

Christ Covenant Church of Grande Prairie - CREC Candidate Church Information

The items below correspond to the list provided in the document, “CREC Guidelines for Sponsoring Churches.”

1. Basic Information

Christ Covenant Church of Grande Prairie.

Mailing address: c/o 10307 - 93 St, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 1Y2.

Meeting address: 8202 - 110 St (Grande Prairie Christian School).

Web site: christcovenant.ca.

Contact: Council clerk at (780) 830-1125 / (780) 876-1102 (Tim Gallant).

2. Contact Information for Elders

George Plante, council chairman
Box 21071, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6W7
(780) 568-4221

Dale Callahan, vice-chairman
10017 - 85 Ave, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 3C2
(780) 532-9867
dale35callahan@hotmail.com

Tim Gallant, clerk
10307 - 93 St, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 1Y2
(780) 830-1125 / (780) 876-1102
tim@timgallant.org

Jamie Soles
12109 Crystal Ridge Rd, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 5C9
(780) 539-3227
jamie@solmusic.ca

3. Deacon

Leo Wattel
(780) 538-3738

4. Size of Congregation

41 members.

5. History

For our history, see the document available on our web site.

6. Polity

Please see our constitution (also available on our web site).

7. Confessional Information

a) The confessional standards to which we subscribe are listed in our constitution under Article 1.

b) *Exceptions to the standards*. Here is the relevant excerpt from the minutes of the council meeting where exceptions (or possible exceptions) to our confessions were discussed:

No council member has any explicit exceptions. Clarifications, however, were brought up. Mr Gallant draws attention to two points: 1) he does not take the wording of e.g. *Heidelberg Catechism* Q/A 81 as prohibiting paedocommunion; 2) with regard to *Belgic Confession* Art 22, third sentence of the second paragraph: “But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all His merits, and so many holy works which He has done for us and in our stead, is our righteousness.” Mr Gallant wishes to clarify that he does not understand this as quantitative merit points which Christ has earned for us, but rather that Christ as the true Man and substitute perfect Lamb offered for us, is judged righteous, and because we are in Him, we share in that verdict. Other council members unanimously concurred with these readings.

Mr Soles drew attention to Article 29 of the *Belgic Confession*: “the true and false church are *easily* distinguished from one another.” All members agreed that distinguishing between the true and false churches requires a great deal of discernment and charity.

8. Constitution

[See # 6 above.]

9. Pastoral Credentials

[Not applicable; our church is presently functionally two office and has no full-time pastor.]

10. Exceptions to CREC Memorials

Here is the relevant excerpt from the minutes of the council meeting where exceptions to the CREC memorials were discussed:

Mr Plante indicates some reluctance regarding the first memorial concerning incorporation. A question was raised whether incorporation functioned differently in the USA than in Canada, but members were not certain. Council members indicated that there is no sin involved in seeking civil government’s recognition of the church (even as it recognizes families), without granting that the civil authority has power to create the church. (Whenever tax receipts are

issued, there is recognition by the civil gov't.) All agree that Christ alone is the Head of the Church, both locally and universally.

No members indicated difficulties with any of the other memorials.

11. Our Worship

From our web site's introduction to our worship:

Introduction

God has created human beings not simply as invisible spirits, but also as bodies and as communities. Likewise, God has made us creatures of *ritual* - patterns within which we find meaning.

Because of this, the biblical form of worship incorporates rituals which engage us, not only intellectually, but also on a social and bodily level. These rituals are not empty, but rather are filled with meaning, and shape us as we serve the God who gave them.

Principally, the bodily rituals of worship are *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, by which God brings us into His family and renews us by causing us to participate in His own life and with each other. These rituals are for the whole people of God; indeed, they mark out and shape that people of God.

Here is an outline of our order of service for Lord's Day worship. Although it is still somewhat of a work in progress, we claim no originality here; the overall structure is a pattern familiar from Scripture and the Church of the Lord down through the ages.

Order of Service

Call to worship
Greeting and salutation
Opening song
Confession of sin:
 Scripture reading
 Prayer of confession
 Declaration of pardon
 Sung response
Prayer of the Church
Songs of praise
Scripture reading
Prayer for illumination
Sermon
Song of response
Tithes and offerings
Lord's Supper
 Introduction
 Recital of the Creed
 Distribution of the bread, with singing
 Blessing and participation
 Distribution of the cup, with singing
 Blessing and participation
Doxology
Benediction

Principles of Participation in Lord's Day Worship

We believe that Lord's Day worship is principally a mutual activity between God and His people. It is a dialogue (mutual conversation) rooted in the covenant God has made with us as His own. Think of it as a semi-formal but *conversational family meal*.

Looking *outward*, this means that we are delighted to welcome into God's presence those who do not yet belong to His family. At the same time, two things should be noted: 1) the Lord's Supper is only for baptized Christians in good standing with Christ's Church; 2) the Word administered in Lord's Day worship is primarily (although not exclusively) addressed to those already in the believing community. This means that, unlike in other circumstances of our life and service, in Lord's Day worship, evangelism is achieved principally through loving welcome of visitors which allows them to see and hear how God addresses His own children, rather than through "conversionist" sermons or altar calls. We hope and pray that our visitors will see how special and wonderful God's relationship with His people truly is, and they will be moved by the Spirit to desire to become part of His chosen and redeemed community.

With regard to the *community itself*, the principle of worship as a family meal between God and His people entails that the whole body participates. This is achieved, not through everybody "sharing" a testimony or standing behind the pulpit - God provides special gifts to the body for such purposes (cf 1 Corinthians 12.27-30; Ephesians 4.11-12). But the united participation of the whole body does find practical expression in congregational worship, precisely in those activities which all can do together. We all sing, pray, and confess together, and God speaks His Word to all of us together. And in particular, Paul notes that - unlike the special gifts - the whole body of Christ shares in *baptism* into Christ and drinking by the Spirit in the *Lord's Supper* (1 Corinthians 12.12-13).

This is why we at Christ Covenant *baptize our infants* (for of such is the kingdom of heaven: Matthew 19.13-14) and discern the body by *including our little ones as participants in the Supper*, just as children were invited to the ancient Feasts of Israel (see e.g. Deuteronomy 16.11, 14; cf Exodus 12.4). This inclusion of the children of believers in both sacraments was practiced for centuries in the earliest Church, and we believe it is a very important means by which the solidarity and unity of Christ's body is to be maintained. As Paul says, we being many are one bread and one body, because we eat together of the one bread (1 Corinthians 10.17).

12. Special Ministries

We are currently developing a program for education and works of service. At present, we have been having monthly prayer meetings, as well as music instruction following Lord's Day worship.

13. Family Life of the Elders

Messrs. Plante, Callahan, and Soles are all married and raising godly families. Mr Gallant is single. A bio of Mr Gallant is attached. We hope to provide brief biographies of the others shortly.

14. Other Pertinent Information

None was discussed. Please feel free to request further information if you have specific questions.

This information was prepared by Tim Gallant, Clerk of Council, September 15, 2006.