



**MCCOOK**  
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

# **CHURCH & COMMUNITY PROFILE PACKET**

# PROFILE PACKET

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

VISION FRAMEWORK.....	3-5
CHURCH PROFILE.....	6
COMMUNITY PROFILE .....	8-10
Schools and Colleges.....	8
Community Services.....	8-9
Recreation .....	9
Housing.....	9
Quality of Life.....	9
Climate .....	10



## VISION FRAMEWORK

### Measures

Matthew 4:19 – A disciple is committed to:  
Knowing & Following Jesus  
Being Transformed by Jesus  
Being on Mission with Jesus

### Values

Truth  
Discipleship  
Relationships  
Leadership  
Missions  
Creativity

### Vision

Because of the grace of God, we at  
McCooK E-Free will be the hands  
and feet of Jesus, willing to get  
dirty in the weeds of life.

### Mission

Cultivating followers  
of Jesus to impact  
our world.  
Matthew 28:18-20

### Strategy

Worship  
Develop  
Serve  
Train

# MEASURES DEFINED

Matthew 4:19 – A disciple is committed to:

- Knowing & Following Jesus
- Being Transformed by Jesus
- Being on Mission with Jesus

Someone who knows & follows Jesus

John 12:26

Indicates an acceptance of Jesus, His authority and truth, at the **head** level.

Recognizes and accepts Jesus as their Lord, Leader, and Master.

Knows who Jesus is and what He is like.

Demonstrates a willingness to seek and be obedient to His will as evidence of their love for Him.

Is learning and believing truths about Jesus, which lead to changes in their headship and knowledge.

(Although much of this can be connected to one's heart this definer is speaking primarily to the mental aspect of being a disciple).

Someone who is being transformed by Jesus...

Romans 8:29

Is allowing Jesus to transform their **heart** and affections to better reflect the image of Christ.

Has a vibrant and intimate abiding with Jesus through prayer and study.

Has a spiritual response to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in our lives.

Demonstrates a teachable heart by humbly yielding to the Spirit's movement and call in their lives.

Has a growing evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.

Someone who is on mission with Jesus...

Indicates their response of action affecting the way they live and what they do with our **hands**.

Demonstrates their understanding of being saved for a purpose to join Jesus on His mission to love and reach a lost and hurting world and make disciples.

Are actively seeking His kingdom first.

Begin to see the world from His perspective and care about the things He cares about.

Understands that they were knitted together in our mother's womb by God for acts of service and ministry in His kingdom and have God-given abilities that should be used for God's glory.

Lives a missional lifestyle.

Is pursuing being an intentional leader.

Demonstrates loving service to others.

Is committed to the teamwork of the Church.

Examples of Methods for Measurement:

If you were to die tonight, how do you know for certain that you would go to heaven?”

If you were to die, and God were to ask you, “Why should I let you into my heaven,”  
what would you say?

Describe your relationship with God in prayer.

Describe what God has been revealing to you through His word. What has God asked  
you to do recently?

Describe some areas of your life that you have grown in the last year?

In which of the fruits of the Spirit, do you see the most room for growth?

If I were to tell your coworkers that you are a follower of Jesus, what would their  
response be?

Who do you serve in your life that is not a follower of Jesus? How do you serve them?

Who is personally influencing you most in your walk with Jesus?

Who are you intentionally influencing in their walk with Jesus?

Where are you serving in the church?

Describe your relationship with those whom you serve with?

Can you name our spiritual gifts?

How are you leveraging them in your service?



## CHURCH PROFILE

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

In October of 1979, 12 individuals and their families began meeting in a weekly Bible study using visiting missionaries and pastors for Sunday morning services. Realizing the need for a denominational affiliation they requested to join the Evangelical Free Church on March 16, 1980. Now composed of 22 church members, the church selected Pastor Melvin Loge as Senior Pastor on July 20, 1980.

The present property at 14<sup>th</sup> and East F Street was purchased in November of 1980 for \$25,000. The church was accepted into the Midwest District in February of 1981 with a membership of 36 that adopted the name "McCook Evangelical Free Church". On May 6, 1981 the church voted to proceed with building. November 14, 1981 marked the first service in the new building. AWANA began in December of 1982 with 12 children.

By 1984, average attendance increased to 108. Pastor Loge was called to plant a new church in Smith Center, Kansas, and our new pastor, Dair Hileman, began in January 1985. An office complex and a Christian education wing were added to the existing building in 1989 nearly doubling the area of the building.

In 1993 our church joined two others and began sending mission teams to Romania to plant a church in Constanta. This church was formally started in 1996.

In March 1998, Pastor Hileman was called to another ministry in October of 1998, and Pastor Bruce Lester became our new senior pastor, serving as such for twenty years until his retirement in May 2019.

Because of considerable growth the church sanctuary was enlarged in 1998. The average attendance for our two Sunday morning worship services in 1997 was 291, and by 2015 it was 389. A new worship area was completed in January of 2014 and a new kitchen was completed in February of 2016.

### **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

Pastor Dave Cruddas came as our first associate pastor in 1992, serving as youth pastor and supervising the children's ministry. In January 2006 Derek Beck was hired to serve as our Interim Youth Director, following him, in February of 2009 John Byerly came from Texas to be pastor of youth and children's ministry. In August of 2016, he was called to plant a church in Wyoming, and the church called Trevor Smith to be our youth pastor overseeing junior high and senior high ministries.

### **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**

Dorene Gordine, serving our children since 1991, became our Children's Ministry Director in August of 2017. She oversees all children's ministries including nurseries on Sunday, Kids LifeTeams, Children's Church, and AWANA as well as special ministry events such as VBS.

We have maintained an AWANA program since 1982 for children from age 4 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The average attendance for the past year was 130 clubbers with 60+ adults working with the children each Wednesday evening during the school year.

## **WORSHIP SERVICES**

Our church is known as a place where the Bible is taught and believers are encouraged to apply its teachings to their lives. There are two scheduled Sunday morning worship services (9:00AM and 10:45AM). During the summer we often have one worship service at 10:00AM. There is a half-hour for fellowship and coffee between the services. Our services lean toward a blended style of worship. A 9-11 member worship team leads the service on most Sundays.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRIES**

The church places an emphasis on having a Sunday school program for all ages that provides biblical education and fellowship. A variety of LifeStudies are available for adults and youth. Classes include topical studies, books of the Bible, Financial Peace University, and our Next Step classes. Our Kids LifeTeams for children begin with pre-school and run through high school age during 1<sup>st</sup> service. Children's Church is provided for preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade during 2<sup>nd</sup> service.

## **ADULT MINISTRIES**

Pastor Chris Atkins joined our pastoral staff in June of 2006 as associate Pastor of Adult Ministries. Pastor Chris went to be with the Lord in April of 2011 due to a brain tumor; and in June of 2012 Pastor Jeff Donelan joined our staff as the new Pastor of Adult Ministries.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

Since August 2018, Anne Wiemers has been our full-time Administrator and Amber Guerrero, who has been on the administrative staff since 2016, became the full-time Administrative Assistant in July 2019. They handle all of the office procedures as well as coordinate our database system, communications, and oversee the volunteer office staff.

## **MISSIONS**

McCook Evangelical Free Church believes in the Great Commission to go into the entire world. We are currently partnering with missions organizations around the world and seek to support them through prayer, finances, care, and on-site visits. We have three missions teams (local, national and global) and our people are encouraged to join and participate in their events and ministries. We have a lead team who oversees the three missions teams.

## **SPECIAL MINISTRIES**

Our church is involved in various outreach ministries. Our Creative Arts ministry is utilized for skits, dance, and full theatre productions.

The church continues to air our pastor's sermons on a local radio station (93.9 FM) each Sunday at 10:00AM and we presently live-stream our services on our Facebook page. Our present Youth Pastor is actively involved with the Red Willow County Ministerial Association, which has brought in different concerts and speakers to the area and the local Lenten services that are held yearly in the community. We also participate in the National Day of Prayer. The church also is also utilized 4 days a week for an exercise program for older adults. Our Care Ministry, Heart to Heart, shows care for members when sick or having struggles and provides visits and cards to shut-ins as well.

## **DENOMINATIONAL INVOLVEMENT:**

Our church supports the EFCA district office and typically one or more of our pastors attends the district conference.



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

McCook is located in the heart of Southwest Nebraska in Red Willow County. A community of 7,551, it is the central hub of many smaller towns in the area. The population of the 30 mile radius of McCook is 20,883, its trade area reaches approximately 75 miles in any direction. With such a large trade area, McCook offers many services that would normally be found in larger communities. Denver, CO is 254 miles to the west while Lincoln and Omaha, NE are 250 and 300 miles to the east.

### Education

McCook Public Schools consists of one Special Education Unit, an elementary school that is Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a middle school consisting of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, a junior high that is 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a high school that is 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and a small alternative high school program.

Current enrollment is approximately 1,450 students Pk-12th grade and our graduation rate is close to 96%. The district is constantly ranked among the best school systems in the state, with several of its buildings receiving an excellent classification from the State of Nebraska. McCook Elementary is also a Blue Ribbon award winning school. McCook Public Schools currently holds the highest rating of accreditation, Double A classification, in the State of Nebraska. St. Patrick's Catholic Church supports a K-8<sup>th</sup> grade school with about 180 students.

McCook Community College was founded in 1926 as the first two-year, post-secondary school in Nebraska. In 1973, it became affiliated with Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte. Most classes are accredited to transfer to 4-year colleges. Two of these schools are: The University of Nebraska at Kearney (105 miles from McCook) and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. McCook Community College is equipped with State of the Art satellite equipment, which provides additional training to the community. The college serves approximately 1200 students. Review their 2018-2019 Annual Report at the following link:

<http://www.mpcc.edu/aboutmpcc/AnnualReports/2019%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Southwest Area Training Service (S.W.A.T.) serves individuals who are 21-years-old and older with developmental disabilities.

### Community Services

The McCook community supports 21 denominational churches.

In addition, Community Hospital is a vital and continually growing asset to the area. The hospital offers a full range of diagnostic and rehabilitative services, including cardiac and pulmonary rehab, state of the art patient rooms and labor/delivery area. Community Hospital's Infusion Department and the Anderson Center for Radiation Oncology provide advanced medical oncology and radiation oncology services to patients in a 15-county area. It is equipped to serve more than 30,000 people who live in the referral area.

The McCook Clinic and Specialist Center is located adjacent to the hospital and houses 7 family practitioners, 3 nurse practitioners, a general surgeon, an anesthesiologist, and 4 physician assistants, all who live locally. More than 30 different medical specialists also come to McCook on a regular schedule. Specialties offered include: cardiology, dermatology, ear nose throat, family medicine, gastroenterology, general surgery, nephrology, neurosurgery, neurology, OB/GYN, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, podiatry, pulmonary, spinal orthopedics, and urology. An urgent care facility is also available in McCook.

### **Recreation**

McCook is located within 30 miles of three public lakes (Harry Strunk Lake, Hugh Butler Lake and Swanson Lake) containing more than 8,370 acres. These lakes offer an abundance of boating, fishing, skiing, swimming, camping, and hiking and are part of the Nebraska State Park system. Southwest Nebraska is also known as the pheasant capital of the nation. There is also an abundance of deer, geese, wild turkey and quail in the area.

Heritage Hills Golf Course, rated one of the top 75 public golf courses by Golf Magazine, will test anyone's skills. A major YMCA facility is also active and available for fun and exercise. Baseball is alive and well in McCook with many midget leagues as well as Junior Legion Ball. Other activities include bowling, auto racing, tennis, as well as several well-kept parks.

McCook also has several events annually with parades, races, food, storytelling, and concerts downtown and at the fairgrounds.

### **Housing**

Over the past 18 months the median sale price of houses in McCook was \$119,900. There is a wide variety of homes available as well as apartments and condominiums and may be viewed on line at <https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/69001>

### **Quality of Life**

The rural setting of McCook is a relaxed, friendly environment. We have one of the lowest crime indexes in the nation. A lot of this could be due to the strong work ethic that the people of McCook are known for and is evident with our low unemployment rate of 2.3%. The population of our county is around 11,000. The age breakdown for McCook is: 24.1% under the age of 18, 9.7% from 18 to 24, 24.2% from 25 to 44, 21.3% from 45 to 64, and 20.7% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age is 40 years.

The education level of adults living in McCook is as follows: 91% are high school graduates and 33% are college graduates. As you see the age breakdown is fairly even which makes for a variety of interests going on at all times. We are very proud of our little city and that is why we say "Welcome to McCook and the Good Life".

Apartment Therapy ranked small towns throughout the country and ranked McCook the #1 small town in Nebraska and the #27 small town in the country. This goes along with the Readers Digest ranking earlier this year as McCook being the nicest place in Nebraska. Read more from Apartment Therapy here: <https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/best-small-towns-to-live-in-36677870>.

McCook was also named the 6th most affordable place to live in Nebraska according to cost of living data. [See the top 10 here.](#)

**Climate**

McCook enjoys four distinct seasons throughout the year. Annual average temperatures are around 51 degrees Fahrenheit. The highs can reach 100+ degrees F several days in the summer while the lows in the winter can also go below zero. The cold blizzard-like days can be followed by mild, sunny days throughout the winter months. Daily sunshine averages around 55% in December to 80% in July. Wind direction changes frequently all seasons of the year. Relative humidity is lower than other parts of the state varying from 55% in January to 35% in July. Annual rain received is about 22" with most of it coming between the months of April through August and annual snow totals average about 25". We have approximately 150 frost free days.