

First Presbyterian Church • Puyallup, Washington
Mission Study 2020

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV

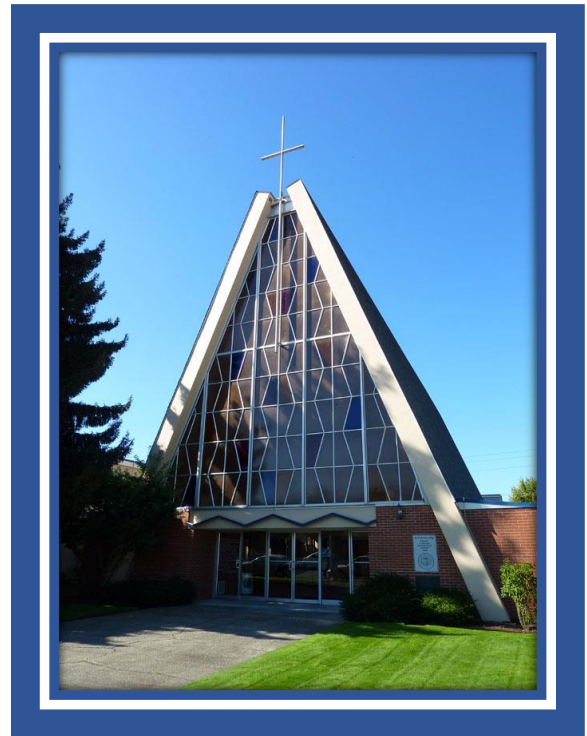


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At First Presbyterian Church we have a proud past and a promising future.

We have built this church on the hope we have in Christ our Savior.

We trace our roots in Puyallup to 1889, but our faith goes back
to the first generation of Christians who risked everything
to believe in and to follow Christ.

It is important to us that we pass this legacy
on to others in our community.

• Purpose of our Report

First Presbyterian Church of Puyallup desires to call an Associate Pastor for young adults and youth ministries. Our desire is to have a full-time ordained pastor who will:

- Develop and implement spiritual, social, and personal growth for an unserved young adult and youth population
- Expand young adult and youth outreach to our community
- Expand our missional ministry program to young adults and youth
- Assist in pastoral leadership
- Assist in children ministries

• Methodology

In early 2020, it was recognized by our Session that we have presented multiple congregational “input” opportunities and continue to hear the same comments such as; “We are an aging congregation!,” “Where have the youth, young people and families gone?” And, “How can we attract younger people to our congregation?” “We have kids and families all around us, let’s engage them.”

Jane Carden, Joe Harrison, ErrolLynne Marsh and Bill Klouse were appointed by our Session to examine and analyze all congregational input activities from 2013 to 2020. The resulting report or mission study contains Who We Are, Our Review and Analysis of Congregational Input Activities and Our Vision for Moving Forward.

WHO WE ARE



- **A PC(USA) Church in Puyallup, WA**

First Presbyterian Church is located near the downtown core of Puyallup, Washington. Our neighborhood is commercial and residential. The church is a striking landmark. An “A-frame” building located near central services and the original high school. Several elementary schools and two junior high schools are located within walking distance. Downtown Puyallup is home to several churches.

- **Our Mission Statement** (adopted by Session, May 20, 2014)

As faithful disciples of Jesus Christ
we reach up to God,
reach into His Word, and
reach out to love and serve.

- **Our Pervasive Prayer** (adopted 2019)



God, you are with us always. We trust you.
Help us to know and do your will
in our church and community.
We know we will have to step outside
our comfort zone to be fully alive in you.
Make us as eager to hear your voice
as we are to speak to you.

With the help of the Holy Spirit we pray— Amen.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

- **Our Beliefs and Spiritual Practices**

As a congregation, we strive to be a missional church,
continually searching for what God's plans are for us.

We seek to serve our community by understanding its needs and
working to meet those needs through activism and charity.

We sponsor and/or work with numerous ministries and
outreach programs locally, nationally, and globally.

First Presbyterian Church in Puyallup is a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
We believe God is the creator of the universe, Christ is the incarnation of God on earth
and the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in the believer.

We believe the Bible is the authority for life and practice and it is the inspired word of
God. The Bible is meant to be studied and used in worshiping of God. As Presbyterians
we are guided in our understanding of the Scriptures by the Book of Confessions and the
Book of Order.

We believe God sent his son that the world might be saved through him. Christ's death
and resurrection brings eternal life to believers. God grants the gift of grace and a
renewed life in Jesus.

First Presbyterian Church offers a community of believers opportunities for growth
through preaching, the sacraments, prayer, teaching, mission, music, caring for each
other and serving those in need in our community and abroad.

Our members express their beliefs throughout the life of the church. During the week
there are adult Bible studies, CORE for our children and educational opportunities for
youth. Advent and Lent studies are offered with discussion. Book studies are another
way we practice our faith and deepen our spiritual development. Our prayer warriors
practice their faith and experience God's closeness through miracles and answered
prayer.

- **Our Olympia Presbytery**

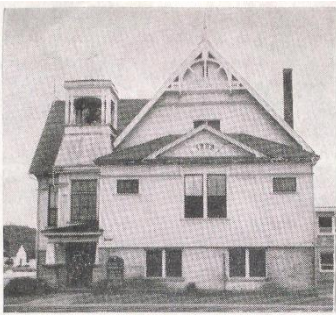


We consistently support Olympia Presbytery. Our leadership attends meetings, we support Presbytery outreach such as Hagar's Church, and Soundview Camp. We supported the 2019 Triennium with a financial gift and sent three youth and a leader to the event. We are a friend to and supportive of other churches in our Presbytery. We have a treasured relationship with our neighbor church, Church of the Indian Fellowship, that goes back many years.

We are supportive of Pastor Sue Watkin's continued leadership at Presbytery. She has served as Moderator and currently serves on the Leadership Council.

- **Our History**

(A complete history, compiled by Paul Hackett for our 125th Anniversary is available upon request.)



The First Presbyterian Church of Puyallup was born in 1889 with members worshipping in homes. During that first year the church building was constructed. The current building was dedicated in 1959. In 1983, the congregation celebrated the burning of the mortgage.

Rev. Lackey was named pulpit supply and many pastors and associate pastors have been called since then. Currently the Rev. Sue Watkins serves as our pastor.

In 1890, a manse was built next to the church. By 1895, FPC had 113 members. Over the years, membership numbers have risen and declined. Currently, we have 167 members.

The Session of four has grown to the current Session of twelve Elders leading five Commissions. There are twelve on our Deacon Board.

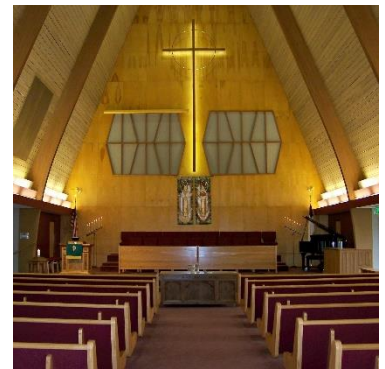
Presbyterian Women Circles began in 1929. Today Presbyterian Women celebrate three Circles: Chase-MacInnes, Hoff-Nicholson and Eve. PW has approximately thirty members.

From the beginning, our church has made Christian education a priority. At one time, our history boasted twelve classes with 200 children. Over time there have been Directors of Christian Education, Youth Directors, Logos Program, camp opportunities, and VBS.

First Presbyterian Church is a church with a strong mission history. Mission support started in 1889 with Helping Hand Society. There were several years of support in PACE – Puyallup Action for Children of Migrants. Over the years there has been involvement in Miles of Pennies, Habitat for Humanity, Paint Tacoma Beautiful, and mission trips across our country and in Mexico. Missionaries have served on the mission boat, Anna Jackman, and the Sheldon Jackson College in Alaska. We have supported missionaries abroad in Madagascar, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, China, Guatemala, and Kenya. More recently in Puyallup, our church has hosted the Freezing Nights ministry two to three times a month.

We are proud of our legacy to other PC(USA) pulpits and leadership. Several candidates for ministry have grown up in our church. And others have been under the care of First Presbyterian Church.

Our worship services have always been enhanced by music. In the beginning by a quartet, then a choir and an orchestra. Presently we have a wonderful organ, a spectacular grand piano and strong music program with choir, praise team/band and a renowned bell choir. Our music leadership is strong and deep. These leaders responded quickly and passionately to the COVID crisis of 2020.



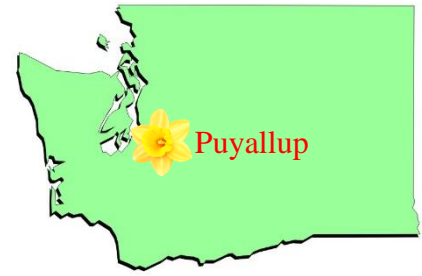
We have supported different Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops throughout our history. The first scout group met at the church in 1950. Currently both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meet in our building.

Since 1980, our youth have enjoyed participating in summer camp experiences from Cardai Hill, to Calvinwood, to Buck Creek, to Soundview. During the last few years, camp scholarships have been made available to our children and youth. We have helped financially with the revitalization of Soundview Camp. Each year, we send about 15 kids to camp. In 2019, we sent 18 campers and 6 rovers to Soundview. We love Soundview Camp!

We have a rich vacation Bible school history. Christian Education included Vacation Bible School since the 1920's. In recent years we have hosted as many as 108 children in FREE VBS. Adult volunteers from our church and neighboring churches and youth volunteers present a themed program with Bible study, games, crafts, music, food, and fun!!

- **Our Puyallup Community**

Puyallup is a medium-sized city located in the state of Washington. It has a population of approximately 42,000 people. Puyallup is located six miles east of Tacoma, 30 miles south of Seattle, and is situated in the heart of the Puyallup Valley.



Puyallup spreads beyond the city center to Summit on the west, Gem Heights to the south, Edgewood to the north and Sumner to the east. Puyallup is the 27th largest community in Washington.

Puyallup is an ethnically diverse city. This is also true of the 39 schools within the district. The Puyallup School District, established in 1854, has twenty-one elementary schools, seven junior high schools, three senior high schools and an alternative school. The Puyallup School District serves over 22,000 students. It is the 8th largest school district in the State, serving a population of approximately 123,000 residents.

In 1987, Puyallup became home to an expansion of Pierce College. Pierce College Puyallup was recognized by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in 1999 as the state's 34th community college and the second college in the Pierce College District 11. The enrollment at Pierce College Puyallup is 4500 students, 75% are between the ages of 15 & 24.

- **Our Members & Regular Attendees**

Church membership is currently 167 individuals. Our average attendance is 98 at Sunday worship and includes members and friends of FPC. Forty-nine percent of our congregation is over 70 years old. Thirty percent are between 40 and 70 years old. Fourteen percent are under 25 years old. Our congregation is 96% white.

Adults: We offer Sunday School for adults with an average attendance of 15 and a mid-week pastor led Bible study averaging 5 attendees. In addition, there are book studies which include opportunities for learning and discussion.

Children: Twenty-seven children ranging in age from preschool to Jr. High/ Middle School are among us. Children's Sunday school attendance averages ten students. CORE is a Wednesday evening gathering time for this age group. There is an average attendance of 12 which includes friends of our regular attendees.

Junior High/Middle School: We have recently added a Junior High Youth Group under the leadership of our Children's Ministry Coordinator. They are hosting 11 sixth through ninth grade youth this fall. During the school year they meet once a week for games, dinner, and a Bible study.

Senior High/Youth: There are eight attendees who meet regularly to study, participate in community outreach activities, and enjoy fellowship together. They plan and accomplish an annual mission trip.

- **Our Staff**



First Presbyterian Church is blessed with several talented staff members. Pastor Sue Watkins provides spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and oversees our programs of worship and work. Our Office Manager greets the public and serves the needs of our congregation. The Children's Ministry Coordinator oversees educational opportunities for children and youth through middle school. Two Nursery Attendants and an Activity Time Coordinator care for and nurture our youngest children. Our talented Organist, and Worship Leader/Choir Director provide Sunday worship music and music for special occasions.

In addition to our paid staff, there are several volunteers whose service we appreciate. They include an Interim Youth Ministries Coordinator providing education and fellowship for our high school youth, our Parish Nurse who is available for health concerns and offers educational opportunities. Our paid music staff is supported by the volunteer hours from our Coordinator of Music Ministry, our Handbell Director, and our Choir Director Emeritus.

- **Our Leadership**

Session: The business of the church is conducted at regular monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month and at special called meetings. There are twelve Elders who serve a three-year term with every Elder serving as moderator or member of at least one commission.

Deacons: The twelve members of the Board of Deacons, each elected to a three-year term, provide services of care and compassion to the congregation and beyond. Deacons meet monthly on the second Tuesday. In caring for the congregation, communion is served monthly in worship service, to those homebound, and on special occasions. Cradle Roll and Beyond is a ministry of love to children under three and to young adults. Deacons oversee Food Bank donations and Outreach Meals for those in need. The Health Ministries team coordinates with our Parish Nurse and keeps our Hygiene Closet supplied. Deacons enable Prayer Chain requests through email or by phone calls. Deacons show compassion by providing receptions following memorial services, sunshine activities of cards and flowers, and visitation of those with special needs. In addition, they coordinate three special events during the year: Father's Day Breakfast, Remembrance Breakfast, and ECEAP/Bates Preschool Christmas Gifts.

• Our Ministries and Programs

Christian Education: Since the beginning, Christian education has been a priority for FPC. Our Christian education program for children, youth and adults is strong and varied.

We are blessed to have a Children's Ministry Coordinator on our staff. For the children at FPC, we offer Sunday School and Children's Time during worship service followed by Activity time. On Wednesday we offer a well-attended CORE program for our children and their friends. A Junior High youth group meets Wednesday nights.

Our Youth Group has a history of both paid and volunteer leadership. Currently it is led by volunteers. This exciting program is much more than fellowship. Our youth study scripture, share about their faith, volunteer regularly in local mission work, and plan and attend an annual mission trip. They also participate in Triennium. Each year, the youth plan and present a complete worship service on Youth Sunday.



We take great pride in presenting a popular neighborhood FREE Vacation Bible School each summer. This five-morning event is full of scripture lessons, games, crafts, and character-building activities.

Adult Christian education is offered on Sunday mornings. Known as the Parlor Study, this long time Bible study is very popular. Throughout the year we offer other Bible studies, book studies and special interest studies for adults.

Community & Global Discipleship: The Community & Global Discipleship Commission is responsible for the mission and missional ministries of FPC. Our church consistently tithes, giving money to both community and global causes. Beyond that, we have a history of volunteering to support our community.

Financial Community and Global Mission Support: Most of our global financial support is through Olympia Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are a PC(USA) *Four for Four* congregation – consistently giving to all four special offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace & Global Witness and Christmas Joy! We also give to Rafiki Foundation in support of missionaries Dave, Julie, and Olivia Pederson in Kenya. And we joyfully contributed boxes to Operation Christmas Child's Shoe Box Ministry. We partner with several quality community ministries. A few of the ministries we regularly support are: 2¢ a Meal (Olympia Presbytery Hunger Grant), Armory Hot Meal, Associated Ministries, Church of the Indian Fellowship, Coffee Oasis and Serra House,



Communities in Schools, Freezing Nights, Hagar's Community Church, New Hope Resource Center, Puyallup Food Bank and Sound View Camp.

Missional Education: The commission plans and executes missional education projects. Attended by 30 members, *What's It All About*, was a four-session introduction to the Missional Church based on *Moving Back Into the Neighborhood*. Both Rev. Dr. Keith Tanis and Rev. Julie Johnson helped plan and present this event. Two Pentecost book studies about the Holy Spirit focused on the power of the Holy Spirit for individuals. A six-week summer series, *The Heart of Neighboring*, explored what it means to be a neighbor guided by Jesus' teachings. Pastor Sue Watkins, Pastor Tayler Morgan, Pastor Nicole McKnight, and ministry candidate John Asher each led Sunday worship presenting different aspects of being good neighbors. *Living and Growing in the Fullness of Christ*, led by Bill Bowers, included a Sunday pulpit presentation and 5 weeks of study. All who participated grew in their understanding of Christ's challenge to us as individuals.

Missional Action: Our beloved Kid's Bags ministry for the Bates ECEAP School located in our church provides weekly protein, lite meals, and snacks for the students. Other regular action ministries include: Friday sandwiches for New Hope Resource Center, volunteering for Freezing Nights and providing housing several times during the year, preparing and serving the Armory Meal monthly, joining Emergency Food Network's Hunger Walk and support for the Puyallup Summer Lunch program. Recently, we have expanded into new areas of ministry by promoting a beading day with Church of the Indian Fellowship, joining worship at Hagar's Community Church at the Washington Corrections Center for Women in Gig Harbor, preparing for and eating dinner with the students and instructors for Jobs for Life class presented by Bridges of Love. We sorted school supplies and volunteered at the Candy Buffet for Puyallup Food Bank. We are supporting the ministry of The Coffee Oasis and Serra House for homeless and at-risk youth. We have started a relationship with Pierce College Puyallup's Student Life. We have worked with them to fill the Pierce College Food Pantry.



In late 2016, our church brought the leadership of four neighboring churches together to discuss common ministries and goals. From that event, Pioneer Neighbors was initiated.

Representatives from our neighboring churches meet monthly to exchange ideas and report on happenings in each church. In 2019, the four churches worked together to host Dollars for Desserts where we raised over \$4000 for our common ministry, Freezing Nights.

Congregational Worship Life:

First Presbyterian Church is a friendly church, and many feel a family bond with other attendees. Through the work of Congregational Worship Life, there are beautiful seasonal banners at worship, youth candlelighters, activity bags provided for the children, hearing devices for assistance during worship service and name tags to help us learn each other's names. An audio/visual system supports worship and other sanctuary events. Our gifted organist, chancel choir, and talented praise team provide special music. Each Sunday after worship, we enjoy coffee and snacks during fellowship. Other fellowship opportunities include Soup Supper for Maundy Thursday, Bradley Lake Park Worship Service and Picnic, an all-church campout, Thanksgiving Eve Service and Fellowship Hour, and the Hanging of the



Greens where many decorate the church for Advent. Members and friends of all ages join in a Christmas caroling afternoon and evening. We visit homes of those who are unable to come to church with music and carols. We follow-up with a potluck meal and fellowship for the carolers.

Facilities: Along with our Custodian, the Facilities Commission oversees the church's physical resources and the grounds. Our facility is contained in one unit which includes the sanctuary, fellowship hall, education wing, the nursery, and the office spaces. There is also a fenced playground which is used by our children and the preschool housed in our building.

Sharing our building is an important mission of FPC. The ECEAP/Bates Preschool is housed at our facility. Breakfast and lunch for the students are prepared and served by the school staff daily. Other community groups using the building are: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, AA, Al-Anon, TOPS, ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics), Vivace Choir and PVMC (Puyallup Valley Music), Step up to Life, and TALC (Tacoma Area Literacy Council).

Personnel Stewardship and Finance: The Personnel/Stewardship and Finance Commission (PSF) has responsibilities in each of these areas as well as oversight of the Scholarship Committee, the Memorials Committee, and the Endowment Committee. PSF develops job descriptions and pay ranges for staff. Stewardship is a yearlong endeavor and PSF monitors expenses and income monthly. This commission also oversees the work of our Treasurer, our Financial Secretary, and our Financial Bookkeeper.



Presbyterian Women (PW): Presbyterian Women is committed to nurture faith through prayer and Bible study, support the mission of the church, work for justice and peace and to build an inclusive, caring community of women. At First Presbyterian Church in Puyallup there are approximately 30 active women. The women meet monthly at a Gathering for lunch and a program. The three Circles meet monthly for Bible Study and fellowship. During the Gatherings, mission is supported with three special offerings; Thank Offering, Least Coin Offering, and the Birthday Offering. A Christmas Tea and a May Luncheon are special events sharing food, fellowship, and music. Each year a woman, and occasionally a man, is presented with the Honorary Life Membership on *Celebrate the Gifts of Women* Sunday.

Women of our congregation have participated in National PW Gatherings which happen every 3 years and have held offices at the Synod and Presbytery levels of PW. Currently, one of our PW members is publisher of *The Pipeline*, a publication by and for the Presbyterian Women in the Alaska-Northwest Synod. And another is the treasurer of Olympia Presbytery PW.

- **Our Commitment as a Matthew 25 Church (Fall 2019)**



In the Fall of 2019, we became a PC(USA) Matthew 25 Congregation. We celebrated our commitment at the PC(USA) *Matthew 25: A Gathering and Commissioning celebration (ZOOM)* on June 10, 2020. We were presenters at the event which was attended by over 400 Presbyterians. Our Session chose to act on all three areas of focus.

Focus #1: *Building congregational vitality by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.*



This focus was a natural choice for us as it fit into our continuing work toward becoming a missional church. Our vitality quest began long before the Matthew 25 initiative. In 2012, a Guide Team started working with Olympia Presbytery Presbyter, the Rev. Dr. Keith Tanis, to transform our congregation to a missional congregation. Activities and experiments to introduce the congregation to missional actions were planned and carried out during the next several years.

In late 2017, our Session voted to enter the Vitality Pathway, a several year process to understand the congregation's vision of its future doing God's work. We are still in the process of traveling the pathway. We started with a dinner event, *Remember When*. We focused on our approximately 130-year history. Rev. Heather James led us as we

celebrated the changes we have gone through in our history and came to an understanding we had gone through several changes during our history.

On Sunday, October 21, 2018 we celebrated a *Veritas Sunday Worship* led by Rev. Dan Whitmarsh from Lakebay Community Church (EEC). Followed by a catered lunch with table discussions moderated by Pastor Sue Watkins, Pastor Dan Whitmarsh and Pastor Heather James. Reports on these events are included in the Review and Analysis of Input section of this study.

A Vitality Team was formed and started working on our Covenant of Relational Behaviors. This covenant is a tool to help us as we discuss our future. A future that will require change. The Vitality Team studied and presented a proposed covenant to the Session and to the congregation for input. Every phrase in the covenant is based on scripture. The corresponding verses are posted with the covenant. The covenant was adopted by the Session on January 21, 2020. It was signed by members of our church family on January 26, 2020. (A copy with verses included is available upon request).

Puyallup First Presbyterian Church Covenant of Relational Behaviors

We are members of a Holy Spirit led community, part of the larger body of Christ, which is at work in the world to share God's saving grace. We affirm our need to be inspired and challenged by the Gospel. With our actions and words, we agree to work together honestly and openly, living the truth of God's gospel with respect, honor, and joy. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we listen and respond to God's voice in prayer and seek his guidance in scripture.

We seek what God wants for our whole church. In times of disagreement, we will trust the Holy Spirit to lead us to a solution grounded in Christ.

- We will work together by listening to one another with love, respect, compassion, and receptive minds.
- We will resist letting hidden problems, disagreements or conflicts grow into resentments, frustrations, and anger.
- We will practice patience, "bearing with one another in love," even when we disagree and cannot find immediate resolution.
- We will avoid gossip and address conflict openly with intentional empathy and respect for one another in Christ.
- We will give grace and forgiveness in our relationships, always loving, caring, and praying for our church and each other.

The Vitality Team and Pastor Whitmarsh are planning to lead our congregation along the pathway to the next step: Empowering People and Inspiring Change (EPIC) as soon as possible. This will be a workshop that offers tools for change management, including helpful constructs for our leadership and church.

Focus #2: *Eradicating systemic poverty by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.*



We have a rich history of caring for those in need in our community. We support local ministries helping people struggling with lack of housing, food, and necessities. We give money and needed items to these ministries each year. We have several ministries where we feed those who are hungry. And for many years, we have been members of Freezing Nights, a local homeless ministry. We house and feed homeless guests during the cold months 2 to 3 nights a month. And we give financial and food support to a local homeless day center, New Hope Resource Center.

Therefore, choosing this Matthew 25 focus was a natural fit. We are hoping to do more than help those in need. We want to understand the reasons people are forced to continue to live in poverty and help to make changes to the systems that keep them there. In early 2020, we formed an Eradication of Systemic Poverty Action Committee to study systemic poverty and take action to make changes.

Focus #3: *Dismantling structural racism by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.*

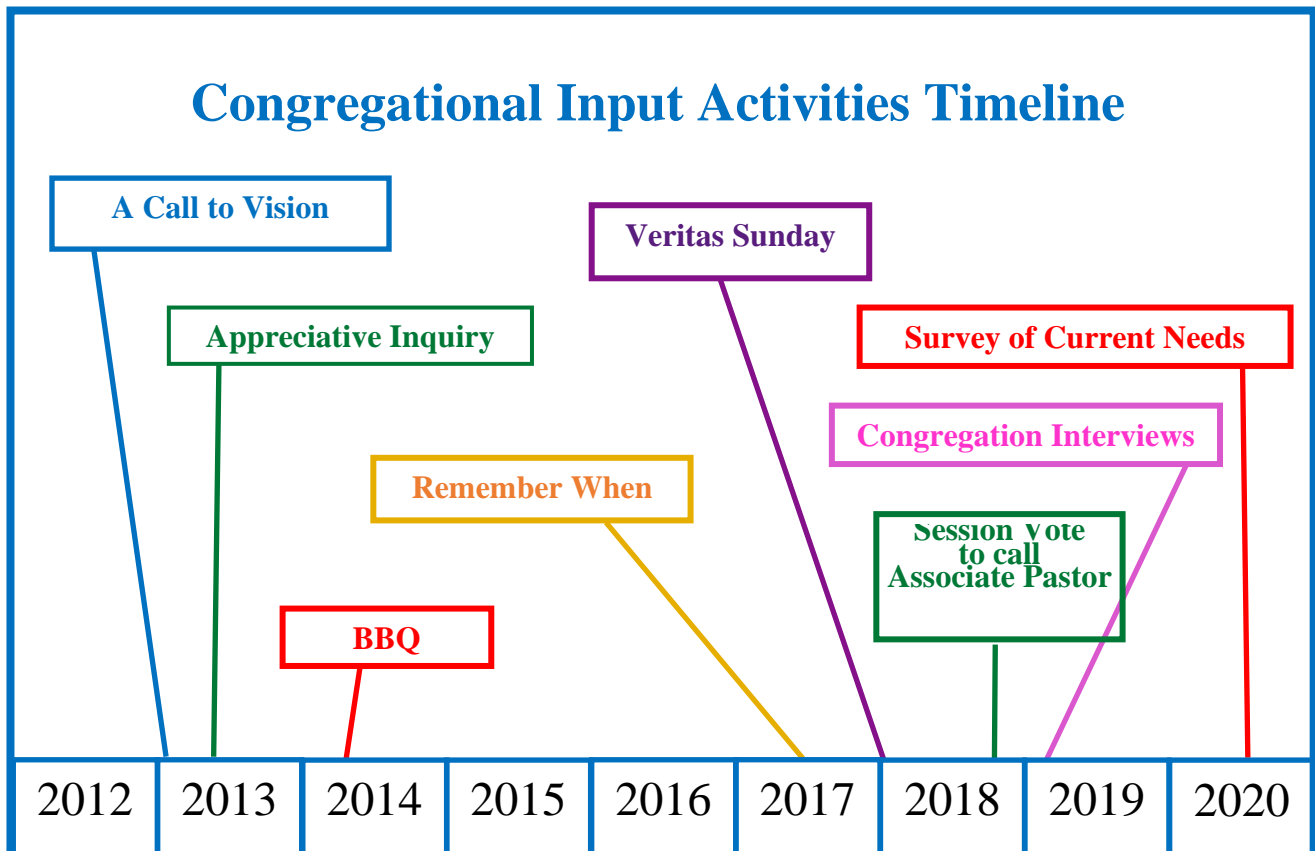


We did not choose this focus originally. We thought Congregational Vitality and Systemic Poverty were the two we were already working on and would be all the work we could handle. In March 2020, our world took on a new look. And, as Pastor Sue said at the Matthew 25 commissioning, “Dismantling Structural Racism chose us.” We feel compelled to work in this area too. Our Session approved the addition of Focus #3 on July 21, 2020.



OUR REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONGREGATIONAL INPUT ACTIVITIES

This part of our mission study summarizes our self-study events in the past few years. Each of our “vision for the future” activities strongly indicated the need for development of leadership for young adults and youth. Our report addresses our desired movement forward at this “critical moment.”



• **A CALL TO VISION** was a retreat of members and attendees identified as past leaders, current leaders, and future leaders. The Rev. Elaine Swigart was the facilitator for our January 12, 2013 all-day event. We hosted 45 leaders: 21% of the membership. Pastor Swigart’s program was based on *Managing Polarities in Congregations* (Alban Institute). Two major areas were targeted as needing immediate attention:

1. *Devise a Marketing Plan* had nine leaders working on three identified tasks: Landscaping/Exterior, Mission Statement and Stained-Glass Windows. Other areas of development we identified for future work. Each of these tasks were accomplished to the extent time and funds would allow.
2. *Intentional Small Groups* had four people working on several small group ideas. *First Friends* was identified as a critical need. Sixteen people were recruited to attend to visitors, nurture new attendees, and keep a welcoming and informative narthex.

● **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY** was accomplished over a three-month period, April to June 2013. Our Missional Guide Team, led by the Rev. Dr. Keith Tanis, accomplished this task. The seven Guide Team members interviewed 160 people, 74% of the membership. Interviews were either one-on-one or in small groups of 2-3 people. Each person was asked three questions and notes were recorded:

Question 1. The Past: Reflecting on your entire experience at church, remember and describe a time you felt most engaged, alive, and motivated. Who was involved? How did you feel? What happened?

The three most repeated answers to #1 were:

- Participation in project
- Involvement in music ministry
- Involved in youth program

Question 2. The Present: What do you most value about Church today? What contributes most to your spiritual life? What relationships, programs or events are (or have been) most powerful and helpful in nurturing your relationship with God?

The three most repeated answers to #2 were:

- Sense of Christian community
- Support of church community
- Seeing the youth and supporting their efforts

Question 3. The Future: What are your three wishes hopes or dreams for our church? What would you like to see us become? What changes would you like to see happen? What would our church look like if your wishes came true?

The six most repeated answers to #3 were:

- Reach out to the community, expand our focus
- Keep the “family” feeling, supportive
- Expand programs, small groups, increase involvement
- Attract more members, multigenerational, young families
- Expand Sunday School
- Grow the youth program

● **BBQ FOR YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS AND YOUNG FAMILIES**

This special BBQ was an amazing event that resulted in the formation of a group called First Families. In early 2014, the Session appointed two Elders to explore ways to involve young adults and families with young children and youth. The BBQ was planned. Young adults, youth and families with youth, and young children were identified and invited. After fellowship and food, a discussion of what could be done to increase involvement at church was started. It was clear our guests all felt we were offering weak or no programs which would interest them. Some were attending

churches where the family programs were strong. During the discussion, a church member volunteered to take on the task of creating a program for young families.

First Families started right after the BBQ. Families from our church and families from the community joined First Families and enjoyed fellowship and activities for a few years. The program is without a leader now and waiting to be revived.

• TWO VITALITY PATHWAY EVENTS:

Remember When: A potluck dinner celebration of our history, *Remember When* was held on August 25, 2018. More than 50 people attended this event which was moderated by the Rev. Heather James. When remembering what it was like, our congregation fondly looks back at the times our church had lots of families with children and young adults as members. Pastor James guided us to understand the many changes we have been through in our 130-year history.

Veritas Sunday: Veritas was a well-planned serious look at our church on October 21, 2018. The worship service was attended by 96 members and attendees. It was followed by a catered lunch. Pastor Sue Watkins, Pastor Dan Whitmarsh and Pastor Heather James moderated the event.

Pastor Whitmarsh preached about the reality of a congregation's vitality and we each had the opportunity to vote as to how we saw our church's future. The results were: Healthy Missional church chosen by 24%, Stable church was chosen by 40%, a church at a Critical Moment was chosen by 34% and a church At Risk was chosen by 2%.

During lunch, Pastor Sue Watkins, Pastor Dan Whitmarsh and Pastor Heather James moderated table discussions. Seven topics were discussed, and responses were recorded. Some sharing was done. All table notes were transcribed into a data base and shared at our annual meeting in January 2019.

Topic #1: Who are we?

Responses appearing at more than one table are: We are aging. We do a lot of good things. Some people do all the work but provide a lot of good deeds in Christ's name.

Topic #2: What are our greatest assets?

Responses appearing at more than one table are: Our people, talents, and gifts. The building. Location. Welcoming atmosphere. Believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

Topic #3: What has it been like to take an honest look?

Tables did not have common responses. Recorded responses are: Our church has much to offer. Yes, we are willing to take an honest look. We don't do it (take time to look and evaluate), but we are today. It is threatening. It is uncomfortable. Tendency to push in a new direction and retreat. How do we know the Spirit leads us? Churches are becoming divided on politics. Protectiveness of "sacred cows," fear of unknown. Wonder, is the greater congregation willing?

Topic #4: Do we have the means to be a healthy missional church?

Tables did not have common responses. Recorded responses are: Feel strongly that we have a vision to be a missional church and that something of value will come out of this. Open up scripture, discussion on Bible study. Prayer, Go to God. Cultivate life with Jesus. Form vitality team. Create covenant. Continue with questions. Come to questions with sense of healthy and holy brokenness. We need to be aware of cost/benefit analysis, there are costs. We do not, at this time, have the vision to be a healthy missional church. A lot of good ideas, but do we have the means?

Topic #5: Vision

Responses appearing at more than one table are: High school 2 blocks away, wave at kids from turquoise table, facilitate community service hours for students in our building, offer after school tutoring. Do we know the gifts of the congregation... can we find out?

Topic #6: Ideas

We/youth need to go into the community. Mother's night out.

Topic #7: What will work for our church?

Don't wait for Sue to do the work, just let her lead and guide.

● **CONGREGATION INTERVIEWS; ASSOCIATE PASTOR POSITION:**

Our Session decided to poll the congregation about the concept of adding an Associate Pastor for Young Adults and Youth. Members and friends attending church on Sunday, July 28, 2019 were interviewed by eight Elders. Fifty people were interviewed, 62% of the people in attendance that day. The following interview questions were directed to the idea of expanding our staff to include an associate pastor for young adults and youth.

1. Past: Reflecting on your entire experience at church (all churches you have attended), what are one or two memories you have about youth and young adult involvement? Who was involved?

If the person interviewed, attended church during their childhood, answers indicated a positive and active youth group experience. Good memories of a large variety of experiences. Leaders were pastors, youth pastors and youth leaders.

2. Present: Considering our church today, what do think about the youth and young adult involvement? What programs are available? How are those programs staffed? How important are those programs?

Answers indicated most felt leaders were doing a good job, they were worried about burnout, we needed a paid staff, we need more youth and young adult involvement.

3. Future: What are your hopes and dreams when you consider youth and young adults who come to our church? What would opportunities for young people at our church look like?

Eighty-two percent of those questioned indicated they would like to see an expanded young adult and youth program that reaches out to the community. Many indicated a concern for how taxing the job is for volunteers.

● **SURVEY OF CURRENT NEEDS:** During May of 2020, the Associate Pastor Study Committee preparing this study decided it might be a good time to get up to date information. A survey was prepared and sent via e-mail and mail to members and attendees. Fifty-four people responded to the survey, 30% of those sent out. The survey had six questions, multiple-choice responses, and a place for comments.

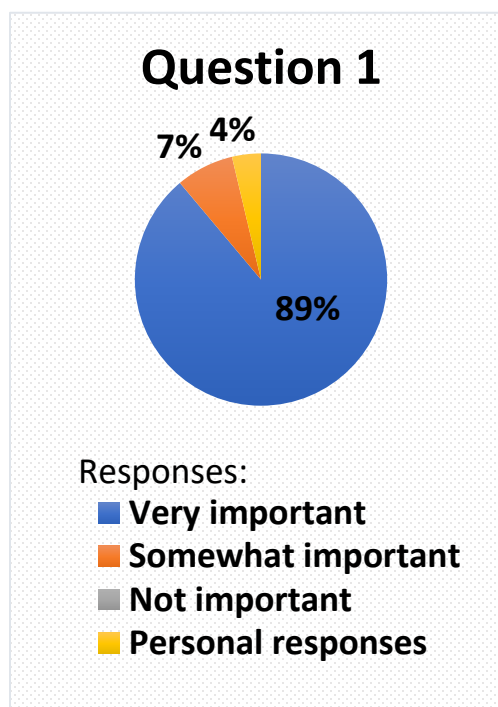
Question 1: How important is providing a program to attract and support young adults and young families in their spiritual growth? There were 54 responses. Two responses were personal responses (*other*). Only one response was allowed.

The possible responses and results were:

- Very important – (89%)
- Somewhat important – (7%)
- Not important – (0%)
- Two *other* responses – (4%) (2% each)

The two personal responses were:

1. Of course, it is important
2. I believe our church is doing this for our young adults



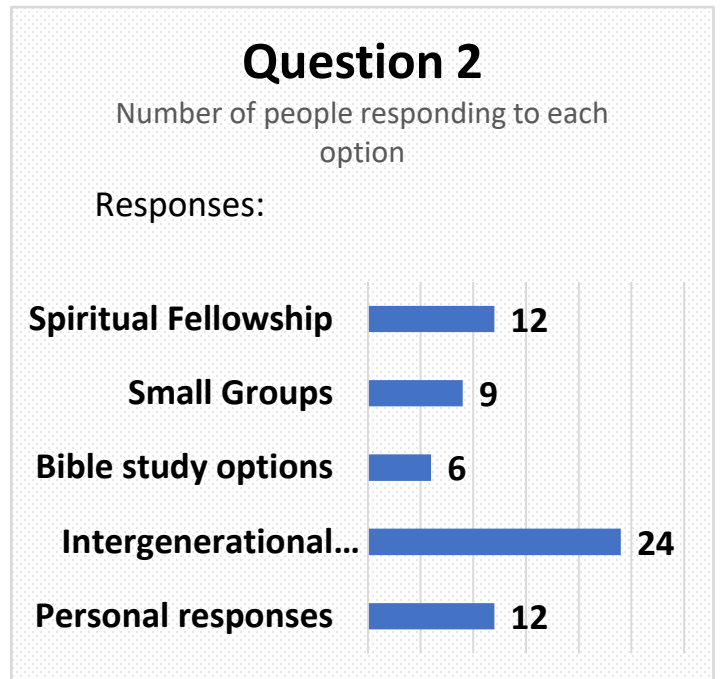
Question 2: Considering our current program offerings, what is absent for you? (Check all that apply) The number of people responding was 45. Twelve responses were personal responses (*other*). More than one response was accepted.

The possible responses and results were:
(number of people choosing the response)

- Spiritual fellowship – 12
- Small groups – 9
- Bible study options – 6
- Intergenerational activities – 24
- *Other* responses – 12

The 12 personal responses were:

1. Youth choir opportunities
2. Additional youth dynamics and draw
3. A slower pace, fewer extras
4. I have tried online service, volume too low even when computer turned up
5. I am satisfied with what we are doing
6. Music is a huge part of my worship,
I miss singing – singing by myself isn't cutting it.
7. Nothing
8. Robust Youth Choir-we need to draw kids first
9. Being together, physically
10. A sense of belonging
11. I like what we have
12. I believe we are doing good. We are not perfect, but the people have good hearts.



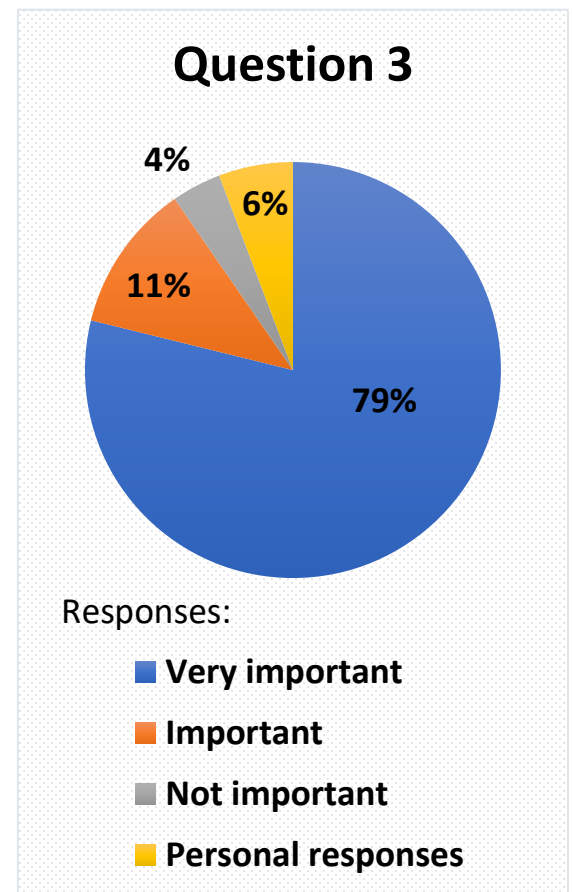
Question 3: How important do you feel the development of a strong youth and young adult program is to the future of our church? There were 53 responses. Three responses were personal responses (*other*). Only one response was allowed.

The possible responses and results were:

- Very important – (79%)
- Important – (11%)
- Not important – (4%)
- Three *other* responses – (6%) (2% each)

The 3 personal responses were:

1. Again, the future of our church is most important ...however times are changing
2. We have had this vision since I can remember. But you cannot force people's hands. We have had many young people grow up in the church, happy, content, go off to college and they never come back, even to visit. But we gave them love and a good start.
3. Very important, but how are we going to pay for it.

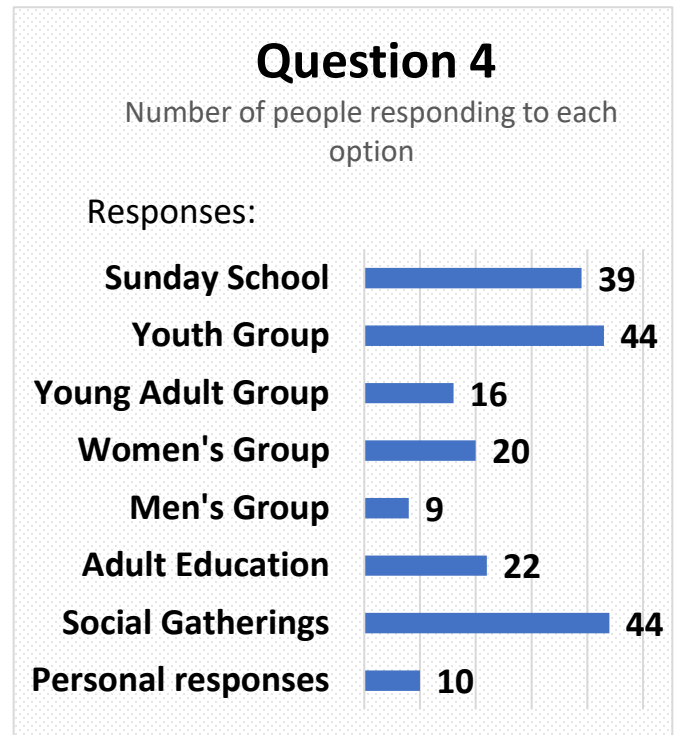


Question 4: Considering your past-experience with church (all you have attended), what programs played a significant part in your development as a Christian? (Check all that apply.) The number of people responding was 51. Ten responses were personal responses (*other*). More than one response was accepted.

The possible responses and results were:

(number of people choosing the response)

- Sunday school – 39
- Youth Group – 44
- Young Adult Group – 16
- Women’s Group – 20
- Men’s Group – 9
- Adult Education – 22
- Social Gatherings – 44
- *Other* responses – 10



The 10 personal responses were:

1. Youth Choral and Youth Choral Outreach (Summer performance touring)
2. Summer camp for youth, Nondenominational Singles group
3. I sing in the choir now and have been soloist years past. I miss that and in person church service.
4. All are important to someone. Would not want to cut any programs.
5. Youth musicals and short performance tours
6. Bible Study, prayer groups
7. Worship service
8. Retreats; both as a youth and as an adult
9. Camps
10. Catechism

Question 5: During the past few years, we have held workshops, events and gatherings to focus on the future of FPC. You may have had the opportunity to contribute during one or more of these events. At each of these, concern for the future of our church as we know it has been discussed. Which best describes your feelings about the future of FPC? There were 53 responses. Two responses were personal responses (*other*) and there were 5 added comments. Only one response allowed.

The possible responses and results were:

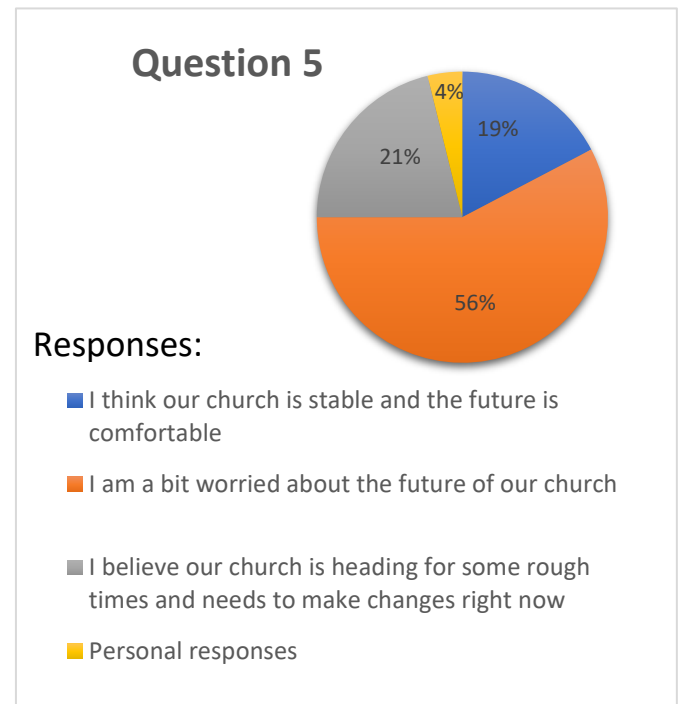
- I think our church is stable and the future is comfortable – (19%)
- I am a bit worried about the future of our church – (56%)
- I believe our church is heading for some rough times and needs to make changes right now – (21%)
- *Other* responses – (4%)
- There were 5 comments added

The 2 personal responses were:

1. Hard to say, we are kind of been in limbo but all in all we seem to be changing things, some may need to be revived or at least looked at
2. With the world today especially C-19....we need to stay connected even more.

The 5 added comments were:

1. I think we need to wait until we can all be together again to make big changes. Who knows how long that will be.
2. Change is always welcome, I think we need to keep up with the current needs in our community. Although the Book of Order calls out a guideline, I know this is recommended. Making lessons personalized and relatable is refreshing and interesting.
3. Due to this pandemic we are heading into some tough times.
4. I think that most churches are facing this same thing. The "bench warming" age of the elder generation is dwindling and the younger folks are struggling to find answers. Getting younger folks, who's parents aren't attending or teaching their children about our Lord and Savior isn't going to be something that is done overnight. What ideas do you have that will inspire or want them to participate. Will it be enough to inspire them to take part and be a part of the FPC family. We all know many children raised with Sunday school, through confirmation and maybe when they marry or baptize a little one..
5. We must stay the welcoming and loving church we have always been.



Question 6: Elders on the FPC Session have voted to hire a full-time Associate Pastor who would focus on developing a strong youth and young adult program while supporting the existing church programs and staff. Do you support this decision? There were 50 responses. Five responses were personal responses (*other*) and there were 5 added comments. Only one response allowed.

The possible responses and results were:

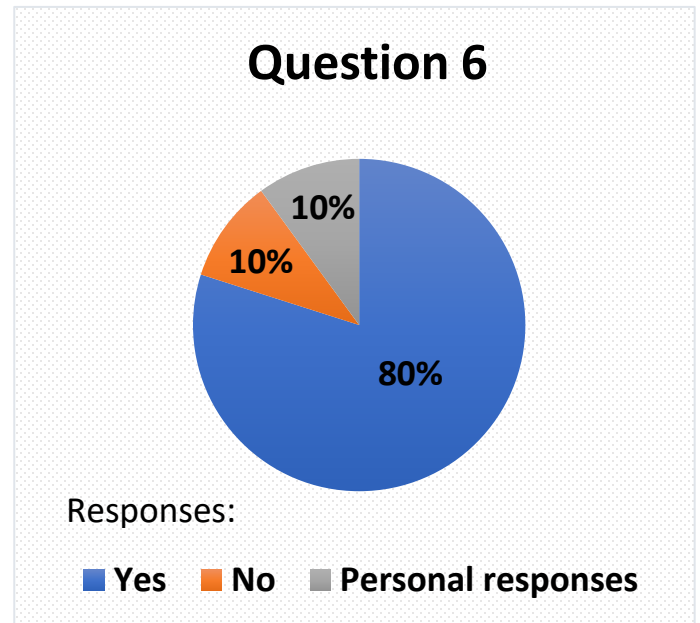
- Yes – (80%)
- No – (10%)
- *Other* responses (10%) (2% each)
- There were 5 comments added

The 5 personal responses were:

1. My suggestion is to see if our budget can handle another employee. A full time assoc pastor needs many dollars for many years. Let's all give like we have one now for a year and see if we can afford it. We never have been able to in the past.
2. Not sure we need a full-time Associate
3. I honestly do not know enough of the details to give an answer.
4. I am uncertain
5. Undecided, are there enough funds? If so "yes" I'd support this.

The 5 added comments were:

1. Not at this time as I stated above. It's a financial risk.
2. Paying for it is a challenge
3. This is the wrong time to hire a full time Associate Pastor. The church is not even open for services. We are still in a Stay Home situation because of the Coronavirus. Good idea, but not at this time.
4. NOT if we have to raid endowment funds to do it.
5. I don't believe the answer is a full-time associate. While support of our current youth and young adults should be a priority, I don't think attempting to recruit young members is where our gifts lie. There are plenty of "hip" churches with dynamic programming and many bodies. In our congregation a full-time salary would be better utilized reaching an under-served population (not our aspirational population).



OUR VISION FOR MOVING FORWARD

We are a strong presence in central Puyallup surrounded by families.

We are located near many schools and a community college. We are surrounded by churches, small businesses, parks, and a library. Our central location presents an amazing opportunity to reach out to young families, youth and their families and young adults. This demographic used to be a major part of our church.

It is one we wish to serve with an innovative program. We wish to provide a place where young adults, youth and their families can learn how to live out God's purposes for their lives and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Session believes the path forward is hiring an Associate Pastor to focus on the growth and development of a Young Adult and Youth Program. Our congregation has shown support for this path forward through each of our “vision for the future” activities over several years.

Our leadership feels now is the “critical moment” to act.

First Presbyterian Church Hopes for the Future: Partnership with an Associate Pastor

Responsibilities

We envision this pastor’s first responsibility to be developing and overseeing a program for young adults, youth, and their families. Additionally, we hope the pastor would work closely with our Children’s Ministry and Christian Education programs.

We would expect our Associate Pastor to collaborate with Pastor Sue. And to be actively involved with the Session, Deacon Board, Presbytery, and other youth programs in other churches.

It will be very important for this pastor to reach out to and be involved in our Puyallup community and to reach out to Pierce College. Pastoring FPC’s college students living away from home is another needed responsibility.

Ministry Description

We envision a holistic approach where young adults, youth, and their families will be given opportunities to develop and build personal relationships with God through Jesus Christ. Included would be Christian Education, worship, fellowship, mission opportunities, a Confirmation Program and missional education and involvement.

It will be important for this pastor to be a bridge between the young adults and youth ministries and the broader church, creating involvement in both directions. We would expect to see planned offsite spiritual enrichment for young adults and youth and regular mission experiences.

Personal Qualities

Our vision is the Associate Pastor must be strong in their faith and willing to share that faith with young adults and youth who may not be familiar with the teachings of the Bible. They must be patient and willing to go above and beyond the confines of the church or their office to reach out to young adults and youth. A sense of humor would be welcomed.

The Associate Pastor must be a positive, prayerful church staff member working in cooperation for the overall vision of our church. An enthusiastic Christian leader. A team builder. A well-organized self-starter. Proficient in technology.

We would hope to support this pastor in continuing education, personal development, and taking good care of their emotional and spiritual needs.

Submitted by Jane Carden, Joe Harrison, Bill Klouse, and ErrolLynne Marsh; August 2020

Received by Session September 15, 2020

Submitted to COM September 16, 2020

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Philippians 4:6-8 NIV