

# Growing in God's grace

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Clinton Presbyterian Church  
*Vision 2018*

## **Vision 2018 – Growing in God's Grace**

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In the spring of 2018, the Session of Clinton Presbyterian Church approved a visioning process which would allow our congregation to come together and craft the next chapter of our journey in faith.

Clinton Presbyterian is a strong and vibrant church family. As we entered the process of thoughtful reflection, we were determined to clarify our core values, build on our strengths and identify areas of growth. Deacons and Elders facilitated small group Congregational Conversations with members and friends using the Appreciative Inquiry model. These conversations were encouraging, inspiring and life giving as God's people shared their stories, hopes and dreams.

At the request of Session, a Vision Team was formed to synthesize and summarize the information gathered through these conversations as well as to develop priorities and initiatives for the next 3-5 years. The work of the Vision Team was extensive and prayerful, and Session enthusiastically endorses their work and commits to the priorities outlined in this document. We invite you to read, pray and commit your own energy, resources and love to this vision as together we move forward, always Growing in God's Grace.

*“Clinton Presbyterian Church is a welcoming congregation called to share Christ’s love.”*

Founded in 1831, CPC has a long history as a worshipping community right in the heart of Clinton. For generations those who have walked through our red doors and into our historic Sanctuary have experienced Christ's presence and peace.



## **Core Values**

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We are grateful for God's grace which allows us to be:

**Welcoming to All** – our doors and our arms are open to all who would join us on this journey of faith.

**Growing in Faith** – at every age and stage of life we recognize the importance of nurturing faith development.

**Serving with Love** – we embrace opportunities for mission.

## Strengths

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***As a congregation, we have come together to identify our strengths and are committed to both preserving and advancing these areas of our ministry.***

### **Christ-Centered Worship**

Sunday worship is the center of our congregational life, and we experience it as both authentic and compelling. We enjoy a diverse music program, relevant preaching and a sense of warmth as we worship together. We will continue to bring new and innovative offerings to worship while maintaining our core traditions and identity as we glorify God together.

### **Caring Community**

Most of our members and friends feel well cared for in this family of faith. We are quick to provide a meal, a prayer and company when friends are in need, and we are swift to celebrate together in moments of joy. Community is a gift, and we want to both preserve this strength and update programs to meet fellowship needs.

### **Mission Engagement**

Our church deeply values serving others as an act of Christian discipleship. We partner with a number of organizations to meet the needs of our local community and beyond. We have increased our participation in hands-on mission significantly over the last years. We will continue to prioritize mission as a hallmark of Christian discipleship and work to create new opportunities to engage an even broader portion of our congregation in Christian service.

### **Child-Friendly Atmosphere**

We celebrate the presence of children in our church family. We love their wiggles and giggles in worship, their thought-provoking questions and their joyful energy. We will continue to structure our ministry in a way that creates opportunities for children and their families to be engaged and included. We will stay flexible and responsive as the needs of our children and families grow and change over time.

### **Dedicated Leadership**

Our elders, deacons and staff are committed to their calling. Working together they provide for the day-to-day operations of the church and set the tone for our life together, serving with energy, enthusiasm and love.

# Strategic Priorities

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**Grow Our Worshipping Community** so that we may be a vital witness to God's love now and for generations to come.

- 1. Encourage intentional invitation to worship and church events** – urge congregants to invite others, through personal invitation and social media, to join them at CPC either for worship or other gatherings, such as book clubs, days of service, youth events, etc.



- 2. Highlight the importance of welcome** – identify members with gifts of hospitality to actively welcome and connect with visitors; create an increased sense of warmth in the vestibule area.
- 3. Promote CPC worship and events throughout our facility** – provide current and relevant visual reminders so that all who pass through our doors may know about our vibrant and welcoming church family.
- 4. Market CPC events broadly through social media, newspaper reports, and mailings** – highlight opportunities for the community to become a part of our church life.
- 5. Connect with local newcomers' groups and realtors** – share CPC information as permissible when people move into the area.

**Grow Our Opportunities for Faith Formation and Connection** so that we may deepen our relationships with God and one another.

- 1. Strengthen and expand educational offerings** - consistently offer adult Sunday school and Bible study as well as seasonal small group gatherings; consider a church-wide initiative to encourage Bible reading and offer classes based on particular areas of need (faith and finances, parenting and marriage, aging, etc.)



- 2. Encourage faithful exploration of “Life’s Big Questions”** – create a variety of forums in which we can ask challenging questions about God, faith, and Christians living in today’s world.
- 3. Continue and grow church-centered fellowship** – host a variety of dinners, picnics, outings; add additional offerings as needs arise for particular groups (eg. seniors, singles, young adults, etc.).
- 4. Deepen our connection with college students** – provide support and encouragement in tangible ways as students leave for school; provide opportunities for them to gather when home on break.
- 5. Create a church-wide directory of talents and interests** – encourage the use of this directory to facilitate the formation of new interest groups; additionally, use this resource to help meet needs as they arise in members’ daily lives and around the church facility.

**Grow Our Commitment to Children and Youth Ministries** so that we may equip and encourage the youngest of Jesus' followers.

- 1. Continue and Improve upon our Children's Ministry capstones of Sunday School and VBS** – encourage increased congregational engagement with Sunday school, and explore new models for Sunday morning needs; continue to market our VBS program widely while evaluating shifting community needs.



- 2. Invest in changing ministry needs for middle and high school students** –continue and strengthen current programming for Sunday school and youth groups; simultaneously develop a vision for youth ministry which identifies CPC as a “go-to” location for teens, highlighting the importance of discipleship and service.
- 3. Foster worship opportunities for children/youth** – encourage participation in worship at all ages; extend an invitation for all children to participate in communion; help both children and parents make the transition to full participation in the worship service at the appropriate age; invite older children and youth to serve as liturgists, ushers and musicians throughout the year in addition to our yearly Children and Youth Sundays.
- 4. Support and encourage parents of younger children** – continue Cradle Roll program to foster welcome of young families; extend childcare hours on Sunday mornings to allow for parent participation in fellowship and study; provide audio broadcast of service to the nursery; offer “Kids Night Out” on a regular basis, and introduce family- focused gatherings at the church on a seasonal basis; offer parenting seminars/studies as appropriate, and explore the need for other family-based programming; extend welcome to all CPC events and activities to preschool families.
- 5. Celebrate our young people** – highlight the adventures of our children and youth in their daily activities; be diligent in screening and training all volunteers as we prioritize our children's safety.

## Grow Our Service to Others so that we may answer and follow Christ's call.

1. **Continue and grow our commitment to local mission agencies** –strengthen these connections by providing regular opportunities for hands-on service; highlight our mission relationships in worship; identify new local service opportunities that are accessible for all.



2. **Build new relationships within the local community to identify service needs** – connect with leaders in social service agencies, senior centers, non-profits and schools as a first step in forming these relationships; meet needs as possible, and share stories of transformation as appropriate in worship, on social media and in the newsletter.
3. **Expand mission service in surrounding areas** – charge the Mission Ministry Team with researching ways in which this will be accomplished.
4. **Form a Disaster Response Team** – identify individuals within the congregation who have an interest in disaster relief work; establish leadership to facilitate careful coordination, expediting our ability to respond to disasters.
5. **Explore possibilities for family-focused and work-focused mission trips** – offer extended service opportunities within reasonable driving distance of CPC; determine trip frequency according to interest, availability and need.

**Grow Our Community Engagement** so that we may be more visible and involved locally.

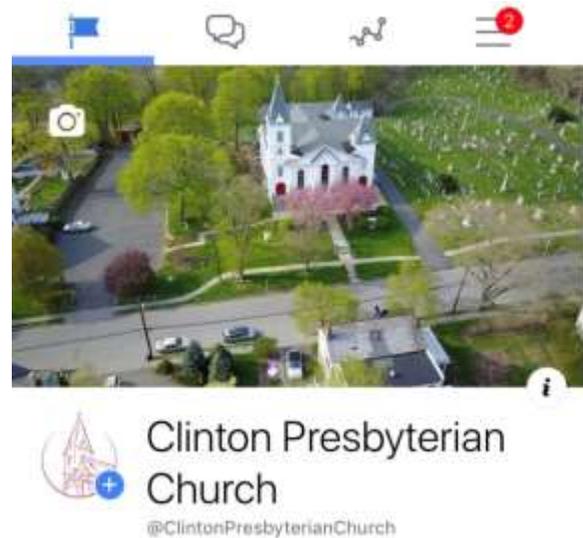
- 1. Continue and build on the success of church-sponsored, community-wide offerings** – be intentional in using these events to both highlight our church family and extend a welcome to all.



- 2. Host additional church activities which sync with wider community events** – coordination in a way which will allow CPC to take advantage of higher traffic times in Clinton and become a more integral part of the community.
- 3. Establish an active and easily identifiable CPC presence at all local community events** – leverage our membership in the Clinton Guild to help with planning; create a community engagement team to include members who would be called on to represent CPC at events.
- 4. Create CPC visibility in members' everyday lives** – provide branded items such as clothing, mugs, etc. that will serve as conversations starters with neighbors and friends.
- 5. Consider new opportunities to engage with our neighborhood** – create offerings which seem relevant and appropriate to the demographics of the neighborhoods surrounding CPC.

**Grow Our Digital Presence** so that we may effectively connect with our church family and those who are seeking a faith community.

- 1. Refresh church website to better reflect our congregational vitality** – focus on easy navigation and quick access to key information, including our new preschool ministry; increase functionality for members with online sign-ups and a current weekly and monthly calendar; create and utilize video content to highlight various aspects of church life, which we will use across digital platforms.



- 2. Increase and maintain a consistent social media presence** – develop a team who will plan content development and implement daily posts which lift up our core values and create a glimpse into our life together (include testimonials, etc.); share, as appropriate, to community pages and with news outlets; encourage members to “like” and “share” social media posts and to “check in” at church as a means of boosting our online presence.
- 3. Utilize technology to extend the reach of our ministry** – use live streaming of worship services as a point of connection with homebound members and those who are travelling; offer virtual studies and forums, use live streaming to connect with online visitors.
- 4. Consider investment in branded content templates for social promotion** – incorporate new logo and consistent colors/fonts/graphics, helping to make CPC instantly recognizable.



**Clinton Presbyterian Church**

Clinton NJ • Est. 1831