

Church and Community Profile

Gentle Shepherd Community Church, Grey County, Ontario

Church Characteristics

The main campus of Gentle Shepherd Community Church is located in a rural setting on the outskirts of Eugenia in the beautiful Municipality of Grey Highlands, in the southern part of Grey County, Ontario. The church building, dedicated in 1991, is a single storey, completely wheelchair accessible complex that seats roughly 275, with an overflow area that can accommodate another 100 plus. Our secondary location, the "Cedarside Campus," is located in the town of Flesherton approximately six kilometres from the main campus.

We are a church of 149 members and adherents (97 members, 52 adherents as of September 21, 2023), with an average weekly attendance of 70. Approximately 9% of the congregation are aged 20-40, 23% are aged 41-60, 40% percent are aged 61-80 and 23% are above 80. Up to 40 children attend our Creationland (Sunday morning) and King's Kids (midweek) programs on a weekly basis, and up to 15 students attend our monthly community youth ministry.

Our church family is spread over a wide geographic area: 42% live in the immediate area of the church, in Flesherton, Eugenia and Kimberly, 20% live approximately 15 kilometres away in Markdale and Priceville areas, 21% live 24 to 55 kilometres away in Durham and west, Berkeley north to Owen Sound, Dundalk area, Maxwell area and Meaford area. Another 17% come from Creemore, Waterloo, Mount Forest, Pembroke, Stayner, Collingwood, Kemble, and other places.

The church's projected revenues for 2023 are approximately \$230,000.00

Church Purpose, Mission and Vision

The purpose of Gentle Shepherd Community Church is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ, according to His commandment (Matthew 28:19-20a).

We declare with passionate zeal our desire to present the gift of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, and to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. We do this by exalting Almighty God, encouraging Christians toward spiritual maturity, equipping Christians for ministry, and extending the love of Christ.

We are growing into a vision of being seen in Grey Highlands as the visible hands and feet of Jesus Christ in serving the needs of our various communities, and of being heard as His unashamed voice of hope in proclaiming salvation, healing and transformation through the truth of the gospel.

Church Values

The Centrality of Jesus and the Gospel Message

Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness from the pulpit and throughout the community is central to who we are and what we do. The goal is salvation for all who hear the message. We feel the need to see a generation reclaimed, salvation of the lost, and prodigals returned, by means of prayer with zeal and passion to the Lord with great expectation and joy.

The Priority of Scriptural Preaching

Biblical preaching has always been a core staple of ministry at Gentle Shepherd Community Church. We have never compromised in keeping our theology in line with scriptural truths, with Christ at the very centre.

The Importance of Personal Spiritual Growth

Bible-based teaching in youth and children's ministries, and in discipleship and small groups is so important, for spiritual feeding both inside the church as well as outside for the large populations around us who do not know God. We want to make sure we are getting people connected with teaching ministries, since it's important to grow deeper in our faith, to mature as believers, to be holy, and to have a Christlike attitude.

The Joy of Body Life

Fellowship—We are a warm, loving, inviting and welcoming church, a comfortable, safe place for people who have been hurt in life; we are a kind and caring community who treat each other like family; **Worship**—worship through scripturally based music is vital. Musical worship in the Sunday service prepares our hearts for the message. Allowing for the movement of the Holy Spirit is uppermost; **Prayer**—people truly care for one another, and support each other; we encourage each other, pray for each other, and share in fellowship with each other; **Service**—Gentle Shepherd Community Church is a place where we value strong Spirit-filled leadership; there are many opportunities for the talented and spiritually gifted people in the congregation to step up to use their gifts in ministry.

The Urgency of Mission

We are a church that highly values outreach both locally and internationally. **Locally**—we value maintaining and developing our Christian presence in the community; we want to communicate, connect with and care for our community, since we are to know Christ and make Him known. We want to reach out to be Jesus for those who don't know Him. **Internationally**—we are missions-minded; the great commission says to go and make disciples of all nations, so we will continue to be a church that supports and sends missionaries to complete this task internationally.

Community Characteristics

The Municipality of Grey Highlands is a rural community with a population of approximately 10,000 plus residents. It has a large agricultural/farming industry, followed by construction, and small manufacturing and other business industries. It is blessed with its scenic

landscapes, rivers, waterfalls and lakes, thus making it a popular tourist area for hiking, fishing, boating and other activities.

The most populated settlement area is Markdale, followed by Flesherton, Eugenia and several hamlets including Priceville, Kimberley, Rocklyn, Maxwell and Feversham. There are three elementary schools (Flesherton, Markdale, Maxwell) and one community secondary school (Flesherton). Many homes are being built in the neighbouring towns of Markdale and Dundalk.

Grey Highlands and surrounding municipalities are very proud of the brand new hospital that opened recently in Markdale, which also happens to be the home of Chapman's Ice Cream— Canada's largest independent Ice Cream manufacturer.

Demographics show that locals 55 plus years of age represent the largest age group, 40.5%, in Grey Highlands, while ages 34 to 54 represent 21.6% and ages 15 to 34 represent 20.4%, followed by those aged under 14, representing 17.6%. The representation of males and females is approximately equal—50.6% and 49.4% respectively. There are 155 Visible Minorities on record in our region, with 97.2% being predominantly English-speaking. Grey Highlands has a family-oriented population with 53.5% of the population being married, 11% being in common-law relationships, 22% being single, and 13.5 % being widowed, separated or divorced. The most recently reported average annual family income is \$85,000.00.

These families and individuals need to feel the love of Jesus, and know that there is a community of believers that are here to be a part of their lives.