Nearly 90 First Presbyterian Church members participated in home meetings during the month of February. Participants discussed four questions:

1. If our congregation would , I know I would tell my friends what wonderful things they are missing out on at FPC.
2. If our congregation did not continue to , I would lose interest in remaining as a member.
3. The things that concern me the most about FPC are .
4. If with the stroke of a pen I could change one thing about our congregation, I would .

Afterward, facilitators wrote up the results of the conversations, and forwarded their reports to the Planning and Evaluation Team. The P&E Team met on March 5 to review the results of the home meetings. Here is the P&E Team’s sense of the meetings:

1. Participants are dedicated to First Presbyterian Church and really want the congregation to move forward and succeed. What keeps members of FPC invested in the church are friendships, loyalty to the congregation, the programs we offer, and our mission projects.
2. People are excited about the potential for new mission projects based on our track record of mission and our historic role in downtown Columbia.
3. The chief concern or anxiety in the congregation at this time is declining numbers. There are also concerns about staffing—some related to performance, others related to uncertainty about how and when staff positons will be filled. Communication could be better. Finally, participants expressed concerns about our congregation’s ability to process conflict and deal with tough issues.
4. People want to identify and participate in a new, local, hands-on, and intergenerational mission project.

Based on the conversations in the home meetings, the P&E Team is proposing the following goals for the Session to consider:

* Identify and execute a signature local mission project to which FPC would devote the bulk of its financial and human resources.
* Over the next five years, increase worship attendance at a rate that is equal to or greater than the percentage of population growth in the city of Columbia.
* Provide more fellowship events that bring together worshippers from both services and participants of all ages.
* Improve communication across the board (web site, social media, minutes for mission, pew and seatback literature, etc.).

These goals are in addition to tentative goals already proposed by the P&E Team based on the Evening of Historical Reflection event in January. At a retreat in the late spring, the Session will consider all the goals and adopt the ones it believes that God is calling us to embrace. For more information about our discernment process, visit the web site, [www.fpccolumbia.org](http://www.fpccolumbia.org). Click on the “About” tab, and then click on “Discernment Process.” Or go straight to <https://www.fpccolumbia.org/discernment-process>.