



Clinton Presbyterian Church Clinton, NJ

**2011 Mission Study Report
Approved by Session 10/27/2011**

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I. OVERVIEW OF CPC MISSION STUDY TASK FORCE

The Session of CPC approved the formation of the Mission Study Task Force (MSTF) in January 2011. The overall objective of the MSTF is to produce a Mission Study Report which examines:

- The history of CPC;
- The present state of CPC's congregation and current ministry efforts; and
- The steps necessary to meet God's call in the future - both within CPC and outside our walls.

The Mission Study Report will be the foundation from which the Pastoral Nominating Committee develops a Church Information Form. The Church Information Form is a critical element of the pastoral search process.

MSTF MEMBERS

The MSTF members are Leslie Hyman and Candy Pamerleau (co-chairs), Bill Harclerode, Debbie Hazelette, Mary Kayler, Dave Kelly, Jerry McCutcheon, Jessica Prakopcyk, and Sharon Stevens.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

The Reverend Linda Robinson, our Interim Pastor met with MSTF, prayed with us and offered various insights of potential tools and approaches that the MSTF might consider. She shared different models from the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Presbytery to aid our brainstorming and planning efforts. Linda also provided facilitator training to MSTF members to support us and enable consistency in our plan to facilitate focus groups across the church community.

Alan Ford is a member of the Elizabeth Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM). He was the Liaison between our MSTF and Elizabeth Presbytery. He met with us twice during our work. Alan provided us with the Elizabeth Presbytery minimum requirements for a report and examples of other church reports. He met with us to review our approach and timeline and offered feedback to affirm that the MSTF approach and timeline were reasonable.

The MSTF also met with the Reverend Greg Albert, Interim Executive Presbyter, to better understand the Ministry Area Profile for 2010 (see Appendix A) and to discuss the results of the Percept Leadership Survey (see Appendix B).

CPC Session and Deacons as well as the congregation prayed for us during our time of service on the MSTF. Representatives of the MSTF met with Session on two separate occasions and we published meeting minutes that were included in the Session packets to keep them informed. Session also committed to meet with us for a Retreat to discuss and provide their feedback for our draft report and ultimately approval for our final report.

MSTF TEAM PROCESS

The MSTF Team chose two co-chairs: Leslie Hyman and Candy Pamerleau. For the planning phase of our efforts, MSTF team members were broken down into sub-teams in order to assess and define the work effort required and to create the data collection and analysis processes that would be used. But, most importantly, the MSTF's approach has been one of prayer and discernment. Meetings began and ended in prayer. Scripture was

read and discussed to keep us focused on doing God's work. The team collaborated on all tasks and shared the work effort.

We began some preliminary discussions with the congregation by hosting a Town Hall meeting and introduced small group discussions to begin our dialogue with our church family. We also hosted an event entitled "Wall of Wonder" - with a hands-on exercise to build a "timeline" of significant events in the lives of our church family (e.g., birth, marriage, confirmation, divorce, death, illness, etc.) Nineteen families participated. We learned how CPC supported people as well as areas where the church family fell short of expectations. These events were a prelude to our detailed data collection, provided valuable insights which helped us to refine our approach so we could hold more detailed discussions with CPC congregational and leadership using small focus groups.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS APPROACH

The tools used to define and guide our work were provided by the Presbytery of Elizabeth, the Hartford Seminary, and the Percept Group. These tools have enabled the MSFT to gather information and feedback from CPC leadership, the CPC congregation, community leaders and the Committee on Ministry (COM) of the Presbytery of Elizabeth through the use of:

- Membership data;
- Demographic information;
- 3X5 survey cards;
- Pastoral leadership traits survey;
- CPC congregational focus groups;
- CPC leadership focus groups;
- Reflective meetings; and
- The previous CPC Mission Study Report.

The MSTF Report incorporates the results of the above components either in the body of the report or as an Appendix. All of these sources of information were analyzed to develop conclusions that confirmed our strengths, struggles, areas for opportunity and our inspired desires. By looking at Clinton Presbyterian Church from diverse perspectives and sources, the MSTF acted as an independent team to hold up a mirror and reflect back to our church and to the COM where we believe God is taking us as a Christian community of believers.

COMMUNICATION

The MSTF recognized the need for frequent communication. Our goal was to communicate often and to have a continuous dialogue with the congregation, CPC Leadership and the COM from the Elizabeth Presbytery. Our Interim Pastor was also provided with information as appropriate to address concerns of immediate importance to the church's well being.

Communication with congregation: We have used various means to communicate with the congregation: announcements during Worship, Town Hall meetings, providing written updates in our Church Bulletin and in our monthly newsletter – The Bell Ringer. In addition, we introduced e-mail announcements using *Constant Contact*.

Communication with CPC Leadership: Representatives of the MSTF met with Session in August and Leslie Hyman represented the MSTF at a Session Meeting in September. A Retreat was planned to provide Session with our findings and to provide a forum for them to ask questions, aid in any report refinement and vote on the Report. The Retreat was expanded to include the Deacons and provide them an opportunity as part of the Leadership Team, to hear the Report prior to our congregational meeting and presentation. The draft report was circulated to both Session and the Deacons approximately ten days in advance of our Leadership Retreat.

Communication with Elizabeth Presbytery: The MSTF kept in contact with the Elizabeth Presbytery by phone, e-mail, and through having both Alan Ford and Greg Albert participate in one or more MSTF meetings. Bill Harclerode served as the MSTF liaison with Greg Albert and Leslie Hyman served as the MSTF liaison with Alan Ford.

TIMELINE

The MSTF met from February 2011 through October 2011. We met weekly since May 2011 and many times per week since September. All of the information gathered by the MSTF was analyzed and this formal report is the culmination of our work. A Leadership Retreat held on October 22, 2011 with both Elders and Deacons of CPC provided an opportunity for MSTF to review our work and present our final Report to Session for formal approval.

The Mission Study Report (approved by Session) was sent to the Committee on Ministry (COM) on October 28, 2011. The MSTF presentation to COM was on November 3, 2011. Along with their blessings and approval are the final stages required by the MSTF so that Clinton Presbyterian Church may formally call congregational members and leaders to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and begin the next phase of work needed to search for a new Pastor.

The MSTF requested that Session call a congregational meeting on November 6, 2011. At that time, the MSTF will discuss the MSTF Report with the congregation and they will be asked to affirm the work of the MSTF, receive an update from the Nominating Committee on the PNC progress – and potentially vote on the slate of congregants to serve as PNC members.

TIMELINE CHART **Event**

Date

February	MST Began Meeting
March	Town Hall Meeting
March	3x 5 survey
April	3x 5 survey
May	Wall of Wonder
July	3x 5 survey
August	Focus groups: Church leadership
September	Focus groups: Congregation at Large
September	Pastoral Traits Survey
October	Written Report to Session and Deacons
October	Retreat with Session and Deacons
October	Session votes on Report
November	Report submitted and presented to Presbytery COM

II. HISTORY OF CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ALMOST 200 YEARS OF HISTORY AS A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The congregation that is now known as Clinton Presbyterian Church began in 1825 as a 'Sabbath School' in the village then called "Hunts Mills." At this time the village consisted of four houses, a wool mill, a grist mill and a chair and spinning wheel factory. The village took the name of Clinton in 1828 for DeWitt Clinton, Governor of NY, in honor of his leadership in the construction of the Erie Canal.

Early in 1829, the New Jersey Missionary Society sent a student from Princeton Seminary to preach at a series of services here. Later that year, the Presbytery of Newton agreed to regularly send pulpit supply preachers. At this time the land where our current church is located was donated and by the end of 1830 a stone church was built here. In June 1831 the church was officially organized by the Presbytery with 10 communicants and 3 ruling elders. Two years later, Alexander Macklin was ordained and installed as the first Pastor; he served for 2 years. Over the next 50 years six pastors served our church [see end of this history]. In May of 1884, Samuel J Rowland was installed as Pastor of CPC where he served for 43 years until retiring in 1927. During the 84 years from 1927 to 2011, 14 pastors have served the congregation [including our Co-Pastors from 2001 to 2009 and an Associate Pastor from 2008-2010].

Interestingly, our connection to Princeton Seminary remained through the decades. From the 1980's through the early 2000's, Clinton Presbyterian Church regularly hosted Princeton Seminary Students who completed their year-long Fieldwork under the tutelage of our Pastors. These students preached, taught Sunday school, lead music programs and performed many other duties among our congregation. Many have become life- long friends, whom we count as members of our Church Family, even as their careers in ministry take them all over the world.

OUR CHURCH BUILDING

In September 1845 the original church building burned down, but a new building was constructed soon after. In the 1860's the bell steeple was added but was, sadly, blown down in the "blizzard of 1888". As part of the restoration, in addition to a new steeple, the sanctuary was expanded to its present size and an organ was added. The central stained glass window at the back of our church which depicts an Angel holding a banner was installed in 1890. Our Pre-Raphaelite stained glass windows along the east and west sides were added in 1906. To this day the Sanctuary of CPC continues to be a beautiful and highly cherished place of gathering and worship for our congregation.

In 1961 a successful building campaign resulted in the addition of classrooms, a Fellowship Hall, a new kitchen and a new heating system. In 1986 the "Wolverton Building" which had been a shed was converted to a classroom to help accommodate the growing Christian Education programs at CPC. In the 1990's the kitchen was modernized, with the important addition of an automatic dishwasher which enabled us to meet local health code standards in order to serve meals to the public.

OUR COMMUNITY

When the Sabbath School was founded in 1825, the area was largely agricultural, along with a small but growing area of commerce in and around the area where the North Branch of the Raritan River and Spruce Run meet in what is now 'down town' Clinton. The town and surrounding areas of northern Hunterdon County remained predominantly farmland for many years, and church membership was comprised mostly of local dairy and chicken farmers, along with a few merchants and business people. With the completion of Interstate 78 in 1986, the rural town of Clinton was now only an hour's drive to New York City, and changes in the population and the land soon ensued. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's many of the farms were sold to developers who built

expensive homes to accommodate the growing economy of Central New Jersey and those who chose to commute to NYC. Businesses and services followed, and the area changed from an agricultural community to a mixture of both local, long time residents and newcomers. The 80's and 90's were a time of change, and in some ways tension between the 'old and new' in North Hunterdon county. This was evident in the school districts where new families asked for expanded programs and facilities, in the government where they sought more services, and even in the church where they sought expanded opportunities in which to be involved and new forms of worship through which to express their faith. From the '90's into this decade the town of Clinton and the surrounding townships experienced true 'growing pains' and CPC did as well. With most of the farms gone, and most of the 'old' farming families gone as well, the area has become predominantly comprised of relatively high income, highly educated, families headed by two, career professional parents.

Our current congregational membership reflects this 21st century population of the Clinton area. We are, predominantly, a congregation of busy professionals and their families. We struggle with balancing family, work and school demands, while serving Christ through our church. We are a church family joined by our love for Christ, our desire to bring our children into His Word and our strong devotion to this historic community of believers.

PASTORS AT CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Some interesting facts about our pastors:

- Of the eighteen pastors called to serve CPC, nine have served for 8 years or more, and nine have served for 7 years or less.
 - The longest serving pastor was Samuel Rowland who served for 43 years.
 - Up until 2001, our church has been led by a male pastor.
 - In 2001, CPC called Tim and Karen Harrison as our first co-pastors.
- In 2008, CPC discerned a need for our first Youth Minister and called Becci Curtis to serve as our Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry. She served for two years and took on additional responsibilities when the Harrison's left to serve another church until our Interim Pastor joined CPC in March, 2010.

ROSTER OF PASTORS

The roster of Pastors that have served at Clinton Presbyterian Church is listed below.

Alexander Macklin, 1832-1835
Arthur B. Bradford, 1836-1838
Albert Williams, 1839-1848
James C. Watson, 1849-1850
John Mc Nair, 1851-1864
I. Alstynne Blauvelt, 1864-1868
John Ewing, 1869-1883
Samuel J. Rowland, 1884-1927
Luke C. Ray, 1928-1931
Elwood M. Schofield, 1931-1936
Theodore A. Rath, 1937-1945
George L. Moran, Jr., 1946-1951
R. Douglas Merriam, 1952-1957
Thomas L. Thorne, Jr., 1958-1968
Kent W. Kinney, 1969-1976
James R. Barber, 1978-1988
William Sadler, 1989-1998
Tim and Karen Harrison [co-Pastors] 2001- 2009

One Associate Pastor has served at Clinton Presbyterian Church:

Becci Curtis [Associate Pastor- Children, Youth and Family] 2008-2010

ROSTER OF INTERIM PASTORS

The Elizabeth Presbytery requires that an interim pastor be identified to serve in the role as a congregation's pastor, to carry on the ministry of the church while the congregation prepares to search for an installed pastor. The MSTF tried to identify when this practice began. Interim Pastors appear to have been introduced as a requirement around 1991.

Clinton Presbyterian Church has had three Interim Pastors serve our congregation:

Leland Gartrell from 1988-1989
Carol Noel Seaman from 1998-2001
Linda Robinson from March 2010 to present

The manual "On Calling a Pastor" (<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/calling-pastor-word/>) states that Interim pastors are trained to help the congregation:

- deal with all the feelings that accompany the departure of a pastor, such as grief, anger, relief, confusion, and anxiety.
- think about the church and its ministry in the past, present, and future.
- deal with any problems before a new minister is called.
- prepare for a new minister.

III. DEMOGRAPHICS

PART I: THE COMMUNITY

Appendix C (most recent US census data obtained from Hunterdon County web site) contains the demographics of Hunterdon County and NJ. The following discusses the highlights of that information (Hunterdon County versus NJ).

Race:

Hunterdon County is primarily white (91.4%), with 5.2% Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% Asian, and 2.7% black.

Hunterdon County is less diverse than the rest of NJ, which is 68.6% white, 17.7% Hispanic/Latino, 8.3% Asian, and 13.7% black.

Age:

Hunterdon County is similar to the rest of NJ in age distribution, as shown in the following table (%) (2000 census data).

Age	Hunterdon-%	NJ-%
Under 5 years	5.0	6.4
5-18 years	18.6	17.1
18-65	64.2	63.0
65+	12.2	13.5

Other facts of interest:

Hunterdon County residents have a much higher income than the average NJ resident, with median household income of \$100,485 vs. \$68,444. Only 4.3% of residents are below the poverty level compared to 9.4% for all of NJ. Homeownership rate is 87.2% versus 67.15% for the rest of NJ.

(Note; Cost of living index averages 100.0 for the entire US. According to the US Census, the cost of living index for two areas in NJ are provided as follows: 124.8 for Middlesex-Monmouth, and 129.7 for Newark-Elizabeth)

Hunterdon residents are more educated than the average NJ resident with 48% versus 34.1% having a bachelors degree or higher.

Population density is much lower in Hunterdon County, with only 298 persons per square mile versus an average of 1,185 for NJ.

Percept Report for the Clinton Area

The Ministry Area Profile Report for 2010 (Appendix A) is a report of the demographics of the Clinton area prepared for Clinton Presbyterian Church by Percept Group, provided free of charge courtesy of our Elizabeth Presbytery. The area of this survey is defined as all those living within a 5 mile radius of the church, but not including the institutionalized residents of Edna Mahan, Hunterdon Developmental Center or the Mountain View Youth Correctional Facility.

Key results from the Percept ministry Clinton area profile are as follows:

- 1) The local population is expected to grow somewhat less than the US average in the next 5 years (3.6% versus 5.1% for the US).
- 2) Diversity is low (there is an error in the Percept report on page 1 which states that diversity is high, but that statement is not supported by the facts in the report).
- 3) The largest age groups in the Clinton area are “Boomers” (age 50-67) (24.1% versus 20.6% for US). Compared to the rest of the US, the Clinton area has a large number of Survivors (age 29-49) (30.0%).
- 4) The family structure is Traditional, in that there is an above average presence of married persons (65.9% vs. 52.5%) and two-parent families (86.5% vs. 68.9% for the US)
- 5) Adults are highly educated (46.4% college graduates versus 24.4% for the US).
- 6) Primary Household Concerns are Time for Recreation and Leisure, Ageing Parent Care, Parenting Skills, Achieving a Fulfilling Marriage, and Finding Life Direction.
- 7) Faith Receptivity is about average, but Likely Giving Potential is Extremely High.

PART II: THE CHURCH CONGREGATION (data taken from CPC annual reports and membership database)

Church members live in the following towns (zip codes). Towns with less than 7 members were combined and counted in the “Other” category. The data shows that most church members live in close proximity to the church (within a five mile radius).

Town	Number	Percent
Annandale	143	29.6%
Clinton	94	19.5%
Lebanon	59	12.2%
Asbury	53	11.0%
Other	40	8.3%
High Bridge	30	6.2%
Pittstown	27	5.6%
Glen Gardner	19	3.9%
Hampton	10	2.1%
Bloomsbury	8	1.7%
Total	483	100

Race:

CPC is predominately white, with only between 5 and 12 non-white members recorded over the past 10 years.

Age:

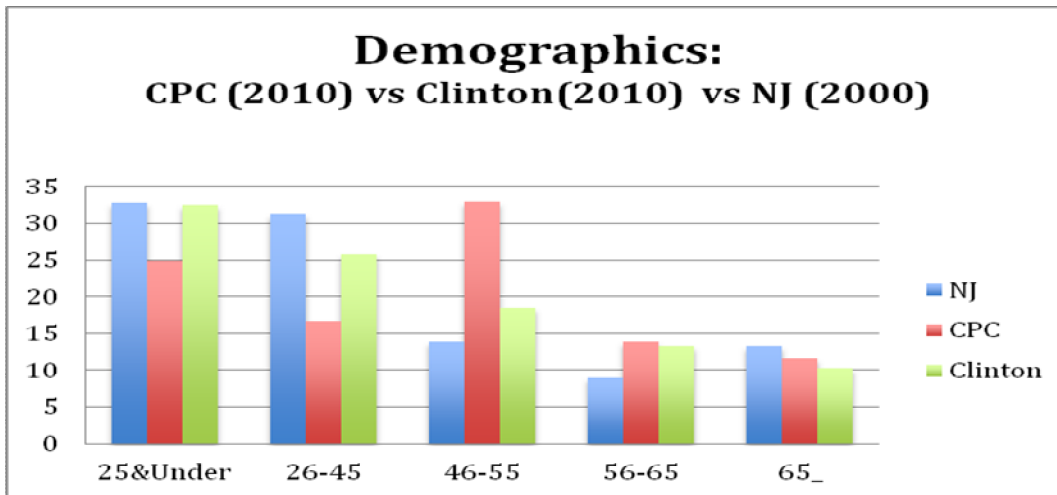
Demographics of the congregation by age group are presented below (only available for the past two years).

Year	2010	2009
25&Under	24.9%	22.4%
26-45	16.7%	17.6%
46-55	32.9%	34.4%
56-65	13.8%	14.6%
65+	11.6%	11.1%

The corresponding numbers are as follows:

Year	2010	2009
25&Under	103	89
26-45	69	70
46-55	136	137
56-65	57	58
65-	48	44
total	413	398

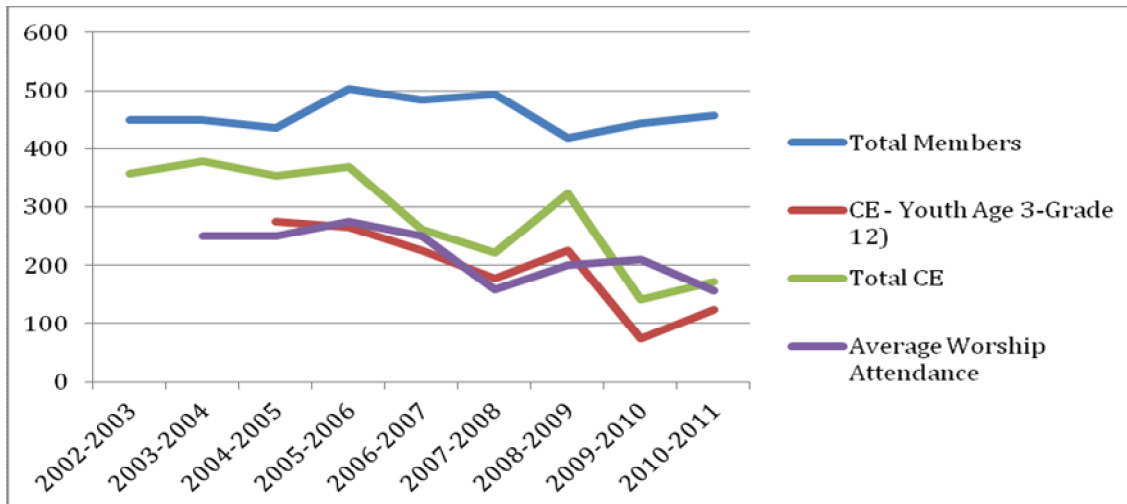
A comparison of demographics for Clinton, CPC, and NJ is presented below (based on Census data from Appendix C). The chart shows that CPC has fewer youth (25&under), fewer people in the 26-45 age group, and more people in the 46-55 age group, as compared to both the community and NJ.



Other facts of interest:

- 1) Total church membership is about evenly distributed between women and men (ranging between 45-53% over the past 6 years).
- 2) Session is historically composed of slightly more women than men (range between 33-50% men over the past 10 years, with men currently at 50%).

- 3) Deacons are historically composed of significantly more women than men (with men ranging between 8-44% over the past 10 years, and currently at 27%).
- 4) The following chart shows historical church total membership, average attendance at Sunday worship services, and number of youth and total membership in Christian Education programs. This chart shows that attendance in Christian Education programs has fallen dramatically. Also the number of attendees in worship on Sunday has also fallen. Interestingly, the total number of church members has remained about the same throughout the years (currently at 483).



PART III: SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- 1) Significant drop in youth attending CE over the past 3-5 years from a high of about 270 (2004-2006) to the current low of about 100 (2009-2010). This level of decline is not reflected in the community school districts. This trend is most likely related to the departure of the previous Co-pastors and the Youth Minister.
- 2) Significant drop in total number of people participating in CE (youth, adults, and teachers) from a high of about 360 (from 2002-2006) to the current low of about 165 (2009-2010). This trend is also most likely related to the departure of the previous Co-pastors and the Youth Minister, which resulted in fewer CE offerings.
- 3) Significant drop in worship service attendance, from a high of about 250 (2003-2007) to the current low of about 156 (2011). This trend correlates with the departure of the previous Co-pastors and the Youth Minister, and the uncertainty surrounding the period of transition back to a permanent pastor.
- 4) The community and congregation are predominately white, affluent, highly educated, white collar, with a traditional family structure (two parent households, high home ownership).
- 5) Compared to the community, CPC has a high number of people in the 46-55 age group, and a low number of people in the <25 age group and the 25-45 age group.
- 6) Compared to the community, CPC has fewer non-whites (2-3% versus 8.5% in the community).
- 7) Giving potential is high, but actual giving is historically and currently low, and is not currently meeting expenses. This trend is partially attributed to the uncertainty surrounding the period of transition back to a permanent pastor.

IV. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2011 BUDGET

CPC leadership is forecasting a budget with income in the amount of \$342,800 and expenses in the amount of \$490,200 resulting in a budget deficit of \$147,400. CPC leadership has worked to reduce the initial projected 2011 CPC deficit by \$72,600 through additional Ministry Team budget cuts and a leadership pledge.

HISTORICAL STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION

Since 1997, CPC pledging generally has generally trended upward. The exception has been the period 2008-2011 during which several measures of pledging declined. Specifically:

1. Total pledges from 1997- 2007 rose from \$184,851 to \$392,116. For the period 2008 – 2011 total pledges have fallen to \$251,686.
2. Average pledge amount from 1997- 2008 rose from \$1,330 to \$3,084. For the period 2009 – 2011 the average pledge amount has fallen to \$2,420.
3. For the period 1997 – 2011, the number of giving units at CPC has fluctuated with a high of 172 in 2000 and a low of 101 in 2010.

BUDGET AND SPENDING

Below is a five year view depicting how CPC spends the monetary gifts provided by God.

2011:

Projected Expense	\$490,200
Projected Income	\$342,800
Projected Operating Deficit	\$147,400
Capital Fund Balance (09-30-11)	\$545.6K

2010:

Total Expense	\$492,660
Total Income	\$346,591
Total Operating Deficit	\$146,069
Capital Fund Balance (12-31-10)	\$585.9K

2009:

Total Expense	\$579,900
Total Income	\$410,131
Total Operating Deficit	\$169,769
Capital Fund Balance (12-31-09)	\$591.6K

2008:

Total Expense	\$575,838
Total Income	\$487,434
Total Operating Deficit	\$88,404
Capital Fund Balance (12-31-08)	\$640.1K

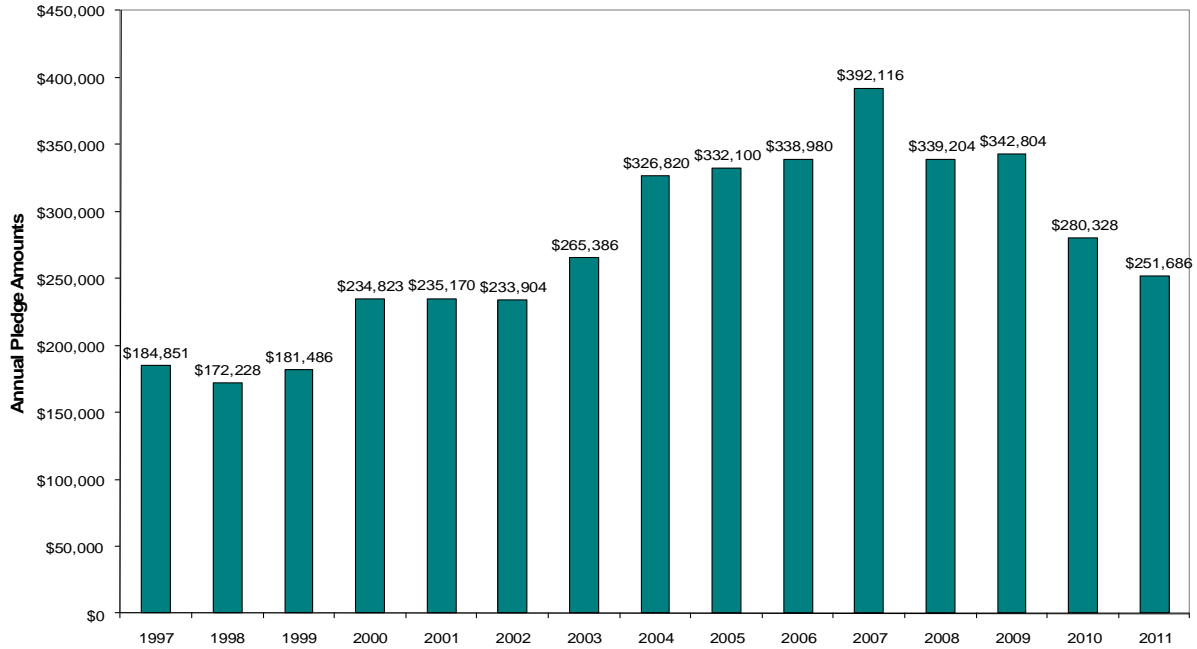
2007:

Total Expense	\$539,414
Total Income	\$495,706
Total Operating Deficit	\$43,708
Capital Fund Balance (12-31-07)	\$953.2K

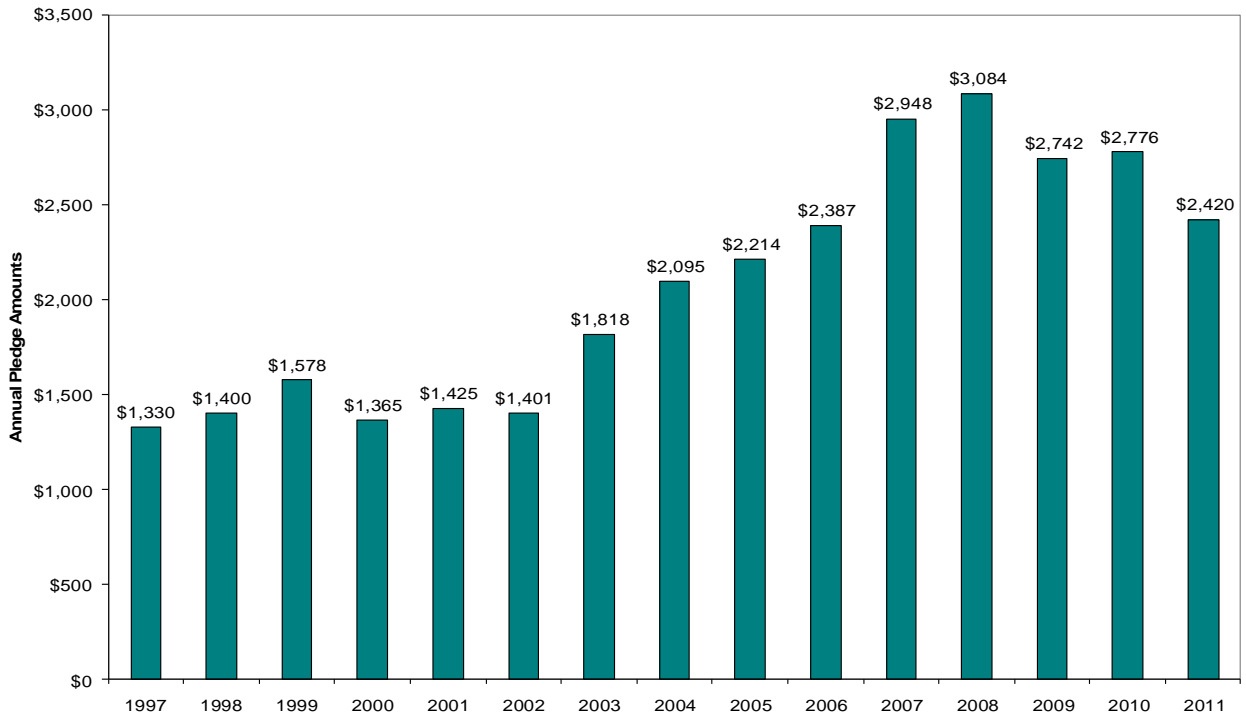
Notes:

- Despite running an annual operating deficit, CPC has not incurred debt due to covering shortages by drawing down on capital accounts.
- More detailed financial can be found in Appendix D.
- Weekly Pledges and Loose Collections decreased by \$141K since the peak years of 2007-2008.
- Use of Facilities income reduced by \$12K since 2008.
- Personnel Expenses decreased with the departure of the Co-Pastors and Associate Pastor, CYF, but were partially offset by addition of Music Director and Interim Pastor.
- Property Expenses, attributed to fuel oil prices, spiked \$45K above budget between 2007 and 2008, better planning and management has brought this in line over time.

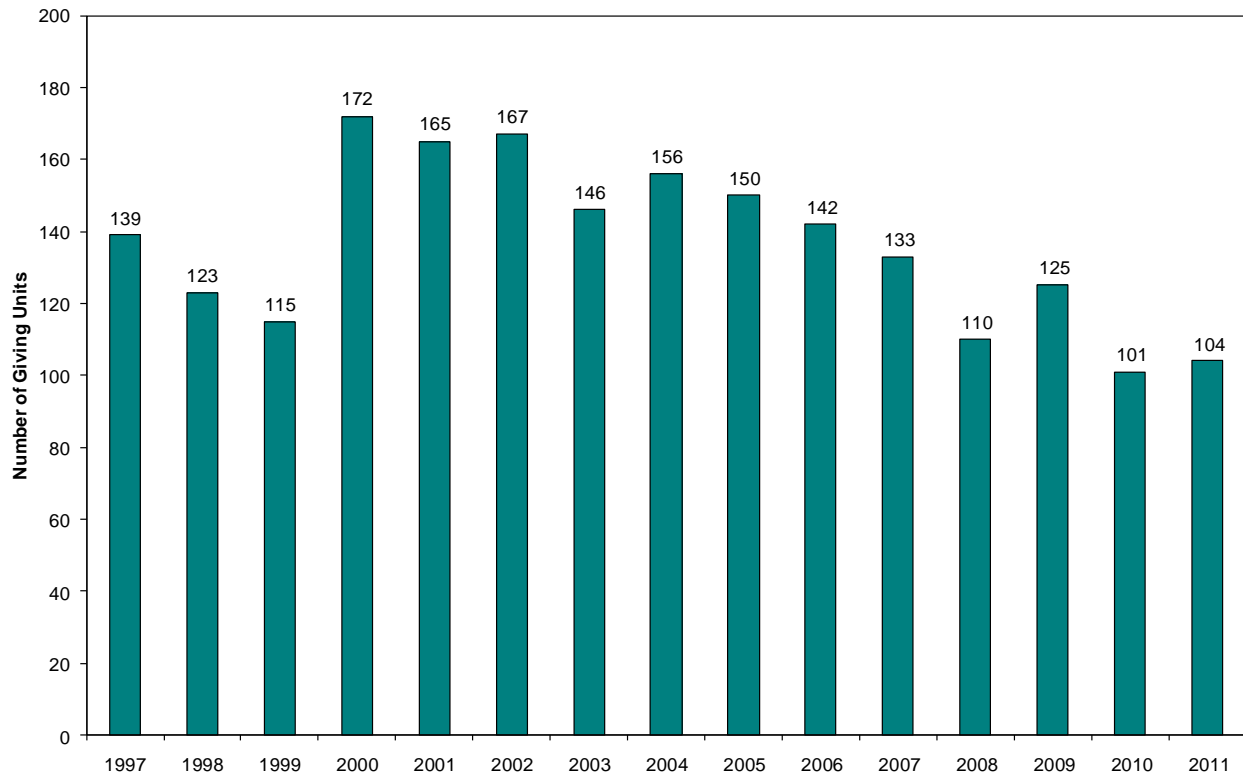
Stewardship Pledge History



Stewardship Pledge History - Average Pledge



Stewardship Pledge History - Giving Units



V. CONGREGATIONAL FEEDBACK

Time during Sunday services was set aside for the congregation to participate in a modified survey approach adapted from the Pittsburgh congregational mission study guide model. The MSTF presented pre-printed questions on 3x5 cards requesting all in attendance to complete. This approach ensured the broadest range of participation among members and visitors in attendance.

3x5 surveys were completed with responses collected over five Sundays during the months of March, April and July. Below is a high level summary of the congregation responses.

QUESTIONS ON MARCH, 2011 3X5 CARDS

Seventy two 3x5 cards were completed to address the following questions:

- What are the greatest strengths of the church?
- What about this church gives you the greatest joy or satisfaction?
- When and why did you first come to this church?

SUMMARY

Members and visitors perceive and significantly value and appreciate the fellowship and feeling of being one big family at CPC. This response category dominated both questions 1 and 2 in a very positive, encouraging manner. Christian education, music and mission programs are also noted as strengths. CPC received a wide array of positive feedback that many are attracted to CPC as it meets diverse spiritual needs through a variety of different ministries.

Ages 35 through 44 were not well represented by CPC membership in response to this first survey.

QUESTIONS ON APRIL, 2011 3X5 CARDS

One hundred and three 3x5 cards were completed to address the following questions:

- What do you enjoy most about this church's worship service?
- What are the greatest challenges or opportunities facing the congregation?
- What is one area of the church for which you can offer a constructive idea for improvement?

SUMMARY

Music, sermons and fellowship came out to be the three most enjoyable things about our worship services at CPC. One of the largest challenges is that people feel there is conflict throughout the church. Members also feel that there is an overwhelming need for a new pastor. Many members offered constructive criticism about the actual worship service and the overall spirituality of CPC.

QUESTIONS ON JULY, 2011 3X5 CARDS

Seventy six 3x5 cards were completed to address the following questions:

- Please list the volunteer activities in which you actively participate outside of Clinton Presbyterian Church, and from this list briefly describe one that you find the most fulfilling.

If there were no barriers of any kind to limit you (time, other obligations, etc.), what volunteer or charitable participation would most interest you? Please describe one.

SUMMARY

We received an overwhelming response of people who volunteer in the community. The highest response shows the heart of our church. CPC is a community of givers. They volunteer most for outreach activities, and widely enjoy fellowship and relationships.. When asked what they would volunteer for if time were not an object, the same results came out. Overall we are a very outreach based community.

Summary results of the the 3x5 cards can be found in Appendix E.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS WITHIN CLINTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fifty eight members participated in small group discussions (called “ focus groups”) held between June and September, 2011. Over the summer , focus groups were held with the following ministry teams: Mission, Worship, Christian Education , Personnel, Membership, Stewardship, Property and Finance and the Deacons. Elders who chaired a ministry participated along with the congregational members that serve on the ministry. In the fall, focus groups were opened to congregation members at large.

An MSTF member facilitated the meeting with many meetings having a second MSTF member act as a scribe. Participants were asked to attend 2 different focus groups so that different topics could be discussed. During each focus group, participants went through a brief Bible devotion,discussion and prayer prior to answering questions posed by the MSTF.

Each participant agreed to maintain confidentiality and keep the discussion within the focus group. Summary minutes were prepared for each focus group and analyzed by the MSTF. Ten focus groups addressed Topic 1 and eight focus groups met to address Topic 2 on the questions listed below. The MSTF took the responses from the eighteen focus groups, summarized and prioritized the responses into the following broad categories: People, Programs, Leaders/Staff, Facility and Finances. High Level summary responses are provided for each question and may be included in multiple categories due to the impact of the response. Category are listed according to the number of responses received.

Topic 1 questions were discussed by 10 Focus Groups:

1.What gifts, talents and other resources are there in our congregation that enables us to fulfill our call to ministry as the church of Jesus Christ?

People:

- Caring for each other
- Creative talented people
- Welcoming community
- Feeling of family

Programs:

- Mission minded
- Music programs
- Strong Christian education

Facility:

- Beautiful facility

Finances

- Great financial potential

2. What is hindering our congregation from responding fully to the call of Christ into new life and faithful ministry?

People:

- Lack of time
- Conflict with staff / leadership / congregation
- Lack of trust / commitment
- People tired / burned out
- Focus on me / them / not what is pleasing to God

Leaders/Staff

- Long interim period before new pastor
- Conflict with staff / leadership / congregation
- Lack of communication

Finances

- Lack of money

Programs

- Diminished congregation

3. Where are the signs of new life and faithful ministry in the congregation today?

Programs

- Music ministry
- Youth and teen involvement in music
- Continuance of programs
- Continued mission work
- Sunday school and youth programs and leaders
- Confirmation class

People

- New members
- Youth and teen involvement in music
- Congregational members remain faithful
- Caring congregation

Leaders/Staff

- More joyful session members
- Sunday school and youth programs and leaders

4. If a stranger were to ask you to tell him or her (in one sentence) our congregation's calling, the special vocation as a church in Clinton, NJ, how would you describe it?

People

- Welcoming congregation
- Care for each other
- See us as Christians because of our love
- Spread the word of Jesus Christ
- Provide spiritual growth
- Make disciples

Programs

- Christian education is biblically based
- Community outreach: Bible study, youth programs, etc.
- Mission
- Worship and serve the Lord
- Spread the word of Jesus Christ

- Make disciples

Leaders/Staff

- Spread the word of Jesus Christ
- Make disciples

Topic 2 Questions were discussed by 8 Focus Groups:

1. What do you believe God is calling us to do as a congregation? How do you see us responding?

People

- Serve others in the community
- Be a Christian example
- Care for each other (external)
- Focus on God / God's word
- Get through conflict / continue to heal
- Connect people with God
- Learn the bible
- More fellowship / events to bring visitors to church
- Bear fruit
- Be welcoming to teens
- Be honest with ourselves
- Be positive and supportive

Leaders/Staff

- Focus on God / God's word
- Get through conflict / continue to heal
- Learn the bible
- Bible teaching pastor
- Be welcoming to teens
- Be honest with ourselves
- Be positive and supportive

Programs

- Focus on God / God's word
- Learn the bible
- More fellowship / events to bring visitors to church
- Be welcoming to teens
 - Provide more Christian education offerings

2. What are the most critical issues God is calling our congregation to address today to enable us to respond more fully to God's call.

People

- Reach out to community
- Conflict resolution / healing
- Rely upon God's will - not our own
- Encourage congregational involvement
- Communication
- Collaboration

Programs

- Reach out to community
- Conflict resolution / bridge the gap in the curriculum

- Encourage congregational involvement
- Address drop in Sunday school enrollment
- Youth Programs
- Collaboration

Leaders/Staff

- Find Pastor: Be honest and clear on expectations
- Find Pastor: Recognize the pastor is not the church
- Rely upon God's will - not our own
- Encourage congregational involvement
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Foster healing

Finances

- Live within our means

3. Over the next ten years, what do you believe might be the most critical needs in our community that God may want us to address given our resource and inspired desires?

Programs

- Community programs / outreach to others
- Job programs / unemployment / under employment assistance
- Senior citizens programs
- Address drop in Christianity
- Strong children's programs
- More worship services to adapt to people's needs
- More knowledge about other religions

People

- Community programs / outreach to others
- Job programs / unemployment / under employment assistance
- Senior citizens programs
- Children emphasis

Finances

- Community programs / outreach to others
- Job programs / unemployment / under employment assistance

4. Where is new life needed in our congregation today? What might that new life look like?

People

- Increase "20 something" crowd
- Revival of energy to include more senior events
- Increase youth attendance and involvement in life of church
- Active new members
- Revival of energy – more intimate relationships / fellowship
- Encourage people
- Share spiritual experiences
- Family and youth retreats
- More small groups

Programs

- Increase "20 something" crowd
- Revival of energy to include more senior events

- Increase youth attendance and involvement in life of church
- Different services to meet needs
- Share spiritual experiences
- Family and youth retreats
- More small groups

Leaders / Staff

- New pastor

SUMMARY

See Appendix F for Summary of Focus Group Findings by Topic and Question and Appendix G for Focus Group Detailed Analysis.

VI. PERCEPT CHURCH LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Different Pastors emphasize different roles in their ministries and every Pastor also has his/her own style of ministry. As we prepare to call a new Pastor to CPC, it is essential that we understand the roles that our congregants view as most important and the style of leadership with which we are the most comfortable. We used Percept Group's ReVision Starter Kit Survey, Section 7 "Church Leadership" to gather information about our congregants' Pastoral Leadership preferences. See Appendix B for Survey and Appendix H for data.

A total of 119 surveys were completed. The survey was distributed and completed during a Sunday worship service. Members were notified [via email 'blast' 'Constant Contact'] that the survey was also available through the CPC website and at the church office. We did receive completed surveys from this second avenue.

Participants were asked to answer two questions.

Question 1 – Pastors emphasize different roles in their ministries. Based upon what you perceive to be the needs of our congregation, rate the importance of the following characteristics of a senior pastor using the following 6 point scale where:

1=very unessential; 2=unessential; 3=neutral, 4=essential; 5=very essential and 9=don't know.

- A. Minister of the Word/Teacher of the Congregation
- B. Church Administrator
- C. Social Activities
- D. Enabler/Facilitator
- E. Celebrant/Liturgist
- F. Spiritual Guide
- G. Witness/Evangelist
- H. Counselor/Healer
- I. Community Chaplain

(See Appendix B, Leadership Report, for definitions.)

Question 2 – Styles of ministry vary by Pastor. While you would probably agree that all of these characteristics are important, if you had to choose, in which direction would you lean?

- A. Expertise in Biblical and theological matters **OR** High degree of spirituality
- B. Tends to be provoking and challenging **OR** Tends to be comforting and assuring
- C. Preaching Emphasizes the Bible **OR** Preaching emphasizes contemporary issues
- D. Welcomes and implements new ideas and approaches **OR** Deep appreciation and commitment to tradition
- E. Is Strong, decisive force in decisions regarding policy and program **OR** Encourages decision making of other Pastors and/or lay leaders
- F. Has formal style **OR** Has relaxed style

Participation in the survey reflects the congregation's age distribution. 70% of the respondents identified themselves as active in at least one activity/ministry at CPC.

DESIRED PASTORAL TRAITS

Pastoral Roles: The two Pastoral roles which our congregation views as overwhelmingly necessary in our Pastor are "Minister of the Word/Teacher of the Congregation" and "Spiritual Guide". 98% of survey participants who

rated these two traits gave them a rating of "Essential" or "Very Essential." Following closely behind, are the roles of Celebrant/ Liturgist (77%), Counselor Healer (76%), and Witness/Evangelist (74%).

In contrast, the role viewed as least important is that of Community Chaplain, with 63% of those who rated this role viewing it as neutral, unessential or very unessential.

Pastoral Leadership Style:

This section of the survey asks participants to choose from 2 choices, which leadership styles they prefer in a Pastor. Two preferences that dominate our responses are:

- A leader who encourages decision making by others rather than a leader who prefers making decisions regarding programs and policies
- A leader who has a relaxed informal style as opposed to a formal style. This trait was important to all age groups, but particularly among the younger survey respondents.

Additionally:

- We place solid value on a leader who welcomes and introduces new ideas and approaches in contrast to a leader who has a strong commitment to tradition.
- We seek a Pastor with a high degree of spirituality, yet who is balanced with a solid expertise in Biblical matters
- We seek a Pastor whose preaching emphasizes the Bible, while addressing contemporary issues.

See Appendix H for Summary of Leadership Survey.

Additional information can be found in the Conclusion section of this report.

VII. COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

Six community leaders were interviewed to gain a broader understanding of our community and their needs and to gain a perspective of whom CPC is called to serve and support. Questions asked of our community leaders and key comments follow:

1. What is the primary responsibility of your office and what is your part in it? Or, what is the role in your community?

Community leaders represented a variety of diverse community interests: local government, health, education, law enforcement and faith and include: president of a large facility, police chief, school teacher, vice president in business organization and church pastor.

2. What is the community's greatest strengths?

- Strong faith involvement
- Beautiful open space
- Very accessible from three major highways

3. What can you tell us about the people who live and work in this community?

- Becoming more diverse
- Caring, informed, family oriented
- Growing Hispanic community

4. What are the most serious problems you and others who live and work in this community face?

- Declining real estate values
- Tolerance of drug and alcohol abuse
- Struggling with economy – many are house poor

5. *Do you have any suggestions for how concerned church people might help with these problems?*

- Be civic minded, participate and get involved
- Reach out to younger families, offer volunteer playgroups/babysitting
- Churches working together

6. What changes do you see in the next 5-10 years?

- Emphasize accountability for services by healthcare and public servants
- Technology cutting off personal communication between people
- Economic circumstances separating the community

See Appendix I for a summary of the community interviews.

VIII. MSTF CONCLUSIONS

In analyzing all of the information collected through the MSTF process, the congregation identified the following:

STRENGTHS OF THE CONGREGATION

- Members and visitors appreciate and value fellowship and sense of family at CPC.
- We are a welcoming faith community.
- We highly value music programs that involve diversity of participation – of all age groups and genders.
- The development of youth and teen music programs has significantly increased their direct participation in worship.
- We are Christ-centered in our worship.
- We are a Bible-focused church – in worship and in our Christian Education program.
- CPC meets a variety of spiritual needs through Sunday School, Bible Study, Worship and Mission.
- CPC has a long history of commitment to its mission ministry in which members of all ages participate.
- In addition to our involvement and commitment to our church, CPC members are typically also involved in a variety of community organizations and causes.
- CPC has highly creative and talented people.
- We value our church facility, its beauty and functionality and its location. The church is well used and is considered part of the “town center” of Clinton, in close proximity to major interstates (I78, Route 31, Route 22).

OUR STRUGGLES AS A CHURCH

- We struggle to listen to God’s will in our church and not our own.
- We struggle with defining and agreeing with what the Pastor’s role is in our church.
- Our congregation, Sunday school and youth group attendance has been shrinking over the past two to three years.
- We struggle, individually and as a group, in trying to deal with conflict in an effective, biblical manner. This includes discerning between actual and perceived conflict, and understanding our roles in conflict resolution.
- Families in the congregation and the community are struggling with job loss and debt during this economic downturn.
- Members of CPC struggle with lack of time and overcommitment of time due to a fast paced life which mirrors society.
- Demands of family, work, community and church exhaust us. We find ourselves burned out.

NEEDS OF THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

There are approximately 2,600 people in three populations co-located within our community that we do not touch today: individuals who have special developmental needs (Hunterdon Development Center) and those who are in prison (Mountain View Youth Correctional Facility and Edna Mahon Correctional Facility).

People who have been marginalized by society exist in Hunterdon County. There appear to be unmet needs for these groups and an open community desire for church communities to come along side in support. Specifically, CPC ministry has an opportunity to expand it's ministry for to those who struggle with drug and alcohol addiction problems, to provide support for single parent families, and to care for the needs of the immigrant community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN MINISTRY AND MISSION

- Listen to what God wants for our church
- Unify the church and worship God
- Strengthen communication and transparency
- Reach young adults and minorities
- Call a Pastor
- Improve our financial health
- Retain and increase church membership
- Address gossip
- Enhance ministry and worship for youth through sermons and events that speak to them
- Introduce and model conflict resolution and healing with biblical principles
- More outreach within the community
- Enhance collaboration within CPC ministries
- Encourage more congregational involvement at all levels
- Offer more senior citizen focused events
- Provide more fellowship opportunities

DESIRED PASTORAL TRAITS

Our congregation seeks a Pastor:

- who views his/her role as that of Spiritual Guide to the Congregation, through Biblical Teaching and Preaching that addresses the challenges of our lives today.
- who has a passion for Worship and is comfortable with diverse worship styles, formats and music that include congregants of all ages.
- willing to serve as guide, encourager and advisor to lay leadership as they make the decisions for our congregation's life.
- that has a relaxed, informal style and is comfortable interacting with the different age groups in our church, particularly youth.
- that shares our congregation's commitment and passion for Mission Ministry within our church as well as to those outside.
- who is committed to Biblically based Christian Education, through traditional means (Sermons, Sunday School Classes) and
- is open to creative, new approaches will also be important.

CPC MISSION STATEMENT

We are a welcoming congregation called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ through joyful worship, Biblical teaching, prayer and loving service in His name.

VISION STATEMENT

Clinton Presbyterian Church seeks to spread the Good News near and far so that all may know Christ Jesus. We encourage spiritual growth and Christian service by bearing the fruit of the spirit, living and teaching the gospel, and being witnesses to others in His Name.

A STATEMENT OF CONGREGATIONAL BELIEFS AND VALUES

We believe

- in the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- God reveals Himself and His will for us through his word and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- the Holy Bible is the authoritative Word of God.
- in a caring and loving God.
- we are all made in God's image.
- the only way to God is through His son Jesus Christ. Through His sacrifice we are saved by grace and while undeserved, grace is freely given to us as a gift from God.
- in order to share the gift of God's salvation, our church is called to lead people to Jesus Christ so that they may come to know Him as their Savior and Lord.
- we are created to worship God and to bring Him glory through praise, prayer and worship and by loving and serving others in His name.
- through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, church members will become more active participants in the life of the church, advance their faith journey, and together we will proclaim the power of grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ to the world.

The Session strongly affirms the work and conclusions of the Mission Study Team in its reporting of the congregation's desires and observations. However, in its leadership responsibilities over the past year the Session has made a number of important observations that the congregation at large has not yet come to recognize. The following represent additional opportunities and challenges that the leadership of the church will need to bear in mind.

IX. COMMENTARY AND CONCERNS FROM SESSION

- A large number of people in the congregation and leadership have a significant spiritual life and are hungry for growth.
- We are debt free with a significant set of investments.
- Effective and committed caring is one of the greatest strengths of this church. We have an active and effective Deacon Board who lead this but the congregation at large also cares well for each other in need.
- Our membership is significantly lacking among the 26-45 age group, which causes an increasing leadership gap.
- We have difficulty perceiving we are a smaller congregation than we have been in recent history; making the necessary adjustments due to our decreasing size is problematic.
- We are a theologically diverse congregation and come from many faith traditions, but we have not engaged in serious discussion about our theological differences.
- We have not discussed or explored some significant issues that impact the church at the denominational level.
- Session has been working all year and continues to work on moving toward a future balanced budget.
- We have difficulty drawing boundaries and imposing limits on difficult and even destructive behaviors when they arise within the congregation, staff and leadership.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGREGATION AS BROUGHT FORTH IN THE MISSION STUDY

Year	1	3	5
Mission	<p>Identify and begin to address current congregational needs (example, unemployment, unresolved conflict, debt, etc.)</p> <p>Expand mission opportunities for teens</p> <p>Continue our current ministries, encouraging increased congregational involvement (example: Christmas Giving Tree, Thanksgiving Baskets, youth mission trip, Maine trip, Interfaith Hospitality Network, etc.)</p>	<p>Identify and begin to address community needs (example: drug and alcohol abuse, job loss, debt, life skills, etc.)</p> <p>Provide more hands-on mission opportunities for the congregation</p> <p>Continue to build on the long-term relationships we have built with ministries such as IHN, MATE (Maine), Friendship Center for New Beginnings, etc.</p>	<p>Partner/collaborate with other churches and partners to broaden our mission reach outside of the local community</p>
Christian Education	<p>Expand opportunities for adult Bible study</p> <p>Encourage small group studies</p> <p>Encourage a youth/teen contemporary Bible study class</p> <p>Continue our creative, child focused Sunday School program</p>	<p>Continue to improve, adapt and expand the CE program for all age groups to meet people's needs</p> <p>Seek ways to invite the community to participate in our Christian Education programs.</p>	<p>Partner/collaborate with other churches and partners to broaden our reach in this community</p>
Worship	<p>Call a new pastor</p> <p>Sustain the current music program that has diverse participation</p> <p>Sustain the Biblical basis of our worship</p>	<p>Consider multiple worship services, and new forms and formats for worship</p> <p>Encourage increased participation by congregation in Worship Ministry</p> <p>Collaborate with other churches in our music program</p>	<p>Partner/collaborate with other churches and partners to broaden our reach in this community (example; tent revival, Thanksgiving and New Years ecumenical services, etc.)</p>
Fellowship	<p>Increase fellowship opportunities for all age groups (esp. Sr. Citizens and Sr. Highs)</p>	<p>Encourage participation in our Fellowship opportunities by those outside our membership</p>	<p>Partner/collaborate with other churches and partners to broaden our reach in the community</p>
Communication	<p>Continue to increase and improve communication and transparency between pastor, lay leadership, staff and congregation.</p> <p>Clarify roles and responsibilities of pastor, lay leadership, staff and congregation prior to the call.</p>	<p>Follow-up, re-assess and readjust church goals and plans annually, and communicate status of these goals with the congregation.</p>	<p>Continue regular assessment of goals and achievements throughout the life of the congregation</p>

Session will develop a five-year plan that will incorporate these objectives.