

# Northern Illinois Conference 2022 One Matters Award

*West Ridge Community United Methodist Church – Lake North*



West Ridge Community United Methodist Church has served the neighborhood at Lunt and Oakley in Chicago for 98 years. Each Sunday, at the beginning of our worship service, the congregation recites our mission statement: "We don't go to church, We Are the Church for making disciples of Jesus in our community."

This July, we look forward to baptizing five adults, three youth, and one infant. In addition, we will be confirming seven youth and accepting two adult members through professions of faith.



*West Ridge Sunday Worship Children's Time.*

As reflection of our neighborhood, we are a diverse congregation with members and friends who are from the Midwest and far beyond. We are Caucasian and African-American. We have families who have immigrated to the United States from Jamaica, Haiti, Belize, India, the Philippines, Japan, Ghana, Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, and Nigeria.

We are small but mighty! We are at our best when we are connected as a community, through worship, prayer, and Bible Study. In addition to Sunday in-person worship, we have established a presence on YouTube by live streaming our weekly worship service to more than eighty subscribers. (A generous technology grant from Berry UMC makes this possible!) We conduct Adult Bible Study both in-person and online at 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays. In addition, we offer our All-Church Friday Night on the first Friday of the month. It is a gathering for people of all ages, featuring a potluck dinner followed by Christian Education for pre-school and elementary school children, confirmation study for



*West Ridge All-Church Friday Night Dinner*

teenagers, and special programming for adults. In addition to religious study and prayer, special adult programs include guest speakers on a variety of topics such as financial literacy, food insecurity, vaccinations, and the War in Ukraine.



*West Ridge Confirmation Class*

Our teenagers also meet on the third Friday of the month for fellowship and confirmation study. Recently, Pastor G. Morris Jarkloh, Jr. established a ministry of study and fellowship for young adults (ages 18-40) in our congregation.

While our formal efforts to make connections into the community have been curtailed by the pandemic, we started a Little Food Pantry, open 24/7, to provide access to nutritious food to our neighbors in need. In addition, we hosted two free Covid-19 vaccination clinics in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Health. Partnering with Swedish Covenant Hospital, we look forward to hosting a back-to-school vaccine event for children in August. Due to the pandemic, the formal outreach activities of our Ministry Center for Immigrants and Refugees were cancelled but we continue to work with individuals in our church family who require assistance. As conditions improve, we hope to resume our Bible Study at Elevate Care Chicago North Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in our neighborhood.



*Pastor G dedicates Little Food Pantry*

We will continue our mission to make disciples of Jesus in our community.