

Mission Information Study

A Self-Study

INTRODUCTION

The Transition Team was appointed by the session in June 2017 and charged with three tasks which included securing clergy and lay speakers to fill the pulpit each Sunday, finding an interim pastor to be hired by the session, and drafting a mission information study to help us remember as a church our past, who we are now, and where God is leading us next.

With the submission of this report the Transition Team (Doty Dunn and Ann Henderson, co-chairs; Burke Basquin, William Mase, Lois Roberts and Marti Schriver) will have completed two of the three tasks. We have secured clergy and lay speakers to fill the pulpit until an interim pastor is hired and we have drafted the mission information study. The Mission Information Study will be presented to the Session for their review and discussion and final approval. The approved report will then be submitted to the Committee on Ministry of the Savannah Presbytery. The Pastor nominating committee when elected will utilize this report to complete the Mission Information Form (MIF) as part of their search for a pastor.

This report has been organized into the following sections: Mission, Vision and Values; History of the Church; Membership, Leadership and Organization; Worship and Fellowship; Mission and Outreach; Description of Community, and Summary of the Mission Information Study. The report consists of information and data collected from church documents, an on-line survey conducted the beginning of August, 2017 and supplemented by an open forum where data was presented and open discussion was encouraged. Information concerning the community and surrounding area was collected from the websites cited in the report.

HISTORY OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (taken from a series of articles written by Dot Odom former FPC Historian)

In 1891, a group of Scots Presbyterians from the Fayetteville area of North Carolina came to Statesboro and were the founders of Presbyterianism in Bulloch County. Their former church in North Carolina had been named Mr. Zion, and so the First Presbyterian Church in Statesboro was also named Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church. This was the beginning of what is now First Presbyterian Church of Statesboro, GA.

Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church was dissolved in 1895 when many of its members relocated. However, a new church was organized in February of 1896 as Statesboro Presbyterian Church. Just 13 months later, the congregation moved into their new building on Broad Street.

The church at Statesboro was growing. Session reported in April of 1920, a total of 80 members

and 90 attending the Sunday School. Thus, the congregation felt the need for more space and they purchased a lot on the corner of Zetterower and Savannah Avenues, and proceeded to build a manse for their minister. Then, disaster struck in 1940 when the church on Broad Street burned. The fire encompassed most of the Presbyterian Church and badly damaged the roof of the building and burned the Sunday School Classroom. Members tried to save what they could, but the building was a total loss for them. So the lot was sold and a new brick church was constructed on the Savannah Avenue Lot. Construction of a church building on Savannah Avenue began very quickly after the fire destroyed the church. Since this was right at the beginning of the World War II era, building at that time must have presented many difficulties so when the congregation moved into their new facilities, there was a great deal of work to do to replace lost or fire damaged property.

In the new building the church became more open and welcoming. New people came in, many from the college. This had a great influence on the life of the church. During the years when our Church was housed at the Savannah Avenue location, the Statesboro Presbyterian Church made a great deal of progress along "our walk of Faith".

In the 1950's, a new manse was constructed on what had been the Church parking lot. The old Manse had been converted to the Church School. However, there were many problems with the facility on Savannah Avenue, a leaky basement and a lack of space for parking were two very large problems.

Serious study began in 1963 to find a new location for Statesboro Presbyterian Church. A piece of land (8.9 acres) on Fair Road was purchased from Mrs. Wallis Cobb for \$2000 per acre. Also, during this time period, the church was given a new name, First Presbyterian Church of Statesboro. First Presbyterian Church has remained at the Fair Road site since 1964.

MISSION, VALUES and VISION

First Presbyterian Church (FPC) is a local congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) located in Statesboro, GA. We were commissioned by the Savannah Presbytery in 1891. Although the physical location of our church has changed over the years, our purpose has always been to glorify God and enjoy God forever through worship, fellowship and discipleship.

Our mission is to be a Christ centered family of believers called and committed to worshipping, growing spiritually, and sharing God's love and grace. Included within this mission is to be witnesses to the new thing God is doing in the world in Christ: breaking down barriers of every kind, bringing forth life in the face of death, reconciling the world to God and people to each other. As we work toward attaining these goals we worship God together in song and prayer, study the scriptures, serve our neighbors, and grow together in the Spirit of unity and peace.

At FPC we are committed to the following core values. Through worship we are committed to expressing our love of God. We are devoted to a deep and abiding faithfulness to God, the Bible and our Confessions and are faithful to our reformed tradition and transformation of

believers through the study of God's word. We are a diverse community of believers dedicated to the nurturing of others and the faithful stewardship of our church. We are committed to open and honest communication and action.

The vision of FPC is to be an inclusive family of faith praying for God's guidance and seeking to impact our community and other communities with nurturing outreach programs and opportunity for spiritual and personal growth.

MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP and ORGANIZATION

Today, First Presbyterian Church of Statesboro, Georgia is described as a moderately progressive purple church with a variety of worshippers. The church has stood the test of time, impact of history and regional change through its commitment to God's work on earth.

The church property is conveniently located at 1215 Fair Road adjacent to Georgia Southern University and next door to East Georgia Regional Medical Center. Statesboro is located 50 miles west of the popular coastal city of Savannah, GA. The church was established in 1891 and is a member of the Savannah Presbytery and the Synod of the South Atlantic. The church office is open from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday- Friday.

In a recent document speculating on why individuals chose First Presbyterian Church, it was suggested that the church's strong program of traditional church music and its "reputation in Statesboro for theological and political moderation...makes it appealing" (On-line Church Survey, 2017).

At this time in the church's history – as we seek to define ourselves and our direction, the congregation looks forward to discerning God's will for the church, its leaders and members. Members understand that the purpose of the church is "to glorify God and enjoy God forever through worship, fellowship and discipleship."

The 2016 Church Report for Presbyterian Church U.S.A. listed 232 active members, 214 of whom were white and 138 were women. There were 135 participants in Christian Education program. The average Sunday worship attendance was 86. There were 85 potential giving units noted with a budgeted income of \$266,500.

Over the years, the church has been fortunate to have had pastors with strong preaching skills who have lovingly and competently led worship services and devoted time to pastoral care in the community and to the congregation. The church has a talented and dedicated staff with a Music Director, two organists, a Christian Education Director and a Youth Director. The church also employs a part-time Office Administrator and Custodian.

The Congregation elects twelve ruling elders to the Session. At this time there are six men and six women working together to strengthen and nurture the life of this church. Responsibilities

are divided into six service areas – Administration, Christian Education, Facilities, Mission, Pastoral Care, Service and Worship.

WORSHIP

At First Presbyterian Church we worship because God has called us together. We are claimed as God's own in the waters of baptism and nourished for Christian witness at the Table of our Lord. Each Sunday we gather to hear God's Word of grace and love, and to respond to that Word with lives of commitment and service. All are welcome in worship. Our worship service follows a traditional format outlined by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Worship Opportunities

FPC Statesboro has a wealth of meaningful worship services throughout the year. We follow the liturgical calendar.

Advent and Christmas

We light a candle in our Advent wreath each Sunday of Advent to symbolize the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. We have a live nativity pageant during one of worship services during the Advent. We have a traditional Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols.

Lent and Easter

We celebrate Ash Wednesday as an entry point into the Lenten celebration. Congregants come forward and the minister marks their foreheads with the sign of the cross in ashes. We acknowledge the Lenten season in various ways through spiritual disciplines of prayer, bible study, fasting and service. We commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples with a Maundy Thursday service. On Good Friday the sanctuary is open to anyone for prayer. During Holy week we are part of a group of churches of many Christian denominations who celebrate the week together with noon time worship services followed by lunch. We celebrate the Easter Vigil with a sunrise service on Easter morning followed by a traditional Easter service at 11:00 am.

Music in Worship

At FPC Statesboro we have a rich history of strong music. We have a chancel choir who sing a prepared anthem during our Sunday morning worship services. We offer four choir scholarships to Georgia Southern University music students. Our hand bell choir plays about 4 times a year during worship. We also have a children's choir and a youth choir that sing at various times of the year during worship. All of these groups rehearse on Wednesday evenings. We use both organ and piano during our services and occasionally have a variety of additional instruments.

Liturgists

Anyone who is interested may participate in worship as a lay liturgist.

Christian Education

Christian education plays an important role in the life and work of our congregation and is supervised by the Christian education director. There are seven Sunday school classes which meet at 10:00 AM. Classes include a nursery for children from birth through the age of three, an elementary class for pre-k through fifth grade, a youth class for grades sixth through twelfth, and four adult classes.

In addition, there are three Bible study groups that meet weekly or bimonthly. The Ladies Bible Study meets each Tuesday afternoon at 3:30, the UKirk (college age) Bible study meets at 6:00 PM on Sundays, and the 2X4 Men's Bible study meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 AM. Two women's circles, the Joy Circle and the Pond House Circle meet monthly during the school year. Wednesday night Christian education programs are separated into groups for adults, youth, and children and follow the fellowship dinner.

Our youth ministry is led by our youth director and volunteer parents of youth. The youth group meets for fun, fellowship, devotions and Bible study on Wednesday nights, Sunday evenings, and Friday mornings during the school year. Special events for the youth group include: 7:00 AM Friday meetings at Starbucks, recreational activities and social gatherings, mission trips, ski trips, Montreat Youth Conference, and Faith in 3D. The children's ministry includes Sunday school; Wednesday night activities to include recreation, Bible study, and mission projects; Vacation Bible School; annual children's unrehearsed Christmas pageant; the acolyte program for children in grades first through fifth and various other fun activities and social events during the school year.

FELLOWSHIP

Christian fellowship is more than simply spending time together. It is literally building up the body of Christ with solid relationships and close connections that constitute a real community. Intergenerational activities have been the emphasis of our fellowship in recent years. We share our lives in the community of First Presbyterian Church; we bear one another's burdens; we pray and laugh and weep together often. Here is a sampling of our many fellowship activities:

- Wednesday night suppers
- Seasonal Events: Fall retreat or festival and hayride, Advent Fair, Easter Egg Hunt, Sunrise Service Breakfast, Splashing into Summer
- Presbyterian Women Circles
- Young Adult Socials, Sunday School Socials
- Supper Groups, UKIRK monthly dinners, youth chili cook-off, youth spaghetti dinner, Sunday covered dish dinners
- Special Observations of 90th and 100th birthdays
- All Seasons Book Clubs

MISSION and OUTREACH

At FPC we try to think of “mission” less as what we do but rather who we are. We are a missionary people because we serve a missionary God. With Christ as our example, we are committed to serving God and neighbor, reaching out beyond the walls of our church to the world which God so loves. Through acts of service, reconciliation, and witness, our members participate in the wider community:

First Presbyterian Church has numerous local missions and outreach to broader missions, which include:

- Ecumenical worship- Participating Church in our community’s regularly held ecumenical worship services.
- UKIRK- Our congregation supports UKIRK college ministries by offering our facilities, incorporating our college students in worship, and hosting monthly meals at Church member’s homes. FPC is united with the Presbyterian Church (USA) in reaching, loving, and teaching college students so that they may become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.
- ACTS (Area Christians Together in Service)- This interdenominational outreach program provides emergency relief to the poor and indigent of Bulloch County. FPC supports ACTS through regular financial giving, food and supply donations, and volunteering. We also serve on the organization’s Community Board.
- Rebecca’s Café- is a local soup kitchen where FPC team members prepare and serve food to those in need on the second Tuesday of every month. Many of these same volunteers can be found working at the Food Bank as these organizations work hand in hand. Rebecca’s Café serves over 80 hot meals on a typical day.
- Backpack Buddies- (for underprivileged Bulloch County School students)- our congregation collects nonperishable food items that are packed into back packs and delivered weekly all throughout the school year to grade school children in need. In addition, during the Christmas season, donations are collected from individual members and Sunday school classes. These donations are used to put together food boxes for Christmas meal preparation and obtain individualized Christmas gifts for the children in the same families. Food boxes are packed by delivered by congregation members.
- Swainsboro Apartments- The Presbyterian Women of the Church coordinate and deliver Valentine and Christmas Gift Bags to the residents of Swainsboro Apartments. The congregation donates suggested gift items and the youth make well-wishing cards.
- STARfish –working through the Lutheran services of the Savannah office to assist refugee families resettle in our community. Current efforts involve teaming up with other Churches to collect home furnishings and appliances and move in assistance when the family arrives.
- Facility donation for community outreach- includes church members volunteering and interacting with the following organization:
 - Silver Lining Club (respite care for Alzheimer’s and elderly) occurs weekly on Saturday mornings with programming and prepared lunch for participants
 - Senior Companion Program (through Georgia Southern)
 - Safe Haven Women’s Shelter- relies on FPC as a community drop off center for donations of gently used clothing and household items. In addition, families at Safe Haven receive a

special invitation to our annual church-wide Easter Egg Hunt and cookout.

- Warming Shelter- FPC offers the only area warming center within a 30-mile radius. In conjunction with the Bulloch County Emergency Management Agency, FPC and its dedicated volunteers offer use of our fellowship hall as shelter from persistent subfreezing weather conditions. Church members provide a hot meal, sleeping cots, and overnight use of facility bathrooms.

In addition to these local missions, FPC supports our denomination's national and international mission work through special offerings. Over the last 5 years we have developed a special partnership with our Haitian brothers and sisters in Christ.

- Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM)- FPC has built a strong relationship with HOM through multiple mission trips to build relationships, help repair homes, visit HOM schools, and to experience worship with them. Our yearly vacation bible school (VBS) program also contributes to this mission by raising money each year earmarked specifically for HOM. VBS donations have been used to further goals for clean water campaigns in Haiti. Additionally, many church members individually sponsor Haitian children attending HOM schools.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY

Bulloch County (<https://www.georgia-demographics.com/bulloch-county-demographics>)

The population of Bulloch County is 74,722 people. Bulloch County is composed of three main racial and ethnic groups; White (64.0%) followed by Black (28.3%) and Hispanic (3.6%). The median income within Bulloch County in 2015, was a median household income of \$36,032. Bulloch County households.

Statesboro (<http://www.statesboroga.gov/city-overview/>)

Created by an act of the Georgia legislature in 1803, Statesboro is a Georgia Municipal Association City of Excellence and Certified City of Ethics. The City of Statesboro is approximately 15.2 square miles in area with an average elevation of 240 feet above sea level, the terrain being mostly flat. The climate is seasonal, but moderate, with mild winters and warm, humid summers.

Statesboro has an economy comprised of a growing industrial base, a growing university, expanding retail activity, a regional medical center and an expanding array of amenities. This regional economic hub is located 10 miles off Interstate 16. Situated in the southeastern corner of the state, Statesboro is located 194 miles from Atlanta, 76 miles from Augusta, 55 miles west of Savannah, 144 miles from Charleston, SC. and 168 miles from Jacksonville, Fla.

Statesboro is the County seat of Bulloch County. It has a current population as of March 2017 of 30,721 and has experienced an average growth rate of 2.64% per year since the 2009 recorded statistics. The median age for the City of Statesboro is 22, which is not a surprising age since Statesboro is home to one university (Georgia Southern University) and two colleges (Ogeechee Technical College and East Georgia State College). Statesboro is a regional trade center for commerce, education and health care. The City has a highly diversified economy with several

major industries located in the area and is a regional shopping center and health care provider East Georgia Regional Medical Center for 8 surrounding Georgia Counties (Effingham, Screven, Jenkins, Emanuel, Chandler, Evans, Tattnall, and Toombs).

The 2017 median income per household in Statesboro was \$22,763 and the per capita income was \$12,423. The average household size is 2.54. The March 2017 unemployment rate for Bulloch County was 5.0%. Education Statistics indicate that 85.70% have a High School or GED Diploma, 30.80% are college graduates and 45.60% are attending college.

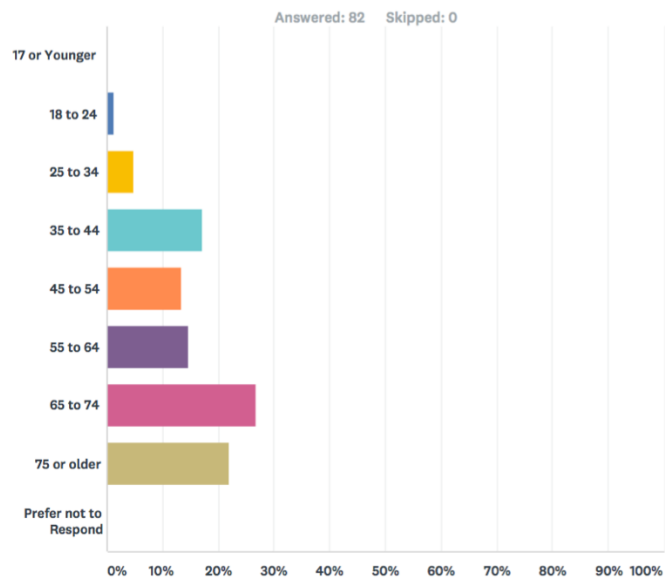
Recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for our citizens are plentiful in Statesboro. The Willie McTell Trail is a linear park that provides a pedestrian walk and bicycle path for local cycle enthusiasts and the S & S Greenway Trail, which extends nearly 3 miles. Also located in Statesboro is Bulloch County's family water park and aquatics center, "Splash in the Boro". Soccer fans now have a new pro franchise located in Statesboro, the Tormenta, which plays in the Premier Development League.

Statesboro residents and visitors can also enjoy cultural and performing arts in the David H. Averitt Center for the Arts located on East Main Street. Recent additions to the Averitt Center include the Whitaker Black Box Theater on W. Main Street and the Roxey Remley Center for Fine Arts on Vine Street.

MISSION INFORMATION STUDY FOR FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Transition Committee compiled, conducted and analyzed a Self-Study Survey to collect data and opinions from the congregation as to present and future priorities of the church. Data from an on-line survey was collected between July 14th and August 12th, 2017, with 90 of 176 (51%) completing the survey. Results of the on-line questionnaire were presented at an open forum and luncheon following church on Sunday, August 13th and further discussion questions and opinions were gathered at this time. A summary of the results of the Self-study Survey and the open forum responses follow.

Q1 What is your age?



Answer Choices	Responses	
17 or Younger	0.00%	0
18 to 24	1.22%	1
25 to 34	4.88%	4
35 to 44	17.07%	14
45 to 54	13.41%	11
55 to 64	14.63%	12
65 to 74	26.83%	22
75 or older	21.95%	18
Prefer not to Respond	0.00%	0
TOTAL		82

Q2 Gender

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	32.93%	27
Female	64.63%	53
Prefer not to Respond	2.44%	2
TOTAL		82

Q3. Marital Status

Answer Choices	Responses	
Single	10.98%	9
Married	73.17%	60
Widowed	8.54%	7
Divorced	4.88%	4
Prefer not to Respond	2.44%	2
TOTAL		82

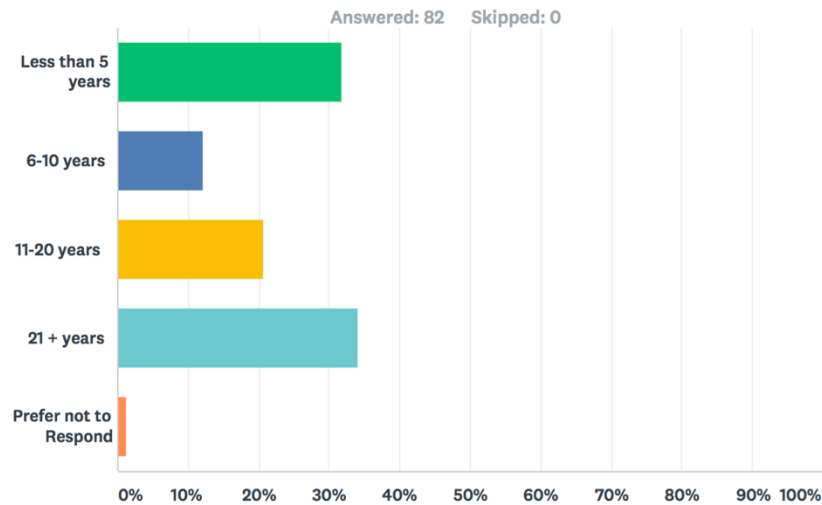
Q4. Ages and Stages of Household members

Answer Choices	Responses	
Single / Live Alone	15.85%	13
Infant/Preschool	7.32%	6
Elementary/Middle School	12.20%	10
High School	7.32%	6
19-25	3.66%	3
26-35	10.98%	9
36-45	14.63%	12
46-55	10.98%	9

Q5. Church Membership Status

Answer Choices	Responses	
Member (Current member of FPC)	89.02%	73
Attendee (Regularly attend but not a member)	8.54%	7
Prefer not to Respond	2.44%	2
TOTAL		82

Q6 Years of attendance at First Presbyterian Church, Statesboro



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 5 years	31.71%	26
6-10 years	12.20%	10
11-20 years	20.73%	17
21 + years	34.15%	28
Prefer not to Respond	1.22%	1
TOTAL		82

First Presbyterian Church, Statesboro, GA

Q7 On the average, about how many times did you attend worship in this congregation during the last year?



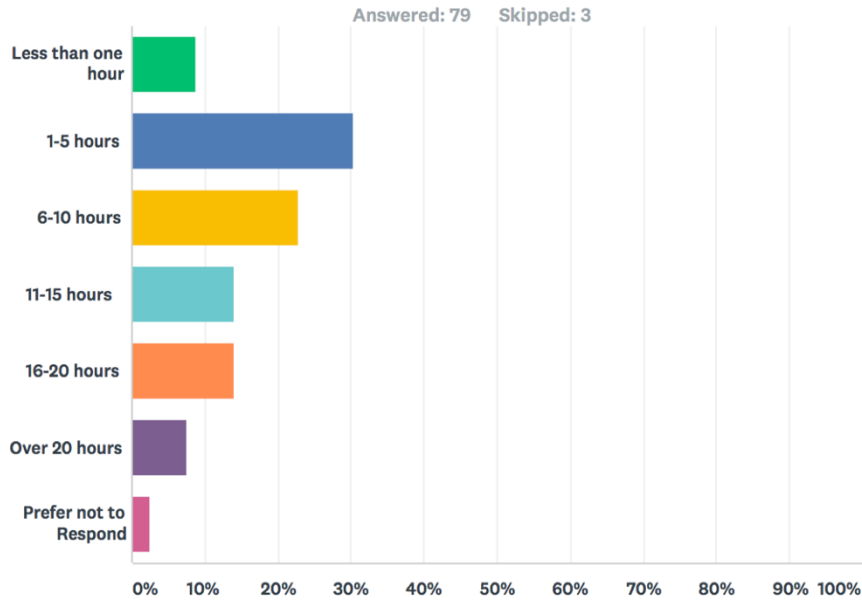
Answer Choices	Responses	
None	1.15%	1
Less than 6 times	5.75%	5
About once or twice every 2 months	1.15%	1
About once a month	6.90%	6
About 2 or 3 times a month	39.08%	34
4 or more times a month	43.68%	38
Prefer not to Respond	2.30%	2
TOTAL		87

Q8 On the average, about how many times did you attend Sunday School in this congregation during the last year?



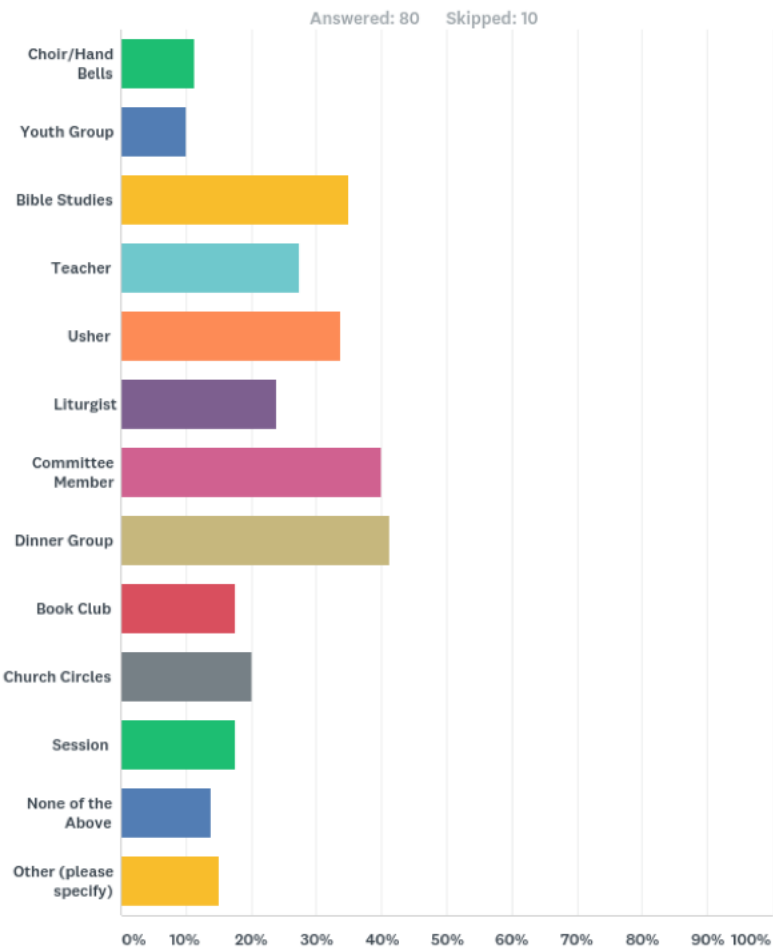
Answer Choices	Responses	
None	22.99%	20
Less than 6 times	16.09%	14
About once or twice every 2 months	2.30%	2
About once a month	3.45%	3
About 2 or 3 times a month	33.33%	29
4 or more times a month	20.69%	18
Prefer not to Respond	1.15%	1
TOTAL		87

Q9 How much time do you spend during an average month in this congregation's affairs (including worship, study groups, meetings, committee work, travel preparation etc.)?

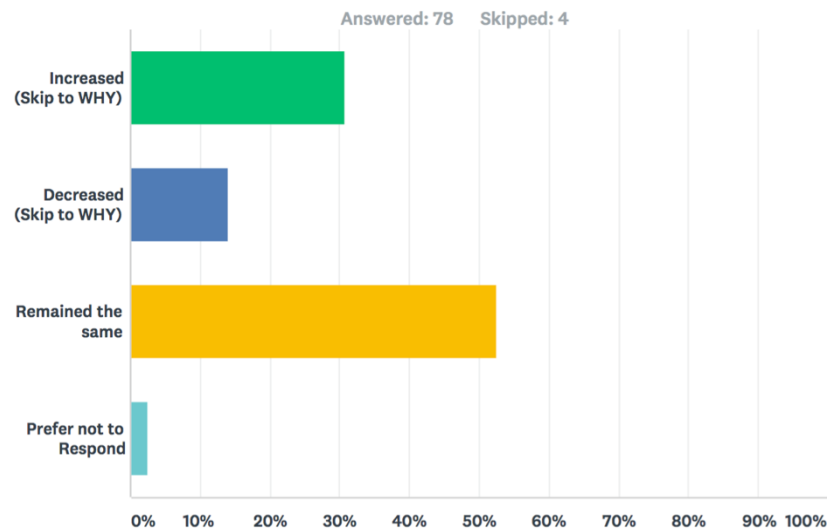


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than one hour	8.86% 7
1-5 hours	30.38% 24
6-10 hours	22.78% 18
11-15 hours	13.92% 11
16-20 hours	13.92% 11
Over 20 hours	7.59% 6
Prefer not to Respond	2.53% 2
TOTAL	79

Q10 In which positions and/or groups within the church do you actively participate? (check all that apply)



Q11 In the last two years, has your participation in this congregation



Answer Choices	Responses	
Increased (Skip to WHY)	30.77%	24
Decreased (Skip to WHY)	14.10%	11
Remained the same	52.56%	41
Prefer not to Respond	2.56%	2
TOTAL		78

Five Point Assessment Questions based on a Likert Scale (average)

Q12) In terms of fellowship, I see my church as:

Warm & Personal 1.3 Cold & Distant

Q13) In terms of worship, I see my church as:

Alive & Compelling 1.7 Dead & Boring

Q14) In terms of its program of education, I see my church as:

Effective & Innovative 1.6 Ineffective & Dull

Q15) In terms of its evangelism, I see my church as:

Aggressive & Clear 2.5 Timid & Unclear

Q16) In terms of its stewardship, I see my church as:

Generous & Self-sacrificing 1.8 Tight & Protective

Q17) In terms of its service to others in the community, I see my church as:

Active & Concerned 1.3 Inactive & Ingrown

Q18) In terms of its emphasis on youth needs, I see my church as:

Interested 1.4 Unconcerned

Q19) In terms of its unity, I see my church as:

Cooperative & Trusting 1.4 Fractured & Fighting

Q20) In terms of its commitment to Christ, I see my church as:

Very Dedicated 1.2 Lukewarm

Q21) In terms of knowledge of the Bible and reformed faith, I see my church as:

Knowledgeable 1.4 Confused

Q22) In terms of communication with/among itself, I see my church as:

Open & Clear 1.4 Closed & Garbled

Q23: In terms of having clear goals, I see my church as: (2.0)

Well Focused & Moving 2.0 Confused & Scattered

Responses to Open –ended Questions 24-31

Q24. Why do you participate in this congregation? (Not why you joined, but why you continue to participate) - (73 responses)

Church Congregation or Attitude

People/Members/ Friendships/Friendly - 16
Welcoming/warm & friendly/loving/caring congregation – 12
Church family / warm relationships/ bonds w/members - 9
Church family loves Christ/each other/community - 6
Feeling of belonging/part of a family/ home – 6
Staff are challenging & Inspiring/leadership - 4
Sense of community/Fellowship spiritual and social - 4
Acceptance of all -3
Kids surrounded by Love/get sense of fellowship/want kids to grow up here - 3
Church has stood by my family in difficult times/help when you need it - 3
Fellowship of Christian Love/Peace/Growth – 2
Feeling of belonging even though not from here or like everyone else in town -1
Openness of this faith – 1
I have a voice for my children - 1
1 Pressure from Spouse – 1
Congregation has a variety of gifts and hold each accountable – 1

Worship or Church Activities

Church service /structured /traditional - 5
Pastor (Dan) / Sermons - 5
Mission/ uses money to help others - 3
Music programs – 3
Sing in Choir - 2
Enjoy Sunday School Classes - 2
Small congregation - 2
Opportunity to make a difference/ serves Christ and Community – 2
Church activities/Outreach/are important to church and community – 2
More meaningful in my spiritual life than any other church attended – 1

Spiritual Needs or connection

Longtime member/Grew up Presbyterian -5
Philosophies/ beliefs align - 3
My Calling/my commitment/trust in God - 3
Focus on God/ faith journey – 2
Praise to God - 1
Feel closer to God – 1

Holy Spirit keeps me here - 1
Fills my Spiritual needs - 1
Keeps me on God's path - 1
Share God's love
We care about this congregation & church -1
Habit -1
My responsibility to share love of Jesus -1
I don't - a few families rule the church - 1
I love Jesus and he loves me – 1
Only Presbyterian church (USA) in Statesboro -1
Part of my discipleship – 1

Q25. What brought you to FPC and what keeps you here? (73 responses)

Came Because

because PC USA -10
Spouse/ spouse's family - 8
Ancestry/family/born into this church -6
Member/ Friend Invited/ recommended -6
Pastor - Dan & Susan - 4
Because of my children brought me here - 2
People/Very welcoming/warmth/friendly -4
Worship service familiar - 2
Children's program/Wanted children to have same spiritual upbringing - 2
Music
Family tragedy brought me back
Other PC is too conservative
Wanted a church that emphasize God's Love rather than judgement – a church where it
is ok to a democrat and not be judged because gay
Friend's loved it
A representative attended a vigil for the Pulse nightclub massacre and I decided to give
the church a try
denomination is comfortably liberal
Curiosity
Wanted to worship My Lord

Stay Because

Feeling of family/ church community/ warmth of congregation - 9
Like the folks/people/ relationship/fellowship - 7
Friendly/welcoming community/ not smothering - 3
Music Program - 2
Community outreach/Desire to serve other - 2

Right mix of traditional music/worship -2
Church shares progressive values/ theology -2
Preacher & congregation -2
Church vibe – traditional yet progressive -2
Sermon's -2
Spirit of hospitality/ home - 2
Because I'm involved with worship and service
Do more mission
Willingness to persevere when dealing with change
Son's participation with youth group & I want a voice
Feel good about worshipping with this congregation
A feeling of unity
Appreciate liturgical services and hymns
Christy and Phillip came over before service and welcomed me to the church immediately
Great place to be
Trying to rekindle my walk with the Lord
Church seems to be trying to follow the example of Jesus Christ
Love keeps me
Provides best relationships for me to serve God and accept his blessing
Commitment to loving the least of these in Statesboro
Theological agreements with church tenets
Have not decided if we will stay
Church activities
Continue to believe in a republican form of government
Happy here
My wife and I who come from different Christian backgrounds both feel comfortable here
Exceeds my needs spiritually and emotionally
Won't be as active if don't connect with next pastor

Not clear if both or Come or Stay

Previous affiliation/ grew up/ Presbyterian - 13
Philosophies
Friendships
Friend's recommendation
Traditions of service
I have a fervent hope that we will more of a church which will reach out to our community
rather than reaching for distinctly questionable groups which are not there to promote
Christian Principle
Church that reflects what I believe and is a comfort to me, as there are good people here
Church enables me to love Christ in the way I have been led my entire life
Openness to global peace, choir and good Sunday school
Where I should have always been, God's Grace
The Lord
Spouse

Sense of Community

Music

Found 1st PC online and read the bulletin for the service

Q26. What are strengths of Congregation? (72 responses)

Church is a family / members/ community

Caring Church “family”/ people/warmth of congregation - 19

Kind/ Compassionate/wonderful/ loving/thoughtful/Good people - 12

Thinking/ Knowledgeable/educated/intelligent - 7

Friendly/ welcoming/inclusive - 3

Many community leaders/dedication to community/helping & serving others - 6

many Christian Ed and Community Outreach [opportunities] /local and at large - 3

Able to build relationships easily/relationships - 2

Strong in sharing the love of Christ

Church Characteristics

Diversity of membership/ diverse backgrounds/ acceptance of All believers in Christ - 9

Smart group of people - 2

When there is a specific need, the congregation meets the challenge - 2

Generous/ Generosity - 2

Strong s The lack of fighting or “camps” in the church Intergenerational relationships

Sense of Community

Committed, very balanced congregation

Open/ openness Diverse beliefs and lifestyles honored -3

Non-judgmental members

Outspoken

Try to get all involved

Clear views on Christ’s teaching, avoidance of trendy practices

Dedicated congregation members, unfortunately a small number.

Conviction of social justice

Service to God

The body seems dedicated to the church

Regressive [?] thinkers

Get along Well Those who participate want Christ’s mission to succeed

Sincerity and cohesiveness

Get along well

Creativity

Sharing of Talents

Spirit-filled
Knowledgeable of bible

Worship/ Faith

Love of Christ/Lord Love God - 4
Wonderful Musicians/ Music -3
Worship/fulfilling worship - 2
Progressive faith - 2
Pursuit of biblical truth/desire to deepen knowledge of bible -2
Youth/ & Youth Activities -3
Faith - 2
Unity - 2
Teaching
Programs that operate out of our church on a weekly basis

Leadership

Dan provided well delivered, thought provoking sermons. His youth and personality were definitely assets
Very talented Director of Christian Education/ Christian Education -2
I always thought Dan & Susan were a major strength. I now feel the people that make up the church are the greatest strength
Ministry by elders and Pastor
Group of leaders will tackle any task. They step up to keep on keeping on whatever the need.
hard working group seeking spiritual guidance
Core members are a tight group and look out for one another.
Seasoned members

Q27. What are weaknesses of this Congregation? (71 responses)

Worship & Fellowship

No pastor -2
Sermons do not proceed with power and does not change people. At the end it should have a clear uplifting message that sticks with you for like
No prayer meetings and do not spend quality time in prayers
Sunday school curriculum is not widely available to members to read before service so they can come prepared.
Sometimes the liberal ideology from the pulpit was a bit much
Need to follow worship service and not add things because choir director or preacher wants to do it
Music and programming is skewed very old.

Communication

Communication on church critical issues - 2

More people need to be asked to serve

Sometimes on one side of an argument is represented or considered.

Bridging gaps between more conservative and less conservative members

Sometimes strong committed people can find it hard to agree on which paths to follow

Sharing of information with new people on ways to participate in church activities

Don't listen to each other

Involvement & Size of Church

Small size of congregation/declining membership/not growing enough - 9

Need more involvement by all/More to pick up leadership roles/Leadership overload - 8

Lack of membership participation/commitment - 4

population - 1

Size limits outreach - 1

Not enough youth - 1

Lack of commitment to listening to each other and being willing to make personal commitments - 1

College and young adult ministry - 1

Attracting young families that will stick around and continue to keep our church growing - 1

Scary when senior members are moving on/retiring and there are gaps in the congregation – 1

We've lost some wonderful & very active folks, including our preacher and his family, who have moved on to other places. - 1

Potential burnout among most committed- 1

Congregation getting older, not enough young member willing or have time to take on leadership roles- 1

Large number of older people versus number of younger people - 1

Less than majority carrying on the majority of the work, this carries over into the financial support - 1

Willingness to participate in church programs - 1

Difficulty sustaining growth - 1

Not meeting Needs

Insufficient checking on sick members - 1

Not enough interest in older ones in the church - 1

Pastoral care - 1

Past leadership - 1

Targeting and knowing the strengths of each member and motivating them to serve in some part of ministry of the church - 1

Fragmented in purpose - 1

The church does not look like or actively serve the 10-mile radius.

In changing times we have difficulty in changing how we best equip our members - 1

Hard to compete with Baptist and UMC Took a while to get to know people, and I felt like I slipped through the cracks for a long time in this town - 1

Lack of community evangelism and visibility - 1

Beliefs/ Background

Conservative (for PCUSA) - 1

Lack of commitment to really listening to each other and being willing to make personal commitments - 1

Presbyterians are rather sedate/covert in expressing their love of the Lord openly to one another in conversations - 1

Typical Presbyterian Stuff . . . cold rigid, traditional, aging populations, non-contemporary - 1

Timid about working with others in the community of faith - 1

Congregation Weaknesses

Sticking with things that do not work out of tradition/willingness to change - 2

Being too political - 1

Cliquish - 1

Congregants don't like each other - 1

Some people not friendly and it's a bit hard to meet people - 1

Small degree of prejudice and self-righteousness - 1

Extension of GSU faculty - 1

Willingness to recruit new participants - 1

Willingness to spend personal time studying the Bible and reaching out to others - 1

I also felt like some people were judgmental that my attendance was erratic. - 1

May[many] chose tradition over other opportunities - 1

Poor attendance - 1

Lack of fundraisers - 1

Difficult for members to make the church a priority with such busy lifestyles - 1

Many intimidating factors for visitors - 1

Lack of diversity. I am almost 50 and would be considered young adults class (really?). - 1

Lack of active participation on committees - 1

N/A

None -3

Q28. If You could make one change in this congregation what would it be? (67 responses)

Growth & Involvement

More Members/Attract more people/ growth - 8
More young families -2
More member involvement/ time, talents and money -2
More involvement/new members/young adults -4
More college students and youth/involvement - 4
Add 50 members to bring budget in line with programs - 1
New family group - 1
Stronger ministry to young adults group (mid-twenties) - 1

Diversity

more diverse/ensure diversity - 5
Aid Pastoral Care - 1
More inclusive (age, race, economics) young non-white - seen in youth programing - Montreal, Disney, Starbucks, ski trips etc. - 1

Pastoral Care & Mission Outreach

More connection/visible presence to community - 3
Greater Pastor /hire /strong/cares about members - 3
Connect to older people/ keep track of their needs -1
More effort by all to follow Dan's example - 1
Listen to old people - 1
Make sure everyone knows each person's name - 1
concerted effort to reach out to the "Nones" A big concern for the capital C church - 1

Worship

need Contemporary service - 1
Memorable sermons - 1
Stop singing Introits - 1
Larger group at worship regularly - 1
More varied music - 1
Communion more than once a month - 1
Change Prayer culture & make church more prayerful - 1

Wednesday Night

Improve Wednesday nights programming/more music Wed. - 3
More Opportunity to share the work of the Spirit in our lives - 2
no Wed. night suppers – have evening bible study or book study - 1

Financial & Physical

More money/resources – 3

Find ways to increase profit - 1

Make physical surroundings more open to strangers – change sign on playground, make breast feeding nook, make sanctuary open to more wheelchair spaces close to the front - 1

Relationship & interactions

more listening respectfully to each other - 1

Less political - 1

We are all too polite to say what we need ex: source of frustration younger generation doesn't do as much as older. They should step up and serve but it may end up looking different - 1

Other

Me - 1

Alter calls preceded by what that means. This is not part of Presbyterian tenets - 1

Nothing/No changes - 4

Don't know/unsure -3

No comment - 1

Q29. What have we learned about how this congregation resolves conflicts/ Disagreements? (60 responses)

Open meetings/discussions/discuss issues/effective and loving dialogue - 10

We acquiesced to Session/ Rely on session/ Elders & minister / Committees - 8

Find another church/ people leave/quit coming/ withdraw rather than engage - 7

In a considerate way/ resolve or handle well - 6

We can disagree while still find places to compromise - 2

Easy going group/ get along fairly well -2

Work together and fix it - 2

Disagreements do not affect personal relationship respect other's opinions -2

More sharing of differences than shared likenesses - 1

Respectfully and ensure that congregation is well informed - 1

Being non-confrontational - 1

Depends on who is in leadership role - 1

Avoidance by letting older congregants have their way in little things, big stuff moves in progressive fashion - 1

There's a difference of focus opinion between Statesboro natives and GSU faculty & staff but handled well - 1

Wednesday night Suppers are helpful - 1

Avoid them - 1

Typically ignore them - 1

Most are open about disagreements and work toward productive solutions - 1
 We have been reluctant to address conflicts in recent years - 1
 People from different ends of political spectrum still love each other as family in the end - 1
 Reason it out - 1
 The core rules the roost - 1
 Leaders respect and care about those they represent - 1
 Not much disparate input - 1
 Agree to disagree - 1
 It works together - 1
 With grace - 1
 Even deaths solve some problems of intransigence - 1
 One different opinion about a sacrament led to changes I felt were not warranted for one member but it was worked out fairly well & quickly - 1
 I would be surprised to find resolution of conflict to be highly contentious - 1

 Not really sure/not observed - 9
 I try to avoid conflict - 1
 N/A - 4

Q30 Explain why your participation has increased in the past two years. (24 responses)

Person

Dr. Dan Lewis was instrumental in getting involved - 1
 Good preacher - 1
 Wonderful church family - 1
 Have a lot of church friends - 1
 More active with other members and pastor - 1

Feeling

More comfortable with church - 1
 As I begun to feel more welcome and at home at FPC wanted to become more involved and feel enriched and loved - 1
 Joined and felt part of the community - 1
 New to congregation - 1
 Wanted to make a stronger commitment - 1
 New and trying to find my place - 1
 More aware of opportunities to serve - 1
 Calling - 1
 Felt led to serve - 1

Church Activities / involvement

Session member/elder /husband - 4
Joined church -3
Involved in more activities - 2
Ushered - 2
Just started visiting the church last year - 1
Teaching Sunday school - 1
Joined Joy circle - 1
Helped provide food - 1
Helped in kitchen - 1
Provided flowers - 1
Church clean-up day - 1
Attended dinner groups - 1
Wednesday night suppers - 1

Time

Children older/more independent - 2
Not currently working - 1

Q31 Explain why your participation has decreased in the past two years. (13 responses)

Illness/ health issues/ Age - 5
(Not aging well - Don't have time or energy to do so)
Not comfortable/ didn't like Pastor - 2
Traveling/Out of town too much - 2
Overloaded at work - 1
Programs not interesting to me - 1
Moved - 1
Sermons not stimulating - 1
Gave up Clerk responsibilities - 1

RESPONSES FROM OPEN FORUM LUNCHEON

1. What do you value most about our church?

People/Friendships/Friend - 15
Church Community/ Church family - 12
Acceptance of all/Inclusiveness/ Non-judgmental/Openness - 11
Kindness/Caring/Love/Support/Compassion - 9
Relationship/ Fellowship - 6
Sunday School class - 4
Warmth and belonging - 3
Outreach to community - 3
Christian Ed./bible study - 2
Welcoming - 2
Deep thinking/thought - 2
Faith - 2
Outreach to church - 1
Versatility - 1
Ownership - 1
Worship – 1
Praying for one another - 1
History of church - 1
Connectivity to people in good and bad times - 1
Music - 1
Small size - 1

2. Memorable Experience at Our Church

Christmas Programs

Children's Pageants at Christmas - 4
Little Drummer boy Christmas Pageant - 1
Christmas Pageant when my child was baby Jesus - 1
Being an angel - 1
Live Nativity - 1
Christmas Programs followed by reception in Carleton Hall - 1
Christmas Pageant w/ Wise Men walking around - 1

Significant Events

Talent Show - 2
Lock-ins with the youth group - 2
Served on last PNC - 1

Silver Lining Club - 1
Rehearsal dinner for Christy & Phillip - 1
Phillips Memorial Service - 1
Graduation Lunches - 1
Joined Church on Easter Sunday - 1
Enjoying Pot Luck Dinners - 1
BBQ fund raiser - 1
Hurricane Hugo when we were a Red Cross Site - 1
Warming Shelter because people appreciated our efforts - 1
Weddings of family - 1
Funerals have been joyful and meaningful - 1
Listening to a sermon that made my wife and realize this is where we wanted to go to church - 1
Church's decision to commit to Habitat house - 1
NEXT Church Conference - 1
Playground - 1

Working together

Cooking Boston Butts all night long - 1
Men working together for Construction of Pavilions - 1
Church Coming together with Love at passing of Church members - 1
Young Adults working together with Pilgrims and Prodigals - 1
Helping each other in times of need - 1
Getting involved - 1
Connection of Young and old - 1

Worship/Bible Studies/Christian Education

Vacation bible school - 2
Standing together at Baptisms/ Baptisms - 2
Providing flowers for Sanctuary- 1
Hymn Sings - 1
Singing in church choir - 1
Wednesday night bible study w/ Dr. Gossai - 1
Regular 2x4 Men's Bible study - 1
Revival by J. McDowell Richards in 1950 - 1
Wednesday Night - 1
Sunday School – 1
Watching children grow and learn together - 1
Lois's Sunday school Class - 1

Caring Relationships

Caring for our church members - 1
Warm welcome from the start – 1
The fact that nothing stands out makes it special - 1

Any time we are all together – 1
Outpouring of Love when I had an injury - 1
Relationships with people at church – 1
Support for each other and for those beyond – 1
Welcome and care shown to my father - 1
Outpouring of love and food when family member dies - 1

3. Three Wishes

Growth in Numbers

More members/More people at worship/steady - 15
Increase membership and participation - 3
Increased involvement of members - 3
Growth of younger families/ young couples /youth - 3
Grow larger to accomplish more but have a small church feel - 1
Stay close as we grow - 1
Approximately 30-50 more giving involved members - 1
Double in size in 5 years – 1
Encourage younger family - 1
Attract young active people while nurturing our older members - 1
More Dunns - Doty, J.D, Suzanne and Charles - 1
More babies – 1
Better attendance - 1

Related to new Pastor

New pastor/great - 5
Pastor who is good fit/right for us - 4
Find Pastor who is both pastor and preacher - 3
Find another young dynamic Pastor - 2
Leadership that unites us - 2
Pastor who is enlivening and challenging/engaging - 2
Pastor that reflects congregation's goals - 1
Pastor who is young, sensitive – 1
Pastor who is warm and progressive - 1
Pastor that will fit with and create excitement - 1
Pastor in tuned w/ life/world view - 1
Pastor as good or better than Dan - 1
Preacher for everybody - 1
Dynamic Preaching - 1
Preach to unbelievers - 1
Articulate a clear message to the “nones” - 1- 1

Pastor who delivers sermons without reading them

Mission/Outreach

More Outreach to community - 9
Active community presence/more stepping in to volunteer - 2
Partner with other churches on common projects - 1
Stronger leader in Statesboro – 1
More outreach to under privileged – 1
Socially engaged and be a force for good - 1
Seen as progressive active entity in the community- 1
More Missions - 1
More resources to broaden our mission possibilities- 1

Pastoral Care

Stronger small groups ministry - 1
Support of each other - 1

Youth & Youth Group/ Activities

More Youth or Bigger youth group - 3
Develop our own Confirmation youth program - 1
Youth pastor - 1
Structured youth bible study - 1
Continue great youth programs- 1
More coloring - 1
More time to play outside - 1
Movie day at Sunday School - 1

College Groups

Increase UKIRK membership - 2
More interaction with GSU and other colleges here - 1
Strengthen college ministry - 1

Spiritual Growth

More attention to spiritual life of members - 2
Continued growth in Jesus Christ together - 1
That we grow together in love for Christ and our community as a Church- 1
Larger teacher pool - 1
That our new start renews all our hearts and spirit - 1
God's Will for FPC- 1

Values

Unity - 2
Love each other and our community - 2
Do God's Will - 1

Stability - 1
Commitment to our values - 1
To become truly Purple - 1
Transformation of our heart's to be more Christ like - 1
Don't forget traditional values - 1
Remaining true to Christ call not Society's - 1
Be less political and more God - 1

Diversity

Grow in diversity/in all groups - 2
Continued acceptance of all people - 1
Encourage more diverse people to come to church - 1
More openness to other - 1

Facilities

Gym/Youth building - 2
Dog park - 2
Updating facilities- 1
Walking trail around property - 1
Repair of facilities - 1
Pre-school - 1
Remodeling of the youth room - 1

Activities

More trips - 1
More church activities - 1
More times when we get together - 1

Worship/Bible Study

Continue creative Worship and education - 1
Develop a contemporary service - 1
Do away sing-along portion of service - 1
More up lifting services - 1
More Study groups - 1
Increased Sunday School attendance- 1
More people in Bible Study – 1
More Fellowship with members - 1
More old fashioned music - 1
More intergenerational experience - 1
More in-depth bible study- 1
More people at Wed. night supper - 1

Financial

Unlimited money in saving - more financial security - 1
More stable financial giving - 1
Increase in Financial condition- 1
More economic diversity - 1