

## **Smithville United Church Profile**

### **Mission Statement:**

Smithville United Church, through its various ministries, provides experiences to nurture, uplift, and strengthen each individual and their Christian faith for service.

### **Denomination and Communities:**

The suburban community of Smithville, is located in the Niagara Region, halfway between Hamilton and St. Catharines. With a population of 6,500, it is the largest population **centre** and administrative centre for the township of West Lincoln. It boasts a brand new Multi Use Recreation Facility which includes a sports arena, library, playground and splash pad; a senior's community, a Catholic, a public and two Christian elementary schools, a Christian high school, and churches representing seven different denominations. More information on the town can be found at [www.westlincoln.ca](http://www.westlincoln.ca).

Smithville United Church is a community hub for many groups. There is a commitment to use available space with the intention of generating connections between this Community of Faith and the neighbouring community. We currently accommodate the local Early On program that operates daily from September to June. The Foundation of Resources for Teens (FoRT) runs weekdays after school programmes from September to June. Our facility is also used for Brownies, Sparks, Quilters Guild, AA, Kloggers, and a Township sponsored Pilates group. We believe God is calling us to find new ways of being a church to our larger community.

### **Community Outreach and Social Justice:**

Our Community of Faith is well known and respected within the town of Smithville for its long-time support of Community Care. Since its inception by our members in the basement of Smithville United, it has been embraced by the wider community and supported by many social service groups and other Communities of Faith, within the surrounding area. It has expanded and is now housed in its own spacious, modern structure at the Stanpac Ink complex in town.

In addition, we are closely involved with Partners in Hope, Loaf of Bread, United to help Syrians, Wesley Centre, Albright Manor, Niagara Christian Gleaners, and we are also involved with the planning and participating in mission trips. Most of these outreach programs are financially supported by our fund- raising events organized during the year. They are promoted to the congregation and community through our Sunday bulletin, overhead screen, and advertised to the larger community by our outdoor electronic sign and when appropriate, our local newspaper. In addition, we are a dedicated supporter of the Mission & Service fund. In 2018 we contributed a full 10% of the total amount collected by Hamilton Presbytery.

### **Worship, Faith Formation & Christian Education:**

Our worship services are designed to move, challenge, inspire, convict, stretch, touch and surprise our members. We are concerned with how to reach the broadest audience, ensuring our message is relevant and relatable to mixed generations. Services are conducted with PowerPoint presentation, speakers, standing microphones or head set and are connected to audio earphones for those needing hearing assist.

Currently our worship services are of a traditional nature with some contemporary elements included. However, we are exploring ways to encourage a more blended style of worship and thus enhance the worship experience. Studies reveal that many young adults and families desire a worship experience that is relevant and meaningful to their lives and that related to the turmoil and transitions with which they are living. They desire an opportunity where they can explore relationships, learn how to connect their values with their life and work, and ground themselves in a loving community.

Planning and providing leadership for our worship services is shared between ministry personnel and an active laity. Youth Group and Children's Church Club participate in our worship services on a regular basis. Attempts are being made to respond to expressions of a keen interest in the occasional use of drama, poetry, storytelling in the presentation of the scriptures and message.

Music is a vital aspect of our worship services! We have a vibrant choir, experienced soloists, professional pianist and cellist. There are also several musicians within our community of faith who occasionally share their musical gifts.

The purpose of our various programs is to promote an understanding and knowledge of God; to provide instruction in the Christian faith, and to promote spiritual growth and Christian living. We offer adult faith study groups that are active and centered around seasonal themes, such as Advent and Lent as well as a variety of topics related to life issues. We offer a confirmation programme that is held bi-annually and led jointly by lay persons and ministry personnel. There is A Children's Ministry which provides a nursery and a children's Church Club during worship services on Sunday mornings. We also offer a Youth ministry for children ages 10+ which includes a variety of fellowship activities and study programme. We have experimented with various curriculum including Messy Church. All Faith Formation and Christian Education initiatives are offered and supported jointly by lay people and ministry personnel.

#### **Congregational Life:**

Our fundamental purpose is to encourage people into a deeper faith in God, to follow the teachings of Jesus the Christ and to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit. We also endeavour to encourage authentic expressions of one's faith through membership and active participation in the life of the church.

We understand pastoral visitation to be spiritual work and look to our ministry personnel for guidance in this area. He or she is primarily responsible for counselling, attending to a crisis and/or hospital visitation as well as presiding at funerals and celebrations of life services and providing pastoral care for those who are grieving. Our community of faith arrange for home visits, make routine telephone calls and in person check in with members on a regular basis. Christian fellowship is achieved by bringing members together in a less formal manner with social activities, book clubs, and women's and men's clubs.

#### **Leadership:**

An official Church Board is the model we have chosen for leadership in our community of faith. Spiritual leaders we believe should possess the ability to inspire, engage and motivate others, expressing a compelling vision of what it means to be the body of the Christ

#### **Self Care:**

We are mindful of the United Church's commitment to observe Holy manners. We have developed a set of Holy Manners that has been adopted by the governing body and practised by the community of faith.

The way in which we care for our own families is how we care for our church family. Self-care and efforts to maintain our spiritual lives are made available to our community of faith. Living out the Gospel message as authentically as possible is what we strive to achieve.

As residents of a small suburban community, many of us are interrelated; and, as such we frequently find ourselves interacting in our Community of Faith as a family.