

Lacombe, Alberta

Woody Nook

Christian Reformed Church

Rooted in Christ, Living in Grace



Overview

Membership: 800

Average Sunday Morning Attendance:

Pre-Covid: 400

During Covid: 75 people in-person,

200+ views of live-streamed services

Average Sunday Evening Attendance:

Pre-Covid - 50

During Covid - no services

Congregation Demographics:

Woody Nook is a flourishing intergenerational congregation. We cherish our young children, our seniors, and everyone in between. We have many young families with more than 100 children in Sunday School from age 3 to grade 3! Our GEMS and Cadets programs are well attended, with approximately 40 girls and boys from grade 5-9 in each program. A majority of our members have belonged to Woody Nook for 10 years or more. Many have been here for their whole life. We also value the varied perspectives and experiences of the many new members who join our congregation. Many, but certainly not all, people in Woody Nook own small businesses and/or earn their living in agriculture or trades.

History

In 1927, a group of immigrants who had just arrived in the Lacombe area began to meet together for worship. Many had moved to Canada from Europe looking for new opportunities, particularly in farming. In 1935, the group officially became the First Christian Reformed Church of Lacombe. The next year, they completed construction of their first church building on the current Woody Nook CRC site. As the congregation grew, members formed a Christian School in 1945 and began sister churches in Lacombe, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House and Rimbey. The church's name was changed to Woody Nook Christian Reformed Church in the late 1980's.

Over the years, Woody Nook CRC has grown and diversified as a church congregation. We've welcomed newcomers from across Canada and around the world. Woody Nook participates faithfully in local projects as well as in global initiatives in places such as Sierra Leone, Honduras, Bolivia, Mexico, Nigeria and Nicaragua. We have truly been blessed as a gathered and scattered body of Christ.

Woody Nook CRC has had 19 pastors (including interim) since it began. Pastor Dayna Vreeken joined the ministry team in 2011. Prior to 2011, she studied at Regent College in Vancouver and spent several years working at First CRC in Vancouver. Pastor Chad Vandervalk began serving as Pastor of Community Development in December 2019. Prior to coming to Woody Nook, he served at Fleetwood CRC and Charlottetown CRC.

Woody Nook has experienced significant changes over the years. Female deacons began serving in 1997 and female elders in 2002. Several years ago, we replaced voting for office bearers with an affirmation process. In 2012, we underwent a building expansion, which includes a new nursery, education wing and fellowship hall.

In 2018 Woody Nook engaged in a visioning process and produced the document, **Rooted in Christ, Living in Grace**, which provides guidance at the present time.





Worship

Worship services at Woody Nook feel like a family gathering. There are many generations present, and most people value being together more than having the worship style exactly as they want it. There is a refreshing air of give and take. Sermon texts and themes are chosen by the pastors, with the remainder of the service put together by one of the worship leaders, in consultation with the pastor. The Worship Committee reviews services, gives suggestions and assists in the planning of seasonal themes and special services. Our services have a mix of contemporary and traditional songs, tied together with meaningful readings, scripture and prayer, following the traditional order of worship.

The praise teams lead much of the service, including the call to worship, prayers of confession and words of assurance. We have four praise teams, made up of different combinations of piano, guitars, drums and vocalists. All hymns, song texts and readings are projected on a screen, with hymnal numbers for those people who like to read notes. We like to sing and we sing well! Our morning worship services start at 10:00 a.m, and last about 75 minutes. Evening services, which begin at 7:00 p.m., are typically smaller, more intimate gatherings that include more questions and conversation.

Discipleship Practices

We have a large Sunday School program for ages 3 through Grade 3. Gems and Cadets welcomes students in grades 5-9 from Woody Nook and from the community. CATCH (Chasing After The Christian Heart) is eagerly attended by students in grade 7-12. Other youth events are planned by the Youth Elders and parent reps. Alpha is run by a few members of the congregation and has been well attended. A number of Alpha attendees continue to be part of the congregation. All adult members are encouraged to be part of a small group. Adult Education evenings are planned a few times a year. In recent years topics have included mental health, homosexuality and faith formation for families.

Many Woody Nook members are active in their neighbourhoods and communities, by serving on community and industry boards, and volunteering for community services. While we are united in our desire to serve the community, we are diverse in the serving that we engage in.



Location

Woody Nook CRC is located in the middle of Central Alberta, a vibrant, growing region of multiple towns, small cities and surrounding rural communities. About 150,000 people live within 50km of Woody Nook. The larger centers of Edmonton and Calgary, both with populations over 1 million, are about 90 minutes from Woody Nook. The towns of Banff and Canmore in the beautiful Rocky Mountains are about 3 hours away.

Some Woody Nook members drive 45 minutes to come to the church, while others live next door. About one quarter of the congregation lives in Lacombe, with the remaining members living in or around Bentley, Gull Lake, Red Deer and Ponoka.

Central Alberta is home to a number of Christian Reformed Churches that have good relationships with each other. Lacombe is also home to a number of other denominations. The Lacombe ministerial meets monthly for prayer and encouragement.

Maskwecis is a First Nations Reserve about 45 minutes north of Woody Nook, with a population of about 8,000. Over the last number of years, Woody Nook has intentionally built a relationship with the Louis Bull Church located in Maskwecis.



Financial Information

The budget for 2021 has been approved at \$682,029. Last year's budget was \$697,223. For many years, all of Woody Nook's financial obligations have been met in full, including 100% of our ministry shares (which consists of Denominational, Classical and Area College Ministry Shares).

Leadership

Woody Nook CRC has a council of 28 members, made up of 15 Elders, 6 Youth Elders and 7 Deacons. The Administration Board is a group of 4 elders, 1 deacon, 1 youth elder and a pastor rep. Admin Board meets monthly to take care of the ongoing administrative work so the elders can focus on the pastoral care of the congregation. Elders, Youth Elders and Deacons meet monthly. Full Council meets four times per year. Council members serve for three years. In addition to Council, Woody Nook CRC has many volunteer groups such as Stephen Ministry, Caring Touch and Morning Break. Committees such as Worship, Finance and Sunday School help with the administration of ministries.

Current Challenges

Woody Nook, like most other churches, has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Since the pandemic started, we have followed public health measures and worked to find creative ways to keep our congregation connected. We upgraded our internet capabilities to be able to live-stream our services. A limited number of people are allowed to gather in the sanctuary each week, but most people watch the services from home. GEMS, Cadets, CATCH, Morning Break, and some small groups have met over Zoom or in-person when restrictions have allowed. Dealing with pandemic restrictions and implications, as well as planning for future re-opening will be a continued focus.