



# **First Presbyterian Church of Allentown Town Hall Meeting**

**April 16, 2023**

# Agenda

1. Opening Prayer & Comments – Rev. Carter Lester
2. Overall Status of Lombard Recommendations – Carter (for vacationing Bruce Gunn)
3. Detailed Update on *Lombard Recommendation #1 – Mission and Mission Study* – Team
  - a. Mission & Mission Study Overview – Debbie Palmer
  - b. Mission Study Content – Kathy Schmied
  - c. Sequence of Mission Study– Rich Ferrera
  - d. What We Need from the Congregation & Nomination of Members for Mission Study Team – Debbie and Carter
  - e. Q&A



# Opening Prayer & Comments

# Status of Lombard Recommendations

1. Mission/Identity/Theology – **Detailed Update Today**
2. Membership/Belonging/Community
3. Worship/Education/Spiritual Formation
4. Children/Youth/Families
5. Transition/Leadership/Communication
6. Finances/Stewardship/Campus/Physical Plant
7. History/Reputation
8. Conflict/Change/Disruption/Discomfort/COVID
9. Diversity/Friendliness/Welcoming
10. Staffing/Volunteers

## **Lombard Recommendation #1: *Mission/Identity/Theology***

- a. We propose that the Session develop a plan to communicate and implement a Mission Study to educate the congregation about PC(USA) theology, PC(USA) standards for communications and civil discourse. The study will need regular opportunities for town hall gatherings and listening sessions.
- b. We propose that Session address the need for an up-to-date mission or identity statement. A statement which defines: who we are; what we are called to do; what we do; why we are doing it; and what makes us different from other churches. The mission statement should be based on the Bible, clear, concise, candid, and honest. It needs to have congregational alignment and needs to value the diversity within the congregation.

# Mission & Mission Study Overview

**During Lombard meetings, participants raised questions, directly or implicitly, related to identity including:**

- Who are we?
- What is our DNA?
- How does scripture and theology inform who we are?
- Are we more influenced by society than scripture or theology?
- How is our identity shaped by the PC(USA) denomination to which we belong?
- How do we live out the gospel together?
- What makes us different than other churches?
- What are our church's unique gifts that God can be using to bless others?

**As Presbyterians, the process for coming to know ourselves better is a  
Mission Study.**

# Purpose of a Mission Study

## **A Mission Study will:**

- guide the life of the congregation.
- inform staffing decisions.
- facilitate search for a new head of staff.
- steer the work of the new head of staff and Session.

## **Carter suggested exploring the merit of engaging a consultant**

- Formed ad hoc group: Rich Ferrera, Kathy Schmied, myself and Carter
- How might a consultant help?
  - Provide expertise.
  - Help create an impartial process.
  - Help us integrate the work we've already done with Lombard into the Mission Study.
  - Involve parents, younger members, and other underrepresented persons who were not able to attend the Lombard weekend sessions.
  - Possibly help with design and writing of final product.



## **How is a consultant for the Mission Study different than Lombard?**

- They'll ask different questions.
- The consultant will be involved differently.
- The Mission Study process will be more time-friendly.
- The cost of this consultant will be a fraction of the cost of the Lombard consultants.

## What we have done so far

- Prepared written Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Identified and offered the RFP to 8 consultants
- Received 3 replies immediately saying “no”
- Received 2 proposals

The Session will consider our recommendation and make the final decision regarding hiring a consultant.

If Session decides not to hire a consultant, the process will have helped us clarify what's important in creating an identity statement and Mission Study.

**The Mission Study is very important to the life of our congregation.**

- It must be done well.
- The result needs to be practical.

# Mission Study Content

## Mission Study Process will create the following content

1. Our Vision
2. Our Future Vision
3. Mission Statement
4. Core Values of Our Congregation
5. The Strengths of Our Congregation
6. Accomplishments and Issues Identified Through the Mission Process
7. History of the Church
8. Property
9. Organization of the Church
10. Community Information and Demographics
11. Membership and Worship Statistics
12. Missional Outreach
13. Spiritual Formation and Discipleship
14. Budget and Financial Resources
15. Job Description for New Lead Pastor: developed with collaboration of Personnel Team of Session

## Our Identity

- Who we are
- What we are called to do
- What we do
- Why we do it
- What differentiates us from other congregations

## Six Mission Study Aspects

- Current health and sustainability of FPCA. Its relationship to the macro-culture. How that informs our future and direction
- Overview of our congregation's past and present
- The values, needs and aspirations of our, and the greater, community
- FPCA's leadership and management
- How we imagine our future
- How we respond to change

**Resulting in a Mission/Identity Statement and the necessary information to complete the Mission Study.**

# Mission Study Sequence

- Identify the right consultant and submit the proposal to Session for consideration.
- Define a detailed process.
- Implement the process.
- Complete the Mission Study with job description for new lead pastor.
- Submit Mission Study for approval by Presbytery.
- Provide the completed Mission Statement to the new PNC for lead pastor.



# What We Need From You

1. Prayer
2. Patience
3. Participation

Nomination of Members for Mission Study Team

# Questions & Answers