

Mission Studies Committee 2023

Report to Session

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Come and visit the

Presbyterian Church of Wilmington

<https://www.pcwilmington.org/>

A welcoming congregation wishing to receive all in the spirit of Jesus Christ

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

A congregation striving to live out Christ's message of love and nurture to our neighbors.

A congregation knowing that it is not perfect but hoping to keep growing in faith and maturing in our adherence to the reconciling work of Christ in our world.

A mission-driven faith reaching out to the community of Wilmington, our nation, and the world.

A member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery of the Miami Valley.

See what we believe:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/>



You will find:

- A Relaxed and Casual Atmosphere
 - No dress code.
 - Friendly and inviting people.
 - Able to laugh at ourselves.
- A Traditional Worship
 - In structure of service.
 - In music style (but don't be surprised by the occasional southern gospel or praise music).
 - Always flexible (this is live church, after all).
- Solid Preaching
 - Focusing on living Christ-like lives.
 - Helping us to understand the Bible's scriptures and God's messages to us.
 - Emphasizing the two great commandments:
 - Love and serve God.
 - Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Family-oriented
 - Timber Faith Preschool.
 - Vacation Bible School.
 - Summer Camp Scholarships.
 - Youth education during Sunday Worship.
 - People of all ages welcome in vocal choir, bell choir and Worship participation.

The vision of the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington is set forth in these beliefs.

- We believe that Christ offers us the glorious gift of salvation.
- In loving response to His gift, we become joyful disciples of Jesus Christ using our God-given strengths, time, talents, and resources to glorify God and faithfully participate in Christ's mission in the world.
- We believe that Christ intends for us to be at peace with ourselves and our neighbors, and most importantly with God.
- We believe that through His teachings, we are blessed, enabling us to enrich ourselves, our families, our congregation, our communities, our nation, and our world.
- We believe that God's word, through the Scripture, calls the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington to engage in intentional mission by:
 - Energizing worship and spiritual activity.
 - Creating vibrant fellowship.
 - Working to enhance the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of the community.
 - Proclaiming the Good News through loving words and deeds.

The mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington ... We have been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ; to equip the Saints; to minister to the need of congregational members and the community; and to promote peace, justice, and equality in the world.

The values of the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington include:

- Combining our beliefs and our mission to visualize what God is calling us to be as a church in our community.
- Growing and strengthening our church through spirituality, evangelism, and mission
- Being a hospitable church energized by spiritual activity
- Ministering to our church members and the greater community
- Worshiping and glorifying God
- Knowing each other better
- Sharing our joys and love
- Providing comfort and refuge
- Teaching and being teachable
- Growing individually and collectively in Christ.

We have faithfully examined our church, its history, its members, its financial past and present, its changes in membership, and the demographics of the community in which our church resides.

We have developed the following lists of strengths and aspirations:

Strengths

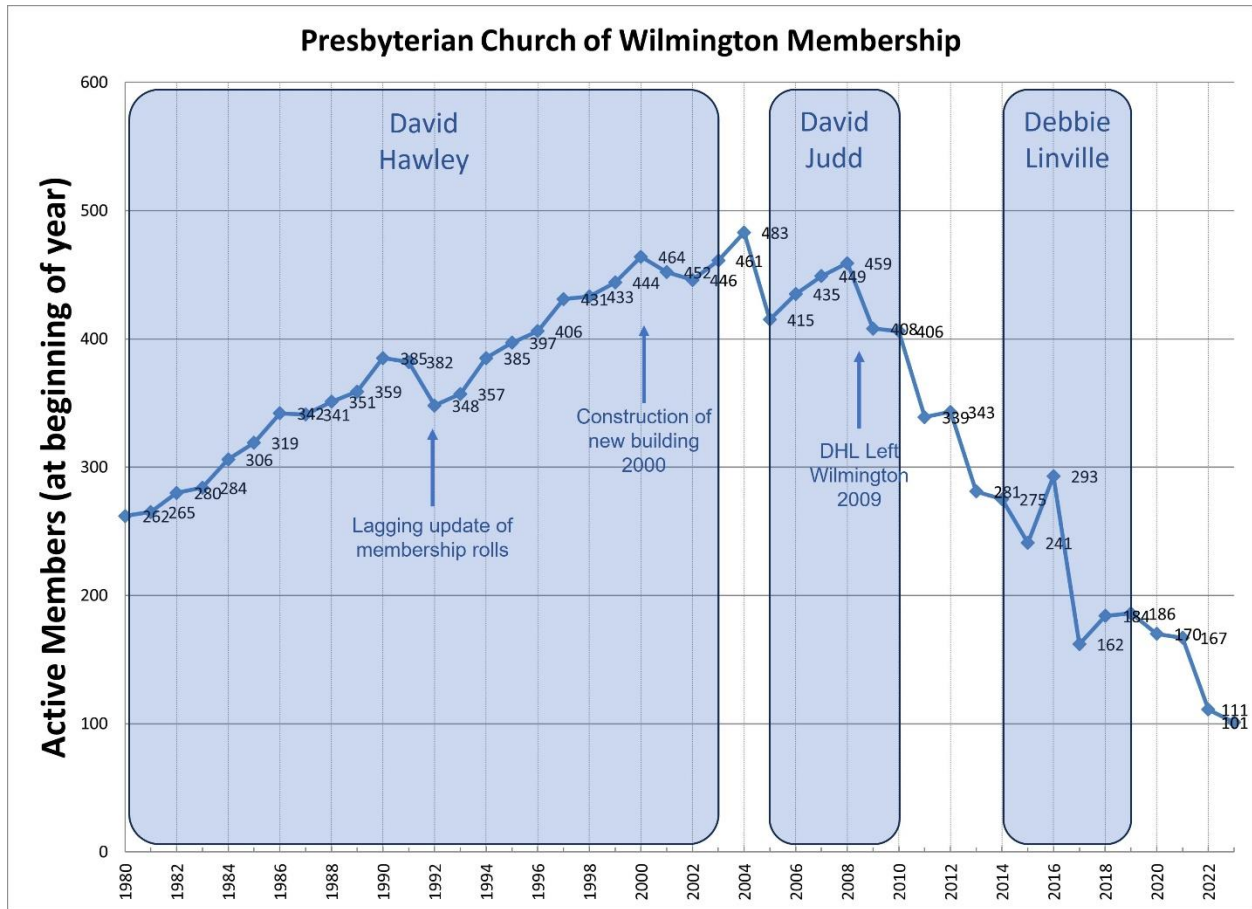
- The education programs we have for our young children.
 - Timber Faith Preschool.
 - Sunday School (during worship).
 - Vacation Bible School.
 - Various programs for participation in Sunday worship and special services (e.g. Christmas musical, Blessing of the Backpacks, children's sermon, acolytes).
 - Confirmation classes and Confirmation mentorship program.
- Our church facility.
 - Modern.
 - Well-equipped.
 - Mortgage-free!
 - Open to the community.
- The quality of our worship services.
 - Traditional in form and structure, but flexible.
 - Facebook Live Worship.
 - Strong music program.
 - Vocal Choir.
 - Handbell Choir.
 - Seasonal Children's Choir.
 - Welcoming
 - Accepting of relaxed attire.
 - Everyone can participate, regardless of membership.
- Fellowship and social activities.
- Missions -- local, national, and international.
- Faithful core membership.
- A scholarly congregation.
- Willingness to give generously for a good cause (e.g. organ replacement, handbell refurbishment, mortgage payoff, community food drive, school supplies).
- Relationship with the Presbytery.

Aspirations

- Increase community involvement.
- Expand missions.
- Grow participation of young families.
- Expand membership of retired and senior community.
- Seek out younger families to grow our long-term church community.
- Enhance Facebook Live Worship to enable remote participation.
- Increase outreach to Wellington College.

Appendix A: Trends in Number of Active Members

In order to answer the question of “who we are as a church”, it was recommended to study historic trends in membership numbers for the church. To this end, records were located going back 43 years, to 1980. Most of the annual reports from these years listed several membership statistics, the most useful for this study being “Total Active Members”. This count was charted, with the result as shown below.



Currently, The Presbyterian Church of Wilmington enjoys a total of 101 active members. However, our membership peaked at 483 at the beginning of 2004. Several external factors have influenced our membership numbers, such as the construction of, and subsequent move to, the current church building in 2000, and the closure of the DHL shipping operation at the Wilmington AirPark, which accounted for a sizeable percentage of the employment in the area, in 2009. There have also been internal stressors that resulted in the loss of some members, on top of the general country-wide trend towards reduced church membership. However, we also have typical Sunday attendance of approximately 60, which is a comparatively high percentage of regular attendees compared to total membership.

Appendix B: Church and Community Programs and Activities

This report was researched by studying the Annual Church Reports dating back to 2000. Although that is farther back than the 10 years asked for, because of the Covid years, it was thought we would investigate further back in time.

Although the charts shown below do not depict the years, they do show how involved our church has been through the years, not only within our congregation but also as a member of the Wilmington Community. We have had our eyes outside our church, locally, nationally, as well as internationally over time. We have a strong presence in our Homeless Shelter, and Sugartree Ministries - which provides clothing and food, as well as several homes for homeless women and children. Participation and loving care have always been a good quality of our church members. The events that our church missions have participated in are endless, basically different ways of helping others. Over the years, with various fund-raising programs, Missions has been able to raise thousands of dollars that are not listed in the budget to support various community programs, all the way to helping children go to summer camp at places like Kirkmont, hosting a community pig roast for the neighborhood, and donating tons of food and clothing to the needy. Other groups such as Presbyterian Women, and Blanket Bunch work under the Mission umbrella to give more than their time but also their talents in creating blankets, dresses, and any other conceivable items as gifts. Our missions outside of Wilmington have taken us to New Orleans to help clean up after Hurricane Katrina, to Africa to help a sister church, and also to clean up neighborhoods in Detroit, Michigan.

Evangelism has been a dual system for our congregation in that it has helped us stay refreshed with each other as well as provide support to church members. A host of projects have fallen under Evangelism from creating a wall of member pictures, to hosting drug court, to offering communion to shut ins. We feel that this committee will be able to help our congregation grow spiritually even more in the future.

Our Christian Education has always been received well. It is family orientated, well organized, and has good strong youth worship during Sunday service. Our children go to summer camps and come home very excited to know that they have learned much in preparation for what they learn away from home. Vacation Bible School has been a staple in our education process. We continue to look for ways to educate the entire family at the same time, giving adults more time to spend spiritually.

We have also been able to host other types of activities which do not fall into specific categories. These can range from hosting the Miami Presbytery in a monthly meeting, to combining with the Methodist church and community members in a vocal ensemble called Cantabile, bringing in bagpipes for Heritage Month, and giving scholarship money to graduating Seniors.

All in all, our congregation is a loving congregation that wants to be a peace-loving staple in our community. We are willing to try just about anything reasonable to be good neighbors and to share the Good Word.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CHURCH AND/OR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS ACTIVITIES

MISSION	Evangelism	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	OTHER ACTIVITIES
Deacons – mission of sympathy and service	Crazy Bridge Party	Sunday school ages 2-Grade 5	HOSTED MIAMI PRESBYTERY MEETING
Provided transportation to worship service	Dinners for 8	9:30 AM Sunday School – Jr High, Adult, Sr. High	Coffee Hour after worship
Collected food - YFK, HOMELESS SHELTER, AND OTHER GROUPS	Under the Stars listening to band + ice cream	Sunday School funds purchased 12 large duffle bags TO Children’s Services	New member reception
Relay for Life	Scavenger Hunt - road rally	October collection for UNICEF	Confirmation reception
Crazy Bridge Party	Progressive Dinner	Sunday School picnic	Graduating seniors’ reception
Support for Homeless shelter	Nametag Sunday	Collection for Ho-Ho	Hosted Community blood Draw - Provided refreshments and workers for the day.
Annual Yard Sale	Class of Photo Shop taught by Dave Miller	Vacation Bible School	37 Easter Baskets for Seniors 60 baskets for Thanksgiving for families
Christmas Auction	Family Putt-Putt	Confirmation classes	Delivered Holiday remembrance Packages for shut-in members
Soup Luncheons after church fundraiser	People signed up for Kroger cards, to earn free money for church	6 th graders given personalized bibles	Summer Celebration luncheon in June
Presby Women – donating sweat pants to schools	Provide support to church family members who are experiencing mental, physical, spiritual, or emotional challenges	Beginner Youth Group – 3 rd -5 th grade youth Fellowship	Consecration Sunday Meal
Sugartree Ministries meals served	Created a Wall of Fame with pictures of all members	Junior Youth Group – 6 th – 8 th grade	Hosted Chicken barbeque/ice cream social
Youth painted Homeless Shelter	Dinner for drug court	Senior Youth Group – 9 th -12 th grade	Christmas carry-in meal after Childrens program by youth choir
Product drive for Homeless Shelter	Created Holy Spirit Committee - Visit the people who need support/spiritually,	Cardboard City	Candlelight service for Christmas eve

	emotionally, physically, or nutritionally		
Pennies for Pets – fundraiser for Humane shelter	Card showers	Summer Camp	Timber Faith Preschool -
Christmas Cards signed to send to Military	Delivered remembrance boxes	Raised \$ souper bowl Sunday for homeless shelter	Special Veterans Celebration
Cape May Vespers	Youth Adventure Golf	Trunk or Treat	Community Cantabile
Single Rose program – Wholistic Health Ministry	- Contact visitors and send notes	YWAM	PW scholarship to graduating seniors
Yellow Dot program	Deliver communion to shut ins, and support, nurture , etc.	Adult Bible Study in Bartkey's home	Ruth Circle
Provide snacks for after school program at main School	Keeps church family updated on family members needing prayer or services	Souper bowl	Gift of shawls and blankets to church members
Raise money for Georgianna Thomas fund	Hog Roast	Lenten Dinner	Making of banners and wall hangings for church
Raise money to support local diaper mission	Updated wall of fame	Easter Pageant	Live nativity outside
Thinking of You boxes to college students and military	Wednesday night meals	Recognize Graduating Sr.	Special services on Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Sunrise Service
Blanket Bunch donated \$ to Harvest of Gold	CARE GROUP W/1 DEACON, 1 ELDER	Wally's Lawn Party	Combined service with Methodist Church
Volunteers to help with Habitat for Humanity	Banquet for 60+	MS/HS Bowling Party	Heritage month
6 people went to Detroit to work with Rippling Hope	First official web site - 2009	Back to School BBQ for all church families	Hanging quilts Worship
Sent supplies to Florida	Evangelism Sunday cards distributed to be mailed to people we were thinking about or haven't seen at church lately	Hygiene Kits assembled by Youth groups	Bell Choir

Donate soups and small meals to needy	Hosted a Sunday afternoon concert	Harvest Party	Fundraiser for organ
Rippling Hope in Detroit	Periodic nametag Sundays	Mom's time Out	Pet Blessing Ceremony
Blanket Bunch donate money to CCYC, ADA Chapel Diaper Mission Presby Disaster Fund	Inquirer Classes – possible new members	YWAM	Hosts meals for funerals
	angel committee formed	Blessing of the Backpacks	Parking lot service began May 10th
Serves Meals at Your Father's Kitchen		3 rd annual Christmas arts festival	Started Facebook video of worship May 17th
Cancer Society Relay for Life Food donation to Sugartree Ministries	Family softball game	Youth Music	1 st outdoor virtual baptism Gracelyn Mae Fulton
Donated bags and special kits to Cypress Lake Presby church	Scavenger Hunt	Children choir	Sanctuary Guild
Signed cards for Operation Gratitude for service men and women	Traveled to LaComedia	1 st year for live nativity scene - 2008	2008 Congregational survey
Ho-Ho Shop	Golf outings	2 Taiz Services with Baptist Church	Planned to increase small group activities
Donated \$ to Besong Smile Organization to aid church in Cameroon Africa	Dinner with a ghost	Children Choir traveled to Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Kentucky	Presby movers
Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child	Church directory	Older girls danced at Cape May	Women weekend retreat
Sent sundresses and shorts to Cameroon Africa church	Formed Visual records committee	Birthday party for Jesus after Christmas program	Planning and design Committee
Parking lot drive thru with donations	Hayride	Began pre-school program – 2005 Timber Faith	
Blanket collection	Mug Task Force created – visit the home of a local first-time visitor and thank them for visiting us – team of 2 – mug filled with candy, a pew	Children time started 2003	

	brochure, and a couple of church pencils		
4 – 40 Mission Team community projects	Implemented pew registers		
Hog Roast	Family canoe trip planned		
Established Georgiana Thomas fund	Family Fall Harvest Celebration		
Blood drive	Steak and wine at Valley Vineyards		
Sponsored a child in India (Subasri)	Provided 35 baskets for CC Senior Citizens and 60 baskets for families in need		
Sent money to Kirkmont	Progressive dinner		
Sponsored A CHILD MAGAESWARI FROM India, family has leprosy	Bring a Friend Sunday Open House – Entire community was invited, but we especially targeted our own neighborhood by hand-delivering invitations the week before to area families		
Worshiped in amphitheater outside church			
Habit for Humanity built a home			
6 trips to New Orleans			
Purchased chickens for Heifer project			
Served spaghetti dinner to GOBA bicycling group			
Helped clean trails at Kirkmont			
Relay for Life			
Kamp Dovetail			
Travelled to New Orleans scouting area			
Mailed packages of uniforms and money			

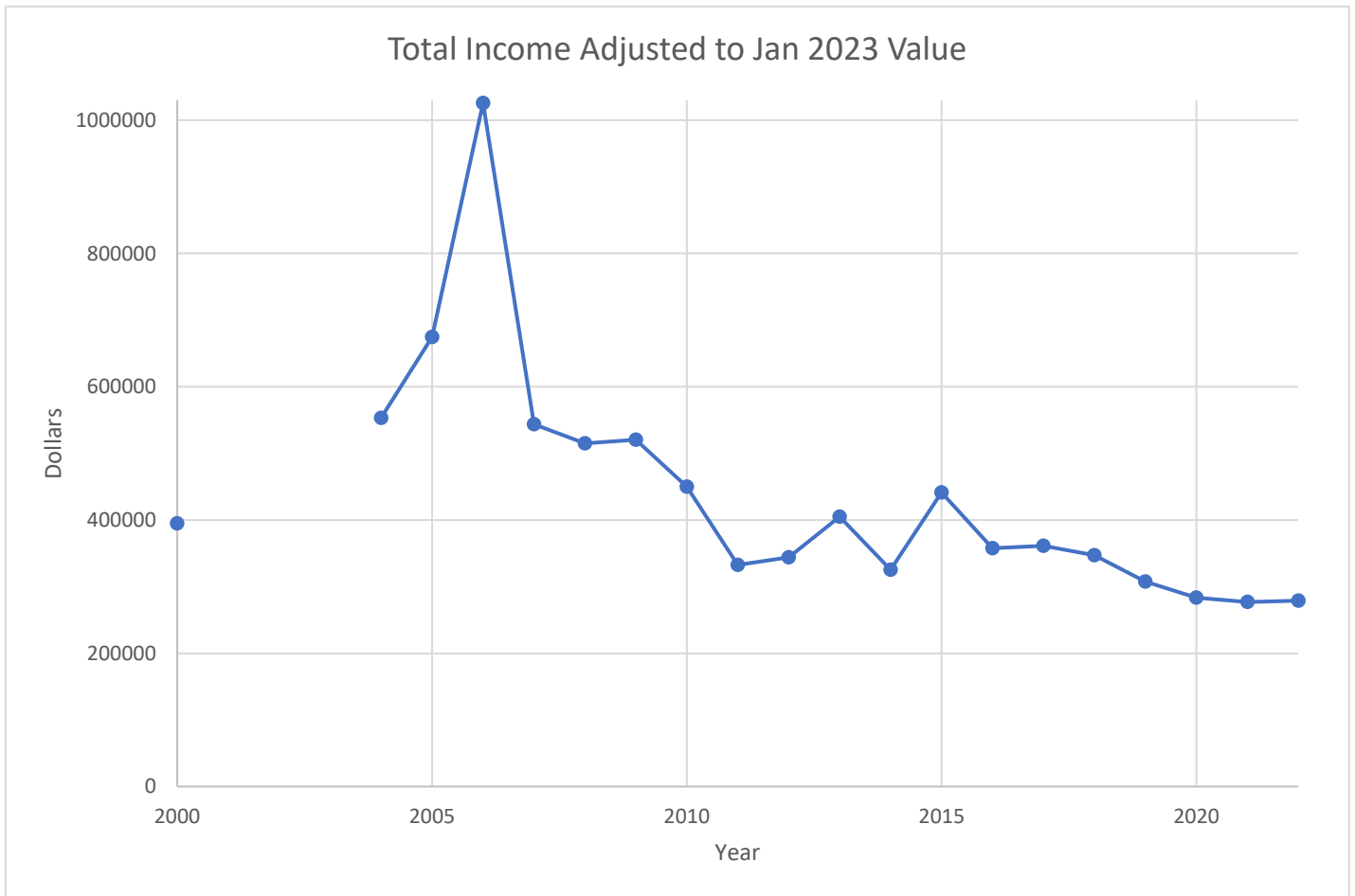
to Pearl River School District in Mississippi			
Presbyterians Responding IN Servant Mission, Sr High youth volunteering hours, earn certificates that colleges will accept with applications			
Collected clothing for children of Ukraine			
Ukraine orphans			

Appendix C: Trends in Church Finances

Information was gathered from Annual Reports going back to 2004. Before that, there was some limited information available. Mary Zaycosky, in the church office, provided all the reports and other information that could be found.

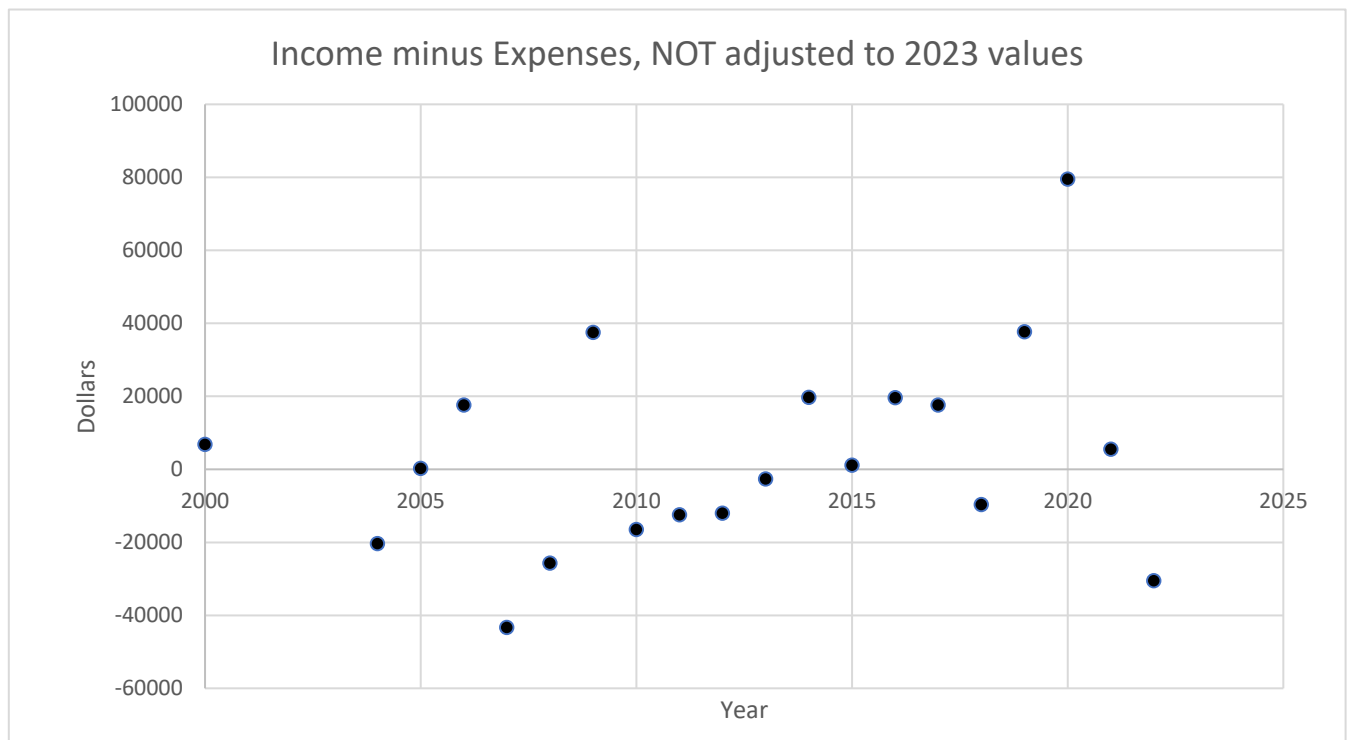
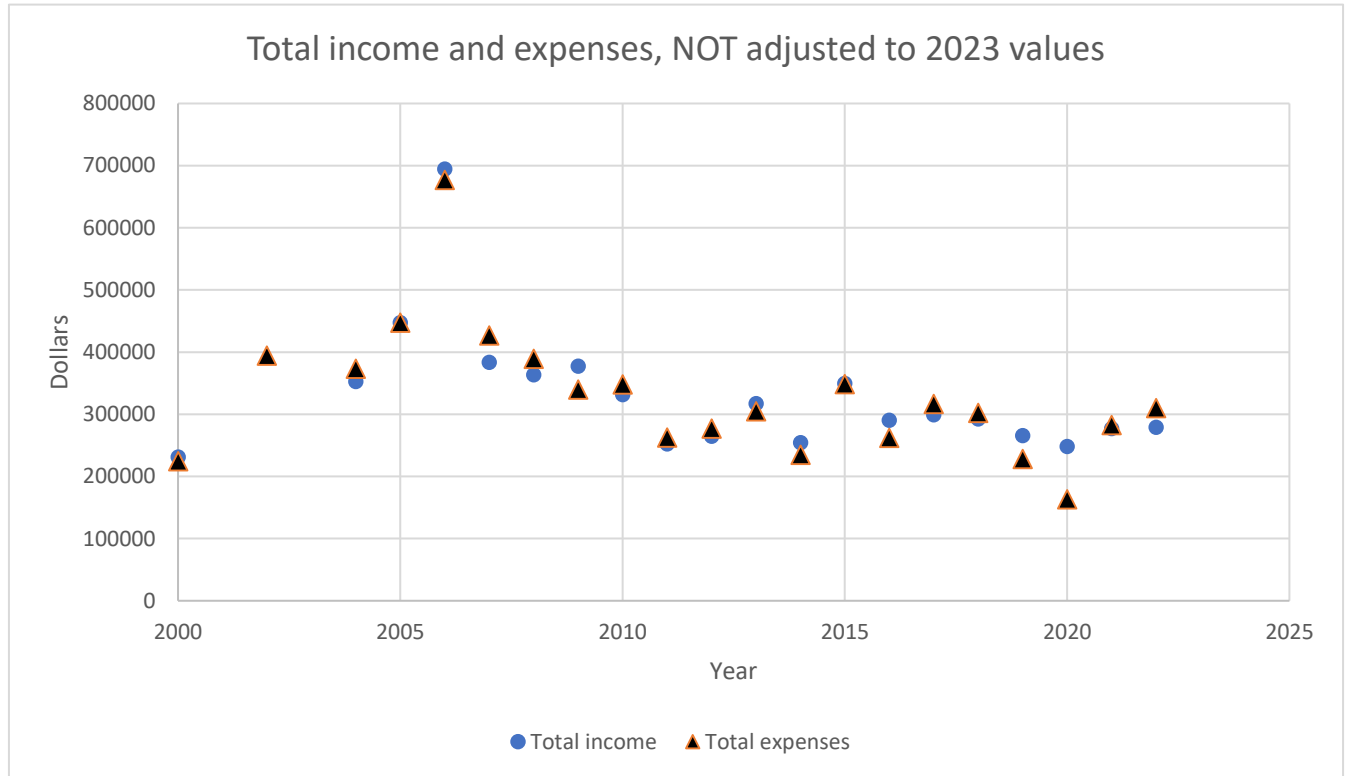
It should be understood that over this time, accounting systems changed, treasurers changed, ministers changed, how moneys were grouped changed, etc., so there is a strong apples-and-oranges effect. Every effort was made to keep comparisons consistent, but sometimes it did feel more like apples-and-pterodactyls. Any attempt to use this information for fine-grained analysis of specific items should be done with caution.

The congregation as a whole firmly believes that once upon a time, the Church income was much larger than it currently is. This is accurate, as seen in a graph of income adjusted to 2023 values. (The spike in 2006 was due to a bequest which was applied to the mortgage.)

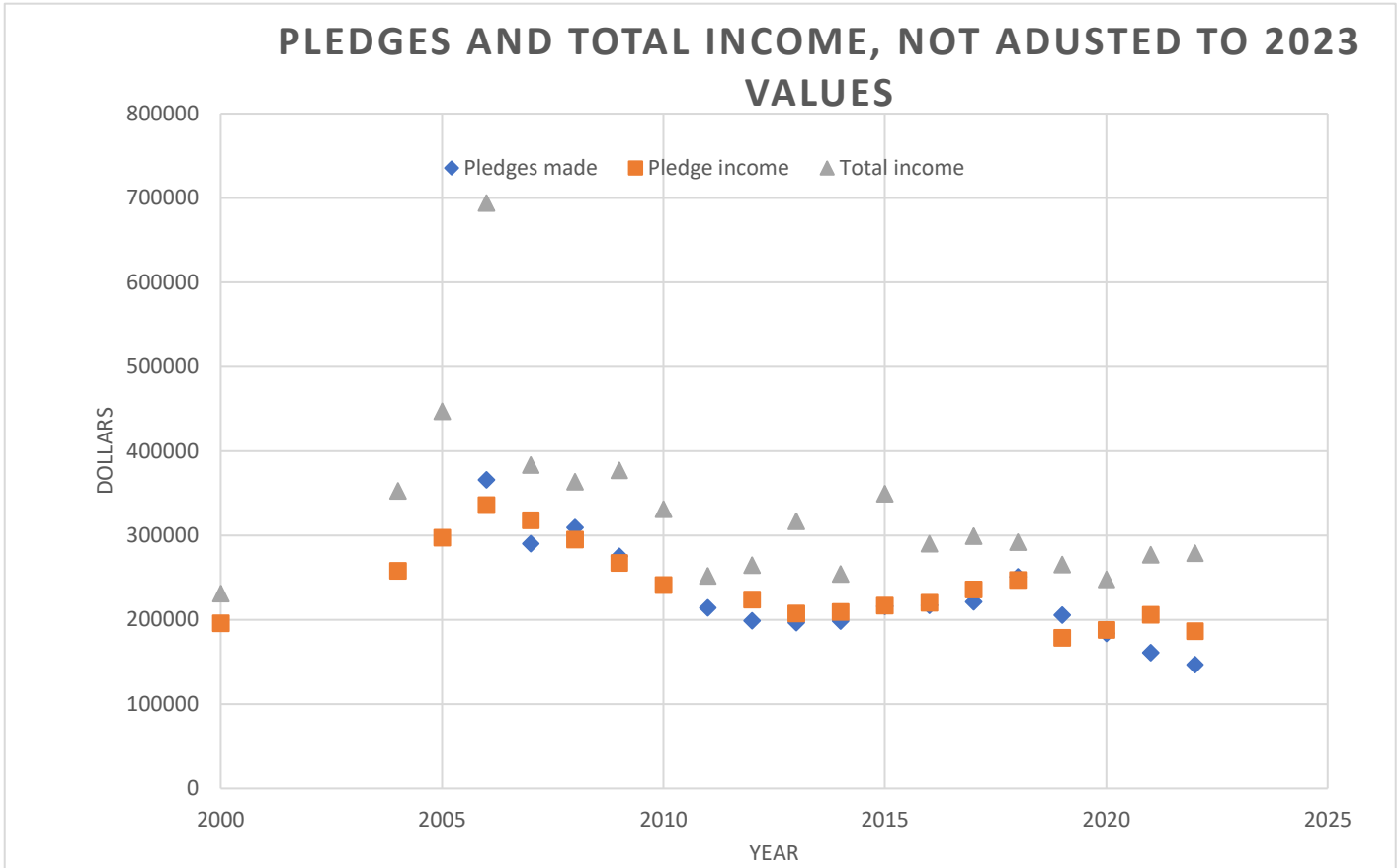


This decrease is roughly in agreement with the change in membership numbers.

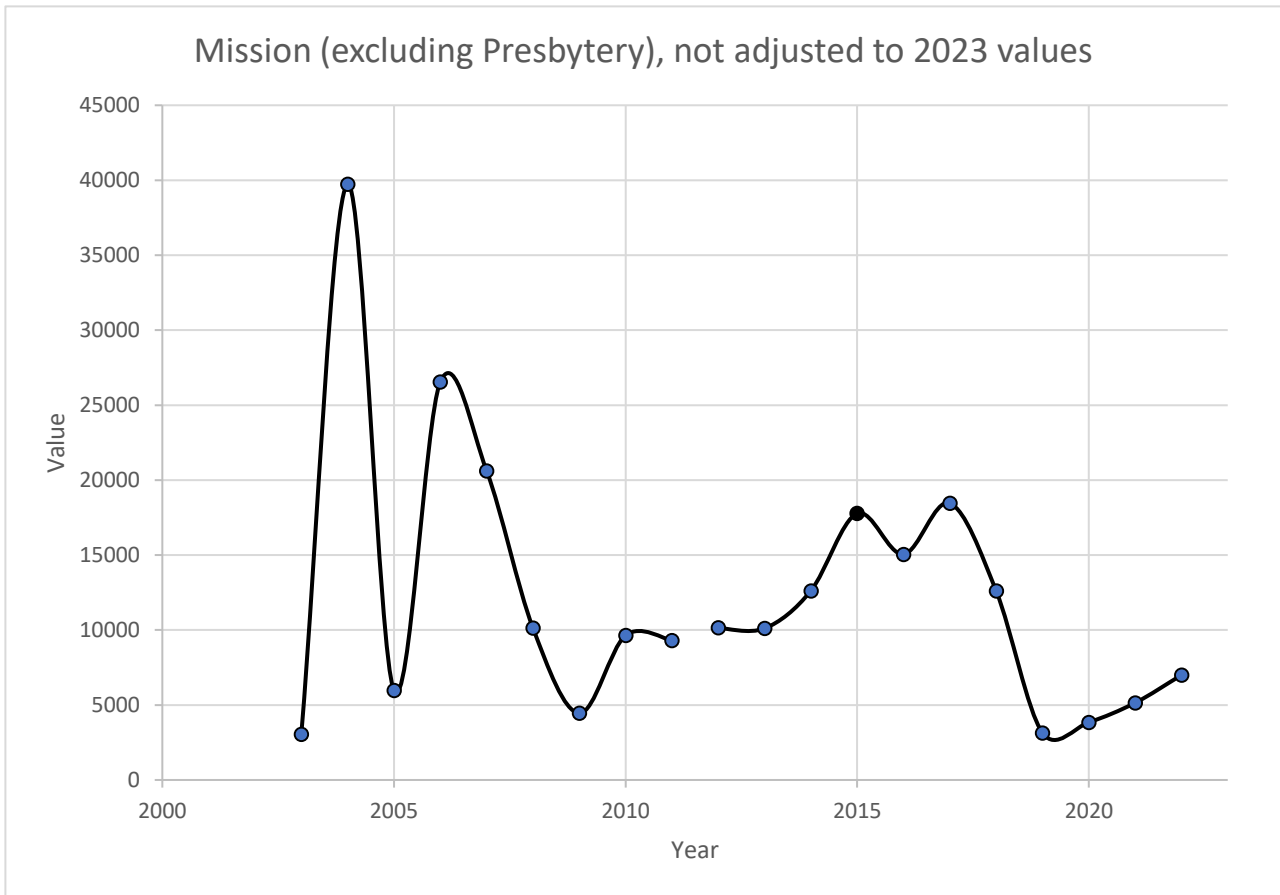
Another congregational belief is that recently, expenses have significantly exceeded income, and that this had not been true historically. That is not particularly accurate, as seen in a graph of income vs. expenses. (These numbers are NOT adjusted to 2023 values. Please note that the spike in 2005 income due to a bequest is matched by a spike in expenses, as that bequest was applied to mortgage.)



On the whole, the Church has done a remarkable job of keeping up, despite challenging demographics (common to all churches these days). Furthermore, total income has consistently exceeded pledges, including in years for which pledge income was below pledges made.



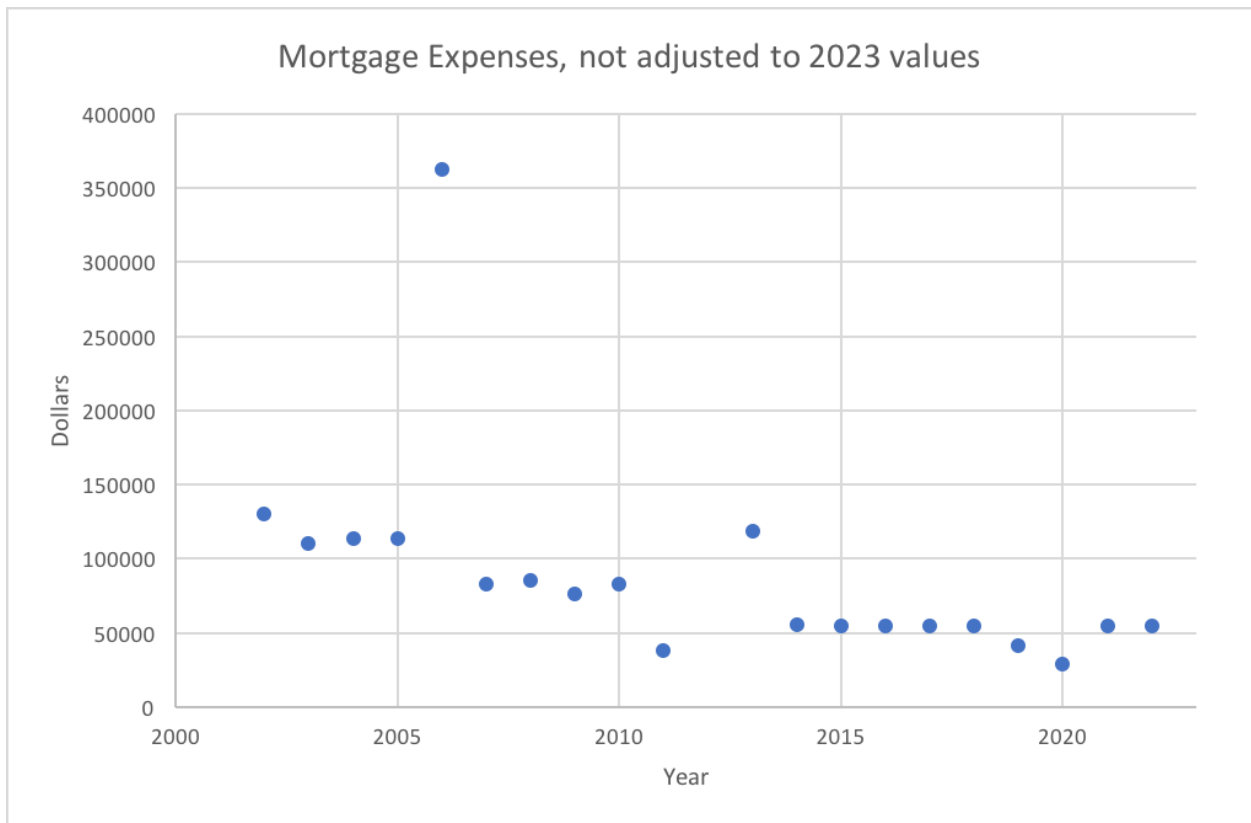
Funding of Mission projects was, unfortunately, especially hard to decipher from the Annual Reports. A number of initiatives have been effectively pass-through funds, and how things have been organized in this area has been very inconsistent over the decades. Sometimes it was not possible to disentangle contributions made to Presbytery from other Missions. However, it is true that the Church is dedicated to Mission. A number of activities involve donations and work which is not monetized. Furthermore, and perhaps unfortunately in this context, but positive overall, activities have been decentralized, especially in recent years. Work is done by groups and individuals, moneys pass through, gifts are made, but no one person keeps track of it as a whole. The graphed data is a very conservative guesstimate based on annual reports, and shows only a part of what members do.



The Church has been in two different locations in the last 23 years. There has been a mortgage for all of that time. At times, the mortgage expense has been considerable, and in the last several years it has been \$55,000 per year. Note that when money was tight, the shortfall was met in part by adjusting the mortgage payments.

The Church engaged in a campaign to pay off the mortgage in late spring and summer of 2023, assisted by an anonymous matching gift. At the start, the mortgage balance was about \$160,000. At the end, it was about \$146,000. The target was for the congregation to raise \$80,000 by the end of October. As they were collected, gifts were applied to the mortgage during the campaign to diminish the outstanding balance. The congregation raised \$82,405, exceeding both the amount needed and the target amount, and by the end of July, so three months early. The Church is now mortgage free.

Much of the reason for paying off the mortgage was to free up funds towards hiring a new pastor. The congregation happily and eagerly applied itself to this goal.



Appendix D: Community Demographics

Wilmington is the largest city in Clinton County, Ohio, and is the county seat. Clinton County comprises the Wilmington, Ohio, Micropolitan Statistical Area, which is also included in the Cincinnati-Wilmington-Maysville, OH-KY-IN Combined Statistical Area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 412 square miles (1,070 km²). The general elevation of the county is roughly 1,050 feet (320 m) above sea level, and there are few areas in the county that deviate from this by more than 200 feet (61 m).

In 2020, Clinton County had a population of 42,018 people and a median age of 39.8 years. Median household income was \$54,683. Between 2019 and 2020 the population of Clinton County grew from 41,957 to 42,000, a 0.102% increase and Median household income grew from \$52,815 to \$54,683, a 3.54% increase. In 2020, the median property value in Clinton County was \$139,100.

Clinton county is predominantly white with only 6.9% being other races. Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) individuals comprised 1.89% of the population. None of the households in Clinton County reported speaking a non-English language at home as their primary shared language. 98.7% of the residents in Clinton County are U.S. citizens.

Clinton County is proud of its two institutions of higher education. Wilmington College is a traditional liberal arts institution with ties to the Religious Society of Friends. Southern State Community College is a two-year community college offering Associate degrees.

Clinton County is home to:

- Cowan Lake State Park.
- Caesar Creek State Park.
- World Equestrian Center.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities, including fishing, swimming, boating, hiking, bicycling, camping, fossil hunting, and wildlife viewing.
- Wilmington College, which boasts several NCAA Division III athletic programs, whose events can be attended by the public.
- The Clinton County Corn Festival.
- The Banana Split Sundae Festival.
- The Clinton County Fair.

The Presbytery provided significant demographic data, including the results of several surveys with participation from our area. Two of these surveys are highlighted below.

When asked what they want in a church, people say:

Program or Ministry Preferences

Priority List	Top 15 ministry or program recommendations based on this study area			
	Preferences are ranked by ratio of important to not important			
	Ranking	Program	Ratio	Strength of Preference
	1	Warm and friendly encounters	5.6	Very Strong Preference
	2	Quality sermons	3.2	Strong Preference
	3	Traditional worship experiences	1.9	Somewhat Strong Preference
	4	Holiday programs/activities	1.5	Somewhat Strong Preference
	5	Opportunities to develop personal relationships	1.5	Somewhat Strong Preference
	6	Celebration of sacraments	1.5	Somewhat Strong Preference
	7	Opportunities for volunteering in the community	1.5	Somewhat Strong Preference
	8	Adult social activities	1.4	Somewhat Strong Preference
	9	Seniors/retiree activities	1.2	Moderate Preference
	10	Family oriented activities	1.1	Moderate Preference
	11	Involvement in social causes	1.0	Moderate Preference
	12	Small groups (i.e., life groups, personal interest groups)	0.8	Somewhat Minimal Preference
	13	Contemporary worship experiences	0.8	Somewhat Minimal Preference
	14	Online or virtual worship experiences	0.7	Somewhat Minimal Preference
	15	Spiritual discussion groups	0.7	Somewhat Minimal Preference

When asked why they do not attend church, people say:

Reasons to Consider Non-Participation—Those Inside a Religious Congregation or Community

Priority List	Top 10 of 25 reasons for considering NOT participating in a religious congregation or community			
	Ranking	Concern	Ratio	Strength
	1	Didn't feel welcome	4.3	Very Strong Reason
	2	Don't believe in God	3.4	Strong Reason
	3	Moved from community	2.2	Strong Reason
	4	Religious People too Judgmental	2.1	Strong Reason
	5	Conflicts in religious community	2.0	Strong Reason
	6	Religion too focused on money	2.0	Strong Reason
	7	No longer believe	2.0	Strong Reason
	8	Wasn't supportive during crisis/time of need	1.8	Somewhat Strong Reason
	9	Don't trust religious leaders	1.7	Somewhat Strong Reason
	10	Strict/inflexible beliefs	1.5	Somewhat Strong Reason

Top 10 Reasons for *Considering NOT* Participating in a Religious Congregation

Appendix E: Pastoral Leadership

In the past 45 years, the Presbyterian Church of Wilmington has only had three installed pastors:

David Hawley (Installed) – 1978 – 2003 – tenure ended in retirement

Thomas Martin (Interim) – term ended when new minister called

David Judd (Installed) – 2005 – 2010 – tenure ended with minister resignation

Jeffery Ott (Interim) – term ended with resignation after paster nominating committee started

James Graham (Stated Supply, retired part-time) – term ended after new minister called

Deborah Linville (Installed) – 2014 – 2019 – tenure ended with minister resignation

James Graham (Stated Supply, retired part-time) – term only until permanent solution found

Robert Wade (Stated Supply, retired part-time) – term ended in final retirement

Stanley Gockel (Stated Supply, retired ¾ time) – term ended in final retirement

Elders (fill-in for sermons)

Pastoral traits that this committee has discussed as positively impacting the church:

- Friendly.
- Inclusive.
- Humble.
- Open to members' ideas.
- Supportive.
- Warm.
- Competent in the pulpit.
- Learned.