

First Federated Church of Peoria



**Senior Pastor
(call)**

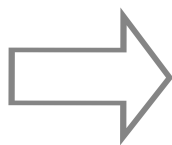
Illinois Conference United Church of Christ

[June 1, 2022]

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"God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work."
(2Corinthians 9:8)



1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
 - b. SCOPE OF WORK
 - c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
 - d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?
-

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: First Federated Church of Peoria

Street address: 3601 N. Sheridan Rd., Peoria, IL 61604

Supplemental web links:

<https://www.ffcpeoria.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/FFCPeoriaIL>

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstFederatedChurchPeoria/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ffcpeoria>

Additional ecumenical affiliations:

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Conference: Illinois Conference UCC

Association: Western

Association Staff Contact Person:

Rev. Stephanie Perdew, Ph.D.

Phone: 708-701-4933

Email: StephaniePerdew@ilucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

What We Believe:

We believe there are many paths to Jesus Christ.

We believe we are all on a journey to discover where God is leading us.

We believe in the individual's capacity for finding Truth.

We believe in growing together.

We believe that Christ has risen, and that He will one day come again.

Individuals' interpretations and perspectives may differ within the congregation of First Federated Church, but our church is a church of tolerance and understanding. Thus, you will not be told what to believe nor how to act. We will instead seek God through Christ's teachings, as they are accessible to all and will welcome individual interpretation and reflection.

Who We Are

Our logo represents all that we are. We begin with a circle, a long-standing symbol of completeness and wholeness.



At FFC, we minister to the whole person and to the whole world. The circle is divided into four smaller circles. These circles remind us of our diverse nature – that God created us as physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social beings.

Family Events

Annual Gingerbread House Family Event (held each November)





Young Families' Bowling Night



Outdoor Family Worship

Youth Activities

Junior High Youth Group



Bowling Event in Peoria



Tanner's Orchard Visit



Gingerbread Baking



LOGOS Intergenerational Ministry



Stronghold Youth Retreat



Students in grades 8-12 attend an annual weekend retreat at Stronghold in Oregon, Illinois, each spring. This is a long-standing tradition for the youth of FFC.



FFC students at Stronghold (2022)



Stronghold Castle

Worshiping and Praising



The Preschool at First Federated Church of Peoria:



Our Church History



*Second Presbyterian Church
Designed by William Boyington, architect of the Water Tower in Chicago*



*1st Congregational Church
destroyed by fire in 1936*

*Architectural rendering of
current First Federated Church
Peoria*





*Bell that was salvaged from the 1936 fire
(now resides outside current FFC building)*

*Two stained glass windows salvaged from the 1936 fire
(these now reside in the chapel of FFC)*



Peoria, Illinois



What we value about living in our area:

The Peoria community and surrounding area have the feel of a city with connections to smaller rural communities, allowing people to experience rural nature and city life. First Federated Church of Peoria benefits from the community that comes together on our Christian journey; we grow together by engaging each other and having conversations with children and adults of all ages.

Current size of membership:

506 active members (as of May 1, 2022)

- 301 PUSA members
- 205 UCC members

Position Title:

Senior Pastor

Position Duration:

Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

Compensation Level:

Full Time

Total support package meets conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK**Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship****1. Spiritual guidance and pastoral care**

- A. Provide pastoral leadership for creating and maintaining a framework that inspires nourishes and informs the spiritual welfare of the congregation
- B. Be a person of deep and evident faith
- C. Be responsible for the worship experience at First Federated
- D. Coordinate with music staff, ministry program and liturgist as needed
- E. Ensure that the sacraments are administered appropriately and officiate at baptisms weddings and funerals as necessary
- F. With the staff, provide pastoral care for the congregation and for all who seek comfort and guidance through the church

2. Leadership and development

- A. Be the head of staff, supervising and encouraging a collegial collaborative approach with the pastoral program and administrative staff
- B. Provide staff support and spiritual guidance to the following: Personnel, Finance, and Stewardship
- C. Promote healthy behaviors in the congregation, council staff and identify and address unhealthy behaviors when seen
- D. Engage in professional development opportunities
- E. Promote and interpret the church's mission

3. Community Engagement and Partnerships

- A. Serve as a community representative of the church, supporting partnerships and relationships with community groups and other churches
- B. Represent the church in the community in social justice initiatives
- C. Regularly engage in congregation-wide fellowship activities

4. Resource development

- A. Lead the congregation in being a welcoming community, growing its participation, membership and finances in a manner consistent with the programs and theological mission of the church
- B. Develop leadership by working with people in the church to help identify and nurture their spiritual gifts in service to others
- C. Take a leadership role in efforts to achieve long-term financial goals of the church

5. Core Competencies

- Effective communicator
 - Collaborator and team player
 - Effective organizational skills and time management
 - Holds all persons in genuine respect, both those with whom they agree and disagree
 - Caring, approachable, a good listener
 - Sense of humor!
 - Talented speaker
-

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

\$65,000-\$85,000 - comprised of salary and housing allowance. Health and pension benefits, professional expenses, and continuing education allowance will be provided in addition to salary and housing allowance.

Continuing Ed - \$1500
Professional Expense - \$5,200

Residential/commuting expectations:

In or near Peoria

Incentives:

Approved moving allowance

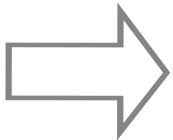
1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We are looking for a minister who will help us to work together as we continue to grow the church, strengthen our already dynamic youth programs and encourage involvement from members of all ages.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We would like our minister to help us to continue to support missions and community outreach locally.



2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

In order to respond to this question and to better hear the voices of our members, we chose to have 10 one-hour focus group sessions with prepared questions to help us identify where we are now at FFC, and a Congregational Survey to help guide us as we prepare for the future. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed in preparation for both the UCC and PCUSA profiles. Copies of the focus group questions and the complete survey are attached as appendices.

Focus Group outcomes:

Participants (N=48) expressed many items of importance to grow and sustain our church in our efforts to become what God calls us to be. Their thoughts and ideas fell into the seven categories below.

Committee Work:

People felt that committee work was engaging and motivating. They named specific committees they liked to work on. They like the variety of committees that appeal to a variety of individuals. There were some committees that existed in the past that respondents thought would be good to bring back in order to enliven the church. Some committees were associated with particular events that allowed more people to engage in a variety of activities, such as Habitat for Humanity, family picnics, intergenerational activities, and community meals.

Children and Youth:

Participants felt the children/youth programs were critical. Our website is evidence of the active part that the children/youth have in the church. The intergenerational activities (VBS and LOGOS) were mentioned and are also evident in the many pictures on the website. The children/youth are inspiring to the congregation; they set an example for many adults when they listen intently during the children's sermon. Our church families come from many different locations in the area, and it is challenging to find time for youth to meet with the many different activities and schedules that they are involved with. Therefore, we need to get creative and explore many avenues to involve our youth. We also currently have no college ministry, though there is a mid-sized university just ten minutes from us, and this might be an opportunity for growth.

Welcoming Atmosphere:

Focus group participants feel that having a welcoming congregation is very important in growing the church. Although the social hour following worship has diminished with COVID, it is an important time for people to make friends and connect with people. We need to reach out to the community to bring in more diversity. More people add to the spirituality and energy of the church.

Music:

We currently have our regular chancel choir and a chancel bell choir that performs every Sunday. Our church has been blessed with some very talented people who occasionally share by playing instruments or singing solos. People specifically stated that they like traditional music the majority of the time. One group suggested we consider a children's choir. Additionally, they liked when we brought in Bradley University musicians, so perhaps we can do this again when people are more comfortable getting back to normal.

Missions and Outreach:

People expressed spiritual fulfillment and pride for the congregation with the participation in the mission programs. They specifically identified Habitat for Humanity, School Snack Pack program, the Christmas Catalog, Rummage Sale, WanaWaMola in Mombasa Kenya, both youth and adult mission trips, and PAWS. Some felt our mission work needs improvement, and we should focus on this more. People would like more information about the different missions and would like to hear representatives from our local missions come speak about what is accomplished through the mission. Perhaps we need to better identify needs and be more responsive locally. Our congregation is very generous; the Christmas catalog and rummage sale brought in record amounts this past season.

Tradition:

Again, the music was mentioned, but people also focused on our efforts to be traditional yet progressive. We have some diversity, but need to consider how we can better reach out to others. We do have adult opportunities with book clubs, Bible studies, Women's Club, Old Buddies Breakfast, and several other groups, but some would like Adult Sunday school brought back.

Worship:

Focus group participants mentioned the beauty of the sanctuary and how it promotes a peaceful feeling as a place to think/meditate. There was spiritual fulfillment when a lot of people came together. This has been missed with COVID limitations, but we can strive for this as we move forward. Another suggestion was to have speakers. Participants like the "church on-line" especially when they are unable to attend.

Congregational Survey outcomes:

The Congregational Survey focused on two aspects, personal pastoral qualities and pastoral qualities that support the life of the congregation. There were 113 respondents to the survey; following is a summary of the results.

Personal Pastoral Qualities:

The top three qualities in the first category of personal pastoral qualities rated as very important and important were: Ability to work with groups (96.5%); Relates message through real-world examples (95.6%); and Ability to communicate faith & beliefs (89.4%). (See Table below)

Pastoral Qualities to Support the Life of the Church:

In the second category, the top three ratings of very important and important were: Collaboration being the top leadership style (88.5%); Works to grow vibrant youth programs (85.9%); and supports missions locally (85.8%).

Pastoral Attributes and Preaching Style:

The top five most important pastoral attributes chosen were: good interpersonal communication, personable, engaging speaker, sincere spiritual leader, and inspirational. The three most effective preaching styles were ranked as: Personal, relational, engaging; narrative stories to illustrate points; and use of textual scripture to provide meaning.

The table below displays qualities identified as very important or important. The top three qualities in each category are highlighted. The qualities that are somewhat important are also recorded with the total percent of the top three ratings in the third column.

Congregational Survey Results: Table of Top Ratings:

Personal Pastoral Quality	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top three ratings
1. Ability to work with groups	96.5%	3.5%	100%
2. Relates message through real-world examples	95.6%	Minimal	95.6+%
3. Ability to communicate faith & beliefs	89.4%	8.8%	97.2%
Pastoral quality supporting the life of the church	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top two ratings
Question 24 Top leadership style - Collaboration	88.5%	11.5%	100%
Question 19 Works to grow vibrant youth programs	85.9%	12.4%	98.3%
Question 14 Supports missions locally	85.8%	12.5%	98.3%

<p>Question 25 Five most important attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● good interpersonal communication ● personable ● engaging speaker ● sincere spiritual leader ● inspirational 	<p>85%</p> <p>83.2%</p> <p>75.2%</p> <p>71.7%</p> <p>61.1%</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Question 26 Three most effective preaching styles to communicate God's word:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personal, relational engaging ● narrative - use of stories ● textual - meaningful scripture 	<p>87.6%</p> <p>81.4%</p> <p>34.5%</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>NA</p>

In summary, FFC has a lot of positive elements to continue to maintain. For the church to continue to meet the needs of the congregational mission and goals, we will need to be faithful in our efforts as we seek God's guidance.

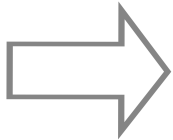
Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

1. The church has focused on needed repairs and maintenance of the roof, preschool, and Life Together Center (Discussed later in this report.). The capital campaign to complete these projects exceeded our financial goals. We are more aware of the needs to become A2A (Accessible to All); we are in the planning process of identifying more specific needs of the preschool to better meet the needs of the community; and we want to continue to connect to the community about our wonderful resources at the Life Together Center.

2. COVID challenges/opportunities: FFC followed CDC guidelines throughout the pandemic. Adjusting to mandates has required the church to become more creative and examine our resources in order to serve and support our church family, missions, and community connections. Of course technology allowed us to participate in worship through YouTube videos. At first, sections of the service were done independently prior to merging for production that was organized into as close to a regular service as possible. Instead of the full chancel choir singing, there might be a solo performance, the Bible readings and sermons were integrated, and announcements were made. When it was time for communion, people could sign-up and participate in a drive-through. As time progressed, people made reservations to attend masked with seating appropriately spaced using swimming noodles and ribbon pew markers. Most

recently, we are no longer required to mask and we still have some spacing markers in place. Music has returned with the choir and bells each Sunday, and on occasion there is special music. Most importantly, the Children's Message has returned and provides inspiration to everyone. Prior to COVID, we always had an earlier service, as well as the mid-morning regular service. We are now back to both services. For communion during worship inside, we continue to use the disposable communion bread/wine dispensers rather than passing the trays, but plan to return to regular communion when possible.

3. We continue to provide our 10:00 am service on YouTube. This provides opportunity for those unable to attend, those not ready to venture out, and those who want to revisit the service to have access to the regular worship. We continue to improve the quality of online viewing and use of technology to bring God's Word to our members and those joining us from other communities.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Congregational Reflections

First Federated Church (FFC) is an inclusive, open, and accepting congregation welcoming all to fully participate in God's love and the life of the church. We are a federated church consisting of Presbyterian (PCUSA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC) denominations. We have a well-accepted unofficial saying at FFC that “We are a traditional Church full of progressive people.” We at FFC are open to seeing the world not as black and white, but as a beautiful rainbow of differing colors and shades, to accepting others' opinions and differing theologies. Because we as a congregation hold a diverse array of theological perspectives, we are open to being challenged, and yet are respectful of others' deeply held differing beliefs. We profoundly care about the wellbeing of everyone within our church family, the surrounding community, and the world. We are committed to making a difference in this world by working within the church to feed the souls of our congregants, and outside the church walls, through our missions both locally and internationally.

These are the core beliefs at FFC:

- We believe there are many paths to Jesus Christ.
- We believe we are all on a journey to discover where God is leading us.
- We believe in the individual's capacity for finding Truth.
- We believe in growing together.
- We believe that Christ has risen, and that He will one day come again.

FFC's mission statement is "Making Disciples through worship, as we praise and glorify God; mission, as we embody God's love; fellowship, as we love and care for one another; giving, as we express gratitude to God." As one congregant commented, "We are not a congregation looking for answers as much as we are a group of people willing to wrestle with the questions and doubts that come from confusing life experiences."

There is an ardent desire by many within our congregation that we become not only an open church but also an affirming church.

Describe Several Strengths or Positive qualities of your congregation:

Our congregation has many strengths. FFC is a multi-generational congregation that is active in the church and the community. We have many fellowship groups that help to strengthen our relationship to God and each other. We are a fiscally sound church. We own our facilities, have continued to meet our stewardship goals even throughout the pandemic, and have recently completed a capital campaign for a new roof.

FFC has a world class traditional music program that is the pride of many within the congregation. We have a magnificent grand piano and pipe organ. Our music program on Sundays is blessed with many different soloists, instrumentalists, and visiting choirs throughout the year. Additionally, we are the practice facility for the Central Illinois Youth Orchestra.

This church is also active with adult education, and although we currently do not have an adult Sunday school, we have many different book studies. We recently read *Holy Envy* by Barbra Brown Taylor for a Lenten book study. Previous books read and discussed in a Theology on Tap book study include *How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X Kendi, *Love Wins* by Rob Bell, *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr, and *The Last Week* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

We have a strong desire to share God's love with the world around us by giving of our time and financial support through missions run from the church building, including the Snack Pack program that ensures that children at a local elementary school have food for the weekends when they would not have access to school meals. At the start of COVID we pivoted to be a distribution center to provide meals for students when they were at home doing virtual learning. We provide financial support to many different groups working for the improvement of the greater Peoria community. Furthermore, FFC supports one international mission, WanaWaMola, that provides a fresh start for street children in Mombasa, Kenya.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers:

Praising and honoring God is the foundation of our existence as a congregation. Sunday is our day of worship. We offer two services – a casual outdoor or chapel service at 8:00a.m. and a traditional sanctuary service at 10:00 a.m. During Covid we have been able to offer live broadcasts of the 10:00 a.m. service on our YouTube channel.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. - John 4:24

8:00 a.m. Casual Service: This traditional, relaxed service praises God through the richness of worship under the open sky of Her beautiful world. It is a slightly condensed version of our 10:00 a.m. service. The sacrament of Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month. We move this service into the chapel during the cooler months and inclement weather. The service is typically attended by 20-40 people and runs about 35 to 40 minutes long. It is traditional in its format but does not have any services provided for young children.

10:00 a.m. Traditional Service: Our principal service, this traditional worship gathering praises and glorifies God through the fullness of music, prayers, scripture, and the preached Word. The talented Chancel Choir lifts its unified voice to God in anthems as the congregation joins them, together singing both time-honored and modern hymns. This service is held in the main sanctuary. We use a traditional liturgy, and we follow the Revised Common Lectionary for scripture readings and sermon topics. Music during this service is pipe-organ-accompanied hymns, traditional classical instruments, chancel choir pieces, bell choir performances and guest soloists. Childcare for nursery-aged children is provided, and school-aged children start the service with their families and depart for Sunday school after the children's message. We enjoy intellectually stimulating, challenging, biblically referenced sermons with practical, everyday applications. Good preaching can be described in many ways – learning something new about the context of scripture, gaining a new insight into what scripture could mean for our world today, gaining a deeper relationship with God, learning a new, deeper way to show love to God, our neighbor and ourselves.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

In our ministry to youth and families, we seek to create a community where stories are shared and experienced together. FFC is blessed to have incredible adult leaders who serve faithfully alongside our youth while welcoming their questions, gifts, and passions.

With our faithful youth and family ministries of adult leaders and staff, we are able to provide regular fellowship, engaging Bible study and Christian education, leadership development, transformative retreats, and committed service to both the local and global communities.

Ultimately, the youth and family ministry expands well beyond the walls of FFC's sanctuary. By connecting our adults and youth with supportive relationships and meaningful resources, we seek to empower families for discipleship in the world.

Additionally, we run a full day preschool that utilizes our facilities throughout the week and provides a needed service in the local community. We also have many other educational opportunities for our young children including a Wednesday night LOGOS program (30 kids three months throughout the year) and Vacation Bible School each summer (70 kids). Our junior high group consists of 15 kids and our senior high group has about 15 active kids.

We welcome and encourage the younger members to get involved in church leadership. The committee assembled to search for a new pastor is an example of this. It includes a member of our senior high youth group.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.


Pastoral staff includes the Lead Pastor as Head of Staff, and the Minister of Pastoral Care. The Director of Worship and Music is a full-time employee. The Organist, Director of Children’s Ministries, and the Director of Youth Ministries are part-time employees. Office staff includes the Secretary, Administrative Manager, Financial Secretary and one Maintenance personnel. The director of the First Federated Pre-School and other pre-school staff are also church employees.

The Executive Board, the governing body, is composed of 12 elected voting members and other ex-officio members. The pastor serves as the moderator.

Seven committees conduct the work of the church: Pulpit and Staff, Hospitality, Missions, Christian Education, Buildings and Grounds, Worship, and Finance (that includes stewardship). Each committee meets monthly.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

*It should be noted that when an individual joins FFC, he or she has the option to be a UCC or Presbyterian member.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST										
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS										
										
Church#:	163300									
Assoc:	210	Schedule: 0	First Federated Church UCC	Peoria	IL	61604				
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED	
2010	291	219	94	2	0	4	5	4	-3	
2011	289	200	232	2	0	4	8	0	-2	
2012	284	205	230	2	0	2	9	0	-5	
2013	290	210	259	4	0	5	3	0	6	
2014	272	201	202	3	0	10	30	1	-18	
2015	281	213	229	4	0	9	4	0	9	
2016	254	207	73	4	1	6	13	25	-27	
2017	243	197	58	6	0	0	5	12	-11	
2018	227	145	194	3	0	6	2	23	-16	
2019	226	147	87	2	0	4	1	6	-1	
2020	226	147	87	0	0	0	0	0	0	
YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPPLY CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2010	\$256,162	\$132,854	\$22,324	\$21,625	\$43,949	\$79,712	\$123,661	8.71	\$512,677	\$263,983
2011	\$266,200	\$211,485	\$23,440	\$22,246	\$45,686	\$84,952	\$130,638	8.81	\$608,323	\$271,944
2012	\$305,514	\$107,286	\$23,884	\$6,970	\$30,854	\$71,111	\$101,965	7.82	\$514,765	\$243,216
2013	\$330,451	\$401,758	\$23,384	\$5,664	\$29,048	\$111,475	\$140,523	7.08	\$872,732	\$272,306
2014	\$323,701	\$38,802	\$23,580	\$2,355	\$25,935	\$148,025	\$173,960	7.28	\$536,463	\$285,832
2015	\$338,932	\$78,301	\$23,356	\$2,916	\$26,272	\$127,709	\$153,981	6.89	\$571,214	\$347,359
2016	\$409,428	\$76,842	\$23,076	\$2,410	\$25,486	\$131,875	\$157,361	5.84	\$643,831	\$363,062
2017	\$493,551	\$75,922	\$25,200	\$4,246	\$29,446	\$152,662	\$182,138	5.11	\$875,689	\$366,675
2018	\$540,501	\$79,987	\$23,664	\$2,940	\$26,604	\$148,734	\$175,338	4.38	\$715,839	\$397,108
2019	\$483,115	\$102,776	\$13,243	\$3,798	\$17,041	\$106,687	\$123,728	2.69	\$616,843	\$387,530
2020	\$493,115	\$0	\$12,311	\$550	\$12,861	\$0	\$12,861	2.50	\$505,976	\$0
% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
2015-2020	-19.57	-30.99	-62.01	-100.00	-100.00	45.49	-51.05	-11.42		
2010-2020	-22.34	-32.88	-7.45	-100.00	-100.00	92.50	-70.74	-1.31		

PROFILE: FIRST FEDERATED CHURCH - PEORIA, IL

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

Number of active members:	558*
Number of active non-members:	15
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	573

*indicates 2019 year-ending numbers

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

More than 10 years:	68.2%
Less than 10 years, more than 5 years:	12.4%
Less than 5 years:	19.4%

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
72	42	58	57	47	47	65	81	158

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

- Education: university professors, teachers, and school administrators
- Healthcare: nurses and doctors
- Law
- Engineering - a number of our congregants work for Caterpillar
- Nonprofit administration
- Sales
- Pharmaceuticals
- Broadcasting; etc.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up:

Our congregation has a diversity of ages, but we are not especially ethnically diverse. Our nonwhite members make up just about 1-2% of our membership. This is an area where we would love to see growth.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

We are hoping to expand our community outreach and grow the congregation. It is our church's goal to offer a welcoming environment for everyone, and we would be excited to have a pastor who could help shape a vision to increase our diversity.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Ways of Gathering	Average number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? (list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)
Adult Groups or Classes	Two groups at Lent	Pastor & children's ministry
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	two	Pastor & children and family ministry
Children's Groups or Classes	44 (Sunday school)	Children's and family ministry leaders
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship		Program staff
Church-wide Meals	One meal	Thanksgiving – Hospitality Committee
Choirs and Music Groups	Two groups	Russel Boulton – bell & chancel choirs
Church-based Bible Study	none	none
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	Once per month	Church staff & Executive Board
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Class deferred to 2022
Drama or Dance Program	none	none
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	11	Board of Deacons, Memorial Committee and staff
Intergenerational Groups	several	Logos, Pretzel Sunday, Gingerbread House Event
Outdoor Worship	2 or 3 services	Pastor, Children & family ministry leaders
Prayer or Meditation Groups	none	none
Public Advocacy Work	none	none
Retreats (Adult)	One retreat	Executive Board
Retreats (Youth) - Stronghold	15-20	Children & family ministry leaders; Youth group members
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	one (currently)	Monthly worship at Buehler Home (resuming the fall: Theology on Tap)
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	one	FFC Wedding Consultants and staff
Worship (8:00 service) Worship (10:00 service)	Seasonal variations Pre-Covid: 175-120 Post-Covid: 125	Program staff
Young Adult Groups or Classes	Two book studies, young families gatherings	Pastor / Children and Family Ministry leader
Youth Groups or Classes	70	Children and Family Ministry leaders

Additional comments:

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
PADGETT, REV. LAUREN	4-way	HOSPICE CHAPLAIN IN PEORIA	FFC-Active Deacon	N
BORDEN, REV. DWIGHT	No	N/A	Parishioner	Y
HOKE, REV. CAROLE	No	N/A	FFC - Executive Board	Y
KERR, REV. JOHN	No	N/A	Coordinates weekly worship at Buehler Home	Y
HEIN, REV. HENRY	No	N/A	Parishioner	Y - PCUSA
HAYWOOD, REV. DON	N/A	N/A	FFC Handbell Conductor	Y - UMC
OTHER MINISTERS (PCUSA AND ELCA) OFTEN WORSHIP WITH US	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

These are the ministers who worship with our congregation. However, Lauren Padgett is on the board of deacons and Carole Hoke is a member of the executive board. Henry Hein, former interim who is in his 90s, worships here.

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Name	Staff Position	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Arnold, Brittany	Director of Preschools at FFC	FT - Salaried	G Weghorst	4 years
Barch, Rev Stephen	Minister of Pastoral Care	FT -Salaried	Senior Pastor	9 years
Bartley, Debbie	Teacher, FFC Preschool	FT - Hourly	B Arnold	4 years
Bartley, Kelsey	Sub Teacher, FFC Preschool	FT - Hourly	B Arnold	1.5 years
Boulton, Russel	Director of Worship and Music	FT - Salaried	Senior Pastor	9 years
Hackett, Lisa	Children and Youth Ministries	PT - Salaried	J Sheley	2 years
Hanson, Kirsten	Sunday Nursery and Event Liaison	PT Hourly	G Weghorst	10 years
Hulin, Brian	Event Liaison/ Set-Up	PT Hourly	G Weghorst	1.5 years
Koch, Lisa	Teacher, FFC Preschools	FT Hourly	B Arnold	7.5 years
McGrath, Sabrina	Financial Secretary	PT Hourly	C Walker-Walter	1.5 years
McIntyre, Vicki	Teacher, FFC Preschools	FT Hourly	B Arnold	4 years
Mudd, Jessica	Teacher, FFC Preschools	FT Hourly	B Arnold	3.5 years
Richardson, Marcia	Piano and Organ	per event	R Boulton	2 years
Sheley, Jessica	Director of Children and Youth	PT - Salaried	Senior Pastor	5.5 years
Walker-Walter, Cecelia	Secretary	FT - Salaried	Senior Pastor	10.5 years
Weghorst, Fred	Maintenance	PT Hourly	Senior Pastor	2 years
Weghorst, Gail	Administrative Manager	FT - Salaried	Senior Pastor	5.5 years

REFLECTION

After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's overall ministry?

We have an active congregation with a strong sense of community among our members. We have a strong music ministry, a thriving youth ministry, and a thriving children's ministry. It is an intergenerational congregation, and we have groups and activities to serve members of all ages. However, some believe there could be an even stronger focus on activities that bring the generations together. Additionally, there is still some room for members to become more active in volunteering and serving where there is need within the church. Another important aspect of our church identity is our service to the community and our support of missions. Many members say they find a lot of meaning in our involvement in these forms of outreach.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

2022 BUDGET

REVENUE - CHURCH

Pledge Contributions	\$590,000.00
Non-Pledge Contributions	\$ 45,000.00
Plate Offerings	\$ 1,000.00
Endowment Transfer	\$110,000.00
Interest Earned	\$ 400.00
Rent Income	\$ 200.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 1,000.00
Missions Offering	\$ 41,500.00
Preschool	\$258,565.00
Life Together Center	\$ 63,905.00
Transfer from General Reserves	\$193,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE - CHURCH	\$1,304,570.00

EXPENSES - CHURCH

Missions	\$ 50,000.00
Christian Education	\$ 26,050.00
Buildings and Grounds	\$194,150.00
Administrative	\$101,750.00
Worship and Music	\$ 5,200.00
Membership	\$ 9,500.00
Board of Deacons	\$ 7,800.00
Communications	\$ 6,000.00
Preschool	\$258,565.00
Life Together Center	\$ 63,905.00
Transfer from General Reserves	\$193,000.00
Senior Pastor Search Committee	\$ 15,800.00
Personnel	
Ordained Staff	\$ 160,325.00
Non-Ordained Staff	\$ 148,985.00
Administrative Staff	\$ 129,772.00
Other	\$ 39,035.00
Capitol Project: Church Building Improvements	\$ 12,000.00
Preschool	\$ 258,565.00
Life Together Center	\$ 139,638.00
TOTAL EXPENSES- CHURCH	\$1,304,570.00

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 14%

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)**
- One Great Hour of Sharing**
- Strengthen the Church**
- Neighbors in Need**
- Christmas Fund**

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)

Because the church is Federated with the PCUSA, our gifts are determined by formula in our Federation Agreement (constitution). Whatever is given to one is equal to the amount given to the other. In 2022, our supporting gifts were approximately \$11,600 to each denomination.

What is the church's current indebtedness? Currently no debt

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2021	Raise the Roof: to replace roof on sanctuary/wings	\$350,000	\$350,000	Goal reached/ Roof replaced in summer 2021

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

To replace the roof and protect the sanctuary and organ

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$2, 518, 590

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

Annually and for capital/ project needs

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

Last year 5%, estimated 5 years ago 4-5%. The Executive Board maintains the withdrawal rate at approximately 5% each year. This is constantly reviewed by the Endowment Committee.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

\$90,000 - \$115,000 per year for the last five years

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? The Endowment Fund continues to receive gifts and grow. Viability projections far exceed a 5-year horizon.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

The numbers for previous years are estimates but should be close estimates. The draw from the endowment cannot exceed 5% of the average balance of the last three years, measured at year-end. Our endowment is split between the regular permanent endowment and the quasi endowment. The permanent endowment is \$984, 841, and the quasi endowment is \$1,533,749 as of Dec. 31, 2021.

Other Assets:

Reserves (savings): We have \$645,953 of unrestricted cash as of Dec. 31, 2021.

Investments (other than endowment): None

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Main Church building

Life Together Center - former office building which the church purchased in 2012

Garage

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)

Main church building, 1st & second floors

Life Together center, entire building

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?

We have a beautiful, historic church building in which our members take pride. Many of our members have been a part of FFC for decades, with some families tracing their connections to the church back generations. The preservation of our church building—as a place for members to worship, as well as the ties it represents to our past—is something we value. This value is reflected in the recent capital campaign to replace the roof. At the same time, we understand that a church is ultimately the people, not a building. People (the members of our church, as well as the numerous community members who are served through our preschool, Life Together Center, and missions giving) are at the heart of who we are and what we care about. This value is clearly reflected in our church budget.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

Our church is a merger of the Second Presbyterian Church and the First Congregational Church. There was a fire in 1936, and the Congregational church burned to the ground. The Second Presbyterian church invited the Congregational church to use its building. Eventually there was a merger (engineered by the women of the church) in which each church was able to keep its denominational identity.

The most important recent event was the purchase of The Great Central Insurance Agency building in 2011, which became our Life Together Center. This building serves our church and the Peoria community. Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, LOGOS, Executive Board meetings, Peoria Youth Symphony practice, Rummage sales, and many other activities are held there. Community activities such as decorated Christmas tree sales and bridge clubs use the building.



Located in the heart of Peoria, our **Life Together Center** is a unique meeting, gathering, and community event center supporting both the life of our church and the community at large. The Center is a multi-room, multi-purpose facility that can host a variety of events and is a part of the church's active outreach to the community. Following is a list of the different spaces that support FFC and the Peoria community:

- Great Hall (5,640 sq ft) can comfortably seat 300 guests at round tables, or seat 400 theater style
- Central Room (5000 sq ft) can accommodate 250 guests at round tables or seat 350 theater style
- Trinity Room (1,700 sq ft) can seat 100 guests at round tables or 150 chairs theater style
- Garden Room (1,685 sq ft) can seat 100 guests at round tables or 100 chairs theater style
- Boardroom (900 sq ft) can seat up to 15 at one large conference table
- Additional smaller meeting rooms are also available



The Great Hall of the Life Together Center



Jesus statue at the entrance to the Life Together Center

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

The purchase of the Life Together Center was the first major conflict within the Church for two generations. It "ruffled some feathers," but the congregation got past the conflict, and with time, it has proven to be a major asset. In this regard, we have joined other prominent churches in our area in providing a multipurpose facility for community use.

Ministerial History (*include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years*)

Staff member's name	Years of service	Position	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. William Petterson	2	Associate Minister	No
Dr Robert Gillogly	14	Senior Minister	No
Dr. Forrest Krummel	14	Senior Minister	No
Rev. Daren Hofmann	5	Associate Minister	No
Rev. Stephen Barch	9 to present	Assistant Minister	Yes
Rev. Ryan Bradney	1	Assistant Minister	No
Rev. Zachary Lysdahl	2	Assistant Minister	No
Rev. David Ezekiel	1.5	Interim Minister	No

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

Our church has been fortunate to have pastors that serve our church for a number of years when deciding to become part of our church community. We are a stable and vibrant church. We support and respect our fellow members and ministerial staff. We have been commended by our members for organizing a comprehensive ministerial search that is open, thorough and receptive to input from members.

As the group of decision-makers, the search committee knows how vital the ministerial choice is to our church. As part of this most recent process, church members reminded us that there was one time when the ministerial search was not carried out with similar fidelity over 35 years ago. It resulted in selecting a pastor who stayed for a comparatively short period, was viewed as a micro-manager and overall did not fit with our congregation. Members who voiced these complaints agreed that such a situation could have been avoided had we adhered to a thorough search process with care and concern. This is what we are doing, and our membership generally agrees we are taking the right approach given the feedback we've received. We value a pastoral search because it is the best way to find a pastor who is well-liked and will be here long term, like our former pastors.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

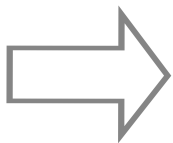
No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

First Federated provides space, volunteers, and financial support to many direct service organizations:

- American Red Cross
- The Center for Prevention of Abuse
- Crittenton Centers
- CROP Walk
- Friendship House
- Habitat for Humanity
- Midwest Food Bank
- Snack Pack Ministry for Whittier Primary School
- Reading Buddies

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

None

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

There is a strong desire by many in our congregation that we become Open and Affirming.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

Although we have not recently participated in interfaith activities, we have found during the discernment process that many in our congregation have fond memories of interfaith activities in the past and would like the opportunity to engage in more of these activities in the future.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

FFC's mission statement is "Making Disciples through worship, as we praise and glorify God; mission, as we embody God's love; fellowship, as we love and care for one another; giving, as we express gratitude to God." As one congregant commented, "We are not a congregation looking for answers as much as we are a group of people willing to wrestle with the questions and doubts that come from confusing life experiences."

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

The Senior Pastor is expected to be the most visible face of the church in the community. During their tenure, they are encouraged to seek and accept leadership positions on various community boards as well as offer occasional adjunct courses at area colleges and universities. Our pastors in recent years have not been activists but have encouraged the congregation to see and be involved in the wider conditions and realities of the community and the world. The Senior Pastor has historically been involved in denominational activities as their time and interest permit.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's Mission Insite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

In the immediate neighborhood of our church (1½ mile radius), the East (known as District 2) is trending younger with a moderate increase in families with school-aged children. The neighborhood is stable and homogeneous, according to the community diversity index. This presents an opportunity for growth. To the north, south, and west, the population is largely (but not exclusively) middle-aged, empty nesters.

How does your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Peoria is the second largest metropolitan area in Illinois. For many years Peoria has been well-known nationally by the slogan, "Will it Play in Peoria?" because we are representative of the country at large. We have blue collar workers, professionals, and a mix of ages. In general, Peoria has always been "middle America." First Federated is also representative of this mix. As a congregation we prefer to set aside labels and political views and focus on Christ's message of love and acceptance.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not?

The church serves the Peoria community in a variety ways, including Vacation Bible School, an annual rummage sale, and a year-round pre-school. and working with a local inner city school to provide snack packs to students in need. The Snack Pack Program is just one example of how FFC supports low-income families in the Peoria area. With an increasingly younger demographic and Bradley University in close proximity, we are assessing how best to minister to this population and reach out.

What is our potential?

FFC has vast potential with appeal to young families, offering a high-quality preschool within the facility. FFC is a vibrant place on Sundays and throughout the week.

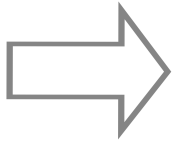
What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

We are known to be generous to community causes. The previous pastor had a strong reputation for connection and involvement in the community, and through him the church enjoyed a good reputation. Many members sit on boards and serve in leadership positions in community activities.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

New members often comment that we reached out to help them connect fully in the life of the church. We are intentionally friendly and welcoming to new people and deliberately seek to connect them to groups within the church in which they can actively participate.

Our congregation likes to describe itself as "a traditional church for progressive people."



5. REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1 (See attached letter)

Mark Roberts / CEO of Community Foundation of Central Illinois

309-674-8730

mark@communityfoundation.org

This organization is housed in our Life Together Center.

REFERENCE 2 (See attached letter)

Donna Kosner / Director of Community Outreach, Education and Applications

309-839-2754

dkosner@givingindependence.org

We contribute to this cause and recently helped them to obtain a \$40,000 grant from State Farm, a private community foundation.

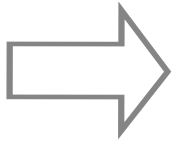
REFERENCE 3 (See attached letter)

Libby Braband / Vice President, Parsons Corporation

773-343-3294

ebraband@yahoo.com

Libby attended FFC during her youth and is the daughter of a current member.



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
 - b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
 - c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION
-

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, in times of stress and change, we often seek your guidance and aid. Our selection of a new pastor is one of those times. Help us to have the humility to consider new directions, help us to be thoughtful in our actions, and help us to be mindful of your teachings to care for others.

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

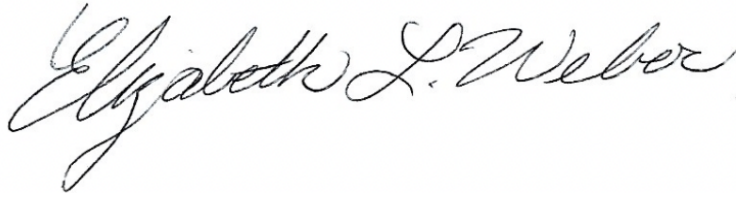
As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (*for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.*)

Executive Board
 Senior Pastor Search Committee
 FFC Congregation

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth L. Weber".

5-27-22

Elizabeth L. Weber

Co-chair, Senior Pastor Search Committee

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone: Date:

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22

**First Federated Church
Peoria, IL**

MISSION STUDY

MISSION STUDY: First Federated Church - Peoria IL

Upon reflecting on the question, "Who is God calling FFC to become?" we wanted to hear the voices of our members. We chose to have 10 one-hour focus group sessions with prepared questions to help us identify where we are now at FFC, and a Congregational Survey to help guide us as we prepare for the future. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed in preparation for both the UCC and PCUSA profiles. Copies of the focus group questions and the complete survey are attached as appendices A & B.

Focus Group outcomes:

Participants (N=48) expressed many items of importance to grow and sustain our church in our efforts to become what God calls us to be. Their thoughts and ideas fell into the seven categories below.

Committee Work:

People felt that committee work was engaging and motivating. They named specific committees they liked to work on. They like the variety of committees that appeal to a variety of individuals. There were some committees identified as being in the past that they thought would be good to bring back and enliven the church. Some committees were associated with particular events that allowed more people to engage in a variety of activities; specifically addressed were missions such as Habitat for Humanity, family picnics, intergenerational activities, and community meals.

Children and Youth:

Participants felt the children/youth programs were critical. Our website is evidence of the active part that the children/youth have in the church. The intergenerational activities (VBS and LOGOS) were mentioned and are also evident in the many pictures on the website. The children/youth are inspiring to the congregation; they set an example for many adults when they listen intently during the children's sermon. Our church families come from many different locations in the area, and it is challenging to find time for youth to meet with the many different activities and schedules that they are involved with. Therefore, we need to get creative and explore many avenues to involve our youth. We also currently have no college ministry, though there is a mid-sized university just ten minutes from us, and this might be an opportunity for growth.

Welcoming Atmosphere:

Focus group participants feel that having a welcoming congregation is very important in growing the church. Although the social hour following worship has diminished with COVID, it is an important time for people to make friends and connect with people. We need to reach out to the community to bring in more diversity; more people add to the spirituality and energy of the church.

Music:

We currently have our regular chancel choir and a chancel bell choir that performs every Sunday. Our church has been blessed with some very talented people who occasionally share by playing instruments or singing solos. People specifically stated that they like traditional music the majority of the time. One group suggested we consider a children's choir. Additionally, they liked when we brought in Bradley musicians, so perhaps we can do this again when people are more comfortable getting back to normal.

Missions and Outreach:

People expressed spiritual fulfillment and pride for the congregation with the participation in the mission programs. They specifically identified Habitat for Humanity, School Snack Pack program, the Christmas Catalog, Rummage Sale, WanaWaMola in Mombasa Kenya, both youth and adult mission trips, and PAWS. Some felt we are doing average with our missions and need to focus on this more. People would like more information about the different missions and would like to hear representatives from our local missions come speak about what is accomplished through the mission. Perhaps we need to better identify needs and be more responsive locally. Our congregation is very generous; the Christmas catalog and rummage sale brought in record amounts this past season.

Tradition:

Again, the music was mentioned, but people also focused on our efforts to be traditional yet progressive. We have some diversity, but need to consider how we can better reach out to others. We do have adult opportunities with book clubs, Bible studies, Women's Club, Old Buddies Breakfast, and several other groups, but some would like Adult Sunday school brought back.

Worship:

Focus group participants mentioned the beauty of the sanctuary and how it promotes a peaceful feeling as a place to think/meditate. There was spiritual fulfillment when a lot of people came together. This has been missed with COVID limitations, but we can strive for this as we move forward. Another suggestion was to have speakers. Participants like the "church on-line" especially when they are unable to attend.

Congregational Survey outcomes:

The Congregational Survey focused on two aspects, personal pastoral qualities and pastoral qualities that support the life of the congregation. There were 113 respondents to the survey; following is a summary of the results.

Personal Pastoral Qualities:

The top three qualities in the first category of personal pastoral qualities rated as very important and important were: Ability to work with groups (96.5%); Relates message through real-world examples (95.6%); and Ability to communicate faith & beliefs (89.4%). (See Table below)

Pastoral Qualities to Support the Life of the Church:

In the second category, the top three ratings of very important and important were: Collaboration being the top leadership style (88.5%); Works to grow vibrant youth programs (85.9%); and supports missions locally (85.8%).

Pastoral Attributes and Preaching Style:

The top five most important pastoral attributes chosen were; good interpersonal communication, personable, engaging speaker, sincere spiritual leader, and inspirational. The three most effective preaching styles were ranked as: Personal, relational, engaging; narrative stories to illustrate points; and use of textual scripture to provide meaning.

Displayed on the table below are qualities identified as very important or important. The top three qualities in each category are highlighted. The qualities that are somewhat important are also recorded with the total percent of the top three ratings in the third column. Additional results in Appendices C & D.

Congregational Survey Results: Table of Top Ratings:

Personal Pastoral Quality	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top three ratings
1. Ability to work with groups	96.5%	3.5%	100%
2. Relates message through real-world examples	95.6%	Minimal	95.6+%
3. Ability to communicate faith & beliefs	89.4%	8.8%	97.2%
Pastoral quality supporting the life of the church	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top two ratings
Question 24 Top leadership style - Collaboration	88.5%	11.5%	100%
Question 19 Works to grow vibrant youth programs	85.9%	12.4%	98.3%
Question 14 Supports missions locally	85.8%	12.5%	98.3%
Question 25 Five most important attributes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● good interpersonal communication ● personable ● engaging speaker ● sincere spiritual leader ● inspirational 	85% 83.2% 75.2% 71.7% 61.1%	NA	NA
Question 26 Three most effective preaching styles to communicate God's word: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● personal, relational engaging ● narrative - use of stories ● textual - meaningful scripture 	87.6% 81.4% 34.5%	NA	NA

In summary, FFC has a lot of positive elements to continue to maintain. For the church to continue to meet the needs of the congregational mission and goals, we will need to be faithful in our efforts as we seek God's guidance.

Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

**Appendix A:
Focus Group Questions**

Discussion questions:

1. Think back on your entire experience at FFC, and name a time when you felt the most engaged, alive and motivated.
2. When you consider all of your experiences at FFC, what has contributed the most to your spiritual life?
3. Tell about a time when you were most proud of your association with this congregation.
4. What do you think is the single, most important, live-giving characteristic at FFC? When we are at our best, what are we doing?
5. What motivates you to come to worship at FFC?
6. Complete this sentence with one of the two choices for each item (everyone should vote for one - no "half votes" are allowed!) "Our church is . . ."
 - a. **Rigid or Flexible?**
 - b. **Status Quo or Mission-oriented?**
 - c. **Fearful or Courageous?**
 - d. **Thriving or Getting by?**
7. What do you think FFC is doing really well?
8. How well do you feel FFC meets the needs of the current congregation?
9. Thinking of the Peoria community and beyond (globally), how well do you think FFC ministers to the needs locally and beyond?

Additional questions if time:

10. Don't be humble! The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual gifts -- what gifts do you share with the congregation (including things like personality, perspectives, skills, character, etc.)?
11. Now consider any gifts you have that aren't shared with the church. Are there gifts -- such as talents you enjoy or skills you are good at -- that don't get shared with the church because opportunities don't exist?
12. If we define a relational group as a group of people who gather at times other than on Sunday morning, for the purpose of prayer, study or fellowship on a weekly basis...what relational groups does FFC have?
13. What does FFC do to prepare teachers, elders, and other leaders in the church?
14. What are the ministry opportunities begging for attention in FFC's neighborhood/Peoria?
15. If FFC were to close, what would be the one thing people in the community would miss most?

Appendix B: Congregational Survey

Appendix B: Congregational Survey

These qualities are important to me in a senior pastor: Rank as *Very important (5)*, *Important (4)*, *Somewhat Important (3)*, *Not very important (2)*, and *Not important (1)*

1. _____ Ability to communicate faith and beliefs through inspirational speaking skills based on scripture.
2. _____ Counseling members who are dealing with personal problems.
3. _____ Participation in community activities.
4. _____ Importance of senior pastor visiting the sick and grieving in addition to the Pastoral Care Minister.
5. _____ Visitation with members both current and potential.
6. _____ Works well with individual groups within the church, committees, elders, deacons, etc.
7. _____ Facilitates support of missions, locally and worldwide.
8. _____ Emphasis on teaching the congregation.
9. _____ Encourages and works with youth programs.
10. _____ Promotes a variety of times and settings for worship.
11. _____ In composing sermons, the senior pastor uses real-world examples that relate the message to the lives of the congregation.
12. _____ In composing sermons, the senior pastor is faithful to the liturgical calendar, such as Advent, Pentecost, etc.
13. _____ Works regularly in development of stewardship growth.

These qualities are important in the life of the congregation: (Same ranking system)

14. _____ Supports the missions of the church locally.
15. _____ Supports the missions of the church globally.
16. _____ Provides opportunities for lay leadership and participation.

17. _____ Provides more worship and study opportunities throughout the week.
18. _____ Maintains traditional music, including choir, hymns, bells, guest musicians, etc.
19. _____ Works to grow more vibrant youth programs and activities.
20. _____ Provides a variety of volunteer opportunities.
21. _____ Improves online services to attract new members.
22. _____ Accommodates the needs of all church members.
23. _____ Offers small group engagement opportunities for multiple age groups and interests.

24. **Select one:**

The leadership style of the senior pastor that I find most desirable is _____.

- a. Senior pastor makes the final decision.
- b. Senior pastor collaborates with committees and members.
- c. Senior pastor delegates to committees/ congregation, leaving them with the final decision.

25. **Please read the following attributes of a potential pastor and rank your top 5:**

- a. Personable _____
- b. Sincere spiritual leader _____
- c. Effective biblical communicator _____
- d. Engaging speaker _____
- e. Good interpersonal communicator/listener _____
- f. Missions-minded _____
- g. Adaptable and flexible _____
- h. Inspirational _____

26. Which of the following elements of preaching style most effectively communicate God's Word to you?

Check the 3 that appeal to you in a sermon:

- () Logical, detailed, point by point.
- () Personal. relational, engaging.
- () Textual (the Scripture text provides the meaning.
- () Narrative (the use of stories to illustrate points.
- () Sermon series (spending multiple weeks on a topic.
- () Bible book (spending multiple weeks on a book of the Bible.
- () Challenging, appealing for action or change (revival).

27. Please share with us any other thoughts you may have that are not addressed in this survey:

We appreciate your taking the time to complete this survey.

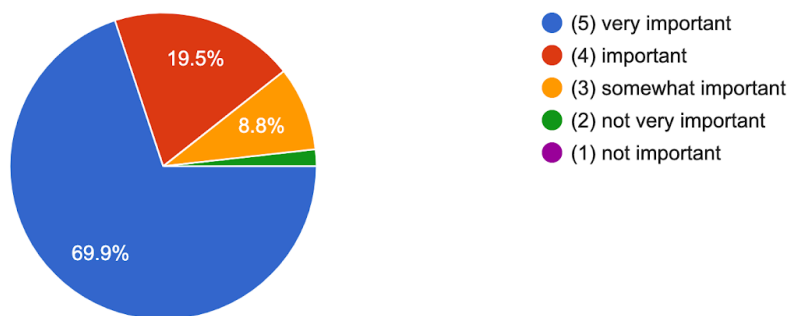
Please return all surveys to the church by _____

Appendix C: Survey Results

How important to you are the following qualities in a senior minister?

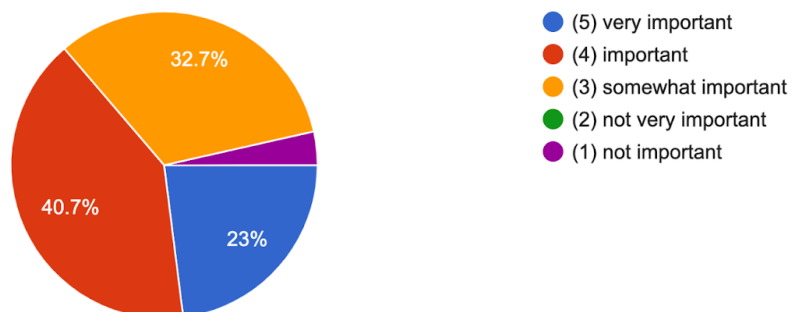
1) Ability to communicate faith and beliefs through inspirational speaking skills based on scripture.

113 responses



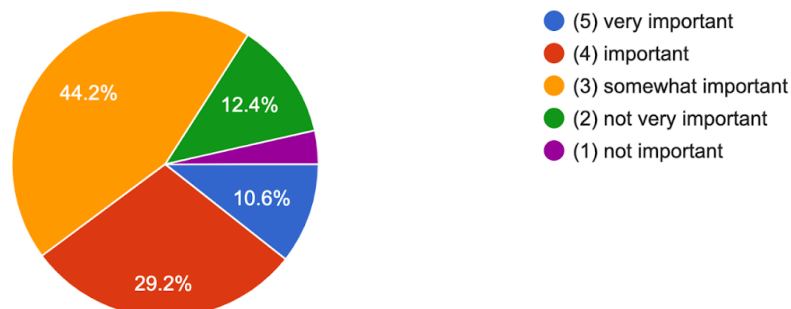
2) Ability to counsel members who are dealing with personal problems

113 responses



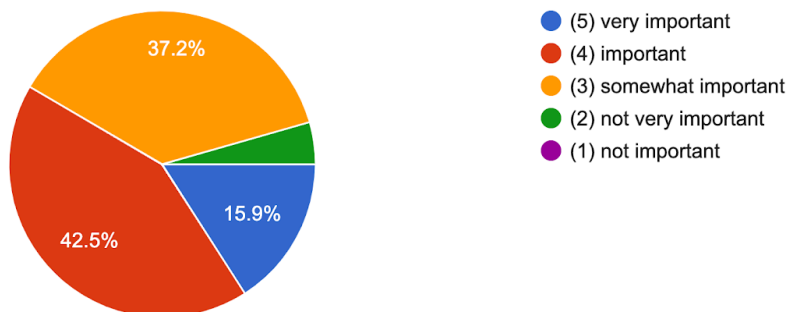
3) Participation in community activities

113 responses



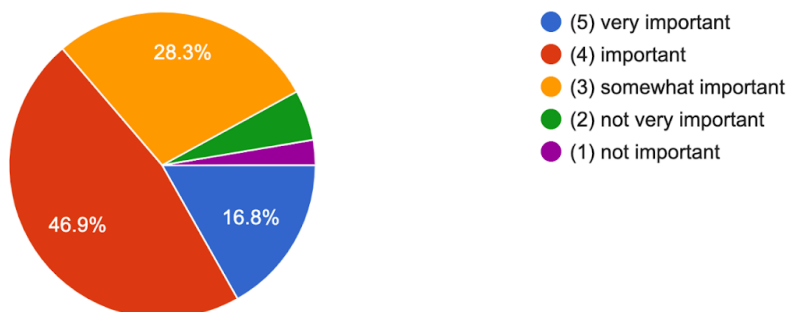
4) Visitation of the sick and grieving (in addition to visits by the Pastoral Care Minister)

113 responses



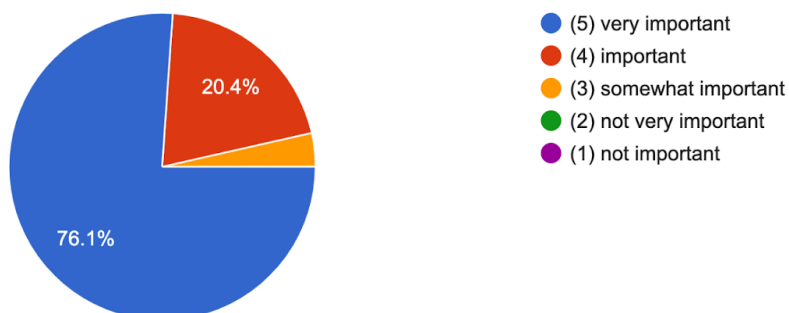
5) Visitation with members (current and potential)

113 responses



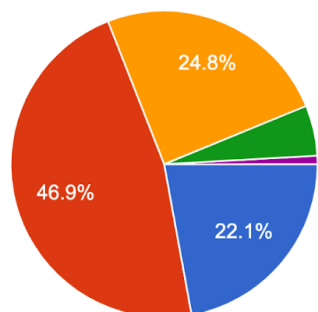
6) Ability to work well with individual groups within the church (committees, elders, deacons, etc.)

113 responses



7) Ability to facilitate support of missions (locally and worldwide)

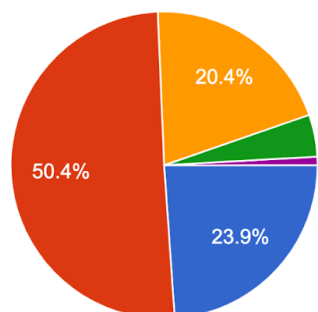
113 responses



- (5) very important
- (4) important
- (3) somewhat important
- (2) not very important
- (1) not important

8) Emphasizes teaching the congregation

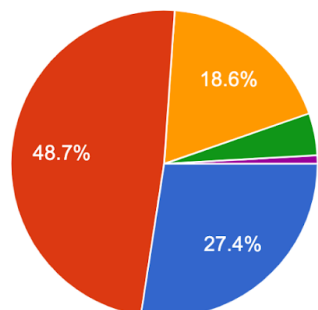
113 responses



- (5) very important
- (4) important
- (3) somewhat important
- (2) not very important
- (1) not important

9) Encourages and works with youth programs

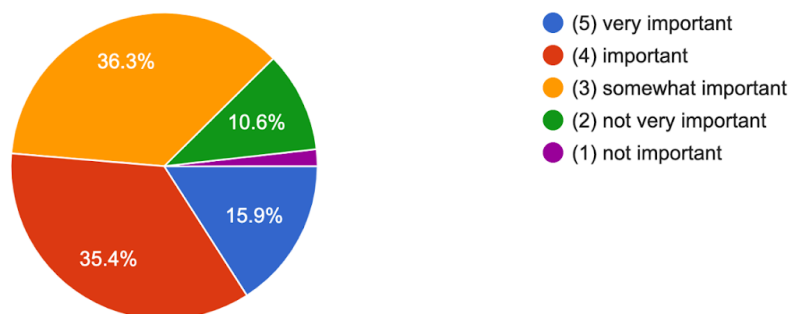
113 responses



- (5) very important
- (4) important
- (3) somewhat important
- (2) not very important
- (1) not important

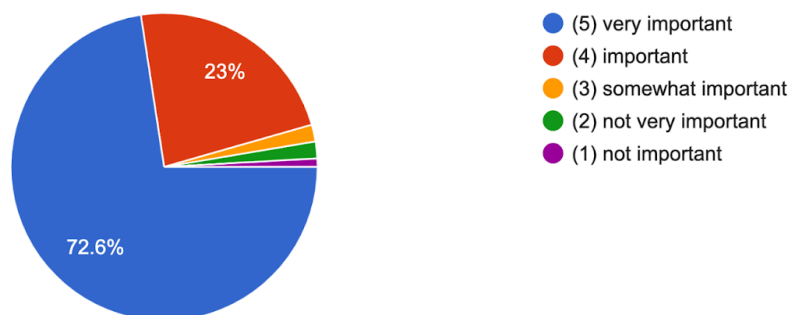
10) Promotes a variety of opportunities for worship (settings, times)

113 responses



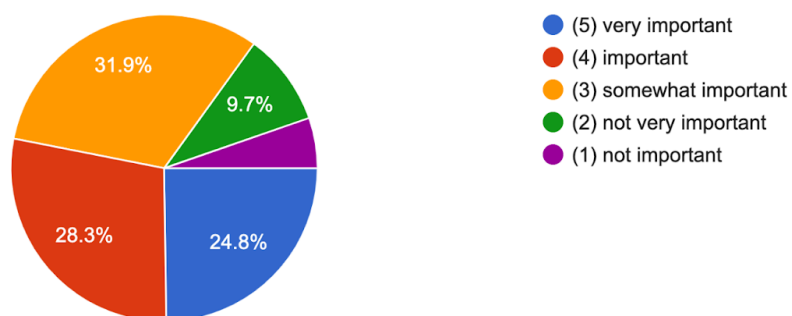
11) Has the ability, when composing sermons, to use real-world examples that relate the message to the lives of the congregation

113 responses



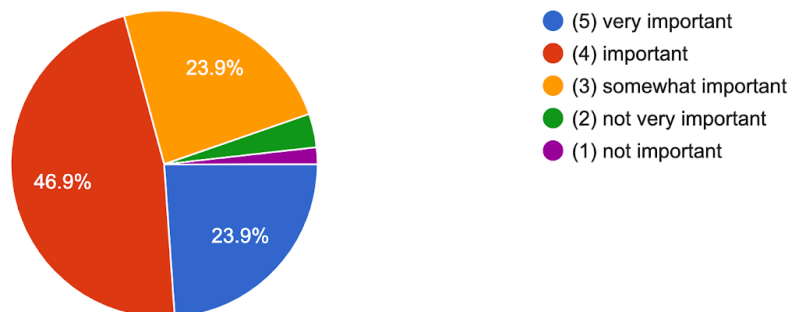
12) When composing sermons, is faithful to the liturgical calendar (Advent, Pentecost, etc.)

113 responses



13) Works regularly in the development of stewardship growth

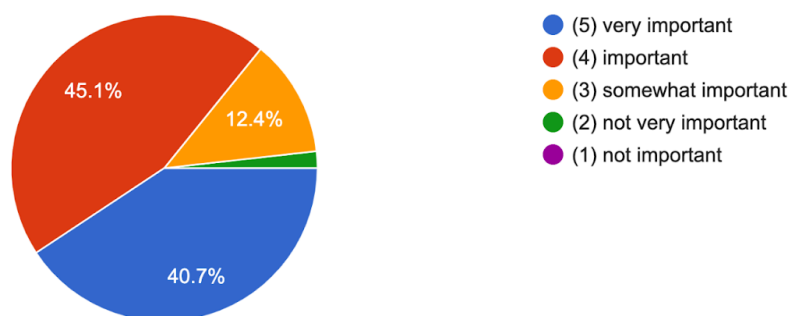
113 responses



How important are the following pastoral qualities in the life of the congregation?

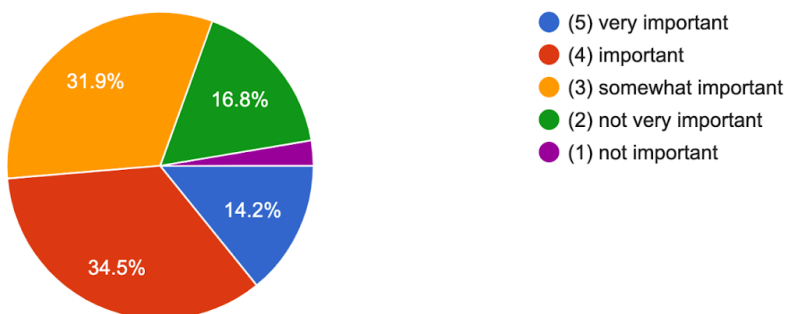
14) Supports the missions of the church locally

113 responses



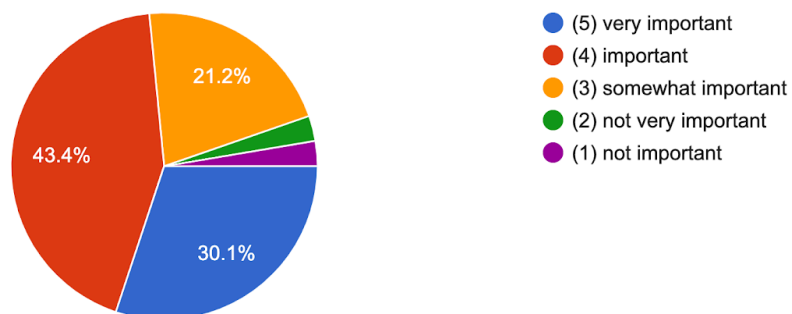
15) Supports the missions of the church globally

113 responses



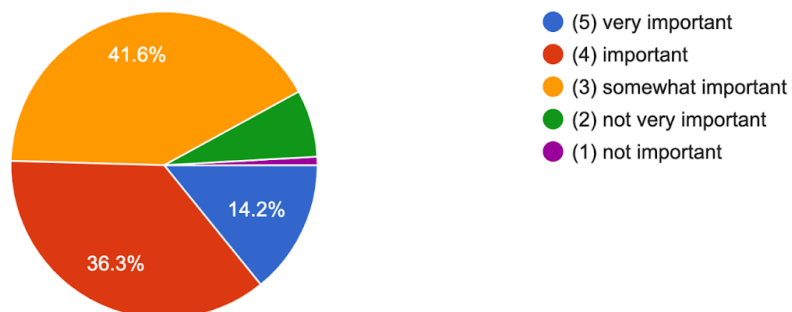
16) Provides opportunities for lay leadership and participation

113 responses



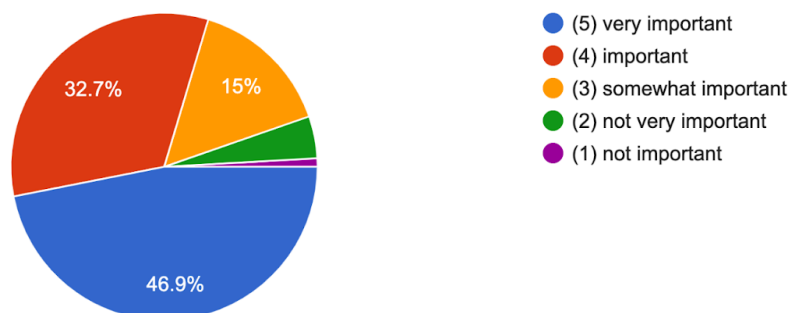
17) Provides additional worship and study opportunities throughout the week

113 responses



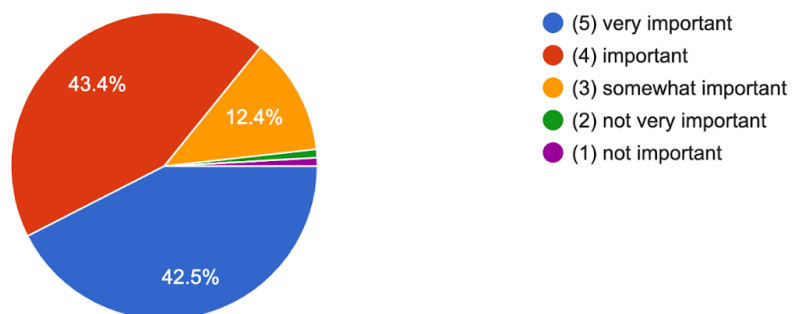
18) Maintains traditional music, including choir, hymns, bells, guest musicians, etc.

113 responses



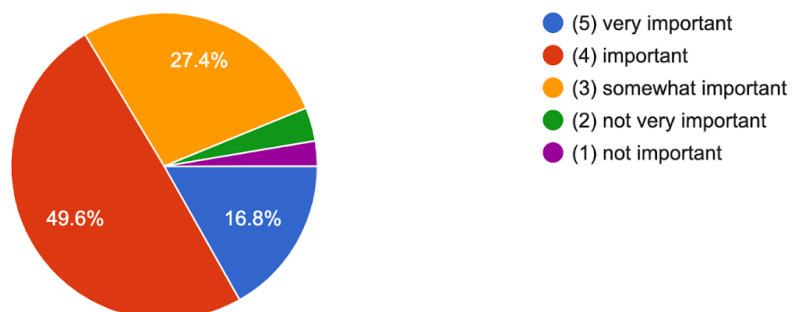
19) Works to grow more vibrant youth programs and activities

113 responses



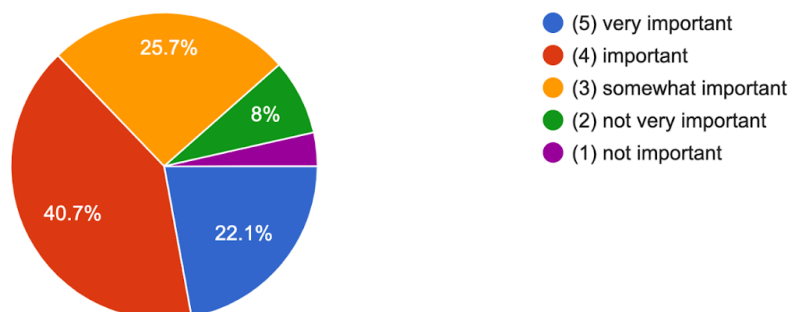
20) Provides a variety of volunteer opportunities

113 responses



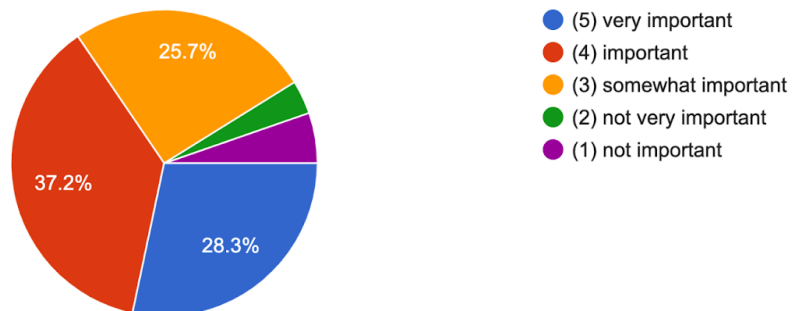
21) Improves quality of online services to attract new members

113 responses



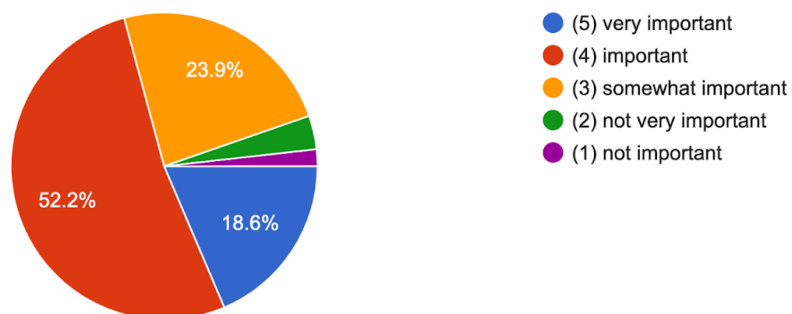
22) Accommodates the needs of all church members

113 responses



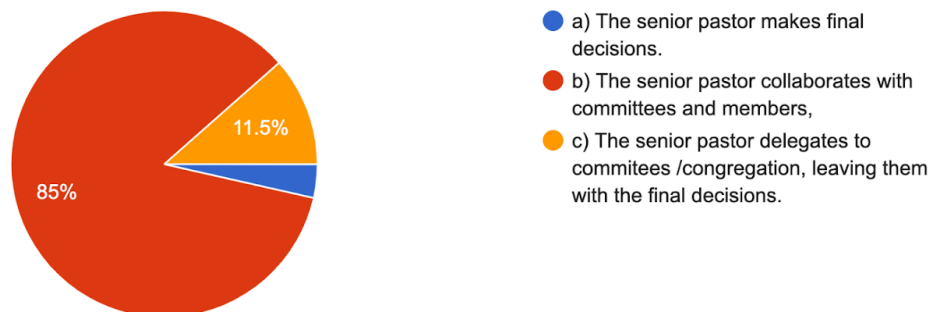
23) Offers small group engagement opportunities for multiple age groups and interests.

113 responses



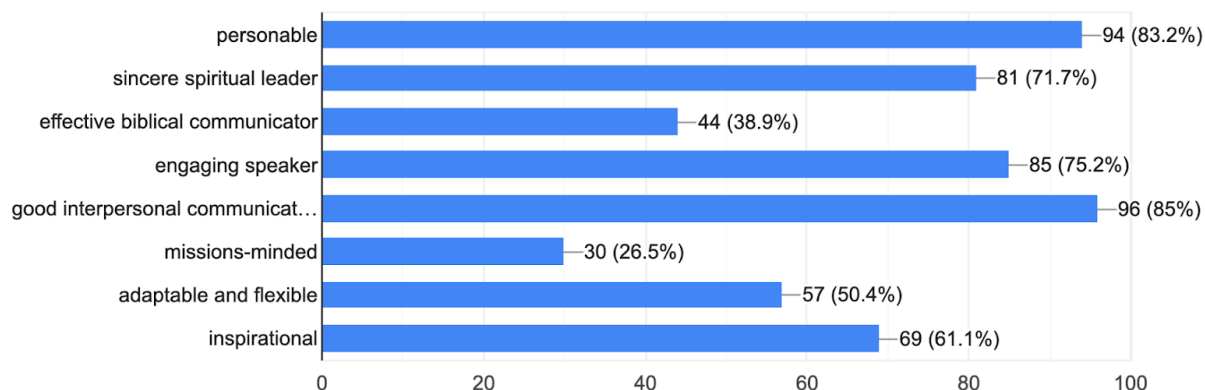
24) The leadership style of the senior pastor that I find most desirable is: (select only 1)

113 responses



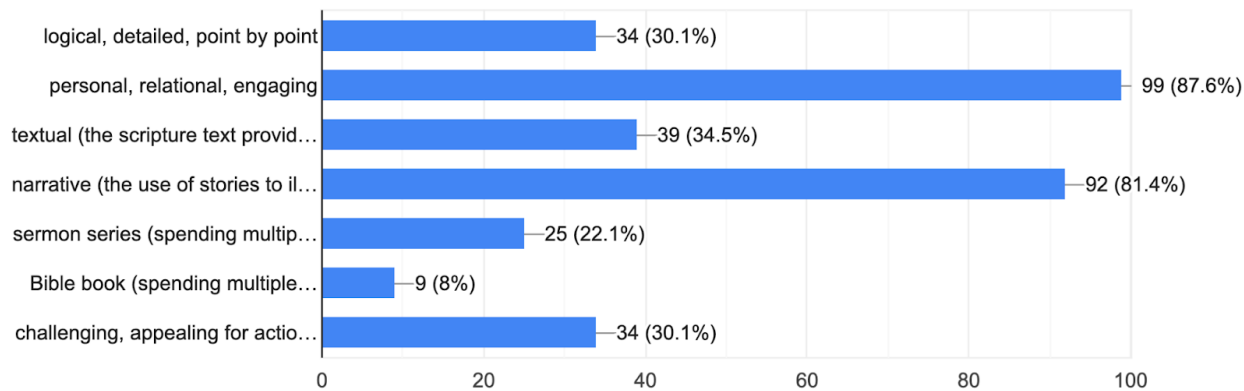
25) Select the 5 attributes of a potential pastor that are most important to you: (Select only 5)

113 responses



26) Which of the following elements of preaching style most effectively communicate God's word to you? (Select only 3)

113 responses



27) Please share with us any other thoughts you may have that are not addressed in this survey:

- Input from anonymous mailed paper survey.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey.
- **IMPORTANT BUT NOT ADDRESSED ANYWHERE ABOVE:** The prospective minister absolutely must be prepared to have a complete understanding of the church's bylaws and be 100% committed to working within them. Should the bylaws be inadequate, the minister must work through the

congregation to modify the bylaws. FFC is an institutional church. The minister must be responsive to the board and submit themselves to the board's oversight.

- Pastor should have a servant's heart
- A leader who is willing to work with others and lead in a healthy environment
- Many of your questions really apply to the youth minister and or the pastoral care minister not so much the senior minister. We thank each committee member for your time and commitment to FFC's future. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- It's important for a Senior minister to handle the things only a Senior minister can handle and allow others to take care of other things. He can be consulted when questions come up but should be able to delegate some of the work to trusted coworkers and committees.
- The membership profile of our church has changed and membership has reduced and continues to decline. A minister with a track record of membership growth should also be considered.
- We always seem to end up with a Presbyterian minister. While that hasn't been bad, shouldn't we get a Congregational minister for a change. After all we are a federated church. With a Presbyterian minister, I'm never sure if he/she understands that he/she works for the Board not the other way around.
- recognize the wide range of beliefs among this congregation
- I would like to see a minister who does NOT follow the lectionary, but is more liberal thinking, more accepting of the good in other religions, brings in current events, and introduces new ideas in Bible research.
- A) Can help us develop a vision on how to best utilize the entire physical campus. B) Can help us create a plan for financial sustainability. C) Can help us leverage pre-school success to bring more young families into FFC.
- An important quality of the pastor will be the ability to manage and coordinate the staff and key committees.
- Pep up the music
- Having a minister that engages with the congregation is important. He/She needs to be personable, approachable and a team player.
- The new minister needs to push for the evolution of the church. Missions, energy and civic leadership, social justice, and open fiscal communication will be important facets to attract Gen X, Millennial, and younger members, while being respectful to the older generations. This person should be a good speaker, and intelligent, but constantly learning, but does not need to 'show off' their learned-ness.

- I found question 24 very difficult. There needs to be a point "person" for decision making which is the executive board with input / recommendations from the senior pastor. In providing that input, the pastor would collaboratively work with committee's in the congregation. But for day, to day operational items, I would think the senior pastor has to make the decisions. So I could justify bullet one or two but I do not believe either fully describes my preferred approach.
- I was ill and couldn't attend a focus group. What I wanted to say there is that I hope that the committee is using the consultant reports that were generated a couple of years ago by the consultants that we hired for finance and church health. They provide a good picture of the church. I believe that we have been successful in implementing many of the suggestions but we have not addressed the issue of factions in the church and the often unhealthy way that disagreements are handled. I do not think that we are going to be able to keep a pastor if these issues are not dealt with. I even heard that there was an effort to not listen to negative feedback in the focus groups. This has been a large and often not talked about issue in the church but the consultant did a good job of bringing light to the issue. A new pastor must have exceptional skills in conflict management and in organizational assessment. [REDACTED]
- The senior pastor also needs to be good at managing the church staff and leading them in the day to day operation of the church.
- In choosing leadership style, I think it's important that a minister is part of active lay leadership groups, i.e. executive board, Christian ed board, etc. A very important quality for clergy is always a personal relationship with God that is reflected in how he/she lives. I believe that FFC congregation will always value Biblical scholarship interpreted in practical applications. We are not a congregation looking for answers as much as we are a group of people willing to wrestle with the questions and doubts that come from confusing life experiences. Prayers for all of you on the search committee.
- I believe we are looking for a new pastor that is traditional but will have to be progressive in the religious sense to fit in well with FFC.
- My ideal senior pastor is one who is aware and tuned in to the things happening in our church community without necessarily needing to have direct input or final say over every single detail. The pastor should be one who is part of the community, not ruling over the community. I enjoy sermons that give me pause to reflect on how the message and lesson can be interpreted and adapted into my daily life and activities. I do not enjoy overly "preachy" sermons that dictate good/bad, right/wrong, etc. The world is a grey place, and it is our task to make it as bright and beautiful as we can, while still respecting, honoring, and lifting up those who may not think, feel, look, or believe the same as us.
- Input from anonymous mailed paper survey. New pastor needs to be flexible - current events may come into play requiring action from pulpit. Promoting growth in the 20-35 age group. Needs flexible

music. Need to look at alternative services (contemporary) for this group. Readily available and rapid response to all concerns and inquiries.

- Input from anonymous online paper survey. We need a younger pastor who will be at FFC for a long time to develop a consistency and help build programs and dedicated membership. A friendly and personable pastor with an engaging and welcoming personality who I feel comfortable being with and talking with. A pastor who will continue a traditional worship service, but bring new and meaningful aspects to it to engage all ages of our members. It's very important to me to continue to keep our younger families and add new ones, but I want to keep our traditional service instead of a more contemporary one (big screens, rock bands, and drums!). Thanks for your time and effort with this most important project. God's blessings to you.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. I'd like the person that we choose to be our next minister to have a warm, genuine, authentic personality! I want this person to be able to relate to the young and old. I want this person to be empathetic and to have a good sense of humor! They need to have a good tone to their voice, NOT a monotone type that could put you to sleep! They need to be ENTHUSIASTIC and INSPIRATIONAL in their sermons!!!
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. The choices of attributes in a senior pastor were all important to this person and they couldn't distinguish between them. "Good luck folks. I will be happy to support your decision. May God be with you. I will pray for you. Actually, I have a very high regard for Hope that he stays acquainted with our church."
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. The senior pastor must be honest, trustworthy and kind with a strong focus on the spiritual and religious needs of the members of the congregation and with the ability to deliver attention getting and thought provoking sermons that incorporate and address current social issues.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. I think our senior pastor should also be active in our community (i.e. be an active member in a service club such as rotary).
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. Relate to everyday life and not just a time that we didn't live in. One dinner I attended years ago, I felt physically uncomfortable and had to leave early. My husband got a ride home - at my insistence. The minister called that night to check on me. Meaningful and wasn't forgotten. Care for the congregation.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. I really like being a part of the church - I feel very close to God. I do say thanks to God for this life. God is very important in many ways. Thanks be to God.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. Minister is spiritual leader, not youth director, fundraiser, music director or CEO. Board and Committees, lay leadership make decisions for the church, not the minister. Minister tends to his flock, teaches classes, visits members of the congregation, develops and encourages community. Wishing the pastoral search committee the best. We have confidence in the committee!

- Input from anonymous online paper survey. Have to remember the pastor is ONE person and cannot be everything to everybody.
- Input from anonymous online paper survey. It is important the pastor have a personality that attracts prospective members. It is important that the pastor feels pastoral ministry is essential (because the congregation is aging).
- unanimous paper survey: A pastor with background in theology and prior experience with a congregation is going to be important for a church this size.
- A good sense of humor; balanced approach; strong consultative skills; developed leadership abilities
- Unanimous paper survey: We need a strong, personable leader; someone that is a good shepherd of our flock; a traditional, old fashioned leader/minister.
- anonymous paper survey: [REDACTED]
- I believe charity first begins at home.
- Unanimous paper survey - I would prefer all of the above qualities in a minister younger than 49 years of age. We need to reinvigorate our congregation with new members and young families.
- [REDACTED]
- unanimous paper survey: Many of the items were marked lower because there are members in the church that can handle such programs without the Senior Pastor having to be involved deeply in every aspect of the church.
- We are only in Peoria 6 months of the year.
- [REDACTED]
- I would also like to see us work towards becoming an open and affirming church.
- unanimous paper survey: Please remember that a minister is only one person and be sure he's not on overload. I am a traditionalist and enjoy traditional services.
- unanimous paper survey - Share theological thoughts of recent theologians in interpretation of Biblical text in small groups if not sermons.
- unanimous paper survey: We have been very happy with the past two ministers and hope the committee will pick someone similar to them. Sorry this is late. We are in Florida and our mail is slow coming to us.
- unanimous paper survey: I want a pastor who is apolitical. That's the goal of any pastor, but not often practiced. That's what Jesus practiced above all other things. I feel like the push for diversity and progressive leaves many like me behind, I am a traditionalist, but still understand that Jesus' love for me and others is the foundation of the church. We don't need special (? unreadable) to make certain feel accepted. Jesus already accepts everyone and I think our church does too.

- Making the best use of our incredible physical assets ... and moving toward financial stability.
- [REDACTED]

- Question #22 - accommodates the needs of all church members - With a diverse congregation (Specifically ages), there will always be members who feel left out by leadership decisions. I would emphasize that a senior pastor needs to have well-developed conflict resolution skills.

Appendix D: Percentage Table of Survey Results

Table of Percentages of Survey Results:

Personal Pastoral Quality	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top two ratings
1, Ability to communicate faith & beliefs	89.2% 92.2% 89.4%	8.9%	98.1%
2. Counseling members	63.4% 62.8% 63.7%	33%	96.4%
3. Community participation	39.3% 47.1% 39.8%	44.6%	83.9%
4. Visitation of sick & grieving	58.1% 64.7% 58.4%	37%	95.1%
5. Visiting members	63.4% 74.5% 63.7%	28.6%	92%
6. Ability to work with groups	96.4% 100% 96.5%	3.6%	100%
7. Ability to facilitate support of missions	68.7% 78.4% 69%	25%	93.7%
8. Emphasizes teaching the congregation	74.1% 82.4% 74.3%	20.5%	94.6%
9. Encourage s & works with youth programs	75.9% 80.4% 76.1%	18.8%	94.7%
10. Promotes a variety of opportunities for worship	51.8% 70.6% 53.1%	35.7%	87.5%
11. Relates message through real-world examples	95.5% 96.% 95.6%	minimal	95.5%

Pastoral quality supporting the life of the church	% Very important or important	% Somewhat important	Total % of top two ratings
12. Sermons faithful to the liturgical calendar	53.6% 58.8% 53.1%	31.3%	84.9%
13. Regular development of stewardship growth	70.5% 80.4% 70.8%	24.1%	94.6%
14. Supports missions locally	85.7% 90.2% 85.8%	12.5%	98.2%
15. Supports missions globally	48.2% 49% 48.7%	32.1%	80.3%
16. Provides opportunities for lay leadership & participation	73.3% 82.3% 73.5%	21.4%	94.7%
17. Provides additional worship & study opportunities	50% 66.7% 50.5%	42%	92%
18. Maintains traditional music	79.4% 76.5% 79.6%	15.2%	94.6%
19. Works to grow vibrant youth programs	85.8% 94.1% 85.9	12.5%	98.3%
20. Provides a variety of volunteer opportunities	66.1% 76.4% 66.4%	27.7%	93.8%
21. Improves quality of online services to attract members	62.5% 68.6% 62.8%	25.9%	88.4%
22. Accommodates the needs of all church members	65.8% 72.5% 65.5%	25.9%	91.6%

23. Offers small group experiences for diverse ages & interests	70.6% 80.4% 70.8%	24.1%	94.7%
24. Top leadership style - Collaboration	84.8+% 86.3% 88.5%	11.6%	96.4+%
25. Five most important attributes: - good interpersonal communication - personable - engaging speaker - sincere spiritual leader - inspirational	84.8% (92.2%) 85% 83% (84.3%) 83.2% 75.9% (76.5%) 75.2% 71.4% (70.6%) 71.7% 60.7% (54.9%) 61.1%	NA	NA
26. Three most effective preaching style to communicate God's word: - personal, relational, engaging - narrative - use of stories - textual - meaningful scripture text	87.5% (92.2%) 87.6% 82.1% (88.2%) 81.4% 34.8% 34.5%	NA	NA

Appendix E: Reference Letters

Paws Giving Independence



"saving a life to change a life"

I have been asked to write this letter about my experience at First Federated Church. I am on the board of directors and am one of the founders of Paws Giving Independence. We are an all volunteer non profit that was started in 2008. We train service dogs for individuals with a variety of abilities and place them free of charge to our recipients. We train mainly for wheelchair/mobility and medical response as well as facility dogs for areas schools and centers.

We have worked with First Federated for over ten years. They were our first community partner at a time when we were just starting out and because of First Federated we are still here almost 14 years later, still placing service dogs. While we are an all volunteer organization we have to cover the costs of the 25 dogs in training at a time. The number of dogs we can train at a time is based on our income. We were chosen to be in their Christmas catalog and the congregation has done so much to embrace us. We have been included in the catalog every year and received generous donations. We have presented at their services and to their pre schoolers helping people become aware of what we do.

Whenever I go to First Federated I feel the warmth and compassion of the people there. While their donation is a huge help to us every year it is the welcoming feeling of going there that means so much to us. We feel they really care about what we do and care about the people we help. Their members always take the time to talk to us and they talk to our recipients. It is like visiting family and we always look forward to going to see them.

We applied for a grant this year and it involved national online voting. We are a small organization so we didn't think we stood much of a chance. I called the church and asked if they could ask their congregation to vote for us. Not only did they promote it on their social media, but one of the congregants with marketing background called and he and his sons showed us how to promote it and create flyers and a QR code that made it easier for people to vote. He was so kind and followed up with me regularly through the weeks of voting. We got the grant and it was thanks to their caring enough to help us.

If you are looking for a congregation that cares about their own congregation, but also reaches out to others both locally and internationally this is the perfect choice for you. There is a lot of need in the Peoria area and I am always impressed with the different ways they reach out to those who need their help. I recently found out about all they do to help a local school that has one of our facility dogs that works with profoundly disabled children. They do these things not for recognition, but to help our community. It is beautiful to watch a congregation that does so much to reach those in need in our area in so many different ways. They are a very special group of people that live their faith.

Donna Kosner

Donna Kosner
Paws Giving Independence



3625 North Sheridan Road
Peoria, IL 61604

March 1, 2022

First Federated Church
3601 N. Sheridan Rd.
Peoria, IL 61604

Dear First Federated Church Pastoral Search Committee,

It is my pleasure to offer a few brief thoughts in regard to First Federated Church's (FFC) ministry. As background, the Community Foundation of Central Illinois (CFCI) moved our offices to FFC's Life Together Center (LTC) in August 2015. The fact that we, a non-faith-based organization, did so is one of the strengths of FFC's ministry, in my opinion. The church's commitment to supporting the broader local community, not just their immediate church family, is remarkable. Prior to our move, church representatives worked closely with us to determine our needs, led the effort to design the office space, and even paid for 50% of the buildout. They graciously established a more than fair payback plan for our portion of the buildout, in addition to a very reasonable monthly rent structure. It made our move to the LTC a complete "no-brainer". The church demonstrated strong support for our mission as a community-focused nonprofit organization, and clearly went well above and beyond to make us feel welcome. We remain thankful for this initial positive experience to this day.

In the nearly seven years that CFCI has officed in the LTC, we have been privileged to observe many aspects of FFC's mission in action. In addition to a clear, strong commitment to the Peoria-area community, we have enjoyed seeing their commitment to fundraising activities like the annual rummage sale; the care and attention that goes into support children through their daycare, vacation bible school, and other youth-focused activities and programs; and the fellowship demonstrated by church members and other volunteers as they work on these programs, among many others.

In summary, CFCI is thankful for our relationship with FFC, and are pleased to work alongside the church in serving the community. If I can provide any additional information, I will be happy to do so.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "MARK".

Mark Roberts
President and CEO

309-674-8730

CommunityFoundationci.org

March 3, 2022

First Federated Church
3601 N Sheridan Rd,
Peoria, IL 61604

Re: Senior Pastor Search

I am delighted to serve as a non-member reference for First Federated Church in Peoria. While I have not attended the church for many decades, my religious roots and the foundation of my faith was established within it. I was always proud to be a member of FFC (despite often hearing the name sounded like a bank) because -- in a period where so much of religion fostered division -- MY church's very roots were in uniting and fellowship. The church itself had been formed after a fire destroyed First Congregational Church and neighboring Second Presbyterian Church invited congregants to join them for worship; eventually the two congregations merged the financial resources and built First Federated Church, as it exists today -- half Presbyterian and half UCC. This was so unique and represented to me everything that religion should be.

To understand how important FFC is to me you must understand that my parents and my husband and I were married there, and sadly in 2018 my mother's funeral was held there. Her ashes are in the columbarium on the property -- in a spot she chose when the facility was first installed decades ago. She selected a spot right along the walkway as she claimed she wanted a prime spot that would "allow her to eavesdrop on all conversations and stay up on the gossip of the church" in perpetuity. The following should paint a picture of why -- all of these years later -- FFC remains so very important to me.

One of the other things that always distinguished FFC was its excellent youth programs. From its nursery to its senior high youth group, FFC attracted families. When I was in high school many teenagers who didn't even go to FFC would attend our youth group activities. Some of those same students are now active adult members of the church.

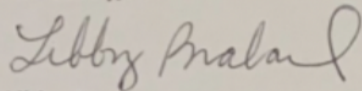
Another thing that was always notable about FFC was that it was a COVETED location for a wedding. From its long center aisle to its beautiful altar to its wonderful organ, people have always wanted to get married in the sanctuary. While that may seem insignificant, many of those people, who might have been attracted to the church for purely aesthetic reasons have also gone on to become longtime members of the church. FFC has leveraged this by continuing to enhance spaces for fellowship with both the creation of the atrium and the purchase of the adjacent insurance property, now known as the church's "Life Together Center," which hosts church and community events and is home to the Community Foundation of Central Illinois and the Central Illinois Youth Symphony.

FFC has always had an active mission program: I was a participant on the first Yucatan work trip in the early 1990's, and it was a deeply impactful experience. However, I have been glad to see more of its mission focus turning to locally based organizations. Peoria is a wonderful town. However, it does face many urban challenges. As a church with financial resources from a relatively affluent congregation, I feel strongly that the most joyful noise FFC could make in Peoria would be to further enhance its local ministry engagement beyond its current involvement, e.g. Rebuild Peoria Together, Habitat for Humanity and Reading Buddies.

Finally, as an outsider, I would love to see the church consider options to enhance diversity in its congregation and to add caring for creation/environmental stewardship to the church goals. While I don't ever expect FFC to become a super progressive church, I do believe as Christians we cannot hide our collective heads in the sand at our role in environmental stewardship and our obligation to our future generations.

I look forward to discussing FFC with you in greater detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 773-343-3294 or ebraband@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,



Libby Braband