

Appendix F - How Does Forest Hill Stack Up in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve?

Statistics for each of the 49 congregations in our Presbytery were gathered from the PC(USA) website. We selected 9 churches to compare to Forest Hill, generally omitting churches outside the Greater Cleveland area, as well as churches with less than 100 members, basing our choices on the following:

Covenant (University Circle) Fairmount (Cleve. Hts.) Lyndhurst Pres. (Lyndhurst)	Chosen for their geographic proximity, musical excellence, and similar size and theology.
John Knox (North Olmsted)	Large, theologically conservative congregation; chosen because it experienced more growth than any other church in the past 10 years.
Korean Pres. (Brecksville)	Chosen as representative of the one segment of the Presbyterian denomination that is growing world-wide and for its location in a growing population area.
Pioneer (Solon)	Chosen for its similar size and theology, its location in a growing, well-to-do population area, and as an example of a growing congregation.
Rocky River Pres (Rocky River)	Chosen for its similar size and theology as well as its similar neighborhood demographics.
Valley (Bainbridge)	Chosen as a formerly large, relatively wealthy congregation experiencing rapid decline.
Western Reserve (Pepper Pike)	Chosen as a smaller church in a wealthy suburb facing gradual decline in membership.

DEMOGRAPHIC GLEANINGS

Membership Statistics:

Losses:

Of the 10 churches surveyed:

Fairmount lost the most members—395—over the past decade but remains the largest congregation in our Presbytery.

Valley lost 299 members and continues to decline, mostly due to pastoral issues.

Lyndhurst lost 152 members.

Covenant lost 112 members.

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Modest Gains:

Only 3 of the 10 churches reported net membership gains:

John Knox gained the most (157) and was the 2nd largest congregation in our Presbytery for the entire decade.

Pioneer showed modest losses and gains similar to **Forest Hill's** until calling new co-pastors in 2006—since then they gained over 100 members.

The **Korean** church gained 21 members.

Modest Losses:

Forest Hill, Rocky River, and Western Reserve posted modest losses over the decade: 34, 32 and 15 respectively, and yet **Forest Hill**—the 4th largest church at the beginning of the decade—is now the 3rd largest in our Presbytery.

Forest Hill could learn from **Pioneer** as they appear to share many of the same characteristics as Forest Hill. A significant portion of Pioneer's growth can be attributed to their geographic location in the growing suburb of Solon but it's worth investigating whether the kinds of programs they are offering may be contributing to their growth.

FINANCIAL GLEANINGS

1. Forest Hill is an exceptionally generous congregation.

Although **Forest Hill** is the 3rd largest congregation, our members consistently contribute more than the 2nd largest, **John Knox**. And with the departure of **Fairmount's** Senior Pastor in 2010, **Forest Hill** members contributed more than any other church in our Presbytery in 2010.

Forest Hill's Per Member Contributions for each of the past 5 years have been higher than any other church except the **Korean** church and the wealthy **Western Reserve** church. More significantly, in 2010 **Forest Hill's** Per Worship Attendee Contributions surpassed every other church in our Presbytery.

These findings suggest that our various ministries—pastoral, worship, stewardship, spiritual formation—have been doing a better than expected job of educating the people in our pews about tithing. This information may be useful to the Ministry of Stewardship as they begin their Focus Groups.

2. Our Endowment Fund needs renewed attention.

Two areas that **Forest Hill** lags behind in are the amount of Bequests received and the Investment Income received. Investing energy into increasing donations to our Endowment Fund could have a major impact on strengthening our financial picture.

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3. Money alone is not the answer.

It will be worth watching how Covenant fares in the next few years. They received a very large (\$2.6 million) bequest in 2010 and completely renovated their building along with increasing the amount spent on publicity and other marketing. It's too soon to tell what effect these expenditures will have on Covenant's membership, worship attendance, or member contributions.

4. Our program spending is in line with the rest of our numbers.

We appear to have the 3rd largest program budget, based on the historical numbers posted by Fairmount. (The amounts reported by Fairmount in 2009 and 2010 do not appear to be accurate.)

5. Our mission spending is in line with the rest of our numbers as well.

We also appear to spend the 3rd highest amount on local mission giving, just under the 10-year giving totals for Fairmount and Covenant, and ***significantly above*** the 10-year totals for the other 7 congregations surveyed.

Tabular data for each of the 49 congregations in our Presbytery is found at <http://www.pcusa.org/search/congregations/?criteria=&congregation=&by-presbytery=on&presbytery=040768&distance=25&submit=Search>