

Church and Community Profile

Central Baptist Church, Victoria, BC

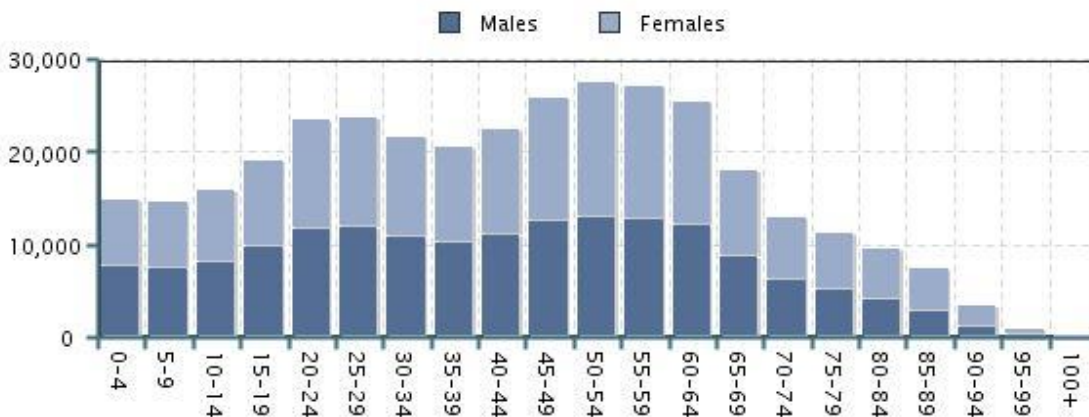
Our Community

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.

It is also one of the oldest cities in the Pacific Northwest with settlement dating as far back as 1843 and is home to two of the most famous landmarks: the Legislative Assembly of BC (1897) and the Fairmont Empress Hotel (1908).¹ The downtown core hosts festivals, fireworks, and parades throughout the year while outlying areas continue to be developed for additional shopping and housing. It is a thriving city.

In terms of demographics, Victoria is known for its disproportionately large retiree population - it has the country’s 3rd-highest concentration of people 65 years and older (18.4%) compared to the national average of 14.8%. A historically popular cliché referred to the city as “newly wed and nearly dead,” but this is changing - nearly 43% of residents are single and the average age of all residents of 42.6 years².

Victoria – Population by five-year age groups and sex³



¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria,_British_Columbia

² https://web.archive.org/web/20110928161624/http://www.victoria.ca/common/pdfs/profiles_neigh_qa.pdf

³ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=935>

Despite Victoria's reputation as a tourist destination, homelessness and panhandling are serious problems in the downtown area, as is "open-air" drug use.⁴ Although Victoria's infamous "Tent City" was recently dismantled⁵, the issue is still of paramount concern for the Victoria police force as well as Central Baptist attendees with 2 of the 3 much-debated "safe-injection" sites located mere blocks from Central⁶.

Central has a unique opportunity to show God's love in our community as we are in the heart of it all.

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 journey⁷, particularly in the downtown core. We have a congregation size of approximately 750 people (approximately 500 people attend the morning service; 352 members) with a healthy mixture of young and old. We have programs for every age category from newborns to seniors. There are thriving junior and senior youth programs, drawing young people from the church and from the community, as well as various Bible studies, a family group, and other community groups.

Central hosts many different events throughout the year to engage with the community including: Serve Our City, Urban Adventures Daycamp, and Fall Festival, as well as partnering with local organizations such as Our Place and Artemis Place to serve our community.

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. For the past year we have been supporting and integrating a refugee family from Sudan into our city. Locally we organize several work trips to Esperanza, serve in two of our local elementary schools, and participate in endeavors like Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes. We are also currently supporting partners in a new church plant.

Central is embarking on a RENEW vision for the next five years - renewing our community through the gospel. Our key objectives are:

- creating a clear pathway for people to learn about the gospel,
- make Central known for seeking the common good of the city,
- utilize current technology to contextualize the gospel for our culture,
- grow our under 40 demographic while engaging and valuing our seniors,
- and multiply gospel centred congregations.

See our web page to download a copy of the [RENEW booklet](http://www.centralbaptistchurch.ca/pages/renew-vision) which outlines this in more detail:
<http://www.centralbaptistchurch.ca/pages/renew-vision>

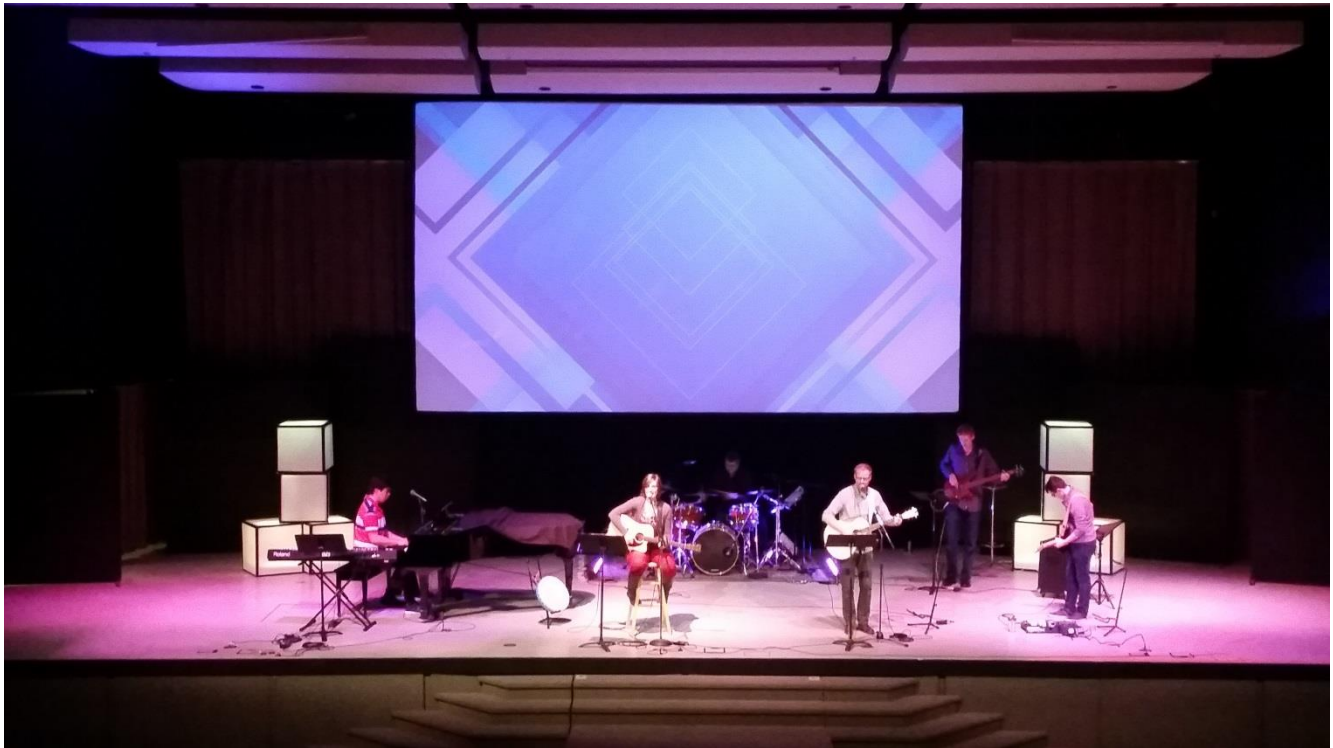
⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria,_British_Columbia

⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/victoria-tent-city-shut-down-year-dismantled-1.3718635>

⁶ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/victoria-fentanyl-overdoses-supervised-consumption-1.3851984>

⁷ <http://www.centralbaptistchurch.ca/about>

Despite our numerous programs targeting various community groups, one community group we know we are weak in is the online community. We recognize that this community is just as important as any other group - it's not limited to any geographical region and is global in nature. We're really excited to see this area grow and mature and have already taken preliminary steps (like a new website, providing HD sermon videos, live service broadcasting, etc), but recognize we really need help branding everything with a professional, artistic eye. It's encouraging to hear reports that people outside of Victoria and missionaries abroad visit our site weekly to view the sermon and listen to the podcasts.



Worship at Central is also a growing area of excitement. We have 4 worship teams on rotation with supporting tech teams, running a new Midas M32 digital sound board and ProPresenter displaying lyrics on a new 24' screen. Utilizing technology is one of the ways we plan to contextualize the gospel for our culture. In the end, it's all about reaching our community for Christ.