

Inspired By Christ's Unconditional Love

A new command I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you."

(John 13:34)

Report of the Ewing Presbyterian Church Transition Team to Session 2015.

Presented on June 30, 2015

Ewing Presbyterian Church

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I. The Transition Team—Background and Process

The EPC Transition Team was formed in January 2014 to gather information from the congregation to answer the questions, “What does God call this church to be?” and “what kind of leader will guide us in our vision?”.

The Transition Team members are Chuck Armbruster, Buzz Dakin, Bob Kull, Carol Hecky, Rachel Morgan, and Cindy Strain, and advised by Pastor Paul Rhebergen. The team members represent diversity in age, gender and length of membership at EPC.

The task of the team was complex. The Team was challenged with not only reporting what the congregation wants, but with studying the congregation in regards to demographics, our history and our goals for the future. With this information, the Team was then able to identify the qualities our new pastor would need to possess in order to lead us in our mission and vision.

The team gathered information from the congregation throughout the year in several ways. A series of six Home Gatherings took place over several months in which EPC members hosted small gatherings in their homes. These gatherings allowed members to answer questions posed by Pastor Paul in an informal and neutral setting. Each Home Gathering was moderated by Pastor Paul, and one member of the Transition Team was present to observe. After the Home Gatherings were completed, the Transition Team planned four Café Conversations held at the church. Again, Pastor Paul posed questions and moderated while the Transition Team members collected information. Each Café Conversation addressed a unique question and members of the EPC congregation actively participated. The following questions were asked:

1. How can we best connect people with God?
2. How might we live as a church in the world?
3. How do we best use the space we have to live out who we are called to be?
4. What is most important to you for the transition team to know?

5. What are we looking for in a pastor that will lead us?

We have asked the Holy Spirit to guide us in interpreting the information gathered. The report that follows reflects the Team's insights formed through the Home Gatherings, Café Conversations, discussions among the Transition Team's members, prayer and thoughtful considerations. The report contains the team's study of the demographics of our church and community, a history of where we have been and recommendations for moving forward which includes our vision and modified mission of EPC which better reflects who we are. The report was presented to the Session on June 30, 2015. The EPC Transition Team strongly encourages the Session and Pastoral Nominating Committee to use the recommendations in this report to guide our future.

II. Ewing Presbyterian Church History: A Thumbnail Sketch and Recurring

Themes

In 2009, our congregation - known by many names, including the First Presbyterian Church of Ewing and Ewing Presbyterian Church – celebrated an incredible 300 years of uninterrupted congregational faithfulness, ministry and service, and of gathering to worship “at the bend” on Scotch Road. Our founding members – primarily immigrant farmers - were among the first in the area to purchase and set aside land for burial and sacred purposes, and to request clergy to come among them to minister and lead worship.

They certainly planted their “spiritual crop” in a fertile place! More than 300 years have passed, and although the world has changed greatly, a faithful congregation continues in the same location to worship and serve God, to be a light to the world, and to minister to God’s people near and far.

Three hundred years is far more history than can be recounted here, but in reviewing the material which still exists to tell the story of this congregation (and there is quite a lot!), there are several recurring themes which still resonate today, and may even provide an historic context and direction for our future.

Of modest means: The “country house,” or “Old Ewing,” as the congregation was known in the 18th and 19th centuries, respectively, was never a well-to-do congregation. The immediate area in and around Ewing was rural farmland, even into the mid-20th century, and the Scots and Scots-Irish farmers who first settled the area and tilled the land were hard-working, humble and frugal. Those that followed tended to be of similar nature. A call for a pastor to serve both the “town” (Trenton) and “country” (Ewing) congregations in 1785 took nearly 18 months to be accepted, due to the country church’s difficulty in raising the one-third salary agreed upon. Indeed, the congregation was unable to afford to call its own full-time pastor until almost 125 years into its ministry, long after others had done so. And even then, that first “full-time”

pastor, The Reverend Dr. Eli Field Cooley, had to find other part-time work to keep his large family fed and housed! He must have been content with us, however, as his 34-year pastorate with us (1823 – 1857) remains to this day the longest one served by one person. While there certainly have been some more wealthy individual members (the Fisk and Green families, for example), they seem to have been more of an exception than the rule.

Willing to share: Whether due to financial circumstances, the prevailing “norm” of the time, or the call of a particular ministry, we have usually been willing and able to “share” our resources, those of people, buildings, land and time. Of the four very local Presbyterian congregations which shared worship places and clergy from early in the 18th century (Lawrenceville, Pennington, Trenton and Ewing), we were the last to call our own pastor, the Rev Dr. Cooley in 1823, thereby no longer sharing pastoral services with another congregation. Our cemetery – which surrounds the acre of land purchased in 1709 to which we date our founding – has continued to grow in size to almost 55 acres over more than two centuries – and has always been available not just to member families, but to all faiths. Our buildings were made available to others needing large gathering spaces, and for decades, Ewing Church was “the” social and gathering center of Ewing, hosting meetings, community functions, recreational activities, women’s gatherings, dinners, and large weddings and funerals. Our spaces have continued to be rented or made available to a variety of non-profit organizations over the years, including quoit leagues, boy and girl scout troops, AA and Alanon groups, Interfaith Hospitality Network, counseling services, deaf ministries and yoga groups, to name only a few.

A Spirit of Generosity: Despite not being a well-endowed congregation, Ewing has more often than not been a generous congregation. It is documented that in the construction of both the 1795 and 1867 meeting houses, members of our congregation contributed much of the physical labor and materials, in addition to making their “subscriptions” (pledges) to the building campaigns. Upon the retirement of Rev. Cooley, a parsonage was built for and inhabited by the subsequent pastors, until the 1880 parsonage (current office building) was built for a pastor with a larger family. Families donated the funds necessary to replace the original windows in the sanctuary with the large stained glass windows which are currently in the nave, and the

Women's Association raised funds for the Rose Window above the chancel. In the 1980's the congregation contributed generously to the improvement of the facilities. Most recently our Building on the Foundations campaign in 2014 was fully and quickly subscribed.

The congregation's generosity has been reflected in more than buildings, however. Ledgers and Session minutes record giving to and supporting mission work and missionaries over the decades. The various iterations of the Women's Association have contributed goods, clothing, money, hand-made items, and time to countless causes and needs, locally, nationally and globally. The congregation over the past 35 years has responded with varying levels of generosity to a variety of causes, including supporting youth trips and educational/spiritual experiences, the HIV/AIDS crisis, homelessness, housing and hunger needs in Trenton and elsewhere, Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, the Hurricane Sandy and South Fork crises, and much more.

Community and church leaders: Ewing Church's members have been leaders in both the community and the church from the start, establishing the community before it was even named. Early members created places, began businesses, established trade, and built roads. Later in the 18th c, we were among those Presbyterians who were very vocal in opposing colonial oppression and championing the patriot cause. Many of our men, young and old, fought and died for the creation of America. Later, they fought and died for the rights of all of America's people. Our facilities have traditionally been the center of community events. Our members have been teachers, missionaries, businessmen, farmer, tradesmen, and housewives. They have been elected officials, judges and representatives, school board members, superintendents, doctors and nurses. They have served the Presbyterian church as Elders and Deacons, pastors and commissioners, on countless committees and at all governing levels, as well as in ecumenical conferences and gatherings. They established the first Sunday School in Ewing, formed additional Sunday School elsewhere in the township, and maintained a Nursery School for 50 years. They are and have been active, effective and sometimes outspoken members of the community.

Justice: Throughout the centuries, Ewing's pastors and members have taken strong and visible stands for peace, justice, and tolerance. The congregation was born during the struggle for religious liberty at the dawn of the 18th century by Presbyterians seeking religious tolerance, and our members and leaders helped to establish the American Presbyterian church, separating church from the state. In the mid-1700s, our pastors preached against the tyranny and subjugation by Britain, and our members fought and died for liberty in the Revolution. Members of our Session were among those who signed a bill abolishing slavery in New Jersey, over a half-century before the nation did so. We spoke up against imprisonment for debt, and helped to establish charitable institutions for the poor. We endorsed temperance when consumption of alcohol was a huge societal problem. We ordained women as Elders when it was still a rare occurrence, and ordained gays and lesbians when it was not sanctioned. We have supported war efforts, and peace efforts. We have ministered to and stood up for the rights of marginalized and oppressed peoples, and have strived to be an inclusive congregation.

As with all congregations, we have had times of comfort and times of challenge; times of conflict and times of harmony. But historically, together we have sought to be a light in the community, pointing others to Christ, and to "gratefully acknowledge the goodness of God planting this church here, and in giving to her by His Spirit all her power for benevolent work."*

~ Helen Kull, May 2015

Judge William M. Lanning, in an historical sketch of the Ewing Church for its 200th anniversary in 1909.

III. EPC Transition Report: Demographics

This section of the report compares the characteristics of Ewing Presbyterian Church with the community of which we are a part. While our campus is located near the geographic center of Ewing Township, our members are generally existing or former residents of Ewing Township, with a number of members living in adjacent and nearby communities in Mercer County, Hunterdon County, and Bucks County Pennsylvania. As these areas are socioeconomically similar to Ewing Township, demographics for Ewing Township are described as representative of both our existing and potential members.

A. Ewing Presbyterian Church

Limited demographic data is available for the congregation, primarily through the annual report filed with the denomination by the Clerk of Session and through other observations by the Transition Team.

Membership/Population: According to the Church Report for 2014 filed with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Ewing Presbyterian Church has 196 active members. In addition, 22 individuals are baptized but not confirmed members and 5 other individuals regularly participate in our congregation, for a total congregation of 223 “adherents.” Of the total, 120 members (61%) are female. Average attendance for Worship was reported to be 84 individuals.

Officers: Session was nearly evenly divided between male and female in 2014. Deacons were all female, though males were added to the Board of Deacons in 2015.

Age groups: The largest age group was over 65 years of age for both males and females. The male age group 56-65 was nearly of the same size as the male over 65 age group (see chart).

Through the transition process, Pastor Paul has shared with us a way of recognizing the very different ways people from different generations view the church and its life summarized below. Though necessarily very generalized, these classifications, described in the table, provide some insights to guide us going forward. Our congregation is a mix comprising mostly Builders, Silents, and Boomers with a significant share (about 25%) of Survivors and Millennials.

For the generations that exist within our congregation, the importance of church denomination has faded and people shop for churches seeking a community of faith where they find acceptance, and where their needs are ministered to. They are suspicious of institutions that have programs and structures that prioritize their own continuing existence and that are obstructions to spirituality. For many Boomers, Survivors, and Millennials in the church, the most profound experience of faith came in the midst of a youth group experience, and as adults they seek a similar culture with an emphasis on relationships and experience.

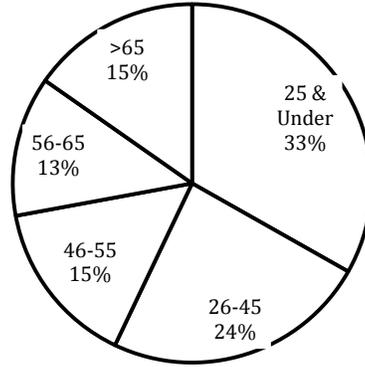
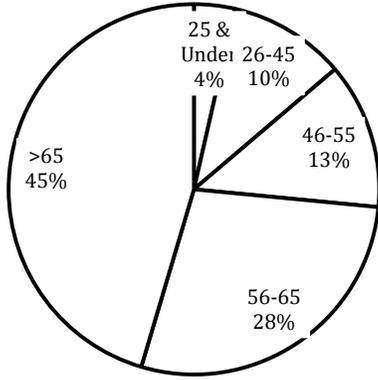
AGE GROUPS

Ewing Church

Ewing Township

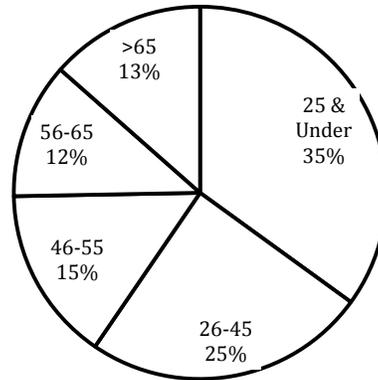
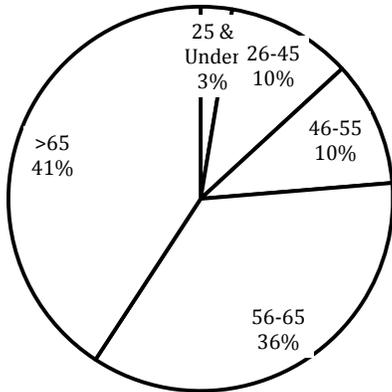
ALL 196 MEMBERS

ALL TOWNSHIP



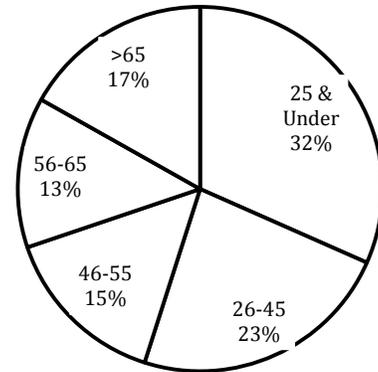
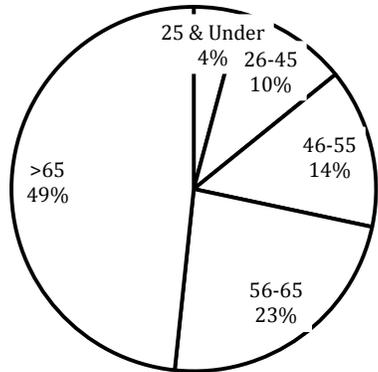
MALE

MALE



FEMALE

FEMALE



Generational differences combine with differences in personality, tradition, and experience to create an atmosphere in which it can be very difficult to function as the church. Pastor Paul has illustrated these differences as, “On a Sunday morning, the Builders come to church early and take “their” seats in the pews. The Silents come early and wait to see what seats are left. The Boomers come whenever they want and sit wherever they want.” There will always be tension as conflicting views come together in creating and maintaining a ministry and guiding its leadership. Says, Pastor Paul, “The reality is that we are called to live in the midst of these tensions, and to be in ministry together, across any lines that might divide us.”

Generation	Description
Builders (1901-1924)	<p>The economic crash and the Great Depression shaped them. They came of age during World War II. This is the generation that learned to “use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.” This is the generation for whom “credit” was a dirty word. The Builders formed the nuclear family, a change from the extended family of multiple generations living together or near each other. This “Greatest Generation” as labeled by Tom Brokaw is a generation of groups, not individuals. They came of age as our nation gathered to fight first the Depression, and then the Axis powers in World War II. This generation became the Civilian Conservation Corps that formed to build our nation’s parks and highways, schools and post offices, to bring us out of the Depression. They were drafted into the squads and companies to fight the enemy in war. They joined the work force that fueled the home war effort. The Builders became known for their insistence on conformity. They expected the same camaraderie they felt as youth and as young adults at war in their life following the war. This generation built our institutions, as we know them, our churches, our schools, and our governing structures. Even in retirement, this generation is building institutions, such as the Association of Retired Persons. This generation likes stability.</p>
Silent/Squeezed (1925-1942)	<p>This generation came of age during the early post-war years and the 50’s. They were shaped by the Cold War and the growth of American culture. This is the generation of facilitators, helping to make our institutions more caring and workable. Between generations that push hard for what they want, the Builders and the Boomers and protected as children, they sought freedom and their struggles between conformity and breaking out played out in “mid-life crisis.” This generation sought value in inner searching, through inner values. Those who “broke free” became the gurus the Boomers followed in their search for new experiences. This generation is often most absent from mainline churches.</p>
Boomers (1946-1964)	<p>Coming of age in the midst of the civil rights and anti-war movements, they were shaped by the space race, the availability of the “pill”, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the Viet Nam War, by the assassination of American political leaders, the Tonkin Gulf Incident, and Watergate. They became extremely suspicious of institutions. Indulged as children, with many fewer boundaries, and they pushed the limits.</p> <p>For this generation, everything is questioned and measured against the individual search. Truth is defined within oneself and by experience. The boomers are a generation high of declarations, and short on respect. They are idealists, captured by a grand vision of what life should be. Yet, when reality is different than the vision, this generation has dropped out or moved on to plan B. This generation sees the church as an organic body rather than as an institution; it lives in relationships rather than in its structure. Membership is defined as doing, rather than fitting in. Truth is defined by the individual, and there is a strong sense of entitlement.</p>

Generation	Description
Survivors (1961-1981)	<p>This is the Generation X, the MTV generation. Black has been their color of choice. This is the first Information-Postmodern generation. They resent the omnipresent Boomer generation, defining themselves in opposition to them. This is the generation that grew up on television, and the computer has been with them from a very early age. This is the first generation to believe they won't have it as good or better than their parent's generation. This generation grew up learning that the world's resources were finite, limited, and there would not be enough for everyone. Often both of the Survivor's parents worked, bringing the sense that the world did not revolve around the children. Therefore, this generation does not expect to be taken care of, and they have become streetwise pragmatists, taking care of their own survival. Think of the number of young adults in this generation who have already reaped and lost huge profits by forming their own computer/internet businesses.</p> <p>This is the first post-Cold War generation, having grown up with no great enemy and with no fear of nuclear annihilation. Instead they have anticipated an environmental disaster that will end life as we know it. This is the cyberspace generation.</p>
Millennials (1982-2003)	<p>Their identity emerging. They will grow up with the expectation of great changes to come as we move into a new millennium. This is the first generation to face random violence in our culture and their schools. This is the first generation since World War II to experience the impact of genocide, the scenes of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the specter of the Pentagon burning and the World Trade Center Towers collapsing, the images of continued terrorists attacks throughout the world that will affect this generation as powerfully as scenes from Viet Nam affected the Boomers. The incredible speed with which new things and ideas come into existence, are developed, and then passed on, is new to their generation. For this generation there is no safe place, no security. This will profoundly affect how this generation views the world.</p>

Race/Ethnicity: 95% of our membership is white, with the remainder black or Hispanic.

Disabilities: Approximately 25 of our members have one or a combination of hearing, sight, mobility, or other disabilities.

Financial: Our members comprise 55 pledging units (individuals or households), who contributed a total of approximately \$205,000 in 2014 (on average \$3,725 per pledging unit).

B. Ewing Township

United States Census and similar data provide more detailed information for the Township as a whole.

General characteristics: Compared to New Jersey state averages, Ewing Township has:

- Median house value significantly below state average.
- Unemployed percentage below state average.
- Black race population percentage above state average.
- Hispanic race population percentage below state average.
- Median age below state average.
- Foreign-born population percentage below state average.

- Renting percentage significantly below state average.
- Length of stay since moving in significantly above state average.
- Number of rooms per house significantly below state average.
- House age significantly below state average.
- Institutionalized population percentage significantly above state average.
- Number of college students above state average.

For population 25 years and over in Ewing:

- High school or higher: 84.1%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 29.1%
- Graduate or professional degree: 12.0%
- Unemployed: 4.6%
- Mean travel time to work (commute): 22.2 minutes

For population 15 years and over in Ewing Township:

- Never married: 44.0%
- Now married: 38.8%
- Separated: 2.2%
- Widowed: 7.6%
- Divorced: 7.5%

Population: The population of Ewing Township was estimated to be 36,352 in 2013, of which 55% are female.

Age groups: The largest age group for both males and females is 25 and under, with 26-45 years of age the second largest group for both sexes (Survivors and Millennials). This difference in world views needs to shape how we interact with the community around us.

Race/Ethnicity: 59% of the Township's population is white, with the next largest shares being black (25.2%) and Hispanic (8.1%). The largest groups of ancestries include Irish (12.1%), Italian (11.5%), German (9.8%), Polish (6.8%), and English (6.6%). Approximately 12.4% of Township residents are foreign born.

Disabilities: Statistics for disabled individuals are not available for the Township.

Financial: The estimated median household income in 2012 for Ewing Township was \$68,785, very similar to the statewide median of \$69,667. But in 2009, 8.9% of residents lived in poverty (10.3% for White Non-Hispanic residents, 6.3% for Black residents, 10.8% for Hispanic or Latino residents, 0.0% for American Indian residents, 13.2% for other race residents, 0.0% for two or more races residents).

Households: The average household size in Ewing is 2.5 people. 65.4% of households are family households. 4.8% of households are headed by unmarried partners (compared to 4.9% for the whole state). Likely homosexual households, estimated based on self-reported same-sex unmarried-partner households, are lesbian couples as 0.4% of all households and gay men as 0.2% of all households.

Group quarters: Current group quarters population statistics are not maintained. In 2000, people in group quarters in Ewing included:

- 3,486 people in college dormitories (includes college quarters off campus)
- 1,135 people in state prisons
- 227 people in nursing homes
- 65 people in short-term care, detention or diagnostic centers for delinquent children
- 37 people in homes for the mentally retarded
- 32 people in religious group quarters
- 26 people in unknown juvenile institutions

Occupations: The most common occupations for males in Ewing Township are:

- Other management occupations except farmers and farm managers (5%)
- Computer specialists (5%)
- Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations (5%)
- Other office and administrative support workers including supervisors (4%)
- Other sales and related workers including supervisors (3%)
- Sales representatives, services, wholesale and manufacturing (3%)
- Law enforcement workers including supervisors (3%)

The most common occupations for females in Ewing Township are:

- Secretaries and administrative assistants (9%)
- Other office and administrative support workers including supervisors (9%)
- Preschool, kindergarten, elementary and middle school teachers (6%)
- Information and record clerks except customer service representatives (4%)
- Other management occupations except farmers and farm managers (4%)
- Other sales and related workers including supervisors (4%)
- Registered nurses (3%)

Employers: The most common types of employers in Ewing Township for males are:

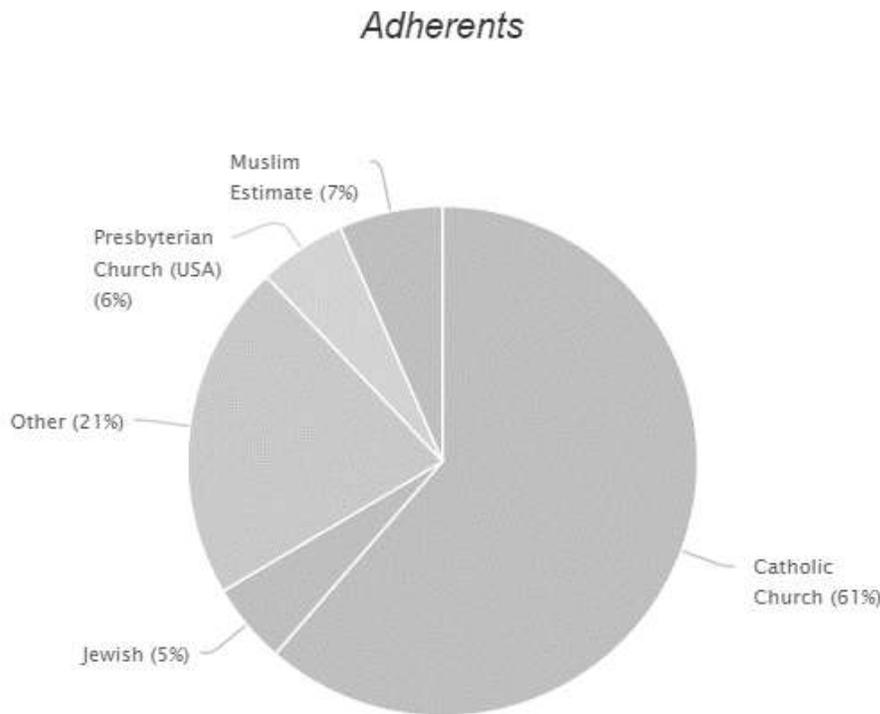
- Retail trade (13%)
- Public administration (12%)
- Educational services (11%)
- Construction (9%)
- Professional, scientific, and technical services (7%)
- Manufacturing (7%)
- Health care and social assistance (7%)

The most common types of employers in Ewing Township for females are:

- Health care and social assistance (19%)
- Educational services (18%)
- Public administration (14%)
- Retail trade (8%)
- Professional, scientific, and technical services (6%)
- Finance and insurance (6%)
- Accommodation and food services (6%)

Politics: Politically, more than 55% of Ewing Township voters have voted for the Democratic candidate for President over the past 20 years. The current Township government (both Mayor and all members of Council) are currently Democratic, though this has varied over the past 20 years.

Religion: Nearly 51% of Ewing Township residents are affiliated with a religious congregation, nearly the same as the 50% statewide average. The largest share is Roman Catholic (61%), followed by Muslim (7%), Presbyterian (6%), and Jewish (5%).



IV. Mission and Focus

A. Who we are

Christ is at the center of Ewing Presbyterian Church. Our members are a people of God who support and care about one another and the church. We are an inclusive family and accept everyone regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation and theological beliefs. We respect the traditions of the church and we are open to new ideas. Our congregation is a community which is connected to the greater community. We are a congregation of diverse talents who have a lot to share such as Mission Sewing, Deacon's activities and outreach, VBS, Rescue Mission and Mercer Street Friends.

We are a family of Christ. We are committed to loving and caring for everyone from our children to the elderly. We are a passionate people who are dedicated to God through our worship, music, bible study, adult education and Sunday School. We have learned to be flexible and adaptable and are realistic about our finances, resources and aging population.

We are positive, hopeful and enthusiastic about our future and where The Holy Spirit will lead us.

B. EPC Mission Statement

We propose minor, but significant changes to our current mission statement to read:

*Inspired by Christ's unconditional love,
we strive to be servants of God,
and to embrace all people through the Holy Spirit
in a loving community of faith.*

LOVE: We LOVE as Christ commanded- as we welcome, embrace and serve a diverse community.

INSPIRE: We strive to INSPIRE and to be inspired through worship, music, fellowship, education and involvement in the communities around us.

BELIEVE: We explore and practice what we BELIEVE in God through prayer, worship, study and service.

NURTURE: We care for and NURTURE each other and our community through the sharing of the time and talents we have received from the Holy Spirit.

V. Recommendations –

A. Church

Extend Into the community-

- consider the ministry of the Nursery School- Is it meeting the needs of the community or would a daycare center better meet these needs?
- look to serve youth-i.e. tutoring program
- structure the life of the congregation so it responds to the needs of the community, such as the elderly, addicted, homeless, hungry, imprisoned.
- look at the potential use of our facilities as a ministry- as a service to our community. Possibly combining the use of our worship space and the 1867 Sanctuary
- establish and strengthen our partnerships with other organizations such as Mercer Street Friends, HomeFront , Mercer County Drug Coalition

Within our church

- look into other worship opportunities that are still sincere and reflect on who we are as a church community
- strengthen shared ministry opportunities with sister congregations
- continue with the Café Conversations as a way to keep communication open with the congregation as well as to continue with reconciliation

Communication

- update the Website to share the Good News, share the good news of our congregation, and welcome others to join us in living the Good News
- update our church's brochure
- participate in community activities such as the 4th of July parade, Ewing Community Days and National Night Out

B. Leadership

The transition team recommends, for the long term, to be able to have full time pastoral leadership as we move forward in our mission to respond to Christ's call. We recognize the importance of other staff including church secretary (full time), music director and accompanist, facilities manager, bookkeepers, as well as staff that supports the nursery school and cemetery.

We also recognize the need to hire additional pastoral support staff from time to time to meet specific needs, such as an Urban Youth Evangelist, seminarian interns and parish associates.

We strongly recommend continued investment in leadership development of our Elders, Deacons and other lay leaders.

Pastoral Leadership should have the following qualities:

Personal Characteristics

- sense of humor
- open minded in worship
- innovative, motivational, inspirational, creative
- established / experienced positive energy
- tech-savvy
- values the importance of personal time
- approachable
- welcoming to a diverse congregation
- non-judgmental

Leadership Qualities

- strong leader for our vision
- strong worship leader / preacher
- can help us evangelize
- shares best practices (finances, CE, youth, spiritual leader, etc)
- able to delegate
- open, not necessarily tradition-bound in terms of worship
- good supervisor of staff

Talents and Abilities

- cheerleader for our talents
- pastoral counselor
- pastoral care / visitation (w/ parish associate?)
- Work churches in community
- relates well to all ages
- understands and honors our traditions, 300 years of history, and vision for future
- committed to outreach (faith-based and secular)
- connectional (to Presbytery and elsewhere)
- appreciates ministry of music
- bring in un-churched / non-churched
- Willing to accept change of mission and resources, and of traditional Christianity
- inspires us to be better followers of Christ

VI. Appendix

a. Café Conversations

Café Conversation Question # 1: How Can We Best Connect People with God?

Table 1

- The way we encounter God is through each other.
- Some people never asked to be on Deacons or other groups.
- Maybe we are overlooking people.
- Invite all to participate.
- Once a month have a contemporary service.
- One-third of our youth group activities need to be here.
- Offer more things for all youth in community.
- Show others how we connect with God through example.
- Involving children leads to involve involvement of parents
- Undertake big projects like Haiti

Local projects like reading to children who are not read to.

Table 2

- Adult Bible study for men , women, and combined
- Mentorship

Table 3

- Conversation about worship space
- Invite people to come to church
- Meaningful worship space
- Everyday life with others-project
- Explore new ways of worship
- Ask young people what kind of service they would like
- Get a van to pick people up

Table 4

- The church as a whole can connect people by having missions that count like 12 steps, cemetery, preschool, missions of women's group.
- Sharing our faith with others
- Country Day
- Through VBS, getting and retaining young couples with kids
- Communication
- Food Bank more visible

Table 5

- Link technology with service
- Create opportunities for Fellowship
- The building in NOT empty
- Allow people to be who they are

Table 6

- Encourage involvement in church life]
- Lead by example
- Talk with new people at fellowship
- Outreach to community
- Abundance of errands
- Young Deacons
- Wednesday Night Dinner Club
- Contemporary Service
- Follow up with parents who baptized their babies here
- Pancake breakfast and Country Day
- What can we do to encourage teens to be active?

Table 7

- Give time, talents, music
- Tell our EPC story
- Balance young and old
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter
- Don't force but live and teach by example

Table 8

- Extend Youth Group to younger kids (4th, 5th graders)
- Motivate with youth activities
- Reach out to 30s-50s
- Ongoing mission projects
- As Presbyterians, it's not our nature to market ourselves
- Missional Renaissance
- Ladies Night Out for 30s-50s
- More members need to step up not same people

Table 9

- Fall/Spring Festival
- Connect with future visitation
- Mission within the church
- More Programs for younger people: movie nights, sleepovers, game nights
- Connect with Nursery School families and invite them to worship, events, activities

Café Conversation Question # 2: How might we live as a church in the world?

Table 1

- Do we need to rethink “the church” in the light of our society today?
- You come in to the church in one mindset and the need to take that out with you to the world.
- Projection of positive aspects we have gained and we need to take it to others.
- Need to be aware and be involved in local and global missions.
- We are in competition with the culture.
- How many families even go to church?
- Advertise to bring folks in.
- Through mission work and support.
- Project joy in your daily living.

Table 2

- How do we let the community know the things we are doing?
- Change other activities away from Sunday morning.
- Honoring the culture of other religions.
- Respectful of age differences.
- Strive for outreach—encourage more people to join us such as youth and senior citizens.
- Inclusiveness, community outreach
- Open up joint dialogue.

Table 3

- Our church being an example in outreach, respect and culture.
- Mission not to change or convert but just to give for the sake of giving.
- Every small thing builds upon itself.
- “Least Coin” offering through PW
- Creating a ripple effect as a church.
- Step out of comfort zone.
- Focus on ourselves as a church so that we can help others.

Table 4

- Using arts and creativity to do some of these things.
- Spreading the word, evangelizing.
- Finding common language.
- Think larger—act larger beyond bounds of denominations.
- Listening with open mind; accepting other cultures, belief systems, creeds, religion.

- Adult education opportunities—Islam, Judaism and others.
- Link with other congregations to do larger projects.
- Supporting, helping people and their needs.
- Join with other Christian churches to make change.
- Finding commonalities in making connections.
- Visitation—being aware of others’ needs and responding to them.
- Invite new people to worship; make worship inclusive.
- Signage on campus and in community.

Table 5

- Reaching out to ethnic communities in the area.
- Sponsoring charity that begins at home.
- Public works in community reaching out as well as pulling in.
- Paint railway bridge; show Ewing pride.
- Get teenagers involved with a project.

Table 6

- Actions better than words.
- Respect others in general.
- Reach out to other communities and people.
- Try to understand others.
- Think positively.
- Learning about other religions.
- Similarities more than differences.
- In good weather, greeters outside or in lobby.

Table 7

- Stay connected to Presbyterian denominations as a whole.
- Project inclusiveness and multi-culturism.
- Honor diversity in our town.
- Preschool gives outreach.

Café Conversation #3: How do we best use the space we have to live out who we are called to be?

- The Scout Hut, Red and White Building and Office Building need attention
- Outreach: Tutoring space offering
 - Covenant offers-Young Scholars programs
 - We have proximity to Fisher Middle School
 - Bonner students could participate
- Day Care vs. Nursery School
- Other possible offerings
 - Computer Instruction
 - ESL
 - Literacy for adults
 - Parenting guidance
- Building as rental space
 - Hindu Festivals
 - Hispanic
 - Offsite meeting venue

Other thoughts:

- We are still a church. A witness to the community of Jesus Christ. We need to remember this
- Would we grow if we worshipped across the street? Would we grow if we used that space for other events?
- Trinity Church in NYC has opened to the community: community meetings and community activities

- Our north lot- offer as a community garden space, soccer fields, flea market, yard sales for neighborhoods or sell it. Do we need it?
- Our garden-partner up with Isles to create a community garden

Cafe Conversation #4:

“Most Important Thing for the Transition Team to Hear”

Continue cafe conversations - get together to share
Get word out that conflict is behind us
Utilizing space - Sanctuary availability for use
Work within our means - people and dollars
A few good projects done well
Reaching out to Isles and other ways to serve community
Connect to others who serve
A welcoming, safe place
People scene
Advertising
Signage that lets people know we're alive
More visible in community outreach
Hearing what others/younger want, so we build for them
Church is a family and support system
[1867 Sanctuary - remember that we are not a building but “a church”]
Technology to reach out to members and community
Getting 25-40 age cohort back with us
Youth cafe
Sharing responsibility
Bonner Foundation
Reclamation of those that were here - special service
Change worship time
Experiment with times and types of worship
Men's ministry/group
Ring the bell!
Increase of membership/welcome package to new people
Want pastor to stay!
Revisit mission of nursery school
Ministry of the cemetery

Table 1:

- 12 step program
- family and community place for peace, respite, music
- support

- serving
- growth of young families and Sunday School
- worship space
- cafe conversation for kids
- extend invitation to outside groups to use facilities
- establish a welcome kit and packet
- two services - one less traditional
- flexible worship time
- community garden
- exist within financial means
- sense of family and community
- friendship
- caring
- growth with young families
- sanctuary use for special purposes (use of organ)
- 25 - 35 age group - outreach project - need a purpose
- what does Ewing need?
- extension of community
- mission of cemetery and nursery school
- ESL
- keep Paul
- services people can relate to

Table 2

- youth cafe
- ways to grow - build our core congregation, draw from apt complexes
- non-traditional service
- offer more for the youth
- living within our means and resources
- transportation issues
- usage of the Sanctuary - opens up this building; organ lessons
- happy cat face
- reach out to College and apartment residents
- schedule multiple services, one geared to younger group
- respond to people signing guest book
- welcome packet

Table 3:

- be open to non-traditional
- better technology: broader wi-fi, easy access, big screens, broadcasting ability
- what is our mission outreach
- visible - that people will join
- how does outreach get people to the church?
- bring people together on campus between Sundays
- a safe and welcoming place for singles (not as fifth wheel), young, widows, diversity
- a good inside; and how to get the outside in
- be more visible
- front door welcome - welcoming out front - seeing people out front
- labyrinth
- new and different do-able challenges
- casual Sunday - tables with coffee during worship
- monthly services in 1867 Sanctuary, advertised to broader community, county
- asking Paul to stay
- cultivate habit of church-going
- 10 am service
- summertime abbreviated service - 9 am - led by lay/seminarian/youth group
- Saturday evening 5 or 7 pm service
- get young families participating
- need good press
- finances - how do we get away from focus on dollars; don't understand them
- get away from three years cycle of fund-raising
- why have people left us?
- would it make a difference if we had the 1867 Sanctuary?
- get former members back
- resume outreach to disenfranchised
- place free ads: Our Town, Philadelphia Gay News

Table 4:

- our space - use in community
- we are a welcoming, safe place to worship, grow, know others
- increase members - encourage, families, young people
- church is a family and support to each other
- space
- communication - technology, who we are, we are here in the community
- continuity
- care

- visibility
- service
- action
- support
- outreach
- welcome
- hope
- evangelism
- fellowship
- young adults - 25-35 that grew up here, still living in area, involve in service projects
- link with Rider, Bonner
- find a few good projects to do well
- re-vision, mission with cemetery and nursery
- change roll of Friends of the Cemetery
- website

Cafe Conversation #5 - Pastor Qualities

- Table A
- dedicated / involved
- pastor who is part of a family unit
- availability to increase communication with ALL members
- very caring / mature / experienced
- positive attitude
- good listener
- wonderful sense of humor - doesn't take self seriously
- forward-looking
- welcoming to a diverse community
- community focused, service, social-justice oriented (both faith-based and secular)
- appreciate music and importance to congregation
- great with kids
- ability to be a good administrator - delegate, unbiased - w Deacons, Session, cmtes, etc
- relate to connectional church, presbytery, synod and disseminate information
- open to possibility of yoking with other church in area
- pastoral / teaching oriented
- not necessarily great preacher
- appreciates importance of pastoral care

- Table B
- appreciate and value music
- maintain neutral stance in controversial issues
- good sense of humor
- interested in pastoral care, or helping us with it (call on members at first; know congregation)
- connected to groups beyond congregation (churches, interfaith, non-religion)
- different kinds of services ("user friendly")
- strong preacher - readily understandable
- faithfulness
- confidence
- stability
- worship grounds us to go out and serve and expand
- strong communicator, diversity of types of communication
- strong leader, but non-judgmental

- ability to galvanize people in groups
- positive energy
- authority but approachable (good listener, above congregation politics)
- willing to participate in some congregational activities
- needs much congregation experience
- creative
- provide guidance to keep us on point
- flexible, open-minded
- younger with family
- relates well to all ages
- welcoming
- spiritual
- inspiring
- evangelism
- ability to position opportunities to work with others beyond our congregation
- work w/in community; look beyond our walls to bigger issues, how we can help
- motivational
- share best practices
- tech-savvy (blogging, tweeting, etc)
- younger, family-oriented
- empower / enable us and others to do / serve / create / blossom / inspire
- delegate

- Table C

- flexible
- encourage CE
- innovative - open to less conservative ways of worship, attract younger group
- makes an effort to know stories of 300 years of being a congregation
- wants to honor families, traditions, visions for our future
- ability to be a beacon to the community
- good children's sermon, and inclusive of children in worship
- knowledgeable of fund raising for sustaining church financially
- can lead stewardship effort, and access to helpful resources
- provide info to congregation in a neutral way, so all know what's going on
- good administrator and organizer - not manipulator of rules and regulations
- care for congregation's needs - visitation
- direction for talents

- super hero
- lead us in understanding Bible, and polity of Presbyterian church
- help us find the way to serve our community and the world - mission vision
- good Sunday School and youth programs led by a one with a good grasp of CE
- pastoral, recognizes and leads the congregation
- flexible / not a dictator
- visits sick and shut-ins. Pray w them, take Communion, so members don't feel alone
- cheerleader for individual congregants' efforts. Knows what they are, and how to motivate individuals to use them

- Table D

- anticipate changes in congregational needs
- reaching out - evangelism
- pray with
- new form of service
- visibility
- unjudgmental
- sharing resources
- someone not afraid of doing new things
- teacher of scripture with contemporary interpretation
- inspire groups, younger generation
- nurturer
- assures and energizes
- reality of loving church
- delegation
- teacher, Biblical scholar
- innovative - new service times
- outreach
- inspiring sermons connecting to community
- teacher - interpreter of the Word
- solid, able background for Bible study and depth to sermons
- sermons approachable to all ages
- guidance to rise above congregational politics
- approachable; can calm the waters
- pastoral counseling; guidance for personal problems
- sense of humor
- pastoral care by and through the pastor, delegating, equipping, overseeing

- resources through coordination and connection with community
- inspire younger generation
- willing to lead new forms and times of worship (eg, Longest Night)
- reaching out to community (eg, Umio prayer walk)
- visibility (not political) - connectional
- appreciates music
- comfortable with technology, and with those who are not
- awareness and sensitivity to needs within congregation (Seniors/spiritual help)
- compassionate
- sense of programs for children and youth
- organizational, business, financial sense
- willing to accept change of mission and resources, and of traditional Christianity

- Table E

- male
- family
- younger
- sense of humor
- caring
- approachable
- organized
- leadership skills
- dedicated
- tech savvy
- established
- willing to work with other churches in community
- appreciates music and its importance in our service
- with maturity
- pastoral care
- relevant and user-friendly sermons
- humble
- business skills
- administrative skills
- teachers scripture
- non-traditional
- leader
- brings in younger people

- brings in unchurched people
- willing to pitch in and help
- can speak to the emotional people in building self-esteem, confidence

- Table F

- pastor has own family, so can relate to other families
- able to energize groups
- approachable
- teaching vs preaching
- nurturing / counseling minister on personal level, caring for spiritual wellness
- innovative / current
- contemporary / traditional
- positive attitude
- inspiring
- accessible to congregation
- cares for elderly, frail
- relates to children
- good Bible background
- good preacher
- engages with community
- communicates with Presbytery and shares with congregation
- good administrator with Session and Deacons
- engages with all denominations and faiths
- good listener
- practices humility
- sense of humor
- previous congregational experience
- vision and execution
- plans ahead - not stagnant
- responsible for looking ahead; planning is part of leadership

- Table G

- unbiased - is our Switzerland

- current and topical issues in sermons and how they relate to OUR time and lives, and how we are to live today
- join our family
- offers counseling with individuals and families as needed
- sense of humor
- appreciates music and its importance to us
- tactful
- good administrator - aware of issues to be dealt with
- relates well with all ages, from kids to elderly
- help us to participate more in community needs
- delegate to Session and Deacons
- be a pastor, not just a good preacher
- planning, no secrets, though good communicator
- be connected to the presbytery
- keep us involved in world-wide issues
- can handle 80% position
- male with a family

Summary of our meetings:

What has the transition team learned from the Cafe Conversations?

The congregation:

- Is passionate and dedicated
- Genuinely cares about the church
- Believes in tradition but willing to go forward
- Is interested in different people to work to make good ideas happen
- Is interested in going out into the "community"
- Should do 2 or 3 things well, not all ideas "half fast"
- Is interested in sermons that are relevant
- Sees the importance of conversation
- Has moved on from the negativity after church
- Recognizes the mood and conversation have changed
- Recognizes reality, re: money and aging congregation
- Should look for relationships with the community-new opportunities
- Sees a shift from moving past to looking forward
- Is aging-what will happen to some of the ministries we have prized?
- Recognizes there is an importance in Sunday School-seeing it adapt to our students
- Includes our children in church
- Sees the advantages of our space: flexibility, fellowship
- Recognizes the importance of bible study
- Believes communication is key

What do we need to tell the people?

- we need to address/answer the questions that are asked
- When a questions is asked, it needs to be addressed as if it were the first time asked
- you will get an answer
- "we do hear"
- we are here and we are a viable community
- we love each other
- information about the sanctuary-what's happening
- information about the cemetery-what's happening
- *everything is great. Things are good. Come and see the good, we are healing!*

What do we ask people of the congregation?

- What are your gifts?
- How might those gifts be used?
- Listening might just give us the questions
- Labeling our space-What do we call this space?

Future Questions:

- What are the misconceptions currently held?
- What is most important for the transition team to know as they prepare to write their report? (Café Conversation topic for 4/19)

Notes on our thoughts and task:

- Our task *is to propose*:
- **the vision for the congregation**
- **how do we move forward?**
- Community involvement
- the sanctuary
- How do we as a church improve people's accessibility to us-communication?
- **working with the people of this church to be better leaders and witnesses to the gospel of this church**
- include the mission statement with our tweaks

Recommendation thoughts:

When we develop the recommendations they need to be **directional statements and measureable goals**- do we give specifics or leave that to session?

- We are looking at who we are as a community
- sharing responsibilities within the congregation-open sharing, open development
- ways to increase youth, young people

- **Vision thoughts:**
 - worship service times-looking for ways of outreach, to draw in different people (old, young, new), to be flexible
 - looking to meet the needs of educational challenges in the community
 - partnerships with Mercer Street Friends
 - building facility as a rental piece will this help us financial and also service the community?
 - the nursery school-how can it best meet the needs of the community?
 - meeting the needs of our elderly-reaching out to them. Offering services like making financial decisions, wills, etc

- **Theme Thoughts:**
 - caring
 - communication
 - community
 - religion
 - fellowship

Notes on our identity:

Bob:

INTENT

To live as Apostles of Christ in the world.

Several years ago, our congregation developed and Session approved a logo embodying the words, "Love, Inspire, **Faith (Change to Believe), Stewards. (Change to Nurture)** "

As we ponder these words, we recognize these remain essential to us today.

Our intent for Stewards is that we are called to nurture and nourish all of God's creation, the environment and the life within it. This also includes the institutions under our care, including the nurture of our congregation as the Body of Christ, care for the people who lead us, and proper use of the material possessions we have and may obtain for our ministry.

Our intent for Faith is that we seek to discern, believe in, and act based on the will of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in all things, in times of weakness and strength, in times of sickness and health, in times of poverty and plenty.

Our intent for Inspire is to use the Word through work and worship to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and to carry the flames of Pentecost (and the PCUSA logo!) within us as we become models of the best of Christian behavior in our communities of faith, family, work, and play, and to have courage to do the work of the Holy Spirit as we go beyond the boundaries of what is familiar to us.

Our intent for Love is to be a fellowship of faith that not only welcomes people in, but cares and **reconciles (work with empathy and forgiving)** with individuals both within and outside of our fellowship so that our entire **community (what does this word mean to us, the congregation?)** can help to realize our full potential as part of God's Creation.

Rachel:

Finding Benefits in a Small Church

I feel that there are many wonderful things happening at our church. I think that we should discover ways to enhance and strengthen what we already have.

- Minister to the community at a small level, small but just as significant
 - Put a face to the church in the community
 - Ministering to our own members as we do now
 - Always remembering that the church is to be servants to the world
 - Serve the poor, those poor in material things and poor in spirit

All of these have a tremendous impact on the world and ourselves.

Carol:

- We are primarily an older congregation who wants to reach out to the youth, and younger families to grow
- We are dedicated to the mission in our community and the world
- We are dedicated to keeping our church financially together which we have seen by the generous donations made to the *Building Foundation Fund*
- We are a strong, devoted, sustaining congregation who has continued with the mission of the church even in difficult times (in times of needed, we have stepped up and stayed strong)

From the **Ewing Presbyterian Church- Our Story** used in the packet when seeking an interim pastor

- II. In 1708 the first gathering of believers who became the The Ewing Presbyterian Church was held under the two large oak tree. For over 300 years this congregation has met in various worship spaces: a log cabin, a wood-frame house, a brick building, the 1867 stone building and now our worship space is located in the recently renovated education building.
- III. Ewing church has many opportunities for fellowship and mission. From adult education and Sunday School each week to Mission Sewing once a month, our church offers something for everyone. For the youth, there is youth group shared with other local churches, nursery school, Sunday School, children’s choir and VBS. For the senior citizens there is a group that meets frequently. Opportunities for everyone include-bible study, breakfast at Michael’s Diner, three women’s circles, and two choirs (vocal and bell). There are also many special programs and events offered throughout the year to help our church grow in its faith. We are proud of the many opportunities offered to our congregation and community.

- Ewing Presbyterian Church is now on the verge of a new direction and seeking an Interim Pastor to help come together as we discern the will of God for our church and the community.

Other minutes from the meeting:

- What is our focal point for the next few years in moving forward
- What came from the Café Conversations to move forward: Community of faith, neighbors, diverse community
- The healing issue and why it is necessary in moving forward
- May/should continue with the Café Conversations to give people an opportunity to talk

Highlights (Questions) from the article: Jeffrey Jones: New Questions for a New Day

- “How do we bring them in?” it would be better for us to ask, “How do we send them out?”
- “What is God up to and how do we get on board?”
- How do we serve?”
- “How do we make the reign of God more present in this time and place?”