

History

It is not yet completed . . .

In 1952 the northern New Castle County suburbs were flourishing as the post-World War era fueled the building of new housing developments. Recognizing the need to provide faith communities in this growing area, the New Castle Presbytery selected The Reverend Henry L. Jacobs as the missionary to establish Concord Presbyterian Church.

The hunger to witness to the gospel in this place was evident, and a regular church service began in a shoe repair shop in the Fairfax Shopping Center. In 1953 plans were made to begin construction of a permanent home for the church. Over the next five years the current structure was completed in three phases, trying to keep pace with the membership that was growing to 625. That number would continue to grow, peaking in 1968 at 1601 members.

Concord's entire history has been one of vital witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We witness through joyful worship, including the gift of high-quality music. We witness by our care of each other, as well as our commitment to serve our community and our world through numerous mission and outreach initiatives. We witness by seeking to learn more about our faith and the God revealed in the Scriptures through study and prayer. We witness by providing a nurturing environment and activities for our children and youth, including our Concord Preschool, established in 1956.

Over the years Concord's membership has declined to the current 320 members, but the Christian calling of this enthusiastic family of disciples remains very much alive and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In 2004 the congregation completed a study that resulted in a renewed vision for the future. The vision includes transformative efforts in the areas of spirituality, evangelism, social justice, and local community service. These efforts have already begun, and, with God's help, the new energy that is evident at Concord will ensure its continuation as a vital and growing witness to the Kingdom of God.

Vision

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As Concord Presbyterian Church, we commit ourselves to be a Christ-centered people of God. By the Grace of God and energized by the Holy Spirit . . .

- WE WILL FEED the spiritual and intellectual hunger of God's people.
- WE WILL BUILD a church family that welcomes, embraces, and loves all people, excluding no one from full involvement in the life of the church.
- WE WILL SERVE the world around us, sharing in the concerns and struggles of its people.
- WE WILL RESPOND to God's goodness with celebration!

Adopted by the Session November, 1998

Mission

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Near term areas of effort in furtherance of our vision include:

SPIRITUALITY

We need to reinvest in the spiritual energy of our membership. Active prayer ministries, retreats, and other programs are needed to recharge our spiritual batteries. We also need to learn how to mentor those new to a relationship to Christ. The church hungers for more fellowship that includes all age groups.

EVANGELISM

We believe that Concord must be a vibrant community of believers that invites people to become part of our fellowship. We intend to grow. We also recognize that traditional church structures and organizational style may need to change as we adapt to what it means to be the church of the 21st century. However, we must avoid the temptation to measure our success by church growth alone.

We live and are engaged in mission in times that require Concord to address new challenges for which it is currently not equipped. We are used to doing ministry and mission in a context where everyone in our community knows the Good News of Jesus Christ and our role was to be welcoming to those who wished to join Concord for worship, fellowship, and service. We now find ourselves in a world where we need to take ownership for introducing our neighbors to Christ and sharing the message of what Christ can bring to their life and soul.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We must shine God's light on injustices in the world and join in efforts to overcome them. Our mission concerns for poverty and homelessness within our immediate neighborhood, as well as in greater Wilmington and the world, remain unchanged. We seek to be a link between our local community and the larger world. We envision inviting those in our local community to join with Concord in our community and world outreach efforts.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

We seek to provide for local community needs from a Christian perspective. This must begin with a more focused effort on understanding local community issues. We envision doing this work in partnership with other churches where we can. We need to be much more active in communicating to the local community. More intentional efforts to meet the needs of our community may lead to additional worship times and/or styles.

Plan

It is not yet completed . . .

The life and work of Concord Presbyterian Church is supported by the generous stewardship of current members. Annual stewardship is our means of returning to God a portion of our time, our talent, and our income. The simple truth is that as our membership has decreased over time, our continuing ability to accomplish all that God is

calling us to has been strained.

The Session has authorized an effort to build our endowment fund. Just as stewardship giving is a chance to return to God a portion of our annual income, contributions to the endowment fund provide a means to share accumulated resources as long-lasting support for the continuing witness of our church. By design, the principal of an endowment remains intact so that through its earnings the endowment can provide financial support year after year. Even if it were legally possible (it is not), it would be financially irresponsible and short-sighted to invade endowment principal to cover current operating costs or even for one-time expenses. This fund, therefore, is not to be viewed as a substitute for the stewardship of future congregations. As such, income from the endowment will be limited to three areas designed to provide support as well as growth and vitality for this congregation:

- Support for evangelism
- Seed money for members to begin new initiatives in ministry. This is designed to encourage passion, energy, and creativity in seeking to discern God's call in new directions. Active involvement of members will be a requirement.
- Building issues/extraordinary capital needs

This effort will build upon work that began in 1999. The endowment fund balance currently stands at \$177,000. Our goal is to grow the fund to \$500,000 through current gifts as well as bequests. No endowment income will be used by the church until the balance in the account reaches this goal.

How can we do this? *It is not yet completed . . .*

There are a number of ways we can choose to help build the Concord Endowment Fund. Everyone's situation is different, and the benefits to the church and to you need to be individually addressed. Professional help is available from attorneys, accountants, and financial planners. In addition, Concord has a number of resources to assist you.

Gifts to the Concord Endowment Fund can be made either during your lifetime or as a bequest in your will. Gifts can be designated for a specific purpose, or directed to be used as needed within the three areas to be supported by endowment fund income.

Gifts or bequests may consist of:

- Cash
- Real Estate
- Securities
- Life Insurance
- Appreciated Property
- Personal property

Estate gifts to charity are most commonly made through a simple will provision, and many of the rest through a beneficiary arrangement that names the charity. Some of the ways gifts through your will may be structured are: a percentage of your estate; a fixed

amount of your estate; or the residue of assets remaining after all other bequests have been fulfilled.

Some may find it best to support the Concord Endowment using one of a variety of gifts (collectively known as "life-income agreements") that, in addition to providing resources for the church, can also provide a lifetime income to the donor. For those interested, your advisors or representatives from the Presbyterian Church Foundation can help determine which option might be best for you.

This brief overview is not meant to be exhaustive. It is simply meant to demonstrate that there are many ways to answer the question: How can we do this? Through the materials and education that we will provide, through consultation with your own advisors, and with God's help, we will discover that: We can do this!

What could we do with endowment income?

It is not yet completed . . .

As mentioned earlier, the Session has designated that income from the endowment will be limited to three areas designed to provide support as well as growth and vitality for this congregation. Here they are listed again, along with some ideas of specific uses. The ideas shown below are the product of some "dreaming" by the Endowment Committee. They are not concrete proposals. You are encouraged to do your own dreaming as well. The point is that the endowment is meant to provide an ongoing source of funding for uses that will help future congregations maintain and grow Concord's witness to the gospel; and to dream and discern new ways to respond to God's call.

Support for evangelism " Bless backpacks for the community kids in September " Community food drive " Video for the website " Targeted mailings several time per year announcing church activities and services " "Awareness" advertising in newspapers and radio " Fill in your dreams here

Seed money for members to begin new initiatives in ministry " Alzheimer's support group " New mothers' support group " Park beautification (next door) " Adult daycare " Senior activity center " Parish nurse program " Church van " Visiting scholar program " Youth mission trips and conferences " Ecumenical programs " Fill in your dreams here

Building issues/extraordinary capital needs "Make building more hospitable through signage, accessibility, etc., significant repairs/replacement of major building components(e.g., roof, HVAC, electrical, plumbing)" Fill in your dreams here

Many of us may not see the results of our future-oriented stewardship. There is a Zen teaching that says, "No seed ever sees the flower." Imagine, though, how grateful we would be today if past congregations had provided the kind of resource we are planning now.

Invitation

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“You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:11-12

We are all called to discipleship out of the waters of our baptism, and stewardship is synonymous with discipleship. There may be slight differences in emphasis, but both words speak of our glad response to the goodness of God in Jesus Christ, both speak of following Jesus, both speak of our life in Christ.

As part of your faithful discipleship you are invited to support Concord Presbyterian Church’s ability to continue to witness to the gospel in this place well into the future. Your support of the endowment can come from a current contribution, by providing for the church in your estate, or some combination of the two.

In the weeks ahead we will be conducting a number of informational sessions to answer your questions, to listen to your dreams, and to present a variety of ways that you can accomplish your support of this important effort.

Exciting things are happening here in response to God’s outrageous love for us. Building on this new vitality will take time, imagination, and resources. With your help we can assure that Concord Presbyterian Church will be a welcoming and fitting place for all whose faith journeys bring them to our door. It will be a place where their ideas for new ways to do mission will be honored and supported. And the light that shines from this place will draw ever more children of God to join us.