

## Grace Pres Church Call Description

Illiana Presbytery is looking to call a planter committed to a winsome and outwardly focused ordinary means of grace ministry to its mission work, Grace Presbyterian Church, Carbondale, Illinois. This is essentially a replanting with a core group.

The cultural situation of the church and the town are complicated. Carbondale is a small (25k) rural university town that has experienced decline due to the collapse of the coal industry and a decades long decline of the university. These trends seem to have stabilized but have left a town with needs, though it still is a regional commercial center.

Our members are in town, north, south and east of town. Some foreign university students in attendance represent a token of the outreach opportunity. We hope some of the ethnically diverse non-student attenders will return to the church after Covid.

Our pulpit supply, a TE overdue for retirement, is our church administrator and main shepherding elder. The church has grown from 8 to 35 pre-covid (now back to about 30 most Sundays) with pulpit supply. In addition to him, who was also the founding pastor of the church (1970), the other local session member (38 years old) is the father of the church's six covenant children and has a secondary preaching role as well as the primary role of teaching the Westminster Confession Sunday School class. His family also hosts Wednesday night prayer meeting in their home and has just completed hosting a Christianity Explored class on Saturday afternoons.

Several other members are actively involved in personal outreach and discipleship. One of our single female members (age 44) has been conducting our children's classes and doing outreach, duties which she has performed excellently. She has established relationships with international students at the university, mostly non-christians, who have attended regularly at times. We think home missions may be her lifelong calling and we have a great place for that to happen. The church has a sincere interest in world missions, takes the ministry of hospitality and Christian education seriously.

The church will provide \$50,000 per year towards a call package over at least the first two years with no growth in income. The area has a VERY affordable cost of living with a median annual household income of about \$23,000. Notable is the fact that our weekly prayer meeting has half of Sunday's attendance. Between post-pandemic reopening and the added "hands on the oars" of a full-time pastor, we are very hopeful for the growth of the church in number and depth, God being more and more glorified in our work and worship.