

The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow 2016/2017 Mission Study



Submitted to the Session of
Sweet Hollow Presbyterian Church
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The Visioning Task Force:

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Jeremiah 17: 7, 8 "But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water and sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Mission Statement

The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow is a community of Christians who were brought together, through the grace of God, to worship and enjoy fellowship with the Lord. We commit ourselves to joyfully act with God's message of love in our hearts every day and to listen to the word of God, lessons of Jesus Christ and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Through our faith and commitment, we will grow as a congregation and as individuals. Our mission is to develop a more energized congregation united in the goals to improve youth programs, strengthen church membership and stimulate community outreach.

We do this in God's name and in God's glory for the improvement and preservation of the Church and our community of faith.

PCSH Visioning/Mission Study Approach

- The Nominating Committee will propose a task force made of active congregation members to study the church's past and present, and prayerfully propose a direction for our future. - The Task Force will be guided by the pastor and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry
 - The Task Force will regularly update the staff and members about its process.
 - The Task Force will use a variety of methods (prayer, conversations, workshops, questionnaires) to collect data about the congregation's history and present state.
 - The Task Force will actively listen to what God is calling us to do next, and how we shall respond as a congregation.
 - One goal of the Task Force's discernment is to determine future staffing arrangements for the church.
 - The Task Force will prepare a report for the Session by April, 2017.
 - The Committee on Ministry will receive a copy of the report in May, 2017.

At the annual meeting Jan 2016 the following slate was presented by the Church Officers Nominating Committee and approved by the congregation to serve as the members of the Visioning Task Force:

- o Melissa D'Angelo
 - o Carol Keil
 - o Daniel Layer
 - o Maureen Sansone
 - o William T. Walter
- .. Charlotte DeSanti is the Committee Chair as a member of Session and as the Personnel Committee Chair.

Daniel Layer later requested to be removed from the committee for family reasons.

Visioning

The Visioning Task Force (V.T.F.) of The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow was created as a sub-committee under the Personnel Committee to provide a simple, informative, chronological Mission Study V.T.F. of the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow will study its past, look at its present and seek the future direction of our church by engaging in conversations, questionnaires and collection of data, supported throughout by the prayers of our congregation and the abiding guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Sweet Hollow's Transitional Journey

When our Pastor of 10 and a half years, Reverend Rebecca Segers, preached her last sermon here on December 29, 2014, the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow had already begun turning its attention to determining what its next phase of pastoral ministry would be. Session voted for Reverend Nancy Jennings to serve as our Supply Pastor, and she graced us with her presence up through May, 2015.

In November, 2014, an Interim Pastor Search Committee was formed to research and interview possible candidates to fulfill the role of Interim Pastor. In April, 2015, Session met with and approved Reverend Mary Margaret Flannagan as a Designated Pastor, position for two years. Tom Bosch, our Committee On Ministry liaison, had previously notified the Interim Pastor Search Committee that the title of the incoming pastor would be "Designated", instead of "Interim". In May, 2015, a special congregational meeting was called so that a Vote of Affirmation could be presented, which affirmed Session's decision to hire Rev. Flannagan as a Designated Pastor. Rev. Flannagan began her pastorate at Sweet Hollow in June, 2015.

Tom Bosch subsequently informed the Personnel Committee of the next steps to be taken in the transitional process:

Personnel created a task force to provide a simple, informative chronological mission study.

- Preliminary Questionnaires were sent to Elders and Deacons in Fall 2015, to determine those areas in which we're doing well and those areas which could use improvement, as well as insights regarding Sweet Hollow's future.
- A Congregational Questionnaire was mailed out by the Personnel Committee as well.
- The Personnel Committee then shared those results with Session and has continued to update Session periodically throughout the visioning process.
- The V.T.F. was approved during the Annual Congregational meeting January 2016.
- The V.T.F. was instructed to send out congregational surveys and questionnaires, conduct workshops, etc. Once the information has been compiled, they are to compose a Mission Study, which will first be presented to Session and then to The Presbytery.

In February 2016, Reverend Anne Stewart Miller came to Sweet Hollow to present an Interim/Transitional Workshop to the V.T.F. and to the congregation, which was very informative, as well as eye-opening.

The V.T.F. met regularly, collecting information to help Sweet Hollow prepare for its future. Rev. Anne Stewart Miller and Rev. Mary Margaret Flannagan provided much appreciated advice and guidance.

In May 2016, a second Congregational Workshop was held to review and further examine the Congregational Questionnaire responses with the goal of prompting in-depth discussions. Attendees had been asked the following questions:

- What are Sweet Hollow's 5 Top Strengths?
- What are Sweet Hollow's 5 Top Challenges?

The results of the information gathered at that Congregational Workshop, as well as the Preliminary Questionnaires, Congregational Questionnaires, additional individual and small group live conversations, e-mails, telephone calls, etc., enabled The V.T.F. to:

- Pinpoint those areas in which Sweet Hollow truly shines
- Reflect on the myriad ways in which we are truly blessed
- Identify present challenges
- Identify future challenges
- With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, continue to discern Sweet Hollow's calling

We look forward to hearing God's voice as we begin our next chapter.

The Mission Study has been written for The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow to provide an overview of our congregation to four audiences:

- The Pastor Nominating Committee, which will use this Study to write the Church Information Form
- Prospective pastors
- The Session, as it continues to lead and guide the congregation into the future
- The congregation in transition

May this Mission Study provide clarity and illumination to all as we embark on this journey into our future.

Brief Church History

In 1829, a group of 45 members of the Old First Presbyterian Church in Huntington, farm families in the Sweet Hollow community, tired of driving their buggies five miles up to Huntington, decided to organize and build their own church. The men built the church in less than 4 months during the spring of 1829. One year later, church membership had risen to 101 with Rev. Joseph Nimmo as the pastor. The bell tower was added in 1840 and the steeple about 1850. Two carriage sheds for horses and wagons stood for 125 years at the rear of the property.

The life of the Sweet Hollow community became centered about the Church. About 1856, the community's Sweet Hollow name was dropped and Melville substituted; however, the church has retained its Sweet Hollow name.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the gradual falling off in attendance became much more severe in the early 1900's. On March 16, 1930 it was voted to discontinue church services because of diminishing attendance. For 18 years the church was closed, used only for an occasional funeral. Its bell served as a fire alarm and during World War II, as an air raid alert.

On October 3rd 1948, the Church was reorganized, having been rediscovered by the new families moving to Melville after the Second World War. Electricity and an oil burner were installed. The kerosene lamps, chandelier, the wood-burning stoves and foot rests were stored in the belfry. Pulpit supply ministers conducted worship services until Reverend Angelo Crescenzo was called in 1956 as the first full-time minister since 1930.

Finding space to run Sunday School became the major concern of the Church. With more children than adults in 1956, a Sunday School facility rose to the top of the list. A 7-acre plot of land on Gwynne Road, one-half mile north of the church, was purchased, and a Christian Education Building (C.E.B.) constructed in 1960. The long range plan was to use the Gwynne Road site to build a new Sanctuary and a new Manse, and move the old Church to this site, to be used as a Chapel. During the pastorate of Angelo Crescenzo, the Sweet Hollow Church experienced a dramatic growth. Church membership expanded from 68 members when he was installed on September 7, 1956, to 535 members. Sunday School rolls grew from 151 to 378.

In 1966, when Rev. John Wallace became pastor, the church had not physically changed very much from its original construction over 100 years earlier; the sanctuary had been built like a large barn, a single room with a bell tower in front. No provision was made for a coat room or choir robes, nor were there any restroom facilities. The first building campaign in 1967 added extensions on each side of the bell tower, providing running water for these facilities, piped to the church for the first time.

Attention was then turned to a permanent solution to the separation between the Sunday School in the C.E.B. and the Church. When the 7-acre Gwynne Road site was acquired, it had been expected that houses would be built in the surrounding lands. However, Suffolk County proceeded to acquire all of these lands for the new West Hills Park that now includes over 855 acres. The Sweet Hollow Church did not feel that its mission was to be one of isolation in the middle of a park. The Church belongs out in the Melville community, where it can play an active role.

Some 11 years of hard work were required to resolve this issue. Many alternate sites were examined and one was even purchased before Mrs. Jakob's 9-acre property at 95 Old Country Road was secured. During this time, Suffolk County had acquired our 7-acre Gwynne Road property by condemnation. Several years of negotiation occurred before we were able to obtain a fair settlement price for our C.E.B. An additional impediment was a deed restriction permitting residences only on the new site. The major problem was moving the church to the new site. It was too big to move down the road, so we wanted to move it across both a neighbor's and Suffolk County's fields and woodlands. After finally securing approval from Suffolk County, we received a letter from the neighbor's lawyer rescinding his earlier verbal approval.

The church had to be moved the hard way. The steeple was removed, the sanctuary was cut in half, moved down Old Country Road in two sections and put back together on the new site, where a new church foundation and a new C.E.B. had been constructed. The craftsmen were able to realign the two halves to within

one-eighth of an inch. The Jakob's house was modified to serve as the connecting link between the Church and the C.E.B.

On March 4th, 1979, the first service in the old Church on its new site was held. Re-consecration of the Sanctuary and dedication of the new C.E.B. was combined with the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Sweet Hollow Church.

In 1998, we began a series of major renovations of the church facilities. An addition to the old Jakob's house provided a new pastor's office. The former small pastor's and church offices, which had been the kitchen and pantry in the Jakob's house, were renovated into a larger, more functional church office facility, with room for the modern computer and telecommunication equipment. The manse was completely renovated, including the creation of two comfortable rooms for relaxation or study created in the basement. Next, we returned to improving the church facility, where we created a second study room underneath the church office and then proceeded to create a room underneath the church parlor with sound isolation built into the ceiling, the room being used as a Youth Group meeting room.

During the renovation years there were Pastorate changes which are included in the Church Membership Table. Pastor John Wallace retired in 1999 after serving our church for thirty-three years. Pastor Connie Wilkerson then served as our Interim Pastor from 2000-2001. Pastor Robert Close served as Temporary Supply in 2002 and from 2003-2013, The Reverend Rebecca Segers served as our Called Pastor. The Reverend Nancy Jennings served us as Moderator in 2014. From 2015 to the present, The Reverend Mary Margaret Flannagan Fischer has been serving as Designated Pastor.

During Pastor Rebecca's time here, a new roof was put on the sanctuary, the outside of the sanctuary was painted with a special 30 year paint, the inside of the sanctuary was insulated and painted, improvement was made to the Steeple and a Labyrinth and Memorial Garden were added to our Great Lawn. In 2016, a new roof was put on the House, the Breezeway and the CEB entrance.

Many organizations use our Church facilities. Our tenant, Gathering of Light Inter-Spiritual congregation, is a non-denominational group which holds services on Saturdays from 10AM - 11AM, followed by fellowship time. They additionally use our facility on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and for their special events.

Other groups currently sharing our facility are;

Town of Huntington Senior Citizens
Centro Misionero

Town of Huntington Board of Elections
Club Play, LLC (Summer)
Driftwood Day Camp (Summer- parking only)
CODA
AA
SLAA
MA
Sweet Hollow Counseling Center had office space on the lower level of the C.E.B.,
Monday through Friday.

Congregational surveys have identified the following as our principal strengths:

- We are a small, welcoming congregation exemplified by our motto: “The Little Church with the Big Heart.”
- We have a core group of dedicated volunteers who support our Sunday School, serve as Deacons and Elders and spearhead enriching social opportunities such as the monthly Church Brunch program, Women 4 Women (W4W), Book Discussion and Prayer Shawl Ministry.
- We are blessed by the presence of a dedicated, talented music director and volunteer choir who provide weekly music for worship and special services.
- Mission activities such as participation in Project HOPE (Helping Other People Eat) cast a wide net of compassion and caring within our community and beyond that draw us together in a common cause for good.
- Activities that strengthen our faith such as Bible Study/Diner Discussion gatherings, Prayer Circle and W4W.
- Sunday worship services providing a weekly spiritual lift.
- We are blessed by the tranquil, pastoral location of our church facility so close to major traffic arteries and the hustle and bustle of commerce with spacious grounds, a labyrinth, a memorial garden and ample parking.
- Our CD ministry provides access to the weekly Worship Service by members and friends of the congregation who are unable to attend worship in person.
- Communication: The Sweet Hollow web page, sweethollowpresby.org, and Facebook page www.facebook.com/sweethollowpresby provide current information, directions and contact information for our church as well as access to our monthly newsletter, *The Bell Ringer*, with news of church events, photos, and the church calendar. Weekly updates are provided via email and are printed in each Sunday’s Church Bulletin.
- Newly renovated Manse nearby

James 1: 2-3 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

The following have been identified as challenges facing our congregation:

- Declining attendance (starting in 2013) is our greatest challenge.
- Declining and/or aging membership has led to decline in financial support of the church, and a depleting pool of volunteers to serve in officer positions and in support of the church Nursery, Sunday School and various activities.
- Our Nursery, Sunday School and Youth Group programs are experiencing poor attendance, making it challenging to facilitate and staff these vital faith journey tools; We are grateful to our senior members who have been volunteering to assist. The attendance and participation of our young children, youth and their parents are essential to the future of our church
- The Congregation has been challenged by changes in its traditional components of the worship service (Communion, Order of Worship, etc.).
- Establishing regular outreach to inactive members and former members, as well as shut-ins or those unable to drive; attempts to implement a ride service have fallen short of this goal.
- Addressing the needs of Gen X-ers and Millennials: how can we pique their Interest in worship services, Youth Group and activities, since studies indicate that they're interested in interfaith programs and service to others.
- Sweet Hollow's existing core group of volunteers, who have run its programs, groups and activities over a long period of time, seek to “pass the baton” to a new group of volunteers, thereby curbing burn out and ushering in an era of fresh perspectives and new opportunities.
- Session: When the Church Officers Nominating committee began having difficulty in obtaining nominees, we decreased the size of each Class of Elders in between 2010-2013. Changes were not made in committee structure to redistribute the work and responsibilities. Committee structure now needs to be strengthened and augmented so that committee chairs (Elders) are not overburdened. Furthermore, committee members need to

grow into their responsibilities as potential Elders and committee chairs. This will prevent committee history from being lost in leadership transitions.

- Sweet Hollow's visibility in the community and beyond needs to be developed; additionally, we need to determine how to make our beloved church relevant in today's ever-changing world. Finding our place in 21st Century life; including use of technology to enhance outreach.

The Melville Community

The Melville community has also experienced a significant change during the past 55 years, changing from a farming community to what Newsday, Long Island's daily newspaper, which is located in Melville, calls "Long Island's downtown". More than two million square feet of office space has been created in Melville. The former trolley route, from Huntington on the North Shore to Amityville on the South Shore, is now the divided, six-lane New York State Route 110, with a major shopping center, the Walt Whitman Shops, just north of Melville on Route 110. Immediately north of the Church, however, is the 855-acre Suffolk County West Hills Park, with hiking and horseback riding trails. Jayne's Hill, the highest point on Long Island, is located in the park. Walt Whitman, who was born a few miles northeast, wrote that he could see both the Long Island Sound to the north and ships in the Great South Bay to the south from the top of Jayne's Hill.

Recently, the Town of Huntington has been facilitating housing developments in the Melville area. One reason is to unclog the roads by decreasing home-to-work transportation times and distances. Not only have single family homes been erected, but town houses, condominiums and senior housing communities are also being built in Melville. The Huntington Quadrangle, built some 50 years ago to begin the office space development in Melville, is now considering an upgrade to also include apartments.

The Sweet Hollow Church is surrounded on three sides by Suffolk County property, sections of the 855-acre West Hills Park. Across Old Country Road to the south lies large acre residential property.

Ministry Area Profile

The Town of Huntington encompasses approximately 93 square miles and has a population currently estimated at 203,264. There are six Presbyterian churches in Huntington, all within 5 miles of Sweet Hollow. As we plan for Sweet Hollow's future, it is imperative that we be realistic about our mission focus and priorities to ensure that they reflect the spiritual needs and preferences of both our members and the community.

Presbyterian/Reformed households constitute 1.4% of the population. The highest religious preferences are Catholicism 39% and Judaism 10.5%. According to a Ministry Area Profile report from the Percept Group, a firm that provides demographic data to churches and other religious organizations for planning purposes, the receptivity of faith is somewhat low compared to national averages. The report indicates that 39.7% of households are likely to be "not involved" with their faith, 31.6% are "somewhat involved," and 28.4% are "strongly involved." Concerning church program preferences in our area, respondents' preferences for Spiritual Development are 24.5% *below* national average. Personal Development is 14.9% *below* the national average and Community/Social Services is 10.4% *below* the national average. Recreation, however, is 19.8% *above* the national average. In order of importance, household concerns that exceed the national average are: time for recreation or leisure, aging parent care, finding life direction retirement opportunities, social justice and satisfying job/career.

Sweet Hollow Church Membership

As indicated in the table below, the membership in the Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow has ranged from 122 to 157 during the 20 years from 1996 to 2015. Reviewing the membership rolls is normally done by Session at their December meeting. Membership numbers are not an accurate reflection of the consistent active participants.

The geographical distribution of our members and of individuals who have shown an interest in our church is shown in the table of Sweet Hollow membership by zip codes. A larger number of people who have indicated an interest in the church is used to obtain a wider picture of the area from which we might draw new members. The close-lying zip codes in Huntington, Melville, Huntington Station and Huntington, furnish 99 of the 167 people for which we have zip codes. A number of the individuals in the outer zip codes have moved from closer zip codes and prefer to maintain their membership with Sweet Hollow, rather than transfer it to a closer church.

Church Membership

YEAR	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	CHURCH PASTOR/ INTERIM /MODERATOR/DESIGNATED
1996	152	John Wallace, Pastor
1997	143	John Wallace, Pastor
1998	148	John Wallace, Pastor
1999	142	John Wallace, Pastor
2000	136	Connie Wilkerson, Interim
2001	122	Connie Wilkerson, Interim
2002	119	Robert Close, Temporary Supply
2003	125	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2004	128	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2005	133	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2006	139	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2007	142	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2008	128	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2009	134	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2010	150	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2011	154	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2012	157	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2013	147	Rebecca Segers, Pastor
2014	146	Nancy Jennings, Moderator
2015	136	Mary Margaret Flannagan, Designated
2016	122	Mary Margaret Flannagan Designated

ZIP CODE	NUMBER	ZIP NAME
11747	36	Me lville
11746	27	Huntington Station
11743	14	Huntington
11803	4	Pla in vie w
11724	4	Cold Spring Harbor
11798	4	Wheatley Heights
11729	3	Deer Park
11731	3	East Northport
11791	3	Syosset
11772	3	Patchogue
11771	2	Oyster Bay
11507	2	Albertson
11763	2	Medford
11738	2	Farmingville
37849	2	Powell, TN
77479	2	Sugar Land, TX
8 zip codes	8	
Total Church	121	

Membership, Pledging and Finances

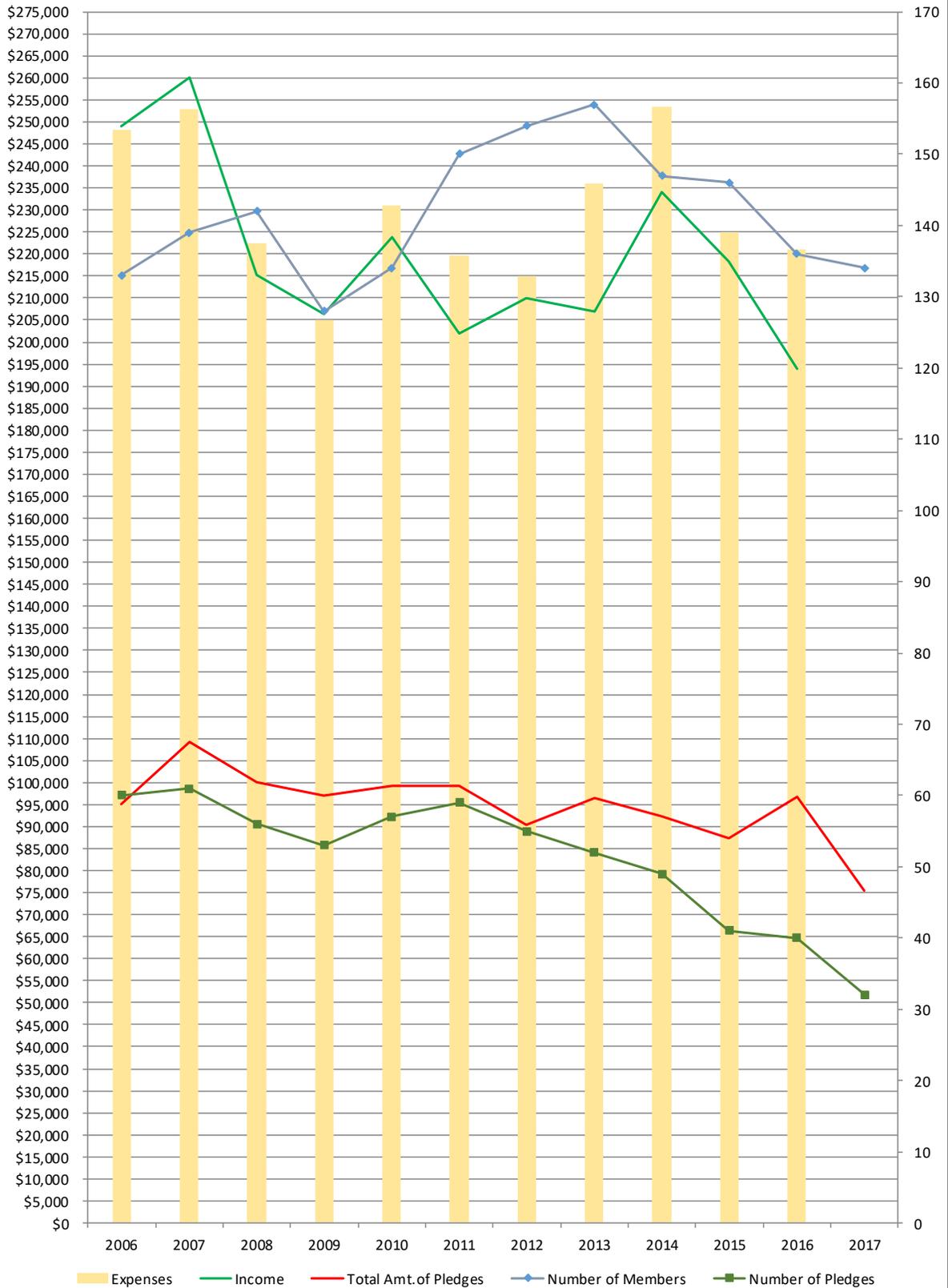
The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow is chiefly funded by pledges and by monies paid for the use of our facility by others. Various groups meet daily in our facility. The Fellowship Hall is available to groups wishing to hold an event on a per use basis.

Expenses have been greater than income in leading to increased dependence on the Reserve and Memorial Fund accounts.

YEAR	# OF PLEDGES	TOTAL AMOUNT	MEMBERSHIP
2006	60	\$95,000.00	139
2007	62	\$109,000.00	142
2008	56	\$100,000.00	128
2009	53	\$97,040.00	134
2010	57	\$99,226.00	150
2011	59	\$99,227.00	154
2012	55	\$90,487.00	157
2013	49	\$96,574.00	147
2014	47	\$90,734.00	146
2015	42	\$87,000.00	145
2016	40	\$97,000.00	135
2017	32	\$75,466.00	122

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Income Total	\$ 210,204.00	\$ 254,459.00	\$ 229,313.00	\$ 215,984.00	\$ 219,067.00	\$ 223,695.00	\$ 210,930.00	\$ 215,042.00	\$ 260,154.00	\$ 248,998.00
Bethpage Federal CU										
Money Mkt										
Beginning Balance	\$ 113,108.00	\$ 2,761.95	\$ 2,753.08							
Ending Balance	\$ 110,102.00	\$ 113,107.85	\$ 2,761.95							
BFCU Savings Acct										
Beginning Balance	\$ 14.42	\$ 157,407.25	\$ 10,244.50	\$ 5.00						
Ending Balance	\$ 14.46	\$ 14.42	\$ 2,327.25	\$ 10,244.50						
Chase										
Beginning Balance				\$ 15,481.18	\$ 25,451.09	\$ 50,333.12	\$ 38,507.18			
Ending Balance				\$ -	\$ 15,481.18	\$ 25,451.09	\$ 50,333.12			
Bank of America										
Beginning Balance				\$ 3,458.91	\$ 10,453.97	\$ 10,434.54	\$ 15,106.58	\$ 15,000.00		
Ending Balance				\$ -	\$ 3,458.91	\$ 10,453.97	\$ 10,434.54	\$ 15,106.58		
Capital One CD (formerly North Fk)										
Beginning Balance							\$ 529.32	\$ 528.27	\$ 528.10	\$ 15,966.86
Ending Balance							\$ -	\$ 529.59	\$ 528.27	\$ 16,003.92
Wachovia Securities MM/Dryden Global										
Beginning Balance							\$ 5,018.98	\$ 26,468.69	\$ 16,703.53	\$ 25,684.53
Ending Balance							\$ -	\$ 5,018.98	\$ 26,468.60	\$ 25,684.53
Washington Mutual CD										
Beginning Balance								\$ 37,307.65	\$ 25,976.05	\$ 25,000.00
Ending Balance								\$ 38,507.18	\$ 37,307.65	\$ 25,976.05
Emigrant Savings										
Beginning Balance										\$ 23,178.64
Ending Balance										\$ 23,540.80
PCUSA MM										
Beginning Balance	\$ 10,268.25	\$ 10,245.35	\$ 10,241.35	\$ 10,203.46	\$ 10,061.25	\$ 10,000.00				
Ending Balance	\$ 10,293.95	\$ 10,268.25	\$ 10,245.35	\$ 10,241.35	\$ 10,151.72	\$ 10,061.25				
PCUSA 36month note										
Beginning Balance				\$ 16,154.15	\$ 15,225.49	\$ 15,000.00				
Ending Balance				\$ -	\$ 15,682.89	\$ 15,225.49				
Expense Total	\$ 224,920.00	\$ 253,495.00	\$ 236,072.00	\$ 214,836.00	\$ 219,689.00	\$ 230,891.00	\$ 204,918.00	\$ 222,374.00	\$ 253,007.00	\$ 248,217.00

2006 - 2017 PCSH Financial and Pledge Trend



Staff

Pastor, Head of Staff: To provide spiritual leadership, pastoral care, administrative oversight and organization. Emphasis on worship, music, preaching, teaching, stewardship, mission, outreach and the development and involvement of/with membership and innovative programs.

Church Secretary: To provide secretarial and administrative services to the Pastor and other church staff, keep church rolls updated, prepare sanctuary for worship, order of supplies, preparation of bulletin and to forward rental applications to Session Committee.

Music Minister/Choir Director: To provide leadership to adult and youth choral and music programs and to provide musical accompaniment at services. Conduct weekly choir practice, recruit new members, work with Pastor and Worship Committee, report the need of materials within budget, organ/piano service, serve as organist for weddings and funerals (in addition to salary).

Treasurer: To keep accurate records of all church financial transactions; expense and income, bills paid and approved, payroll, monthly financial report to Session, prepare Federal and State Taxes and oversee insurance requirements.

Church Leadership Organizations and Boards

The Session

Sweet Hollow has nine ruling Elders who conduct all the church business. Within the session is the oversight of church committees, each chaired by an Elder. The Standing committees are listed below;

Personnel Committee-The Personnel Committee oversees the employment of non-ordained staff (Treasurer, Secretary, Choir Director, and Nursery Supervisor). An Annual Review is conducted by the Personnel Committee with input from the Pastor as Head of Staff. The Personnel Committee attends to all staff concerns and ensures that fair employment practices, personnel policies and issues of adequate compensation are addressed.

Worship Committee-The Worship Committee meets with the Pastor regularly throughout the year to coordinate, develop and shape the weekly traditional Sunday Services for the liturgical year, as well as Advent, Christmas Eve, Lent, Holy Week and Easter services. The Committee also coordinates the monthly celebration of Communion.

Budget Committee / Stewardship Committee - The Budget Committee works with the Treasurer to oversee the preparation of the annual budget. The committee runs a yearly stewardship campaign wherein the congregation is encouraged to reflect on its many blessings, in the hope that each member will feel compelled, as well as inspired, to give back to the church, both financially and through gifts of time and talents. The committee has set up alternative means for church members to contribute, such as through a QR Code, a debit credit card system, or setting up a direct withdrawal from their bank to the church, with the goal of receiving regular, steady, monthly income throughout the year.

Fellowship & Outreach Committee-The Fellowship & Outreach Committee provides an opportunity for our congregation and the community to enjoy a variety of enriching, inspiring events and activities: Monthly Book Discussion, Monthly Church Brunch, Monthly Women4Women, Homecoming Picnic/BBQ, Special Coffee Hours, New Member Luncheons, Tabletop Bible Study/Discussions at Sweet Hollow Diner and the Annual Fall Harvest Dinner.

House and Property Committee-The primary concerns of the House Committee are:

- A.) The Sanctuary
- B.) The Christian Education Building (CEB-Fellowship Hall)
- C.) The Manse
- D.) The Grounds, Sanctuary and Facilities
 - a. The beautiful grounds are maintained by a handful of hardworking church volunteer.
 - b. During the winter, we contract out for snow removal.
 - c. A professional cleaning company is employed to clean the sanctuary and building facilities on a weekly basis and to set up/take down any tables, chairs, etc., as requested by those renting the Fellowship Hall.
 - d. Income generation is a continuous discussion to make the most of what we have, while not taxing our finances and the wear and tear on our property. Our building is rented out weekly to many Not for Profit Organizations, such as AA, as part of our community outreach. Gathering of Light, an Inter-Spiritual congregation, shares our sanctuary space on Saturdays, and uses rooms in our facility on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, as well as for special events. Each year finds us challenged to raise the funds for any of these situations, so as to not impact the budget and remove money from the Reserve Fund.

Christian Education

- Nursery level children under age 4 (pre-K) participate in an age appropriate story augmented by a craft, music or other activity each week. Regular staffing of our Nursery has been challenging. On the other hand, attendance of nursery age children has been extremely sporadic. Efforts to hire an adult Nursery staff person have not succeeded to date. Our current rolls include 8 children of Nursery age.
- Sunday School classes are presented for children aged pre-K through 3rd grade. There are currently 8 children enrolled in SS, with no children enrolled in grades 4-6.
- For the past 12 years, we have used lesson resources from the L.I. Presbytery library, as well as various online resources to present WORM: **W**orkshop **R**otation **M**odel lessons. The same Bible story is presented over a 4-5-week period of time, with a different focus each week, ie: music, games, storytelling, arts and crafts, cooking, science, etc. Our classes are held in "one-room school house" fashion, led by a rotating group of volunteers who serve as Lesson Leaders, assisted by Room Shepherds. In addition to a weekly "Message for Children" led by our Pastor, the children currently remain in worship on the 3rd Sunday each month, to experience a full worship service geared toward them.
- Confirmation Class, led by our Pastor and an adult volunteer, is held weekly following morning worship. Four students were confirmed May 2017.
- Youth Group: The Youth Group is largely inactive. It is our goal to establish regular programming here as well as joint programming with other Huntington area Presbyterian churches.
- Adult study opportunities include *Lexio Divina* led by our Pastor as part of the weekly Prayer Circle meditations. *Diner Discussions* led by our Pastor provides an informal opportunity for PCSH members and friends to gather for a meal and discussion topic, usually over the course of one month.
- Annual Events-Welcome Home BBQ/Picnic in September; Christmas Pageant; Pancake Breakfast with free-will offering of the Sunday School Children's choice; Sunday School Plant Sale held each May-proceeds are generously donated to the Sunday School.

Mission Team

Although Sweet Hollow's Mission Team is small, it's mighty. While it may seem challenging to be a small Church (fish) in a large demographic area (pond), Sweet Hollow jumps in with both feet, as it strives to shine the beacon of Christ's Light in the community, by participating in the following Ministries:

- **Annual Souper Bowl Challenge**-Each February, along with 14 other Long Island Presbyterian churches, the Mission Team partners with our Christian Education Team to participate in this event. Food, diapers and cash, which are donated to the local pantries, are collected for the entire month, culminating in 2016 with a grand total of 27,622 items, 2,995 which were from our "little church with a big heart". Sweet Hollow placed 4th overall each year. Each year, we challenge ourselves to do even better than the previous year.
- **Huntington Community Food Council**-Throughout the year, we ask for thematically specific food items for our "Box of Giving", which is strategically placed in two primary locations in our facility. Additionally, we thankfully welcome any and all food items, as well as personal care items, such as diapers, soap, shampoo, etc., which are all donated to the Huntington Community Food Council on a weekly basis. Our members are always quite generous; we consistently receive donations from the groups which use our facility.
- **Sharing Bags for the Huntington Tri-CYA**-Six times a year, the Mission Team coordinates collection and delivery of Sharing Bags of healthy snacks and Sharing Bags of school supplies to benefit the Huntington Tri-CYA, a community and youth agency which supports the growth and development for children and their families in need within Huntington, Huntington Station and Cold Spring Harbor.
- **The United Veterans Beacon House**-Each Memorial Day and Veterans Day, a Clothing/ Blanket Drive is instituted to benefit The United Veterans Beacon House, which assists our veterans in all the Armed Forces and their families.
- **St. Hugh of Lincoln-Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat)**-Founded in 2005, this community Ministry serves the laborers in Huntington Station who seek employment and have no means with which to pay for food for their families. With no knowledge of when and if they and their families will have their next meal, Project H.O.P.E. does just that-it gives these workers hope. Hot meals prepared by volunteers from St. Hugh's parish, as well as from various churches in the area, are delivered to the laborers at a work site. There's also a mobile soup kitchen and a bagel and bread Ministry. Sweet Hollow is privileged to participate in Sunday Suppers, a parallel Ministry in which delicious meals are lovingly prepared and served twice a month to members of the community through Parish Outreach programs, Family Service League and other organizations that help the poor. Attendance at the Sunday Suppers averages 150-175.
- **Annual Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser**-This is our major fundraiser. Each October, the Mission Team coordinates, schedules and manages this month long

fundraiser, offering a colorful array of every size and shaped pumpkin one can imagine, supplemented with the sale of delicious goodies baked by church members. This community favorite continues to thrive each year as we welcome familiar as well as new “pumpkin patchers” and their families, providing an excellent Outreach opportunity.

- **Adopt-A-Family and Christmas Boutique**-Sweet Hollow sponsors mothers and their children (last year 9 mothers and 9 children) from Madonna Heights, a haven for young mothers, many of whom are victims of domestic abuse. We are given a wish list by the mothers; church members generously purchase specific items or donate cash. Mission Team members shop for the items, then gift wrap them and deliver them. To assist in this ministry and to further fund this dream come true for the children, there's also a Christmas Boutique, offering beautifully crafted Christmas items by a talented member of the Mission Team.
- **Mittens, Gloves, Hats and Scarves Ministry**-Each December, gloves, hats and scarves are contributed by our members for the benefit of the families served by the Tri -CYA.

The Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons is comprised of 12 adult Deacons and 2 Youth Deacons. Deacons work together to provide compassionate service to those members who are in need. Each Deacon is likened to a “Shepherd”; each Deacon has a “flock”-their particular group of members with whom they’re in contact, should a situation arise wherein someone is ill, someone has died, for church closings or when speedy notification is required. Their responsibilities include: preparing and assisting in the administration of the Lord's Supper (to homebound as well), ushering and facilitating the ordering of flowers at Easter and Christmas. Other functions of a Deacon include delivery of Poinsettias and Easter Lilies, home visits and whatever’s necessary for the homebound to continue to feel connected to the Sweet Hollow family.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is elected to meet annually to nominate Elders and Deacons.

Website

Our church web page, sweethollowpresby.org is maintained to help those looking for a church home in Melville and contains a map and directions on how to find us.

A Call To Action: Where Is God Calling Us To Go From Here?

- **Sweet Hollow is currently at a critical decision point for its future.** Financially, It has become increasingly evident that continuing on our current course of deficit funding will result in the closure of PCSH. The decline in our membership, pledges, rental income and carrying out much needed capital improvements, has necessitated us to dip into our Reserve and Memorial Fund to meet our monthly expenses. The 2016 church operating deficit was \$12,987. The 2015 operating deficit was \$6,714, the 2014 operating deficit was \$19,376. We cannot continue taking funds from the Reserve and Memorial Fund to maintain operations.
- **Increasing Membership:** As membership has continued to decline in the past five to seven years, we now seek methods to attract new members, by utilizing all forms of social media, advertising in spiritual publications, developing programs /activities geared toward families, revitalizing our Youth Group and offering additional fellowship events including both our congregation and the greater community.
- **Church Facility Operation:** Pledges from the congregation provide less than half of the revenues required for Sweet Hollow's operation for the past 25 years or more. Building use donations are responsible for most of the other half. Groups we share our facilities with are also an important part of Sweet Hollow's mission. We have been told by a leader of these groups that we do not realize the important mission work that is being accomplished here. With quite a number of different groups sharing our facility there are a number of issues that arise and must be resolved cooperatively for all of these activities to run smoothly. These include schedule, times of usage, set up and take down, food, respect for our furnishings, donation of unwanted furnishings, enforcement of our no-smoking policy, lawn mowing and our flower beds. The kitchen and bathrooms are particular concerns. Donation offers need to be channeled in accordance with Sweet Hollow's facility plan. Building Use contributions must also be kept current with our costs, the wear & tear and the depreciation of our facility. The elder who handles Building Use issues, the Pastor and the Secretary are all involved.
- **Partnering with another church for various reasons:**

There are presently six Presbyterian churches within the greater Huntington Township community. Choosing to partner with one of the other existing

Presbyterian congregations could be the answer to several of our greatest challenges: declining membership in general, the resulting decline in revenue and small number of children in Sunday School and Youth Group.

Core Values

Sweet Hollow's Core Values are based on Jesus Christ's ministry of caring for others, by using our gifts, resources and talents to welcome all who enter our doors and to go beyond our church facility to make a difference in people's lives.

Worshipping God-As a Christ-centered community of faith, we seek to feel His presence beside us in all our endeavors.

Acceptance-We believe the church should be a place that opens its doors to all. We want people to feel valued and respected as individuals, as we strive to share God's love without boundaries or requirements. We welcome with warmth, love and sincerity all who encounter our Sweet Hollow family.

Service To Others-We seek to follow the example of Jesus in our service to our community and our members. We believe that God has given gifts to each of us to be used in serving His creation.

Spiritual Gifts-With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we seek to develop a deeper understanding of our faith through prayer, worship, fellowship and Bible study that will sustain us throughout our life journey.

Ministry Profile (Initiatives)

- We seek to be open to new opportunities and to be relevant in the daily lives of our membership, particularly our young families and our elderly.
- We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to guide us as we work to discern our future.

Pastoral Profile

The following observations are a result of both formal survey canvassing, group discussion survey and in private conversations.

The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow seeks a Pastor to provide spiritual leadership and ministry, and to guide us as we fulfill our mission to serve God and our community. He/she must be prepared to embrace the congregation and the

greater community with compassion, intelligence, patience; with an outgoing, warm personality; with a sense of humor and accessibility, while:

- Seeking new ways to inspire and encourage participation by our young families and provide leadership of regular Youth Group meetings and Mission opportunities for both youth and adults.
- Encouraging and promoting the spiritual development of our members— young, old, new and prospective members, as well as visitors, by providing opportunities for spiritual growth and Bible study.
- Working collaboratively with the church Elders and Deacons, committees and congregation on the daily functions of the church: Worship Service, holiday services, Celebration of The Lord's Supper, weddings, funerals, baptisms, attending all Presbytery meetings and moderating Session meetings. Also, constructively delegating responsibilities when appropriate.
- Providing Pastoral care to our homebound, hospitalized, those in nursing facilities and any members by maintaining relationships through home visits and facility visits; administering Home Communion on Communion Sundays.
- Supporting our Mission projects with time and effort, by inspiring commitment to ministries of empathy and compassion in our church community with pastoral leadership and congregational involvement.

Jeremiah 29: 11 “For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Our Future Goals/Opportunities

Build membership by developing programs/activities and emphasizing existing Youth Programs for families with young children; establish new relationships with Huntington area Presbyterian Youth Groups.

Encourage volunteerism and ministry involvement by letting each church member know how important it is that they be an integral part of our “little church with the big heart”, and that our programs/activities cannot run without their much-needed help.

Establish new sources of funding by thinking outside the box to bring in groups that would pay to use our beautiful church grounds and/or our conveniently located facility.

Advertise our church in any and all media, with an emphasis on Social Media, so that the public can see just how special our church is

Through Congregational involvement, ideas and perhaps bringing back some of the older traditions and activities of our church so that we may grow, improve and preserve our church and our community of faith for generations to come.

Develop a ministry wherein Deacons regularly visit any home bound, elderly members, providing care and companionship when needed.

Build upon an already established ministry in which younger church members pick up and drive home bound, elderly members each Sunday, so they don't miss worship and will feel connected to their church family.

Summary

We strive to discern who God is calling us to be as He guides our paths today, tomorrow and in the future, praising Him in fellowship each Sunday, as we walk our individual faith journeys.

Demographics and the current culture of society has changed drastically over the last five to ten years, resulting in a precipitous decline in faith involvement. Due to factors such as technology, social media, personal activities and greater demands on families, many churches face a daunting challenge in maintaining their current membership, let alone attracting new members. By utilizing today's relevant tools to reach out to those who are currently "unchurched", we trust that once they enter our doors they will have found a church home.

It is our hope, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to revitalize our church family where there is more interaction among members beyond the Sunday morning service, as we reach out and engage our church community and our local community through Christian fellowship. This call begins with our Church Officers (Elders), our Pastor, our Deacons and our church members: to spread the message of Jesus Christ, working together while helping to enrich the lives of others.

Proverbs 16:3 "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."