

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church Profile



Introduction

Have the opportunity to experience Alberta's clear blue skies and Northern Lights all within driving distance of the majestic Rocky Mountains. Neerlandia CRC is a 600+ member, family-oriented church in a rural setting in the heart of Alberta. We are an active multi-generational congregation with a strong foundation of over 100 years of ministry.

Any questions or requests for further information can be directed to the Search Committee secretary, Steven DeVries, steven.devries@ualberta.net

Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church
4913 50th St Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0
Phone (780) 674-4232 Fax (780) 674-4810
Website www.neerlandiacrc.org
Classis Alberta North

Search Committee Chairperson: Richard Krikke

Where We Have Come From: **A Brief History of the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church**

In the early 1900's a group of Dutch immigrants living in Edmonton began looking for a place to start a farming settlement north of Edmonton. They were looking for a place with good soil and few, if any, other settlers, in which to establish a distinctively Dutch and Reformed community.

The organizational meeting for the Neerlandia CRC, was held on June 2, 1915, in the recently completed log church building. The congregation started with 35 confessing and 46 baptized members. Dutch was used almost exclusively in church services for the next 30 years.

In 1929 Rev. Harm Van Der Woude became the first full time pastor and he stayed for 12 1/2 years.

An influx of Dutch immigrants from the Netherlands after WW II affected congregational life as some of them had been involved in the 'Vrijgemaakte Kerk.' In August 1950 a number of families separated from the Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church to form the Neerlandia Canadian Reformed Church.

In 1973 Sunday school classes for children aged 4 through grade 2 began, held during the morning worship service. In 1974 Rev. Neil Vriend came to minister among us and stayed until 1991.

The Synodical debates of the early 1990's had a significant impact for Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, as it did for many Christian Reformed churches in North America. In July 1992, 25 - 30% of the congregation left and formed the Emmanuel Reformed Church of Neerlandia. Shortly hereafter Rev. James Mantel accepted the call to become our pastor and he ministered among us from 1993-2000.

The years following the split saw changes in the style of worship including increased participation by choirs and music groups and the integration of a variety of musical instruments. The congregation became more involved in prayers and readings and the Worship Committee and pastor implemented the use of more creative and varied liturgies.

The Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church underwent a ministry evaluation process completed in the summer of 1998 and set goals for the next five years.

From February 2000 to September 2012, Dr. Raymond Blacketer served the congregation. One major change implemented during this time was the switch from a 10:00 service and a 2:30 service to the present format. Cross Training (teaching service) with discussion is held at 10:00 at which time children attend Sunday School. This is followed by a half hour of coffee and fellowship then the Worship Service for the entire church at 11:15.

Sandy Blacketer served from February 2000 to September 2012 as Neerlandia's first youth director, enhancing the youth program already in place.

The voting for office bearers was replaced by the affirmation process several years ago. In 2011 the first woman elder was installed.

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As part of the search process, Neerlandia CRC congregation completed the Healthy Church Survey and Conversations in February, 2013. A Visioning Committee evaluated the information gleaned from these activities and worked together with the Search Committee to update our ministry plan, vision and goals.

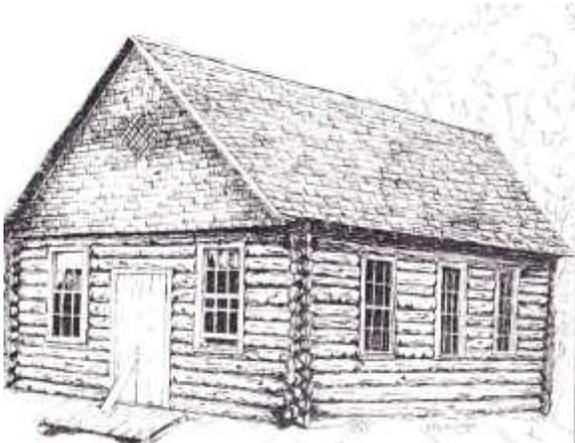
During this time Pastor Sidney DeWaal and wife, Janet served as our interim pastor. Pastor Ferry Yang accepted our call in the fall of 2013. After an unresolvable conflict Pastor Yang and our congregation separated under Article 17a effective March, 2015.

On August 1 & 2, 2015, our congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary with a Saturday afternoon of special activities, followed by a supper and program. On Sunday, we held a special worship service. It was a bitter-sweet time. Our hearts still ached due to the conflict of the previous year, yet we were able to celebrate the faithfulness of the Lord over the years. *For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100:5*

In Sept. 2015, we hired Pastor Ron Klok as a transition pastor. He worked together with a newly formed Transition Team to help us.

1. Come to terms with and find healing following pastor/church conflict
2. Review, re-work, re-own our Vision, Ministry Core Values and Ministry Plan
3. Go through a process of values clarification
4. Get to a place where we are ready to engage a new calling process

After Pastor Ron's year with us was complete, we formed a new Search Committee to begin the process of calling a pastor. In Jan, 2017, Pastor Art Verboon was hired as an interim pastor and then installed as our full time pastor in June, 2017. Now our congregation would like to expand our pastoral team and therefore, as of March 2018, our committee has been directed to search for a Director of Faith Formation.



Staff and Membership: Brief Statistics

Paid Staff Positions

Ordained pastor --- full time
 Executive Assistant --- part time
 Bookkeeper --- part time
 Janitor --- part time

Position(s) Available: 1 full time Director of Faith Formation
 Date of Vacancy: March 2018

Membership

NCRC Membership	2013	2018
Number of Families	140	153
Professing Members	371	378
Non-professing	226	236

Total # of members as of April 2018 is 614.

Profile of Church Membership

Age

0 - 10 16%
 11 - 20 16%
 21 - 30 20%
 31 - 40 13%
 41 - 50 9%
 51 - 60 15%
 61 - 70 7%
 71 - 80 2%
 80 plus 2%

Educational Level of Adults:

11.5% Some High School or Less
 51% High School
 36% College/University
 1.5% Graduate School

Occupations

24% Agriculture
 19% Professional
 13% Retired
 10% Stay at home parents
 6% Trades
 5% Office and Secretarial
 4% Truck drivers
 4% Business
 3% Oil and Gas
 3% Nursing/School Aids
 2% Sales
 7% Other

Length of Membership

Less than one year 1.7%
 5 years or less 10.5%
 6-10 years 14%
 11 years or more 73.8%

Racial/Ethnic Composition

98% Caucasian
 2% Other

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Neerlandia CRC Ministries:

This is What We Do

We Worship Together

Our Sunday morning worship starts at 10:00 with a teaching session we call “**Cross Training**”. During this time we offer Sunday School for children age 3 to grade 6 and a teaching service in the sanctuary for the adults. We enjoy coffee fellowship in the hall from 10:45 -11:10 and reconvene in the sanctuary for a regular worship service. During this hour there is a chance for the 3-5 yr olds to have supervised playtime in the basement. Nursery is provided for ages infant-2 years during both services.

We have a very active **Worship Committee** that plans all special services and requests participation from all age levels in reading, praying and music. Special services are held on Good Friday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Periodically we plan services which focus on the ministries of GEMS, Cadets and Young People.

We celebrate communion approximately every six weeks. All baptized members who come with age and ability appropriate faith are welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper. Parents are encouraged to enter into conversation with their children about the Lord's Supper, discussing its purpose, symbolism and significance before their children participate. Due to the size of our group we stay in our pews and are served by the elders. We use cubed white bread and grape juice as the elements.

The style of liturgy we use is a blend of traditional and contemporary. We have many members who have musical gifts and our congregation enjoys singing. Our music ministry consists of 5 praise groups, each with their own style, who take turns leading the music. Organ and piano as well as drums, keyboard, and guitars are used to accompany singing.



We Share the Gospel

Our **Mission Committee** leads us in supporting 2 missionaries and 2 Church plants in partnership with Resonate Global. Our pastors have been part of the Barrhead Ministerial Association and involved in the volunteer chaplaincy program at the local hospital and nursing home and we lead a worship service at the senior citizen homes on a monthly basis. We also have an active **Coffee Break Ministry** that meets weekly from October to April.

We Nurture Our Children and Learn Together

The **Education Committee** leads our members of all ages to know more about God by taking responsibility for our Sunday School program, Catechism, Adult Bible Studies and the church library and Bible study resources. We subscribe to Right Now Media as a congregation and are working our way through a bible reading program called Meet the Bible. Approximately 45 students, ages 3 years to grade 6 participate in Sunday School. Grades 7 through 12 attend Catechism which is offered on Wednesday evenings during the fall and winter.

GEMS and Cadet clubs are active in our congregation, as is the Ladies Fellowship Circle and 50+ Fellowship group.

The **Youth Committee** initiates and supports our ministry among youth: junior high, high school and young adults. The youth enjoy attending and hosting interdenominational activities. Traditional meetings held at the church were replaced by small groups meeting for dinner at people's homes followed by lessons and discussion. Every year our youth attend YC, youth conventions, and local youth rallies and participate in service projects in places such as Belize, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Honduras every other year.

We Care for Each Other and Help our Neighbors

Through our **Refugee Committee** we have been sponsoring world refugees since the mid-1970s. To this date, our goal is to sponsor a family every year and integrate them into the Canadian lifestyle.

We have a Global partnership with the Las Minas Aguan community in Honduras.

We show our love by supporting each other during difficult times. Many people visit the needy, prepare servant suppers and help out financially for those experiencing hardship. We also volunteer in church or community organizations.

A number of our members are committed to intentional and specific prayers for the congregation and community as part of a vital **Prayer Chain**.

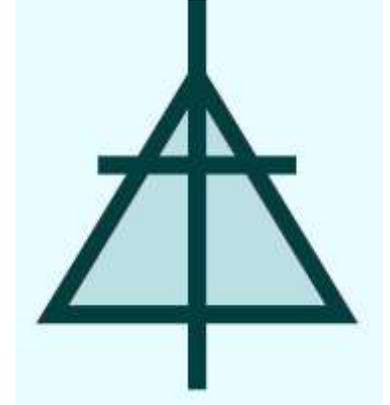


Neerlandia CRC Leadership: Governing Structure

Our **Church Council** leads our congregation. The council, currently numbering 23 members, is composed of the Elders and Deacons. The Consistory of the church consists of the 18 Elders and the Pastor.

The **General Council** is composed of the ordained Pastor(s), Elders, and Deacons of the congregation. The council deals with matters of general concern to the congregation, and matters which do not exclusively fall under the responsibilities of the Diaconate or Consistory. It is also a forum for communication among all the office bearers, and for mutual encouragement and accountability.

The **Administrative Council** consists of the Council President, Vice-President, Clerk and the Church Treasurer as well as the Chair of Pastoral Council and a Deacon designate. They meet monthly and deal with administrative matters in the church.



The **Pastoral Council** includes the ordained Pastor(s) and Pastoral Elders. This body deals with matters of church discipline, preaching, worship and teaching, outreach and evangelism in the community, doctrinal matters, the supervision of pastors, and the spiritual health and pastoral needs of the members.

The **Diaconate** is composed of the Deacons. This body seeks to identify (mostly material) needs of persons, both within and outside the congregation, and to provide assistance to persons in need. It also seeks opportunities for our members to reach out in Christian compassion in our larger community. It encourages the congregation in its stewardship, and manages and organizes our offerings.



Financial Matters: Buildings and Budgets

The Home of Our Ministries

The church owns 10 acres of land in the center of the hamlet, on which we have a large Church Building with attached Fellowship Hall. We also own a parsonage located right next to the church. Classroom space is limited and the office space for the executive assistant and bookkeeper is shared. The pastor's study is in the church.



The parsonage is 60+ years old but has been well maintained and is in good repair. It has 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and an office.



The church also owns a mobile home situated on the property. Here we house our refugee families which we sponsor from time to time.

To help manage our finances, building maintenance and the day to day care of the church and parsonage, we have volunteers serving on the following committees: Building Committee, Auxiliary (Catering) Committee, Audio-Visual Committee, and Finance Committee.

Annual Budget

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The finance committee proposes a budget in the fall that is approved by Council and voted on by the congregation in a November congregational meeting. The budget includes general operating expenses, our missionary commitments, building projects and renovations, the refugee ministry, the youth ministry, denominational ministry shares and classical ministry shares. Typically the congregation meets the financial obligations of the budget.



Neerlandia CRC Ministry:

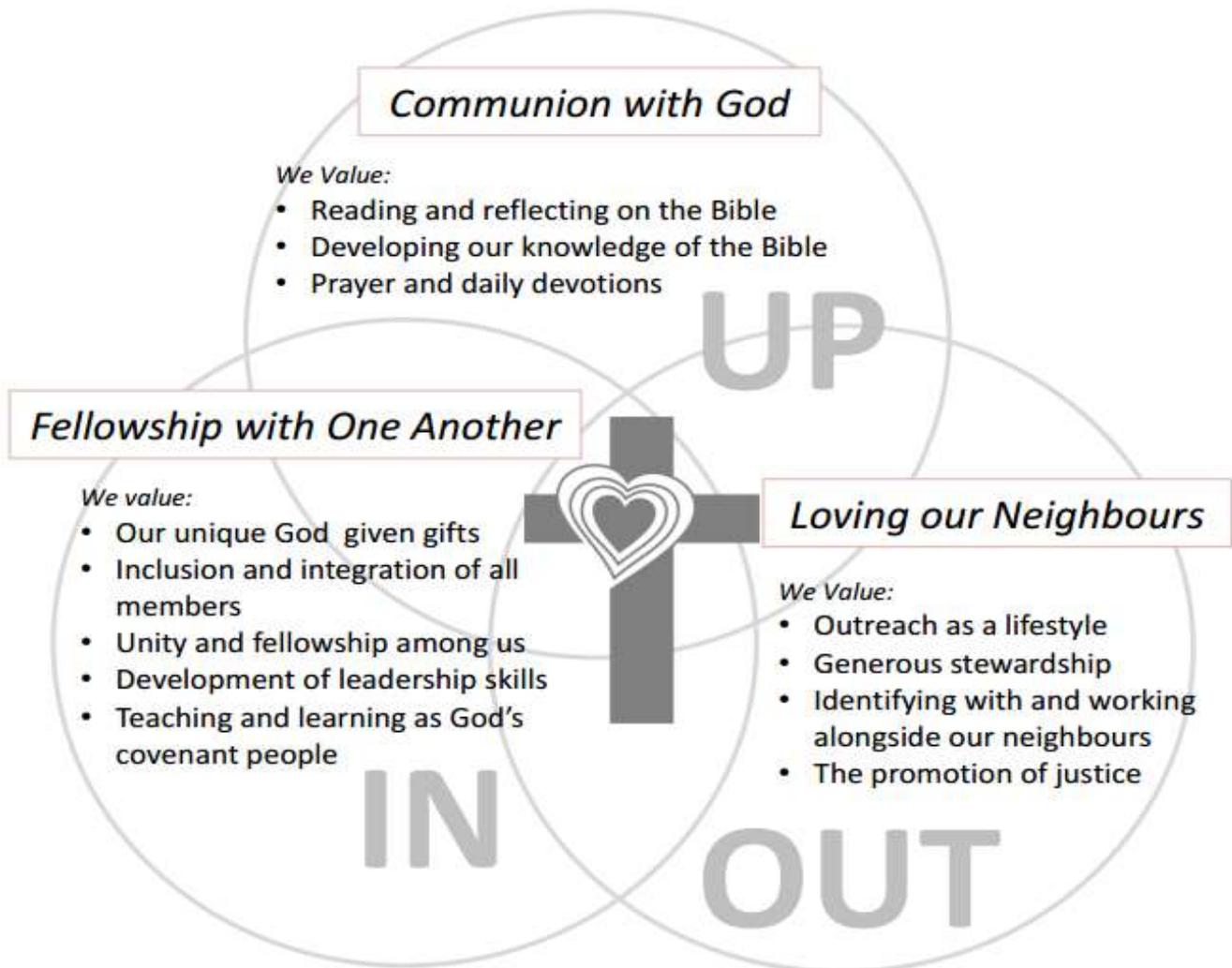
Mission and Vision

Our previous congregational master plan was completed in 1998. The mission and vision statements developed at that time have been in place since then with only minor revisions. The plan set goals for 5 years, many of which were realized.

A Ministry Manual was compiled in 2009. It contains our mission and vision statements as well as a comprehensive compilation of documents outlining our structure and ministries. It includes committee mandates, guidelines and congregational policies. It was revised in 2013 to reflect changes in policy and structure (available on www.neerlandiacrc.org)

In 2013 a Visioning Team was formed to evaluate our ministries, conduct a Healthy Church Survey, and update our ministry goals; resulting in the development of a Vision and Ministry Plan. In 2016 as part of the transition process, our congregation reviewed this plan and affirmed that our core values have not changed. We remembered ways in which God works in and through us, we lamented our failures and weaknesses, and we dreamt about being more like the holy people God calls us to be.

(See Appendix A: Vision and Ministry Plan including the 2016 evaluation)



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Neerlandia CRC Setting:

Community Profile

Neerlandia is an agricultural community, established primarily by Dutch immigrants in the early 1900's and is situated near the scenic Athabasca River and Sand Hills. It is located 150 kilometers northwest of Edmonton within the County of Barrhead. The population of the Hamlet of Neerlandia is 120 and the population of the community within a 15 kilometer radius is approximately 1,500.



The hamlet includes two church buildings, school and library, car wash, a community cemetery as well as numerous family homes. The Neerlandia Co-operative Association also operates a large and thriving grocery store with attached restaurant and liquor store, Home and Farm Center, Agro Center, Service Center and Gas bar located just outside the hamlet.



Neerlandia offers Christian education within the public school system. Neerlandia Public Christian School is inter-denominational and is designated an alternate school in the Pembina Hills School Division. NPCS just recently moved into a brand new building and has an enrollment of 179 students from K – Grade Nine and employs 20 staff. The integration of students with disabilities is evident in Neerlandia Public Christian School. The nearest public high school is Barrhead Composite High School 25 kilometers south of Neerlandia. Covenant Canadian Reformed School offers K - Grade 12 and is located 3 kilometers east of Neerlandia. A home schooling association is also active in the community.



Within the hamlet of Neerlandia are two congregations - Neerlandia Canadian Reformed Church in addition to Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church. The Barrhead Ministerial Association, a group of Barrhead and area pastors, co-ordinate ecumenical services in Barrhead and the community, the nursing home and the senior citizen's homes. The Ministerial also supplies pastors for a volunteer chaplaincy in the Barrhead Health Care Center.

A variety of organized activities offered in Neerlandia includes preschool, community theatre, community baseball and hockey, adult badminton and exercise classes. The community volunteer societies and organizations are the Neerlandia Co-operative Board of Directors, Neerlandia Library Society, Neerlandia Sports Committee, Neerlandia Historical Society, Neerlandia Funeral Association and Neerlandia Volunteer Fire Department.

The community has a history of strong commitment to people living with disabilities and support organizations such as Rehoboth and Barrhead Association for Community Living. Other interdenominational ministries the community has been involved in are several food grains projects to support the Canadian Food Grains Bank and Habitat for Humanity.

Barrhead, population 4,400, is the nearest town which serves the surrounding agricultural communities. Its facilities and services include a Health Care Center (hospital), an extended care nursing home, several senior citizen's homes, a public library, the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, bowling lanes, a curling rink, a hockey and skating arena, an aquatic center, golf courses and indoor sports and fine arts clubs (eg boxing, judo, dance academies and community theatre). A number of municipal and provincial parks are nearby which give the opportunity for camping, boating, hiking, hunting, fishing and many other recreational activities. The local ski hill provides down-hill skiing for beginners and intermediates as well as cross country ski trails.