

City and Church Profile

Central Baptist Church, Victoria, BC

Our City

Central Baptist Church is located in Victoria, BC, a city of about 80,000 people in the metropolitan area and 345,000 in the wider Capital Regional District. Victoria is the southernmost major city in Western Canada, boasting of a temperate climate with mild winters and warm summers. Known to be “The Garden City,” Victoria is a popular tourism destination with a thriving technology sector. We have one of the highest “park to people” ratios in North America. Bike trails, beaches, lakes, and an abundance of scenic walking paths add to the beauty and activity of the area.

Victoria is also one of the oldest cities in the Pacific Northwest with settlement dating as far back as 1843. The downtown core is being reinvigorated as new people continue to move into the hundreds of new condo units that have been constructed over the past several years and that continue to be built. The city also hosts festivals, fireworks, and parades throughout the year and has a variety of restaurants and cultural things to experience. Despite Victoria’s reputation as a tourist destination, homelessness and drug use remain as significant challenges. The high cost of living is also making it difficult for working families to provide for their families. Raising Indigenous cultural and political awareness is a key focus for the city as it is for the province in general. Central has a unique opportunity to show God’s love in our community as we are in the heart of it all.

Located about 20 minutes from the church, the western communities of Colwood, Langford, View Royal, and the Highlands continue to be the top ten fastest growing cities in British Columbia with Langford being the fastest growing city in B.C. in 2020. As a downtown church, Central attracts people from across the Greater Victoria area and so plays an influential role in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the capital regional district.

Our Church

Central Baptist has been in Victoria since 1927. We believe that God has placed us here to point people to Jesus and encourage them on their faith journey, particularly in the downtown core. We have a congregation size of approximately 600-700 people (approximately 500 people attend the morning service; 346 members) with a healthy mixture of young and old.

In recent years, we have increased our focus on developing an online community, which immensely contributed to the smooth transition to being strictly online during the pandemic. Our Sunday Livestream is viewed not only by our church family, but also those outside the city and around the world, including missionaries.

Most recently, in January 2021 we hired Corey Doak as our full time Director of Music & Media (DMM), and in mid 2021 we hired Phil Horton full time as our Pastor to Seniors and Community Groups. We also have other staff members who play key roles in making up the team at Central (please see the church website for more details).

We have programs for every age category from newborns to seniors, including:

- Club 456 and youth group, drawing young people from the church and from the community.
- Community Groups that are more than a Bible study. They are communities of people who challenge us to orient our whole lives around Jesus -- because the Bible is not just a book we study, but a book that informs the way we live. Every Community Group is defined by three things: TRUTH (we study the Bible together), LOVE (we care for and serve others), and MISSION (Gospel intentionality is about living a life that clearly communicates the gospel).
- Family Group – a community group for families meeting mid-week for pot-luck dinner, adult Bible study, and a kids program.
- Many other ministries including care ministries, seniors ministries, summer camps...etc.

Central is very outward focused in reaching our community for Christ. For instance, we run food distribution ministry to those in need on Monday nights called “Neighbourhood Market”, a summer kid’s camp called “Urban Adventures”, as well as partnering with local organizations such as Our Place, Victoria Pregnancy Centre, and Artemis Place to serve our community. We also have a strong partnership with Camp Qwanoes, a youth-focused high adventure Christian camp that exists to love kids and share life like no other in Christ.

Central Baptist has a rich history of involvement with missions, both globally and locally. Globally we provide financial and prayer support to missionaries, many of whom are sent from our own congregation. We have a very strong partnership with Compassion. Compassion Canada is one of the world’s leading child development organizations and partners with local churches to end poverty in the lives of children and their families. Central has sponsored over 150 children through Compassion and has set up numerous Compassion survival programs for pregnant and new mothers in Guatemala. In recent years, we have raised funds and brought two refugee families from Sudan and Eritrea into our city. Locally we organize several work trips to Esperanza, an isolated west coast community, and serve in two of our elementary schools.

Central’s vision is “renewing our community through the gospel.” Under this umbrella, our current three-year plan is “Multiply 2023”, which outlines six key objectives:

1. We will use the discipleship pathway we created to multiply followers of Jesus.
2. We will be known for seeking the common good of the city.
3. We will leverage modern technology to contextualize the gospel for our culture.
4. We will grow our under 40 demographic while engaging and valuing those 40 and over.
5. We need to multiply leaders and gospel centred congregations.
6. We will make changes to our 1929 and 1964 buildings.

In order to achieve our objectives, we operate with core values that identify what we think is important and provide a context for making decisions. Some of these are values we already cherish, but are so important

that we need to continue to emphasize them. Others are values we need to aspire to in order to achieve the objectives for the next three years.

Gospel

The good news of Jesus Christ is the centre of everything we are and everything we do.

City

We don't run from the difficulties of the city. We are *in* the city and *for* the city.

Urgency

People die every day without knowing Jesus. This puts a sense of urgency in all we do.

Generosity

We love giving our time, money, and abilities to see the gospel move forward.

Multiplication

We reproduce disciples, leaders, and churches because the Great Commission is not optional.

Prayer

We're on our knees before God because we cannot do anything apart from Him.

Focus

We stay focused on our vision. We do a few things really well rather than a lot of things with mediocrity.

Family

We are a diverse family that cares for each other. We stick it out, resolve conflict, and grow toward maturity together.

Many more things could be said about Central and our mission to make Christ known in our city. If your heart resonates with some of what you've read, then we look forward to talking with you further about being on mission with us in the city of Victoria.

