



FIRST PRES. PRESS

OCTOBER 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PASTORS' PAGES	2-3
AMONG OUR PEOPLE	4
CONNECT	5
NURSERY SCHOOL	6
SESSION & TRANSITION	7
MAGS	8-9
COMMUNITY	10
OCTOBER CALENDAR	11



At our Fall Kickoff on September 13 we dedicated our new prayer garden. As we continue to see the name rocks in our garden, let us continue to pray for those people to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank you to all those who made the prayer garden possible: Bryan Early, Eric Eiche, Nathan Jacobs, Scott Johnson (Faith Bible Church), Scott Mansfield, Lou Pasquale, Larry and Christina Pierce, Bonnie Rowland (Artist/Calligrapher), Ede Sornberger, and Tim Devine.

OUR NEW LOGO

As you may have already seen around, we have begun rolling out a new logo for our church. Here is a little backstory on its development:



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: ENDICOTT
An ECO Member Congregation

as we began the transition into ECO, we knew that we would need a new design that showed our values as well as our new denominational affiliation. With that in mind, the new logo was designed (in ECO green) to represent the things that we as a church hold high: 1) The authority of Scripture, and hence the authority of God the Father, represented by the open Bible; 2) Saving grace, only through Christ's substitutionary sacrifice, represented by the cross (which is the same cross that is on the front of our building); and 3) Our mission, to go out and make disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit, represented by the compass points.

OVER 80 BIRTHDAYS

October 5
Lois McKaig

October 25
Jane Sprague

PASTORS' PAGE

-JAN AND TIM DEVINE, CO-PASTORS

**WHO
AM I****THE ESSENTIALS OF A GODLY IDENTITY**

“You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you.”

— C.S. Lewis

If someone were to ask you how you believe the teachings of Scripture and the Christian faith are being challenged or attacked in our culture today, how would you answer?

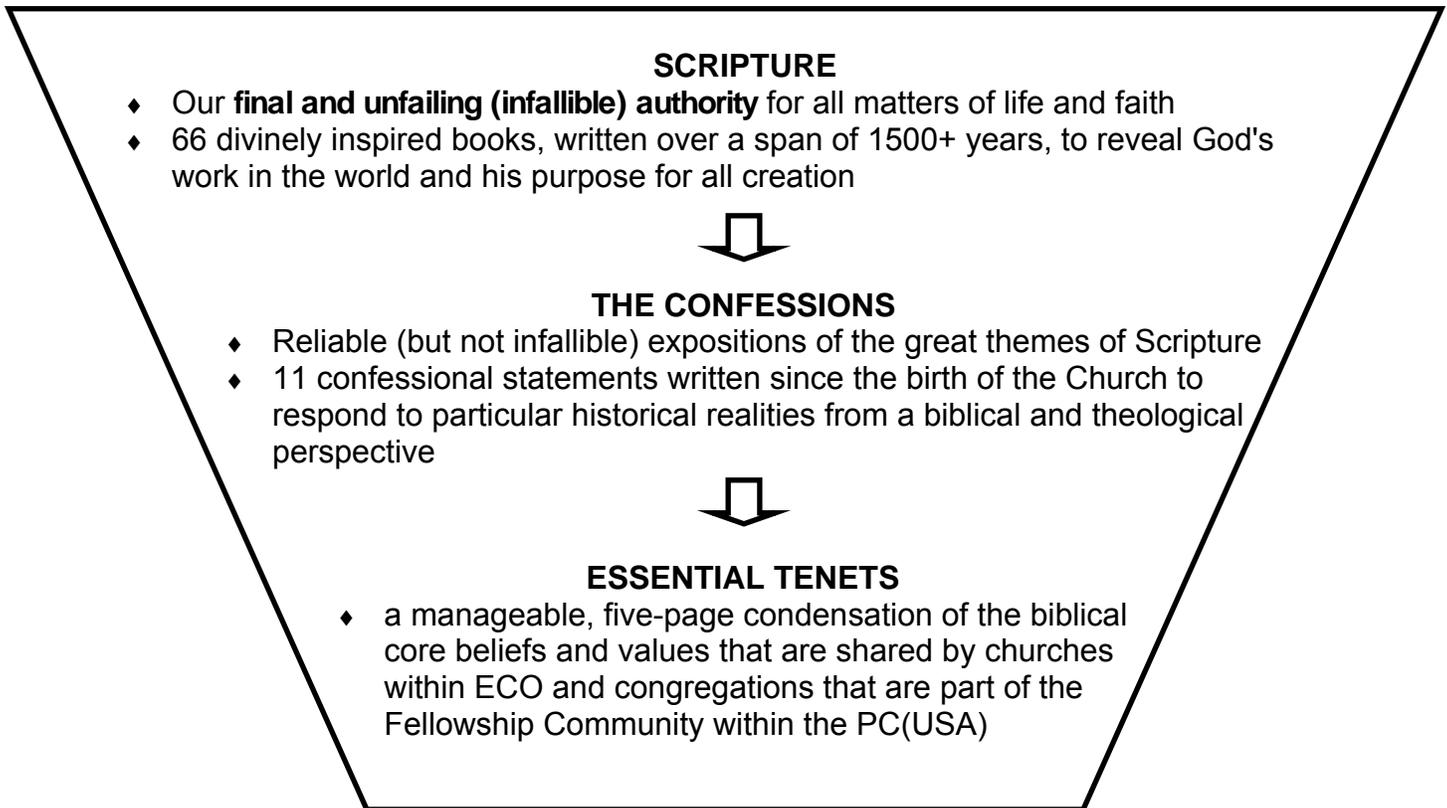
And if you were to write a response, based on Scripture, to address the challenges we face today, what would you say about God, about Jesus Christ and what he has done for us, about the authority of Scripture, and about how we as Christians ought to respond and live in the world today?

The process of answering those two questions is a simple way of explaining how we Christians in the Reformed tradition got our Confessions/Creeds. “Confession” in this sense is not an admission of wrongdoing or guilt; it is an affirmation or declaration by Christians about what we believe is true. Each of the Reformed Confessions or Creeds emerged because the Church felt it had to take a stand for truth in a particular historical situation- regardless of the opposition, rejection or persecution that might come. A Confession is a prayerful and careful attempt to articulate the major beliefs that are taught in the whole of Scripture, and then reflect on how those beliefs shape our lives and our identity.

Our new denomination, A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), has determined a set of Essential Tenets for the same reason. But let this be clearly stated and heard: the Confessions and the Tenets do *not* have the same authority as Scripture. They reflect the sincere attempts of Christ-followers to take thousands of pages of God-inspired writing and distill it down to a manageable and understandable summary of the core truths of the faith. Every theological tradition tries to do the same. In the Reformed tradition, we call those statements Confessions (and Tenets). We believe that they reflect reliable, although imperfect, human attempts to summarize God’s truths that are found in the grand narrative of his Written Word to us.

To understand how the Bible, the Reformed Confessions, and the Essential Tenets relate to one another, think ‘cosmic’ to ‘condensed’:

PASTORS' PAGE CONT.



ECO AND FPC:E ESSENTIAL TENETS

In 2013, this church adopted the Essential Tenets which are held by congregations in The Fellowship Community of the PC(USA) and ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

A **Tenet** is a principle or belief.

Essential Tenets articulate the biblical core beliefs and values that are embraced by ECO and FPC:E. They reflect an understanding of Scripture that is Christ-centered, Reformed, and evangelical.

Our Essential Tenets are organized around these major themes:

- I. God's Word: The Authority for Our Confession
- II. Trinity and Incarnation: The Two Central Christian Mysteries
- III. Essentials of the Reformed Tradition
 - A. God's grace in Christ
 - A. Election for salvation and service
 - B. Covenant life in the Church
 - C. Faithful stewardship of all of life
 - D. Living in obedience to the Word of God

JOIN US in October and November as we look more deeply at these convictions in worship on Sunday mornings and in small groups. What we believe shapes our identity!

WHAT'S NEW AMONG OUR PEOPLE?

— NATHAN JACOBS

With fall well upon us now, and pumpkin spice dominating our senses and advertising, let us celebrate God as He showers us in colors and displays his glory for all who have eyes to see it. Reflecting on the changing seasons of our world and of our lives, I would invite you to spend some time this month celebrating with God that He brings us through each season, whether one of plenty or one of want.

As you spend time in prayer, keep these friends in your conversations with our Father:

- Linda and David Glajch, who celebrated their 35th anniversary.
- Doug Kerr, who traveled to the interior of Congo to work with a hospital there.
- Jolin Mapes, a neighbor of many in the church, who is fighting esophageal cancer.
- Jim Santacrose's niece, Lizzie, who was hospitalized for dehydration.
- Norma Santacrose's brother, Frank, who is recovering from a heart attack and stent.
- The family and friends of Ethel Whittemore, who passed away on Aug. 24. A celebration of Ethel's life was held at the Atrio Banquet Hall.
- Flo Powley, who moved on Sep. 11 to Bethlehem, PA to be closer to family.
- Jeff Thomas, who continues to improve and was able to visit Bob in September.
- Dawn Weber, who celebrated her son David's 23rd birthday.
- Bob Thomas, who was honored at his law firm for his years of service to the community.
- Children, families, and Nursery School staff, as they began classes this past month.
- Joe and Daina Kocak, who welcomed a new daughter, Payton Anne, on August 28.
- Carole Cockrell, who fell and broke two bones in her left hand and hit her head.
- Bev Conklin, as several family members are facing health concerns.
- The Wilke family, upon the death of Bob's mother in New Mexico.
- 30+ women, who gathered for prayer and praise on Sep. 14.
- Sue Tuch, as she recovers from her second knee replacement.
- All those who participated in a great outdoor kickoff to the Children's Ministry on Sep. 20!
- Sheila Beblavy, who celebrated the birth of her grandson, Gunner.
- Bonnie and Bob Moyer, as they celebrate 49 years of marriage on Oct. 1. Bonnie and Bob were married here at FPC:E.
- Meaghan Kintner and Eric Cady, who were married here on Sep. 26.
- Sweetie, daughter of the director of the Nanda orphanage, who has been released from the ICU in India after spending time there because of Sickle Cell Disease.
- Claudia Delafield, upon the death of her father-in-law.

CONNECTING THOUGHTS

— SHARON EARLY

*“There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3

At our kickoff on September 13, we recognized our longest running small group at FPC:E. This group, led by Fran Ebbers for many years, provided years upon years of support to each other, and more importantly, an opportunity to be in God’s Word together. The hardest challenge we have had with small groups is to accept that small groups have different seasons of life- just as we do. This group has reached a new season of life; however, their friendships and spiritual bond will continue. As we dedicated the prayer garden, we were also reminded that once someone comes to faith, the journey does not end– it is just beginning. It is so extremely important for others to continue to walk with us on our journey of faith. So as we recognized the start of FPC:E’s journey with groups, we gave thanks for that group’s incredible example of what it means to nurture one another in faith, in service, and in life together. Members of the group were given tulips to commemorate the years they nurtured each other and to allow us to visualize what will happen with the bulbs we plant this fall in the front of the church to replenish our tulip garden. Over the years it has become sparse due to a lack of attention. The same thing can happen with our walk in faith. If we do not nurture and give attention to our spiritual development, over time it will also suffer and produce less fruit in our lives and others’.

Small groups are in a season of rebuilding: many groups appear to be reconfiguring depending on people’s schedules and as they step up to serve within and beyond the church. This fall we are having a “mini-launch” of groups to discover together the essentials of our Godly identity. If you are not part of a small group, I would encourage you to seek out a group that is following the sermon series. The bulletin board in the gathering area has a list of various groups, when they meet, and leader contact information. Alternatively, I will work with you to find a group that works with your schedule, or I can help you start your own group with those you are already connecting with (sharon@firstpresendicott.org or 748-8196).

WHO
AM I



THE ESSENTIALS OF A GODLY IDENTITY

It has been exciting to see new small groups arise because of the desire people have to reach others in their community. A leader does not have to be formally trained: what is most important is the desire to invest in others and together discover the truths in Scripture. It was exciting to welcome two new small group leaders to our recent leaders’ gathering! The small group ministry is here to support and encourage us to reach out. May all of us continue to pray that our eyes will be open to those God wants us to walk alongside of in life. And may we help nurture a bountiful harvest of souls for eternity!!



ROCKIN' IN 53 YEARS OF PRESCHOOL EXCELLENCE!

**- RONNE SISCO, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
- DEREK WASHBURN, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS**

First Pres. is so pleased to announce the following additions to our Nursery School staff this year -



Mrs. Tonia Blazey
1-on-1 Aide



Mrs. Lisa Dutcher
Teacher of 3 Yr. Olds



Mrs. Abeer Haddad
1-on-1 Aide



Ms. Cristina Nava-Wilson
1-on-1 Aide



Mrs. Brenda Mariano
Long-term
Substitute Teacher
of 3 Yr. Olds



This new year at the nursery school is one of great need for many of our students. We are so grateful to be able to offer over \$21,000 in tuition assistance thanks to funds raised through the annual Janet Cook Scholarship Golf Tournament, the Parent Council of 1st Pres. Nursery School, and through the many generous donors here at FPC:E.

Our heartfelt gratitude.

SESSION UPDATE AND TRANSITION REPORT

- LINDA WILLETS, CLERK OF SESSION

The Session held its regular meeting on September 9, 2015.

Much good news was reported as we move into the new school year. Session heard plans for:

- The Fall Kickoff on September 13, including the creation of a Prayer Garden in the courtyard at the back entrance.
- The Children's Ministry Kickoff on September 20—an outdoor celebration of this year's "Route 66" curriculum including box car building, ramp racing, a "What Book is That?" guessing game, and snacks at the Route 66 Diner. We praise God for a number of new teachers who have stepped up to form teaching teams.
- The Small Group Ministry Team is meeting to equip leaders for the Fall Study and Sermon Series on the Essential Tenets, called, "Who Am I? The Essentials of a Godly Identity."
- Middle and high school youth ministry is resuming in October. High school students will have an opportunity to go to the ECO Northeast Region High School Retreat on November 20-22, 2015, at Mont Lawn Camp & Retreat Center, Bushkill, PA.
- Session members were encouraged to attend the first ECO presbytery meeting on Friday evening and Saturday, October 2 and 3. Also, FPC:E is hosting the fall gathering of our Mission Affinity Group (MAG) on October 24.
- The Nominating Committee praised God for members of our church who are responding to God's call to serve as elders and deacons.
- The Nursery School has expanded the 3-year-old program. New teachers have been hired, and because of the increased enrollment, they are able to meet the greater need for scholarships this year.
- The Session reviewed and approved the new church logo that you are beginning to see.
- Tim thanked the Session for funding and allowing him to coordinate the Summer Outreach Program in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. They served over 100 children, and one of the young adult leaders was hired at the Boys and Girls Club for the rest of the summer.

Transition Process:

- Session acted on several requests of members to be placed on the Presbytery's Residual Roll or to be removed from the membership rolls of FPC:E.
- Session approved a draft of proposed revisions to the wedding policies based on suggestions from ECO and Church Mutual.
- Session approved recommendations from the Personnel Committee to address changes in medical coverage and retirement funds because of our transition to ECO.

MISSION AFFINITY GROUPS

— EDE SORNBERGER AND JANET COOK, RULING ELDERS

Mission Affinity Groups (MAGs) are relationships between the Sessions of churches. MAGs may contain either only ECO congregations, or a combination of both ECO and PC(USA) congregations. MAGs provide a way to connect, care for, and provide accountability for churches and leaders. Every ECO congregation is required to be in a Mission Affinity Group. Each MAG consists of 3-4 congregations organized around similar ministry contexts.

We have seen in our study of Acts that one of the key elements of the growth of Christianity has been the support within a small cohesive group of believers; today we might call it a Mission Affinity Group. We need groups bonded by strong belief in the Gospel truths, trust, accountability, love, and mutual respect. We can't go it alone. We need the relationships and support of fellow believers, just as the early church did.

Members of MAGs commit to meet at least once a year, for at least three years, and connect in other ways in-between meetings. At its annual meeting, each congregation in the MAG must have at least 1/3 of its ruling elders in attendance. These annual meetings are ideally 8 hours in length, often from a Friday night to a Saturday afternoon. The focus of the annual meeting is for each congregation to share their answers to the *Narrative on the Health of Mission & Ministry*. The narrative consists of 10 questions, listed below, that enable a Session to evaluate and summarize their ministry health over the past year:

1. How has the Holy Spirit been evident in your congregation in the past year — through conversions, growth in the fruit of the Spirit, or other transformational experiences that make disciples of Jesus Christ?
2. How has your congregation extended itself beyond its bounds through the establishment of new communities of worship and discipleship, expanding the Kingdom of God?
3. In what ways is your congregation seeking the welfare of the community to which you have been called — devoting itself to the poor, seeking justice, and living out the whole of the Great Commission?
4. How are you encouraging people to allow God's Word to shape their priorities and actions, and to nurture constant learning and the life of the mind?
5. How are you helping children and others new to the Christian faith to discover Jesus and grow in their understanding and love of God's Word?
6. Describe the moral expression in your congregation — are you more like the world or more like participants in the values of the Kingdom of God?
7. How is your congregation intentionally unleashing the ministries of women, men, and people of different ethnic groups who are experiencing God's call?
8. How is the idea of ministry as the joy and calling of every disciple evident in your congregation? How are you equipping people to represent Jesus more effectively in their respective professions?
9. Illustrate the commitment of your congregation to global evangelism and discipleship, including examples of where you are engaging and with whom you are partnering.
10. How does your congregation understand commitment to the larger church through our connectional relationships within the Body of Christ?

MISSION AFFINITY GROUPS CONT.

As congregations share from their Narrative, the members of the MAG are able to learn from best practices, collaborate on mission, and be accountable to one another where correction is needed.

ECO INFORMATION SERIES

If you are interested in learning more about ECO, visit the website and find the “ECO Information Series” under the “Resources” link.

There are six sessions in this information series that each include a 10-20 minute video about the particular subject, an outline for the video if you would like to follow along and make some notes, and reflection questions on the bottom of that outline. This content-rich series is designed to help leaders, sessions, and congregation members have a better understanding of the culture, vision, and expectation of those churches that choose to make ECO their denominational home.

GRACE AND PEACE MISSION TO ORISSA TRIP



Please pray for Hemant and Saima Tandi and the two mission teams they will be leading to India in November. The first team from Faith Bible Church will go from November 8-22; a group from Two Rivers Assembly will overlap from November 15-28.

Goals for these trips include:

- Time with the children at Nanda and an opportunity to update their sponsor information
- A 2-3 day evangelistic outreach event
- A Hindu-Christian reconciliation outreach (planned with and financed by the Justice in Ministry committee of the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley)
- Small projects/repairs using the construction expertise of one of the participants
- New participants experiencing the scope of GPMO
- The start of a health care program to provide the children with annual physicals, immunizations, and basic medical care

Donations to support general expenses or particular goals may be sent to: GPMO (200 Front Street, Vestal, NY, 13850), with your designation in the memo.

COMMUNITY

Transition of Deacon's Pantry

Instead of hosting the Deacons' Pantry this fall, FPC:E will be working with Mother Teresa's Cupboard at St. Ambrose. In addition to money the Deacons give monthly to help purchase food for M.T.'s Cupboard, the Deacons will also start providing personal care items so that people can receive things at one location. To make the transition known in the community, the Deacons will host one final Pantry afternoon here at FPC:E on Monday, October 5, 3:30-5:00 pm.

Want to Turn Your Old Blue Jeans into Shoes for African Children? Throw a Sole Hope Party!

As many of you know, our summer Sole Hope party at FPC:E allowed us to send hundreds of pairs of shoes to impoverished children in Uganda. Praise God! And thank you, volunteers! To continue that impact, if you, your office, your small group, or your family are looking for a meaningful and simple way to spread God's love this holiday season, please consider throwing your very own Sole Hope party. All you need is a few pairs of old jeans, some sharp scissors, and a bit of your time to make a difference in the life of a child.



If you're interested, please check out solehope.org and contact Jamie Jacobs at 761-6493. She can help you host your party and/or provide any materials you may need.

Hello from an Old Friend



For those of you who have been at First Pres for a long time, you will recognize this picture of Dick Scroton. Although he now lives close to family in Liverpool, Dick stays in touch and recently sent this picture from his granddaughter's wedding.

Thank You to Compassion Builders

"We want you to know how much we appreciate the help you provided in making our house back into a home. What a super bunch of guys with great work ethic and an even greater sense of humor. It was a pleasure to have them at my home. Thank you also to the women who were kind enough to bring out meals for the guys. Thank you again, Kim, Kailey, and Mykenzie Huff."

Altar Flowers

Each Sunday this congregation graciously provides beautiful flower arrangements that are used in the front of the church during services and then shared with church family members who are shut-in or have recently experienced difficulties. We are currently in need of additional people to sign up to donate flowers so that we don't have any lapses. If you are willing to participate in this ministry, please contact Dot Melrose at 754-6971.

School Supplies

THANK YOU!!! Four overflowing boxes of school supplies were delivered to CFJ Elementary School thanks to the generosity of the congregation at FPC:E!!! The deacons delivered the supplies but the thanks from the school and students goes out to all that were able to donate.

Church Calendar

October 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	2 6:00 pm ECO Presbytery of the Northeast Will Be Held at New London Presbyterian Church Decorating Party for U-E Homecoming	3 ECO Presbytery of the Northeast Will Be Held at New London Presbyterian Church
4 9:09 am Worldwide Communion 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:30 am Children's Ministry 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional)	5 3:30 pm Final Deacons' Pantry	6 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 7:00 pm Deacons	7 6:00 am Men's Group 7:00 pm Session 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	8 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	9	10
11 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:30 am Children's Ministry 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional)	12 Columbus Day- No Nursery School	13 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper 7:00 pm Nominating Committee	14 6:00 am Men's Group 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal 7:00 pm Session Budget Mtg.- Tentative	15 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	16	17 9:00 am Nursery School Fall Fest
18 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:30 am Children's Ministry 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional)	19 6:30 pm Parent Council Mtg.	20 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	21 6:00 am Men's Group 1:00 pm Women's Circle III 7:00 pm House Meeting 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal 7:30 pm Mission and Stewardship Meeting	22 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm GPMO Board Mtg.	23	24 FPC Hosts Our Mission Affinity Group (MAG)
25 9:09 am Worship Service (Contemporary) 10:30 am Children's Ministry 10:45 am Worship Service (Traditional)	26 5:30 pm Nursery School Board Meeting	27 12:30 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Samaritan Supper	28 6:00 am Men's Group 7:00 pm Worship Team Rehearsal	29 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	30	31

VISION STATEMENT

(What God wants to do)

We believe God wants to transform our community through the saving love of Jesus Christ and calls us to share that hope with the world. To be an agent of hope, our congregation must work together and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ, whatever the cost.¹ This commitment, which is grounded in a deep love of God and neighbor,² sends us out to share the Good News of Christ through our words³ and our actions.⁴

¹ *The Great Commitment*, Matthew 16:24-26

² *The Great Commandment*, Luke 10:27

³ *The Great Commission*, Matthew 28:18-20

⁴ *The Great Compassion*, Matthew 25:31-40

MISSION STATEMENT

(What God wants us to do)

We believe God wants us to share the life-changing power and love of Jesus Christ in such compelling ways that more people become fully devoted followers of Christ.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

(The reason we exist)

To reach more people and together grow in Christ.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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