



**First Presbyterian Church – Moorestown**  
**Mission Study Report**  
**Prepared 11/22/2016**

## Welcome to First Presbyterian Church, Moorestown!



Since it was officially organized in 1887, the FPC-Moorestown has committed to impacting the people of Moorestown and its surrounding area for Jesus Christ. Since that time, our location has changed several times, pastors have come and gone, and countless individuals have encountered Jesus through our congregation. Through it all, we are convinced that the Holy Spirit has brought us together for the purpose of developing disciples saved by Jesus' grace and living in His love, ready to make him known in a world still desperate for a Savior. Today, our story remains the same. As we contemplate our next chapter, we are still committed, like the faithful witness who came before, "to know Christ and make Him known". We are thankful for all we have been and hopeful for all we may be, faithful that He who began a good work at FPC-Moorestown will carry it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

In that confidence, the session of the church called a Mission Team in September of 2016 and charged it to compile a comprehensive profile of the church to aid in the calling of a new senior pastor. The team has worked diligently, examining and exploring the church's history, demographics, and many ministries in an effort to clearly comprehend who we are as a church as we take this important next step. Information for the report was culled from church and local presbytery records, a lengthy survey of the congregation, and input from church staff and leadership. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it was analyzed and distilled into this report. It is our honest effort to provide the important information necessary to aid the pastoral selection process, guide our church leadership in a time of transition, and inform our larger family of faith about our current efforts to fulfill FPC-Moorestown's call in this community.

First and foremost, the report reveals that we are still who we say we are. Begun with a commitment to Christ over 125 years ago, our Church still congregates with that same purpose. Time has helped us clarify that commitment into a strong mission statement. At FPC-Moorestown, we strive to become a community of disciples dedicated to growing in spirit by embracing our MISSION to:

- Declare God's Praise
- Develop Christ-like Disciples
- Demonstrate the Spirit's Power
- Deploy Faithful Witnesses

In general, the pursuit of this mission calls congregants at FPC-Moorestown to devote themselves to their personal relationship with God, worship corporately to offer Him praise, connect through committed fellowship, and respond to God's love by serving others. In particular, it has informed every aspect of what we do at here at FPC-Moorestown.

This Mission Study makes an effort to demonstrate the depth and breadth of that effort, as our church provides countless opportunities to engage in a dynamic faith experience beholden to our mission. The following pages contain detailed summaries of three of the most significant manifestations of this effort: **Our Ministry, Our Mission, and Our Vision for the Future**. In each, you will see the congregation's continued efforts to capture the power of the Holy Spirit, collectively live in the joy of knowing Christ, and passionately pursue his call to minister to our community and the world. The Study also includes summaries and analysis of the church's history, demographics, and finances, found in the appendix. Together, they tell an honest story of our church's effort to continue to work out our collective salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that God is at work in us in order to fulfill his good purpose in our lives and our community.

The Mission Study Team would like to thank the entire church community for their valuable input throughout this project. As a team, we were encouraged by our congregation's passionate views and strong desire to help our Church move forward. Our work confirmed our collective dedication to deepening our personal and collective walks with Jesus and our commitment to our spiritual "home". Our team is convinced of our desire to continue forward, walking in faith, confident in what we hope for, and assured about what we do not see. With our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, we are ready to run with perseverance the race God has marked out before us here in Moorestown and beyond.

So let it begin.

Respectfully submitted in Christ,

Adrienne Barr  
 Brian Catanella  
 Jay Darling  
 Lorenzo Eagles  
 Janet Wilkie

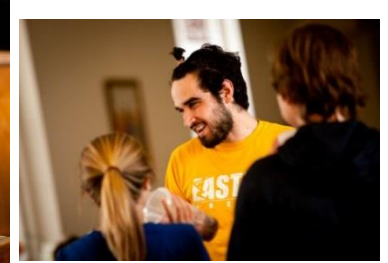




# Our Ministry

What is ministry at our church? It takes on many faces and occurs in many places. It is worship on Sunday mornings, where congregants gather to praise the Lord and learn more about His plan for our lives. It is choir practices throughout the week, where young and old make a joyful noise to the Lord. It is the meeting of the Lunch Bunch or the Presbyterian Women or the Men's Weekly Bible Study, as members of our community join together to break bread, share conversations, and explore our faith. It is all of these things and so much more. It is how we, as a congregation, deepen our walk with our Savior even as we deepen our relationships with each other. It is the fellowship of believers, gathering in Moorestown, to live our call to this community -- to declare God's praise, develop Christ-like disciples, demonstrate the Spirit's power, and deploy faithful witnesses in Moorestown and beyond. It is our spiritual home.

The following pages attempt to capture all the ways the Lord is working in us to help us know Him and be His hands and feet in the world today.



## **Ministry at FPC-Moorestown**

### **Sunday Morning Worship:**

Sunday Morning Worship at FPC-Moorestown is a focal point of the week for our congregation, representing our effort to come together as the Body of Christ and Declare God's Praise and Develop Christ-Like Disciples. With three different services, we hope that everyone will find a worship style with which they are comfortable, allowing all an opportunity to grow closer to our Living and Loving God. Our Services are:

#### **8:15 am Traditional worship (Sanctuary)**

Our 8:15 am (8:00 am during Summer months) service aims to give you time to process and respond to hearing the Sermon during worship. For that reason, we have designed the service to build up to hearing the Preached Word of God and allow us to respond in prayer, in offering and in contemplation.

This service runs for roughly an hour and afterwards we invite you to join one of our Sunday School Classes. Please come dressed however you would like to worship our God.

#### **11:00 am Traditional worship (Sanctuary)**

After our Sunday School hour, we invite you to our 11:00 am traditional service (10:00 am during Summer months) which is aimed to help you get a glimpse of the Majesty of God. From the scope of our sanctuary, to being led in worship by our choirs and our organist, we hope you will be able to see just a small fragment of how Mighty and Great our God is. He is truly awesome, let us glorify His name.



This service tends to have a more "dressed up" feel, but please dress in whatever you feel comfortable in. The service runs between 60 and 70 minutes. Join us as we glorify our Lord.

#### **11:00 am New Creation Contemporary worship (Miller Commons)**

Here at FPC we call our contemporary service New Creation because through Christ's actions you are a "new creation." The old has passed away and you are made whole in him. In an effort to reflect our wholeness in Christ, we aim for a service which engages your whole person. Through Contemporary worship songs, prayer stations, our children's table, and more; we hope to engage your whole person and your whole family in worship.



New Creation is an informal service held at 11:00 am (10:00 am during Summer months) in the Miller Commons. Feel welcome to bring your kids, to get a cup of coffee, and to dress however you like. God invites us to come as you are to Him, so please come and join us in worship.

In addition to our main worship opportunities, our Church has several additional offerings, as well:

#### Children's Worship

Children's Worship is a time set aside for children ages 5-9 to have their very own time to worship God. The children are dismissed about half way through the adult worship services and taken to their own morning worship experience, including a Bible lesson, crafts and other fun activities.



#### Our Arabic speaking friends...

4:30 pm Arabic Prayer ~ 5:00 pm Arabic Worship (Fellowship Hall)

No matter which service you attend, we hope the worship experience brings you closer to God and each other as you

Sunday mornings also offer a host of Christian education opportunities, targeted to both adults and children. These classes continue to help us Develop Christ-like Disciples and Declare God's Praise. Here are the offerings:

**Adult Sunday School** is offered on Sunday mornings beginning at 9:30 am. The classes last for one hour.

Our Sunday morning program is designed so that you may participate in a class for a few weeks and then explore another topic that interests you. It is not a yearlong commitment.

We try and have 3 classes each Sunday to offer something for everyone. Classes have included Bible studies, book studies, topical discussion groups, and even guest lecturers from local seminaries.

**Middle School and High School Sunday Schools** both meet in the Attic (Third floor Youth Space).

For the first 30 minutes, we focus on fellowship. We will play games (our attic space includes a pool table, ping pong table, and video games) to build relationships between our Adult Leaders and our Students. This time is not only fun, but creates an environment where students can know that they are not just in school, but are a part of a living and growing community.

For the second 30 minutes High School and Middle School will break up into different rooms. The High School follows the topics of our High School Youth Group. The Middle School group talks through different topical studies. Currently, they are comparing the T.V. Show "The Bible" with the actual Bible to encourage them to look for truth in the pages of scripture.

**Sunday School for children 3 years old through 6th grade** is offered Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 a.m., and runs September through May. Each class helps lay a foundation of faith for our youngest congregants through lessons, activities, arts & crafts, and the demonstration of Christ's love through a teaching staff comprised of generous and talented volunteers.

#### **CREDO Youth Church Membership**

Credo is a confirmation class designed to give students the opportunity to process through what they believe and make a public profession of faith. At the end of the year, students who profess their belief in our Savior Jesus Christ and choose that FPC-M is the church for them, will be confirmed as members of FPC Moorestown. Most students attend Credo during their 9th Grade Year. Our time together includes Sunday Morning classes working through the Apostles Creed and what joining a church means; Sunday Night Youth group where students can get to know the larger community here at FPC; and a mentor who will walk through the process with them.

As part of our Credo class, students will be asked to write a Statement of Faith.

## **Weekly Ministries**

Of course, ministry at FPC-Moorestown doesn't stop on Sunday mornings. The church is alive with activity the rest of the week, as well. Believing that Christians are never to stop learning and growing in their spiritual journey, we encourage all of our congregants to pursue an active and intentional way of becoming more Christ-like by taking advantage of the ministry opportunities that occur throughout the rest of the weekly calendar. Here is a sampling of what happens when it is not Sunday Morning.

#### **Adult Ministry**

There are many groups that meet regularly for fellowship, spiritual growth or Bible Study. We have groups for men, women, and couples; literally anyone! Many of our groups combine fellowship with devotion or study of the scripture.



**Adult ministries** include:

Men's activities, including morning and evening men's Bible study programs, and a men's retreat.

Women's activities, including Presbyterian Women, Dorcas study, Moms' group study, Barbara book group, and a women's retreat.

Specific activity groups including the Alpha studies, Knitting Circle, Lunch Bunch, Friday Nighters, and an annual couples' retreat plus Renewal weekends occasionally including speakers and video programs.



**Stephen Ministry**

Stephen Ministry is the way we do caring ministry in our church. Pastors will always be the primary caregivers, but it is not possible for pastors to meet all the needs for continuing care. God has called all of us to minister to one another. In Stephen Ministry, trained and supervised lay persons provide one-to-one Christian care to individuals facing life challenges or difficulties.

**Family Ministry**

It is our joy and honor to partner with our families in ministry as we seek to raise a generation that is passionate about Christ and wanting to grow in their faith. We want to come alongside families in every phase of life and resource them with everything they need to succeed. Families may look different from one another, but we are all a part of the family of God. The programs offered through our Family Ministry are open to anyone who is a part of God's Family.

Activities include:

- Vacation Bible School for a week every summer.
- Wednesday night family dinners weekly from October through April.
- Gingerbread House contest and Jesus' Birthday Party every December.
- Easter Egg hunt every Spring.
- Various movie nights, concerts, programs throughout the year.
- Bus trips to Sight and Sound and various other opportunities for fellowship with others outside our church.
- Rummage sale and Strawberry Festival for community outreach and money for local missions.





## Children's Ministry

The Bible tells us that we are to share with our children the magnitude and impact of God's love and purpose for our lives. It is our desire that the children of this church get to know who God is through education, fellowship, and small groups. We hope to give our youngest congregants a voice to the life-giving stories of the Bible through skits, music, crafts, role playing, games and fellowship. Our two weekly groups for children are:

**Kingdom Kids** is a Christian Fellowship group for children in grades K-3 meeting Wednesday nights (October-April) from 4:45 to 5:45 pm in Fellowship Hall.

**Crossing Zone** is a Christian fellowship group for young people grades 4-6 meeting Wednesday nights (October-April) from 6:30 to 7:30 pm in Room 9.



## Youth Ministry

FPC Youth Ministry is about opportunities to Know God, know his Word, know his People, and Grow to be More Like Him. Our Lessons are aimed at building a foundational faith where students are able to make their faith their own, and learn to not just accept but to believe.

Because we know that lessons are not enough, we focus on building a community where students can feel safe and at home. We also focus on having committed Adult Small Group Leaders who are there weekly to build relationships on which the students can depend.

### Middle School Youth Group- FLOCK

Flock is our 7-8th grade Youth Group and meets on Wednesday evenings through the school year (6:30 - 8:00).

### High School Youth Group- WAVE

Wave is our 9-12th grade fellowship night and meets on Sunday evenings through the school year (6:30 - 8:30).



Both Flock and Wave participate in various retreats and mission trips throughout the year.

## Music Ministries

One of the most significant ministries at our church is the Music Ministry. This ministry has decades of tradition upon which it is built. Since the installation of a pipe organ in 1964, the Church has fostered a diverse program of musical expression committed to the glory of God, the declaration of the Word and the edification of His people. Over the years, a vital graded choir system has grown involving 240 singers from Kindergarten children to Senior Citizens. All of the choirs provide worship music on a weekly basis as well as perform concerts. An effort is made to coordinate the selection of vocal music with the Scriptural theme of the services. Every year there is a weekend retreat for three of the youth choirs.



The Adult Choir is enhanced by the presence of a professional singer in each section. During the season, these trained section leaders provide many vocal solos and opportunity is given to volunteer soloists as well. The concert series, Special Musical Events, has been in existence since the installation of the first pipe organ and has rendered many major choral works with full orchestra and includes concerts for children and teens with orchestra, organ recitals by world class organists, chamber programs and mission concerts. In 1991 a new pipe organ was installed, a tracker organ of 29 stops built by Marcussen of Denmark, one of only three such organs in the United States. Here are our choirs:

### Primary Choir

Primary Choir meets on Wednesday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. for Grades K-1.

### Junior Choir

Junior Choir meets on Tuesday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. for Grades 2-4.

### Choristers

Choristers meet on Wednesday evenings at 5:00 p.m. for Grades 5-8.

### Chapel Choir

Chapel Choir meets on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for Grades 9-12.

### Adult Choir

The Adult Choir rehearses every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m.

### Bell Choir

If you are somewhat able to read music, the Hand Bell Choir meets every Tuesday evening at 6:00 p.m.



Interested in sampling the sounds of our Music Ministry? Click [here](#) to sample some selections from our different choirs. Or you can watch our Chapel Choir perform by clicking [here](#). Take a minute to sit back and listen to our choirs Declare God's Praise!



## **The Step-By-Step Christian Preschool**

Our preschool is a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown open to the members and friends of the church and the residents of the surrounding communities. In our school, children are with their appropriate age group in a well-rounded program aimed at teaching the “whole child” and meeting each child’s educational, spiritual, social, physical and emotional needs.

The preschool year consists of 38 consecutive calendar weeks starting mid-September and ending the week after Memorial Day. The sessions are half-day occurring either in the morning from 9:00am to 11:30am or in the afternoon from 12:30pm to 3:00 pm.

## **Our Leadership**

Integral to the ministry opportunities that abound for the congregants at FPC-Moorestown is the leadership of the church. Between both members called to service as Elders, Deacons, and Trustees and the professional staff, ministry opportunities are well led, rooted in the larger mission of church, and dedicated to God's glory. Here are the groups and individuals critical to that process.

## **The Elders**

Our elders (like those in the Bible) lead, oversee and direct the entire life and ministry of this congregation. Elders, together with pastors, constitute the Board of Session that exercises leadership, spiritual discernment, and discipline. Individually and as a whole board, they are called to strengthen and nurture the faith and life of this congregation by keeping us faithful to the Word of God. They are charged specifically with encouraging God's people in the worship and service of God, equipping and renewing them for tasks within the church and ultimately for their mission in the world.

Elders also visit, comfort and care for the people, with special attention to the poor, the sick, the lonely, and those who are oppressed. It is also the Elders' privilege to assist in leading worship and teaching the Word of God. Those actions which are expected of all Christians because of the love of God are especially incumbent upon elders due to their call to serve the church as leaders. Here are the key committees within the Session.

Worship – Oversees all Communion and usher duties, including scheduling and preparation, Baptism and wedding requests, pulpit and sanctuary supplies and suggestions to enhance worship.

Adult Ministries and Discipling Children and Youth – Oversees all fellowship groups from nursery age, K-6, 7-12, and adults, including Sunday school, Children's worship, VBS, Step-by-Step Preschool, youth groups and Bible studies.

Music – Oversees all musical activities for all ages and in all services, including traditional and New Creation.

Missions – Oversees all missions. Please see separate report on Missions.

Membership – Oversees the Inquirers' Class, updates active rolls, works with Reveal study, name tags, meeting desk, Strawberry Festival and other events.

Personnel – Exists to guide, mentor, and support the staff with administration, oversight, leadership, and development.

Evangelism – Meets to come up with and implement ideas for spreading invitations to know Jesus and our church.

Long Range Planning – See separate "Vision" report.

Stewardship – Oversees plans for pledging, Stewardship Sunday, and other opportunities to encourage giving as well as keeping track of same.

Technology – In charge of Church website, wi-fi, phone app, video and audio.



Communication – In charge of intra church communication and messaging, with specific respect to clearly conveying actions of the Session to the congregation.

## **The Deacons**

The service of our Deacons as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. The primary work of a Deacon is to minister to those who are in need: the sick, the friendless and anyone who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith.

Our Deacons lead the way as we as a church strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus for our congregation and our surrounding community. Through their local benevolence ministry, our Deacons direct financial support to ministries like MEND (Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development), The Tender and Providence House, Contact and The Christian Caring Center. Through their ministry of Community Welfare, they are the point in our outreach to the homeless through IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network), to the children of prisoners through Angel Tree and to the hungry through the Moorestown Community CROP Walk. Through their hunger ministry, they help feed families during the holidays with food baskets and during normal weeks with the food shelf they keep stocked at our church. The hunger ministry also supports the local Ministerium's Good Samaritan Ministry and Community Food Pantry. Finally, the ministries of visitation and hospitality encourage and care for members of our own congregation and beyond with church picnics, flower deliveries and special events.

### **Committees of the Deacons**

Community welfare – Lends support to those in need through events such as Blanket Sunday, Crop Walk, Prison Ministries, and others.

Hospitality – Oversees all church meals and various refreshment needs, such as Congregational luncheons, Parish Picnics, and the Strawberry Festival.

Hunger – Oversees Food drives and collections for the food pantry and Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter food baskets for those in need.

Visitation and aging – Reaches out to seniors and shut-in members and non-members in nursing facilities, hospitals and others. Provides transportation to church events and delivers flowers.

Interfaith Hospitality Network – Hosts homeless families periodically, providing shelter, meals, and support.

Local Benevolence – Supports not-for-profit organizations. See list in the annual report.

## **The Trustees**

The mission of the Board of Trustees is to take those actions that enable and support the Church in its efforts to spread the word of Jesus Christ to our congregation, community, and the wider world. To that end, the Board has a sworn fiduciary responsibility to maintain the stability

of Church administration, finances and property. In particular, the Board has oversight for the Church's budget, investment funds, and the maintenance and improvement of property and facilities. The Board works closely with the Church administrator and professional staff in this regard.

## **The Staff**

Rev. James A. Capps

### **Interim Senior Pastor**

Pastor Capps comes to us having just completed service as an Interim in Austin, TX where he led the Shepherd of the Hills Church. That pastoral call was his fourth Interim position in churches ranging in size from 450 to 3000 members.

Jim and his wife Alice currently reside in Florida near their daughter Becky (who is an ordained Presbyterian pastor herself), her husband Austin, and their granddaughter Dulaney.

Prior to Jim's service as an Interim Pastor, he served three different churches for a combined total of 33 years—most recently as the Senior Pastor of Southport Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, IN. Before that he was Senior Pastor of the Bonhomme Presbyterian Church in Chesterfield, MO and Co-Pastor at the First United Presbyterian Church, Belleville, IL.

While attending the University of Indianapolis Jim met Alice who he married in 1969. After graduating from the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, he was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister in 1972.

Dr. Richard Herman

### **Executive Pastor**

Dr. Herman grew up in the mountains of Central Pennsylvania, where he came to love the rural countryside and was introduced to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior through his family, church and ministry of Young Life during his high school years. Dick has been married to his college sweetheart, Lissa, since 1973. They are blessed with a daughter, Beth Walker, who lives with her husband Torrey and daughters, Lydia and Hannah. Dick has been pastor here at FPC Moorestown since September 2002.

#### **EDUCATION:**

- Bucknell University, 1973, Bachelor of Arts with a major in Religion.
- Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1978, Master of Divinity
- Fuller Theological Seminary, 1994, Doctor of Ministry
- Columbia Theological Seminary, 2006, Certificate in Spiritual Formation
- Oasis Ministries, 2008~2011, Training in Spiritual Direction

#### **PREVIOUS ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICE:**

- Latta Memorial Presbyterian Church, Christiana, Pa 1978~1988
- Covenant Presbyterian Church, Sharon, Pa 1988~2002, Senior Pastor

- Young Life in Pittsburgh, Pa, Field Staff, 1973~1975, • Spiritual Director, 2009~present

#### Pastor Martha Jordan

##### **Associate Pastor for Families**

Pastor Martha grew up in New York State. She was born a Yankee fan and ended up marrying a Mets fan. While working as the DCE at a church, Martha chaperoned the youth of Hudson River Presbytery on their trip to the Youth Triennium at Purdue in 1995. It was there that she met her husband, Bruce, who was also there as a chaperone. They were married one year later. Bruce and Martha have two daughters, KD and Ellie.

#### **EDUCATION:**

- Marist College in 1993 with a BA in History and a minor in Psychology and Education.
- Union-PSCE Masters of Divinity in 1998 and Masters of Arts in Christian Education in 2004

#### **PREVIOUS CHURCHES:**

- First Presbyterian Church, Connersville IN Solo Pastor 2005-2010
- Northeast Presbyterian Parish, Co-Pastor 2001-2005
- Yorkminster Presbyterian Church, Associate Pastor 1998-2001

#### Dan Wonneberger

##### **Director of Youth Ministries**

Dan went to college at Eastern University where he triple-majored in Youth Ministry, Theology, and Biblical Studies with a Language Concentration in Koine Greek. During college, he interned at Vienna Presbyterian Church in Virginia for a summer and Narberth Presbyterian church in Pennsylvania for 2 years. Dan has served here in Moorestown for the past 4 years as the Youth Director, working with middle schoolers and high schoolers and their families.

#### Holly Asciutto

##### **Director of Children's Ministries**

Holly grew up faithfully attending St. John's United Methodist Church, where she was taught by some of the finest Sunday School teachers and became a member at age 13. She served at St. John's for over 20 years in many capacities, working with the congregation and the greater South Jersey community. Her fondest memories by far include her service with the church's various children's ministries, such as her years working with the Vacation Bible School program, Sunday School, Nursery care and teaching at St. John's UMC Preschool. In 2006 Holly began her journey serving the children and families of First Presbyterian Moorestown, where she has worked for the past 10 years in children's ministry. Sharing the love of Jesus with little ones not only fills Holly with joy, but also teaches her anew of the amazing qualities and characteristics of God. She has been truly blessed by each child that has entered the doors of First Presbyterian. Holly is the proud mother of two incredible adult children, Anthony and Cassandra. Raising them has been her greatest joy.

Rev. Marsha L. Harris

**Missions Administrator**

Rev. Marsha is currently the Director of Missions. She began working in this position on March 16, 2015. Previous work history and experience includes a 34-year career in the Federal Government in human resources and information technology. She also has over 30 years of experience in various ministries at the churches to which she belonged. The ministries include: President of Mission and Outreach ministry, President of Women's Ministry, many years of teaching Bible studies and discipleship training. In May 2014, Marsha was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Second Baptist Church, Moorestown. In April 2016, Marsha was ordained by the Bethany Baptist Association of Southern New Jersey.

Marsha's education includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maryland, College Park campus, and a Master of Arts degree in Counseling from Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. Marsha worked for Safe Harbor Christian Counseling Center for 6 years as a Christian counselor. Marsha will be matriculating in the Master of Divinity program at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in the 2017 Spring Semester.

Joel Krott

**Director of Music**

Joel has been the director of music here at First Presbyterian Church in Moorestown since 1972. He is a summa cum laude graduate of the Philadelphia Musical Academy, and has studied and traveled extensively through Europe. He has studied at the Royal Conservatory of Copenhagen and in Holland with Anton Heiller from the Vienna Conservatory and Marie Claire Alain of Paris. He has also participated in the Oregon Bach Festival, led by Helmut Rilling. Since 1980, Joel has also been the artistic director and conductor of the West Jersey Chamber Music Society which presents several chamber music concerts each year at FPC, including both choral and orchestral works.

Amy Agger

**Preschool Director**

Amy has been the Preschool Director at Step-By-Step Christian Preschool for nine years. Previously, when she and her family lived in Ohio, she had been an elementary school teacher for seven and a half years. She received her Bachelor of Science in Education at Miami University and her Masters of Education at Wright State University. Her family includes husband, Andy, and two teenage boys, David and Matt. They moved to Mount Laurel in 1997 and joined First Presbyterian in 2001. Both boys went to the preschool here at First Presbyterian and that is what ultimately led the Aggers to attend and later join the church. Amy has also been a Sunday School teacher for many years, VBS and Children's worship volunteer, and served as an Elder.





# Missions

What is Missions at FPC-Moorestown? The answer is simple – the call of the Great Commission. We believe that our faith is not to be kept under a bushel or hidden under a lampstand. The more we come to know Him, the more our lives and our actions should testify to His grace and to His glory. Therefore, we believe we have responsibility in the midst of our busy lives to focus on going forth into the world and make disciples of all nations, reflecting God's love and power wherever we go. Central to that mission is service, as we embrace Jesus' own heart and express His divine love to our neighbors, whomever and wherever they may be – Moorestown, New Jersey, the United States, the World.

The following pages chronicle our efforts to not just know God but to make Him known, passing on the redemptive love of Jesus to those we encounter in our lives.



# Missions at First Presbyterian Church, Moorestown

## Our Call to Mission

***"We're doers, senders and givers" - Marsha Harris, Director of Mission Ministries  
FPC Moorestown***

Marsha Harris, our Director of Mission Ministries, will tell you as someone who grew up and went to church in the area that FPC Moorestown is exceptionally well known in the community for two things -- "music and missions". The recognition of the latter is a manifestation of our purposeful effort to fulfill the call of the Great Commission and prioritize mission at our church. Much of our current focus was developed as part of a long-term plan on missions written in 1998 and updated in 2007. Here is the Mission Statement of that effort on mission:

FPC Moorestown seeks to fulfill the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20; to make disciples at home and throughout the world. This is accomplished by engaging in faith building service and support of proclamation of the Gospel locally and around the world through outreach, interpretation, and direction and investment of resources (time, talent, financial support) of the congregation that increase the body of Christ.

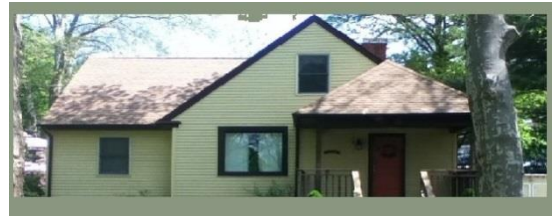
From that starting point, we have developed a clear set of objectives and goals designed to make sure our church keeps its focus on Christ's call. They center around education – efforts to facilitate understanding and knowledge of mission through involvement, education, communication, and interpretation – and participation – we want our members to be active participants and supporters of missions at FPC – Moorestown. Since their formal adoption, these objectives have helped our church make great strides in our commitment to missions. Many members have participated in mission service opportunities, the church has increased its financial commitment to missions, and we are encouraging members to pursue life-time calls to mission.

These efforts are ongoing manifestations of our strong desire is to create a church called to go out and share the joy of the gospel. The rest of this section will chronicle with greater focus how we are trying to accomplish that goal.

## Committing our Church's Resources

As a starting point, our church has decided to make our mission effort tangible, both physically and financially, by dedicating our resources to the mission call. These efforts resulted in...

- The establishment of a **Director of Missions Ministries**. This position, currently held by Marsha Harris, is intended to provide administrative oversight of the missions programs in order to maintain continuity, direction, and communication with our missions' people and programs and to connect them to our congregation.
- The maintenance of a **Mission Residence**, named "Carol's House" in honor of our retired Mission Director Carol McWilliams. This residence, located at 1 Birch Avenue in Moorestown, provides short and long term housing for visiting missionaries, missionaries on sabbatical, seminarians, and pastor or ministry staff on study leave. Currently, the residence is the home for Pastor Jim Capps through his ministry as Interim Pastor.
- Setting **Mission budget funding goals**. Starting in 1998, our church committed to intentionally grow and expand the portion of the church's operating budget dedicated to missions, hoping to dedicate 20% of said funds to missions by 2003. The chart below chronicles those efforts.



Year	% Mission Support		Year	% Mission Support
'98	13%		'07	16%
'99	14%		'08	17%
'00	15%		'09	17.5%
'01	16%		'10	18.5%
'02	20%		'11	18.5%
'03	19%		'12	18.75%
'04	17%		'13	19%
'05	17%		'14	19.25%
'06	17%		'15	19.75%
			'16	19.2%

Between 2003 and 2006, the church held a capital campaign, called Send the Light, to expand and improve the infrastructure of the church. A significant mission component was built into the campaign and totaled \$500,000 over the time period. These monies were invested in infrastructure projects with our mission partners.

All these efforts are lasting commitments to make sure that we, as a church, are remembering the challenge of the Great Commission. Whether it be in our yearly operating budget or in the maintenance of the Missions House, our church is trying to institutionalize the missional call of the gospel, making sure we will always have Jesus' outward focus to the world around us.

## Promoting Mission Awareness

With resources committed, education becomes central to the mission call at FPC-Moorestown. We recognize the call to outward mission can be challenging in this day and age, so every effort is made to remind our congregants to carry out their faith beyond our church walls. Interestingly, much of that effort takes place inside those very church walls. At FPC-M, we...

- Host interpretation **activities**, such as venues for missionary visits, presentations by special speakers, personal testimonies of mission travelers and Mission Fairs.
- Coordinate and develop special worship, music, education, and fund-raising **events** with, and among, appropriate staff members
- **Communicate** mission news through *Connections*, inserts in Sunday Bulletins, mission bulletin board, and short mission presentations during worship (Focus on Faith/Moment for Mission), and special communication vehicles when appropriate.
- Create a dedicated **Mission Exhibit area** including numerous gifts, artifacts, and photographs received from our mission partners on display for teaching and enjoyment.
- Operate a **Missionwares** store which provides third world handcrafts which has generated income for thousands of families around the world since coming to FPC Moorestown in 1991.

The goal is simple – to remind our congregants of the call beyond self and beyond the Church walls.

## Membership Mission Opportunities

**"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go visit you?' "The King will reply, '*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*'"**  
**Matthew 25: 37-40**

FPC-Moorestown recognizes the critical role actual service plays in the missional mindset of its members. Therefore, we continue to seek out opportunities to engage our congregation in active mission. Since 1998, adults and youth have participated in



mission journeys to Mexico, Africa, India, Central America and Haiti as well as destinations in the USA. Care for mission partners includes hospitality at FPC whenever possible with opportunities to participate in worship services, special events and teaching opportunities. We continue to do our small part both locally and globally to spread the gospel and support the "least of these" through our mission focus; here are some quotes from FPC Moorestown mission participants about what they witnessed in serving others:

**Following Hurricane Katrina service in Mississippi:**

- **Seminary Intern:** "The most significant thing I witnessed was the way our team members constituted Christ's body in the world. I saw how a group of people, skilled in so many different ways could serve the Lord to great ends."
- **Grandfather:** "my youngest grandson was with me and it was a special time to get to know him a little better and to see what an exceptional young man he has become. He is a hard worker and wants to experience more mission outreach."
- **Grandson:** "I didn't expect to fit in because I didn't know anyone. Everyone was so accepting; it would have been hard not to make friends! During a walk on the beach I saw a car sticking out of the sand and it really made me think about how we take things for granted. The trip made me realize that life isn't about material things."

**Vision Trip to India: Dr. Reeta Rao (SNEHA School in India)** "Your visit encourages and inspires us and gives us the reassurance of your love and support in every possible way."

**11<sup>th</sup> Grade Mission Traveler to Mexico:** "The mission experience in Mexico was awesome! I especially loved working with the kids at Vacation Bible School who were so eager to learn more about Christ. Their faith encouraged me and helped me to realize the importance of the benefits I have in America."

**Adult traveler to Mexico:** "Being part of a team where youth and adults lived in community, worked together, shared openly, and grew spiritually was inspiring and rewarding. God's plan is always bigger and better than any we could develop, and He was in control every moment of our time. One common element of the believers there, and around the world, is the joy of knowing the redeeming hope of the Gospel, there is no underestimating the power of this Gospel."

**Pastor traveler to Kenya:** "I will never forget entering an orphanage for handicapped children and feeling the pull of a small hand on my arm....and then looking to see my daughter on her knees playing with children with joy...that was my lesson for the day."

**Adult traveler to Kenya:** “The countryside where we stayed and traveled was beautiful and lush and contrasted with the absence of conveniences and services ... things that we take for granted. Yet, the people worship God with energy, passion and joy thanking Him for the blessings that are poured out over them. It’s incredible and humbling at the same time.”

**Youth traveler to West Virginia:** “The trip was God-sent for me. It started me on the best foot towards my new friendship with Christ. I learned you can be cool and Christian.”

**West Virginia Trip Leader:** “Jesus told us to serve others. On a missions trip you not only make others’ lives better, you come away from the experience much closer to God and with an attitude that others will notice – the attitude of a servant. A missions trip is one of the most powerful ways to experience true servant-hood.”

## Partnerships in Mission

With **more than 50 missionaries and ministries** receiving direct support from FPC Moorestown both domestically and globally our outreach "footprint" has been quite significant around the world. Our Mission Focus remains on 1) Verbal proclamation of the Gospel, 2) The "10/40" Window (10° N to 40° N of the equator in the Eastern Hemisphere), 3) Education/ Literacy, 4) Children at risk, and 5) HIV/AIDS.

Mission partnerships that demonstrate the mutual encouragement of service engagement include the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) in India, Hekima Place in Kenya and Haiti Outreach Ministries in Haiti. UrbanPromise Ministries in Camden has been a longstanding example of a local ministry partner that has engaged our members through the many ways it reaches children, youth and teens in the city along with their International outreach in both Honduras and Malawi amongst other locations globally.

### **UrbanPromise Ministries (Camden, NJ), UrbanPromise International (Honduras & Malawi)**

Our church began working with Founder & President Bruce Main in 1993 with a focus on helping children in high-risk urban areas with the support of a loving, Christian-based educational environment for school, after-school and summer camp offerings. At the local Camden, NJ location (which is located in one of the highest-risk crime cities of the United States and only a short car ride from our church) our congregation sponsors 5 student scholarships along with significant member involvement as volunteers, fundraisers, leadership teachers and board members.

Our church has also supported UrbanPromise International around the world. In 2010 Kourtney Burris de la Cruz was the first full time missionary sent by FPC. Kourtney served as the Director of Camp Agape with UrbanPromise Honduras for 3 years. Kourtney now serves the local UrbanPromise ministry in Camden, NJ (*see more on*

*Kourtney's story and testimonial below).* Most recently in 2016, FPC Moorestown sent a group of 16 youth and 4 adults to Honduras for a Youth Missions Trip. Also in Malawi, Africa we have supported the efforts of several schools throughout the country and most recently our Worship Leader Neal Stephens traveled nearly 300 miles on a bicycle throughout the Malawi countryside to raise money and awareness for their cause with a group of brave fundraisers.

### **Haiti Outreach Ministries (Port-au-Prince, Haiti)**

Haiti Outreach Ministries' was incorporated in 1990 after a chance meeting between two students at Cincinnati Christian University spawned a connection between Founding Director Leon Dorleans and a fellow student in the Mid-1980's. HOM ministers and serves three communities around Port-au-Prince – Cite' Soleil, Terre Noire (Blanchard) and Menelas (Repatriote). Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, a vision team was sent to gain a sense of how we could be effective in recovery efforts with Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM) in Port-Au-Prince. While the vision team was not prepared for the devastation, they returned with the hope and compelling desire to begin the long process of reconciliation and reconstruction. The partnership with HOM has developed into a vibrant relationship through annual service trips and visit exchanges. HOM has 4 ministry sites, each with a church base, a primary school, feeding program, and potable water access. The latest initiative is construction of a high school that will receive students from HOM primary schools and the local community. FPC initiated a matching gifts mission campaign in 2013 and raised \$20K to assist with initial building costs of the high school.

*"Watching one of the tradesman include and teach my son Branden how to lay block was a special treat. We were all coming together as one team, one body. We were now serving each other. The friendships that ensued were a testament to this relationship of brothers and sisters in Christ. To this day when I see a member of that Haitian team we greet each other with a smile, a handshake and a hug much like the ones we shared at the end of that week of work together. This fellowship we have with each other is more than I had ever expected but no more than what God has promised us all when we allow Him to be present in our lives."*

*Dave Hess, FPC Moorestown  
Member and HOM Board  
Member*

### **Hekima Place (Kenya)**

The earliest FPC international outreach was to Kenya, East Africa, through denomination partners the Medical Benevolence Foundation and the Outreach Foundation. Through these partners, FPC was introduced to a start-up mission in 2005 called Hekima Place (Hekima means wisdom in Swahili). Hekima Place was initiated by American missionary Kate Fletcher with the purpose of rescuing girls who were abandoned or orphaned by AIDS. The girls did not have AIDS, but because of their family crisis were sent to live with relatives, neighbors, or abandoned altogether. Kate began Hekima Place with support from her home church in Pittsburgh. It started with 6 girls in rented property near Nairobi. Kate's vision was to provide a home filled with



Christian love to feed, clothe and educate girls to give them an opportunity to reach their God-given potential. A permanent home for Hekima Place was established in 2010 which is now home to over 80 girls. “Family”

cottages, a guest cottage, dining hall/activity center, water system and a large vegetable garden are located on 10 acres of property in Kiserian, Kenya. There are several girls in University now with plans to return to Hekima Place to give back to younger girls.

### **Emmanuel Hospital Association (Delhi, India)**

EHA is comprised of 20 hospitals and 29 community-based health centers in rural North India all of which exist to transform communities through Christian caring. EHA’s primary emphasis is on the poor and marginalized. FPC support for EHA began more than 20 years ago and our partnership has helped establish their witness in an AIDS crisis treatment center, improved maternal health and, most recently, palliative care units that are being set up in multiple hospitals. Vision/service trips to India have helped our church relate to the mission of EHA in the communities they serve, while visits by Dr. Ann Thyle have put a face on a mission that conveys deep Christian compassion. The mission component of the FPC capital campaign (Send the Light) helped EHA make physical improvements to a maternity ward and create an infant nursery in one hospital and build an infant ICU at another.

## **Summary**

**Someone asked, Will the heathen who have never heard the Gospel be saved? It is more a question with me whether we — who have the Gospel and fail to give it to those who have not — can be saved.**

– Charles Spurgeon

We at FPC Moorestown know the significance of Christ’s call to be His hands and feet in the world. We understand that we are called to go forth and serve. We know we can have an impact for Jesus when we do. We also know that, even as we serve through missions, the Holy Spirit also changes us. **Kourtney Burris De La Cruz’s** life testifies to the twin impact mission has had through our church:

"My first experience with the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown was when I was in 8th grade: Mr. Krott invited my siblings and I to sing in the choir. That marked the beginning of a hugely formative and important shift in my life. Singing in the choir lead to attending youth group. Involvement in youth group and Bible study lead to going on my



very first mission trip, which coincidentally was the first time I traveled outside the country, when I was sixteen years old.

It was on that first trip to Mexico, in 2002, that my heart began to do flips for the Church outside of the US, specifically in Latin America. Like many mission trip participants, through service, I developed relationships with brothers and sisters in

Christ in a context that was entirely different from my own. What's uniquely interesting, though, is that I also developed relationships with adults in the FPCM community who went on to speak life and call out my gifts and talents, even once we came home and for years to follow. God used both the ties down in Mexico and those that were created with members of FPCM to knit a web of support around me that helped me listen to and see what His purposes for my life are: to serve Him in the domestic and international mission field.



Upon graduating college, I knew I wanted to jump right into ministry and served first in Ensenada, Mexico with the Christian and Missionary Alliance and then with UrbanPromise Honduras in Copan Ruinas, Honduras. The church enthusiastically supported me through both terms of service with mindbogglingly (for me) generous financial support, spiritual counsel, and dedicated prayer.

I later returned to UrbanPromise Honduras as staff for three and a half years, and continued to receive the same support from the church as FPCM continued to deepen their relationship with UrbanPromise across the world. FPCM has dispatched multiple teams to ministry sites where I have served, both to share in the service I was doing and to connect church members to ministry efforts supported by the church, and also sent teams to many of the UrbanPromise sites globally.

The support I have received from FPCM in first hearing, obeying, and following the call to missions on my life speaks volumes about the central focus and heartbeat of the church: to advance the Gospel both at home and abroad through relational, community-centered ministry. I am extremely grateful to be a part of this community and now am pleased to serve from within the congregation instead of miles away (for now)."

Our fervent hope and prayer at FPC-Moorestown is that mission will continue to impact our congregation, resulting in more stories like Kourtney's, where serving Christ in missions becomes a life changing vehicle for the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, can we as a church truly meet the call of the Great Commission.

# A Vision for Our Future



With Ministry and Mission at the heart of the FPC-Moorestown experience, helping us to know Jesus and make Him known, our church looks confidently towards the future. We know that the Lord has placed our church in Moorestown for a purpose. We have watched, over time, as the church has tried to live out that call. We have seen good times and bad, joy and heartache, success and failure. But through it all, our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, we know that He will continue to use us to further His kingdom here on earth. This final section examines our present and our vision for our future. It looks at the life of the church today, acknowledging the strengths that are a manifestation of God's blessing and admitting the weaknesses, the areas of challenge and contention that are an honest part of who we are. Through both, we see a picture that mirrors our past and provides hope for our future. We hold onto Paul's prayer for the Philippians, that, "he who began a good work in you will carry it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

## Our Church's Firm Foundation

Enter First Presbyterian Church, Moorestown on any typical week and you will find a church alive with activity. Monday morning, children rush into the church's Step by Step Preschool, excited about a new day of learning and growing in a school dedicated to God. Tuesday evening, while committees meet, debating and discussing key issues confronting our Church, praise music sung by the Choir and rung by the Bell Choir fills the hallways. Bright and early Wednesday morning, lively and active discussion rises with the sun as the men's weekly Bible study gathers. That night, our family dinner anchors a busy evening of youth groups and choirs, as many find respite from the busy week in the fellowship of faithful friends. Prayer groups, Dorcas Circle, Mom's Group, and Lunch Buddies all carve out time on Thursday, as smaller groups of believers develop intimate relationships rooted in faith. Friday, a wedding rehearsal fills the Sanctuary while our Friday Nighters start an evening of fun in the Commons. On Saturday, the West Jersey Orchestra fills the Sanctuary with rehearsal, followed soon by the Girl Scouts, both groups finding our space inviting and supportive to their efforts to enhance our community. And, Sunday. Sunday, the church comes alive with worship, as the congregation gathers together as one to offer praise and thanksgiving, enter into fellowship, and learn to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

For many, the busy-ness and bustle of our church is not just a calendar full of events. Rather, it is what makes our church special to them. A place where they can find friends and connect over faith. A place many think of as "home". When queried about what brought (and still brings) them to church, our congregants responded with answers that reflected the importance of the community atmosphere that is key to all that we are:

- It's "home" to me. The people in the congregation are my friends. I love the mix of ages from young to old. I do appreciate the programs for all ages.
- My favorite thing about FPCM is New Creation. I love feeling so relaxed in the service. It feels like God's living room.
- We were invited by neighbors and friends and we were initially impressed with the music program. Now FPC is like our family.
- We have made many close friends in Christ. The denomination brought me here, but the people and relationships I've made keep me here.
- I like our Church for its "vibrancy". The halls are bustling with adults and children. There is a true sense of community within our walls!

These quotes are indicative of a church that recognizes the importance of what we are together -- the fellowship of believers. And, as we break bread together, sing together, study together, and serve together, we know we are developing relationships that are

testimonies to God's goodness in our lives. The previous pages of Ministry and Mission opportunities testify to the importance of what we 'do' to the well-being of our church community.

We recognize, of course, that actions alone do not define our experience. Indeed, in the midst of the many Ministry and Mission opportunities is still a steadfast dedication to our desire to know Christ and make him known. Our MISSION -- to Declare God's Praise, Develop Christ-like Disciples, Demonstrate the Spirit's Power, and Deploy Faithful Witnesses -- is at the heart of who we are. Again, our polling of our people reflected this desire to place God and the study of His Word at the center of all that we do. Here is a sampling of congregants' responses when asked what they thought should be our focus moving forward:

- It is the people and the focus on God.
- Increased focus on Biblical truth vs worldly opinion. The sovereignty of God.
- Focus on the life in Christ and the Bible through small groups.
- Focus should always be on the Word and Jesus. That should drive our worship, Bible Studies, family programs, and youth programs.
- Grow the body of spirit-filled people - discipleship. Especially men. Need an out pouring of the Holy Spirit to wake up the church - To become passionate for Christ and His will.

The majority of the people recognize that our relationship with Jesus defines us and that we need to constantly re-focus on the core convictions that have been our firm foundation throughout our entire existence.

Therefore, our church has much to offer as we look to the future. We are a church that has sought to place Jesus Christ at the center of who we are and all that we do. As the years have gone by, we have experienced His grace, mercy, and many blessings as we have carried out His plan for our community and beyond. We are thankful for it all and hopeful as we follow Him into the future, faithful that He who began a good work at FPC-Moorestown will carry it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

### **Cognizant of the Challenges**

Of course, we know that our journey will be fraught with complications and challenges. Like many churches today, FPC-Moorestown is dealing with difficult issues that are presently and will in the future affect our ministry. We are located in an affluent community where the demands and expectations of the world challenge our commitment to Christ and His Church. Declining attendance and seemingly annual

financial challenges testify to the troubling trend of serving a community where loyalties are so easily divided. We are also grappling with identity issues, seeking to find God's will for us in the way we worship and serve Him. For example, the success of our New Creation service did not come without difficult discussions on the nature of worship and the impact the service would have on our traditional services. Fundamentally, we are trying to figure out how to be rooted in our rich history, committed to our current ministries, and dedicated to the movement of God's spirit even as we discuss and debate how to respond to a world that seems to step further from faith in Jesus with every passing moment.

Recently, acknowledgement of these challenges led to significant self-assessment as we sought to discover a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of our ministry and the faith of our congregants. Critical to the process was the decision to query the congregation through Willow Creek Association's REVEAL survey. The survey purported to give insight into the spiritual growth of our congregation through an 80 question web-based survey administered in the fall of 2012. Two hundred and thirty-two people took the survey, over 40% of our weekend attendance. The conclusion? Our church was very much like many other suburban Presbyterian churches. Demographically, we are older, whiter, and richer than other churches. Spiritually, REVEAL labelled us "complacent". Complacent churches are characterized by congregants who attend church and are involved in church programs, but have made little effort to actually grow in their faith. According to REVEAL'S Spiritual Growth Index, many of us were content just going to church but showed less interest in deepening our spiritual commitment to Christ.

The church responded to the designation with concern and a carefully considered plan. Complacent churches had congregations who were lax in their spiritual practices and infrequently put their faith in action outside of Church. But they are also ripe with potential. Because many still had positive associations with the church, the room to grow was real. The Church leadership, primarily through the efforts of pastoral staff and the Session's Long-Range Planning Committee, re-visioned the church, building on our church's current mission to promote the individual spiritual growth our church needed. Their efforts were summarized in the following vision statements:

Our **VISION** is for everyone in our church community to

- Experience the joy of knowing Christ
- Grow in a personal relationship with Him
- Explore ways of sharing that joy with others.

The efforts to promulgate this vision included clear goals and an action plan to help our congregation move beyond simply sitting on the successes of our past and the strength of our current ministry to dig more deeply into a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ. The Pastoral staff initiated a four-stage sermon series addressing our need to go deeper spiritually and Session approved seven goals designed to nurture spiritual growth. These efforts were designed to help the congregation consider the nature of their relationships with Jesus in a variety of contexts and capacities. (See Appendix E) By the fall of 2015, we were a church making progress towards experiencing the joy of knowing Jesus, growing in our personal relationships with Him, and finding ways to share that joy with others.

Of course, challenges still remained. In the midst of our efforts to move beyond the comfort of our complacency, we were forced to deal with the dilemma of our denomination. The actions of our General Assembly regarding ordination standards involving gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered persons caused division among us. Session grappled with clearly defining our own church's response to the issue and reconsidered our membership within the PC(USA). The final decision was to remain a part of the denomination and adopt an "aggressively moderate" approach to the issue. We will aggressively welcome and offer God's love to anyone who walks into our door, regardless of their sexual identity; however, we will not compel everyone to follow the decisions made by the denomination. For example, this has permitted pastors who do not want to officiate gay marriages to not do so. Session summarized our current position as follows:

A Brief Statement on Our Position

*First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, NJ seeks to follow faithfully Christ's commission to love God, one another, and our neighbors, and to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples wherever God leads us.*

*Prayerfully seeking God's guidance in all matters, neither affirming nor rejecting all that the denomination says or does, FPC Moorestown will remain in the PC (USA). Our focus is on loving each other and respecting each other's views, without anyone having to compromise their own faith convictions.*

While this action has settled the church -- we are no longer actively debating our approach to this contentious issue -- we are aware that the middle ground we have staked out comes at a price. It has caused people on both sides of the issue to leave the congregation. It also means the issue may have to be revisited. For now, we await



the movement of the Holy Spirit and trust that God will continue to teach us to love one another even when we don't agree on everything.

In the midst of the upheaval, we took our second REVEAL survey in an effort to ascertain the success of our efforts to grow and change since the first survey. While a change in the survey process reporting through Willow Creek made it difficult to compare growth between the two administrations, the second survey once again left us with a troubling label -- literally "troubled". According to REVEAL, "troubled" churches have lower than average satisfaction with church leadership and demonstrate spiritual immaturity, a reflection of a passive, even apathetic, approach to spiritual growth. The diagnosis was difficult to accept given the efforts to push forward after the first survey. However, most felt it clearly captured a church in the midst of a difficult and contentious chapter of its existence.

## **Re-Focusing on our Firm Foundation for our Future**

Since the survey, the church has made a steadfast commitment to turn from the divisiveness of the Presbytery debate and the frustration of the latest REVEAL process back towards the heart of the re-visioning effort already underway. Our pastoral staff has focused efforts on continuing to develop disciples that seek God's Kingdom, even in times of trouble and transition. Our trustees have successfully implemented a capital campaign to up-grade our infrastructure, including renovating our kitchen and improving our heating system. Many of our congregants continue to pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus through the many ministry options that still exist in our Church. Our membership continues to sing our praises to our Creator, to seek ways to deepen our relationship with Him, and to discover ways to serve others as we do.

Overall, we are a Church like many others today. We are learning to cling to the Cross in the midst of uncertain times. We want to increase our desire to know Christ more deeply so that our love for Him might abound more profoundly, allowing us to meet the challenges that will invariably come with obedience to His wisdom and love. We know that many who have attended this church in the past have pressed on to attain the same goals. We know that our church today has many vibrant ministries designed to help us achieve them as well. We are certain that the Lord has a plan for our future here in Moorestown. We anxiously await the next chapter of our story, fully convinced that the Lord will continue to use this congregation for His purpose until the coming of His Son in glory.

# More about FPC-M

**Appendix A: Our Church's History**  
**Appendix B: Our Church's Community**  
**Appendix C: International Missions Outreach**  
**Appendix D: Our Church's Finances**  
**Appendix E: REVEAL Action Plan, 2015**

## Appendix A: Our Church's History

A handful of Moorestown Presbyterians began gathering for worship in the Main Street home of Thomas S. Collings in the summer of 1886. That winter, Reverend D.C. Porter, the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Mount Holly, conducted regular Sunday services in the Grange Hall, on Main Street (near Chester Avenue). He died of typhoid fever in the spring of 1887, but momentum continued, with preaching being done largely by students from Princeton Theological Seminary, and with 35 individuals being the charter members of First Presbyterian, which called the Reverend Chalmers Martin, a missionary from Sian, as its first Pastor in April, 1889.

Dr. Martin left for a call in Port Henry, New York, in June, 1891, and the Congregation called as the second Pastor Rev. William Finney, formerly of Cream Ridge and New Egypt, both within the Monmouth Presbytery, as was Moorestown at that time. His salary was \$1000.00 a year. The membership had grown to 66.

The first service in the first Church building built solely for our Congregation was held on June 26, 1892, and Dr. Finney was formally called three days later. He served First Pres. For the next 18 years, and left with a membership of 111. Dr. Finney was replaced by Rev. Edward Haines Kistler, of Allentown, PA, who served for less than three years and left for a call from the Babcock Memorial Presbyterian Church of Baltimore. Our membership was then at 118.

Our fourth Pastor was Rev. John Snyder Carlile, who began in May, 1914, and almost hit himself with the door coming and going, as he resigned in December of that same year to become an Army Chaplain.

The Reverend J. Shackleford Dauerty was called from Columbus, NJ, on April 10, 1918, and he oversaw the growth in membership to 205 by 1938. He was recognized beyond the area as a scholar (he held four separate degrees, three in theology, including a Doctorate), and served as a contributing author to *The Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Worship in the United States of America*. He served until his retirement in 1945, at which time the membership had grown to 244.

After a vacancy of a year, First Pres called Reverend E. Crawford Williams from Christ's First Presbyterian Church of Hempstead, New York. His ten-year tenure produced significant growth and changes across the board: our membership had increased to 540 when he left. He oversaw the building and completion of our present Sanctuary. Session membership increased from six to nine and then to twelve. A Board of Deacons was established.

A quick parenthetical with respect to our present Sanctuary. Our Congregation offered to purchase the Collins Estate (our present location) and sold our prior location on Chester Avenue to the then newly-formed Lutheran Congregation in town. The "new" sanctuary itself was intentionally of Georgian design, and specifically intended to be representative of a colonial

Presbyterian place of worship. Amusingly, and evocative of Christ's birthplace, Sunday School was held in the stables of the Collins Estate while the Church was in transition.

Reverend Harold L. Myers led First Pres from 1957 to 1980 when he retired. The positions of Directors of Music and Christian Education were created under his watch, and our present Director of Music, Joel Krott, has served the Congregation since 1972. Our "high water mark" with respect to members occurred in 1973 with 1,519. Session also increased to 18 during Pastor Myer's tenure. The education building was completed in 1962.

Pastor Myers was followed by Reverend Robert Shires, who served from 1982 until his resignation in 1989. The Reverend Dewey Dobbs served as interim until 1990, when the Reverend Jack Berghorst became Senior Pastor and remained until his resignation in 1993. In 1991 a Narcussen organ, which was designed and built in Denmark solely for our Sanctuary, was installed.

Pastor Berghorst was followed by the Presbyterian legendary lion Bryant Kirkland (for decades the Senior Pastor at Fifth Avenue Church in Manhattan) as interim, until the arrival of Pastor Jonathan Miller, who served us from 1994 until his retirement in mid-2015, after which time the Reverend Jim Capps began service as our Interim Pastor. During Reverend Miller's tenure, the facilities were expanded to include the Commons.

Much of this history can be viewed in video form at [1st Presbyterian Church, Moorestown - History](#).

## **Appendix B: Our Church's Community**

First Presbyterian Church Moorestown is located in the heart of Moorestown, New Jersey. A "South Jersey" town of a little over 15 square miles, Moorestown counted over 20,000 residents and 7,400 households at the 2010 US Census. Being only 10 to 15 miles from the center of Philadelphia, many residents of Moorestown commute across the Delaware River to Philly for work or for one of the many museums or restaurants that the city has to offer. Being in New Jersey also makes First Presbyterian and Moorestown only a two-hour drive or train ride away from New York City and a three-hour drive away from Washington DC.

One of the biggest factors that draws people to Moorestown is its schools. There are three elementary schools (Baker, Roberts and South Valley), one Upper Elementary School (grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>), one middle school and one high school. Total enrollment at the high school this year is 1365 with an average class size a little shy of 350 students. The high school earned a silver medal in the National Rankings from US News and World Report this year based on how well the school prepares its students for college and on how well students perform on state-required tests.

Beyond the schools, one of the unique things about Moorestown, that is also a trend at First Presbyterian, is the fact that younger generations come back to the place where they grew up after they enter adulthood. Many families who live in Moorestown have at least one parent who grew up in Moorestown and chose to relocate back to his or her hometown. The same can be seen at First Presbyterian. Almost 10% of people polled said that "family tradition" initially brought them to First Presbyterian. On a typical Sunday morning, it is common to see three or four generations of one family attending FPC together.

### **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN GENERAL INFO**

FPC is one of the 60 churches of the West Jersey Presbytery of PC(USA). It is one of the largest churches in the Presbytery. As of December 31, 2015, our church membership was 1,269 and our average total church attendance at three different services was 414 people. Our membership rolls were down 155 members from 2014. The majority of these losses (93 members) were members who were moved to the inactive list by our Membership Committee. Many are young adult children of current FPC active members who live out of Moorestown but have not yet found another church. Another 60 or so were members who have moved or who have not attended church in some time who were deleted from the rolls.

### **COMMUNITY STATISTICS**

While FPCM draws the majority of its members from the immediate area of Moorestown or local towns such as Mount Laurel or Riverton, there are members who travel 10+ miles to get to our house of worship. The majority of these congregants are still located on the Jersey side of the river.

FPCM contracted the Percept group to complete a full Ministry Area Profile of the area surrounding our church. Based on the FirstView report that FPCM received, the following

snapshot can be drawn of the community within an approximate 10-mile radius of FPCM and the community within the walls of FPCM:

- 1,213,533 people live in this highly populated area that includes parts of the city of Philadelphia and Camden in addition to Jersey suburbs such as Moorestown, Mount Laurel and Cherry Hill.
- While the racial and ethnic diversity of the 10-mile radius is highly diverse with only 52% of the population being white, Moorestown is predominantly white (88% according to the 2000 Census). At FPC Moorestown, ninety-seven percent of members are listed as white.
- The largest age group in the 10-mile radius (ages 35-55) comprised over 27% of the population (336,998 people). In Moorestown, that same age range (ages 35-55) is the largest part of the population and comprises over 32% of the population (about 4500 people). In our membership at FPC, the numbers are broken down differently and there is no equal compare. The largest age range by far at FPC, however, is the 46-55 year-old demographic which comprises almost 30% of members (371 people).
- The average age in the full profile area is 38.6 years and is projected to increase to 39.4 by 2021. The average age in Moorestown is 41.1 years.
- The average household income in the study area is \$73,050. Ten-percent of all households make over \$150,000 per year. In Moorestown, the average household income is \$179,752. Twenty-seven percent of households in Moorestown make over \$200,000 per year.
- Over 19% of the population (239,578 people) is under the age of 15 and that number is expected to grow to almost 26% (316,474 people) by the year 2021.
- Within the 10-mile radius, the average household is at the national average of 2.6 people per household. Of the 159,132 households with children under the age of 18, over 90,000 of them (57.3%) are Married Couple family households.
- It is estimated that over 67% of the population is at least somewhat involved with a faith which is slightly above the national average. The estimate is that the remaining 32% are not involved in a faith at all. This percentage is slightly below the national average of 34.7%.



## Appendix C: Mission Outreach Table

### Intergenerational Mission Outreach 1996 – 2015

Destinations, Partners, Accomplishments (does not include several Youth Only Trips)

Ministry Destination	Date	# of participants	Ministry Partner/ Journey Sponsor	Journey Focus
Kikuyu, Kenya Africa	June 16-July 1, 1996	3	Medical Benevolence Found.	Vision Trip
Kikuyu, Kenya	June 28-July 10, 1998	14	FPC/MBF	Hospital finishing projects
Reynosa, Mexico	April 16-22, 2001	17	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
Kikuyu, Kenya	June 29-July 15, 2001	19	FPC/Outreach Foundation	Primary sch. Library/children's program
Acuna, Mexico	March 31-Apr. 7, 2002	11	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
North/South India	Jan. 30-Feb. 12, 2003	4	FPC/EHA/SNEHA/IBL	Observation/encouragement
Acuna, Mexico	April 20-27, 2003	10	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
Kikuyu, Kenya	Aug. 7 – 23, 2003	14	FPC/Outreach Foundation	Church dedication/construction
Piedras Negras, Mexico	April 11-18, 2004	19	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Home construction/children's program
Kikuyu, Kenya	Dec. 12-20, 2004	6	FPC/Outreach Foundation	Church dedication/children's program
Acuna, Mexico	Mar, 27-April 3, 2005	8	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
Reynosa, MX	June 25 – July 2, 2005	19	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
Kikuyu, Kenya	July, 2005	15	FPC/Outreach Foundation	Church construction/children's program
Malawi, Africa	July, 2005	4	UrbanPromise International	(Kenya extension-Youth Care Vision)
Gulf States/NOLA	September, 2005	13	FPC	Hurricane Katrina Response
North/South India	February 3-21, 2006	3	FPC/EHA/SNEHA/IBL	Observation/encouragement
Gulf States/MS	April 8-15, 2006	20	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Gulf States/MS	April 16-23, 2006	13	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Kikuyu, Kenya	April 17-May 1, 2006	14	Deerfield Pres/FPC/Outreach	Chapel construction/children's program
Gulf States/MS	August 6-13, 2006	13	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Acuna, MX	April 8-14, 2007	12	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program

Gulf States/NOLA	April 8-15, 2007	13	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Kikuyu, Kenya	July 12-28, 2007	11	FPC/Outreach Foundation	Church construction/children's program
Gulf States/MS	March 23-30, 2008	15	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Acuna, MX	March 23-30, 2008	16	FPC/Pres. Border Ministry	Church construction/children's program
Gulf States/ MS	August 9-16, 2008	16	FPC/PDA	Home reconstruction
Ensenada, Mexico	April 4-11, 2009	8	FPC/Christian&Miss. Alliance	Local construction/children's program
Gulf States/Galveston, TX	July 25-Aug. 9, 2009	18	FPC/PDA	Reconstruction
Kiserian, Kenya	April 1-12, 2010	11	FPC/Hekima Place	Construction/children's program
Haiti	July 31-Aug. 8, 2010	7	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Vision/reconstruction
Malwai, Africa	Sept. 24-Oct 4, 2010	8	UrbanPromise International (Multiple Ministries)	Vision/children's programs
Philadelphia, PA	Feb. 11-13, 2011	7	FPC/The Philadelphia Project	Community repair/rehab
North/Central India	March 11-24, 2011	2	FPC/EHA/SNEHA	Hospital construction project/ministry visits
Kiserian, Kenya	April 14-25, 2011	11	FPC/Hekima Place	Construction/children's program
Haiti	April 16 – 23, 2011	10	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Home construction
Haiti	January 14-20, 2012	16	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Home construction
Honduras	April 7-14, 2012	10	FPC/UrbanPromise Honduras	Construction/children's program
Haiti	January 12-19, 2013	16	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Home/playground construction
Honduras	July 13-20, 2013	6	FPC/UrbanPromise Honduras	Children's program/video documentary
Haiti	January 18-25, 2014	16	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Home construction/women's ministry
Malawi, Africa	June 2-14, 2014	4	UrbanPromise International (Multiple Ministries)	Classroom block dedication/leadership summit/children's program
Haiti	January 10-17, 2015	29	FPC/Haiti Outreach Min.	Home construction
Malawi	August 10-19, 2015	TBA	UrbanPromise International (Multiple Ministries)	Vision/Girls' orphanage dedication/ children's program

## Appendix D: Our Finances

<b>2016 Budget - FINAL</b> (1.7.16)	
First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown	
	<b>2016 Budget</b>
Revenue	
Offering-Pledged	\$ 1,350,000
Offering-Postpaid Pledges	\$ 2,000
Offering-Prepaid Pledges	\$ 40,285
Offering-Unpledged	\$290,000
Plate Offering	\$ 32,000
Anticipated Faith/Budget Help	\$ 70,000
Christmas Green Offering	\$ 42,000
Per Capita	\$ 15,000
Miscellaneous Offering	\$ 6,127
Bequest	\$ 60,000
Income-Other	\$ 475,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 2,382,412</b>
Salaries/Wages	\$ 1,099,870
Cost of Living Increase 2%	
Benefits	\$ 339,287
<b>Total Compensation</b>	<b>\$ 1,439,157</b>
Denominational	\$ 50,000
Missions Committee	\$ 320,040
Missions Pass-Thru	\$ 24,000
Mission Trips	
<b>Benevolence</b>	
Deacons	\$ 60,000
Presbyterian Women	\$ 12,600
<b>Missions/Benevolence</b>	<b>\$ 466,640</b>
Pastoral Expenses	\$ 20,000
Boards and Committees	\$ 19,550
Pastor Nominating Committee	
Adult Ministries	\$ 14,550
Children's Ministries	\$ 17,500
Youth Ministries	\$ 11,335
Nursery School	\$ 15,050
Music	\$ 22,000
Office/Administration	\$ 82,700
Property Management	\$ 188,450
<b>Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 391,135</b>
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ 2,297,412</b>
Fees Disbursed	\$ 85,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,382,412</b>

## Appendix E: REVEAL Action Plan, 2015

The below table was created by the Session's Long Range Planning Committee in an effort to quantify progress on the steps of the re-focused Vision created in 2013. The table serves as a solid summary of the church's ongoing effort to develop disciples beholden to that Vision, namely to: Experience the joy of knowing Christ; Grow in a personal relationship with Him; and Explore ways of sharing that joy with others.

Goal	Responsible Party	Status Update
<b>Goal 1: Spiritual Growth for our Newest Members</b>		
Establish and staff an Information Desk in the Commons Lobby and Narthex	Evangelism	Completed
Improve External Signage	Trustees	In Process
Entice & Encourage New Members to Engage in One Area of Ministry	Membership	
Formalize a System for Follow-up with Visitors	Membership	
<b>Goal 2: Spiritual Growth through a Christ-centered Loving Community</b>		
Rethink the Parish Program to form Various Small Groups	Deacons & College of Elders	
Provide a Daily Spiritual Morsel from FPC via Email / Website	Pastors	
Provide Opportunities for Families to Grow in their Faith	Christian Education	Completed
Provide a Name-tag for each Member	Membership	Completed
<b>Goal 3: Spiritual Growth through Worship</b>		
Explain Why We Do What We Do	Worship	Completed
Consolidate the Number of Sunday Worship Services	Worship	Completed
Re-initiate the Dedication of Offering after it is Collected	Worship	Completed
Try linking Scripture and Sermon with Sunday School Lessons	Christian Education	
<b>Goal 4: Spiritual Growth through Engagement with Scripture</b>		
Create a Biblically-based "Guided Track"	Christian Education	Completed
Establish Recurring Bible Studies	Christian Education	Completed
Train lay-leaders to Guide Discussion and Study of Scriptures	Christian Education	Completed
Encourage Scripture as a Spiritual Compass in Daily Life	Christian Education	
<b>Goal 5: Spiritual Growth through Self-directed Personal Spiritual Practices</b>		
Offer Classes on the Importance of Prayer	Christian Education	Completed
Offer Classes on Tactics for Journaling, Meditation, Silence, Fasting	Christian Education	

Invite Members to Understand the Spiritual Journey		Christian Education	<b>Completed</b>
Develop and Implement Spiritual Pathways		Christian Education	
<b>Goals 6/7: Spiritual Growth through Service and Stewardship</b>			
Develop a Spring Service Campaign to Enlist Members to Commit their Talent / Time		Stewardship	Completed
Create a Database of Volunteer Opportunities		IT	
Teach Biblically-based Stewardship throughout the Year, Including Proportional Giving		Christian Education	
Utilize Social Media for "sign-ups" for Special Groups and Targeted Activities		IT	

## **Mission Study Addendum June 2, 2017**

### **A Change in our Organizational Structure**

While still a church dedicated to fulfilling Christ's call in our community, FPCM has had to confront significant challenges over the past several years. As detailed in the Vision Statement of the Mission Study, these challenges are the reality of many churches today as they attempt to minister into the 21st century. Specifically, they have contributed to a decrease in our weekly attendance, which has subsequently strained our ability to meet our annual budget. Each year, our year-end stewardship campaign seems to grow more pointed and passionate as we strain to meet our financial obligations.

In response, the Church's leadership, spearheaded by our Interim, Reverend James Capps, initiated a review of our organizational structure in an effort to better understand its operational efficiency and cost effectiveness. Session's Personnel Committee began a lengthy review of our staffing, comparing and contrasting our current structure to churches who shared both our size and scope of ministry. The Committee concluded that, given our current size and financial position, we were an overstaffed church and recommended a significant restructuring to better prepare the Church for the future.

The full recommendations were presented to Session in February of 2017. They included the following:

- A re-organization of the Church Office, reducing administrative personnel from two full time, four day a week employees and one part time employee to one full time five day a week position and one part time 20 hour a week position.
- Restructuring the Position of Director of Missions from a full-time position to a part-time position. The position was renamed the Outreach Administrator in an effort to coalesce the many mission activities of the Church under one position.
- Eliminating the Volunteer Coordinator position.
- Dissolving the position of Associate Pastor for Families.

Ultimately, the committee had proposed a plan to return our church to a two pastor church model, deemed a necessary step to best position the Church to meet its ministry obligations in a fiscally responsible manner. After much debate and discussion, the Session approved the plan.

***The plan was presented to the Congregation through both "town hall" meetings and a "Sit-Down with Session" Sunday School class. The decision to dissolve the relationship with the associate pastor needed the further approval of both the Congregation and the Presbytery. The measure passed a congregational vote on May 21st and subsequently received the approval of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry and the Presbytery itself. This is a difficult but necessary step to set the Church on firm footing for our new pastor.***



Paul's letter to the church in Corinth in 2nd Corinthians chronicles the challenges his ministry faced during difficult times. He acknowledges his human frailty in the struggle; He is hard pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted, struck down. But, rooted in the ministry of the Spirit, his weaknesses become a strength, revealing the total sufficiency of God in the process. Like Paul, we are a church going through a transition. It has been, and continues to be, difficult. However, as we prepare for our next pastor, we do not lose heart. We, like Paul, realize that our light and momentary troubles are achieving an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes on what is not seen, fully believing that God has an eternal plan for our Church that goes beyond the tumult of this time of transition.

On Him we have set our hope.

**Mission Study Addendum #2**  
**October 30, 2018**

**Moving Forward**

In 2nd Corinthians, Paul details the great difficulties that confronted his ministry. From his human frailties to the great hardships brought by the world, Paul acknowledged pressure seemingly far from even his ability to endure. The struggles of First Presbyterian, Moorestown, cannot be considered a deadly peril like those the apostle faced, but, like Paul, we have experienced our own time of trials. Recent years have had our church coming to grips with our own complacency, dealing with difficult decisions made by our denomination, and enduring the loss of two beloved pastors through retirement and a third through a structural reorganization that also impacted our office and ministerial staff. Like Paul, many at our church were feeling hard-pressed, perplexed, hurt, and anxious. However, with our hope fully set on Jesus, we have begun to move forward, pressing forward into a better future blessed by God.

Now, we are beginning to see just what God has in store for us. Our future will involve the Reverend Stuart Spencer. After an exhaustive search, our Pastor Nominating Committee unanimously and enthusiastically recommended Reverend Spencer to our church, paving the way for his selection as the 11th Senior Pastor in our church's history. Stuart began his ministry in the spring of 2018 and was formally installed on September 30, 2018. He has already had a profound impact on our church, preaching to the power of the Gospel in a manner highly applicable to our lives, challenging us to live our faith with an authenticity that reflects God's love in our lives. He also challenged our church leadership to consider the qualities for which our church should be known, creating a clear set of fundamentals that are destined to drive the development of our faith into the future.

Pastor Spencer's arrival has been one of many positive changes. Kelly LePenske has joined Stuart as a Ministry Associate. Linda Jagiela has taken over as our new part-time Administrator of Outreach, bringing energy and purpose to her promotions of the many missions supported by the church. Martin Bass has taken over the leadership of the worship team in our Contemporary Service. Jan Martin coordinates a dynamic church office. Amy Delgado is now the Director of our Christian Preschool program. All these new faces in new places have brought their own spiritual gifting to our church. Together with the existing staff, there is a palpable positive synergy coursing through the church, as the leadership has come together to consider the ways they can work to further God's plan in our church.

Our next step is to find an outstanding Associate Pastor. In the summer of 2018, Richard “Dick” Herman, our Associate Pastor of 16 years, retired from ministry. Dick’s role in leading our adult education ministry and his deep commitment to our Reformed tradition at First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown will be missed but we are confident that the teachings and programs with which he gifted our congregation will carry on for many years, growing stronger as our members continue their individual faith journeys. Dick’s retirement means that an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee will be formed to search for candidates that will work towards calling a new pastor to work alongside Stuart Spencer.

The Spirit’s movement has not been limited to just the leadership, as God continues to call faithful people to serve Him and our community in amazing ways. For example, on the eve of Stuart’s arrival, a dedicated group of volunteers helped lead a renewal weekend called a Celebration of Faith where we, the people of the church, considered the power of God’s spirit in our collective lives. Since his arrival, the session has created a Prayer Committee that has revitalized the prayer life of this church. From prayer walks to vigils, the people of First Presbyterian are finding that God moves most powerfully when we are on our knees before Him. Finally, this past fall the church held a Consecration Service, where members were challenged to give back to God what is rightfully His. In these ways and more, God is working through the lay leaders of our church for His good purpose.

Not so long ago, our church was a church in a transition that left many of us wondering what God had in store for us. We held fast, clinging to the clear conviction that we were in God’s hands. And now, even with more change to come and challenges to face, we are beginning to see God’s blessings in our collective lives. We are a church with new leadership, a new focus on deepening our walk with God and a renewed desire to see His Spirit bring revival to our community.