

MISSION STUDY REPORT

I. Current information about the congregation - its demographics, finances, facilities, ministries, strengths, and challenges.

Third-Westminster Presbyterian Church is located at 780 Salem Avenue, Elizabeth NJ. We are a culmination of three churches: Third Presbyterian, established in 1851; Westminster Presbyterian, established in 1861; and Madison Ave. Presbyterian, established in 1877. In 1972, Madison Ave. merged with Westminster Presbyterian. In 1984, Third and Westminster merged and established a new name of Third-Westminster Presbyterian.

Our membership has declined over the years. We are currently a multi-ethnic congregation of 50 members, with an average weekly worship attendance of 32.

As our membership declined so have many of our ministries. We continue to stay relevant to the community through the Institute of Music for Children, Inc., a mission program established by our church in 1995, which was incorporated in 2003. The Institute of Music exposes children of several counties to all forms of the arts, public speaking, cooking, and mentorships. We continue to participate in the local Presbyterian Fellowship known as PRISM.

Our giving, rental income and investments are supporting the church as of 12/31/2014 as follows:

Envelopes and Loose Offering	8.4%
Property Rentals	11.8%
Investments	79.8%

As a result, investments are declining. The endowment fund balance was \$985,832, at the end of 2014. The balance reduced \$ 185,506 in the year 2014.

Our campus is 1.8 acres with three buildings – church, a separate meeting building, and a manse. Our property is well maintained. Most rooms, including the sanctuary, are air-conditioned. Our property is mortgage free.

Historically, emphasis in our congregation was placed on fellowship, relationships, intimacy, and member involvement. Our members share strong bonds of loyalty to each other and passion for their Church. Our strengths are:

- Declining but adequate financial resources at this time
- Well maintained church buildings and grounds
- Ability to share facilities with the community including weddings, parking, meetings, etc
- Loyalty for each other

Our challenge is trying to meet the needs of our community which is both financially and culturally different than it was in the past. We have experienced a drastic change over the last

few years. We acknowledge that in the past we have focused more on ourselves than those around us, therefore we are not thoroughly connected with our changing community.

II. Current information about the community - its demographics, characteristics and needs.

We are located in the northern perimeter of Elizabeth, N.J. This section of Elizabeth borders Hillside, Union, and Newark. The church is located on North Ave. and is five miles away from Newark International Airport. It is further bordered by Salem and Westminster Avenues. Residences along the Salem Ave. border of the church property include older apartment buildings and senior citizen housing. Housing along the Westminster border is large scale single family residences. There are eight Presbyterian Churches in our community with the Hispanic/Latino population now in the majority and growing.

The Hispanic/Latino population is now in the plurality and growing. The community has two distinct and diverse populations. The first group is a lower echelon blue collar and service sector worker with a lower than average median family income. The second group is more educated with multiple earnings that provide a middle class income from a mix of blue collar and service jobs.

The diverse needs of this community include:

- Child care and after school programs
- Job training programs
- Affordable housing
- Budget and financial guidance
- Learning English as a second language
- Parental guidance
- Hunger programs

III. A statement of the congregation's vision for ministry

Our congregation remains passionate about our church's future for survival. With all of our differences, we shall worship the same Lord and Savior, and seek to serve the same God. We shall further advance our community outreach by continuing to provide a home for the Institute of Music for Children, and to deepen our relationship so that we may seek ways to minister with the families who bring their children to participate in this program. While we desire to establish other spiritually based programs with our current membership, we realize that our human resources are limited. So we may faithfully serve God, we will continue to pray for and to care for each other, and to provide a welcoming presence to those coming to our doors. We will strengthen our relationship with PRISM and partner with our sister churches on opportunities to come together and strengthen each other.

IV. A statement of the congregation's mission goals for addressing the needs of the community

"Where do we go from here?" is the question asked by everyone at the conclusion of the five

week study. Making a decision was not easy. The primary focus of the “The New Beginning” is to become a missional church, “Fishers of Men,” through change. As the author stated, change has two partners pain (fear) and possibilities (potential), both emotions are difficult for some people to accept. If we succumb to fear and don't change, how long do we survive? If we explore our potential and change, do we have enough people or do we lose people?

We looked at ourselves critically using three specific categories “Passion, Best At and Resources”.

- We are passionate about our church; some long for the days of old, others want minor adjustments to the worship service; but most want little change.
- We are “Best At” taking care of each other, our property and financially supporting The Institute of Music for Children.
- We are currently financially stable and our property is in manageable condition; rental income and withdrawals from our endowment supplement our income which enable us to maintain property and staff.

Except for the Institute of Music for Children, these are all internal acts that don't encompass those outside of the Third Westminster tent.

Our decision to move forward is to form a hybrid redevelopment strategy using tenets from both restart and parallel start strategies. Our redevelopment strategy will include:

- Calling a new pastor with characteristics that mirror the community
- Ensuring current congregation that they are valued and will continue to be cared for by creating a congregation that has two worship services, one hosting a more traditional service and a second service that is more relevant to our community
- Using the Institute of Music for Children as a platform to create new community inspired ministries
- Reevaluating bylaws and church mission
- Using fiscal resources and physical resources (buildings and grounds) prudently, we will be one congregation with two worshipping communities

V. A Statement of how the Pastor’s position will help the church reach its vision and goals

God has blessed us with resources to minister to those in our community. While we have the desire to serve, we are hampered by our limitations. We still desire to have our resources used to help those in our community.

We will continue to care for our current membership and support the Institute of Music for Children. With a pastor who is imaginative, energetic, patient and able to connect with people, the new worshipping community at Third-Westminster will begin to provide those other services that our community needs.

VI. A description of the characteristics, qualifications, leadership competencies, and tasks, needed in a Pastor and the scope of the position (full time/part time)

We seek a full-time designated pastor to lead us for two years; he or she may be renewed or installed as permanent after initial two year period is up. Given the scope of the position and responsibilities required to adequately fulfill their covenant with us, our Pastor should be knowledgeable of the Hispanic culture, and should possess the 5 C's confidence, conviction, commitment, compassion and communication. Using these skills to connect the church, Institute of Music for Children and the community the Pastor should be able to:

- Lead worship and administer the sacraments
- Enhance the spiritual growth through teaching, preaching and personal example
- Speak Spanish and English proficiently
- Maintain a close relationship with our current membership, while developing relationships to form new worshipping community
- Assist current leadership with caring for current membership and pursuing missional work in the greater Elizabeth community
- Encourage open communication and offer guidance in problem solving and decision making
- Facilitate uniting the two worshipping communities into one congregation
- Fully embrace the mission and vision of the Institute of Music for Children
- Connect more effectively with the Music Institute regarding children's family concerns while residing in this community
- Collaborate with the Music Institute on the designing of community based activities that will link church membership, families of the Music Institute, and community
- Establish family support ministries

Approved: June 20, 2015

