

INTRODUCTION

This Mission Study highlights the First Presbyterian Church of Tracy, the community of which it is a part, where we have been, where we are at the present, and how we perceive God is leading us into the future. This Mission Study was created to help the congregation and its leaders as we move forward in the search for pastoral leadership. It is our hope that it will serve also as a resource for the Session and Board of Deacons as they strive to carry out the mission and ministry of our church within the community and the wider world.

At its March 2016 meeting, the Session authorized the creation of an *ad hoc* mission study committee consisting of not more than five members. Members of the congregation that accepted the invitation to serve are Pat Brandes, Ellen DiFilippo, Terry Donaldson, Robert Opie, and Roger Winkler. Each member was furnished with documents that provided background information useful to the process. Demographic data for the church and the City of Tracy, as well as a brief history of the city and the church were included. Previous mission studies and strategic plans were included in an Annex for reference.

The mission study committee held four meetings during April 2016, with Cecilia Moran, the Presbytery Committee on Ministry's Liaison, in attendance at two of these. Meetings continued into May and were supplemented by numerous exchanges via e-mail. The outcome of this series of meetings and exchanges was the development of a questionnaire soliciting the opinions and desires of members and friends of the church. On May 9, 2016 a total of 168 questionnaires were mailed to members and friends of the congregation, with the request that the completed forms be returned by the end of May. A total of 42 completed questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 25.0 %. The relatively low response rate was not completely unexpected, considering the high percentage of church members and friends dealing with age-related and other health issues. One member of the church declined to complete a questionnaire, but requested the opportunity to meet with the Mission Study Group to express his thoughts. The group met with this individual at its June 5, 2016 meeting.

The responses provided by people who returned a questionnaire represented a wide range of opinions. All of the responses were thoughtful and valuable, but attempting to summarize the answers and find commonality from which trends could be deduced proved to be a challenge. The Mission Study Group held several meetings during June, 2016 to develop an understanding of the information provided, and to draw meaningful conclusions that would serve as the basis of its report.

MISSION

VISION STATEMENT

To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

First Presbyterian Church of Tracy, California, enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, exists to build a Christian community through worship, fellowship, education and service in witness and mission.

MISSION SUPPORT AND WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

The following statement has been provided to the San Joaquin County Assessor to justify the granting of a religious exemption from the imposition of property taxes on church-owned property:

The First Presbyterian Church of Tracy is part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the national level, and locally is a member of the Presbytery of Stockton. The Presbyterian Church is a Protestant Church in the reformed tradition with an emphasis on worship, Christian education, and mission.

In furtherance of these aims, the First Presbyterian Church conducts worship services on a weekly basis, with additional services held throughout the year at special times in the Christian calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Along with its regular worship schedule, the First Presbyterian Church maintains an active Christian education program for adults and children, with classes taking place each Sunday and throughout the week. Additionally an active program is available for youth. Beyond its program of public worship, the First Presbyterian Church makes available pastoral care and counseling to members of the church, and to members of the community at large.

The First Presbyterian Church is firmly committed to mission, both within the local community and worldwide. A sampling, but by no means a complete list, of activities carried on by the First Presbyterian Church in support of mission is its active participation in Tracy Interfaith Ministries, an organization made up of many Tracy churches to provide assistance to people in the community. The Church makes its facilities available at no charge to various organizations within the community, such as a mental health group. The Church supports the wider mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through its giving to the denomination's mission program, as well as actively participating in local and foreign mission projects.

CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY

LOCATION OF TRACY

Tracy, an incorporated city with a population of approximately 85,000, is located in the Central Valley of California within a triangle formed by Interstate Highways 5, 205, and 580. Nearby population centers include the City of Stockton to the north and the City of Modesto south of Tracy. Due to the availability of Interstate highways, as well as its proximity to Route 99, a major North-South highway, Tracy has developed a major distribution and transportation infrastructure, while still retaining a significant presence in agriculture. Tracy's location provides easy access to many destinations in Northern and Central California. The San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley are within commuting distance to the west and the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Lake Tahoe are a 2 to 3 hour drive to the east.

HISTORY OF TRACY

In 1869 the Central Pacific Railroad completed a rail line running from Sacramento to Oakland, passing over the Altamont Pass by way of Stockton and what would eventually become the site of Tracy. In 1878 a new rail line was started from Oakland and followed the shore of San Francisco Bay through Martinez, connecting to the Central Pacific. The point at which these two rail lines connected became the City of Tracy, founded on September 8, 1878.

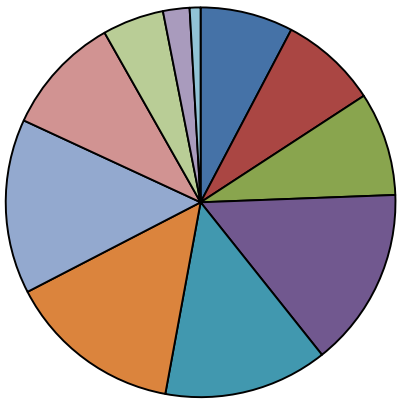
Tracy continued to grow as a railroad center, with the establishment of a rail line to the South, to Los Angeles. In March of 1894 the Central Pacific located its San Joaquin Valley headquarters in Tracy, resulting in the growth of Tracy as new businesses moved in to support the railroad and its employees.

Over the years Tracy has prospered through its ties with transportation. While it was initially created to support rail transportation, in the 1940's Tracy was the site of a pilot training program for United Airlines. As the emphasis on rail transportation has waned, highway transportation has assumed greater importance in Tracy. With its location astride three Interstate highways, Tracy has become a major distribution hub for the California Central Valley.

Agriculture has always played an important role in Tracy's history. The establishment of the first irrigation district in 1915 was a spur to growth in the area, and agriculture continues to be a major factor in Tracy's economy. Tracy was incorporated in 1910 and has grown to become the second largest city in San Joaquin County.

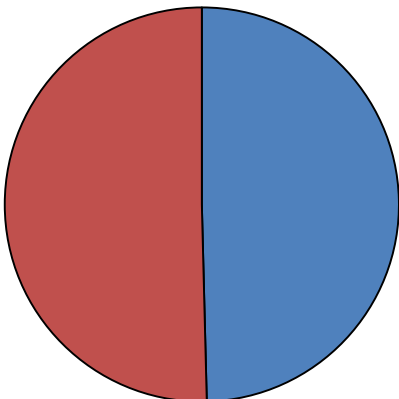
DEMOGRAPHICS OF TRACY [2015 Data]

Population by Age



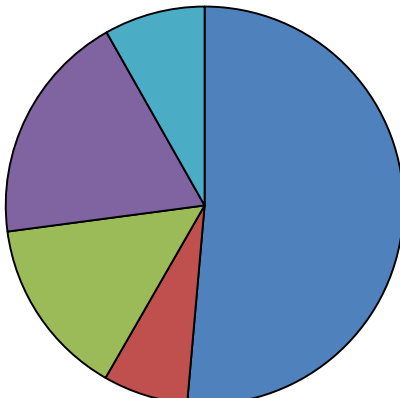
- 0 - 4 ■ 5 - 9 ■ 10 - 14 ■ 15 - 24
- 25 - 34 ■ 35 - 44 ■ 45 - 54 ■ 55 - 64
- 65 - 74 ■ 75 - 84 ■ 85+

Population by Sex



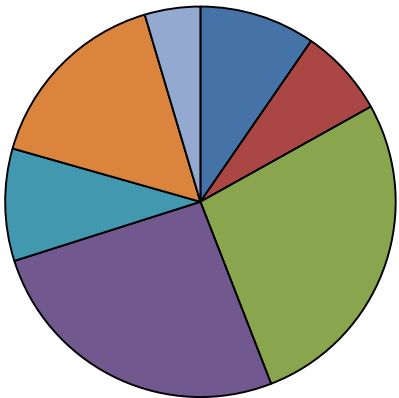
- Male ■ Female

Population by Race



- White, incl. Hispanic ■ Black
- Asian ■ Other Race
- Two or More Races

Population Education



- < 9th Grade
- 9th - 12th Grade
- H.S. Grad. / GED
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate / Professional Degree

HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

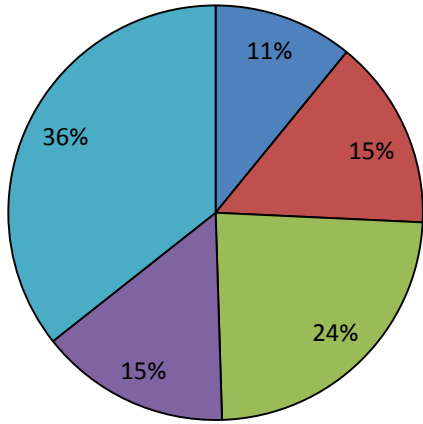
With the founding of Tracy in 1878, the entire community contributed to a building fund to construct the Presbyterian Church on land donated by the railroad. This property was located at the Southwest corner of 9th Street and Central Avenue, the current location of the Tracy Fire Department's Administration Building. The building became a community church, shared by the German Lutheran, German Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations. In 1917 the church and manse were moved to the back of a lot on West 10th Street, where the Bank of America is currently located.

With the congregation having outgrown its building, in 1925 they gratefully accepted a gift of land in the newly developed Lincoln Manor subdivision on which to build a new church. Completed in 1926, the property at 101 Beverdor Avenue continues to be the location of the sanctuary. In subsequent years surrounding property was acquired to provide space for a parking lot, church office, and nursery school.

In 1997 two adjacent parcels of property were acquired, one by gift and the other by purchase, with the goal of building a new church building and associated facilities to replace our current facilities. The new site has not yet been improved; however a portion of it is currently being used as a community garden, for which the County Assessor has granted a welfare exemption from property taxes.

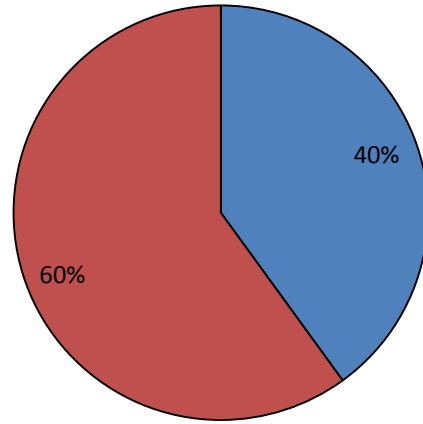
DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Membership by Age



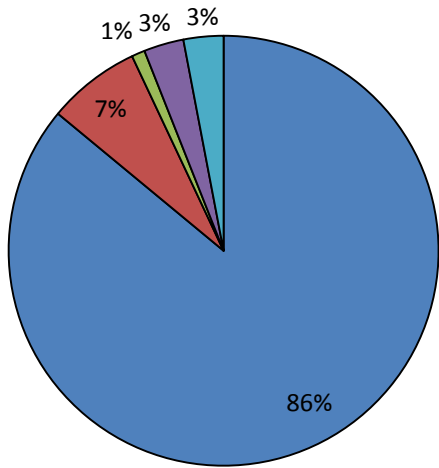
■ < 25 ■ 26 - 45 ■ 46 - 55 ■ 56 - 65 ■ > 65

Membership by Sex



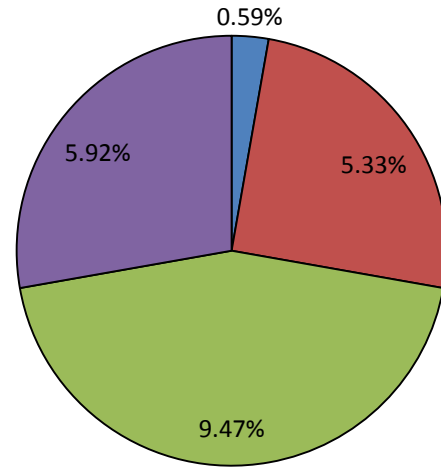
■ Male ■ Female

Membership by Race



■ White ■ Hispanic ■ Black ■ Asian ■ Other

Membership Disability

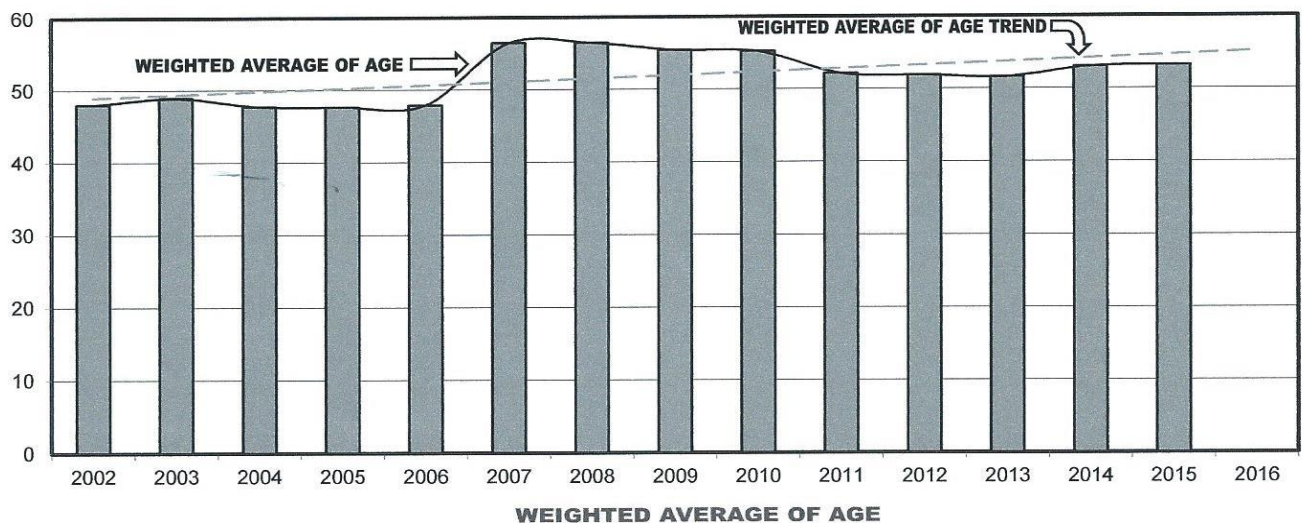
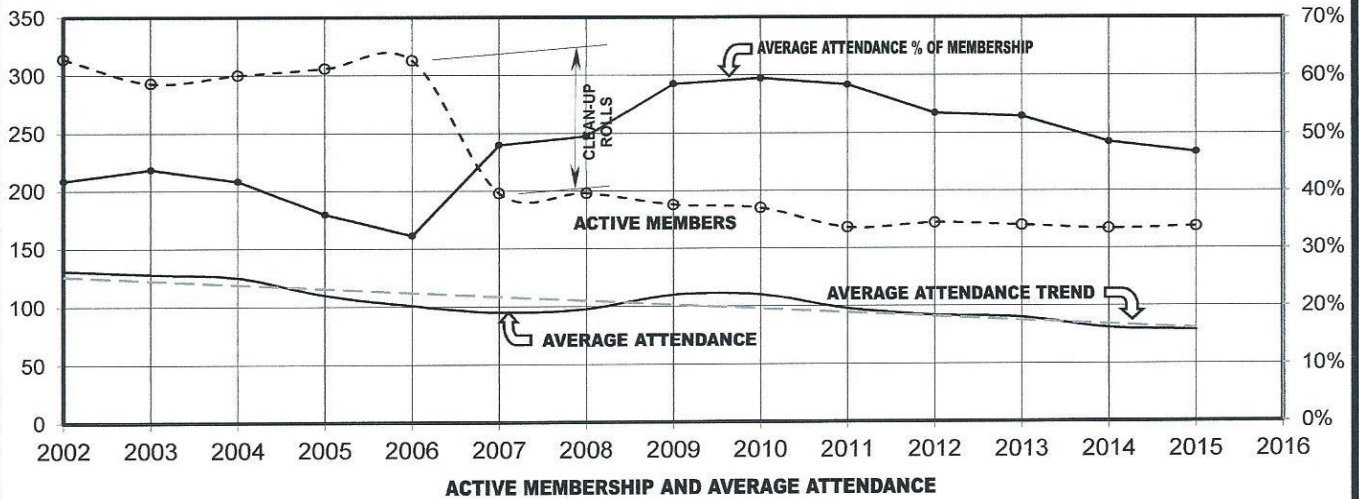


■ Vision ■ Hearing ■ Mobility ■ Other

First Presbyterian Church of Tracy

Distribution of Active Members

YEAR	ACTIVE MEMBERS	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE		AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE MEMBERS						TOTAL	WT. AVE.
		NUMBER	% OF ACTIVE	< 25	26 - 45	46 - 55	56 - 65	> 65			
2002	314	131	41.72%	51	49	101	62	51	314	48.0	
2003	293	128	43.69%	41	45	98	62	47	293	48.9	
2004	300	125	41.67%	49	46	100	63	42	300	47.7	
2005	306	110	35.95%	50	49	100	63	44	306	47.7	
2006	313	101	32.27%	50	49	103	65	46	313	47.9	
2007	198	95	47.98%	10	28	32	60	68	198	56.5	
2008	198	98	49.49%	10	28	32	60	68	198	56.5	
2009	188	110	58.51%	10	25	40	60	53	188	55.5	
2010	185	110	59.46%	10	25	40	60	50	185	55.2	
2011	168	98	58.33%	22	22	45	23	56	168	52.1	
2012	172	92	53.49%	23	23	46	24	56	172	51.9	
2013	170	90	52.94%	25	21	45	23	56	170	51.6	
2014	167	81	48.50%	19	25	39	23	61	167	53.1	
2015	169	79	46.75%	18	25	41	25	60	169	53.2	
2016											



FACILITIES OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The facilities actively being utilized at the present time by the First Presbyterian Church is made up of five parcels.

PARCEL NUMBER	USE	AREA	ASSESSED VALUE
233-368-16	Church Sanctuary and Fellowship	12,500 s.f.	\$ 205,838
233-361-11	Church Office	6,000 s.f.	\$ 51,571
233-368-15	Nursery School	7,405 s.f.	\$ 52,207
233-361-17	Parking Lot	6,100 s.f.	\$ 12,442
233-361-18	Parking Lot	6,100 s.f.	\$ 12,442
		<u>38,105 s.f.</u>	<u>\$ 334,500</u>

The Church owns the property on which the Nursery School is located; however it no longer operates the school. Currently the facility is leased to a commercial enterprise that pays rent. As such, property taxes are collected on the parcel.

The Church has acquired two additional parcels, located at the corner of Mount Diablo Blvd. and MacArthur Blvd., for future development. Currently these parcels are being utilized as the site of a Community Garden.

PARCEL NUMBER	USE	AREA	ASSESSED VALUE
235-140-09	Future Development	87,120 s.f.	\$ 826,605
235-140-10	Future Development	52,969 s.f.	\$ 620,880
		<u>140,089 s.f.</u>	<u>\$ 1,447,485</u>
Total Property		<u>178,194 s.f.</u>	<u>\$ 1,781,979</u>

ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In accordance with the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the First Presbyterian Church of Tracy is governed by a Session. Pursuant to the Bylaws amended by vote of the congregation on January 27, 2013, the Session consists of 12 members elected by the congregation and a moderator appointed by the Presbytery of Stockton. The Session is made up of three classes, each serving a three-year term.

The Bylaws of the congregation establishes a Board of Deacons consisting of 12 members organized in three classes, each serving three-year terms.

SESSION COMMITTEES

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church has organized itself into eleven functional areas in order to carry out its responsibilities. The eleven committees are:

- Building and Grounds
- Evangelism and Membership
- Stewardship and Finance
- Mission
- Personnel
- Worship
- Christian Education
- Fellowship
- Fund Raising
- Nominating
- Technology

In addition to the committees listed above that are required by the Bylaws, various other committees exist; among them are the Mission Committee's Community Garden Subcommittee. Certain other functions are overseen by an individual who has expressed a particular passion for the activity, e.g., Family Camp Coordinator.

BOARD OF DEACONS COMMITTEES

The Board of Deacons at the First Presbyterian Church has performs its duties in both a "duty roster" and committee basis. Each active Deacon is assigned to a committee, but additionally a "duty roster" is set up for the preparation of the elements for communion and the serving of communion to homebound members. The committee structure of the Board of Deacons is:

- Chancel
- Sunshine
- Food Basket
- T.I.M. Liaison
- Helping Hands

Other Deacon assignments are Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary, Treasurer, Session Liaison, Prayer Chain Coordinator, Memorial Fund Subcommittee Liaison, and Nominating Committee Member.

OTHER MINISTRIES

In addition to the ministry of the committees of the Session and the Board of Deacons, a number of other ministries are active at the First Presbyterian Church. A representative, but by no means exhaustive, list of other ministries includes:

- Bible Study
- Men's Breakfast
- Women's Group
- Making our facilities available to other worship groups
- Lunch Bunch
- Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Youth Group
- Making our facilities available to community groups

EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Within the Tracy community, the First Presbyterian Church is perceived as one of the historical mainline Protestant churches. Tracy Interfaith Ministries, a non-profit organization receiving support from many of the churches as well as the wider community, had its beginning at this church. With the passage of time and broadening of the support base for T.I.M., the community's recognition of the church's central role in the creation of Tracy Interfaith Ministries has faded somewhat, but there continues to be acknowledgement of the church's on-going support of this worthwhile effort. But First Presbyterian Church's involvement in the community is by no means limited exclusively to T.I.M.

The church is also recognized as being actively involved in several other community wide support services, such as McHenry House, a shelter for women and children, the community garden, and its participation in a program to feed the hungry, plus others.

The First Presbyterian Church provides office space for Tracy Volunteer Caregivers, at no charge to that organization. The church has also made its facilities available to two other congregations, one Korean and the other Indonesian.

The questionnaire contained 2 questions seeking the congregation's perception of how the community at large views our church. A majority of respondents believe that the church is well received in the community, largely through our involvement and support of community projects, such as Tracy Interfaith Ministries, the community garden. However a significant number of responses indicated the feeling that the esteem of the community our church once enjoyed has declined in recent years.

MISSION STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

SUMMARY

It was made clear by their answers to what was asked in the Mission Study Questionnaire that the respondents recognize that the congregation is aging, and that attracting new and younger members is vital to the church's future. Members enjoy the family-like feel of the congregation and its traditional style of worship. They know that to attract younger members they must make changes, but adapting to change is difficult for many who have grown up in the church and are comfortable with what it offers to them. The style of music presented during the worship services is an area where a large percentage of the respondents are prepared to make modest changes. Several comments were received suggesting the introduction of more upbeat music. The opportunities for fellowship offered by the church are very important to the congregation, and respondents indicated that additional fellowship opportunities would be welcomed.

There is a desire for more opportunities for adult Christian education, both on Sunday mornings and evening Bible studies that would fit the schedule of working adults. The church's involvement in programs, both within the church and outreach to the community, are important. Involvement in community outreach is seen in terms of spiritual growth and as an opportunity to provide visibility for the church, bringing with it the possibility of membership growth. There is, however, acknowledgement that the conduct of our programs must take into account the aging of the congregation, and the limitations that come with it.

Numerous responses pointed out the physical condition of the church building and its ancillary facilities resulting from years of deferred maintenance. The congregation continues to struggle to reach a consensus on the disposition of the undeveloped church property on MacArthur Boulevard, but they are strongly in favor of keeping the church in its present location.

Enthusiasm for working with youth was the trait desired in a pastor listed most frequently by respondents. Other desirable qualities are the ability to respect confidentiality; supportive of local mission, Christian education, and evangelism; being well versed in the Bible; a desire to work with seniors; and possessing good organizational and counseling skills. A concern that was expressed was the perception that the same group of members are called upon repeatedly to serve in leadership roles. There is a sentiment that more members need to participate in the life of the church by serving on Session, Deacons, or one of the committees.

THE CONGREGATION

First Presbyterian Church of Tracy has a small, aging congregation. Because of this demographic, attendance on Sunday mornings has been steadily declining. This has caused some pessimism in the membership, but also there is hope for growth in the future. Most members realize that attracting new members is vital to keep this church alive. Families of all ages are desired to build Sunday School and Youth programs. However, many members like the format and style of worship that is currently used, at the same time acknowledging that younger people might not be attracted to that style.

Many members are satisfied with the emotional and spiritual care that they can get from other members through their connections. The family-like feel of the congregation is very important. The friendly atmosphere and caring, open attitude toward visitors will help bring new members in. Inviting friends and neighbors to worship and activities was a part of how people first came to the church.

Members agree that there need to be more people helping in the various programs. A strong majority recognizes that the church is only as strong as the working base that supports it. Without volunteers to run the programs regularly, too much will be left undone, or too few people will attempt to run everything. This is seen as a challenge that the church needs to meet – how to encourage more people to be more active. Some people feel that they do everything in the church and wish that others would step up to help. A large portion of the congregation feels that their own involvement has increased in the past year.

In conclusion, the smaller, less-active congregation that now makes up this church has mixed feelings about the future. There is acknowledgement that growth is needed, but change is difficult to endure. There is agreement that the friendly encouragement is a major factor, but it only goes so far when volunteers are needed. With God's guidance these issues can be addressed.

CHURCH LIFE

Fellowship is very important in the life of the congregation. When asked to identify their favorite part of church, 38% listed fellowship at the top of the list and another 21% rated fellowship as their second most favorite. Five percent more used the term, "caring" to describe what they considered as their favorite part of church. In describing what provided them with spiritual support, members of the congregation identified interpersonal relationships with other members, members' warmth and caring for each other, and being able to talk with others to help with struggles in spiritual growth. Supportive and loving people in the congregation provide a very important and meaningful resource.

While the existing opportunities for fellowship are valued within the congregation, additional and more diverse expressions of fellowship are needs that are currently being unmet. Adult social groups, perhaps similar to the old Mariners; adult classes beyond Christian education or Bible study that encouraged and facilitated social contact would be welcomed by the congregation.

Music is very likely the area with the greatest divergence of opinion within the congregation. Of those that identified what was their favorite part of church, 24% listed the music at the top and another 24% listed it as their second favorite. However 38% rated the music as at, or near, the bottom of the list. Many responses praised the choir and the uplifting music. Many others feel that the hymns that are sung are outdated and more upbeat music needs to be introduced into the worship service. In any discussion of music, one factor that cannot be ignored is the fact that our beloved organist, who played for decades, was forced by health issues to retire. The congregation has not yet completely reconciled itself to her departure. While none of the responses suggested a desire to replace, or supplement, our current music program with a different style, for example a “praise band,” there was a significant expression of interest in injecting an occasional up-tempo hymn into the service.

Christian Education and Bible Study are considered by the congregation to be an important aspect of the life of the church. In response to the question, “Where should the congregation place its emphasis?” 81% indicated Christian education. When asked to indicate their satisfaction with Christian education for children and youth, 64% felt it needed more emphasis, 24% were generally satisfied with the current effort, and 7% were very satisfied. Regarding Christian education for adults, the responses were only slightly less compelling: 57% wanted greater emphasis, 36% were generally satisfied, and 5% were very satisfied. In neither case did the congregation feel that too much emphasis was devoted to Christian education.

In responding to several questions, the topic of Bible study was mentioned. Bible study was seen as essential to nurture spiritual growth; however the congregation is divided in their opinion as to how well the church is doing in this regard. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 3% felt that the church was doing well in Bible study while 7% felt that the church was not doing as good a job as it should. Suggestions that were offered were creating an evening Bible study tailored to the schedule of working adults, and making Bible study available on a regular basis for adults. In response to the question, “What is your favorite part about church?” Bible study ranked fifth, behind worship, fellowship, service, and music. A total of 26% of the responses ranked Bible study in one of the top two rankings, while 38% ranked it in the bottom two. Given how essential the congregation considers Bible study to be, the low ranking appears inconsistent. The assumption is that if more opportunities for Bible study and Christian education were available, particularly to adults, these classes would be enthusiastically received.

Programs that are part of the life of the church have evolved over the years. For example, what began as an effort to offer help people in need has grown from a small storage closet in our church to major multi-denominational operation now known as Tracy Interfaith Ministries. Other programs that were mentioned by respondents include Family Camp at Zephyr Point, Vacation Bible School, Sunday school, Easter egg hunt, the women’s tea, and soup tasting. Others mentioned programs that are no longer functioning; such as a counseling program apart from the Pastor, and a preschool operated by the church. The desire was expressed by a few that these programs be reinstated.

A factor that adversely affects certain church programs is the demographics of the congregation. As can be seen on the Distribution of Active Members on page 7 of this report, the congregation

is getting older. From 2002 through 2006 the single largest age group in the congregation was from 46 to 54. When the Session cleaned the rolls in 2006, that age group fell to the third largest. In 2006 the "Greater than 65" age group represented 15% of the congregation; by 2015 it had grown to 35%.

The significance of this shift is felt in church programs. With the aging of the congregation, there has been a perceptible decline in participation in activities in general, but particularly in evening and nighttime activities. In planning programs, if this reality is not taken into account the success of the program will be jeopardized.

PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

Summary of the responses focusing on these facilities:

The church building at 101 Beverdor Avenue, the office across the street, the parking lot facing Holly Drive and the acreage at MacArthur Drive, E. Mt. Diablo Avenue and E. 3rd Street (sometimes referred to as "new site" or location of community garden).

First, please note that these responses are from only 25% of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Tracy. That number indicates 75% apathy -- failing to respond.

Broken down by question number:

#7. What is one thing that you would like to change about our church?

(Of 42 total responses, these represent 7%)

Paint inside of Lea Lounge.

An updated kitchen.

New floors in the kitchen and fellowship hall.

#8. List up to 3 things that the church should be, but is not, doing:

(Of 70 total responses, these represent 6%)

Providing a facility that's in good repair and clean.

Upgrade our facility - it is old, dark, and sometimes smells!

Maintain the church, office, and parking lot so community sees that we care about how it looks, not sinking into disrepair.

Paint inside Lea Lounge.

#9. List up to 3 things that the church should not be, but is, doing:

(Of 41 total responses, these represent 5%)

Paying for property we cannot afford or want.

Wasting money on new church property.

Not repairing or providing clean surroundings .

#19. How should we use our resources, including our facilities, to better fulfill God's plan for our congregation?

(Of 23 responses, these represent 26%)

Maintain the church property.

Sell the unpaid property and hire a contractor to bring our church up-to-standards or up-to-date.

Repair and cleanup, as needed.

Improve them!

Dedicate space for youth and adult education in all our buildings.

Develop a plan to gradually develop classrooms.

We need to sell our land on 3rd Street and use the money to refurbish our present church and make it very visible to the city.

Advertise our renovation.

Upgrade to meet the needs of the 21st century churchgoer.

The following are comments written in the essay section, edited to be applicable to the facilities and properties focus:

The social hall needs to be cleaned up, painted and mold (and mold smell) remediated. Utilize the stage for shows, recitals, show inspirational movies, talent shows. Example: the melodrama last year!

Selling the new church property will not solve our problem of growth.

Fix the church's social hall and hire a gardener for the church office and parking lot.

Keep everything "as is" until we grow the congregation, then decide whether to build or not.

The community garden is an asset.

Expand garden, but build a facility there to use for worship, fellowship, and outreach.

The church is people, not the building. Too many seem to be too attached to the building and unwilling to let go of the past.

We need to find a way to make our church more visible and attractive to the community.

MISSION OUTREACH

The Mission Survey Questionnaire contained a variety of questions that elicited responses from the congregation that related to their views of the church's involvement, or lack thereof, in the community. In general, community outreach, being involved in activities in and for the community, was the most frequent way people expressed their view of how the church is doing in that regard, and whether it is, or should be, a priority. A listing of questions which resulted in mission/community outreach responses is included. Keep in mind that about 40 surveys were returned and reviewed. The number of responses that mention mission/community outreach will be noted parenthetically, but as mentioned, due to the diversity of way people responded to a variety of questions, these may include some inadvertent subjective grouping.

In general, the responses are separated into two general categories. First, responses that characterize the church's involvement in outreach projects and activities in a positive way. This will include those responses that believe the church is doing a good job in reaching out. Second will be responses that tend to characterize the church's efforts to be generally unsatisfactory and in need of improvement.

Positive views were by far more prevalent in the survey. In order of the questions which got the most positive responses to the church's involvement in community outreach, we will start with:

1. What is the church doing well? (20 community outreach related responses)

In response to this question, about half of all survey respondents listed a variety of answers that were generally supportive of activities that included church's involvement with serving/feeding the needy and homeless (5 mentions, including Thanksgiving baskets), Tracy Interfaith Ministries (3 mentions), the Community Garden (2 mentions) and support for other organizations, like Tracy Volunteer Caregivers, that help those in need (2 mentions). The most common response was that the church is doing a good job of helping the community/reaching out to the community, which may include all of the above efforts along with others not enumerated (10 mentions).

Along this same line, was the following question:

2. Where in the church do you see the most life and energy? (7 responses)

Local mission/community outreach was seen as very successful by 5 respondents, while feeding the hungry and the community garden were each mentioned once.

Also highlighting specific positives was the following question:

3. What is the single biggest support to spiritual growth offered through this congregation?

(2 responses)

The respondents listed community outreach and helping the needy in the community as having this attribute.

Reflecting on the congregation's opinion of the community's view of the church, was the following question:

4. If the church closed tomorrow, would the community miss its presence, and if so, why?

(11 community outreach related responses characterizing the answer as 'Yes')

In response to this question, those who expressed the answer of 'Yes', the church would be missed, and listed a response of how, community outreach was easily the most common theme. Our involvement in T.I.M (4 mentions), feeding the homeless (3 mentions), supporting McHenry House (1 mention), the Community Garden (2 mentions), and many listed more general activities such as ministering at the hospital, support for community organizations that support those in need, our service to the community, and our attentiveness to the needs of the community.

This question also had a number of respondents with a more negative response of 'No' to the query of 'If the church closed tomorrow, would the community miss its presence, and if so, why?' (5 responses)

Among the reasons listed to illustrate the 'No' answer were several views about our lack of visibility in the community due to factors like lack of publicity and community outreach, no pastor involved in the greater community.

And this question also received one 'Don't Know' response, although a few of the 'No' responses indicated doubt.

Again along a positive note, was a question relating to qualities of previous pastors:

5. What were some of the strengths of the previous pastors and how did these attributes benefit the congregation? (10 responses)

In general, all the responses referenced involvement by past pastors in the community at large, and its organizations. The general sense was that the pastor's involvement outside the church, brought visibility/public awareness to the church.

This was followed by a related request for input regarding any perceived weaknesses of past pastors.

6. What were some of the weaknesses of the previous pastors and how did these attributes hinder the congregation? (5 responses)

The majority of the responses (3) characterized a decline or failure to be involved in the community outside the church. One respondent noted a failure to communicate with both members and community. And one respondent characterized a lack of enthusiasm or encouragement of church activities.

And finally, there were two questions that asked respondents to list up to 3 things in response to the following questions:

7. List up to 3 things that the church should be doing, but is not doing. (4 responses)

Three respondents to this question listed being in the community or outreach to the community as shortcomings. The fourth felt we need to regain our position as a religious institution in our community profile.

8. List up to 3 things that the church is doing, and should not be doing. (3 responses)

Two of the three responses regarded the church's efforts to assist a homeless man by allowing him to sleep behind the church despite concerns about safety expressed by neighbors. One respondent listed outreach to the homeless and hungry.

LEADERSHIP, WORSHIP, SERMONS, AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Pastor, (Questions 15, 17,18); The highest ranked personal trait the congregation valued in a minister was one who had a desire to work with youth. Other high ranking characteristics were, the ability to respect confidentiality, was supportive of local mission and Christian education and well versed in the Bible. Having a desire to work with seniors, being a good one-on-one communicator, supportive of evangelism, good organizational and counseling skills were also ranked highly. Some suggested we bring in a young minister, one that would challenge us to stretch our faith – take us out of our comfort zone- and a strong, vibrant leader who gets to know everyone, partners with the leaders of the church and is a catalyst for change. The congregation would like a pastor that is moderately involved in the community, has a good sense of humor, is personable, extroverted, humble, and charismatic, gifted in pastoral care, approachable, friendly, and a good listener. They would also like a pastor that has a vision, is trustworthy, knowledgeable, teaches bible study, displays concern and compassion, is kind, and is a good speaker and storyteller and trained in counseling. A pastor who is able to effectively delegate would be helpful. A few congregants responded that they would like a pastor that has energy, is willing to try something new, has inspiring sermons, ecumenical growth, and someone who radiates love of the Lord. A few also wanted someone that was accessible, had experience, lived in the community, and who was able to admit mistakes, needs and weaknesses. Some felt it was taking too long to get a new pastor.

Spiritual Growth (2,3,28,29);

The congregation was asked, “where do you perceive that God is leading this congregation “. Many individuals in the congregation said our calling was to be a witness to Jesus Christ, and to grow by bringing in new families and attracting youth. Some felt our calling was to grow in local mission and service, to stay together and draw in more members, and to follow PCUSA into the 21st century. One said we need to focus on God and He will lead us if we look to Him instead of focusing on our wants. Others responded that they felt that God was giving us time to discover who we are as a congregation, and to find our way through prayer. Others were unsure of, or didn’t know, of Gods calling for us. Others felt that we were not letting God lead us, or that a few leaders in the congregation were leading us for their own personal agenda. Others felt that we were in a holding pattern or that God is letting us tread along slowly, letting us disappear, or die. Others mentioned rebirth and helping us become vital again. Some suggested our church needed fun, laughter, inspiration and creativity and that God was leading us away from our rigid adherence to long term tradition and towards a more cross generational congregation to grow new life in the church and community, or to become more in tune with what the community needs. Some suggested we reach out to youth and the community as a place to come and find caring Christians.

Fellowship followed by good, moving, thoughtful and meaningful sermons were the categories that provided the single biggest support to spiritual growth offered through the congregation. Two responders mentioned Jennifer’s sermons specifically. Others responded that Bible Study, regular Sunday morning and scripture based worship, community outreach, Zephyr Point family camp, or Ina and Gladys were the biggest support to spiritual growth. A few said there was no support at this time, or that spiritual growth was left up to the individual. One suggested we forget to glorify God – through worship, study and deeds. However worship was ranked as the favorite part of our church by 43% of respondents, slightly above fellowship (38% of respondents ranked it as their favorite part of our church), and above service (29%), music (24%), education (24%), Bible study (24%), its caring (24%), or special services (5%).

Only one person said the congregation should place its emphasis on spiritual growth, while most felt that Christian Education, including the formation of Christian character, community outreach and local mission, and personal growth were more important than spiritual growth. However, when asked about helping members deepen their personal and spiritual relationship with God, the vast majority said it needed more emphasis. The respondents also said that helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service needed more emphasis. Two thirds said they were either very or generally satisfied with the caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved, while about a third thought it needed more emphasis.

Leadership (2,4B,8,9,11); Some individuals understood that the congregation needed to step up and take on larger leadership roles. One suggested we needed to be concerned that no one wants to take a leadership role. Some suggested leadership training to improve the effectiveness of leaders, and to put more emphasis on everyone being involved in the life of the church by serving on committees or developing more ways that people could become involved beyond worship (e.g. service). Some hoped for a better understanding of members and leaders. One

suggested that only certain people were allowed into leadership positions. And one suggested that the leadership was the one thing that they would like to change about our church. Someone else suggested we not argue about things. One person suggested that we stop apologizing for not having this or that and affirm our strengths. One other suggested we lack cohesion in our various ministries. One other suggested we concentrate on a few things and do them well rather than being spread too thin. Someone commented that keeping actions of session a secret was one of the things session should not be doing, but is doing.

Worship/Sermons (3, 4B, 5,6,7,8,9,10,17,18). Some respondents felt like worship was where the church has become a little stuck or calcified. One wanted the worship service to change more from one week to the next, and one other would like to change the order of worship. Some wanted shorter, such that the service ends on time, relevant and lively, but authentic, sermons, to bring back those who have stopped attending recently. Some felt that good sermons bring people in. Some felt that a change was needed for receiving prayer requests during worship due to issues with privacy, gossip, and the amount of time it took during the service. One suggested we make our worship experience and music more inviting to youth and younger families, and another one suggested we remove the responsive reading on Sundays and replace it with upbeat, inspiration songs. One suggested that we have a worship service for young people in addition to our regular service. Most enjoy the traditional style of worship, while about a third would like a contemporary worship style, with more music. Very few liked audio-visual or to project hymns on screens. Just under a fifth (17%) of the respondents thought we were doing worship well. One person wanted to go back to a 9 or 9:30 service, and about a third said it was their favorite part of our church.

COMPARISONS WITH PREVIOUS MISSION STUDIES

In the recent past two mission studies have been conducted by the congregation, the first by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) in 1999 and the second by a committee in 2005 for the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) that presented the pastor whose replacement is currently being sought. The questions posed by the current Mission Study Group are not identical to those asked in the previous mission studies, particularly the one conducted by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, since it was seeking to fill a different position. Therefore, while the responses to the current mission study do not provide a direct correlation to the previous mission studies' responses; there are points of commonality which offer insight into possible shifting of the congregation's priorities and concerns.

One item of interest is the congregation's emphasis on fellowship compared to spirituality. In both of the previous mission studies, when asked to list what was important to them, the majority of the congregation ranked fellowship above spirituality. In the current mission study, spirituality moved up in ranking, however fellowship continues to be important to the congregation.

In all three mission studies the congregation's responses indicate that developing programs to attract and retain youth is a very high priority.

The previous mission studies reported that emphasis on the support of local mission was in the low-to-medium range, in contrast to the current mission study, where local mission was ranked very high.

The PNC mission study did not ask what motivated individuals completing the questionnaire to come to our church, however both the APNC and the current mission studies did. Both mission studies were consistent in that in the APNC study 29% claimed that being a Presbyterian prior to moving to Tracy was their reason, while 31% cited the same reason in the current study. Likewise, "Family" and "Friend" were reasons cited in both mission studies. One answer that illustrates a shift in how people find a church is that in the APNC mission study, 5% listed the telephone book as their source of information, whereas no one in the current mission study listed that source. In the APNC mission study, "advertising" was an option, however not a single person listed that as the basis of them coming to this church. In the current mission study, one respondent listed the sign as what brought them here.

The question of remaining in our present location, or building and relocating to the property on MacArthur Blvd. has proven to be a challenging one over the course of all three mission studies. The PNC mission study reported that, by a large majority, the congregation desired that the church remain in its present location. This sentiment is reflected in the APNC and current mission studies as well. However, the congregation's desire for the new site property is less clear. In the current mission study, a total of 48% of the respondents want to sell the property and use the proceeds either as needed or specifically to refurbish the existing facility. Twenty-one percent want to use the new site property as it is currently being used, 10% want to use the new site property as it is currently being used until a consensus is reached, and 10% want to start a campaign to raise funds to build on the new site. The results of the current mission study reflect the ambivalence reported in the previous mission studies, and points out a significant issue in the life of our church that is in dire need of resolution.