

# **SPECIAL ASSESSMENT**

**Hazelwood Christian Church  
Muncie, Indiana**

Indiana Region  
August 12, 2011

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Hope Partnership *for*  
Missional Transformation



**Special Assessment  
For  
Hazelwood Christian Church  
Muncie, Indiana**

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## I. WHY THIS ASSESSMENT?

The Apostle Paul, in his letters, makes clear God's call for Christians to live together in healthy congregations. We are to understand who we are and who our neighbor is. We are to develop faithful, effective and innovative ministry that shares the Gospel message—the good news of God's unconditional love and justice—with a hurting world.

While the message of God's love remains constant, ministry today doesn't look like First Century ministry. In fact, today's ministry doesn't look like ministry even a decade ago! Using the Gospel as the guide, healthy congregations continually assess and develop appropriate ministry for their changing context. **Sometimes, once-thriving congregations find themselves in declining health. They need help to discern God's unique call again; help to regain their vitality—or to help to direct their remaining assets into the ministry channels they determine to be most appropriate to their mission.**

In the fall of 2010, leaders from Hazelwood Christian Church began to realize that their current model for ministry was starting to lose its edge. The fact that the church has experienced declining resources and participation has led leaders to consider standing back and taking a hard look at their situation. As a result, they called their long-time partner, Church Extension to provide this report and a process for conversation.

**To renew their passion, struggling congregations may need a little help looking objectively at their situation.** A small book called, *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*, describes how organizations conspire to hide from the truth. They are afraid to (or don't want to) see realities that represent unwelcome change. They need someone who cares what happens to them, but who is far enough removed to offer a credible reality check on the landscape around them. Out of that need, this process was developed.

Disciples General Ministry, Church Extension—which has been facilitating capital funding for building projects for new and existing Disciples congregations since 1883—has a passion for helping sustain and bring new life to Disciples congregations. Starting in 2010, Church Extension has developed a partnership across the church with HELM (Higher Education and Leadership Ministries) and DHM (Disciples Home Missions) now called the Hope Partnership. This partnership is allowing congregations to view their ministry opportunities in new ways.

Together with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, we hope this assessment helps our partnership with your church in three ways. The first intent of this assessment is to help your congregation come to clarity about a hard decision you need to make in terms of the use of your assets/resources for mission. The second intent is to give the congregational leaders tools for defining a future story in mission that is true both to historic commitments and relevant for 21<sup>st</sup> century need. The third intent is to help the congregation begin to make the shift from an “attractional” model of ministry (where people “come to the church” as a place to get their needs met) to a “missional” model of

ministry where disciples are empowered to “go out from the church” to live as Christian people in the world. New Beginnings is an assessment tool designed to bring together your congregation with an assessment and reflection process to help your congregation be intentional about discerning God’s call for present and future mission.

### **WHERE DID THIS REPORT COME FROM?**

**Your congregation’s leaders and your regional or area minister worked closely with Rick Morse, a Vice-President from Church Extension, who wrote this assessment.**

The onsite New Beginnings Assessment was held on November 1, 2010 at the church. It included a complete tour of the facilities and property, as well as an hour-long meeting with the pastoral staff of the church to discuss finances and resources. The assessment visit also included a “windshield tour” of the community to confirm the demographic data.

That evening, an Appreciative Inquiry session was held with about 50 participants. These folks discussed their engagement with the church, their perceptions about congregational life today and their opinion about the congregation’s position on the Congregational Life-Cycle scale. The onsite visit amounted to about six hours of “face time” with the congregation.

The report was held up however while waiting for a roster of participants. This essential data was needed for the community review and gap analysis portion of the report. The staff was not able to produce the report due to demands on their time, an indicator for the need for this report, and a new model for ministry at Hazelwood. (This is not meant to be a criticism of the staff, but a statement regarding the realities the staff is working with at this time).

Additionally, data in this report came from congregational records and from the past 10 years of the congregation’s reports to the *Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Information collected includes demographic data about the participants in the church, their approximate tenure in the congregation, income and expense reports for the past three years and a current balance sheet. This information about your congregation is collected, sorted, and measured to give all of us a better idea of the factors that impact your congregation’s ministry in this time and place.

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

To be sure, this is NOT a “fix-it” manual. Church Extension does not work to “fix” situations, but allow congregations to engage in quality conversations about their future—**which lead to a decision. While Regional Staff and Church Extension are available to walk along side the congregation through this process, the congregation ultimately makes the decision about its future without interference.** And you do it in conversation with other congregations who face similar circumstances. YOU are the experts. Learning together some of the rewarding, but sometimes tough, lessons of change, your congregation, and your partner congregations find the answers to your own

problems within yourselves. The Assessment just holds up a light to make that God-given message a little easier to read.

**But your first step is to take a look at the congregation's current context and condition.** You will find in this report an analysis of your congregation now, and a number of options that seem most appropriate for the congregation moving forward.

**This process is ultimately designed to help the congregation have a healthy—and holy—conversation that engages all interested members in creating a vision for a healthy and vital future.**

*The Hope Partnership offers a variety of services including Leader Development, Ministry Planning, relocation planning, etc. We also work in partnership with Church Extension's building planning processes and capital fund-raising services as well as their investment and loan services. For more information, please call Rick Morse at 1-800-274-1883, or email at [RMorse@churchextension.org](mailto:RMorse@churchextension.org).*

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



Hazelwood Christian Church is at an intersection in its life. Like most congregations, after 60 years in a particular location, Hazelwood is at a point where it really needs to take a hard look at its current ministry realities, and reevaluate how it will proceed.

Muncie, and the immediate area around the church is nothing like the community was in 1951 when it relocated to its current site. The neighbors are very different, the buildings cost more to maintain, and the congregation has aged to a point where pastoral care requires more time than a pastor can effectively give.

The following report names the conditions surrounding Hazelwood Christian Church. It measures numerous issues facing the congregation, and provides demographic analysis of the current context for the congregation's consideration.

Three options are recommended for consideration: 1- Relocation towards the growing edge of the community, 2-Leasing the Mansion, and 3- Doing nothing.

Regardless of which of these three choices the congregation makes, there are additional considerations: 1-Revising the mission of the congregation from a membership oriented congregation, towards a missional church, 2-Shifting staff responsibilities of pastoral care so that the pastor can move from a "chaplaincy" model of serving, to that of a leader, and 3-Development of lay leadership in a multiplying fashion.

Included in the report are estimates of costs associated with these decisions. In addition are notes from the Appreciative Inquiry Session held in November of 2010.

## **III. CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY**

Hazelwood Christian Church was founded 1889. It is one of the oldest congregations in Muncie. It occupied two different sites prior to 1951 when it relocated to the growing edge of Muncie at that time at its current location. When the mansion (now known as the Fellowship House) came available, the church moved to the site, building the sanctuary.

At what some members consider the height of the ministry, Hazelwood boasted 835 members and likely had an attendance of around 400. This was when church was more at the center, and the large birth rate time of the baby-boom. The church was also located on the growing edge of the community at that time. Today, the church averages 175 in worship. While any congregation has no end of stories, achievements and legends to share, we pay particular interest to the last decade or so of the congregation's history.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Your congregational history includes lives, words, songs and achievements that defy measurement. But this report, you may already have noticed, dwells on data – numbers, numbers, and numbers! Why do we seem so interested in numbers? In part, we pay attention to numbers because they help us track changes over time; they show growth or decline in giving or attendance, along with other information that signals the trends of the last decade that seem to impact your congregation. Numbers are *not the only* measure of vitality. Yet numbers provide insight into the direction the congregation is heading.

We also track numbers because the size of a congregation determines the best approach to ministry in that context. Lyle Schaller, a leading church consultant, points out that size makes all the difference in the world in how a congregation operates. And if your congregation, for example, was once a large church that has since become a small church, this information may be critical to understanding the way forward... Most likely, your solutions today will not be accomplished the way they were in days of your former glory. Understanding this is half to battle in regaining your footing as you strive to be faithful to the congregation's call.

### **SMALL CHURCHES FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS**

**Small “Family-sized” churches** (60 members or fewer) tend to resemble extended families and thus emphasize fellowship, relationships, intimacy, belonging and member involvement. People matter more than performance, so high value is placed on volunteering, rather than on professional skills one may possess for the work that needs to be conducted. Churches with fewer members actually rely more heavily on lay volunteers. These small churches tend to be lay-led organizations, and thus they may be reluctant to hand over too much authority to the minister. The perception of the minister's job is to love the members – and that relationship trumps even mediocre preaching. In the estimation of small congregations, ministers need interpersonal skills more than academic credentials or leadership qualities. The small-church minister is but one leader among many—and, in many case, may not be the most influential.

### **BIGGER ISN'T BETTER—JUST DIFFERENT**

Congregations in the pastor-driven congregations, in the 61- to 130-member range tend to hand over more responsibility for care of the congregation to the pastor. The pastor brings proposals to the church board for decision. Most decisions involve the pastor in one way or another. Lay leaders are primarily those who are empowered by or taught by the pastor.

As these congregations creep into the 130-to-200-member range (program-size churches) expectations shift again. Those who attend program-size churches seek performance more than relationships. They want quality programs, well-organized activities and professional leaders. Prospective volunteers know that there are probably many other members who are better qualified for a particular task. They will be expected to do it very well. So, they are more hesitant to volunteer. The incentive structure of the large church discourages lay involvement. The senior minister of a large church needs administrative skills, and strengths in supervision and leadership of both large and small groups. Member care is a lower priority in the larger church. Care happens, but it is delegated to other staff members. The size and complexity of larger churches give great power to the senior minister, who, because of her or his position at the hub of church communication networks, may be the only person with adequate access to the activities, problems and concerns of the church as a whole.

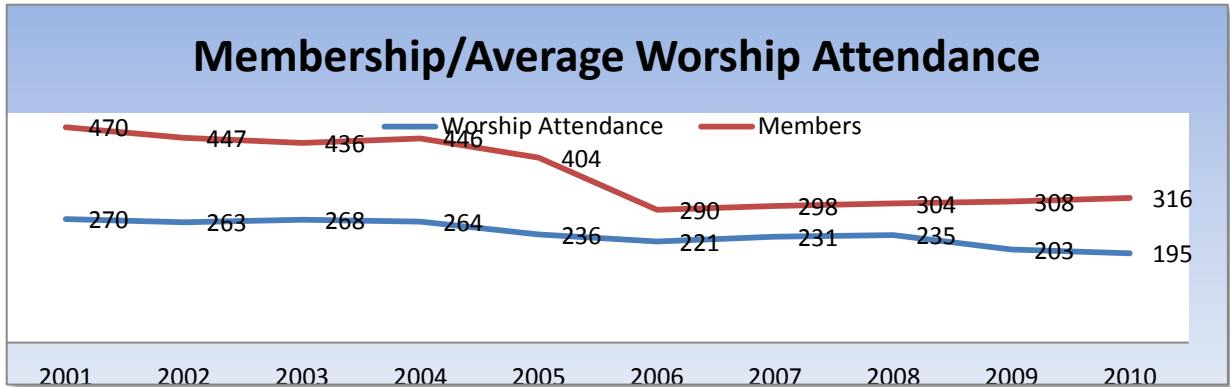
So, as we look at numbers, we are also looking at models of governance and leadership. A congregation that was once pretty sizable might be struggling to continue to ACT like a program-size or pastor-driven church, when in reality, the congregation is a family-size church. Is the congregation struggling to live into its current reality? Some of what we learn in our assessment can help you find solutions to problems associated with size.

First, with an Average Worship Attendance of 195, this congregation is a Program Sized church. To learn more about this topic, and your church's size, we recommend reading Alice Mann's books, *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*, and *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*. If you are experiencing utter frustration that what used to work DOESN'T work any more, you may be facing a size shift. But chances are, there are other dynamics at work in your congregation as well, including: changing demographics in your neighborhood, inability for differing generations to agree on the way mission and ministry should be done, and outdated modes of decision-making and organization. To understand the specific dynamics at work in your congregation, a number of other factors should be addressed.

### **10-YEAR AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE/MEMBERSHIP**

Let's look at Average Worship Attendance over the last 10 years. Trends in attendance offer other clues about the health of the congregation.

As demonstrated in the chart below, the congregation has experienced **DECLINE** in both Average Worship Attendance (AWA) and Membership over the past 10 years. Average Worship Attendance (AWA) is the most helpful measurement of member engagement in a congregation, so we pay special attention to this figure. This data is compiled from the past 10 years of your congregation's reports to the *Yearbook and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

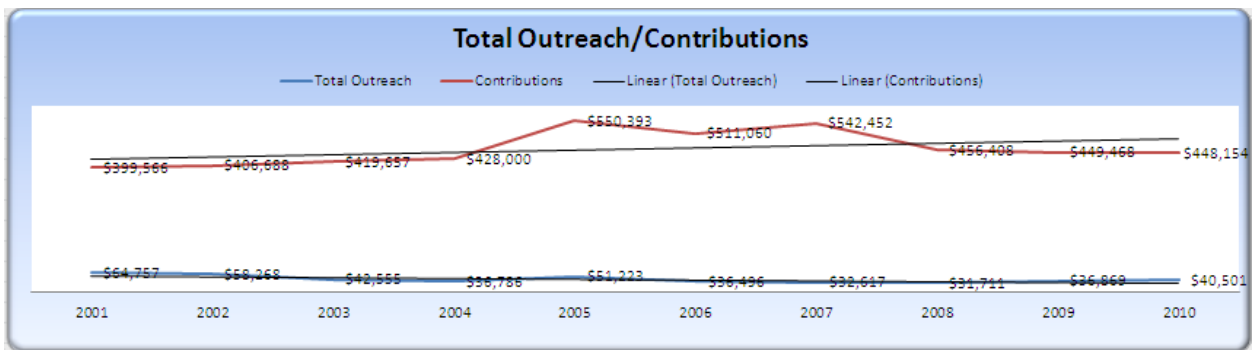


Your congregation's decline trends do not happen in a vacuum. It should be noted that the community in which the church serves has declined by 2.7 percent during this same period. The congregation's AWA declined by nearly 75 people or 27% during that same period. Given the current rate of decline, the church would have an AWA of 120 by 2020.

#### 10-YEAR GIVING

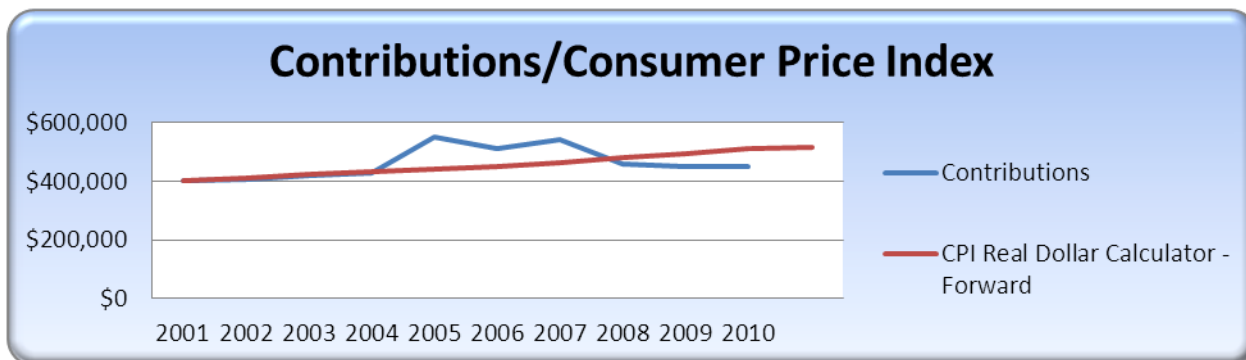
Congregational giving is also an indicator of member engagement. We pay attention to this number because as participants deepen their level of engagement with the church, their giving usually follows. Often times this indicator lags behind the Average Worship Attendance figures. That is, AWA may decline or grow at a faster rate than giving.

During the past 10 years, the congregation has reported fairly **SLIGHT GROWTH** in their General Fund giving. This is the total income received by the church.



Income figures alone do not tell the whole numbers story. It is important to measure the congregation's giving against the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to see if giving has kept pace with inflation over the past 10 years. Congregations can actually increase their giving, but still have fewer funds for ministry because of inflation.

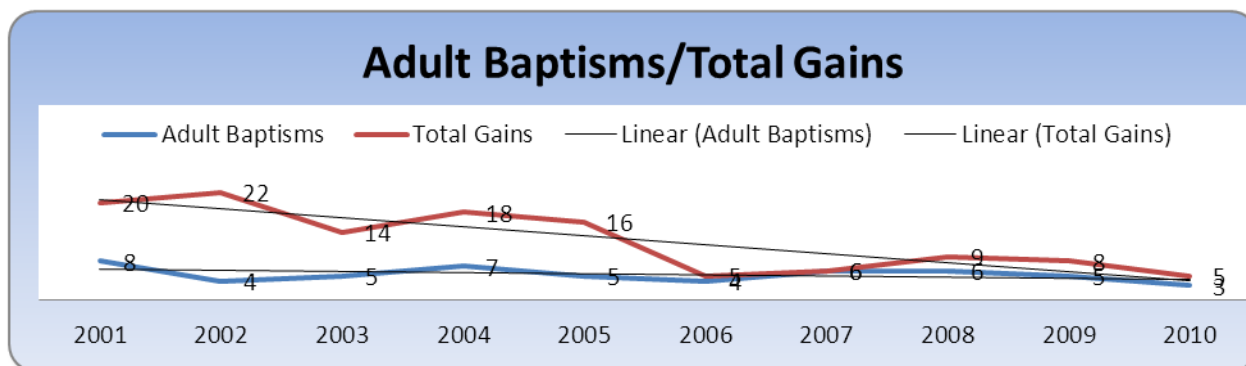
The chart below demonstrates that congregational giving **HAS NOT KEPT PACE with the CPI over the past 10 years**. This indicates declining engagement.



### BAPTISMS/ADDITIONS

The final measurement of engagement in the past 10 years is the number of additions that the church has received. It is important to note the relationship between baptisms and transfers. Comparing these two figures speaks to the congregations' passion for reaching unchurched persons, OR caring for those who already made their commitment to Christ in some other place. Healthy churches have strong numbers in both areas.

The chart below demonstrates that the congregation has a **DECLINING NUMBER OF BAPTISMS AND ADDITIONS**. This is usually the characteristic of a congregation in decline since it is neither introducing new participants to the faith, nor helping existing members mature in their faith. Total additions have fallen from 30 to just 10 per year on average.



When we consider all indicators related to the congregation's past 10 years there is little doubt that the congregation is in a declining situation. Without growth in the near future in any of these categories it is likely the congregation will not continue. Growth for this congregation will clearly require significant change.

#### IV.FACILITIES EVALUATION



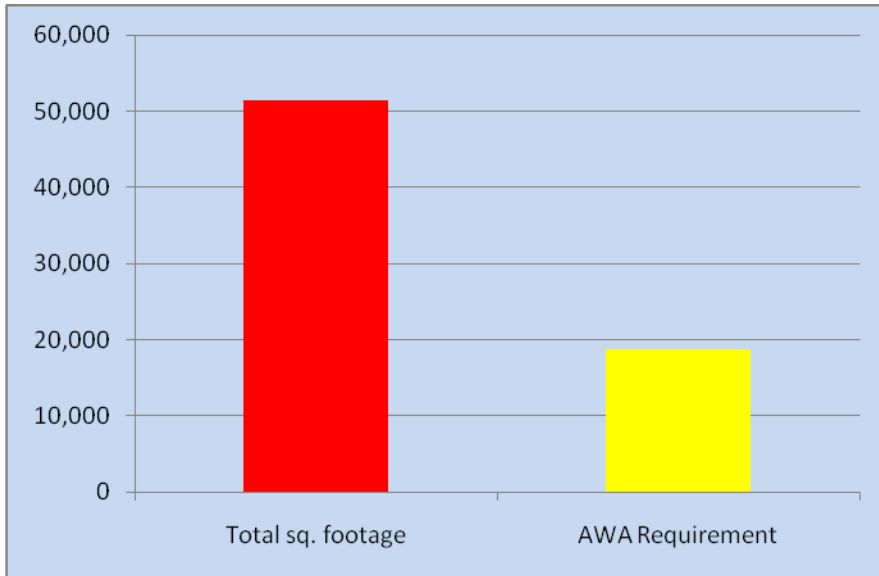
In consideration of the congregation's resources, it is important to evaluate the facilities to determine if they are of appropriate size for the current congregation. It is also important to consider whether there is a growing list of deferred maintenance issues or other features that may inhibit growth of the congregation.

Founded in 1868, the congregation moved to its current location in 1951 and built its Sanctuary in 1954. Initially, the church met in the Fellowship House, a former mansion built in 1912, and it continues to use this building for its administrative

space. In 1991, it later added an Education Wing and Rotunda to further expand its facilities. During the week, the congregation or other organizations use approximately 36.5% of the church facility. The major areas of use are the church's classrooms, offices, and Cartwright Hall.

Hazelwood Christian's facilities are contained in 3 buildings located on an 8.26-acre lot. It is estimated that the facilities are approximately 51,500 sq. feet in size. The property is insured for \$8,887,312.

Hazelwood Christian Church is approximately 51,500 square feet, which averages to be 218 square feet per Average Worship Attendee ( $51,500 / 235 = 218$  sq. ft.) Typically, a church with an Average Worship Attendance of 235 people needs approximately 18,800 sq. feet, which means that the church is using 36.5 % of its space. This percentage shows that the church has plenty of space for its current ministry, additional space for growth, and that it is paying extra costs to maintain and use its facility.



**Fellowship House:**



The fellowship house was built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with good construction standards. Despite expensive renovations, and energy efficiencies made by the congregation in the past few years, this 100 year old facility continues to show signs of its age. This facility is likely the most used building space by the congregation since it houses church offices, and is the site of mid-week meetings. It is also used by the community.

According to the Energy Audit completed by Church Extension a couple of years ago, this facility is likely the most expensive unit to operate. In 2008, the congregation put \$100,000 into this facility to make in more efficient, which is paying off in small ways.

## **Education Wing**

In 1991, the church added an education wing. This space is used for congregational meals, the pre-school, and the contemporary worship service. It is modern and efficient utilizing current construction standards.

Being adjacent to the sanctuary facility, this building is attractive and highly useful for the church's program.

It has a commercial grade kitchen and has modest capacity for church programs. (A smaller kitchen unit exists in the Fellowship House).



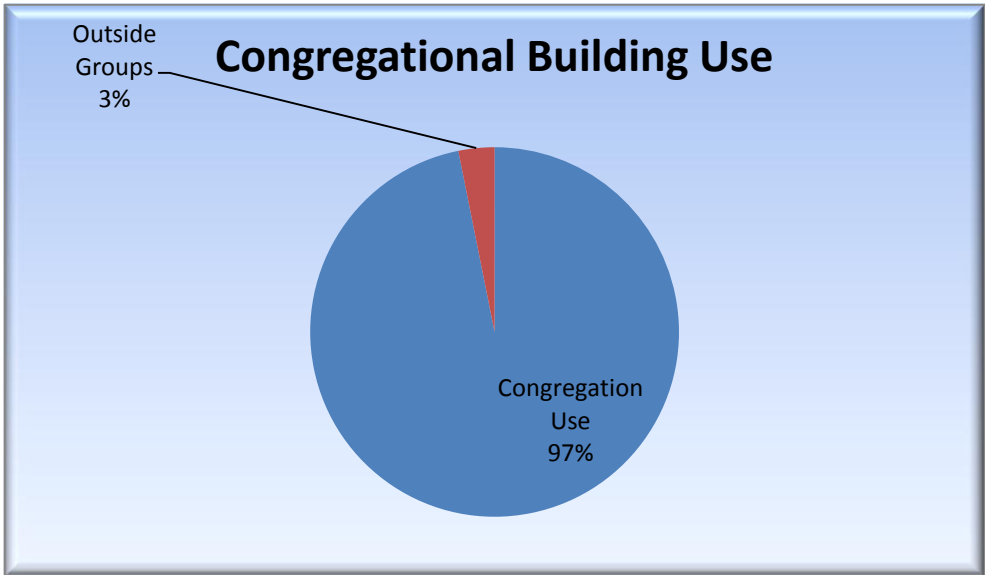
## **The Sanctuary Building**

The Sanctuary was built in 1951 when the church relocated to this current site. It was built in the style familiar to Disciples from that era with pews, pipe organ, and a traditional chancel. The sanctuary is utilized for one service per week, choir practice, and occasional weddings and funerals. The heating unit was recently replaced by a GFA furnace instead of the prior boiler system.

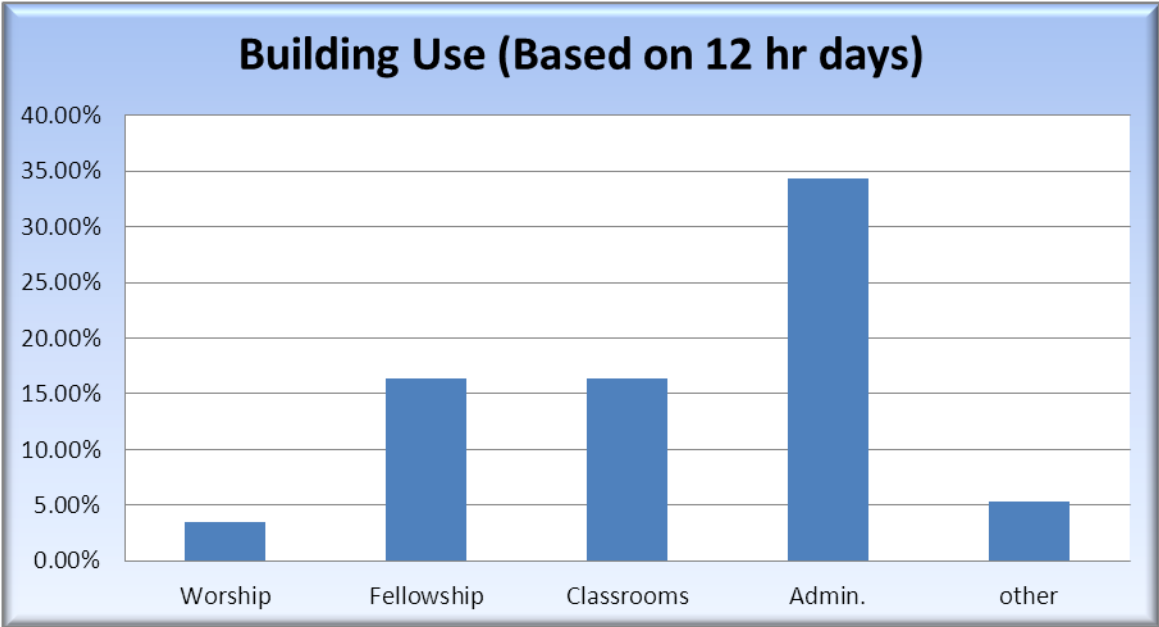
All three buildings are in “good” condition, but the congregation has been forced to spend a lot of its resources on maintenance and capital improvements. (This will be discussed in the financial capacity section in some detail).

### **How the Facilities are Used:**

The church building is a valuable resource for both the congregation and the community. A good indicator of a congregation's willingness to engage a community is by looking at how the church uses this resource. Based on total building use, the graph below demonstrates the percentage of total usage by outside groups. These groups are open to the community and often times led by people other than church participants.



Congregants are often amazed at how little a building gets used. We divided your facility into “kinds” of space. The sanctuary is considered “worship” space, the fellowship hall and narthex “fellowship” space, etc. Using your church calendar, we have calculated the hours each kind of space is used and calculated the percentage of time it is utilized. This percentage is based on the space being available just 12 hours a day, 7 days a week.



A quick look at these charts demonstrates a building that is both underutilized by the congregation and the community. The cost associated with maintaining and operating

this resource raises a question for the congregation to consider, namely “is this the wisest stewardship of the resources that have been given to us by God?”

## V. THE COMMUNITY

Muncie was first settled in the 1770's by the Delaware Indians who had been displaced from their tribal lands on the east coast. They were moved further west in 1818 and the area was opened to white settlers. It was once considered to be a good location for the state capital. The population grew, and by 1865 it became an incorporated city.

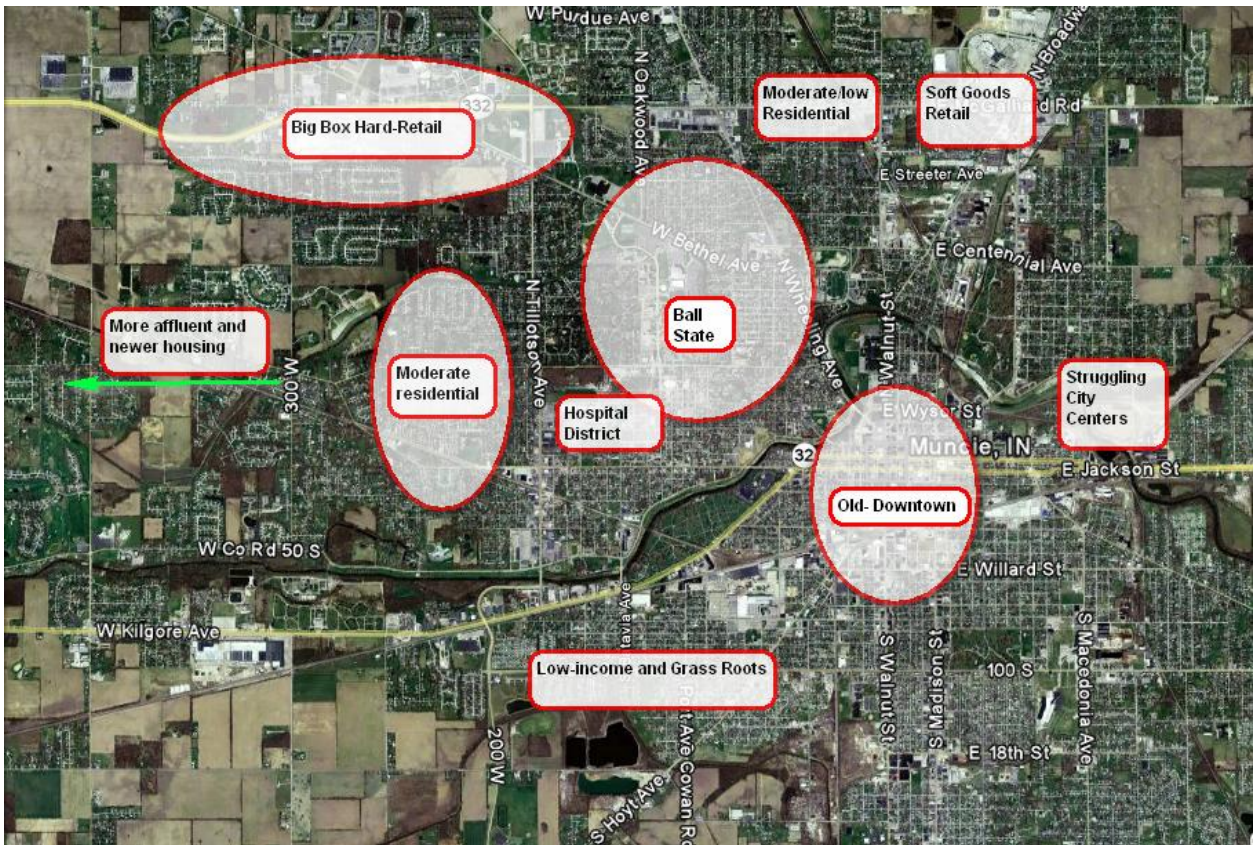
Throughout its history, it has always been distinguished sociologically as a "Middletown", a term sociologist used for middle America during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Surprisingly, the sociology of Muncie has been studied for more than a century.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Muncie developed early around manufacturing with the reliance of the area's rich natural gas resources. In 1888 the Ball glass company moved to Muncie. It eventually became the home to Indiana Steel and Wire (the church occupies the home of its founder today), Delco, and General Motors.

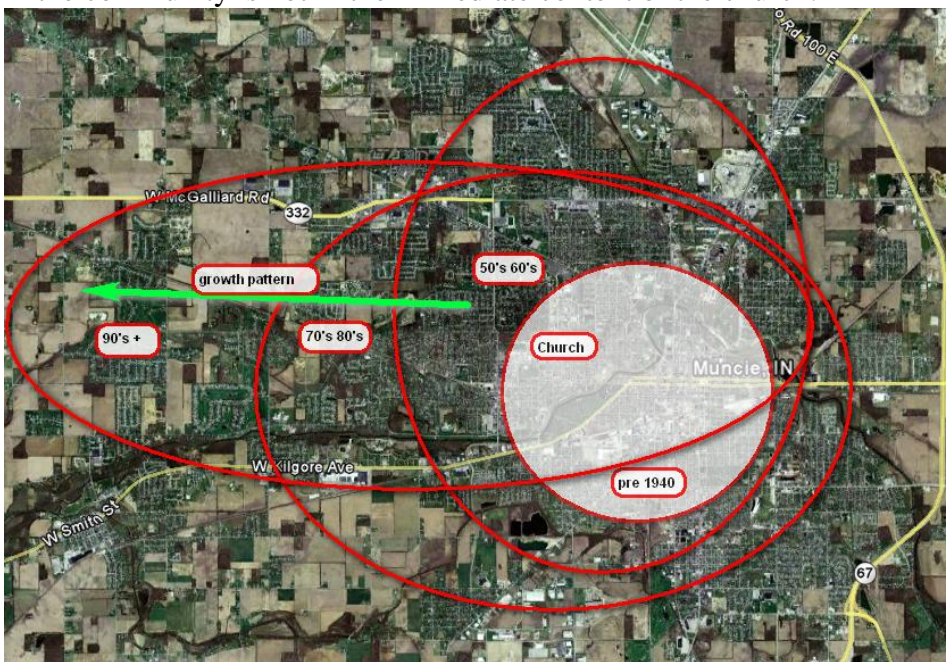
The economy relied heavily on manufacturing, and today is in transition from an economy based on manufacturing to the digital age. Today, the local economy is struggling with the exception of jobs related to Ball State University (which is expanding) and phone centers (since there is a cheap labor market in the area). There are other skilled jobs coming on the immediate horizon which have not fully materialized at the writing of this report.

Hazelwood Christian Church has experienced the ups and downs of Muncie's history. As mentioned earlier, the church was once located in the downtown area, and relocated to its site in the 1950's when the college area was a fairly new suburb. It is now located in an area best described sociologically a "J04" or College Town Community. The vast majority of its immediate neighbors are related to Ball State, mostly as students. (more about this later in this section).

Muncie has developed in a pattern similar with other rust-belt cities. First formed along the White River, it has spread from its center towards I-69, its primary link to larger cities. A drive through the community can best be described by the map below:

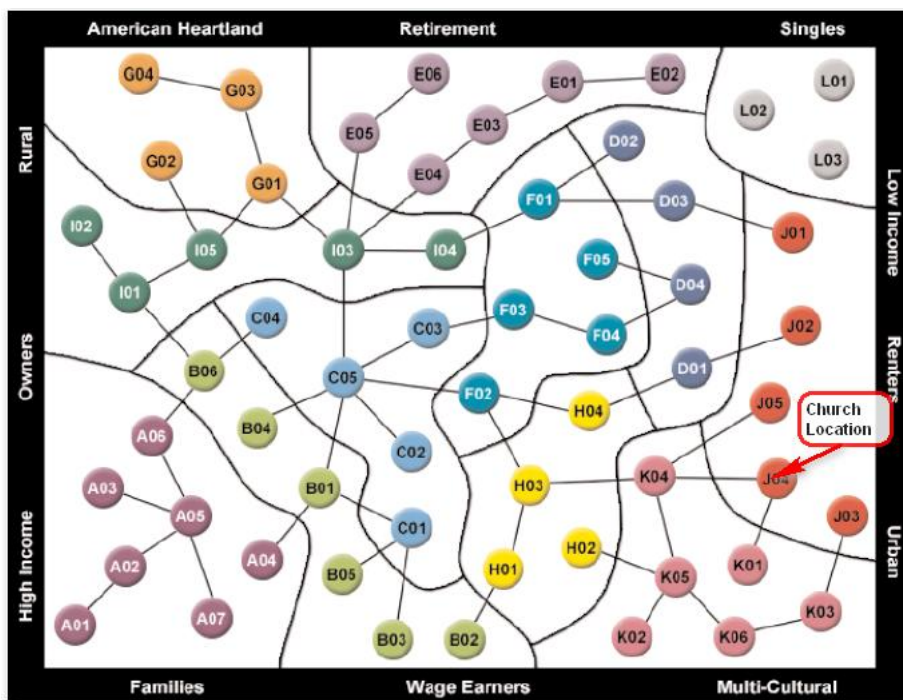


Driving the community also demonstrates a generalized growth pattern towards the west as indicated on the image below. By dating housing, one can see that the current growth in the community is not in the immediate context of the church.



In addition to seeing geographic features, we can also identify key subcultures in the community. It is important to understand people groups or subcultures because it is widely confirmed that the Christian faith travels easiest along existing relational ties, among people who share a similar subculture. Therefore, a congregation needs to understand the particularities of the people group(s) nearest the church and adapt its ministries for that particular people group OR relocate to another part of town. Let's examine a few more key people groups in this area.

“Mosaic” profiles are lifestyle groupings of people who share similar behaviors, social characteristics, attitudes and values. Designed by Experian (a very large credit service and data-collection company), there are 60 distinct Mosaic groups (or segments of the population) in the U.S. These groupings are based on multiple socio-economic and life-stage factors.



The Mosaic tree demonstrates the interconnectedness of these distinct groups. You will note, that the tree works like a continuum with a rural flavor in the upper left hand corner, and more urban on the lower right. Families and high income are in the lower left corner, while singles and lower income is represented on the upper right.

Each Mosaic group is identified with a letter and number (e.g. A07 is “New Suburban Families” while K04 is “Urban Diversity”). Some groups have natural affinity with others because of similar characteristics, while others mix like oil and water. The chart below shows the relative closeness or distance between the 60 different lifestyle segments. As you can see from the chart below, the “A” groups (A01-A07) consist of higher-income families, while the “L” groups (L01-L03) are low-income and mostly single. The short lines connecting the colored dots show the easiest lines of connection.



Top 15 Mosaic Types	2010		Brief Mosaic Descriptions	IN	2010	Comp Index
D03: Lower-income essentials	5,336	15.8%	Lower-income empty-nester couples/aging seniors, remote, aging houses.	12,038	0.5%	3239
J04: College Town Communities	4,627	13.7%	Young, single, college educated and students, around college communities.	20,085	0.8%	1083
F05: Grass-roots Living	3,481	10.3%	Less educated, racially diverse, middle-aged rural Midwest and South.	87,845	2.7%	375
D04: Small-city Endeavors	2,983	8.8%	Lower income, young, old, singles, families, working-class towns	142,912	5.8%	153
F01: Steadfast Conservatives	2,621	7.8%	High school educated mature singles/couples, middle-class blue-collar	162,208	6.6%	118
C04: Family Convenience	1,981	5.8%	Families, remote towns/military bases, dual-income, blue-collar jobs.	174,901	7.1%	82
E04: Suburban Advantage	1,690	5.0%	Empty-nesters, retirees, middle-class, along the both coasts.	13,696	0.6%	902
J03: Struggling City Centers	1,613	4.8%	Young, single (parent) minority renters, very low-income Southern cities.	40,201	1.6%	293
A06: Small-town Success	1,203	3.6%	White-collar, educated, middle-aged working couples, the nation's beltways	98,596	4.0%	89
H03: Stable Careers	1,037	3.1%	Young, ethnically diverse singles, apartments, big-city metros.	20,725	0.8%	366
K05: New Generation Activists	1,017	3.0%	Less educated, young, low income minorities, in the nation's inner cities.	64,707	2.6%	115
B06: Successful Suburbia	956	2.8%	Middle-age, couples with children upscale, far from hustle of city living.	138,678	5.6%	50
F03: Southern Blues	926	2.7%	Racially mixed, young, lower-middle-class singles/couples, Southern	103,399	4.2%	65
H01: Young Cosmopolitans	687	2.0%	Young, single, college educated, upper-middle-class, professionals.	78,998	3.2%	64
F02: Moderate Conventionalists	681	2.0%	Mobile, middle-class singles/couples, modest homes, second-tier cities.	155,617	6.3%	32
Remaining HH	2,998	8.9%		1,176,702	47.6%	19
Totals:	33,817	100%		2,471,318	100%	

## D03: LOWER-INCOME ESSENTIALS

### *Lower-income empty-nesting couples and aging seniors, living in out of the way towns in aging houses and mobile homes*

#### **Demographics**

Lower-income Essentials is dominated by aging seniors and empty nesting couples of modest means. Although small in absolute numbers, the Native American population here is three times the national average. Concentrated in out-of-the-way towns in the Prairies, residents make do with humble lifestyles. The educational levels are often low, with one in five residents never completing high school—about 40 percent above the U.S. average. Most workers earn low wages at blue-collar or service industry jobs in manufacturing, retail and health care. With these lower echelon positions, residents live in aging houses and mobile homes valued at well below the national average.

#### **Lifestyles**

The demographics of Lower-income Essentials combine to create less-than-luxurious lifestyles. Households pursue outdoor activities like fishing, hunting and gardening. They're active in community affairs, belonging to church groups, veterans clubs and local government associations at high rates. Their isolated towns offer relatively few entertainment options, and most spend their leisure time at home, watching TV or listening to music. Their idea of a night out could consist of playing bingo, a meeting at the American Legion or socializing with family and friends. Residents describe themselves as fashion conscious, but their low incomes limit their tastes to what's available at discount chains like Wal-Mart, K-Mart and Big Lots. Their taste in electronics is similarly driven by their budget, and is reflected in their low rates for buying the latest consumer electronics. Their autos are mostly pick-up trucks and mid-sized sedans, taking out car loans to buy used vehicles.

Here is a closer view of the area immediately around the church facility. For more complete descriptions of the people groups (Mosaic codes), visit the MissionInsite website and download a PDF copy of the MOSAIC Description Guide. This can be found at: <http://www.missioninsite.com/local-churches-resources.shtml>

### ***Young, single and college educated households and students living in and around college-oriented communities***

#### ***Demographics***

Students are the center of community life in College Town Communities. About one in nine residents lives in a dormitory. In this cluster of towns dominated by college campuses—places like Manhattan, KS (Kansas State), Charlottesville, VA. (University of Virginia) and Boone, NC (Caldwell State)—residents are primarily young, single and college educated. Because of their youth, many of these recent graduates still report entry-level jobs and low-end incomes that are less than half the national average. The highest concentration of workers is employed in education but retailing and food services also account for a major portion of the job base. With housing prices higher than most recent grads can afford, most households live in low- and high-rise apartments.

#### ***Lifestyles***

The young and unattached members of College Town Communities lead footloose lifestyles. They like to attend the latest movies, plays, concerts and museum exhibitions. Many are body-conscious individuals who pursue a variety of recreational activities, including biking, yoga, swimming and weight lifting. They have high rates for traveling, visiting cities in the U.S. and abroad. Self-described liberals and early adopters, they like to be the first among their friends to buy the latest laptops, MP3 players and wireless email devices. They seek out the latest fashions, though for these price-sensitive shoppers it may mean looking for sales at the Gap, Banana Republic and J. Crew. Perpetually on the go, these consumers favor groceries made for grazing—bagels, yogurt, pizza and pretzels. They like their beer the way they prefer their cars—imported, and preferably sports cars.

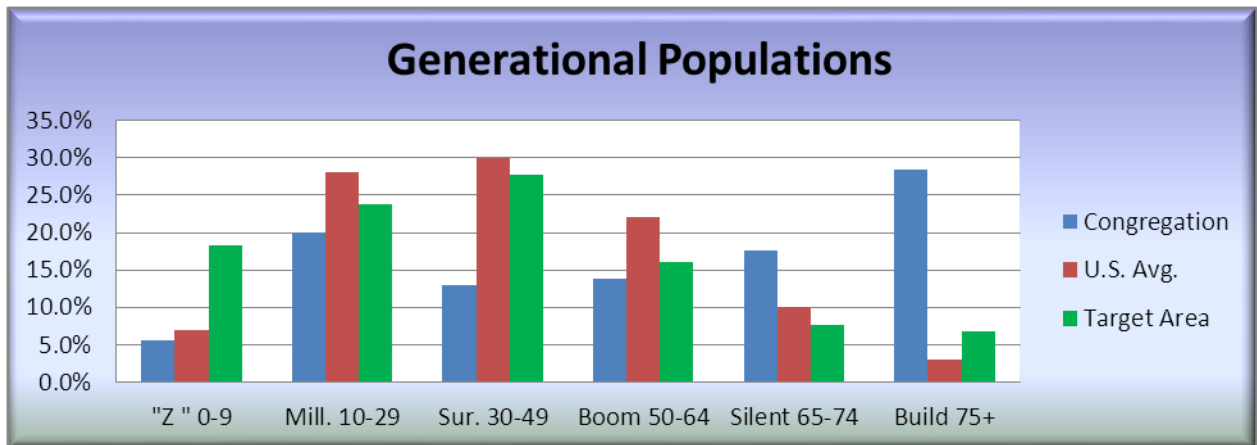
Questions to consider when observing this data include:

- What do these largest Mosaic groups have in common with the people of our congregation?
- What may be some gaps (or under-represented groups) between our church and our immediate community?
- Looking at the description of the largest one or two Mosaic groups in our community, what ministry needs are likely to be present among these people? What style of worship would they most likely be drawn to? What types of community groups are already effectively reaching out to these people?

## VI. THE CONGREGATION

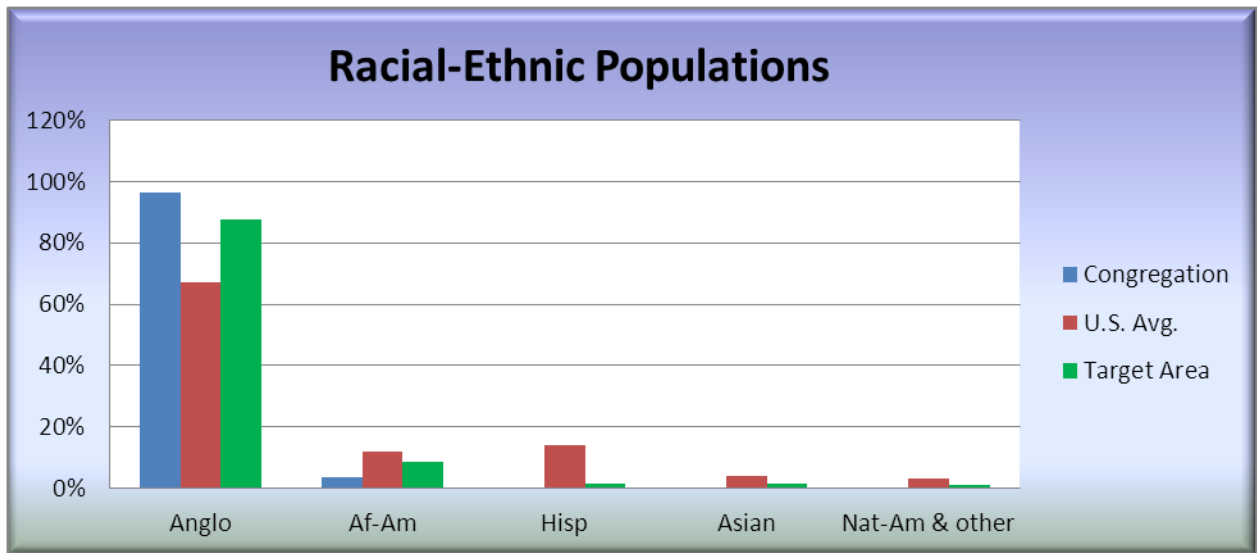
Gap analysis is a way of looking at the congregation in direct relationship with the community in which it serves. It is a way of clarifying where you are, what the needs are in that community and what opportunities for vital ministry remain as you engage that community. In this section, we compare the congregation's profile with the community profile in the previous section. We will look at where participants live in relationship to the church building. These figures help us determine the "match" you have with the community around you. Do members live where the congregation is located? If not, how does this faith community stay in touch with the needs of the neighborhood? In some cases, congregations exist in an entirely different location in the city from where their members' homes are concentrated. They have continued to decline in membership as they have attempted to "commute" into worship and serve a neighborhood from which they have grown apart.

Hazelwood Christian provided profile information of each participant in its congregation, which we compared with U.S. Census data from a church demographic service partner.



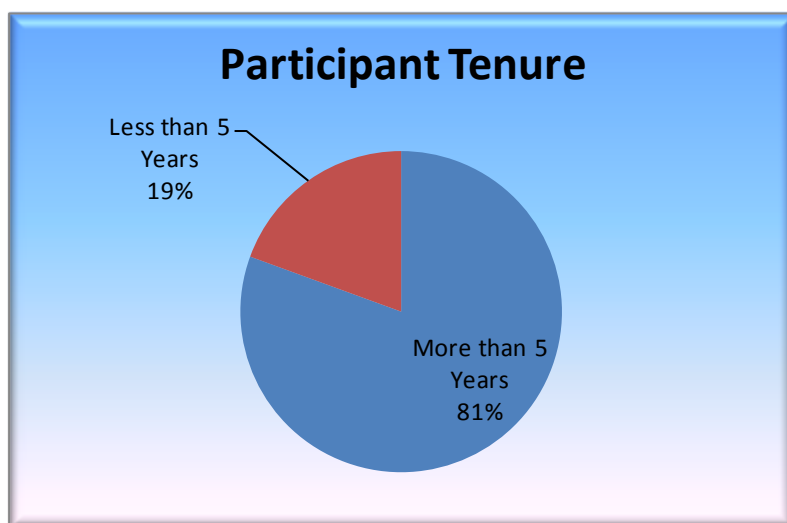
The first graph demonstrates the ages of participants in the congregation with the ages of those who live in the community. The red bars show the percentage of participants in the congregation in each category. The yellow bar is how that compares with the total population of the United States, and the green bar is the breakdown compared to the community. The data related to the yellow and green bar comes from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The chart shows that 60% of the congregation is of the Boomer generation or higher, while only 30.4% of the wider community is in that category. (Even though this is a college community, average communities will have only 35% of the general population in the Boomer+ category) This single measurement is very important to the future of the congregation. Vital congregations will normally experience a 50-50 split between the Boomer + generations and the younger groups.



The chart above demonstrates the Racial/Ethnic Gaps of the congregation related to the community in which it is a part. This data also comes from the U.S. Census. *NOTE: It may severely undercount the Hispanic population in your area.*

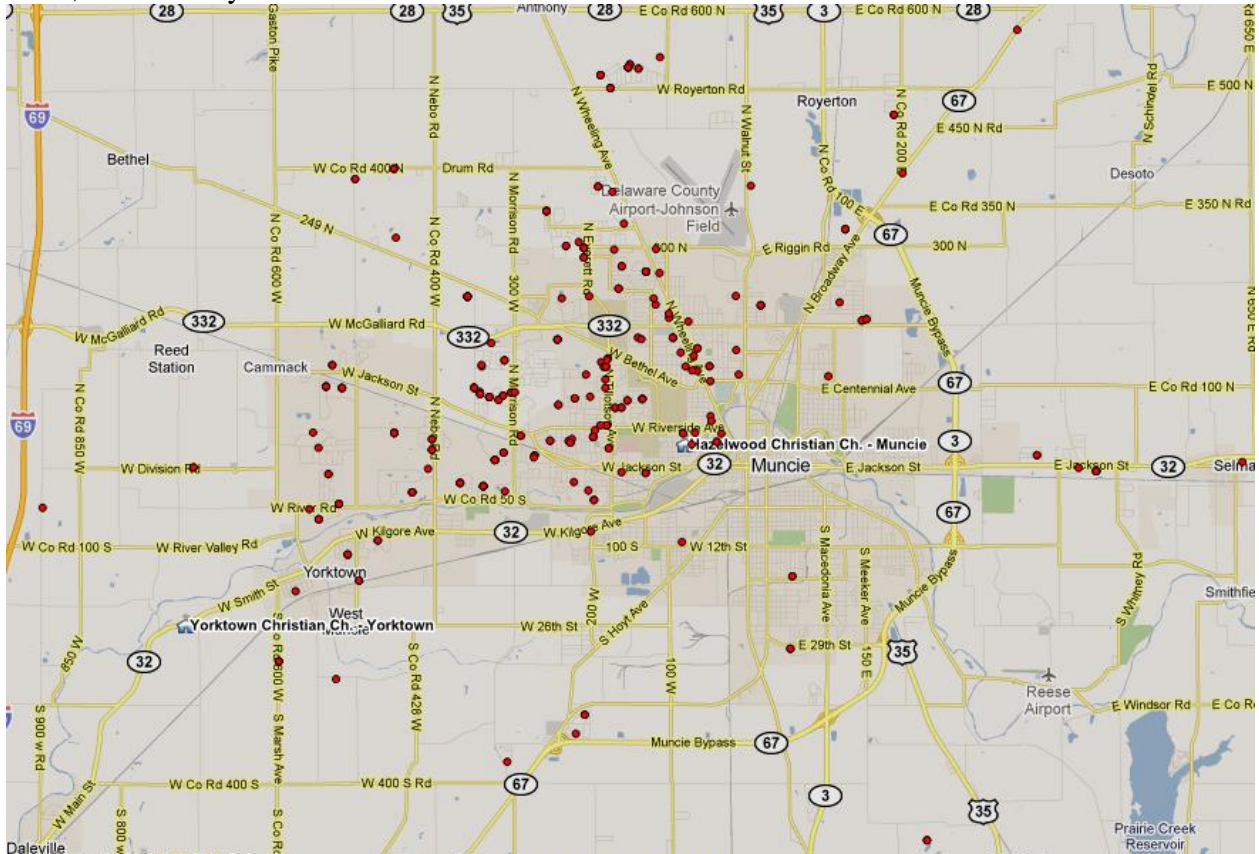
Congregations are still highly segregated on Sunday mornings, which means that gaps are likely to appear in this arena. However, if the congregation is in a changing area, and has declining members of their racial/ethnic group represented in the congregation, it is an indicator of a significant gap. For example, if you are an Anglo congregation in a community that is 65 percent African American, the congregation may have a significant gap that it should consider in the future (especially if density numbers are low).



Another important indicator of congregational life is the tenure of its participants. While it is a good sign of stability to have long-term members, it is also important to the congregation to have new participants. New participants bring innovations, energy and a

new perspective to the church. And new members help you measure the effectiveness of your efforts to reach beyond your doorsteps into your community with the Good News.

Healthy congregations usually demonstrate a 50-50 split with participants who have been in the church five years or fewer, with those who have been there more than five years. A congregation with too many “old timers” is not likely to be very receptive to new ideas, or creativity.



### Congregant Distance to Church

Distance to Church	Count	Count %
> 1 Mile to 3 Miles	145	54.5%
> 3 Mile to 5 Miles	92	34.6%
< 1 Mile	27	10.2%
> 5 Mile to 10 Miles	1	0.4%
> 10 Miles	1	0.4%
Totals:	266	100%

We have also explored the relationship of participants with the location of the church building. A pin-map has located the home of each participant. Only 10% of the congregation lives within a mile of the church. 89% of the congregation drives between 1-5 miles to church.

A congregation that has a good relationship with its community will normally display about half of its families within that seven-minute circle. If no one in the church lives within the circle, the congregation has a severe gap in relating to the community.

The final area of analysis is a congregant extract of those who participate in the church. Based on addresses we are able to extract the socio-economic subgroups that mostly

attend Hazelwood. The following table demonstrates the number of households in each of the 60 socio-economic groups. Nearly half of the congregation is represented in four of the 60 groups. This means that the church does a good job in attracting and serving these four sub-groups.

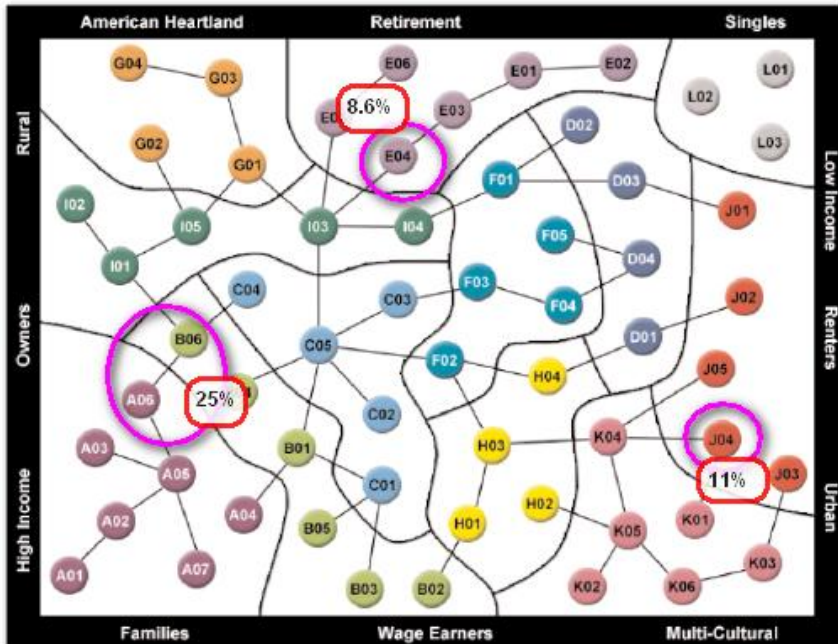
The top four groups are:

- B06 Successful Suburbia
- A06 Small Town Success
- J04 College Town Community
- E04 Suburban Advantage

**Congregant Mosaic Profile**

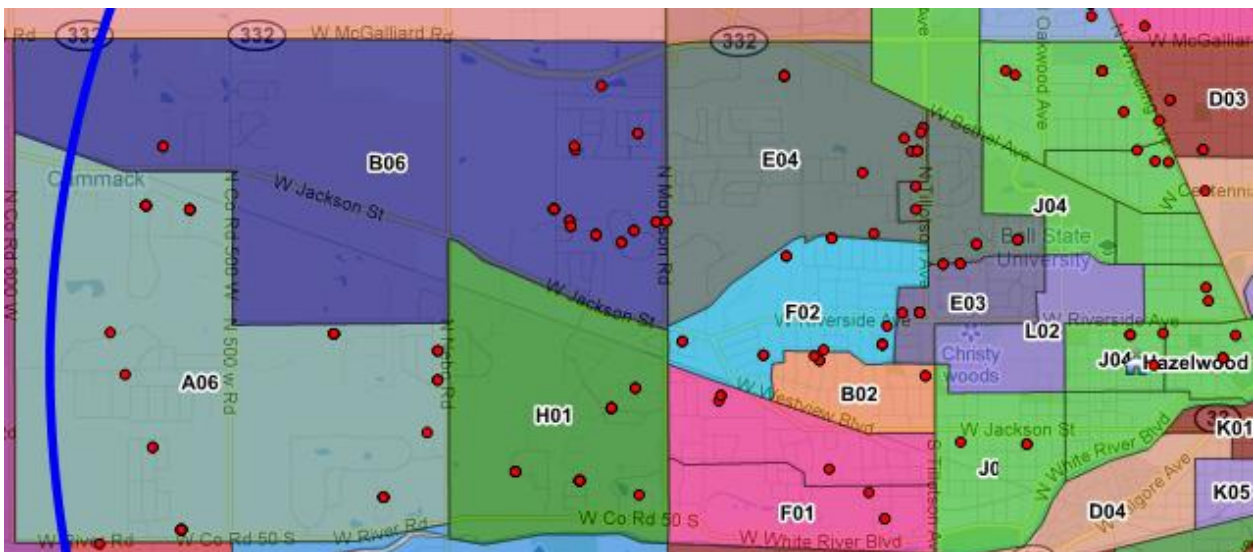
Code	Congregant Household Profile	Congregant Household Profile %	Study Area %	Index
B06 SUCCESSFUL SUBURBIA	19	13.70	3.30	415
F02 MODERATE CONVENTIONALISTS	8	5.80	2	290
B03 URBAN COMMUTER FAMILIES	7	5	1.90	263
B02 AFFLUENT URBAN PROFESSIONALS	3	2.20	1	220
A06 SMALL-TOWN SUCCESS	16	11.50	5.50	209
E03 PROFESSIONAL URBANITES	4	2.90	1.40	207
E04 SUBURBAN ADVANTAGE	12	8.60	4.60	187
H01 YOUNG COSMOPOLITANS	5	3.60	2	180
I03 COMFY COUNTRY LIVING	4	2.90	1.80	161
B04 SOLID SUBURBAN LIFE	3	2.20	1.60	138
C04 FAMILY CONVENIENCE	9	6.50	5.70	114
I01 INDUSTRIOUS COUNTRY LIVING	1	0.70	0.70	100
F01 STEADFAST CONSERVATIVES	9	6.50	6.70	97
J04 COLLEGE TOWN COMMUNITIES	16	11.50	13.30	86
H03 STABLE CAREERS	3	2.20	3.10	71
F03 SOUTHERN BLUES	2	1.40	2.90	48
D03 LOWER-INCOME ESSENTIALS	8	5.80	14.90	39
F05 GRASS-ROOTS LIVING	5	3.60	9.80	37
D04 SMALL-CITY ENDEAVORS	4	2.90	8.50	34
J03 STRUGGLING CITY CENTERS	1	0.70	4.70	15

To discover how these groups interrelate, it is important to view them on the Mosaic Tree. This diagram will show the sweet spot of Hazelwood Christian Church.



This chart shows that the church has a disproportionate success rate with the A06/B06 population. These are two demographics by which Disciple churches normally find their niche among working families. A large portion of the E04 group is represented by retired individuals. The J04 group (which is consistent with the neighborhood of the church) is represented by those who live around the college campus.

While no church would ever exclude anyone (I hope), this extract gives an indication of the parts of Muncie where Hazelwood would have its most success (primarily west of its current location).



## VII. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Congregational finances are fairly complicated because each congregation tracks its income and expenses very differently. Congregations tend to have a lot of “restricted” funds, which can only be used for specific purposes, and which may or may not enhance the ministry of the congregation. In this review we have done our best to evaluate the financial strength of the congregation based on the norms we have observed from many congregations.

Our first area of review is to look at the congregation’s income sources. It is important to see where the income for supporting the congregation’s ministry comes from, and how much the church relies on outside sources of income.

Hazelwood’s income for the church comes primarily in the form of offerings. 98% of the church’s income is the result of the Sunday morning offerings and fundraisers. This offering income is about \$435,000 a year, and supports the staff, buildings and programs of the church.

***Please note:** The operations for the pre-school are kept separate from this report. When looking at income and expenses, we are accounting only for Church operations.*

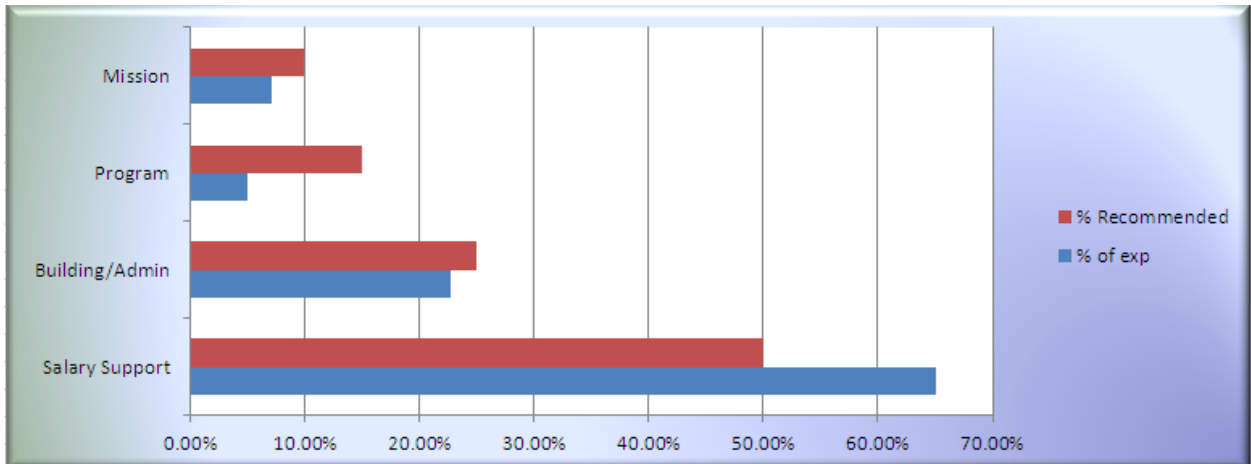
When we consider the expenses of the congregation, we group expenses in four main categories; Salary Support, Building and Administration, Program Expenses, and Mission Giving.

- A. Salary Support** includes salaries of all church staff and benefits associated with employing them. Such benefits would include social security offsets, health insurance, pension etc. It does not include costs such as auto expense or office reimbursements. Most congregations will expend about 50 percent of their income on salary support. Experience has shown that congregations that exceed 50 percent in this category are rarely over paying their pastor. In fact, most New Beginnings congregations fall short of average salaries for their region. (The Pension Fund of the Christian Church offers a free brochure entitled “What is a Fair Salary” at your request should the congregation wish to explore this topic in detail.) The salary amount is not too high but the percentage of the budget allotted to salaries is too high, short-changing mission, outreach and program.
  
- B. Building and Administration** costs are those associated with running the church office and the building. Typical costs include insurance, utility bills, maintenance and yard upkeep. A typical congregation will support building and administration costs with 25 percent of their income. Congregations that are not “right-sized” find themselves paying more for facilities, usually at the expense of their program.

**C. Program Expenses** are costs associated with running a program. This would include faith development, evangelism, and worship materials, choir music and supplies, advertising, and other resources and supplies that enable the program to operate. This is usually about 15 percent of a church's budget. Since this is the place where most congregations can control spending they will usually decrease their spending in this category first.

**D. Mission Giving** is giving that the congregation has contributed to both Disciples mission causes as well as local mission causes. Mission giving trends are about 10 percent of a vital congregation's budget as a starting point. Congregations will often reduce their mission spending after depleting their program spending. Many Disciples congregations, in past decades, contributed 30-50 percent of their income to mission giving.

Current Operating Budget		% of exp	% Recommended
Salary Support	\$283,553	65.05%	50.0%
Building/Admin	\$99,265	22.77%	25.0%
Program	\$22,107	5.07%	15.0%
Mission	\$30,949	7.10%	10.0%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$435,874</b>		



As you can note, salary support is much higher than the recommended levels by 15%. Currently, Hazelwood employs 17 people either in a full or part-time capacity. This doesn't necessarily mean that Hazelwood needs to reduce staff but represents a deeper conversation regarding the use of volunteers in the church and the need for leader development. It also represents a church with very large facilities, some of which are in need of constant repair, and the burden of keeping facilities in workable condition.

In addition to the sources of income, the congregation also has some investments plus the estimated value of the property. This is outlined in the table below:

### *ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS*

The congregation also has a loan with Church Extension with an outstanding balance of \$84,447. It is current with this loan.

### **FINANCIAL CAPACITY**

In light of the financial information above, this congregation has **ABUNDANT FINANCIAL CAPACITY** for ministry. That is to say the income stream would allow the congregation to be more creative in its delivery of ministry to the community. Congregations with this type of financial picture can afford to look at new ways of outreach that most congregations cannot afford to consider.

**However** the congregation has **INADEQUATE FINANCIAL CAPACITY** to fund staff and programs in the manner it has done in the past. Hazelwood has recently crossed the line from being a “program” style church to the high end of “Pastoral” styled congregation. The congregation will want to review its financial model for how it provides program and staff.

## VIII. CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

A final area of inquiry on this report is to measure how current participants engage in the life of their congregation. This begins to ask the question about what kind of church we have.

Through interviews and a review of the church calendar, the consultant is able to measure the kinds of engagement people have with the church in four categories:

1. **Direct Spiritual Development:** These are activities in which the person involved in seeking direct growth in their spiritual life. It would include prayer groups, Bible Studies, Sunday school classes, or basically anything where more than 50% of the groups experience has a “spiritual growth” activity.
2. **Relational Development:** These are activities that enable people in the congregation to deepen their relationship with each other. While these groups have devotions and prayers, if more than 50% of the activity is related towards relationship building it falls in this category.
3. **Direct Mission Delivery:** These are activities of service to the community. It would include developing a community garden, organizing a mission trip, or a congregationally run food bank in the church.
4. **Decision Making:** These are committee meetings, and administrative groups that plan.

As you can see, these are all congregationally run activities, and do not count the efforts of outside groups that utilize the facility. This is a measurement of the kinds of activities, and the numbers of people engaged in them. This is measured by the following formula: (The number of times per year this group meets X Length of time X number of people involved.) Not included in this formula is Sunday morning worship or preschool participation.



## IX. IX. MINISTRY REVIEW AND OPTIONS FOR YOUR NEW BEGINNING

Let's review the analysis of the congregation at this point:

- *History and 10-year indicators: Indicators demonstrate declining worship attendance, slight increase in income (but below CPI), and declining numbers of additions over the past 10 years. Only 19% of the congregation has begun participating in the church during the last 5 years.*
- *Recap of facilities evaluation: Facilities cost \$100,000 a year to maintain or 23% of congregational income. The facilities are almost twice as large as needed for a congregation of this size.*
- *Recap of congregational gaps: The congregation is much older than the Muncie average with 60% of the participants over 50 years of age (compared to only 30% of Muncie). It demonstrates success with several specific socio-economic groups.*
- *Recap of financial review: The congregation has adequate financial resources, but needs to consider employing a different economic model for operations.*
- *Program Output: The church has a great mix of relational and spiritual development programs at its core. Participation in program areas could be higher given the staff commitment for providing programs.*

The purpose of this Assessment is to provide objective, but engaged observations related to the congregation. We compiled all the data, like a portrait of the congregation. Then we placed it alongside general data to show how your congregation is doing by comparison. Now, we weigh these factors in relationship to ministry options that seem viable for you congregation in your own time and place. Congregations have four basic choices for the future:

- 1- **Do Nothing:** Looking at the trend lines for the last 10 years in the graphs we have provided can help the congregation see where the “do nothing” option might ultimately lead. While the trajectory may be downhill, many churches see this option as much easier than going through the pain of change. This does not require energy, new effort, or ingenuity. Usually, staying the same means increased losses due to the age of congregants.
- 2- **Mission Redefinition:** Churches that seek to change may need to establish a whole new way of being church. While all congregations will need to do visioning about their future mission opportunities, most congregations will do so alongside a redevelopment opportunity. Sometimes, however, there are congregations who “could be” the right church in the right place with a significant

- shift in missional focus. This option requires of the congregation significant energy, ingenuity, creativity and spirituality because people will be leaving behind previous ministry entirely and doing a very new focus in ministry. It is important to note that there is no guarantee of numerical growth by entering Mission Redefinition. It also is important to note how well—or even *if*—the congregation can sustain its ministry through what may be a years-long process.
- 3- **Redevelopment:** This option can take numerous forms and hybrids. They include; relocation, morphing into a new demographic participant profile (that matches the community in which the church resides), a restart, a parallel start, or combinations of these with Mission Redefinition. Redevelopment of the congregation requires new approaches that enable the church to adapt to a new environment.
  - 4- **Close:** Churches who choose this option realize that they don't have the energy, skill, or resources to keep going. They select this option as a way of concluding their congregation's life with dignity and intentionality so that their assets (which previous generations have entrusted to them) can continue to work after they are gone, in providing a Disciples witness.

## **X. POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS**

Based on the data, the conversation with the congregation and its leaders and on the assessment of the ministry potential for this congregation, we suggest these possible “future scenarios.” Each of these scenarios below is written from the perspective of the future. They are offered as a way for the church to imagine its future and the type of decision(s) facing the congregation. These are not recommendations, but ideas for consideration by leaders of the church.

### **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #1: Relocate and Revise Mission**

Relocation is a complex process by which a congregation sells its facilities, and relocates to a part of the community where there is growth, and a good socio-economic match.

There are several factors that make Hazelwood a good candidate for relocation:

1. The church owns facilities that are twice as large as the current congregation and program need.
2. The church is located in a part of the community that is largely related to Ball State and its students, rather than the year-long residents. Relocation would make the church more accessible to the group with the best match.
3. The growth in the community (which is slight) is happening further to the west.
4. The congregation does not have high visibility given the fact that it has been a long-time structure in the community. The mansion is the focal point of the property rather than the church facility which is easily missed.
5. The facilities eat up an enormous amount of resources that the church could use for other ministries.
6. It currently has the human and financial resources to make such a move.
7. A relocation may allow the church to have surplus funds at the end of the process.

There are factors however that would make relocation a difficult option for the church.

These include:

1. The growth rate in the area is very low, and the economic future of Muncie is uncertain.
2. The process of relocation is complex and requires high commitment among members.
3. Church participants are emotionally connected to the current facility.
4. The church added a sizeable addition and upgraded the Fellowship house over the past 20 years.

If the church were to relocate, it could generate \$6 million from the sale of the facility. The church would need 6-8 acres of land, and a facility of about 26,000-30,000 sq. feet. At current construction costs and land values, this would like support the cost of land and a new facility. (Land in the potential area is about \$50,000 per acre. Building costs average \$125-\$400 a sq. foot (incl. soft costs and site work).

Land Budget: \$300,000-\$400,000

Facilities Budget: \$3.9-\$12 million

The new facility would be more visible in the community. It would be on the growing edge of the community. It would be fully accessible by participants and energy efficient.

**POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #2: Leave the Mansion and Revise Mission:**

A way in which the congregation could generate additional income, while “right sizing” would be to lease the mansion to another non-profit or for-profit entity, while making modest modifications to its entry adding additional offices to the current structure.

Most of the rooms in the current church facility are pretty much “single use” rooms that sit largely unoccupied during the week. The current program could expand the use of these rooms to multiple use rooms, allowing the church to fit its ministry and program into the current facility.

A lease arrangement could stipulate parking to the east of the mansion for use by that tenant, and require that parking would be available on Sundays. Current lease rates in Muncie appear to average \$.66-\$.80 per sq. ft. That means the mansion could bring in more than \$10,000 per month once fully occupied. (\$120,000 per year would pay all of Hazelwood’s building operational costs). If the church was to lease to a “for-profit” entity, there would be unrelated business income tax on that amount.

If the church was to take this option, it would also require missional revisioning in order to discover ways to create more visibility for Hazelwood’s ministry in the community.

**POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #3: Do Nothing and Revise Mission:**

The church could have small incremental success by merely revising its mission. By this we do not mean rewriting the mission statement, but finding ways to reprioritize its use of staff and resources for a new type of mission in Muncie. Utilizing the demographic information included in this report, the church could shift its focus from a membership model of church towards missional context.

Regardless of which scenario, it is clear that the current program and mission of the church is not achieving the kinds of results that would lead to congregational growth in the near future. As the congregation continues to age, and additions decline, the church will begin to spend down assets until there are no choices for the church and the Disciple witness in Muncie.

## **Considerations for Revising Mission:**

### ***Shift from membership model of congregation:***

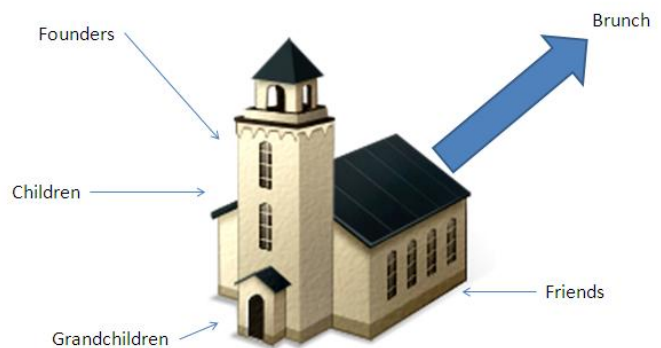
The church would have to revise its economic model for ministry if it were to relocate. The church offers a variety of traditional church programs that are staff driven, and costly to maintain given the size of the congregation. Additionally, Clergy staff spends enormous amounts of time in pastoral care, with little time for community outreach or engagement.

Consideration about the church's mission life would need to be revisited.

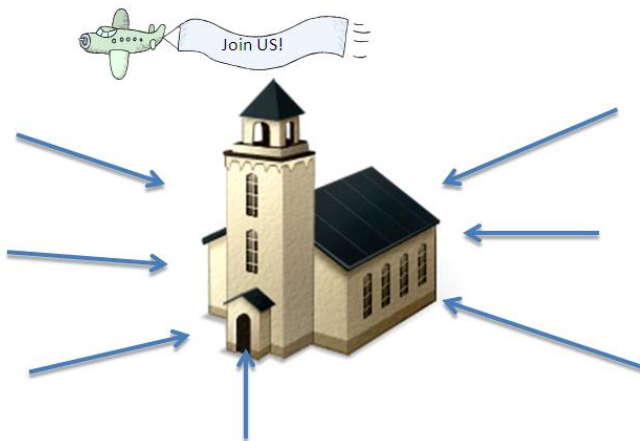
There are basically three models of being church today.

The "membership" model of congregation makes decisions based on what is best for the participants in the church. While it does mission, it does mission projects "to" the community rather than "with" it. Facilities are used 99% of the time for congregational activities, with little outreach to outside groups. Families are important to this model of church, and leadership is long term.

### **Membership Church**

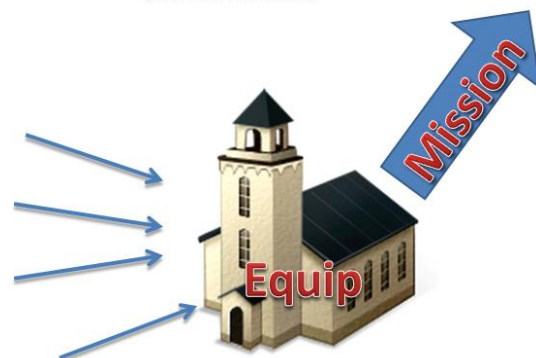


### **Attractional Church**



An Attractional church focuses on getting people into the church to hear the message. Its focus is not related to changing a community, or being the hands and feet of Jesus as much as it is to experience a lesson about faith. It makes decisions based on whether it will help them reach new people or not.

### **Missional Church**



A missional Church has a different focus. It makes decisions based on what is best for the community first. Participants come to equip themselves for mission with the community in which it resides. The church sees its call to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their context and throughout the world.

***Shift in Staffing Configuration Considerations:***

A review of the Appreciative Inquiry notes says a lot about congregational expectations of their ministerial staff. While it is clear that there is a deep love in the congregation for its pastors, there is an underlying expectation that the Pastor is there to serve the members spiritual needs. The expectation is that the Pastor is primarily a chaplain or shaman to the faith community, rather than a visionary or leader.

As the congregation has aged, the need for pastoral care in this setting has multiplied to the level it is not sustainable. Clergy staff has few days off, and spends much time in the hospital and funeral home. This does not allow adequate time for community networking, program development, or ministry planning for the future of the church.

Studies have shown that when a congregation has this expectation, and clergy accept the mantle of chaplain of the congregation, they will limit the church's ability to grow. Exceptional clergy can have that kind of relationship with about 200 individuals, which translates to an average worship attendance of 100-130. With additional clergy, the AWA only raises by a factor of 50.

Hazelwood was a larger congregation at one time, operating like a program church. This allowed the church to grow, while not burning out the clergy. This subtle shift in expectation of clergy has shifted as the congregants have aged, and demand grew.

Regardless of the facility configuration, the use of staff for pastoral care needs to be augmented by a Stephen Ministries program with volunteers, or perhaps engaging an assistant pastor with the responsibility of pastoral care.

***Shift in Spending:***

Hazelwood Christian has engaged in a practice that is familiar with other "university" congregations. The relationship to an educational institution and high number of academics in a congregation leads a church towards thinking more about calling "professionals" to fill roles in the church that are often fulfilled by volunteers in other church settings.

Hazelwood has a high number of staff positions for the size of the congregation. This is partially what has placed the greatest burden on the budget. Perhaps the greatest shift that could take place is for the church to find ways to empower volunteers assume tasks that were once reserved for others.

This leads to another deficit in programing. There is little in the current program that develops new leadership in the congregation. Muncie is a community that is ripe with

extremely gifted individuals who could be empowered to do extraordinary ministry if “spirited permission giving” could become a part of the church’s ethos. It would also help the budget. There was little to no evidence of leaders in the congregation finding ways to multiply their efforts.

Regardless of the ministry option selected by the congregation, the Hope Partnership has additional services that could help the congregation once a decision is made.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

I want to thank the leadership of Hazelwood Christian Church for engaging Hope in this process. I particularly want to thank your pastor, Rev. Colby Smith, and your Administrative Assistant, Linette Cook, and everyone else who provided input for this report.

I also wish to thank this congregation for the way it reached out to my son Alex Morse, when he was a member of this congregation while attending Ball State. His relationship to this congregation was important to him during those pivotal years of his life.

It has been my pleasure to worship with this congregation on a number of occasions during his time at Ball State. It is a wonderful faith community full of wonderful people. It is also a congregation with great potential for the future.

While this report may have some “edges” in naming realities of Hazelwood, it is no way meant to be a critic of the church and its ministry or its staff. Everyone here is doing the best they can with what they have. Instead it is meant to be a “balcony view” of how things might change for the benefit of the Disciples witness in Muncie.

There should be no mistake that congregations everywhere are facing these same issues, and need to making the kinds of shifts mentioned in this report.

In Christ,

*Rev. Dr. Rick Morse  
Hope Partnership  
Indianapolis, IN*

*PHONE: 317-713-2520  
E-MAIL: [rmorse@churchextension.org](mailto:rmorse@churchextension.org)*

*Cc: Regional staff*

## **Appendix A—Appreciative Inquiry Notes**

### **7:15 SECTION A: (Appreciative Inquiries)**

1. Reflecting on your entire experience at this church, remember a time when you felt the most engaged, alive and motivated. Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel?

Jim Warner – On the search committee for Colby, met very often, interviewing, did history study, brought us closer together as a group and as a church. Mary Dobson – Going to John center for retreat and meeting others (Roman Catholic) Bill Ritchie – remodeling, had a good group of trustees, mansion shows improvement, a lot of involvement. Laura Rowe – high school, our youth minister was fabulous, retreats at Edwards Woods (maybe). Laura’s mother – church camp important. Dick Frasier – youth camp, retreats. Jerry McKean – teaching middle school Sunday School was gratifying. Andy Rees – Committee Chair of Celebrate very engaging. John Starnes – Sunday School young marrieds growing into older marrieds, got together with them socially. Jane Frazier – enjoys the good times with her more mature Sunday school class. Oscar Wagner - joined in 1952, group of retirees got together every Friday to work on the building, stuck in tower

This is question number two:

Nancy Cook – son seriously ill, brought her closer to the church

Lois Ritchie – son seriously injured, church was wonderful to him and her family

Mary Dobson – church was very loving to her during her time of trial

MaryAnn Matchett – serve with the elders, feels very touched spending time with these people

Wendy Rees – very special services that have affected her, not just one event, small Bible study, youth Sunday yesterday

Jerry McKean - during adoption of first child had major problems, small group pulled him through

Bill Ritchie – small group study at their house

2. When you consider all of your experiences at this church, what has contributed most to your *spiritual life*?
  - a. What relationships or programs or events have been most powerful and helpful in fostering the congregation’s relationship with God?
  - b. Are there particular characteristics or traits of our congregation that are most valuable as we grow spiritually?
3. Don’t be humble—this is important information: What are the most valuable ways you contribute to this church personally? (Your personality, perspectives, skills, character....please give examples...)
4. What do you think is the most important, life giving characteristic of our church? When we are at our best, what is the single most important value that makes our church unique?

Outreach, Lois believes our minister is there in dire need, another testimony on Colby from Laura's mom, Dr. Cartwright came through also, Dick Frazier appreciating Colby also, MaryAnn says home communion and children's spiritual life (children), Bill Ritchie – Colby, Wendy Rees – taking care of people of the church, providing children and youth programs, and providing two different services

5. Make three wishes for the future of our church. Describe what the church would look like as these three wishes come true? <sup>1</sup>

Increased membership, build a church every Sunday, more young married couples with children or young adults, a balanced budget, our own private softball field, adult Sunday school program come back (more small group development), surplus budget, endowment fund

**7:45 SECTION B: (Congregational mood)**

1. What motivates you to come to worship at this church each Sunday?  
(Relationships, habit or family ties, powerful worship, programs, the church needs me)  
Dr. Wakeland, Rev Colby message, routine, doesn't feel right and I don't go, I love Jesus, our Praise band, traditional music ministry

2. What excites or worries you about this church?

3. Complete this sentence: Our Church is....

- a. Rigid or flexible
- b. Status quo or mission oriented
- c. Fearful or courageous
- d. Surviving or thriving
- e. Energizing or getting by<sup>2</sup>  
Rigid 11 Flexible 30  
Status quo 38 Mission oriented 9  
Fearful 25 Courageous 23  
Surviving A Lot Thriving no  
Energizing 12 Getting By 29

**8:00 SECTION C: (Vital Signs)**

1. Does your congregation have a mission statement?
  - a. What is the mission of this congregation?
  - b. Do you feel like developing a mission statement?
  - c. What is God calling your church to do at this time?
2. A relational group is a group of people who gather at times other than Sunday Morning, for the purpose of prayer, study, or fellowship on a weekly basis. Lets make a list of relational groups in this church.

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<sup>1</sup> From *Memories, Hopes and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* by Mark Lau Branson © 2004 by the Alban Institute, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to Max Hickerson of Houston, TX.

3. Tell me about leader development in this congregation. What does your congregation do to prepare elders, Sunday school teachers or other leaders in the church?  
I Worship Seminars, Eldering, teaching Sunday School, Deaconing, people helping around the church
4. What are the ministry opportunities begging for our attention in this area?  
College student participation, inner city schools, service agencies needing volunteers, adult illiteracy, getting young families to church, low cost child care for struggling families
5. If our church was to close, what would be the one thing people in our area would miss the most? Preschool, Christian Ministries, extension outreach, musical events, dog walking on our grounds, 2 African families found a home here, beautiful place for weddings, special events such as ice cream social and Christmas Eve service

**8:15** LIFE-CYCLE EXERCISE: (CE)

*Many dots in quad 3. A good number in quad 4.*

## APPENDIX B

### ***Testimonials:***

“New Beginnings was a helpful process for our congregation. We are now looking to relocate our church, and for the first time we are excited about our future after years of decline.”

Moderator, First Christian Church, Lake Charles, LA

“As a former member of Garfield Park, I had been very concerned about the church and its future. Everything I heard or read indicated the church had been in serious decline, and was just a shadow of its former life. I went to church there this past week to celebrate the congregation’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and was pleasantly surprised to see such a great cross-section of the community in worship. The music was uplifting and worshipful, the people in the congregation showed vitality. The pastor of the church credits New Beginnings to turning this church around. I am grateful for this resurrection.”

Former member, The Circle Church (Disciples of Christ), Santa Cruz, CA

“The New Beginnings Cottage Meetings reminded our congregation about how much fun we have when we are working together for the future of our church. These meetings have reinvigorated our small group life in a great way. We now realize that we have great financial and human resources, we only need a sense of mission to be a vital congregation again. While it is hard work, we know we are up to it.”

Member, Midway Hills Christian Church, Dallas, TX

“The New Beginnings process helped us begin the conversation about closing our church. We all knew that we were towards the end of our mission, and that our resources were almost totally depleted. New Beginnings allowed us to have the conversation without outside pressure. We will be starting a new church in our community soon with the assets from the sale of our building, and we feel good that our witness will continue.”

Vice Moderator, Guelph Christian Church, Guelph, Ontario