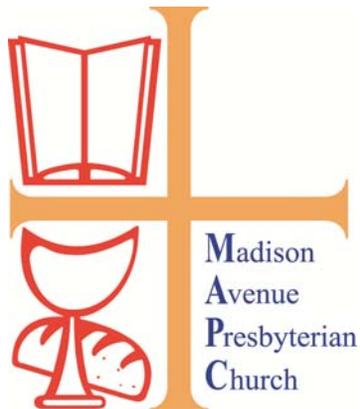


Mission Study Report 2016



Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

“As Christ's ministers striving to build a community of God's love, justice and mercy, trusting God to lead us into faithfulness.”

Presented to Session March 22, 2016

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Introduction

The transition period during the search for a new Pastor provides unique opportunities for a congregation to examine itself and study anew God's call to service. The congregation and leadership of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (MAPC) have sought to use this gift of time in dialogue and prayer as we work to imagine how we as a community will respond to God's call.

MAPC has had to search for a new Pastor only four times in the last 110 years, which meant many in our current congregation had no experience with the process and were anxious about the search and the interim period. Our Interim Pastor, Dr. Eric O. Springsted, has helped us welcome this transition period as a time to examine our history and imagine our future in which we pursue our stated mission - "to bring people into the transforming presence of Jesus Christ through worship, teaching the Word, Christian nurture and ministry in and to the world. As Christ's ministers, our members are striving to build a community of God's love, justice and mercy, trusting God to lead us into faithfulness."

In study groups and individual conversations, the Mission Review Committee heard members' affirmation of the precepts laid out in our mission statement, the centrality of worship to all that we do and the strong sense of community they experience. They also heard members' concerns about decreases in attendance, about the cost of maintaining our physical plant and our programs of service and about our need to attract new members.

We see this transition time as an opportunity to humbly seek God's guidance regarding all of these issues, in expectation of even greater understanding of how we are to serve.

Process of the Mission Study

After having faithfully served Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church for 23 years, The Rev. Dr. Fred Anderson announced in February, 2014 that he planned to retire at the end of May, 2015.

As part of the preparation for a thoughtful and inclusive transition process, the Session elected a Mission Review Committee in June 2014. The committee was empowered to lead a study of MAPC's current practices and programs and help members discern in what ways God might be calling us to new endeavors. The eight-member committee included men and women, long-term and newer members, seniors and those more youthful, and some who had experience with previous pastoral call efforts. During the course of our work the size of the committee was reduced to six, when two members moved away.

During the summer of 2014 the committee held an organizational meeting and began developing a survey specific to our congregation, to be used in conjunction with the interdenominational Congregational Life Survey (CLS). We were eager to have input from our members about the aspects of their life at MAPC that were of greatest importance to them and to hear what they believed might be improved. These surveys were distributed by hand and by mail to more than 300 members in the greater New York metropolitan area. The surveys offered members the opportunity to indicate their level of satisfaction with, and participation in, varied aspects of MAPC's life. Also included in the survey were several questions that encouraged members to expound on their perceptions and experiences. Narrative responses were received from 38% of those polled and were tabulated and reviewed for common themes. At a series of bi-monthly Transition Talks, church members gathered to hear updates on the committee's process and discuss topics that were of concern or special interest.

The Rev. Dr. Eric O. Springsted became our interim pastor at the end of September, 2015, and with his experienced guidance we also held a series consisting of two 90-minute small group sessions designed to help discern who we are as a congregation and to look ahead to how we might better serve as witnesses to the message of the Gospel. The small groups were a focus of our October all-church retreat at the Presbyterian Camp at Holmes, NY and were offered multiple times during the months of November, December and January. The committee and the congregation found these gatherings and conversations to be extremely valuable.

Also important in our process were the interviews that the committee conducted with all members of the church's staff and with all committee chairs. Information from the surveys, small groups, individual interviews and analysis of current membership data is reflected in the body of this report.

Our History

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church began its life in 1834 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. After moving to several other locations and changing names several times, the congregation moved to the corner of 73rd Street and Madison Avenue in 1899, when it merged with the Phillips Church. In 1905, with the arrival of Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, a new vision for the church that was based on the Social Gospel movement galvanized the congregation. Dr. Coffin provided the congregation with decided focus: a Christocentric worship life, centered around solid biblical preaching and the celebration of the sacraments, coupled with a desire to reach out to neighbors and strangers alike in New York City and around the world.

This ministry was supported and expanded by his successors, Dr. George Buttrick (1927-1955) and Dr. David H.C. Read (1956-1990) – both strong, biblically-based preachers. From 1992-2015, Dr. Fred R. Anderson assumed leadership among us and continued the tradition. Dr. Anderson brought changes that were driven by a changing neighborhood and an evolution in thinking about the nature of outreach within the church. We became partners with local outreach organizations (e.g. Inwood House and Yorkville Common Pantry) and we widened our outreach to include a long-term partnership with the Harare Synod in Zimbabwe and Theological Education by Extension in Zambia (TEEZ). A seven-day-a-week homeless shelter for 12 men and a weekly meal were established.

In 1996 we sought to better address the demands and curiosity of a congregation that has always been eager to explore the scriptures and to learn about new and evolving ways of understanding Christianity and seeing the world through a Christian lens. Consequently, we added a Christian Education Hour for adults at 10:10 and moved the children's church school to that time, between the two morning services.

The Liturgical Movement within Christian churches in the mid-twentieth century encouraged churches to use a more varied liturgy, often based on the practices of the early church. There was encouragement to serve communion more frequently and as a result, in 2002, MAPC adopted weekly communion. Music has long been an exceptionally important part of worship life at MAPC, with a full choir of professionals and volunteers at the 11:15 morning service. Each week the musical themes are harmoniously coordinated with the lectionary and the biblical themes of the service.

In short, for the past two decades, we have striven to imagine a new blueprint for MAPC in the twenty-first century, much the way Henry Sloane Coffin and the MAPC congregation of his time provided one for the twentieth. In doing so, we have built on the foundations developed by Dr. Coffin. And with these steps, we continue to honor and build on the commitment a small congregation on the Lower East Side entered into with itself and posterity 175 years ago.

MAPC Today

Demographics

The majority of MAPC's congregation falls within two age categories: members 25-44 years of age make up 34% of the congregation, and those between 45 and 65 years of age make up 29%. This may not accurately reflect the ages of active participants, however. In

addition, the ethnic makeup of the membership is primarily White at 90%, followed by Asian at 5% and Black or African American (Africa Native, Caribbean) at 4%. Both the age and ethnic makeup largely reflect the overall population of our broader neighborhood, based on data that we were able to ascertain from the Research Services of the PC(USA) Mission Agency.

Please see page 22 for additional demographic data.

Physical Plant

MAPC is blessed to have two large buildings located on the east side of Madison Avenue in Manhattan, between 73rd and 74th streets. The Sanctuary building is at the corner of 73rd Street, and it includes a main Gothic Revival sanctuary, originally built in 1899, with a vaulted ceiling and balcony, and total capacity to seat about 680 congregants. Below the Sanctuary is the Parish Hall, with kitchen facilities that can serve about 200 guests for meals, or the room can accommodate approximately 300 in a meeting format. Behind the east end of the Sanctuary building is the three-story Phillips Building, which houses a small chapel (the Dana Chapel), meeting rooms and a small staff or visitor apartment on the upper floors. Space dedicated to our Columbarium is next to the Sanctuary and adjacent to the Dana Chapel.

We are also blessed that our music programs are enhanced by a magnificent pipe organ, originally built in 1961 by Casavant & Frères of Quebec, and restored by the same company in 2011. It houses over 4200 pipes and fills our Sanctuary with glorious music.

To the north of the Sanctuary is the Church House at 921 Madison Avenue. In 1910 only a small garage was on the property, which was purchased and donated to the church by Edward Harkness, a Yale classmate of then head preacher, Henry Sloane Coffin. Five years later Mr. Harkness acquired and donated the property at 923 Madison Avenue and underwrote the cost of the ten-story church house we now enjoy. We continue to be dedicated to the donor's original intent, as beautifully described by Dr. Coffin. "It is the donor's desire that the building be used on Sundays for Bible studies and religious meetings, and throughout the week for social, educational and any other purposes that may serve to present the Church as a friendly and helpful force in the community, interested in the bodies and minds and souls of people. While he offers it to us as a Presbyterian Church, he wishes the building to be used on no narrow or sectarian basis, nor for the benefit of any one class in the community, but with Christ's

breadth of sympathy and interest in every human being, and with this special concern for those who are least privileged.” Such is our legacy, and we strive to fulfill that wish.

Today the Church House includes the church administrative offices, three staff apartments, the MAPC Day School for children two to six years old, a roof garden, a gymnasium, and meeting rooms. The building is used heavily during the week by a wide variety of church committees and programs and by groups from the surrounding community. Several local schools use it for physical education programs; MAPC operates a seven-night-per-week shelter for homeless men; MAPC holds meetings and Bible studies; and we host local counseling and other support groups, to name just a few.

Over the past 20 years MAPC has embarked on three major renovations requiring substantial capital campaigns. From 1997-2001 the Fund for Renewal raised \$12 million supporting a massive renovation of the Sanctuary building. The foundation was fortified and virtually every surface of the Sanctuary was rebuilt or refurbished. The floor was removed and leveled, lowering the rear of the sanctuary by over three feet and making the entrance more attractive and accessible. The project also included a reconfiguration of the basement utility areas. From 2006-2013 the 921 Fund raised over \$6 million for major improvements to the infrastructure of the Church House. Most recently the church tower required substantial repairs and restoration, and MAPC embarked on the Mission Fund to raise capital for the tower renovations, retirement of debt from the Church House renovations, and to fund the last of the renovations to the Church House. This capital campaign remains under way.

From each of the capital campaigns above, MAPC set aside a tithe of 10% of the funds raised to support local, national, and international, mission projects.

Pastoral and Program Staff

MAPC’s pastoral ministry team includes three ordained ministers: our Pastor, our Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and our Associate Pastor for Outreach and Evangelism, as well as program staff including a Director of Christian Formation, and our Director and Associate Director of Music. Together the pastoral and program staff lead our Sunday worship services and oversee our ministries of preaching, sacraments, education, pastoral care and mission. Additionally, all pastoral and program staff work directly with our children and youth.

Our Pastor is our Head of Staff, and as such is the Session Moderator and staff liaison with the Board of Trustees. The Pastor also provides staff support to three of the standing committees of Session: Worship and Music, Personnel and Stewardship. Other committees staffed by the Pastor are the Congregational Nominating and Budget committees. The pastoral and program staff, along with the MAPC Business Manager and Day School Director, report to the Pastor.

Our Associate Pastor for Congregational Life and Pastoral Care is responsible for a wide variety of programs such as small group ministries, Hood Library Fellowship, Moms' Night Out, Men's Night Out, senior ministries and Families with Young Children. In addition, she oversees the work of our 30-member Board of Deacons and the Day School, and provides staff support to the Congregational Nurture Committee.

We have just begun a search for an Interim Associate Pastor for Outreach and Evangelism, who will staff the Outreach Committee, Evangelism Committee, the Zimbabwe Partnership Committee and the Global Ministry Fellowship Committee. The pastor's wide-ranging responsibilities include overseeing our shelter and food programs, as well as new member integration. Our 2014-2016 Global Ministry Fellow/Parish Associate for Global Ministry is serving in this position during the search.

Our Director of Music and Organist is responsible for all music programs at MAPC, including our choirs, visiting choirs, all aspects of the worship service, and the Saint Andrew Music Society choral and concert series. Our Associate Director of Music is the founder and leader of The New York City Children's Chorus (NYCCC), which is a graded choral program for children in the metropolitan NYC area. She also directs the MAPC children's choir programs and assists the Director of Music in all other music ministries. Together they staff the Worship and Music Committee, the NYCCC Committee and work with the Wednesday Kids Club.

The Director of Christian Formation oversees education and discipleship ministries for children, youth and adults at MAPC. These include adult education and Bible studies, children and family ministries, and especially youth ministries. In addition, he provides staff support to the Christian Education Committee. This position was created in 2013 by combining the positions of Director of Christian Education and Director of Youth Ministries.

Elected Boards and Ministries

There are three elected boards of church officers at MAPC: the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deacons and Session.

The 30-member Board of Deacons cares for MAPC members and friends who are elderly, ill, shut in, or lonely. This is done with personal visits, phone calls, the delivery of flowers and written notes. In addition to this, the deacons perform several other services, such as serving communion and decorating our sanctuary, that help make MAPC a warm and welcoming space for all.

The Board of Trustees is entrusted with the oversight of the business affairs of the church, supervision of investments and the endowment, and expenditures for the maintenance of facilities. The decisions made by the Trustees are subject to the approval and concurrence of Session. The Board of Trustees has the following committees: Audit, Building and Grounds, Development (planned giving), Finance, Insurance, and Investment. The Board sends representatives to the Budget Committee and the Congregational Nominating Committee. There are currently 15 trustees, and staff support is provided by the Pastor and the MAPC Business Manager.

The Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees report to Session as the governing body of the church. MAPC's Session is comprised of 18 elders and the three pastors, who together make the decisions that govern the life of the congregation. Session maintains the following standing committees:

- Worship and Music – oversees all of the church's music programs, as well as all aspects of the worship services, including music, liturgy, and schedule. The committee also arranges participation of elders and deacons to serve communion.
- Christian Education – oversees programs for infants- through adult-education.
- Outreach – oversees grants to outside organizations and operation of the various participatory ministries like the weekly shelter dinner and English as a Second Language classes (ESL).
- Evangelism – works to attract and welcome new members, and to integrate them into the life of the church.
- Congregational Nurture – plans events and programs to engage congregants in the life of the church, works closely with the deacons on pastoral care and with the Library Fellowship on their book sale and annual luncheon.
- Stewardship and Development – conducts the annual stewardship campaign and planned giving programs.
- Personnel – supports the Head of Staff, reviews compensation and benefit policies and maintains the employee handbook.
- Day School – oversees the MAPC Day School.
- Zimbabwe Partnership – coordinates MAPC activities in cooperation with our partners in the Harare Synod in Zimbabwe.
- Budget – made up of the leaders of each of the other committees and pastoral and program staff to formulate the annual operating budget.

- Global Ministry Fellowship – selects candidates for our Global Ministry Fellow program supporting the Theological Education by Extension Program in Zambia (TEEZ), which began in 2007.

MAPC currently has one temporary committee and one task force:

- David H. C. Read Preacher/Scholar Award Committee – selects an annual recipient of the award for both accomplishment and promise in preacher development.
- Mission Fund Task Force – conducts our current capital campaign to raise funds for the church tower restoration and additional infrastructure improvements to the Church House.

Finances

MAPC’s operating budget for 2016 is roughly the same as it has been for the past several years. Pledges and gifts account for 35% of this total, with investment income and principal from the church’s endowment accounting for an additional 25%. Costs shared by the Day School equal 15%, and fees associated with use of the Church House facilities make up 8.5%. The balance, approximately 17%, comes from other income, which includes grants and special offerings.

The majority of operating expenses are for personnel, primarily professional, office and building staff, including employee benefits, followed by expenses for our ministerial staff. The balance of the expenses is for programming and operations.

The church continues to benefit from a giving congregation focused on stewardship. The challenge each year is to maintain a high level of commitment and encourage broader participation by the congregation. Pledges fulfill nearly a third of the annual budget. In addition, we have been fortunate to have had strong investment returns from the endowment, something we cannot always count on. In light of this, the importance of managing expenses, living within the budget and minimizing the draw from the endowment are critical to our future financial health.

MAPC: Our Mission - Key Themes

Members’ reflections and commentary during this mission review process spotlighted the following five key themes as being most appreciated, most needed, and most important to our congregation as we look to the future and God’s calling for us.

Worship and Music

According to MAPC's website, "Worship is the defining characteristic of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (MAPC) and the wellspring from which all other ministries are nourished." This is a lofty description, but one that was affirmed time after time in our Congregational Life Survey and small group discussions. Many of those who participated explained that worship is the reason they initially came to MAPC, and it is the worship experience that keeps them here. They cherish our traditional style of worship that includes Scripture, lectionary based preaching, celebration of the Lord's Supper, and extraordinary music.

MAPC has been blessed with a history of prominent and long-tenured preachers who have inspired us to think more deeply about God's word and apply it to our everyday lives. Our intellectually curious community appreciates preaching that is scholarly, yet thoroughly grounded in Scripture, and we look for sermons that do not merely entertain, but make us think beyond ourselves and help us better understand our mission.

Our services take place on Sundays at 9 and 11:15 am, with one service at 10:30 in the summer months. Our community appreciates the central role that Scripture holds in each of these services, which feature an Old Testament lesson, a Psalm, a New Testament Epistle, and Gospel readings based on the Revised Common Lectionary. Together they provide the foundation for our Pastor's sermons and liturgy, and are rounded out by prayers, a Prayer of Confession, passing of the peace, announcements, an offering, and Holy Communion. On the first Sunday of each month, two pastors are available for private prayers for healing and anointing during the distribution of communion.

Services also occasionally include baptisms, the welcome of new members and special "Words in Action" offered by members of the congregation and pastoral staff. Children are very important to our community, as described in a later section, and the pastoral staff put much effort into incorporating them in the worship experience. Each service includes a children's lesson that is specifically designed to introduce the same biblical themes that will be featured in the sermon. These themes are further explored in our Children's and Youth Worship programs, which take place in other parts of the church while the sermon is being preached. After this specialized time of worship, the children and youth then return to the sanctuary to celebrate communion with the adults.

A component of worship that is deeply appreciated by MAPC members and visitors alike is our renowned music program - its importance to our community cannot be overstated. Our services enjoy rich choral and organ music that nurture us spiritually and help us to bring our best selves to worship God on a weekly basis. Many mission study participants

credit MAPC's music and choir programs with inspiration, spiritual growth, and a wonderful opportunity to bring new people into our sanctuary.

Hymns, psalms, responses and Taizé/Iona chants are sung at services, and the Church Choir, consisting of both professional and volunteer singers, sings weekly. The Children's Choir and Cherub Choir also sing in worship services on a regular basis.

Outside of worship services, our church's active music ministry to the wider community includes the Saint Andrew Music Society and New York City Children's Chorus. The Saint Andrew Music Society concert series has offered concerts in our sanctuary on Sunday afternoons for over 50 years. Performances of sacred choral works by the Saint Andrew Chorale and professional Orchestra, our annual Carol Sing, and concerts featuring guest recitalists and instrumental and vocal ensembles, provide an enjoyable form of musical outreach to our community.

The church's music program also includes an acclaimed graded choral program, the New York City Children's Chorus (NYCCC). Enrollment during the 2015-2016 season stands at over 170, spread over nine ensembles for children ages four through high school. The program's mandate "enables choristers, through hard work and dedication, to develop a passionate commitment to excellence through the choral art, to learn discipline and self confidence, and to give back to their community through the gift of music." The performing ensembles regularly appear in broadcasts and tours, and their first commercially produced CD was released in 2015. This program, along with all other music programs at MAPC, are overseen by the Director of Music and Associate Director of Music, who also staff the Worship and Music and NYCCC committees.

Although our congregation is grounded in the traditional style of worship described in this section, the idea of adding a less formal worship service was raised in nearly every mission study discussion. Those who voiced the idea thought this additional service might be a good way to attract younger people to MAPC - an enduring challenge that all churches face in a city inundated with other activities. Nearly all study participants, however, were adamant that we maintain our current worship style, but the suggestion illustrates the concern for drawing more people into MAPC's worship community and the need for creative ideas to accomplish this.

Outreach

MAPC has a long and active history of outreach to the wider community: locally, nationally and internationally. This has included financial grants to outside groups, as well as mission trips, sponsorship of pastoral education in the US and abroad, our partnership

with Harare Synod in Zimbabwe, space for service groups to stay while they serve in New York City, and a number of active hands-on ministries managed by MAPC congregants. This desire to serve is deeply ingrained in MAPC's culture. As a result, we strive to tithe as a congregation, using both our direct funds as well as our physical space to support outreach to our community. Further, every capital campaign contains a mandate that a 10% tithe of the funds raised be allocated to outreach.

The hands-on ministries MAPC operates give congregants an opportunity to live out their faith. ESL classes are held on Sunday afternoons at the church, and every Thursday night we serve up to 150 healthy, hot meals to combat local hunger. Seven nights a week, and in cooperation with St. James Episcopal Church, we house up to twelve men in a quiet, clean and safe environment, as they struggle with homelessness. We operate in partnership with the Church of the Resurrection a weekly tutoring program, Learning Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP), for children in East Harlem. Every Christmas, we gather gifts from the congregation for children who are missing an incarcerated parent.

The priorities for local outreach grants are focused on care for the elderly, shelter and feeding of the homeless, programs supporting women and children at risk, and immigration. We tend to prioritize grants where we can make a meaningful contribution to the full budget of the organization or can contribute once to a critical capital need. This is in addition to support for the Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center, the Presbytery of New York City, and the PC(USA). Our grants budget has declined in recent years due to budget constraints, and while we are hoping to be able to raise the grants budget in the future, we recognize this as one of our financial challenges. Still, we believe we are providing meaningful support to the groups receiving grants, as we also favor those in which our members support the groups with their time. We continue to encourage ever-greater participation by the congregation.

Nationally and internationally we have made grants for local economic development, sent mission groups to areas in need, and actively supported ministry development with grants to seminaries, the David H. C. Read Preacher Scholar grant, and our nearly ten-year-old Phillips Talbot Global Ministry Fellowship Program. This latter program provides an opportunity for a recent seminary graduate to spend a year in Zambia working with pastors and lay leaders, after which they travel for several weeks before returning to MAPC for six months to culturally and spiritually enrich our congregation with their experience. Former Global Ministry Fellows are now serving congregations throughout the U.S. The beginning of this program stimulated an additional ministry in Africa with the exploration and initiation of our partnership with the Synod of Harare in Zimbabwe. Through this partnership, MAPC and Harare Synod exchange visiting groups, MAPC enjoys a 4-6 week

visit of a minister from Zimbabwe, and we share our mutual strengths and weaknesses, all with the hope of enhancing our faith and our impact on our respective congregations.

We believe it is imperative that our new pastor shares our passion for Outreach.

Sense of Community

MAPC is a vibrant church, located in the middle of the borough of Manhattan, with a congregation of 600 members. Ours is a city of great intensity and an extremely fast pace of life, where people are often only in the city for a short time. MAPC provides a warm, welcoming, and inclusive community that has a collective belief in a Christian way of life, individually revealed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Despite the church's location in a very expensive, quite commercial part of New York City, we have long been a congregation focused on reaching out and bringing in those seeking a Christian home in this city. We continue to work to increase the diversity of our community through the many different programs that bring people into our buildings.

MAPC's long and cherished tradition of excellent preaching and beautiful music bind our congregation together. We care deeply about the quality of our connections with each other and the world around us - in NYC, and across the globe. Outreach is in our DNA, as is shown in the previous section. We engage the members in our community through worship, fellowship, committee work, Bible study, lectures, Christian education, social events and outreach ministries.

Our 30 deacons meet monthly to strengthen their skills and support each other; they then reach out to those in need in the congregation. Their caring reaches from newborns to the elderly, with whom they regularly visit and at times give assistance with housing and documents. Deacons keep an eye on the congregation, noticing when regular attendees may be absent and alerting the pastors. They decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and Easter and also assist at funerals. They are a dedicated group who model Christ's love through their work with congregants and visitors to MAPC.

In our small group discussions, members indicated that, at MAPC, we are on a faith journey together, and we nurture each other in our faith. This is done in part through Outreach and Christian Education but also through our Congregational Nurture Committee, which organizes a variety of activities for families with young children and for adults. Adult offerings include Senior Lunches, On the Town (museum and theater visits), Women's Brunches and Fellowship Evenings, Men's Fellowship Evenings, Congregation-

wide fellowship events, Moms' Night Out, 20s/30s Bible Study (Bible study and fellowship) and Hood Library events.

One committed group of participants in these programs is our senior members who lead our congregation through their presence, their time and their talents. Their dedication is an example to everyone and they further enable us to create a community that is vibrant and welcoming to all.

Value of Scripture

Colossians 3:16 says to, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." The living Word of Christ is a treasured part of life at MAPC and the base on which we build our ministries. This reverence for Scripture has been apparent throughout the mission study process. When asked what aspects are most important to life at MAPC, participants in our survey and discussion groups repeatedly mentioned a worship experience that is grounded in Scripture and includes the full range of the lectionary, biblically-centered preaching, strong scriptural prayers, and the singing of Psalms.

The Christian Education Committee oversees several opportunities for our congregation to explore the Bible apart from worship. MAPC has several pastor-led and peer-led Bible studies, such as the Women's Bible Study, the Men's Bible Study, the 20's/30's Bible Study, and one focused on reading through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Though these Bible studies seem to be highly valued by participants in our mission study, overall attendance is low. This may, in part, be a factor of timing and busy schedules as some people have expressed a desire to expand our Bible study and adult education offerings with more conveniently-timed gatherings, or by adding coffee hour discussions about the worship service's Bible passages.

MAPC's 10:10am Christian education hour also provides a way to learn more about the Bible through classes that cover topics such as biblical history, the Church's mission and Christian parenting. With the help of scholars from both within and outside our community, as well as our own pastors, our congregation can use this time to take a more scholarly approach to understanding Scripture with classes that resemble those found in a religious studies program or divinity school. Great importance is also placed on providing a biblically-centered education for our children and youth. Sundays provide many opportunities for children to hear God's word in Church school and Children's and Youth Worship. These offerings will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

While our community's love for Scripture is clear, we also heard a desire for spiritual growth from many in our congregation. Given our common love and respect for the Word of Christ, it is only natural that we seek ways for it to dwell richly in us.

One program already focused on nurturing spirituality is the Spiritual Growth and Faith Group, which is a newly-formed fellowship overseen by the Associate Pastor for Congregational Life. Twice monthly, participants gather at James Lenox House, a nearby senior living facility, for a time of prayer, Scripture reading, reflection and sharing. Other programs such as our 20s/ 30s Bible Study and Young Adult Small Group give participants a brief time for prayer and sharing, and MAPC's confirmation class gives confirmands time to share prayer requests and take turns praying aloud for one another. Our recent Advent retreat also allowed for quiet reflection and discussions related to spirituality.

Another source of inspiration is our partnership with the Harare Synod of Zimbabwe and the friendships developed through our annual exchange visits. Members of MAPC are blessed to know firsthand our Zimbabwean brothers' and sisters' deep knowledge of Scripture and how fully the Gospel's powerful message transforms their faith and their daily lives. After our youth team visited Zimbabwe in 2013, one MAPC participant explained, "They knew their Scripture, they talked about their trust in God, and they were passionate about sharing the gospel."

Many of us here at MAPC are committed to Scripture and allow the Word of Christ to dwell richly WITHIN us, but many of us hesitate to talk about our own trust in God or passionately share the Gospel with others. The challenge of nurturing this in our community is explored later in this report.

Children, Youth and Families

MAPC's ministries for children and youth enjoy tremendous support from members of all ages - parents and non-parents alike. Time after time, these ministries were mentioned as something our mission study participants did not want to see changed, and there is great appreciation for the wide range of programs, from the nursery for infants, to our children's choirs, and of course our Church School and worship programs. Our pastoral and program staff devotes much time to our children's and youth ministries with the belief that pastors need to be directly involved with the children as they grow up, just as pastors remain connected to adults of all ages through Bible studies and other ministries.

Christian education remains at the heart of our children and youth programs at MAPC, reflecting the congregation's promise at a child's baptism to help that child grow in love

and faith. The children's Church School program, offered during the 10:10 am Christian education hour, is designed to familiarize children with the stories of the Bible, to hear what these stories reveal about God, and to provide a time for all classes to join in singing hymns and songs of praise.

Children are always welcome in our worship, where they participate in the first portion of the service and join the Pastor at the baptismal font for a Lesson for Young Christians. After the Lesson, children from age three through third grade leave the Sanctuary for an age-appropriate worship service, with a lesson based on a portion of the lectionary for the day. Young people in 4th grade and up join the Director of Christian Formation and participate in their own Youth Worship Service. Parents and other volunteers, including two seminarians, provide leadership for the children's worship program.

Children are also offered a weekday program of Christian education during the school year. Wee Kids for preschool age children and Kids Club for children in grades K-5 meet on Wednesday afternoons and include Bible study with a pastor, choir rehearsal, recreation and dinner with parents and caregivers. Kids Club has proven popular with MAPC families and others from our extended community.

In recent years, our congregation saw a need to expand our children's programs to reach middle and high school youth being drawn away from church by other commitments and by a lack of programming geared toward their age group. In 2013, a Director of Youth Ministries was brought on staff to establish new youth-focused programs, including Youth Hour and the Young Adult Small Group, both of which meet on Sundays and combine Bible study and fellowship, seasonal Pizza and Game Nights and Kids Club Youth Leaders. These additions supplemented the already existing confirmation class and the annual Youth Sunday, which gives young people the opportunity to lead both worship services. One of the most popular new programs is community service one Thursday each month at our church's weekly shelter dinner, which has been especially helpful in bringing youth, including those who do not otherwise attend church, into our community.

MAPC's newest program focuses on our youngest members, newborns through three-year-olds, and seeks to build continuing connections to the church for those children and their parents. A deacon and a member of the Christian Education Committee stay in touch with the family, and the church provides age-appropriate books and gifts to help nurture their personal and corporate faith.

Parents have also enjoyed fellowship through activities like Church Family Night, the Families with Young Children ministry, Moms' Night Out and Monday Morning Moms Group, which are organized by the Congregational Nurture Committee.

Many families have joined the MAPC community because of its focus on children and family ministries; however, another program that is a significant draw to families is the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School, which is an extension of the church's educational mission and community outreach. In the Day School, children from age 2 years, 9 months, through age six enjoy the developmentally appropriate nursery-kindergarten curriculum, which is designed to enhance children's spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. Children learn about traditions from all the major faiths, and celebrate the Christian holidays with a Christmas and Easter chapel. Several participants in our discussion groups expressed a desire to more fully integrate the Day School into the life of our church by increasing awareness and communication between Day School members and our congregation.

Despite the abundant enthusiasm for our children, youth and family ministries, attendance is always a challenge due to time constraints caused by homework and the plethora of extracurricular activities offered here in New York City. With these things in mind, there has been a focus on flexibility in programming, fellowship among MAPC children and youth, and encouraging families to discuss the Church School and worship lessons at home - all efforts that we hope will encourage a strong connection between these busy families and our church community.

Ongoing Concerns

It is clear that our congregation is excited about MAPC's future and about living into our mission. Members are also aware of challenges that must be addressed in order to maintain our vibrant ministries. The following three concerns were brought up repeatedly during this mission study.

Membership and Participation

As this report indicates, MAPC has a strong active membership that feels deeply connected to our style of worship and music, to the outreach ministries, Christian education and youth ministries. Many of our congregants participate in the opportunities for fellowship, study and service. Members care about each other and a large percentage have good friends in the congregation. We are blessed to have a committed core of individuals who lead through example with their gifts of time and treasure. Nevertheless,

as a twenty-first century protestant church with an aging population in a very intense city, we face a number of challenges. Of utmost importance is the need to expand our membership and find ways to actively engage members in the church.

We are encouraged that our congregation is becoming more ethnically diverse and we are dedicated to continuing this change. Many people, both “churched” and “unchurched,” come through our doors on a regular basis – for ESL lessons, the church and children’s choirs, the homeless shelter, the Thursday dinner, and the MAPC Day School. We continue to seek ways to engage these individuals in the worship and fellowship of the church.

Two more diverse groups of families who are already at the church on a regular basis are families of the NYC Children’s Chorus, now in its third year, and families in the MAPC Day School. The Children’s Chorus brings 170 children into the church every week. As they get to know our church members and our programs, some of these families may become more involved at MAPC. Some students and graduates of the MAPC Day School already participate in Kids Club and the Chorus, and some are the children of church members. We will continue to work with the Day School to acquaint their parents with the church and work to help them see it as a place for their family’s faith development.

Another group that has brought us several new members is our ESL student body, which includes recent immigrants and others who are eager to improve their English language skills. We will continue to encourage their participation in the varied aspects of our congregation’s life as well.

We would like to engage our families with young children more fully in the life of the church beyond Sunday worship. These families are pulled in many directions – sports, homework, friends – even on Sundays. All of those factors compete with church time. We strive to find avenues that encourage wider participation by our young families – in ways that support their parenting and faith development. The Kids Club program described earlier in this report has had considerable success. We hope, ultimately, to bring some of the parents of these children into leadership of the congregation so their voices are clearly heard. However, when we tried to arrange small group discussions with childcare, very few parents of young children participated.

We would also like to more fully engage our young adult population (20s, 30s), which is now only marginally involved. In the past, a few members or couples have been able to bring a lively group together for Bible study and fellowship, but absent that core, it is often difficult to draw them in. We need to be more intentional in reaching out to the young adults whose names are on our member lists.

A further challenge became identified as we moved through this mission study. Despite our wide range of classes and our Scripture-based worship, we began to realize that it was unclear how much spiritual growth is actually generated by these avenues. Most people in our congregation are comfortable discussing Scripture in a third person context, but few seem comfortable expressing their own personal beliefs or spirituality - at least in the church setting. Sixty-six percent of the CLS survey participants reported spending time in private devotional activities at least a few times a week - and most of those do so every day - yet few mention opportunities to share their faith at church. In our small groups, the desire to grow spiritually was consistently expressed, but few seemed willing to discuss their own spiritual growth beyond that.

Some participants suggested ways that we could encourage this in our community, including providing opportunities to share testimonies, engage in more small group discussions and providing additional classes that focus on spiritual growth. A large part of our community is inspired to grow spiritually through worship, but others would seem to benefit from small, cohesive groups that gather regularly to share faith, wisdom and support.

As we move ahead, we are encouraged to think about what new avenues for spiritual development our individualistic culture might welcome. Are there different ways we can engage within our MAPC community and connect on a deeper level? What might that look like? These are questions we will continue to explore.

Financial Considerations

With an active and committed congregation, and a substantial endowment reflecting the generosity of our members throughout our history, we nevertheless have long contended with three primary concerns for our financial condition and operations. First is the matter of our physical plant: while it is a wonderful blessing for our ministries, maintaining it requires nearly 25% of our total annual expenditures. Beyond this, additional expenses are anticipated as we continue to address long-term deterioration, changing building regulations and codes, and necessary upgrades to security and accessibility.

Second is the impact that results from issues mentioned in the Membership and Participation section above: like many other churches, we have experienced a slow decline in the number of annual pledges. We are fortunate that pledges have increased modestly in total value because this smaller number of pledging members has faithfully increased their

commitments to achieve the increased value. There is still a range of gifts, but there is concern that we have become even more dependent on a concentrated number of large gifts.

And, finally, we are concerned that though our endowment has supported our operations for several decades, we have relied too greatly on that endowment, with total withdrawals from the endowment averaging 6-8% of the total for extended periods of time. We are nearing the end of a multiyear plan to reduce the draw from the endowment to levels of 5% of the endowment, or below. Another consideration is our outreach budget, which is currently supported by the tithe from the last capital campaign. This tithe is not set up as part of the permanent endowment and may be exhausted in the next five years.

Going forward our ability to finance all our activities, programs and outreach will require that we develop in three areas: increasing membership, increasing the endowment, and encouraging planned giving through bequests.

Communication

MAPC's weekday calendar illustrates the range of activities that take place daily at the church and in the Church House. Members and non-members participate in meetings, Bible study, morning prayer, early childhood education, small group gatherings, music rehearsals, support for the homeless and members of 12 step programs, sports programs and fellowship activities for all ages. Colorful posters and notices on bulletin boards and in the elevators help spread the word about these opportunities, and each week the Pastoral Staff Letter (PSL) is distributed by email (and surface mail, by request). The PSL includes calendar notices, hands-on program opportunities, special events and links to our Global Ministry Fellow's work. The church also publishes a quarterly magazine, *MAPC Life*, which includes a variety of in-depth articles. The recent spring issue looked at Lenten observations, the coming youth mission trip, news from our returning Global Ministry Fellow, special events and a detailed article about the Music Ministry at MAPC.

Despite these efforts many members feel that not enough energy is put into making sure the congregation is aware of the members who serve on the governing boards, and of these boards' decisions. By the same token, some committees question the congregation's level of understanding of their work. Those concerns were heard, and we have begun to develop ways to assure greater transparency going forward. The names of all those serving as Deacons, Elders or Trustees are now listed on our website, mapc.com, and were also included in the spring issue of *MAPC Life*.

The fact that our members come from many different neighborhoods means that they often see one another only at worship or at other activities at the church. We need to be sure that we are doing all that we can to help build connections between young and old, those who worship at 9:00 and those who worship at 11:15, and between newcomers and long-time members.

We need to take a fresh look at our web site and the role technology could play in attracting new members. Technology might also help make the weekly PSL email more effective. The PSL provides a great deal of information, but its mix of news and necessary up-dates add up to a lengthy document. One option might be shortening the email by including links to information that is readily available at mapc.com. Addressing these challenges need not wait for a new Pastor's arrival.

Conclusion

Highlighted during this period of examination and reflection has been our members' deep connection to this community of faith. Their generosity of spirit and eagerness to be active participants in this study affirmed the importance that MAPC has in their lives and made clear their desire to continue in service to God's mission for us in this place.

Our committee is deeply grateful to our congregation and staff for their thoughtful contributions to this document. It has been a privilege to serve them, and we look forward to continuing dialogues as our path to the future is revealed.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14 NRSV

Submitted by the Mission Review Committee:

Kristin Hohmann, Co-Chair
Barbara Iverson, Co-Chair
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Rev. Dr. Eric Springsted, Interim Pastor, ex officio

MAPC Demographics
March 1, 2016 membership

Membership:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Overall % of membership</u>
15-24 yrs	21	62%	13	38%	6%
25-44 yrs	124	62%	75	38%	34%
45-64 yrs	106	62%	65	38%	29%
65-79 yrs	69	62%	43	38%	19%
80+ yrs	57	78%	16	22%	12%

Residence:

Upper East Side	267	45 %
Upper West Side	56	9.5
Upper Manhattan	23	4
Below 59th St.	<u>57</u>	<u>10</u>
	403	68.5%
Other boroughs	29	4 %
New Jersey (commute)	<u>9</u>	<u>1.5</u>
	38	5.5%
USA and abroad	148	25 % (rounded)