**Who We Are - Congregational Profile**

We began as a mission work of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario, in 1906. Now, 115 years later, we are a congregation under the umbrella of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

Because of our tenure we have a rich history; and as such, have some multi-generational families; as well as, some who are newer to Elgin.

Recently, we have operated under a two-service model with consistency of preaching, but differing worship styles – one would be considered more traditional and the other more contemporary. This has created some challenges in trying to operate as “one church.” We have tried other ways to stay connected as a church. We are at a bit of a crossroads in consideration of the one vs. two services model going forward post-COVID.

We are “connected” to other churches in Stratford and area through the Stratford and District Council of Churches through participation with the annual Festival of Praise; joint junior high ministry with another area church; through a daughter church which began in Mitchell roughly 20 years ago; and, through Bethel Pentecostal church and our church consistently supporting each other’s community sports outreach programs with volunteers.

Within the community we are arguably best known for our long-term hosting of Elgin Youth soccer each summer, which brings hundreds of Stratford and area children onto our soccer fields each week for soccer and bible story time. While perhaps not as well known, we also have some innovative children’s programs such as Launchpad (our weekly children’s outreach ministry which attracts non-Elgin families), and others

Admittedly we are a church at a stage in its life cycle looking to re-establish growth and revitalize some areas of ministry which are, admittedly, not as vibrant as we want them to be. Sunday school and children’s church during services are such examples in terms of being important ministries that are offered but have been declining in numbers in recent years. Having said that, we have a strong core of Elgin supporters within our midst in terms of members and regular adherents who love the Lord and love Elgin.

Missions is another important area at Elgin and we have good international missionary connections that we support faithfully; including, families who had strong local Elgin roots before heading out to the mission field. Conversely, more local or short-term mission opportunities is definitely an area we would like to further develop.

Currently, we have an annual budget of roughly $350K to $400K with regular weekly attendance, pre-COVID, of not quite 200 combined across the two services. Our 2020 membership was at 112. Going forward we are planning to have just one worship service.

When we moved into our current location in 1985 we were more “rural” in our settings but as Stratford has continued to grow and expand we find ourselves now right at the edge of the city with a fairly even composition of attendees from within the Stratford city limits and the surrounding rural area.

Over the years our congregation has experienced seasons of both growth and decline. Times of growth have been accompanied by upgrades and expansions to our building. We do have plans to enable further expansion and would love to see this opportunity present itself in the near future as we resume growth under new leadership.

Our current lead pastor is looking to transition into a different role here at Elgin once we hire a new lead pastor. He will continue to move toward full retirement, within the congregation, within the next few years. Elgin has had a history of team leadership, under the supervision of the lead pastor, and we would like to continue with this model.

Structurally, our congregation is an oligarchy. We have an elected Board of Directors, whom all paid staff are accountable to. A board member may sit on the board for a maximum of two consecutive, three-year terms. Ultimately, most decisions are made by the board. Major decisions, such as staffing changes, are brought before the congregation. We also have a very active Deacon’s board who assist the lead pastor with visitation, communion, membership, baptism, cares and concerns, and prayer.