

# Crossroads United Methodist Church, A Small Church with a Big Heart

By Judy Marr, Williamston

In this age of mega churches and worship services that seem more like rock concerts, what is it like to be part of a small congregation?



In the case of Crossroads United Methodist Church at the corner of Haslett and Zimmer roads east of Haslett and north of Williamston, it means that every man, woman and child who steps through the doors is appreciated, welcomed and affirmed as a child of God.

It means that there is no dress code or particular appearance necessary, that whatever your background or life station, you are an important presence in the pews, that you are appreciated just for being there.

It means that there is no dress code or particular appearance

It means that the worship experience is informal, there is no pressure for perfect reading or singing or speaking, that every person's needs and requests are recognized, that there is no "fitting in," only belonging.



It also means that whatever gifts or abilities you bring are useful and needed, and that you can find great worth in serving in whatever capacity you wish or feel comfortable with.

Though small, Crossroads takes to heart its mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ, seeking every opportunity to reach out, to teach, to share the Good News of God's love and mercy.

"My experience with Crossroads is that its members want to be faithful messengers of

God's love, grace, and forgiveness. They sincerely serve with their presence, gifts, witness, and talents," Pastor Marty Johnston observes of his eight months leading Crossroads and its sister church, Webberville UMC.

"Crossroads people are its greatest asset," continues Dean Kitchenmaster, head of the Crossroads Church Council. "They are friendly, but not pushy. When someone asks, 'How are you?' they really want to know.

When they hear of someone struggling (in the church, community or other parts of the world), their first thought is how to help. Also, I have observed individuals quietly helping others with money, food, chores, or a phone call to let them know someone cares in their time of need."

Crossroads opens its doors for children's vacation Bible school every summer; for annual summer picnics, fall festivals and craft shows, and for Swiss steak dinners several times in the fall and spring.

Its men's and women's groups meet every month for breakfast and lunch, respectively, and anyone is welcome to share a meal. The church has held movie and game nights, presented musical groups for special evening or afternoon programs, and in fall 2017 began free early Monday morning giveaways of donuts and coffee for passing motorists.

Crossroads played a large part in the community recovery following the 2007 Williamston tornado, and donates needed items all year to the Lansing City Rescue Mission. The youth and several church members support schooling of "adopted" children in Africa through a program called Kids First Uganda.



Crossroads United Methodist Women provide spiritual growth retreats, creative activities for women, educational programs on topics such as ecology, human trafficking, economic justice, mass incarceration, refugee needs and other crucial topics, and support local missions Hannah's House, City Rescue Mission and Loaves and Fishes.

Sunday services at 9 a.m. feature a blend of hymns and praise songs, times to raise praises and prayer requests, scripture, and thoughtful, engaging messages from Pastor Johnston. Children's messages are a part of every service. Sunday school for children and adults follows the service.

Wednesday afternoons Pastor Marty leads discussion for those following a year-long plan to read through the entire Bible. A quilting group that meets the first Thursday afternoon of each month has sewn hundreds of lap quilts for a medical mission in Haiti, as well as Quilts of Valor for veterans. Other groups who meet at the church include a weekly Tai Chi/Qigong class, a local Girl Scout troop and a weekly AA group.

“The people are the church, not the building.” Dean continues. “But the building has been a prominent fixture in the community for nearly 140 years. People mention that it has charm and a tranquil aura. It's not unusual for visitors to one of our neighborhood events to just sit for a while in the sanctuary.”

“There is always a place for you and your God-given gifts at Crossroads,” continues Karlena Dennis, president of Crossroads United Methodist Women. “We are very active within our church and our community; always looking for ways to serve and grow God's kingdom.

“At Crossroads, you, too, can help do God's work. And you will be embraced by your new family who will always be there for you in thought, deed and prayer.”

If you'd like to know more about Crossroads, you can find the church on Facebook, look up its webpage at [www.crossroadsumc.org](http://www.crossroadsumc.org), and email at [crossroadsumc@gmail.com](mailto:crossroadsumc@gmail.com).

Come check us out!