

Northern Illinois Conference 2025 One Matters Award

Antioch United Methodist Church

Antioch, IL – Prairie Central

When Pastor Katie arrived at the United Methodist Church of Antioch in July 2020, it was the height of the pandemic. We weren't worshipping in person at all, and we were holding get-to-know-you

meetings in the parking lot, so we could be socially distanced. As things began to ease up and people started to be more comfortable in groups again, we ended up being a haven of progressive theology in our corner of the world, which is otherwise quite conservative. When visitors would arrive at church, we heard ideas like, "We heard we'd be safe here" shared with our ushers.



or encourage them to pull a chair up to the table where many others were already gathered. Invitations were freely offered to join folks for lunch after they left our building, as well. In the last five years, we've baptized 8: 2 adults and 6 children, so far, and we've received 24 by either confession of faith or transfer. We currently have 6 students from our congregation in a joint Confirmation class (with Lake Villa UMC) and, three of which will be baptized at their confirmation, should they choose to join the church.

We've also found that we have needed to help our young families teach worship practices to their toddlers. Incorporating our little ones into worship has brought delightful smiles from so many in the pews. They are learning acolyte responsibilities (with an



adult's help!), and they are helping to collect our offering. Our confirmation students are also sharing their faith with the littles, helping them with a small craft project after the children's time. It is a joy to watch our young people learn and teach together.



Together we are offering fun worship themes – summer and winter sports, our annual Mardi Gras service (that includes a local Dixieland band!) just to name a few – and helping to make sure that people who might not fit elsewhere, know they are welcome.