

**Terra Ceia Christian Reformed Church**  
**3296 Terra Ceia Road**  
**Pantego, NC 27860**

**Community Setting**

Terra Ceia CRC is a small church in beautiful eastern North Carolina. The church is located in a rural, agricultural and recreational community with a number of small towns nearby. Bath, Belhaven and Washington are historical waterfront towns approximately 15-20 miles away. The city of Greenville, known as the educational and medical hub of eastern North Carolina, is about 40 miles away. Eastern NC is a wonderful place to explore!

Terra Ceia is a close-knit community that values relationships. Therefore, it is important for the pastor to develop relationships in order to understand the culture and connect with the community. The church desires to be active in the community and started an ESL program a year ago. However, there is a need to find more ways to connect with the local community. Many retirees are moving into surrounding towns and may be open to coming to the church for worship and friendship.

What is needed is leadership that embraces this unique culture. The pastor needs to build trust by paying attention to the basics of ministry, preaching and listening to his people before crafting his own agenda. He needs a pioneering spirit, an openness to learn, and patience to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. While the church is slow to adapt to change, they know that they must in order to have a way forward. When wisely led, they respond well.

**Church Profile**

We are open to a male pastor, either part-time or full-time. There may be an option for bi-vocational work with respect to the gifts and abilities of the pastor and his wife. We are open to all ages and years of experience of potential candidates.

**General Position Description**

The pastor provides direction and vision for the church and community. He works with the Council on goals and strategies for the congregation. His primary role is leading worship, pastoral care, and meeting with various committees as necessary. The church committees are Worship, Outreach, Education, Fellowship and Facilities/Maintenance. He also leads a class for the high school youth on Sunday morning before worship. These young people are interested in learning how to be strong in their faith throughout the week, not just on Sunday.

## **Church Demographics**

The church lists 53 members on its rolls. Most are nearing retirement or are retired. There are 8 children high school age or younger and we recently baptized our youngest member. The occupations represented in the church are farmers, tradespersons, college educated, teachers, and business owners. While mostly one culture, because of the ESL classes offered at the church, the participants have a Latino background.

## **Worship**

Worship services are varied and a very important part of the church life. A member has helped coordinate services, but this role fluctuates depending on the pastor's interest in taking on this responsibility. The church is open to flexibility in the worship order and members participate in the worship service from time to time. Recently a group met weekly with the pastor to discuss the Scripture passage for the next sermon. Their input was helpful and the group enjoyed the time together.

## **Compensation**

Most important is to find a fit with the pastor and the congregation. The salary and benefits will be negotiated when a candidate is interested, as situations will vary and dictate the needs from both parties.

## **Facilities**

The building has undergone a few revisions in recent years. Most recently were the designation of a quiet space behind the worship area for those who might need it, and a beautifully renovated fellowship hall that is used weekly for classes and coffee after worship and occasionally for dinners. The spacious parsonage next door to the church has two stories, with two bedrooms downstairs and two upstairs, along with 2 ½ baths. It is equipped with Wi-Fi, an updated kitchen, and some furnishings since we have hosted interim pastors over the past few years. One bedroom in the parsonage could be used as an office, though there is also a pastor's study in the church building.

Adjacent to the church is the Terra Ceia Christian School. The school is fully staffed and has an enrollment of approximately 160 students in grades K-12. The church has hosted some school events and performances over the years and several members teach there.

## **Church Characteristics**

- Presently, the focus of the ministry is current members and the community at large in some ways. Interim pastors have helped the church to respond to the community through school supplies, food collections, and especially ESL. This has given the church an eye toward more than being here for members only.

- The worship service is designed primarily for believers since that is the makeup of those who attend. If the church desires to grow, more attention is needed on how to connect with the community and attract people to attend.
- The style of music is blended, but tends toward traditional. The accompaniment is either piano or organ.
- Leadership within the church is generally provided by volunteers and the Council.
- The church encourages spiritual growth through ministries for selected groups. The women's ministry meets for Bible study, but meetings are not always regularly scheduled. The youth group is small and meets every other week. Some of the youth also meet with the youth group at the nearby URC. There currently is no organized men's ministry group for the men in the church. However, a few young men in the congregation meet regularly with friends in the community for a men's Bible study.
- Outreach methods and strategies are generally planned rather than spontaneous. Yet when western NC was hard-hit by a hurricane, the church responded within a couple weeks with a special offering.
- Justice and compassion needs are a commitment by the church together. A designated part of the benevolence fund goes to nonprofits that are partners in ministry in eastern NC.
- Mission support is both local and global.

### **Leadership**

There are 5 Council members; 3 elders, 2 deacons. The Council meets monthly; presently on Sunday mornings prior to worship.

There are 5 committees:

- Worship
- Education
- Fellowship
- Outreach
- Facilities/Maintenance

Each committee consists of a few members and a liaison from the Council. They meet as needed.

**Do you have a recently articulated mission for ministry?**

Our most recent mission has been to offer weekly ESL classes to the growing Hispanic communities in the area. The program began in 2023 with approximately 5 teachers for the 25 students who originally expressed interest in the class. However, attendance dwindled throughout the year with just a few attending regularly for one on one tutoring. This fall 12 students have attended the class. Expanding our ministry to include an ESL program is an exciting development for the church and we look forward to seeing how God will use this outreach opportunity.

**What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last 3 years?**

In the last three years, the congregation has been in a holding pattern. We have been well-served by a series of interim pastors who have provided Sunday sermons and pastoral care part-time during the week. However, we realize that although this arrangement has maintained the church, it has not led us to move forward or grow our membership.

**What major goal(s) has the congregation set for itself?**

A major goal that the congregation has set is to call a pastor. With the leadership of a pastor working with the congregation, we hope to understand and fulfill the church's purpose as we grow spiritually and serve others.

**What does being Christians of Reformed accent mean to you?**

Being Christians with a Reformed accent continues to mean being people of the Word and centering life on the Bible. It also means being saved by grace through faith and following Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We understand that we must be salt and light in our families and to the surrounding community.

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

Our congregation is truly a mission outpost, settled by Dutch pioneers in the 1930's. They had strong personalities and deep convictions and beliefs. They started farming, built a church and a Christian school. A split occurred in 1998 over the CRC's stance on women in leadership, and over half of the members left to form a United Reformed Church. The church is committed to CRC doctrine but lives largely in isolation from the CRC community. For example, only a few members get and read *The Banner*. Classis meets in Florida and the main CRC headquarters is in Michigan.

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

Our American culture is so divided these days. This is even true among the churches here. Southern culture is quite conservative here and different from northern culture. It is very important to listen to and learn from the community to understand those differences.

**What have been the 3 most important events in the church's history?**

One important event in our church's history was the early beginning in the 1930s. A group of Dutch immigrants settled in eastern NC and decided to establish a Christian Reformed church as well as a Christian school. A second important event was during a period of program growth in Coffee Break, Gems, Cadets and Youth ministry that challenged the spaces for these ministries and consideration was given to expand the building to accommodate this need for space. A third important event was the church split in the late 1990s, resulting in more than half of the members leaving the CRC to form a United Reformed Church. Since the split, the membership and ministries of the church have declined.

As the church moves forward, we need a pastor to help us navigate the next important events in the life of our church. We need leadership and direction in strengthening the spiritual vitality of the church, in continuing the ESL program and considering the possibility of ministry to the Hispanic community, and in making connections with the local community through community outreach programs.