

## First CRC Sarnia - CHURCH PROFILE

### Church Information:

**Name:** First Christian Reformed Church

**Location of church [City, State/Province]:** Sarnia, ON CANADA

**Classical Church Counselor:** Andrew Zommerman

### Search Committee Contact:

**Name:** Brad Rekman

**Phone Number:** (519) 402-3065

**Email Address:** bradrekman@gmail.com

Community Setting: Sarnia is a small city in southwestern Ontario with about 72000 people. The economy is centered around the petro-chemical industry. The population has been static for many years.

### Church Profile

We are seeking a full-time pastor. The applicant can be male or female.

**Date of vacancy:** February 2024

**Bi-vocational position?:** No

**Number of years preferred of ministry experience of applicant:** No preference

**Required language:** English

Other church employees: Office Administrator and Children's Ministry Leader

### Compensation:

We offer a salary package based on the compensation CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area. The package includes pension and benefits, housing and vehicle allowance, and an ongoing education fund. The most recent salary based

on 12 years experience was \$88,000. Over the past three years the salary has increased 3% / year. A Sabbatical Policy is in place and weeks of vacation will be determined in the letter of call.

Church Demographics:

**Average Sunday attendance:** 80-120

**Active adult professing members:** 175

**Profile of church members:**

**Age:**

21%	0-11	4%	12-18	4%	19-24	12%	25-34
13%	35-49		17%	50-64		29%	65+

Occupation:

10% Business	10% Professional	27% Trades
5% Stay-at-home parent	1% Agriculture	42 % Retired
2% Student	3% Other	

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation:

Less than 5 years	14%
5-10 years	9%
10 or more years	77%

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community: The composition of our community is changing as there are about 2000 international students at the local college, many of them who move here with their families. This is a demographic that our church should become intentional about supporting.

Our congregation is mono-cultural.

List the last three persons in this position:

1. Dave VanBerkel
2. Henry Meinen
3. Dave Weemhoff

Worship:

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

Our Worship Committee is comprised of 5-6 members. Members of the team take turns planning the worship services each month, plan for special services, and decorate the sanctuary according to the liturgical calendar. The

team also works with the Children's Ministry Director to plan intergenerational services every six weeks, which include a lot of participation from our children.

We encourage our congregation to participate in the services as singers or instrumentalists on our praise team, technicians on sound and projection, worship leaders, and congregational pray-ers.

### **Describe the worship services in your church:**

Two Sundays (sometimes three) a month are led by praise teams with a blended/contemporary style of worship. The other two Sundays are organ-led and more traditional. We are blessed to have a sanctuary with wonderful acoustics, so congregational singing is always a real pleasure.

We follow the liturgical church calendar throughout the year. Our weekly services include a Call to Worship, Confession and Assurance, Scripture reading and Message, Prayers of the People, Offerings, and regular readings from the church doctrines and creeds. Communion is planned every six weeks or so. Our services are live-streamed so that we can include our shut-ins and broader community.

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

Sunday school is provided for children aged 3 to grade 3. The Junior Catechism is for children in grades 4-6 and they are working through the ["New City Catechism."](#) We also look after ensuring that a local seniors' home has access to our live-streamed services on Sunday mornings.

During the week, there are Gems and Cadet clubs for grades three to eight. Various bible studies are held through the week including "Connect Groups" and "Men's Life"

Our Children's Ministry Leader also plans community events for the congregation and neighbourhood such as: Pancake Tuesday Supper, Outdoor Christmas Scavenger Hunt, Chili Cookoff, Ice Cream Social, and Neighbourhood Egg Hunt.

### Financial:

**Present annual budget:** \$364,402

**Last year's annual budget:** \$379,918

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

Budget - 87.3% \* *We adjusted our budget in November 2023 and cut back on some expenses, knowing that we would not achieve our original 2023 income goal. The adjusted budget was met 103.9%.*

Denominational Ministry Shares - 74.4%

Classical Ministry Shares - 100%

## **Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares:**

<b>Specify (optional):</b>	2023 Income:	\$331,725
	2023 Expenses:	\$319,301

### Building

#### **Describe Facilities:**

- The church has a few wings that include the sanctuary, office spaces, classrooms, a fellowship and kitchen, narthex (entry way), separate nurseries for toddlers and infants, a library, a workshop and accessible washroom facilities. The church also features outdoor spaces including a community garden, a playground and patio area with tables and chairs.
- The sanctuary has plenty of space and boasts excellent acoustics which lend themselves to meaningful worship. The sanctuary is also equipped with live stream equipment which allows for services to be viewed on-line. A variety of church owned musical instruments are found and put to use in the sanctuary including a pipe organ, grand piano and acoustic drum kit.
- Fellowship occurs in all areas of the church but is typically centered in the entry area and fellowship hall during the winter months and outside on the entryway patio or at the playground during the summer months. Coffee and juice are typically served and on occasion baked goods can be found as well.
- The nursery is a busy place on a Sunday morning and consists of separate rooms for toddlers and babies. There is also a designated washroom that is the right size for the children.
- Office spaces for the pastor and office administrator are found just off the narthex (entry way) and feature a desk, chairs and bookshelves as well as standard office equipment like a printer/scanner.
- The fellowship hall and kitchen are found down a small flight of stairs that can be accessed by a small elevator. The functional kitchen is equipped for hosting functions or simply preparing and cleaning up the dishes associated with Sunday morning coffee.
- Classrooms for the children's ministry program are found upstairs. The rooms are bright and large enough for Sunday school lessons or evening meetings. A room has also been created up stairs with a sofa and foosball table dedicated to our youth, so that they have a space to gather after a service, discuss the pastor's message, and enjoy a snack together. A small workshop is located upstairs where GEMS and cadets can build things and gain experience with hand and power tools.
- An outdoor area referred to by some as "the Commons", includes a community vegetable garden, patio for fellowship and a playground for children. Benches, picnic tables and a large shade tree make for an inviting space for the whole community. The "Garden of Eatin'" is a community garden. Church and community members are welcomed to plant, tend and harvest from the garden throughout the summer months.

## Are your buildings adequate for your ministries?

The building is adequate for our ministries despite the always present human desire for a more contemporary building and larger, cozier spaces.

## Is a building program projected? No

## Does the church own a parsonage? No

## Location of office or study:

There is an office for the pastor at the front doors of the church.

## Church Characteristics:

## Presently, the FOCUS OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY is

External ⇒	Community exclusively	Community primarily	Current members/ participants equally ✓	Current members/ participants primarily	Current members/ participants exclusively	⇐ Internal
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## In our church, the WORSHIP SERVICE IS DESIGNED FOR

Unchurched ⇒	Designed for unchurched	Emphasis on unchurched	Unchurched and believers ✓	Emphasis on believers	Designed for believers	⇐ Churched
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## In our church, the STYLE OF WORSHIP used in the worship service is

Contemporary ⇒	Contemporary	Mostly contemporary	Blended ✓	Mostly traditional	Traditional	⇐ Traditional
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## In our church, LEADERSHIP is generally provided by the

Congregational members ⇒	Predominantly lay leaders	Frequently lay leaders	Lay leaders & pastoral staff share leadership ✓	Lay leaders function under pastoral staff	Predominantly pastoral staff	⇐ Pastoral staff
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## Our church seeks to ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH

Informal ⇒	No specific ministries	Ministries for a few groups ✓	Ministries for selected groups	Ministries for most groups	Ministries for all groups	⇐ Formal
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**In our church, EVANGELISM STRATEGIES AND METHODS ARE**

Unplanned ⇒	Predominantly unplanned	Generally unplanned	Equal emphasis	Generally planned ✓	Predominantly planned	⇐ Planned
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**Our church is representative of the ECONOMIC DIVERSITY of our community**

High representation ⇒	Strongly representative ✓	Mostly representative	Moderately representative	Mildly representative	Weakly representative	⇐ Low representation
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**Our church is representative of the ETHNIC DIVERSITY of our community**

High representation ⇒	Strongly representative	Mostly representative	Moderately representative	Mildly representative ✓	Weakly representative	⇐ Low representation
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**Our church’s RESPONSE TO COMPASSION, MERCY, AND JUSTICE NEEDS is**

Church based ⇒	Commitment to church-based action	Encouragement of church-based action	Church-based and personal action ✓	Encouragement of personal action	Commitment to personal action	⇐ Personal
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**Our church’s MISSIONAL FOCUS is**

Local ⇒	All local	Mostly local ✓	Equally local and global	Mostly global	All global	⇐ Global
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**In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?**

Sarnia has an Evangelical Fellowship for local pastors and we would welcome our future pastor to partake in this.

Many of our members can be found volunteering in the community for various organizations; both faith and non-faith based, like the local hospital, those who help the vulnerable in our community (the local food bank, home for teens and young mothers), nursing homes, local Christians, and the hospice. Some organizations we support on a regular basis are: [Gianna Home](#), [Ohana Landing](#), and the [Inn of the Good Shepherd](#).

We have a joint committee with the four local CRC churches to sponsor and support refugee families re-settling in Sarnia. We have a local community college chaplaincy program that we also support.

## **Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:**

We have an intergenerational focus, fostered by our paid Children's Ministry Director which helps to connect our two largest demographics, children and seniors, in worship.

We have an active group of people involved in worship planning, singing, and artistic visuals to complement the liturgical year.

We are passionate about interacting with our neighbours and local community. We host an annual Nativity walk and also workshops entitled "Tuesdays at First." Our church property is on a main street and our neighbourhood makes great use of the accessible playground and the [Garden of Eatin](#).

We are actively supportive when needs arise: whether financial, spiritual, physical or prayer

## **Reflect on your passions as a church:**

- Focused on Children in worship
- The marginalized, which is evident in our donations and volunteer choices
- We enjoy having fellowship and having social gatherings

## **List specific problems with which your congregation struggles.**

- We have many willing volunteers who are stretched too thin. Our membership numbers have shrunk, but we are trying to maintain our current level of programming.
- We have never met our goal of 100% for Ministry Shares.
- Synod's decision on the HSR report has been a divisive topic amongst our congregation, and we struggle with how to move forward without segregation.

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

- Yes, our current vision statement was developed during the 2016 Renewal Lab. First Church's vision is to inspire passionate imitators of Jesus.
- Our mission is to cultivate intentional relationships that help people grow spiritually.

## **What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church?**

- An interesting event in the life of our church occurred in the 1950s. First Church Sarnia had grown too large for its building and it was decided to start another sister church down the road: Living Hope CRC. A few decades later, a third church, Redeemer CRC was established in Sarnia.

## **What are some major goals that this congregation has set for itself?**

- We are committed to being present in our community and demonstrating the love of Christ to our community. We are passionate about supporting the

vulnerable through donating items to local agencies, working with the City of Sarnia to bring affordable housing with [Indwell](#), and volunteering to serve at local charitable organizations.

- We would like to see growth in discipleship of our members so that we can grow in the love and knowledge of our Lord, and learn how to share the gospel with unbelievers. This could be through discipleship classes, catechism classes for high school students and adults, or other bible studies.
- We would like to see a revival of a youth program in preparation for the upcoming younger demographic in our congregation

### **Describe your understanding of the local church and the denomination.**

- Our church is loyal to the denomination. There is strong appreciation for our history.
- There is appreciation for the various ministries of the CRCNA.

### **Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:**

- We have 9 people on the Pastor Search Team. Here are some of our individual comments pertaining to this question, which speaks to our individual accents; dialects of the Reformed accent 😊
- That we stand firm on the Word of God and His Sovereignty, and the Creeds and Confessions of the CRC, namely the Heidelberg Catechism.
- Affirming the authority of scripture.
- Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone.
- Acknowledging that every square inch of creation belongs to God.
- We honour the Bible as the story of God's redemption. The Bible is always read in the context of the time it was written. Reformed accent means that we also hear God's story in the creation we experience. God speaks to us through the Bible and what He has created.
- Every square inch of the world belongs to God. It is my passion and duty to give God the honour in whatever I do and work for. I do this not to go to heaven, but to be totally active in God's kingdom. Going to heaven is an undeserved reward from God for being obedient to Him in my life. I am a sinful human being, but Jesus has paid for my sins. Out of my thankfulness, I work in his kingdom.
- God has proven through the Bible that His word can be trusted! As a recipient of God's grace and a member of the New Covenant in Christ, I can wholeheartedly rest assured that God's promise of eternal life with Him is a guarantee!

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

- There has been a big shift to a "me-focused" society which has negatively



affected our church community. From volunteering and financial giving to our response to weekly worship.

- LGBTQ+, climate change, care for the homeless, drug culture, greed, care and respect for the marginalized, and the list goes on.
- Christian churches have lost their value and respect in our present day society
- Shifting from legalism to grace as the pendulum swings creates a church that “spares the rod and spoils the child”. Picking and choosing small snippets of scripture to preach on avoids some of the messy subjects that we are timid to address, and creates a congregation that doesn’t understand the entirety of God’s Word.

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

1. Visioning sessions, including Launch 2000 and the 2016 Renewal Lab have encouraged us to try new things, to see where God is at work. We have shifted from being internal-focus to outward-focus: installed a playground structure, Garden of Eatin’, etc.
2. Focus on youth: Hiring a Children’s Ministry Director, incorporating children in leading worship services, including children in communion
3. Including women in church leadership roles alongside men.

#### Leadership:

**How many council members does your church have?** 16

**What is the length of term for council members?** 3-4 years

**How often does the full council meet?** Bi-monthly (6x / year)

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

- Not including the pastor, First Church currently has 16 Council members. This breaks down as follows:
  - 4 x Administrative Elders (of which 1 is also Clerk, and 1 is also Chair of Council)
  - 5 x Shepherding Elders
  - 7 x Deacons.
- The number of Council members is fluid and may vary from year to year, depending on the need. Normal length is 3 years. Some years we may have a retiring elder or deacon serve a fourth year if not enough new nominee names are available to present to the Congregation for election. Normally, Council meets bi-monthly (6x / year). If necessary, due to some unusual situation, an additional meeting may be held.
- Subgroups of Council include:
  - Executive Team - meets monthly and processes all minutes from

various Church Teams appointed by Council.

- Shepherding Elders - meet bi-monthly and report directly to Council
- Deacons - meet bi-monthly and report directly to Council.
- Church Teams include:
  - Faith Formation
  - Fellowship
  - Finance
  - Property Management Reach
  - Worship
  - Pastor Search