



## Church Profile Form

### Section A. Background Information

**Today's Date:** 1/15/2023

**Position to be filled:** Pastor

**1. Name of church:** North Branch Reformed Church

**2. Web address:** www.nbrc.com

**3. Address:** 203 US Route 28

Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

**Telephone:** (908) 725-2313

**E-Mail:** officeadministrator@nbrc.com

**4. Classis:** Classis of Delaware-Raritan

**5. Classis Supervisor:** Rev. Thomas E. Jones

**Address:** Lebanon Reformed Church

100 Brunswick Ave

Lebanon , New Jersey 08833

**Telephone:** (908) 236-6167

**E-Mail:** lebanonrefchurch@gmail.com

**6. Chair of search committee:**

**Co-Chair:** Steve Biuso

**Address:** 57 Choctaw Ridge Road

Branchburg, New Jersey 08876

**Telephone:** (908) 707-9159

**E-Mail:** steve.biuso@aecom.com

**Co-Chair:** Beth D'Elia

**Address:** 37 Bernard Street

Branchburg, New Jersey 08876

**Telephone:** (908) 963-0314      **E-Mail:** beth\_delia@msn.com

<b>7. Membership:</b>	<u><b>Five years ago</b></u>	<u><b>Today</b></u>
<b>Active Confessing Members</b>	443	363
<b>Inactive Confessing Members</b>	236	349

**Comment on significant changes:** Like many churches since the pandemic, we have experienced a significant decline in active members, many due to relocation from our community, and many due to lack of church engagement. We officially report 363 active members to our Classis. However, 200 is a more realistic estimate, although we are actively trying to re-engage as many as possible.

#### **Age of all active members (baptized and confessing)**

5%    0-20 years old  
5%    20-34 years old  
20%   35-49 years old  
40%   50-64 years old  
30%   65 years and older

#### **8. Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation:**

1%    African American  
1%    Asian  
97%   Caucasian

1% Hispanic

0% Other: (please specify)

## 9. Worship schedule:

### Average Attendance (includes adults and children)

Time of worship	Average attendance	Average attendance
	<u>Five years ago</u>	<u>Today</u>
8:30 am	50	N/A
10:00 am	165	100 (online views 25-35)

### Comment on significant changes:

We have seen a significant change in attendance due to COVID concerns. We have changed our worship schedule to one service at 9:30am with an average in-person attendance of 100. An average of 25-35 additional people attend through Facebook live (concurrent with the live service). People can also view a recorded replay of any Sunday service throughout the following weeks. While viewer counts for these replays can vary dramatically, Sunday service replay viewing ranges from 50 to 150 views per service.

## 10. Describe a typical worship service (order of worship, music, etc.) What is your congregation's preferred style or styles of worship? Attach a bulletin, if available.

Currently, North Branch Reformed Church strives to conduct a blended service that includes contemporary and traditional practices and music. From 2010 until the Covid-19 Pandemic, we conducted two Sunday services, whereby, one was blended (with the music mostly being traditional and led by the adult choir) and the other was contemporary. Presently, we have one Sunday service, which has been constructed to include different aspects (either during the service or on a weekly basis) that may appeal to those who resonate more with a Traditional

style of service and those who wish to experience more of a contemporary style of service.

A Worship Team is in place which provides oversight for all aspects of the weekly services.

A typical worship service usually follows this format:

*A welcoming song before the service*

*A welcome by one of the pastors and announcements (announcement sometimes come after the worship songs if they are longer)*

*Call to Worship*

*1-2 worship songs*

*Prayer of Confession followed by Words of Assurance*

*Hymn of Preparation*

*Prayer of Understanding*

*Scripture Reading Sermon*

*Sometimes a creed is read here*

*Offertory (accompanied by a song)*

*Doxology*

*If having Communion, this is where it happens (2x a month): Meaning of Communion, Words of Institution, Communion Given (accompanied by music), Communion Prayer*

*Prayers and Thanksgivings*

*Prayers of Intercession*

*Lord's Prayer*

*Final worship song*

*Benediction*

Worship music is primarily contemporary Christian worship music for the opening and closing songs. There are times when the organ is used and traditional hymns are sung (usually more familiar hymns), but this is more rare. Pre-Covid, we had a children's sermon given within the first 15 minutes of the service, and once a month, children (aged 4-8 who were in the Worship Kidz music group) would sing and dance during that time.

The style of the offertory music is varied. Most weeks, contemporary music is performed by the NBRC Praise Band. Other times, youth members who are in the Worship Teens, will also perform contemporary Christian music. Currently, once a month, the adult choir sings a more traditional selection during the offertory. Finally, we have a Bell Choir that also performs a few times a year.

The Praise Band consists of 4-5 vocalists, a pianist, a keyboard player, an electric guitar player, an acoustic guitar player, a bassist, drummer, and a saxophone player.

There is an adult choir of about 15 members. The Bell Choir has about 10 people.

**11. Financial Information: Attach a copy most recent Consistorial Report and Annual Budget if available.**

	<u>Five Years Ago</u>	<u>Today</u>
<b>Total RCA related contributions</b>	\$581,225	\$544,545
<b>Total other contributions</b>	\$0	\$0

**Percentage of total budget contributed by living donors:**

- X      100-90 %  
           75-89 %  
           60-74 %  
           45-59 %  
           44 % or less

**(Please include a copy of your annual budget)**

## 12. Congregational Giving:

### Number of those whose annual contribution is:

Less than \$500:	68
\$501- \$1,500:	46
\$1,501- \$2,500:	27
\$2,501-\$3,500:	18
Greater than \$3,500:	51

## 13. Financial assistance: Do you receive financial assistance beyond the congregation? (rents, etc.): Yes

If yes, amount received last year: \$49,942

### List other fundraising programs that support the church:

1. Church sponsored pre-school facilities usage: \$3,200
2. Facilities rental to outside organizations: \$1,700
3. Hope House rental income: \$28,457
4. Sunrise House rental income: \$4,800
5. Interest/Dividends: \$11,785

## 14. Church/Sunday School:

### Average Attendance

Average attendance <u>Five years ago</u>	Average attendance <u>Today</u>
2021 – 21	2022-16
2020 – 40	

2019 – 42

2018 – 47

2017 – 52

2016 – 54

**Comment on significant changes:**

The ongoing pandemic has led, in part, to the decline in attendance.

**15. Describe briefly all educational programs (including children, young adult, adult).**

**Church school:** Church school is available from preschool (age 3) through high school. Classes are held Sunday mornings. Age appropriate curriculum is presented by a rotating team of teachers.

**Youth Groups:** Pioneer Youth Group (3rd, 4th, and 5th graders) meets twice a month. It is run by the youth Pastor and parents. Jr High/Sr High Youth Group (6th-12th graders) meets twice a month and is led by adult leaders.

**Vacation Bible School:** VBS runs for a week in August (9am-12) for ages 3 to completed 5th graders.

**Surveyors (confirmation class):** High schoolers that are enrolled in Surveyors begin in the fall and meet several times a month with the Youth Pastor before Confirmation Sunday in May

**Small Group Bible Study:** We currently have 9 small groups Bible studies that meet regularly (weekly or monthly).some groups have been meeting for over 18 years. Topics vary. We have 3 additional small groups that are offered for a limited period of time (1-3 months) on a specific topic.

**16. Church groups/organizations: Briefly describe ministry purpose of each group. (use separate sheet if necessary)**

## **NBRC Preschool Board**

Ministry: To align the goals and objectives of the preschool with the vision of the church as a whole, to maintain a strong connection between the church and the preschool, and to create, organize, and staff several outreach programs each year.

Meetings: 5 times a year

Attendance: 10 people

## **Christian Education Team**

Ministry: Christian Education is a foundation for spiritual growth and church life. It provides a life-long environment for learning about our faith in Christ in a loving, caring and growing community. We seek to enable (empower) people in the church and our community to understand the meaning of that faith and encourage the practice of that faith.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 7 people

## **Sunday School Ministry (5th grade and younger)**

Ministry: Teach children about God, Jesus and the Bible.

Meetings: January – May and September-December weekly

Attendance: 3-11 children plus 4-6 teachers (varied due to Covid)

## **Sunday School Ministry (6-12 grades)**

Ministry: Teach children about God, Jesus and the Bible.

Meetings: January – May and September-December weekly

Attendance: 8-3 children plus 4-6 teachers (varied due to Covid)

## **Pioneer Youth Group (3 – 5th Grades)**

Ministry: Teach youth about God, Jesus and the Bible.

Meetings: Bi-weekly, Sept-May

Attendance: 7-9 youth plus 5 teachers (varied due to Covid)

## **In-Person Jr/Sr. High Youth Group (6-12 Grades)**

Ministry: Teach youth about God, Jesus and the Bible.



Meetings: Weekly, Sept-May

Attendance: 4-7 youth plus 5 teachers (varied due to Covid)

### **In Person and Online Surveyors (9th Grade)**

Ministry: Prepare youth to join the church.

Meetings: Bi-weekly, Sept-Apr

Attendance: 8-9 youth plus teacher (varied due to Covid)

### **Vacation Bible School (5th grade and younger)**

Ministry: To learn about God, Jesus and the Bible.

Meetings: Daily for one week in August

Attendance: 70 children and 30 volunteers

### **Sue McGeown Online Bible Study**

Ministry: Help people develop a stronger relationship with God through Bible/Book Study.

Meetings: Weekly on Mondays

Attendance: 15-20 people

### **Pastor Mark Hybrid Bible Study**

Ministry: Help people develop a stronger relationship with God and greater understanding of the Bible.

Meetings: Weekly on Tuesdays

Attendance: 6 people

### **Pastor Mark In-Person Bible Study**

Ministry: Help people develop a stronger relationship with God and understanding of the Bible.

Meetings: Weekly on Thursdays

Attendance: 10 people

### **Pastor Mark Online Bible Study**

Ministry: Help people develop a stronger relationship with God and understanding of the Bible.

Meetings: Weekly on Fridays

Attendance: 8 people

### **Couples Bible/Book Study**

Ministry: To bring couples together to discuss the Bible or spiritual books.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 10 people

### **Annual Women's Conference**

Ministry: To bring women together to explore themes of the bible related to women while in a casual environment.

Meetings: Annual (prior to Covid)

Attendance: 50 people

### **Men's Breakfast**

Ministry: Set a social environment for men of the church to meet and eat.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 10 people (varied due to Covid)

### **The Green Team**

Ministry: To inspire, educate and mobilize the congregation and community to respond to the call of environmental stewardship for the benefit of all humanity and God's creation.

Meetings: occasionally

Attendance: 4 people

### **Ignite Invite**

Ministry: To get people excited to come up with events and activities to encourage the congregation to invite unchurched friends and family to church events.

Meetings: 3 times per year

Attendance: 6-8 people

### **The Learning Gate Team**

Ministry: To help the local Learning Gate Preschool, that supports low income families with child care, so the parent (s) can work at basic jobs. Team plans ways we as a church can support the families financially, through gift cards for food, used clothing, winter coats and boots, Christmas gifts, etc. and with hands-on help.

Meetings: Once a year and as needed

Attendance: 8 people

## **Finance Team**

Ministry: To prepare the operating budget; oversee the Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's activities, monitor income and expenses versus budget; manage endowments, financial investments and portfolio performance.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 8-10 people

## **Pastor Staff Team**

Ministry: Maintain staff/personnel policies as documented in the staff handbook and ensure staff compliance; oversee staff compensation and benefits; maintain staff position descriptions; and address staffing challenges and concerns.

Meetings: Quarterly, or as-needed

Attendance: 8-10 people

## **Stewardship Team**

Ministry: To plan and organize annual stewardship campaign; and encourage and promote faithful generosity as an act of faith.

Meetings: Quarterly

Attendance: 6 people

## **Kirkside Team**

Ministry: Administer to the welfare of senior occupants who live at Kirkside and oversee and maintain the building and property.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 10-12 people

## **Kirkside Garage Sale Team**

Ministry: To provide funding to defer costs at Kirkside through the sale of donated items and for team fellowship.

Meetings: Weekly from April until November

Attendance: 8 people

## **Worship Team**

Ministry: To handle incidentals of church basics (i.e. straighten parament settings through liaison with minister, organize items in pews) assist with weddings as minister requests.

Meetings: As needed

Attendance: 4 people

## **Cemetery Team**

Ministry: To maintain, preserve and improve the grounds of the NBRC Cemetery, and to oversee the selling of burial plots, and help plan interments. The team also provides comfort to families who have lost loved ones.

Meetings: Quarterly

Attendance: 8 people

## **Building and Grounds Team**

Ministry: To serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the maintenance and provision of improvements to his house of worship and to provide facilities to accommodate his many ministries.

Meetings: Monthly

Attendance: 10-12 people

## **Sermon Study with the Minister**

Ministry: To explore in greater detail the sermon presented each Sunday.

Meetings: Pastor dependent

Attendance: 8 people

## **Preschool Board**

Ministry: As governing body of the Preschool they approve policies, budgets, marketing, advertising, hiring of staff, etc. and do several outreach programs and fundraisers for both the Preschool and our community.

Meetings: 5 times a year

Attendance: 12 people

## **Preschool Staff Team**

Ministry: To plan curriculum, for professional development & to share updated policies/mandates.

Meetings: Monthly from September – May

Attendance: 5-10 people

## **Preschool Parent Teacher Organization**

Ministry: To manages the class parents, and helps plan Preschool events.

Meetings: Prior to Covid met monthly, September through May

Attendance: 5 people

## **Missions Team**

Ministry: Oversees the selection and scheduling of monthly missions featured to the congregation for giving, over and above regular offering; coordinates any church sponsored mission trips and mission trip scholarships; oversees the various sub-teams that run the local missions of the church including Sunrise, Kirkside, Haven House and local service team; acts as the main point of contact with our foreign RCA missionaries; oversees the disbursement of budgeted funds dedicated to mission.

Meetings: 4-6 times per year

Attendance: 9 people

## **NBRC Music Ministries**

**NorthSong** (approximately 14 members), Music Director leads, performs and arranges the music. Adult Contemporary Praise Band, (vocals, piano, bass, drums guitar forms the basis of the music)

- rehearses year round, twice weekly and performs most Sundays as part of worship.
- provides contemporary music weekly our church services, for concerts and special holiday services.

**Chancel Choir** (12-20 members), Music Director leads, accompanies. Traditional Adult Choir (vocal SATB and piano or organ accompaniment)

- rehearses weekly September- May
- provides periodic music for Sunday services, concerts and holiday services

**Carillon Bell Choir** (approximately 13 members) Music Director directs. 3-5 Octave “traditional” Bell Choir

- rehearses weekly September – May
- provides periodic music for Sunday services, concerts and holiday services

**Worship Teens** (4-7 teen members, 2-3 adult leaders) Music Director leads. Teen Contemporary Praise Band

- rehearses generally weekly September - May
- provides periodic music for Sunday services, concerts and holiday services

**Youth Drama Club** (10-12 members, 4-6 Adult team leaders) Music Director leads/directs Youth (gr 3-6). Drama Theatre Group

- rehearses weekly , with additional rehearsals as needed September – April
- performs 2 full length Christian musicals annually, and for periodic Sunday services, concerts and holiday services.

**Youth Worship Singers** (3-8 members) Music Director leads. Youth (gr 3-6 ) contemporary vocal group

- rehearses and performs periodically for services , concerts and holiday services

**Worship Kidz** (5-12 members) NBRC Volunteer selected by Music Director leads under direction of Music Director. Children ( K-2) contemporary movement and beginning vocals

- practices weekly September-May
- performs periodically for Sunday services, concerts and holiday services

### **Additional NBRC Performances**

Various soloists, duos, trios, quartets rehearse and perform periodically as off-shoots of the various NBRC ensembles outlined above.

### **17. Comment on one event or experience over the last year that has significantly contributed to the spiritual life of the congregation.**

Overall, it was the way the church dealt with the Covid crisis in 2021. There were several factors that contributed to our spiritual growth as a congregation.

We quickly assembled a team to plan for all aspects of continuing to have the church operate while keeping people safe. We didn't want to miss a beat.

We were able to watch the service through Facebook streaming, while getting prayer requests and comments at the same time.

For people who preferred to continue to come in person we planned all the necessary precautions to have them sit safely with other parishioners. This helped with their need to continue interacting with church members in a safe way.

You saw “out of the box” thinking like having a food truck in our church parking lot on several occasions to keep people connected, or Sunday School on the playground.

All Bible Studies were offered through Zoom and drew a significant attendance.

Our minister, Todd, had a daily message for people on Facebook where he shared scripture and incorporated it into our daily living with words of hope and faith. Weekly sermons were inspirational and directed toward what we were experiencing at the time.

Members of our Consistory called every church family to see how they were doing and if they needed anything.

A preschool in our community who especially supports low income families was hit hard. Many of the families lost their jobs and couldn’t even pay for food or clothing for their children. Our church was extraordinary through people who purchased \$25 gift cards for Walmart or Shop Rite so these families could feed their families. Over 250 gift cards were distributed. We also had more bags of clothing than ever donated as well as winter coats and boots for the children. There was an amazing outpouring to love in the Christmas gifts that were purchased and we had two organizations join us in our outreach. One organization currently delivers 15-20 meals to The Learning Gate each week and the other donated \$600 in gift cards for the holidays. People have described this outreach as “seeing God in the community”.

We also worked together to gather sports equipment, school supplies and laptops for the teens at the Martin Luther King Center in Bridgewater. We had teams working at the Somerset Food Bank every Monday and Thursday to help feed the hungry.

Through these and other initiatives our faith was strengthened in 2021 and continues to be in 2022.

**18. Buildings: Please describe church-owned or rented buildings and purpose.**

**Church sanctuary and education/administration building (adjoined buildings):**

The church sanctuary consists of a main floor and a 3-sided balcony with a capacity of about 300 people. The education/administration building is a 2 story-building (plus basement) consisting of education classrooms, fellowship hall, kitchen and church administrative offices.

**Kirkside:** Adjacent residential house that provides low-cost, shared/group housing for up to 5 seniors. Residents must be ambulatory and self-reliant.

**Hope House:** Adjacent formerly-residential house that has been converted to provide professional office space/rooms for faith-based counseling professionals. Rent-paying professional businesses are independent from church affiliation.

**Sunrise House:** Adjacent residential house owned by the church, but through a contractual agreement, managed by a local 501(c)3 charitable organization that provides transitional housing for homeless individuals and families.

**Cemetery:** Actively-managed cemetery about ¼ mile from the church.

**19. Do you plan any capital expenditure during the next five years? No**

**If yes, please explain briefly:**

There are no planned major capital expenditures planned for the next 5 years. However, given the number of properties managed, there are always ongoing capital improvements required (new roof, HVAC upgrades, parking lot repairs, etc.). We have a \$400,000 capital endowment specifically purposed to generate funds through investment gains/income for capital projects.

**20. Is there a mortgage indebtedness? No**

**Amount:**

**Of how long standing?**

**Annual rate of repayment**



## **21. Pastor's study:** In church

## **22. List all paid staff in addition to the pastor:**

### Position

Pastor of Discipleship	Full Time
Director of Music and Worship Arts	Full Time
Office Administrator	Part Time (30 hours/week)
Kirkside Administrator	Part Time (10 hours/week)
Property Manager	Part Time (4 hours/week)
Sound Technician	Part Time (2 hours/week)

Due to emerging financial challenges, Consistory has been monitoring our current staffing model and recognizes that changes may be needed. However, Staffing decisions have been intentionally deferred until after our new pastor arrives so that he/she can influence the staffing model to best complement the pastor's gifts, talents and experience.

## **23. Consistory Membership: What method is used in selecting members?**

The terms for our Elders and Deacons is 3 years. Every year, we introduce two new names for each group.

Names are selected by consistory, but the congregation is allowed to submit candidates as well. The names are reviewed by the consistory with attention paid to diversity in gender, age, and church involvement. Calls are made directly to the individuals to invite them to join.

The candidate names are normally posted in the Sunday bulletin prior to the annual Congregational meeting which is generally the first Sunday in February. During this meeting, the names are formally announced, and motions is made to accept them. There is also an opportunity to make a motion for different

candidates if someone is so inclined. Assuming the motions and the vote are affirmative, the new Elders and Deacon are now part of the consistory.

**Please list present Consistory members (Put a check in the box where appropriate)**

**Elders**

Male	Lawyer
Male	Software Developer
Male	Medical Device R&D
Female	Executive Admin
Female	Retired Teacher
Female	Lawyer

**Deacons**

Male	Accountant
Male	Retired Finance/Investments
Male	Telecom Tech
Female	Scientist
Female	Sales Support Manager
Female	Quality Control - Cosmetics

**24. What leadership roles do women currently fill in your church?**

- Consistory as Elders and Deacons
- Committee leads
- Sunday school teachers
- Youth Group leaders

- Seminary intern
- Office administrator (paid)
- Music director (paid)
- Preschool director (paid)
- Preschool teachers (paid)

**25. In our congregation...(please check appropriate box)**

**Had up to twelve years of formal education:** Most have...

**Had some education beyond high school:** Most have...

**A college degree:** Most have...

**A graduate degree:** Many have...

**26. In our congregation...(please check a box)**

**Scientists & Engineers:** Many are...

**Farmers:** Few are...

**Business People:** Many are...

**Students & Teachers:** Many are...

**Industrial Workers:** Few are...

**Office Workers:** Many are...

**Other:**

**27. Special training/experience desired: (describe briefly).** N/A

**28. Languages:**

**Should your pastor be fluent in any language other than English?** Not required

**If yes, please explain.**

**29. The salary we are prepared to offer out new pastor is:** in accordance with classis guidelines for the Classis of Delaware-Raritan compensation guidelines, which are based on church size and years since ordination.

**The average annual increase to our pastor over the past three years was:** in accordance with annual classis recommended cost of living adjustments.

**30. Is a parsonage provided?** No

**If so, is it on site with the church?**

**If the parsonage is not on site with the church, how far from the church is it located?**

**31. Is a Minister's housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage a negotiable option?**

Yes. In addition, relocation expenses will be reimbursed. Housing allowance is consistent with the cost of living in New Jersey. Recognizing geographic cost of living differences throughout the US, low-cost loans to an incoming pastor may also be negotiated.

**32. The benefits/business expenses we will provide our pastor are:**

**(Please check those provided or give amount as requested.)**

**Base Salary:** Per classis guidelines

**Housing Allowance:** negotiable

<b>Parsonage provided:</b>	No
<b>Travel Reimbursement:</b>	\$2,000 annual allowance
<b>Social Security (Amount):</b>	included in base salary
<b>Book Allowance (Amount):</b>	\$200
<b>Continuing Education Allowance (Amount):</b>	1/52 of base salary
<b>Provision for Sabbatical:</b>	negotiable (after 5-7 years)
<b>Other (Specify Below):</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

<b>Retirement:</b>	Yes
<b>Major Medical Insurance:</b>	Yes
<b>Health/Hospital Insurance:</b>	Yes
<b>Life Insurance:</b>	Yes
<b>Dental Insurance:</b>	Yes
<b>Unemployment Insurance:</b>	No
<b>Disability Insurance:</b>	Yes

<b>Annual Vacation (Number of Weeks):</b>	4 weeks, including 4 Sundays
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**Necessary Comments regarding above:**

**33. Community served: (please check one)**

**Rural: Under 2,500**

**Town: 2,500-9,999**

**Small City: 10,000-49,000**

- X      **Metropolitan-Suburban: 50,000+**  
         **Metropolitan-Urban: 50,000+**  
         **Metropolitan-Inner City: 50,000+**  
         **Other**

**34. Cooperative ministry: In what ways have you cooperated with other churches in your community during the past year?**

We have a sister relationship with St. Bernards & Temple Beth El. We hold an interfaith Thanksgiving service and a men's Christmas breakfast with St. Bernards

**35. Community involvement: In what community programs or projects have you participated during the past year? (As an organization, not as individuals.)**

NBRC has held several community picnics for the community. We help the Learning Gate in Raritan by providing gift cards, winter coats, boots and labor for mulching, painting and other projects. We always support the crop walk for hunger with money and participants. The church preschool collects new adult socks to donate to S.H.I.P. in Somerville. The North Branch Reformed Church donates food and labor to the Somerset County Food Bank. The church helped dozens of families after hurricane IDA floods in Branchburg as well as Somerville. On Earth Day we celebrated by going on a neighborhood walk and picking up trash.

**36. What denominations or religions are present within three miles (in rural areas, consider the county) where your church is located?**

Calvary Bible Church

Gateway Church

Pluckimen Presbyterian Church  
Bradley Gardens Reformed Church  
St. Bernards Roman Catholic Church  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints  
Grace Community Church  
Hindu Temple  
Evangel Chapel Assembly of God

**37. Outreach: What is your strategy to reach un-churched people in your community?**

Our award winning Pre-school has been an important entry way to NBRC for over 66 years.

**38. The income level of the people in our congregation tends to be: (please check one)**

- ☒ About average for our community  
☐ Somewhat below the rest of the community  
☐ Somewhat higher than the rest of the community

**39. Describe the community and school system: (Provide website links were appropriate.)**

Branchburg Township and Bridgewater have excellent IC-High schools. Branchburg students attend Somerville High School in a sending-receiving relationship and Bridgewater students attend Bridgewater-Raritan High School. Branchburg Township school district contains 3 schools and 1,394 students. The district's minority enrollment is 30% with a student:teacher ratio of 9:1.

Bridgewater Township has 11 schools K-12 with a total enrollment of 8,603 and a student:teacher ratio of 11:1

**40. Record of last three pastors:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Rev. Todd Buurstra	1999 to 2021
Rev. Peter Paulson	1997 to 1999
Rev. Peter Nordstrom	1986 to 1994

**41. Please complete your profile with the following contacts:**

<u>Name</u>	
Lauren Fox	Vice President, Consistory
Rev. Thomas E. Jones	Classis Supervisor



## Section B. Reflections

Please answer the following questions, adding your own experiences where appropriate.

### 1) What is the stated mission, vision or purpose of your congregation?

**Vision Statement:** “Overflowing with God’s blessings, our hearts and hands reach out to the world.”

**Call Statement:** “God calls North Branch to lift up the poor and poor in spirit in Bridgewater and beyond.”

**Motto:** “The Church that Serves.”

**Mission Statement:** The North Branch Reformed Church is committed to live out God’s vision through:

- **Vibrant Worship** that glorifies God by inspiring praise, generosity, and service through biblical teaching, prayer, and music;
- **Warm Community** that reflects Jesus’ love and embraces all people in an expanding diverse fellowship;
- **Grateful Service** that reaches outward so our neighbors know us as the church that serves in Jesus’ name;
- **Family Centered Ministry** that supports individuals and families of all ages through prayer, education, and community as they navigate the demands of life in an ever-changing world; and,
- **Empowering Leadership** that promotes a culture where young and old are mentored and encouraged to develop and utilize their gifts to the glory of God.

**2) What goals have been developed from your mission and vision over the next 5 years? (Example new programs or outreach ministries.) Include long range or strategic plan.**

NBRC's heart beats for mission, expressed through Christ-like acts of love and service. Our goal is to reach out to our local community, nation and world with conscious, deliberate and visible acts of service as a demonstration of God's love and grace.

NBRC seeks to be a safe place to explore and nurture faith-infused life through dynamic worship, music and small groups, where a relevant Gospel message is consistently conveyed and congregants are inspired and challenged to live faithfully through Biblical instruction.

NBRC aspires to be a balanced, energetic, intergenerational congregation providing an engaging place where adults, young families and youth can learn, grow and thrive in their faith journey and spiritual connections.

NBRC strives to be inclusive and representative of an increasingly diverse community through partnerships and joint activities with other faith-based organizations that share our vision of demonstrating God's love to underserved communities.

NBRC seeks to leverage member's creativity and talents to:

- revitalize our ministries and community outreach through a deliberate emphasis on attracting, welcoming and incorporating new members;
- employ technology to deepen engagement and expand worship opportunities;
- leverage our Pre-School as an opportunity for growth and family outreach; and,
- remain good stewards of our financial and property assets, ever-grateful for everything God has blessed us with.

### **3) Describe the strengths of your church, the best of what you are as a community, and what you can offer a new pastor.**

A devoted, warm and welcoming congregation with:

- a deep-seated spirit of volunteerism;
- a passion for engaging in community service and mission as a demonstration of God's love and grace; and,
- a generosity of time, talent and treasure.

A recognized, well-established Pre-School (in its 66<sup>th</sup> year!) that provides Christian-based early education and serves as a gateway for families to explore their faith through continued church engagement.

An inspirational music and arts program that enhances spirit-filled worship and provides a variety of worship opportunities and experiences.

A passionate community of faith that loves, prays and cares for each other through fellowship, support and the communion of saints; and, is ready to share that community with those who aren't here yet.

### **4) Explain the strategies or ideas that most excite your church in becoming or remaining missional.**

NBRC has a passion for service, and in particular for supporting local missions and service organizations in our immediate community by providing both direct, hands-on involvement (food bank volunteers, river clean up, work days, etc.) as well as financial support (gift cards, family sponsorships, clothing donations, etc.).

NBRC is passionate about our Pre-School, and providing a safe, Christian-based opportunity for early childhood education that leads to a life-long love of God.

NBRC sponsors and regularly sends adults and youth on both domestic and international mission trips. With the goal of spreading the Gospel and serving communities in need, mission trips also challenge our folks toward discipleship and inspire a deep passion for service and ministry. They also cultivate connections and increase understanding both within our congregation, as well as with the communities that welcome us.

As the demographics of our local community change, NBRC has a vision for a more inclusive and diverse congregation, and seeks to attract congregants from underserved communities that can infuse new energy and broaden perspectives.

**5) Name three of your church's most passionate hopes and why they are significant.**

We pray for the post-pandemic re-gathering and re-invigoration of our congregation and community. We pray for the revival of our Christian education and youth programs, and the energy and vibrancy they bring to the entire congregation, and the potential they have in attracting newcomers.

We pray that our passion for service will inspire transformational faith, and that service will lead to a spirit of mission and evangelism, particularly with underserved communities.

We pray that through our inspired worship, preaching and music we will be more intentional about welcoming newcomers, while at the same time rekindling our own passion to love God and serve Christ.

**6) How do you hope someone who visits your church would describe what s/he considers to be most important?**

We hope that newcomers to our church can quickly and easily recognize that we are a church that loves the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind; and, that we love our neighbors as ourselves. Nothing could be more important!

**7) Name at least one challenge facing your new pastor.**

Our community is not immune to the general societal trends of increasing secularization; the lack of trust and commitment to organized religion; and, the increasing polarization of society. These long-standing challenges were further magnified by the pandemic. As a result, our new pastor will be faced

with the challenge of declining attendance and an aging congregation, and all the financial and organizational challenges that brings. While in general the congregation is receptive to change and looking forward to new pastoral leadership, change is never easy and open-mindedness to new ideas in order to attract a younger, more diverse membership could be challenging.

While being “The Church that Serves” has been the hallmark of our recent history, we still face the challenge of turning that passion for service into mission and evangelism that results in hearts and souls turned to Christ. Our challenge remains to inspire transformational faith that changes lives, and our prayer is that our new pastor can lead us toward that goal with dynamic and challenging preaching and leadership.

#### **8) Describe your vision and hopes for your church and your pastor over the next 5 years.**

2025 will be the bicentennial for NBRC, and we eagerly look forward to the celebration of what North Branch has meant to this community over the past two centuries, while at the same time inviting all newcomers to join us in our journey forward. Through wars, famines, floods and pandemics, people of all faiths have turned to the North Branch Reformed Church to be the foundation for this community. God has done great things, and will continue to do great things through NBRC.

Our vision is also for our new pastor to lead us in trying to bridge gaps where polarization in our community exists, through proactive relationship building with others in the community, and a focus on our shared faith and commonalities to overcome differences that may narrow our perspective or impair our vision.

Our hope and vision for our new pastor is that s/he will leverage the strengths of our congregation; channel our passion for service and missions; and, inspire us through spirit-filled worship and Biblical education to turn our challenges into opportunities to glorify God and continue His work here on earth.

**9) Explain whatever else you would like your potential pastor to know about your church.**

We'd like you to know that:

- we steadfastly trust that God will call the right pastor to our church, and us to him/her;
- we're open and excited for the new ideas, opportunities and challenges that a new pastor will bring; and,
- while no church is without its own unique challenges, we're an immensely talented congregation of deep faith, committed to proclaiming God's grace and prepared to face those challenges together with you.