

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands



Vision 20/20

**Approved by Session May 12, 2012
Updated and Republished with Session Approval
October 2013
November 2014
January 2016**

Vision 20/20

Strategic Plan of the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands Document Summary

This Vision 20/20 document reflects a review and update from the document of 2015. It was prepared by each Ministry Team and approved by Session. Our Mission, Core Values, Vision and Goals remain unchanged.

The original process of creating the strategic plan for the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands began in June of 2011. The intent was to set goals for a three to five-year time period that supports the mission of the church and achieves a clear vision. An intensive process was pursued by each Ministry Team to examine all aspects of the church. Out of their efforts a vision was cast which strives to set aspirations and to pave the road for a strong future.

In 2011, a new, succinct, mission was developed and three core values were identified to compel the work of our church [see page 3]. These aspects provide the building blocks on which all else grows and develops. Six goals were established to attain the vision. These goals are comprehensive and involve all facets of the church's ministries working together to realize the vision. Guided by these values and goals, the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands will be a stronger, more vibrant and diverse entity with a bright and stable future. More members of the congregation will be actively involved, spiritual growth will be fully nurtured, mission work will grow, and the church will achieve financial security to support all aspects of its ministries.

The following strategies and objectives to achieve the goals are organized by ministry teams (MT). Each MT plays a vital role in realizing our future. The MTs are the organizational structure of the church and by utilizing the listed objectives and tasks, the MT members are prayerful they will bring about positive and rewarding results.

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands, NC

Mission

To know Christ and to be committed disciples in God's kingdom here on earth

Core Values

1. Jesus Christ is the center of all that we do.
2. As reformed Christians we are always being reformed by the Holy Spirit.
3. We carry the gospel proclamation of Sunday into Monday and beyond.

Vision

The First Presbyterian Church of Highlands is a vibrant, multi-generational congregation which honors our heritage as a mission oriented church of God centered on the love and justice of Jesus Christ. With the Spirit's guidance we joyfully move into the future as we respond to an ever changing world in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Goals

1. Nurture spiritual growth
2. Strengthen the sense of belonging and unity (we are one church)
3. Become as diverse as the communities we serve
4. Increase congregational commitment
5. Deepen mission commitment
6. Strengthen financial commitment to support our growing ministries

These goals are set out throughout the document as a strategy supporting the visions for the ministry teams.

Ministry Team Strategies and Objectives

The number(s), in parentheses at the end of each strategy refers to the goal it supports.

Adult Education Ministry Team

The mission of the Adult Education Ministry Team (AEMT) is to encourage members and visitors to come to know God more fully by providing study and learning opportunities. We wish to strengthen First Presbyterian Church of Highland's learning opportunities through the ongoing development of new learning formats as well as maintain existing classes and studies currently meeting the needs of our Church family.

FPCH currently provides the following educational formats:

Interactive

1. Sunday School Classes – 3 formats - weekly
2. Bible Study – 2 women's and 1 men's weekly meetings
3. Beyond the Walls Book Review – weekly
4. "Pot Luck" Dinner Discussions – monthly
5. Advent & Lenten Study Series - seasonal
6. Mullen Lecture Series - annual engagement with noted speakers/authors

Print/Digital Media

1. FPCH Newsletter – Monthly
2. FPCH Website
3. Wired Word – weekly subscription available to all via email
4. Library Content – our book offering expands with each Sunday school, book review and speaker offering.

Sunday School Classes

- Bible Study – led by Rick Demetriou, ongoing class selecting various Books of the Bible over the calendar year
- Book Review – led by Chad Lucas, ongoing class using Brian McLaren's, *The Road is Made by Walking* for 2016
- Wired Word – ongoing group discussion inspired by the weekly Wired Word transmission

Bible Study

- Women's Evening Study – led by Betty Fisher on Thursdays
- Women's Morning Study – led by Sally Copeland on Wednesdays
- Men's Breakfast Study – on Mondays

Beyond the Walls Book Review

- Tuesday Meetings at the Ugly Dog Pub starting at 4pm

Pot Luck Dinner Discussions

- The last Thursday of each month – led by Betty Fisher and held in Coleman Hall at 6PM

**Attendance is poor at approximately 6 participants per event. This offering has been identified by the AEMT as needing special attention in raising awareness and participation for ongoing success. We will aim to promote the event better and emphasize the educational component as a special offering during this community meal. We will review our efforts quarterly and advance with what we learn.

Advent & Lenten Study Series

**Attendance is poor at approximately 3 participants per event. This offering has been identified by the AEMT as needing special attention in raising awareness and participation for ongoing success. A proposal to incorporate the Lenten Season Study into the traditional Sunday School time slot is being discussed. Previous offerings required attendance on a weekday in the late afternoon – citing this as a likely barrier we will consider the Sunday morning placement and whether it acts as an ADDITIONAL offering or a REPLACEMENT offering thus placing another class or classes on ‘holiday’.

Mullen Lecture Series

Per the 2015 Vision Statement for the AEMT a subcommittee was formed for the Mullen Lecture Series. Members are: Curtis Fussell, Sally Copeland, Claude Sullivan, Chad Lucas. Jim Phillips served on this committee with remarkable contributions—prior to his passing he solicited and secured our guest speaker for 2016. This year’s event will certainly be a tribute to him and his passion for growing the very ‘mind’ of our Church.

The 2nd Annual Mullen Lecture Series hosted Apollo 16 Astronaut Charlie Duke the first weekend of August 2015. The event was a great success in both the Sunday service and Monday lecture formats. The format will be repeated in much the same way for 2016. Minister Sharol Hayner, co-author of *Joy in the Journey*, will join us in August as the Mullen Lecture Series Speaker for 2016.

Assessment and Action:

We acknowledge we rely on a relatively small volunteer base to serve within our various Ministry Teams. Our **best efforts are when multiple Ministry Teams combine efforts on a given project/event**. The Lecture Series hosted a Sunday luncheon reception provided by the Congregational Care MT. This type of partnership is a model to improve many of the needs as cited above such as the Pot-Luck Dinners.

1. The AEMT sets a goal of improving our outcomes by partnering more closely with Congregational Care MT and the Worship MT to both promote and enhance educational offerings.
2. The AEMT sets a goal of partnering with and assisting the Mission MT -- educating our members and visitors about the work the Church is doing and its mission commitments.
3. The AEMT seeks to expand its own Ministry Team membership in 2016 and will address the need to expand the Mullen Lecture Series Committee.
4. The AEMT identifies that the congregation at large doesn't necessarily know who their Ruling Elders are or what exactly they do --- it is a goal to improve this awareness in 2016.

The AEMT will continue to look at contemporary formats for learning that can complement existing or new offerings.

Children's Education Ministry Team

The Children's Ministry Team Mission is to provide Christ-centered education and support for children and youth of the church and community at large, in a caring, Christian environment, to fully support the "Churches" mission statement.

1. The Sonshine Program continues to grow. Finding extra space for the children to learn and play is an ongoing focus.
2. Dividing the students in to two separate groups will continue to be a priority as it provides a better environment for learning and study and for the directors to provide individual help during homework time.
3. We will make an effort to make better use of the Sonshine office for storage of games, supplies and toys.
4. Volunteers will be encouraged to devote one hour per week to help students with homework to improve and insure that each child is getting the help that is needed.
5. Coleman Hall, the Westminster Room, the upstairs nursery, and library are all being used by the after school students for both play and educational activities. We will continue to make use of these areas in an effort to improve our program.
6. We will continue our relationship with the Bascom, the Literacy Council, the Land Trust organization, and Hudson Library as all offer fun and educational opportunities and we believe that all children should have the experience of being introduced to new and different experiences.

7. The Children's Ministries Elder will continue to request grant money from local organizations so that we can offer scholarships to students who might not otherwise be able to attend our program.
8. The concept of a music and/or art camp is still judged to not be a viable project at this time.
9. Our ministers are encouraged to drop in from time to time so that the students get to know them and the ministers get to know our students.
10. We will continue to offer a nursery for Sunday Services as well as the Christmas Eve Service.

Congregational Care Ministry Team

The mission of the Congregational Care Ministry Team of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands is to seek to involve the entire congregation in active Christian fellowship to serve our church community in support of the mission statement of the church.

Objectives:

1. Carry out our responsibilities in a way that involves as many in the congregation as possible strengthening the sense of belonging and unity.
2. Develop, document, and communicate team responsibilities and structure to facilitate smooth transitions in every area of the team increasing the commitment to the church and to each other.

Challenges/Needs:

1. Communication – swift, reliable communication from the church office of needs within the congregation along with swift, reliable communication within the team to insure that those needs are met.
2. Ministry Team Interaction – timely communication with other Ministry Teams where the teams are impacted by each other.
3. Congregation Involvement – identify activities that may involve weekend/summer members and friends of the church and actively seek participation – a sense of belonging comes with involvement.

Planned Activities:

1. The Congregational Care Team will plan one event (luncheon or reception) each month. The Team will work with the Mission Ministry Team to plan 'Food for Fuel' and 'Empty Bowls' luncheons each year. In addition to these events, an event to recognize new members can be added as needed.
2. Congregational Care will help secure volunteers for the Highlands' Community Thanksgiving Dinner. The Congregational Care Team will

also help the Mission Team Plan First Presbyterian Church's involvement quarterly in the Community Table Dinner.

3. The Congregational Care Team will organize a week day luncheon each December to show appreciation to women leaders in our church as well as our staff.
4. There will also be ongoing activities – birthday cards, general member care cards, meals and visits for those in need, etc.
5. The Congregational Care Team will be available to plan and implement funeral/memorial receptions as needed.
6. The directory will be corrected and reprinted.
7. Shake Ups- the Team will plan several of these gatherings during the year; hoping to have members and friends from different groups/areas in attendance

Organizational Structure:

1. One member of the Congregational Care Team will be the lead person in charge of the luncheon or reception planned for that month. They will be responsible for securing volunteers for that event – table setting, food preparation support, hostess activities and cleanup.
2. Card Writing: Birthday – Congregational Care will secure one or more volunteers to be in charge of this activity, who will get volunteers for each month to send cards to the congregation.
3. General Member Care Cards – Congregational Care will secure one or more volunteers to write cards to those who need a word of encouragement, condolence, get well, etc.
4. Grace Groups – no formal involvement with the existing Grace Groups; they will continue to function on their own
5. Visitation – the visitation team will be organized and on call for visits as needed.

Action Plan:

1. Monitor Congregational Care activities for areas of potential improvement. Get feedback from team members, other elders, and the congregation in general.
2. Document responsibilities for transition to new team leaders.

Stewardship & Finance Ministry Team

The mission of the Financial Ministry Team is to administer and properly account for all of the finances of the church and report the findings to the session monthly and at least annually to the congregation.

The Financial Ministry Team will:

1. Accumulate requests from all ministry teams & prepare an annual budget to present to Session for review and approval.
2. Review the financial operations of the church and make monthly reports to session and annual report to the congregation.
3. Schedule biannual outside third party reviews of financial procedures.
4. Monitor the performance of investment accounts by outside investment managers.
5. Prepare a gift acceptance policy to present to Session for review and approval.

Membership/Outreach Ministry Team

The mission of the Membership/Outreach Ministry Team is to assist in building a healthy and vital congregation. The changes and growth in our church and community will be measured by the percentage of change that we see, not only in numbers, but also in the vitality of the church.

By bringing people together from diverse backgrounds, we hope to balance an appreciation of our strengths while earnestly seeking God's Love and will. Most visitors and seasonal members live in other parts of the country for part of the year, giving them a more diverse point of view. Additionally, many of our visitors and members come from various religious backgrounds. Most have not been Presbyterian all of their lives, thus bringing diverse religious customs to our congregation. Our diversity does not stand on age, or ethnic backgrounds, but a wonderful mixture of geographic and religious backgrounds that give us a great way of thinking and renewed learning from each other.

- A. The goals are to continue to unite and motivate people to work together for the glory of God while building our membership and outreach to the community. Membership/Outreach depends upon and partners with several strong ministries of this church.
 1. Our music programs at First Presbyterian give opportunities for a more diverse audience than merely our Sunday Morning service! The Interlude Series, Fourth of July Concert, Christmas Men's Chorus, Bluegrass music to name a few. All of these beautiful musical events are free to the community. The Interludes are shared with the Episcopal Church across the street as the concerts are rotated between the two sanctuaries from time to time, therefore strengthening our church communities.
 2. Through our Mission Ministry Team, we have invited the Highlands Community Child Development Center (HCCDC) to hold its graduation exercises in our sanctuary. As we invite these families

into our church, we have an opportunity to reach out to these families that may not have a church home, therefore giving us an opportunity to outreach beyond our walls.

3. The after church luncheons offer a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another and to have members work together with the Congregational Care Ministry Team as volunteers.
- B. As we utilize the gifts of those inside our walls and reach out to those beyond, communication is key and will be strengthened to engage our members, retain our members and attract and keep new members. Follow up and communication are so important in keeping our church actively alive. In order to accomplish this goal, we will seek to give attention to the following.
1. To tap into the gifts and talents of our members by effectively involving a broader range of people in areas where they have strengths.
 2. Create a 'feed-back loop' with members of Session and the Clerk of Session to make sure that everyone who offers their time and talents is contacted and thanked.
 3. Invite our newest members to participate in short-range, people-friendly endeavors, e.g., Sunday greeters, volunteering, Sunday School Classes, Book Club, etc.
- C. Follow up when people visit us for an extended period of time. Would they like to become part of our church family by being members?
1. When people become members, follow up, don't just put them in a file and forget about them. Again, people want to help, if someone will only ask them to do so.
 2. Follow up when members do not attend services for an extended amount of time. Any pastoral information gleaned should be communicated to the pastors.
 3. Continue to use our facilities for various community meetings, reaching out to others in our community and Non-profits in our area.

Specifically, our membership must grow to ensure the health and vibrancy of the church AND our community. Realistically, growth is attainable by increasing our membership, sponsoring missions, community outreach, children's programs beyond our walls, board presence in many Non-Profit organizations by our members, being PRESENT in our community. There is no time table on this, this is an everyday, in many ways, commitment which First Presbyterian members have and share with others.

The true meaning of our goals is to contribute to others and show what a Christian life is....by doing, by sharing, by giving to others. To be Christ

centered in all that we do, giving examples to others to follow. There are no end points to sharing.

Membership and Outreach, as in all the Ministry Teams, is in perpetual motion. There is no time boundary to complete this Vision. Our growth and good will to the community is a forward motion.

Mission Ministry Team

The purpose of the Mission Committee is to lead the First Presbyterian Church in reaching out and responding in love and concern to those in need in our congregation, community and beyond.

- A. The Ministry Team will increase its knowledge and understanding of supported organizations that receive major gifts by developing a long term relationship with each organization. (Goal number 5)
 - 1. Essential information from each organization will be gathered. A written application process, supplemented by personal knowledge from team members, will provide the following information: what do they provide? Why is it important? Why is FPCH support necessary and appropriate? What percentage of their budget is the FPCH donation?

- B. The Ministry Team will work to increase communication with the congregation by organizing and presenting regularly scheduled information. (Goal numbers 2 & 5) The team leader will send a letter to all nonprofits funded by FPCH, inviting them to participate and listing items needed to meet the following objectives:
 - 1. Bulletin board display: Ministry Team member, bulletin board committee members and representatives from featured organization will provide display on a monthly basis.
 - 2. A monthly article will be submitted to the newsletter highlighting a specific organization each month. A Mission Ministry Team member will coordinate with featured nonprofit and church staff to produce the article.
 - 3. An article will be published monthly on the church website. Mission Team member will coordinate with featured nonprofit and church staff to produce the article.
 - 4. A moment for mission will occur during Sunday services. A Mission Ministry Team member will coordinate with featured nonprofit and church staff to produce the article.

- C. The Ministry Team will increase communication to the general public and the community. (Goal #3 & #5)

1. An article in local newspapers and other media coverage will occur. Mission Ministry Team member will coordinate with featured nonprofit using information from objective #3.
- D. More members will get involved with the ministry team. (Goal numbers 1, 4 & 5) Specific goals/tasks/projects will be developed to involve more people.
1. A Ministry Team member will coordinate with Highlands School to involve students, particularly in the construction ministry
 2. Each member of the MT will personally invite someone to participate in the following order:
 - Work on a one-time task
 - Coordinate a project with time limit or end date
 - Serve on a committee
 - Chair a committee
- E. The efforts pursued in the Bolivian water project will become more long term and sustainable. (goal number 5)
1. Provide ways to remove excess fluoride in the water.
 2. A network of systems has been set up, including an on-site coordinator, parts warehouse, and annual conference for all system operators and educators.

The Ministry Team will look to reduce local need in areas such as food and health care by providing educational pamphlets and/or classes about such topics as hygiene, safe food handling, transportation, and general information about other helping organizations and resources. Other FPC funded non-profits will also be encouraged to do this. (Goal number 5)

Personnel Ministry Team

The Mission of the Personnel Ministry Team is to work in concert with the pastors in providing for orderly, focused and considerate support and oversight of the Staff of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands.

- A. Membership: A minimum of five persons, at least one of whom shall be from Session. The pastors and administrative manager serve as ex-officio members. The Chairperson will be the Personnel Elder from Session. The at-large members shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Chair person.
- B. Meetings: The Ministry Team shall meet monthly and on the call of the chairperson or pastor. The agenda for each meeting shall be set by the chairperson and the pastor jointly. No meeting will take place without at

least one pastor present, unless the pastors are notified and informed of all agenda items.

C. Relationships and Accountability: The Ministry Team is accountable to the session. It will present a written report to the session following each Ministry Team meeting.

D. Ongoing Responsibilities:

1. Recommend to session position descriptions for all staff.
2. Review and keep current the Personnel Policy manual.
3. Encourage professional growth and development for all staff.
4. Make sure we are in compliance with equal employment opportunities, developed in consultation with presbytery and approved by the session.
5. Provide for a review process for all staff to assist in work planning.
6. Act as a support group for the pastor(s) and other members of the staff.
7. Assist the pastors as needed to adjudicate staff issues.
8. Confer with the pastors on any important issues of concern.

E. Action Plan:

1. Develop and submit to Session Personnel Budget by October each year.
2. Evaluate the impact of the Affordable Care Act as to how it affects the health insurance coverage for the staff. The staff is to be made aware of any changes to the coverage and their options. As necessary make an addendum to the Personnel Policy Manual. This is an ongoing process.
3. Whereas the current church staff is an efficient and well managed team, it is however, positioned for the present and will not meet the needs of the church as it goes forward. A comprehensive study is necessary to determine how will be the best way to accommodate the future needs of the congregation. Projected completion date is September 30, 2015.
4. The new Child Safety Policy must be strongly enforced. A continuous monitoring process will be necessary to ensure FPCH compliance. It is recommended that an audit be conducted semi-annually. Coordination with the Children's Ministry Team is essential.
5. There is a need for a Sexual Misconduct Prevention policy to address proper and expected conduct among the adult staff and workers. Work on this endeavor should be undertaken by March 31, 2015.
6. There is a need for a staff hiring policy. There are currently no guidelines for best practices when various Ministry Teams find it necessary to hire or terminate staff. This should be accomplished by

January 2015 and presented to session for approval by February 2015.

Property Ministry Team

The Mission of the Property Ministry Team of First Presbyterian Church of Highlands is to properly maintain all facilities and grounds for the use of the congregation and community and preserve the integrity of these structures and land granted to the congregation, all to the glory of God.

- A. Space will be fully utilized before expansion is considered. (Goal #3)
 - 1. Storage space was added and is being utilized. We also added outside storage that has provided space inside. Our space is adequate now. If the Sonshine School increases enrollment to 18, we will have to find more storage space.
- B. Audio Visual capability was upgraded and is working fine.
- C. Church Grounds will continue to be maintained as an inviting space for members and visitors to enjoy. The development of the 5th street exposure was completed.
- D. The Burning bushes along the driveway were replaced with Holly shrubs.
- E. Memorial Garden – The garden is now complete. The Memorial Garden was dedicated in June.
- F. We continue to use outside banners to communicate what is happening at the church. These banners help communicate to our members as well as to the community and visitors.
- G. We have addressed the outside structure of Coleman Hall and the leak to the inside. We have a plan concerning the leak and its resolution. We completed the painting of the exterior of the hall to solve the staining.
- H. A Memorial Garden stand and book reside at the 5th Street entrance.
- I. We will continue to monitor the church HVAC systems.
- J. Other items Property Ministry Team has completed over the past three years.
 - 1. Bell restoration and the bell tower repaired.
 - 2. Kitchen code confirmation.
 - 3. Sanctuary floor refinished.
 - 4. Sanctuary exterior painted.
 - 5. Coleman Hall exterior painted.
 - 6. Ownership of land secured so the Memorial Garden could be built.

Worship Ministry Team

The mission of the Worship Ministry Team is to provide for the worship of God within our Reformed Tradition of the PC (USA).

Because worship is a many faceted experience, the Worship ministry team includes the following sub-committees: Audio-Visual, Communion, Flowers, Greeters, Ministry of the Farthest Pew, Music, Name Tags and Ushers.

First and foremost is to, with the ever powerful love of God, care for the health and wellbeing of our own congregation. What follows are our recommendations for our Worship Teams goals and visons for the coming year.

The opportunity will continue to be explored to provide a supplemental worship service. This will be a very loose format for 2016-2017 until we are able to determine what best serves the people in our church and in the community.

1. This will commence with one meeting a month.
2. The time and day will be determined by the pastor's availability.
3. We will solicit recommendations from our congregation.
4. This service will enhance the worship experience, not detract from Sunday worship.
5. The hope is not only to help enrich our congregation's worship experience but to also provide an alternative venue for non-members.

The training of elders as to their responsibilities as Elder of the Month now that we have two Pastors.

To train members of the congregation to help with the setting up and clearing away of communion.

Music: Our vision is, through excellence in music, to enhance the worship experience to our congregation and then to extend this experience to the community beyond our walls. Music provides a wonderful opportunity to introduce visitors to the love of Christ.

1. We are looking to continue and to enhance our existing programs such as; The Hymn Sing and the 4th of July concert. These are already successful. We hope for greater participation from our own congregation and to will continue to use these opportunities to welcome guests.
2. The introduction of a new Hymnal to the church congregation. This can be done through education so the congregation has an opportunity to experience some of the new Hymnals' exceptional music. Some of the songs from this Hymnal have already been heard and sung and have been well received.

The Worship Ministry Team is humbled by the amount of responsibility it has been given. It is in our hearts to be good stewards of this opportunity to serve. It is our vision to maximize the generous resources and funds appropriated to this committee to best serve our congregation. We would like for this year to be an exceptional example of God's love and faithful open arms to all who pass through our doors.