

# CHURCH PROFILE FORM

Reformed Church in America



## Introduction

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The Reformed Church in America's Office of Ministry Services provides information and services to ordained ministers who are seeking a call and churches who are seeking ordained ministers. It does not recommend any particular candidate or church but instead serves as a resource to both.

For further information, or if you have questions or problems while completing this form, please contact Ministry Services at [ministryservices@rca.org](mailto:ministryservices@rca.org) or 212-870-3252.

### Helpful Hints for this form...

- ❖ To move to the next field, hit TAB.
- ❖ To move the cursor to a desired field, left click on it with the mouse.
- ❖ To mark (x) in a box, left click with mouse.
- ❖ Hitting ENTER will move the cursor to the next line but keep you in the same field (essay questions)
- ❖ Spell check is not available in this format.
- ❖ Bold, italics and underline are not available in this format--use quotation marks instead for emphasis.
- ❖ The form will "paginate" itself as you complete it.
- ❖ If at any time you cannot include information important to you because of the "form field", please continue to complete the question on a separate page. Make sure to reference the question number!
- ❖ Please sign and return the **Release Statement** at the end of this form. You may scan it and email it as an attachment to [ministryservices@rca.org](mailto:ministryservices@rca.org).

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Reformed Church in America



## Section A. Background Information

Today's Date: 4/21/2022

Position to be filled: Pastor

1. **Name of church:** High Bridge Reformed Church
2. **Web address:** [www.hbrefomedchurch.org](http://www.hbrefomedchurch.org)
3. **Mailing address:**  
**P.O. Box 225**  
**Street**  
High Bridge, NJ 8829  
**City / State / Zip Code**  
**Telephone:** (908) 638-6798      **E-Mail address:** [info@hbrefomedchurch.org](mailto:info@hbrefomedchurch.org)
4. **Classis:** Delaware/Raritan
5. **Classis Supervisor:** Rev. Scarlet Gorton  
**Address:**  
38 Ridge Road  
**Street**  
Lebanon, NJ 8833  
**City / State / Zip Code**  
**Telephone:** (908) 752-5348      **E-Mail address:** [Sgorton38@earthlink.net](mailto:Sgorton38@earthlink.net)
6. **Chair of search committee:** Jessica Luteran  
**Address:**  
207 Mt. Airy Rd  
**Street**  
Glen Gardner, NJ 8826  
**City / State / Zip Code**  
**Telephone:** (908) 399-9238      **E-Mail address:** [hoosluteran@gmail.com](mailto:hoosluteran@gmail.com)

7. **Membership:**

<b>Time of worship</b>	<b>Five years ago</b>	<b>Today</b>
<b>Active Confessing Members</b>	52	34
<b>Inactive Confessing Members</b>	20	17

**Comment on significant changes:**

We have seen a steady reduction in membership over the last few years. COVID also impacted our number of Active members attending services.

**Age of all active members (baptized and confessing)**

<b>3 %</b>	<b>0-20 years old</b>
<b>7 %</b>	<b>20-34 years old</b>
<b>20 %</b>	<b>35-49 years old</b>
<b>20 %</b>	<b>50-64 years old</b>
<b>50 %</b>	<b>65 years and older</b>

**8. Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation:**

<b>%</b>	<b>African American</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>Asian</b>
<b>100 %</b>	<b>Caucasian</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>Other: (please specify)</b>

**9. Worship schedule:**

**Average Attendance (includes adults and children)**

<b>Time of worship</b>	<b>Average attendance Five years ago</b>	<b>Average attendance Today</b>
<b>10 am</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>pm</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	60	30
<b>am</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>pm</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		

**Comment on significant changes:** Members have been moving away and have left for other area churches. There hasn't been a consistent effort for gathering new members. Several members have passed away.

**10. Describe a typical worship service (order of worship, music, etc.) What is your congregation's preferred style or styles of worship? Attach a bulletin, if available.**

Ours follows a traditional Reformed liturgy: Prelude, Announcements, Approach To God, Salutation, Praise Hymn, Confession, Assurance of Pardon, Guide to Life (The Law), Gloria Patri, Message for all ages, Greeting, Prayer of illumination, Word of God, Message/Sermon, Response hymn, Our response to God (Offertory, Doxology), Sacraments/communion, Prayer & Concerns, the Lord's Prayer, Sending hymn, Benediction, postlude. Additional liturgical music often used. Majority of our music selections are traditions songs, with some contemporary music. Instruments frequently often used are piano, organ and guitar. Soloists are often featured.

**11. Financial Information: Attach a copy most recent Consistorial Report and Annual Budget if available.**

	Five Years Ago	Today
<b>Total RCA related contributions</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Total other contributions</b>	\$\$71,432	\$\$42457

**Percentage of total budget contributed by living donors:**

<b>100-90 %</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>75-89 %</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>60-74 %</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>45-59 %</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>44 % or less</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*(Please include a copy of your annual budget)*

**12. Congregational Giving:  
Number of those whose annual contribution is:**

<b>Less than \$500</b>	11
<b>\$501- \$1,500</b>	3
<b>\$1,501- \$2,500</b>	6
<b>\$2,501-\$3,500</b>	0
<b>Greater than \$3,500</b>	0

**13. Financial assistance: Do you receive financial assistance beyond the congregation? (rents, etc.) Yes  No**

**If yes, amount received last year: \$**

**List other fundraising programs that support the church:**

Dinners  
Christmas Bazaar  
Bake Sales

**14. Church/Sunday School:  
Average Attendance**

Average attendance Five years ago	Average attendance Today
0	0

**Comment on significant changes:**

No youth programs in house. No Sunday school currently running. Only a couple of younger children in member families currently.

**15. Describe briefly all educational programs (including children, young adult, adult).**  
None at this time.

**16. Church groups/organizations: Briefly describe ministry purpose of each group.  
(use separate sheet if necessary)**

Name of group	Frequency of Meeting (i.e. weekly, bi-monthly, etc)	Attendance

**17. Comment on one event or experience over the last year that has significantly contributed to the spiritual life of the congregation.**

Pastor Scarlet Gorton's arrival as an interim pastor for our church. Her leadership has inspired unity, reflection, and forward-thinking among our congregation

**18. Buildings: Please describe church-owned or rented buildings and purpose.**

Parsonage for minister. Church sanctuary and separate large fellowship hall/chapel for dinners/community events or worship service

**19. Do you plan any capital expenditure during the next five years? Yes  No**   
**If yes, please explain briefly:**

Building upgrades, paint and repairs. Parsonage repairs. Pipe organ rehabilitation

**20. Is there a mortgage indebtedness? Yes  No**

**Amount: \$**

**Of how long standing?**

**Annual rate of repayment**

21. **Pastor's study:**  
 In church  in parsonage  Other  Not Provided

22. **List all paid staff in addition to the pastor:**

Position	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
Organist	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Administrative Assistant	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Custodian	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Creative AV Director	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
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	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>
	Full time <input type="checkbox"/>	Part time <input type="checkbox"/>

23. **Consistory Membership: What method is used in selecting members?**

Total of 6 members + Pastor and Clerk. Nominating committee prays separately for names. Then comes together to see how many names are the same. Those are the congregational members that are called.

**Please list present Consistory members ( Put a check in the box where appropriate:**

Elder	Deacon	Male	Female	Occupation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Retired
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sales
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Computer Security
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Golf Course Turf Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**24. What leadership roles do women currently fill in your church?**

Whatever is needed. The men and women both hold equal roles in our church.

**25. In our congregation...(please check appropriate box)**

	Few have...	Many have...	Most have...
Had up to twelve years of formal education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Had some education beyond high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A college degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A graduate degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**26. In our congregation...(please check a box)**

	Few are...	Many are...	Most are...
Scientists & Engineers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students & Teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**27. Special training/experience desired: (Describe briefly)**

New Member recruitment/outreach, Pastoral calling and community involvement/outreach.

**28. Languages:**

**Should your pastor be fluent in any language other than English?**

Yes  No  If yes, please explain. Spanish, is desirable but not required. There is a minority that is growing and needs reaching out to.

**29. The salary we are prepared to offer our new pastor is \$** What is recommended by Classis.

Negotiable

**The average annual increase to our pastor over the past three years was**

\$Recommended by Classis

**30. Is a parsonage provided? Yes  No**

If so, is it on site with the church? Yes  No

If the parsonage is not on site with the church, how far from the church is it located? N/A

**31. Is a Minister's housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage a negotiable option?**

Yes  No



**32. The benefits/business expenses we will provide our pastor are:  
(Please check those provided or give amount as requested.)**

<b>Base Salary</b>	<b>\$55376.00</b>
<b>Housing Allowance</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Parsonage provided?</b> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Travel Reimbursement</b>	<b>\$0.57</b>
<b>Social Security (Amount)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Book Allowance (Amount)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Continuing Education Allowance (Amount)</b>	<b>\$1065.00</b>
<b>Provision for Sabbatical</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Other (Specify Below)</b> Annuity and Benefits	<b>\$18000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$74441</b>

- Yes  No  Retirement  
 Yes  No  Major Medical Insurance  
 Yes  No  Health/Hospital Insurance  
 Yes  No  Life Insurance  
 Yes  No  Dental Insurance  
 Yes  No  Unemployment Insurance  
 Yes  No  Disability Insurance

**Annual Vacation (Number of Weeks) 4**  
**Necessary Comments regarding above:**



**33. Community served: (please check one)**

Rural: Under 2,500	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town: 2,500-9,999	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Small City: 10,000-49,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Suburban: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Urban: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metropolitan-Inner City: 50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Some members outside town	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**34. Cooperative ministry: In what ways have you cooperated with other churches in your community during the past year?**

**Shared worship services with HB Methodist Church**

**35. Community involvement: In what community programs or projects have you participated during the past year? (As an organization, not as individuals.)**

Local food pantry food drive.  
Annual Holy Trail  
Helped upgrade apartment for family from Ukraine

**36. What denominations or religions are present within three miles (in rural areas, consider the county) where your church is located?**

**Methodist, Catholic, and Presbyterian**

**37. Outreach: What is your strategy to reach un-churched people in your community?**

**Currently we are trying to figure this one out.**

**38. The income level of the people in our congregation tends to be: (please check one)**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	About average for our community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat below the rest of the community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat higher than the rest of the community

**39. Describe the community and school system: (Provide website links were appropriate.)**

**Top ranked school systems. Setting in a Rural town community.  
<http://highbridge.org/>**

**40. Record of last three pastors:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Ronald Kelly	1991 to 1998
Steve Yon	1999 to 2014
Bethany Popkes	2017 to 2021

**41. Please complete your profile with the following contacts:**

<b>Name</b>	
Julie Mills	<b>Vice President, Consistory</b>
Scarlet Gorton	<b>Classis Supervisor</b>

## Section B. Reflections

Please answer the following questions, adding your own experiences where appropriate.

**1) What is the stated mission, vision or purpose of your congregation?**

The mission of HBRC is to praise God through worship & fellowship while sharing His love with all people.

**2) What goals have been developed from your mission and vision over the next 5 years? ( Example new programs or outreach ministries.) Include long range or strategic plan.**

In response to recent challenges and our changing world, one of our goals is to offer alternative forms of worship in addition to our traditional Sunday worship. To do this it will be necessary to form new committees, delegate new tasks, and expand our budget. To bolster fellowship, we plan to create and/or resume ways in which we may have conversation with, listen to, and help one-another. In service of this aim it is our goal to bring back our Bible study, book club, nursery and Sunday school programs. For outreach we seek to increase our community and ecumenical involvement, and it is among our goals to identify and give aid to community needs, partake in community events, continue hosting seasonal activities (ornament 'Make & Take', Christmas Bazaar, pumpkin carving), resume Christmas caroling, collaborate with other local churches on services and ministry efforts, offer free dinners to our neighbors, and host music events. We plan also to have our Church become a shelter for those in need in times of crisis. The planning and work necessary to achieve this is underway, and includes building improvements as required by certification criteria.

**3) Describe the strengths of your church, the best of what you are as a community, and what you can offer a new pastor.**

Built and founded over 150 years ago, our church has deep roots. In both body and building, it has been a spiritual home to generations of members who are committed to expanding upon the Reformed tradition and are resilient in pursuing our mission. Our church is a second home to many of our members, and the bonds formed among us are strong.

As many churches struggle financially, we are blessed to have the financial security to persevere and support our staff well into the future. For our Pastor, we maintain a beautiful parsonage with garage on church grounds, nestled in historic downtown.

The strength of our adaptability carried us through the first year of the pandemic, as we embraced the online medium with media production tools and techniques, bringing our ministry to our homebound members and beyond. In this manner and in others, our staff is exceptionally adept technologically, committed to using whichever tools may best serve our mission.

**4) Explain the strategies or ideas that most excite your church in becoming or remaining missional.**

Becoming more involved in our town's evolving community is the subject of much exciting discussion among us. High Bridge may be a small town but it is quickly growing and changing, and we aim to share the love of Christ with our neighbors by forming relationships with town officials, business owners, and other community leaders so that we may become a familiar and trustworthy presence to those around us.

Among an increasingly secular culture in our area, our missional ambitions largely remain local, and begin with offering to those in our communities our ears and our aid. From our involvement in town-wide events outside the church, to hosting free dinners inside the church, we are most excited to share love and kindness with those in our community.

**5) Name three of your church's most passionate hopes and why they are significant.**

Firstly, It is no secret that a large number of small churches passionately hope & pray for the same thing: Growth of congregation. We wish to see our church thrive, to be a place for families to learn & grow in love and fellowship.

Second, we hope to become involved in our community in ways which meaningfully impact the lives of our neighbors. So many churches, including ours, have become insular, unaware of and unchanging in the midst of their rapidly changing surroundings. In this new chapter, we hope to step outside our church walls so that we may outwardly live out our faith as Christ would.

Third, we hope to revitalize the life of the church within our walls, by organizing groups, events, and other practices for our members and visitors to grow in fellowship and in learning. As our church has diminished over the years, we have ceased Bible study, Sunday school, and other similar offerings. We regard a renewal of these programs as crucial to the health of our faith as individuals and as a congregation and we are determined to bring these programs back.

**6) How do you hope someone who visits your church would describe what s/he considers to be most important?**

Primarily, It is our hope that anyone visiting our church would feel welcomed and included by our congregation and staff. Further, we hope that they may feel uplifted and engaged by the service, and that they find the message to be

relatable and applicable to their own lives. It is our aim that, if we receive visitors properly and in the spirit of fellowship, they should feel valued.

**7) Name at least one challenge facing your new pastor.**

The challenge of congregational growth is increasingly present today and we acknowledge the unique and complex dilemma it poses to church leaders. While we possess the resources and the intention needed to achieve our goals, we lack the membership numbers. After years of struggling with this problem we have come to terms with the realities of the possible solutions, as well as the possibility that growth may not be part of God's plan for us. We also want to be very clear in stating that we understand that the burden of this goal cannot be placed solely on a Pastor, and we believe that the task of growth is a responsibility shared by the whole church

Another challenge is that of differing opinions among members regarding the church's future. Many of ours are life-long members and consequently some are resistant to change, whereas others are strongly inclined to adapt and change to assure viability of the church. This is a challenge, but we do believe it can be managed if met with grace, understanding and creative solutions.

A third challenge, which is related to that of church growth, is that of our want to bring in families but that we lack the infrastructure to accommodate them. We recognize that, at present, we have little to offer families who may require a church to have youth programs if they are to join. It is a quandary: We are reluctant to create these programs if they will not be used, but realize that, if they are not offered, no one who may need them will come! We hope to devise and apply different plans with our new pastor to address this.

**8) Describe your vision and hopes for your church and your pastor over the next 5 years.**

Despite the difficulties facing us, it is with optimism and lightness that we hope and dream about the near-future of our church, working with our pastor.

As stated previously, we hope to bring back groups and other services such as: Nursery, Sunday school, Bible study, and book club. Pre-Covid, our music director hosted concerts which filled our sanctuary with people - a gratifying way for us to share our space with others, united in music, and we plan to do many more music events.

Alternative worship excites our leadership. We are intent on expanding upon our traditional Sunday morning worship services with the implementation of non-traditional worship ideas. Our town is home to many beautiful natural offerings (trails, rivers, & parks) which serve as ideal venues for outdoor worship activities, and our fellowship hall is fit to host a worshipping body who may wish to gather over a meal rather than in the pews of our sanctuary. With our location & resources the possibilities are manifold, and it is our intention to explore the future of corporate worship with a newfound openness.

**9) Explain what ever else you would like your potential pastor to know about your church.**

After the challenges of the last few years, we believe in blessing and indeed we see our blessing. We would like to say that our minds and ears are open now more than ever before. Reformed and always reforming, it is with faith & trust that we will receive God's plan for this next chapter of our history. We look forward to meeting you, with whom we will worship the Lord, singing praise and prayer! Glory be to God, and thank you for reading.

Reformed Church in America  
Office of Ministry Services

**Release Statement**

(Full Church Name)

**We, High Bridge Reformed Church, acknowledge that the information in this Church Profile is accurate and complete. We authorize the Office of Ministry Services (OMS) to release this profile to designated recipient(s) seeking positions as ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament, including posting of this profile on the RCA website.**

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Signature of Search Team Chairperson or Designated

Date



