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THIRD CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

HISTORY AND BIO FOR PROSPECTIVE PASTOR

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PASTOR,

Thank you for expressing interest in the position of Lead Pastor for Third Christian Reformed Church. We welcome the opportunity to provide you with a perspective of who we are and our plans for the future.

Our church was established in 1907. Over the past 119 years, God has been faithful to Third. During this period of time, Third CRC has enjoyed the leadership of 13 pastors and three over the last 52 years!

To support the upcoming transition in ministry leadership, the council at Third CRC consulted with the denominational group, Thrive, to contract with a Specialized Transition Minister (STM). In September of 2024, Rev. Tom Swieringa began working with our church as a pastor trained in transition leadership. In January of 2025, a transition team of nine members was formed. This group worked from January to September gathering information and hosting listening events to discuss where we have been as a church and where we would like to go. So, with this gathered information in September of 2025, a seven member search team was assembled to begin the journey of discerning who God has identified to be our next lead pastor. God has been faithful to our Church for many years, and we are confident that he will be faithful for many more.

On behalf of the Search Team and our congregation, thank you for your interest. Please review the enclosed Pastor–Church profile to learn more about us. We hope it helps you discern, through the Holy Spirit’s leading, if this is an opportunity you would like to explore further.

In Christ,

Chad Schut

Search Team Chair



POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Third Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan anticipates the arrival of a Lead Pastor, a person of God who will lead the congregation into a new chapter of ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. First and foremost, the lead Pastor shall be a gifted communicator and leader characterized by a deep and growing love for the Lord and His church.



As a **communicator**, the Lead Pastor will have the privilege of preparing and delivering biblically based and relevant sermons to the gathered community as well as planning and leading inspiring worship services.



As a **leader**, the Lead Pastor will have the opportunity to work alongside, encourage and empower a core group of dedicated volunteers (Council) and professionals (staff members) towards the realization of the vision of Third Church.



As a **shepherd of the sheep**, the Lead Pastor will have the privilege of directing and sharing the responsibility of providing spiritual direction and encouragement to individuals as they walk through the major transitions of life including, but not limited to, birth, baptism, profession of faith, marriage, crises of faith and death.

The ideal candidate for this position will be an experienced, theologically trained, and ordained individual who:

- Embraces a meaningful personal relationship with the Lord, a commitment to prayer, and a willingness to be personally and spiritually accountable
- Models the character of Jesus Christ, affirms the centrality of communal worship in the life of the Christian community, and is passionate about both gathering the lost and discipling the found
- Demonstrates a hunger and ability to learn, emotional health, the ability to create and sustain positive relationships with people and an understanding of the times in which we now live (cultural intelligence)

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Lead Pastor will be expected to:

- Fulfill the biblical qualifications of Elder
- Commit to the vision and goals of Third Christian Reformed Church
- Affirm the creeds and confessions of the Christian Reformed Church of North America
- Assist the Council to insure that the ministry of our congregation aligns with the church order of the CRCNA
- Share responsibility with the Elders and other staff members for the public presence of our congregation in the community and the denomination
- Be ordained within the CRCNA or Reformed Church of America

Attributes of the Candidate

- **Pastoral Care** - A deep and vibrant relationship with God and clear dependence on guidance of the Holy Spirit. Faithful spiritual leadership and compassionate pastoral care to the congregation.
- **Preaching and Teaching** - Commitment to meaningful, God-centered worship experiences through collaborative planning of Sunday services with biblically grounded preaching and teaching.
- **Biblical and Theological Knowledge** - A strong foundation and understanding in Scripture and theology, applied to preaching, teaching, and leadership within the church.
- **Vision and Strategic Planning** - Passionate about working with church leadership to develop and implement a vision for the future, guiding the congregation with clarity, purpose, and faithfulness.
- **Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Leadership** - Exhibits relational skills and collaborative leadership, providing regular support and accountability for staff. Addresses conflict with wisdom, humility, and grace.



CHURCH HISTORY



For the last 119 years, God has been faithful to our congregation, as we have continued to pursue His will. Third CRC was founded on March 8, 1907 by a group of Dutch immigrants who wanted to start the first English-speaking congregation in Kalamazoo.

The same spirit of openness and innovation has lived on throughout Thirds's history. Our congregation was one of the first to open church offices to women, and develop a robust educational ministry. Our church has had a staff ministry model since the 1970's, and despite long tenured pastors there have been a wide variety of perspectives and influences represented on staff over the years.

During Rev. Buursma's tenure (1973 - 1991), 3rd CRC incorporated a lot of very traditional "high church" elements in worship. During the leadership of Rev. Baker (1992 - 2017) and Rev. Zeyl (2018 - 2024), the church went from multiple services (traditional and contemporary) to a "blended" service that is in practice today.



OUR MISSION & VISION



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST, HIS CHURCH, AND HIS COMMUNITY

REACH UP

by seeking spiritual transformation through engaging in personal and communal relationships with God through **WORSHIP** and seeking His will as members of His Kingdom in **PRAYER**.

REACH IN

by participating and investing in the church according to our spiritual gifts to come alongside one another to **CARE** for each other and **GROW** in our faith and friendships.

REACH OUT

to **SERVE** and bless the greater community by contributing our talents and resource and **WITNESS** to them so that they can experience the church as a place to be loved, to belong, and to taste and see that the Lord is good.

3rd CRC is committed to helping people see themselves as missionaries our community, working to share the good news of Gospel. We do this through relationships in our workplaces and neighborhoods, and through involvement in a variety of ministries. Some of our major local ministry partners include **Kids Hope** (elementary school tutoring), **Open Door Next Door** (affordable housing for low-income families), the **Kalamazoo Deacons Conference** (social services for the working poor), **Kalamazoo Valley Gleaners** (international hunger), **Sparrow and Nest** (furnishing spaces for those transitioning out of homelessness) and **Tree of Life** (Christian school serving all socio-economic levels). We also support a number of international ministries including **Karin Community Initiative Uganda**, **Pacific Island Ministries**, **Wycliffe Peru**, **Resonate Mexico** and others.

OUR MINISTRIES

CHILDREN

YOUTH

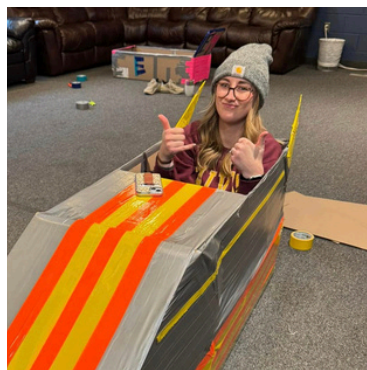
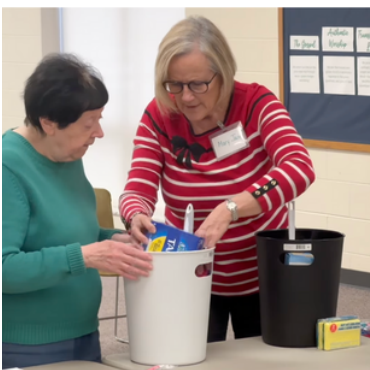


ADULT



FAMILY

3rd CRC offers a variety of programming for individuals and families. We have a vibrant children's ministry, separate programming for middle school and high school students, adult small groups, as well as regular social and intergenerational events.



OUR BELIEFS



GOD

We believe in one God who has revealed Himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our God created all things, including humans, to be in relationship with Him. However, the curse of sin has broken our relationships with God, self, others and creation.

THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. It makes known all that is necessary for salvation for believers of all ages. We call the Bible Gods Word, believing that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God speaks to us through this book.

JESUS

We affirm that Jesus is both fully man, and fully God. As the Christ, Jesus fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies about a Messiah who would redeem God's people. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are grounded in historical fact. After his earthly work of redemption was finished, Jesus took his place in heaven as Lord of all things. He will come again to make all things new.

REFORMED

As a church, we are part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). To learn more, visit: <https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs>

PASTORS AND STAFF



Rev. Dr. Tom Swieringa
Specialized Transitional Minister



Rev. Agshin Jafarov
Outreach & Adult Ministries



Rev. Audrey Edewaard
Pastor of Worship Arts



Bryan Keeley
Director of High School Ministries



Rachel DeNooyer
Director of Children's Ministry



Jennifer VanderMolen-Potter
Asst Director of Children's Ministry



Andi Potter
Office Administrator



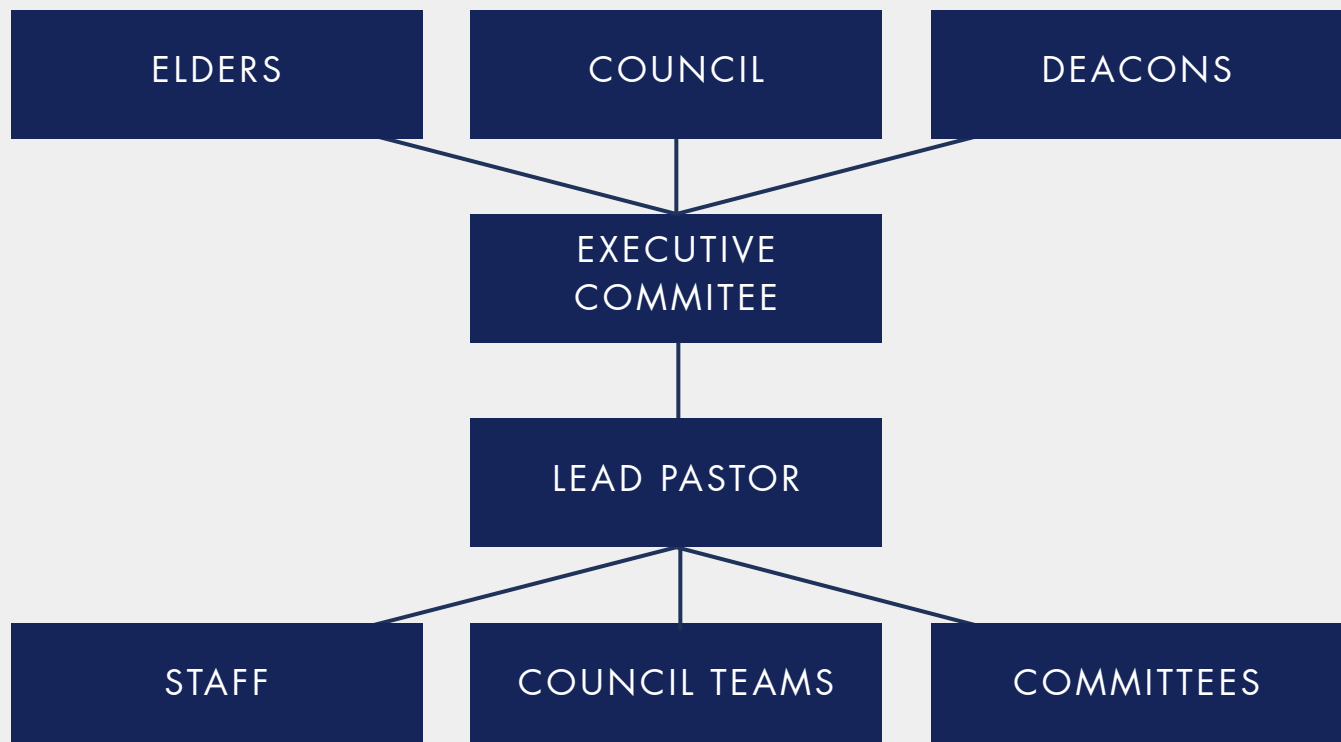
Jane Lockwood
Facilities Manager

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Executive Committee consists of the Chair of Council, Chair of Elders, Chair of Deacons, Treasurer, Elder Personnel, Deacon Facilities, and the Office Administrator. This committee makes administrative decisions on behalf of Council and sets the monthly meeting agendas.

The Executive Committee meets once per month. Full council meets once per month, alternating between elder and deacon specific meetings and joint council meetings.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE



FINANCIALS

The church has a strong financial position with over \$1,436,610 in our bank account and no debt.

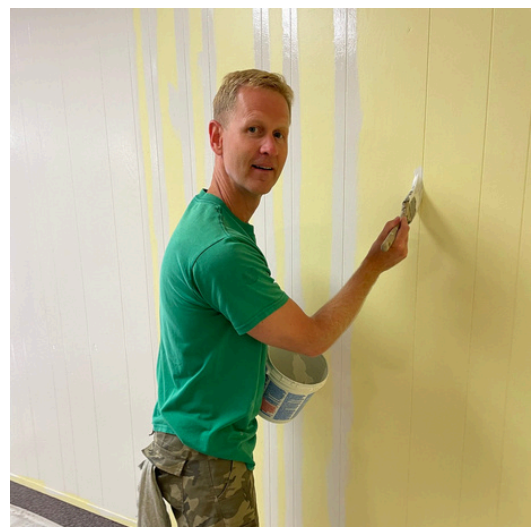
In addition, the Church has over \$940,000 in our Ministry Development Fund (MDF). The MDF consists of bequests left to the church and is used for irregular and non-budgeted items. In the past these have been things like mission trips, seminary scholarships and technology needs.

The Christian Education Fund was established to promote Christian Day School education for the members of 3rd CRC. As a commitment to our baptismal vows to the children, this fund provides financial grants to families who send their children to Kalamazoo Christian Schools. Last year, this fund provided \$97,000 in Grants and additional assistance to 34 students at 3rd CRC.

ANNUAL CHURCH **GIVING**

MINISTRIES FUND	\$817,303
BUILDING FUND	\$67,633
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FUND	\$60,002
BENEVOLENCE	\$85,269
SPECIAL OFFERINGS	\$21,267

TOTAL GIVING: \$1,976,475



OUR COMMUNITY

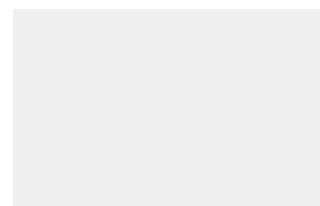
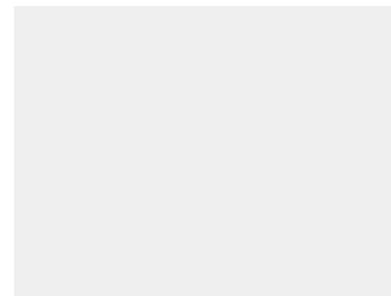
The City of Kalamazoo is located in Southwestern Michigan at the intersection of I-94 and US-131, halfway between Detroit and Chicago, and an hour from the beaches of Lake Michigan and near many local lakes, hiking trails and parks. Kalamazoo is a diverse community that offers a unique blend of small-city charm with many unique offerings for a city of its size (~260,000 metro area).

The city is known for its strong sense of community, affordable cost of living, and access to quality education. It is home to three higher learning institutions, a medical school and the nationally recognized Kalamazoo Promise scholarship.

Residents enjoy a vibrant arts, music and theatre scene, with regular community art events, local theaters and music festivals.

Kalamazoo has a strong presence of fortune 500 employers including Stryker and Pfizer, and is home to significant downtown revitalization projects including a large sports arena.

For more information about our beloved city, please visit:
www.discoverkalamazoo.com

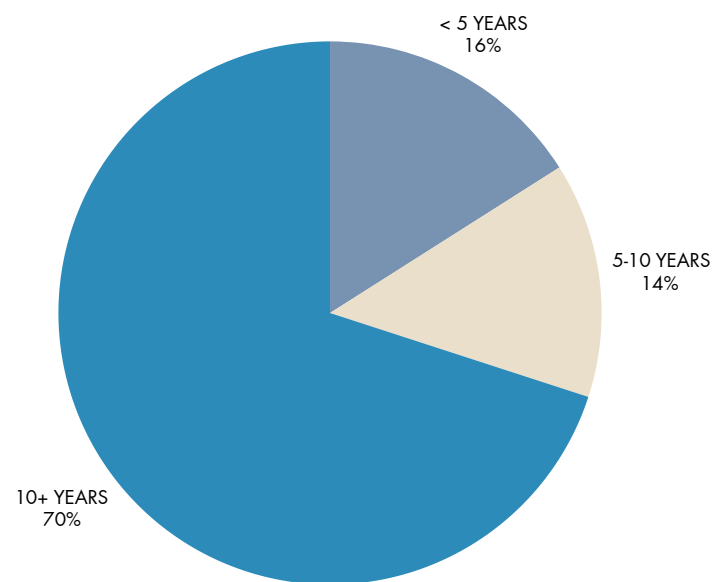


CHURCH STATISTICS

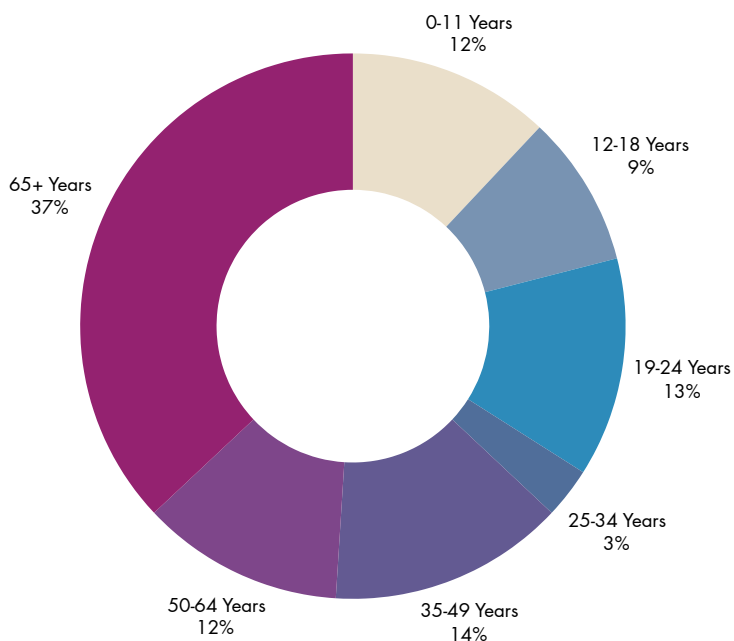


We're blessed with an intergenerational congregation and have embraced opportunities for members to serve as mentors and prayer partners for the youth of our congregation. The adults in our congregation are highly educated, with the majority holding bachelors and graduate degrees, and employed across a variety of professions.

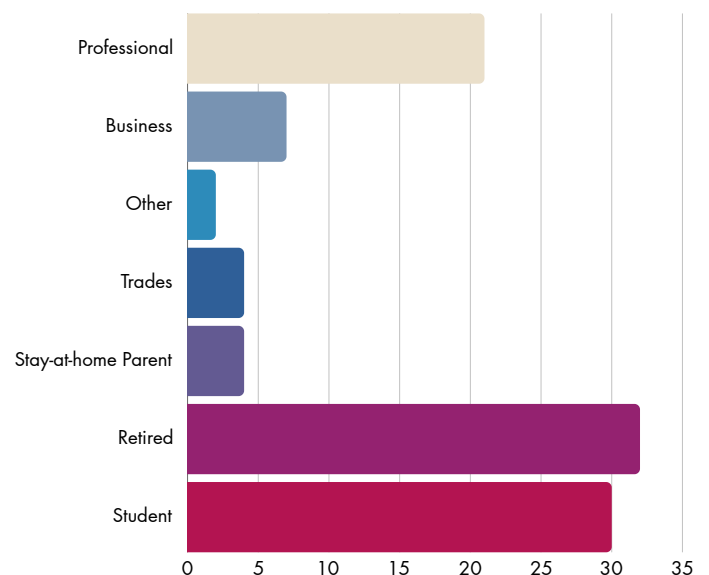
DURATION OF MEMBERSHIP



AGE OF CONGREGATION



OCCUPATION OF MEMBERS





GET CONNECTED



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