

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRANADA HILLS

2006 MISSION STATEMENT

A. Introductory Statement about the Church

The First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills is a dynamic worshipping community centered on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A vital part of northwestern San Fernando Valley since 1947, we understand our mission as reaching inward to our congregation and outward to our community with the transforming power of God.

First Pres. is a very busy place! Various ministries happen throughout every day and every evening. There is never a quiet night on our campus. Our vision is to challenge all members to find a place where they can grow in their faith as well as to find a place where they can serve. Our goal is to provide a variety of quality opportunities for people to do just that.

First Pres. is also a very caring community. One of the hallmarks of our congregation is its genuineness and sense of family. Our guests always remark how friendly we are. On Sunday mornings we pray with and for one another. We seek to be the kind of community where it is safe to express a differing opinion and still receive Christ-like love and respect. Our Deacons go the extra mile in endeavoring to ensure that every member feels supported and loved. Every member is encouraged to see themselves as part of the family of God.

In a period when so many congregations are experiencing decline and frustration, First Pres. is very healthy! Over a decade ago, the leadership observed what was happening to so many congregations here in the Valley and decided that they needed to be open to new ideas and new ways of doing ministry. Today, by all indicators, First Pres. is vital and growing. We are a happy congregation, financial support is strong, there is a great respect for theological diversity and there is a genuine excitement about the future.

As with all healthy congregations, it is the people who make the difference. The First Pres. family is made up of people of all ages and backgrounds. We are committed to creating and maintaining a well-balanced congregation, both in terms of age and ethnic diversity.

B. Introductory statement about our Neighborhood

Our congregation primarily serves the Los Angeles suburb communities of Granada Hills, Northridge, Porter Ranch and Chatsworth in the northwestern section of the San Fernando Valley. Rapid growth began in the 1950's transforming the once rural valley into a community of single-family homes, condos, and apartment complexes. The northern end of the valley is still growing today with upscale home developments in the Porter Ranch area.

The church sits on a seven-acre site located across the street from Granada Hills High School and a half block from the northern border of the California State University at Northridge (CSUN) campus. Immediate neighbors also include houses, apartments and small businesses. The downtown business section of Granada Hills and several distinct shopping areas are located two blocks north. A large mall (Northridge Fashion Center) is two miles west.

C. Membership

Current church membership	736	2005 attendance at:	
Church membership five years ago	770	Sunday Morning Worship	447
Adult women	436	Christmas Eve (2005)	1188
Adult men	300	Ash Wednesday	225
Youth members included	30	Easter (2005)	925

Racial Composition	Asian	31
	African American	12
	Hispanic	26
	Caucasian	667

D. Discipleship Curriculum

Toddlers to 5 th Grade	Self-produced Workshop Rotation
SURGE (Middle School)	Self-produced
JIVE (High School)	Self-produced
The Well (College)	Self-produced
Adult	Self-produced

E. Organizations within the Church

First Pres. is an exceedingly active church family. Each elder serving on the Session coordinates a ministry area that is vital to the church's life. Ministry areas include Adult Education, Arabic, Children, Youth, Weekday School, Worship, Mission, Fellowship, Social Concerns, Membership, Marketing and Public Relations, Finance, Stewardship, Property, Personnel and Church Officer Nominating Committee.

Examples of specific ministries are: Children's Sunday School, Club 45 (fourth and fifth graders), SURGE (Serving Under a Radical God Eternally-Middle School), JIVE (Jesus Is Victorious Eternally-High School), The Well (College), Weekday School (preschool and elementary schools) Women's Bible Studies (weekly and monthly), Men's Bible Studies (weekly), Prime Timers (Sunday morning adult Sunday School), Young Marrieds, Ministry for Seniors (bimonthly lunches and program), Fellowship Groups, numerous Small Groups, Cathedral Choir, New Light Ensemble, Worship Band, Handbell Choir, Willing Weekday Workers (monthly volunteers for property maintenance), our Weekly Homeless Shelter, and Deacons.

F. Total Annual Budget (2005)

Parish \$898,308 Weekday School \$1,723,995

G. Our Church and Neighborhood

1. *The Church:* First Pres. has been a vital part of the northwest Valley since 1947. Since the beginning we have been known as a congregation that cares for one another and cares for the world around us. When people hear the name First Pres. they may think of our strong Christ centered worship or our much sought after Weekday School or our active children's and youth ministries or growing College ministry or they may think of our commitment to helping feed and shelter the homeless or our regular mission trips into Mexico or Africa or South America.

Our congregation's home is a large complex of buildings sitting on seven acres. In addition to a 550 seat sanctuary, we have two multipurpose buildings with stages and kitchens, an office complex, two adult lounges, nursery and toddler rooms and over twenty classrooms shared by our Sunday School and Weekday School ministries.

2. *The Neighborhood:* The Granada Hills-Northridge neighborhood reflects the ever-changing face of America. During the post war boom of the 1950-1960's our neighborhood was predominately white suburban families. Housing costs were moderate, and the area still had a semi-rural feel to it. Today housing is anything but moderate. Smaller homes sell for over \$500,000.00 and go upward from there. Many new homes built in our part of the Valley sell for over a million dollars. After the Northridge Earthquake of 1994 our community received a facelift, shopping centers were remodeled and expanded and older homes were updated and upgraded.

The northwest Valley is seen as a very desirable place to live. This desirability is drawing people from many different ethnic backgrounds. We have a large Pacific-Rim population as well as growing Hispanic population. We are also seeing a Middle Eastern community growing in numbers. First Pres. seeks to be a church for all who love the Lord. With the General Assembly we currently co-sponsor an Arabic Bible Study, and host a Korean congregation. We are endeavoring to provide a new model of what it means to be the church today.

H. Ministries

- 1 *Worship:* First Pres. offers two worship styles every Sunday morning. At 9:00 we have a blended worship, singing several traditional hymns accompanied by our large pipe organ and also singing several current worship songs accompanied by piano, guitar, bass and drums. We work hard to reflect our traditional rich reform worship heritage with a sense of the personal and the joy of the community. We always have a Time for Young Disciples (children's sermon) as well as a time of prayer that includes opportunity for people in the congregation to lift up a personal joy or concern. The morning's sermon seeks to be Biblically based with the application aimed at today's needs. The 11th Hour Worship is a ministry designed for those who seek a more edgy worship style. Band driven, with an excellent Worship leader, this worship attracts a growing number of people of all ages. Different ways of communication are explored in this worship, including video clips and drama as well as more tangible ways to response to the Word. One way of responding is by celebrating Communion by intinction every week in the 11th Hour.

2 Discipleship: First Pres. is committed to providing discipleship opportunities for all ages. Our Children's Ministries reflects our commitment to helping parents provide a solid Christian foundation for their children. Following the Workshop Rotation Model, all curricula are written "in house". For fourth and fifth graders we have a monthly Club 45 Ministry designed to introduce them to a youth group model of ministry. Our Middle School Ministry (SURGE) meets mid-week for games, worship and teaching and on Sunday mornings for Bible study. Senior High Ministry (JIVE) also meets weekly for games, worship and teaching. When school is in session, our College Fellowship (The Well) has a weekly evening fellowship meeting for worship and teaching, a Sunday afternoon game time and a variety of small groups that meet throughout the week.

On Sunday mornings we have several Adult Sunday School classes including the Young Married's class. A Pastor's Bible Study is offered on Wednesday evenings. In addition we have many self-led small groups that meet in homes throughout the week.

Women's Ministries take a variety of forms at First Pres. including monthly Presbyterian Women Circle Bible studies, a weekly Bonehead Bible Study aimed at the Moms of our Weekday School children, a Tuesday Morning Bible Study, a Fall retreat, a Winter Seminar Event and a Spring Luncheon. Men's ministries currently consist of a small weekly breakfast Bible study and a larger quarterly breakfast with a speaker.

3 Mission: Commitment to mission both home and abroad is part of the fabric of First Pres. On the local level we participate in Habitat for Humanity and are part of a Valley homeless shelter opening one of our halls to homeless men, women and children every Thursday night.

Overseas, we support a variety of missionaries as well as regularly send intergenerational work teams from the congregation. In the past few years Mission-Work Teams have traveled to the Philippines, Ecuador, Malawi, Belize and Honduras. Our intergenerational teams have augmented our over forty-year tradition of Senior High Mission Caravans and our new tradition of yearly college mission trips.

- 4 *Weekday School:* As a mission outreach of First Pres. we have a preschool and elementary school ministry with approximately 340 students. Our highly respected Weekday School has served the community for over forty years and is known to be one of the best schools in the Valley. Each student is encouraged to achieve their full potential as we provide challenging and engaging programs in a nurturing Christian environment.

Unique for Christian schools, our preschool is accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children and our elementary school is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Our high test scores reflect that we far exceed the state standards for elementary education. We strive to educate the whole child offering an academic program integrated with values, spirituality and community.

In addition to low class size (twenty or under), our fully credentialed teachers along with classroom aides, offer a core curriculum that is enriched with studies and experiences in the Bible, Computer Science, Spanish, Music, Art and Physical Education. There are also enrichment classes which includes King's Kids' Musical Drama Group (Christmas/Spring concerts), Irish Dance, Karate, Science, Math, Chess and Art. To better meet the needs of our working parents, we offer before and after school extended care. Both preschool and elementary students participate in a monthly Chapel in the Sanctuary. Our Weekday School Ministry co-sponsors events and educational activities with our Children's Ministry.

- 5 *Music:* First Pres. is gifted with many excellent musicians, vocal and instrumental. On any given Sunday you will enjoy a variety of musical groups, instrumentalists and styles. From our forty voice Cathedral Choir to our a cappella ensemble New Light to our Kids of the Kingdom Choir to individual soloists you will be lifted into the joy of worship. With trumpet, organ, piano, flute, sax, handbells, strings, guitar, bass and drums of all sorts, we strive to energize our worship of God with the gift of music.
- 6 *Fellowship:* One of the things that continue to draw people to First Pres. is its sense of fun and community. Typical yearly fare for the whole congregation includes a talent show, a Valentine's Banquet and Dance, a summer picnic, a golf tournament, a Country Fair, an Advent Family Potluck, and a Preschool Angel Breakfast. In addition, different age-oriented fellowship groups sponsor their own activities

I. Current Issues and Action Items

Our issues and action items center around the question, "what does it mean to be the light of Christ in our community today?"

- 1 ***Contemporary Worship:*** In 2002 we began a new Sunday Morning contemporary worship called the 11th Hour. Initially designed to complement our College Ministry (The Well) and reach out to the student community at CSUN this worship now attracts men and women of all ages. It has become the primary place where guests are introduced to First Pres. In many ways this Worship and the community it attracts represents the future of First Pres. The Session and congregation is committed to ensuring its quality and growth by providing quality leadership.

ACTION: To call a second Associate Pastor to oversee this ministry by providing both theological and music leadership.

- 2 ***College Students:*** God has placed First Pres. in a very strategic location, sitting one block from the California State University Northridge (CSUN) campus. We recognize that college years represent the critical period for college age believers. It is a time of great searching and experimenting. For many it is a time of being up-rooted from their homes and families. We are called to provide a Christ-centered ministry to come along side students during these years. We seek to provide community, discipleship, out reach evangelism as well mission. With the growing number of college men and women attending First Pres. we believe God has called us to take seriously our ministry to students.

ACTION: To call a second Associate Pastor to provide strong leadership for our College Ministry.

- 3 ***Young Couples and Families with Young Children:*** With our 11th Hour contemporary worship and Weekday School ministry we are seeing younger couples and families look to First Pres. as their church home. We are endeavoring to create ministries that will meet their needs.

Action: In February of 2006 the Session acted to expand our ministries for younger families and families with younger children. We increased the hours of one of our Directors of Children's Ministries so that she can help us assess the current and future needs and begin to formulate a plan that will help us meet the identified needs.

New ministries under consideration include MOPS (Mother of Pre-Schoolers), a new women's Bible Study that reaches out into the community and a new fellowship group for younger families. We are exploring what a Weekly Family Night could look like at First Pres. along with expanding events and seminars designed to reach out to families with younger children.

ACTION: We have as a future goal to be able to create a new staff position for Family Ministries along with a new Session Commission for Family Ministries.

- 4 *Homeless:* We are very concerned with those who find themselves at risk because of shelter and basic need issues. With over 10,000 people on the streets and homeless every night in the Valley alone the needs are great. There are simply not enough emergency shelters and kitchens serving the hungry in the Valley.

ACTION: In addition to hosting a weekly shelter at the church and working with Habitat for Humanity, we are committed to work toward long-term solutions for those in greatest need.

- 5 *Neighborhood:* As mentioned elsewhere, the Valley is undergoing a radical transformation with respect to its ethnic and socio-economic make-up. We are committed to plan for the future and to act now by providing a foundation for the men, women and children who will be the family of First Pres. in 2026 and beyond.

ACTION: To intentionally create an environment where people from many different backgrounds can come and experience Christ-centered worship, love, community and discipleship.

- 6 *Vision and Resources:* First Pres. has many dreams for the future. Dreams for ministry as well as dreams for up-grading our facilities. As with many churches, our dreams constantly outrun our financial and people resources.

ACTION: To re-establish our Long Range Planning Committee in order to review and update our long-term goals.

J. Staff

Rev. Jim Sillerud	Pastor (FT)
Rev. Barbara LeFevre-Lyons	Associate Pastor (FT)
Carol Morian	Co-Director of Children's Ministries (1/2T)
Gretchen Czach	Co-Director of Children's Ministries (1/2T)
Julie Orr	Children's Ministries Assistant (PT)
Vacant	Nursery Coordinator
John Bowling	Director of Youth Ministries (FT)
Matt Robbins	Interim Director of College Ministries (1/2T)
Chris Sillerud	Minister of Music (3/4T)
Bill Sperry	Director of Contemporary Worship (1/2T)
Marianna Abrahamyan	Organist (PT)
Lorraine King	Director of Handbell Choir (PT)
Dianne Tarantelli	Director of Children's Choirs (PT)
Mary Lou Pennington	Principal for Weekday School (FT)
Dolly Perillo	Admin. Assistant for Weekday School (FT)
Pierre Lyons	Admin Assistant for Weekday School (FT)
Vacant	Church Office Administrator (FT)
Valerie Snow	Church Office Assistant (1/2T)
Nita Standke	Church Office Assistant (1/2T)
Sheila Koster	Controller (Church) (3/4T)
Betty Jenkins	Financial Assistant (Church) (PT)
Carole Rice	Accountant for Weekday School (3/4T)
Joe Vasquez	Property Coordinator (FT)