



Church of the Atonement

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

"By God's grace and for His glory, our mission is to bring people from unbelief to maturing joyful faith in Jesus Christ."

CHURCH PROFILE

Washington Metropolitan Area
10613 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, Maryland 20902

atonementlife.org





Atonement Youth Director Search

A new and exciting season of ministry is taking shape at Church of the Atonement. Our church has been blessed with a new Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor in the last three years and our Next Generation ministry (children and youth) is growing. We now have nearly 40 students in our youth ministry, with 12 additional entering the program in fall 2023. Praise God!

While this growth is amazing, it presents us with a good problem. As the size of the ministry increases, the complexity of the ministry increases. A youth group of 50 requires many more chaperones, leaders, and ministry strategies to effectively disciple our youth. We are at a juncture where we must work hard to keep the ministry feeling small and relational. The result of this discernment is a new direction, a new position, and a new structure for our ministries. We are excited to see how God continues to lead us in finding the person who will help lead our church to faithfully minister to youth and families.

As we pray for God's provision, we seek a director whose love for Jesus and for others is evident in their speech and relations and who exemplifies:

- A life that is Christ-centered and rooted in Scripture;
- Reformed theology and graciousness in presenting it;
- Commitment to personal development and self-care;
- Experience in communicating the Gospel and defending the Faith in ways that speak to our contemporary culture;
- Ability to lead and train others to lead;
- Faithfulness to teach, evangelize, and shepherd.



atonementlife.org/youthdirector



A BRIEF HISTORY

of Church of the Atonement

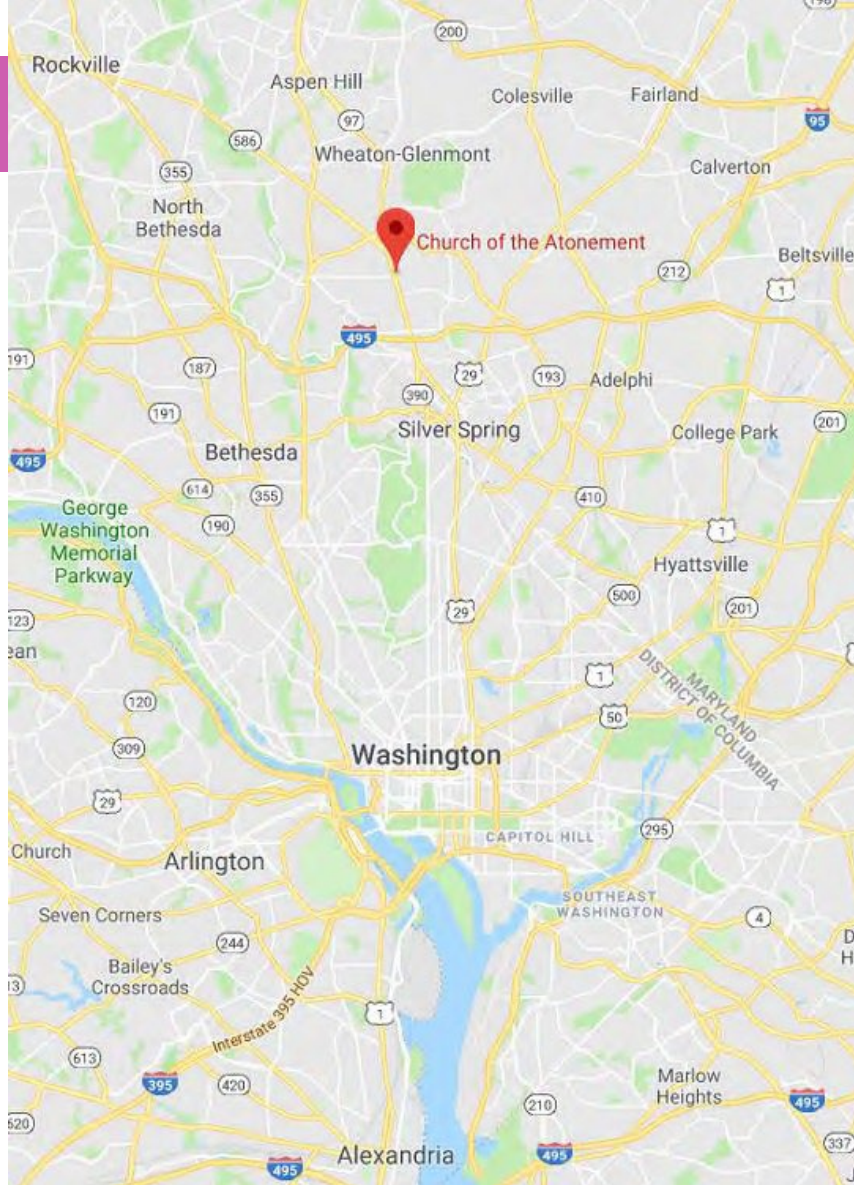
A person can know a church by the commitments it keeps. Presbyterian Church of the Atonement was planted in 1947 in Wheaton, Maryland, as surrounding farmland was turned into housing for a booming post-war community. The motivation was missional, the result of a strategy to ring Washington, D.C. with evangelical Presbyterian Churches. Three core commitments were foundational to the church at that time and still are today: To the full authority of Scripture and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to outreach at home and missions abroad, and to the community in which the church was planted.

The church remains on the property where it first held services. Originally that meant farmland. Indicative of the commitments and growth of the church, as well as the gradual urbanization of the area, the campus has progressed from a farmhouse to a small sanctuary (1949), an added Christian education building (1955), a larger sanctuary (1968), a major renovation to expand parking and upgrade the facilities (2010), and a new children's library and family welcome area,

adult library, and offices, and upgrades to classrooms and our Christian education wing (2018-ongoing).

In 1981, Atonement left the United Presbyterian Church in protest over a decision by its local presbytery to ordain a minister who denied the deity of Christ. The church affiliated with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church because of its longstanding history within American Presbyterianism and its confessional allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In its 72-year history, Atonement has had five senior pastors: Rev. Eugene Allen (10 years), Rev. Stewart Rankin (25 years), Rev. Ashton "Tat" Stewart (12 years), Rev. Curtis "Curt" Young (25 years), and Rev. Ryan Mowen (3 years and counting).



OUR LOCATION

Atonement is highly accessible and visible along a major artery just north of Washington, DC. The church building is in walking distance of the landmark “Wheaton Triangle,” where three major roads intersect with the Washington Metrorail system.

Wheaton and Silver Spring are the most diverse communities in Montgomery County, with over 40 percent of our population born overseas. Almost 70 percent of the population over the age of 25 has at least a bachelor’s degree; at the same time, 11 percent of the residents fall below the poverty line. About 114,000 people live within two miles of the church.

Montgomery County Public schools are among the best funded and best performing in the country. However, there can be significant disparity between schools, with high numbers of students who speak English as a second language and who receive subsidized lunches.

The Silver Spring and Wheaton areas are in the middle of urban economic expansion with apartments, townhouses, and offices under construction. Houses in older, established neighborhoods are in demand because of their location in the Washington, DC, area and access to transit.

Atonement needs to focus on outreach to and care of diverse communities in an increasingly urban environment.

In 1999, Atonement decided to remain in its location despite rising costs, increased regulation, diminished parking, and confined space. As other churches moved away from the city, Atonement undertook a major renovation to meet the challenges of effective ministry in the future. This was completed in 2010. Atonement has the largest attendance of an English-speaking church within our community.

Church of the Atonement

Immediate Neighborhood: 114,827 population (2016)

0.2%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone
10.7%	Asian alone
16.5%	Black or African American alone
30.0%	Hispanic
0.1%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
0.3%	Some other race alone
3.0%	Two or more races
39.2%	White alone



THE CAMPUS



The Church of the Atonement has a 46,000 square foot facility with a renovated sanctuary that holds 400 people. The building also hosts an Iranian church, Community Bible Study (CBS), a Body & Soul fitness class, youth activities and meetings, and other events.

The building has 13 education rooms, a chapel, a choir room, children's and adult libraries, a kitchen, and a hall for theater, teaching, fellowship, and recreation.



THE CHURCH

The Body

Meet Our Members, in Their Own Words

Members of the congregation were asked in a pair of town hall meetings to describe the church in their own words. Here is a summary of how they characterize Church of the Atonement.

Atonement's "commitment to scripture and Biblical teaching" is a defining characteristic of our church. We also share "commitment to the Reformed faith." The spiritual atmosphere of the church is extremely important to us. Atonement "is a caring and welcoming body of believers." "There is a feeling of family" and "an acceptance of all" despite being a congregation of varied faith and personal backgrounds. "We bear one another's burdens and it's not hard to find help when it is needed." This body of believers has "an accepting outlook toward people wherever they are in their walk with the Lord." The church is "open and inclusive." "Generational, ethnic and racial diversity" are celebrated. Leaders "identify strengths in others and listen to them." "Older, mature Christians mentor younger Christians." "Mentorship is provided across multiple generations."

The congregation is committed to providing "a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers" and "does a good job of integrating members" into the life of the church. "It's easy to become involved." The "worship atmosphere" is important and includes a "good integration of traditional and contemporary music." Many "talented musicians within our congregation" help to lead worship through "edifying, God-based music." Sunday school programs for all ages show "respect for God's Word" and evidence of "humility in teaching and learning." "Women are respected, and their talents are recognized and utilized." The church is "dedicated to the Wheaton community" and "has a commitment to outreach efforts."

The congregation embraces the challenges that lie ahead. These include "the growing political and societal resistance to Christ" and "governmental challenges to Christianity." Members are focused on "keeping young families connected and involved" and "capitalizing on the population growth in our area" by "attracting and keeping new members."

In conclusion, we believe the church is called to shepherd people of all ages into mature faith by gospel-driven transformation. As a church, Church of the Atonement has a vision for cultivating flourishing, multi-generational discipleship. An integral part of this vision is found in God's instruction to His people in Deut. 6:4-9. These verses speak to the necessity of spiritual formation through family discipleship. God commands His people to live in His love, learn His instruction, and teach their children to do the same.

While the family is God's primary means for evangelism and discipleship for our children, the Church also plays an important role. In addition to providing opportunities for instruction, spiritual formation, and service for children and youth, we also recognize the importance of investing in our families by equipping parents and grandparents to live into their calling and pass the faith on to the next generation.

Church Membership

Currently our church membership is 308, of which approximately 250 are active. These 250 active members comprise approximately 145 family units. Our members represent more than 20 different nations of origin, although the majority are Caucasian. About 78% of our families live within a 20-minute driving radius of the church. Less than 15% of our new members join by transfer of membership.

Approximately 80% of our first-time adult visitors are unmarried or attend without their spouse. Church membership is presented and accepted as a significant spiritual commitment.

Our principal means of drawing newcomers includes the church's web site, personal invitation, prominent location, and reputation in the community.

When asked why they initially returned to Atonement, newcomers focused their answers on the worship service and the faithful preaching of scripture. When asked why they decided to make Atonement their church home, newcomers focused on how readily they felt accepted and welcomed into new friendships.





Student Ministry

In 2021 this church set out to build ministries that would effectively reach the next generation with the gospel of Christ. At the time, we had about 24 students in the youth program. Now, nearly 2 years later, it is amazing to see what God is doing. No one could have anticipated the rapid growth in the number of families worshipping at Atonement in such a short time! We now have nearly 40 youth in our program, with 12 additional youth entering the program this Fall. This is tremendous growth within the NextGen ministry, and we praise God for it!

To put these numbers into perspective, church health assessments will make basic assessments of a healthy church based upon the relative size of various ministry demographics. For example, a healthy ratio for small groups in a church is to have 50% of your congregation engaged in a small group. For children's ministry, the target is 20% of your average worship attendance. For youth ministry, it's 10%. For Atonement, God is blowing those statistics out of the water! If we take an average worship attendance of 190, we should hope to have 38 children and 19 youth. The reality is that we have 58 children and 37 youth in our NextGen ministries! Next year, our youth group will be 3x the "healthy ratio."

And while this growth is amazing, it presents us with a good problem. As the size of the ministry increases, the complexity of the ministry increases. A youth group of 50 requires many more chaperones, leaders, and ministry strategies to effectively disciple our youth. We are at a juncture where we must work hard to keep the ministry feeling small and relational.

In addition to meet ups, pop up events, and summer camps for our middle and high schoolers, we have Connect Groups which provide a small group study of a cultural topic. Our ladies gather every other week to eat delicious food and enjoy time together as they discuss the readings. Our high school and middle school guys Connect Groups meet separately in other homes where they are led by members of Atonement. Our guys enjoy food and some games and then discuss the topic. Every other Sunday night, we meet at the church for Hangtime, which brings everyone together for a few hours for worship, a lesson, worship, games, food, and breakout groups. Our students also enjoy weekly Sunday School classes following worship. Our Sunday School classes are designed to support our students as they learn about the Bible and God's love for them.

Our student ministry is alive and growing! We have committed leaders and a congregation poised to join us in ministry to this next generation, to see them follow Jesus for a lifetime!

OUR TEAM



Ryan Mowen
Senior Pastor



Logan Spoon
Associate Pastor



Amy Hackman
Care Coordinator



Luke Link
Director of Music Ministries



Cecile Ntumba
Events Coordinator



Jim Rohrer
Assimilation Coordinator



Kristin Rundell
Coordinator, Children & Family Ministries



Rick Plasterer
Librarian



Karen DeHaven
Business Manager

Keri Jacobs Office Manager
Allison Miller Director of Children's Ministry
Sarah DeLacy Organist and Assistant Director of Music Ministries
Gil Gotiangco Director of Ministry Support

Challenges and Opportunities

By the grace of God, Atonement has flourished for decades through faithful ministry, strong bonds of love, and willingness to meet the adaptive challenges before us. The principal internal challenge the church currently faces is responding well to the many new families that are deciding whether to make Atonement their home.

With many families regularly coming to Atonement, our children's and student programs are experiencing tremendous growth. We have seen the need for a full-time youth director to help shepherd and guide these programs in a dedicated way. We have also been blessed to bring on a part time Director of Children's Ministry to oversee this growing and vital part of our ministry.

Along with this, we are still developing our NextGen ministry to bring a cohesive discipleship vision that will bind our ministries together and partner with families in the discipleship of the next generation.

The Bible clearly places the responsibility of nurturing faith to children with the parents. But many times, parents aren't equipped and disciplined to do this. Further, many of our families have children in both programs simultaneously, which can present a challenge to families.

If parents are the people God intends to shape and encourage their kids' spiritual lives, the Church's responsibility is to partner with parents for this work. We see the importance of investing in our parents, grandparents, and our kids. This will take strategic vision and a team of staff who know how to train and equip people for ministry.



Faith

Atonement holds to the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF). It is taught in introductory fashion in every new member course, and its importance is underscored in officer training courses. Members are not required to subscribe to the WCF but to uphold the church's commitment to teach it. The Elders are free to accept some reservations or exceptions to the WCF among church officers, but all preaching and teaching are consistent with the Confession.

The WCF is the foundation for discipleship at Atonement, not a litmus test for spirituality. The leadership of the church is clear that Scripture is primary and the focus of preaching.

Our adult Sunday school classes cover books of the Bible, theology, apologetics, marriage, and other special topics. All classes are taught through the lens of Reformed theology.



Worship

Atonement has one Sunday morning worship service (9:30 AM) with Sunday school classes for all ages (11:00 AM).

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly during worship and come to the table to be nourished by God's grace in Christ.

The music is blended in style and includes songs written or arranged by members. A dozen instrumentalists may be involved in a service, from drums and electric bass to the restored Steinway piano and renovated pipe organ.

Congregational singing is led by a small vocal ensemble. Atonement has four choirs (adult, children, youth, and bells), an instrumental ensemble, and a band that regularly participates.

The integration of music and word elements in worship is coordinated through weekly collaborative meetings involving the pastors and director of music ministries.

Organization and Budget

Atonement has three classes of church officers: elders, deacons, and trustees. Every year the church elects four ruling elders for a four-year term, so there may be sixteen altogether. The congregation also elects six deacons for a three-year term, so there may be eighteen altogether. Two trustees are elected annually to a three-year term, so there may be six altogether.

The elders are responsible for the governance of the church and the ministries of the word and worship. The deacons are responsible for the ministry of mercy and those works necessary to support the ministries of the word including the serving of communion along with the elders. Each group is organized into task-oriented ministry teams or committees. The ministry teams under the elders include Adult Ministries, Atonement Arts Ministry, Youth & Family Ministries, Children & Family Ministries, Global Missions, and Worship & Music.

The committees under the deacons include AV, Inside Maintenance, Kitchen, Mercy, Outside Maintenance, Property (rental house), Safety & Security, and Space Utilization. Two committees, Finance and Memorials, are joint Elder/Deacon committees.

The trustees represent the church in legal and contractual matters and maintain important papers. Only elders and deacons are ordained.

The office of elder is open to men only. The offices of deacon and trustee, as well as team leaders and committee chairmanships, are open to women and men. Our 2022 fiscal year ended strong with total giving at \$1.34 million with \$107,000 going toward missions. In addition, there was an additional \$245,000 designated giving to missions.

