



CHURCH PROFILE

CHURCH INFORMATION

Name Bridge of Hope Ministries
Location of church Sioux Center, Iowa
Classical Church Counselor Rev Joel Kok

SEARCH COMMITTEE CONTACT

Daren Dieleman, Search Team Chair
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COMMUNITY SETTING

LOCATION	FUNCTION	COMMUNITY GROWTH
Rural	Industrial	Growing
Small Town	College/University	Static
Metropolitan	Agriculture	Declining
Suburban	Recreational	
Inner City	Military	
Small City	Bedroom	

Approximate population of community: 2010—7,000; 2020—8,229

CHURCH PROFILE

We are open to Male and female pastor applications
List all staff positions Pastor, Church Administrator, Youth Director, Sunday School Director, Congregational Caregiver (forthcoming), Worship Director (forthcoming), Clerical Support (forthcoming)
Position available Half-time Pastor
Date of vacancy May 2020 (FT pastor); Fall 2022 (Interim pastor/preacher)
General position description The pastor serves the congregation by preaching sermons while empowering the other shepherds (elders and deacons) and staff to lead the people. It is a highly collaborative position, and one shaped heavily by Vision 2025. The primary function of the role is preaching/teaching, followed by administration as a secondary area. Pastoral care constitutes a smaller role. The position is designed to be half-time, flexible in nature, with the potential for the candidate to be vi-vocational.
Full-time or Part-time Part-time (half-time equivalent)
Bi-vocational position Yes
Required languages English
Number of years preferred of ministry experience of potential candidate Negotiable. We value specific qualifications, spiritual gifts, and passion at a higher level than years of ministry.

CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS

Profile of church members

AGE		OCCUPATION			ATTENDANCE/MEMBERSHIP
0-19 yr: 43%	20-39 yr: 16%	36% Professional	30% Trades	20% Business	Average Sunday attendance: 150
40-59 yr: 31%	60+ yr: 10%	8% Retired	3% Stay-at-home parent		Active adult professing members: 108
		2% Agriculture	1% Student		

Percentage of members belonging to the congregation

Less than 5 years	25%
5-10 years	16%
10 or more years	59%

Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation and surrounding community

Composition of congregation		Composition of surrounding community	
91.4% White	8.6% Bi-racial	85.1% White	12% Hispanic
Bridge of Hope is generally Caucasian. It does have several families who have adopted. Many of these children are from a variety of races.		.5% Black/African American	2.4% Other

List the last three persons in this position

August 2011—September 2016	Rev Dr Verlyn Boone
January 2018—May 2020	Rev Joel De Boer
Fall 2020	Dr Nathan Hitchcock (Vision Consultant) + Rev. Dr. Justin Bailey

WORSHIP

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

Bridge of Hope's Worship team consists of 5 members and is led by a part-time Worship Director who facilitates the team's activities. This team plans and leads worship on Sunday mornings as well as Maundy Thursday, Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve. In addition to the Worship Team, there are 6-8 members who sing, play an instrument, run sound or media and help lead worship each Sunday. People rotate Sundays, serving about once or twice per month. The worship planner for that particular week works with the pastor and Worship Director to coordinate the order of worship, the days the sacraments will be given and the general direction they will be leading during a given service.

We also have a time of Koinonia prayer. This is lead by the pastor or the Pastoral Shepherds. During this time, anyone in the congregation can bring their praise and concern forward in fellowship, presenting them in prayer before the Lord.

As our worship and educational hour occurs in a rented space, we have set-up teams who take turns setting up and taking down church every Sunday.

We offer worship time for 3 year olds through transitional kindergarten called Promise Lambs. Children are dismissed part way through the service. Members take turns serving by setting up and teaching these children.

Describe the worship services in your church

We gather each Sunday morning for a contemporary, laid-back, yet structured service. We have a full band with keyboard, drums and guitars. In keeping with our "come as you are" mission, dress and vocabulary are casual.

The order of worship includes reformed emphases. The Word of God is central, with Bible-based sermons and Scripture used throughout the service. Confessional elements such as the Apostles' Creed, Heidelberg Catechism, and Ten Commandments are used sporadically. The Lord's Supper is celebrated monthly.

Sermons are typically expository, though with direct applications to today's life. They last between 20-30 minutes. The gospel of Jesus Christ is expected to be at the center of the preaching. The congregation is relatively highly educated; they welcome more advanced teaching. However, they are most responsive to preaching that uses dynamic illustrations/props and openly involves children.

The congregation is comfortable with participation in the worship service. This is seen through participation in the Koinonia prayer time, in which congregants share joys and concerns.

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

0-2 year olds are cared for in nursery. Members are on a rotating schedule to serve.

3-TK participate in a program called Promised Lambs which meets during the message portion of our services. Parents and others who volunteer are on a rotating schedule to serve. They use "Dwell" curriculum by Faith Alive Christian Resources.

K-5th grade uses Bible Studies for Life during the Sunday School hour. They initially meet as a large group for singing and an introduction to the story and then break up into individual classes.

6th-8th grade uses video-based studies in Sunday School through RightNow Media.

9th-12th grade are beginning a fresh catechism on Sunday mornings called Quest of Faith which is digital, dialogue-based, and calls for active engagement in the form of written answers.

CONNECT: Connect is our youth ministry program that involves our middle school students in 6th-8th grade. They have gatherings two Sunday nights each month where they first meet as a large group and then break up into small groups. Approximately once a month the group will get together for a fun event that helps build community.

YOUTH GROUP: Youth Group is our youth ministry program that involves high school students in 9th-11th grade. In recent years we have begun building our high school youth program and next year intend to have it encompass all high school grades! These students gather a couple of times a month for small group study and join CONNECT for large group outings.

GEMS & Cadets: We partner with other CRC churches in our community for these mid-week programs.

ADULTS: Our small group ministry is vital in our church for discipleship and building relationships; small groups take on two forms at Bridge of Hope: LINK Small Groups and LIFE Small Groups.

LINK Small Groups form around many different aspects and needs of life and are designed to require a short timeframe of meeting together so that opportunities are not lost in the busyness of life. They may meet for a period of 4-6 weeks, or perhaps even more, or they may even be a one-day occasion. LINK Small Groups allow for people with busy lives to experience a small group setting on a short-term basis. These groups give opportunity to meet people you don't know because they offer diversity of being a mixed group, study or social group. They are the front door for inviting new people who have not been involved with our church.

LIFE Small Groups offer opportunity for people to develop community and authenticity on a deeper level. These groups often begin organically and offer a place where, when members fail, become discouraged, or struggle, support and encouragement can occur, and others are there to stand with them. LIFE Small Groups take prayer and commitment seriously and believe in honest discussion. People may make a 2-4 year commitment to be a part of one of these groups that generally meet once a month.

BUILDING/FINANCIAL

Present annual budget	\$369,118 (2023)	
Last year's annual budget	\$332,605 (2022)	
Percentage of financial obligations met in 2022	Bridge of Hope Budget	100%
	Denominational Ministry Shares	100% of pledge
	Classical Ministry Shares	70%
Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares	0%	

FACILITIES

Describe facilities:

We worship in the Sioux Center Intermediate School Gymnasium (950 4th Ave NE). We have a separate office/ministry center where there are two offices, a conference room, and a large room with a kitchen for mid-week programming.

Are your buildings adequate for your ministries?	No
Is a building program projected?	No
Does the church own a parsonage?	No
Location of office or study	43 2nd Street NE, Sioux Center, Iowa

COMPENSATION

The salary range we are prepared to offer our half-time pastor is based on the CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area. Specifically, it is based on Classis Iakota averages.

The average annual increase for this position over the past three years is: 3.0% - 5.0%

Housing: Housing allowance Parsonage only Either of the above

(Total compensation package on how to structure the half-time pastor's package is negotiable.)

Benefits and expenses: Pension Life insurance Medical insurance
 Social Security/Canadian Pension Travel/mileage Continuing education funds
 Continuing education time allotted Sabbatical policy in place Annual vacation (3 weeks)

- Medical insurance—*could be part of the compensation package, available if needed*
- Sabbatical policy in place—*none at this time, could be developed down the road*
- Annual vacation (3 weeks)—*semi-built into a half-time role*

CHURCH CHARACTERISTICS

(The highlighted item is closest to representing our church's characteristics.)

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

External					Internal
	The community exclusively	The community primarily	The community and current members / participants equally	Current members / participants primarily	Current members / participants exclusively

In our church, the WORSHIP SERVICE IS DESIGNED FOR...

Unchurched					Churched
	Designed for unchurched	Emphasis on unchurched	Unchurched and believers	Emphasis on believers	Designed for believers

In our church, the STYLE OF MUSIC used in the worship service is...

Contemporary					Traditional
	Contemporary	Mostly contemporary	Blended	Mostly traditional	Traditional

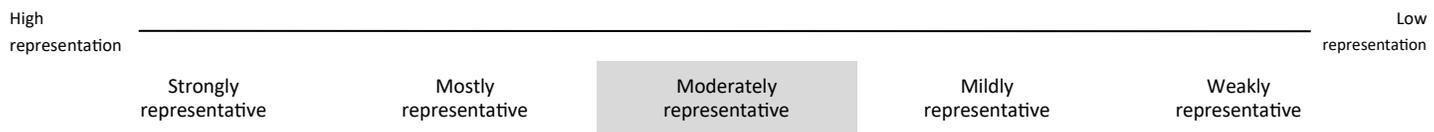
In our church, LEADERSHIP is generally provided by the...

Congregational members					Pastoral staff
	Predominantly lay leaders	Frequently lay leaders	Lay leaders and pastoral staff share leadership	Lay leaders function under the pastoral staff	Predominantly pastoral staff

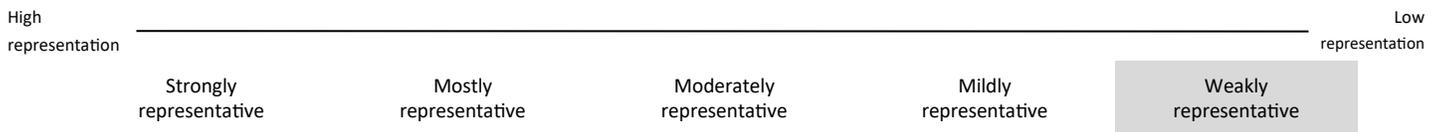
Our church seeks to ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH through...

Informal					Formal
	No specific ministries	Ministries for a few groups	Ministries for selected groups	Ministries for most groups	Ministries for all groups

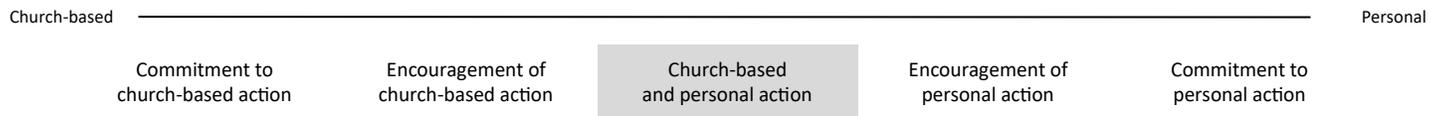
Our church is representative of the ECONOMIC DIVERSITY of our community...



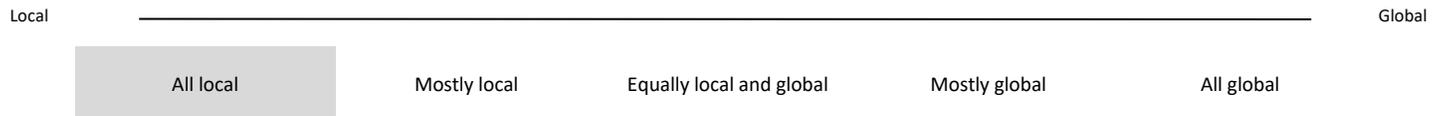
Our church is representative of the ETHNIC DIVERSITY of our community...



Our church's RESPONSE TO COMPASSION, MERCY, AND JUSTICE NEEDS is...



Our church's MISSIONAL FOCUS is...



NARRATIVE

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

Our mission is: “Come as you are, Grow in grace, Go and serve.” We are excited to be tasked with this mission in our community. We welcome all those who want to know God’s story for their lives and to be equipped with grace and truth to live a holy life.

In the last year, Bridge of Hope articulated a renewed vision for our church body. We are living into Vision 2025, making progress toward becoming a church of joyful energy rooted in the love of God, praying the scriptures, and growing followers of Jesus, both personally and corporately. We are also becoming a church of joyful order and accountability, purposeful in all of its programs, and developing as an authentic, caring community. Finally, we are becoming a church of joyful hospitality, humbly engaging people from different backgrounds, inviting people into the life of the church, and creating strong ministry partnerships. *See Appendix A for Vision 2025 document.

In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

Bridge of Hope participates in ecumenical activities in formal and informal ways. Formally, we are part of the Sioux Center Ministerial Association, Classis Iakota and the CRC denomination. Informally, we partner with sister churches in Sioux Center to provide opportunities for our children in the Cadets and GEMS programs. We are invited to participate in and on occasion help plan two Christian Reformed combined church services in our community each year—the Ascension Day Service and the Reformation Day Service. Many members of our body are involved in ministries such as Northwest Iowa Cursillo, Northwest Iowa Encounter, Royal Family Kids of NW Iowa, Celebrate Recovery and the Hope Food Pantry - Sioux Center.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:

Our strengths are tightly aligned to our mission and vision. We are intentional in providing Sunday morning worship services that are contemporary in nature and inviting to members and non-members alike. Our teams are active, operating with clear missional mandates, and helping us develop as an authentic, caring community. We are excited about our new organizational structure, including equipping lay leaders in the church to go and serve our community. Our Youth Discipleship programs are vibrant, well-led, and invite our youth to become growing followers of Jesus.

Reflect on your passions as a church:

Bridge of Hope is passionate about being an authentic, caring community. This passion is displayed during Sunday morning worship and in our life together. For example, we have a time of Koinonia each Sunday, a time of intimate communion through the sharing of joys and concerns. Each summer, we hold a service at the local park where different members of the church share their testimonies of God's work in their lives. Bridge is passionate about being a learning community. We are excited to provide opportunities for our members to become growing followers of Jesus and have invested in our adult and youth discipleship programs and activities. Bridge of Hope is passionate about being a joyful body of believers, rooted in the love of God. Our worship services are joy-filled and welcoming. We actively seek opportunities for our congregation to partner with local ministries and for ways we can make a difference in our local community, including an annual service-Sunday in the spring. Other examples of this passion include the Hallelujah Party that Bridge hosts for our community each year on October 31, or the way members serve in local ministries such as the Hope Food Pantry or Royal Family Kids Camp.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles. (Challenges)

Bridge of Hope has many committed church members, but we still struggle filling lay leadership positions such as Council or various teams. We have experienced some healthy growth post-Covid and while vacant. While we have an active integration process and do an exemplary job of welcoming new people to church, we have experienced challenges in equipping newcomers and church members to 'grow in grace' and 'go and serve.' While we realize this challenge is not unique to Bridge of Hope, notably in a time of increased church consumerism, we are working hard to see this as an opportunity.

As a mobile church, Bridge of Hope does experience some challenges with a rented church space for Sunday morning worship and Sunday school, although our recent decision to exclusively utilize the school gym has lessened the challenges of multiple locations. We do have a very functional ministry center / building that hosts our administrative offices as well as space for team meetings, youth activities, and small groups.

What has been the most interesting and challenging events in the life of your church in the last three years?

We experienced a 'perfect storm' during the spring of 2020. The pandemic was a significant challenge, just as it was for churches across the world, navigating how "to be church" when we couldn't be together in person. But during that same time, Bridge of Hope faced an even more significant challenge: working through Article 17, the church order's prescribed mechanism for ending a pastor's call to a congregation. Our previous pastor left abruptly during the beginning of Covid due to what we have agreed to as a mismatch of vision and expectations, as well as a perceived difference in the interpretation of roles. This process, albeit painful and divisive, led us to our church consultant, Dr. Nathan Hitchcock. Dr. Hitchcock has navigated Bridge of Hope through these stormy waters to a place of hope and renewed vision. We have clarity in who we are and who God wants us to be in this community. Vision 2025 is alive and well, helping Bridge look up, look in, and look out. We are pursuing the challenge to become a church of joyful energy, order, and hospitality.

List major goals that this congregation has set for itself or opportunities the congregation anticipates:

Bridge of Hope is working to implement the various strategies coming out of Vision 2025.

Implementing a new staffing model to match the future vision/direction, which includes filling the following part-time roles: Worship Director, Sunday School Director, Congregational Caregiver, Clerical Support, and Part-Time Pastor. These new positions will join the staff we already have—Church Administrator/Ministry Coordinator and Youth Director.

Revamping our outreach and mission team to find the best way to make an impact in our community.

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

Being Christians of Reformed accent means that we hold true to the authority of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, follow reformed doctrine, and understand that we are a part of a larger body of believers. While holding these things true, we seek to welcome, care for, and love all members and guests. We are open to receiving people from different denominational and cultural backgrounds.

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

Bridge of Hope participates in joint initiatives with other area CRC churches (combined Ascension Day and Reformation Day services, GEMS, Cadets). Consistent with the CRC denomination, Bridge financially supports local Christian day schools. We regularly participate in Classis Iakota and pay our classical and denominational shares to the best of our ability. Bridge of Hope values and appreciates being a part of a larger denominational body that provides us guidance, support, and accountability and has engaged with and appreciated the support provided by Pastor Church Resources.

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

In recent years, the political climate in the United States has become tense and polarized; within our own congregations, we struggle to navigate the increasing polarization. How do we disagree in love, and stay rooted in the truth? The North American church also continues to struggle with racial tensions. How do we walk alongside and love those who are different from us? Gender and sexuality issues continue to divide church culture. How do we move forward in light of Synod’s recent decisions? Also, the Christian culture is increasingly more consumeristic when it comes to church membership and participation. How do we draw new members into the life of the church?

Although it is easy to be discouraged by these challenges, we believe we’re called to be ‘salt and light’ (Matt 5:13-16) in the world. We are to love others as Christ loved us, while holding true to Scripture. Thankfully, we have an incredible model of Jesus Christ to follow when faced with these challenging issues.

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

- 1) Early years: The first major events in the history of Bridge of Hope after formation was the decision to join the Christian Reformed Church denomination in the early 2000’s and the subsequent calling of our first pastor.
- 2) Middle years: Prior to 2013, Bridge of Hope did not own any buildings; that year we purchased our current ‘Ministry Center’, a building that houses the church offices as well as a space for meetings and fellowship. Later in 2015, Bridge of Hope submitted an overture to Classis Iakota to allow women in church office which was subsequently approved.
- 3) Recent years: Since 2020, our church has experienced significant challenges, along with much grace and hope for the future. As the Covid-19 pandemic was hitting in March 2020, which affected everyone and was hard on most churches, Bridge entered into an Article 17 separation from its most recent pastor (noted earlier) in May 2020. Since that time, Bridge of Hope has engaged extensively with Classis Iakota, CRC Pastor Church Resources, and with a church consultant, Dr Nathan Hitchcock, who for over two years, helped us work through a process of grieving, self-reflection, restoration, and revisioning. Though initially the ‘perfect storm’ of the pandemic and separation was very challenging, God’s grace and faithfulness have been at work and brought us a new vision (Vision 2025) for the future that the church is excited about!

LEADERSHIP

**How many Council members does your church have?
What is the length of term for Council members?**

5 Pastoral Shepherds (Elders); 5 Service Shepherds (Deacons)
Three years, with the ability to be renominated for 3 more.
When serving one 3-year term an individual may be renominated after being out of office for 1 year. When serving 2 back-to-back terms, the individual must be out of office for 3 years.

How often does Council meet?

Monthly

What subgroups of Council exist, how do they function and how often do they meet?

Council meets on the third Wednesday of each month. Often, Pastoral Shepherds (Elders) and Service Shepherds (Deacons) meet separately before or after the Council meeting.

The president of Council can either be a Pastoral Shepherd or a Service Shepherd; they chair the Council meetings. The chair of Pastoral Shepherds chairs the Pastoral Shepherd meetings, and the chair of the Service Shepherds runs their meeting. The treasurer is a Service Shepherd while the clerk is a Pastoral Shepherd. In the past, we’ve invited the pastor to do a time of teaching at our Council meetings so that we can learn about and discuss current issues in the church.

Council members also serve as liaisons to our church’s teams. Some of these teams meet monthly, such as the Worship Team. Others meet as needed. Each Council member is a liaison to one to two teams. They report on the teams at the monthly Council meeting.

Our church administrator is present at and takes minutes at the Pastoral Shepherd meetings and Council meetings.

VISION 2025

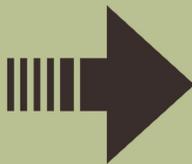
BRIDGE OF HOPE



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