



## **NARRATIVE QUESTIONS**

(For each narrative question, please limit your responses to no more than 1500 characters including spaces and punctuation.)

### **1. What is the congregation's or organization's vision for ministry? Additionally, describe how this vision is lived out. [1486]**

Our world is so tumultuous that some churches can't be sure exactly who their members are on a given day. In such times, having a consistent, unifying vision and mission is critical. At FPC Hickory, we affirm that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, sinners saved by God's grace. We seek to glorify God and to grow in faith through our worship, study, service, and witness. Led by the Spirit, we strive to reach out to each other, to our community, and to the world.

We live out our vision as we inspire people to worship, to give their time in mission and service, to share their wealth, to study and proclaim God's Word, to spend time together, to love each other, and to welcome all in Christ's name.

FPC Hickory fosters diverse, intergenerational connections among people trying to build faith through worship, study, activities, mission, and witness to Jesus Christ. We consistently provide meaningful, uplifting worship at our two Sunday services. We seek not only to continue these ministries but also to extend our reach concentrically in imaginative ways.

We enjoy a rich legacy of leadership from both pastors and members as we have sought to follow God's lead. Our church has a history of connecting with all of our members and attracting spiritually hungry people from our community, while honoring our traditions. We look forward to engaging a new pastor who will embrace our current vision – and open our eyes to a broader one that meets the needs of a world in crisis.

### **2. How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of your community or constituency? [1302]**

For almost 150 years, FPC Hickory has been at the forefront of embracing emerging needs for its members and for the community. Examples include welcoming soldiers home from WWI a century ago, starting a soup kitchen to feed the hungry, providing a medical clinic for the poor, and forming a nonprofit in the 1980s to help those with AIDS. Today, we still stand side by side to help the poor, hungry, and sick. Hand in hand with local ministries, we assist those out of prison or in recovery, and we help families build a new life or a new home.

Our outreach initiatives are strong; we commit about 30% of our budget to benevolence.

Groups within the church address emerging needs:

- we take care of our homebound, sick, and those suffering loss,
- members meet weekly to make prayer shawls for those facing illness or adversity,
- Bible Study groups support one another and help members on their spiritual journey, and
- our strong Stephen Ministry program provides urgently needed one-on-one support.

We also support vital programs that grow and enrich members' lives of all ages as they help others. Mission trips for Senior High, Junior High, medical professionals, and adult groups have allowed members to travel locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally to serve God's people in need.

### **3. How will this position help you to reach your vision and mission goals?**

**[1449]**

Our next pastor comes at a time of great opportunity as our church looks to embrace dynamic change while respecting our traditions, balance competing desires for worship services, connect with all generations, and help us reach out to members (and future members). We seek an energetic person who can share our current vision and help us focus that vision! This would include offering inspiring sermons that will motivate us to serve God's will in our community (and the world), attracting younger members (and neighbors), and helping us innovate while respecting our heritage.

Our pastor will help us grow by equipping us to reach out to those not currently part of a Christian community. We will continue to offer ourselves in faithful, loving service to God and to all people. Together, we will look to deepen our faith and discipleship through selfless service, worship, study, prayer, innovation, enthusiasm, and love.

We seek a pastor who can help us continue to be a beacon in a darkened world. This will be accomplished by affirming an inclusive faith community rooted in our Presbyterian beliefs and biblical understanding while learning and growing spiritually in lifelong discipleship. Our pastor will help further develop our church's culture of generosity. Our culture is established through fellowship opportunities that result in transformational relationships.

(Our new pastor must also get comfortable saying "sesquicentennial.")

#### **4. Describe the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation and/or organization. [1485]**

Like most churches, we're seeking a unicorn. We would accept a workhorse, but we're hoping for a Thoroughbred.

We seek:

- an energetic pastor whose sermons inspire us and make us excited about coming to church, then resonate with us as we go into the world;
- a spiritual leader who helps us grow in faith and in number;
- a "people person" able to connect with every age group, listen carefully, and express opinions honestly with compassion for others;
- someone flexible enough to adapt when necessary, demonstrating diplomacy, self-awareness, and a good humor;
- an open-minded minister willing to engage in diverse dialogue without judgment, actively involved in the lives of individual members and the larger community.

This person motivates and challenges others with new ideas, shepherding from the pulpit and through action.

As Head of Staff, our minister will need to further our church vision, collaborate with staff to maximize their talents, serve as an effective motivator, show the courage to recognize new opportunities, make changes where needed, and lead us in a sustainable future. The same qualities apply to working with our larger community, because our pastor should always lean toward collaboration.

We want a pastor who will honor the trust and credibility our church has earned over our 149-year heritage as we embrace our dreams and aspirations of the future. We hope that our next minister feels God's call to join our church family and is excited by that call!

#### **5. For what specific tasks, assignments, and programs areas will this person have responsibility? [1411]**

FPC Hickory seeks a lead pastor with a deep passion for the Lord and for the Bible, a personal ministry, and doctrinal views consistent with those of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The lead pastor, as a minister of the Gospel, shall be devoted to the service of Christ and the church, preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and faithfully devoted to pastoral work.

The lead pastor will:

- preach at most worship services;
- lead the congregation in worship;

- lead the church to discern God's vision;
- work with the Session;
- lead in the Presbytery;
- supervise our staff's spiritual and ministry development;
- provide pastoral care for the congregation; and
- partner with lay leadership to direct church ministries.

Despite the attendance challenges many churches currently face, FPC Hickory wants the new lead pastor to help grow our congregation.

We encourage our next pastor to be part of the Hickory Area Ministers to connect with fellow religious leaders across denominational and racial lines to make a large and positive impact on the community. HAM sponsors many important events in Hickory, including the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. service, Wednesday Lenten services, a Good Friday community service, and Thanksgiving service. Other opportunities for involvement include the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Discussion Group and the Greater Hickory Interfaith Council.

**Provide below any links to online information that may help call seekers understand your congregation or organization. (e.g. organization or community websites, online newsletters, demographic information) Please note the CLC system does not warehouse links. (Limit characters to 500) [397]**

Hickory First Presbyterian's website is at [www.hickoryfpc.org](http://www.hickoryfpc.org), and the church maintains a presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The greater Hickory community works together to make our community benevolent, welcoming, and safe. These sites give you some perspective on our community:

[www.catawbachamber.org](http://www.catawbachamber.org)

[www.hickorywellcrafted.com](http://www.hickorywellcrafted.com)

[www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov)

[www.myhky.com](http://www.myhky.com)

[www.catawbaschools.net](http://www.catawbaschools.net)

[www.presbyterywnc.org](http://www.presbyterywnc.org)

[www.hickorync.gov](http://www.hickorync.gov)

[www.visithickorymetro.com](http://www.visithickorymetro.com)

[www.hickoryschools.net](http://www.hickoryschools.net)