

Church Profile



Resurrection Covenant Church (ResCov)

For more information about our church community, see our website, rescov.org

If interested in our Lead Pastor position, please submit a resume and cover letter describing why you feel called to this congregation to search@rescov.org.

Introduction

ResCov is an urban church in Chicago made up of people who care deeply about the church community, growing in their faith, and living it out through ministries to the wider community. We are companions of all who desire to follow Christ and welcome all to participate fully in our life together without limitation, regardless of age, ethnicity, race, national origin, physical or mental ability, economic status, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or station in life. We offer full pastoral care to all, including (but not limited to) prayer, visitation during illness, spiritual counsel, weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

Children are an essential and an active part of the church, including their voices, presence, and participation in worship. Worship and liturgy are greatly valued as is the

weekly celebration of communion. Questions and doubts are a welcome part of the church, and humility and transparency reflected in the pulpit are desired. The church desires to grow and be challenged spiritually especially as we live out our faith in the wider community. We live by “For God’s glory and neighbor’s good.” We desire our lead pastor to love and reflect Jesus, to lead with a strong sense of vision, and to work collaboratively with other staff as well as congregational leadership. We are a church who enjoys worshiping together and fellowshiping with one another as we grow in our faith and service.

The church as it is now

ResCov is a vibrant community on Chicago’s Northside. Our services average around 50 adults and 20-30 children each week. In total, approximately 85 adults and 50 children call our church home. The majority of our members are in their 30s and 40s with elementary aged children. We also have some small pockets of people in their 20s, 50s, 60s, and 70s, and we just graduated our first confirmation class. While the majority of our congregation is married, ResCov has been intentional about naming and welcoming single folks as well (as an example, we call our yearly retreat an “all church retreat” instead of “family camp”), and we have many single members of all ages. The majority of our congregation is white, affluent, and many are highly educated. Our proximity to North Park Theological Seminary means that many seminary students pass through our doors, and many members of our congregation hold seminary degrees or work at North Park.

ResCov values shared leadership. We value the process of making a decision as much as the decision itself. Our leadership team is currently composed of seven women and men who work together with the pastoral staff to help discern the church’s direction and keep it healthy and vibrant. We’ve been blessed with skilled part-time pastoral staff. Our Associate Pastor of Children’s Formation, Kyle Mecher, has been a member of ResCov since 2011, and began serving as the pastor in 2015. Pastor Kyle additionally serves as our sexton and manages the oversight and upkeep of our buildings. Our Associate Pastor of Worship and Creative Arts, David Bjorlin, has been with ResCov since 2009. In October 2023 he announced to our congregation that he will be stepping down from his position once we have called a new lead pastor in order to more fully pursue his vocation as a seminary professor. Our third staff member is Emily Hunt, who works as the Assistant Director of Children’s Formation and the Office Administrator. It is important to us that our next pastor works collaboratively with our staff and is committed to their growth and thriving. Our congregation is very aware that our pastoral leadership is white and male. One of the values expressed by our congregation is that this changes, and it is important that our next pastor share the value of learning from, listening to, and following the leadership of diverse voices.

We hold one weekly service on Sundays. Our worship services follow a more traditional liturgical structure, but with a casual style. We follow the lectionary, use hymnals and bulletins, and observe the Christian calendar and holy days. It is also common for pastors to arrive in jeans and sneakers, and for people to make jokes from the pulpit. We take worship seriously, but do not take ourselves too seriously. Many of our beloved church traditions have developed out of observing the Christian calendar, such as a “Fat Sunday” chocolate feast the week before Lent, and contemplative, candlelit evening services during Advent. The highlight of the year for many in our congregation is Triduum, and in particular our celebration of the Easter Vigil Saturday night. This four-part service is highly creative and participatory, with roles for adults and children alike, and concludes with a dessert feast. In the past we have partnered with two other Covenant churches to combine Triduum services, trading off where the congregations attend Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, with Easter Vigil always held at ResCov. We celebrate the resurrection with a champagne communion on Easter.

Along with traditional liturgy, music is a vital part of our worship. The service may include contemporary songs, hymns, and music from other cultures and languages. We value having children participating in worship. They spend the beginning of the service with us, attend ResCov Kids during the sermon, and return for communion. ResCov’s community life is included in our prayer time, where people openly share announcements about what is going on in the life of the congregation, as well as prayer requests they have for themselves, their community, and our world.

As an artistic congregation, we value creativity and visual arts in the worship service. We value a sermon that is centered in the Word, intellectual while still being practical. At the same time, ResCov has become a place where many who have or are “deconstructing” their faith feel comfortable. Because we believe that we need people of all ethnicities and genders to fully understand the kingdom of God, we are intentional about sharing the pulpit with our congregants and guests. Beyond the sermon, members of the congregation of all ages share leadership throughout the service, whether that be serving on the worship team, reading Scripture, serving communion, or leading the prayers of the people. It is not uncommon to see children of all ages participating in different roles as well: greeting people as they come in the door, playing on the worship team, reading Scripture, and helping at communion.

We have a deep commitment to our children and want church to be a place where they can bring their whole selves. When we asked our children to describe our church, they said that our church is a place where everyone can come, where they get to participate, and where people will listen when they talk.

We are highly engaged in worship on Sunday morning, fellowship, and commitment to our youth. The areas our church is less engaged in are: community outreach, spiritual formation, and shepherding opportunities. We have been a safe place for many who needed to deconstruct their childhood faith, and are in the process of discovering how to reconstruct their faith in healthy ways. We are looking for someone who can help us grow in our spiritual formation in this context.

We have found that one-off opportunities, or monthly or biweekly gatherings, work better than weekly small groups. We've recently re-engaged our Christian formation committee after having it fall by the wayside during COVID, and we are trying out different methods of spiritual formation this fall, including a lectionary Bible study, book club, and "faith in the arts" group. We have a deeply committed prayer group that meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays mornings over Zoom for a time of prayer.

Our longest running ministry is the Warming Center, which began in 2009 and still meets on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Friday of the month. During this time, under-resourced folks in our community are invited to gather for a meal, grab necessary hygiene supplies, find a warm (or cool, in the summer) place to connect, and play a hand (or three) of Uno. A core group of church members run this ministry, with others participating as volunteers on Friday nights, and some preparing the meal in advance on Thursdays. We additionally partner with another local congregation who makes the meal once a month. While our congregation deeply values this ministry and wants it to continue, it can be hard for many to find the time to volunteer, particularly as many of our congregants have small children. That said, not every Warming Center volunteer attends church on Sunday, though we do see them - and the Warming Center guests - as members of our community. Our regular Warming Center guests often say they attend for the community. The need for Warming Center services has recently grown, with an average of 40-50 guests attending each meal, served by 5-6 volunteers.

The primary way we participate with our denomination is through camping ministries. Our children have found Covenant Point Bible Camp and Covenant Harbor to be safe places to explore their faith, for which we give thanks. We have additionally had fruitful partnerships with other local Covenant churches in the past.

The surrounding community

ResCov is located on the north side of Chicago bordering the Lakeview/North Center neighborhoods, just over a mile west of Lake Michigan.

The nearby surrounding area has older homes and growing families comprised of mostly white, upper-middle class people. There are many parks, restaurants, and top-rated schools.

Much of this tight knit congregation live further west in the city but are drawn to ResCov through their relationship with North Park University and Theological Seminary. While our church is embedded in a neighborhood, the majority of our congregation does not live in the neighborhood.

ResCov is a compassionate welcoming community (to all) that lives out God's invitation to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly." (Micah 6:8) This is lived out by the congregation through a Warming Center ministry that serves the local under-resourced population, though many of the guests take public transportation from various places in the city to attend.

The church we wish to see

ResCov strives to be a safe place for congregants and newcomers- those who may fit a certain mold and those who struggle to find their "place." One congregant described it recently as a place that "can feel like an island in a turbulent ocean."

We hope to continue to provide an open and safe environment, while not becoming exclusionary of those who need it the most. We want to find ways to become uncomfortable in areas that we have allowed ourselves to become stagnant.

We hope to continue to nurture our children and youth ministries, but need to prepare for the ways in which our demographics will change over time.

We believe in the theological call to do justice and mercy, and we seek to be a congregation that lives that out in various facets. That said, we also recognize that we are a predominantly white congregation, and some of our members have expressed concern that we value diversity, racial reconciliation, and justice more in word than in practice. Some of our past ways of living out this justice aspect of our faith have included advocating for police accountability, fundraising for greenlining, attending Pride Month celebrations, and supporting refugee families.

We are eager to join in leadership with our lead pastor where together we create a vision for our deep values of service and justice that include not only Sunday mornings but engage us in the larger community.

The lead pastor we are seeking

In listening to our congregation's hopes for our next lead pastor, there have been a few clear themes. We are looking for our next pastor to listen to the needs and desires of the congregation while also discerning along with us, ways we need to be challenged that nurture growth and movement. We are looking for a wise, visionary pastor who loves and reflects God, and who is centered in their beliefs. We want our lead pastor to listen to and recognize the gifts of the congregation while discerning the ever changing needs of the church. We are looking for someone who brings a strong sense of leadership, while also being a personable, authentic member of the community.

We hope our lead pastor will value thoughtfully planned worship, including the liturgy and sermon, and the faith formation of each person and population, including children and the ebb and flow of doubts and questions that come with the spiritual life. We hope that our lead pastor will have a deep value for justice and the role the church has in seeking it out on earth as it is in heaven. This includes the value for racial and economic justice, women in leadership, inclusion and affirmation of the LGBTQ community, more presence and leadership of people of color, and care and advocacy for vulnerable communities. Additionally, we hope our lead pastor will value working as a team member with other staff.

We expect our lead pastor to spend time getting to know the congregation, partnering with us in the ministries of the church, caring for us and leading us. We anticipate that the pastor will spend a good portion of the time planning for worship and working on sermon preparation. We expect our pastor to spend time nurturing the spiritual formation of the church in partnership with the community. We also think it's important that the lead pastor spend time praying and reflecting on developing, casting, and leading a vision for the church.

We hope our lead pastor will approach worship and preaching with a thoughtful manner and a sensitivity toward words and practices that have historically caused harm. In that spirit, we expect the lead pastor to be intentional in considering the language and tone being used in worship and preaching toward fostering what is truly life-giving and healing. We expect our lead pastor to hold in tension valuing and pursuing excellent preaching and, at the same time, not overly elevating the role of the sermon in worship. We also hope that the lead pastor will bring new perspectives and practices in our worship services that point us to God's multi-cultural and multi-faceted reign.

Our hope would be for our next lead pastor to engage pastorally with every person, every group and population of the community. In care for the youngest

members of our community, our lead pastor will be working with Pastor Kyle as he takes the lead in the spiritual care and faith formation of children and youth. Our desire is that our lead pastor would also be open to opportunities to be a pastoral presence to the broader community. Just as Christ had a special eye and relationship with the least in power and in privilege, we expect our lead pastor to reflect that as well in the way the pastor treats and cares for vulnerable communities, including children and our Warming Center guests. It is also important for our lead pastor, working together with the church as a whole, to always be asking, “who is not at the table” or “who are we missing?” The lead pastor, in partnership with the church community, is always seeking to find ways to include all of God’s people into the life of the church and to affirm their worth and belovedness.

Our expectation is that the minister will have basic administrative skills and knowledge to move projects and day-to-day tasks along. Our hope is that our lead pastor is organized and can prioritize their time and talents wisely, delegating certain administrative duties to others who can support the pastor. Our hope would be that this would free up the minister to lead well and clearly in what may be a time of uncertainty and transition.

We hope the pastor will have an expansive view of God’s love and care for all people and will lead and minister in such a way. This means we expect the lead pastor to affirm and celebrate LGBTQ persons, to affirm women in all levels of leadership, to pursue ways the church can advocate for economic and racial justice, and to stand in support and care for immigrants, refugees, the unhoused, among other vulnerable communities. We expect the lead pastor to align with God’s deep care for creation and to encourage the church in ways that God’s people can advocate for policies that care for the earth. Since one of the deep held beliefs of the congregation is the inclusive nature of God’s love, we are welcoming and affirming. We seek a pastor who is also welcoming and affirming and will lead us in our vision to be an affirming congregation in the midst of our differing values in our current denominational affiliation.

History of the church

Resurrection Covenant Church began as a gathering of Scandinavian immigrants in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago who banded together to form the Scandinavian Missionary Society to follow Christ together. In 1897, this small group decided to officially start a church, and the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of Cuyler (Cuyler Covenant) was formed. After moving to its current site on the corner of Byron and Marshfield in 1901, the church began its long and faithful ministry in the Lakeview neighborhood, courageously deciding to stay in the city when many white communities moved to the suburbs in the era of White Flight. With numbers dwindling in

the early 2000s, the congregation made another courageous move and entered into a revitalization process with their denomination, calling two young pastors – Aaron Johnson and Adam Phillips – to lead in 2006. The church was rechristened Resurrection Covenant Church and chose as its guiding vision a saying of their pietist forebears: “for God’s glory and neighbor’s good.” Adam Phillips pastored through 2009, with Aaron Johnson serving as lead pastor until January 2023. In the time since revitalization, Resurrection Covenant Church has since committed itself to the work of mercy and justice, the inclusion of all God’s people, and the worship of the God who welcomes all.

Practical matters

The compensation package has been prepared by the leadership team and includes base salary as well as health, life, and disability benefits provided via the Evangelical Covenant Church (or equivalent costs), PTO, retirement contributions, and paid family leave time. The base salary range for the position is \$70,000-75,000 and can include housing in our three-flat as part of the compensation package if that is desirable, which would then impact the base salary. This is by no means mandatory, but is an option open to candidates. More information will be provided as a candidate moves through the process.

As we are seeking a pastor that challenges and leads our community, we want to encourage that pastor to develop both inside and outside of the church. We will provide time and budget each year for continuing education as well as a sabbatical after five years of ministry. We encourage participation in organizations outside of the church, including meetings within the denomination, non-denominational ministerial groups as well as groups throughout our community, locally, nationally and globally. Additionally, we believe that part of an essential part of the ministry is taking care of one’s self, and therefore want to encourage the use of support systems outside of the church.

We are seeking a full-time position, and in the past that has included the days Tu-Fr, and Sunday. However, with the impending departure of our Pastor of Worship and Creative Arts, we are open to situations where there are co-pastors leading the church.

The church owns three properties, the church itself, a 3 flat directly behind the church, and a single family home across the small parking lot that is rented out to non-members of the church who have been tenants for many years. The main church building includes an office on the same floor as the sanctuary for the lead pastor. The 3-flat consists of three 3-bedroom, 1-bathroom units with shared

laundry and storage in the basement level. These units are currently all occupied by the current part-time members of our staff, Dave Bjorlin, Kyle Mecher (and family) and Emily Hunt. As Dave is stepping away from his position, he will no longer be occupying his unit, and therefore, as mentioned above, it is an option for potential candidates should housing be desirable. The three-flat also includes some parking in the church lot.

In addition to our morning services and hosting the Warming Center in the church basement, our church building is also used by a local Spanish speaking church, Iglesia de Jesucristo Palabra Miel Bethel Chicago who rent the space on Sunday afternoons. Congregants and other area groups are also allowed to rent the space for things like birthday parties or rehearsal space, and in the past folks have also rented our gym.

Being in the Lakeview neighborhood means that there are ample methods of transportation, plenty of attractions, lots of places to eat and shop, and numerous options when it comes to groceries. Below is a list of just some of what the neighborhood has to offer:

Local Grocery Stores

- Trader Joes (0.5 miles)
- Jewel (0.6 miles)
- Paulina Market (0.6 miles)
- Target (0.8 miles)
- Whole Foods (0.9 miles)

Local Schools

- Neighborhood elementary school - Blaine (0.4 miles)
 - Other area elementary schools - Hamilton (0.5 miles), Ravenswood (0.7 miles), Coonley (0.9 miles)
- High School - Lakeview High School (0.2 miles)

Nearby Attractions:

- Mercury Theater (0.5 miles)
- Music Box Theater (0.5 miles)
- Southport Corridor (0.5 miles) (Shopping/Dining)
- Wrigley Field (0.9 miles)
- Wrigleyville (0.9 miles) (Shopping, dining)

- Athenaeum Theater (1.3 miles)
- Lakefront (1.6 miles)

Transportation

- Brown line (0.3 miles)
- Buses: 80 - Irving Park (0.2 miles), 9 - Ashland (0.2 miles), 22 - Clark (0.5 miles)
- Divvy bikes, two stations along Ashland, and one near Irving Park
Brown line

For more information see our website, rescov.org

To email the pastoral search team for more questions or information, contact us here:
search@rescov.org