Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Stonebridge Church Community and our open pastoral position. As you will see, StoneBridge has been blessed by God with a variety of internal as well as external ministries. Our pastoral leadership team is looking forward to partnering with the new Shepherding Pastor to further advance our ministries for Christ. Knowing God has directed our ministries and growth over the past 30 years gives us confidence that he will confirm his choice for our open position.

In Christ,
The Pastor Search Committee
Jeff Levinson (chair), Mike Dockery, Jerold Griggs, Bryan Holladay, Dave Jackson, Cynthia Mitchell, Diane Rothwell
StoneBridge Church Community began almost 30 years ago with a desire to bring a new church presence to the growing University City area of Charlotte. In April 1990, a group of thirteen people began Sunday evening Bible study meetings in the upstairs loft of a local restaurant. After much prayer, planning, and hundreds of phone calls announcing the kick-off, the group held its first Sunday morning worship service on March 17, 1991 in the Cone Center on the campus of UNC-Charlotte.

The congregation—known then as University City Presbyterian Church—met in several temporary locations, during which the church was particularized in 1993 and broke ground on a permanent building in 1995.

With the opening of the new sanctuary in 2004, the church chose to change its name from University City Presbyterian Church to StoneBridge Church Community, under the conviction that a church’s name should say something about its vision, not just its location. Placing the word *community* last (rather than its expected place in the middle) was meant to draw attention to our community-building call, both inside and outside the walls of our building. As a church desiring to ‘build bridges of grace to our community, our nation, and our world, we felt the name change would speak better to our purposes and hopes.
Today StoneBridge is a healthy, vibrant church in an area of our city that has experienced rapid growth. God has richly blessed us in numerous ways. Currently we have four ordained pastors on staff who represent more than 45 years of cumulative ministry at StoneBridge. We have 17 additional staff, many of whom have been part of our church family for 20 years or more, as well as seminary interns from nearby RTS-Charlotte. StoneBridge is very active in serving our community and world through co-laboring efforts with local ministry partners, other local churches, and international missions. The COVID-19 crisis has recently created a deepened network of our city’s faith leadership, elected officials, and other community service groups.

Why we are searching...

Since early September 2019, StoneBridge has been operating without a senior pastor. We began a dedicated time of prayer in February 2020 as the first step in moving forward in finding our next leader. Although the COVID-19 crisis slowed our next steps, we believe the Lord has led us during this season to pursue a more uniquely collaborative model for our pastoral team.
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8
The vision and mission of StoneBridge is to – Advance the Kingdom of God by Building Bridges of Grace for God’s Glory. As a Christian community, we strive to be a church that gives ourselves away for the sake of the gospel.

There are many ways to build a bridge that connects people to the grace of God. For StoneBridge, there are six guiding principles we focus on. These are the Stones of StoneBridge.

**SUPPLICATION:** Committing our lives to God through prayer.
(1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:1-2)

**TOGETHERNESS:** Living as a community of saints.
(1 Corinthians 12, 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**OUTREACH:** Reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
(Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8)

**NURTURE:** Building people up through education and discipleship.
(Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Colossians 1:28-2:7)

**EXALTATION:** Worshipping God in all of life.
(Psalm 29:1-2, Revelation 4 and 5)

**SERVICE:** Making a difference through mercy.
(James 1:27, 2:15-16)

As we focus on these principles, we consider ourselves a resource church. We strive to share open-handedly as we develop policies and procedures, music and pastoral resources, ministry ideas, and more. Last year we opened a community parklet to better serve our neighbors with an outdoor space for rest and recreation. We believe that the Lord’s blessings on our church are meant to be shared, not just in our financial decisions, but with our people, property, and resources.
Thirteen years ago we began to more earnestly define our conviction to give ourselves away for the sake of the gospel. This growing desire led us to suspend plans that were underway for a new educational wing for our church. Instead of a physical building expansion, we believed God was calling us to leverage those resources elsewhere. We launched an effort known as Kingdom Vision 2020 to better define our church’s calling as a kingdom-provider in the years ahead. In order to develop ministries and partnerships that built bridges of grace outside the four walls of StoneBridge, we were led to some specific strategic targets that became known as IBC.

IBC is short for India, Brooklyn, and Charlotte. These are the three specific places we’ve identified as our embodiment of Acts 1:8’s Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

India exemplifies our call to the ends of the earth: a culturally and geographically distant country. The Lord providentially guided us into an amazing partnership with Harvest Ministries, a group of 25 Indian pastors who serve the holistic needs of their churches in one of the poorest areas of that country. This partnership with Harvest also resulted in the creation of the Vijayalaxmi Memorial StoneBridge School (a Christian English-speaking boarding school) in 2010, and the launch of a child sponsorship program for its 300 students, a ministry we call Bridge to India. There have been many milestones in our church’s life that have shaped who we are, but perhaps none have been more formative than the opening of this school.
Brooklyn represents our Judea and Samaria: a culturally-different but geographically-close region. We have partnered with a church network called Resurrection Brooklyn to sponsor their pastoral interns as they plant and revitalize churches in the densely populated neighborhoods of that borough. As an outflow of Superstorm Sandy relief efforts, the Lord led us to assist significantly in a church plant in Sheepshead Bay.

Charlotte is our Jerusalem: the city in which we reside. We have more than 20 long-standing local ministry partners that we support as we seek to be a good neighbor to our own city. We specifically (though not exclusively) target ministries within a 5-mile radius of StoneBridge, serving the needs of our North Charlotte community.

Through God’s faithfulness, ministries have grown. Our Kingdom Vision 2020 program has, since 2007, sent over $1.2 million in capital funds to our partners, over and above budgeted giving and child sponsorship. In terms of person to person ministry, StoneBridge has sent over 120 of our church family to India, 120 to Brooklyn and countless man-hours have been spent in Charlotte serving with our local ministry partners. In the years ahead, we believe God is calling our church to greater involvement in other regions of the world, as well. For many years, short-term mission teams have served in Honduras and Poland.

As we look beyond 2020, we desire to share God’s grace and love wherever he leads.
Current Membership

935 Communing Members | 331 Non-Communing Members
406 member family units

Average member age - 44
Average member and non-communing member age - 36

74% of family units are married
37% have children 18 and under in the home.

Average weekly worship attendance: 638 (pre-COVID)
Since 2012, 2 out of 3 of new members are coming from a non-Reformed background
Since 2008, 45% of new members joined by profession or reaffirmation of faith

Leadership
15 active ruling elders
11 active ruling deacons
16 full-time staff
4 part-time staff
A unique characteristic of StoneBridge is that the pulpit is shared between the pastors on staff. For over 15 years, the pastoral team has actively collaborated on sermon preparation and worship planning. This has been especially helpful during recent months without a Senior Pastor and has helped maintain a sense of normalcy for our church family. We plan to incorporate the new pastor into our shared preaching approach.

Because our church’s preaching has already been built on a plurality of pastors, we believe StoneBridge is well-suited to embrace a collegial leadership model—a team of pastors with similar authority, rather than a designated senior pastor. The scriptures offer strong support for the practice of co-laboring in ministry (Acts 13:2-3, Acts 14:23, Mark 6:7). This model is attested to Presbyterian history as well; J.A. Hodge in 1886 described a co-pastor model as, “two or more ministers associated together as pastors of one or more churches, having equal authority.” Additionally, notable Presbyterian figures such as Samuel Miller and James Henley Thornwell served in co-pastor models.

We desire for the new pastoral hire, as a part of this leadership team, to serve as the ‘frame and glue’ of the team—a consensus-builder who moderates, coaches, and preserves the smooth running of this collaborative approach.
A New Leadership Model

The Session of StoneBridge Community Church recommended moving from a hierarchical pastorate model to a collegial model. Historically, StoneBridge has utilized a hierarchical model in which the senior pastor supervises other pastors and staff, and sits on the session and Planning and Operations Commission (POC). This is a common ecclesial model and also common in the business world, where the equivalent is a CEO.

The English Oxford Dictionary defines collegial as “relating to or involving shared responsibility, as among a group of colleagues.” Colleagues are those explicitly united in a common purpose and respecting each other’s abilities to work toward that purpose. A colleague is an associate in a profession or in a civil or ecclesiastical office.

In the context of StoneBridge, collegiality means respect for another’s commitment to the common purpose and ability to work toward it. StoneBridge has adopted a collegial model of management for the daily operation of the church and its ministries. This collegial team is called the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT is made up of the senior leadership, including pastors and other senior executives.

In this model, one Pastor does not supervise another. Pastors help set the overall vision and direction for the church. The members of the ELT may each bring their own vision and leadership to the discussions and in a collegial manner come to consensus on the vision and direction of the church.

The Shepherding Pastor will be the first of among equals. In this position, he will be the primary person to keep the ministry focused on our vision and provide guidance on resources that enable our mission. In addition to understanding the shared vision of our pastors, session, and diaconate; the Shepherding Pastor will seek to understand the path that God sets for the church. We anticipate the new pastor will organize and direct the church vision.
Why are we changing to a collegial model?

To align all aspects of the ministry into proper focus and importance. Stonebridge sees a flat organizational model as the best approach to meet this goal. Balanced leadership among elders, deacons, and pastors—each in their proper roles—guards against StoneBridge being characterized by a single person. Having overall governance and leadership centered in the session (elders and pastors), rather than in an individual, lowers the risk of having the life and well-being of StoneBridge reside with one person and his leadership.

The Book of Church Order states that ministers (teaching elders) of the Word shall be part of the session (together with ruling elders). This allows the congregation, through the election of elders, to lead the church. Churches in our denomination (Presbyterian Church In America) are of the Reformed tradition and follow a polity of church leadership as described in the book of ACTS. The vast majority of decisions will be made by pastors and staff overseeing a particular ministry, which is appropriate. The session however, provides the forum for making larger decisions that inform the day-to-day activities and programs at StoneBridge.
Our City

Charlotte is located in the Piedmont of North Carolina, within a few hours drive of both the Appalachian mountains and the Atlantic Ocean. The local climate allows for ample outdoor activities from hiking and boating to fishing and golfing. An ethnically diverse location, Charlotte is the third-fastest-growing major city in the US. The small geographic footprint encompassing “The Queen City” allows for walkable navigation of the Uptown area with a myriad of restaurant options, a culinary school, various museums, and over 30 unique breweries.

Charlotte
- 15th most populous city in the United States
- Population: 885,708 (2019 census)
- Median Age: 35
- Demographics: 42% white; 35% black; 14% Hispanic; 7% Asian
- Median Income: $53,274
- Median list price of current homes on the market (4/2020): $292,000
- Median rent price (4/2020): $1,500/month
- Second-largest banking center in the US: Headquarters for Bank of America, Truist Financial and Wells Fargo (East)
- Entertainment: NASCAR, Panthers (NFL), Hornets (NBA), Knights (Triple A- White Sox MLB affiliate), Billy Graham Library, U.S. National Whitewater Center

University City
- Located in Northeastern Mecklenburg County
- Population: 160,000
- Home to: University of North Carolina at Charlotte, IKEA, LYNX (light rail connection to Uptown Charlotte, NoDa, South End)
For more information on the pastor search process go to stonebridge.org/pastorsearch