

CHURCH PROFILE FORM

Church Information:

Name: Connect Church of Pella

Location of church [City, State/Province]: 914 Liberty St, Pella, IA 50219

Classical Church Counselor: Will Verhoef

Search Committee Contact:

Name: Matthew Spoelstra

Address: 1011 West 3rd St, Pella, IA 50219

Home: _____ Cell: (641) 295-4150 Work: _____

Email address: matt.spoel@gmail.com

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: 10,800

Church Profile:

We are open to:

- Male and Female pastors Female pastors only Male pastors only

List all staff positions: Church Secretary
Organist
Custodian

Position Available: **Lead Pastor**

Date of vacancy: 08/01/2022

General position description:

The lead pastor will preach and teach the Word of God weekly, and administer the Sacraments. The sermons will normally follow the church season. He will provide pastoral care to members of the congregation according to needs, including visiting the sick and shut-ins. The pastor will provide pastoral leadership for meetings, activities, and organizations of the congregation as needed. The pastor must enjoy interacting with the young people and children of the church, and interact and take an interest in our community.

- Full-time Part-time

Bi-vocational position?

- Yes No

Number of years preferred of ministry experience of potential candidate: No preference

Required languages: English

Church Demographics:

Average Sunday attendance: 65

Active adult professing members: 55

Profile of church members:

Age:

10 % 0-11 5 % 12-18 0 % 19-24 15 % 25-34
15 % 35-49 10 % 50-64 45 % 65+

Occupation:

3 % Business 5 % Professional 10 % Trades 2 % Stay-at-home parent
30 % Agriculture 35 % Retired 15 % Student % Other

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than 5 years 9 %
5-10 years 3 %
10 or more years 88 %

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community:

Congregation: 99% Caucasian

Community: 94% Caucasian

Composition of congregation:

Mono-Cultural

Multi-Cultural

Specific Ethnicity (specify:

)

List the last three persons in this position:

1. Brad Meinders
2. Jeff Sajdak
3. Harvey Brink

Worship:

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

A worship team currently meets monthly to discuss all aspects of worship. During the church's vacancy, the members of the worship team take turns each week meeting with the interim pastor to plan each worship service. In the past, the church's minister has planned the worship service largely by himself. Church members have assisted by leading morning prayers, reading Scripture, leading liturgies, and playing instruments for congregational singing as well as other music in the services (preludes, postludes, etc.).

Describe the worship services in your church:

Church services generally begin with a Call to Worship, Call to Confession, and Assurance of Pardon. A mix of traditional and contemporary songs are mixed in, led by the organ or a praise team. An offering is received, a morning prayer is given, and a sermon is given by the minister. The service is then usually concluded with an appropriate song, blessing, and a doxology. There is, of course, flexibility in the service.

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

Our church operates a Cadets, GEMS, and YACs (High School Youth Groups) program where youth from our church as well as those outside of our church come together biweekly to do a Bible study and fellowship. Around 50% of our youth in those programs are from outside our congregation. We also have Church Education for Pre-K-5th Grade and Catechism Class for 6th grade-Adults. We do occasional Children's Worship during the service as well.

Building/Financial:

Present annual budget: \$218,205

Last year's annual budget: \$258,297

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

Budget	100%
Denominational Ministry Shares	\$15,869
Classical Ministry Shares	\$5,000 (100%)

Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares: \$37,664.05

Specify (optional):

Facilities:

Describe facilities: 80 year old church with a 400 seat capacity, pipe organ, and 12 classrooms available

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: One in church and one in parsonage

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

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
- 4 Annual vacation (# weeks)
- Other (please specify) Cell Phone

Church Characteristics:

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

Presently, the FOCUS OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY is

	Community exclusively	Community primarily	Community & current members/ participants equally	Current members/ participants primarily	Current members/ participants exclusively	
External	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Internal

In our church, the WORSHIP SERVICE IS DESIGNED FOR

	Designed for unchurched	Emphasis on unchurched	Unchurched and believers	Emphasis on believers	Designed for believers	
Unchurched	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Churched

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

	Contemporary	Mostly contemporary	Blended	Mostly traditional	Traditional	
Contemporary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Traditional

In our church, LEADERSHIP is generally provided by the

	Predominantly lay leaders	Frequently lay leaders	Lay leaders & pastoral staff share leadership	Lay leaders function under pastoral staff	Predominantly pastoral staff	
Congregational members	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pastoral staff

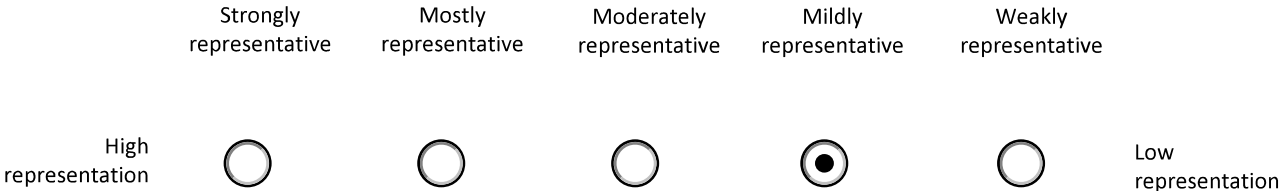
Our church seeks to ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH through

	No specific ministries	Ministries for a few groups	Ministries for selected groups	Ministries for most groups	Ministries for all groups	
Informal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Formal

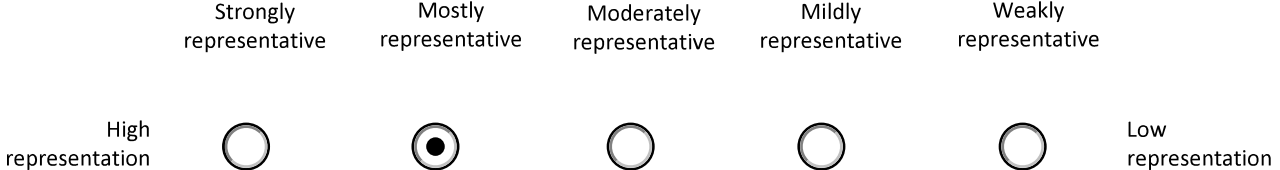
In our church, EVANGELISM STRATEGIES AND METHODS are

	Predominantly unplanned	Generally unplanned	Equal emphasis	Generally planned	Predominantly planned	
Unplanned	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Planned

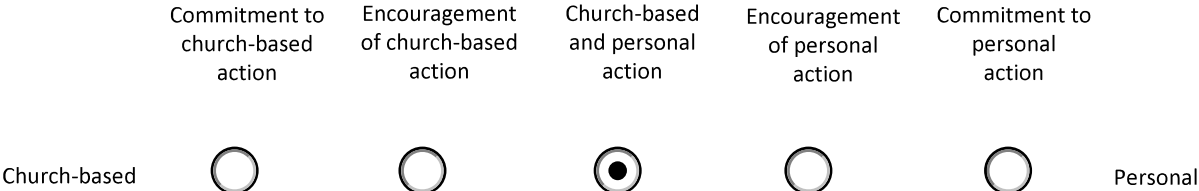
Our church is representative of the ECONOMIC DIVERSITY of our community



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?

We have combined worship services for Holy Week with other area Christian Reformed churches and send volunteers to another area church for a community wide Vacation Bible School in the summer.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:

We are a caring, close knit congregation who pray for, care for, and support one another. We have very dedicated and involved leadership for our youth programs. We have a heart of service towards our community that is demonstrated through our monthly family suppers that are provided for congregation members as well as families of Pella, our Quilting Group that sends over 200 quilts to individuals in need, and our Care and Share group that visits members who are ill.

Reflect on your passions as a church:

We have devoted quilters who make over 200 quilts annually and share them with those who have a special event in their lives. We have a Care and Share group who visit and bring a meal or gift card to those who have had surgeries or illness. We have devoted and passionate leaders for the youth groups of our church, and a group who make a meal for members and area families to share.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

We have an older congregation with few young families; this makes attracting more young families difficult. Having a smaller congregation leaves a lot of church work to be done by not a lot of people, and getting people to step up for leadership positions is difficult. We have a large facility that is difficult for our current size of congregation to maintain. We also don't have eager consistent monetary givers to the church. Approximately 25% of our church members give regularly to the budget which often makes the budget tight.

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?

Over the last three years, our church has been through an intense process of discernment and renewal. In 2022, our lead pastor decided to take a new position outside of pastoral ministry, and 6 months later, our worship pastor also took a new position outside of traditional ministry. This led to our church doing an in depth discernment process. We hired a discernment pastor to lead us through the process. The process was a several week-long process that led the congregation through a series of questions to focus on the past, the present, and the future. Ultimately, the congregation had to vote on whether to close the doors to Connect Church or commit to renewal. It was voted by 64% of the congregation that we would put together a Renewal Task Force Committee and our church would pursue renewal. The job of the Renewal Task Force Committee is to put together measurable goals for renewal of the church that can be assessed to determine its level of success. This process has been interesting and challenging because it has forced us to look inward and see how our church has changed for the better and worse and assess where we truly are today.

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

In December of 2023, our Congregation voted to pursue renewal. What exactly this renewal is going to look like is still being explored by the team we put together for that purpose. What we expect at this point, is to soon be pursuing that renewal both within the church and within the community around us.


We have set for ourselves 3 core values that will serve as our focus. First, we value the Holy Scripture as the infallible, inspired Word of God for instruction in living and direction into a personal, life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord. Second, we value being a praying church, trusting God to supply all our needs. Third, we value being a warm and inviting church community built on mutual trust and integrity that reaches out to the community and the world with the Love of Christ. In summary, our major goals that we have set for now, are to explore how we can better live these new core values out in our church life and how we interact with the Pella community. 

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

Being Christians of Reformed accent begins with the word Reformed. We are a product of the Reformation and as such, we believe in the Priesthood of all believers. In this, we believe that every believer is able to commune directly with God and that God is equally accessible to all those of faith. We are also evangelical, meaning we believe in the importance of sharing the Gospel with others and emphasize creating new disciples. This particularly is a part of our Vision for our church, with our vision statement being: Disciples made, matured, and multiplied. Along with this, not only are we called to make disciples, but we are also called to be a part of God's redeeming work in all of creation and in all aspects of our lives.

We are also confessional, holding to the confessions of the Christian Reformed church: the Three Forms of Unity, as well as the Apostle's, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds and Our World Belongs to God believing them to be accurate reflections of the teachings of the Bible.

We believe in a Doctrine of Grace often summarized with the TULIP acronym, that we are Totally Depraved and lost in sin, Unconditionally Elected by God, that Christ's Atonement was Limited to the elect, that God's Grace is Irresistible, and that the Saints will Persevere in their faith.

Finally, in summary, we believe that we are saved by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone revealed by Scripture alone to the Glory of God alone. 

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

For the most part, our understanding of the relationship between the local church and the CRC denomination is laid out plainly in the Church Order and its Supplements and includes things such as funding for large scale mission work, support and guidance for and toward individual churches, inter-ecclesiastical relations, etc.

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

There are many issues facing Christians and the Christian church today. One issue that our church and the town of Pella is seeing very clearly is the decreasing participation in Sabbath practices. There has been a steady decline in church attendance in general, but since online church became such a necessity during COVID, many have not seen a complete return in attendance since. While the divorce rate in the United States has generally decreased since the mid 80s, another rising issue the Christian church is facing today is the sanctity of marriage. One reason divorce rates are decreasing is because couples are choosing cohabitation before marriage or instead of marriage. Another cultural challenge Christians are facing is how to handle sexual orientation and gender fluidity that does not line up with Biblical teachings. This ultimately leads to the challenge of progressivism in the church and the move away from Scripture based preaching and the sanctity of the Bible. Many progressive churches today are open to the reinterpretation and redefinition of the Bible and Christian doctrine. One other cultural challenge facing the Christian Church is the rise of Christian Nationalism and the abuse and misuse of the Bible and the pulpit for personal and political gains.

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

When building our current church building, we received the materials 2 weeks before Pearl Harbor and had it been delayed we would not have been able to build the church because all steel materials were utilized for war industry after that.

In 1998, our church went through a schism where over half the members left the CRC to join, eventually, the URC. This was not a clean split and became quite a mess that affects the church community to this day.

In 2017, our church joined conversations with two other Pella CRC churches to consider a merge of congregations. This was a year-long process that ended with all three churches voting down the merge.

In December 2023, we as a church voted between closing and continuing with renewal. We chose to pursue renewal and are exploring what that means.

Leadership:

How many council members does your church have? 3 elders and 5 deacons

What is the length of term for council members? 3 years

How often does the full council meet? once a month

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

Subgroups of the council include seven (7) teams: Worship, Discipleship, Missions, Hospitality, Shepherding, Finance, and Facilities. The teams meet monthly to discuss matters and report to the Council.