

**Mission Study Report**  
**The Presbyterian Church in Geneva**  
**Approved by Session March 18, 2020**



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## Vision and Mission

### *Vision:*

With Jesus Christ as our model and the Holy Spirit as inspiration, we boldly live our faith in God as disciples, serving each other, this church, our community, and all people, while working to bring God's justice and peace to our world.

### *Mission:*

1. **We welcome** all – no matter what age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, economic situation, educational background, or religious background – extending the hospitality of Christ by comforting and helping those in need and celebrating together the joys of life.
2. **We worship** God through music, prayer and Word, celebrating the gifts of the Spirit, nurturing our faith, and challenging our complacency.
3. **We study and teach** broadly in order to understand and interpret the Gospel to prepare for discipleship, enabling each of us – wherever we are in life's journey – to grow in faith.
4. **We work** for justice, peace and the well-being of the Earth and all its peoples.
5. **We commit** to being generous stewards with our gifts – time, talents, resources – and our lives.

As the members of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva, we live our faith through connection with the community. We come together to worship, to enjoy fellowship at meals or on weekend retreats, and to inspire each other to continue to reach out. Music is an important part of our fellowship too, and we are fortunate to have a strong music program with many talented musicians in our congregation.

The walls of our building have never defined the limits of our relationships; in fact, in 1849 our church hosted the ceremony in which Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman in the world to receive a Doctor of Medicine degree. More than 170 years later, our relationships with the community thrive and we host more than 30 local organizations every month. We enthusiastically celebrate diversity. We believe our youth should play active roles in our worship services, our church leadership and our community engagement.

When we chose to unite two churches thirty years ago, the decision was made not from a place of need but from a shared belief that together we could do more. We pray that our existence has been and will continue to be a testament to God's plan for how to treat this planet and all people.

## **Our History**

First Presbyterian Church in Geneva traces its history to July 16, 1798 when 13 men and one woman gathered in the hotel on Pulteney Park and petitioned the state legislature to grant them a charter so they could form a religious organization. Its first pastor was the Rev. Jedediah Chapman, a part-time missionary pastor from 1800 to 1812 and senior pastor for a year afterward. During his time in what was then considered to be wilderness he organized 11 other churches.

Second Presbyterian Church, later named North Presbyterian Church, was organized in 1870 and the building at Genesee and Lewis Streets was dedicated July 1876. Now there was a Presbyterian church in both the north side and south side of Geneva.

### ***Combining Forces***

A union of the two Presbyterian churches had been suggested repeatedly over many years, but the effort had never before progressed beyond initial discussions. In the meantime, they joined together for mission and events in the community including hosting the 198<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Moderator Benjamin Weir in 1987. For two decades they shared summer worship services with First Baptist Church, alternating pastors and pulpits.

While both churches had strong congregations and programs, many felt that a combined church would be more beneficial in serving the community and mission endeavors. After a year of putting all the pieces in place, the congregation held its first unified worship service on November 27, 1988. The First Presbyterian building was selected as the new home of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva. The organ, grand piano, baptismal font, and two stained glass windows from North Church were incorporated into the new church and the sanctuary was renovated the following year.

### ***Pastors of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva***

- The Rev. Dr. J. Richard Hart served as minister of First Presbyterian Church from 1959 until his retirement in 1988. He was named Pastor Emeritus after his retirement.
- The Rev. Charles Peet served as Interim Pastor until April 1989.
- The Rev. W. James Gerling served as pastor of North Presbyterian Church from 1980. In 1989, Rev. Gerling was called to serve as the first pastor of the new church. After serving for 24 years as the pastor, he retired December 2012. The title of Pastor Emeritus was conferred after his retirement. Under Rev. Gerling's compassionate leadership the church truly became a united congregation and a vibrant part of the Geneva community, with a strong emphasis on local mission.
- The Rev. Dr. Deborah Lind-Schmitz served as interim pastor January 2013 through September 2014 and has served as the installed pastor since then. She plans to retire September 30, 2020.

### ***Associate Pastors and Parish Associates***

- The Rev. Mary G. Ludvigsen served 1990-1992.
- The Rev. Lynn U. Nelson served as Interim Associate 1993-1994.
- Beginning in 1994, the Rev. Dr. Nancy Birdsong served as Associate Pastor for 17 years.

- The Rev. Suzanne Otterbacher began in 2011 as the part-time Parish Associate. She assisted with Sunday services, acting as staff liaison with the Deacons and the Worship Committee, and led a Presbyterian Women (PW) Bible study group. She retired in 2014.
- In 2019, the Rev. John Milne became the part-time Parish Associate. He assists with Sunday services, pastoral care and leads a mid-week Bible study group.

### ***Pastoral Transitions 2012-2014***

Rev. Gerling's retirement announcement in January 2012 was not entirely unexpected. As early as 2010 we began planning for the many changes this would bring. A Retreat Planning Committee was formed to organize and lead two day-long retreats: one in May 2010 and one in February 2012. A six-member Transitional Pastor Nominating Committee was appointed in March 2012 by Session for an interim pastor search.

The Transitional Pastor Nominating Committee was delighted to find an outstanding candidate in the Rev. Dr. Deborah Lind-Schmitz, who began serving as an interim pastor in January 2013. In March 2013, a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) of eight people was elected by the congregation. Following table talks and with input from the earlier retreats, the PNC wrote up our Mission Study Report and Ministry Information Form.

In March 2014 the PNC brought in a candidate, the Rev. Dr. Jeff Garrison, after a comprehensive and thorough national search. He was selected from over 125 applicants. Information packets about Rev. Garrison were mailed to each member. Rev. Garrison and his family visited our church the weekend of March 1-2, 2014. He met with Elders, Deacons, and staff, attended a Meet & Greet reception on Saturday. He conducted Sunday worship and a congregation meeting followed. There was a great deal of concern about the candidate's opposition to same-sex marriage, which was illegal in New York at the time. When the paper ballots were tallied, 28% of votes were negative. The candidate graciously declined the call, saying he did not want to divide the congregation over this issue.

After receiving permission from the Presbytery of Geneva to call our interim pastor to an installed position, the session voted to call the Rev. Dr. Deborah Lind-Schmitz as the installed pastor. The congregation and Presbytery then approved this call. Pastor Lind-Schmitz has helped us move forward and recognize the strong bonds of fellowship and faith we share. We are committed to be an inclusive church with a strong mission focus.

### ***History Tidbits***

- April 1831, evangelist Charles Grandison Finney led a revival meeting at First Presbyterian Church.
- January 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Geneva Medical College in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church. She was the first woman to receive the Doctor of Medicine from a recognized medical school.
- September 9, 1884, President Chester Arthur and several cabinet secretaries, and New York Governor and future president Grover Cleveland attended the funeral of Charles J. Folger, Secretary of the Treasury at First Presbyterian Church. Some 40,000 people thronged the streets that day as it was the nation's "Capital for a Day."
- Arthur Dove, first abstract artist, joined North Presbyterian Church in 1895.

For more on the history of our church see:

Hart, J. Richard (1997) *The Presbyterian Presence in Geneva, New York 1798-1998: People and events that shaped the life of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva*, Heart of the Finger Lakes Publishing, Interlaken, New York.

## **The Geneva Community**

Located along the north end of Seneca Lake, Geneva is an urban community in the heart of New York's Finger Lakes Region. Geneva's diversity, beautiful neighborhoods, and scenic settings make it a wonderful place to live, learn, and grow. Though a small community, Geneva is rich in many assets that make us unique. The City of Geneva has a population of 12,762. With the surrounding Town of Geneva, the total population is just over 16,000. Committed to balancing the preservation of historic and natural resources with economic development, Geneva is rich in history and has become a vibrant dining, retail, cultural and entertainment destination. Geneva serves as a hub for commerce, higher education, health care, and the arts for rural communities in the surrounding area. It is about an hour's drive from Ithaca, Syracuse and Rochester. With New York's Finger Lakes Welcome Center opening in Geneva's lakefront park in 2018, the city is a tourist gateway to the Finger Lakes.

### ***Population***

Geneva is a community of neighborhoods, with eleven distinct neighborhoods that are supported by the city's Neighborhood Resource Center. Residents come together for events, activate improvements in the many neighborhood parks and volunteer throughout the community. Geneva is much more diverse than other parts of the Finger Lakes region, and our diversity is a point of pride for the community. For example,

- 68% of residents in the City of Geneva are White compared with more than 90% of residents in Ontario County
- 16% Latino or Hispanic,
- 9% Black or African American,
- 4% Asian
- 3% two or more races
- 1% American Indian (2018)

At least 34 languages are spoken and more than 12 religious faiths are represented (Geneva City School District website). Geneva's school district was ranked in the top five percent of the most diverse school districts in the state, with more than half of the city's students classified in groups historically identified as minorities (*Niche*; niche.com), including

- 30.5% Latino or Hispanic
- 11.3% Multiracial
- 11.1% Black or African American,
- 1.8% Asian or Native Pacific Islander (data.nysed.gov)

Geneva's median age is 29.6 years compared to Ontario County's median of 43.3 years.

## ***Economic Climate***

The economy of Geneva depends on jobs related to educational services, health care, social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing. The three largest employers are Cornell AgriTech, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, and Finger Lakes Health (Geneva General Hospital). Other large employers include the Geneva City School District, Finger Lakes Medical Associates, Walmart, Wegmans, and local hotels. While manufacturing jobs have disappeared from Geneva over the past 100 years, Guardian Glass, Zotos International (maker of beauty products), and other smaller industries still employ 10% of Geneva residents.

Economic indicators demonstrate a greater level of poverty in the City of Geneva than in other parts of Ontario County. In 2017, the median household income in Geneva (\$40,920) was approximately two-thirds that of Ontario County (\$61,710), signifying a poverty rate in Geneva (18.9%) that is significantly greater than in the rest of Ontario County (8.3%). The poverty rate of people under 18 is an alarming 30.9% in Geneva; 2.5 times that of Ontario County and 50% higher than the average for New York State (Success for Geneva's Children, 2019).

Although Geneva suffers from many of the problems found in larger cities (poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, and racism), it is of a small enough size that success in addressing these problems seems possible. Presbyterians are involved as volunteers in most of the community groups dealing with these issues, and many serve in leadership positions.

## ***Higher Education and Research***

For 140 years, Cornell's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, now known as Cornell AgriTech, has developed cutting-edge technologies essential to feeding the world and strengthening New York economies. World famous for its Empire, Cortland and Jonagold apples and other fruits, Cornell AgriTech supports the farms and agricultural businesses that surround Geneva even as it continues to serve millions of consumers, agricultural producers, food businesses and farm families throughout the rest of the state. More than 300 researchers work on the Geneva campus.

Geneva is home to two undergraduate institutions: Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Finger Lakes Community College.

- Hobart and William Smith Colleges is a small private liberal arts institution with a focus on community service and environmental sustainability. Founded as two separate colleges (Hobart for men and William Smith for women), they are now coordinate colleges that share the same campus, faculty, administration and curriculum. The 2020 edition of *The Princeton Review's Best 385 Colleges* recognizes Hobart and William Smith Colleges and ranks it second in the nation for "impact," and third for study abroad.
- Finger Lakes Community College has an extension site in Geneva, offering a wide variety of classes and programs. Its expanding programming in viticulture and the culinary arts support the development of the Finger Lakes as a tourist destination.

Finger Lakes Health offers three separate hospital-based nursing education programs.

- The Marion S. Whelan School of Nursing offers a Licensed Practical Nurse program.
- The Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing offers a full time Associates Degree leading toward a Registered Nurse credential.
- A Certified Nursing Assistant training program is also available.

### ***Cultural and Recreational Attractions***

The historic Smith Opera House in downtown Geneva provides an elegant venue for concerts, films, and other performances. Seating 1,400, it is home to the Geneva Concerts annual series as well as other programs ranging from live performances by national acts to showings of locally produced theater and independent films. More than a dozen grassroots music and theatre organizations enliven the City with opportunities to be on stage or in the audience. The Geneva Historical Society manages a museum and several historic sites in the area. The annual Festival of Nations hosted at Geneva City Schools connects our youth and community with Geneva's cultural assets.

Geneva was the only city in New York to be named an All-America City in 2015. Among the criteria the National Civic League used for the prestigious designation are civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness, innovation and impact. In a national poll conducted in 2019 by *USA Today* and its travel site, 10Best.com, the Finger Lakes was named the best wine region in the United States for the second consecutive year. The Finger Lakes area is a growing tourist destination, and the more than 120 wineries are a big part of the draw.

## **Programs, Ministries and Missions**

A church is its people! Every individual is invited to develop a deeper faith when the church provides experiences for faith and spiritual development. The Presbyterian Church in Geneva (PCG) offers opportunities for worship, education, fellowship, outreach, growth, and spiritual development for all who wish to participate.

### ***Worship***

Worship is our invitation to be in the presence of God and to have our spiritual needs acknowledged and nurtured. Worship is central to the life of our church. Our worship is intergenerational with numerous church members contributing to the experience. We pray to and praise God for all that worship provides. Worship sustains us. Worship enhances our spirit. Worship opens our eyes to the glory of God. We offer two services each week during the school year: an 8:15 am service in the chapel and a 10:30 am service in the sanctuary. During the summer we hold one service at 9:30 am in the sanctuary.

### ***Music***

Music is worship. Music lifts us from our common existence into a world where angels sing and glory abounds. Music enhances our worship, raising our spirits and opening our hearts to the wonder of God. There are many music opportunities in our church, including the Adult Choir,

Children's Choirs and Bell Choir. Everyone is invited to participate. Our spirits all sing Alleluia in the musical moments that fill our worship.

### ***Children and Youth***

We encourage children and youth to become involved in the church from an early age. Sunday School classes help children explore Bible stories and their relevance to everyday life. They also include instruction in music each week. Parents and children together are invited to participate in the Faith and Families program. Each worship service includes a children's sermon and our youth participate as acolytes, lay readers, ushers, members of the children's choirs and Orff Instrument Ensemble, and in special dramatic offerings, such as the Christmas pageant and Sunday School Sunday.

Other youth activities include sponsorship of the Heifer Project and Souper Bowl for Caring, along with collecting supplies and offerings for various local causes. Youth are encouraged to serve as counselors at Camp Whitman in the summer and attend Triennium. In 2019, five youth and two chaperones, including Rev. Lind-Schmitz, attended Triennium.

Every two years there is a Confirmation Class, and confirmands become eligible to serve as youth elders (2 positions) and deacons (2 positions). Once confirmed, older youth continue to meet in a Sunday school class each week during the school year.

### ***Adult Education***

On Sunday mornings, Bible studies, spiritual development discussions, and historical explorations of Biblical times are addressed in the Adult Forum. During the week we offer a Pastor's Bible Study, a book club, and meditative experiences including the meditative experience of Tai Chi. In the summer, Let's Talk gatherings discuss current events topics with experts in the field. During Lent, we offer Friday evening soup supper Bible studies. In all programs, participants are encouraged to ask and discuss tough questions, providing a supportive environment in which participants can grow and evolve in their faith.

### ***Fellowship***

"Faith is individual but a Church is everyone working together to bring the work of God into the world," as Hillary Clinton said so profoundly in her book *It Takes A Village*. Our church is a village of individuals working together. As we work together, we become friends, mentors, support persons, and confidants. And so naturally, we gather together socially. Our church gathers often as people of God to share experiences and dreams (and food). We also invite the greater community to join us. We are the church and our togetherness builds a greater church. Fellowship gatherings include:

Epiphany Feast  
Annual Meeting Dinner  
Watson Homestead Winter Weekend  
Lenten Friday Soup Suppers & Bible Study  
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper  
Lenten Breakfasts (Wednesday mornings)  
Supper and a Song (March)

Palm Sunday Brunch  
Talent Show and Ziti Dinner (May)  
Strawberry Festival (June)  
Baccalaureate Breakfast (June)  
Harvest Luncheon (November)  
Hanging of the Greens (Advent)  
Christmas Plum Pudding Celebration

### ***Presbyterian Women***

All women in the church are included in this group. Some choose to be active in specific ways. Through hard work and commitment, Presbyterian Women (PW) supports the church and its ministry in many ways. The Hospitality Committee hosts receptions for memorial services and keeps the busy church kitchen clean and well-organized. The whole church comes together to help with the annual PW June Strawberry Festival, a community favorite and major fundraiser. The nationally renowned SERRV Shop is sponsored by PW. The Self-help Sewing group meets one day a week to teach people how to sew for themselves or for others. The Needles Group knits items for charitable purposes. PW helps our community by assembling kitchen kits and personal hygiene kits for the homeless and those housed by Social Services in motels. PW also provides financial support for local, Presbytery, Synod, and church-wide mission projects.

### ***Spirituality and the Arts***

Programs teaching art skills and the use of art are offered throughout the year in the new Sacred Arts Studio. Art is a visual experience that speaks to our inner person, and also offers an experience to develop our spirituality by creating images that speak directly to us and to the spiritual gifts that are important to each individual. Contemplation of the created art provides a quiet, meditative time that opens our being to the glory of God. Sharing the creative experience also develops a deeper faith. Classes include Origami, Scrapbooking, Crocheting, Sew Fun!, Grrlfriend Knit Market Bag, Drawing Studio, and Tai Chi. During school breaks, art classes for children are also offered.

### ***Congregational Care***

Our church family is a caring community and we reach out to all who have need of our care. The Deacons provide assistance for those in need and assure that no one is forgotten. They provide hospital visits, arrange transportation to church services, and coordinate a greeting card ministry. Deacons and Elders share communion with shut-ins and those in nursing homes. Our Parish Nurse provides guidance for those making decisions about health care options for themselves or loved ones, assistance to those needing help getting to appointments, and a listening ear if needed in meetings with health care professionals. The Youth Fellowship group visits with senior church members as a way to acknowledge the work these members have done for the church over the years. Everyone in the Church is important!!

### ***Health and Wellness***

Maintaining a healthy mind and body is essential to sharing the message of Jesus' love with our congregation and to those in the community. In 2006, our Church established the Parish Nurse Program. In addition to congregational care activities, the Parish Nurse informs us all about diseases, check-ups, routine procedures and ongoing care that is important for our continued health. She plans and facilitates the Passages Program on topics such as maintaining mobility and stability, following practices that lead to wellness, legal issues related to health care, discussions of nutrition, end of life issues, and ways to help those in need. She also convenes the Twilight Group, a supportive gathering for people serving as caregivers for loved ones and for those who have a lost loved one for whom they've served as caregiver.

## ***Mission and Outreach***

At the Presbyterian Church in Geneva, we have said for years that “mission is our mission!”, which is a way of shouting from the rooftops that we value the service that happens within the church building just as much as we strive to prioritize congregational and community service outside the church walls.

Many new members of our church have commented over the years that it didn’t take long for them to feel at home because they already knew many existing members from various volunteer endeavors, or had been welcomed by members of the church when their non-church-related activities hosted meetings or events within the church walls. We strive to make our church feel like a community center, hosting more than 30 groups (Appendix 1), providing shelter to homeless families through the interfaith work of Family Promise, and serving as a polling place.

Our members often connect with opportunities which speak to their desire to deepen their faith and work for others. Engagement in these personal efforts is one way our congregation becomes aware of needs in the larger community. And very often, once a need is identified, we provide assistance. The Village Links project, started in 2006, is one of these efforts. Teen moms in our community were struggling with all the responsibility of being so young and caring for children. To offer the young mothers a place to talk to others with the same challenges, and support for the mothers and their babies, our church formed a group to provide that support. Many young single moms have been served over the years and appreciate the care and support that has been offered. The Baby College program for Early Literacy was a companion piece of this effort.

In addition to supporting local community groups, as a congregation we are committed to mission causes around the world. For example, members of our church worked hard to establish a SERRV shop housed in our church building. The SERRV shop sells fair trade, hand-crafted items and food produced in 23 developing countries. In addition to regular Saturday hours, the shop volunteers also visit various church conventions, retreats and community churches, both near and far in New York State, to sell goods and tell the SERRV story. Profits from the shop benefit the church and our community. Through One Great Hour of Sharing we support a variety of projects helping those who might otherwise struggle on a daily basis.

We have recently endeavored to take stock of all the ways mission work occurs within the church, through our members when they are out in the community, and via financial support (p. 20, *Retreat September 14, 2019*). The list is extensive but a churchwide retreat held recently identified three key areas that the congregation believes form the center of its mission philosophy. These areas help to tell the story of who we are as a church and where we would like to grow:

1. Congregational Care. Families care for their members in a variety of ways. As an aging congregation, we want to tend to the needs of those who cannot attend church any longer, who face health issues and need moral and spiritual support, and to current attendees who stay connected to the church for spiritual nourishment. We have a robust history of celebrations (with food), discussion gatherings (with food), and bereavement support (also with food). PW and the Deacons have traditions that pull the community in, including an annual Strawberry Social with music (and food, of course!).

2. **Children and Youth.** We have welcomed many new families into the congregation in recent years and offer Christian Education, a youth group, a children's sermon, and childcare after the children's sermon has ended. We want to grow our intergenerational opportunities, particularly as they relate to mission work, to strengthen connections between members and within the community.
3. **Social Justice and Peacemaking.** Every year, we contribute a substantial portion of our church's budget to mission work--be it through contributions to PC(USA), the Presbytery, or direct international assistance efforts. Our mission committee also solicits proposals from local groups providing vital services to the community and, in conjunction with the Presbytery mission grant program, provides approximately \$30,000 in support to those organizations. But social justice and peacemaking is not just about giving, it is about doing--talking, listening, advocating, witnessing. Members of the congregation have traveled to West Virginia for Appalachian service work, to the southern border to help desperate families seeking refuge in the United States, to Colombia to bear witness to injustice and seek peace, and to Indonesia for a Global Exchange.

### ***Interpretation and Stewardship (I & S)***

All the programs mentioned above require resources and it is the job of the I & S Committee to interpret to the church's members and friends the needs of the church and invite them to join in the support of this mission work. I & S organizes the Palm Sunday Auction for One Great Hour of Sharing and local mission, organizes the annual Stewardship Campaign, and conducts time and talent surveys of the congregation. This interpretation is a year-round effort that also involves the Mission & Social Concerns Committee.

## **Plan of Organization and Staffing**

The programs and mission of the church rely on critical support from the staff as well as from volunteers. The PCG has one full-time pastor who serves as head of staff. Other full-time staff include the Financial Administrator & Building Administrator, the Office Administrator, and the Church Custodian. The rest of the staff serve in part-time positions.

Currently assisting the pastor is our Parish Associate. The Parish Nurse provides pastoral care and health and wellness education. And supporting the general operations of the church are an Assistant Custodian and an Information Technology Director.

Christian Education and youth programs are supported by:

- Director of Christian Education
- Youth Ministries Coordinator
- Nursery Care Provider

Our worship services and music program are supported by:

- Church Organist
- Director of Music
- Orff Ensemble & Youth Bell Choir Director
- Senior Bell Choir Director
- Youth Choir Director

There have been a few changes in personnel over the past 5 years. The current Administrative Assistant was hired in 2016 and the current Church Custodian was hired in 2018. The position of Youth Ministries Coordinator is currently vacant.

***Committees of the Session***

- Adult Education
- Christian Education
- Membership & Evangelism
  - History
- Communication
- Nominating
- Personnel
- Property
  - Columbarium
- Worship and Music
  - Chancel Guild
- Mission and Social Concerns
  - Parish Nurse
  - Village Links
- Finance
  - Revenue Management
  - Acquisitions & Foundation
  - Investment
- Interpretation & Stewardship

***The Session and Board of Deacons***

Following Session discussion and discussion at a church retreat, in 2017 the congregation voted to reduce the size of Session from 23 (3 classes of 7, plus 2 youth elders) to 17 (3 classes of 5, plus 2 youth elders). The Class of 2022 is the first with 5 members, and by January 2021 the process will be complete (Table 1). The Board of Deacons decided not to reduce its size from 21, but it has been difficult to find 7 people to fill each class.

Table 1. Membership in Session and Board of Deacons

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Session	20	22	23	23	23
Deacons	20	19	20	23	23

***Leadership Beyond Geneva***

Over the past 200+ years, more than fifty congregants have entered professional ministry as pastors, missionaries, or Christian educators. Many have been involved with committees and leadership in General Assembly, Synod of the Northeast, and the Presbytery of Geneva. And always, members of our congregation have been community leaders and involved in our schools, our hospitals, and our civic organizations.

## Church Data

### *Membership*

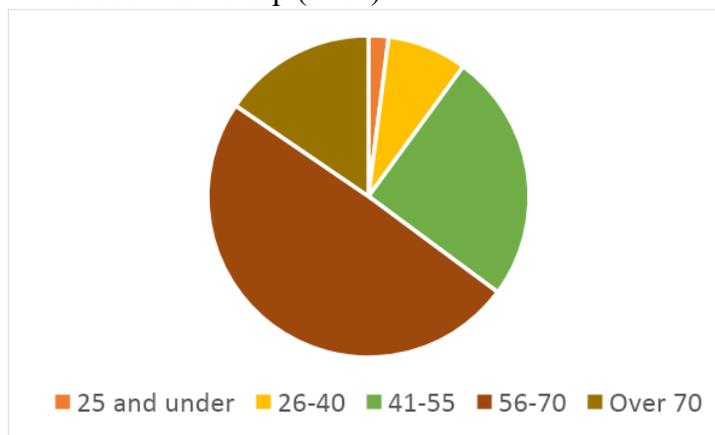
Membership declines have been the norm in Presbyterian Churches over the past few years (10% decline for PC(USA) between 2015 and 2017) and our church is no different. Our church’s total membership has declined approximately 5% since 2015 (Table 2). Membership numbers will drop significantly in 2020, most likely to around 390, as we complete a comprehensive audit of our rolls and account for unrecorded deaths, duplications, and other errors. On the other hand, our church’s membership in 2019 (499) and our anticipated corrected membership in 2020 (390) are greater than the average of 153 calculated for PC(USA) in 2017 and more than most in our Presbytery.

Table 2. Membership Trends

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>528</b>
Female	298	299	298	304	312
Male	201	208	207	211	261

Our church has an aging membership, with about 65% of our members over 55 years old (Fig. 1). Another 25% of members are between 40 and 55. Many of these members are very active and serve in leadership positions, but we need to recruit more young people to join and take on leadership roles. Across the PC(USA) as a whole, 44% of members are over 55 years old.

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Membership (2019)



We are not a racially or ethnically diverse church. Our racial ethnic make-up is:

White:	480	Middle Eastern/North African	2
Multiracial	10	Black/African American/African	2
Latino-a/Hispanic	3	Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	2

Membership losses have exceeded gains over the last 5 years (Table 3). The large loss in the 2014 to 2015 “Other” category reflects work of the Membership Committee and staff to review the rolls and contact people who had not been involved in the church for more than 2 years. The goal was to determine if these people wished to remain active members; 104 people opted to end their active membership.

Table 3. Membership Gains and Losses

	2018 to 2019	2017 to 2018	2016 to 2017	2015 to 2016	2014 to 2015
<b>GAINS</b>					
Certificates		4	2		6
Youth Professions		5		2	9
Professions and Affirmations	5	10	5		2
<b>Total Gains</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>LOSSES</b>					
Certificates					
Death	13	11	11	12	11
Other		6	6	3	104
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>-8</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-98</b>

### *Attendance*

Worship attendance has declined 11% since 2015 (Table 4). In the past two years, the average number of people attending worship has been approximately 35% of the total membership. This compares to an average of 56% for the PC(USA) as a whole. If our actual membership is closer to 390, as we expect, then our average attendance in 2019 was 48% of total membership.

Table 4. Average attendance at worship (both services combined)

2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
187	165	175	200	210

### *Christian Education Enrollment and Attendance*

About 25 children and youth participate each week in our five Sunday Christian Education classes. Enrolled are:

- 6 in 3 years-kindergarten class
- 8 in 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade class
- 8 in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class
- 7 in Confirmation class
- 8 in Older Youth class

About every two years we offer a confirmation class. An average of 6 youth participate in each youth ministry activity.

Sunday morning adult education includes a forum between the two worship services. An average of 10 to 15 people attend each Sunday forum.

### ***Finances: Overview***

The PCG is blessed with financial resources that support our programs and ministries, and we are becoming more financially healthy, thanks to generous giving and prayerful stewardship. Members and friends respond generously to appeals for annual pledges, per capita giving, special offerings, and to capital and endowment campaigns. Our investments have always helped support our annual budget but from 2015 through 2018 an average 53% of funds withdrawn from investments came from principal. It is clear that drawing down the endowment principle is unsustainable in the long term.

Early in 2019, Session took actions to address this situation, including:

1. The membership was asked to increase by 20% their current year's pledging during the second half of the year. The membership responded very positively and, as of the end of the year, 98% of the hoped for total of \$30,000 was received.
2. We reduced our 2019 voluntary giving to Presbytery, Synod, and GA to \$31,244 from \$61,244.
3. The Ensuring our Future Appeal was begun. This appeal has a goal of raising \$3,000,000 for a permanent endowment fund from which only interest and dividends can be withdrawn. This 5-year appeal is underway and as of December 31, 2019 we have received about \$170,000 and pledges for a total of nearly \$960,500. We anticipate that more pledges will be received.

These actions resulted in a reduction in the use of endowment funds for the annual budget from \$157,914 in 2018 to \$107,700 in 2019 (Table 6). Although voluntary giving to Presbytery, Synod, and GA was \$30,000 lower in 2019 than in 2018, total mission giving in 2019 was still \$112,212. This total includes budgeted mission, special offerings, SERRV, PW and Deacons contributions, as well as proceeds from our annual Palm Sunday One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Auction (Table 7).

Budget planning for 2020 included strategies to increase revenue from sources other than endowment and to decrease expenditures. The end result is that the expected draw from endowment will be about \$92,000, which is a reduction of 42% from 2018 (Table 6). The Stewardship Campaign for 2020 requested that members prayerfully consider an increase of 20% over their original pledge for 2019, in effect continuing the pledge level of the last 6 months of 2019. We anticipate that pledges will total about \$360,000, up from \$343,296 in 2019 and \$305,478 in 2018, an increase from 2018 of 18%.

Another plan to increase revenue to support the annual budget is to allocate \$5,000 from our annual Palm Sunday OGHS Auction to local mission projects funded through the Mission & Social Concerns Committee. Previously, money raised by this auction was donated to OGHS and to the Presbytery's West Virginia Mission Work Team. The auction has typically raised about \$8,000 each year. OGHS will still receive all donations designated specifically for OGHS and donations raised during other events during Lent.

**Finances: Annual Budget**

The Church’s annual budget has varied from about \$481,000 to \$522,000 over the past five years (Tables 5, 6). Through 2018, pledges accounted for about two-thirds of income for the annual budget and investments accounted for nearly one-third (Table 5). Average annual giving in pledges, per capita, and plate offerings ranged from \$612 to \$650 per member through 2018 and increased to \$732 in 2019. If we use the anticipated membership total of 390 for 2019, annual giving was \$937 per member.

Table 5. Sources of income for PCG annual budget

Sources of income for annual budget	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Pledges, Per Capita, Plate Offering	\$365,282	\$329,382	\$325,316	\$323,730	\$323,396
Giving per member (pledge, per capita, plate offering)	\$732	\$650	\$644	\$629	\$612
Endowment	\$107,700	\$157,914	\$173,000	\$158,811	\$149,715
Other	\$7,778	\$16,112	\$23,805	\$21,031	\$24,818
<b>Total income for annual budget</b>	<b>\$480,760</b>	<b>\$503,408</b>	<b>\$522,121</b>	<b>\$503,572</b>	<b>\$497,929</b>

Annual variations in budgeted expenditures between 2015 and 2018 are minimal (Table 6 part A). They mainly reflect variation in annual utility bills and a change in custodial staff in 2018. The drop in budgeted mission expenditures was due to the reduction in our voluntary giving to Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly (GA).

Contributions through special offerings, OGHS auction, and from Deacons, SERRV, and PW adds significantly to mission giving included in our annual budget (Table 6A, B). This is clear by comparing total mission giving (e.g., \$86,962 in 2019) to budgeted mission expenditures (e.g., \$42,239 in 2019). Over the past 5 years, total mission giving has been 73% greater than mission expenditures in our annual budget.

Table 6. Annual expenditures (actual)

<b>A. Budgeted Expenditures</b>	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Personnel	\$344,977	\$338,186	\$347,199	\$342,758	\$332,590
Committee budgets, property	\$68,280	\$68,467	\$73,453	\$62,356	\$64,121
Per capita	\$25,250	\$25,750	\$26,400	\$27,544	\$28,512
Mission (in annual budget)	\$42,239	\$71,005	\$75,103	\$72,244	\$71,594
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$480,746</b>	<b>\$503,408</b>	<b>\$522,155</b>	<b>\$504,902</b>	<b>\$496,817</b>
<b>B. Total Mission Giving</b>					
Local mission <sup>1</sup>	\$30,247	\$36,906	\$29,939	\$38,596	\$26,554
Validated mission <sup>2</sup>	\$53,271	\$84,323	\$82,059	\$81,597	\$82,843
Other mission <sup>3</sup>	\$3,444	\$3,708	\$3,160	\$2,931	\$3,807
<b>Total Mission Giving</b>	<b>\$86,962</b>	<b>\$124,937</b>	<b>\$115,158</b>	<b>\$123,124</b>	<b>\$113,204</b>

<sup>1</sup> Local mission includes the mission committee budget, special offerings for local projects, as well as SERRV, PW and Deacons contributions to local mission projects.

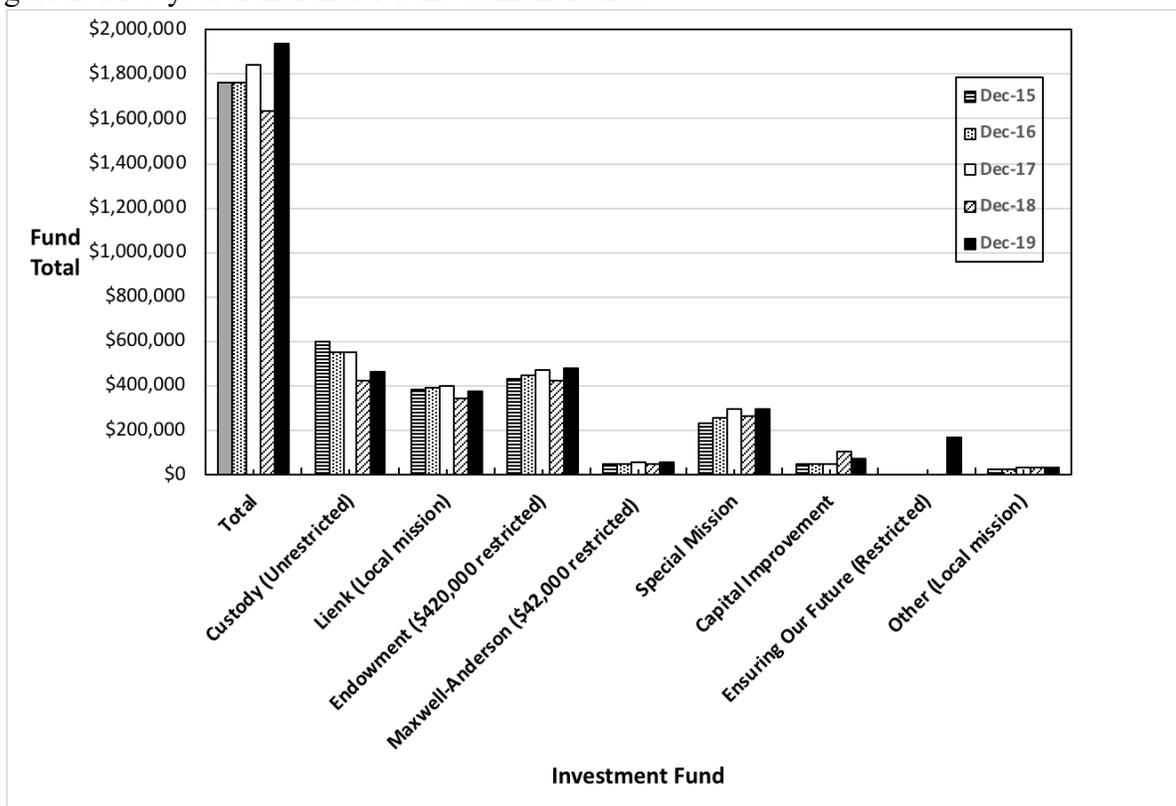
<sup>2</sup> Validated mission includes voluntary Presbytery, Synod and GA; Camp Whitman, Presbytery and PC(USA) special offerings (e.g., 2 cents a meal, Joy and Peacemaking Offerings, OGHS).

<sup>3</sup> Other mission includes PW Offerings (Thank, Birthday) and CWS Blanket Offering

***Finances: Endowment***

At the end of 2019, our investment funds totaled approximately \$1.9 million (Fig. 2). Variation in totals from year to year reflects a number of factors, including changes in the market, donations to campaigns, the withdrawal of funds for our annual budget and for capital improvements. Two of the funds (Endowment and Maxwell-Anderson) have set amounts that are restricted (\$420,000 and \$42,000, respectively) and we have drawn down these accounts nearly to those restricted totals. The increase of approximately \$300,000 between December 2018 and December 2019 reflects (1) contributions to campaigns and appeals, (2) an uptick in the market, and (3) a reduction in our use of investments to fund our annual budget.

Figure 2. Five-year trends in PCG Investment Funds



***Finances: Campaigns***

During the past five years we’ve completed two successful capital campaigns, Enhancing our Mission I and II, and have started a third (Table 7). The first (EOM I) ran from 2014 to 2018 and gifts exceeded the goal of \$250,000. These funds were used to renovate the kitchen, Christian

Education space, conference room, nursery, and to add acoustical panels and paint the sanctuary. Because renovation estimates ultimately exceeded the total raised during EOM I, without much publicity we initiated and completed a second campaign (2016-2019) with the help of a 1:1 match from an anonymous donor. This raised funds to complete the renovation of the Sunday School rooms, the North and South parlors, and the refurbishment of the Scout room.

Table 7. Giving to Enhancing our Mission I and II (capital campaigns) and to the Ensuring our Future (endowment campaign)

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	Total
Enhancing our Mission I		\$700	\$52,008	\$53,860	\$103,259	\$285,405*
Enhancing our Mission II	\$6,900	\$68,916	\$118,024	\$59,071		\$252,911
Ensuring our Future Appeal	\$960,481 Pledged \$170,036 Received					

\* Includes \$75,580 received in 2014.

Given our continued reliance on investments to fund a portion of our annual budget, in 2019 the Session voted to launch a five-year endowment appeal (Ensuring Our Future, or EOF, Appeal) with a goal of \$3 million. By the end of 2019 we already had pledges totaling over \$960,000 and gifts totaling over \$170,000 (Table 7). Funds raised in the EOF Appeal will go into permanent endowment; only interest and dividends may be withdrawn.

## **Planning for the Current Transition**

With Pastor Lind-Schmitz’s training as an interim pastor, she has led us as we’ve healed, reflected, regrouped and planned for the future. These processes are critical during a transition, and we’re now ready to search for her successor. To aid us in that process, we will be working with a Presbyterian Coach during the period between Pastor Lind-Schmitz’s departure and the installation of our new pastor.

Broad participation in two retreats (2017, 2019) helped us understand our strengths and challenges and resulted in substantive recommendations. Recent table talks (January and February 2020) gave the congregation an opportunity to discuss and share their answers to the narrative questions posed in the Ministry Information Form. Responses recorded during the table talks and submitted by individuals unable to attend the table talks illustrate broad agreement among members about who we are, where we want to be headed, and the type of person we’d like to have as our next pastor.

### ***Retreat November 4, 2017***

Facilitated by the Rev. Jennifer Hope Kottler, Congregational Coach/Consultant

The goal of this retreat was to figure out better ways to do the things we do and to engage more people in the mission activities of our church. As publicity for the retreat stated, “Being Presbyterians, we have lots of committees, and haven’t really changed our committee structure since the two Geneva Presbyterian churches united about 30 years ago. Maybe there’s a better way to get our work done.”

At the Saturday morning retreat, its approximately 50 participants were invited to join in conversations about any (or all) of the following eight areas of ministry:

- Adult education and fellowship
- Children and youth ministry
- Congregational care
- Finance and administration
- Local and global mission
- Membership and evangelism
- Property
- Worship

For each area of ministry, people were invited to comment on current activities discuss which we do well and which need improvement, and how to better organize these activities. Each table had a facilitator and a note-taker. Once individual table conversations had ended, we all joined together to take a ‘walk around’ of all the tables and to hear a summary from the facilitator. Participants were clearly passionate about the ministries of the church, adding in more activities the organizers hadn’t included, and making many suggestions about ways to improve our ministries.

In her report, Rev. Kottler pointed out three main themes she heard at many of the table conversations:

- **Communication:** A desire to better communicate within the church community and with the outside community who we are and what we are doing as a church. One recommendation was to improve our website as a way to engage the community and potential new members.
- **Coordination:** A need for better coordination between programs and committees; for closer ties between adult education programs and what is happening in local missions; to better coordinate when and how people are being asked to contribute financially.
- **Connection:** Individuals need to feel connected to the community of our church, and as a church we need to be connected and relevant to the community around us. People expressed a desire to engage more members directly in local mission. While many members are very involved in community organizations, others may feel the church has only asked them to be involved through financial contributions. There were many conversations about creating an ‘opportunity wall’ to inform people of ways to volunteer in the church’s mission work.

Rev. Kottler commented on potential next steps:

- Consider reducing the size of the Session and the Board of Deacons and the number of session committees. She observed that we have more people serving on these boards and more session committees than is typical in churches of our size. She heard from us that as our congregation ages, we may not have as many people willing to take on leadership roles; we may need to change the way that the work of our congregation gets done.
- Consider using short-term task forces to accomplish particular goals rather than assigning such tasks to on-going committees. Short-term commitments may be more attractive to newer and younger members than serving on an on-going committee.
- Consider a rethinking of the concept of “membership.” Providing opportunities for involvement by “friends” of the congregation is often an opportunity to share what it means to be a part of a church community through membership.

Session members received a report on the retreat, including summaries from the facilitator and the retreat organizing committee, and notes from each table. The organizing committee brought

motions to the Session in December 2017 on (1) reorganization of Session committees, and (2) reduction in the size of Session.

We have acted on some of the recommendations and comments from this retreat. Specifically, we have:

- reduced the size of Session
- consolidated some Session committees
- experimented with ways to invite more people to volunteer in the church's mission work
- encouraged the Mission & Social Concerns Committee to be in touch with other groups in the church engaged in mission projects, with a goal of having a larger impact and more clear communications about mission by working together.

We are still in the process of improving our methods of communication, especially our on-line modes of internal and external communication. This is critical as we look to engage more people in worship and in the programs of our church.

### ***Retreat September 14, 2019***

Facilitated by the Rev. Dr. Betsey Crimmins, pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Elmira and a PC(USA) Synod Coach.

The goal of this retreat was to:

- develop an inventory of current mission activities, including financial support, in-kind gifts, and hands-on service
- brainstorm ways to better engage more individuals in mission;
- develop a list of priorities for mission projects so that we have a better focus and intentionality to our mission
- propose a vision statement for the Mission & Social Concerns committee: "A just community without need."

The retreat started with small groups each reading a different Biblical text that included a call to mission. Participants were asked to discuss how that scripture informs their view of mission and how we should *do* mission. Small group comments were shared with the whole group.

In Fellowship Hall were large posters labeled with major categories of mission in which we're engaged (e.g., Children's Well-being, Congregational Care, Economic Empowerment, Environmental Concerns, Housing, Hunger, Peacemaking and Combating Injustice). Participants were asked to add post-it notes for activities we do that fall into each category. On green post-its people listed projects we support financially and on yellow post-its we listed projects we support with our time and talents.

The next activity was to discuss priorities. It was clear from the post-it notes added to the posters that our church is engaged in many mission projects in many different ways. Small groups were asked to discuss whether we are spread too thin in our mission projects and whether it would be better to reduce the number of projects or to focus on a particular theme for a year or two. Each person received 6 stickers ("dots") to use to vote for their top three priorities for mission. They

were asked to put 3 dots on the category of mission that is their top priority, 2 dots on their second priority, and 1 dot on their third. After everyone had finished adding their colored dots to the posters, we counted up the dots. Coming out on top were:

1. Congregational Care
2. Children and Youth
3. Peacemaking and Combating Injustice

Before concluding with prayer, small groups discussed ways to better

- engage more people in mission, and
- communicate mission to the whole congregation and community

Some comments, questions, and suggestions from the sharing of ideas from small-group discussions:

- Our congregation needs to be re-energized to do mission. In response, it was suggested that we look into the PC(USA)'s revitalization initiative.
- What would it look like if there was no boundary between "inside" and "outside" the church? It was noted that not everyone in our church may be open to breaking down these walls.
- What are we doing to get to know the groups and people using our church building?
- We should partner more with other groups and churches.
- We should consider focusing on a mission theme for three years, and be willing to drop some projects that fall outside of that theme, at least for a while.
- We need to invite our youth to become engaged in projects they select and want to do.
- To better coordinate mission work being done by different groups within the church, hold a quarterly meeting of all involved to share and plan.
- Include something about mission each Sunday.
- Remind people about opportunities (email reminders for 2-cents a meal, food pantry donations, etc.).

As a follow-up to the retreat, the Mission & Social Concerns Committee has been in communication with the Worship Committee about ways to highlight the mission work of our church and individual members each week. The Committee has also held special meetings on Congregational Care and on Children and Youth. Invited to each meeting were specific groups within the church (e.g., Deacons, Village Links, Family Promise, PW, SERRV, Christian Ed) and representatives from some of the local community groups we support (e.g., Boys & Girls Club, Success for Geneva's Children, Geneva Reads) who are engaged in these areas of mission. A meeting focused on Peacemaking and Combating Injustice will be next. These follow-up discussions made it clear that:

- With strong leadership from the Deacons we are focusing on ways to improve and involve more people in congregational care.
- We are blessed with church community members who give their time, talents, and resources generously when asked to support each other and to help their neighbors in need.
- We have the potential to make a critical difference in the lives of children at risk in our community.

### ***Table Talks (January 12, 19 and February 2, 9, 2020)***

The congregation was invited to share its responses to the questions posed in the narrative section of the Ministry Information Form (MIF). Table talks were held after both services on four Sundays early in 2020. People could also pick up a copy of the survey questions from the church office or print one out from a link in an email sent out to everyone on our email list and then submit responses to the church office.

At the January table talks the focus was on questions about our church and mission:

1. How would you describe The Presbyterian Church in Geneva?
2. What is this congregation's vision for ministry? How is it lived out?
3. How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of our community?

In February, the table talks focused on questions related to the pastor we'll seek:

4. What do you appreciate in a minister?
5. How will the ministry position help this church reach your vision and mission goals?
6. What characteristics are needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation.
7. For what specific tasks, assignments, and program areas will the minister have responsibility?
8. On the next 2 pages is a list of Leadership Competencies that come from the PC(USA). List your top three choices for the next minister.

Table talks were facilitated by members of Session and all comments were recorded. These were combined with responses from surveys returned to the church office in a summary document shared with Session and used in the writing of this Mission Study Report. Responses to questions 4-8 will be used by the PNC as it develops our MIF.

Responses recorded during the table talks and submitted by individuals unable to attend the table talks illustrate broad agreement among members about who we are, where we want to be headed, and the type of person we'd like to have as our next pastor. Words and phrases commonly used to describe our church:

- community
- inclusive and open
- welcoming
- engaged in the community
- focused on mission
- interested in learning and growing in faith

There were a few comments that pointed out concerns, such as:

- aging membership
- declining attendance
- losing youth
- quietly conflicted regarding politics
- busy...very busy
- weighted toward older, white members

Addressing demographic changes and declining attendance is something that all churches wrestle with and will continue to be a challenge for us. We say we value diversity but we need to do a better job of that when it comes to politics. We need to be aware and respect that there is a range

of political views among us. In addition, not everyone is ready to be pushed to apply scripture to contemporary political and social issues.

Responses to questions about the church's mission yielded comments that were consistent with what we'd heard at our 2019 mission retreat. We have said that "Mission *is* our Mission" and it is clear that members embrace this focus on mission. In addition to mentioning mission projects we currently support, respondents commented that our vision for ministry includes:

- ministering to our own congregation,
- having a strong local focus,
- offering our church building as a resource to the Geneva community,
- focusing on social justice,
- evangelizing "covertly" as we carry out our mission, and
- engaging everyone (though it was pointed out that we do have members who are not as engaged).

When asked how they feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of our community, people mentioned opening up our church building to local groups and participation in ongoing programs that address critical needs in Geneva (e.g., homelessness, food insecurity, illiteracy, at-risk children). They also mentioned the need to draw upon our faith as we engage in mission by praying and looking to Christ as a model.

People made a few recommendations about how to get more people involved in mission: asking people directly, rather than waiting for people to volunteer; finding ways to make everyone feel that they can contribute to the life and work of the church; celebrating and recognizing the ways that people are engaged in mission in the community; reaching out to re-engage members who have become less involved in recent years; and continually learning about our community so we can celebrate successes and contribute to problem-solving. Others recommended we collaborate more with others, including other churches, faith groups, and community organizations. Finally, people raised concerns that as current leaders of many mission programs are getting on in years we need to be encouraging more young people to take leadership roles.

Discussions about characteristics appreciated in a pastor or needed by the person who is open to being called resulted in a long list of attributes, including words and phrases that fall into these categories:

- approachability
- compassion
- engagement with the community
- inclusive – accepting of all people
- open-minded
- passion for mission, peace and justice issues
- thoughtful, inspirational, and research-based sermons on topics relevant to everyday life
- good management skills
- leadership

In terms of the competencies listed in the MIF, top choices of people participating in the table talks or completing their own survey were:

- Preaching and worship leadership
- Interpersonal engagement
- Compassionate
- Public communicator
- Bridge builder
- Culturally proficient (or bilingual)

When asked how the ministry position will help our church reach its vision and mission goals, people mentioned the need for someone who can serve as a spiritual guide, offering prayers and sermons that address who we are called to be as Christians in the world. People also think the person should be community-oriented and supportive of our mission goals. Given concerns about declining attendance, it's not surprising that people hope the minister will help make our church a place that draws people in and makes them want to stay. While most look to the pastor to be a leader as we work toward our mission and vision goals, others mentioned the importance of the pastor knowing when to let others lead and not trying to micromanage all church programs.

## **Our vision for the future of The Presbyterian Church in Geneva**

- Optimistic and joyful
- Broadly inclusive, welcoming and affirming
- Mission-driven
- Community-based

We envision continuing the work and worship we currently enjoy, with an ever-growing role in the community and in the lives of those we touch with our mission work. Our vision is one of growth for the future. It is also a vision of mission, of active outreach and activism. Our vision is one of a sustained presence in our community and a continued commitment to that community. We see ourselves having a joy-filled time as we accomplish this.

We seek a pastor who will be committed to joining us in our journey to make this vision reality. We will look to this pastor to share the Word with us in thoughtful and provoking sermons and worship services that call us in to be sent out to do the work of Christ in our community. This pastor will embrace our vision of being broadly inclusive and be a role model of compassionate pastoral care.

We look forward to the future with optimism. We come to church to be nourished through worship and to evolve in our faith. We see each day as an opportunity to continue serving God, our community and each other. We have created initiatives to sustain our building and our congregation. We will welcome all regardless of social, racial or political background. We will welcome all regardless of economic status, level of education or degree of ability. We will welcome all regardless of who they love, regardless of sexual orientation. Whether a person is looking for a spiritual home for worship and fellowship, is looking to share in our active missions, or is seeking a foundation for their children's Christian education, we are committed to being welcoming.

We see inclusion as extending beyond political correctness, to the true and affirming meaning of Christian hospitality. When we say all are welcome, it is because we have all been welcomed,

and because the love we have for each other only grows as we share our love and resources. We include all in every aspect of our Christian lives, from membership to ministry to the sacraments.

As a mission-driven church we see the future as continuing and even expanding our active mission outreach. From programs such as Family Promise to considering the Matthew 25 initiative, we will continue to provide support and to answer the call when we are needed. Our congregation boasts a high percentage of volunteerism in our community, and contributes financially as well. Our mission efforts are diverse, and they support local, national, and international organizations.

Because we see ourselves as a community-based congregation, we envision our future as growing our footprint in the broader community while not forgetting our members and friends.

Our community is our congregation, those people we worship next to and laugh with. When we're sick and when we're no longer able to attend church, we know we'll be supported through prayer and pastoral care.

Our community is also Geneva and the Finger Lakes region of New York. Our community is the 35 or so agencies, community partners, 12-step groups, Scouting organizations and others who use our building every day.

With all of these groups -- our neighbors, friends and members -- we envision a future together, working as Christians for the acceptance of everyone and the betterment of all.

*Appendix 1. Groups and organizations currently using our church building on a regular basis*

AA  
Al-Anon  
Alzheimer's Association Support Group  
American Red Cross (blood drives)  
Board of Elections – polling place  
Boy Scouts  
Bridges Support Group  
City of Geneva Recreation Department (various classes)  
Family Promise of Ontario County  
Finger Lakes Investment Club  
Finger Lakes Symphony  
Fortnightly Book Club  
Geneva Area Interfaith Council  
Geneva Concerts  
Geneva Historical Society (Wassail Bowl)  
Geneva Music Festival  
Geneva Reads  
Geneva Theatre Guild  
Geneva Youth Theatre Guild  
Girl Scouts/Brownies (3 troops)  
Hobart & William Smith Community Chorus  
League of Women Voters (Court Watchers)  
Literacy Volunteers of Ontario/Yates  
Martin Luther King Committee  
UR Medicine Hospice Bereavement Support Group  
Philanthropic Educational Organization  
Presbytery of Geneva  
Relay for Life  
Self-Help Sewing  
SERRV  
WIC (Women, Infants and Children)  
Zero Waste  
Zonta