

## Vision Task Force Report May 3, 2011

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”*  
*Matthew 28: 19-20*<sup>1</sup>

### **I. Introduction**

In October 2010, the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church (Covenant), College Station, Texas, commissioned a Vision Task Force to discern the direction God is calling the church to lead in ministry and mission over the next three to five years.

Covenant is a medium-sized church of 358 congregants, of which 308 are active members. Approximately one-third of the active membership is over the age of 65, and we historically lose 9% of the membership annually, to transfer or death. In the past 5 years, Covenant has experienced a total net growth of 5%; however, we have also noted a loss in total congregants in the past 3 years. Covenant has had a declining number of first-time visitors over the past two years; this is directly responsible for the loss of incoming ‘friends’ and total congregants.

In order to better understand the needs and hopes of Covenant’s members and friends, the Vision Task Force conducted a Vision Survey. There were 78 respondents, providing representation across all age groups. Based on the feedback from this survey, the Covenant congregation is best characterized as:

- (1) Being more traditional than contemporary in desired focus on worship, family, meaningful relationships, bible-study opportunities, and growth/direction;
- (2) Having a desire for additional youth and young adult opportunities that will attract new congregants;
- (3) Having a need for greater commitment and empowerment of laity members and committees to lead;
- (4) Having significant budgetary issues. Given the building mortgage liability, a limited number of dominant givers<sup>2</sup>, and the current economic climate, there is a need to get finances in order; and
- (5) “A warm and caring congregation that demonstrates its Christian call to care for one another.”

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from New International Version, ©2011

<sup>2</sup> For 2011, the top 12% of pledges amounted to 45% of the total. It would be desirable to have a greater number of large pledges. The median pledge is \$3,000, which needs to be significantly increased.

One key insight from the survey is that people are generally pleased with the current model of ministry. Covenant seems to be providing well for the group of constituents that wants to come and rest and restore their soul. It also seems to be meeting the needs of the group that wants to be spiritually nourished and grow in their faith. However, there remains room for improvement in cultivating a group that wants to carry God into our community with passion and purpose. A sense of mission is essential in order for us to meet two dominant challenges affecting the state of the Covenant congregation:

- (1) The current congregation size and slow growth rate, which is a hindrance in resolving the second issue;
- (2) The financial constraints of a building mortgage and the current economic climate, which require the prioritizing of remaining resources.

In order to meet these challenges, it is going to require a shift in the congregation's commitment to ownership of God's vision for Covenant – a greater spirit of volunteerism, a greater stewardship of time, talent, and financial resources. Relying on volunteers may sacrifice something in the way of quality, but will gain by empowering the congregation.

Covenant must “show” a passion for its mission to the community if we want to see our congregation and participation increase. Where will this passion come from? Who will take ownership of God's direction for this church? Who will do it? If not us, then who?

## **II. Defining and Embracing Covenant's Identity**

*“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him with all faithfulness...  
choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...  
but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”  
- Joshua 24: 14-15*

Looking towards a vision for the future of Covenant first requires a solid understanding of who we are as a church. What do we as a mainline Protestant church have to offer this community?

- Spiritual depth and gravitas;
- Bible-centered preaching and teaching, i.e, “meat” in the sermons;
- Wisdom from the congregation; and
- Connections within the church across age groups.

If congregants embrace these elements with passion and conviction, we believe Covenant can be an attractive place of life and worship for members of the community. Young adults (both university students and young professionals) make up a substantial portion of the community's population and are a key demographic group that Covenant would like to attract. They, in particular, are looking for an open-minded, uncritical place that will affirm their intellectual

curiosity and provide a stable “home” and supportive “family.” Covenant can be such a place for them. While bringing in young adults is not immediately going to bring in dollars, it remains as a worthy priority/ministry, and will define the future of the congregation.

In the words of Clark D. Cowden, executive presbyter of San Diego Presbytery, San Diego, California, “If our function is to participate in the mission of God on earth, then we need a form that focuses us and constantly funnels us in that direction. If you want to see different results, you will need to align yourself differently.” Rather than focusing primarily on internal issues, our church should focus on the preparation of the congregation to move *into* the community to serve our mission. We need to set up the bee hive to provide a base for the workers to harvest God’s crop in the community.

A mission statement defines in a paragraph or so any entity's reason for existence. It embodies its philosophies, goals, ambitions and mores. Any entity that attempts to operate without a mission statement runs the risk of wandering through the world without having the ability to verify that it is on its intended course. In order to better communicate this identity and purpose, we seek input from the Session on either updating or re-emphasizing our current mission statement:

Currently, the statement reads:

*“Covenant Presbyterian Church is a welcoming community of faith who reaches out, cares for one another, and proclaims the love of Jesus Christ to all.”*

Because the passive ‘welcoming’ is the word of choice, not the more active ‘go’ as stated in Matthew 28 (The Great Commission), we offer the following revision:

*“Covenant Presbyterian Church is a community of faith who reaches out, proclaiming the love of Jesus Christ to all, welcoming everyone, and caring for one another.”*

### **III. Our Values: Preparing the Congregation to Carry Out Our Mission.**

In order to understand the congregation’s perception of our church and the priorities we should be setting, the Vision Survey asked respondents to select words and phrases the congregation feels we *should demonstrate*. The Top 10 responses were:

- |                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Christ-centered    | (6) Personal Relationship with God |
| (2) Meaningful Worship | (7) Family                         |
| (3) Friendship         | (8) Prayer                         |
| (4) Spiritual growth   | (9) Caring                         |
| (5) Accepting          | (10) Financial Stewardship         |

Respondents were also asked to rate how well the congregation *currently demonstrates* these values, with a rating of 1 reflecting “Not at All” and a rating of 5 reflecting “Very Much.” For the 10 listed above, scores were satisfactory with the highest ratings awarded to the words “Accepting” and “Friendship.” The value that seems to require more work is “Financial Stewardship”, given an average rating of 3.4 (between “Sometimes” and “Often”).<sup>3</sup>

Next, respondents were asked to consider a set of 30 statements that capture some of the core values of Covenant Presbyterian Church. The Top 5 statements that the respondents feel best reflect the *current values* of Covenant are:

- A congregation that is responsive to members in crisis or hardship,
- Being an open and caring community of faith,
- Christian education opportunities for all ages,
- Bible-centered preaching and teaching, and
- Being welcoming to visitors and willing to do whatever it takes to connect with new people.

When asked to reconsider those same statements and select those that are essential for the *future* of Covenant, the responses were quite similar. The Top 5 values from the respondents for the future of Covenant are:

- Effective pastoral leadership,
- Being welcoming to visitors and willing to do whatever it takes to connect with new people,
- Bible-centered preaching and teaching,
- Being an open and caring community of faith, and
- Christian education opportunities for all ages.

Notice that “effective pastoral leadership” ranks quite high on the respondents’ list of values they believe important for our future -- this raises an important concern. Because of our size and financial situation, Covenant needs to be moving away from a pastor-driven model to a congregant-driven model. The congregation may expect the pastor (and perhaps associate pastors – whom we do not have funds to hire) to do the majority of the work in growing our church. Instead, the leadership of the church must challenge the congregation toward greater lay leadership and a greater willingness to volunteer their time and talent.

#### **IV. Near-Term Opportunities**

The last five questions on the Vision Survey were open-ended. The responses to this portion of the survey paint a rich picture of where we are as a church and where we hope to be in

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<sup>3</sup> The scores for each of the individual words/phrases are reported in the Appendix, along with other detailed survey statistics and responses.

the next three to five years.

Questions 10 and 11 asked participants to identify what experiences they currently find to be most meaningful and least meaningful at Covenant. In question 12, they were asked to provide examples of meaningful experiences from other churches that they would like to see incorporated at Covenant. Together these questions provide insight on what is working well now and on what areas can be improved in the near-term (1-3 years). Based on these responses, we identified the following three key areas in the current life of the church:

- A. The worship experience
- B. The congregants' sense of connectedness to one another and to the mission of our church
- C. Christian education and opportunities for spiritual and personal growth

### **A. The Worship Experience**

*Relevant committees: Worship, Church Life and Fellowship*

*“My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.”  
- Psalm 84:2*

Worship services were often cited as one of the most meaningful parts of our members' and friends' experiences at Covenant. Specific elements of Sunday morning service to consider include:

- Sermons: These were often cited as an important component of Sunday morning service, and there was little criticism expressed in the survey responses.
- Music: The congregation is (as one might expect) split on the type of worship music they find most meaningful. Some value traditional hymns and organ music (and dislike drums), while others wish for songs that were more up-tempo. There was also a fair amount of criticism of the choir, for example, the lack of robes or similar attire and inconsistent seating after the anthem.
- Sacraments, Apostle's Creed, Doxology: some list these as most meaningful; others find them least meaningful.
- Prayer: A common theme in the responses was a desire for more prayer, both for local or congregation-specific needs and for broader concerns that affect our country and the world.
- Overall mood: One respondent liked the informality of Sunday services, but many others expressed a feeling that certain elements of the worship service are too informal (“silly” or lacking reverence). Announcements were often said to be distracting or inappropriate.
- Pacing: Many expressed dissatisfaction with the pacing of Sunday morning service, saying that it feels rushed.

Several respondents list Sunday Night Live as their most meaningful experience at Covenant; many of these respondents were from the younger age groups, but there were also some older members of the congregation who expressed enthusiasm for the service. Still, there are others (both young and old) who do not personally connect with it. Of those respondents who listed it among their least meaningful experiences, a few still value it as an outreach opportunity while others wonder if it is a worthwhile use of our resources.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Keep Sunday morning service as a blend of traditional and contemporary.
2. Strive to create a more reverent tone, perhaps by opening the service with chimes and possibly moving any announcements to the end or later in the service. Regardless of when announcements occur, they should be kept to a minimum and participants should simply be encouraged to refer to the bulletin.
3. In order to be more welcoming to visitors, and to set the right tone inside the hall, we might try moving coffee and a tray of snacks near the foyer rather than setting them inside the kitchen.
4. It is a challenge to fit everything that currently takes place during worship into an hour-long service without it feeling rushed. Perhaps there are elements that could be combined or rotated – for example, one week drop one of the hymns, the next week, drop the Apostle’s Creed. This would be preferable to extending the length of the worship service, as we believe an hour-long service is attractive to busy professionals and students.
5. Continue evaluating Sunday Night Live as an alternative to the more traditional morning service. Ensure that this service is advertised consistently, by updating the marquee by Tuesday each week.

## **B. Congregants’ Sense of Connectedness to One Another and to the Mission of Our Church** *Relevant committees: Membership, Church Life and Fellowship*

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*  
*- Jeremiah 29:11*

The relationships among congregants and the sense of community are universally regarded as one of the most important elements of our church experience. People describe the congregation with a number of positive adjectives: open, welcoming, friendly, caring, supportive, encouraging, warm, “like a family.” This is surely one of the distinguishing aspects of Covenant Presbyterian Church. It is often what restores existing members, attracts new members, and causes long-time visitors to feel that sense of belonging that draws them back week after week.

Strong fellowship has also begun to cultivate God’s mission; for example, the Young Adults group started out with monthly get-togethers and a softball team but, as they continued to meet,

that fellowship has grown into discipleship (a Sunday School class) and service (e.g. Church Work Day).

Nevertheless, we were surprised to see that a handful of survey respondents wrote they were having trouble connecting with others, feeling like an outsider, or struggling to find opportunities to get involved in Children's Ministry, community service, or other areas of church life.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Continue to provide opportunities for fellowship, both as the whole church (e.g. Fall Fellowship) and in smaller group settings. These small group settings may naturally involve members and visitors at similar life stages (e.g., Young Adult gatherings, Empty Nester events); however, we also encourage the development of small group events that cross generations (e.g. the Progressive Dinner). It would also be especially nice to have more opportunities for young children and young families.
2. To help visitors and new members feel connected, we agree with one respondent who suggested personally introducing them to others in the church with the same interests or others at the same stage of life.
3. To help interested individuals become involved in the life of the church, improved communication about the activities of church committees is essential. The pastor and committee leadership need to encourage participation in the life of the church.
  - a. In addition to following up on the "Time and Talent" forms given to new members, consider setting aside one Sunday when each committee would host an informational booth after service. Another option would be to extend "A Moment for Mission" to "A Moment for Ministry," an opportunity for each committee to speak to the congregation about their activities.
  - b. Basic information about the committees as well as contact information for the committee leader should be available on an insert that goes in the bulletin once a month and is otherwise available on the back table. This information should also be available on the website.
  - c. Ask the pastor to occasionally change the announcement during service directing people to members of the membership committee. In addition to saying "If you have questions about our church,..." we should also encourage members and frequent visitors: "If you would like to get more involved in the life of the church by joining one of our committees, or if you have a suggestion for one of the committees, please see one of the people wearing a yellow ribbon on their name tag."
4. Respondents to the survey provided several specific suggestions for visiting speakers to invite to ONEderful Wednesday: Christian comics, musical groups, and FCA athletes from the University.

### **C. Christian Education and Opportunities for Spiritual and Personal Growth**

*Relevant Committees: Christian Education, Evangelism, Church Life and Fellowship*

*“We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders which he has wrought.”*  
- Psalm 78:4

Several respondents cite the sermons, Sunday School classes, and other educational opportunities as meaningful experiences through which they are able to deepen their faith. Others seem to yearn for more: more challenging classes and deeper discussions that lead to a fuller understanding of the Bible. One area of particular concern may be the need for better programs for children/youth.

### **Suggestions:**

1. For children:
  - a. We recommend the Christian Education committee spend time evaluating programs, focusing on attracting and retaining families with young children.
  - b. One respondent suggested the need for a “certified Christian Educator or Associate Pastor for Children/Youth.” However, we do not believe this to be a financially-viable suggestion at this time and instead encourage efforts to draw volunteers to support the work of the Youth Director and Children’s Choir Director.
2. For adults:
  - a. Consider offering thematic Sunday School classes and/or sermon series that last a specified number of weeks. Members might find something like this easier to commit to and a sort of personal challenge if they do not typically attend. One respondent said as much in suggesting a series of sermons during worship: “a hook to keep me motivated to attend.”
  - b. Covenant should consider offering “life skills” classes, both to our congregation and to the broader community. Examples include money management, financial planning, end-of-life (funeral/estate) planning, grief support, or preparing for marriage classes that would link practical skills with the foundations of our faith. In order to make these accessible to people who do not regularly attend our church, we should be open to offering these classes outside of the usual Sunday School hour. The Evangelism Committee should be tasked with identifying classes that would address these needs. This is also an opportunity to target college students with classes on budgeting, eating healthy, etc.
3. Times for Sunday School should also be advertised on the marquee.

### **V. Opportunities for the Next 3 to 5 Years**

Questions 13 and 14 from the survey point towards the congregation’s vision for the future and specific developments they would like to see over the next 3-5 years. In their responses, the congregation overwhelmingly identifies a need for growth in membership. Concerns over

financial stability and viability are also high among all age groups except the 18-25-year-old group.

## **A. Growth in Participation and Number of Congregants**

*Relevant Committees: Membership, Evangelism*

*“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

*Acts 2: 46-47*

The largest number of comments were directed toward Evangelism experiences that respondents would like to see over the next 3-5 years in the life of Covenant. Common themes included expanding the youth and college student opportunities and participation at Covenant, with the hope that the addition of young adults and young families will sustain longer term growth. Congregants expressed a desire for moderate growth with focused programs for small groups.

### **Suggestions:**

1. It is important to clarify the functions of the Membership and Evangelism committees. It may be the case that these groups would benefit from being restructured or reconceptualized.
2. Growth must come from greater efforts in evangelism and outreach. In addition to traditional advertising, we can increase our visibility in the community simply through our involvement in local mission and community service projects (e.g., Habitat for Humanity)
3. To attract and support college-age students, the connection with United Campus Ministries is key. The congregation should take advantage of its older, stable population and explore ways to build mentoring relationships as Kyle Walker described in his dissertation presentation, “We Built It, and They Didn’t Come.”
4. We should also be on the lookout for ways to capitalize on existing events. For example, the upcoming rummage sale attracts so many members of the community that do not typically attend our services. We should create a receipt that includes information about service times, Vacation Bible School, and the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.
5. While specific activities involving Worship did not appear frequently in response to questions 13 and 14, it is important to note that Sunday Night Live is often associated with church growth. Worship may well be challenged to provide those experiences necessary to support the other areas.

## **B. Financial Stability**

*Relevant Committees: primarily Budget & Stewardship, but all committees are being challenged to do more with less.*

*“Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.”*

*- Malachi 3:10*

There were a number of comments from respondents in regard to church finances, indicating a deep concern in the congregation. Therefore, everyone needs to keep the focus on sound financial planning. Annual budget expenses should be limited to the most likely expected income rather than hoped for unrealistic levels. We should avoid taking funds from reserves to cover budget items. The current mortgage will be with us through the 3 - 5 year planning period and must be serviced. We need to strengthen work on expanding the number of giving units as well as encouraging existing units to increase their contributions.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Given the current financial constraints, Covenant should move toward greater reliance on volunteers in order to balance the budget.
2. In addition to its collecting and reporting tasks, the Budget & Stewardship Committee should actively pursue alternative channels for raising funds, e.g. seeking out grants for specific programs. The committee should recruit some of the members of our congregation who have experience with grants and proposals through their work at the university.
3. Explore cooperative program opportunities with other local PC(USA) churches and our co-communion denominations (e.g., Family Promise with Friends Congregational Church, joint youth events with First Presbyterian Church in Bryan).
4. Some respondents expressed a desire for growth so that we can build or need to build a sanctuary in the next few years. However, given our current financial situation, this is not a realistic goal. We anticipate that being in a position to undertake such an ambitious project will be beyond the next 3-5 year plans and instead suggest the Session consider the words of one commenter, who said “In spite of stated visions and values, it seems to me that the `dream’ of the congregation is a new building. If that is our dream, we will never get there.” We believe that, in the next 3-5 years as funds become available, they will be best directed toward missional activities and service to the community. This is echoed in the comments of another respondent: “I like that we meet in the ‘fellowship hall’ and sit in folding chairs. It is my wish that we never endeavor to build a sanctuary filled with pews, that we instead put our resources to work serving others, fulfilling needs, spreading God’s love.”
5. The leadership should continually challenge the congregation to strive to be all we can be within our financial means.

## **VI. Concluding Challenge: Who Will Do It?**

*“And who knows but that you have not come to royal position for such a time as this?”  
- Esther 4:14b*

Answering this question requires the congregation taking ownership and becoming more dedicated to the mission God has laid on us, which will bring new member growth, added missional support, and the giving of time, talent and financial resources. We caution: raising additional money, dipping into reserves, cutting back on spending of programs and missional activities or at some point reducing staff will require constant management by leadership. The very resources whose application attracts new people to the congregation may well be eliminated. This is a challenge to the congregation at-large. Members of the church are needed to accept the nominating committee’s call to serve in positions of leadership. The leadership then needs provide the necessary commitment and service for the church to follow its mission and fulfill its vision.

Who will sacrifice their time, talent, and money to bring this vision into place?

### **If not you, then who?**

*“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”  
- Isaiah 6:8*

Respectfully submitted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 2011 by the Vision Task Force:

*Jim Carroll  
Stephanie Houghton  
David Elton (Pastor)  
Weldon Kruger  
Dennis Martin  
Linda Windle  
Tom Woodbury  
Nina Wright*

## **Appendices**

**A. Church Record 2010**

**B. Vision Survey, as submitted to the congregation on January 29, 2010**

**C. Summary of Survey Results**



**PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH (USA)**

## CHURCH RECORD FOR 2010

**PIN Number** 11795

**Presbytery Number** 440

**Church Covenant**

**Address** 220 Rock Prairie Rd

**City/State** College Station, TX 77845 8795

**Church Phone** 979 694-7700      **Fax** 979 696-4334

**Email Address**

office@covenantpresbyterian.org

**Internet Web Site** www.covenantpresbyterian.org

### Membership

Prior Active Members: 315

#### Gains

17 & Under:      5  
18 & Over:        9  
Certified:        2  
Other:             0

**Total Gains:**      16

#### Losses

Certified:        3  
Deaths-           5  
Other:             13

**Total Losses:**    21

**Total Active Members:** 310

Inactive:         0

Baptized:        0

**Total Adherents:** 310

Female Members: 152

**Average Attendance:** 147

**Affiliate Members:**      4

### Baptisms

Child Baptisms:    2

Adult Baptisms:    0

### Officers

Male Session:      11

Female Session:    4

Male Deacons:     0

Female Deacons:   0

### Age Distributions of Active Members

25 & Under:        54

26 - 45:            55

46 - 55:            49

56 - 65:            52

Over 65: 100  
**Total:** 310

**People with Disabilities**

Hearing 9  
 Sight 2  
 Mobility 13  
 Other 12

**Christian Education**

Birth 3:	3	Grade 7:	4
Age 4:	0	Grade 8:	5
Kindergarten:	1	Grade 9:	7
Grade 1:	5	Grade 10:	3
Grade 2:	1	Grade 11:	3
Grade 3:	1	Grade 12:	4
Grade 4:	0	Young Adults:	10
Grade 5:	4	Over 25:	36
Grade 6:	1	Teacher/Officer:	13
<b>Total:</b>	101		

<b>Racial Ethnic Breakdown</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Elders</b>	<b>Deacons</b>
Asian	6	1	0
Black	2	0	0
Hispanic	4	0	0
Native American	0	0	0
White	298	14	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	310	15	

**Potential Giving Units:** 150  
**Budgeted Income:** 494,780  
**Budgeted Expense:** 575,830

**Receipts**

<b>Regular Contributions:</b>	440,195	<b>Bequests:</b>	100,000
<b>Capital Building Fund:</b>	0	<b>Other Income:</b>	19,175
<b>Investment Income:</b>	0	<b>Subsidy or Aid:</b>	0

**Expenditures**

<b>Local Program:</b>	382,689	<b>Per Capita Apprt:</b>	1,815
<b>Local Mission:</b>	9,501	<b>Validated Mission:</b>	3,792
<b>Capital Expenditures:</b>	0	<b>Theological Fund:</b>	0
<b>Investment Expenditures:</b>	0	<b>Other Mission:</b>	1,672

RETURN TO MENU



Covenant  
Presbyterian  
Church

## Vision Survey 2011

Last year, the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church commissioned a Vision Task Force to discern the direction God is calling this church to lead in ministry and mission over the next 3 to 5 years. Seven members of the congregation were selected to the Vision Task Force and began their work last October. One of the most important tasks was to offer a Vision Survey to hear from members, friends and visitors of the congregation. This Vision Survey that you are about to fill out is more than a survey. It is an opportunity for you to share in and contribute to helping Covenant discern God's vision for this church! This survey will help identify our church's core values, interests and hopes, and give vital direction to the Session in their work.

The Vision Task Force invites each individual to fill out one survey, and urges you to do these three things before you begin:

- (1) Pray for guidance as you consider what is most important for you and your faith, and this community of faith.
- (2) Please read the instructions carefully before filling out each section.
- (3) Please read each question or value before answering.

This will not only help you in the survey process, but also help ensure that the Vision Task Force has an accurate understanding of your values and hopes for CPC. The last day this survey will be offered is February 11, 2011.

Thank you for taking the time to share in this Vision Survey and for being a part of this family of faith.

Yours in Christ,

*Vision Task Force*

*Jim Carroll*

*David Elton (Pastor)*

*Stephanie Houghton*

*Weldon Kruger*

*Dennis Martin*

*Linda Windle*

*Tom Woodbury*

*Nina Wright*

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### PART III: Core Values

**A:** Mark an X by ten (10) of the 30 statements below that you believe best reflect the current values of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

**B:** Mark an X by five (5) values that you believe are the most important for the future of our congregation. (These five (5) can be the same or different from those marked in Part A.)

<i>I VALUE:</i>	<b>Part A</b> Current Values (pick 10)	<b>Part B</b> Important for CPC's Future (pick 5)
1. A congregation that is responsive to members in crisis or hardship.		
2. A congregation that is welcoming and responsive to the needs of a university community.		
3. A grace-orientation in all that we are and all that we do.		
4. An attractive, accessible and functional facility.		
5. Being an open and caring community of faith.		
6. Christians committed to growing as disciples of Christ.		
7. Being welcoming to visitors and willing to do whatever it takes to connect with new people.		
8. Bible-centered preaching and teaching.		
9. Caring for the poor in our community.		
10. Carrying the Good News effectively to the community.		
11. Christian education opportunities for all ages.		
12. Christian ministry programs for children. For example, Children's Choir.		
13. Christian ministry programs for youth. For example, Souper Bowl of Caring.		
14. Christian ministry programs for college students. For example, Hurricane Ike mission trip.		
15. Effective, transparent organization – a church that works and communicates well.		
16. Effective pastoral leadership.		
17. Empowered lay leadership.		
18. A congregation that understands and actively participates in the mission/vision of CPC.		
19. A church that uses financial resources wisely and responsibly to further its vision and its mission in the community.		
20. Financial stewardship – a congregation that gives willingly to support the work of the church.		
21. Intergenerational opportunities for Christian education and community service.		
22. Opportunities to deepen my relationship with others in a small group setting.		
23. Our Presbyterian identity.		
24. Practices that sustain excellence and quality in all aspects of our ministry.		
25. A church that creates the environment for strong family, friendship, relationship and fellowship.		
26. A church where everyone has an opportunity to serve.		
27. Worship that is vital and alive and leads the congregation to encounter God.		
28. A mission to the community that provides early childhood care and education in a Christian environment.		
29. A church that offers opportunities to deepen my relationship with God.		
30. A church where every Sunday school class, small group, music and ministry group has some external community service.		

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## **PART IV: Other Thoughts**

1. Thinking about your Covenant Presbyterian Church experience, what do you find most meaningful?

2. Thinking about your Covenant Presbyterian Church experience, what do you find least meaningful?

3. Thinking about your experience in other churches, what did you find most meaningful that you would like to see in the life of Covenant Presbyterian Church?

4. Looking forward to the next 3 to 5 years, what additions and/or changes would you like to see happen in the life of Covenant Presbyterian Church?

5. Additional Comments: Please tell us anything else you value in a congregation and about your vision for Covenant Presbyterian Church's future

## Appendix: Vision Survey Results

Date Range: January 29 2011 - February 21 2011

### 1. and 2. Gender and Age Range:

Answer	Male	Female	Total	%
Under 18	0	0	0	0%
18-25	2	3	5	6%
26-45	7	9	16	21%
46-55	5	6	11	14%
56-65	7	13	20	26%
Over 65	13	12	26	33%
Total	34	43	78	100%

\* one respondent (over 65) left gender blank but marked age.

### 3. Marital Status:

Answer	Response	%
Single/Never Married	10	13%
Married	62	82%
Separated	0	0%
Divorced	4	5%
Widowed	0	0%
Total	76	100%












### 4. and 5. Number of Children Living at Home and Ages

Answer	Response	%	Ages (if reported)
0	55	72%	
1	10	13%	Kevin- 26 at A&M most of the time; 7; 8; 4; 20; 15
2	9	12%	16 and 18; 6 and 11; 6.5 and 4; 18 and 24; 18 and 24; 16 and 18; 6 and 2mo; 10 and 16; 6 and 2mo
3	0	0%	
4	0	0%	
5+	2	3%	
Total	76	100%	

Of the 21 respondents who answered as having children at home, 15 also reported their ages.

**6. Select ten (10) words/phrases on the list below that you think our congregation SHOULD demonstrate.**

#	Answer		18-45	Over 45	No Age Given	Overall	%
8	Christ-centered		10*	37*		47*	59%
26	Meaningful Worship		7	38*	1	46*	58%
18	Friendship		10*	27*	1	38*	48%
39	Spiritual growth		8*	28*	2	38*	48%
1	Accepting		11*	25*		36*	46%
32	Personal Relationship with God		8*	24	2	34	43%
15	Family		11*	19	1	31	39%
33	Prayer		8*	21	2	31	39%
7	Caring		6	23		29	37%
16	Financial stewardship		3	22		25	32%
23	Integrity		7	14	1	22	28%
24	Joy		5	16	1	22	28%
45	Word & Sacrament		1	19		20	25%
12	Discipleship		5	14		19	24%
6	Care for the poor		5	13		18	23%
9	Compassion		4	14		18	23%
14	Faithfulness		3	14	1	18	23%
3	Authority of Bible		5	12		17	22%
21	Grace as a way of life		3	13	1	17	22%
27	Open Communication		4	13		17	22%
41	Tolerance		4	12		16	20%
13	Enthusiasm		3	12		15	19%
38	Servanthood		3	12		15	19%
44	Volunteerism in community		5	9	1	15	19%
17	Forgiveness		3	11		14	18%
19	Genuineness		7	7		14	18%
31	Personal Growth		4	8	1	13	16%
25	Knowledge of the Bible		3	9		12	15%
34	Relationships		6	5	1	12	15%
35	Relevance		5	7		12	15%
22	Hope		2	8	1	11	14%
37	Reverence		2	8	1	11	14%
40	Teamwork		4	6		10	13%
4	Belonging		1	7	1	9	11%
28	Passion		6	3		9	11%

36	Respectfulness		3	5	1	9	11%
10	Creativity		3	5		8	10%
42	Tradition		3	5		8	10%
5	Care for Environment		3	2		5	6%
30	Peace		2	3		5	6%
46	Other		3	2		5	6%
2	Adventure		2	2		4	5%
43	Unity		2	2		4	5%
11	Daily Bible Reading		1	2		3	4%
20	Global Outreach		1	1		2	3%
29	Patience		1	1		2	3%

Top 5 (and ties) are starred for each age group and overall.

Other	Age Range
Mission in the World, Inclusion, Diversity	26-45
trust in God to provide	26-45
Life skills mentoring	26-45
Education/Learning	46-55
Social justice	Over 65

**7. For each of the values you selected, indicate how well you think the congregation DEMONSTRATES this word right NOW.**

#	Question	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Responses	Mean
x8	Christ-centered	0	0	6	29	11	46	4.11
x26	Meaningful Worship	0	1	4	29	10	44	4.09
x18	Friendship	0	2	5	12	18	37	4.24
x39	Spiritual growth	0	1	15	16	4	36	3.64
x1	Accepting	0	0	3	19	13	35	4.29
x32	Personal Relationship with God	0	0	14	13	5	32	3.72
x15	Family	0	2	8	6	14	30	4.07
x7	Caring	0	0	4	17	8	29	4.14
x33	Prayer	0	0	7	12	10	29	4.10
x16	Financial stewardship	0	2	13	8	2	25	3.40
x24	Joy	0	1	6	11	4	22	3.82
x23	Integrity	0	0	2	15	5	22	4.14
x45	Word & Sacrament	0	0	0	7	12	19	4.63
x12	Discipleship	0	1	10	8	0	19	3.37
x6	Care for the poor	1	0	7	5	4	17	3.65
x27	Open Communication	0	0	10	5	2	17	3.53
x3	Authority of Bible	0	0	6	6	5	17	3.94
x21	Grace as a way of life	0	2	4	8	3	17	3.71
x9	Compassion	0	0	3	10	4	17	4.06
x14	Faithfulness	0	0	4	6	7	17	4.18
x41	Tolerance	1	0	6	6	3	16	3.63
x44	Volunteerism in community	0	2	4	5	4	15	3.73
x13	Enthusiasm	0	1	7	6	1	15	3.47
x38	Servanthood	0	2	6	6	1	15	3.40
x19	Genuineness	0	0	3	8	3	14	4.00
x17	Forgiveness	0	0	4	5	4	13	4.00
x31	Personal Growth	0	0	6	4	2	12	3.67
x25	Knowledge of the Bible	0	2	4	4	2	12	3.50
x22	Hope	0	0	3	5	3	11	4.00
x34	Relationships	0	1	2	6	2	11	3.82
x37	Reverence	0	2	1	4	4	11	3.91
x35	Relevance	0	1	5	4	0	10	3.30
x40	Teamwork	0	2	3	4	1	10	3.40
x36	Respectfulness	0	0	2	5	2	9	4.00
x28	Passion	0	3	4	1	1	9	3.00
x10	Creativity	0	3	4	1	0	8	2.75

x42	Tradition	0	1	3	3	1	8	3.50
x4	Belonging	0	0	1	6	1	8	4.00
x46	Other	2	0	2	0	1	5	2.60
x5	Care for Environment	0	1	2	2	0	5	3.20
x30	Peace	0	0	0	4	1	5	4.20
x2	Adventure	0	2	1	1	0	4	2.75
x43	Unity	0	0	2	1	1	4	3.75
x11	Daily Bible Reading	0	1	0	1	1	3	3.67
x29	Patience	0	0	1	0	1	2	4.00
x20	Global Outreach	0	1	1	0	0	2	2.50

## 8. Part A

Question: Mark ten (10) of the 30 statements below that YOU BELIEVE best reflect the CURRENT VALUES of Covenant Presbyterian Church.	Number who marked
1. A congregation that is responsive to members in crisis or hardship.	57
5. Being an open and caring community of faith.	54
11. Christian education opportunities for all ages.	48
8. Bible-centered preaching and teaching.	48
7. Being welcoming to visitors and willing to do whatever it takes to connect with new people.	47
26. A church where everyone has an opportunity to serve.	45
16. Effective pastoral leadership.	40
28. A mission to the community that provides early childhood care and education in a Christian environment.	36
4. An attractive, accessible and functional facility.	36
25. A church that creates the environment for strong family, friendship, relationship and fellowship.	31
13. Christian ministry programs for youth. For example, Souper Bowl of Caring.	28
2. A congregation that is welcoming and responsive to the needs of a university community.	28
27. Worship that is vital and alive and leads the congregation to encounter God.	28
22. Opportunities to deepen my relationship with others in a small group setting.	28
12. Christian ministry programs for children. For example, Children's Choir.	27
19. A church that uses financial resources wisely and responsibly to further its vision and its mission in the community.	22
29. A church that offers opportunities to deepen my relationship with God.	22
23. Our Presbyterian identity.	22
9. Caring for the poor in our community.	18
6. Christians committed to growing as disciples of Christ.	15
15. Effective and transparent organization – a church that works and communicates well.	13
20. Financial stewardship – a congregation that gives willingly to support the work of the church.	13
17. Empowered lay leadership.	13
18. A congregation that understands & actively participates in the mission/vision of CPC.	11
3. A grace-orientation in all that we are and all that we do.	11
14. Christian ministry programs for college students. For example, Hurricane Ike mission trip.	10
21. Inter-generational opportunities for Christian education and community service.	9
24. Practices that sustain excellence and quality in all aspects of our ministry.	4
30. A church where every Sunday school class, small group, music and ministry group has some external community service.	4
10. Carrying the Good News effectively to the community.	3

## 9. Part B

Question: Mark five (5) of the 30 statements that YOU BELIEVE are most important VALUES for the FUTURE of CPC. These 5 can be the same or different from those marked in Part A.	Number who marked
16. Effective pastoral leadership.	28
7. Being welcoming to visitors and willing to do whatever it takes to connect with new people.	28
8. Bible-centered preaching and teaching.	28
5. Being an open and caring community of faith.	26
11. Christian education opportunities for all ages.	19
19. A church that uses financial resources wisely and responsibly to further its vision and its mission in the community.	18
20. Financial stewardship – a congregation that gives willingly to support the work of the church.	18
27. Worship that is vital and alive and leads the congregation to encounter God.	17
15. Effective and transparent organization – a church that works and communicates well.	17
2. A congregation that is welcoming and responsive to the needs of a university community.	17
6. Christians committed to growing as disciples of Christ.	17
25. A church that creates the environment for strong family, friendship, relationship and fellowship.	16
1. A congregation that is responsive to members in crisis or hardship.	15
18. A congregation that understands & actively participates in the mission/vision of CPC.	14
10. Carrying the Good News effectively to the community.	14
26. A church where everyone has an opportunity to serve.	14
4. An attractive, accessible and functional facility.	11
24. Practices that sustain excellence and quality in all aspects of our ministry.	11
29. A church that offers opportunities to deepen my relationship with God.	11
12. Christian ministry programs for children. For example, Children's Choir.	10
22. Opportunities to deepen my relationship with others in a small group setting.	8
23. Our Presbyterian identity.	8
17. Empowered lay leadership.	7
30. A church where every Sunday school class, small group, music and ministry group has some external community service.	7
3. A grace-orientation in all that we are and all that we do.	6
9. Caring for the poor in our community.	6
13. Christian ministry programs for youth. For example, Souper Bowl of Caring.	5
28. A mission to the community that provides early childhood care and education in a Christian environment.	3
21. Inter-generational opportunities for Christian education and community service.	3
14. Christian ministry programs for college students. For example, Hurricane Ike mission trip.	2

**10. Thinking about your Covenant Presbyterian Church experience, what do you find MOST meaningful:**

	Related Committee Category										
	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
<b>18-25</b>											
As a college student, and a member of a different Presbyterian church, I really enjoy the friendliness of the members. I have made several new friends through the college bible study group. Every service I attend I meet a new person and I find everyone very inviting and welcoming	X	X	X		X	X					
Fellowship events; small group interaction.			X								
The community and feeling the presence of the Lord.			X	X	X						
The preaching and worship. Also, the welcoming and friendly congregation.			X			X				X	
The people - willingness to greet visitors/potential new members.		X	X		X	X					
<b>26-45</b>											
I believe the worship services are excellent.					X	X				X	
The relationships I have created over the years which continue to sustain me.			X	X							
Relationships with other members of the church. Wonderful Wednesday			X	X		X				X	
Opportunities to get involved with community projects like Habitat for Humanity. Also the support that Covenant has given me to go out on my own and serve the poor. Great pastoral leadership is present at Covenant, which is very meaningful				X	X		X				
Worship, especially Sunday Night Live.										X	
As a member with younger children, I am always being reassured that we as a family are always welcome, and that they way the children conduct themselves both in and outside of church and Sunday school is not being judged. Therefore I feel secure and comfortable in my attendance in the areas I am able to work in. My children are always made to feel welcome, and have grown and prospered as a result.		X	X							X	
Small group bible study		X	X		X	X					
I find some of the small group opportunities for young adults to be very meaningful. I also find the new Sunday Night Live worship service to be very meaningful. Along with opportunities for volunteerism and to learn how to deepen ones relationship with God. Also enjoy Wonderful Wednesday and meeting everyone in a laid back different setting		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
- Friendships I have formed. - The way the community supports one another. - The way the morning worship blends the traditional (hymns, liturgy, doxology, communion every first Sunday) and the contemporary (Sing the Faith songs).			X							X	
I am new to the church and am having trouble connecting with others in the congregation. This is due in part to my own reservations but I still feel very much the outsider.			X			X					
The relationships I have formed with other CPC members.			X			X					
A welcoming congregation with nice facilities.			X			X			X		
What I find most meaningful is the variety of ways CPC offers for me to connect with people and God. For example, participating in handbells gives me the opportunity to share my musical talents in a way that enhances the worship service. The young adults' Sunday school class is an avenue to develop friendships and study the Bible with other Christians my age. These two are different, but both cultivate my personal and spiritual relationships		X	X			X				X	
How Friendly everyone is. The fellowship and friends I've made.			X			X					
Friendliness of members. Encouragement. Caring.			X			X					
<b>46-55</b>											
us caring for others and others caring for us the people of this church			X								
Fellowship with other members, either in or outside of church activities; the acceptance of others regardless of political persuasion, social standing, or the "uniqueness" of a person connecting with others of differing ages and stages in life			X	X		X					
Informal and individual encounters with members of the church. An opportunity to discuss the christian message with my daughter.		X	X		X						
My Sunday School class.		X									
worship & music, mission opportunities										X	
Everyone is very friendly, helpful and welcoming.			X			X					
The accepting, loving, and welcoming nature of the congregation. The Sunday Night Live worship service. The teaching messages by the pastor.			X	X		X				X	
Bible study and worship		X								X	
The worship service itself. A friendly and caring church.			X			X					
<b>56-65</b>											
Worship, service, the caring people, Church Home			X							X	
the message from the pastor										X	
The opportunity to participate in things like choir and youth activities		X	X							X	
Friendly atmosphere, caring and welcoming nature of the congregation.			X			X					
The Services		X								X	
It gives me support like a family.			X	X							
relevant preaching, personal relationships, mission opportunities, music							X			X	
Friendliness - Sermons			X			X				X	
Worship services, communion, opportunities for fellowship and service with others in the church			X				X			X	
I find the friendship, caring and opportunities to reach out to others through worship, music and volunteering the most meaningful.			X							X	
Openness. One of the great tenets of Presbyterianism is welcoming all believers.			X	X	X	X					

fellowship,small group experiences			X	X							
Our commitment to invitation to others. Increased commitment to assisting members and non-members in need.					X	X	X				
Friendships, opportunities to serve, openness to all, worship services (both), opportunity to know and work with persons with such diverse backgrounds, lives and experiences				X	X	X	X				X
The openness and welcoming of the congregation to all visitors; the feeling of a 'home' church			X			X					
A) The sense of "family", a connection and bond that I haven't seen in most other churches. B) Visitors are welcomed and encouraged to attend church events and be involved. If we share communion with visitors, why should we withhold anything else from them?				X		X	X				
Over 65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
The Sunday Morning Service, the spirit of giving, and warmth of the congregation are inseparably the most meaningful to me.	X		X		X	X					X
Sunday worship educational opportunities that deepen my faith		X									X
Worship											X
The service opportunities I have been afforded in CPC. That is what makes you close to your church and congregation.				X			X				
The church is a 'welcoming' community			X				X				
The Preaching											X
Sunday morning worship service; David's sermons		X									X
Welcoming and friendly congregation and meaningful worship			X			X					
The Sunday morning worship service with meaningful and well presented sermons by Rev. Elton surrounded by friendly parishioners.						X					X
informality of Sunday services and ties of goings on in the world to sermons and prayers. I can connect with that.		X	X			X					X
The sermons											X
The sermons											X
A warm and caring congregation, that demonstrates it's Christian call to care for one another. Our woship service's feel my needs very well, it contains all the componets for learning and worshipping God.			X			X					X
The peace I find worshipping in this church, and the love I feel among our members. The music and teaching are most meaningful.		X	X								X
1. Sunday morning worship service. 2. The caring for members of the congregation shown by other church members. 3. The dedicated time and service to the church, its members, and regular attenders shown by the minister and church staff.			X			X	X	X			X
The friendliness of the people						X					
Warmth and friendliness of the congregation. Many members are involved in volunteering in many activities to further the work of the church . The opportunity to enjoy fellowship with other Christins who follow Christ and His teachings. The opportunity to volunteer in virtually every and any activities within and outside the church to spread the Gospel through words and actions. Opportunities to learn more about Christ's life and teachings and the Bible. Programs for youth to bring them closer to God		X	X			X	X	X			X
Music and sermons											X
Apostles Creed & giving of the Holy Smacroments											X
Church attitude and friendliness.			X			X					
The fellowship with good Christian friends.			X								
The Sermon Prayer Singing in the Choir The Women's Bible Studies The mission of the church in the Church Pantry and Habitat In the past, being part of the Sunday School and Youtl Group teachers in Christian Education		X	X	X			X				X
Worship services											X
A caring congregation church leadership dedication of the session to the business of the church			X			X					X
Christian Congregation. Music on organ and piano. Empty Nesters. Pastor sermons - Sunday morning service.											X
Meaningful worship based on the Bible, good sermons, traditional hymns. Friendliness and fellowship are enjoyable additions but main purpose must be hearing and learning God's word		X	X								X
<b>Total number of feedback responses to each committee</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Percentage of feedback to each category by 71 respondents</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>56%</b>	

\*B&S-Budget & Stewardship, C Ed-Christian Eduation, CL&F-Christion Life and Fellowship, CC-Congregational Care, Evang-Evangelism, Mem-Membership, Mis-Mission, Pers-Personnel, Prop- Property, W-Worship



When choir members leave after the anthem. Either have them all leave or have them come up and sing the anthem and then all return to their seats. It would help the congregation if the choir was mingled in with them.										
adult Christian education opportunities		X								
church dinners	X	X	X							
Lack of cue before the announcements are made for all to be seated. It is awkward and too casual the way it is now. All should be seated and attentive to the announcements. A musical cue would be most appropriate. Greeters could gently encourage all to be seated. Choir in street clothes. People walking around during the service. Beverages being consumed during Service. Communion being served by those casually attired.										
Outside community projects							X			
Clapping after musical offerings and drums/percussion in church.										
This is a little thing, but I find thoroughly distasteful the practice of members going down to place their pledges on the altar in the fall. I always think back to the Saducees (?) praying on the street corner to be seen by man.	X									
Dissent between members, gossip.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
some of the CLF events, but I realize to some this is very important; the fact that there is a small group of core members who do 90% of the volunteerism; worrying about the money	X		X				X			
The connection with the minister										
Over 65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	
Because the Sunday Morning Service, giving spirit, and congregational warmth mean the most to me, it would seem that other aspects of Covenant Programs are less meaningful. However, it seems to me, that choices are given, which might also be acceptable to God.		X	X	X			X			
meetings that go on and on gatherings that are self enhancing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Atmosphere when preparing my mind and heart for worship on Sundays.										
1- long-silly announcements 2- choir moving after anthem										
The drums, etc.										
Now 82 (almost 83) years old, I find attending the evening events rather difficult. However, I'm certain that there are those who find them quite meaningful.										
My committee experiences. Lots of talk; not so much commitment and follow through.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I do not find anything that does not have meaning to me.										
So far, everything has been meaningful.										
The tendency for some people to treat the parts of the worship service as a theatrical production instead of a time to be worshipping, e.g., clapping after the choir or a soloist sings an anthem.										
We are spending money over our heads	X									
Politics within the church. Uncomfortable personal relationships. Meetings.										
I don't know how to get to know people; I've been there for years and there are many, many I don't know.						X				
The need to eat at every church function.	X									
some of the modern music										
Sunday Night Live - the idea is good, but it is just a shorter version of regular service and the music is slow, and at times confusing by going back and forth multiple times.										
Good to get announcements out of the way before worship, but briefly with most in the inserts in the bulletins. Lengthy and supposedly humorous announcements are distracting.										

Total number of feedback responses to each committee	12	13	9	7	8	9	10	6	7
Percentage of feedback to each category by 54 respondents	22%	24%	17%	13%	15%	17%	19%	11%	13%

\*B&S-Budget & Stewardship, C Ed-Christian Education, CL&F-Christian Life and Fellowship, CC-Congregational Care, Evang-Evangelism, Mem-Membership, Mis-Mission, Pers-Personnel, Prop- Property, W-Worship

**12. Thinking about your experience in OTHER churches, what did you find MOST meaningful that you would like to see in the life of Covenant Presbyterian Church?**

	Related Committee Category*										
	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
18-25											
My hometown church is very small and very traditional. The twenty-something people in it are a very close-knit group. The church is my family, both literally and figuratively. My dad is clerk of the session, my mom runs the Presbyterian Women, and my uncle is the organist. All the members are close very close friends. I hope after a couple years with Covenant, I will feel the same deep family connection as I do with the members in my hometown church.			X			X					
Reading of scripture.											X
More prayer for others.				X							X
Candlelight service at Christmas time.											X
26-45											
Well developed and ongoing Christian Education and children/youth ministry. This will probably require a certified Christian Educator or Associate Pastor for Children/Youth.		X									
A Worship centered church. Worship, which is centered in God, the Word and the sacraments.											X
More possibilities for young children and as such for young families.		X	X								
Focus on discipleship. Finding ways to put the bible to work in my life.		X									X
A monthly committee meeting night and Session every other month.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
The one area that I could always count on in my former church was that everyone who COMMITTED to involving themselves in a program, whatever it was...they were always there, on time, you were always able to count on this! Schedules were always sent out, and people took their commitments seriously, and there was never room to wonder if you were flying solo.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Visiting speakers (christian comics, musical groups, FCA athletes from the University)		X	X		X						
A couple of things that stood out was that some churches clearly state there mission statement on the bulletin which I thought was worded very well and helpful. Also, when I visited another church they had a clear outline of the sermon with some blanks that had to be filled in, which I felt it enhanced and helped me to pay closer attention to the sermon.											X
Targeted Sunday School classes - 6-8 weeks spent on a particular Book of the Bible or a special theme (one week on each Fruit of the Spirit, discussion related to a current event, etc.) Volunteer opportunities or community service done as part of a Sunday School class or (in my case) Young Adult gatherings.		X					X				
I enjoy working with the church to somehow serve the community. I have yet to find that opportunity at cpc.					X	X	X				
At my last congregation, the morning services were run more efficiently (less downtime between sections), which helped keep the focus on worship and ritual. I would rather have fewer choir performances that were more polished, with one strong lead singer, and possibly one less song overall in the service. On the committee level, meetings were run more efficiently with a greater emphasis on making decisions, delegating execution, and not wasting people's time. At Covenant, too many decisions are delayed by needing David or Kara involved in everything.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
My previous church (also PCUSA) was very traditional and formal, with wooden pews, stained glass windows, and robes for the choir. While I don't think these things are necessary, they certainly set a reverent tone. I think the focus of every service should be the worship of God. I would like to see more time spent in prayer, scripture reading, and delivering the sermon and less time devoted to hymns.											X
The life skills classes for all ages		X									
Take the clocks away. There is too much stress surrounding Sunday services.											X
46-55											
Small group ministries. dynamic worship service full of energy where the musical instruments complements the choir rather than drowning them out		X	X								X
Better Sunday school classes/programs for K-12; deeper understanding/knowledge of the Bible; more small group activities/personal church family relationships.		X	X	X							
A choir that sings with enthusiasm.											X
Young family group development within the church. We need to really figure out what young families tend to want in a church a provide it. I suspect that less formal worship services would help. We need to look at other churches that are successful in the area and be open to trying new things. What does Christ United Methodist church do? What does Central Baptist do? A few years ago, we had a small but dedicated group of young families, almost all of whom left our congregation. Why have we unable to maintain such a group? The church will die a slow death without them. How long will our (few) current young families stay before they leave too? We need to get those that have left to talk frankly about why they left if we can		X	X			X					
I've always enjoyed doing a part of the church facilities care--everybody has a small job. Otherwise--Covenant is the best at education, music, worship and missions!!!!									X		
I like a church that is accepting, welcoming and wants you to be there which I think Covenant is. Introduce you to others in the church that might have your same interests. Children same age, young married couples, middle age couples etc.			X			X					

Blend or combine elements of traditional and contemporary music into the weekly Sunday morning service. Having a dedicated/designated worship leader to lead the congregation in the gathering and preparing for worship. Sing more than one hymn or song at the start of the service. Music is so much a part of today's culture and people like to sing! Having music play softly in the background as the congregation and visitors gather for worship. In most cases this has been pre-recorded CD music. Challenging teaching sermon series that focus on in-depth study of scripture											X
I would like to see more child and youth involvement in the worship service.		X									X
56-65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
More outreach to the community to share the good news of Jesus with more people that need Him in their life					X						
This is better than most I have been in.											
Stronger worship service, more formal choir, strong youth group for junior high and high school level age groups.		X								X	
Our youth having a closer relationship with pastor		X									
1-8 week special classes during the Sunday school hour, with a variety of topics		X									
Musical cue for all to be seated and attentive to the commencement of Service (including announcements) Choir attired in similar fashion										X	
Enthusiasm about worship and service.										X	
Leaving the service assured and prepared/ready to take on the next week...										X	
A welcoming congregation with many opportunities for service is what brings me into a church.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
stronger congregational activities, i.e. potlucks, seasonal parties, fix-up days			X						X		
Increase participation of congregation in worship, especially as liturgists.										X	
more committed lay people who will teach, lead Bible study, etc.; more opportunities for spiritual growth, Bible study and discipleship; more commitment by members in regular participation in worship attendance, committees and other outreach areas; more emphasis what we as Presbyterians believe; more historical info on how and why we became the Presbyterian church	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Maintain the 'family' feeling of the church and the welcoming atmosphere immediately felt upon arriving.						X				X	
Two words - Stephen Ministry, or some other program of lay ministry.				X							
Over 65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
Covenant Presbyterian Church provides all Christian experience that I could ever find meaningful.										X	
more opportunities for prayer as a community growth in the concept of grace and sacrament										X	
Prayers during worship that cover a wide range of specific prayer requests each week from the world to the local										X	
Members having social lives with others, i.e., becoming close friends.			X								
choir members were seated as part of congregation... only came to front when anthem was sung..										X	
A choir with robes and chimes to begin the service										X	
stronger youth program; stronger Sunday school program		X									
More relevancy social activities in or outside the church			X								
I have attended many churches in my life, and I think CPC covers all my needs. I would like to see acolytes in our morning service.										X	
Open prayer opportunity in SNL or small gatherings.										X	
I appreciated the seriousness and formality of worship in a former church in which the choir was dressed in robes, all of the elders wore suits or dresses when communion was served, etc., helping make a person feel that worshiping God was a serious business.										X	
A more organized program to outreach and welcome new people to the church					X	X					
Continually apprising the congregation of activities and programs of the church and the opportunities to participate/volunteer in the programs.	X		X			X	X			X	
Asking the congregation for financial support very directly. Sermons not tied to lectionary syllabus.											
Challenging theological study.		X								X	
more joyful music										X	
Communion Words of Jesus at the Last Supper, longer and complete Prayers where we the cognation respond, and cover the government, the world, our community, and members by name in joys and concerns										X	
A more uplifting and joyous Christmas Eve service										X	
I grew up in a fundamentalist church. I found a home in the Presbyterian Church. Enough said.										X	
Praise service that was upbeat.										X	
Empowerment of lay persons to lead, which seems to be lacking now. Is this from lack of delegation? Or do committees not take responsibility? Pastor should be leading religious aspects and delegating most other things to others. Better communication among members as to calendar, events, meeting dates/time. Bulletins for worship main way of communicating, but often these have omissions, typos or errors (are they proofread?).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Total number of feedback responses to each committee      7      21      17      9      10      13      9      6      8      39  
 Percentage of feedback to each category by 60 respondents      12%      35%      28%      15%      17%      22%      15%      10%      13%      65%

\*B&S-Budget & Stewardship, C Ed-Christian Eduation, CL&F-Christian Life and Fellowship, CC-Congregational Care, Evang-Evangelism, Mem-Membership, Mis-Mission, Pers-Personnel, Prop- Property, W-Worship



46-55	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W
SNL - so far is mainly for the current members as it has not really brought many into our fold so the word needs to get out especially after we have it being more of a meaningful spiritual experience; it needs to be dynamic; the instruments drown out the choir and while the music is dynamic at first it just repeats and repeats and repeats (needs harmony and more different verses), I would like to see it continued where it does bring in outsiders and feel enriching. Wish it always had the music energy that Mike brings! Would love to have small groups meeting in homes for notlucks. for picnics. for desserts, for fellowship, for spiritual enrichment on a monthly basis Wish minister was less of a crisis manager and planned more ahead of time, get more organized Wish office staff (Kara) was better at details (especially since minister is not) and that it did not take 2 or 3 go rounds to get everything done correctly Wish minister and members would attend Cursillo so that more can be spiritually revitalized want our youth program to continue to grow and be a place where our youth are inviting their friends to come I think that if we had a dynamic parenting Sunday school, with guest speakers (even if they are from our own congregation), we would attract more families to our church. Especially if we had a strong youth group to complement it.	X	X	X					X		X
Growth of the college student membership/programs; more small group activities; more intergenerational activities/interactions.					X	X	X			
I think the church ministers well to the under 18 crowd and the over 60 crowd, but the 18 to 60 demographic, which constitutes the majority of the population of College Station, doesn't seem to have much to gain from the community, except in an ad hoc fashion, unless they happen to be parents of children, who are well served. There is not a simple solution, because these are both the busiest people, and also the most resistant to "cookie-cutter" programs.										
I would like to see us hire a vibrant young additional minister, with family, who can help build and maintain a young family ministry. I would like us to hire a full-time GREAT youth minister who we pay enough so he/she will stay. When we lose families like the Cote's when the kids hit jr/sr high, we are in trouble.	X							X		
Some solutions to our fiscal problems. Strengthening the direction our church is going with innovative worship like Sunday night live. A commitment to genuine Bible study and prayer. A significant effort/campaign in the church to pay down the mortgage. Years ago I attended a church that had a significant building debt. They conducted a campaign specific to the building debt - it was a 3-year plan. In addition to the stewardship pledge members were asked to make a pledge specific for the mortgage. For example, a member might pledge \$10 per month the first year, \$15 per month the second year, and \$20 per month the third. Live outloud, demonstrating relevance of the Word of God, the Bible, to the maladies/problems that plague the human condition.	X									X
Bring our financial house in order so that we can reach out to those in need more often	X						X			
When this church gets caught up financially, start building the new sanctuary, etc.	X							X		
56-65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W
Membership number increase, and continued programs for small groups		X	X		X	X				
membership growth					X	X	X			
I like it the way it is.										
Attract more young families as well as those choosing to retire in College Station. Encourage "friends of CPC to become "members". Added opportunities to get together as a church body in a social setting. Keepfocus with all attendees on need for sound financial stewardship.					X	X				
Growth, but not to where we don't know each other.					X	X				
Mortgage paid off and not having to take money from TX Presbytery Foundation to cover budgeted items.	X									
return to an early service and late service; increase participation by families with children in Sunday school classes and youth programs; membership growth and pleding growth so money is not an issue; additional short-term classes during Sunday school hour		X								X
More involvement of congregation in committees and in service (i.e., greeting, ushering, decorating, working in kitchen). Financial stability. Growth, particularly among young people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
While I haven't asked for a copy of the budget, I would like to return to the "old days" where choir directors, organists, etc. GAVE their services to the church and didn't expect to be paid for them. I can tell you that it still occurs in the Presbyterian church (elsewhere).										X
I believe that we need to concentrate on young families and the activities to support them. Our church seems to be aging and it needs the vitality of students and families to sustain growth.		X	X	X	X	X	X			
I would like to see the same teamwork that's evident in preparing, executing and cleaning up meals to be applied to maintaining the buildings and grounds. I'd like worshipers who pick up after themselves (including bulletins and communion cups), who show respect for the facility and others. The purpose in volunteers cleaning the buildings and mowing the grounds, for example, is to free up money for God's work.									X	
more evangelism, outreach					X		X			
Increase focus on our Reformed tradition, especially in Sunday School and worship.		X							X	
more people become actively involved; enough growth to sustain financial situation, but do not want to become a mega-church; growth specifically of young families with children and middle-aged adults, yet continue to provide welcoming environment for retirees; PAY OFF THE MORTGAGE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
The expansion of the congregation, especially to the college age students and young families. Making Covenant more widely known through out both the Bryan and College Station communities. If you don't grow, you die.					X	X	X			

2 growing, vibrant worship services						X	X	X			X
1) Significantly increase mission activities, especially joint ventures with other churches. 2) Get the budget in the black. 3) Attract new members - and I believe nothing accomplishes this more than 1) above. 4) Once 3) is accomplished, start building the new sanctuary.											
Over 65	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
It would be wonderful to fill Covenant Church with young and old, sick and healthy, poor and wealthy adorations who come by foot, car or bus, because of their thirst to hear the word, pray, and repeat the confession every Sunday morning.(like Notre Dame on Easter morning, or Covenant itself on Christmas Eve). This might involve some advertising in nearby towns, senior homes, bulletins produced as far away as San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, even Scotland.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
greater growth in family ministry spiritual direction opportunities increased activity in caring for the poor		X		X							
Add 200 people to the congrgation, a choir of 50, and organ with many new pipes. lots of opportunities for spiritual growth. Build our steeple higher so it can be seen from anywhere along wellburn road.	X									X	
Build the sanctuary to have a place for worship and a place for fellowship. If not able to build somehow separate the worship area and the fellowship area.	X									X	
1- an aggressive Evangelism program, fully supported by congregation.. church must grow.					X						
Build the rest of the physical CampusSee above	X									X	
More families involved in youth and childrens programs including Sunday school. Stronger financial position.	X	X									X
Although I like our current smaller congregation, I believe we do need to increase the number of church members					X	X	X				
One thing: NET growth in the congregation's size. Appeal to more younger families via more children's activities. Less "praying for desired results" and more assertive action by the budget/stewardship and evangelism/membership committees to get after pledges and attract and complete the member recruitment process, respectively. Combine evangelism and membership committees so that responsibility is in a single place and does not get dropped in the crack between them.					X	X	X				
More Bell performances											X
More bell choir performances.											X
I would hope to repair areas that need repairs and hopefully do a little more landscaping. Of course a new sanctuary would be wonderful!	X									X	
Stephen Ministry program initiated.	X			X							
Increased communication to the congregation (both members, visitors, and regular attenders) about what is going on in the church's different programs. For example, how many church school classes do we have, what is the average attendance in them, who are the teachers or leaders, what type of curriculum is being followed, etc. (Might also be good items for short regular squibs in the Courier.) Another example: what is happening in UCM and how can/does our church help with that program. Another example: better descriptions of what the programs are going to be in the Onerful Wednesday programs (simply listing a presentation at 6:15 by Joe Blow doesn't tell us much.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
A balanced budget if possible	X										
Emphasizing to the congregation the need to bring new members into the church. Emphasizing the need for financial support. More youth participation in worship services. More congregational participation in outreach activities to our community, i.e., more activity being "fishers of men". Our church need to do more to let others know who we are and what we do - and what we CAN do for others.	X				X	X	X				
Growth, of course. Growth in the choir. Challenging studies.					X	X					X
We appear to be pretty much on course.											
A congregation more dedicated to giving to the church. Giving time and \$, no matter how little.											
Seeing our church move into Phase 2 and build a larger sanctuary, and have all the increase in members to fill it at worship.	X									X	
Better communication, increased youth participation, increased college participation	X				X		X				
We need more members and I know that this has been addressed.					X	X					
A strong youth program.		X					X				
Better handle on church finances. Need to limit annual expenses to expected income, not plan expenses for what we desire and then hope for a miracle so income will cover expenses. There is too much reliance on funds from Presbytery Foundation - is there a feeling we can keep spending because we have some reserves for a few years? If having money problems, why spending on such frivolity as new signs?	X										

**Total number of feedback responses to each committee**  
**Percentage of feedback to each category by 68 respondents**

25 20 11 8 29 25 21 7 11 18  
37% 29% 16% 12% 43% 37% 31% 10% 16% 26%

\*B&S-Budget & Stewardship, C Ed-Christian Education, CL&F-Christian Life and Fellowship, CC-Congregational Care, Evang-Evangelism, Mem-Membership, Mis-Mission, Pers-Personnel, Prop- Property, W-Worship

**14. Additional Comments. Please tell us anything else you value in a congregation and about your vision for Covenant Presbyterian Church's future.**

	Related Committee Category*										
	B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W	
18-25			X							X	
I really enjoyed the service and fellowship.			X							X	
26-45											
I'm hopeful that CPC look to deepen the discipleship of its current families and reach out to new families with a heart for their spiritual growth. A commitment to accept all the wide range of diversity in God's creation.		X									
I value the close family type setting that I have with members of the church. It is invaluable to me and my family, and it is something I hold close to my heart.			X			X					
In depth bible study series in worship services. For example I'd like to see a series of sermons on Romans or Isaah, etc. AKA a hook to keep me motivated to attend		X								X	
I love that this is such an open and welcoming community. I'm probably a more liberal member of the College Station community and it's important to me that I feel comfortable here (that we avoid talking about politics, for example). I also value the intellectual nature of this congregation.						X					
There always seems to be this sense of urgency in wanting things to grow. Growth takes time. Perhaps we need to do a better job of focusing on our current membership, programs, resources, etc.	X	X				X				X	
In a town somewhat lacking in diversity, we should continue to be a congregation that welcomes a diverse membership - both demographically and politically.					X	X					
I envision that CPC will continue to grow. I believe we should focus on attracting more college students and young adults. First of all, many TAMU grads remain in College Station, and I believe they would continue to worship at CPC after graduation. Second, our young adults' class and activities have gained numbers. So, visitors will find a young, vibrant congregation that they may choose to be their church home. I also think young adults will be attracted to the family atmosphere of our congregation. They should see that CPC is a good Christian environment for starting a family and raising children.					X	X					
Straight forward preaching from the pulpit Teaching our youth and children to take a stand for their faith Energetic worship, interactive worship		X								X	
46-55											
I value a genuine, sincere family of believers--not pretentious, but also tolerance in knowing each member is not perfect, and an acceptance that while we are not perfect, we all aspire to be Christ-like. I believe a healthy congregation has good representation of all age groups, and interacts as a true church family. I believe this church has a greater ability than it exhibits, to reach out to the 15-25 year olds out there who really need to have a Christian family (other than their own) to help them when times seem tough. With 60,000 university students in BCS, we need to do much better.			X		X	X					
Community.			X								
I would love to see Covenant grow and prosper. We always seem to be able to come up with money for 'things' but we can't come up with money to hire people. In spite of stated visions and values, it seems to me that the 'dream' of the congregation is a new building. If that is our dream, we will never get there.	X							X	X		
We've got a great church with great people and great programs. I think our biggest weaknesses are in finances and communication. We get out lots of email, newsletters, announcements, but we need some way to make sure everyone gets really talked to or contacted.	X										
56-65											
David is a great pastor and brings the Word to us in deep and meaningful messages. We need to get out of debt for a while before we take on new building	X	X							X		
Would like to see more students at SNL										X	
I'd like to see the congregation growing in all age groups and having to build on because we have outgrown our buildings.					X	X					
It would be great to increase membership enough so we can build a sanctuary in the next few years. This is an extremely welcoming congregation - we need to figure out how to get people in the door in larger numbers.					X	X					
Hope for future growth across the board. Strong youth programs and Sunday School to attract young families More optimism Fewer meals coffee and finger foods following service. Willingness to try new things		X	X		X	X					
We need to be a welcoming, dynamic church with open doors and open hearts.					X	X					
I have been a member for several years but haven't been attending regularly because after each service, I fail to get that "warm,fuzzy feeling" and I leave frustrated.										X	
I like that we meet in the "fellowship hall" and sit in folding chairs. It is my wish that we never endeavour to build a sanctuary filled with pews, that we instead put our resources to work serving others, fulfilling needs, spreading God's love.	X				X		X		X		

I want CPC to be a spiritual "home" for me; a place where my friendships are strong; a place where my work and worth are valued; a place in the community that I can be proud to say is my church. I want financial security so that we can take our visions and creatively expand our church to do what is necessary to minister to our congregation and the community at large. I want to be able to find faith, hope, love and peace here.		X			X			X			
We need more visibility in the community. I don't mean advertising (although we need that, too), I mean local mission, community involvement, local projects. We also need to have a better understanding of our church polity, what Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly are doing, especially in the mission area.						X		X			
Over 65		B&S	C Ed	CL&F	CC	Evang	Mem	Mis	Pers	Prop	W
I am quite happy with Covenant Church and look forward to enjoying the congregation just as it is.											
Acceptance of people from different walks in life encouragement in even the little things that a person does or tries to do to be a disciple a kind word for everyone who comes through our doors more blessing from the leadership and from each other			X			X	X				
Strong youth program. Provide presbyterian leadership in south CS.			X								
We need to build our congregation and choir (with robes to unify the choir). Many churches have been built on their choir, i.e., Christ United Methodist. It was started in 1992 with about 50 members and today it is one of the largest churches in our community. To build and add programs we must increase our membership base. With the leadership we currently have I think you would see miracles, especially in programs and services offered in the church and the community.							X				X
So many committed, talented individuals in our congregation. We are indeed blessed.							X				
As does the government or any organization, a church must exercise care not to over extend its activities beyond what it can afford and exceed its annual budget.		X									
Plan and build activities for the future. What is our church to be 3-5 years from now? How do we get there/ How do we realize the vision that will come out of this effort? Who will do it?											
Going to just one service makes the church seem fuller.											X
I value especially the friendliness of the people in our church and their welcoming of visitors and friends. I hope that continues. I hope also that we are "big enough" to welcome and help people with questions and doubts about Christianity, their being a Christian, our Presbyterian form of government, etc.						X	X				
Need to take a page out of the Baptists' book and hold a revival sometime. Conduct activities in the church that will bring in members and offer members an opportunity to invite non-members, e.g. musical performances, special guest speakers, plays, youth programs, etc. Advertise our church and let the community know more about our church. We seem to not advertise ourselves nearly as much as we should. Need to update our website so we can advertise through it. Many ways to advertise our church at little or no cost, word of mouth being the best! Covenant should be THE church in our community!						X	X				
I'd like to see the acoustics improved. I'd value having close friends in the church. Maybe small groups where people could become close. Maybe more emphasis on prayer.				X		X					X
The Children's Programs, as they are our future. Community Outreach Programs to keep us in touch with real world.			X	X		X		X			

**Total number of feedback responses to each committee**      7      9      7      1      15      16      5      1      4      8  
**Percentage of feedback to each category by 36 respondents**      19%      25%      19%      3%      42%      44%      14%      3%      11%      22%

\*B&S-Budget & Stewardship, C Ed-Christian Education, CL&F-Christian Life and Fellowship, CC-Congregational Care, Evang-Evangelism, Mem-Membership, Mis-Mission, Pers-Personnel, Prop- Property, W-Worship