Information for Pastoral candidates

Inquiries should be addressed to Hello@WinnemuccaFellowship.com, attention: Pastor Search. Our address is 4380 S Grass Valley Rd., Winnemucca NV 89445.

1. Please see our doctrinal statement on our website: <https://www.winnemuccafellowship.com/beliefs>
2. Community:
	1. Winnemucca is a town of 8,000 with many more of Humboldt County’s 17,000 residents living on the large perimeter of the town.
	2. General info: <https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/c/humboldt-county-nv/>
	3. A large segment of our workforce is directly or indirectly related to mining (gold, primarily) and tourism, being at the intersection of Interstate 80 and State Route 95. Top employers are shown here: <https://nevadaworkforce.com/_docs/Top-Employers/20231/Humboldt-County>
	4. 2000 construction workers are due in town soon—and for about two years, for the development of the Thacker Pass Lithium mine, reported to be one of the largest lithium mines (think batteries, cars, and otherwise) in the US. After construction, the mine will require 300 miners for the estimated 40 years or more of mining.
	5. The county has a hospital with many specialties. Major medical services and subspecialties are in Reno, 2.5 hrs. away via Interstate 80.
	6. Outdoors and things to do: More demographics including weather (most years not much snow that lasts) and things to do are easily found on the internet. Hunting is a very popular sport.
	7. An interesting factoid: Basque culture is prominent here. It’s enjoyed by everyone, and we have state-wide award winning Basque food at the Martin Hotel (used to be a hotel). http://www.winnemucca.com/visitors-activities/basque-culture
3. Churches
	1. The community is home to a number of churches, including denominational, Catholic, Jehovah’s Witness, and LDS. Winnemucca Christian Fellowship (WCF) is on friendly terms with evangelical churches in town. We estimate that less than 1000 regularly attend Christian churches in greater Winnemucca. Evangelism events such as Strong Man at a city park (2021) are well received. Some of the pastors are bi-vocational or retired from other work. The congregation with most worshippers (well over 100) was started about 7 years ago by a local church under the theory that more will worship if there are more churches, rather than trying to get more people to come to existing churches. That has proven true in Winnemucca.
	2. WCF has been the location for AWANA for many years. Many people from other churches, including a pastor from another church, participate in teaching the approx. 80 kids each week. WCF has provided this teaching at no cost to participants since 2021.
	3. Other churches are easily found on the internet.
4. Winnemucca Christian Fellowship (WCF)
	1. Some history:
		1. WCF was started in 1980 as a result of the merger of two churches. Attendance grew substantially to 200-300 over the years, and then waned critically. Four years ago, attendance dropped to a low of 18.
		2. Pastorate: The long-term pastor left and our current pastor, Gary Kuskie, was engaged to teach Christ. Gary had been bi-vocational, pastoring a small church in the nearby town of Imlay, and then as interim at another Winnemucca church for a short period. Importantly, Gary has announced his retirement as Pastor, although he plans to continue as an Elder and teacher. Due to prior history at WCF, the pastor is not the chair of the Elders. A reorganization effort became paramount, following Scripture for the selection of Elders and Deacons.
		3. Involvement: Today there are three Elders including the Pastor, and seven Deacons, as well as many in vital roles in our congregation addressing teaching Scripture through Sunday School, several Bible study groups, AWANA (80 kids), VBS (80 kids), and (in no particular order) care for the poor and needy, ordinances, visitation, music, fellowship, tech, evangelism, youth, safety, facilities and grounds, administration, cards and flowers, finance, welcoming and more. Average Sunday worship attendance has averaged just over 100 for the past few months. Baptisms occur approximately monthly.
	2. Non-denominational: WCF is non-denominational, and some in our congregation come from denominations which may account for the strong position of being non-denominational held by many. Please see our Constitution – By Laws for our doctrinal statement and other important info. In the past three years we have had relatively minor changes to the document, none relating to doctrine. Note that there is no official membership of this church—it’s self-proclaimed during votes in business meetings (typically 35-45 people in attendance). About 70 folks well attend monthly potlucks.
	3. Congregants: The majority of those who were present at WCF four years ago are still with the church and are older believers. Many now come with children, and the sound of babies and young kids is very welcomed. We asked the congregation for some information, which is summarized here:
		1. A few percentage points more female than male, and 44% were 70 years of age or more, 15% 60-69, 6% 50-59, 15% 40-49 and under 10% in each age category below that. These are the 35 respondents to the survey, not a count of all attending. (This is similar to the typical number attending business meetings.)
		2. 71% are currently married. 21% have kids under 18 at home.
		3. 47% rate their involvement with WCF as a 3 out of 5, while 36% rate themselves as 4-5 of 5 where 5 is very active.
		4. 59% have trusted Jesus over 20 years while 15% have trusted Him under 5 years.
		5. Educationally, 33% have high school or less education, 41% some college, and then varying percentages under 10% each for categories of bachelor’s degrees, technical and professional certifications.
		6. Almost all respondents say they would stay at WCF no matter what its future size is. Our recently stated vision is to grow attendance to 200 by the end of 2024 because we love our neighbors and tell them about the salvation of Jesus which is so needed in our community where so few even worship Christ in church.
		7. When asked about doctrinal preferences, few want more (or less) denominational doctrine, and this was the most commented on question in the survey, where congregants want the Bible taught without denominational influence.
	4. Buildings/finances: Our church building was constructed in phases 30-40 years ago. Following the low 18 in attendance, we’ve replaced the roof and had the building painted, showing the strong giving in our worshippers. These and a couple of smaller capital projects used about $100,000, yet our bank balance remains at $100,000 plus, again reflecting the giving nature of our congregation. The church also owns two separate buildings which for some years had housed offices for mining operations. We have now converted those into classrooms, especially for VBS, and one is now used for Jr and senior high youth (new this year) on Tuesday nights for AWANA, as well as crafting in the other building.
	5. Missions / Care: Our funding to missionaries is 12% of total spending and we have a fund balance in Missions that we are working to deploy. The six missionaries we support are four through Advancing Native Missions (a very long-term partner in ministry), a church and its church plants and a school and feeding program in Kenya, and our regional AWANA missionary. Our largest designated fund at almost $10,000, is called the Heart Fund, which is for care of attendees and sojourners. We anticipate this fund will be used more significantly now that we have a Deacon of Care. Each month we give offerings after Communion for the poor and needy, and the offerings are significant.
	6. Yes, Elders have engaged in Biblical discipline and dispute resolution. Yes, Elders have been very active in all aspects of church life.
5. The new pastor. Our primary concern is for this person’s healthy relationship with our Lord. We anticipate speaking with our candidate about his spiritual walk, and how he leads by example. Our congregation weighed in on items that are not called out in I Timothy 3 or Titus 1, for example, with the following results:
	1. The largest group of congregants have no age preference, and following that, the next largest group wants some age maturity.
	2. A significant portion would like seminary training.
	3. There is great diversity of opinion about marital status.
	4. More than not would like the candidate to have pastoral experience.
	5. While a significant group would like the size of his church to be similar to ours (see above), many have no preference.
	6. Preaching, leadership, and relationships are very important.
	7. In terms of a focus of time, the congregation would like prayer to be a very high priority, along with sermon preparation, counseling, and meeting ministry leaders who plan and organize ministry activities.
	8. Our preference for preaching styles is that we prefer many styles (personal, relational, engaging; textual; narrative; sermon series; Bible book focus (currently going through John); challenging and discipleship. Most had multiple scorings by individuals.
	9. In terms of ministry focus of our pastor, the congregation is highly supportive of prayer, evangelism, discipleship, vision, and missionary mentality with respect to our community.
	10. We like our music at about five songs each Sunday interspersed with Scripture… which usually includes a hymn or two and sometimes combined with a contemporary chorus (ex: Amazing Grace—My Chains Are Gone). We avoid Bethel/Hillsong/Elevation music to not support apostasy. Our worship time includes several readings of Scripture on the TVs and there is great participation in reading the Scriptures, at least one of which is related to the daily reading guide, and another tied in with the Sermon topic. We have adopted a rousing version “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” as our post-baptism song—with enthusiastic singing by the congregation. Our music team leads us in worship; there is no focus on self in the whole team.
	11. Tech: Our sermons have been recorded and posted, but the tech time was consuming so we’ve stopped. Our music team and anyone else who wants, can see what we’ll be singing this coming Sunday on Spotify. We have a website that has some traffic. Online giving is via Stripe. We use Planning Center for various applications including VBS registrations, for example.

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