

UWCPC Report to COM on Season of Discernment 2020

Approved by Session, April 27, 2020

**Upper West Conococheague Presbyterian Church
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Clerk of Session, Receiving PIFs and Applications through 2020.8.15

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The Session of Upper West Conococheague Presbyterian Church (UWCPC), Mercersburg, seeks part-time (20-30 hours a week, negotiable) pastoral leadership by a Minister of Word and Sacrament (MWS) or Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) for the purposes of providing temporary pastoral services to UWCPC, Mercersburg, PA for 1 year, renewable.

Introduction

- UWCPC is a congregation rich in history beginning in 1738 in a log structure at Church Hill with Pastor John Steele and growing to the present complex on Seminary Street in Mercersburg.
- We would love to have a full-time pastor, because we understand that it usually takes a full-time pastor to affect the type of growth and change we would like to accomplish; however, unless something changes, with our current giving reserves we only can afford a part-time pastor for perhaps the next six years.
- Though our congregation is small (20 worshipers), we are a group of faithful attendees; most members are retired.
- In 2019, giving totaled \$37,000; an average of \$1,850 per active member. We are blessed to have investments around \$300,000, of which we are devoting roughly \$50,000 this year to maintenance (roof replacement, etc.).
- We commit to honoring Presbytery of Carlisle minimums for pastoral leadership.

#1 Our vision and mission for ministry, and how that is lived out

- After four months of intentional, prayerful discernment, we strongly believe the Lord is leading us to continue as a Presbyterian presence in the Mercersburg community.
- Our vision statement is: *"Thanking God for His faithfulness, we want to move forward in following Jesus Christ as He leads us to be good neighbors in meeting the needs of our community."*
- Our vision is to apply the gifts and resources with which God has blessed us – caring members, a beautiful historic building and manse situated on a corner lot within walking distance of the downtown area, and a lovely community of committed people who want to work together – to the glory of God.
- Deacons and Presbyterian Women are active in outreach mission but we would like to do more in meeting our mission: *"Sharing God's Love in an environment where He is changing lives."*
- We, the present UWCPC congregation, cannot lose hope but continue to believe that God is at work in us on this present journey.

#2 Ways we reach out to emerging needs of the community

- In February 2020, UWCPC hosted a Panel Discussion with key community leaders (police chief, Chamber of Commerce president, Library spokesperson, etc.), to which representatives from the local ministerium were invited.
- As a result of that evening, we were encouraged and affirmed in our desire to partner ecumenically with existing efforts in the community – specifically Meals on Wheels through the Senior Center, and Tutoring through the elementary school directly across the street from us.
- We also believe the Lord is leading us to create small group support programs for caregivers, and to coordinate sitters to stay with shut-ins to caregivers can go out on errands.
- The COVID-19 coronavirus is making us be more creative – e-mailing sermons; experimenting with Bible Study, worship, and session meetings on Zoom; and other innovative ways – to enhance communication and participation.
- Our Deacons and Presbyterian women coordinate a Town Fest Breakfast during Spring and Fall. Supported by the congregation they also coordinate collections such as:

- Bountiful Blessings (food bank of non-perishable goods via Mercersburg Area Churches)
- Lenten Soup and Study Nights (led by the ministerium of local pastors)
- Giving Tree (providing for local children with help from other churches)
- Stuff the Bus (providing school supplies partnering with United Way)
- Operation Shoe Box (serving children around the world)
- Blanket Fund (Presbyterian women match up to \$200 of what the congregation gives)
- We understand and are open to reevaluating our priorities, as we invest our energies during this change, but will need pastoral help in navigating these transitions.

#3 This pastoral position will help our congregation reach our vision and mission goals as follows

- We seek a person to be the pastoral face of UWCPC to the community, offering continuity and stability while moving us forward with new or revitalizing ideas that align with our mission.
- We pray that the one the Lord has chosen will assist us as an aging, but devoted, congregation to be good stewards of our limited resources (time, talent, and treasure).
- We have 4 shut-ins, and we reach out to them with calls, cards, meals, prayed for on the weekly prayer list sent by e-mail and monthly newsletter sent to local as well as those out of the area.
- We want to do more to give respite to care-givers, both in our congregation, and those we are learning about in our community. Because we are an older congregation, our sensibilities lie with those needs.
- We hope the priorities and sensibilities of our church will give the pastor an opportunity to maximize his or her gifts and potential, and passion.

#4 Characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation

- Session prayerfully evaluated the 33 pastoral leadership competencies that are part of the Church Leadership Connection Mission Information Form. Frankly, session members had a wide variety of thoughts about what the congregation needed at this point in time.
- Gradually, certain competencies surfaced as priorities, and ultimately, session agreed unanimously that they hope for a pastor who not only is gifted in preaching and worship leadership, but who is a compassionate, hopeful, good communicator, advisor, change agent, and motivator, who exhibits spiritual maturity, flexibility, organizational agility.

#5 Specific tasks / assignments / ministry areas for which this person will have responsibility

- Plan, prepare, and conduct all services of worship deemed appropriate by Session ○ Including preaching and administering the Sacraments of Lord's Supper and Baptism
- Moderate meetings of the session and of the congregation
- Have voice and vote at meetings of presbytery
- Report to COM
- Officiate at weddings and funerals (paid separately) as approved by Session
- Ensure that pastoral care is provided (assisted by Deacons, Elders, and members)
- Participate in training and equipping newly elected officers
- Represent the congregation in the community
- Encourage topics for bible study and attend or lead on occasion if time permits
- We know that with a part-time Covenant of Agreement, a pastor will not be able to attend every church dinner, meeting, mission effort, or community function. We promise not to expect that. We trust our pastor will be open about his or her hours, and work with session to set priorities.
- We will want a pastor to mentor us and guide us spiritually so we are better equipped to make faithful decisions about the care of our members and building and grounds, and also to better reach out to show God's love to those in need of hope and help.