

In **Listening to Each Other**, the Moorings Presbyterian Mission Study Team conducted the U.S. Congregational Vitality Survey (USCVS) in November of 2022, which included:

- **A congregational survey** that measured seven qualities of congregational vitality (discipleship, outward focus, evangelism, servant leadership, worship, caring relationships, and ecclesial health). 35% of the active membership (230 of 648) participated in the survey.
- **Small group sessions** in which MPC members provided their input regarding how the church should move forward. Four sessions were held with a total of 69 participants.

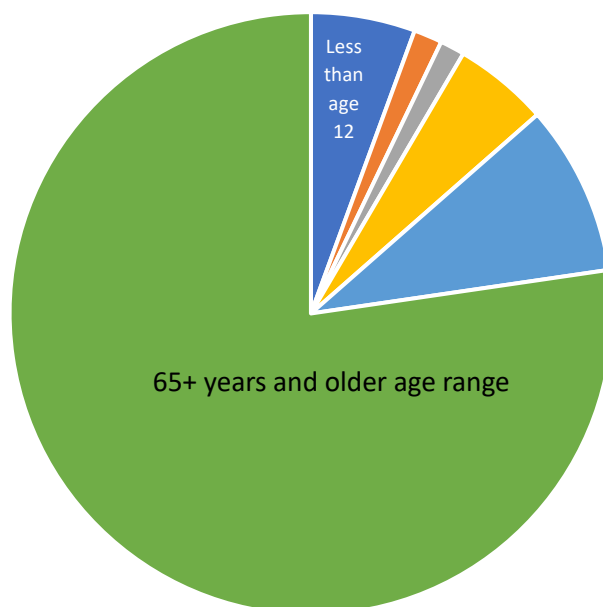
Listening for God, the Mission Study Team created this report which represents, as faithfully as possible, those shared demographics and views of the Congregational Survey and Small Group Meetings. In this document we offer an open, hopeful, and honest presentation of the history and the future ministry and mission of Moorings Presbyterian Church.

Summary of the 2022 Congregational Survey (USCVS) for MPC

The 230 participants reported a total of 301 family members of which 268 are active in the life of the church. The total households include the following age groups:

- Less than age 12: 17 (5.5%)
- 12-18 years of age: 5 (1.5%)
- 19-25 years of age: 4 (1.3%)
- 26-40 years of age: 16 (5%)
- 41-64 years of age: 28 (9%)
- 65 years and older: 230 (76%)

While most of the congregation is retirement age, it appears (based on the number of younger families involved in the life of the church) the rate of survey participation may have been greater in older families.



Other background information of worshippers included

- Education: 89% have education after high school and 40% have advanced degrees
- Race: 99% identify as white
- Employment: 57% are retired
- Income: 66% have income of more than \$100,000

Theological Orientation

The respondents are split between conservative and moderate or liberal. (47% Conservative, 38% Moderate and 15% liberal)

The answers to questions in the survey provided a score of how our congregation is doing with the seven marks of vitality. Here are the seven marks of vitality that were assessed:

- Lifelong Discipleship Formation – From the cradle to the grave seeking to be formed for right living with God and with all people.
- Intentional Authentic Evangelism – Intentionally sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, not just acts of kindness.
- Outward Incarnational Focus – Outward exploration and awareness, as well as a focus on neighbors, neighborhoods, and those who may never step foot in church.
- Empowering Servant Leadership – Identify, nurture, and support the use of spiritual gifts of all people to serve.
- Spirit-Inspired Worship – Worship is about God. We get to come on holy ground, encounter the presence of the living God, and are sent to live lives of wonder, love, and praise.
- Caring Relationships – Instead of a closed judgmental community, people find freedom to share stories, encounter the Savior and ask for help.
- Ecclesial Health – Clarity in mission, core values to ministry, passion, and joy in being the church.

Reviewing the scores for the seven marks of vitality helps identify our greatest strengths and areas of possible improvement. Responding to a series of questions about each of these categories, here is how our members graded MPC.



Our strongest areas:

- Spirit-Inspired Worship – 73%
- Lifelong Discipleship Formation – 70%
- Caring Relationships – 69%

Possible areas for improvement:

- Ecclesial Health – 65%
- Empowering Servant Leadership – 64%
- Intentional Authentic Evangelism – 63%
- Outward Incarnational Focus – 60%

Summary of Small Group Meetings

What attracts you to MPC and keeps you coming back?

To open our listening sessions, we began every meeting with the question, “What attracted you to Moorings Presbyterian Church?” A common theme in all four sessions was the music program. There was also wide approval of the youth programs and the opportunity for their participation in worship. Another theme was preaching from the pulpit with appreciation for the use of scripture and application to daily life by our interim pastor and previous pastors. Fellowship activities in the past have been a draw for many including study groups, women’s circles, and family night dinners. Also mentioned were an informal early Sunday service and the opportunity to be involved in mission programs.

MPC’s Music and Youth Programs are Integral Elements to this Church.

What significant events do you remember in the life of the church?

Several in the groups mentioned the upheaval surrounding the departure of 2 pastors and how it caused some members to leave the church family. There was also an attitude that we need to move forward and learn from but not dwell in the past.

Specific events that were fondly remembered were:

- Members art exhibit.
- Welcome dinner event for new members.
- Dedication of the new sanctuary and paying off the mortgage.
- Caroling on the trolley.
- Potluck fellowship dinners.
- The Stephen Ministry.
- Thanksgiving in the Park in Immokalee.

What are the strengths of the church?

The strong music program was frequently mentioned along with our church staff, children's programs, the Pre-K school, the facility/campus, volunteer opportunities, and Bible studies. Also mentioned were well-balanced worship services with strong sermons and music and the welcoming presence of members reaching out to newcomers in worship.

What is God calling us to do and to be as a church?

- Follow the admonition in the Book of Order – to be servants to those around us.
 - This includes outreach to members who cannot physically attend worship.
 - Ideas such as large print bulletins for those with visual impairments.
 - Online worship capabilities/the ability to watch services online.
- Mission outreach beyond our members to help others in our community and beyond.
- Spread the Word and bring people to our worship services and encourage participation in the life of the church for all, (including young families) not just the “same people.”
- Several participants mentioned consciously moving forward, not getting bogged down in “the way it was” or revisiting concerns of the past.



What have we learned from the past that would help us move forward faithfully?

A common theme was we must move forward with hope, humility, and forgiveness, accepting a new path. There was widespread agreement that we need to recognize that “one person can’t do it all” so we need to spread the work for both staff and members. The emphasis was that we need to enable the Pastor to be our spiritual leader and keep him from being inundated with administrative work.

What gifts of the new Pastor would enhance the mission and vision of the congregation?

The group discussion before completing the Leadership Competencies form focused on two main areas:

1. Effective preaching that interprets the Bible and teaches our responsibility to reach out to others.
2. Leadership that enables us to know and follow Presbyterian polity.

Several references were made to having a pastor who gets to know the congregation and participates in a meaningful way with members beyond just preaching.

Leadership Competencies

There is a list of 33 competencies for a new pastor in the PCUSA. This list is used by pastors in preparing their Personal Information Form (résumé) and which is used by Pastor Nominating Committees in seeking a new pastor.

After a general discussion, participants completed the form by checking their top 10 competencies. Only 3 of the 33 categories had 3 or fewer of the 53 votes. It is important to read the description of each competency to understand the votes. The 10 most desired qualities are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Preaching and Worship Leadership | 92% |
| 2. Interpersonal Engagement | 72% |
| 3. Spiritual Maturity | 70% |
| 4. Collaboration | 60% |
| 5. Motivator | 53% |
| 6. Communicator | 51% |
| 7. Public Communicator | 49% |
| 8. Decision Making | 45% |
| 9. Organizational Agility | 43% |
| 10. Compassionate | 42% |



Hopes and Dreams for the Church

Here's a partial list of items listed:

- MPC to be a shining reflection of God's love and an example of how to live so that it is clear that God is in this place.
- Maintain a rich worship experience.
- Grow our youth program and involvement of young families (repeated many times).
- Attract new members.
- Invite and involve.

- That our worship and activities will be scripture driven.
- That we will grow in our personal faith and, in the process, seek opportunities to reach out to those in need.
- For MPC to have more engagement in the community.
- That we will be willing to strike out and take chances in doing God's work.

A Brief History of Moorings Presbyterian Church, Naples

Significant Events in Our History:

Moorings Presbyterian Church was founded in 1964 and held its first service on November 14, 1965, at Naples High School. The service was attended by eight individuals, five of which were family members of our first minister, Reverend David Moss. Our first sanctuary was a chapel that seated 350 that was completed in 1968 and remained our main sanctuary for forty-one years. In 1971 a wing was added to the chapel for an additional 120 seats with continued remodeling in the 1970's and 1980's to accommodate increasing membership. Closed circuit broadcasting of services to Moss Hall as well television broadcasting to the community was seen in 1979. Ground was broken for our new sanctuary seating 680 on June 25, 2006, and was completed in 2007.

Christian Education has been a part of MPC since the beginning. The Christian Education Building broke ground in 1977, with dedication and occupancy on April 17, 1978. Our Moorings Weekday Preschool opened at that time with expansion over the years. The first Vacation Bible School was held in 1975 and a Family Ministries Team was formed. By 1989, weekday preschool

MOORINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Lives Transformed for Christ

TIMELINE
History
Significant Events in Our History

- 1964-1965**
MPC IS FOUNDED AND HOLDS FIRST SUNDAY SERVICE
The service was attended by eight individuals, five of which were family members of our first minister, Reverend David Moss
Chapel seated 350 congregants and remained our main sanctuary for forty-one years.
- 1968**
WEBSTER CHAPEL COMPLETED
- 1971**
WING ADDED TO CHAPEL TO ADD 120 SEATS
Remodeling like this continued in the 1970's and 1980's to accommodate increasing membership.
- 1978**
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING IS COMPLETED
Christian Education has been a part of MPC since the beginning. Our Moorings Weekday Preschool opened at that time with expansion over the years. The first Vacation Bible School was held in 1975 and a Family Ministries Team was formed.
- 1979**
CLOSED CIRCUIT BROADCASTING MADE AVAILABLE
Closed circuit broadcasting of services to Moss Hall as well television broadcasting to the community was seen
- 1989**
PRESCHOOL AT CAPACITY WITH A WAIT LIST
Youth fellowship attendance averaged 28 and fiscal year end showed a gain of \$59,849.
- 1990**
MPC BECOMES MEMBER OF PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY
Becoming a congregation of newly-formed Presbytery
- 2007**
MPC'S NEW SANCTUARY IS COMPLETED
Now seating 680, this Sanctuary brought even more attendance potential
- 2023**
MPC CONTINUES TO GROW & THRIVE
With the increased participation of members as well as the impressive Music & Youth programs, MPC looks forward to a bright future!

enrollment was at capacity with a waiting list, youth fellowship attendance averaged 28 and fiscal year end showed a gain of \$59,849.

MPC has been known for providing quality Christian Education utilizing the skills of our Associate Pastor of 20 plus years followed by the hiring of a Certified Christian Educator that was brought up in our congregation.

Over the years, Christian Education at MPC has included professionally designed programs for adults, youth, and children that has included all levels of Sunday School, Fellowship Groups, Mission Trips, Retreats, Youth Choir, Handbells, and Worship Band as well as Youth Elder and Liturgy programs.

Music has always played an important role in the life of MPC. Our first choir director was church member, Jerome Edwards who was also band director at Naples High School. The new Rogers console organ was dedicated on Maundy Thursday in 1972 and played by our first organist Florence West. In the late 1970's, MPC hired its first full time church musician, and our handbell ministry was born. The Anderson Music Center was dedicated on May 18, 1980, with Richard Crofts becoming Music Director in 1983. With the assistance of his wife, Martha, the choir program was strengthened, and handbell ensembles grew. The Hyacinth Series of concerts started in 1981 with a founding gift of \$25,000 and MPC received a gift of the Yamaha Conservatory Grand Piano. In 1990, the Moorings Chancel Choir sang the Messiah at the Philharmonic, and the youth bell choir was represented at the National Handbell Festival. The Music Center was completed in February 1997 with an elevator to the upper floors and the Christian Education Building. The gift of a new Sterritte Family Organ was introduced at worship in August of 2002. In October 2007, the Music Center was rededicated to Crofts Music Center.

Throughout our history there has been an emphasis on mission and outreach, with congregation enthusiastically supporting local missions as well as missions of the presbytery. The Mission Committee saved enough S&H and Sunshine Stamps in the 60's to buy 24 cribs and mattresses for needy families. The 1970's saw Moments for Mission, formation of Boy Scout Troop 2, and MPC was one of four local churches to incorporate the Collier County affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.



Mission Programs continued in the 1980's with Thanksgiving in the Park, Readers Rendezvous, Commissioning of Stephen Ministers, and the founding of St. Matthews House as a new ministry. The 1990's also saw mission support to Ethiopia and a mission trip to Guatemala with medical supply help and hurricane relief. MPC also formed Operation Love for church members needing visitation, provided transportation to church for those in need and a cookie ministry for new visitors. In the new millennium, MPC Ministries included a mentoring program at Lake Park Elementary, and a Grace Place Backpack program. Deacons started Meals of Hope; Communion Sunday was designated as the first Sunday of the month; Elders and Deacons were trained to serve communion to those that cannot attend worship; and Presbyterian Women was expanded. Mission continued with travel to New Orleans to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina in 2010; The Bob and Norma Thorne School in Jalapa, Guatemala was dedicated on February 28, 2012; MPC members served as tutors for New Horizons children and the youth ministry partnered with CROSS Missions in Charlotte, NC for volunteer opportunities.

Other significant events in the life of MPC include giving birth to Lely Presbyterian Church in 1973 and helping Lely assume its own full support by 1975. On December 31, 1990, MPC became a member of Peace River Presbytery. Since its founding in 1964, MPC has had six senior pastors and three associate pastors. By 2010, MPC saw staff downsizing and reduced member vibrancy with the economic challenges. In 2012, the Burn the Mortgage Committee raised the funds to pay off the mortgage with celebration of zero debt on January 22, 2012, while awaiting our new pastor to bring renewed hope and increased membership.

More Recent Past:

In 2012, pastoral staff met the congregation's needs while waiting for new Senior Pastor's arrival in August. In 2013, we researched leasing some of our facilities to outside organizations to increase revenue for the church. By 2014, finances were still below needs. On September 30, 2017, Hurricane Irma caused extensive damage to the church. In 2018, unresolved management issues evolved within church leadership, with changes in Treasurer, Finance, and Accounting positions several times. In March of 2020, the Pandemic caused facility closure and staff worked from home. Meetings were held via Zoom. Worship services were initially recorded and broadcast and then MPC adopted Live Streaming technology during the Pandemic.

By 2021, the growing discontent in the congregation led to calls and letters from MPC members to the Presbytery. Dr. Learned, our Senior Pastor, and Reverend Jaci Smith Patman, our Associate Pastor, resigned in September and October respectively, both leaving in November of 2021. This led to Presbytery involvement with the Presbytery moderating the 2021 MPC Congregation meeting. At the September Congregational meeting, 6 of the 7 elder nominees from the MPC Nominating Committee were replaced with write-ins from the floor. Additionally,

some church elders and deacons resigned at that time along with the treasurer and the Clerk of Session.

Presbytery took an active role in church leadership at this time, establishing an Administrative Commission (AC). In the meantime, Session members regrouped and selected The Reverend Dr. Ron Rand as Bridge Pastor, followed by The Reverend Dr. Pablo Diaz as our Interim Pastor. Under the direction of Dr. Diaz and the AC, the Session has been very responsive and is moving steadily forward. The Session has squarely faced the challenges before them, and engaged in frank conversation with each other, members of the congregation and the AC. After the Presbytery reviewed Session minutes and Financials for 7 years, they reported that they found no criminal or chargeable offences at MPC. Elders and staff committed to the health, ministry, and life of their church with a deep desire to move forward in work and ministry.

Even with these issues at MPC, the Music program has flourished under the new direction of Chris Dekker, who joined the staff in 2021. The choir has grown exponentially, the children are engaged, and Handbells and concerts continue. Christian Education under the direction of Alicia Rowland continues to thrive with Sunday School, Youth Groups, Mission Trips, Youth conferences and retreats.

The Moorings Preschool, under the direction of Preschool Director, Nanette Rathbun, continues to be at capacity and to serve the community. Fellowship is back at MPC and is well-attended. Presbyterian Women continues to succeed, and the newly formed and Men’s Bible Study Breakfast is thriving.



In 2023, the church attendance and contributions have increased. Easter Sunday, in particular, had one of the highest attendances – with over 750 congregants joining us for Worship. This 45% increase over 2022 Easter attendance only serves as a mere snapshot in the boosted congregant engagement. MPC continues to incorporate spirit-inspired worship to draw people in and generate momentous turnout.



In terms of recent Mission history, from 2014 to 2019, Moorings allocated as much as 10% of its annual budget to around 12 social service organizations with local, national, and international purviews. The Missions Committee selected groups for allocated financial support based on selection criteria developed by the committee members and approved by the Session. This robust support for parachurch/social services ministries has waned since 2019. In 2019, the Session terminated allocated financial support from the general operating fund to mission groups. In its place, the Mission Committee launched a “March Mission Month,” during which nonprofit groups gathered at tables in Moss Hall to tell congregants about their work.

Congregants were encouraged to make special gifts to these groups. From January 2021 until October 2022, Moorings members had designated \$176,571 in donations to local and international mission partners including:

- St. Matthew’s House
- Echo Global Farms
- Helps Outreach
- Love the Children
- Guadalupe Social Services
- New Horizons
- Miracles in Action
- Medical Benevolence Fund
- Meals of Hope



Of that \$176,571 in almost two years of giving, over \$50,000 went toward the Advent mission partner, Love the Children. There are also ad hoc volunteer trips organized to visit the mission partners including serving in soup kitchens, packing backpacks, and assembling meal kits among others.

What the Data Tells Us

Naples Area Demographics:

Naples, Florida in Collier County is world-renowned for its beautiful beaches, limitless recreational opportunities and is home to numerous championship golf courses. Naples is ranked among the top places to live in the United States ranking #1 in 2023. As reported by Scholaroo, Naples ranked as one of the best places to move to, according to Travel and Leisure. The Collier County Public School District is an “A” rated school district in the state of Florida with an annual graduation rate of 81%.



There are four institutions for higher education in the county (Ave Maria University, Florida Southwestern State College, Lorenzo Walker Technical College, and Hodges University) as well as Florida Gulf Coast University located 20 miles north. Naples is also home to two world class hospitals, NCH Healthcare System and Physicians Regional Healthcare System. Collier County’s environment includes miles of beaches, acres of conservation land, biking paths, hiking trails, Naples Zoo, Children’s Museum of Naples, Artis-Naples, Naples Botanical Gardens and a wonderful array of public parks and facilities. The average annual temperature is 74 degrees Fahrenheit. Collier County also has the lowest crime rate of all metropolitan counties in Florida. Naples continues to be a “seasonal” (January through April) and retirement destination for many that own as well as rent.

MPC is located several blocks from the beach in the Park Shore Area of Naples and is west of US 41 which puts it in what many would call a prime real estate area. Naples-area statistics reveal that within a three-mile radius of the church which we will call the surrounding area, there are

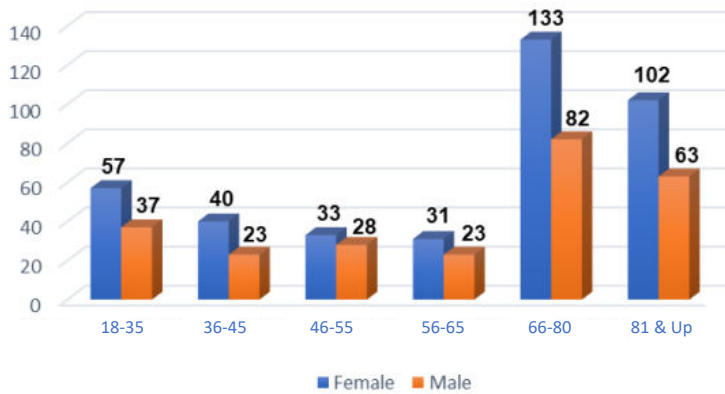
mostly apartment/condominium structures and single-family homes whose estimated value is above \$300,000 for the large majority (78%). Over 50% of the surrounding population is over 55 years of age with 22% over 75; 80% of residents are white; 36% have an average annual income greater than \$125,000 and many are retired. The surrounding population is more educated than the US trends with 50% having a bachelor degree or higher as compared to US statistics of 32%.

This large retirement community can mask a growing younger demographic. For example, our Preschool and Christian education programs have continued to flourish over the years catering to the childcare and Christian Education needs of the surrounding community. MPC surrounding area statistics reflect much like national trends in relation to younger generation statistics with the largest group being 10 – 14 years old; the largest young adult group being 25–34-year-olds and the largest Middle age group being 45–54-year-olds.

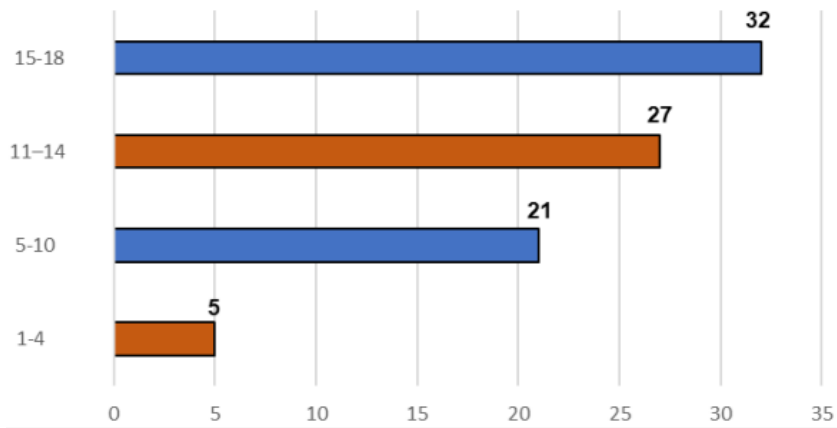
Moorings Presbyterian Church Demographics

The membership rolls of Moorings Presbyterian Church were cleansed after many years with the formation of the Membership Committee in February of 2022. Current membership data as of March 2023 shows 499 Active Members, 149 Affiliate Members for a total membership of 648. Of these members, the majority identify as white with education beyond high school and a higher-than-average annual income. From the 2022 Church statistics, over 50% of congregants are over 65 years old with 20% being over 80. Families with children show more children in the 11-18 age bracket than in the 1–10 age bracket. All membership age bracket statistics reflect more females than males. The length of time at Moorings Presbyterian varies widely with 42% joining in the past 10 years and 40% have been members for over 20 years. 85% of MPC membership lives within the 18 Zip Code area including Naples and surrounding communities.

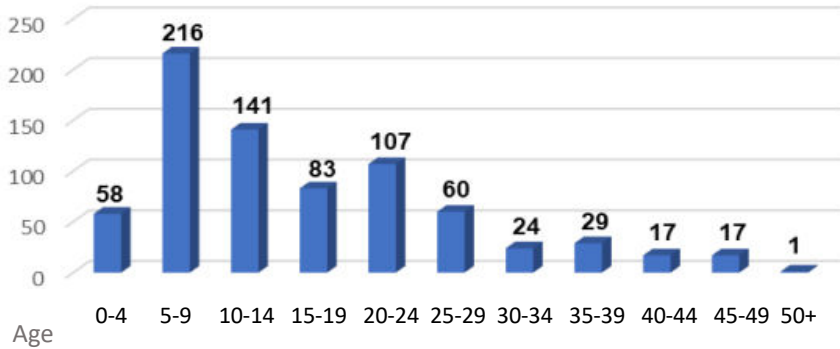
Age Breakdown by Gender



Age of Children for Members



Membership Longevity in Years



SUMMARY:

Our Mission Study has gathered valuable insight and data by listening to our membership as well as gathering relevant church and community statistics. We shared our history as a church and discussed recent events that have led us to seek a new pastor. We explored past and present church and Christian Education programs as well as the importance of Music and Mission to Moorings Presbyterian. Additionally, we have identified desired pastor competencies as we look towards forming our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). MPC clearly demonstrates a desire to move forward meeting congregational needs, and this Mission Study will serve as the cornerstone of that process.

MISSION STUDY TEAM

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