

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE 2024



CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



The Search Committee of Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton welcomes and invites all prospective candidates to review this Congregational Profile and to give prayerful consideration to becoming Central's new minister of Word and Sacrament.



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge with gratitude and respect that Central Presbyterian Church is located on the traditional territories of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee peoples. This land is protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to share and care for the lands, air and waters around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We recognize that we must learn about the rich history of this land to better understand our role as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.

We are all treaty people.



STATEMENT OF WELCOME AND INCLUSION

God's Love Includes Everyone

We strive to be a welcoming, nurturing, loving, and supportive community unified in Jesus Christ. As an inclusive congregation, we joyfully affirm and honour the diversity of God's creation. Our community is richer when we include people of all ages, gender identities, racial and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, economic circumstances and family configurations. We proclaim this statement of inclusion to all who have experienced the pain of exclusion or discrimination by the church and society. All are invited to join a body of believers, to participate fully in the life, leadership, witness and ministry of Central Presbyterian Church. We acknowledge we are imperfect and in different stages of our faith journey. No matter who you are, how you identify, whom you love, or where you are on life's journey: know you are welcome here, and you are loved by God. Central appears on the [registry of congregations](#) that will host and conduct same-sex marriages.



HISTORY

Central Presbyterian Church officially became a congregation on the third Sunday in February, 1841 - twenty six years before Canada became a country! Over its long history Central has witnessed a multitude of experiences, providing a rich heritage from which we grow.

The initial congregation numbered 12 individuals, but steadily grew into the hundreds, necessitating several moves to larger churches before settling at the corner of Jackson and MacNab in 1861 when the congregation also renamed itself "Central." The last move – to its current location at the corner of Charlton Avenue and Caroline Street in 1908 – occurred because of a devastating fire that destroyed the 1861 church.

In 1925, with a congregation of nearly 800, Central was just 17 votes away from becoming part of the newly formed United Church of Canada. This challenging time was faced by the Session and the congregation with "good heart" and our church remained Presbyterian.

In the congregation's 183 years, there have only been 13 senior ministers, four of whom had ministries here for over 20 years. Five ministers have served as Moderators of the General Assembly. Central has a history of excellent preachers, and our worship has been blessed by so many of the ministers that God has chosen for us.

Our congregation has consistently had a heart for helping others. Outreach and Mission have always been a focus, from sponsoring mission schools and new congregations in the 1800's to our current work to assist refugees and neighbours in need.

Reflecting on our history, Central's congregation has indeed experienced times of joy and times of difficulty. The joyous times have been and continue to be celebrated. The difficult times have challenged us to face them honestly, enabling us by God's grace to learn, to change and to grow. We look forward to the future with hope and faith.

More information on our history may be found on [Central's website](#).

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Congregational life at Central is warm and welcoming. Embracing inclusivity, our church community offers programming for continued learning and deepening faith journeys through discipleship studies, Social Justice Group meetings, and special guest speakers. Elders seek out their districts regularly, guiding them through the various channels to be involved in congregational life. Pastoral care is offered in various ways to meet the needs of congregants.

Central also provides a range of fellowship opportunities for all generations. Prime Time provides senior-aged members of our congregation a friendly space to discuss helpful topics; the Book Club enjoys meaningful conversations about timely and contemporary books; the Knit and Knatter group offers a weekly haven for the knitters of Central to bond.



Our faith community also hosts seasonal, multigenerational dinners with community-building activities such as kite-making and pumpkin carving. There are plenty of opportunities for congregants to volunteer, including community-forward outreach initiatives, committee work within the church, and lending various gifts for the improved joy of congregational life.



WORSHIP AT CENTRAL

The Sunday morning worship service is the heart of our church community; a time of joining together through scripture, prayer, music and teaching. The congregation is welcoming to all, encouraging children, young people and all members to lead in opening prayers, responsive psalms and scripture readings. The aim of our worship at Central is to lift us to God and to be opened for God to come to us. In this very act we are changed. Our worship is purposeful and liturgical; the fitting response of the creature to the creator.

Central has a tradition of strong preaching; we have been blessed with ministers who reach deeply into God's word, interpreting and applying the scriptures to our daily lives so that we may continue to grow in faith.

Children and youth lead an intergenerational service four times each year, and special services include the Christmas Eve service, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and an annual "In Memoriam" service in January.

Services are live-streamed so that members of the community unable to attend may join with us in worship.

[YouTube channel](#)



MUSIC

Music is deeply ingrained in Central's history, culture, ministry, and outreach. For many years, we have had a continuous tradition of high-quality choral music and musicianship that supports and enhances congregational worship.

Central fully supports this musical ministry by funding a half-time Director of Music Ministries and paid section soloists. Each Sunday, Central's choir offers an introit and an anthem, as well as leading the congregation in hymns and a sung psalm. In addition to the accomplished choir, our exciting and dynamic music program is enhanced by several active professional instrumentalists within our congregation who have formed the Charlton String Quartet.



Music offers a vehicle for Central to regularly open its doors to the community, whether through our two major choral outreach events, the Candlelight Carol Service in Advent and the Good Friday performance, or through our Music@Central Sunday afternoon concert series. These concerts are presented free of charge, with voluntary donations solicited to support the music program. These special music events are a powerful outreach vehicle for inviting the surrounding community to Central.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Central congregation's children and youth ministry provides a welcoming, safe environment that leaves a lasting impression on the young people who attend our programs.

The Ministry is fast-growing and includes children and youth from all age groups. As of spring 2024, we have 11 children in nursery (preschool to JK), 21 children in Faith Finders (SK-Grade 8), and 5 high school-age youth.

The Faith Finders program and a Nursery staffed with an Early Childhood Educator are offered every Sunday. Children 5 years old and up join their families for the first portion of the service, then are invited to the front of the church for a child-focused story or lesson before heading to Faith Finders. Various fun activities are designed by the discipleship coordinator, including Bible lessons, music, crafts, board games and basketball.

The children and youth ministry programs at Central are designed to guide young people in their spiritual growth, capture interest and stimulate their learning and ability to see dignity and worth in every child.



OUTREACH

We live out Central's mission statement of caring for one another, and taking God's love to the world, by serving the community and world beyond the walls of our church building. The congregants of Central have been, and continue to be involved in a wide range of mission activities and projects, providing not only financial support, but our gifts of time and talent.

Central's winter outreach initiatives take many forms: coat drives, food donations, and a gift-card program for our annual White Gift Sunday. Our largest mission project is hosting the Hamilton Out of the Cold (HOOTC) program each Thursday evening from November through March. HOOTC provides a hot, nutritious meal for those experiencing homelessness or food insecurity and brings many volunteers together in joyful service. A new initiative this year was the HOOTC Café and Warming Centre, which provides a vibrant gathering space and a place of respite from the weather on Mondays during the winter months.

Central provides a vibrant nucleus to its surrounding community by supporting local artisans, crafters, and farmers as the host of the Durand Farmer's Market from late spring through fall and a Christmas pop-up market. The gardens of Central offer a moment of serenity to passersby, and in the summer, the front steps of the church come to life with Music on the Steps – part of the Music@Central free concert series.

To encourage understanding and friendship and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours, Central's Social Justice group hosted a workshop entitled "Moving towards Reconciliation", in October 2022, led by Stanley (Bobby) Henry, a Cayuga leader from Six Nations and Education professor from Brock University. The event was open to the greater community and well attended and received.

Our faith community also challenges and encourages our children and youth to be involved in outreach. In December 2022, with wonderful contributions from the congregation, the Faith Finders children and youth carried out a mission project to send 60lbs of healthy snacks to Tusarvik Elementary School in Naujaat, Nunavut. This January, Faith Finders children stuffed many socks with hygiene products and the stuffed socks were made available at the Central HOOTC Café. In February, the Faith Finders children and youth prepared a pancake brunch for the congregation to raise funds to support World Renew, a Canadian registered charity with a global impact.

In faithfulness to God's mission in Canada and around the world, Central's congregation contributes to Presbyterian World Service and Development and Presbyterians Sharing.

OUR BUILDING

Central occupies a large city lot at the corner of Charlton and Caroline Streets just west of downtown Hamilton. The large sanctuary has capacity for over 600 people, and is a beautifully proportioned, light and open sacred space.

Throughout the years, the building has been very well maintained by a proud congregation, the last major restoration happening in the 1990s and early 2000s which included the removal, cleaning and re-leading of all of the stained glass windows. The Casavant organ is original to the building, and remains one of the largest and finest in the city of Hamilton. One of two transepts was converted in 1960 to form a cozy chapel under a balcony, where smaller, more intimate services can take place.

The attached Christian Education wing was rebuilt in 1960 and contains a large fellowship hall (which also serves as a gym), several meeting rooms, Sunday school classes, church offices, a fine parlor, and a commercial kitchen which meets food inspection requirements. The upper floor contains additional offices and Sunday school classrooms, and the lower floor has yet more classrooms, storage, and an open “hub” area.

Many spaces are rented throughout the year for meetings, movie shoots, concerts and community programs. In addition, Central is currently working with a realtor to secure a long-term tenant for some lesser-used spaces which could provide a more secure source of income and ensure long-term sustainability.



CENTRAL'S FINANCES

Central has an annual operating budget of approximately \$500,000; however, a year-over-year trend in decreased givings has compelled leaders within the church to search for creative ways to extend and augment Central's resources.

At the end of the 2023 fiscal year, Central's endowment generated approximately \$200,000 annually. Historically, the interest generated from the endowment has enabled Central's trustees to invest in significant capital projects to maintain and update the church building. More recently, trustees have allocated funds to church operations in order to make up the budget shortfall. The financial legacy left by generations of congregants is a critical component of the church's financial sustainability.

Over the last decade, owing to both a change in the congregational demographics as well as a decrease in Sunday attendance, congregational givings have decreased. Grants, rental income and endowment proceeds are required to balance the church's annual budget.

Staffing and building costs make up the majority of Central's operating expenses. While building rentals currently generate between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year, the Central community is aware that it has entered a season in which church leaders and the congregation as a whole need to make transformative changes to the church's operations to reduce reliance on endowment proceeds. The re-establishment of a sustainable operational budget - and the vital conversations and decisions that accompany this type of work - will be a significant focus of Central's minister, the Session and the congregation as a whole.

STAFF

Interim Minister: The Rev. Dr. Nick Athanasiadis

Director of Pastoral Care: The Rev. Lois Whitwell

Director of Music Ministries: Dr. Marcus Scholtes

Coordinator of Discipleship: Sara Traficante

Office Administrator: Helena Bootsma

Bookkeeper: Michelle Frebald

Nursery Coordinator: Aztecca Clarke

Custodian: David Lewington

Sunday, Event and Rental Custodians: Geoff French, Gregg Bullock-Price, Abbie Boyko

LOOKING FORWARD: IMAGINING CENTRAL'S FUTURE

When we consider where God is leading Central in the next five, ten, or even twenty years, we see much possibility. We have some big, bold, dreams: continuing to build our local mission and outreach; engaging in social justice and climate advocacy to care for our unhoused neighbours, newcomers, and the planet; and creating connections and dialogue with other denominations and faiths.

We are also aware that many challenges lie ahead. As mentioned, our finances are an area of concern – especially as we strive to maintain our beautiful and historic church building. As a congregation, we are aware of the need to prayerfully consider creative sources of income in order to achieve financial stability and continue our physical and spiritual presence here in the Durand neighbourhood.

With support and guidance from the Presbytery and the Interim Minister, the present congregation has emerged from a period of challenge and division. We approach this call with renewed hope and a clearer understanding of who we are.

Central's congregation benefits from many gifts that help us look to the future with optimism. In the short term, we see ourselves continuing to strengthen and grow together through deliberate community-building actions, both in the whole and in small groups. We hope to build the number of members and adherents, particularly adults in the 18-35 age range. We also hope to enhance communication and transparency through the creation of a Strategic Plan and an Annual Plan.

We see our new Minister as someone who, through the grace of God, will be able to help turn these dreams into realities – someone who can help lead, discern, and guide us as we continue to share God's love and grace.

“Let us accept with gladness the inheritance we have been given, build on their (the founders) achievements and look to the future in the strong confidence that the God who guided those who went before us will walk with us into the future.”

The Rev. Dr. Alan M. McPherson, Minister Emeritus

MINISTER PROFILE

Preferred Experience and Qualifications:

- Proven life and leadership experience in church ministry or similar setting working with a diverse congregation.
- Sustained, personal relationship with God and experience of the grace of God that also questions and seeks new learning.
- Masters of Divinity (minimum requirement for ordination in the PCC) with a commitment to ongoing learning and study.

Worship

- Preaches and teaches with both joy and gravitas in a way that nourishes our spirits and our faith and gives us strength for the journey.
- Preaches thought-provoking, progressive and inspiring sermons that encourages us to grow in our Christian faith and equip us for daily life.
- Embraces Central's worship style and sustains the importance of music in our congregation's approach to the worship of God.

Leadership

- Lives and embodies Central's Statement of Welcome and Inclusion.
- Accepts the congregation as we are, treats everyone with respect and as equals and helps identify and nurture the spiritual gifts of all.
- Facilitates visioning and helps build Central's future together with session, staff, committees, and the congregation in a collegial way.
- Demonstrates good conflict resolution and listening skills, finds common ground and compromises when appropriate.
- Ministers to a community of faith, working within our capacity and with self-care, while aspiring to grow.
- Represents the Central congregation to the surrounding neighbourhood and participates in outreach to the broader Hamilton community.

Personal Qualities

- Feels called to ministry at Central.
- Able to relate to and work with people of all ages and stages of life and economic realities with kindness, approachability and collaboration.
- Engages in pastoral care for all by being empathetic, using skills in listening and providing emotional and spiritual support.
- Seeks and is open to feedback with a teachable spirit.
- Commits to personal wellness and is able to cope with personal and professional stress.

PASTORAL SKILLS AND INTEREST INVENTORY

Ranked in order of priority from 1 to 18.

1. Leading Worship and Preaching (Planning and conducting worship services.)
2. Equipping Church Members (For integrating Christian faith with life.)
3. Crisis Visiting (Serving people at times of illness, death, trauma, family crisis, job loss.)
4. Program Development (Establishing goals, and organizing programs in church and community.)
5. Personal and Spiritual Development (Providing resources and guidance for people's devotional life, and for prayer groups, retreats and other small group experiences.)
6. Pastoral Care (On a regular basis.)
7. Leadership Development (Planning for and sharing in the training of leaders for the church's program.)
8. Stewardship (Faithful use of our time, gifts and money in response to the generosity of God in Christ.)
9. Administration (Managing the affairs of the congregation and other organizations.)
10. Work with Youth
11. Work with Seniors
12. Christian Education (Writing or selecting appropriate curricula for the educational ministry and planning activities for groups of all ages.)
13. Mission Outreach (Evangelism and social justice in the community, the country, and the world.)
14. Home Visiting (On a regular basis.)
15. Evangelism (Relating the gospel to people outside the church and helping the congregation to do the same.)
16. Interdenominational Cooperation (Working in inter-denominational programs and activities.)
17. Community Leadership (In areas like substance abuse, schools, community organizations.)
18. Denominational Service (Sharing in the work of all the courts of the church.)

WE WANT TO HELP

Members of the Search Committee will be available to help our new minister negotiate a seamless transition to your new home. We will offer tours of the city and its popular neighbourhoods, help connect you with realtors, shops and services, healthcare, recreational programs; in fact anything you may need to build a life here. We want your move to Central to be as easy and stress-free as possible.

CITY OF HAMILTON

Situated in the heart of southern Ontario's Golden Horseshoe, Hamilton offers big city amenities and small-town welcome. Historically built on the steel industry, Hamilton has pivoted in recent years to a less industrialized economic base, with world-class higher education and health institutions driving its growth.

The lands on which Hamilton now stands have been stewarded by the people of the Anishnaabek and Haudenosaunee for generations. British settlement began with the arrival of loyalists fleeing the 13 American colonies in 1778. The city was named for white settler George Hamilton, a well-connected veteran of the war of 1812, who used the previous British survey to sell parcels of land and set out railways in 1815.

Today, Hamilton welcomes people from diverse cultures, religions and backgrounds. In 2014, it was named a sanctuary city for undocumented immigrants at risk of deportation. The community of the Six Nations of the Grand River is located 40 kilometres to the south of Hamilton along the banks of the Grand River, while the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation is just a little further. In addition, Hamilton has a significant Francophone community.



WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT LIVING IN HAMILTON?

Just about everything! Hamilton has great public and private schools, on- your -doorstep post secondary education (McMaster University, Mohawk College, Redeemer University) and a healthcare system built around McMaster University's award-winning medical school.

Hamilton's arts scene is vibrant and exciting, anchored by the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, and Theatre Aquarius. A strong network of music groups, film and theatre groups makes the arts a truly community-based part of life in Hamilton. Every September, Supercrawl, Hamilton's free Arts and Music festival, attracts more than 250,000 visitors.

Sports fans enjoy rooting for the Hamilton Tiger Cats and the Hamilton Forge FC at their new stadium in the heart of Hamilton's east end or for the Hamilton Cardinals at Bernie Arbour Stadium. Golfers enjoy easy access to many public and private courses in and around Hamilton. Curling clubs, tennis clubs, and running and cycling groups abound, and North America's oldest long distance running race, the Around the Bay race, takes place here every March.

Hamiltonians love to eat and find everything from upscale dining to family-friendly dining to amazing food trucks. We are also home to the very first Tim Hortons! Specialty food shops and major grocery stores make it easy to find a variety of ingredients.

Family fun is everywhere. Hamilton has 394 municipal parks and 49 kilometres of City-owned trails, and the city offers a myriad of amenities for every season – including splash pads, wading pools, outdoor skating rinks, sandy beaches, and close proximity to several conservation areas. Gorgeous natural landscapes are all around Hamilton, and the Royal Botanical Gardens offers extensive specialty gardens, hiking trails, and fantastic children's programs. Hamilton truly has something for everyone!

Useful Links:

[*City of Hamilton*](#)

[*Tourism Hamilton*](#)

[*Hamilton Conservation Authority*](#)



Thank you for reading through our Congregational Profile Document in which we share our life at Central Presbyterian, here in Hamilton. As a congregation, we trust that God will lead the right spiritual guide and leader to us – one who will motivate and inspire us in our goals and aspirations to be a source of Christ’s light and love in all aspects of our lives.

Please note:

We offer a housing allowance.

Stipend and benefits according to the Presbyterian Church of Canada guidelines.

If you are being led to respond to God’s call to grow with us, and to share our vision, we look forward to receiving your response. For further information, please visit our website:
www.cpchamilton.ca

To submit your profile, please contact our Interim Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson.

Email: revpmw@outlook.com

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