

Profile - First Baptist Church, Torrington, Wyoming

The Area

Torrington, Wyoming is the Goshen County seat and located on the southeastern side of the state. Torrington is 32 miles from Scottsbluff, Nebraska, 83 miles from Cheyenne (the state capitol), and 184 miles from Denver, Colorado. The population of the county is estimated at 12,562, with 6,140 residing in Torrington. Goshen county has a population density of 5.6 people per square mile. Torrington is made up of 78% individuals who are white and 17% Latino or Hispanic all other races are less than 1% each. Goshen county also reports 24% of the population as older than 65. Approximately 1,000 of Torrington's 6,140 residents reside in the Wyoming State Medium Corrections Prison (about 4 miles East of Torrington).



Goshen County is a rural farming and ranching community. Torrington is home to the nation's 5th largest sale barn which boasts that they can ship cattle to 19 different states within 24-hours. Torrington is also home to Eastern Wyoming College (EWC). EWC offers 2-year degrees in a variety of areas, has a vibrant community outreach program, and hosts the local community theater. In addition to agriculture, the school systems, hospital/medical industries, and the prison are the area's largest employers. Torrington has a vibrant downtown, that includes a world class bakery and confectioner. In 2022, the average median income is reported to be \$55,500 with 12% of the population listed as living in poverty. The cost of living in Goshen County is considerably less than many other locations in the nation. Torrington is a good place to raise a family, or retire, the crime rate is low, the wind blows frequently, and the winters are considered mild (compared to the rest of the state, the snow is usually gone between storms).

First Baptist Church

First Baptist Church is reflective of the community. We are small, with 138 registered members and an average of 40 people in attendance per week. We have 10 to 15 who attend regularly who are not members of the church. We also broadcast our service weekly to consistently 10 or more individuals via Facebook (profile name: First Baptist Church of Torrington, WY). Prior to Covid, FBC maintained a full choir, music has been and remains important to our ministry. Many of the FBC congregation members are older than 65. FBC was established in Torrington in 1918 by the chapel car ministries. Like many congregations, over our 100+ years of service to the community, FBC has seen growth, conflicts, splits. FBC has struggled since Covid to find the right person to provide spiritual leadership for us to grow into the future. We are church board driven although our boards are smaller than most and we are considering transitioning to one church board. FBC welcomes new members through statement of faith, letter of transfer and baptism. Speaking specifically for us, we tend to be slow adopters, most of us avoid

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conflict and we are looking for a pastor who will lead us through biblical based teachings, spiritually and literally grow with us and provide some stability/consistency to the church.



Trustees

FBC is a mission giving church and financially stable. The proposed budget for 2026 is \$125,602. The church sold its parsonage in the late 90's and the income from the sale was invested. That investment has grown and allowed the stewards of the building and grounds to provide a beautiful place to worship on Main Street. Current investment holdings fluctuate between \$300,000 and \$350,000 depending on the market. As a counter measure to the continual increase in insurance costs we have increased the deductible to offer some savings. In the meantime, we are building a special fund account to cover the deductible to help cover any emergency repairs. As with many older buildings we have our share of items that need to be repaired and replaced, and the Trustees are actively working on these items. In addition, if a new item is purchased, or replaced or when a major repair is needed a special collection from the members will cover much of the cost.

Pastoral salary, compensation, and benefits are above community averages. The Pastor is responsible for identifying and securing their own home, part of the pastoral salary package is a housing allowance. A contract between the church and the Pastor will be executed and reviewed annually. A copy of the most recent contract is available for candidate review. Pastoral salary information will be provided when the correct candidate is invited to consider a home with us.

Diaconate

The diaconate board assists the pastor where needed. Monthly communion service is prepared on the first Sunday by the diaconate who with the pastor serve the elements to the congregation. The diaconate visits and serves communion to a minimal shut-in population with the pastor. The Diaconate organizes pulpit supply and arranges worship leaders if needed. The Pastor and diaconate board will meet with anyone seeking membership and guide them through the process. We greet visitors/guests

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with welcome packages that will introduce people to our church. We also administer the deaconate fund for those in need. The diaconate board is here to help where and when needed.

Pam Pugsley, Chair-Diaconate, Search Committee Member

Board of Christian Education

As a board, our focus is missions and the children's ministry of the church. In the past, we've held yard sales at the church to help fund community projects (i.e. painting an older person's house, repairing a broken fence, yard clean up, things of that nature). Traditionally, we provided free hot dogs and chips during the fair day parade, but we have not done this for the past four or five years. We participate in the community trunk or treat every year by passing out a small bag of candy with a verse for the children. In 2025, we gave each child a small treat bag with a Christian themed activity pad which had our church information on it and a few pieces of candy. We handed out at least 600 bags last year during Trunk or Treat. Our church supports international missions as well as participating in Operation Christmas Child.



Currently, we have a small Sunday school and children's church group and a jr. high/high school youth group. We do not have a Sunday School teacher for junior/senior high or adults currently.

We are hopeful that a candidate for pastor is a person who has a vision for how we, as a church, can show people of our community the love of Christ through our witness and community involvement.

Sherri Schultz, Chair, Board of Christian Education, Search Committee Member

Youth Programs

FBC programs provided to children and youth include Sunday school for children fifth grade and under, children's church during part of the worship hour, and a youth group for teens grades 6-12. Children who attend children's church are dismissed from the service after a time of singing and prayer before the pastor's sermon. Before being dismissed, the children are called forward for a children's message

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given by the pastor which includes a small treat as they depart. Youth group is presently on Sunday evening with a meal and games preceding a time of bible study.

Looking into the future, FBC is welcome to growing programs for middle and high school aged youth. A goal that leaders and students attending have is to grow the program in order to separate middle schoolers and high schoolers. In addition, the church is open to a children's program during the week as well

Karis Walker, – Search Committee Member, Youth representative

Summary of our Church Life

The church prioritizes Sunday School for all ages, fostering a community committed to spiritual growth. Midweek prayer and Bible study sessions provide an additional avenue for spiritual recharge, yet opportunities for children's programs and consistent childcare during services could be improved. We have a small number of children and youth who currently attend the church.

While the church offers ministries for men and women, there's potential for further development to cater to specific needs within these other demographics. Offering small group Bible studies to nurturing relationships and spiritual growth in a more intimate setting would be nice to start up again.

In the past there has been a focus on assessing spiritual gifts and encouraging involvement in missions, community service, and ecumenical worship events. Intergenerational activities promote unity among diverse age groups.

There's room for enhancement in providing for special needs groups and expanding programs such as day-care ministry, and community basic needs outreach. Further improvement could be made in offering teacher training events and opportunities for children during midweek activities.

Overall, the church exhibits a strong commitment to spiritual growth and community engagement, with ongoing programs and various opportunities. To create a more inclusive and diverse church community, it's essential to focus on enhancing ministries for specific demographics and expanding programs to cater better to diverse needs, especially for children, teens, special needs groups, and specific community outreach initiatives.

Summary of our Worship Life

In terms of congregation involvement in our worship life, there's a notable desire for more active engagement. People greet each other as part of worship, prayer concerns are regularly sourced from the congregation, but opportunities for lay leaders and children to participate are less frequent. While the church covenant isn't read regularly, there's potential for more involvement through responsive readings/litanies and unison prayers/bible readings.

Regarding music, congregation participation in praise songs and familiar hymns is a vibrant aspect, while other musical elements like choirs, handbells, and varied instruments occur less frequently (and even less so post covid). Pre-recorded music accompaniment is not widely used. A vibrant music committee needs to be re-established.

As for the minister's role, there's a strong preference for them to be the primary worship leader, delivering sermons with a biblical focus and involving themselves in the children's story. There's a desire

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for pastoral prayers to include all concerns mentioned, though sharing leadership on topics like evangelism, social issues, and stewardship with the laity is less common. The Pastor is expected to consult with the Diaconate for order of service, music preference and creation of the bulletin. Encouragement for charismatic gifts in worship and preaching on such matters is not a priority for the congregation. The pastor's political views should never be shared from the pulpit. There are no pastoral support staff, only dedicated church members.

We expect the pastor to play a crucial role in understanding and addressing community needs, mediating conflicts, and offering counseling and healing relationships. The pastor should provide a strong foundation in theological teachings and guide individuals towards spiritual growth.

Our congregation values financial stewardship and effective budget implementation. We're dedicated to expanding our community through membership programs and ensuring transparent communication.

Together, our focus is on realizing our vision and sustaining the church while fostering an inclusive and caring environment. We prioritize planning and managing church goals, nurturing fellowship, and encouraging both individual and collective stewardship.

We emphasize active participation in worship, fostering connections among members, and engaging in youth ministry for nurturing Christian faith and discipleship.

Our collective efforts aim to build a vibrant and spiritually enriching community, where the pastor and congregation collaborate to serve and grow together.

Recent Pastors

- **Rick Cedarholm** – 2006 - August 2017. Biblical leader, community mission driven, outreach, fellowship. Rick's wife Kelly desired to move closer to her children and grands. Currently serving in Avon, Massachusetts.
- **Brian Keithline** – April 2019-September 2021. Covid was difficult and contributed to his short tenure. Currently serving in Fargo, ND.
- **Brian Willats** – November 2021 – July 2023 Interim. And October 2024 – May 2025 Interim. Outstanding biblical knowledge, church healing, calm, leader. Full-time ministry is not what he is seeking. Due to health issues, had to step down. Currently serving as interim in Hot Spring, South Dakota.

Other Items

We operate using our church by-laws.

Our Mission Statement

First Baptist Church of Torrington, Wyoming, seeks to be an obedient people, empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a witness, glorifying God in Christ's love.

Pastoral Relations Committee

Will consist of at least two members of the current search committee, and a third member from the church body. We will meet with the Pastor regularly and only address issues and complaints when brought to the Pastoral Relations committee in writing (from either the Pastor or the congregation).

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Wedding Policy

We, the Christian community of First Baptist Church, Torrington, Wyoming, strive to be obedient to God's word and to uphold the Biblical truth that marriage should be between one man and one woman. Therefore, it is our Church Policy to deny a same sex wedding ceremony to be performed within the Church or by the Church Pastor.

Summary of our Church and Worship Life from documents created by Dick Glandt prior to 2019. Updated and summarized by Jeff Edwards in 2023 and again by David Howell in 2026.

Respectfully submitted, David Howell, Search Committee Chair, 2026