

Heritage Presbyterian Church

Mission Study Report

March 2015



Heritage Presbyterian Church Profile

Heritage Presbyterian Church is a vital family of faith, consisting of a small but committed congregation that is actively shaped by the life and teaching of Christ. We strive to love one another and to serve our community and the world. We are a welcoming and accepting church.

In 2006, we developed *Feed my Sheep* from John 21:6 as our guiding principle. We went on to clarify what *Feed my Sheep* meant to us at that time. The clarifying statements are: Engage in defined mission; Providing meaningful, vibrant worship; Fostering personal relationships; Providing relevant growth opportunities; Being good stewards of our finances and properties.

Membership in HPC has held steady for the last five years. At the beginning of 2015 we had 76 members. Sixty-eight percent are women. Forty-three percent of our members are over 65. Presently, there are seven families with school age children. Worship attendance has averaged 45 through the last year of transition, although for special occasions it has reached 100.

Christian education consists of Bible study gatherings, both on Sunday and midweek, drawing about 20 people. Youth and children attend Sunday school after children's time in worship service.

The Session consists of ten elders who also act as trustees and perform deacon's functions. This lay leadership has ensured a strong, continuing program, even during periods of pastoral transition. It also represents a congregational strength that can work in partnership with future pastors. The congregation is organized into four parishes, which are under the care of session members.

Other than the pastor, our paid employees are the secretary, the janitor, a child caregiver and a music director.

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Heritage History

Heritage Presbyterian Church is located in the small town of Benicia, which is nestled between Highways 80 and 680, along the straits which run from the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento. It has a population of nearly 28,000 people. Benicia is named after the wife of General Vallejo. General Vallejo was a colorful member of California's history. A little known fact is that Benicia was first the state capital of California. Its area is only 12.9 square miles.

The current Heritage Presbyterian Church is located on the northeast corner of East Second and East Military. Anyone coming into the downtown area, passes our church. Our members come from both sides of Highway 780, which runs through our town. They also come from surrounding towns such as Fairfield, Vallejo, American Canyon, Walnut Creek, and Hercules.

The Presbyterian denomination in Benicia dates back to April 15, 1849, when Reverend Sylvester Woodbridge, Jr., secured enough members to organize the first protestant church in California. Unfortunately, that church was dissolved in 1872, due to controversy over its adherence to the Union during the Civil War.

It was not until 1979 that the Presbytery of the Redwoods (formerly named "Benicia Presbytery") explored the feasibility of forming a new Presbyterian church in Benicia. Rev. Emmit S. McDowell was called as the church's organizing pastor. On September 7, 1980, the new church held its first worship service. Approximately 100 worshippers met in City Park, near the historical marker of the First Presbyterian Church (a practice which we continue annually with a fall picnic). For the first five years, the church met at the Benicia High School library and auditorium. We moved to a former Baptist church, often referred to as the *bee church* (based on the buzzing tenants who shared the space), located on the northwest corner of Military and East Second Streets.

The congregation adopted the name Heritage Presbyterian Church of Benicia (HPC) on April 10, 1981, and on World Communion Sunday, 1981, the church was officially organized with this name and 80 charter members. Some of those charter members continue to worship with us.

In April, 1983, the Presbytery of the Redwoods purchased the undeveloped lot on the opposite corner of East Second and East Military. The church commissioned architect Jack Ross to design a permanent home for HPC. The current structure includes the first phase of the proposed design, the completion of which would allow for expansion, creating basically a mirror image of the existing structure.

The first service was held in the new sanctuary on World Communion Sunday in 1986. That afternoon Rev. Sue Fleenor was installed as the congregation's second pastor. On November 23, 1986, the sanctuary was dedicated to God and the work

of Christ. (It is interesting to note that in 1986, HPC was one of three churches in Benicia to have women serving as the ordained minister.)

The church flourished during the late 1980s and early 1990s. We achieved financial independence within the first year of moving to the new building. By summer 1988, our youth had outgrown the Sunday school room provisions in the building and we purchased a 60-foot mobile home to house our Sunday school classrooms. In the fall of 1989, we began offering two Sunday morning worship services.

Pastor Sue left in April 1991 and Interim Pastor Ron Dowell filled the pulpit while we began the search for a new pastor. Worship attendance and membership began to decline. Per our contract terms, Ron's ministry ended on October 4, 1992. Tragically, he committed suicide shortly thereafter. While we learned that his suicide was due to circumstances outside of his church ministry, the congregation was devastated; frustrated that we had not seen the signs of his depression.

Reverend Don Biddy succeeded Reverend Dowell and began his ministry with us on November 11, 1992. It was a difficult time. Many of our members chose to worship elsewhere and only returned for occasional visits or special occasions. After months of struggle, Rev. Biddy left in April 1994.

With the help of the Presbytery, the church survived. In November 1994, Reverend Beverly White arrived as our designated pastor. Hers was not an easy task. We needed healing and rebuilding. All-church retreats at Westminster Woods were initiated. We learned to re-build our relationships and to trust one another. We started annual mission trips. On February 8, 1998, Pastor Beverly White was installed as our called pastor.

Pastor Beverly opened our eyes. While she did not live in town, she immersed herself in the Benicia community. She mentored at the local continuation high school. She became a member of Rotary. She met with the other ministers in town. She brought her learnings back to us, and made us aware of other things happening in our town. She was also active in Presbytery. Beverly challenged us. Some of her thoughts made us uncomfortable. We had to re-evaluate our own thinking.

Under Pastor Beverly's leadership, we grew as a congregation. After selling a portion of our property, the church was able to build Heritage Hall, replacing the deteriorating mobile home, which housed our Sunday school classrooms. We were also able to pay off the first mortgage on our sanctuary. We raised funds to install stained glass windows in the sanctuary. Other projects financed more mundane enhancements, such as the replacement of a leaky roof, installing drop-down screen and improving the sound in the sanctuary, adding panels in Heritage Hall to absorb sound, and painting the exterior of the church.

Pastor Beverly retired after delivering our Easter service in 2014, and we now are searching for our new pastor. After serving one Sunday as a pulpit-supply minister,

Reverend Natalie Moon-Wainwright submitted her application for our interim pastor position. She has been an answer to prayer. We recalled her excellent sermon that Sunday, and were eager to work through the process of retaining Pastor Natalie as our interim minister. Natalie's contract became effective July 1st, 2014, and she is currently leading us through the process of finding a new minister.

We continue many of the established activities and to reach out to the community. We have a rental agreement with the local community garden organization which allows members of the community to grow their own produce on church grounds. Last year, we expanded that concept to include a new community orchard. We also serve as a center for distribution of the produce.

We actively encourage community organizations to use our facilities at a low cost. We have rental agreements with Alcoholics Anonymous, which uses our facility about four to six nights each week. American Association of University Women occasionally uses the hall, as well as a quilting group and a scrapbooking group. Periodically, the city will use our facilities for water conservation and/or gardening classes. We want the people of Benicia to be reminded of God, the blessings He bestows on us, and the importance of putting our faith in God into action.

Worship

Our worship life at Heritage Presbyterian Church revolves around our Sunday morning worship service held at 10 a.m. It seeks to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation through preaching the word of God, Bible reading, music, and prayer. Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month as well as the Sundays of Advent and Lent.

The worship elder assists the pastor in leading the worship services along with our beloved pianist/choir director who has been with us for the past 20 years. Music is an important part of our worship service with 15 members singing in a multi-generational choir. Special music, provided by soloists and musicians from the congregation, enhances and supplements the music throughout the year. Our music selections primarily follow the new Presbyterian hymnal, *Glory to God*, with both classic and contemporary anthems.

Childcare is available during the worship service for children under the age of 3. A children's sermon is part of the worship service after which the children and youth are excused to go to their respective Sunday school programs. On the first Sunday of the month and for special services, the children and youth remain during the entire worship service to participate in Communion. Children and youth also participate as lay readers, greeters, and ushers.

Christian Education

An elder on session chairs our Christian education programs, in coordination with our pastor. Currently there are three weekly Bible studies with topics selected by the group and rotating leadership. They are held Thursday morning, Thursday evening and Sunday morning (the hour before worship service). Attendance at these Bible study groups averages 6 to 15.

A Zebra women's ministry group meets on the 3rd Saturday morning of the month. The vision of the Zebras is to unite God's women to love, honor and serve Jesus Christ through monthly meetings and rotating prayer partners.

Children and youth Sunday school takes place during the 2nd half of the worship service, just after the children's time. The children's Sunday school teachers and the youth leaders rotate throughout the school calendar year. In addition the children prepare an annual Christmas pageant presented on the 4th Sunday of Advent. The youth group plans at least one service each year, for which they lead the entire worship service.

Mission

The members of Heritage Presbyterian church are known throughout this Presbytery for their generosity. They give of their time and their money to local and distant mission projects.

Mission In Action:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church's Wednesday Night Community Dinner: On the third Wednesday of each month, members of our church plan, prepare, and serve dinner to those who come to St. Paul's Episcopal Church for their free weekly hot meal. An average of fifteen volunteers participate in this ministry.

Several members of our congregation have been trained in safe food handling. Members go to the Food Bank to select food, which supports the planned menu and other food is made available to those in need. We also rely on individual donations and a grant from the Presbytery of the Redwoods Hunger Task Force to expand our ministry beyond what our budget supports.

Adopt-a-Family through Community Action Council (CAC): Each Thanksgiving, Christmas and, occasionally, Easter, CAC provides us with the names and contact information for several families and older adults who need assistance. We provide these people with boxes of staples, as well as some specialty foods, which are intended to brighten their holidays. At Christmas, members of our congregation provide both food and gifts. The gift suggestions are based on recommendations from CAC.

Fair Trade Coffee: The Fair Trade Coffee program has been set up to ensure farmers earn a fair wage. One member of our church has taken on the responsibility for maintaining the inventory of Fair Trade Coffee and related items. Coffee, tea, olive oil, and chocolates are available for purchase every Sunday.

Cancer Caps: Several women of the church enjoy knitting and make caps for people undergoing chemo-therapy. The caps are collected and delivered to local hospitals. Recently, we delivered over 160 caps.

SafeQuest: SafeQuest is a safe haven for victims of domestic violence who have been forced to leave their homes quickly with little or no preparation or supplies. We encourage our members to collect unused toiletries from their hotel stays. We bag the toiletries into packages, which can be given to a single person, and give those packages to the SafeQuest distribution center in Fairfield. We also have various campaigns during the year, collecting paper goods, kitchen supplies, or sweat clothes for those who seek shelter at SafeQuest.

Food Barrel: We maintain a barrel in Heritage Hall, where our members and others donate non-perishable food items to contribute to the Food Bank.

Mission Trips: Our congregation likes to be hands on. For several years, we sent teams to Mexico to help other churches build their church and/or help members of their congregation. After hurricane Katrina, two members of our congregation spent time over two summers helping in the effort to rebuild the area around the Gulf. Over the last several years, we have sent a team, including several of our youth members, to Covelo, a small remote community in Northern California with a strong Native American presence. Initially, we helped fix problem areas around their church building. Later, our work projects branched out into the community. In addition to manual labor, our teams provided breakfast and vacation Bible school for the children in the area. Through these mission trips, we have formed close and lasting relationships with people in the community.

Service as Worship: We have tried the Service as Worship mission project once and might participate in it again. While our congregation enjoyed our initial attempt at this type of service, we found that it requires a lot of planning and coordination with other members of the community.

Special Offerings:

Two-cents a Meal: On the second Sunday of each month, we collect for the Presbytery of the Redwoods Hunger Task Force Two Cents a Meal program. Last year HPC sent 25% of those monies to the local Community Action Council.

Souper Bowl Offering: On Super Bowl Sunday, our youth, like other youth across the nation, bring out soup pots and collect money. This year HPC approved sending these funds to the local Community Action Council.

We support the following special offerings sponsored by the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Pentecost Offering
- Peace and Global Witness Offering
- Christmas Joy Offering

Communication

Heritage Presbyterian Church attempts to share the Word. As we say during preparation for communion, 'all are welcome,' and we want everyone to know all of the opportunities which are available. The Sunday bulletin includes the order of the service, upcoming events and announcements, the pastor's office hours, and a prayer list.

Heritage submits an article to the local newspaper each week, which publishes a worship service page on Thursdays. We often include the scriptures, sermon title and topic of the upcoming service along with basic information about our church.

We recently updated our website, so it is a work-in-progress. The website allows people to listen to sermons and catch up on upcoming events. Our newsletter, church calendar, and other information about our church are available on the website.

We publish a newsletter monthly. Elders from each service area are invited to contribute an article. The newsletter includes other information vital to the life of the church. The newsletter is distributed electronically and in printed form.

Pastor Natalie introduced Heritage Tidbits, which is a weekly email. It is sent early each week and recaps the week's activities and announcements of coming events.

We use projected media in the sanctuary for the first half of the Sunday service. Prior to the sermon, the screen is raised so the congregation can see the cross and stained glass window. Slides are displayed before the service to encourage our members to meditate. Slides are also used to display scripture readings, responses, and the prayer of confession. Sermons are recorded and uploaded to our website.

We rely heavily on our music director, who, with our enthusiastic and talented choir, creates beautiful music.

The church secretary functions as our communications hub. In addition to e-mailing or mailing postcards to everyone participating in the upcoming Sunday worship, she collects all of the materials, which need to be included in our bulletins, Heritage Tidbits, the newsletter and then creates the final product.

The church directory is published once or twice a year, depending on how many new members and/or friends have joined the church. We do a picture directory about every four or five years. Another helpful directory our secretary provides is a directory of parishes, members' birthdays and anniversaries.

The worship elder and the pastor send welcome notes to first-time visitors who provide their contact information. The pastor may also make a personal phone call. Our fellowship elders and pastor send cards to members and regular visitors, acknowledging their birthdays, anniversaries, and other life events.

Fellowship

The wealth of our church is not just in the weekly worship but also in the friendships we make. At Heritage Presbyterian Church we engage in fellowship often and support one another through the ups and downs of life. We are truly a family. Fellowship elders are always looking for new opportunities to keep our members connected.

Our church is blessed with both a sanctuary and a fellowship hall, fondly named Heritage Hall. The hall has two partitioned rooms. One is set up as a youth ‘hang out,’ complete with bean bag chairs, a couch, and lava lamps. The second area is used for the adult Sunday morning Bible study. The rest of the hall is open for whatever use we have.

The main hall is available for use by community groups. We also have a kitchen available to members of the church. It is equipped with a commercial gas oven and sink. Each month, one parish is responsible for providing refreshments after worship. Normally, those refreshments consist of both healthy and sweet snacks, in addition to coffee, tea, and juice.

Some of our special Sunday celebrations include:

- a celebration of birthdays and anniversaries on the third Sunday of the month
- the annual meeting in late January when we have a ‘soup-er’ bowl
- Maundy Thursday, when we have a simple dinner of soup, salad, and bread before celebrating the communion
- Easter with fruit and special Easter breads provided by the congregation
- Recognition Sunday, generally the first Sunday in June, when the Fellowship elders host an ice cream social
- ‘Back to Church’ Sunday, in September, includes a potluck picnic
- the annual all-church Thanksgiving dinner on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving
- we have shared pizza while participating in the ‘hanging of the greens’

Other opportunities, independent of our worship service, include:

- a monthly men’s breakfast
- a bi-monthly women’s gathering
- an occasional youth activity
- Lenten and fall programs include meals with a time of learning and generally have three sessions.

Congregational Care

The purpose of Congregational Care is to reach out in love to members of Heritage Presbyterian Church in their times of need and to strengthen the bonds of friendship between people in the church. Many people are involved at different times and members tend to be very generous with their time. People provide transportation to medical and other appointments and/or meals for those who have a need. It can be said that our members are really there for each other!

Members are also, at times, actively involved in making it possible for people to remain in their own homes. Such activities may involve occasional cleaning and safe-guarding their homes, engaging in prayer and Bible study with them, bringing food or just being with them in a ministry of presence.

Heritage has a prayer chain, although it is used with confidentiality and without too many details. This service helps provide information to our four parishes, which helps members maintain close, intimate bonds with each other. Emphasis is placed not only upon relaying information, but also spending time learning more about the well-being and concerns of the person or family called. People who receive such calls often remark that they really appreciate the personal approach to this service as well as the opportunity to learn about the welfare of their friends.

Stewardship and Budget

Stewardship is defined as “planned congregational giving” that can be relied on for budgeting purposes and for implementing the church’s mission and community outreach programs.

Heritage Presbyterian Church Stewardship program generally happens during the month of November when the congregation is asked to make financial pledges for the coming year. A pledge request in the form of a letter is mailed to church members and other church attendees. Regular stewardship announcements are made during church services, in the newsletter, bulletins and in 2014 it was mentioned in the weekly email that is sent to all church members with an email address.

Stewardship History

Year	Amount Pledged	Number of Pledges
2005	\$97,800	
2006	\$94,500	
2007	\$79,000	
2008	\$94,730	23
2009	\$85,000	30
2010	\$81,156	29
2011	\$89,920	35
2012	\$101,297	39
2013	\$94,626	35
2014	\$86,624	32
2015	\$80,486	29

Heritage Presbyterian Church has received memorial donations throughout the years including a contribution of \$10,000 in April of 2008 which was deposited in the Synod Reserve fund until it was partially used in 2014 to help pay off the Heritage Hall loan.

Income and Expense History

The next section presents an overview of the financial history of Heritage Presbyterian Church over the past nine years from 2005 to 2014.

Summary of Income and Expenses 2005 through 2014

Year	Total Income	Total Expense	Net Income
2005	\$138,950	\$138,505	\$445
2006	\$134,217	\$134,031	\$186
2007	\$146,027	\$136,789	\$9,238
2008	\$165,304	\$168,297	(\$2,993)
2009	\$139,971	\$145,650	(\$5,679)
2010	\$149,296	\$147,583	\$1,713
2011	\$160,873	\$162,680	(\$1,807)
2012	\$162,777	\$157,785	\$4,992
2013	\$144,256	\$145,975	(\$1,719)
2014	\$145,662	\$125,623	\$20,039

Pastor Compensation Expenses

A key element of our overall operating budget is the compensation package for our pastor. The majority of this package includes salary, housing, and insurance. The full time pastor's salary was for 2014 and the interim pastor's salary, at 75% time, is for 2015.

Pastor Expense Item	Full Time Pastor	Interim Pastor
Salary/housing/savings	\$49,680	\$39,140
Major medical/pension fund	\$17,325	\$14,820
Auto reimbursement	\$2,500	
Study leave	\$800	\$960
Community involvement	\$1,000	
Miscellaneous expenses	\$300	\$2,160
Dental medical	\$802	
TOTALS	\$72,407	\$57,080

Vacation and study leave are included in the pastor's compensation package as required by Redwoods Presbytery.

Results of *Café to Go* Mission Study Meetings

As part of our effort to prepare for the calling of a called and installed pastor the Mission Study Committee held three *Café to Go* sessions. They were held after our regular Sunday worship services in the fall of 2014. A different question was explored at each café with progressive rounds of intimate discussions in groups of 3-4 people. A member of the mission study committee was at each table as a recorder and facilitator. Each café ended with whole group conversation and sharing. The *Café to Go* questions were posted in the sanctuary and emailed/sent out to members of the congregation who were either homebound or did not attend at least one session in an attempt to get as much input as possible from members of Heritage Presbyterian Church. The information was recorded, reviewed and assimilated by the committee. The mission study committee was pleased with the level of participation from members and regular attendees and the open sharing of thoughts and ideas. Approximately half of members and repeat visitors attended or communicated responses and comments to the questions.

***Café to Go* Question #1**

What does it mean to be the heart, hands and feet of Jesus?

1. Follow Christ's 'blueprint' for our lives, our church and our relationship with the community. We should not fear failure but continually reach out to those in need, putting our trust in God. Our goal is to love with the heart of Jesus, reaching out to those in need of love and assistance.
2. Love one another as God loves you. Serve one another with love, respect and without judgment. Practice forgiveness of self and others. Explore and use our God-given gifts to serve and share with others by continually assessing and meeting the needs of the congregation and the community.
3. Share the Good News as demonstrated by our actions, led by the Holy Spirit. Recognize that we are made in God's image and we are God's messengers in our community and the world. Be willing to go wherever the need is.
4. Continue to grow through our study and understanding of God's word as found in the Bible. Appreciate and accept the rich diversity of our faith backgrounds at Heritage Presbyterian Church.

***Café to Go* Question #2**

What keeps you coming to Heritage Presbyterian Church and what more do you need?

There were four major divisions in the answers to the first part – Fellowship, Worship, Service and Spiritual Growth.

1. Fellowship at HPC is expressed by a feeling of belonging with a remarkably caring and tolerant congregation. Café participants feel they have found a warm family environment which is evident every Sunday both during worship service and in fellowship afterward. It is a kind, loving community that allows each to find his/her own path. There is a nurturing environment here that enables a feeding of body and soul. Outside church, there are a number of activities, such as men's breakfasts and women's lunches, that foster camaraderie.
2. Worship at Heritage gives us a sense of God's presence. Inspirational sermons, a wide variety of music, and the multiple opportunities for congregants to participate enhance our spiritual experience.
3. Service within our church is expressed by support in times of need through congregational care. We have a wide variety of opportunities to use our God given gifts and to answer His call in the community and the world.
4. Opportunities for spiritual growth at Heritage are provided in a number of ways besides worship: Sunday school, Bible studies, Zebra ministries and informal discussions among members are examples. These can provide a feeling of purpose and the ability to answer God's call. Pastoral counseling is readily available. Service and mission activities provide excellent ways for spiritual fulfillment. Capable leadership is provided by many members, as well as by the pastor and elders.

For the second part of the question, the answer most frequently given was the desire for a full time pastor.

Many feel that we need to do more to provide a relevant place for young adults and families with children as well as meet the needs of our older congregants. The future of our church depends on that.

A desire was expressed for more reaching out to our community, including new visitors to Heritage. There is a wish for more interaction with other local churches.

More service opportunities would be welcomed, especially by youth members.

We are open to incorporating our traditions with new ideas in worship service, including joyful expressions of our faith.

We would like a wider variety of materials and speakers for Bible study, Sunday school and special programs. There is also a desire for a late night Christmas Eve service.

Cafe to Go Question # 3

As you have gone through different life changes, how has Heritage Presbyterian Church supported, nurtured and fed you?

Generally, responses centered on three major areas: our congregation as a family, worship (pastor and worship service) and offering growth opportunities.

1. Congregation as a family

Overall, respondents are very satisfied with our congregation, indicating the feeling of being a member of one big family. We noted that not only are we fellow congregants but also friends. We feel welcome and that every person's voice matters. We believe that acceptance of different perspectives promotes strength and faith. We appreciate that we can be as involved in the church and its missions as much or as little as we choose. We feel safe, listened to, understood and supported, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

- Spiritually: Respondents feel supported through Heritage's worship services, which help develop our relationships with God. We also feel nurtured by Heritage's various Bible study offerings, Adult and Children Christian Education, Women's and Men's Breakfasts and Zebra Group.
- Emotionally: Congregants express support through the feeling of oneness and that we are not alone. The sentiment is one of belonging to a village which helps and supports each member. The Heritage way is one of reaching for help and providing help. The consensus is that Heritage is a safe place to share and grow together. Fellowship after church service connects and brings people together to share joys and strengthen friendships in a safe, hospitable and non-judgmental environment. Heritage's prayer chain connects us and maintains our intimate bond.
- Physically: Respondents indicate they feel support by Heritage's emphasis on its caring ministry for those in need.

2. Worship (Pastor)

Congregants indicate the importance of quality sermons and the pastor as a strong, cohesive force in this extended family. The pastor is the most visible representative of the church. He/she sets the tone, welcomes everyone, nurtures hungry, searching souls, and sustains them with his/her sermons.

Respondents want a pastor who is a strong leader and who challenges them intellectually and spiritually. We look to the pastor to deliver inspirational sermons that help us grapple with life and world issues. We want a pastor who encourages us on our spiritual path.

We want a pastor who wants to get to know us on a personal level. Respondents also want their pastor to bring community involvement/awareness back to the congregation.

3. Worship (Service)

Although the pastor is the church's most visible face, the worship service as a whole reveals the church's breadth, identity and mission. The tandem forces of an effective pastor and worship service draw new members and encourage existing members.

Respondents are very satisfied with Heritage's worship service, citing the importance of sermons that challenge, pique interest and resonate, as well as the music and our choir. We value prayer/meditation, focus on God's blessings, celebration of life's joys and sharing of concerns as integral to our worship service.

4. Offering Growth Opportunities

Congregants are pleased with the varied opportunities to share their gifts. We feel encouraged and emboldened to explore new paths. There are many volunteer opportunities in all areas of church life, as well as missions, as detailed previously in this report.

Benicia Community Leader Interviews

Members of the Mission Study Committee interviewed seven people involved in key positions in Benicia. Persons interviewed included: Benicia Mayor, Elizabeth Patterson; Director of Arts Benicia, Larnie Fox; Program Coordinator of St. Paul 's Episcopal Church Community Meal Program, Debi Hall; Director of the Benicia Community Action Council (CAC), Viola Robertson; the Family Resource Center (FRC) of Benicia's Blanche Hilman and Conni Holloway; and in-coming President of Families In Transition (FIT), Melody Seymour. Below is a summary of their responses.

Question #1: What are the needs of the community?

Poverty has increased, particularly affecting seniors, families and youth in Benicia. There are currently several hundred single-parent families in the area. As they attempt to support their families on single incomes, life for them becomes increasingly challenging. There is a need for low-cost childcare and low-cost/free bus passes for low-income students. The school district does not provide bus transportation in Benicia. There is a critical lack of low-income housing and emergency housing. Many people have moved out of Benicia due to a lack of affordability.

There is a lack of resources for single adults. There is a need for more agencies that can provide meals. When St. Paul's Episcopal Church began serving Wednesday evening meals 16 years ago, the number of meals was 25 per week. They now serve 125-160 meals per week.

Another concern is that there are relatively few recreational opportunities for youth, particularly for low-income youth due to additional costs and transportation needs.

Question #2: How do you see the community changing in the next five years?

There will be a need for more services to meet the needs of an increasingly aging and growing population. People indicated that they see the economy worsening as rents increase due to increases in housing prices. Complicating this issue is the fact that people often over-extend themselves to live in the community because the schools are good and it is safe place to rear children. Interviewees cited a widening gap between the very wealthy and the middle and lower classes. A number of respondents mentioned that this seems to be a world-wide trend.

There appears to be a trend of less involvement of people in their late 20's, 30's and 40's in the community. Promoting the Arts and joint community service projects could develop connections on an inter-generational basis.

Question #3: How do you think that churches can be a resource to support the community?

Individuals recommended that churches add budget items for regular support of resource organizations such as assisting the agencies in their efforts to meet community needs as they arise. They also suggested that the local churches allow charitable/non-profit organizations to use church facilities without cost. Pastors could meet regularly with resource agencies.

They recommended an effort be made by churches to better coordinate groups providing free food and meals. They also suggested that churches become more involved in organizations that serve the community (counseling, job training, affordable child care, etc.). Heritage Presbyterian Church could be represented in these groups.

Around the nation, there are approximately 140 *Villages* being developed to help meet the needs of an aging population. There are currently plans to look into such a project in Benicia to make “living in place” possible for seniors. Such projects involve volunteers who assist seniors. Heritage members have participated in meetings to look into development of such a project.

Churches could reach out to at-risk youth through projects which would partner the youth with members. Church members are perceived as good role models for people who need mentors.

People remember that the former pastor, through the church’s discretionary fund, sometimes provided gasoline, gift cards, clothing and non-perishable food to needy people and expressed their hope that a subsequent pastor would continue to do this. Appreciation was also expressed for Heritage allowing non-profit organizations to place announcement signs of their activities on church property. A suggestion was that churches pursue multi-generational projects to benefit the community.

Arts Benicia would like to join a composting project with the Community Gardens. The director indicated they have the equipment needed for such a project. They would also like to do an *Arts in the Sanctuary* exhibit to focus on spiritual art. This would be very closely supervised and could benefit not only struggling artists in Benicia but also enhance the spiritual experience of the church and possibly bring in visitors. They would also be interested in doing individual exhibits.

It was mentioned that Heritage had always been a very inclusive church and it was hoped that it would stay that way with the change of pastors. Several community leaders suggested that Heritage use social media to reach all age groups.

Some believe there is a need in Benicia for more concern about environmental issues (crude oil, etc.). Heritage could provide a place for the community to discuss controversial issues of concern. It could also provide an arena for healing around such issues.

New Pastor Profile

The consensus from the *Café to Go* meetings is for a pastor who delivers inspirational and challenging sermons that help us connect Christian values and teachings to our complex and busy lives. We seek to be challenged spiritually and intellectually, in order to grow stronger in our relationships with God and each other.

We need a pastor with effective leadership skills to unify individual personalities from different perspectives, backgrounds and generations. We also desire strong communication and guidance as we continue on our quest to become a missional church, exploring how to participate more fully in God's mission in the community and world.

Our new pastor needs to be available for pastoral care and counseling for congregants. We want our pastor to be involved with the local community and encourage more community involvement among members. We are looking forward to our church and our community thriving in coming years.

Appendix A — Church Report



Church Report 2014

PIN Number	10608
Presbytery Number	220564
<hr/>	
Church	Heritage
Address	1400 E 2nd St
City/State	Benicia, CA 94510
Phone	707-745-6650
Email	info@hpcbencia.org
Web Site	www.hpcbencia.org
Fax	

Membership			
Prior Active Members	77		
Gains		Losses	
17 & Under		Certificate	
18 & Over		Deaths	
Certificate		Other	1
Other			
Total Gains	0	Total Losses	1

Total Active Members	76
Baptized	
Other Participants	
Total Adherents	76
Female Members	52

Average Attendance 45

Affiliate Members			
Baptisms	Officers		
Child Baptisms	1	Male Session	3
Adult Baptisms		Female Session	7
		Male Deacons	
		Female Deacons	

Age Distribution of Active Members	Male	Female
25 & Under	7	2
26 - 45	10	4
46 - 55	8	1
56 - 65	18	5
Over 65	33	12
Total Distribution	76	24

People with Disabilities

Hearing	4
Sight	
Mobility	4
Other	1

Christian Education

Birth 3		Grade 7	
Age 4	2	Grade 8	1
Kindergarten	1	Grade 9	2
Grade 1		Grade 10	
Grade 2		Grade 11	1
Grade 3		Grade 12	
Grade 4	4	Young Adults	
Grade 5		Over 25	20
Grade 6	2	Teachers/Officers	8
Total	41		

Racial Ethnic	Membership	Elders	Deacons	Male	Female
Asian	5	1		3	2
Black					
African American					
African					
Middle Eastern					
Hispanic	1			1	
Native American	1			1	
White	69	9		19	50
Other					
Totals	76	10	0	24	52

Potential Giving Units 54**Budgeted Income** 131,562**Budgeted Expense** 131,562

Receipts

Regular Contributions	85,472	Bequests	
Capital Building Fund	4,800	Other Income	38,722
Investment Income		Subsidy or Aid	

Expenditures

Local Program	117,502	Per Capital Apprt	2,508
Local Mission	2,063	Validated Mission	7,616
Capital Expenditures		Theological Fund	150
Investment Expenditures		Other Mission	6,813

Appendix B — Community Demographics

Demographic reporting is from the PCUSA website on comparative statistics:
http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/research/pdfs/2012-cs-complete.pdf

Location

Benicia is on the southern edge of Solano County in the San Francisco Bay Area. HPC is in a prime location near the center of town.

Population

Benicia has a population of nearly 28,000. The approximate age percentage breakdown by selected age groups is as follows:

Under 5 years	3.7%
5 to 17 years	18.6%
18 to 24	6.5%
25 to 44	21.9%
46 to 64	35.8%
65 and over	13.5%

Culture/Ethnicity

The estimated percentage breakdown by cultural group for Benicia is:

White	68%
Black	1%
Asian	11%
Hispanic	16%

Educational levels

The estimated educational attainment level of adults in Benicia is:

Less than 9th grade:	2.3%
High School, Non-grad:	4.3%
High School Graduate:	16.1%
Some College:	29.2%
Associate Degree:	10.2%
Bachelor's Degree:	25.0%
Grad Program/Degree:	13.0%

Family Structure

The estimated composition of households in Benicia is:

Married, no children	30.8%
Married, children present	19.6%
Single parents	8.6%
Other families	7.3%
Non-family households	33.9%

Housing Types

Single family homes	66.0%
Multiple dwelling units	32.2%
Mobile homes	1.5%
Other	0.2%

Household Income

Less than \$20,000:	9.3%
\$20,000-\$39,999:	10.8%
\$40,000-\$59,999:	12.3%
\$60,000-\$99,999:	23.5%
\$100,000 or more:	44.1%

Appendix C — Resources in the Benicia Area

1. Benicia Forum of Community-Based Organizations

Contact: Nora Gauger Phone: (707) 342-8034

Benicia Forum is a group of Benicia non-profits and local agencies who work with low- income persons/families. It is a partner with the Solano/ Napa group, which is comprised of 17 churches and 4 non-profit organizations.

2. Benicia Housing Authority

Contacts: Janet or Susan Phone: (707) 745-2011

The office certifies low-income families/individuals for Section 8 housing, which is a federal rent subsidy program for low income families, displaced families, single people with dependent children and the elderly.

3. Benicia Human Services Board

Contact phone: 746-4200

The agency oversees funding for all the non-profits that serve those in need in Benicia.

4. Benicia Family Resource Center (BFRC)

Address: 150 East K Street, Benicia, CA 94510

Contacts: Conni Holloway 746-4363 or Blanche Hillman 746-4352

The agency serves families and children as part of Solano County FRC network. BFRC offers a full range of services including information and referral to other local and county services, limited financial assistance, crisis referral, and counseling and support.

5. Community Action Council (CAC)

Director: Viola Robertson Phone: (707) 745-0900

Address: 480 Military East, Benicia CA 94510

CAC was set up by churches in the area to coordinate resources for persons in need in Benicia. The organization administers the Season of Sharing money (to which Heritage contributes) for Solano County. CAC offers job placement services, budgeting and USDA food. Per Mrs. Robertson, CAC has a house in neighboring Vallejo that can be used for 30-60 days by people

who are recuperating from medical procedures and are homeless. The service is funded by local hospitals. CAC also helps homeless/low-income people obtain sources of income.

6. Families in Transition (FIT)

Vice President: Melody Seymour

FIT is partially funded by a city grant of \$16,000/year and donations from churches and businesses. FIT is able to provide immediate assistance for rent, utilities or security deposit. They have no overhead as FIT is an “all-volunteer” agency of interviewers who work on a hot-line. All donations are used to help persons in need. As part of the agreement, recipients are asked to “pay it forward” when they can and many do. A three-month follow-up is done by the agency.

Criteria: Applicants must have been residents of Benicia for at least three months. If they have children, the children must be attending Benicia schools. Services are “one-time-only” and there must be reason to believe the family will be self-sufficient after receiving the services (between jobs, have extra car repairs, etc.). There is widespread need throughout the city.

7. St. Vincent de Paul

Contact Susan Hayes: (707) 751-1435

The organization offers *immediate* help with food for anyone, as well as limited (\$300) help with rent and (\$35) utilities. With one call, they will deliver food to a person in need within an hour or two. There is a hot line where people can leave their name and phone number (746-1773).

8. St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Community Meal Program

Program Coordinator: Debi Hall Phone: (707) 745-0307

Address: 120 East J Street, Benicia, CA 94510

The program has been in operation for 16 years and has provided 25 (at onset) to 165 (at the highest) meals each week, averaging about 100.

Although numbers have fluctuated over the years, people often return due to changes in economic conditions, landlords no longer accepting Section 8 subsidy, seniors living on fixed incomes, divorces/deaths in families, single income families moving to the area, new services being provided in

neighboring Vallejo, rising costs of living in Benicia (resulting in families moving away), etc.

Observations are that the program has increasingly served more seniors, probably due to their living on fixed incomes as well as rising costs of food, utilities, housing, healthcare, etc. Also, the program provides a safe and comfortable place for seniors to receive a hot meal among friends and neighbors, providing a social outing, which is a constant in their weekly routine and a pleasant break from an often stressful existence.

Other Miscellaneous Programs in Benicia

1. Arts Benicia

Director: Larnie Fox

Exhibits Director: Mary Shaw

Address: 991 Tyler Street, Benicia, CA 94510 Phone: (707) 747-0131

www.artsbenicia.org

Arts Benicia is an organization of local artists. The Director expressed interest in working cooperatively with Heritage to display an exhibit of spiritual art in the sanctuary for short periods. This could provide a venue for artists to show their work and introduce the church to local artists as a place in which they might be comfortable worshipping.

There is also an interest in working with the Community Garden (one of which is on Heritage property). This would involve Arts Benicia providing composting equipment and the Community Gardens allowing Arts Benicia to place (and use) the equipment on outer areas of the gardens.

Arts Benicia is also interested in partnering seniors and youth (who often lack the money to participate in recreational activities) in art activities. This would provide an opportunity for mentoring of youth by seniors and allow passing on of skills by artists.

2. Maker's Faire:

Call city council offices in Benicia to contact.

This organization operates on a grant and pairs older artists and artisans (small manufacturers of soap, glass, furniture, etc.) with youth to pass on skills.

3. The Village:

Contact persons: Mary Francis Poh (Not listed)

Lois Request (Not listed)

Judy Donaldson (Retired Professor of Arts)

judydonaldson@gmail.com

The Village as a concept is spreading rapidly throughout the country. There are 140 nationwide. The interest has to do with the fact that the numbers of “baby boomers”, in relationship with other age groups, are increasingly reaching retirement age. The concept promotes “aging in place” by recruiting volunteers to work with seniors to perform tasks that the aged are not able to do. There is increasing interest in this concept as there are retired/retiring persons in this area.