

Where God is Calling Us

Long-Range Planning Committee Report

***Received and Adopted by the Georgetown Presbyterian Church Session
December 16, 2022***

Worship, Connect, Learn, Serve

1. Introduction

This report is the culmination of a discernment process undertaken this year to determine together God’s call for our church for the next five to ten years. It represents a synthesis of what the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRP) learned from listening sessions with the congregation, comments on an interim report the LRP distributed to staff and the congregation on those listening sessions; the congregation-wide CAT survey and its interpretation by the presbytery; and an assessment of GPC’s capacity in terms of time, talent, energy, and financial resources.

The LRP was launched by the session in 2018 with a focus on preparing for our 250th anniversary in 2030. It was first envisioned that the anniversary could be the catalyst for launching a big initiative that may involve a capital campaign for yet-to-be determined purposes. In 2021 our pastors encouraged the committee to pivot away from the longer-term 250th anniversary focus, sensing that the mood of the congregation had changed due to the urgent needs in our community and beyond, which had been laid bare by the pandemic, its economic fallout, and widespread racial unrest. In early 2022, the LRP initiated the current process, which proved this suggested pivot to be spot-on.

2. Key Findings

In both the listening sessions and the CAT, the congregation expressed widespread concern about the various needs among marginalized people, particularly food and housing insecurity, education gaps, and racial divides. Participants noted repeatedly that the needs are great, and they believe that as a congregation we have the resources to respond. Similarly, the CAT results showed that the congregation has a strong desire to put more energy into external outreach for those on the margins of society. (See summary of the CAT in Attachment 1).

At the same time, both the listening sessions and the CAT brought up internal issues that deserve attention. The need for deeper connection came up often, as did the desire to ensure that we are caring for our own members. We want to preserve and nurture what we love about our church, while focusing more intentionally on strengthening our connections with, and care

for, one another. We want to continue to be grounded in scripture, and deepen our own understanding of what scripture calls us to do in the world today.

There is a joyous synergy in these findings. We want to do more to lift up those who are suffering in our community and the world, but we recognize that to do so, we must be nourished by deeper congregational connections and strong spiritual grounding. Together and in community, we can do significantly more service alongside those with greater needs.

3. Recommendations

The LRP has developed a number of recommendations for the consideration of church leadership. These are based on what we heard members express in the listening sessions and follow-up conversations with the congregation, as well as the CAT survey. These recommendations set out steps we believe will help us become the church we long for, and that God is calling us to be. The recommendations also factor in considerations about the practical capacity of our church to accomplish our aspirations. The recommendations are organized into groupings aligned with the major themes that emerged in our research.

a. Celebrate and nurture what is working well

Participants in the listening sessions were quick to list many things they value about GPC, beginning with the quality of our worship services and music. We treasure our pastors' theological approach to worship, and find their sermons inspiring. We appreciate our long history that grounds us, and our beautiful building in a vibrant neighborhood. People value our worship traditions, including sermons based on scripture and praising God through joyful music.

Similarly, the CAT results showed high satisfaction with our worship and music traditions. Importantly, it also highlighted that GPC is a very clergy-centered congregation, meaning that members will be more energized by initiatives that have the visible endorsement of our pastors. We do not necessarily expect the clergy to carry the weight of implementing the initiatives, in fact we will be most energized if we see that church leadership (e.g., elders and deacons) is also supporting and implementing our mission. But we need regular communication from our pastors about their commitment to our mission and vision. Lacking that pastoral leadership, initiatives are more likely to languish.

In the context of pastoral leadership, it is worth noting (and is further elaborated in a later section) that when the word from the pulpit is consistently framed in Biblical terms, it helps us trust the more difficult messages. It is not an overstatement to say that the listening sessions and the CAT show that we flourish when our pastors help us understand, through scripture, how to do God's work in the world and how our lives are shaped as followers of Christ.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and church leadership:

- Consider ways that pastors can leverage their role to foster more meaningful relationships, lead us to be better Christians in today's world, expand congregational

support for external mission programs, set a tone for spiritual generosity, and address other priorities the congregation has expressed. Given members' passion for the worship experience in particular, consider how these goals can be woven into Sunday services.

- Consider ways to encourage people to come back to in-person worship. Some may be simply experiencing inertia, and need a nudge. Their presence in the sanctuary will be spiritually rewarding to them as well as for the entire congregation. For those that have health or family reasons to continue worshipping remotely, consider more ways to connect with them.

b. Strengthen member connections

The need for connection came up over and over in the listening sessions. We value the connections through faith that we make with one another, and we long for more and deeper opportunities for fellowship. We want to ensure all our members feel a sense of belonging. We desire a restoration of the community feel that we lost when worship and other church activities were virtual.

The CAT results underscored that members are longing for deeper connection. One aspect that came through loud and clear is that people want to be sure we are caring for our own members in need. It is likely we have people in the congregation that are feeling disconnected, and also that may have pastoral needs we do not know about. In addition, we want to be sure our older members, especially those who are home-bound, are receiving outreach. We are a congregation that wants to support one another, but we are uncertain that all needs are being identified, and we want to be sure there is a pastoral plan to address those needs.

In terms of connections with one another, while we see ourselves as a warm, friendly congregation, and in fact we hear this often from new members and visitors, the CAT results suggest that the relationships are at more of a surface level than we may think. We are not always clear on how to break through that and develop more meaningful relationships. We feel vulnerable to opening up even though we desire closer connections.

Finally, one issue that was often raised is that our church is politically diverse, which most of us appreciate, but also creates some tension. Many of us have taken pride in "checking our politics at the door". But often that leads to just avoiding discussing difficult issues. In the recent few years of increased political divisiveness in our country and our community, this tacit agreement to avoid politics at church may be costing us more than we realize. We desire closer connections, but we are holding back on talking about issues that have become very important to us personally, for fear of how that conversation might go.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and church leadership:

- Focus on nurturing and maintaining connectedness

- Encourage the deacons to embrace their key leadership role in nurturing connections.
- Encourage all church officers to personally build connections at every opportunity
- Review the approach to pastoral care to ensure those in the church going through difficult times are identified, and receive outreach.
 - Ensure there is a plan to provide such care. Share it with the congregation, including roles of pastors, officers, and others, so there is agreement on, and transparency of, expectations.
- Be more intentional about creating opportunities for fellowship and connection within the church, including across generations. Recognize that the needs and desires of members may be different than pre-pandemic, and we may need to iterate toward a new normal. Hospitality is key here, but it is not everything.
 - Consider ways to foster building deeper connections, such as sharing one another's stories.
 - Develop ways to help the congregation learn to engage in constructive dialog on difficult issues.

c. Deepen our understanding of how scripture connects us to the world today

We are a community of life-long learners. A number of people commented on the intellectual curiosity of the congregation, and its willingness to be self-reflective. We want to draw a connection between our spiritual development and our collective role in the world. Many participants lauded the educational programs over the last two years on racial disparities, and would like to see those continue. Washington DC, with nearly half its residents Black, was hit especially hard by the events of the past few years. We want to be relevant in our city, to be challenged to become more faithful Christians, and to live according to our faith. And we want this challenge to be done in community with each other.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and church leadership:

- Provide opportunities to learn about racial and economic disparities in our community, understand root causes, and consider what scripture calls us to do.
 - Consider town halls or panel discussions on the nature and impact of racial disparities in DC
 - Consider ways we can leverage our relationship with Mount Zion's so that we can develop peer relationships with congregants that have different lived

experiences from most of us. Consider developing similar relationships with other historically Black congregations in our community. Find opportunities to connect on shared mission projects, education sessions, group discussions, and the like.

- Form a task force to explore, in consultation with the Heritage Committee, our church's historical relationship with slavery and with the significant number of free Blacks that lived in Georgetown prior to, and after, the civil war.
- Continue to provide adult education programming and bible studies, seeking approaches that are accessible to more members.
- Explore additional opportunities for spiritual growth such as
 - Disciple classes, or other spiritual formation classes
 - Thematic bible studies on connectedness; vulnerability; marginalized people; racial reconciliation
 - Additional prayer groups

d. Expand GPC's impact in the world

From the listening sessions, we know that GPC members believe that serving others is fundamental to doing God's work in the world, and they expressed a great deal of gratitude for the mission work GPC does. However, there was a clear call to do more, especially after witnessing the impact of the recent pandemic, economic upheaval and racial discrimination on our community and beyond. Members want to respond by expanding the service we do for and with communities outside our church, and they believe that as a congregation we have the resources – time, talent, and treasure – to do so. Members also desire to learn more about the communities we serve as well as our mission partners. This will help our work be more impactful, as well as fulfill us spiritually.

This call to do more mission activities was echoed in the CAT, in which members expressed a strong desire to place more energy into external ministries that provide services to those living on the margins of society. In fact, compared to other churches taking the CAT, GPC members ranked this priority unusually high.

A key question is whether our church has the financial resources and the energy to accomplish this goal. The CAT did not provide specific data on either, although respondents did indicate they definitely would be willing to contribute both more money and more volunteer time to support deepening our mission work.

With respect to financial resources, clearly a bold increase in mission activities has a budget impact, which must be met by either a similar increase in stewardship giving, or by use of invested funds, or some combination of the two. The LRP is currently working with the Finance,

Stewardship, and Building and Grounds committees to evaluate what steps need to be taken to provide GPC the financial capacity to undertake additional external mission spending. This work is described in the next section.

With respect to energy, comments to the LRP from the listening sessions, data from the CAT, and GPC's historical record of commitment to mission, all suggest a growing mission program will easily create its own energy, provided our pastors are visibly enthusiastic and volunteer opportunities involve members working together, in community.

The Mission Committee of the session has already taken a step in the direction of deepening GPC's mission commitment. In 2021, in light of the ongoing economic hardships made worse by the pandemic, the session approved the Mission Committee's recommendation to provide \$135,000 for direct income payments to 20 families from Excel Academy. This special contribution, made from GPC's invested funds, was part of a coalition of nonprofits coming together to lift up families in southeast DC.

In 2022, the Mission Committee spent time developing a Vision and Values Statement (Attachment 2), which outlines their principles of engagement with mission partners. In the statement, the Mission Committee makes a number of commitments, including:

- Engaging the congregation in addressing the needs of vulnerable children and families, including those who have endured poverty, racism, and generations of neglect from our larger community, or who have been affected or displaced by violence and conflict
- Interacting with our mission partners and their communities with respect
- Ensuring each mission activity selected provides our congregation opportunities to serve in expanded fellowship with one another

GPC's Mission Committee already has established relationships with several organizations that meet their principles of engagement, including nonprofit organizations that can help leverage GPC's contributions and efforts. Dozens of volunteers at GPC have been involved with and are energized and excited about supporting these missions. This is a very strong base from which GPC can expand its impact in the world.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and church leadership:

- Embrace the Mission Committee's new Mission and Values Statement, which clarifies for the congregation the committee's principles for engagement with mission partners.
- Expand the impact on our community and the world by doubling the congregation's mission giving by 2025. In 2022, the budget allocated to mission activities is \$125,000, or roughly 10% of GPC's operating budget. Commit to double this to \$250,000 by 2025. This budget increase will enable the Mission Committee to commensurately ramp up the church's investments in our major mission areas, which are:

- Housing refugees
- Supporting vulnerable families and schools in DC
- Alleviating housing and food insecurity
- Supporting education of children in Africa
- Consider various means to increase member connection and engagement in mission work:
 - Improve transparency of mission activities and congregational awareness of mission volunteer opportunities
 - Consider restructuring of the Mission Committee to ensure “ownership” of various mission activities is broadened beyond church leadership
 - Develop and continue hands-on service opportunities for members of all “ages and stages” that recognizes members have varying schedules and preferences for volunteer activities.
 - Create a process to involve new members in mission
 - Return to including “time and talent” on pledge cards
 - Include opportunities for families to serve together, and involve children’s ministry
- Explore options for impact investing so that our capital funds can do good in the world at the same time we are being responsible stewards of our funds.

e. Strengthen our church’s capacity and financial resiliency

In the listening sessions, we asked people to dream big about the future of our church. To evaluate the capacity of our church to realize these dreams, LRP looked at GPC’s current and projected financial stability by reviewing the patterns in our revenue, and also the potential demands on our invested funds.

The Presbyterian Foundation Giving Analysis for GPC for 2021 suggests that the congregation has not established a pattern of personally meaningful giving across the age bands represented in the analysis. Neither does the median gift across all family units that give reflect what would be expected by the community prosperity of the zip codes in which the majority of the members reside. The giving analysis also suggests that the annual stewardship results rely disproportionately on a few families in the upper age brackets. That is a risky model for continued financial stability in light of its potential for abrupt and permanent change. The congregation could not operate at an equivalent scope without them. At the same time, 60% of families give nominally or not at all. (See summary of the Giving Analysis in Attachment 3.)

While GPC has what appears to be ample invested funds (approximately \$3 million as of this writing), there are many sources of potential threats to the stability of those funds, including market volatility, the upkeep of our 201-year-old building, and other expected and unexpected expenses.

The LRP has been working with the Finance and Building and Grounds committees to develop a framework for evaluating potential draws related to building upkeep. A building audit is currently underway, which will yield projected upkeep expenses over time. Potential expenses unrelated to the building maintenance should also be mapped out. These should include resources needed to implement recommendations in this report. The only proposal in this report for which the cost has been identified is in the mission area, but other initiatives may have cost implications such as staff support and the like.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and church leadership:

- Work toward stewardship and planned giving becoming a spiritual discipline, incorporated into GPC life
- Consider what steps to take in response to the recent giving analysis, which suggests our congregational giving is well below its potential
 - Bolster the Stewardship Committee for the task ahead
 - Clearly connect stewardship to the goals of the Long-Range Planning initiative, particularly the congregation's desire to engage in more service activities outside our church
 - Practice transparency around the accomplishments enabled by higher giving levels, once achieved
- Open a conversation about the relative priorities of our church resources. The listening sessions suggest we want our church to stay relevant in the world, and that we find joy in external giving. How can we keep these desires alive in our future financial decision-making?
 - Task the Finance and Mission Committees to develop a rough analytical framework for annually measuring expenditures the proportion of our resources we share with God's children outside our church. Do we feel good about the current allocation or do we want it to change? Take the analysis into consideration when proposing annual budgets or considering capital expenditures. For example, before moving forward with a large internal expenditure such as replacing the organ, we would consider steps to keep our external and internal expenditures in the balance we desire.
- Evaluate and promote GPC's financial soundness through the following steps:

- Conduct a building audit to identify future maintenance needs (underway), and use the results to develop a plan to care for our building. Implement an approach to ensure funds are reserved against these projected expenses
 - Map out any projected changes to expenses over the next 3-5 years resulting from implementing the recommendations in this report.
 - Evaluate the minimum amount of unrestricted invested funds that GPC should maintain in order to cover expected and unexpected expenses. This will provide context when church leadership wishes to use invested funds for a specific purpose such as a capital expense or a mission project. It also may shed light on whether we are holding too much of our financial resources for internal use when we could be using it to do good in the world.
- Design and implement a planned giving initiative
 - Encourage and sponsor a higher level of financial literacy among members of the congregation to understand GPC finances and how they relate to their own giving at a personally meaningful level.

f. *Preserve our church home in Georgetown*

Being a historic church in Georgetown is something we value. We treasure our current building and its heritage. Our church has had a steadfast presence on Georgetown soil for 242 years. As we approach our 250th anniversary as a congregation, we celebrate both its legacy and its future.

Georgetown is one of DC's wealthier neighborhoods, but one doesn't have to go far from GPC to encounter distressed communities and poverty. Indeed, the weekly homeless dinners GPC helps to host often attracted over 75 guests during pre-pandemic times when we were able to offer a hot meal and fellowship. Our church is largely White, but Georgetown used to have a thriving Black population, and Georgetown remains home to several of Washington DC's oldest African American churches.

Listening sessions suggested congregation members all feel connected with Georgetown, regardless of where they live. Participants noted that the relative wealth and education of our congregation carries a risk that we become isolated from the needs of other communities. Some also noted that there are likely spiritual needs right here in Georgetown that are not being met. As families move into the neighborhood, they will be seeking connections, which may be an opportunity for GPC. We want to understand the spiritual needs Georgetown residents may have, and offer a neighborhood gathering place that could meet those needs. We long for a better understanding of, and connection with, our history and our neighborhood.

Accordingly, we recommend that the pastors and the church leadership:

- Commit to providing the resources to preserve our beloved but aging building, as described in the previous section. Being secure in the future of our physical space will foster confidence in our ability to do ministry in this spot, as well as confidence in being able to commit to meaningful, longer term mission work outside our building.
- Form a 250th Anniversary Committee with a clear charter to celebrate that milestone with a focus on increased connections within the congregation, service with and for our community, and an acknowledgement of our history as a precursor to our future.
- Revitalize the Heritage Committee with additional members and a clear place in the structure of GPC governance to continue the work of maintaining our archives and so that our history can be known and understood by present and future generations.
- Explore opportunities to be a good neighbor in Georgetown, including
 - Outreach to our neighbors to foster interest in membership
 - Consider whether and how we can support struggling neighborhood churches, such as Mount Zion.

4. Conclusion

It is an unusual time in the life of the church. The pandemic period affected all of us, in ways that may not be entirely clear at this moment. It has been over two years since the pandemic led to a shutdown of in-person worship. Many other aspects of our lives were also experienced on a virtual basis, including work, friendships, our children's schooling, and even holiday gatherings. The racial reckoning and growing economic divide in our community and beyond also left many of us with deep unease and longing for spiritual guidance. This all took a toll, and while worship has been in-person for several months, attendance is still down, and we heard from many of you that you are still disconnected, and unsure what the new normal will or should look like.

Coming back together as a church community is an important moment for growth and change. But it is uncharted territory and will call for grace with ourselves and each other as we discern the way forward together. Implementation of these recommendations should be deliberative. We cannot and should not try to do everything at once. Some things will need to be tried, evaluated, and adjusted. Others may need to wait.

The important thing is that we have a shared vision that informs our path ahead. The recommendations in this report belong to all of us. The congregation provided a great deal of thoughtful input throughout this process, as we discerned, together, where God is leading us.

Attachments

1. Georgetown Presbyterian Church - Congressional Assessment Tool Report Executive Summary
2. Mission Committee Mission and Values
3. Excerpts from the Presbyterian Foundation Giving Analysis of Georgetown Presbyterian Church 2021 Giving Data

Sources

What We Heard: Interim Report to the Congregation from the Long-Range Planning Committee of the Session, May 20, 2022

Vital Signs for Georgetown Presbyterian Church, DC, generated from The Congregational Assessment Tool, August 16, 2022

Giving Analysis for the Calendar Year 2021 for Georgetown Presbyterian Church, June 30, 2022

Long-range Planning Committee of the Session

Tracy Davis, Chair; Susan Bell; Roy Henwood; Reverend Jessica Tate, Pastor Liaison

Georgetown Presbyterian Church – Congregational Assessment Tool Report Attachment 1
Executive Summary
November 2022

The Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) was used in conjunction with the long-range planning process in summer 2022. 312 persons were invited to participate; of these 167 persons responded. This rate of response was more than sufficient for valid results.

Overall, approximately 62% of GPC members are clearly satisfied with things in the church, which is rated as HIGH. When responding to questions about overall satisfaction, energy, attendance, and value of activities beyond worship, a higher-than-expected number of people indicate they are “on the fence.” This could be worth additional exploration to better understand what would move members toward increased satisfaction and energy.

When asked about satisfaction, GPC members tended to focus on the issues addressed in the statements below. When they feel positive in these areas, they tend to feel positive overall. Conversely, when members feel less positive about these statements, they tend to feel less satisfied with their experience in the church overall.

- Our pastors communicate with people in way that keeps us informed and connected.
- Our pastors help us accomplish our mission by bringing out the best in everyone.
- The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.
- Our pastors have ensured the development of a plan to care for members in times of need (emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, etc.).
- The leaders of our church show a genuine concern to know what people are thinking when decisions need to be made.

The CAT revealed GPC to be a highly clergy-focused congregation, which means that when the pastors are engaged and excited about a focus area, that excitement takes hold in the congregation as well.

Every church exhibits patterns in its life that contain strengths and potential weaknesses. GPC has potential strengths related to openness and structure of religious practice. Potential weaknesses include a tendency to become tradition-bound and overwhelmed with needs.

As members look toward the future, their top four goals are:

1. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc).
2. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.

4. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons).

These priorities held true across age brackets as well as frequent and infrequent attenders.

The CAT also reveals consistency across congregational subgroups that international mission, music, and worship do not require additional attention for members to remain satisfied with what is being provided. In other words, we should continue doing what we are doing in these areas because they are widely appreciated in their current forms.

In comparison to other churches, three goals that are unusually strong for GPC are:

1. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons).
2. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc).
3. Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God.

These may warrant attention from the leadership, even if they are mid-level priorities.

A “performance dashboard” reveals the following:

- Worship and Music are rated very highly. They are meeting and exceeding needs.
- Morale, Conflict Management and Governance are all in the healthy range and tend to be correlated with one another.
- Engagement in Education is also rated highly.
- Hospitality (how we create meaningful connections between people in the church) could be higher. Attention to moving past friendly, but surface-level interactions to more vulnerable ways of connecting will serve us well.
- Spiritual Vitality is low, but higher than many other PCUSA congregations. This score is directly correlated with financial giving, meaning an increase in financial generosity would likely raise this score.

The CAT revealed that compared with other churches, our congregation’s theological diversity is high.

GPC’s Flexibility Index is moderate, with the congregation perceiving the style of worship to be settled but the programs we offer to be highly adaptable to the changing needs of the members.

Mission Committee (what we do): In answering Christ's call, the mission committee engages the congregation in addressing the needs of vulnerable children and families, including those who have endured poverty, racism, and generations of neglect from our larger community, or who have been affected or displaced by violence and conflict.

Values (the principles that inform our work, our decision-making process):

- 1. Congregation participation and engagement:** We believe that congregation participation and engagement in the work of GPC's Mission is critical. It is by engaging, learning from, befriending, and supporting our neighbors in need, and by taking part in community conversations, that we can be most effective in our mission work. We seek to walk alongside vulnerable children and families in creative and meaningful ways.
- 2. Respectful partnership:** We practice respectful partnerships when seeking to address the needs of vulnerable children and families, believing that in them we see the image of God. "Respectful partnership" means listening and learning from our partners, without making our participation a burden on them. We believe that no partner dominates the other, and that we can achieve the greatest impact by building upon the work of people in affected communities who know best what needs to be done and how best to do it.
- 3. Partnering and investing for the long term:** We believe that investing in partnerships for the long term is most transformative for the GPC congregation and our partners. It provides an opportunity to grow in faith together as we serve our neighbors. It also affords us the time to deepen our relationship with our partners, better understand the need, and achieve more lasting change in the lives of vulnerable children and families.
- 4. Flexibility, responsiveness:** Even though we recognize that investing for the long term is most transformative for all involved, we are also aware that urgent requests for assistance do arise occasionally. The GPC congregation and our partners value our flexibility and willingness to consider and address urgent requests from our community.
- 5. Investing in mission projects grounded in evidence:** As stewards of the GPC congregation's money designated for mission, we review proposals and make funding decisions on the basis of the best available evidence. To that end, we believe in investing time to review the literature and consult practitioners and expert opinions, so that we support projects that are most likely to have a meaningful impact on the lives of vulnerable children and families.
- 6. Reflection and spiritual growth:** We believe meaningful mission work invites us to reflect, learn, and grow as we encounter pain and injustice in our community, city, and world. Engaging with our neighbors should change us and shape us to be Christ-like in our interactions.

**Excerpts from the Presbyterian Foundation (PF) Giving Analysis
of Georgetown Presbyterian Church 2021 Giving Data
November 2022**

Attachment 3

For purposes of the report, a “giving unit” is a uniquely identifiable contributor. It could be one person, a couple, or an entire family. The terms “giving units” and “donors” and “donor families” and “families” are used interchangeably.

Giving by gift range reveals the following:

- 39% of families give \$0;
- 21% of families give at a modest level, which PF defines as \$20 or less per week;
- thus, some 60% of the church’s families give nothing or give at a nominal level;
- the church has 21 families giving at \$10,000+: while this compares favorably to most PC(USA) congregations, community affluence would have suggested a higher number of major donors.

The median gift across all family units is \$250; the median gift among those families that give is \$1,660. Both measures are within normal ranges for a church of this size but lower than would be expected given community prosperity.

The church is dependent upon five families for 22% of all gifts received. This is a higher percentage than would be desired: for a congregation of this size, PF would hope to see a metric of 15% or lower. This ties, of course, to the lower-than-expected giving levels of others within the congregation. Church leaders are, of course, grateful for the impressive generosity of these five families, but the congregation cannot continue operating at an equivalent scope without them.

Giving is somewhat weighted towards the congregation’s oldest donors: families age 80+ represent 9% of the church’s makeup but provide 16% of all giving. Families younger than 50, on the other hand, represent 36% of membership but only 26% of giving.

PF suggestions for action would be:

- addressing the number of member families who are giving at low levels, or not at all, to include generation-specific strategies;
- addressing the congregation’s dependence on a very few families who underwrite a sizeable percentage of the church’s operating expenses;
- beginning a discussion throughout the church on the principles of Christian generosity and comparisons of member giving to their faith community and the other charitable causes they support.

PF is unfamiliar with the church’s policies and practices related to clergy knowledge of individual giving patterns and note that high-performing churches provide their pastoral staff with real-time and unencumbered access to giving information.