

**MURRYSVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH (PCA)  
MURRYSVILLE, PA**

**MINISTRY COMPASS FOR 2018-  
2020**

APPROVED BY SESSION: SEPTEMBER 13, 2018



**PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL**

“I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

## MINISTRY COMPASS FOR 2018-2020

The summer of 2018 has provided the opportunity to assess, to listen, to envision, and to develop the ministry vision and plan—present and future—for Murrysville Community Church (MCC). The following study comes from the strategic planning questionnaire (given in May and June) and the subsequent discussions within the Session and with individual members of the congregation (July and August) by the Interim Sr. Pastor. From this interaction, it was determined that for the next two years, MCC will attempt to organize and to move strategically forward in 5 primary directives (**worship, Christian education, outreach, community-discipleship, and family ministry**) in order to experience revitalization as a biblically-based, gospel-centric, Christ-exalting, Reformed-teaching congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). This movement and these strategic initiatives are a statement of faith, and a humble expression of biblical expectation in God’s leading for present and future spiritual renewal. These plans represent the passion of our soul and the path to which we desire to be led. They express our desire to be “partners in the gospel ministry.”

**Read these plans prayerfully and expectantly as we transition to a new chapter in our life:**

1. **Our Ministry Environment:** as we look around, what types of people live around us? What “pockets of the population” do we believe we can reach, given the makeup and resources of our congregation?
  - a) Our congregation is nestled within an economically stable, multi-generational family community (grandparent “empty nesters”, suburban mid-life and young families, unmarried adult millennials, and widows/widowers) whose household incomes and family structures (esp. traditional nuclear families and widow/widower presence) are all above the national average.<sup>1</sup> This means that in the 9-mile radius surrounding the church, not only is there a sizable multi-generational family population present, but more importantly, a *family-mindset* exists. To say it succinctly, in this area, there is an “affection for family.” Further research shows that a nearly even percentage of people-age groupings exist, substantiating the claim that multi-family generations are present.<sup>2</sup> Yet, research also reveals that the two fastest growing population segments in this area are the Gen Z group (born 2002 and after), and those over 65,<sup>3</sup> many of whom likely are (great) grandparents, and their grandchildren. This makes **family ministries** (ministries to evangelize, disciple and build up children, students, married couples, singles, widows/widowers) a primary pursuit.
  - b) We live in a demographically-stable area that has benefited economically from Pittsburgh’s transformation from an industrial, steel and manufacturing town to a high-professional, high-educational, high-technology and cutting-edge medical city. Many who live in the Murrysville and surrounding areas (Plum, Export, Level Green, Irwin, Monroeville, etc.) have work and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Snapshot, pages 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.towncharts.com/Pennsylvania/Demographics/Murrysville-municipality-PA-Demographics-data.html> p.2 shows that in “Murrysville, PA and Area Age by Generation Chart,” percentages show: under 20:22.4%, those in 20s:7.7%, those in 30s:10.2%, those in 40s:10.6%, those in 50s:17.7%, those in 60s:16.9%, those in 70+:14.5%.

<sup>3</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, 2023 Trends, pages 4-5.

connections to Pittsburgh, and have benefited from this transformation. The average household income in this study radius is \$82,047/yr.<sup>4</sup>

- c) We understand that the “Faith Receptivity” level in the area surrounding MCC is classified as “somewhat high,”<sup>5</sup> and that there is remarkably a higher percentage interest in the Presbyterian/Reformed Faith than the U.S. average.<sup>6</sup> While this is initially encouraging, it is uncertain if this higher faith interest is triggered by a reaction to the recent PA Attorney General’s report on the child abuse cases within the Roman Catholic Church in western PA over the last 30 years involving 6 Catholic dioceses<sup>7</sup>, or if other factors unknown to us are contributing to this statistic. Regardless of the factors, we should proceed with an outreach posture that is positive, enthusiastic, and “family-minded,” believing that people are genuinely interested in **discipleship that is community-rationally-minded and worship that incorporates a traditional grounding with appropriate contemporary elements**, as research reflects.<sup>8</sup>
- d) We recognize that while we live in an area in which the economic levels are relatively stable and the employment levels are lower than the U.S. average<sup>9</sup>, there are still many young to middle-aged families, empty-nester couples, and widows/widowers that are experiencing the challenging stresses and demands of western PA cultural life: “finding quality healthcare” (29.2% compared to the U.S. average of 23.9%), “finding health insurance” (32.5% compared to the U.S. average of 29%) and “maintaining personal health” (47.4% compared to U.S. average of 43.5%)<sup>10</sup> are a major concern, with related issues such as “day-to-day financial worries” (33.2% compared to U.S. average of 31.6%), “dealing with stress” (31.4% compared to U.S. average of 29.8%), and “finding/providing aging parent care” (15.9% compared to U.S. average of 15.5%) on the minds of some that live here. This makes **outreach ministries** that have an appeal to **families and widows/widowers** a primary consideration.
- e) We realize that although our area’s education level is deemed as average,<sup>11</sup> there a slightly higher percentage of high school graduates, and those with bachelor’s and master’s degrees than the U.S. averages.<sup>12</sup> When you overlay on this claim the realization that western PA has experienced a strong tradition in Roman Catholic and/or private schooling, you conclude that education is a favorable asset in this region. This makes **Christian education**, most especially the teaching of the Bible, a primary pursuit in ministry.

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<sup>4</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Snapshot, page 2.

<sup>5</sup> Percept Report, First View 2018, page 3;

<sup>6</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Ethos, page 15 shows that in our study area, 7.0% are interested in the Presbyterian/Reformed expression, as compared with the 4.6% U.S. average.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/taking-action/press-releases/attorney-general-shapiro-details-findings-of-2-year-grand-jury-investigation-into-child-sex-abuse-by-catholic-priests-in-six-pennsylvania-dioceses/>

<sup>8</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Compass Report, page 3 states that “Estimated Households Likely to Prefer Church Worship which is Both Emotionally Uplifting and Intellectually Challenging” at 39.0%, the highest percentage of the other options. Likewise, the “Estimated 2018 Households Likely to Prefer Church Music which is Both Traditional and Contemporary” at 30.5%, also the highest percentage of the other options.

<sup>9</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Census 2010 with 2018 update, page 9, reveals that those “unemployed” in our study area is 3.2%, lower than the 4.3% U.S. average. Households with retirement income is 22.0%, higher than the 17.6% U.S. average.

<sup>10</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Ethos, page 16.

<sup>11</sup> Percept Report, First View 2018, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> Percept Report, Census 2010, 2018 update, page 8 states that 33.2% are high school graduates (27.6% is U.S. average), whereas Associates degrees (11.0% compared to 8.2% U.S. average), Bachelor’s Degree (20.2% compared to 18.9% U.S. average) and Graduate Degree (12.2% compared to 11.5% U.S. average).

f) We see that that recreation plays an important interest within the minds of many in this area, with “family activities and outings” (35.6% compared to 32.8% U.S. average) and “active retirement programs” (31.2% compared to 26.8% U.S. average) favored by many as a “church program preference indicator.”<sup>13</sup> This is understandable in an environment where multi-generation families live, and where western PA seasonal weather patterns play major roles in emotional and mood outlooks on life. People and families are looking for wholesome ways to bring life and vitality to their minds and to their bodies, and recreation is a contributing element. Again, **family ministries** become a prime pursuit.

2. **Healthy Ministry Indicators:** What evidences show the gospel’s fruit at MCC? What qualities reveal the fullness of Jesus Christ’s presence in us? These indicators, drawn from questionnaire responses and discussion, must become prime objectives in our ministry plans. This is where we want to go and what we want to be by God’s grace. Prayerfully, we want to move forward in these directives:
- a) **Vibrant worship:** as one member stated and others concurred in similar ways, “this church needs to be a worshipping community where we can all say, “I was glad when they said unto me, ‘let us go into the house of the Lord.’” Vibrant worship draws people to more consistent attendance and involvement. As another member stated, “If God is there, they will come.” Here, a respectable number of people stated the desire to have one united worship service to promote greater unity, rather than two services. It is also here that **diversity** (appropriate traditional and contemporary liturgical elements and music styles) within **unity** (MCC is a multi-generational family-minded church) is needed to appeal to **all** generations.
  - b) **Seeing Conversions:** Aggressively sharing the gospel with others and seeing new Christians, even entire families, coming into our folds on Profession of Faith. Encouraging present members to invite their friends, neighbors, and family members to church services, classes, socials, and special programs.
  - c) **Participation and Serving:** many responses mentioned seeing more people volunteering and/or serving in some aspect of church life, outreach, or leadership. One response represented many sentiments, “members of the body stepping up to assume roles, consistent with their talents, in the church leadership, teaching, service, helps, etc. Basically, an attitude of ownership, love, and willingness to become involved wherever led, not assuming the posture of waiting for someone else to step up.”
  - d) **Experiencing Growth:** not only numerical growth in new people and families, but especially spiritual growth in discipleship, with an expanding number of people desiring to grow in their relationships with others within the church. A desire to be in a *relational community* where love, forgiveness, grace, encouragement, spiritual healing, and help is received and experienced in deeper ways.
  - e) **Greater Spiritual Hunger:** one member stated, “the degree of our appetite for God’s Word and prayer growing (as healthy disciples of Christ).” A desire to see God’s Word taught with clarity and personal application with well-attended Christian education classes that equip members to know Christ more.
  - f) **Multi-Faceted Outreach:** not only local outreach efforts supported, but also mission opportunities and a variety of trips to expose our members in greater ways to the broader work of the Kingdom of God.
  - g) **Touch points/bridges to the community:** as one member stated with others giving similar thought, “intentionally making meaningful contact with non-Christians in various ways (through outreach events/programs, inviting friends/coworkers to Bible studies/events, having people in our homes, etc.”

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<sup>13</sup> Percept Report, Ministry Area Profile 2018, Compass Report, page 2.

This involves identifying areas of human need/interest within the community and the church posturing herself to address some of those needs and interests as a salt and light witness.

3. **What we value: prominent responses drawn directly from questionnaires and discussions**
  - a) Growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Loving him and wanting him to be glorified.
  - b) Serving the least and the lost.
  - c) Sharing the passionate love of Christ to others, just as he showed us. As one member stated, “reaching out our hands and giving of our hearts to help support and encourage others whether it be our church family, our community, and beyond.”
  - d) Spreading the truth of God’s Word to the community.
  - e) Educating our children, youth and adults in the Scriptures, showing special value to covenant children.
  - f) The spiritual health of our members.
  - g) Demonstrating to others a love for God and for one another. As one member stated succinctly, “loving him and others is what is important to him (God) and therefore important to me.”
  - h) Relationships and hospitality. We love personal interaction and times where we can converse around food. A member said, “bringing people together to share life and build relationships with each other.”
  - i) Preaching the Word of God with insight and personal application.
4. **Vision and direction:** Where must MCC improve and put more focus (all important, no priority).
  - a) **Creating greater awareness in the community:** one member stated succinctly, “advertising, social media and other forms of PR, need to be utilized a lot more.” Another respondent concurred, “we have not done a consistent good job of being visible in the community.” It is highly likely that in the 9-mile radius surrounding the church where over 200,000 people live, a very small percentage even know of MCC’s existence. Careful thought needs to be directed towards making the presence of this church more known and visible to the surrounding area, including the allocation of some resources to make this happen. Related to this was the need to research our community’s needs better, then direct ways to meet those needs. In doing this, the church’s presence is more clearly seen.
  - b) **Christian education:** Improvement will require the development of a coordinated program of CE for infants through adults **and** by fostering a culture within MCC where CE is valued as an essential element of Christian growth and maturity. CE needs to be offered year-round which requires additional teachers for all age classes except adults. Multiple Adult CE classes should be offered with at least one class being a traditional in-depth Bible Study.
  - c) **Family ministries of all kinds:** numerous times the longing for a men’s ministry was invoked where men can experience discipleship, greater fellowship and relationships. With many young families and an increasing number of babies and toddlers, the need for volunteers for childcare and nursery duty is increasing. Offering practical, biblical training for couples in marriage enrichment and parenting skills can equip the growing number of young families that MCC enjoys. Realizing that the church mirrors the 9-mile target community demographics in many ways, a larger recognition and incorporation of widows, widowers, and single adults within MCC and outside is preferred. A greater desire to see a *wholistic emphasis* on family ministry that coordinates in better ways the children’s, youth, men’s, and women’s ministries was also expressed. Securing more leaders and volunteers to serve in some aspect of family ministry is also needed. One member summarized this approach: “mentoring to families as a whole: ministering to children should not just be the church’s job but we should enable families to do

this. Mentoring—woman to woman, man to man, family to family.” A sub-ministry under this objective was family finances training, with mention made of Dave Ramsey’s *Financial Peace University* course offered both to members (adult and youth versions) within MCC and to the community as an outreach. All in all, the passion to see MCC as a *spiritual family* to its members, and imaged as a *welcoming family* to the community is envisioned.

- d) **Internal communication:** especially between ministries within the church to each other. As one respondent stated, “right now, the “champions” for various ministries seem to be on islands. It is hard to find what ministries are happening and who the leaders are...I’d like to see a better connection between the Session and Diaconate with these various ministries.” This need for more internal communication also applies to better communication with the worship and AV teams in the selection of the worship music and the elements of the liturgy on Sunday mornings. Related to this are better ways to train and to encourage the congregation to utilize primary communication vehicles such as *The Loop*, MCC’s website and Facebook page. The need to create an internal system of better organization with improved coordination among ministries was highly voiced among the leaders and staff.
  - e) **Community Groups—more emphasis, leaders, and options.** One member aptly stated, “in order to grow them we not only need more leaders, but we need to make them accessible to more people by varying the times, days, and frequencies they meet.” Related to this was the need for greater flexibility and the ability to adapt to people’s needs and schedules. There is a strong desire for community at MCC, so finding ways to make Community Groups more prominent was regularly voiced.
  - f) **More missions focus areas:** while Moose Factory is a wonderful outreach that we hope we can continue, several members voiced the need to see more local projects in MCC’s arsenal utilized, while still promoting world missions. Obviously, this would involve not only “Salt and Light” presence, but also partnering with others in mercy ministries as needs were made known.
  - g) **Ministry leadership development:** in the Interim Sr. Pastor’s evaluation, there are a number of ministries functioning at minimalistic leadership levels. More emphasis and work is needed in leadership development of current elected leaders, lay leaders, and young up-and-coming leaders.
5. **Session Strategic Initiatives for 2018-2020:** In reviewing the congregational responses and in subsequent discussions within the Session, the staff, and the Interim Sr. Pastor’s discussions with numerous individuals and families over the summer, it was determined that **five** primary ministry directives (Session committees) be organized and developed to carry MCC’s ministry into the next chapter of her congregational life and mission. They involve increased and/or new development in **worship, Christian education, outreach, community-discipleship, and family ministries**. Each area is now profiled.

a) **Worship Ministries:** Theological Vision, Values and Ministry Implementation Principles

Worship, both personal and corporate, is the sacrificial giving of one’s mind, heart, and will under the Holy Spirit’s empowerment and direction towards the exaltation and glorification of God for who he is and for what he has done as presented and taught in the Scriptures.

In the Bible’s presentation of God’s activity, only two interests depict his “seeking” pursuit: evangelism and worship:

- *Evangelism:* “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

- *Worship*: “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks” (John 4:23).

Along with evangelism, personal and corporate worship must be one of the central priorities in this congregation’s ministry before the Lord and to this community. As a keystone endeavor, the following theological vision, values, and ministry implementation principles for worship are observed and will be followed by the worship committee:

#### *Theological Vision and Values*

1. Worship declares the glory and character of God from the truth seen in his revelation in creation, in Christ, and in the Scriptures. *We value declaration.*
2. Worship expresses the wonder, brilliance and whole counsel of God’s attributes, his greatness in creation, and his power and plan of salvation as a believer engages biblical truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Worship is not a “spectator sport.” *We value engagement.*
3. Worship utilizes the skills of individuals gifted by the Holy Spirit to lead God’s people in the expression of praise through instrumentation and singing. *We value giftedness.*
4. Worship respects our heritage in the Protestant Reformation as it calls us to engage our present culture with robust doctrinal fidelity in a way that is understandable. *We value clarity.*
5. Worship draws from our biblical/theological foundations in the Protestant Reformation and compels us to structure the content of our liturgies and to choose musical lyrics around biblical themes articulated in our Reformed Confessions and creeds. *We value doctrine.*
6. Worship involves not only the human mind (intellect), but also the heart (emotions), and the will (passions) in provoking a person’s total being before God’s presence. *We value comprehensiveness.*
7. Corporate worship shows both unity (participation together as a spiritual family) and diversity (varieties of composition and musical styles) in its praise offerings and confessions to God. *We value unity and diversity.*
8. Worship prepares participants for the proclamation of God’s truth by complementing liturgical elements and their meanings with the sermon’s central points. *We value complementation.*

#### *Ministry Implementation*

1. Because corporate worship is central in God’s will for believers and for his church, we believe our participation in worship occupies a prominent priority in the life and health of our congregation, and we give it priority with our time and resources (human, property, and financial).
2. Because corporate worship is a creative and family expression of praise involving the earlier generation, the current generation, and the future generation, we believe significant effort should be given to assimilate a liturgical and musical expression that engages robustly all generations within our congregation without excluding one over another.
3. Because corporate worship is an expression of unified praise to God using “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19), we believe the use of diverse musical songs-styles with rich biblical themes within each worship service shows unity and diversity in its most practical and feasible way.

- b) **Outreach Ministries:** any activity or attempt (both in word or deed) to engage, impact, and/or influence people beyond our membership with the love of Jesus Christ for the sake of gospel.

This ministry is entrusted with overseeing and directing all the local, national, and international evangelism and outreach functions of the church, in conformity to the Great Commission, the Cultural Mandate, and the biblical call to show mercy tangibly to those in need. There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for carrying the gospel to “our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.” Included in this oversight and direction is the promotion of evangelism and outreach strategies that will encourage MCC members to participate in the following three areas of biblical evangelism:

- i) The Great Commission: making disciples in our community, nation, and world
  - (1) Scriptural basis: Matthew 28:19-20a; “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (ESV).
  - (2) This involves evangelism that is both local and across the world.
    - (a) There needs to be evangelism first in order to have disciples.
    - (b) Emphasis will be **relational** evangelism, providing training opportunities for our members to learn how to be more effective witnesses for Christ where they live, work, and play.
  - (3) Providing mission trip opportunities, especially focused when possible, with missionaries that MCC currently supports.
- ii) “Salt and Light” presence in the community, commonly known as “the Cultural Mandate.”
  - (1) Scriptural basis:
    - (a) Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion ...on the earth.’” (ESV)
    - (b) Matthew 5:16: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (ESV)
  - (2) This involves recognizing areas of human need within our community, and reaching out in Jesus’ name to address some of those needs with the gospel. Several examples:
    - (a) Family life workshops (marriage enrichment, parenting skills, family finances, etc.). Seeking to offer biblical principles, skills, and Christian perspectives towards the building of healthier marriages, the Christian nurture of children, and stable family stewardship.
    - (b) Family loss ministry: overseeing and directing outreach, nurture, care, fellowship and supportive opportunities for those within MCC and in the community who have experienced the loss of a spouse, child, parent, or other close person cherished as “family.”

This ministry attempts, within a multi-generational family community, to recognize and to reach a substantial number of widows, widowers, and people who have experienced life-altering losses in their journey by offering a safe place to find support, encouragement, and hope for the road ahead.

- (c) Seeing where current MCC members live, work, and play in the sectors of community life (education, business, government, recreation and leisure, health care, etc.) as places where these members can be the “eyes and ears of Jesus,” encouraging them to look for ways where MCC can partner with other leaders and/or churches in that particular sector to address human need and gospel opportunity. This necessitates being active in the community, watching for ways/means that MCC can address with the resources/people she possesses.
- iii) **Mercy Ministry:** largely following the lead of the deacons, looking for ways to show genuine mercy and love to the least and to the lost
  - (1) **Scriptural basis**
    - (a) Matthew 25: 31-46
    - (b) James 1:27a: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction...” (ESV)
    - (c) Deuteronomy 10:18: “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.” (ESV)
    - (d) Isaiah 1:17: “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.” (ESV)

*Summary: The Outreach Ministries’ initial plan of action involves the following:*

- Actively recruit MCC members to be members on the Outreach Ministries Committee who have personal involvement and/or exposure to strategic sectors in the community.
- Identify target sectors in the community that appear promising for gospel/church involvement.
- Continually research community needs and be open to opportunities for MCC’s involvement.
- Present to the Session opportunities for MCC’s involvement to the community.
- Promote participation for outreach events/opportunities as they become known.

c) **Family Ministries:** two primary areas

- i) **Children’s ministry (birth to 5<sup>th</sup> grade):** overseeing and directing nursery care, children’s worship, Powered Up, and VBS. There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for each area of oversight. Included in this oversight and direction are balanced ways to promote the ministry to MCC children within the congregation and to recruit and to train volunteers and lay leaders to serve in the rearing, training, and discipleship of our covenant children. This ministry team will actively promote a working partnership between MCC parents, seeking to equip them to be better parents to their children in the home. The ultimate objective is to foster a welcoming, nurturing, and learning culture set in a physically and spiritually safe environment.
- ii) **Student ministry (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade):** overseeing and directing middle school and high school student events, small group studies (outside of Sunday School), service projects, retreats, and mission trips

(in coordination with the outreach committee). There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for middle school and for high school ministry. Included in this oversight and direction are balanced ways to promote the ministry to MCC students within the congregation and to recruit and to train volunteers and lay leaders to serve in the rearing, training, and discipleship of our youth. This ministry team will actively promote a working partnership between MCC parents, seeking to equip them to be better parents to their teenagers in the home. The ultimate objective is to foster an engaging, encouraging, and stimulating culture set in a physically and spiritually safe environment.

d) **Discipleship Ministries:** three primary areas:

- i) **Men's ministry:** overseeing and directing discipleship, fellowship, and service opportunities for men at all stages of life. This ministry attempts to challenge men to grow as spiritual servant-leaders in their home, as productive catalysts in their work, and as faithful witnesses for Christ in their life. There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for building an army of effective men who are devoted followers of Christ in their marriages, families, and professions, using their spiritual gifts within and outside the church for God's glory.
- ii) **Women's ministry:** overseeing and directing discipleship, fellowship, and service opportunities for women at all stages of life. This ministry attempts to challenge women to grow as supporters of God's mission in their home under the spiritual leadership of their husbands, to discover and to use their spiritual gifts within and outside the church, to participate in fellowship and social opportunities with other women in a supportive and encouraging environment, and to provide appropriate, biblical ways where women can serve and lead in the church for God's glory. There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for encouraging women to reach their fullest potential in Christ as they grow spiritually and serve within the church.
- iii) **Community groups:** co-ed, small groups that meet on separate evenings and are offered to MCC friends and families of all ages and seasons of life. These groups meet in two ten-week sessions in the fall and the winter. This ministry attempts to encourage singles and couples to participate in a group so that a deeper sense of community and relational bondedness can occur within the congregation. There needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for promoting community group participation, for training the leaders necessary to cultivate "authentic life" within each group, and for multiplying the number of groups so that a greater number of MCC members experience relational bondedness and spiritual growth with each other in community.

e) **Christian education ministries:** the teaching of the Bible and reformed doctrine to all age groups during the Sunday School hour and other appropriate occasions and events (Bible conference, special seminars, etc.). This ministry is charged with offering opportunities for all ages to grow in the knowledge and application of the Bible and reformed doctrine, as well as recruiting and training MCC members to teach the Bible with effectiveness and fruitfulness to children, youth, and adults. There

needs to be a ministry team organized and engaged in this ministry, crafting and articulating a clear vision, sense of purpose, and mission statement for promoting the following areas of Christian education within the church:

- i) Measurable learning objectives for each age division in the congregation, culminating in a master-plan of SS curriculum and resources for teaching the entire Bible, reformed doctrine, and practical Christian living that is derived from direct application of the Scriptures. In effect, a desire to teach with comprehension what many church fathers of the Faith call “the Whole Counsel of God.”
- ii) Teacher recruiting and development for each age division in the church, equipping teachers with the most effective ways to engage students at their respective age level.
- iii) Offering workshops and special training on effective methods of personal Bible study, using the various tools and skills to study the Bible from a historical, cultural, and redemptive framework.
- iv) Evaluating periodically the current SS curriculum offerings for each age division in the church, staying alert to new and/or updated resources and/or topics that will enhance the learning process.

6. **Our Resources:** what members say are our greatest assets:

- a) “God is for us, not against us” (Romans 8:31). Numerous times mention was made that MCC is the Lord’s Church, and that we have his Word, his Holy Spirit, and all the spiritual riches and promises of the Kingdom of God. We need to use them more, as one respondent echoed, “We have some amazingly smart people in our congregation. I also believe we have a better grasp of Biblical Truth than most other churches in our community. If we can find the passion and vibrancy I think we lack and combine it with God's Word that we know, we can have a greater impact than we do currently.”
- b) Despite the past times of hurt and scars, there is a genuine love for the Lord and for each other within MCC. As one respondent stated with many others concurring, “Our love for each other as evidenced when we support each other in good times and hard times without passing judgment, but rather showing the love of Christ.”
- c) A committed, serving staff and officers (ruling elders and deacons) that love the MCC congregation. One member replied with others stating similarly, “They are dedicated and extremely hardworking. Other great resources will be these newly elected and installed officers and their desire to see the church grow and the time and effort they put into that.”
- d) Balanced, congregational-age diversity. We have many children, especially young children, with more on the way! But we also have many middle-aged to older adults within MCC also. Practically every age group on the spectrum is represented within the congregation. As stated before, this shows that MCC is a multi-generational church *par excellence*.
- e) Pastors that can shepherd and preach the Word, as several stated, “A great associate pastor who has been through all of the recent transitions and loves the Lord and MCC. An interim pastor who has helped churches in similar situations to ours in the past.”
- f) A volunteering congregation, situated in a community that can partner with other evangelical churches as one deacon replied, “We have a lot of people who are generous, faithful, behind-the-scenes, hard workers. They are not necessarily leaders, but very willing and enthusiastic participants. We are generationally diverse (this can be challenging as well, but can be a great benefit if we take advantage of it). We are positioned in a community with other strong churches, which means many opportunities to work together (we don't have to re-invent the wheel or fill a lot of needs all on our own).

