



## **HOPE CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

### **First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church Indianapolis, Indiana**

October 4, 2017

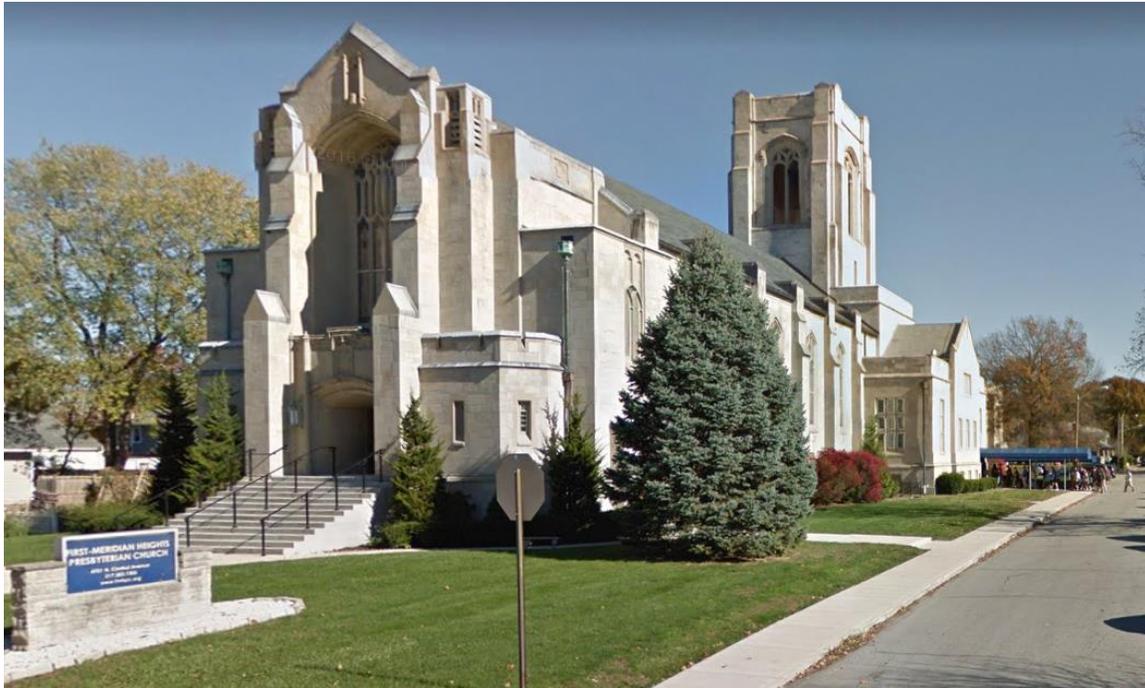
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## INTRODUCTION

First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church is at an important juncture in its life and witness. While it has enjoyed a long and proud and influential history in the Indianapolis community, for several years it has undeniably been in decline. The last decade has seen the church slip below levels of sustainability in several key categories. The 10-year trends are disturbing at best.

There are many issues of concern in the life of the congregation and community providing challenges and needing attention – not the least of which are the aging of the congregation, the absence of younger generations in the membership, a large and aging and expensive to maintain building, and how to connect with and serve more fully the neighborhoods closest to the church.

Despite these troublesome issues, the active members of the congregation maintain a bright and positive spirit and are very clear about the spiritual significance the church has on their lives.

There is much about the future of the church that is unknown and will even remain so after this process is complete. What IS clear is that the future of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church is going to look very different from the past. Using the “Epiphany”

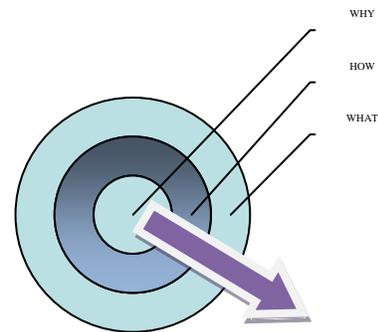
process offered by Hope Partnership is a way of beginning the journey to the productive and vital and yet to be revealed future God is calling you to embrace.

There is no magic in what is explored, discussed, and offered in the pages that follow. There are a lot of facts and figures and charts and graphs that will leave your head swimming a bit from time to time. Some of what is to be shared might even be painful to hear. But, it is all spoken in love – and in the hope that what is shared here will help YOU, as a congregation, have a meaningful and productive discussion together about the future of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church.

### WHY THIS ASSESSMENT?

In his book “START WITH WHY” Simon Senek discusses how great leaders have significant focus on why they exist. While most leaders focus on what they do, the leaders that excel are clear about why they do it. It is a connection of passion with purpose.

Congregational leaders are usually very clear about what their church does. They can often tell how the congregation goes about doing its tasks—but things get fuzzier when you ask them why they do it. We call this “The Why”.



Churches function best when they have clarity about WHY they exist. Based on that “why” the church organizes their life around their passion and calling rather than filling spots because we’ve always done it that way before.

This report will help leaders of the congregation name their current condition—during the process of discovering their “why”

Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation -- a ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) -- has a passion for seeing new life in congregations. With the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, we hope this assessment helps your congregation in three ways. The first intent of this assessment is to help your congregation come to clarity about hard decisions 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 leaders see that you have an abundance of resources that can be used in new ways that will lead towards joining God in God’s mission.

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

**Your congregation's leaders worked closely with Frank Everett from Hope Partnership, who wrote this assessment.** The onsite Assessment was held on September 12, 2017 at the church. It included a complete tour of the facilities and property, as well as an hour-long meeting with financial officers of the church to discuss finances. The assessment visit also included a "windshield tour" of the community to confirm the demographic data.

That evening, an Appreciative Inquiry session with between 35-40 participants was held. 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.

Additionally, data in this report came from congregational records. 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?**

Your leadership has been engaged in an Experiential Retreat to discover the ins and outs of transformational leadership, and to begin thinking about their mission in new ways. This report is for their use at the second retreat. At that retreat, the leaders will summarize and name the current condition of the congregation—name the available resources, and begin to think about a new future story. This document will be foundational for those conversations.

After leaders develop their future story, Hope will continue to work with your congregation in developing a capacity report that will eventually lead to your timeline and next steps through coaching.

**But now you need 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 the people you call neighbors.

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

## CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

First-Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church can trace its history back to the founding of two significant congregations in the Indianapolis community.

First Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis was established on July 5, 1823. Among the many prominent members of the downtown church was future President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison.



The Meridian Heights Church was founded in 1909 with the vision of serving the growing North Meridian / Kessler neighborhood. Under the leadership of Pastor Gerry Johnson, the Meridian Kessler

Neighborhood Association was founded – in part to combat rampant redlining practices (intentional segregating of neighborhoods based on race). Throughout its history the Meridian Heights Church had a great interest in educating children and youth – building an education wing in 1959 because it had run out of room for youth to attend Sunday School!

“First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church” was formed when the two congregations merged into one in 1970, each congregation coming into the merger with their own rich history. After the merger, the church continued working in the neighborhood through various programs including the Vivian Smith House for teenage mothers, the Kaleidoscope after school and summer childcare program and the Just Older Youth Program (JOY) for teenagers. For 20 years it provided space for the At Your School (AYS) Childcare Program.

Today First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church continues its legacy of service to the community in several significant ways:



**The community garden on land adjacent to the church provides lots of produce for the Northland Food Pantry**

- Hosts the Independence Academy – which provides education for middle-school and high school students with high-functioning autism and Asperger syndrome.
- Hosts the Parkview Co-op Preschool – a parent-lead school offering pre-school age children a nurturing place to play and learn.
- Providing significant volunteer support and donations of items to the Northwood Food Pantry, including....
- Produce from the Community Garden (adjacent to the church on land that once bore the Vivian Smith House).
- Providing meeting space for community groups including an Alcoholics Anonymous group.

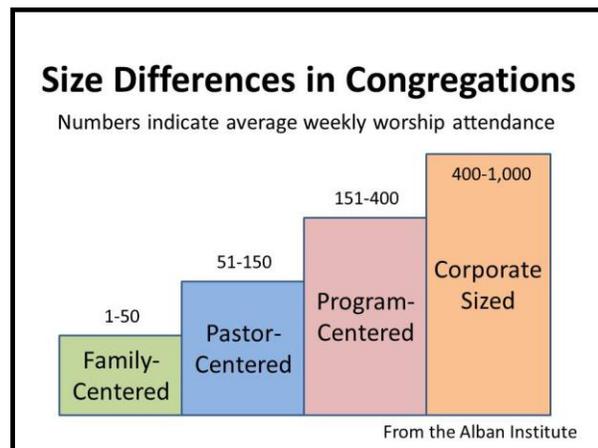
### BY THE NUMBERS

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. Church consulting colleagues at the Alban Institute point 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 the 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** (50 or less people in average weekly worship) 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 cases, may not be the most influential.

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

Congregations in the “pastor-centered” congregations, with 51-to-150 people in weekly worship range, tend to hand over more responsibility for care of the congregation to the pastor. In these congregations, the pastor's presence at meetings and activities is very important. The pastor brings most 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.

Congregations in the 150-to-400 worshipper range are considered “program-centered” and their expectations are different from smaller congregations. Those who attend program-size churches tend to seek quality over relationships. They want well-run programs, well-organized activities and professional leaders. Many leadership roles are filled by paid staff people (musicians, children and youth coordinators, bookkeepers, facilities managers, etc.). In smaller congregations, these roles would be filled by trained volunteers. The governance structure of the large church is often very large with several clearly defined committees and/or ministry teams.

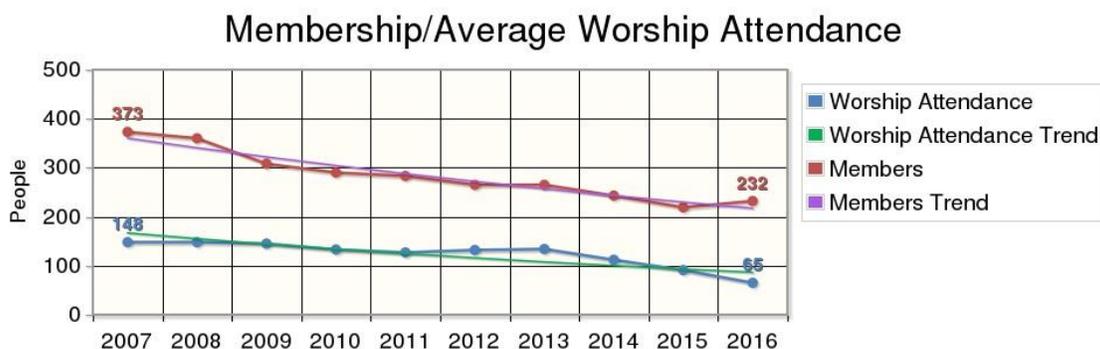
First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, with a current Average Worship Attendance in the mid-60s, is a “Pastoral” sized congregation by these standards. In the not too distant past – certainly within the memory bank of most of your membership – this congregation was much larger. Indeed, the building, staff, budget and governing structure all assume a program-centered church or larger. If you are experiencing utter frustration that what used to work DOESN'T work anymore, it may well be because your size has changed but your expectations and assumptions have not. (Note – as you will see below your average worship attendance has been at the “Pastor Centered” size for some time.)

So, your size has shifted, but chances are there are other dynamics at work in your congregation as well. These might include: 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. 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*.

## TEN-YEAR TRENDS

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

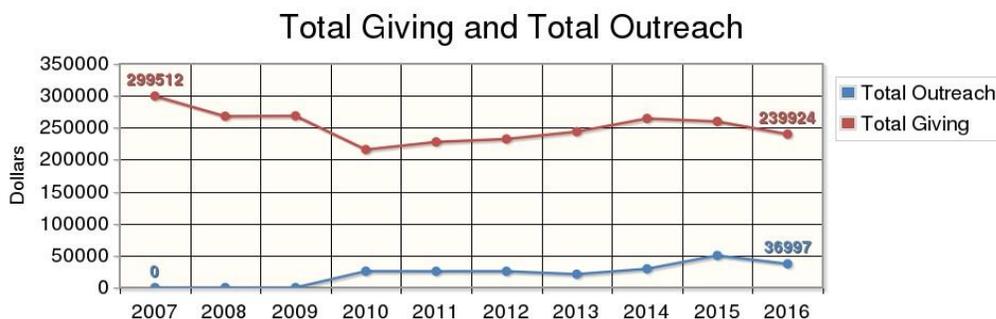
As demonstrated in the following chart, the congregation has experienced decline in Average Worship Attendance (AWA) over the past 10 years. Average Worship Attendance is the most helpful measurement of member engagement in a congregation, so we pay special attention to this figure. This data is compiled from records provided to the Assessor from the church and the Presbytery.



Your congregation's decline trends do not happen in a vacuum. It should be noted that the community in which the church serves has **increased in population by 3.5% percent** during the same period the **church's average worship attendance has decreased by 56% percent**. This reflects a possible disconnect to the community that should raise a red flag for the congregation.

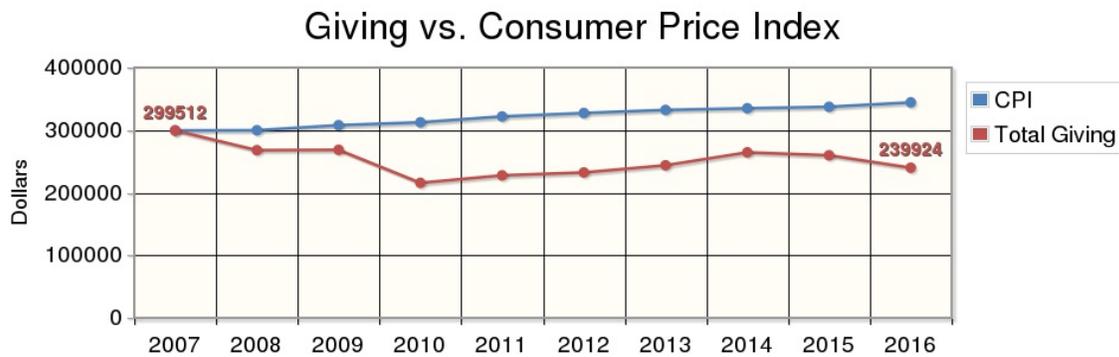
Congregational giving is also an indicator of member engagement. We pay attention to this number because as participants deepen their level of engagement with the church, their giving usually follows. Often times this indicator lags behind the Average Worship Attendance figures. That is, worship attendance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

During the past ten years, the congregation has reported decline in General Fund income. This is the total income received by the church. This is demonstrated on the following chart.



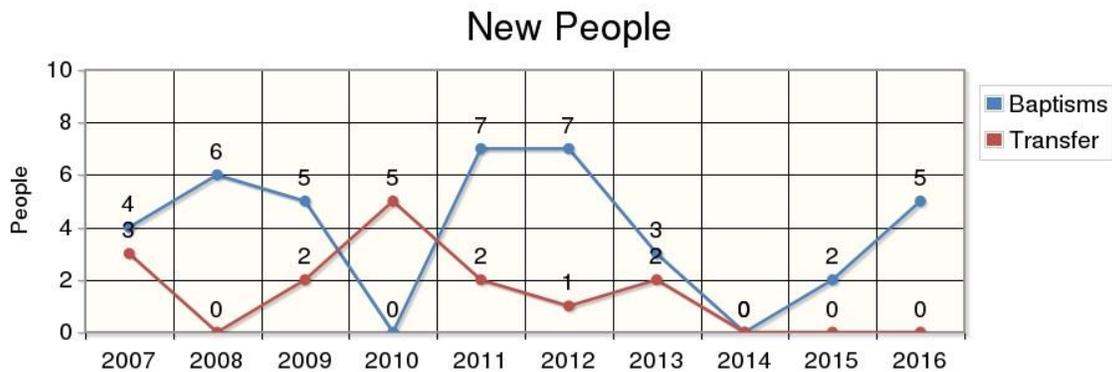
Income figures alone do not tell the whole numbers story. It is important to measure the congregation's giving against the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to see if giving has kept pace with inflation over the past ten years. Because of inflation, it may be possible for a congregation to increase its revenue, but actually have fewer funds available for ministry.

Not surprisingly, the following chart demonstrates that along with the decline in overall giving the congregational has also lost buying power. These circumstances make it tough to develop growth without significant changes in either giving or budgetary priorities.



### NEW PEOPLE

The final measurement of engagement in the past ten years is the number of additional people the church has welcomed. It is important to note the relationship between baptisms and transfers. Comparing these two figures demonstrates the congregation's passion for both reaching new Christians AND welcoming those who have already made their commitment to Christ. Healthy congregations show evidence in both areas. The following chart shows evidence of additions based on information provided.



Over the last ten years, the church has had a total of 39 baptisms and 15 additions by transfer. By any measurable standards these numbers do not indicate growth in any significant way. While there have been a handful of new members the last few years, it is hardly enough to sustain viability.

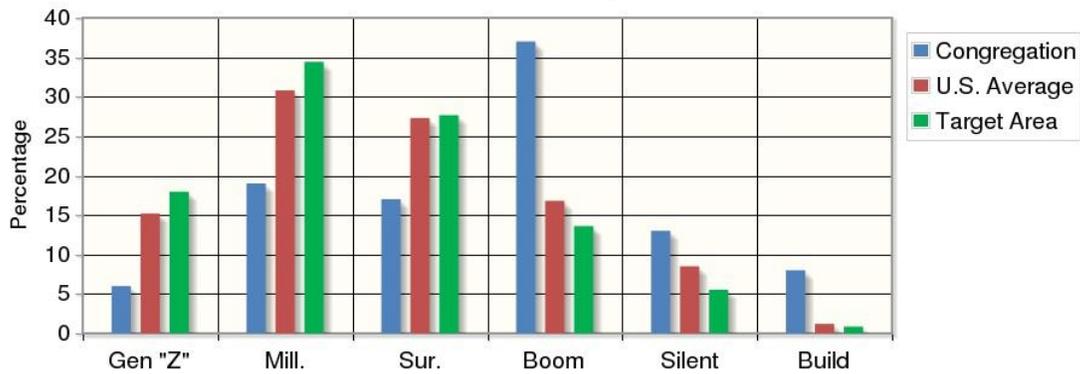
When all indicators are considered related to the congregation’s past ten years there is little doubt that the congregation is in a declining situation. Reversal of these trends will be necessary if the congregation expects to exist into the future. The church is in need of dramatic adaptation in order to effectively reach out to the community again.

**CURRENT PARTICIPATION**

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.

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

**Generational Populations**



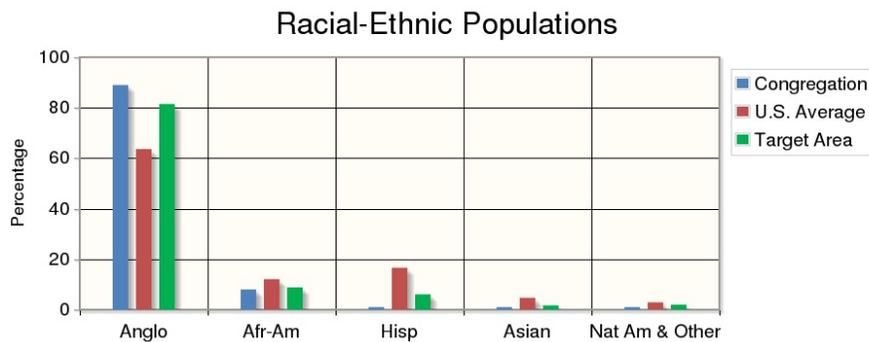
The first graph compares the ages of participants in the congregation with the ages of those who live in the community. The horizontal axis shows each of the six living

**Age by Generations**

Generations	S & H Type	Initial Birth Yr	Final Birth Yr
Homeland (Z)	Artist	2005	2025
Millennial (Y)	Hero	1982	2004
Gen X (13th)	Nomad	1961	1981
Boom	Prophet	1946	1960
Silent	Artist	1925	1945
GI	Hero	1901	1924

generations. The youngest is Generation Z, followed by Millennials, Survivors, Boomers and Silents. The eldest is Builders on the far right of the chart. The blue bars show the percentage of participants in the congregation in each category. The red bar represents the entire U.S. population and the green bar indicates the community around the church. The data related to the red and green bar comes from the U.S. Census Bureau.

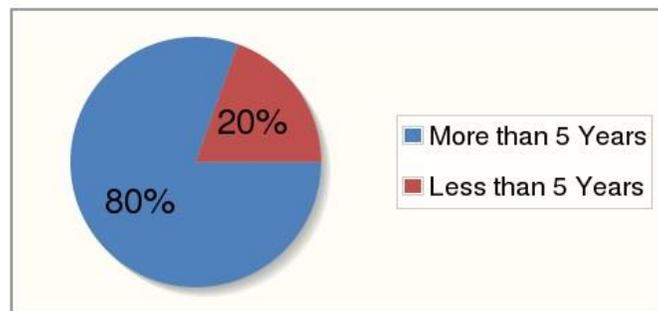
The chart shows that **58 percent of the congregation is of the Boomer generation or older**, while **less than 20 percent of the wider community is in that category**. This single measurement is very important to the future of the congregation. Vital congregations will normally experience a 50-50 split between the Boomer-plus generations and the younger groups.



This chart 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% African-American, the congregation may have a significant gap that it should consider in the future (especially if density numbers are low).

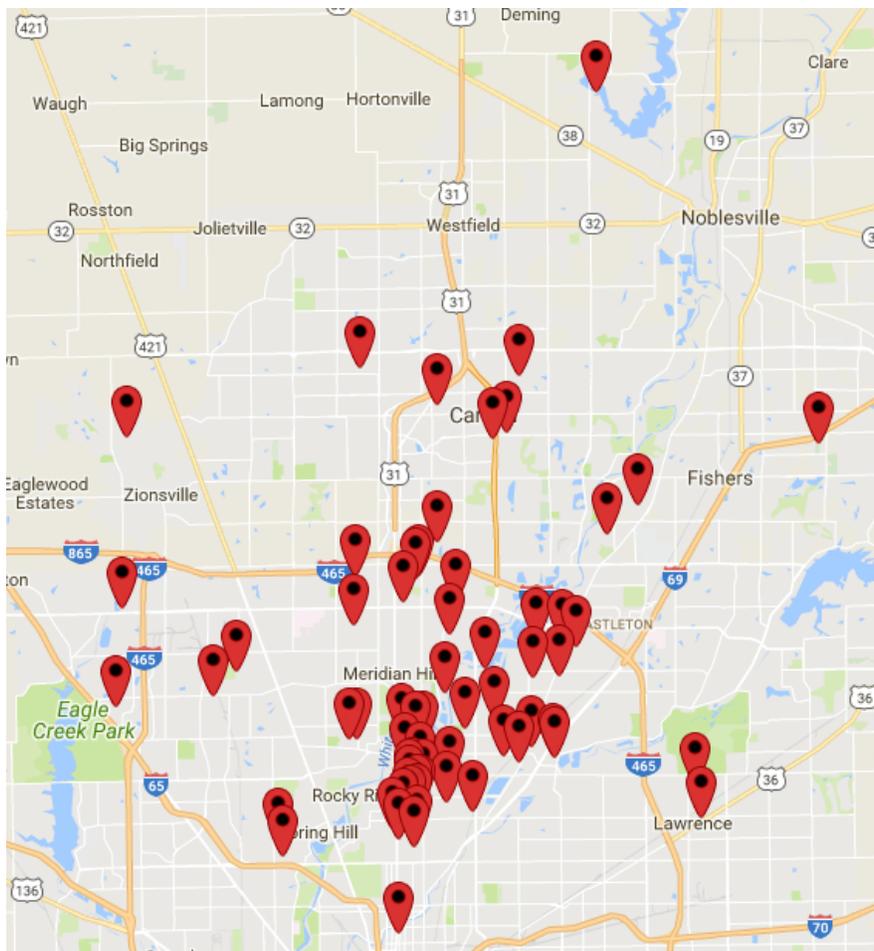
### Participant Tenure



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. The chart above indicates that the vast majority of the congregation’s participants (80%) have a tenure in the church of 5 years or more. This is a long way from the 50-50 split that usually indicates a healthy and growing congregation.

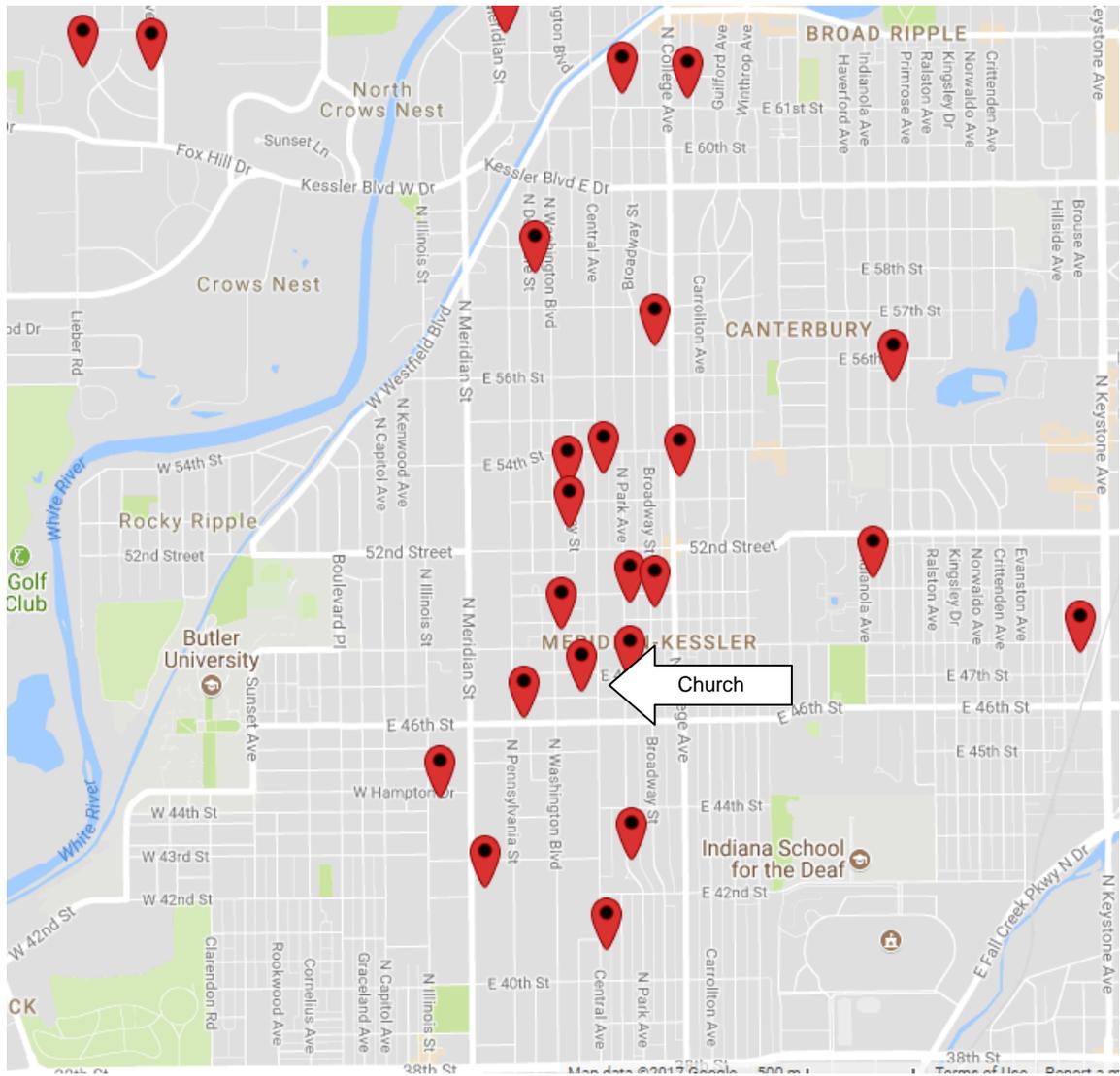
### Where the Congregation Lives



*Pin-Map of Church Households – Wide View*

Finally, we have explored the relationship of participants with the location of the church building. A pin-map has located the home of each participant and shown each in relation to the church facility.

The information provided by the church includes 79 separate households. The previous map shows that the congregation's members are spread over a wide area of Indianapolis, all north of I-70 and most within the I-465 loop and west of Binford Road. While there is a significant concentration around the church's location, it is not as heavy as one might guess as the following pin-map shows.



***Pin-Map of Target Area for the Church***

A congregation that has a good relationship with its community will normally display at least half of its households within a seven-minute circle around the church. The pin-

map above approximates that standard. If *no one* in the church lives within a seven - minute drive, the congregation has a severe gap in relating to the community. In the case of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church, of 79 households plotted 24 (30%) live within this seven-minute standard. So, there is a gap. It is an issue that will likely prove troublesome for the future unless there is significant growth of members from this surrounding area of the church.

### PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

An additional area of inquiry is to measure how people participate in the life of their congregation. This begins illuminate what kind of church we have – and our priorities as a congregation. Through interviews and a review of the annual church calendar, we can measure the kinds of engagement people have with the church in four categories:

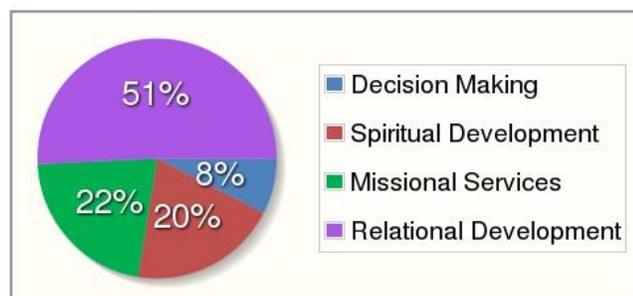
- **Spiritual Development:** These are activities whose purpose is direct spiritual or discipleship growth. These could include prayer groups, Bible Studies, Sunday school classes, or similar gatherings hosted by the church.
- **Relational Development:** These are activities where the purpose is deepening relationships. It could include social events like meals, fellowship groups, “game nights,” etc. These groups may feature devotion or prayer time, but they are primarily social in nature.
- **Missional Service:** These are congregationally-organized expressions of service to the wider community. It could include mission trips, serving hot meals to people in need, or tutoring school children.
- **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 people’s individual efforts or the activities of non-church-related groups that use the facility. This is a measurement of the kinds of activities, and the numbers of people engaged with them. This measurement is determined by multiplying the total number of hours by the number of church people involved. Participation at worship services is not included in this formula.

**Ideally, we would see an equal balance of spiritual, relational and missional activities – each around 30%.** If these are out-of-balance, church leaders may want to examine the church’s calendar and, for all items, ask “What is the purpose of this activity?” Some activities may have overlapping purposes, but likely will favor one direction over another.

The congregation is out of balance in how it spends its time, but not terribly so. Being actively involved in mission is highly valued in the congregation as are activities that lead to spiritual growth. The time

### Participant Engagement



given to decision making is pretty much on target with HOPE's recommendations. The high level of relational activities has to do not so much with specific activities designed for such but from the fact that community is developed in the course of doing missional activities and spiritual development programs.

## THE COMMUNITY

### Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood

The boundaries that form this popular residential area consist roughly of Kessler Boulevard to the north, the Monon Trail greenway corridor to the east, 38th Street to the south, and Meridian Street to the west. Meridian Street forms a shared boundary with the adjacent **Butler-Tarkington** neighborhood that is also in the church's primary ministry zone. (See below.)

The area started to develop in the late 1890s with a smattering of country estates along Meridian and neighboring streets north of Maple Road (now 38th Street). However, the area remained mostly open farmland until the early 1900s.

In 1905, landscape architect George Kessler redesigned Maple Road into a grand urban parkway as part of his ambitious municipal plan to form a network of parks and boulevards to connect the City of Indianapolis. Also in 1905, Indianapolis annexed Meridian Street from Maple Road/38th Street up to the town of Broad Ripple. The city's gradual road improvements in the area encouraged residential development.

The real neighborhood boom began in the early 1920s. Grand, prestigious homes were built by some of the wealthiest in Indianapolis along Meridian Street, Pennsylvania Street, and Washington Boulevard. However, most of the new homes were a little less ostentatious – if fine homes in their own right built by upper-middle-class families. Growth continued at a slower pace in the 1930s as the neighborhood filled up, and the wealthy continued their northern migration beyond the city limits. Meridian-Kessler continued to be a neighborhood of choice for the affluent, and by the end of World War II it was all but full.

Today, Meridian-Kessler remains a predominately upper-middle class area and a highly desirable neighborhood. Meridian-Kessler has achieved some degree of racial diversity, but it is less integrated than the neighboring Butler-Tarkington community. While the neighborhood is primarily residential, there is a smattering of small businesses, specialty shops, and restaurants here and there.

### Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood

This neighborhood is immediately to the west of Meridian-Kessler and is bounded by 38th Street and Crown Hill Cemetery to the south, the Central Canal and Westfield Boulevard to the north, Michigan Road to the west, and Meridian Street to the east.

The neighborhood has a parallel development story to Meridian-Kessler. It began as a farming settlement in the 1840s near what is now the intersection of 38th and Illinois Streets. The settlement was called Mapleton due to the large number of maple trees in the area. The settlement was connected to the railway system of the City of Indianapolis in the 1860s. In 1890, the city's electric street car system ran a line up through the neighborhood. Mapleton was annexed by Indianapolis in 1902, and most of the rest of the neighborhood was annexed by 1906. Residential development took off in the 1910s and 1920s.

The neighborhood was almost exclusively Anglo until the mid-1950s when African-Americans began moving into the southwest portion of the neighborhood. The Butler–Tarkington Neighborhood Association was formed in 1956 to help foster community and ease the tensions resulting from racial integration of the neighborhood. Today, one-third of the residents are African-American. The community continues to be seen as an example of successful neighborhood integration.

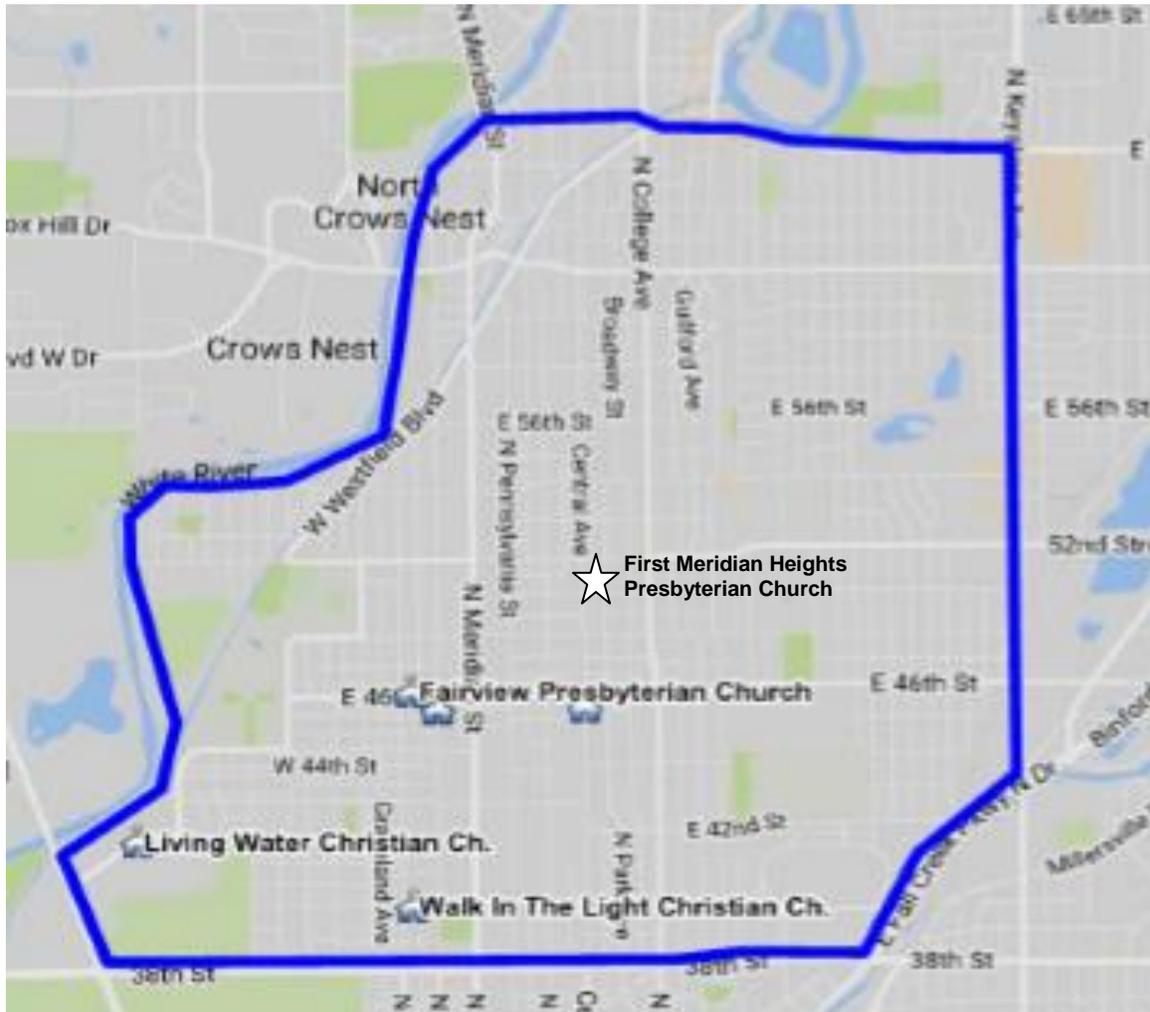
The neighborhood consists mainly of working to upper-middle-class households, with wealthier families inhabiting the much grander homes along the western edge of Meridian Street, and also portions of Illinois Street north of 40th Street. Like Meridian-Kessler, Butler–Tarkington is known for its attractive residential architecture.

The neighborhood's name comes from Butler University and writer Booth Tarkington, who lived in the neighborhood for 23 years in his country estate until his death in 1946. Butler University moved from Irvington on the far-East Side of Indianapolis to the neighborhood in 1928 when it acquired what had been the community's 300-acre Fairview Park. The University increasingly dominates the neighborhood as the campus continues to grow and develop and a lot of the residential homes provide housing for professors and students. The Christian Theological Seminary was formed as an independent educational institution from Butler University in 1958, and in 1966 it opened its own campus adjacent to university. Like the Meridian-Kessler neighborhood, Butler-Tarkington is primarily residential with some small businesses, specialty shops, and restaurants scattered about.

### **The Study Area**

The Primary study area chosen for this report (which is the basis for the *Insite* demographic data shared) is essentially the combination of these two neighborhoods. This is actually much smaller than the wide region from which your current participants come – which was graphically borne out by pin-maps earlier in the report. While it is great to have participants from anywhere, vital churches take seriously the area immediately around their location. They know that their congregation is in the best position to serve and be a spiritual home to those who live, work and attend school nearby. Congregations that have little or no connection to the immediate neighborhood need to ask: What integrity does our congregation have in the eyes of the people who live and work near here? Why does our congregation choose to remain in this location today? Do we have a heart for those in this immediate community?

The area used for your demographics research is captured in the following map.

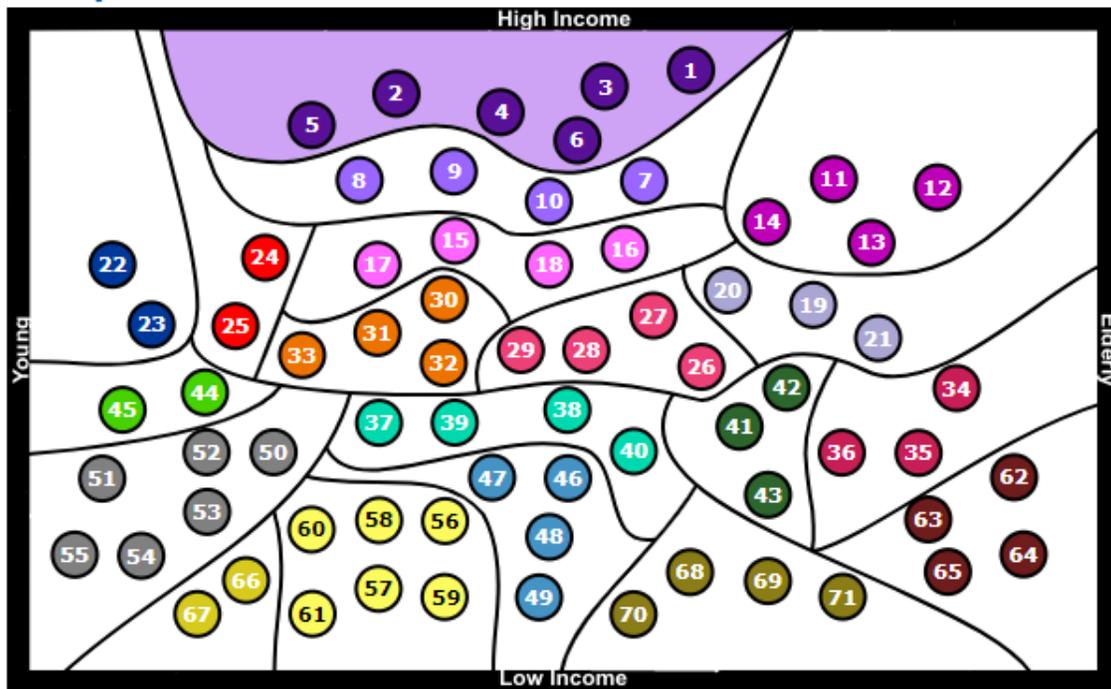


It is also possible to identify key subcultures in the community. It is important to understand people groups or subcultures because it is widely confirmed that the Christian faith travels easiest along existing relational ties, among people who share a similar subculture. Therefore, a congregation needs 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.

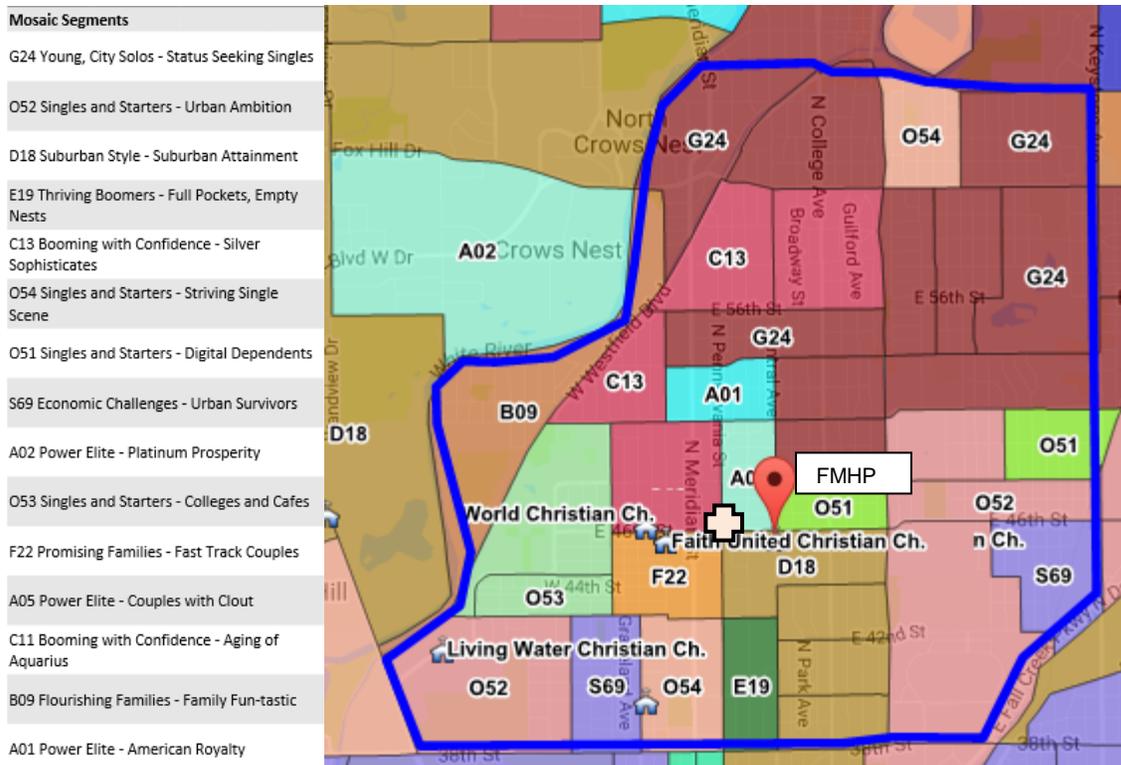
“Mosaic” profiles are lifestyle groupings of people who share similar behaviors, social characteristics, attitudes and values. Designed by Experian (a very large marketing company), there are 71 distinct Mosaic groups (or segments of the population) in the U.S. These groupings are based on multiple socio-economic and life-stage factors.

Each Mosaic group is identified with a number (e.g. 8 is “Babies and Bliss” and 48 is “Gospel and Grits”). 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 71 different lifestyle segments. The distance between the dots and the color of the dots illustrate affinities between the groups. For example, group 7 will relate easiest with groups 6, 10, 16 and 14, but not so easily with groups 55 or 65 (at opposite sides of the chart). This is important for churches to consider so that congregations may better understand the “life-ways” needs of particular sub-groups/cultures who are closest to their location. What we are after is a way for the missional “niche” which is yours to meet the needs of the people in your community.

### Family Tree



The map on the next page shows much of the community around your church. The church can be seen in the middle right. Each of the colored areas is a Census Block Group. Each block group contains an average of 1,500 people. The block groups are color-coded based on the dominant Mosaic profile found among the people in that small area.



The area north of the church is made up mostly of younger adults with up-scale ambitions and taste with a mix of aging boomers, also with upscale expectations. The G-24 blocks (which make up the largest segment of the population in your area) tends NOT to be involved with churches much. It will be hard to craft a strategy for revival by targeting this segment. The C-13 blocks are older, tend to be empty nesters, philanthropic minded, and more inclined toward the church – although not massively so. There are probably some from this group in your church already.

To the west of the church are a considerable number of college age students – to be expected given the proximity of Butler University (O-53). There are also a mix of high-income established families and those on the fast track to get there (F-22), with a pocket of high-end “movers and shakers” of the greater Indianapolis community (A-01 & A-02).

To the east of the church is another mix of younger adults with more modest incomes and expectations who are mostly looking for stability. The O-52 block is made up mostly of African-American singles and single-parents with upward ambitions. They do not have near the resources as the other blocks represented in the area, but they have a great sense of pride and are striving to improve their lives and the prospects for their children. If the church truly wants to become integrated and diverse, there is potential here for growth.

To the south of the church are more young adults with many of the same tastes, ambitions and lifestyles of those north of the church but much more family oriented.

Most of the adults in these homes are 35 or younger and are very strongly into family life. They care about their schools and churches. They are environmentally conscious and global in their outlook. They have favorite causes but would rather write a check than march in a protest. There is potential growth here for the church.

In general, the church is centered in a popular residential area in Indianapolis that has proved steady and desirable for some time. There is currently a change-over in generations taking place and that is bringing with it changes in expectations and lifestyle preferences as well. The lesson for the church to take from this is that ways of being the church that worked for the last 20 years are not necessarily -- indeed probably NOT going to work going forward. If the church wants to connect with these new younger adults and families, it will need to learn who they are, take seriously their expectations and assumptions, and design programs and ministry to meet their needs.

More detailed descriptions for these groups surrounding your congregation (listed in the chart below) can be found in **Appendix C**. For descriptions of the ALL MOSAIC codes, visit the Interactive Mosaic Guide online at: <http://guides.business-strategies.co.uk/mosaicusa2011/html/visualisation.htm>

	2017	2017%	State %	Comp Index	Relative to the IN State Ave.
<b>Mosaic Segments</b>					
G24 Young, City Solos - Status Seeking Singles	3,387	21.9%	0.9%	2551	Well above the state average
O52 Singles and Starters - Urban Ambition	1,531	9.9%	1.7%	571	Well above the state average
D18 Suburban Style - Suburban Attainment	1,344	8.7%	1.7%	501	Well above the state average
E19 Thriving Boomers - Full Pockets, Empty Nests	894	5.8%	0.4%	1631	Well above the state average
C13 Booming with Confidence - Silver Sophisticates	841	5.4%	0.5%	1095	Well above the state average
O54 Singles and Starters - Striving Single Scene	828	5.3%	1.5%	365	Well above the state average
O51 Singles and Starters - Digital Dependents	717	4.6%	4.6%	100	About average for the state
S69 Economic Challenges - Urban Survivors	689	4.4%	2.4%	186	Well above the state average
A02 Power Elite - Platinum Prosperity	609	3.9%	0.8%	504	Well above the state average
O53 Singles and Starters - Colleges and Cafes	591	3.8%	1.2%	312	Well above the state average
F22 Promising Families - Fast Track Couples	572	3.7%	2.3%	163	Well above the state average
A05 Power Elite - Couples with Clout	510	3.3%	0.3%	974	Well above the state average
C11 Booming with Confidence - Aging of Aquarius	495	3.2%	3.4%	94	Somewhat below the state average
B09 Flourishing Families - Family Fun-tastic	468	3.0%	1.1%	280	Well above the state average
A01 Power Elite - American Royalty	310	2.0%	0.5%	403	Well above the state average

When we compare the actual Mosaic profile with the congregation we can see where the congregation has had penetration, and where it has not.

Mosaic Codes	Mosaic Segment	Study Area		Congregation		Analysis	
		2017	2017 %	Cong HH	Cong HH %	Index	Pen Rate
O52	Urban Ambition	19,735	10.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
D18	Suburban Attainment	19,643	10.4%	6	9.4%	90	0.0%
S69	Urban Survivors	15,559	8.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
G24	Status Seeking Singles	12,394	6.6%	12	18.8%	285	0.1%
O54	Striving Single Scene	10,892	5.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
C11	Aging of Aquarius	9,737	5.2%	4	6.3%	121	0.0%
A01	American Royalty	8,750	4.6%	2	3.1%	67	0.0%
A03	Kids and Cabernet	7,769	4.1%	1	1.6%	39	0.0%
C13	Silver Sophisticates	6,142	3.3%	4	6.3%	191	0.1%
R67	Hope for Tomorrow	5,630	3.0%	1	1.6%	53	0.0%
A02	Platinum Prosperity	5,400	2.9%	9	14.1%	486	0.2%
Q62	Reaping Rewards	5,346	2.8%	1	1.6%	57	0.0%
K40	Bohemian Groove	5,247	2.8%	1	1.6%	57	0.0%
E19	Full Pockets, Empty Nests	4,538	2.4%	5	7.8%	325	0.1%
B09	Family Fun-tastic	4,520	2.4%	5	7.8%	325	0.1%
B07	Generational Soup	4,300	2.3%	1	1.6%	70	0.0%
L42	Rooted Flower Power	4,037	2.1%	2	3.1%	148	0.0%
F22	Fast Track Couples	3,568	1.9%	2	3.1%	163	0.1%
O51	Digital Dependents	3,528	1.9%	3	4.7%	247	0.1%
Q65	Senior Discounts	3,285	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
O55	Family Troopers	2,489	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
J34	Aging in Place	2,413	1.3%	1	1.6%	123	0.0%
Q64	Town Elders	2,261	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
K37	Wired for Success	2,143	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
S71	Tough Times	2,124	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
N48	Rural Southern Bliss	1,921	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
E20	No Place Like Home	1,901	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
A04	Picture Perfect Families	1,844	1.0%	1	1.6%	160	0.1%
A05	Couples with Clout	1,807	1.0%	2	3.1%	310	0.1%
B08	Babies and Bliss	1,149	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
O53	Colleges and Cafes	1,105	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
R66	Dare to Dream	1,080	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
P56	Mid-scale Medley	810	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
G25	Urban Edge	643	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
M45	Diapers and Debit Cards	532	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
D16	Settled in Suburbia	491	0.3%	1	1.6%	533	0.2%

Finally, what do participants in the community do for a living compared to the congregation?

	Mosaic Segments Study Area		Congregant Mosaic Segments Weighted by Presence		
<b>Est. Head of HH Occupation</b>					
Retired	14.1%	26,589	14.1%	9	100
Professional/Technical	34.1%	64,510	50.0%	32	146
Sales/Service	33.5%	63,208	23.4%	15	70
Farm-Related	0.4%	682	0.0%	0	0
Blue Collar	12.8%	24,181	9.4%	6	73
Other	5.1%	9,583	3.1%	2	62
	<b>100%</b>	<b>188,753</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	

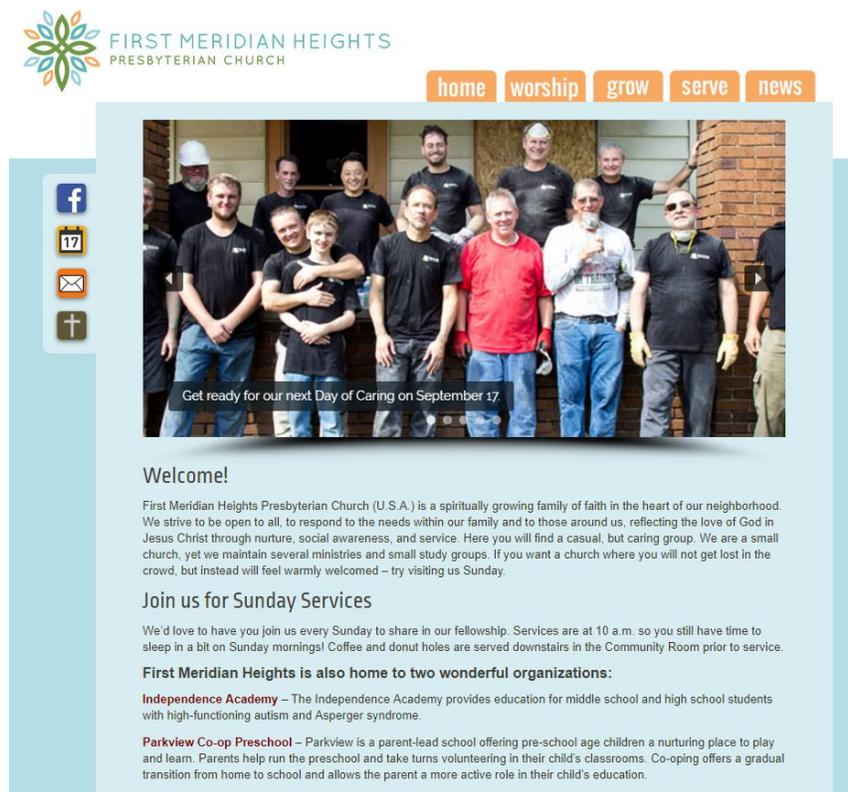
So, what does all this mean and what does it have to do with ministry for your faith community? Some questions to consider when observing this data include:

- 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?

## ONLINE PRESENCE

In today's socially-networked world, many people approach a congregation virtually before ever going to a congregation's physical location. People of all ages are likely to experience the congregation initially through their attempt to find it online.

Because every congregation is unique, there is no one *correct* way that they should make information available in the digital realm. This is good news for congregations with little or no experience with digital age. There are, however, some fundamental things that make it possible for people to gain information about the congregation.



**FIRST MERIDIAN HEIGHTS**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

home worship grow serve news

Get ready for our next Day of Caring on September 17

**Welcome!**

First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a spiritually growing family of faith in the heart of our neighborhood. We strive to be open to all, to respond to the needs within our family and to those around us, reflecting the love of God in Jesus Christ through nurture, social awareness, and service. Here you will find a casual, but caring group. We are a small church, yet we maintain several ministries and small study groups. If you want a church where you will not get lost in the crowd, but instead will feel warmly welcomed – try visiting us Sunday.

**Join us for Sunday Services**

We'd love to have you join us every Sunday to share in our fellowship. Services are at 10 a.m. so you still have time to sleep in a bit on Sunday mornings! Coffee and donut holes are served downstairs in the Community Room prior to service.

**First Meridian Heights is also home to two wonderful organizations:**

**Independence Academy** – The Independence Academy provides education for middle school and high school students with high-functioning autism and Asperger syndrome.

**Parkview Co-op Preschool** – Parkview is a parent-lead school offering pre-school age children a nurturing place to play and learn. Parents help run the preschool and take turns volunteering in their child's classrooms. Co-oping offers a gradual transition from home to school and allows the parent a more active role in their child's education.

The church web-site is generally attractive, easy to navigate, has good pictures, and informative about the congregation. Here are a few considerations to improve your web-presence:

**Physical Address:** Can a visitor find your church? It begins by having your address up front and prominent. Your congregation's website has the church's address and phone number listed in the footer – which means it shows up on every page – a good thing! But, it would be even more helpful if the actual address of the church was in a more prominent place on the front page and in a much larger font. The top right corner is a great place to list your street address. Also, prominently listing your city and state helps visitors make sure they've found the right church. It also has the added benefit of making your church's site more likely to come up when someone searches for a phrase like "Presbyterian churches in Indianapolis, Indiana."

**Contact Information:** As someone visiting your website, how do I get more information? Everywhere your street address is listed, make sure you also have a telephone number and email address listed. A contact email address could easily be added to the footer of your website. You might also consider including hours the church office is staffed.

You have a dedicated Contact Page, but it took the Assessor awhile to discover it. At first it appeared that you didn't have one. Then almost by accident it was found. The lesson is – try to make this more prominent and clear! The information, setup and format of the page itself are excellent.

**Directions Page:** Your "Directions Page" itself is pretty good, but it is buried on the Worship Page. It would be better if there was a link on the Home Page that says something like, "How to Find Us" or "Where We Are." The "link" you have to the Google Map on the Directions Page is great!

**Service Times:** Most people come to church websites for information about attending a worship service. On your site the worship time is listed in the "Join Us for Sunday Services" section and is prominently displayed on the Worship Page. You might consider adding the worship time prominently in a side-bar on the Home Page.

**What to Expect Page:** Churches that *expect* visitors and go out of their way to be intentionally welcoming of visitors tend to be the ones who *get* visitors. Once you have made sure people know WHERE your church is and WHAT TIME worship is, it is important to let them know what to expect when they come. Your Worship Page does a reasonably good job of this and is linked to the Home Page – all positives! There is a clear and positive description of the service, pictures of a "real" service, information about child-care, and a clear description about your church's practice of communion. You might want to add information about the best way to enter the sanctuary.

**Belief Statement:** Before visiting a church, many people want to know what the church believes. Visitors expect some sort of creedal or doctrinal statement to be available on the website. It isn't necessary to put this on the Home Page, but works well on the "About Us" page. The "Welcome" message on the Home Page does this to some extent, but probably not to the degree that some of your contacts would like to know.

**Pastor and Staff Pages:** On many church websites, the most viewed page after the Home Page is the Pastor's Page. Having a brief biography and contact information is important (as you have on our page). The most helpful addition would be a picture. A brief welcome message from the Pastor is also a good thing.

**About Us Page:** The most likely visitors to this page are people who know little or nothing about your church, so this is your chance to make a great first impression. This is your chance to give visitors a glimpse into the story of what God is up to in his community.

Possibilities to include might be: a greeting to visitors, a little about the church, a link to the denomination, a link to the Belief Page, an invitation to worship (including services times), a link to the pastor's page, and a welcoming video. A little about church history is OK, but keep it short – a paragraph or two. Primarily what you want to tell people is the story of what God is doing here and now.

Your website includes most of these items, but they are scattered about here and there. Consideration should be given to a dedicated "About Us" page.

**Pictures:** Lots of pictures are good, but there are a few guidelines to keep in mind. The point of having pictures is to give visitors a glimpse into your character as a faith community. It is nice to have a picture or two of the church building on the site to help people recognize where they're going, but the building should NOT be the most prominent thing on the site. The church is about what God is doing among people not about the building.

The most important thing about pictures is that they should be authentic. Using church stock photos from the internet might look professional, but it is basically false advertising. At the same time it is important to use quality photos. Poorly lit, out of focus photos from the church message send a message that you don't care much about how our website looks. The goal is to authentically put the church's best foot forward.

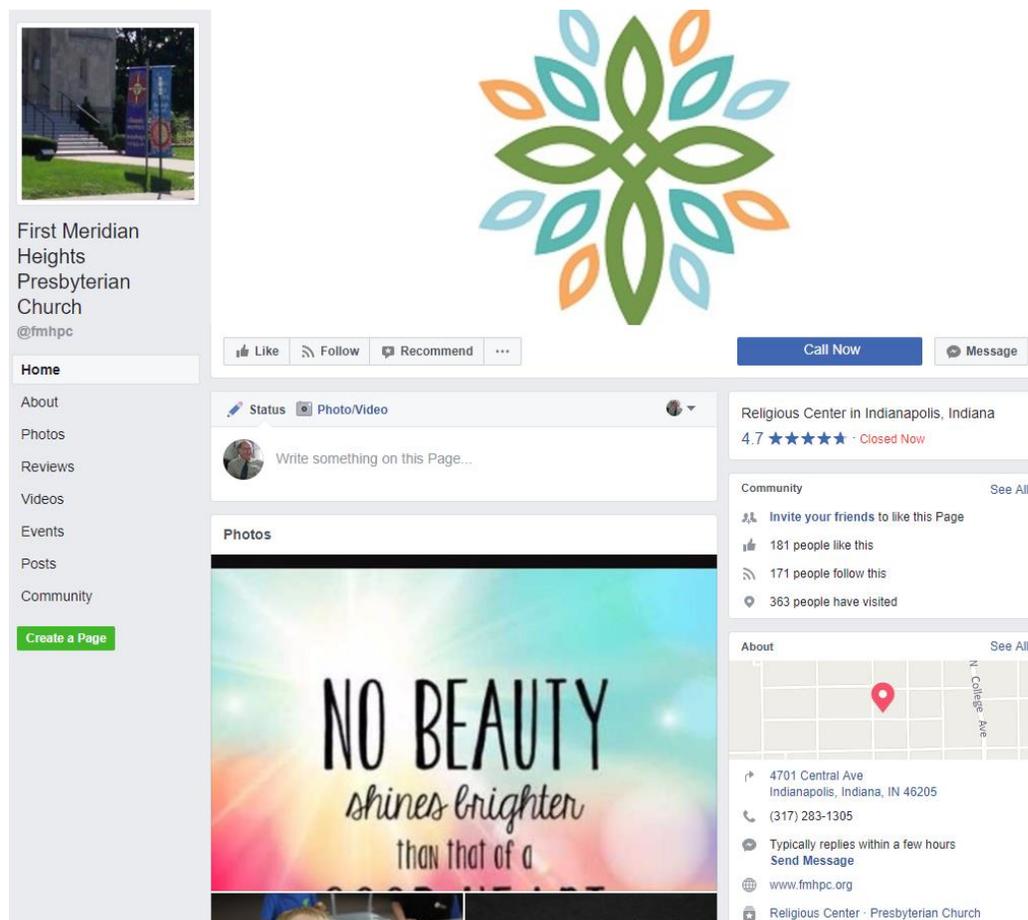
The few pictures your website has are of good quality and seem pretty authentic – at least where it counts most. But, if I am a visitor I would want to see more. Tell me more about the story of your church with quality, authentic, and recent pictures!

**Overall First Impression:** The website is likely the first impression a visitor has of your church. Take a minute and look at your site as though you have never seen it before. What draws your attention first? What would you expect to find that's not there? Better yet, try getting someone NOT from your church, or even someone not at all church affiliated to look at your site and ask them what they think.

## **FACEBOOK**

While your website is the “face” of your church and provides an important first impression, your Facebook page may be one of your most important tools for ongoing communication to your members and attenders. You can update this resource more easily, frequently, interact with people more, and provide dynamic and current information about your church and your ministry. It is also a great tool to expose potential guests to your church. While your church Facebook page will never replace your website, it may become a more vital and useful tool.

**Set Up:** The page looks clean and good. Using the church logo as the page's profile photo is perfect. The timeline photo is also good.



The screenshot displays the Facebook page for First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church. The page layout includes a left-hand navigation menu with options like Home, About, Photos, Reviews, Videos, Events, Posts, and Community. The main content area shows the church's profile picture (a building), a cover photo featuring a colorful floral logo and the text "NO BEAUTY shines brighter than that of a", and a post prompt "Write something on this Page...". The right-hand sidebar provides details about the church, including its location in Indianapolis, Indiana, contact information (phone number and website), and community statistics such as 181 likes and 171 followers.

**The Basics:** The church name, address, phone number, web address and link, are all prominent and visible. Directions to the church and days and times of services are all on the About page. There are several recent posts and lots of information about upcoming events. It is clear someone is paying attention to this site.

**To Consider:** Create posts at least daily in one of the following areas:

- Status Updates
  - New groups that are starting, with a photo of the resource being studied or the people leading it.
  - A scripture quote from the most recent sermon.
  - A link to a recent sermon video or audio download.
  - A weeknight activity.
  - The upcoming message title and scripture passage.
- Photos and Videos
  - Baptisms.
  - Video testimonies.
  - People serving, teaching, and helping in the church or community.
  - Albums of Vacation Bible School, retreats, camps, and/or mission trips.
  - Video clips from worship, a skit, or something funny from an event.

**What's going on?** When promoting a seasonal worship service, concern, community event, or any other occasion, create a Facebook Event. Include the following information:

- A clear title for the event.
- An accurate date and time.
- A simple description of the event.

Once you have created the event, use the “invite friends” tool to send invitations to your Facebook friends. Others may also invite their friends to this event. You may add more photos and videos to promote the event as they become available. It is a great way to build momentum.

**Build Community:** Don't overlook inviting your church members, family, and other friends to “like” your Facebook page. Use your church bulletin, emails, and posters to invite people to like your page. The larger the number of “likes” or “fans” you have, the larger your reach.

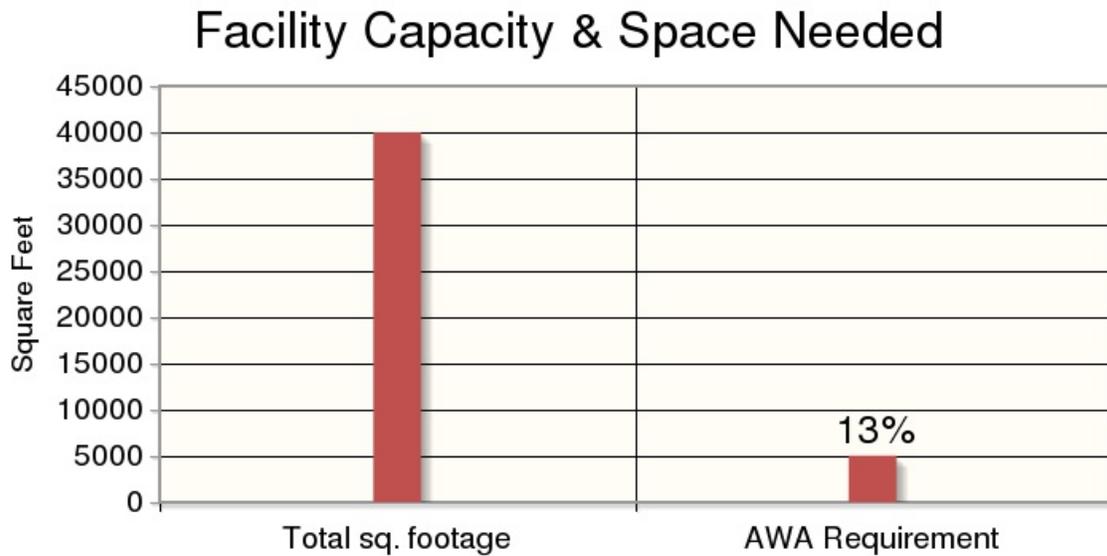
## **FACILITIES EXAMINATION**

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 the vitality of the congregation.



The church’s facilities are contained in one building located on a 1.02-acre lot. It is estimated that the facilities are approximately 40,000 sq. feet in size. The property has a value of about \$8.2 million.

Based on Average Worship Attendance, a congregation of this size would have adequate space in a building of 5000 sq. feet, meaning that the current congregation is only using 13% of its current space. This is demonstrated on the following chart.



#### **THE SACRED WALK**

Worshippers begin what has been called “the sacred walk” the moment their foot hits pavement as they get out of their vehicle to begin the entrance into the building. This walk says volumes to members and visitors alike about the self-esteem and vitality of the congregation. The “sacred walk” helps worshippers prepare for the experience of

worship at your church. For that reason, this walk should guide the worshiper clearly and directly —and as pleasantly as possible—to the sanctuary or even to office spaces. Signage and a clear, safe walkway are essential to this experience. The impression on guests continues inside the building. While they might not expect lavish facilities, guests will be made more welcome and comfortable by cleanliness, neatness and general care for the facility. Unkempt facility and grounds send an unintentional message: “This is not a place even WE like very much.” Clearly, that is not a very effective evangelism tool.

What follows is the impression the assessor had upon embarking on the “sacred walk” at the church.

### LOCATION AND OUTSIDE APPEARANCE

The church is located at the corner of Central Ave and 47<sup>th</sup> street, north of downtown Indianapolis about three miles. Central is a busy street but not a main artery. A few blocks either east (College Ave) or west (Meridian) of the church are main traffic thoroughfares going north and south. The east-west streets in the area around the church tend not to be long thru-streets but rather a jumble of short bursts. For example, you can only travel a couple of blocks on 47<sup>th</sup> Street either way from the church before you are forced to go either north or south to find a thru-street. Fortunately, 46<sup>th</sup> Street provides a thru-way to the south and 52<sup>nd</sup> street does the same to the north. It is surrounded mostly by well-cared for, desirable homes built mostly in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A public school borders the church on the south. So, the church is not isolated by any measure, but it is also not on a main drag. The “drive-

by visibility” of the church could be better, but it could also be a lot worse.

The front of the church is very clean, open and impressive from the curb. It is hard to NOT notice this building! The “front door” leads to the sanctuary, but hardly anyone

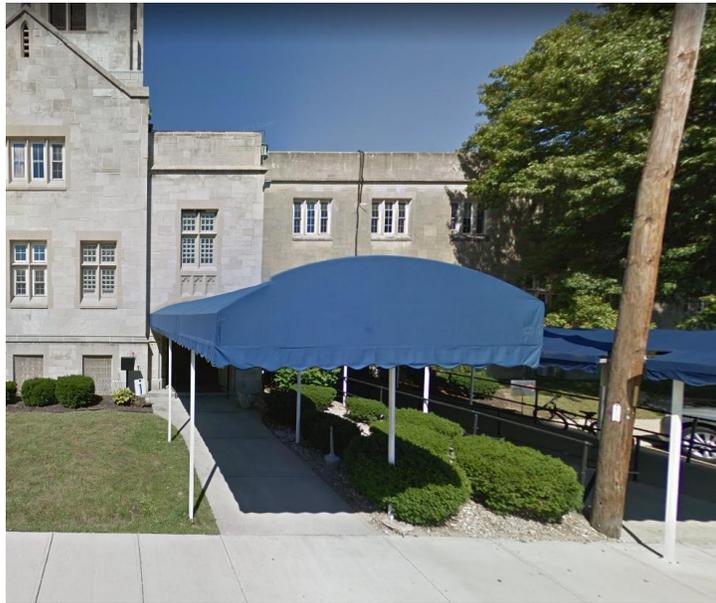


Front entrance – used by few people to access the church.

Sign is attractive, but lettering is way too small to be read or noticed much by passing traffic.

accesses the church this way. This is partly due to the steps and mostly due to parking which is all on the south and east side of the building. Therefore, most people enter the church from the southside-middle of the complex.

The entrance most used to access the building is covered with an attractive canopy which provides welcome shelter in getting from the street to the church during incimate weather. However, there is nothing obvious – other than the canopy itself – to alert a first-time visitor that this is the way in. A noticable sign by the sidewalk would be helpful.



One of the unique features of the complex is a community garden space set aside on the north side of the building. It is large, well-organized, attractive and productive. Several members of the church contribute to the development and maintenance of the garden. Produce is shared with the local food pantry and others in need as well as with members of the congregation.



## PARKING LOT AND WALKWAYS

Driving habits for each congregation vary widely. Some congregations average only one person per car parked in the lot; others pack in families. Still others are located in dense urban areas and pride themselves for being within walking distance of the local public transportation. The place in which a car is parked, and the control the church has over that parking also determines capacity. Architects have developed some formulas in estimating the worship capacity of your church, based on parking. Based on the location of the congregation's identified parking, capacity is calculated on the chart to the right.



The chart would suggest that the church only has a capacity for 90 participants based on its available parking. This is true if you consider only the parking spots on the property and adjacent street parking. But, when you consider additional street parking nearby in the neighborhood and use of 30+ parking spots available to the church from the school next door then, parking really is not much of an issue for most events at current participation levels and even allow some room for growth. However, if the sanctuary were full on a regular basis and/or for other special events, adequate parking could conceivably be an issue.

The walkways to the church are wide and well-maintained. The landscaping around the church is attractive and adds to the pleasantness and attractiveness of the building.

## SANCTUARY

The sanctuary is attractive, bright, and well-maintained. It is the picture of classic, traditional church space. The nave is long and narrow with high, vaulted ceilings. The sanctuary main floor itself will hold about 300 people. The chancel sports an electronic organ, a baby-grand piano, and space for a worship band. There are TV screens mounted on each side of the chancel for worship projection purposes. The screens seem small for the size of the sanctuary. The stained-glass windows are full of color and appear to be in good repair. A balcony at the back of the sanctuary holds approximately 100.

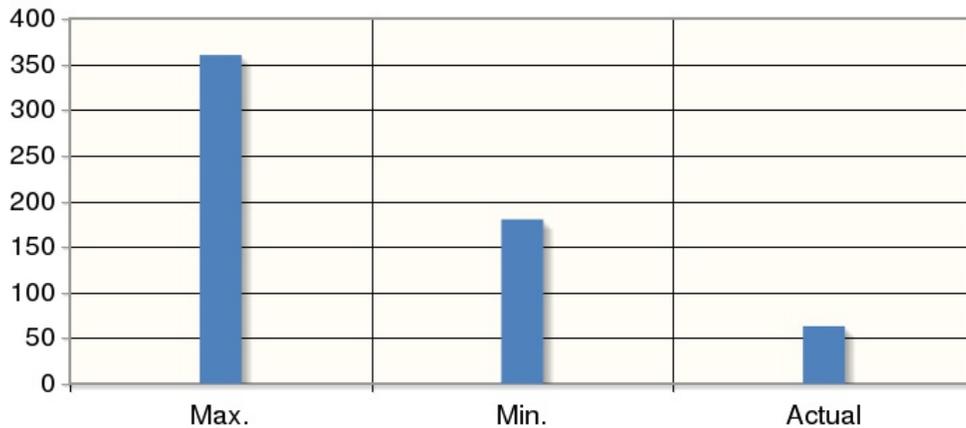


Based on generally accepted measurements, we know that when a sanctuary is more than 80% capacity (comfortably full) on a regular basis, it will impact worship attendance with an overcrowded feeling. In the same manner, if a sanctuary is less than 40% of capacity it will also impact worship attendance as participants feel it is uncomfortably empty.



It is estimated that the sanctuary has a total seating capacity of 450. Based on the Average Worship Attendance of 63 the current sanctuary usage is at about 15%, well under the appropriate capacity range. To feel even “comfortably empty” this sanctuary should have 150-180 in attendance.

### Sanctuary Capacity



### GATHERING, FELLOWSHIP AND EDUCATION SPACES

The fellowship hall is located in the basement level below the sanctuary. It is large, open, and bright – especially for a basement. It is served by a good-sized and well-equipped kitchen up to modern health code standards. The hall can comfortably serve 200-250 with a maximum occupancy of about 300. It is used for a variety of meetings and activities by the church, outside groups (such as AA and the Boy Scouts), and both the Independence Academy and the Parkview Co-op Preschool.



The classrooms are mostly located in the 1956 addition to the back of the sanctuary. These spaces appear to be structurally sound, well appointed, and up to date. The third floor is used primarily by the Independence Academy, including 7 classrooms and 2



bathrooms. There is also a library and a small snack kitchen on this level. The second includes Sunday School classrooms used by the church, a chapel that seats about 100, a “Bride’s Room” used for dressing and “hanging out” by the bridal party before weddings, and two classrooms used by the Independence Academy. Both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors have 2 bathrooms each. The basement or ground floor has three classrooms used by the

preschool, a large storage area that once was an apartment, a large youth room for high school age, one large general storage room and an additional storage room for the Presbyterian Women’s Organization, and the custodian’s office and workshop.

While in most churches there are always improvement and upkeep issues with such spaces, this building (well-used as it is) appears to be in good shape and maintained. There are no obvious deferred maintenance issues on the interior.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER SPACES**

The church offices and administrative areas are currently located on the “ground floor” or second level of the church. These are pleasant, large and functional rooms, well



decorated and appointed. The computer systems are up-to-date and the church has a wireless wifi connection available throughout the building.

The Pastor’s office is likewise spacious and attractive with plenty of bookshelf and storage space.

There is also a very nice parlor area on this level which can be used as

meeting space, hold small receptions and/or parties, or serve as classroom space or a small-group meeting place.

## SYSTEMS

The mechanical systems of the church are all in good shape and well maintained. The church employs a custodian who keeps on top of any issues and keeps good maintenance notes and up-to-date inspection records.

The wiring checks out as far as correct polarity. The main boiler is new as of January 2017. The mechanical room is as clean, well-organized, free of clutter and easy to negotiate as any this Assessor has seen! The kitchens throughout the complex all have operable fire-extinguishers and/or sprinkler systems above the stove.



## DEFERRED MAINTENANCE ITEMS

Some congregations have poorly tended facilities. These facilities are not just a “turn off” for guests and members. They also can become a costly money pit that defers mission. Preventive maintenance is normally less costly than emergency maintenance. Unfortunately, that lesson may not be learned until it’s too late. Many congregations fall behind on maintenance due to declining funds and are then forced into making emergency repairs they simply cannot afford. We noted these items that the church appears to have “put off”.

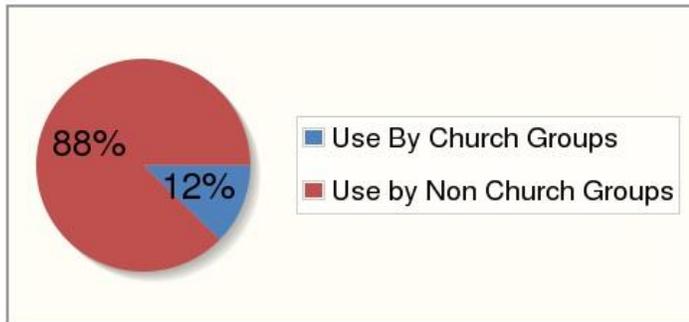


- There appears to be work that needs to be done with tuck-pointing and sealing several areas on the exterior of the church.

### USE OF THE FACILITIES

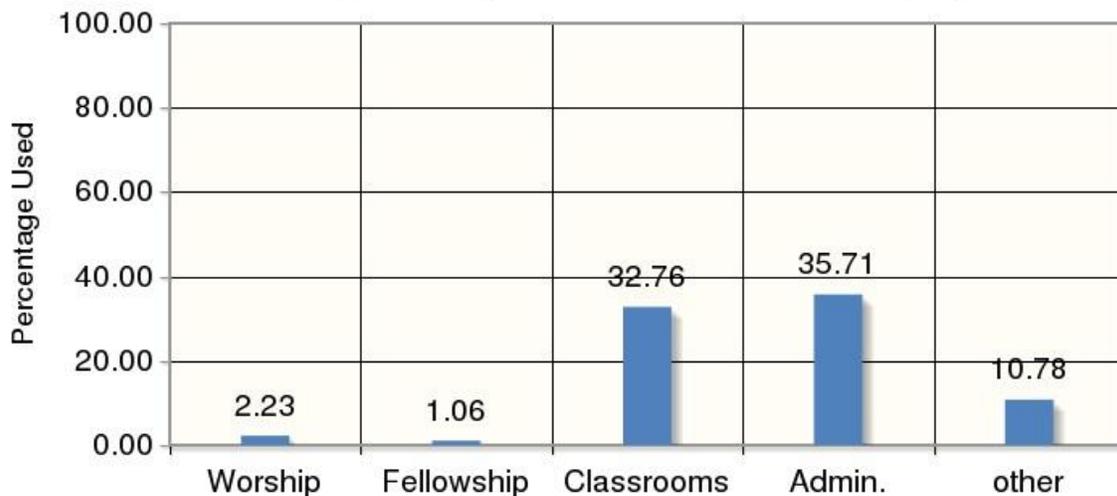
The church building is a valuable resource for both the congregation and the community. A good indicator of a congregation's willingness to engage a community is by looking at how the church uses this resource. Based on total building use, the graph below demonstrates the percentage of total usage by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

### Total Building Use



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.

### Building Use (Based on 12 hr days)



## HIGH USE BY OUTSIDE COMMUNITY WITH LITTLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONGREGATION

A quick look at these charts demonstrates that the congregation is allowing community groups to use the facility to a high degree. This in part accounts for the high level of classroom and administrative use of the facility in comparison to other spaces. The high volume of participants and hours of use by the Independence Academy and the Parkview Co-op Preschool also skew the results a bit toward the 88% use by outside groups. Still, it is clear that the majority of the use of your church facility is by others. If this trend continues the mission of the church will by default become to maintain a facility for other people and groups to use.

## 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.

This table indicates the income sources for your church in relationship to congregational offerings. At the minimum, a congregation should support its expenses with at least 70% of its income coming from offerings. Congregations that rely too heavily on outside sources of income will often compromise their ministry for the needs of those who provide outside income or become overly dependent on endowment income.



<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>\$239,924</b>	<b>\$259,792</b>	<b>\$264,476</b>
<b>Interest from Investments</b>	<b>\$246,235</b>	<b>\$242,660</b>	<b>\$230,298</b>
<b>Building Use Income</b>	<b>\$35,050</b>	<b>\$34,778</b>	<b>\$36,755</b>
<b>Fundraisers</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Transfers from Other Accts</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$521,209</b>	<b>\$537,230</b>	<b>\$531,529</b>

As the charts show, in each of the last three years the offering support fell well below the 70% line. Indeed, over half of the church’s income each year is coming from endowment and building use income. In other words, the church’s ministry is being funded mostly from sources other than contributions from its members.

### **CONGREGATIONAL INCOME AND GIVING**

Based on profile data of the congregation, the combined household income of this congregation is \$7,890,291 or about \$123,000 per household. *(see data in Appendix D, pg. 7&8)* The congregation’s members contributed just under \$240,000 in 2016. On average, households contributed at a rate just over 3% of their income.

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.

**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% of their income on salary support. Experience has shown that congregations that exceed 50% in this category are rarely over paying their pastor.

**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% of their income. Congregations that are not “right-sized” find themselves paying more for facilities, usually at the expense of their program.

**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% 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.

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

## Current Operating Expenses

Current Operating Expenses		Percent of Expenses	Percent Recommended
Salary Support	\$301,500	66.44%	50%
Building/Admin	\$109,953	24.23%	25%
Program	\$20,287	4.47%	15%
Mission	\$22,057	4.86%	10%
<b>Total Expense:</b>	<b>\$453,797</b>		

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

<b>Property Value</b>	\$8,230,000
<b>Investments</b>	\$0
<b>Savings/Reserve</b>	\$135,000
<b>Memorial Funds</b>	\$0
<b>Endowments</b>	\$4,924,707
<b>Checking</b>	\$26,781
Other (identify)	\$0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$13,316,488</b>

## FINANCIAL CAPACITY

In light of the financial information above, this congregation has a **MIXED FINANCIAL CAPACITY** for ministry. The giving of the congregation (over \$3800/average worship attendance) is nearly 4 times the benchmark rate recommended. Outstanding by any evaluation! But, it also indicates that the congregation is probably pretty tapped out in its giving. Likely there is not much opportunity for growth here. Most people are giving what they can give – and then some. Even so, the congregation is failing by a wide margin to keep above the 70% line of offering support for expenses. The congregation is increasingly dependent upon endowments, reserves, and income from outside groups using the church to keep operations going. While this may be sustainable for a good while given the church's resources, it erodes at the heart of the church and is not healthy. At stake here are questions of the church's sense of vision and mission and how it wants to use its resources (building, endowments, contributions) to do ministry. How the leadership of the church helps the congregation to find its path through this interesting mix of factors will likely determine the future viability of the congregation.

### SUMMARY

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

#### History and 10-year indicators

First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church has a significant history and presence in the Meridian-Kessler area of Indianapolis. At its height many of the leading individuals and families of the city were a part of the congregation. It has a history of being a leader in the community and the Presbytery.

The average worship attendance and membership numbers have been in decline for several years, but are particularly troublesome the last three years. The same can be said of several other key indicators.

Congregational giving has been fairly steady but also shows signs of decline. In one sense giving is good compared to your number of giving units. Nevertheless, contributions have failed to keep up with the Consumer Price Index and is not providing a large enough percentage of the expenses (less than 50%) to be sustainable over a long period of time. This despite the fact that the congregation's members are giving at an incredibly generous rate. In other words, the church is relying too heavily upon endowment income and outside sources of income to pay its way.

Additions show some positive sign – but here the statistics are too sketchy to draw much insight. The most reliable statistic for gaging congregational participation and vitality is Average Worship Attendance, and it is clearly in decline as noted before.

No single event or factor is the sole explanation for the downward trend of numbers. There are several issues at play: the gradual aging of the congregation, turnover of staff, the changing demographics of the neighborhood (generally getting younger) and with it changing spiritual appetites and practices of potential constituents. All have contributed.

### **Facilities Evaluation**

The church property is really very striking and impressive. It appears clean, well-cared for, and is appealing. There is some maintenance to be done on the outside structure regarding tuck-pointing and sealing, but otherwise there is not much deferred maintenance to be concerned about.

The mechanical systems and infrastructure of the church appears to be in really good condition. There are some exterior signage issues that need to be addressed going forward. People need to know WHO you are and WHERE to go to find the sanctuary, offices, classrooms, and meeting hall. Don't leave your guests "guessing" where to come in!

The biggest question with regard to the building has to do not with its condition, but with how it "fits" with your future? Currently your church complex is mostly used by outside groups. Is this the guiding vision of the congregation? To increasingly become a gathering of friends who worship together once-a-week and maintain a building for the benefit of others? If not, how can the building be altered, changed, or adapted to fit the ministry needs of the congregation as it moves into the future? Do you tear down the sanctuary and build something to fit your future needs? Do you try to sell the building and relocate? Do you combine building resources with another congregation? Is the building a mission tool for the church? Or is maintaining the building the mission? How the congregation answers these questions will largely determine the church's future.

### **Congregational Gaps**

It is clear that a disproportionate amount of the church is 55 and over (58%) and has been a part of the congregation for 5 years or more (83%). Perhaps the biggest challenge to the church moving forward – to doing "something bold" – will be overcoming human nature to keep things the way we are comfortable with and used to doing them. Younger and newer members are needed for their energy, vitality, connections to the community, and relevance to the future. The good news is there is a small but significant core of people who are active in the congregation from the generations the church needs to attract in order to grow. Nothing attracts young people like – other young people. The opinions, ideas, needs, spiritual hunger, and gifts of this core of younger folks in the congregation are to be nurtured and consulted and – most important of all – taken seriously for the congregation to have some idea about how to move forward.

## **Finances**

The financial status of the church is not at a sustainable place for the long-term prospects of the congregation, despite the generous level of giving by the church's individual members. Not that the church will run out of money soon thanks to a considerable endowment. The point is, the church is relying too much on endowments and outside income to be healthy financially.

## **Vision**

Given the size of the church's endowment funds, the congregation has a considerable cash-stream available for growth and development IF it chooses to redirect its use. In the future some of these funds may need to be turned loose for other purposes -- to "do something bold" – in terms of growing new and viable ministries. This, again, is a decision the congregation needs to wrestle with in order to be intentional about its future. The church is structured in terms of building and staff and programs for a much larger congregation with different assumptions about "how" to be church than what is required to grow and develop in new ways. To be sustainable, the congregation either needs to grow into the structure it has (which usually means trying to do better what you have always done and expecting different results), or change the structure to fit who you are now AND to enable growth. This will not be easy. Change is hard work. It requires vision, conviction, unity of purpose, and the courage to take risks. This will likely be THE test of the mettle, creativity, faith, and will of the congregation.

## **Programs, Mission, Values, and Other Intangibles**

One of the largest assets of the congregation is the positive spirit evident in the members of the congregation. This was especially apparent at the "Appreciative Inquiry" session. Over half the AWA attended the meeting. Over and over there were expressions of appreciation for the sense of support and community within the congregation. When asked to characterize the life-giving nature of the church, in multiple ways those in attendance responded, "We care about each other." Those who are involved are active and committed to the church.

## **Connecting to the Neighborhood**

One of the central issues in the congregation's resurgence will be finding ways to reconnect with the neighborhood. This is underscored by the fact that less than a third of the congregation lives within the *Executive Insite Report* study/target area. So how does the congregation go about doing that?

Some clues and suggestions can be found in the *Executive Insite Report* itself. (See copy.) The study/target area population is projected to grow about 2% over the next 10 years. Most of this gain will be in terms of Families (projected at 2.6%). Of these families, 68% are two-parent/couple families and 32% are single-parent families. The largest age-sector growth is projected to be in children ages 5-17 (growth of 4.6%) and adults 65 and over (growth of 3.5%). This could suggest a two-pronged strategy that

focuses on development of ministry that responds to the needs of these two very different groups.

In this respect, the information on page 15 of the *Executive Insite Report* could provide very helpful to the congregation. Here is listed a variety of “Religious Program or Ministry Preferences” of the study/target area. The areas of interest are listed with a percentage of respondents that indicated such was either “Very Important” or “Moderately Important.” A chart follows (provided by the Assessor) that shows the highest rated interests in order based on the combined total percentage of the two indicators, with the “Very Important” column weighted a little bit heavier (1.5 points for each percentage point as opposed to 1.0 for the “Moderately Important” column).

Ministry Preferences	Mod Impt	Very Impt	Weighted Pct
Opportunities for Volunteering	51.3	21.8	84.0
Traditional Worship Service	41.0	24.2	77.3
Holiday Programs / Activities	51.0	16.8	76.2
Adult Social Activities	53.4	13.3	73.4
Family Oriented Activities	41.2	20.7	72.3
Involvement in Social Causes	47.5	15.1	70.2
Contemporary Worship Services	41.2	16.8	66.4
Cultural Programs (music, drama, art)	45.9	11.5	63.2
Seniors / Retiree Activities	39.2	15.0	61.7
Bible or Scripture Study / Prayer Groups	35.0	17.2	60.8
Personal / Family Counseling	41.1	12.7	60.2
Spiritual Discussion Groups	42.2	11.8	59.9
Social Justice Advocacy	44.0	9.9	58.9
Crisis Support Groups	40.9	11.5	58.2
Youth Social Activities	34.8	15.4	57.9

This chart is revealing in many ways. It clearly shows how residents of the area have interest in various social causes and advocacy groups. Volunteering is important as are social activities for the various age groups represented. Interestingly enough, there is a strong interest in both “Traditional” worship services (77.3 score) and “Contemporary” worship services (66.4 score). There is a need for and an opportunity to grow ministry with both. There is also an opportunity to respond to needs with Bible Study, spiritual discussion groups, and prayer groups – but in innovative settings and ways – not necessarily at the church. (NOTE: For example, many churches have had success with sponsoring “Pub-Talk” programs – with discussions and studies based at local bars or wineries.) Notice that “family” oriented activities and programs also rank high and are prominently mentioned.

There is much fertile ground to be explored here for a congregation that has insight, creativity, the willingness to take risks, and a heart for ministry.

### **Other Churches in Similar Circumstances**

This report does not come to you in a vacuum. All you have to do is look at a map of your area and you will see there are several congregations near you – some even Presbyterian – many of which are in similar circumstances. Moving forward in a viable way does not have to be alone. There may well be ways to collaborate on various programs and ministries with other congregations. To some degree this is already happening. So, there are some natural avenues of conversation to explore. In some communities, churches from different denominations have even chosen to share building space and are thriving. The point is, to think boldly and out of the box. Most of the time the constraints we experience in a church are those we put on ourselves.

### **Choosing the Future**

The purpose of the Epiphany 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 slowing losses, while the ultimate conclusion is closure.

**Note: A decision to ‘do nothing’ is still a decision. And by choosing this option, the church will be sending an important message to people in the church (from the newest member to the pastor) that “status quo” is the desired choice.**

2. **Mission Redefinition:** Sometimes a church has resources, and gifted people who have believed their role was to maintain its members, rather than think about transforming lives in the community and in the church. Maybe the church has been focused on maintaining traditional programs that no longer meet the needs of their neighbors. Mission Redefinition is more than writing a new mission statement. It gets to the core of seeking to live a new way as a congregation, and engage in new practices. This option requires energy, ingenuity, creativity and spiritual depth. It creates a new scorecard for success.
3. **Redevelopment:** This option can take numerous forms and hybrids. They include: relocation, reaching out through a parallel start to a new demographic profile (that matches the community in which the church resides), a restart, an adoption, 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 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 faithful, lasting Christian witness. It is an ultimate act of faith to make this decision – but one that often comes with a sense of relief in knowing the church has not died. It is instead living on in perpetual witness for future generations.

The next stages of the Epiphany process are designed to help the congregation weave through the issues that will lead to making an informed and faithful decision about its future.

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS: FIRST MERIDIAN HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

We share these possible “future scenarios” base on the assessment you have just read. Each of these scenarios below is written from the perspective of the future. They are not written to tell the congregation “what to do.” They are intended to spark your imagination for what is possible. They are offered as a way for the church to envision its future and the type of decisions facing the congregation.

### **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #1: Redefine the Mission**

***Saturday, July 18, 2022...***

It is a beautiful Saturday afternoon in mid-July. Once again First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church is co-sponsoring what has quickly become a popular, can't miss event for the summer. Working with Northwood Christian Church, Fairview Presbyterian Church, Common Ground Christian Church, Life Community AME Church, and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Meridian-Kessler Family Fun Festival is in full swing. There is face painting, games, crafts, and of course a 'jumper house' for the kids, a martial arts demonstration, and a D-J spinning music non-stop. A local dance studio is due anytime to put on a little show, and the hi-light to which everyone is looking forward: the *Dancing with the Pastors* competition. All the clergy at the churches have agreed to participate.

“Whew,” said Rev. Jones to Sally Smith, an Elder at First Meridian Heights. “These kids are going to run me ragged.”

“You had better rest up, Pastor. You don’t want to be tired for the dance competition.”

Rev. Jones groaned. “I can’t believe I agreed to be a part of that. I haven’t danced a step in 30 years.” After taking a breath, he asked, “How many folks do you think have come through so far?”

“The last count I heard was in the 400s, but who knows for sure. Anyway, it’s a lot more people than last year. It is amazing how much this event has grown in four years.”

“It’s amazing how much the church has grown in four years,” Rev. Jones quipped back.

“Yes, absolutely,” Sally Smith agreed.

Four years earlier First Meridian Height’s participated in a Epiphany program to help discern its future. It gave the congregation the opportunity to take an honest appraisal of itself, to look at the needs of the neighborhood in which they were nestled, and begin to make some significant changes.

“You know, we have the Epiphany process to thank for this,” said Rev. Jones.

“With all due respect, Pastor, I think we mostly have you, the church’s leadership, and the will of the congregation to try some new things to thank,” responded Sally. “And besides, we had this event in the planning long before Epiphany came along.”

“Well, yeah, I know. And, certainly without the congregation behind us we couldn’t have done much; and the leadership of the church has been great. But, still, without the Epiphany process, I fear we would have just gone on doing what we have always done while expecting different results. And it seemed to help interject some energy and enthusiasm and hope into us that has carried over into everything we do. I’m not sure this event would be what it has become without that. I hate to think where we would be now if we had not gone through that process.”

The study the congregation did helped confront what they already knew but few were willing to say – the church had been declining for years. Membership growth was negligent, worship attendance was going down, and increasingly the congregation was

depending on endowments and investments to pay the bills. It was not a formula for sustainability.

“It was a lot of hard work,” commented Sallie Smith.

“Indeed it was,” agreed Rev. Jones.

Redefining the mission of the church is not easy. It requires a lot of talking and listening to each other – a lot of honesty, a lot of prayer and being open to the leading of God’s Spirit. Sometimes it is painful. In order to become something new you have to let go of some things you hold dear because of their importance to the past. But, the past is not the future. Sometimes progress is slow. Sometimes it can seem like you are *lost in the wilderness* like the ancient children of Israel just going in circles. It requires patience and a lot of trust in the process; and good leaders who keep the church focused and together as well as offering encouragement along the way.

“And without the Epiphany program, I don’t think we ever would have started the Celebration Service on Saturday nights,” Rev. Jones added.

“Oh yes, that contemporary service we do. How is that going?” inquired Sally.

“It is going great,” said Rev. Smith. “You know, for years we have been a bit schizophrenic with our Sunday morning worship. It’s not really a contemporary service, but not really traditional either. Now we have a clearly contemporary service on Saturday nights and a relaxed traditional service Sunday morning. It allows both to be what they want to be.”

“I think so too,” said Sally. “The only problem is I like both, and kind of bounce back and forth between the two.”

“Nothing wrong with that,” said Rev. Jones. “Part of the beauty of having a Saturday night time is that you not only have a choice of style between the services, but also day and time. People really don’t have to choose a preference, they can go to whatever fits their mood or schedule for that week.”

“I’ve heard rumors you considering some other options, too?” Sally inquired.

“Well, there’s been some talk,” Rev. Jones admitted. Maybe sometimes offering a *Classic Celebration Service* with a String Quartet leading the music, or a *Country and Bluegrass Celebration Service*. Who knows. Now that we have people used to trying new things, the ideas just keep coming.”

“You can say that again,” Sally exclaimed. “I have a hard time keeping up with all the new ministries. I will say this, that study we did sure helped us identify with our neighborhood more, helped us understand what the needs are of the people who live here. Every week it seems like there is some meeting, program, event, or celebration happening that connects with our neighbors. That wasn’t happening before.”

“I know,” agreed Rev. Jones. “We sort of got focused on ourselves for a while.”

“We have changed a lot,” said Sally Smith. “But, Rev., you know what has changed the most?” Rev. Jones didn’t offer an answer, wondering what she was going to say. “Our hearts,” she said.

Rev. Jones smiled and nodded in agreement. “You know,” he said, “This church has always had a desire and a history for helping others. It’s just in the DNA of the congregation. It feels good to be making a difference in this community again.”

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #2: Join with Another Congregation and Open a New Church**

### ***Sunday, July 19, 2023...***

It is a beautiful Sunday morning in mid-July. People are beginning to exit from the worship service at the new church site recently opened in the Meridian-Kessler area of Indianapolis.

“Wow, what a great service,” said Pastor Jones. “How many do you think we had in worship today? “

“I counted about 170,” said Janet Johnson, one of the Elder’s of the church. Then she added, “But, it is hard to get a good count with all the kids moving around. They don’t sit still very well. It’s like counting a room full of cats.”

“A hundred-seventy? Wow! Who would have ever thought?” mused Pastor Jones.

“It’s been quite a journey,” reflected Elder Johnson. “I have to confess, I didn’t give us much of a chance.”

Six years ago, the people of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church made a bold decision to close-out the nearly fifty-year ministry they had at their previous location and join with another struggling congregation to see if together they could do something new. Pastor Jones had just written an article about the church’s journey for the Presbytery’s Newsletter. In it pastor wrote: “It was a tough decision. We all loved our church on Central Avenue and the history it represents – which goes back way beyond the 1970 merger that created First Meridian

Heights. But, we realized that for some time we had failed to engage new people in the community. We were slowly dying. If it wasn't for a sizable endowment and income from outside groups using the church we wouldn't have been able to pay the bills. We managed to keep the building in fairly good shape, and we had staff – when we could keep them. But, that was all. There was hardly any money or energy left for programs. We knew we had to do something bold, innovative, creative – and dare I say 'risky.' But, this congregation has a history of stepping out in faith and following where God leads, even when it is risky. It wasn't clear to us how we could do that and stay in our location. As long as we were there it was just going to be business as usual. If we truly wanted to do something new, we realized we needed to let go of the building and see where God would lead us."

Pastor Jones continued to shake hands with people as they left the sanctuary. One of them, Dave Smith, one of longest tenured members at First Meridian Heights Presbyterian was all smiles. He came up to the pastor and said, "You know, this would never have happened had we not joined with our good friends at Across the Way Church."

"I agree," said Janet, overhearing his comment. "We were – are – perfect partners. We each had something to give the other." Pastor Jones and Dave Smith gave each other a knowing smile. They understood exactly what she meant.

Along with declining numbers, compounding the problem for First Meridian Heights is the fact that the neighborhood around them is changing. It is getting younger as a new generation of younger families is moving in and settling the area. Janet Johnson explained to one of her friends who had questioned her about the church's decision to join with another and open in a new location, "There are lots of opportunities for ministry in Meridian-Kessler. But, our old church building, as beautiful as it was, was just taking up all our time, energy, and resources. We needed to get out of there to be set free to do new things, to write a new chapter in the history of our congregation. But, we knew we couldn't do it alone. We had gumption and financial resources, but, we needed some younger families, new ideas, and some energy. We needed some help – someone to partner with us in a new adventure with God."

About that time conversations began between some of the people at First Meridian Heights who were friends with members at Across the Way Church, that was having its own difficulties keeping things going. They had a core of younger people, but not much in the way of resources. While their membership had declined as well, they still had a faithful core of people. They also had a facility that was near and dear to its members, but they really couldn't afford a pastor and it was getting increasingly expensive to maintain the building.

When representatives from the two congregations first got together to talk about a possible merger, they were quick to realize that it made sense in a lot of ways. But, the sticking point was always, "Where are we going to meet?" Both sides were very attached to their church homes. They also tended to look at the assets of the other church as an answer to their issues. No consensus could be attained – until.

"I will never forget what you said at that big meeting we had between our two churches," Janet said to Dave Smith. "Things were not going well. In fact, I thought any hope of merging was going to die that night. People from both churches were just too attached to their own place. Then you saw the solution. Do you remember what you said?" she asked him. "Like it was yesterday," quipped Dave Smith. "Let me see if I can quote you," offered Pastor Jones – doing an impression of Mr. Smith: "If you're gonna do somethin' new, do somethin' new!"

"That's pretty close," said Dave Smith.

"Oh, but you're leaving out the best part," said Janet Johnson – doing her best to mimic Mr. Smith's voice and manner as well: "All we are talking about here is propping up one old church or another. How long will that last? Another ten years? No sir. If we are going to combine, let's combine! Sell what we have, and follow God's lead to start something new in a whole new place and a whole new building, and doing church a whole new way." All three laughed.

"The answer was so clear but it had been hard for any of us to embrace it," added Pastor Jones. "It was hard," added Janet Johnson, "and worth it. Today is a great example."

It wasn't an easy road. The meeting adjourned with the tepid commitment to "explore" the idea. A small group with half-a-dozen reps from each church went to interview three churches that had done something similar to find out what their experience had been. While all of them had different stories to tell – and not all of it was smooth sailing – the response was encouraging enough that next the two churches agreed to send a contingent to attend a New Church training with their pastors. Then they did some preview services monthly at a school in the area near where they thought it would be a good place to have a new start together. It was slow. The first few services they didn't have much more than some of their own members and their friends in attendance. But, they learned so much. The visitors they did have gave helpful feedback.

"It was messy and anything but smooth at first," wrote Pastor Jones in the article for the Region, "and, to be honest, I wasn't sure we were going to get past the identity of the two separate churches. But, we kept at it. And, I have to say, it was worth it."

"We only were able to do it," Janet Johnson explained, "by making the decision to do it, having faith in God and each other, and trusting the spirit to lead us."

"And," added Pastor Jones, "we discovered that what united us was not what we had to give or take from each other, but what we had to give to the community. Both churches had outreach in their DNA. Once we discovered and focused on that, the doors opened wide. The new home we chose is right smack in the middle of a lot of needs. The difference is, together we seem to have an energy and excitement about connecting to the neighborhood that neither of us had alone. Together we are reaching out in ways that neither congregation has done in a long time."

“Like I said,” quipped Dave Smith, “If you’re gonna do somethin’ new, do somethin’ new.”

“It is amazing what can happen,” concluded Pastor Jones, “when the church turns its focus outward and it has the courage to follow God’s lead into a bold new future. “

### **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIO #3: Stay the Same**

#### ***A pleasant Sunday afternoon in the fall, 2027...***

A remnant of First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church is gathering for a fellowship dinner and Annual Meeting after worship. On the docket is the question of how/if the church is going to be remain holding worship services every week. There are plenty of funds for staff, thanks to the presence of a significant endowment. But, it has been three years since the church could attract even a part-time pastor. The church has dwindled so much in numbers and grown so much older that not many people can make it every Sunday. Energy is low and many are feeling a sense of grief for a community that seems to be coming to an end.

Recounting the history of the last ten years, people remember when they were challenged to seek a clear vision for ministry in the next season of life at First Meridian Heights Presbyterian Church. They even had explored merging with another local congregation that was struggling. But, to do so would have meant for both congregations to sell their properties and combine their resources into a new start. Too many were only willing or able to imagine going to church in this facility. They talked about starting some new programs, but it never really got past the talking stage. So nothing really got off the ground. Most folks thought the answer was to just work harder at what they had been doing for 50 years and somehow the results would be different. What they had failed to understand was that the decline of the church had not been due to lack of effort or desire, but lack of vision.

Worship had been an interesting experience that day. The total attendance had been eight – including the guest preacher. (Their last semi-permanent preacher – whom they all adored – had finally retired two years earlier. She had said it was time to travel and spend some time with family.) Now it seems like every Sunday it was somebody different offering the sermon. Mostly it was people supplied by the Presbytery. Sometimes Elder Dave Smith would offer something. Some Sundays they just sang, prayed, and had communion.

The sermon was better than usual that Sunday. The Presbytery had sent them a good one this time. It was communion Sunday, which made things interesting. Following the traditions of the past, during the communion hymn two elders and two deacons lined up at the back of the church, processed down the aisle and lined up around that communion table. Counting the Pastor, the keyboardist and vocalist, that left 1 in the congregation to be served.

At the fellowship lunch following the service, another Elder – Janet Johnson – asked the guest preacher, “Pastor, how long do YOU think we can keep this going?” “What, the fellowship dinner? I would say as long as you have people here....” the guest pastor replied.

“No, no, no. Not the dinner, the church! How long can we keep the church going? People want to know,” Janet insisted.

“Oh, the church,” the guest pastor muttered while thinking carefully about what to say. Then in candor spoke these words: “Technically, the church can keep going for a long time. I have seen your financial report. Your endowment provides plenty of funds to keep the building in good shape. I am sure the Independence Academy and the Parkview Co-op Preschool appreciate it very much, as well as the other outside groups that use your building. But, at some point you have to ask yourselves, ‘What defines the church?’ Is it the building? Or the people? You don’t have many people left – especially who can make it here on a regular basis.”

“So, why should we keep going?” Janet asked.

“Tradition,” the guest pastor said, then winked. “Seriously,” he said, “for awhile at least it is the caring thing to do. A lot of people have put their lives and a fair amount of their fortunes into this congregation. The least you can do is keep it going for them while they can still come so they have a home to worship, where they can remember better days.”

“Was this inevitable?” Janet asked.

“Inevitable? Who knows,” responded the pastor. “I understand that a few years ago you had an opportunity to join with another congregation? Or to get more involved with the neighborhood around you? Is that right?”

“Yeah,” Janet answered slowly. “We were part of a process that was intended to help us discover a new vision for our future.”

“Ah, so what came of that?” asked the pastor.

“We had a Vision Team, the congregation was assessed, we did a lot of demographic study concerning the people around us, had some good meetings and talkback sessions with most of the congregation participating.”

“And?” asked the visiting pastor.

“And nothing came of it,” Janet said measuredly.

“Oh, no, no, no. You are wrong there. Something very significant came out of that process,” Dave Smith interjected, eavesdropping on the conversation.

“What?” Janet asked, bewildered. “I don’t remember anything concrete coming from those meetings?”

“Precisely,” said Dave Smith. “The congregation decided to do nothing. To just stay the same. Preserve the Tradition. Just keep moving ahead like we have for so long. So, here we are ten years later – barely alive.” Then he added, “You know, Janet, to NOT decide is to decide to eventually die. The only real decision left for us is to determine when we are going to turn off the lights.”

After thinking for a moment, Dave Smith adds, “The sad thing is we really had something good here. There was a good, positive, generous spirit among the people here. The folks in this church really cared about the community and each other. We had a gift to share with the people of the Kessler-Meridian/Butler neighborhood, a witness for God that was special and powerful. We just needed to get it channeled in a way that would help us grow.”

“Don’t you still think that’s possible?” Janet asks.

“Anything is possible with God,” the pastor says with a smile. “But, it is going to take some serious praying and some serious change of hearts, I fear,” he added.

“But you saw the worship this morning,” Janet said. “We only had SEVEN in worship – counting YOU!”

“You are forgetting your Bible stories,” said the pastor. “Remember what God did with Abraham and Sarah? By my count your odds are at least three times better than they had!” All three joined in laughter.

“In the meantime,” said the pastor, “I guess you can just keep doing what you’ve always done: keep loving each other and serving God the best you can.”

## A FINAL WORD

Let me conclude with a word of thanks and gratitude for your congregation's welcome, responsiveness, and willingness to engage in this process. Your hospitality while I was at your church was outstanding. I consider it a privilege that you shared your time, hopes, and dreams with me – and your heart for ministry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank H. Everett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Frank H. Everett  
Contract Assessor  
Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation

PHONE: 317-832-2172  
E-MAIL: [fheverett@gmail.com](mailto:fheverett@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX A – APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SESSION

### 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?

- Back when First Pres and this church (Meridian Heights) combined. It was big. Risky. Complicated. Messy.
- Most engaged today. My church experience has always been here and now, not what it once was.
- Several different locations in different years – involved laughter with other women – out of our comfort zone doing something creative and building relationships.
- First “Day of Caring.” Provided a sense of purpose. It was tangible. It was something important.
- When my kids were a lot younger and more involved in Sunday School activities – Christmas ornaments, decorating houses, etc.
- When we had the Joy program. / When we had dance classes.
- When we were first starting the food pantry initiative. Started as a small idea and kept growing.
- Vivian Smith House – for young women with small children – providing daycare.
- Youth group activities – met my spouse here. Our young adult group when we were young!
- I came for the music and the message, but I stayed because of the people. Felt very connected through the programs.
- Small groups are very important.
- When you have a crisis in your life the people here really rally around you.
- I will always be indebted to the foundation in life the church gave me – all the life events I have experienced within these walls. Part of something bigger than myself and this church.

### 2. When you consider all of your experiences at this church, what has contributed the most to your spiritual life?

- Youth group mission trip I went on. Focused – feeling of spiritual experience.
- Opportunity for intergenerational relationships outside the immediate family.
- Appreciate how the message – the word – is made real. To go out and serve. Puts scripture into action. It is God made real.
- Miss having discussion with other adults.
- In teaching Sunday School, listening to the children, how powerful it is what they say and how they relate to God.
- Anytime we can pray together and ease the burden of others. (Part of a larger testimony in relation to the significance of the food pantry.)

- Being able to be a confirmation mentor and watching my children being mentored by other adults.

**3. Tell about a time when you were most proud of your association with this congregation.**

- When I served as a deacon, then Elder, and on the pastoral search committee.
- When the church was actively involved with several other congregations in developing a plan for community programs of outreach. (Where Vivian Smith House came from.) Took seriously the needs of the community.
- Back in the days when we had a midnight service on Christmas Eve – blew out the candles and walked out and it was Christmas.
- Like the flexibility. Not so rigid here. Not so orchestrated. (Christmas pageant.) Niece was a sheep. Everyone was welcome. Also at a family memorial service – felt like family.
- Always feel comfortable inviting friends and neighbors – like being inclusive.
- When one of the Independence Academy kids was here with youth – engagement and kindness of one of the youth of the church who engaged so openly with these kids.
- Want the same for other kids that my kids (and I received). I grew up in this church along with my kids.
- When we started Alive Time – contemporary service. We were on the cutting edge of contemporary services at the time. We weren't afraid to step out and try something new.
- Reached out to a broader cross-section of people. Even on PBS broadcast as an example of changing with the times.
- My proudest moment – when we gave Wishard Hospital 242 baby puffy pillows – not easy for us to do.

**4. Don't be humble! The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual gifts – what gifts do you share with the congregation (personality, perspectives, skills, character, etc.)?**

- Encouraged to step into the role of Treasurer. Has been a time of growth for me and sharing my skills in helping the church increase the effectiveness of its procedures.
- Best feeling in the world is in giving. I'm not very big, not very smart, but I can donate blood about as well as anyone else. (353 pints – 43 gallons) I have donated my body after I die. It is a good feeling to know I will still be giving after I'm gone.
- My gift is my attitude: "If you get knocked down, you gotta get back up."
- I did the church newsletter for 21 years. Great at writing plays.
- I like to see humor in what's going on.
- We keep making babies for the church..... we like coming here to be authentic .... Inviting others.

**5. What motivates you to come to worship at this church (relationships, habit, desire for God, the church needs me, responsibilities)?**

- Relationships & music.

- Part of a pleasant Sunday morning routine. Go to church – then to Roselyn bakery to get a donut.
- To hear the Word of God – scripture – sermon – to be in that space with the beautiful windows. It is transforming.
- During the work week I am often wrestling with other people’s issues – I can’t tell you how many times I have been in church and received the answer to the issues I have been wrestling with.

**6. Complete this sentence with one of the two choices (everyone should vote for one – no “half votes” are allowed!) “Our church is ...” a. Rigid or Flexible? b. Status Quo or Mission-oriented? c. Fearful or Courageous? d. Thriving or Getting by?**

- a) rigid – 0 (except for where people set in the pews) flexible – 36
- b) status quo – 8 mission oriented - 21
- c) fearful - 11 courageous - 25
- d) thriving - 0 getting by – 36

**7. A relational group is a group of people who gather at times other than on Sunday morning, for the purpose of prayer, study or fellowship on a regular basis. Let’s make a list of relational groups in the church.**

- Puppy pillows
- Youth groups
- Fishermen
- Food pantry group
- Garden group
- Boy scouts
- Group that meets & eats donut holes

**8. Tell me about leader development in the congregation. What does this congregation do to prepare teachers, elders, and other leaders in the church?**

- Role modeling
- Hasn’t been much intentional in several years
- Serving on Session
- Informal – on the job – mostly by serving
- Day of caring
- Parenting
- Child protective training
- Seems like it is the same leadership cycled over and over again

**9. What are the ministry opportunities begging for our attention in this area?**

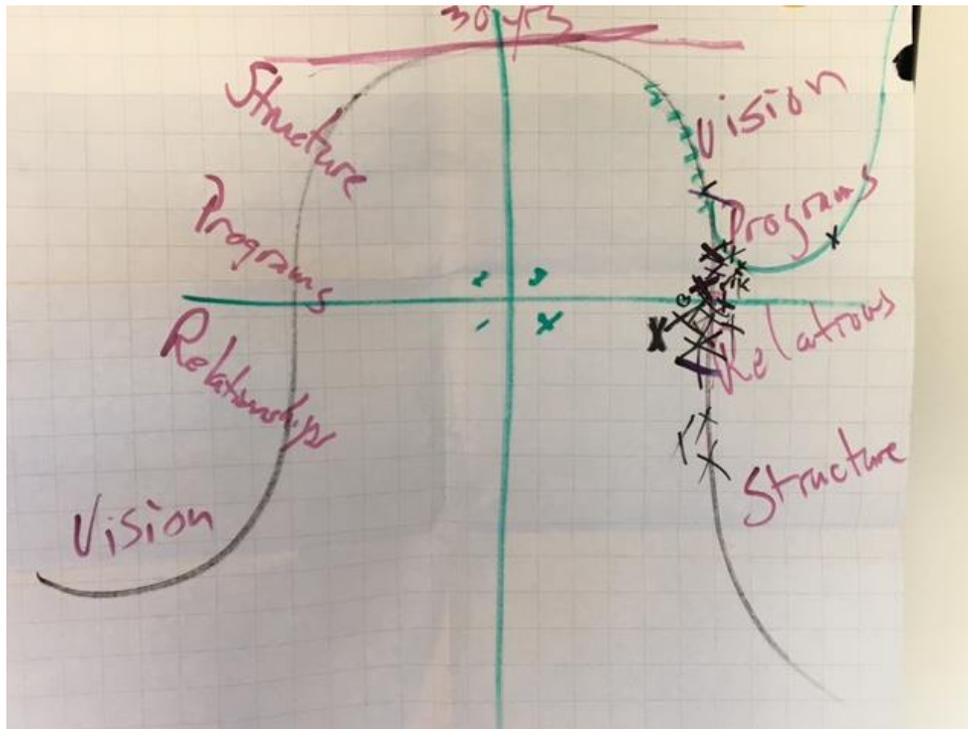
- Communications / marketing ministry
- Buildings and grounds always needs help
- Don’t have a collective consensus on what the ministry of this building is....
- Family and young children’s oriented programs

- Identify needs that we can serve – be more active with mission in a noticeable way in the community
- Church misses an opportunity to solicit a report card from the congregation
- Would like to hear the organ occasionally
- Food pantry
- Good stewards of this space, these resources, for this community so they know who we are
- Where are we going? Have to answer that question first.
- How can we be the body of people to reach out to others and be inclusive.

**10. If our church were to close, what would be the one thing people in the community would miss most?**

- Food pantry would miss our support
- The schools we sponsor
- The relationship with IPS School 70 (across the street)
- The garden
- Relationship with the boy scouts
- AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)

Below is a snapshot of the life-cycle bell curve that was presented by the Assessor at the Appreciative Inquiry session. The black Xs indicate where the congregation’s participants in attendance place the church in its current life-cycle. Most cluster either just above or just below the transition from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quadrant to the 4<sup>th</sup> quadrant on the decline side of the curve. This suggests that members understand the seriousness of the church’s situation.



# G24

## Status Seeking Singles

Younger, upwardly-mobile singles living in mid-scale metro areas balancing work and leisure lifestyles

Jonathan & Sarah

1.66% | 0.97%



### Key Features

- Single city dweller
- Highly educated
- Upwardly mobile
- Professionals
- Physically fit
- Foodies



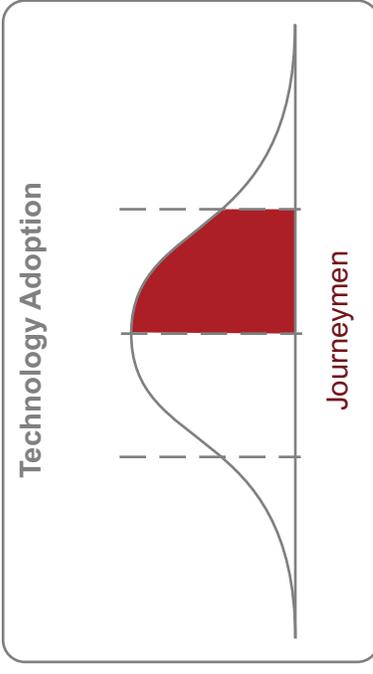
### Who We Are

<b>Age</b> 36-45 28.9%   182	<b>Property type</b> Single family 87.3%   108
<b>Household income</b> \$50,000-\$74,999 26.0%   141	<b>Household size</b> 1 person 84.4%   166
<b>Home ownership</b> Homeowner 57.3%   88	<b>Age of children</b> 13-18 6.0%   49



### Channel Preference

29	152	115
127	159	218



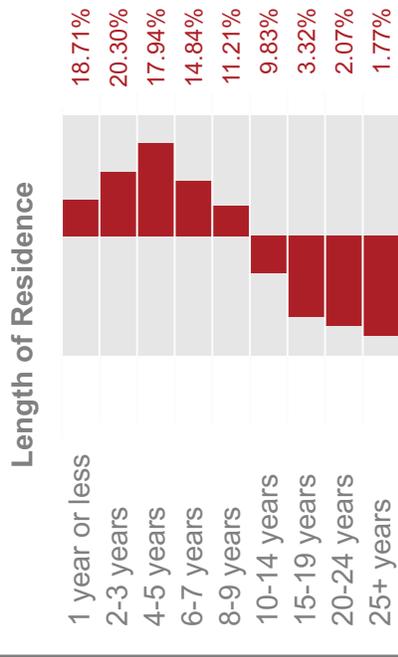
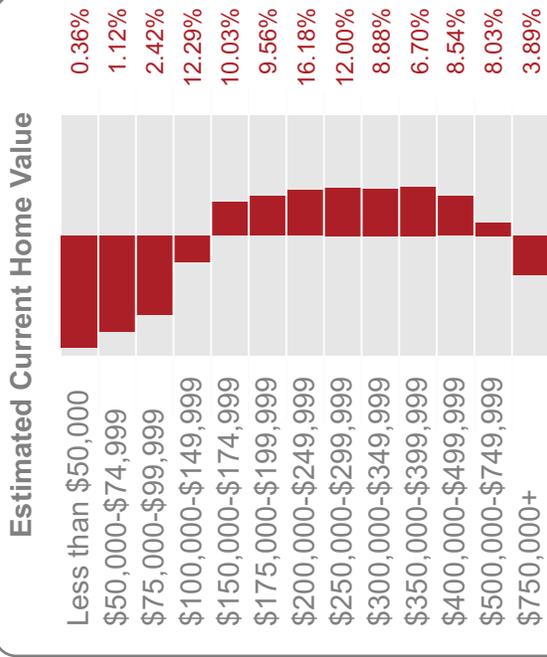
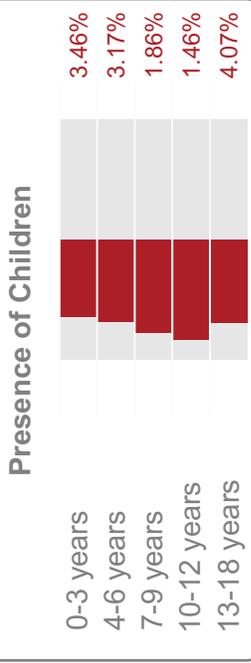
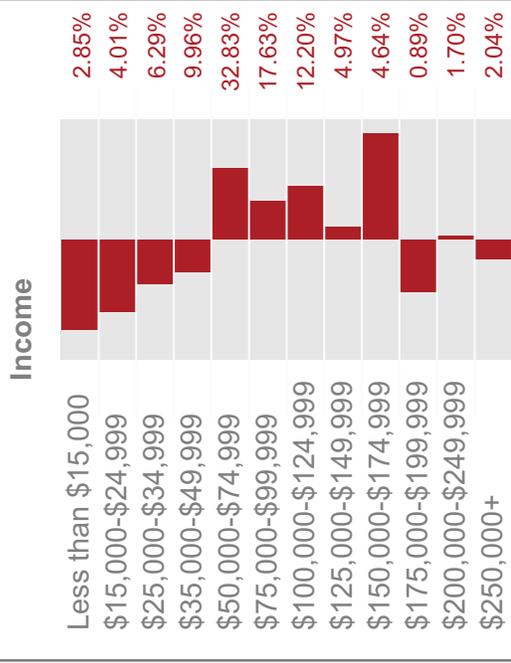
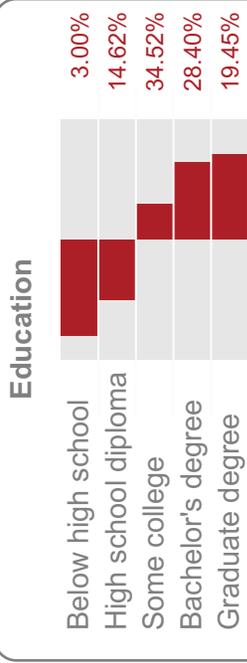
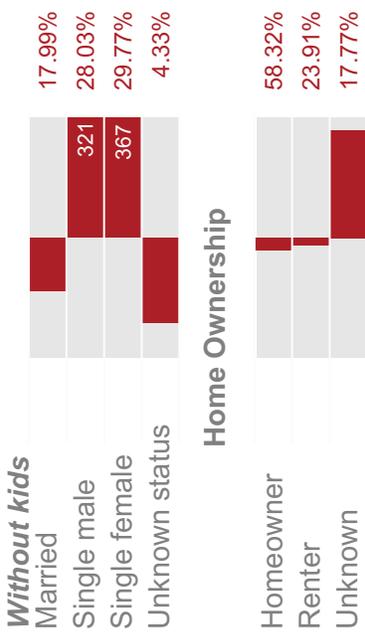
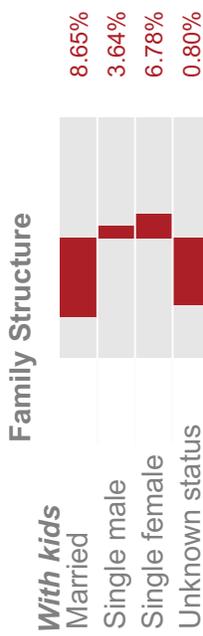
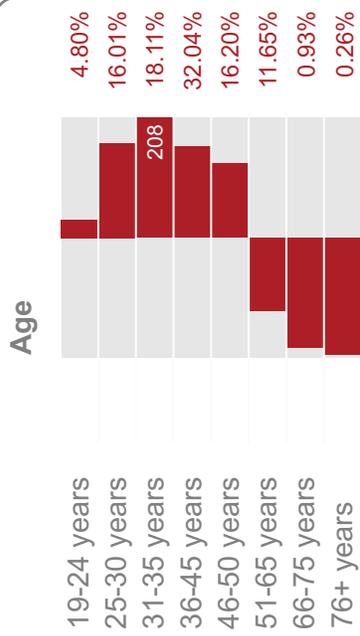
## Status Seeking Singles

Younger, upwardly-mobile singles living in mid-scale metro areas balancing work and leisure lifestyles

Jonathan & Sarah



1.66% | 0.97%



# O52

## Urban Ambition

Mainly Generation Y singles and single families established in mid-market cities

Marcus & Stephanie

1.24% | 0.85%



### Who We Are

<b>Age</b> 31-35 20.1%   227	<b>Property type</b> Multi family: 5-9 units 20.2%   407
<b>Household income</b> <\$15,000 21.8%   161	<b>Household size</b> 1 person 76.8%   151
<b>Home ownership</b> Renter 85.7%   345	<b>Age of children</b> 13-18 7.7%   62

### Key Features

- Racially diverse
- Singles and single parents
- City apartment renters
- Music hip
- Technology adapting
- Video game entertainment

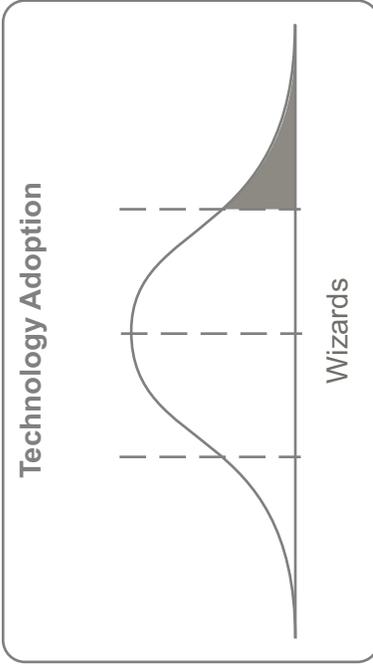


60



### Channel Preference

50	190	189
271	55	117



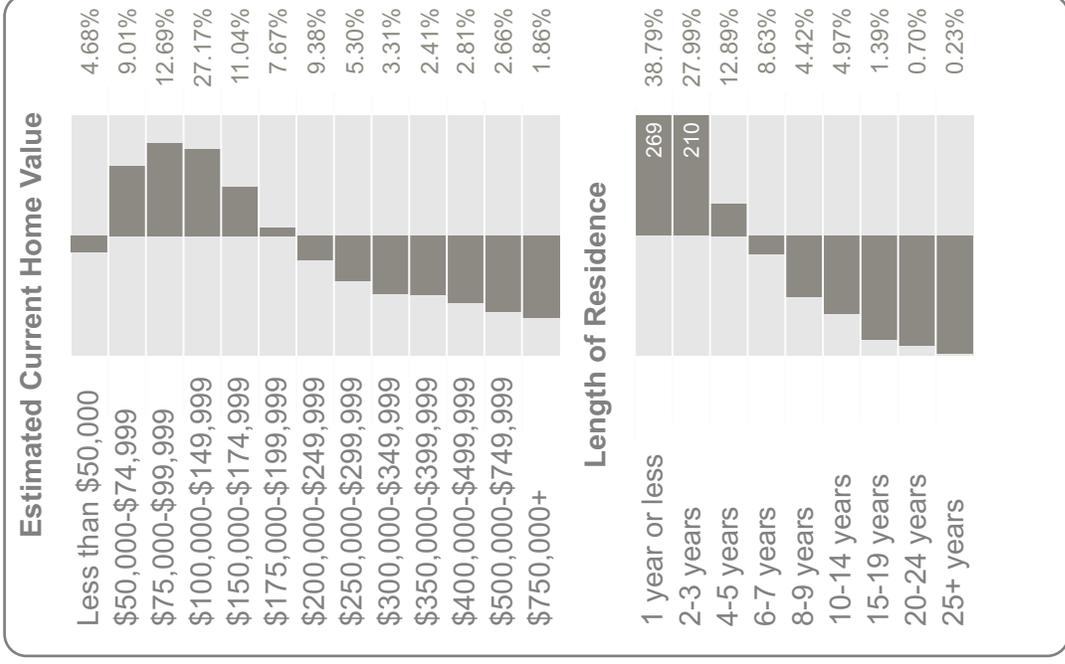
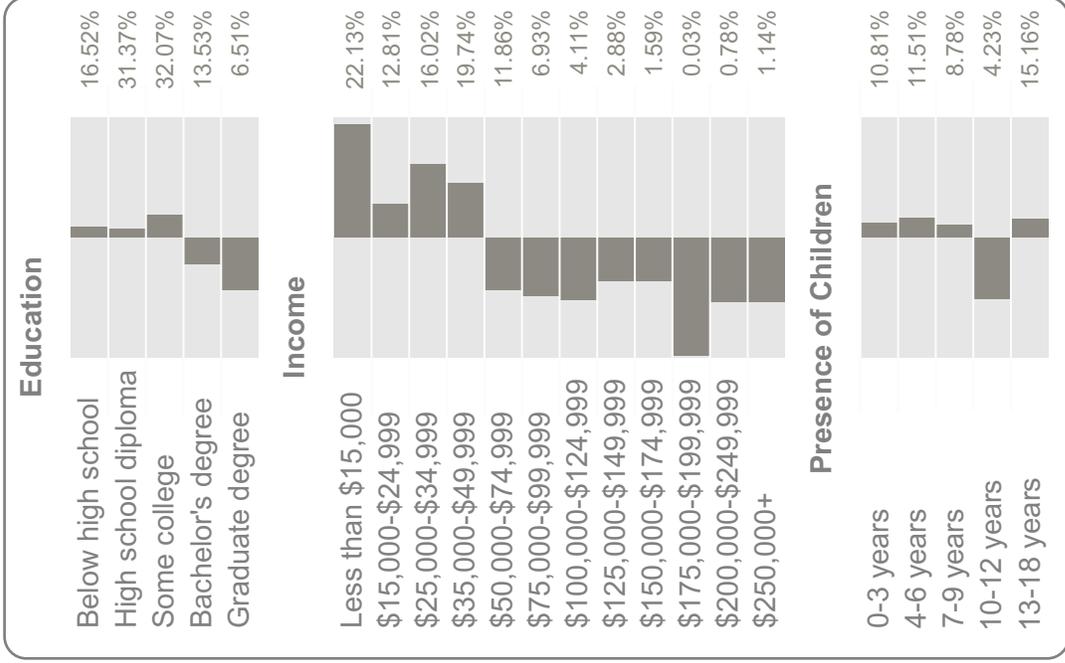
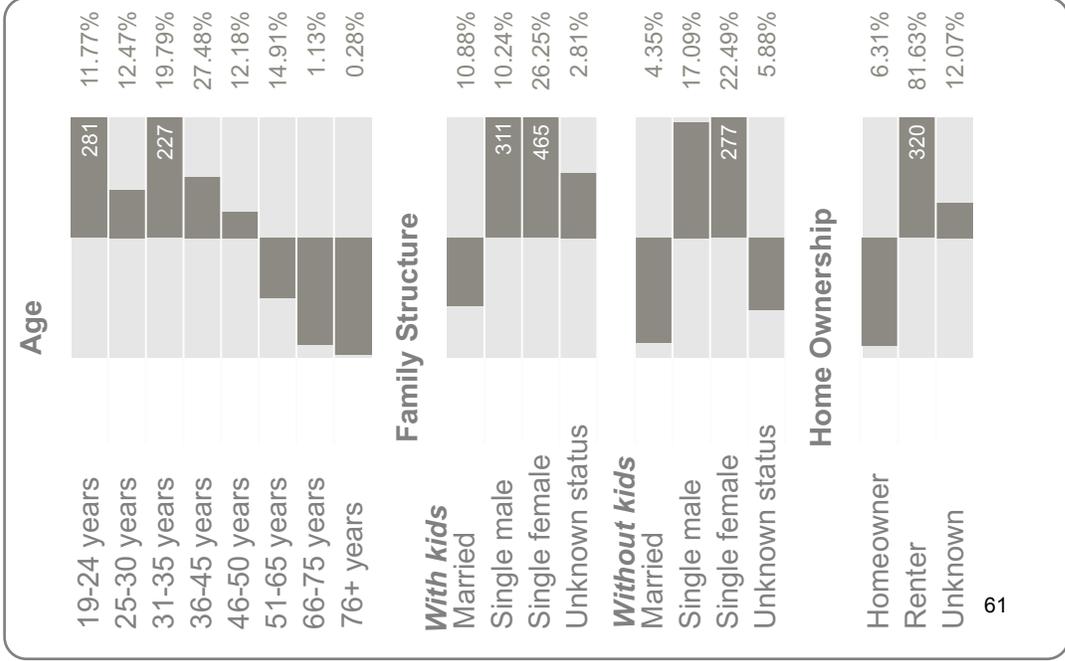
# O52

## Urban Ambition

Mainly Generation Y singles and single families established in mid-market cities

Marcus & Stephanie

1.24% | 0.85%



# D18

## Suburban Attainment

Upper middle-class couples and families living mainly in the expanding suburbs

Ronald & Cynthia

🏠 1.61% | 👤 2.11%



### Key Features

- Racially diverse
- Politically liberal
- Power shoppers
- Active lifestyles
- Jazz listeners
- Brick and mortar shoppers



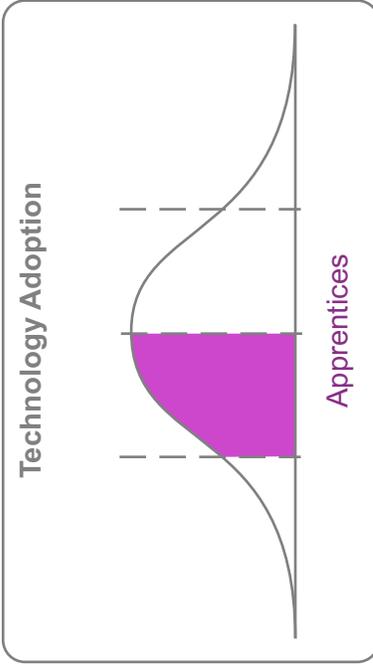
### Who We Are

Age <b>51-65</b> 40.2%   138	Property type <b>Single family</b> 95.3%   118
Household income <b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b> 37.5%   203	Household size <b>3 persons</b> 19.0%   168
Home ownership <b>Homeowner</b> 91.2%   140	Age of children <b>13-18</b> 14.9%   121



### Channel Preference

📧 74	📱 83	📺 91
@ 215	📺 133	📡 118



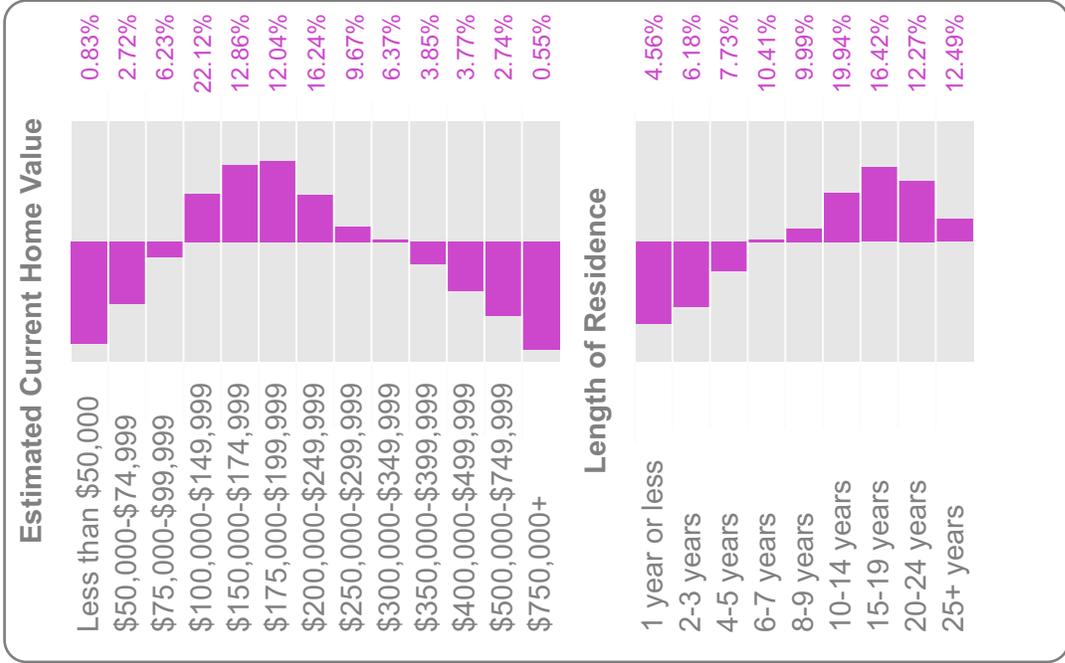
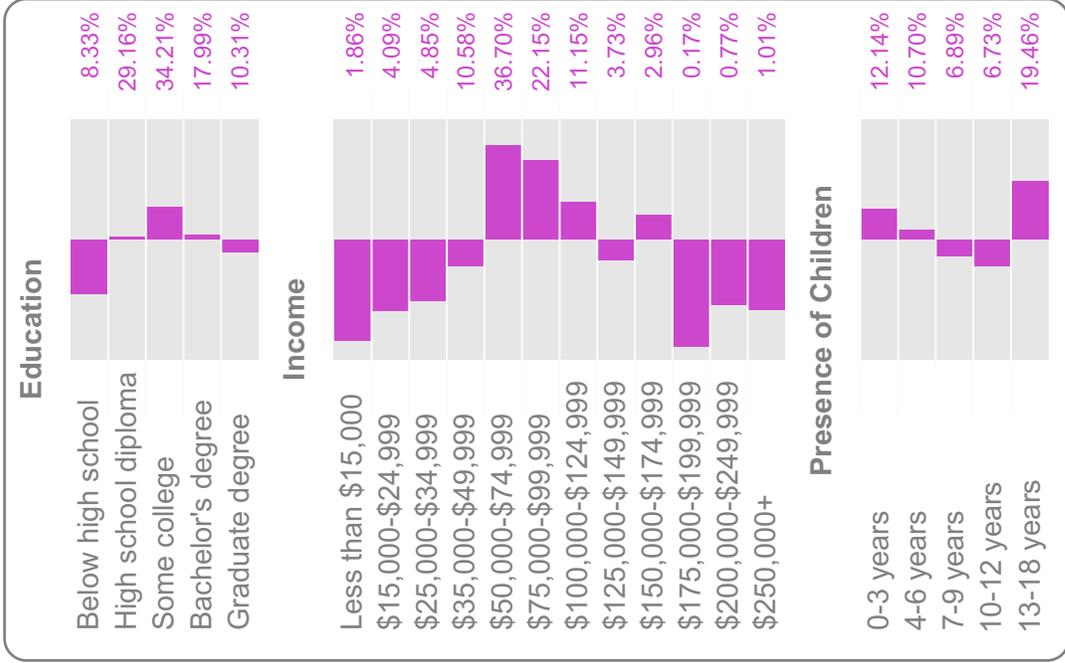
## Suburban Attainment

Upper middle-class couples and families living mainly in the expanding suburbs

Ronald & Cynthia

1.61% | 2.11%

# D18



# E19

## Full Pockets, Empty Nests

Empty-nesting, upper middle-class households with discretionary income living sophisticated lifestyles

Bruce & Margaret

1.51% | 1.15%



### Who We Are

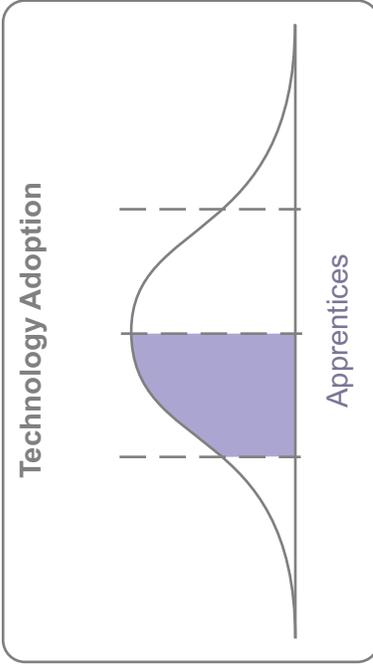
<b>Age</b> <b>51-65</b> 53.4%   183	<b>Property type</b> <b>Single family</b> 67.2%   83
<b>Household income</b> <b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b> 28.6%   155	<b>Household size</b> <b>1 person</b> 66.6%   131
<b>Home ownership</b> <b>Homeowner</b> 68.4%   105	<b>Age of children</b> <b>13-18</b> 1.8%   15

### Key Features

- Empty nesters
- Highly educated
- City dwellers
- Environmental advocates
- Well-traveled
- Fitness minded

### Channel Preference

149	46	78
69	163	150

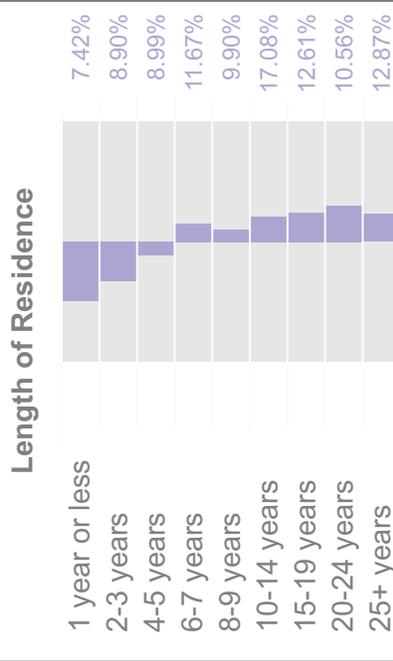
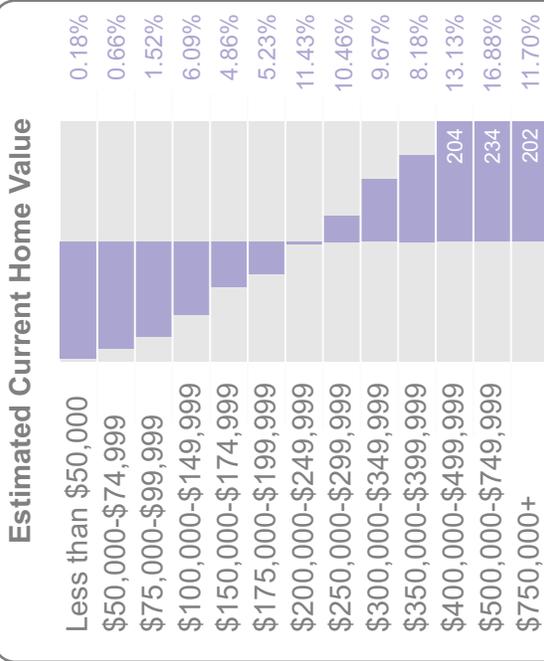
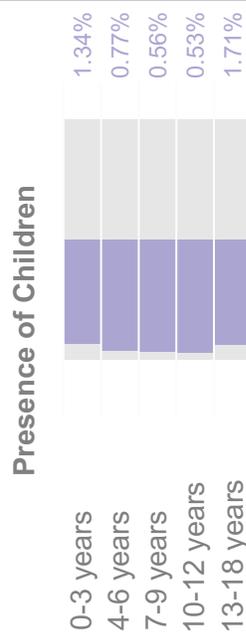
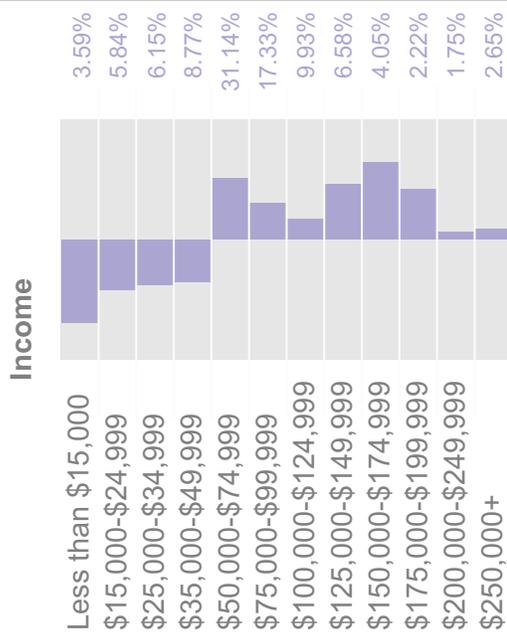
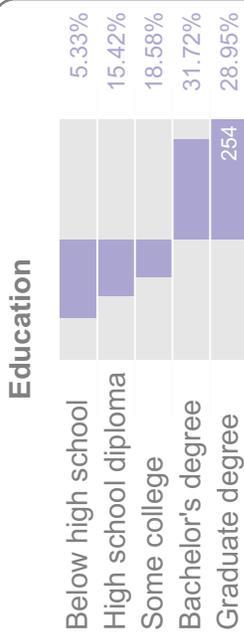
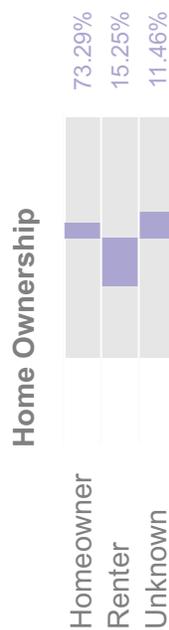
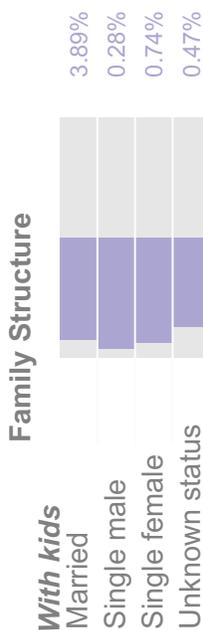
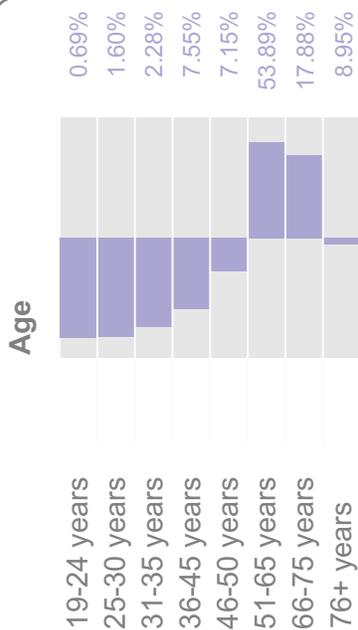


# E19

## Full Pockets, Empty Nests

Empty-nesting, upper middle-class households with discretionary income living sophisticated lifestyles

Bruce & Margaret  
 1.51% | 1.15%



# C13

## Silver Sophisticates

Mature, upscale couples and singles in suburban homes

Gerald & Rose

🏠 2.04% | 👤 2.06%



### Who We Are

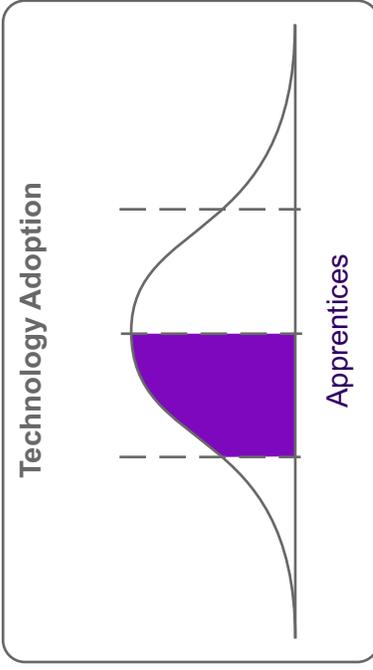
<b>Age</b> 66-75 29.0% 300	<b>Property type</b> Single family 96.3% 120
<b>Household income</b> \$175,000- \$199,999 6.2% 457	<b>Household size</b> 2 persons 33.1% 143
<b>Home ownership</b> Homeowner 89.9% 138	<b>Age of children</b> 13-18 3.8% 31

### Key Features

- Retiring in comfort
- Experienced travelers
- Art connoisseurs
- Philanthropic
- Retirement investments
- Ecological lifestyles

### Channel Preference

📧 206	📱 28	📺 15
@ 8	📺 199	📡 112

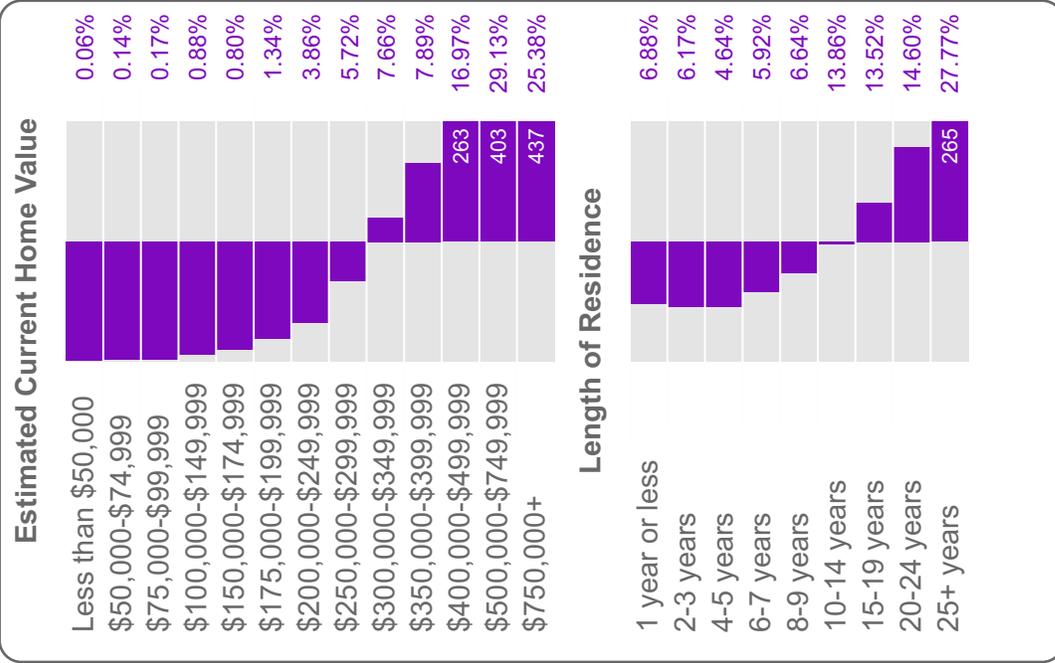
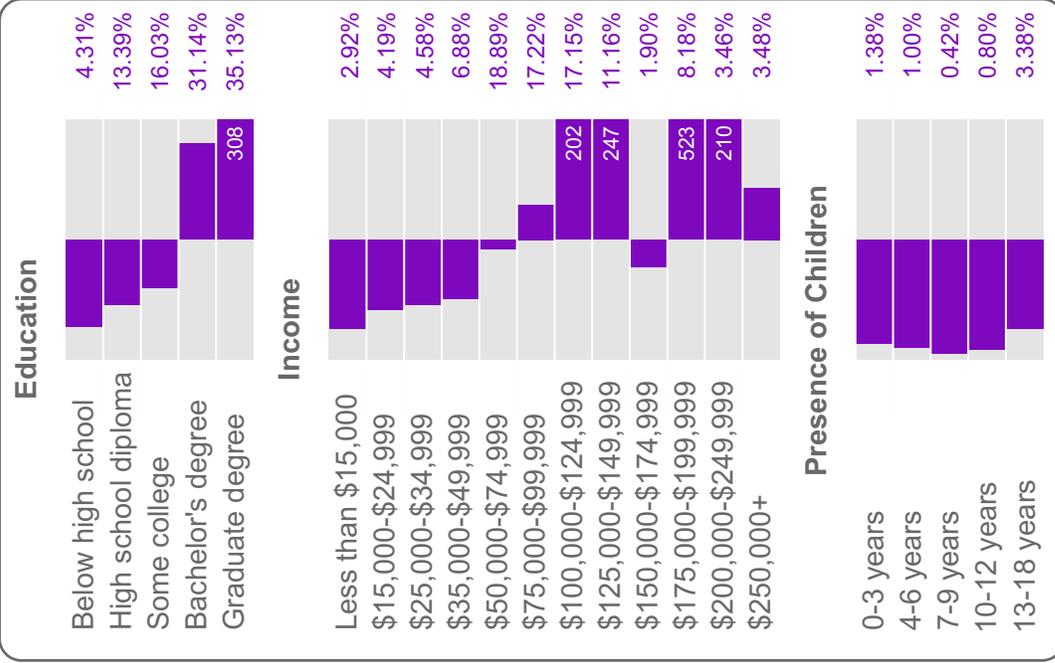


## Silver Sophisticates

Mature, upscale couples and singles in suburban homes

Gerald & Rose

2.04% | 2.06%



# O54

## Striving Single Scene

Young, singles living in Midwest and Southern city centers

Justin & Tiffany

🏠 2.43% | 👤 1.24%



### Who We Are

<b>Age</b> 25-30 69.0% 586	<b>Property type</b> Multi-family: 101+ units 34.4% 988
<b>Household income</b> <\$15,000 27.4% 202	<b>Household size</b> 1 person 91.3% 179
<b>Home ownership</b> Renter 83.2% 334	<b>Age of children</b> 0-3 3.1% 45

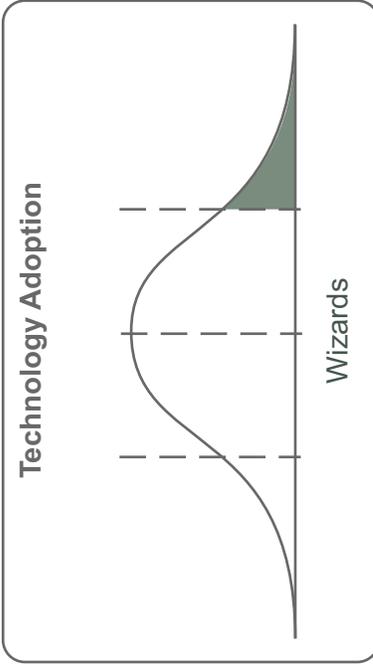
### Key Features

- Career-driven
- Metropolitan lifestyles
- Digitally dependent
- Active social lives
- Foodies
- Sports and fitness fans



### Channel Preference

📧 23	📱 203	📺 173
@ 240	📺 111	📶 223



# O54

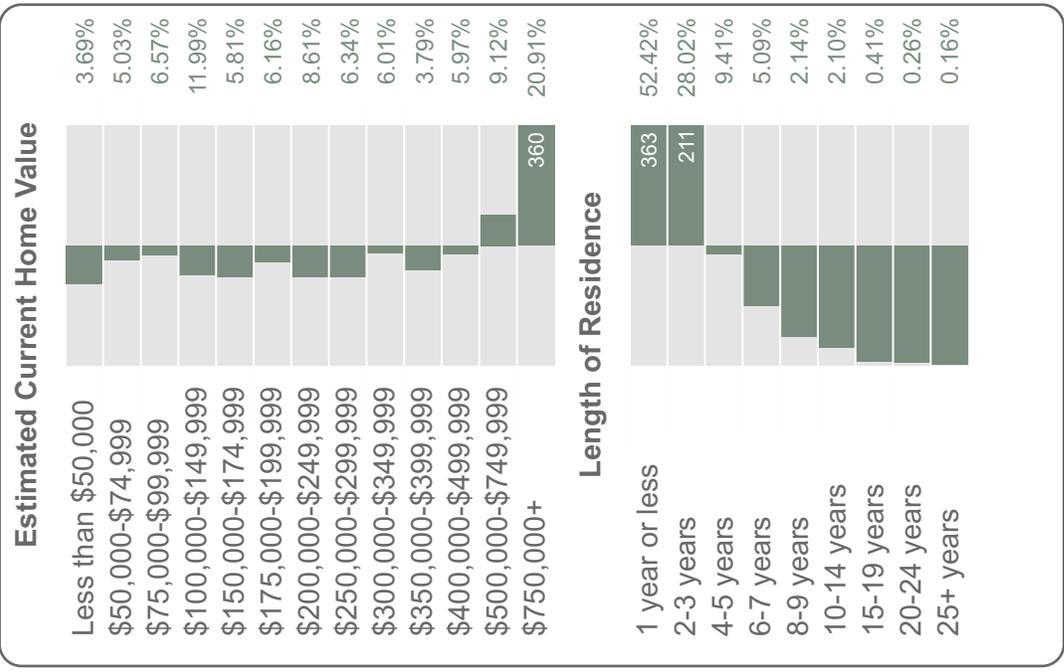
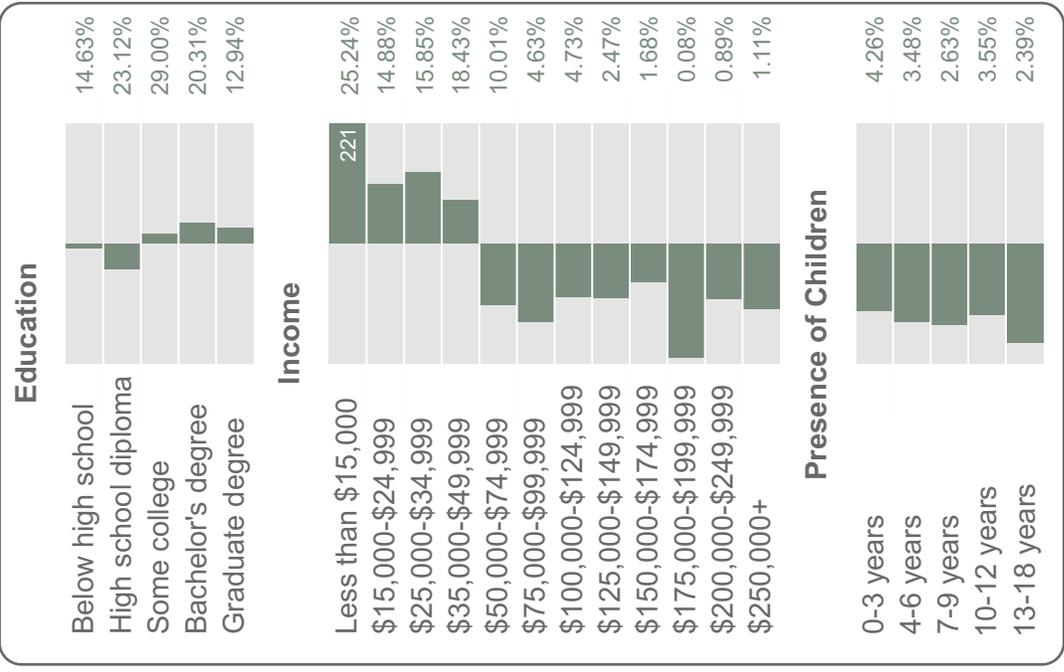
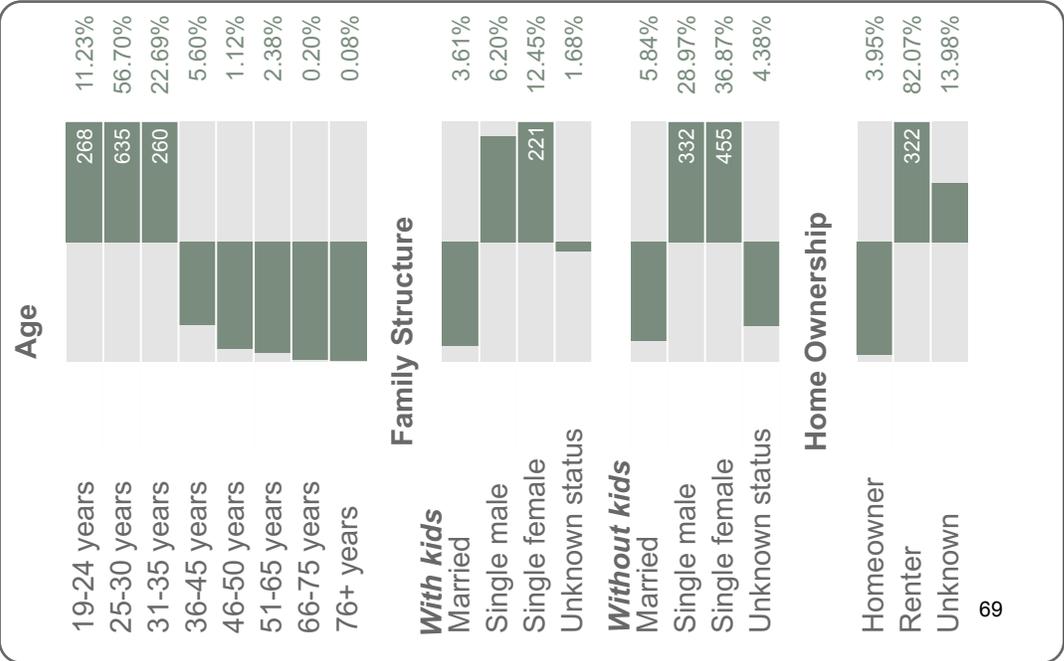
## Striving Single Scene

Young, singles living in Midwest and Southern city centers

Justin & Tiffany



2.43% | 1.24%



# The ExecutiveInsite Report

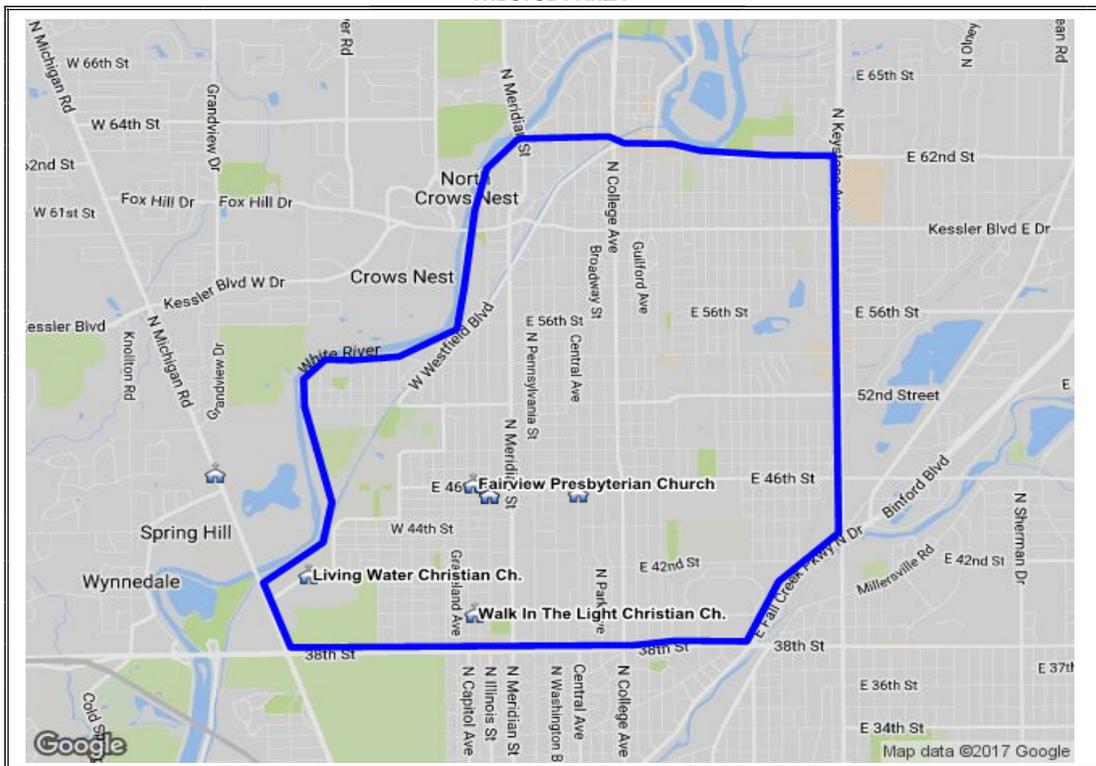
Prepared for: Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation DoC  
 Study area: Custom Geography

Base State: INDIANA  
 Current Year Estimate: 2017  
 5 Year Projection: 2022  
 Date: 9/26/2017  
 Semi-Annual Projection: Spring

This ExecutiveInsite Report has been prepared for Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation DoC. Its purpose is to “tell the demographic story” of the defined geographic study area. ExecutiveInsite integrates narrative analysis with data tables and graphs. Playing on the report name, it includes 12 “Insites” into the study area’s story. It includes both demographic and beliefs and practices data.

ExecutiveInsite is intended to give an overview analysis of the defined geographic study area. A defined study area can be a region, a zip code, a county or some custom defined geographic area such as a radius or a user defined polygon. The area of study is displayed in the map below.

## THE STUDY AREA



## THE 12 INSITES

INSITE	PAGE
Insite #1: Population, Household Trends	2
Insite #2: Racial/Ethnic Trends	3
Insite #3: Age Trends	4
Insite #4: School Aged Children Trends	6
Insite #5: Household Income Trends	7
Insite #6: Households and Children Trends	9
Insite #7: Marital Status Trends	10
Insite #8: Adult Educational Attainment	11
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Insite #10: Mosaic Household Types	13
Insite #11: Charitable Giving Practices	14
Insite #12: Religious Program Or Ministry Preferences	15

## More Information

Please refer to the last page of the report for additional notes and interpretation aides in reading the report.

Not all of the demographic variables available in the MI System are found in this report. The FullInsite Report will give a more comprehensive view of an area’s demographics.

Also, the Impressions Report adds additional social, behavioral views and the Quad Report provides a detailed view of religious preferences, practices and beliefs.

# INSITE #1: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

## Population:

The estimated 2017 population within the study area is 36,420. The 2022 projection would see the area grow by 664 to a total population of 37,084. The population within the study area is growing somewhat slower than the statewide growth rate. While the study area is projected to grow by 1.8% in the next five years, the state is projected to grow by 2.5%. The study area's estimated average change rate is 0.4%.

## Households:

The households within the community are growing faster than the population, thus the average population per household in 2010 was 2.34 but by 2022 it is projected to be 2.34. Compare this to the statewide average which for the current year is estimated at 2.59 persons per household.

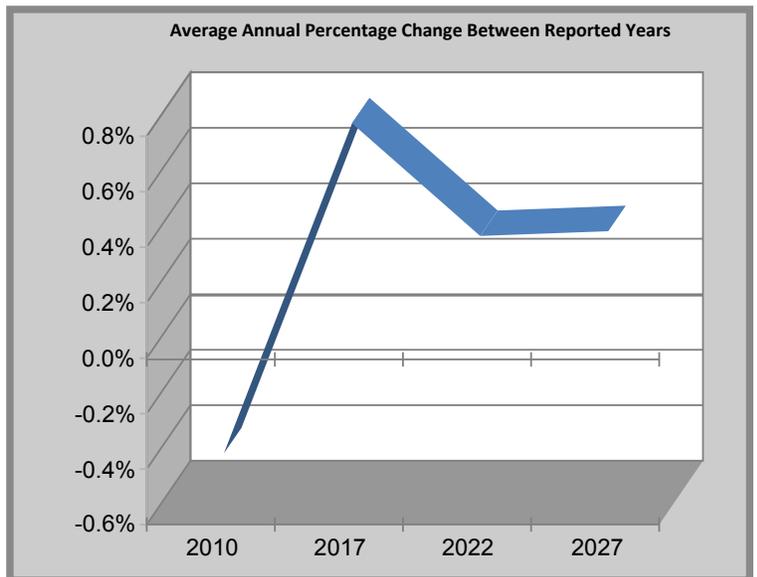
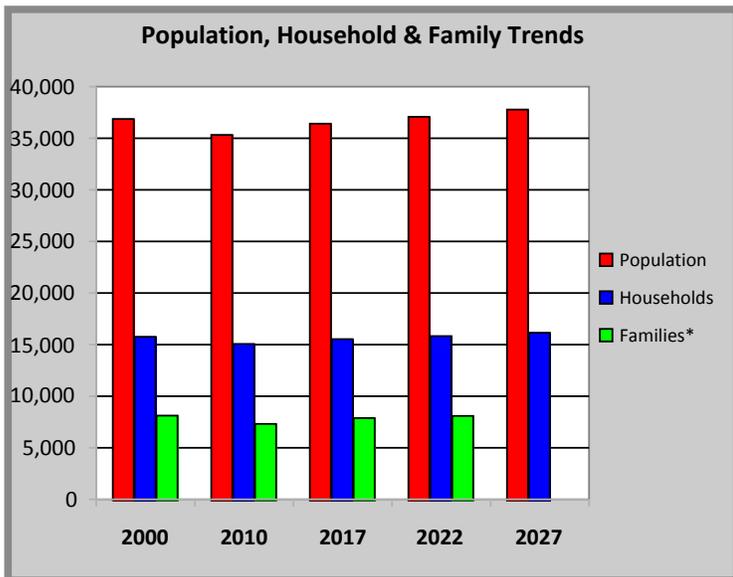
## Population Per Household

Population per Household: The relationship between population and households provides a hint about how the community is changing. When population grows faster than households, it suggests an increase in the persons per household. This can only happen when more persons are added either by birth or other process such as young adults in multiple roommate households or young adults returning to live with parents. In some communities this can occur when multiple families live in the same dwelling unit.

## Family Households:

Family households provide an additional hint about the changing dynamics of a community. If family household growth follows population growth, then it would be reasonable to assume that the increasing population per household comes from additional children. This is the case within the the study area. Family households are growing as fast as the population suggesting that the increasing population per household is from additional children.

<i>Population/Households &amp; Family Trends</i>					
	2000	2010	2017	2022	2027
<b>Population</b>	<b>36,876</b>	<b>35,331</b>	<b>36,420</b>	<b>37,084</b>	<b>37,792</b>
Population Change		-1,545	1,089	664	708
Percent Change		-4.2%	3.1%	1.8%	1.9%
<b>Households</b>	<b>15,769</b>	<b>15,072</b>	<b>15,541</b>	<b>15,832</b>	<b>16,153</b>
Households Change		-697	469	291	321
Percent Change		-4.4%	3.1%	1.9%	2.0%
<b>Population / Households</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.34</b>
Population / Households Change		0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Percent Change		0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%
<b>Families</b>	<b>8,123</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>7,887</b>	<b>8,091</b>	
Families Change		-805	569	204	
Percent Change		-9.9%	7.8%	2.6%	

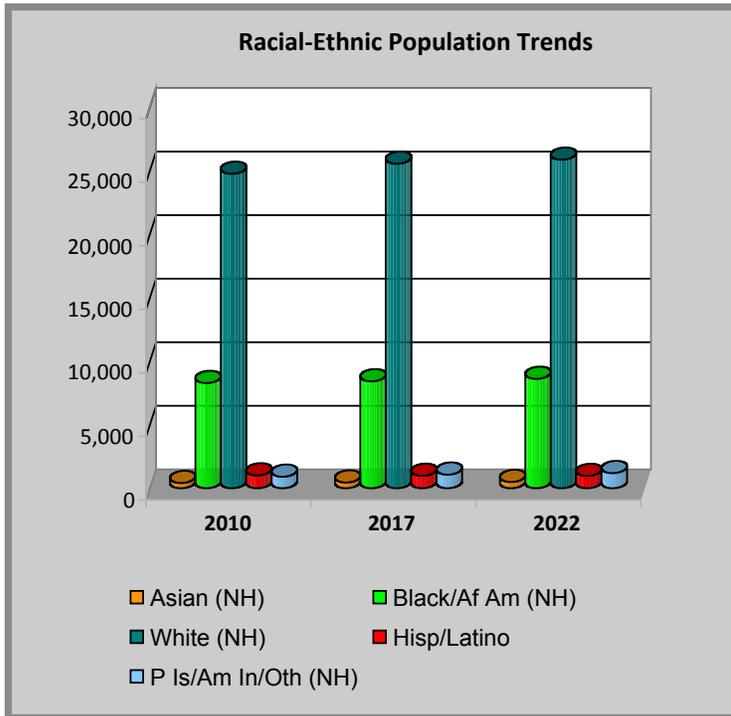


NOTE: Family Household data is not projected out 10 years.

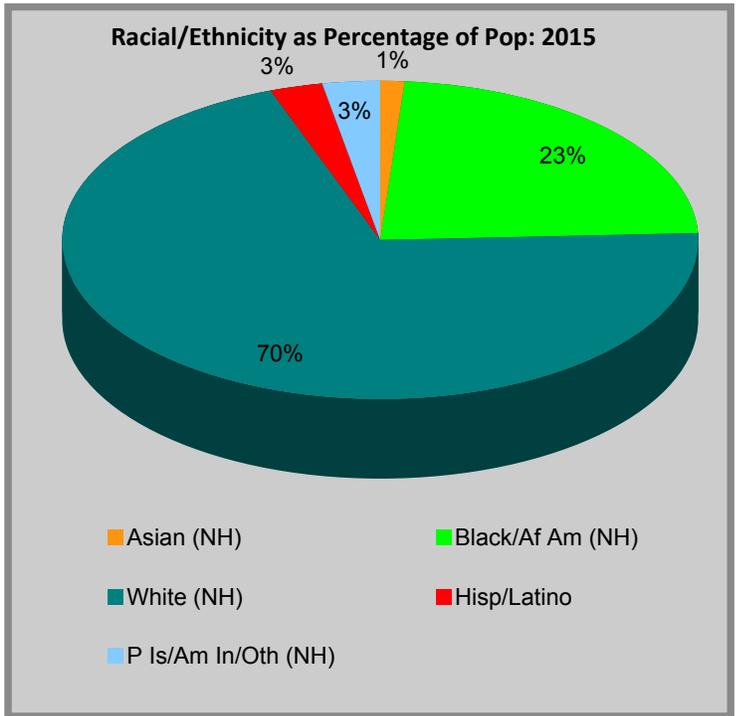
## INSITE #2: RACIAL-ETHNIC TRENDS

The US population's racial-ethnic diversity is continually adding new and rich cultural mixes. This data considers the five groups for which trending information is available. Please note that several groups are aggregated into a single category due to their smaller size. Those persons who indicated Hispanic or Latino ethnicity along with a racial category have been separated into a Hispanic or Latino category.

The Population: Racial/Ethnic Trends table provides the actual numbers and percentage of the total population for each of the five racial/ethnic categories. Pay special attention to the final column on the right. This will quickly indicate the direction of change from the last census to the current five year projection.



The Racial Ethnic Trends graph displays history and projected change by each racial/ethnic group.



This chart shows the percentage of each group for the current year estimate.

### The percentage of the population...

Asian (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Black/African American (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

White (Non-Hisp) is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

Hispanic or Latino is projected to remain about the same over the next five years.

	2010	2017	2022	2010%	2017 %	2022 %	2010 to 2022 %pt Change
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>							
Asian (NH)	409	446	487	1.16%	1.22%	1.31%	0.16%
Black/Afr Amer (NH)	8,274	8,408	8,603	23.42%	23.09%	23.20%	-0.22%
White (NH)	24,735	25,522	25,843	70.01%	70.08%	69.69%	-0.32%
Hispanic/Latino	1,009	976	964	2.86%	2.68%	2.60%	-0.26%
P Is/Am In/Oth (NH)	903	1,067	1,187	2.56%	2.93%	3.20%	0.64%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>35,330</b>	<b>36,419</b>	<b>37,084</b>				

# INSITE #3: AGE TRENDS

A community's age structure and how it is changing is an important part of its story. Overall, the American Population has been aging as the Baby Boomers progress through each phase of life. This has been abetted by episodes of declining live births. However this picture may particularize differently from community to community. There are communities in the US where the average age is lower than some others. In other cases, there is a clear shift toward senior years as the Boomers enter their retirement years.

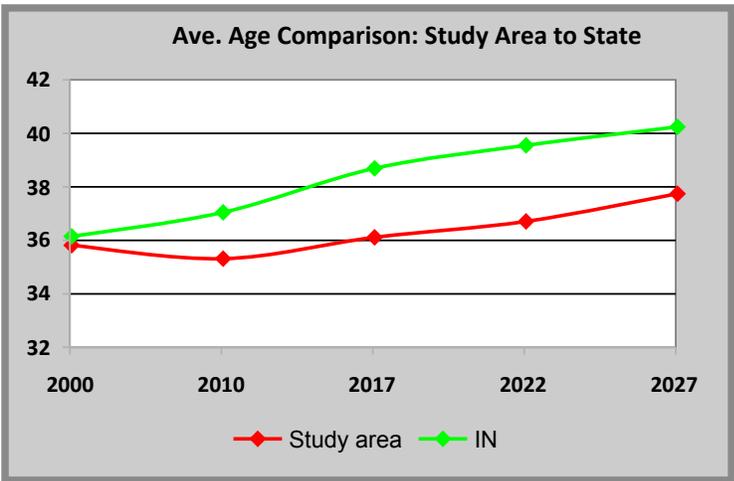
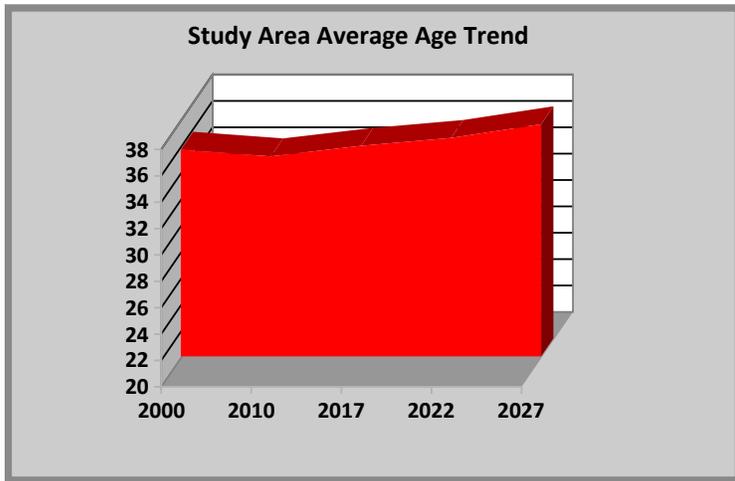
The Age Trend Insite explores two variables: Average age and Phase of Life.

**Average Age Trends** provides five important snapshots of a community from five data points; the 2000 census, the last census, the current year estimate, the five year projection and the ten year forecast. These five numbers will indicate the aging direction of a community.

**The Phase of Life Trends** breaks the population into seven life phases that the population passes through in its life time.

## AGE

<i>Average Age Trends</i>	2000	2010	2017	2022	2027
<b>Average Age: Study Area</b>	<b>35.82</b>	<b>35.31</b>	<b>36.11</b>	<b>36.71</b>	<b>37.75</b>
Percent Change		-1.4%	2.3%	1.6%	2.8%
<b>Average Age: IN</b>	<b>36.15</b>	<b>37.05</b>	<b>38.69</b>	<b>39.55</b>	<b>40.24</b>
Percent Change		2.5%	4.4%	2.2%	1.7%
Comparative Index	99	95	93	93	94
<b>Median Age: Study Area</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>



### Summary of Average Age Findings:

The Average Age Trend chart shows both history and projection of the change in average age in the study area. The average age of the study area is stable and relatively unchanging. It is projected to remain relatively the same over the next five years.

A comparison to the average age of the state helps to contextualize the significance of the average age of the study area and its history and projection. In the graph above, the study area and state are laid out side by side. The state's average age is estimated to be higher than the study area.

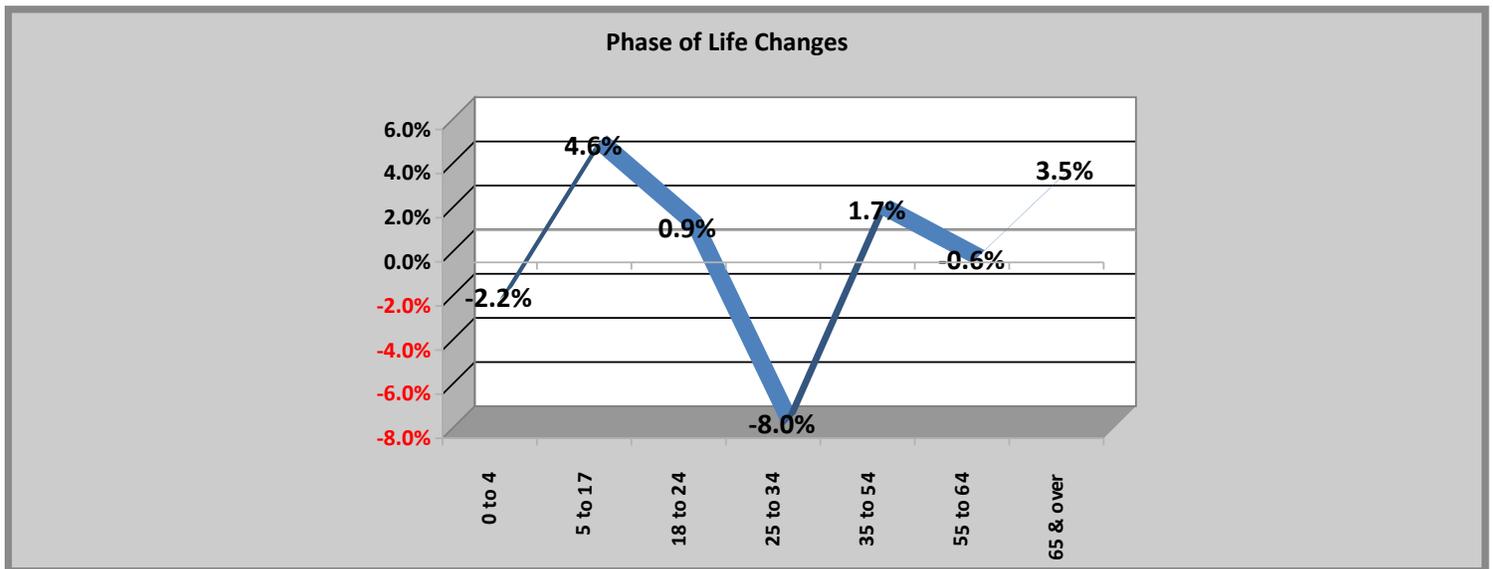
## INSITE #3: AGE TRENDS (continued)

### PHASE OF LIFE

The Phase of Life analysis provides insight into the age distribution of a population across the different stages of life experience. It can reveal a community in transition.

Pay special attention to the color codes of the Change column (far right below). It will immediately indicate which phases are increasing or decreasing as a percentage of the population.

Phase of Life	2010	2017	2022	2027	2010%	2017%	2022%	2027%	Estimated 10 Year %pt Change 2017 - 2027
<b>Before Formal Schooling</b>									
Ages 0 to 4	2,217	2,965	2,734	2,228	6.3%	8.1%	7.4%	5.9%	-2.2%
<b>Required Formal Schooling</b>									
Ages 5 to 17	3,925	5,214	6,456	7,163	11.1%	14.3%	17.4%	19.0%	4.6%
<b>College/Career Starts</b>									
Ages 18 to 24	6,005	4,461	4,519	4,984	17.0%	12.2%	12.2%	13.2%	0.9%
<b>Singles &amp; Young Families</b>									
Ages 25 to 34	7,320	5,773	3,645	2,978	20.7%	15.9%	9.8%	7.9%	-8.0%
<b>Families &amp; Empty Nesters</b>									
Ages 35 to 54	8,759	9,945	11,013	10,963	24.8%	27.3%	29.7%	29.0%	1.7%
<b>Enrichment Years Sing/Couples</b>									
Ages 55 to 64	3,730	3,916	3,779	3,848	10.6%	10.8%	10.2%	10.2%	-0.6%
<b>Retirement Opportunities</b>									
Age 65 and over	3,376	4,146	4,938	5,629	9.6%	11.4%	13.3%	14.9%	3.5%



#### Summary of Phase of Life Findings:

Phase of Life changes reflect the age profile of a community. On average, it takes 2.1 children per woman to replace both mother and father. If the percentage of the population under 20 is declining as a percentage of the total it is likely that the community will see an increase in the more senior aged population possibly due to a decline in birth rates.

In this study area children 17 years of age and younger are increasing as a percentage of the total population. Considering the other end of the phases of life, adults 55 years of age and older are increasing as a percentage of the total population.

In summary it may be that the community is experiencing some growth of children of school age.

# INSITE #4: SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN TRENDS

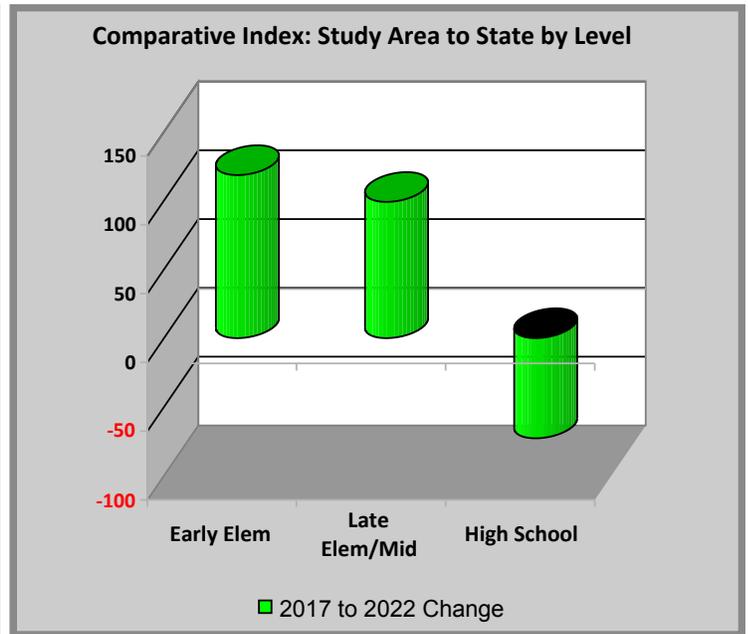
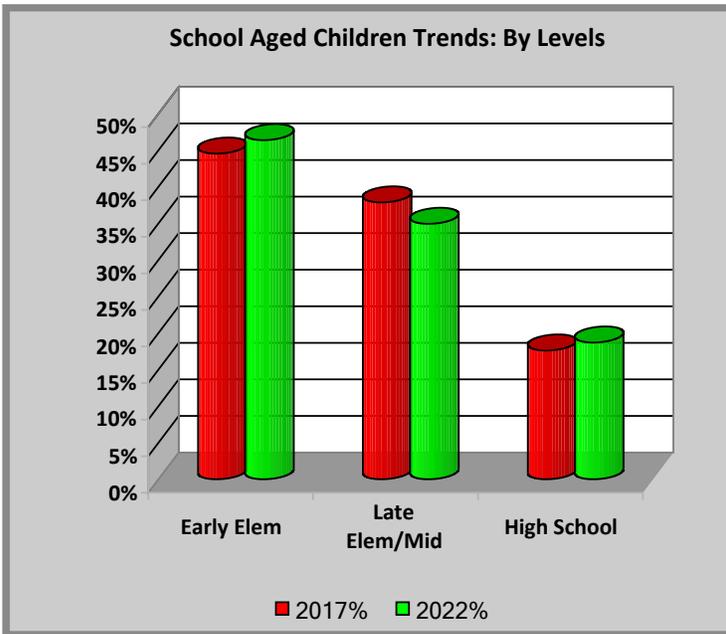
Children are the future! Understanding their specific population dynamics is critical for all planners of social and/or educational services. The "School Aged Children" variable is a subset of the "Required Formal Schooling" segment in the Phase of Life profile. It allows one to zoom in more closely on the children who are of formal schooling age.

The school aged population includes all school aged children including those enrolled in public and private schools, those home schooled and children in institutions.

The School Aged Children variable provides a snapshot of three levels of the population that comprise school age children. The three levels roughly correspond to the following.

- Elementary grades
- Intermediate/Middle School grades
- High School Grades

School Aged Children	2010	2017	2022	2010%	2017%	2022%	Estimated 5 Year %pt Change 2017 - 2022
<b>Early Elementary</b>							
Ages 5 to 9	1,667	2,322	2,994	42.5%	44.5%	46.4%	1.8%
<b>Late Elementary-Middle School</b>							
Ages 10 to 14	1,467	1,974	2,255	37.4%	37.9%	34.9%	-2.9%
<b>High School</b>							
Ages 15 to 17	791	918	1,207	20.2%	17.6%	18.7%	1.1%



**Summary of School Aged Children Findings:**

Early Elementary children ages 5 to 9 are projected to increase as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by 1.8%.

Late Elementary to Middle School aged children ages 10 to 14 are declining as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by -2.9%.

High School aged children 15 to 17 are increasing as a percentage of children between 5 and 17 by 1.1%.

Overall, children are aging through but there is some evidence of a resurgence of children in the younger years.

# INSITE #5: HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME TRENDS

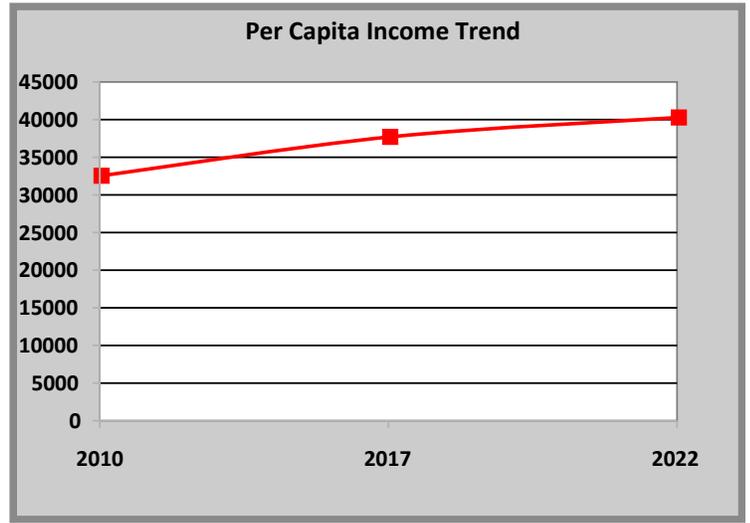
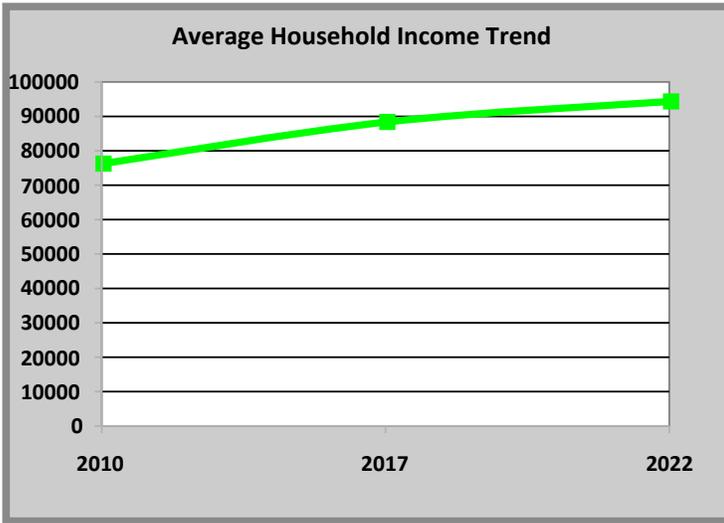
## AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND PER CAPITA INCOME

Average Household Income and Per Capita Income indicate the level of financial resources within a community. Average Household income reflects the average income for each household, whether family or non-family.

In this study area, the estimated current year average household income is \$88,395. The average household income is projected to grow by 6.8% to \$94,365.

Per Capita Income is a measure of the average income of all persons within a household. For family households, this would include all children. It does not mean that each person actually contributes to the average income from work. It is calculated by dividing the aggregate household income by the population.

The estimated per capita income for the current year is \$37,719. The Per Capita Income is projected to grow by 6.8% to \$40,287.



Income Trends	2010	2017	2022	2010%	2017%	2022%	Estimated 5 Year %pt Change 2017 - 2022
<b>Households</b>							
Less than \$10,000	971	1,060	967	6.4%	6.8%	6.1%	-0.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	654	480	502	4.3%	3.1%	3.2%	0.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,376	1,382	1,268	9.1%	8.9%	8.0%	-0.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,616	1,534	1,417	10.7%	9.9%	9.0%	-0.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2,282	2,199	2,074	15.1%	14.1%	13.1%	-1.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2,762	2,467	2,674	18.3%	15.9%	16.9%	1.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,826	1,784	1,800	12.1%	11.5%	11.4%	-0.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,837	2,525	2,586	12.2%	16.2%	16.3%	0.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	962	1,341	1,276	6.4%	8.6%	8.1%	-0.6%
\$200,000 or more	785	769	1,268	5.2%	4.9%	8.0%	3.1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15,071</b>	<b>15,541</b>	<b>15,832</b>				

## INSITE #5: HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME TRENDS (continued)

### FAMILY INCOME

Family income is a sub-set of household income. It excludes non-family households. Family households include two or more persons who are related and living in the same dwelling unit. Children are more likely to live in family households. Non-family households are households in which two or more persons live in the same dwelling unit but are unrelated.

The number of families with annual incomes above \$100,000 is projected to decline over the next five years. For the current year, it is estimated that 41.2% of all family incomes exceed \$100,000 per year. In five years that number is projected to be 40.6%.

<i>Income Trends</i>	2017	2022	2017%	2022%	Estimated 5 Year %pt Change 2017 - 2022
<b>Families</b>					
Less than \$10,000	406	406	5.1%	5.0%	-0.13%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	156	152	2.0%	1.9%	-0.10%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	539	546	6.8%	6.7%	-0.08%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	638	770	8.1%	9.5%	1.43%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	796	806	10.1%	10.0%	-0.13%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,170	1,190	14.8%	14.7%	-0.12%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	932	936	11.8%	11.6%	-0.25%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,694	1,713	21.5%	21.2%	-0.30%
\$150,000-\$199,999	981	1,000	12.4%	12.4%	-0.08%
\$200,000 or more	576	571	7.3%	7.1%	-0.24%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,888</b>	<b>8,090</b>			

### MEDIAN INCOME BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Median income by race and ethnicity is a subset of household income. Median income is that point where there are as many households with incomes greater than the median as there are households with incomes less than the median.

Median Income by Race and Ethnicity	2017
Asian Household Income	29,999
Black/ African American Household Income	37,194
Hispanic/Latino Household Income	68,699
White/Anglo Household Income	73,331
P Is, Am Indian Other Household Income	47,399

# INSITE #6: HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN TRENDS

Diversity of child rearing environments is increasing along with the many other types of growing diversity in the US. To understand this, we begin with the types of households that exist in a community. There are...

- family households with children under 18
- family households without children under 18

The concern of this analysis is family households with children under 18. Of the types of family households with children there are...

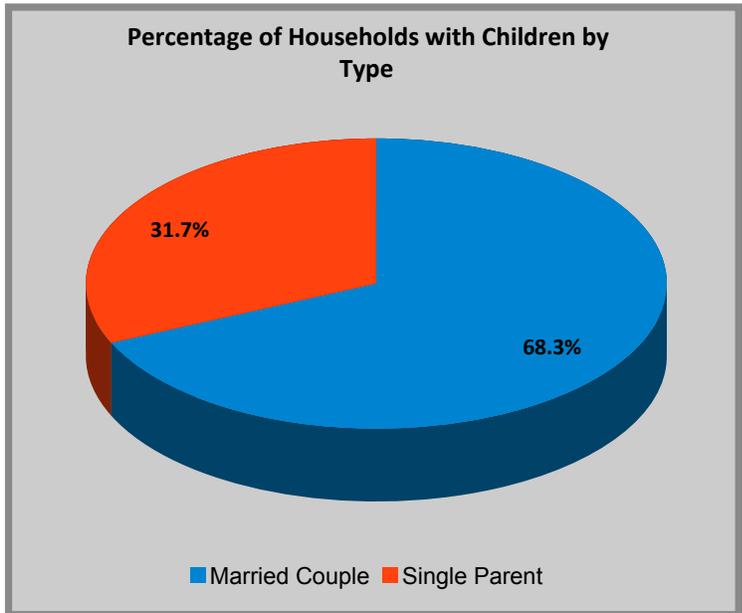
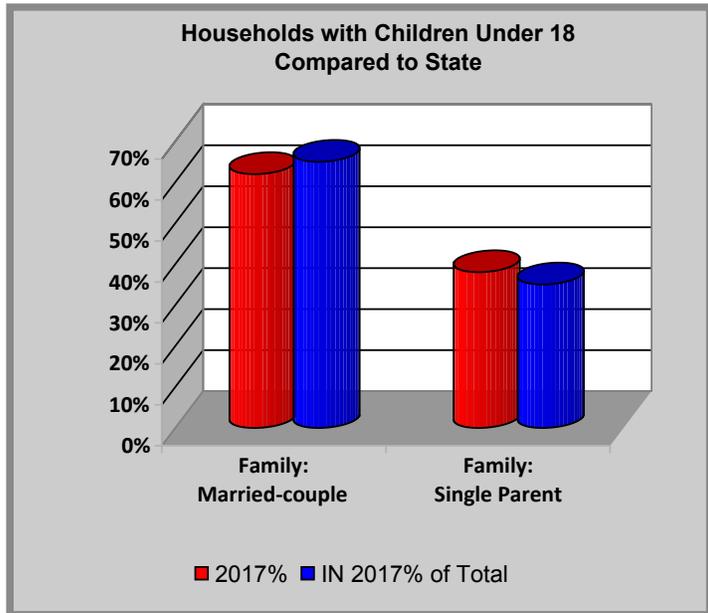
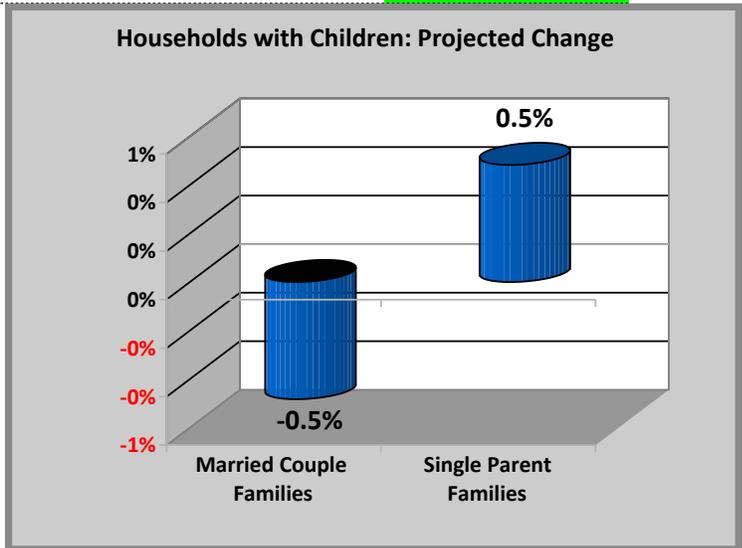
- Married couple families
- Single parent families (father or mother)

These two are reported for the study area in the table below.

Households	2010	2017	2022	2010%	2017%	2022%	Estimated 5 Year %pt Change 2017 - 2022
<b>Households with Children under 18</b>							
Married Couple	2,081	2,269	2,295	62.0%	68.3%	67.8%	-0.5%
Single Parent	1,277	1,054	1,090	38.0%	31.7%	32.2%	0.5%

Of the households with children under 18, married couple households are decreasing as a percentage while single parent households are increasing. The graph to the right illustrates this. Bars above the 0% point indicate a family type that is increasing while bars below 0% is decreasing. This provides "insite" into how family households and structures with children are changing in the study area.

A comparison to the state reveals to what extent this community is similar or dissimilar to the state as a whole. The study area's married couple households with children are similar to the state's profile. The percentage of single parent households with children is about the same as the state.



# INSITE #7: MARITAL STATUS TRENDS

## MARITAL STATUS BY TYPE

Population by Marital Status considers the number and percentage of persons 15 years of age and greater by their current marital status. Both trend information as well as a comparison to the study area's state marital status types provides two different views of this social reality.

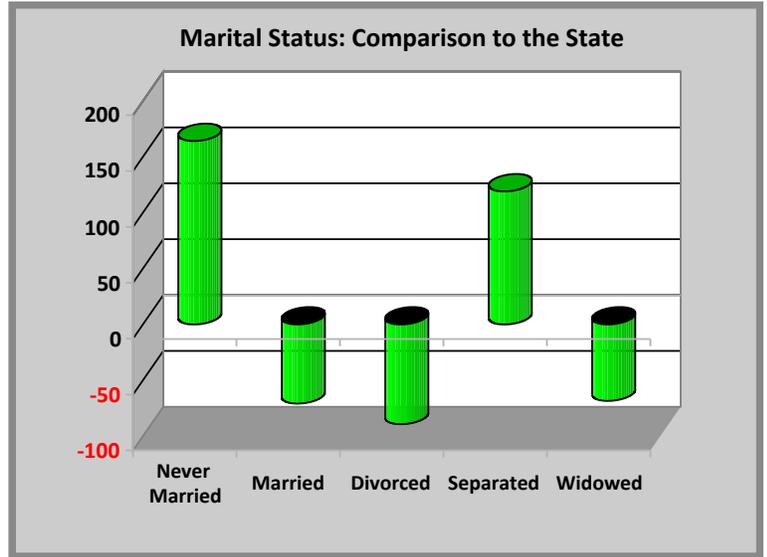
Marital types reported include..

- Never Married (Singles)
- Currently Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed

	2010	2017	2022	2010%	2017%	2022%	2010 to 2022 %pt Change
<b>Population by Marital Status: Age 15+</b>							
Never Married	13,591	13,697	13,559	44.9%	46.4%	46.0%	1.1%
Married	11,832	10,881	11,041	39.1%	36.9%	37.5%	-1.7%
Divorced	3,114	3,127	3,138	10.3%	10.6%	10.6%	0.4%
Separated	436	524	509	1.4%	1.8%	1.7%	0.3%
Widowed	1,281	1,261	1,234	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%	0.0%

In this community, the current year estimate of marital status reveals a community of adults less likely to be married than the state average for adults. The percentage single, never married in the study area is higher than the state average for adults 15 years and older. Divorce is less prevalent than the state wide average.

The graph to the right illustrates the marital status comparison of the study area to the state. Bars above the 0% point line indicate a marital status type that is more prevalent than the state average while bars below the 0% are below the state average. The length of the bars represent the strength of the difference. They are not percentages.



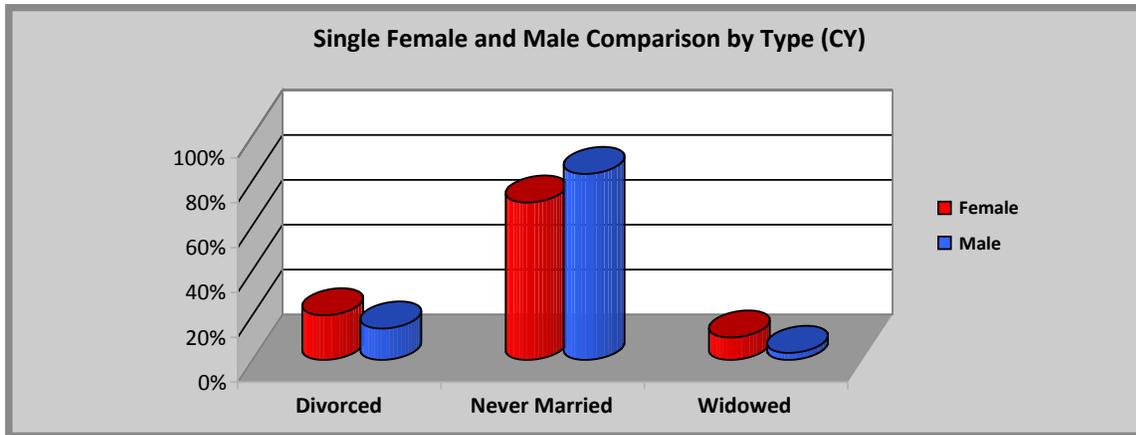
## MARITAL STATUS BY FEMALE AND MALE

Who is more likely to be unmarried, women or men in this community? Consider these findings about this study area:

Women 15 years and older are less likely to be single, never married than men.

Women 15 years and older are more likely to be divorced than men.

Women 15 years and older are more likely to be widowed than men.

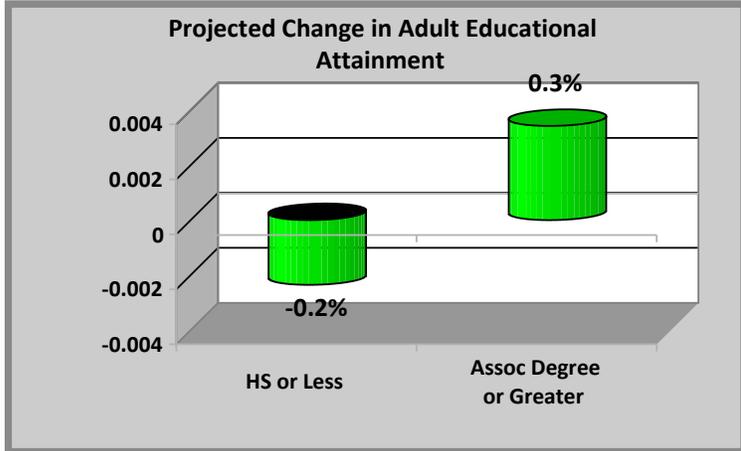


# INSITE #8: ADULT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The level of educational attainment of a community's adult population is an important indicator of its opportunities and challenges. This analysis will look at the Adult Educational Attainment from three perspectives

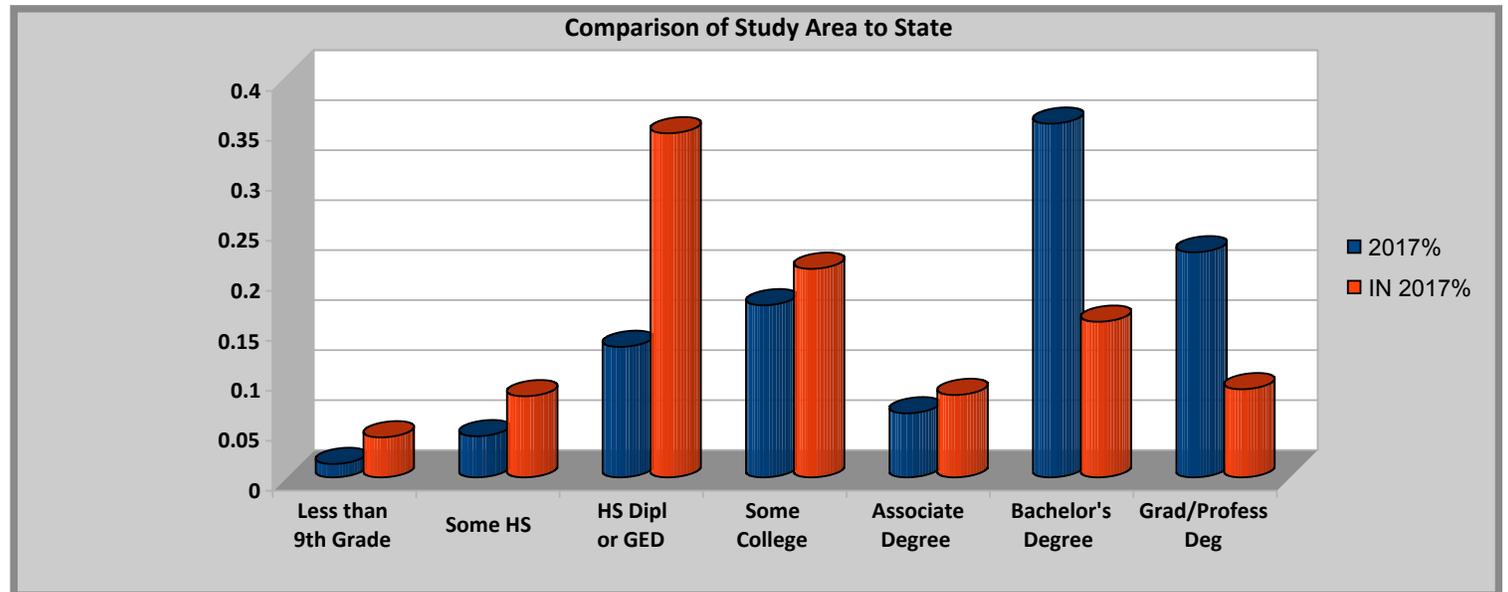
First, it looks to see if the level of educational attainment for adults is rising or not. Second, it compares the level of attainment to that of the state of INDIANA. (If this is a state report, the comparison will be to itself.) Finally, the table provides the percentages from 2010.

## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINMENT CHANGE



The educational attainment level of adults has been rising over the past few years. It is projected to rise over the next five years by 0.3%.

## EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPARED TO THE STATE



	2010	2017	2022	IN 2017%	2017 Study Area-State Comp Index
<b>Population by Educational Attainment: 25+</b>					
Less than 9th Grade	1.7%	1.3%	1.4%	4.0%	33
Some HS	4.9%	4.1%	3.8%	8.1%	51
HS Dipl or GED	18.0%	13.0%	12.8%	34.4%	38
Some College	17.2%	17.2%	17.3%	20.9%	83
Associate Degree	4.2%	6.4%	6.8%	8.2%	78
Bachelor's Degree	31.9%	35.4%	35.9%	15.6%	227
Grad/Profess Deg	22.1%	22.5%	22.0%	8.8%	255

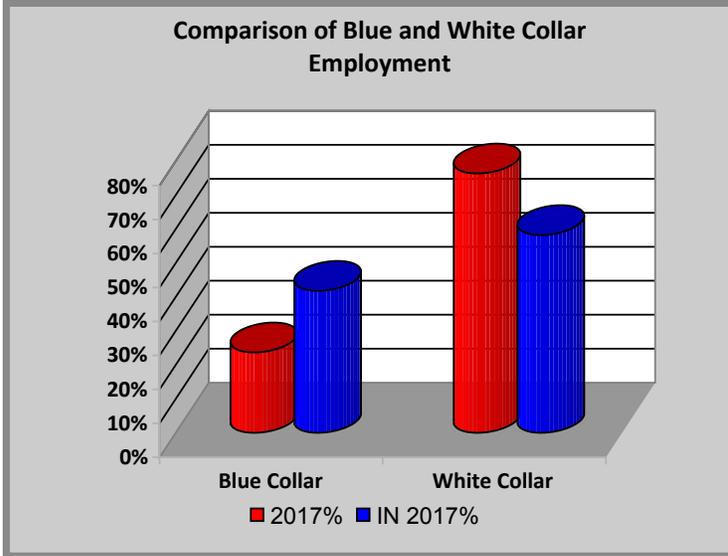
The overall educational attainment of the adults in this community is greater than the state.

## INSITE #9: POPULATION BY EMPLOYMENT

Like educational attainment, an analysis of a community by its employment types and categories provides an important “insite” into its socio-economics. This analysis looks at two factors.

First is a report of the employed population 16 and over by the traditional “blue collar” and “white collar” occupations and compares these to the state. Second, it looks at the community by the seven standard census bureau occupations and compares them to the state.

### EMPLOYED POPULATION : BLUE COLLAR OR WHITE COLLAR



On the chart to the left, the study area is compared to the state of INDIANA. This study area is well above the state average for White Collar workers. It is well below the state average for Blue Collar workers.

### EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION BY OCCUPATION

	2017	IN 2017	Comp. Index	Interpretation
<b>Employed Civilian Pop 16+ by Occupation</b>				
Bldg Maintenance & Cleaning	2.2%	3.7%	61	Well below the state average.
Construction	3.7%	8.4%	44	Well below the state average.
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.1%	0.4%	26	Well below the state average.
Food Preparation Serving	6.3%	5.9%	106	At about the state average.
Healthcare Support	1.3%	2.4%	53	Well below the state average.
Managerial Executive	20.7%	12.8%	162	Well above the state average.
Office Admin	10.5%	13.2%	80	Well below the state average.
Personal Care	3.3%	3.0%	109	At about the state average.
Production Transportation	6.0%	18.5%	33	Well below the state average.
Prof Specialty	32.6%	19.7%	165	Well above the state average.
Protective	2.0%	1.9%	106	At about the state average.
Sales	11.2%	10.1%	111	Well above the state average.

## INSITE #10: MOSAIC Segments

Mosaic is a geo-demographic segmentation system developed by and for marketers. Instead of looking at individual demographic variables, a segmentation system clusters households into groups with multiple common characteristics. Demographic variables that generally cluster together would include income, educational levels, presence of children and occupations among others.

This database is developed by Experian. Some find the information helpful because it presents a multi-dimensional view of a community.

In the report below, the top 15 Mosaic Segments of the study area are provided. (If less than 15, rows will be blank.)

**NOTE: For a full description please see the DI Demographic Segment Guide (Mosaic) under the Help menu on the Documents gallery.**

	2017	2017%	State %	Comp Index	Relative to the IN State Ave.
<b>Mosaic Segments</b>					
G24 Young, City Solos - Status Seeking Singles	3,387	21.9%	0.9%	2551	Well above the state average
O52 Singles and Starters - Urban Ambition	1,531	9.9%	1.7%	571	Well above the state average
D18 Suburban Style - Suburban Attainment	1,344	8.7%	1.7%	501	Well above the state average
E19 Thriving Boomers - Full Pockets, Empty Nests	894	5.8%	0.4%	1631	Well above the state average
C13 Booming with Confidence - Silver Sophisticates	841	5.4%	0.5%	1095	Well above the state average
O54 Singles and Starters - Striving Single Scene	828	5.3%	1.5%	365	Well above the state average
O51 Singles and Starters - Digital Dependents	717	4.6%	4.6%	100	About average for the state
S69 Economic Challenges - Urban Survivors	689	4.4%	2.4%	186	Well above the state average
A02 Power Elite - Platinum Prosperity	609	3.9%	0.8%	504	Well above the state average
O53 Singles and Starters - Colleges and Cafes	591	3.8%	1.2%	312	Well above the state average
F22 Promising Families - Fast Track Couples	572	3.7%	2.3%	163	Well above the state average
A05 Power Elite - Couples with Clout	510	3.3%	0.3%	974	Well above the state average
C11 Booming with Confidence - Aging of Aquarius	495	3.2%	3.4%	94	Somewhat below the state average
B09 Flourishing Families - Family Fun-tastic	468	3.0%	1.1%	280	Well above the state average
A01 Power Elite - American Royalty	310	2.0%	0.5%	403	Well above the state average

### Learn about your Mosaic Households

To access Mosaic Portrait data click on:

[Mosaic USA E-Handbook by Experian](#) (To open in a new Tab hold Control key when you click on the link)

Handbook includes Mosaic Overview and two graphic pages for each of the 19 Groups and 71 Segments.

To access the Mosaic application guide click on:

[Mission Impact Mosaic Application Guide by Bandy](#) (To open in a new Tab hold Control key when you click on the link)

## INSITE #11: CHARITABLE GIVING PRACTICES

Charitable giving practices data provide three perspectives about giving in the study area. First, they indicate how extensive giving is within a study area by showing the percentage of households that are likely to contribute \$200 or more dollars per year to charitable causes.

Second, they project the direction of giving. Giving data is provided across 10 sectors of charity giving. Each community has its own distinctive pattern.

Finally, they show how the study area gives across the 10 sectors in comparison to the state of INDIANA. An area may contribute modestly to a charitable sector in terms of actual projected households but it may be well above the state-wide average for such giving.

### Interpreting the Table

As the table is studied look at two factors; the number of people or households and the index. The first will provide a sense of the number strength in the study area. The second shows how giving to one of the 10 charitable targets compares to the state. Any "index" over 100 means the study area gives more to a charitable target than is true for the state as a whole.

To make the interpretation of this easier, the following table is sorted by Index. However, be sure to look at the "% of Households" column. A particular charitable sector may have a low index but still a larger percentage than some other of the 10 sectors represented here.

	Hholds	% of HH	Index	Interpretation
<b>Charitable Contributions Last Yr: \$200 Or More</b>				
Public Television-\$200 Or More	166	1.1%	299	Well above the state ave.
Public Radio-\$200 Or More	95	0.6%	238	Well above the state ave.
Environmental-\$200 Or More	174	1.1%	207	Well above the state ave.
Health-\$200 Or More	909	5.8%	170	Well above the state ave.
Social Services/Welfare-\$200 Or More	1,242	8.0%	153	Well above the state ave.
Education-\$200 Or More	777	5.0%	149	Well above the state ave.
Political Organization-\$200 Or More	105	0.7%	146	Well above the state ave.
Private Foundation-\$200 Or More	674	4.3%	128	Well above the state ave.
Other-\$200 Or More	877	5.6%	119	Somewhat above the state ave.
Religious-\$200 Or More	3,339	21.4%	97	About average for the state.

### Summary of Charitable Contribution Findings:

Overall, it is estimated that households in this study area are well above the state average in their contributions to charities.

### More specific findings include:

The number of charitable sectors where giving is well above the state average: 8.

The number of charitable sectors where giving is somewhat below the state average: 0.

The number of charitable sectors where giving is well below the state average: 0.

## INSITE #12: RELIGIOUS PROGRAM OR MINISTRY PREFERENCES

This information is from the recent survey conducted by MissionInsite of US Religious Preferences, Practices and Beliefs called the Quadrennium Project. While general religious data is available through various organizations, only MissionInsite can provide local geography projections that are current. The complete survey results are available in the Predesigned Quad Report. The Quadrennium White Paper is available on the web site.

	Study Area		US Average		Comparative Index	
	Modestly Important	Very Important	Modestly Important	Very Important	Modestly Important	Very Important
<b>Personal Growth</b>	33.3%	7.3%	32.6%	9.0%	102	81
Addiction support groups	25.7%	9.2%	26.9%	10.0%	96	93
Health/weight loss programs	35.7%	6.3%	33.9%	9.1%	105	69
Practical training seminars	38.4%	6.5%	37.1%	8.0%	103	81
<b>Family Support and Intervention Services</b>	35.5%	12.7%	35.0%	14.8%	101	86
Daycare/After-School Programs	25.7%	9.0%	24.3%	10.6%	106	85
Crisis support groups	40.9%	11.5%	41.7%	14.3%	98	81
Family oriented activities	41.2%	20.7%	39.5%	24.0%	104	86
Marriage enrichment	35.5%	12.1%	35.3%	13.7%	101	88
Parenting development	28.6%	10.1%	29.6%	11.7%	97	86
Personal/family counseling	41.1%	12.7%	39.6%	14.2%	104	90
<b>Community Involvement and Advocacy Programs</b>	49.1%	15.0%	47.7%	16.1%	103	93
Adult social activities	53.4%	13.3%	51.8%	17.0%	103	78
Involvement in social causes	47.5%	15.1%	48.6%	15.5%	98	97
Social justice advocacy work	44.0%	9.9%	39.3%	11.6%	112	86
Opportunities for volunteering in the community	51.3%	21.8%	51.1%	20.4%	100	107
<b>Community Activities or Cultural Programs</b>	42.7%	14.7%	42.3%	16.6%	101	88
Cultural programs (music, drama, art)	45.9%	11.5%	45.2%	12.8%	101	90
Holiday programs/activities	51.0%	16.8%	49.0%	18.0%	104	93
Seniors/retiree activities	39.2%	15.0%	41.8%	16.7%	94	90
Youth social activities	34.8%	15.4%	33.0%	18.8%	105	82
<b>Religious/Spiritual Programs</b>	37.1%	16.0%	34.2%	19.0%	108	84
Alternative spiritual practices (meditation, yoga, etc.)	32.1%	6.5%	28.2%	8.0%	114	81
Bible or Scripture study/prayer groups	35.0%	17.2%	32.5%	21.6%	108	80
Christian education for children	30.9%	19.4%	27.8%	22.0%	111	88
Contemporary worship services	41.2%	16.8%	40.2%	17.0%	102	99
Spiritual discussion groups	42.2%	11.8%	40.1%	15.0%	105	79
Traditional worship services	41.0%	24.2%	36.8%	30.3%	111	80

# Supporting Information

## Interpreting the Report

The ExecutiveInsite report is designed for easy reading. But there are several tools provided in the tables that make this easier.

**Change over time:** Several trend tables have a column indicating a change over time. Generally these tables begin with the last census, include the current year estimate, a five year projection and if available, a 10 year forecast. The data in each cell represents a percentage change up or down.

**Color Coding:** Both the "Change over Time" and "Comparative Indexes" columns are color coded to easily spot any change and the direction of that change.

Change:	Increasing	Stable	Declining
Index:	Above Ave	Ave	Below Ave.

## Variable Definitions

Full variable definitions can be found in the MI Demographic Reference Guide. Download it free from the Help/Documents menu located on the map screen of your study area on the MissionInsite website.

**Indexes:** Some variables will have a column called "Comparative Index." An index is an easy way to compare a study area with a larger area. For this report, all comparisons are with the state or states within which the study area falls. The indexes can be interpreted as follows.

- Indexes of 100 mean the study area variable is the same as its base area.
- Indexes greater than 100 mean the study area variable is above the base area. The higher the number, the greater it is above the base.
- Indexes less than 100 mean the study area variable is below the base area. The lower the number, the greater it is below the base.

## Support

If you need support with this report, please email MissionInsite at [misupport@missioninsite.com](mailto:misupport@missioninsite.com).