

UPC is a vibrant Presbyterian congregation located in a dynamic community across the street from a major public research university. We seek to love God more fully, to follow Christ more closely, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are committed to balancing our disciplined "inward journey" of spiritual formation with the "outward journey" of reaching out with compassion and love to all who are in need – in our congregation, in our local community, and in the world beyond. That balance acknowledges that, in the end, these two movements are inseparable – like the inhale and the exhale of the same breath.

# 2018 Mission Study Report

University Presbyterian Church  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

UPC Mission Study Team

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*Affirmed and adopted by the session  
June 24, 2018*

*Approved by the Presbytery of New Hope,  
Commission on Ministry  
July 11, 2018*

UNIVERSITY



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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Note that some versions of the Mission Study Report document do not include the Appendices. Those may be accessed online at the following address:

<http://upcch.org/missionstudyreport>

*“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

– 1 Corinthians 15:58



# Introduction





*“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift.*

*“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”*

– Ephesians 4:1-7,11-16



## INTRODUCTION: A LETTER TO OUR CONGREGATION

Dear Friends,

Upon hearing that Bob Dunham would be retiring as our pastor during a Moment with Children last year, one of our younger members asked, “Will there be another one?” In God’s gracious providence, the answer certainly is “yes” – but the identity of our next pastor remains as yet unknown to us. We are confident that we need have no fear, because God has loved us from the beginning and God’s love for us cannot be lost (1 John 4:17-19). Moreover, the book of Isaiah reminds us that the key is to remember who and whose we are – so that we proceed not from our own strength but because we are inhabited by God’s love, which drives out all fear (Isaiah 41:1-10; 43:1-7).

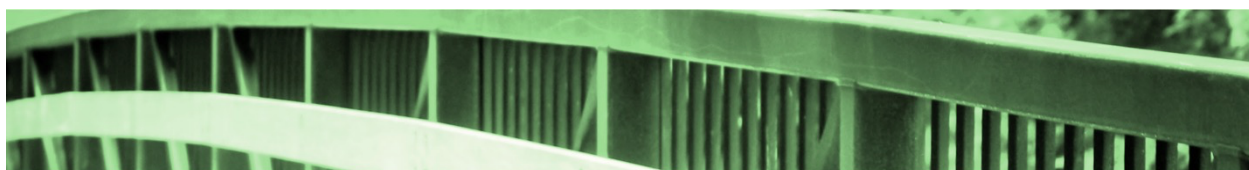
And so we have continued to be the church together, traveling this interim season in hope, holding fast to the One who always holds fast to us. During this season, our mission study process has provided space and time for us to process our deep feelings, to adjust, and to consider who we are, who God is calling us to be, and what kind of pastoral leadership we will need in our next season.

We worked through this self-study with a goal of discerning how God is moving in our midst – and moving us toward God’s plan for our church. We’ve gathered demographic data; studied the church’s history; talked to community leaders; and asked you to describe and envision this church at its best. Although the processes and procedures were unfamiliar to most of us, Margaret has led us faithfully and thoughtfully so that we’ve moved in confidence, embracing the words of Philippians 2:12:

*“It is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”*

This is a time of transition from “what has been” to the next growing space. We give thanks for the past, for those who had vision, who planted, and who watered so dreams could come true. We give thanks for tomorrow, full of surprises, knowing that whatever tomorrow may bring, the Word is our promise that we forever rest in God’s keeping, live in God’s love, and serve by God’s strength.

Through our conversations with you, we learned that UPC comprises an amazing variety of diverse gifts, experiences, passions, and perspectives. And yet, we are held together by a shared inheritance and a common desire to participate in the creative, redemptive, and sustaining work of God in this community. Therefore, we look forward with eager anticipation and deep hope to learning how God will continue moving among us and working through us in the years to come.



With this report, our hope is to challenge and inspire the reader to be a part of God's plan for University Presbyterian Church. In response to God's great love and grace, we hope that any fear will be converted into love, any grief reshaped into new life, and that our prayers will be transformed into deeds that forever glorify God.

In writing this report, we acknowledge that this is a work of many more than the eleven writers listed below. We wish to give special thanks to our program staff for their love, patience, and constructive criticism; to Ginny Horne, Jennifer Johnson, Jeanette Schmidt, and Katharine Yager for their selfless and timely help; and to the many members of the church and our community who gave of their time and thought during interviews. We are also grateful to our families for giving us the space and time to do this work. Lastly, we want to recognize our larger family, the congregation, for joining us in prayer, study, and conversation. We are grateful to all of you.

It is with humility and gratitude to God that we present this report.

*Mac Gilliland*

*Thad Monroe*

*Nancy Jones*

*Lee Scott*

*Carolyn Karpinos*

*Katie Sanford*

*Vicki Lotz*

*Scott Singleton, Chair*

*Madi Marvin*

*Margaret LaMotte Torrence, Staff*

*Gordon Merklein*





# Executive Summary



*“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

– Philippians 2:5-11





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

University Presbyterian Church's mission study formally began in January 2018 when the session commissioned the Mission Study Team with the charge to engage with the congregation and the larger community to discern God's voice and leading for UPC. Our mission study involved careful and prayerful reflection on our history and demographic data, thoughtful listening to community leaders, and deep conversation with congregants about who we are and who God is calling us to be.

## KEY FINDINGS

The Mission Study Team's research in preparing this report uncovered a wealth of information that tells the story of God's work in and through this community of faith. This is a summary of our findings, which include observations, celebrations, and concerns for University Presbyterian Church.

### OUR CONGREGATION: HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHICS, AND FINANCES

- The **origin** of the Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill is inextricably intertwined with that of the University of North Carolina that opened its doors to students in 1795 as the first public university in the US.
- The **early history** of our church is marked by periods of decline and resurgence, navigated by pastors with a passion for social justice.
- The church supported and planted **two new Presbyterian churches**: Church of the Reconciliation in 1966 and Chapel in the Pines in 2006.
- Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church was renamed **University Presbyterian Church** in 1966, after the founding of Church of the Reconciliation.
- After the Ash Wednesday fire destroyed the entire church in 1958, our **present facility** was constructed and dedicated in 1962; significant additions along with extensive renovations have been completed in the decades since.
- We have been blessed with stable, caring, humble, and prophetic **pastoral leadership** for nearly 70 years; our pastors have been leaders in generous stewardship and faithful risk-taking to support those beyond our walls, and have also been recognized for their broader influence in our community, in our presbytery, and in our nation.
- We enjoy **strong preaching** that is theologically rooted, intellectually challenging, inspirational, and contemporary.
- Our **worship services** are organized around a beloved traditional order during which the Word is proclaimed in the context of **beautiful sacred music** that is offered by our choirs and congregants striving to lift their best up to God in the work of worship.
- A key strength of the current congregation is the presence of both **balance and diversity of members by age** within the church; this allows for intergenerational interactions and opportunities while continually challenging our program staff and the session to provide meaningful educational and spiritual growth opportunities to all age groups.
- Similarly, there is both balance and diversity among the members in terms of their **length of participation** at UPC, so that UPC's rich history and lovingly held traditions are continually enhanced by new members who bring different experiences and fresh ideas.
- Personal and familial participation in **annual stewardship campaigns** are encouraged, and our members share God's abundance faithfully and cheerfully.

- Our collective response to God’s love has blessed us with an **ample budget, financial stability, and significant annual contributions to local and global outreach.**
- UPC’s members have pledged or given **over \$5 million in excess of UPC’s annual budgets** in the last five years to fund capital enhancements that magnify our ability to reach out with compassion and love to all who are in need in our congregation, in our local community, and in the world beyond.
- The support for the recent capital campaigns has been strong across our congregation, thereby leaving the church **debt free** and with well-funded Operational and General Reserve Funds.

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## OUR COMMUNITIES

- Chapel Hill is a **dynamic community in which to live and work** – and an attractive place for young families and retirees alike – due, in part, to the presence of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (a major, public research university), the UNC Medical Center, strong emphasis and pride in the concept of public education, and the proximity of other cities in the Research Triangle area (Durham and Raleigh); this geography supports the fortuitous merger of cultural and sporting opportunities, academic programs and speakers, and excellent medical care.
- As a convergence of all of these positive attributes, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and the neighboring communities have **grown exponentially** in recent years.
- The rapid population growth in this community has greatly exacerbated the **growing disparity between wealthy and poor families**; this issue was of paramount and overarching concern to most of the individuals interviewed during our Community Study.
- We have a very real **crisis in affordable housing**: as more and more people come here to live, housing prices have increased significantly while at the same time the community is experiencing some notable demographic shifts; these factors have caused concern that we are becoming a much more homogeneous community with greater wealth and a predominantly white population.
- Some community leaders fear we are **becoming a community where only wealthy and upper middle-class families can afford to live**, and where workers with lower-paying, minimum wage jobs or even average-paying jobs must commute into work, thus separating them from this community.
- Community leaders further point out serious concerns about increased **homelessness**, about low-paying jobs that fall below a **minimum living wage**, and about resulting **food insecurity**; these issues disproportionately affect minority communities (especially African-American, Latino, and immigrant/refugee populations).
- Several **community leaders have challenged University Presbyterian Church** to devote the energy, time, and resources necessary to craft or enact solutions to the systemic problems of affordable housing, homelessness, poverty, living wages, and the student achievement gap for African-American and to some extent Latino students.
- Several community leaders have asked how willing University Presbyterian Church would be to assume a **position of advocacy for the poor** in our community.

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## OUR CALL

- We are committed to balancing our **disciplined “inward journey” of spiritual formation** with the **“outward journey” of reaching out with compassion and love** to all who are in need – in our congregation, in our local community, and in the world beyond; this balance acknowledges that, in the end, these two movements are inseparable – like the inhale and the exhale of the same breath.

- We have **faithful, loving, passionate, and talented staff members**, all of whom continue to inspire, encourage, and challenge us and to support our mission comprehensively.
- The collective gifts and effort of our staff and congregants allow UPC to offer a **wide variety of ministries, programs, and opportunities** for all our members and those we are called to serve; in particular, we are blessed with outstanding educational, spiritual development, and fellowship programs for all ages as well as treasured opportunities for intergenerational connections.
- We seek to **enhance our character as a connectional church**: there is hunger and potential for deeper and more meaningful connectivity – between groups that are traditionally separated by generational, social, or demographic factors; between members, non-members, and new members; and between members and our community.
- We seek to listen for God’s leading and to adapt in ways that allow us to be **God’s church into the future**: we are open to change, especially in response to needs for better inclusivity and enhanced ministry to youth, college students, and young adults.
- We seek to **reach out with compassion and love to all who are in need** in our local community and in the world beyond: we have been richly blessed as a community and our grateful response is to put our rich inheritance and our position of influence to use to bear God’s fruit in the world.
- We seek to go **beyond living with open doors**: UPC strives to exhibit an open and welcoming posture to all; however, we recognize that we could do more by better extending our welcome to newcomers, new members, and members of our community, and by reaching out with active invitation and affirmation to the under-recognized and under-served in the communities around us.
- We seek opportunities to **engage as a vital part of our community and to get involved by directly helping** or serving our neighbors: many of us are deeply interested in addressing issues of economic and social justice, especially around race, poverty, and immigrant or refugee status.
- We seek to use our strengths and resources to **bear God’s fruit in the world**: many of us believe that, as a downtown urban church, we have special responsibility to be involved in roles of advocacy on issues of economic and social justice.
- We seek to **follow Christ’s example of loving our neighbors and serving the “least of these”** while avoiding the pitfalls of partisan political issues and transient secular movements.







# Mission Study at UPC



## STAY

*I know how your mind  
rushes ahead,  
trying to fathom  
what could follow this.  
What will you do,  
where will you go,  
how will you live?*

*You will want  
to outrun the grief.  
You will want  
to keep turning toward  
the horizon,  
watching for what was lost  
to come back,  
to return to you  
and never leave again.*

*For now  
hear me when I say  
all you need to do  
is to still yourself,  
is to turn toward one another,  
is to stay.*

*Wait  
and see what comes  
to fill  
the gaping hole  
in your chest.  
Wait with your hands open  
to receive what could never come  
except to what is empty  
and hollow.*

*You cannot know it now,  
cannot even imagine  
what lies ahead,  
but I tell you the day is coming  
when breath will fill your lungs  
as it never has before,  
and with your own ears  
you will hear words  
coming to you new  
and startling.  
You will dream dreams  
and you will see the world  
ablaze with blessing.*

*Wait for it.  
Still yourself.  
Stay.*

## MISSION STUDY AT UPC

In the life of any organization, change is certain. UPC is no different. In May 2017, Bob Dunham retired after 26 years as our beloved pastor and head of staff. Because we served with Bob for so many years, many of us weren't familiar with the interim process or the value of a mission study. Providentially, Margaret LaMotte Torrence arrived as our interim pastor in September to walk with us through this season of change. Margaret's pastoral and administrative leadership were gratefully welcomed as she worked with our talented and committed program and administrative staff and our faithful session.

With Margaret's guidance and counsel, the session commissioned UPC's Mission Study Team (MST) in January 2018. The MST comprised 11 members, reflecting the congregation's diversity across a number of measures, including age, gender, and length of membership:

- Mac Gilliland
- Nancy Jones
- Carolyn Karpinos, Session Member
- Vicki Lotz
- Madi Marvin, Youth
- Gordon Merklein
- Thad Monroe
- Katie Sanford
- Lee Scott, Session Member
- Scott Singleton, Chair
- Margaret LaMotte Torrence, Staff

The session commissioned the MST to lead the congregation through the mission study. Specifically, the MST was charged to engage with the congregation and the larger community to discern God's voice and leading for UPC. Our mission study involved careful and prayerful reflection on our history and demographic data, thoughtful listening to community leaders, and deep conversation with congregants about who we are and who God is calling us to be. Through this process of studying and praying together, the team endeavored to discern where God is calling this church family to serve in the next season of its life and to facilitate UPC's reaching a deep, honest, and mutual sense of call with a new head of staff when the time is right. The entire process is described in detail in **Appendix B**.

## ENGAGING OUR CONGREGATION

The duration of our mission study has been a time to travel together, and our process provided the time and space for many of us to process deep feelings of grief and gratitude, to adjust to life and church in Bob's absence, and to consider who we are, who God is calling us to be, and what kind of pastoral leadership we will need in our next season. The Mission Study Team sought to listen carefully to our members' voices and to discern God's leading in all that was shared. In particular, the Congregational Survey and Congregational Gatherings (both small-group conversations and town-hall-style meetings) provided rich information.

For University Presbyterian Church, the mission study *process* has been at least as valuable as any data that it has produced. Participants in the process were open, engaged, and seemed eager to talk with one another, to share, and to be together in this transition time. There was a shared sense of good spirit, energy, and optimism in all the conversations. Many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their voices and to learn from one another.

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## CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

The Congregational Survey captured both demographic data and thoughtful responses to open-ended questions that deepen our understanding of who we are and where we hear God calling us to act and serve. (See **Appendices C and D**.) The survey, which was accessible in both hard-copy and on-line formats, was released to the congregation on March 22 and closed April 15. We received nearly 300 survey submissions from UPC participants.

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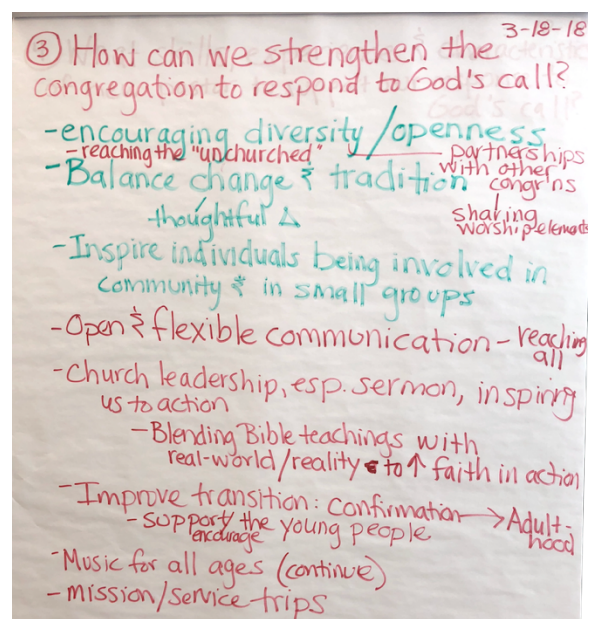
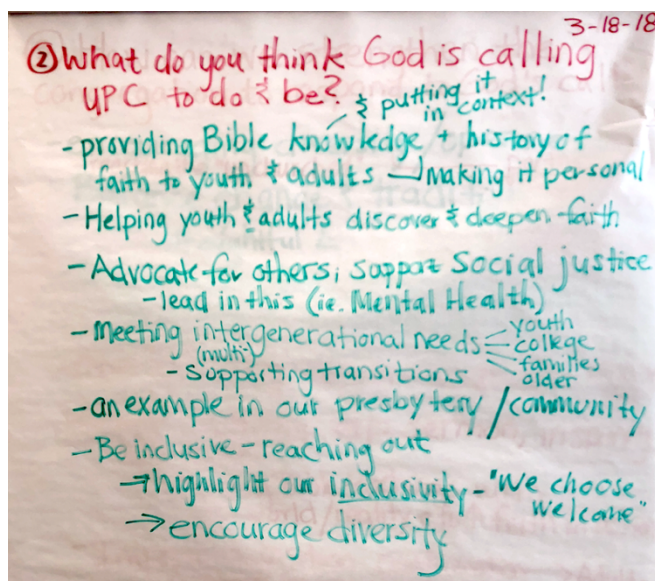
## CONGREGATIONAL GATHERINGS

Twelve Congregational Gatherings took place throughout March and April, and these gatherings were supplemented by a worship service during which individuals were further engaged in an aspect of mission study.

Eleven face-to-face Conversations lasted 45 to 90 minutes each and engaged approximately 200 of our members, including both youth and adults. Three of these Congregational Conversations were held between Sunday morning worship services (i.e., during UPC's "Sunday School hour") on March 8, 15, and 22, and all congregants were invited. The other Congregational Conversations were gatherings of established groups within the church, such as the Deacons, the middle- and high-school youth, UPC members at two retirement communities, Presbyterian Campus Ministry, a Young Adult group, and others. The MST gleaned rich insights into how members see UPC, with a focus on the following questions (see also **Appendix C**):

1. Why do you participate in the life of University Presbyterian Church?
2. What do you think God is calling UPC to do and be?
3. How can we strengthen the congregation to respond to God's call?
4. What skills, experience and personal characteristics in our new pastor would be most supportive of our work in response to God's call?

Typically, the participants were given the four questions on a sheet of paper and time to reflect and write down their thoughts. Conversation among four or five attendees then followed at the tables where they were seated. Each table was supplied with a colored sheet with the same 4 questions, and the participants at each table were asked to record

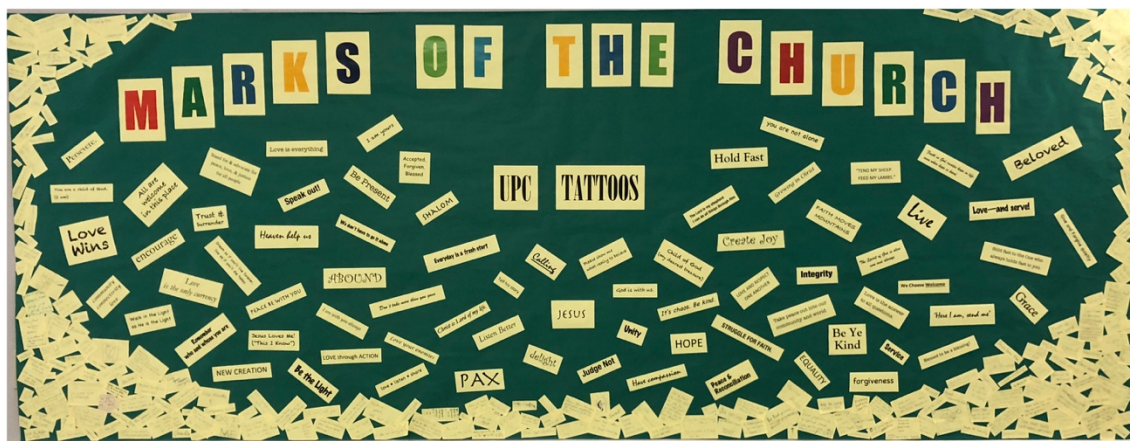




Further, all participants at both worship services on Sunday, April 8, were invited to respond to the Sunday sermon more personally. Margaret's sermon, *"The Marks of the Church,"* was based on Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and John 20:19-31. She relayed her struggle to support her son's decision to tattoo "God is Love" on his unblemished back, and then she challenged us to consider:

Congregants submitted their responses in writing, and these were shared at subsequent Congregational Gatherings.

The final Congregational Gathering took place as a Town Hall Meeting on April 22. Over 100 congregants gathered in two identical meetings, one after each worship service, as the MST presented select preliminary findings, and then participants were asked to respond to three sets of questions for reflection and discussion that extended the team's understanding of key challenges and opportunities for UPC.









# Our Congregation



*“As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

– 1 Peter:10-11





## OUR CONGREGATION

A central goal of the Mission Study process was to discern what's fundamental to the identity of UPC and how might God be calling our church further into ministry. In other words: Who are we? What are we called to be and to do? Endeavoring to address the first question, the Mission Study Team delved deep into the history, demographics, and finances of UPC. We also used the Congregational Conversations and Congregational Survey to hear how UPC's congregants see our church.

## OUR HISTORY

The team started with a study of UPC through time, understanding that the decisive stories of our congregation's history are important: in our historical identity we find the roots of our congregation's future.

### THE ORIGINS OF OUR CHURCH AND THE UNIVERSITY ARE INTERTWINED

The early history of the Presbyterian Church in Chapel Hill is inextricably intertwined with that of the University of North Carolina. The University's history is no less tied to Presbyterianism, as Presbyterians were centrally involved as the University of North Carolina was chartered by the state legislature in 1789.

From the day in 1795 when the University first opened its doors to students, worship for students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was obligatory. As services were conducted by faculty members who were Presbyterian ministers, the services were likely informed by Presbyterian doctrine and form of worship. For its first 70 years, the university's president was a Presbyterian and two were Presbyterian ministers. One of these, President Joseph Caldwell, pastored the first organized church in Chapel Hill until his death in 1835.

### CHAPEL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: UPC'S FOREBEARS

A church of 20 parishioners is noted in the report of Orange Presbytery to the synod in 1827. The Reverend James Phillips, Professor of Mathematics at the university, spearheaded evangelism and fundraising throughout the state, allowing for the church to purchase a lot across from the university and erect the first building of Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in 1848. Several church structures followed on this site and served the church well during the next hundred years.

After a devastating fire destroyed the entire church on Ash Wednesday in 1958, the present facility was constructed. This included the completion of the Presbyterian Student Center and Education Building in 1959, and the present sanctuary, which was dedicated in 1962. In more recent years, Vance Barron Hall and Dunham Hall were added, along with extensive renovations to improve energy efficiency, life safety, and accessibility.

After sponsoring the establishment of The Church of Reconciliation in 1966, Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church was renamed University Presbyterian Church.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DISCORD IN THE 1940'S

The early history of our church is marked by periods of decline and resurgence, navigated by pastors with a passion for social justice. While relations with our presbytery have been largely cordial and mutually supportive over the

years, discord has not always been a stranger to our community. The pastorate of Charles M. Jones (1941-1953) marked the zenith of conflict both within the church and between the church and the presbytery.

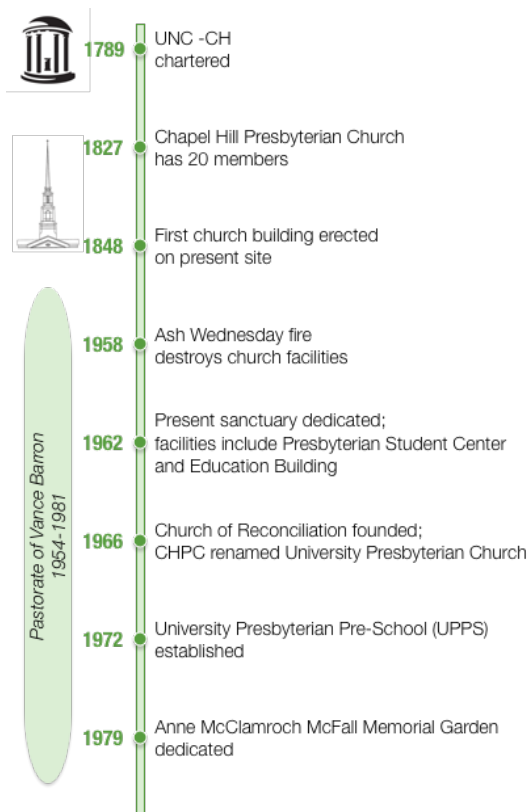
Charles Jones was an admirable man and a force for good in our community. He brought a prophetic vision not only in preaching social justice but also in trying to change the social structure at a time when this was badly needed. It is a tribute to Jones that our church was one of the earliest in the South to welcome people of all races. UPC was at the forefront of calls for social justice long before the civil rights movement.

Sadly, this did not occur without major controversy, one so intense it garnered national attention, including mention in *Time* magazine. In 1945, members of the church, in opposition to Jones' progressive view on race, petitioned to remove him. The presbytery refused this and protected him. Many of the dissident members left, and Jones' leadership was congenial to those who remained.

Although an effective and charismatic advocate, Jones was less committed to his responsibility to the denomination. Under his leadership, the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church was essentially a Unitarian enterprise. Examples of the church straying from Presbyterianism abound: the Sacrament of Communion was not celebrated at the main Sunday service; baptisms were not regularly conducted; no instruction, examination, or ordination of church officers occurred; no prayers were offered "in Christ's name;" and hymns sung came from a Unitarian hymnal. Further, members were not systematically received on profession of faith; instead, a handshake with Jones in the hallway sometimes sufficed.

Presbyterians newly arrived in Chapel Hill shared the dismay and distress of like-minded members of the existing congregation that there was no church in Chapel Hill following Presbyterian order and worship. The presbytery affirmed their petition for a new church. In a fateful afterthought, while appointing a Commission to establish the new church, the presbytery also directed it to investigate the "total situation" in the Chapel Hill church. After a thorough study and over the strong objection of the session and congregation, the Commission acted to remove Jones, assumed governance of the church, and dismissed church officers. After appeals were exhausted, Jones then acted against the advice of his friends and formed the local Community Church, now Unitarian, and a number of our members followed him.

Reverend Robert McMullen, a seasoned, gentle, and kind leader helped the church recover. New officers were trained and ordained, governance returned from the presbytery, and Reverend Vance Barron was called as minister of a congregation composed of the old and new churches. Thus began a period of considerable stability characterized by lengthy, successful pastorates. The tenure of two of these, Vance Barron (1954-1981) and Robert Dunham (1991-2016), each lasted over 25 years.

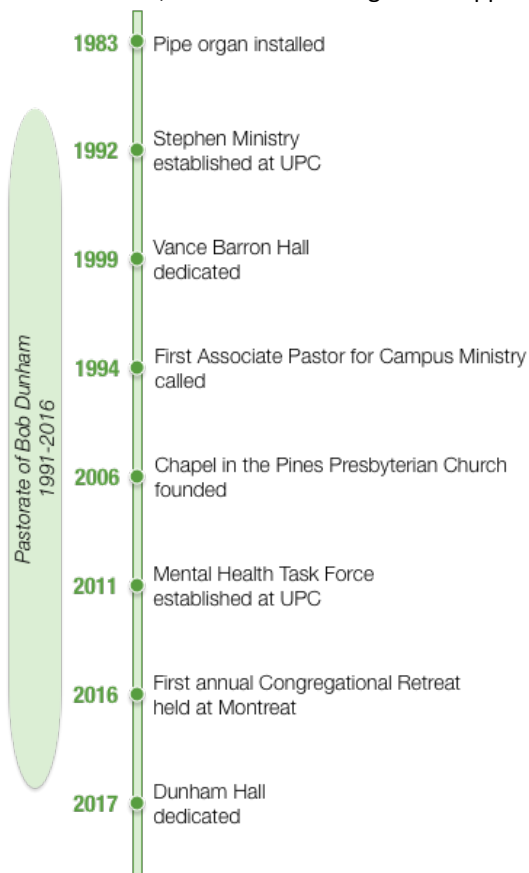


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## STABILITY AND CONTINUED ADVOCACY FOR JUSTICE (1950–1980)

While Vance Barron's years were mostly stable within the church itself, he did not shy from advocating social change in spite of resistance. From his first day here, Barron was a forceful advocate for racial equality and social justice. Although at times faced with harsh words from the session and church members, he was unrelenting in his support of civil rights and was present for the second march at Selma. In line with this, UPC sponsored and planted the Church of Reconciliation in 1966 as "an intentional community of racial reconciliation" in line with God's call. During this turbulent period of American history, Barron was an organizer and Vice Chair of the Fellowship of Concern, a group of over one hundred ministers spanning fifteen southern states. Their aim was to support pastors who were under critical pressure due to their faithfulness to the church's stand on racial and social issues. Barron was equally fierce in his opposition to the Vietnam War.

In the 1970s, UPC also responded to recognized needs of young families in the area. Two programs were separately established: University Presbyterian Preschool and Kindergarten (UPPK), which opened in 1972, and My Morning Out (MMO), which opened in 1977. Since that time, the preschool and kindergarten became University Presbyterian Preschool (UPPS), which has been continuously supported by the church. UPPS continues today as a thriving preschool for children aged 2-5, serving both church families and those of the larger community. UPPS routinely provides scholarships to families in need so all children have the opportunity to play, learn and grow in this safe and loving environment.



Toward the end of Barron's pastorate, the Ann McClamroch McFall Memorial Garden was created (1978) and dedicated (1979) as a place to bury the cremated remains of loved ones and to honor their memories, as well as a place for quiet meditation and prayer for church members and visitors. The garden required redesign and restoration, and in 2006 this was undertaken. It was rededicated in May 2007. At the physical center of the church, the garden's beauty can be viewed through the parlor's picture window or its impact can be experienced materially during a walk or by resting on a bench within it.

While in many respects sharing Jones' activism, Barron demonstrated a firm commitment to the doctrines and polity of the Presbyterian Church. His first Sunday at UPC was World Communion Sunday. Observance of the Lord's Supper at the eleven o'clock service, something absent in the Jones era, epitomized the church's return to its Presbyterian heritage and roots.

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## A SEASON MARKED BY CONTINUED GROWTH, RENEWAL, AND MUSIC (1980S)

Barron's immediate successor was the Reverend David Hoffelt. During his tenure, UPC membership increased to more than one thousand. The chancel was reconfigured in 1983 for the installation of a pipe organ designed by American organ builder Robert Sipe and built by the Aug. Laukhuff Organ Company of Weikersheim, Germany. The organ contains three manuals, 39 stops, 51 ranks and 2,261 pipes. Since the organ's installation, the superb

musicianship of Thomas Brown, Minister of Music, has engaged the instrument to add inspiration and joy to our worship.

The music programs have continued to grow in strength of numbers and excellence. The Chancel (Adult) Choir sings under the direction of Tom Brown, and leads worship from September through May. Beth Auman Visser leads Children's, Junior, and Youth Choirs that welcome all school-age children and youth, allowing them to participate joyfully in the worship of God. These choirs sing regularly during worship services, stage annual musicals, and continue to exert a strong appeal to young families.

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## TRANQUILITY ENLIVENED BY SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND ENERGY (1990-PRESENT)

After a productive Interim Pastorate by Rev. Robert Keever, Rev. Robert E. Dunham (1991-2017) was called and served the church for the following 27 years. The stability and tranquility of this season, though welcomed as a rare gift, were not associated with complacency. Spiritual growth and energy were manifest and the congregation grew in numbers particularly as many young families were drawn to the church. Conflict, though minimal, was dealt with in a spirit of comity and concern for the common good.

Dunham regularly called us to concern for social and racial justice and to respond to the "better angels of our nature." Though he voiced these challenges from the pulpit, we sensed that he sat beside us in the pews as a fellow pilgrim seeking to lead a better life in gratitude for God's abundant love.

In the mid-1990s, the congregation dreamt of a new church that would grow out of UPC using the model that had helped to form the Church of Reconciliation in the 1960s. Under Dunham's leadership, the program staff and members of UPC began a series of conversations and planning activities to start a new church in North Chatham County, an area of expected growth just south of Chapel Hill. In 2006, Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church began worship services with the support of UPC and Salem Presbytery as well as a five-year grant from the General Assembly. Many members of UPC were commissioned as new members of Chapel in the Pines, and Rev. Mindy Douglas Adams, Associate Pastor at UPC, became the Organizing Pastor of Chapel in the Pines.

The generosity of our congregation has been expressed in our own stewardship, our support for local and global outreach, and in a tithe portion of two recent capital campaigns. Indeed, three successful capital campaigns made possible the addition of much needed space in Vance Barron and Dunham Halls, with the tithe portions resulting in major support for Union Seminary and other causes. Similarly, after receiving an unexpected and large gift, the church gave a major portion to rebuild a Haitian hospital following that country's disastrous earthquake. The support for undertaking risks in pursuit of the common good has been strong across our congregation, thereby leaving the church debt free and with well-funded Operational and General Reserve Funds.

*"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."*

— James 2:17 (New Revised Standard Version).

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## A FAITHFUL HABIT OF RISK-TAKING TO ANSWER NEEDS BEYOND UPC'S WALLS

Generosity, energy, vision, hope, and the courage to take risks have characterized this congregation's response to a suffering world outside of our church walls. The congregation and individual members have addressed the need for new resources in Chapel Hill-Carrboro, spearheading the development and support of new programs including the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC) (1963), the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA (1968), and the Orange County Women's Center (1982). Numerous programs were nurtured in their infancy through being housed within our



church, including a community Teen Center, and a young mothers' support program called Mother's Enrichment (late 1970s). This tradition of direct caring for those just outside our doors continues still as our pastors work with individuals who come to the church seeking help. Along with making appropriate referrals to partner agencies, our Pastors' Discretionary Fund is available to help with utilities and other essential needs.

Through our Local Outreach Committee, UPC supports more than a dozen non-profit organizations offering a broad array of programs addressing hunger, homelessness, developmental disability, prison ministry, schools, and advocacy for women. Several efforts are notable.

The **Inter-Faith Council for Social Service** (IFC) confronts the causes of and responds to the effects of poverty, and offers direct services to people in need by providing shelter, food, advocacy, and information. UPC members are regular participants in the Community Kitchen. We are the largest church/religious contributor to IFC's annual budget and have also supported their capital needs campaigns with lead gifts, including the Community House, a shelter for men, completed in 2014.

**Habitat for Humanity** has had ongoing relationship with UPC for thirty years and in that period thirty homes have been constructed, providing affordable housing for 102 people.

Likewise, our Global Outreach Committee nurtures long-term relationships with the partners we fund. Maintaining close contact with these groups helps to ensure that people in the target communities are the ones making decisions as to what problems need to be addressed. Strong relationships have been built in Haiti with almost annual mission trips including teacher training workshops, Teaching Teachers. Bins of donated school supplies accompany our members on these trips. Support is provided also to Wings of Hope, a home in Haiti for children and young adults with mental and/or physical challenges. Further, UPC sponsors a Women's Health and Birthing Center there. Scholarships are provided for students in the Latin Patriarchate School on the West Bank. Missionaries are supported in Costa Rica, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. An annual Alternative Gift Market during Advent recently raised nearly \$19,000 making it possible to help existing partners at the end of their fiscal year.

*"The most eloquent testimony to the reality of the resurrection is not an empty tomb or a well-orchestrated pageant on Easter Sunday but rather a group of people whose life together is so radically different, so completely changed from the way the world builds a community, that there can be no explanation other than that something decisive has happened in history."*

— William H. Willimon. *Acts (Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching)*. John Knox Press, 1998.

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## RENEWING UPC'S CONNECTIONS WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Presbyterian Campus Ministry (PCM) is a hallmark of the congregation's willingness to look outward. In the early 1990s, it became clear that UPC needed to respond more effectively in offering a safe, steady spiritual community for young people attending UNC from across the state and nation. The existing student program was laboring but was also faced with loss of financial support from the synod. In response, the session and congregation saw an opportunity. In 1994, PCM was restructured, such that UPC began to fund an Associate Pastor for Campus Ministry as part of our church staff. Program leaders at UPC realized that many students, away from their parents for the first time, were also in that life phase when so many people drift away from the church. Thus, PCM was purposefully designed as a space where students could "Believe, Belong, and Become."

While UPC continues to provide the main programmatic funding, it is assisted in this and in governance by six partner churches. The church's commitment is amply rewarded by the vitality the students bring. In 2012, PCM received a Lilly Endowment Campus Ministry Theological Exploration of Vocation (CMTEV) award, which encourages vocational discernment for careers in ministry. Twenty-five students are now involved in this program. Presently seven graduates of PCM are in seminary. It is fair to assume that other graduates will form the lay leadership of the denomination in the years ahead.

With a willingness both to celebrate and to learn from our history, UPC can now embrace with confidence and optimism a new chapter in the life of our church.

## A DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY OF OUR CONGREGATION

Demographic data for the membership of University Presbyterian Church were collected from the UPC 2018 Census Report and Church Trend reports supplied by PC(USA) Research Services. These data were supplemented by specific questions in the Congregational Survey. Of UPC's 1219 members, 297 (24%) responded to the survey. The data tabulated below suggest that the survey respondents were largely representative of the congregation as a whole. The values tabulated for children ages 0-10 are calculated averages from the 2015-16 Church Trend data because these were not included in the most recent census. These values are not included in the statistical analyses.

### A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CONGREGATION

The 2018 Census Report shows 1219 church members. There are 674 female members (55%) and 533 male members (44%). Data collected by PC(USA) Research Services for 2016 show an average Sunday attendance of 565, and 693 individuals registered for UPC's educational programs (especially Sunday School).

The demographic data indicate little racial or ethnic diversity among UPC's membership, with 99% reporting as white or Caucasian. This fact was a point of discussion mentioned by participants in both the Congregational Gatherings and Survey, and will be elaborated below. The data also indicate a higher proportion of married individuals (74%) than would be expected based on the general population of the surrounding communities. Likewise, UPC members tend to have extensive educational backgrounds, with 96% of the survey respondents reporting at least a college degree and 69% having completed a master's or doctoral degree.

### STABILITY AND DIVERSITY IN OUR DEMOGRAPHICS

Of course, the demographic study of our church reveals more than a set of numbers. Reviewing the numbers of members of UPC over the seven-year span from 2012 to present reveals minimal variation. This stability in the total number of members can be visualized in the **Members by Age Group (2012-2016)** plot below. While there is an apparent decline in membership between 2014 and 2015, that change can be largely attributed to a purposeful improvement in the church's electronic membership rolls. Otherwise, the year-to-year variation was 3% or less.

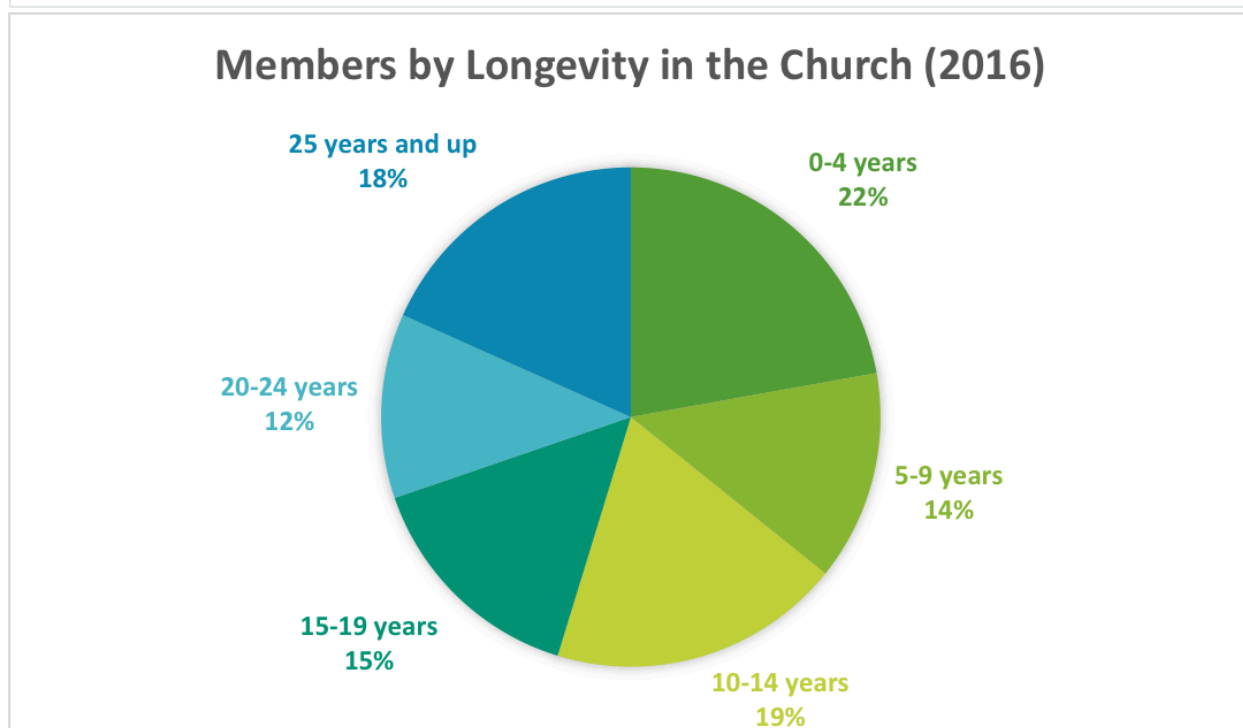
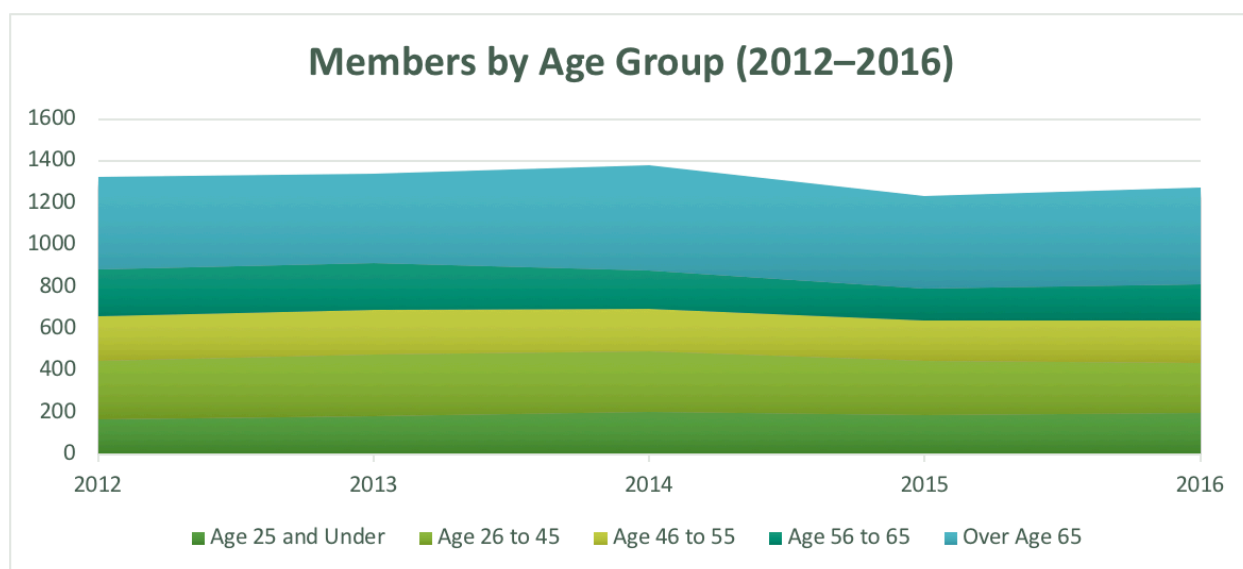
#### Summary of select demographic information for University Presbyterian Church (continued on next page)

	Census		Survey	
<b>Total</b>	1219		297	
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	674	55%	127	62%
Male	533	44%	74	36%
Unspecified	12	1%	4	2%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Native American or Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian / Pacific Islander	8	0%	0	0%
Black or African American	3	0%	0	0%
Hispanic	0	0%	1	0%
Middle Eastern	1	0%	0	0%
White / Caucasian	1260	99%	200	98%
Multiple ethnicity / Other	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%	3	1%

Census			Survey	
Age				
Average	53.5		62.8	
Median	54		66	
0-5	(64)*	0%	0	0%
6-10	(88)*	0%	0	0%
11-15	36	2%	0	0%
16-20	88	7%	0	0%
21-25	65	5%	3	2%
26-30	60	5%	5	3%
31-35	54	4%	7	4%
36-40	50	4%	5	3%
41-45	51	4%	6	3%
46-50	109	9%	18	9%
51-55	84	7%	19	10%
56-60	66	5%	14	7%
61-65	67	5%	20	10%
66-70	86	7%	22	11%
71+	330	28%	77	39%
Unspecified	72		90	
Longevity in church				
0-4	269	22%	55	19%
5-9	165	13%	31	11%
10-14	230	18%	54	19%
15-19	182	15%	40	14%
20+	367	30%	108	37%
20-24	145	11%	—	—
25-29	58	4%	—	—
30-34	66	5%	—	—
35-39	21	1%	—	—
40-44	21	1%	—	—
45-49	20	1%	—	—
50+	36	2%	—	—
Marital Status				
Married	779	74%	157	77%
Separated	9	3%	1	0%
Divorced	25	2%	16	8%
Widowed	83	8%	13	6%
Single	131	13%	18	9%
Education (highest level attained)				
Did not attend school	—	—	0	0%
Elementary	—	—	0	0%
Jr. high/Middle school	—	—	0	0%
High school	—	—	0	0%
Some college, trade, or vocational	—	—	4	2%
College degree - Associate	—	—	5	2%
College degree - Bachelor's	—	—	54	27%
Postgraduate - Masters	—	—	76	38%
Postgraduate - Doctorate	—	—	63	31%

The **Members by Age Group (2012-2016)** plot also reveals a key strength of the church. Namely, there is both balance among and diversity of members by age within the church. The balance and diversity have been stable over time. Moreover, the diversity is meaningful as it allows for intergenerational interactions and opportunities that were highly desirable according to participants in our Congregational Gatherings and the Congregational Survey. The diversity also constantly challenges our program staff and the session to provide meaningful educational and spiritual growth opportunities to all age groups within the congregation.

Similarly, the **Membership by Longevity in the Church** plot below reveals both balance and diversity among the members in terms of their length of participation at UPC. This suggests that the congregation contains a mixture of experiences, so that UPC's rich history and lovingly held traditions are continually enhanced by new members who bring different experiences and fresh ideas.

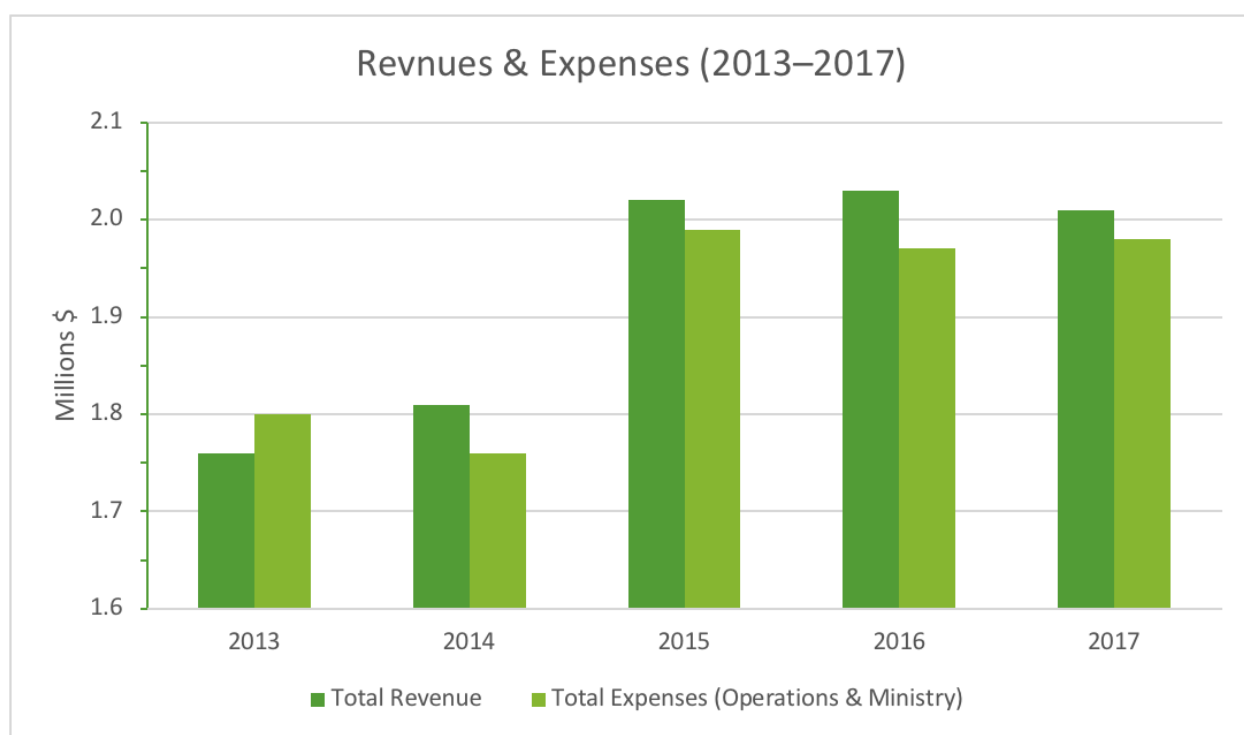


## A FINANCIAL STUDY OF OUR CONGREGATION

Nearly 200 years after the Presbyterian Church was first organized in Chapel Hill, UPC continues to grow, thrive, and evolve. Although finances are but one characteristic of the congregation, UPC finds itself blessed by God to have a stable and healthy financial situation:

- our current annual budget exceeds \$2 million;
- our reserves exceed \$800,000;
- our endowment is valued at over \$1.7 million; and
- we have no ongoing debt.

The continued faithfulness, cheerfulness, and abundance with which our members give of their financial resources allow UPC to maintain and enhance a downtown campus in a dynamic setting, to support an enthusiastic and creative staff, and to develop programs and ministries as we sense the call for them.



## OUR BUDGET

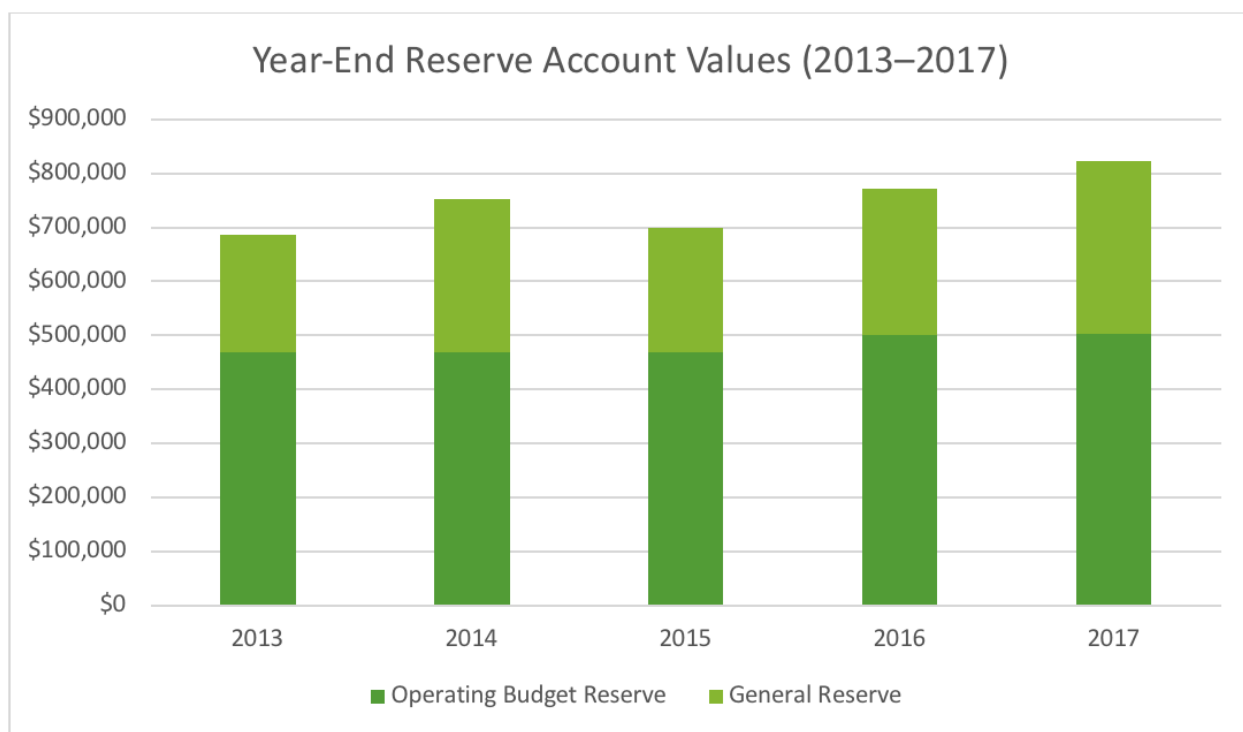
The total annual revenues and expenses for University Presbyterian Church from 2013 to 2017 are plotted below. UPC's budget for 2018, including projected revenues and expenses in major categories, is tabulated below. Actual revenues and expenses for 2017 are tabulated for comparison.

### Budgeted Revenues & Expenses for University Presbyterian Church in 2018

	2018 Budgeted	2017 Actual
<b>Revenue</b>		
Pledges	1,681,213.00	1,683,201.73
Non-Pledge & Open Plate	219,000.00	219,199.54
Miscellaneous Income	6,800.00	6,250.00
Ministry Revenue	87,470.00	87,650.43
Reserve Utilization	40,556.00	14,698.53
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,035,039.00</b>	<b>2,011,000.23</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Personnel	1,319,207.28	1,229,195.97
Administration Expenses	187,525.42	211,219.29
Outreach	346,125.00	359,197.42
Worship	2,232.50	1,748.83
Choirs	54,680.80	57,221.76
Children's Ministry	16,525.00	17,506.65
Youth Ministry	49,060.00	45,487.70
Adult Christian Education	12,785.00	12,414.32
Deacons	1,938.00	1,682.49
Congregational Life	42,110.00	42,656.87
Membership & Assimilation	2,850.00	2,858.39
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,035,039.00</b>	<b>1,981,189.69</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>29,810.54</b>

## OUR RESERVES

University Presbyterian Church enjoys two financial reserves. The year-end valuations of each reserve account are plotted below for 2013 to 2017. The Operating Budget Reserve protects the church in the event of a "major, unexpected financial shock." Its recommended funding level represents 110% of three months of the church's annual operating budget, and is revalued annually. The General Reserve is available at the session's discretion to offset year-end deficits and to provide for extraordinary, non-budgeted expenses. Net Income closes to the General Reserve when the books are closed for year-end. Unrealized gains and losses from the church's investment account are also lodged in the General Reserve.



## OUR ENDOWMENT FUND

University Presbyterian Church is blessed with an endowment valued at \$1.79 million for the year ended December 31, 2017. The endowment's governing document, *Articles Establishing the University Presbyterian Church Endowment Fund: A Legacy of Faith, and the Endowment Committee*, was last updated on April 10, 2014. The session established the Endowment Committee to administer the Fund. The Fund's financial records and operations are separate and distinct from the operating budget of UPC. The Committee functions under the oversight and approval of the session.

The *Articles* direct that approximately 5% of the endowment may be spent annually. The endowment is composed of *restricted* funds (18%) and *unrestricted* funds (82%). Expenditures from the *unrestricted* portion may not be used for the operation of the church or for its regular budgeted program, but rather for an extension of its program and an enlargement of its Christian concerns, as set forth in the Statement of Purpose in the *Articles*. Expenditures from unrestricted funds must be approved by the session. Restricted funds may be expended in accordance with the instructions of the donors and do not require the session's approval.

## STEWARDSHIP AND PLEDGING

University Presbyterian Church's Stewardship Committee was re-created by the session in May, 2014 in response to budget challenges resulting from rising personnel, healthcare, and other costs outpacing essentially flat pledging. The 13-member committee, initially staffed by Bob Dunham and Anna Pinckney Straight, began its work by reviewing UPC membership (level since 2004), worship attendance (steady increases since 2008), and stewardship campaign data (total giving rose steadily from 2004 to 2008, then leveled off). The committee members acknowledged the likelihood that the recession, national trends of declining church attendance and giving, and the **2013 Faith Forward Capital Campaign** (see below) negatively impacted annual stewardship in recent years.

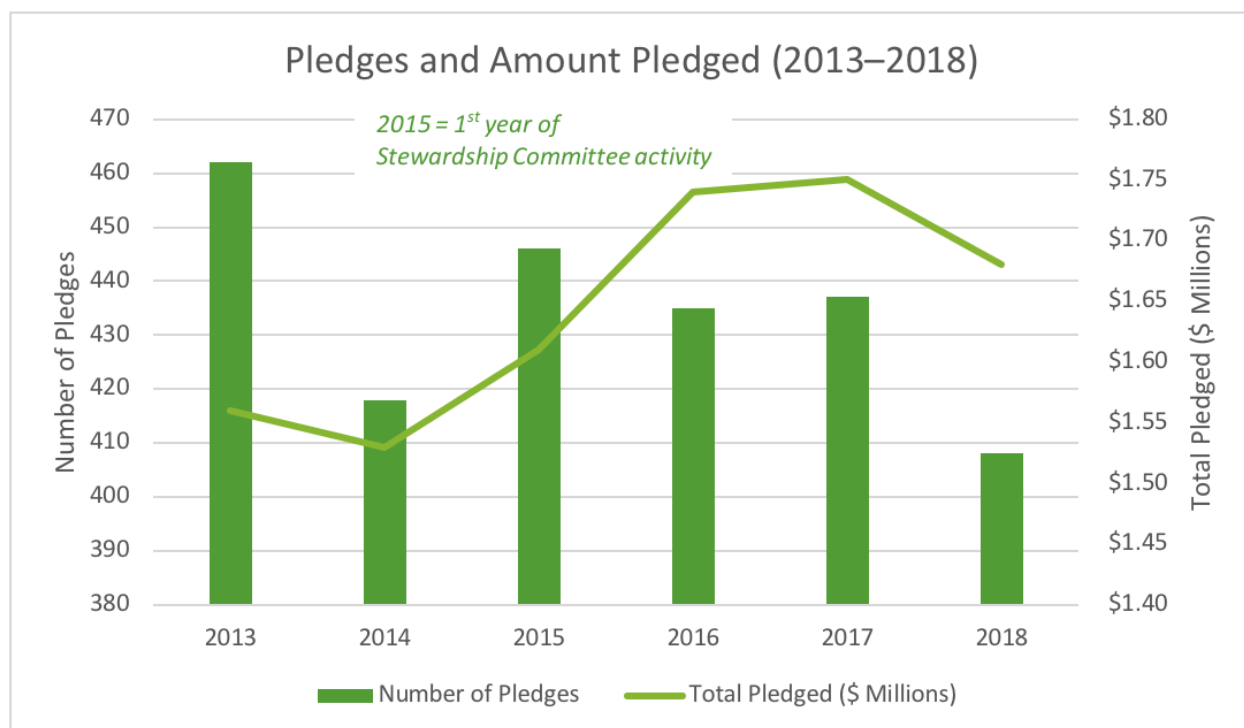


The committee has conducted four annual stewardship campaigns (2015-18). Its work each year has included:

- selecting a campaign theme and underlying scripture
- creating an original, multi-page stewardship brochure
- selecting “stewardship moment” speakers for worship during stewardship season
- writing monthly stewardship season articles for *The Chimes* newsletter
- writing weekly stewardship season announcements and updates for the worship bulletin
- writing periodic stewardship season posts for UPC’s Facebook page
- hosting a Second Sunday lunch during campaigns
- providing information for the stewardship page on the UPC website
- writing follow-up letters toward the end of campaigns to all members who pledged in prior years but not yet in the current year
- making phone calls toward the end of campaigns to lapsed pledgers
- writing handwritten “thank you” notes to all who pledge
- reviewing campaigns at their conclusion to determine ways to improve in the future

The committee has also organized stewardship campaign gatherings at UPC members’ homes, and area retirement communities. Several such gatherings include the screening of a stewardship video produced for the 2016 campaign. Stewardship materials for the 2015-18 campaigns are online at [www.upcch.org/stewardship](http://www.upcch.org/stewardship).

The number of pledges and the total amounts pledged for 2013 to 2018 are plotted below. The first three campaigns conducted by the stewardship committee (2015-17) set UPC records for generosity measured by total dollars pledged. Not unexpectedly in this time of transition that closely follows two capital campaigns, the 2018 stewardship campaign yielded \$67,000 less in pledges than the 2017 campaign had. The session carefully considered the 2018 budget (see above), looking closely at the trend away from pledged giving to non-pledge giving.



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## RECENT CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

In 2013, University Presbyterian Church began a major capital campaign to expand, update, and improve our church building. The plans funded by this **Faith Forward Capital Campaign** emphasized renovating the church offices, expanding the church building with a new wing (later dedicated as Dunham Hall), and improving energy efficiency, life safety, and accessibility throughout the building. The initial fund-raising goal was \$4.2 million over three years (2013-15). During that period, \$3.5 million was pledged. As part of the campaign, UPC pledged and gave a tithe of \$330,000 to support other local, global, and denominational ministries. More information about the Faith Forward Capital Campaign is online at [upcch.org/about-upc/capital-campaign/](http://upcch.org/about-upc/capital-campaign/).

In 2017, we expanded the initial campaign to honor and thank Bob and Marla Dunham as Bob retired. The goals of the **Legacy Capital Campaign** included: leaving UPC without any debt for the construction project (this was Bob's fervent desire and highest priority); providing a \$50,000 endowment to Union Presbyterian Seminary in thanksgiving for Bob's ministry; and giving Bob and Marla a substantial love gift. More information about the Legacy Capital Campaign is online at [upcch.org/about-upc/legacy/](http://upcch.org/about-upc/legacy/). Based on its members' generosity, UPC was able to complete the construction at a cost of \$4.5 million without taking on any debt. Dunham Hall was joyfully dedicated on November 19, 2017.

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## OUR FINANCIAL POSTURE

University Presbyterian Church's loving and giving spirit is evident in the way we care for each other, for the community we live in, and for the wider world. Our members give generously and faithfully of their time, their talents, and their financial resources. In total, UPC's members have pledged or given over \$5 million in excess of UPC's annual budgets in the last five years. These gifts funded capital enhancements that relieved stress on existing space and provided additional space for our growing education and music programs. In addition, the construction and renovations enhanced our ability to achieve our mission: reaching out with compassion and love to all who are in need in our congregation, in our local community, and in the world beyond.

Outreach is the heart of UPC's life in Christ. The 2017 budget included \$355,000 to be given to local, national, and global outreach ministries. Another \$100,000 was given through the UPC Endowment, special offerings, member gifts passed on to other missions, the Alternative Gift Market, and the Pastors' Discretionary Fund. Additionally, UPC provides facilities and support for University Presbyterian Preschool and UNC Presbyterian Campus Ministry.

UPC's financial health enables us to develop programs and ministries as we sense the call for them. In 2014, we were able to expand our staff so that our Children's, Youth and Adult Ministries could each be supported by a full-time staff member. In 2016, we held our first Congregational Retreat, formed Kirk Club for 4<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-graders, launched a Woman-to-Woman group for mutual care and support, and began a New Member Luncheon that is held every two months. In 2017, we introduced an inter-generational format for PYC, our middle-schoolers began to attend the Massanetta Youth Conference, the men of UPC started meeting for monthly fellowship and study over breakfast, and the Young Adults began a Bible study. The members of UPC are willing to invest the resources to support a staff that will continue to seek out new and better ways to serve. UPC has maintained its commitment to provide health insurance, pension and death and disability benefits for all full-time employees without cost-sharing. In addition, UPC supports its full-time program staff with routine professional development time and summer sabbaticals every five years.

We are ever-cognizant of trends in church participation and support both nationally and in our own denomination. Moreover, we acknowledge the significant financial headwinds, including the pastoral transition and the recent

capital campaigns, that likely impacted the 2018 stewardship campaign. Nevertheless, we are poised to welcome a new pastor and move forward to the next phase of our church's life on strong financial footing.

## OUR IDENTITY

As a congregation, we are grateful for our history of involvement with our local community – both academic and civic – and our presbytery. From our earliest days as a small gathering of Presbyterians across the street from the first public university in the United States, UPC has continued to grow and thrive in God's providential love. The historical and ongoing relationship with UNC is presently expressed through our roles in supporting university students and our Presbyterian Campus Ministry program. However, our members' voices – heard through the Congregational Conversations and Congregational Survey – make it clear that our identity has grown, too. As the town of Chapel Hill and the Research Triangle area have continued to grow and develop, we also see ourselves as a downtown, urban church with close neighbors whom we want to know.

We gratefully acknowledge the ways we have benefitted from pastors who have been leaders in generous stewardship and faithful risk-taking to support those beyond our walls, and who have also been recognized for their broader influences in our community, in our presbytery, and in our nation. In particular, we have enjoyed stable, caring, humble, and prophetic pastoral leadership for nearly 70 years.

We have a faithful, loving, passionate, and talented staff who continue to inspire, encourage, and challenge us and to support our mission comprehensively. We enjoy strong preaching that is theologically rooted, intellectually challenging, inspirational, and contemporary. Importantly, the Word is preached in the context of a beloved traditional order of service where beautiful sacred music is offered by our choirs and congregants striving to lift their best up to God in the work of worship. The collective gifts and effort of our staff and congregants allow UPC to offer a wide variety of ministries, programs, and opportunities for all the members and those we are called to serve. In particular, we are blessed with outstanding educational, spiritual development, and fellowship programs for all ages as well as treasured opportunities for intergenerational connections.

Our ministries and programs, the staff who so skillfully support them, and the physical facilities that we enjoy, are all enabled by the faithful and generous stewardship of the congregation. Personal and familial giving and participation are encouraged, and our collective response to God's love has blessed us with an ample budget, financial stability, and significant annual contributions to local and global outreach.

UPC is a place where individuals have joined together in a strong and thriving community of faith. Furthermore, UPC's members see the church as a home and the members as their family. We strive to love and support one another as we seek to offer help where needed and to be open to help from others. In this place, we treasure the communal effort to explore and challenge our own beliefs as we seek to know and love God more completely.







# Our Communities





## OUR COMMUNITIES

University Presbyterian Church is part of a vibrant community – the church is physically located in the heart of downtown Chapel Hill on Franklin Street just across from the campus of the University of North Carolina. When we at UPC talk about and define our community, we construe it broadly – the Town of Chapel Hill, a North Carolina municipality of about 59,000 residents; the University of North Carolina, a renowned center of public education – in fact, the first public university in our nation, established in 1789; our county, Orange County, which is also home to Chapel Hill's adjacent neighbor, the Town of Carrboro, as well as home to the historic Town of Hillsborough, and also open to much beautiful open space and to rural farmland. We consider our community also to include our neighbor, the City of Durham, the larger state of North Carolina, and our country. Further, many of the congregants at UPC regard themselves as citizens of the world, with much interest evinced in global issues and partners.

### CHAPEL HILL, CARRBORO, AND THE UNIVERSITY

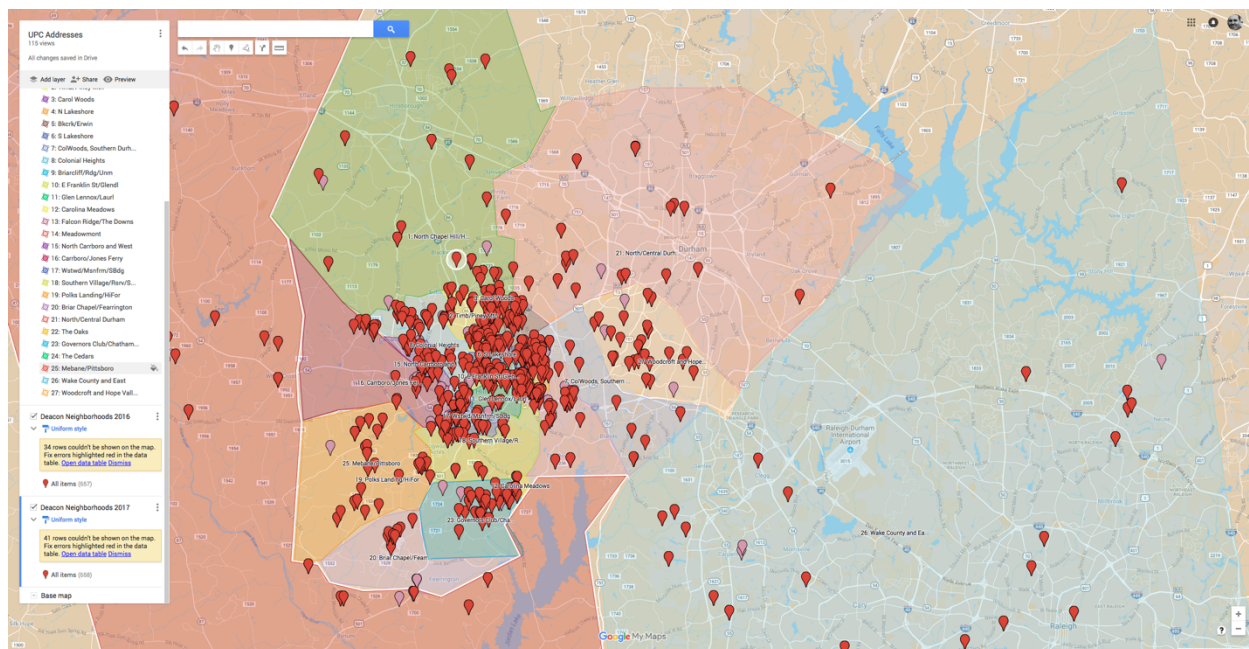
The community is a dynamic one – a true university community. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is considered to be the flagship campus of the wider University of North Carolina system. There are approximately 28,000 students enrolled at UNC-Chapel Hill: 18,500 of them in undergraduate programs and nearly 10,000 in graduate and professional programs, which include those administered by the Graduate School, School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy, School of Nursing, School of Dentistry, School of Law, School of Social Work, the Kenan-Flagler Business School, and numerous other units. The students at UNC-CH come from all one hundred counties in North Carolina, from the other forty-nine states, and from forty-seven different countries.

There is strong emphasis and pride in the concept of public education in Chapel Hill – both higher education and elementary and secondary school programs. In general, the community values education and has for years considered its elementary and secondary schools in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School System (CHCCS) to be the focus of energy and considerable parental volunteer effort. Traditionally, the public school system has produced excellent students and exemplary college admissions test scores, making the community a place where some parents move so that children may be enrolled. In addition, there are equally excellent choices for private school education in the larger community, as well.

The Town of Chapel Hill is bounded on the west by the town of Carrboro and on the northeast by the significantly larger City of Durham. While most of Chapel Hill's borders are adjacent to unincorporated portions of Orange County and shared with the City of Durham, Carrboro is indeed Chapel Hill's closest historic and actual neighbor – the two municipalities share public transportation and the school system, as well as other city services. As the demographic data contained herein suggests, the members of UPC live in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Durham, as well as the less urbanized areas of Orange, Durham, Chatham, and Alamance Counties.

The University offers excellent cultural and sporting opportunities for the residents of this area. We are within easy driving distance of North Carolina's capital city, Raleigh. This is a city that claims stellar art and history museums, as well as being home to the institutions and offices of State government. The entire Triangle area (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill), home to North Carolina State University, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina, is well known for the excellence and variety of its collegiate academic and athletic programs. In Chapel Hill, large numbers of student-athletes have worked under the tutelage of excellent UNC-CH coaches and teachers, who in their own rights, have national reputations.





Further, the University of North Carolina Medical Center has expanded significantly in the past fifteen years and maintains a place of national excellence in biomedical research, health professions education, and patient care. UNC faculty members have won Nobel Prizes and have been elected to The American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Chapel Hill has become a very attractive place for retirees because of the fortuitous merger of cultural opportunities, academic programs and speakers, and excellent medical care. There are several nationally recognized retirement communities in Chapel Hill, in Durham and in the adjacent Chatham County. There are residents in each of those communities who are members of University Presbyterian Church.

As a convergence of all of these positive attributes, the community has grown exponentially in recent years. It is a dynamic community in which to live and to work.

## OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY STUDY

While many aspects of this community are greatly valued by the members of University Presbyterian Church, significant challenges lie ahead and many community issues need to be addressed. In an effort to think about the role of our community of faith in the larger community, we conducted a series of interviews with a broad-based group of community leaders. We spoke to community representatives of government, law enforcement, non-profit institutions, business, and education. (See **Appendix F** for a listing of these community representatives.) These interviews were formatted most often as one-on-one interviews rather than group conversations.

The question posed to the various community leaders was simply:

*Reflect on and share what you believe will be the larger issues facing this community in the next 10 to 15 years.*



In follow-up conversation, we asked them to reflect on how communities of faith – in particular, our community of faith at University Presbyterian Church – could play a part in crafting solutions and responses.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: CHAPEL HILL, CARRBORO, AND ORANGE COUNTY

Of paramount and overarching concern to most of the individuals we spoke with was the growing disparity between wealthy and poor families. This is by no means a problem unique to Chapel Hill and the surrounding areas, but it is one that has been greatly exacerbated in this community by rapid growth.

One respondent expressed serious concern that, because this area of North Carolina has become so attractive to people nationally, we are continuing to experience rapid growth even while such growth has slowed elsewhere in our state. As more and more people come here to live, housing prices have increased significantly while at the same time the community is experiencing some notable demographic shifts. These factors have caused concern that we are becoming a much more homogeneous community with greater wealth and a predominantly white population. This, in turn, has created a very real crisis in affordable housing.

Community experts in the areas of housing, including town employees with positions that focus on housing and community, and several directors of well-known community non-profits (the Community Home Trust, Habitat for Humanity, and the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service) point out that our community must work to slow the loss of housing that is reasonably priced for families who earn 60 percent or less of the area median income. They further suggest that very little has yet been done to alleviate the issues of those families whose incomes fall below 30 percent of the median income. As a result, many of the people who fall into the categories mentioned above are paying well over 30 percent of their income toward rent, the threshold at which housing is considered no longer affordable. Many families even pay over 50 percent for housing.



When housing is no longer affordable, the workers who are employed by the University, the UNC Medical Center, or various retirement communities, which are the main economic engines in our community, are simply unable to remain living in this community. With the average cost of a home in Chapel Hill and Carrboro close to \$400,000, many teachers, police officers, and firefighters are also looking outside the town for a permanent living situation. Some community leaders fear we are becoming more and more of a community where only wealthy and upper middle-class families can afford to live, and where workers with lower-paying, minimum wage jobs or even average-paying jobs must commute into work, thus separating them from this community.

Our growing populations of refugees and immigrants have experienced these same obstacles to housing. In recent interviews with a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (a growing refugee population in Orange County), and with a refugee from Myanmar (now a 10-year resident and US citizen), both described housing as one of their major challenges in building a life in this community. In addition, there are issues involving relocation of families and restructuring of older and traditionally stable neighborhoods because of the increasing numbers of students who seek off-campus housing.

Community leaders speaking about all of these issues noted that some creative partnerships between the Town, the University, and specific communities are beginning to address some of the causes for concern, especially for those

people who are able to take advantage of programs being built in connection with the low-income credit housing. In addition, the University, the Town, and non-profit organizations in the community have made some positive strides in working with older and traditionally African-American neighborhoods to retain their character in the face of changing housing patterns. However, housing for the very poor in our community continues to be a serious cause for concern.

Many members of University Presbyterian Church have expressed interest and concern about these issues, and certainly the Local Outreach committee has been generous and financially supportive of nonprofit organizations that work with housing issues. There seems to be a general recognition in the UPC community that housing issues can dramatically impact the lives of individuals. These concerns certainly affect the larger sense of community that the church would like to foster.

Community leaders further point out serious concerns about increased homelessness, about low-paying jobs that fall below a minimum living wage, and about the concomitant and resulting food insecurity. These issues frequently affect minority communities (especially African-American and immigrant/refugee populations) more than others.

UPC has been recognized for the generosity of our Local Outreach programs that help fund nonprofit organizations that focus on these issues, including TABLE, PORCH (People Offering Relief for Chapel Hill-Carrboro Homes), and the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services. However, several community leaders have asked how willing our community of faith would be to assume more active volunteer and leadership roles. Further, they asked about the possibility and feasibility of UPC assuming a position of advocacy for the poor in our community. Through these interviews, we were reminded that our biggest challenge in these coming days will be to address the systemic causes of poverty.

One community leader pointed out to us that the disparity between wealth and poverty is heightened for people of color and discussed the detriment of this to any community. He directed our attention to statistics indicating that black North Carolinians are twice as likely to live in poverty as white North Carolinians (i.e., 24 versus 12 percent). The gap widens for children (14 percent of white children and 38 percent of black children are poor), and expands even further for children under age six (about 50 percent of the youngest black children). Moreover, black North Carolinians are twice as likely to suffer from hunger or food insecurity. Twice as many African-Americans are unemployed as whites. These income-based disparities are stunning but they pale in comparison to measures of wealth. Black households in North Carolina have, on average, only 6 percent of the wealth possessed by white households. Three times as many black families as white ones have negative net worth.

While these are state-wide statistics and while Orange County is not among the poorest of North Carolina counties, certainly it is the case that leaders in Chapel Hill are challenging communities of faith to help them respond to the racial and systemic discrimination that they believe is prevalent everywhere.

One visible impact of this racial disparity was brought to the forefront by an interview that reminded us that a significant number of African-American families and some refugee families from public housing (who are by definition at the poverty level) are sending children to school systems other than the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools system, citing their perception that their children are not really welcome in our community schools because of poverty and the extraordinary achievement gap that exists between African-American and white students. This challenge to an inclusive culture in the schools is heightened because there are many children of academic professionals in our public school system. These children are backed by considerable support from home and seriously high expectations of academic performance. This was a particularly disturbing statistical revelation given that we pride ourselves on being an open, inclusive, and welcoming community.

Several community leaders have challenged University Presbyterian Church as a community of faith by saying that many of these issues – affordable housing, homelessness, poverty, living wages, the student achievement gap for African-American and to some extent Latino students – have been on the table for a number of years. They have suggested that while we in this academic environment are quick to identify social problems and discuss possible solutions with intellectual vigor, many of us in the community have been unwilling to devote the actual energy, time, and resources necessary to crafting or enacting solutions to such systemic problems.

One of our own church members, who is also a business leader in our community, said that he has a mental image often that there is an “invisible fence” around University Presbyterian Church and in his discussion with us challenged us to move outside in a direct and hands-on way, actually reflecting the views that many members of our congregation have expressed as hopes for our continued direction.

Several particularly powerful conversations with community leaders have led us to think in terms of a wider concept of “community”. One business leader pointed out specifically that frequently the efforts of towns and counties are duplicated – i.e., an affordable housing task force for Chapel Hill, another one for Carrboro, and yet another one led by the county – without serious governmental efforts at coordination of solutions. Part of the small-town character and charm so valued by each separate community can work against us when we are trying to address these larger and more universal issues that ignore city limits. Over and over again we heard the message that real community is built by caring for each other without the imposition of town limits, county lines, or even denominational designations. We heard several expressions of hope that University Presbyterian Church and other downtown churches and faith communities could be instruments of serious community building with an awareness of programs already in place at each church and with some coordination of efforts.

We were reminded in most eloquent terms that a vital role for University Presbyterian Church and other communities of faith is to work at community without expectation of return but with the hope of change.

## NORTH CAROLINA AND THE NATION

In regard to issues at the state level, University Presbyterian Church was challenged by two community leaders to be more vocal and more willing to let our statewide representatives be aware of how significant cuts in funding educational programs and social services have directly impacted our own communities.

Mental illness was a topic of significant importance in discussions with many of our community leaders, several noting how seriously the cuts in state and federal funding have adversely impacted individual communities in North Carolina. One physician pointed out that we are particularly hard hit in the UNC Medical Center here in Chapel Hill because the UNC Hospital Emergency Services division is a first-line resource for mentally ill patients in crisis. He noted that on any given day there might be fifty or more mentally ill patients in serious crisis, lying on gurneys in the Emergency Department and waiting for beds at the UNC Medical Center. This impacts direct services to trauma patients or medical emergency patients entering at the same time, and this so overloads the medical system that there are delays in the quality and kind of care that people with mental illness should have.

The community is fortunate to have a clubhouse model program for people with mental illness, but the gap between the crisis entry into a medical system and rehabilitation and training is huge and growing. Some leaders have suggested that this model of individual support could be transposed to the larger community with great success.



Others noted that community and hospital funding also will be imperative in closing the referenced gap. Mental Illness is a challenge that many at UPC have felt called to address, resulting in the formation of a Mental Health Task Force at UPC in 2011. The group was formed with the intent of raising awareness and reducing stigma within the congregation and the larger community.

The graying of America, also a topic of national discussion, is happening in every county of North Carolina. A community expert in aging issues pointed out that North Carolina is the third largest migration state for those who are choosing to “age in place.” That fact combined with the statistics that over half of those eighty-five and above suffer from symptoms of dementia and that seniors are the largest growing age group in our state is a definitely clear “writing on the wall,” reminding us that this is indeed a significant issue that our community will be grappling with in days and years to come.



Of course, this issue touches on the quality of care and the training of caretakers for this growing part of our population. We must ask ourselves who, in turn, will take care of these workers, and whether they, too, will have a place to live in our community. Moreover, we wonder if they will be paid wages commensurate with the importance of their work.

## THE WORLD

Several community leaders who have travelled extensively and been involved in international programs spoke about how important it is that University Presbyterian Church continue to reach out to our brothers and sisters around the world. They encouraged UPC to give serious support to programs that addressed global partners’ educational and medical needs, as well as continue to share religious programs with them. These leaders suggested in interviews that continued support for the trifecta — education, medical and spiritual needs — was imperative given that our global partners have enormous and overwhelming social and economic challenges.

University Presbyterian Church has partners in Haiti, Zambia, Thailand, India, Syria, Lebanon, and the West Bank.





# Our Call



## Prophets of a Future Not Our Own

*It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.*

*The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.*

*No statement says all that could be said.*

*No prayer fully expresses our faith.*

*No confession brings perfection.*

*No pastoral visit brings wholeness.*

*No program accomplishes the Church's mission.*

*No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about.*

*We plant the seeds that one day will grow.*

*We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.*

*We lay foundations that will need further development.*

*We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.*

*This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.*

*We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.*

*We are prophets of a future not our own.*

This prayer was first presented by Cardinal Dearden in 1979 and quoted by Pope Francis in 2015.

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/prophets-of-a-future-not-our-own.cfm>

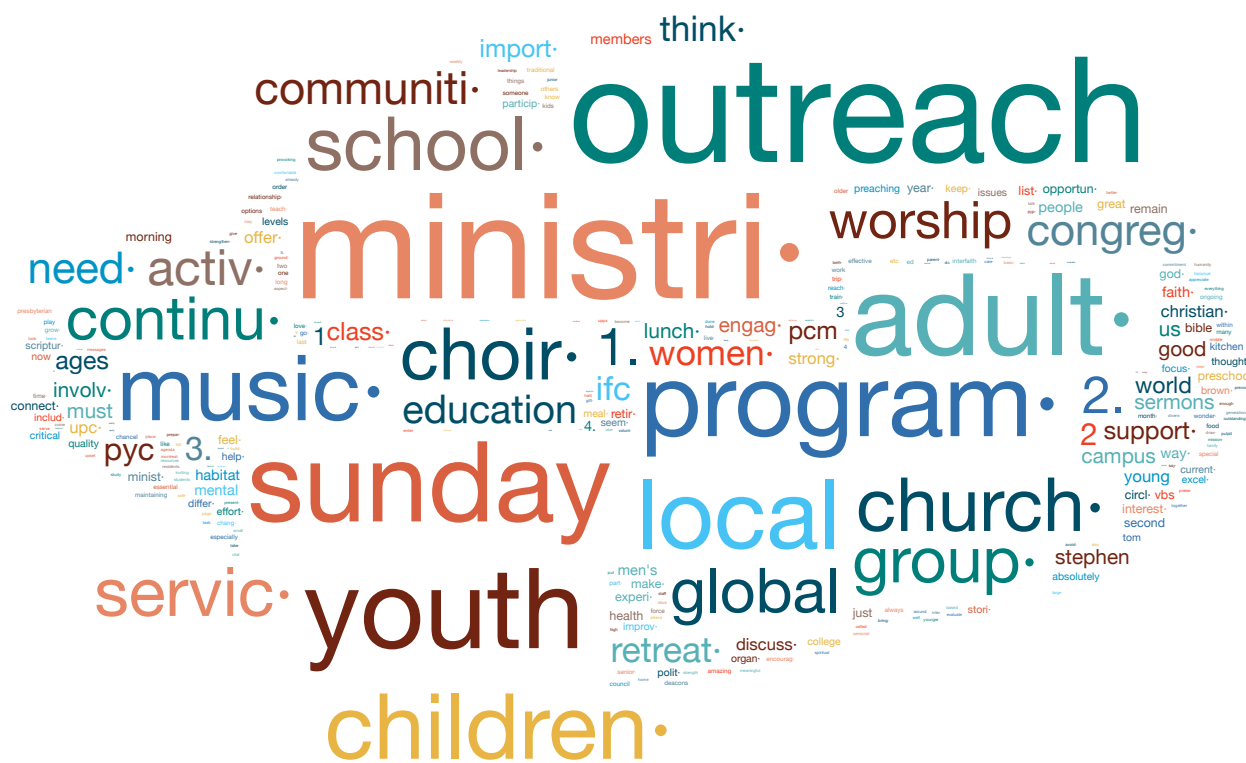
## OUR CALL

The previous pages have elucidated UPC's sense of identity – drawn from studies of our history, demographics, and finances, the Congregational Survey, and the Congregational Gatherings – as well as our understanding of our community and its needs. UPC finds God's leading for its next season at the intersections between these identifying characteristics and meeting the needs of the community around us and around the world.

UPC's ministries are active ways that we as a community currently respond to God's call, both within our congregation and in the wider world. The Congregational Survey provided an opportunity to provide input about 33 of UPC's ministries and programmatic activities in which respondents or their family members participated in the past two years. When asked to rate the effectiveness of each ministry at serving the needs of our church and our community, respondents rated all the ministries and programs (on average) as being at least "moderately effective" (i.e., 3 out of 5). Indeed, 28 (85%) were rated as being "very effective" (4/5) or "extremely effective" (5/5), with the most effective being the four choirs (Chancel, Children's, Junior, and Youth), University Presbyterian Pre-School, the Congregational Retreat, and our service to the IFC Community Kitchen.

When survey respondents were then asked to describe which ongoing ministries and activities should UPC absolutely continue in order “to support your growing faithfulness, discipleship, and/or service in our wider community,” an analysis of the resulting narrative responses revealed the most highly cited ministries and activities were those including the terms outreach (local or global), music or choir, and youth or children (see word cloud below).

At present, UPC can be described as a congregation that seeks a dynamic balance between its commitments to the disciplined “inward journey” of spiritual formation and the “outward journey” of creative engagement in the missional needs of our community. Our inward journey includes building and nourishing the body of Christ, while our outward journey reflects our active response to God’s call to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world. That these



two aspects of our call must be dynamically balanced acknowledges that, in the end, these two journeys are inseparable – like the inhale and the exhale of the same breath.

## A DISCIPLINED INNER JOURNEY

UPC's blessings of quality pastoral leadership and preaching, excellent staff, financial health and stability, and outstanding educational, spiritual development, and fellowship programs for all were mentioned above. The Congregational Survey and Congregational Conversations revealed that these are indeed widely valued strengths. Among those strengths are UPC's multigenerational makeup and varied opportunities for fellowship and intergenerational connections.

Still, there is room for improvement even in these areas of strength. Some members suggested that more opportunities could be provided for interpersonal connectivity. This issue was discussed during our Congregational Town Hall meetings. Almost all participants agreed that it is important for UPC to ensure that every member feels the opportunity to be engaged fully in the life of the church. We also discussed how having members of all social and demographic groups feel connected and engaged makes UPC a stronger faith community. Finally, participants were asked what UPC could do to better connect them — or a group that they identify with — to the rest of the church.

These conversations revealed that we seek to enhance our character as a connectional church: there is hunger and potential for deeper and more meaningful connectivity between groups that are traditionally separated by generational, social, or demographic factors; between members, non-members, and new members; and between members and our community. Congregants noted that current intergenerational activities, such as the Congregational Retreat, that bring young and older alike together to discover and deepen their faith are highly valued. Such activities allow older members to model strong faith in action that provides treasured, organic examples to the younger participants.

*“Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”*

— Matthew 13:8-9 (NRSV)

Importantly, the same conversations revealed a congregation that is open to change, especially with a view to being God's church into the future. Possible changes were responses to needs for better inclusivity and enhanced ministry to youth, college students, and young adults. As an example, participants in many of the conversations lifted up the possibility of starting a “contemporary service” to ensure that our worship included activities that were attractive and welcoming to college students and young adults. (When directly asked, however, a group of young adult members clearly stated that such a service was not attractive for current participants.)

## AN OUTWARD JOURNEY

Clearly, we at UPC have inherited rich blessings in preaching, music, and education. While we want to continue those traditions, we also seek to be open to new ways to use our resources and experiences for new forms of ministry to which God might call us.

One widely valued strength revealed by the Congregational Survey and Congregational Conversations was UPC's open and welcoming posture. However, not every response was positive: one member described UPC as more “institutional than welcoming.” Other members see that our strengths could be enhanced so that our welcome could be better extended to newcomers, new members, and community members. This issue was discussed during our



Congregational Town Hall meetings. Almost all participants agreed that it is important for UPC to ensure that every visitor finds a warm welcome and that every participant is embraced by our faith community. We also discussed what further actions our congregation can take in these areas. Finally, participants discussed the ways in which we can reach out with active invitation and affirmation to the under-recognized and under-served around us. In other words, we seek to take steps beyond living with open doors.

Likewise, it is noteworthy that community leaders and church members alike expressed their hopes for a more racially unified religious community in Chapel Hill. Many participants in both the Congregational Gatherings and Survey noted the lack of racial diversity in our congregation and expressed interest in exploring related issues more deeply. While recognizing that every community of faith has its own traditions and liturgy, some community leaders and some UPC members encouraged us to be open to community programs that foster joint efforts, with volunteers of every racial or ethnic background working together for the collective good of our community. They also mentioned the possibility and hope of our communities of faith sharing common celebrations as well as occasional meals.

As noted in the section above, some community leaders reported that UPC is a giving congregation that often writes generous checks; however, they challenged us by asking: How willing is UPC to assume a position of advocacy on key community issues? In concert, the Congregational Conversations and Survey revealed a widespread interest in addressing issues of economic and social justice, especially around race, poverty, and immigrant or refugee status. Moreover, the Congregational Conversations revealed a widely felt longing for opportunities to engage as a vital part of our community and to get involved by directly helping or serving our neighbors. This issue was also discussed during our Congregational Town Hall meetings. We wondered together about the ways that UPC can use our strengths and resources to bear God's fruit in the world. Most participants agreed that, as a downtown urban church, we do have special responsibility to be involved in roles of advocacy on issues of economic or social justice.

Our discussion on these issues also reflected on the feeling that there is some active tension around partisan politics. Nevertheless, there was a shared understanding that we need each other, and that all voices are welcome and needed as part of God's church. In that space, we discussed how we can follow Christ's example of loving our neighbors and serving the "least of these" while avoiding the pitfalls of partisan political issues and transient secular movements.

*"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

*Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"*

— 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 (NRSV)

Note that this version of the Mission Study Report document does not include the Appendices. Those may be accessed online at the following address:

<http://upcch.org/missionstudyreport>

