

## APPENDIX A: RESPONSES TO MIF NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

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

Our ministry is that of a family who cares about and serves our community and our members. We seek to show Christ's love through our actions. Our ministry is focused in three areas.

Ministry to the Community-helping those in need. Direct activities include serving a free community dinner to about 100 people each month, supporting the food pantry through use of our building, volunteers, and donations of food. We also have a vegetable garden with the harvest given to the food pantry. Our rummage sales provide clothing and household items at low cost, or free to those in need. We give financially to many community organizations, and collect goods for local and international organizations. Indirect activities include a wide ranging use of our building by community groups.

Ministry to our members. We have a very active group of Deacons who provide support for members in need, including shut-in's, those with illnesses, and those who have lost a loved one. We have a wide range of Christian fellowship activities, including weekly coffee hour, men's and women's breakfasts, game nights, and local minor league baseball games.

Ministry through Christ-centered Worship and Christian education. This includes meaningful sermons and a vibrant music program with a vocal choir and bell choir. Prayer is integral, and on a typical Sunday a dozen or more prayer requests are shared. We also have weekly Bible studies and an adult "Sunday" school. We intentionally strive to make visitors feel welcome.

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

Our community needs are growing, our congregation is aging-this will prompt a change over time as to how we perform ministry.

Ministry to the Community-our physical abilities are decreasing, so we need to look at new ways to serve those in need. At the same time, the needs in the community are increasing, with more people in need and fewer organizations helping them. We will need to reach out to other churches and organizations, where combining resources can increase opportunities for ministry. We also need to look at new and changing ways to utilize our facility. We don't want to give up serving, just need to look at new ways of doing it, and ways to add to our existing resources.

Ministry to our members—as our congregation ages we need to look at ways to help them get to worship and other activities. We want to keep all involved, and providing a more formal transportation system could be warranted. Again, connecting with other churches in our area could be a way of increasing fellowship activities. We should also bring more focus to “missing” members, as they could enhance all aspects of our ministry.

Ministry through Christ-centered Worship and Christian education. Society is changing, and Sunday worship is not as integral as it once was. Also, communications methods are changing. We need to change with them, while maintaining the meaningful worship our members now value. This will include the integration of new technology and new ideas, for both communications and worship.

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

The person called to this position will be looked to in four areas. First, we look for this individual to lead a Christ-based worship service with solid preaching of God’s Word. Worship is the one time where everyone comes together to seek out Christ’s direction, and it is important that the pastor can preach God’s Word in a way that is understandable for all. Our internal spiritual growth is very important, and we look towards the pastor to both lead a rewarding worship service as well as be a teacher of God’s Word both in worship and in Bible Studies, etc. Second, we look for a compassionate individual who is able to provide pastoral care for our members, and advise the Deacons and other members in ways they can help with this care, which is very important to our congregation. Third, we look for this individual to provide motivation and advising for our outreach into the community. The congregation has a solid base of activities in this area, and we look for the pastor to not “do it”, but help those who are driven to serve by offering insights and thoughts. Finally, we look for the Pastor to help guide our vision and help develop a strategy that will assist the congregation to change as the conditions noted about change.

### **4. Provide a description of the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation and/or organization.**

Preaching and Worship Leadership – planning of worship that is Christ-centered, educational, and enriching – including special services during Lent and Advent.

Compassionate – showing God’s care for those in the church who are suffering from losses, illnesses, or loneliness – willing to spend time on visitation.

Flexibility – able to adjust to a new church, looking for modest changes that will improve the church’s ministry, yet adapting to the long history of the church.

Communicator – able to communicate on a personal, small group, and congregational level in both written and oral forms.

Motivator – able to inspire members of the congregation to reach out and serve in both present and potential new ministries.

Teacher – teaches not only during worship, but also during Bible Studies and Adult classes, as well as being able to teach on a one-on-one basis for those that have questions about God’s Word.

Advisor – helping Session set the direction of the church not by dictating that direction, but advising those in leadership positions in the church.

Strategy and Vision – able to work with Session and other church members to look to the future, and help set a direction on where the church should go in these changing times.

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

Prepare services, lead Worship and education, minister to members. Help session with transition period as they look for a full-time Pastor. Advise church committees.

**APPENDIX B: IN JOY AND IN HOPE**

**First Presbyterian Church  
Horseheads, New York  
November 6, 2016**

**In Joy and In Hope: Celebrating the Gifts of First Presbyterian Church of Horseheads**

Attending: Transitional Pastor Cheryl Ann Elfond and 40 members and friends of the Church signed in and participated.

**Philippians 4:8**

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY QUESTIONS**

**1. Think back on your entire experience at this church and name a time when you felt the most engaged, alive and motivated. [Who was involved? What did you do? How did it feel]?**

- Many times but the first time in this church --- today when I served communion.
- I think we have been here quite a while; when we felt most engaged was when our children were in high school and we all came as a family

- We had been coming for a long time but were not really involved; eventually both Allen and I decided it was time to give back; I was invited to be a deacon and serve on the worship committee
- I am going to mention two times if I may; when I completed communicants class when I was 16 and was involved in youth program (81); second time was during the time of the couples club when we became very important to each other as friends and church mates and remained that way over the years
- A time when couples club was active; active in education; Sunday School Superintendent and children were here
- Last Christmas everyone got \$20 to give away and I felt most engaged then with the whole mission
- Easter prayer vigil; hour alone in sanctuary alone meditating and praying

**2. When you consider all of your experiences at this church, what has contributed the most to your spiritual life?**

- Always been a connection with music and being involved in musical part of worship
- I echo what Ruth said; time alone I would spend sitting what I would call shiva for Christ over Easter weekend; sit silently for an hour and commune with Christ; made me feel part with God
- I am at time of life when I am in between worlds and not sure when; I know what they meant; it is so good to be here today I am living in Courtyards; wonderful experience; Rev. Bell when I came
- I have loved all of the music we have; the singing; bell choir but especially Christmas Eve the candles and singing Silent Night
- If I were to define one thing; it is to be lay reader; I have spoken in front of groups; this one is tough; I am amazed at others who can walk in and do it; I practice ahead of time and get large print and do research on Bible I am going to do and not get caught on Bible I can't pronounce
- I found the vigil between good Friday and Easter; I would take two hours at 2-3 in am and I have audio tape the last week and listen to it
- Music and participate and bible studies
- The Bible studies with Jon and now you

**3. Tell about a time when you were most proud of your association with this congregation.**

- I am from an old masonry church in Elmira and came up here because my wife was in charge of getting babysitters for people who had children; we live in Horseheads and I want to go someplace where my children grow up; in those days I can remember two years in a row 1962-63 we had 4 services in downtown church on Easter; all 4 were full; we had to sing at 3 of them and children in 1 of them; the part that was good for us we attended the last couples club meeting that was held at someone's house because no one had a big enough house and they were all here; being involved in this building and working with architect that studied with Frank Lloyd Wright; camper was in 1972; our

oldest daughter in confirmation class and one of over 20 being confirmed; choir of 32 people and only 2 were guests

- A number of years ago the mission committee gave \$10 to each member and we were asked to add a little to it and give it to someone who needed it and I found woman at work who lost husband at work and it was a good feeling
- Community dinner and people have place to eat and share selves
- I am American Baptist – I remember a guy who used to refer to Presbyterian as frozen children and I somewhat believed it; the time I am proud of my association with this congregation is the times when we dedicated things that have been made by this small congregation that is going to the rest of the world; it impresses me
- I can't say any one thing; so many things that people are doing in general; small in numbers but big heart for each other and community

**4. What do you think is the single, most important, life-giving characteristic of this church? When we are at our best, what are we doing?**

- Communicating
- Acceptance
- Sharing
- Trusting in God to lead us where we need to go
- Caring for each other and the community

**5. Don't be humble! The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual gifts – what gifts do you share with the congregation (including things like personality, perspectives, skills, character, etc.)?**

- Sewing
- Jan with cooking and organizing dinners and rummage sale
- Music; vocal and bell choir; I love those sounds Dan can get out of keyboard
- Involvement grew; for me it is time prior to retirement there wasn't time for outside work and family; so my gift is time
- Skills
- Gardening and fill in where needed
- Very organized it drives people nuts
- Vegetables
- Music and hopefully friendship
- History
- My own personal situation; involved with food pantry at Episcopal church and I saw elderly gentleman stand at stairs and he could not get down to get food; came to Jon and said I would like to think about getting involved with food pantry and move it; no hesitation and we moved everything here; I am enjoying the action we have every Tuesday and Thursday for people who don't have food; extended into many different areas as well
- Through all of these years; we have sponsored boy scout troop; pastor was not active at first and new pastor Bruce was; we said we have scouts who are looking for merit badge

and he said he would work with them; neighborhood kids as well as people from here; dedication service here in which we had 8 eagle scout awards; most had merit badge

**6. Now consider any gifts you have that aren't shared with the church. Are there gifts -- such as talents you enjoy or skills you are good at -- that don't get shared with the church because opportunities don't exist?**

- I have worked a great deal with kids and adults who have difficulty learning things; mentally retarded kids
- My wife is a graduate of Arnott nursing school and when we were retired we both volunteered to work at hospital; I became ill and now my immune system is on the fritz and doctor says stay out of hospital; she was still volunteering and doctor told her not doing her to good bring home bad germs;
- I volunteer at meals on wheels twice a week
- I do two gardens at food bank and raised swiss chard and tomatoes; and poor attempt at broccoli; started garden in living room; filled up enough of area with plants put them in beds and I had a bumper crop
- Beds are not being used here; a few of us spent a couple weekends trying to get them and we did two more beds; I would like to continue

**7. What motivates you to come to worship at this church [relationships, habit, desire for God, the church needs me, responsibilities]?**

- I have a daughter who lives up here; Presbyterian is all I know and my daughter lived up here and I had to come when my husband died; what motivated me was God; no one talks about prayers or God; the church is God
- Always Methodist when new family in Horseheads; Methodists were not friendly; this church was very friendly
- It has to do with habit; something is missing in my week if I don't come
- My relationship with God is number 1; don't feel right if I don't have that connection even though I don't have to be in this church; relationship with people around me; it is my church family; wanting to give musically
- I started coming here because my mother was attending; I stayed because desire to worship, music and community
- Sometimes it is habit; but when I think about what this church; how important it has been in life occasion for me and hopefully for all. This is the place we belong
- Could I add one more thing; the people
- It is a welcoming place; makes us feel like we are not outsiders; I have a lot of friends here; not a lot I can do anymore but... when we started getting serious when we moved to Appleridge; we got to get serious and decide on one; the next Sunday we came and heard choir and Jane used to be a good singer; the choir was the hook that got her then the bell choir got her; I like the traditional service with hymns out of hymnal; good scripture in service; lots of it; I better be careful -- I would like to hear good preaching -- don't know that I have always heard it here
- History

- I married into it but there is element of all of those things
- I said yes to a number of things on the list of this questions

**8. Complete this sentence with one of the two choices (everyone should vote for one – no “half votes” are allowed!) “Our church is ...”**

a. Rigid	1	or Flexible	36
b. Status Quo	17	or Mission-oriented = forward looking	14
c. Fearful	9	or Courageous	21
d. Thriving	1	or Getting by	31

**9. If we define a relational group as a group of people who gather at times other than on Sunday morning, for the purpose of prayer, study or fellowship on a weekly basis. Let’s make a list of relational groups in the church.**

- Tuesday am bible study
- Coffee and conversation
- Choir rehearsal vocal
- Choir rehearsal bell
- Monthly community dinner
- Monthly prayer shawl
- Monthly men’s breakfast
- Monthly women’s breakfast
- Committees

**10. What does this congregation do to prepare teachers, elders, and other leaders in the church?**

- OJT (on the job training)
- Retreats in the past for elders (Jon has had retreats in the past for incoming, etc.)
- With deacons, we do an orientation where the new ones come to last meeting of the ones that are going off
- Informal mentoring
- Being ordained

**11. What are the ministry opportunities begging for our attention in this area?**

- I believe there are many opportunities in every nursing home around for all churches; there may be a group of people who want to visit. Some woman where I live, a couple of women come and sing a song, tell a joke, etc. they can’t give us that special feeling of oneness; perhaps there could be a group once in a while or as part of your ministry who will go and visit; in hospital areas, people sit and no one comes to see them; parents are gone and children have other things to do and believe me I know it; don’t want to make daughter or son feel guilty; we can do it; I will go and walk an talk; if I see someone who is lonely, I will go and do it. Loneliness not fully reached until you are older
- The same is true for an in home situation; not everyone has offspring.

- Ecumenical ---- all churches not just mainline; to be involved with all churches do something together
- Transportation is very difficult thing as we are all aging; difficult for people to get here; don't know answer. But it is missing
- I am thinking our youngsters; people come to area but nothing here; nursery school is good start;

**12. If your church were to close, what would be the one thing people in the community would miss most?**

- Community dinner
- Use of the building
- Bell choir and singing choirs
- Rummage sales
- Food pantry (mentioned twice)
- Boy scouts
- Sunday morning religious program
- AA (not anymore)
- During the holidays; family comes in visiting out of town; habit of coming with their families – they would miss that

After the closing prayer, the person who responded “thriving” to question 8.d, explained that he was thinking about all the things this congregation does.

Transitional Pastor Cheryl Ann asked all present to think about and pray about question 11. What ministry opportunities are there here in Horseheads that are begging for your attention.