



SUSSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Love God. Love Others.

CHURCH PROFILE

Introduction

Sussex Christian Reformed Church (SCRC), established in 1950, has been a part of the Sussex Borough and Wantage Township, New Jersey communities. The mission of SCRC is to *grow disciples who transform the lives for Christ*. A new, full-time position has been created to advance this mission within our community.

The Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship will work with the Senior Pastor, Council, and existing ministry teams to advance our Discipleship, Next Gen (children's ministries covering birth through High School), and Worship ministries. The main objective will be to assess our community, identify opportunities to advance our mission in these areas, and develop and build teams/leaders that will help us instruct our youth, disciple our members, and lead us in vibrant worship. This is a new, full-time position at Sussex CRC that has been created to advance our mission within our community.



- **Motto:** Love God, Love Others
- **Mission:** Growing disciples who transform lives for Christ.
- **Vision:** Cultivating grace filled authentic relationships so that together we can be more like Him.

Sussex Christian Reformed Church

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Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship

Ministry Description:

The Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship will work with the Senior Pastor, Council, and existing Ministry Teams to advance Discipleship, NextGen, and Worship Ministries. The main objective will be to assess our community, identify opportunities to advance our mission in these areas, develop and build teams/leaders that will help us instruct our youth, disciple our members, and lead us in vibrant worship. This is a new, full-time position created to advance our mission within our community.

Qualifications:

- Is a witness in word and deed that Jesus is the Lord of his life.
- Is ordained in the CRC or on a pathway to ordination.
- Believes the Bible to be the infallible Word of God and has a solid understanding of Scripture as interpreted through a Reformed lens.
- Demonstrates a heart to lead others in understanding the Word, engaging in Worship, serving in Community, and serving in God's mission.
- Demonstrates ability to lead teams and develop leaders.
- Demonstrates ability to work effectively within ministry teams, engaging a wide variety of personalities and leveraging varying gifts.
- Demonstrates a pastoral and discipling heart, exhibiting compassion and understanding to members of the community
- Has obtained or is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree.
- Exhibits integrity in word and action, demonstrating the ability to maintain confidentiality and apply sound judgement.
- Ability to work flexible hours and schedules as needed to meet the job responsibilities. This will require regular evening and weekend work.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the Senior Pastor to assess our community's progress in our Discipleship, NextGen, and Worship vision and objectives, identifying gaps and realigning as necessary with our mission, vision, and values.
- Develop measures and monitor our progress in Discipleship and NextGen.
- Meet regularly with ministry teams to identify objectives for advancing our vision in these areas.
- Expand our ministry teams by gathering, encouraging, and equipping volunteers in leaders in each of these areas. Ensure these teams remain focused on our mission and vision.
- Oversee curriculum usage and effectiveness within Discipleship and Next Gen.
- Stay connected with Safe Church ministry team and inform leaders of updated policies
- Foster enthusiastic, heartfelt, and gospel-centered worship through song, liturgy, and prayer within our diverse congregation.
- Consistently evaluate how our Sunday morning liturgy can help us grow disciples
- Oversee worship team and provide skills training for participants.
- Work with worship planning team to develop creative ideas for worship
- Regularly incorporate faith stories in worship.
- Assist the Senior Pastor in preaching and pastoral care responsibilities.

This is a new position as of April 2024. We are open to all levels of ministry experience, male pastors only, and the required language is English. This will be a full-time and not a bi-vocational position.

The above job description highlights qualifications and responsibilities and is not all-inclusive. The role will be adapted to the ongoing needs of the congregation and the candidate.



Church pastor and team

Sussex Christian Reformed Church (SCRC) is served by a full-time Senior Pastor and a part-time team—Administrative Assistant, Custodial Staff, Financial Secretary, Music Support Staff (e.g., pianist, organist) and Seminary Intern.

The previous part-time Worship Coordinator position is being replaced with the **new position: Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship**

Church finances

The 2024 and 2023 annual budgets were about \$392,000 and \$372,000, respectively. All budget and financial obligations were met, including denominational and classical ministry shares.

Church building

There is one church building (owned by the church) built in 1950, with addition and renovation in 2018. There is no parsonage. The church building includes an upper-level sanctuary. The lower-level of the building consists of a fellowship hall, kitchen, two nursery rooms, a classroom, a larger multi-use conference room (used for children’s ministry, Council meetings, and various ministry meetings) office for administrative assistant, office for pastor, and a family/nursing mother’s room.

The buildings are adequate for ministries and no building projects are projected. However, the growing children’s ministries requires more space which is provided through a strong partnership with Sussex Christian School (adjacent to the church property) using of some of their facilities. Without this partnership space would be very limited.

Community setting

SCRC is in **Sussex Borough, New Jersey** (population: 2,048), a small town in the rural area of Wantage Township (population: 10,933).

The community growth has been static in recent years and the primary functions are agricultural, recreational, and place where many commute to work (i.e., a bedroom community).

The racial/ethnic demographics of surrounding community: White: 91%, Hispanic: 7%, Black: <1%. Asian: <2%.

Church demographics

Average Sunday attendance: 250

Active adult professing members: 220

Age of church attendees:

- 0-11: 24%
- 12-18: 8%
- 19-24: 8%
- 25-34: 17%
- 35-49: 12%
- 50-64: 14%
- 65+: 17%

Members belonging to congregation:

- Less than 5 years: 20%
- 5-10 years: 19%
- 10 or more years: 61%

Occupation of church members:

- Business: 20%
- Trades: 15%
- Retired: 15%
- Professional: 10%
- Stay-at-home parent: 10%
- Agriculture: 10%
- Student: 10%
- Other: 10%

The composition of the congregation is generally mono-cultural, representative of local community demographics, and moderately representative of the local community’s economic diversity.

Worship

At SCRC, the worship service is designed for both unchurched and believers and typically includes the following order of worship:

- Call to worship
- Songs of praise
- Reading of the Law
- Time of confession and assurance
- Song of preparation
- Sermon
- Song of response
- Offering
- Benediction
- Doxology

Services are pastor-led with regular congregational involvement at certain times (e.g., call to worship, reading of the Law, and the prayer of Illumination prior to the sermon).

The style of music is blended between contemporary and traditional; consisting of hymns, psalms and contemporary songs lead by a worship team or piano/organ (alternating every other Sunday). A screen and projector are used for all services to display song lyrics.

Evening worship services each Sunday for teaching, corporate prayer.

Member involvement

In planning—A worship committee that meets and plans special services and themes for special seasons (e.g., Advent, Lent). We currently have a few volunteers helping to plan the songs and other elements of the worship service like Call to Worship and time of Confession.

In worship—A variety of members from all generations are involved in church liturgy most weeks--usually invited to do so by the Worship Coordinator or whoever is planning the worship service. Members participate in Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, Bible readings (especially on special services like Good Friday), occasion litanies and other prayers (like dedicated prayer services). In addition, several members take part by leading in song through the Worship Team or by offering gifts of special music. We like to seek out readers from all age groups and stages of life. Lastly, elders lead by offering prayer of illumination each Sunday morning before the Sermon.

Discipleship practices

Current discipleship ministries include:

- NextGen (e.g., "Little Praisers" for children ages 3-5, Sunday School for children, and Catechism classes for youth on Sundays).
- Life Groups for adults and families.
- Bible Study groups for seniors, ladies, men
- Junior and Senior High Youth Group.
- GEMS and Cadets.
- Vacation Bible School.



Narrative

Our passion as a church is represented by:

Our core values

Word of God
Worship of God
Community of God
Mission of God

We love God's Word. We love gathering in corporate worship and seeing all of life as our act of worship. We love cultivating meaningful relationships with other believers and serving God in our vocations and local community.

We are particularly committed to nurturing the next generation of believers as they grow and serve Jesus. This is why we love our intergenerational worship. On any given Sunday, you will likely see three to four generations of believers in the same family attending the worship service. This passion is also reflected in our strong support of Christian education, including direct support for our three local Christian schools.

Our strengths as a church include a servant-minded community of believers that care for each other and our community. We support local ministries that serve practical needs and have been growing in our church's connections with the local community.

We are a multi-generational church, love studying God's Word, and have growing children's ministries. We have a strong relationship with Sussex Christian School, a Pre-K through 8th grade Christian school (founded by our church 65 years ago). Our church also built Hillside Manor Apartments in 1996 and oversees its vision to provide affordable housing to low-income senior citizens.

We are learning how to increase our outreach ministries, actively seeking ways to support our members' passions for mission. A few years ago, members of our church began a GriefShare ministry that has served over eighty grieving people in our community with the hope of Jesus. We participate in a community Compassion Project with another local church, where we take care of some basic home repair needs for local community members in need.

We host events to connect with our local community, such as hosting an outdoor live nativity service, Vacation Bible School (VBS) and a Harvest Table in the center of town where we give out fresh produce from our congregation's gardeners and farmers. Our congregation also shows up in support when a big need arises within our church or local community.

A primary goal of our church is to *develop a clearer pathway of discipleship* for our members to continue growing as followers of Jesus and leaders who worship God deeply. This is why we have begun the search for a full-time associate pastor to help us pursue that goal of worship and discipleship. We have also recently begun planning a Discipleship 101 class for this upcoming Fall for newer members and faith seekers.

Some goals from our last vision process included every member trained in relational evangelism; 75% of members are believing, self-feeding, maturing and reproducing; 15% of attendees (worship and programs) are faith seekers; 100 people engaged in a leadership development track.

These reflect our desire to grow disciples!

Specific challenges as a congregation, we desire to enhance our volunteer and leadership training, local community outreach, and discipleship programs. As we have grown and added ministries, we have struggled to train and maintain volunteers and leaders.

While we have made some strides in connecting with our local community, we have more work to do. Although we have added some new adult discipleship programs, we are looking to deepen our discipleship efforts through establishing a clearer pathway for helping our congregation mature in their faith journeys.





Narrative (cont.)

Interesting and challenging events in the life of the church, like most churches, COVID has been our most recent, biggest challenge to manage. In New Jersey we had to navigate changing mandates and recommendations on worship and groups meeting. There were many different experiences and perspectives. However, God was incredibly gracious to us. We began with online-only worship services, then transitioned to outdoor worship services for most of the summer until we could gather in our sanctuary. It's interesting that we had just begun rolling out a new mission and vision in January of 2020, when in March, we had to put a hold on everything. However, we used that time to reflect, regroup, and launch stronger new ministries afterwards. We have learned that we were far more adaptive than we ever thought we were, as God helped us grow in so many new and surprising ways through this pandemic.

Important events in the history of the church include the founding of the church and Sussex Christian School in the 1950s and building addition to and renovation of the church in 2018. For a more detailed history of our congregation's major events, please see <https://www.sussexcrc.org/history>.

Our ecumenical activities build on good relationships with other local churches. We join them in a community Compassion Project and in support of the Sussex Help Center, a local food pantry. The Sussex Help Center also has a group of lay leaders that meets regularly to discuss how local churches can support mercy ministries in town. We engage in ecumenical prayer services like the National Day of Prayer and alternate hosting a Reformation Day service with other Reformed churches. We participate in an annual commemorative service on God's history in our community at Old Clove Church, a historical church building. We support missionaries globally as well as members of our church on missions.

Being Christians of Reformed accent demonstrates a commitment to God's Word and His sovereignty over Creation, and means we are saved by grace through faith to join the work of God in all areas of life.

Our understanding of the relationship between the local church and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) denomination is that it serves as a reminder we are part of the broader family of God. The local church is a covenant community of God on mission in our communities. As part of the CRC, we are in covenant relationship with other Reformed churches throughout the U.S. and Canada; united in our embrace of Reformed Creeds and Confessions and our polity. The denomination provides oversight, accountability, and resources to support the local church, and the local church honors our covenant with the denomination with ministry shares and leaders to serve.

Cultural challenges facing Christians and Christian churches today include facing a culture growing more hostile towards Christianity and its message, increasing political polarization, and a shift away from trusting religious institutions in general. The church must learn to effectively equip the people of God with the true message of the gospel in a way that connects with culture yet is not changed by culture.



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Ministry focus

Presently the **focus of our church's ministry** is on current members and regular attendees primarily (internal), with some community focused ministries (external).

Our church seeks to **encourage spiritual growth** through ministries for most groups.

Our **evangelism strategies and methods** generally have equal emphasis between planned and unplanned.

Our church's **response to compassion, mercy, and justice needs** is both church-based and personal action.

Our church's **missional focus** is equally on local and global.

Council and committees

Our **church leadership** is shared by lay leaders (congregation members) and pastoral staff.

Consistory (elders and deacons) includes 13 members with three-year terms, meeting monthly.

Vision or ministry teams include ministry team director, council liaison and congregation members. Vision teams focus in the areas of Discipleship, Hospitality, Next Gen, Worship, and Community Connections. Vision teams generally meet quarterly to discuss how our ministries are working toward our mission.

For more details about our church and ministries visit sussexcrc.org.

More position details

The salary range SCRC will offer for the Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship position is based on the CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area, with average annual increases of two to three percent.

SCRC offers a housing allowance, pension, medical insurance, and life insurance, contributes to Social Security, covers ministry related travel and mileage expenses, budgets and offers time for continuing education, and offers three annual vacation weeks.

Please reach out to the search committee with any questions.

Contacting the search committee via email at:
search@sussexcrc.org

Search committee contact: Rick Vander Ploeg

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