

S.W.O.T. REPORT FOR PINE RUN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 2023

The first step in the Transitional Process is self analysis. My role as the Transitional Pastor is to present an analysis based on the interviews I had with 51 members of the church and on my own observations. The next step will be to guide the Elders to focus our vision and plan as a church to move into our future. Finally, we will begin to move into incorporating that vision into our church life. This process will begin in the Transitional time and be completed with the new called Pastor.

Strengths

First, a general comment. PRPC is fundamentally a healthy church. Pastor Lanny did a wonderful job caring for and leading the church.

As I asked each person in the interviews what they see as the greatest strength of the church I got the same answer again and again....the people. PRPC indeed is a wonderful family church. The people of the church care for each other and love their church.

There is a core group in the church that is very strong in faith and very active in ministry. There is a strong desire to move forward as a church. Ministries to reach into the community (e.g. VBS, Trunk and Treat) has started with great success.

There is a belief that PRPC has a strong spiritual base. The transition into the EPC was not an easy step...a number of families were lost. But there is a solid belief that it is where the church needs to be. The centrality of Christ and the authority of Scripture is evident at PRPC.

The leadership of the church is strong and dedicated to moving forward. The Elders have begun to step up and fill the gaps left by moving from a full time pastor to a part time Transitional Pastor. The leadership is dedicated to the Lord, dedicated to the church, and dedicated to moving the church forward.

The worship service is a wonderful time to focus on God in proclaimed word, prayer and music. Sunday school has great leadership and has had an increase in participation the past few months.

Weaknesses

The interviews (and my observations) point to the obvious weakness. PRPC has been experiencing a slow decline over the past 25 years. The primary reason for this decline is the change in society. Churches that depended upon a small number of families to populate the church for the past 100 years are facing a difficult future. The fact is families are smaller, children tend to move away, and new generations of children are less active in church.

Mega churches have become more popular. Also, far smaller percentage of the population desire to be active in church.

Because of the decline in the church the number of ministries has decreased. There was a lamenting of the lost ministries that were part of the church in the past.

The slow loss has also caused a financial strain on the church. Raising the funds for a full time pastor is a challenge.

The core group of active volunteers is shrinking. It is difficult at times to find volunteers for the vital ministries of the church.

Opportunities

Again, I repeat my first statement. PRPC is basically a healthy church.

PRPC needs to build on the solid base that exists at the church. The attraction of the church is the people of the church. There needs to be an intentional and purposeful building of relationships and the inviting others to be part of our church family. We will not “out program” the large churches therefore we need to “out relationship” other churches. People are looking for friendships and for a solid base in life.

We need to grow in our sharing of the gospel. As a congregation, and as individual members of the congregation, we need to actively look for and rejoice in the opportunities to share our faith with a hurting world.

A clear vision and purpose for the church to move into the future must be understood by the congregation and emphasized.

A church must not become inwardly focused. We must remain in obedience to the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples. Growth, again both individual and congregational, is never by accident.

A new pastor is also an opportunity. Finding the person God is calling to lead this church is a great opportunity to move forward as a church.

Threats

First, the good news. There are no immediate threats facing the church.

Again, the greatest threat is obvious....continued, slow decline. A church can get to a point where it is next to impossible to continue. PRPC is certainly not at that point. but continued decline is a great danger.

Society will continue to change and interest in involvement in church will continue to decline.