

**ST. LUKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**  
*www.stlucedg.org*

**MISSION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
*(updated March, 2011)*

**CHURCH HISTORY, COMMUNITY HISTORY & DEMOGRAPHICS, and KEY ISSUES**

**ST. LUKE HISTORY**

St. Luke Presbyterian Church is located at 3910 Highland Avenue, Downers Grove, Illinois. The church held its first Sunday service in 1962 at Highland School with the Rev. Kirby Wahl officiating.

On June 10, 1962, the first congregational meeting of St. Luke Presbyterian Church was held in the gymnasium of Highland School with 40 members attending. Twelve members of the congregation were elected as Elders. Groups and committees included a junior and senior choir, men's breakfast and prayer group, senior high school group, which met on Sunday evenings, and a Women's Study group, which met on Tuesday evenings. The first "Clean and Sheen Day" (our traditional clean-up day), held on May 19, 1962, was to clean the site for the current church building.

In 1965, plans for a new church building were created and finalized; ground was broken on June 27 of that year. The first service in the new building was held on April 26, 1966; Sunday school for youth followed the worship service.

The Rev. Wahl resigned in late 1966, and the Rev. Kenneth Stewart was called as pastor and installed on September 17, 1967. In 1968, the church discussed both its short-range (one-year) and long-range (five-year) goals. This resulted in Youth Sunday, youth choirs, a summer picnic, a desire to increase the size of the congregation, and a need for more classrooms. The drives were paved and landscaping around the church was completed. The children's choir was divided into the Cherub Choir (grades 1-3) and the Carol Choir (grades 4-6). 1968 saw the formation of the Celebration, Cherub, Carol, and Chancel choirs.

In January 1971, the Board of Deacons, consisting of 12 members, was ordained.

Ground was broken for a new addition (Fellowship Hall) to St. Luke Presbyterian Church in 1974, and was dedicated in May 1975. In 2000, the hall was renamed Heller Fellowship Hall in memory of member Ray Heller.

We were given a substantial monetary gift in 1982, which was used to purchase new pews, along with a new sound system, Bible stand, candle holder, and Carol Choir robes. Later, a new copier machine, new roof for our buildings, refrigerator for the kitchen, and an air-conditioner for the sanctuary were all purchased from the same gift.

Over the years, the stained glass panels featured in the sanctuary have been given as honorary or memoriam gifts by church members.

The Rev. Stewart announced his decision to retire early in 1988, and the Rev. Jerry Andrews accepted the position of Interim Pastor in May 1988.

The Rev. Howard L. Milkman's name was placed in nomination by the pastoral search committee in July 1989; Rev. Milkman joined us in September of that year.

Under Reverend Milkman's guidance, St. Luke developed a significant focus on mission programs. The church actively participates in One Great Hour of Sharing, Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS), Church World Service CROP Walk, Habitat for Humanity, Cabrini Alive, Two Cents a Meal, LOVE, Inc., and The Care & Counseling Center, among others.

In 1998, the Warming Center (affiliated with PADS) opened its door for the first time. Each Saturday, October through April, guests are served lunch and given a warm shelter. Additionally, St. Luke has been hosting PADS guests overnights on Wednesdays in July and August since 2009. Each November, St. Luke also orchestrates Monday night PADS dinners and overnight guests at First Congregational Church in Downers Grove.

Rev. Milkman formed a book club in the early 90s that met monthly to provide members and friends the opportunity to select, read and discuss various literary works. After Rev. Milkman's retirement, the group continues to meet monthly, led by congregation members.

After receiving a large monetary donation, "Friends of the Carpenter" was established, and the group built a stage in Heller Fellowship Hall. In 1998, new rooftop air conditioning units were purchased for the sanctuary and new carpeting was installed throughout the building. In 1999, the kitchen modernization, performed by an army of St. Luke volunteers, began and was completed in the summer of 2000. We now have an up-to-date commercial kitchen, used not only for our Warming Center, but for various church activities as well.

In 1998, the St. Luke Infrastructure Committee was established to implement the needs for our church's facilities.

From 2000-2002, St. Luke was chosen by McCormick Seminary as a Field Education site for its student interns. Robert Hamilton, Jr., joined us as the first intern under this program. Chuck Maney joined us as an intern in 2001 until his ordination in 2002. Dari Rowen interned with us in 2002.

New sanctuary furniture, including a communion table, pulpit, lectern and baptismal font, were built and installed in 2000, along with a new sound system. Air handling units on the roof and air-conditioning units for the sanctuary were replaced.

St. Luke celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2002.

In 2004, a new sign was installed on the Main Street side of the building, purchased from Memorial Gifts.

During the winter of 2004-2005, the congregation voted to go forward with a building renovation and the establishment of a capital committee to raise funds and oversee the building project. The theme selected for this fundraising and building campaign was "*Building on Love's Foundation.*"

The capital committee, in conjunction with a consultant, guided us through the steps of an effective capital fundraising campaign, and predicted that approximately \$400,000 in funds would be raised. The campaign received pledge promises of \$970,000. This level of commitment demonstrated the strong resolve and desire the congregation had for this project.

The Rev. Howard Milkman retired on September 17, 2006. The Rev. Amy Snedeker filled in most Sundays and provided pastoral care until Rev. Dr. Rose C. Taul became interim pastor on February 4, 2007. The Rev. Rose Taul's term as interim pastor ended in January 2009, when she accepted a position as an interim pastor at a church in Indiana. The Rev. David Neff became temporary supply pastor from February-August 2009.

A building (renovation) committee worked with Architect David Schultz to arrive at a final building architectural plan at a cost of approximately \$1,500,000. Construction began in October 2009 and was completed in May 2010. During construction, worship services were held in Heller Fellowship Hall. The building was dedicated on June 13, 2010.

The Rev. Deborah Matthews' name was placed in nomination by the Pastor Nominating Committee June 28, 2009. On October 25, 2009, Rev. Matthews was installed as the pastor at St. Luke. The Rev. Matthews took medical leave in September 2010, eventually leading to Rev. Matthews requesting the dissolution of her relationship as pastor of St. Luke, effective December 31, 2010.

From September 2010 through January 2011, Executive Presbyter Rev. Dr. Virginia Smith, Rev. Jennifer McNutt, and David McNutt served as pulpit supply pastors until February 1, 2011, when the Rev. Dr. Rose Taul returned for a second term as interim pastor.

### **Worship & Music**

In 1972, our Order of Worship included Confessional Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Sermon, Offertory, Benediction, and Lord's Prayer. In 1975, the Confession Prayer was rewritten to reflect more contemporary language and entitled "How Things Are With Us." This prayer became very important to the members and was a part of our worship through 2006. A new form of the Lord's Prayer was also introduced to further emphasize the use of contemporary and meaningful language in the worship service; however, this was discontinued due to mixed responses from the congregation.

The current order of worship includes Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Assurance of Pardon, Children's Sermon, Scripture Readings, Sermon, Prayers of the People (Joys and Concerns), Lord's Prayer, Offertory, and Benediction. Communion usually occurs on the first Sunday of each month.

In 1977, the church began permitting baptized children to receive communion at the discretion of their parents. Recently, non-ordained members have been included in the serving of Communion.

RoseMary Jandes accepted the position of church organist on a volunteer basis in 1979. After many years of volunteering her services, RoseMary reluctantly accepted a salaried position and remained with us until early 2007. Mary Bittner followed as organist until her retirement, due to illness, in June 2007. Since September 2007, our principal organist is Bonnie Johansen-Werner.

David J. Molnar was hired as Director of Music in 1984, and was in and out of that role until his resignation in 2004. Until the hiring of David, the music program was directed entirely by volunteers; with his strong leadership skills, David contributed greatly to the music program and the children's programs. Michelle Eppley joined the staff in 2004 as Director of Music, and Laura Miller-Maggos was hired as Director of Bells. Michelle resigned in February 2005, when Sara Moss stepped in as Interim Director, until the hiring of Willard Thomen in August 2005. Fred Moszur now serves as volunteer Cherub Choir director. As of February 2011, Willard Thomen, Bonnie Johansen-Werner, and Fred Moszur serve as the main leaders of music. Music is an important aspect of worship at St. Luke.

The organ needed to be replaced in 1987, and this was done from unrestricted memorial gifts, as well as a large gift given specifically for a new sanctuary organ.

In 1998, new choir robes were purchased for the Chancel Choir in honor of RoseMary Jandes' 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary as organist.

A two-octave set of hand bells was received in 2000, followed by the third octave, which enhanced our church music program.

In 2002, an organ was gifted to St. Luke by Linda & Michael Sifferd, and in 2003, a baby grand piano was given by David Molnar.

In 2010, St. Luke incorporated its children into the worship service as acolytes.

### **Church School and Youth Programs**

1969 saw both junior and senior high school groups formed; these groups remained in place until February 1977, when both groups disbanded due to poor attendance. In 1986, SOS (Seniors on Sunday senior high school group) was formed; they meet Sunday afternoons. The JAZ (Juniors after Zchool junior high school group) formed soon thereafter, and continued to meet after school on Wednesdays, until February 2011, when their meeting time was moved to Sunday after church.

The first Vacation Bible School was held in June 1982, proved to be quite successful, and continued for several years before disbanding for want of teachers and coordinators. In 1998, VBS was revived and has been very successful bringing in children not only from membership, but from the Downers Grove and surrounding areas.

An adult Christian education class that met Sunday mornings before the worship service was formed in 1983 and continued until 2005, when it was disbanded due to declining numbers. After 2005, several short-term adult education classes have occurred, such as 8:30 a.m. Sunday Bible Study and classes on various subjects led by interim pastors and Pastor Matthews, but no regular schedule has been able to be maintained.

Valerie Moses-Shaw was hired in 1985 as Minister of Education and this was seen as a turning point in the church school and young adult programs. Michael Duetsch followed her as Minister of Education from 1988-1992. Laurie McCabe then took over as Youth Coordinator and served until 1996; Renee Hyzy served in this capacity from 1997-1998.

In the 1980s, we began a series of all-family retreats which became an annual event at Stronghold Castle in Oregon, Illinois from 1998-2008.

In 2002, Sarah Karstens was hired as youth coordinator for the junior and senior high youth groups and served until 2009. Megan Polich was hired as youth coordinator in October 2010. This part-time position oversees coordination of these groups, which meet once per week during the school year, mission trips and other youth programs. Adult volunteers assist with both the junior high and senior high groups. Youth mission and middle school retreat trips were periodically taken starting in the 1990s, including a mission trip to Benton Harbor, Michigan in 2003, to South Dakota in 2005, and to Canada in 2009, with the hope that they will be continued.

In 2005, the Session approved the addition of a part-time Christian Education coordinator to primarily coordinate curriculum, volunteers and support for our rotational education model for children in K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Kim Wojcik, a church member, serves in this capacity. She also coordinates teachers for the preschool program. Youth attend church until after the Children's Sermon, when they leave the sanctuary to attend church school.

From 2006-2009, St. Luke offered three faith-based adult education classes on personal finances.

### **Church Planning**

In June 1972, a Long Range Planning Committee was established. In the spring of 1973, a small group of members participated in "Purpose and Goals" congregational meetings. In 1974, a booklet outlining the history, goals, and purpose of St. Luke was prepared, and in 1975, a report of the Ad Hoc Program Committee was completed. In 1984, the Committee on Tomorrow was commissioned to recommend a set of steps to strengthen the programs of the church. The committee delivered a report recommending improvements in the music program and church school, among other changes; these recommendations eventually resulted in the hiring of David J. Molnar and Valerie Moses-Shaw as noted above. The congregation was asked to increase its pledges to support these changes, and membership responded strongly.

A Planning Committee was again established in 1992 to look into the future plans for St. Luke Presbyterian Church, and in 1999, a Sanctuary Committee was formed to look into possibilities of enlarging our sanctuary, putting on a new roof, and making other capital improvements.

One of our biggest challenges in recent years was to move forward with plans to further renovate and expand the building. Several committees have worked together diligently over the last twelve years to gather the congregation's input, work with an architect to design plans that meet our needs, and undertake a capital campaign to support the building program. The process was orchestrated by a very committed and talented group of members.

In 2004, the Omega Committee was established to look into the financing of the building program, which would include renovation and enlargement of the present sanctuary, new roof, and more parking. In the spring of 2005, a survey was sent out to membership, and the consensus was that we should go ahead with our plans for a sanctuary renovation and adding more classrooms for a budget of \$2.2 million. It was later decided that Phase 1 of the plan would include sanctuary expansion and creation of additional parking, with a budget of \$1.5 million; Phase 2 would involve classroom expansion. A major capital campaign to fund the program was launched in February 2006, with very successful results; \$970,000 was pledged over a three-year period.

The Renovation Committee selected Mazur & Son as the general contractor. The sanctuary construction began in October 2009 and was completed in May 2010.

The current Planning Committee began work on a new long range plan in 2009; the plan is expected to be completed in 2011.

## **Finance**

The financial history of the church can be traced by reviewing the budgets since 1968. Between 1968 and 1973, the budget grew gradually from \$22,500 to \$40,000. From 1974 to 1979, the budget ranged from \$59,000 to \$66,000. From 1980 to 1988, the budget was between \$82,000 and \$137,000. The 2007 annual budget was \$230,000. The projected annual budget for 2011 is \$262,374.

On June 7, 1992, near our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we “burned the mortgage.”

In 1999, a \$30,000 line of credit was secured to fund kitchen and bathroom renovation projects. The money was paid back in full later that year from additional giving, as these projects were well received by the congregation.

A \$35,000 loan was arranged through the Presbytery of Chicago to put a new roof on the upper portion of the building in 2002, and was paid off within two years.

As of February 2011, a mortgage balance of \$466,000 currently remains on the expanded sanctuary.

A Fundraising Committee has been in place for the past 10 years to support various needs of the church. Programs have included an engraved brick program, Heart to Heart silent auction, and annual church yard sale, among other events.

## **Programs and Outreach**

Between 1999 and 2004, St. Luke sponsored three refugee families. The first was a family of seven from Kosovo; the second, a father and his eight children from Togo, Africa; the third, a couple and their daughter from Somalia.

In January 2010, six St. Luke members went on a week-long mission trip to Guatemala, through the Hearts in Motion (HIM) organization. While in Guatemala, St. Luke ambassadors went into local villages to help set up medical clinics. Conversations have already begun about where the next mission trip will take us!

Club Luke, an after-school gathering for children ages 3 years old through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, meets on Wednesdays during the school year. A beloved and long-standing St. Luke tradition, Club Luke is a time for crafts, snacks, sharing and music, and is open not only to St. Luke children, but kids throughout the community as well.

The Saturday Warming Center became a site for the Downers Grove Township Peer Jury to use as a community service consequence for teenagers in 2002.

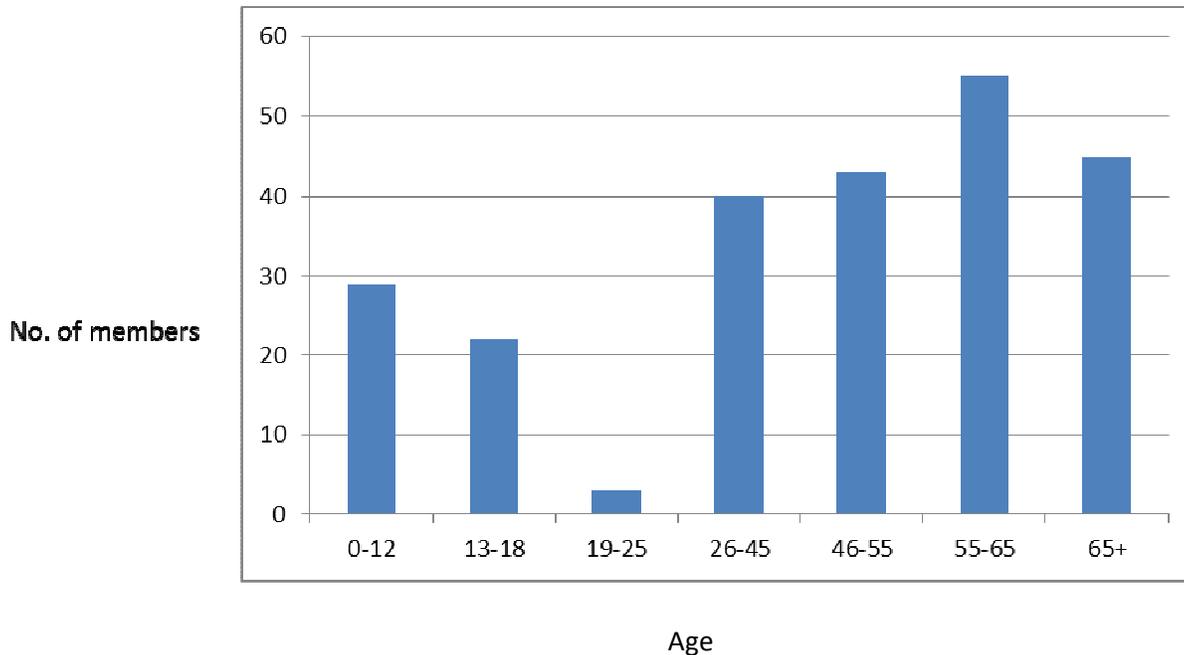
At the present time, St. Luke Presbyterian Church serves the community by opening its doors to various non-profit and educational groups, including two weekly OA (Overeaters Anonymous) groups, two AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) weekly groups, and a Girl Scout troop. We also rent space to several groups during the year for different social activities and recitals.

Good Samaritan Hospital and St. Luke Presbyterian Church are partners in Disaster Planning, with St. Luke being a Family Information Center for the hospital in case of disaster and, specifically, in case the hospital grounds were to be quarantined. Should the need arise, St. Luke is also a “safe place” for the children and teachers at Highland School, located across the street from the church.

## Church Enrollment & Demographics

Since 2006, membership has declined, in part due to the cleaning of the rolls and putting members on the inactive list. Church membership currently totals 210 (female 129, male 81).

### Church Membership Age Distribution



### St. Luke Mission and Vision Statements

The St. Luke mission and vision statements were revised in 2009 to reflect what St. Luke stands for, and to provide the governing boards of the church a guideline for developing programs that would support the mission of the church, the congregation, and the congregation as it interacts within the community.

#### *Mission Statement*

Our mission is to be an inclusive family of God in the midst of a world in need. We strive to provide love and acceptance, forgiveness and empowerment. As we worship together, we challenge each other to work and to live in the spirit of Christ in our community and in the world.

#### *Vision Statement*

For the glory of God, we worship joyfully, nurture all, and engage in mission by reaching out to the community and the world. We encourage spiritual growth by involving the entire church family in education, fellowship, and lay leadership to help fulfill the needs of the congregation and beyond.

## Church Government and Activism

The St. Luke Session is an active, involved group, which oversees the following committees and programming:

**Worship:** Our Sunday morning, holiday, and special event services emphasize praise, music, participation, and relevance to our daily lives. Music is an especially important part of the heart and soul of St. Luke, and music programming is recognized as a high priority among the congregation.

**Mission:** St. Luke is extremely committed to mission and is actively involved in world, national and local programs. The church has supported three refugee families in recent years, and operates a Warming Center for the homeless every Saturday fall through spring. Additionally, since 2009, St. Luke has been hosting PADS guests overnights on Wednesdays in July and August.

**Christian Education:** Programming includes a rotational model Sunday School (preschool – junior high), senior high class, Confirmation class, and pastor’s Bible study class. An active junior high and senior high youth group is offered. Vacation Bible School is held every summer.

**Membership:** The committee oversees ongoing fellowship activities and outings. The Lukan Letter weekly e-newsletter and church website, membership directory, publicity, and other community outreach activities.

**Property:** The committee ensures our building is well maintained and coordinates use of the building by outside groups. We depend on church volunteers for much of the work and upkeep.

**Planning:** The Planning Committee oversees the church’s annual planning retreat, ten-year plan, coordinates goals and objectives of the Session and its committees, and provides that each committee is accountable for their goals.

**Stewardship:** The committee oversees financial reporting, audits, the annual stewardship campaign and interacts with a fundraising committee that sponsors ongoing events to supplement funding for church programs.

**Board of Deacons:** The deacons of St. Luke are hard-working people who serve behind the scenes in three main areas: fellowship, congregational care, and mission.

**Fun/Fellowship Committee:** The fellowship committee plans six events throughout the year, some for adults, some for children.

**Personnel:** This committee oversees the hiring, evaluation, compensation, and other personnel-related issues of paid staff.

People have described St. Luke as a “small church with a large heart.” We are blessed with what we feel is a unique “family” that lovingly cares about its members, extended families, and those in the community who need our support. St. Luke is truly a congregation of givers – we are never at a loss for volunteers who give of their spirit, time and finances to support our work, or a cause that will further our mission as a community of Christ.

St. Luke has a history of being informed, in tune, and involved with local, national and world events. We are a congregation highly focused on support of and advocating for the poor, oppressed and disadvantaged. Our

programs to support the homeless and those in need are reflections of this priority. We particularly support human rights causes, both publicly and financially. For example, the congregation recently supported the cause for the Immokalee workers' increased wages, and is frequently willing to sponsor/support petitions or motions to further protect and support human welfare.

## **PC-USA**

Two Elders, along with the pastor, regularly attend scheduled meetings of the Chicago Presbytery. With regard to key issues within PC-USA:

In 1998 the St. Luke Session opposed the ban on the ordination of non-celibate gays and lesbians and supports the efforts to delete G-6.0106b from the denomination's *Book of Order*. St. Luke's welcoming statement, adopted by the Session and printed each Sunday in our bulletins, characterizes our theological approach to the issue of inclusiveness, be it homosexuality, ethnicity or race: *"We welcome you to St. Luke. We receive each person as we would receive Christ. Please feel at home. This is an open church which considers diversity to be God's gift and blessing. St. Luke Church resolves to erect no barriers and struggles against existing barriers between people in the world. We are richer for your presence and blessed by your participation."*

The St. Luke Session has opposed divestment by the Presbyterian Church from corporations doing business in Israel and took steps to voice and seeks revisions in this action at the Chicago Presbytery.

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION—VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**

Downers Grove embraces a hometown feel with high character, quality people, and hometown values. There is a high degree of satisfaction of those living in Downers Grove; it is considered a welcoming, friendly, aesthetically beautiful, strong, and safe community.

Named for its first settler, Pierce Downer, the community's heritage features a unique and interesting blend of people, places and events. Downers Grove is in a maturing phase, with some residential development and a flourishing business community.

Downers Grove is a community of 47,833 located in the Chicago metropolitan area. The Village is 20 miles west of downtown Chicago and provides easy access to the entire metropolitan region.

Downers Grove is a well planned community, with diverse and well maintained housing, quality education and health care, and excellent community facilities. The citizens of Downers Grove care about their community as demonstrated by a long tradition of civic service and involvement.

## **Housing**

The housing stock in Downers Grove is a unique blend of old and new construction. Some homes, generally near the center of town, date from the middle of the 19th century; however, housing styles of each succeeding generation are also represented. Condominiums and townhouses are also available. Downers Grove has

experienced one of the highest teardown rates in the Chicago area; small, older residences are being demolished and replaced with much larger new houses.

The median house value in Downers Grove is significantly above Illinois state average. The renting percentage in Downers Grove is below Illinois state average. Estimated median house/condo value in 2011 is approximately \$275,000; in 2005 it was \$310,000; in 2000 it was \$205,000. As in many cities and towns across the country, home values in Downers Grove have certainly been affected by the downturn in the national economy.

Estimated 2011 median home values:	Downers Grove .	\$275,000
	Illinois:	.\$165,000

### **Education**

The Downers Grove school districts have consistently provided an excellent education system for Downers Grove residents. A system of elementary, middle, and junior high schools prepares students for high achievement in area high schools.

Named in *Newsweek*, “America’s Best High Schools”, 2010 and *U.S. News & World Report*, “Best High Schools in America,” 2010, both North High School and South High School have reputations for academic excellence, with a 23.2 ACT composite score average, exceeding the national average. There is a strong focus on college preparedness, with the offering of eight Advanced Placement courses. Additionally, both high schools boast all-state athletic teams and champions in a variety of sports, as well as all-state bands, orchestras and choirs. Elementary children attend Districts 58, 66, and 68, and high school students attend District 99. The teaching staff of all the districts is excellent and well trained.

The village of Downers Grove also offers residents an opportunity to enroll their students in a variety of private schools. Many of the Downers Grove school districts, both public and private, participate in the Life Skills program offered by the village of Downers Grove Human Service Division. The Life Skills program focuses on preventive education for topics such as decision making, problem solving, character development, conflict resolution, violence prevention and drug awareness. Additionally, Downers Grove boasts higher education opportunities at Midwestern University (Full-time enrollment, 555 31st Street; private, not-for-profit; offers Master's and Doctorate degrees) and Parker Business School (1021 68th Street; private, for-profit) .

### **Transportation**

The main line of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway runs through the center of downtown Downers Grove. Many residents use it to commute to work in downtown Chicago (there are three stops within Downers Grove), as well as to access the many cultural attractions found there, such as museums, theater, music, dining, parks, sports venues, lakefront, etc. Interstate highways 355 and 88 both pass through the community, providing excellent access to surrounding areas. Downers Grove is also served by the Pace Bus Service, a system of suburban public transportation.

Downers Grove is also one of the only communities to run its own shuttle bus service. The Grove Commuter Shuttle runs four routes throughout the community, including stops at two of the three train stations.

Major airports nearest to Downers Grove:

- Chicago O'Hare International (about 15 miles)
- Chicago Midway International (about 19 miles)

### **Community Events**

Downers Grove hosts a variety of community events each year; highlights include:

- Ice Sculpture Festival-February
- Summer Nights Classic Car Show-Friday nights, May-August
- Memorial Day Parade
- Downtown Farmer's Market-Saturday mornings, May-October
- American Cancer Society's Relay for Life-June
- Independence Day Parade and Fireworks
- Grove Fest-July
- Fine Arts Festival-September
- Halloween Window Painting and Costume Parade
- Bonfield Express 5k Race-Thanksgiving Day
- Holiday Tree Lighting and Visits with Santa

More detailed information can be found on the [www.downtowndg.org](http://www.downtowndg.org) web page.

### **Local Politics**

The Village of Downers Grove operates under a council-manager form of government. The Village Council, consisting of six commissioners and working in conjunction with the mayor, is the policy making body that authorizes a professional manager to oversee the daily operations of the village. In addition to the Municipal Code, which establishes many of the rules and regulations by which the Village operates, the Council has also adopted separate council policies on several matters related to municipal activities.

The elections for village positions in the village have traditionally been non-partisan; the candidates' party affiliations do not appear on ballots and direct party funding is not practiced. The local Republican Party and Democratic Party organizations have not, in the past, openly issued endorsements of the candidates.

### **Religion**

The Downers Grove area is home to many different houses of worship. Christian traditions represented include the Assemblies of God, various Baptist traditions, Bible Churches, Churches of Christ, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Christian Science, Disciples of Christ, Reformed Church in America, Jehovah's Witnesses, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Full Gospel Church, Lutherans of various synods, United Methodists, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Church in America, United Pentecostals, Presbyterians (both Presbyterian Church USA and Presbyterian Church in America), Unity Church and Seventh-day Adventists.

## Utilities

Downers Grove drinking water comes from Lake Michigan via agreements with the Chicago Water Department. Its electricity infrastructure is largely maintained by Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd); its natural gas infrastructure was built by Northern Illinois Gas.

Household waste pickup is contracted out by the village, as is yard waste pickup; these are paid for by household-purchased stickers. Curbside recycling is free.

## Income & employment

	<b>Downers Grove</b>	<b>Illinois</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
Median household income	\$73,683	\$54,671	\$50,140
Median household price	\$264,900	\$177,900	\$187,800
Cost of living (% of national avg.)	113%	99%	100%
Per capita income	\$42,048	\$41,904	\$39,626
Unemployment	8.2%	10.7%	9.4%

## Interviews with Downers Grove Community Members

Interviews were conducted with key members of the Downers Grove community to gather their assessment of the primary issues and concerns within the community. Members interviewed included:

- Director of Counseling & Social Services, Downers Grove
- Downers Grove Fire Department Chief
- Deputy Chief of Police in Downers Grove
- Principal of Highland School, Downers Grove
- Pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
- Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Long-time resident, Downers Grove

*The following is a summary of the key community issues cited by those interviewed:*

**Aging Population** - From the survey and from the interviews, one of the key factors identified was the overall aging of the community as well of our congregation. This presents multiple challenges, which are not mutually exclusive. The overall average age of the U.S. population, as well as in the church, is increasing. From a community standpoint, concern was voiced about how to provide care for the aging population and what role the church and community will have in this responsibility. In the church, the increasing average age of the congregation poses a continuing challenge on how to attract and keep younger members.

Nearly all those interviewed mentioned that there is a need for increased help to care for the elderly in the community. Part of this rationale is that current generations are more transient than prior generations and are more likely to move away from their parents and are less likely to be in a position to provide care for their parents when they are elderly. Public service officials interviewed, specifically Police and Fire officials, both mentioned that a larger amount and focus of their efforts today involve the care and safety of the elderly. Some examples of this include assisting with frequent calls from the same person, finding caretakers and homes, and frequently assisting with meals on wheels.

**Communication** - Community leaders interviewed cited that people no longer know their neighbors. Previous generations not only knew, but spent time with and watched over their neighbors. There is less mingling among neighbors due to both spouses working, concerns and issues with finances, higher levels of transience, an overabundance of materialism, the amassing of huge debts, the availability of vast information in the home (Internet & not going to the library), and less job security than with past generations.

Those interviewed believe that current generations are much more focused on quantification and technology vs. human interaction. Vehicles of communication have changed; there are several modes of near and instant communication available. This is not a bad thing, although many do perceive it that way; it's just reality. There is less focus on reading as a learning method, and more on visual and audible methodologies. It was said by one of the interviewees that he sees less of this trend as younger people seem to be gravitating back to more interpersonal and interactive techniques of communication.

**For More Information of the Village of Downers Grove, see the links provided below:**

**2010 census information on Downers Grove:**

[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC\\_10\\_PL\\_QTPL&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_PL_QTPL&prodType=table)

**2005-2009 American Community Survey statistics information on DG:**

**Population**

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR5&-geo\\_id=16000US1720591&-ds\\_name=D&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_DP3YR5&-geo_id=16000US1720591&-ds_name=D&-lang=en)

**Social characteristics: households, marital status, education, language, ancestry:**

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=16000US1720591&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR2&-ds\\_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US1720591&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_DP3YR2&-ds_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false)

## **Economic**

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=16000US1720591&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR3&-ds\\_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US1720591&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false)

## **Housing**

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=16000US1720591&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_DP3YR4&-ds\\_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US1720591&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_DP3YR4&-ds_name=&-lang=en&-redoLog=false)

## **Narrative with charts**

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?\\_bm=y&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2009\\_3YR\\_G00\\_NP01&-geo\\_id=16000US1720591&-gc\\_url=&-ds\\_name=&-lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-qr_name=ACS_2009_3YR_G00_NP01&-geo_id=16000US1720591&-gc_url=&-ds_name=&-lang=en)