

CHURCH PROFILE FORM

Church Information:

Name: Valley Christian Reformed Church

Location of Church: 1452 River Road, Binghamton, NY 13901

Classical Church Counselor: Sam Sutter, Goshen Christian Reformed Church,
Goshen, NY

Search Committee Contact:

Timothy C. Brown

1229 Dorothy Street, Binghamton, New York 13901

Home: 607-217-5323

Email address: timothy.brown48@yahoo.com

Community Setting

Location

Rural

Suburban

Function

Industrial

College/University

Agricultural

Growth

Declining

Approximate population of community:

2019 – 15,391

2024 – 14,555 (-836) -1.1% Pas

Church Profile:

We are Open to: Male and Female Pastors

List all staff positions:

- Pastor (Full Time)
- Custodian (Part Time)

Position available: Pastor

Date of vacancy: April 11, 2019

✓ Full Time

✓ Bi-vocational position

General position description

- Dedicated Christ-follower having a deep love for Christ and the Church
- Church planting/renewal experience
- Mission-focused (reaching the unchurched, has a heart for those far from God; evangelistic)
- Biblical, effective preacher
- An adaptive leader having a passion for discipleship
- Equipper (in the spirit of Ephesians 4:11-12)

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

Required languages: English

Church Demographics:

Average Sunday attendance: 45

Active adult professing members 59

Profile of church members:

Age:

03%	00-11	07%	12-18	15%	19-24	03%	25-34
12%	35-49	32%	50-64	27%	65+		

Occupation:

05%	Business	23%	Professional	20%	Trades	01%	Stay-at-home parent
03%	Agriculture	27%	Retired	20%	Student	00%	Other

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than 5 years	13%
5-10 years	09%
10 or more years	78%

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community:

Asian (Non-Hispanic)	2019 – 112	2024 – 126
Black/Afr Amer (Non-Hispanic)	2019 - 100	2024 – 97
White (NH)	2019 – 14,755	2024 – 13,922
Hispanic/Latino	2019 – 153	2024 – 137
P Is/Am In/Oth (NH)	2019 – 270	2024 – 272

Composition of congregation:

- Mono-Cultural
- ✓ Multi-Cultural
- Specific Ethnicity

List the last three persons in this position:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 1. Kurt Monroe | 2013 – 2019 |
| 2. Alvern Gelder | 1994 – 2011 |
| 3. Lugene Schemper | 1984 – 1993 |

Worship:

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

Members participate through leading music (praise team), reading scripture, leading the congregational and offering prayers, sharing prayer concerns, creating liturgical banners, and leading the worship service when a pastor is not present.

Describe the worship services in your church:

Valley Church has one weekly worship service on Sunday morning that has a simple liturgy led by the pastor, but includes parts led by other members. Congregational responses and congregational songs are coordinated between the Pastor and Praise Team and projected onto a screen. The congregational prayer is preceded by sharing of joys and concerns from the congregation. The Lord's Supper is celebrated monthly.

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

We've been lacking in consistent discipleship practices for some time. We've just defined a vision statement (Together: Gather – Grow – Serve – Send) that is intended to define a discipleship process that all members and attenders would be involved in. In the past, we have had a Sunday School program for children, teens and adults, as well as small groups. A women's Bible study, formed 50+ years ago, meets weekly.

Building/Financial:

Present annual budget: \$132,486.00

Last year's annual budget: \$139,546.00

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

Budget	86%
Denominational Ministry Shares	100%
Classical Ministry Shares	100%

Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares: \$3,000.

Specify (optional): Resonate/World Renew

Facilities:

Describe facilities:

Contemporary A-frame church building set into hillside on approximately three acres of land. Sanctuary features mostly fixed pews with some flexible seating. Additional rooms on first floor include, office area, fellowship area, narthex and three restrooms. Stairs and lift are ADA compliant and available to access second floor, which features pastor's study, nursery, large fellowship hall with partitions to create classrooms space, kitchen, youth room and two restrooms. New LED lighting being install throughout the facility.

Are your buildings adequate for your ministries? Yes

Is a building program projected: No.

Does the church own a parsonage? No.

Location of office or study: Church 2nd floor office.

Compensation:

The salary range we are prepared to offer our new pastor is based on the CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area: Yes.

The average annual increase for this position over the past three years is: 6.5%

Housing:

Housing allowance

Benefits and expenses:

- ✓ Pension
- ✓ Medical Insurance
 - Life Insurance
 - Social Security or Canada Pension
- ✓ Travel/Mileage
- ✓ Continuing Education time allotted
 - Sabbatical policy in place
- ✓ Annual vacation – 2 weeks
- ✓ Other: Misc. expenses reimbursed (e.g. leadership development)

Church Characteristics:

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

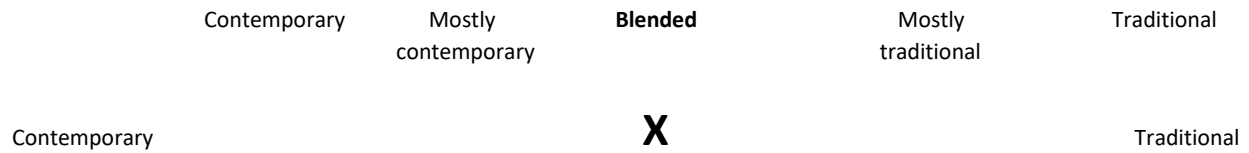
Presently, the FOCUS OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY IS

Community Exclusively	Community primarily	Community & current members/ participants Equally	Current members/ participants primarily	Current members/ participants exclusively
External		X		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		X		Churched

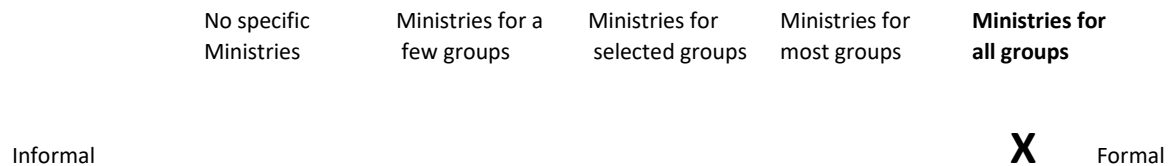
In our church, the **STYLE OF MUSIC** used in the worship service is



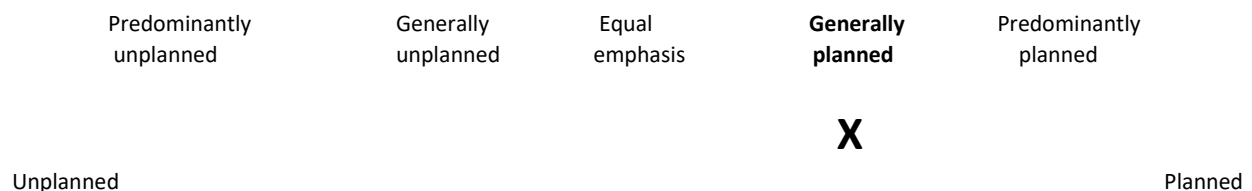
In our church, the **LEADERSHIP** is generally provided by



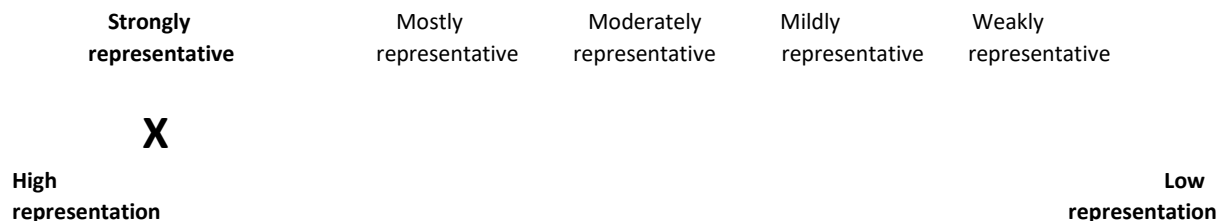
Our church seeks to *ENCOURAGE* SPIRITUAL GROWTH through



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



Narrative:

In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

The food pantry hosted by our church is part of a network of pantries coordinated by the Broome County Council of Churches. Former pastors have met with a local group of pastors.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:

There is a core group of members who are committed to being at worship on Sunday morning. We have a strong worship team. We have a small prayer team that is committed to gathering weekly and praying for our church and the community we live in. We have a number of people with servant hearts, wanting to help where they can. Our fellowship team provides regular time to talk and connect over refreshments each Sunday.

We have a woman's morning Bible study and a men's breakfast fellowship that have been meeting regularly for decades.

Ministry toe-holds in the community: Scouts, food pantry, public schools nearby.

Strong intergenerational caring relationships

Passion for kids

Facilities are owned and well-maintained

Reflect on your passions as a church:

We are passionate about being committed followers of Christ. We are passionate about loving one another in our church. However, we have come to the realization that we have lost our effectiveness for reaching the community around us. Therefore, we have embarked on a path of renewal. We are growing in our passion to become a missional church. We have leadership committed to renewal and are working to spread the vision. The vision is gradually taking hold.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

We often have good ideas for new initiatives but we struggle with effective execution and follow-through. For example, we struggle to get a solid discipleship/small group system in place. While many will acknowledge it's a need, it has yet to happen. Effective communication is a struggle. We know we need connections through social media and an updated website, yet have not addressed it effectively. We are experiencing a decline in church membership.

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

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

We recognized that we are a church in decline. We realized that doing the “same old thing” was not working. In June of 2019, we used the Congregational Assessment Questionnaire from the denominational renewal team. The results indicated “Good hope for the future but, fresh renewal investments must be made.” We made a decision to embark on a journey of renewal that has led to subsequent learnings and the work needed to begin that journey.

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

- Communicate Valley’s Vision Statement to each person of our church.
- Call and install a new pastor with a heart for Mission.
- Develop our relationship with surrounding school districts
- Recruit God’s preferred Valley Church Director of Kid’s Hope USA

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

Since there are so many ways to answer this, a few members of the Renewal Team have contributed their personal response.

- 1) We believe God created a perfect world where God and people had open communication with each other. Sin created a chasm in that relationship. Brokenness and death were a consequence of that sin. Christ came as the Savior of the world, breaking the power of sin and death, beginning the work of renewing His people and His world through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are part of His renewal plan, bringing hope and light to others.
- 2) Our framework for understanding God’s working in history can be understood by creation, fall, redemption and restoration.
- 3) We cling to God’s love and grace, which moves us to acts of service to others.

- 4) There are two succinct phrases from the past two centuries that wonderfully describe what it means to be Reformed: a) "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" – Abraham Kuyper b) "Our World Belongs to God." – Both the phrase and the CRC contemporary testimony.
- 5) Sovereignty. It is all about God.
- 6) Covenant. God makes promises and keeps them. God's grace is a gift we cannot earn: God acting first.
- 7) Kingdom. God calls each of us to participate in the spread of his kingdom.

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

The denomination is a place where we find our theological identity. It give us the opportunity to participate confidently in ministries beyond our individual capability, such as World Renew, Resonate Global Mission, and others. The denomination equips us to be more effective in our local ministries.

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

- 1) Biblical literacy is minimal within society
- 2) There is no longer a cultural expectation that families attend church worship services on Sunday morning.
- 3) Busy lives where we prioritize most, if not everything above giving attention to God. By doing this, we lack the ability to filter Christian truth from worldly opinions. We are not grounded in scripture and prayer.

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

- 1) Church started in 1960's as a church plant.
- 2) Vacation Bible School with hundreds of kids in attendance in the early years of the church. In the 1990's Vacation Bible School became Kids Night Out. A monthly kids ministry rather than 1-2 weeks in summer.
- 3) Drive to '85 (raise funds to pay-off debt from a significant addition to the church building a few years earlier).
- 4) Encouraging women to serve in the offices of deacon and elder.
- 5) 50 year celebration
- 6) Decision to embark on a journey of renewal and subsequent learnings and work to begin that journey.

Leadership:

How many council members does your church have? 9 (4 Elders, 4 Deacons
1 Pastor)

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

How often does the full council meet? Monthly

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

Elders meet monthly approximately one hour prior to the monthly full Council meeting.

Deacons meet independently monthly and again with the full Council meeting.

Teams meet when needed and report to the full council – Music and Worship, Fellowship, Education, Facilities. Teams include regular members /attenders of the church as well as Council representatives.

Additional questions suggested by the Center for Church Renewal:

1. An honest conversation about the congregation's desire to pursue a renewed passion for mission.

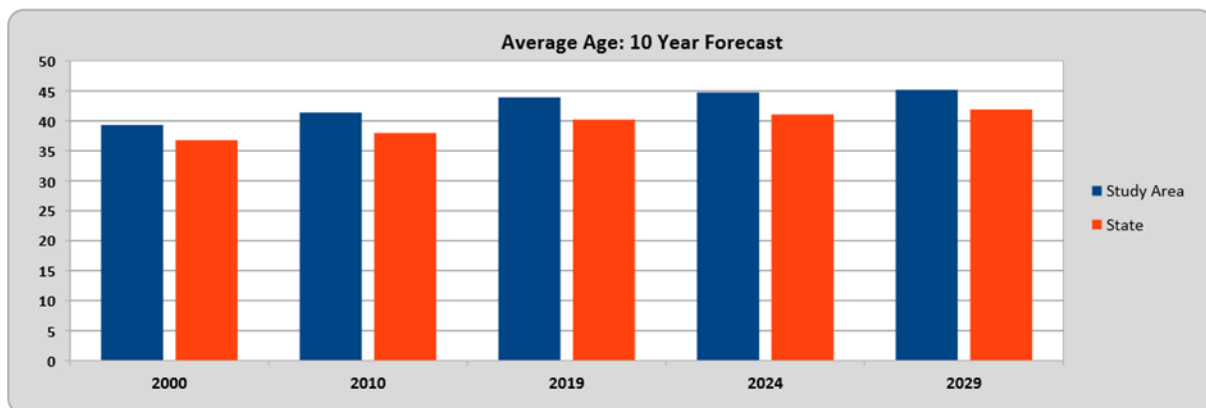
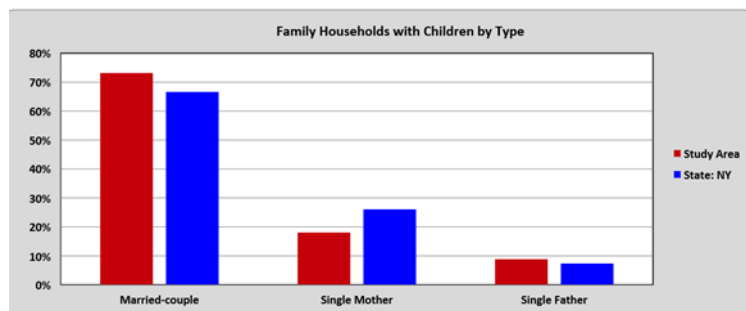
Valley Church, lead by Council, has begun a journey of renewal. Recognizing this is a lifetime journey, we have invested the past 6 months prayerfully working to describe ourselves in a church profile and listing the desired characteristics of its next pastor. Council understands the Renewal process requires rethinking our mission/vision so we become a more missional congregation that fulfils God's command to make more and better disciples for Jesus. It requires creating new plans for outreach and discipleship. It requires significant change to the way we've always done things. It often requires empowering new leadership. Council is willing to take risks attendant to change and believes that Christ can use Valley Church to make a redemptive difference in our community and beyond.

The Pastor Search Committee, and then the Renewal Team, have been reading books and blogs, attending webinars, listening to podcasts, and engaging with consultants to learn about church renewal. A small group has been studying Thom Rainer's book Anatomy of a Revived Church. So we're beginning to learn what we need to do. We have a new vision statement which focuses on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. A small group of members have committed themselves to prayer.

Garden analogy: The seeds of Renewal are being planted. They are being sprinkled with prayer. They will need careful attention and cultivation to grow.

2. A description of the community in which you live with its challenges and opportunities

We live in a predominantly white, middle class community of family homes. Demographic studies show that the majority of our community is married with children.



While the student population has fallen and continues to fall, we still have hundreds of children in our community.

This last statistic provides us with a huge opportunity. Our church is located directly across from the public school.

Challenges are commensurate with those of typically busy households, working and raising children.

The immediate neighborhood seems positive about their circumstances. We have young families and people who have resided here for several generations.

In contrast, Upstate New York, including Broome County, has been stagnated for decades. The loss of some major employers (and the resulting population decline) in the past decades has demoralized many.

In the Binghamton area, there is growth in health care and higher education (Binghamton University, SUNY Broome Community College).

Opportunities: Connection to schools; new families in the neighborhood; better follow-up with existing programs; Ministries that can be invested in like finances, boy scouts, community garden...grow and develop them; Minister to high needs in the community (i.e. poverty and housing).

3. A list of ways in which the congregation is already engaged in the community.

Events: Live Nativity, Fall Festival, Kids Night Out. Ongoing: Food pantry; Community garden; the church building is used by a scout troop and the school across the street. Recent ministries that haven't been able to be maintained: Faith & Finances. Ministry in the works: Community Playgroup. Various members serve on town boards, non-profits, such as the local clothing bank, and community associations.

4. A description of the last 3-5 persons who have made their way into the life of the church through evangelism.

One of the primary reasons that Valley needs renewal is that we have mostly relied on transfers (local and CRC from other areas) and births to grow our congregation

in the past. None of those are happening anymore. There have not been any persons who have recently become part of the church through evangelism.

5. A description of the people who make up the congregation with a summary of their gift mix.

In an average worship service, it looks like the bulk of our church are families where the heads of the household are adults between 40 and 60 with younger family members, mostly teens and young adults. Retirees are another significant group at Valley. Many are willing to serve the church where needed.

Teachers: Many of our members are teachers in the local public schools and universities.

Farmers: Most of the farmers in our congregation are now retired, but we have two active farmers.

Haitian immigrant families who attend regularly on Sunday mornings.

There is a good balance between families who are life-long CRC members (some who came from other parts of the country) and those where Valley was their first encounter with the CRC.

There is a mixture of families who live nearby the church as well as others who commute up to a half-hour away.

Gifts: No current assessment of individual gifts.

6. A description of the type of leader the congregation needs to move into a God preferred future.

- Mission-focused: reaching the unchurched, has a heart for those far from God, evangelistic
- Biblical, effective preaching, Church planting/renewal experience

- Adaptive leader: listening to new info, analyzing and open to change – humble
- Passion for discipleship
- Equipper (Ephesians 4:11-12)