

CHURCH PROFILE FORM

Church Information:

Name: Connections Church

Location of church [City, State/Province]: Highlands Ranch, CO

Classical Church Counselor: Eric Snyder

Search Committee Contact:

Name: Joseph (Joe) Unrein

Address: 7866 S. Pierce Way, Littleton, CO 80128

Home: _____ Cell: (303) 918-3800 Work: _____

Email address: pastorsearch@myconnections.church

Community Setting:

Location

- Rural
- Small Town
- Metropolitan
- Suburban
- Inner City
- Small City

Function

- Industrial
- College/University
- Agricultural
- Recreational
- Military
- Bedroom Community

Growth

- Growing
- Static
- Declining

Approximate population of community: 102,300

Church Profile:

We are open to:

- Male and Female pastors Female pastors only Male pastors only

List all staff positions: Paid employee positions: Office Administrator, Music Director, Media Director
Outside contractor positions: Director of Operations, Family Relations Director, Janitor
Volunteered staff positions: Family Ministries Director, Risk Management/Leasing Director, Communications Director

Position Available: **now**

Date of vacancy: 08/29/2023

General position description:

The senior pastor's role is to focus on spiritual leadership and pastoral care, with distinct elements shaped by Reformed theology and governance. The role is highly collaborative with elders, deacons, and staff, centered on nurturing a covenantal community, integrating faith into all spheres of life. Preaching, sacraments, and congregational care are key responsibilities as well as leading the church in engaging thoughtfully with cultural and social issues from a biblical perspective. We are seeking someone willing to be a servant leader.

- Full-time Part-time

Bi-vocational position?

- Yes No

Number of years preferred of ministry experience of potential candidate: 5 years preferred

Required languages: English

Church Demographics:

Average Sunday attendance: 40

Active adult professing members: 36

Profile of church members:

Age:

10 % 0-11 5 % 12-18 11 % 19-24 10 % 25-34
11 % 35-49 20 % 50-64 33 % 65+

Occupation:

47 % Business 8 % Professional 4 % Trades 0 % Stay-at-home parent
0 % Agriculture 35 % Retired 6 % Student 0 % Other

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than 5 years 37 %
5-10 years 33 %
10 or more years 30 %

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community:

White, Chinese, Taiwanese, Chilean, Zimbabweans

Composition of congregation:

Mono-Cultural

Multi-Cultural

Specific Ethnicity (specify:

)

List the last three persons in this position:

1. George Saylor - 2018 - 2023
2. Tom Vander Ploeg - 2011 - 2017
3. Pete Van Elderen - 1997 - 2009

Worship:

How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?

The pastor develops the sermon and works with the music director finalizing songs, blending mostly contemporary music with hymns. Worship leaders or the pastor present the call to worship and congregational prayers. An announcements person shares church events and updates. The First Impressions Team (FIT) welcomes attendees before and after the service and the refreshment coordinator prepares coffee and snacks for fellowship. Deacons oversee the offering. The media team prepares and runs the slides. Communication about services is handled through emails, Planning Center, Google Docs, Facebook, and Instagram. +

Describe the worship services in your church:

We have one service that starts at 9:30 a.m. The basic worship schedule is:

- Call to worship followed by 3 songs. Pastor welcomes/blessing followed by a time of greeting one another.
- Announcements followed by Congregational prayer, Lord's prayer, and blessing of the children.
- Song -- Sermon (communion once a month) -- Song - Benediction
- Offering is received through boxes in the back of church. Quarterly special offerings in the service.
- Not deeply liturgical and not expressively confessional.

Describe the discipleship practices in your church for all ages of members and attenders:

- Children's Church for toddlers - elementary age during the worship service
- Middle School gatherings
- High School Bible study
- Various Adult Bible Study groups that meet throughout the month
- Prayer opportunities and communications
- Membership classes

Building/Financial:

Present annual budget: \$237,850

Last year's annual budget: \$321,580

Percentage of financial obligations met (last complete year reported):

Budget	100%
Denominational Ministry Shares	25%
Classical Ministry Shares	25%

Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares: \$28,000

Specify (optional): major building repair needs

Facilities:

Describe facilities: 30,000 sq ft-9.6 acres. In process of selling approx. 4 acres. Lower level remodel completed 10/24 for homeschool enrichment program. +

Are your buildings adequate for your ministries? Yes No

If no, please explain:

Is a building program projected? Yes No

If yes, describe what and when:

Does the church own a parsonage? Yes No

Location of office or study: Church

Compensation:

The salary range we are prepared to offer our new pastor is based on the CRC Minister

Compensation Survey for our area:

If other, please specify:

The average annual increase for this position over the past three years is:

\$

or

0 - 3

%

Housing:

- Housing allowance
- Parsonage only
- Either of the above

Benefits and expenses:

- Pension
- Medical insurance
- Life insurance
- Social Security or Canada Pension
- Travel/mileage
- Continuing Education funds
- Continuing Education time allotted
- Sabbatical policy in place
- * Annual vacation (# weeks)
- Other (please specify) *vacation determined on years of experience

Church Characteristics:

[Check which one(s) are closest to your church's characteristics]

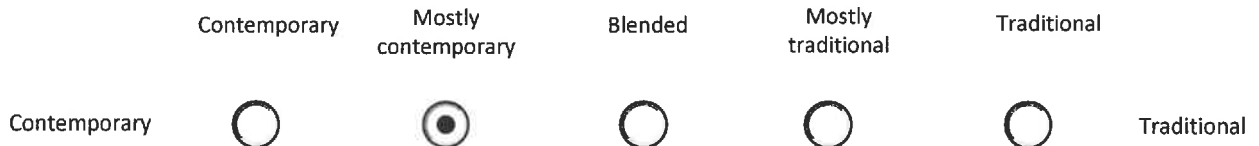
Presently, the FOCUS OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY is



In our church, the WORSHIP SERVICE IS DESIGNED FOR



In our church, the STYLE OF MUSIC used in the worship service is



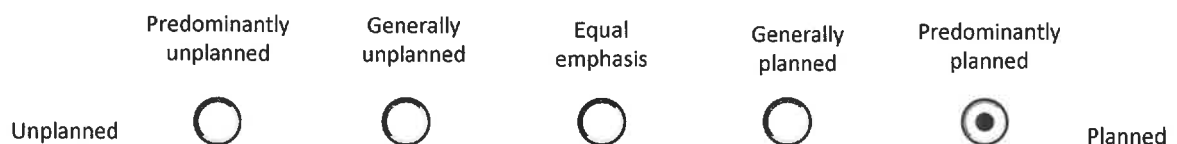
In our church, LEADERSHIP is generally provided by the



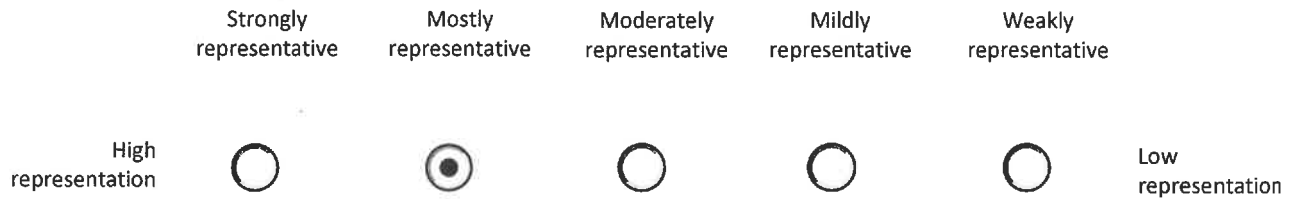
Our church seeks to ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH through



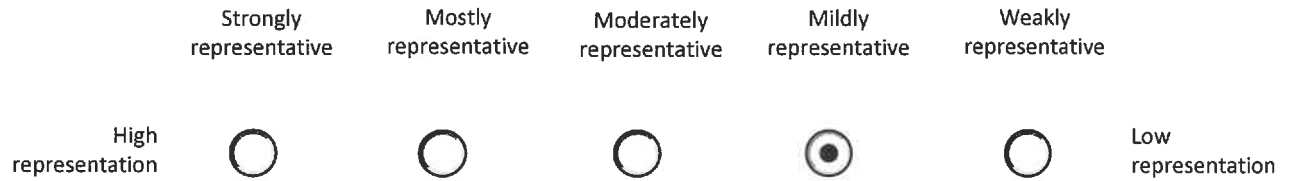
In our church, EVANGELISM STRATEGIES AND METHODS are



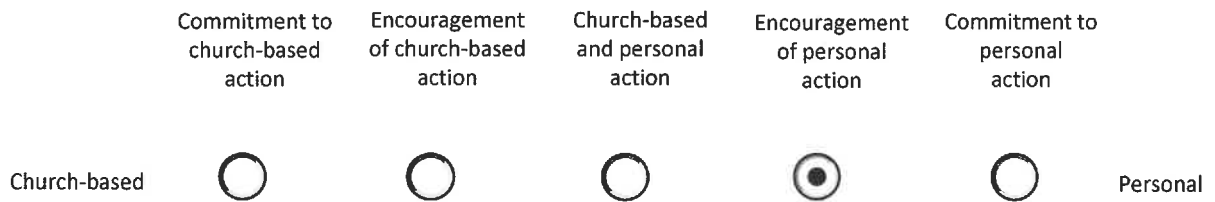
Our church is representative of the ECONOMIC DIVERSITY of our community



Our church is representative of the ETHNIC DIVERSITY of our community



Our church's RESPONSE TO COMPASSION, MERCY, AND JUSTICE NEEDS is



Our church's MISSIONAL FOCUS is



Narrative:

In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

Our church has participated in various ecumenical activities over the years.

-In the past, we were involved with two county sponsored Weather Shelter Networks, though both have closed.

-More recently, we have started engaging with Jesus on Colfax, a CRC Denver ministry that supports underprivileged people in the Colfax area of Aurora.

-We have limited support with Volunteers in Action, a CRC local ministry that works with the underprivileged.

-We maintain an ongoing relationship with the Jicarilla Reformed Church in Dulce, New Mexico, through annual mission trips and financial support. This church ministers to the Apache Nation.

-We hold the credentials for Rev. Joy Engelsman, a community chaplain and CRC ordained pastor. We provide financial support for her involvement with Youth for Christ International.

-We are currently reconnecting with Resonate, specifically with Joel Huyser; the church has supported him in the past.

-While we have two neighboring churches, we have not yet engaged with them directly.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:

-One of our core strengths is the authenticity and warmth we offer to everyone who walks through our doors. We are a welcoming congregation that values fellowship and creates a strong sense of belonging.

-Our openness to diversity enriches our community and we embrace different perspectives and experiences with love and respect.

-We are fortunate to have strong lay leaders who contribute significantly to the spiritual and operational life of the church.

-Based on the size of our building and need for additional financial resources, we have two homeschool enrichment programs (secular, Catholic) renting our facilities. We also allow use of our building for various events – both Christian and from the community.

-Looking to the future, there is the potential for financial stability with the anticipated sale of four acres of land. This opportunity offers both the resources for growth and the flexibility to continue using our existing building for ministry and outreach.

-Together, these strengths provide a solid foundation for our church's ongoing mission and vision.

Reflect on your passions as a church:

-First and foremost, we seek to be continually Reformed in our teachings and preaching, ensuring that everything we do is firmly grounded in the Bible. This commitment to biblical principles shapes our message and mission.

-We are dedicated to building and strengthening our family ministries program, recognizing the importance of nurturing the next generation in faith.

-We also strive to be a welcoming congregation, embracing all who come through our doors with warmth and inclusivity.

-We are committed to offering worship music that is both uplifting and engaging, creating a worship experience that inspires and connects us more deeply with God.

-These passions drive our church's vision and help shape our community.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

In 2023, our congregation was faced with two Article 17 terminations.

-In July, the Family Ministries Pastor, CRC ordained pastor Rev. Ruth Folkerts, resigned.

-On September 1, 2023, the Council released Rev. George Saylor from his position as senior pastor.

-These leadership transitions have compounded existing struggles, such as the need to develop new leaders within the congregation and the ongoing difficulty of retaining members long-term.

Being a church of 36 professing adult members and 14 committed adult attendees is a struggle but overall we have a core group of lay leaders who are heavily invested in continuing to provide the community with a safe place of worship and connection and to growing God's ministry at Connections Church. The interim pastor has mentioned that our lay leadership group is committed and very professional in our approach and we strive to do good work for the church's future but he has a concern of burn-out for the group.

Do you have a recently articulated mission/vision for ministry?

Yes

No

What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

As there has been a lot in motion the last couple of years, it is difficult to narrow that down to one specific event.
-In 2023, we faced the difficult process of two Article 17 separations, which presented both emotional and organizational challenges.

-In the summer of 2024, we began working through the Healthy Church process in collaboration with Grand Rapids. This has been a positive and constructive experience and we are still actively navigating it.

-Another significant event was the completion of a lower-level remodel in October 2024, undertaken to secure a long-term lease with Platte River Academy, a charter school homeschool enrichment program, which has been an important financial step and outreach opportunity for our church's future.

-We are in the process of selling approximately four acres of unused property, a decision that could have a significant impact on our congregation and community moving forward.

List major goals that this congregation has set for itself or opportunities the congregation anticipates:

-The Healthy Church team has identified short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives/next steps, based on input from the congregation.

-We continue to build on our family ministries, though seeking to hire a Director to oversee all aspects of this ministry. We currently have responsibilities divided up between 3 people. Recently, we brought on a woman from India, who is a student at Denver Seminary, to help us with our Children's Church teaching as volunteers are limited.

-There are new opportunities for outreach, particularly through partnership with Platte River Academy and engaging with the potential 55+ community (i.e. land sale build), which present exciting prospects for expanding the church's mission and influence.

+

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

-It means living with a kingdom-focused perspective in every aspect of our lives. Our thoughts, actions, and decisions should reflect our commitment to God's kingdom and His purposes.

-The Bible is the foundation upon which we base all of our teaching and understanding, guiding us in how we live and serve.

-The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are central to our faith, sustaining us in our daily walk. Through Christ alone, we are able to have a direct and personal relationship with God.

-Some in the congregation are not aware of our Reformed beliefs or may not appreciate them.

Describe your understanding of the relationship between the local church and the Christian Reformed denomination:

-The relationship between the local church and the Christian Reformed denomination involves collaboration and shared beliefs, ensuring unity in confessions and doctrine.

-Connections Church works with our Classis on various activities, reflecting a commitment to mutual support and collective efforts within the denomination.

-While Connections Church is part of the denomination, it maintains relative independence in its operations and decision-making.

Identify some of the cultural challenges facing Christians and Christian churches today:

- One major issue is the evolving understanding of human sexuality, which often clashes with traditional Christian teachings, leading to debates within congregations about inclusivity and doctrinal integrity. At Connections Church, we have not directly addressed the issue.
- Additionally, rapid cultural changes are reshaping societal values, prompting churches to navigate complex discussions about identity and morality while remaining relevant to younger generations.
- The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further complicated matters; many congregations are still adjusting to shifts in church attendance and participation, as people's priorities and perspectives have changed dramatically.
- Our being a church near the Rocky Mountains and having local professional sports teams, inconsistency in attendance is a reality.

What have been the three most important events in the history of your church?

- First, the merger with Apex (a neighboring RCA/CRC church plant that Rev. George Saylor pastored) in 2018 was a significant milestone, as it united long-standing members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) with a new generation of congregants who did not grow up within the CRC tradition. This integration fostered a richer community dynamic, blending diverse experiences and perspectives.
- In 2023, the implementation of two Article 17's further strengthened our commitment to mutual accountability and support within the church, laying the groundwork for healthier relationships among members.
- The ongoing Healthy Church process in 2024 is helping us evaluate and enhance our ministry practices, ensuring that our church remains vibrant and responsive to the needs of our congregation and the wider community.

Together, these events reflect our dedication to growth, unity, and the pursuit of a flourishing church life.

Leadership:

How many council members does your church have? 5

What is the length of term for council members? 3 years-up to 9 consecutive

How often does the full council meet? 9-10x a year

What subgroups of council exist, how do they function and how often do they meet?

Elders meet 4x/year
Deacons meet as needed