



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRANADA HILLS

2022 MISSION STUDY

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. We have been a worshipping congregation in the northwestern San Fernando Valley since 1947. First Pres is known for our strong Christ-centered worship, our active ministry groups, and our commitment to reaching outward to our community and the world around us with the transforming and love power of God. Our vision is to challenge all members to find a place where they can grow in their faith as well as find a place where they can serve.

First Pres has had unique stability in its pastoral leadership, which has provided a strong foundation as we look forward to a new chapter of ministry and mission with our new pastor. Our congregation, in consultation with our Presbytery, has chosen a co-pastor transition model. We are looking for our new pastor to partner with our retiring pastor for a period of not more than six months, for the purpose of providing a seamless transfer of pastoral leadership. Our retiring pastor is committed to being a support to our new pastor as our congregation falls in love and they assume the role of Head of Staff.

Coming out of COVID-19, First Pres has returned to being a very busy campus! Various ministry activities happen throughout every day and evening. There is rarely a quiet night on our campus. 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, toddler rooms, and over twenty classrooms shared by our Sunday School and Granada Preparatory School (an International Baccalaureate school that is co-owned by First Pres). We have a long history of hosting a wide variety of community groups including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, and Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters. We are committed to these groups and are exploring other ways we can support the larger community around us.

First Pres is a very caring community. One of the hallmarks of our congregation is its authenticity and sense of family. Visitors often remark how friendly we are. During Sunday morning worship we make time to pray with and for one another. We seek to be the kind of community where

different opinions are valued and all receive Christ's love and respect. Our Deacons go the extra mile in endeavoring to ensure that every member feels supported and loved and are encouraged to see themselves as part of the family of God.

While the COVID-19 pandemic of the past two years has taken its toll, First Pres remains very healthy, and we are seeing our congregation return to active life in the church! Despite these difficult economic times financial support has remained strong and there is 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 diverse congregation, staff, and pastoral leadership.

B. Introductory statement about our Neighborhood

Our congregation primarily serves the Los Angeles suburban 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, condominiums, and apartment complexes. Today the northwest valley is still seen as a very desirable place to live. This desirability is drawing people from many different ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the ever-changing face of America. We have large Hispanic and Caucasian populations as well as a growing Asian/Pacific Rim and African American population. We are also seeing the Middle Eastern community growing in numbers.

The church sits on a seven-acre site located across the street from Granada Hills Charter High School and a half block from the northern border of the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) campus. Immediate neighbors also include houses, condominiums, apartments, and small businesses. The downtown business section of old Granada Hills has recently undergone revitalization and hosts food trucks every Friday night. There are several distinct shopping areas within blocks of our campus, a large mall complex (Northridge Fashion Center) is two miles west. There is also a large medical technology company, Medtronic, less than one block from our campus.

Our end of the valley is still growing today with upscale home developments continually being built. According to the California Association of Realtors, housing prices have soared in the past twelve months in the San Fernando Valley, averaging over \$867,000. This reflects a 14.4% growth-rate since

February 2021. Further, many homes in our part of the valley sell for over a million dollars.

Economically, the area has an average household income of \$110,424 per year. Median income is expected to increase by 14.55% in the next 5 years according to a 2021 report by MissionInsite. 92% of the local population lives above the poverty level. The average yearly commitment (2021) of First Pres members to the mission and ministry of the congregation is \$2,379.

As mentioned previously, the San Fernando Valley is growing in population and diversity. According to the 2021 report by MissionInsite, the immediate areas around First Pres are 40% Hispanic/Latino(a), 35.5% Caucasian, and 17% Asian/Pacific Islanders. The remainder is made up of people of African American and Middle Eastern race and ethnicity. Given that over 85% of our congregation identifies as Caucasian, our surrounding community is significantly more diverse than our membership, which is a discrepancy we feel is critical to address as we move forward.

C. Membership

The challenges of COVID-19 (an inability to hold in-person worship services, the postponement of new membership classes, and the cancellation of fellowship activities) have impacted First Pres just as it has churches across America. The transition to on-line and then back to in-person participation is an obstacle we are still navigating.

Current church membership (2021)	540
Adult women	351
Adult men	189

Member Racial Composition	Asian/Pacific Islander	24
	African American	11
	Hispanic/Latino(a)	23
	Middle Eastern	8
	Caucasian	474

Average Sunday Morning attendance (3 year average)	331
Christmas Eve (2 services, 2021)	540
Ash Wednesday (2022)	244
Easter (3 services, 2022)	595

D. Discipleship Curriculum

Toddlers to 5 th Grade	Grow Curriculum
SURGE (Middle School)	LIVE Curriculum
JIVE (High School)	LIVE Curriculum
Adult	Self-produced

E. Organizations within the Church

First Pres is an exceptionally active church family. Each ruling elder serving on the Session coordinates a ministry area that is vital to the church's life. Ministry areas include Adult Discipleship, Family, Children, Youth, Worship, Mission, Fellowship, Community Concerns, Membership, Finance, Stewardship, Property, Personnel, and Congregational Nominating Committee.

Deacons also play an important role in the life of First Pres. The congregation is divided into 26 geographic parishes. Each parish has one Deacon assigned to care for those members living within the parish bounds. In addition to their parish ministry, the Deacons work with the pastors regarding special assistance concerns, coordinate and prepare communion, provide receptions following memorial services, and lead our Adopt-a-Family ministry each Christmas. This past year (2021) 31 families were gifted with food, clothes, and toys for the children. The Deacons also lead a vital prayer ministry within the congregation, coordinate our prayer team and oversee our Grief Support Group.

Examples of specific ministries are: Children's Sunday School, SURGE (Serving Under a Radical God Everyday-Middle School), JIVE (Jesus Is Victorious Eternally-High School), Women's Bible Studies (weekly and monthly), Men's Bible Studies (weekly, including one over breakfast), Co-Educational Bible Studies (weekly), MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers), Ministry for Seniors (twice annual luncheons and program), Senior Singles (weekly fellowship group), numerous small groups, Cathedral Choir, Voices of Gabriel Choir, Carpenter's Union (K-5th choir), Acafellas (men's quartet), Worship Band, English hand bell choir, Willing Weekday Workers (monthly volunteers for property maintenance), and Deacons.

F. Total Annual Budget (2022)

Parish \$1,104,538

G. Current Ministry Priorities

Worship: First Pres offers two worship styles every Sunday morning. At 9:00 a.m., we offer a blended worship service, singing several traditional hymns accompanied by our large pipe organ and several current worship songs accompanied by piano, guitars, keyboard, bass, and drums. Our thirty-member Cathedral Choir enhances this service in addition to a small vocal group, our Children's Choir, and Handbell Choir. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated monthly.

The 11th Hour Worship is a ministry designed for those who seek a more contemporary worship style. Band-driven, with excellent worship leaders and communion every week (by intinction), this worship attracts new people of all ages and serves as the gateway to First Pres for many.

In both worship services, we strive to reflect our traditional rich, reformed worship heritage with an appreciation of new worship styles. First Pres is very fortunate to have many gifted musicians who contribute regularly to our worship. In both services, we have a weekly children's sermon as well as a time of prayer that often includes an opportunity for people in the congregation to lift a personal joy or concern. The sermon seeks to be Biblically-based with the application aimed at today's needs. We seek to creatively incorporate multi-media by utilizing seven large plasma screens and cameras in our sanctuary. Each service is live streamed and archived on YouTube for those unable to worship in person. Our sanctuary is also ADA compliant.

Throughout the year, First Pres offers many special worship services. During Lent, we celebrate a traditional Ash Wednesday service, a creative Maundy Thursday worship, a Good Friday Tenebrae service in reader's theatre-style, and a Palm Sunday worship complete with Radar the donkey! On Easter Sunday, First Pres has three services including a sunrise service on the church patio.

People often comment that no congregation celebrates Pentecost like First Pres! Focusing on the coming of the Holy Spirit, everyone comes dressed in red, and we end our worship with everyone releasing a helium-filled red balloon in the sanctuary, symbolizing the gift of the Spirit working in our lives.

On Christmas Eve, we celebrate with two distinctly different candlelight communion services at 5:00 and 11:00 pm.

In each worship service, we seek to celebrate the joy of our community gathered before the Lord.

Adult Discipleship: First Pres offers a flourishing ministry in Adult Discipleship including Bible and specialty studies for diverse and intergenerational groups including young adults, women, men, seniors, and singles. These are reflected in topical studies, sermon reflections, scriptural devotions, and classes such as *Grief Care* and others as needs are identified. The calendar is always full of activities to strengthen our faith and church community acknowledging our gifting as one body in Christ as expressed in Romans 12:4-5: "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Below is a sampling of the various ministries that contribute to our love for God and neighbor.

Women's Ministry: First Pres provides Biblical teaching, spiritual growth, and community for all women in our church and beyond. We seek to love God, love each other, and love and serve the world around us. Monthly Presbyterian Women's Circle Bible studies and several weekly Bible studies are available for all women. There is a Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Membership luncheon in the spring and a retreat in the fall for weekend or Saturday attendance only. Other opportunities for community building include a Women's Tea and a monthly Girl's Night Out at which women are encouraged to provide a service such as making beanies for those who are experiencing homelessness or sewing Little Dresses for Africa.

Men's Ministries: *Granada Men (GMen)* is an active ministry for men. The ministry includes a monthly breakfast along with Biblical studies to help disciple men towards a deeper walk with Jesus. Outside activities include Dodger baseball games, trips to museums, and friendly quarterly challenges with the males of the High School group. Bi-monthly "Movie Nights" are provided where the men enjoy pizza along with a review and discussion of the movie. An annual fall dinner event is offered to reach out to both the men in our congregation and in the surrounding area of the *GMen* ministry. Weekly Bible study groups are also available for men of all ages.

Bridges: Through the ministry and partnership of BridgesUS.org, we offer training for adults to learn how to be Christ's disciples as they live out their daily lives within their local communities.

Young Adults: This is a group composed of those of college age through mid 30's that meets weekly for Bible Study and bi-monthly game nights. This group serves in the community by joining events such as trash pick-up day and reaches out by posting memes on social media. The goal is to split the group into college and post-college as the group begins to grow.

Senior Adult Ministries: Senior Singles Group meets three times monthly for Christian fellowship and has daily email interactions which create deep personal relationships and support among its members. Ministry For Seniors luncheons meet twice annually for lunch, fellowship, and to hear significant speakers.

Children and Youth Discipleship: Our Children's Ministry reflects our commitment to partner with parents to provide a solid foundation for children to grow spiritually both at home and at church. We use *Grow Curriculum*. We believe there are four spiritual habits that help kids grow closer to God: spend time with God, spend time with others, share your story, and use your gifts. Every summer we have a Vacation Bible School with last year's being intergenerational involving the whole church. Children's Ministry sponsors many special events throughout the year to also engage our school and the community including this year's Easter celebration called Rise Up with Jesus, a Car Rally for Halloween, Advent Dinner, and Craft Night (co-sponsored with Family Ministry), Lenten Prayer Pennant Activity and Breakfast (co-sponsored with Adult Ministry), and Kid's Fun Day in December. We will be starting our Club 45 for the fourth and fifth graders this summer which is designed to introduce them to a youth group model of ministry.

First Pres also has a Biblically-centered, Middle and High School Ministry. Both *SURGE* (middle school) and *JIVE* (high school) meet weekly for games, worship, and teaching. They provide students a host of other activities including small groups, community volunteering, retreats and game/movie nights. While these two groups have typically met on different evenings, due to decreased participation following COVID-19, they have been meeting together.

Family Ministry: First Pres is committed to nurturing families. We aim to do this by educating, equipping, and encouraging families in every age and stage of life, so that a spiritual foundation is established in Jesus Christ. Family Ministry sponsors several events, such as game nights, community service projects, and holiday events throughout the year. We are excited

to hold our All-Church Retreat in May, for the first time since 2019 due to COVID-19. Held at Forest Home on Memorial Day weekend, it is a time for fun, fellowship, and discipleship. This year our Ministry is sponsoring more intergenerational activities such as bowling nights. Family Ministry also partners with MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers) an international organization that seeks to equip moms of young children while strengthening their relationship with Jesus, and Moppets, a ministry designed to be a safe, loving, and creative place where children have fun learning Biblical truths while their moms attend MOPS.

Mission Ministry: Commitment to mission both home and abroad is part of the fabric of First Pres.

Our Mission Ministry supports international, national, and select local mission programs. Local mission programs include InterVarsity at CSUN, Young Life (at various community colleges, high schools, and middle schools), World Impact, and Journey Out. 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 Fortuna in California, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Belize, Honduras, Mexico, New Orleans, and to the Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona. Our intergenerational teams have augmented our over sixty-year tradition of Senior High Mission Caravans.

Our Community Concerns Ministry leads our local mission emphasis. We support and actively participate with San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission (includes Home Again Shelter for families with children and Renewed Hope which shelters men), California State University, Northridge (CSUN) - Food Pantry and Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission. Community Concerns is involved in many other activities, including putting together and distributing "Handy Handouts," (individual bags that include food and personal hygiene supplies that can be given to people in need) and Thanksgiving food distributions with other partners.

Granada Preparatory School: Granada Preparatory School ("GPS") is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school within a Christian environment. GPS seeks to encourage students' personal development and academic achievement with the goal of becoming thoughtful leaders in society and the world. The IB program is recognized around the globe for producing high-achieving and well-rounded students. GPS is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Office and accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

When it was proposed that we blend a former secular school (Chatsworth Hills Academy) with a Christian school (First Pres Prep), each school stated its non-negotiable. For Chatsworth Hills Academy this was continuing to be an International Baccalaureate School. The non-negotiable for First Pres was to be a school in a Christian environment, meaning mandatory Chapels and a Bible class as part of the curriculum.

Currently 150 children, ranging in age from pre-school through 8th grade, enjoy learning in a nurturing yet rigorous academic environment. GPS provides small class sizes and offers students many opportunities to participate in auxiliary activities such as student government, music, art, and drama. The Pastor of First Pres conducts two monthly chapel services for GPS students, one for preschool and one for the upper grades. We are planning to offer weekly Bible classes as an option to GPS students in the coming 2022-2023 school year.

GPS was formed in 2020 as a partnership between First Pres, which had run a well-respected weekday school since the 1960s, and Chatsworth Hills Academy ("CHA"), another highly respected private school serving the San Fernando Valley since 1977. Half of the Board of Directors of GPS is appointed by the Session of First Pres; the Pastor of First Pres is always on the Board of Directors. A time of global pandemic may not have been the optimal moment to facilitate a merger of two different types of private schools. However, First Pres and CHA share many values, including a commitment to providing our children with a nurturing and supportive environment filled with wonderful, talented, and dedicated teachers and staff. As a result, GPS hit the ground running and we are excited and optimistic about the future of our school.

Music: First Pres is gifted with many excellent musicians, vocal and instrumental. On any given Sunday we enjoy a variety of musical groups, instrumentalists, and styles. From our very talented thirty-voice Cathedral Choir, men's quartet (Acafellas), children's choir (Carpenter's Union), English hand bell choir (Gloribells), acappella choir (Voices of Gabriel), and multi-talented Worship Band to individual soloists, we are lifted into the joy of worship. With trumpet, organ, piano, flute, hand bells, strings, guitar, bass, and drums of all sorts, we strive to energize our worship of God with the gift of music.

Fellowship: One of the attributes that continues to draw people to First Pres is its sense of fun and community. Typical yearly fare for the entire congregation includes various well-attended luncheons and dinners, such as our Maundy Thursday dinner and Annual Christmas Concert Reception. We

generally have a Talent Show, a Summer Picnic and other fun activities open to all who wish to participate and enjoy celebrating. In addition, different age and gender fellowship groups sponsor their own activities throughout the year.

H. Dreams, Issues and Action Items

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

Associate Pastor Leadership: First Pres recognizes that part of a healthy congregation is adequate leadership. Our intent is to call two associate pastors once we have a new Head of Staff in place. Priorities for these positions include congregational care and youth/college ministry.

Action: Develop a job description and begin candidate searches to seek new associate pastors. Consideration will also be given to the hiring of an interim associate(s) if that is deemed more appropriate for our staffing needs.

Diversity: As mentioned elsewhere, First Pres seeks to be a place of worship for the community. We are committed to diversifying our staff and congregation to better represent the growing community around us.

Action: Create an environment where people from all different backgrounds can come and experience Christ-centered worship, community, and discipleship. Explore more community out-reach options and continue developing plans for creating a Hispanic Ministry team (which was postponed due to COVID-19). Consider programming that would invite youth onto our campus for fellowship.

College Ministry: God has placed First Pres in a very strategic location, sitting one block from the CSUN campus. We recognize that college years represent a critical period for students. It is a time of great searching and experimenting. For many it is a time of being uprooted 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, and outreach evangelism.

Action: Seek leadership that will help us revitalize our ministry to college-age men and women and diligently work to increase our presence on the CSUN campus and share the Gospel.

Granada Preparatory School: Clearly God has brought First Pres and GPS together on the same campus for a reason. While a secular school, First Pres envisions GPS as a ministry priority.

Action: Ensure that pastoral staff continue to prioritize our connection and relationship with GPS. Our Head of Staff will remain on the board of directors and continue to discuss ways in which we can partner with them. First Pres will seek opportunities to support and interact with GPS.

Children and Youth Ministry: Our children and youth ministries have both experienced a steady decline in participation. Just prior to COVID-19, we had a large group of young couples with children who have since relocated to more affordable areas. Affordability of housing in our area is challenging. Additionally, COVID-19 has also taken its toll on our numbers that have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. First Pres recognizes the need for young families as our young disciples are the future of First Pres.

Action: Aggressively reach out to young families with the Gospel. Seek a new associate pastor with experience leading children and youth ministry. Given our close proximity to Granada Hills Charter High School, we might consider ways to routinely connect and support youth there, and potentially begin a specific outreach ministry with these students. Explore ways to foster a stronger relationship between youth and the congregation. Coordinate routine opportunities for adults, via Men's and Women's Ministries, to directly interact with youth such as ping pong, bowling, and barbecues.

Fellowship and Member Support: First Pres, despite some of our areas of weakness, has a very committed and loving congregation. In fact, most members express the feeling of family in relation to each other. We do not want to lose sight of our current flock and must prioritize new ways to connect and create community experiences for our congregation.

Action: Our wise congregation has suggested many ways this might be accomplished. Some of these include monthly All Church Service days where we serve a specific family or member of the congregation, highlighting members and families in our monthly Spire (monthly church newsletter), and holding monthly All Church Potlucks. New pastoral staff will explore these and other options for our congregation to be in relationships and experience fellowship together.

Facilities: First Pres has a large campus with numerous buildings that serve our community in countless ways. However, they are aging and in need of numerous repairs to keep them reliable and useable in the years to come.

Action: Begin planning for ways to best manage the upkeep of our large campus. Consider ways to reinvent some aspects of our current space to better meet the needs of children, youth, and adult groups.

I. Staff:

Rev. Jim Sillerud - Head Pastor (FT)

Stephen Robertson - Apprentice Pastor (FT)

Marilyn Rios - Pastoral Intern (PT)

Rev. Christina Chambers - Parish Associate (Not on Payroll)

Carol Morain - Director of Children's Ministry (FT)

Katie Morain - Children's Ministry Assistant (PT)/Nursery Coordinator (PT)/Child Care (PT)

Scott Landon - Co-Director of Youth Ministry (10 hours/week)

Tara Landon - Co-Director of Youth Ministry (30 hours/week)

Chelsea Obermeier - Children's Choir Director (PT)

Chris Sillerud - Minister of Music (31 hours/week)

Chance Johnson - Director of Contemporary Worship (15 hours/week)

Ben Mason - Organist (PT)

Sunday Worship - (PT) Till Richter, Michelle Zarlinga, Emily Hernandez, Danny Connell, Jack Douth, Rick Faigh, Riley Dial, (Sub Jayme Palmer-Benson)

Set Up Crew - (PT) David Camacho, Janelle Kim (also does Child Care), Ryan Magana

Krystal Hoover - Church Office Administrator (FT)

Stephanie Deach-Foyle - Director of Communications (FT)

Rosemarie Deach - Church Controller (30-40 hours/week)

Linda Long - Financial Assistant (PT)

Luisito Buhay - Property Coordinator (FT)

Child Care - Ivie Alcorn, Juliana Price (PT)