



Norris Religious Fellowship

Pastoral Search

In things agreed upon unity,
In other things liberty,
In all things the will to be one.

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Norris, TN 37828
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Search Committee Profile

Search Committee Chairperson:	Emily Ott
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Church Affiliation:	International Council of Community Churches (ICCC)
Date position is available:	May 2020
Reason for pastoral vacancy:	Resignation of previous minister of 2 years

Who We Are

The Norris Religious Fellowship is an interdenominational community church which has grown from the desire of people with varied religious backgrounds to share experiences and to search together for spiritual enrichment. Its idea is not to bind by creed but to weld through love of God and love of fellow man. In the spirit of the earliest Christian church it has sought to serve God through serving the wide town and country community of which it is a part. It seeks to provide an opportunity for spiritual growth through a deeper appreciation of the Christian heritage and an understanding of the insights of the world's great religious faiths. Its membership is open to all. In the spirit of Jesus, our church continues to build, hoping that those who join with us will find their burdens shared and their joys multiplied.

We are a non-creedal church though we are composed of a number of individuals who come to us from creedal churches. We are a member of the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC). We are a church that not only accepts and tolerates differences but encourages this diverse group to come together. It is an incredible mix. Through the years the Fellowship has continued to attract members and ministers from a variety of geographical and religious backgrounds. While remaining free of denominational ties, the Fellowship seeks cooperation with other denominational groups, several of which have established churches in Norris since the founding of the Fellowship. We actively participate in an ecumenical Good Friday service, Easter sunrise service and Thanksgiving service.

At the Norris Religious Fellowship, we are firmly committed to benevolence giving and designate 10% of our budget to this cause. We pick from a broad range of opportunities: local, regional, national, and international. The idea of service, giving and ministry in

mission is a strong belief of our Fellowship. We strongly believe that we are the hands of God in the world and take this responsibility seriously.

Brief History of the Church

The town of Norris, population 1,900, was started in 1933 by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to house workers and management personnel brought in to begin its first project, the Norris Dam. The layout of the town was designed around the concept of a quaint English village, with streets and home arranged around a central green commons. A small shopping area, with post office, is still in existence, along with four other denominational churches. As families began to move to Norris, the need for a formal religious organization arose. Answers to a questionnaire indicate that more than 200 Norris residents preferred a cooperative type religious program. Only two opposed it. What we now know as the Fellowship was started as a community church in October, 1934.

In late 1944 or early 1945, the Fellowship paid TVA \$20 for an old fire hall on West Norris Road. The Fellowship spent \$379.59 more to put the little building in good, attractive condition. It was loaded on a truck and moved to where it now stands. It was called Fellowship House, the name is still retained today, as it serves as the office of the minister of the church. Between 1951 and 1959, construction was done on what is now the church building with a fellowship hall, Sunday school rooms, sanctuary, and basement with additional Sunday school rooms. The building was constructed almost entirely by members of the Fellowship. The first worship service was held in the new sanctuary in July, 1959. A variety of renovations have been done on the building since 1959, including the addition of a commercial kitchen.

Church and Community Information

I. Church

The church is centrally located in the city. The area around the church out to a radius of about one mile consists mostly of housing. There is a cluster of small businesses, elementary and middle schools, library, city office and community activity building, and police and fire stations. There are also four other churches in the city, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, and Catholic.

Norris Religious Fellowship has at present approximately 50 active members, plus a number of non-member friends that participate in activities on a regular basis. About 50-60% of our members are of retirement age. The Fellowship complex includes a sanctuary which seats 250, an educational building with a commercial

kitchen, a fellowship hall, a library and Sunday school rooms. A separate building serves as the minister's office/study. Additionally, a five-bedroom parsonage is located a few blocks from the church. All properties are debt free. The Fellowship staff includes a part time secretary and custodian.

In addition to Sunday worship service, the Fellowship offers Sunday school to children, a Taize meditative service, active Women's and Men's groups, a food drive at Christmas for needy families, a spring plant sale, and our annual Harvest Bazaar, one of the oldest in the state. Sunday services are broadcast live via the NRF website and archived on YouTube. Our youth of the church previously participated in a Ecumenical Youth Group with three other area churches. We are a friendly, welcoming congregation with a history of community involvement and a strong future for growth and service.

II. Norris Community

The population of Norris is approximately 1,900 people and remains about the same year to year even though the number of houses has increased. This is due to the fact that about 40% of the population is retired and family sizes are smaller. The median income per household in Norris is approximately \$62,000, and the current average household income is \$75,000. The education level of the Norris population 25 years old or older is high school 92.5% and 47.1% have college degrees. The ethnicity of the population of the city is approximately 97.8% caucasian and the number of people aged 25 to 85 is about 1,450 with a median age of 49.7 years. Currently about 61% of the housing units in the area are owner occupied, 26.9% renter occupied and 12% are vacant.

Norris was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1975 and has been named a "Tree City USA" for many years. It is located in East Tennessee near Knoxville and Oak Ridge, and provides quality medical services, educational opportunities and police/fire protection. Nearby Norris Lake boasts championship fishing, and our area museums, including the Museum of Appalachia, are nationally renowned. We have easy access to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and a selection of state parks.

Qualities Desired in a New Pastor

Our minister must be ordained as a graduate from an accredited divinity school, have ministerial experience, and must be comfortable with a moderate-to-liberal theology. We seek an open-minded, non-judgmental spiritual leader, counselor and

guide, with strong moral and religious commitments, demonstrated leadership skills, an ability to inspire and teach through engaging and relevant sermons, and a passion for counselling the ill and grieving. We expect our minister to take an active role in revitalizing both our membership and our religious education program. Our membership has declined over the past few years over disagreements arising from previous pastoral leadership. The minister must recognize the special interdenominational outlook of the church. The minister must be willing to relocate to Norris, TN.

Compensation

Compensation will be commensurate with education and experience. A five bedroom parsonage located a few blocks away is available. The compensation package, in addition to the parsonage and utilities, includes moving expenses, an allowance for health insurance, conference travel, vacation time and a retirement plan.

Websites

Norris Religious Fellowship:	www.norrisrf.org
ICCC:	www.icccusa.com
Norris, TN	www.cityofnorris.com
Anderson County, TN:	www.andersontn.org