

# First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford

## 2009 Long Range Plan



Presented to:

Session  
Board of Deacons  
Staff, Members and Friends

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*The mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford is to provide a sanctuary where people of faith can come to worship and foster their belief in Jesus Christ. As a church family we are an example of Christian living. Together we educate and nurture our adults and children in the teachings of our Lord and the Word of God. We extend God's grace by serving others and those in need. We welcome and invite everyone to participate in the life of our congregation. We seek to provide a loving, nurturing environment to develop a personal relationship with God.*

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# First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford Long Range Plan

## Abstract

"Where there is no vision, the people perish;... " - Prov. 29:18

One of the specific goals established for Rev. Wilkinson upon his arrival as the Designated Pastor was to aid the church in the development of a long-range plan. At his first meeting with the Session in July 2007, Rev. Wilkinson asked the board, "What do you want to happen at First Presbyterian Church?" One elder succinctly stated, "I want First Presbyterian Church to be **the** church to attend in Rutherford." It is our hope and dream that this plan provides the direction needed to move ourselves into the position of being "**the**" church, the body of Christ, where people are fed in faith, nurtured in love, and empowered to grow.

More important than the specific task responsibility of the development of a plan, is the reality that all individuals and institutions need to have a sense of vision and purpose. Our world and culture has dramatically changed in the last seventy years. The cultural changes have dramatically affected the life, ministry and vitality of our church. If our church is going to thrive in the future, we must have a sense of direction and vision that allows us to make needed and necessary changes that move us forward together as a community empowered by God to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Bible continually reminds people of the need to have a vision and direction. For example, when God called Joshua to lead the people of Israel, Joshua was told, "... go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land

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which I am giving to them, to the people of Israel..." (Joshua 1:2). Joshua had a mandate and a direction. Jesus shared a specific vision and mission statement, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15). God's vision and focus is always upon the Kingdom. Our vision is predicated upon our ability to be "Kingdom people". We are called to bring and show people the way to the Kingdom of God.

As Presbyterians, we are people of "ardor and order". Being people of "ardor" means who trust in the Spirit of God to lead and guide us. We are also people of "order". We trust people working together in groups to make conscious, deliberate decisions. We spend our lives as Presbyterians trusting God to use groups working together to develop ways for the church to grow together. We trust that the Holy Spirit is present with us as we meet, make decisions and, ultimately, seek to fulfill God's plan.

At this point in the life of our congregation, there is the need to develop a long-range plan. In the rich history of our church, the last 70 years was marked by an incredibly successful, long-term ministry during the tenure of Dr. Holloway (1936 – 1976). During the "heyday" of his ministry the church had well over 1000 members, an accomplished music program, a vibrant Sunday School, and multiple worship services every week. When Rev. Wilkinson arrived on July 1, 2007, there were 320 people on the Membership Roll and our Sunday worship attendance was 100. If the church continues to follow its current "path" and nothing changes, the church as a vital organism will cease in approximately 10 years. Having a specific plan for the future provides the congregation with a

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sense of direction as it faces this challenging time. A specific plan also guides the use of resources (time, talents, and treasures) as we make decisions on how to proceed forward, together.

We recognize that a plan can only be as effective as the church is willing to follow and fulfill its direction. Crucial in the development of this plan is the need for the minister and the key leaders of the church to utilize the plan and hold each other accountable for following and fulfilling the plan. In the past, churches (including this church) have made well thought out and meaningful long-range plans. Unfortunately, the churches involved have not always made the spiritual/emotional commitment to follow the plan and fulfill the dream. The purpose of our long-range plan is to provide a vehicle for us to follow together to live out God's plan for the Presbyterians in the greater Rutherford, New Jersey community.

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## **Project Initiation**

In August of 2008, a long-Range Planning team was formed at First Presbyterian Church. The team was tasked with completing a plan to chart the future course of the church in time for presentation at the 2009 Annual Congregation Meeting (normally held sometime in February).

Rev. Wilkinson determined that in order to complete this task in a relatively short period of time (6 months), there was a need to have a small group of “engaged” people in the life of the church to serve on the team. The four team identified members were:

- Jim Ely, a long time member of the church who has served on various Boards of the church.
- Linda McFadden, a newer member of the church who recently served on Session and is an active member of the church choir.
- Walter Meyer, a long-time member of the church who is currently serving on Session.
- Linda Zinn, a new member of the church.

Rev. Wilkinson was searching for active members of the congregation. He wanted people who both understood the history and richness of the past and those whose experience in the church may be broader than membership at First Presbyterian. Most importantly, he was searching for faithful Christians, who were willing to learn from each other and work together.

Because of the smaller size of the team, he recognizes the need for the leadership of the church to “buy-in” to the long-range plan. Therefore, as the

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team completes specific parts of the task, it vows to seek approval and support of the Session. Ultimately, it is the goal of the team to have the congregation approve and support the plan.

### **Methodology**

While it is common during strategic planning to focus solely on the future, it is imperative that an initial focus is first placed on the present. Sound strategic planning practices mandate an objective and comprehensive analysis of the existing state of the organization (or in this case, Church) to identify both the stability and health of the foundation on which it currently stands. Without this understanding, and subsequent agreement and acceptance by the involved parties of it as the starting point, it is nearly impossible to plot a successful course of action to obtain the desired end results and goals. As with any project or effort, the entire team must understand where they are and where they want to go before they can determine how the best way to get there.

To accomplish this task at the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford, the Long Range Planning Committee adopted the common AS-IS/TO-BE methodology. Under this methodology an understanding of the current state, or AS-IS, is first established. This exercise is followed by defining the desired end state, or TO-BE. Once both the AS-IS and TO-BE are documented, the focus shifts to identifying any “low hanging fruit”, or things that can be done in the short term to make immediate improvements while longer term plans are completed. Implementation of the “low hanging fruit” recommendations occurs

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simultaneously with long term implementation planning which then turns the new AS-IS (new from the short term improvements) into the desired TO-BE. At the conclusion of the cycle, the newly implemented TO-BE becomes the new AS-IS and the process begins again.

### **AS-IS**

To document the AS-IS under this methodology, the Long Range Planning team first conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in the context of the current, or AS-IS, state. This was done through a facilitated open and frank discussion where constructive criticism and disagreement was both welcomed and encouraged. Only in such an environment can the true state be revealed. Lists for each category were compiled and reviewed to identify common patterns and trends. The results of the analysis follow.

### ***SWOT***

#### **Strengths**

The strengths of the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford are bountiful. They can be grouped into three primary categories: People, Facilities and Finances.

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## **People**

People are the most important asset of any organization and are even more critical in a faith community where relationships are the focal point. First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford is blessed to have such wonderful and giving members and friends. The team identified the following positive attributes related to our people:

- A warm and friendly congregation is noticed by members and visitors alike
- People are genuinely happy to spend time together as is evident by the outward signs of fellowship
- We have a supportive and responsive Minister and Staff
- Numerous members are willing to make long term commitments to leadership roles
- We have a productive Session and Board of Deacons with committed Deacons and Elders

## **Facilities**

First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford is blessed to have beautiful facilities. We are also blessed to be able to consistently fill those facilities with the gifts and talents of our members. The team identified the following positive attributes related to our facilities:

- We have a beautiful building that is the focal point of the surrounding community
- We are located in an ideal location at the center of town

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- We are well rooted in and connected with our community
- We are able to fill our worship experiences with the gift of music through our solid choir and music programs

## **Finances**

Despite continuing to operate with a budget deficit, we are blessed to be financially sound if we continue to manage our funds responsibly.

## **Weaknesses**

Like every organization, there are many weaknesses found in the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford. They can be categorized into three groups as well: Culture, Facilities/Infrastructure and Leadership/Mission.

### **Culture**

The culture of an organization, or in this case Church, defines the context in which group experiences occur and establishes the tone and order of the group. While culture can be both positive and negative, the following weaknesses were identified:

- The composition of the congregation is changing. We have an increasing number of single parents and families where both parents work. Our culture has not adapted to support the needs of this changing dynamic
- This new family dynamic consists primarily of those with time constraints, conflicts and multiple commitments yet we have not responded by becoming flexible and adaptive

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- We often overlook our many demographic gaps and fail to meet and understand their needs
- We take for granted that everyone knows everyone and we often forget to reach out to newcomers and make them feel like part of a family. We are welcoming but often not nurturing nor embracing
- We are unable to express a shared sense of faith and common sense of purpose and have not created an environment where people are comfortable discussing their true concerns
- We are not strong in the area of spirituality and do not seem to place an emphasis on its importance
- We are oftentimes caught in the past and unable to see the present and future

### **Facilities/Infrastructure**

While our facilities and infrastructure are strengths, they are also weaknesses. The following were identified in the area of our facilities:

- We sometimes covet our building too much
- We lack parking and transportation for those that may require it in order to attend services
- We have many entrances and exits and people often enter and exit without being greeted or welcomed
- We are not advanced technologically and rely frequently on informal communication to spread our messages

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## **Leadership/Mission**

Leadership and Mission are critical components of a faith organization.

After analysis the following weaknesses were identified:

- While we have a strong sense of mission, it is always conducted by the same people. The same people are consistently called upon to carry the leadership burden and take on the responsibilities
- We continue to operate in a budget deficit limiting our ability to focus on mission and community work without tapping into our reserves
- We are in limbo while we consider the longevity of our designated pastor creating uncertainty in the future and a sense of instability
- We lack a succession plan for our staff to ensure the longevity of the Church

## **Opportunities**

Many opportunities lie within our grasp if we consciously strive to take advantage of them. Fundamentally they all are in the area of growth.

- Spiritual growth opportunities exist where we both challenge and assist all members and friends to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Care and compassion growth opportunities exist by better using our Deacons and Elders to become an integral part of the lives of our members and friends of our congregation by proactively connecting and communicating with them on a regular and consistent basis

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- Understanding and acceptance growth opportunities exist by embracing and incorporating the cultural differences of our congregation and our surrounding communities
- Active participation growth opportunities exist through better leveraging the skills and abilities of our family and creating means by which those gifts can be shared both inside and outside of the congregation
- Attendance growth opportunities exist by offering more services in perhaps different styles and languages
- Financial growth opportunities exist by trusting that we will be provided for and exploring creative avenues for revenue generation beyond tithes, offerings and endowments

### **Threats**

While we may not have threats in the common sense of the word there were several items identified that distract from our sense of purpose and frequently become the focal points of discussion over the perhaps more pressing priorities. Among these distracters are:

- Our inability to trust that God will provide for us financially leads to an obsession over finances. Despite this obsession, we are far from frugal and are living above our means and need to control our expenses. We continue to rely too heavily on the principle of our investments.
- Our focus on preserving our facilities sometimes causing us to think twice before we open our doors to those that “knock”

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- Our focus on having the best fellowship “presentation” creates an environment where people do not want or desire to compete and therefore do not participate
- Our focus on seeing people as attendance numbers and not seeing them as people and nurturing them and making them feel like members of a family
- Our focus on our Christian education and Music programs over the worship experience
- Our inability to embrace change and new ideas and assuming we know what is right and we know how we should do it

### ***Performance evaluation***

After the SWOT analysis was complete, further exploration of the AS-IS state was completed by evaluating current performance against a set of pre-defined and applicable criteria. For the purposes of this project, the team chose “Eight Quality Characteristics of Growing Churches Worldwide” from Christian A. Schwarz’s *Natural Church Development* (<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/index.html>). This evaluation was also conducted using an open forum where participants were encouraged to speak freely and challenge current paradigms. This was done in an attempt to uncover the actual performance rather than that which was desired or would be expected by others. The results of this process also follow.

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## The Eight

Christian A. Swartz defined eight characteristics of a growing church in his movement named *Natural Church Development*. These eight characteristics are listed below with definitions modified slightly from his text. Each is explored in more detail in the pages that follow in order of strongest to poorest performance at First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford.

- Empowering Leadership – Churches with empowering leaders concentrate on empowering other Christians. They invest in discipleship and teach, support and motivate others. They understand that alone they can not succeed but with an energized network of people anything can be accomplished.
- Gift-oriented ministry – Churches that embrace gift-oriented ministry are knowledgeable about and leverage the gifts and talents of their congregation. They do not select and assign tasks based purely on availability but seek to develop and nurture participation on the basis of giftedness.
- Passionate spirituality – Churches that encompass the passionate spirituality characteristic explicitly illustrate their relationship with Jesus Christ in their worship, prayer and action.
- Functional structures – Churches with functional structures understand that the physical and organizational structures of the church must enable the mission to be accomplished and not act as a hindrance.

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- Inspiring worship – Churches with inspiring worship find their congregation comforted, inspired and challenged.
- Holistic small groups – Churches that recognize the need for discipleship understand that the relationships formed from small groups that study the Bible, pray, share and serve others creates a solid foundation upon which to build.
- Need-oriented evangelism – Churches that are strong in this characteristic support those that were given the gift of evangelism. They are empowered to develop their personal ministry and meet the needs of others.
- Loving relationships – Churches that recognize that it is not the quantity of their relationships, but the quality, embrace this characteristic and radiate love into and beyond their neighborhoods.

### **Loving Relationships**

The analysis found that in our current state, the church was strongest in Loving Relationships. Members of the congregation, the community and the committee frequently commented that there was indeed a strong sense of family and the associated care and concern that comes from that bond. Visitors were received with genuine friendship and kindness. As was defined above, this characteristic defines the quality of relationships that exist and the degree to which the congregation radiates love into the neighborhood. It is easy to see and feel why this is our strongest characteristic.

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However, while we do this better than the other characteristics, there is always room for improvement. The committee identified these potential areas of weakness:

- While our Elders and Deacons are dedicated, their role is quite limited and lacks some of the fundamentals and structure required to adequately nurture and comfort our congregation
- Continuing with the above there is currently no formal program for mentoring and welcoming of new members and visitors. They often are left to their own devices to make connections and learn how to become part of the family and an active member of the congregation
- Following that same thought, there is no mentoring of existing members to ensure they continue to grow spiritually and remain engaged with the church. There is also no formal means to identify needs and concerns or monitor the general well being of the members and their immediate families
- Fellowship hour was mentioned above in the SWOT analysis and has become somewhat of a competition causing the original spirit and purpose to be diminished
- The church currently does not hold regular congregation meals where there is an opportunity to break bread together, enjoy each others company and grow as a family. Like the traditional family, the dinner table is the root of the structure and a time to come together as one
- The church currently does not have a formal prayer chain or prayer group

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- Similar to fellowship hour mentioned above, the original spirit and purpose of Sharing of the Peace has been diminished and takes up a significant amount of our worship time together
- While we present an opportunity for joys and concerns to be shared amongst the congregation there is no formal means to follow-up with individuals to ensure their needs are being met
- We are blessed to have a diverse and talented church family yet we often fail to recognize members for their accomplishments and contributions

### **Gift-oriented Ministry**

Gift-oriented ministry entails assigning tasks and responsibilities not based upon availability but on one's gifts and talents. The committee felt this was also one of the strongest characteristic of the church. Those that are passionate and have the initiative to share their talents and spearhead a project or tasks are free to do so and receive the full support of the congregation.

However, we are limiting our possibilities in this area due to the following weaknesses identified by the committee:

- There is currently no means or structure in place to capture and leverage the talents of our congregation. This is exacerbated by the fact that no pictorial directory of members and friends exist making it challenging and awkward to reach out and learn that information
- As was mentioned in the Loving Relationships section there is also no means to reach out to new members and visitors and due to the

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building layout and lack of a formal greeting program at the beginning of service there is no means to identify and embrace the talents of those exploring our worship services

- There is currently no formal process in place to allow people to bring forth their ideas and suggestions for sharing their gifts. This may cause many missed opportunities

### **Inspiring Worship**

Simply stated, inspiring worship is the quality of worship offered. A quality worship experience should be comforting, inspiring and challenging. During worship the presence of the Holy Spirit should be felt and the sense of community should be observed by visitors. While this was found to be a stronger quality at our church than other characteristics, there were still areas where additional quality could be instilled. These included:

- There currently is only one service offering with one worship style. Limiting the options to both our congregation and community creates an environment where some may feel uninspired or may be unable to participate due to time and life constraints.
- While we consider ourselves to be Presbyterians there is little shared about our beliefs and opportunities are not provided to learn about our background and traditions. This creates an environment where one is not necessarily challenged to grow in spirituality and understanding nor to challenge their belief structures and grow in faith

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- Due to limited resources there often is little time to prepare for the upcoming services. While adequate planning and forethought is done around the major holidays of Easter and Christmas, similar attention is not provide to the weekly services leaving them with a sense of lesser importance. Since our focus is on worshiping our Lord and Savior at all services, not just on holiday's, each service should be afforded the same care and considering to illicit the same response and joy

### **Empowering Leadership**

Empowering leadership was defined earlier as creating and sustaining a large network of people that can teach, support and motivate others. This characteristic rounds out the top half of the list. It was evident to the committee that many in the congregation are empowered and have created a network to support the projects and causes they are passionate about. However, as was mentioned earlier, the same faces are present over and over and we have failed to organize and empower the masses. Some potential areas of focus are identified below:

- There is currently no formal succession planning done to ensure that leadership roles are continuously filled with eager and prepared volunteers. In addition, there is no formal succession planning for the staff nor is there complete documentation on their critical tasks, processes and information. Both leave the church exposed should key members leave or step down

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- In addition, while we ask of our members to assume leadership roles and responsibilities we provide no formal leadership training and have no clear expectations for their performance
- It is currently difficult to both volunteer and to find volunteer opportunities available, especially for new members and friends. There also is no centralized means to coordinate volunteers and ensure opportunities are known and filled. Often the same people assume the burden for the success of an event, leading to more and faster burnout exacerbated by the length of leadership term limits.
- There was also found to be no cultural means to hold people accountable for their commitments. This causes added strain on our leaders to ensure tasks and projects can be completed

### **Holistic Small Groups**

Small groups were identified above as a critical factor for growth. Not only do they provide a means for relationship building but they create opportunities to connect with new and potential members by sharing common interests. This is the first area on the bottom half of the list and something that would not be considered a strong suit of ours.

Looking at the current state of the church, the committee identified the following smalls groups in various states of health:

- Choir

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- Hand bells
- Bookworms
- High School Youth Group
- Women's Group
- Session
- Deacons
- Staff

It was noted that the addition of new groups was hindered by the difficulty in coordinating and obtaining approval to use church facilities after hours. It was also noted that many of the groups in the past diminished and/or disappeared due to the changing dynamics of the family and workplace. Most events now occur only on Sundays or sometimes infrequently on weeknights. No set or consistent schedule is routinely offered for planning purposes. A large opportunity exists to expand the number and types of small groups to allow members to grow their relationships through their common interests.

### **Passionate Spirituality**

Passionate spirituality was defined above as the intensity of which the relationship with Jesus Christ is experienced. This is important in both quality and quantity of experiences. This characteristic was also in the bottom half as the committee felt our experiences lacked that passion in many cases. This is perhaps not true individually but certainly is in aggregate.

The following areas were identified to be future areas of focus:

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- There are currently no formal Prayer Chains, Prayer Meetings or Prayer Groups. Prayer is not only a way to lift our thanks and concerns as a united front but is also a powerful means for us to share our faith and experiences
- Personal spiritual growth is very important to the health of our congregation and of Christianity as a whole. Group retreats are a means to achieve growth however it is something we do not take advantage of nor offer.
- We also do not take advantage of growth opportunities through participation in groups outside of our congregation. This would allow us to identify new ways to be both in relationships with others and with Jesus Christ.
- Personal growth is also possible through the sharing of stories/experiences of His presence and in talking and teaching about spiritual gifts. We currently do not provide any opportunities to do so
- Multiple services at differing times following differing styles was mentioned earlier as a way to increase the inspiration of our worship. It is also a means to afford all an opportunity to forge a relationship with Jesus Christ in an environment that might be more suited to their individual needs than our traditional service
- The limited role of Session and Deacons was also mentioned earlier and affords us a great opportunity.

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## Functional Structures

Functional structures were defined earlier as both our physical and organization structures. In growing churches they enable the mission rather than act as a hindrance. This characteristic is near the bottom for our church. Both areas were considered in the context of the AS-IS state of the church.

Looking first at our physical structures, we highlighted the following hindrances:

- Lack of parking
- Lack of or limited alternative transportation methods
- Lack of adequate signage or floor plans
- Lack of ramps and elevators
- Lack of, or little, technical infrastructure and tools
- Lack of sufficient security for our services and Sunday school
- Insufficient heating and cooling systems

Looking then at our organizational structures, we noted an overabundance of committees often consisting of the same Elders with minimal participation from congregation members. This situation causes an inordinate amount of meetings and time to be spent on the inner workings and administration of the church rather than fulfilling our mission. In addition, the burden often causes burnout of the participants rather than reenergizing them. The following committees were identified as active:

- Budget and Finance
- Building and Maintenance

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- Christian Education
- Membership
- Mission/Outreach
- Personnel
- Stewardship
- Worship and Music

### **Need-oriented Evangelism**

Need-oriented evangelism was defined above as setting people free to develop their ministry and focus on people in need. This characteristic was listed last by the committee and the characteristic where we performed the poorest.

The following areas were found to be lacking in our AS-IS:

- Multiple services at differing times following differing styles has been listed several times and is also a hindrance to our reaching more members of our community by assuming that one style and time works for everyone
- In order to reach more people we also need to incorporate better and more use of technology. This affords us the opportunity to reach people at any time of the day and in any place in the world. It also helps to bridge the generation gap and engage our young people
- We also need to do a better job at using targeted advertising and communicating with the public. We can not reach people if they can not hear, see or feel our message and invitation.

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- The limited role of Session and Deacons and the limited means to identify those in need has also been listed several times. This again is a huge opportunity for us if we take advantage of it
- Closely related to the Gift-oriented ministry we have much talent and knowledge amongst our congregation and are missing huge opportunities to leverage those skills and provide educational opportunities internally and to members of our community

In addition, it was identified that the current structure provides no means or group dedicated to helping people find and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. As a congregation we take much for granted and not only assume that the system is in place to take care of those in need and identify those in pain but also that everyone can find their faith of their own fruition without the help of others around them.

### **Transitioning to the TO-BE**

With the AS-IS fully explored and documented, the focus of the committee shifted to defining the TO-BE or desired state of the Church. As was stated earlier, the goal of our church is to be **the** church to attend in our community. In order to become “**the church**”, we must faithfully live out our charge as followers of Jesus Christ. From a Biblical standpoint, the “measurement tool” is how we live out the Great Commandment, “[Jesus], which is the great commandment in the law?” And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first

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commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself”. (Mt 22:36). Our future as a congregation is dependent upon our faithfully living out the Call to be a loving, engaged Church.

The Bible provides wonderful/powerful images of what it means “to be” **the church**. As we faithfully consider the steps necessary to move toward our goal, we must keep the guidance we are provided in scripture in mind. The following passages should be used as checks and balances against the decisions we are making and asking others to accept and follow.

**The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40):** When asked about the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus acknowledged the commandment to love God, neighbor and self, is foundation of all relationships. At First Presbyterian, we take very seriously the importance of the relationships that we have with God and our neighbor. We value loving relationships and at the core of our future together is the importance of developing and nurturing all loving relationships. All of our activities must allow others to see/experience the love of God in Christ.

**The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12):** Paul shares an image of people living/working together in service to Jesus Christ. This passage rightfully acknowledges the unique gifts that every individual possesses. The passage also shows the importance of working together and the interconnectedness of all of our parts. A foundation “piece” that we can celebrate is the unique gifts that God has provided. A challenge is discerning how we can/will share our gifts with the world.

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**A Light that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14-16):** Jesus reminded people during his Sermon on the Mount, that our actions and our lives will be a “light” for all to see. The light is Christ. As we (our church) set upon a hill, might this passage provide a reminder of what we are called to be and do.

**The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20):** At the end of his ministry, Jesus reminds his closest followers that they are to go out into the world baptizing and teaching.

**Sacramental People (I Corinthians 11:23-26):** Paul reminds us that at our core, we are tied to Christ and each other through the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. That we remember Christ’s sacrifice and live out our covenant with each other.

At the heart of who we want “To-Be” is three values:

1. **At our core, we seek to live out Christ’s command to love.** We hope and seek that whenever we gather, people will recognize us by our capacity to show and share the love of God in Jesus Christ.
2. **We will be a place that expects and nurtures people to grow in their walk with God.** We are committed to helping anyone and everyone to grow spiritually.
3. **We are committed to growing numerically as a church.** As we live out our commitments to faithfully live out Christ’s command, we anticipate that others will also see our “light” and our “love” and desire to have and share the experience of the Risen Christ.

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## **TO-BE**

With the AS-IS fully explored and documented, the focus of the committee shifted to defining the TO-BE or desired state of the Church. However, before beginning to describe what the future should look and feel like, we must first ensure some necessary spiritual fundamentals are alive and thriving. Their presence strengthens the confidence with which we define and declare our goals. Their presence builds us up and gives us the stamina to continue to move forward when signs may show that it would be easier to retreat, settle or give up. But, most importantly, their presence unites us and marks us as a family serving not our purposes, but His.

First, when looking forward it is critical that we are not constrained by earthly limitations. In Jeremiah 23:27 we are reminded “I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” God is capable of bringing our biggest dreams and goals to fruition. We must dare to set lofty goals for ourselves that at first glance seem unrealistic and others would scoff are not possible. We must constantly remind ourselves that what seems impossible for us or others to imagine, or even comprehend from our earthly perspective is simple to the One in Jeremiah 23:17 that is proclaimed “Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.” As Luke 1:37 reminds us “For nothing is impossible with God”; so in that spirit we should be true to His powerfulness and not be afraid to set our sights high.

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Second, we remember what we as Christians must do as was taught in 2 Corinthians 5:7 “We live by faith, not by sight.” We must remember that God will take care of all our needs if we trust and focus on Him and follow Him where he leads us, even if the circumstances do not seem to indicate that is so. We must push aside our fears and focus on doing what we are being led to do. In other words, we must hold fast to our goals and not give up when things get tough or we do not see the possibilities with our eyes. We must learn to see them with our faith. As Hebrews 10:35-36 reminds us, “do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. <sup>36</sup>You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” And, as 1 Corinthians 13:7 tells us, with love we are strong; “It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” Setting ambitious goals and walking by faith to persevere will require that are routed solidly in our beliefs, that we love enough to help each other through our fears and our uncertainties and that we are strong enough to keep each other focused on Him.

Finally, we must be willing to surrender and unite to focus on serving His will, not ours. This means surrendering our earthly ambitions, desires and agendas even when we are not sure we agree of the direction or the goal but are willing to trust it is His will not ours. We must be willing to prayerfully consider and reflect on the direction we are being asked to go and seek guidance from the Holy Spirit. We must search inside to find strength and peace in each other as a united body of Christ. Colossians 3:15 states it clearly, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And

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be thankful.” We must be thankful that we are being asked to do His will and not be burdened by the concerns that others will raise from our decisions. Romans 12:2 also reminds us to turn from the focus on things that we are used to and the ways that things have always been done, to truly listen for where we are being called to go; “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Jesus told us in Mark 3:35 “Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.” Together we are one, together can achieve God’s will, and with Him, anything is possible.

### ***Our Future***

The future of the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford is predicated upon the Greatest Commandment found in Matthew 22-34-40:

<sup>34</sup>Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup>One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

<sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup>Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” <sup>38</sup>This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>40</sup>All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

All of our actions, goals and objectives must focus on how we show our love to God, our Neighbors and ourselves. Having this focus helps to ensure we make good decisions with the right intentions behind them.

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## Love God

Loving God is at the heart of what we do and what we want to become. Our Love of God can be shown and measured through worship, education, prayer, care/compassion and outreach. To show our love we have established the following long-term goals:

- Hold the following regular active worship services of different styles and at different times each week:
  - 2009 - 3
  - 2010 - 3
  - 2011 - 4
  - 2012 - 4
  - 2013 - 5
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
  
- Achieve the following average weekly worship attendance numbers:
  - 2009 - 120
  - 2010 - 140
  - 2011 - 160
  - 2012 - 180
  - 2013 - 200
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
  
- Achieve the following average weekly Sunday School attendance numbers:
  - 2009 - 25
  - 2010 - 30
  - 2011 - 35
  - 2012 - 45
  - 2013 - 50

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- 2018 - ?
- 2023 - ?
- 2028 - ?
  
- Achieve the following average weekly adult education attendance numbers:
  - 2009 - all leadership + 5
  - 2010 - all leadership + 10
  - 2011 - all leadership + 15
  - 2012 - all leadership + 20
  - 2013 - all leadership + 25
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
  
- Achieve the following quarterly proclamations or reaffirmations of faith (Adult Baptism):
  - 2009 - 1
  - 2010 - 2
  - 2011 - 3
  - 2012 - 4
  - 2013 - 5
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
  
- Hold the following number of one weekly prayer groups:
  - 2009 - 1
  - 2010 - 2
  - 2011 - 3
  - 2012 - 4
  - 2013 - 5
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?

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- Train and engage the following number of care and compassion leaders able to provide/compliment pastoral care:

- 2009 - 15
- 2010 - 20
- 2011 - 25
- 2012 - 30
- 2013 - 35
- 2018 - ?
- 2023 - ?
- 2028 - ?

- Growth tithes and offerings to the following amounts:

- 2009 - \$175,000
- 2010 - \$200,000
- 2011 - \$225,000
- 2012 - \$250,000
- 2013 - \$275,000
- 2018 - ?
- 2023 - ?
- 2028 - ?

### **Love Thy Neighbor**

Loving Thy Neighbor is reflected in so much of what we do and is an essential part of how we see ourselves in the future. Our Love of Thy Neighbor can be shown and measured through congregation, community and world mission work. To show our love we have established the following long-term goals:

- Achieving the following levels of congregation participating in mission opportunities:

- 2009 - 25%
- 2010 - 30%
- 2011 - 35%
- 2012 - 40%
- 2013 - 50%
- 2018 - ?

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- 2023 - ?
- 2028 - ?
  
- Achieving the following number of total volunteer hours:
  - 2009 - 500
  - 2010 - 750
  - 2011 - 1000
  - 2012 - 1250
  - 2013 - 1500
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
  
- Achieve the following percentage of allocated budget for Mission work:
  - 2009 – 1%
  - 2010 – 3%
  - 2011 – 5%
  - 2012 – 7%
  - 2013 – 10%
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?

### **Love Thyself**

Loving Thyself is often more difficult than it sounds. We often spend more time taking care of others than taking care of ourselves. In order to ensure the longevity of First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford we must make loving ourselves a priority and an integral part of our long-range plan. We can show measure how we love ourselves through the growth in our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and each other. To show our love we have established the following long-term goals:

- Achieve the following levels of congregational commitment to pray daily:

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- 2009 – 10%
  - 2010 – 30%
  - 2011 – 50%
  - 2012 – 70%
  - 2013 – 90%
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?
- Achieve the following congregational commitment to read the Word daily:
    - 2009 – 10%
    - 2010 – 30%
    - 2011 – 50%
    - 2012 – 70%
    - 2013 – 90%
    - 2018 - ?
    - 2023 - ?
    - 2028 - ?
- Achieve the following congregational participation in a spiritual mentoring partnership:
    - 2009 – 5%
    - 2010 – 10%
    - 2011 – 15%
    - 2012 – 20%
    - 2013 – 25%
    - 2018 - ?
    - 2023 - ?
    - 2028 - ?
- Achieve a the following congregational commitment to a spiritual discipline such as fasting, journaling, scripture, Sabbath, scripture memorization, etc.:
    - 2009 – 5%
    - 2010 – 10%
    - 2011 – 15%
    - 2012 – 20%
    - 2013 – 25%
    - 2018 - ?

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- 2023 - ?
- 2028 - ?
- Hold a the following monthly congregational meal/fellowship opportunities:
  - 2009 – 1
  - 2010 – 2
  - 2011 – 3
  - 2012 – 4
  - 2013 – 5
  - 2018 - ?
  - 2023 - ?
  - 2028 - ?

### ***Our Plan to Get There***

With our goals clearly established, the focus then shifted toward implementation plans to start achieving results....

### ***Our Plan to Stay on Track***

With our implementation plans completed, the schedule for progress meetings was prepared...

### **Low Hanging Fruit**

Several short term recommendations were identified while evaluating the results of the AS-IS analysis. They are listed below in the order in which they were identified.

#### 1. Redefining the Mission Statement

To begin the lengthy and important process of change management the committee recommended redefining the Mission Statement. The Mission

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Statement should be concise and must represent our priorities to ensure we do not lose focus while implementing the TO-BE. The committee proposes the following be adopted:

*The mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Rutherford is to provide a sanctuary where people of faith can come to worship and foster their belief in Jesus Christ. As a church family we are an example of Christian living. Together we educate and nurture our adults and children in the teachings of our Lord and the Word of God. We extend God's grace by serving others and those in need. We welcome and invite everyone to participate in the life of our congregation. We seek to provide a loving, nurturing environment to develop a personal relationship with God.*

### 2. Reorganization of the organizational structure of the church

The committee recommends possibly restructuring the active committees into four primary responsibilities: Mission, Ministry, Outreach and Administration. Each committee would meet on a quarterly basis with smaller groups meeting more frequently on specific topics when warranted. This would help to reduce the time spent on meetings while ensuring adequate time was allocated for planning and decision making. Other options for restructuring might also be considered.

### 3. Safety of the congregation and children

We live in a much different world today than many of us grew up in. Parents expect their children to be safe while attending Sunday school and other

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church functions. Members and friends expect to feel safe and secure. The committee recommends formal security procedures for our children be implemented. This may include something as simple wrist bracelets and identification checks or may include a higher tech solution as situations warrant.

#### 4. Facility maps and Crisis Planning

In a post-9/11 world we can not take for granted the need for emergency planning. In addition to simplifying navigation of new members it is critical that maps and emergency plans be deployed and available in all common areas. This includes but is not limited to emergency contact numbers and available phones, directions to specific areas and “You are here” maps, evacuation and staging area plans, call trees and “I’m ok” processes.

#### 5. Facility Access and Group Development

One barrier that is easily overcome regarding the addition of new and thriving groups within the church is ease of obtaining access and permission to use church facilities. The committee recommends a formal process be developed and implemented and annual schedules be prepared and released. The congregation may consider implementing a weekly/monthly activity night where pot-luck dinners are held and multiple groups meet concurrently. This is a common practice in southern churches.

#### 6. Multiple worship opportunities and styles

In several areas the lack of multiple worship services and diversity of style was noted as a weaknesses or an opportunity. The committee recommends implementing two additional services, one early in the morning on Sunday that

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follows the format offered this summer and one on Sunday or Saturday evening that follows a more relaxed and contemporary style. The congregation may also consider a weeknight or weekday morning service. The more opportunities that exist to come together and worship the more opportunities we have to connect with others and expand the active participation of our members and friends. A one-size-and-time-solution does not fit all.

### 7. Redefine the role of Session and Deacons

While Session and Deacons members should be proud of their contributions it may be prudent to redefine their roles to ensure that the needs of our congregation and community are best met. This may include adding new responsibilities or reinstating some responsibilities that have been overlooked or discontinued due to other priorities. This may also include eliminating or changing existing responsibilities and delegating some tasks to volunteers.

### 8. Identify and appoint a Volunteer Coordinator

A new leadership opportunity was identified to help ensure the process of sharing time and talents is smooth and successful. The committee recommends creating and filling a volunteer coordinator position to assist with posting and filling volunteer opportunities across all groups/teams. This position would allow those heading the opportunity to focus on the task at hand and not on recruiting participation.

### 9. Formal Worship Planning

For worship to be consistently comforting, inspiring and challenging it must be consistently planned by more than just the minister. There is much

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preparation that goes on for our most successful services: Easter and Christmas. The same forethought and planning should go in to all services. The committee is therefore recommending a Worship Planning Team be created to assist in the content, flow and design of the weekly services.

### 10. Restructure Sharing of the Peace

Sharing of the peace has gone well beyond its spirit and intent of greeting your neighbors in His name to a chance to say hello to people through the Sanctuary. This creates an awkward situation for many as they must stand and wait for others to finish their greetings. We may consider moving the Peace to after the benediction so that those that wish to spend time will have the opportunity to do so while others can greet and move on. Other options may be considered, including eliminating the Peace all together.

### 11. Create a pictorial directory and skills/talent inventory

To better get to know our members and friends the committee recommends that a pictorial directory be approved and implemented. In addition, steps should be taken to capture and maintain a formal inventory of skills and talents that exist. This inventory may be leveraged to further help our community with outreach projects and may also help to broaden the volunteer opportunities that exist within the church. In addition, the congregation may consider some form of name badge/tag system to both help track attendance and aid in the learning of our fellow Christians.

### 12. Implement a formal pre-service greeting program

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To ensure people are welcomed and embraced a formal greeting program should be established. The committee recommends that the greeting process occur at the beginning of the service and that any new visitors are immediately identified and put in contact with a member. This may involve seating them with a volunteer or inviting and accompanying them to fellowship hour.

### 13. Discontinue Dial-a-thought

The current service is not widely used as was evident from the extended period where the message was not changed and no reports were made to the church office. While not a significant expense, there is a cost associated with the additional dedicated phone line. Alternative means to share a daily devotional message should be explored.

### 14. Revamp the Joys and Concerns

The need to share the good news and challenges of our lives is an important part in nurturing the family environment of our congregation. However, the current format of Joys and Concerns has gone beyond the spirit and intent of the program segment. One possible option worth exploring is leveraging the prayer chain proposed but the congregation may also consider sharing in private using written messages that are lifted as a whole without being read out loud or perhaps limiting the scope to members, friends and their immediate families.

### 15. Revamp the collection process

Especially in financially challenging times, the offering portion of the service can create stress by making it evident who is giving and who is not. While we should not judge, we know it is human nature to make assumptions

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about what others are doing or not doing and why. The manner in which we do our offerings is awkward for both the Deacons and the congregation and it also inhibits those that might be willing to make monthly, quarterly or annual offerings in lieu of weekly by making it obvious who is putting into the plate and who is not. We may consider passing the plates down the pews allowing or perhaps having the plates at the entrances. We may also promote and recommend online and automatic giving or perhaps providing a Prayer Offering that can be given for those that just can not give financially allowing them to make a “deposit” at the appropriate time while not feeling guilty or shameful.

### 16. Increase the illumination of the Church

Compared to the surrounding buildings of downtown Rutherford and surrounding communities, our Church is modestly lit and does little to highlight its beautiful architecture. We should consider some properly targeted spot or flood lights to show off our building after sundown. We might also consider new and better signage.

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## **Project Planning**

With both Low Hanging Fruit initiatives and the vision of the TO-BE defined the planning process shifts toward project planning.

### ***Scope Statement***

### ***Success Criteria and Performance Metrics***

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

### ***Milestones***

### ***Schedule***

### ***Status Reporting***

### ***Lessons Learned Sessions and Feedback***

## **The Continuous Improvement Process**