

Church Profile Co-Lead Minister

Conference Staff Liaison:

LaTrell Harrison

lharrison@uccfla.org

JupiterFIRST
CHURCH

A place that feels like home.

JupiterFIRST Church is committed to fostering a community that is welcoming in the love of God and neighbor while bursting at the seams with joy and grace. We care about one thing more than anything else, Jesus Christ. As a family of individuals who have found hope in Jesus, we are on a journey to help others walk in step with Him.

As an inter-generational church, we are growing in spirit and numbers. JupiterFIRST serves as the most theologically and socially progressive church in the community and is an open and accepting congregation embracing every expression of the faith journey.

JupiterFIRST Church's DNA is the United Church of Christ. As a member of this larger Body of Christ, we stand strong in our faith and our convictions that ALL are unique, unrepeatable, miracles of God. Wherever you are, whoever you are, however you are, you'll always be accepted as part of our family. Period.

Contents:

Page	Topic
2-3	Co-Lead Responsibilities
4	Organization & Structure
5	Financial Outlook
6	Strategic Consultant
7	Membership & Attendance
8-9	Sunday Worship
10-11	Missions & Community
12-14	Congregational Involvement
15	JupiterFIRST Church Preschool
16	Campus & Facilities
17	Our History
18-19	Jupiter Community
20	Characteristics
	References

Our Mission:

To be a community called to:

Embrace all as beloved images of God

Love and serve in all the ways of Jesus

Joyfully participate in God's dream for all creation

All through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.





Co-Lead Minister Position Responsibilities

Position Summary:

This position is a called, full-time, Co-Lead Ministerial position and will be an integral part of a team-led congregational church. The Co-Lead Minister will help achieve goals by collaborating with staff and lay leaders to build partnerships and trust. As a member of this ministry team, the Co-Lead Minister will share preaching, congregational care responsibilities, education programming and perform special services.

Key Responsibilities:

- Act as lead supervisor—working with the Co-Lead Minister and Director of Operations—on matters related to staffing, facilities, budget management, membership development and long-term strategic planning
- Provide strategic leadership and insight as a core member of the Ministry Team, with a focus on organizational health, systems, and mission alignment
- Oversee management and innovation in areas of stewardship and financial sustainability, cultivating a culture of generosity throughout the congregation
- Participate in the collaborative planning of weekly worship services and share in rotational preaching responsibilities
- Collaborate with the Co-Lead Minister in leading staff meetings, modeling a team-based approach to ministry leadership
- Collaborate with the Co-Lead Minister in reporting to and voting on Council matters, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with church-wide goals in accordance with Church Bylaws

Qualifications:

- Ordained minister with standing or eligibility for standing in the UCC
- Experience or desire to work under a collaborative team model
- Effective and dynamic preaching abilities
- Experience ministering effectively to people in crisis situations and dealing effectively with conflict
- Commitment to the theology of the United Church of Christ inclusive of an open and affirming congregation
- Highly organized with excellent oral/written communication abilities
- Commitment to lifelong learning, developing theological and biblical skills
- Self-reflective with high emotional intelligence and sense of ministerial direction
- Experience in building a sense of fellowship among staff, ministerial team, congregation, lay leader and the community at large
- Experience in organizational strategic planning and vision casting with growth oriented mindset
- Experience in stewardship and lay leader development

Compensation | Ministry Expenses:

- Salary commensurate with experience and conference recommended salary range
- Comprehensive benefits with the intent to follow UCC guidelines may include: health insurance, dental insurance, housing allowance, disability & life insurance, phone allowance, car/mileage reimbursement and four weeks paid vacation
- Maternity/Paternity leave
- Bi-weekly pay cycle
- Relocation expenses, if needed
- Travel Reimbursement
- Meeting Expense Reimbursement
- Books and Periodicals





Co-Lead Minister Position Responsibilities (continued)

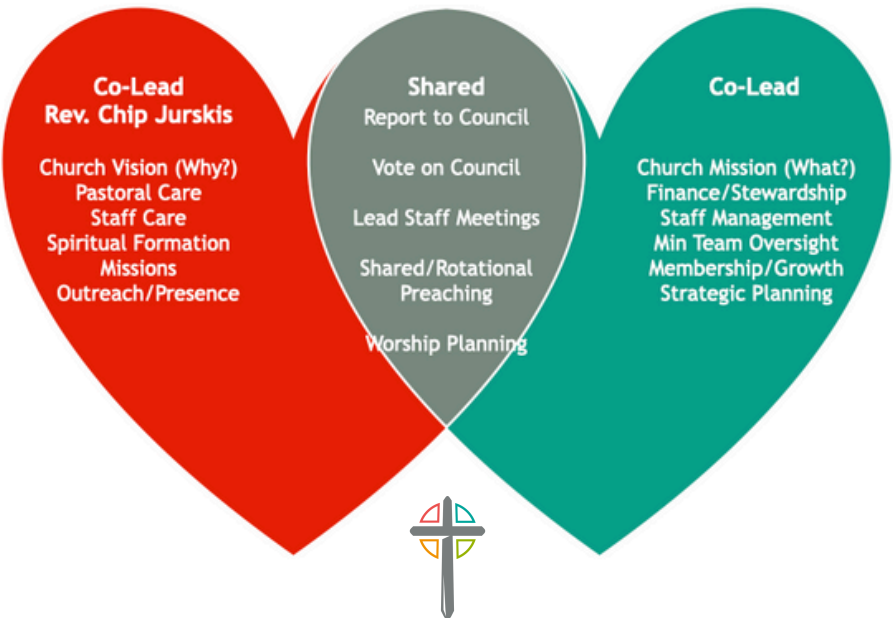
Supervisor:
Church Council

Anticipated Start:
Third Quarter 2025 – First Quarter 2026

Salary History:
The Co-Lead Minister position is a new position to our church and will be equal to the existing Lead Minister. The current Lead Minister compensation package is \$133,000. Our church has never failed to fulfill its financial obligations to its pastors.

Co-Lead Model:
JupiterFIRST Church has thoughtfully restructured its leadership model to embrace a collaborative and complementary approach by establishing a co-lead framework. This intentional shift, supported by necessary amendments to the church’s bylaws, reflects a commitment to shared responsibility, healthy accountability, and a dynamic vision for the future. The co-lead model ensures that the gifts of administration and pastoral leadership are both honored and fully utilized in the life of the church. As this model continues to take shape, JupiterFIRST is seeking a minister who can step into this partnership with clarity and purpose—someone with the spiritual and strategic gifts to cast compelling vision before the congregation and the relational and coaching skills to guide and empower the staff in discerning and pursuing what God is calling them to next.

JupiterFIRST Co-Lead Model





Organization & Structure

Key Leadership

JupiterFIRST Church operates under a Co-Lead Minister model with a Church Council and a variety of Committees and Ministry Teams made up of lay leaders, supported by staff. As outlined in the Church Bylaws, the Church Council meets monthly providing broad oversight on behalf of the congregation. Day-to-day ministry and operational leadership are carried out by the team of Ministers and staff.

The Nominating Committee is the sole standing committee with authority as defined by the Bylaws. It is responsible for nominating individuals to serve on the Church Council and Diaconate, with final confirmation by congregational vote at the Annual Meeting. All lay leaders serve terms as outlined in the Bylaws.



Ministry Teams & Structure

The Church Council, with input from staff, establishes various Ministry Teams to carry out the vision and mission of the church through dedicated volunteers. Current Ministry Teams include:

- Diaconate (also serve as Section Hosts)
- Endowment
- Facilities
- Personnel
- Search (as needed)
- Stewardship
- Worship

Each Ministry Team is connected to the life of the church through a designated staff liaison, who communicates the team's efforts, updates, and needs to the Church Council. This structure ensures coordinated leadership, spiritual accountability, and collaborative progress across all areas of church life.





Financial Outlook

Category	2024	2023
Income	\$1,323,982	\$1,304,475
Pledged	\$890,335	\$880,207
Budget	\$1,433,615	\$1,374,749
Expenses	\$1,491,543	\$1,372,318
Reserves	\$2,146,477	\$809,901
Designated	\$141,786	\$202,303

Annual Giving

As part of our annual stewardship pledge campaign, members are invited to strive toward five practices we refer to as our “Benchmark 5”: [pray](#) regularly for the church, [worship](#) consistently (in person or online), [give](#) generously as able, [participate](#) in at least one ministry, and [invite](#) others to experience our family of faith. Membership at JupiterFIRST Church is a partnership – a partnership with God and a partnership with this community of faith. We view this partnership not as an expectation or promise but an aspiration and covenant to walk in faith together and live out Christ’s love through action and connection.

LegacyFIRST Endowment Fund

Recently established to help ensure long-term stability and support for our ministries, our endowment fund functions as one leg of a three-legged stool, alongside our annual budget (supported by pledges) and our facilities reserve funds. The endowment generates distributions that are annually awarded to departmental requests that seek funding for non-budgeted ministry initiatives. Over \$1 Million dollars has been pledged in less than two years.



Strategic Work with Ministry Consultant

In 2022, JupiterFIRST elected to pause our search for a Co-Lead Minister to ask a bigger question: What is fueling our momentum in a season when many congregations are downsizing or closing?

Leaders sensed that lasting health required more than enthusiasm; it called for careful listening and strategic clarity. Led by Neal Watkins, Florida Conference Minister for Vision & Vitality, and transitional Ministry Consultant, members were invited to assess shared values, mission, and vision through a congregation-wide survey, multiple staff retreats, and a structured strategic-planning journey. Those conversations quickly revealed a common thread: before dreaming further, the church had to reinforce the internal scaffolding that would carry new growth.

Strategic Planning Highlights

- Congregational Survey & Listening Sessions captured hopes, concerns, and guiding values from a broad cross-section of members.
- Staff Retreats surfaced operational pinch points and untapped creative energy.
- Strategic-Planning Process confirmed that sustainable infrastructure (clear governance, lay leadership pipelines, and adaptive staffing) must precede bold new initiatives.

Infrastructure Built for Mission

1. Co-Lead Minister Model

- Revised bylaws now distinguish co-leadership, ensuring shared decision-making and healthier pace for clergy.
- Over the past several months, JupiterFIRST has utilized Neal Watkins' leadership to transition pastoral and operational staff towards working in a co-lead model.

2. Lay-Led Ministry & Teams

- Finance, Personnel, Facilities, and Stewardship teams were formed and trained, channeling member gifts into expert oversight.
- New Spiritual Formation Team invites lay leaders to design classes, small groups, and retreats—fueling discipleship across all ages.

3. Worship Team Reinvention

- A Worship Ministry Team now funnels congregational creativity—music, spoken word, drama, visual arts—directly into Sunday planning.
- Congregational Feedback remains a vital part of the conversation centered around participation and membership engagement.

4. Youth and Children's ministries are expanding opportunities for intergenerational connections while adding fresh programming for elementary, middle, and high-school students.





Membership & Attendance

Statistically, the majority of our congregation falls between the ages of 35-75 with 41 percent over the age of 75. 53 percent of our membership is married with 16 percent having children at home. 61 percent of membership listed income over \$75,000 with a college education level of 72 percent.

The numbers below reflect the seasonality of JupiterFIRST and include our online viewership.

Average Sunday attendance in Season 2023-2024
365 in person, 71 online
Christmas 2023 = 1554 in person
Easter 2024 = 1239 in person

Average Sunday attendance Summer 2024
276 in person, 45 online

Average Sunday attendance in Season 2022-2023
324 in person, 67 online
Christmas 2022 = 1606 in person
Easter 2023 = 1155 in person

Average Sunday attendance Summer 2023
268 in person, 61 online

By the Numbers

Total Pledging Units 2024
252

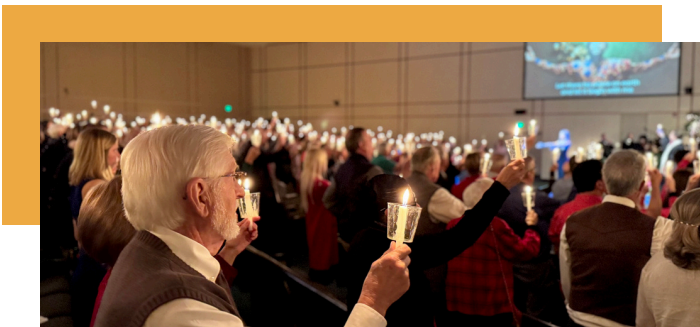
Children/Babies-12th Grade 2024
338

Ordained Ministers 2024
1

Commissioned Ministers 2024
3

New Members 2024
32

New Members 2023
28





Sunday Worship

Worship at JupiterFIRST

Worship at JupiterFIRST is the heart of our community—a dynamic and Spirit-led experience designed to draw people together across backgrounds, ideologies, and life stages. Held each Sunday at 9:30 a.m., our worship services are intentionally crafted to be both deeply reverent and refreshingly creative, reflecting our belief that God is present in all things—both the sacred and the seemingly secular. We embrace a wide range of musical and artistic styles, allowing for traditional sacred expressions to coexist with modern or unexpected elements that speak to the spirit of the moment and the message. This approach allows us to reveal the holiness of everyday life while also honoring the depth and beauty of our sacred tradition.

For over three decades, David Cowen has led our Music and Worship ministry with exceptional care and creativity. As David prepares for retirement, our Music Ministry Team is working closely with him to ensure a strong and faithful transition—one that preserves our Church’s commitment to artistic excellence while continuing to evolve worship into meaningful community-building and spiritual experiences.

Each service includes scripture, prayer, and a message that is biblically grounded, theologically rich, and personally resonant. Our preaching draws from, but is not limited to, both the Narrative Lectionary and the Revised Common Lectionary, helping to root our congregation in the broader story of faith. Sermons are supported by visual elements such as slides and occasional videos, and are designed to meet people where they are—offering encouragement, challenge, and a spiritual framework for navigating everyday life. We aim to expand our shared theological vocabulary, deepen our understanding of the gospel, and equip one another to move forward in faith.

Worship at JupiterFIRST isn’t meant to end with the final song or benediction. A hallmark of our church’s spirit is the energy that carries into the time after worship, where conversations continue, friendships deepen, and new connections take shape. In a world too often divided, JupiterFIRST seeks to be counter-cultural by creating a worship space that unites rather than separates—a place where everyone is invited to listen, speak, sing, and seek together what God might be saying next.



Sunday Worship (continued)

Technology & Collaboration

Worship at JupiterFIRST is the product of many hearts and hands working together to create a vibrant, Spirit-filled experience each week. From our choir and rotating ensembles of gifted musicians to scripture readers, visual artists, and even a beloved puppet ministry, worship is an ever-evolving collaboration. In 2024, we launched a new Worship Ministry Team designed to help gather ideas from the congregation and bring them to life through music, spoken word, visual art, drama, and other creative expressions—reminding us that worship is not a performance to watch but a community to join.

Behind the scenes, our dedicated tech team plays a vital role in expanding the reach of our services far beyond the sanctuary. JupiterFIRST has been live streaming worship for over 15 years, and since 2020, our audio/visual ministry has undergone major upgrades—including state-of-the-art sound, multi-camera streaming, and enhanced accessibility for the hearing impaired through closed captioning and assistive technology. In 2021, new screens and high-resolution projectors brought fresh visual energy to the worship space, and in 2024, we welcomed a Director of Technology to oversee A/V, lighting, sound, broadcast, and digital infrastructure across the campus.

Each week, worship is streamed live on three platforms—our website at live.jupiterfirst.org, YouTube, and Facebook—with an extensive archive available for those who worship on demand. Whether in-person or online, JupiterFIRST continues to innovate and invest in creating a worship experience that is inclusive, accessible, and deeply participatory.





Missions & Community

At JupiterFIRST Church, missions and community engagement are woven into the fabric of who we are. For decades, our greatest strength has been the active and collaborative participation of our congregation in serving others. While our formal missions budget may not fully reflect the breadth of our impact, much of our giving is direct and hands-on—whether it's stocking the food pantry, donating Christmas gifts for foster children, collecting board books for the NICU, or supporting local families in need. Our church infrastructure is intentionally designed to serve, providing space for AA and other recovery meetings, hosting the Greek Coptic Church, and partnering with El Sol in Jupiter to offer meaningful work for day laborers helping with our grounds. We believe mission is not a line item—it's a way of life.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry lovingly creates shawls, afghans, baby blankets, and more—not only for our church family, but for those in need throughout the wider community. Gathered over coffee and conversation, knitters of all ages come together to stitch comfort, hope, and prayer into every piece. From blessing each item as it's made to sending prayer squares with our youth on mission trips, this ministry weaves threads of compassion across generations.



Partners in Service

Meeting each month to dream and imagine how to expand our pathways of service, this group's focus is on expanding opportunities for JupiterFIRST members and friends to partner with organizations in our community and beyond to engage in service following in the ways of Jesus. They work with many local organizations to determine their needs and ways we might partner to serve the community including The Lewis Center, Help & Hope, St. Mary's NICU, CROS Ministries Food on the First, Friends of Foster Children, annual gleaning projects and many more.



Missions & Community



Secret Shepherd

Each Christmas, our members provide gifts for hundreds of underserved children in Palm Beach County. Members anonymously select a child's wish list and shop with care, spreading joy and love through simple acts of generosity. One dedicated donor even provides dozens of bicycles each year, making this ministry a cherished tradition of giving.

Youth Missions

Rooted in faith and compassion, our youth serve both locally and beyond. They regularly volunteer at Quantum House and Real Life Children's Ranch, offering meals and organizing activities for children and families in need. On campus, they support ministries like Gardeners for God and assist with facility care. Each summer, they participate in mission trips to serve underserved communities through construction, outreach, and relationship-building. Through it all, they grow spiritually through worship, devotionals, prayer, and meaningful small group reflection.

Global & Disaster Response Missions

Our commitment to mission extends far beyond our local community. We support disaster relief efforts through the Florida Conference of the UCC, responding to hurricanes, fires, and other urgent needs. Internationally, we partner with World Vision through their Chosen campaign in Rwanda, empowering children and families through sustainable development. These efforts reflect our call to serve wherever compassion and justice are needed most.



Congregational Involvement - Adults

Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is of highest importance to us. We have many unique opportunities to connect with others and explore topics of faith and spirituality in the real world. From weekly Prayer Shawl groups to Book Clubs and Partners in Service, there is something for everyone. Our current offerings and ways to learn, serve and connect include:

- Lectionary Lab
- Prayer Shawl
- Book Clubs
- JupiterFIRST Singers
- Partners in Service Team
- Children & Youth Ministry
- Various Bible Study & Disciple Classes
- Monthly Church-Wide Breakfast
- Centering Prayer

Curriculum includes various Disciple and bible studies and both the Narrative and Revised Common Lectionary.



Congregational Care Groups

At JupiterFIRST, our Congregational Care groups embody the heart of our church—showing up with compassion, presence, and practical support wherever it's needed. Whether offering a listening ear, a helping hand, or a warm welcome, these ministries work together to care for our church family and extend Christ's love in tangible ways. Through their service, our community is strengthened, nurtured, and reminded that no one walks alone. These groups include:

- Grief Share
- Caregivers Support Group
- Hospitality Team
- Stephen Ministry
- Hurricane Helpers
- Gardeners for God
- Senior Activities



Congregational Involvement - kidsFIRST



kidsFIRST

We believe that kids aren't just the future of the church, they are the church of today, too! We are excited to welcome all children into our church and invite them to experience God and our community of faith.

Nursery

During worship, we provide parents with the option of taking their babies and toddlers to church or bringing them to our staffed nursery where they have time to play, interact and hear a story that helps them develop a sense of wonder for God.

Children's Church

Our Children's Minister, Marthe Hjortshoj is excited to welcome all children into our church and to invite them to experience God and our community of faith. Children begin Sunday worship with their families in the sanctuary and most weeks include a children's sermon before kids head to their classes in Faith Hall. Kids will enjoy a lesson, hands-on activities, and fellowship time. Curriculums include Group Play & Worship, Godly Play and the Narrative and Revised Common Lectionaries.

Events

Additionally, our Children's Ministry offers opportunities throughout the week to engage including Storytime at the Playground for toddlers and parents and Pizza on the Playground where parents of children of all ages can socialize and connect after service. Each summer we offer a week of Vacation Bible School with a record-setting full registration in just 5 days in 2025! Some of our intergenerational events include the Easter Egg-Stravaganza, Parents' Night Out, BINGO, Talent Show, Advent Wreath making and more.

Lighthouse

Weekly Lighthouse Youth Group for K-5th graders meets Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30pm in Faith Hall. Children are encouraged to bring a friend and join Miss Marthe and her awesome team of volunteers, and come ready to have fun, meet new friends and discover something incredible about God.



Congregational Involvement - youthFIRST



Bible & Bagels

Teens of all ages meet on Sunday mid-way through the service for a time of devotion and discussion. Led by our Youth Minister, SherylN Burnham-Kuehn, our middle and high school students enjoy socializing and digging deeper into scripture.

Middle School | The Wave

Bringing together tweens and teens from 6th through 8th grade, it's a night always filled with energy. They meet in Faith Hall from 6:00-8:00pm. With high school leaders guiding the way, our middle school kids enjoy pizza, games, worship, a message, and small breakout groups focused on friendship, faith, and fun.

High School | Anchored

Catered to high school minds, Anchored meets weekly from 6:00-8:30pm in Porter Hall. Each gathering is designed to pull students closer to each other and God... all while having a lot of fun! Led by an awesome group of adult volunteers, the program features food and snacks, games, worship, a message and small group breakouts, plus some time to just hang out in a positive and uplifting environment.

Other youthFIRST Activities

In addition to our regular ongoing programming, special events throughout the year include parties, lock-ins, service days, retreats, mission trips, beach days, Rock the Universe and much, much more!

Confirmation

Confirmation classes are available to all 7th and 8th graders and unconfirmed high school students. The curriculum is developed by the Ministerial Staff to introduce the students to Jesus. They participate in an 8-week adult-led bible study of the Gospel culminating in confirmation service witnessed by the congregation.

Timothy Award

We offer a Timothy Award scholarship presented annually to a high school Senior or adult demonstrating a desire to pursue a Masters of Divinity. Should a Timothy Award Winner pursue this degree at any point in their life, the scholarship will be made available to them, from specific earmarked funds.



Preschool

Where big hearts shape little minds

History

JupiterFIRST Church Preschool was established in 1989. School was held in what is now Porter Hall. In March 2005, the church built a new sanctuary allowing Faith Hall to house all student activities for the church and preschool. We closed for a period of time, reopening in the Fall of 2024 to allow new students to begin their school careers.

Management

The Preschool is owned and operated by JupiterFIRST Church and managed by Judy Harris, Director and a dedicated staff. As a ministry of JupiterFIRST, the ministry staff is encouraged to be present in appropriate pastoral, creative, and strategic ways.



Mission

Bringing The Preschool provides each child with a positive, fun, and safe environment to grow in a well-balanced curriculum according to his or her age. We offer an atmosphere that builds self-confidence while encouraging children to be harmonious in the world and with each other, providing them with a deeper understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Program Objectives

JupiterFIRST Preschool's objective is to treat every child as an individual, always recognizing that they are all on a different level of development.

- We are responsible for the safety, positive enjoyment and the infusion of a love of lifelong learning.
- We commit to pray for each child by name.
- We understand the importance of encouraging new friendships and the overall importance of social emotional intelligence.
- We believe in obtaining cooperation through connection, problem solving skills and modeling positive behaviors, which in turn allows them to be the best version of themselves.
- We contribute to the development of physical growth, creativity, self-concept, social awareness and intellectual curiosity.



Church Campus & Facilities



Main Sanctuary and Offices

JupiterFIRST Church sits on a beautiful 10 acre, well-landscaped campus in the heart of Jupiter, Florida. The post-modern architecture resonates with the surrounding area. Our main sanctuary seats 900 with additional seating available for overflow in the large, open floor Narthex. A small chapel off the Narthex, is a welcoming place for an intimate baptism, memorial, wedding or other events including meditation or spiritual reflection. *Welcoming Jesus*,

sculpted by one of our members, invites all those who enter to cast away their worries and rest at home in His house. The cross, baptismal font, podium and table were hand-crafted by a local artist specifically for our sanctuary. A cry room is available for those wishing to worship with their babies and small children. Located behind the sanctuary are the administrative and staff offices, work spaces, meeting rooms and a private mental health counseling office. Currently, our campus is partially handicapped accessible. JupiterFIRST Church does not own a parsonage.

Annually, we participate with the neighboring Catholic Church and Temple for an Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service, hosted alternately by each house of worship. Our campus also serves as a community hub for our annual Pumpkin Patch Festival and Easter Egg-Stravaganza, and host site for events including dementia specialist Teepa Snow, The Orchid City Brass Band and more.

Faith Hall

Faith Hall served as our main sanctuary until 2005 and has been thoughtfully renovated with several upgrades. It serves as a gathering place for our Children's and Youth Ministries and the JupiterFIRST Preschool. Equipped with a small kitchen, restrooms, classrooms, and worship space it continues to provide a hub for fellowship, meals and activities of all kinds. A new outdoor playground, covered pavilion (used by the local Boy Scout troop) and a large lawn space provide additional meeting areas for games, carnivals, movie night and camping!

Center for Spiritual Renewal

The CSR was built specifically to add classrooms for adult education and bible study groups. A small kitchenette, bathroom facilities and office space provides room for meetings of all types and sizes. This building currently provides meeting space 7 days a week for groups such as AA, Al-Anon, Emmaus, and the 2020 Stephen Ministry Workshop for South Florida.

Porter Hall

Funded by a long-time member, Porter Hall was established to house the Youth Ministries who meet twice per week for bible study, fun and games, praise and worship, testimonials, leadership training and mentoring and, of course, pizza!

Engle Serenity Garden

Nestled between Faith Hall and our main sanctuary is the Engle Serenity Garden. This beautifully landscaped space provides an intimate hideaway to walk, rest, reflect and pray.



Our History

Our Beginning

JupiterFIRST Church was started in 1983 by Rev. Ned and Lynn Barnes as a plant of the United Church of Christ. They imagined a church that welcomed individuals and families of all types. A church that didn't just use the word "welcoming" but actually was welcoming—where everyone had a seat at the table regardless of personal history, sexual identity, family status, or ethnic background.

In 1993, Rev. Dr. Barry Johnson and his wife, Barbara, came to JupiterFIRST to continue the good work Ned and Lynn Barnes began. Pastor Barry, who went to his Lord and Savior, May 29, 2021, served the Lord for fifty years, twenty five of those years, at JupiterFIRST Church. He ministered this church well and instilled

in this congregation of believers these truths: God is good...All the time, God loves us more than we can ever mess up, and we are unique and unrepeatable, miracles of God. They are words of hope and definitely, words well remembered. For his entire ministry, Barry closed all his written correspondence with the phrase, "The JOY continues," and it does.

Relationship with Ministerial Leaders

Transitions within ministry staff have created some difficulties in recent years. First, our Pastoral Care Minister and Executive Minister, who were married to each other, resigned after the church left the UCC in 2016. Then, after 25 years of service, our beloved Senior Minister retired.

The Senior Minister who came in May of 2017, after the retirement of Barry Johnson, was not a good fit for our congregation and our DNA. Membership and financial support declined by 50% and after months of deliberation, the Church Council voted to ask for his resignation which was effective, December 31, 2020.

In 2022 Pastor Chip Jurskis was called as Lead Pastor by our congregation. In collaboration with our ministry staff, there is a renewed feeling of joy and commitment with an eagerness to welcome a co-lead model. In particular the music, children's messages, youth involvement and sermons show the Holy Spirit is at work in our Church through a demonstration of love and acceptance.

Wider Church Connections

Effective May 2021 we renewed our relationship with the UCC and are active in the conference and wider denomination. JupiterFIRST Church hosted the UCC Florida Youth Conference in 2021, and remains a rotational host for Florida Conference Clergy Cluster groups and interfaith gatherings such as the PEACE network's Nehemiah Action Project. In 2023, JupiterFIRST Church joyfully celebrated its 40th anniversary with a weekend of special events honoring our history, community, and future. Highlights included a vibrant worship service, fellowship gatherings, and a successful fundraising auction that brought members and friends together in celebration.



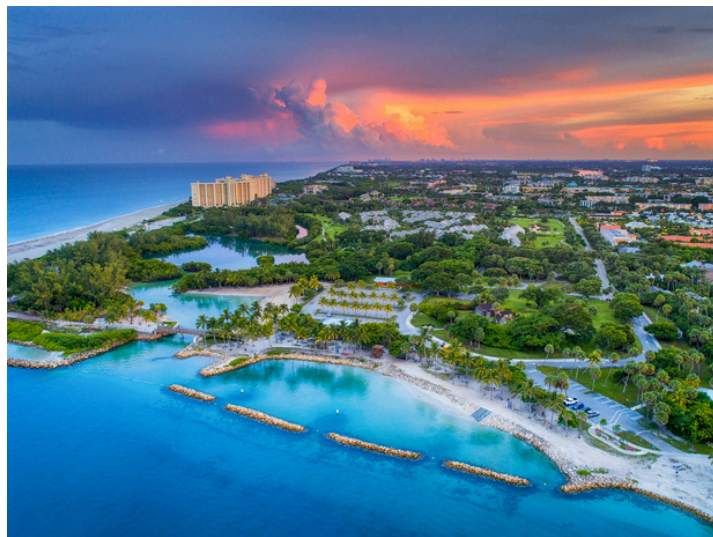


Jupiter Community Characteristics

JupiterFIRST Church is located in Jupiter, Florida, a town renowned for its stunning natural landscapes, relaxed beach atmosphere, and iconic lighthouse views. Situated in Palm Beach County, Jupiter offers residents and visitors alike access to pristine turquoise beaches, the Jupiter Inlet, and the Loxahatchee River, which are central to the town's identity. Complemented by numerous golf courses, Jupiter has long been a favored destination for tourists and seasonal residents, with the population increasing by approximately one-third during peak seasons.

Demographics and Population

As of 2023, Jupiter's population is estimated at 61,291, reflecting a modest growth of 0.23% from the previous year. The town spans over 21.6 square miles, resulting in a population density of approximately 2,824.9 people per square mile.



Racial and Ethnic Composition

The racial and ethnic makeup of Jupiter is predominantly White (Non-Hispanic) at 75.7%, followed by Two or More Races (Hispanic) at 9.06%, White (Hispanic) at 5.69%, Two or More Races (Non-Hispanic) at 3.13%, and Other (Hispanic) at 2.12%.

Economic Indicators

The average annual household income in Jupiter is \$168,260, while the median household income stands at \$109,109. Residents aged 25 to 44 earn a median income of \$115,231, and those between 45 and 64 years old have a median wage of \$124,713. The poverty rate is approximately 8.23%.



Jupiter Community Characteristics (continued)



Housing Market

The housing market in Jupiter has seen significant appreciation. The average home value is \$700,916, reflecting a 1.2% decrease over the past year. Homes typically sell after 95 days on the market.

Education

Jupiter is served by highly-rated public schools across all levels. High school students have opportunities for dual enrollment at local institutions such as Palm Beach State College, Scripps Research Institute, and Florida Atlantic University Honors College. While part of the Palm Beach County School District—the tenth largest in the U.S.—Jupiter also attracts students from neighboring counties.

Major Trends and Challenges

- *Economic Opportunity:* Ongoing growth fosters business development and attracts new enterprises.
- *Environmental Concerns:* The community remains vigilant about preserving the health of the Loxahatchee River, Jupiter Inlet, and surrounding oceanic environments.
- *Zoning Pressures:* Balancing development with maintaining Jupiter's quality of life presents ongoing challenges.

Community Focus

Jupiter strives to address issues such as enhancing diversity, providing affordable housing, and protecting the environment. The town is committed to being stewards of its beautiful South Florida setting. For faith communities like JupiterFIRST Church, this context presents opportunities to offer a welcoming home for new residents, provide a space for the irreligious and those disillusioned with traditional Christianity, and support the needs of the undocumented community in Jupiter.





References

Neal Watkins

Ministry Consultant, JupiterFIRST Church
Minister for Vision and Vitality, UCC Florida
nwatkins@uccfla.org

Rev. Dr. David Kaiser-Cross

Former Executive Minister, JupiterFIRST Church
Former Executive Minister, Naples United Church of Christ (Ret.)
davidkaisercross@gmail.com

Rev. Martie McMane

Senior Minister, First Congregational UCC Boulder (Ret.)
Leadership Advisor, JupiterFIRST Church
720- 331-1591

CROS Ministries

Emily Zarzycki
Community Partner
emilyz@crosmministries.org

Real Life Children’s Ranch

Mark Mayers
Community Partner
Mark.Mayers@RLCR.org

The following JupiterFIRST groups
contributed to, reviewed and approved
this church profile for circulation:

Search Committee
Erica Barnes, Chair

Church Council
Nathan Endrud, Chair



JupiterFIRST
CHURCH