

DESCRIPTION OF THE BEAVER DAM CITY AND COMMUNITY 2021

Harvest Church is located a few miles east of Beaver Dam, WI.

Beaver Dam, a city of 16,000 residents, is located in Dodge County in south central Wisconsin on the south edge of Beaver Dam Lake, which is the 16th largest lake in Wisconsin. Beaver Dam is situated just 30 minutes northeast of Madison, 60 minutes northwest of Milwaukee, 90 minutes south of Appleton, and 2 ½ hours north of Chicago.

Area employers include light duty manufacturers, such as Mayville Engineering Co. and John Deere, as well as health services and correctional facilities, but most workers are employed at smaller businesses, in service jobs, or in agricultural occupations. Stores like Kohls, Walmart and Menards make up some of the retail marketplace, while Beaver Dam is surrounded by rich farmlands.

The community of Beaver Dam has much to offer. Along with a plethora of civic organizations, it is also home to active community music groups, theater, and an art center. There are also multiple recreational facilities in the area. The city has a strong public school system, along with two faith-based K-8 schools, a 9-12 private boarding school, a technical college campus, and a Christian school within driving distance.

Community services include two homeless shelters, one for men and one for women and children as well as a domestic abuse shelter. A community coalition food pantry and St. Vincent de Paul also support the poor. Work has started on converting a building downtown into a new senior center. The community is also blessed to have Church Health Services, a local non-profit organization that helps the disadvantaged meet their “physical, spiritual, and mental health needs.”

According to the latest census, the city’s population is 93% Caucasian. A Hispanic/Latino population is the only significant minority, accounting for virtually all of the remaining 7%. Like most communities, Beaver Dam’s population of retirees is also increasing.

Beaver Dam and the surrounding area is a complex, and at times challenging, area for ministry, despite appearing to be a typical small town in the Midwest. Politically, it is very polarized, with both a conservative set and strong numbers of those who have a very liberal stance. Culturally, Beaver Dam is very much like Madison: secular in mindset and suspicious of people of faith. People who do have a church connection in their past usually come from a Lutheran or Catholic background. Virtually all mainline church attendance in town is dwindling, and many are forced to cut staff positions. There is the presence of Youth for Christ as a non-denominational ministry, but it also struggles to gain partnership with churches and with individuals in town.

All of this creates a need and a great opportunity for the Gospel. There is a core of believers in the area who desire to reach their communities with the love of Christ, and Harvest is home to many of them. We believe that our area needs us to be a light here and that through love, relationships, and patience, many can be won to Christ and disciplined to become lifelong followers of Him!