

Reflections on Ministry and Context

# Christ United Church

DeWitt, MI

Completed:



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

---

*Congregations and Organizations in the Call Process are invited to expand their Ministry Site Profile (MSP) by reflecting on the several key aspects of ministry and context given below. You are encouraged to give short, thoughtful answers (a maximum of 250 words) on at least four of the seven topics. This form is optional unless specifically requested by a synod bishop. The form is submitted electronically and becomes a part of the Ministry Site's MSP.*

1. What key issues or concerns of our church and society are reflected in the ministry that is centered in your congregation or organization?

2. How do the stewardship practices and allocation of financial resources of the congregation or organization reflect your priorities for mission?

**Although we are small, we always have enough money to fund ministry. If we begin to run short, we make it known and everyone gives a little more to catch up.**

**When short-term ministry opportunities arise, we fund it through additional giving.**

**We have access to a \$20,000+ Dioceses grant a \$10,000 Whitley Foundation grant every three years that must be used for capital improvements,, such as parking lot paving, lighting, flooring, etc.**

**We have not had a typical stewardship drive in the first twenty-five years of Christ United. Three years ago, Episcopal Bishop Perry asked us to have one. So, we have asked members to make a "generosity" pledge for planning purposes. Since then, we have received more income than expenses each year.**

**Each member signs up to obtain and pay for supplies for the church and keep them stocked.**

**We have not incurred any debt in about twenty years, when a major remodeling occurred.**

3. In what ways is the membership of your congregation or organization similar or different from the people of the neighborhood in which you are located?

4. Identify the three most significant or formative events in the history of your congregation or organization.

**A. In 1999, St. Anne's Episcopal church partnered with ELCA to form Christ United Church. ELCA Pastor Terry Williamson was the founding pastor and radically changed the look and feel of the building to reflect a relaxed and unassuming ministry. It became a popular niche. Neighbors were invited and joined and we became a Sunday casserole of Episcopalians, Lutherans, Catholics, Methodists and others. At one time we had more Catholics than Lutherans because we were a place to heal from the injury caused by other churches.**

**B. In 2019, the founding pastor announced his intention to retire. COVID struck and he stayed on an extra year as he lead worship by video from his home. When he did retire, we led most of our worship services ourselves with only a few visits by Lutheran or Episcopal pastors.**



**C. We initially offered Pr. Alex a three-quarter-time position (an increase from the halftime position of the longstanding pastor before him). Sadly, we were unable to sustain that level of commitment. At the same time, the Episcopal Church offered Pr. Alex a scholarship for a grand to study conflict resolution. At the end of that time the Episcopal Diocese offered Pr. Alex a newly vacated halftime position in campus ministry at MSU. This coincided with the new ELCA bishop asking Pr. Alex to provide his internet technology skills halftime, providing him with full-time work. We believe these opportunities were Spirit driven and now we find ourselves looking for you.**

**5. Describe the way the congregation or organization is currently involved in community and ecumenical partnerships. Christ United Church is a federated ELCA/Episcopal church. We are in fellowship and have access to resources from both. Each bishop has lead worship at Christ United and supports our efforts. Episcopal Bishop Perry regularly gives a personal donation.**

**We provide space for local groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, a business networking group, Sister Nancy's faith formation and spiritual direction classes, concerts, craft classes, fitness group, recitals, etc. Our space is available for rental at reasonable rates with the goal of getting people in the door to see for themselves.**

**6. Has your congregation or organization had significant conflict in recent history and, if so, what have you learned from that experience?**

**7. Describe your physical facilities: construction date, purpose, capacity, date of last renovation, any deferred maintenance, and any plans for upgrading.**

**St. Anne's Episcopal Church was founded locally in the 1950s. In the 1990s ELCA wanted to expand into the DeWitt area. Both agreed to become a federated congregation. A Lutheran Mission Developer pastor took on the challenge. Using Lutherans Mission Development Funds, Episcopal grants and Whitely Foundation Grants, we gutted the building. The result is seating in the round with flexible settings. There are no plaques or permanent artwork. No icons or fixtures. It was meant to be a blank space that could be arranged and decorated spontaneously by season.**

**The church building is owned by the Episcopal diocese. We have kept up with maintenance and improvements using grants. In 2025 – 2026, we have completed several capital improvements so things are in great shape. Our biggest drawback is that building restrooms are on the ground floor while the sanctuary is on the first floor. We do not have handicap access without going outdoors. A wide interior staircase connects the two floors.**

**Christ United is situated on 3.6 acres of land. In 2025, we worked with the National Park Service-Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to convert 2.25 acres of the property into a restored native meadow. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has planted native meadow and grassland seeds throughout the area. As the meadow establishes itself over the next two years, we will walking paths for use with exercise, meditation and environmental mindfulness for member and the community.**