

# **First Presbyterian Church of Hawley Hawley, PA**

## **Mission Study in Support of Search for New Pastor**

**October 2019**



***We believe that God is alive and active. As faithful disciples, we spread the good news of Christ's love, forgiveness and grace. Our mission is to be God's presence in our community. Our ministry is people to people, nurturing spiritual growth, promoting peace, caring for others and providing fellowship.***

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## **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide a foundation for the successful identification of a new pastor for the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Hawley, Pennsylvania. Our beloved pastor, Reverend William Samford, is retiring after 29 years, leaving behind a congregation that works to reflect his love and grace. Our goal in this narrative is to adequately characterize the opportunity that is First Presbyterian for a new pastor—that of a strong, loving, inclusive congregation.

## **B. Introduction**

First Presbyterian Church of Hawley is a community church nestled in the small town of Hawley, 20 minutes from Honesdale and 40 minutes from Scranton and surrounded by the resort community of Lake Wallenpaupack. Members of the congregation represent residents of Hawley, Honesdale and environs and “transplants” from other areas (often retirees) who are full or part time residents of the community. Most attendees drive 10-30 minutes to get to First Presbyterian Church. The congregation is devoted—more than ¾ attend church weekly, participate in multiple church activities, and care for each other and the community. A hallmark of the church is that we strive to be loving and welcoming of all who enter our doors; a diverse and inclusive church, in which we encourage all to try new things (though not always easy) as we move forward in the spiritual growth of our church.

## **C. History of First Presbyterian Church of Hawley**

The Presbyterians have had an early and enduring influence in the spiritual development of the Hawley region. The church today meets at 815 Church Street, the only church on the east side of the tracks heading to the Eddy Bridge. The present church building, dating to 1890, is the second House of Worship the church has owned.

It all began on November 25, 1849 when Rev. Burr Baldwin, missionary of the Presbytery of Montrose, met with seven people who would help form the church at Hawley. Six of the charter members were transfers from the Honesdale Presbyterian church. The seventh was Alfred Burnes, who came on confession of faith and was baptized. The other six founders were Isaac and Catherine Beardslee, Joseph and Laura Brown, and John and Anna Newman. Joseph Brown was elected and ordained as the first ruling Elder.

At first the charter members met in a hired hall or in the Baptist Church, which in those days was located on lower Hudson Street near the Eddy (Walnut Grove) Cemetery and normally conducted their own services. On occasion a missionary would come and preach.

On Jan. 6, 1851, five trustees were elected: Joseph Brown, Solomon Lord, E. Fish, Levi Barker and Brown Fitch. A charter was granted by the Presbytery on May 8, 1851. The congregation, numbering about 20 souls, was already planning to build their own church structure. By April they had raised \$3,011. Located on Second Street (now known as Prospect Street), the sanctuary would be 40 by 60 feet with a belfry and a basement for the Sunday School. A cost overrun occurred, which was generously liquidated by Stephen Torrey of Honesdale. In December 1852, their first pastor was installed, Rev. Elijah Stoddard. He served three years.

This early flock of Hawley Presbyterians was quickly seeing its goals met and saw undoubtedly their prayers answered. The community was quickly growing and developing and it was a marked transitional time for the town. The Pennsylvania Coal Company had just arrived and was starting to bring their coal by gravity railroad to the waiting canal boats. The population was quickly growing with a great demand for labor. The community was deciding what to be called, and in 1849 it changed from Falls Port to Hawleysburg, and in 1851, they settled on Hawley.

The new church edifice overlooked the growing town high on the hill. This section was known as East Hawley with commerce centered on First Street, a wooden plank road later named Hudson Street. The "Flats" was just starting to develop, where downtown would soon shift. Shanty Hill (Marble Hill) was filling up with Irish immigrants seeking work on the gravity railroad or the canal. Trains of coal cars rolled in daily and were hauled back out on an amazing complex of trestles. The canal basin and coal company works was a noisy, dusty and busy place. The Presbyterian's trustee Levi Barker was right in the midst of it, his crew swinging hammers and working saws, turning out canal boats at a rapid rate. At this time, the faithful would flock to their churches, for prayer, worship and admonition in the ways of the Lord.

Rev. Henry Van Houten was the Presbyterian's second pastor in 1856, followed by Rev. William A. Dunning in 1866. Van Houten returned in 1867, and was succeeded by Rev. Wright C. Galpin in 1872. During Galpin's pastorate, a manse was erected on Prospect Street. The congregation raised \$3,000 and no indebtedness was incurred. The manse, which was the pastor's home, still stands although the old church is long gone.

Rev. Arthur Folsom came in 1877. The next year, the trustees arranged a \$900 mortgage to purchase the land for the site of a new church, on lower Church Street. This vision would take 12 years to be realized. Although the church school numbered 163, Rev. Folsom decided to resign. Other ministers supplied the pulpit for the next few years- including Rev. Charles Dunning from the Honesdale church. It was not until 1884 that Rev. R. H. Craig was installed. The church needed to be renewed, and again, we can say their prayers were heard. Fundraising began for a new church. Rev. Jonathan Greenleaf began in 1889; the move for a new church continued in earnest. Within his first year, 27 members were added.

On Sunday, Oct. 12, 1890, the final service was held at the Prospect Street church. The old church had been sold to a downtown merchant for \$200 who wanted to move the building for a new use. Whether this was done, is not clear. On Oct. 16, 1890, the new church on Church Street was dedicated. Former pastors and other ministers from the community participated, as well as the Moderator of the Presbytery. In 1892, the mortgage taken out in 1878 was paid off.

Rev. John Rankin started in 1893 and began holding evangelistic services. He was followed by Rev. John Crane, 1900; Rev. Walter S. Peterson, 1906; Rev. W.L. Buchanan, 1912; Rev. S. R. Diehl, 1916; Rev. George W.S. Wendrick, 1920; Rev. Calvin L. Hine, 1925; Rev. Ebenezer C. Brink, 1929; Rev. Robert W.L. Mark, 1936.

It was during Pastor Mark's time that disaster struck the community. The flood of May 22-23, 1942 brought much destruction to the Lackawaxen River Valley, severely affecting low-lying

parts of Hawley. The Presbyterian Church, located close to the river, as well as the manse next door, received substantial damage. Church damages totaled \$6,200.

Rev. John Highberger was installed in 1943. He was the next to witness calamity. On Jan. 5, 1944, a fire caused \$4,000 damage to the church and its contents. While repairs were underway, the Presbyterians held services in the Baptist church.

Rev. George Evans started in 1947, followed in 1953 by Rev. Robert W.L. Mark. During Evans' time, a second flood struck the church building- in August 1955. Severe damage occurred to the interior. The church was rededicated on its 75th anniversary in 1965. New stained glass windows were installed in 1966; in 1971, the pew arrangement was changed to increase seating from 90 to 104. Rev. Ross Pinkney became pastor in 1975. He was followed by Rev. Richard Bauder in 1983 and Rev. Jean Kiskaddon in 1988. The latter was the first female pastor that we have had.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our present church building, Rev. William L. Samford was called to serve the church. In 1990 the Hawley and Bethany Presbyterian churches had been yoked for approximately 50 years. However, our church had grown sufficiently by 1996 that the Presbytery of Lackawanna separated the two, which was a pivotal point for both churches. Rev. Samford became the full-time pastor of our church and many of the changes contained within this report are a result of the Hawley Church having the sole attention of our pastor. The first of five additions to our church property occurred in 1993 with the expansion of Blough Hall.

Twelve years ago our church started the Good News Cafe, offering free community luncheons on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. An annual golf tournament was begun in 2003 to fund a Head Start outreach as well as the church's Youth Ministry.

The congregation, which numbered 39 in 1990, tripled under the leadership of Rev. Sanford and Sunday attendance grows significantly during the summer months due to vacationers in this resort area. Changes in the First Presbyterian Church of Hawley occurring under Rev. Samford's leadership (1990-2019) are listed below. Some of the changes may seem ordinary, such as a choir. While there may have been a choir in the 1930s, there had been none in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such is the case with many other changes, adult and youth activities, Sunday service, mission and outreach as well as church staffing. This list is considerable, but happened over a period of 29 years. A summary of the growth is listed below:

### **Membership Growth:**

**1990** - 39

**2000** - 131

**2019** - 128

### **Service changes:**

First Presbyterian Church of Hawley separation from First Presbyterian Church of Bethany in 1996\*

Open monthly Communion

Participation of children in Communion  
Ash Wednesday (bread & soup) Service  
Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service  
Christmas Lessons and Carols  
Music, particularly Choir  
Tone chime Choir  
Additional instrumental music

**Building expansion:**

Blough Hall - 1993  
Addition to Blough Hall - 2000  
Former Manse/now Samford Administrative Offices - 2003  
New Manse 825 Church St. - 2015  
Jackie Wolf Wing - 2018  
Wentz Renovation of Blough Hall - 2018

**Staff:**

Full time Pastor as of 1996\*  
Board of Deacons added  
Part-time Sexton  
Part-time Assistant for Administration and Finance  
Director of Music Ministry  
Volunteer Organist

**Communications:**

Church directory (online app)  
Website  
Facebook  
Thursday and monthly e-news bulletins  
Monthly calendar  
Video Monitor during church services

**Youth Activities:**

Active Sunday School  
Vacation Bible School  
Ice Cream Social  
Craft Days/Nights  
Movie Nights  
Lock-ins  
Swimming and Crafts during Golf Tournament

**Adult Activities:**

Bible Study  
Coffee Hour following Sunday services\*\*  
Baseball Night at the Rail Riders\*\*  
Night at the Ritz Theatre  
Christmas Party\*\*  
Lenten Studies  
Advent Studies  
Thanksgiving Congregational Dinner\*\*  
FPC Book Club  
Promised Land State Park - Service and picnic\*\*

**Fundraisers:**

Cookie Walk and Victorian Tea  
Carnival for Kidz  
Golf Tournament  
Tags and Treasures  
Tricky Tray

**Missions** (local and international):

Good News Cafe  
Head Start materials and/or donation (both Hawley and Newfoundland)  
Head Start Family Picnic  
Head Start playground clean-up day  
Red Cross Blood Drives (August & December)  
Operation Honduras: materials and financial donations  
Hurricane Katrina work week in Mississippi+

\*\*Family activities  
+one time activity

#### **D. Demographics and Description of The Congregation and Surrounding Community**

The diverse nature of the congregation of First Presbyterian is reflected in the demographic make-up of our surrounding communities. To reflect this varying landscape, we have included demographic breakdowns of: a) the area within a 10 mile radius (nearly the edge of the 11-30 minute drive that 2/3 of congregants make each Sunday); b. the area within a 2 mile radius (representing downtown Hawley, our local neighbors); c. key demographics from our school district (representing families with children within 327 square miles including Hawley); and d. the demographics of our congregation.

##### **a. Community Demographics (Mission InSite data) - See Appendix I**

For the purpose of this analysis, demographic data was drawn from a 10 mile radius around First Presbyterian Church, Hawley. (A recent survey indicated that 2/3 of respondents drove 11-30 minutes to get to church, thus the 10 mile radius.)

The population in this defined area showed growth of over 10% between 2000-2010 to almost 32,000, but has been stable since that time and is expected to remain stable through 2024. The number of households is also expected to remain stable, though non-family households have been reduced by nearly 20% since 2010, but also are now expected to remain stable. The average age has increased only slightly to 46 years of age. Minority representation in this area has increased by only a very small percentage from 2000-2010 with similar rates expected in 2024: 93% of residents are white (non-Hispanic).

Between 2010 and 2019, the number of residents aged 5-17 (those requiring formal schooling) was reduced by nearly 25%, but is expected to remain stable over the next decade. In contrast, those individuals aged 65 and older have increased by 25% during the same time period and are expected to show continued growth of ~15% over the next decade. Individuals 65 and older represent >25% of the defined population.

From 2010-2019, the average household income for this defined area has increased by 20% (to \$68,975), with an average per capita income of \$29,000 and is expected to increase by another nearly 10% in the next decade. This report suggests that almost 94% of families are above the poverty level. (This differs significantly from the data from the Wallenpaupack Area School District as noted below.)

##### **b. Hawley, PA Demographics (Mission InSite data) - See Appendix II**

Demographic data was also drawn from a 2 mile radius around First Presbyterian Church, Hawley to represent our local neighborhood from which we draw many congregants and also to whom we reach out with community support.

The population in this defined area has shown slow growth (2%) over the past 9 years time and is expected to largely remain stable through 2024 as are the households.



The trends regarding households and non-family households are similar to the larger radius as is the average age (45 vs. 46). Minority representation in Hawley increased by slightly more than the larger area, with 8% minorities (92% white non-Hispanic) in 2019 (expected to increase by an additional .5% by 2024). This source indicates that 2/3 of minorities (5.1% of the population) are Hispanic/Latino.).

The reduction in the number of residents aged 5-17 (those requiring formal schooling) is similar to that in the larger area. This group is expected to continue to decrease slightly (-5%) over the next 5 years before rebounding to current levels in was reduced by nearly 25%, but is expected to remain stable over the next decade. In contrast, those individuals aged 65 and older have increased by 25% during the same time period and are expected to show continued growth of ~15% over the next decade. Individuals 65 and older represent >25% of the defined population.

From 2010-2019, the average household income for this defined area has increased by 16% (to \$63,975), \$5,000 less than the larger area. This figure is also expected to increase by another nearly 9% in the next decade. In contrast to the larger area, these data indicate that 88% of families are above the poverty level (compared to 94% above). These figures differs significantly from the data from the Wallenpaupack Area School District as noted below.

c. Wallenpaupack Area School District Demographics (327.5 square miles)

In contrast to the smaller area within 10 miles of the church and including all age groups, the demographic data for the WASD presents a very different picture. Over half (57.2%) of enrolled students are economically disadvantaged.

d. First Presbyterian Church, Hawley, PA Demographics (2019 Pastoral Search Survey, ~70 respondents for demographic questions, Appendix III)

Almost 2/3 of the attendees at FPCH are women; and 2/3 are 65 or older. More than 50% have a college or post graduate degree. Almost 60% are retired. More than 50% of those who provided a response on income (n=56) report an annual income of >\$75,000 per year, with 32% reporting an income of  $\geq$  \$150,000/year. That said, almost 1/3 of those who responded to this question, report incomes less than \$50,000/year, with 11% under \$25,000/year.

## **E. Description of Our Community**

Represented in the greater Hawley/Honesdale area are the following denominations: Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Jewish, Pentecostal, Presbyterian and others. From time to time, we, at First Presbyterian of Hawley, partner with local churches in community events and our pastor has been an active member of an informal ecumenical group in Hawley. We value the diversity of our community and we are pleased to be an active part of it.

Quite simply, our First Presbyterian Church of Hawley is located in an extremely attractive area. Although physically located in Wayne County, our church counts many members/congregants who live in adjacent Pike County. Together, both counties embody the following description of our area and offer a relaxed life style within very reasonable reach of the major metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia, as well as the valley cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We are fortunate to have an international airport in Avoca, a one-hour car ride from Hawley.

The Counties of Wayne and Pike and the greater Lake Region lie within the area of Pennsylvania known as the Northern Pocono Mountains. The magnificent beauty of the area's woodlands, lakes, rivers and streams are complimented by the picturesque rolling farmland of still working farms which provide produce to area restaurants and farmers' markets. Rich in fun-filled activities, the area offers outstanding state parks, wildlife sanctuaries, boating, kayaking, fishing, hiking, golf, skiing and much more. Rich in history, the area is known for its roots in railroads, canals, forestry service, glassworks, bridges, famous authors and much more.

The charming and historic towns of Hawley, Honesdale and Milford are not only the centers of commerce of the Northern Poconos but also home to an array of exciting cultural, seasonal and holiday events and festivals throughout the year. Many excellent resorts, hotels, restaurants, breweries and coffee shops are present throughout the area for the enjoyment of visitors and residents alike.

Due to the popularity of our area as a travel destination, there are a large number of publications available detailing the natural resources and activities in our region, as well as general information regarding topics such as transportation, medical facilities, dining, regional history, civic and professional organizations, etc. Please contact us if you have interest in any of these publications.

## F. Finances

Annual pledges to FPCH have decreased slightly over the past two years (from 2017 to 2019), now averaging just over \$150,000/year. However, the addition of other revenue (including funds raised for youth ministry, etc.) result in an operating income over \$200,000 annually. In addition to this annual budget, the church holds a Major Repairs Reserve account and an Investment Account. In addition, the Jackie Wolf Wing and Wentz renovation of Blough Hall were begun in 2017 and completed in 2018, with building improvements totaling \$340,000, all privately funded.

One additional analysis of note is the contribution analysis by annual giving. Since 2016, 7 and now 6 pledge units represent >50% of the annual pledge total. This puts the church in a somewhat precarious position, in part due to the age of the congregation and also now in the face of a major ministerial change.

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	Budget <u>2019</u>
<b>Pledges</b>	\$160,890	\$174,725	\$175,043	\$178,500
(Non-/Pledge envelopes, plate offerings)				
<b>Total Other</b> (fundraisers, other gifts, etc.)	55,399	56,606	64,901	51,651
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>216,289</b>	<b>231,331</b>	<b>239,944</b>	<b>230,151</b>
<b>Expense</b>	<b>238,802</b>	<b>201,828</b>	<b>251,944</b>	<b>233,875</b>
<b>Assets</b>				
Other (Youth Min, EAF, Mem Fund, etc.)	21,220	24,376	20,647	
Maj. Repair Reserve	16,581	18,589	3,596	
Investment Account	69,303	80,232*	77,383	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107,104</b>	<b>123,197</b>	<b>101,626</b>	
 Mortgage Loan	 50,703	 43,123	 37,645	

\*In 2017, loan of \$9,500 made from Investment Fund to General Operating Fund

\*In 2017-2018, planning and renovation/construction of new JW Wing Blough Hall, \$340,000

## **G. Building and Grounds**



We are blessed to have had continued growth of both the membership and the physical facilities-“the campus”-of First Presbyterian Church in Hawley. This “campus” now consists of three buildings: The Sanctuary (seating ~150) and connected Blough Hall, the two-story Samford House Administrative Offices (connected to the church with the addition of the Jackie Wolf Wing in 2018) and the Manse (3BR2BA), next door to Samford House. Including the parking lot (but excluding the Manse), the land occupies ~1 acre.

The renovated and enlarged fellowship hall (Blough Hall and the Jackie Wolf Wing), includes a nursery, two classrooms, ADA-compliant rest rooms a large fellowship area (>3000 square feet after 2018 addition) and a full kitchen. The facilities support not only church activities such as Sunday School, Coffee Hour, Bible Study, Committee Meetings, etc, but are also open to the community (AA, NA, civic organization meetings/dinners, etc.). We are located in downtown Hawley at the “river” end of Church Street, aptly named.



## **G. Staff**

Currently, FPCH has a full-time pastor, a part time Director of Music Ministry, a part time Assistant for Administration and Finance, a part-time Sexton, and a volunteer Organist (supported by the Director of Music). In addition, though not staff, we have a 15-20 voice Chancel Choir.

## Our Church Facilities Throughout the Seasons



Easter



Choir at Pentecost



Christmas



## **H. The Christian Culture of First Presbyterian Church, Hawley**

Due in large part to the influence of 29 years of service from Pastor Bill Samford (described as devoted, loving, open arms, inclusive, welcoming, a friend, supportive), there is a unique culture that is First Presbyterian Church, and that culture is embraced and embodied by a heterogeneous congregation. We consider ourselves a “purple” church—accepting, welcoming and loving of all individuals, with equal focus on loving and supporting our membership and supporting those in our community in need.

In July and August, 2019, FPCH underwent a quantitative survey and also participated in a number of small discussion groups. (See Appendices III & IV for summary of results.)

Below are important findings related to the culture/essence of FPCH that are important to understand in selecting a new minister.

- a) The results of the quantitative survey demonstrated a healthy, unified congregation with a focus on serving each other as well as the community and a high priority placed on our children and youth.
- b) Those who attend First Presbyterian Church Hawley (FPCH) are very/satisfied with all aspects of the worship service—the music, the worship service and having their spiritual needs met.
- c) ALL noted that having parts of the worship service especially for children was important. Almost all noted that time to greet one another, silent prayer/meditation and emotionally moving worship was also important.
- d) In addition, almost everyone said that they felt confident with our church’s identity, feel a strong sense of belonging and feel that this church has made a difference in their spiritual life. This church feels like “one large family” to 70% of congregants.
- e) Almost all who answered noted that members help each other in times of trouble. More than 2/3 are very/satisfied with the extent to which our church provides a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved.
- f) In addition, greater than 2/3 of the congregation are very/satisfied in the extent to which our church engages in acts of charity and service to people in need, is very involved in the community, provides an environment that welcomes diverse groups and feels like one large family.
- g) These findings are juxtaposed with the fact that our congregation is somewhat divided in some of their religious beliefs. Fully 3/4 of respondents believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation, yet 15% strongly/disagree. Half of respondents believe that all religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth; but the other 50% are unsure or strongly/disagree. This speaks to the inclusion of diversity that is at the core of FPCH and is a key defining property.
- h) The activities of the church are numerous and highly dependent on volunteers and the volunteer effort is admired and supported by the members of the church.

## **I. Ministries and Programs**

The church, mostly under the leadership of Rev. Samford, has continued to grow and expand the ministry and programs available at First Presbyterian Church of Hawley. The church offers the following activities, largely planned and supported by church members as individual volunteers and through Committees. The Committees include Christian Education, Mission, Parish Life and Worship & Music. (Note - Committees for Administration & Finance/Building and Grounds, Emergency Response, Personnel and Outreach are also in place.) Many of these activities offer opportunities for community outreach.

### **Youth Activities:**

Active Sunday School  
Vacation Bible School (50-60 youth each year)  
Ice Cream Social  
Craft Days/Nights  
Movie Nights  
Lock-ins  
Swimming and Crafts during Golf Tournament

### **Adult Activities:**

Bible Study  
Lenten Studies  
Advent Studies  
Coffee Hour following Sunday services  
Baseball Night at the Rail Riders  
Night at the Ritz Theatre  
Christmas Party  
Thanksgiving Congregational Dinner  
FPC Book Club

### **Fundraisers (and Outreach):**

Cookie Walk and Victorian Tea Luncheon (during Hawley Winter Fest)  
Spring for Kidz Carnival (Memorial Day weekend)  
Golf Tournament  
Tags and Treasures  
Tricky Tray

### **Mission** (local and international):

Good News Café (twice/month free lunches)  
Head Start materials and/or donation (both Hawley and Newfoundland)  
Head Start Family Picnic  
Head Start playground clean-up day  
Red Cross Blood Drives (August & December)  
Operation Honduras: materials and financial donations  
Hurricane Katrina work week in Mississippi (one time activity)

## Our Church Community Through Ministries and Programs

### EXAMPLE YOUTH ACTIVITIES



2019 Vacation Bible School - Sanctuary

2018 VBS - Blough Hall



Spring for Kidz Carnival





## Our Church Community Through Ministries and Programs

### EXAMPLE MISSION/OUTREACH/FUNDRAISERS



Greater Lake Relay for Life – Presby Striders



Bi-Annual Blood Drive - Blough Hall



Community Crop Walk



Cookie Walk – Hawley Winterfest

## **J. Strengths, Opportunities, Challenges**

### **Strengths**

- First Presbyterian Church Hawley is a healthy, diverse and unified congregation with a focus on serving each other as well as the community and a high priority placed on our children and youth. Ours is a “church family” and going to church often also feels like coming “home.”
- Those who attend First Presbyterian Church Hawley (FPCH) are very/satisfied with all aspects of the worship service—the music, the worship service and having their spiritual needs met. There is great satisfaction with the warm and welcoming environment for all who attend. We are a caring, inclusive congregation, with a deep commitment to our fellow human beings.
- In November 2018, FPCH hired a new Director of Music Ministry, Matthew Rupcich. His abilities to lead worship through music and to develop the level of musicianship of the choir and others is that of a professional and his impact has been felt in many ways—including changes to the VBS program so that all community youth lead worship on the final Sunday, presentation of an annual “Music Sunday”. In 2019 the choir with supporting voices and strings presented Vivaldi’s Gloria.
- More than 75% of our congregants are increasing or maintaining their participation in church.
- FPCH is a growing church in an era of decline in main line churches. A new wing to our “social hall” has just been added, more than doubling the size of the space available for community activities (including Vacation Bible School) as well as rental.
- Though a fairly small congregation, we have a large community presence due to our focus on welcoming as well as reaching out to and serving our community, as well as our commitment, dedication and sincerity.
- We have a core group of committed families with young children, who though busy work tirelessly to increase youth participation in our church and to reach out to others in the community.
- Our Committee structure and membership are dedicated, well trained and experienced.

### **Opportunities**

- The area identified in the discussion groups as needing improvement is the opportunity to attract new people of all ages into the church with a special emphasis on youth.
- There were recommendations on how to use our community outreach to invite new people to participate as volunteers with the church and not focusing solely on invitations to attend a service.
- Similar to the above, there is no publicity committee/individual so our external presence and internal communications can be improved.
- The largest area of growth in our geographic area (near/retirees) aligns with the primary demographic in our church, and these individuals may also be able to provide financial stability to the church.
- As a church with resources right in the midst of a less economically advantaged area (especially the youth in our schools), there are a number of local community

support/mission/development opportunities in our church. This may also align with our desire to increase participation of young families and youth (the future of the church).

- In 2018, a Living Legacy Fund charter was created for First Presbyterian Church and is ready to be considered for formal approval and implementation. This Fund is a great opportunity to preserve our financial stability moving forward.
- We suggest conducting an analysis of the local churches with large numbers of young families and youth to identify what we might bring to First Presbyterian.

## **Challenges**

- While we have an opportunity to attract new families, especially those with young children, we also realize that “time for church” is often hard to find for today’s young families and we need to find a way to appeal to their unique circumstances and interests.
- First Presbyterian as we know it today was largely “built” by those individuals who are now entering their 70’s and are less able to participate as actively in the church. (Among those whose participation has decreased (20%), 2/3 said this was due to health concerns.)
- Combining these first two points, First Presbyterian will continue to be a congregation of young families and retirees and we need to make sure our offerings are spiritually meaningful and attractive to both—to maintain our robust, unified, inclusive congregation.
- As noted in the Finances section, a very small number of donors (6 in 2019) contribute over 50% of the pledged amount. This represents an area of vulnerability. In addition, Pastor Bill has a personal relationship with a number of larger donors (i.e., the ability to approach them for annual pledges when they may have been overlooked) that will be lost when he retires.
- The relationship between First Presbyterian and neighboring Paupack Fuel Oil is not specifically codified. As we use their parking lot not only for ingress and egress on Sundays but also for parking during large church events, the lack of clarity on our ongoing rights represents a vulnerability.
- Reverend Samford has been a “one man show” for the past 29 years, and we need to ensure that all of the work that he does is captured and maintained following his departure.
- Lastly, Pastor Bill has been the “glue”, provided the grace, that has helped us to be a diverse and unified church and now we need to live to that grace without his help.

## **K. Vision Statement of the Church/Qualities Desired in a New Pastor**

In short, the vision for First Presbyterian Church Hawley is to preserve the current essence/culture of the church with a hope for continued growth in the church with an active population including retirees as well as young families with children. Comments also noted the desire to continue to be welcoming to all (a diverse community).

Our Mission statement remains:

***We believe that God is alive and active. As faithful disciples, we spread the good news of Christ's love, forgiveness and grace. Our mission is to be God's presence in our community. Our ministry is people to people, nurturing spiritual growth, promoting peace, caring for others and providing fellowship.***

The priorities for a new pastor considered of very/high importance were: preparing and preaching inspiring sermons (96%), visiting the sick, shut-in or bereaved (89%), planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation (86%) and developing and supporting religious education programs for children and youth (82%). The most important role of the new minister according to almost all respondents was Friend/Fellow Traveler (warm and loving person who relates to us as an ordinary human being; compassionate and good listener and not afraid to reveal personal gain and struggle). The most essential qualities desired in the new pastor (noted by 80% of respondents) are that s/he maintains confidentiality, is a person of faith and is an effective preacher/speaker. A large number of qualities (32) are considered by 90% to be Essential or Very Important (see Appendix IV).

In the discussions about Pastor Bill it is clear that he is cherished by our membership. "Coming here is like coming home. We hope the new pastor feels like he/she is coming home." The participants acknowledged that change is inevitable; in fact Pastor Bill has changed over the years, as have the members of the church as new ideas have been introduced and new challenges have been met. There is a very high priority placed on maintaining a welcoming environment. The feedback aligns with the survey results of seeking a "Friend/Fellow Traveler which is a warm and loving person who relates to us as an ordinary human being; compassionate and good listener, not afraid to reveal personal gain and struggle (96%)."

## **L. Appendices**

**APPENDIX I - Mission InSite Report, 10 mile radius FPCH, October 2019**

**APPENDIX II - Mission InSite Report, 2 mile radius FPCH, October 2019**

**APPENDIX III - Demographic Summary, FPCH Survey -- July 2019**

**APPENDIX IV - Summary of FPCH Pastoral Search Survey – July 2019**

**APPENDIX V - Summary of Feedback from FPCH Discussion Groups, 8/19**

## APPENDIX I: AREA DEMOGRAPHICS, 10 MILE RADIUS FPCH

Presbytery of Lackawanna



### Custom Demographics Report: 10 Mile Radius 815 Church Street

#### Demographic Trends

Demographic Trends	2000	2010	2019	2024
Population	27,904	31,441	31,870	31,982
Population Change		3,537	429	112
Percent Change		12.68%	1.36%	0.35%
Households	11,265	13,154	13,341	13,393
Households Change		1,889	187	52
Percent Change		16.77%	1.42%	0.39%
Population / Households	2	2	2	2
Population / Households Change		0	0	0
Percent Change		-3.63%	0%	0%
Family Households	7,790	8,830	9,104	9,139
Family Households Change		1,040	274	35
Percent Change		13.35%	3.10%	0.38%
Non-Family Households	460	678	543	545
Non-Family Households Change		218	-135	2
Percent Change		47.39%	19.91%	0.37%
Average Age	41	44	46	46
Average Age Change		2	2	1
Percent Change		6.00%	5.02%	1.13%

#### Racial/Ethnic Trends

Racial/Ethnic Trends	2010	2019	2024	2010 %	2019 %	2024 %
Asian (Non-Hisp)	163	172	188	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Black/African American (Non-Hisp)	448	511	518	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%
White (Non-Hisp)	29421	29619	29585	93.6%	92.9%	92.5%
Hispanic or Latino	1025	1136	1221	3.3%	3.6%	3.8%
Pac Is/Am Ind/Oth (Non-Hisp)	383	433	471	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%
Totals:	31,440	31,871	31,983	100%	100%	100%

Phase of Life Forecast	2010	2019	2024	2029	2010 %	2019 %	2024 %	2029 %
Before Formal Schooling: Ages 0-4	1293	1354	1443	1630	4.1%	4.2%	4.5%	5.1%
Required Formal Schooling: 5-17	4920	3729	3630	3768	15.6%	11.7%	11.4%	11.8%
College/Career Starts: 18-24	2126	3002	2558	2188	6.8%	9.4%	8.0%	6.8%
Singles and Young Families: 25-34	2725	3498	4278	4142	8.7%	11.0%	13.4%	13.0%
Families and Empty Nesters: 35-54	8640	6836	6253	6690	27.5%	21.4%	19.6%	20.9%
Enrichment Years Singles/Couples: 55-64	5039	5084	4685	3967	16.0%	16.0%	14.6%	12.4%
Retirement Opportunities: 65+	6697	8367	9134	9562	21.3%	26.3%	28.6%	29.9%
Totals:	31,440	31,870	31,981	31,947	100%	100%	100%	100%

Average Income Trends: Households and Per Capita	2010	2019	2024
Average Household Income	57,778	68,975	75,263
Average Household Income Change		11,197	6,288
Percent Change		19.38%	9.12%
Per Capita Income	24,173	28,874	31,518
Per Capita Income Change		4,701	2,644
Percent Change		19.45%	9.16%

Summary: Families in Poverty	2019	2019 %
Above poverty level	8529	93.7%
Below poverty level	575	6.3%
Totals:	9,104	100%



## APPENDIX II: AREA DEMOGRAPHICS, 2 MILE RADIUS FPCH



### Custom Demographics Report

**Study Area: 2 mi Around 815 Church Street, Hawley, PA**

#### Demographic Trends

Demographic Trends	2000	2010	2019	2024
Population	2,084	2,228	2,276	2,291
Population Change		144	48	15
Percent Change		6.91%	2.15%	0.66%
Households	912	978	1,000	1,006
Households Change		66	22	6
Percent Change		7.24%	2.25%	0.60%
Population / Households	2	2	2	2
Population / Households Change		0	0	0
Percent Change		-0.44%	0%	0%
Family Households	568	594	614	617
Family Households Change		26	20	3
Percent Change		4.58%	3.37%	0.49%
Non-Family Households	31	57	49	49
Non-Family Households Change		26	-8	0
Percent Change		83.87%	14.04%	0%
Average Age	41	43	45	45
Average Age Change		2	2	1
Percent Change		4.10%	4.40%	1.14%

#### Racial/Ethnic Trends

Racial/Ethnic Trends	2010	2019	2024	2010 %	2019 %	2024 %
Asian (Non-Hisp)	8	11	13	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Black/African American (Non-Hisp)	15	31	31	0.7%	1.4%	1.4%
White (Non-Hisp)	2085	2095	2096	93.5%	92.0%	91.5%
Hispanic or Latino	92	116	128	4.1%	5.1%	5.6%
Pac Is/Am Ind/Oth (Non-Hisp)	29	24	23	1.3%	1.1%	1.0%
Totals:	2,229	2,277	2,291	100%	100%	100%

### Population/Households Forecast

Population/Households Forecast	2019	2024	2029
Population	2,276	2,291	2,286
Percent Change		0.66%	0.22%
Households	1,000	1,006	1,004
Percent Change		0.60%	0.20%

### Phase of Life Forecast

Phase of Life Forecast	2010	2019	2024	2029	2010 %	2019 %	2024 %	2029 %
Before Formal Schooling: Ages 0-4	95	102	109	123	4.3%	4.5%	4.8%	5.4%
Required Formal Schooling: 5-17	370	280	268	279	16.6%	12.3%	11.7%	12.2%
College/Career Starts: Ages 18 to 24	154	214	191	158	6.9%	9.4%	8.3%	6.9%
Singles and Young Families: 25-34	202	270	319	296	9.1%	11.9%	13.9%	12.9%
Families and Empty Nesters: 35-54	615	480	442	497	27.6%	21.1%	19.3%	21.7%
Enrichment Years Singles/Couples: 55-64	349	384	347	270	15.7%	16.9%	15.2%	11.8%
Retirement Opportunities: 65 and over	442	546	614	664	19.8%	24.0%	26.8%	29.0%
Totals:	2,227	2,276	2,290	2,287	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Average Income Trends: Households and Per Capita

	2010	2019	2024
Average Household Income	54,832	63,749	69,700
Average Household Income Change		8,917	5,951
Percent Change		16.26%	9.33%
Per Capita Income	24,069	28,009	30,606
Per Capita Income Change		3,940	2,597
Percent Change		16.37%	9.27%

### Summary: Families in Poverty

	2019	2019 %
Above poverty level	541	88.1%
Below poverty level	73	11.9%
Totals:	614	100%

### APPENDIX III - DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY, FPCH SURVEY, 2019

Age:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 20	1.45%	1
20 - 24	1.45%	1
25 - 34	0.00%	0
35 - 44	14.49%	10
45 - 54	5.80%	4
55 - 64	10.14%	7
65 - 74	40.58%	28
75 or over	26.09%	18
TOTAL		69

Education:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than high school graduate	0.00%	0
High school graduate	21.43%	15
Some college, trade or vocational school	21.43%	15
College degree	27.14%	19
Post graduate work or degree	30.00%	21
TOTAL		70

Income Range:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under \$25,000	10.71%	6
\$25,000 - 49,999	21.43%	12
\$50,000 - 74,999	10.71%	6
\$75,000 - 99,999	12.50%	7
\$100,000 - 149,999	12.50%	7
\$150,000 or more	32.14%	18
TOTAL		56

## **APPENDIX IV - Summary of FPCH Pastoral Search Survey – July 2019**

### **CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

In July 2019, the Mission Study Team conducted a quantitative survey of the congregation. We developed a customized version of the Hartford Institute Pastoral Search Survey and emailed or mailed ~130 surveys to individuals/households, requesting that all individuals over the age of 15 complete the survey. Eighty congregants responded to this survey. Of those, the vast majority are regular churchgoers (60% weekly, 25% 2-3 times per month), and are year round residents (90%), and members of the church (83%, 14% participate regularly). There is a broad distribution of how long the respondents have been coming to the church—evenly split over the categories covering 3-20+ years. Over two thirds travel more than 10 minutes to get to church (70% 11-30 minutes), while one quarter live with ten minutes of the church.

For the large majority of these respondents (80%), their level of participation in the church has either remained the same (50%) or increased (30%). That level of participation is evenly spread from participation in no activities to participation in more than seven activities. For those whose participation has increased (30%), almost half reported the increase was due to accepting a new responsibility (43%), with another 55% split between having more time and having a more positive attitude. For those whose participation has decreased, 2/3 reported this was due to health problems. Almost ¾ of the respondents have invited at least one family to visit or join the church.

There is a wide distribution in the amount of financial support for the church (see graph).

### **TASKS OF THE CHURCH**

In general, respondents are very satisfied with the tasks of FPCH.

More than 2/3 are very satisfied with the extent to which the church:

- Provides worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition
- Engages in acts of charity and service to persons in need
- Provides a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins, and the bereaved; and
- Providing an environment that welcomes diverse groups.

There are a few areas that 20% of respondents felt need more emphasis:

- Providing Christian education for children & youth and adults
- Sharing the good news of the gospel with the unchurched; and
- Participating in activities and programs with other local religious groups

When asked “what one thing do we do best”,

- 1/3 said worship that provides a meaningful and the Christian tradition; and
- 1/5 said provides an experience that welcomes diverse groups.
- One individual wrote in “EAT” 😊

When asked “what one task needs to be strengthened”,

- Slightly greater than 10% said providing CE to children and youth and adults (2 different responses) and helping members deepen their personal, spiritual relationship with God

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Almost all respondents (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Members help each other in times of trouble (96%!)
  - Members are well informed about what the various committees/groups in the church are doing
  - Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation
  - Members are encouraged to discover their gifts for ministry and service
  - Current morale of our church membership is high

That said ~15% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that:

- The activities in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community
- Study of the needs of the congregation and the community is regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning
- Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors
- Cooperative programs with churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church

## **CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY**

### Describing Our Congregation

- The church represents an equal mix of history/tradition and contemporary ideas (40% #4), trending toward tradition (+42% #1-3)
- The church is very involved in the community (70%)
- The church is an equal mix of serving members and serving the world (42%), trending toward serving our members (+50%)
- Feels like on large family (#1-2 = 70%)
- Gives strong expression to our denominational identity (#1-3 = 85%)
- Lean toward creating partnerships with local churches (#1-3 61%, #4 22% 50/50) vs. working by ourselves

### Church Identity (% agree/strongly agree)

- Nearly all members (97%) feel confident with our church's identity, feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization (96%) and feel that being at this church has made a difference in their spiritual life (98%)
- Almost all members (90%) say it is easy to tell a friend what is unique about our church
- The greatest amount of disagreement was expressed around the effort made to instruct respondent on the church mission (18% disagree/strongly disagree)

### Qualities that Make a Good Worship Service (total of essential and important)

- Having parts of the worship especially for children = 100%!!
- Time to greet one another (97%)
- Silent prayer/meditation (95%)

- Worship that is emotionally moving (93%)
- Corporate prayer (86%)
- Intellectually challenging (85%)
- Use of creeds and statements of faith (82%)
- Lay participation (80%)
- Use of inclusive, non-sexist language (72%)

Over half of the respondents (~55%) felt that the following were not very important:

- Use of new or unfamiliar hymns
- Providing worship at times other than Sunday
- Use of contemporary worship styles, music and language

#### Qualities That Make a Good Sermon (Essential + Important)

- Carefully composed and skillfully delivered (99%)
- Spiritually moving and inspirational (97%)
- Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and leading a faithful life (97%)
- Touches directly on my daily life (96%)
- Is challenging and thought provoking (96%)
- Obviously flows from the depth of the preacher's own personal faith and personal connection (93%)
- Makes me reflect on issues and events that go beyond my personal life and community (92%)
- Is biblically based and illustrated (92%)
- Is comforting and reassuring (82%)
- Contains scholarly and literary illustrations (78%)
- Sets forth various sides of an issues without taking a position (72%)

#### SATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF CHURCH

Nearly all our members are satisfied or very satisfied with:

- Music (98%, 67% very satisfied)
- Worship (97%, 62% very)
- Spiritual needs met (95%, 50% very)

#### WORSHIP TIME

Over 2/3 of respondents preferred 10am. There was no one other time that received a meaningful response.

## **TASKS OF THE PASTOR**

### Priorities for a New Pastor

Those responsibilities considered of very high of high importance are:

- Preparing and preaching inspiring sermons (96%)
- Visiting the sick, shut-in or bereaved (89%)
- Planning and leading worship sensitive to the needs of the congregation (86%)
- Developing and supporting religious education programs for children and youth (82%)

## **THE CHOICE IS YOURS**

The most important roles of the new minister (essential + important) are:

- Friend/Fellow Traveler: Warm and loving person who relates to us as an ordinary human being; compassionate and good listener, not afraid to reveal personal gain and struggle (96%)
- Minister of the Word/Teacher of the Congregation (76%)
- Spiritual Guide (73%)

When asked to pick the most important role, the answers were:

- Friend/fellow traveler (47%)
- Spiritual Guide (19%)
- Minister of the Word (14%)

The least important roles were:

- Community Chaplain (34%)
- Witness/Evangelist (26%)
- Friend/Fellow Traveler (11%)

(Note: There were a smaller number of respondents to these two questions than the overall question likely due to a lack of clarity on the hard copy surveys.)

## **CULTURE**

A large majority of respondents (70+%) noted that both the welcoming congregation and the minister were what originally attracted them to First Presbyterian, whereas just under half said worship style (41%). These numbers are slightly flipped when discussing what keeps them here with 87.5% noting the minister, 78% noting the welcoming congregation. Worship style (54%), my friends are here (43%) and the music program (36%) also had a meaningful number of responses.

## **RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PERSONAL PRACTICES**

- Almost ¾ of respondents believe there is no way to salvation but through Jesus Christ (strongly agree/agree); 11% are neutral or unsure, 6% disagree and 10% strongly disagree.
- Almost 2/3 of respondents agree that human beings have developed over years from less advanced forms of life; 20% are unsure; just under 20% disagree.
- A similar number (~75%) believe Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual event; with the remainder unsure.

- Half the respondents believe that all religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth; 25% are unsure, and 25% disagree/strongly disagree.
- Just under 75% feel that the Bible has answers for all the basic questions of life (54% agree, 14% strongly agree); 20% are unsure and 10% disagree.
- Over half of respondents feel it is difficult to live out their faith in daily life; 14% are unsure and 30% disagree.
- Almost half of the congregation spend time in private devotional activity daily, 80% do so at least once a week.
- Two thirds of the congregation uses the Internet and email regularly. Only 1/3 use Facebook.
- Less than half of the respondents get information from the church's online resources (Facebook, website). However, almost 2/3 gets information from the church's weekly email.
- Two thirds of the respondents volunteer their time in the community.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Two thirds of the respondents were female and two thirds were over the age of 65. Fifteen percent were between 35-44, and 3% were under the age of 24. Over ¾ of the respondents were married.

## **QUALITIES IN A NEW PASTOR**

### Essential

- Maintains confidentiality (83%)
- Is a person of faith (81%)
- Is an effective preacher and speaker (80%)

### Essential + Important

100%:

- Makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes
- Is mature and emotionally secure
- Has strong commitment and loyalty
- Maintains confidentiality
- Is a compassionate and caring person
- Is a good leader
- Is effective in working with adults
- Works well on a team

>90%

- Deals effectively with conflict
- Ministers effectively to people in crisis situations
- Builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works
- Is a person of faith



- Helps people work together in solving problems
- Is an effective teacher
- Is an effective preacher and speaker
- Is effective in planning and leading worship
- Has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry
- Encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives
- Inspires a sense of confidence
- Is effective in working with youth
- Helps people develop their spiritual life
- Is a helpful counselor
- Works regularly at bringing new members into the church
- Is skilled in planning and leading programs
- Plans and leads well-organized meetings
- Is effective with committees and officers
- Is accepting of people with divergent views
- Is effective in working with children
- Has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church
- Encourages others to assume and carry out leadership
- Is an effective administrator
- Continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills
- Writes clearly and well

Though all characteristics were considered essential or important by >50% of respondents, those considered least important (not very important or not important at all by ~30+% of respondents) were:

- Makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes (47%)
- Understands and interprets the mission of the church from a global perspective (38%)
- Is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate (29%)

## **APPENDIX VI.**

### **First Presbyterian Church of Hawley**

#### **Summary of Feedback from MST Gatherings**

The Mission Study Team held four outreach gatherings between August 18<sup>th</sup> and August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Each gathering focused on a key topic of interest and all who attend our church were invited to attend any or all of the discussions. The discussion topics were: Worship and Music (11 participants); Church Life (9 participants); Mission and Community Outreach (8 participants) and The Future Church (7 participants). Of the total of the 35 participants across the group, they represented 20 unique individuals as some attended multiple sessions.

#### **WORSHIP**

##### Newcomers

A newcomer was immediately welcomed and this was from someone who is very shy but who immediately felt at home.

A member related her story as a first time visitor – was welcomed – names exchanged, escorted to coffee; then she used the same model to welcome a new couple who visited the church and they have been long term members ever since. It is a strong and positive model to follow.

##### Announcements

Should be outside of the worship service. The Prelude is now after the announcements which is a positive change.

It is good/necessary for visitors to hear what is going on in the church. The variety of individuals making announcements signals how involved numerous people are – it says lots of positive things about a lot of people. This is also an important communication tool for our membership. We should be sure the let “announcers” know to be brief and to the point.

##### Joys and Concerns

Hugely important part of our service. One person felt everyone’s arms around her as she went into surgery – felt the warmth and care

##### Apostle’s Creed

Why do we change it every Sunday vs the “standard” Creed –

Maybe it helps us think more about what we are saying if it changes every week.

The choice of the Creed can align with the message of the service.

We speak to different aspects of the way things are by saying it differently at different times

It opens the door to other people’s views -- as in being a purple church in the way we understand God and Jesus

We are flexible - there is something there for each of us. It is an affirmation.

### Communion

It takes too long. The recent decision during the VBS service to pass the bread and wine at the same time and consume the bread individually and do the wine in unison was very well received. Have a couple of pews between passing the bread and then the wine so people can handle the trays more easily.

Endorse the all inclusive policy and endorse having the children come in for communion.

The time invested in the sacrament of communion is important. Communion in some other (Presbyterian) churches is shorter as the readings and responses are shorter. Opinion was that this is a very meaningful invitation and the way we do it is special. Holy, holy, holy response is special.

Appreciated Bill's recent words that God's love for you as an individual is demonstrated in eating the bread individually and love for the group by drinking the cup as a group.

### Minute for Mission

Too long. May need to be Two Minutes but people need to be shorter with their message. It would be lost in coffee hour.

### Diversity

All are welcome at this Table. This theme is important to all. All religions are welcome. We have a large number of former Catholics.

### **MUSIC**

Matt is doing a terrific job. There is a range of talent in the choir from those who can't read music to those who can solo. Matt is great at working with this variety of skills.

We need younger people to join the choir. Average age is 72? Can we have a children's choir? "Build a field and the players will come". Would like to have hand bells someday.

It is wonderful that hand chimes are being added. Can we attract high school students in the music program to get involved? When this group is up and running we can visit various locations such as nursing homes.

The understanding is that Bill and Matt work on selecting the music together as Bill did with Adele.

Would like a good range of music.

It was mentioned that music during the holidays was a key factor in selecting the church. Flute ensembles, brass ensembles, all are appreciated. We are blessed to have the musical talent in this church.

Can we grow attendance through music? How do we nurture the group that attended VBS? If we have a youth group that attracts more youth, the parents will follow. Give the choir a week off and let the children sing. Kids (young people – HS) will not come to a youth group unless there is a group to be with.

## **YOUTH**

Love the children's service on Christmas Eve – led to a discussion of disappointment that we don't do a Christmas pageant any longer. Can we start this again? Is it one way to attract families? Can we tap the children from VBS to put on a Christmas pageant?

It would be good to have more Sundays when children participate in the service. We can reaffirm that children are welcome more often/tolerance of children in the church service is important to us.

One Sunday a month – maybe a Music with Matt format. There is also discussion about a Science Sunday.

Ring the bell at the beginning of service – it is forgotten many times. The children love to ring the bell. Can an usher be put in charge of ensuring this is done? Can there be a rotation list for the children to sign up. Once again there was great support for children being part of the service.

This past Christmas the church dinner was held at the church which allowed children to attend and they enjoyed the Christmas carols. This is important to the children. The Children's sermon is very important. Members of the choir can see that the whole congregation is involved in listening to it.

We need to get the older youth group that is involved with VBS involved with the church in some way.

We may want to have a cross functional team focused on children (e.g. worship, music, education) for the transition process.

## **CHURCH LIFE**

### **LIST OF ACTIVITIES**

Coffee Hour

Cookie Walk

Victorian Luncheon

Vacation Bible School

Tag Sale

Golf Tournament

Holiday Decorating

Spring Clean Up (Trimming, Planting)

Sunday School

Deacons

Elders

Women's Luncheon

Book Club

Tricky Tray

Quilting Group

### Opportunities for Fellowship

Fellowship hour is a great way to actually get to know people; it leads to relationships and more people are apt to volunteer. As a contrast, a couple that attends a church in FL noted that there is no coffee hour (due to 3 services on Sunday morning). It is much harder to get to know fellow members.

Coffee hour is a great way to bond. Outreach, mission, recruiting and serving. It is important to think about not sitting in the same place every Sunday with the same people during the coffee hour.

It was noted that it has become intimidating for some people to volunteer to do coffee hour because of the perception that it is more of a meal and a lot of work is involved. We want to spread the word that coffee hour should be kept simple and that cookies, cake, fruit or other simple treats are all that is expected along with coffee, tea and juice. There will be some special coffee hours with more elaborate (planned) offerings but not on a regular basis. We would like to spread the effort over more people. So how do we get away from these big spreads. We can look at who is signing up and mention this to them. In order to foster a simpler coffee hour we should put some guidelines in writing and publish them with an encouraging message. We should also use a buddy system so no one person has to do too much.

Pot luck and hymn sing after church service was very popular. Have we ever considered having a pot luck and talent night?

We had a spaghetti dinner – a fundraiser open to the community that raised \$600. A comment was made at the time that it wasn't worth the effort to make so little so it was not repeated. The feeling of the group that a community dinner like this may be worth it as it means more than just raising money.

There is a feeling that serving people and working together (dinners, projects etc) is an important way to really get to know people outside of Sunday services. Spring Clean Up and other cleanup activities – we have an opportunity to get children involved in these initiatives.

### Volunteerism and Communication

The use of signup sheets and follow up calls by the Pastor help to ensure that people can get involved and know what needs to be done. A process of actively passing around signup sheets and having someone encourage people to sign up during coffee hour should continue to be used.

The Cookie Walk is a good example of needing to communicate – what is expected of volunteers and when. It was also mentioned that there should always be a record of how various projects are run so that individuals stepping in know how the process works, key contacts, timing, etc. Also critical is financial oversight which has been done to varying degrees in the past (meaning recordkeeping). We should be evaluating the cost and benefit of our projects and how they can be improved. There should be a way to ensure a smooth transition of projects to new leadership.

There are some projects where stronger communication would be beneficial and may foster more volunteer participation. Parish Life used to have monthly meetings to go over all of the activities but there hasn't been a meeting in a long time. A suggestion is that the leader of each project be on the Parish Life Committee to ensure full communication.

We discussed the idea of having a buddy system in place for some of the volunteer efforts such as the Good News Café. It is not enough to announce that we need volunteers if members don't know what is involved in the work to be done. Suggestion is to ask someone if they would like to attend one Saturday to see what is involved making it easier for the volunteer to get involved. A personal connection is important. We should identify potential volunteers and reinforce the idea of engaging them in activities as a way to get to know others.

Cookie Walk – Some potential volunteer bakers may not have the ability to purchase the ingredients for 20 dozen cookies. It was suggested that we not only ask for bakers but ask for volunteers who don't bake to make a donation for cookie ingredients.

All of our activities are an extension of worship and are also mission driven when we really look at what we do. The Cookie Walk gives us great visibility within the community and makes us a partner in the effort to increase the visibility of Hawley.

It would be helpful to hold some activities in the evening so that working people can participate. The idea of a couples Bible Study in the evening was proposed. There may need to be a person who can watch children for this hour (paid child care?). Also, a meet and greet for parents (invite those that came to church for VBS). Also, a young people's group like VBS.

Deacons many times are the most consistent about visiting shut-ins. Provide flowers and cards. Deacons were assigned a month to go to hospitals and shut ins. We may need to have a process in place for the transition to make sure these activities occur. Copies of sermons are not available. Can we think about having them available? (Also these would be great for shut ins)

Using the new space for community organizations – increases our visibility. How can we use it for mission? No one other than the admin committee has to worry about the hall rental. A fee is charged to compensate Sean for the cleaning.

“What do you want me to do?” How you respond to God's call is up to you.

## **MISSION AND COMMUNITY**

### List of Mission and Outreach Activities

Good News Café  
Vacation Bible School  
Carnival for Kidz  
Clean Head Start Playground  
Picnic for Head Start  
Blood Drives  
Crop Walk  
Souper Bowl  
The Church Has Left the Building

Emergency Assistance Fund  
Relay for Life  
The Giving Tree

A potential new member saw the congregation in action at a fashion show fundraiser for Literacy with good humor and Bill's personal participation. The spirit and good will made the church seem to be a place where one could be comfortable and welcome and involved in the community.

The Good News Café is so important. It creates a sense of community for those that attend. A visit to the Sojourner Café at the Methodist Church one day showed that they had only a few people in attendance. We regularly have between 20 and 35 people. The number of volunteers required is 3-5 people plus any musicians that participate. We identified a need to help attendees with transportation issues.

We are proud of our role in the Crop Walk. We will be having this in April next year instead of October when things are so busy. How can we increase participation?

We did not have The Church Has Left the Building this year but there is a date set for 2020. We discussed how this works with nonprofits and community organizations providing lists of what needs to be done and each person or group participating signs up for an activity. (e.g. choir performs at a nursing home or tasks are done for homeowners who can't do them, or painting for a nonprofit).

A Blood Drive was held just the day before. 31 pints were collected! We hold one in August and one in December and it usually requires 4-5 volunteers.

We clean the Head Start playground. We also have a family picnic at Head Start in May. We feed approximately 225-250 people. This usually involves 10 volunteers. At the beginning of the school year Head Start teachers make lists of what they need and we fill bags with the supplies. It was noted that the announcement of the Head Start clean up did not mention the location of the school. We need to keep in mind that we have new members and/or new volunteers who may not be familiar with the details.

We have a Giving Tree during the holidays. Last year there were over 60 names on the tree which was much higher than in the past. All of the requests were answered. A list of requests are obtained from Social Services in Wayne and Pike Counties and some from Head Start.

We send gifts to college students each year as well.

We did not fully discuss what expenses are paid from the Deacon's Fund. There is an Emergency Assistance Fund that is used to help people with heat, rent and other misfortunes. This is handled by the Pastor.

There was a discussion about Camp Lackawanna that was used by the church in the past. We used to help with the annual clean up of the camp. The attendees did not know why we are no longer involved.

We collect metal tabs for the Ronald MacDonald House. We make donations to the Presbyterian Disaster Fund. Food from the Rotary food drives is stored at the church until it can be donated.

On an international basis we have been actively supporting the Wyoming Valley Presbyterian Church and Jim Davenport for their Operation Honduras mission. There is a mission trip each February that we are free to participate in. Contributions help with buildings, hearing aids, eye doctors and a dental component. We have collected items to ship to Honduras as well as money. Are there additional ways to be made aware of mission trip opportunities?

70% of survey respondents said that they are involved in the community.

We asked for a breakdown of how the proceeds from major projects are used:  
Carnival for Kidz – Proceeds are used for Christian Ed  
Golf Outing – Proceeds used for Head Start and Christian Ed  
Souper Bowl – Proceeds are donated to food pantries

There is no fee for children to attend VBS.

Members should try to bring people to the various projects so that potential volunteers understand what is needed. It is also a great way to get to know people (and the MST gatherings have been another good example of getting to know fellow members).

The quality of the Cookie Walk and the Victorian Luncheon says a lot about us to the community.

Becoming more involved in the church can be very helpful after someone suffers a loss of any kind. We should be sensitive to this issue and think about inviting more “singles” to become more involved. A phone call making a request “will you help me....” Can be the first step.

The willingness to be of service and to find ways to be of service and the support that everyone provides to those that step forward says a lot about the church and its membership.

## **THE FUTURE CHURCH**

We all have hope for the continued growth of the church. Diversity is very important to our attendees. What does diversity mean to us? People with disabilities; diversity of age which supports the need for volunteerism.

We need to have activities that attract people/couples in their “mid-adult” years (30s and 40s) and support the possible need for child care and timing of activities as both people may be working.

How do we connect people to the church?

We can attract people by having speakers on various topics that may bring them in the door of Blough Hall.

In other churches (in the past) there used to be the concept of a couples club that did various activities together.



What are the key topics of interest that would be compelling?

### Spiritual Life vs Religion

A spiritual life has values that connect to Biblical themes without the formal structure of church.

TIME magazine published an article during the last 5-7 years that younger generations are interested in a spiritual life and connections but not necessarily organized religion.

We can consider introducing people to us through an activity rather than the traditional “invitation to attend a church service”. Opportunities to engage people outside of worship could be connected to a music program (involvement in) or by inviting people to get involved in a community outreach or mission event such as the Good News Café. We already have a good example of this type of outreach with our VBS efforts which brings new people in and introduces them to our membership.

How can we publicize events when we do have them? We can use Peter Becker and The News Eagle. The River Reporter is very supportive of local events and always needs articles focused on the PA side of the River (they have a lot of info on happenings on the NY side). This would be a good place to publicize Carnival for Kidz. We already place a small ad for our Cookie Walk and Victorian Luncheon.

It was noted that each person has their own “culture”. Each person has their own world view. Are we listening? This goes back to how we welcome new members and the individual experience. What is important to them? We also have diversity of religion. We need to understand what the individual’s needs are. What is the need of the new person coming here? One is acceptance. A Jewish visitor felt very comfortable here. When a new attendee is comfortable they are likely to bring others which are what a new attendee did here.

We spoke about the diversity and acceptance of ‘the other’ and an understanding that we each have a relationship with God. We can have different views of Jesus and still gather together to worship. The ability to be open is truly distilling the concept of diversity. Everyone who isn’t me reflects diversity. We have the opportunity to create a safe place where personal needs for spirituality can be met.

We are the church.

### **PASTOR BILL**

There are things that get done in the church that we make take for granted such as setting up the creche, trimming (landscaping), various clean ups. We will need to ensure that a list is developed of all of the activities that Pastor Bill usually oversees to make sure they are assigned to various people. It was noted that Nancy Vignau has asked Bill to work on this. We also need to make sure that there is a schedule of all activities that take place in the church.

Pastor Bill established a regular meeting of local pastors from the Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. The Baptist church has a new minister. There are a number of churches in the Hawley area. Is there a way to get more Pastors involved in this group? Our

survey showed that there is interest in partnering more with churches in the community. Would like to ensure that the Clergy Association that Bill started continues.

Bill was willing to handle a concern about infant baptism in a different way that made it a meaningful celebration for the family. Concerns were accommodated.

Bill's commitment to travel to visit those in hospital or ill. Bill is there.

We will not have a Bill. But we realize that people change and things change. Bill is not the same person he was when he joined the church. The new pastor will also change over the years, as will we. We are a strongminded, unified congregation. We may need to exercise patience.

Coming here is like coming home. We hope the new pastor feels like he/she is coming home. We must remain open-minded. New ideas will come from us and new ideas will come from the pastor.

Bill has changed a great deal over the years. And, he has become comfortable with each individual. It was noted that the Pastor facilitates the welcoming of people and that leaders of the church will want/need to step in to fill this role during the transition period.

Fundraising and Development. Bill is good at asking for money. This skill will be needed in a new pastor.

We have the same nucleus of people doing most of the activities – the one constant in ALL activities is Bill. Bill is a bachelor and we are his family. We get a lot of his time. A new pastor may have his or her own family and the amount of time needed for other responsibilities could be different. Something to keep in mind.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

In the Future Church conversation it was mentioned that a husband and wife (or partners) are two DIFFERENT people with different needs. This brought to mind that we tend to look at couples in the church as a single entity in terms of communication. We need to initiate an effort to have every individual's email address and individual's cell phone number. This issue was particularly noticeable during the survey process where in many cases a couple received only one email about the survey and then had to ensure that others responded. It is important that ALL members receive the newsletters and weekly updates as their interests in what is happening in the church will be DIFFERENT. The golf outing is another good example of needing to reach the people interested in the event and not just the person who happens to be the email recipient.

Along the same lines – who currently has the responsibility to collect names, phone numbers, email addresses? Who approaches a newcomer after a period of time and asks if they would like to be in our directory and asks for a photo? How often is the online directory updated? Do we need a point person who takes responsibility and manages this process now and in the future? This would also create the opportunity for discussions about the various ways that people can volunteer based on their interests.