

## **Mission Statement**

(as approved by the congregation on April 5, 2009)

*First Presbyterian Church is called by God to be a spiritual home where we seek, encourage and equip people to live as life-long followers and servants of Christ.*

## **Vision Statement**

The year is 2014. Clarkston First Presbyterian Church is vigorously seeking Christ and serving others—together. Our church hears God's call upon us—to be a spiritual home where we seek, encourage and equip people to live as life-long followers and servants of Christ—and we strive to make that call a reality.

### ***A Spiritual Home***

*Prayer.* Prayer is a large part of the foundation of our church. A faithful group stands ready to pray for God's grace whenever adversity arises. Prayer chains connect the diverse groups within our congregation in lifting up joys and concerns. Our leaders pray often for guidance and wisdom, seeking God's direction for the church. We, in turn, strengthen our faith by praying daily for God to lead our lives.

*Mutual Care.* People look out for each other in our church. "Spiritual care" is not just what the pastor does for us; it is a way of mutual love that characterizes all our relationships within the church. "They love one another!" is our church's reputation around the Valley (see John 13:34-35).

A trained team of spiritual caregivers maintains close contact with the people of our congregation and provides the first line of response when crises arise. Beyond this, a well-coordinated program of congregational care lies at the center of this mutual love. People with a variety of abilities and interests are quickly connected with those who have complementary needs. Whether it is a listening ear or a word of encouragement, whether it is a hand to hold or a hand with auto repair, whether it is advice with a complicated relationship or a confusing tax form or a nagging spiritual question, someone in the church is ready to respond and to help.

*Fellowship.* Fellowship is the glue that binds us together. Our mutual relationships develop and sustain our church community. Larger gatherings provide opportunities for both newcomers and long-time members to become acquainted with the church family. In smaller groups we grow in intimacy by sharing our successes, burdens, and doubts; creating personal accountability; and developing close relationships with others of like faith.

## ***Seeking, Encouraging and Equipping***

*Seeking new people for Christ.* The era, “If you build it, they will come,” has ended. We spend our days among people—classmates, coworkers, friends and neighbors—who may not have discovered God’s love for them in Jesus Christ. We are learning to articulate our faith comfortably and naturally, and are ready to help others see the connection between their lives and the gospel.

*Newcomers comfortably connected.* When visitors come to us, by invitation or curiosity, we welcome their presence and ready to incorporate them into the larger life of the church. An organized structure of small group Bible studies and social activities allows newcomers to move readily from curious exploration to deeper relationships. Friendliness leads to friendship, and friendship to covenant faithfulness.

*Worship.* We love our time together as the body of Christ. Our worship is marked by a hopefulness powered by God’s work around us, a seriousness driven by the authority of Scripture, and a joy born of our mutual love. Our walk of faith is encouraged and strengthened as we hear the Word, praise the Lord in music and prayer, and celebrate the sacraments together. We are a congregation that rejoices when we say to each other, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!” (Psalm 122:1)

*Training in Ministry.* Each member is a vital part of our congregation’s ministry. We equip and mobilize each other to minister to our church, our community, and the world beyond. This includes Biblically-based leadership training programs for small groups, congregational care, and evangelism through service. We adjust our training to address changing ministry needs.

*Leadership.* Our ministry flows out of well-coordinated and well-supported lay leaders. Our governing boards are sized appropriately to the number of the active members in the congregation and suitable to its makeup. Formal leadership is understood as an opportunity to grow in faith; those who seek it and are sought for it are those for whom it is an appropriate next step in their spiritual maturity.

## ***Life-Long***

We are a church populated across the age spectrum.

*Children and Youth.* Our ministries to children and teenagers and their families demonstrate the seriousness with which we take the proverb, “Train children in the right way, and when old they will not stray” (Proverbs 22:6). Children’s excitement about coming to church is only matched by the discoveries they bring home concerning who Jesus is and what it means to live in him. Teenagers find such value in belonging to a church home, receiving its love without criticism or prejudice, and seeing Christ’s life take root in their daily lives that others are attracted and find their lives changed. Parents

who come recognize the value we place on their children and experience a comparable care themselves. Our Christian Education facilities are clean, attractive and well appointed.

*Learning to Follow Through the Years.* Just as we take seriously the training up in faith of our children and grandchildren, so too do we take seriously our own continued sanctification. We have adopted a learning posture toward ourselves and toward Christ's will for us, and we eagerly look for new opportunities to grow in the way of Christ. We stay with each other long enough to grow beyond mere politeness into steadfast loyalty. We trust each other enough to live our lives openly and to listen when others tell us the truth in love (see Ephesians 4:15). We actively pursue robust dialogue about living by faith.

*Intergenerational.* But it does not adequately describe our church to say that people are growing spiritually from cradle to grave. Just as significant are the relationships that exist between people of dramatically different ages.

Children look forward to seeing the adults they know when they come to weekly gatherings. Teenagers are forming mentoring relationships with their elders. New parents, sometimes far from home, find support and wisdom from "surrogate grandparents" as they learn how to raise children. As we enter each new stage of life, someone is ready to offer us perspective and hope.

Young and old alike are discovering that their counterparts are far more interesting and less intimidating than they had imagined. People who previously thought themselves with nothing to offer are discovering just how valuable they are.

### ***Followers of Christ***

The Word of God provides real substance to our relationship with God. We are eager to study the Christian Scriptures and apply them to our daily lives.

*Reading and Proclaiming the Word.* We come to our weekly gatherings expecting to be met by the Word of God. Worship services center around serious inquiry into the Scriptures. Sound, intelligent, and well-prepared sermons matter to us. We find ourselves thinking and talking about the message throughout the week and reflecting on its implications for us.

*Bible Studies.* Similarly, we emphasize small-group fellowship and Bible study. The majority of us meets regularly to share concerns and joys and to strive to understand the Scriptures together. We encourage each other to participate and eagerly invite newcomers to join us. Our pastor and trained small-group leaders are available to help us deepen our understanding of the Scriptures. We use commentaries and other aids; however we trust the plain meaning of the Biblical text and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us hear God's voice.

## ***Servants of Christ***

*Service to the Community.* We are an enthusiastic band of “home missionaries” who understand that attending to the practical needs of our neighbors is central to the work of Christ’s kingdom. Our service is well known in the Valley. We are regularly seen doing yard work for those who no longer can, improving home accessibility for the disabled, and providing meals and friendship to homeless families. We enjoy close partnerships with local Christian organizations that serve those in need.

*World Mission.* Our ministry extends beyond our community’s boundaries and into the world. Our members regularly serve on short- and long-term mission projects. We train and support our members to bring skills, hope and servants’ hearts to places and people in need throughout the world. We actively give our tithes of time, energy and money, in places as far away as Asia, Africa, and South America, but as close as Asotin and Nez Perce Counties.

## ***Conclusion***

We have worked hard these past five years to reach this vision. It has not been an easy road. Nor do we believe that we have reached God’s will. We are not a perfect church. We hear complaints, but we do not let the complaints define our agenda or distract us from the work to which God has called us. Rather, we press on with the work that needs to be done. Christ’s call beckons us forward. One step at a time, we have seen God’s confirmation of the path we are taking. “The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day” (Proverbs 4:18).