



Ebenezer Reformed Church

*"A body of believers glorifying God, outwardly
focused, committed to growth in personal
transformation and in number."*

2997 N. German Church Road
Oregon, IL 61061
(815)732-6313
www.EbenezerReformed.com

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* Some of the data used to complete this profile was gathered using our church directory which was updated August 2025. Other information was gathered by Search Committee members who consulted church records and interviewed key consistory members.

This profile was completed by the Search Committee – **November 2025**

Section One:
Who We Are



General Information

Location: 2997 N. German Church Road
Oregon, IL 61061
Phone: (815) 732-6313
Website: www.EbenezerReformed.com

Regional Synod Mid-America

Classis Illinois

Classis Supervisor Rev. Bob Hoffman
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Church Secretary Dee Haak
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Additional Paid Staff Treasurer (Part-time)
Janitor (Part-time)
Secretary (Part-time)

Search Committee Chairperson Melissa Reecher
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Search Committee Members Cara Stewart - secretary
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Tony Berg
Stacy Flanagan
Gary McDanel
Larry Seabold
Joseph & Kendrah Ring
Cara Stewart
Nelda Johnson
John Smith (Advisory)

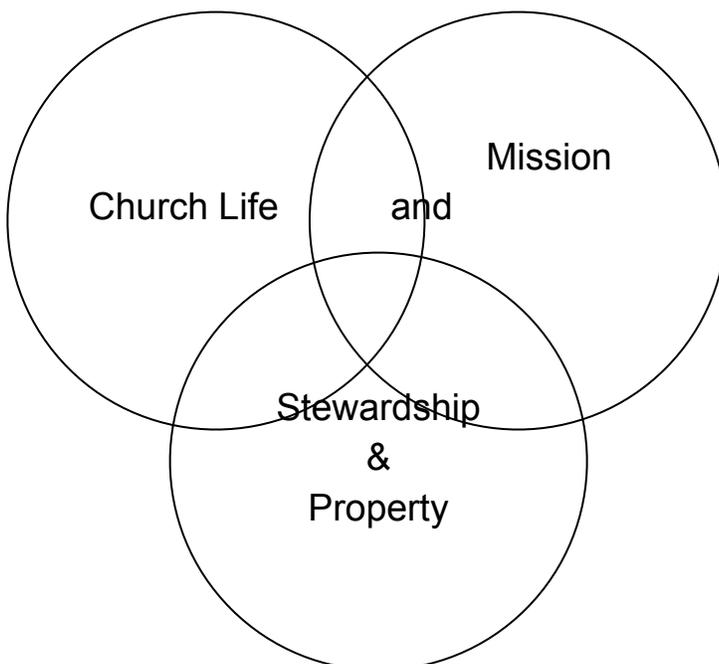
Consistory Information

The consistory is a representative body of the congregation, elected by the congregation to various offices within the church. Elders and deacons each serve a three year term. Regular consistory meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month; special meetings may be called as the need arises. Current consistory members include:

Elders:	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
	Carl Berg	71	Retired Rock River Energy Services Agent
	Dale Flanagan	58	Supervisor Ready-Mix
	Steve Raine	61	Retired Nuclear Training Instructor - Exelon
	John Shelley	66	Retired as a principal scientist in R & D
Deacons:			
	Cara Stewart	61	Apartment Manager
	Bill Reeher	66	Retired Work Control Supervisor - Exelon
	Liz Brooks	68	Retired Customer service, Oregon Park District
	Mark Mengle	61	Semi-retired Nuclear Station Operator

Councils of Consistory

Within the consistory, there are three councils as illustrated below. Although each council is separate and distinct, there are areas where they overlap with one another. The Church Life council is responsible for helping people grow in their relationship with God, and in their knowledge of the Bible. It also provides direction for the congregation in the areas of worship and music. Mission & Outreach raises support for missions, local and worldwide. As well as planning outreach events for the community. Stewardship & Property oversees the use and maintenance of church property and involves members in giving of their time, talents, and financial support, as well as other means of means of stewardship. All consistory members members serve on one of the various councils. Members of the congregation are encouraged to serve as well.



Worship Information:

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Average Worship Attendance 2014	Average Worship Attendance 2024
84	40
Average Sunday School Attendance 2014	Average Sunday School Attendance
30	12

Ebenezer is a very friendly and caring family. These attributes thus spill over into our style of worship. The morning service starts with a Call to Worship that sets the tone for praise and worship to inspire us to be totally involved, not just spectators.

Worship aids & Bibles:

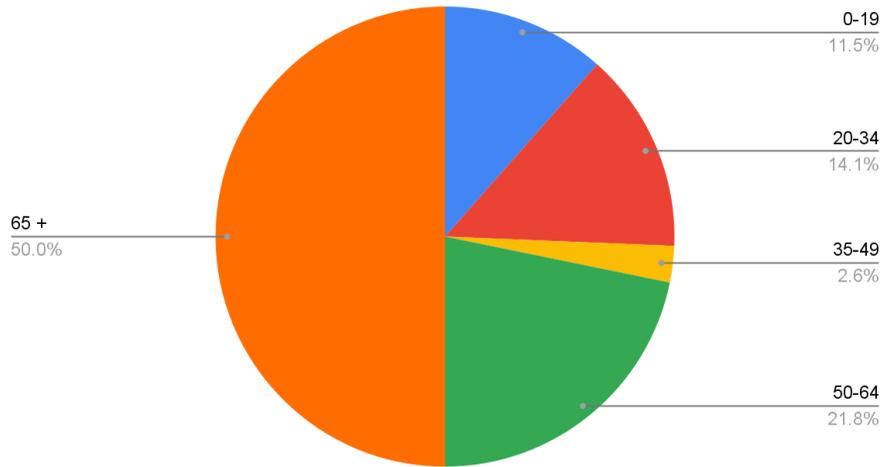
Ebenezer is currently using The Celebration Hymnal by Word/Integrity Music (Print date: 2000). All songs are projected on a screen using Easy Worship Software at the front of the sanctuary. The 1984 NIV is the most predominately used Bible translation. To accommodate those who are unable to attend or shut-in, we stream our services via OBS software to YouTube or provide CDs.

The music format can be that of praise songs, hymns, or a combination of the two. These may be accompanied by the organ or worship team which enhance our time of worship. The more traditional side of worship can be seen in the sacraments, where the utmost respect is given to acknowledge the great sacrifice our Savior Jesus Christ endured on our behalf. The congregation is most comfortable in an atmosphere of sharing and caring that respects God’s holiness.

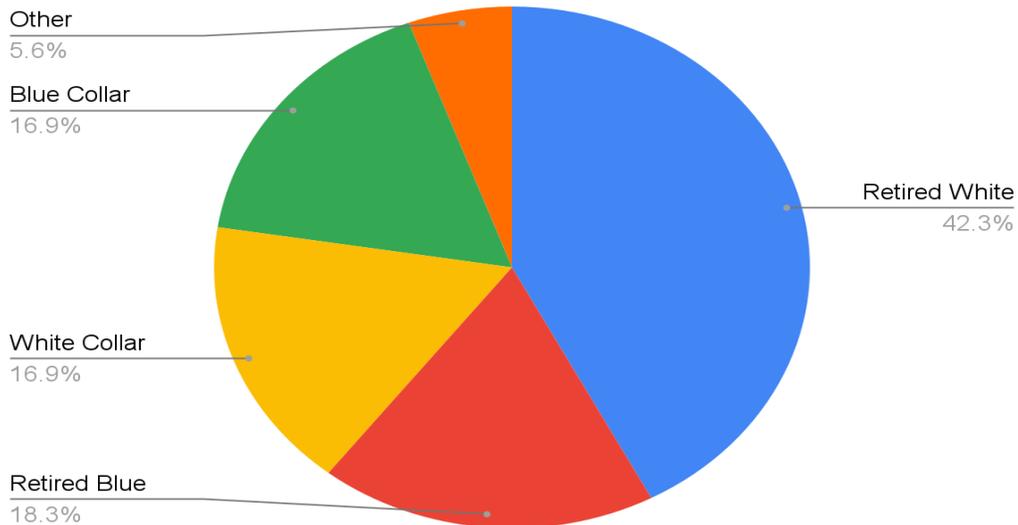
Congregational Data

The following statistics were gathered from our church directory updated in August of 2025. The directory consists of confessing members as well as non-members.

Age Groups

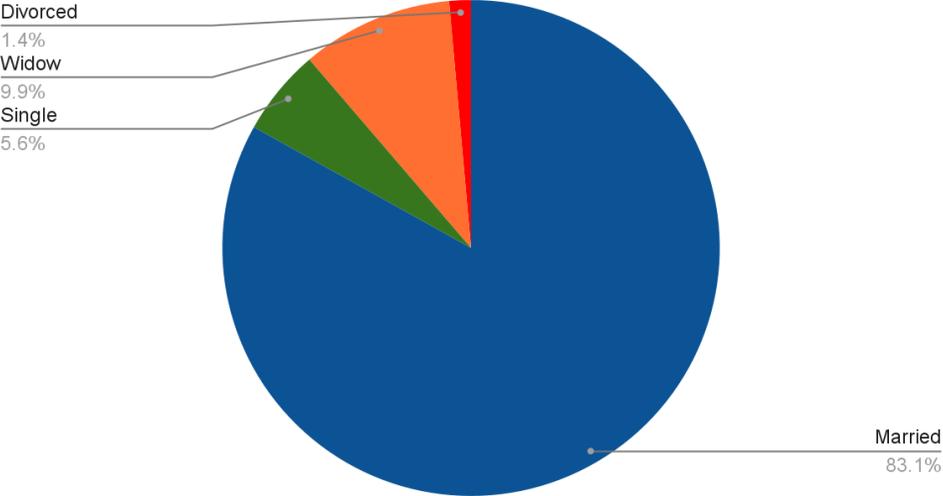


The chart below shows the occupations within Ebenezer.

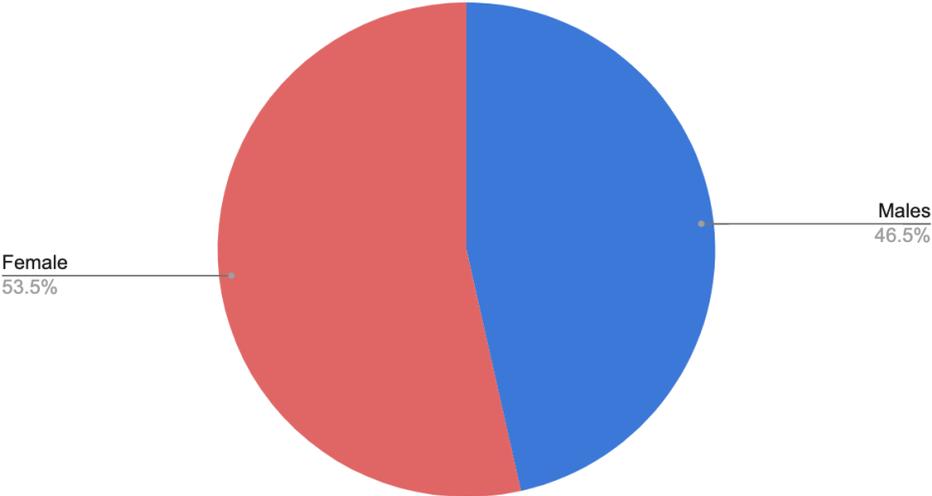


Other areas of interest related to congregational data are gender and marital status as shown below.

Marital Status



Gender



Section Two:
Where We're Located



Community

Ebenezer Reformed Church is located in beautiful North Central Illinois, in Ogle County. Geographically, that puts the church about thirty-five miles south of the Illinois/Wisconsin state line and about the center of the state on an east/west axis. Ogle County is the seventeenth largest county in Illinois and comprises twenty-four townships totaling 757 square miles or 488,320 acres.



Approximate location of Ebenezer Reformed Church

Given our setting, most people would consider ERC to be a country church in a fairly rural county. The total population of Ogle County at the time of the 2020 census was 51,788.

The church sits one mile south of the Byron Nuclear Generating Station in a triangle between the towns of Byron (population 3,784) Oregon (population 3,604) and Stillman Valley (population 1,075). These numbers represent populations of the villages and do not include numerous sub-divisions outside of the city limits. The three towns listed are all less than six miles from the church.



The majority (close to 90%) of the members of Ebenezer live within twelve miles of the church. In that same twelve mile circle, there are over twenty-five other churches of various denominations. This number does include one other RCA church, Elim Reformed in Kings located 12 miles east of Ebenezer.

There is adequate grocery shopping as well as a number of pharmacies in the twelve mile circle around the church. For clothing and other major shopping needs most people will travel to the Dixon, Rockford or Rochelle areas.



Numerous outdoor recreational opportunities exist in the general area. There are four state parks; Lowden Miller near Oregon, White Pines, near Polo, about fifteen miles away, Castle Rock, south of Oregon, and Lowden State Park, near Oregon. Most of these parks offer camping and hiking trails. The Rock River that flows through both Byron and Oregon offers the activities of boating and fishing. Additionally, there is an RCA affiliated campground called The King's Camp located near Chana, IL, which is approximately 6 miles from our church. The 200 acre facility offers camping, hiking, fishing, canoeing and swimming. Our annual church picnic and worship service is held there in the summer.



Schools

The three towns of Byron, Oregon and Stillman Valley are all served by community or consolidated school districts. The 2024 school populations of the three districts are as follows; Byron 1,440; Oregon 1,467; Stillman Valley 1,466.

There are two private Christian schools within driving distance, Faith Christian in Grand Detour and St. Paul in Rochelle. Homeschooling has played a vital part in the education of our youth both, past and present.



Byron Tigers



Oregon Hawks



Stillman Valley Cardinals

Section Three:
Where We've Been



Ebenezer Reformed Church
1969-2005

Ebenezer Reformed Church History

Starting around 1849, immigrants began settling the fertile farm ground of Northern Illinois. One such adventuring soul was Jan Reints who is believed to be the first settler from the East Friesen area of Germany. After 1855 the number of German immigrants increased rapidly in this area, many of them coming from Ostfriesland.

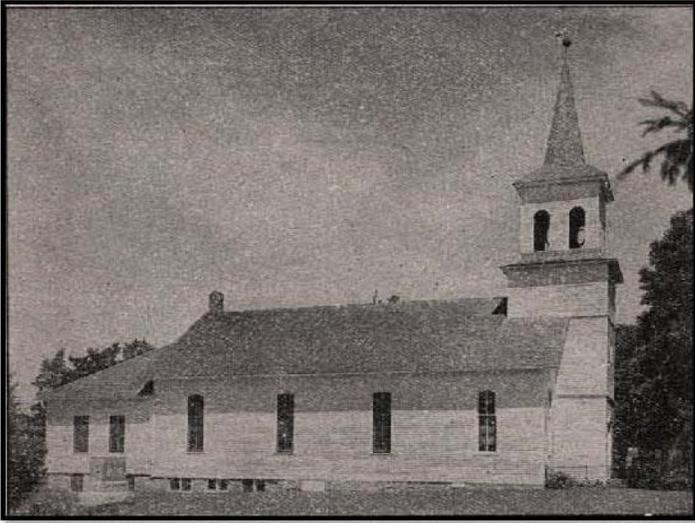
For years, a number of the families from the Ostfriesland area were invited into the home of Harm Roos for a time of worship and singing. His farm was located about a mile north of the present church location. After some time, the group grew so large they could no longer fit in the log cabin home. They started searching for a more permanent meeting and worship space.

They were told of a school house that was not being used; it was located about two miles north and a little east of the present church. The school house was moved to a plot of land that was donated by one of the worshiping families. The exact spot where the school was moved and how the move was accomplished remains a bit of a mystery.

The official start of Ebenezer Reformed Church came a full twenty years after the known German immigrants settled in this area. Sometime in 1869, the Classis of Wisconsin received a petition and granted permission for the organization of a formal congregation.

Through the early years, various ministers from surrounding areas like German Valley and Forreston, as well as laymen of the church, provided the sermons during the worship time. As you can imagine, the congregation became anxious to have their own minister and in 1874 extended the call to Rev. L. Watermulder who became the first pastor.

On January 14, 1875 the decision was made to build a larger building. The original church structure was 40 feet by 60 feet and was built on the land across the road from the present church. There are many stories about this original structure, but here are a few we would like to share:



**Ebenezer Reformed Church
(1944)**



**The Parsonage
(1944)**

There was a partition down the middle of the aisle and men sat on the south side and women sat on the north side. There is no clear date as to when the partition was removed but the desire of families to sit together may have had some influence. Another story goes that every year at the congregational meeting there would be an auction of the pews for between 50 cents and \$5.00 and the members who paid the most were allowed to sit nearest the front of the church. There was a section in the northeast corner of the church for those who could not afford to pay, or visitors. Early services were in the High German language and ran about two hours long, from 10:00 to 12:00. The order of service was very much like it is today; prelude, invocation, hymn, scripture,

pastoral prayer, hymn, sermon (45 minutes to one hour), closing prayer, hymn, benediction, postlude. The tradition of using the German language was also carried over to the Consistory minutes which were recorded in German until December 18, 1940. As the reader can see, tradition is a large part of Ebenezer and its history. However, as a church we know that we can never lose sight of the future that God has planned for us as individuals or as a church body.

Facilities

On February 27, 1964, seven church members were appointed to a new church building committee. After two years of meetings, the committee resolution was approved by a large majority of church members attending the annual meeting.

Between the approval in 1966 and March 1968 the church members and this committee recommended that the church be built. A special congregational meeting was held to build the new church by a vote of 67.4% to 32.6%. Ground breaking was on May 12, 1968.



On May 12, 1969, the new Ebenezer Reformed Church building was dedicated. This was finished in time to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Ebenezer Reformed Church.

The pastor's office was located at the southwest corner and the secretary's office was located in the northwest corner of the church, and they remain there today.

The pastor's office was located at the southwest corner and the secretary's office was located in the northwest

On July 25, 1978, the mortgage was paid off, and on October 29th the church held the mortgage burning ceremony. The very next day, a committee was formed to start a new parsonage fund. The starting date to build the new parsonage was April 1, 1979. (See details of parsonage in Section 5)



Facilities cont'd.

After many years, Ebenezer realized more space was needed for Sunday School rooms, a larger kitchen and a place for youth and social activities. A new committee was formed and met for the first time on September 21, 1999.

After five years of meetings and fund raising, the ground breaking was on September 4, 2004. The new addition was dedicated in 2005.

The addition added another 8,146 square feet to the church. The Sunday School wing includes eight classrooms and restroom facilities. The Family Life Center is used for many diverse functions such as: youth activities, potlucks, volleyball and basketball. It is approximately 62'



x 65'. It can be noted that the entire facility is air conditioned. The Family Life Center has been made available for various community organizations and activities.



The cost of the new addition was \$1,300,000. The church made a down payment of \$550,000 leaving a mortgage of \$750,000. After two pledge drives and a memorial donation, the balance of the mortgage was approximately \$259,000 with a monthly payment of \$4,372.56. This mortgage was paid off in 2020. Plans

were made to celebrate the completion of the mortgage as well as Ebenezer's 150th Anniversary. Many of the plans were carried out but the Covid-19 pandemic disallowed the remaining events.

Pictures of Facilities



Sanctuary



Sunday School Wing



Kitchen



Family Life Center



Sanctuary



Sunday School Wing

Section Four:
What We Offer



Ministries and Programs

Ladies Bible Study - This is a women's Bible study which meets every other Thursday in the morning Spring through Fall. Different study guides are used. This is open to all women of the church.

Ladies Aid - The ladies of the church organize the refreshments for funerals. This is open to all women of the church.

Wonderful Women in the Word - This is an outreach group for unchurched women and new Christians. However, all women are welcome. The women use an inductive Bible study to explore the Scriptures. They meet on Wednesday nights from October through May.

Men's Bible Study - All men of the church are welcome to participate on the first and third Tuesday nights of the month at 6:30 p.m. for this Bible study. The group meets October through March, and they study various Christian topics.

Praise Team - There is currently one praise team which leads us in contemporary praise music during our worship service on various Sunday mornings. At present, we are utilizing lyric videos to accompany the worship team.

Men's Breakfast - The third Saturday of the month men of the church and community meet to share a meal, devotions and fellowship at a local restaurant.

Life Groups/Small Groups- In accordance with the early church in Acts, members meet twice a month for a meal, Bible Study and fellowship. This ministry offers the opportunity for families to participate in a small group and relaxed atmosphere.

Prayer Chain - Various members of the church are active in our prayer chain. When there is a prayer need or praise, a contact is made and the prayer chain is started. Congregation members are contacted either by telephone or email with prayer concerns or praises.



Church Picnic - The church has an annual picnic usually in June. It is held at King's Camp which is part of the Reformed Church in America. The camp is approximately 6 miles from Ebenezer. Campers are invited to join in Ebenezer's church service held at the camp. Following the service we host a potluck dinner for congregants and campers.

Sunday Morning Fellowship – Every Sunday morning after the worship service we gather for a time of fellowship and share a snack. This is a time to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions. Members and non-members enjoy building friendships and catching up over a cup of coffee.



Sunday Morning Fellowship

Past programs – The following is a list of programs that have been successful in the past which could be renewed if needed.

Divorce Care and Divorce Care for Kids- help and support for families and individuals affected by divorce.

Grief Share – help and support for families and individuals dealing with a loved one's death.

Financial Peace University- classes based on Dave Ramsey's program teaching Christians financial responsibility.

Choir

Church Bazaar

Work Camp

Christian Education & Youth Programs

Sunday School

Ages 3 years old and up
Meets every Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
prior to morning worship

Curriculum:
Grades Preschool, K-5th –
Answers in Genesis
Adult – Bible study

Children's Sermon

During Worship service every
Sunday.

Past Youth Programs

Pioneer Kids Club
Youth group
Children in Worship
VBS



Our Partners in Mission (PIM)

Rockford Rescue Mission: This is a local Mission that shares hope and help in Jesus' name to move people from homelessness and despair toward personal and spiritual wholeness. The church holds a worship service twice a year at this facility. Sack lunches are provided for the evening meal. This is a temporary shelter for individuals in need where they can be spiritually and physically fed. Ebenezer also supports this Mission with monetary gifts, clothing, food and paper goods throughout the year.

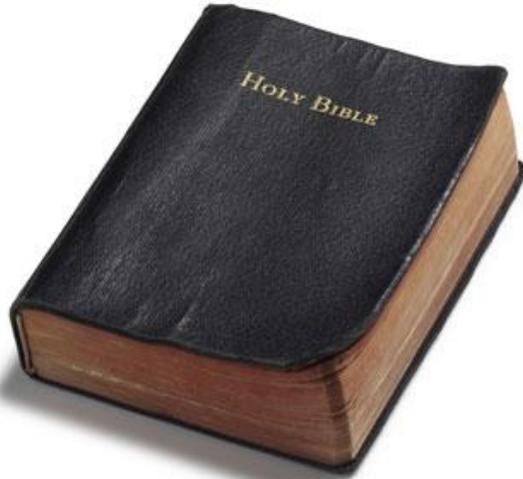
Jackson County/ Grace Covenant Ministries: This is in Annville, Kentucky and is an outreach ministry for area residents who need to experience the love of Christ.

Art Aviles: Art's main missionary vision is to see people come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, thereby bringing glory to God. His hope is that this is accomplished through the ministry of Bible translation among the Dadjo people of Chad, Africa and through the relationships that God gives him here in the United States. His ultimate desire for his work in Chad is to make God's Word known to the Dadjo people in a language that speaks to their hearts.

Deacons Fund:The purpose of the Deacon Fund is to provide material assistance in the Name and to the Glory of Jesus Christ as an explicit testimony to the love of Jesus Christ, not simply to provide services. The Deacon's fund ministry is designed to reach those individuals who are attendees at Ebenezer Reformed Church during their time of need.

*There are many other local mission projects outside the PIM that our church supports throughout the year which are too numerous to mention.

Section Five:
How We Seek to be Led



The congregational survey conducted in November of 2025 identified the following as our strengths and weaknesses. Overall, Ebenezer is looking for a Pastor to help us advance our strengths, address and overcome our weaknesses, and grow together as a church family.

Our Strengths as we see them:

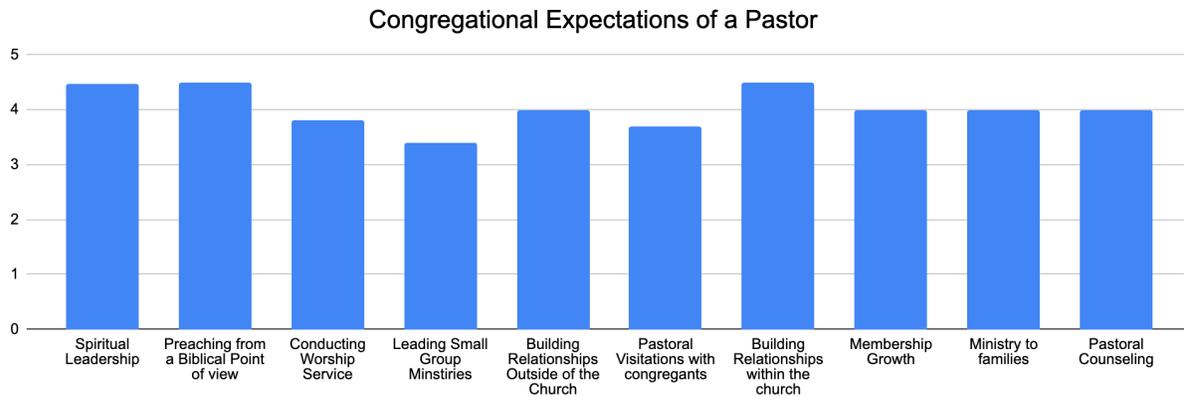


Our Weaknesses as we see them:



Expectations

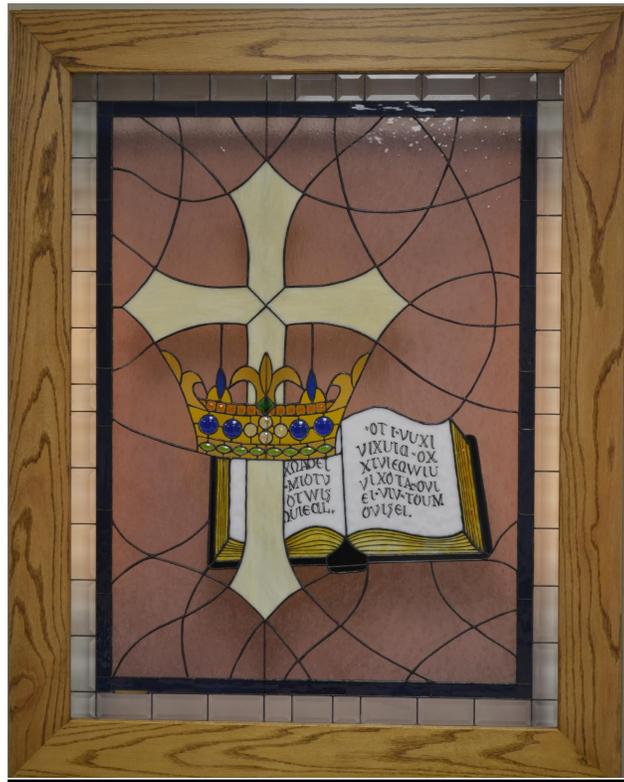
Looking to the future of our church, the congregation was asked to identify the importance of the gifts of a pastor on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. It is our belief that the pastor called to lead Ebenezer into the future will have the pastoral gifts to meet the challenge of these expectations.



Ebenezer has a rich heritage in its pastoral leadership. Many of its pastors served the church for long pastorates, which speaks well of the church. The three most recent leaders and the years they served follow: Rev. Brion Brooks (2009 – 2014), Rev. John Wisdom (2015-2017), Josiah Youngquist (2019-2024)

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 1 Peter 5:1-4

Section Six:
Compensation, Benefits,
and Ministry Expenses



Compensation, Benefits, and Ministry Expenses

The compensation package Ebenezer is prepared to offer our new pastor follows the recommendations put forth in the RCA Minister's Salary Schedule, Rules and Guidelines. We will meet and/or exceed the RCA recommendations in all areas.

The parsonage pictured below will be provided and is located across the road from the church. It is located on two plus acres of land and includes a two-story, 4-bedroom, 2½ - bath, with a partially finished lower-level home and an attached 2½ car garage.



Congregational giving

Number of those whose annual contribution is:

\$100 or less	3	\$1,001 - \$1,500	0	\$2,501 - \$3,000	6
\$101 - \$500	6	\$1,501 - \$2,000	4	\$3,001 and over	20
\$501 - \$1,000	5	\$2,001 - \$2,500	2		

Income and Expenses

	2022	2023		2024	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Consolidated Annual Receipts	\$278,476	\$200,000	\$175,068	\$200,000	\$157,026
Total administrative/ Church Life	\$1,569	\$1,800	\$1,244	\$1,800	\$1,469
Total Worship & Music Expenses	\$664	\$1,655	\$1,493	\$1,955	\$1,677
Total Mission Fund Expenses	\$36,708	\$38,944	\$34,508	\$42,393	\$40,574
Total Maintenance	\$9,435	\$10,780	\$6,507	\$11,300	\$6,379
Total Non-budget	\$81,779	\$85,622	\$0	\$0	\$47,073
Total Other Expenses	\$550	\$500	\$259	\$500	\$393
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$95,464	\$108,698	\$110,372	\$119,119	\$118,048
Total Utilities & insurance	\$31,781	\$45,263	\$39,347	\$37,434	\$35,717
Total Budget Expenses	\$257,950	\$293,262	\$193,730	\$214,501	\$251,330

*Previous budgets are available upon request.