

# Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church Profile



## Introduction



**Have the opportunity to experience Alberta's clear blue skies and Northern Lights all within driving distance of the majestic Rocky Mountains. Neerlandia CRC is a 650+ member, family-oriented church in a rural setting in the heart of Alberta. We are an active multi-generational congregation with a strong foundation of over 100 years of ministry.**

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## Where We Have Come From:

### A Brief History of the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church

In the early 1900s a group of Dutch immigrants living in Edmonton began looking for a place to start a farming settlement north of Edmonton. They were looking for a place with good soil and few if any other settlers, in which to establish a distinctively Dutch and Reformed community.

The organizational meeting for the Neerlandia CRC was held on June 2nd, 1915 in the recently completed log church building. The congregation started with 35 professing and 46 baptized members. Dutch was spoken almost exclusively in church services for the next 30 years.

In 1929 Harm Van Der Woude became the first full time pastor and he held the position for 12.5 years.

An influx of Dutch immigrants from the Netherlands after WW II affected congregational life as some of them had been involved in the 'Vrijgemaakte Kerk.' In August 1950, a number of families separated from the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church to form the Neerlandia Canadian Reformed Church.

In 1973, Sunday school classes for children aged 4 through grade 2 began, held during the morning worship service. In 1974 Neil Vriend came to minister among us and remained as pastor until 1991.

The Synodical debates of the early 1990s had a significant impact for the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church; as it did for many Christian Reformed churches in North America. In July 1992, 25-30% of the congregation left and formed the Emmanuel Reformed Church of Neerlandia. Shortly thereafter James Mantel accepted the call to become our pastor and he ministered here from 1993 - 2000.

The years following the split saw changes in the style of worship including increased participation from choirs and music groups and the integration of a variety of musical instruments. The congregation became more involved in prayers and readings; and the Worship Committee and pastor implemented the use of more creative and varied liturgies.

The Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church underwent a ministry evaluation process completed in the summer of 1998 and set goals for the next five years.

From February 2000 to September 2012, Pastor Randy Blacketer served the congregation. One major change implemented during this time was the switch from a 10:00a.m. service and a 2:30p.m. service to the present format. Cross Training (teaching service) with discussion is held at 10:00a.m., at which time children attend Sunday School. This is followed by a half an hour of coffee and fellowship. The Worship Service for the entire church is held at 11:15a.m.

Sandy Blacketer served from February 2000 to September 2012 as our first youth director, enhancing the youth program already in place.

The voting for office bearers was replaced by an affirmation process. If more nominees are affirmed than vacant positions, the members to fill the positions are selected by lot during the following Sunday's worship service. In 2011 the first woman elder was installed.

As part of the search process, the Neerlandia CRC congregation completed the Healthy Church Survey and Conversations in February 2013. A Visioning Committee evaluated the information gleaned from these activities and worked together with the Search Committee to update our ministry plan, vision and goals.

During this time Sidney DeWaall served as our interim pastor. Pastor Ferry Yang accepted our call in the fall of 2013. Following a conflict, Pastor Yang and our congregation separated under Article 17a, effective March 2015.

On August 1 & 2, 2015 our congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary with a Saturday afternoon of special activities, followed by a supper and program. On Sunday, we held a special worship service. It was a bitter-sweet time. Our hearts still ached due to the conflict of the previous year, yet we were able to celebrate the faithfulness of the Lord over the years.

*For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100:5*

In Sept. 2015, we hired Ron Klok as a transition pastor. He worked together with a newly formed Transition Team to help us:

1. Come to terms with and find healing following pastor/church conflict
2. Review, re-work, re-own our Vision, Ministry Core Values and Ministry Plan
3. Go through a process of values clarification
4. Get to a place where we were ready to engage a new calling process

After Pastor Ron's year with us was complete, we formed a new Search Committee to begin the process of calling a pastor. In January 2017, Art Verboon was hired as an interim pastor and then installed as our full time pastor in June 2017.

In March 2018, our congregation decided to expand our pastoral team to include a Director of Faith Formation. The search resulted in the hiring of Pastor Leon Johnston who served in this position from November 2018 to June 2024.



## Staff and Membership:

### Brief Statistics

#### Paid Staff Positions

Ordained Pastor - Full-time

Executive Assistant - Part-time

Bookkeeper - Part-time

Janitor - Part-time

*Position Available:* 1 Full-time Director of Faith Formation

Date of Vacancy: June 2024

#### Contract Position

Snow Removal / Grass Cutting

#### Church Membership by Age

Age	Count
0-3	24
4-6	42
7-12	105
13-17	88
18-24	99
25-34	128
35-44	180
45-54	130
55-64	84
65-74	87
75+	94
<i>Total</i>	1061

In 2025, Neerlandia CRC's congregation was made up of approximately one hundred and fifty families.

There were two hundred and fifty-five professing members.

#### Occupations

Members participate in a variety of paid and unpaid work. The congregation has members who work in: agriculture, trades, office work, small business, oil and gas, education, medical, sales, in the home and other. Farming continues to be the livelihood of many of our members, but is often subsidized by jobs off the farm as well.

## Neerlandia CRC Ministries:

### This is What We Do

#### We Worship Together

Neerlandia CRC is a busy place on Sunday mornings with many volunteers participating in the services and tasks associated with our weekly worship. Our congregation is composed of individuals of all ages from babies to seniors, and is located in the centre of the hamlet, providing a great place to meet up and connect with one another. Our Sunday morning worship starts at 10:00a.m. with a teaching service we call “**Cross Training**”. During this time we offer Sunday School for children age three to grade six and a teaching service in the sanctuary for adults. We enjoy coffee fellowship in the hall from 10:45a.m.-11:05a.m. and then reconvene in the sanctuary for a regular worship service. During this service there is an opportunity for children aged three to five to have supervised playtime in the basement. Nursery is provided for infants to age two during both services. Children’s bulletins are also available for the main worship service.

We have a very active **Worship Committee** that plans approximately twenty special services a year around the church calendar. Members of all ages are asked to participate in special services in reading, praying, children’s stories, visual displays and music. The committee oversees the volunteer schedules for the worship services including: audio-visual, ushering, music teams, communion, greeters etc.

We celebrate communion approximately every six weeks. All baptized members who come with age and ability appropriate faith are welcome to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Parents are encouraged to enter into conversation with their children about the Lord’s Supper, discussing its purpose, symbolism and significance before their children participate. Due to the size of our group we stay in our pews and are served by the elders. We use cubed white bread and grape juice as the elements.

The style of liturgy we use is a blend of traditional and contemporary. We have many members who have musical gifts and our congregation enjoys singing. Our music ministry consists of four praise groups of a variety of ages, who take turns leading the music. Organ and piano as well as drums, keyboard, and guitars are used to accompany singing.



## We Share the Gospel

Our **Mission Committee** leads us in supporting two missionaries and one church plant.

Our pastors have been part of the Barrhead Ministerial Association and involved in the volunteer chaplaincy program at the local hospital and nursing home. Congregation members lead a worship service at the senior citizen homes in Barrhead on a monthly basis. The Mission Committee encourages members to be involved in reaching out to the broader community through cooking meals for Ronald McDonald House in Edmonton, and worldwide missions in filling a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child or making Christmas cards for the Ministry to Seafarers.

We also have an active **Coffee Break Ministry** that meets weekly from October to April. The men's Bible study group called **Truth on Tap** also meets weekly during the winter months.

## We Nurture Our Children and Learn Together

The **Education Committee** leads our members of all ages to know more about God by taking responsibility for our Sunday School program, Catechism, Small Group Studies, Adult Bible Studies and the church library. We subscribe to *Right Now Media* as a congregation.

Approximately ninety-nine students, age three to grade six participate in Sunday School. About forty-five grade seven to twelve students attend Catechism which is offered on Wednesday evenings during the fall and winter. GEMS and Cadet clubs are also active in our congregation, drawing in many kids from the larger school community.

The **Youth Committee** initiates and supports the ministry among our fifty-five youth: junior high and high school. The youth enjoy attending and hosting interdenominational activities. Large group meetings are held at the church or activity locations, and smaller grade groups meet for dinner in leader's homes for mentorship and fellowship. Every year our youth attend a local youth retreat and run church supper fundraisers. They have the opportunity to participate in service projects in Honduras every other year.



Nursery

## We Care for Each Other and Help our Neighbors

Through our **Refugee Committee** we have been sponsoring world refugees since the mid-1970s. The process for sponsorship has changed over the years, and has become very lengthy. The Refugee Committee is currently working with an Eritrean family whose sponsorship application was made in 2022, but arrived in 2025. The congregation is responsible to support them for one year.

We have been involved with World Renew in a global partnership with communities in Honduras, and are looking into further partnerships in the area.

We show our love by supporting each other during difficult times. Many people visit the needy, prepare servant suppers and help out financially for those experiencing hardship. We also volunteer in church or community organizations.

A number of our members are committed to intentional and specific prayers for the congregation and community as part of a vital **Prayer Chain**.

Our **Safe Church Committee** continues to work on policy and forms to make our congregation safe for all persons. Encouraging our group leaders and volunteers to keep attendance, fill in activity forms, and acquire Police Information Checks is an ongoing task.



## Neerlandia CRC Leadership:

### Governing Structure

The **General Council** is composed of twenty-four ordained elders (Administrative, Pastoral & Young Adult) and deacons affirmed by the congregation. The Pastor and Director of Faith Formation also attend the General Council. The council deals with matters of general concern to the congregation, and evaluates the ministries of the church. It is also a forum for communication among the office bearers, and for mutual encouragement and accountability. The General Council meets six times a year. Elders and deacons serve a three-year term, and are assigned a district which includes members of the congregation to visit and stay in touch with.

The **Administrative Council** includes four Administrative elders who hold the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer. The Council also includes the Chair of the Pastoral Council, Chair of the Deacons and the Pastor. This council meets monthly and deals with the administrative matters of the church.



The **Pastoral Council** meets monthly and includes eleven Pastoral Elders, four Young Adult Elders, the Pastor, and the Director of Faith Formation. This body deals with matters of church discipline, preaching, worship and teaching, outreach and evangelism in the community, doctrinal matters, the supervision of pastors, and the spiritual health and pastoral needs of the members.

The **Diaconate** is composed of five Deacons who meet monthly, and to count the offerings with the church Bookkeeper. The deacons discuss requests that have come in for financial or other help, and discuss how to meet the needs of those who need assistance or a visit. The Diaconate encourages the congregation in its stewardship, and manages and organizes our offerings.



Council Room



## Financial Matters:

### Buildings and Budgets

#### The Home of Our Ministries

The church owns ten acres of land in the center of the hamlet, on which we have a large Church Building with an attached Fellowship Hall. We also own a parsonage located right next to the church. Classroom space is limited and the office space for the executive assistant and bookkeeper is shared. The pastor's study is in the church.



The parsonage has been well maintained. It has four bedrooms, two bathrooms and an office.



The church also owns a mobile home situated on church property. This is used to house our refugee families which we sponsor from time to time.

Our **Building Committee** has many volunteers who take on general maintenance tasks at the church and parsonage. Each year the committee focuses on different projects to improve our building and ensure that we have great spaces to run our many programs. In 2025, the committee installed accessible doors into our main

lobby from the east parking lot. With many members we are blessed to have a large facility and parking to accommodate the church needs.

## Annual Budget

Our budget includes general operating expenses, our missionary commitments, building projects and renovations, the refugee ministry, the youth ministry, and staff salaries.



Church Office



Fellowship Hall

## Neerlandia CRC Ministry:

### Vision and Ministry Plan

Our previous congregational master plan was completed in 1998. The mission and vision statements developed at that time have been in place since then with only minor revisions. The plan set goals for 5 years, many of which were realized.

A Ministry Manual was compiled in 2009. It contains our mission and vision statements as well as a comprehensive compilation of documents outlining our structure and ministries. It includes committee mandates, guidelines and congregational policies. An online copy is revised when needed to reflect changes in policy and structure (available on <https://neerlandiacrc.ca/>).

In 2013, a Visioning Team was formed to evaluate our ministries, conduct a Healthy Church Survey, and update our ministry goals, resulting in the development of a Vision and Ministry Plan. In 2016 as part of the transition process, our congregation reviewed this plan and affirmed that our core values have not changed. We remembered ways in which God works in and through us, we lamented our failures and weaknesses, and we dreamed about being more like the holy people God calls us to be. In November 2025, the Administrative Council reaffirmed the Vision and Ministry Plan.

**The Purpose and Calling** of Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church is to:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.  
Love your neighbor as yourself.

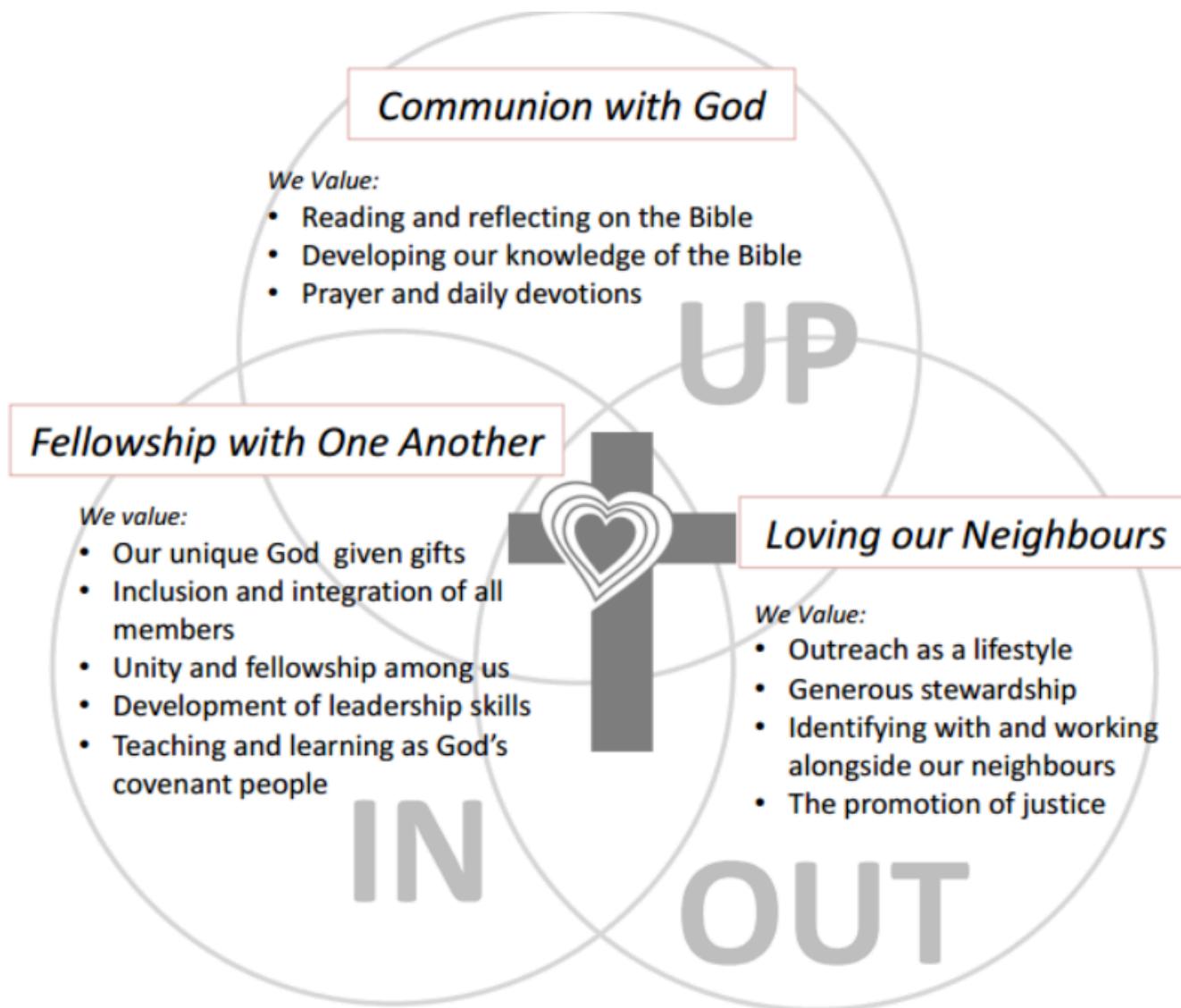
**The Vision** of the church describes who we are as God in Christ calls us to be:

We are Christians, expressing our faith in the Reformed tradition, growing deeper in our knowledge and experience of God's gracious steadfast love for us. Obediently and thankfully, we share his love with others.



The **Ministry Plan** is represented by three circles, UPWARD, INWARD, and OUTWARD. The area of intersection, God's love for us, gives meaning and purpose to the entire plan. The phrases in the boxes are our core values - the principles that shape congregational life and practice

A Congregational Survey regarding the Director of Faith Formation was done in June 2025, responses were compiled in a summary format; some of the congregational feedback was used by council to form the job description for the position.



## Neerlandia CRC Setting: Community Profile

Neerlandia is an agricultural community, established primarily by Dutch immigrants in the early 1900's and is situated near the scenic Athabasca River and Sand Hills. It is located 150 kilometers northwest of Edmonton within the County of Barrhead population 6 051 (2024). The population of the community of Neerlandia is 1 293 (2021).



The hamlet includes two church buildings, Christian school and library, car wash, skating rink, a community cemetery as well as numerous family homes. The Neerlandia Co-operative Association operates a large and thriving grocery store with attached restaurant and liquor store, Home and Farm Center, Agro Center, Service Center and Gas bar located just outside the hamlet.



Neerlandia offers Christian education within the public school system. Neerlandia Public Christian School is inter-denominational and is designated an alternate school in the Pembina Hills School Division. The school building was constructed in 2015 and has an enrollment of 247 students from Kindergarten to Grade Nine and employs twenty-three staff. The school also has a pre-school program with an enrollment of 12.

The mission statement of the school is: "Neerlandia Public Christian School will provide a Christ-centred education so that students are equipped to serve God joyfully in all areas of life." The nearest public high school is Barrhead Composite High School, 25 kilometers south of Neerlandia. Covenant Canadian Reformed School offers Kindergarten - Grade 12 and is located 3 kilometers east of Neerlandia. A home schooling association is also active in the community.



Within the hamlet of Neerlandia are two congregations - Neerlandia Canadian Reformed Church, and Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church. The Barrhead Ministerial Association, a group of Barrhead and area pastors, co-ordinate ecumenical services in Barrhead and the community, the continuing care centre, and the senior citizen's homes. The Ministerial also supplies pastors for a volunteer chaplaincy in the Barrhead Healthcare Center.

A variety of organized activities offered in Neerlandia includes preschool, library programs, community theatre, community baseball and hockey, and adult badminton. The community volunteer societies and organizations are the Neerlandia Co-operative Board of Directors, Neerlandia Library Society, Neerlandia Sports Committee, Neerlandia Historical Society, Neerlandia Funeral Association, and the Barrhead Regional Fire Services.

The community has a history of strong commitment to people living with disabilities and support organizations such as Rehoboth, Barrhead Family and Community Social Services, Barrhead Food Bank, Pregnancy Care Centre and Amber's Hope Maternity Home. Other interdenominational ministries the community has been involved in is the Neerlandia/Vega Growing Project which supports the Canadian Food Grains Bank.

Barrhead, population 4,580 (2024), is the nearest town which serves the surrounding agricultural communities. Its facilities and services include a Health Care Centre (hospital), an continuing care centre, several senior citizen housing options, a public library, bowling lanes, a curling rink, spray park, all wheel park, tennis/pickleball courts, a hockey and skating arena, an aquatic centre, golf courses and indoor sports and fine arts clubs (e.g. boxing, judo, dance academies and community theatre).

A number of municipal and provincial parks are nearby which give the opportunity for camping, boating, hiking, hunting, fishing and many other recreational activities. The local ski hill, Misty Ridge, provides down-hill skiing as well as cross country ski trails. There is also an active snowmobile club in the county.