



# CHURCH PROFILE

## First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

701 North Main Street      Lancaster, SC 29720

**Name of Church:** First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

**Address:** 701 N. Main Street

**City:** Lancaster

**State:** South Carolina

**Presbytery:** Catawba

**Phone:** 803-285-1578

**Website:** [www.firstarplancaster.org](http://www.firstarplancaster.org)

**Church contact person:** Mike Cauthen, Search Committee Chair

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### Part 1: The Church

#### Basic information about the church:

When was the church organized?    1884

Membership:    125

Average Attendance:    Sunday morning (63)    Sunday evening (36)

Church membership 5 years ago:    125

Annual general budget:    \$255,421

Number of new members last year by: Profession   3   Transfer        Reaffirmation       

Number of members lost last year by: Death   2   Transfer   2   Removal from roll   1  

Is your church part of a yoked parish?    No

Ethnicity - Predominantly Caucasian

Former Pastors– Please list your last three pastors, their addresses (if known) and the years they were at your church.

1. Rev. Dr. Kyle Sims - 2005-2023
2. Rev. Gilbert Rowell – 1993-2003 (deceased)
3. Rev. Roy Beckham – 1981-1992

## **About our Congregation:**

We at First ARP church are a loving and caring congregation. We welcome guests, visitors and family members of the congregation as well as each other.

Our worship and fellowship show the deep connection of each member to one another. We enjoy worshipping as a church family. A visitor would get the impression of a family-like atmosphere as we have close and lasting relationships.

We love Christ and His word. We know we are sinners and have done nothing to earn God's grace. We all desire to know and grow in Christ. We love digging deeper into God's Word and growing stronger in our faith.

The Worship service is somewhat traditional and includes psalms, hymns, music, prayer, common statements and preaching of the word. Preaching of God's word is the utmost importance to the members.

Our congregation's majority age is 60 plus with several young families. We embrace and support families with younger children. We support and enjoy having children in our congregation. The older couples in our congregation are respected and valued as strong saints in the Lord.

We have a desire for younger couples and families in our church. We know this is the way to grow and continue our church life.

We also have a desire to reach out to the community however God would have us do that.

We are committed to our church and support any functions, programs, events that the church offers. We enjoy working and serving together.

We support our church financially and know the importance of tithing. We are aware of the need for safety and have established a committee to see that we are doing all we can do to keep our congregation safe.

Lastly, but most importantly – we are a praying church. We pray in worship, Sunday School; at any event there is prayer. We are prayer warriors and believe that God hears our prayers and will answer them in His timing and according to His will.

## Part 2: The Neighborhood

### Check any terms which might apply to your neighborhood:

Inner city \_\_\_\_\_ Downtown  Urban residential \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Rural \_\_\_\_\_  
Small town  College  Retirement \_\_\_\_\_ Resort \_\_\_\_\_ Agricultural \_\_\_\_\_

The total population of the town, community, or rural area within which the church is located is approximately: 8,757 - City of Lancaster in 2020

### The community in which our church ministers:

For at least 100 years, Lancaster was a textile town, with Springs Industries being the overwhelming top employer in the area. In 2007, the last mill closed and with the decline of textiles our population decreased, and unemployment was high from the 1990's through the 2000's. During that time many young couples moved away to find employment and students graduated from high school and moved away, whether to go to college or find employment.

Fast forward and Lancaster County has become a diverse and well-balanced economy. The population recently crossed 100,000 and the population growth is third highest in the state. Most of the growth is in the northern end of our county in the community of Indian Land (known as the panhandle) which borders Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. The growth is happening quickly and spreading toward the city with new single and multi-family housing developments being constructed just outside the northern boundary of the city of Lancaster. The city is also growing with 9% growth since 2000 and new housing developments are being built within the city limits.

There are numerous parks and recreation facilities with more in development to accommodate the population growth. The Lyndsay Pettus Greenway and nature trail runs through the city and is ¼ mile north of the church.

### Opportunities available to minister to the people of the community:



Lancaster High School is across the street and has a need for mentoring. This spring we were approached by the local FCA organization to sponsor and mentor the LHS baseball team.

Lancaster County has the second highest population growth in the state with new housing getting closer and closer to the north of the city, where we are located.

We are in proximity of low-income neighborhoods including Barr Street, Clinton Avenue, and Pardue Street Apartments.

The Lindsay Pettus Greenway is one block from our church and provides an opportunity to see Lancaster residents who walk there.

USCL, a satellite campus of the University of South Carolina with enrollment of about 1500 students, is located within five minutes of the church.

### **How we serve our community and our neighbors:**

Our church supports HOPE In Lancaster, Inc a local organization that provides short term crisis assistance to low-income families in need of food, training or other assistance. We donate food to HOPE and an annual donation is included in our church's budget.

In past years, we held a Fall Festival, around Halloween, that was open to the public. We have also had a team and a booth at the local Relay for Life events. During the school year, we had a Friday morning breakfast and devotion for the youth, and we had a basketball team in a church league for several years. We have Wednesday night supper before prayer meeting and church members often bring friends or visitors.

In addition, we have also been a host church for Lifeline Screening days, and we have allowed our facilities to be used by outside groups such as Amitie Cotillion and a local Home School Association.

## **Part 3: Activities**

### **A. Session**

How many members are on your Session?   6  

Are they rotating or permanent?  rotating 

### **B. Diaconate**

How many members are on your Diaconate?   6  

Are they rotating or permanent?  rotating 

Do you have women on the Diaconate?  yes 

### **C. Children**

How many elementary school children do you have   9  

Pre-school children   4  

Do you have children's church  no 

What other special events/ activities do you have?

- We have an Easter event for the children and during COVID we held a drive-thru Easter Parade and handed out treat bags to the children and Bibles and church information to the adults.

#### D. Youth

How many youth do you have in your Junior High/ Middle School? \_\_\_3\_\_\_

Senior high? \_\_\_12\_\_\_

College? \_\_\_5\_\_\_

Do you have any special programs other than Sunday School and youth groups for the youth?

- Our youth attend both Quest and Horizon camps at Bonclarken each summer, along with chaperones from our church.
- We have also sent teams of youth and adults to conduct VBS in the Appalachian Mountain region, partnering with First ARP Church in Rock Hill, SC.
- Wednesday night Bible Study is provided during the school year.
- Summer activities include trips to Lake Wateree.
- Although money for youth activities is included in our annual budget, the youth and their leaders also hold fundraisers, car washes, bake sales, and yard sales to offset some of the expenses of the outings and trips.

#### E. Women's Ministries

Do you have an active ARPWM group? \_yes\_\_\_

How many regular participants? \_\_\_20\_\_\_

How many circles do you have? \_\_\_2\_\_\_

What special events does your ARPWM sponsor annually?

- We have two circles that meet monthly and study a book suggested by the denomination's WM board. We also hold a women's retreat on the alternate year that our Presbytery does not have a retreat at Bonclarken. We attend the Catawba Presbytery's Meet and Greet, and we offer the yearly WM annual meeting and conference to all women of the church. We have had ladies' teas in the past and have utilized the talents of some of our members to make gifts for the sick.

#### F. Outreach Ministries

List any special service or outreach ministries you have.

- Our Sunday worship services, morning and evening, are livestreamed on YouTube each week and recorded for later viewing.
- The City of Lancaster holds an event called Boofest uptown around Halloween and we had a booth with games for the children while attempts were made to engage people in conversation about our church.
- An annual Christmas Cantata is held for members and guests.
- We set up a hospitality table at the United Way bed race in 2022, which is held on Main Street in front of our church.
- Members prepare and donate shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child each year. Since the late 90's, we have taken a group to volunteer at the Charlotte Processing Center.
- During the school year, we have a meal before prayer meeting and, before covid, the church

bus was used to pick up youth in surrounding neighborhoods to join us for dinner and a time of Bible Study with our youth.

- A Saturday morning men's prayer breakfast is held at the church monthly.

#### G. Missions

Describe how your church promotes World Missions and Local Missions.

- We currently contribute financial support to two missionaries on a monthly basis. Rebekah Carson, who is with World Witness serving in Germany, and Mark and Natalie Witte, also with World Witness serving in Spain. Rebekah was our Youth Director before she answered the call to the mission field; Mark is a former pastoral intern at our church.
- Phil Baer, an associate member of our church, is currently semi-retired with Wycliffe and is currently being supported by our church through an annual contribution to help offset a trip he makes to Mexico to visit and minister to the Lacandon Indians, doing Bible translation work and discipling believers.
- We also have a Jubilee Birthday party each year and money collected is given to our two Jubilee Birthday women missionaries with World Witness, Rebekah Carson and Sheila Osborne.

#### H. Social Events

What special events occur annually in the life of your church that bring all your people together?

- An annual church-wide picnic in the spring
- FAN (Faith, Activity, and Nutrition) meals and activities
- New Member's Luncheon where new members from the previous year are recognized. It's held in conjunction with Souper Bowl Sunday and donations and canned goods are also collected for Hope in Lancaster.
- Wednesday night dinner and fellowship before Prayer Meeting
- Sunday night worship is followed by snacks and fellowship during the school year.
- Fall Kick-Off – a meal and presentation of upcoming activities and opportunities.
- Congregational Weekend Retreat to Bonclarken each October
- Summer ice cream social and fellowship time.

#### I. Worship

When are your worship services?

Sunday morning at 10:00 am, Sunday evening at 6:00 pm, and Wednesday evening prayer meeting at 6:30 pm.

What special worship events happen annually throughout the year?

- Maundy Thursday joint services with surrounding ARP Churches (Oak Ridge, Shiloh, Unity).
- Two Christmas Eve services (4:00 pm and 10:00 pm).
- Guest preachers and Missionaries as invited by the pastor.

#### J. Stewardship

Describe how your church encourages stewardship every year.

A budget presentation is made to the congregation from the diaconate, sermons are preached on faithful giving, and there are reminders in the church bulletin to encourage stewardship.

Does your church have a pledge system as part of your budget process? If so, how does it work?

We do not have a pledge system.

#### K. Staff

Please list the full or part– time staff of your church.

- Church Secretary -part time Monday thru Friday
- Pianist – part time
- Sunday evening music coordinator – part time
- Intern – part time VACANT

#### L. Christian Education

What is the average attendance in your Sunday School? 40

What educational/ discipleship programs do you have?

- Catechism class
- Men's prayer breakfast
- Men's book study group
- Women's Circles Bible study
- Children, Youth and Adult Sunday School Classes
- Children and Youth classes on Sunday night and Wednesday night

Regular New members class? no

Officer training? Yes, as new officers are elected each year.

#### M. Music

What on-going music ministries do you have in your church?

- Choir on Sunday morning and Worship Team on Sunday night