

Opportunity Snapshot

Albert City Evangelical Free Church
Albert City, Iowa

Pastor Profile

He should be old enough and mature enough to biblically qualify as an elder.

Ideally he should possess the MDiv degree.

He must be ordained by the EFCA or be willing to be ordained by the EFCA.

We are looking for a married man.

He should have at least one church ministry experience as pastor/associate/or youth pastor. Other “real world” work experience (business, industry, education, government, military) would be a plus.

He should be gifted as an expository preacher, teaching the Bible passage-by-passage by explaining the overarching big idea and applying it.

He should fully subscribe to every plank of our doctrinal statement, which is also the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

He should be committed to our mission of making disciples and be able to inspire our church to reach our community.

He should be the leader of leaders, yet be a team player, understanding that submission and accountability to others is part of serving and leading people.

He should be a visionary who can inspire us to fulfill our mission.

His focus will be on preaching/teaching, discipleship, evangelism, young families, and missions.

History

Albert City Evangelical Free Church (ACEFC) is an [EFCA](#) church that began in 1894 as the Swedish Free Mission, one of the original 27 Swedish Free Churches. The town motto is “How Swede It Is.” Many current members trace their lineage to charter members of the church. We have built three sanctuaries, hosted the national conference in 1933 and a [Central District](#) conference. ACEFC loves missions (50% of receipts in 1968 according to the centennial book and perhaps 45% of all our current giving—both internal and external—supports missions).

It has been exciting to see our church move away from a “fortress mentality” (us against the world) to an outreach focus. We started a [MOPS](#) (Mothers of Preschool Children) ministry that attracts women from ten outlying communities. We now offer translation into Spanish language for the Hispanic families in our community. We started a Wednesday night meal to attract unchurched children to Adventure Club. We offer two adult Sunday School classes and eight small groups, which we call Home Bible Fellowships. We started an annual four-wheeling trip to South Dakota in which we invite unchurched men to come explore and camp with us. We hosted a Wild Game Feed and shooting competition. We recently released one of our elders, Dave Olson, to replant a church in Sioux Rapids, a town of 776. That town once had 6 churches, but now only three exist. Dave’s church is the biggest in that town. We hope to see more church growth by planting other churches and by growing internally.

Our church is the biggest in Albert City, attracting many younger families. The Lutheran church runs about 80 and the Evangelical Covenant Church about 50. We averaged 145 in average attendance in the 1990’s, 179 in the 2000’s, 170 in the years since 2010. The high point was 2005, with an average attendance of 190. The church grew significantly and immediately under Pastor Steve Smith, but attendance declined in the

last few years, perhaps because of church conflict over the two congregational votes on the building program. In an attempt to create more worship, lobby, and educational space, the building committee proposed using Brown Church Development to be our contractor. The congregation has authorized the building committee to proceed when we have 2/3 of the cost in hand.

A church's health can be measured, not just by how many people come, but by how many are sent out. We have sent out numerous missionaries and pastors. One of our current members, Ken DeYoung, started [GoServ Global](#), ministering in Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, Uganda, and performing disaster relief throughout the Midwest. Darwin Anderson grew up in ACEFC to become president of [International Messengers](#), offering many English language outreach camps in the Middle East and in former Communist countries. Another former member, Ken Anderson, was a pioneer in Christian film. He discovered and directed Liam Neeson in "Pilgrim's Progress." Jim Forstrom grew up in ACEFC and became the associate executive director for ReachGlobal, the EFCA mission. We have so much to celebrate as we approach our church's sesquicentennial year (125th anniversary). God has blessed us richly.

Our previous pastor, Steve Smith, served 21 years. He felt God's call to a church in Des Moines, Iowa and did not leave under duress or compulsion. He was dearly loved and greatly gifted as a preacher. The board called Dr. Woody Woodward of Interim Pastor Ministries to bridge the gap and lead the church through a process of analyzing the ministries and pointing the church forward.

Our church mission is grounded on the Great Commission to make disciples—"To Know Christ and Make Him Known."

Findings of Assessment Tools

Demographic Reports

The following information comes from the Executive Insite Report we commissioned in 2012, based on a 10-mile radius around the church.

The population in this area was 3762.

The ethnic mix was 96.7% white, 2% Hispanic, .3% Asian, .2% black, .8% other.

The average age was 44.1.

The per capita income was \$21,500 and expected to climb to \$23,600 by 2016.

The top 5 mosaics, or geo-demographic segmentation, of the area were 43.1% America's Farmlands, 14% Steadfast Conservatives, 11.1% Comfy Country Living, 9.2% Rugged Rural Style, and 7.8% Family Convenience.

Church Effectiveness Survey Results

This is a stable church. Many of the members are long-term members and long-term believers. We have a healthy mix of generations and of long-term v. newcomers.

This is an educated church, with a higher than average percentage of people who have earned some college credits or who have a college degree.

This is a church that is strong financially. Our church is very committed to giving to missions and going on short term missions. Our church gave 25.29% of its receipts in 2017 to missions and people indicated in the survey they gave an additional 5.2% of their incomes outside of the church budgets.

The average driving distance to the church is 10.3 minutes, compared to a national norm of 13.3 minutes, but our drives times are all highway miles. 26% of our people drive 20-45 minutes. Fully half the names on our roster do not have an Albert City address. We draw people with addresses in the areas (but not necessarily inside the towns) of Varina, Marathon, Laurens, Rolfe, Linn Grove, Pocahontas, Newell, Sac City, Havelock, Storm Lake, Curlew, Plover, and Sioux Rapids.

Our church has a very strong attendance rate, but we need to work harder on attracting and assimilating new people.

More About Our Church

ACEFC is blessed with an abundance of godly and strong leaders. Every farmer is a CEO. Classicist Victor Davis Hanson says, "To walk into a room of farmers is to see some of the most rough-looking yet highly intelligent citizens in America." Farmers value independence. They are often expert on a host of issues including construction, mechanics, meteorology, commodities markets, and animal and plant science. They often make decisions intuitively and quickly. Each day begins with a plan, but changes as soon as livestock gets sick or the weather changes. This shapes the type of leader in rural churches. The unpredictability of rural life is an incentive for people to look to God for security.

Rural churches offer significant opportunities for leaders who place high value on building disciple-making relationships because rural churches know people well. People in country churches often value strong and stable friendships. Redemptive friendships have time to bear spiritual fruit. There is great potential for making servant-leaders in the rural church.

The dominant occupation is farming. Others are employed in agribusiness, education, insurance, nursing, financial planning, trucking, construction, banking, and auto sales and service.

We possess excellent leaders at all life stages. The previous pastor, Steve Smith, did excellent work in training future leaders through the Timothy Team training. ACEFC parents have disciplined their children well to love God and serve Him. Part of the reason that rural churches have strong leaders is that farmers tend to be strong leaders.

Church leaders who are adequately prepared for success in rural ministry are also uniquely equipped to address the mission needs of many of the major urban centers of the world. Contrary to Western assumptions, most of the great cities of the world do not reflect the socio-cultural patterns of the great cities of the West. Conspicuously absent are the expansive, affluent suburbs found in American cities. Global megacities are often composed of hundreds of thousands of rural people groups that have invaded the cities and continue to preserve their rural/agrarian cultural values and behaviors. Curiously, in order to effectively reach the largest cities of the world, we must mobilize a new generation of leaders who understand rural.

You will be assisted by Associate Pastor Steve Stepec, who oversees worship and youth ministries. Steve grew up in Duluth, Minnesota and graduated from the University of Northwestern in St. Paul in 2002 with his Bachelor's in Youth Ministry and Bible. Before coming here, he spent eight years as Pastor of Youth and Worship in Marshalltown, Iowa and before that he was full-time program director at Lake Ellen Camp in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Steve met his wife Amy as summer staff at Trout Lake Camp in northern Minnesota and they married in 2002. They have four children, Jack, Henry, Evelyn, and Lucy. A brief word about Steve's two responsibilities: Our worship is blended toward contemporary. We use piano, keyboard, guitar, bass, and drums. We average about 6 students in Senior High and 9 in Junior High ministry. Our youth are very active in attending EFCA youth retreats and summer camps.

The church owns a spacious two-story, 4 bedroom/2 bath parsonage with a full basement and a huge lot that includes a playground with swings and slides. The church provides lawn care. The house has lots of character with woodwork, wood flooring, a window box seat, and a sunroom. The basement leaks a bit, so the previous pastor used it for storage, the laundry room, and as a play room and workout room. The parsonage is adjacent to the church. Tough commute! If you fear you might miss out on real estate appreciation, buy one of the local homes and become a landlord. Why do we keep a parsonage? Anytime a new pastor might move into our community, the limited real estate market might not provide a suitable house. With this charming home, we will always have a wonderful, utility-free, hassle-free home for our pastor.

ACEFC is a generous church. We compensate our pastors well.

We have a strong children's ministry.

We are very missions minded, not only launching career missionaries, but also sending 3-5 short term teams out every year.

You should also consider us because we are part of the Central District of the EFCA. Our district offers quality youth retreats and leadership events at an amazing facility called Hidden Acres, men's and women's ministries, care and counsel for pastors and churches, credentialing pathways for pastors, healthy church networks and church health development, intentional church planting, retreat and camping ministries, church building help (Solid Rock Builders), pastor placement for churches and pastors, and ministry expansion loans. The District owns a beautiful retreat house, Rock River Retreat, for use by our pastors and their families and staff. Pastors and wives also enjoy a fall retreat.

Life in Albert City

A good place to learn about our town is on the [Albert City Chamber](#) website.

Albert City is home to an annual antique farm show called [Albert City Threshermen and Collectors Show](#), dedicated to the preservation and display of agricultural and pioneer equipment. Last year 18,000 people came. This event was started by two of ACEFC's own: Karl Lind and Keith Sundblad. It meets the second full weekend in August. Albert City is home to many agricultural innovators, including Ed Sundholm, a grease gun manufacturer and the [Thieman](#) Harvester Company. That can-do, Yankee ingenuity is still present here.

The three churches in town cooperate in several joint services: [Sioux Central High School](#) Baccalaureate, Memorial Day service at Fairfield Township cemetery, Holy Week (Sunday & Monday

evening), Summerfest (Albert City's Swedish festival which happens near summer solstice), and Threshermen's.

The school system is called Albert City/Truesdale. The elementary school is excellent and is located in Albert City. Three of the eight teachers of K-6 grades attend ACEFC, as well as the art teacher and computer teacher. The Junior High and [Sioux Central High School](#) are in Sioux Rapids, which is 22 minutes northwest of us. [U. S. News & World Report](#) ranked Sioux Central as 24th in the state of Iowa and awarded the school a bronze star nationally, based on their performance on state-required tests and how well they prepare students for college. With 207 students, your children will have the opportunity to engage in a host of clubs, sports, drama, music, and academic competition. If your kids are ambitious, they can take college credit courses through the local high school and enter college with a year's worth of college credits. The school's athletic director attends our church. Most of our people send their kids to public schools, either Albert City/Truesdale, Newell or Pocahontas. About three ACEFC families home school.

Major employers in Albert City are [Ag Partners](#) (the grain elevator), the [Valero Albert City Ethanol Plant](#), and Albert City/Truesdale Elementary School. Pleasant View Nursing home was rated one of the top 100 in the nation. Other businesses include a florist, auto mechanic, hardware store, RV park, welding shop, bank, library, hair salon/fitness center with FIR sauna and tanning booths, antique store, Cenex gas station/convenience store, and the Straw Horse (a store for all things Swedish). We also have a local ministry to local indigent folks called Helping Hands, which is run by the Pentecostal Church in Marathon, Iowa. We have a historical museum with seven buildings that rivals the best in the state.

In Albert City (population 700), you will have the opportunity to affect an entire town and a great portion of the county. You'll be reminded of the lyrics to the TV sitcom Cheers, "Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came." You can become the chaplain of the local volunteer fire department, a mentor to unchurched youth, play in the Albert City symphonic band, or serve as an assistant coach in a youth league or at the Junior High or Senior High school.

We have no grocery store, but Storm Lake's Hy-Vee grocery store will deliver to Albert City. We have a local farmer's market on Thursdays. The Cenex gas station and convenience store makes fresh pizzas, burgers, and tacos. Oversize Load BarBQ (by Texas native and BarBQ competition winner Fred Neville) serves "Q" on Thursdays. The nearest true restaurants are in Laurens, Iowa (12 minutes northeast): Pizza Ranch, The Teapot Café, and the Lauren's grocery store deli. Storm Lake is 30 minutes away and has restaurants too numerous to mention, including about six Mexican, three Chinese, and one Thai. Storm Lake is also home to [Buena Vista University](#) (Presbyterian), several grocery stores, a movie theater (3 screens), Super Wal-Mart, clothing stores, and a hospital. For some medical issues, many people use the hospital centers in Sioux City (1:50), Sioux Falls (2:40), Omaha (2:30), Des Moines (2:30), and the world-renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota (3:40). The nearest airports are also found in Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Omaha, and Des Moines. Fort Dodge Iowa (0:58) has a cheap regional carrier, Air Choice One, that flies to St. Louis, Chicago, and Minneapolis.

The nearest mall is in Spencer, Iowa, 45 minutes northwest. Spencer is home of the legendary [Clay County Fair](#). A bigger mall is found in Sioux City.

Fun things to do in the area are water sports (Storm Lake, Lake Okoboji), tubing and kayaking on the local rivers, hunting (pheasant, deer, dove, turkey), fishing, four-wheeling, and snowmobiling. Albert City has two baseball fields and a running track and soccer field. Youth sports in the area include swimming, baseball, and soccer. Storm Lake has a water park. Alta, Iowa is 25 miles west of us and has an excellent community theater.

People in this part of the country will drive an hour to shop or church, to commute to work or eat out, and two or more hours to go play. For those who enjoy NCAA competition, we are 2 hours to Ames, home of Iowa State, and 2.5 hours to Des Moines, home of Drake and the prestigious Drake Relays, and 4 hours to Iowa City, home of the University of Iowa.

Why Should I Come Here?

Why would someone come to rural Northwest Iowa?

- Quality of life.
- Great people.
- The Milky Way. You can't believe how bright it is here.
- A slower pace.
- Four season climate.
- Family friendly.
- Great schools.
- A place to find lifelong friends.
- A great place to make world changers.
- We offer Green Acres...the place to be. Is this heaven?...No, it's Iowa.

Why come to pastor ACEFC?

- We are a healthy church.
- Historic legacy.
- Strong missions' focus.
- We love the Word of God.
- We are open to trying new things, especially if it involves outreach.

What next? How do I apply?

Send us your resume. If we advance your application, you will go to the portal the EFCA and our Central District use to evaluate candidates, <https://ministerconnection.net>, and click on the button "Candidates." Take the tour to see how it works. Remember, we are part of the Central District, and our gatekeeper is District Superintendent Cal Swan. Fill in your name. We will give you the password so that there is no cost to you.

If you make our short list, we will conduct a criminal background check, a credit check, reference checks, verify education and employment history, and conduct a personality profile. Of course, we will protect the confidentiality of your search so as not to jeopardize your current ministry.

Statement of Faith of the EFCA

God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory. *Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 3:14; Matthew 28:19*

The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises. *II Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:20-21*

The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed. *Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 3:6-7; Romans 15:12-14*

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate. *Matthew 1:18; John 1:1-4, 14-18; Philippians 2:5-8; John 19:16-22; Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 4:14-15*

The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation. *1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:18-19; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 15:20-21*

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service. *Romans 16:8; John 3:5-8; 1 Corinthians 2:13; John 16:12-13; Acts 1:8*

The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these

ordinances confirm and nourish the believer. *Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:18, 24; Matthew 28:18-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed. *Matthew 22:37-39; James 1:27; Ephesians 6:10-20; Matthew 23:18-20*

Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission. *Matthew 24:35-42; John 14:1-3*

Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen. *1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Revelations 20:1-6, 11-15*

Distinctives of the EFCA

The Evangelical Free Church of America is a believers' church—membership consists of those who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

The great heritage of EFCA people around the world includes the fact that fellowship and ministry opportunities in the local church are based solely on one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and trusting in Him alone for salvation. Membership requires commitment to sound doctrine as expressed in our Statement of Faith. However, a person is not excluded from membership because he or she does not agree on every fine point of doctrine. Within the EFCA, there is allowance for legitimate differences of understanding in some areas of doctrine.

The Evangelical Free Church of America is evangelical—we are committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible and the essentials of the gospel.

The EFCA was born out of a heritage of commitment to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. We have deep convictions based on the authority of God's Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatists.

The Evangelical Free Church of America embraces a humble orthodoxy in partnership with others of like faith.

We believe in the spiritual unity of the Church though not necessarily in structural union. We join with other Christians and other denominations of like, precious faith in common goals and ministries to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. But we believe that there is strength in diversity and that it is important to preserve our distinctives. We recognize that union in structure does not guarantee unity of spirit. Our foremost concern is unity of spirit with our Lord, with each other and with other Christians.

The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in Christian freedom with responsibility and accountability.

We believe in Christian liberty, but freedom always has its limitations. Responsible Christians do not abuse freedom. The apostle Paul wrote forcefully about Christian liberty in the Book of Galatians. He shattered the legalists with the doctrine of grace. But in First and Second Corinthians and Romans, the apostle also rebuked believers when liberty was abused. He declared boldly the principles of Christian liberty, but spoke with equal forcefulness about Christian accountability. The EFCA desires to preserve our freedom in Christ. We encourage our people to be responsible, godly men, women and young people who desire to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the principles and precepts of God's Word, and in harmony with God's will for life as revealed in the Scriptures.

The Evangelical Free Church of America believes in both the rational and relational, i.e. the head and the heart, dimensions of Christianity.

We believe the Scriptures must be applied to our individual lives with warmth of heart, warmth of message and warmth of concern. We believe it is essential to have solid, biblical content in our doctrinal understanding of faith, but it is equally important to have a dynamic, vital relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sound Christian doctrine must be coupled with dynamic Christian experience. Ours is a ministry of love and spiritual reconciliation.

The Evangelical Free Church of America affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs with a spirit of interdependency with other churches.

The EFCA is committed to a congregational form of government as stated in our Articles of Incorporation: "The Evangelical Free Church of America shall be an association and fellowship of autonomous but interdependent congregations of like faith and congregational government..." Strong pastoral leadership coupled with discerning and well-equipped Christian lay people can produce spiritual growth as well as significant church growth. While the EFCA affirms the right of each local church to govern its own affairs, we also believe in the biblical values of interdependence and cooperation.

We are a movement of churches committed to working with one another in order to fulfill the Great Commission in the United States and abroad. This is only possible when there are strong ties with other EFCA churches, with local district organizations and with the national EFCA ministries.