

Name of Church
Grace United Church of Christ

Address
535 S Third Ave
Wausau, WI 54401-4608

Conference:
Wisconsin

Association:
No Associations

Title
Pastor

Start Date
Aug 2, 2026

Description
Settled Pastor

Church Contact Information

(715) 845-7051 (Church Primary Phone)
office@graceuccwausau.org (Church Email)

Listing Information

Web Presences

https://www.facebook.com/graceuccwausau	Type: Other
https://www.youtube.com/@GraceUCCWausau	Type: Other
https://www.instagram.com/graceuccwausau/	Type: Other
https://graceuccwausau.org	Type: Personal

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

Ecumenical Services

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person**Name:**

Rev. Shannon Joshi

Title:

Northern Region

Phone:

608-419-7509

Email:

SJoshi@wcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

Grace UCC of Wausau is looking for a minister to work hand in hand with an active and committed congregation. We are searching for a part-time pastor who will engage with us and the community in our common goals, while leading and teaching us in our Christian faith. We are a friendly and caring congregation, have had good relationships with our pastors, and hope to call a pastor that will inspire us in our next chapter. We are also open to the possibility of a shared ministry with another church to create a full-time position.

Church pictures**What we value about living in our area.**

The Wausau area features outdoor activities from hiking and skiing at Granite Peak to fishing and kayaking, alongside numerous parks and museums. The region boasts an active arts and music scene, year-round sports, and a vibrant downtown with cultural venues—all blending urban amenities with small-town Midwest charm. Its central location places it just a couple hours from larger metropolitan areas.

Current size of membership

150

Average in person attendance

32

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.

Video Conferencing

On average, how many devices are logged in per service?

15

Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

40

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Pastor

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

1/2 Time (approximately 20-22 hours/week)

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

Will work with the Wisconsin Conference guidelines

Scope of Work

Some fields reference The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ .

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the Call Agreement Workbook.

No response

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

An engaging leader who effectively influences the congregation both individually and collectively to continue the Church's Mission and Vision.

Second:

Inspire and support the congregation in living their faith authentically, serving as witnesses to God's transforming love in the world.

Third:

Foster connections between the community and congregation that empower all members in their ministries, whether gathering in-person or connecting virtually.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE (IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	0	☒	☐
Housing Allowance	0	☒	☐
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	☒	☐
Salary Basis: 0			
Pension/Annuity	0	☒	☐
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	☒	☐
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	☒	☐
Life Insurance	0	☒	☐
Disability Insurance	0	☒	☐
Worker's Compensation	0	☒	☐

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

We will work with the candidate to come up with a package that is best for Grace UCC and the settled pastor.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

We are open and willing to work with the settled pastor.

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

N/A

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

We are open to a bi-vocational pastor and will work with the pastor to accommodate their needs and ours.

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.
Conference and/or Association meeting registrations
Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).
Criminal background checks.
Community of Practice Participation.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

The Wisconsin Conference offers many professional ways of support including Community of Practice, scholarships and grants to assist in continuing education.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

Our church is looking for a pastoral leader that would be able to work with the congregation.

A: Praising God

B: Living the Way of Jesus

C: Building the Beloved Community

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We are a WISE congregation and we are currently in the discernment process to become Open and Affirming. Grace UCC works with First United Methodist Church on Community Suppers to prepare, distribute and serve meals to over 100 needy individuals and throughout the year Grace UCC has "Mission Sundays" where we collect items for our Food/Diaper Pantry, including toiletries. We support our 5 for 5 UCC missions that reflect "living the way of Jesus."

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

We are an English-speaking congregation committed to the UCC's call for multicultural ministry. We welcome candidates from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are 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.

Nurturing UCC Identity

Building Transformational Leadership Skills

Caring for all Creation

Working Together for Justice and Measure

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

We believe that we are more effective in finding answers together, as a community, than we are alone. We look to scriptures for guidance and always question - what does this mean today?

The congregation has always been an accepting and loving community as time and neighborhood has changed.

The congregation has opened their minds and hearts to ministry in new and creative ways.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

Grace UCC actively engages both our community and congregation through diverse ministries. We serve our neighbors through a Food/Diaper Pantry, Thanksgiving food baskets, winter clothing for children, Trunk or Treat, Community on Call, and regular Community Suppers. Within our congregation, members connect through Coloring Club, WISE Readers Book Club, Bible Study, Prayer Circle, hospital and homebound visits.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

An active and dynamic fellowship that engages the congregation through compassion and empathy, inspiring members to live their faith both within our church walls and in service to the wider community.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

Community connection
Welcoming and inclusive
Resilient
Mission-focused

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

We have navigated through the pandemic and a significant amount of time without a called pastor.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Sunday worship at Grace is inclusive and welcoming. Our smaller congregation allows for genuine connection - we greet one another by name, share joys and concerns, and pray together as a community of friends. Our worship features a mix of traditional and modern Christian music, meaningful scripture, and thoughtful sermons that connect faith to daily life. We celebrate Communion monthly and during special services. Our Communion table is, and always will be open to all.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Faith Formation for children is offered on Sunday mornings. Adult Faith Formation includes Bible studies and we collaborate with the other UCC's in the area for Vacation Bible School. We have a vision of expanding a youth program that would reach out into the community, with mission, service and activities.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

We are a 5 for 5 congregation, faithfully supporting all five UCC mission offerings. Beyond this, we believe ministry happens when members discover their passions and callings. When a member feels called to a particular mission or ministry, the congregation supports and encourages that work. This approach has led to our diverse ministries - from our Food/Diaper Pantry to WISE advocacy to community partnerships - each born from a member's deep commitment and sustained by congregational support.

When it comes to decision-making, 6 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

When the pandemic occurred, the Pastor, Church Council President, and Head Elder responded.

When the doors closed, the leadership adapted— live-streamed services were launched. Meetings were moved to Zoom. The Faith Formation Team ensured that children stayed connected through Zoom and produced a recorded Christmas play.

The result was a seamless transition from in-person only, to online and local access channel 980, to the current hybrid model. In times of crisis, quick action was made possible by a trusted leadership core, clear communication channels, and a willingness to adapt. Responsibilities were delegated and the church not only survived the crisis but expanded its reach through technology.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[Download Constitution and Bylaws 2025.docx \(1\).pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11_YEAR_REPORT_Grace United Church of Christ _2025 \(1\).pdf](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	150
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	10
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	160

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	80%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	10%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	3
12-17	10
18-24	11
25-34	12
35-44	5
45-54	10
55-64	15
65-74	40
75+	35

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	23%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	8%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	20%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	23%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	26%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	39%
COLLEGE:	27%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	5%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	29%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	25%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	65%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Occupations range from industrial trade to professional.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

We are a predominantly white congregation.

What diversity means in our context?

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

Yes

DATE COMPLETED: Aug 8 2024

Comment after the exercise:

Yes, when we became a WISE congregation.

On November 10, 2024 we had a special congregational meeting to approve Grace UCC's WISE covenant. We are currently initiating conversations on becoming ONA.

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	12	Pastor and/or Lay Leadership
Baptisms (number last year)	2	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	3	Lay Leadership
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	75	Pastor
Church-wide Meals	30	Lay Leadership
Choirs and Music Groups	12	Lay Leadership
Church-based Bible Study	6	Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	37	Elders
Community Meals	100	Lay Leadership
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	1	Pastor
Funerals (number last year)	3	Pastor and Lay Leadership
Prayer or Meditation Groups	15	Lay Leadership
Retreats	5	Moon Beach Camp Leadership
Weddings (number last year)	0	Pastor
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	4	Lay Leadership

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10:30 am	32	Worship Team

Additional comments:

40 additional people will view our service through various video options every week.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Julie Goranson	none	member	member	☒
Nancy Russell	none	member	emerita	☒
Ann Larrabee	none	current	licensed	☐
Stephen Russell	none	member	emeritus	☒
Wayne Drueck	none	member	emeritus	☒
Donald Baumann	none	retired	retired	☒
Gloria Van Houten	none	retired	retired	☒
Vicki Wunsch	none		supply	☐
Mary Jo Laabs	none	interim current	licensed	☐

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

They are members at large.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Custodian	n/a	part	Council	30
Administrative Assistant	n/a	part	Council	7
Accountant	n/a	part	Council	2
Organist	n/a	part	Council	recently hired
Licensed Pastor	n/a	part	Council	3
Interim Pastor	n/a	part	Council	7 months

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

The depth and diversity of our ministry reflects a community of faith that understands the gifts of every person matter, and that the work of the church belongs to all of us.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	131208
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	9259
Total	140467

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

158196

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download 2026 Narrative budget Grace United Church of Christ.pdf](#)

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

20

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

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Donations

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

0

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

No response

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

Landscaping that began in 2022 and is expected to be complete by 2026. The budget is based on donations and endowment. We are currently looking at roof replacement and organ repair or replacement.

Pictures



Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

N/A

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

380686

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

Yes, once a year.

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

N/A

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

The funds are drawn as follows, The cost of living is calculated for the current year and the amount added to the balance, and if there is a surplus then we may withdraw that amount.

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

Based on the current restrictions the endowment will continue to offer church grants yearly.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Unless the congregation changes the rules set forth the fund will remain intact. Numbers are from 2025.

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

No response

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

The Church building--535 S. 3rd Avenue, Wausau, WI

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

N/A

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Accessible parking spaces

Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids

Wheelchair access in bathrooms
Handrails on all stairs
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Curb cuts
Accessible bathroom on each floor

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

All areas above are accessible.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

The Finance Team and Endowment Team report to the Church Council. A yearly audit takes place.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

We take seriously our responsibility to manage our congregation's resources wisely and with care.

Historical Information**Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.**

Founded in 1886 by several families from Germany who emigrated to the U.S. and settled in the Wausau, Schofield and Stratford, WI area.

In 1894, the "Little White Church" as it was known, was moved to the present location on the west side of Wausau.

In 1925, the congregation began construction of the current building and it was dedicated on Feb. 21, 1926. During this time, the church was known as the First Reformed Church.

In December of 1955, a new educational wing was dedicated and in 1964 the name was changed to Grace United Church of Christ.

In 1983, Grace UCC called a husband and wife team to pastor the church. They were the first ordained couple in the Wausau area to lead a church.

In 2012, as a seminary student, our most recently called pastor, Rev. Julie Goranson, was graciously accepted to serve alongside Rev. Wayne Drueck. In 2016, when Rev. Wayne retired, Rev. Julie became our called pastor.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

One of the most significant changes our congregation has faced in recent years was adapting to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and going online. We also have had to navigate the departure of our called pastor who chose an early retirement due to critical family issues in August of 2023.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We believe in direct and caring communication, in listening with open hearts and minds, and in seeking resolution that honors the dignity of every person involved.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

In recent years, our congregation experienced a period of transition as our vision and direction evolved. While that journey led some members to find their path elsewhere, those who remained emerged with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper commitment to where God is calling us.

Ministerial History:

Name: Julie Goranson

Years of service: 11

UCC Standing

Name: John Helt

Years of service: 1

UCC Standing

Name: Jake Close

Years of service: 2

UCC Standing

Name: Vicki Wunsch

Years of service: 1

UCC Standing

Name: Wayne Drueck

Years of service: 10

UCC Standing

Name: Steve Russell

Years of service: 19

UCC Standing

Name: Nancy Russell

Years of service: 19

UCC Standing

Name: Ann Larrabee

Years of service: 3

UCC Standing

Name: Mary Jo Laabs

Years of service: 1

UCC Standing

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

We have learned that the relationships we build with our ministerial leaders extend far beyond their time of service with us. Those who have led us remain part of our story, and we remain part of theirs.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

Our congregation believes that faith is best expressed through action. We host Trunk or Treat community events, work with Hmong Specialty Plants and Herbs sale, run a Community supper and Food/Diaper pantry, collect backpacks and winter clothing for children in need, and actively serve those who are unhoused in our community.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

We believe that faithful membership in the United Church of Christ means showing up — not just locally, but across the wider church. Grace UCC has a long tradition of regular participation in the Northern Region, the Wisconsin Conference, and the UCC General Synod. We bring that same philosophy in our support of our ministers, encouraging them to engage in the world beyond our walls.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

We engage with our community in two important ways — by bringing the community to us and by supporting our members as they go out into it. We regularly invite local speakers to share their missions. We encourage and support members who are personally involved in community organizations and causes.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

WISE Congregation for Mental Health.

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

Grace UCC is proud to be recognized as a WISE Congregation for Mental Health. Our covenant reflects what we already strive to live out every day: that every person who walks through our doors deserves to be met with dignity, compassion, and genuine understanding.

The commitments we have made are expressions of who we are and who we are still becoming. Most recently, we have embarked on the Open and Affirming process, welcoming the guidance of the Conference ONA liaison committee. We move forward with open hearts, knowing that the work of becoming a more inclusive and just community of faith is never truly finished — and we are grateful for every step along the way.

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

Grace UCC believes that the Spirit moves well beyond our own walls and our own tradition. Throughout the years we have gathered in worship with neighboring congregations, including the two UCC churches in our area. Celebrating the faith we hold in common and the rich diversity of expression makes our broader religious community vibrant. These shared services are a reminder that we are part of something much larger than any single faith community.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

"Our mission is given to us by Jesus who told us to go and make disciples. So we are on that journey. No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!"

When Jesus told us to go and make disciples, he gave us both a mission and a pathway. Our mission statement keeps the way steady, helping us align our time, our resources, and our collective energy with what matters most. This is a congregation that does not just recite its mission, but lives it out faithfully, both within our walls and beyond them.

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

Grace UCC takes seriously its responsibility to support its pastoral leadership both inside and outside the congregation. We have actively supported Pastor Ann, our licensed pastor, in her continuing education as she pursues ordination. We have a history of supporting members through Lay Academy and encourage our pastors to engage in outside ministry, including retired Rev. Julie's role as a police chaplain.

We want to be upfront and transparent about the nature of this position. We are offering a part-time role, and we respect that candidates may have other ministerial, professional, or personal commitments alongside their work with us. We welcome that conversation openly and are committed to building a scope of work that reflects both our needs and yours.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

No response

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

We are located in a blue-collar, low-income neighborhood that is more diverse than the greater Wausau area. A strong UCC identity, a genuine commitment to Social Justice, and a heart for our neighbors give Grace everything it needs to stand apart and make a real difference right where we are.

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

There is an honest gap between who we are as a congregation and who our immediate neighbors are. Grace UCC's membership is predominantly white, with relatively higher income, and more formal education. We do not shy away from that reality. It is one of the reasons our commitment to social justice and community outreach matters so deeply to us.

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

Grace UCC takes genuine pride in the ministries we have built in direct response to the realities our neighbors face. Through our food/diaper pantry, we address the very real challenge of food insecurity in our low-income neighborhood. Through our social events, we create space for connection, dignity, and belonging. And through our past affiliation with NAMI, we stand alongside those whose struggles with mental health are too often met with silence and stigma. These are not programs — they are expressions of who we are and who we are called to be.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

Grace UCC has a visible home on 3rd Avenue. What we are still working to build is an identity in the broader community that is equally recognizable — one that connects our familiar building with the vibrant, mission-driven congregation inside it. That is a challenge we embrace with energy and intention.

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

When we ask newcomers what drew them to Grace UCC and kept them coming back, the answer is remarkably consistent — they felt welcome. For some, it began before they ever walked through our doors, drawn in by the UCC's "A Just World For All" flag flying proudly outside our building. For others, it was a warm smile and a genuine

conversation with one of our members that made all the difference. In both cases, the message was the same — you belong here.

References

☒ Anna Lewis

Completed: Sunday, Aug 11, 2024

Daughter of Patti Bergmann, member of Grace UCC since 2017

Primary Email Address: anna.noel.lewis@gmail.com

Mobile Phone: 6122934004

Reference Response

I am writing to recommend Grace UCC in Wausau, WI. While I'm not a member, I've attended many services and events, witnessing the positive impact on both its members and the community.

Grace is a welcoming, inclusive congregation deeply committed to service. The sermons are inspiring, grounded in scripture, and thoughtfully address contemporary challenges. Grace maintains a neighborhood pantry, serves community suppers, houses the NAMI office, and provides breakfast for the warming center. Though small, the congregation is always ready to lend a hand. As fall approaches, they're busy preparing backpacks of school supplies and planning their annual Trunk-or-Treat.

In summary, Grace embodies faith, love, and service. I wholeheartedly recommend this church to anyone seeking a nurturing spiritual home engaged in meaningful community work.

☒ Michael Dembowski

Completed: Thursday, Jun 4, 2026

Son of Sheila Dembowski - Grace United Administrative Assistant since 2021

Primary Email Address: thebean894@gmail.com

Personal: 7152250575

Reference Response

As a non-member of Grace United, I find the environment to be extraordinarily welcoming and the people of Grace to be kind, warm, and inviting. Grace has an environment that is welcoming to lay people of any denomination, and their pastors have genuine care for their congregation, which can be seen through their sermons and church events that bring people of all different backgrounds together for the worship and reverence of God.

Grace offers a space that is different from other denominations due to its focus on compassion and love. That is what I appreciate most about this community — the people of Grace have genuine care for the members of their community, which can be seen through the various charitable acts they perform, including their food pantry. Grace is a congregation that truly means all are welcome — regardless of background, identity, or whom you love.

☒ Marcia Innis

Completed: Thursday, Jun 4, 2026

Visitor since 2020

Primary Email Address: minnis44@charter.net

Personal: 7152985755

Reference Response

What makes Grace a special place?

As a visitor, this is what I know: It's LOVE!

Acceptance of everyone. Sharing themselves and what they have...in their church...in their community.

Anytime. Anywhere. Always.

Unlike other congregations I have belonged to in my 90 years (3), Grace does what God asks of all of us...Love all my children as I have loved you. 24/7. Grace congregation is God's love personified.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, as we seek to embody your love and justice in our community, grant us clarity of vision for our church as a beacon of hope and compassion. Guide us to faithfully live out our mission as a congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcoming all people, advocating for the marginalized, and actively working towards a world where peace, equity, and love prevail. May we be a vibrant community, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to serve others, share your Gospel, and be a transformative force for good in the world.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

This Local Church Profile was prepared by Grace UCC's Call Team, drawing on input gathered through congregational surveys and formal and informal group discussions. The result reflects the perspectives and insights of our wider membership.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We view the scope of work for this position as a starting point for conversation. Grace UCC is fully committed to working with our candidate to shape a role that is a genuine and sustainable fit for both the individual and our congregation.