

# Strategic Plan

2023 - 2026



**ATTRACT AND  
RETAIN MEMBERS,  
STRENGTHEN FINANCES**



## Introduction

Following a June 2022 Session mandate, a committee comprised of Rev. Paul Gilmore, Liz Kohler, Susan Langan, Josh Warren, Ward Wilson, Bill Witt, and Kate Van Vlack was formed to explore and develop a strategic plan for WPC. This report is the result of that mandate. This plan hopes to usher WPC successfully into its seventh decade in 2026.

- WPC is a slowly shrinking but paradoxically thriving religious community.

Churches have taken a hit during COVID-19, just as all public spaces – restaurants, concert halls, theaters – have. WPCs attendance is down as well. And over the last five years we have lost some of our most loyal older members.

But despite these downward trends, there are also signs of hope. Several new families have joined in recent months. We currently have the largest confirmation class in decades.

- Our trend is downward, but our possibilities are genuinely wide.

We live in a world where pandemic has reminded everyone of the frailty of human life, isolation has reminded us all of our need for community, and war and violent weather have demonstrated (again) the vital importance of faith. A recent survey found that when asked where the happiest place on earth was, peoples' first and overwhelming response was "houses of worship."

We have an outstanding children's ministry that draws new families to us.

We have a music ministry that gracefully spans styles from traditional to contemporary, from plainsong to evangelical.

We have active and effective ministries in the larger community around us, feeding hungry people globally and locally, providing shelter, clothing, and help for those in need.

Most of all, however, we are blessed with a congregation of welcoming, committed families and individuals who live out our mission statement: "WPC is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are inspired by Jesus Christ to welcome all with open arms, to worship and grow in faith centered in God's Word, and to share God's love with all through word and deed."



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## **Report and Recommendations**

In June 2022, the Session approved the development of a strategic plan to focus on WPC membership growth, membership retention, and financial health in order to assure the church's vitality and financial well-being in the future. A committee was formed to conduct research, analyze findings, and make recommendations in a formal plan to be presented at the January 2023 Session meeting and at the February 2023 Annual Meeting. Action teams to implement recommendations for 2023 through 2026 will be led by the Session and other church members.

### **WPC strengths and opportunities**

Our congregation, lay leaders and staff agree that we are a family friendly church that offers a warm welcome and a caring attitude in worship and other gatherings. We have a strong children's and youth program, intellectually and socially stimulating small groups, a caring and professional staff, and flexible and functional spaces. We are centrally located in the New Trier High School District, at a major intersection in West Winnetka. We share PC(USA)'s progressive values yet respect and welcome other views from the congregation and community.

In a prior Congregational Survey, respondents were satisfied with their overall experience at WPC, but believed the church needed to grow its numbers, especially families with young children, and develop spiritual generosity to support the ministry of the church. Most respondents to our December 2022 Congregational Survey echoed agreement with the need to make a strong effort to grow membership. These respondents also indicated an interest in enhancing adult education and pastoral care to those who are aging, lonely or in need.

Our market area is one of potential: high income, high education and homeowners with children. While it is less racially and economically diverse than other areas in Chicagoland, it offers promise if WPC can target potential members wisely. We need to market the message that church in general and WPC in specific can offer "greater happiness and meaning" and "lower stress" that people are seeking through spirituality and religion, according to Washington Post research.

## **WPC weaknesses and threats**

We have a demographic gap in our church. People aged sixty and older are strongly represented as are young parents in their thirties or early forties. We are missing cohorts of church goers in their twenties and fifties. Some members would like a more traditional worship while a larger group would like to have more contemporary services. As a midsize church, we lack the deep bench of staff and volunteers to offer the range of programs to meet the needs and interests of the congregation. Budget concerns also hold us back from making big changes to grow our membership.

WPC suffers from the same threats to organized religion experienced throughout Europe and the United States. A growing number of people believe that religion is a stale dogma with incredible beliefs about miracles that has no relevance to the world of online social media, celebrity culture, and endless entertainment. Closer to home, many residents of our market area are overbooked with other activities for children, family and individual pursuits.

## **Recommendations and Action Items for Attracting New Members**

**Goal:** Add six new members each year to our active rolls between 2023 and 2026. Currently, WPC has 249 active members and 187 inactive members.

**How:** Raise WPC visibility in the community through messaging and action. Messaging includes targeted marketing, publicity, and personal outreach to neighbors, family and friends. Action includes worship, fellowship and community events designed to appeal to families and younger demographics.

- Offer a modern Sunday worship service that is more informal, family oriented, and shorter in length with contemporary music and children's sermons.
- Develop a "live, work, play" outreach strategy for communicating to potential new members by studying neighborhoods, workplaces, and recreational and social outlets. Understand what "church shoppers" are looking for and use targeted marketing to reach them. Incorporate some techniques from private/country clubs to market WPC as a place to meet interesting people, make friends, and pursue spiritual development and personal improvement.

- Make sure we are on Yelp, Google search, Nextdoor and other social media to publicize worship and other events and describe what it is that makes us special.
- Educate and encourage all members to share their faith, talk about their church home, and invite family, friends and neighbors to visit.
- Offer periodic Open Houses where families can check us out, either at night with pizza, games or a movie or on a Pancake Breakfast Sunday. Treasure each visitor and follow up with personal note, phone call or visit. Find out how the church can best serve them.
- Open outreach and mission opportunities to the public. Become a place of solace and reflection during crises and support social and other causes.

### **Recommendations and Action Items for Retaining Our Members**

**Goal:** Strive for 100% retention of our active members, not counting relocation or death.

**How:** Define our WPC community as people who understand our mission, work toward common goals, and accept and love each other for who they are. Encourage connections between congregants, spiritual formation, and revive “Every Member in Ministry” to increase volunteer, lay leadership, and mission participation.

- Develop a worship advisory team with the goal of offering music, ritual and prayer that aid in the worship experience of a broader spectrum of our congregation. Offer special services other than Sunday mornings around specific occasions, seasons or pastoral care needs.
- Offer an “Every Member in Ministry” mission-fair event or informational material, where all projects and offerings of the church are displayed so that volunteers can sign up. Train, motivate, and cherish volunteers.
- Declare a “No Friend Left Behind” policy. Get to know WPC friends and members for who they are and meet them where they are, do everything you can to facilitate people’s spiritual gifts in their full variety. Maintain good communication between staff, Deacons, Stephen Ministers and other supportive members.

- Plan CLC events such as lectures, Bible study, book club, knitting, concerts, movie or game nights. Consider off site fellowship events such as family game days, picnics in the parks, or meet ups at community events.

### **Recommendations and Action Items for Strengthening Our Financial Health**

**Goals:** Increase giving units (families or individuals) by three each year, starting with 65 units in 2023. Increase total pledges by \$2,500 each year, starting with \$500,000 in 2023. Add two planned gifts per year, starting in 2023. Increase annual fundraising goal by \$1,000 each year, starting with \$20,000 in 2023.

**How:** Regularly communicate the positive impacts that our pledges and gifts have on those in need as well as church programs that connect us and help us grow in faith and love. Use creative fundraising methods and seek other sources of funding from internal and external sources. Develop administrative methods that allow staff and lay leaders to meet major goals and function effectively.

- Follow these stewardship guidelines from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership: Set giving targets and offer prior year data to ask for a slight increase. Provide a “Step Up” plan to encourage everyone to grow in giving. Use the most personal approach possible. Follow every successful solicitation with a meaningful and timely gesture of appreciation.
- Use creative fundraising methods and seek other sources of funding from internal and external sources. Do annual fundraising to supplement our fall stewardship campaign. Seek out grants and endowment giving.
- Develop administrative methods that allow staff and lay leaders to meet major goals and function effectively. For example, convene a supportive committee for Children's and Youth ministries to partner with Nancy Holly, who carries a heavy load. To reflect the changing nature of volunteerism, offer “bite sized” volunteer opportunities for most other needs.

## **Key Findings From General Trends in Religion, Church Affiliation, and Congregational Giving**

### **Summary**

Though Christianity remains the largest religion globally and in the US, fewer people are actively involved with religion and religious institutions. The proportion of “nones” – people with no religious affiliation – is growing. There is an inverse relationship between economic advancement and religious commitment: the more money you have, the less likely you are to be involved religiously. PC (USA) membership has declined in the past decades. In spite of these weaknesses and threats, there remains a strong attraction to religion for its meaning, connection, and social benefits. Families pass along their religious commitment to younger generations. Stewardship giving reflects the importance that members place upon the church and its community. The financial stress that churches feel, especially smaller churches, has been increasing as membership and attendance decline in many areas of the US and globally.

### **Strengths**

In a recent national survey, religious and spiritual activities are rated highest in happiness and meaning and lowest in stress. Not even sports, exercise, recreation, eating or drinking is rated higher. Places of worship are the happiest places on earth. [Washington Post, see Selected Sources]

Religious service attendance – as a result of having a social support network – is linked to health benefits such as lower rates of depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, and drug overdoses. [Institute for Family Studies]

Highly religious parents tend to raise highly religious children who are less likely than other children to disaffiliate in young adulthood. This intergenerational transmission may help churches grow membership. [Pew Research]

### **Weaknesses**

People in North America say religion plays a less important role in their lives today. [Pew Research] Globally, there is a clear correlation between higher economic advancement and lower religious commitment. [Pew Research]



If current demographic trends continue, Muslims will equal Christians in share of global population (32.3%) by 2070 and gradually increase as the dominant religion. [Pew Research]

Membership in the Presbyterian Church, USA [PC(USA)] has declined for the past 60 years. The 2021 Statistical Report states 51,584 members left or died, with 1.19 million remaining. Our (mostly white) denomination is aging, with a third being age 71 or older. [PC(USA)]

Some observers are skeptical that traditional churches will endure. "Mainline churches don't have much more than 12-15 years left." [The Great Emergence by Phyllis Tickle, 2008]

### **Opportunities**

The COVID pandemic has not changed believers' attitudes toward God nor their religious practices. However, white mainline Protestants and unaffiliated adults are less likely to say their faith has strengthened due to the pandemic. [AP/NORC.org]

Current religious switching patterns may be affected by other events outside the study's model, including war, economic depression, climate crisis, changing immigration patterns or religious innovations. [Pew Research]

52% of Protestant pastors in 2022 say the current economy is negatively impacting their church operations. However, most pastors report their congregational giving meets budgeted goals and remains in line with the previous year. [Lifeway Research]

### **Threats**

People are becoming less religious in the US: 63% identified as Christians in 2021 vs. 78% in 2007. US respondents with no religion increased to 29% from 16% in 2007. Projections of US Christians in 2070 range from 54% to 35%. [Pew Research]

The most religious folks are dying out and the least religious are the ones coming in. [Pew Research]

The decline in PC(USA) congregations is happening as churches get too small and dissolve or merge. Most PC(USA) congregations are small – with 20%, or one in five, having 25 members or fewer. About two-thirds of PC(USA)

congregations have 100 members or fewer. PC(USA) dissolved 104 congregations in 2021 and 103 in 2020, leaving a total of 8,813 congregations. The number of presbyteries also dropped from 170 to 166, with mid councils merging or realigning. [PC(USA)]

The share of regular churchgoers fell from 34% in 2019 to 28% in 2021. At the same time, the number of Americans who have never or seldom attend religious services increased by 7 percentage points (50% in 2019 to 57% in 2021). There is no corresponding data to suggest that empty pews have been replaced by online worshippers to a significant extent. [Institute for Family Studies]

Declining year-over-year giving is a factor for a quarter of responding Protestant churches. Smaller congregations are among the most likely to be facing economic headwinds. [Lifeway Research]

## **Key Findings from WPC Market Area Trends**

### **Summary**

At its founding in 1956, WPC served a need for a Protestant church in west Winnetka. Since then, the 3 mile market area around WPC has seen additional growth in religious institutions that either have a physical presence or draw from the market area (i.e. Willow Creek Community Church in Glenview and Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago). Population growth in our market area is constrained by space and other restrictions, limiting the number of potential new members for WPC. Individuals and families in our market area are largely white, highly educated earners with potential to enhance WPC as active members who participate in church events, volunteer on committees or as lay leaders, and provide financial support. However, WPC competes with other strong religious organizations as well as other non-religious activities such as youth sports, travel and entertainment.

### **Strengths**

WPC is located in the center of the New Trier High School district, which attracts younger families with children who benefit from excellent educational and extracurricular opportunities. WPC is situated near other excellent school districts such as Glenbrook, Evanston, Niles Township, Lake Forest, District 113 (Highland Park) and District 109 (Deerfield). There is also a strong selection of private and parochial schools in the area.

WPC is conveniently located and has facilities such as its Christian Life Center, adjoining large kitchen, sizable parking lot, and ADA adaptations that can serve members and the community at large.

WPC offers space for AA meetings, for New Trier Township food distribution, Cub Scouts, and other community events. Currently, WPC has a space use agreement with Oak Leaf Cooperative School, a nonprofit nature-based education preschool program. In the recent past, it had a space use agreement with a Korean church. Prior to its move to Oak Street, Willow Wood Pre-School operated at WPC

### **Weaknesses**

There is a slight decrease projected in population, number of households, and families with children in the 3 mile market area around WPC.

WPC has an aging building and grounds requiring maintenance which threatens its ability to devote necessary funds for outreach and programs that could attract and retain members.

### **Opportunities**

The two largest lifestyle categories identified in our 3 mile radius market area are the “Power Elites” and “Booming with Confidence.” Power Elites are described as wealthy individuals in exclusive neighborhoods, enjoying life. Booming with Confidence defines prosperous, established couples in their peak years, living in suburban homes. These segments offer potential in terms of being active members and strong donors. [PCUSA FullInsite and Experian Mosaic Segments]

Top life concerns of the market area include: ongoing impact of COVID-19, social & political tensions and discord, and personal health crisis or illness. [PC(USA) MinistryInsite]

### **Threats**

The market area is less diverse: it consists of mostly white, highly educated, high income, white collar homeowners who are less likely to develop a strong affiliation with a church.

There is an abundance of competing programming for children and youth, including sports, arts, and family activities. A significant portion of the older population travel seasonally, have second homes, or retire to other parts of the country.

There are significant numbers of Protestant churches and other religious institutions in the market area, offering similar programs. Kenilworth Union Church, one of the largest Protestant churches in our market area, reported 594 donors, averaged 312 attendees per service, and welcomed 39 new members in 2021. [Comparison of Area Church Data and Websites, see Selected Sources]

Five main reasons for non-participation in religious congregations in our market area are: they couldn’t find the right faith community in the area, they didn’t feel welcome, they believe religion is too focused on money, they were not supported during crisis or in need, and they don’t believe religion is relevant in their lives. [PC(USA) MinistryInsite]

## **Key Findings from WPC Surveys of Congregation, Pastoral Team and Lay Leaders**

### **Summary**

The COVID-19 pandemic was a stress test of great proportions, which WPC was able to meet quite successfully. It adapted to online worship and Zoom meetings until it was deemed safe by health officials to return to physically distance indoor worship. Some members felt isolated while the church was closed and believed the church did not contact them as much as they needed. The recent Congregational Survey indicated a return to higher satisfaction with the overall WPC experience and a strong belief that participation at WPC is very meaningful to members and friends of the church.

### **Strengths**

The recent Congregational Survey indicated strong satisfaction with the overall experience at WPC and in church activities. Areas of excellence (89% Satisfied) included music and sermons in worship services. Also rating highly (73% or more Satisfied) were: communion, communication, fellowship activities, service and mission activities, and stewardship.

Staff and Lay Leaders believe WPC is a small, friendly congregation that allows for deep relationships, takes courageous stands on social issues, has great facilities, and a first class childrens program.

Worship surveys were conducted in 2021 and 2022 to gauge satisfaction with worship in the CLC and readiness for a return to worship in the Sanctuary. Respondents indicated significant satisfaction with CLC because of COVID physical distancing needs and the abundant natural light of the large space. Those who wanted to return to the Sanctuary missed the organ, the stained glass windows, a full choir, and the overall formality of the space.

Our recorded and livestream worship services provided a way to connect with members who moved out of state or were temporarily out of town. Online services have proved to be a way to attract visitors and potential members.

From a 2016 congregational survey, respondents identified these WPC strengths to build upon: hospitality, governance, worship and music, and conflict management. [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

### **Weaknesses**

Over half of Congregational Survey respondents were dissatisfied with small group activities and nearly half were dissatisfied with adult Christian formation programs like Connections/Third Hours and special series. Three in ten respondents indicated dissatisfaction with pastoral care.

Staff and Lay Leaders indicated a strong staff that is spread thin, which can negatively affect programming, pastoral care, and operations. It was also noted that volunteers can get fatigued from doing too much: there is a small core of dedicated volunteers, but more are needed. Lay leaders are concerned that services are too old fashioned and not geared toward the type of members we need (younger families). Our declining membership hurts the church spiritually, socially, and financially.

In a congregational survey from 2016, WPC respondents indicated average satisfaction and high energy, compared to respondents in similar-sized churches WPC had a number of distinct, autonomous centers of activity, high subgroup loyalty but low allegiance to a larger vision, high energy out of alignment with a central purpose, and resistance to efforts to restore alignment. [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

### **Opportunities**

Top priorities identified in the 2016 congregational survey remain the same today: reach new people and incorporate them into church life, attract families with children and youth, and develop a spirit of generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. [Congregational Survey 2023 and Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

Congregational Survey respondents indicated a strong need for attracting new members and a willingness to help in this outreach effort.

Staff and Lay Leaders say that WPC should take advantage of its great location and flexible facilities. The group also believes that we should shine a brighter light on our good works and get more engaged with Winnetka and the surrounding communities.

Demographics from the 2016 congregational survey indicated an untapped potential of financial resources among respondents. [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

Unique priorities by age in 2016: Under 35's want to work as advocates for social and institutional change and expand outreach ministries to provide direct services to those in need; 35-64 want more opportunities to form meaningful relationships, and 65+ want more opportunities for Christian education. [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

A descriptive map of WPC in the 2016 survey indicates a Progressive-Adaptable type, meaning the church at its best is: rational, advocate, intellectual, powerful, efficient, deep knowledge, "Yoda." At its worst the church is: aloof, impersonal, unapproachable, theoretical, "Spock on steroids." [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016].

Another descriptive map in 2016 indicates WPC as a Progressive-Settled type, meaning the church at its best is: warm, compassionate, healing, mentoring, accepting, "Mother Theresa." At its worst, the church is: overly emotional, overwhelmed, naïve, stuck in routine, "Don Quixote." [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

From 2016, WPC opportunities to address: morale and engagement in education. A critical area to address: spiritual vitality. [Congregation Assessment Tool 2016]

### **Threats**

Staff and Lay Leaders indicated their fear of an increasingly hostile culture towards religion and the church in general. Within the WPC market area, there is also the "overbooked factor" with all ages: children and youth in sports, social and cultural events, adults with their secular interests and work and family commitments. Also within our market area, there are competing churches that provide a similar experience to WPC. While many agree with the center-left leaning positions of the PC(USA), some members and friends do not feel their views are heard and appreciated.

## **Key Findings from Other WPC Internal Data**

(Including Worship Attendance, Membership, Stewardship, Financial, Mission, Communications, Personnel, and Building & Grounds)

### **Summary**

In the past three years, WPC has weathered the COVID storm and is emerging into a future that blends the traditional in-person worship services and meetings with online worship and Zoom calls. Like any big (mostly happy) family, WPC celebrates milestones together: births, baptisms, confirmations, graduations, and weddings. We also grieve when we lose dear members of our family. As our membership and pledges decline, we need to take bold action to reverse course. Our challenge is to gain new members, retain members, and engage everyone in our congregation to invest their time, talent, and treasure to sustain WPC for decades to come.

### **Strengths**

Despite a drop in pledging units (individuals or families) over the past 8 years, overall pledges have come close to achievable goals set by Session. Three of those years involved a successful second ask for additional pledges, using matching funds as an incentive.

There is strong fundraising capacity at WPC, with a small but devoted volunteer base. In 2018, \$29,000 was raised from an auction. In 2019, a rummage sale raised \$39,000. Fundraising is slated to return in 2023 after a three year pandemic break.

In December 2022, nine adults joined as new members, adding nine children as family members.

In the fall of 2022, a part time office manager was hired. A part time tech expert is also on staff.

Geoff Duffy has helped bring WPC into 21st century technology and made our communications more efficient, effective, and attractive. He reports that there are 244 email subscribers to WPC communications: 65% open rate, 71% of those read often and 21% read sometimes.

### **Weaknesses**

Our aging building needs maintenance which is not covered adequately in the



budget; nothing is saved for a rainy day.

The cost of live streaming worship services (\$15,000 for 2023) adds pressure to an already lean budget of \$600,000.

Our largest expense category, similar to all churches, is the personnel expense at almost 70% of the 2021 budget. The next largest expense is building & grounds at nearly 15% in 2021.

The number of pledging units has dropped from 80 in 2014 to 65 in 2021. However, total pledges are expected to exceed \$500,000. Unfortunately, this falls short of a more suitable campaign goal of \$600,000 (equal to the church's annual budget).

### **Opportunities**

In the last four months of 2022, there were 25 unique views of online worship services. WPC has a Facebook page with 315 followers and its website had 464 unique visits in the past 30 day period of December 2022.

With more members pledging more money, WPC could afford to give more to its mission ministries. In 2014, almost \$43,000 was distributed; in 2021 just under \$21,000 was distributed. With more members on our rolls, lay leaders and other volunteers can be recruited more easily.

### **Threats**

WPC active membership has dropped from 294 in 2016 to 239 in 2021. Total members for 2021 are 457, including 218 inactive members.

Average weekly attendance has also fallen, from a 2009 high of 158 to a pre-COVID low of 92 in 2019.

WPC reported net losses in 2014, 2017, 2018 and 2020. A positive net total of \$45,609 was reported at year end 2021.

Our staff wears many hats and works hard to keep our church running smoothly. We want them to stay healthy, engaged and motivated with fair pay and other benefits of working at WPC.

## List of Sources

(Documents included in main report, available upon request)

- Key Findings from the Global Religious Futures Project, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/12/21/key-findings-from-the-global-religious-futures-project/>
- Modeling the Future of Religion in America, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>
- The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>
- <https://pres-outlook.org/2022/04/pcusa-releases-2021-statistical-report-showing-a-denomination-of-small-churches-and-aging-membership/>
- 2021 PCUSA Statistical Report, <https://d3htmdvqo5vzzb.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2021-Press-Release.pdf>
- The Decline in Church Attendance in COVID America, <https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-decline-in-church-attendance-in-covid-america>
- <https://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/religion-and-the-pandemic.aspx>
- Half of Pastors Say the Economy is Hurting their Church <https://research.lifeway.com/2022/10/11/half-of-pastors-say-the-economy-is-hurting-their-church#:~:text=A%20Lifeway%20Research%20study%20of,positive%20factor%20for%20their%20churches.>
- The Future of Faith blog post by Diana Butler Bass mentions Phyllis Tickle, bestselling author and religion expert, <https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/the-future-of-faith>, <https://www.phyllistickle.com/books/the-great-emergence/>
- Fifty Ways to Improve Your Annual Stewardship Campaign
- <https://www.churchleadership.com/50-ways/50-ways-to-improve-your-annual-stewardship-campaign/>

## WPC Market Area Trends

- Map of New Trier Township High School District, <https://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=3112&dataid=3622&FileName=Township%20Map.pdf>

- Comparison of Area Church Data and Websites, (see Selected Sources)
- FullInsite Report for 3 mile radius around WPC, PCUSA Research
- MissionInsite Report 2021 for 3 mile radius around WPC, PCUSA Research
- Mosaic USA E-Handbook by Experian (main lifestyles for WPC Market Area: Power Elites and Booming with Confidence)

#### **WPC Surveys, 2016 to 2023**

- Congregational Survey Results and Highlights, January 2023, (see Selected Sources)
- Focus Group Results, January 2023
- Pastoral Team and Lay Leader Survey Results, January 2023
- Lay Leader Survey Results, January 2023
- Worship Survey, September 2022
- Worship Survey, December 2021
- Congregation Assessment Tool Executive Summary, 2016

#### **Other WPC Internal Data**

- WPC Story, 1955 to 2016
- WPC Statements of Identity and Vision, 2011
- WPC Mission and DNA Statements, 2017
- WPC Attendance, 2007-2022, (see Selected Sources)
- WPC Membership, 2016-2022
- WPC Revenue and Expenses, 2014-2021
- WPC Stewardship Campaigns, 2014-2021
- WPC Stewardship Giving by Expense Category, 2021, (see Selected Sources)
- WPC Building & Grounds Projects, 2022
- WPC Mission Ministries, 2021
- WPC Communication Statistics, (see Selected Sources)

## Selected Sources

### Washington Post Survey on Happiness and Meaning

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/01/06/happiest-jobs-on-earth/>

#### The happiest, most meaningful and most stressful activities

Rated on a scale from 0 (low) to 6 (high)

ACTIVITY	HAPPINESS ▾	MEANING	STRESS
Religious and spiritual activities	5.1	5.6	0.7
Sports, exercise and recreation	5.0	5.0	0.8
Caring for and helping non-household members	4.9	5.3	1.3
Caring for and helping household members	4.9	5.3	1.4
Volunteer activities	4.9	5.4	1.3
Eating and drinking	4.7	4.5	1.0
Telephone calls	4.5	4.7	1.7
Consumer purchases	4.4	4.2	1.4
Socializing, relaxing and leisure	4.4	3.9	1.0
Traveling	4.3	4.0	1.4

#### The happiest places on earth

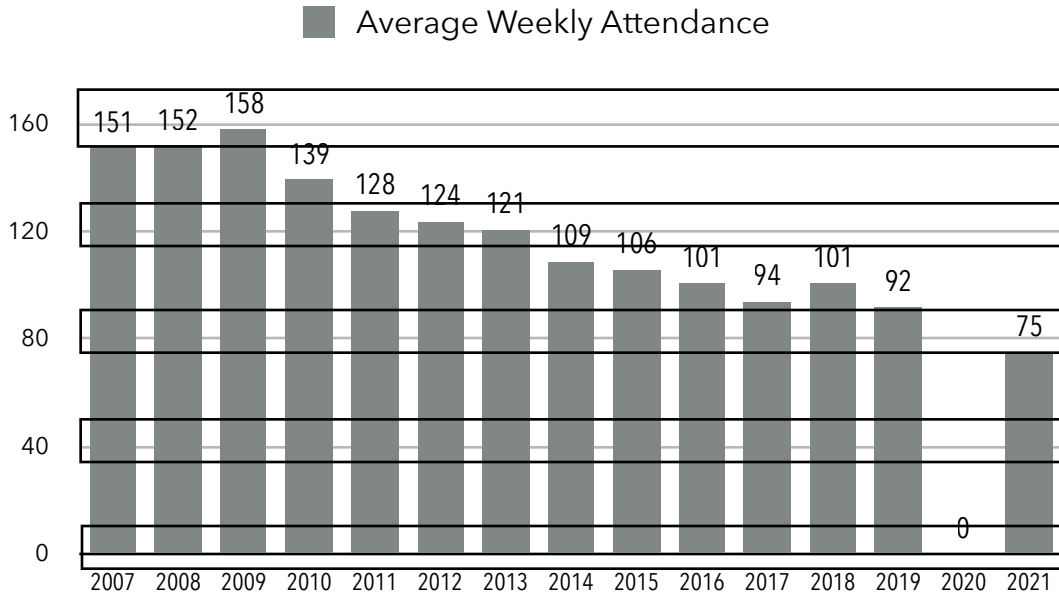
Rated on a scale from 0 (low) to 6 (high)

LOCATION	HAPPINESS ▾	MEANING	STRESS
Place of worship	5.2	5.5	0.7
Outdoors (not at home)	5.0	4.9	1.0
Someone else's home	5.0	4.8	0.9
Restaurant or bar	4.9	4.6	0.8
Bicycle	4.8	4.2	1.1
Vehicle (passenger)	4.7	4.2	1.2
Gym or health club	4.6	4.9	0.9
Other store or mall	4.6	4.4	1.3

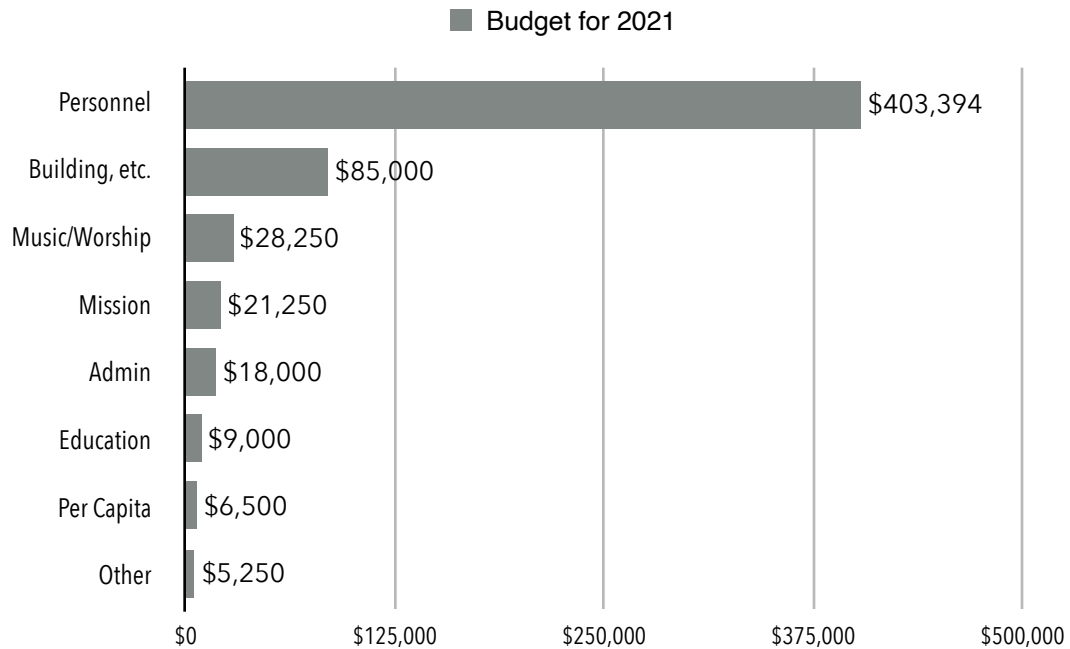
## Comparison of Area Church Data and Websites

	Mission	Activities	Members	Donors	Avg Worshippers	New Members
<b>Kenilworth Union Church</b>	Nurtures love, faith & fellowship, unites generations and traditions, inspires generosity and service in the name of Jesus Christ.	Pre-school, Mah Jong, Men's Coffee, Grief Group, Movie Night, Book Review, Bridge, Confirmation, Choir, Outreach		594	312	39
<b>First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette</b>	Experience God. Grow Disciples. Transform lives. Church for all.	Scout meetings, midweek dinner, bible study, men's hour, piano recital, investment club, women's group, Presbyterian Homes event, bridge, book group, Sr. Supper Club				
<b>Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago</b>	Welcoming, serving community, reflection the inclusive love of God and nurturing each individual's spiritual pilgrimage.	Bible study, book groups, mission trips, tutoring, speakers, volunteering, men's groups, women's groups, teens, art exhibitions, music,	5,540 (2013)			
<b>Congregational Church of Winnetka</b>	Seek justice, love kindness and walk together in all God's ways.	Women's groups, bible study				
<b>Trinity of Wilmette</b>	Find hope for living, grace in action, and music for the soul.	Men's group, Women's group, movie nights, book groups, fundraisers, potluck, music, scouts, vacation bible school				

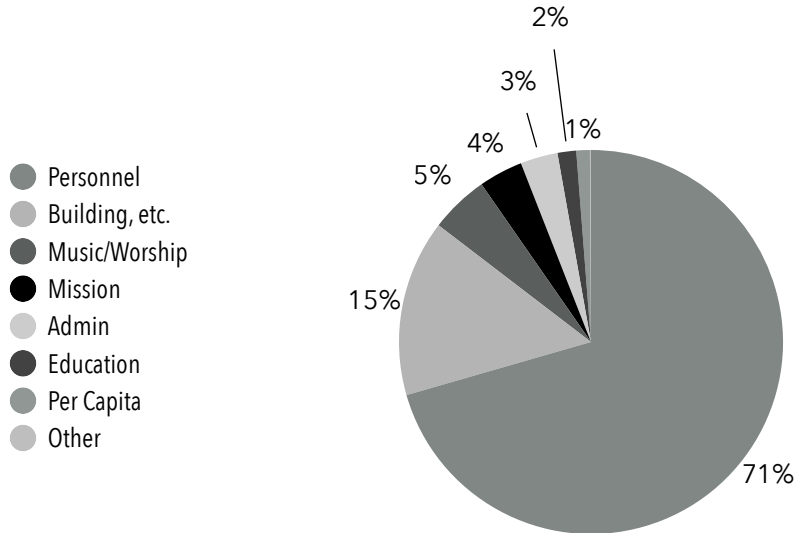
## WPC Attendance



## Where Our WPC Giving Goes (\$)



## Where Our WPC Giving Goes (%)



## Communication Statistics

Over the past 4 months (September – December, 2022), we have averaged 25 unique views a week.

### Emails

244 Subscribers  
65.24% avg. open rate  
4.97% avg. click rate

### Read

71.31% often  
20.90% sometimes  
7.79% never

### Website

Over the past 30 days (December 7, 2022 to January 6, 2023), there have been 464 unique visits to the website, although some were by staff. Pages most frequently visited are: Online Worship, Staff, and Music/Worship.

## **WPC Congregation Survey Highlights**

A total of 47 respondents contributed their perspective for the WPC Q4-2022 survey. For the purposes of this summary, all trends indicating “Satisfied” include “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses, unless specifically noted. Similarly, we grouped “dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied” as “Dissatisfied” within this summary of responses.

### **Overall Satisfaction Indicators**

- 83% (39) of respondents say they are Satisfied with their overall experience at WPC
- 8% (4) of respondents say they are Dissatisfied with their overall WPC experience
- 83% (39) of respondents believe their participation in church activities is very meaningful to them
- 75% (35) of respondents believe the following remains a top priority for WPC: “Pre-Covid WPC surveys indicated WPC members and friends most valued the following priorities:
  1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
  2. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
  3. Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.”

### **Areas of excellence**

- 89% (42) are Satisfied with the Worship Service Music
- 89% (42) are Satisfied with the Worship Service Sermon
- 79% (37) are Satisfied with the Worship Service Communion
- 79% (37) are Satisfied with the Communication (i.e., Friday email, Sunday bulletin, website & Facebook)
- 75% (35) were Satisfied with Fellowship activities (i.e., Dinner for 80, Welcome Home Picnic, Women’s Garden Party)
- 75% (35) were Satisfied with Service & Mission activities (i.e., Afghan Refugee Support, Just Harvest, Good News Partners, Family Promise, Feed my Starving Children)
- 73% (34) were Satisfied with the Annual Fall Stewardship Campaign & Fundraiser (i.e., Auction, Luncheons & Rummages Sales)



### **Opportunities for Growth**

- 53% (25) are Dissatisfied with the Small Group Activities (i.e., Bible Study, book group, women's group, men's group)
- 47% (22) are Dissatisfied with the Adult Christian Formation (i.e., Connections/Third Hour and special series)
- 85% (40) of respondents agree "we need to make a strong effort to help grow the membership of the WPC" (Question #5) Of note, no one disagreed with this priority

### **Mixed Results**

Pastoral Care (from Minister or lay leaders/Stephen Ministry)

- 56% (26) were Satisfied but 30% (14) were Dissatisfied with Pastoral Care
- Outreach to newcomers
- 40% (19) are Satisfied but 32% (15) are Dissatisfied with outreach efforts