

THE LA PAZ COMMUNITY CHURCH

HISTORY:

La Paz Community Church traces its roots back to the 1930s when a small group of English-speaking Christians met periodically for worship. Missionaries and lay people led services. The church officially organized October 29, 1944. The church community met in borrowed and rented locations. Over the years, it grew, and through diligent work and sacrificial giving, the early members purchased property in the Calacoto neighborhood and constructed the beautiful church facility we enjoy now.

Our current facility, the La Paz Community Church and International Center, was dedicated in 1980. We are blessed to have a beautiful sanctuary and excellent classroom space. Thanks to the dedication of many church members and the goodness of God, the church is debt-free.

Our facility is used first and primarily for the ministries of the church, but is also available and usage encouraged for other cultural and community activities that may be desired by the English speaking community in La Paz.

MISSION:

We exist with a clearly defined mission, to reach the English-speaking community in La Paz. This doesn't mean that we don't care about the Spanish-speaking community or see ourselves as separate from the broader fellowship of believers in La Paz. We are a part of God's Kingdom here and want to work hand in hand with all believers and churches, but we have by design and purpose, limited our own ministerial involvement to a select-targeted group of people. Over the years, there have been some who have thought we should and tried to direct the church into being a bi-lingual congregation with services in both English and Spanish. We would like applicants to understand that this is not our desire or mission. We want to stay focused on our target congregation and develop programs and ministries geared to the needs of the English-speaking people in La Paz. The incoming pastor needs to be aware of our mission and be willing to work with the congregation, not bringing their own agenda that differs from our historical and current reason for existence.

OUR ADHERENTS:

The English language is the common factor among those who attend our church. We draw people from many different backgrounds and countries. There are those who attend from the English-speaking institutes and schools, ambassadors and workers from various embassies, people who have established business in La Paz, Bolivians, who for various reasons, want to worship in English and others from diverse backgrounds and reasons that have brought them to Bolivia. On any given Sunday, there will be people attending the church from various countries and many different denominational backgrounds, including both Catholic and Protestant worshipers, though most are from Protestant backgrounds. The majority of attendants would come from an evangelical persuasion though there are those attending who come from Sacramental theological backgrounds as well.

The congregation has a solid core of people who live in La Paz and give the church consistency. There are many others who, because of the nature of their assignments by government, business or mission-sending agencies, are often here for only short periods of time. Thus, the congregation has a certain fluid feel with people coming and going.

The attendance over a period of time can vary greatly. As people come and go due to their various reasons for being in La Paz, there may be times when more people are here with a desire to be involved in a church, resulting in a larger attendance, and times when the opposite is true, resulting in smaller numbers in attendance. The attendance at the church can vary from 20 to 50 or more at any given period of time. The attendance patterns are not as predictable as is true for churches located in communities where people live for long periods of time and remain committed to one church for many years.

THE PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH:

The leadership of the LPCC tries to be sensitive to what is needed in the life of the congregation at any given time. Programs may need to be developed, executed, evaluated, changed or dropped, depending on the consistency of the congregation. Programs need to be developed that meet this ever changing nature of the congregation. The pastor needs to be able to flow with this dynamic and not be frustrated by this type of changing dynamic.

DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES:

Because English is the common factor for people coming to the LPCC, we will on any given Sunday have people from many different theological backgrounds, bringing with them their own traditions, practices and styles of worship. There will be those who are very reserved in their style and practice of worship and those who can and like to be more expressive in worship form. The order of service is often varied from Sunday to Sunday. While most Sundays the service is more liturgical in nature, there may be other Sundays when the service excludes these worship aids and takes on a very free type of worship expression. On most Sundays, we sing mostly traditional hymns. On a rare occasion, we may have a worship team that leads us in some more contemporary choruses and worship songs. There is a deliberate attempt at doing things in various ways to reach the needs and desires of all reflected in the diverse backgrounds in theology and worship styles. The pastor must understand this dynamic and be able to fit into this milieu and mixture of worship style.

We do not want a pastor who comes with the desire to make everyone fit one style of worship and promote and encourage only the style of worship that reflects his denominational or personal methodology in worship. Flexibility and adaptability are needed in this type of congregation. Also, the pastor must be willing to put aside denominational and theological distinctions and uniqueness and major in ministry on those Biblical issues and truths that are core to our Christian faith and are bigger and deeper than denominational and theological distinctives. The preaching must not reflect solely either Reformed or Methodist doctrine, or Lutheran or Pentecostal expressions of faith for example, but deal with the core issues of faith as expressed in the historical creeds of Christendom. The pastor must understand and be sensitive to interdenominational ministry modules and be able to relate with ease cross-denominationally and with cultural sensitivity.

THE CITY OF LA PAZ:

The city of La Paz is a modern city of about a million people, located high in the Andes, at about 11,000 to 12,000 feet in altitude. A connecting area called "El Alto" has approximately another million people, meaning one lives in a people base of about two million people. Some people have some problems initially with adapting to the high altitude.

You have access to most everything you would need in La Paz, adequate and good shopping, both in modern malls and/or street markets. There is adequate medical and dental care available at a very reason rate, at least when compared to costs in the United States.

LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS:

The LPCC is located in the Southern Zone of the city, a more affluent area of La Paz and within walking distance to a large modern mall.

The church and parsonage are located in one complex, the parsonage being only a few yards from the church. The parsonage is a very adequate home, four bedrooms, three baths, two stories with many windows and good lighting from the sun. There is a pastor's office in both the parsonage and the church.

SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN:

There are two English-speaking private schools in La Paz, both good sized, progressive and adequate for the pastor's children's education. These are private and require a paid tuition. Several of the teachers from these schools have [and some still do] attend the church. They are accredited and transferable to American universities.

SALARY:

The congregation is not large and finances are limited. We have the ability to pay a pastor a monthly salary of \$1,000.00 US in addition to providing the parsonage, paying the utilities, providing a phone, etc.

This amount is adequate for a couple and provides a good and comfortable living on Bolivian standards. The problem comes in with a family with children. That amount would not be adequate if tuition had to be paid for children in one of the private schools. If there are children involved, consideration may be given to raising some private support from friends, family and home churches to supplement the salary given by the church to cover the educational costs involved in private schooling or consideration given to home schooling.

JOB PROFILE:

The expectations of the pastor's role are consistent with what is expected with any lead pastor. To lead in worship, preach, teach, give administrative guidance and help set vision for the church, visiting and counseling. Being pastor of a church with the uniqueness of this type of church often demands the ability to make change and be flexible in ministry expectations, though by and large, the role reflects what is generally expected from any pastoral assignment. Exact expectations will be negotiated and agreed upon by the search committee and the perspective pastor when that time comes.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND POLICY:

LPCC is congregational in its governmental process, electing a Board from the congregation who is responsible for the policy directions and the general administration of the life of the church. This elected body holds the final authority for the decision-making process of the church. The pastor is expected to work with and be a part of this body, not to exercise authority "over them" but to work "with them". Basically, the church views the role of pastor and Board as a working relationship when they work "hand in hand" together in governing the church. The pastor is not viewed as having sole authority to act without consulting the Board on issues of importance to the life of the church. The Board meets monthly with extra meetings called if necessary.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

What is shared above is not inclusive, but does give a reasonable overview of the life and operation of the Church here in La Paz. It is shared with you so you have a better idea of what is going to be expected if you desire to be the pastor of LPCC. We would like you to give this your prayerful consideration and reflection.

Having had time to ponder and pray, if you feel what is shared above is not consistent with your comfort levels and philosophy of ministry, we would appreciate you letting us know that you would like your name withdrawn from the pool of perspective candidates for this position. We want to thank you for your honesty in not pursuing a position that would not fit you and your presence thus becoming problematic to the church.

On the other hand, if what is shared above fits into your comfort zone and you feel this is something, under God's direction, that you would like to pursue further, we would be honored to keep you in the evaluative process. Letting your name remain in this process assumes your understanding of our needs and your willingness to fit into the concepts shared above.

We anticipate keeping applications open for through the month of September, and then begin the selection process, hopefully completing that process in December and having the new pastor in place by January of 2018. Please send CVs to maria.inarra@acslp.org and gaila.chambi@acslp.org

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely

The Search Committee