



church profile

IRON WORKS CHURCH

PHOENIXVILLE, PA

PREACH CHRIST
LOVE ONE ANOTHER
SERVE THE CITY
PLANT CHURCHES





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What is Iron Works Church all about?

Iron Works Church was founded in 2007 when three Phoenixville families found they were each praying for a church plant that would relentlessly embrace orthodoxy and be an open door for anyone investigating Christian faith. Services began in 2011. More than a decade later, what was once a scrappy little church plant gathering in a conference room is now by the grace of God a thriving, deeply connected community steadfastly pursuing its mission to **preach Christ, love one another, serve our city, and plant churches.**





who we are

— ORTHODOX

Iron Works unashamedly embraces historic Christian teaching in all of its fullness, depth, and complexity. We seek to sing, pray, and teach the doctrines of Reformed Christianity clearly, reverently, and joyfully. We believe a proper grasp of the gospel avoids legalism and license, moralism and pragmatism. But we don't take ourselves too seriously: We balance reverence for Christ with humor and levity because we know that even when we earnestly try our best, we will still mess up. We gratefully embrace the grace God gives us for those times, laugh at ourselves, and try again.

— HOSPITABLE

We desire to be hospitable to all people, no matter where they are along the spectrum of belief—convinced, perplexed, or skeptical. We welcome the questions, objections, and problems of thoughtful people and are committed to responding with honesty and intelligence, not hostility. We recognize that people in our Sunday services have doubts and even skepticism toward organized religion.

— AN UNCOMMON COMMUNITY

Iron Works is a community of very different people united by our need for the saving work of Christ. Though we come from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, we bear one another's burdens, physically and spiritually. We know we don't have it all together, and we don't expect each other to, either. Having put away falsehood, we are able to speak the truth in love to one another with grace. This authentic community is a part of everything that happens at Iron Works.

— CHURCH PLANTERS

Iron Works is committed to planting healthy churches both here and around the world. We replanted a now-thriving local church in 2017 and are seeking to discern whether God is calling us to plant a Spanish-speaking church nearby. We are committed to setting aside 10% of general fund offerings for future church plants. Globally, we partner with an organization to plant churches among unreached people groups in India.

— DEPENDENT ON THE LORD IN PRAYER

Prayer permeates the culture of this church—from regular corporate prayer gatherings, to home groups, to friendships. We know that we are utterly dependent on the power of God to move forward, that he is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. We pray together as a church for everything from effective outreach to provision of a drummer for our music team.

— PURSUING EXCELLENCE

Iron Works believes our mission is worthy of the best we have. We relentlessly seek improvement, refinement, and innovation in the way we fulfill this mission. "But we've always done it that way," is a perspective we seek to avoid.

where we've been

CHURCH PLANT

In 2011, Iron Works Church began gathering for services in an event hall at the heart of a mixed-use building that once was a factory.

Over the next 4 years the church grew into a community where all **different kinds of people could thrive**—political liberals and political conservatives; blue collar workers and white collar; artists and statisticians.

What started as a pumpkin-themed neighborhood gathering grew into a **fall outreach festival** on the main streets of the town organized in partnership with other local churches. **Phoenixville Pumpkinfest** drew 7,000 people at its peak in 2018.



CHURCH PLANTING

In June of 2016, Iron Works graduated from mission status to become a **particular church**, calling planter Darin Pesnell as its pastor. Just a few months later, we embarked on our **first church plant** (in this case a replant of an older, dwindling church) in the nearby city of West Chester. Today, Iron Works West Chester is a thriving particular church.



THROUGH COVID

By the grace of God, Iron Works **purchased the facility** it had been renting in 2019. Just a year later COVID hit.

Iron Works leadership sought to make **a place for everyone**, regardless of risk tolerance, and encouraged members to embrace friendship across lines of cultural division. Attendance rose.

Phoenixville Refuge was born out of the need that arose during the pandemic. It aims to provide the hope and comfort of Jesus Christ through shelter, food, and other aid for some of Phoenixville's most vulnerable.

A SEASON WITHOUT A LEAD PASTOR

In August 2022, after 2 years of prayer and seeking counsel, Pastor Darin Pesnell heeded the Lord's call away from his role as lead pastor to an extended season of investment in his family.

With an average Sunday attendance of 200 and a strong community with a sense of mission, **Iron Works now seeks its next senior pastor to lead us into the next chapter.**



PHOENIXVILLE, PA where we are

We love our town of Phoenixville— and not just because it is home to an amazing craft beer scene. It's been described as Bedford Falls from *It's a Wonderful Life* or Stars Hollow from *Gilmore Girls*: It's charming, quirky, and full of people who care deeply about their community.

Named for the Phoenix Iron & Steel Company that employed much of the town until the late 1980s, Phoenixville is thriving and has seen incredible revitalization in the last 15 years.

Families and children are everywhere. The main street shuts down on the weekends in summer, and restaurants, shops, and live music set up in the open air. It's close to all kinds of hiking and kayaking, but also just 45 minutes away from Philadelphia.

CHALLENGES

Phoenixville is also the county headquarters for the LGBTQ+ Alliance and hosts a pagan festival celebrating the winter solstice each year. Most people are unchurched, and many grew up in the Catholic church but no longer engage with that faith or practice.

SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Largely unseen in the mainstream life of the town is the large Guatemalan community that lives on the fringes in every sense. Frequently, people will travel to Phoenixville just weeks after crossing the southern border. We've found that the people in this community are hungry for truth and connection.

OUTREACH

Iron Works is steadfastly focused on how we can be useful to Phoenixville in ways that further the kingdom of heaven. Rather than condemn our town for the ways in which it strays from God's design for human flourishing, we want to invest ourselves in serving our community and then relentlessly preach Christ during worship services and events explicitly oriented toward Christian outreach and apologetics.



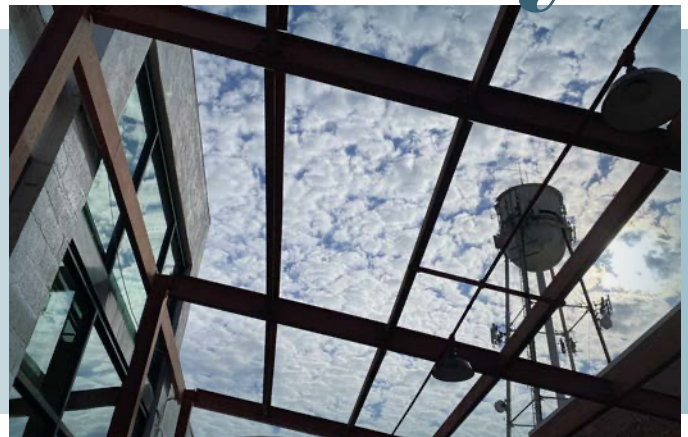
HOSPITABLE WORSHIP SERVICES

We design our services expecting non-Christians to be present, believing that the experience of God's presence in our midst will lead many to embrace Christ. Part of this is avoiding "Christianese," seeking to communicate the Gospel in everyday language that anyone can understand.

how we seek to serve the city

IN THE CITY BUT NOT OF IT

We want to be an integral part of our town such that if we were to disappear, our town would miss us. Even our location is part of this strategy: Rather than being sequestered off in our own building and asking people to come to us, we've made our home in the midst of community life in a mixed-use building that is also home to a charter school and other businesses.



A REFUGE FOR THE POOR

We see the poor and needy in our town and, as the Lord has provided refuge to us, we seek to serve them through the Phoenixville Refuge ministry, which aims to meet needs of both body and soul by providing utility and housing relief, monthly food distribution, Bible study and ministering to spiritual needs, and equipping with resources to connect with the broader community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

the numbers

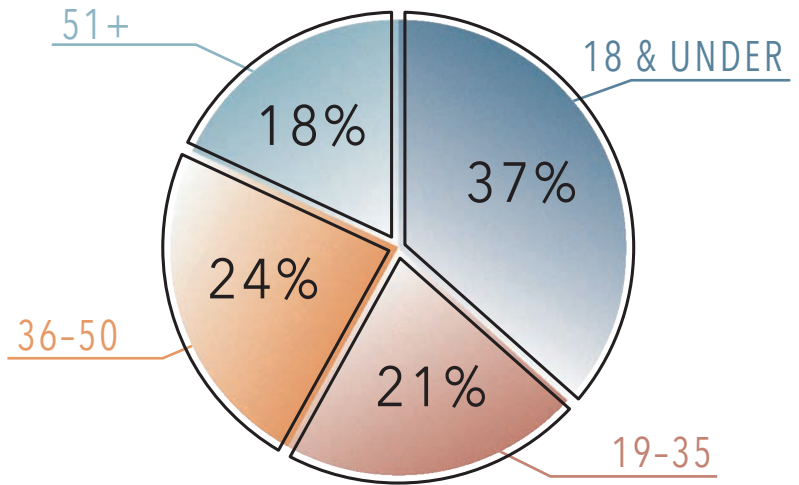
ON IRON WORKS CHURCH

194 AVG. SUNDAY ATTENDANCE

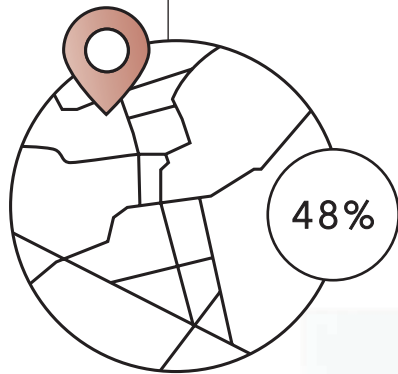
147 MEMBERS

94 FAMILIES

89 CHILDREN



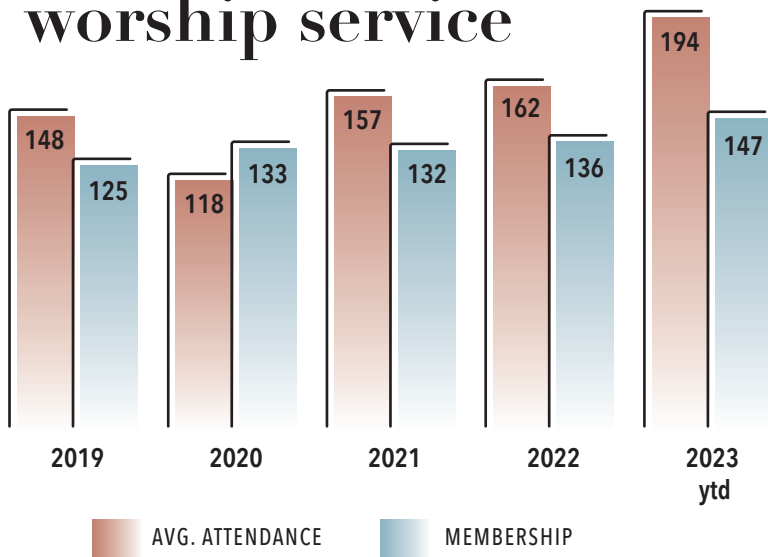
age breakdown



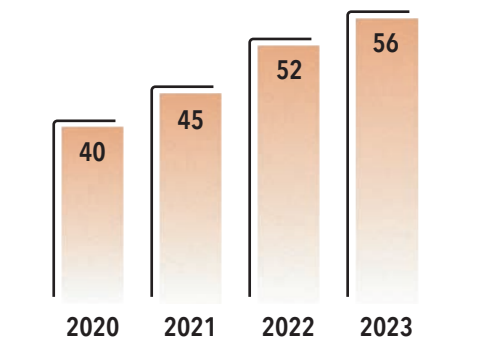
48% OF FAMILIES LIVE WITHIN 3 MILES OF THE CHURCH

ATTENDANCE GROWTH 2019-2023

worship service



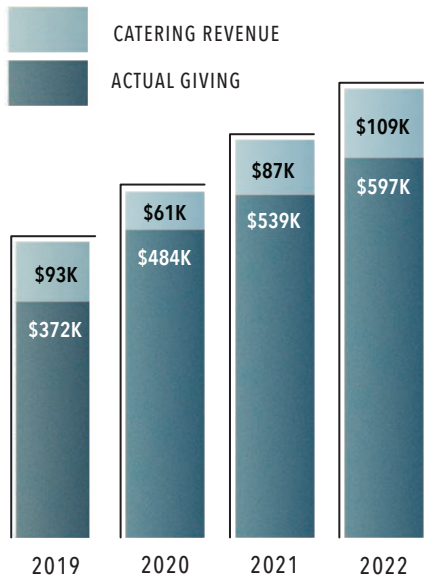
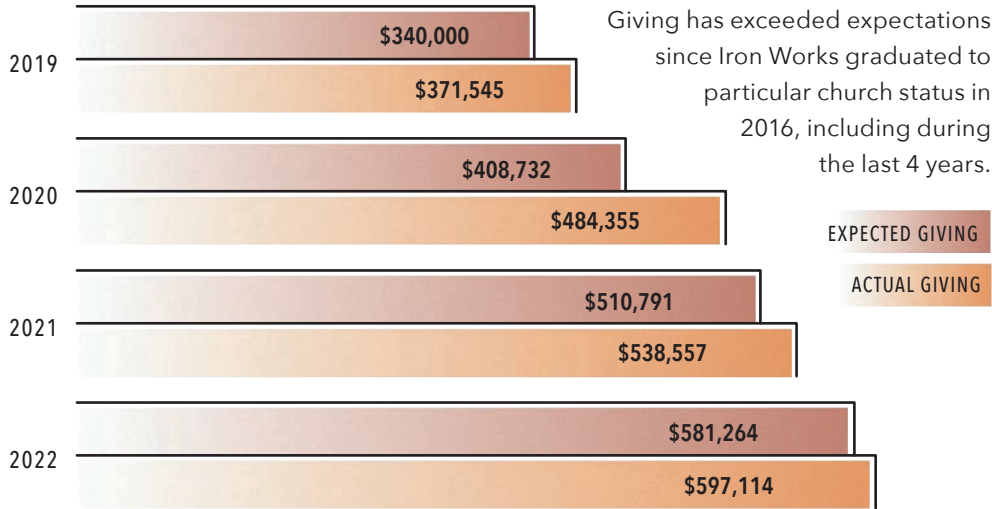
all figures are for in-person attendance



prayer meeting

average attendance at bimonthly midweek prayer meetings

giving

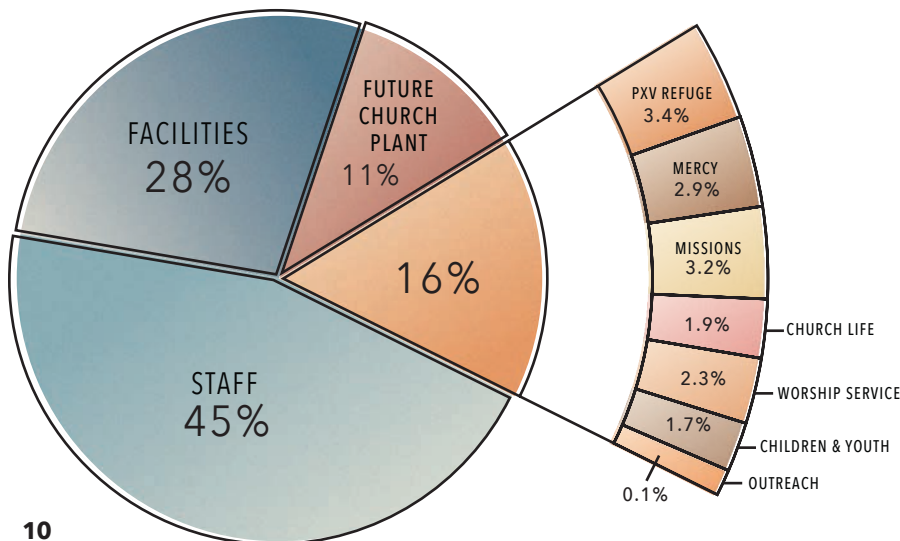


other income

When Iron Works purchased its space in 2019, we inherited a relationship with a catering company that has provided significant revenue. Initially this revenue stream was key to managing the mortgage. In the years since, the church and giving have grown, and catering revenue has generated reserves that the church can use in the event of unexpected expenses.

Church giving is projected to cover operating expenses in 2023. The contract with the catering company runs through March of 2025.

spending



ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Sam Andreades has served the church in a part-time capacity since 2019.

DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Josh Olson is ministering to the congregation in an interim capacity and then plans to resume his vocation in full-time nursing. Josh is a founding elder of Iron Works and is currently inactive.

PASTORAL RESIDENT

Román González is committed to Iron Works through November 2024 learning the ins and outs of church leadership. He is a tremendous asset to ministering to the Spanish-speaking community!

STAFF

Iron Works has a thriving staff of **7 full- and part-time employees** who are hungry for leadership as they seek to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

SESSION: three ruling elders.

Since particularization in 2016, the two founding elders have rotated off the session and are now serving in other areas of the church.

DIACONATE: five deacons and three deacon assistants

how we serve

A CULTURE OF PARTICIPATION

Iron Works seeks to avoid a cult of personality around a senior pastor by empowering leaders, honoring those who serve, and sharing the leadership of the worship service with a trained liturgist and music leader.

SERVING IN GIFTEDNESS

We also strive to help people identify and serve in their gifting rather than pressing them to fill empty roles. Unmet needs are brought to the Lord in prayer; we know he will build his church.

LIMITING CHURCH ACTIVITIES

While the activity of the church is valuable, we want to enable people to have time to build relationships with their neighbors, serve one another personally, and be involved in the life of the town.



ministries

TRADITIONAL MINISTRIES

- FAMILY MINISTRY
- MEN'S MINISTRY
- WOMEN'S MINISTRY
- HOME GROUPS
- SUNDAY SERVICE TEAM
- MISSIONS TEAM

DOODLE SUNDAY

We believe church is for kids, that we adults lose out if we don't learn to worship alongside them. On the first Sunday of the month, all preschool and school-age kids stay in the service for the sermon instead of going to children's church. Kids worship through intentional dancing and singing. They get their own worship guide for the day, where they can draw in response to parts of the sermon set aside specifically for them. And at the end, if they've listened well, they get a prize that further helps them remember the lesson of the sermon.

PHOENIXVILLE REFUGE

Born out of the need our town experienced during the pandemic, Phoenixville Refuge provides the hope and comfort of Jesus Christ through shelter, food, and other aid for the most vulnerable in the Phoenixville community.

SPANISH-SPEAKING MINISTRY

Many of those served by Phoenixville Refuge are recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking nations. Hungry for the word, more and more of them are coming for a biweekly Spanish-language Bible study.

LILIES & SPARROWS

This women's group cultivates intimacy with God through fellowship, the Word, and intercessory prayer as they discuss deep personal and mental health issues for hope and healing.





opportunities for growth

MANAGE GROWTH WELL

Sunday attendance and membership have grown considerably since our lead pastor stepped down in August 2022. We rejoice at what God is doing in our midst! However, we need leadership to understand how to sustain and grow our culture of authentic community at this size, as well as to invest in training and equipping leaders—and leaders of leaders—to remain healthy.

In this season without a lead pastor, we as a congregation long for leadership in how we ought to pursue mission in this place and time. We find that without a leader helping us prioritize, we've generated and are chasing too many ideas.

Likewise, we are so excited about the growth of our Spanish-language Bible study but deeply feel the need for leadership to discern how the Lord would have us develop this into a strong ministry or church plant.

TAKE DISCIPLESHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

While some home groups are flourishing, others are dwindling. Men's and women's ministries have some strengths, but as the congregation grows beyond the size where everyone can know everyone, discipleship must be thriving if we are to move forward in every aspect of our mission.

GETTING BACK INTO PHOENIXVILLE AFTER COVID

While the pandemic launched the Phoenixville Refuge ministry, it also slowed the momentum of engagement with the rest of the town. It's been four years since we've been able to do large-scale outreach to the town; we need to re-engage with the beating heart of Phoenixville after COVID.

CHURCH PLANTING

Iron Works has been committed to planting churches since its founding, and it remains a priority: During this time without a pastor we have continued to faithfully set aside 10 percent of general fund offering for this purpose. We need a leader who can share in this vision and lead us in pursuit of where the Lord is leading, whether that's a Spanish-speaking church plant or elsewhere.

BETTER USE OF OUR SPACE FOR MISSION

While we love our nontraditional space, it comes with challenges. As we've matured from a church plant and grown into a larger congregation, we realize that not taking full advantage of the space we own is limiting our effectiveness. We are just starting to look at how we can invest in developing this space to more effectively pursue our mission, and will need to develop a long-term vision for that in the next few years.



Go on mission with us.

IF YOU'RE EXCITED TO

PREACH
LOVE
SERVE
& PLANT

IN PHOENIXVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA,
WE'D LOVE TO TALK WITH YOU.

McGowan Global Institute is assisting us in our search.

APPLY: mcgowanglobal.com/pastor-registration

QUESTIONS: Rev. Dr. Case Thorp | case@mcgowanglobal.com

