Lacombe, Alberta  Woody Nook  
Christian Reformed Church  
Rooted in Christ, Living in Grace

Overview

Average Sunday Attendance:  
400  Membership: 880  

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. Early on, they assembled for Sunday worship services in various homes and schools in the Lacombe area. In 1935, the group officially became a CRC congregation known as 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 also began sister churches in Lacombe, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, and later, 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 many places, including British Columbia, Ontario, the Netherlands,
Pakistan, South Africa, Burma and Iran. Woody Nook has worked hard to participate 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 18 pastors (including interim) since it began. Pastor Dayna Vreeken was hired in 2011 and is currently serving as the Pastor of Preaching and Worship. Prior to coming to our church, she studied at Regent College in Vancouver and spent several years working at First CRC in Vancouver. Pastor Chad Vandervalk joined the Woody Nook ministry team in December 2019 as Pastor of Community Development. Prior to coming to Woody Nook, he served at Fleetwood CRC and Charlottetown CRC.

There have been some significant changes at Woody Nook in recent years. Female deacons began serving in 1997 and in 2002 the first female elder was installed. Several years ago, we replaced voting for office bearers with an affirmation process. And, in 2012, we underwent a building expansion, which includes a new nursery, education wing and fellowship hall.

Within the last two years, the congregation and Council has reflected on its ongoing mission and produced the document, Rooted in Christ, Living in Grace, which provides guidance for the congregation at the present time.

**Worship**

Worship services at Woody Nook are 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 that like to read notes. We like to sing and we sing well! Our morning worship services start at 10:00 a.m. Evening services, which begin at 7:00 p.m., are typically smaller, more intimate gatherings that often include a question-and-answer time following the message.
Financial Information

The budget for 2018 has been approved at $703,130. Last year’s budget was $699,676. 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.

Discipleship Practices

We have a large Sunday School program for ages 3 through Grade 3. Gems and Cadets welcomes students from grades 5-9. CATCH (Chasing After The Christian Heart) is planned by Pastor Dayna, facilitated by adult volunteers and 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. It has been a blessing to those who are exploring questions of faith and what it means to belong to a church. 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.