

Opportunity Profile

# Director of Student Ministries

Central Presbyterian Church  
Merced, CA



## :: OVERVIEW ::

Central Presbyterian Church is a healthy and influential church (about 350 in weekly attendance) located in the central valley of California, just about an hour and a half away from the gorgeous Yosemite National Park. The church is known for being family-oriented and holding true the Word of God. The people of CPC are driven by God's Word and seek to grow in knowledge and application of the truth.

Central Presbyterian is looking for a creative team player to collaborate with church leadership, parents and volunteer leaders to reach youth and their families, and to partner with church families in discipling the students in the greater Central Valley area. The ministry spans grades 7 to 12.

## :: CHURCH ::

Central Presbyterian Church was started in October of 1912 as three different Presbyterian churches merged to form CPC. It has enjoyed strong seasons of influence and is seen as a staple in the Merced community.

CPC became an early adopter a few years ago and joined the newly formed denomination, ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. The church has many members who are educators and is a highly educated church (Biblically literate).



David Goebel, has served as the Lead Pastor since December of 2015. He grew up on the beach in Jacksonville, FL, but has lived all over the United States since leaving home for college. David and his wife Nancy met when they were both college students at Wheaton College and raised four children (all now adults). David has a passion to see people who are far away from God find Jesus.

CPC states, "We are an intentionally intergenerational congregation who love Jesus and the community in which God has placed us. We love to see the next generation succeed and diligently pass on the deep tenets of the Christian faith. We're a big church that feels small and there's always room for one more." Their core beliefs can be found [here](#).



## :: THE OPPORTUNITY ::

The new Director will report directly to the Lead Pastor and work alongside volunteers who serve in the student ministry. The middle school and high school ministries have a handful of leaders who serve with the 50 to 70 students who attend the different groups on a weekly basis.

CPC has dedicated space for the youth (including the use of a gymnasium) and ample meeting spaces for breakout groups.



Current programming for Student Ministries includes:

- Weekly Sunday morning ministry for both middle school and high school
- Wednesday night middle school youth group
- Sunday night high school youth group
- Yearly Mexico Mission (Spring Break)
- Annual CIY summer camp
- Occasional service projects
- Outreach events
- Student leadership development



## :: CURRENT CULTURE ::

Total budget for the church \$1.1 million. The youth budget is \$42,000.

When asked about Central Presbyterian Church parents, students, staff and adult leaders said the following:

- “The church has a **STRONG** reputation for reaching the youth in this community, we may be the most known church when it comes to success in youth ministry in Merced” — Parent



- “Our youth leaders have established a great presence on most of the (school) campuses that are represented in our group, hopefully campus visits remain a priority!” —Parent
- “I like most of what we do... but we probably do need some changes” —Student
- “Our Jr. High group has really suffered this year, but High School group is still going strong!” — Student

- “There’s a dichotomous tension between families who want students to go deep and those who are driven by the outreach” — Parent
- “I think the strong history can help or hinder the new person... help if the leader takes some time to get to know the culture and history and hinder if that new leader only tries to do what has always been done; we need change, but likely change that comes with relationship first” — Elder
- “We need training, it’s been baptism by fire for the most part as a leader” — Leader
- “Our group is really relational, but for the most part the church and students are two different entities, I hope we have a great ‘bridge builder’ in our next Youth Ministry Director” — Parent (and Leader)



## :: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES ::

The challenges that could be anticipated by the new Student Ministries Director include:

1. **Program Diversity:** With very few traditions that could be considered “sacred cows” it is time to re-evaluate and even reimagine the effectiveness of current programs and outside events—the overarching theme among parents, leaders and students was that a little more creativity is likely needed and many expressed that

somewhat of a “fresh start” could take place after a relational foundation is established.

2. **Ministry With/To Parents:** It was voiced a number of times that many (certainly not all) of the parents feel disconnected from the ministry— this has to do with both communication (consistency) and focus— the latter being that much of the ministry seems to have been focused on community youth, and church families have felt somewhat neglected. Taking time to build into parents and perhaps seeking to build community could create a pathway to better connection and better communication.



3. **Leadership:** To develop current volunteers and recruit others— the current (small) team is a faithful group. Though busy, the leadership team conveyed a desire to have intentional and next-level training available. The new director will have freedom to build his or her own team of volunteers to recruit and train those he or she feels would fit best for the direction moving forward.

4. **Build-A-Bridge:** Because the youth have a great history of an evangelism focus, there is the perception that the group is more for the community than it is for the church. The new leader should have the ability to navigate both a deep and wide

strategy for the youth ministry. In addition it is an aspiration of church leadership that a better connection be established between the congregation and the students in the youth ministry program.



5. **Program Diversity:** The programming is currently fairly routine and lacks a bit of variety. The new leader should have the ability to reach and teach the varying stages of growth and expand the boundaries of types of events/programs being offered. Students expressed many ideas of what could be done and their voices felt validated

in someone just taking the time to listen to their ideas.

6. **Longevity Perception:** The previous leader in this position served for about three years in the role. Church leadership, parents and students are all united in their desire to see a person come in and have a long and healthy stay. Trust must be built (whenever there is turnover), and the person coming in should demonstrate self-assurance as he or she goes through the natural comparisons that take place when leadership transition takes place.

## **:: QUALIFICATIONS AND PROCESS ::**

### Currently

It is likely the Student Ministry Director candidate is leading (or part of the leadership team of) a church-based ministry in a congregation where they have leadership responsibility. This individual will have demonstrated not only gifts, skills and motivations for working directly with teens but also will have developed and/or participated with a solid team of volunteers while integrating the ministry within the larger congregational context.

### Candidate Criteria Summary

- Passionate devotion to God
- Strong Biblical knowledge and core theological understanding
- Three (or more) years of (primary) leadership experience (full-time ministry role)
- Effective communicator in large and small group contexts
- Ability to expand and empower leadership (lay leadership and student leadership)
- Bachelors degree

### Application Process

We encourage anyone who has the qualifications and senses a potential calling for such an opportunity of service to contact us and discuss this position. Alternatively, you may know someone you wish to recommend for this position.

In order to provide a more complete picture of you and your abilities, in addition to sending a resume please also provide succinct responses (no more than 350 words per answer) to the following questions:

1. Do you sense that you meet the Criteria Summary listed above? If not, which ones and could you address how you feel it may be overcome?
2. Give your brief testimony of your relationship with Jesus.
3. Name up to three people (and/or books) that have helped shape your personal relationship with Jesus and/or your ministry/leadership philosophy.
4. Based on what you know about CPC, what excites you about this opportunity and how do you feel uniquely qualified for this position?
5. Name one or two experiences (including education) that have prepared you for this Student Ministry Director opportunity.
6. Where do you sense you need to grow the most in order to become more effective as a Youth Director?
7. Provide a video link of your teaching (audio acceptable if unable to obtain video).\*

\*Teaching— If you do not yet have teaching audio or video, please submit your answers, but make it a priority to get yourself recorded and provide a link within a two to three week time period.

### References

Please also provide at least four references (including at least one previous supervisor, a subordinate and a peer). Indicate your relationship with each and include phone and email information for each person.

\*We will not contact your references until later in the process and only when you approve.

Submit these responses (in Word or PDF format) along with your resume to:

Kristen Thomas  
CPC Office Manager  
[kthomas@cpcmerced.org](mailto:kthomas@cpcmerced.org)