

1. How does STAYING in the PCUSA help CHPC fulfill its Mission?

I'm not sure it does. We spend a great deal of our manpower and financial resources on attempting to salvage the Biblical foundations that the denomination was built on.

Jesus didn't leave people who had other viewpoints. We seek to be reconciled to our God, to our community, and to one another

How does our mission compare to PCUSA mission, I do not know?

Feel it will not help by staying as CHPC's mission appears different than PCUSA

Great Question! Not sure being part of PCUSA helps us effectively be a church without walls.

If our mission is to listen to God and doing HIS will, then staying with PCUSA has no importance at all. Their mission projects are good but not needed to fulfill the mission of CHPC

Staying will avoid the work and cost of changing/ Staying will not make the distraction of PCUSA issues go away and they may well increase over time/ I think we will lose more people and giving if we stay than with other options.

If PCUSA is not in line with God's direction and we are, then we have to cut the hand off if it's going to lead us to road of destruction

Power, monetary backing

Loss of great money for summer camp for kids

Good support for global missionaries

Staying in the PCUSA makes us appear more inclusive and loving. esp in regard to homosexuals

Affiliation elsewhere could provide a broader base of support for the mission of CHPC. We wouldn't have to be lonely beacons

Our mission is to be a church without walls reconciling our neighborhood and those living and working in it to Christ, and denominational affiliation gives us access to resources within the Presbytery to accomplish this mission

PCUSA provides national recognition and support. If PCUSA is equated to gay-friendly, perhaps being affiliated with this group would allow us to meet our

mission of building a community of believers that will reach “beyond our walls” to the gay community

By staying we would continue to be salt and light within the denomination/ The question is: Is this still part of God’s mission for CHPC?/ Would allow us to continue support of missionaries abroad

Support for missionaries in other areas.

Staying gives us an established and recognizable brand that facilitates staffing, missions, membership in a meaningful way. I believe God can use CHPC in his mission within the PCUSA or through another affiliation that provides for these needs of the church.

May have a voice to speak truth to places of deception within PCUSA

Staying in PCUSA gives the connections to other churches in the support of global missions which are a part of our mission./ By staying we also can be a voice to help curb further changes in polity. We can also try to correct areas that have gone against God’s will or word.

I don’t know. I would imagine that we are involved with a lot of other ministries and churches because of our affiliation. What I don’t know is if our affiliation is undermining our mission.

Connected to larger fellowship of believers beyond our walls better position to support ministries abroad and away from local foundational connections and history

Jesus did not start another group away from the Jewish nation. He brought light to them and to the world through them. Many of the early missionary trips went to groups of Jews in the area of the mission. Can we stay a light to those who stay in the PCUSA? Can we point those who remain to God and what Jesus said?

Not only fulfill across the street and around the world but we also strengthen our faith and beliefs by standing up for what we believe

In its mission around the world we have the resources of a large body of believers.

It is difficult for me to identify ways that PCUSA helps CHPC fulfill God’s mission because of the loss of scriptural and spiritual integrity that has been lost. What I’m hearing from others is the benefits we get from the Presbytery for funding certain programs. The other area would be in connecting community – but that is local; the differences in integrity seem greater than the connection

Do not see a lot of reason to stay – provides no support for us as a body.

Staying means we belong to a group that is very active in helping our CHPC missionaries.

The only way staying in the PCUSA would help is if we are afraid to walk in faith toward the future as described in God's Word. In other words, I can't see it being an asset or a help for the future.

Staying facilitates / There are some good missionary activities/ This would avoid spending time and energy on property issues and realigning with a new denomination

We can act as a beacon of light within PCUSA for God's word and Jesus to counter false teachings

We can continue to be the salt and light this denomination needs – if we leave we lose the right to speak.

Very, very concerned about the lack of Biblical integrity that I see in the PCUSA. For this reason I believe that we have been salt & light, but now it is time to leave.

The church has invested nearly 40 years of prayer and resources trying to renew a denomination that has grown further and further from its Reformed Theological roots, especially in terms of pre-eminence of biblical authority for Christian faith and practice ; Jesus fully God and Man, crucified and bodily resurrected and ascended, the only way to salvation; and the reality of the supernatural, transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Since these are foundational truths for the mission of the Church and our church, without agreement we are seriously 'unequally yoked'...like two horse harnessed together pulling a wagon, but the horse are facing two different directions.

The PCUSA stands for things that are not part of CHPC such as homosexuality and pro choice values.

I honestly don't know. I do feel, however, that our church is already fulfilling our mission. The believers we have in our Church are Dynamic. I feel at home here even though we don't all feel the same way about everything. The general feeling when I walk through the doors exemplifies our mission and our prayer. I love this place and feel loved in this place because the presence of the Holy Spirit hits me like a warm breeze- just by opening the door. It's very real, very present. This church is really wonderful the way it is.

"Connect us in Jesus no matter our differences."without walls....."

I believe the second line of our mission outlines exactly why we need to stay in the PCUSA. Regardless of our differences we need to come together and connect in

Jesus. Further, in the fourth line, Celebrate You no matter the circumstances. We are better together than separate.

It is time to leave. 10 years ago we had the same issues. We have tried to make things work. How long do we stay... in the wrong denomination?

If we do not leave the PCUSA – this congregation will split and no one wants to see that again./ If we leave the congregation will stay together and our mission will go forward without missing a step.

“My sense is that the church wants to split because of PCUSA's willingness to accept to possibility of homosexuality. Sure there may be other reasons written about, but gut tells me that this is the core issue.

Note line 3 in the prayer above. Do we really believe this? Heck, then entire prayer for that matter.”

Newcomers to the church are aware of the PCUSA's departure from Scripture and orthodox Christianity. It makes it more difficult for them to affiliate with CHPC even though we have orthodox values. It will become increasingly more difficult to obtain ministerial staff that holds our value system. The enrichment that comes from like minded churches in the Cincinnati area is being strained.

Provides strong witness to the grace and power of Jesus Christ by being Salt and Light in a darkening world

Our evangelical bent has been evident for many years. We have continued to be the "church" and lived out our biblically based beliefs as a body without the direct influence of the denomination. We have tried to be "salt and light" to the PCUSA by remaining but I believe our call now is to move on.

I feel that the PCUSA is neither vibrant nor dynamic, but that our affiliation with it is holding us back. We have tried staying and making a difference in the denomination, but I believe that it has drained us of energy and enthusiasm. The gap between what this denomination practices and what our church stands for has grown too wide. Our "differences, cost and circumstances" where this denomination is concerned have been great. We have tried to "connect, serve and celebrate" within this context, but the denomination now stands by ideas which are false teachings, and so I believe the time has come to separate from them. The only reason I did not give this a "5" is because of the division that leaving will cause for some within the Body. The Holy Spirit may lead our congregation to stay, but at this time, this is not the sense I am getting.

"I think the way the PCUSA is going we cannot be a part of their views."

Staying in the PCUSA does not help CHPC fulfill its mission. How can two faiths embrace one future? The question is how can two groups who have such different

views of the nature of Biblical authority work together. At CHPC we believe that our vision, goals, and methods are to be determined by scripture alone. As I understand it, a good number of PCUSA pastors believe that while the Bible is honorable and historically profound, they believe that historically held scriptural views on so many matters are now negotiable. For example, the exclusivity of Christ as the one way to God. Also, it appears that within the PCUSA the Bible is a book whose commands can be ignored and rebelled against, i.e. the PCUSA's advocacy of abortion on demand in the face of the Biblical command "You shall not murder." (A command that is repeated by Paul in Romans.) How can staying with a group we are in such strong disagreement with help fulfill our mission?

I think the way the PCUSA is going we cannot be a part of their views."

I believe there are some great people and congregations within the PCUSA. Our missionaries are connected with the PCUSA as I understand it. Leaving the PCUSA and joining another, may cause additional distractions and sap human resources. These would be some advantages of staying.

The PCUSA's statements and activities has been diverging so greatly from those of the CHPC leadership that our association with the PCUSA denomination does us more harm than good. When connecting with people outside our denomination, they assume we believe as the PCUSA believes. On the positive side, PCUSA does help to locate ministers, handle pensions and coordinate some missionaries.

We seem to repeatedly be in a quagmire about the place of the holy word of God and it's authority. There seems to be an on going litany of socially charged topics that go against the express word of God, that elements of PCUSA like to continue to debate. This is a foolish distraction from our work.

God's word is our guide....we need to follow. "

The PCUSA seems to be following the way of the world, accepting or embracing areas of sin in the same way that the world does now and will continue to do. We need to be salt and light to the world and be in the world but not of the world. Seems like the PCUSA is saying okay, we'll be of the world too. If you can't beat them, join them.

I'll answer Questions 1 & 2 Together – I don't think simply staying or leaving in and of itself helps CHPC to fulfill its Mission and I believe that is key. For some people, this will temporarily remove a thorn from their paw, until they find another. For some this will be a hurtful breaking of fellowship. I think there are two more vital questions: What does CHPC need to be doing or stop doing, change or keep, etc. that we aren't now to fulfill our mission? And how much, if any, involvement do we want to have in denominational (wherever we end up) life based on our mission?

It doesn't help. It distracts from furthering the mission.

It hinders, not helps.

It does not help.

First some history....We were married at CHPC in 1980 and have attended ever since. We bought a house in the neighborhood and poured our love and time into our church family by being active in 3Cs, teaching Sunday School (for many years) including God' Kids. I served on staff as Special Events Coordinator for Families and Children for several years. I headed up , as a volunteer, the Arts and Crafts for both day camp and overnight camp for at least 8 years. We have both served on committees and many ,many ministries of this church . Our daughters were dedicated and baptized here. They all were active in youth group, and two of them were summer interns. We chose to stay when many members parted in the "split" in the mid-nineties, (including all of our small group) because of our commitment to the church's presence in our neighborhood and to Christ's call to unity and diversity.

We have rejoiced over the past few years, as CHPC has turned toward truly becoming a "church without walls". It seems, finally, that this is the kind of place that Jesus might hang out in. Certainly there are plenty of us that need ministering to, and the change over the years is that we are now humble enough to admit it. It, indeed, has become a hospital (a safe place for hurting people) rather than the "country club" that it seemed to once be. It appears that all are truly welcome. In our Church Without Walls prayer we specifically pray that we would be connected in Jesus "no matter our differences", and that we serve the world "no matter the cost". We have said this prayer corporately and vocally at the end of each service for more than a year now...we must really mean it! It is our view that leaving the denomination at this time erects more walls, and by so doing, counters the mission stated in this prayer.

Despite what we hear from those who wish to leave that "this isn't about the homosexual issue", it clearly looks that way. If you Google "churches leaving PCUSA" most if not all, point to the General Assembly's recent vote to allow ordination of non-celibate homosexuals as the impetus for leaving. Whether or not that is the primary issue here at CHPC it certainly seems to be and would be seen that way for those who are watching. At the very time that we are attempting to welcome and empower all of those that Jesus has invited to the table, why would we participate in a movement that is about excluding them? Do we exclude those that do not fulfill Jesus' charge to care for the poor and sick and homeless? Divorced? Jesus never mentions homosexuality, yet we have chosen to create a special category for these brothers and sisters, directing our fears and often hate toward them above all others, whether they are sexual sinners or not. If we, as our prayer suggests, want to follow Christ's example of empowering and loving the disenfranchised then lets bravely be about that, as we have historically done, regarding gender and racial equality. To erect barricades and close doors to a category of people does not fulfill the mission of Christ, nor is it congruent with the prayer that we say aloud each Sunday.

In John chapter 17 Jesus prays a prayer of which this is a part;

I'm praying not only for them
But also for those who will believe in me
Because of them and their witness about me.
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,
So they might be one heart and mind with us.
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—
I in them and you in me.
Then they'll be mature in this oneness,
And give the godless world evidence
That you've sent me and loved them
In the same way you've loved me.

Our movement to leave, counters these words of Jesus. It also communicates that we are not only erecting walls against certain people whom we have deemed "sinners more so than other sinners", but we are leaving because we cannot even sit down at Jesus' table with those who think differently about this (our brothers and sisters in the wider Presbytery).

What a message to send to this hurting, broken , seeking world.

It is difficult for me to identify ways that PCUSA helps CHPC fulfill God's mission because of the loss of scriptural and spiritual integrity that has been lost. What I'm hearing from others are the benefits we get from the presbytery for funding certain programs. The other area would be in the connecting community – but that is local; the differences in integrity seem greater than the connection.

Staying in PCUSA, I believe, will ultimately hurt CHPC in our desire to fulfill our mission. In a world that lives by decrees – “if it feels good , do it” and “do what you think is right;” people yearn, and I think expect, for the church to provide an authority – morally. With the leadership at PCUSA so wishy-washy, I think it will not allow for new folks to want to stay part of this church body. I think the respect for authority will continue to fetter any attempts to work outside of PCUSA's beliefs.

My Q: What about the worship and standing with Gay & Lesbian/ My Q: Will we stop worshipping the scripture word for word?

Staying in the PCUSA does not really help CHPC fulfill its mission. The PCUSA is at odds with CHPC on some key issues, many of which directly relate to CHPC's mission. On the one hand, this doesn't strongly impact CHPC as long as the PCUSA doesn't force CHPC to adopt certain policies. On the other hand, why should CHPC stay in the PCUSA if the PCUSA isn't helping CHPC achieve its mission?

The current "disagreements" will continue to be a distraction to fulfilling mission.

We can fulfill our mission regardless of the denomination.

Splitting away because of "our differences" violates the above prayer. I was always taught to look at our similarities, not our differences. Focusing on our differences enables behavior that does not fulfill our Commission.

I do not believe that it will. PCUSA is CHPC's governing authority, not just a partner or acquaintance or friend. If they do not believe as we do, how can we do our mission as the Lord calls us to?

It does not

They do not have the same beliefs in the Bible.