

Mission Study Report

Union Presbyterian Church of Los Altos

October 7, 2009

PREFACE

This Mission Study Report was prepared in anticipation of the formation of a Pastor Nominating Committee and its search for a new Senior Pastor for Union Presbyterian Church (UPC) of Los Altos. In composing this report the following members of the Mission Study Team have prayed and listened to discern God's vision for our church.

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Gratitude is extended to the Session and our Office Manager, Jodie Signes, for their support and assistance.

Adopted by the Session on October 7, 2009.

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."
Romans 5:1-2

In February of 2009 Los Altos Union Presbyterian Church (UPC) established a team to develop this Mission Study Report which sets forth a new mission and vision for UPC. The report's objective is to both provide information necessary for the search of a new Senior Pastor and to share this information with UPC's Session and staff to advance our church's ministries.

A large body of data was obtained in May and June of 2009 via two detailed surveys: one for the adults in our congregation and another for the youth. The response was very encouraging and informative. We received 142 responses (85% of church attendees) to the Adult Survey (See Appendix 1) and 14 responses to the Youth Survey which approximates the average youth group attendance (See Appendix 2). In addition to the formatted answers to questions, there were hundreds of written comments. After our committee's review of the survey results, three discussions were held with the congregation to communicate these results and to obtain input on additional questions (See Appendix 3). Demographics, as well as church historical and program information, also were gathered.

Prayerful analysis of this information helped us develop the insights and vision contained in this report. Additionally, the survey information already has proven useful to various church leaders and committees in planning programs and activities.

II. BRIEF HISTORY OF UNION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ⁱ

"Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

Acts 20:28

The town of Los Altos was founded in 1907 when a new Southern Pacific Railroad line brought San Franciscans to the milder Peninsula climate. Paul Shoup, the "Father of Los Altos", helped form the Altos Land Company that enticed San Franciscans to ride the train down to the country to purchase lots starting at \$250. Shoup constructed one of the town's first buildings, a two-story structure, on Second and Main Streets. The second floor, a public hall above a grocery store, was the site of the first worship services in Los Altos.

In 1909 retired minister O. M. Hester established a Methodist congregation in town when he gathered people for worship and Bible study. Because the congregation included a variety of Protestant faiths, the church decided not to affiliate with any particular denomination. On Easter Sunday, March 23, 1913, the members affirmed their Articles of Faith and the Union Church of Los Altos was established as a community church in Los Altos.

On the day of its incorporation, April 14, 1914, Union Church of Los Altos numbered thirty-four members. Once officially established by the congregation and the state of California, Union Church found a site for a permanent church home. In 1914 the "Little Brown Church" was built on the corner of Third Street and San Antonio Road.

A succession of retired ministers and a seminary student cared for the small church until 1917 when the Reverend Thomas Landels from London began his ministry. He served the growing church for over 23 years until 1940. Our church's Landels room commemorates his ministry. Reverend Leroy Coburn served briefly as the next pastor until the Air Corps called him to chaplaincy during World War II. Reverend Arthur Bailey filled the open pastoral position in 1942. He oversaw the expansion of the church after the war. By 1948 the Little Brown Church had become too small for the growing congregation. Reverend Bailey retired in 1952 after serving ten years.



Reverend Stewart Harro came next to serve as pastor in 1952. Having outgrown the downtown building, the congregation purchased six acres of land on University Avenue in 1953 for the site of a new 36,000-square-foot church. The first buildings constructed were the sanctuary and a manse. Since Reverend Bailey made a bequest for the construction of a new fellowship hall, it was named Bailey Hall. The sanctuary was completed in 1957 and dedicated at a worship service on September 8, 1957.



In 1962 another major, defining change occurred when Union Church of Los Altos decided to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church. The congregation voted on January 19, 1962, to become the Union Presbyterian Church of Los Altos. Reverend Harro served the church for 25 years until 1977.

The Reverend Kent Meads next held the position of Pastor and Head of Staff for 12 years, 1979 to 1992. Pastor Meads was known for his scholarly expository teaching and pastoral care in times of crisis. Reverend Mike Clark followed, serving UPC for 14 years as Senior Pastor from 1994-2008. Pastor Clark, too, was widely respected for his expository teaching and preaching. He was also dedicated to mission outreach both locally and abroad. Dr. George Gilchrist became UPC's Interim Pastor in the spring of 2008.

Building renovations have continued over time. In 1988, a new 6300-square-foot wing was constructed for staff offices as well as more meeting rooms and classrooms. The sanctuary was renovated in 1992 and the kitchen in 2003. A second manse was completed on the church property in 2005. The first manse is currently being renovated and remodeled.



III. LOS ALTOS COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:10

A. Location

Union Presbyterian Church is located in the residential area of an upscale bedroom community in Silicon Valley close to downtown of Los Altosⁱⁱ (See Appendix 4). Downtown is composed of small businesses, two supermarkets and professional offices. Amenities include six small neighborhood shopping areas, some of California's best-rated schools, 11 neighborhood parks, 17 Christian churches and state-of-the-art medical services. Los Altos Hills, adjacent to Los Altos, offers hiking trails, access to the Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space Preserve, and a popular Little League Baseball field.

B. Schools

"Well-known for academic excellence, all nine of the Los Altos School District (elementary) schools are among the top one percent of schools in the state of California. The district as a whole has received the highest standardized test scores of all districts in California for seven years in a row, according to the Associated Press. All three high schools (in the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District) have been named California Distinguished Schools, while Mountain View High has also been selected as a National Distinguished School."ⁱⁱⁱ

Foothill College, within a mile of UPC, is an award-winning community college that serves approximately 18,000 day, evening and online students.^{iv} The diverse student population, including many students from abroad, offers great potential for growing the UPC family. Other recognized educational institutions nearby include Stanford, Santa Clara and San Jose State Universities.

There are numerous private and parochial schools in and near Los Altos. In 1991, The King's Academy (TKA) was incubated at UPC. Now located in Sunnyvale, TKA's student population is more than 800. Several UPC children now attend TKA, and a number are graduates of the high school.

In 2008 two new Christian schools found a home at UPC: The University Child Development Center (pre-school)^v and Heritage Academy (Christian classical education for K-6).^{vi} In 2009-2010, the combined population of the schools will be 80 students. UPC also has a number of home-schooled children and has opened its doors to their monthly "oral reports club" and to BASIC, a Bay Area home-schooling parents' group.

US Census Bureau Information

The following information summarizes the data detailed in Appendix 5, "First View of 2009", based on US Census Bureau information extracted from the local area within two miles of UPC and reviewed by the Percept Group, Inc.

C. Base Demographics

At the time of the Percept Group report, 41,478 people resided within the two-mile radius of UPC, an increase of about 6% since 1990. The average population growth in the United States (US) was significantly higher. The projected growth rate between 2009 and 2014 of the church area was only 1.5%, or about 600 people, in contrast with the US expected growth rate of 5%.

D. Area Diversity

Financial: About 81% of the households in the immediate area were financially affluent at the time of the Percept Group report, with an average annual income of \$168,799. This was significantly higher than the average household income in the US (\$68,000) at the same time.

Ethnicity/Race: Caucasians represented 71% of the population in the immediate area at the time of the Percept Group report. Asians made up nearly 20% of the population, Hispanics approximately 6% and other ethnic and racial groups accounted for the remaining 3% of the local population. The area's Asian population was projected to increase from 20% to 23% between 2009 and 2014.

Age groups: At the time of the Percept Group report, the population in this area was older than in the US as a whole, with people 28 years and older making up 68% of the population here in comparison to 59% of the US population. (Note: 68% of the 121 adults who answered the UPC Adult Survey question regarding their age were over 55 years old.)

Households with Children: Single parent households consisted of only 13% of the population as compared to 30% on average in the US.

E. Educational Attainment

The area around UPC was reported to have a very high level of educational attainment compared to the US in general. Ninety-five percent of those age 25 and above had graduated from high school (compared to the national average of 80.4%), and 66.5% of those over the age 25 were college graduates compared to 24.4% in the United States. (According to the 2007 US Census, 41% of college graduates living in the area had graduate or professional degrees.)^{vii}

F. Social and Community Concerns

Social conditions known to place the UPC area at risk were very low compared to the US on average. The UPC area had a substantially smaller number of households below the poverty line, adults without high school diplomas and households that are led by a single parent. With social and living conditions significantly better than the rest of the US on average, the highest concern reported was related to "hopes and dreams" (32%), making ends meet (20%) and community problems (18%). The Percept report noted that as people age and populations diversify, resistance to change increases. Therefore, the potential for resistance to change in our area was reported to be somewhat high.

G. Faith Preference

Only 6.5% of the households in the UPC area were reported by the Percept Group to be likely to express a Presbyterian/Reformed preference, slightly higher than the national average of 4.7%. Overall, 48% of the population in the immediate area were not involved in or part of a Christian religious affiliation compared to 35% of the US population. On the other hand, 27% of the local population were considered receptive to a Christian religious affiliation of some kind.

David T. Olson, author of The American Church, reported that in 2000, only 4.2% of the population in Santa Clara County attended an evangelical, Catholic or mainline Christian church. Attendance in the state of California at that time was reported to be 14.4%.^{viii}

H. Programs and Services

Programs and services most attractive to the UPC area were recreational in nature (music, art, sports, camping, activities for retirees, and youth programs). The area's population preferred recreation programs by 45%, while preferences for spiritual development were 21% (US 25%), community/social services 16% (US 25%), and personal development 8% (US 10%).

I. Conclusions

The US Census data, and the study performed by the Percept Group in early 2009, found the immediate area around UPC to be on the older side, highly educated, financially affluent and with lower than average social conditions that put household members at risk. At the same time, people reported a higher than average interest in the arts and recreational pursuits and some resistance to change. Overall the likely faith involvement level and preference for historic Christian religious affiliations were reported to be very low when compared to national averages. The potential for financial giving seemed to be quite high at the time of the report. The favorable social conditions in and around Los Altos may make people less likely to realize they need the grace of God for salvation through Christ. The most likely way to reach people may be through arts and recreational programs.

IV. WHO WE ARE

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Romans 8:16-17

A. What We Believe

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."

Romans 1:16

The Adult Survey and Youth Survey taken in May and June, 2009, indicated strong agreement between the two age groups' Christian beliefs. Most surveyed in both groups indicated they believed:

- The Bible is the inspired and true Word of God.
- God created mankind.
- Jesus was born of a virgin.
- Christ was physically resurrected.
- There is no way to salvation but through belief in Christ.
- It is important to make a personal commitment to Christ.

B. Our Denomination

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Hebrews 11:6

Union Presbyterian Church's pastors have always preached that the Bible is God's authoritative word, following the teachings of Christ Jesus and the doctrine of salvation by God's grace through Christ. While a member of the Presbyterian Church USA (PC/USA), UPC's theological position has not always aligned with that of the PC/USA. For instance, in the 1960s when the denomination began supporting controversial socio-political causes with mission funding, UPC decided to designate 100% of its own mission funds rather than submit these to the PC/USA for allocation. Another example of our theological stance is that UPC supports the "Fidelity and Chastity" clause in the PC/USA constitution. Despite some differences, UPC continues to participate in our Presbytery. Members have served as Moderators of Presbytery and the Synod and currently serve on some Presbytery committees.

C. Congregation and Attendance Overview

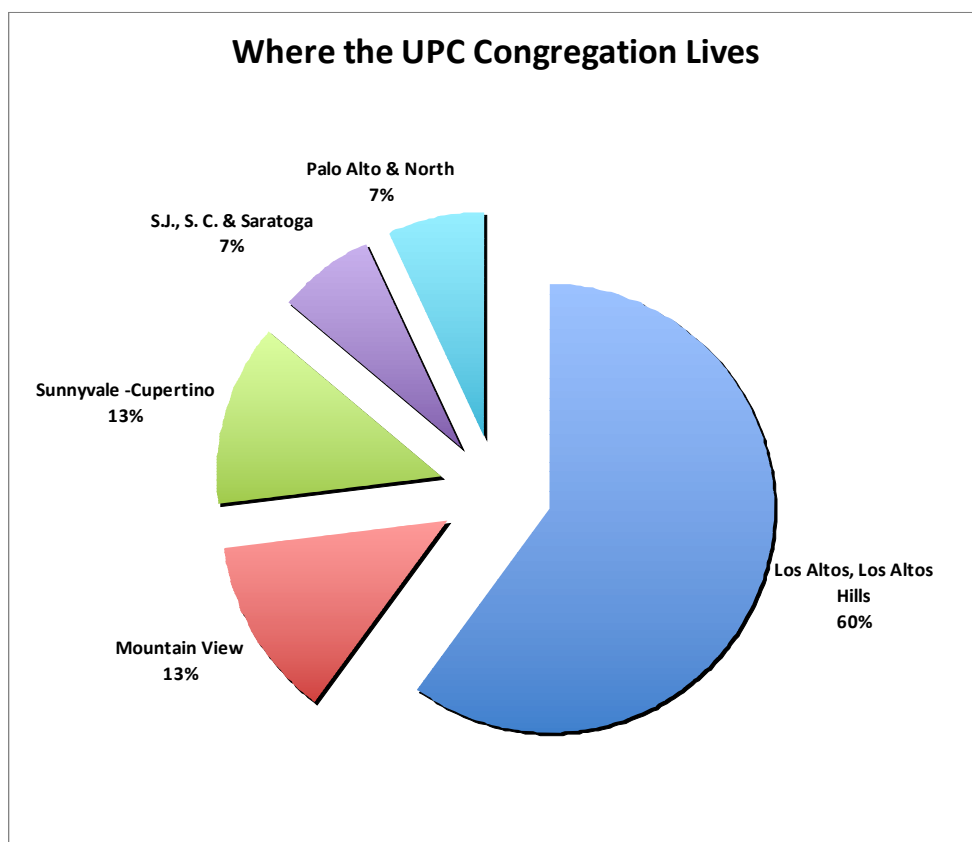
"As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:4-5

Union Presbyterian Church's membership numbers peaked at over 700 in the 1960s, though attendance numbers are not known. Later, attendance was much lower and flattened to the 220 to 250 range with some variances beginning in the early 1990s through 2007 (See Appendix 6). Breakfast worship services, initiated in 2002, have been popular among those who prefer a more contemporary worship format. Attendance at UPC has been divided between three services with a more traditional worship service at 11:00 attended by 40% to 50% of the membership. Total current attendance ranges around 160.

In the late 1990s children and youth program enrollments dropped off by about 30%. Enrollments have partially recovered in the past several years, however fewer children under Kindergarten age are entering the program and the children's Sunday School attendance compared to enrollments is low.

Those currently attending UPC reside in and near Los Altos.



D. Recent Organizational History

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."
Colossians 3:15

In 2005, under the leadership of our Senior Pastor and Session, UPC conducted a very successful "40 Days of Purpose" small-group study program. Several of the small groups that started with that program are still active today. At the time of the congregational survey there remained approximately 80 people attending small groups in the church.

Following the "40 Days of Purpose" program and somewhat driven by "Purpose Driven Church" concepts, the organizational structure of the Session was changed in such a way that lay elders' responsibilities were reduced in key areas. This inadvertently reduced

communication and joint session/staff participation in important areas of decision making. At the same time, personnel problems were growing.

In 2007, personnel difficulties heightened and a number of staff departed including the Senior Pastor who left in the first half of 2008. Average attendance has fallen to the 160 range, and some lingering issues still affect the harmony of the church. In May, 2008, an Interim Pastor joined the staff to help the church make the transition to a new Senior Pastor.

In early 2008, Session responsibilities were changed to reestablish lay elder involvement in key activities of the church. Concerted efforts have been made to establish better communication with the congregation. Session continues to evaluate our organizational structure and to interface with the Personnel Committee to monitor and review staff assignments and responsibilities.

As this transition time has been hard on the congregation, there is a strong desire to find a new Senior Pastor who will revitalize the ministry to all ages in our church.

E. Facilities

"In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in which God lives by his Spirit."
Ephesians 2:21-22

The UPC campus is located on a quiet street of ranch-style homes, a short distance from a major thoroughfare and one mile from a freeway that traverses the County of Santa Clara to the south and stretches northward to San Francisco. While the church building is not highly visible, it is easily accessible from the communities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and beyond.

Union Presbyterian Church and its two manses occupy approximately 6 acres of land. The church sanctuary and balcony seat nearly 300 people. A raised platform holds a pipe organ, grand piano, and seating for the choir. On the first floor and adjacent to the sanctuary is the large fellowship hall, a remodeled industrial-sized kitchen and a well-stocked library. Also on the first floor are church offices, conference rooms and the offices of *Help One Child*, a ministry birthed at UPC in 1993.^{ix} On the second floor there is a choir room, youth rooms, many Sunday School classrooms, and a nursery. Several of these rooms are shared with the two schools on site during the week, as well as with Bible study groups and other organizations that use the facility weekly or monthly.

The original manse is a 2500-square-foot ranch home built on a half acre in 1956. It has 3+ bedrooms, 2-1/2 baths and a 2-car garage. Currently being remodeled, this manse compares to other houses in the neighborhood valued at \$1,500,000 to \$1,700,000. The rental value of this manse is \$4,000 per month at the time of this report.

The second manse (3 bedrooms, 2 baths) built on a quarter acre in 2005 contains 1900-square-feet of living space and a larger garage. Because this manse is newer, it is similar in value to the original manse.

Each manse has a built-in office, fenced yard and space for privacy. To all appearances, the manses look like part of the residential neighborhood rather than part of the church facility.

Because the church parcel is large, there is ample room for parking and a large park-like lawn area enjoyed by UPC and our neighbors. It is used for all-church picnics, our annual youth soccer camps, vacation Bible school games, neighborhood dog-walking and outdoor wedding receptions.

The well-used church and grounds are in fair condition but could use improvement. The sanctuary has not been redecorated since 1992 and appears dated. The kitchen, social hall and many of the upstairs rooms have recently been redecorated. A deluxe playhouse has been added to the playground. Renovations of the original manse and sanctuary are high priorities for 2010.



F. Finances

"Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness."
1 Chronicles 16:28-29

Union Presbyterian Church is and has been blessed with a generous congregation. We do not ask for pledges but for many years have done UPC's budgeting on a faith basis. UPC has not had to borrow funds to finance building programs or facility enhancements. The congregation is regularly advised on how we are doing financially and of any special needs. (See Appendix 7 for financial history for the past 19 years.)

Our monthly giving pattern has historically been uneven. We normally receive 20% or more of our income in the month of December. For the eleven months of January through November, UPC's average monthly income has been about \$60,000 per month with lower income levels during the summer months. Historically, our reserves from prior years are used to meet the cash flow needs during the summer. All this makes forecasting difficult, and we often do not have a clear financial picture until after December. Of interest during this transition period is that in December, 2008, giving totaled \$280,000 for the month. This amounted to 31% of UPC's 2008 income and held off potential staff reductions. (See Appendix 8 for monthly giving patterns for past four years.)

A new and important source of revenue, about \$4,500 per month during the school year, comes from fees provided by the two Christian schools that use UPC's facilities. The Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley^x also uses our facilities and provides \$750 per month to UPC's income.

2009 UPC Budget

Account	2009	
Title	Budget	% of Budget
Missions	155,213	19.5%
Outreach	14,000	1.8%
Personnel	415,144	52.1%
Worship & Arts	12,500	1.6%
Buildings & Grounds	110,000	13.8%
Childrens Ministries	10,550	1.3%
Youth Ministries	8,300	1.0%
Adult Discipleship	2,250	0.3%
Administration	55,050	6.9%
Fellowship	14,200	1.8%
Ministry	-	
	797,207	
Staff Bonus	6,138	
Major repairs	-	
	803,345	

V. WHAT OUR CONGREGATION IS DOING

"My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Colossian 2:2-3

A. Worship

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care." Psalm 95:6-7

1. Services

At the time of the congregational Survey, UPC offered two family-oriented contemporary breakfast worship services in Bailey Hall and a third, more traditional service at 11 o'clock. Attendance was about evenly split between the sum of the breakfast services and the traditional service. Session voted to change the schedule for summer to only one breakfast service, followed by a Sunday School hour and then the more traditional service.

Session has decided that UPC's worship service schedule for the fall of 2009 will return to two breakfast services and an 11 o'clock traditional service beginning September 20, 2009.

2. Music

The Celebration Singers, UPC's adult choir, is a vital part of worship and presents beautiful anthems at the 11 o'clock service throughout the year. At Easter and Christmas, they give God-glorifying performances which often include drama and liturgical dance. A praise band and vocalists lead the worship in the breakfast services. A newly-formed intergenerational handbell choir will perform regularly in all three services in upcoming months. A group of teens, the "Messiah Kwiah", occasionally performs at worship services.

B. Discipleship

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.
Matthew 4:19-20

1. Children

The congregational Survey indicated that people at UPC put high importance on its Sunday School program for children, and they viewed the current program positively. While recently UPC's classes have been small in number of students, a team of volunteer teachers presents a high quality of instruction.

One of UPC's best outreach programs is our well-organized Vacation Bible School every summer. This year 27 teens and about 50 adults sang, taught and played with over 125 local children. An illustration of this program's success is that many children who graduate from camp look forward to returning as volunteers. UPC also offers a soccer/cheerleading camp. This summer 78 children were coached by four well-trained college-aged Christians. Seventeen children accepted Christ at this camp.



2. Youth

Currently, the youth program at UPC consists of middle and high school groups. The groups meet once a week for fellowship, games and Biblical discussions year-around. The Associate Pastor, along with a Youth Associate, has coordinated the youth programs for several years. Typically, about 15 to 20 junior and senior high students attend the weekly events. Throughout the year, these youth participate in service activities and fundraising events, as well as attend concerts and retreats.

UPC youth often read Scripture at Sunday worship services. They are seen in many areas of church life: on the worship music team, handling the sound and technical needs of church, participating in the fall Melodrama and Christmas programs, and playing major roles at Vacation Bible School and Sports Camp. Most years, teens travel to Santa Marta in Mexico during spring break to build/repair orphanage facilities and to hold Vacation Bible School. At Christmas for the past two years, teens have joined with children and adults to pack and wrap shoeboxes for the Samaritan's Purse mission project.

The Associate Pastor and Youth Associate also coordinate the Youth Sunday School classes throughout the school year with several parent volunteers. This summer about ten to fifteen youth have participated in an intergenerational class on Sunday mornings. This class and several discipleship groups, led by the Associate Pastor and a Youth Associate, instruct youth how to be followers of Christ.

3. Adults

The adult discipleship team focuses on adult Sunday School classes, small groups, midweek Bible studies, the church library and retreats. There is usually one class offered on Sunday mornings attended by fifteen to thirty adults. During the summer of 2009, two classes were offered: a series presented by missionaries home from the field and an intergenerational class focusing on doctrines of Christianity. Both classes were well attended. In addition, there are a number of midweek men's and women's Bible studies and several active small groups that meet monthly or semi-monthly.

For more than 25 years, a small group has met weekly to UPC to pray. This informal group always welcomes prayer requests (which can be left in the church office) and more people to pray with them.

C. Missions At Home and Abroad

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19

Overseas and local missions are an integral part of church life at UPC. For many years, the church has given 20% or more of its annual income to missions and kept in close touch with the work of our missionaries. Currently eight of the missionaries we support grew up at UPC or were part of the church family before joining the mission field. Beyond financial support, UPC encourages both our missionaries and our parishioners by regularly sending youth and adults on short-term mission trips. In 2008, 38 youth and adults from UPC visited mission sites in Mexico, the Ukraine, China, and Peru. The trip to the Santa Marta orphanage and school in Baja California has been a popular annual mission for more than 20 years.

Locally, UPC supports *City Team Ministries, the Community Services Agency, Community Pregnancy Centers, Young Life, and Help One Child*. UPC congregants also provide many hours of volunteer services to our community for projects that include reading

and general tutoring, coaching youth sports, food services, homelessness abatement, a Christmas party for foster children, service club involvement, prayer support, counseling and child care.

Union Presbyterian Church has a long history of opening its doors to service groups, especially those with a Christian affiliation. In addition to the two schools and *Help One Child*, UPC hosts *The Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley*; *Boy Scout Troop 31* (anchored at UPC for over 50 years); *Bible Study Fellowship*; *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the *Parent-Child Connection support group*.

Below is a summary of this year's UPC financial support of missions (all of which is specifically designated).

Mission/ministry category	Number supported	% By number	Funding budgeted	% of Mission Budget
Local	14	35%	\$57,100	38.5%
National	4	10%	\$11,400	7.7%
Mexico	3	7.5%	\$15,800	10.6%
Overseas	19	47.5%	\$64,072	43.2%
TOTALS	40	100.00%	\$148,372.00	100.00%

Total Mission and Local Outreach Giving budgeted for 2009: \$148,372

D. Fellowship

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."
Acts 2:42

Many of UPC's fellowship activities originated years ago with the Presbyterian Women's organization. Currently, many women, represented on the Session by the Fellowship Elder, are responsible for the breakfast and fellowship on Sunday mornings, as well as other activities including Bible studies, the Uplifters service group, a book club, the Christmas tea, Ash Wednesday communion breakfast, spring and fall luncheons, and memorial receptions.

Family-friendly Sunday mornings at UPC's breakfast worship services and the bountiful fellowship hour after the 11 o'clock traditional worship service offer ideal opportunities to welcome visitors and encourage one another with loving support. Fellowship also happens regularly at UPC with the Mariner's group activities and other intergenerational events. These events include Big Sunday church picnic, our annual July 4th pancake breakfast, a summer pool party, bingo night, the spaghetti melodrama, the annual square dance, Christmas caroling and craft night, family movie nights, missions potlucks, and other impromptu gatherings.

E. Ministries

*"Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

For the purposes of this section of the report, the word "ministry" refers to care given by people at UPC to those within our church family.

The deacon network is UPC's primary ministry arm. Currently eleven deacons divide the responsibility of looking out for the well-being of those who attend our church. They meet once a month under the leadership of the Interim Pastor to share prayer requests and to report on needs within the congregation.

Other forms of ministry at UPC include service on the Session and the various committees and groups that serve in the following areas: weekly prayer, sanctuary and fellowship hall Sunday preparation, welcoming at the Sunday services, music and drama, technical audio-visual support, communion preparation, food preparation, teaching, fellowship organization, supportive roles with youth and children, library maintenance, clean-up and building maintenance jobs, administrative work, and much more that is unnoticed by all but God.

Two immediate ministry concerns indicated by the Adult Survey, were the need for a Sunday morning Prayer Team and for more Sunday School teachers.

VI. CONGREGATIONAL STRENGTHS

*"The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."
Psalm 29:11*

UPC is and has been blessed with dedicated and talented people who love the Lord and seek to serve Him.

We are united in faith and in our enthusiasm for local and foreign missions.

We have been blessed with a generous congregation that meets the financial needs of the church.

Our congregation shows great care for one another in praying together and serving each other in times of need. Visitors are warmly greeted and welcomed.

UPC has many small Bible-study or covenant groups to which new members are always welcome.

Our buildings and church grounds are pleasant and put to good use.

We are blessed by our fellowship with each other.

VII. CONGREGATIONAL CHALLENGES

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

James 1:2-3

The loss of several pastoral and music staff members in the past two years, coupled with the necessary discretion in personnel issues, has hurt and confused our congregation.

An immediate job of the new Senior Pastor will be to rebuild confidence in the leadership and future direction of the church.

The location of UPC, in an upscale residential neighborhood with little visibility, presents the need for thoughtful, well-prepared outreach and marketing.

The congregation's average age presents the need to bring more young Christians into leadership roles so that our church can develop effective ways to speak to the generations that follow. At UPC, only 12% of the adults who responded to the survey are under the age of 46.

Two working parents and child-rearing responsibilities present challenges for younger people to volunteer for leadership and teaching positions in the church. While volunteerism at UPC is high, the drop in attendance the past two years has left fewer hands to do more work.

Our aging church population has needs, too. UPC's active and organized deacons address many of these needs, but existing systems of care must be enhanced.

We are also challenged to understand our non-believing culture. We desire to learn and practice ways of communicating the love of God to the secular culture that surrounds us.

VIII. WHERE OUR CONGREGATION WANTS TO GO

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:5-6

A. Our Mission: Bowing to Christ, rising to serve Him

B. Our Vision: That the people at Union Presbyterian Church will become ignited by the Holy Spirit so that every knee will bow before Christ Jesus; that our love for God and one another will be so great that it cannot be contained within our doors but will burst forth to draw strangers of all ages to Christ.

C. Our Objectives

1. To be a church that teaches the Word of God. To be a warm church that attracts, welcomes, and spiritually feeds all who come to us so that they will be led to a realization of the saving grace of Christ.
2. To help people grow in their faith so that they will become mature Christ-centered people.
3. To particularly fulfill the needs of young families so that they and their children will make UPC their home.
4. To provide our youth with the knowledge, wisdom and spiritual strength to sustain their Christian beliefs as they go on to college and out into the world.
5. To support Christ-centered mission fields at home and abroad.

D. Our Timeline and Goals

In order to meet our vision and our objectives as stated, the following goals are suggested:

1. New Senior Pastor by September of 2010.
2. Teaching for all ages, by September of 2009: We will add to our Bible class offerings so that all ages are served, on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.
3. Church Unity (ongoing): We will grow together as a family in Christ, placing our focus on being His obedient servants. We will place in perspective all our differences and yield to God's plan for our church.
4. Church Growth (10% per year): We will encourage more people to come to Christ by first seeking ways to meet their needs. We especially desire to add young families to our church family.

5. Caring for Each Other (by March 2010): We will establish a Sunday morning prayer team and systems to better equip members to assist deacons in caring for our church family.
6. Continued Strength in Successful Areas (ongoing): We will continue to support the current programs that bring people to Christ and help them to mature. Among these are the missions programs, fellowship, choir, and youth programs.

IX. HOW WE ARE ADVANCING OUR GOALS

"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from this love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, than make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being in one spirit and purpose."

Philippians 2:2-3

The Adult and Youth Surveys used for this report yielded useful information in many areas. This information has already been shared with ministers and elders working in key areas.

Both as a result of this information and by the inspiration of church members, here are some targeted changes:

- A. We are developing a Sunday School class for pre-schoolers in the fall of 2009.
- B. An Evangelism Elder has been elected and a committee has been formed to help grow UPC.
- C. The Alpha Course^{xi} program is planned for October 2009. Twenty-six volunteers have already signed up to help run the program. The goal of the class is to strengthen our understanding of the fundamentals of our faith, to equip us to share that faith and to establish an outreach by inviting others to join us for the class.
- D. Prepare the Way Ministries^{xii} has been invited to return to give two seminars on how to maintain a Christian worldview in an increasingly secular world. In January 2010 there will be one seminar for adults and one for youth.

X. WHAT WE WANT IN A SENIOR PASTOR

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Romans 10:14

Union Presbyterian Church is in search for a Senior Pastor who will feed our spirits and intellects with Biblical truths and applications through expository teaching and preaching. We desire to be inspired by God's Word. We seek a pastor with talents to heal, unite, and energize our congregation. Likewise, we seek a wise leader who will organize and work with our session, staff, and volunteers to achieve the goals in the missions that

God has planned for us. As a small community, we look forward to welcoming the new Senior Pastor to the UPC family.

XI. CONCLUSION

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
John 15:4-5

Many months have been spent learning about who we are and discussing our church's hopes and dreams for the future. While our fingerprints are all over this report, we have worked to remain true to God's Word. Now is the time for those of us who worship at UPC to focus on the present, prayerfully discerning what God will have each of us do as we anticipate His bringing us a new Senior Pastor.

May this report be pleasing to God and glorify Him.

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

John 15:8-11

APPENDICES

1. Union Presbyterian Church Adult Survey Responses 2009
2. Union Presbyterian Church Youth Survey Responses 2009
3. Notes from three discussions with congregation after worship services on May 17, 2009
4. MapQuest Map of Los Altos
5. Percept Group's "First View 2009 Report" prepared for the Presbytery of San Jose, Union Presbyterian Church, Los Altos, California, Study Area Definition: 2.0 mile radius
6. Union Presbyterian Church Attendance Chart
7. Financial History Chart
8. Monthly Giving Chart

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Based on "History of Los Altos Union Presbyterian Church" by Rev. Mike Clark, May 2001.

ⁱⁱ www.Losaltoschamber.org

ⁱⁱⁱ www.Losaltoschamber.org

^{iv} www.Foothill.fhda.org

^v www.Universitycdc.com

^{vi} www.Heritageacademyonline.org

^{vii} US Census Bureau, Census 2007

^{viii} www.Theamericanchurch.org

^{ix} www.Helponechild.org

^x www.Cornerstonechurch.net

^{xi} www.Alpha.org

^{xii} www.Preparetheway.com

A. Short Summary of Adult Survey Responses

The Adult Survey was completed in May, 2009, by 142 people at UPC, making participation in the Survey nearly 85% of those who regularly attended. Some respondents did not answer every question, so response percentages are based on the number who did respond. For instance, only 121 people answered the question with regard to their age. Of those who answered the question, 65% reported being over the age of 55. For more information and to know how many people answered a specific question, please refer to the full summary of Adult Survey Responses following this shorter summary in the Appendix of the Report.

1. Seventy-four percent of respondents said they attended church almost every Sunday and 70% said that they were in a Bible study. Nevertheless, a strong majority believed that UPC adult education programs and prayer support should be strengthened.
2. Sixty percent did not have enough information about children's and youth programs at UPC to rate their effectiveness, but those familiar with the programs gave them high ratings. While adults believed that adult and parental support needed to be strengthened with youth, a very small number indicated willingness to do that.
3. Concerning personal ministry, 84% of respondents said that they had been encouraged to serve within our church. Service in UPC's kitchen and helping at Vacation Bible School were the forms of service mostly highly reported. Approximately 18% reported serving in the community outside of UPC-related programs.
4. Sixty-seven percent of respondents believed that UPC should continue giving about 23% of its annual budget to missions, while 12% thought that was not enough and 21% thought that it was too much. Ninety percent liked the appearances of visiting missionaries at worship services and found them interesting and informative.
5. The five favorite outreach programs at UPC were reported to be:
 - a. Vacation Bible School (92%)
 - b. Help One Child (82%)
 - c. Young Life (63%)
 - d. City Team (60%)
 - e. Santa Marta work trip (57%)

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6. The preferred times and style of worship services were about equally divided between those who reported attending the breakfast services and the 11 o'clock service, and 75% reported that they attended the service they did because of service style, kind of music, and time. Availability of children's Sunday School was important to 13%.
 7. Respondents said that the following was most important in a worship service:
 - a. Reading of scripture (87%).
 - b. Content of the sermon (86%).
 - c. Children and youth choir participation (80%).
 - d. Special music programs apart from weekly worship (79%).
 - e. Delivery of the sermon (77%).
 - f. Fellowship on Sunday mornings (73%).
 8. Seventy-one percent felt they were warmly greeted when they first came to UPC, and 86% said they had been encouraged to attend fellowship activities. Respondents rated the Spaghetti Melodrama (71%) and the 4th of July Pancake Breakfast (68%) as their favorite fellowship activities.
 9. Agreement and partial agreement about faith-sharing matters:
 - a. Some agreed they were committed to bringing others to Christ (22%), and some partly agreed (52%).
 - b. Some agreed they were strong enough in their own faith to teach/disciple others (30%) and others partly agreed (42%).
 - c. Some agreed that they relied on their actions rather than words to convey the gospel (40%) and some partly agreed (46%).
 - d. Some agreed they were knowledgeable enough to discuss their faith with others (35%) and some partly agreed (47%).
 - e. Some agreed they would like to take a class on how to share the gospel (18%), and some partly agreed (36%).
 - f. Some agreed they would like to take a class on how to disciple others (15%), and others partly agreed (39%).

About half of the respondents had invited one or two people to worship or to a small group this year; about a quarter had invited no one; and about a quarter had invited more than two.

10. At the time of the Survey, respondents believed that UPC appealed more to seniors/older adults (66%) and to families with children (48%). Ninety-three percent of respondents believed that UPC should be deliberate in being more appealing to families with children. Eighty percent also believed UPC should work to attract more youth/teens.
11. In matters of faith, respondents believed:
 - a. The Bible is the inspired word of God (72%) and literal word of God (23%).
 - b. God created mankind (96%).
 - c. Jesus' bodily resurrection was an actual event (95%).
 - d. Jesus was born of a virgin mother (92%).
 - e. There is no way to salvation but through belief in Christ (85%).
 - f. The Bible has the answers for all the basic questions of life (85%).
 - g. It is the duty of all Christians to share their faith affirmatively (84%).
 - h. All persons should be eligible for church leadership, regardless of sexual orientation (19%).
12. Good news. At the time of the Survey, more than 80% of respondents agreed or partly agreed that:
 - a. They were well informed about UPC activities.
 - b. Volunteer leadership was valued at UPC.
 - c. Leadership and contributions of youth were valued at UPC.
 - d. Visitors found UPC friendly and inviting.
 - e. Members were encouraged to participate in church ministries.
 - f. They were hopeful about UPC's future.
 - g. UPC did a good job of encouraging children and youth participation.
13. Not so good news. Percentages reflect agreement or partial agreement of respondents.
 - a. 23% thought UPC successfully drew visitors from our community.

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- b. 39% thought UPC had an effective new member program.
 - c. 46% thought issues affecting the church community were discussed openly.
 - d. 54% thought UPC had an effective organizational structure with clear lines of authority and communication.
 - e. 58% thought UPC did a good job of encouraging *young adults* to participate.
 - f. 60% thought theological and biblical implications of important decisions were discussed.
 - g. 61% were well informed about what Session, Deacons, and various committees were doing.
 - h. 62% thought UPC's leadership reflected the thinking of the majority of its members.
 - i. 63% thought volunteer leaders received adequate training.
 - j. 76% thought the maintenance and cleanliness of the church building and grounds were satisfactory.

14. Respondents thought that the following activities should be UPC priorities:

- a. Providing a worship service that deepens the experience of God (95%).
- b. Teaching children and youth about the Bible (93%).
- c. Teaching children and youth about Christian living (92%).
- d. Expressing the gospel in terms that are applicable to daily living (91%).
- e. Encouraging and equipping members to care for, pray for, and support one another (88%).
- f. Providing Christian fellowship (83%).

15. Top priorities of a pastor, according to respondents at the time of the Survey:

- a. Preparing and preaching sermons (96%).
- b. Vision and leadership (93%).
- c. Ensuring that the congregation maintains a Biblical focus (83%).
- d. Emphasizing the spiritual growth of members (75%).

16. Respondents preferred a pastor who:

- a. Leans toward being outgoing and engaging (93%).
- b. Leans toward sermons that emphasize the Bible, versus contemporary issues (87%).
- c. Leans toward integrating private life with the life of the congregation (85%).
- d. Leans toward helping people figure things out for themselves (83%).

B. Short Summary of Youth Survey Responses

The Youth Survey was completed in June, 2009, by 14 youth, 92% of whom attended a breakfast service at the time of the Survey and 100% of whom attended Sunday School. Boys and girls were equally divided, with 50% being between the ages of 11 and 13 and 50% being 14 years old and above. Respondents did not answer all the questions. For instance, only 50% answered the questions “What would inspire you to invite more friends to UPC?” and “What would be the best way for getting non-believing and/or un-churched teens to want to come to UPC?” The percentages noted below are based on questions that were answered by nearly all youth. For more information and to know how many youth answered a specific question, please refer to the full summary of Youth Survey Responses following this shorter summary in the Appendix of the Report.

1. At the time of the Survey, 86% said their worship was enhanced by the use of videos; 86% wanted more drama presentations; 79% preferred a contemporary worship format; and 79% appreciated a good sermon delivery.
2. Ninety-three percent of those surveyed said their youth program at Union was *definitely* effective in providing fun, Christ-oriented fellowship activities, with 93% thinking the program was effective in teaching Biblical truths, 79% thinking it was effective in providing service opportunities, and 79% thinking the program was effective in discipling youth.
3. Seventy-one percent said they would like more adult participation with youth, though only 50% (the younger respondents) wanted those adults to be their parents.
4. One hundred percent of the youth reported that they had been encouraged to serve within the church. Helping with Vacation Bible School, the music programs, and the trip to Santa Marta were their favored service activities, in that order.
5. The youth rated highly the fellowship at UPC, listing the Super Sunday BBQ, family movie nights, the Spaghetti Melodrama, and church picnics as their favorites.
6. Youth were mostly uncomfortable sharing the gospel with others and only 39% had invited friends to church youth activities, but 86% agreed or partly agreed that they would like classes in how to share the gospel and how to disciple others.
7. With regard to faith, respondents believed:
 - a. It is important to make a personal commitment to Christ (93%).
 - b. The Bible is the inspired word of God (50%) and literal word of God (43%).

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- c. God created mankind (100%).
 - d. Jesus' bodily resurrection was an actual event (93%).
 - e. Jesus was born of a virgin mother (93%).
 - f. There is no way to salvation but through belief in Christ (86%).
 - g. The Bible has the answers for all the basic questions of life (43%); 50% partly agreed.
 - h. It is the duty of all Christians to share their faith affirmatively (57%); 36% partly agreed.
 - i. All persons should be eligible for church leadership, regardless of sexual orientation (43%); 29% partly agreed.
8. Nearly all youth agreed or partially agreed that:
- a. They were able to share their concerns and hopes.
 - b. They were well-informed of UPC activities.
 - c. Youth leadership and contributions were valued.
 - d. UPC was a friendly church.
 - e. They were encouraged to participate.
 - f. Their meeting rooms at UPC were comfortable and inviting.
 - g. The maintenance and cleanliness of the building and grounds were satisfactory.
9. Few youth communicated with other UPC attendees through e-mail, text messaging or Facebook. They seldom checked the UPC website.
10. Looking to the future,
- a. Ninety-three percent of youth surveyed thought UPC should put a high priority on teaching children and youth about the Bible, about Christian living, and about how to keep their faith in difficult situations.
 - b. High priority (86%) was also placed on providing a worship service that deepens the experience of God and expresses the gospel in terms that are applicable to daily living.

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- c. Following close behind (85%) were the priorities of providing fellowship opportunities for the church family and preparing youth to share the good news of the gospel with the un-churched.

11. Youth hoped the new pastor would:

- a. Have a relaxed interpersonal style (100%).
- b. Present new ideas and approaches (93%).
- c. Nurture his relationship with the youth of the church (85%).