



The Park Church
Congregational, United Church of Christ
208 West Gray Street, Elmira, NY 14905
607-733-9104

www.theparkchurch.org

[View The Park Church Narrative](#)

NOTE: Blue, underlined items are live links to the documents indicated. You may also view linked documents as appendices at the end of this profile.

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Search Committee Chairs	
<p>Doug Couchon 109 Foster Ave. Elmira, NY 14905 607 425-7203 dcouchon@gmail.com</p>	<p>Mimi Gridley 110 N. Glenora Rd. Dundee, NY 14837 607 742-3308 mdgridley14@gmail.com</p>
Conference Staff Person	
<p>Rev. Marsha Williams 315 446-3073 mwilliams@uccny.org</p>	

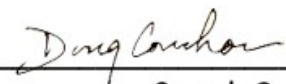
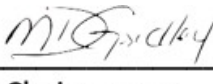
Congregation: The Park Church
Location: Elmira, New York
Position sought: Settled Minister
Conference: New York Conference
Association: Susquehanna Association, United Church of Christ

Validation Date:

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 might be helpful to candidates.

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

 and 

Search Committee Chairpersons

_____ Date



LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Consent and Validation
- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become? ([Please refer to Narrative](#))
- Who Are We Now? ([Please refer to Narrative](#))
- View [The Park Church References](#)

POSITION POSTING

Listing Information

- Church name: The Park Church
- Street address: 208 West Gray Street, Elmira, NY 14901
- Supplemental websites
 - www.theparkchurch.org
 - Facebook: [The Park Church Elmira](#)
- Additional ecumenical affiliations: None
- Conference: New York Conference
- Association: Susquehanna Association
- UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name: Marsha Williams

Title: Associate Conference Minister

Phone: 845-500-5082

Email: mwilliams@uccny.org

Summary Ministry Description

The Park Church is a group of seekers, sharing a journey with all who want to participate. Some are dreamers who see a church trying to bring about a transition from a progressive and meaningful past to a future that reaches out to meet the present needs of our community. Some are doers, willing to take on challenges and come up with programs that fulfill both spiritual and social needs in our congregation and among our neighbors. We are looking for a leader of vision who can inspire us to be our best.



- Current size of membership: 124
- Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): n/a
- Position Title: Settled Pastor
- Position Duration: Long Term
- Compensation Level: Full Time
- Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?
Yes

[View Scope of Work](#)

Core Competencies/Skill Sets

- Preaching
- Communication
- Community Building

Compensation and Support

- Salary Basis (*cash salary plus housing allowance*): \$53,454
Based on UCC guidelines for Master of Divinity, 16-20 years experience and 100 church members
- Benefits: Salary plus benefits
- Expected living situation for your next minister: Living nearby with a housing allowance
- Residential/commuting expectations: Elmira or surrounding area

Peer and professional supports available for ministers

- The Conference Minister (Rev. Marsha Williams) is available for immediate support to UCC ministers in the region. She is among the first colleagues a new pastor at The Park Church should contact.
- Local clergy meet monthly during the program year to talk over issues and plan joint services. There is also a bible study group that meets weekly at Mt. Savior Monastery.
- The Susquehanna Association's Conference on Ministry consists of a committee of local ministers and lay-people who "check-in" with area clergy once a year or so. If a minister is experiencing a challenge in the church, s/he is encouraged to work with the committee to resolve the problem in a constructive manner.
- The Conference also provides Community of Practice, Peer Learning, and Support Groups for clergy.
- There are two Susquehanna Association meetings per year that provide support and educational opportunities for area clergy.
- The New York Conference provides ongoing educational opportunities and the Annual Conference. The latter offers networking among clergy.
- The Southern Tier Interfaith Coalition (STIC) unites ministers, rabbis, imams and interested lay people to promote interfaith harmony and tolerance.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER US?

Please refer to [The Park Church Narrative](#).

What Is Worship Like

The service begins with greeters handing out bulletins at each door. Members have name cards that help newcomers and members alike feel welcome and comfortable to engage in conversation. Attendees find their own place in the sanctuary.

Our organist opens the service with a prelude, followed by a bell choir or choral welcome. Formal prayers are recited together. Typically, there are two hymns during the service and a closing hymn. There is a time of sharing and prayer requests followed by the pastor's prayer which ends with the congregation saying the Lord's Prayer.

We desire scripture readings and a sermon that relate to our lives and provide a message which reflects what is happening in today's world. We hope to hear the sermon in a way that challenges us to respond to life with inclusivity, kindness and love.

Members read the scriptures most Sundays. Communion is shared monthly, with everyone welcome to participate if they so choose. The benediction is followed by a powerful organ postlude. We then enjoy a quiet moment of reflection before fellowship hour.



WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?



The Park Church has been on a journey of soul-searching and change. We have spent the last two years actively discussing, through planned events, how we feel about the church, our role as members and where we are headed. While we are proud of our heritage, we are very much aware that changes will be necessary if we are to continue as a congregation.

- We want to be a church that meets the spiritual needs of our congregation and community, while also voicing a strong commitment to social and environmental matters.
- We have embarked on becoming a Climate Justice Church, an educational process that involves discussion groups, seminars and active steps dealing with climate change.
- We wish to make better use of our facility, in a self-sustaining manner that preserves the church's identity as a spiritual center.
- We see for our facility a vision of growth, with programs including education, music, mental health and others.
- As a congregation, we envision ourselves doing more outreach, increasing the number of families actively participating in church, and enhancing our inclusiveness.



The Park Church Mission and Vision Statements

Mission: Our purpose is to build and nurture our faith by worshipping God together, by actively welcoming all, by growing in Christian understanding and acceptance of the diversity of God’s creation, and by sustaining a community of caring people.

We will live our faith by sharing our gifts and talents, by identifying and ministering to human needs and by working for peace and justice in our community, in our nation, and in the world.

Vision: The Park Church works for social justice with a progressive pulpit and a caring congregation in a landmark structure. We are an active and hopeful partner in Elmira’s renaissance.

[View our Strategic Goals](#)



WHO ARE WE NOW?



Congregational Reflections

How we view God: As a congregation, we view God as a Loving Spirit, a Higher Power, Mother Nature, and as Father. The Holy Spirit is called a Guiding Spirit, the Spirit of the Universe, or simply 'the Holy Spirit.' As a whole we do not assign God a gender; we see God as the God of Love, fully wanting what is best for us, supporting the journey we are on and not seeking to condemn anyone. It should be noted that while all these views and others are used, it by no means represents the myriad views held by our congregants of God and the Holy Spirit. It is in our spirit to respect each and every view of God. We consider our openness to all approaches to spirituality one of our greatest strengths.



Our Music Program: Music is an integral part of our worship and another of our strengths. We are blessed with a devoted choir and organist who make every service special. Several talented musicians in the congregation and community as well as our beautiful bell choir appear regularly in the services. These assets along with special recitals and concerts make up a glorious music program at the church.

Child and youth education: Currently, two or three K-6 students are taught by an adult volunteer and a teenage helper, who follow the liturgy with a short lesson or some Bible studies, and a craft or baking project. Our half dozen youth enjoy community service, preparing and serving meals, singing and acting in church programs, designing greeting cards for shut-ins, and creating educational posters. Our educational facilities include five classrooms (three very large), including a fully equipped nursery and a gymnasium.

Arriving at Consensus: The Park Church congregation comes to consensus through focus groups, congregational surveys, informal meetings and feedback to members of council.

Individual congregants frequently provide unsolicited feedback to council, staff and the pastor. To the extent possible, considering confidentiality, there is also feedback from the pastoral relations committee.

In the recent past, we have discussed and acted on issues and feedback mostly at the council level, but on occasion we address issues at the congregational level. During these processes, we have been able to maintain respect for one another, while giving everyone the opportunity to speak.

Statements of Witness The Park Church

Creation Justice (We are in discernment about becoming a creation justice congregation.)

Open and Affirming (ONA)

God is Still Speaking

Bylaws: The Park Church Bylaws are available on request.

Our Relationship with the Wider Church

In 1846, a break-away group of Presbyterians who felt strongly about the wrongs of slavery formed the Independent Congregational Church. They chose a site beside a downtown park, where they built the present structure in 1871. At that time and still today, The Park Church has embraced "Congregational" ideals. In 1984, after fifteen years of discussion, it became a member of the Susquehanna

Association of the United Church of Christ (UCC). We attend annual meetings of the Susquehanna Association, participate in special offerings, contribute to the UCC's wider mission and seek its support regarding pastoral searches and pastoral issues.

[View our organization chart](#)

11-Year Report

It came to the search committee's attention that no congregational data report was made to the New York Conference for six of the last 10 years. This explains why the report lacks up-to-date data for some years.

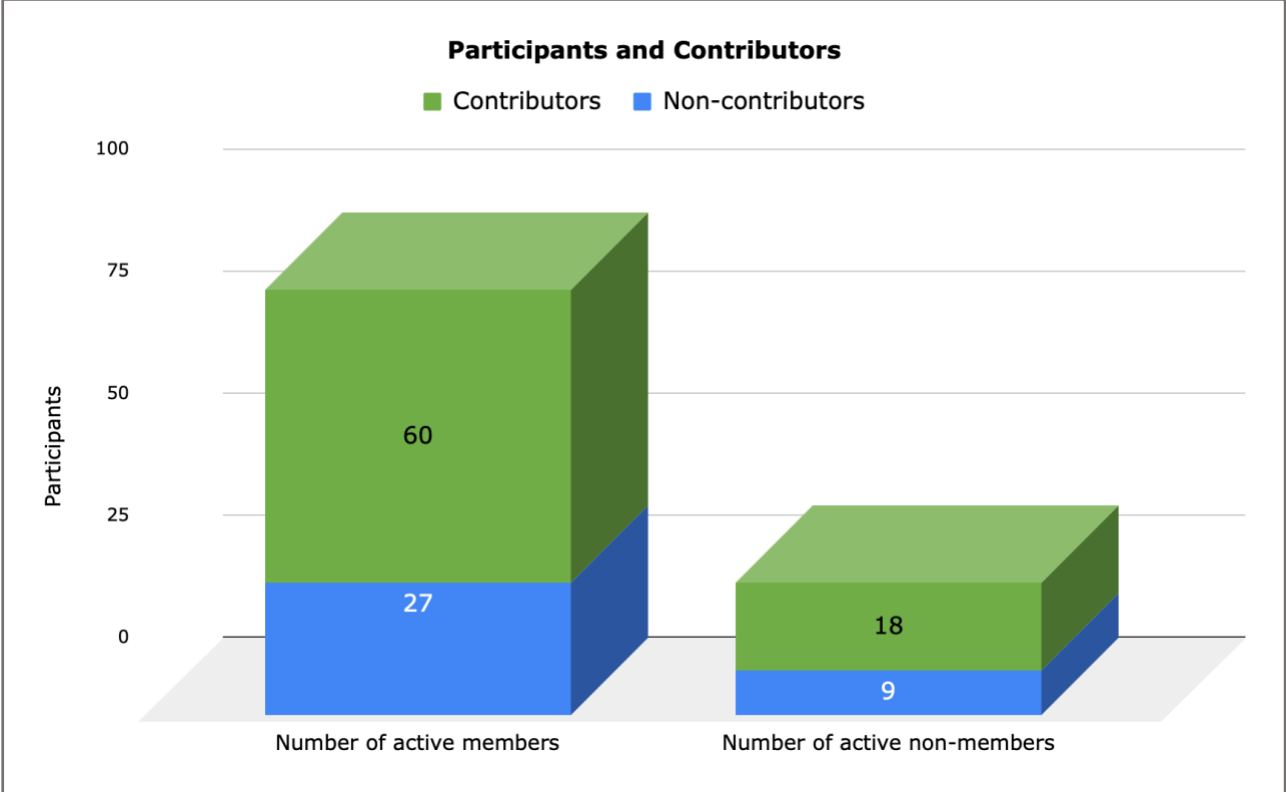
[View the 11-Year Report](#)

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS



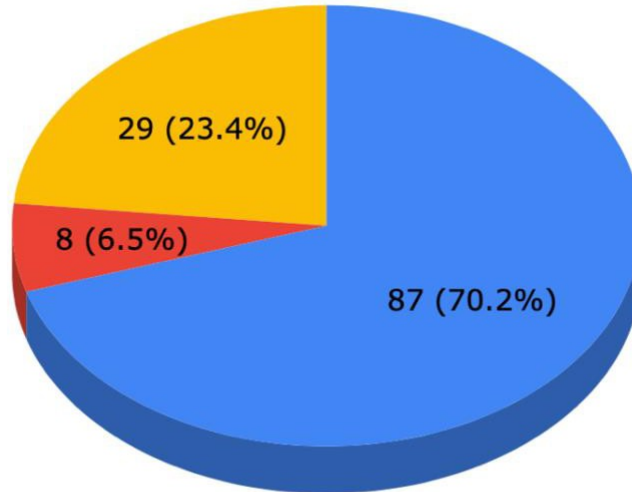
Estimates: Data for the following charts, graphs, and tables was derived from church records by a team of members who have a central role in the function of the church. These numbers are accurate or close to accurate.

PLEDGING UNITS AND ACTIVE MEMBERS



MEMBER AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT OVER TIME

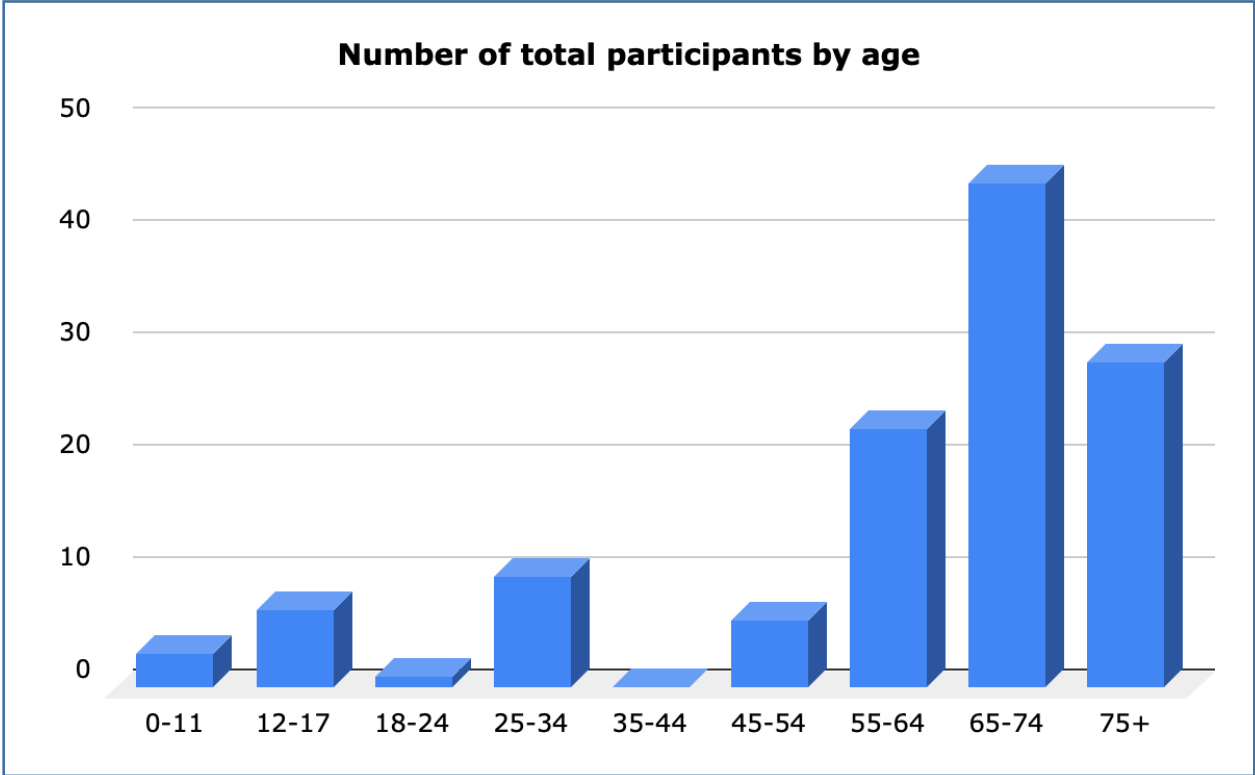
Number of Participants (114 Adults + 10 Youth)



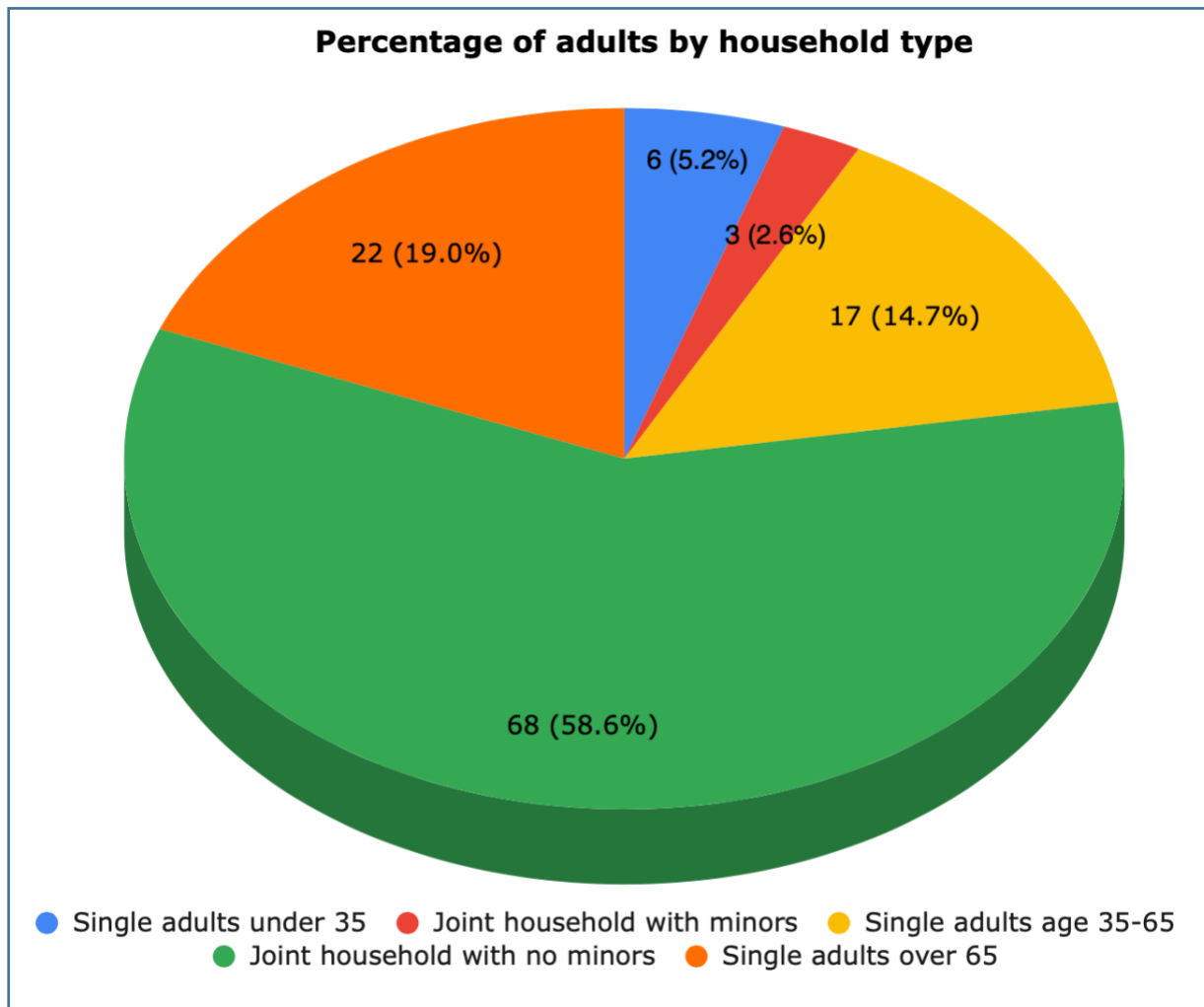
● 10 years or more ● More than 5, less than 10 years ● Less than 5 years



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY AGE

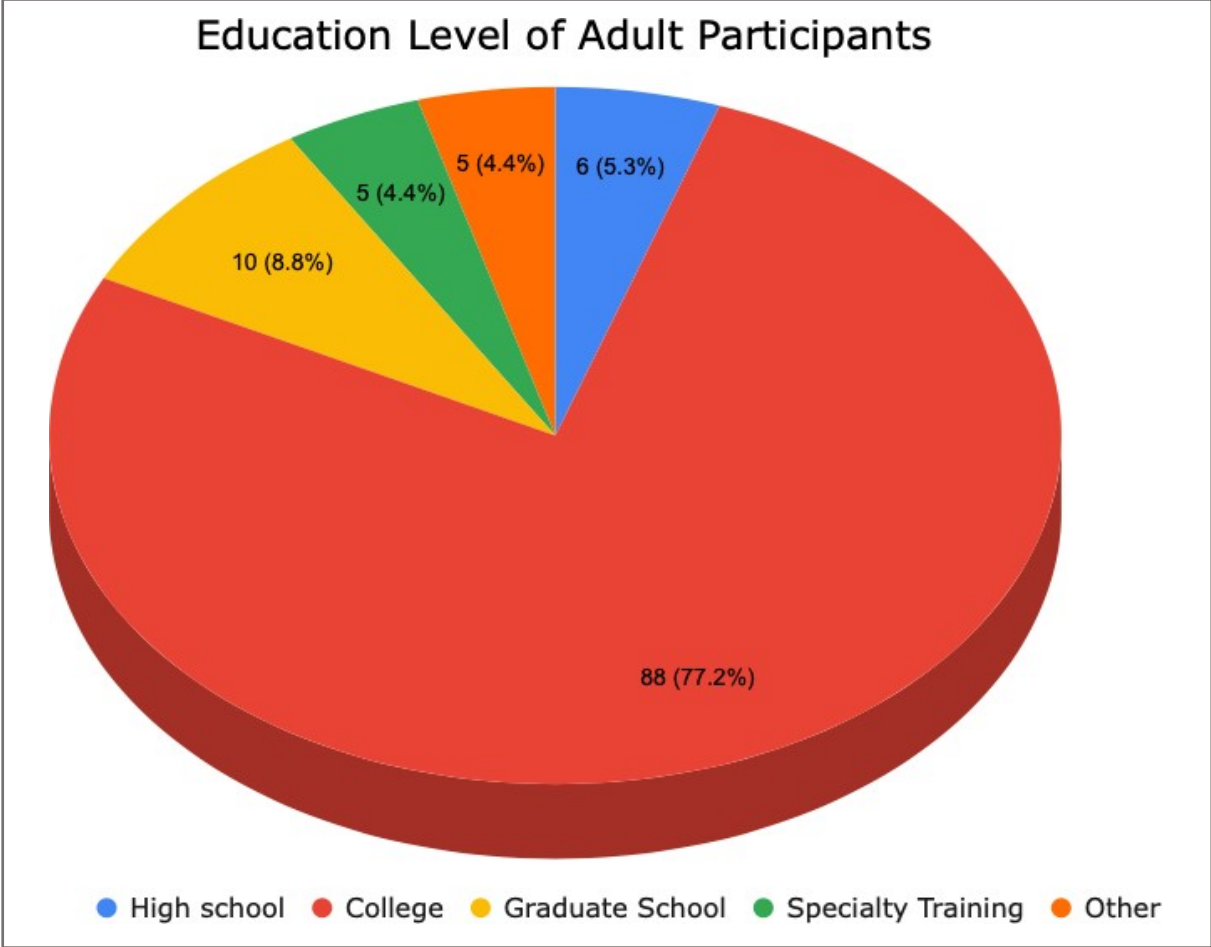


PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS IN VARIOUS HOUSEHOLD TYPES:

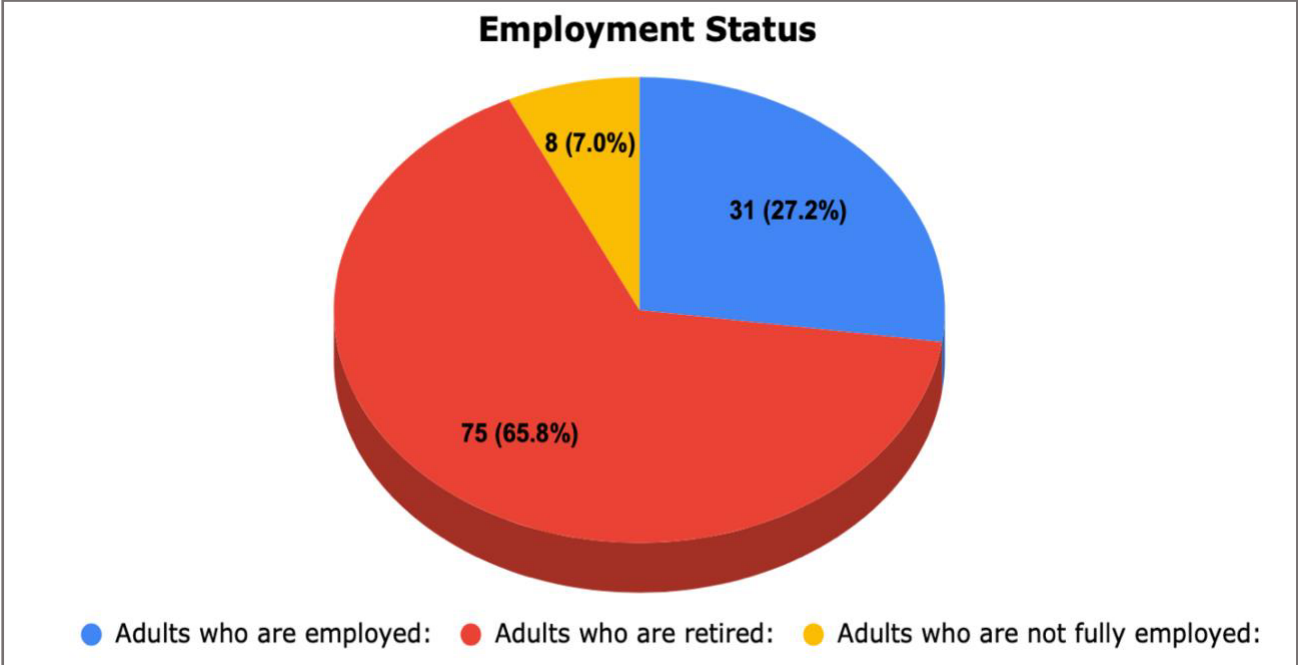


The Park Church Community Garden, which contributes to an Elmira food pantry.

EDUCATION LEVEL OF ADULT PARTICIPANTS BY PERCENTAGE



PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS IN VARIOUS EMPLOYMENT TYPES



RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS OF WORKING ADULTS

Medicine, education, social work, law, art, trades, music, theater, retail, restaurant service, business, insurance, activism



Racial make-up: We are 99% white.

WHAT DOES DIVERSITY MEAN IN OUR CONTEXT?

The word 'diversity' applies in several contexts to our congregation. It describes who we are, what we have done and where we would like to be. We are an Open & Affirming congregation, known in the community for being truly open to and affirming of LGBTQ+ people. We are also diverse in economic status, ranging from business owners and professionals to people who struggle financially. Though we regard ourselves as mostly progressive socially and politically, conservative values are likewise embraced. Indeed, the make-up of our congregation is a microcosm of the surrounding community. We lament the lack of racial and ethnic diversity and would welcome an increase in members of color and different ethnicities.



PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Notes
Adult Groups or Classes	496 (yearly total)	Spirit Café, Meaningful Movies
Baptisms (number last year)	3	
Children's Groups or Classes	123 (yearly total)	
Christmas Eve and Easter 2018	176 (total)	
Worship 2018	39 (avg)	
Worship (time slot: 10 AM)	43	Sept 2018-June 2019 (41 week average)
Worship (time slot: 9 AM)	27	July and August 2018 (11 week average)
Choirs and Music Groups	Choir: 14	Weekly rehearsal and performance
	Bell Choir: 12	Weekly rehearsal, performs monthly
Church-based Bible Study	0	
Communion (served how often?)	12x / year	First Sunday each month. Average 2018 attendance 42
Community Meals	385 (total)	11 breakfasts and dinners, ~35 each
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	0	
Drama Program	10 players	As part of worship twice a year
Funerals (number last year)	2	
Intergenerational Groups	13	Dramatic performance and all meals
Outdoor Worship	0	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	0	
Public Advocacy Work		Community Kitchen, Community Garden in summer, Traveling Books, Literacy
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings (number last year)	1	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	1	Soup-er Bowl luncheon
Other	Use of Building	Common Time choir weekly rehearsals, Math and bridge tutorials, Reading Partnership

ORDAINED, LICENSED OR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OR REGULAR PARTICIPANTS

Name	Three-Way or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. J.K. Boodley	No	Minister	Intentional Interim	N
Rev. Beth Frigard	No	Pulpit Supply	UCC	N
Rev. Jon Knight		Retired	Presbyterian	Y
Rev. Elaine White	No	Pulpit Supply	United Methodist	Y
Rev. Bonnie Harrison	No	Chaplain	Chaplain	N
Rev. Dave Preisendanz		Occasional visitor	Presbyterian	N

Previous pastors or retired ministers who are current members of the church:
As listed above with the exception of Rev. Preisendanz

CURRENT STAFF: REV. J.K. BOODLEY SERVES AS HEAD OF STAFF

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part-time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Diane Hughes, Secretary	No	20 hours/week	Minister	4 years
Charlotte Cook, Music Director	No	12 hours/week	Minister	2 years
Marty King, Sexton	No	10 hours/week	Buildings and Grounds Council Member	5 years
Pat Richards, Financial Assistant	No	6 hours/week	Treasurer	2 years

CHURCH FINANCES

CURRENT ANNUAL INCOME (DOLLARS USED DURING THE MOST RECENT FISCAL YEAR)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$141,873
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$3,790
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, a drawing down the principal@</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events (Breakfast/dinners for the roof fund)	\$2,000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose (Roof)	\$20,888
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$4,130
Rentals of Church Parsonage (N/A)	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (Downtown event parking, grocery card discount)	\$3,800
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$ 176,481

Current annual expenses budgeted for most recent fiscal year:

There were \$204,017 in expenses budgeted for 2019. The (\$20,427) difference between income and expenses represents possible pastoral search and new pastor salary expenses. There were no such expenses in 2019.

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? To our knowledge, The Park Church has never failed to pay its pastor

THE PARK CHURCH SUPPORTS THESE UCC PROGRAMS

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)
Budgeted for \$6,500 in 2019, 3.5% of \$184,290 total budgeted income
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Neighbors in Need

CURRENT INDEBTEDNESS

The Roof loan balance is \$50,331 and we are paying \$31,070 per year, most of which is now going to principal. The roof was built in 2012 at a cost of \$1.5 million.

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LOAN DEBT: \$50,331

Reason for debt: Balance of roof loan, expected to be paid off in 2020
All other payments are current

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS:

There have been no capital campaigns in the last 10 years and none are presently anticipated.



- Does your church have an endowment? Yes
- What is the market value of the assets? Approximately \$934,756
- Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Annually
- Percent rate of draw: 5% per year. This is considered prudent. At the current rate of draw, the endowment is growing.

OTHER ASSETS

Reserves (savings): \$17,717

Investments other than endowment: None

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Buildings owned by the church: The church building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places

Non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: n/a

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs: Worship space, portable pulpit, fellowship space, bathroom facilities, narthex, kitchen

SUPPORTING OUR MISSION

Our finances are in good health. We are free to pursue our mission and ministry. The Park Church Missions Ministry meets regularly to allocate funds to community service organizations. Food, clothing, personal items, and over \$9,000 was given in 2019, including to:

- OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Local Community Kitchen
- Regional Food Bank
- Local SEA (Support and Emergency Aid) Fund
- Personal items (soap, toothpaste, laundry detergent, etc.) are collected monthly for the Second Place East homeless shelter
- Members plant, weed and harvest eight beds at a local community garden. Vegetables are donated to the Samaritan Center food pantry.
- 130 sweaters and fleeces were collected in December and donated to Catholic Charities

A list of local programs and organizations supported by the church through the hands-on work of members can be found in the [Park Church Narrative](#).

Historical Information

Please refer to [The Park Church Narrative](#)

MINISTERIAL HISTORY (ALL PREVIOUS MINISTERIAL STAFF FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS)

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Arlene Nearing	1992-1996	Yes
Rev. Jeanette Sherrill (co-pastor)	1996-2000	Yes
Mr. Skip Reed (co-pastor)	1996-2006	Yes
Rev. John Gibbon	2002-2007	Yes
Rev. Felicity Wright	2010-2017	Yes

What we have learned from our pastors and ourselves

Our pastors have helped us expand our capacity to love, enjoy spiritual growth, and understand the interconnectedness of all God's creation. We thrive when they lift up and support our quest for justice, equality, and reduced suffering.

Our pastors have taught us that faith falters when not exercised, that hope is essential to spiritual growth and that doing good in the world is its own reward. We enjoy being challenged by thoughtful sermons, and are excited when our pastors appreciate our energy, enthusiasm and spiritual diversity.

We have learned that trust and fellowship stem from love, honesty, and respect.

HAS ANY PAST LEADER LEFT UNDER PRESSURE OR BY INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION?

Yes. Two former pastors left under pressure. One was given the opportunity to retire after being in conflict with various members over time. Trust had been breached beyond repair. Another proved more dedicated to his side work as a military chaplain than to the congregation. The search committee is being deliberate in the current search to ensure, to the best of our ability, that a good match is found.

HAS YOUR CHURCH BEEN INVOLVED IN A SITUATIONAL SUPPORT CONSULTATION?

Yes, twice. About twenty five years ago, the congregation was in conflict over whether to become Open and Affirming. A support consultation was needed then. Ten years ago a support consultation followed the departure of one of the pastors referenced above.

HAS A PAST PASTOR BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A FITNESS REVIEW WHILE AT YOUR CHURCH?

To the committee's knowledge none of our former pastors has been the subject of a fitness review.

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: 

Name/Title: Doug Couchon, Co-chair, Search Committee

Email: dcouchon@gmail.com

Phone: 607-425-7203

Date: February 1, 2020

Community Characteristics

Population Elmira 27,204 (2019) **Chemung County** 86,900 (2017) Black 6.5 %
Latino 3.2% White 86.3% Other 3%

MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN CHEMUNG COUNTY

Government (includes 2 NYS prisons & the Elmira Psychiatric Center)	6932
Arnot Health (includes two Elmira hospitals)	2350
Hilliard Corporation	500
Hardinge, Inc	350
Elmira College	250
General Revenue Corporation	250

OTHER GLOBAL AND FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES

- Anchor Glass Container Corporation
- CVS Caremark Corporation
- DeMet's Candy Company
- Eaton Cutler-Hammer
- Emhart Glass
- Fortuna Energy
- Howell Packaging
- Kennedy Valve
- Salient Corporation
- Synthes USA
- Thomas & Betts Corporation
- Travelers
- Vulcraft of New York (division of Nucor)

In nearby Corning/Painted Post (Steuben County)

- Corning, Inc. World Headquarters
- Dresser Rand

In nearby Ithaca (Tompkins County)

- Cornell University
- Ithaca College

General Description

Chemung County is set in a beautiful rural area of small cities, towns and villages with easy access to large metropolitan areas. The Elmira/Corning Regional Airport offers service with connections to domestic and international destinations.

	Corning	18 miles
	Ithaca	36 miles
	Binghamton	58 miles
	Rochester	119 miles
	Syracuse	128 miles
	Buffalo	143 miles
	NY City	235 miles



Elmira Websites: theparkchurch.org/elmira

Our Congregational Survey



The Park Church Search Committee

We hope you have enjoyed learning about The Park Church in Elmira and our vibrant congregation.

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: The Park Church is in good standing with the Susquehanna Association of the New York Conference

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

Staff Comment: Yes.

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

Staff Comment: Yes.

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Dr. M. E. Williams*

Name / Title: Associate Conference Minister

Email: mwilliams@uccny.org

Phone: 845-500-5082

Date: 5/28/2020

APPENDICES



The Park Church: Introductory Narrative

Who We Are and Who We Want to Become

The Park Church is a Congregational Church affiliated with the United Church of Christ. The congregation seeks to follow the model of Jesus while accepting a wide range of views about faith. Our diversity of beliefs supports and inspires our collective growth. Our principles are rooted in the traditions of Christian theology: love, tolerance, justice, community, and the pursuit of a spiritual life.

We care for one another, have intellectual curiosity, a sense of humor, and actively participate in the needs of Elmira. Our church is a safe place emphasizing invitation, trust, openness and participation. We want to grow our membership by welcoming all people, especially families with children.

Our story begins as an abolitionist church founded in 1846. Under the guidance of Rev. Thomas K. Beecher, the church participated in the Underground Railroad. It became Elmira's first public library, the first employment service, a homeless shelter, a community center, gymnasium, health clinic, and a community Sunday school that served over 600 children.

Consistent with the values of early church leaders, we continue to take action on social justice issues. After a period of discernment, we became an Open and Affirming Church in the 1990s. Recently, members helped plan and sponsor a "Rise for Climate" rally and the church sponsored two years of the Women's March Elmira.

Now we are moving into another discernment process to focus on climate change. We believe that addressing climate change is one of the primary moral challenges of our time, as it amplifies all forms of injustice and human suffering. It is our obligation to do our part to avoid its worst impacts.

Outreach

Our members' interests, talents and life experiences are among our greatest strengths. Our community activities include:

- Community Kitchen (free meals for the hungry)
- Family Reading Partnership
- Literacy Volunteers
- Arnot Ogden Medical Center
- Glove House (last stop for behaviorally challenged teens)
- Able 2 (services for mentally challenged persons)
- Mittens for Kids
- Second Place East, Inc. (homeless housing)
- Spirit Café (spiritual exploration at the church attended by people of all faiths in the community)
- Meaningful Movies (films on topics of social concern screened and discussed at the church)
- Chemung County Library book sale

- Community Garden (food grown by members and others donated to the local food pantry)
- Math enrichment sessions
- People for a Healthy Environment
- Mothers Out Front
- We Are Seneca Lake (civil disobedience campaign to stop pollution of the lake)

The collective heart, mind and journey of our congregation is expressed through our collective mission and outreach.

Whom We Are Calling

The Park Church seeks a man or woman of spiritual depth to become an integral member of our congregation, a person with ideas, energy, enthusiasm, compassion and humor who inspires and guides us in new ways to strengthen our faith in a challenging world. We hope to find in him or her a colleague, a mentor and a friend.

We want a pastor who delivers challenging and thought-provoking sermons that relate Christian values to everyday life and is motivated by social and environmental justice. We wish to be challenged to push back against the ubiquitous messages of materialism and consumerism that predominate in our society, understanding that our aspirations for justice require us to emulate Jesus' emphasis on love and spiritual growth beyond worldly prosperity.

We need our new pastor to help us realize our hopes and dreams, which include:

- Increase membership
- Develop a strong Christian education program
- Build an active environmental justice congregation
- Enhance and build on our strong music program
- Promote use of the church building by the community
- Continue to serve God and the people of our community and the world

We ask her/him to live in the greater Elmira area in order to best serve the church and community. Housing prices in Elmira are among the lowest in the country. The city's housing includes examples of magnificent architecture, design and homes available in a range of affordability.

The Local Community

The City of Elmira is a small, family friendly community on the edge of the Finger Lakes in New York's Southern Tier. It has a rich history, of which The Park Church is an integral part. The domed church is one of the architectural centerpieces of the city. The region offers exceptional natural beauty, recreational opportunities and a variety of intellectual and cultural activities.

The 1,700 seat Clemens Center provides a variety of traveling Broadway plays and musical concerts, including children's programs. The Corning Museum of Glass and The Rockwell Museum of Western Art, a Smithsonian Institute affiliate, are nearby. Other local museums

include the Arnot Art Museum, Chemung Valley History Museum, John W. Jones Museum, Vietnam Veteran Museum, and National Soaring Museum.

One of the architectural and educational jewels of our city is Elmira College. The college was founded in 1855 as the first college to offer a four-year degree to women equivalent to those offered previously only to men. Elmira College is a liberal arts college which offers a variety of undergraduate majors and minors, a master's program in education, and a medical school scheduled to open in 2020. Cornell University, Ithaca College, State University of New York at Binghamton and Corning Community College all are within an hour's drive from Elmira.

Elmira is known as the Soaring Capital of America, and is home to The Pioneers, a Collegiate Baseball League team, and The Enforcers, a professional hockey team. Several of the Finger Lakes are only a short drive from Elmira. They offer boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, camping, photography, dining and lodging. The Chemung River, with access to kayaking and canoeing, runs through the city. The Finger Lakes region is a world-renowned and award-winning wine producing region.

Conflict Management

The Park Church does a good job managing person-to-person conflicts. Most often, in such instances people are heard and valued; disagreements are resolved amicably. Congregation-wide conflict is more difficult to manage, but we have learned a lot during our tougher times and are better prepared to deal with them.

Over the past 30 years, the church experienced two crises that created discord and a sense of betrayal. After we consulted the UCC conference for guidance, these difficulties were resolved through congregational meetings and candid discussions in open forums.

Though we made mistakes during these periods of conflict, we learned to talk, even when discussion was tough and painful. We learned that trust and fellowship is built on the foundation of love and mutual respect. These experiences have left us better prepared to deal with major conflicts.

Education

The Park Church currently has limited educational opportunities for youth, reflecting the small number of children in our congregation, but we are blessed to have Sunday school lessons led by a Montessori teacher who is one of the outstanding educators in our region. The church has several professional educators in the congregation, and many members are deeply invested in giving our local community opportunities to reflect upon Jesus' principles of love, compassion and caring for others. Two of the most notable examples are Spirit Cafe and Meaningful Movies, monthly gatherings held in the church hall that often rival Sunday services in attendance.

A full schedule of adult education programs is scheduled from October 2019 through May 2020. Twelve sessions will focus on aspects of climate change, climate justice, and dealing with loss. There will also be a book study of *Climate Church, Climate World*, by Rev. Dr. Jim Antal. In addition, we hope to re-establish a strong Christian education program on Sundays for adults, and we would like to develop ways to reach members of the congregation who are unable to

attend church.

The congregation and local community are also invited to weekly lessons in bridge and mathematics. The church building is available for musical and theatrical performances and informational meetings. We regularly host experts for presentations and public forums in global care and social justice.

Music at Park

The Park Church has a rich history of musical performances from sacred to secular, from opera to jazz. Our Schatz German Baroque style 2832-pipe organ is one of the finest and most beautiful-sounding organs in New York State. The sanctuary has superb acoustics and is a favored venue of many local performing organizations.

We have hosted renowned musicians and a variety of performing groups. In the past year we enjoyed chamber concerts, the Todd Thomas Scholarship concert, noontime Advent and Lenten Recitals, the American Guild of Organist concert, Fall Follies (baroque) and The Cantata Singers.

A paid professional organist and a dedicated adult choir perform weekly. Our handbell choir performs monthly. Musically talented members often accompany the organist or choir. Intergenerational musical dramas are presented in Sunday services twice a year. Annually, the church hosts a candle-light Christmas Eve service.

From our hearts, we share the following scripture that was embraced as a central aspiration for our congregation during a summer introspection. We hope our new pastor will join us on this journey:

**The Park Church community seeks to
do justice,
love kindness, and
walk humbly with God.**



THE PARK CHURCH PASTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position	Pastor (full time: 40-50 hours per week)
Reports to	The Park Church Council
Purpose	Provide spiritual leadership, pastoral care, administrative oversight and organizational direction to The Park Church

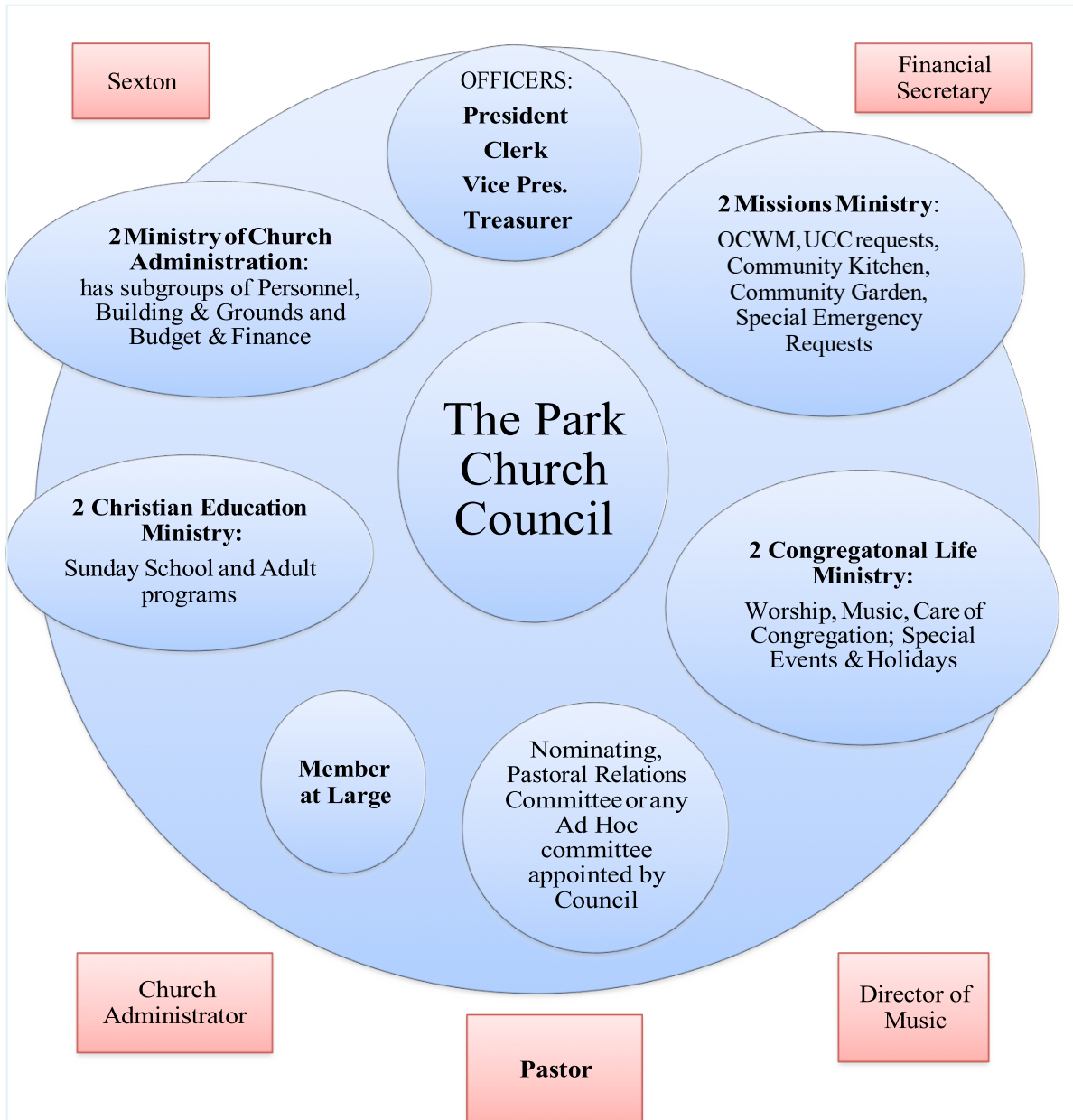
RESPONSIBILITIES (in order of importance)

Worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and leadership of Sunday Worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, planning of music in coordination with Director of Music, preach, offer prayers, including use of lay leaders and volunteers. Administer sacraments monthly. • Officiate special services for members such as weddings, funerals, baptisms
Faith Formation & Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energize and deepen the spiritual connections and faith understanding of members of all ages in all they do. Connect service to spiritual growth. • Self-care and education: on-going study and prayer to increase your faith and to improve your skills so as to preach, teach and lead better, as per UCC guidelines. • Participate in wider church activities such as conferences and association meetings. Encourage lay leaders to also attend.
Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally provide pastoral care, especially in emergencies. Coordinate continuing care with the Caring Tree lay team and other committees or volunteers. • Make appropriate referrals when necessary and respond to crisis situations, which arise within the congregation.
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Ministries and Committees to continue the growth of lay leaders in the work of the church. Challenge less experienced members to become leaders. • Support the strategic planning process and the best use of church resources for internal and external activities.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend monthly Council meetings. • Attend committee and church ministry meetings as requested. • Supervise and evaluate paid staff (office admin; finance; sexton; Dir. of Music) • Act as spokesperson for the church; engage lay leaders as required.
Community Engagement & Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure Park's O&A stance; welcome visitors and invite new members. • Be available to wider community for funerals, wedding, special worship programs as your schedule allows. • Foster local interfaith relationships and suggest to lay leaders activities that Park could join.

Strategic Goals for The Park Church - 2019 – 2022

Goal:	Components:	Activity details:
1. Increase Congregational Vitality, Volunteerism and Targeted Community Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregational Life • Welcoming Efforts • Volunteer and Leadership Development • Dynamic Worship • Care of Congregation • Mission Activities in the Community • Music & Performance • Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Young adults ◦ Families & children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to plan together an integrated and meaningful set of activities for our congregation: worship, social support, care, seasonal and individual celebrations, etc. • Continue our O&A Welcome and Hospitality for All; nametags, welcome bags, getting to know you efforts at coffee hour and Inquirers process. Expect to turn visitors into members! • Grow the number of congregants that participate in volunteer work of the church, including leadership roles on committees and as Council members. • Create dynamic worship activities with music, choir, bells, drama and lay participation. • Continue to care for those in need – within our congregation and with our charity commitments. • Continue our service to the Community Kitchen, Community Garden, Reading Partnership, 2nd Place East, and UCC denominational support. • Grow the way our musical resources and sanctuary can be used more often by more people and groups for exposure, community service and income! • Continue adult programs like Meaningful Movies and Spirit Café that illustrate who we are and attract kindred souls. • Develop a new program for young adults and college community that is of value to their needs and can be delivered by a liberal congregation and its community partners. Connect with the LGBTQ community. • Research what we could offer of value to families and young children related to our liberal religious values.
2. Care for our Assets: Our Mission, Building, Staff, Volunteer Leadership and Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and its Caretakers • Our New Minister and our Staff • Council Leadership Development • Finance, Stewardship & Budget • Two new volunteer positions: a volunteer coordinator and an events coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about what the Mission Statement means and how it guides our work as The Park Church. • Make a wider number of people aware of building's needs and develop a team to care for it • Call a pastoral relations committee, Council set pastoral goals, personnel committee continue effective work • Bring new volunteers into Council leadership roles, especially financial aspects • Governance & Ministry process; board manuals & annual retreat, policies gathered and/or written • Draft two new job descriptions, identify ways & means, select volunteers • Become the go-to resource that community entities think of as a place to hold meetings, or ask for collaborations. Live the mission!
3. Plan and Execute our 175th Anniversary Celebration (Anniversary date is Jan. 3, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what would be meaningful to us and to the community • Use the anniversary events to re-vitalize Park's internal and external profile: i.e. publicity, signage, social media, slogan, printed materials, website • Make Community connections relating to our history and to our values going forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use summer 2019 discussions, inquire with community stakeholders • Make a wish list of what we could rejuvenate to make Park feel and look more vital to ourselves and to the wider community. • Learn about our history and determine what that history is calling us to be involved with in today's world and its challenges. Make a pledge to each other that we will not be complacent and rest on our laurels, but strive to continue to lead in our community as a voice of reason, stewardship, justice and liberal religious compassionate service. • Find community organizations and other congregations (ones that are closing and others that are vibrant) to partner with around shared values and community needs.

The Park Church Council, Ministries and Staff Organizational Chart as of 11/29/2019



KEY:

Council is made up of 13 members (in **boldface**) as elected by the congregation plus the Pastor

Pink rectangles are paid staff members:

- Pastor reports to Council
- Director of Music reports to Pastor
- Church Administrator reports to Pastor
- Sexton reports to B&G Council member *
- Finance Secretary reports to Treasurer *

Blue ovals are Ministries; those reaching outside the Council circle use congregational and/or community volunteers

* during the current time of intentional interim pastorate

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST										
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS										
Church #	Assoc	Church Name			11-Year Report					
461120	544	Schedule: 0			The Park Church UCC, Elmira, NY 14901					
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED	
2008	232	85	101	0	0	0	3	9	-12	
2009	228	65	46	0	6	0	6	4	-4	
2010	194	63	39	0	4	1	4	9	-8	
2011	208	67	47	0	18	0	4	0	14	
2012	208	67	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2013	208	67	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2014	208	67	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2015	208	67	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2016	208	67	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017	112	35	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2018	116	45	2	0	7	0	5	0	2	
YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2008	\$257,962	\$2,000	\$8,245	\$300	\$8,545	\$4,715	\$13,260	3.2	\$273,222	\$182,779
2009	\$274,085	\$0	\$8,965	\$990	\$9,955	\$0	\$9,955	3.27	\$284,040	\$0
2010	\$274,085	\$0	\$8,465	\$1,291	\$9,756	\$0	\$9,756	3.09	\$283,841	\$0
2011	\$260,229	\$2,000	\$8,465	\$2,573	\$11,038	\$5,085	\$16,123	3.25	\$278,352	\$170,163
2012	\$260,229	\$0	\$8,465	\$872	\$9,337	\$0	\$9,337	3.25	\$269,566	\$0
2013	\$260,229	\$0	\$8,465	\$964	\$9,429	\$0	\$9,429	3.25	\$269,658	\$0
2014	\$260,229	\$0	\$6,465	\$770	\$7,235	\$0	\$7,235	2.48	\$267,464	\$0
2015	\$260,229	\$0	\$6,465	\$543	\$7,008	\$0	\$7,008	2.48	\$267,237	\$0
2016	\$260,229	\$0	\$0	\$906	\$906	\$0	\$906	0	\$261,135	\$0
2017	\$260,229	\$0	\$6,550	\$0	\$6,550	\$0	\$6,550	2.52	\$266,779	\$134,000
2018	\$260,229	\$0	\$6,746	\$694	\$7,440	\$0	\$7,440	2.59	\$267,669	\$0
% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
2013-2018	-44.23	-32.84	-95.74	0	0	0	-21.09	-0.74		
2008-2018	-50	-47.06	-98.02	0	-58.33	0.88	-12.93	-2.03		

The Park Church Congregational Survey

Style of Ministry

Preferred Trait	Level of Preference*	Contrasting Trait
Has a relaxed interpersonal style	+58%	Has a formal interpersonal style
Helps people figure things out for themselves	+40%	Advises people what to do
Is outgoing and socially engaging	+36%	Is reflective and reserved
Usually emphasizes contemporary issues	+29%	Usually emphasizes the Bible
Costs of goals sets priorities; means determine the ends	+26%	Achieves set goals regardless of cost; ends justify means
Tends to encourage and defer to decision making of congregation and lay leadership	+26%	Tends to be a strong and decisive force in decisions regarding policy and program
Welcomes new approaches and ideas	+21%	Values traditions
Maintains a private life of family, friends, recreation and personal & professional development	+20%	Gives whole self to the life of church and work as pastor
Strong emphasis on spiritual development	+16%	Expertise in Biblical and theological matters
Interactions tend to be thought-provoking & challenging	+15%	Interactions tend to be comforting and reassuring

* If all members strongly prefer a trait: Level of Preference = 100%

If all members slightly prefer a trait: Level of Preference = 50%

If preference for a trait and the contrasting trait are equal: Level of Preference = 0%

The Park Church Congregational Survey

A Good Sermon

Strongly Supported	Supported	Not Supported
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is challenging and thought-provoking (70%*) • Makes me reflect on issues and events that go beyond my personal life and local community (68%) • Touches directly on my everyday life (65%) • Is carefully composed and skillfully delivered (62%) • Is spiritually moving and inspirational (51%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obviously flows from the depth of the preacher’s own personal faith and spiritual convictions (42%) • Contains scholarly and literary illustrations (36%) • Is comforting and reassuring (34%) • Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and living a faithful life (19%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is biblically based and illustrated (-5%) • Expresses a clear, unambiguous basis of religious authority (-27%)

Religious Beliefs

Strongest Agreement	Agreement	Disagreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life (65%*) • Environmental degradation and climate change are essential Christian issues (45%) • Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel (40%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth (19%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is often difficult to live out my faith in daily work, leisure & community life (-7%) • Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was an actual event (-14%) • The Bible has answers for all of the basic questions of life (-17%) • There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ (-42%)

* If all members find a quality essential or strongly agree: Level of Support = 100%

If all members find a quality important or agree: Level of Support = 50%

If all members find a quality distracting or strongly disagree: Level of Support = - 100%

The Park Church Congregational Survey

Religious Beliefs (Continued)

[2%] The Bible is an ancient book of history, legends and cultural stories recorded by humans. It has little value today except as classical literature.

[28%] The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good people. I do not believe it is actually God's word but it can teach us many valuable lessons.

[57%] The Bible is the record of many people's response to God, and because of this people and church's today must interpret the Bible's basic moral and religious teachings for themselves.

[11%] The Bible is the inspired word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it reflects some human error.

[2%] The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally

Clergy Role

Most Essential	Supported	Least Essential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friend/Fellow Traveler (59%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister of the Word/Teacher of the Congregation (36%) • Social Activist (30%) • Church Administrator (27%) • Spiritual Guide (23%) • Counselor/Healer (20%) • Group Facilitator (20%) • Community Chaplain (12%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness/Evangelist (-29%)

All positive percentages in this report represent an overall level of support above neutral, while negative percentages are below neutral.

For example, if 70% of a set of responses had strong agreement with a statement and 30% had strong disagreement, the overall result would be 40% above neutral.

Alternately, if 40% of a set of responses had strong agreement and 60% of responses were neutral, the overall result would again be recorded as 40% above neutral.