



CHURCH & CANDIDATE PROFILE

CHURCH NAME

Ainsworth Evangelical Free Church

CITY

Ainsworth

STATE

Nebraska

CHURCH WEBSITE

<https://ainsworthfree.org>

THE COMMUNITY

POPULATION OF CITY

1,670

POPULATION OF COUNTY

2,905

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Ainsworth is an agricultural community of approximately 1600 people located in the beautiful Nebraska Sandhills. In the north central part of the state, it is 30 miles south of the South Dakota border. Proudly proclaiming that we live “in the middle of nowhere,” and located about 180 miles from any large city we enjoy our lifestyle and all that the area has to offer. With the aid of technology and Amazon we manage to keep one foot in the modern world and the other in a world of old-fashioned values and beliefs.

WHY PEOPLE LIKE LIVING HERE

Both local individuals with generations behind them and newcomers alike enjoy all that our area has to offer. The Niobrara River located a few short miles north is a National Scenic River and offers canoeing and tubing through miles of wooded splendor. The surrounding Sandhills are one of the largest areas of grass-covered sand dunes in the world and are home to the state’s cattle ranches. Farming is also part of our economy with irrigated corn, soybeans and hay being the main crops.

Outdoor activities here are an important part of our life with many options. With lots of wildlife, people here enjoy good hunting and fishing. We have a well-maintained golf course, hiking trails and state parks to visit. Winter fun includes ice-fishing and snowmobiling.

The town itself has been working hard to keep growing, which is a challenge that many small towns have. In the last several years we have remodeled our school and hospital and built a community center. A main street building was remodeled into a volunteer run movie theater. We have a strong community spirit with fund raisers supporting the fire department, American Legion, etc. There is always an outpouring of community support for anyone facing serious illness or other needs. A recently remodeled library offers reading programs and other activities for children plus available computers and access to online books besides the collection it houses. We have 8 churches, 2 grocery stores, 3 banks, a pharmacy, and small businesses including a bookstore, flower shops, car dealers, dollar store and others. There are also numerous businesses that support the ag economy.

Families appreciate our well-run school with its dedicated teachers. It offers a good mix of academics, sports and extra-curricular activities. The most recent school remodel included a new addition for students to be hands on with animal husbandry, trades such as welding and automotive training, and offers many college credit courses to give an advantage to students moving forward in education. Graduates that leave here for higher education have a good chance of succeeding in college.

There are many young families moving here and choosing to raise their families here with remote access and broadband capabilities. Young parents are creating more opportunities and activities for their children. There's a new effort for a childcare center and more family activities!

Ainsworth may be a small town, but it has a lot to offer. It is a safe place to raise a family. Kids can ride their bikes to the swimming pool or library. The people who live in and around it are hardworking, friendly and caring. We love and share each other's burdens and joys. Living in a remote area has its challenges but the positives outweigh the negatives by a country mile!

THE CHURCH

CHURCH HISTORY

Ainsworth EFC has been served by only three full time Senior Pastors since 1987, and is officially part of the Evangelical Free Church of America and its Midwest District since 1990.

1987 – 1988 First Pastor called, youth ministry began, blessed with missions.

The Ainsworth Evangelical Free Church began as Bible studies started by Pastor Bruce Beebout with a small Bible study in June 1987. By January 1988, an average of 20 people meeting on Sunday evenings at a local bank, and the first Sunday morning worship service was held on March 6, 1988 with 33 in attendance. On February 12, 1989, to accommodate growth, services were held at the Hoch's Funeral Home. After one year of public ministry in Ainsworth, by March 5, 1989, an average of 60 people attended for worship and 40 in Sunday School.

1989 – 1999 Met at bank, building purchase, start remodel, moved to funeral home, Dan Fong starts Royal Family Kids Camp, involved in Taste of Christmas event, Awana ministry, and first youth minister was hired.

In the spring of 1989, the current building was purchased. It was built for manufacturing that never happened, sat vacant for several years, was purchased at a discounted price by the church, and remodeled with the work of many in the congregation. The first service was held in April 1990 and sanctuary completed in 1991. Awana served families in the church and community from 1992 to 1999, and youth minister added.

2000 – 2006 Part-time staff additions, Camp Witness, Rodeo Bible Camp, Small group studies, concert in the park, Pastor Bruce leaves and an interim pastor was called.

Many recall the 40-days of Purpose and Experiencing God small group studies as strong times of growth and discipleship. The church began Concert in the Park in 2005, and members were involved in Camp Witness, Rodeo Bible Camp, and Common Ground for youth. Pastor Bruce leaves to start a new church in Valentine, NE, and an interim pastor served for 1 year.

2007 – 2011 New pastor, crisis counseling, Operation Christmas Child, Dare-2-Share.

After a one-year interim pastor in 2006, Mick Thornton began as the church's second full-time pastor in 2007. He soon became a "community pastor" by connecting with people and through crisis counseling. Operation Christmas Child became an annual and all-year event for the church, and a partnership began with Dare-2-Share.

2012 – 2019 Add second pastor, expand missions, Saturday service, difficult youth pastor search and ending, 2018 economic decline, Senior Pastor resigns in August 2019.

Associate Pastor for Community and Outreach was added in 2012. Scotty Clark was hired to focus on connecting to the community, recruiting for outreach, and for missions. A large financial gift in 2014 provided a way to refocus on missions. The "Missions Big Thing" became a church partnership with Grace & Truth Church through World Orphans in Guatemala City. The annual Concert in the Park continued to connect with many people locally. A Saturday evening service was added for more space and for outreach in 2016. The highest years of attendance and giving were 2015 and 2016 (avg. 187). In spite of an economic downturn in agriculture during 2018, attendance and giving remain strong for this area. A difficult search for a third pastor (for youth) in 2018 and having to dismiss the eventual hire after six months due to moral failure, resulted in both significant disruption to youth ministry and distractions for leadership. After a year of consideration, Mick steps down in August 2019 to continue writing and radio ministry.

Notable strengths of the Elders' and Pastors' leadership during this time period was the emphasis given to reaching out to the community (events, counseling, visibility), welcoming visitors ("come as you are"), and generally reaching beyond the church and community in specific ways to the region and in global missions.

August 2019-Sept. 2021 Interim Pastor, Lead Pastor search, Associate Pastor leaves, Covid disrupts services.

Following the resignation of Pastor Mick, Pastor Dan Johnson was secured through Interim Pastor Ministry, IPM. A transition team was formed and the IPM program was followed to survey strengths/weaknesses and support the church.

During the transition period, Associate Pastor of Community and Outreach, Scotty Clark, feels called to serve elsewhere and leaves in the spring of 2020. Covid arrived and disrupted all ministries. Online worship services during the winter/spring months followed by meeting outdoors at the city park during the summer became the norm. Services moved indoors with reduced seating in the fall. Together groups were formed with the intent to support and connect the body.

Sept. 2021-2023 Pastor Charles begins serving as Ainsworth EFC's third full-time head pastor, new purpose statement created.

September 2021 begins Pastor Charles and wife, Shelly's ministry in Ainsworth. They have become an integral part of not only our church body, but our community. By attending school, sporting and social events, they are well known and connected to the citizens of our area. An emphasis on developing small groups has become a priority during this post-covid time frame. A positive carryover from covid outreach efforts include an online presence featuring a live stream on Sunday morning, weekly e-mail bulletin, weekly elder board prayer time via Zoom and monthly summer services in the park followed by food and fellowship. After a lengthy discussion by the elders a new purpose statement is introduced to the congregation March 2023: We glorify God by proclaiming Jesus and growing as His disciples.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

Evangelical Free Church

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

In several assessments of the history of this church, Ainsworth EFC has embraced biblical values of loving God, His Word, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. These biblical values extend to loving God's work in us, love for one another and love for Christ's mission to this community and around the world. In ministry values, we are a welcoming and accepting church--"come as you are" is genuinely practiced here. People of all backgrounds and life situations are invited to meet Jesus through us as we proclaim and grow as His disciples.

AVERAGE WEEKEND ATTENDANCE

135

IS YOUR CHURCH MULTISITE?

No

ATTENDANCE TREND

Growing

HOW MANY CAMPUSES?

1

NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES

1

WORSHIP STYLE OF YOUR CHURCH

Guitar-based worship with a mostly contemporary mix, often with keyboard, drums or cajon box, and sometimes a string bass. People enjoy the style of worship and a wide selection of music, and style of worship has not been controversial here.

OVERVIEW OF WEEKLY WORSHIP GATHERING

Worship services run from 10:00 to 11:00am on Sunday mornings. The services are usually started by a greeting from the pastor with brief announcements. This is followed by an elder praying for the service as well as a brief thought/Bible passage. This year's objective is to present ourselves as "approachable and relatable" in our messages. Two worship songs led by the worship team proceed the children ages 4 through 4th grade being dismissed to Kid Country. Nursery for children age birth to 3 years is provided for the entire service time. The sermon of 20-25 minutes is then followed by 3 additional worship songs. Snacks are then served in the fellowship hall. It is not unusual for people to fellowship for over an hour before departing.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FACILITY

The facility is not a traditional church building. It was originally built as a manufacturing facility that never started production, then was purchased by the church and finished inside with an auditorium that opens into a fellowship area (normal seating capacity over 200), administrative and pastor offices, a kitchen, restrooms, children's hallway and a "west wing" with another office and three meeting room areas for middle and Jr/Sr high classes.

OVERALL BUDGET (THIS FISCAL YEAR)

\$259,780

OVERALL LONG-TERM DEBT OF THE CHURCH

none

OTHER MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS

EFCA and the EFCA Midwest District. Support for local KGRD Christian radio station, Camp Witness staff members in Long Pine, NE, and missionaries with Navigators UNL, Wycliffe Bible Translators, and UIM international (MBI), and Operation Christmas Child (supplies collected throughout the year), sending around 1,000 boxes for the last several years.

GOVERNANCE & POLITY

The Senior Pastor is one of five Elders, with responsibilities also delegated to standing boards of Deacons and Deaconesses, and any other ministry teams or committees as approved by the Elders—such as Missions, Children’s Ministry, JH/SH Youth. The Senior Pastor is an ex-officio member of every committee, leads the staff, and works in a collaborative relationship with other elders.

Although not among its central doctrinal convictions, EFCA churches are congregational, autonomous and self-governing. EFCA congregationalism defines six matters ultimately approved by the corporate will of the congregation: determination of membership, appointment of principal governing boards (Elder, Deacon, Deaconess), selection of the Senior Pastor, approval or alteration of constitution/by-Laws, approval of an annual budget, approval of major purchases or dissolution. “EFCA churches entrust much of the decision-making to godly leaders who are trained, trusted, and allowed to lead” (See EFCA Convictions, Appendix 2).

An Elder Covenant was recently approved to give clarity to how Elders support, encourage, give direction, and evaluate how they work together toward agreed-upon ministry goals. Our desire is for the Elders to be policy-focused (ministry ends) while giving as much latitude to staff and other volunteer leaders (under the leadership of the Senior Pastor and collaboratively with other Elders) to determine the best ways to accomplish shared goals (ministry means).

MINISTRIES, PROGRAMS, AND STAFFING

CURRENT PAID STAFFING LEVEL

- Full-time Senior Pastor
- Part-time Administrative Assistant
- Part-time Worship Leader
- Part-time Facility Cleaning

MAJOR MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

In addition to Sunday worship, we have children's ministry, Chrysalis(monthly tea party outreach for girls ages 4 and up), JH and SH student ministries (ROC-Rely On Christ), a multitude of small groups, women's ministry, men's ministry (Equipped to Lead), missions, counseling ministry (non-staff, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner, compensated voluntarily, practices Biblical counseling), yearly baptism at community pool with watermelon and swim party.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Worship in the park in the summer with potluck, pastor perspectives in the local newspaper, donating to the community food pantry, word of the day opportunities on the local radio station. Our many small groups provide outreach and care to non-attenders. Our members and students are involved in FCA at Ainsworth High School, an annual Rodeo Bible Camp, Camp Witness, Special Youth Challenge (SYC) of Northern Nebraska, and are a witness to our community through local businesses, farms, ranches, city/county government, school teachers and administration, students, school board members, law enforcement, volunteer fire department, EMS and medical services, and in many ways connected to the life of this area.

WINS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

BIGGEST CHURCH 'WINS' IN LAST 18 MONTHS?

ROC (Rely On Christ) Youth Ministry—increase of volunteers

Grace and Truth Church in Guatemala becomes self sufficient

Operation Christmas Child continues to flourish

Increased number and diversity of small groups

Development and expansion of Chrysalis group for girls age 4 years and up

BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR CHURCH IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Continuing and growing of vibrant youth ministry that is relevant for all area youth, reaching them for Christ and connecting them and their families to the church

The establishment of a Spanish speaking small group

Continuing to build on the previous year's momentum of growth and community outreach

CHURCH'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

Continue to minister effectively in an ever-changing culture

Building our volunteer base as ministries expand

THEOLOGY

PUBLISHED THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

We are in full agreement with the published EFCA Statement of Faith and EFCA Distinctives (see efca.org, also on our website and in our Constitution), theologically conservative but not legalistic. We are complementarian in key leadership roles (Pastor, Elders) and in full agreement the 2017 EFCA Conference Resolution on Biblical Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage.

WHAT THEOLOGICAL HILLS WILL YOU DIE ON?

As in the EFCA Distinctives, “we are committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible and the essentials of the gospel... We have deep convictions based on the authority of God’s Word, but we do not draw battle lines over minor points. Nor do we make minor issues of doctrine a test of fellowship in the local church. We are evangelical. We believe in separated living and personal holiness, but we are not separatists.”

HOT-BUTTON SOCIAL/CULTURAL ISSUES FOR YOUR CHURCH

While seeking to proclaim the gospel and demonstrate the love of Jesus to everyone, we agree with the 2017 EFCA Conference Resolution on Biblical Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage. While many members may choose not to drink alcohol as a beverage, it is not a test of fellowship, and we agree that drunkenness is prohibited by Scripture.

DESCRIBE YOUR CHURCH'S POLICIES ON PARTICIPATION OF LGBTQ INDIVIDUALS IN THE LIFE OF YOUR CHURCH

We love everyone and hold to Biblical truth that stands in opposition to LGBTQ+.

THE POSITION

POSITION TITLE

Youth and Family Pastor

FULL TIME POSITION?

Yes

OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF THIS POSITION

The Youth and Family Pastor will oversee the ministry to all youth, nursery through college age, including teaching, curriculum and leadership development. He will establish connections with the parents of the youth as well as develop relationships with students and parents in the community.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

He will report to the Senior Pastor who reports to the Elders.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

We expect the Youth and Family Pastor to develop meaningful relationships with the youth and families of the church and community while fulfilling our purpose statement "to glorify God by proclaiming Jesus and growing as His disciples".

DO YOU HAVE A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THIS ROLE?

Role: The Youth and Family Pastor is responsible for mentoring and discipleship of the teenagers, children, and families of the Ainsworth Free Church and our community. This man must meet the qualifications for a pastor and overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and be a strong leader able to inspire families to become more like Christ.

Responsibilities:

Youth and Children's Ministry

- The Youth and Family Pastor is in charge of planning and implementing weekly programs and other special events for children/youth from infants to college age.
- The Youth and Family Pastor will continue and refine the current children (Kid Country) and youth (ROC) curriculum/programs.
- The Youth and Family Pastor is responsible for gathering, training, and equipping volunteers to accomplish the weekly and special event needs of the

Youth / Children's Ministry.

- The Youth and Family Pastor is expected to develop relationships with families of children and youth of the Ainsworth Free Church.
- The family Pastor should seek to grow the youth ministry by engaging with youth and families in the community and outside of the congregation.
- The Youth and Family Pastor will communicate with parents about the logistics of the children's ministry activities, and this person, too, must communicate with parents about the spiritual development and overall well-being of their children (and youth).

Marriage/Parent Ministries

- The Youth and Family Pastor will direct, develop and lead discipleship courses for married couples and parents.
- The Youth and Family Pastor is charged with coordinating events for families throughout the year.
- The Youth and Family pastor should have the desire to seek out relationships with parents and families within the community beyond the Ainsworth Free Church.

Other/Expectations

- The Youth and Family pastor is a full time position with 45-50 working hours weekly. Evening and weekend work is expected.
- A work schedule should be developed to include at least one day off per week and other blocks of time with attention given to maintaining a healthy marriage and personal family considerations.
- The Youth and Family pastor will attend school sports and other events.
- The Youth and Family Pastor will promptly attend scheduled staff meetings.
- The Youth and Family Pastor should work with the Senior Pastor on matters of family discipleship and family pastoral care.
- Salary, vacation, ministry leave, and other benefits will be established by the congregation upon recommendation by the elder board.
- The Youth and Family pastor is responsible and accountable to the Senior pastor and will report to the congregation.
- This document will be reviewed with the Senior pastor/Elder board, and revised as needed, in conjunction with annual performance evaluations.

Qualifications/Qualities:

1. The YFP should be a faithful Christian committed to Gospel Ministry with a particular love of families.
2. The YFP should be relational and gifted with interpersonal skills

3. This YFP should have the ability to teach people on matters of faith, especially of varying ages and family situations.
4. The YFP needs to have the creativity and leadership skills to create and direct a wide variety of discipleship opportunities for children, youth, parents, and families.
5. The YFP must be experienced and equipped to counsel families and parents on matters of faith.
6. The YFP should have strong leadership skills.

SKILLS, PERSONALITY, AND EXPERIENCE

WHAT SKILLS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SPECIFICALLY?

We are looking for someone who is relational and has the ability to teach in a small group setting, lead volunteers, and disciple youth and parents.

WHAT TECHNICAL ABILITIES (IF ANY) ARE REQUIRED?

This person needs to know basic computer skills: zoom, basecamp, group text.

BUDGET AREA SUPERVISION

\$12,000 to \$15,000

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED

- Relational
- Structured
- Outgoing
- Self-motivated

WHAT WOULD IMMEDIATELY DISQUALIFY SOMEONE?

- Divorce
- Unrelatable
- Inability to create deep relationships

OTHER "MUST HAVE" SKILLS

- Ability to be flexible
- Team player

OTHER "NICE TO HAVE" SKILLS

Guitar and singing abilities, bilingual (Spanish)

DESCRIBE THE PERFECT CANDIDATE

Our perfect youth and family pastor would have a dynamic personality, and be someone who is relational, community oriented and passionate about helping parents and students walk with Jesus.

PUBLIC JOB POSTING PAGE

PUBLIC JOB POSTING

Ainsworth Evangelical Free Church
Youth & Family Pastor
Ainsworth, Nebraska

Ainsworth Evangelical Free Church (Ainsworth EFC) in Ainsworth, Nebraska is looking for a Youth and Family Pastor to join their team. Ainsworth EFC has embraced the biblical values of loving God, His Word, and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. These biblical values extend to loving God's work in everyone, love for one another and love for Christ's mission to their community and around the world. They are seeking a Youth and Family Pastor to oversee the ministry to youth, work with parents of the youth and mentor them, and attend student activities and develop relationships with parents in the community.

WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING:

- Planning and implementing weekly programs and other special events for children/youth from infants to college age.
- Gathering, training, and equipping volunteers to accomplish the weekly and special event needs of the Youth /Children's Ministry.
- Directing, developing and leading discipleship courses for married couples and parents.

SKILLS YOU NEED TO HAVE:

- Love and follow Jesus
- Excellent relationship skills
- Ability to teach
- Strong leadership skills.

THE AREA:

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WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU APPLY!

<https://bit.ly/3rkCtRf>