

Church Visitor Report for Acton CRC – February 7, 2022

Pastors Andrew de Gelder and Tim Leferink visited with Bethel CRC in Acton on February 7, 2022. We were welcomed by 17 Council members. Council chair, Ken Kamminga welcomed everyone and opened with a reading from Luke 10-38-42, reminding the body of the need to continue to turn to Jesus, especially in these stressed and distracted times.

After a time of introduction, Pastor Andrew explained what a church visit is highlighted by the directional “arrows” – up (worship), down (preaching), inward (fellowship), outward (outreach).

As Bethel returns to in-person worship once again, they are pleased with the amount of participation. On February 6th for instance, 166 persons came to the church to be part of the service. Bethel has no pastor or youth pastor at the moment. Yet, Bethel has been blessed by a strong Worship Coordinator, 3 praise teams, Youth praise teams as needed, and worship styles vary (blended). Bethel expresses thanks and God’s goodness for dynamic preaching from the Classical Appointments. They are timely and relevant for Bethel’s needs.

Bethel has undergone a revisioning process, adopting the vision: “Follow His Light,” online during COVID. It was well received, resulting in 7 initiatives and 7 implementations. Some initiatives include: strong pastoral leaders, vulnerability, geographical districts. The church is governed by a deacons’ board, elders’ board, and a ministry board. Congregational care occurs in districts with 2 elders, a deacon and a pastoral care person

Bethel has programs running, among which are GEMS and Cadets, Youth Group, Young Adults, Coffee Break, Small groups, Men’s breakfast, Youth of Yesteryear. These groups are in various stages of in-person and online activity

The church has been inventive dealing with the restrictions of COVID, drawing the congregation and community together through: online bingo, Porchtraits, and a coffee trailer (outdoor coffee after church!) and Sunday School Skits. Bethel is eager to enfold new members but is delaying an actual membership class until God provides a new pastor. Bethel has expanded its use of technology through the “Bethel Beacon,” Online Worship, Facebook and the Bridge app. Even meals are coordinated online.

The church has become more of a community church over the years which brings benefits and challenges including wrestling with the issues surrounding the LGBTQ community. They have reached out to other churches, and Rev. Darrel Bierman for advice/direction in this matter.

They have a vivid outreach plan, doing yard clean up, indigenous community backpacks, Samaritans purse shoebox. Bethel is part of the Ministerial in Acton with an annual community service, a nativity scene with live animals, and (at one point) a skateboard park.

When asked what request they have of Classis, Bethel expressed a clearer cross-church discussion vehicle with which we can all share our victories and struggles to help each other.

Pastor Tim Leferink closed in prayer