



Chepachet Union Church

1138 Putnam Pike
Chepachet, Rhode Island

Community and Church Profile

The Chepachet Union Church, meeting as a Christian community since 1845 with a Congregational and Baptist form of government and leadership, is a congregation of believers of many different Christian backgrounds. Our diversity in this regard is a source of strength in worship and service to God and our fellow man. As a church body, we profess to believe as delineated in the following Church Covenant and statement of faith as testimony and as an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

Church Covenant

Believing that we have been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord, Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant one with another, as one body in Christ.

We promise, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of His Church through knowledge, holiness and truth, to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also endeavor to maintain family and personal devotions, to teach our children the Christian truths, to seek the salvation of all humanity, to walk uprightly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments and zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further promise to watch over each other in brotherly love, to be slow to take offense but quick to forgive as is our Lord.

We also promise that when we sever our relationship with this fellowship we will unite with another Christian fellowship to further the spirit of this covenant and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Church Theological Statement

WE BELIEVE

- * The sixty-six books of the Bible were inspired by God in their entirety and were free from error in the original writings. They therefore are the final authority in Christian faith and practice.
- * There is one God who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory, infinite in being and perfection.
- * God the Father created and preserves all things and has eternally planned for redemption through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- * Man was created in the image of God. He sinned through disobedience, resulting in spiritual and physical death. All human beings are born guilty before God with a sinful nature, and from this condition can be saved only by the grace of God, through faith in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- * Jesus was begotten by God the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. His divine and human natures are united in one person, fully God and fully man.
- * Jesus died on the cross for the remission of sin. He arose bodily, ascended into heaven, and is now with God as our High Priest and Advocate. He shall come again personally, visibly, and bodily to judge all people and to establish His kingdom.
- * Each person who receives, by grace through faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes a member of the body of Christ, the church, and is adopted as a child of God. Each member of the body of Christ is indwelt by the Holy Spirit who makes effective Christ's work in this person's life as Teacher, Intercessor and Comforter. The Holy Spirit is the Seal of Salvation and Giver of spiritual gifts.

ON THIS BASIS

- * We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in His holy ways. We will strive to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to be firm in faith, quickened in hope and constant in charity. And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance and influence as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.
Amen

Church History

Chepachet Union Church, located in the heart of the historic Chepachet Village in Glocester, Rhode Island, represents a “Union” of the Baptist and Congregational denominations and is a member of both the American Baptist Churches USA and the United Church of Christ.

The village of Chepachet has an early history of hosting various Congregational organizations that evolved into the Glocester Evangelical Congregational Society in 1845 and our church sanctuary was built in 1846. The town was also home to the Freewill Baptist Church which was built in 1822. In 1920, because the religious leaders of the village did not believe that the parishioners could adequately support two ministers, the Baptist and Congregational people worshiped together, alternating between the church buildings.

In 1951 the Congregational Evangelical Society relinquished its holdings, consisting of the church, a parsonage, and various outbuildings to the newly chartered Chepachet Union Church. In 1957, the neighboring land and a house were purchased to be used as a Christian Education Building.

In 1962, anticipating suburban population growth, the church membership voted to embark on a monumental building project. Work was begun on the present administrative wing, classrooms and a Fellowship Hall with a seating capacity for 220 people. During this time period, adjacent land and a house were purchased on the eastern border of the property next to the church, for use as a parsonage. The present parsonage and church building are both on the Rhode Island and Federal Historic Register.

Organizational Structure

In reality, Chepachet Union Church is not a union church, community church, or a federated church, but a combination of all three. There is a similarity to a union church since a common property is used for worship, but the congregations are not separate as they would be in a true union church. There is a similarity to a community church in that many denominations are represented in the fellowship of its members and constituents, but the church body is basically non-sectarian. Equal affiliation is maintained with the Baptist and Congregational denominations. The greatest similarity is to a Federated church, since there are two denominational churches united for mutual conduct of worship, and yet a separate roll of members is not maintained for each group. The problems of such a complex congregation are self-evident.

Educational materials are of a non-denominational type. Most of the ministers serving the church have been from the Baptist denomination, but

denominational emphasis is usually lost. In spite of this, many individuals are able to maintain a strong feeling for their parent denomination.

The church government is led by the Church Council, which is comprised of the Chairpersons of the Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Education, Board of Finance, Board of Missions, the Church Treasurer and Financial Secretary, two Members-at-Large, and a member to represent the Youth. The President and Vice-President of the Church are elected by the Church to lead the council meetings, and ensure that the by-laws are followed in all matters pertaining to the governance of church business and spiritual matters.

Church Demographics

Chepachet Union Church has a total membership of 397, ninety-six of which are currently on the active list. Our Sunday School has approximately 30 children and adults attending each Sunday. Our congregation is comprised of a few young families from the community who seek to teach their children the Word of God, along with a number of middle aged and elderly people who have called Chepachet Union Church “home” for most of their lives. There is very little ethnic diversity represented by the membership, which reflects the town’s population.

Previous to Covid19 restrictions, Chepachet Union Church provided two church services each Sunday from September to June – one at 9:00 a.m., with an average attendance of 60, and a second at 10:30 a.m. during the Sunday School hour which averaged 20 attendees each week. During the months of July and August there is one church service each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and no Sunday School. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, the church has been conducting services and Sunday School virtually during the winter and outside on the front lawn during the summer. We have recently begun to have in-person church services with social distancing and wearing of masks.

Church Programs

Chepachet Union Church is an important center for religious and social events and all, regardless of personal creed, are welcomed within.

The Christian Education program includes traditional Sunday School classes for about 20 students from age three through adult on Sunday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30. Sunday School begins in September with a Rally Day event outside on the front lawn and continues throughout the year with attendance at a portion of the 10:30 church service, a Christmas performance and a closing program in June. At times, depending on the current leadership, Sunday School has been called Junior Church. There is a Vacation Bible School that is held for one week during the summer with an enthusiastic group of about 40 children from the community. In

July you may find the VBS leaders busily assembling a large float to enter into the town's annual 4th of July parade. Youth Group meetings are held on Sunday evenings welcoming all youth in grades 6 through 12. Various Bible study classes and prayer groups are held throughout the year for men, women, and mixed groups. The church also provides a comfortable and well-appointed nursery for its Cradle Roll members during church services and events.

The Board of Missions supports a number of local and worldwide evangelical missionaries. Local missions include Community Chaplain Service for assisted living and nursing homes, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship at URI, and Straight Ahead Prison Ministry. Worldwide missions include Operation Mobilization, TABCOM, SIM USA, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Operation Christmas Child and various missionaries in Africa, Asia, South America and Haiti. Chepachet Union Church also boasts a very successful community garden, which provides delicious bounty to anyone in need and to the Providence Rescue Mission soup kitchen. The Missions Board also provides TLC (The Love of Christ) bags for the homeless and needy.

Chepachet Union Church maintains two vital programs of service to the community. One is the food pantry, which is controlled by the Board of Deacons and offers an assortment of food and necessities to anyone in need on the first and third Saturday mornings of every month. Also, the Rho Delta Club operates a thrift shop, which is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Clean gently-used clothing is accepted and sold inexpensively.

The Rho Delta Club is the active women's group of the church, meeting one evening a month. This group conducts many of the major fundraising activities of the church such as the May Breakfast, the Strawberry Supper, and a yard sale. They also provide funeral collations and sponsor local events and dinners as needed. Their meetings are fun-filled and all of their money is donated to charitable endeavors.

All men of the church and their friends are welcome to partake of a feast of a breakfast on the fourth Saturday of every month. The vast array of man-food is prepared by a few men from the church and served with a lot of fun, fellowship and a light dose of spirituality. This has become a significant outreach program that touches people who are hesitant about attending church services.

Chepachet Union Church's music program is overseen by the pastor and the Board of Deacons. The worship services are traditionally celebrated each week with anthems by a choir during the 9:00 service and soloists and instrumentalists during the 10:30 service. We employ a fine pianist and the choir is currently in a state of rebuilding. Our music ministry is an opportunity for growth.

Chepachet Union Church is a busy meeting place for several local organizations. Both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts meet weekly in the building and the church holds the Charter for Boy Scout Troop 44 and Cub Scout Pack 1 Chepachet. Alcoholics Anonymous utilizes the facilities for their weekly meetings here as well. During the summer, the Gloucester Recreation Department, in conjunction with C.A.S.T., conducts their summer concert series comprising of various genres of musical entertainment on the spacious front lawn of the church on Wednesday nights. They also run their annual 4th of July Road Race from the church's front lawn. In addition, the Northwest Child Outreach Program currently uses the building as a testing site on a regular basis. During Covid19, a local entrepreneur has been allowed to hold Zumba classes on the front lawn on Monday nights. The church is quite gracious about hosting warm, welcoming gatherings to the members of the community and joining in at community events such as Candlelight Shopping and the Scarecrow Festival.

The Church Setting

The Town of Gloucester, Rhode Island is located in the northern part of the state, and borders on the state of Connecticut. Gloucester is unique because, while being a rapidly growing suburban area, it retains the setting and characteristics of a rural town, with a population of just under 11,000 people. This is in large part due to the large tracts of public lands (Pulaski Memorial State Park, George Washington Park and camping area, Durfee Hill management area, to name a few) which are part of this community. The town has an abundance of lakes and ponds, and much of the countryside is wooded and lightly developed. The town maintains several swimming areas and recreational parks. Year-round recreational programs are available for young and old.

Chepachet is one of the three villages in the Town of Gloucester, located near the geographic center. It is located eighteen miles northwest of the state's capital city, Providence, twelve miles from the northernmost city of Woonsocket, and about ten miles east of Putnam, Connecticut. It is easily accessible from Interstates 295 and 395 as well as State Routes 44, 102, 146 and 6. Chepachet Union Church is located in the center of the Village of Chepachet and is nestled on Main Street in the center of the village historical district. The church is surrounded by fine old homes, antique shops, the Town Hall, a library, and a post office and many historic sites. Other conveniences include two banks, a CVS, a grocery store, a gas station, a historic tavern, a liquor store, a sandwich and ice cream café, two pizza parlors, and a Dunkin Donuts. Most conveniences are within walking distance.

There are two elementary schools in the Town of Gloucester – the West Gloucester Elementary School, and the Fogarty Memorial School – which house grades K-5, Early Childhood, and Special Education classes. The Ponaganset Middle School houses grades 6-8 and the Ponaganset High School houses grades 9-12. Both Ponaganset schools are regional schools shared with the neighboring town of Foster.

Three volunteer fire departments serve the Town of Glocester and are located in the villages of West Glocester, Harmony and Chepachet. The town has many fraternal, business, social, and youth organizations and programs. Libraries are located in Chepachet and Harmony. The Heritage Society is active in town and works to preserve the historic buildings and monuments within the town's Historic District.

The residents of Glocester enjoy the calm, quiet, peaceful environment of rural living, and the convenience of being within driving distance of the coastline and business centers of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Ministry Priorities

The search committee has determined through extensive thought, prayer, discussion, and input from church members, that the following ministerial gifts and skills are the top priorities in our search for a pastoral leader:

- * An effective preacher/speaker who believes in the Bible as the final authority in Christian faith and practice.
- * An ability to interpret the faith in terms that are relevant to people's lives.
- * Maintain a Christian Education program of all age groups, but with a special emphasis in children and youth, and in maintaining an active Christian Education program.
- * An ability to inspire a shared vision for the ministry of a church, and to develop and maintain the programs and activities to foster that vision.
- * An effective administrator/leader who is a consensus builder and is able to inspire, motivate and encourage volunteers.
- * An effective pastoral leader who exhibits empathy and concern for people in their day-to-day lives as well as during times of crisis and triumph.
- * An ability to motivate the laity to use their gifts for ministry in their daily lives.
- * An ability to build up the music ministry of the church.
- * Ministers to the sick, dying, and bereaved.
- * An ability to infuse the congregation with a spirit of love and conciliation.

Our goal is to make the strongest possible match of these stated priorities of the needs of our church with the abilities of the candidates as they see themselves and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to find the minister who will lead, direct, guide and inspire the people of the Chepachet Union Church in its ministry for Christ in the future years.