

St. John's Presbyterian Church Devon, PA



Mission Study 2012
Revised 2016

OUR MISSION

We experience God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ, and together, we strive to love God, our neighbors and ourselves in return.

INTRODUCTION

The Pastor Nominating Committee for St. John's Presbyterian Church was charged in early January 2012 with both preparing our Mission Study and nominating a new pastor to the congregation. After extensive research, survey work, analysis, and discussion we are pleased to complete this study, the foundation for our search. It follows a very helpful and specific format from Donegal Presbytery.

The following pages explore our history, our community, and the St. John's congregation. Moreover, we will assess, in detail, our goals, challenges, and mission.

The Committee thanks the Session, the congregation, the staff and Beth Kephart for their assistance during this process.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Holt, Chairman
Dave Dalrymple
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In 2015, St. John's congregation voted to add a second ordained position to our staff, an Associate Pastor for Children and Youth Ministries. The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee was commissioned in January 2016 to nominate a candidate for that position. Because the 2012 Mission Study was both thorough and recent, we decided it was not necessary to start from scratch, but instead chose to update the 2012 study to reflect the most recent data.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the 2012 Committee for their prayerful and dedicated approach to their task, and especially for the result that brought Pastor Patrick Marshall to lead our congregation. We are inspired by their service and can only hope to emulate their faithfulness.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Ator, Co-Chair
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Matt McClintick
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SUMMARY

Since the Devon Chapel was founded in 1893, the Philadelphia metropolitan area has grown toward, around, and beyond us; throughout it all, St. John's Presbyterian Church has embodied the friendliness and warmth of a country church in the suburbs. Relative affluence, diversified employment opportunities, pleasant neighborhoods, and excellent educational opportunities surround us. Still, our country-style church maintains its emphasis on the intimate and personal—a quality our members both value and reflect.

Our membership is multigenerational, though we have fewer young families than we would prefer. St. John's thoughtful traditional worship services, overlapping Sunday school, and weekly fellowship are appreciated by our members. Our members also share in the creation and leadership of programs for spiritual development, and our core membership continues to be actively engaged.

We develop meaningful relationships within our church family. We are inspired to live our faith through mission and daily example. In times of need, nurture and support are readily offered. Compassion runs deep at St. John's, and so does fun. We think we're at our best in fellowship.

Still, while we are well-positioned to carry out our mission and have the generous support of the congregation, we face problems peculiar to our size, problems that we must work to overcome. We face, for example, resource constraints, leadership fatigue, and a limited range of programs. Supporting our youth leadership and programs is receiving higher priority. As with many churches, the age distribution of our congregation is skewed toward an increasingly older population.

As we look to the future, we aim to grow at a moderate pace. We are particularly focused on the need to attract younger families that can regenerate the congregation. Strengthening our children and youth programs will play a vital role in accomplishing this goal. At the same time, we hope to deepen our spiritual development and to strengthen the overall engagement of *all* our members.

Our suburban setting insulates us from the most severe effects of our changing and sometimes troubled community and world, but we are fully aware of the economic, social, and spiritual needs that reside close to home. Even as we minister with great care to each other and offer a welcoming worship community, we have more work to do on expanding our mission activities and improving our embrace of evangelism.

When this document was compiled by the 2012 PNC, we were facing the retirement of only our second pastor in fifty years, an unfamiliar position. And yet, as that group reviewed the results of the March 2012 Congregational Survey, several things were clear: we know who we are, we have a firm direction, and we have the resources we need to achieve our goals. The 2012 PNC approached their task with confidence that the right match in leadership could help us accomplish great things.

Their search resulted in St. John's call to the Rev. Patrick W. Marshall. His arrival in June 2013 fulfilled the vision of the 2012 PNC, bringing energy and enthusiasm to the programs of the church, relatable and applicable Scripture-based sermons and an approachable style. We now

want to strengthen our commitment to children and youth by calling an Associate Pastor to spearhead that part of our ministry. We are inspired by the commitment shown by the 2012 PNC and gratified by the results of their search. We enter this new phase hoping again to match our congregation with the right leadership to fulfill our calling in ministry to children and youth.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*

The Early Years

In April 1892, ten men from Devon, Pennsylvania, started a Sunday school in the home of Mr. J. Lewis Twaddell on Valley Forge Road, an organization that would soon become known as the Devon Sabbath School. Soon seeking to become a true Presbyterian church, the organization applied to the state for a charter. The "Charter of the Devon Chapel" was granted on June 14, 1893, making it a corporation under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania.

In 1895, with the Chapel growing in membership, services were conducted by Mr. Edward Keigwin, a student at Princeton Theological Seminary. That same year, a church bell was purchased and then inscribed to read, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, Devon Chapel 1895."

By 1897, the work of the Church had prospered, and it was felt that a full-time minister was needed. The Reverend Joel Swartz D.D. answered the call.

Thirty-one charter members organized the Devon Church on June 10, 1900. Three years later, a petition was presented to the Presbytery of Chester. With the petition approved, the church became St. John's Presbyterian Church of Devon—a name change to which the congregation had unanimously agreed.

Our Pastors

We have had only twelve Pastors in our 119-year history, and the last fifty years have been years of particular stability with each of our two pastors serving until retirement. The complete list of our pastors follows:

1897-1907	Rev. Joel Swartz D.D. (Served until retirement)
1908-1916	Rev. Hugh W. Rendall (Accepted the call of a church in NJ)
1917-1919	Dr. Charles S. Stevens (Accepted the call of a larger church)
1920-1927	Rev. Warren J. Johnson (Served until his death)
1928-1936	Rev. Theodore Brown Williams (Served until his death)
1937-1945	Rev. Frank B. Moss, Jr. (Accepted the call of a church in New York)
1946-1951	Rev. John Dwight Pentecost (Left to teach at Philadelphia Bible Institute)
1952-1954	Rev. Charles E. Olwine (Accepted a call of another church in PA)
1955-1959	Rev. W. Edward Jordan (Served until his death)

1960-1990	Rev. Ernest L. McMillan (Served until retirement)
1992-2012	Rev. Victor M. Wilson (Served until retirement)
2013-Present	Rev. Patrick W. Marshall

Our Church Buildings

After Coffin and Altemus, real estate developers, donated a plot of ground, St. John's erected its first building in the fall of 1893 for a cost of \$3,500. By 1912, the membership at St. John's had increased to 138—a number that would continue to rise until, in 1925, extensive building additions were required. The first additions to St. John's featured a new transept that would become the home of the present sanctuary. Mr. William C. Kirk gave a new pipe organ in memory of his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Wilt, meanwhile, presented a beautiful stained-glass window in memory of their only daughter, Ethel.

Throughout the 1950s, numerous expansion programs were completed to provide adequate room for the fast-growing membership of the Church and Sunday school. The Carriage House, built in the 1890s for the Henry C. Davis estate, was soon acquired. Subsequently, a large piece of property, in the shape of a "T," was purchased and a new parking lot and driveway built, as well as a circular drive in front of the church.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of St. John's Presbyterian Church in 2003, a newly remodeled Carriage House was dedicated for God's work. In 2012, the building was rededicated as the Wilson Carriage House upon the retirement of Pastor Victor M. Wilson in honor of his ministry to St. John's.

Fifty Years of Stability

On February 10, 1960, the Reverend Ernest L. McMillan was installed as the tenth pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church. He, his wife, June, and their four children had recently returned from Abadan in South Iran, where he had organized a new church under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions and Great Britain. Rev. McMillan served St. John's for thirty years until his retirement in 1990.

In January 1992, Victor Wilson, originally from England, was called as pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church. Victor and his wife, Jane, arrived from Pensacola, Florida with their two daughters, both of whom would grow up in our church. During Rev. Wilson's tenure, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of our church. Following two decades of service at St. John's, Rev. Wilson retired to North Carolina on August 1, 2012.

Following a brief interim period, St. John's called its twelfth pastor, the Rev. Patrick W. Marshall who had served as the solo pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Wahoo, NE since his graduation from seminary in 2005. Patrick, his wife Jen and their three young children, Brandon, Ryan, and Emily, arrived in June 2013 and quickly integrated themselves into the life and ministry of St. John's.

Over the past 109 years, at least thirteen members of St. John's Presbyterian Church have entered the ministry.

To this day, St. John's retains much of the charm of a small country church. Its white clapboard exterior, stained glass windows, and warm fellowship remind many in our community of the church of their childhood, while its renovated interior, with its oak pews, pulpit, and choir loft, offer a quiet sanctuary for worship.

The true history of a church is not found in a list of appointed ministers or records of building expansions. The true history of a church is embodied in the prayers of the people, the influence and direction of the ministers, and the spiritual life of the congregation. Weddings, baptisms, and funerals; joys and sorrows; the sacrifices and the generous donations; the full religious life of members—this is what has defined St. John's Presbyterian Church through the years, and this is what will continue to define us.

*Condensed from a history by Eva D. Noll, St. John's Historian

WHO WE ARE

Our Community

Located in Devon, Pennsylvania, St. John's Presbyterian Church is the easternmost church in the Donegal Presbytery. According to the 2010 Census, Devon, a suburb along Philadelphia's "Main Line," had a population of 5,146. The population of the immediate area is approximately 70,000 people.

The church is located in a residential area and generally has a good relationship with its neighbors and surrounding community. In fact, St. John's has several local non-profits (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Mothers of Preschoolers, etc.) that routinely use the property for a variety of functions.

The surrounding area lacks racial diversity, with whites accounting for approximately 85% of the population. The Asian population is the next largest group, accounting for 6.7% of the population, followed by African Americans (3.5%), Hispanics (2.5%) and others (1.8%). Similarly, the St. John's community is predominantly white (97% of membership) with 1% African American, 1% Asian and 1% Hispanic membership.

Economically, the community, like our church, is relatively healthy. Unemployment in Chester County was 3.2% in 2015. The largest employers in the immediate area include world-renowned financial services, pharmaceutical, and technology companies.

Population and employment in Chester County have boomed during recent years, thanks to the westward expansion of suburban development and the growth of high-technology businesses along the Route 202 corridor. Tredyffrin and Easttown Townships have also seen significant growth in the past two decades; however, the community overall remains relatively unchanged. The area continues to be a bedroom community of Philadelphia and other nearby cities while priding itself on award-winning schools, low crime rates, and a small-town feel.

St. John's is located in the Tredyffrin/Easttown school district—a compelling draw for potential new residents. In the 2016 Best Public Schools Ranking by Niche.com, the T/E school district was ranked first in the country. With more than 6,000 students and eight schools, the District serves the townships of Tredyffrin and Easttown, encompassing thirty-eight square miles in eastern Chester County. Sports are particularly prominent, with nearly 50% of the 2,050 high school students participating in at least one interscholastic athletic team and 15% participating in the intramural program. Over 90% are involved in at least one facet of a broad-based student activities program, which is notably strong in service and leadership, media production and publications, government and politics, and visual and performing arts. In addition, dozens of area private schools offer families a wide range of educational and extracurricular opportunities. Many of St. John's youth and parents are involved in supporting school programs; while this support is vital to the continued high quality of our local schools, there are inevitable conflicts with church activities.

Like many other communities, we face the typical societal challenges, including underage drinking and substance abuse. From a church perspective, membership is down in area Presbyterian churches with even more pronounced declines in average weekly attendance.

Our Membership

Members by Age	2015	%
Pre-school	8	
6-11	17	
Confirmed members		
12-18	44	11%
19-25	52	15%
26-45	40	11%
46-65	139	39%
Golden age	87	24%
Unknown	7	
TOTAL	369	100%

Our current membership stands at 369 active members, with approximately 50 “participating non-members.” Over the past several years, membership has remained stable, in contrast to national trends.. We were especially pleased to maintain this stability through the recent pastoral transition and interim period. Currently, adult women members comprise 58% of the adult membership, while adult men account for 42%. Confirmed membership also includes eighteen girls and twenty-six boys under the age of eighteen years. Average worship attendance is 122, which has been relatively consistent in recent years. Average church school attendance is twenty-five to thirty. Youth church school is divided into six grade levels, starting with the nursery through high school. During summer months, weekly attendance is noticeably lower, and Sunday School programs are limited. Adult study includes two separate women’s groups with a combined enrollment of eighteen and Supper at St. John’s, which boasts attendance of between thirty-five and seventy on Wednesday evenings.

Grades	Enrolled	Curriculum	Average Attendance
Nursery (to age 3)	3		3
Pre-K / 2nd Grade	13	Whirl	4 to 6
3 rd / 4 th grade	7	Whirl	3 to 4
5 th / 7 th grade	13	Connect	3 to 5
8 th grade	9	Confirmation	5 to 7
High school	32	Echo the Story: 36	5 to 7
TOTAL	77		23 to 32

There are currently thirteen boards and committees within St. John's, including our eleven-member Session. There are thirteen Deacons, which includes one youth Deacon, nine Trustees, four members of the Administration Committee, six members of the Christian Education Committee, eight members on the Adult Christian Education Committee, eight members of Christian Outreach, nine members of the Membership Enrichment Committee, six members of the Nominating Committee, six members of the Personnel Committee, four members involved in Worship and Music, nine members of the Women's Fellowship Board, and three members of the Investment Committee.

In addition, St. John's has a variety of other groups, including three singing ensembles (Chancel Choir, Children's Choir, and Joy Messengers), Devon Brass, two bell choirs (Devon Chapel Bells and Rejoicing Ringers), Carriage Club, and Supper at St. John's. There are also two couples' groups, one singles' group, and a combined senior high and middle school youth group.

WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING TO CARRY OUT THE BIBLICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH?

The Great Ends of the church are stated in the Book of Order and constitute the church's mission statement to the world. In the Congregational Survey, members of St. John's were asked "How should St. John's prioritize its efforts to further the Great Ends over the next three to five years?" The discussion below reflects the six Great Ends in the order of priority as determined by the congregation of St. John's. This survey was conducted in 2012 by the Pastor Nominating Committee formed in preparation for Dr. Wilson's retirement. Although some details have changed in the time since, we feel this is still an accurate reflection of St. John's priorities and character

Worship

Worship Services at St. John's primarily follow a traditional Presbyterian format, but include occasional contemporary elements to accommodate differing preferences in the congregation. Sermons are biblically based, with a healthy dose of present-day and personal experience interspersed. The Worship Service typically includes a Children's Message delivered by the Pastor or Youth Leader. It has been a tradition that children from pre-kindergarten through the Senior Highs attend the service up through the Children's Message, when they leave for Sunday School. Middle School and Senior High remain in the sanctuary to celebrate monthly Communion, which alternates in style between traditional and intinction. Eighth graders remain in worship each Sunday as part of their confirmation preparation.

Worship is also enhanced by the Chancel Choir (adults including a professional soprano), the Alleluia Choir (children), two different bell choirs (adult and children), the Devon Brass (a quartet), and the Joy Messengers (a contemporary folk group). The latter groups often play and sing as part of various other church activities.

St. John's traditionally holds a Lenten Luncheon on Ash Wednesday and a Maundy Thursday service with communion. We participate with other churches on other occasions such as Good Friday services. The annual Christmas Pageant is a very special youth-led service for children, followed by a Christmas Eve Candlelight service.

The Survey results indicated that worship should be highly emphasized among the Great Ends. But the congregation also had numerous and widely diverse views of how worship should be conducted. Many respondents said they were satisfied with the worship service as it is. Others suggested some easily made, but not necessarily easily accepted, changes in St. John's worship services, including adjustments in service time, duration, order, music, communion format, and even the character of the sermons. Generally, the responses asking for minor changes do not seem to indicate a congregation bent on drastically changing St. John's present form of worship.

Living our Faith

“Exhibiting the Kingdom of Heaven to the world and to our Community” was described as Living our Faith in the Survey and was a Great End that the congregation feels should receive considerable emphasis. The Kingdom of Heaven is exhibited every Sunday in the special invitation and warm welcome St. John’s provides to its members and guests, by the saving Grace of Christ Jesus as preached from the pulpit, by the warmth and love of Christ displayed at Coffee Hour, during the time spent in Sunday school, throughout the many annual church gatherings, in the various outreach programs, and in the hundreds of hours of volunteer work undertaken by St. John’s members. It is shown in the daily lives of the congregation at home and at work.

Some examples of living our faith at St. John’s in 2015 include:

- *Angel Tree*: The Deacons collect Christmas gifts from the congregation and deliver them to children in Southwest Philadelphia who have an incarcerated family member.
- *Anti-Human Trafficking Network*: Working in partnership with the Chester County Coalition, a group from St. John’s works on raising consciousness, advocating for appropriate legislation, and supporting locations that help trafficked girls.
- *Baby Bundles Sewing Group*: This group made 120 items by hand for Church World Service in 2015.
- *Builders’ Competition*: Founded by a member of St. John’s, this annual event features construction teams competing in a race to assemble framing for 1200 square foot Habitat for Humanity homes. The framing packages are then sent to a site in the local region for assembly and completion. During the 2015 competition, fifty participants built wall framing panels for five homes, bringing the total number of framing packages built over the past nine years to fifty-six.
- *Broad Street Ministry*: The services and activities Broad Street provides are designed to build trust, foster community and help alleviate the suffering of our neighbors facing homelessness, hunger and poverty. An innovative “new church” approach to gathering everyone from street people to artists to musicians, and sponsoring a broad spectrum of ministries and services to their community.
- *Chester County Food Bank Gleaning*: Volunteers work together in two-hour shifts at local farms to support the Food Bank in their Farm Program, in which they grow and harvest 180,000 pounds of mixed vegetables per year. No green thumbs required!
- *Cornerstone Christian Academy*: A private Christian school in a most challenged neighborhood in Philadelphia, with volunteer opportunities to mentor, tutor and offer other support to students.
- *Dream Academy*: 20-25 Conestoga kids tutoring and fundraising for technical equipment at Cornerstone Academy.
- *Great Valley Food Cupboard*: We collect shelf milk, paper goods, cleaning supplies, cooking oil, olive oil, sugar, crackers, cookies, snack items for kids’ lunches, juice or juice boxes, applesauce & fruit (small containers), sugar, complete meals in a box, pet food, and personal hygiene products, and deliver them to the cupboard which distributes to people in need.
- *Philabundance*: A Philadelphia-based organization that distributes available food from restaurants and grocery providers to feeding centers and food pantries.

- *Sandy Relief*: Work crews travel monthly to areas affected by Hurricane Sandy to assist with construction projects.
- *St. John's Community Garden*: Now in its third growing season, located behind the Carriage House, a number of gardeners produce a harvest of fresh produce which is given to the Great Valley Food Cupboard. We're always looking for anyone interested in helping to water, harvest, or transport our crops.
- *Sherwood Christian Outreach Center*: St. John's has had a special relationship with this Southwest Philadelphia neighborhood worship center and child-care center. Our Deacons sponsor an annual clothing drive and create a Christmas party for the children of Sherwood that features Christmas presents donated by our members.
- *Stop Hunger Now*: Our annual meal preparation extravaganza, with people of all ages scurrying around Fellowship Hall, ultimately preparing 10,000 meals!
- *Supplies for Success*: A school-supplies drive that provides inner-city Philadelphia school children with the supplies necessary for educational success.
- *T&E Care*: An organization that supports local (Tredyffrin and Easttown townships) families in times of financial or other need.
- *The Common Place*: In partnership with Wayne Presbyterian Church, a former church in Southwest Philadelphia is being renovated to provide a broad spectrum of programs to support the neighborhood, especially the children. Volunteers help with painting, woodworking repairs and other renovations.
- *Wellspring/Karitas*: This foundation offers encouragement and empowerment, personal and financial support, innovative and effective programming to create vibrant partnership, a full reciprocity where all, donors and recipients, are both givers and receivers. Current partners are located in the region of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

For more than 20 years, an annual Mission Trip has been a very important event for our youth. Each summer members of St. John's Senior High Mission Team spend a week sharing God's love through their actions and words with people somewhere in the United States. The acts of love have included painting buildings, helping small children, cleaning yards, conducting Bible schools, spending time with people at senior and retirement homes, and handing out brown bag lunches to homeless people. Attendance and destinations over the past four years have been:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ○ 2012 – 8 youth, 4 adults | Ocean View, Delaware |
| ○ 2013 – 14 youth, 3 adults | Taylorsville, North Carolina |
| ○ 2014 – 15 youth, 5 adults | Philadelphia |
| ○ 2015 – 10 youth, 4 adults | Minnesota |

The Mission Trip is partially funded by the proceeds from the annual Devon Horse Show parking effort. Staffed by the youth and assisted by adult members, this parking program provides a valuable service to attendees of the nationally known horse show that runs for a week in late May/early June just a few blocks from the church's parking lot.

Fellowship and Nurture

A majority of the responses to the Survey show that the single most attractive aspect of St. John's is the warm, friendly, and welcoming environment. Each Sunday a member of Session's committee on Membership Enrichment greets arriving visitors, members, and friends to make each attendee feel personally welcome. The Greeter is also available after worship and during coffee hour to respond to visitor questions. These contacts are followed by telephone calls thanking the visitors for attending and inviting them back. This committee also prepared the Visitor's Guide brochures that are always available in the pew racks. Formal worship each Sunday is followed by a Coffee Hour that encourages socializing and closer bonding within the congregation and allows visitors and guests to be warmly received. Our young children are nurtured by a caring group of adults in our Nursery and Toddler rooms during the service.



Fellowship at St. John's is not restricted to Sunday worship. We also hold a Strawberry Festival each spring and offer a Burger-Corn Roast each fall, complete with music and an ice cream sundae bar. During the fall and winter our weekly Supper at St. John's combines fellowship, a delicious dinner, and a choice of Bible and spiritual enrichment programs. We have an annual Progressive Dinner, a Trivia Night, and a church family picnic.

The Deacons of St. John's have an active pastoral ministry to ensure that our homebound and sick members are visited. In addition, they provide transportation and meals to those in need and send college and military care packages. The Caregivers' Network, a ministry of compassion led by the Deacons, helps make sure that our St. John's family is on hand to help any member facing a crisis. These essential caregivers provide meals, of course, but they have also helped drive members to radiation treatments, physical therapy sessions, and doctor's appointments. Babysitting has also been provided in crisis situations. Our members, in short, generously give of their time. They demonstrate God's love for those church family members in need.

Starting in January 2011, a monthly Carriage Club was re-instituted after being dormant for many years. It provides a week-day lunch followed by a speaker. Presentations have encompassed a broad range of topics, including medical missions to Haiti, personal faith journeys, pharmaceutical research, and the creative processes of authors and artists.

A “Reunion” for current college students, recent college graduates, and high school seniors has been hosted by Patrick and Jen Marshall at the manse since their 2013 arrival at St. John’s. This time of fellowship has allowed our students to reconnect with one another and to get to know our pastor and his family.

Education

Christian education begins with Sunday school, which spans six classes from pre-kindergarten through high school. These classes begin each Sunday when the students leave the sanctuary after the Children’s Message. The Confirmation Class remains in worship and meets for class on Wednesday evening. Sunday school is held during the school year, with middle school and high school students remaining in worship on the first Sunday of each month when Communion is served. During summer worship there is a Bible-based story hour for young children, while older children remain for the entire service.

St. John’s holds a Vacation Bible School in August for its own children and those in the community who respond to church banners, newspaper articles, and personal invitations. When this Study was prepared in 2012, attendance at VBS averaged 15 students and we recognized the need to improve this program. Our goal was to grow the average attendance at VBS by at least 20%. Improved publicity combined with an increase in the member participation have been effective in achieving that goal: over the past three years, VBS attendance has averaged 20-25 students.

Adult education also includes a regular Inward Journey Bible Study, a weekly Women’s Morning Biblical Reflection group, a weekly Companions in Prayer group, and a choice of different Bible-based courses after Wednesday night Supper at St. John’s.

Social Righteousness

It has long been our commitment to devote 25% of our annual income to support Christian mission work and charities helping those in need. Through the Christian Outreach Committee of Session and the Board of Deacons, St. John’s supports Christ’s mission to feed the hungry, care for the sick, and clothe the naked by providing our time, talents and financial support to many charities.

In 2015, the Outreach Committee created and distributed a survey to the Congregation asking for their thoughts on how we should be distributing our mission funds. To begin, we asked congregation members about their preferred geographic targeting for our Outreach resources. Respondents indicated that they would suggest that the Outreach Committee direct about 60% of our resources locally/regionally. They indicated that the remaining 40% should be shared equally among national and international efforts. Presently, our local/regional outreach mirrors survey feedback but the balance of our resources are more internationally focused.

We also asked for guidance on outreach focus from among a list of activities that we either now support or could begin to support. Four areas of focus were clearly felt among the respondents to be the best use of St John's resources: educational, health, hunger and shelter. While the weighting of current resources varies somewhat from how congregational members responded, we are happy to be able to share that these four areas are the present priorities.

Each year we seek out and support mission opportunities at the local, national and global levels using input from the congregation. We search out opportunities that benefit not only from financial contributions but also from volunteer time, paying particular attention to those with an established connection to our members. While we endeavor to make a significant contribution to each organization selected, no recipient receives more than 25% of the Outreach budget. The Outreach Committee reviews all potential recipients and continually monitors the activities of those selected to receive support.

In 2015, the service organizations that received financial support from St. John's were:

- *Baker Industries*: Non-profit business in Malvern providing real work experience for people with disabilities, recovering substance abusers, parolees, and homeless persons.
- *Common Place*: A faith-based educational outreach center for children in Southwest Philadelphia.
- *Crudem Foundation (Hospital Sacre Coeur)*: Provides medical treatment in Haiti.
- *Dawn's Place*: Works to improve the lives of women who have been trafficked or prostituted.
- *Endow-A-Home*: Philadelphia agency which assists and trains homeless women and children in owning and maintaining a home.
- *Great Valley Food Cupboard*: Provides emergency food relief to needy families in the immediate St. John's area.
- *Habitat For Humanity, Philadelphia*: Constructs housing which is sold to recipient families at cost using zero interest mortgages. Our contribution this year helped facilitate the construction of a Habitat home in Philadelphia from foundation to finished walls in a week.
- *Hayes Manor*: Philadelphia area retirement home for low income seniors.
- *La Estación*: Provides meals and preschool education to children of a squatter settlement in Cuernavaca, Mexico.
- *Partners In Health*: Provides healing ministries in hospitals and clinics worldwide.
- *Philabundance*: Private agency feeding the Delaware Valley region's poor and homeless.
- *Sandy Relief Teams/Karitas*: A team of volunteers initiated by St. John's who travel monthly to assist work projects rebuilding homes devastated by Hurricane Sandy.
- *Sherwood Community Center*: Provides a soup kitchen and day care services to a distressed neighborhood in West Philadelphia.
- *Stop Hunger Now*: An international hunger relief agency that coordinates the distribution of food and other lifesaving aid to children and families in countries throughout the world.
- *The Clinic*: Phoenixville, PA medical facility providing services to individuals without health insurance for whatever fee such individuals can pay.
- *Young Lives*: Provides spiritual assistance and material aid to young, unwed mothers in the Philadelphia area.

Evangelism

St. John's proclaims the saving Gospel of Christ Jesus in a multitude of ways—through the worship service, through Christian education and prayer groups, through Christian outreach activities, and through the financial support of local, regional, national, and international mission work.

We share our Christian faith with the world beyond our church primarily through good works after the manner of Christ Jesus. The congregation, Christian Outreach, and Deacons are

committed to sharing our faith—and our resources. Among the Christian missions having receiving funds from St. John’s are the following:

- *Broad Street Ministries*: Philadelphia church dedicated to serving the spiritual and material needs of the homeless and the Center City community and residents,
- *Cornerstone Christian Academy*, which provides an excellent academic and Christian education to low-income students in a deprived area of Philadelphia,
- *Presbyterian Church (USA) support* for a missionary meeting spiritual needs during disasters in Guatemala,
- *The Village*: Facility in Rosemont, PA which admits and cares for children from backgrounds of neglect and abuse,
- *Witnessing Ministries Of Christ*: Provides Christian and secular education to the children of people sometimes referred to as “untouchables” in India.

In addition to its general mission pledge, St. John’s Outreach has connected with and supported two Mission Partners, Jed Koball and Claire Zuhosky. Jed and Claire are working in Peru and Niger, respectively. We hope to foster closer ties with them in the next few years through specific longer term financial support, active newsletter communications, visits to St. John’s, participation with our Youth Group, prayers and perhaps visits to their missions.

In the spring of 2015 Jed Koball visited St. John’s. He shared with the members of St. John’s the ongoing struggle to protect life in La Oroya, Peru. He also preached on Sunday, and met with our Youth Group.

We have been fortunate to have had two seminarians connect with St. John’s in the past five years. One young woman joined the church with her family years ago and interned at St. John’s while attending Princeton Theological Seminary. In order to support her financially through her studies, we established a Seminarian Fund and provided funds to assist in each of her three years at Princeton. She has since found a call as co-pastor of a local congregation.

A Palmer Theological Seminary student connected with St. John’s as an unpaid pastoral intern for several years. Through the Seminarian Fund, we were able to provide support to him as well. Upon his graduation from Palmer, he served as our un-ordained Youth Leader for a year before finding his calling as an ordained pastor and head of staff.

Although the Seminarian Fund is not currently in use, we would be delighted to have the opportunity to support another aspiring pastor in the future.

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

When this Study was initially adopted, the goals of St. John's Presbyterian Church as stated in the April 2011 Strategic Planning Session were:

- Increase membership engagement;
- Deepen spiritual development; and
- Strengthen children and youth programs.
- Grow our Membership

In 2015, our goals focus on fully equipping our members to show Christ's love to each other and within our community. The first three 2011 goals are consistent with our emphasis today.

Increase Membership Engagement

Membership Engagement is defined as the degree to which members participate in church activities in addition to Sunday Worship. In March 2012, the membership of St. John's was informally classified as follows:

- 44% Actively-Engaged Members (attend worship service plus participate in at least one other St. John's activity);
- 17% Passively-Engaged Members (attend worship service);
- 21% Non-Engaged Members (people who come to church once or twice per year, but still make a financial contribution to the church); and
- 18% Unable-to-be-Engaged Members (our homebound members, students living away from home, and members who have moved away but want to remain on the rolls).

Our goal has been to encourage non-engaged members to come to church more often by making phone calls, writing personal notes, and sending emails regarding events that might be of interest. Early each September, the Membership Enrichment Committee conducts its "Good News Calls" in which members and regular visitors are contacted to provide information regarding the kick-off of St. John's fall calendar, including dates and times of the various programs. Efforts such as these have successfully returned some non-engaged members to our fold.

Additionally, the 2012 PNC wished that the subsequent five years would see our passive members become more actively involved by participating in the many opportunities offered by St. John's. Suggestions to achieve this goal include personal invitations to passive members to join a program, continuing use of "how can I help?" cards to encourage active participation and better use of New Member Intake forms that help us identify areas of potential interest. If a new member has indicated an interest on the form, we should be calling them, extending a personal invitation so that they can feel like a part of our community from the start.

We recognize that our members are busy, and that they don't always have time for all the activities we offer. But we also believe that our dream to have all members across all ages actively engaged in the life of the church is a highly viable one.

As we now update the Mission Study, we have revisited the informal classification of membership involvement and now estimate somewhat improved participation by our members:

- 47% actively involved
- 19% passively involved
- 17% non-engaged
- 17% unable to be engaged

Deepen Spiritual Development

Deepening the spiritual development of our members is foundational—it is who we are and what we do as a church. We recognize our responsibility to continue to provide as many opportunities as possible to help encourage members on their faith journey. We recognize, too, that we must pursue this goal despite the fact that we can never accurately quantify our success. All of our members are in different places in their personal faith journeys, and we always will be.

While we cannot gauge just how effectively Bible Study classes help deepen an individual's spiritual development, we can measure participation in Bible Study classes. We can also survey participants in Bible Study classes and ask them to tell us whether the class deepened their faith and, if so, in what ways. We believe that by offering a variety of options and encouraging participation, we are taking the right steps toward meeting our mandate. We're particularly proud of Supper at St. John's, an initiative we introduced five years ago to increase participation in Bible Study. By offering a Wednesday night supper prior to adult education classes, we regularly have fifty-five to seventy members participating in Bible Study groups. We are gratified to find continued strong attendance in our adult education programs in 2015.

Strengthen Children and Youth Programs

In the 2012 Survey, a number of members mentioned that they liked having the children with us during the first part of the church service. They liked seeing the children coming forward for the Children's Message, followed by the parade of youth leaving for their Sunday School classes. We recognize that we must make an effort to proactively attract young families if we are going to maintain the vitality of the youth program of years past. Our goal is to strengthen the children and youth programs as the means of launching our youngest members on their faith journeys and of keeping our young families actively involved at St. John's.

While Session has not stated specific objectives, the 2012 PNC believed that a key measure of our success over the subsequent five years would be an increase in regular attendance of Sunday School as well as an increase in participation of Youth programs. In 2016, this remains one of our goals. Obviously, more young families will increase the number of children and young families who visit St. John's for Sunday worship. Promoting programs like "Bring a Friend to Sunday School" will also help. The 2012 PNC recommended creation of a Youth

Advisory Council to get our high school age members to design programs that appeal to St. John's youth. That suggestion has been implemented. We want to work from our strengths. We want, among other things, to keep the Youth Mission team together during the year with local service projects that can keep our high school students involved.

One of the challenges we've faced with our youth programs has been a rotating corps of Youth Directors—seven in all in the last twenty years since the position was created to support our commitment to our youngest congregants. Of those seven, six have continued in their professional calling to serve the church: two are now ordained pastors serving as head of staff, two are seminarians and two are serving churches in non-ordained youth ministry positions. It seems all were well-suited for their work at St. John's, but that their time with us was an early step in their process of discernment.

Perhaps a short tenure is the nature of this position, but the lack of stability has hindered the development of long-term relationships with the youth. Attendance in our youth program has fluctuated over the years, often in response to turn-over in the Director of Children and Youth Ministries position. We are also challenged, as all churches are, to provide programs students find as relevant to their lives as the extra-curricular activities that compete for their time. Sunday sporting events and after school commitments make it difficult to find time to schedule programs that can achieve maximum attendance. Without critical mass, the youth who do attend decide not to come back. We need to find a way to gain critical mass in attendance.

In 2015, upon the departure of our most recent DCYM, the Session re-evaluated the duties and qualifications of the position, and felt the need to address these concerns by elevating the qualifications we are seeking. The Session recommended to the congregation that we call an ordained Associate Pastor for Youth and Family Ministries, and the congregation approved that recommendation in November 2015.

The Associate Pastor position has been created to deepen our long-standing commitment to children and youth and to help them experience the fellowship, Christian Education and commitment to mission that our congregation values. We envision a pastor who has been educated in the field of Christian Education and youth ministry, who has a passion to work with our children and youth in their spiritual formation. Our Associate Pastor will serve as a source of support and consistency for families committed to raising their children in faith, cultivating lasting relationships with our young people.

A strong Christian Education Committee and a core of volunteers will partner with the APYFM in this journey. At the same time, those volunteers will benefit from the guidance, education and leadership of an ordained pastor.

Like many churches, we seek to be a relevant place of nurture for children, youth and their families in our larger community. We feel we have many strong traditions in place, especially in our annual youth mission trip. We will partner with our Associate Pastor in strengthening existing programs and implementing creative initiatives to nurture our youth's faith in Jesus Christ and to reach out to others in our community.

It is our hope and expectation that we can identify a pastor who can bring passion, vision and devotion to our program and help us fulfill St. John's calling in ministry to children and youth.

Grow our Membership

In 2012, our goal was to increase St. John's membership by ten adult members each year, reflecting a desire to grow at a rate that would not compromise our identity as a small and friendly neighborhood church. A large number of the 115 respondents to the Congregational Survey mentioned that they liked the small size of the church and appreciated the sense of family that emanates from the church. In the three years before this report was initially issued, we averaged eleven new members per year. In 2011, we exceeded our target when a total of seventeen new members joined. At the time of Dr. Wilson's departure, we anticipated slower growth and hoped to be back on track over the subsequent five years, with a target goal of ten new congregants per year. We have significantly exceeded that goal since the arrival of Pastor Marshall, averaging 18 new members per year in 2013-15. Our total membership has remained stable, however, due to attrition and a continuing commitment to contact inactive members and keep the rolls up-to-date.

While our congregation has generally expressed a preference to retain our current size, it is consistent with our goal of strengthening children and youth programs to attract young families that will represent the future of our church. In the 2012 Survey, over fifty-five of the 115 responses to the question "What changes do you hope to experience in the next five years?" made mention of the desire to increase the number of young families and younger members joining St. John's.

Since the arrival of Pastor Patrick Marshall, we have seen an increase in participation by children and youth, especially noticeable by the number of children coming forward during worship to hear the Children's Message before they exit worship to go to Sunday School. Our youth bell choir remains active, while attendance at youth groups has fluctuated. We feel we have made progress, but have plenty of room for growth.

We dream of a vibrant, intergenerational church community. We look toward a day in which the young families that join us now will remain with us as we ultimately baptize their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

St. John's Goals with regard to the Great Ends of the Church

The "Great Ends of the Church" that need the greatest attention if we are to meet our stated goals of growing our membership, increasing membership engagement, deepening spiritual development, and strengthening our children and youth programs are: Worship, Living our Faith, Fellowship and Nurture, and Christian Education. These Great Ends, in the order listed here, are in line with the congregation's priorities. Compelling sermons, inspirational worship services, an array of interesting Christian education courses, and an inviting church community that welcomes new members and encourages all to join in our many mission and fellowship activities are paramount. The remaining two Great Ends—Social Justice and Righteousness and Evangelism—were ranked fifth and sixth, respectively, by members. As we deepen our spiritual development in the years to come, our church family may want to put greater emphasis on evangelism and social justice and righteousness as a way to share our faith with the community and the world.

Preparing for the Transition

When this study was prepared in 2012, we were particularly concerned with ensuring that our new pastor would be effectively integrated into the community of St. John's. This section outlines the plan the prior PNC developed, which was subsequently followed and found to be successful. We expect to employ a similar strategy to welcome our new Associate Pastor.

We want our new pastor to work with us to meet the goals of our church. We recommend that the following steps be taken to help our new Associate Pastor and our congregation with this transition at St. John's:

- Formation of a Transition Team that will formulate a plan to help prepare the congregation and staff to accept the changes that inevitably occur when a new pastor is installed. This team will also determine whether there are desired changes in responsibilities for the pastoral position that will allow the pastor to focus his or her energies on the goals that are most important to us as a church.
- Development of a "Welcome to St. John's" Handbook that will give the new pastor names and phone numbers of the church members responsible for each area of the church, the tasks for which they are responsible, and the timing of the various programs each year.
- Development of a "Welcome to our Community" Handbook for the pastor and his or her family that would include recommendations of local doctors, dentists, restaurants, and the like. Information about local schools, recreational areas, and annual township events might be helpful to a family that is relocating to our area.
- Scheduling of small group luncheons and dinners so that the pastor and his or her family can meet our church family in a more personal setting.
- Introduction of the new pastor to other pastors in the area through the local Ministerium, to provide a group of peers for support.

We believe these preparations will ease our new pastor's transition to St. John's and our community. We welcome our new leader's help in growing our membership through the attraction of young families, increasing membership engagement, deepening our spiritual development, and strengthening our children and youth programs.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN FOR US TO BE MORE FAITHFUL TO THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH?

Our Mission

Our stated mission at St. John's Presbyterian Church's is:

"We experience God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ, and together, we strive to love God, our neighbors and ourselves in return."

Purpose of the Church and a Christian Model

More broadly defined, our purpose is to work toward the Great Ends of the Church as outlined previously. We seek to:

- satisfy spiritual needs through worship;
- encourage members in living their Christian faith;
- provide fellowship opportunities;
- educate children, youth, and adults;
- support mission activities; and
- work for justice in the broader world.

St. John's efforts to accomplish these Great Ends oblige us to be a people with certain attributes and attitudes. We first need to be committed in our faith and spiritual in our daily lives, with Christ at our very centers. We must, as well, be confident and inspiring as we strive to share that faith with others and to spread the message within and outside our congregation. We must be caring and devoted to each other in service and fellowship. We must be friendly and welcome others into our faith, worship, and fellowship. We must be simultaneously curious and informative so that we can educate ourselves, our children, and others in this Christian faith. We must be fair, just, and forgiving as a model for others, and we must be generous with our resources and charitable with their use as we carry out our mission in the community. We must, finally, live our faith, reflecting Christ's example to the world on a daily basis.

Though we at times tire, fall short, and fail, there is no question that these qualities are on display as we describe our congregation below.

Our Congregation

St. John's has its own distinct personality. The Congregational Survey identified the factors that congregants value most and that attract members to the church.

The most revered characteristic involves our size and friendliness. St. John's is small and welcoming in worship, in fellowship, and in spiritual development. We are often described as a country church in the suburbs. Our size, both in membership and physical presence, fosters intimacy. Moreover, it promotes close personal relationships, meaningful connections, and a true sense of family.

Visitors and guests as well as members note the warmth and friendliness of the people at St. John's. Adjectives such as genuine, caring, and open were prominent in member comments. This group of people truly enjoys spending time together.

Our members actively care for each other and are devoted to sustaining each other through prayer, service, and fellowship. Countless acts of support take place each week and month—prayers, meals, rides, listening, visiting—and are especially valued by the congregation. We really are a church family.

St. John's has exhibited remarkable stability in leadership. As referenced in our history previously, the last two pastors finished their careers here, serving for a combined fifty years. A large number of members note being highly satisfied with the church's pastoral leadership.

A dedicated group within the congregation has initiated new opportunities for membership enrichment, development, and fellowship. This has enlivened the church, deepened our personal relationships, given us a common sense of purpose, and helped attract new members. These programs have been resounding successes.

A large core of members is very involved in activities, service, fellowship, and enrichment, resulting in an engaged and connected congregation. This sense of belonging was noted in the survey as being very attractive.

Our members are very well educated and accomplished in their careers and lives. They are multi-talented and contribute those gifts willingly. The result is an interesting, thoughtful, and engaging atmosphere—and an organization that can accomplish a great deal.

Problems and Proposed Solutions

However, St. John's has a few specific problems that hinder the pursuit of our mission. Our size can limit our reach and depth in program offerings. Though the congregation is individually talented and has above-average individual resources, collectively there is simply a smaller base from which to draw. Our smaller size has also resulted in a higher proportion of members serving as leaders at any point in time, meaning that rotations back into leadership roles occur more frequently. This can lead to burnout among members.

We recognize that attracting new participants is a natural antidote for size issues, even as the congregation has expressed interest in retaining our close-knit nature. In the meantime, satisfying the broad needs and interests of the congregation may take precedence as niche needs are put on hold. The set of leaders within the church has been broadened and new members have been recruited into leadership roles more quickly than previously.

The solo pastor model that we have had at St. John's for many years requires that one person must fulfill preaching, educational, visitation, counseling, and organizational roles while appealing to a broad array of members.

In deciding to add an Associate Pastor for Youth and Family Ministries to our staff it is our hope that we can provide a colleague in ministry with different responsibilities that complement and support those of our Senior Pastor.

In 2012, we anticipated the possibility that our stability in leadership could present its own possible shortcoming: our members may have a more difficult time adapting to the anticipated transition. Moreover, the independence we've demonstrated in developing and running new activities and programs could make us more resistant to change. Any congregation in our position would be mindful of this issue. However, our members have demonstrated open-mindedness, flexibility, and receptiveness to change that made our recent transition to new pastoral leadership a smooth one.

Over the past twenty years, we have employed a series of Christian Education and Youth leaders. The position has been staffed by recent college graduates with great enthusiasm yet limited experience as well as seminary graduates still discerning an ordained call. Perhaps they have been at a fluid stage in their careers and lives, and long tenure would be the exception. This discontinuity makes building our children's and youth programs more difficult. An associate pastor with imagination and leadership for youth programs will be a welcome addition. We are hopeful these changes can begin to attract the younger families required to regenerate our membership.

In the years since this Study was originally prepared, we have seen some success in attracting more families with young children as well as greater participation by our existing children and youth. We are gratified by this new vitality and feel renewed commitment to our ministry to these young congregants. Our challenge now is to call an Associate Pastor who shares that commitment, who can minister to our children and youth and support the adults who seek to nurture their spiritual formation.

Our task does not conclude with the conclusion of our search. Once our new Associate Pastor is installed, we are committed to supporting him or her in becoming integrated into our community of faith and in providing volunteer support for new and existing programs.

Community Appraisal

The community appraisal of St. John's parallels our own self-image. We have cooperated with two local businesses in particular, sharing land and facilities for a number of years. The relationships have been mutually beneficial and each company has noted our example of Christian life and our professional interaction. Area secular charities know us as caring and generous.

Neighbors view us as a small country church with a friendly nature. Folks invited to or dropping in on fellowship events, worship services, and Sunday school have remarked about the warm welcome that they experienced. Members are recognized as caring, loving people doing good things in the community. Our pastor has a good reputation and is well regarded. On the other hand, we seem to keep a pretty low profile, and the community is not drawn socially to St. John's. One source of conflict with some neighbors has been our use of on-street parking during worship services.

Community and World Issues

Though our location on the western Main Line keeps us highly insulated from many of the most severe national and world problems, we are not immune. In fact, our area's economic strength may make the distractions of materialism and complacency even greater risks. However, our close proximity to the decidedly more urban and troubled city of Philadelphia should be a constant reminder that there are serious issues right next door.

Our population is aging. Increasing needs of the elderly tax their dispersed families, communities and social services. Yet in spite of these efforts, many older people are isolated and without the support they need to feel cared for and included.

The national decline in organized religion has a twofold effect. It can contribute to our concerns about world morality and fraying communities. It also means that attracting new church members must now involve a reach toward the "unchurched" population.

Resource constraints are a challenge for all layers of government, public safety organizations, schools, and social service providers. Our communities feel the strain.

Advancing technology, though it affords us wonderful new capabilities, also has the capacity to dominate our leisure time, to deny us quiet time for reflection and devotion, and to isolate us personally.

St. John's Response

The breadth and depth of these economic, demographic, and social trends can seem overwhelming to a church of any size. The area immediate to St. John's thankfully faces these issues on only a small scale, but that does not reduce the responsibility we have to make a difference in our community and world. We close this report with a reflection on the natural response of our congregation.

First, we recognize that we must care for those among our congregation upon whom these concerns weigh most heavily. Our members already cherish the support they offer to one another, and we hope to involve more members in doing more.

We are also committed to continuing and expanding our mission activities to show the love of Christ to those around us. Broadening our focus may be less effective than deepening our efforts and emphasizing sustainable change. Thankfully, for some members, mission work is the single most important and rewarding connection they have with St. John's; we look forward to expanding our outreach activities.

We must live up to our description as "an oasis on the Main Line" for the needy in spirit. The spiritual support we offer can and has changed lives. However, we must raise our profile in the community so that others can find us. The congregation's emphasis on worship and spiritual development is a strong signal that with new pastoral leadership we can have a significant impact.

We must continue to extend a warm welcome to both committed Christians and those pursuing a spiritual relationship for the first time. Our outreach and development efforts should excel at

satisfying the needs of both groups. The warmth of our gatherings and friendliness of our members is a strong foundation for success, even if evangelism ranks lower in our priorities and may not come as naturally to our members.

Finally, we must encourage our members to be civic-minded in all they do, within the established sphere of St. John's mission activities and elsewhere. Living daily as Christians includes the responsibility to get involved and to overtly care. Many of our members find valuable encouragement right here at St. John's. But there is more we can do—more we want to do—as we help each other live our faith.

CONCLUSION

This mission study was researched and written to complete phase one of St. John's Presbyterian Church's search for a successor to our retiring pastor in 2012. The healthy response to this survey ensured that the committee was well informed by the congregation.

In 2016, a new search began, and the mission study was updated to reflect current information. At the same time, we felt that the basic character of the church was relatively unchanged, so we did not repeat the 2012 survey.

A very detailed account of our current activities reveals that we are pursuing the Great Ends of the Church with the most vigor in Worship, Living Our Faith, Fellowship and Nurture, and Christian Education. We are putting less emphasis on evangelism and mission. We conclude that these activities align well with the long-term interests of the congregation.

Our goals at St. John's are to fully equip our members to show Christ's love to each other and within our community. These objectives parallel many of the changes that members hope to experience.

Similarity among the assessments of St. John's leadership, the congregation, the search committee, and the community give us confidence that we can characterize our church as follows:

- Warm, friendly, family culture
- Meaningful worship with thoughtful preaching
- Intimate size
- Compassionate and caring members
- Close personal relationships
- Enjoyable fellowship

We believe problems related to our size and resources, our ability to attract young families and the aging of our congregation, and our lack of stability in youth leadership can be overcome, especially with a good choice in pastors.

The completion of this document focuses our attention on the desired skills, characteristics, and talents of the Associate Pastor we seek. While we are still refining the profile of the ideal candidate, we have highlighted the following attributes most prominently:

- A compelling love of God and commitment to Jesus Christ

- A passion for nurturing Christian faith in children and youth
- An understanding of and commitment to the principles of the Reformed tradition
- A vision for an engaging, enriching Sunday School and Youth program balancing fun and spiritual development
- A dynamic, engaging and outgoing personality
- An ability to build relationships with children, youth, and adults through warmth, compassion, and humor
- Relatability to support and advise youth as a trustworthy confidante
- An intellectual and spiritual resource for our teachers and leaders
- A commitment to personal spiritual growth and renewal
- An ability to collaborate effectively in small and large group settings
- Ability to recruit and coordinate volunteers
- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to manage time, multi-task and follow-through
- Effective use of appropriate technology and channels of communication to reach all constituents

We embark on the next phase of the search with a solid understanding of St. John's today and our future direction. We have faith that our search will select a well-matched Associate Pastor to spearhead our successful pursuit of the mission of St. John's Presbyterian Church: to experience God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ, and together, strive to love God, our neighbors and ourselves in return.

APPENDIX
THE CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

The Survey

The Pastor Nominating Committee surveyed St. John's congregation during February and March 2012 with six narrative questions to discover: (1) what the congregation likes about/what draws them to St. John's; (2) what the congregation wants to continue unchanged; (3) what should be changed as soon as possible; (4) what should be changed over the next five years; (5) what characteristics or qualities St. John's wants in its new pastor; and (6) a catch-all "whether we have missed something and if so what" question. The survey also contained a ranking question asking where emphasis on the Great Ends of the Church should be placed plus two demographic questions asking whether there were children under eighteen in the household and the age bracket of the respondent.

The initial form of the survey was based in part on questions suggested by Dean E. Foose in *Searching for a Pastor the Presbyterian Way*, Louisville, Kentucky, Geneva Press, 2001. After the Committee prepared the initial form of the survey, it was discussed with three different focus groups, aggregating about 36 people from the congregation, in an effort to improve and validate the proposed survey. Several changes were made to the questions and to the form of the survey as a result of comments from those focus groups. A copy of the survey questions is attached.

We took care to distribute the survey widely and to make responding easy to garner the broadest possible participation. It was distributed in the Sunday Bulletin for two Sundays. It was also made available electronically by a free online survey website, and a link to that website was sent to every member and regular visitor on St. John's email list. Parents of children who are in college or away working were urged to forward the link to those children with a request that they also respond. Finally, a hard copy of the survey was mailed to any member or regular visitor without an email address on file. Responses were requested in a Minute for Mission and by the Pastor. The survey was open for responses for a period of two weeks.

The 115 narrative responses are discussed in various parts of the Mission Study. Attached are several charts and graphs that analyze those survey responses