

Allen Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Allen Avenue Christian Reformed Church has been ministering for 133 years in Muskegon, Michigan, a culturally diverse lakeshore city working hard toward growth and transformation. Once known for its lumber and fur trade, then as a foundry town, Muskegon has been reinventing itself into a thriving port city with diverse career opportunities. Located on the beautiful shore of Lake Michigan, we enjoy God's great creation all around us. Our area offers a wide variety of outdoor activities such as boating, fishing, golfing, and swimming, as well as winter sports like cross-country skiing, luge, and ice skating. Residents and visitors appreciate Muskegon's historic architecture, museums, theater, and many concert venues, including Unity Christian Music Festival at Heritage Landing. We are just a short drive away from Grand Rapids, the 2nd largest city in Michigan and headquarters of our denomination.

Like our city, Allen Avenue is working toward transformation. Instead of counting on internal growth we are seeking to become a congregation passionate about growing Christ's church through evangelism.

Our vision statement is: We live to BLESS.

Our mission statement is: B.L.E.S.S. and we are called by God to:

Believe - Believe in One Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Believe that the Bible is the true and inspired Word of God and reveals the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Love – Love and nurture one another as the body of Christ and our neighbors as children of God.

Evangelize - Evangelize by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with our neighbors and by participating in mission efforts across the globe.

Support – Support Christian education with our gifts and prayers and by volunteering our time.

Serve - Serve our community and world by pursuing God's justice and peace in all areas of life.

We are prayerfully seeking a pastor who demonstrates a strong and growing relationship with Jesus Christ, preaches biblically grounded messages, is a strong supporter of Christian Education, enjoys reaching out to the local neighborhood and encourages evangelism in our community. If you believe Allen Avenue may be a good fit for you, please review our church profile for more information.

Allen Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Church Profile

Church Information:

Name: Allen Ave Christian Reformed Church
Location: 695 Allen Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49442
Phone: 231-722-6411
Website: www.allenavechurch.org
Specialized Transitional Pastor: Pastor Stanley J. Sturing
Classical Church Counselor: Matt Eenigenburg

Search Committee Contact:

Name: Mary Kortman
Address: 2437 Memorial Drive, North Muskegon, MI 49445
Phone: (616) 726-4956
Email: pastorsearch@allenavechurch.org

Community Setting

Location: Small City, Inner City
Function: Manufacturing, College/University, Tourism, Recreational
Growth: Static
Approximate population: 173,500 – Muskegon County

Church Profile:

We are open to: Male & female pastors
List of current staff positions: Pastor, Worship Coordinator, Secretary, Custodian, Financial Secretary
Position Available: Pastor
Date of vacancy: January 20, 2021
General position description: Sole Pastor, full-time
Bi-vocational position: No
Numbers of years preferred of ministry experience for potential candidate: No preference
Required languages: English

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Church Demographics:

Average Sunday attendance: 60-70

Active adult professing members: 104

Profile of church members:

Age:

3%	0-11 years
6%	12-18 years
1%	19-24 years
5%	25-34 years
3%	35-49 years
46%	50-64 years
36%	65+ years

Occupation:

24%	Business
52%	Retired
12%	Student
5%	Trade
2%	Stay-at-home parent
2%	Professional
0%	Agriculture
3%	Teacher

Length of Membership:

Less than 5 years	8%
5-10 years	0%
10 or more years	92%

Congregation is white with surrounding community predominantly African American

List of last three persons in this position:

1. Benjamin M. Oliveria (2016 - 2020)
2. Robert L. Bierenga (1996 -2014)
3. G. Bernard Dokter (1985 – 1994)

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Worship:

How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?

- Worship and Music Committee made up of about 6 people
- Worship Coordinator & Pastor handle specific details of service
- Praise Teams leading songs every service
- Volunteers participate in many ways including sound system, projection, congregational prayer, children's message, and refreshments after church

Describe the worship services in your church:

Worship services at Allen Avenue could be described as "blended" with a variety of music styles incorporated into each service and a liturgy that reflects the covenantal nature of our relationship with God.

Describe discipleship practices for all ages and members:

- For children/youth: children's messages, Sunday School, Catechism, GEMS, Youth Group, and a VBS each summer for church and neighborhood children.
- For adults: Men's and Women's Bible Studies, and small groups
- Weekly prayer time on Tuesday evenings via Zoom

Building/Financial:

Current annual budget: \$270,054

Last year's annual budget: \$269,601

Percentage of financial obligations met:

- Budget – 100%
- Denominational Ministry Shares – 100 %
- Classical Ministry Shares – 100%
- Amount contributed above budget and ministry shares: \$13,500

Facilities:

Describe facilities:

Well maintained brick facility, organ, baby grand piano, video sound booth, off street parking for 75 vehicles, ADA compliant lift, and adjacent parsonage now converted to Education Center.

Are buildings adequate for your ministries: Yes

Is the building program projected: No

Does the church own a parsonage: No

Location of office or study: Church Proper, 695 Allen Ave

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Compensation:

The salary range we are prepared to offer our new pastor is based on the CRC Minister Compensation Survey for our area.

The average annual increase for this position over the past three years is 2% per year.

Housing allowance, pension, medical insurance, social security or Canada pension, travel/mileage, continuing education, 4 weeks' vacation, one Sunday off from preaching in months with 5 Sundays

Church Characteristics:

Presently the focus of our church's ministry is: current members/participants primarily

In our church, the worship service is designed for:

- Emphasis on believers

In our church the style of music is:

- blended

In our church, leadership is currently provided by:

- lay members and our specialized transitional pastor

Our church seeks to encourage spiritual growth through:

- ministries for all age groups

In our church, evangelism events are:

- Generally unplanned

Our church is representative of the economic diversity of our community:

- Weakly represented

Our church is representative of the ethnic diversity of our community:

- weakly represented

Our church's response to compassion, mercy and justice needs are:

- Church based and personal action

Our church's missional focus is:

- Equally local and global

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Narrative:

In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

Our church participates in the worship and ministries of Angel Community Church. We support denominational programs through ministry shares and provide additional support for six specific missionaries. We have participated in mission trips to help areas impacted by disasters.

Reflect on your strengths/gifts as a church:

Members of our congregation use a variety of gifts to serve both in the ministries of our church such as worship, GEMS, church school and in community organizations such as Love INC (ramp projects, serving on the board, screening calls) and DIBS! resale shop (supports West Michigan Christian Schools). We also have a very active prayer ministry with multiple daily text messages and weekly Zoom prayer times.

Reflect on your passions as a church:

We have a passion to support and minister to children both in our congregation and in the community by promoting Christian education and building vibrant ministries like GEMS. We also support evangelism and missions both financially and through our actions. We have a passion to support our local Angell Neighborhood in a variety of ways. We have a strong desire to grow spiritually.

List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

Our membership has been declining. Due to our declining membership, we are struggling with sustaining our current ministries—especially children and youth-oriented ministries. Overcoming the emotional impact related to the last two pastor separations. Establishing a clear vision and goals for our church.

Do you have a recently articulated mission/vision for ministry? Yes

What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

Both the separation with our last pastor and the COVID pandemic have challenged the life of our congregation in the last few years.

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List major goals that this congregation has set for itself or opportunities the congregation anticipates:

- Redefining the vision for our church and ensuring the majority of members support the vision.
- Finding a new pastor who shares the vision we have as a church and who will help us implement that vision.
- Reaching out to our neighborhood families both through our church's and Angel's ministries.
- Revitalization of current ministries including small groups, children and youth ministries.
- Growing our church through evangelism.

Describe what being Christians of Reformed accent means to you:

Allen Avenue and its members adhere to the doctrines and biblical teachings of the Christian Reformed Church. We support the Denomination and Classis in its ministries and activities.

Describe your understanding of the relationship between the local church and the Christian Reformed denomination:

Same as above - Allen Ave and its members adhere to the doctrines and biblical teachings of the Christian Reformed Church. We support the Denomination and Classis in its ministries and activities

Identify some of the cultural challenges facing Christians and Christian churches today:

- Overall, Christians are under attack for views which are falling more and more out of alignment with society
- Sunday observances, musical challenges, mixed denominations
- The breakdown of the family unit – single parent homes, cohabitation instead of marriage
- The redefinition of marriage in our culture and how we address human sexuality issues
- The great proliferation of the Internet and instant access to less than wholesome content
- Right to Life

What have been the three most important events in the history of your church?

- Celebrating our 125th anniversary in 2014 (Allen Avenue was organized in 1889)
- Supporting partner in the forming of Angel Community Church in 2001
- Right now, this turning point for our church in filling a leadership role of the pastor, and redefining ourselves with an evangelistic focus

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Leadership:

Our church has 12 council members, plus the pastor.

Length of term for council members is currently 3 years.

The full council meets monthly.

Subgroups of the council include:

- Elder/Deacon teams that oversee and visit district members as needed
- Standing committees, meeting as needed:
 - Building
 - Congregational Life
 - Education
 - Finance
 - Missions
 - Discipleship
 - Technology
 - Worship and Music
 - Emergency Response