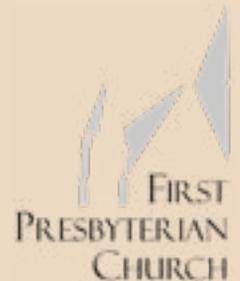


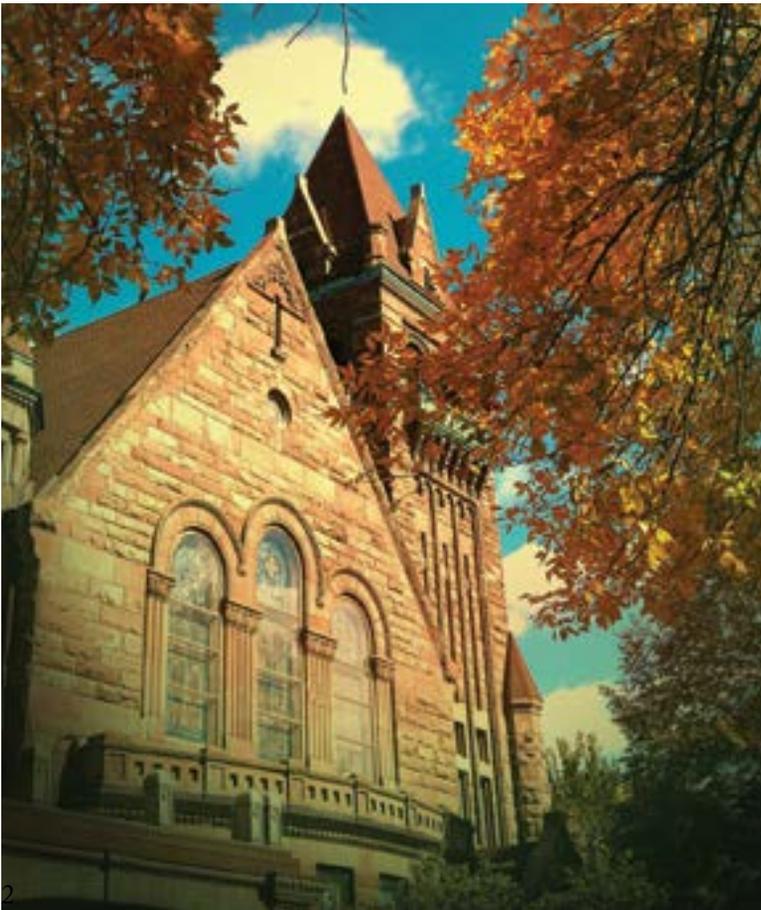
At the Crossroads

A Mission Study of
First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, IA
May 17, 2022



Contents

Preface	3
About This Document	4
Where We've Been	5
But Times Have Changed	6
The Modern Era	7
Where We Are	8
Community Demographics	8
A Closer Look at First Church	9
Congregational Growth (chart)	9
Significant Events Affecting Growth	10
Perceptions of Our Congregation	10
Physical Plant	10
Staff and Volunteers	10
Fiscal Health	12
The FPC Foundation	13
Financial Challenges	15
Stewardship	16
Music	17
Mission	18
Fellowship	19
Christian Education	20
Governance	22
Where We Hope to Go	24
Core Values	25
Vision	26
What's It All Mean?	27
What We Need	28
Appendices	29
Envisioning 20/20 Report	29
Mission Study Small Groups	32
Congregational Marketing & Growth Committee Report	34
Narrative on Recent Events	36
The PNC	41



Preface

At the risk of overstating our case, in the 180+ year history of our congregation, we've never faced challenges as daunting as what we face today.

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport stands at a crossroads. And it's time to make some hard choices.

We can choose to live in the past or look forward to our future ...

... a future of our own design that is true to ourselves, reflecting our shared values and vision.

... a future we pursue with intention, using the gifts we've received and the love and support of our friends and family.

We can dwell on the scars of past conflicts, which have created turmoil, damaged relationships, and led to a steady erosion of membership, financial support, and enthusiasm. Or we can set aside the pain and confusion of the past and move on to something better.

Our congregation's creativity - an openness to a broad diversity of ideas and sincere willingness to welcome and include people traditionally turned away by more fundamental communities of faith - creates an opportunity.

And that opportunity is a doorway to a future that tells a better story about First Presbyterian Church. A place known for generations as "First Church."

It's our story to tell. We just need to find someone who can help us find the words and show us how.

About This Document

This “mission study” presents a three-part story about First Church: where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going. It’s an honest appraisal of the challenges and opportunities our congregation faces coming out of an international pandemic and over three years of internal struggle that, in all honesty, began about three years before that.

We call those who welcome the challenge to work with us as we reinvent every aspect of what we do to affect positive change in the lives of our congregation and community. As you’ll learn when you read this document, First Church has a rich history of doing just that. But as times change, so do congregations and priorities.

We seek to engage those who listen closely to the stories we tell; join us as we discover and understand the true meaning of the gifts we have received, and work with us to share those gifts to the best of our abilities wherever required.

To make First Church better meet the spiritual needs of the Quad Cities community, we hope to find a visionary head pastor. We need to find someone who can listen, lead and motivate us to act on our hopes for a future and spark our imagination, making it inspiring again to be a member of First Church.

And we hope to find that head pastor installed by the fall semester of 2022.

So, go ahead and read this report. Consider the opportunities. And then let us know if you’re interested in helping First Church write its next chapter.

We can be at this crossroads together.



Where We've Been

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport took root in the new frontier town of fewer than 1,200 people back in 1839. Located in the Iowa Territory of the Louisiana Purchase, the community could be found on the north side of the Mississippi River, just upstream from Credit Island – which was near the confluence of the Rock and Mississippi Rivers.

During the War of 1812, Credit Island was where Major Zachary Taylor fought the British to help settle the question of American independence from the crown.

Davenport's location was also near the Rock Island Rapids, which would become the site of the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River fifteen years later, officially opening the western frontier to settlers and immigrants.

During the period known as The Second Great Awakening, all self-respecting villages, towns, and cities had churches – and Davenport was no exception. So Ann Rhea Mitchell, a Covenanter Presbyterian with ties directly back to the Scottish House of Argyle, gathered ten other charter members and formed the First Presbyterian Church of Davenport.

That small log cabin only served the congregants for a few years when they moved to a new home on Third Street and then moved again, twenty years later, to a larger church building at 7th and Brady Streets.

A generation later, the congregation was on the move again, this time to a new home at the top of the hill, on the corner of Kirkwood and Iowa Streets. On the actual day of the move, the entire membership of First Church made a symbolic pilgrimage up the hill and to the new building. Leading the congregational parade was a young

A.R. Bawden, the grandson of one of the founding members and whose great-grandchildren now attend Sunday School at First Church.

When you comb through the Southwood Heritage Center, located on the top floor of the Christian Education Building, you'll find artifacts and interesting stories about members of the congregation actively involved in the church's life and the community it serves.

These were people involved in all facets of the community's life: from public education to the arts, from local business to foreign missions.

Stories abound involving political and civic leaders of the day who were also active members. By the mid-1950s, First Church was the largest Presbyterian Church in the State of Iowa. In the 1960s and 70s, the church added several programs and services which allowed members and their families to get involved and stay connected to their spiritual community.

But times have changed.

If you look at it today, you'll see that the immediate neighborhood surrounding First Church bears little resemblance to its condition when the congregation moved there nearly 125 years ago. Back then, at the turn of the twentieth century, Kirkwood and Iowa Streets were away from the hustle and bustle of downtown and less than a quarter-mile from "The

Outing Club," where Davenport's elite would enjoy fine dining, tennis, and formal balls.

Over the years, the Victorian-era homes in the neighborhood gave way to urban redevelopment, and the area lost its luster as more well-to-do families moved to other subdivisions in East Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa. As a result, household incomes of the immediate neighborhood dropped. Ownership of homes in the area shifted from the residents to absentee landlords. Investment in the neighborhood slowed as "the hilltop" aged - and it was reflected in the general condition of the houses. Over time, the ethnic makeup of the blocks surrounding the church bore no resemblance to the



membership of First Church's congregation.

Many of the active and engaged families in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s remained members of First Church even though they had moved further away. At least for a while, for the traditions of faith were not easily broken.

But things were changing.

The Modern Era

By the mid-1970s, with membership still relatively robust, membership stagnated, and youth engagement became more and more limited.

It's possible the root cause of this problem could be the wide range of school districts and programs in which First Church's teens were involved. At any one time, it would not be unusual to have a dozen high school students in a youth group who never saw each other during the week because each went to a different high school.

The social pressures experienced by other mainline denominations afflicted First Church's membership. In addition, demands for time from competing organizations and interests, forced members to prioritize and make hard choices.

As the church population aged, donations of time, talent, and money became more difficult to secure.



Where We Are

Davenport and the Quad Cities have a lot going for them.

The larger region is mid-sized, with around 475,000 people in the five metropolitan areas that make up the Quad Cities (yeah, that's not a typo). Davenport is the largest of the cities, with just over 102,000 residents.

The Quad City area offers big-city amenities with many small-town conveniences. And it's affordable. In fact, with the cost of living approximately 16% below the national average, the area is ranked as one of the ten most affordable communities in the entire USA.

The community has over 50 parks and numerous bike paths along the river and creeks that extend from one city to another. Every week, there are also many festivals, events, and activities.

The area is the home of several excellent school districts and institutions of higher learning. And major institutions like the University of Iowa or the University of Dubuque (home of Dubuque Seminary) are less than an hour away by car.



Community Demographics

The Quad Cities is predominantly white (84%), with Latinos and Hispanics making up 7% of the population, African-Americans 4%, and all other races equaling the remaining 5%. Davenport is a bit more racially diverse than the Quad Cities as a whole, with whites making up 77% of the population, Latinos and Hispanics constituting 7%, African-Americans at 12%, and all other races equaling the remaining 4%.

When looking at the community by generation, 25% of the population is 19 or younger, another 25% is between the ages of 20-39, another 25% is between the ages of 40-59, and the remaining 25% is over 60. One in twenty-five people in the Quad Cities is 80 or older. The median age is 40.2 years.

A Closer Look at First Church

From a generational and racial perspective, First Church's congregation is old (70% of the congregation's membership is over the age of 56) and white (97%). There are an estimated 40 children of high school age or younger.

This demographic profile reflects a long-term membership who remain members of First Church for a variety of reasons but who, in all likelihood, no longer live in the immediate neighborhood. The social and economic differences between the population in the surrounding neighborhood and the perceived affluence of the congregation make it difficult to attract and retain members.

More recently, general disorientation resulting from significant staff upheaval and organizational/institutional disruptions from 2016 to the present day have made it easier for members to leave First Church and find an alternate church home.

More information about these events and disruptions can be found in the "A Narrative on Recent Events" appendix to this report (found on page 37).

Congregational Growth (Historical)

Year	Membership	Av. Worship Attendance	Pledges
2022	544	122	\$ 568,000
2021	547	129	647,000
2020	563	149	740,000
2019	606	191	765,000
2018	705	250	830,000
2017	715	267	860,000
2016	911	278	---
2015	921	312	---
2010	1,290	443	---
2005	1,285	491	---
2000	1,557	598	---
1995	1,694	---	---
1990	1,743	---	---
1985	1,837	---	---
1980	1,805	---	---
1975	1,876	---	---
1970	2,114	---	---

Significant Events Affecting Growth

1972 Retirement of Rev. Dr. Donald Blackstone	2011 Problems begin with Associate Pastors and Rev. Dr. Miller
1973 Ministry of Rev. Dr. Allen Wirtz	2014 Tiffany McClure hired as Christian Ed Director
1980 Sanctuary organ replaced	2015 Departure of Minister of Music Steve Jobman
1990 Steve Jobman hired as Minister of Music	2017 Consolidation of Worship into one service
1991 Performing Arts Series starts	2018 Departure of Rev. Miller
1996 Accusations made against Rev. Wirtz leading to his resignation	2019 Interim Ministry of Mark Galbraith
1996 Bridge-builders Capital Maintenance Campaign	2019 Departure of Christian Ed Director Tiffany McClure
1996 Ministry of Rev. Richard Wereley	2020 COVID-19 Pandemic starts; in-person worship suspended
1999 Established Foundation	2020 Interim ministry of Rev. Kathy Stoner-Lasala
2007 Interim Ministry of Rev. Ray Larson	2021 In-person worship resumes
2008 Ministry of Rev. Dr. Richard Miller	

Perceptions of Our Congregation

There is a widely held perception that FPC is a wealthy church. While no specific household income is available for this study, this perception is not supported by observations made by the Stewardship Committee. Committee feedback from non-pledging members would suggest that a significant portion of the congregation does not feel able to contribute financially, but rather through time and talent.

Physical Plant

First Church sits on the corner of Kirkwood Boulevard and Iowa Street in central Davenport. The building's dedication occurred on December 3, 1899. It is a beautiful structure built of Marquette brownstone in the Romanesque style. The building is a registered National Historic Monument.

The Sanctuary features art glass windows commissioned and created by Frederic Lamb of J & L Lamb Studios of New York at the time of the building's construction.

They have previously been restored and are currently in another phase of restoration, funded by a grant from the Iowa State Historical Society and a family trust.

Through the years, the Sanctuary has undergone multiple redecoration and renovation projects. Past projects include the enlargement of the chancel to accommodate larger choirs and Performing Arts Series (PAS) events and the addition of the 61-rank Casavant organ in the front of the space.

This addition, made in 1980, required a reconfiguration of the pews in the Sanctuary to accommodate the instrument. The main floor now seats 430, with the balcony adding another 204 seats.

Multiple cameras, a multi-channel audio system, and the accompanying technology allow for recording and live streaming of Sunday services and other events from the Sanctuary. There is also a screen with video projection capabilities to enhance worship.

The ground floor of the main building houses the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, library, and Bride's room. The Sanctuary level includes a Chapel that backs up to the main worship space. In 1982, the church installed an elevator to provide easier access between the two levels.

The Christian Education building, built in 1923, connects to the main Sanctuary building and includes three levels. The upper-level houses classrooms and a nursery. The main level has a medium-sized meeting hall with a small stage (Von Maur Hall) and a parlor (connected to a small kitchen), and offices for pastors and support staff. The ground floor includes a gymnasium, music library, choir practice rooms, and offices for music staff. There are restrooms on all three floors, and a second elevator was added to provide access within this building.

Two paved parking lots adjacent to the buildings provide ample parking.

In 2019, the church installed a security system to monitor every entrance as well as the interior and exterior of both buildings. Door locks, activated by programmed key fobs, help control entry to the building from the outside. Call buttons with monitors/speakers are also available for persons requesting access.

As with all structures over 100 years old, our church building is constantly faced with repairs and maintenance



projects to keep the buildings and grounds safe and sound. Fortunately, major capital maintenance and improvement projects can often be funded through endowed funds that have been donated to First Church and its foundation by past and present church members. This allows utility bills and routine maintenance expenses to be covered by the annual church budget.

Staff and Volunteers

First Church operates with a complement of paid staff (full- and part-time) and members of the congregation who volunteer their time and resources.

Staff:

Due to loss of membership and budget constraints, FPC staff is 50% the size it was a decade ago. Current full-time staff includes Bridging Pastor, Rev. Dr. Kathy Stoner-Lasala; Director of Music, Matt Bishop; and Principal Organist & Assistant Director of Music, Alex Gilson.

There are also full-time administrative staff positions, including the church Finance Manager, Administrative Assistant, Custodial Supervisor, and an additional custodial position. The part-time staff covers Christian Education, children's choirs, and other custodial duties.

In past years, the congregation has called associate pastors specifically covering Christian Ed, Pastoral Care, and Mission. Those positions no longer exist in the church's current staff organization. Other eliminated positions include Parish Nurse, Membership Coordinator, and additional office and publication staff.

The current staff has accepted the downsizing and is willing to pick up additional duties. They work well as a team, recognizing their unique strengths and weaknesses. Staff members do their best to step in and assist when and where the work is needed. In addition, the congregation continues to be blessed by the involvement of a retired pastor who fills the pulpit regularly and handles some pastoral care duties.

At times, it has been a challenge for members to acknowledge the full impact of downsizing. For example, the elimination of staff specifically responsible for pastoral care and Christian education has left a void.

There was also a full-time employee who coordinated publications—bulletins, newsletters, visual displays, etc. That position has been eliminated as well.

Volunteers:

As with many groups, the number of volunteers has decreased since 2020, largely due to COVID concerns. However, the congregation still has a mindset of volunteering when needed.

Volunteers regularly cover tasks such as answering phone calls in the church office, preparing mailings to the congregation, visiting the homebound, assisting the Finance Manager, and serving as worship hosts, liturgists, and media coordinators during worship services.

The Music Department, in particular, has a robust volunteer program. A group coordinates and organizes the vocal music literature, ensuring that it is ready for choir members' use during worship and concerts and then refiling the music following its use. In addition, volunteers set up and tear down the temporary stage for the Christmas Concert, Good Friday, musicals, and other Performing Arts Series (PAS) events. Volunteers make

up the staff of PAS musicals and are responsible for costuming, props, set building, directing, and choreography.

The CE department requires numerous volunteers for youth groups and Sunday School to be successful. It has often been a challenge to recruit Sunday School teachers. In response, a previous CE Director set up a staggered teaching schedule so teachers could alternate weeks. Unfortunately, the congregation has recently experienced a decline in the number of Sunday School-aged children for various reasons.

The commitment to volunteering remains strong at FPC, but there has been an adjustment period due to the

decrease in event participants and available volunteers in recent years. The congregation looks forward to a time when there is both a greater need for volunteers and a larger volunteer pool.

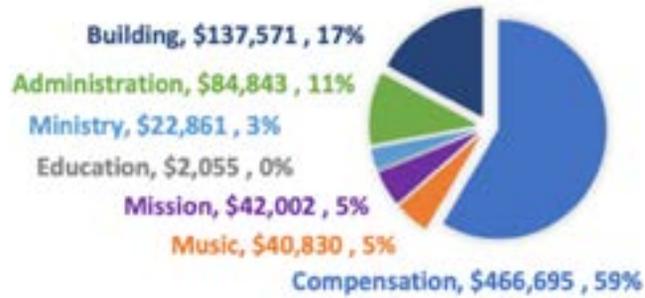


Fiscal Health

Although First Church's annual budget has shown a declining trend in recent years, the overall financial position remains reasonably strong.

Total revenues in 2021 were \$810,000, including \$647,000 from annual pledges and offerings and

2021 EXPENSES



additional receipts from deacons' offerings, estate gifts, government grants for COVID, and custodial funds. Custodial revenues—i.e., targeted donations for specific purposes such as mission or music—accounted for \$53,000.

Total expenditures in 2021 were \$797,000, with the largest items including \$467,000 in compensation expenses (58.6%) and \$138,000 in building expenses (17.3%).

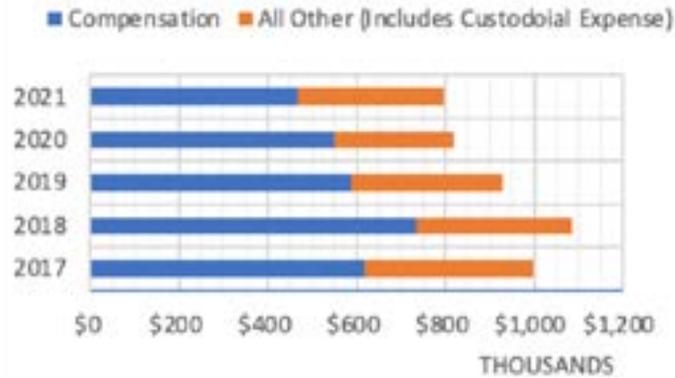
The church's general fund balance as of 12/31/2021 was slightly over \$484,000.

The five-year revenue history reflects the decline in membership and some impact of the pandemic on church participation for the past two years. Pledges and offerings have decreased each of the past five years.



Pastoral staff changes primarily drive the five-year expense comparison. Annual changes in compensation reflect the departure of the head pastor late in 2018 and severance paid at that time. In addition, compensation costs reflect the engagement of an interim pastor for portions of 2019-2020, departures of the CE director in 2019 and the associate pastor early in 2021, and the

Five Year History - Expense



hiring of a bridging pastor in 2021.

Budgeted revenue for 2022 totals \$772,000; this amount includes \$568,000 in projected pledges and offerings. Expenses of \$880,000 reflect an expected increase in compensation to \$609,000 resulting from adding a new head pastor during the year.

The deficit budget for 2022 is atypical, but church leadership has committed to the projected compensation increase, with the shortfall paid off with money from the church's general fund balance.

The FPC Foundation

In evaluating the fiscal health of First Church, it is important to note that other financial resources are available for both capital maintenance and improvement as well as mission.

The Foundation of First Presbyterian Church was established in 1999 to supplement the annual budget. The Foundation is a combination of unrestricted funds and restricted funds targeting capital expenditures for the church building.

Thanks to many generous donors, the Foundation balance had grown to \$1,385,000 as of 12/31/21. This includes \$1,075,000 in invested funds and \$310,000 book value of real property owned in the area neighboring the church.

The properties currently generate sufficient rental income to be self-sustaining. The Foundation's investment portfolio consists of about \$940,000 in endowed capital maintenance and repair funds managed by donor-appointed fund managers as well as approximately \$441,000 in various donor-restricted funds designated primarily for mission and programming.

Financial Challenges

Long-term challenges to the fiscal health of the congregation are rooted in the need to stabilize and increase membership, with an urgent need for new staff to provide innovation and leadership in achieving that goal.

The cost of maintaining an aging building is particularly concerning. The congregation will need to make some decisions regarding allocating resources among its programs and facilities to keep a solid financial base.

Stewardship

In a broad sense, Stewardship includes the management of time and talent as well as money. Simply put, it's not just fundraising. Therefore, other parts of this Mission Study directly address Stewardship's time and talent aspects, while this section focuses primarily on financial issues.

Certain aspects of financial stewardship have been beyond the congregation's control, most notably the COVID pandemic. In addition, leadership changes and uncertainties within the church have also presented a significant challenge. These factors and the resulting decline in membership have created challenges in maintaining a stable annual budget.

While recognizing these challenges, the Stewardship Committee has maintained a positive focus. For example, the fall campaign in 2021 highlighted the essential needs the annual fund drive addresses and included testimonies from members about pledging and the church's impact on their lives.

The theme "Give and it will be given to you" (Luke 6) was developed in conjunction with the Session. A low-key campaign emphasized "giving what you can" without putting excessive pressure on church members and acknowledged they come from various backgrounds.

The church office offers multiple ways to fulfill pledges, including online and automatic payment options.

First Church also annually promotes four special offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

Music

First Church's music program is well-known throughout the community. In past years, the church's Christmas Concerts have been televised nationally on PBS.

The focus of the music program takes three main directions: the enhancement of worship through weekly musical leadership; Christian Education of children, young people, and adults; and the outreach of our church through the proclamation of God's salvation to the world.

The Performing Arts Series includes multiple visiting artists (often in partnership with Quad City Arts), a church's principal organist concert, and a biennial musical. The series also features a Christmas Concert and Good Friday Tenebrae Service, including orchestral accompaniment.

The various choirs include the Sanctuary Choir, Chamber Chorale, Celebration Singers (grades 7-12), Kirkwood Choir (grades 2-6), and Cherub Choir (ages 3-6), Vesper Bells, and Kildalton Quartet. In addition to programs for adults and children from ages 3+, a certified instructor leads the church's Musikgarten classes for babies and toddlers on Sunday mornings.

In prior years, First Church's program included The Choir of Young Men & Boys and Cecilian

Carolers (young women & girls). Both groups are currently inactive.

The regionally-renowned Sanctuary Choir often works with living composers to commission new music. In addition, it has established a tradition of music outreach tours:

- In 2018, the choir traveled for 11-days in Germany. The trip included concerts and partnerships with refugee resettlement organizations.
- In 2019, the choir took a long weekend trip to Milwaukee, which included a benefit concert for a local organization that works with the urban homeless and the singing of the National Anthem at an MLB



game.

- The choir is currently planning a tour of Ireland in July 2022.

The music staff includes two full-time positions (the Director of Music and the Principal Organist/Assistant Director of Music) and two part-time positions (the Associate Choral Director and the Associate Choral Director for Young Children).

Mission

First Church's mission programs are often joint efforts with other local organizations or churches.

Current projects include:



- Regular donations to a local food pantry and a free meal site, in addition to serving a monthly meal at the Salvation Army
- Founded in 2006, P.U.N.C.H. (People Uniting Neighbors and Churches) includes nine churches in the Hilltop area, including First Church. The nine churches are from different denominations, and each is actively involved in this ministry. Some of the services provided include community gardens, Blessing Box (non-food supplies to those in need), and other community outreach to the homeless, unemployed, and all in need physically and spiritually.
- Caring Closet, located in the church, provides clothing free of charge for community members.
- Support for Quad-Cities organizations such as Churches United, Habitat for Humanity, Humility Homes (outreach to the homeless), Meals on Wheels, and New Kingdom Trail Riders (therapeutic horseback riding programs)
- An ongoing relationship with a church/outreach project in Zacapa, Guatemala. Since 2000, members from First Church have made multiple trips to the country to work on and support a variety of projects.

- Sewing circle for dresses to be distributed in the U.S. and abroad and a knitting group making prayer shawls and items for Knit for Kids
- Longtime sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 7, chartered at First Church in 1912, continues to meet at the church.



- Annual donations of Christmas gifts for the children of incarcerated parents
- Support of Camp Wyoming (church camp of East Iowa Presbytery)
- Kids Against Hunger (packaging meals for overseas shipment)

A few past mission efforts have included establishing housing and assistance to immigrant Vietnamese and Congolese families, mission trips to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and U.S. areas devastated by inclement weather.

The congregation also provided space for a Boys and Girls Club for many years and offered tutoring services for its members.

Fellowship

Establishing opportunities for members to develop friendships is vital at First Church. Therefore, small groups and activities have formed around shared interests.

These groups and activities include: two book clubs, a men's cookout/breakfast, a women's

retreat, a pickleball league (in the church gym), a volunteer group working on church landscaping, a travel fellowship, various Bible Study groups, the Young Adult Connection, and a combined couples/singles group that plans monthly social gatherings.

The Congregational Development & Fellowship Committee of Session organizes events to promote fellowship. Events include a monthly Sunday morning breakfast (Manna & More), Mardi Gras Sunday, and Thanksgiving Eve Pie Fellowship. In addition, the Deacons organize an annual neighborhood picnic and annual Homecoming luncheon for members 75 years old and older.

Special summer services include Blessing of the Animals, when members can bring pets to church, and a musical service recognizing Bix Beiderbecke, a legendary jazz musician from the 1920s whose family considered First Church their home.

Not surprisingly, COVID restrictions have forced modifications of many programs at First Church. Nevertheless, nearly all of the above have continued in some form.

Once COVID restrictions are relaxed or lifted, many former ministries may resume if the needs are present and individuals step up to lead. These might include past efforts such as Peace Fellowship, grief/singles'/young mothers' groups, Parish Nurse, Befrienders, and United Presbyterian Women.



Christian Education

Christian Education for all ages is a significant emphasis and continually presents challenges of best meeting members' needs in an ever-changing world.

In the pre-COVID era, preschool through 12th grade Sunday School classes convened on Sunday mornings and Youth Group met on Sunday evenings, focusing on service projects for the church and community. Kirkwood Club (2nd-6th grades) met on Wednesday evenings.

Under COVID protocols beginning in spring 2020, most activities were conducted through Zoom with a few activities held outdoors. As with other church activities, this limited participation.

As the church began to again meet in person, Vacation Bible Camp was held in 2021 in conjunction with weekly outdoor Sunday services during the summer.

Since fall 2021, Sunday school has been scheduled to alternate weeks with the children's choirs. 2021

concluded with children participating in a Family Christmas Eve Service production from Illustrated Ministries entitled "Do Not Be Afraid." More recently, the children's choir sang in person for Palm Sunday.



Confirmation classes are held every other year for 7th and 8th graders. The most recent class concluded in May 2022.

Annual events include an Easter Egg Hunt/ Party, Vacation Bible Camp, and Trunk or Treat (at Halloween). In addition, activities for junior and senior high youth in the last decade have included mission trips and delegations to Youth Triennium.

The church's youth protection policy requires two adults present at any event involving children.

Adult Education opportunities at First Church include a weekly class following Sunday morning worship and Bible studies held during the week. These have continued, largely via Zoom, during the pandemic.



Governance SESSION

There are twenty-one members in the Session. Every year, a class of seven Elders is elected by the congregation. Members of the Session are restricted to serving no more than two consecutive terms before having to step away.

Standing committees and sub-committees of the Session include:

Adult Christian Education

Includes Library subcommittee.

Building & Grounds

Christian Education & Fellowship for Youth

Congregational Growth & Marketing

Provides direction for marketing the church to stimulate FPC's membership growth; and coordinates the technological resources to provide in-person and remote access to church activities and protection from internet threats, data theft, and cyber-attacks.

Congregational Development & Fellowship

Promotes activities of fellowship groups.

Finance

Hospitality & Welcome

Addresses the addition of new members and recruits and schedules worship hosts.

Personnel

Supports the Head of Staff in the leadership of staff employees and supports Session leadership of the congregation.

Stewardship

Worship & Music

Pandemic Task Force

Evaluates the current rates of Covid, makes plans for safer activities for the present and strategies for the future.

DEACONS

There are sixteen elected Deacons to the First Church Board of Deacons. Every year, a number of Deacons are elected by the congregation to provide leadership at the board level.

Being elected as a Deacon of the church is a lifetime appointment, so the actual number of Deacons at the church is much larger. Those Deacons who do not serve on the Board of Deacons often provide leadership on committees and sub-committees which are organized as shown below:

Mission Connection

Reviews and promotes current and potential programs/missions, emphasizing national and international missions.

Outreach

Organizes participation in neighborhood and community involvement opportunities.

Pastoral Care & Spiritual Development

Supports activities related to congregational ministries, including visits to homebound members.



Where We Hope to Go

The only way to successfully overcome challenges is by knowing where to go and how to get there. That takes an ability to envision a future outcome and reach consensus on the values that will drive the change necessary to make that vision a reality.

The Congregational Growth and Marketing Committee (CGMC) - a committee of the Session consisting of six congregational members and two staff - studied national trends that defined what people look for when seeking a church home. The committee then reviewed previous surveys of First Church congregational members (summaries of which are included with this report as appendices, starting on page 29) as part of an assessment of our institutional values.

These core values were referenced by the committee as it developed value statements, key messages, and a recommended “marketing position” for First Church.

The CGMC reported to Session (and eventually to the congregation) that it found that churches, now more than ever, need to be “authentic” when presenting themselves to the public – both prospective members and current ones. The younger the audience, the less confidence they have in the honesty and forthrightness of the institution.

In a media environment full of deep fakes and social media rumors, First Church needs to adopt a position of being “real” to stand out from the clutter. The CGMC continued:

“The challenge we face is to come up with an honest and believable vision for First Presbyterian Church and our congregation – who we are, what we believe, and how we act on that belief. An authentic vision of ourselves should admit our faults and celebrate our gifts ... and it should inform everything we do and say as well as the way we present ourselves to friends, family, and the public-at-large.”

Admittedly, true transparency can be a little embarrassing, but it can also be transformative and liberating. That’s why the committee recommended focused messaging and communications around some core values that are easily associated with First Church’s storied past and best moments ...



Core Values

Creativity

We are a creative place and a creative people. You can see it in how we solve problems and take on challenges in all forms (both artistic and practical).

Joyfulness

We are a congregation of good humor and expression; whether it's the joyful laugh of children during their worship message or applause at the end of a service's postlude, First Church expresses love and joy without reservation or remorse. Joy makes us ready to do good work and encourages us to do that work well.

Justice

As a congregation involved in the communities in which it lives, we have a long-standing reputation for volunteerism and principled activism, of leadership and fair-mindedness.

Loyalty

First Church has a reputation for honoring commitments made and sticking with them for the long haul. We understand that it is far better to do what is right rather than just doing what's easy or expedient, even if that's all that's asked.

Legacy

First Church has a rich historical heritage in the community as one of the oldest and most influential churches in the Iowa Quad Cities.

It is that first value, "Creativity," that the CGMC recommends considering as a critical point of differentiation when it comes to creating a definitive "point-of-view" for First Church in the community. Not every congregation member needs to be an artist or a performer, but rather have a creative mindset – saying "why not" instead of "no."

Vision

Keeping this recommendation in mind, the CGMC has now engaged the congregation to provide feedback on a draft vision statement. As part of that feedback process, members reflect on their personal relationships and faith, then find a way to share that story.

It is, in fact, this act of sharing stories that will build meaning into our shared vision statement by providing real-life examples of that vision at work.

This vision is a work in progress in every sense of the word. The specifics of the statement still require refinement, but the general understanding of the statement has broad support.

First Church needs objective leadership from an individual with the practical experience, spiritual maturity, strategic vision, and ability to motivate others to shepherd the process to a fulfilling conclusion.

First Presbyterian Church is a community of believers who are open and welcoming to everyone.

As a congregation, we are dedicated to making practicing your faith fun and meaningful – and we do that by joyfully and creatively sharing stories of the promise found inside a loving relationship with God through Christ.

We share our commitment to our faith by turning our words into actions and by staying resolute on matters of fairness, equality, and equity for all.

What's it all mean ...

“a community of believers”

As members of this congregation, we're committed to the basic tenets of the Presbyterian tradition.

“open and welcoming to everyone”

As a Matthew 25 church and member of the Covenant Network, our congregation does not discriminate based on race, sexual orientation, preference, or identity.



“We are dedicated to making practicing your faith fun and meaningful”

We publicly proclaim that practicing your faith should be exhilarating and intentional - this is our evangelical message.

“joyfully and creatively sharing stories”

We celebrate and share the good news of not just our faith but of our faithful journey with our fellow members, and we do so in a way that is captivating and relevant.

“the promise found inside a loving relationship with God through Christ”

Every story should have, at its heart, a revealed truth about our relationship with God through Christ.

“turning words into actions”

We value “walking our talk” – doing what we say we're going to do and keeping our promises.

“staying resolute on matters of fairness, equality, and equity for all”

The principles of the denomination and commitment to representation that underpin Presbyterianism reaffirm our position on social justice.

What we need

First Church needs two things in order to fully realize its vision and live into its potential: a willing and engaged congregation who understands and embodies the core values identified above; and a head pastor to serve as its spiritual leader and chief motivator. Even facing the various economic and cultural challenges that exist today, First Church can attract and retain an activated congregation - when the right leader feels the call and joins with us.

We need leadership and guidance when it comes to sharing our stories as a congregation and motivating ourselves to achieve the bold ambitions expressed in our vision.

The ideal pastor to minister to the congregation and community of First Church would have these experiences and qualities:

Experience as a head of staff – of either a mid-sized church or a larger church.

Experience working as an engaging communicator – someone who actively listens and synthesizes multiple points of view to develop a practical, creative solution.

Spiritual maturity – demonstrating the integrity of purpose by walking the talk and engendering relationships built on trust and respect both inside and outside the organization.

Strategic vision – an ability to see the big picture and understand what it will take to make First Church (and organized Christian traditions in general) relevant to our membership and the community for future generations.

So, you may be someone we need - whether you're a pastor in search of a new challenge and a new calling, or a believer in the love and power of the Spirit to affect positive change. The door is open.

And we're ready to welcome you to First Church.



Appendices and Supporting Documentation

PNC Mission Study Reviews

First Presbyterian Church of Davenport has engaged in multiple forms of mission studies, reviews, and introspection since 2016. A summary of these studies follows.

Envisioning 20/20 Report

*(Discerning God's Will through the Voice of the
Congregation)*

In August 2015, the FPC Session authorized a process to define a vision and identify opportunities for the church going forward. A task force of 10 volunteers was formed by Rev. Richard Miller and proceeded under the leadership of consultant Rev. Jim Kitchens from PneuMatrix.

The gathering of information from the congregation took place in the form of three meetings facilitated by Rev. Kitchens in January-March 2016, with approximately 125 people participating in each of the meetings.

The first meeting, "Remembering the Past," focused on the aspects of FPC that attracted its members and kept them involved. The most frequently mentioned items were the worship services, music programs, children and youth programs, and fellowship with family and friends.

During the second meeting, "Examining the Present,"

members were asked to identify both areas of ministry the church is doing well and areas requiring attention. Based on this evaluation, key areas of emphasis were identified as Spiritual Formation, Community Outreach, Worship & Music, Children & Youth Ministry, and Fellowship.

At the third meeting, “Dreaming the Future,” a series of “God-Sized Dreams” was developed to guide the Session in implementing church programs going forward. The dreams were summarized as follows:

Spiritual Development

First Presbyterian Church is a community in which all are invited to join in the journey of learning to love God and learning that we are loved by God.

We are each at different stages in the journey, and we are each challenged to take intentional steps to explore our faith, realize our gifts, and experience God’s love. The church supports each of us in our journey by providing opportunities for spiritual development and Christian education.

Our shared experience in the journey of seeking God infuses the life and work of the church and transforms it. The culture of the church is one where spiritual development is highly valued and given first priority by the congregation.

Mission and Outreach

With caring Christian hands and hearts, FPC shares God’s love with our neighbors across the street and our neighbors throughout the world, by responding to basic human needs and addressing injustice and discrimination.

FPC’s light shines as a neighborhood center that partners with other faith communities, schools, and professional and public services by sharing our buildings, treasures, and talents.

Worship and Music

Worship at FPC is spiritual and nurturing. We show our love of God through sacraments, prayer, meditation, sermons, and music. Worship nourishes each of us as we travel on our own spiritual journeys and nourishes the congregation to be in loving union with God.

We are stretched and strengthened as the body of Christ to reach beyond ourselves to do God’s work in the world.

Children and Youth

First Presbyterian Church has a vibrant Youth and Children's Ministry. All youth and children are invited to join in the same spiritual development journey as adults - that of learning to love God and that we are loved by God.

Our Youth Ministry attracts members from the community and also reaches out to the community. Youth and children are involved in all facets of church life and activities.

Our young contribute to the life, energy, and spirit of our congregation. We know them, nurture them as we have promised, and strive to help them prepare to do God's work in the world.

Fellowship

At First Presbyterian Church, we are called by God into fellowship with one another as the body of Christ. Our fellowship is highly valued.

Fellowship is not all we do at FPC, but it is part of all we do at FPC. It is in worship, in our praying, in our meetings, in our learning, and in our service to others. Friendships are strong and enduring.

Our fellowship is inviting, open, inclusive, and joyful. It is intergenerational. It is an important way that we care for each other and share God's love.

The task force published its report in August 2016. In the report, each of the above Dreams included recommended action steps for implementation. The action steps were prioritized and timelines were set for starting work on each element of the Dreams.

The report's conclusion highlighted, in particular, the importance of spiritual development to the future of the congregation, advocating the need to include prayerful discernment into the decision-making process of church leaders and to provide opportunities for individual and corporate spiritual growth.

As with all visioning processes, not every Dream has been realized in the years since this process occurred, but the report has been a key guiding document for Session and Deacon committees since that time.

Mission Study Small Groups

Following the departure of Rev. Miller in October 2018, Rev. Mark Galbraith was called as Interim Pastor and began serving in August 2019. As part of his interim ministry, he organized a series of small group “congregation conversations” with the assistance of volunteer facilitators beginning in February 2020.

The goal of these small group meetings was to share and document future hopes, dreams, and challenges as the church moved toward calling a new head of staff.

Prior to the group meetings, members were presented with the following questions for discussion during the sessions.

- What makes your heart sing about First Presbyterian Church?
- What are the challenges and opportunities before us?
- What is God calling First Presbyterian Church to be as a transformational and servant mission in the community that surrounds us? From this, what are 3-5 Mission Goals you sense God calling FPC to embrace to define the next chapter of ministry?
- What needs to change for these Mission Goals to become reality?
- What specific steps need to take place for healing and reconciliation? *(Note: this question was largely directed toward members with hurt feelings over the departure of Rev. Miller and the relationship with Presbytery in the aftermath.)*
- What leadership skills (not personal qualities) do the next called and installed Lead Pastor need to have to partner with FPC for these mission goals to happen?

The group meetings were well attended and, not surprisingly, members provided a wide variety of answers to the above questions. Those responses required further review and summarization.

However, the surge of COVID-19 in the United States began in March 2020, almost as soon as the group

meetings were completed, and this prevented further gatherings. As a result, the process did not reach the level of completion originally intended.

Rev. Galbraith's final report included a lengthy listing of the various responses, with a single-page summarization of the themes he felt necessary to highlight.

A brief recap of the more common responses includes:

- What makes your heart sing? Supportive friendships, music program, traditions/history, beautiful sanctuary, outreach to the community and beyond
- Challenges and opportunities: Meeting needs of young families and children, budget concerns, departure of past members, relevancy to a changing world, relating to the surrounding neighborhood, lack of volunteers
- What is God calling First Presbyterian Church to be? Connected with nearby churches, involved with mission work and social justice (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, clothing closet, food pantry, mission trips), expanding music program beyond the walls of the church
- What needs to change? Level of volunteerism, more effective leadership, openness to different ideas, improved communication and transparency
- What specific steps need to take place for healing and reconciliation? Truth and openness regarding past events, practice forgiveness
- What leadership skills do the next called pastor need to have? Effective administrative abilities, listening skills, integrity, effective preaching, innovative and visionary

Rev. Galbraith's summary highlighted the importance of the supportive friendships developed by church members as a key reason for church involvement.

The challenges referenced in his summary included financial issues, as well as the confusion created by the departure of Rev. Miller and the need to establish a more comfortable relationship with Presbytery.

Finally, the summary highlighted the need for a permanent called Presbyterian pastor with desired leadership skills, including active listening, accessibility, sense of humor, relatable sense of spirituality, and ability to motivate church leaders.

*Congregational Growth and
Marketing Committee (CGMC)*
(Report to Session)

A group of six church members and two staff liaisons was tasked with developing a strategic marketing plan to enhance the church's presence to gain membership and coordinate committee activities throughout the church. The task force provided a PowerPoint presentation to the FPC session in November 2021.

The concept of "branding," the process of bonding meaning to a name or icon, was a key focus of the task force's presentation. Noting that a church such as FPC either brands itself or will be branded by someone else, the goal of self-branding would be increased membership, financial stability, spiritual growth, and community impact.

In an attempt to self-brand, the task force identified the following core values that shape FPC: creativity, intellectualism, tolerance, worldview, tradition, history, and performance. It was concluded after reviewing the perceived core values of six other Quad-Cities churches that those core values are not necessarily unique to FPC; indeed, the similarities tend to outweigh the denominational differences.

The one potentially differentiating characteristic of FPC, its creativity and passion for performance (primarily through music), is often overlooked or ignored. In part, this is because FPC's worship presentation tends to reinforce the image of the "frozen chosen," an image that is not particularly appealing to those who might be seeking a spiritual home.

The task force proposed a new mission statement to define the congregation:

"At First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, we're here to serve each other and our community – helping everyone experience and celebrate the love of God through Christ."

To support this mission statement, the task force developed a series of suggested recommendations built around the theme of “creative celebration,” as follows:

In Worship:

- Technologically “friendly” to congregants attending in-person and virtually
- More generally optimistic tone and empowering conclusions
- Sharing new work created by church members

In Children’s Ed:

- Streaming Sunday School for kids at home
- Using work created in Sunday School as part of worship
- Youth podcast produced as part of middle/high school education
- Featured work by youth members on the church website

In Family Fellowship:

- Regular movie nights, possibly including a group meal
- Family field trips or adventures to places members might not usually go

In Mission Trips:

- Designate “correspondent” for each trip to record the work done and create a mini-documentary to be shared with the congregation
- Share the stories of groups in need of assistance to raise interest in their causes.

In Music:

- Continue to develop relationships with composers to allow FPC to premiere new work.
- Expand relationship with Quad City Arts
- Provide space for studio lessons for interested musicians and community members

Around the Building:

- Provide public art space for posting messages or artwork
- Provide tours of the church’s art glass windows, offer classes in creating art glass
- Use blank wall space as galleries for works by members and local artists

In concluding its report, the task force sought feedback and refinement of the above ideas, with the acknowledgment that they did not all need to be implemented simultaneously, nor would they all necessarily be successful.

The report included a proposed timeline for steps that could be taken between November 2021, and the fall of 2022—including a redesign of the church website, the launch of FPC’s new branding, modification of committee structures and goals to bring them into alignment with the branding and public outreach to recruit “creatively curious” Quad-Citians to visit and learn more.

A Narrative on Recent Events *(2018–Present)*

First Presbyterian Church, Davenport (FPC-D), has recently undergone a painful conflict, internally and with the Presbytery of East Iowa (PEIA).

Following is a summary of that turmoil:

FPC-D has historically allocated to the standing committees of Session much of the detailed work in each committee’s area of responsibility. Prior to September 2018, the Church Government & Personnel Committee (CG&P) was charged with responsibility for all personnel matters, including working directly with the Senior Pastor and Head of Staff (one position) on his/her actions, behaviors, and outcomes.

Therefore, CG&P was working with Rev. Richard Miller during his tenure to improve his ministry. Concerns developed, including charges of verbal sexual harassment, a hostile work environment, plagiarism, and other inappropriate behaviors.

The Committee requested that Rev. Miller participate in professional development, counseling, and evaluation activity with a third-party organization, which occurred in December 2017. The cost of this activity was borne by PEIA, members of which were copied on the referral letter describing Rev. Miller’s behavior. The final report from the third-party organization was sent to Rev. Miller and forwarded to the members of the CG&P Committee.

After eight months, the CG&P Committee

determined that Rev. Miller's behavior had not improved. Preliminary discussions began with Rev. Miller about ending his ministry at FPC-D and certain members of PEIA were advised of these discussions.

In August 2018, Rev. Miller approached PEIA about the preliminary discussions on ending his ministry at FPC-D. He asserted that the process used to begin these preliminary discussions was not in accord with PC(USA) policies and procedures as directed by the Book of Order (collectively, Presbyterian Polity).

On August 21, 2018, there was a meeting with CG&P and a representative of PEIA who participated as an expert on Presbyterian Polity. At that meeting, the expert told the CG&P members that their actions were in accord with Polity. He also indicated that additional actions planned by CG&P in this matter would be in accordance with Polity.

On August 29, 2018, there was a meeting including Rev. Miller, a PEIA representative, Rev. Miller's advocate as appointed by PEIA and all members of CG&P. Rev. Miller's advocate cautioned the CG&P to use care when talking about the evaluation report, as doing so could be a possible violation of Iowa law. The conclusion of the meeting was that Rev. Miller and his advocate would respond to the committee within two weeks and a subsequent meeting would be held. However, there was no such follow-up.

Instead, in September 2018, the Stated Clerk and the Ministers and Congregations Commission (MCC), acting on behalf of PEIA, told Rev Miller to call a special meeting of the Session for October 1, 2018. At that meeting, PEIA delivered a letter to the FPC Session including serious allegations against the process CG&P utilized in its discussions with Rev. Miller. Fear of a potential lawsuit against PEIA and FPC-D was identified as a motivation for calling the meeting and delivering the letter.

That letter included the following recommendations:

- Rev. Miller should cease all activity as pastor of FPC-D. He accepted their recommendation. This recommendation came from the Ministers and Congregations Commission (MCC).
- The CG&P committee be immediately dissolved.
- Members of the CG&P immediately resign from Session or Board of Deacons.

- FPC-D's insurance company be notified of a possible claim for wrongful termination and illegal disclosure of protected information.
- There should be no discussion of any personnel matters or any topic regarding Rev. Miller by any member of Session and the former CG&P members with anyone.

The letter also stated that, if these recommendations were not followed, PEIA would take original jurisdiction over the governance of the congregation. PEIA representatives also told Session members that they could be personally liable for the alleged violation of Iowa law. The Session accepted the recommendations.

On October 14, 2018, an informational meeting about these matters was held with the congregation in the FPC-D Sanctuary. The meeting was led by members of PEIA, with congregation members, Session members, and members of the CG&P in attendance.

The letter that had been presented to Session was presented, and members were told that they should not engage in discussion of personnel matters. It, therefore, became the understanding of FPC-D members that they were subject to a "gag order" regarding any matters beyond the scope of the letter's recommendations.

These events created conflict and turmoil within the congregation with no opportunity for resolution because of the gag order. Many individuals were hurt and wounded by these events.

A called congregational meeting was held on November 11, 2018, attended by representatives of PEIA, at which a variety of emotional comments were made by members. The congregation voted to approve a motion to provide severance payment of 10 months' salary to Rev. Miller in exchange for his agreement not to pursue legal action against the congregation, even though PEIA guidelines for severance indicated that 6 months would be typical.

The relationship between FPC-D and Rev. Miller was formally dissolved in late November and the agreement not to pursue legal action was signed at the same time. The agreement did not release PEIA from the threat of legal action.

An Administrative Commission was established by PEIA to work with the Session of FPC-D, although the

Commission never formally took control of the church. However, the threat of losing original jurisdiction caused the Session to enact all actions recommended/required by the Administrative Commission. The Commission existed from November 2018 to November 2019.

The former members of CG&P, who were never interviewed by the MCC regarding its actions and who were bound by the gag order from communicating with other church members, initiated judicial action within the PC(USA) alleging irregularities in the actions taken by PEIA.

In December 2018, a complaint was filed with the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. In February 2019, the Synod ruled that CG&P did not have the standing to bring action and dismissed the complaint. Harry Hoyt, the former member of CG&P, challenged the dismissal but Synod denied Mr. Hoyt's challenge in May/June 2019. In June 2019, Mr. Hoyt appealed the ruling on lack of standing to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAJPC). The GAJPC ordered a hearing in July 2019. Due to the pandemic, the hearing was done without appearances and the Decision and Order was subsequently issued in April 2020.

During this extended judicial process (December 2018 – April 2020) the Session and congregation understood that the judicial process must be completed before actions to move forward could be taken. Between June 2019 and March 2020, three offers were made by members of CG&P to discuss and agree upon a settlement outside of the judicial process which might include withdrawing the legal actions. Two of these offers were declined; no reply was received in the third instance.

Tensions continued to exist in most interactions between FPC-D and PEIA during this period. Within FPC-D, tensions rose as little information was being shared, rumors began, and no resolution appeared to be on the horizon.

Attendance at FPC-D events began to diminish, exacerbated by the pandemic. The Interim Pastor, who had been called in the summer of 2019, was unable to relieve the growing emotional distress. The Session was informed in February 2020, that the MCC would not approve a Pastor Nominating Committee until a mission goal-setting process was completed and until the MCC felt the congregation was ready.

The judicial process concluded in April 2020 when

GAJPC issued its Decision and Order. The Order directed the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to conduct a special administrative review and offer the parties an opportunity to seek resolution and reconciliation. However, as with prior judicial statements regarding Rev. Miller's departure, this Decision and Order did not include substantive commentary about the underlying facts and circumstances.

A Synod Administrative Review Committee (SARC) began a review in June 2020 and issued a preliminary report in December 2020 and a final report in March 2021. The final report included several recommendations for both FPC-D and PEIA.

The Session worked to implement these recommendations during 2021, including reviews of committee descriptions and updates of personnel policies. A report on the status of the recommendations was provided to Synod in September 2021.

As part of the recommendations, FPC-D and PEIA were ordered to participate in a reconciliation process, which began during the summer of 2021. Rev. Beth McCaw was enlisted as a facilitator for that process, which included "restoration circles" during which individuals shared points of dysfunction or injury and hopes for a more constructive future.

A workgroup, consisting of representatives from each body, studied restoration circle feedback in January 2022 and noted serious failure in communication contributing to the tension between the two entities.

The workgroup's February 2022 report detailed circle feedback and proposed a covenant between FPC-D and PEIA, with emphasis on more sensitive communication, better self-awareness, and understanding of roles. Specific recommendations were offered to carry out these goals.

FPC members are weary of being in "limbo" from the events which began back in 2018 and there is a great desire to move beyond this period of turmoil. The congregation is committed to setting aside any hard feelings from the past and pushing forward toward being a positive and vibrant congregation that will glorify God in the future.

Prepared by:

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