

We at St. John's are growing from a clergy-focused congregation and learning to be a lay-led and clergy-guided congregation. We work to be faith-centered both internally – with scripture study, prayer and thanksgiving – and externally, through our community ministries including food bank distribution, a rotating homeless shelter, Fair Trade/Sustainable Development Goals outreach, environmental stewardship, and a community hot meal program. We are strongly inclusive. We both respect tradition and encourage innovation, seeking balance in our worship.

Characteristics, shown by a recent survey, that are important to us include:

- To be a community;
- To focus on social justice;
- To care about the people around us, particularly those in difficult life circumstances;
- To walk with Christian education for both our children and ourselves;
- To continue leadership that is considerate, thoughtful, democratic, open-minded and collaborative; and,
- To have a sense of routine and predictability.

We believe in living the Gospel: welcoming the stranger, feeding the poor, clothing the homeless, and caring for each other; all while developing in ourselves a deeper relationship with Christ and his teachings. This walk with Christ is not always easy, but needs to be encouraged and nurtured, recognized and honored, by ourselves as much as any external guide.

We have amazing people who volunteer, who serve, who lead. Our leadership emanates from a broad core group of our congregation, with positions turning over and refreshing through congregants who often have served in the past, maintaining a strong sense of identity and purpose. We care deeply about each other. We have come through a period of recent decision-making with a renewed sense of caring about each other and a strong sense of purpose, both made even stronger by some modest turmoil and conflict.

We are not staid; we want a pastor to walk with us, challenge us, reassure us. We want to be relevant for the needs of today, living in our community, vibrant in our faith, all while walking with humility and a great sense of thanksgiving for the teachings of Christ. We like seeing our pastor recognized around town, invited into conversations, sought out for leadership; yet we are learning the limits of part-time pastoring, and are eager to discern the mutual benefits of this collaboration. We want to celebrate our community, imperfect though it may be, yet enthusiastically connect to the greater world.

We are learning that growth may not be measured in numbers but in vibrancy. However, our challenges include reinvigorating our youth ministry, connecting with the Millennial generation, and not taking for granted our current level of activity.

While the current time has brought considerable changes for our ministry and our church community, we are immensely proud of our history, as shown by our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration: <https://youtu.be/5KfdZ4H-KJg> . Our people have amazing gifts that we hope can be of service in our faith-centered, community-caring, forward-looking walk with Christ.