

# Milliken Presbyterian Church

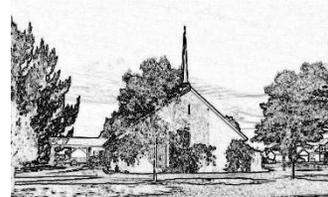
## Mission Study

March 2021



### Committee Members:

Emily Slyter  
Ron Uttecht  
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## Belief Statement

**W**e receive the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as authoritative for our study and prayer.

**W**e seek to stand on that foundation and to live by **God's** written word.

**W**e look to the life of **Christ** as revealed in the gospels as where we want to align our lives with **Him** as **Lord** and **Savior**.

**O**ur relationship with **Christ** is a call to make **Him** known. We readily accept opportunities to share **Christ's** love of all people within the world.

## Introduction

As you read this Mission Study report, we hope you will get a picture of Milliken Presbyterian Church and its congregation. What we want you to feel is a sense of who we are and how we are striving to live out God's call in our lives.

A four-member committee conducted this self-study of Milliken Presbyterian Church. Due to Covid-19, we were not able to meet with the congregation in-person and therefore, thought it best to conduct a detailed online survey of the congregation. The purpose of the Mission Study is to better understand who we are as a congregation by examining where we have been, where we are now and where we hope to be in the future. We are presenting this study to our Session, our members, and to the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery.

Interim Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk of Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Mission Study Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

## Who We Are

We strive to be a Bible-based, Christ-centered, and mission-focused congregation.

Milliken Presbyterian Church is a friendly community church with a big heart for God and a deep 119-year history. Our community is set in the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado in a rapidly blossoming area. The atmosphere gives a person a sense of belonging, security, and encouragement to a family of believers. Our priority is to strengthen our relationship with God and to grow spiritually.

As a congregation, we jump at opportunities to be an inviting church and connect with others through fellowship. We also strive to support one another and the surrounding community. MPC is sensitive to the needs of the congregation and willing to help in many ways. The congregation tries to create an environment in which individuals feel safe asking for the help they need.

We value God's Word as an integral part of worship along with praise and worship music. Our church has friendly warm services that are a mixture of traditional and contemporary. We also sing traditional hymns, as we feel it is important for each of us to hear the voice and message that God is sending through music. We would like to see our music program grow and want to encourage more involvement of our youth and members in our services.

We desire to be a congregation that works together and use God's word as a guide to positively impact the community around us. We do this by hosting a variety of local programs and activities. *(See section on Mission and Ministry activities)*. We encourage members to discover and employ their spiritual gifts. We aim for having more open discussion between church members about important decisions, changes, and goals. We treat each other like family and help each other out in times of trouble. Our relationships outside of the church extend to community-based programs, mission projects, and partnering with United Methodist Church of Johnstown.

We have areas of opportunities and growth within our church, including: reaching out to new members and friends of the church to better reflect the community around us, supporting trying new practices, programs and activities for Bible study, Sunday school, conflict resolution, improving internal and external communication and dispersion of information, expanding discussions surrounding the theological and Biblical implications of decisions and global outreach. We are a strong, family-oriented congregation and will continue to make that a part of our outreach programs. Community outreach is about being the hands and feet of Jesus. We try to do this by being increasingly inclusive so anyone feels welcome to come find Jesus.

And yet, we are unsure if our message resonates and reaches our neighbors and the surrounding community.

We recognize that we have had obstacles and struggles, both past and present. We endeavor to be aware of where we fall short. We acknowledge that we have members who question if their voice is being heard, if they are making a difference, or if they are valued as a part of the congregation. Going forward, it is important that we prioritize affirming different and varying points of view, embracing change, and doing so with open hearts and minds toward one

another. We want to find new ways to empower and encourage our friends of the church and members.

We are immensely proud of our church family and we hope that anyone would feel welcome to join us in worship. Many of our members grew up in this church and have made the commitment to stay. Many others have friends who attend and this drew them to MPC.

Our church members are kind, friendly, caring and willing to help and support each other. It is our desire that everyone who enters our doors feels the presence of God, grows closer to Him and becomes the person He designed him or her to be.

As members of this church, who want to grow closer to God, we feel fulfilled when we hear the Word of God, which helps us experience and better understand His love and forgiveness. When we receive God's Word, we experience a deeper walk with Him and learn to be more obedient and faithful.

## Church Mission Statement

Our mission is to reach out and actively engage others by sharing our Christian faith, worshiping, studying the Bible, praying, and serving God in our families, our communities, and our world.

## History

Milliken Presbyterian Church began as the Hillsboro Presbyterian Church in 1901. Hillsboro was a small trading point located west of present-day Milliken. The group met as a Mission Sunday School consisting of professing Christians from several denominations, organized by W. H. Schureman, who was commissioned as Sabbath School Missionary for Boulder Presbytery. At that time, several evangelistic meetings were held and the religious life of our church began. The Presbyterian procedures were the same then as they are now: in 1901 a petition signed by 14 individuals was presented to Boulder Presbytery and a committee was appointed to visit. On May 2, 1901, the group became the Hillsboro Presbyterian Church.

The land that was donated to the church was located at Hillsboro. A contract was signed to construct a frame structure for \$1450. It was finished and dedicated about May 25, 1902.



Hillsboro was a successful farm community, but there were problems transporting goods to market. The news of the coming railroad raised hopes for a larger market. Several officials from the Laramie & Northwestern Railway Company visited but thought Hillsboro was not conveniently located, so a new site was selected ½ mile east of Hillsboro in 1909. New land was donated by the Railroad Company to relocate the Hillsboro Church to Milliken, if the church building would be moved to that site. With considerable difficulty, the building was moved to Milliken, a rededication service was held June 1910. A manse was built across the street from the church building in 1915. We were then called the Presbyterian Church of Milliken. In the session minutes of March 2, 1960, approval was given for the church to be called the First Presbyterian Church of Milliken.

## Pastors

Since 1950 we have had ten installed pastors (Rev. E.R. Anderton 1949-1958, Rev. Albert Smith 1959-1961, Rev. Paul Kimmel 1963-1967, Rev. Rich Stewart 1968-1975, Rev. C.E. McBane 1976-1982, Rev. Brian Sparks 1986-1987, Rev. Darwin Smith 1990-1994, Rev. Curtis Hill 1996 – 2005, Rev. Stewart Drake 2007 – 2013, Rev. John Anderson 2015 – 2020). Prior to 1950, we were considered a mission church and had only one installed pastor (1910-1911) with 26 others serving as interim or temporary supply pastors. We have been blessed that all the pastors who have served, have enriched our church with very diverse and interesting backgrounds, such as a chaplain, a Bible translator and missionaries who served in different parts of the world. We have been fortunate to have had so many dedicated ministers, who have traveled through the life of our church. Each one had his/her own gifts and personality, but each also gave us love, leadership, education, and direction in our studies and our personal walk with Christ.

## Recent History



In 1973 a new manse was constructed. Then a new church building was built in 1981. In 2014, the manse was renovated. At the present time our church buildings are paid off and we are debt free. However, we have been considering building an addition or renovating the church building.

Milliken, as well as surrounding areas, are rapidly growing bedroom communities due to its convenient location. Milliken is a small town with historic and agriculture roots within close proximity to larger cities such as Denver, Boulder, Loveland, Greeley, Fort Collins, and Cheyenne, WY. Rocky Mountain National Park is about an hour away, as well as other outdoor recreational activities. Shopping, dining, and various cultural activities are close by as well. Milliken's growth has recently skyrocketed with the addition of several housing developments to meet the needs of an expanding bedroom community. The growing population is approximately 7,185 residents. Johnstown is Milliken's closest neighbor and has a population of approximately 14,110 residents. Between Milliken and Johnstown there are approximately fifteen churches.

The membership/population age demographics are approximately as follows:

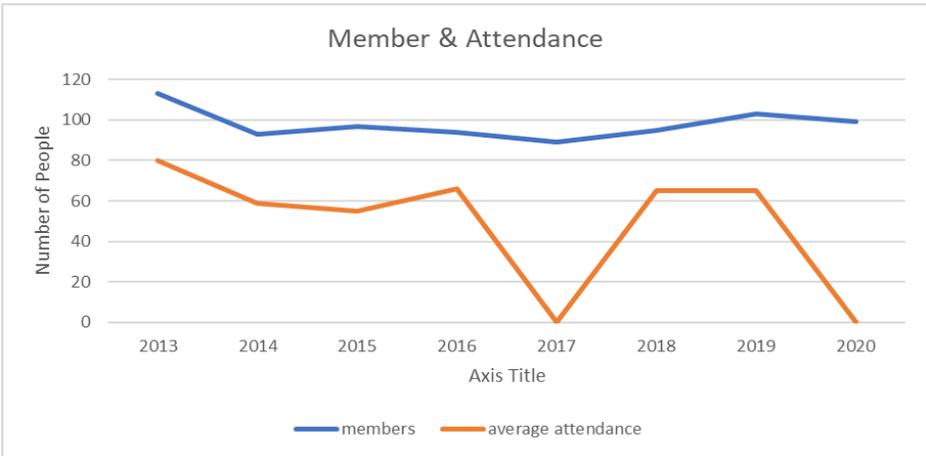
	<15yrs	16-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Milliken Presbyterian	>1%	2%	5%	25%	67%
Milliken	35.1%	10.7%	32.4%	16.4%	5.4%
Colorado	21%	14%	33%	22%	10%

Based on 2020 census information, the average age of residents in Milliken is 36. The racial makeup of the town is as follows: 92% White which includes 21% Hispanic, and 8% other. Within the church family, 50% live outside of the Milliken/Johnstown area with most of those either growing up in the church or having extended family ties to the church. Per the 2020 church’s annual statistical report, the congregation’s racial makeup is 96% white, 2% Hispanic and 2% multiracial.

The average household income in 2019 was \$90,000. Milliken has a 4% poverty rate. Within the community 11.6% of the population has less than high school education, 30.5% are high school graduates, 37.8% have some college experience, 14.9% have a Bachelor’s degree, and 5.1% have a graduate degree or higher. The median home value is \$275,000.

Based on those in the congregation who responded to the survey, the education demographics are as follows: 16% has a high school diploma or GED, 27% has some college experience, 16% has trade or vocational experience, 25% has a Bachelor’s degree, and 15% has a Master’s degree or higher.

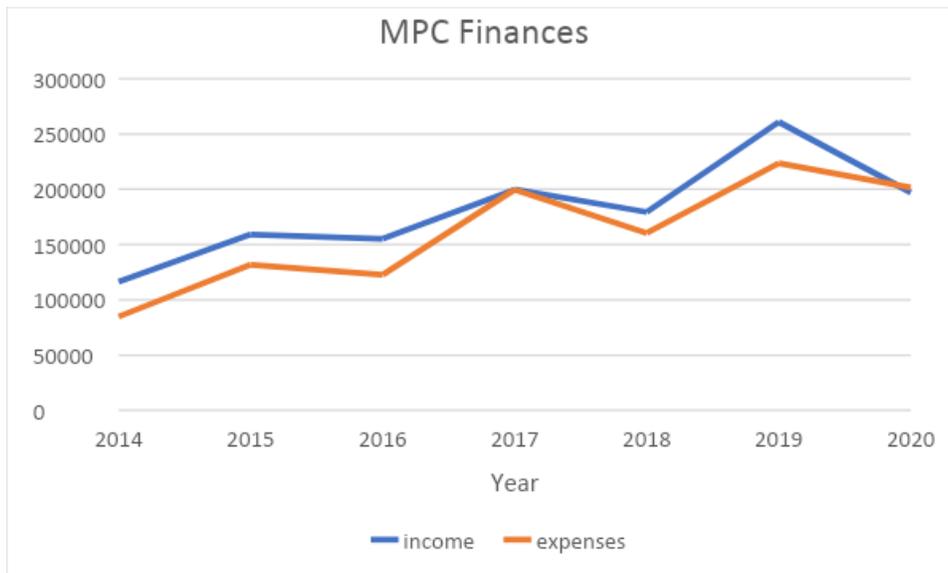
Church membership over the last seven years has averaged 98 members. Over that same period, church worship attendance has averaged 65 attendees. The current membership is at 99 and the average attendance is at 65. Despite changes in membership, our giving units have remained consistent and stable.



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Note: No data was collected in 2017 and 2020.

## Finances



## Mission and Ministry Activities

We chose projects that fill a community need or where we feel called by God. Therefore, generous giving is a top priority in our hearts and is a responsibility we feel called to work hard to fulfill. In addition to our General Mission Pledge, members and friends of this church have been blessed with the opportunity to support many missions and community-focused projects.

We also support two of the denomination's special offerings – One Great Hour of Sharing and the Christmas Joy offering.

Our most recent international mission projects include:

- Samaritan's Purse (Christmas care packages for children in need)
- Arok Garange, Seeds of South Sudan

Our local mission projects and ministry activities have included:

- Food pantry (distributed 35 tons of food this past year, in addition to approximately 140 Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets)
- Kids Hope
- PB&J Club (Praise, Blessing and Joy club for students grades 1 – 5. They meet once a week after school at the church)
- Trunk or Treat
- Children's and Adult Sunday school classes
- Bible Study groups form as the Spirit leads
- A women's group ~~that~~ meets monthly and sponsors various projects
- Vacation Bible School
- Youth Group
- Habitat for Humanity
- Highway clean-up
- Support and participate in Highlands Camp's programs
- Youth mission trips

We open our Church for various organizations to meet. Two that have met regularly are Parents Who Need Parents (PWNP) and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Our history of mission giving reflects the compassion we feel for the underserved and those treated unjustly. Jesus taught us to share what God has abundantly given us.

## **Committees and Boards**

Our Trustees work to ensure that our buildings are maintained and secured to provide an inviting and healthy environment for worship. Among other projects, they oversee the distribution of memorial funds towards meaningful projects. They maintain our manse and church building in numerous ways with the goal of providing a safe environment for MPC members along with our surrounding neighbors. To that end, a safety and security team has been developed, as well.

Due to the pandemic, we created a COVID-19 task force. The task force works with the Session to help facilitate both outdoor (weather permitting) and online services, monitor building access, and maintain safety protocols for the parking lot services we have held and the food pantry distribution. We want to acknowledge that there has been conflict around restrictions and guidelines for activities and in-person worship due to COVID-19. The task force is instrumental in working with Session to determine when we can return to in-person worship.

Our Deacons serve our congregation in areas such as hosting a Thanksgiving dinner for the congregation and providing new member and baptism gifts, flowers for Mother's Day, candy bars for Father's Day and meals for funerals. They host several potlucks each year, including one for graduating Seniors in our congregation. Each Deacon (matched with a session member) has a Concern Circle of members and friends of the church. They keep in touch with those on their list by sending cards, making phone calls, and scheduling visits.

The Women's group has annually hosted Chicken Noodle Soup dinners and Baked Potato Bar luncheons to assist with funds for special projects of the church. As needs have been brought to their attention, they have been instrumental in helping to supply the children of Milliken Elementary School with school supplies, mittens, hats and other essential items.

The youth of our church and several adults have been on mission trips over the last several years. Multiple groups have attended Triennium over the years and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to enjoy several other outings, events, and gatherings most months of the year. They have hosted spaghetti dinners, pancake breakfasts, labor auctions, and plant sales and calendar sales to fund mission trips and other events and activities. This is a fun group that includes members and friends of the church, who are always willing to help out or participate.

We have a strong and dedicated group of leaders who have taken on responsibilities of the Church and its boards and committees. We have an opportunity to encourage others to step into leadership roles and to train them effectively to be able to carry out their associated responsibilities.

## Vision and Member Reflection

We want to allow God to take us where He wants. We hope to be challenged to grow in our faith and aspire to strengthen our relationship with God. We hope that one of the results of this growth will be that we truly welcome everyone, accepting them as they are.

Looking ahead to the future and vitality of our church, we hope to grow. We want to prioritize increased support in community social service programs, while exploring the possibility of renovating our current church building. Using our talents, free time and resources, giving to our local community service programs is a high priority. As a congregation, we hope to call a Pastor who foremost, has an active spiritual life, is compassionate, has strong decision-making skills, has spiritual maturity, is a motivator and a teacher.

Inspired through our walk with God, our church family attends worship, gets involved in the church programs, works to strengthen our relationship with Him, enjoys fellowship, feels a sense of belonging, inspiration, and encouragement.

## Member Reflection

When people were asked to write a 30 second elevator pitch for MPC, here are some of those responses:

*“MPC feels like a warm hug from your family members. It’s small but mighty and inviting. MPC embraces so many different people without hesitation. They make an impact on the community.”*

*“We are an inclusive, Bible-based church family that welcomes you to share your gifts and receive nourishment in your quest for a Godly-based life!”*

*“Come and visit, you will come as a visitor and leave as a friend.”*

*“MPC provides a strong spiritual foundation from the Bible that is looking for new people to engage and expand our outreach in the community and a place to worship and celebrate Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior in life and death.”*

*“MPC is a caring and generous church community that is guided by God’s love and pursues opportunities to learn and grow in an effort to reach his people.”*

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3: 5-6**