

MISSION STUDY REPORT



2017

First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia Mission Study Report. The report, prepared by a group of five elders and trustees, is the first step in our preparation to call a new pastor in 2018.

Fundamental to any pastoral search is garnering an accurate profile of the congregation. To develop a profile of First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (FPCP), our Mission Study team quickly decided we needed help. We wanted to include the opinions and thoughts of every member of the congregation, not just a few who might attend the more typically used focus groups. We also knew we lacked the expertise to develop an assessment tool ourselves that could capture information and analyze it to the depth we wanted. Thus, we contracted to use an online assessment tool which the entire congregation was invited (and exhorted) to take. This tool, developed by Russell Crabtree, a former Presbyterian pastor and founder of the consulting firm Holy Cow! Consulting, has been used by 1,300 religious institutions across the country. We also received guidance through the process and help interpreting its results from David Miron of Samaritan Counseling Center. David is schooled in the assessment methodology and trained to help congregations interpret the results. Also instructive was our reading of Crabtree's book, Owl Sight: Evidence-Based Discernment and the Promise of Organizational Intelligence for Ministry.

The Congregational Assessment Tool enabled us to gather the congregation's experience, perceptions, and aspirations for our future. In fact, our response rate was 109% of average weekly attendance, a fact of which we are very proud. The data gathered and the congregation's high participation rate give us confidence that the church profile relayed in the Congregational Assessment section of this report is an accurate depiction. In addition to the church profile, we polled the congregation on the critical skills and abilities that the next pastor should have as well as their expectations for transition activities and giving.

Along with the church profile, critical abilities, and transition information, you will find information describing our history, membership, ministries, congregation and neighborhood demographics, building and infrastructure, staffing and organization in this report. We believe that understanding who we are is the first step required toward determining where God is leading us in the future. This report reflects our church and congregation as they exist today (February 2017) and, together with our next pastor, we will work to discern God's plan for our future.

WHO WE ARE

Located in the Rittenhouse District of Center City Philadelphia, First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (FPCP) is a congregation 237 souls strong and striving to spread God's word and love and perform His work in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Our mission:

We are many voices but one people who seek to glorify God through worship, prayer, and theological inquiry, to live the love of Christ through service to others, and to provide a welcoming and nurturing presence in this urban community.

We hold as central the transforming power of God's reconciling love as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Considered by many as the "mother church" of American Presbyterianism, it was here in the early 18th century that the first steps were taken to organize an American church in the reformed tradition that had emerged from the Protestant Reformation. Among its distinctive practices were governance by "elders" ("presbyter" in the New Testament) who were elected by the congregation and a strong sense of the church as an instrument of reform of both church and society. These continue to be guiding principles of the church to this day.

You will find much information about us in this Mission Study Report. Additional (and sometimes duplicate) descriptive information about our history, ministries, program, and organization can be found on our website: <http://www.fpcphila.org/>. You can also find a number of other communications including past sermons, weekly bulletins, and past issues of our newsletter on the website. Reviewing a few of these will provide much insight into our congregation and style of worship and work.

HISTORY OF FIRST CHURCH

The First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia was organized in 1698, just 16 years after the arrival of William Penn. For its first hundred years, the church occupied a site on High (now Market) Street, and both the first American presbytery and the first synod met in the church's meetinghouse. In the 1820s the congregation moved to the south side of Washington Square where it remained until the late 1920s, when it moved to 15th and Locust Streets.

In 1743, a second Presbyterian Church was formed during the "Great Awakening" and erected a large building at Third and Arch Streets. Members of both First and Second Churches were active in the struggle for independence, including three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Dr. Benjamin Rush, Thomas McKean, and James Wilson. In 1789, the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was held there, a new church for a new nation.

After the Civil War, the Second Presbyterian Church constructed a new building at 21st and Walnut Streets. In 1949 the two congregations united to form one church, retaining the name First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, though occupying the building of the Second Presbyterian Church.

For more than 300 years men and women have been called to worship, serve, and bear witness to the Word by the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. A history of the church was published in 1998 as "The Mother

of Us All” in conjunction with the celebration of the church’s tercentenary. Written by the late Rev. Donald Kocher, copies are still available through the church office.

A list of our pastors since the mid-1950s:

- J. Ernest Somerville 1956-1986
- Alvin Duane Smith, Interim 1986-1987
- Fergus Alexander Smith 1988-1998
- C. Raymond Trout, Interim 1999-2001
- Jesse B. Garner 2001-current

Please see www.fpcphila.org/history/ for a historical timeline of the church.

CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT

In fall 2016 following the announcement that its pastor of more than 15 years planned to retire in summer 2018, our church began work on the mission study required to begin the search for a new pastor. Knowing that involving the congregation as fully as possible in the pastor search process is always a challenge and that focus groups, even well-constructed ones, seldom elicit the depth and breadth of a congregation’s needs and desires, we knew we needed help. We found it in the form of Holy Cow! Consulting, a firm specializing in helping churches and other religiously-affiliated organizations. Using the consultant’s survey tool, we were able to poll the congregation regarding its perceptions of a wide range of factors key to determining the overall health of our church. The survey instrument, the *Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT)*, includes 85 standard questions and is taken anonymously. Congregations have the option of adding up to 10 additional customized questions as well as selecting additional survey modules specifically target to different aspects of church life such as stewardship, the pastor transition process, and critical abilities for a new pastor, etc. FPCP elected to use the Critical Abilities and Transition profiles as well as adding two custom questions focused on volunteering and involvement. In total, congregants were asked to respond to 96 separate statements.

Results

FPCP has 237 members on the active role and an average Sunday attendance of 175, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services combined. We are delighted to report 191 surveys were returned for a response rate of 109% of average weekly attendance. This high rate of participation affords FPCP, its Session, and the Mission Study Team the ability to offer clearly substantiated conclusions regarding the overall health of the church, its readiness to issue a call for a new pastor, and to begin an informed discussion regarding future directions in outreach and mission.

Church Profile

The CAT gauges church “health” by measuring satisfaction with how congregants perceive the overall operations, i.e., decision making, mission, outreach, and the sense of energy/excitement present in the church, i.e., satisfaction with worship services and music. Eighty seven per cent (87%) of respondents agreed, specifically, 70% agreed/strongly agreed and 17% tended to agree, that that they “are satisfied with how things are in our church”. There was nearly as high a percentage (64%) of agreement when asked about church activities outside of worship with the statement “on the whole, participation in

church activities is very meaningful to me.” Other statements that generated high degrees of satisfaction were ones that addressed leadership and governance, whether or not the leadership shows genuine concern for people’s opinions and whether or not different approaches are considered when making decisions. Perceptions regarding the quality of worship and music, good indicators of the vibrancy and energy felt in a congregation, were remarkable: 89% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “the music at our church is outstanding in quality and appropriate in style to our congregation,” and 78% agreed/strongly agreed that “the worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.” To frame this sense of vitality from a different perspective, slightly over 80% of the respondents fell into the strongly disagree/disagree/tend to disagree pool with the statement “It seems to me that we are just going through the motions of church activity. There isn’t much excitement about it among our members.” An additional finding of the survey is that, FPCP is a *church not* experiencing any substantive internal conflicts.

Just as important as the gauging overall health and vitality of a Church is assessing how its congregants view the nature of scripture and the degree to which they experience their relationship to the declarations of their faith. When asked to respond to the statement “Scripture is the literal Word of God without error, not only in matters of faith, but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters” a notable 80% disagreed (40% strongly disagreed, 23% disagreed, and 17% tended to disagree), but 65% agreed (23% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, and 23.5% tended to agree) that “our congregation is committed to abide by the unchanging, historic faith as handed down through the centuries.” Even though the congregation is clear in its theological perspectives, it is also a congregation “willing to make adjustments in the way it goes about its ministry” Eighty-eight per cent (12.4% strongly agree, 41.2% agree, and 34.7% tend to agree) of respondents agreed with the statement “Our church changes its program from time to time to meet the changing needs of its members.” The success of FPCP’s 9 a.m. Celebration Service, which began 3 years ago and attracts many of the congregation’s young families, is testament to the church’s flexible nature. Taken in total, the responses to the CAT sections regarding theological perspectives and style reveal a congregation that exhibits knowledge of its faith and values open discourse. FPCP is “adaptable” in the sense that it has the ability to make change without distracting from its current work.

When asked to rank priorities for where to expend additional energy congregants identified the following:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
2. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
3. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society (i.e. homeless, immigrant, transient persons).
4. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
5. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.
6. Work as an advocate for social and institutional change.

The actual ranking of these priorities showed a virtual dead heat among priorities 3, 4, 5, and 6. When parsed by age groups, younger respondents placed a higher priority on advocacy for social change, but middle aged congregants sought more opportunities to form relationships. Important to note, though, is that these rankings do not suggest that focus should be shifted from current efforts, but that perhaps that these

efforts could be expanded or new ones added. As is discussed in the section Church Direction and Challenges for the Future below, how best to address these priorities with the congregation will be an on-going task. We will seek to understand why participation rates in volunteer activities in the past few years do not necessarily support a high priority ranking for expanding outreach. When asked to respond to FPCP's two custom questions which assessed levels of involvement and interest in work and ministry only 27% noted that they were very interested in being more involved or were underutilized. We will work to understand these dynamics.

Some Comparison Data with other Religious Institutions

In addition to looking at areas where energy could be added, other questions asked respondents to measure some factors about the church's ministry and how the church's work is done today. These measures reflect our church's responses relative to the other 1,300 religious organizations that have taken the CAT and whose data is included in the consultant's database. Though we do not know the makeup of this database, it is unlikely to be all or even predominantly mainline Protestant churches. Thus, consider it analogous to comparing an apple (FPCP) to a bowl of mixed fruit (other organizations in the database), which may contain a few apples, but also oranges, tangerines, and, even kiwi. We should be careful in drawing conclusions and should not consider our responses to be qualitative (good or bad, positive or negative). This is not a test! We consider this just the beginning of a conversation.

The eight items measured are ranked in order from high to low. Each measure is slotted into a category according to these definitions:

Very High:	90-100th percentile
High:	70-90th percentile
Average:	40-70th percentile
Low:	20-40th percentile
Very Low:	0-20th percentile

FPCP measurement is in parenthesis. Comments relating these measures to other information is in italics.

Worship and Music (Very High). Worship is central to the vitality and growth of a congregation, something every member shares. Seeks to measure the congregation's feelings about the quality of the worship experience. Assessment responses placed our church in the 94th percentile of our consultant's database.

Hospitality (High). Seeks to measure the degree to which the congregation is engaged in offering themselves and their resources to people who are new, different or in need.

Morale (High). Measures the positive, passionate and persuasive engagement of members in the mission of the church.

Conflict Management (High). Measures the degree to which conflict is appropriately managed and/or resolved. It reflects how well we handle conflict, not whether conflict is present or not.

Engagement in Education (High). Measures whether members understand that Christian Education is a life-long learning responsibility and whether the church provides appropriate opportunities for learning. *Interesting to note that our adult attendance in educational offerings is rather low.*

Governance (Average). Measures whether the decision-making structures and processes of the church are open to members' concerns and input.

Readiness for Ministry (Average). Measures whether the church helps members transition to lay ministry and equips them for their particular ministry. *One contrasting note: our church measured high when asked if the laity assist with leading and planning worship services.*

Spiritual Vitality (Low). Measures the degree to which members' faith is central to their lives rather than peripheral or episodic. *Of interest, when the respondents were parsed according to their frequency of attendance, the frequent attendees measured Very High. Another consideration is that other organizations included in the database may interpret the spirituality statements differently than those attending mainline churches might. We will likely explore this area further, perhaps through focus groups, to better understand the congregations' response.*

Transition Profile and Critical Abilities

The CAT Transition Profile assessment module asked congregants to respond to seven statements regarding their expected levels of involvement in the process and their beliefs about the direction of the church and its new pastor. A clear majority of respondents reported that they expected their involvement in terms of taking on additional responsibilities to be the same or more involved (83%) and expect their giving to the church to be about the same or more (96%). When asked to respond to the statement "in the future, I believe the church should continue in the same overall direction that it has taken in the recent past, 90% agreed, and to the statement "I believe the next Pastor we call should have approximately the same skills and responsibilities as our current Pastor..." 64% were in agreement, with 27% tending to agree. The results in these areas show a church that, while ready to take on the task of a pastor search process, is not looking to make large changes in its overall operations or searching for a spiritual leader much different from the one it has now.

The Critical Abilities module asked respondents to rank seven abilities on a scale from least important to most important. Not unexpectedly, "Preaching—capacity to inspire and connect people to God's word" was the leader by a large number of votes followed by Strategic leadership and Pastoral Care in 2nd and 3rd order of priority. A relatively few in the congregation recognized the administrative role that the pastor plays at FPCP. Oversight for facilities, finances, and staff is part of the pastor's role and is addressed in the Challenges for the Future section.

In summary, what the data distills to is that the next pastor of FPCP should be appreciative of a variety of theological perspective as well as be intellectually resonant with a moderately progressive perspective. The pastor should be comfortable with a church culture characterized by exploration, openness and intellectual engagement and should lead by recruiting and developing a team of leaders who will provide high quality programs. FPCP is an energetic church and while it neither desires nor needs significant change, it values the kind of thoughtful, inspiring leadership required to keep it on its course in the future.

Church Direction and Challenges for the Future

The congregational assessment does not indicate any major issues requiring immediate attention. Our congregation is satisfied and energized, and wishes to continue along its current path accompanied by a pastor with similar characteristics to our current pastor.

However, as a city church FPC is not immune to issues evident at other mainline urban churches. There is a disconnect between a congregation comprised mostly of relatively well-off, white urban professionals and the inner city poor and people of color whom we might do well to serve. Ours is a transient community, with new members often leaving for new locales to start careers or families. We currently have very few families with young children, though this is increasing. Off-setting this is a resurgence in Philadelphia of empty-nesters retiring into the city. Our congregants tend to live busy lives, and finding time both on and beyond Sunday morning is often a struggle. However, despite all this, our church has been thriving and growing and we have no stronger desire than to keep this good momentum going.

Our assessment results suggest we should explore best practices with regard to reaching new people, healing church members in need, better serving those living on the margins of society, helping leaders better discern their gifts, and family ministry.

Upon reviewing the results of the congregational assessment, the leadership of FPCP had some notable reactions. Primary among these was a sense that although the survey respondents expressed a clear desire for more outreach both within and beyond the church walls, church leaders have consistently had difficulty in recruiting people to carry out such activities.

We have seen evidence of this in many areas: young people who express a desire for social work, yet there is difficulty in recruiting for specific activities; Christian Educational programs which are perceived as excellent, but are sparsely attended; members who feel inadequately prepared to minister; Nominating Committees who often struggle to fill Boards; Session Committees who are thinly staffed. Most recently, church leadership has moved in the direction of hiring part-time staff to do the work formerly done by volunteers.

A final concern is FPCP's infrastructure. We have a beautiful, historic building whose maintenance and preservation require vast amounts of resources, in both time and money. Our current pastor sees this as taking up an inordinate amount of his time, which many in the congregation are likely blind to. Additionally, as our congregation ages, there is some trepidation about a potential cliff in our future where our older, more dedicated members are not adequately replaced by a new breed of member. Going forward, stewardship will demand more attention than in the past.

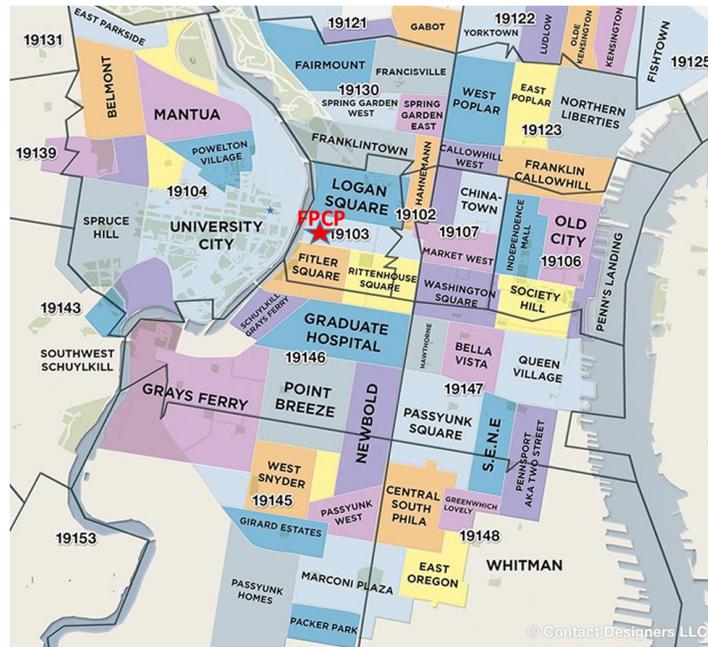
OUR NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS

First Presbyterian is located in the Rittenhouse District of Center City Philadelphia, 1 ½ blocks from Rittenhouse Square, which is an iconic, high-income neighborhood. It is also located about 10 blocks from Point Breeze, a lower income, struggling neighborhood where we have participated in mission work many years. According to the United States Census Bureau, Philadelphia's estimated population in 2015 was 1.5M (<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/4260000,42101>). The larger metropolitan area including Philadelphia suburbs is 6+ million.

A great deal of demographic information about Philadelphia can be found on the Internet. The Pew Charitable Trust published its State of the City report in 2013 (http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/philadelphia_research_initiative/philadelphiacitystatisticspdf.pdf). In addition to statistical information, it offers a cogent narrative describing the dynamics affecting: Jobs & the Economy, Public Safety, Education, Government & Housing, Transportation & the Environment, Arts & Culture, and Health & Welfare.

First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia

The map below depicts the major Center City neighborhoods by name and zip code. FPCP congregants in Center City live primarily in: 19103, 19106, 19130, 19146, and 19147.



MAP COPIED FROM PHILADELPHIA LIVING BY KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY ([HTTP://WWW.PHILALIVING.COM/PHILLY-NEIGHBORHOODS/](http://www.philaliving.com/philly-neighborhoods/))

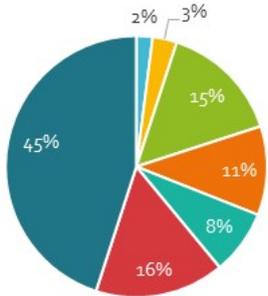
The Rittenhouse District population is dense (21,908), primarily Caucasian in race, highly educated (75% achieving a 4-year or above degree), with a large number of late 20s to early 40s adults and a small number of middle aged adults. Single adults out-number families by far. The percentage of children under 18 is small (about 5% of population lives in a family), which is often typical of Center City neighborhoods because the public school system is in disarray. Once young adults marry (or not) and have children, they often migrate to suburbs that have an adequate school system. Of those families who decide to continue residence in Center City, 71% send their children to private school. Once families move to the suburbs, their church membership usually follows. This family migration presents a challenge in growing our membership. (DATA SOURCES INCLUDE THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, YAHOO, GOOGLE, FEDEX, UPS, and www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/19103/#stats)

Philadelphia is a city of colleges and universities. To our west and across the Schuylkill River are the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. Other Center City educational institutions include Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University (medical), and University of the Arts. Many colleges are located in the Philadelphia environs including Bryn Mawr, Villanova, and Swarthmore.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE DEMOGRAPHICS

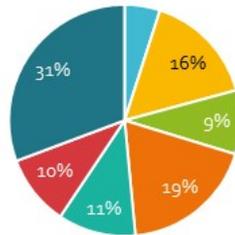
The charts below depict major demographics for our congregation. This data is taken from our congregational assessment.

Age



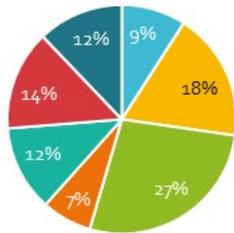
■ Below 19 ■ 19-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+

Tenure



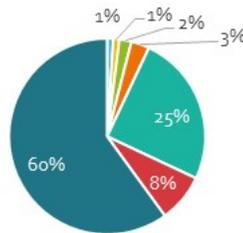
■ < 1 year ■ 1-2 years ■ 3-4 years ■ 5-10 years
 ■ 11-15 years ■ 16-20 years ■ > 20 years

Distance to Church



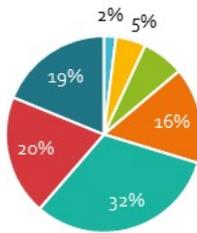
■ < 4 blocks ■ 5-8 blocks ■ 1-2 miles ■ 3-4 miles
 ■ 5-9 miles ■ 10-15 miles ■ > 15 miles

Level of Education



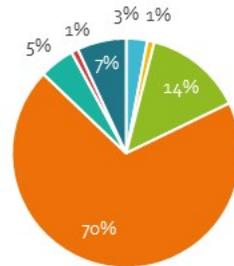
■ < High School ■ Some high school ■ High school grad
 ■ Some college ■ College grad ■ Some post grad
 ■ Graduate degree

Attendance Frequency

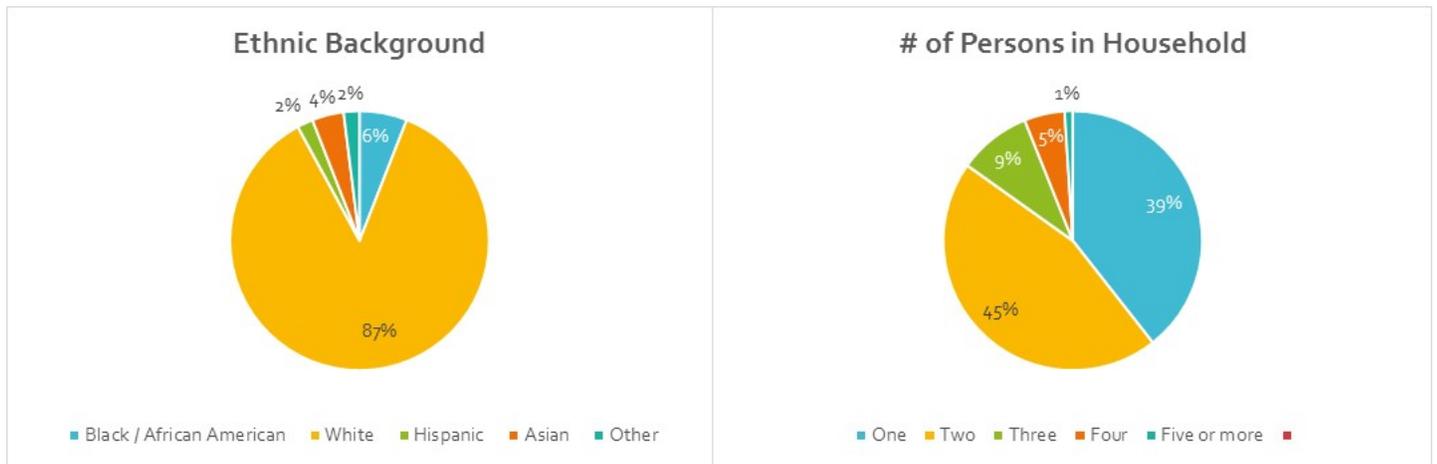


■ None ■ 1-4 times per year ■ Once per month
 ■ Twice per month ■ 3 times per month ■ All but 4 weeks
 ■ Every week

Attendance Trend (now vs 3 years ago)



■ Third as much ■ Half as much ■ Somewhat less ■ Same
 ■ Somewhat more ■ Twice as much ■ 3 times as much



Membership

Membership is, of course, similar to the congregation in attributes. The number on the church’s active member roll has increased slightly over the last four years and is shown in the table below.

Year	Membership
2016	237
2015	236
2014	228
2013	209

Historically our membership has tended to be older and often single, but with the addition of the 9:00 a.m. Celebration Service, we have experienced a small but observable influx of young families. Our most recent membership numbers, when compared with average attendance, are much closer to each other than in other congregations, suggesting our rolls are in good shape.

Attendance

Our average weekly attendance (combined for Celebration and 11:00 a.m. service) is 175, having grown from 150 in the past 3 years.

BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The physical church, located at 21st and Walnut Streets, is a blessing to the congregation. As described in the Our Neighborhood Demographics section, the neighborhood is relatively upscale and densely populated, and the building is secure, yet accessible.

Sanctuary

Its 1870-era architecture makes the sanctuary building visually distinct from surrounding buildings. Philadelphia architect Henry Augustus Sims designed the church building erected in 1869-72 for the

congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church. The style of the building is a mixture of French and English Gothic. The tower was added in 1900 by the prominent Philadelphia firm of Furness and Evans.

The sanctuary interior is buff-colored brick and sandstone and the pews are black walnut, exemplifying Sims' architectural philosophy of honesty in building materials. Stone carvings both inside and out were done by Alexander Milne Calder. Among them are representations of the



leading agricultural products of the 1870s. The chancel of the church was remodeled in 1954 following the union of First and Second Churches, and significant renovations to the buildings followed over the years since.

The decorative sanctuary interior invites worshippers to retreat into a world separate from the crush of modern life. The sanctuary has seating capacity for 500, and features many notable stained-glass windows.

Electrical support systems include a sound-amplification system, a light-dimming facility, and an audiovisual recording console able to capture excerpts from services and concerts. The sanctuary is not air-conditioned.

The sanctuary has many fine works in stained glass. Our website includes photographs and descriptions of several.

Organ

With 120 stops and over 5,000 pipes, the church's acclaimed pipe organ is spread throughout the sanctuary. The largest portion is the Gallery Organ; a smaller Chancel Organ is located in both transepts; and the Echo Organ is in a chamber in the attic, directly above the chancel. The organ is played from a 4-manual console. Besides regular worship services, the organ is used for occasional concerts and recitals.



Sanctuary Basement

Located below the sanctuary, the basement houses the church nursery and Sunday School, a choir rehearsal room, and a small meeting room for general use. The unfinished part of the basement houses heating systems and blowers to power the organ.



Parish House

The gothic parish house added in 1885 was once a separate building, but was joined to the sanctuary in the early 20th century. The pastor's office is located within and just behind the church office on the main floor. The congregation's main general-purpose room, Old Buttonwood Hall occupies most of this floor's space along with an adjoining kitchen.



The second floor houses the offices for part-time church staff, the music director, and the church treasurer. The remainder is given to two general-purpose meeting / education rooms. A self-service elevator makes this floor handicap-accessible.



Maintenance

Sustaining such a church building challenges the congregation. Maintenance is costly compared with that of a contemporary building. The building's location and proximity to other structures requires great care when working on the exterior. The interior spaces are not amenable to easy repurposing, being literally set in stone. The architectural vintage of the décor requires great care when adding new features near old ones. It is an old building and yet beloved by those who worship here.

The church employs a part-time sexton, but outsources cleaning, snow removal, and minor repair work to outside vendors. The annual maintenance spend of \$193K represents about 23% of the annual operating budget. \$62K of that amount is for debt service on the church's \$1.5M mortgage.

The church has usually had resources on hand to cover un-planned but required special maintenance.

Capital Projects

Historically the church spends approximately \$50K per year on routine capital improvements. Special capital campaigns are periodically launched to fund large projects. The most recent one (2011–2013), the “Preserving First for our Future” campaign, raised just over \$1.1M, which was pooled with proceeds from a \$1.7M mortgage to finance exterior stonework repair, remodel parts of Buttonwood Hall, and to make most of the building handicapped-accessible.

Projects for 2017 include construction of an interior columbarium, replacement of the sidewalk surrounding the building, and renovation of telephone equipment.

Future capital spending is expected to focus on completion of exterior stonework repair that was not undertaken during the Preserving First Campaign.

FINANCIAL

Over the years the church has largely been able to conduct its ministry while maintaining a solid financial footing, neither incurring significant losses nor garnering large surpluses. The prudent management and use of our \$7M endowment has been key in maintaining financial stability.

Our 2016 operating budget of \$925K is comprised as follows:

Budget Item	2016 Budget Amount (in thousands)
Clergy salaries, housing, and expenses	\$ 283
Worship and music including choir salaries	142
Congregational needs and work: evangelism, deacons operations, stewardship	41
Christian education	20
Office and information technology	101
Building operations	232
Mission and outreach	88
Other	18

Our 2016 operating expenditures were funded by budgeted income of \$948K which was derived from investments (endowment and trust income) of \$441K, offerings of \$485K, and other income of \$22K.

In 2016 the Trustee Board initiated a capital budgeting process that would consider capital needs alongside operational needs when allocating available funds. Historically about \$50K per year has been spent for capital purposes, excluding that spent on major capital campaigns.

Whereas the value of the church’s financial assets is easy to ascertain, the value of the church real estate is not. The land and building are insured for a \$10M replacement cost, but the actual value of the assets is not actually known.

A mortgage secured by the property has a \$1.5M outstanding balance. No other debt exists.

Annual congregational giving is unevenly spread across the congregation with a few congregants contributing a disproportionately large percentage of the total pledged. Total giving has grown from \$416K in 2008 to

\$485K in 2016. According to the results of our congregational assessment, the average contribution per household \$3,242 and the average % of income given is 2.66%, which is in the 66th percentile within the comparative database. Although the percentile rank is higher than many, we believe there is room for growth in stewardship.

We have established a deferred giving program in which congregants are encouraged to remember First Presbyterian Church in their wills.

MINISTRIES

Worship Services

Worship services are absolutely central to life at First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. It is the primary way by which people come to know us. We have two services each Sunday morning, one at 11:00 in the



sanctuary which is traditional, and our Celebration Service at 9:00 in Old Buttonwood Hall which is more informal.

Our 11:00 service, with a strong emphasis upon preaching and music, attracts a number of visitors each week. We consider music to be a universal language central to worship, tying together scripture and sermon. We utilize two choirs - a paid professional chancel choir and a volunteer parish choir. Services are generally led by our pastor, accompanied by our part-time clergy and/or various members of the church. Our music is very traditional; we use The

Presbyterian Hymnal published in 1990. Communion is celebrated on average 12 times per year, either seated or by intinction. Tailored services on special occasions help to reflect a culture of theological inquiry as to the uniqueness of each particular day or season. Among these are: World Communion Sunday, All Saints Day, Advent, Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve, Martin Luther King Day, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost. Copies of Sunday's bulletin and various sermons are available online. Weekly attendance runs on average at 145 people.

Our Celebration Service was begun 3 years ago, providing a more intimate, informal and participatory Sunday morning worship setting. This service appeals to persons seeking a more participatory and/or informal style of worship with weekly communion, families with young children, and people whose schedules benefit from an earlier service. Worship is led by our Pastor and our Celebration Team Leader, with additional support from other part-time clergy and members of the church who speak to the children, offer readings from the Bible and serve Communion. Weekly attendance is on average, 30 people.

To build the life of faith of individual Christians, acts of worship and discipleship beyond the gathering of the community for corporate worship are also encouraged. Two years ago we began a Spiritual Direction Group which meets every other Sunday at 9:45 in the basement of the church. This program provides additional opportunities to glorify God through worship, prayer, and theological inquiry in a more intimate relational setting. Group meetings are led by our Parish Associate and attendance runs between 15 and 20 people. On occasion, spiritual retreats and pilgrimages are offered, though not on a regular basis.

Outside of Sunday morning worship, our church also supports the in-house program, Concerts@First, which provides a variety of high quality concerts that appeal to a broad range of audience, helping introduce attendees to First Church and its programs, keeping in mind the spiritual purpose of the space and witness. In 2017 an additional goal is for a chancel choir tour at Truro England, shared via the FPCP website and promoted locally via a series of Evensong services open to the public.

Families

Families with young children at First Presbyterian Church come together for educational, social, and spiritual activities through various ministries.

Our Sunday morning Celebration service is geared toward children and families. This informal service in Old Buttonwood Hall is more intimate and provides ample space for children of all ages to move around and participate. Lectionary scripture readings are supplemented with a children's lesson, with children sitting on the floor, circled around the lesson's teacher. Children assist in collecting the offering and, during the weekly communion service, children are encouraged to kneel around the communion table to see and engage in the Lord's Supper. Often, the pastor's sermon during Celebration is rendered in as a shorter version – or a completely different version – of the sermon imparted in the regular Sunday worship service.

Monthly after the Celebration worship service is a monthly sing-along called Make a Joyful Noise, where participants practice faith through music and play. Many well-known children's Bible songs and hand instruments of various kinds encourage children to glorify God through singing and music.

Each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. elementary-aged as well as older children participate in Sunday School (see Christian Education Ministries). Additionally, for families with children who attend the regular worship service on Sundays at 11:00 a.m., a nursery provides care/babysitting for infants and toddlers who need supervision, freeing parents to give their fullest attention to adult worship in the sanctuary. Of course, children are welcome to attend the 11:00 a.m. service along with their parents, too.

Family fellowship events are scheduled throughout the year and include visits to sites and areas of interest in the Philadelphia Center City region. The First Church Families Fellowship Group on Facebook provides information about family activities.

Christian Education

Christian education programming for worshippers of all ages and covering varieties of topics provides opportunities for theological reflection and spiritual growth.

Adult Lectionary Bible Study & Education Classes

Lectionary Bible study is held every Sunday at 9:45 a.m. and is led by the current pastor, Rev. Jesse Garner. Educational sessions dealing with topical issues are held concurrently. Recent series topics included: History of the Presbyterian Churches of Ghana, South Korea and Taiwan, and book study of Dr. Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal." An annual Lenten Wednesdays program features dinner, education, and worship during Lent. Our congregation is blessed to have Will Harris, a scholar of the constitution, who leads an annual, thought-provoking series of three or four sessions on the U.S. Constitution as relates to Christianity.

Children and Youth Sunday School (see also Family Ministries)

Our Sunday school classes for children aged 5 and up are held September through May, with classes meeting at 9:45 a.m. We use standard Presbyterian curricula and for this year it is Feasting on the Word Curriculum: Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary, which can be obtained from <http://www.feastingontheWord.net/Curriculum/>. Sunday School tends to be lightly attended; we are working to develop new methods and delivery of Christian education that will be appropriate for the families in our church and the age ranges of their children.

A nursery for children under the age of 5 is provided from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. each Sunday. The nursery is staffed by hired nursery care workers and volunteers from the congregation.

Young people (usually aged 13 – 16) are offered the opportunity to participate in a communicant's class, which prepares them to make their Christian Confirmation. Youth also participate in a variety of activities beyond the classroom, including retreats and community service opportunities.

College-Aged Students and Young Adults

First Church is blessed with a large number of young adults who worship with us and serve in various ministries of the congregation. Comprised of singles, marrieds, students, professionals, and everything in between, all are welcome and will find others who are interested in exploring where faith and life intersect. This group is led by a part-time staff person.

On the first Sunday of each month after worship, the group gathers in Fellowship Hour and goes to brunch together at a local restaurant. Almost every Wednesday night (and sometimes on weekends) the young adults gather for either a study series ranging from biblical studies to issues in the life of faith and discipleship or a social gathering. Throughout the past year these social gatherings have included Quizzo, movie night, gathering at a local restaurant or beer garden, going to a park, hiking, or going on a seasonal activity like an outing to Linvilla Orchards.

More importantly, the group seeks to connect with the wider membership by participating in church-wide programs and ministries. For example, young adults participate in the Random Acts of Dining program, in which small groups of congregants of all ages gather to share a meal. Also, church members often host the young adults in their homes for a night of food and fellowship.

The past couple years the Young Adults have spear-headed a "giving tree" during Advent season. This year, with the help of the entire church congregation, 10 Young Adults in the PRIDE Program at Valley Youth House received over \$4,000 in gifts.

LGBTQ

First Presbyterian's LGBTQ community has been present, active, and included in leadership within our church for several decades. Though all who identify as LGBTQ participate in every facet of church life, they have social and other gatherings and activities as a community as well. The church sponsors a table or space at the Pride event every year where all who stop by are invited to church and given welcoming, affirming words. The group has an annual Christmas party as well as other social events each year. It also sponsors a scholarship to the Community College of Philadelphia to recognize Community College of Philadelphia students in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered community and students who strive to understand the issues facing people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered, and who demonstrate the ability to achieve academically. FPCP is a member of the Covenant Network.

Other Groups

Men's Bible Study

A weekly Bible study for men provides an intimate learning community focused on reading one book or gospel slowly and carefully, and discussing it in community. Though time is flexible, currently the group meets at 9:00 a.m. Saturday mornings at a local coffee shop.

The weekly gathering begins with a time of joint prayer for one another and for issues on the hearts of participants. Then, participants read scripture together; stopping to ask questions to seek understanding of what God wants to say through the scripture being read. Currently Rev. Drew Harrison is a member of the group and joins in to help guide readers through the text based on a mainline historical and theological understanding of the texts.

Wise Retirees

Wise Retirees is an informal gathering of retired and non-retired men—members and non-members of FPCP who gather for an hour to share ideas, discuss current events, and enjoy fellowship time with interesting company. There is no membership, just an interest and willingness to having good conversation, in a safe space, and share insights on a variety of topics. Occasionally, the group invites outside speakers to present on the topic in order to facilitate additional discussion.

Women's Groups



A Bible study specific to women attendees began recently. The group is in early days of organizing and growing attendance (currently 4 – 5 attendees).

Though not a planned annual event, often the deacons organize a Ladies Tea in the spring. This intergenerational event attracts as many as 60 women decked out in their finery.

Mission and Outreach

First Church has a long history of mission and outreach. Indeed, three organizations that contribute to the cultural and social well-being of the city of Philadelphia were begun by members of the church: Reading Buddies, MANNA (Metropolitan Area Neighborhood Nutrition Alliance), and Rearing Successful Sons.

First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia

The church provides support to organizations via direct financial contributions, volunteer efforts, and facilities use. Our 2017 missions budget for direct contributions is \$50K and budgeted funds to missions work through the PCUSA is \$34K. Causes and ministries supported include food for those who are ill, experience food insecurity, or are homeless; education and youth mentoring for inner city youth and those with developmental disabilities; and home repair. Other support includes free-of-charge use of our facilities for organizations such as Musicopia and Penn's Village. Musicopia provides music education to school-aged children. Penn's Village provides volunteer services for older or Philadelphians who need help with tasks, such as rides to doctor appointments, basic household maintenance and shopping.

First Presbyterian members provide about 1,000 hours of missional volunteer work each year. Frankly, we are struggling a bit to increase volunteerism and recently took on a seminary intern to coordinate volunteer opportunities. Our congregational assessment indicates that providing direct services to those in need is among our congregation's highest priorities for the future. We are working to understand what that means in terms of our volunteerism.

Focused missional areas for 2017 include The ARC of Philadelphia, an organization that protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; Norris Square Neighborhood Project, which promotes positive change through youth education, community leadership, green spaces, the arts and the celebration of Latino culture. We also hope to build on our relationship with Urban Mosaic, a Christian mission dedicated to building community and faith in the urban slums of Mexico City, through a fall mission trip.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Staff

At present FPCP is staffed by one full-time pastor/head of staff, one full-time church administrator, and a full-time director of music/organist. Part time positions held by Presbyterian clergy are the Celebration Team Leader who leads the 9 a.m. worship and the director of membership and congregational care. Part time, non-clergy positions are the director of communications, the sexton, financial office secretary, and the young adult leader. Prior to 2015, FPCP was additionally served by an associate pastor. When that individual left to take a pastor position at another church, FPCP made the decision to not replace the full-time associate pastor position and to divide several of its responsibilities among the celebration leader, the director of membership and congregational care positions, and the young adult leader. On an as needed basis, several parish associate clergy also assist with church programs.

Session and Session Committees

The Session is the governing council of our church and is composed of 15 ruling elders elected by the congregation of the church. The Session includes and is moderated by the Pastor, and minutes are taken by the Clerk of Session, also an elder. Together, they exercise leadership, governance, and oversight for the life of the congregation and participate in the work of the larger church locally and beyond. Elders are strongly encouraged to participate in the sharing of the sacraments as well as in reading from the Bible during Sunday morning services.

Each ruling elder is expected to serve a 3-year term of office, limited to two consecutive terms. After a year off they are eligible to be re-elected to serve. Session meetings are held monthly at the church with one

longer “Session Retreat” typically held one day during the summer. Elections are held at a Congregational Meeting in mid-late winter with new terms beginning the following spring.

In recent years we have had difficulty recruiting sufficient volunteers to staff our boards and committees. In an effort to make church volunteering less time consuming, we have begun, where possible, working in small teams or task forces to accomplish specific goals. Congregants who would not otherwise be able to commit to a long-term board assignment or committee are often able to commit to short-term tasks. An example is the Mission Study Team that prepared this report. Also, some tasks that were previously performed by volunteers are now performed by paid staff. An example is the Communications Director.

All active elders are expected to either chair and/or serve on a Committee of Session. Committee members are appointed by the Moderator and may be composed of elders, deacons, trustees, at-large members of the church and staff. Terms are one year in length with members recommitting as they are able. Standing Session Committees and their responsibilities are outlined briefly below.

Christian Education

Responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of a comprehensive program of life-long Christian nurture for all members of the congregation. This includes our nursery, Sunday School, Adult Education, week-day educational programs and discipleship training, including confirmation and new officer workshops.

Worship

Responsible for providing for the worship of the people of God, including the preaching of the Word, the regular sharing of the Sacraments, and for the music program, in keeping with the principles of the Directory for Worship. This includes all worship services, funerals and weddings, oversight and support of the music program of the church including Concerts@First, and support of spiritual exploration initiatives such as the Spiritual Direction Group and church-wide retreats.

Personnel

Responsible for the employment and training of all non-ordained staff, for policies covering all personnel standards and procedures, and for the annual review of the performance of all staff, including clergy, and the adequacy of their compensation. This includes regular monitoring of job performance, ongoing training, and acting as an advocate with PCUSA Board of Pensions on behalf of staff.

Missions

Responsible for leading the congregation in participation in the mission of the whole Church in the world. This includes a comprehensive program of mission witness both local & world-wide, maintaining relations with agencies within the Presbyterian Church (USA), maintenance of inter-faith relations with other church, faith, and community groups and recruiting of volunteers for mission agencies & programs we support.

Membership & Evangelism

Responsible for recruiting, instructing and integrating new members into the life of the congregation. This includes identifying and responding to visitors to the church, cultivation of their interest in becoming members, offering regular opportunities by which interested persons may become members, outreach to the students, staff, and faculty of local universities, and recommendations to the Session for regular review of the church membership roll.

Stewardship & Budget

Responsible for challenging the people of God with the privilege of responsible Christian stewardship of time, talents and money. This includes the annual stewardship campaign for financial support, encouragement of planned giving and bequests to the church, formation of the session's annual budget and in conjunction with the Finance Committee of the Trustees, oversight of the Financial Office and the preparation of regular reports.

Other

In addition, a Nominating Committee is elected annually by the congregation and chaired by an elder. This committee's charge is to identify and recruit talented members of our church for service on each of the Church's Boards – Session, Deaconate and Board of Trustees. This slate is then presented for election to the congregation at our annual meeting.

Session also assembles other short-term committees or task forces to perform a specific piece of work, such as this Mission Study Report.

Trustees

This 15-member board operates under delegation of authority from the Session to manage the tangible assets of the church. Legally the board is a chartered Pennsylvania Corporation. Most of its work is performed by those on its major standing committees:

- Operations - oversees the maintenance of the building
- Treasurer - runs day-to-day financial operations, accounts for income and expense, manages payroll, and maintains accessible financial records.
- Building Preservation - plans and executes larger capital projects
- Finance - manages the custodian of the \$7M endowment and liaises with trusts of which the church is the beneficiary, sets investment policy.
- Insurance - interfaces with insurance vendors to manage risk
- Information Technology - maintains computer, telephone, and printer networks
- Audit - oversees financial operations to assure adherence to best fiduciary practices

From time-to-time special purpose task forces are created which exist until their assigned project is completed. Trustees often serve with members of Session on other joint committees. The Board is headed by these officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The Board is careful to conduct its business dealings with conformity to Christian principle and to always show the face of Christ even in the secular world of commerce.

Deacons

Deacons are men and women in whom the spiritual gifts of Christian compassion, hospitality, and service have been discerned. Our 15-member ordained diaconate is committed to witnessing to the community-building love of Jesus Christ by providing refreshment after worship during Fellowship Hour and communal meals at

special times of the year, by looking after the needs of those who need attention, care and assistance, by offering intercessory prayers every Sunday after worship for specific prayer requests, and by ensuring that our worship services are graced with friendly ushers, beautiful flowers, and celebrative communion services.