

CHEMISTRY ✦ STAFFING

CHURCH & CANDIDATE PROFILE

We're hiring a

LEAD PASTOR

Onward Christian Church · Onward, Indiana

● AT A GLANCE

A SMALL CHURCH WITH A BIG HEART.



DENOMINATION

Christian Church

(Independent)

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

50

One service

ANNUAL BUDGET

164,900

DEBT

0

Onward Christian Church is an independent Christian Church in the Restoration Movement, deeply rooted in rural Indiana since 1866. We're a debt-free congregation of about 50 people who gather every Sunday for blended worship, weekly Communion, and expository preaching. Our mission is simple: to grow the Kingdom of God by obeying the Great Commission and sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

LOCATION

WIDE OPEN SPACES, DEEP FAMILY ROOTS.

We have wide open spaces, a cost of living that is low compared to Indiana cities, the people are friendly and neighbors look out for one another. In other words, we have a small-town vibe.



ONWARD

76-202

2020 Census

CASS COUNTY

37,870

2020 Census

Onward is a very small agricultural town in Cass County, Indiana — the kind of place where neighbors look out for one another and school sporting events bring the community together. Most of our congregation commutes from nearby towns like Walton (5 miles), Peru (11 miles), and Logansport (12 miles). The schools are a central part of community life, and generations of farm families have shaped the area's values.

The cost of living is low, and while we're rural, we're well-connected. Kokomo (20 miles) offers shopping and manufacturing jobs. Indianapolis is just 60 miles south, with museums, sporting events, and entertainment. Fort Wayne and Lafayette are within easy reach. Local amenities include the Onward Farm Market with Amish bakery items, Grissom Air Museum, Rock Hollow Golf Club, and Mississinewa Lake State Park.

 OUR STORY & TODAY

160 YEARS OF FAITHFUL WITNESS.

Onward Christian Church was founded on February 8, 1866. For more than a century, we've been a Restoration Movement congregation committed to New Testament Christianity. In 1968, we voted to become independent after the Disciples of Christ denomination tried to tell us what to believe. We remain fiercely independent, following the Restoration Movement and committed to biblical authority.

Our original sanctuary is over 100 years old and has been lovingly updated over the decades. In 2008, we added a Fellowship Hall with a modern kitchen and seating for over 200, matching the capacity of our main sanctuary. Our famous Chicken Noodle Supper — held annually since 1946 to pay for the church basement — has become a beloved community tradition.

Our church family has deep roots in missions and ministry. Dr. Puterbaugh, a dentist and church member, founded what is now The Ark Christian Ministries (formerly Pearson's Mill Church Camp) in 1965. Ruth Widner, another faithful member, served as the camp's first cook. We continue to support The Ark both financially and with volunteers to this day.

Today, we're a church of about 50 who gather every Sunday for blended worship, weekly Communion, and expository preaching. We've weathered difficult seasons and are now experiencing stability and renewal. We're looking for a pastor who will stand beside us, lead us, and help us grow in faithfulness to our mission.

● MINISTRY IMPACT

SMALL CHURCH, GENEROUS HEART.

We are committed to growing the Kingdom of God by obeying the Great Commission and sharing the love of Jesus Christ.

Our most visible ministry is our **Annual Chicken Noodle Dinner**, a community tradition since 1946. Through this event and other efforts, we've built a benevolence fund that provides food, utility assistance, and medical-insurance help to those in need. Church members have even helped build houses for families in crisis.

Women's Fellowship is the beating heart of our outreach. This active group supports missionaries, provides money and supplies to mission fields, supports Flawless (a ministry for young girls), stocks the Walton Food Pantry, assists Weekday Religious Education fundraisers, gives to Peak Community Living Division (serving disabled persons), provides Christmas gifts to students at Lewis Cass Elementary and Jr/Sr High, assembles Buddy Bags to feed four students over the weekend, and sends 20–50 pounds of noodles annually to benefit dinners and veterans through the American Legion Auxiliary. They also give wedding showers and provide money, food, and paper products to The Ark Ministries Church Camp every year.

We support **college campus Christian houses** and **at least two missionaries overseas**. We hold special services for Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. We provide Junior Church and pay to send children to The Ark church camp.

We formerly employed full-time youth ministers (most recently from 2012–2021) and once held regular Bible studies, but those have been suspended due to illness and declining youth numbers.

Our biggest recent win? Stabilization of the body after an uncharacteristically short previous ministry.

Our biggest opportunity? To exist, grow, and affect our community consistent with our mission statement and God's will.

Our biggest challenge? Finding a minister who is able to stand beside us, lead us, and help the church grow and make a difference in our community.

● THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY & HISTORIC CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

We are an independent Christian Church in the Restoration Movement. In 1968, we voted to leave the Disciples of Christ denomination because they tried to tell us what to believe. We hold to biblical authority and New Testament Christianity.

Theological Convictions: We affirm the inerrancy of Scripture and the foundational truths of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of a virgin, crucified for our sins, and raised from the dead on the third day. We believe salvation is available to all who place their faith in Christ, repent of their sins, and are baptized. Communion is central to our worship and is observed weekly. In accordance with our understanding of Scripture, the roles of Pastor, Elder, and Deacon are reserved for men, while women serve in many vital areas of church life, including ministry, music, Sunday School, and Board leadership.

Cultural and Lifestyle Convictions: We seek to approach cultural issues with both biblical conviction and grace. The church affirms marriage as the union of one man and one woman and holds traditional biblical convictions regarding sexuality and gender. Regarding alcohol, responsible consumption is not prohibited; however, drunkenness and behavior that could negatively influence others are inconsistent with the expectations of pastoral leadership.

Participation and Membership: Everyone is welcome to attend our worship services, Bible studies, and classes, regardless of background or life circumstances. At the same time, church membership, voting privileges, and service in leadership or worship ministries require alignment with the church's biblical beliefs and standards, including its convictions regarding sexuality and gender. Our desire is to demonstrate Christlike love to every person while faithfully sharing the gospel and encouraging all people to follow the teachings of Christ.

● WORSHIP STYLE

BLENDED WORSHIP, CENTERED ON THE TABLE.

People like that communion is every Sunday that is a central portion of the worship service.

We gather for **one Sunday service** with a blended worship style. Traditional hymns are favored by most of the congregation, and we also incorporate contemporary Christian videos by request.

Our preaching style is **expository** — opening the Word verse by verse, book by book, and letting Scripture speak.

What people love most: **Communion is central** to our worship every single Sunday. The Lord's Table is not an add-on or afterthought — it's the heart of why we gather.

● THE POSITION

LEAD PASTOR.



Onward Christian Church, an independent church is seeking a pastor with working knowledge of the Restoration Movement (Stone-Campbell Movement) to lead our congregation in spiritual growth as we move forward in our quest to of over 160 years of serving the Lord in our rural community.

We are looking for a Pastor who will lead and teach prayerfully and compassionately, is rooted in the written Word of God, and will focus on meeting our congregation's and community's spiritual needs.

Duties include, but are not limited to:

- leading Sunday worship services and special services that encourage participation from all ages,
- giving sacraments,
- arranging pastoral visitations,
- directing and supporting mission, youth and fellowship activities,
- and supporting operations and planning in collaboration with the church council/leadership.

● THE CANDIDATE

WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

We are looking for a pastor who is grounded in Scripture, passionate about ministry, and eager to become an active part of both our church family and the surrounding community. The ideal candidate will have formal theological training and/or formal ministry experience and demonstrate strong communication and leadership skills. We value someone who can connect with people across generations, communicate biblical truth clearly through relatable examples and stories, and bring energy, optimism, wisdom, and a sense of humor to ministry. More than someone who simply works for the church, we are looking for a pastor who will work with our congregation—serving alongside our members, caring for people in times of need, and helping us reach and engage the next generation.

- Be knowledgeable in Scripture and able to support and teach within our church's theological beliefs.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, using Scripture, stories, and practical examples to engage listeners.
- Be energetic, passionate, approachable, caring, honest, trustworthy, and dependable.
- Demonstrate strong leadership, communication, organization, and time-management skills.
- Relate and communicate effectively with multiple generations, with a particular heart for reaching youth and younger families.
- Be a hands-on “doer” who is willing to serve alongside church members and take an active role in ministry.
- Embrace a missional approach, becoming involved in the local community and building relationships beyond the walls of the church.
- Provide compassionate pastoral care, including visiting shut-ins, assisted-living residents, hospitalized members, and families experiencing sickness or bereavement.
- Be comfortable with basic technology needed for sermon preparation and worship, including computers and PowerPoint. Experience with sound systems and other church technology is a plus.
- Be willing and able to work within ministry budgets established by the Board and collaborate appropriately with church financial leaders.
- Ideally have a basic understanding of finances and be comfortable communicating with the church treasurer and/or CPA when needed.
- View themselves as part of the church family and take an active interest in the lives of members and the broader community.
- Bring musical ability, such as singing or playing an instrument, as a welcome bonus given the important role music plays in our worship.

● GREAT CANDIDATES

WHAT THRIVING HERE LOOKS LIKE.

The right pastor for Onward Christian Church will love this small, faithful body and see the Kingdom opportunity in rural ministry. You'll preach the Word expositionally, lead with humility and patience, and walk alongside a congregation that's weathered storms and is ready to grow again.

You'll value weekly Communion as central to worship, share our Restoration Movement convictions, and understand that ministry here means being deeply embedded in a small-town community. You'll champion the generous missions heart of this church and help us fulfill our mission to grow God's Kingdom right here in Cass County.

Expository preacher

Restoration Movement

Loves small-church ministry

Patient leader

Missions-minded

● NON-STARTERS

WHAT WON'T WORK HERE.

We're a Restoration Movement church with clear biblical convictions, and we need a pastor who shares them. These aren't secondary issues for us — they're hills we're willing to stand on because we believe Scripture is clear.

If you affirm same-sex marriage, support transgender ideology, or believe alcohol use in ministry leadership is unproblematic in all contexts, this isn't the right fit. We're looking for someone who upholds historic Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality and who understands the weight of pastoral example in our rural community.

Affirms same-sex marriage

Supports transgender ideology

Public drunkenness

● PUBLIC JOB POSTING

LEAD PASTOR — ONWARD CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Onward Christian Church in Onward, Indiana is seeking a **Lead Pastor** to stand beside, lead the congregation in spiritual growth, and help the church grow and make a difference in the rural community.

About Us

Founded in 1866, Onward Christian Church is an independent Christian Church in the Restoration Movement with a weekly attendance of about 50. They are debt-free, deeply rooted in Scripture, and committed to growing the Kingdom of God by obeying the Great Commission and sharing the love of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18–20).

They gather every Sunday for blended worship with traditional hymns and contemporary Christian videos, expository preaching, and weekly Communion — which is central to their worship. The sanctuary and Fellowship Hall can each seat over 200, and they've been faithfully serving our community for 160 years.

Onward Christian Church is known for our generous missions heart. The active Women's Fellowship supports missionaries, local ministries, and families in need. They host an Annual Chicken Noodle Dinner (a beloved tradition since 1946), maintain a benevolence fund, support college campus Christian houses and overseas missionaries, and partner with The Ark Christian Ministries, a camp founded by one of their own members in 1965.

About the Role

They are looking for an expository preacher who shares the Restoration Movement convictions, loves small-church ministry, and will walk patiently alongside a faithful congregation ready to grow again. You'll preach the Word, lead worship, champion missions, and be deeply embedded in their rural Indiana community.

What We Believe

Onward Christian Church holds to biblical authority and historic Christian teaching. They have a formal published statement affirming marriage as between one man and one woman. They take seriously the biblical call to avoid causing a weaker brother to stumble, especially regarding alcohol and cultural issues.

If you want to lead, teach, and serve alongside members, caring for people in times of need, and helping them reach and engage the next generation - apply today.

APPLY TODAY!