

Prosper CRC Church Profile Form

Church Information:

Name: Prosper Christian Reformed Church

Location of church: Falmouth, MI

Classical Church Counselor: Pastor Todd Kuperus

Search Committee Contact:

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Community Setting:

Location: Rural

Function: Agricultural

Approximate population of community: Missaukee county population is reported at 15,156

Growth: Static

Church Profile:

We are open to: Male Pastors only

List all staff positions: Administrative Secretary, Administrative Assistant

Position Available: Sole Pastor

Date of Vacancy: 9/1/2022

General position description:

Prosper CRC is looking for a full time lead pastor. The duties of the pastor will be biblical preaching along with pastoral leadership and care. We long to have leadership that has a desire to see growth and maturity of the congregation so they are well equipped to impact this community for Christ.

Number of years preferred of ministry experience of potential candidate: Open to God's leading.

Required languages: English, Spanish is a plus

Church Demographics:

Average Sunday attendance: 180

Active adult professing members: 173

Profile of church members:

Age: 0-11: 13% 12-18: 12% 19-24: 8% 25-34: 11% 35-49: 14%
50-64: 13% 65+: 29%

Occupation: construction, agricultural, retail, health and educational services, manufacturing, public service.

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than 5 years: 21%

5-10 years: 18%

10 or more years: 61%

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community: Caucasian 91%, Hispanic 3%, Other 6% per census

Composition of congregation: Predominantly Mono-cultural

List the last three persons in this position:

Pastor Dale Slings (STM), Pastor Dirk Koetje, Pastor Larry Baar

Worship:

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

The worship planning team collaborates with the Pastor to organize the worship services. Praise teams incorporate both the young and older members, leading singing and playing instruments. Occasionally special musical numbers are offered. A children's message is given most Sundays by a team member that connects their message to the sermon that day.

Describe the worship services in your church:

Prosper follows a traditional order of worship. A typical Sunday morning service includes a call to worship and opening prayer followed by singing. Prosper Church uses its members as praise team leaders. A variety of instruments may be utilized. The musical selections are an intentional mixing of both hymns and contemporary praise songs, the lyrics projected on screens. There are hymnals and Bibles in the pews. The congregation very much enjoys being a singing church. There is congregational prayer and offertory and most often a children's message led by congregation members or the Pastor which typically blends with the sermon of that day. A departing blessing ends the formal portion of the service. The Sunday evening service is much less formal with more of a teaching/dialogue format.

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

Youth discipleship is an important value at Prosper. Sunday school for K-4 and Catechism 5th through High School occurs after the Sunday morning service. Gems and Cadets meet twice a month during the week. The Junior High and High School youth group meets twice a month on Sunday evenings. Those wishing to profess their faith receive one on one mentoring. Women's Bible studies and prayer groups are strong. A men's study is held on Saturday mornings. A men's prayer group meets weekly. There are adult small groups who meet regularly.

Building/Financial:

Present annual budget: 387,123

Last year's annual budget: 453,446

Percentage of financial obligations met (last complete year reported): 100%

Denominational Ministry Shares: 100% of pledged amount (50%)

Classical Ministry Shares: 100%

Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares: 0

Facilities:

Describe facilities:

The facilities meet most of our needs. One current need is a larger space for fellowship. We would also like to see the nursery space moved upstairs. There has been recent remodeling of classroom/meeting space in the church, an enlarged and reconstructed parking lot with covered entrance and remodeling in the parsonage.

Is a building program projected?

A special building committee was formed several years ago and has worked to project solutions to potential upcoming needs. Completed projects in the last 6 years include expanding and redoing a parking lot and the purchase of a different parsonage and increased land space. The prior parsonage was moved off the lot. This then allows for possible church expansion should more growth occur in the future. A plan has been conceptualized to increase fellowship space, move the nursery upstairs and add a new sanctuary for when it is felt needed.

Location of office or study:

There is study space at both the church and in the parsonage.

Compensation:

The salary range we are prepared to offer our new pastor is minimally based on the CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area and also based on experience and family size.

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

Minimally consistent with cost of living adjustments.

Housing: Parsonage

Benefits and expenses:

Medical insurance

Social Security

Travel/mileage

Cell phone allowance

Continuing Education funds

Continuing Education time allotted

Annual vacation, number of weeks based on experience

Sabbatical policy undefined but open for discussion

Church Characteristics:

Currently the focus of our church's ministry is primarily on its members and participants while reaching out to the community and those abroad. The worship service is designed with an emphasis on believers while reaching out with the gospel message to those who have not yet come to believe. The church leadership is generally provided by lay leaders functioning under the pastoral staff. We seek to encourage spiritual growth through ministries attempting to include all groups. In our church evangelism strategies and methods are a mix of planned and unplanned events. We are generally representative of both the economic and ethnic diversity in the area and look to reach out and enfold all regardless of economic status or ethnicity. Our church's response to compassion and mercy needs is equipping and encouraging for both corporate and personal action. Our church's missional focus is both local and global.

Narrative:

In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

We support Josh and Mandy Shaarda who are missionaries in Uganda. We support a church plant in Vista, CA led by Pastor Brad and Kristin Jones. We support Kyle and Melissa Donker who are working with CRU at New Mexico State University. We support Emily DeRuiter (a daughter of Prosper) working with CRU as a videographer. We have had a long history helping the people in the Dominican Republic in various ways, supporting missionaries there, many congregants having gone on serve projects there and currently supporting Paniba, a mission helping to feed the young and the old who have limited resources.

Locally Prosper has a bi-weekly Food Drive enhancing interaction with those in the community. We give financial support to Life Resources which seeks to help those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy in the Cadillac and Big Rapids areas. Friends ministry, Foster closet, Bible League, Gideons and the local Right to Life group are also supported regularly.

With other local churches we have a combined community 4th of July

service/celebration. There are combined high school Youth Group activities.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church.

The people of Prosper are caring and practice generous hospitality within both church and community. That nature of generosity flows also into giving financially. Prosper is blessed with a congregation balanced across the spectrum of age. It is a well rooted and established congregation trying to live out the Reformed faith and teach that faith to others, particularly the youth.

This past year (2024) we were blessed to celebrate the baptism of four young children, the profession of faith of four young adults, the celebration of marriage of three couples and the transfer of membership to Prosper of five adults.

Reflect on your passions as a church:

As a church Prosper is passionate about being faithful to God's Word. We have a desire for encouragement and direction through expository preaching to help us rightly interact with each other and our neighbor and give honor to God.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

We have some difficulty with strong family (generational) influences that are coupled with past family and church grievances. We tend to be separated into "cliques" or groups and have a hard time getting out of our family and friend connections to be able to develop deep spiritual and trusting relationships with others. We struggle with adult discipleship, participation in small group ministry is lower than it could be. Worship attendance has decreased over the past two years related to several factors in part due to our vacancy.

Do you have a recently articulated mission/vision for ministry? A revision of our current mission/vision statement has been recognized as a need by the leadership and plans are being discussed to revise this.

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

Working through the absence of pastoral leadership. Struggling with familial conflict within the church body that led to the loss of members.

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

Rebuilding unity within our congregation is a major goal. We would also like to articulate a new/updated mission and vision for ministry. We have an opportunity to increase adult discipleship.

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

A conviction surrounding the "5 Solas of the Reformation." By faith alone, through grace alone, in Christ alone, by the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone are all foundational doctrines for our faith. The sovereignty of God in all things in heaven and on earth throughout all ages, having complete authority in and through all. We acknowledge and use the catechism and confessions as useful tools for Christian Living.

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

The Christian Reformed Denomination serves as a structure through which our local congregation can be held accountable in areas of church life and polity. The relationship is bilateral and predicated upon both remaining true to the Word of God.

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

The Church finds itself on the unpopular side of many cultural issues (same sex marriage, abortion, political ideologies, etc.). Maintaining a connection to our young people within a shrinking/aging church. Working within a culture that increasingly does not place value on corporate worship. Correctly identifying the parts of Christian culture that reflect the Word, as opposed to those which are reflective only of American culture. We seek to equip members to live in this more secular culture prepared to defend the faith in Christ.

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

We had a 125th anniversary celebration in 2019 with events over the course of several months in which we celebrated God's faithfulness to His people here at Prosper CRC. This celebration also served as community outreach which was well received.

We have struggled and grown together as we processed tragedies, some of which include the loss of our council president and his brother to Covid in 2020 and the loss of our Pastor's wife and teen daughter in a car accident in 1992. Our Church family has had to process and grieve through many tragic and untimely deaths.

In 1988 the building/sanctuary underwent significant remodeling adding on a fellowship space which prior was nonexistent. This provided space for increased interaction among regular and casual attenders and a cultural shift for our church family.

Leadership:

How many council members does your church have?

Six Elders and six Deacons

What is the length of term for council members?

Three years

How often does the full council meet?

Monthly full council meetings.

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

Deacons meet once a month. Elders meet once a month with the Pastor.
Other committees include:

- Worship
- Education
- Fellowship
- Discipleship
- Outreach
- Finance
- Building and Grounds
- Building and Development
- Technical
- Funeral
- Pastoral Search