lobbying for affordable housing, childcare, etc. He led worship services at local nursing homes. While members of our congregation did not participate directly with Scott in these activities, his contacts benefited our congregation, for example through shared activities with the congregation of Temple Sinai and past projects at Harrington Hall, a nearby homeless shelter.

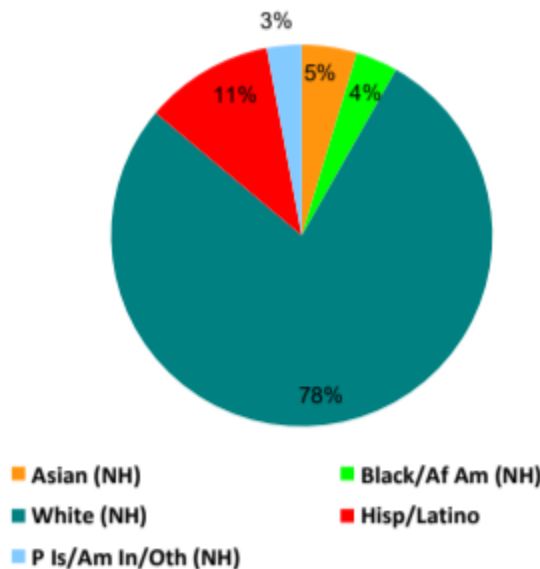
## Mission InSite

### Trends and Opportunities

Cranston is located in central Rhode Island and, at population 82,934 (2020 census), is the second-largest city in the state. It was named one of the US's "100 Best Places to Live" by Money magazine in 2006. In a 2014 survey done by 247wallst.com, Cranston ranked 36th on the list of "America's 50 Best Cities to Live." The 4 zip codes most of Woodridge's congregation reside in are 2 Cranston zip codes, plus a Warwick zip and the only West Warwick zip.

Mission InSite demographic reports based on these 4 zip codes predict that the ethnicity distributions in our area are expected to remain stable for the next 5 years.

Current Year Racial/Ethnicity as Percentage of Pop



Age trends: The average age in the study area, 42.73, is almost a year older than in RI as a whole and is expected to increase by about 15 months over the next 10 years. The percentage of the population ages 0 – 34 is expected to remain stable over the next 10 years, while ages 35 – 64 decrease by about 1%. Meanwhile age 65+ is expected to increase by about 3.6% as a percentage of the population.

| AGE                     |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Average Age Trends      | 2000  | 2010  | 2023  | 2028  | 2033  |
| Average Age: Study Area | 39.21 | 40.75 | 42.73 | 43.46 | 44.09 |
| Percent Change          |       | 3.9%  | 4.9%  | 1.7%  | 1.4%  |
| Average Age: RI         | 37.58 | 38.83 | 41.89 | 42.78 | 43.41 |
| Percent Change          |       | 3.3%  | 7.9%  | 2.1%  | 1.5%  |
| Comparative Index       | 104   | 105   | 102   | 102   | 102   |
| Median Age: Study Area  | 38    | 40    | 42    | 43    | 44    |

| Phase of Life                        | 2010   | 2023   | 2028   | 2033   | 2010% | 2023% | 2028% | 2033% | Estimated 10 Year %pt Change 2023 - 2033 |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| <b>Before Formal Schooling</b>       |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 0 to 4                          | 6,021  | 6,286  | 6,005  | 5,769  | 5.2%  | 5.3%  | 5.0%  | 4.8%  | -0.5%                                    |
| <b>Required Formal Schooling</b>     |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 5 to 17                         | 16,454 | 16,592 | 16,802 | 16,540 | 14.1% | 13.9% | 14.1% | 13.8% | -0.1%                                    |
| <b>College/Career Starts</b>         |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 18 to 24                        | 9,997  | 9,431  | 9,382  | 9,903  | 8.6%  | 7.9%  | 7.9%  | 8.3%  | 0.3%                                     |
| <b>Singles &amp; Young Families</b>  |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 25 to 34                        | 16,301 | 14,311 | 13,914 | 13,760 | 14.0% | 12.0% | 11.6% | 11.5% | -0.5%                                    |
| <b>Families &amp; Empty Nesters</b>  |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 35 to 54                        | 33,617 | 31,025 | 30,452 | 30,002 | 28.8% | 26.1% | 25.5% | 25.0% | -1.0%                                    |
| <b>Enrichment Years Sing/Couples</b> |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Ages 55 to 64                        | 14,914 | 16,447 | 15,151 | 14,519 | 12.8% | 13.8% | 12.7% | 12.1% | -1.7%                                    |
| <b>Retirement Opportunities</b>      |        |        |        |        |       |       |       |       |  |
| Age 65 and over                      | 19,470 | 24,985 | 27,730 | 29,480 | 16.7% | 21.0% | 23.2% | 24.6% | 3.6%                                     |

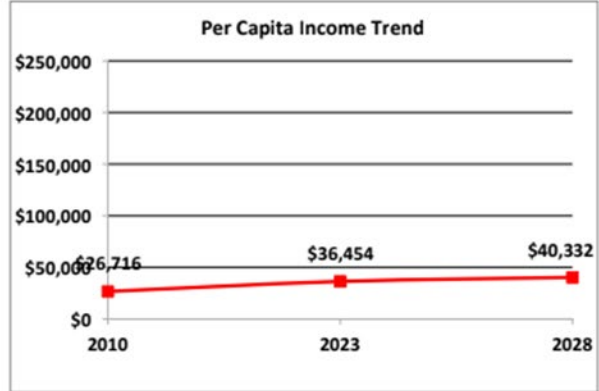
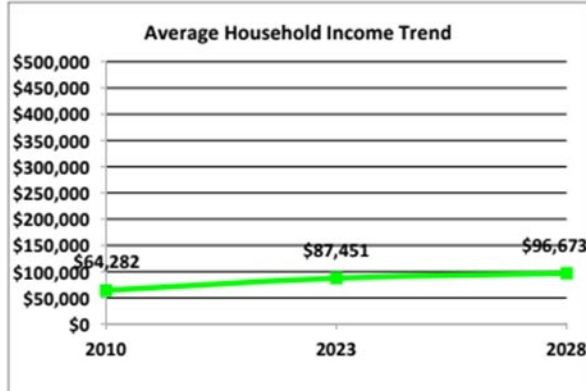
## Household incomes are steadily increasing in the study area.

Average Household Income and Per Capita Income indicate the level of financial resources within a community. Average Household income reflects the average income for each household, whether family or non-family.

In this study area, the estimated current year average household income is \$87,451. The average household income is projected to grow by 10.5% to \$96,673.

Per Capita Income is a measure of the average income of all persons within a household. For family households, this would include all children. It does not mean that each person actually contributes to the average income from work. It is calculated by dividing the aggregate household income by the population.

The estimated per capita income for the current year is \$36,454. The Per Capita Income is projected to grow by 10.6% to \$40,332.



| <i>Income Trends</i>   | 2010          | 2023          | 2028          | 2010% | 2023% | 2028% | Estimated 5 Year %pt Change 2023 - 2028 |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| <b>Households</b>      |               |               |               |       |       |       |   |
| Less than \$10,000     | 3,452         | 2,294         | 2,016         | 7.1%  | 4.6%  | 4.0%  | -0.6%                                   |
| \$10,000 to \$14,999   | 2,707         | 2,220         | 1,624         | 5.6%  | 4.5%  | 3.3%  | -1.2%                                   |
| \$15,000 to \$24,999   | 5,057         | 3,422         | 3,357         | 10.4% | 6.9%  | 6.7%  | -0.2%                                   |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999   | 4,572         | 4,037         | 3,567         | 9.4%  | 8.1%  | 7.2%  | -1.0%                                   |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999   | 7,041         | 5,941         | 5,753         | 14.5% | 12.0% | 11.5% | -0.4%                                   |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999   | 9,608         | 7,726         | 7,483         | 19.8% | 15.6% | 15.0% | -0.5%                                   |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999   | 7,182         | 7,602         | 7,071         | 14.8% | 15.3% | 14.2% | -1.1%                                   |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 6,200         | 9,358         | 10,318        | 12.8% | 18.9% | 20.7% | 1.9%                                    |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 1,536         | 4,393         | 4,870         | 3.2%  | 8.9%  | 9.8%  | 0.9%                                    |
| \$200,000 or more      | 1,172         | 2,642         | 3,772         | 2.4%  | 5.3%  | 7.6%  | 2.2%                                    |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>48,527</b> | <b>49,635</b> | <b>49,831</b> |       |       |       |   |

The Ministry InSite Priorities report for the same area indicates that Woodridge’s strengths align well with the top ministry or program recommendations, as shown in the chart below.

| <b>Priority List</b> | <b>Top 15 ministry or program recommendations based on this study area</b> |  |              |                               |
|----------------------|--|--|--------------|-------------------------------|
|                      | <b>Preferences are ranked by ratio of important to not important</b>       |  |              |                               |
|                      | <b>Ranking</b>   | <b>Program</b>   | <b>Ratio</b> | <b>Strength of Preference</b> |
|                      | 1  | Warm and friendly encounters                               | 4.3          | Very Strong Preference        |
|                      | 2  | Quality sermons  | 2.0          | Strong Preference             |
|                      | 3  | Traditional worship experiences                            | 1.5          | Somewhat Strong Preference    |
|                      | 4  | Holiday programs/activities                                | 1.4          | Somewhat Strong Preference    |
|                      | 5  | Opportunities to develop personal relationships            | 1.4          | Somewhat Strong Preference    |
|                      | 6  | Opportunities for volunteering in the community            | 1.2          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 7  | Adult social activities                                    | 1.1          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 8  | Seniors/retiree activities                                 | 1.1          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 9  | Involvement in social causes                               | 1.1          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 10   | Celebration of sacraments                                  | 1.0          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 11   | Family oriented activities                                 | 0.9          | Moderate Preference           |
|                      | 12   | Small groups (i.e., life groups, personal interest groups) | 0.7          | Somewhat Minimal Preference   |
|                      | 13   | Cultural programs (music, drama, art)                      | 0.7          | Somewhat Minimal Preference   |
|                      | 14   | Contemporary worship experiences                           | 0.7          | Somewhat Minimal Preference   |
|                      | 15   | Crisis support groups                                      | 0.6          | Somewhat Minimal Preference   |



### Demographic Comparisons

The age distribution of our congregation skews significantly older and younger than the zip codes our members reside in. We have very few participants aged 18-34, and about half the percentage of age 35-54 as are in the general population. Please see the chart below. On the plus side, Mission InSite shows the fastest growing age group as age 65+, which is clearly a group we appeal to.

Age distribution of Woodridge vs residents of zip codes 02920, 02910, 02886, 02893.

|           | Woodridge<br>Survey<br>2023 | Mission<br>InSite<br>2023 | Mission<br>InSite<br>2033 |
|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| age 0-17  | 26%                         | 19%                       | 19%                       |
| age 18-28 | 1%                          | 8%                        | 8%                        |
| age 25-34 | 1%                          | 12%                       | 12%                       |
| age 35-54 | 12%                         | 25%                       | 25%                       |
| age 55-64 | 18%                         | 14%                       | 12%                       |
| age 65+   | 42%                         | 21%                       | 25%                       |

### Demographics Shaping Ministry

Woodridge reaches out to the lower-income members of the community through supporting the Cranston Interfaith Food Bank, distributing Thanksgiving baskets, selling used household goods at very low prices at our annual Yard Sale and Holiday Bazaar, and distributing Deacons Fund monies.

Woodridge has a very strong Intergenerational ministry. One will find our youngest and oldest parishioners working together in all aspects of Church life. We enjoy an intergenerational worship service together the first Sunday of every month, where we share communion together. Our young people are often liturgists, assist with Thanksgiving baskets, serve at the Almost May Breakfast, and participate with the Holiday Bazaar preparations. Sunday School students work in conjunction with the Service Committee with special projects, such as diaper drives and our Goodrich Presbyterian School Advent collection. We also have a popular intergenerational chimes group called the Prime-Time Chimers, with members as young as 7. Woodridge is very intentional about including children in all aspects of our service and church life.





The Prime Time Chimers

### **What Our Church is Known For**

We have hundreds of people come into our church for our annual holiday bazaar and our annual May breakfast. What we hear over and over again is that they appreciate and value the prayer squares they are given when they enter. They comment on the friendliness, good humor and kindness of the people waiting on them, our congregation. A few people wrote us reference letters and said our congregation is dependable, hard working, generous, and a faith community committed to upholding the values of interfaith partnership, inclusion and making the world a better place.



Serving coffee and juice at the Almost May Breakfast

### **New People are Saying...**

People come to our congregation as visitors and new members because they like our open and affirming community. This is what we hear repeatedly in new member classes. Visitors say that folks were friendly and they got a warm welcome, so they came back.



Welcome to the Waffle Station at the Almost May Breakfast!

## REFERENCES

### **First Reference**

Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser

Spiritual Leader

Temple Sinai

30 Hagen Avenue

Cranston, RI 02920

Work: 401-942-8350

Cell: 401-573-4600

[rabbi.j.goldwasser@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi.j.goldwasser@gmail.com)

Relationship to the Congregation: Partner with Woodridge Church in community events, clergy fellowship, and joint advocacy

### **Second Reference**

Rev. Yonghwan Noh

Pastor

First Korean Church of Rhode Island UCC

546 Budlong Road

Cranston, RI 02920

Cell: 401-339-4713 (text preferred)

[firstkoreanucc@gmail.com](mailto:firstkoreanucc@gmail.com)

Relationship to the Congregation: We are neighbors in covenant community. Woodridge Church has forty-four years history of sharing their church facility with our faith community, First Korean Church of Rhode Island.

### **Third Reference**

Michael Sheldon

President, Interfaith Food Ministry

[Sheldon37@yahoo.com](mailto:Sheldon37@yahoo.com)

Relationship to the Congregation: we work together to feed our neighbors.



**Rabbi Jeffrey W. Goldwasser**

Cantor Dr. Deborah Johnson

Gregg H. Rosen  
*President*

Rabbi George J. Astrachan, D.D.  
*Rabbi Emeritus*

Remmie J. Brown  
*Cantor Emeritus*

November 9, 2023

Dear Martha,

It is my pleasure to offer this reference letter to the Search Team for Woodridge Church as you look for your new pastor. Since I came to Temple Sinai nine years ago, Pastor Scott Spencer and Woodridge Church have been wonderful partners for interfaith events, such as the annual Cranston Interfaith Thanksgiving service, for the fellowship and support of the Cranston clergy group, and for social action work to address poverty and racial and religious bias and discrimination. I am grateful to the entire Woodridge community and look forward to welcoming your new pastor.

I regard Woodridge as a faith community that is committed to upholding the values of inclusion and making the world a better place. I was so impressed by the “Hate Has No Home Here” program at which I spoke last March as an opportunity to bring people of faith together around issues of racism against people of Asian ancestry, discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, and antisemitism. I was proud to bring members of my community to the event to emphasize the importance of allyship and partnership on these issues.

I know that, like many faith communities in these times, Woodridge has struggled to reach out to younger people and families to sustain itself and to pass its values on to the next generation. I see Woodridge as a community that is asking itself tough questions and innovating new programs to draw in younger families. This will be a major challenge for your next pastor.

Early in my tenure at Temple Sinai, I approached Pastor Spencer about the lack of Jewish holidays as vacation days in the Cranston public schools, posing a difficult dilemma for Jewish students in the district. Pastor Scott joined me in meetings with Cranston’s schools superintendent and even to the executive director of the state superintendents association to find long-term solutions. That was the experience that showed me the commitment of Woodridge Church to real interfaith partnership and cooperation. I will never forget it.

I wish you and the Search Team success in finding the next great spiritual leader for your church. Please feel free to have your candidates contact me, and please feel free to contact me yourself, if I can be of any help or guidance in this process.

With gratitude,  
Rabbi Jeff Goldwasser



Reference from Pastor Noh:

### **Areas of Strength**

- Welcoming: this open and affirming community joyfully welcomes everyone into their community, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, age, family structure, physical or mental ability and gender identity or expression. 44 years ago, we, First Korean Church, had a hard time finding a place to worship because we were different from most people. But this church welcomed us.
- Involved in community service: they are cooperating members of Cranston Interfaith Food Pantry. Also, they are hosting a grief support group.
- Music: They have a great music program, with a choir, a handbell choir, and amazing piano, flute, saxophone and organ players.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- The Woodridge community needs something different such as gospel, jazz, and pop style music for their worship service like modern churches because we listen to those in our daily life.
- Green Church: including energy efficiency, recycling programs, or other eco-friendly initiatives.
- Young adult ministry

### **A significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.**

- The two church pastors (Scott and me) were part of the Cranston Clergy Association. They discuss issues regarding legal matters on the local agenda in order to help people.
- Our two churches come together each year on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and on the first Sunday of October for World Communion Sunday.
- Sometimes, First Korean Church shares our resource of music with Woodridge UCC. Every time we meet in the music field, we can introduce our language and traditional musical instruments, sometimes our foods.

### **Anything else you wish to share.**

- People in this church are very faithful. They give their time and work to this church. I can tell they love their church.

## Reference from Michael Sheldon:

The Interfaith Food Ministry is a group of 5 churches who coordinate a food pantry in the Cranston, Rhode Island, area. The pantry is open on Saturday mornings from 10 am until 12 noon. The work consists of keeping the shelves stocked and transferring food from the storage area to the distribution area. Volunteers pack bags with food to distribute to clients. There is a representative from each of the 5 churches who serve on the board. Each church is responsible for working at the pantry on one Saturday each month using volunteers from their parish.

Woodridge Church was a founding member of this ministry in 1993. Since that time, members of this church have actively volunteered and served on the board. Woodridge volunteers are consistent in working on their particular Saturday and the church frequently has numerous volunteers. Some Woodridge volunteers have offered to help other parishes on their weeks when there is a shortage. Woodridge also used the pantry as an opportunity for its confirmation class to obtain service hours.

Maintaining the food pantry is a coordinated effort as the Rhode Island Food Bank requires a service plan and recertification every two years. Each church and its volunteers must adhere to the guidelines. A copy of the plan is available.

The Covid pandemic provided a challenge to distributing the food. There was an increase in the number of clients needing food and the distribution needed to take place outside in order to keep clients and volunteers safe. In addition, a shortage of food at the RI Food Bank meant that we could not always provide the variety of foods that our clients had come to expect. Numbers of families needing food increased from an average of 50 to 60 families to over 100 each week. No matter what the weather, Woodridge volunteers moved the food bags from the pantry to the outdoors and handed out the bags there. Woodridge parishioners also stepped up and collected food items and monetary funds for donation to the pantry.

The current board representative from Woodridge no longer volunteers at the pantry but she serves as a liaison between the volunteers and the board and maintains communication with the volunteers. There has been a recent increase in the number of volunteers from Woodridge.

The relationship between the 5 churches in the ministry is not limited to the food pantry. Many parishioners support activities in the other churches such as bazaars, festivals, and food events. In this way, we are a true fellowship.

There continues to be a growing need for more volunteers as some current ones will be retiring. This is a great opportunity for younger people to engage in a much-needed ministry. We hope that Woodridge will continue to recruit consistent volunteers to lead the Interfaith Food Ministry into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Sheldon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Michael Sheldon  
President, Interfaith Food Ministry

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4: 2-3, NIV)

### **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.

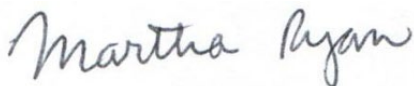
As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about 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?

The Search Team plus members of the congregation who replied to our bulletin insert questions, responded to our survey and/ or participated in our congregational event.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: none.

Signed:



Martha Ryan, Search Team Chair 2/19/2024



## **Validation by Conference/ Association**

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: Rev. Patty Kogut

Title: Rev. Dr. Patricia Kogut, Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region

Email: [kogutp@sneucc.org](mailto:kogutp@sneucc.org)

Phone: 508-244-4416

Date: March 6, 2024