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## The ties that bind

### Church of Christ Reno

By [D. Brian Burghart](#)

“This is America.”

That’s the thought that kept going through my head as Hunter and I attended a service of the Church of Christ Reno on Sunday morning. The services were held in a converted home on Sinclair Street, and I’m not quite sure why I got such a visceral reaction to the group, but I imagine that this style of congregation is what the Founding Fathers were picturing when they agreed to the First Amendment: A small group of families who get together to worship, eat and sustain each other.

But the mind goes where it will. The congregation enters the church from the back side. The door opens into the small sanctuary. The décor is pretty minimal, about 35 dusty rose chairs and off-white walls. The chancel was dominated by a projection screen upon which were the words, “The Family of God.” To the left was the lectern, to the rear a small, cloth-covered table that contained the communion. There were about 19 congregants in the room, eight of them children.

It’s a new church. According to the website, [www.churchofchristreno.com](http://www.churchofchristreno.com), the group moved to the Reno area in the summer of 2008 with the mission “to reach out to our community, to share our Lord Jesus Christ, to learn—and help others learn—to live and



Photo By D. Brian Burghart

The Church of Christ Reno, 515 Sinclair St., meets at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Sundays. For more information, call 560-6519 or check out [www.churchofchristreno.com](http://www.churchofchristreno.com).

serve God to the best of our ability.”

Minister Matt Hayes caught us as we entered, introduced us to the nearby members and then gave us the quick tour of the church, circuitously back to the restroom.

Services began promptly at 10:30 a.m. (There’s a second at 2:30 p.m.) It started with announcements, by Hayes, mainly updates on people who’d been sick or absent lately, followed by an opening prayer. It included a bit of gratitude: “[We are] thankful for the blessings of friends and family and brothers and sisters in Christ, and your Son and the sacrifice He made for us.”

I don’t know enough about the Church of Christ to say if the songs sung—“Be Still and Know,” “Safe in Your Fold,” “Higher on the Mountain,” were standards—but as the group sang acappella, it certainly had that aspect.

Mark Herota gave the sermon, which focused on comparisons between what it takes to have a healthy family and a healthy church. He was well prepared to speak, and it didn’t take long to get into the rhythm. He’d tell a joke to illustrate where he was going, then he’d elucidate with Bible verses and explanations of where the scripture would fit into the lives of the congregation.

Herota offered four characteristics of a healthy family. I’ll leave it to you to determine how that works with a church. Healthy families must: 1) put God first; 2) have inter-generational structure; 3) love and care for each other; 4) stick together.

The congregation eats lunch together after the service, and it looked like it was going to be quite a feast. I think that people who are looking for a Christian community that will help them rise above the secular gutters may well find it at this new, family-sized church.

## **MUSIC**

*none*

*mellow*

**traditional**

*rockin’*

## **SERMON**

*none*

**thought-provoking**

*informative*

*inspirational*

## **FELLOWSHIP**

*cordial*

*friendly*

**welcoming**