

Church Profile Form



Introduction

The Reformed Church in America's Office of Ministry Services provides information and services to ordained ministers who are seeking a call and churches who are seeking ordained ministers. It does not recommend any particular candidate or church but instead serves as a resource to both.

Though not all fields are required, please provide as much information as possible in order to give candidates an accurate understanding of the life of your church.

For further information, or if you have questions or problems while completing this form, please contact Ministry Services at ministryservices@rca.org or 616-541-0895.

Helpful Hints for this Form: ❖

To move to the next field, hit TAB.

To move the cursor to a desired field, left click on it with the mouse.

To mark (x) in a box, left click with mouse.

Hitting ENTER will move the cursor to the next line but keep you in the same field (essay questions).

Spell check is not available in this format.

The form will "paginate" itself as you complete it.

If at any time you cannot include information important to you because of the "form field," please continue to complete the question in the comment box on the last page. Make sure to reference the question number.

Please sign and return the **Release Statement** at the end of this form. You may scan it and email it as an attachment to ministryservices@rca.org.

Section A. Background Information

Today's Date: 3 / 1 / 2023 **Position to be filled:** Part-Time Pastor (50%, ~ 24 hours)

1. **Name of church:** Clover Hill Reformed Church
Note: Our church is currently being served by transitional pastor, Rev. Beth Scibienski.

2. **Web address:** www.cloverhillchurch.org

3. **Address:**
Street: 890 Amwell Rd
City / State / Zip Code: Hillsborough, NJ 08844

Telephone: (908) 369 - 8451 **E-Mail address:** chrc1834@gmail.com

4. **Classis:** Delaware Raritan

5. **Classis Supervisor:** Rev. Beth Scibienski

Address:
Street: 888 Amwell Rd
City / State / Zip Code: Hillsborough, NJ 08844

Telephone: (732) 735- 2112 **E-Mail address:** pastorbeth@gmail.com

6. **Chair of search committee:** Marilyn M. Fineman

Address:
Street: 37 Rittenhouse Circle
City / State / Zip Code: Flemington, NJ 08822

Telephone: (908) 788- 0664 **E-Mail address:** m2fineman@gmail.com

7. **Membership:**

Time of worship	Five years ago	Today
Active Confessing Members	129	71
Inactive Confessing Members	280	55

Comment on significant changes:

The decline in members is a result of both declining membership and a 'clean-up' of the membership rolls. Since 2018, the Consistory, along with the Pastor, has been reviewing

membership rolls and updating them to accurately reflect a member's relationship with CHRC.

Age of all active members (baptized and confessing)

10%	0-20 years old
1%	20-34 years old
4%	35-49 years old
37%	50-64 years old
48%	65 years and older

8. Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation:

0%	African American
0%	Asian
100%	Caucasian
0%	Hispanic
0%	Other: (please specify)

9. Worship schedule:

Average Attendance (includes adults and children) for 2022

Time of worship				Average attendance Five years ago	Average attendance Today
10am	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	pm		70	33* *This includes in-person and live-streaming. We average 5-7 people/week that live-stream.
am		pm			

Comment on significant changes:

Like many churches, our attendance has been declining since the early 2000's. And like most churches, COVID shut downs made many people rethink their Sunday morning worship and some have never returned.

10. Describe a typical worship service (order of worship, music, etc.) What is your congregation's preferred style or styles of worship? Attach a bulletin, if available.

The atmosphere of our church reflects our heritage beginning with the residents who built and established our church to meet the worship, fellowship and ministry needs of the people living in Clover Hill Village and surrounding areas in 1834. We continue this heritage by providing a sanctuary for all who wish to practice their religion and have fellowship with our church.

Our church services are inclusive of all age groups. The children of our church are treasured. They are appreciated and heard in our Sunday services, especially during the Children's Sermon when the pastor gathers the children forward and delivers the message of the week in a simple, interactive way. This is followed by a prayer for and with the children. At the conclusion of the Children's Sermon, the children are dismissed to their Sunday School classes held in the Nevius Fellowship Hall

Order of Worship

Morning Announcements (read by member of the Consistory)

The Approach to The Word

Welcome

The Prelude

The Call to Worship

Opening Hymn

The Prayer of Confession

The Words of Assurance and the Law of God

The Gloria Patri

The Word of God

Senior Choir Anthem/Hymn

The Children's Sermon

Scripture Reading

The Sermon

The Response to the Word

Affirmation of Faith

Hymn of Response

The Request for Prayers

The Prayers of the People with the Lord's Prayer

Communion (First Sunday of each Month)

The Gifts of the People

The Offertory

The Prayer of Dedication

The Doxology

Dispersion to Serve God

Closing Hymn

The Benediction

The Postlude

Passing the Peace

11. Financial Information: Attach a copy of the most recent Consistorial Report and Annual Budget if available.

	Five Years Ago	Today
Total RCA related contributions	\$ 11,345	\$ 7,800
Total other contributions	\$ 4,374	\$ 6,944

Percentage of total budget contributed by living donors:

100-90 %	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
75-89 %	<input type="checkbox"/>		
60-74 %	<input type="checkbox"/>		
45-59 %	<input type="checkbox"/>		
44 % or less	<input type="checkbox"/>		

(Please include a copy of your annual budget)

12. Congregational Giving:
Number of those whose annual contribution is:

	<i>– these are 2022 #s –</i>
Less than \$500	19
\$501- \$1,500	16
\$1,501- \$2,500	9
\$2,501-\$3,500	3
Greater than \$3,500	12

13. Financial assistance: Do you receive financial assistance beyond the congregation? (rents, etc.) Yes No

If yes, amount received last year: \$

List other fundraising programs that support the church:

ShopRite Gift Cards

14. Church/Sunday School: Average Attendance

Average attendance Five years ago (2018)	Average attendance Today (2022)
5.2	2.4*

Comment on significant changes:

Since COVID, many of our families have never returned.

*Note, that currently (2/2023) we have three families with a total of five children who regularly participate in Sunday School.

15. Describe briefly all educational programs (including children, young adult, adult).

Children's Programs (Pre-COVID):

While Sunday School attendance has declined more than 50% in the past few years, we have begun to rebuild and have an enthusiastic group of teachers, several teens who help as assistant teachers and a solid group of 6 to 8 children who love interacting with one another and learning the Word of God.

Our Sunday School takes place at the same time as worship, 10 a.m. each Sunday. All children ages three through seventh grade are welcome to participate whether they are regular attendees or not. The children sit with their families for the beginning of the worship service, are called to the front of the sanctuary to join the pastor for a children's sermon and then are dismissed to their classes. Parents pickup their children from their Sunday School classrooms when the worship service is done

For the past several years, we have been using a new Sunday School curriculum assembled for us by one of our members who also serves as a Sunday School coordinator and teaches Sunday School. These lesson materials are designed to take our children through many of the best known Bible stories in a two year cycle. This curriculum ensures that our children are exposed to these important lessons, but it does not follow the common lectionary, the source for the scripture readings in worship each week. Because both the children's bulletins distributed at the door each Sunday and the children's sermon were drawn from the common lectionary, this resulted in a disconnect between what the children heard in the children's sermon and the lesson presented when they were dismissed to their classes. Beginning in the fall of 2018, the children's sermon leads into the Bible story that is being presented as part of the Sunday School lesson that day. And the children's bulletins also reflect the Sunday School lesson.

In the fall of 2018 we introduced NSW (NOT School, Wednesdays for Everyone) This was done to accommodate the reality of busy family schedules, by offering the "Sunday School" curriculum on a weeknight as we seek to provide direction for living to our youngest members. The NSW program is geared toward those in grades K to 7, but all are welcome. The hour-long session includes two lessons, a craft or activity and food offered in a relaxed (NOT school) setting. NSW meets twice a month from Sept-May.

During the summer, we host a one week Vacation Bible School open to the community. This typically has been a well-attended, well-received, high-energy week for all involved. Each year, a team of volunteers meets to select a theme and develop a curriculum and associated crafts and activities and snacks. For 2019, we partnered with our sister church, the Neshanic Reformed Church, for VBS as they had discontinued their VBS program and wanted a “leg up” to restart. We also hold Summer Season Sunday School (SSSS) during the church worship service. SSSS is held using the one-room classroom format (i.e. all ages together). Each summer, the SSSS Lessons have a common theme (e.g. Let’s Pray: The Lord’s Prayer, In the Beginning: The People of Genesis, etc.)

Children’s Programs (Post-COVID, i.e. March 2020-Present)

Since the COVID shut-down, our children’s programs have struggled.

Beginning in June 2020, we offered virtual Sunday School via Zoom. Weekly, we sent all families the lesson and children’s bulletin to be used at home. The virtual Sunday School lesson was kept to under 20 minutes and involved prayer, pre-story questions, the Bible story and post-story questions. We have had one child attend faithfully during this timeframe. Zoom Sunday School continued through the end of May 2022.

Starting in June 2021, we offered in-person, outdoor, socially distant Sunday School. In November, we brought Sunday School indoors. We have had a few weeks where children attended, but mostly there were no children attending church on Sundays.

Starting in the spring of 2022, we offered in-person, indoor, socially distant Sunday School with masks because we had children return to church. Since June 2022, we have only offered in-person, indoor Sunday School. We have four children from two families that attend two or more times a month. Both families are committed to CHRC but wonder if a more robust Sunday School would better serve their children.

In the fall of 2022, we decided to trial the ‘Spill the Beans’ curriculum since Pastor Beth wanted to use this story-based lectionary during worship.

The NSW E program met a few times via Zoom in 2020, but has never been revived since COVID. We have reached out to parents via email and phone.

The full-week VBS program was canceled for both the summers of 2020 and 2021. In July 2021 we held a one day ‘Cupful of VBS’ that was very well received. We attempted a second one-day program for children in August, but had no expressions of interest. In the summer of 2022, we resurrected the VBS program we had shelved in 2020 and held a VBS program with Neshanic Reformed Church. We had about 25 children in attendance.

Youth/Young Adult Programs:

We offer Confirmation classes every other year, focusing on participants in 8th and 9th grades. In the 2018-2019 school year and again in the 2020-2021 school year, our Confirmation class was held jointly with Neshanic Reformed Church. (In 2018-2019 Three Bridges Reformed Church also joined us.) Our first joint effort was organized by the interim minister at Neshanic and the more recent class by the newly-arrived pastor there. The classes were led by a team of adults from both congregations. Both were extremely positive experiences for the Confirmands and the adults on this journey with them. The meetings with the Elders and Confirmation services were held separately by each

congregation. Currently (2022-2023 school year), we have one student in a combined class in progress with Neshanic and Three Bridges, led by the pastor of Three Bridges. It is anticipated that we would continue to participate in a combined class with our pastor involved as well.

Youth Group activities have been open to those in grades 7 through 12. Our focus has been on service to the community. We sometimes partner with Neshanic, South Branch and Three Bridges Reformed churches in our Youth Group programs. During the past year, we did only the Raritan Headwaters River Clean Up. We had loss by attrition prior to COVID and, with the exception of Confirmation classes, the pandemic seems to have brought an end to youth activities/participation.

Adult Programs:

Adult Bible Study: After a twelve year run, our Adult Bible Study ended in September 2021. From 2019-2021, we had regular attendance of about 5 people. The group was led by a member of the congregation.

Book Swap (pre-COVID): About six years ago, under our previous pastor, Summer Book Reviews were started. For the months of June-August, those participating all read the same book and then came together for a pastor-led session during which the book was discussed. With the departure of this pastor, several members of the congregation felt that they wanted to continue the book reading and review habit, but in a different form. From that, a 'Book Swap' was started. The group met every 2-3 months and discussed books (on religious topics) that they were reading. All were invited, whether they've read a book or not, to share in the discussion. The Book Swap was led by a member of the congregation.

Book Swap (post-COVID, i.e. March 2020-Present): The group was to read and review a common book, 'Faithful Presence' by David Fitch. With the lock-down and all worship services being virtual, our one week discussion turned into an 8-week discussion where the group dove deeply into each chapter in the book. The result of this was the creation of the 'Faithful Presence' group, which held socially-distant lunches with several members of the congregation, held several prayer walks, two mini-retreats and the Early Birds Devotion sprang up from the group. The group was led into a 'Huddle' by Pastor Marisol through the book, 'Building a Discipling Culture'. The group looks forward to taking what they have learned from 'Faithful Presence', the Huddle and what some have learned about Fresh Expressions Church outside the walls of the CHRC.

We had hoped to revive the Book Swap in 2022. While that did not happen, a group of fourteen read Thom S. Rainer's book, 'The Post -Quarantine Church'. The outcome of this is talked about in question 2 of Part B of this profile.

Lunch Bunch: The lunches started by the 'Faithful Presence' group, stopped during 2021, but were brought back in the summer of 2022 and were open to all. As we worked our way through this new rendition of a lunch gathering, we developed a format where the lunch was run by a congregation member, who opened and closed the group in prayer and also led the group in a discussion around a specific topic and provided supporting scripture. (e.g. What does it mean to be the church? What does living in the world but not of the world mean to you? Do you believe in angels?) We try to keep these gatherings to about an hour, and our ultimate intent is to, when the weather permits, hold them in a public place. The group meets at least once a month.

Coffee with Jesus: In the fall of 2022, Pastor Beth started a post worship gathering, called 'Coffee with Jesus' where we talk about Bible related topics (e.g. What is the Bible, Why do bad things happen to good people, Why were the Hebrews the 'chosen' people, etc.) The group meets about 2-3 times a month and averages about 10 people per gathering.

Additional Note to Potential Pastors:

We are looking for a minister who can help facilitate bringing families and young adults back to our church.

16. Church groups/organizations: Briefly describe ministry purpose of each group.

Name of group	Frequency of Meeting (i.e. weekly, bi-monthly, etc)	Attendance
Skeins of Hope (crochet group)	1 x month	5
Early Birds Devotional and Prayers	1 x week	9
Lunch Bunch	1 x month	8
Coffee with Jesus	1-3 x month	10

Skeins of Hope: This group likes to crochet and have fellowship together. The group makes afghans for church fundraisers or to donate to mission groups that support children.

The remainder of these groups are described in question #15.

17. Comment on one event or experience over the last year that has significantly contributed to the spiritual life of the congregation.

On Sunday, October 16, 2022, the Clover Hill Reformed Church in cooperation with our sister churches, Three Bridges Reformed and Neshanic Reformed participated in multiple service projects outside the three church buildings, under the name of "The Church has Left the Building".

In lieu of a traditional Sunday worship service, people from the three churches lived out their faith, in action, performing service projects to benefit local nonprofit service providers in Hunterdon and Somerset counties, including Flemington Food Pantry, Safe Harbor, Good News Home, S.H.I.P. soup deliveries and Crop Walk. Other people from the three churches met at the Clover Hill Reformed Church and assembled 150 hygiene kits that were delivered to S.H.I.P. for the homeless.

18. Buildings: Please describe church-owned or rented buildings and purpose.

The church building was established in 1834 at 890 Amwell Road, Hillsborough, NJ 08844. It was established by a group of local residents, and some of their descendants

still worship in the church today. It is a well-maintained, bright, and attractive country church on the border between Somerset and Hunterdon counties. It is conveniently located in central New Jersey, about 30 minutes from New Brunswick and Princeton and just over an hour from Philadelphia and New York.

The current parsonage is a vintage farmhouse that was a bequest to the church. Parts of the house date back to the 1700s and 1800s, and the house retains many period features. The parsonage is adjacent to the church and sits on a beautiful lot of over three acres of property with stunning views of farmland and the Sourland Mountains.

Clover Hill Reformed Church also owns and maintains a convenient parking lot across the street. The lot is made more attractive by our Garden Angels, who plant and maintain lovely flower gardens throughout the year.

19. Do you plan any capital expenditure during the next five years? Yes No
 If yes, please explain briefly:

We plan to replace the carpet in the narthex and sanctuary this year (2023). We also plan to have steeple painting and repairs done within the next three years.

20. Is there a mortgage indebtedness? Yes No

Amount: \$

Of how long standing?

Annual rate of repayment

21. Pastor's study:
 In church in parsonage Other Not Provided

22. List all paid staff in addition to the pastor:

Position			
Office Administrator	Full time	Part time	X
Interim Organist/Choir Leader	Full time	Part time	X
	Full time	Part time	
	Full time	Part time	

23. Consistory Membership: What method is used in selecting members?

A Nominating Committee consisting of two present Consistory members and two congregational members are selected. The Nominating Committee presents a single slate of nominations to the Congregation for approval.

Please list present Consistory members (Put a check in the box where appropriate)

Elder	Deacon	Male	Female	Occupation
X		X		Medical Writer
X			X	Nurse Practitioner
X			X	Retired
X			X	Retired
	X		X	Retired
	X		X	Retired
	X		X	Senior Firm Support Staff

24. What leadership roles do women currently fill in your church?

- Consistory members
- Coordinator of Search team
- Sunday School Coordinators
- Pastor
- Devotion, prayer, book discussions, crochet groups
- Finance Secretary

25. In our congregation...(please check appropriate box)

	Few have...	Many have...	Most have...
Had up to twelve years of formal education			X
Had some education beyond high school		X	
A college degree		X	
A graduate degree	X		

26. In our congregation...(please check a box)

	Few are...		Many are...		Most are...	
Scientists & Engineers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business People	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students & Teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: (Medical)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Special training/experience desired: (describe briefly).

The ideal Christ-centered candidate should have excellent verbal and communication skills, the personal skill to encourage individuals' talents and interests, and the professional skill to assess our church's current state in order to motivate and encourage congregational initiatives, guided by God's vision for CHRC.

In practice, that means the candidate should aspire to:

- share the values and vision of the congregation to build on recently initiated programs
- organize, delegate, and motivate members so as to grow the congregation
- help our multigenerational congregation maintain hope and grow spiritually by applying pastoral care to youth programs, adult study, and homebound/hospitalized/isolated church members
- provide instructive, reflective, fulfilling, joyful worship services

28. Languages:

Should your pastor be fluent in any language other than English?

Yes No If yes, please explain.

29. The salary we are prepared to offer our new pastor is \$ 37,000 - \$45,000 for a *TOTAL salary and benefits package based on experience.*

The average annual increase to our pastor over the past three years was \$ —
 We typically follow the Delaware Raritan Classis Ministerial Compensation Guide for salary increases.

30. Is a parsonage provided? Yes No
 If so, is it on site with the church? Yes No
 If the parsonage is not on site with the church, how far from the church is it located?

31. Is a Minister's housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage a negotiable option?
 Yes No

We would **strongly** prefer to have a minister live in our parsonage.

32. The benefits/business expenses we will provide our pastor are: (Please check those provided or give the amount as requested.)

Base Salary	\$ see below
Housing Allowance	\$
Parsonage provided?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Travel Reimbursement	\$
Social Security (Amount)	\$
Book Allowance (Amount)	\$
Continuing Education Allowance (Amount)	\$
Provision for Sabbatical	\$
Other (Specify Below)	\$
TOTAL	\$

Yes	Retirement
Yes	Major Medical Insurance
Yes	Health/Hospital Insurance
Yes	Life Insurance
Yes	Dental Insurance
No	Unemployment Insurance
No	Disability Insurance

Annual Vacation (Number of Weeks): 4

Necessary Comments regarding above:

Base Salary: prorated based on years of service and hours worked
Housing Allowance: We would strongly prefer to have a minister live in our parsonage.
Travel Reimbursement/Book Allowance/Continuing Ed allowance: yes
Social Security: yes
Provision for Sabbatical: negotiable
Insurance: needs are highly individualized. We will work w/ a candidate to try to cover as much of their insurance as we can as a part of their compensation package.
Note: We are willing to work with a candidate to develop a compensation package that will be of the greatest benefit for them. We can adjust how we handle fringe benefits, medical, retirement, and salary to maximize income.

33. Community served: (please check one)

Rural: Under 2,500	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town: 2,500-9,999	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small City: 10,000-49,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Suburban: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Urban: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Inner City: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

34. Cooperative ministry: In what ways have you cooperated with other churches in your community during the past year?

Pastor Beth meets with the pastors from Three Bridges and Neshanic Reformed Churches every Wednesday to find ways to “share services” or collaborate. Clergy clusters are very important. Pastors need to meet with other pastors especially in nearby churches. They provide each other with professional and personal support and share ideas and resources. The next step would be for the Consistories of the three churches to meet to talk more about collaboration.

With Three Bridges and Neshanic, we have had shared worship services (Ash Wednesday, Good Friday), Vacation Bible School, Confirmation Class and jointly held a ‘Church Left the Building’ Day

35. Community involvement: In what community programs or projects have you participated during the past year? (As an organization, not as individuals.)

We have supported the Flemington and Hillsborough food pantries for many years with donations of goods collected throughout the month. We also involved our Vacation Bible School in a food drive and, in February 2022 gave a “Feel The Love” campaign where our members supplied over 350 lbs of food and gift cards. A favorite project supporting the food pantries included a Birthday party in a bag kit for the clients and an Easter candy collection to help fill baskets for the children.

Another ongoing campaign is in support of the Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP) in Somerville. This organization operates food trucks and offers many outreach programs to the homeless and disadvantaged. Along with a donation jar in the sanctuary, we have collected pop-top canned goods, hygiene kits, and socks, and throughout the pandemic, we have supplied casseroles and bagged lunches.

The service team originally planned quarterly missions; however, the local need has been so great in many areas that we have expanded our missions to monthly.

Within the last three years, we have become involved with Binnacle House (now closed), a residential sanctuary for boys in Flemington; activities have included cookie baking and picnics. We have also supported Family Promise with Christmas gifting and an April shower to help fill the housekeeping pantry. We continue to support the Trenton Rescue Mission delivering hats, scarves, gloves, and the United Way of Hunterdon County with gift cards. We have been able to help local organizations needing back-to-school supplies and supply warm goods for the annual Point-in-Time homeless count.

The service team also received a call for clothing from a local mom for her four children; again, our congregation did not hesitate to fulfill this need. We have since set up a benevolence fund to offer more assistance when needed.

CHRC continues our support for Engineering Ministries International (EMI), a non-profit made up of architects, engineers, surveyors, and construction managers who, since 1982, have created a worldwide mission to develop people, design structures, and construct facilities which serve communities and the church.

The Service team meets monthly to discuss any ongoing missions and determine where we might help in our communities. We have recently included a “Spotlight on” section in the monthly newsletter highlighting other local service organizations that may be of interest to our congregation.

36. What denominations or religions are present within three miles (in rural areas, consider the county) where your church is located?

The Clover Hill Reformed Church is in an area populated by many churches established by worshippers pre-dating the American Revolution. Christianity has historically played a

central role in the lives of Amwell Valley residents, as seen in the prominent locations of church buildings in the communities. Many of the original settlers were Dutch, so many Reformed churches are our neighbors, and we are close to the New Brunswick Theological Seminary for additional support.

Church finder.com lists forty congregations within ten miles of Clover Hill, including all the mainline Protestant denominations and many independent assemblies and non-denominational churches. Both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox congregations are in the area, as are Jewish synagogues. A mosque and Hindi temple (mandir) are also nearby.

The small community of Clover Hill is between the populous towns of Hillsborough and Flemington. Clover Hill Reformed Church has maintained an important profile in those towns, both as a place of worship and for community interaction. Both the towns are growing in population and businesses.

37. Outreach: What is your strategy to reach un-churched people in your community?

We currently have a Communications Team with a mission to promote effective communication within our church and with our community. Using a variety of communication tools, we hope to engage both our congregation and community, to inspire and invite participation in worship, teams (Fellowship, Service, Spiritual Growth, Stewardship) and other ministries of the church.

We utilize the following methods:

Weekly press releases - to let the community know worship and Sunday School times as well as the scripture which the message will be based upon.

Website - The main purpose of our church website is to inform potential visitors about our church. A second major purpose is to provide an information hub for our congregation. (Our website was totally redesigned and updated in 2018.)

FaceBook / YouTube - to improve our digital presence and cultivate relationships within and outside of our church family. Social media are designed to be social and the reach of Facebook is undeniable.

Local Media Outlets (online) - to inform the community around us of the events/activities/meetings that are open to them in getting involved in our church life and family.

Local Community Newsletter – all church activities are published once a month in a free newspaper for the East Amwell area.

Portable Signs – events such as our Vacation Bible School, Pig Roast, music concerts, special worship services and more are advertised on two portable signs, one that is in front of our church near the road and one in the parking lot across the street from the parsonage.

In 2022, after reading 'The Post-Quarantine Church' by Thom S. Rainer, we did the following to expand our outreach efforts:

- We set up a second portable sign in the parking lot across the street from the parsonage. There is a schedule of dates and messages to be 'posted', and people sign up to change the message. We use the sign to advertise various church activities, like VBS and special services, and share inspirational thoughts.
- We converted our Facebook 'profile' to a Facebook 'page' to allow non-Facebook users to see what we are posting and are posting more intentionally.
- During Holy Week, we had a 'Free Coffee and Baked Goods' giveaway for people driving by the church. We also distributed information about our VBS program and our Holy Week worship schedule and asked them to send us any prayer requests that they might have.
- We put up a 'Prayer Fence' on Easter and had it up for six weeks for the congregation and the community to lift their prayers to God. This was advertised on the portable sign and on Facebook.
- In the summer we started a monthly 'Lunch Bunch' where we gathered for fellowship, prayer, a brief discussion on a Biblical/religious topic and lunch. While these gatherings have so far occurred on church grounds (outdoors when the weather is good), the intent is to eventually hold them throughout the community.
- We are exploring starting up some variation of 'Dinner Church' .

38. The income level of the people in our congregation tends to be: (please check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	About average for our community
<input type="checkbox"/>		Somewhat below the rest of the community
<input type="checkbox"/>		Somewhat higher than the rest of the community

39. Describe the community and school system: (Provide website links where appropriate.)

The Clover Hill Reformed Church is part of the Clover Hill Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Clover Hill Village is named after Peter Clover, a blacksmith who had his shop opposite the church. The church was the centerpiece of the rural village which once had a hotel, a creamery, a general store and post office, a school and was surrounded by small, family dairy farms.

Today, the church, which is in Hillsborough Township by just about 15 yards, continues to be the centerpiece of the Clover Hill Village area which comprises two counties and three townships: Hillsborough Township in Somerset County, Raritan and East Amwell Townships in Hunterdon County. The Clover Hill Village has evolved and now may be characterized as a suburban bedroom community.

The 'rural spirit' of the Clover Hill Village remains through the upkeep of buildings and the farmland preservation program. Purchases of development rights for a number of farms in proximity to the church retains its open fields, beautiful rolling hills and rural appearance.

Clover Hill is in central New Jersey and is almost equidistant between Philadelphia (55 miles) and New York (52 miles). The church is about 17 miles from Princeton, about 20 miles from New Brunswick and about 15 miles from Clinton, NJ, Somerville, NJ and the Lambertville/New Hope area.

The nearest town is Flemington at 5.5 miles. Next is downtown Hillsborough at 8.2 miles. Flemington is the Hunterdon County seat where there are shops, restaurants, outlet stores, Walmart, Lowes, Costco, The Home Depot, Kohls, supermarkets, gyms, a sports complex and a regional medical center, the Hunterdon Medical Center.

Our members come from a number of different communities. The children in our church do not all attend the same schools. This makes our congregation a unique overlay of various surrounding towns. Our missions reflect that our church straddles two counties. Partnering with Somerset and Hunterdon counties' local organizations, we provide donations to food pantries, as well as other county missions i.e., clothing and holiday gift drives etc.

Our church's parsonage is in Hillsborough Township which is 54 square miles with 43,276 residents, a growth of 4,973 residents since 2010.

[Hillsborough Township New Resident Guide - Web 2021 \(hillsborough-nj.org\)](http://www.hillsborough-nj.org)

Children residing in the parsonage attend Hillsborough public schools. In general, the public schools in central New Jersey are excellent. Hillsborough's schools are no exception. The link for the school district website is: www.htps.us

Hillsborough has a high school with an enrollment of over 2300 students for the 2021-2022 school year. Of the almost 600 graduates in the class of 2021 89% were college bound. The school system also includes a middle school, an intermediate school and six elementary schools. Younger students from the Clover Hill area attend the Woodfern Elementary School.

Other surrounding communities, including East Amwell Township, Readington Township and the Flemington-Raritan School District, also have excellent schools. All are kindergarten through eighth grade districts; the high school students attend Hunterdon Central Regional High School. Links to the websites are included below.

East Amwell Township Schools: <http://www.eastamwell.org/>

Readington Township Schools: <http://www.readington.k12.nj.us>

Flemington-Raritan Regional Schools: <http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us>

Hunterdon Central Regional High School: <http://www.hcrhs.k12.nj.us/>

40. Record of last three pastors:

Name	Dates
Andrew Issac Wall	9/2015 to 8/2018

Scott Kent Jones - contract P/T worship leader	9/2018 to 3/2020
Marisol Ferrer Malloy - contract P/T worship leader	10/2020 to 9/3/2021

41. Please complete your profile with the following contacts:

Name	
Amy Frank	Vice President, Consistory
Rev. Beth Scibienski	Classis Supervisor

Section B. Reflections

Please answer the following questions, adding your own experiences where appropriate.

1) What is the stated mission, vision or purpose of your congregation?

At Clover Hill Reformed Church we seek:

To create spiritual friendship

What makes a friendship spiritual is not its lofty height so much as its origin and direction. Spiritual friendship begins in God, continues in God, and is perfected in God. Spiritual friendship is a road and we are on this road together.¹

To serve our community

We live in a specific place and time, where both our internal church community and external neighborhood community have needs. We want to live our faith in tangible ways that meet expressed needs, providing support in the midst of struggle

To gather for Christian worship.

We engage in the rich tradition of our Reformed worship, celebrating through quality music, praying with one another and listening for God's thoughts to us in today's world.

2) What goals have been developed from your mission and vision over the next 5 years? (Example new programs or outreach ministries.) Include long-range or strategic plan.

During the winter of 2022, fourteen people in our congregation embarked on a joint reading of Thom S. Rainer's book, 'The Post Quarantine Church'. The book led us to consider:

- i making better use of digital media,
- ii reconnecting with the community near the church,
- iii making prayer a more important part of our lives, both individually and as a church,
- iv and rethinking the use of our facilities.

A whole list of ideas came out of the discussions we had.

¹ <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/spiritual-friendship/>

We decided to focus on some short-term activities and one longer-term activity and then to meet again to see what else we might do. To connect with our community, at the beginning of Holy Week, we hosted a free coffee and cookie give-away to passing motorists who were also given a schedule of our Holy Week services. To engage in prayer with each other and our community, we put up a 'prayer wall' on the parking fence for a month. We also took on a variety of 'smaller' efforts such as putting up a sign board in the church parking lot, updating the pew cards for visitors and prayer requests, making better use of our Facebook page. We brought back the lunches that the Faithful Presence group started two years ago, with a twist and called them 'Lunch Bunch'. All of these activities are in-line with our mission statement to create spiritual friendship, serve our community and gather in Christian worship.

We are open to exploring alternative ways of worship, what they would look like, how we could connect with our community by doing this.

3) Describe the strengths of your church, the best of what you are as a community, and what you can offer a new pastor.

Our spiritual friendships provide a solid foundation for our work and worship. Many of us raised our children together and have watched each other grow in more ways than one. Our congregation supports one another. Our teams work well and are self-sufficient, although open to pastoral guidance as well. We are a small but active church.. There are always opportunities for outreach and plenty for fellowship. In the past two years in particular, more than half of our regular Sunday attendees have been intentionally reflecting on faith and life together. Book studies led to an early prayer group that led to lunch discussions that have led to being more comfortable with questions and the unknowns of our faith.

We try new things, and are creative thinkers who take initiative. We are dedicated to the purpose and future of the church.

4) Explain the strategies or ideas that most excite your church in becoming or remaining missional.

Over the past few years, our Church management has become more congregation-driven. This initiative has been advanced by the organization of administrative teams. We are the ones "working the Church"- working to apply our talents in new ways. This enables our part time pastor to focus on areas of teaching and pastoral care.

As a congregation, we are very committed to caring for those in our lives, meaning those outside of our church community. We share the needs we encounter with one another readily and support one another as we offer light to our neighbors.

With new-found, earned confidence we want to continue to explore shared ministry projects with the Neshanic and Three Bridges Reformed Churches and the community at large.

5) Name three of your church's most passionate hopes and why they are significant.

1. Being without a consistent pastor for the past four years, as a congregation, our hope is to find a Pastor that can join us in meeting the needs of our church family and help attain spiritual fulfillment.
2. As a congregation, we would love to see the church grow. We would be remiss if we didn't say that young families with children would breathe new life into our church, but we believe God is using us for His purpose as we are right now.
3. We are willing to accept change that will sustain and even allow us to grow. Our hope is that our new pastor will provide the guidance to help us discern what those changes are and then to implement those changes.

6) How do you hope someone who visits your church would describe what s/he considers to be most important?

As a congregation, we strive to welcome any visitor to the church. We hope that they feel we are warm and welcoming. We would want them to return to worship with us, to join our missions, enjoy our fellowship, and leave feeling uplifted.

Our bulletin for several years has included the following:

Before worship, speak to God,
During worship, allow God to speak to you,
After worship, speak with your neighbor.

7) Name at least one challenge facing your new pastor.

Our membership consists of a consistent group of 25-35 people on Sunday and then another 20 who are dedicated to the church but not part of Sunday worship. These are not homebound members. The pandemic opened up different ways to worship and often changed habits.

From the congregational surveys, there is a hope that the new pastor will bring not only consistency and new life but an increase in attendance.

We are fairly nostalgic for the days when the pews were full, particularly of young children and families. However, we have engaged in hard conversations about the realities of church and what the future may or may not look like.

A decision to seek out a part-time pastor for our church is not a new experience. We will need our new pastor to help us find the proper balance of priorities.

8) Describe your vision and hopes for your church and your pastor over the next 5 years.

We are a vibrant, faith-filled congregation. And yet, like many religious communities, we are small. We have done the hard work of right-sizing our expenses and understanding our income. Therefore, as we move forward, we are seeking to be a healthy, successful small church. Our primary hope is to have stability in pastoral leadership. We believe a stable pulpit and pastor will help guide us toward spiritual growth and a greater love of our neighbor. We want to be faithful to God in our worship and work.

9) Explain whatever else you would like your potential pastor to know about your church.

We have been through a rather lengthy transition that included some trauma. We have worked very hard to support the daily workings of the church. We are invested in our faith and fellowship. We need a pastor who will recognize and respect who we have become and then apply his or her own skills alongside us.

Release Statement

(Full Church Name)

We, Clover Hill Reformed Church, acknowledge that the information in this Church Profile is accurate and complete. We authorize the Office of Ministry Services (OMS) to release this profile to designated recipient(s) seeking positions as ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament, including posting of this profile on the RCA website.

Marilyn M. Fineman

3/1/2023

Signature of Search Team Chairperson or Designated

Date