



Cresheim Valley Church Sr. Pastor Application Packet

August 1, 2022

Dear Applicant,

The following document comprises the application packet for the position of Senior Pastor of Cresheim Valley Church. We've carefully assembled these materials in hopes of helping you get to know CVC and the communities we serve. We hope you will take the time to review them and prayerfully respond if you believe the Lord may be calling you to minister our congregation.

We are earnestly praying for the Lord to bless us with a new senior pastor and we eagerly await his provision. Thank you for taking the time to apply.

Sincerely,

The CVC Pastoral Search Committee

*David Apple
Ginger Arthur
Lindsay Brooks*

*Michael Chu
Dan Henrich
Aisah Isah*

*Jen Loux
Adam Porcella
Ann Williams*

Application Instructions & Questions

Please submit the following materials via email to CVCSearch@gmail.com. The Committee will not consider resumes submitted without these supporting materials.

- **Resume/CV**
- **Cover letter** (this may simply be the email to which your materials are attached)
- **2-3 sermon samples** (links to video or audio)
- **2-3 references** who can speak to your character, professional strengths, and ministry. Preferably, one of these should come from a teaching or ruling elder and another should come from a lay person.
- **Answers to the following questions** in whatever format seems most natural to you – short answers, single essay, video, etc.

1. *Briefly explain your understanding of:*
 - a. *worship*
 - b. *evangelism*
 - c. *shepherding*
 - d. *service*
 - e. *diaconal ministry*
2. *The motto of Cresheim Valley Church is “Celebrating grace and engaging life.” How can we effectively contextualize the Gospel in a culture that is increasingly hostile to a Christian worldview?*
3. *How should the style and structure of a Sunday morning service reflect the greatness of God and the truth of the Gospel?*
4. *How should we ensure that our church is utilizing the spiritual gifts of all of our members?*



Job Description

Core Values

Cresheim Valley Church (CVC) is a congregation serving the Chestnut Hill/Mount Airy section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. CVC is an orthodox, grace-filled community. Our mission is to “celebrate grace and engage life” in our neighborhood, our city, and the world for Jesus Christ. We aspire to be a community of grace, where each of us as broken, hurting, sinful people find forgiveness, healing, and hope in Jesus Christ. We desire to be a community that prays together, seeking God’s will (not our own) as we engage His world.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Skill in expository preaching, with a commitment to Reformed theology as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith.
- An aptitude for leading corporate worship and a commitment to the regulatory principle of worship.
- A dedication to reaching young families and growing current children’s and youth ministries.
- A commitment to local outreach, evangelism, and world missions.
- An ability to identify those areas requiring administrative attention and address them directly, secure help from congregants, or hire staff to ensure the orderly and timely operation of the church.
- A commitment to biblical discipleship and the Matthew 18 principles of peacemaking and church discipline.
- A heart for and gifts in pastoral care of the members of the congregation.
- A commitment to fostering a collegial and collaborative relationship with the session, diaconate, staff, and ministry groups (able to lead, train, and delegate as needed).
- A dedication to a rich personal prayer and devotional life.



Proficiencies

- A strong biblical character that consistently exhibits spiritual maturity, integrity, purity, and humility with a prayerful dependence on God and a life above reproach (*cf.* 1 Tim 3:1-7).
- Several years of experience in pastoral ministry, having served as a lead pastor previously or on staff under the mentorship of a lead pastor.
- An ability to craft an evangelism and outreach strategy to reach Christians without a current, or orthodox, church home, people who grew up in the church and have left it, and our neighbors who have never been regular churchgoers.
- A commitment to gospel-centered preaching that communicates boldly and humbly to a growing and diverse audience (both believers and non-believers).
- A ministry and vision that understands and embraces the mission and vision of Cresheim Valley Church; a willingness to expand and enrich that understanding and vision within the church, in the local community, and beyond.

Required Education and Experience

- An undergraduate degree, as well as a Master's of Divinity from an accredited seminary, or have otherwise completed the educational requirements of the PCA.
- Leadership experience as a pastor in a healthy church with a track record of developing ministries, leaders, and disciples of Christ.
- A clear testimony of faith and a vital, personal, and growing relationship with Christ beliefs evidenced by attitude and behavior.
- Licensure and ordination in the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) or substantial and measurable progress towards these credentials.

Pastoral Goals and Commitments

- Collaborate with the session to create a strategic plan to implement our vision for internal and especially external growth.
- Lead the session in reviewing and analyzing all present ministries and activities to establish whether they promote the core values and vision of the church, including consolidating and/or ending of ministries as needed.
- Participate and engage with the PCA, including local churches, agencies, presbytery, and General Assembly

Compensation

We will consider the experience as well as the need of a candidate in determining the details of a compensation package.



Introduction to Cresheim Valley Church (CVC)

Our motto is “Celebrating grace and engaging life.” The expository preaching at CVC has historically emphasized the gospel and avoided the culture wars. This has resulted in a community of Christians with a range of political views, social backgrounds, and ethnicities who are dedicated to truths of the faith and the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world around us.

We embrace the historic Christian faith as summarized in the great ecumenical creeds and our Reformed and Presbyterian heritage. Our desire is that our doctrine would inspire us to a greater faith, hope, and love as we seek to honor God.



We desire to worship God joyfully, as we celebrate his grace found in Jesus Christ, and reverently as we honor him as our Heavenly Father. We are committed in our public worship services to incorporating sacred music, confession, hymns, prayers, the sacraments, and ancient elements of the Christian faith.

CVC History

CVC was formed in May 2006 out of three different groups: members of Tenth Presbyterian Church who lived in Northwest Philadelphia, families who sent their children to Phil-Mont Christian Academy, and a handful of students, faculty, and administrators from Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS). All of these groups believed that the Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill areas of Philadelphia needed a church that was theologically orthodox and culturally engaging. The church was named for the valley that lies between these two neighborhoods.



(CVC History Continued)

CVC held its first worship service on Jan. 7, 2007 at the Masonic Lodge in Chestnut Hill. About 40 people were present. The church grew quickly through word of mouth and conversion. Reaching dissatisfied mainline church members is one of the reasons CVC has chosen to worship in both a liturgical and traditional worship style. CVC worship emphasizes congregational involvement, high-quality music, and expository preaching.

On February 18, 2007, CVC was sent out as a daughter church of Tenth Presbyterian Church in downtown Philadelphia.

CVC was organized as an independent church on April 20, 2008, and formally incorporated on February 2, 2009. We were privileged to have seasoned Elders from Tenth Presbyterian and other area churches.

Having quickly outgrown the Masonic Lodge, CVC moved in 2008 to Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (SCH), a local private school. The church continued to grow to a community of about 225 with a Sunday morning attendance of 150 – 175 by 2013.

We functioned for the first five years with only part-time staff. John Leonard, our founding pastor, was bi-vocational until the church called him full-time in 2013, also serving on the faculty of WTS. CVC functioned with pastoral interns from WTS until 2020 when we hired Jonathan Richardson as a full-time pastoral assistant and youth worker. Beginning in 2015, David Viehman served as part-time Assistant Pastor before the congregation before being installed as Associate Pastor in 2019. David retired from ministry in July 2022 but continues to attend CVC.

Since John Leonard's retirement from WTS, we have seen a steady decline in the number of seminary students,

faculty, and administrators attending CVC. At present, no faculty and just one administrator attend.

One of the aspirations of CVC is to be as diverse as the communities in which we minister. Currently, two of our Elders are African-American and we have had ebbs and flows of African-American families, as well as other ethnic minorities, at CVC. However, the sizable majority of the congregation has always been White, despite African-Americans accounting for the majority of Mt. Airy residents and nearly a third of Chestnut Hill residents. (See Appendix for additional demographic information.)

Strengths and Values

Warmth and Hospitality

CVC is a welcoming congregation characterized by its warmth and hospitality. Visitors are welcomed with open arms and encouraged to engage in congregational life. Our fellowship is nurtured regularly in tight-knit community groups and Bible studies. Within these groups, members care for one another in faithful prayer, companionship, encouragement, and service. CVC holds dear its traditional Christmas parties, picnics, and other social events – we are a church that loves to spend time together.

Being a part of a Christ-centered community at CVC means sharing our joys, sorrows, and struggles. We share meals, celebrate birthdays, give thanks together and pray for healing and blessings. We even help each other move as families come to and leave the area. Community groups function as more immediate parts of our extended church family. Family is at the heart of CVC's warmth – Christ-centered family, where we extend and receive hospitality in our homes.

Preaching and Teaching

The CVC congregation places its highest priority on the faithful preaching of the Word. The congregation also has a hunger for in-depth biblical teaching in Sunday School classes and in Bible studies. CVC has been blessed with a deep bench of gifted and skilled teachers within the session and laity who are able to clearly expound the scriptures and help the congregation thoughtfully and winsomely engage the surrounding culture. Years of consistent, faithful teaching has borne fruit in a membership with a depth of spiritual maturity and the ability to disciple others in the faith.

Music and Worship

CVC also prioritizes excellence in worship, deeply valuing beauty in liturgy and celebrating creativity and artistic expression. The congregation loves music and is blessed with a faithful and skilled professional accompanist. CVC has been committed to preserving the great tradition of Western hymnody (in our congregational singing) and the equally great tradition of African American gospel music and jazz.



We are blessed to welcome talented soloists each Sunday, both professionals and students, drawn from area music schools and conservatories.

Leadership and Resources

Cresheim Valley has 120 active members and an average attendance of 90 at Sunday worship. The membership is small but not without resources, being composed of deeply invested individuals and families with a willingness to serve. There are a number of PCA elders in the congregation, including seven highly engaged and committed Ruling Elders currently serving on the Session. The church also possesses some savings that could help facilitate a transition towards further growth.

Unique Vision

Cresheim Valley Church has a unique vision of ministering across racial and social lines. It is strategically located to serve very diverse communities. This challenge has been at the core of the church since its founding and continues to be a vision of its membership.



Vulnerabilities

CVC has several notable vulnerabilities, some of which have been brought about by recent events, while others have been historical struggles.

COVID Impact and Place of Worship

CVC has never owned a building, preferring to meet in rented space that requires fewer resources to maintain. While this has its advantages, COVID highlighted some of the weaknesses of this model. When our regular meeting space became unavailable during the pandemic, we were unable to find an alternative space to meet regularly in person within our target area. As a result, Sunday morning worship was held virtually from the Leonards' home from Spring 2020 to Summer 2021, when we were again allowed to access SCH. Members continued to gather virtually and in-person in small groups, but the inability to worship in person on Sunday for such an extended period was discouraging.

During the pandemic, we lost approximately a third of our church community, mostly to suburban churches meeting in person and running children's and youth programs.

Finally, the SCH Chapel is tucked away from the main road (“the Avenue”) that runs through Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy. Though aesthetically pleasing, this location goes unnoticed by many members of the community. We have always had to work hard to go out into the community and make ourselves visible. During the pandemic, this was especially difficult to do.

Children’s and Youth Programs



At times, CVC has had strong children’s programming for Children’s Church, Sunday School, and nursery. However, this has always been dependent on a key part-time staff member or volunteer coordinator. Several people in this position have become discouraged and “burned out” due to inconsistent support from volunteers to support these programs.

Youth programs for middle- and high-schoolers have been more difficult. Throughout CVC’s history, we have struggled to maintain critical mass in this age group. We have consistently lost families as their children enter these years and parents desire larger, more robust youth group and junior/senior high Sunday School programs.

Small Staff and Volunteer Fatigue

In their roles as Sr. and Associate Pastor, John and David performed a number of functions outside their core responsibilities of preaching/teaching and shepherding. With their departure, the church faces a need for a strong administrator to oversee and delegate (not necessarily perform) day-to-day tasks, such as overseeing our relationship with SCH, sourcing and securing musical soloists for Sunday worship, and congregational communications.

CVC functions on a volunteer schedule for weekly setup/teardown, fellowship hour food, and children’s programs. Our recent decline in membership during COVID has left fewer hands to perform the same functions. Many of our “worker bees” are feeling fatigued.

Opportunities

There are several opportunities that Cresheim Valley Church should explore to accomplish its goals of stabilizing a Children’s and Youth program, growing the Men’s ministry, developing meaningful connections between members, increasing current membership engagement, and growing overall membership. The following outlines target areas for CVC to maintain their strengths, address their vulnerabilities, and leverage the resources in greater Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy to realize these opportunities. CVC should focus on these areas:

- *Westminster Seminary*
 - WTS is about four miles from CVC where >50% of the student body is under 35 years old. Some graduates of Westminster are currently members of CVC and CVC previously had a strong WTS contingent. CVC should leverage its alumni network and proximity to Westminster to attract prospective members from a younger demographic.
- *Partnership with other churches*
 - Children's and Youth Program – establish a program where children from CVC can join children from other churches for fun activities and fellowship. CVC can assist by providing resources, structure, and instruction but could benefit from a partner to gain more participation from children and youth.
 - Local Missions and Charities – CVC may not be able to support an entire initiative individually but may be able to share duties and resources with another church to support a mission or an effort.
- *Administration*
 - CVC has a knowledgeable, diverse, and committed Diaconate and Session. These groups should be leveraged to assist in the day-to-day operations of the Church.
- *Organized Activities*
 - Men's Ministry – there are few forums where the different age groups can connect collectively. Participation is also sporadic due to conflicting schedules. Men's ministry at CVC has lacked consistent, committed leadership, outside of Pastor Leonard. This is an area for growth.

Pastoral Profile and Priorities

In light of the values, vulnerabilities, and opportunities outlined above, CVC should seek to call a pastor whose skills and passion align well with the following congregational priorities. We believe to lead the church effectively in these areas, a candidate should have several years of experience in pastoral ministry, having served as a lead pastor previously or on staff under the mentorship of lead pastor to equip him in the following areas.



Leading Worship and Preaching the Word

CVC proclaims and clings to “the faith once delivered for the saints.” In line with our Reformed tradition, we put a high value on the beauty and structure of the Sunday worship service and look to be convicted and comforted by the weekly preaching of the Word of Life. We look to our senior pastor to lead us in these endeavors, pointing us to Christ and sending us out into the world to “celebrate grace and engage life.”



Evangelism and Community Outreach

To be a thriving congregation and fulfill our mission, CVC needs to grow -- we hope the number of people worshiping with us on a typical Sunday morning will double in the next 18 months to two years. We believe there are many people in our target areas yearning for community and looking for answers to life's big questions whom the church should find and pursue, just as Christ found and pursued us.

The success of our recent apologetics Sunday school program indicates a thirst for meaningful engagement with challenging topics. However, this is only one part of a robust ministry to address the reasons people have left or are leaving church. Polls by Barna, Gallup and Lifeway all point to a significant population of people who have left church in an act of "deconstruction" of their faith, or for being "church hurt," or for failing to see the relevance of church for the improvement of their family and work lives. Programs and plans of action to call some of the 66% of young Christian Americans, as well as the 50% of other groups that stopped going to church must be at the forefront of our evangelism strategy.

We look to our senior pastor, along with the rest of the Session, to craft an evangelism and outreach strategy to reach Christians without a current, or orthodox, church home, people who grew up in the church and have left it, and our neighbors who have never been regular churchgoers.

Shepherding & Discipleship

CVC looks to our Ruling Elders to shepherd and disciple the congregation and each other. The importance of the Pastor both training and supporting Ruling Elders cannot be understated for the spiritual life of CVC. As a small church, we seek to take full advantage of our strengths. Though our ability to offer programs is limited at this time, our ability to be a source of spiritual support in genuine brotherhood should be leveraged. This is integral to our vision for affecting Northwest Philadelphia for the Kingdom. A well-loved congregation loves well in return and a well-disciplined congregation goes and makes disciples.

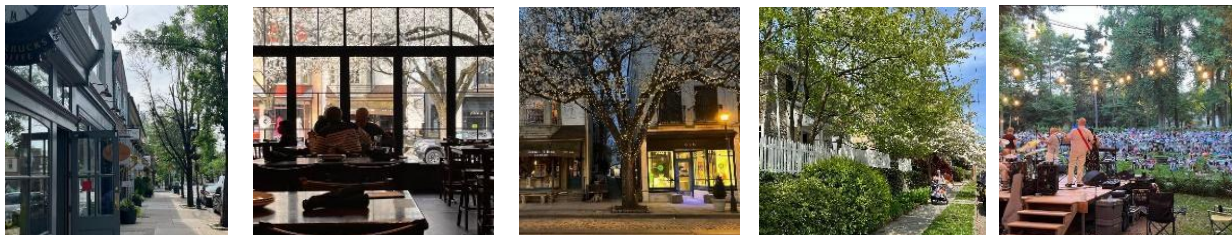
Administration

As mentioned above, our current pastors do a lot of leg work that would fall on staff in a larger church. Though he does not need to do everything himself, it is critical that a pastor in this role is able to identify those areas requiring administrative attention and either address them or secure help from congregants – or hire part-time staff – to ensure that things run smoothly.

Summary -- Equipping the Congregation

All of this is clearly too much to ask from one person. Rather, our new senior pastor will need to set an example in these things and consider it a critical part of his role to encourage, enable, and equip the congregation to fulfill its mission.





Appendix: Northwest Philadelphia – History, Diversity, and Character

Cresheim Valley Church is focused on reaching and serving the Northwest section of the city of Philadelphia. CVC's primary target areas are the city neighborhoods of Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy.

History

While within the city limits, Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy were the among the nation's first suburbs. They were created when the owners of the Pennsylvania and Reading railroads extended train lines in the 1880s into Northwest Philadelphia to build gracious residential communities. Well-off Philadelphians would escape the summer heat of downtown, moving to the higher ground of the area overlooking the Wissahickon Gorge. To attract new homeowners and seasonal residents, these railroad magnates also built churches, schools, and country clubs.

Throughout Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy, many large, gracious homes built of the local stone (Wissahickon Schist) from the 1880s to the 1920s dot the landscape. Over the past 140 years, these communities have also been infilled with twin homes, row homes, and apartment complexes.

Germantown Avenue serves as the main artery, its historic character signaled by its cobblestone paving. Along the Avenue are stores, restaurants, theaters, churches, schools, libraries, and parks. A number of buildings are historical, such as an old livery stable that now serves as a beer outlet and a colonial-era cottage that houses a top-flight restaurant.

The area is rich in history. A large part of the Battle of Germantown was fought in Mt. Airy as Washington's troops marched south on the Avenue in the early morning fog of October 4, 1777. The area has served as a hotbed for various progressive movements, such as the Abolition movement and contains a number of Underground Railroad sites.

The cultural and entertainment area created by Germantown Avenue, along with the recreational opportunities of the Wissahickon Gorge of Fairmount Park on the communities' western flank, create a draw and connection with neighboring communities. This includes the adjacent suburban townships in Montgomery County and the city neighborhoods of Germantown, East Falls, and Manayunk.

Diversity

Since the colonial era, Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy have had a scattering of shops and farms along the Avenue, but the efforts of the railroad magnates brought a distinctly different and more affluent group to the area. The train lines created one of the first commuting groups of bankers, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen, who worked in Center City but lived in Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy. This influx of wealthier residents immediately created spin-off economic activities that expanded the diversity of the community. Italian stonemasons located nearby to build the large stone homes that still stand among more modern buildings. Merchants set up shop along the Avenue to serve

the new residents. Housing was built for the domestics that served in the homes of the more affluent families.

Over the past 100 years, the diversity of the region has increased. Chestnut Hill, a community of approximately 11,000, is 68% White, 20% Black, with sizeable Hispanic and Asian contingents. Mt. Airy is a larger community (~29,000) comprised of 58% Black and 33% White residents. Mt. Airy is home to a sizable Jewish community, as well as others who continue to identify strongly with their heritage, evidenced by Italian and Irish social clubs that continue today.

Mt. Airy in particular has been known for over fifty years as an integrated neighborhood. While less of a matter of note now than a generation ago, Mt. Airy was frequently mentioned in news articles as one of the best places for interracial couples to live.

The people in the area are largely professionals. While many are employed in business, a large number work in healthcare, education (all levels), and municipal government. The area is well educated – more than half of adults in both communities hold undergraduate degrees and more than 30% in both communities hold graduate degrees.

From an income standpoint, Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy residents are better off than most of the citizens of Philadelphia. The median household income is approximately \$86,000 in Chestnut Hill¹ and \$74,000 in Mt. Airy², compared to \$49,000 city-wide³.

Diversity reigns from a religious standpoint also. There are a number of churches and synagogues in the community. Most of the White churches are mainline. Most of the evangelical or conservative churches are African-American, including a few megachurches. Consistent with the area's diversity strain, there are also Unitarian-Universalist, Christian Scientist, and Jehovah's Witness congregations. Some of the more vibrant Catholic churches are run by monastic orders as opposed to the Archdiocese.

Character

The residents of Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy are characterized by the earnestness of their community activism. They are known for having the highest voter participation in elections in the city. The communities have active community organizations designed to address community issues. These include the Chestnut Hill Community Association and the East and West Mount Airy Neighbors. The latter two were instrumental in peacefully integrating Mt. Airy in the 1960s. Neighbors have also banded together to support Wissahickon Park, preserve numerous small parklets, create sporting leagues for various ages, and so on.

Cooperation is a value. The neighborhoods are served by the very successful Weaver's Way Food Co-op. Many other cooperative ventures exist to provide babysitting, pre-school, and even snowblowers.

Social and environmental activism and community concern run deep. This is consistent with the progressive political posture of most of the residents. Many of the mainline churches in the area still seem to thrive, especially those that front-forward their social activism.

Summary

The Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy neighborhoods that are the focus of Cresheim Valley Church are rich in history, culture, and diversity. The people are engaged with their community and try to make it a better place for all. Their community, social, and environmental activism stand out among the city's neighborhoods.



¹ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/86000US19118-19118/>

² <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/86000US19119-19119/>

³ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US4260000-philadelphia-pa/>