

# Greenwich Presbyterian Church

## Cultivating Flourishing Congregations

### Congregational Activity #1: Looking Back

## Executive Summary

This document captures congregational reflections from four groups on lessons learned, values developed, gratitude for Greenwich's history, evidence of God's faithfulness, and discernment for the church's next season of ministry. Across the responses, the strongest shared convictions are that Greenwich's future should remain centered on God's faithfulness, Scripture, prayer, unity in Christ, strong and transparent leadership, and mission-focused service. Participants repeatedly affirmed that the church has endured seasons of change, conflict, and hardship through God's grace, congregational perseverance, and the love and care of its people.

## Key Findings

- **Greenwich's strongest shared identity is theological and relational.** Participants described the church as grounded in God's faithfulness, Scripture, prayer, Christ-centered worship, fellowship, and love for one another.
- **The congregation sees resilience as a defining mark of its story.** COVID, leadership challenges, conflict, misconduct, and social uncertainty were named as difficult seasons through which God preserved and strengthened the church.
- **Leadership is viewed as essential to future flourishing.** Respondents emphasized the need for strong, transparent, humble, biblically grounded, and visionary leadership, including both clergy and lay leaders.
- **Members want to honor the past by continuing the mission.** The congregation values remembrance, but the dominant impulse is not nostalgia; it is continuity of gospel witness, service, generosity, and faithfulness.
- **The church senses a future-facing call to mission.** Responses point toward community engagement, church planting, support for struggling churches, outreach, and a renewed outward-facing witness.

# Main Themes by Question

## Q1. Lessons and values most important for the next season of ministry

- **God-centered faithfulness:** Keeping God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and prayer at the center of church life.
- **Unity and perseverance:** Remaining united through growth, change, challenge, and potential conflict.
- **Leadership and vision:** Valuing strong, transparent, biblically grounded leadership that casts vision and equips both clergy and lay leaders.
- **Adaptability with identity:** Being open to change while staying faithful to Greenwich's core identity, mission, and Christian values.
- **Mission and community engagement:** Recognizing community needs, acting on the church's mission, and sustaining a strong witness beyond the walls of the church.

## Q2. Ways to honor people and groups who made a significant impact

- **Preserve and share history:** Create or update a historical timeline, memory book, website history, heritage wall, mural, exhibit, or book of church history.
- **Recognize ministries and milestones:** Highlight ministry stories, successes, and contributors through newsletters, bulletins, screens, newspapers, and periodic reflections.
- **Honor through continuity:** Continue the values, ministries, mission, and gospel legacy of those who came before.
- **Inclusive remembrance:** Acknowledge that many contributors were unnamed or unseen, and that the whole body of Christ has shared in the church's work.
- **Community gatherings:** Consider Homecoming Sunday, Heritage Sunday, dinners, or other gatherings that remember the people and groups who shaped Greenwich.

## Q3. What participants most want to give thanks for

- **God's faithfulness:** Gratitude that God has sustained Greenwich from its founding through the present and into future generations.
- **Leadership and people:** Thankfulness for pastors, congregational leaders, founders, members, and countless contributions across time.
- **Community and fellowship:** Appreciation for Greenwich's welcoming, warm, friendly, authentic, and family-like culture.
- **Growth through change:** Recognition that the church has grown through seasons of change, challenge, and adaptation.
- **Ministry and generosity:** Gratitude for music, preaching, outreach, Bible studies, care, stewardship, community involvement, and generous giving.

## Q4. Where God's faithfulness, grace, and love were most noticed

- **Through hardship:** God's grace was most visible during COVID, misconduct, conflict, uncertainty, and other difficult seasons.
- **Through protection and perseverance:** The church's continued existence and ability to move forward were seen as evidence of God's blessing.
- **Through leaders and people:** God's love was reflected through faithful leaders, church family, fellowship, generosity, and care.
- **Through Scripture and teaching:** Participants noted the importance of being taught to find answers in the Bible and remain faithful to God's Word.
- **Through mission and welcome:** God's grace was seen in church planting, mission, small groups, community relationships, and welcoming all to grow in the Lord.

## Q5. What the Holy Spirit may be revealing

- **God remains present in crisis:** The Holy Spirit has been with the church through COVID, 9/11, misconduct, and other trials.
- **Difficulties prepare the church:** Challenges may strengthen Greenwich for future ministry and deepen trust in God's direction.
- **Unity and obedience matter:** Responses emphasized obedience to God's call, unity among God's people, and continued reliance on prayer.
- **Mission is expanding:** Participants sensed a call toward church planting, supporting struggling churches, witness, and outward mission.
- **God works through people:** The history of Greenwich shows God bringing people together and working through their gifts, leadership, integrity, and perseverance.

## Summary of Main Values

- **Faithfulness to God and Scripture:** Trusting God's sovereignty, remaining biblically based, and keeping Christ central.
- **Unity in Christ:** Maintaining peace, fellowship, shared purpose, and love across differences and seasons of change.
- **Leadership with integrity:** Valuing strong, transparent, humble, visionary, and biblically grounded leadership.
- **Perseverance and resilience:** Enduring adversity, conflict, and transition with patience, courage, and faith.
- **Welcoming community:** Extending warmth, acceptance, authenticity, kindness, fellowship, and care to all ages and backgrounds.
- **Mission focus:** Serving the community, planting churches, supporting ministries, and maintaining an outward-facing witness.
- **Generosity and stewardship:** Giving sacrificially, using gifts faithfully, and planning for the future in ways that honor the church's legacy.
- **Humility and adaptability:** Learning from mistakes, remaining open to new people and ministries, and adapting without losing core identity.

## Synthesis of Shared Values

| Shared Value                       | What It Means in the Responses                                                                                        | Implication for the Next Season                                                                               |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>God-centered faith</b>          | God's faithfulness, Scripture, prayer, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are the foundation of Greenwich's life.            | Keep worship, biblical teaching, prayer, and discernment central in all planning and ministry decisions.      |
| <b>Unity in Christ</b>             | The congregation values peace, fellowship, shared purpose, and love through good times and hard times.                | Strengthen practices that build trust, communication, reconciliation, and shared mission.                     |
| <b>Faithful leadership</b>         | Participants repeatedly named leadership, transparency, vision, integrity, and lay involvement as essential.          | Equip clergy, staff, elders, lay leaders, women in ministry, and new members to lead faithfully.              |
| <b>Resilience and perseverance</b> | Greenwich has endured COVID, conflict, misconduct, transitions, and broader social challenges.                        | Approach future challenges with confidence, patience, humility, and trust in God's provision.                 |
| <b>Welcoming fellowship</b>        | The church is described as warm, authentic, accepting, kind, family-like, and open-armed.                             | Continue making Greenwich accessible, hospitable, and relationally strong for newcomers and longtime members. |
| <b>Mission and service</b>         | Respondents emphasized community needs, outreach, church planting, ministry, witness, and care beyond Sunday worship. | Discern where Greenwich is being called to serve locally, support other churches, and expand outward mission. |
| <b>Legacy and gratitude</b>        | There is deep gratitude for founders, pastors, lay leaders, ministries, history, and countless unnamed contributors.  | Preserve the church's story while honoring the past by continuing its gospel mission and values.              |
| <b>Generosity and stewardship</b>  | Giving, stewardship, availability, talents, land, resources, and sacrificial support appear throughout the responses. | Use resources wisely and generously to sustain ministry, care for the community, and prepare for the future.  |

