

White Lick Presbyterian church chat

2530 North 600 East, Avon, IN 46123
July, 2019 in the year of our Lord, Jesus Christ

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New Beginnings Update



Pastors Note: Glimpse of Grace

July 2019

The opening words to the New Beginnings assessment read, "White Lick Presbyterian Church is in most ways an ideal model of a thriving small, rural church. With a delightful, picturesque and well-maintained building in a beautiful location, this church compels the heart to sing, 'Come, come, come to the church in the wildwood/come to the church in the vale/No spot is so dear to my childhood/as the little brown church in the vale.'" From the beginning of the process, it was clear to the assessor that White Lick had a lot going for it.

Every church has room to grow, to improve, to better fulfill its calling to serve Christ. Every church struggles with its relevance to a changing culture and a shifting community. But most churches are not in a position to successfully adapt and grow. This congregation has a lot of things going for it. We are very welcoming and faithful. We love and care for one another and that caring is obvious to anyone who is looking. Our traditional worship also speaks to people's lives today. We have a beautiful setting that helps create a wonderful comfort from the moment a person comes onto our property. We are a people who know and love one another, where you will never be another face in the crowd. All of this, plus we are in a growing community where new families are moving in and many who are looking for a community of faith just like ours.

Just as the community is growing around us, we also are better recognizing some of the needs as well. The school districts and existing support groups are adapting to the changing community while new groups like PAL and Family Promise work to fill in the need gaps that are present. White Lick is ready to engage our community in new and meaningful ways as we also adapt and connect with the changing community to which God has called us.

In the final word section of our New Beginning's assessment, the author writes, "It was a delight to spend time with you at White Lick Presbyterian Church. I experienced a spirit of positive, hopeful joy. The love you have for one another, the care you have given to your beautiful building, and the joy in your faces as you shared with me what you love about your church have all truly blessed me. In truth, this assessment was one of the most difficult for me to write precisely because this is such a delightful church, and I immediately fell in love with you all!" The Spirit is calling us into the future, but we can give thanks that God's grace continues to show forth from our past and present. That is a foundation that God can build on.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Dr. Daren Hofmann

Opening

The following articles are written by the leadership of the church in an effort to keep everyone on the same page. We hope to articulate what we heard from you during our listening sessions and to share some ideas about how we hope to move forward. Know that we are always open to your thoughts and questions. Please read and find ways to share your energy and gifts as we walk together with Christ into the future.

New Beginnings Leadership
 Diane Buxton
 Annetta Davis
 Daren Hofmann
 Erik Johnson
 Beth McGuire
 Mary Mitchell
 Ginny Sheets

Being a Vital Congregation

Our consultant Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation suggested we assess our vitality using the 5 Marks of a Vital Congregation. Our small groups evaluated White Lick as follows:

Mark #1 A Compelling Sense of Mission that is Driven by the Gospel

(Mark 1 is foundational to the other four marks.) "Why"? White Lick has had a viable presence on the corner of 575 and 600 for almost 170 years. Those who have worshipped at our church have come to love it; those who pass by recognize us as that church in the wildwood. Why are we still here today?

- We exist to **honor and praise God**, our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.
- We exist to be the **hands and feet of Jesus**.
- We exist to be the **"salt and light"** in a troubled world; to spread the Good News and minister to all who need spiritual connection and life-giving support.
- We exist to be a **"sanctuary"** where everyone can feel the love and acceptance of a caring community of disciples of Jesus.
- We exist to gather with friends to **worship, refresh, renew and reenergize**.



Mark #2: A Discipleship Church Instead of a Membership Church
 Our current vision statement *Preparing and Sending Spirit-filled Disciples who walk with Christ into the world for the glory of God* speaks directly to White Lick's focus on discipleship. Our church welcomes visitors into the community of fellowship. We are generous in our missional outreach support to PAL, Sheltering Wings, Good News Mission, Get Real; four PCUSA special offerings; PW and Deacons outreach; and, for special projects including blessing bags for the homeless; food for children during school breaks; donations to a local food pantry; Dorcas baskets for Dominican Republic; Christmas giving tree.

Mark #3: A Church That Is Contextually Relevant to its Community

We currently have an aging congregation surrounded by subdivisions of growing families and schools bursting at the seams. Although our location is more remote than other churches, our name is recognized by many who pass the church on a regular basis. However, they know little about us. Our *image* of a traditional, rural, small church with few amenities (especially a robust children's program) may dissuade attending. We are continuing this summer to become better informed about our neighbors and their needs, and encourage everyone to participate.

Mark #4 Passion and Energy

When you think about where we put our energy...are we "fishers of people" or "keepers of the aquariums"? Our passion exceeds our energy. Passion at White Lick can be observed in many ways from the attendance at worship, fellowship during Sunday lunch; and participation in various supported ministries. Too frequently active support (i.e. leadership) comes from a few who attend and participate while many others support very willingly though passively (i.e. financial contributions, donation of supplies and goods for special needs solicitations.)

Mark #5 Have the Resources Necessary for Mission

What are our best resources?

- People – caring and supportive; untapped spiritual gifts for ministry.
- Pastor—Grounded in God's Word. Committed to continuing Jesus' ministry. Vitality. Willingness to try new things. Go to attitude.
- Building—Well kept in a natural setting. Traditional in image. Inviting.
- Financial sustainability—challenges which can be overcome.
- Spiritual—traditional worship; strong faith.

Tackling the Assessment

Over the past month, our congregation processed a lot of information from the New Beginnings assessment. The report starts out by verifying what we already know to be true: White Lick Presbyterian Church is in most ways an ideal model of a thriving small, rural church. With a delightful, picturesque and well-maintained building in a beautiful location. Recent upgrades to flooring and fresh paint speak of a church positive about its current situation and its future.



White Lick Presbyterian has a long history of being a welcoming, traditional and friendly rural church. Our church is passionate about fellowship, sharing meals together, and missional outreach. We have developed strong relationships among members. And we support many community mission organizations such as PAL, Sheltering Wings, Indy Love Train and Good News Mission. We often opt for financial or material giving. White Lick best supports outside missional efforts with financial contributions and purchase of requested food and supply items.

Our passion is evident in the many programs we support. Many of our individual members work diligently in the community. The Day of Caring is one of the opportunities for our congregation to work together in missional outreach. Our passions are diverse, reaching several segments of the surrounding area. However, due to burnout, age and outside commitments, the energy level of the congregation limits our ability to serve and support those missions. Therefore, we struggle to use time and spiritual gifts to serve our community. Outside of Day of Caring, White Lick Presbyterian offers few opportunities for the whole congregation to fully engage in mission.

Our physical facility sets an image of a peaceful, quiet country church; comfortable but traditional. We can build on this image as a place of relief from the pain and pressure of the outside world. We need to better communicate our level of activity which is not visible to the community or those who pass by us on the way to someplace else.

Aspects of Congregational Life

During the congregational conversations, participants were asked to assess five aspects of congregational life. These included **congregational participation, leadership, finances, relationship with surrounding community** and **building use**. Participants were given a spectrum of choices in each aspect, and, while everyone felt that White Lick was not in any of the lowest choices, they also indicated that there was room to grow in all five aspects.

In the area of **congregation participation**, consensus pointed to White Lick being good at welcoming new visitors. We also host a few public events that welcome the community into our facility. As we grow in our congregational participation, we would aspire to see a more consistent growth in membership and a stronger development of new leadership. Out of this new leadership, new congregational initiatives can be developed.

In the area of **congregational leadership**, the conversations pointed to White Lick having a pastor-driven leadership with committee structures that take on specific responsibilities within congregational life. Effort is made to connect the spiritual gifts of members with leadership responsibilities. As we work to grow our congregational leadership, we would expect the pastor's role to transition from directing activity to a coach/trainer role for other leaders. This model would give greater ownership to the congregation of the mission and ministry of the church.

When examining the area of **building use**, the general opinion was that White Lick does very little when it comes to opening our doors to outside groups. Though we are not staffed to have our facility open much more than it already is, there are opportunities to grow into a deeper connection with outside groups under the right circumstances. This would both expand the visibility of the church and our connections to the wider community. It could also have a positive financial impact.

In the area of **church finances**, most respondents believe that the church budget is approximately 95% basic needs including staff, administration, facility maintenance and a few internal programs. There was no direct analysis of the White Lick budget during this exercise, so the response is based on individual knowledge or understandings of our finances. Some growth goals that we can identify with our budget would be to get to where 10% of our budget would be used for mission outreach and 10% would be use for new discipleship initiatives. Another growth goal was to increase the compensation for the pastor to rise above the minimum and better reflect experience levels.

In the final area of the congregational **relationship with our surrounding community**, we had the largest spread of responses. Some feel we do not know our neighbors and there are some concerns about the church's security while others note that our neighbors do know the church and have access to our schedules and events. Some also note that our congregation is primarily community based, with most of our members coming from the local area. Many of our conversations are centered on growing this aspect and better engaging our neighbors in mission and ministry.

As we move forward with the information gathered, we will begin by exploring in depth our relationship with the community. How might we increase our activity within our community? How might we serve our neighbors in a way that is a part of our unique identity? To that end, we are planning a conversation on Sunday, **July 21st at Noon** for anyone with an interest in the conversations. We will grab our lunch and dig deep into the who, what, when and why of the matter as we walk with faith into the future together. Mark your calendars and come share your wisdom and energy.

Why We Value White Lick

As we have worked to discover new opportunities for mission and ministry, we also want to hold onto the core values of our church which include the following:

Hospitality: We welcome the stranger whose name is remembered and feels comfortable within the church.

Fellowship: Warm, secure, stable, acceptance with no judgement, family feel, Sunday meal.

Compassion: Praying and caring for each other; looking out for the welfare of each other and those served by the church. Willingness to contribute goods, supplies, and financial support for mission efforts.

Faith: God has a purpose where He has placed you. Spirit-driven disciples who walk with Christ into the world to glorify God. Opportunities to go deep and wide in the Word through Sunday morning worship, children's church, or Bible study.

White Lick is a tradition on the corner of 575 and 600 where it has stood since the first structure was built in 1857. To the casual passer by, the church has a quaint, rural look, a true vision of "the church in the wildwood".

Next Steps

As we move forward, the next steps include in-depth conversation and planning as we seek to create new ministry initiatives. The session leadership has already begun these formal and informal conversations and we also want to include others in the conversations. The next opportunity to get involved will be on Sunday, July 21 during lunch. We will be focusing on who God is calling us to reach out to and how we might serve and connect with our neighbors. There will be additional opportunities for conversation in coming months. Each opportunity will focus on a new opportunity for growth and vitality. We would love to have your voice at the table.

Dessert Fest

The annual Dessert Fest is this month, July 20 from 1-4pm. This community event allows White Lick to connect to our neighbors and raise funds for mission through the Presbyterian Woman group. We hope to see you, your family, your neighbors and colleagues during the afternoon.

If you are donating desserts, please have them to the church by 11:30am. The PW will label and display them so no need in bring items in special containers.

4th of July Parade

Thank you to all who brought candy to share for this event. Anyone who would like to help decorate the float, we will be meeting at 6pm on July 3 at Pastor Daren's house (1464 Sweet Gum Dr S, Brownsburg). For those who will be riding or walking during the parade, please meet at Pastor Daren's house by 9am on the 4th. We will shuttle you to Williams Park and drop everyone back at the house at the end of the parade. Come and connect with our community.

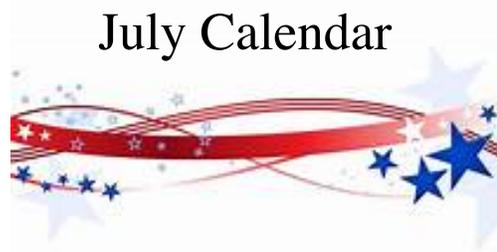
Women's Fall Retreat

This years Fall Women's Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, August 17th. The women of the church are encouraged to be a part of this morning event and to invite other women from their families, friends and neighbors. Sarah Hofmann will help lead the time with the theme, "Sharing Our Stories". You will not want to miss it.

July Birthdays

- 1 Shirley Halterman
- 6 Owen Brooks
- 9 Karen Line
Lori Parker
- 10 Lynn Turner
- 16 Eric Brooks
Dave Fancher
- 17 Diane Buxton
Barbara Rodgers
- 21 Bill Blank
- 22 Jake Stellmack
- 23 Amy Okuhara
Alicia Rosales
- 25 Ginny Sheets

If your birthday is missing from this list or from any other month's listing, please email your name & birthday to wlpres@indy.rr.com
We want tot include you, too.



July Calendar

Sunday, June 30

8:30 Worship w/Communion
10:30 Worship
10:50 Sunday School Classes
12:00 Fellowship Lunch –
Building & Grounds

Thursday, July 4 – Independence Day

10:00 Brownsburg Parade
6:30 pm PAL Group

Sunday, July 7

8:30 Worship w/Communion
10:30 Worship
10:50 Sunday School Classes
12:00 Fellowship Lunch – Pitch-in

Thursday, July 11

6:30 pm PAL Group

Saturday, July 13

1:30 Good News Mission

Sunday, July 14

8:30 Worship w/Communion
10:30 Worship w/Communion
10:50 Sunday School Classes
12:00 Fellowship Lunch –
Christian Ed

Monday, July 15

5:15 pm Presbyterian Women –
fellowship
7:00 pm Presbyterian Women –
meeting

Tuesday, July 16

7:00 pm Session Meeting

Thursday, July 18

6:30 pm PAL Group

Saturday, July 20

10:00 am Indy Love Train
1:00 – 4:00 Desert Fest

Sunday, July 21

8:30 Worship w/Communion
10:30 Worship
10:50 Sunday School Classes
12:00 Fellowship Lunch – Elders
Community Relationship
Discussion

Thursday, July 25

6:30 pm PAL Group

Sunday, July 28

8:30 Worship w/Communion
10:30 Worship
10:50 Sunday school Classes
12:00 Fellowship Lunch - Hospitality