



MISSION STUDY REPORT

Spring 2022

ROCK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

6439 Highway 61/67

Imperial, MO 63052

636-464-7625

www.rockpcmo.com

Preface

In the Presbyterian Church (USA), a congregation planning to call a new pastor must first conduct a Mission Study. This time for self-study and reflection helps a church to prepare for its next season of ministry, embrace a new beginning, and call a new installed pastor.

The Rock Presbyterian Church Mission Study Team (RPCMST) was commissioned by the Session to conduct the Mission Study, which is not only a formal part of the process to call a new pastor, but also an exercise that invites God to reveal strengths and weakness. The RPCMST was asked to involve the congregation in answering fundamental questions of identity and purpose.

The insights we have learned from our study are compiled in this report. Our goal in the following pages is to paint a clear picture of where we have been, where we are today, and where God is leading us in the future. It is our hope that the Mission Study Report will help RPC gain clarity about its core values; recognize its context for ministry and how it affects current and future possibilities for growth; and identify hopes and dreams for the future that our Session and a newly installed pastor can develop into a unified vision.

We would like to thank the many congregants who responded to the congregational questionnaire. The thoughtful, honest responses allowed this study to be informative, enlightening and have provided a strong foundation for the ensuing pastoral search. A special thank you to Bill Perman for his assistance in guiding our team and to Cindy Jones for leading our team.

We hope the RPC Session, the RPC congregation, and the future Pastor Nominating Committee will use this Mission Study Report as a reference for building on the many gifts of RPC as we look to the new experiences God has in store for us. We believe we have a strong community of faith at RPC, willing to grow in our service to Christ, and we look forward to continuing our journey of faith.

In Christ,

Your RPCMST:

Cindy Jones, *Moderator*
Ashley Zugmaier
Joanne Kramer
Linda Hardgrave
Susan Harman

Table of contents

[A brief history of Rock Presbyterian Church](#)

[Our current situation, leadership needs, and future prospects](#)

[Demographic, community and Christian churches study](#)

[Congregational study](#)

[Congregational input and feedback](#)

[Financial report](#)

[Mission statement](#)

[Conclusion](#)

A brief history of Rock Presbyterian Church

Rock Presbyterian Church was born out of three small long-standing churches — The Presbyterian Church of Sulphur Springs, The Presbyterian Church of Windsor Harbor and The Barnhart Chapel. The Presbyterian Church of Sulphur Springs was organized in 1865 in Sulphur Springs Landing, an important settlement and a prominent refueling place along the Mississippi River. The Presbyterian Church of Windsor Harbor was organized in 1868 and first met at the Public School House of Kimmswick. They purchased a lot in 1870 in Windsor Harbor to build their own house of worship and it was completed in the fall of 1871. The Barnhart Chapel's first record was in 1912 and they met at the Barnhart Public School House. In 1923, the chapel was built in Barnhart, and it was designated as a community building for use by all denominations. All three churches had struggled from their beginnings and the Great Depression did not help. On November 16, 1937, the three churches came together and combined their resources into one church to be known going forward as Rock Presbyterian Church.

RPC met at Windsor Chapel, part of the Windsor Harbor Church until a fire on December 17, 1950, burned the little building to the ground. The congregation broke ground on a new church in the spring of 1951 on highway 61-67 and, on January 12, 1952, the cornerstone of our current church was laid complete with documents placed inside the cornerstone box. Stone and concrete blocks salvaged from Windsor Chapel were used to build the new church and a cross plaque was given to the new church forged out of the burned timbers and iron nails as a link to the past.

In January of 1967, the mortgage for the church was paid off, a start was made on the parking lot, and beautiful new hymnals were gifted to the church as a memorial for beloved church member. On September 12, 1971, RPC celebrated 100 years in our community, and it continues as vital presence in our community to this day.

Over the years there have been many pastors, choirs, youth groups, vacation bible schools, Advent services, Last Supper pageants, Easter celebrations, Women's Associations, Men's breakfasts, Family Fun events and potluck lunches.

The mission of our church has always been to help those in need, particularly children. There are early entries in the records of our congregation reaching out to those in dire need even though the financial situation of the church was on shaky ground. In the fall of 1932 during the Great Depression, our church saw that needy children received free scarlet fever shots and supplied eyeglasses to numerous children. This continues today through our giving to

Mission Study Report: Rock Presbyterian Church, Imperial, MO

organizations like the Homeless Youth Initiative and Brenden's Friday Backpacks Program which feeds hungry children in our community over the weekend.

From the earliest days, our church has been focused on youth education. In the building notes of the Sulphur Springs Presbyterian Church, 1868, the requirements were that the church would have a schoolhouse in the basement. Throughout our history, Sunday school and youth groups have played a large role in our church and in the community, giving youth a place for fellowship. In 1889, The Windsor Harbor Church established a Young People's Christian Endeavor Society, 45 members strong, with activities including sporting events, Christmastime caroling and vacation bible school. Over the years, our church has shared space with many schools including our current facility which was home to Mustard Seed School from 1952 to 2018. Today we have a new school at our church, Kizer Academy, continuing our commitment to education.

Our current situation, leadership needs and future prospects

Rock Presbyterian Church is a small congregation of mostly mature members with a beautiful building and educational facilities. Currently, it is home to Kizer Academy, a pre-school and a before and after school care program for kids ages 3-12. The Academy rents our classrooms, fellowship hall and kitchen during the week for the entire year. We also allow our facility to be used by two Alcoholics Anonymous groups that meet one night each during the week for a small donation.

Since COVID-19 forced us to attend worship services virtually, we started recording our service to share with the community via YouTube and Facebook every week. We continue to record even though we are back to in-person worship now. We also share a message and activity for kids (RPC Kid's Zone) on Facebook every week. In addition, we post motivation from *Our Daily Bread* on Facebook every day for our adult audience.

Our church has always been very generous, taking care of those in need by participating in numerous charity events including monthly baskets of food for local families in need, and giving throughout the year to local organizations supporting a variety of causes such as Adopt-A-Family, Hand-In-Hand Pregnancy Center, and Pevely Rescue Mission.

RPC elected to go to a half-time pastor in 2014 and entered into an agreement with a local Lutheran church to share a pastor serving each church half-time. We continued this arrangement until the pastor retired in June 2021 and have been using the Presbytery pulpit supply to fill our pastoral needs since then.

Our experience sharing a pastor half-time with another church was very positive and we would be open to pursuing this arrangement again. We commit to working together with our new pastor to help grow our congregation, appeal to new and younger families, and refresh our worship service with new ideas. Please see the [financial section](#) of this report for specifics on money set aside for a pastor salary for the current year.

As we look at alternatives, we hope to secure leadership that can positively affect membership, activities, and the spiritual well-being of our congregation to ensure the viability of RPC for the future.

Demographic study

Rock Presbyterian Church is located in northern Jefferson County, Missouri.

As of the census in April 2020:

- The population of our county is 226,739.
- The area is overwhelming white — 96%.
- Children under 5 years of age make up 5.8% of the county's population.
- Persons under 18 years of age make up 22.9% of the county's population.
- Persons 65 years of age and older make up 15.5% of the county's population.
- Female persons make up 50.3% of the county's population.
- There are 84,444 households in the county (2015-2019).
- There are 2.63 persons per household in the county.
- The county has 3,905 total employer establishments (2019).
- Of those establishments, the total employment is 40,761 (2019).

Community study

As of the census in April 2020:

The characteristics of the population in Jefferson County, Missouri, includes the following:

- 89.1% of the county's population has a high school diploma.
- 20.4% of the county's population has a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 92% of households in the county have a computer.
- 85.4% of households in the county have broadband internet.
- The median household income in the county is \$65, 454.
- 8.4% of the county's population live in poverty.

[For additional information on Jefferson County, Missouri, please click here.](#)

Christian churches study

As of the census in April 2020:

There are 12 churches in or near Imperial, Missouri:

- 3 Baptist Churches
- 3 Catholic Churches
- 2 Lutheran Churches
- 1 United Church of Christ
- 1 Evangelical Church
- 1 non-denominational Church
- 1 Presbyterian Church

The closest Presbyterian Church is Grace Presbyterian Church which is 14 miles south of our location.

Congregational study

During the past four years (2018-2020, inclusive), our membership has stayed steady.

- For 2018, we ended the year with a total membership of 27. This included a gain of 2 members.
- For 2019, we ended the year with a total membership of 21. That was a loss of six members due to the annual review of the membership rolls.
- For the years of 2020 and 2021, there were no changes, so our total membership remained 21 for each year.
- For the current year of 2022, we have already gained 3 new members, but we recently lost a member due to death which reduces our membership to 23.

Starting in the early 1990s, when a pastor has departed, we have suffered a decline in membership.

There is currently a plan in progress to do a mass mailing to the local community inviting households to join us for worship. We also want to plan activities for the public to attend.

For a small church, we have always had a high percentage of members attend worship. Also, if someone is not in worship, someone normally knows why.

During the pandemic, we closed our building for in-person worship from March 2020, until March 2021. Members were anxious to return to the in-person worship service. During this period, we held weekly worship services via zoom, Facebook, and YouTube. Our members were faithful in attending these services. Communion was celebrated at each service with the members providing their own elements.

In addition to all the above, we had weekly live fellowship via Zoom so we could visit and see one another.

There were no Sunday School classes during this time. However, one of our members created a page on Facebook for children. This “class” created a message that connected with the sermon and included instructions for a craft/activity. In addition, we had Vacation Bible School (VBS) in 2020 along with another local church. Everything was done on-line. As with the children’s Sunday school, a member created the message along with activities. Prior to the start of VBS, packets were created for the children for each daily class. They were distributed to each child prior to the start of VBS.

Lastly, our members have worked hard to continue our church operations during the pandemic and the loss of our pastor.

Congregational input and feedback

In December of 2021, our RPCMST sent a questionnaire to all current church members. The over-arching theme of the responses was that we need to work together on our communication skills and have more compassion and kindness toward one another.

Following is a summary of the answers on the questionnaire.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

Over the years, there have been good days and bad days for our church, but most of our congregation said that time together with our members was the most favorite thing about our church, followed closely by the friendliness of our congregation, the tranquility during worship services and our willingness to support those in need. While we have had numerous events affect the church like the retirements of pastors and gaining a new school, the pandemic and watching our membership decline have had the most profound affect.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Currently, our church is undergoing a transformation and it is clear that improvements in communications need to occur. We are a small congregation, and we need to talk to one another instead of texting and emailing to involve everyone in the decision-making process and to stop miscommunications. While recording our worship service along with our social media presence is a great use of technology, we are behind in keeping our website updated. We hope these platforms become tools to attract new members in the future.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

God is calling us to continue worshiping together and is leading us in a new direction. The “rebirth” of our church can only happen if we work together and show more compassion and kindness toward one another. Working together with our new pastor, our hope is that we can grow our congregation, appeal to new and younger families, and refresh our worship service with new ideas. With patience, understanding, and love, our church can move forward in a positive direction.

Financial report

Considering the experiences of the last 2-3 years, we feel that Rock Presbyterian Church is on considerably solid ground financially. We can take pride in this accomplishment during troubled times.

The 2022 annual expense budget for RPC is \$68,000 and the income budget is \$46,000. The main reason for a \$22,000 deficit is due to a \$20,000 line item for a new pastor if we would be able to call one in 2022. There also is a line item of \$7,600.00 for pulpit supply for the entire year.

The finance committee agreed that there needed to be a line item for the Pastor Salary in the 2022 budget, which is \$20,000. This decision was made in case a pastor was called in 2022. This would be the minimum salary offered for a part-time pastor. The remaining monies from the pulpit supply could be added to the minimum offer. With the availability of an investment account (currently approximately \$120,000), it is very feasible that for a maximum salary offered, we would be able to increase the base salary to fit our needs.

With the addition of Kizer Academy, multiple grants, and the generosity of our congregation, we have been able to transfer additional funds into our Edward Jones Investment account. Every month we review the availability of funds for our regular expenses. At this time, if it is deemed appropriate, a transfer of monies from the general fund to the investment account will occur. This decision was made to increase the overall return from our investment account.

So far in 2022, \$10,000.00 has been added to the Edward Jones Investment account. These funds are readily available if we have a situation that requires extra funds for unknown expenses.

Mission statement

Because the over-arching theme of responses to our questionnaire was that we need to work together on our communication skills and have more compassion and kindness toward one another, we have adopted a new mission statement:

*Together we can learn, live, share,
and celebrate the Word of God.*

We feel this mission statement embodies our current situation by suggesting that while we are already doing some of these things well, there is also much room for improvement. And we will do this together as a congregation at Rock Presbyterian Church.

Conclusion

The RPCMST has worked diligently collecting, listening, and discerning the feedback from the congregation of Rock Presbyterian Church. We pray that the conclusions expressed in these findings will not only be used to guide the Pastor Nominating Committee in calling a new pastor, but also be used as a starting point to foster positive conversations throughout the church that will develop into a unified vision. Now is truly a time of opportunity for us to foster a culture that promotes a sense of belonging and strengthens the congregation's spiritual well-being, relationships, and community impact.