



FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

Toledo, Ohio

**LEAD PASTOR
CANDIDATE
PACKET**

(Version 1|1.8.2025)

Thank you for your interest in the **Lead Pastor** position at *First Church of God, Toledo (FCOG)*.

We are prayerfully seeking a shepherd and visionary leader who will guide our congregation in worship, discipleship, and community transformation.

If you feel called to explore this opportunity, we invite you to submit an application packet that reflects your faith journey, ministry experience, and vision.

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

Mission

The mission of First Church of God, Toledo, is to celebrate together in worship, witness everywhere to reconcile people to Christ, disciple every believer toward spiritual maturity, and equip all to serve one another and the world, to the glory of God.

Vision

Our vision is to reach individuals of all ages through ministries that address the needs of our urban community and inspire transformed lives for God's glory.

Purpose & Plan

We strive to grow in relationship with God, with one another, and in number and impact. Each Sunday, we gather for worship centered on celebration, expressed through songs of praise, prayer, healing, and the teaching and preaching of Holy Scripture.

Our ministry prioritizes children, youth, and families, recognizing them as the foundation of a thriving faith community.

HISTORY

Founded in 1918, First Church of God has been dedicated to serving the spiritual, social, and practical needs of Toledo's inner-city community, including food, water, and shelter.

The church traces its beginnings to May 1918, when Reverend and Mrs. Carter hosted early gatherings in their home at 103 Vinal Street. That same year, Sisters Sallie Foster, A.V. Burns, and Janis Barber began holding cottage meetings and Bible studies, laying the foundation for what would become the city's first Black congregation of the Church of God in May 1918.

Sunday School officially began in March 1919, with Reverend Carter serving as the church's first pastor.

Over the years, First Church of God has worshiped in several locations. A brick church was built in 1923 at 385 Vance Street, and in May 1979, the congregation moved to its current home at 3016 Collingwood Boulevard.

HISTORY (continued)

The church's history includes a legacy of pioneering leadership. In 1924, First Church welcomed its first female pastor, Sister Lucinda Vines, and in 1935, Sister Mattie Hill was installed as the first female Elder—a remarkable milestone for the denomination. In 1987, Bishop Robert A. Culp established the church's Elder Board, strengthening lay leadership and shared ministry.

Bishop Culp delivered his first sermon on May 21, 1961, and faithfully served as pastor for over 62 years, officially retiring in May 2023. His ministry shaped not only the congregation but also the broader Toledo community through decades of civic and faith-based leadership. In September 2022, Pastor Eric Von Butler served as Lead Pastor until May 2025.

Today, First Church of God remains deeply committed to serving the Toledo community through active participation in a variety of organizations such as the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), African American Legacy Project (AALP), Multi-Faith Council, Toledo Fair Housing Center, Toledo Lead Resource Center, Black & Brown Unity Coalition, NAACP, Pathway, and the Community Action Table.

The City of Toledo

Located along the western shores of Lake Erie, **Toledo, Ohio**, known as “*The Glass City*,” is a vibrant, diverse, and resilient urban community with deep industrial roots and a growing spirit of renewal. As the fourth-largest city in Ohio, Toledo offers the richness of a metropolitan area with the warmth and accessibility of a close-knit community.

A City of Culture, Faith, and Community

Toledo is a city of neighborhoods, where faith communities, schools, and grassroots organizations play a vital role in civic life. The Historic Old West End, home to **First Church of God**, is one of the city’s most architecturally significant areas, known for its grand homes, strong community identity, and proximity to the **Toledo Museum of Art**, the **Glass Pavilion**, and the **Imagination Station** science center. The arts, education, and public service remain central to Toledo’s civic DNA.

Diversity and Opportunity

With a population of approximately **270,000 residents** (and over 600,000 in the metro area), Toledo is home to a richly diverse community, roughly **55% White, 28% Black or African American, 9% Hispanic or Latino**, and a growing number of multiracial and international families. This diversity enriches every aspect of the city’s cultural, economic, and faith life. Toledo’s affordability, vibrant local colleges, and expanding economic sectors make it an ideal place for families and ministry leaders seeking to build lasting roots.

- **Median Age:** 35–36 years
- **Median Household Income:** ~\$46,000
- **Poverty Rate:** ~25%
- **Education:** 86% high school completion; 21% bachelor’s degree or higher
- **Housing:** Median home price ~136,500 (significantly below national average)

Education and Civic Life

The University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Mercy College of Ohio, Owens Community College, and Lourdes University are among the region’s key institutions, shaping Toledo’s academic and healthcare landscape. Local schools serve a broad and diverse student body, offering opportunities for mentorship, outreach, and educational ministry partnerships.

Education and Civic Life (continued)

Toledo's civic fabric is strengthened by a robust network of nonprofits, social service agencies, and interfaith initiatives that address challenges such as housing, youth development, and economic mobility.

For more information about Toledo and the surrounding areas, please visit:

<https://visittoledo.org/about-toledo/about-toledo>

<https://toledo.oh.gov/>

<https://www.co.lucas.oh.us/>

<https://ohio.gov/tourism>

<https://ohio.gov/>

Lead Pastor – Job Description

Church Name: First Church of God Toledo

Address: 3016 Collingwood Blvd, Toledo, OH 43610

Position Type: Full-Time, Salaried

Location of Services: Main Campus

Reports To: Board of Elders

Compensation: The compensation package will be negotiated individually based on experience, qualifications, and scope of responsibilities.

Role Summary

The Lead Pastor provides spiritual, visionary, and organizational leadership for First Church of God. As the chief shepherd and primary preacher, this leader guides the congregation in worship, pastoral care, teaching, discipleship, strategic planning, and community outreach.

The Ideal Candidate

- **A Loving Shepherd** – Cares for members across all generations, offering compassionate pastoral presence, counseling, and general guidance.
- **A Visionary Leader** – Provide spiritual, administrative, and operational oversight of church ministries while mentoring and developing leaders to support the congregation's growth and organizational effectiveness.
- **A Dynamic Preacher and Teacher** – A gifted communicator who brings Scripture to life through biblically rooted, theologically sound, and culturally relevant preaching that deepens faith, fosters spiritual growth, and strengthens biblical literacy.
- **A Community Builder** – Champions outreach and evangelism; strengthens partnerships across civic, faith, and neighborhood networks to expand the church's impact and witness in the community; equips members for missional living; and serves as a visible advocate for justice and transformation in Toledo.
- **A Collaborative Partner** – Works with elders, staff, boards, and members with empathy, humility, and grace; models servant leadership and unity within the body of Christ.
- **A Culturally Relevant Leader** – Honors the rich traditions of the Black Church (storytelling, call-and-response, and celebration) while engaging contemporary realities with authenticity and purpose.
- **A Compassionate Person with Spiritual and Personal Integrity** – A person who exemplifies integrity, strong character, personal wellness, and effective communication in both word and action.

Key Responsibilities

The Lead Pastor will provide Christ-centered spiritual leadership, pastoral care, administration, and community outreach.

Spiritual Leadership

- Cast and implement a Spirit-led vision that aligns with the church's mission and values.
- Direct the order of worship services and oversee the spiritual welfare of the congregation.
- Deliver engaging, theologically sound weekly sermons and Bible studies grounded in Scripture and cultural relevance. Communicating the Gospel clearly and inspiring spiritual growth, discipleship, and biblical literacy are essential.
- Mentor ministry leaders across generations with empathy, collaboration, and accountability.
- Foster a culture of prayer, service, discipleship, and leadership development across all ministries.
- Abide by the church's bylaws, leadership structure, and systems of accountability to ensure alignment and clarity in leadership.

Pastoral Care

- Provide pastoral counseling, visitation, and crisis care.
- Officiate weddings, funerals, communion, baptisms, and other ceremonies.
- Actively engage in the training, growth, and development of church leaders, ministerial staff, and lay members.
- Promote unity, guiding conflict resolution, and fostering reconciliation.
- Represent the church in local, denominational, and ecumenical settings.
- Maintain a regular, visible office presence throughout the week.

Administration

- Work with the Board of Elders and the Board of Stewards to ensure operational efficiency, fiscal integrity, compliance, and transparent governance in managing the church's budget and financial forecast.
- Lead annual strategic planning to advance congregational growth, ministry, and outreach goals, and to sustain capital and community transformation initiatives.
- Facilitate and actively participate in staff meetings, providing guidance and serving as a strategic resource to church committees and boards.
- Oversee ministerial staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers, while fostering a culture of unity and collaboration.

Community Outreach

- Build and sustain partnerships with faith-based, civic, educational, business, and nonprofit leaders to expand the church's community impact.
- Lead outreach and evangelism initiatives that respond to local needs and strengthen the church's presence in the community.
- Serve as a visible advocate for justice, hope, and holistic transformation throughout the City of Toledo.

Candidate Preparation and Expectations

- **Research Thoroughly:** Candidates should study the church and the City of Toledo beyond their websites; understanding community demographics, growth trends, and history is essential for effective ministry.
- **Craft a Thoughtful Application:** Submit materials that go beyond summarizing your résumé. Share your sense of calling, vision for ministry, and how your gifts align with the mission and context of First Church of God.
- **Demonstrate Future Readiness:** Exhibit both technological literacy and awareness of emerging tools (including AI) to support ministry innovation, while also demonstrating understanding of contemporary church challenges such as facility and capital needs, multigenerational ministry, member engagement and growth, and financial stability. Candidates should also affirm their familiarity with, or commitment to, maintaining written policies that address sensitive matters such as sexual harassment prevention and child protection.
- **Practice Transparency:** Be open about life and ministry stressors, such as anxiety, isolation, financial pressure, or congregational transition, as part of an honest and holistic discernment process.
- **Understand Governance and Accountability:** Be prepared to inquire about and understand the church's bylaws, leadership structure, and systems of accountability to ensure alignment and clarity in leadership.

Qualifications

Spiritual Calling & Credentials

- Demonstrates a genuine call to pastoral ministry and the ability to effectively communicate and teach biblical principles through theologically sound weekly sermons and Bible studies.
- Ordained and credentialed minister through the **Church of God (Anderson, IN)** or willing and able to obtain credentials within a specified timeline.
- Commitment to the doctrines, practices, and reformation heritage of the Church of God movement.

Education & Theological Preparation

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution is **required**.
- A Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or equivalent master-level theological degree from an accredited institution is **preferred**.
- Evidence of ongoing professional and theological development through workshops, continuing education, or denominational training is highly valued.

Experience & Leadership

- Minimum **five (5) years of pastoral leadership experience**, demonstrating effectiveness in preaching, administration, and community engagement.
- Proven ability to lead in both spiritual and organizational capacities, fostering unity and growth across a diverse congregation.
- Skilled in guiding the church toward mission and vision-driven goals.

Administrative & Financial Stewardship

- Strong organizational and management skills, including staff supervision, budget management, and oversight of church operations.
- Knowledge of capital projects, facility maintenance, and financial stewardship.
- Familiarity with and willingness to abide by FCOG Toledo church bylaws, governance structures, and compliance policies, particularly those concerning ethics, safety, and transparency.

Professional Conduct & Vetting

- Willingness to cooperate fully with the **Pastoral Search Committee** in a thorough vetting process, including:
 - Review of references and ministry philosophy
 - Verification of education and employment history (e.g., **official transcript review**)
 - Extensive background, credit, and character checks
 - Assessment of alignment with church mission, values, and standards of excellence

Required Application Materials

Candidates must submit a **complete** application packet (PDF format preferred):

- **Cover Letter** – Describe your call to ministry, pastoral philosophy, and vision for leading First Church of God.
 - **Résumé / Curriculum Vitae** – Include education, ministry experience, leadership roles, and professional affiliations.
 - **List of References** – Provide three (3) references, including at least one **pastoral peer**, one **lay leader**, and one **supervisor or denominational contact**.
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Submission Details

Please submit all materials electronically to the **First Church of God Pastoral Search**

Committee at hr@fcogtoledo.com with the subject line:

FCOG Toledo Lead Pastor Application – [Your Name]

Application Deadline: Friday, December 19, 2025, at 11:59 pm

If you have questions about the process or need additional information, please contact the Search Committee Chair, Elder Kyle Walton, via the same email address (hr@fcogtoledo.com).