

First Presbyterian Church has been located in Downtown Albemarle since its founding in 1898 and on the present site since 1924. The City of Albemarle, population 16,432, is centrally located in the Piedmont region of North Carolina and is the county seat of Stanly County, population 63,425. Albemarle's median age is 38.9 and has a median household income of \$43,231. The two largest ethnic groups are white (66%) and African-American (23%). Albemarle is conveniently 3 hours from the Appalachian mountains, 3 hours from a wide variety of beautiful North and South Carolina beaches, 4 hours from Atlanta, GA, 2 hours from Raleigh, NC and 1 hour from Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

As a southern textile town, Albemarle suffered significant job loss in the 1990s, along with many other NC towns, as the mills closed. Since that time, Albemarle and Stanly County's economy have diversified and include agriculture, textiles, energy, healthcare and aerospace. Both Albemarle and Stanly County are currently developing industrial parks to attract new industry and the recent unemployment rate was 3.4%. Historic Downtown Albemarle has continued a revitalization effort begun many years ago with recent renovations of a hardware store, a historic hotel building and an almost 100 year old closed elementary school. Over 100 new apartments were added downtown along with a performing arts venue. At least 6 restaurants are open downtown with more on the way as well as the city's first brewery. Two institutes of higher learning, Stanly Community College and Pfeiffer University's Center for Health Science, are located in Albemarle. Charlotte Pipe and Foundry recently relocated to western Stanly County and is one of the largest companies in their industry.

Stanly County, along with the NC Air National Guard (ANG), jointly operates a regional airport categorized as a general aviation facility 5 miles northeast of downtown Albemarle. The airport is constantly undergoing improvements due to the presence of the ANG and accommodates the massive military C17 cargo aircraft. Approximately 25% of airport traffic is military related. With over 2,000 new home sites approved within the city limits in the past 18-24 months, Albemarle is poised to experience significant residential growth over the next 5-10 years.

The local public school system is operated by the Stanly County Board of Education and is the largest employer in the county with over 1,350 employees. The system consists of 5 high schools (including an early college), 4 middle schools, and 11 elementary schools and serves approximately 8500 students grades PK-12. Other education options in Stanly County include a highly rated grade 6-12 charter school (Gray Stone Day School) as well as several other private schools, religious schools and numerous home school groups.

One of Albemarle's greatest resources is our access to the outdoor lifestyle. East of Stanly County, the Uwharrie National Forest (UNF) is a 50,000 acre region named for the ancient Uwharrie Mountains that promotes camping, fishing, a shooting range, 4-wheeling, hunting and 40 miles of hiking trails. Stanly County is divided from the UNF by the Yadkin/Pee Dee River. The lakes on the river, created by a series of 4 dams, provide kayaking, boating, skiing, fishing, and other outdoor amenities. Morrow Mountain is a 6,000 acre state park located in Stanly County on the western edge of the lakes region, offering site camping, cabins, a public pool, kayak and canoe rental, horseback riding trails and hiking trails. The park had over 500,000

visitors during 2020. Albemarle has 4 parks in the city including 2 public swimming pools, 2 disc golf courses, 10 pickle ball courts, walking trails, tennis courts, picnic areas, a dog park, ball fields and a privately operated tree top obstacle course. The City of Albemarle has also recently entered into an agreement to lease a ballfield to a collegiate wood-bat baseball team which will begin play in 2023 and provide a new sports entertainment outlet for the community.