

**Interim Report  
First Presbyterian Church of Allentown  
Allentown, Pennsylvania  
June 11, 2022**

**Background**

In December of 2021, the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) was contacted by the Presbytery of the Lehigh Valley to consider engaging First Presbyterian Church of Allentown (FPCA) of Allentown, Pennsylvania. We were asked to help mitigate some lingering hurts from the past that seem to have dampened the vitality of what was once considered a large, influential, and vibrant congregation in the Lehigh Valley. After further discussion with the leadership from the Presbytery and the leadership of FPCA, LMPC agreed to submit a proposal to, “heal past hurts, address current differences, and develop a shared vision to facilitate a flourishing future with the First Presbyterian Church of Allentown (FPCA).” A proposal supporting those three goals was submitted (see Appendix A) and accepted. Those three goals have guided LMPC’s work thus far.

**Review of Process**

The following is an outline of the dates and ways that LMPC has engaged the leadership and members to date.

- Late December of 2021 and early January of 2022  
LMPC team members held several conversations with the presbytery and congregational leadership by Zoom. Those conversations led to LMPC agreeing to present to FPCA’s Session what a typical mediation process involves.
- January 22, 2022  
Jay Wittmeyer and Devon Miller were invited by Session to join their retreat by Zoom to consider options to address the losses and the hurts that have been ongoing in FPCA. After hearing LMPC’s presentation, Session voted to explore these options further by inviting LMPC to present their process to the congregation.
- February 27, 2022  
Jay Wittmeyer joined the congregational meeting to present the mediation process at the annual meeting and to field any questions members may have had. The presentation was well received. Based on a brief poll there was wide support of Sessions decision to move ahead with the process was garnered.

- March 2022

The presentation was immediately followed by a questionnaire that was distributed, both electronically and by mail, to as many members as could be contacted. Two hundred and twenty-one people responded to the questionnaire: one hundred and seventy-three electronically and forty-eight by paper. The results were collected by LMPC and were then compiled and organized by themes that emerged from the questionnaire (see Appendix B).
- First part of April 2022

As the results of the questionnaire were being compiled, LMPC also began a series of ninety-minute phone interviews. LMPC requested the contact information of members that provided a wide range of perspectives from within the congregation. Session provided LMPC with fourteen members they felt fit this profile. LMPC contacted each of the names they were provided and each agreed to a phone conversation. During those conversation, two additional names were given as having a significant perspective on the current situation. One of the individuals agreed to speak with LMPC; the other person declined because of personal and professional reasons. The information gathered from these conversations, together with that gathered from the questionnaire, was used by LMPC to shape the upcoming small group dialogues.
- Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23, 2022

Jay Wittmeyer travelled to Allentown to lead a *Healthy Congregations* workshop. The workshop was well attended and received with nearly one hundred members participating in the workshop. The workshop was enhanced by good food and hospitality provided by the Deacons.
- Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6, 2022

Devon Miller traveled to Allentown to lead a *Conflict Transformation Skills for Congregations* workshop. Again, the workshop was well attended and received with approximately one hundred participants. People enjoyed being in the fellowship hall which had been left unused for some time. The event was hosted by the Middle Eastern Community, which offered wonderful meal featuring Syrian cuisine.
- Thursday, May 26, through Saturday, May 28

Jay Wittmeyer and Devon Miller traveled together to Allentown to co-facilitate a series of Small Group Structured Dialogues. Over the course of those three days, Wittmeyer and Miller hosted ten ninety-minute sessions. The largest group consisted of fourteen participants; the smallest group consisted of four participants. Most groups were full with twelve participants. Two sessions were held on the evening of Thursday, May 26, at the church. Two sessions were held on the morning of Friday, May 27, at the Luther Crest senior living center. Four more sessions were held at the church that day—two in the afternoon and two in the evening. The weekend concluded with two morning sessions on Saturday, May 28. In all, ninety people participated in the small group dialogues over the weekend.
- Tuesday, May 31 and Thursday, June 2, 2022

In addition, LMPC offered two Small Group Structured Dialogues by Zoom. A total of nineteen people participated in the Zoom groups increasing the total number of participants in the small group dialogues to one hundred and nine.

Each session, including those held on Zoom, followed the same format. Sessions were begun with a short devotional from Philippians 2:1-11 and a prayer. Participants were then invited to introduce themselves, giving their name, their involvement over the years at FPCA, and one thing that they appreciate celebrate about FPCA. The results of those comments are compiled below (see Appendix C). Introductions were followed by a brief spectrum exercise intended to stimulate people's thoughts about FPCA. The questions used in the exercise (see Appendix D) as well as the compiled results (see Appendix E) are included below.

The remainder of each session was set aside to provide each participant some uninterrupted time to express what was on their mind regarding FPCA. People were encouraged to talk about their concerns, their losses, their grief, their fears, their hopes, and their dreams for FPCA. Those comments have been compiled and organized into themes that emerged throughout the sessions (see Appendix F). Highlights of each theme are provided in the Observations section below.

### Upcoming Events

- Saturday, June 25, 2022  
Jay Wittmeyer and Devon Miller will travel to Allentown to facilitate a Restorative Conversation from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM. All members are invited to attend this session. People will be given an opportunity to express the losses they have experienced and to heal some of the hurts that may be lingering from the past.
- Saturday, September 10 and Saturday, September 17  
LMPC team members will travel to Allentown to engage in Problem-solving sessions. Using information gleaned from the events up to this point, LMPC team members will facilitate a brainstorming session on how FPCA might move forward in a flourishing way given the challenges it faces.
- In subsequent weeks to the Problem-solving phase, FPCA leadership will work at finding ways to implement the recommendations that emerge from those sessions.
- LMPC's engagement in this process will conclude by taking part in a reconciliation ceremony with the congregation. A date for this event has not yet been determined.

### Observations

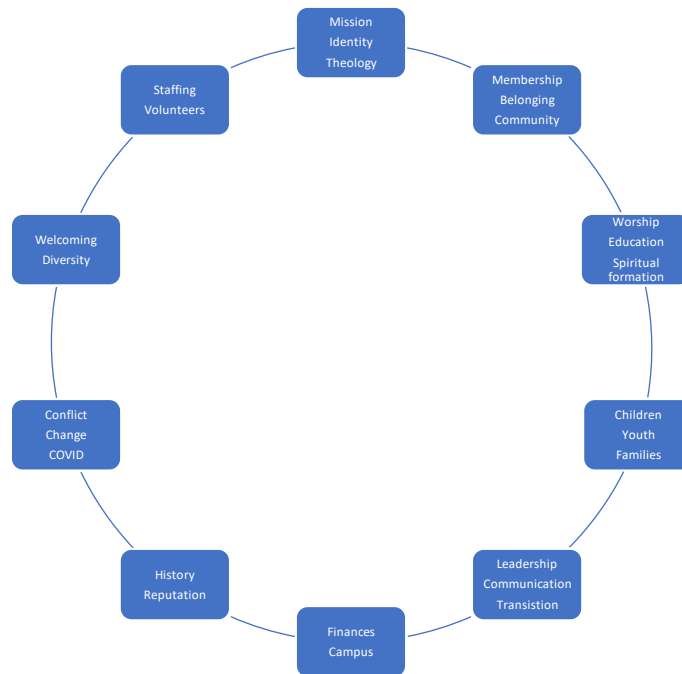
As LMPC listened to the concerns and interests of members during the Small Group Structured Dialogues a number of themes began to emerge. Some of these subjects are directly connected to the

Spectrum Exercise that was administered during the Small Group Structured Dialogues; others possibilities arose more organically during the dialogues. Initially, fifteen separate categories were identified. In looking more closely at these changes, it was determined that many of the categories were interrelated in such a way that it was more beneficial to discuss them in relation to each other than in isolation. Thus, each of the elements in a category such as “Mission/Identity/Theology” could easily have deserved their own discussion, but it was also clear that any discussion of mission would need to consider how FPCA understood their identity since mission flows out of identity. Furthermore, any discussion of identity needs to consider commonly held beliefs, values, and practices which flows out of theology.

Finally, ten categories were settled upon. As demonstrated in the chart below (see Figure 1), they are all linked to each other. For example, it is easy to see how concerns in a category such as “Children/Youth/Families” could be connected. A decline in children and youth ministries may be impacted by a decline in membership of young families and so forth. It is also understandable how this category may be directly impacted by concerns raised in a category such as “Conflict/Change/COVID.” Change is often the source of conflict, whether from internal sources such as worship styles, or external forces such as COVID. One person mentioned that at the beginning of COVID children were forced to do all of their schoolwork on Zoom and that when it came time to get involved in church on Zoom they were already “Zoomed out.” This shows how important it is to remember that these are not fixed categories but that their boundaries are porous, and their content is fluid.

For those interested in a more detailed report, the responses remain as they were recorded during the session and placed in more specific categories in Appendix G. Each of those categories have been organized to facilitate the Problem-Solving Sessions later in the process. For the purposes of the written portion of this report, direct quotes from the small Structured Dialogues have been interspersed throughout to provide a sense of what was heard in session.

Finally, the observations here are meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive in any way. They have been formatted to point to the Problem-Solving Phase later in the process that LMPC is facilitating.



*Figure 1: Areas of Interest*

Each category is briefly discussed below, in no particular order, highlighting the primary concerns that were heard during the Small Group Structured Dialogues. A summary follows highlighting some of the key insights derived from the listening sessions.

1. **Mission/Identity/Theology:** As part of the Spectrum Exercise during the Small Group Structured Dialogues, participants were asked about the clarity and adherence of FPCA’s mission statement. Some felt there was a strong sense of mission prior to COVID in which the church did “well at representing Christ in the past,” but that it had taken a “backseat recently.” Some felt that the mission statement was more of an identity statement than an action statement. Many felt that because of its position in the community that there are plenty of opportunity for innovative engagement with the urban community in spite of being a suburban church, and that such a focus would allow people to connect in meaningful ways that would have a unifying effect on the church.

There was some concern that the church had become “self-centered” or “inward focused.” There was a strong sense that the church would benefit from finding its “DNA,” “listen to the younger people,” “find a new direction, and discover a “new way of being together.”

All of these concerns were tied to a desire to return to the “basics of the Gospel” and being grounded in a “clear theological teaching on how to relate to the world around us” in a way that is “relevant to the church today.”

2. *Membership/Belonging/Community:* A primary concern for many participants was the decline in membership, though it was acknowledged that the decline had been taking place over many years and was not a recent phenomenon. Associated with this decline is the reduction of young families in the church that had an impact on the “vibrancy and vitality that used to be in the halls of the church.” Even though the church is no longer as large as it once was, it is still difficult to get to know each other’s names.

During the Spectrum Exercise, most people indicated that the church body was a caring body. However, some participants indicated that they have been attending FPCA for many years and felt like they knew very few people. This has been compounded over the past few years by COVID and not being able to attend church in person. Many felt that for the church to regain its vitality it was essential that people found ways to meet in person as before, such as spaghetti suppers, small groups, Bible studies, mission outreach, and so forth.

Overall, there was an overwhelming sense of loss of community and connectivity. People are longing for finding new ways to connect with others in the congregation. Someone noted that “belonging precedes belief.” If people are going to adopt the mission of the church they will need to feel as though they are connected in some way, such as through meaningful worship, Bible study, small group fellowship, or mission.

3. *Worship/Education/Spiritual Formation:* An important topic in each of the Small Group Structured Dialogues was the topic of worship. All agreed that that FPCA has supported a wonderful music program through the years. Most also grieved the loss of the choice between the two services: the alternative service and the traditional service. While some emphasized the importance of one style over the other, no one diminished the importance of the other. This indicates a willingness on the part of people that they are open to change and differences.

Some highlighted how when both services were running at their best, it was very difficult for the pastors as they had to run from one pulpit to the next with their sermons getting lost in the shuffle at times. Many suggestions were made as to how a more creative schedule could allow for both styles of worship to exist alongside each other in such way that people could still connect with one another without losing the style of music and worship that is important to them. This will be an important topic to consider when it comes to the Problem-Solving Phase of LMPC’s process.

Historically, FPCA has valued Biblically inspired teaching that addresses the needs of the world based on the Gospel. Some grieved the loss of inspirational preaching and teaching that they could “tuck in their pocket for the week.” Some valued the former programs that brought in gifted speakers from time to time. All appreciated the Bible studies such as those offered during Lent and Advent.

4. *Children/Youth/Families:* At the heart of many peoples’ grief was the loss of the youth choir that had been such a vibrant part of FPCA in the past. While some yearned to revive the choir

and other former youth and children's programs, others recognized that there have been societal shifts that pull young families in different directions than in former days. It was also recognized that there still many successful youth ministries throughout the country. The key is to understand how to address the needs of young families in such a way that the church community is an asset in managing their busy schedules rather than another drain. It was recognized that young families, when they do come to church, need help in caring for their children, especially in the wake of COVID when many parents took on the added responsibility of managing their children's education from home on top of their regular jobs.

Many people felt that the future of FPCA rests in its ability to discern the needs of young families, especially, young mothers and their children, finding ways to integrate them into a community and worship format that is conducive to young families. To some, this meant setting aside personal preferences and supporting what is beneficial to the long-term well-being of the church.

5. *Transition/Leadership/Communication:* Some members feel their voices are left unheard. Communication takes places in silos, or a one participant put it, "The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is up to—in a negative way." Many expressed a desire to have more input into good decision-making, especially as it pertains to the transition to a new lead pastor.

Regarding the transition, many felt an urgency in identifying a new lead pastor to provide stability and continuity in leadership as the church considers its vision and mission moving forward. Others recognized the need for patience in the process, noting Presbyterian polity spells out specific procedures in calling a lead pastor, and that Session is following those procedures even though it may seem slow. Others recognized the role that COVID has played in "slowing some things down" while "accelerating other things". This created creating an unprecedented situation that is challenging for leadership.

Many expressed a desire for more open, transparent communication between the leadership, especially Session, and the rest of the congregation. People also recognized that communication is a two-way street. Information is often communicated and people either don't know where to find it, do not take the time to look it up, or maybe feel like it has been made available in obscure places.

Along these lines, it was also pointed out that some may not be particularly familiar with presbyterian polity. In some situations, people have more agency than they realize, but that does not give them the ability to "micromanage." Nevertheless, considerable sentiment was expressed desiring Session to be more forthright and expeditious regarding the transitional process.

Some expressed appreciation for FPCA as a place where difficult topics are openly discussed without the danger of being heavily criticized or dogma being enforced against peoples' wills, and hope that this posture will continue to be a defining characteristic of FPCA.

Related to communication and guidance from leadership, many expressed an appreciation for the inspirational sermons that have been offered in the past leaders in the past, but that there has been a decline in the quality of sermons over the past number of years. While all expressed a desire to address relevant social issues that confront our nation, doing so in a one-dimensional way that diminishes the views of those who come at the issue from a different perspective has the potential of ostracizing people within the congregation. People expressed a need for sermons based on what it means to follow Jesus in times of crisis.

6. *Finances/Stewardship/Campus/Physical plant:* Tangentially related to the decline in membership is the matter of a reduction in financial contributions. Many people expressed a concern that the church was in a financial crisis. People noted that many have withheld their pledges because of recent turbulence in the leadership, especially as it relates to lead pastors. Others noted that decline in giving dates further back than the recent past, that giving has been in decline for over a decade. Some attributed this to the method of pledges being an outdated form of giving that does not fit the way young families manage their resources, noting young families are much more likely to give to a specific project than they are to make a pledge to a general fund.

The lack of financial contributions has had a significant impact on the physical condition of the campus. This large facility housed the vibrant heart and soul of this flourishing community in the past. However, with the decrease in both funding and membership the building is in danger of becoming a liability that will overshadow the spirit of the congregation.

While this may have been included in the Worship or Communication portion of the report, many recognized that the building, especially the sanctuary, was to them a sacred place and that tinkering with the design and layout, such as moving benches out of the sanctuary and replacing them with chairs to accommodate a more contemporary service, felt to them like a degradation of such a sacred place. Upon further discussion, however, most agreed that such changes may have been in order but that the surprise of showing up to find the changes had taken place without any input from the congregation was what sparked their most ardent reaction.

7. *History/Reputation:* Many expressed their deep appreciation of the history of FPCA recognizing both the highlights of former pastors and the need to recognize that the church has done many things well in the past. It was mentioned that leaders have had many different styles in the past: some were collaborative; some functioned as CEOs of large corporation; and others related as the friendly neighbor net door that knew everyone's name.



It was also mentioned that there has often been conflict and controversy surrounding transitions in leadership in the past. These controversies were compounded or, at times, the result of interference coming from Associate Pastors during the transition process. Some continued to feel betrayed and confused by the departure of former lead pastors but have never had place or time to grieve those losses openly.

Some expressed a need to forget the past and move forward. Others expressed the need to pause and recognize the losses and lay them to rest to prevent them from haunting the future any longer.

Some pointed out that FPCA held a reputation in the community as being a large, financially stable congregation that engages the community in meaningful ways but that the congregation can no longer rest on those laurels. FPCA needs to find new ways to move forward while still remaining a significant influence in the community

8. *Conflict/Change/Disruption/Discomfort/COVID*: Many people reacted to the idea that FPCA was involved in what was being described as a conflict even though most recognized that there plenty of differences of opinion in the church. Some attributed this to the language being used to describe the situation—people react negatively to the term “conflict” but less so to “differences.” Nevertheless, most recognized that FPCA, as are most churches and institutions in the nation, in the middle of rapidly changing societal changes. Conflict is inherent in change, though it does not mean that change or conflict is negative, only that people respond to them differently.

Even though change has been expedited by COVID, some pointed to societal changes that have been taking place over the past thirty years. While FPCA has had it really good for many years, it has not necessarily adapted to the surrounding changes in society as they arose or people may have pushed back at those change and are now facing some the consequences of that reluctance to change.

A clear factor in the disruption and discomfort that many are experiencing is the intrusion of the pandemic. COVID has created a challenging situation for congregational leaders throughout the nation who try to balance care for the vulnerable while recognizing the psychological impact isolation can have on individuals. However, the pandemic has also forced FPCA into positive changes in its use of technology, though it has come with its own set of challenges. Many recognized the opportunity that comes with these changes in reaching out to a broader audience.

Nevertheless, as one person put it COVID clearly “mucked things up!” It exposed two groups of people: those who wanted to come back in person and those who wanted to stay at home. Some may have left because they thought COVID was mishandled one way or another by leadership. COVID both stalled and accelerated the vitality and the stagnancy of the church.

One person quoted an expert on natural disasters, saying “Natural disasters do not create disparities; natural disasters expose disparities.”

Overall, people expressed an openness to change and a willingness to explore new ways of being together but that they wanted a voice in the changes being made rather than being told what was being changed. Again, the benches being removed and chairs being added serve to illustrate peoples willingness to change but wanting a voice in the matter or at least being offered an explanation of why the changes were being made before they occur.

One thing from the past that the younger generation sees as being feasible taking with it into the future is FPCA’s propensity to do everything it does with quality. The younger generation pointed out that if the church is going to thrive in the future it will need to recognize that there is no path back to “normal” or the past, there is only a path forward. Some recognized that with the path forward there comes the opportunity to experiment; and while experimenting with ministry can be “dangerous” it is also for times like this that we have been given our faith. FPCA will need to find a new way of being together if it will be thriving twenty years from now.

9. *Diversity/Friendliness/Welcoming*: Some have characterized FPCA as “one church body with many different groups.” It is important to recognize that with diversity comes difficulty. Even though the church views itself as a diverse congregation, featuring two service in other languages, it was noted by some that neither one of those two language groups participated in the Small Group Structured Dialogues. Some indicated that the two separate services—the alternative and the traditional—made it difficult for people to interact with each other because of the way the services were scheduled.

Also related to diversity, it was noted that a wide generational gap has developed over time contributing to the lack of vibrancy in the church. Many older members recognized that if the church desires to be flourishing in the future it will need to find ways to be more welcoming to young families.

Others commented that they did not want a “red church or a blue church, just a church,” indicating that there may be a diverse range of political perspectives in the congregation that may be related to generational factors. While all agreed that it is important to address pressing social issues it is important, especially for leadership, to do so in a way that does not diminish people’s personal perspectives on the topic.

Some find it difficult to know how or where to participate in select groups. One person expressed FPCA’s claims to diversity in these terms: “If we are going to be diverse, we need to walk the walk not just talk the talk!” Though many feel connected through small groups, those who have not found their way into such a group often feel disconnected or like they have fallen through the cracks.

10. *Staffing/Volunteers*: Many expressed a concern with the inability to recruit volunteers to help run programs. It was noted that this was not just a problem for FPCA, but something that was a challenge for many organizations. Some recognized that programs aimed at young families such as the Food Truck Event, which was a one-time event, is likely to draw much better participation than long term commitments such as teaching Sunday school. Some suggested that there be some incentive attached to volunteering to attract younger families to participate in events or programs. It was also noted that as people become more invested in the church it will create a greater sense of community.

Despite the decrease in volunteers, many recognized the tremendous resource of gifts, talents, and creativity that exists among the members of FPCA. There remains a sentiment that FPCA is full of “wonderful, caring, God-fearing people.” Therefore, it is important, as some mentioned to be selective in choosing the kind of programs FPCA becomes involved in to maintain the quality it is accustomed to by drawing on the gifts the people have to offer. As one person noted, “What will we give up so that we can take on a new project?”

Many also grieved the loss of staffing which in many cases can be traced to the decline in financial giving and resources. This has impacted such things as the music program, leaving many with a deep sense of loss. One person suggested the use of members in creating services periodically by tapping into existing talent in the congregation, suggesting there may be creative ways to meet the needs of the congregation and community in the road ahead.

### **Summary**

As indicated earlier, each of these categories is interconnected with each of the others in some way. A disruption in one will create disturbance in each of the others. What may be overlooked is the way each of the categories contributes to the sense of community (see Figure 2). What people both grieve and long for is a sense of community and belonging, a place where all are accepted wherever they are coming from. While people appear to hold on or return to former times, what they long for is community. As many people have expressed, the road back to normal is no longer feasible, there are plenty of opportunities for FPCA to move forward with renewed hope and mission as it seeks out innovative and creative ways to engage young families in the congregation and the community.



*Figure 2: The Centrality of Community and Belonging*

### **Conclusion**

This report has outlined the process that LMPC has led thus far. It provides both strengths and challenges of FPCA as seen through the eyes of those who have participated in the questionnaire, the phone interviews, and the small group dialogues. A complete Interim Report will be submitted after the Restorative Conversation as spelled out in the Memo. These observations will then be incorporated into upcoming Problem-Solving sessions in September 2022.

## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Moving Toward a Flourishing Future: A Congregational Engagement Process

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) has been invited to propose a congregational engagement process to heal past hurts, address current differences, and develop a shared vision that will facilitate a flourishing future with the First Presbyterian Church of Allentown (FPCA). LMPC proposes to blend ethnographic and conciliatory methods to overcome past tensions and reach a mutual understanding of FPCA's mission moving forward through a participatory process. This proposal seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Discern the exact nature of the congregation's health and functioning and how its members perceive and experience their participation in the church community at FPCA together.
2. Provide opportunity for congregants to voice their perspective on the current situation at FPCA.
3. Document the areas of congregational life that members hold in common and celebrate.
4. Provide opportunity for individuals to better understanding the views and perspectives of other individuals and groups within the church.
5. Address past misunderstandings and griefs in a manner that works toward healing and reconciliation.
6. Teach conflict transformation skills and strategies to manage differences in the congregation.
7. Educate the congregation in healthy congregational functioning from an emotional process perspective.
8. Identify core values and key interests and work systematically to find win/win solutions for the congregation to move forward together.
9. Document the process through accurate reporting.
10. Do all of this in a way that glorifies God and strengthens the church.

The process consists of seven distinct phases:

**Contracting Phase.** LMPC will meet with the Session of the congregation to explain the details of the proposal, including the steps, proposed schedule, time commitments, and estimated fees. If leadership decides to proceed further, LMPC will meet with the congregation to explain the process, answer questions, and assess the congregation's commitment to participate in the process which is usually done through a survey or poll.

**Information-Gathering Phase.** LMPC will begin the process of understanding and documenting differing perspectives and experience within the congregation by 1) gathering relevant church documents (constitution, policy manual, annual reports, strategic plans, church profile reports, etc.), 2) sending a questionnaire to individual members and processing the results, and 3) conducting telephone interviews with 12 individuals who represent a broad spectrum of perspectives to better understand the history of the church and some of its patterns, focusing on pastoral tenures, transitions, and congregational life.

**Small-Group Phase.** LMPC will conduct a series of ninety-minute small group sessions consisting of twelve persons each to provide uninterrupted time to listen to each participant's perspective on how

well the church is flourishing together. This process systematically allows LMPC to understand individual concerns, desires, hopes, and interests which will then be incorporated into a “needs statement.” The “needs statement” provides the groundwork for future decision-making.

**Education Phase.** LMPC will conduct two workshops which are essential for the engagement process, giving church members a time to be reflective, learn new concepts, and apply these learnings to their context for a renewed understanding of God’s will for the church.

The first workshop, *Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches*, provides a fresh perspective on conflict, presenting conflict as a normal part of life and preparing church members to navigate difficult situations in a constructive manner to promote growth and deeper relationships in fulfilling the mission of the church.

The second workshop, *Healthy Congregations*, looks at the congregation through the lens of a family system and seeks to better understand the emotional challenges of being together as a congregation. Through the workshop, participants will grow in their understanding of how their church functions as an emotional system, learn strategies to manage times of heightened anxiety more thoughtfully, and learn to appreciate differences within their membership rather than ignore or condemn them. LMPC will conclude the Educational Phase and the Information-Gathering Phase with an interim report of preliminary observations.

**Restoration Phase.** Before entering the planning phase, LMPC will conduct a five-hour restorative conversation where individuals would be able to process their past experiences in FPCA. Attention would be given for past grievances and hurts to be addressed to allow for healing as needed. The session would be led by facilitators who help set ground rules to provide a safe space to encourage dialogue that creates greater understanding of each other within the congregation.

**Strategic-Planning Phase:** LMPC will facilitate another session for FPCA to reflect together upon expressed interests, brainstorm and evaluate ideas for moving forward, and begin building agreements for the future. Using recommendations LMPC sets forth, the Session will work together with LMPC to develop, agree upon, and draft a strategy for FPCA moving forward. Official action will need to be taken by the Session to enact the plan.

**Closing Phase.** LMPC will bring closure to the process by generating a comprehensive report, including 1) details of the entire process, 2) observations and recommendations made by LMPC gathered from the interests expressed by FPCA participants during the process, and 3) the outcome and official actions taken by the Session as a result of the process. LMPC will hold a closing service of affirmation with FPCA to legitimize the work undertaken in the process. LMPC will follow up with FPCA in six months after the conclusion of the process to assess and confirm whether outcomes of the plan have been successful or whether follow-up work will need to occur.

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire Results First Presbyterian Church of Allentown

**221 people responded (173 electronically / 48 by paper)**

#### Strengths:

- Music/Worship (123)
- Pastoral Team/Staff/Sermons (110)
- Mission/Outreach/Ministry (100)
- Membership/Family/Caring/Community/Commitment (96)
- Campus/Facilities/Building (67)
- Youth/Children Ministries/Faith Formation (65)
- Diversity (64)
- Lay Leadership/Volunteers/Gifts/Skills/Intelligence/Talent (60)
- Small Groups/Fellowship/Faith Formation/Bible Studies (50)
- Ability/Willingness to Change/Adapt to New Ideas/Circumstances (35)
- Hospitality/Friendliness/Welcoming Spirit (30)
- Tradition/History/Reputation (27)
- Spirituality/Values/Christ-Centeredness (20)
- Teaching/Philosophy/Theology (14)
- Giving/Financial Stability (11)
- Concern for Current Issues—Race/Environment/Social Issues (10)
- Commitment to Denomination/Polity (6)
- Communication (5)

#### Challenges

Multiple levels of transformation of the church happening all at the same time (local and worldwide) and for most folks, it is unclear what or why it is happening. People don't understand how and why the church is changing, and why change is a good thing. This has introduced a fear in most people, whether conscious or subconscious.

- Declining (88)
- Traditional vs. contemporary services (74)
- Financial stability (63)
- Loss of children/youth ministry (53)
- Need for a permanent lead pastor (53)
- Impact of COVID (47)
- Care of building (40)
- Lack of communication from leadership (39)
- Bridging traditional to new thinking about the church / Change (39)
- Dealing with the frequent turnover of staff and pastors (34)
- Discontented members / gossip / rumors /triangling (34)
- Focus on partisanship in politics / social issues (33)



- Lack of belonging/connection/unity/fellowship (31)
- Loss of staffing (26)
- Lack of congregational involvement (21)
- Lack of identity / mission statement / direction for the future (21)
- Lack of relevant sermons (17)
- Need for members to be heard (17)
- Need to grieve the past and let it go (17)
- Lack of trust in leadership (16)
- Lack of inclusion / diversity (15)
- Aging membership (13)
- Lack of spiritual growth / adult formation (10)
- Lag in technology (9)
- Lack of enthusiasm in worship (7)
- Lack of pastoral care (2)
- Lack of flowers on the chancel (2)
- Too many meetings (1)
- Need to have difficult conversations (1)
- Lack of support from Presbytery (1)

## Appendix C

### Celebrations/Major Strengths First Presbyterian Church of Allentown Allentown, PA Small Group Dialogues May 26–June 2, 2022

#### The People

- A place with wonderful people who are interested supportive and caring of each other.
- A place with a sense of community and family in spite of its differences.
- A place with a sense of family.
- A place where people support each other.
- A place with a sense of family and community that care for each other.
- A place where people get to know each other by being with each other.
- A place where the people the preaching and the family atmosphere is valued.
- A place where the church is home for the family.
- A wonderful place to raise a family.
- A place that provides camaraderie for raising a family.
- A place with long lasting relationships and a family atmosphere.
- A place with loving people and good leadership.
- A place that is loving and accepting.
- A place that provides community.
- A place that is welcoming and friendly.
- A place with friends, fellowship, and strong relationships.
- A place that is warm welcoming and friendly.
- A place where friendships are developed through small groups.
- A place that values friendship.
- A place that values the friendships that are developed there.
- A place that values the friendships that are made.
- A place where people care for each other.
- A place that is diverse and offers a welcoming atmosphere.
- A place where camaraderie can be formed.
- A place where connections are made through small groups.
- A place where friendships are developed through volunteering together.
- A place that is welcoming and where people and friends embrace each other.
- A place where church has become a family.
- A place where family relationships have been developed overtime.
- A place that values relationships.
- A place that has become family away from family.
- A place where lifelong friendships for children are made.
- A place where friendships are developed.
- A place where friendships are made that carry on and off campus.
- A place where friendship with people are developed.
- A place where people and families can connect.
- A place to share wonderful dinners with beautiful people such as the wine dinner group

- A place that provides community and people children are impacted by those relationships.
- A place where meaningful friendships are made.
- A place that provides a sense of home.
- A place to enjoy fellowship in connection with people.
- A place where personal friendships are developed.
- A place of very friendly people.
- A place with faithful members.
- A place where fellowship can be found.
- A place where people can party together such as spaghetti dinners.

### **The Leadership**

- A place where leadership is supportive through rough times.
- A place that provides support from its staff and pastors with a sense of community and mission.
- A place with a good staff and auxiliary staff.
- A place where outside expertise is invited to come in and teach.
- A place that is structured and well run.
- A place that values its pastors.
- A place that benefits from the ministry of many wonderful pastors in the past.
- A place where people can participate in the ministry of pastoral care.
- A place with a strong history.
- A place where members can participate in the leadership of the church.
- A place that benefits from the wisdom of the ministers through difficult times.
- A place where leadership has provided stability during COVID.
- A place with effective Bible study leaders.

### **The Worship**

- A place that provides good music and relevant sermons.
- A place with excellent music including handbells.
- A place that values relevant sermons and a good service.
- A place that values music in its worship.
- A place that has a high regard for quality music.
- A place where music is valued.
- A place with an excellent Christmas Eve service.
- A place that values its music program and choir.
- A place that values preaching.
- A place where an alternative service is provided.
- A place with a wonderful choir.
- A place where music is important and appreciated.

### **The Programs**

- A place with strong Christian education and Sunday school program.
- A place with excellent teaching resources and adult education.
- A place where many Bible studies are offered.

- A place with adult youth and women Bible studies for all ages.
- A place that values inspirational sermons.
- A place that provides small groups and Christian education.
- A place that provides many small group opportunities.
- A place where the youth program fellowship and young couples are valued.
- A place where the fellowship of young couples has historically been valued.
- A place where pastors and youth ministry are valued.
- A place that values youth programs.
- A place that values programs for their children and grandchildren.
- A place that values its youth programs.
- A place that engages children and missions.
- A place that values the work with children.
- A place that provides ministry with children.
- A place that provides ministry for children and youth.
- A place where children and youth ministry are valued.
- A place for mission and outreach.
- A place with a strong giving program.
- A place with many opportunities for mission.
- A place with a wonderful Christian Ed program.
- A place with opportunities like book groups even through COVID.
- A place with a strong mission outreach and Steven ministries program that makes a difference in people's lives.
- A place where people pull together and reaching out such as the Katrina rebuild and Habitat for Humanity.
- A place where the youth program created community.
- A place that values its music and youth ministry.
- A place with a strong local mission.
- A place that provides small group opportunities even during COVID.
- A place with many small group opportunities.
- A place with a large local mission.
- A place where the mission work creates a sense of community.
- A place with a core of amazing people to carry on the mission of the church.
- A place where there is something for everyone.

### **The Campus**

- A place with a beautiful campus and physical plant.
- A place that respects its buildings.
- A place that values its gardens.
- A place with a beautiful campus and facility.
- A place that is large enough with a facility that is large enough where everyone can find something to get involved in.

### **The Diversity**

- A sense of community with a range of theological diversity and respect for each other.
- A place that welcomes a wide range of perspectives.

- A place with diversity in the midst of a neighborhood.
- A place where intellectual stimulation can occur.
- A place where there is a big tent welcoming attitude.
- A place that values diversity and mission outreach.
- A place that values diversity in the church.
- A place that is large enough to welcome people from many walks of life.
- A place that welcomes diversity.
- A place where there is an openness to talk about difficult topics.
- A place that includes diversity such as the Arabic community and the Chin Burmese community.
- A place where openness and dialogue are welcomed.
- A place that lives outside its walls.
- A place with inquiring minds.
- A place with intelligent innovative and supportive people.
- A place that is willing to consider outside influences and how to incorporate those ideas into its life.
- A place that has been very supportive through difficult times.
- A place that is willing to evaluate itself.
- A place that has maintained a social awareness or a social consciousness even though not all may agree to the approach.
- A place with a lot of variety as demonstrated by the two other language services that are offered the Arabic community and the Chin Burmese community.
- A place that offers different language services.
- A place where valuable relationships are made with a diverse group of people.

### **The Creativity**

- A place that is resilient to change.
- A place that is innovative.
- A place that is free to explore new ideas that are outside traditional thinking and dogma is not enforced.
- A place that has been dynamic energetic and full of life.
- A place that is large enough to provide a wide range of resources.
- A place that values Presbyterian theology.
- A place that values the way it governs itself and is structured according to Presbyterian polity.

## Appendix D

### Questions Used in Spectrum Exercise

#### 1. **Mission and Purpose:** If...

the current mission and purpose of the church is very clear to you; there's a visible mission statement; there are regular ways of reviewing it; an annual process of setting goals for moving toward fulfilling the mission;  
programs are evaluated by relating them to the mission; leaders are elected or appointed according to how well they will implement the mission – then you will be at 9.

On the other hand, if...

you believe that the mission and purpose is not clear;  
you've never seen a mission statement; can't remember hearing it;  
it has become lost amid the day-to-day demands of church life;  
such that the church is adrift, without any clear sense of mission and purpose – you'll be at 1.

**Place yourself somewhere between 1 and 9** (record numbers) (do same for each spectrum).

#### 2. **Worship, Spirituality, Christian Education:** If...

worship is fulfilling and uplifting; it addresses the range of worship preferences within the church; there is a vibrancy in worship; the Holy Spirit's presence is evident, – and there are other ways that the church is nurturing spiritual growth beyond worship; including a strong Christian education program for all ages – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...

you believe that worship is not at all uplifting; there is more of a mindlessness to the way people worship together; it is just a habit; worship does not provide spiritual nourishment for the week; the church does nothing else to nurture people in their spiritual growth; there's a lack of quality Christian education for all ages – you'll be at 1.

#### 3. **Caring for Each Other:** If...

you believe that the congregation supports each other in every possible way; in times of physical, spiritual, and emotional need; that one often doesn't need to ask for support;  
that you personally have experienced this type of support – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...

you believe that the congregation is not supportive of one another in times of need; that you personally have experienced times when the people of the church have not supported you in times of need;  
that people's needs are forgotten or ignored by church members – you'll be at 1.

#### 4. **Caring from Pastors:** If...

you believe that the congregation has a history of pastoral care that is exemplary.  
 that pastors have always been there when an individual or family had needs such as an illness,  
 death in the family, or a need for pastoral counseling.  
 that pastors have provided just what was needed at the time; or made sure that such care would  
 be provided through others; with appropriate follow up – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...  
 pastors have often been unavailable during times of need in members' lives;  
 or the care needed was not forthcoming; either from pastors or others charged with providing  
 pastoral care;  
 if people's pastoral care needs were just "lost in the shuffle" – you'll be at 1.

#### **5. Caring for Pastors: If...**

you believe that the congregation has a history of supporting its pastors; not only financially, but  
 also caring for the pastors and their families in times of personal need;  
 that the church has always provided clear and reasonable expectations for pastors and provided  
 them with clear feedback through an evaluation procedures that help pastors grow – and  
 that such evaluation procedures acknowledge that the congregation shares responsibility for the  
 success of the church's ministry – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...  
 you believe that the congregation has often failed to provide needed support for pastors and their  
 families, regarding personal needs; or have placed unreasonable expectations on pastors;  
 or have not outlined clear expectations or provided adequate feedback through an evaluation  
 process and people have seen pastors as solely responsible for the success of the church – you'll  
 be at 1.

#### **6. Caring Conflict Transformation: If...**

you believe the church has a history of seeing conflict as an opportunity; leaders welcome open  
 disagreement; all work for win-win agreements; all are able to be hard on issues, soft on people;  
 many voices are heard representing all the different perspectives; there is open and direct  
 dialogue, with little behind-the-back criticism – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...  
 conflict is avoided or seen as dangerous; disagreement is frowned upon; only the most vocal are  
 heard; people are attacked for their ideas; with lots of blaming, rather than sharing responsibility;  
 there is indirect communication, triangling, and rampant gossiping – you'll be at 1.

#### **7. Communication and Decision-Making: If...**

you believe that the congregation has excellent lines of communication;  
 clear minutes are kept of meetings; reports are regularly shared with the congregation;  
 information regarding important decisions is widely publicized;  
 the process for making decisions is well-known and widely supported; with opportunity for input  
 and questions from members – in a way that is consistent with your denominational polity;  
 church members are generally kept informed regarding what is happening – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...

communication lines are blurry; people often don't know who to go to with questions; people don't know what is happening; little record-keeping or reporting is done; decision-making processes are unclear, not properly providing people with opportunities to have input in a way that is consistent with your denominational polity – you'll be at 1.

**8. Structures and Leadership: If...**

you believe that church structures are clearly defined; the congregation has clearly defined roles and expectations for persons in leadership;

there's good supervision and follow-through on assigned tasks; people know who is responsible for various leadership roles and they support those persons; persons are allowed to do their jobs; they're not undermined by others no longer in leadership; that leadership qualities are well-matched to the tasks required – you'll be at 9.

On the other hand, if...

church structures are not clearly defined – or defined structures are not followed; there is significant lack of clarity regarding leadership role expectations, with little support or supervision, and little follow-through; if leadership responsibilities are inappropriately infringed upon by others – you'll be at 1.



## Appendix E

### Spectrum Exercise

First Presbyterian Church of Allentown

Allentown, PS

Jay Wittmeyer and Devon Miller

May 26–29, 2022

#### 1. Mission and purpose

<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 2. Worship, spirituality, and Christian education

<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 3. Caring for each other

<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>15</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 4. Caring from pastors

<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>14</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 5. Caring for pastors

<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 6. Caring conflict transformation

<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

#### 7. Communications and decision-making

<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## 8. Structure and leadership

<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## Appendix F

### Interests/Needs—Categorized First Presbyterian Church of Allentown Allentown, PA Small Group Dialogues May 26–June 2, 2022

#### 1) Mission/Goals/Outreach/Identity

##### *a. Celebration*

- i. A need to recognize that mission outreach was strong prior to COVID.
- ii. A need to recognize that the church has done well in representing Christ in the past.

##### *b. Grief/Loss*

- i. A need to recognize that mission and outreach has taken a backseat recently and needs to be revived.
- ii. A need to recognize that the current mission statement is not an action statement.
- iii. A need to consider if we are directionally challenged.
- iv. A need to recognize that mission and job descriptions and structures exist but have been lost in the shuffle.
- v. A need for a mission statement beyond and identity statement.
- vi. A need to recognize the pandemic has caused the church to drift.
- vii. A need to recognize the church has been very inward focused.
- viii. A need to recognize the mission statement has been set aside.
- ix. A need to recognize there was no person to oversee the vision.
- x. A need to recognize that we can become self-centered.
- xi. A need to redefine ourselves in the community. In the past people have seen FPCA as a large congregation with lots of money. That has changed.

##### *c. Hope/Vision*

- i. A need to recognize that there is potential to engage the urban community.
- ii. A need to clarify what we keep and what we will let go of.
- iii. A need to be innovative with the church such as outreach charter schools to get money for the building concerns for membership and finances.
- iv. A need to assess what leadership style is needed looking forward to be innovative and take advantage of technology and the Internet.
- v. A need to understand how mission helps people connect with each other.
- vi. A need to recognize that an outreach and mission program will help unite the church.
- vii. A need for more local mission in a city with a lot of opportunity.
- viii. A need to explore and innovate how technology can be effectively used moving forward.
- ix. A need to invest in sound systems.
- x. A need for clear goals.

- xi.* A need to continue the mission programs.
- xii.* A need for the church to focus on what its needs are in the future not on what I prefer now.
- xiii.* A need to recognize that the process LMPC offers gives us hope for the church in the future.
- xiv.* A need to allow God to work on our lives outside of our preferences.
- xv.* A need to find a new way of being.
- xvi.* A need to listen to younger people.
- xvii.* A need to recognize that FPCA is a suburban church not an urban church.
- xviii.* A need to recognize the church needs to find its DNA.
- xix.* A need to recognize we need to rediscover who we are.
- xx.* A need to recognize who the congregation is in order to meet their needs.
- xxi.* A need for the church to get grounded and find a new direction.
- xxii.* A need to recognize that we do not know how to move forward.
- xxiii.* A need to recognize that there is pushback when new things are attempted.
- xxiv.* A need for good communication for new things to be birthed.
- xxv.* A need for the congregation to be vibrant if it wants to move forward.
- xxvi.* A need to be open to change.
- xxvii.* A need for worship to be vibrant and thriving for things to move forward.
- xxviii.* A need to recognize current potential opportunities for change.
- xxix.* A need to listen deeply and responsively to various voices within the congregation.
- xxx.* A need for long term strategic planning.
- xxxi.* A need to clarify our goals—the flywheel metaphor.
- xxxii.* A need to be willing to change while also keeping what is important.
- xxxiii.* A need for the church to be willing to face its challenges as it moves forward.
- xxxiv.* A need to maintain quality as we consider new things moving forward
- xxxv.* A need to recognize that we will need to create something new.
- xxxvi.* A need for an openness to be innovative and thought as we move forward.

## **2) Belonging/Connectivity/Community/Vitality**

### *a. Celebration*

- i.* A need to recognize previous pastor set a precedent of knowing everyone's names. Bill Barker set the bar high.
- ii.* A need to celebrate the small groups.
- iii.* A need to recognize that the church was historically a connected church.
- iv.* A need to recognize the valuable relationships within the church.
- v.* A need to appreciate the connectivity experienced within the church.

### *b. Grief/Loss*

- i.* A need to recognize the lack of vibrancy and vitality in the halls of the church.
- ii.* A need to recognize that the two separate services made us miss each other.
- iii.* A need for the church to move beyond the stagnancy, floundering and muddling that it is in.
- iv.* A need to recognize that though we are smaller we are still large but it's difficult to get to know each other.

- v. A need to recognize that some people may be lost on the fringes.
- vi. A need to grieve the loss of community.
- vii. A need to recognize that many programs which connected people before COVID have been discontinued and it has affected community life.
- viii. A need to recognize that some areas are not as supported as others.
- ix. A need to recognize that connectivity of the church has declined.
- x. A need to recognize that coming back the emphasis was not going to be on coming back together.
- xi. A need to recognize the emphasis has been on convenience not on being together
- xii. A need to recognize a church is better in person than online.
- xiii. A need to recognize that people can become content with their own little groups and they need to be more welcoming.
- xiv. A need to recognize that some people have not participated in small groups.
- xv. A need to recognize that the Burger King church model is not ideal. Have it your way!
- xvi. A need to grieve the vibrancy of the church that has been lost.
- xvii. A need to recognize the lack of enthusiasm and that a lot of that can be blamed on the pandemic.

*c. Hope/Vision*

- i.* A need for people to interact in person with each other.
- ii.* A need to recognize the value of meeting together in person.
- iii.* A need to do things together so that we all feel one we are different but of the same church one body with different groups.
- iv.* A need to let groups be separate from each other and find ways to meet together occasionally.
- v.* A need to not blame others and look at the real causes and understand why others are thriving.
- vi.* A need to keep the church together.
- vii.* A need to welcome those on the fringes.
- viii.* A need to get people engaged in the life of the church.
- ix.* A need for the church to engage with people.
- x.* A need to recognize that belonging comes before belief.
- xi.* A need to realize that the onus is on the members for the church to thrive.
- xii.* A need for all groups to come together.
- xiii.* A need to have a place to talk about the right things such as getting to know each other.
- xiv.* A need to recognize that the church will be an important influence in the world in the future.
- xv.* A need to recognize that if the church will once again become flourishing it will need to reach out to the community.
- xvi.* A need to realize that music connects people and different music connects different people.
- xvii.* A need to recognize that when people get involved, they feel connected with a sense of belonging.

- xviii. A need to maintain ways to stay connected.
- xix. A need to create opportunities for people to stay connected.
- xx. A need for more unity.
- xxi. A need for more dinners such as the spaghetti dinners.
- xxii. A need for in person community.
- xxiii. A need for people to get involved in small groups.
- xxiv. A need to offer a variety of programs for people to fit into. Example, the Kellogg variety pack.
- xxv. A need to revive an adult Sunday school program.
- xxvi. A need to expand the breadth of small groups so that all can be involved and know how to be involved.
- xxvii. A need to care for those who have left and build back the membership.
- xxviii. A need for a renewed sense of community.
- xxix. A need to find ways for people in the different services to interact with each other while at church.
- xxx. A need to open new small groups that are open to everyone.
- xxxi. A need to not be individualistic but to think of the good of the community.
- xxxii. A need to be concerned that young people feel connected.

### 3) Worship (Alternative vs Traditional)

#### a. *Celebration*

- i. A need to celebrate the hybrid worship and the value of being able to go online and follow the church life.
- ii. A need to understand that the two worship services we're never divisive that they greeted each other and it has been used as an excuse for other things.
- iii. A need to understand that musicians are good and zoom helped us see this.
- iv. A need to celebrate the music director's ministry but also improve the quality of sermons.
- v. A need to recognize that the alternative service meets the need for spiritual nourishment for some.
- vi. A need to recognize that the alternative and traditional service has divided and split the church—people never met people from the other service.
- vii. A need to recognize that there is a lot of value in both forms of worship.
- viii. A need to recognize that some people started coming to FPC a because of the contemporary services.
- ix. A need to recognize large Presbyterian churches have strong traditional music programs.

#### b. *Grief/Loss*

- i. A need to recognize that the worship committee was disbanded.
- ii. A need to recognize that a blended service is not satisfying.
- iii. A need to understand the alternative service did create a gap in our ability to know one another.
- iv. A need to grieve the loss of the alternative service and resist recreating it "just the way it was."

- v. A need to recognize that the loss of the alternative service has prevented some from returning after COVID.
- vi. A need to understand that the alternative service excludes some who value music.
- vii. A need to respect the sanctuary and not treated as a rec room and let it get messy.
- viii. A need to recognize that there may be too many worship options for staff to be effective.
  - ix. A need to recognize that the variety of services is stressful on the pastors.
  - x. A need to recognize that we have been hard on our pastors.
  - xi. A need to recognize that both forms of worship have affected connectivity.
  - xii. A need to recognize the distraction of the poor tech during worship services.
  - xiii. A need to recognize that the worship task force thought it would be good to combine the two worship services.
  - xiv. A need to grieve that the wholeness did not happen as the task force had envisioned.
  - xv. A need to understand that worship never got to experience what the task force had envisioned.
  - xvi. A need to recognize that the worship task force was never allowed to complete it's work.
  - xvii. A need to recognize that people came to FPCA because of the music and sermons but that in recent years the quality of both has slipped.
  - xxviii. A need to recognize that the multiple services complicated the schedule and pushed out the Sunday school program.
  - xix. A need to grieve the loss of the alternative service.
  - xx. A need to recognize that four services were hard on pastors and that people were unable to interact with each other during that time.
  - xxi. A need to recognize that the worship issues has become divisive rather than uniting.
  - xxii. A need to recognize worship styles have done more to divide the church than to unify it.
  - xxiii. A need to understand that the hesitancy to open may have closed the doors to an alternative service.
  - xxiv.** And need to recognize that the music program has lost staff because of financial challenges and concerns.
  - xxv. A need to understand that the removal of the pews was disruptive for some.
  - xxvi. A need to realize that the church is big enough that it is difficult to know everyone and stay connected.

**c. Hope/Vision**

- i. A need to maintain both services and bring them together occasionally.
- ii. A need to accept the alternative service and to let those who appreciate it have a say.
- iii. A need for alternative church and traditional church to be together but to address the music that goes on and on and on.

- iv. A need for the church to be whole not separated and find a way to worship together.
- v. A need for a strong alternative service and a strong traditional service and find ways to come together four times a year.
- vi. A need to get the alternative service up and running.
- vii. A need to keep the two worship services separate as they are too different (organ versus guitars).
- viii. A need to understand why the alternative service needs to be change
- ix. A need for more creative scheduling and planning worship services to allow for as many different options for people as possible without conflict.
- x. A need for the church to have a traditional service.
- xi. A need to have a unified church with different worship styles.
- xii. A need to recognize that people have a variety of tastes regarding worship.
- xiii. A need to recognize the importance of the alternative service.
- xiv. A need to be whole and worship.
- xv. A need to find ways to praise God better and ask, “Why do we worship?” “Do we worship to make ourselves happy?” or “Do we worship to praise God?” OK
- xvi. A need to recognize that we have the capacity to worship in many ways as one body.
- xvii. A need to switch up in one service rather than splitting the church into two separate services.
- xviii. A need to recognize worship is to challenge me not to make me feel good.
- xix. A need to teach children music.
- xx. A need to revive the music program.
- xxi. A need to have interactive components as part of the service.
- xxii. A need to have separate pastors for separate services.
- xxiii. A need to recognize that some prefer the versatility and comfortableness of chairs in the sanctuary.
- xxiv. A need to build unity through mission while maintaining separate services.
- xxv. A need for the church to be more unified. Example pews and children in the sanctuary.

#### **4) Youth/Children/Families**

##### **a. Celebration**

- i. A need to recognize that children's ministry was up and running from day one during the pandemic.

##### **b. Grief/Loss**

- i. A need to recognize the competition for families with other activities such as sports, etc.
- ii. A need to recognize that there has been a reduction in programming for children such as childcare that affects family participation.
- iii. A need to recognize that the decline in youth and children ministry is due to the decline of young families.
- iv. A need to grieve the declining youth service.



- v. A need to recognize that participation in the children and youth programs has declined.
  - vi. A need to grieve the loss of the youth choir.
  - vii. A need to recognize that things like the loss of the youth choir cannot be attributed to Jan.
  - viii. A need to recognize and grieve the loss of the youth programs.
  - ix. A need to recognize Zoom was overbearing for children.
  - x. A need to recognize families have lost the need to see the importance of faith formation.
  - xi. A need to grieve the loss of the youth choir.
- c. Hope/Vision**
- i. A need to develop intergenerational programs.
  - ii. A need to bring in new young families.
  - iii. A need to recognize there are successful youth groups around.
  - iv. A need to integrate children and youth into worship.
  - v. A need to build community that is conducive to young families.
  - vi. A need to focus on young mothers and children.
  - vii. A need to get the kids youth choir started up and to bring parents along with them.
  - viii. A need to recognize that young people often feel uncomfortable in traditional services, lecture style sermons, long services, and traditional music.
  - ix. A need to be a family-oriented church.
  - x. A need to recognize that family structures are different than they were longer ago.
  - xi. A need to design programs that allow families to participate.
  - xii. A need to have a joint service with children.
  - xiii. A need for the church to help families with their kids.
  - xiv. A need to address the involvement of children.
  - xv. A need to consider how to get young people back to church.
  - xvi. A need to find hope in finding a way forward that involves young people and those who have left.
  - xvii. A need for more young families if the church is going to grow.

## **5) Membership**

### **a. Grief/Loss**

- i. A need to grieve those who have chosen to attend elsewhere.
- ii. A need to recognize the downward trend in membership because of the current world situation.
- iii. A need to recognize and grieve the loss of members.
- iv. A need to understand it will be extremely difficult to get people into the church.
- v. A need to realize we have lost members and get moving to stop the loss and get them back.
- vi. A need to recognize there is little optimism among the old as the membership is declining.

- vii. A need to recognize that the loss of membership is distressing and disturbing to some.
- viii. A need to be informed to serve the church and to know what is happening. “Where have former members gone and why?”
- ix. A need to recognize there has been a loss of members which has brought grief to the church.
- x. A need to acknowledge the hurt many are experiencing due to the loss of members and friends.
- xi. A need to recognize members had been leaving the church even before COVID.
- xii. A need to recognize the downward trend has been going on for many years period.
- xiii. A need to grieve the lack of attendance in Sunday services.
- xiv. A need to recognize that the decline in membership and finances has been occurring before COVID ever began.
- xv. A need to recognize that people have left because of the circumstance surrounding the previous pastor—Jack Haberer.
- xvi. A need to recognize the general division one way or another.
- xvii. A need to recognize attendance has gone from 30% to 20%.
- xviii. A need to grieve the loss of those who have chosen not to go through the process.

*b. Hope/Vision*

- i.* A need to work hard to get people back into the church because everything is so difficult and so different.
- ii.* A need for a dynamic pastor to bring people back.
- iii.* A need to understand the link between the worship service and the loss of membership. “Why are numbers down?”
- iv.* A need to address the loss of membership.
- v.* A need for effective preaching to draw new people and old ones back.
- vi.* A need to ask, “Why have we lost so many members?”
- vii.* A need to find ways to draw people back who have left.
- viii.* A need to recognize that some of the decline in attendance is due to the lack of a separate alternative service.
- ix.* A need to know where the people have gone who have left and that will tell us where the problem is.
- x.* A need for accountability.
- xi.* And need for people to be contacted when they leave.
- xii.* A need to ask where did all the people go?

## **6) Education/Sermons/Inspiration**

*a. Celebration*

- i.* A need to celebrate Mary Jo's Bible study.
- ii.* A need to recognize the connection that comes from Mary Jo's Bible study.

*b. Hurts/Grief/Loss*

- i.* A need to avoid political opinions from the staff and pulpit.
- ii.* A need to avoid chastisement from the pulpit.

- iii. A need to recognize that education has been lacking.
  - iv. A need for a pastor to preach uplifting sermons.
  - v. A need for more inspirational sermons.
  - vi. A need to recognize the difference between inspirational and denigrating sermons.
  - vii. A need for sermons to be inspirational.
  - viii. A need to acknowledge that demeaning language or being told that you are broken is not uplifting.
  - ix. A need to recognize that the presentation on the history of ministers was unprofessional.
  - x. A need to leave politics out of the church.
  - xi. A need to refrain from political statements that supposedly represents the entire church.
  - xii. A need to exclude politics from the church.
  - xiii. A need to address worldly issues without including politics.
  - xiv. A need for the pulpit not to become a bully pulpit.
  - xv. A need to recognize that sermons have not been as encouraging as they could be.
  - xvi. A need to recognize that there has been an overemphasis on politics from the pulpit.
  - xvii. A need to avoid politics in the pulpit.
- c. *Hope/Vision*
- i. A need to recognize that people come to church to be inspired.
  - ii. A need to improve sermons and have a fresh message.
  - iii. A need for members to have a deeper interest in studying the Bible. “We used to have better exegesis scholars within the church leadership but have lost that depth.”
  - iv. A need to have preaching that offers depth and substance without simply repeating the scripture.
  - v. A need for better Bible study adult education in Sunday school classes and to bring in more guest speakers.
  - vi. A need for more inspirational sermons.
  - vii. A need for good teaching and preaching from the lead pastor.
  - viii. A need for Sunday worship to be more enriching.
  - ix. A need to maintain the Stevens ministry.
  - x. A need for sermons that consider peoples’ attention spans.
  - xi. A need for sermons that address current issues in a non-divisive manner.
  - xii. A need for an emphasis on contemporary issues instead of old Bible stories.
  - xiii. A need for the pastor to provide inspiring sermons.
  - xiv. A need to talk about over the pulpit what it means to follow Jesus.
  - xv. A need to continue and emphasis on Bible studies.
  - xvi. A need to minister to the entire congregation.
  - xvii. A need for encouraging and inspiring sermons.

## 7) Theology

- a. A need to focus on the basics.
- b. A need to focus on the gospel.
- c. A need for clear theological teaching on how to relate to the world around us.
- d. A need to ask what the fundamental beliefs and teachings of FPCA entail.
- e. A need for a deeper theology that is relevant to the church today.
- f. A need to allow pastors to do theological work.

## 8) Communication/Listening to Congregation

### a. *Need or leaders to listen*

- i. A need to hear the voice of the congregation.
- ii. A need to pay attention to what people are saying.
- iii. A need to value and listen to the voices of all the people in the congregation.
- iv. A need to recognize that we all have our own truth and some truths have been disenfranchised.
- v. A need to know that LMPC's process is not attracting all members participation and that we must find ways to get a more diverse voice in the process.
- vi. A need to recognize that it's important to hear what others have said.
- vii. A need for paid employees to be more attentive to the voice of the church.
- viii. A need for people to be heard.
- ix. A need for pastors to meet and listen to members.
- x. A need to recognize that members have tried to reach out to the ministers but have been silenced or ignored.
- xi. A need to re-create a place where people can talk about difficult topics.
- xii. A need for people's ideas on mission to be heard.
- xiii. A need to recognize that the communication between leadership and the congregation has declined.
- xiv. A need for the leadership to listen and respond to members concerns.
- xv. A need to find and revive existing organizational documents and put them into practice.
- xvi. A need for better communication—"The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is up to" in a negative way.
- xvii. A need to listen deeply and responsively to various voices within the congregation.

### b. *Need for leaders to speak*

- i. A need for pastors to address the entire congregation not just those who agree with them.
- ii. A need for leadership to have better education on important matters and issues.
- iii. A need to be transparent and honest in communication.
- iv. A need to articulate changes to help people accept them.
- v. A need to recognize that the lack of communication causes talk and rumors.
- vi. A need for better communication on the forms of worship—"What are we doing and why?"
- vii. A need for session meeting notes to be more fully reported.

- viii. A need for session to be open according to the book of order.
- ix. A need for leadership to be more open in its communication with members by being more transparent sharing more openly and with no closed meetings.
- x. A need for a connection between the presbytery and FPCA.
- xi. A need for clear documentation and accountability from the leadership.
- xii. A need for session to be more transparent.
- xiii. A need for better more transparent communication. Example, the need for a new directory.

*c. Decision-making*

- i.* A need for a broader involvement in decision making and vision making.
- ii.* A need for people to have a voice in decision making such as the removal of the pews.
- iii.* A need to have better communication and think about “why the pews have been moved, what was the reason and who made the decision?”
- iv.* A need to recognize that people feel like they had no choice indecisions.
- v.* A need to disclose the process of decision making.

*d. Congregational responsibilities*

- i.* A need to read communication to stay informed as it's made available.
- ii.* A need to improve communication on what FPCA has to offer.
- iii.* A need for the congregation to listen to the communication that is being offered by leadership.
- iv.* A need to recognize the dual problem of lack of communication resources (staff, technology) and the congregation not listening well to the communication that is being offered.
- v.* A need to realize that communication is a two-way street.
- vi.* A need for healing.
- vii.* A need for people to understand Presbyterian polity and people want to micromanage.
- viii.* A need for people to understand how polity works.
- ix.* A need to recognize that it goes both ways that people have power but they do not have too much power.
- x.* A need to recognize that our privilege has allowed us to hide in silos.

## **9) Transition/Lead Pastor**

*a. Celebrations*

- i.* A need to recognize that there is a great committed group in leadership.
- ii.* A need to recognize that there is an openness to change as exemplified by the appointment of current clergy.
- iii.* A need to recognize the church has benefited from female leadership.

*b. Grief/Loss/Hurt*

- i.* A need to recognize the many transitions in leadership in a short time and how that has affected the continuity and stability of the church.
- ii.* A need to review the way the 70 members were called in after their letter came to the leadership and how they were interviewed.

- iii. A need to see the misfit of the pastor with the church and how it has been divisive.
- iv. A need to recognize that the vision and mission is being lost through the process of transition.
- v. A need to understand the pain that Jan has been subjected to.
- vi. A need to recognize that it feels like transition is a perpetual process.
- vii. A need to recognize that the transition is way too long and the current pastor is not a transitional pastor.

*c. Hope/Vision*

- i.* A need for a successful transition in a timely manner.
- ii.* A need to recognize that current leadership will no longer be here five years from now.
- iii.* A need for continuity in mission and leadership.
- iv.* A need to have stated goals in the transition.
- v.* A need to find a new lead pastor.
- vi.* A need to have a good process to find the right person to be the next pastor.
- vii.* A need to choose the PNC carefully in order to be able to make good decisions.
- viii.* A need to be quicker in getting together a PNC and not drag our feet.
- ix.* A need to understand that for the congregation to be settled and new lead pastor needs to be identified and hired.
- x.* A need for the interim period to look at the way things are and shake things up.
- xi.* A need for leadership to meet all the subsets of the church and have confidence in the PNC to bring someone good to the church.
- xii.* A need to describe the leadership as interim not as transitional; we are waiting way too long to put together a PNC.
- xiii.* A need for the transition to be quicker; "We've wasted a year." "We need to manage the transition."
- xiv.* A need to recognize that pastors are people.
- xv.* A need for the transition to move ahead as soon as possible because we have an opportunity to rethink who we are and what we do.
- xvi.* A need for leadership that is dynamic in leading the way forward.
- xvii.* A need for people to understand what Jan's role is presently.
- xviii.* A need for consistent leadership.

## **10) Finances/Stewardship**

*a. Loss/Grief*

- i.* A need to know that giving is way down.
- ii.* A need to realize financial giving will decrease enforce us to eat into our foundation.
- iii.* A need to recognize the reality of digital worship which translates into a loss of tithes.
- iv.* A need to fully understand the real numbers of membership giving and pledges to see the full picture.
- v.* A need to recognize that there has been a loss of resources such as finances talents and gifts.

- vi. A need to recognize that the financial situation is creating stress for those managing the finances.
- vii. A need to recognize and grieve the decline in financial giving.
- viii. A need to recognize that the financial decline has been going on for 10 to 15 years.

*b. Hope/Vision*

- i.* A need to revisit how the budget and finances are structured. “Are pledge is relevant anymore?”
- ii.* A need for the church to find a way to flourish again through its giving programs and committees.
- iii.* A need for funding to be designated for specific projects as a new way of raising funds.
- iv.* A need for responsible financial stewardship by living within our means.  
A need to recognize that there are financial challenges ahead.

### **11) Campus/Physical Plant**

- i.* A need for a long-term vision for the campus.
- ii.* A need to recognize the size of the campus has an impact on finances vision and mission.
- iii.* A need for the fellowship hall to be available for dinners and youth club.
- iv.* A need to understand that the funds to fix the roof were slow in coming and stretched out.
- v.* A need for repairs can be made so that things can become settled.
- vi.* A need to keep up the facilities.
- vii.* A need to recognize that the building is aging and will take a lot of care in the future.

### **12) History/Reputation**

*a. Celebration*

- i.* A need to recognize that past leaders have had various styles of leading. Example, CEO, collaborative, etc.
- ii.* A need to recognize that the church does a lot of things really well.
- iii.* A need to recognize that we have had it good for so long.

*b. Grief/Loss*

- i.* A need to realize it's difficult to let the past go.
- ii.* A need to understand that past experiences need to be known—past conflicts, list of histories, and why people have left.
- iii.* A need to recognize there was a terrible shake up with Ron Allen, the moderator of session was there from Dr Easton and tried to maintain the status quo.
- iv.* A need to remember the tough transitions; problems were always there and we need to learn to give and take in conflict.
- v.* A need to forget the past and be willing to grow and be forward thinking.
- vi.* A need to recognize that the experience of choosing Jack Haberer was a difficult and painful time.

- vii. A need to recognize that there was personal loss when pastors left in the past leaving some to feel confused and bewildered.
- viii. A need to recognize that we will not be able to or want to go back to what the church was 20 years ago.

### 13) Conflict/Change/Discomfort/Fear/COVID

#### a. Change/Fear

- i. A need to adapt to the changes in the world community and society.
- ii. A need to be patient with leadership in implementing change.
- iii. A need to recognize people have a sense of loss—not a fear of change.
- iv. A need to recognize these are times for big changes.
- v. A need to recognize that programs and services people came to FPCA for are no longer available.
- vi. A need to recognize change can be very productive.
- vii. A need to recognize the church and society has changed over the years.
- viii. A need to recognize that people are open to change but it matters how we go about it.
- ix. A need to build relationships before introducing change.
- x. A need to focus on the future rather than the past.
  - a. A need to realize people's habits have been shifted.
- xi. A need to recognize the efforts made to change even though they may not have been very successful.
- xii. A need to be prepared for necessary changes.
- xiii. A need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.
- xiv. A need to find a scriptural basis on how to handle our discomfort.
- xv. A need to understand that people can fall through the cracks during change.
- xvi. A need to recognize the loss that has occurred over the past number of years.
- xvii. A need for the pastoral staff to help the congregation be grounded for the change that the church will undergo.
- xviii. A need to recognize that pastors have failed to ground change theologically.
- xix. A need for people to “stick it through” the rough times of change and transition.
- xx. A need to recognize that the church has been impacted by the secularization of society.
- xxi. A need to recognize that the church has been changing since 2000.
- xxii. A need to understand that uncertainty creates discomfort.
- xxiii. A need to understand that change is difficult.
- xxiv. A need to understand that the culture of the world is affecting the culture of the church rather than the church affecting the culture of the world.
- xxv. A need to see that we are a transitional people.

#### b. COVID

- i. A need to recognize the loss and grief of what FPC a was prior to COVID five years ago.
- ii. A need to recognize that it is difficult to evaluate where the congregation is during an interim plus COVID.



- iii. A need to recognize that the church had a vision for change just prior to COVID but it was disrupted—*Canoeing the Mountain*.
- iv. A need to recognize that COVID has been difficult for leadership.
- v. A need to recognize Jan had to deal with COVID before getting to know the church.
- vi. A need to understand that COVID pushed our time frame back to get a settled pastor.
- vii. A need to give credit to the clergy for adding electronics through COVID even though it was not perfect but they tried to get it right.
- viii. A need to address problems without blaming COVID and not compare ourselves to others that are doing better.
- ix. A need to recognize that COVID may have impacted the loss of membership through hybrid services affecting the sustainability of the church.
- x. A need to recognize the church has been adrift in the past number of years, that members have been lost, there's been confusion, there's been grief, there's been no imagination, and COVID has exacerbated all of this.
- xi. A need to restart after the pandemic.
- xii. A need to recognize that it has been difficult during changing and challenging times.
- xiii. A need to recognize COVID propelled the church into a blended service.
- xiv. A need to have patient through change especially the pandemic.
- xv. A need to recognize that communication has been difficult through the changes over the past several years.
- xvi. A need to recognize COVID has “mucked things up.”
- xvii. A need to recognize COVID has stalled or accelerated changes in the vitality and stagnation of the church.
- xviii. A need to ask how we are going to be together after COVID.
- xix. A need to revive or reimagine what we'll bring spiritual vitality as it was experienced before COVID.
- xx. A need to recognize that COVID has exposed two groups of people—people who want to come back and people who want to stay home.
- xxi. A need to recognize that some have left because they thought COVID was mishandled.
- xxii. A need to recognize the church looks very different this side of the pandemic.
- xxiii. A need to recognize that pastors have been very supportive during difficult times period.
- xxiv. A need to acknowledge that leadership was innovative technologically during COVID.
- xxv. A need to recognize the services have been lackluster during COVID.
- xxvi. A need to recognize that COVID provided a great time to experiment.
- xxvii. A need to ask, “How do we encourage pre-pandemic people to come back to faith formation?”
- xxviii. A need to recognize we are being challenged by God during this time.
- xxix. A need to recognize that natural disasters do not create disparities they expose them.

- xxx. A need to recognize people are exhausted.
- xxxi. A need to recognize that the path to normal is not achievable.
- xxxii. A need to recognize that the old normal is not sustainable in the future.
- xxxiii. A need to recognize that faith is for times like this.
- xxxiv. A need to recognize that there is opportunity in the challenge.
- xxxv. A need to recognize the pandemic has not been kind to music.
- xxxvi. A need to recognize that people in small groups the choir and mission outreach continued to meet during the pandemic in meaningful ways.
- xxxvii. A need to be grateful for the opportunity of being an elder during COVID especially during Jack's departure.
- xxxviii. A need to be concerned for our leaders because they are experiencing unprecedented times.

*c. Conflict*

- i.* A need to recognize there is a difference between conflict and having a different opinion.
- ii.* A need to understand what the conflict is about.
- iii.* A need to recognize ministry is dangerous.
- iv.* A need to be patient in working with and through conflict.
- v.* A need to have courage and grace to engage the process.
- vi.* A need to understand that conflict is a new concept to the church and that it has not been talked about.
- vii.* A need to understand the why of the conflict, what is wrong, and why all the negativity.
- viii.* A need to rethink the conflict talk and language.
- ix.* A need to recognize that conflict and different opinions are not the same thing; we do not have conflict.
- x.* A need to give and take to survive.
- xi.* A need to recognize the deep concerns about the church.
- xii.* A need to be able to dialogue on tough topics such as social justice issues.
- xiii.* A need to move beyond the language of conflict.
- xiv.* A need to recognize that conflict handled well is not bad.
- xv.* A need to recognize that until the process that people were not aware of conflict.
- xvi.* A need to recognize that conflict is not a big issue.
- xvii.* A need to recognize that there are benefits to bringing out conflict.

## **14) Diversity/Friendliness/Welcoming**

*a. Celebrations*

- i.* A need to celebrate our commonalities.
- ii.* A need to recognize that the option of Zoom has provided ways for the church to be more inclusive.
- iii.* A need to recognize there has always been a variety of perspectives at FPCA.

*b. Hurts/Grief/Loss*

- i.* A need to recognize that we give them (Arabic and Chin Burmese) space that we are not truly a diverse congregation.

- ii. A need to recognize that the current political environment has a detrimental and parallel affect in the church.
- iii. A need to recognize that political views from the office upset people.
- iv. A need to recognize people have left because the emphasis of the sermon has focused too much on social issues.
- v. A need to recognize that there is a lack of diversity in spite of our idea that we are diverse.
- vi. A need to recognize that there is less separation between the church and politics or state. The church has gotten on the bandwagon.
- vii. A need to think about whether the attempt to be inclusive is actually divisive.
- viii. A need to recognize that the church is not welcoming to new people.
- ix. A need to recognize that there is a gap in generations.
- x. A need to recognize that there is a lack of compromise among people.
- xi. A need to recognize pastors need to address social issues but they need to do it in ways that do not offend people.
- xii. A need to understand that political statements are divisive.

*c. Hope/Vision*

- i.* A need to recognize that diversity creates challenges opportunities and conflict.
- ii.* A need to become a warm and accepting church to younger families and people.
- iii.* A need to see and understand each other's views.
- iv.* A need to have ways to be more welcoming to new members.
- v.* A need to welcome people where they're at and make them feel like they're included.
- vi.* A need to find unity in the midst of our different preferences.
- vii.* A need for people who enter to know that they are loved.
- viii.* A need to have harmony.
- ix.* A need to recognize it's hard to please everyone.
- x.* A need to recognize that positions of leadership are not to be used to promote one's own political views or perspectives.
- xi.* A need to recognize that differences do not mean that people are good or bad.
- xii.* A need for all groups to come together. "We need to walk the walk not just talk the talk" when thinking about diversity.
- xiii.* A need for the church to pay attention to its future in allowing for various perspectives.
- xiv.* A need to put the talk of diversity into practice.
- xv.* A need to separate politics from the church. Example, flashlight service celebrating Biden's victory.
- xvi.* A need to be more welcoming and to avoid cliques.
- xvii.* A need to live out our Christian commitment despite our differences.
- xviii.* A need to have effective preaching that avoids political overtones.
- xix.* A need for a church not a red church or a blue church just a church.

## **15) Volunteerism/Staffing/Resources**

### *a. Celebrations*

- i. A need to recognize that FPCA is full of carrying God fearing people.
  - ii. A need to be grateful for the amazing resources that FPCA has to offer.
  - iii. A need to recognize that the people are an amazing resource.
- b. Grief/Loss*
- i. A need to acknowledge and grieve the loss of staff.
  - ii. A need to understand why members and staff have departed.
  - iii. A need to recognize that there is not enough energy to keep up with ourselves.
  - iv. A need to recognize that church growth is a challenge everywhere.
  - v. A need to recognize finding volunteers is difficult everywhere not just in the church.
- c. Hope/Vision*
- i. A need to recognize current activities require a lot of energy that take away from more relevant activities such as the food truck festival versus the trunk or treat event.
  - ii. A need to rethink how we handle resources staffing and volunteers.
  - iii. A need for a better volunteer program to fill the holes.
  - iv. A need for local mission to be reinvigorated and invite volunteers to get involved as times have changed.
  - v. A need for more flowers at church.
  - vi. A need for people to be allowed to be involved in ministry.
  - vii. A need for stability of the staff in order to provide continuity.
  - viii. A need to reward and create community for those who volunteer.
  - ix. A need to prioritize what the church will be involved with going forward.
  - x. A need for the trustee committee to be reinstated.
  - xi. A need for more volunteers who will then take ownership.
  - xii. A need to think about ways to increase connectivity through meals volunteers, leadership, etc.
  - xiii. A need to find ways to get people more invested in the church.
  - xiv. A need for short term volunteers to provide better opportunities for families.
  - xv. A need to find time for members to be involved in helping create a church service.
  - xvi. A need to involve people in their particular interests.
  - xvii. A need for people to get people plugged in according to their skills gifts and talents.
  - xviii. A need for more participation in mission outreach.
  - xix. A need for people to find a niche in the church whether it be choir small groups or mission outreach.
  - xx. A need to get more people involved in volunteering and programs and events.
  - xxi. A need to increase volunteerism for programs.
  - xxii. A need for people to show up and help out.
  - xxiii. A need for more volunteers to run selected programs.
  - xxiv. A need to be selective in the kind of projects we choose to be involved in.
  - xxv. A need to consider with whether new projects are sustainable. "What will we give up so that we can take on a new project?"