



**Mission Study of the
First Presbyterian Church of Newhall**

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Prepared by the Mission Study Task Force

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Introduction

The First Presbyterian Church of Newhall (FPCN) is a vibrant, multi-generational, inclusive family practicing our Christian faith in worship, fellowship, and mission, here and around the world. We are proud of our heritage which started in 1891, the early years of the town of Newhall. As God leads us in this transition period, we look forward to welcoming a new pastor who will guide us into the future with vision, sharing joint leadership with the Session and the congregation. We are a strong, loving, and compassionate congregation, dedicated to following Christ. Our hope is to find a pastor who will increase our connection and ministry with the people of the Santa Clarita Valley and wherever God calls us.

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A Brief Church History

The city of Newhall is named after Henry Mayo Newhall who established the community in 1876 in a successful effort to lure a railroad connection. By 1878, the town included the Southern Hotel, a park, and a school. The First Presbyterian Church of Newhall began with Sunday School classes that were held in the lounge of the Southern Hotel, the Newhall School, and in parishioner's homes. On May 31, 1891, Rev. F.D. Seward, with 16 charter members, organized the Community Presbyterian Church.

A corporation was formed on June 18, 1891, for The First Presbyterian Church of Newhall, and those handwritten articles are still the current ones held by Los Angeles County, making the church one of the oldest in Santa Clarity Valley. By September 15, 1891, the original wooden church was completed at a cost of \$1,225. This church was a favorite exterior shot for many early silent movies, including those of William S. Hart and Tom Mix.

A manse was built in 1910 and a new brick church building was completed in 1923 for the 42 members. In 1925 a Mollar Theatre Pipe Organ, which we still have, was purchased for \$3,500. Originally, it was manufactured in 1915 and sold to the Strand Theatre in Meridian, Mississippi.

On March 12, 1928, the St. Francis Dam collapsed causing a wall of water 120 feet high to flood the Santa Clarita Valley, killing over 450 people. This was the second-greatest loss of life event in California's history. Our Pastor Wolcott H. Evans worked day and night to help the victims. The Evans Room in the present church building is named in his honor.

By the 1950s, membership was a little over 300 and more room was needed so Fellowship Hall/Christian Education was built, and the dedication took place on October 11, 1953. Little Shepherd's Nursery School, located in Fellowship Hall/Christian



Education, was created in 1967 and became the first church-related nursery school in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The great earthquake of February 9, 1971, did extensive damage. Membership was over 400 and the decision was made to build a new sanctuary rather than restore the old. The current sanctuary was dedicated February 13, 1977, and by 1988, the church had repaid all its indebtedness on the church properties.

The last big purchase was in 1998, when the church bought a small home on Market Street adjacent to the Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building to be used for additional meeting and storage space.

Governance and Management

We are part of the Presbytery of San Fernando, a middle governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA), which is comprised of 48 churches and worshipping communities in the northwest corner of Los Angeles County. It includes heavily urbanized communities, suburban communities, and rural areas, and is extremely diverse in both its racial/ethnic and socio-economic makeup.

Our pastors are elected by our congregation in cooperation with the Presbytery of San Fernando. We are led by our Elders, who are elected by our congregation to serve on the Session, the governing board of our church. The Elders lead and direct the various ministries of our church.

The Session

The Session currently has 12 Elders, as of 2022, and 9 Committees. Some Committees have more than one Elder. The Standing Committees are Children, Personnel, Adult Ministry and Fellowship, Buildings and Grounds, Mission, Worship and Music, Outreach and Growth, Youth, and Stewardship. Our church has had several ad-hoc committees, including the Futures Committee, which had met to resolve various issues.

Staff Positions

There are paid positions for the Director of Youth Ministries, Associate Children's Director, Office Administrator, Custodian, Groundskeeper, Nursery Care, Treasurer, Bookkeeper, Choir Director, Accompanist, Organist, Praise Band Director, Praise Band Members, Associate Communications Director (unfilled), and Senior Pastor (unfilled). Currently, we also have paid positions for Interim Pastor and pulpit supply.

Deacons

There are currently 9 deacons. Each Deacon is assigned a parish and communicates with parish members weekly. Deacons try to establish a personal relationship with the members of their parish to facilitate supporting them in times of need. Deacons serve the Church in other ways such as preparing communion, hosting Memorial Service receptions, and hosting an annual all-church ice cream social. They also provide a coffee fellowship on Sunday mornings after service.



Our Church Mission Statement

The Mission Statement, prepared and adopted by the Session in 1997, is used on the worship bulletins. A stained-glass backdrop behind the sanctuary cross expresses the Mission Statement in images of a fish, a heart, a dove, and footprints.

“At First Presbyterian Church we invite people to follow Jesus Christ in a community where we **EXALT** God in Worship, **EMBRACE** one another in love, **ENCOURAGE** spiritual growth, and **EQUIP** every person for ministry in the church and world.”

Our Core Values and Beliefs

Our updated church website, launched in 2021, states our Core Values and Beliefs, beginning with this statement of our identity and an invitation to join our community of faith.

The congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Newhall is a vibrant, multi-generational, inclusive family of Christian faith.

We seek to be caring, welcoming, passionate, faithful, and empathetic as followers of Jesus Christ. We love worship and music; programs for children and youth are important; we engage in caring for others in our community and with others around the world; we have many fellowship groups where we are engaged with each other in Bible study, prayer, support and caring for the world around us.

We are an active community of faith, and we invite others to participate with us in our activities, ministries, and missions. Detailed explanations for each bullet are on our church website.

- Our congregation is a family of Christian faith, following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior both personally and as a congregation.
- As a family of faith, we seek to follow the Living Word, Jesus Christ, through the direction of the Holy Spirit and through the written Word of God in the Holy Scriptures.
- We are part of the nationwide Presbyterian Church PC (USA) denomination.
- We believe the doctrines and creeds adopted by our PC (USA) denomination.
- We encourage each person to love God with their heart, soul, strength, and mind, as commanded by God and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- We seek to be a loving, inclusive family of faith in following Jesus’ command to love each other.
- We seek to love our neighbors in our local community and around the world.



- We believe that each member of our congregation is gifted by God through the Holy Spirit with unique abilities and character to serve Christ in our church.
- Both members and pastors share ministry and leadership.

The Community of Santa Clarita Valley

We are one hour away from the beach, one hour from the mountains, one hour from the desert, and one hour from world class museums, entertainment, dining, and professional sports venues in the greater Los Angeles area.

The First Presbyterian Church of Newhall is in the City of Santa Clarita, which is about 40 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. Santa Clarita has various neighborhoods with separate names from before they became the City of Santa Clarita in 1987: Newhall, Valencia, Saugus, Canyon Country, and Fair Oaks Ranch. The Santa Clarita Valley also includes the areas of Aqua Dulce, Castaic, West Ranch, Stevenson Ranch, Val Verde, and Newhall Ranch, all under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County.

Gold: The first California gold discovery was here in the Santa Clarita Valley in 1842, in Placerita Canyon. The “Oak of the Golden Dream” is a California Historic Landmark, near the Placerita Canyon Nature Center, where Jose Francisco de Garcia Lopez dug up some wild onions with his knife and was surprised to discover gold clinging to their roots.

Population: As of 2020, the Santa Clarita Valley had a population of 290,000. By 2040, it’s estimated that the residential population will be 393,000. Most housing is single family, with some apartment buildings, condominiums, and mobile home parks throughout the area. There is also independent living and assisted living housing for seniors.

Ethnic Makeup: Based on 2020 *Mission Insite* study for our area, based on a 7.5-mile radius from Santa Clarita City Hall, which approximates the area where our members live: 50% white, 31% Hispanic/ Latino, 11% Asian, including a large Korean group, 4% Black, and 4% other. The same *Mission Insite* survey listed the demographics as 25.9% under the age of 18, and 11.3% over the age of 65.

Higher Education: The valley has multiple institutions of higher education including College of the Canyons (COC), California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and The Master’s University.

Medical Care: The Santa Clarita Valley is served by numerous medical facilities including Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital (357-bed non-profit), health care providers of UCLA, Kaiser, City of Hope, Facey, urgent care providers and private practice doctors and dentists.

Schools: There are 6 school districts serving the Santa Clarita Valley, including 3 elementary school districts (Newhall, Sulphur Springs, and Saugus Union), elementary



and middle school (Castaic Union), K-12 (Acton/Agua Dulce Unified), and high school (Wm. S. Hart Union with 22,000 students in six junior high schools and seven high schools). Families move to the Santa Clarita Valley for the excellent public education offered here.

Recreation: Recreation and sports facilities are well represented in the Santa Clarita Valley. There are several public and private golf courses, a skate park, an Aquatic Center, Six Flags Theme Parks, numerous community parks and a network of bike trails throughout the city.

Placerita Nature Center, Angeles National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area provide numerous hiking trails just outside the city. Santa Clarita is also home to the *Walk of Western Stars* and William S. Hart Regional Park, the home of early western movie star William S. Hart. The Santa Clarita Valley has two live theaters in Old Town Newhall, and it has the Performing Arts Center at COC. The Santa Clarita Valley is known for the *Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival* each spring. Professional sports in Los Angeles include Dodger baseball, Galaxy, LA Football Club, and Angel City FC soccer, Rams and Chargers football, Lakers, Clippers, and LA Sparks basketball, and Kings hockey.

In addition to their highly ranked educational programs, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and University of Southern California (USC) also have athletic programs that produce teams and individual athletes that garner national attention.

Religions: There are many religious institutions in the Santa Clarita Valley, representing all traditions – Roman Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, and all the various strains of protestant churches (both non-denominational and denominational). The Yellow Pages list over 100 churches and religious groups in the Santa Clarita Valley. The recent 2022 *Mission Insite* study for the population within a 7.5-mile radius from City Hall reported that 63% are not involved in a religious congregation or community. Of those surveyed, 44% reported that religious faith was of considerable or utmost significance for them, but not all those are attending a religious institution. One estimate is that 7% of the population attend religious services. If this figure of 7% is applied to the population growth of the Santa Clarita Valley, over the next 18 years when the area is estimated to grow by 103,000 people, over 7,000 new people will be interested in connecting with a church or other religious institution.

Industry: Santa Clarita is the third largest city in LA County and offers employment in many areas including retail, service, manufacturing, biotech, medical, hi-tech, aerospace, warehousing, and entertainment studios including Disney’s Melody Ranch.

Membership

Church records show that in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s church membership fluctuated between 400 and 450. There was a downward trend in membership during



the next decades into the range of 200 to 300. In the tumult of the Pandemic years, it was difficult to know who remained a member. As the church resumed in-person worship in the sanctuary in 2022, the Session had a clearer picture of our membership. As of September 2022, the Church had 121 active members and 102 assigned to the inactive roll.

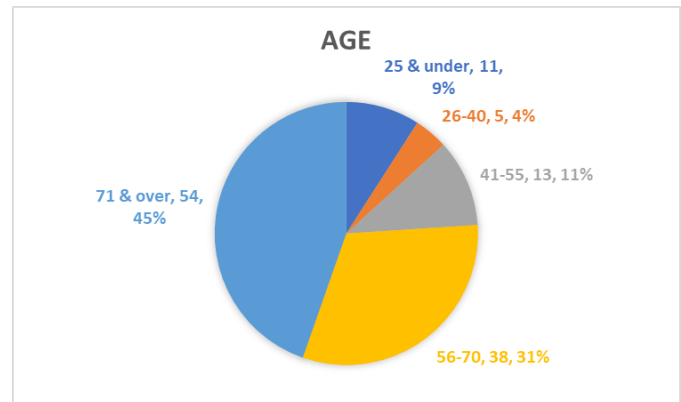
Our Annual Reports show the following additions to our membership:

Year	Total New	Transfer	Reaffirmation	Profession	Restored	Correction
2012	12	4	3	2	3	
2013	32	2	12			17
2014	17	2	14	1		
2015	11	3	8			
2016	24		24			
2017	7	2	5			
2018	11		11			
2019	6		6			
2020	7	2		4		1
2021	2		2			

Member Distribution

45% of the members are 71 and over. 31% are age 56 to 70. That’s 76% of the members.

Not shown on the chart, 60% of the members are women.



Worship

Our Sunday Service: We offer a single service at 9:00 am that provides a mix of traditional hymns, choral music and contemporary praise music and traditional style sermons. People in our church have often been given the opportunity to prepare and preach sermons.

Nursery care is available. Sunday School is available for preschool and school age children. There are special services for Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Sunday. Average in-person attendance January 2 through October 9, 2022, is 88.

Online Worship: Sunday Services are streamed live on Facebook. To access, search Facebook for “First Presbyterian Church of Newhall” or go to our website for the link on



our Worship page. Our average Facebook weekly attendance is 15-20 with views averaging 125; people reached average 100.

Music: Our church has traditionally enjoyed a variety of excellent music to enhance our worship experience. Our Chancel Choir shares musical offerings to enhance the service and bolsters congregational singing with hymns and responses, usually accompanied by our piano or pipe organ. We also have an English Handbell choir who shares the beauty of Handbell music several times a year. EverThirst is our band that leads our congregation with contemporary music to praise God.

Online Communication

Website: <https://www.presby-newhall.org> which is well worth visiting. This new mobile friendly website was launched in 2021. Our new church logo was created in 2021.

Church Phone App: We have an Apple and Google smartphone App, launched in 2022: search “Presbyterian Church of Newhall” in the App stores. The App describes the church, lists all the upcoming events, and has push notifications.

Hybrid Meetings: Besides live streaming our Sunday Worship, we use Zoom for our Session and Committee meetings, Bible studies and micro-gatherings. In 2021 and 2022, we started in-person meetings and studies. Many of these are hybrid, allowing for in-person and Zoom attendance. We are committed to having hybrid gatherings whenever possible into the future to promote connections with those who cannot attend in-person.

Email Blasts: We send email blasts to keep the congregation up to date with current church activities or changes to upcoming events. During Covid we started a “Weekly News,” a bi-weekly email blast.

Our Programs

Children’s Ministry

The Children’s Ministry provides Christian education and activities to children, ages birth through sixth grade, and their families. The Children’s Committee, the Children’s Director, and six teachers, with some youth, support the program. Consistently a dozen children come forward for the Time for Children in the worship service, after which they go out to Sunday School. Special events include Vacation Bible School in June, Trunk or Treat in October, Advent Tree Trimming and caroling, Christmas Eve Family Service, waving of the palms on Palm Sunday and our Easter Egg Hunt. VBS attendance is now 30 to 40 children supported by 20 church volunteers. We advertise events on the church website and Facebook page. In 2021 over 400 parents and children attended our



Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot. We welcome visitors and LOVE our awesome First Pres children!

Ignite Youth Program

Ignite is the youth program for junior high through young adults, led by the Youth Director. Ignite uses Bible based activities, discipleship, games, and fellowship to help youth grow their relationship with Christ. The Youth Program also provides education and mentorship leading to confirmation for the youth. Ignite selects local service projects to aid the community. The Youth are also given opportunities to participate in mission and service projects outside their local community. These mission trips allow the youth to help transform the lives of others in a Christ-focused way and promote a deeper relationship with Christ. Ignite develops our youth to be “good and faithful servants” as they are the future of the church.

Adult Ministry and Fellowship

The Adult Education Committee merged with the Church Life Committee in 2022 to form the Adult Ministry and Fellowship Committee. The committee has two distinct teams that work to plan educational activities and fellowship activities for all to participate in.

The Adult Ministry Group provides adult education with a variety of topics taught during the year. Some topics included “Biblical Justice,” “Mysteries of the Bible,” “Science and Faith,” and a series on the Jewish Holidays. In addition to teaching, the Adult Ministry provides several groups whose focus is on discussion and interaction, including “Questions on the Benches,” “Monday Night Gathering of the Saints,” and Bible study classes.

The Fellowship Group is involved in arranging activities for the church families and friends to participate in, including Dodger games, Hollywood Bowl concerts, plays, and movie nights under the stars at church. It also sponsors the celebration of the church’s birthday, chili cookoffs, and yard sales. Ladies Night Out is a fellowship opportunity for women to gather for dinner at various local restaurants.

Missions

Mission Statement: The Missions committee follows Jesus Christ’s command in Matthew 25:40: “Truly I say to you, as you did it (fed, clothed, housed, welcomed, visited) to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it unto me.”

With our “feet on the ground” we gather volunteers and use our resources to pray, plan, and meet human needs in our community and around the world.

Goals and Objectives

1. To be the hands and feet of Jesus by active involvement in the well-being of our neighbors
2. Support FPCN Missions through financial contributions and active volunteerism



3. Support PCUSA in their efforts of global ministry
4. Support our local Presbytery
5. Increase congregational awareness and involvement of mission opportunities
6. Look for new opportunities to show the Love of Christ to our neighbors

2021 Mission Budget \$35,400 Actual Spending: \$41,982

We are a mission-focused church. Our total for all Mission giving in 2021 (including special offerings and food donations) was approximately \$70,000 which was 14.7% of our total expenses.

Mission Educational Opportunity: Members of our church have attended the annual Santa Barbara Mission Conference for over ten years.

International Missionaries: FPCN supports missions in Columbia, Iraq, Lebanon, and CRU/UNTO/USA. Members of our church participated in 2022 mission trips to Antalya, Turkey, and Pastocalle, Ecuador.

International Missions supported

- We build homes with AMOR Ministries for families in Tijuana.
- Our AguaNam group builds water purification systems in Ecuador and Laos.
- Daystar University in Kenya, providing student scholarships.
- Free Wheelchair Ministry.
- PCUSA Disaster Assistance.

Local Missions supported

- A Light of Hope provides mental health support for youth and young adults.
- Alzheimer's Walk raises awareness and provides research funds.
- Bridge to Home provides shelter for adult individuals.
- Family Promise provides shelter for families.
- Project Angel Tree provides Christmas gifts to children of incarcerated parents.
- Santa Clarita Grocery provides a week's worth of groceries and personal care items.
- ZOE rescues children from human trafficking.

Outreach

The Outreach and Church Growth Committee is working to build our membership. The group ties together the church family through the church's updated website, monthly newsletter, and welcome table. Outreach is also responsible for other communications, including the marquee, the new church App, the Weekly News publication and putting articles in the local newspaper. The monthly newsletter shares articles on recent events, information on upcoming events, and multiple educational articles. The group also works with the Pastor in conducting the New Members classes.

Matthew 25 Group

The group strives to follow Jesus's message in Matthew 25. The group sponsored two online programs for Biblical Justice in 2020 and 2021. The monthly Matthew 25 Book Club reads and discusses books on social justice.



Presbyterian Women

There are currently three active Circles meeting at least monthly for Bible study, fellowship, and prayer. The annual traditional Tea was cancelled during Covid, but plans are underway for 2023. PW continues to celebrate the annual presentations of the Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Member award.

Prayer Chain Ministry

We have a group of church congregants who pray for concerns that have been requested. This is a significant, on-going, and long-standing program of our church's care ministry. It extends the ministry of our church to people across the nation.

Handcrafters

The Handcrafters group gathers to share fellowship while working on personal craft projects, including sewing, needlework, knitting, and crocheting. This group also occasionally works on group projects, including quilts for baptisms, blankets for USC – County Medical Center Chaplaincy, masks during Covid, and improvement projects on the church campus.

Other Groups

Little Shepherd's Nursery School

The nursery school was established in 1967 and is licensed for 33 children. The school is in session during the traditional school year as well as a short summer program. Little Shepherd's offers 2 day-a-week and 3 day-a-week programs as well as a once weekly parent/tot program. The school's Board of Directors guides their program under Session oversight. They are financially independent and stable.

Boy Scouts

We are the charter organization for Boy Scout Troop 609, formed in 1974. They are honored yearly on Boy Scout Sunday for the multiple Eagle projects they have contributed that support the church campus.

Grace Korean Church

Our facilities are used for their weekly Sunday service.

Iglesia las Americas

Since July 2022, we have been in partnership with Iglesia las Americas, a new church plant of the Presbytery of San Fernando using our facilities. Their weekly activities include Sunday Worship, Sunday School, and fellowship meals.

Narcotics Anonymous

Our Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building is used for their weekly meetings.



Drama

Some sermons have been presented as dramas when the preacher works with members who know theater. VBS has skits with characters, costumes, and sets. Some members actively perform in local theaters and other venues in our valley.

Church Property and Facilities

First Presbyterian Church of Newhall occupies approximately 2.8 acres on the corner of 8th Street and Newhall Avenue in the City of Santa Clarita, California. The original Church was built on this location in 1891 and was the first Church in the Santa Clarita Valley. Our main Church building, the third to be built on this property, was dedicated in 1977, replacing the 1921 Church which was damaged in the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake. Our Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building was built in the early 1950's. There are three additional buildings on the property, a garage structure used for storage, the Market Street house used for storage and small group meetings, and a second garage for additional storage and parking the 15-passenger Church van.

Main Church Building: The main Church building houses the Sanctuary which seats approximately 165 people. The Evans Room provides 35 additional seats for the Sanctuary and is used as a meeting and choir room. Also in the main building are the Church office, the Pastor's office, an additional staff office (currently occupied by the Pastor of Iglesia Americas), the Nursery room, and the restrooms.

Fellowship Hall/Christian Education: The Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building is a two-story structure. The first floor has five classrooms, office space for the Church Treasurer, Sunday School and Youth Directors as well as Little Shepherd's Nursery School. Little Shepherd's currently uses three of the classrooms and one office for their weekday program.

Fellowship Hall occupies the second floor of the building. There is a small stage at one end of the building and a kitchen at the other end with a large multi-purpose room in the center. Fellowship Hall is used for Church gatherings and various small group meetings. The Church sponsors a very active Boy Scout troop which meets in Fellowship Hall weekly. It is also used by community groups such as NA and serves as a polling site during elections.

Market Street House: Market Street House is a small house that is currently used mainly for storage; however, the living room is used by the high school group as well as some committees for meetings.

Parking Lot: The Church has off-street parking for 105 vehicles including 5 accessible spaces in our on-site parking lot. A portion of the parking lot is occasionally rented during the week by production companies filming in the local area. During these rentals, parking spaces closest to our facilities are reserved for Church and Nursery School parking.



Patio: The patio area between the main Church Building and the Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building has a combination of grass and concrete surfaces with seating as well as a small kiosk where our Deacons serve coffee after the Service to encourage people to greet each other and visit. The patio area is also used for various events and celebrations throughout the year.

Landscaping: The grounds along Newhall Avenue have been landscaped with drought-tolerant plants, and there is a play yard in front of the Fellowship Hall/Christian Education building to serve Little Shepherd's students and the Church's children as well as shaded and grassy areas for people to gather.

Marquee: The Marquee on Newhall Avenue, remodeled with our new church logo in 2022, provides thoughtful weekly messages and updates related to the church.

Outdoor Cross: The large rustic wood Cross on Newhall Avenue was repositioned into its current location by the Boy Scouts.

