

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWTON, NORTH CAROLINA



Mission Study, November 2024

Mission Study Committee

Eva Bonnema

Randy Miller

LaMarr Jefferson

Bob Neill

Elizabeth Philhower



701 North Main Avenue
Newton, NC 28658





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Newton

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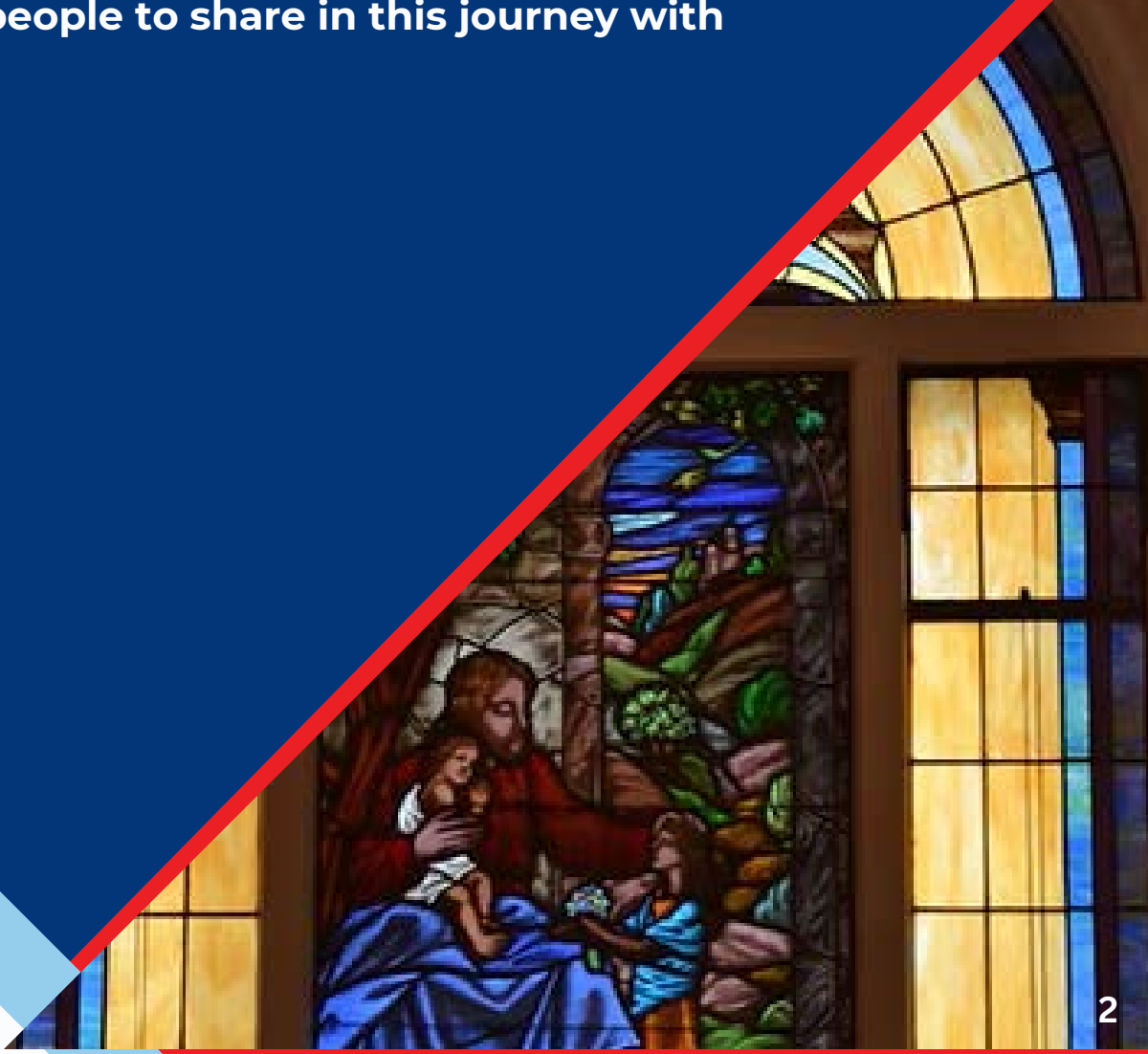
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MISSION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Church welcomes you no matter who you are, where you come from or why you are here.

We are Christ's people and this is Christ's place with our doors wide open.

Through Christ we worship, grow, love and serve as we care for one another and our community. We seek to live together as a family of faith, joyfully welcoming all people to share in this journey with us.



WHO ARE WE HISTORY

First Presbyterian Church can trace its formation to June 13, 1858, when eight congregants met in the parlor of one of the members. Also in attendance was the Reverend Jesse Rankin who was the founding minister of the church and who led services in the members home about once a month. By the end of the first year, there were enough people attending, to move services to Beth Eden Lutheran Church. After the Civil War, the population of Newton and the membership of the church had increased and the first sanctuary was completed in 1878. To this day, the two churches have a close relationship and share in mission efforts and youth activities.

Over the years, there have been many renovations and additions to the facility, but the original building is still a beloved space and continues to be used as the Chapel. Worship services are held there once a month.

In the mid-1980's, new educational facilities and a Fellowship Hall were added. "Our Bold Mission" raised nearly \$1 million dollars to fund these additions in order to be of service to the larger community. In 2002, a spacious new sanctuary was completed and the first service held there was on Palm Sunday of that year. At the same time of the sanctuary construction an educational wing was completed that included space for music and youth ministries. The total cost of this phase of construction was over \$4 million dollars. The church held a note burning service for this debt in 2008. Over the years, additional property has been purchased as it became available.

DEMOGRAPHICS

There are currently 295 active members on the rolls and the average attendance at worship on Sunday mornings is between 85 to 100. The services are streamed live on Facebook and are typically viewed by a large number of people.

During our transition we continue to welcome new members to our church family.

There are 108 members of our church who are over the age of 70 with 50 members age 25 and under. There are currently 27 youth on the roll and we have a small, but excellent Youth Program led by Laura Sparks, the Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries.

The majority of our congregation are Caucasian. We are pleased that in recent years to have welcomed more people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.



CURRENT MINISTRIES



WORSHIP MINISTRY

For members and friends of our church, worshiping together is foundational to who we are. We joyfully join together to hear God's word, to be blessed by the music and to prayerfully lift up prayers to our loving God, for our world and each other.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music plays a very important part in the life of our church. We have a wonderful 47 rank Casavant organ that is used for our weekly worship service. As well as recitals and other musical performances.

Our Chancel Choir is currently led by Brandon Winbush, Director of Music. They participate in our worship with anthems and leadership of congregational hymns.

We are blessed with a Handbell Ensemble that contributes to our worship services.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Adult Sunday School

On Sunday mornings following the worship service. Adults are given the opportunity to meet together to pray for each other and to discuss a variety of topics.



Bible Studies

Are offered by Presbyterian Women and by the pastor throughout the year.

Children and Youth Programs

Laura Sparks, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry. Through these ministries, we seek to support and engage youth, young disciples (children) and their families in an inclusive, faithful, church family that empowers all to seek God's will for their lives. We grow together through mission opportunities, Bible studies and fellowship events.



CURRENT MINISTRIES



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Presbyterian Women Circle groups meet regularly and strive to be an inclusive, nurturing group of women who build relationships with God, each other, serving the community with service projects and special offerings.



MEN OF THE CHURCH

Each Wednesday morning, men from the church gather to help maintain the church campus as they enjoy fellowship with one another. They also host the annual congregational Christmas breakfast.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

Care Team

The Care team consists of members who are committed to offering practical, emotional and spiritual support to the needs of church members in times of crisis and illnesses.



Adult Fellowship Dinners

Adults meet quarterly on a Thursday evening for dinner and fellowship.

MINISTRIES TO OUR COMMUNITY

Seniors Morning Out

This is a program open to senior citizens who enjoy some time away from home. It is hosted in our Fellowship Hall weekdays and is administered by Catawba County Senior Nutrition Services.



Meals on Wheels

Lunches are distributed from the church kitchen to homebound community members.



Habitat for Humanity

Affordable homes are built, renovated or repaired by our local chapter.

Refresh and Renew Shower Ministry

The church is open on Thursday afternoons for those in our community who do not have access to a shower.



Family Care Center

This local nonprofit offers financial counseling and temporary housing to community members.



Granny's Closet/Medical Supply Closet

Supplies are available for loan at the church for medical and other family needs.

Blood Drives

Our church hosts Red Cross Blood Drives quarterly.



Startown Elementary School Partnership

Our church helps support the students and staff by volunteering for school events, tutoring students, and annually providing lunch for the staff.

MINISTRIES TO OUR COMMUNITY



Sunday Community Suppers

Meals are served weekly by groups from our church as well as other community churches and organizations to those in our community with limited resources.



Corner Table/Backpack Program

Lunch is served on weekdays at The Corner Table, our local soup kitchen. Schoolchildren benefit from food provided on Fridays for weekend use.

www.thecornertable.org



Parade of Cans

Staples are collected during an annual drive for The Corner Table.

Rise Against Hunger

Meals are prepared in bulk for international distribution.

www.riseagainsthunger.org



March Madness

Annual food drive for the benefit of Ashure Ministries.

www.ashureministry.org



The Hunger Walk

This walk raises funds for hunger relief efforts in Catawba County, and to heighten awareness of the hunger issue within our community.

MINISTRIES TO GOD'S WORLD



Guatemala Partnership

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina, has a 30 year relationship with two presbyteries in Guatemala. Our church has a 20 year sister- church relationship with Iglesia El Redentor. We enjoy periodic visits and opportunities for mutual support. We help with scholarships and other needs as well as a pen pal program.



Matthew's Market

Matthew's Market is an alternative gifting opportunity hosted by our youth during the Advent season. Donations will benefit those in need in Malawi, Africa, our sister church in Guatemala, and Rise Against Hunger.



Missionaries and Missions We Support

John McCall - Taiwan

Lawrence and Inge Sthreshley - Congo

Eliane Menezes - Guatemala



OVERVIEW

Thanks to the continued dedicated financial support of our congregation, FPC Newton has been blessed to be able to meet expenses and salaries while continuing to provide meaningful church, community, and mission projects. There are many challenges in any regular budget such as rising costs, keeping up with maintenance projects for our aging facilities, and fairly compensating our dedicated staff. We feel that our success has been achieved by close monitoring of costs by our Finance committee and commitment to good stewardship of our resources by our various standing committees.

PLEDGES

From 2021 through 2023, pledge income ranged from \$462,000 in 2021 to \$483,000 in 2023. The budget for 2024 is \$475,000. We are on track to reach this budgeted pledge income in 2024.

Typically, 75% of the budget is based on actual pledge cards returned, while the remaining 25% is estimated based on historical giving from individuals who, for a variety of reasons, prefer not to pledge. For the past four years, we have been averaging about \$470,000 total pledges at approximately \$4,000 per family unit.

From an income perspective, for the three-year period from 2021-2023, we incurred a net loss totaling \$8,600. We are currently working with a balanced budget model.

EXPENSES

Personnel costs represent 52% of the annual budget. This percentage has held relatively constant for the past four years. Our current staff model consists of a Senior Pastor, Office Manager, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries, Director of Music and an Organist. Due to the recent retirement of our Director of Music and Organist, our new Director is filling both roles until a new organist is called.

Property expenses are 27% of the annual budget. These are up 22% from ten years ago. The cost to maintain our facilities, as well as utilities, insurance, janitorial, security and other miscellaneous expenses have continually risen during this period.

Mission ministries account for 21% of the annual budget. The majority of the mission budget funds go to Presbytery Unified Giving (approximately \$30k/yr) and Presbyterian Special Offerings and Gifts held throughout the year. The mission percentage also takes into consideration an in-kind estimate of \$40k/yr for the usage of the Yaussy Mission building by Ashure Ministries, a local crisis assistance ministry serving Catawba County. Not reflected in the percentage are the many mission projects supported by this congregation such as food drives, school supplies, and clothing donations.

Some of the local programs and charities supported financially by FPC Newton include Ashure Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, Outright Youth, The Corner Table, Family Care Center, and Room In the Inn emergency shelter.

The remainder of the budget includes costs for Christian Education, worship and music supplies, congregational ministries and office administrative expenses.

OUR COMMUNITY

The Cities

Newton (which you might hear referred to as Newton-Conover) is a growing, arts-loving community. It has been described as the “center of the wagon wheel” with spokes that will lead you to numerous stores and restaurants as well as trails on the Catawba River in the city of Hickory, to arts and outdoor activities in Asheville, shopping, shows and cultural events in Charlotte, all while being a short drive from the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and a half day drive to the Outer Banks.

The Newton-Conover-Hickory area, where most of our members are from, has continued to grow slowly over the last several years though now we are starting to see much more rapid growth in the area due to the completion of Highway 16 from Charlotte to Newton. In the Newton area alone there are 1,500 new homes that are in some part of the construction phase, while Hickory and Conover are both seeing proportionally similar growth. If you speak to Newton’s Mayor Jerry Hodge, a member of our church, he will tell you how excited he is about the new multipurpose space being converted in the downtown area, with new space for arts, community gatherings, apartments and classes. While the City Planner, Randy Williams, a member of our church, will speak with vigor about the new businesses who are looking to make Newton their home.



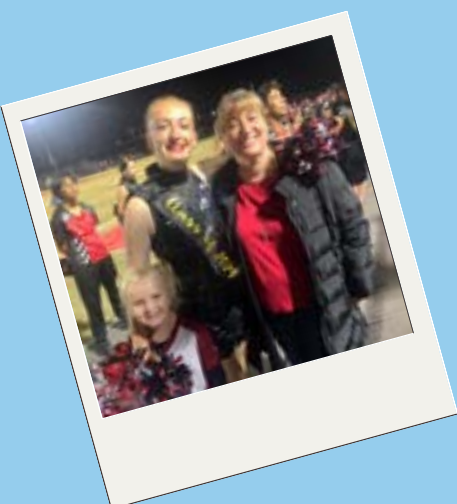
OUR COMMUNITY

Schools

Catawba County has a unique, while beneficial set-up for schools. There are three separate school systems in Catawba County. Newton-Conover has one, the City of Hickory has another and Catawba County has the third. This is an unusual set up for a County this size in North Carolina. However, it has proven beneficial in several ways. First, each school district is able to focus on the needs of their specific populations. Needs of families and children in the city might not be the same as the needs of families in more rural areas. Each school district has created an alternative High School experience, and since there are three of them in this county, each has been able to focus more on specific needs, while still offering space to any child in the county to attend. In addition to the three thriving public school systems there are also a number of quality private options available.

Jobs

As mentioned earlier, this entire area continues to grow and change, offering new job opportunities in just about any industry. The Hickory/High Point area has always been known for its furniture and textile factories, and while we continue to have those operations, the manufacturing in this area has expanded to metal-working, fiber optics, food processing and more. This area has also long been considered a “healthcare hub” with two nationally recognized health care centers.



OUR COMMUNITY

Things to Enjoy

There is never a shortage of events in the Arts community. Between the Green Room Theater in Newton, the Hickory Community Theater, Newton's Performing Arts Center and concerts by the local Symphony, Chorales and bands, live shows are never in short supply. Art festivals and outdoor events and holiday celebrations are also available in local nearby cities.

Outdoor activities are abundant in this rolling piedmont region of the Blue Ridge mountains, and they continue to grow with the expansion of greenways and city parks across the area. Walking, running, kayaking, boating and more are available year round in this community.

There are a variety of activities offered to people of all ages through community centers, YMCA, churches and various organizations. While keeping the charm of a small, southern community fresh, the Newton-Conover-Hickory area offers a wonderful array of experiences.



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our vision is to allow our love of Christ to shine through our members bright enough to shed light on our community, nation, and world.

To break barriers and make connections that build healthy relationships between God and members of our community.

To connect older generations with younger generations to spread love the way God intended.

Thus, continuing to represent solid foundations while growing beautifully into the future and beyond.

“Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God; and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.”

1 John 4:7

