



Mission Study Report

**First Presbyterian Church of Elmira
Elmira, New York**

September 2021

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Mission Study was prompted by the retirement in January 2020 of the Reverend Dr. Betsey Crimmins, who served as pastor of The First Presbyterian Church of Elmira for 27 years. This study serves several purposes. First, it is intended to be used as input for the Ministry Information Form that will be prepared by the Pastor Nominating Committee. Second, it will help pastoral candidates to become acquainted with our congregation, our history, and our vision for the future. Third, this document will serve as a starting point for more detailed planning by Session and by the congregation to fulfill our long term goals. Finally, the “key steps” described in Section II will help the Session and Presbytery to assess how well we are progressing toward our vision a few years after our new pastor is installed.

This document is organized as follows: The remainder of this introduction describes the process by which the Mission Study was conducted, and provides the full text of our Mission Statement. The second section of the study describes our vision, short-term goals that we believe will help fulfill this vision, and a list of qualities and capabilities that we seek in our next pastor. The third and final section describes the history of our congregation, current demographics and statistics describing our local community and our membership, our physical, financial, and human resources, our committees, and some details about our local and global ministry.

Process by which the Mission Study was Conducted

The process used to develop this document began February 7, 2021. Congregational gatherings were held throughout the month. The invitation to participate was placed in our newsletter Pres Clippings, and it was announced during our worship services. These meetings took place via Zoom and were conducted in a large group format, as well as small group breakout sessions.

The purpose of these initial meetings was to define our Core Values. A large list was generated and from this, a solid 4 Core Values emerged.

We also conducted a congregational survey in which people were asked to outline their participation in the church, the qualities of the church that they most appreciated, changes that they would like to see, and the qualities most desired in a new pastor. The questions can be found in Appendix A. The data collected were presented to the congregation during worship on May 16, 2021. There was time allowed for further discussion.

Other sources for material in this report were the World Population Review, First Presbyterian Church of Elmira, The First 200 Years by Edward B. Hoffman, 175th Anniversary Pictorial of First Presbyterian Church, and our Annual Financial Report.

Our Mission Statement

Our mission as God's people is:

"As a welcoming community we strive to provide a spiritual home where we grow in faith, glorify God, and as followers of Jesus, minister to our neighbors and the world."

II. WHERE ARE WE GOING

Our Four Core Values

Glorifying God: We give glory to God when we show good to all. We celebrate and glorify God throughout our worship by using the blessings of music, art, flowers, and other gifts which He has given us.

Welcoming all as Family: We are a family of God's people who welcomes others with warmth and caring, and shows them Christ's love.

Growing in Faith: We continue to learn what God has promised. We grow in faith through the study of the Scriptures and by supporting each other with prayer, encouragement, and sharing our experiences that have grown our own faith. We lead by example and practice what we learn.

Doing the Mission: We are a dependable people committed to being the hands and feet of Christ in the world. We share multiple opportunities for individual and community engagement, and our Christ led works impact our community, our nation, and the world.

Our Vision Statement

Compelled by the Good news of the Gospel, we are called to be a church that:

- Glorifies God
- Exercises Christ-like care and compassion
- Builds relationships and community
- Equips all to be Christ's disciples

Our Ministry

- active and mission oriented
- serving our congregation and our community near and far
- faithfully using our many talents
- reaching out to our youth
- involving all in our worship services
- continuing our excellent music program in person and virtually
- offering adult education with many topics, platforms, and discussion opportunities
- welcoming all to our ministry
- supporting our many mission opportunities
- maintaining our role as community helpers

We seek:

- to be a church that supports its people's spiritual journeys
- to continue to be inclusive, accepting, and supportive of diversity in our ever changing world
- to be open to spiritual guidance for us as individuals and as a group that seeks to be the hands and feet of Christ
- to continue to find ways to share our faith with and engage with youth
- to grow our membership through the sharing of the message and our gifts and talents.

KEY STEPS IN FULFILLING THESE PURPOSES

- Seek ways to become a congregation that is more the hands and feet of Christ
- Develop activities and curriculum that engage and empower our youth
- Invite our congregation to be more active in worship
- Sponsor activities that will help create a sense of community and outreach
- Use mission activities as an opportunity for growth and bringing members of our congregation and community together
- Create new and varied opportunities for adult education
- Begin interfaith conversation within our community
- Look for ways to raise awareness between session and the congregation so as to encourage more open conversation
- To promote the spiritual growth of our people

OUR NEXT PASTOR

The most important qualities we seek in our next pastor include:

- Consistently effective preacher and worship leader
- Compassion and Empathy - genuine interest, kindness, and concern for others
- Character - strong moral consistency, stability, reliability
- Sense of calling - motivated, enthusiastic
- Creativity - ability to develop and present new ideas and methods
- Open mindedness - receptive to other ideas

We also value these traits:

- Professional competence - able to communicate, counsel, empower
- Sense of humor
- Consultative and cooperative approach
- Intellectual depth and rigor - educated, informed, scholarly
- Humility - awareness of his/her limitations

III. WHO WE ARE

OUR HISTORY

First Presbyterian was first organized as the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown in 1795. The Reverend Daniel Thatcher, who was sent to the area by the General Assembly as a Presbyterian Missionary, was the first pastor. The church initially met outdoors and in people's homes. In 1796 a structure was erected on a corner in Newtown that is now the Beecher School lot at Sullivan and Church Streets. It served as the courthouse, jail, and a meeting room. The church met in the jail. Throughout its first twenty-five years, its leaders ranged from a missionary, to a preaching doctor, to laymen, and finally to ordained ministers. In 1820 it was decided that the church would build its own building. In 1835 it was evident that a larger building was needed, and a new building was built. In 1862 that building was torn down, and a third building was constructed. It stood for 105 years.

The long eventful history of First Presbyterian Church has included two major "parting of the ways" when Park Church and Lake Street Church broke away in 1846 and 1861 respectively. In January of 1846, forty members left with the purpose of organizing the Independent Congregational Church (Park Church). A controversy over the abolition of slavery had divided the congregation. In 1860 the Rev. David Murdoch led 116 members in organizing the Second Presbyterian Society, which later became Lake Street Presbyterian. And in 1890 it saw the birth of a mission that later became North Presbyterian Church.²

The move from the downtown area to West Elmira was supported by most of the congregation when it became clear that it was not practical to restore the structure built in 1862. The ground breaking for the new church was held on June 26, 1966. The church was designed by A. Hensel Fink of Philadelphia and is constructed in the cruciform with the Choir loft and Chapel forming the transepts. The first service in the new building was on April 9, 1967. In 1998 construction of a large multiuse room, The Hoffman Great Room, was begun. This has proven to be a valuable addition to the building.

In the nineteenth century, First Church had four outstanding members, Simeon Benjamin, Solomon Gillet, Sarah Smith, and Clara Rose. Benjamin came to Elmira in 1835 and purchased fifteen desirable business properties. He joined First Church and became an Elder and Trustee. He remained in these roles until his death. In April of 1851, he met in Albany with a group that decided to establish a state educational institute for women. When the original group was unable to raise the needed funds, Benjamin stepped up and offered the difference with the intent to bring the college to Elmira. In November of 1851 a charter for the Elmira Collegiate Seminary was issued.

Solomon Gillet came to Elmira in 1830 and was very successful. He held many positions in the community, some of which included director and vice president of the Chemung Canal Bank, director and treasurer of the Elmira Woolen Mill, treasurer and trustee of the original Elmira Savings Bank. In 1850 he was elected President of the Village of Elmira. A gift of \$10,000 to Elmira College was used to construct Gillett Hall in 1892, which is still in use on the campus. He served as First Church's Clerk of Session for 53 years. The Tiffany Ascension window in our sanctuary was gifted to the church by Gillet's second wife after his death.

Sarah C. Smith joined First Church in 1867. In 1880, at the age of 29, Sarah was inspired to travel to Japan as a missionary. She spent her first 3 years teaching in Tokyo. In 1887 she began teaching at the Sapporo Normal School, and at the same time used her own money to establish a school for girls. Her school, Hokusei Gauken, was born in 1887. In 1894, Clara Rose, also a member of First Church traveled to Japan and worked alongside Smith. Later Rose established the Rose Kindergarten in Otaru, Japan. The Hokusei Gakuen now comprises a University, Junior College, three High schools and a Middle school. Many Hokusei students have come to Elmira and become exchange students in our high schools. Delegations from Japan visited in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s, several delegations from Hokusei Gakuen and Rose Kindergarten visited Elmira and members from our church visited Sapporo and Otaru. Our ties with Japan were strengthening.

A Japanese delegation came to visit Elmira in 2015 and in early 2017, Hokusei Gakuen School System invited First Presbyterian Church to send a delegation of members to attend the 130th anniversary of the founding of Sarah Smith's Hokusei Gakuen, and the 120th anniversary of the founding of Clara Rose's Kindergarten. Seven members of our church traveled to Sapporo to celebrate with them and to honor them for their ongoing commitment in the Christian education of Japanese students. While exchange trips have not happened during Covid-19, this partnership continues with the exchange of holiday and other greetings.

In 1992, The Rev. Dr. Betsey Crimmins was called as pastor and began her 27 year ministry in August. Rev. Dr. Crimmins was one of the first women called to a senior pastor position in the Geneva Presbytery and in New York. Rev. Crimmins was very involved in the community, the Presbytery, and the denomination. She served this congregation faithfully, retiring in January 2020.

Twice we have added other staff; the Rev. David Kwon, as Associate Pastor in January 2002 for 4 years, and Felix Perez as Outreach and Mission Specialist from October 2016 to November 2018. Both of these positions provided valuable learning experiences as we tried something new.

After Rev. Crimmins retired the interim search was begun. Then Covid arose, and the New York mandated shutdown occurred in March of 2020. With the help of many, we began offering Zoom worship services which continue. In 2021, a new camera system was installed, which greatly enhanced the quality of the online service. The Rev. Gil Mitchell Broadcast Ministry System was "dedicated with gratitude to the glory of God" on Sunday, October 24, 2021.

We are currently being led by Rev. William "Bill" Reynolds, an American Baptist minister, who was called to serve as Interim Pastor in November, 2020.

OUR CONTEXT

The 2020 Census recorded 26,523 residents in Elmira, down from the 2010 total of 29,200.

The racial composition of Elmira is:

- White: 75.73%
- Black or African American: 15.28%
- Two or more races: 6.12%
- Other race: 1.53%
- Native American: 0.78%
- Asian: 0.54%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.03%

The average household income in Elmira is \$49,549 with a poverty rate of 26.18%. The median rental cost in recent years is \$729 per month, and the median house value is \$74,500. The median age in Elmira is 34.1 years, 33.4 years for males, and 35.6 years for females.¹

Our West Elmira community is predominantly white, with 40% of the population being over age 55. The community is changing very little. Our focus on children's activities and opportunities to bring us together with the community will need continued thought and support.

OUR RESOURCES

The physical facilities of The First Presbyterian Church of Elmira consist of a Sanctuary, 10 classrooms, a choir room, 2 meeting rooms, updated kitchen, office space, and the Hoffman Great Room.

The Sanctuary

Our beautiful sanctuary consists of our worship area, choir loft, and a small chapel area. It is remarkably functional. The sanctuary is seasonally decorated with banners and other adornments. The church's organ, originally a W.S Stevens organ that had been purchased in 1928, was replaced in 1978 with a Delaware organ. About half of its 2,679 pipes came from the old organ. In 2007 a five year renovation project was begun. The organ now features over 2,300 pipes, some of which date back to the 1800s. It is equipped with a custom keyboard and state of the art technology, and continues to thrill all who are privileged to hear it. The sound system has undergone recent updates, and a new video system has been installed. There are also 12 memorial stained glass windows, and our beloved Tiffany Ascension window, which is the only one of its kind in the United States.

Just outside the sanctuary doors in the Narthex lies an item of interest. There you will find an original stone from the Abbey of Iona, Scotland. It was secured by Reverend

Francis Park who served the church from 1965-1971. Beginning in 1989, First Presbyterian began a series of pilgrimages to the Island of Iona. To date over 20 adults and 75 youth have made the trip. Although the last trip was in 2011, there has been interest expressed in traveling to Iona again.

The Building

The church building houses the office and the Pastor's office, the Happy House Nursery School (8 classrooms, 1 office, bathroom facilities and limited storage space), a music room, parlor, youth room, childcare room, two bathrooms, coat room, the Hoffman Great Room, 2 meeting rooms, and a recently renovated kitchen.

In March 27, 1999 the Hoffman Great Room was dedicated. This large multi-purpose space allows the church to have air-conditioned space for summer worship, a monthly space for Red Cross Blood drives and Wednesday Morning Club meetings, and weekly meetings of our Adult Sunday School class and Bone Builders exercise class. It provides the space to hold receptions and dinners, and serves as a Chemung County voting site. This fall our Jewish congregation neighbors, Kol Ami, used the space for their Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. It also provides winter play space for Happy House Nursery School.

The church kitchen was renovated in 2018 following a capital campaign which raised \$70,000.00. The updated kitchen has enabled us to enhance our community outreach as it is utilized for Sunday fellowship hour, weddings, baptisms, memorial and funeral services, and the free community Thanksgiving dinners (2012 – 2018). A grant was written to purchase additional kitchen equipment for Heath Meets Food, which is part of the curriculum for students at LECOM (Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine).

The Grounds

The landscaped grounds contain one large parking area with 2 access driveways. There is a small playground and outdoor storage shed. During the summer months we make use of our large tent on the front lawn. In the center of our building is a delightful courtyard that serves as alternative outdoor space for conversations and coffee hours.

OUR FINANCES

Current status of the congregation - from the 2020/2021 Annual Report:

Potential Giving Units:	185
Budgeted Income:	\$249,983.
Budgeted Expenses:	\$282,502.
Total Assets	\$5,826,072.

Our Annual Financial Report is available upon request.

OUR LEADERSHIP

Current Staff:

Interim Pastor	¾ time; New hire will be full-time
Sexton	part-time
Organist	part-time
Choir Director	part-time
Secretary	part-time
Financial Secretary	part-time
Instrumental music coordinator & music technician	part-time

Volunteer Staff: Clerk of Session, 14 Elders and 12 members of the Board of Deacons.
The volunteer Adult Choir averages 8 members.

OUR MINISTRY FOCUS

Programs of the Congregation

The following are some of the programs which support our membership and the community at large and for which we provide financial or in-kind support:

Chancel Choir	Church School	Adult Education
Sacred Stitches	Conversational Spanish	Adult Care Ministry
Concert Series	Vacation Bible School	First Pres Book Club
Lunch and Learn	Grief Share	past – AA and Divorce Care

Our congregation, currently or in the past, supports the following groups - some financially, some with volunteers, some with both:

Circle of Women	Potter's Hands	Happy House Nursery School
Catholic Charities	Heifer International	Bampa's House
Food Bank of the Southern Tier		One Great Hour of Sharing
Libertad Veteran's Program		Red Cross Blood Drive
Hokusei Gakuen School, Sapporo, Japan		Puerto Rico Partnership
Living Waters for the World		North Pres Food Pantry
Adopt a Highway	Habitat for Humanity – local & Patterson, NJ	

The following outside groups use our facilities on a regular basis (Covid concerns have restricted building use):

Bone Builders	Wednesday Morning Group	Girl Scouts
Awareness through Movement	Circle of Women	Congregation Kol Ami

How these Programs and Ministries Contribute to the Overall Purpose of the Church

Our Mission and purpose at First Presbyterian Church of Elmira through our worship and outreach are to:

- pursue the Matthew 25 initiative
- reach out to all members
- continue to involve all
- continue with a strong pulpit and music program
- continue to be an encouraging body
- engage younger families and build relationships with the next generation
- empower the leadership of members
- build a bridge between the generations
- develop intentional outreach to the community
- develop a culture of curiosity
- build a welcoming community and space for all people

A significant mission partnership is with our sister church in Lares, Puerto Rico. We have been working side by side with Pastora Evelyn Ramirez-Torres from the onset. Although the first trip to Lares was in January of 2018, the first meeting with Pastora Evelyn took place in August of 2018. A planning trip occurred in January 2019, and two teams traveled in February 2019 to work on damaged homes of members of the Lares church. To date, 6 teams have traveled and worked. This is a true partnership. In October 2021, the Presbyterian Women Birthday Grant Offering awarded \$105,000.00 to this partnership, which will enable the installation of a solar electrical system, an industrial generator, and funds to renovate the existing church kitchen and upgrade wiring. Team 7 will travel in November 2021, and it is hoped that two construction teams will go in March of 2022 to help complete the project. In our eyes, our Puerto Rico partners have become family, and there is no expiration date on this partnership.

OUR COMMITTEES IN BRIEF

Adult Christian Education

Christians grow by spending time reading God's word, hearing God's word while worshipping together, and practicing our Christian faith during our everyday lives. Our committee offers programs supporting these activities.

Adult Bible Study: Most recently ACE provided an overview of the entire Bible, with guidance by Rev. Tim Hawk. Classes were offered immediately prior to our Sunday services, so participants could attend church.

First Pres Book Club: During book discussions this past year we have discussed problems immigrants face, racial discrimination, difficulty for the disadvantaged to access education, and the need for all to respect, understand and support each other.

These activities help to spiritually equip us as members of First Pres to do missions in fellowship with other members, community service providers, our Presbytery, and regional, national, and international organizations.

By getting involved, we are building relationships with one another and with those outside our church who share our missions and values. Members of our ACE Committee are involved in Session, Youth Christian Education, Grief Share, and other church activities.

Plans for the future include offering more hybrid programs in church and to those at home, including friends locally and in other locations; mixed media classes using video and written material; and other guest speakers. We also have an interest in updating and making available books, videos, and other religious and spiritual material in our library.

Members: Rich Buchheimer, Chair, Barb Squires, Barb Fitz Simmons, Heather Cranford

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is tasked with managing the church finances and investments in its endowment to support the missions of the church. This is performed in a transparent manner. Financial Statements are reviewed in committee and with Session monthly. Yearly meetings are held with our investment advisors: Valicenti Advisory Services, Inc. and Manning and Napier Advisors, LLP. Yearly Congregational meetings are held to allow a detailed analysis of the financial statements and the budget. Expensive projects such as installation of hardware to allow streaming of church services are funded from the endowment. The endowment fund continues to subsidize the operating budget. The Finance Committee meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 7 pm. This year all meetings above have been via Zoom. Further details of our finances can be found in the most recent Annual Financial Report dated February 28, 2021.

Members: Mark Ivanick, Chair, Fred and Marilyn Betschen, Joy Hoffman, Paul Kingsbury, Barbara Squires, Cynthia Malcovitch, Mike Mitchell, Ad-hoc member: Susan Weaver-Financial Secretary

Membership Committee

Membership Committee Mission Statement: The committee actively strives to retain current members and to encourage regular visitors to consider membership or affiliation with First Presbyterian Church Elmira. Additionally we seek and support opportunities to welcome the community in the church for various activities. The FPC Membership Committee embraces all facets of our stated core values by 1. Being “Pew Hosts” by welcoming visitors and hoping to make a warm, positive church service experience, 2. Making sure that visitors obtain one of our Visitor Packets, and 3. Doing visitor follow-up, either in person, by phone call, or by email. The committee nurtures the church membership by contacting members who have been absent for a period and to assist with any concerns that need to be addressed. The committee also sponsors various “Welcoming Events” to help bring members and strangers alike into the church, such as Recognition Sunday and Back to Church Sunday. We send out postcards and other advertisements to attend special holiday services during Easter and Christmas. (*NOTE These are all pre-Covid -19 procedures.) The committee is engaged in community outreach as part of its local mission work that includes sponsoring the church website,

hosting a “Friendship Sunday”, and hosting various post-service coffee hours, and funding outside informational banners. All of our committee members work with other committees and often, are members of another committee.

Members: Chuck Stewart, Chair, Scott Proudfoot, Steve Proudfoot, Cynthia Malcovitch, Barb Horton, Rich Lavere

Mission/First Pres Works

In our efforts to follow the model of the PC USA "Matthew 25 Initiative", the First Pres Works/Mission Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Elmira lives to support and equip our congregation to be the hands and feet of Christ in the community, the nation, and the world. We are an active and vital committee and meet once a month. Concerns in between regular meetings are addressed through email.

Community Outreach

Current: Adopt-a-Highway Bampa's House, Corning Potter's Hands
Senior Care Sacred Stitches Food Bank of the Southern Tier
Health Meets Food Conversational Spanish Class First Pres Works
Habitat for Humanity (Chemung and Steuben Counties) North Pres Food Pantry

Past: Catholic Charities Ernie Davis Comm. Center Wisner Market
Libertad Veteran's Program Logom Landing, Dansville, NY

National Outreach

Habitat for Humanity, Paterson, NJ Puerto Rico Partnership

International Outreach

Current: Heifer Project Hokusei, Japan One Great Hour of Sharing
Living Waters for the World Mexico Mission
Past: Tegucigalpa, Honduras Iona, Scotland

Members: Joanne Tunison, Chair, Kathy Menges, Secretary, Alida Schamel, Pat Holmstrom, Dottie Tholfsen, Ron Tunison, Barb Fitzsimmons, Andy and Joanne Foster, Brenda Hammett, Falon Denison, Barb Squires, Kammie Morrisey

Personnel

The Personnel Committee is responsible for interviewing, hiring, salary review, performance evaluation, and termination of all employees. We are fortunate to have a financial secretary, a church secretary, a sexton, an organist, a music director, an instrumental music director who also serves in the role of worship technician, two childcare givers in our church nursery, and our pastor who is head of staff. Job descriptions are developed, reviewed, and revised in order to stay current with the changing needs of the church and the employees. We have developed a Sexual Harassment Policy, and all employees are required to take training once a year. Our

church has a Safe Church Policy, and all employees undergo a background and reference check prior to their hire.

Members: Alida Schamel, Chair, Fred Betschen, Mike Mitchell, Connie LaVere, Rich Buchheimer

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee recognizes that the desire to be a good steward must come from within. The committee strives to encourage the congregation to be good stewards of this church by eliciting what is already inside us all. The committee works closely with the Finance Committee to support the church operating budget, the church, and its missions. The committee organizes a yearly Stewardship Campaign, Christmas Offering, and Easter Offering towards these ends. A yearly Per Capita Campaign is performed to offset money that the church sends to the Presbytery. We meet as needed, currently via Zoom.

Members: Mark Ivanick, Chuck Stewart, Alida Schamel

Worship and Music

The name of the committee shows that First Presbyterian understands that music is a significant part of worship. At the same time, teaching, through the spoken word and all our worship activities, plays a large role in our worship service preparations.

While music is never “right” for every congregant - too slow, too fast, too old, too new - we know that the music woven into the service has meaning for everyone. The lyrics to hymns can at times be more meaningful to a person than the scriptures that are read. Music is also an outreach to our members and community. Our outreach activities include a free community concert series and our adult Chancel Choir. Our choir is a vibrant group of people who provide worship service music on Sundays and cantatas for our Christmas and Easter celebration services. And sometimes, choir practice is more fellowship than practice, showing care for one another and our congregation.

As a committee, we work with the pastor and music staff to plan at least a month forward and several months ahead for special services. We typically follow the Revised Common Lectionary, but also look for opportunities to incorporate a non-lectionary sermon series or a special topic. If a major current event occurs, that event can become what dictates the service for the next Sunday. For many years, the Presbytery has placed seminary interns with us to learn about pastoral leadership. These interns attend our committee meetings and fully participate in the planning as a member.

Members: Fred Betschen, Heather Cranford, Greg Lamb, Anne McGee, Melissa Moore, Kay Stewart, Gary Tucker, Tom Leslie

Youth Christian Education and Youth in Action Committee

Our goal is for each child to experience the love of God and the joy of belonging to a family of faith. The YCE/YIA committee supports the “Faith Growth” and “Journey” of our young people through biblical teaching, mentoring, and participation in the life of First Presbyterian. Currently our Sunday morning program is for students K-8th grade. We are offering an in person class with a virtual option for our older students and an in person experience for our little ones. While our numbers are small, we have a committed core of students that attend regularly.

Through Sunday School and participation in learning and worship, it is our goal to bring each child to his or her own understanding of the Christian faith and how that impacts their lives. We would also like them to understand what it means to be baptized, participate in communion, and be confirmed as a member of the church. Beyond Sunday morning we hope to involve our children in age-appropriate mission opportunities.

Vacation Bible School, (currently on hold due to Covid restrictions) is offered as a community outreach to children and families for a week in the summer. We also sponsor community events at Halloween and Easter.

The committee ascribes to the saying, “faith is caught...not taught”; but perhaps, change the not, to and, “faith is caught...and taught.”

Members: Barb Fitzsimmons, Chair, Nancy Cooper, Kathy Menges, Heather Cranford, Michelle Giacchino. Sheila O’Bireck and Rehana Stanley assist with special events.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The goal of Buildings and Grounds is to create a safe and attractive environment both within and around the church that supports the various church activities and goals.

Past projects include:

- Replacement of the flat roof over the narthex, kitchen, Mission Hall, and classrooms
- Installation of ethernet access in the sanctuary, parlor, and Hoffman Great Room
- Replacement of the air conditioning/heating unit for the Hoffman Great Room
- Installation of a 3 camera video system in the sanctuary.
- Restoration of the storage shed

Ongoing projects include:

- Conversion of incandescent and fluorescent lighting fixtures to LED
- Overseeing contractors maintaining the heating, cooling, water and other utilities

Members: Harry Fitzsimmons and Kammie Morrisey, co-chairs, Dennis Cooper

Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. What initially attracted you to First Presbyterian Church, and what keeps you coming?
2. If you could change one thing about this church (besides the size of the congregation and availability of money), what would it be?
3. Has your involvement in the congregation increased, decreased, or remained about the same in the last few years? Please explain.
4. What do we do well that we would like to do more of? What are the strengths that we can expand upon?
5. How can we get more young families interested in our church?
6. Should there be a greater emphasis on evangelism; spreading of the gospel message?

Answers are available upon request.

Footnotes

1. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/elmira-ny-population>
2. 175th Anniversary Pictorial of First Presbyterian Church

