

Stony Brook Church Plant Project

The congregations of North Shore Community Church (Oyster Bay, NY) and Grace Presbyterian Church (Water Mill, NY) along with families from the Stony Brook community desire to plant a new church in the Stony Brook area of Long Island, New York.



The Community – Stony Brook, New York

The Stony Brook area of Long Island, New York presents a wonderful opportunity for a new Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) church. The 205,000 plus people who live in the seven zip codes that comprise the Stony Brook study area are underserved by gospel-centered churches. As it stands, there are only a handful of biblically faithful, evangelical churches serving the community.

So, there is a great and pressing need for a regional, life-giving church grounded in Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity with a vibrant philosophy of ministry to celebrate, communicate, and cultivate the love of God on Long Island. This would be a church that honors Christ by being faithful to Scriptures, that is growing in love of God and of neighbor, that builds relationships that are rooted in grace, and that serves the needs of its neighbors.

The Stony Brook area is a suburban community on the north shore of Long Island, located about 55 miles from Manhattan, NY, and is a short ferry ride across Long Island Sound to New England. The community boasts beautiful bays and estuaries. The community has a rich, colonial history. While it is a suburb it has a global reach through the University, medical Center and Stony Brook School.

Stony Brook University, part of the New York state public university school system, has its 1,500-acre campus in the community. Over 24,000 students are enrolled along with over 2,400 faculty and staff. It is known for its rigorous entrance requirements. Its ethnic diversity is 36% White, 23% Asian, 14% Non-Resident Alien, 11% Hispanic/Latino and 5% African American.

Stony Brook Medical Center is a large (600 bed) regional teaching hospital that is highly regarded for its research, teaching and development of frontier medical procedures.

The Stony Brook School is a private, Christian boarding school for middle school and high school students. Founded in 1922, Stony Brook has educated the children of Billy and Ruth Graham and Tim and Kathy Keller; Elizabeth Elliott served on the board, and the founding head of school, Frank Gaebelein, subsequently served as editor of Christianity Today. Stony Brook enrolls students from all over the world, as well as local day students. It is consistently ranked among the top college preparatory schools in the nation.

Demographic Overview

- 205,000 people on the North Shore of Long Island from Smithtown to Coram.
- The population is expected to hold steady or grow slightly.
- The ethnicity breakdown is 81% White, 9% Latino, 6% Asian, plus others.
- In this predominately white-collar community, 61% percent of families have incomes that exceed \$100,000 dollars per year.
- Charitable giving is well above average for the state.
- High taxation rates as well as excellent public schools.
- Married couples dominate the marital status comparison with 100% more prevalence of married couples and much fewer divorced and never married individuals than state averages.
- Religious involvement is low with alternative spiritual practices (meditation, yoga, etc.) ranking high.
- Beliefs about God and Jesus are non-traditional.
- The number of those who are unsure/undecided about whether a god exists is close to 30% above the national average while those who disagree that Jesus is the only way for human salvation from sin is 35% which is close to 50% below the national average.
- A "de-churched culture" which is disenfranchised from the church exists at a significantly higher rate than the national average.
- The presence of "Nones" is in line with national average of 21% and expected to increase.
- The "no longer believe" category is 37% as opposed to the national average of 33%.
- Those who affiliate with Roman Catholicism have diminished from 41% ten years ago to 36% percent currently.
- Roman Catholicism is expected to decline 5% in 10 years.
- The Jewish population is 12% compared to the national average of 3%.

The Need

As the demographics suggest, the Stony Brook community is like many on the east coast. Secularization is firmly entrenched, and more and more people are unchurched. This community is ripe for harvest. And while there are some evangelical churches in the community, there is need for an even greater presence of gospel-centered, biblically faithful churches. Communities in the South and the Midwest are well served when there is present one church for every 1,000 people. If the Stony Brook community was served by one church per 3,500 people, then there would be close to sixty churches in the community serving side by side in the gospel. Currently there are only a handful of churches serving the 205,000 plus population. So, Stony Brook needs new churches to serve alongside the existing churches.

The Plan

The next steps are to:

- Pray for God's leading and blessing.
- Reverends Yenchko and Middlekauff to build relationships with Christians within the community and build a group of families and individuals who are interested in beginning a new church.
- Work with Redeemer's City to City church planting organization and the PCA's Mission to North America and Reformed University Fellowship to recruit and vet potential candidates.
- Interview and recruit potential church planting couples.
- Call a church planting couple to the work.
- Establish a budget and fundraise. Reverends Yenchko and Middlekauff will assist planter in raising the necessary financial resources.
- Organize a temporary session of elders to oversee the work.
- Welcome the church planting couple and family.
- Provide ongoing church planter training through Redeemer City to City.
- Allow time for the pastor to cast a vision and then a strategy for the church.
- Gather more people into the plant team.
- Church planter leads the plant team to prepare the church launch.
- Launch the new church.

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