



CLAIR MEMORIAL UMC
AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN HERE

679 Communipaw Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07304
Reverend Dawrell Rich, Pastor
Phone: (201) 946-4679 | Fax: 201-432-1604

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Historic Church Preservation



Clair Memorial United Methodist Church (CMUMC) has been a beacon of hope for the City of Jersey City residents for nearly 80 years. The product of a merger between two congregations, Thirkield Methodist Episcopal Church and St. Mark Zion Methodist Church, affords Clair Memorial the distinction of being the first African-American church built by blacks in the city.

Since its inception, CMUMC has served its changing community through social services (i.e., food pantry, free lunch program, youth ministry, community outreach, after-school programs, and homeless assistance). A 2001 New York Times article called us “one of the most stable institutions in the city’s working-class, largely black Bergen-Lafayette neighborhood since it was built” - until a fire raged, leaving only the front-facing facade of the historic building designed by Architect Abraham Davis. After ten years of praying and building, on April 18, 2011, CMUMC reopened after marching from the Temple Beth El, where it held temporary services, to the newly rebuilt sanctuary amid songs and shouts of joy.

Today, the aging congregation is met with another crisis. Severe weather events, including heavy storms, have caused substantial damage to the building - especially the tower - putting the future of this vital institution at risk.

The damages include:

- **Roof Damage:** The roof has sustained significant water damage, leading to leaks
- **Exterior Building Wall:** Deteriorated mortar between bricks allows water to infiltrate
- **Tower:** Interior walls are deteriorating due to water damage and weather-related stress
- **Basement:** Existing mold due to water-related damage





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Therefore, we are requesting financial support for a historic African-American congregation that is still a cornerstone in the community.

Under the leadership of our current pastor, Reverend Dawrell Rich, CMUMC is not only preserving the cultural and spiritual heritage of the community in Jersey City but expanding our footprint to address social and environmental justice issues like affordable housing, food insecurity, health and hygiene, education, and LGBTQ and immigrant advocacy. We strive to be more than a Sunday morning church but a hub that provides resources for residents in our city.

To ensure this historical congregation’s preservation, we seek financial support to address these critical issues. With your assistance we will raise \$120,000 by December 31, 2025 for repairs to the roof, foundation, and tower, as well as restoration work to maintain the architectural integrity of the building. We are confident that we can repair the damages and strengthen the structure to withstand future extreme weather events with your support. Our objective is to restore the church building and enhance its resilience to protect this vital piece of African-American heritage.

Your financial support will make a difference in preserving this historic African-American congregation, allowing it to continue serving the community, promoting cultural awareness, and providing a place of worship for future generations.

You can donate online at www.clairumcjc.org/onlinegiving or send a check payable to Clair Memorial UMC.

Visionary - \$24,000 & above	Steward - \$1,000 to \$2,499
Builder - \$12,000 to \$23,999	Patron - \$500 to \$999
Catalyst - \$6,000 to \$11,999	Supporter - \$250 to \$499
Partner - \$3,000 to \$5,999	Helper - \$100 to \$249
Influencer- \$2,500 to \$2,999	Circle of Friends - up to \$99

In Christ, I remain,

Dawrell Rich

Reverend Dawrell Rich, Pastor
Clair Memorial United methodist church