



# Oxford Presbyterian Church

*Seeking God, Serving Others, Sharing Christ's Love With All*

## **Rationale for Hiring a Full Time Associate Pastor**

Oxford Presbyterian Church is at a crossroads. Over the last four years we have lost two pastors to retirement and a CE Director and a youth ministry director to other opportunities. We have completed a two year interim and discernment period, prepared a Mission Study, conducted a pastoral search, and hired a wonderful new Pastor, Lawrence Bartel. Our future is waiting!

The Mission Study completed prior to forming the Pastoral Nominating Committee, identified specific opportunities and challenges to the future of Oxford Presbyterian Church. These included ministering to families, college students, exploring worship alternatives to engage a new generation of church members, and serving the needs of our community, which we call the *Outward Journey*. We have recently regained the use of our Seminary building with large flexible space that can be adapted to many uses in supporting these missions. Our *Inward Journey* of traditional worship in the Memorial Church, faith building, developing intergenerational relationships, fellowship, and pastoral care need regular refocusing and enrichment. Proposed building modifications for accessibility, fellowship, and flexibility are part of that process.

We believe that to continue these priorities as our call to ministry we require additional leadership in the form of a full time Associate Pastor. The *Inward Journey* as noted above, is where our new Pastor, by necessity, spends most of his time. If we are to reach out, as we have been attempting to do for several years, we must have an additional full-time staff person to work in partnership with the Pastor to lead the congregation in supporting the *Outward Journey*: a family ministry and Christian Education, campus ministry, alternate worship opportunities, and serving our community neighbors. We have considered a part-time associate but find it difficult to imagine addressing these ministries within an 18-20 hour, inflexible, work week. The campus ministry alone, could easily use those hours. We also believe that we are more likely to attract a quality, credentialed candidate for a full-time position.

The Oxford Presbyterian Church is committed to Seeking God, Serving Others, and Sharing Christ's Love with All. We will likely accomplish this in a limited way if we focus on our *Inward Journey*, ministering to our own congregational needs. But if we truly wish to joyously and passionately reach out to our neighbors on the college campus and in the trailer park, to grow our church with new individuals and families looking for a comfortable place to share, worship and grow in faith, we must not stop at this

crossroads but move forward and reach out, the *Outward Journey*. These journeys are neither one directional nor a once in a lifetime experience. Instead they may be better seen as interconnecting circles of *seeking, serving, and sharing* that form a never-ending journey of faith. We believe we need the leadership and support of a full-time Associate Pastor to realize the future to which God calls us!

*As we read in **Matthew 25:35** For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36** I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ...**40** 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

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