

2020 Mission Study

Holly Presbyterian Church

The Mission Study is part of how we Presbyterians begin a Pastoral Search.

It is a time to reflect, dream and plan.

Team Members: Jan Bradshaw, Bob Killewald, Ellen Paulson. Holly Presbyterian Church's pastor retired in late April, 2019. We have not had an interim pastor since that time. Dawn Russell, pastor of Linden Presbyterian Church, has been very helpful in coaching us through this process.

June, 2020

In early June, the Session decided to divide our membership list up between elders and to call each member with various questions. The first question, and perhaps the most important, was how are they doing during COVID-19 and if there was anything they needed. The other questions related to what type of technology they have and how they would like to be contacted as well as their thoughts on how to worship together during the Pandemic, even considering a 'drive-in' service. Most people appreciated the call and encouraged keeping in contact especially as we navigate these unusual times (which we plan to do at least on a quarterly basis). We have this information documented and it has been helpful as an initiation point in the MST process.

July, 2020

HPC had not worshipped together since early March. We did have a Worship in the Park outdoors and afterward we broke into three groups and had some great discussions and a few laughs from questions that arose from a document called Celebrating our Past. Each team member facilitated and took notes, and we combined everything into one document and shared with the entire congregation. A few commonalities were that we would like to see our church grow by adding young families, also we like the warm and friendly nature of our smaller congregation, how do we thrive especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as shrinking attendance with mainline denominations.

August 2020

We worked intentionally to invite all members of the congregation to be aware of and participate in our Mission Study. Since this effort has been done while going through COVID-19, we reached out through all-church emails (we have a weekly news bulletin that is sent out electronically) church newsletter, announcements, and a Worship in the Park service. The congregational surveys were distributed to those in attendance at our Worship in the Park

August 2020 (continued)

service on August 23, with the remainder mailed during the week. We asked that they be returned by either mail or at the next Worship in the Park Service in September. Roughly 70 surveys were mailed.

September 2020

We received 32 completed surveys. With a regular Sunday worship attendance of 35-40, we feel this is a very good sampling (albeit it would be great to hear from more).

Summary- Our Church

The HPC family has been a vital part of the Holly community for over 159 years and we pray we'll remain vital for many more years to come. There are families in this congregation who have worshipped here for generations. We have been blessed with several wonderful pastors. We have experienced some very happy and joyful times but have faced challenges too. We seem to arrive at solutions quite well, whether it pertains to our building, disagreements over sermons or disagreements with one another. There are instances that do not work out as we'd like (like losing church members) but we hopefully learn from those experiences and move forward.

There does seem to be a concern about the same people doing the work of the church and the need for more volunteers, the desire to have younger families join our congregation, the overall aging congregation, our finances and the inability to worship together due to COVID-19. We also have a strong desire for educational and spiritual enrichment, ministering outside of our building, and seeking new opportunities to reach out to others.

Our church building/grounds are known for its beautiful sanctuary and surrounding stained glass, our large Fellowship Hall and our yard that backs up to a lake. Our members are known for providing a welcoming, caring atmosphere, holding fellowship time before and after church, working together on committees of Session and events such as our rummage sales. Some of the very best things that have happened at HPC are joining the church, marriage, baptisms, confirmation, long-term members/faithful families, singing, outreach ministries in our community and spiritual retreats.

Our congregation is called to help others and to share the gospel. We believe there's a continual need for spiritual nourishment in our local community and have opened our church doors for neighbors to step inside as they participate in different community events, as well as offering our building to house meetings for organizations such as AA, Alanon and Friends with Needs group.

Our congregation prayerfully and monetarily supports missions such as Athletes in Action & Operation Transit Mission. We are also home to a free resource for parents of infants and toddlers who are experiencing tough times. This mission is called "In the Beginning Baby Pantry". We have been able to help several hundred families since its inception.

Summary – Our Community

Holly is located about 55 miles northwest of Detroit. A classic small town with a celebrated historic Main Street and unique blend of shops and restaurants.

Holly's rich history goes back to the arrival of the first settlers in 1831. Beginning as a lumbering depot founded by Ira C. Alger, Holly has been home to many industries, including being one of the earliest railroad junctions in the State of Michigan, home to numerous manufacturing sectors (including the automobile industry) and agricultural lands. The actual Village of Holly was incorporated in 1865 and celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2015.

Holly is also home to the headwaters of the Shiawassee River, and boast six inland lakes within the Village and five public parks/playgrounds. Holly Township is also home to Seven lakes State Park, the Holdridge Lakes trails, and many square-miles of agricultural and protected natural lands.

Our demographic study area concentrated on approximately 10 miles around our church at 207 East Maple. Here are some interesting findings provided by MissionInsite, the QuickInsite Report.

At 91.7%, the area houses a mostly white (Non-Hisp) population. Holly is primarily a white collar area, 68% white collar and 32.0% blue collar.

The level of adult education (25 +) that had some college, Bachelor's Degree and grad degrees were higher in the study area compared to the State of Michigan. However, Holly fared slightly lower with less than 9th grade, some high school with no diploma, and high school graduation.

In 2019 the population for our study area was 142,753 with little change (projected increase within the next 10 years to 149,247). In a quick review of Family Households with Children by Type, our study area compared with the State of Michigan had a slightly higher percent of married couples (H: 75% S: 60%), lower percent of single mothers (H: 15%, S: 25%), and about the same for single fathers (H: 8%, S: 8%). It is projected that there will be a slight decrease overall in all three of these areas by 2024.

We found it interesting while looking at the "Phase of Life" graph (Phase of Life presents how a community changes and people age through their various life phases) Families & Empty Nesters (ages 35-54) and Retirement Opportunities (65 and over) had the highest projection into 2029. Also, further review of the "Top 10 Mosaic Segments" (Mosaic lifestyle types provides insight into the behaviors, attitudes and preference of the

Summary-Our Community (continued)

households within the Study Area) supported this data as well. Listed below are some highlights for three of the top segments:

“Booming with Confidence”: Predominantly married couples in their peak earning years and approaching retirement. Many of the households have dual income and few children allowing them to afford fashionable homes on small, manicured yards in city and suburban neighborhoods. Having made a conscious effort to distance themselves from the noise and chaos of the urban core, they’ve retreated to the quiet and predominantly white homogeneity of desirable neighborhoods only a short commute from their jobs. These folks tend to have six figure incomes, with the majority living at the same address for more than 15 years. They have sophisticated taste, solid incomes, diversified portfolios and they can afford the good life. They travel widely, taking getaways to Caribbean beaches and visiting nearly every country in Europe at more than twice the national average. These people are active in their communities and they frequently belong to arts groups, veterans’ clubs and churches and synagogues.

“Booming with Confidence-Aging of Aquarius”: these folks generally have a more global than local perspective, with a high sense of well-being. They have planned lifestyles, are relative liberal and tend to connect with moderate or more liberal churches. This segment includes the first wave of baby boomers (age 50-65) who have had an “approach-avoidance” relationship with the church. As an ecclesiastical institution, the church has been part of the establishment and status quo against which this generation rebelled but they have always had a high interest in spirituality. They explore a variety of religions and philosophies. In their later years, they tended to lose interest in radical ideas. Protesters have become conformists in society, and many returned to the church for a second period of experimentation. Once again, many of them became frustrated with bureaucracy and dogmatism, and drifted away once more. They are still passionate about various social and political causes and tend to gravitate to churches that behave like non-profit social services. They consider themselves “spiritual persons” and are open to liturgical experimentation. They value the visual and performing arts in their practice of faith. Religion is mainly a personal matter but they have a sense of duty to care for the world. Their choice of churches is eclectic. They may shop for churches and often participate in more than one church (or faith-based organization) at a time. Religion, however, must still be balanced with their personal interests, health issues, grandchildren, travels and careers.

Summary-Our Community (continued)

“Autumn Years-Aging in Place”: one of the nation’s older groups contains mostly mature couples retired in the same house where they’ve lived for much of their lives. Nearly 2/3 are over 65 years old. About the same proportion are married couples with grown children; about ¾ are already grandparents. Predominantly white and lower middle-class, they’ve decided to stay in the old neighborhood rather than move to a retirement community. Proud members of the Greatest Generation, these couples are rooted in their communities, often belonging to local art groups, veterans’ clubs, unions, churches and temples.

Listed below are a few observations of the data that are worth noting:

- Out of the 32 reports, 31 respondents were 50+.
- We say we want younger families, but the larger growing segment in our area, supported by demographic data, is older adults.
- We say we want young families but over the course of the last couple years we have not had a volunteer to fill the Christian Ed Chair, nor others to assist in the classroom.
- We say we want a Pastor with a lot of expertise – but within the Survey under TASKS– Seeking Continuing Education Opportunities and Investing time in Developing Biblical and Theological Expertise it was evenly rated in the “Slightly Important” and when compared with CHARACTERISTICS- Expertise in Bible and Theological Matters, Preaching the Word of God, and High Degree of Spirituality these were rated “very high” to “high”.
- We desire to be visible in the local community but under TASKS-Involvement in Local Community Activities, Issues and Problems the congregation ranked as “Slightly Important”/“Not Important” as far as a Pastor’s task/involvement.

The Mission Study Team felt that based on some of the findings between the data and survey, perhaps we should put some of our efforts into reaching older populations. There is always the desire to attract younger families, and we love having young people and children attend our church. Up until the last 10 years or so, we had several active young families. Unfortunately, this segment seems to be dwindling. However, what if we take a closer look at the aging population (coincidentally, many of us are in that group). What are some things we could do to attract 55+? Could we offer special classes (exercise, computer topics, financial planning/legacy)? Are there way to transport individuals to church on Sunday or other events by utilizing outside services like Smartbus? Do we need to invest in a stairlift to make it easier to maneuver lower level stairs? How about opportunities to enlist guest speakers, musicians, other cultural events?

Goals

HPC is a viable, active church and we have been blessed with some very talented and dedicated church members.

As the world is changing, we understand that church ministry may not look or feel the same as it has in the past.

We trust and have faith that our Lord and Savior holds our future and we are open to where that may lead.

We will continue our path with our work, bible study and mission, exploring new ways to worship and minister in an ever-changing environment. Listed below are some goals to consider:

- For a short-term goal, investigate/analyze how can we meet and worship together during this COVID-19 crisis which could last well into 2021.
- Strengthen our mission efforts –perhaps collaborate with other churches?
- Look for creative ways to reach out and share the good news – digital age, social media. Most houses have a computer, 79.6% have broadband internet subscription
- Continue to be good stewards of our building but explore ministry opportunities outside of the building
- Look for ways to reach out to older generation, empty nesters, widows, divorcees
- Research on how other churches are attracting and maintaining younger families

HPC Financial Update

This year has not been normal. The church was in a good position at the beginning of 2020. Our pastor had retired in late April, 2019, and we have not been able to secure an interim pastor, so this allowed us to climb out of a precarious position. All of our special accounts were funded, and we had about \$20,000 above and beyond those accounts and our investments available for current expenses. Our members have been faithful to their commitments and have continued to support the church even though we have been unable to meet as a congregation except for worship in the park over the summer, and without our own pastor for over 16 months now. We have had to do without expected income from building use by outside groups and our rummage sale due to COVID-19, and the drop in the stock market hit right at the time our biggest investment check is calculated.

Despite these challenges, we have managed to hold our ground. We are in essentially the same place we were when the year started, and have also managed to re-roof part of the building, and make electrical repairs at the front of the building and to the parking lot lights.

God has watched over us during this time; we pray that He continues to do so in order for us to all be able to meet together again in our building with our own pastor. Although we've been able to fund a full-time pastor's salary in the past, the Finance Committee and Session agree that it is in the best fiscal interest at this time to designate funds for a half- time only position. Our congregation seems willing to explore the possibility of a yoked arrangement with another church should that opportunity present itself.

Mission Statement

HPC's current mission statement is still very relevant but has not been updated for quite some time. We have not had a pastor to lead us through this interim period. We may want to re-visit once a permanent pastor is found.

Our Mission

"We are a joyful community of faith that nurtures knowing, growing, sharing and serving as followers of Christ within our church, our community, and around the world through peaceful and loving relationships".

Our Vision

- Worship and serve God in a faithful and joyful manner
- Share the good news of the Christian faith with each other and beyond the church
- Live as a caring family dedicated to the biblical values of peace, love, faith and justice
- Develop a dynamic presence in our community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.