

## **FPC MOORESTOWN MISSION STUDY 2021**

It has been almost five years since we completed our first Mission Study as a precursor to finding our current head pastor Stuart Spencer. Since that original writing, many things have changed at FPC Moorestown. Although God has truly blessed us with a faithful, thoughtful pastor in Stuart, we have had more changes in our staffing that have required us to put our search committees back to work. Our Associate Pastor Nominating Committee began meeting and seeking candidates shortly after Rev. Spencer arrived. This work has continued through the pandemic months at a slower pace and we have continued as the APNC - a congregation and committee that are Always Praying, Never Ceasing. Over the past year, our long-time youth director departed for a position closer to home and our Director of Congregational Ministries departed for a new beginning with her new husband. Because of these changes, we now seek to find both a new Youth Director and Associate Pastor. As we seek to follow the Holy Spirit's leading and wait on God's time and plan to find the right people to fill these positions, we have revisited who we are as a church and what God might have in store for our future.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown (FPCM) adopted the following statements in 2020 to represent the vision and mission of our Church and to identify our motivation for pursuing our vision and mission.

**Our Vision:** To be beacons of God's love and truth, growing together in faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Our Mission:** To Worship God faithfully, Connect Spiritually, Serve Christ locally and globally.

**Our "Why" Statement:** We follow the great commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind . . . [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt 22: 37, 39)

### **"WORD" PICTURE OF OUR CONGREGATION**

#### **A new church season: Corona-tide**

Beginning in March 2020 and stretching into 2021, our congregation has pivoted, Zoomed, and re-imagined what it means to be the Kingdom people during a time of pandemic. Although we closed our physical campus for an extended period of time starting on March 17, 2020, our Church never closed. We learned the benefit of constant, clear communication, creating a new website to keep our congregation well-informed in a time when we were more physically apart than ever. Our Missions work never stopped. Despite all the obstacles of 2020, the Lord used the mission committee members, the congregants of First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, and a special bequest from a member to contribute \$525,000 to ministries at home and abroad. We think the great things God accomplished through us had a lot to do with the fact that we were able to love one another even while only connecting virtually. We learned that God is good and his people are generous. We faced a monumental task in meeting our budget for the year, which we accomplished by the grace of God. So many of us gave what we could and rallied behind our Church. Some highlights of 2020 included:

- We practiced virtual home Communion while services were remote. When we reopened, new pre-filled fellowship Communion cups were used so that the Lord's Supper would remain free of everything but the Holy Spirit.
- Christmas Eve services (conducted on Christmas Eve eve due to the weather forecast) were gloriously held outdoors with firepits and candlelight. We may have begun a new tradition!
- Live-stream worship went higher-tech with additional camera angles, audio, and PowerPoint slides. Technophobes were not forgotten; we implemented live-streaming by phone to reach those without computers.
- Drive-through events became special ways to gather safely. Drive-through Pentecost food pantry parade, preschool graduation, financial pledge delivery on Consecration Sunday and Ash Wednesday imposition of ashes were all meaningful events.
- The music never stopped, as our music leaders coordinated music for worship in small ensembles and shared expertly-edited videos. God's people sang along from the safety of their homes.
- We mourned our lost loved ones with committal services in our cemetery.
- We endured the temporary loss of cherished annual events such as the Strawberry Festival, Rummage Sale, and Vacation Bible School.
- We had our first-ever electronic Congregational Meeting, conducted on Zoom using the Chat and Polling features (and a good dose of humor).

We have sought to learn and grow amid the monumental challenges of the pandemic. With every change and decision, we have first sought God in prayer. While we have held an indoor traditional service weekly since October 2020, we just this April returned to two weekly indoor services - one traditional and one contemporary. We can see the Spirit leading us more fully to the vibrancy of in-person worship and community. As wonderful as it has been to stay connected through Zoom and live-streaming during the pandemic, we know that as followers of Christ Jesus, we are meant to commune and worship together. We are excited to see where the Spirit leads us and our congregants as we safely gather together more regularly.

### **How we encounter Christ**

FPCM has remained vibrant and active in our virtual environment during the pandemic. Our youth group, small groups, book studies and Bible studies continue to meet on a regular basis, providing a great opportunity for connection, fellowship and growth as individuals and as a community. We are reconstructing our "new normal," as we move beyond the pandemic restrictions. We do not yet know what this "new normal" will look like in full, but we are steadily and cautiously moving forward and are committed to fostering relevant opportunities to encounter Christ in all parts of our Church community.

Prior to the pandemic, you could enter FPCM in any typical week and find our Church alive with activity. Monday morning, children rush into our Church's Step by Step Preschool, excited about a new day of learning and growing in a school dedicated to God. Tuesday evening, while Session debates and discusses key issues confronting our Church and the Missions committee considers future outreach with a mission partner, praise music sung by the adult 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 full evening of youth groups and choirs, as many find respite from the busy week in the fellowship of faithful friends. Prayer groups, Dorcas Circle, Moms' 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. Saturdays also include Prayer walks in the Church's surrounding neighborhoods as we seek to bring others in our communities to the love of Christ. Sunday culminates the week, when our Church comes alive with worship and the congregation gathers together as one to offer praise and thanksgiving, enter into fellowship, and learn to grow in relationship with Jesus.

For many, the stream of activities 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 brings them to our 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 the Contemporary Worship service. 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 FPCM 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!
- Jesus said that when I do it for the least of these, I am doing it for Him. I love being part of a Mission-oriented congregation. Alone I can do little, but as part of a larger group, I can make a difference.

These quotations are indicative of a church that recognizes the importance of what we are together -- the fellowship of believers. 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.

### **Our Community**

Our Church is located in the heart of Moorestown, New Jersey. Over three centuries old, Moorestown has an unusually rich history. Founded by the Society of Friends in the late 1600s, Moorestown has matured into a suburban, residential community, proud that it has retained its classic charm and pleasant country atmosphere. A "South Jersey" town of a little over 15 square miles, Moorestown counted over 20,000 residents and 7,400 households in 2019. Many residents commute the 12 miles across the Delaware River to Philadelphia for work or for one of the many museums or restaurants that the city has to offer. Moorestown's location also provides easy access to New York City and Washington DC. One of the biggest factors that draws people to Moorestown is its schools. There are three elementary schools, one Upper Elementary School (grades 4th through 6th), one middle school (7th and 8th grades) and one high school. Total enrollment at the high school averages just under 1300 students with an grade-level size a little shy of 350 students. The high school is highly regarded in the state of New Jersey for performance and quality of education. Beyond the schools, one of the unique things about Moorestown is the tendency for younger generations to return as adults to the place where they grew up. The same connection and tendency to return to one's roots can be seen at our Church. Almost 10% of congregants polled said that "family tradition" brought them to FPCM. On a typical Sunday morning, it is common to see three or four generations of one family attending FPCM together.

FPCM is the largest of the 60 churches of The Presbytery for Southern New Jersey, PC(USA) (formerly West Jersey Presbytery). As of December 31, 2020, our church membership was 1,009. 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 New Jersey side of the Delaware 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 snapshots 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 FPCM, 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

section and comprises over 32% of the population (about 4500 people). In our membership at FPCM, the numbers are broken down by different age ranges that are not directly comparable. The largest age range by far at FPCM, however, is the 46-55 year-old demographic which comprises almost 30% of members (371 people).

- 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.
- 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 in our area is at least somewhat involved with a faith (slightly above the national average), with the remaining under 33% estimated not to be involved in a faith at all (slightly below the national average of 34.7%).

### **Our Gifts; Our Culture**

When people gather, they create culture. The culture is the atmosphere or the “feel” of a community or group, and every group has one. Culture is pervasive and affects everyone and everything we do. A unique culture can emerge among any group, including within a congregation. The church has been committed to creating a Christ-like atmosphere and culture since Pentecost. To develop a healthy church culture at FPCM, we need to follow God’s word and Christ’s example of how to live and work together as we pay close attention to whether our actions match our words. To aid us in creating at FPCM “an atmosphere thick with love,” our Church has compiled 25 Ways, drawn from God’s word. Since January 2019, we have thoughtfully studied the Ways each week as we strive to live them together. Every week, starting on Sunday morning in worship, we lift up the Way of the Week. Throughout the week, we talk about this Way as we begin meetings, Bible studies, classes, rehearsals, activities and even in our homes. A more detailed explanation of our Ways can be found on our [website](#).

### **MINISTRY AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

#### **How Christ calls us to 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 a Mission trip - internationally to Honduras to rebuild homes or down the road to Philadelphia, PA or Camden, NJ to combat food insecurity - to be the hands and feet of our Savior Christ Jesus. 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 and beyond. It is our spiritual home.

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

Sunday Morning Worship at FPCM 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 through the faithful preaching of God's Word and the joyous celebration of the sacraments. With two different worship styles (Traditional and Contemporary), we hope that everyone will find a worship with which they are comfortable, allowing all an opportunity to grow closer to our Living and Loving God. Sunday mornings also offer a host of Christian education opportunities for children and adults alike.

### **Weekly Ministries**

Of course, ministry at FPCM does not stop on Sunday mornings. Our 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 Spiritual Formation**

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 and study of the scripture.

#### **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 wants 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. From Wednesday night family dinners to Vacation Bible School and special Christmas and Easter events, the programs offered through our Family Ministry are open to anyone!

#### **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 and our community 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.

#### **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.

### **Music Ministry**

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. 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. Special Musical Events, FPCM's concert series, 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. In 2019, our Music Director led a group of 50 young people and their families on a choir tour in Denmark. In addition to our traditional vocal choirs, FPC also has a bell choir that plays periodically in our traditional service and a praise band that performs faithfully at our Contemporary Service each week.

### **Preschool**

Step by Step Christian Preschool is a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown open to the members of the church and the residents of the surrounding communities. In our school, children learn and play 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.

### **Stephen Ministry**

Our Stephen Ministry provides Christ-centered care to members of our congregation and local community who may benefit from loving support, encouragement, prayer and a listening ear. As gifted and trained lay caregivers, Stephen Ministers are equipped to deal with a variety of issues relating to: grief, loneliness, illness, family, marriage, unemployment, spiritual crisis, aging and many more of life's struggles.

### **Our Leadership**

Our leadership teams are integral to the ministry opportunities that abound for the congregants at FPCM. Between our members called to service as Elders, Deacons, and Trustees and our professional staff, our leadership helps ensure that ministry opportunities are well led, rooted in the larger mission of our Church, and dedicated to God's glory.

Our **Elders** lead, oversee and direct the entire life and ministry of this congregation with particular emphasis on prayer and the ministry of the Word. 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 our Church and ultimately for their mission in the world. In the early months of the pandemic, session members worked closely with our staff to discern the best ways for the church to function. 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 our Church as leaders.

Our **Deacons** lead the way as our Church strives 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), Feeding 5,000, Seeds of Hope and The Christian Caring Center. Through their hunger ministry, they help feed families during the holidays with food baskets. They faithfully keep our Blessing Box stocked with food items. The hunger ministry also supports the local Ministerium's Good Samaritan Ministry and Community Food Pantry, a larger pantry located at the Lutheran Church in Moorestown. 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.

Our **Trustees** 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 Trustees provide fiduciary oversight and guidance for our Church's staff and Session to help promote the long-term stability and best interests of our Church, including financial guidance to promote the stability of our Church's budget and finances, investment management of restricted donations and other investments of our Church, and guidance for the care and maintenance of the facilities and properties owned and controlled by our Church. Trustees fulfill this mission through active committees of the Board, working collaboratively with other leadership groups including Session and its Missions, Personnel and Stewardship committees, and by offering guidance to the Administrator and CFO of our Church. In 2020-2021 the Board of Trustees has been called upon in all of these areas to help manage our Church's response to the pandemic, in part by taking and approving actions to ensure that our financial situation remained stable, to prepare our facility for the safe resumption of limited indoor services and activities, and to implement major structural upgrades to the building and grounds of our Church and its properties.

### **How we use our gifts**

Our Church is blessed with both financial resources and a dedication to service among the people of our congregation, blessings which we know ultimately come from God. Although the pandemic has challenged all churches and businesses in different ways, in many ways our Church has grown stronger over this period through the dedication and generosity of our faithful congregation. In addition to achieving our annual budgetary goals without reducing our



staff or our outward focus and commitments, we have preserved and will still benefit from our September 12th Fund, a fund to which our congregation donates annually that commemorates the formation of our Church. These donations are subsequently invested in the long-term care and support of our Church and its missions. Only a small portion of the September 12th Fund and similar restricted donation funds are used each year for annual support of the Church's budget consistent with their donated purpose, thereby ensuring a growing source of support for our Church and its missions over the long term. We are fortunate and grateful to be able to manage through the pandemic thus far consistent with this long-term philosophy.

As we consider how to use our collective gifts, we turn to the call of the Great Commission, to make disciples at home and throughout the world. 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 making 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 God's divine love to our neighbors, whomever and wherever they may be – Moorestown, New Jersey, the United States, the world.

Our Church has made our mission effort tangible by dedicating both physical and financial resources to the mission call. Some of these efforts are as follows:

- Establishing a full-time Director of Outreach. This position is intended to provide administrative oversight of both our international and local outreach programs in order to maintain continuity, direction, and communication with our missions' partners and organizations and to connect them to our congregation.
- Setting Mission budget funding goals. On average, at least 16.6% of our overall budget is allocated for Missions each year (which is only one of the ways we expend funds for the benefit of others). We maintained this level of Missions allocation in 2020 despite the effects of the pandemic and expect, God willing, to continue to do so in 2021 and beyond.
- Maintaining 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.

With resources committed, education and outreach become central to the mission call at FPCM. 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. At FPCM, we:

- Organize the 'Church Has Left the Building' event each fall. For one Sunday in October, we set aside our normal Sunday church service schedule so that everyone can serve. Many different outreach activities are available for all ages - from making sandwiches for local soup kitchens, writing letters to people in military service, to

assembling food bags with Rise Against Hunger. In 2020, 'Church Has Left the Building' took on a different look due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. It was truly a "left the building" event with no activities occurring on campus. We did not hold our major event with Rise Against Hunger but we were able to support a large number of our mission organizations with a wide variety of projects!

- Host a monthly Missions Book Club. The club was started during the pandemic on Zoom - another blessing that has come out of a difficult time. The book club has provided many people with a way to come together during the pandemic and to spend time sharing uplifting and thoughtful discussions around missions.
- Host interpretation activities, such as venues for missionary visits, presentations by special speakers, personal testimonies of mission travelers and Mission Fairs.
- Host African Sunday, an event in which Fellows from Urban Promise visit with us, participate in Worship and share their faith stories. Coordinate and develop special worship, music, education, and fund-raising events with, and among, appropriate staff members
- Communicate mission news through [the Mission Connections Newsletter](#), inserts in Sunday Bulletins, a 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 for purchase which has generated income for thousands of families around the world since coming to FPCM in 1991.
- Operate an Alternative Gift Market during the Christmas season.
- Seek out opportunities for longer mission journeys for our congregation. Since 1998, adults and youth have participated in mission journeys to Mexico, Africa, India, Central America, Honduras and Haiti as well as destinations in the USA.

With more than 50 domestic and global missionaries and ministries receiving direct support from FPCM, our outreach "footprint" has been quite significant around the world. A few of our Mission partnerships that demonstrate the breadth of this "footprint" include [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.

### **Expectations for the future**

With ministry and mission at the heart of the FPCM experience, our Church looks confidently towards the future. We know that the Lord has placed our Church in Moorestown for a purpose. Our address is no accident. We have watched, over time, as our Church has tried to live out the call to know Jesus and make him known. We have seen good times and bad, joy and heartache, success and failure. This past year in particular, with both a pandemic and staffing changes to navigate, we have seen many ups and downs. 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.

Cognizant of the challenges, of course, we know that our journey will be fraught with complications. Like many churches, FPCM is dealing with difficult issues today that will also affect our future 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 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 contemporary 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.

Through it all, we continue to focus on Christ Jesus and the plan that we know is set in place for our congregation and community. 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 Ministry and Mission opportunities previously highlighted 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. 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.
- How do we faithfully and graciously uphold God's truth in divided and divisive moments in our society?
- Focus on the life in Christ and the Bible through small groups so that we'll be a church *of* 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 (disciples of every age who make disciples) with special attention on youth and 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 our congregants 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. We faithfully believe that Paul's prayer for the Philippians also rings true for FPC Moorestown, that "he who began a good work in you will carry it through to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."