

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Napa, California

Mission Study 2017

In preparation for calling a pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church (CPC), 1226 Salvador Ave., Napa, CA 94558 presents this congregational reflection on who we are and whose we are.

The writers intended to faithfully reflect the individual as well as corporate mission of CPC.

The reflections contained in the Mission Study 2017 were drawn from all-church discussion events, from our annual reports, from our 50th year celebration, and from each of you.

Separate sections of the Mission Study 2017 are:

- Spiritual Health of the Congregation
- Membership and Church Growth
- Mission and Social Justice
- Who is CPC?
- Roles in and Relationship to the Community
- Relationship to Presbytery of the Redwoods
- Pastoral Leadership



Spiritual Health of the Congregation

“It is well, it is well, with my soul.” ~ Horatio G. Spafford, 1873 ~

Spiritual health is generally viewed as a personal concern: what is my purpose, my values; what is my joy; what are my vital practices, in order to attain spiritual well-being?

Yet, the same principles apply to the congregation as a whole, as the body of Christ, we are whole. Covenant Presbyterian Church (CPC), over the years, has offered a number of opportunities for spiritual growth toward the attainment of well-being – for the individual, who, when joined in practice with others, affects the spiritual health of the whole.

The first spiritual discipline of the member is worship, and, despite decline in numbers, there has been steady attendance and involvement, even during the first six months of interim time.

The choir is good-sized for the size of the congregation, and a draw to worship for choir singers and members alike. Their music uplifts, is relevant, and provides a musical dimension to prayer.

The hospitality of greeters, ushers and people in the pew is genuine, and new folks are readily welcomed into the community. There is a vibrancy and open-heartedness which is contagious, and is reflected in the music, preaching and worship leadership, continually confirming our core value of being “intentionally inclusive” of all God’s people.

A week-day Bible study has been offered for twenty years or more, with a core average attendance of 15, ranging in age from 30 – 90! Most recently it has centered on a lectionary-based study of passages for the upcoming Sunday’s worship. It is a lively group, who interact with ease, challenging one another (and the pastor) with regard to biblical history, theology and social justice concerns. Current members are extremely well-versed in the Bible, and all are welcome, regardless of level of study or experience.

Other offerings include a bi-monthly book study, lay-led, of current best sellers or old favorites, which most often include books of a spiritual dimension, whether fiction, history, or another genre.

Theology and Wine is another popular group in the summer, where the pastor and members discuss theological concerns in an informal, relaxed setting on the church’s patio.

There is an outdoor labyrinth which was created in 2007, as another path to experiencing the living God, and a way to learn this ancient prayer practice. Many

individuals use it during the week, or before or after worship on Sundays. A prayerful guide is displayed to provide direction and suggestions for its use. Plans to use the labyrinth in the summer for worship are underway.



Classes on meditation, silence and contemplative prayer have also been offered, and there is an arts center in the sanctuary for use during worship, for those who are inspired to express their gifts and gratitude throughout the service.

CPC is a well-educated congregation, spiritually, but just as importantly, its members express themselves with the compassion of Christ, offering a healthy balance of heart, mind and soul.

Membership and Church Growth

Context

Covenant Presbyterian Church (CPC) was established in 1962, and commenced Sunday service at the new sanctuary in 1965. Several families moved from First Presbyterian Church downtown to establish CPC in the then quickly-growing valley. By 1970, Napa Valley adapted slow growth efforts, successfully reducing growth to around 1 per cent per year by the 1980s. Covenant membership flattened by 2000, then grew from 2005 to 2008, helped by PresbyFest fundraisers. Membership has continued to decline over 30% since 2008.

Napa County reports that the largest-growing demographics are retirees and young (<40) professionals. The City of Napa currently boasts >35% Hispanic households, with estimated 25% primarily Spanish-speaking. Of those groups, retirees have proven to be fertile ground for us. Because of our "Open and Welcoming" practices, we are fortunate to enjoy several new LGBTQ individuals and/or couples, all under 55 years. Considering the historical erosion of that age cohort, these younger members have brought new life, vitality and leadership to CPC. We have been unsuccessful attracting young professionals, probably owing to their cohort's lack of church attendance generally. Hispanic households, though very family-oriented, seem to prefer Catholic, Baptist and apostolic churches. Common professions of members are current or retired nurses,

teachers, financial, and other healthcare. Probably a majority college-educated with many advanced degrees.

Today at CPC

The CPC census for 2016 shows 125 active members, and 20 inactive as of January 2017. Like many churches, CPC exhibits a high proportion of females and retired persons. The falling membership, and dramatically lower church attendance has "distilled" our membership to a small group of very close, dedicated individuals pretty well versed in church tradition and liturgy.

Looking over our Annual Census 2000-present, notable trends include:

- Overall loss of active membership consistent with other local churches;
- A smaller proportion of active members regularly attending church
- Aging of membership and concurrent rise in disabled members

Summary

CPC is aging like many churches today, fighting to remain a positive force for God's love in Napa. While understanding the logic of growth, many members are happy with the status quo. CPC hosts several community 'mission' groups (Sunrise Montessori, kitchen artisans, NV College exercise classes, a Food Bank/Latinos Unidos garden, Tai Chi, The Teacher's Resource Center of the North Bay, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Art Classes, NA, Boy Scouts etc.) that are possible sources of new members. The growing pool of retirees and LGBTQ community are fertile ground. The challenge is to recruit enough active members to proselytize and prospect in a sustained manner. Many members simply feel that God will call new members, and to proactively recruit them is viewed with distrust. For some members, growing Christ's followers is one of the key requirements to establish a more just and peaceful world. As the saying goes, "more hands make for easier work". There is much to be done in our church, and our community. Refreshing our church's growth is so important, and our new Pastor will need to personally lead that effort.



Fellowship and Fun



Kid's Time

15 Year Census Data

Year	Active	Inactive	Total	Av Attnd	%	Feml	%	<55 yrs	%	Disabl*	%
2016	115	20	135	67	58%	78	68%	34	30%	24	21%
2015	125	26	151	67	54%	85	68%	36	29%	25	20%
2014	129	19	148	70	54%	88	68%	36	28%	28	22%
2013	133	1	134	82	62%	94	71%	36	27%	28	21%
2012	138	1	139	82	59%	105	76%	59	43%	31	22%
2011	129	1	130	80	62%	90	70%	69	53%	28	22%
2010	130	2	132	90	69%	85	65%	65	50%	36	28%
2009	137	4	141	90	66%	88	64%	61	45%	30	22%
2008	166	4	170	79	48%	105	63%	71	43%	19	11%
2007	164	2	166	95	58%	109	66%	55	34%	25	15%
2006	168	10	178	101	60%	113	67%	60	36%	26	15%
2005	163	15	178	91	56%	113	69%	57	35%	20	12%
2004	177	0	177	90	51%	109	62%	61	34%	18	10%
2003	149	12	161	90	60%	98	66%	52	35%	11	7%
2002	144	0	144	90	63%	96	67%	68	47%	6	4%
2001	140	0	140	89	64%	90	64%	64	46%	7	5%

Mission and Social Justice

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matt 25:35-37

These words preface the annual reports of Mission Commission, form the focus and guide the activities of Mission work at Covenant Presbyterian Church. This focus has seen steady growth over the past twenty years under the constant support of Pastor Deana Reed. Mission is the hallmark of PCUSA supporting missionary doctors and teachers throughout the world. Covenant makes an annual contribution of \$10,000 to General Mission of the Presbyterian Church which supports Presbytery of the Redwoods, Synod of the Pacific and General Assembly. Additionally, we support the four special offerings:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Pentecost
- Peacemaking
- Christmas Joy

When asked "who is our neighbor", the congregation readily responded with the programs which have become constant activities over the years. The Table, a free food kitchen, has received our constant and growing support to the point

where we now serve regularly once a month. Additionally, we donate foods in a food barrel for the Napa Food Bank, and have written and received grants to donate monies. We have hosted Bike and Build bike riders which monies raised partially was donated the Food Bank. We donate foodstuffs in a barrel for the Food Bank last year donating 439 pounds. Covenant members started a Gleaning Program which operated for several years to pick and donated fresh produce from yards around Napa. It grew beyond to scope of the church to the point that it was taken over by the Food Bank itself and continues to this day.

We participate in 2 cents a meal or Cents Ability offerings and have received grants to assist us in our service at the Table, and are anticipating an additional Cents Ability grant to support the Covenant Garden. We have volunteered at our local neighborhood school Salvador, providing backpacks to those in need and participating in a tutoring program there for several years. Local Mission funds and efforts have supported local programs such as Cope Family Center, Hope Center (toiletries), Church Women United (an ongoing clothing barrel), Hospice, NEWS (Napa Emergency Women's Shelter), and Voices (emancipated foster youth). Yearly, since 2000, we have held an Alternative Christmas Market where programs such as Heifer Project, Habitat for Humanity, Fair Trade Goods, and Rivers of the World Congo Sewing School. Gift boxes and gift cards go to Cope family center at Christmas.

We began supporting the Congo Sewing School in 2011 with a donation of \$7775 raised from the Presbyfest fund raiser. This sewing school in Tshikaji, Republic of the Congo and run by *Rivers of the World* serves women who have no support system to provide a way of making money. In 2016 we were fortunate to have a visit by Omba Ngandu who serves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the In-country Director of *Rivers of the World-Congo* accompanied by Jimmy Shafe Director for *Rivers of the World-Congo* and also a North American board member for Congo Protestant University. Covenant continues to support the Sewing School with financial contributions from the Alternative Christmas Market and sweater sales.

In 2006 thirteen members of Covenant organized a mission trip through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina. We helped rebuild houses severely damaged. Working in one house predominately we developed a relationship with the family and experienced at close hand what dealing with crises means. This experience with PDA has brought increased awareness support of the work of PDA.

"Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with our God." Micah 6:8

Central to the focus of Covenant Presbyterian Church are the words encompassed in the mission statement: "to be a fully welcoming church". That this focus is intentionally inclusive is borne out in the programs implemented over the years. In 2005 a *Building Bridges to Understanding* group in the church offered the showing of Turning Points video followed by discussion of church position on gender identity and the church. Covenant has been a consistent donor to the Covenant Network, an organization working for equality for all members of our denomination. We have participated for over thirteen years in the annual local AIDS walk continuing to be the #1 church donor. In 2010 Covenant hosted the trial of Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr before the Redwoods Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission making welcome all participants in that trial. Consistent responses from the congregation at Covenant state a desire to continue to be a fully welcoming, nonjudgmental and intentionally inclusive church.

Who is CPC?

We are a welcoming, loving and inviting church, where children are welcome and encouraged to be with parents during worship service if they desire. We pride ourselves in being a welcoming and inviting church for all people. We are eager to expand our membership especially to younger families, to attract members from all parts of the City of Napa and to offer service to our neighbors in North Napa.

Stewardship/Finance

Stewardship is defined as "planned congregational giving" that can be relied on for the budgeting purposes and for implementing the church's mission and community outreach programs.

Covenant Presbyterian Church Stewardship program is moving back to the fall (September/October). This is when the congregation is asked to make a financial pledge the coming year. Our Stewardship program runs about 4 weeks with announcements made during church services, pastoral sermons on tithing, newsletters and bulletins for members to review.

Stewardship History *changed to July1-June 30 fiscal year

Year	Amount Pledged	Number of Pledge Units
*2016-17	\$120,852	59
*2015-16	\$143,194	64
*2014-15	\$148,719	66
*2013-14	\$142,825	71
*2012-13	\$144,319	74
2011	\$142,860	75

Covenant Presbyterian Church has a plan to pay off our current line of credit with Synod of the Pacific which was used to do some improvements to our parking lot, replace hall roof, replacement of HVAC units in hall. We will be debt free by June 30, 2017.

Covenant Presbyterian Church has received a number of memorial gifts that were undesignated and session has placed them in The Covenant Fund until appropriate projects are found. Additional individual gifts have allowed a beautiful and peaceful professional landscape to emerge beside our labyrinth. The landscaping, completed in 2016, turns our patio area into a calm, worshipful space. We are looking forward to landscaping in the front of the parking lot as part of this amazing gift.

There are some concerns on the horizon.

The aging donor base has an obvious impact on the future financial plans. It factors into the potential for continuing support for increases in the church's operating budget. Also looming are the aging structures and deferred maintenance that is now beginning to catch up with us.

"I rejoiced with those who said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1

A Little Background

Covenant Presbyterian Church was built in 1965 and resides on 5 acres in Northern Napa in a rural setting adjacent to established and new residential areas. One of the founding families, Al Wurz, sold the land to CPC at a "good price". From inside the sanctuary, one has amazing views of the property and Hall. Covenant was established by The Presbytery of the Redwoods in 1962. Charter members initially met at the Salvador Community Club and Salvador School before our present sanctuary was completed. A major sanctuary renewal project was undertaken in 1991. In 1978, Covenant Hall was constructed, partly due to a generous gift, to offer our congregation space for Sunday school, office and library space and large gathering place for meals and social functions. In 1994, partly with a gift from a congregational member, we remolded the kitchen to be more of a commercial kitchen with upgraded counter space, oven, refrigerator and dish washing stations which has now being rented to several Napa Valley artisans.

The Farm House existed as part of property when CPC purchased the property and has been used for such things as Sunday school classrooms, living quarters and for kitchen facilities.

Our church leases land to Sunrise Montessori School which has 4 buildings and enrolls about 100 kids from Preschool to 5th grade. CPC has had an amazing working partnership with Sunrise Montessori since February 1, 1997. The modular

units were built on site between the existing church playground and northern property line. The rent for the land lease is contributing to our operating budget each year.

In 2003, the Presbytery of the Redwoods was investigating moving their office location in Petaluma and Covenant Presbyterian Church had space to right of the church that was unused and suggested Presbytery of the Redwoods consider build an office space including meeting rooms there rent free they just need to pay for all improvements and construction costs. Due to our interconnectional relationship this has been win/win for both parties and improved our property and provided Presbytery no ongoing monthly lease cost.

Stewardship and Community Connections

Covenant Presbyterian Church has had a strong community involvement since its beginning. Our willingness to share our property is a reflection of the generosity of the founding members. We currently rent our commercial kitchen to a number of artisans. The church adds approximately \$15,000 per year to the operating budget from the commercial kitchen rental. We have approximately ¾ quarters of an acre unused and have just entered into land agreement with CanDoCanGrow and Latinos Unidos directly for the Latino community. This we have offered at no charge and will supply water. We are becoming a direct safe distribution site for the NV Food Bank. We rent office space in our hall for the non-profit *The of the North Bay* at an affordable term rental relationship with a price. We have had long on our property, which now adds approximately \$40,000 per year to our operating budget.



Latinos Unidos digs irrigation

We have just two non-profits, Napa Valley to grow for NV Food Bank and This we have offered at no price. We rent office space in *Teachers Resource Center* approximately \$40,000 per

Relationship to Presbytery

In 2003, we were called to provide a new home for the Presbytery of the Redwoods, which was seeking to transition to a larger space, from a shared location with the Synod of the Pacific.

A beautiful building was erected on our property, next door to our sanctuary, offering office space for Presbytery staff and conference rooms for Presbytery functions, such as Council and other committee meetings.

What resulted from this close proximity to CPC was a more active involvement of members and the pastor on various Presbytery committees: Committee on

Ministry, Committee for Preparation for Ministry, Council, Mission, Finance, and even vacation supply for the Stated Clerk.

CPC finds Presbytery staff to be always responsive and available to the Pastor and the Session, while maintaining a “good neighbor” relationship as well.

Pastoral Leadership

“Love others as you love yourself.” James 2:1

“You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works” James 2:18

For the past 18 years we have been fortunate to have the pastoral leadership of the Rev. Dr. Deana J. Reed. She came to us in a time of turmoil and, under her pastoral leadership, we have become more creative in our love of God and others. We are individually, and all of us collectively, ever more engaged in the ministry and mission of CPC, convinced that there are ways each of us might serve and grow.

What does it mean to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God? from Micah 6:8

We have clearly become a church steeped in social justice, community building, and unwavering acceptance of all of God’s people. During the last few years, we have not only become a fully inclusive church on paper, but have grown into that love and acceptance in a way that is clearly visible and shines through all of us. Deep conversations with each other kept the transition loving and natural. We work to use inclusive language in our worship. Many LGBTQ couples have comfortably made CPC their home church.

In the midst of the busyness of shepherding all of us, our pastor kept worship meaningful and reflective and kept us vibrant and eager. We became more reflective in our worship and God centered. We know to remind ourselves who we are and whose we are.

Our pastoral leadership has modeled and we have embraced involvement and commitment: involvement with CPC, with each other, with the community, with Presbytery, with the seminary, with General Assembly, with the issues and conversations of the church at large. We have learned not to shy away from difficult issues and important conversations. CPC hosted the Dr. Reverend Jane Spahr trial. CPC has been courageously led as a congregation and we have spoken out for equality during times in the church that our advocacy could have put our pastoral leadership in personal jeopardy.

We mirror, as best we can, courage and willingness to be on the side of justice. We strive to maintain the clear vision for a just and equitable world that our leadership modeled. Our learned courage is infectious. We are a committed bunch!

It would have been easy as a small “rural” congregation to disconnect from the larger Presbyterian organization. Our pastor kept us connected to San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Ca. (SFTS). SFTS named her “Distinguished Alumnus” in 2015. CPC had a steady stream of top notch interns who continue to be in relationship with us at various levels. This, because SFTS knew us and trusted future pastors with our spirituality, our leadership skills, our compassion, and our love of God as a model for the future of pastoral relationship. As a congregation, we came to realize that balance is needed in a pastor’s life and we encouraged and supported involvement on the Board of Directors of the Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center, Lake Tahoe, study leave, conferences, mission trips, and her beloved “Women Touched by Grace”. The entire congregation has been led and enhanced through those involvements. Our world and our compassion has grown watching our pastor’s involvement.

Most of us had no idea what General Assembly was and why we should know and care. We watched and learned and understood the importance of our connectedness to Presbyterian Church USA through continually hearing about overtures to the GA which we helped formulate as Deana carried them to GA. The same is true about Presbytery of the Redwoods. We now know our connectedness.

Not to be discounted or overlooked is the unique set of administrative leadership and skills CPC has become accustomed to. We rely on our pastoral leadership to be a confident leader and moderate and facilitate various Bible study offerings, conversations, discussions, and meetings. As head of staff and the overseer of both the spiritual and the practical needs of the congregation, we look to the pastor to be the administrative glue. Not only has our pastor been an accomplished speaker, she has ensured that the office runs smoothly, the facility stays clean and prepared for service, that records are kept, that the budget is sound, and that the relationship with Montessori stays positive. Because we are a small, aging congregation, the coordination of everything from irrigation to putting up shade tents falls initially to our pastor.

Pastoral administrative and fiscal leadership at CPC has seen to the coordination and functioning of various committees and commissions and their integration, ensuring that communication is positive and frequent. We have come to expect leadership that manages by being there, ensuring that commissions meet, making appropriate decisions and suggestions, interfacing with those who utilize our facility, and being the eyes and ears of those of us who volunteer our time

and talents to make up what we know as CPC. We have come to expect a pastor who is intelligent, perceptive, a compassionate leader – and wicked smart.

Deana’s walk through her ALS journey has helped all of us clearly define what is important in our lives and our lives in the CPC community. We became “Team Deana”, willing to support her the way she had supported us for those 18 years. We are compassionate, but lived it out throughout the ALS journey – a beautiful opportunity. It’s not surprising that she prepared us to move forward when her journey and her body said she needed to care more for herself.

We discovered a lot about ourselves and that she had empowered us to follow in her footsteps in keeping us in relationship with each other and with Jesus God. We are a stronger, more worshipful, compassionate, connected, and diverse group of God’s people – grateful that she felt supported as she helped us grow.



Our interim pastoral leadership has been gentle, nudging, positive, easy, humorous, God centered and like being wrapped in a warm blanket. Lynda Hyland Burris has the same social justice, equity core. She has a deep, visible love of God that shines through her no matter what the situation. We are fortunate that she, like Deana, finds in us the support and faith community that keeps her whole.

In Christ, your Mission Study Team

Karen Grobl
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