

Holdeman Mennonite Church
Congregational Profile
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Holdeman Mennonite Church is a congregation of 60-70 persons seeking to live God’s call to a “passionate and growing relationship with Christ which finds expression through worship, service, and nurturing relationships in the congregation and beyond.” Located on the west end of Elkhart County; we sit on the edge of the small town of Wakarusa, and about 15-20 minutes from both Goshen and Elkhart and a little more than a half hour from South Bend. Additionally, we travel just 2 hours to Chicago and 2 ½ hours to Indianapolis.

We are a congregation of persons employed in manufacturing (Elkhart County is called the “RV Capital of the World”), business, agriculture, technology, construction, service professions and those who have retired from those pursuits. We are engaged in volunteer opportunities both in the congregation and in the community. The congregation was established 172 years ago and has the distinction of being the first congregation of Christians in the Wakarusa community.

Community profile

Holdeman Mennonite Church is located in Elkhart County but just one mile away from St. Joseph County. Our members live in both places. Elkhart County has a population of 206,000 people while St. Joseph County, with a larger urban area of South Bend/Mishawaka, boasts a population of 272,000. The two communities together grew about 15,000 people in the last 10 years (twice as much growth in Elkhart County). In both counties, the population is about 70% white. In Elkhart County the second largest population is Latino/Hispanic at 17% while in St. Joseph County the second largest population is Black/African American at 13%.

This community has very strong school systems (both public and private) with considerable opportunities for students in diverse academic and extracurricular areas. Those things include immersion schools, AP classes, sports, interest/career clubs, strong internships/apprenticeships and much more. Additionally, there are many college opportunities in the local area from Ivy Tech Community College to liberal arts schools like Goshen College, St. Mary's, Bethel University, and the University of Notre Dame. Indiana University also has a South Bend campus. IU, Goshen and Notre Dame have many available graduate school opportunities as well. Also, the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary is close by.

Recreational opportunities in the community are many. Bike trails are increasing. While there are some local lakes, it is also just a short trip to Lake Michigan. There are many parks with varied programs and activities related to the various seasons. Both youth and adult sports are popular whether one likes to watch or participate. There is a diversity of ethnic and fine dining opportunities, coffee houses, ice cream shops and much more.

The religious landscape of the community includes many varied Anabaptist/Mennonite groups in Elkhart County and a large Catholic center in South Bend. Of course, there are many other Christian groups with which we work in varied social service and ecumenical endeavors. There are also Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu groups, mostly in St. Joseph County. Churches in Wakarusa are primarily Anabaptist/Mennonite/Church of the Brethren, with several Missionary, one Methodist and one Baptist church also represented.

Who we are?

We believe in the Anabaptist/Mennonite vision cited by Palmer Becker which places Jesus at the center of our faith, community at the center of our life and reconciliation at the center of our work.

Jesus is the center of our faith:

Our worship service is centered on praise & worship of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Our services are typically led by a worship leader who is often a lay member from the congregation. We include a variety of music styles ranging from traditional hymns to contemporary songs in our services. We also have a praise team which includes piano, guitar, bass and on occasion other instruments. It is very common for us to have skits and other visuals included in the service. We stream our services each Sunday on Facebook Live and post them on our website.

Our leadership team has historically been diverse. For over 35 years women have served in leadership roles including pastor, elder and commission chair. In addition, we have called several pastors with backgrounds other than Mennonite, who have chosen to embrace Anabaptist beliefs.

Community is the center of our life:

Our congregation is one that enjoys opportunities to fellowship together. Nurturing relationships are fostered within the congregation in Sunday School classes, small groups, and a mentoring program for

our youth. We enjoy fellowship meals together! From carry-ins to youth group fundraiser meals, these events are always well attended and enjoyed by all age groups.

Reconciliation is the center of our work.

We are a people that rallies around service opportunities. Many of these are local, such as MCC Relief sale, involvement in Wakarusa community events and a Food Pantry in our church. Groups and individuals have helped at our local MCC thrift shop (The Depot), The Center (social services), Cultivate Food Rescue and many others. These are programs/events where we enjoy working together and making a difference in our community.

Beyond our local efforts, groups from our congregation have also made trips to other states to assist in needs with MCC and other organizations.

We believe these opportunities provide a chance to show God's love to those outside our church and allow an opportunity to witness Jesus' love and caring for all people.

Priorities for our Mission together as Pastor & Congregation

We are a people who desire to build strong relationships with youth, young adults and families. We want to share God's word with our community and draw others to Christ. We are looking for opportunities to be a light in the world.

It is important to the congregation that our new pastor emphasize Anabaptist/Mennonite values in their sermons and teachings. We have a long history of being an Anabaptist congregation and wish this to continue.

Our church strives to be welcoming and inclusive of diversity. One of our strengths is a strong feeling of "community" within the congregation and we wish to expand our local outreach. We have joined the Evana Network and will be emphasizing evangelism and outreach as a central theme.

We are known to be a very generous congregation. We have done several major fundraising projects to help people in need. We have recently completed paying for a major addition to the church and are debt free.

For the last 2 years we have been working with a transitional minister whose term ends on April 30, 2023. We have been working on communication as a congregation, who we have been, who we are, and who we want to be.

Post Pandemic, we are reviewing our church structure. The evaluation is intended to streamline our processes and adapt to better serve our congregation for the size of our group.

Areas of Emphasis:

We are looking for a pastor who, first and foremost:

- Demonstrates strong preaching and worship skills.
- Connects with youth and young adults to develop a vital and meaningful ministry to them.

Secondarily, a pastor will:

- Equip volunteers in the church to implement our vision and goals.
- Encourage Christian formation and nurture of persons of all ages and backgrounds.

Also, a pastor should:

- Embrace our unique history and lead us in developing our mission and vision while working at conflict resolution.
- Help us discover our identity for the future as we grow God's Kingdom. We are open to new ways of moving forward.

We are specifically looking for one or two people, of either gender, to fill 1 full-time equivalent position. Some undergraduate or graduate training in pastoral studies is preferred, in addition to some prior experience, preferably 3 or more years. They would need to be able to manage a part-time administrative assistant and office functions as well as preaching and administrative duties. We are open to pastoral candidates from outside Anabaptist traditions if they can embrace Anabaptist principles, are able to sign the Evana covenant, and support the ministries of Holdeman Mennonite Church.

Ready to apply?

To apply, please send resume, letter of introduction and 3 references to the attention of Rob Miller via email to search@holdemanmc.org . Candidates will be required to submit to a background check as part of the interview process.