



FOPC Mission Study Report

Compiled Summer 2016

Presentation to Congregation

FOPC Transition Process

An Overview of Mission Study and Pastoral Nominating Committee's Planned Work

Secure
interim
Pastor

Mission Study Team Report

Adopted by Session and
presented to
Congregation

Future Strategic Planning

(Ongoing work of the Session)

- Overall Staffing Structure
- Vision Update/Strategic Planning

Senior Pastor Call Process

1. Call PNC – (Usually 8-10 Congregation Members, Session Liaison, **Presbytery COM Rep**)

- FOPC Nominating Committee solicits and vets nominations, presents slate of candidates
 - Congregation elects the Pastoral Nominating Committee at congregational meeting
- #### 2. Work of the Pastoral Nominating Committee:
- Briefed on Role/Responsibilities (by Presbytery Committee on Ministry)
 - Produce Ministry Information Form (MIF) based on Mission Study Report
 - Review Personal Information Forms (PIF) of potential candidates and conduct interview
 - Hear candidates preach
 - Reference/ **Background Checks**
 - Preach at FOPC/Congregational Vote

FOPC Mission Study Team



This Mission Study was conducted from May to September 2016 as part of the transition period at Fair Oaks and calling of a new senior pastor.

Current Session Members

- Jim Heining
- Angela Topel
- Derek Inksetter
- Nancy Van Der Griend (clerk)

Congregation Members

- Wendy White
- Doug Strubel
- Karen Bromley
- Barb Mayer
- Jane Vishneski
- Lisa Johnson

Interim Pastor

- Rev. Danie deBeer

Mission Study Resources

Guiding Documents

- InSite community assessments
- Various resources on faith and church trends
- 2002 Visioning Process and 2008 Strategic Plan
- 2015 Every Member Visits

New Insights Gathered

- 124 responses to online **Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT)** and interpretation by Holy Cow consultants
 - Presentation to congregation and feedback
- 2 open and 7 small **group discussions** on Vision & Values (@70 participants)
- Youth (12 mid and senior high) **discussion group**
- 8+ **meetings** of the Mission Study Team

Celebrating our Strength

- FOPC is in a great place to move forward
- After listening to the congregation and reviewing many resources, we have identified:
 - Attributes that are the foundation of our success and future
 - Issues that should be addressed
- Because of this positive position, this Report's observations are candid and specific so that we can productively map out the strategies and actions to create necessary momentum

This Mission Study Report Covers

1. Who we are (an assessment of Fair Oaks today), our values, and our vision for ministry, including our definition of progressive theology.
2. What we discovered about our congregation's emerging needs and challenges.
3. What we discovered about the emerging needs of our surrounding community and opportunities for us to expand our ministry.
4. What kind of church we envision FOPC might be by 2025.
5. Actions we recommend Session and its committees undertake to achieve this vision.
6. Qualifications and characteristics needed by our next pastor and entire staffing team.

Isaiah 43:18-19

“Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

Who We Are: Active, Vibrant

- 406 members and experiencing modest growth, consistent participation in youth programs and congregational activities, average worship attendance has declined (190 to 150)
 - 60% are middle age 44-65
 - We are educated, and upper middle class
 - Almost entirely white, not reflective of our diverse community
 - Have many long-term members
 - Thought of as a family church
- A neighborhood church with most members living within 1 to 2 miles
- Known as a LOGOS church, center of our community visibility
- A heritage of strong youth programs and commitment to study/learning
- A social church with many fellowship activities
- Long-term mission projects/commitments
- Commitment to traditional worship service



Who We Are: Recent Dynamics Which Impact Our Current State

- Move from traditional Presbyterian committees to staff-led programs (people come to FOPC for its intimate/involved environment)
 - Intense volunteer requirements, volunteer demands in a busy society
- As membership grew we intentionally moved from pastoral church model to program church
- Two worship services impact member interactions
- Impactful Disciple Bible Study ran though membership participation, we didn't invest energy in maintaining participation
- Less engaged pastoral leadership
- Less lay involvement in communal worship
- LOGOS evolution – less connection with church involvement
- Turnover in youth leadership

Who We Are: Congregational Assessment

- High energy, low satisfaction – Chaos quadrant
 - A number of distinct, autonomous centers of activity
 - High subgroup loyalty, low allegiance to a larger vision
 - High level of energy that is out of alignment with a central purpose
 - Efforts to restore alignment are met with resistance
- Member focused: The perception of the overall ministry is strongly determined by the members.
- A high percentage of fence sitters, waiting to see the future direction of the church.
- Identified as Progressive-Settled. We recognize the need to change but show limited flexibility in changing our ways of doing things.

Who We Are: Congregational Assessment



“Chaotic systems need long-term strategies that create alignment among the independent activity centers with a central mission. This will require a shifting of loyalty from individual, and often autonomous activity centers, to the larger church and its leadership.”

Who We Are: Discussion Groups

- Have become splintered into smaller groups
- Loss of member engagement
- Lost the personal ask or sense of call
- LOGOS losing its spiritual foundation, focused on mechanics, becoming an after-school program
- Struggles with successful Associate Pastor roles
- Older members missed in programming
- Heavy involvement from small group of volunteers
- Put on airs of having our lives together which limits the ability to express vulnerabilities and ask for/receive help. Families in need have been overlooked.
- Don't fully understand Presbyterian reformed tradition and progressive theology

“We have become too internally focused, worried about our own affairs and not about serving others.”

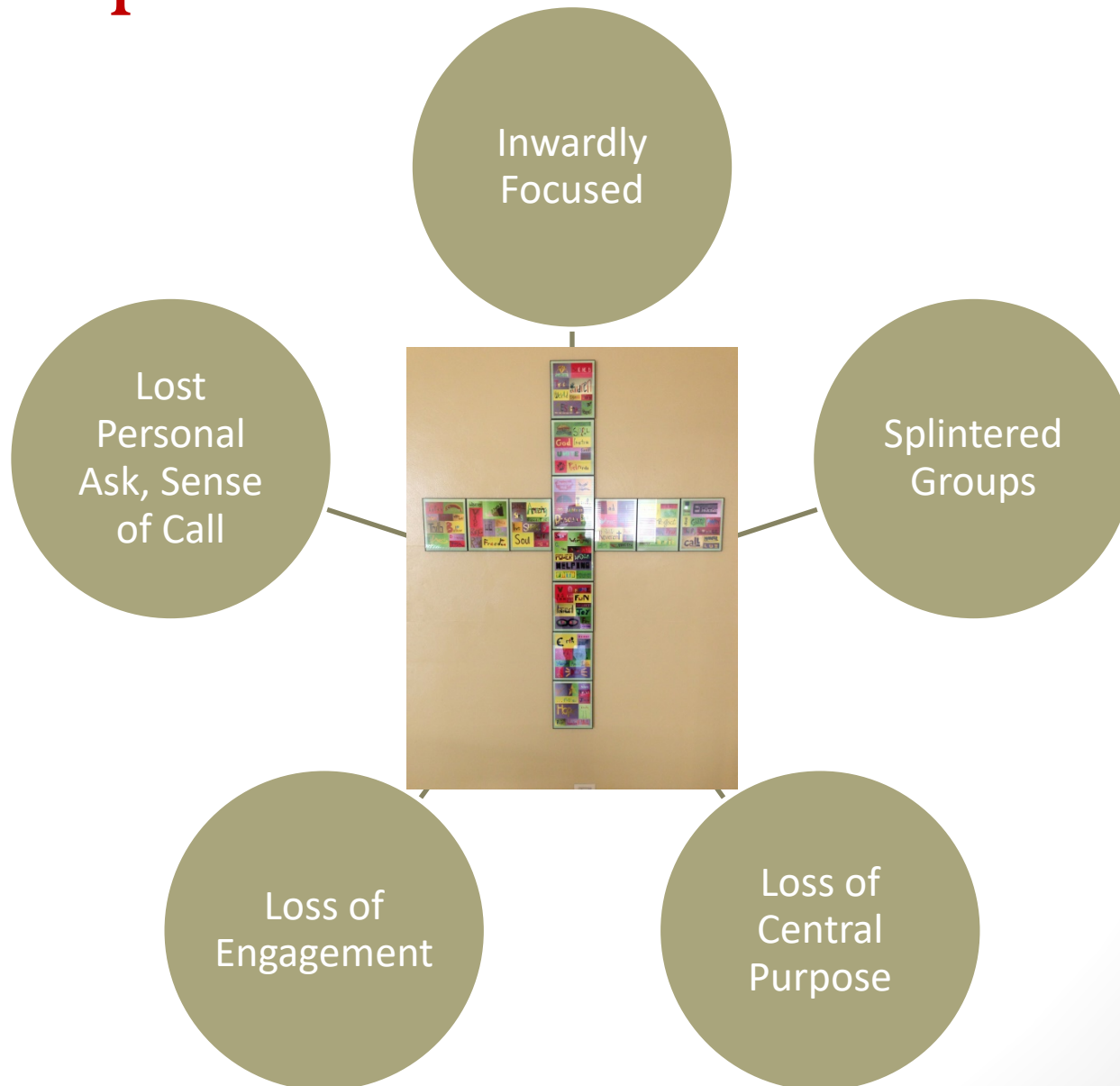
Who We Are: Our Assessment



- We have become more focused on **HOW** things in our faith community are done, versus **WHY** (the central purpose). In some cases we have created overburdening process and drive for perfection. We spend a lot of time filling seats versus praying about people who might be called to carry us forward.
- We need to return to the unifying **WHY**, how Christ is present in our daily lives and works through this community of faith to support one another, and others in God's creation. We struggle with traditions that bind us and those that keep us stuck from moving forward.
- We need the appropriate amount of administration and structure to enable us to focus on the **WHY**.

**“We need to get out of God’s way to do good work here.
We make everything too difficult.”**

The Implications of HOW over WHY



Hosea 12:6

“The prophets continued to call Israel back to God – as they forgot the reason why they were God’s people, and became so busy living and making money and being prosperous and self-focused.”

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1. Who we are, our values, and our vision for ministry, including our definition of progressive theology.

Mission Statement

The congregation of Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church
Is called to **PROCLAIM** by word and deed the good news of our savior Jesus Christ,
to **NURTURE** children, youth and adults into Christian faith and discipleship, and to **SERVE**, in Christ's
name, the Oak Park community and beyond.

Vision Statement

We are disciples of Jesus Christ, called to a community of faith;
Belonging fully to God and to one another;
Responding to God's call to care and be cared for' Growing continually in our knowledge, our fair, and
our service.

1. Who we are, our values, and our vision for ministry, including our definition of progressive theology.

We affirm our focus on progressive theology but recognize we need education to expand our understanding of what that means and regular discussion on how it applies in a rapidly changing world. Likewise, the congregations reaffirms our Mission and Vision Statements as relevant today and they continue to inspire our work.

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our service.

However, we recommend further study and exploration on what it means to PROCLAIM, the awkwardness or discomfort it presents for some, and how we individually and collectively can better PROCLAIM the good news.

1. Who we are, our values, and our vision for ministry, including our definition of progressive theology.

NURTURE

We realize our sweet spot, our core competency, is to NURTURE. Through our Logos and youth programs, youth activities and annual Mission Trip, to our bible study programs and many adult fellowship groups, we create a strong and growing community where all are nurtured into Christian faith and discipleship..



It is the MST's belief that we expand and strengthen this ability, especially among adults, while we work to further understand how to best PROCLAIM the good news and more effectively and collectively SERVE others in Christ's name.

1. Who we are, our values, and our vision for ministry, including our definition of progressive theology.

- Our review of the stated values, identified in a 2003 Visioning process, tend to reflect what we value versus the values that drive us. As part of a needed renewal efforts in the coming years we recommend that the Session further study and restate these to be embraceable and comprehensible values that drive our decision making.

The Values of Fair Oaks:

Our past Visioning Process has discerned the following values of Fair Oaks' community of faith:

- Our Presbyterian heritage and the Reformed theological tradition.
- Meaningful worship that is grounded in Presbyterian heritage, the Reformed theological tradition and that is an imperative **proclamation** of our Christian faith.
- Fellowship activities that join congregants to each other in community and affirm their sense of **call** and **belonging** to Fair Oaks.
- Nurturing adults in their faith development, helping them discern their **calling** in Christ and how to utilize their God-given gifts in ministry.
- Nurturing children and youth into Christian discipleship and commitment to the church.
- Programs that meet the needs of the community and the world and that allow us to share God's love through **service** to others.

2. What we discovered about our congregation's emerging needs and challenges.

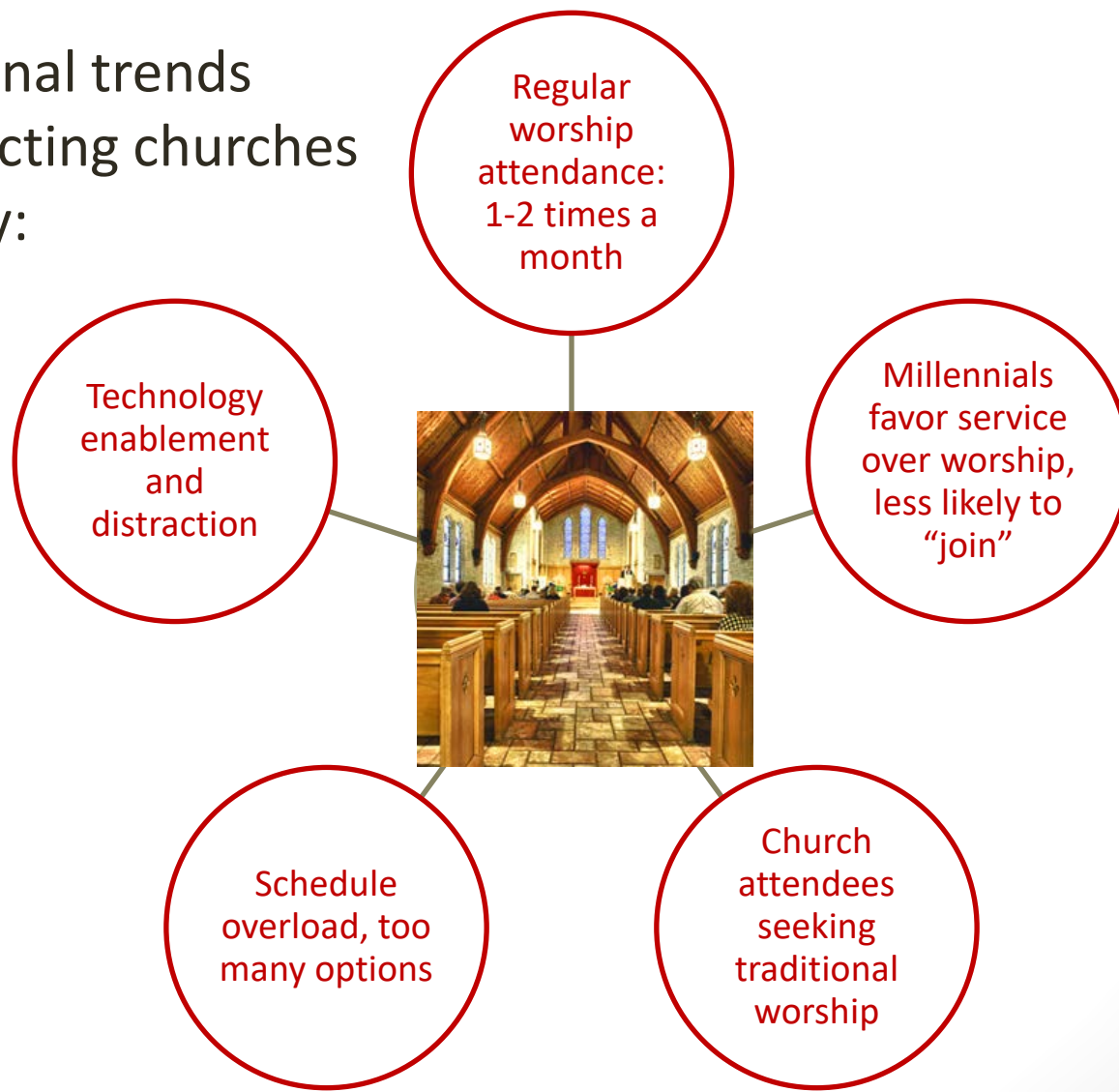
- In our Congregational Assessment Tool, members identified these top three priorities: (“Where would you like additional energy placed to expand or improve our ministries?”)
 1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church (3.15)
 2. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership (3.11)
 3. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.) (2.97)

2. What we discovered about our congregation's emerging needs and challenges.

- Congregation needs to realign around a central purpose, be more Christ centered, have continual context of our mission, be inspired and led by pastoral direction but assume congregational responsibility
- Need continuous education on Presbyterianism and discipleship
- Our challenge: resistance to central purpose, groups let go of their perspective for greater good (CAT)

2. What we discovered about our congregation's emerging needs and challenges.

- External trends impacting churches today:



3. What we discovered about the emerging needs of our surrounding community and opportunities for us to expand our ministry.

- The MST struggled with this question, reflecting that “we need to get our house in order before helping others” which we believe is a symptom of our WHY over HOW dilemma. The mere way we look at serving others is influenced by a possibly debilitating paradigm of HOW.

Galatians 6:2

“Bear one another’s burdens,
and in this way you will fulfill the law of
Christ.”



4. What kind of church we envision FOPC might be by 2025.

- Inclusive
- Unified
- A common understanding of what it means to PROCLAIM
- A place of sanctuary where we can share our vulnerabilities and can care and be cared for – “come where you are and join us where we are”
- Intentional in our efforts and non-judgmental
- Intergenerational
- Doing God’s work because we love him
- Reflect the playfulness and innocence of our youth
- Still practicing a traditional worship style
- Worship God and enjoy him forever, live in the Holy Spirit
- A return of the personal ask/call to inspire engagement

John 13:14-15

“So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

For I have set you an example, that you also should do
as I have done to you.”

5. Actions we recommend Session and its committees undertake to achieve this vision.

Two strategic decisions:

- Revisit our values to modernize and make them true expressions that can drive our actions and decisions
 - Session needs to address key issues to guide and enable PNC
-

Per the Congregation:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church
2. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership
3. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships

5. Actions we recommend Session and its committees undertake to achieve this vision.

Discerned Through This Process:

- **Reprioritize WHY over HOW**, be intentional to create a Christ-centered community
 - Foster group interaction and consensus, align around the center
- Pursue an **engagement structure and activities**
- Create **intergenerational**, cross program experiences
- Focus on **robust education** for all ages (congregational discussion about progressive theology, Presbyterian grounding, proclaim)
- **Create sanctuary**, ability to share vulnerabilities and ability to help and seek help

John 5:42-44

“But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. *How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?* “

6. Qualifications and characteristics needed by our next pastor and entire staffing team.

Staffing Approach:

- Because each individual brings a unique collection of talents given by God, we recommend that the PNC select a senior pastor that best delivers against the desired characteristics (against specific requirements or specialties) and then allow them to build/align our staff to complete a well-rounded team.

6. Qualifications and characteristics needed by our next pastor and entire staffing team.

Qualifications/Characteristics:

- Match the congregation's reformed theology perspective as expressed in the Congregational Assessment Tool
- Can articulate a clear sense of purpose (focus/mission statement) in ministry rather than varied tasks – tighten our tie to Christ
- Sees education as intentionally nurturing discipleship, equipping us to carry out our mission
- One who will hold us accountable, naturally challenges us
- Truly faithful, has a strong relationship with God and leads us there
- Seeks unity – leads a pastoral staff who can unify across all ages, ministry groups, programs, etc.

6. Qualifications and characteristics needed by our next pastor and entire staffing team.

- Delivers strong pastoral care
- Helps us interpret the world through progressive theology lens
- A strong Chief of Staff - A pastor who believes in and appreciates the importance of strong administration and structure which enables the church to move beyond the HOW to the WHY
- Values the LOGOs experience and keeps us strongly focused on its intention
- Qualities
 - Nurturer
 - Have a strong knowledge of self
 - Enjoyable, approachable, relatable, fun

Ephesians 4:15-16

“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.”



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Comments & Questions?