

Lynchburg, VA Community Profile

Sandusky Baptist Church is located within the city limits of Lynchburg, Virginia, in the suburban neighborhood known as Sandusky. Although Sandusky is a stable neighborhood, not in transition, Lynchburg itself has experienced a lot of growth and revitalization within the last decade. Most of that growth is the result of a rapidly increasing population of college students that has firmly entrenched the city as a "college town." Lynchburg (2020 pop. 79,000) is in the central part of Virginia, surrounded by the counties of Amherst (pop. 31,000), Bedford, (pop. 79,000), and Campbell (pop. 56,000). Current population estimates of the metropolitan area which encompasses Lynchburg and the three counties are about 262,000, which would be an increase of 6.9% in the last four years.

Sandusky is demographically similar to most of the rest of the city and could be considered a "melting pot." Residents include Caucasian (60%), African-American (27%), Hispanic (5%), Asian (2%), and all other ethnicities (6%). According to the 2010 census, ages of citizens living in Lynchburg include: <18 (22%), 18 - 24 (16%), 25 - 44 (25%), 45 -64 (21%), and >64 (16%). Although current figures aren't available, it's likely that those 18 - 24 comprise a considerably higher percentage than in 2010. Most of those living in homes close to Sandusky Baptist Church are members of families, as there aren't many apartments within the neighborhood. Lynchburg is only about 50 square miles in area, so all parts of the city are within a 15 - 30-minute drive.

Housing: According to an April 2024 real estate report, the median price for a single-family home is about \$253,000, an increase of approximately 8% over 2023. Homes listed for sale are on the market for an average of 9 days before connecting with a buyer. The average monthly rental cost for a 2-bedroom apartment is about \$1,100. Available housing is adequate, primarily because construction of homes and apartments is booming, in order to keep up with the demand. The Sandusky area consists of mostly well-maintained homes that are increasing in property value on an annual basis.

Schools: Lynchburg has 11 public elementary schools (3 close to the church, 1 in the Sandusky neighborhood), 3 middle schools (1 in Sandusky), and 2 high schools (1 nearby that also serves as one of the State's Governor's Schools for Science and Technology). There are more than a half dozen private schools, some secular and some religious. There are several private universities: University of Lynchburg, Randolph College, Virginia University of Lynchburg, and the largest, Liberty University (which is nearby). Slightly farther out (in Amherst County) is an all-girls' school, Sweet Briar College. In addition, there is a public state college, CVCC, that offers Associate Degrees for transfer to 4-year schools as well as trade profession certificates, that is close to the church.

Shopping and Dining: Lynchburg has a plethora of shopping centers, including River Ridge Mall (the largest), that contain small specialty shops as well as most of the "big-box" national chain stores found throughout the U. S. The same is true with dining establishments, in that almost any type of cuisine can be found, from "mom and pop" restaurants to all the national chain eateries. Choices for fast food, casual buffets, and formal "sit-down" dining are in great

supply. A number of small "pod malls," made up of 8 -10 businesses contain shops for both dining and shopping.

Recreation: There are literally hundreds of choices for recreation within an hour or so of Lynchburg:

Mountains - The Blue Ridge Parkway, featuring the Peaks of Otter, can be accessed from both Bedford and Amherst County. It offers stunning views of fall colors. Part of the world-renowned Appalachian Trail and other hiking venues are within easy driving distance. Wintergreen Resort in Nelson County (through Amherst County), a large winter time ski area, is close enough for an easy day trip.

Water - Smith Mountain Lake, a very large lake impoundment, offers all manner of water recreation, including boating, fishing, and water skiing. The creation of Lynch's Ferry (that offered passengers a way to cross the James River from Amherst County) led to the founding of Lynchburg in 1757. The James River is an integral part of the city, so a lot of revitalization has focused on the riverfront area. Hiking trails, festivals, and boating & fishing areas are concentrated along that corridor.

History - Historic Sandusky, a mere two blocks from the church, is the site of a Union Headquarters during the American Civil War. Appomattox, the site of the Southern Surrender by General Robert E. Lee, is an hour away from Lynchburg, and features an extensive portion of the collection of the Civil War Museum. The National D-Day Memorial in Bedford takes about 45 minutes to reach from here. There are many other historic attractions too numerous to mention, but include the Old City Cemetery and Arboretum, The Pest House, the Old Court House, Point of Honor, Poplar Forest, the home of Renaissance poet Anne Spencer, and the home of Booker T. Washington.

Arts & Culture - Examples of these features include: Amazement Square, a hands-on science and technology exhibition locale for children, The Maier Museum of Art located at Randolph College, The Academy of Music, a restored turn of the 20th century theatre house that books current acts, the Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra & the Children's Symphony Orchestra, and Ecclesia, a youth ballet company.

Sports - City Stadium is the home of the Class A professional baseball team, the Lynchburg Hillcats, an affiliate of the MLB Cleveland Guardians. The adjoining stadium is also the home football field for the 2 local high schools, E. C. Glass and Heritage, both of which are in the Virginia Class AA Seminole District Region 3. Liberty University, a top classification FBS college, plays the best teams in the U. S. in multiple sports. Their facilities compare favorably to any other school in the nation. Additionally, the city has many neighborhood parks, trails, and recreation areas available for public use. The City Parks & Recreation Department has recreational programs and classes for all ages and disciplines.

Tourism: The city benefits from having a lot of attractions that draw people in from everywhere for many purposes, but the economy is not that dependent on tourism in order to balance the books. Since Lynchburg is a college town, there are sufficient hotels to house guests on a short-term basis. Those frequenting attractions in the surrounding counties find it very convenient to stay here locally and make a short drive to their daily destinations. There is a

Tourism Center located downtown that disseminates information about the local amenities and assists visitors in planning their trips.

Transportation: All modes of transportation are available in Lynchburg. Intercity bus routes are served by the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company, while long-distance travel is covered by Greyhound, which has a number of scheduled destinations and transfer points. Passenger rail service is handled by Norfolk Southern, which utilizes a fairly high-speed Amtrak system to connect to all cardinal points of the compass. Lynchburg Regional Airport is busy - most flights are booked on American Eagle, a subsidiary of American Airlines. Departing from Lynchburg, American Eagle usually lands in Charlotte, NC, where connections are available to almost every corner of the world. 3 north/south U. S. Highways serve the city: Route 29, 221, and 501; Route 460 is the east/west highway for Lynchburg. Although there is no interstate highway within the city, an hour's drive will connect with I-64 (east/west) or I-81 (north/south). Also, unlike some cities of Lynchburg's size, there are bicycle lanes marked on some of the main streets as well as a number of off-road bike trails for those seeking a slower pace of travel.

Public Safety & Services: Lynchburg has a paid Police and Fire Department, and is adequately staffed and trained. Fire stations are evenly spread throughout the city, so that each area is close by (the fire department is also equipped to take care of EMT emergencies). The surrounding counties all have paid sheriff's offices and volunteer fire departments. In Lynchburg, as is the case everywhere, there is a certain amount of crime - most of the calls for criminal activities are in the inner-city, as expected. Citizens living in most of the subdivisions and suburban areas have a good rapport with the police and do not generally have many safety concerns. Weekly trash pickup, street & traffic maintenance, and snow removal are taken care of by the city.

Climate: Lynchburg generally has 4 distinct seasons, all of which are usually moderate. The area is classified as having a humid, subtropical climate with cool winters and hot, humid summers. For those interested in home gardening, the plant hardiness zone is 7B.

General Information: According to a 2024 survey conducted by livability.com, Lynchburg is ranked in the Top 100 Best Places to Live in the United States. It is known as a hub for nuclear power technology, pharmaceuticals, and material handling. The biggest employers are Liberty University and Centra Health (the health care and hospital system here), and both continue to build and grow by leaps and bounds. There is no local income tax and real estate & property taxes are at a reasonable level. Virginia imposes a 5.3% sales tax on purchases of most items. Additionally, most cities and counties charge a meals tax on prepared food. Lynchburg's meals tax is 6.5%, requiring diners to pay 11.8% above the price of their meals. Downtown is now a very vibrant part of the city, having received a makeover in the last two decades, following years of neglect.