

**MISSION
STUDY**
2022



Change is a constant and a given. It is important for congregations to pause and reflect from time to time on who they are. The process to prepare this mission study invited Central to look honestly at how change has impacted us and be open to what God is preparing us to do.

The insights we have gained from the discovery process are compiled in this report. Our goal was to paint a clear picture of where we have been, where we are today, and where we feel God is leading us into the future. We believe this mission study will help you gain clarity about Central's values; our ministry priorities, and future possibilities for growth. We believe we have a strong community of faith at Central Presbyterian Church, a willingness to grow in our service to the community, and a desire to continue our journey of faith. This mission study will serve as an introduction to candidates who feel called to serve as our next pastor and as guide for our Pastor Nominating Committee in their work.

We would like to thank the many congregants and regular visitors who attended group meetings, answered question cards, and participated in our congregational discussion. The thoughtful, honest responses you provided allowed this study to be informative, enlightening, and will provide a strong foundation for the ensuing pastoral search.

Through many difficult and unexpected changes, Central has continued to be the church together, traveling this interim season in hope, holding fast to God who always holds fast to us. During this season, our mission study process has provided space and time for us to process our feelings, to adjust, to consider who we are, and who God is calling us to be.

We look forward to building on these conversations with our new permanent pastor.

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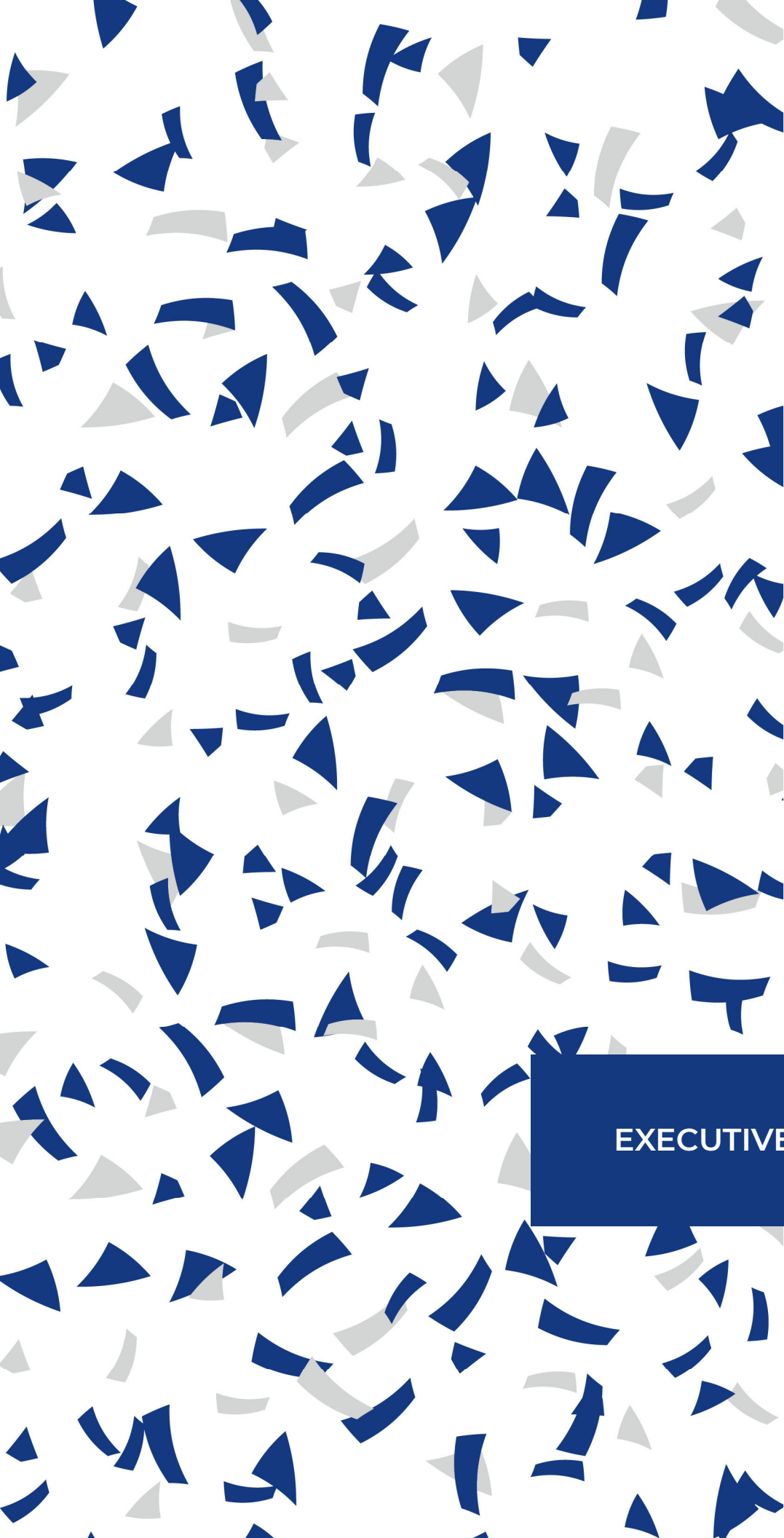
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Congregational Profile

Central Presbyterian was established in 1851 in downtown St. Paul, not far from the state capitol. It has weathered many changes in more than 150 years. After nearly closing its doors in the early 2000s, Central now has more than 200 active members and friends of the congregation. Central prides itself on being open to everyone from all walks of life, from lifelong Presbyterians to people from other faith traditions and to people who perhaps never stepped foot in a church before. Truly, at Central, all are welcome.

Like many Presbyterian churches, Central is a mostly white, middle-class congregation, but our diversity is growing as does the diversity of our surrounding communities. A little more than half of Central's members are either between the ages of 26-40 or the ages 56-70 (27% and 28% respectively). Central also has a growing children and youth program, with a particularly strong cohort of youth in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Central is active in a number of mission activities. Our current priorities include racial justice, housing, and hunger. In addition, Central is actively supporting newly arrived refugees from Afghanistan. Central is also deeply committed to music and the arts: we host art exhibits, a large community choir (VocalPoint), and musicians in residence.

Central re-opened for in-person services in 2021 and continues to provide online streaming for people who prefer to participate from home while the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The church holds around \$2 million in assets, including over \$1.4 million in long-term investments that are used to

fund annual operations. Central's overall finances are well-managed and should be stable for the foreseeable future.

The Community We Serve

Central Presbyterian Church is located in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. St. Paul is located in Ramsey County and is the capitol city of Minnesota. Many of Central's members live downtown, but a large number of members come from all across the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. St. Paul is the largest city in the county, and is known for its walkable neighborhoods, the state capitol, and expansive views of the Mississippi River Valley. The diversity of Ramsey County's landscape and population is one of the region's greatest strengths.

Central's census tract is racially diverse. Approximately 22% identify as Black, 7% as Hispanic, 6% as Asian, 1% as American Indian, and 60% of residents identify as white alone. The total population of downtown St. Paul is about 10,000; this represents about 3% of St. Paul's population. St. Paul has grown by 41% in the last ten years and is projected to continue growing over the next twenty. The median household income is about \$58,000 in St. Paul and about \$65,000 in Ramsey County more broadly. About 19% of St. Paul's residents and 12% of Ramsey County residents live in poverty.

Our Vision for the Future

Central has its eyes on the future. Before the pandemic, Central had recovered from a significant decline in membership and was on its way to becoming a medium-sized and active congregation. As we emerge from this pandemic, Central is focused

on increasing member engagement, continuing to build its children and youth ministry, increasing diversity, and continuing to advocate for social justice. The challenges our communities face related to racial justice, hunger, and housing are not likely to go away anytime soon. And so, our commitment to these issues stands strong. The congregation has indicated an interest in expanding the ways we use our historic building to support and strengthen the communities around us.



A COLLECTIVE VOICE

Summary of Participation

Central conducted a series of discussions with members and regular visitors for the purpose of examining who Central Presbyterian Church has been, who we are today, and what we want to be going into the future.

In a varied series of meetings, days/times, and formats, we saw 95 of our 219 members (43%) participating in discussions between May 2021 and February 2022 for the purpose of the study you are reading today.

The participants closely reflected the same demographic composition of Central's congregation with respect to age, race, and ethnicity. The exception to this was the direct involvement of our children and youth under the age of 18, however we did have the parents of many participate in the discussions.

Small Group Meetings

There were 13 discussion groups held by Zoom or in-person between May 19 and July 27, 2021. A total of 62 people participated to dig into three questions:

1. What brought you to Central?
2. What would make Jesus smile about Central?
What makes Central unique/special?
3. What are your hopes and goals for the future for Central?

In addition to these questions, participants were asked to share their history with Central by recalling significant events such as births, weddings, ordination as elder, which were then compiled into a timeline.

A summary of the Ministry Study, as we called it, was gleaned from this series of meetings and is available as an appendix to this report.

Survey of Engagement

To explore the engagement of our members and those ministries which are being represented in our meeting groups, a survey of participation was conducted with all participants of the small group meetings.

Of those participating in the small group meetings:

- 73% have served on a committee or session
- 35% have served on a task force
- 33% have participated in music (choir, bells, etc)
- 74% have contributed to giving campaigns
- 89% have shared in networking groups
- 29% have volunteered with children and youth
- 55% have volunteered in hospitality roles
- 78% have volunteered in community ministries
- 53% have volunteered in building maintenance
- 96% have participated in regular worship activity

Leadership Discussion

Digging further into the results of earlier meetings, while also engaging more participants in the conversation, Central held a leadership discussion with members of Session and our committee chairs on Zoom in January 2022 with 28 participants.

Working in breakout groups, the participants first began with a Bible Study conversation on select scriptures - Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 2:41-47, and 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10. Then the breakout groups returned to a large group discussion to share their discussions.

The next step, was a return to breakout groups to dig into the following questions:

1. What is God's purpose for Central?
Where is God calling us to be in 5 years?
2. What are the two most important challenges facing Central?
3. What kind of leader would help us achieve God's purpose for Central?

Returning back to the large group, discussions held in small groups were shared and it was noted that the conversation reflected very closely what had been heard in the earlier small group meetings.

Worship Card Survey

In an effort to further engage congregants who had not yet been heard from, we did a four part series of cards inserted in the weekly bulletin for worship. Each card asked only one question and allowed people to respond easily in a time and space of spiritual reflection.

The questions posed on these cards included:

1. How do we (as Central) live out our vision to be 'in the city for good'?
2. What are the most important challenges facing Central today? (This was a series of multiple choice questions in areas that included growing membership, improving building use, financial stability, community service, engagement, etc)
3. What ministries or activities should Central start or do more of to support you in your faith journey?
4. What prayers do you have to God for Central's next pastor?

The card series returned 72 responses over four weeks.

Worship Discussion

After summarizing all of the conversations held over recent months, it was time to prioritize the ideas and goals that were on the table, while also taking one more step to encourage engagement from those who had not yet weighed in on the mission study conversations.

A special worship hour was planned on a Sunday with an abbreviated worship service and the second half of the worship hour dedicated to discussion of two key areas - Envisioning Church Goals and Desired Pastor Characteristics.

Members were given four dots and asked to show where their preferences were on the first question relating to church goals, then gather in small groups to discuss the results. After that, they were then given four more dots and asked to weigh in on the characteristics of a pastor who would best meet that need.

The worship discussion engaged 52 participants in four small groups.

A COLLECTIVE VOICE

What We Heard

Central Presbyterian Church conducted a series of meeting discussions with congregants for purpose of examining who Central has been, who we are today, and what we want to be going into the future.

Summary of Findings

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO CENTRAL?

- The Congregation - Many people mentioned that the welcoming people of the congregation, and family and friends in the congregation attracted them to Central.
- The Location - Central's location in downtown St. Paul is important because 1) it is close to where attendees live and work, and/or 2) they are drawn to the mission of being "in the city for good".
- The Worship - The preaching style and aspects of the worship service including the music resonate with attendees.

WHAT WOULD MAKE JESUS SMILE? WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT CENTRAL?

- Adaptable and Welcoming - Being adaptable and relevant to the times and the welcoming atmosphere of the church were frequently mentioned.
- Social Activism - The congregation's activism in social justice, housing, and hunger initiatives, among many other projects, were mentioned.
- The Children - Being engaged in worship as a welcomed part, free to run in the aisles, would make Jesus smile.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE FOR CENTRAL?

- Pastor Characteristics and Worship Style - Mentioned by several people, insights included finding an outgoing pastor with new ideas and good organizational skills, as well as a background in youth and families and growing the congregation.
- Congregational and Membership Growth - In this time, the growth of our church was a major interest by nearly all. This included growth in racial/ethnic diversity as well as seeing an increase in families with children. The participants had ideas of how to grow the church and increase participation of the people who currently attend.

A Deeper Look at Findings

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO CENTRAL?

- The Congregation - Quite a few people mentioned that the congregation itself brought them to Central, with several welcoming people mentioned by name. Family members attending, sometimes for years, also brought people to the church. Observing families with children in the congregation was a draw for some and the comfortable "come as you are" atmosphere was also mentioned.
- A Downtown Church - Having Central Presbyterian located in downtown St. Paul is important to participants for two reasons: 1) it is close to where they live and work, and/or 2) they are drawn to the mission of being "in the city for good". The location being within walking distance of where they lived was mentioned by quite a

few people. They like being involved in a church that is in their neighborhood and has the diversity of an urban church. People were also attracted to the mission to serve the downtown community, being “in the city for good”. They like the focus on both racial and housing justice.

- **Pastor and Staff** - The pastor is one of the reasons that people came to Central. Common reasons were that they 1) knew the pastor and followed him from church to church, 2) found him welcoming or 3) they specifically mentioned Reverend Colby’s dynamism and leadership. Other Central staff were mentioned, with many references specifically to our Director of Music Ministry for inviting people to be involved in VocalPoint, play bells, or sing in the choir; and to the nursery staff being liked by a family’s child.
- **Preaching** - The preaching includes both personal faith as well as being social justice oriented, the sermon is biblical, with concern for what is happening outside the church walls, and the pastor’s message is applicable to everyday life.
- **The Worship Service** - Aspects of the worship service were mentioned including the tradition and ceremony of the service. The welcoming tone of the worship service where people feel that all belong is important. Several people mentioned they like the small scale feel of worship in a large and beautiful sanctuary. They like that the church is progressive theologically as well as compassionate.
- **Music** - Some people came because of the music and other people say they stay because of the music. Specific examples include Vocal Point, hand bell choir, percussion groups. People like the mix of music, from lively to quiet, “highbrow classical as well as justice choir”. The beautiful organ was also mentioned. The music program has grown over the last decade.
- **The Building** - The building itself was mentioned by a few as a reason that brought them to Central. They mentioned falling in love with the architecture and the beautiful windows. The

historic sanctuary is impressive and “felt right” to others. One active family became engaged with the church when driving by one day the youngest child delighted it was a castle and said “We should go!”

WHAT WOULD MAKE JESUS SMILE? WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT CENTRAL?

- **Adaptable Church** - Many people talked about how adaptive Central Presbyterian continues to be. Central has a long history and is still here. Participants talked about focusing on the present and striving to be relevant in the present. Even with the leaving of a pastor and the pandemic the church keeps moving forward. This is true in part because the church has great people who are willing to jump in and do the work.
- **Being a Welcoming Church** - Being a downtown church, anyone can access it, regardless of background or age. Participants said that you can find encouragement if you need it or just “spiritual time to let you be”. Beyond the typical polite ‘hello’, participants found the congregation warm and welcoming. “People were very interested in who we were, our story and remembered our names”.
- **Social Activism** - The social activism of the church is an important focus to the church. The congregation is generous in giving their time and talent to helping others. Quite a few mentioned Central’s mission and branding tagline of “In the City for Good” with its commitment to being downtown and serving the downtown community. Specific mentions included: Project Home, Vocal Point, Mary Hall, Earth Day, Martha’s Closet, and Mission trips. Also, our focus on hunger including Wednesday lunches that invite the downtown community in for a meal. Events where the church sanctuary was used including the remembrance of the March on Selma and Homeless Day on the Hill.
- **Engaging the Congregation** - The members of congregation connect with each other in several ways. The ones mentioned specifically included:

bible study, the women's networking events, Connection Circle, Sunday lunch offering on the third Sunday, and coffee hour. There are also many opportunities for the congregation to get involved, both in the internal working of the church and external service in the community. Several people mentioned the many ways people could get involved if they chose, and that these opportunities give us a chance to grow.

- The Children - Participants felt Jesus would smile because of the children at Central. Comments included: children feel welcome and important, we let kids be kids, children running through the sanctuary on Sundays (is a joy), we include children in the worship service (including Children's time every Sunday and the annual Children's Christmas pageant). There are music activities focused directly on children and youth such as Sticks and Steel and inter-generational activities like knitting group and the annual musical Cabaret.
- Humor & Lightheartedness - The congregation and worship include times of lightheartedness and humor. It was noted that we don't take ourselves too seriously with examples including the bible study being both serious and a little irreverent at times, the Christmas pageant, and one time when a soloist sang "Fall on my face" by mistake instead of "Fall on my knees".
- Music is an Important Part of Central - The music is thoughtful, beautiful and with incredible talent behind it. There is a purpose to the music. It is not a concert; music is an uplifting and nourishing part of the worship service.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE FOR CENTRAL?

PASTOR CHARACTERISTICS - When talking about hopes and goals for the future, quite a few people talked about what characteristics they were looking for in a pastor. They are interested in a minister who has:

- High energy, outgoing personality, a sense of

humor, is creative, brings new ideas, not afraid to try new things, encourages leadership (in others besides Elders), has good organization and administrative skills, is not a micro-manager.

- Background in relating to children and families with children, ability to energize children to get involved in programs and the community, ability to grow membership and programs, ability to connect with other churches, ability to provide general guidance and when dealing with life challenges (like addiction), can engage the church in community action, has multi-cultural experience in ministry.
- Has a worship style that is dynamic, shows a real sense of God in their life, and can connect the Gospel to real life.

CONGREGATION & MEMBERSHIP GROWTH -

Congregation or membership growth was a hope mentioned by many in the discussion groups. Beyond a general hope for continued growth, quite a few mentioned their hopes that the congregation would grow to include identified groups based on racial/ethnic diversity, families with children, bi-racial families. Ideas for how to increase the congregation or membership included:

- Continue being an open presence in the community through Wednesday community lunches, VocalPoint, TubaChristmas, etc.
- Have an open air festival with art and music.
- Reach out to Lowertown residents.
- Reach out to retirement communities.
- Step up communications to the broader community to expand awareness of the programs we offer.
- Expand Martha's Closet with updated clothes, include men's clothes, and expand outreach efforts.
- Outreach to criminal justice system, juveniles, and their families.

- Partner with other downtown organizations to help them do their work, potentially resulting in more visitors to Central.
- Share our building by opening it up more to groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (who currently use our building) during the weekday.
- Make a plan and take deliberate, intentional steps.
- Increase participation – Strengthen the church by engaging current members and frequent attendees/visitors. Identify new interests to build participation, perhaps through a time and talent survey, as well as personally speak to people and invite them to get involved.
- New programs for current members and outreach, including:
 - Small interest groups that the congregation can join. Examples included recovery groups, adult education dealing with faith issues (besides bible study), men’s networking group, prisoner missionary, adventure groups such as walking and bird watching.
- Free meals offered several times a week.
- Environmentally friendly or green initiatives.
- Group counseling programs to help people going through a difficult time. One participant cited an experience with another church who called the group ‘Life Hurts’, which was open to the community.
- Increase Support – Increase the ways in which we support Central members and frequent visitors/ attendees, including:
 - Visiting home-bound and people in hospital.
 - Using deacons more so not all the weight of member support is on pastor.
 - Supporting people with disabilities as we have members and participants who are partially blind and/or deaf.

- Supporting elders and others in the church who work so hard and are tired.
- Supporting new members/frequent attenders by mentoring them as they build connections with others and engagement in areas of interest.
- Assisting people with new technology (so can watch service at home or attend Bible study by zoom.)

FINANCE - A few people mentioned money in their hopes and goals for Central, including wanting the church to continue to be financially stable and have enough funds to keep the building strong and to support programs. A few people mentioned the need for a capital campaign for the building, as well as increased participation in regular giving and pledging.

Priorities of the Congregation

In the final congregational discussion held in February 2022, following are the priorities of the congregation in declining order of importance. (The reference to dots are the number of votes cast for that particular topic area.)

ENVISIONING CHURCH GOALS

1. **Grow Membership (49 dots)**
Attract diversity, families, and youth to grow Central’s congregation.
2. **Engage Members (46 dots)**
Add programs and activities that encourage participation and volunteerism.
3. **Advocate for Social Justice (43 dots)**
Explore, understand, and drive meaningful change in our communities and world.
4. **Serve Neighbors in Need (42 dots)**
Step up programs for those who are homeless, hungry, and more.
5. **Stabilize Financial Position (21 dots)**
Identify grant opportunities and ways to increase giving.
6. **Preserve History (19 dots)**
Maintain the historical integrity of our building and its legacy.

7. **Expand Use of Central (17 dots)**
Open doors and invite community uses of Central facilities.
8. **Share the Gospel (7 dots)**
Be disciples and share God's word in our community.

DESIRED PASTOR CHARACTERISTICS

1. **Motivating Leader with Vision (36 dots)**
Bright energy to inspire and move the mission of Central forward
2. **Team Player (35 dots)**
Strong communication and collaborative leader who will bring out best in others.
3. **Preaching Style & Spiritual Maturity (31 dots)**
Inspire from the pulpit with strong knowledge of Bible
4. **Bridge Builder and Networker (29 dots)**
Experience creating partnership connections in urban communities
5. **Advocacy (28 dots)**
Cultural proficiency in urban areas with passion for social justice.
6. **Compassion (20 dots)**
Desire to serve, provide care, and hold space with others.
7. **Growth Minded (18 dots)**
Open to learning, exploring, and adventuring with us.
8. **Financial Manager & Funds Developer (10 dots)**
Maximize fiscal transparency and sustainability while nurturing growth.



WELCOME TO CENTRAL

The Origins of Central Presbyterian Church

The history of Central Presbyterian Church began with the arrival of Rev. John Riheldaffer in 1851 when a request was made to the Home Missions office of the Presbyterian Church to establish an “old school’ church in St. Paul. At the time the population of the two-year-old territory was only 7,000, and the population of St. Paul was a mere 1,500 people. Rev. and Mrs. Riheldaffers founded Central Presbyterian Church in 1852 with just seven members.

For two years, the new church had no permanent home, meeting in the Riheldaffer home before moving to the Ramsey County Courthouse and later the Supreme Court chamber of the Capitol. It was 1854 before the new church considered building its own building, a modest stone and brick building on its current site. It was during this time that the church was named “Central Presbyterian Church” in honor of Central Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, which donated significantly to the new church construction. The building remained in continuous use until it was partially damaged by fire in the late 1880’s, at which time it was replaced by the current building.

Central Presbyterian Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Learn more about our origin story on our website at www.centralforgood.org/history.

Connection to Capitol and Politics

Central served as the auditorium for St. Paul, providing the largest space for meetings and

speakers for many years. Notable speakers at Central have included former slave Booker T. Washington; three time Presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan; former president and then-Supreme Court Chief Justice William Taft; and evangelist Billy Sunday. In 2019, Central welcomed Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Hanagan to the chancel as they addressed a full house on the needs of housing reform in our state as part of the annual Homeless Day on the Hill.

In recent years, our pastors have shared moments of prayer and reflection during state legislative sessions and other noteworthy events, including the promotion ceremony for General Stefanie Horvath, the first LGBT person and second female to reach the rank of Brigadier General in the Minnesota Army National Guard. With the state capitol just a few blocks down the street, Central is also a frequent destination for large advocacy events, such as Homeless Day on the Hill which begins at Central before housing advocates move to the capital to meet with legislators to address homelessness and housing needs.

Advocacy for Justice

In 2015, over 700 people gathered at the capitol to remember the 1965 Civil Rights Movement voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, then marched to Central Presbyterian Church where a prominent group of activists spoke – including Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes, who was in Montgomery 50 years ago in the immediate wake of the attacks. This was just one moment in a long history of justice advocacy that Central has embraced.

A few years ago, as the world became shocked by

images of the Syrian refugee crisis, Central created a Refugee Task Force to explore how we might best get involved in relief efforts as a congregation. We prayed, sponsored films and speakers, and eventually became a host congregation for a refugee family from Afghanistan. Many members of Central continue to support the Ahmady family to this day, even expanding that support to extended family members of the Ahmadys who fled Afghanistan in 2021 when the Taliban took control.

Our history in advocacy is long, engrained in the DNA of who we are as a congregation. In recent years, our members have protested, lobbied, and marched for justice in action of:

- Climate and Environmental
- Women's Rights
- Black Lives Matter
- Lights for Liberty to end ICE detention camps
- Housing Justice

Social justice in all its forms (environmental, housing, racial, hunger and food insecurities, etc) is an important identity of Central and a key area that our members see future growth potential in our ministry. We have aligned our missions and built relationships that support these areas including Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, and Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul.

A Season of Renewal

Churches are either growing or they are dying. No living organism remains absolute and unchanged. Some churches can go through life cycles of birth, rapid growth, followed by decline, and then closure. Our recent history has been one of dramatic transformation.

In 2005, Rev. David Colby was brought in as a designated pastor to help this old historic church live or die, with courage and grace. It was to be a four year experiment with an open question - did God have anything in store for this old church that had seen decades of decline?

Session decided that there was no purpose served in

going out of business with money in the bank. Central had an investment portfolio of gifts from past eras of the church's history, and so these gifts were put to work! Investments were made in staffing, programming, and the church's vitality. It paid off many times over in new membership, mission, and services to our city. Without the gifts from donors of those past eras and the stewardship of those who kept them intact for decades - and then decided to use them - Central may not have survived, let alone began to thrive again.

A Financial Gift to Launch Growth

In early 2016, Central received an anonymous gift of \$500,000. After many months of discernment, Session voted to add \$425,000 to our investment strategy, essentially replenishing our investments and ensuring a moderate but steady and sustainable source of income for the church. In 2017, Central received an anonymous gift of cryptocurrency assets valued at \$1.65 million. What remarkable generosity and faith in the future of this church! This sizeable donation launched a new period of discernment as we explored how best to use this unique gift, grow as a church and better serve the needs of our community. The result was an investment into historical preservation of our building, new hunger initiatives, the addition of new staff, and strategic investments to ensure a stable future.

Historic Preservation Grants

Our building is on the national historic register and requires care and attention. It is an expensive building to maintain, and our status on the historic register requires us to follow specific processes to do upgrades and maintenance. We were fortunate to receive a grant in 2018 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. This allowed us to engage an historic architect firm to survey the exterior of the building and recommend and prioritize work that is necessary to maintain and improve its appearance and condition. A second matching grant was received to fund the first phase of work to address the recommendations including exterior masonry

repair/restoration; stained glass and wood window restoration/repair; and storm window replacement. Additional phases were planned but put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this has not stopped all work, as Central has continued to make improvements to the building including security upgrades currently in the works.

Integration of Dayton Avenue Church

Throughout the summer and fall of 2018, members of St. Paul's Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church (DAPC) were engaged in difficult conversations about their future as a congregation. With a small membership and an expensive building to maintain, they made the difficult decisions to sell their church building and to bring their time as a congregation to an end.

Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church closed its doors in December 2018. Since then, 15 members from Dayton Avenue have joined Central Presbyterian Church. They represent 75% of the people who joined Central Presbyterian in 2019 and 2020 (15/20).

This close knit group has been very active in their short time at Central serving as Deacons and Elders, preaching, attending Bible Study, serving on task forces or committees, serving Wednesday lunches, decorating the church for Christmas, and even watering the plants every Sunday. They have inspired a renewed vigor in areas of anti-racism and social justice, helping to grow those committees and task forces with increased activity completed.

A Season of Uncertainty

The process to identify and select a Designated Associate Pastor for Central was thoughtful, deliberate, collaborative, and intentional in scope, process, and decision making. In 2019, a call was extended to Rev. Bair, and she joined Central with the focus to expand our work within the community, building relationships with other non-profit organizations and agencies. After eight months, Rev. Bair made the decision to resign.

Then came the Covid-19 pandemic. The world shut

down and Central responded by moving to virtual worship for over a year. A Covid-19 task force was created with health department specialists to guide our response and eventual return to a new normal.

To add complexity to an already delicate time, Rev. David Colby resigned in 2021. This left members of the congregation uncertain about what the future held for Central when only two years prior there was so much excited energy around Central with growth on the horizon. Many are still processing the loss of a pastor they have known for fifteen years, or wondering who will Central be tomorrow?

An Optimistic Outlook

Walking through the many conversations necessary to prepare this mission study, it was clear that all who weighed in remained optimistic and motivated to see Central grow and thrive in the years to come. Despite challenges of important staff changes and the unrelenting pandemic, there has been a drive within our congregants to connect with each other and continue living the culture of Central, be it gathering for fellowship, meals, and ministry. When the pandemic stopped us from gathering in the sanctuary, they masked and gathered outside, remaining six feet apart.

Central is moving forward as if nothing has changed. The committees continue to make plans, the members worship together, even if behind a computer watching a video live-stream, and the dream to grow and expand who Central is knows no bounds. Members speak of ways to attract and better serve our families with children, opportunities to put our faith in action through social justice, and relish the amazing music program that greets them every time they enter the sanctuary. While there are a lot of questions about who the new permanent pastor will be, there is excitement to see the energy and ideas this person will bring, helping us to grow and remain *in the city for good*.

WELCOME TO CENTRAL

Demographics

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States. Some of the congregational statistics presented in this report will look at 2018 and 2019, before the pandemic, and compare it with the years following the pandemic. In addition, in January 2021, David Colby, the previous minister for 16 years, left Central Presbyterian. Thus 2021 represents the first year of a transitional time for the church as we explore our future and search for a new minister.

Central Presbyterian Church is a medium size church (between 200-250 active members, and 50-60 friends of the congregation). Like many Presbyterian churches, Central is a mostly white, middle-class congregation. Our diversity, however, is growing, and our location in downtown St. Paul brings people from all walks of life through our doors. We have a small number of currently active families with children under 18, but a number of families with multiple generations of membership. We are committed to growing our children and youth programs as we (eventually) emerge out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current Membership and Worship Attendance

Between 2018 and 2020, Central's membership increased from 239 members in 2018 to 258 in 2020. Part of this increase could be because many Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church members joined Central after their church closed in 2018. It is notable that 16 people joined the church as members in 2020, but no one joined the church in 2021.

In 2021 there were 219 members of Central Presbyterian Church. This decline in membership reflects a 15% percent decline from 2020. Much of

the membership decline between 2020 and 2021 reflects the cleaning of the membership rolls. In 2021, the membership declined by 39 people, with 33 people (85%) deleted as part of cleaning the rolls, 3 members moving to other churches, and the death of 3 members.

The average weekly worship attendance has fluctuated quite a bit over the last few years as a result of the pandemic. In 2018, an average of about 125 people attended worship each week, which increased to 145 in 2019. After more than a year of online worship, in-person attendance has averaged about 70-80 per week since Central reopened its doors. Central also continues to provide a livestream service which also reaches anywhere from 10-30 additional participants week to week. The pandemic has clearly had an impact on in-person worship and Central is learning to adapt to the ebb and flow of case rates in our community.

The following tables outline the statistics provided for the Church Statistical Report over the last several years:

AGE GROUP	2018	2019	2020	2021
25 and under	36	N/A	16	13
26-40	43		68	60
41-55	34		22	14
56-70	54		67	61
Over 70	63		82	71
Total	230		255	219

CHILDREN & YOUTH	2018	2019	2020	2021
0-4 yo	11	N/A	14	9
K-5 th grade	19		18	11
6 th -8 th grade	8		12	6
9 th -12 th grade	4		2	8
Total	42		46	34

is an unusual time and, like most churches, we anticipate it will take a couple years to reclaim that vibrancy of community and growth.

RACE	2018	2019	2020	2021
Asian/Pacific Islander	6	5	7	6
Black/African American/African	20	20	26	25
Middle Eastern/North African	0	0	4	4
Hispanic/Latinx	2	2	2	1
Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	1	1	0	0
White	205	205	219	183
Multiracial	4	5	0	0
Total	238	238	258	219

GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

Most of Central's members are women (61%). Central does not currently have information on diversity in regard to gender expression or sexual identity, but the church is and has long been a welcoming and inclusive community. Session's Welcome and Hospitality Committee recognizes the importance of capturing this information and plans to do an informal membership survey during 2022.

Trending in Recent Years

Prior to the pandemic, Central Presbyterian Church was on a slow but steady climb of growth, seeing new members join the congregation, welcoming first time and many repeat visitors, and seeing our diversity in membership grow. The last two years have stunted that climb as we have observed many members remaining home for personal reasons relating to health safety (especially those with young children or very old). We have also observed a reduction in visitors for likely the same reasons. This

Architectural Significance

Central Presbyterian Church, built from 1888-1890 for \$85,000, is historically and architecturally significant as one of the city's finest Richardsonian Romanesque churches - one of only two designed on such a large scale. It was designed by prominent Minneapolis architect Warren H. Hayes, a specialist in church design who is credited with developing the "diagonal" form of auditorium employed in the Central Presbyterian Church.

Historical Preservation

In 1983 Central Presbyterian Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition requires careful effort by our Facilities Management & Asset Management Committee to manage not only typical building maintenance and repairs, but also the preservation of key historical details. At times this can be costly and require careful planning when executing maintenance projects. However, Central has been able to tap into grant funding to assess our building condition, make a plan for necessary preservation projects, and define a strategy for funding. The first phase of that work has been completed, with future phases in the pipeline, subject to a future capital campaign required to secure the necessary funds required of a grant match.

Space Inefficiencies and Opportunities

Any building structure that approaches 150 years of age is destined to have inefficiencies, difficulties, and aging infrastructure that must be adapted. While anyone who attends worship in the summer months will comment on the lack of air conditioning in the

sanctuary, it is actually space on other levels that lead to questions of inefficiencies.

On the upper level, we house Martha's Closet - a program dedicated to providing free career clothing to women in need. On this same level, we also house our nursery and youth programs, which is in need of growth and reorganization. There are possibilities to move Martha's to the basement and reshape the upper level to be an education wing for all ages, but in moving Martha's we will have to downsize the program and require constant mobility of supplies to serve its intended use. In other areas of the church, there are spaces that are under utilized or have no direct purpose.

With the recent integration of live-stream technology in worship, we have continued to invest in modern upgrades. Ownership of video and conference cameras, streaming equipment, and such invites Central to serve new users.

Community Use of Building

Central has long been a place of welcome where community use of its space was a part of the culture that thrived within these walls. Even before its construction was finished, a parochial school for poor children was housed in our basement. Many years later, there would be tutoring programs in our upper level. Today, we host advocacy events like Homeless Day on the Hill, open for voting polls, welcome concert performances for a variety of groups, and host a weekly Alcoholics Anonymous speakers meeting.

With a congregation that does not yet need the size of the space we have, there is a renewed desire to

put this beautiful space to better use. As we continue to make asset preservation improvements and look at ways to be more efficient in our program uses, there is discussion to explore opening the building up to more community use - be it welcoming large events to the sanctuary, which was designed to house 1,200 people, or creating partnerships with non-profit organizations who many be in need of office space. We continue to adapt and explore better uses of our space and expect the new pastor may inspire further ideas.

Floor Plans

Following are summary plans for all floors of the building. To download higher resolution drawings, see the appendix.



WELCOME TO CENTRAL

A Financial Study

Annual Budget

The following summarizes our annual budget. A detailed budget is available upon request.

REVENUE

Total Contributions	\$	355,500
Pass Thru Donations	\$	11,900
Other Income	\$	24,600
Investment Income	\$	<u>139,400</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	\$	531,400

EXPENSES

Personnel	\$	374,439
Building Expenses	\$	126,987
Worship & Music	\$	47,740
Fellowship	\$	29,140
Christian Education	\$	8,000
Finance	\$	21,948
Mission	\$	17,011
Administrative	\$	<u>19,269</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	645,534
Net Revenue-Expenses	- \$	114,134

Central's Accounts

For a small organization, Central has fairly complex finances. Central has several bank and investment accounts through which it transacts business and holds its long-term assets. These are all organized and separated by purpose, to better ensure the tracking of funds. As outlined in our 2021 annual report, the balances for these accounts are:

PCUSA (PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA) FUND

Unrestricted; income used for Central operations.

2020: \$ 49,889
2021: \$ 55,153

MISSION

Restricted funds for various mission related purposes

2020: \$ 98,251
2021: \$ 115,281

ENDOWMENT

Some trust restrictions; produces income for Central operations.

2020: \$ 741,280
2021: \$ 795,905

OPERATING

Produces income for Central operations.

2020: \$ 730,288
2021: \$ 781,826

CAPITAL

Holding account for income generated by the Operating Account.

2020: \$ 1,331
2021: \$ 22,036

RESERVE

Funds held in money market account for restricted purposes/short-term spending.

2020: \$ 135,875
2021: \$ 270,591

PROGRAM

Restricted funds for six-year spend on building improvements; staffing. Funds that were previously restricted for an associate pastor hire are being re-examined by Session for future use.

2020: \$ 680,010

2021: \$ 522,237

OTHER ASSETS

Remaining, undesignated assets from 2017 gift.

2020: \$ 59,546

2021: \$ 344

Capital Campaigns

A successful Legacy Campaign was conducted from 2011-2016 resulting in gifts of \$525,000.

The Finance and Stewardship Committee discussed the need of a capital campaign to support improvements needed as part of the historic preservation grant during 2019-2020. Partners for Sacred Places was brought in and made some follow-up suggestions. Rev. Colby resigned, and the committee deferred further discussion.

Given the scope of the financial needs related to maintaining an historic building and Central's commitment to securing its financial future, Session is actively considering launching a capital campaign in the near future. In addition, the Finance and Stewardship Committee has identified the following goals that can support the building restoration:

1. Demonstrate the importance of our building to our mission of being “in the city for good”. We recommend that Session put together a group to evaluate how the use of the building aligns with our mission and to create a plan to improve and communicate that alignment, as necessary.
2. Improve our budgeting for ongoing repair & maintenance. This will indicate to future donors our intent to keep up with the building’s needs once restoration is complete.
3. Highlight the building account and emphasize that donations can be made at anytime, even in advance of an actual campaign.

Central's Finance and Stewardship Committee keeps a close eye on our financial needs and resources and is thinking creatively to assure the long term future of this congregation..

Our Financial Posture

Central Presbyterian Church has a long history in Saint Paul, and in the State of Minnesota. Central, in fact, actually pre-dates the state that it’s located in. Like many churches, Central has faced times of financial challenge in recent decades. The church passed one such point several years ago, when it retained Rev. David Colby to either bring membership up to a sustainable level, or shutter the church within a four year timeframe.

Fifteen years later, Central has much larger (albeit still modest) congregation, and has turned around its finances. Due to a substantial financial gift Central received in 2017, the church now holds around 2 million dollars in assets, including over 1.4 million in long-term investments that are used to fund annual operations. While Central faces longer-term challenges that are common to many churches – i.e., aging and shrinking congregations – Central’s overall finances are well managed and should be stable for at least another decade. Given appropriate long-term planning – which is now being undertaken by the church, in conjunction with an audit – Central could have a much longer-term horizon.

WELCOME TO CENTRAL

Identity and Values

Rebranding

Assessing the best use of a substantial financial gift in 2017 had Session start with articulating our values. This meant exploring: Who are we? In what ways are we similar or different to other churches? What makes us unique? What are our priorities? What would someone experience on their first visit? Then we turned to goals, asking questions like: Who do we want to become? What do we want to do? Why do we exist? How should we be different or better?

We knew this was an opportunity to really explore who we are as a church, what we want to do and who we want to become. After a phase of research and discovery, three narrative statements were sculpted to define mission and values of Central.

- **We put our faith into action** by nurturing spiritual growth and reflecting the call of God to serve our neighbor.
- **We transform our communities** by promoting social justice and engaging others in ministries that drive change.
- **We invite everyone to the table** sharing fellowship, worship, meals, music and works as one body.

In reviewing our tagline, Central recommitted its intent to remain *in the city for good!*

As part of these discussions, it also became apparent it was time to rebrand Central to reflect this inward dialogue and the ever evolving community we continue serve. And so, in 2018 a new logo was developed effectively rebranding Central in its presentation to the community.



As you look at the image above, you may see the following inspiration that takes shape in our logo.

- A view from our balcony of people seated throughout the curved sanctuary on Sundays.
- Subtle, but important, **theological images** can be found within this design, be it the splash of water at baptism, a crown of thorns, or the dancing flames of the Holy Spirit.
- Shapes that represent **diversity** - persons from differing backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and strengths coming together around a common purpose.
- In pursuit of **social justice**, elements move out from the core - showing Central's efforts to put faith into action by engaging others and drive change in our broader community.
- Design is open and airy with an almost fluid movement and flow, much like the art of **music** for which Central is so revered.
- Elements move inward to reflect the idea of people '**coming to the table**', representative of our food initiatives where all are welcome.

- Aesthetic is inspired by the shape of our prominent stained glass windows.
- Icon is reflective of the sanctuary, an auditorium designed to amplify the spoken word.
- The focal point of the logo is its core, reflective of our emphasis and focus first inward on the word of God.
- A clean, contemporary style was chosen to reflect changing design trends, the prominence of digital marketing and the influence of younger demographics.

As part of this rebranding process, Central premiered a new hymn “*Forever Embracing*” by our composer-in-residence, Abbie Betinis - commissioned by Central Presbyterian Church in celebration of this season of rebirth. Inspired by our new logo, the lyrics include:

*Forever embracing,
spiraling in,
in to the center,
where God’s always been.*

*Meet there the water,
the wine and the bread;
we’re coming together in the Word,
where it’s central for good.*

*Forever outreaching,
the circle expands,
helping our neighbor
through works of our hands.*

*Meet there the spirit,
where disciples once stood,
advancing the call, the cause, the cry,
to be central for good.*

*Forever repeating,
in circles of grace,
all resurrecting
and growing in faith.*

*Here we are called on
to engage as we should.
We’re learning to love as we are loved
here at Central for good.*

Active Groups and Ministries

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP

Members and visitors enjoy casual conversation and connection with others after worship on each Sunday.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

This group meets Sunday mornings before worship with a prayer for each other, then a discussion on the scripture passage that will be preached on in worship that day. It has included in-person, Zoom, and hybrid options during the eighteen months.

CONNECTION CIRCLES

The Deacons offer Connection Circles as avenue for people of all ages and backgrounds to meet online and check in with each other in a fun, guided conversation. These casual Zoom events run on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

WOMEN’S NETWORKING GROUP

Lead by the Women of Central, these casual networking events happen each month at restaurant locations around Saint Paul. Enjoying yummy food, great conversation, and a chance to explore our community, this is a great way to meet people of all ages and backgrounds and learn about other activities of this dynamic group.

KNITTING GROUP

This creative intergenerational group meets after worship on select Sundays to work on knitting and crocheting projects (prayer shawls, prayer squares and more). The items created are given out by the Deacons to homebound members and visitors to Central, as well as special projects such as hat and mittens to area homeless shelters.

MEN’S GROUP

This new group explores faith, fun, and current events as activities include gatherings, outings, and community service. It has struggled to gain footing due to Covid-19 climate, but remains on the horizon for future events.

DORCAS CIRCLE

A small Bible study group for women that meets monthly.

This group was put on temporary hold during the pandemic.

PEACEFUL PRESENCE

In 2008, our Twin Cities Ignatian Associate (IA) community held a ecumenical prayer for peace event during the time of the Republican National Convention, which convened in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since that time, a small group has continued to gather at Central for prayer and quiet contemplation

Signature Events

The calendar of most churches is a wide array of activities and events, some rare treats and other beloved traditions. At Central, we have several events that most will come to enjoy or participate.

- **Wednesday Community Lunch** - A chef catered lunch is served each Wednesday from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and is open to everyone in the community. There is a suggested donation of \$10. However, all who are hungry are invited to eat, regardless of their ability to pay. Prior to the pandemic, a typical lunch service would include 150 people, including area workers, members, and people experiencing homelessness.
- **VocalPoint** - VocalPoint is an auditioned choir of about 80 members led by Artistic Director, Jennifer Anderson with annual concerts each year at Central. VocalPoint uses the power of people, art, and collaboration to tell the stories of organizations doing life-changing work. They shine a spotlight on important issues such as youth homelessness, the immigrant experience, and sex trafficking. They give 100% of performance-driven donations to a worthy cause that will make a dramatic impact in everyday lives. In 11 years, Vocalpoint has raised over \$235,000 for area non-profit organizations
- **Cabaret** - Each year, Central creates a fun, semi-staged musical production featuring our children, choir, and chamber "pit" orchestra! Recent events have included *Mary Poppins*, *Sound of Music*, and in 2022 we will see a mashup of *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Wiz*.
- **Justice Choir Sunday** - Sharing in a dedicated Sunday worship, the congregation sings songs from the Justice Choir Songbook to encourage and engage others for social and environmental change. After worship, we often move to the front steps of Central and sing to the neighborhood.
- **Fall Family Retreat** - This fun getaway is focused on families with children, providing space for making deeper connections: with each other, with nature, and with God. A destination campground is secured and families gather for a weekend getaway just outside the Twin Cities.
- **Artist Exhibitions** - Central invites local artists to display their original works of art in our Friendship Room gallery space. A reception is later held where congregants can meet the artist and learn more about their work and inspiration.
- **Deck the Halls** - Sponsored by the Women of Central, members of all ages come together for pageant rehearsal, decorating for the holidays, and a delicious brunch.

WELCOME TO CENTRAL

Leadership

Staff Profiles

Following is an introduction to key staff positions within Central.

ANNA SANCHEZ **CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR**

Anna started working at Central in September 2010, as Barb Westman's sous chef, and a little over a year later took over duties as Central's Office Manager, and more recently transitioned to Church Administrator, handling the day-to-day building and financial responsibilities. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame in German Language and Literature with a minor in Government.

JENNIFER ANDERSON **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

Jennifer leads the thriving music program at Central and is the Founding Artistic Director of VocalPoint, an 80-voice auditioned choir that uses the power of people, art, and collaboration to tell the stories of organizations doing life-changing work. In the larger musical community, she served on the board of the Twin Cities American Guild of Organists, contributed to the PC(USA) Mission Yearbook and co-chaired the Daily Worship Committee for the National PC(USA) convention held in Minneapolis. Jennifer has served several churches in the capacity of Director of Music and Youth Ministries, as well as multiple internships in this area, and has even written curriculum for rotation-model Sunday School.

CHRISTIE RACHELLE **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Christie is an award-winning freelance photographer, strategic marketing, communications, and graphic

design professional with a long and diverse body of work with non-profit organizations - including law enforcement, military, adoption, advocacy, and the performing arts. The focus of her work at Central has been on strengthening design and narratives to enhance communications. When she is not at Central, she works for an architecture firm based in Fargo.

BARB WESTMAN **CHEF / FOODS MANAGER**

Barbara has been cooking professionally for nearly twenty years, seventeen of them as Food Service Manager at Central. Raised in a tradition of good food and good cooking, Barb is a self-taught chef who honed her skills under the tutelage of Chef Lisa Retamosza. With a vivid and colorful culinary imagination and a love of fresh ingredients, Barb uses old flavors in new settings and gives new faces to old favorites. Perhaps Barb's innovations are most apparent in her specialty - her breads. In addition to her work at Central Presbyterian, Barb partners with Susan Hankerson, in Cottage Gourmets, a catering firm on the rise that offers "food for the events in your life."

MUSIC MINISTRY

The music ministry also includes several part-time staff members with amazing talent.

- Shanta Hejmadi, soprano section leader
- Abbie Betinis & Laura Krider, alto section leaders
- Adam Van der Sluis, tenor section leader
- David Winkworth, bass section leader
- Steve Swanson, pianist
- Patrick Henning, organist

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This ministry area is currently seeking a nursery care provider to add to existing staff that include:

- Laura Walls, Sunday Connections Coordinator
- Megan Beese, Preschool Teacher

OTHER STAFF

Rounding out our staff body, we also have:

- Lavar Jones, custodian
- Peter Ewarts, custodian
- Sue LeClaire, sous chef
- Maureen Smith, Bible study leader
- Sandy White, Martha's Closet director

Committee Profiles

The Presbyterian Book of Order describes the leadership provided by the elders who make up the Session, or governing board, for the church.

"As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life."

Serving on the Session is one way our members become involved in ministry and leadership at Central, and we are grateful to those who are called, elected, and installed in these positions. But, Central's many committees and task forces provide opportunity for many other members and friends to be active in the work of the church.

Following is a summary of the current committees in place at Central.

WORSHIP, MUSIC, AND ARTS

This committee oversees big-picture worship and

arts planning and coordinates the work of ushers and communion preparation.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This committee oversees all the programs that Central offers for children and youth, including Sunday School programming, family and youth outings and events.

WELCOME & FELLOWSHIP

This committee will engage visitors, host inquirers' classes, and help new members get more involved. This committee is charged with recruiting and training people for ongoing hospitality tasks in the church.

PERSONNEL

This committee is responsible for ensuring effective staffing for the church, and to oversee an annual evaluation process for each staff member. Some aspects of the work of this committee are highly confidential.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

This committee encourages generous and faithful stewardship and analyzes and recommends the strategic use of financial resources. With the treasurer, this committee interprets income, expenses and financial realities and priorities to the boards and to the congregation.

COORDINATED MISSION

Central does lots of mission, or community outreach, through the use of our building, our dollars, and our volunteer time. The job of this committee is to coordinate, implement and execute our community serving efforts so that we can be most effective.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Working with the Church Administrator, this committee addresses building, grounds, and safety issues.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

This is a committee, not of the Session, but of the entire congregation. It is charged with discerning whom God is preparing to serve as elders and deacons.



OUR COMMUNITIES

OUR COMMUNITIES

Central Presbyterian Church is located in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota. St. Paul is located in Ramsey County and is the capitol city of Minnesota. Many of Central's members live downtown, but a review of member addresses in 2018 revealed that Central's members come from all across the Twin Cities Metropolitan area.

About 10% of the state's residents live in Ramsey County (approximately 550,000 people). St. Paul is the largest city in the county, and is known for its walkable neighborhoods, the state capitol, and expansive views of the Mississippi River Valley. The city is a hub for transportation, health care, education, and government. The 17 suburban municipalities to the north are nestled amongst lakes and wetlands. Regionally important colleges, retail hubs and corporate campuses help define suburban Ramsey County. The diversity of Ramsey County's landscape and population is one of the region's greatest strengths.

Ramsey County was established on October 27, 1849, one of the original counties of the Minnesota Territory. It is the most densely populated and racially diverse county in Minnesota, and has the highest percentage of residents living in poverty among all Twin Cities metro area counties. Historically, the region was important to Native American peoples for thousands of years as they used the waterways for transportation and food and to develop an extensive trade relationship with other native peoples. By the 1600s, the main group of people living in present-day Ramsey County was the Dakota/Lakota Oyate people. Some of Ramsey County's early settlers were French-Canadian

immigrants, many of whom were fur traders. During territorial days, English and Irish people hailing from the northeastern United States moved into the area, soon to be followed by thousands of Germans, Swedes and Norwegians.

By 1900, Italian and Mexican immigrants followed the Swedes into Saint Paul's Swede Hollow and West Side. The local African-American population grew slowly in the 19th century to about 10 percent of the county's population, where it remains today. Since 1975, Ramsey County's Latino, Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali and Karen populations have grown from nearly zero to among the highest concentrations of these nationalities in the U.S. Today, Ramsey County's residents can trace their heritage from almost every country in the world, making it a diverse and vibrant place to live. Ramsey County is the most densely populated county in Minnesota, and is expected to grow by over 77,000 individuals by 2030.

St. Paul is also part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and our sister city, Minneapolis, is approximately 10 miles to the west of the Church's location in downtown St. Paul. More than half of Minnesota's population resides in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. Ramsey County is a fully-developed urban center that has the second largest county population in Minnesota and the smallest land area.

Focus on Downtown St. Paul

2020 Census data for Central's census tract shows a population of 2,871 people, of which 2,715 identified with one racial/ethnic group. Of these, 60% identify as white alone; 22% identify as Black

alone; 6% identify as Asian alone; 1% identify as American Indian alone; and 7% identify as Hispanic or Latinx alone. 156 people identified as multi-racial. More broadly, the Census indicates that the total population of downtown St. Paul was 9,949; this represents 3% of St. Paul's population. The population of downtown St. Paul has grown by 41% in the last ten years. The proportion of persons identifying as white only has declined in the past 10 years by 8%. All other racial and ethnic groups increased. This decline was mirrored in Saint Paul City, Ramsey County.

Over time, Ramsey County residents will become much more racially and ethnically diverse. By 2040, the population is expected to grow to 655,144 with over half being people of color.

INCOME

In regard to income, the median household income (in 2019 dollars) in St. Paul is \$57,876; for Ramsey County more broadly, the median household income is \$64,660. About 18.9% of St. Paul's residents and 12.5% of Ramsey County residents live in poverty.

EDUCATION

86.6% of St. Paul residents have a high school degree, and 40% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

HEALTH AND DISABILITY

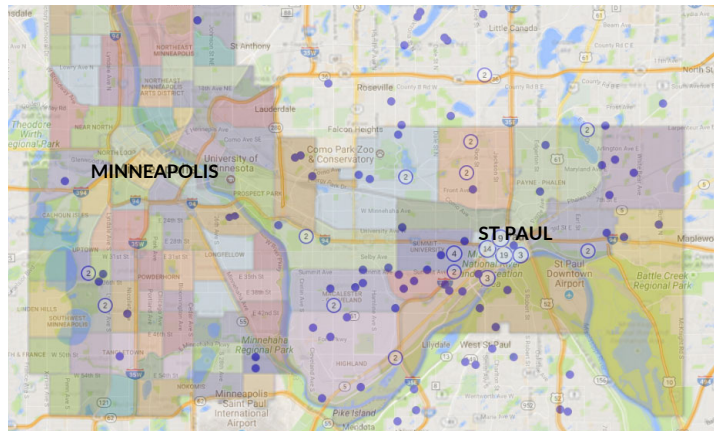
Approximately 9% of St. Paul residents under 65 years of age have a disability; and about 7% of people under 65 do not have health insurance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the profile of Ramsey County, we invite you to visit the following link: https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Departments/Public%20Health/CHA/County%20Overview3_final.pdf

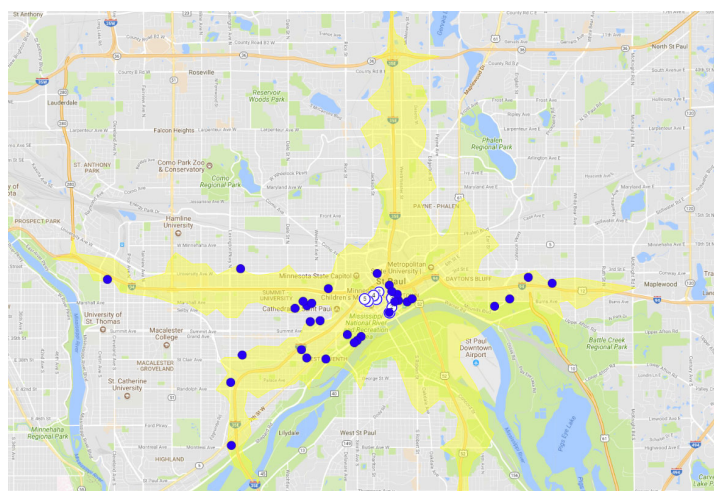
Mapping of Congregational Members

During the 2018 rebranding of Central, we spent time reviewing where current members were coming from within the Twin Cities. Once glance at the following maps and it became clear very quickly that we were drawing from a much larger area than downtown St. Paul.



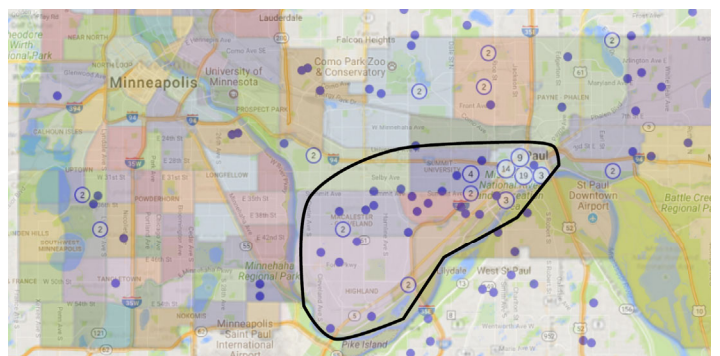
LOCATION OF MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

The blue dots represent the locations of current Central member households.



COMMUTE

A survey of 40,000 Presbyterian worshippers in 521 churches revealed that 58% travel less than 10 minutes to church. This shows areas with that travel time (in yellow) and households who fall within it.



NEIGHBORHOODS SERVED

Blue dots represent current member households. Circled area identifies the neighborhoods most represented in Central's membership body.

Influence of Neighboring Areas

As part of the rebranding effort, we also spent time assessing the surrounding neighborhoods and the influence they might hold on the way we speak to and attract new visitors and future members of Central.

The following information was pulled from Minnesota Compass (which pulls its data from the American Community Survey / U.S. Census Bureau).

DOWNTOWN

- 44% of the population is aged 25-44.
- 93% of homes do not have children.
- 35% of residents moved here in last year.
- 30% of households do not have a vehicle.
- 47% have a college degree.

STANDOUT STATISTICS OF OTHER ST. PAUL NEIGHBORHOODS

- PAYNE PHAYLEN - has the most households with children (32%).
- SUMMIT HILL - has the highest concentration of retiring age (39% are 65+).
- SUMMIT UNIVERSITY - has the highest percentage of Blacks (32%).
- WEST SIDE - has the highest percentage of Hispanics (29%).
- MACALISTER GROVELAND - has the highest income (39% earn over \$100k).
- FROGTOWN - has the lowest education with 28% not having high school diploma.
- DAYTON'S BLUFF - also ranks equal with Downtown for highest education with 47% having college degree.

Ministry Opportunities

Central Presbyterian Church continues to field the needs of those less fortunate in our communities, providing food and support for those experiencing homelessness. As an urban church, there is also a prevalence of drug addiction in our community. Add to that an aging population and we see further need in general assistance navigating everything from

walking into church to understanding the technology of our websites, their phones, and live-stream services. The downtown area is a young population, many of who are new transplants to the neighborhood. This creates an opportunity to help them build connections with others through programming and ministries focused on areas of interest they hold. This may be educational, social, or simple music entertainment activities that invite them in and help them find a new sense of community at Central.

The individual committees and appropriate task forces of Central continue to look into ways to better serve our neighbors and be good neighbors

Future Issues Facing the Twin Cities

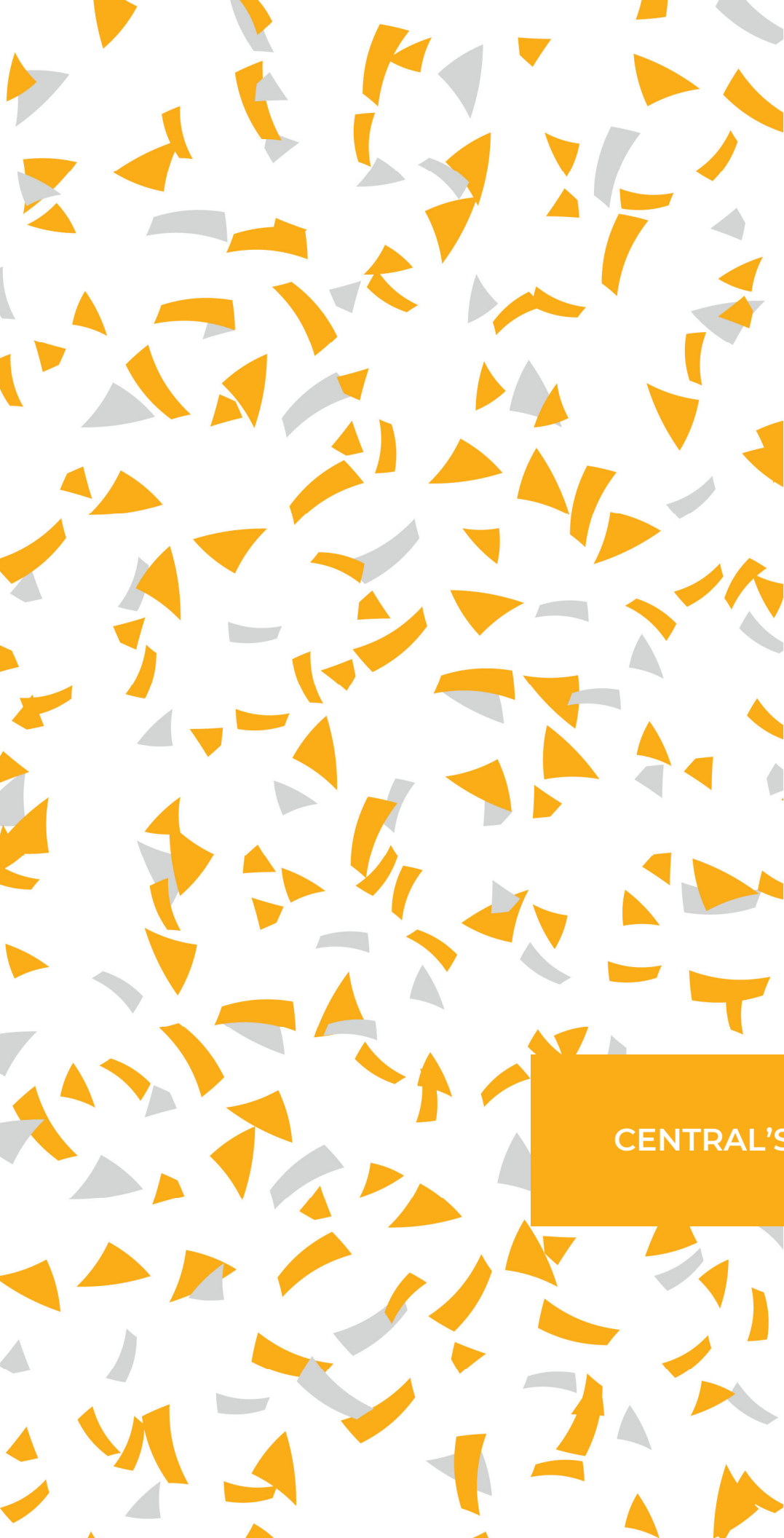
In the next 20 years, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area will face the same changes, challenges, and opportunities as all urban areas across the United States: climate change, population change (including growing diversity) and persistent (and growing) racial and income inequality. The Metropolitan Council, which coordinates regional planning across the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, anticipates continued population and job growth over the next twenty years. The Council anticipates that the area will add more than 800,000 new residents and 500,000 new jobs. This growth will strengthen our economy and add social and cultural vibrancy, but it will also strain an aging infrastructure and add put additional pressure on the housing sector. In addition, the Council notes that our region is aging rapidly: More than one in five residents will be age 65 and older in 2040, compared to one in nine in 2010.

The Twin Cities has a number of key strengths to help the area navigate these changes. With a diverse mix of industries, strong education and arts sectors, diverse faith communities, and a history of civic engagement across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, the Twin Cities is often at the forefront of innovation and change. We will need all of these assets to address both the persistent challenges of the past and present as well as the challenges that lay ahead.

The Twin Cities has seen an explosion of social activism and protest in the wake of the George Floyd murder, women's marches, and other voices calling out for change. Central has not shied away from speaking out where prudent to do so.

Central is navigating a delicate line in some areas of advocacy where it comes to housing justice.

Working with Beacon Interfaith Collaborative has centered on legislative changes that will help control rapidly climbing rents and funding for those with low incomes. This has created challenges in what we can say as it applies to voting and lobbying, without harming our religious non-profit status. It is an area we are continuing to advocate for and so we are continuing to learn the best way to advocate within the necessary lines.



CENTRAL'S CALL

Increasing Member Engagement

In discussions with congregants during this process, a number of people mentioned what attracted them to Central Presbyterian Church was the myriad of opportunities that exist for involvement in the life of the community and beyond. This has not simply been restricted to the writing of checks. There are many projects that are available for Central members and friends to participate in: among them music, worship leadership, Bible study, children and youth programs, and service in the community and the world. Through the process of discernment with the congregation, it was made clear that people want more involvement in the community and opportunities for service.

Many things had to be stopped by necessity during the height of the pandemic when the church was basically closed for months on end. People felt disconnected from one another in the shut-down of the country and church was no exception.

Now that worship has returned and many activities have started again, there is increased need for engagement of members and friends of the congregation. There are a significant number of people who sing and play in the various musical groups of the congregation who have not officially become members of the church. There are a dedicated crew of people who volunteer in the kitchen for the Wednesday lunch and serve meals at a local food program. While Central would gladly accept these individuals into its membership, it welcomes their participation.

As the church continues to rebuild following the pandemic shut-down, there is a very real need to increase member engagement. As in any church the

size of Central, there is a need for people to step forward to help fill the gaps. In the first months of 2022 we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of children who are participating on Sunday morning and a renewed youth program is growing under strong leadership. But even more adults are needed to participate and help the program continue to grow. Children and youth programming is but one area where we need increased involvement, but like all areas of the church life, it has been a challenge to find volunteers. How to do that is the question.

Staying with the needs of children and youth, we continue to lift up the needs to the congregation in newsletter articles and moments for mission. Perhaps most importantly, to give the children and youth a voice during worship where their presence is shared with those beyond the parents. We heard it mentioned in our discussions with the congregation the commitment people have to being in the worship service, which may be why it is a significant challenge to recruit people to help with the children's Sunday morning programming.

One suggestion Central's Session is considering is an all-church skill and interest survey that will help us learn more about our members and friends of the church, and connect those skills and interests with a need in the congregation.

Attracting New Demographics

A significant goal for Central in the next 10 years is to attract new people to Central. In particular, to increase the diversity of our congregation to better reflect the community we serve and to bring in more families with children to provide vibrancy and growth for years to come..

Martin Luther King, Jr. famously called 11:00 on Sunday mornings “the most segregated hour of Christian America.” While Central has a little more diversity than many Presbyterian churches, owing in part to our location and the recent merger with Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church, we know we can do better. We would like to do more community outreach and engagement, and demonstrate our commitment to having an inclusive, diverse congregation that represents all of St. Paul and the surrounding community. This is not limited to racial diversity, but also sexual orientation, gender, familial status, and disability.

In addition, we know that thriving churches are churches that attract families and children. Central’s membership is aging. In order to prosper, Central will need to continue to grow in younger age groups, and their interest in doing so was evident throughout the ministry study conversations. Central has always loved its kids. Members remarked that at Central, children feel welcome and important; we let kids be kids; we include children in music and in worship.

Before the pandemic, we had a growing children and youth ministry with more than 30 children and youth participating regularly—a number which had been gradually increasing since 2010. As families reacted to the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19 in schools, churches, and other settings, participation declined. However, since vaccines have become available, we have seen participation start to rebound. The congregation is committed to supporting this growing program and continues to invest in this area of ministry with new programming dedicated to key age groups.

Redefining Oversight

The shifts from the pandemic and the change in pastoral leadership has meant there are changes happening in the structure of leadership of the Session. In the past it was the expectation that Elders served on multiple committees. Today the expectation is that an elder serves on only one committee, in order to give it their full attention and to have time they might spend attending addition

committee meetings, in getting their committee’s work done. There are several Elders who do feel they have the time and commitment to give to more than one committee and that is of course graciously received. Like many Presbyterian churches, committees at Central have been traditionally been led by Elders currently serving on the Session. The realization now is that we can include other leaders from the congregation at large to provide significant leadership on committees.

The Deacons are a committed group at Central. During the height of the pandemic, when personal visits were impossible, the Deacons stepped up to provide other ways for the congregation to feel support. They began what they have called Connection Circles that are online gatherings of anyone interested in attending with informal questions designed to provide more connections. The Deacons also made phone calls to as many of the members over 65 as they could manage. The intention was to check on one another and also to see if anyone needed help with transportation to an appointment for their Covid vaccination.

One of the areas where there has been a turnover in leadership is the area of children and youth programming. Maintaining consistent staff in the role of the Children and Youth coordinator has been a struggle at Central for many years, with most staff in this role staying about 2 years, and this past year has been especially difficult. Central has identified a few reasons for the frequent turnover—including the part-time status of the role and need for weekly attendance on Sunday mornings. In 2021, the staff member in this role resigned shortly after Rev. Colby’s resignation to pursue a full-time position with another congregation.

The Director of Music Ministry, who has previous experience with and a passion for children and youth, has stepped back from some of the music responsibilities in order to provide leadership for children and youth ministry in collaboration with a newly created Sunday Connections Coordinator, who

assists with program activities for children on Sunday mornings. Other musicians have stepped in to take on some of the responsibilities for performing music on Sundays. The children and youth have a renewed direction that has been seen in the attendance. It has been exciting for the entire committee to see people step in and offer their gifts when they are needed, and perhaps a message to all that God can use us in a multitude of ways.

Central Presbyterian Church has a long history of involvement in the community in which it lives. This support and engagement is reflected in our tag line “in the city for good”.

In recent discussions for this ministry study, congregants spoke of times the church had taken on many diverse projects like building an apartment building for lower-income working women, sponsoring an Afghan family of refugees, or opening our doors as a homeless shelter for families in winter months as part of Project Home.

After a \$1.65 million donation in 2018, Session entered a phase of discernment to determine the best use of this gift not only within the church, but also the community it serves. Five goals began to gain support and consensus among the Session.

1. Grow the number of people involved in the life of Central.
2. Provide more benefits to the community (including through partnerships with other organizations).
3. Maintain the church facility.
4. Expand member participation.
5. And be intentional in our efforts to increase the racial diversity of this congregation.

A decision was made to focus on three specific areas of community involvement: hunger, anti-racism, and housing. These three areas are represented by task-forces who are under the umbrella of Coordinated Missions Committee.

Advocacy and Anti-Racism

If the church was to be involved in the work of justice, racial understanding, and reconciliation in our

society, Central needed to engage in some self-examination and learning. In recent years, this learning was inspired by readings of *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debbie Irving and *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, as well as dedicated Bible study events.

After exploration of anti-racism themes inspired by these readings, there is now a task force team of people working on anti-racism, led by a former Parish Associate at Central. This past year, they have been working to understand the indigenous people who originally lived on the land where the church is located. The Anti-Racism Task Force sponsored a churchwide field trip to the Hennepin County History Museum to learn about the network of freeways that cut through BIPOC communities in the 1950s. There was another trip to the Minnesota History Museum to attend an exhibit on the Ojibwe and Dakota people. They have led a churchwide book read and had an intergenerational activity about the Dakota. The goal is to continue to learn about our indigenous neighbors and eventually do a land acknowledgment.

Housing and Homelessness

In the 1960's the congregation purchased the adjacent St. Agatha's Conservatory and renovated two of the buildings to provide low cost housing and other social services. Two of the Conservatory buildings were razed and a senior citizen high-rise was erected.

The housing task force prior to the pandemic had been hosting families dealing with homelessness through Project Home of Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul. (During the pandemic, these families

were moved to a semi-permanent location and no longer transferred between host churches.)

Central Church is a member of the community-based organization Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. There is a very active group of Central members who participate with Beacon's various initiatives such as Bring it Home and Rent is Due, both of which are working to make housing affordable to all through legislative action.

Meals as a Connection

Meals are important at Central, not only for the nourishment of our bodies but for the social connection with each other. Our Wednesday Community Lunch and 3rd Sunday lunches are highlights for the quality of food, the variety in our menus, the interaction between staff (Chef Barb and Sous Chef Sue) and volunteers, and our desire to offer food to all who are hungry, regardless of ability to pay.

With a large homeless population in downtown St. Paul, we make it a priority to have convenient food on hand so that if anyone says they are hungry, we can offer them something that is nutritious and filling. A small pantry of items including soup, protein bars, crackers and cheese, applesauce, and such. We have also purchased affordable snack packs from the nonprofit MATTER and continue to support the nearby Neighborhood House Food Shelf, where people can get food and be connected to critical community resources.

To do more, and to be effective and helpful, we realized that we needed to learn about hunger in downtown, and what other resources exist near us. So we commissioned research by three Macalester College students. From their academic angles of sociology and urban geography, they helped to map out existing resources and make initial contacts with organizations already working to address hunger. Volunteers from Central engaged in field trips to support and learn from other organizations doing important work in this area.

The result of this effort was the purchase of a new

van for iHelp Market Square. This is a free grocery distribution program which would now be able to expand service in the neighborhood, including to Central Towers, our neighboring senior hi-rise.

In recent years, the Hunger Initiative Task Force has continued to sponsor multiple food drives each year to support local food shelves. There is also faithful group of volunteers that serve meals at the St. Paul Opportunity Center, a program of Catholic Charities.

Music as a Means to Engage

When Central was tasked with examining the ability to live or die in 2005, we knew that music would be a vital piece of church life. Visitors often hear music as they walk into the sanctuary before they ever hear a spoken word of welcome. A church in a downtown setting, on the same block as recording studios, theaters and a now-defunct college of music, lives in a culture that expects high quality music.

Our choir features paid section leaders as soloists who also help teach and lead volunteers who make up the backbone of any church choir. Our section leaders enjoy singing, but also become involved in the overall life and ministry of Central.

Current music opportunities include:

- **Central Choir** - An adult choir sings in worship nearly every week during the program year. While reading music isn't required, this choir moves quickly, learns a lot of repertoire, and throughout the year sings some challenging music, often highlighting the work of local composers! Our choir features paid section leaders as soloists who also help teach and lead volunteers who make up the backbone of any church choir. Our section leaders enjoy singing, but also become involved in the overall life and ministry of Central.
- **Chamber Ensemble** - Open to adults and youth (grade 8 and up) who play traditional band or orchestra instruments for at least three years. This ensemble plays about once a month in worship.

- **Handbell Ensemble** - open to adults and high school youth who have music reading skills and can play independently. This group experiments with sounds and timbres and use repertoire that stretches the limits of what we think of as 'bell choir music'.
- **Sticks & Steel** - Percussion ensembles for grades 3 – 5 (Sticks and Steel 1) and grades 6 – 12 (Sticks and Steel II), with an emphasis on discovering the unique sounds of hand chimes, bells, marimba, hand drums, and other percussion.
- **Higher Ground** - Volunteers serve lunch multiple times a year at the St. Paul Opportunity Center, a center for those experiencing homelessness.
- **Wednesday Community Lunches** - Catered meals by Central's chef are offered to anyone in the community for a suggested donation of only \$10. All who are hungry are invited to eat, regardless of their ability to pay.
- **Mission Trip** - In 2019, Central sent a group of 15 volunteers to Puerto Rico to help in rebuilding in the wake of Hurricane Maria. There is continued interest in doing more activities of this nature.
- **Alternative Gift Market** - A holiday favorite, this market invites Central visitors and members to do some Christmas shopping for fair trade items that support our neighbors in other parts of the world.

Our music ministry features artists-in-residence, as well as guest musicians regularly in worship. In 2021, Central received a \$20,000 grant to grow our artist-in-residence programs, specifically to explore music of African Americans in the *Glory to God* hymnal and provide adult education and workshops open to the Presbytery relating to Black sacred music.

Mission Activities

The members of Central's congregation are strengthened in the belief that Central's mission to be 'in the city for good' means putting our faith into action. Accordingly, we have many regular missions that are part of our church culture, including (but are not limited to):

- **Martha's Closet** - A permanent installation at Central, this mission provides free interview and work clothing for low income women in Saint Paul. Clients are referred by area social service agencies and are able to 'shop' on two set days a week.
- **Diaper Drive** - Each year for Father's Day, the men of Central host a diaper/baby wipe drive for shelters in the community.
- **Food Drive** - Each year, Central conducts multiple food and supply drives for area food shelves and shelters.
- **Project Home** - Central hosted homeless families for one month in the winter as part of Project Home. This was put on hold during the pandemic.

This is but a partial list of the many ways our congregants work to serve each other at Central and within our broader community.



A NEW LEADER

A NEW LEADER

Desired Characteristics & Traits

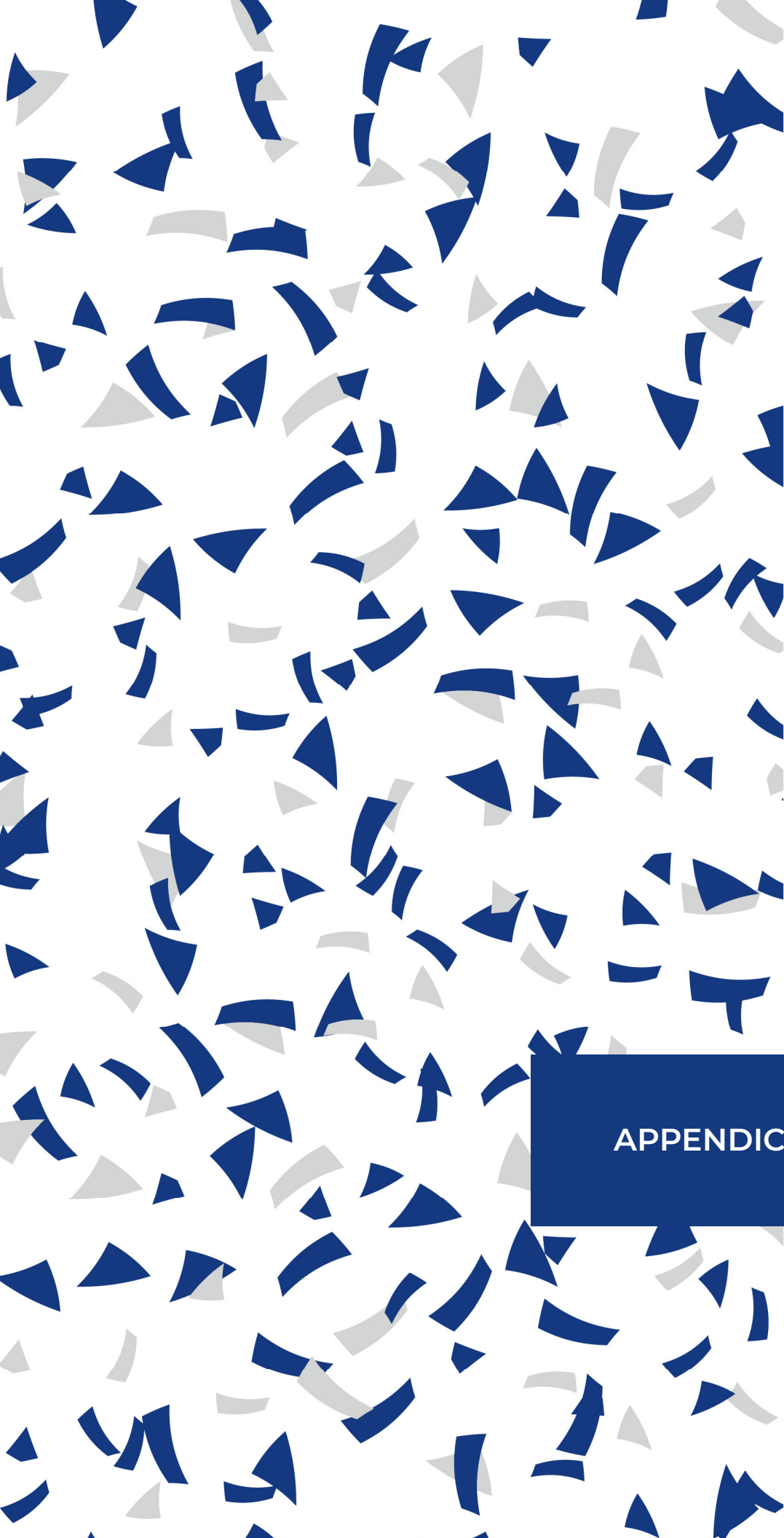
We are seeking pastoral leadership that will help us activate our faith: that will call us in to build the Kingdom of God together in our own communities. We seek someone who fosters leadership in others, with energy to inspire and move the mission of Central forward. Central values collaboration and partnership and has an excellent staff. Accordingly, we seek a team player with strong communication and collaborative leadership skills who can make the most of the staff and congregational skills and strengths. Central also desires and appreciates a pastor with strong knowledge of the Bible and the historical context it represents.

After reviewing the key findings of our discussion groups with the congregation, during a congregational discussion, attendees were asked to prioritize preferred characteristics of our future pastor. While the Ministry Information Form (MIF) prepared by the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) will dig into this area much deeper, following are the priorities voiced (in order of importance) that the PNC may use in preparing the MIF.

1. **Motivating Leader with Vision** - Bright energy to inspire and move the mission of Central forward
2. **Team Player** - Strong communication and collaborative leader who will bring out best in others.
3. **Preaching Style & Spiritual Maturity** - Inspire from the pulpit with strong knowledge of Bible
4. **Bridge Builder and Networker** - Experience creating partnership connections in urban communities
5. **Advocacy** - Cultural proficiency in urban areas with passion for social justice.
6. **Compassion** - Desire to serve, provide care, and hold space with others.
7. **Growth Minded** - Open to learning, exploring, and adventuring with us.
8. **Financial Manager & Funds Developer** - Maximize fiscal transparency and sustainability while nurturing growth.

Specific Tasks

The specific job description and required tasks of our permanent pastor will be addressed in the Ministry Information Form by the Pastor Nominating Committee, with support from Central's Personnel Committee.



APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Ministry Study Summary

To review the detailed summary of conversations held during our small group discussions, or other events during this search, visit our website at:

www.centralforgood.org/pastor-search

Newsletter

Connect Central is our monthly newsletter highlighting upcoming worship schedules, event announcements, Session and committee activities. To download and read past editions, visit our website at:

www.centralforgood.org/newsletter

Annual Reports

Central Presbyterian Church uses an annual report to update progress on the church's vision, show how donated funds are used, and give insight into how each committee and ministry serves the needs of its focus area. To download and read the annual report of the last few years, visit our website at:

www.centralforgood.org/annual-report

Building Plans

To see the layout and space use of our building, visit our website at:

www.centralforgood.org/building

Community Demographic Resources

Visit Minnesota Compass to learn more about the downtown area, as well as others in the Twin Cities.

<https://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis-saint-paul>

Photographs of Central

To see the people, culture, and community at Central, visit our online photo gallery at:

www.centralforgood.smugmug.com

Central in the News

Read more about Central's ministries and recent activities in the local Twin Cities newspapers.

[“In St. Paul, Selma Becomes a Rallying Cry” - Star Tribune \(March 2015\)](#)

<https://www.startribune.com/in-st-paul-selma-anniversary-becomes-a-rallying-cry/295559781>

[“Need Some Lunch? Try This Downtown St. Paul Church” - Pioneer Press \(May 2015\)](#)

<https://www.twincities.com/2015/05/03/need-some-lunch-try-this-downtown-st-paul-church>

[“Historic St. Paul Churches Still Rise Above” - Star Tribune \(February 2016\)](#)

<https://www.startribune.com/historic-st-paul-churches-still-rise-above/367822921/>

[“St. Paul's ‘Best-Kept Restaurant Secret’ is This Church's Lunch” - Pioneer Press \(March 2016\)](#)

<https://www.twincities.com/2016/03/25/central-presbyterian-church-wednesday-lunch-chef-barb/>

[“Minnesota 'Eco-Palm' Project Sends Nearly 1 Million Palms to 5,000 Churches” - Star Tribune \(April 2017\)](#)

<https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-eco-palm-project-sends-nearly-1-million-palms-to-5-000-churches/418718583/>

“Minnesota Awarded \$3.2M in Grants for Historical Projects” - Pioneer Press (January 2018)

<https://www.twincities.com/2018/01/20/minnesota-awarded-3-2m-in-grants-for-historical-projects/>

“Huge Donation Allows Church to Get Into the Fight Against Hunger” - Downtown Voice (June 2018)

https://issuu.com/stpaulpublishing/docs/dtn_june_2018

“Almost 200 Minnesota Nonprofits Closed During the Pandemic” - Pioneer Press (July 2021)

<https://www.twincities.com/2021/07/18/almost-200-minnesota-nonprofits-closed-during-the-pandemic-according-to-state-data/>

“Local Musicians Gather for the Annual Tuba-only Christmas Concert” - Star Tribune (December 2021)

<https://www.startribune.com/local-musicians-gather-for-the-annual-tuba-only-christmas-concert/600126903/>



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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