



First Presbyterian Church of Charleston  
**MISSION STUDY**  
**2020**

# First Presbyterian Church

Charleston, West Virginia

Mission Study 2020

The Mission Study for First Presbyterian Church, Charleston, is based on the premise that all of us are in a relationship with God, who is ever more ready to communicate with us than we are to listen, a God who is ever more ready to bestow grace on us than we are to receive it. This God is also willing to offer us direction and perspective if and when we are ready to be open to receiving such direction.

God will speak to us through Scripture, tradition, community, relationships, events and experiences. What is needed in all cases is the gift of discernment so we are able to distinguish between messages from God and messages that stem from our own willfulness, our ego, or even our shadow.

As a Mission Study Team and community of Christians, we understand that no one person knows fully the will of God. In our sin and finitude, we are not able fully to comprehend or to accomplish God's will. We trust that when we are faithful and open, God's will is disclosed to us that we may follow, and God has given us each other to assist in discovering and doing God's will.

We have attempted to listen for direction from God, and to notice the movement of God through the following: Scripture study; team building; listening conversations with congregation members and staff; interviews with community leaders and church officers; significant reading and study regarding a variety of relevant topics; open and candid assessment regarding history and patterns at First Presby; conversation with members of the Strategic Planning Process; along with considerable personal experience and institutional memory from among the Mission Study Team members.

Through deliberate Christian spiritual discernment, we have pursued our work with a spirit of desiring to continue to assume a religious leadership role in the future of the Charleston community, and to be faithful to the gospel of our Lord.

Becky Ceperley – Chair

Sallie Daugherty – Elder

Richard Gaskins – Deacon

Mary Lu MacCorkle- Deacon

Tom Marchio – At-Large

Taylor Raab – Elder

Reverend Glenn Coleman, Staff Resource

Reverend Dr. Nancy Kahaian, Staff Resource

# Mission Study Context

## Our Recent Past

Our former senior pastor served for thirteen years, and our former associate pastor for less than a year. Near the end of the thirteen-year tenure of our former senior pastor, some members raised concerns about the future of First Presbyterian, leadership practices, political differences, staff turnover, leadership style of the Senior Pastor, communication dynamics, operating procedures of the Session and committees' decision-making. In the midst of this undercurrent of tension was an ongoing Strategic Planning Process that culminated in a call for renovation to the traditional Chapel structure within the campus, which prompted a swift and strong division within the congregation. Shortly after the height of this tension, the former senior pastor retired.

It has been imperative that the two Interim Pastors (a senior and an associate) exercise the capabilities to improve administrative items, provide pastoral care to a hurting congregation and a beleaguered staff, and initiate leadership development among church officers and staff. During the transition experience at First Presbyterian Church, the majority of members are positive about the renewed sense of energy in the congregation, and yet a number of engaged members still have passionate concerns, and the church has not been able to fully heal the divisions. Church officers and congregation members were recently invited to participate in a "Healthy Congregations Workshop" led by Richard Blackburn of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Church leaders are more capable in recognizing and articulating an understanding of the pervasive anxiety in the system of this congregation. Because of their abilities to integrate this information into their leadership practices, church leaders are also strengthening their ability to make better choices related to that anxiety. With an understanding of family systems, and the life forces of 'togetherness and belonging' and 'independence and individuality' at play in our congregational context, there is a renewed awareness of our responsibility to base decisions on values and principles. We must also focus our identity on our mission and purpose as the body of Christ, especially as we give attention to preparing to receive a new Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor.

While sorting out the challenges and obstacles from our most recent past you will read within these pages, the Holy Spirit has set something stirring inside the congregation as a body – there's renewed energy for adult education witnessed in record participation in 2019 Lenten Growth Groups, a Summer Seminary Experience, a fall "Presbyterian 101" primer for adults and church officers, and ongoing spiritual and leadership development among the Session and Deacons. Scores of members are responding to local mission initiatives and global giving opportunities. Other members are excited to be invited to volunteer to serve in the main reception office or assist with Christian education projects.

A weekly electronic newsletter began, and communication processes are more open between church leadership and members of the congregation. Our Interim Senior Pastor has been invited to serve and to speak at community functions, ecumenical and interfaith forums, reviving our clergy leadership legacy in the Kanawha Valley.

Many members are ready, even eager, for spiritual challenge and growth. Alongside the desire for renewed energy are members who over the decades have settled into a comfortable fit with what has been at First Presbyterian Church. We have high expectations of our next Pastor/Head of Staff, and we desire a Pastor/Head of Staff to have high expectations of us. As a body, we have an abundance of gifts for ministry, and we have discerned a desire to expend those gifts more fully, to give of ourselves more as we learn, love and serve together in the name of Christ.

## MISSION STUDY IN BRIEF

As of March 2019, there were two interim pastors on the field at the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston. Within months, a special congregational meeting was called to review the mission and ministry of the committees of the Session from 2019, in addition to addressing the expectations of the interim process, including a written handout circulated entitled “Developmental Tasks for a Transition - The Work of Interim Ministry.” As an outcome of that education and explanation, a “Blue Sheet Questionnaire” was distributed to attendees and also electronically, with those responses shared with the Session and members of the Mission Study Team. In addition to this data, the Interim Senior Pastor conducted “Listening Sessions” to hear from the congregation on those issues that mattered most. A compilation of these issues were shared with the Session and the Mission Study Team.

In the summer of 2019, there were three Wednesday evening “Salad Suppers and Forums” to share information with the congregation related to feedback from members, identification of current issues being addressed by the Session for forward movement, and the anxiety of the congregational system related to the interim process. These Wednesday evening gatherings were very well attended, and also provided information on the current considerable initiatives of the Session, including: completion of the preschool playground; replacement of the fire alarm system; hosting a Healthy Congregations workshop; addressing sound issues in the sanctuary; and relocating the Preschool to the Activities Building. At the conclusion of each evening, all participants were invited to forward a list of three persons who they especially trusted to be leaders in a discernment process related to the creation of a Mission Study Team for First Presbyterian Church. The Mission Study Team's responsibility to discern a vision for First Presby and also shape the leadership skills necessary for the next Pastor/Head of Staff and Associate Pastor.

The Session appointed a six-member team to explore the environment within and outside our congregation. The members of the Mission Study Team are: Becky Ceperley, Chair - Sallie Daugherty, Richard Gaskins, Mary Lu MacCorkle, Tom Marchio, Taylor Raab and our pastors: Glenn Coleman and Nancy Kahaian.

This exploration is understood to be foundational to our discernment for God's intention for First Presbyterian Church. One goal was to answer three questions proposed by former Alban Institute consultant Gil Rendle (see Appendix A for our bibliography of reading materials):

- Who are we?
- Who is our neighbor?
- What is God calling us to do now?

Mission Study Team work commenced in September 2019. Members of the team were prayerfully guided by Scripture study, the values and principles of our covenant (see Appendix B) sharing meals and personal fellowship, and candid conversation in discerning the facets of the components of responding to the questions: church history, history of West Virginia and Charleston, community and congregational demographics, financial and membership data, community leader interviews, staff conversations, goals from conversational forums with members of the congregation.

What you are about to read are the vision and direction discerned from that work.

## Past Informs Present:

### A Historical Perspective

Two hundred years ago when Charleston was only a little village of five hundred people, with no paved streets or bridges, and the leading hotel or tavern (as it was then called), charged twelve and one-half cents for a night for lodging and twenty-five cents for meals, it was then that the work of the church was beginning in the Kanawha Valley.

Colonel David Ruffner, one of the leading citizens of the time, came with his father to this valley from Shenandoah, Virginia, and was very much interested in its economic, educational and religious development. He and his brother bored and operated the first salt wells west of the Alleghenies. He discovered coal, the first known in Kanawha, and used it in his salt furnaces.

David's son, Henry, at an early age showed an interest in teaching and preaching rather than in salt making. In March 1819, in a small upper room of the Mercer Academy, Henry Ruffner met with a small group and organized the Presbyterian Church of Kanawha.

Dr. Ruffner was to become a professor of Latin and Greek at Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, but consented to assume the duties of pastor until a permanent pastor could be secured. In November 1819, the Reverend Calvin Chaddock became the first pastor of the church.

At the time of the Civil War in 1861, a southern General Assembly was organized to take care of the southern churches. Sentiment in this valley was divided since western Virginia was a border region. The Presbyterian Church of Kanawha decided to refrain from sending delegates to either the northern or southern Assembly; and for eleven years it did not become affiliated with either.

In March 1872, two rolls were prepared. As members entered the church, they were asked to sign according to their choice. One hundred and fifty-three preferred the Southern Assembly and twenty-three, the Northern Assembly. It was agreed that the church divide. It was decided that the 153 be given the church, and the 23 were given the manse.

The 153 who signed to go with the southern Assembly were given new membership in the First Presbyterian Church. A Ladies Aid Society was organized, and a few years later the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies.

The church served as the site for several meetings of the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church. In May 1933, the church's pastor, the Reverend Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson was elected Moderator of the General Assembly, the first Moderator to be elected from the Synod of West Virginia.

The First Presbyterian Church has been served by several notable pastors who are recorded in the historical archives of the Presbyterian Church (USA): Reverend Dr. William Benfield, who served as the Chair of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) during its formative years, and also as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1970, and the Reverend Dr. Dean Thompson, who served the congregation from 1995-2003 before becoming the President of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Other pastors include: Dr. Wallace Alston, Dr. George Vick, Dr. Thornton Tucker and Dr. William McCoy.

During the 1960-70s, the First Presbyterian Church generated many new programs, both in the congregation and community, many of which exist today. In response to a growing need for housing for older people of low to moderate income, the congregation assisted with the building of Brooks Manor, a five story building with sixty units, located around the corner from the church. Brooks Manor opened in 1969. The congregation responded to a community need when it purchased a house next door to the church known as "The Fellowship Home," with the purpose of providing a home for recovering adult male alcoholics.

The Kanawha Pastoral Counseling Center opened its doors in 1972, and has been housed on our campus for almost 50 years. One of the most dynamic programs to emerge during this time period arose from the urgent cry for a shelter for runaway youths. Devised and implemented by church member Ardath Francke, the program was supported financially by the Session, and since 1974 the Daymark organization continues to shelter youths in crisis, and offers additional programs for long-term support.

To strengthen the relationship between First Presbyterian Church and Charleston, a community ministry was established in 1983, with Judy Keller as coordinator. Manna Meal, at our neighboring church St. John's Episcopal since 1977, is now assisted by a network of churches, including First Presbyterian. In 1989, the congregation was a leader in the ecumenical efforts to establish The Samaritan Inn, a residence and skills training center for formerly homeless adult men.

Meeting space is currently provided for the Covenant House Community Food Pantry, the Literacy Volunteers of Kanawha County, Boy Scouts Troop 5, Shepherd's Center, Girl Scouts, Pen Women, and Charleston Churches Recreation Association.

Earlier this year, the First Presbyterian Church, and our neighboring Kanawha United Presbyterian Church, joined together to celebrate 200 years of Presbyterian presence in the Kanawha Valley. Every church in the Valley was invited to a worship service at the Charleston Civic Center, with over 500 in attendance. We continue to give God thanks and praise for working through us to faithfully serve our congregation and community.

## Where We Are in Context

### Demographics of our State and Community

Most of the area that is now West Virginia was known as the Middle Ground to the native people of America. This was an area that they would hunt and harvest the rich resources that nature provided, never taking more than they needed. This area then became the Western frontier of the United States. The people that settled here were tough and strong-minded people who had to hack out a living in the dense forest. Only the most determined were successful. They were people who could fend for themselves but who were also ready and willing to help out a neighbor in need.

It was not long before the rest of the country took notice of West Virginia. However, it was not for its fine people - it was for its natural resources. It started with our amazing stand of virgin lumber. From 1875-1920 upwards of 95% of the state was logged and thus began our long history as an extraction-based economy.

Millions of years ago the area that is now West Virginia was a vast swamp. What remains today: oil, gas, and especially coal, would come to define quite a bit of West Virginia's history. One could write a whole essay on things like the West Virginia coal wars (1912-1921) but what it all comes down to is 'fairness'. Those descendants of the settlers that carved out a place to live on the frontier weren't too fond of the idea that all of a sudden the land that had belonged to their families didn't include rights to the coal, gas, or oil that lay buried deep in the ground.

The people tasked with extracting them didn't like the unsafe working conditions, dismal pay, and other restrictions imposed by the companies that employed them. They had to stage the largest insurrection in the United States since the Civil War just to be treated fairly by the mining companies, most of which served out of state owners and investors. These, however, like any extraction-based industry, would be destined to only decline with time, and it would be for us alone to deal with what was left as residents of West Virginia who declare this place our home.

Then things looked like they might change. It was after the Great Depression that Roosevelt's New Deal sought to relieve, cure, and prevent poverty. But the Federal Government needed a good poster child, and West Virginia was a good one. Again in the 1960's with the War on Poverty in response to Kennedy's New Frontier, West Virginians were paraded across the country as some poor backwoods "hillbillies" that could only hope to make it with the assistance of the government. They wanted to move forward so naturally there had to be a "backward." The sentiment exists among many long-term residents, that it feels like the rest of the country needs to put down West Virginians in order to feel better about themselves.

West Virginia is the only state completely contained within Appalachia. A majority of people who live in West Virginia just want to be left alone. The traditions, the things that West Virginians value, whether they be close-knit multi-generational families, interpersonal communications, splendid green forests and quiet rolling mountains, an independent resourceful spirit, a somewhat stubborn streak. Those sort of things sort of butt up against America's idea of progress, and that's why we've always been looked at as backwards. The West Virginia, Appalachian culture, and its idea of progress, doesn't look like the dominant culture's idea of progress. (\*this observation is lifted from an episode of Anthony Bourdain's television show Parts Unknown, in an episode that featured West Virginia).

In spite of all this we are a proud people who are mostly happy. We don't seem to score too high on all these nationwide studies about happiness, healthy habits, best place to live, public school test scores, etc. However, we don't understand those scoring standards to be representative of what we value and our regional culture supports. What we value is more of an emphasis on interpersonal relationships, physical closeness of family and friends, spiritual health, and access to nature/wilderness for both recreation and subsistence.

We are a unique people framed by our distinctive geographical location and our long-standing traditions, of which we are not ashamed.

As West Virginians, we are also residents of the capitol city of the state. The city of Charleston is the center of state government, a site for industry and research, and a venue for arts and entertainment.

Beginning at First Presbyterian Church, one can walk six blocks east, and reach the State Capitol Complex with its Capitol Building, West Virginia State Museum, and beautiful public green spaces. Charleston is the state capitol of West Virginia, and the influence of state government is experienced within the halls of the church campus. A significant number of members and friends of the congregation are attached to the legislature, employed by the state agencies, commissions and councils related to economic development, banking, insurance, emergency management, housing, consumer protection, occupational safety and health, pensions, transportation, and energy interests.

According to Dr. Robert Putnam and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, the strongest predictor of the quality of life in a community, even stronger than a community's income or educational level, is social trust. Social trust means the level of trust we have in others, including neighbors, co-workers, shop clerks, members of the same religion, local police, and people in general. Communities with higher levels of social trust are likely to have higher educational achievement, better performing governmental institutions, faster economic growth, and less crime and violence; the people living in these communities are likely to be happier, healthier, and to have a longer life expectancy.

A survey conducted by Harvard in the Kanawha Valley shows that residents trust other people considerably less than might be expected of residents in a similar community with the same demographics. Communities like ours should score 100 on a competitive scale measuring trust in the community as result of the survey. The Kanawha Valley scored 85. This presents a challenge to our Capitol city.



In places with greater social connectedness and social trust, it is easier to mobilize people to tackle problems of public concern, and easier to arrange things that benefit the group as a whole. At a time when our communities are facing a number of challenges – shrinking resources, changing government policies and priorities, unemployment, industrial consolidation, and out-migration, it is critical that we be able to work together to find common solutions.

Decline of the coal and chemical industries have negatively impacted Charleston's economy. Not only for those working in these industries but also professions that service them – lawyers, accountants, equipment providers.

The city's high poverty rate indicates a lack of a robust economy. One in four of the city's residents lives in poverty. While Charleston doesn't have the same high rate of homeless residents as many of the cities around the country, it does experience significant issues as a result of folks who are without shelter. The Charleston Homeless Task Force continues to research what is working and not working in other communities. The Task Force has over 40 members from all sectors of the City. The Task Force is chaired by a member of First Presbyterian Church and many of the social service agencies were created by members of First Presby.

Our Church has a vast representation on the nonprofit governing boards serving a variety of needs in the community. Recognizing the issues that belong to all of us, working across sectors, and a solutions-focused agenda are the only ways our City will be able to address the complex issues for all our residents.

Many see the aging population as a deterrent to growth in Charleston and West Virginia. Instead of looking for ways to build an economy around the older generation, some people have chosen to see the demographics as negative. Creating an economy around the older folks would provide jobs for the younger population. The City must determine its unique assets and build on those. According to John McKnight, co-director of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute, no community has ever thrived based on what it doesn't have. From his book, The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods, we read: "We need our neighbors and community to stay healthy, produce jobs, raise our children, and care for those on the margin. Institutions and professional services have reached the limit of their ability to help us. The consumer society tells us that we are insufficient and that we must purchase what we need from specialists and systems outside the community. We have become consumers and clients, not citizens and neighbors." We have the capacity to find real and sustainable satisfaction in the community of Charleston, our downtown neighborhood, and in the families of our congregation.

The City has made great strides in the tourism industry. Based on data from the Convention and Visitors Bureau, people now visit Charleston for its food, music, and recreation. Just a few short years ago the main reason people visited Charleston was to see family. The recently renovated Coliseum and Convention Center provides an additional draw for conventions and meetings. The \$100 million renovation of the Colosseum and Convention Center has created a state of the art facility.

Sixty-six percent of all young people now want to become entrepreneurs. Ninety-five percent of all businesses in West Virginia are small businesses. Charleston's future is closely tied to the further development of an entrepreneur ecosystem. The new Innovation Center at the University of Charleston has the potential to help drive that work.

Charleston is also home to one of the only year-round farmers' markets in the country. The Capitol Market has indoor and seasonal outdoor vendors as well as restaurants. Its focus is local agriculture, food and crafts.

The Clay Center for the Arts and Science located in downtown Charleston provides a variety of venues – a science center for children, an art gallery, and a planetarium. The performance hall provides a venue for concerts and traveling Broadway shows. It is also home to the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra.

Charleston has a vibrant arts community. During the summer a two-week festival is held throughout the City, FestivALL Charleston. The festival showcases all the arts – visual, musical, and local crafts. The Charleston Ballet, local musicians, a Mayor's Concert, historical tours, Shakespeare plays, Children's Art at the Library are only a few of the activities that occur during FestivALL Charleston. The name of the festival is a representation that there is something here for ALL. The festival draws visitors from Ohio, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania and a number of other states. Once a month, the Charleston downtown businesses host an Art Walk. The Art Walk showcases local artists and offers their work for sale. The City has created a public arts commission and hired a director. The result has been a burst of public art and murals throughout the city.

Charleston is a river city. Every summer on Friday evenings a concert is held at Haddad Riverfront Park on the river's levee. It is free to the public and showcases local musicians. It is attended by hundreds. "Live on the Levee" has become an event that folks look forward to every summer. In addition to providing a great time, it also raises money for several social service nonprofits. Raffle tickets are sold during the concert. At the end of the concert a random drawing picks a lucky winner who is the recipient of half of the money raised by the raffle. The other half of the raffle money is shared by five local nonprofits. Often the winner donates their winnings to the nonprofits.

Elk City, the West Side business district closest to downtown Charleston, is undergoing a revitalization. Several new restaurants have located there. It has several small businesses including a record store and a distillery. Like most cities, Charleston has a local brew pub and several local coffee shops where folks have business meetings and enjoy friends.

Charleston's first industry was the salt works located in the Kanawha Valley. In the past couple of years, the family who developed the salt works has recreated the salt industry here. Dickinson Salt Works is located on top of an underground ocean that was recently discovered. Using the water from the underground ocean, the family has devised a way to distill the salt and create specialty salt products that are being sold across country. That same family was responsible for bringing Presbyterianism to Charleston. Tours of the Salt Works and special events are held frequently for the public.

The City government has a new Mayor for the first time in sixteen years. In addition, the Mayor is the first woman Mayor of Charleston. City Council includes a record number of 10 women and 4 African Americans. For the first time in over 30 years, the President of City Council is a woman. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church of Charleston.

Two exciting new projects planned for Charleston include a total renovation of Slack Plaza and BridgeValley Community and Technical School moving to downtown Charleston. Slack Plaza is a park located in the middle of the City. It has suffered from lack of upkeep and disrepair. The Mayor and City Council plan to have the renovation of the Plaza underway in the upcoming year.

The Board of Trustees of BridgeValley Community and Technical School has voted to bring the school to downtown Charleston and locate in one of the iconic buildings that has stood vacant for several years. Not only will this move help to restore a vacant building it will also bring more people to downtown.

Chemical and industrial research continues in the Kanawha Valley at the Tech Park. MATRIC, a research incubator that was founded by a First Presbyterian member is located in the Tech Park and has been instrumental in bringing research companies to the Kanawha Valley.

Charleston was a well-known site for the operations of the DuPont company and Dow Chemical company, formerly known as Union Carbide Company. For over 60 years, the presence of Union Carbide influenced the economic, educational, and diversity profile of Charleston and the Kanawha Valley. In 1920, Union Carbide purchased a small refinery in Clendenin and began developing the process for making ethylene and related chemicals. Ethylene is made from natural gas or petroleum, and the new processes gave birth to the modern petrochemical industry. In 1925, Union Carbide purchased a chemical plant in South Charleston to build facilities to produce the olefins ethylene and propylene. Soon chemical units covered the company acreage on the South Charleston mainland and most of the 80-acre Blaine Island in the nearby Kanawha River. In 1947, Union Carbide expanded to the Institute plant, west of Charleston, originally built as part of the government's synthetic rubber program during World War II. In 1949, "Carbide," as it was called locally, built a new Technical Center in South Charleston to house research development, and engineering facilities on an expansive campus. Between 1946 and 1982, revenues increased from about \$415 million to more than \$10 billion, placing Union Carbide in the top 10 companies in the United States. Worldwide employment was near 80,000, with about 12,000 in West Virginia. The company was West Virginia's largest employer for several years. But starting in the 1950s, competition in chemicals and plastics increased substantially, while the poor economic conditions resulted in decreased prices for most chemicals. Then in December, 1984, after the Bhopal gas tragedy, new concerns about safety at chemical plants reached the Kanawha Valley. Carbide sold off almost half of its productive businesses, and in February 2001, the Dow Chemical Company acquired Union Carbide, and the company ceased to exist as a separate corporation.

However, the positive influence of Union Carbide continues to be felt in this Valley. Union Carbide hired the finest minds for its operations from around the world, which accounts for the substantial amount of PhDs in our area. As a result, Charleston boasts a Hindu temple, a synagogue and Jewish temple, a Jewish Film Festival, an India Center, an Islamic Center, and a B'hai Center, largely due to the presence of Union Carbide hires from around the globe.

Charleston has easy access to numerous recreational activities. These include nature trails, parks, state forest, skiing, boating, and kayaking. Within the city, there are nature preserves as well as hiking and biking trails. The Kanawha River runs through the city and provides opportunities for strolls up and down the Boulevard along the river as well as running and biking paths. Boating, water skiing, and kayaking are popular sports on the river. The Kanawha State Forest is also located adjacent to the city. There are trails, biking paths, picnic areas, and camping sites throughout the forest. Charleston is a short one-hour drive to Fayette County recreational area full of camping, white water rafting, and zip-lining. While West Virginia has several ski resorts, the closest to Charleston is a two-hour drive to Ghent, WV.

## Who We Are in Context

### Demographics of the Congregation

Of the 517 household addresses on our mailing list, 196 (38%) are in Charleston's 25314 zip code. One can understand our congregation in context by comparing U.S. Census and American Community Survey data for the 25314 from two sources: (1) our congregation's 2018 statistical report to the PC (USA) and (2) mining our own internal database. The data suggest that, collectively, we members of First Presbyterian Church are:

- Overwhelmingly white, like our community. While state government and local industry attracts racial ethnic populations, only 2% of our membership is racial ethnic. The city of Charleston records an 18% minority population, and we seek to become more diverse, like our city.
- Older than our community, like most mainline Protestant and Presbyterian congregations. Over 62% of the congregation's membership is over the age of 55 years old, and among regular worship attendees, over 77% is over the age of 55. Charleston's average age is 41.2 years, and we seek to be a welcoming place to younger adults and others.
- More affluent than our community, and more affluent than members of the PC(USA) as a whole. 61% of PC(USA) members have a household income of \$50,000 or more, according to the Pew Research 2015 Religious Landscape Study; 78% of the members of our congregation respondents reported an income of \$50,000 or more. The average household income in Charleston is \$34,944, and we are well above the average household income, with extra financial resources available to us as a congregation.

During the transition period of this first year of the interim process, beyond the profile of race, age, and economy, our membership has responded energetically to current programming like Lenten Growth Groups and Church Picnic, and embraced new opportunities for learning and fellowship like the Summer Seminary experience, Easter Breakfast, Gingerbread House Making Night, and Epiphany Party. With increased energy and opportunity during the interim process, the members of First Presby are responding with enthusiasm and commitment.

# Making Meaning Together

## Congregational Mission and Meaning

The Mission Study Team of First Presbyterian Church used a variety of methods to discern the future path of our Church. One of the most exhaustive undertakings was gathering input from the congregation, which included learning from our partners in a predecessor process: the Strategic Planning Task Force.

In 2017, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church adopted a Strategic Plan for 2017–2022. Their foundational work had included two Town Hall Meetings, and commissioning the Barna Group to conduct congregation and community surveys. In addition, the Strategic Planning Task Force worked with church consultant, the Reverend Dr. Stan Ott, of The Acts 16:5 Initiative – Vital Churches Institute, based in Pittsburgh.

The Mission Study Team again reviewed and analyzed the collected data from the surveys and the Barna Group narratives and consultant assessments. In addition, in November 2019, the Mission Study Team met with the Strategic Planning Task Force to get a better understanding of their process, to learn from their experiences, and to build on their work. During this meeting, members of the Strategic Planning Task Force shared their frustrations over the lack of implementation of their previously adopted Plan. Task Force members openly shared information regarding process and content, and the belief that “the process failed.” They further acknowledged that the process exposed every weakness in the Church, including: lack of open and honest communication in content and processes; lack of leadership; absence of clear focus; absence of energizing activity for vital ministry. The budget for the Strategic Planning Task Force process was \$90,000 over two years, with funds drawn from the endowment funds. The Strategic Planning Task Force had hoped to develop a big project or goal that the Church could rally around. Unfortunately, the project selected – “repurposing the Chapel and remodeling it into a gathering room” – only served to divide the membership of the congregation.

During our joint meeting, members of the Strategic Planning Task Force were asked, “What would you have done differently?” Their response was: “We would not have started it.” They expanded on their response with the following: “Without strong leadership at all levels of the Church, including staff and Session, the process was not set up to be successful.” The Mission Study Team is very appreciative of the openness and candor from the Strategic Planning Task Force. We hope to take to heart the lessons learned from their experience.

In addition to this important joint meeting, the Mission Study Team partnered with the Bicentennial Committee to host a special fellowship lunch and conversational meeting. Approximately 75 members and friends of the congregation participated in completing a timeline for First Presbyterian Church designed to celebrate the past and begin to look to the future, noting the patterns that contribute to our effectiveness as a congregation, and within our Charleston community. The Mission Study Team used this wealth of narrative information to identify trends over the decades of the Church.

In addition to creating new methods to gather information from the congregation, the Mission Study Team was fortunate to have at its disposal a variety of recent tools that had been used to solicit ideas, concerns, and possibilities from our members. Early in the transition experience for First Presbyterian Church, our Interim Senior Pastor sought input by holding listening sessions as well as offering a “Blue Sheet” questionnaire at a congregational meeting.

The questions on the “Blue Sheet” included:

- What do you want to happen most during the interim period?
- What are you personally willing to do during this transitional period?
- What question would you like answered in a future e-newsletter of “First Presby Press”?
- What Scripture passage or every day question do you wish to hear addressed in a future sermon?

This data was made available to the Team, having been previously shared with the Session.

The Mission Study Team conducted three congregational Church Cafes and one staff Church Café. The Church Cafes were adapted from the World Café conversation model. In an attempt to model our Team meetings and our growing sense of genuine spiritual community, the format for each “Church Café” including a brief Bible study, as well as opening and closing prayers. The questions posed to the participants included:

- What would it look like for First Presbyterian Church to be happy and satisfied?
- What would be one thing that God would dream for us to do downtown that would make the most impact for good in our downtown neighborhood?
- What conversation, if begun today, could ripple out in a way that will create new possibilities for the future of First Presby?
- What would it take for First Presby to grow more loving in the coming year?
- What would we need to see that happening in the congregation?

Our questions were intentionally engineered to solicit positive, imaginative responses, instead of providing a forum for criticism and complaint. By encouraging a positive stance, it was our hope to minimize the negative voices disproportionately influencing decision-making and discernment for the process.

From this conversation process we heard some strong broad themes from participating members of the congregation: a need to be more welcoming of all people; center our efforts on a focused mission strategy; deepen awareness and abilities for congregational care; strengthen our ecumenical and interfaith efforts in the community; give the congregation a strong Christ-centered purpose to align and unite people; heal the errors of the past.

In addition to the Church Cafes, the Mission Study Team members conducted in-depth interviews with six members of our congregation and six leaders in the community. We realize that what’s meaningful to us as a Christian community is truly meaningful if it also has a positive impact on our community and the world. For that reason, the Mission Study Team placed a focus on inviting community members into conversations about the region’s needs and what a congregation like ours could do to meet them.

The community leaders interviewed included an African American Baptist Pastor, the Superintendent of the County School System, the Chief Executive Officer of the United Way, the Police Chief, the Executive Director of the YWCA, and the Chief Executive Officer of Health Right. The interview questions for the community leaders included:

- What do you see as three of the unmet needs in Charleston and our surrounding community?
- What gaps do you see in possible solutions/services to tackle these unmet needs?
- What role do you see for First Presbyterian Church in helping to meet these unmet needs?

The interview questions for the congregation members with extensive institutional memory included:

- Were there any gaps in the timeline that was created at the September meeting? Anything that you think needs to be added?
- What do you think is the most important positive patterns over the decades for First Presbyterian Church?
- What are the things that trip us up?
- Is there anything else that you think the Mission Study Team needs to know or be aware of?

In light of these questions, responses, and our review of our history, our context, and what God needs us to do and be, we formulated the following vision and mission statements for First Presbyterian Church:

### **VISION**

We are called to be a vibrant community of Christian leaders who gather together, grow together, and give back together in the Church and the community in such a way that Charleston looks like God's Kingdom because of our presence.

### **MISSION**

First Presbyterian Church seeks to be a diverse and intergenerational congregation in the heart of Charleston following Jesus Christ building hope, nurturing faith, and showing love.

Given what we have read and research (see Appendix A), we propose that our wholistic mission design and goals be 'measurable', in order that a healthy spirit of evaluation and improvement become part of the healthy culture at First Presbyterian Church. For example, related to the proposed Mission Statement, the following is hoped for as a visible measure:

Diverse and intergenerational – members of congregation reflect both the racial-ethnic diversity and the presences of all ages among us. One measure for this is to review the Sunday worshipping congregation, and to see if we look like Charleston, and to invite others to worship.

- **Building Hope** - within the Session, Deacons, Trustees, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men, and other forums, intentionally invite folks with varying viewpoints to participate in leadership and ministry, demonstrate respect for each other in conversation and action, and a willingness to change as needed and as the Spirit moves. One measure for this is a review of the roster of each decision-making table at First Presby to ensure a diversity of perspective.

- **Nurturing Faith** – members and friends of this congregation express a feeling of being welcome and included in various church activities and leadership, and a strong segment of others do not feel included. Yet the best of what Christ calls us to be includes unconditional acceptance of all, and we can aspire to welcome all in Christ’s name. One measure is encouraging church members to recognize and warmly welcome visitors. Another measure is encouraging and inviting newer members into service at First Presby, and noting which members are engaging in what activities (this is possible through our ACS database software).
- **Showing Love** – increase in member care and community outreach. Every member deserves to be cared for, and we need to encourage one another in genuine congregational care. One measure for this could be a “Miss You” card in the pew racks/Friendship Pads that members could send to each other.

## Listening to Our Support Crew

### Staff Conversations

It is important to us as members of First Presby to honor our voices in the Mission Study, but also to listen to our staff. Our team facilitated an extended “Church Conversation Café” with staff in November 2019. Eleven full-time and four part-time staff took part.

What we heard indicated the following themes of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities related to the staff relationships with each other and the congregation:

- The policies and procedures for staff should apply to everyone equally, and this has not been the case in the recent past. This uneven application has created some resentment among the staff in recent years
- Staff notice the lack of accountability among some of their colleagues regarding roles and responsibilities
- A clear sense of direction and defined roles has been lacking, and is now being restored in the staff dynamic, but with the perception of considerable tension
- A need to address negativity and an unwillingness to embrace change at the staff level, along with the observation that when such an attitude starts with staff members, it has a tendency to be transferred to segments of the congregation
- There is significant support for the current format for staff meetings of inclusion of all staff members and a demonstrated appreciation by staff for the daily presence of a Head of Staff on-site.

There is considerable work yet to do related to the relationship patterns inherited from previous staff leadership practices. There has been staff turnover in the past few years, and there is a delicate balance of helping and healing current staff, along with challenging and encouraging staff in their roles. Currently, there is anxiety within the staff, because of the realization that a realistic and honest review of church membership, available revenue projections, and a new wholistic design for mission and ministry, are factors that will contribute to a change in the staffing pattern at First Presby for the future.



# Exploring Our Surroundings

## Community Leader and Member Interviews

The Mission Study Team members conducted in-depth interviews with six members of our Charleston community, and six members of the congregation who possess considerable historic and institutional memory. The community leaders included an African American Baptist Pastor, the Superintendent of the County School System, the Chief Executive Officer of the United Way, the Police Chief, the Executive Director of the YWCA, and the Chief Executive Officer of Health Right.

From the interviews with community members, we were encouraged by the following responses and observations:

- First Presby needs to step up and be a leader in the community
- The community needs significant attention to children who have no responsible adult caring for them
- There is a desperate need for job training and recovery needs in the region
- Improved public transportation continues to be a challenge for residents
- Please do what you do as a faith community in a non-judgmental way; be aware and careful about who represents your work in the community

From the in-depth conversations with members of the congregation, we heard the following important themes:

- Create intergenerational programming to meet the needs of the entire church family, the demographics within the church family (children and also, youth, elderly)
- Work for a welcoming and inclusive church – from within our congregation we need to model welcome in how we treat one another, and we need to communicate the message that all are included here
- Vigorously address the needs of young people in Charleston, and work with others to minister to the needs of youth
- Create a serious schedule of maintenance to address the critical needs for the buildings, grounds, vehicles and parking lots

# Of Money and Ministry

## The Financial State of the Congregation

Financially speaking, our congregation has an enviable challenge to address. With restricted and unrestricted endowments totaling nearly \$9 million, we have resources with which to build the body of Christ, within our walls and beyond them. The challenge lies in what many of us perceive as an overreliance on endowment proceeds to support our annual budget, and a theory that the existence of the endowment creates a generosity-suppressing perception among our members that the congregation does not need our money. This is complicated by previous budgeting practices of over projections related to revenue, with a year-end deficit appeal being made among our most wealthy members and the safety net of the endowment assets.

A closer look at our most recently completed budget year paints a clear picture of our dilemma. In 2018, our operating budget was \$1,821,250 with personnel expense accounting for 59% of the operating budget. In 2019, our operating budget was \$1,717,874, with personnel expense at 57% of the budget. (This percentage significantly exceeds that for all Protestant congregations (45%) and mainline Protestant congregations (49%), according to a 2015 study out of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.) Mission expenditures accounted for fully 12%, or about \$214,039 of our expenses in 2018.

Income in 2018 was \$1,819,874 with the following breakdown – adult giving (55%); unrestricted endowment disbursement (19%); and loose offerings, building use donations, and restricted endowment disbursements (25%). In other words, we drew nearly \$354,288 in 2018 income from our unrestricted endowment.

Current data on our financial state includes the following:

- Adult giving has increased from \$1,606 per member in 2015, to \$1785 in 2018, and currently sits at \$1,614 for 2019
- Currently, 2020 pledges are fewer than 2019, but a majority of pledges reflect an increase in giving
- Pledges by new members are not keeping pace with pledges lost when members die, relocate out of state, or otherwise leave the congregation

Our anticipated giving per member for 2020 will be above the national average of \$1,029, despite that fact illuminated earlier that our congregation is, on average, significantly more affluent than a typical PC(USA) congregation and the surrounding community. This indicates we are capable of being more generous financially.

This becomes troubling in light of the attrition of our membership through death, and through relocation outside of West Virginia. We will continue to project less revenue with fewer giving adults. Also, our considerable dependence on allocations from our unrestricted endowment to meet operating budget needs is not sustainable for a long-term vibrant future.

This becomes encouraging when we realize the members pledging to the 2020 operating budget are increasing their pledge amounts. This demonstrates a renewed commitment by the congregation for the future of a faithful First Presby.

# Describing Congregational Models

## Our Present Concept

In recent decades, a whole body of literature has developed, which has come to be known as church size dynamics. Few areas of church life are unaffected by church size dynamics.

Whether a church is dealing with staffing, governance, finance, conflict, managing change, growth, or outreach, size will prove to be a factor. This important literature was developed by Roy Oswald, a leading consultant with the former Alban Institute, and author of *How To Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program and Corporate-Sized Churches*.

The field of church size dynamics identifies four basic sizes of congregation, where size is determined by the average attendance on Sundays. In measuring attendance, we include the children in the church school, along with their teachers, the youth group attendees, as well as adults at the worship service. Each of the four sizes of church has its own distinctive style.

**The Family Church**, averaging fewer than 50 people in attendance, is so named because it behaves remarkably like an extended family! As with human families, individuals we describe as matriarchs and patriarchs tend to dominate life in the family church. This is not a value judgment, it's just what is found most often in this size of church. Family churches tend not to have their own ministers but, when they do, the minister is rarely at the center of congregational life. This is the only size of church where it is really possible for each member to know every other member.

**The Pastoral Church**, averaging 50 to 150 people on Sundays, is what most Americans have in mind when they think about churches. In this size of church, the role of both the minister and the Session shifts toward the center of the system. The pastoral church is no longer one where "everybody knows your name," as in the television series *Cheers*, so the minister becomes a sort of spiritual bartender, since maintaining relationships becomes a full-time job. As steward of the relational system, the minister's influence grows. The board's responsibility for making decisions on behalf of the church increases, as does the sense in which Session members function as volunteer staff. Part-time paid staff is added. Stronger committees begin to develop and their members round out the volunteer staffing needs of the church.

**The Program Church**, with an average Sunday attendance of 150 to 350, is known for the quality and growing variety of its programs. The minister may be joined by another full-time professional clergy and other staff positions that generate program. The Session focuses on policy-making and oversight of congregation-wide matters, divesting themselves of the liaison responsibilities that are typical of pastoral church boards. Some church experts maintain that the program church will be the most vulnerable to decline during the first quarter of the 21st century, and with this awareness, needs to initiate growth initiatives wherever its established excellence.

**The Corporate Church**, averaging more than 350 people attending each week, is the most varied category of the four. Some can be characterized as super-program churches while others look more like mini-denominations or mega-churches. Few congregations of this size can get by without a second minister (or more) and other professional staff members will typically be part of the team,

assisted by a growing support staff. A Session must shift dramatically toward a policy-setting emphasis of governing the congregation's affairs; otherwise they will soon be overwhelmed by their work. Board members are now the church's legislators rather than its managers. Under the leadership of the senior minister or executive team, the staff assumes responsibility for the church's day-to-day operations.

Observations of our current operational church model at First Presbyterian include the following:

- We have the finances and staff of a corporate church, but the worship attendance of a program church.
- Some members understand we've diminished in size, and don't realize that some work formerly completed by compensated staff needs to be completed by energized and qualified members.
- Staff do the work of members, and using the endowments to support staff shelters us from present realities.

For decades, the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston enjoyed the status of a corporate church model, and has clearly shifted to a program church model. This presents us with new opportunities as we serve the spiritual needs of the congregation and community. It also requires necessary shifts related to our financial health and our staffing rationale for the present and future.

## Discerning the Path Ahead

### Congregational Goals

With these conversations, experiences, and data in mind, covered by prayer and Scripture study, the Mission Study Team brainstormed potential goals for our congregation. These goals were discerned from listening to others, attending to our trends toward effectiveness, along with information gathered through all the facets of the Mission Study process.

As part of its discernment, the Mission Study Team acknowledged four categories:

- Strengths to build on
- Dysfunctions to address
- Mission to our community
- Aspirations for our future

A few observations:

- There are strong feelings about the need for an outward focus, and strong feelings about the need for an inward focus. Our Team is balanced in its vision of a future built on hands-on ministry (in which spiritual growth drives action).
- Creating a sense of family, of belonging, and of community is a theme for all, with a serious caveat: not everyone experiences First Presbyterian as inviting, open and inclusive. The perspective is strongly held among some that we tend toward being clique-ish and club-ish, and are in serious need of integrating our "groups" to including "everyone" without exception.

- One of our most considerable challenges is aligning our staffing rationale with the mission and vision of the congregation. As we have learned from forums with our Interim Pastors and the Healthy Congregations Workshop, there are multiple anxiety triggers operating at First Presbyterian Church, and the current staffing dynamic is a primary point of anxiety. Several long-term members of the staff have established loyalties within the congregation and may be tempted to use those to their personal advantage, while other short-term or not-as-well-known members of the staff could be viewed as ‘more dispensable’ to the mission design for First Presbyterian Church. Throughout our narrative data, there is the widespread observation that the “congregation is shrinking, and the staff/staff expense is growing”.
- Our endowment and its role – positive and negative – in the life of the congregation is the cause of considerable anxiety for our leaders. Perspectives vary and are strongly held.

It is understood that the wholistic mission design of the First Presbyterian Church congregation appropriately addresses the following arenas of Christian ministry: worship and music; the Christian education of children, youth and adults; mission and outreach; evangelism of the gospel; proper maintenance of building and grounds; stewardship of financial resources; and demonstrated competencies with leadership and administration. In this way, the Mission Study Team discerned the following goals for the wholistic mission design of First Presbyterian: (not in priority order)

**Create a sense of family and belonging through frequent, intentional, intergenerational interactions, so that every child, youth and adult has meaningful connections outside their own family**

This goal can be realized through strengthening the current LOGOS program; encouraging intergenerational youth group programming; advocating for senior adults to volunteer with our Preschool Ministry; restructuring Sunday School for youth; encouraging an intergenerational summer Sunday School opportunity; etc. Within the congregation, we all need to take responsibility to encourage warm fellowship in Christ.

**Break through our "philosophical openness" to diversity through an intentional movement toward real diversity in our congregation**

This goal could be realized through an “outreach/evangelism truck” (ala a “food truck”) to serve among demographics in the Kanawha Valley region that may not be inclined to drive downtown. Instead of “if you build it they will come”, we will carry the gospel to the University of Charleston, West Virginia State University, BridgeValley Community and Technical College with food and conversation; drive to Oakwood Terrace and provide tutoring services. The “Evangelism/Outreach Truck” would take relationships and hands-on ministry to the wider Charleston region, utilizing a current asset (van/bus). This goal could also be realized by creating and marketing a “Speaker Series” on “Issues that Matter to All of Us”, mobilizing the ecumenical and interfaith community to gather at First Presbyterian Church to address matters such as homelessness, disabilities awareness, human trafficking, police and community relations, creating entrepreneurial ecosystems, among other matters that enable our Charleston area to thrive.

**Bring pledges and expenses into a healthy, sustainable balance, as well as growing membership and giving to reduce the percentage of annual operating expenses covered by the endowment**

This goal can be realized by consistent attention to financial planning and planned giving by the appropriate Committees of the Session. In addition, the Session and Trustees need to practice stewardship based on realistic revenue expectations, along with appropriate needs related to what is a staff role and what is the role of church members as they live out their discipleship.

**Become a positive life force in the heart of Charleston, proactively using our large building campus to partner with others in meeting community needs**

This goal can be realized by recovering the very best of our legacy as a downtown church in the heart of Charleston. Our recent efforts included opening our building for organ concerts in conjunction with FestivALL, hosting a meeting of The Homeless Task Force of Charleston, Mental Health First Aid Training with NAMI, and the Red Cross Babysitting Course.

**Provide serious attention and action to a schedule of deferred and regular maintenance in an aging, and in many sectors, outdated physical plant.**

This goal should be implemented by a serious review of a maintenance program for the buildings on campus, the grounds, and the parking lots. Many sectors of our large campus are in a state of serious disrepair and must be addressed at this critical juncture.

**Discerning the significance of these five major goals, and integrating them into a dream into this wholistic mission design, it is hoped we could unify the church family and ignite our passion and energy to meet a demonstrated need in Charleston. A major initiative to meet the goals discerned for First Presbyterian Church, which aligns with our historic legacy, and our commitment to Christ and His gospel, is the creation of an "FPC Hope Center" on site at First Presbyterian Church.**

Throughout our history, the leaders of First Presbyterian Church have sought to make a positive difference in the Charleston community (cf. Daymark, Kanawha Valley Fellowship Home, etc.). We are also home to a wonderful ministry to support young children and families - the First Presby Preschool - and support a growing LOGOS program on Wednesdays - for older children, youth and families. In addition, there are dozens of people in our pews who possess skills and abilities they are willing to share with young adults to help them grow and develop. With our demonstrated genuine care for children and youth, and our strong abilities as community leaders to serve youth and young adults in meaningful ways, we propose the "FPC Hope Center."

With the relocation of the Preschool Ministry to the Activities Building, considerable space is vacated in the Education Building for congregational and community use.

The proposed vision of the Mission Study Team is for First Presbyterian Church to create an “FPC Hope Center” to serve as a visible reminder of God’s purpose for the young people of West Virginia. The details of such an “FPC Hope Center” are as follows:

**Goal:** The creation of First Presbyterian Church Hope Center. The Center would be a standalone 501(c)(3) housed at First Presbyterian Church (could repurpose the 2nd floor).

**Neighbors Served:** 18 to 25 year olds aging out of foster care.

**Rationale:** News outlets inform us that in 2002, the number of children removed from their homes in Kanawha County was an average of five each month. In 2019, the number of children removed from their homes and placed into foster care reached 75 by the beginning of February 2019, according to CPS. Child Protective Services of West Virginia employs 500 workers, to provide services for 3,700 families. When youth are emancipated at the age of 18, they immediately transition to the adult system of services, treated by adult rules, whether it is the food stamps system or the judicial system. When youth have been taken care of by the state, or in families with limited resources, they are expected at age 18 to operate as adults with limited understanding, experience and resources. As young adults at 18, previous support systems collapse, and transition programs are needed for stability. As young adults, they still require support to learn how to navigate support programs, apply for college, apply for a job. These young adults have not been exposed to life skills such as cooking, personal financial management, or career choices. Most have no access to health care or knowledge of availability of insurance. Youth 18-25 require a support system to help in their transition to adulthood, to show them how to take responsibility for themselves. If not, youth 18-25 are vulnerable to homelessness, unemployment and continued crises.

We listened to community leaders, to current leaders in the congregation, and to our own history as Presbyterians in the community of Charleston. God has used us to make a difference in the lives of others, especially children and families. We discern that God may need us to increase our commitment to serving young adults in the Kanawha Valley through the creation of a “First Presbyterian Church Hope Center”.

**Program Components:** First Presbyterian Hope Center would provide the following services in partnership with area nonprofits and service agencies. Church members and other volunteers with expertise in these areas would be included in providing leadership and guidance.

- Education Completion
- Life Skills
- Job Training and Placement
- Health Care
- Housing

The following nonprofits, service agencies, and religious communities are potential partners:

- YWCA job training program
- Charleston Job Corps Center
- Carver Career and Technical Center
- West Virginia Health Right
- Covenant House
- Charleston/Kanawha Housing
- United Way of Central West Virginia
- Kanawha Valley Collective
- Religious Coalition for Community Renewal (RCCR)
- Daymark
- City of Charleston
- BridgeValley Community and Technical College
- Ben Franklin Career Center
- Kanawha Pastoral Counseling Center
- West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network
- Children's Home Society
- Kanawha County
- Eccumenical and Interfaith Communities
- Presbytery of West Virginia

**Resources:** Some of the current mission dollars could be allocated to FPC Hope Center. As a standalone nonprofit, the Center would be eligible for foundation grants and allocations from the United Way. Those congregation members serving as leaders and guides may also want to make charitable contributions.

**God's Will and Our Theological Foundation:** As a Presbyterian congregation of “fellowship and following,” we are firmly oriented within the biblical vision of a people of God who are on a journey with God, expressing the kingdom of God, following God in trust and obedience, and in doing that, we are being transformed into the likeness of God in the process. It is relationship-centered ministry we discover in the Triune God – the relationship of One in Three.

What we hope to offer the Charleston community through the “FPC Hope Center” is this: God. We offer God. Through this ministry to the young people of Charleston, we proclaim and demonstrate the good news of God's present availability – the very presence of God that has embraced us and calls us at First Presbyterian to live as the Church. In doing this, as First Presbyterian Church we will enjoy and display together an “exceptional life” – one that changes us and our neighbors, a way of life we commend to others longing to find their places at the table of the family of God. This, we believe, is something quite exceptional to offer the community of Charleston.

## Planning for a Faithful Future

Our next Senior Pastor and Staffing Design

It is the discernment of the Mission Study Team that our members are ready for an engaging leader who will challenge and encourage us to teach, guide us in discerning our own gifts for ministry, and creates opportunities for leadership development among church officers and staff. Our members seem to express a prevailing preference for a senior pastor who has a relaxed interpersonal style, a warm personality, embraces new leadership approaches, and is available and accessible to staff and members on a regular basis.



Collectively, we see ourselves as a prestigious church, strongly aligned with our denominational identity, that emphasizes incremental spiritual growth (we are not revolutionaries!), rather than conversion or born-again experiences. We value certain roles as central in the work of our incoming Pastor/Head of Staff:

**Minister of the Word/Celebrant.** Powerful inspirational traditional worship experiences matter to us. Above all, our Senior Pastor ensures that we learn, and grow spiritually, through worship.

We expect our pastor to craft carefully and deliver skillfully challenging, inspiring sermons that make us reflect on the world beyond Charleston. We also want our pastor to plan and lead worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation, and to involve members in leading worship. As our Senior Pastor, the inspirational expectations include participation in ecumenical and interfaith forums in the city of Charleston, serving as a positive, articulate ambassador of First Presbyterian Church in the community.

**Spiritual Guide.** While we want our Pastor to teach and inspire us, we also want her or him to walk beside us, to share her or his insights, vulnerabilities, and doubts, and cast light upon the spiritual path we walk together. Our Pastor will emphasize our spiritual development by being an experienced teacher and guide who is capable of presenting and engaging new thoughts and ideas with adults, youth, and children.

**Church Administrator.** For us, preaching, teaching, spiritual leadership and pastoral care are primary demonstrated competencies for the next Pastor/Head of Staff. Still, we recognize that, as a large congregation with a sizeable staff and significant financial resources, we need a leader who can organize our human and monetary resources for the greatest, most meaningful shared impact. We want a leader who will mobilize the many talents of our members and staff, making all of us ministers together. The next Pastor/Head of Staff must be a skilled administrator.

In addition to the Pastor/Head of Staff, the staffing rationale for the wholistic proposed mission design for First Presbyterian Church includes the following:

- Associate Pastor - responsible for missions and community outreach; staff liaison to the Board of Deacons; also pastoral care, teaching and preaching (one full-time position)
- Director of Christian Education - (one full-time position)
- Youth Ministries Leader - (part-time or volunteer position)
- Senior Adult Ministries Leader - (part-time or volunteer position)
- Assistant to the Pastors - (one full-time position)
- Programs and Communications Coordinator - (one full-time position)
- Hope Center Coordinator - (initially funded by First Presbyterian - part-time position)
- Custodian/Maintenance Man - (one full-time position)
- Custodian/Second Shift - (one full-time position)
- Music Director/Organist - (one full-time position)
- Financial Secretary - (one part-time position)
- Church Accountant - (one part-time position)
- Kitchen Cook and Manager - (one part-time position)

There has been considerable success with supplementing daily responsibilities with church volunteers: Wednesday Work Crew, Office Volunteers, Gardening Angels, Greeters, Ushers, Child Care Workers/Volunteers, Choir Members, Sunday School Teachers. Given our need to realistically align staffing rationale with the mission design and financial resources, tasks previously accomplished by well-compensated staff people will need to transfer to well-intentioned church members. In addition, contract services may also be available for roles previously held by staff members, at a considerable cost-savings to the church.

Our goals can be met by encouraging the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church to adopt “Worship +2”. In other words, my commitment to be present for Sunday morning worship is the foundation to my discipleship practice and investment in the mission and ministry of First Presby. My “+2” is to commit to “two additional” varieties of service at First Presby. We can positively encourage every local resident on our membership rolls to adopt a “Worship +2” mindset!

**To the Glory of God. Amen.**

# Appendix A

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# Appendix B

## Covenant of the Mission Study Team

As the Mission Study Team of the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston, West Virginia, we covenant to:

- Faithfully follow Jesus Christ, and encourage others to be faithful;
- We bring the very best of ourselves to the work of this Team;
- We choose to listen with open hearts, minds, and spirits, and the intent to learn from one another, with the belief that the Holy Spirit guides us;
- We will create and maintain a safe environment where the honest observations of Team members are honored and respected in the hope of spirited debate and diversity of opinion, promising to speak the truth in love;
- Graciously uphold the value of trust in our confidential conversations and printed materials, during and after Team meetings;
- Publicly demonstrate servant leadership in the life of the congregation, modeling the servant leadership of our Lord Jesus Christ;
- Pray for one another, our staff, and our congregation during this process acknowledging the joy and responsibility of being appointed to this work;
- Glorify God in what we say and do as we lead the Mission Study process.

# Appendix C

## Congregational Learning Opportunities

With the hope of initial implementation of parts of the Mission Study in the second quarter of 2020, along with searching for pastoral leadership, it is hoped that the following resources can also be included in the ongoing educational process for the Session, Deacons, and other leaders in the First Presby congregation:

- A educational forum with the leaders of the Coalfield Development Organization, and learning from their work in incubating and growing social enterprises, as they *"inspire the courage to grow, the creativity to transform perceived liabilities into assets, and the community needed to cultivate real opportunity in Appalachia through mentorship, education and employment."*
- An invitation to John Glazier and Faith Knusten, who head up the Social Enterprise Ecosystem project at Voinovich School, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission that is *"helping connect to pressing social enterprises and impact investors to develop sustainable, market-based solutions to pressing social changes."*