

# First Brethren Church Taos, New Mexico Pastoral Search



## **Vision**

**Mission** - To be a faithful, evangelical community of Believers in northern New Mexico that is committed to proclaiming the love of God which finds its expression most fully in the redemptive grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Vision** – As an evangelical church, we exist to glorify God by seeking ways to creatively communicate to a fallen world the love of God as expressed in the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's redemptive power can bring about personal conversion and spiritual growth in our individual lives. It can also bring about redemptive transformation in northern New Mexico and in the entire world.

## **Gospel Opportunity in the Greater Taos, New Mexico Area**

Roman Catholicism is the largest religious demographic in Taos County and in the town of Taos, followed by general Protestantism. There are a number of Protestant churches in the Taos area with represented denominations to include different streams of Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Lutheran. There are two Presbyterian churches in the area, one in Taos and the other in Ranchos de Taos. Both of these churches are affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Since the 1960s, Taos, New Mexico has been universally recognized as a magnet for attracting diverse individuals and organizations that accentuate and promote a progressive lifestyle and the arts. It is our conviction that the gospel message is the message of hope for a fallen world and that it has the ability to impact not just individuals in a dynamic way, but also families and the Taos community at large.

### **History and Background of our Church:**

The First Brethren Church (FBC) was founded approximately 90 years ago in 1932 and later became a mission of the Grace Brethren, Winona Lakes, Indiana. Since that time, it has had an evangelical witness in the Taos area and provided a K-12 Christian education through the Taos Christian Academy (TCA) from 1980 - 2014.

In 2015, the First Brethren Church (FBC) was averaging 120 people in attendance when a serious doctrinal error resulted in the dismissing of the Pastor causing the splitting of the church. Following a series of Pastors who came to the Taos area from the Grace Brethren denomination in Indiana, the church found itself without a Pastor and with an average attendance of approximately 10 people.

In 2020, the FBC enlisted the part-time pastoral help of Tony Sandoval who had recently relocated to the Taos area following his retirement from federal government service. Being a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) and formerly a full-time pastor of the FBC from 1986-1989, Tony has functioned as a part-time Pastor at the FBC since 2020. Given his exposure to and involvement in churches of the PCA in Virginia (specifically New Life in Christ Church, Fredericksburg, VA; and Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, VA), he felt that the PCA was the best option for the FBC to align itself with given the PCA's commitment to the authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures and a commitment to the the proclamation of the gospel in the Reformed tradition. Hence, Tony's recommendation to the FBC was that it prayerfully consider aligning itself with the PCA in New Mexico in an effort to become a part of a network of like-minded churches in order to satisfy the needs for both corporate and individual fellowship; and secondly, to meet the need for moral and doctrinal accountability from a Presbytery in the Reformed tradition.

In addition, there are currently no churches in northern New Mexico that are providing a Reformed evangelical witness. As such, the FBC prayerfully turned to the Rio Grande

Presbytery (RGP) of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) in June, 2020 for their guidance and assistance in considering if the FBC would be a viable candidate as a church for inclusion in the PCA. Prayerful consideration ensued along with multiple opportunities for discussions between the FBC and the RGP. In addition, the FBC was privileged to host a number of visiting Pastors from the RGP who shared God's Word from the pulpit over the past two years +. Opportunities were also created for the church to have their questions about the PCA answered by Teaching and Ruling Elders from within the RGP. In May 2022, the FBC voted overwhelmingly to join the PCA. In September 2022, at their bi-annual meeting, the Rio Grande Presbytery unanimously voted to accept the First Brethren Church of Taos, NM as a mission church.

The selection of the Pastor for the First Brethren Church (FBC) will be made by a Provisional Session of the Rio Grande Presbytery which will work in collaboration with the Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) from the FBC. The Provisional Session consists of John Standridge, Associate Pastor of Christ Church; Adam Viramontes, Lead Pastor at Mosaic Church (PCA) in Albuquerque, NM; Sandy Hoffman and Arlen Biersgreen, both Ruling Elders at PCA churches in Albuquerque, NM. The PSC consists of Tony Sandoval, part-time intern pastor; Ron Holmes, Sue Holt, Rich Puffer, Andrea Martinez and Dee Oskins. The goal of both the Provisional Session and the PSC is to prayerfully identify and help facilitate the call of a full-time Pastor for the FBC.

It is anticipated that once a Reformed identity is established at the FBC, the name of the church will be changed in accordance with New Mexico State laws which govern the existence of non-profits within the State. With a view to rebranding, the church's new name will reflect the church's Reformed tradition and also be designed to attract individuals who are seeking a church with Reformed values within the greater Taos area.

Upon the calling of a new Pastor, one of the initial assignments will also be to develop a church website in order to disseminate information about the existence and availability of the church and its resources. The current part-time Pastor, Tony Sandoval, anticipates remaining in the Taos area to help provide ongoing support to the church and the new Pastor in whatever capacity he can. It is anticipated that this will help make a more smooth transition in leadership, benefiting both the church in general and the new Pastor.

Currently, the First Brethren Church (FBC) holds a Sunday morning service each Lord's Day at 10AM with attendance averaging between 25-35 individuals. On occasion, we have had as many as 45-50. Two Bible studies are held on a weekly basis, one for women and one for men. Three of the ladies in the church provide piano support for a Worship Team consisting of six people.

### **Facilities of our Church:**

The Lord has richly blessed the First Brethren Church (FBC) with debt-free facilities. Located approximately one mile east of the Taos Plaza in a residential neighborhood,

the FBC sits on approximately 2.7 acres. The worship/church facility can comfortably seat 120 individuals. It has a nursery, primary school room, pastor's study, conference room and administrative office, restrooms, storage rooms and an audio-visual equipment room.

The First Brethren Church (FBC) owns a Christian educational facility and gymnasium which in the past has housed a K-12 Christian school known as the Taos Christian Academy (TCA). While the building up and the strengthening of the church is our absolute priority, the FBC has a long-term vision, if God so leads, to one day in the future enhance our gospel witness by opening the TCA with the goal of providing an alternative classical Christian education in the Taos area.

## **Pastoral Search**

The First Brethren Church (FBC) is seeking a man who is gifted as a Pastor/Teacher. His priority ought to be the maintaining of a vibrant, personal spiritual life as foundational for ministering to God's people; and who has a passion and heart for reaching out as an evangelical witness to those who are without Christ.

## **Qualifications of the Pastor**

The ideal Pastoral candidate will be someone with proven leadership, giftedness in preaching and pastoring with strong evangelistic/church-planting gifts; with a love for small and unique places; and with the capacity for patient, steady, faithful and long-term commitment to the church and the Taos community. Specific qualifications include:

- At least 5 years of ministerial experience preferred
- Ordained or able to be ordained in the PCA
- A Master of Divinity or comparable degree from a reputable theological institution
- A passion for church-planting and a heart for reaching out to the secularized, progressive unreached in the Taos area

## Anticipated Pastoral Responsibilities

The Pastor's major responsibilities are centered in the areas of leading worship, proclamation of the inerrant and authoritative Word of God through preaching and teaching, focusing on outreach and evangelism, and providing administrative oversight of the church in collaboration with the Ruling Elders. The Scriptural qualifications for the Teaching Elder are set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

- **Worship Leader:** The Pastor will work in concert with the Worship Team and the eventual Session of Ruling Elders to develop a rich worship life.
- **Proclamation of God's Written Word:** The Pastor will preach the Word of God expositionally having the conviction that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God; and with a commitment to communicating the relevancy of the God's truth as the answer to all of life's questions.
- **Evangelism & Outreach:** The Pastor will lead the church in identifying creative ways to reach out to the secularized community at large with the gospel, communicating it in a meaningful and effective way in prayerful anticipation that the Holy Spirit will use these efforts to win the lost to Christ and thus build up the Body of Christ.
- **Shepherding:** Given that the future of the church lies in building up the congregation, the Pastor will seek to focus on reaching families and young people with the goal of establishing healthy Christ-centered young people and families. Given the existing composition of the FBC, the Pastor will also have a heart for tending to the existing flock, which includes the elderly, through regular and timely visitation.
- **Leading:** The Pastor will work in conjunction with the existing leadership in an effort to develop a team-oriented approach to decision-making; one which will find its fruition in the prayerfully building up of a board of Ruling Elders who can provide the Pastor with prayer and moral support as well as individual accountability. Hence, one of the goals will be to develop strong male leadership within the church to occupy the office of Ruling Elders.

## Our Location: Taos, New Mexico



Taos is located in the high desert of north-central area of New Mexico in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The elevation of Taos is 6,969'. Originally founded in 1615, Taos was established as trading outpost and a fortified plaza for the Taos Pueblo, which borders Taos on the north, and surrounding Hispanic communities in 1795. New Mexico was a territory of the United States beginning in 1850 and became a state in 1912. The town of Taos, incorporated in 1934, operates under the mayor-council form of government. Taos is home to a world-class ski resort (Taos Ski Valley), a World Heritage Site (Taos Pueblo), and one of the most photographed and iconic churches in the country, the St. Francis de Assisi Roman Catholic Church.

Taos is an internationally recognized location for the arts with numerous art galleries, studios and eight art and history museums. Kit Carson Park and Taos Center for the Arts host numerous music events drawing talent from around the world.

The Taos Plaza is undeniably the main focal point of the Town of Taos. The Plaza provides a brief respite from busy lifestyles and activities with traditional celebrations, live performances, as well as plentiful fund-raising efforts held at this lovely town square. In late July, the Town of Taos celebrates the annual Taos Fiestas where the Plaza becomes the focal point. During the summer months, weekly musical events featuring live music are sponsored by the Town of Taos in the Plaza, referred to as 'Thursday Night Live'.



Outdoor enthusiasts appreciate the natural wonder and beauty of northern New Mexico which provide for abundant outdoor activities such as biking, camping, backpacking, fishing, hiking, golfing, snow skiing, snow shoeing, rock climbing, river rafting and snowmobiling. Internationally recognized landmarks within the area include the Rio Grande Gorge and Bridge, the Taos Pueblo, the Taos Ski Resort, and the Carson National Forest.



For more information about the Taos area, visit [www.taos.org](http://www.taos.org)

### **Medium Education in the Taos Area:**

The town's public schools are operated by Taos Municipal Schools and include Arroyos del Norte Elementary School, Enos García Elementary School, Ranchos Elementary School, Taos Middle School, Taos High School, and Taos Cyber Magnet School. Charter schools include Anansi Charter School, Taos Academy (State Charter), Taos Municipal Charter School and Vista Grande High School. Currently, there are no Christian K-12 educational options in the Taos area.

Dallas-based Southern Methodist University operates a 295-acre campus at Fort Burgwin outside of Taos. Albuquerque-based University of New Mexico (UNM) operates a community campus near Ranchos de Taos. Within Taos itself there are eight

affiliated UNM buildings such as the Harwood Museum of Art and Taos High School where some UNM classes are held.

## **Demographics of the Taos Area:**

The Town of Taos has a population of approximately 6,626 people with approximately 35,000 people residing in Taos County. It is currently growing at a rate of 1.16% annually. During the summer months, Taos becomes a magnet for tourists visiting to attend the many art and music events. The area also attracts outdoor enthusiasts who are drawn to the area to hike, camp and fish the many rivers in northern New Mexico. During the winter months, Taos draws snow skiers from around the world who are challenged by the world-class skiing at the Taos Ski Valley. Additional family oriented skiing opportunities can be found at nearby Sipapu Ski Resort, Red River Ski Resort and Angel Fire Ski Resort. Spanning over 6 miles, Taos has a population density of 1,103 people per square mile. The median age in Taos is 50.8 years. The racial composition of Taos is:

- Non-Hispanics: 54.6%
- Hispanics: 31.5%
- Two or more races: 9.85%
- Other races: 7.88%
- Native American; 3.9%
- Black or African American: 0.22%

## **Economy in the Taos Area:**

The median income for a household in town is \$25,016, and the median income for a family is \$33,564. Most jobs are connected to tourism which is the primary industry in Taos. Taos' popularity with visitors has led to an influx of retirees, numerous second homes, and rising cost of living. The county is becoming increasingly more expensive particularly for those who rent.

## **Climate in Northern New Mexico:**

In Taos, wide variations of temperature can occur daily. Taos averages 37 inches of snow per year. The average high temperature in July is 86 degree fahrenheit; and the lows in January average 12 degree fahrenheit. The difference between a sunny area and a shady area can be as much as 15 degrees. Even on hot summer days, evenings cool off. The climate is subject to large seasonal temperature differences, with warm to hot summers and cold winters – often referred to as a warm-summer humid continental climate.

## **How to Apply for the Pastoral Position:**

Questions by Pastoral candidates can be directed to John Standridge, Associate Pastor at Christ Church, Santa Fe, NM, email: [johnstandridge@gmail.com](mailto:johnstandridge@gmail.com) or cell: (830) 377-1603. John is the Chairman of the Provisional Session of the Rio Grande

Presbytery which is working in conjunction with the FBC's Pastoral Search Committee (FBC). Questions can also be directed to Tony Sandoval, the current part-time and interim Pastor at the FBC, email: [tonysandoval5@gmail.com](mailto:tonysandoval5@gmail.com) or cell: (540) 623-5275.

To apply, please submit the following:

Cover Letter/Resume

Documentation of 2 recent sermons or teaching presentations

Application Information may be submitted to:

Email: [johnstandridge@gmail.com](mailto:johnstandridge@gmail.com)

[tonysandoval5@gmail.com](mailto:tonysandoval5@gmail.com)

(Please provide attachments in PDF format)