

Mission Study
Gayton Kirk Presbyterian Church (USA)
May, 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Who are we?

The Gayton Kirk is a genuine, warm, welcoming, theologically progressive, mid-sized congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), a member church of the Presbytery of the James. We connect with the Spirit through various worship services – Celtic, traditional, jazz, outdoor contemplative, and mid-week Taizé services. We are a “Yes” congregation, open and spontaneous. The Kirk is a place to explore and deepen faith, to question, doubt, discuss, pray, share, and have fun together. Hospitality, creating community, a sense of belonging, and enjoying one another, combined with mission, outreach, and connection with our neighborhoods are all part of the Kirk’s DNA.

Who is our neighbor?

The Kirk is situated in a suburban Richmond VA neighborhood much like the composition of our congregation: well-educated, settled, aging, many retired. We and our neighbors are predominantly – but not exclusively – white, middle- to upper-middle class, living in single-family homes. The area is also home to several elder-care facilities. Many come for programs offered in our building. As younger families move into the area, many enjoy the Kirk’s playground and the beauty and accessibility of our grounds. Our neighbors extend to the VCU students we share lunch with, RVA residents who struggle with food, housing, and health care insecurity and brothers and sisters across the nation and world hit by disasters.

Why are we here?

The Gayton Kirk exists to provide a joyful and creative connection to follow Jesus Christ. So many have left or lost touch with the church or doubt the relevance of a church community in their lives. The Gayton Kirk congregation offers fresh and diverse opportunities to move beyond self, to worship, explore the Gospel, grow in faith and share in love and mission in a supportive, inclusive, creative, and caring community. The Kirk will lean into this tradition of hospitality, inclusion, and lifelong exploration and witness to show the love and example of Jesus Christ to the world.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Embracing the example of Jesus,
our welcome knows no boundaries
and is extended to ALL people.*

VISION STATEMENT

The Gayton Kirk will continue to be a welcoming, inclusive, community-oriented, program centered, progressive, Presbyterian church. As followers of Jesus, we worship, grow and share in creative ways; we are church “different.” <https://thegaytonkirk.org/about-us/>

Our website accurately describes us as:

- A caring, welcoming community of people with open minds and open hearts.
- Worshiping God and exploring/expressing our faith with song and dance, visual arts and poetry, jazz and classical sacred music, meditative silence, and drama.
- Welcoming those who have more questions than answers about their faith.
- Justice-seeking, peace-making, mission-involved, and community-serving.
- Offering four very different styles of worship each week to meet differing needs and personal preferences.
- Welcoming people of all walks of life, various racial/ethnic identities, an LGBTQ-friendly church with a wide variety of opinions on Christian faith and issues of the day.
- Nurturing creativity and artistic expression.
- Being innovative, experimental, risk-taking.
- What we are not: stuffy, stodgy, staid, or boring.

INTRODUCTION

The Gayton Kirk Presbyterian Church (USA) is a medium-sized church located in the Short Pump area of the western suburbs of Richmond, Virginia, a part of the Presbytery of the James. As of the 2024 Annual Statistical report (Appendix A), the church has 130 members, with a large number of active “friends of the Kirk.” We are a church that is casual in nature, celebrating inclusivity, diversity, and creativity in our approaches to property, worship, education, mission, and community outreach.

In its 42-year history, the Gayton Kirk has had two permanent pastors, the first serving for 21 years, and the second for 18 years. We have been served by an Interim Pastor since February 2025.

The Mission Study Team formed in July 2024, when Linda Smiley, ruling elder currently serving on Session, and Marilyn Johns, ruling elder serving as Clerk of Session, were appointed by the Session to co-chair the Mission Study team.

On July 15, 2024, the Presbytery of the James gave the Session permission to form a Mission Study Team prior to the departure of our pastor. The Rev. Janet James did not meet with the committee, she was not consulted, and she did not seek to influence our work.

Before the team was even formed Linda and Marilyn, along with the Interim Pastor Search Committee, held an information session for the congregation following the 11:00 am service on August 11, 2024, to explain the search process going forward.

Linda and Marilyn then worked together to form the Mission Study Team. They intentionally chose people who expressed the diversity of the Kirk by choosing Bland Weaver, a ruling elder and longtime member of the church; Linda Craig, ruling elder and new member of the church, and John Barnett, who has been a member for 12 years. Bland attends the Celtic worship service, Linda Smiley and Linda Craig attend the 11:00 service, John attends the Jazz service, and Marilyn attends all three by virtue of being the Zoom host. Rev. Mary Kay Scott, Interim Pastor, joined the team and provided input after she arrived in February.

The team has met at least monthly since our first meeting in August of 2024. We reviewed the Mission Study documents provided on the Presbytery website and the PC(USA), obtained some documents from the PC(USA) website related to our demographics, and were fortunate to have been given access to some recent Mission Studies from other churches in our presbytery.

Our first public task was to hold listening sessions following each of the three worship services on November 3, 2024, to discern, in a group setting, how people view the church and its values, strengths and weaknesses. Those responses are summarized in Appendix B.

We engaged the help of Plan RVA Regional Commission, who provided us with a map of where the members and friends of the Kirk reside. We were not surprised to see that the majority of the congregation lives very close to the church building.

The next major public effort of the Mission Study Team was to do a survey of individual members and friends of the Kirk. Survey questions with a summary of results are found in Appendix C.

For more information about the Gayton Kirk, visit our website: <http://thegaytonkirk.org/>

Based on all of the information provided by the congregation, individual survey feedback and our own research, this report was compiled and approved by Session on May 5, 2025.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Two demographic studies were done to determine the composition of our neighborhood, and where our members and friends live in relation to the church building.

The first was a series of reports showing annual growth rate, households with children, adult age groups, housing types, educational attainment of adults, average household income, and major races in a three-mile radius of the church. When we first accessed this data, it was a 2021 PCUSA study using 2019 census data. At the time of this report, the data were from a 2024 PCUSA study, using 2022 census data, so we were able to see trends.

The results were not surprising. Although population and growth were slightly above the national average, it is lower than 1% and dropping. Households with children were fewer than 30%, but again, slightly higher than the national average. The number of adults over age 55 has grown for our area, from 27% to 32%. The majority of those in our neighborhood are in single family homes, but with more multi-family dwellings and retirement facilities being built, that number is dropping. Educational levels are high, with about 60% of our residents attaining a bachelor's degree or higher. Over the three years of these studies, household income in our area has increased from about \$124,000 to about \$145,000, which is significantly higher than the national average. Finally, the area is predominantly white; this changed slightly between the two studies.

This information tracks closely with the demographics of the Gayton Kirk community. Our membership is predominantly in the 55+ age range, we have few children, about 2/3 live in single family homes, we are highly educated, most are reasonably affluent, and while we have some diversity of race, we are mostly a white congregation.

The document generated from these two studies can be found in Appendix D.

Additionally, we obtained a map of where our members and friends live in relation to the church. Again, not surprisingly, most members and friends live very close to the location of the church. A few live in the western counties near Henrico, and a few (about 7) families live south of the river. In Richmond, the James River divides the city, and people are often reluctant to cross the river to shop, work, or attend church, so it is significant that some in our congregation do.

The members/friends location map is available in Appendix E.

THE GAYTON KIRK – A BRIEF HISTORY

The Gayton Kirk Presbyterian Church is part of the Presbytery of the James. The Kirk is located in western Henrico County and has a diverse membership.

Since its inception, the Kirk has only had two full-time ministers, the Reverend Richard Brand and the Reverend Janet James. Janet served for the past eighteen years and retired at the end of 2024.

The Kirk was a pastor-centered church during Reverend Brand's tenure, and worship service was traditional in its structure. An integral part of the services during those years was a vibrant emphasis on music. We were blessed to have Debbie Mueller as our minister of music for many years. Debbie led talented choirs, conducted handbell groups and choreographed countless cantatas and plays. Her dedication and service to the Kirk helped to enrich the worship experience.

In the early 1990's the Kirk faced a major crossroads: whether to expand or not to expand. A major initiative was launched to expand the facilities. Money was donated to the building fund, but nothing ever materialized. A rift developed in the congregation. After many meetings and discussions, the decision was made to terminate the building drive. There were a lot of hurt feelings, and several members ended their memberships with the Kirk. Since that time there have been other occasions when the expansion topic has arisen, but there have not been any additional construction projects as of this writing. About twenty years ago, Reverend Brand retired. He should be remembered as a man of character and conviction, and the Kirk owes a great deal of thanks to the leadership that he and his wife, Rebecca, provided for our church.

An interim pastor search committee was appointed by the session. This was a critical period in our history. Attendance was waning and there was great concern about the survival of the Kirk. Many recommended that we form a committee that would formulate a strategic plan for the next five years. The plan emphasized unity and stewardship and we were able to stay afloat until it was time to interview candidates for the permanent pastor position. Several men and women were interviewed, and the committee enthusiastically supported the hiring of Janet James.

Janet made it clear from the onset that her vision was to transition from a pastor-centered church to a programs-centered church. Most will agree that the mission was accomplished. Over the next eighteen years, the Kirk has added something for everyone: arts and crafts, cooking classes, yoga, outdoor music concerts, game nights, chili cookoffs,

theatrical productions. There has been an emphasis on continuing education in the forms of spirituality enhancement and current events.

The worship experience has undergone a tremendous transition during Janet's tenure. In addition to the traditional service, you can now attend Celtic, Jazz and Traditional or a seasonal outdoor service.

Missions have always played an important role in the life of the Kirk. The Kirk-Inlow Fund has helped hundreds of families over the years. Many members and friends of the Kirk have participated in supporting hunger issues, particularly with frequent Rise Against Hunger events. A generous percentage of the Kirk's budget is always designated to mission concerns.

Since the Kirk's inception, money has been a primary concern. We were blessed many years ago, when Ella Harness willed a considerable amount of money to the Kirk. Some of that gift was used to liquidate the mortgage. From fall festivals to yard sales and auctions, the Kirk has been creative in addressing the monetary needs of the church.

As we stand at a new crossroads, the future may be a bit scary, but our purpose has never been clearer. The Kirk holds a special place in the hearts of those who have experienced it. We are blessed to have able and willing stewards who will make certain that the Kirk remains a good neighbor to the community for many years to come.

ADMINISTRATION

In addition to the full time Interim Pastor, the paid staff of the Gayton Kirk includes a part-time Office Manager, a part-time Audio-Visual Technician, a part-time pianist, a cleaning service, and a childcare worker. We contract with three flutists to provide music for our Outdoor worship (May – October) and our weekly Midday Prayer service, on a rotating basis. We also contract with three jazz musicians for our Jazz Vespers service. A childcare worker is here on Sundays for the 11:00 service, in case there are children who need care. Volunteer positions include a Treasurer, who signs all of the checks and manages payroll, and a Musician-in-Residence, who leads the handbell choir.

The Office Manager position was led by a volunteer for the past 17 months, due to the need to terminate our previous Office Manager for health reasons. A new, paid Office Manager has just begun working 20 hours per week. Office hours are 9-2 Monday through Thursday. The Office Manager prepares weekly bulletins and newsletters, handles all the accounts payable, provides monthly financial reports to the Session and to committees, orders supplies for the church, warmly greets visitors to the church, and provides other administrative tasks.

The A/V Technician connects the Celtic service to Zoom and streams the 11:00 and Jazz services on Facebook. He is also responsible for the microphones and other technical equipment in the sanctuary. He is a salaried employee and works all day on Sundays.

The pianist is responsible for playing hymns at the 11:00 services. It is hoped, and budgeted, that this position will expand to a Music Director position as people and availability arise. The pianist is paid on a per-Sunday basis.

FINANCES

The Kirk's budget at the present time is in good shape, with generous giving from its members. There have been trying times in the not-so-distant past, however, when the church has struggled financially. We have risen to those challenges with annual (pre-Covid) auctions, which have raised up to \$23,000 each time), fundraisers, and appeals to the congregation. Our latest auction, in November of 2023, raised enough to replace part of our roof and give a large donation to the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program. In 2024, the church held several fundraisers, gaining around \$10,000 for the general budget.

The 2025 budget is as follows:

General Account:

Administration/Personnel	\$182,257.00
Building and Grounds	\$10,620.40
Christian Education	\$500.00
Communications/Outreach	\$2,200.00
Diaconate	\$500.00
Operations	\$38,400.00
Presbytery of the James	\$1,500.00
Worship	\$1,000.00
TOTAL	\$236,977.40

Anticipated giving to the General Fund is \$231,500. Over the past few years, we have consistently spent less than we have received. See Appendix F for budget figures for the past four years.

Our Mission giving is completely funded through designated giving. For 2025, pledges were \$18,150 for Mission.

We also have a number of Designated funds totaling about \$74,000.

In addition, there is an Investment fund that has, in the past, paid for major building repairs. That fund is kept above \$120,000.

STEWARDSHIP

The members and friends of the Gayton Kirk are generous with their time, talent, and finances. Many folks contribute to the worship services by serving as liturgists, so that the pastor mainly preaches (at the 11:00 service) and officiates over Communion, while members and friends fill in the rest. Other than voting and holding office, the Kirk does not distinguish between members and friends in sharing our gifts and ministries. We are a congregation that will try almost anything someone suggests, from book studies to art groups to creative worship.

Financial stewardship is emphasized in the fall. A large percentage of our members and friends pledge each year. In 2025, even knowing our long-term well-loved pastor was retiring, the congregation stepped up and pledges increased! Members and friends alike pledge to the general budget, with opportunities to also pledge to the mission budget and building fund. The Kirk's mission giving is funded entirely of mission pledges. While we do not have a building expansion planned, our building is getting to the age where significant repairs have been needed, and those have been funded from the building fund. A few others pledge to designated funds, particularly the Music Enrichment fund, which allows for special music at our Midday Prayer service, and at the seasonal Outdoor services, as well as on Easter and Christmas. During stewardship "season," testimonials are given in church to highlight some of the ways our stewardship has enriched our church and our relationship with God. After pledges are received, a hand-written thank you note is sent to those who pledged – being able to do this is one of the blessings of a smaller church!

The Kirk has been blessed over the years to have several retired ministers as part of our congregation, who have led classes and helped to fill the pulpit.

WORSHIP

The Gayton Kirk values creative and diverse worship and music styles. Each Sunday we offer a conversational Celtic service, a more traditional 11 am service, a 5 pm casual jazz vesper service, and a seasonal outdoor worship. The Celtic and Jazz services include scripture discussion. The Kirk also offers a mid-week contemplative Taizé style prayer service year-round. All services combine the sacred and secular with scripture, contemporary art and poetry, instrumental and vocal music. Each Sunday service includes communion where the Table is open to all who want to know and follow Jesus. The congregation comes forward to the Lord's Table to receive communion. Lay readers are used for much of the service.

Music is integral to each worship service. The hybrid in-person/ Zoom Celtic service includes YouTube music selections of various styles. The 11 am service includes piano, a vocalist, congregational singing of traditional and contemporary hymns in the Presbyterian hymnal (Glory to God), and occasionally selections by our handbell choir. Flute music enriches the Outdoor service. Integral to the Jazz Vespers service is the live music of a professional jazz trio who play secular American songbook tunes and sacred music. Piano and flute accompany the Taizé style hymns of the midday prayer service. The choir dissolved during the pandemic and with the retirement of the music director. Plans are afoot to revive it in a limited form.

The Kirk values variety to keep worship fresh by rotating communion liturgy over the year using resources like the *Worship Design Studio* and *SALT* for the Sanctuary art created by our Liturgical Planning Team. This is a task force of the worship committee that thinks through seasonal themes to plan and create liturgical art for the sanctuary.

We are a relaxed, casual, welcoming and unstuffy congregation. The contemporary design of the sanctuary with many windows on two sides of the sanctuary brings nature into the worship space. Movable chairs make this a very adaptable space which is also used for fellowship events, weekday Tai Chi, chair yoga and community theatre.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult faith formation is a vital aspect of the Gayton Kirk, including four to six faith formation study classes and groups throughout the week. These are held in person and via Zoom and are led by the pastor or lay leaders. The groups discuss weekly lectionary scriptures, have read and discussed books by progressive Christian theologians and mystics and used Presbyterian Women study guides. In the last several years, the Christian Education committee hosts frequent “lunch and learns” after the 11 am worship service featuring various topics and speakers.

Prior to the pandemic two to three adult classes were held during the traditional Sunday School hour, and they were very well attended. Classes continued on Zoom during the pandemic. Post-pandemic, people have been slow to return to classes during the Sunday School hour, so study groups on Sunday and throughout the week have more than filled that gap. Participants report that these have been very important in their spiritual growth. They report that these have been opportunities to learn, express doubt, discuss and grow in faith. This broad participation has had a significant effect on the faith development and maturity of the congregation.

Children and Youth. The Kirk currently has at most five children and youth in the congregation. A Parish Associate, seminary intern or the pastor have provided instruction for the handful of grade school youth who attend episodically. Currently there is a nursery available. Pre-pandemic, the Kirk held a weekend or Saturday family vacation Bible school, but this was not revived. We do not currently have a confirmation class. The Kirk has hosted many short to half day programs for neighborhood parents and children, but the community response has been minimal. Some grandchildren attend with their parents at Christmas and Easter services and for special events, we have activity bags for various age levels for children who attend worship. Our building has only three classrooms for adult and youth classes.

DIACONATE

There are four categories of care for our congregation and community: feeding, visitation, prayer, and hospitality.

Deacons are responsible for the congregational meals including but not limited to Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving luncheons. These luncheons are very well attended and provide a place of belonging for the entire congregation and especially those who may not have family to gather with. Tasks involved include purchasing the main dish and beverages, inventorying supplies needed for meals, setting up the sanctuary, and cleaning up after the event. They also assist other committees with events involving meals.

Deacons arrange for memorial services in a hospitality capacity as with luncheons by consulting with the families to discern their needs, setting up the space, and cleaning up and returning the sanctuary to condition for Sunday services.

Weekly the Deacons clean up the kitchen, including the refrigerator and freezers, maintain the hallway coffee station, and notify the Office Administrator of supplies needed.

The Deacons assist the Worship committee as “greeters” for Sunday service handing out bulletins, name tags and recording the in-person attendance numbers

Refreshments after the 11:00 worship service are purchased and set-up by the Deacons.

The Deacons reach out to members and friends by sending birthday, anniversary, and get-well cards on a regular basis, and communicate with those who are sick or discouraged, or those who have indicated a need for assistance. They also assist with home and hospital visits.

FELLOWSHIP

Over the years many different types of fellowship events have been an important and enjoyable part of the Kirk's community life. There have been events that cater to small groups, and other events have been attended on a larger scale. Some of the gatherings have been strictly on a social basis while others have been the product of a specific ministry.

Since the Kirk has always been fiscally responsible, there have been occasions when fund-raising beyond stewardship has been necessary. Numerous auctions have been held over the years. In the early years the sanctuary served as the site, and in later years the event was moved to The Place in nearby Glen Allen. The auctions were always successful in their number one goal which was raising money for the general fund at the Kirk, but the secondary goal may have frequently surpassed the money aspect, and that was having fun. Preparation for successful auctions was very tedious, but the end results were unbelievably rewarding.

Being a good neighbor to the community has always been important to the Kirk congregation. Numerous spring flings and fall festivals have been held on the Kirk grounds over the years. These events have served as excellent opportunities for community outreach while everyone had a lot of fun at the same time.

Music is a wonderful medium that is attractive to so many. The Kirk has used music as a ministry as well as a social outreach on a regular basis. Outdoor concerts by local musicians on Friday evenings have been a popular outing. Handbells, jazz music, dramatic productions, cantatas...All of these have enriched our souls.

Offering diverse activities to the congregation as well as the community is important at the Kirk. Many members and friends of the Kirk attend yoga, tai chi, art classes, a ukelele group and bridge playing, etc. on a regular basis.

If your interest lies in continuing education there are weekly classes that are offered year-round.

Many Kirk members are very devoted to the ministry of missions. The Kirk regularly offers opportunities to help Rise Against Hunger, Camp Hanover and many other deserving organizations.

So, it's not just attending worship services at the Kirk. We are a congregation that is community-minded, and we like to socialize with each other in a variety of rewarding ways. We believe that we are called on to serve God as well as our neighbor, and our full range of fellowship activities help us accomplish that goal.

MISSION/OUTREACH

Outreach: Each week, The Gayton Kirk offers hospitality with a blend of secular and faith formation groups. The church provides a positive, supportive and welcoming place for community connection and belonging with free exercise and art classes, a book club, music groups, bridge, community theatre and concerts, local authors forums and space for local artists to exhibit their work. We offer multiple faith-based study groups and a mid-day prayer service. *We seek to increase connection and wholeness while reducing loneliness that is so common in our communities and especially among older adults. The Kirk Community Center is a key part of this outreach and our mission in the community.*

Over time many special events have been offered to the community including game night, a pet show and Blessing of the Animals, a community cookout and fair, several children's festivals, Trunk or Treat, viewing the stars with an astronomer, and during the pandemic an outdoor summer concert series.

Mission Priorities: The Kirk offers "hands on" and financial opportunities to serve "the least of these" in Jesus's name. The Kirk focuses on local and international organizations that help reduce food, shelter, and health care insecurity, and address needs of the poor, provide support for refugees, youth faith formation opportunities like Camp Hanover and hospitality to VCU students through the PACE Center. As a congregation we pray for peace and work for justice.

The Mission Fund is funded solely by dedicated pledges and does not receive dollars from the General Fund. Mission pledges amount to about 10% of total giving. The Mission committee prepares a donation budget which is approved by the Session. Thirteen organizations receive funds from the Mission Fund.

Hands-on mission opportunities: Each month Kirk volunteers distribute food at the Welborne Community Foodbank, an ecumenical food pantry. Each semester Kirk volunteers prepare, serve and enjoy lunch with 60 VCU students through the PACE Center campus ministry. We host collections for food, household goods and school supplies for local nonprofit organizations the mission fund supports. Monthly, we collect an offering for Presbytery and local hunger programs, and we've held Rise Against Hunger and a Chili Cookoff (for FeedMore) events. We have packed weekend food backpacks for elementary students. The church has helped several refugee families adapt and resettle.

The most popular hands-on event is *Rise Against Hunger* where we have packed over 20,000 meals. This involved 100 volunteers from the congregation and community, including students working for community service credit and their parents. As our

congregation ages, we find we need more young muscle power to help to pull this event off. The Chili Cookoff also brought in community members and raised funds for FeedMore.

Changes:

- During the Pandemic years 2019-2021 most involvement was financial. Financial support for the Mission Fund has continued to grow year over year.
- In-person, hands-on mission opportunities restarted in 2022. We now provide meals for 50-60 VCU students involved in the PACE Center Campus Ministry Stories and Lunch program, and we've prepared weekend food backpacks for local Elementary Students. The Kirk provides volunteers who help at an interfaith drive-up community food pantry to reduce food insecurity in our area.
- We added Mission Fund support for several interdenominational public policy organizations, e.g. (Bread for the World and Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy), recognizing that state, federal and international policies profoundly affect the living conditions of low-income people and the nonprofits who serve them. We have sought to avoid politicizing issues while being true to what is helpful to low-income people.
- We've provided disaster relief funds to the PC(USA) and supported PC(USA) missionaries to Haiti and Europe.
- In 2022, the Kirk began participating in the Presbytery's Peacemaking committee. We have hosted, housed and helped organize speaking events for PC(USA) international peacemakers.
- As our congregation ages, we continue to adjust the mix of giving, collections and hands-on opportunities to align with our service abilities.

THE PROPERTY AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONS OF THE GAYTON KIRK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Descriptions of the actual land property and local environs of the Kirk are followed by descriptions of the Kirk building. Measurements are provided by eye and pacing estimates. The Kirk website's photographs can provide a visual appreciation of some of the features described here, and using the Google Maps app affords a "bird's eye" overview of the entire Kirk property.

KIRK ENVIRONS AND LAND

Address of the Kirk: 11421 Gayton Rd., Henrico, VA 23238. Geographically it is in the central Virginia Piedmont region, in the Western suburbs adjacent to the city of Richmond. The longitude is 77 deg 38 min and the latitude is 37 deg 36 min. The climate is officially rated as subtropical and humid, and indeed it is hot and humid in summers. Winters are chilly with occasional light snowfalls.

The property boundaries are defined by the intersection of Ryandale and Gayton roads at the southwest corner of the intersection. Together the two roads are sides of a rectangle of five acres in area. Gayton Road, where the vehicle entrance exists, serves as the northern boundary of the property. It goes eastward about 375 ft. from the intersection to the end of the property line. Ryandale Road, the western property boundary, runs south from the intersection and goes about 600 ft to be the long side of the Kirk rectangle.

A mature hardwood forest (mostly oak and poplar) encompasses the Kirk land. A 60 to 80 ft tall forest canopy suppresses undergrowth and most of the forest floor is quite walkable. About 70% of the lot is entirely forested and members maintain hundreds of feet of trails through it for congregants and the public to enjoy. Hawks, woodpeckers, etc., fly through it, giving joy to birders with binoculars. On the forest floor, sometimes a dazzling white squirrel appears among its gray cousins.

The Kirk building is buffered by the forest from traffic noises by location setbacks; about 100 ft from Ryandale and 125 ft from Gayton. A paved parking lot, containing 94 parking spaces, is entered by a ramp from Gayton Road. Sidewalks from the lot provide building entrance from the east. The cleared areas adjacent to the building afford a playground with swings and slides. Also at the playground is a large cypress wood boat, the "Ark," that is about 15 ft long, 8 ft wide, and 12 ft high for kids of all ages to clamber in and



above. An outdoor chapel with benches and pulpit can serve about 30 congregants in good weather.

A 25 ft circular clearing has a laid-out spiral labyrinth for meditation and prayers. Another area has picnic tables and a stone fire ring that serves to roast hot dogs and marshmallows, as well as giving a bonfire for winter outdoor gatherings. Two robust 10 ft by 20 ft outdoor sheds provide storage for mower, landscape tools, and paints.

The Kirk Memorial Garden is accessed from the building by a 40 ft paved walkway that first passes slightly downhill through a wide lawn until it goes through a 30 ft wide area planted with flowering shrubs. It ends at low plinth where upon the names of the deceased appear, whose ashes have been interred in a memorial garden area beyond it. Interment services are held there, and it is wheelchair accessible along the paved walkway from the Kirk building. Along the north and east side of the building are well-tended plantings of tulips, hyacinths, and a raised herb garden. Enough cleared lawn area north of the building exists to allow telescopes to be set up, affording views of the heavens at times. Observing and celebrating the natural world and universe fits with the Kirk's Celtic traditions.



THE BUILDING

The Kirk building structure has not been altered except for repairs to the roof, HVAC systems, and interior details since it was dedicated in September 1985. It is entirely constructed of brick with shingle roofing and will need fewer exterior repairs than a wooden church. All areas of the Kirk are handicap accessible. After some initial debate in the congregation, a decision was made to not build a separate chapel building for formal worship services but rather to use the existing, large central room for services.

The Kirk building is a one floor structure with a central sanctuary for worship services that also serves as: a dining hall, a theater for plays, a Rise Against Hunger food packing area, chili cook-off contests, chair yoga and Tai Chi sessions, concerts, and various book fairs and community lectures. This is accomplished with artful moving/removing chairs and setting up portable tables as needed. The room has much daylight from 30 tall windows that line its south and west walls, as well as from two windows high above the northeast



entrance from the narthex. Ornamenting the very top of the Kirk is a 10 ft high, two-sided wall structure with a circular opening in each side with a hand-crafted wooden cross in one.

The sanctuary/main room area is about 45 ft square. It has two exits to the outside (one to the Memorial Garden) and it is entered from a narthex (about 20x20 ft) that itself is entered from the parking lot. Monthly changed art exhibits line the walls of the narthex. Besides providing the main sanctuary entrance, the narthex affords entrance to two 50 ft long hallways. Each hallway has an outdoor exit at the end. One connects the children's classroom (and a child's bathroom within), a large kitchen, a storage room, and two adult bathrooms. The other connects the library, an adult classroom, an art studio, a choir robe/storage room, and the main office and Pastor's Study.

The two sidewalks from the parking lot lead to a 25x25 ft semi-square concrete patio (handicap accessible) that converges to the main entrance doors of the narthex. On the north side of the patio are well-tended seasonal flower plantings in a bed that extends for about 15 ft to a raised 10x10 ft herb garden. The patio has a bench and a small table with four chairs. Outdoor concerts are staged there. A tall shade tree permits Tai Chi practice there in good weather.

The property is maintained by a custodial service and a lawn service in addition to an active, hands-on membership. This is increasingly challenging as the congregation ages.

SESSION

The Session of the Gayton Kirk currently has ten members, in addition to the moderator and the Clerk of Session. Our ideal number is twelve. There are six committees of the Session – Administration, Building and Grounds, Christian Education, Communication and Outreach, Mission, and Worship – in addition to the Diaconate. Generally, active elders serve as chair or co-chair of one of the committees.

The Session meets on the third Monday of the month, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., in-person and on Zoom. Reports are submitted in advance by committee chairs and the pastor, and the docket and reports, including financial reports, are sent a few days before the meeting. Business at the meeting proceeds assuming elders have read those reports ahead of time.

Each month, the clerk prepares either a “Polity Practice” or boundary training scenario for the Session to discuss. This fulfills the requirement for boundary training and keeps the elders connected with the Book of Order.

For several years we have welcomed seminary students who are taking a polity course to observe the meeting in February and March. This has proved to be a blessing to the session.

TECHNOLOGY

The Kirk upgraded its Sanctuary sound equipment in 2020 to accommodate online and later interactive hybrid services. This equipment and Zoom have allowed church members and visitors to connect to worship, church classes and groups. Livestream and AV software are current and secure and will not need to be updated any time soon. Wi Fi supports this usage but needs to be enhanced for the office.

Since the pandemic, the Kirk has continued to hold a number Zoom connections to worship and Zoom only classes and groups. A Kirk member and staff use church Zoom accounts to host meetings. OWL technology is used weekly to allow interactive hybrid Zoom and in-person meetings. The Kirk owns its office computer equipment, except for the copier, which is leased. Continuing to maintain and update equipment and software is an ongoing requirement for office efficiency and effectiveness.

In 2022 the Kirk hired a part-time Audio-Visual technician to manage the Livestream and AV software for the three Sunday year-round worship services after determining that this was beyond the capabilities of volunteers. He is the only person who is fully capable of running the system. His contract and job description are up to date. A church member with IT expertise helps with the church's IT needs, but availability is limited. A dedicated member has managed Zoom for many Kirk groups and for three worship services since 2020. Much of the worship responsibility will be transferred to the AV technician.

The website is hosted off site by a paid contractor. Training is needed to allow Kirk staff or a volunteer to keep the site current. Social media is managed by a member, although previously it was managed by a seminary intern/ pastoral associate.

Congregational Challenges and Next Steps

Congregational forums and individual surveys and the observations of Session member informed the themes in following section. These included outreach, attracting and incorporating new members into the life of the church, fragmentation of services, the desire for more all-church fellowship events and the increasing need for congregational and pastoral care, building and grounds maintenance and improvements, planning and the challenges of an aging congregation. The study addresses many of these areas in greater detail. The Session and interim minister are in the process of reviewing the committee structure to align it with the challenges outlined below.

Enlarging our membership

- 1. Our congregation is older and could use more members.** Almost 70% of our congregation is over the age of 56. We continue to attract new members in this age group. But as a congregation we are experiencing waning energy, health issues, and inability to perform physical tasks. We are also aware that as this congregation trends older, it may be harder to attract the interest of a younger group and result in dwindling membership.

Addressing the challenge

- a. In the past few years we have embraced our identity as an aging congregation, and have designed programs with this in mind, i.e., fewer events at night that require meeting in person, speakers and events based on the issues of aging, and working in all ways to respect the challenges of aging members.
 - b. Beginning in fall 2025 staff will expand promotion of our fellowship events particularly those that are relevant to younger families. This population comes now from the neighborhood and the children and grandchildren of members and friends. We are beginning to attract some teenagers at our worship services.
 - c. Elders and deacons actively greet visitors and will seek to get contact information on the visitor cards.
 - d. Beginning in fall 2025, the minister will invite visitors to a bi-annual Inquirer's Class, led by the minister and elders for those interested in more information about the Kirk, which may lead to joining the church or actively participating.
-
- 2. Members are tired.** The past two years, because of our former pastor's family issues and her own illness and surgery, required a lot of our leaders. Kirk leaders have stepped up repeatedly. They are tired and need to be re-energized.

Addressing the challenge

- a. Program Evaluation: To ensure we are using our congregation's energy effectively, Session will encourage committees to evaluate events and programs to assess participation, impact, adjustments and recommend changes or continuation. This could be part of an end of the year review beginning in 2025.
- b. By breaking work into manageable tasks (to the extent possible) and inviting members and friends to sign up, The minister, Session, and committee chairs may broaden participation in the work of the church. Some members are more willing to help with discrete tasks or special projects rather than serve on an ongoing committees.
- c. At the beginning of each year, Committees will be encouraged to sign up to host a fellowship or educational event once during the year,
- d. Session is considering ways to meaningfully recognize our dedicated volunteers at least annually beginning in 2026.
- e. Retaining members: each quarter, Session members plan to reach out to members whose participation has dropped off, to listen, and encourage. This has already begun.
- f. By January 2026 The Session hopes to designate a Membership Committee to take the lead in performing these actions.

- 3. More Congregational Care is needed.** As we age, there are more and more people who are homebound, in elder facilities, or having health issues. Visiting members not in crisis is a big job for a solo pastor.

Addressing the challenge

- a. The Session will continue working with our deacons, on an ongoing basis to contact members who are not in crisis but may be in danger of falling through the cracks. Follow up, listening and encouragement may help retain members by addressing concerns early. This has already begun.
- b. The interim Pastor plans to provide training in visiting, active listening, and pastoral care. This can be continued annually beginning fall 2025.
- c. The Session will provide our pastor with adequate time and skills to visit those in the hospital, in crisis, and those who are nearing end of life.

- 4. We are a somewhat fragmented congregation.** We value our different worship services, each of which attracts a different audience. However this makes it difficult for everyone to know everyone else. Because there are multiple services, our

congregation is spread out and appears smaller that it is. Concern for the lack of cohesiveness has been shared by our membership.

Addressing the challenge

- a. Session and the diaconate plan and promote quarterly events and activities that encourage people to be in fellowship with one another outside of worship, such as an ice cream social on Sunday afternoon, fellowship dinners, and “church” activities away from the church, such as “Theology on Tap,” which meets monthly at a local restaurant. These also provide space for neighbors and friends to be invited.
- b. The interim pastor and the worship committee are considering ways to create cohesiveness in the community while listening to the different services and their desire to remain independent. One consideration is to plan a combined, blended worship service on 5th Sundays, where everyone can worship together, with a social event afterward, this may be implemented fall 2025 or January 2026
- c. We are developing plans to use bulletin boards or a wall in the church to feature regular attendees at different services with photos, interests, etc. Experimentation can begin fall 2025
- d. We know that there is interest in Christian formation and we are seeking ways to hold classes on Sundays on a regular basis beginning fall 2025, this will be another way to bring the congregation together as well.
- e. Our interim pastor is working with us to review our committee structure. We have already identified the need to have a Membership Committee, we hope this will be in place by January 2026 and that the above tasks will fall to this team.

5. **Capital Improvements:** With an aging building, The Kirk needs a five -year capital improvement program and funding plan to anticipate and address capital needs and maintenance projects.

Addressing the challenge

- a. The Buildings and Ground team is considering ways we can invite neighbors to help care for wood’s paths, playground and parking lot, as these are often used by our neighbors. Subject to FY 2026 funding, we see the need to hire a building and grounds staff person to care for our facility and grounds.
- b. Immediate improvements the Session is addressing include new Sanctuary carpeting, a gender-neutral bathroom, refreshing the Narthex and Library, routine care of the Memorial Garden and a rotation of fresh seasonal

plantings at the main entrance. These will be programmed into the capital plan.

- c. **Technology Challenges:** In the 2026 budget the Administration and Building and Grounds committees will work to explore and fund technology upgrades and training to address the following challenges:

- Audio disparities exist between the online experience and subpar audio performance in the sanctuary.
- The OWL technology has greatly enhanced hybrid Celtic worship and Session meetings, but the sound is less satisfactory for those participating by Zoom.
- Office Equipment – Phone (voice-over internet connection) and office internet sometimes fail with multiple users.
- Provide a new laptop for the new minister.
- Website training is needed for the new Office Manager to keep the site current.
- Social media messaging has been inconsistent, both in the type of messaging and the level of use. Session and staff will work to improve this.
- While the Gayton Kirk congregation has adapted to Zoom and other technologies, we are not a tech savvy congregation; additional training is needed.

6. **Worship.** Worship should be a time of welcome and acceptance, along with praise, reflection, challenge and encouragement.

Addressing the challenge

- a. The Session and interim minister and working to reconstitute the worship committee by December 2025 to help plan, train, coordinate lay involvement.
- b. The minister or lay leader includes a friendly, upbeat welcome at the beginning of each service and worship opportunities should always be mentioned in the greeting, including Mid-day Prayer. Included in the greeting the statement that all are welcome, no matter age or circumstance. Perhaps the Mission Statement could be read weekly.
- c. The Kirk values lay participation of all ages, and warmly welcoming those seated near us, those we see after the service who may be new to us, and by listening attentively to their stories and inviting them back.
- d. The minister and Worship Committee, will work to improve the sound issues in the sanctuary; many of our older folks cannot hear well. In 2026 we will find a better way for microphones to work in the sanctuary as well as on Zoom and Facebook.

- e. The music program of the church needs to be reenergized with a choir. We have excellent instrumental music at each service, but members miss choral music at least occasionally. It is our hope that by July 2026, the pianist will accept a position to take on a part time music director role, and will begin to develop a choir. Discussion of this plan began in May 2025, with the concurrence of the pianist.
- f. We have wonderful Orff instruments and we are hoping to offer a Summer Orff camp in the summer of 2026

VISION

Overview: The Gayton Kirk is a genuine, warm, welcoming, theologically progressive, mid-sized Presbyterian church. We celebrate creativity in music, theatre and visual arts, and variety in worship. We are a “Yes’ congregation, open and spontaneous. If you have an idea, and are willing to take the lead, you can usually do it at the Kirk. It’s a place to explore and deepen faith, question, doubt, discuss, pray, share and have fun together. This is a spirit we plan to continue!

Strengths and limitations. The Kirk primarily attracts those near or in retirement. Our weekday programming is attractive to this group, which is the dominant demographic in surrounding neighborhoods. The Kirk provides a place of connection, belonging and growth for those in this new phase of life, which can be lonely and a time of loss. We are primarily a grandparent church, and we will continue to serve the spiritual and social needs of our congregation and this age group.

Despite hosting many events oriented towards neighborhood children and their families, these have not carried over into church attendance. Our building is small with four classrooms. For the foreseeable future, until the demographics of our neighborhoods change, we are likely to remain most attractive to a mature population.

However, the congregation recognizes the need and has the desire to actively reach out and create space for new people and other age groups. There are many opportunities to help meet the spiritual and social needs of our neighbors. While we target our efforts, The Gayton Kirk will continue to extend welcome and belonging to all. We will continue to listen and respond to the Spirit’s leading.

Over the next five years, we will focus on three general areas of growth: Outreach, Care of Members (“in-reach”), and Aging Issues. The Session and Interim minister are in the process of reviewing the 2026 committee structure and responsibilities to support the Kirk’s vision and goals going forward.

- **Outreach Opportunities**

- Use the summer and fall of 2025 to meet with the Directors of the Steward School (across the street) and the Principal and PTA president of Carver Elementary School to identify collaboration opportunities (e.g., woods walk

and care, Rise Against Hunger, provide school supplies, share our facilities.
(Building and Grounds Committee, Mission Committee)

- Identify, and promote programming oriented to the concerns and needs of a younger demographic. This will involve collaborative thinking by multiple committees, including Christian Education and Communications Committees over the course of 2026 and 2027.
- Offer meeting space to the young parents' group in the neighborhood (Christian Education Committee) in 2026
- Many Kirk members attend or participate in theatre performances, gallery openings, and other events held at the church. Session could encourage Kirk "ambassadors" to be present and provide welcome, information, and invitation to the church. This can begin in 2026.
- The Session and Deacons are currently working on strategies to help invite and integrate newcomers into the life of the church, helping them find their place, meet people and share in our mission. Since we have multiple services, all church fellowship and "get to know you" and enquirer opportunities, outlined in the next section, can play a role.
- The officers continue to consider how to reach, program and provide space for new people and groups that align with our mission. Such as, LGBTQ+, retired men, etc. This is a longer-term strategy that is likely to involve many committees.

- **Care of Members ("in-reach") Congregational Connection**

- To enhance our sense of community increase the connection of members and friends who attend different services we are currently considering options during this interim time, including:
 - Instituting a single blended service on months with a fifth Sunday
 - The Pastor and an Elder will lead an Inquirer's Class, every six months for repeat visitors
 - The Deacons and Session will plan a fun fellowship event, engaging the entire congregation and neighbors each quarter
 - Creating a "getting to know you" wall, featuring photos, profile, and interests of those who attend the Kirk.
- Care for members of the congregation:
 - The Session plans to more closely monitor and contact members and friends who have stopped attending

- The Pastor and Deacons will visit and maintain contact with those who are ill or homebound
- The Pastor plans to provide training to equip Kirk leaders for pastoral care
- Recognize our hard-working volunteers:
- Beginning in January 2026, the Session will evaluate programs and the committee structure to ensure they continue to align with our mission statement and vision.
- Session may need add additional ½ day retreat to these and other responsibilities, such as:
 - a. Complete the policy review and update process begun in 2024
 - b. Fellowship and Outreach plans will be considered as 2026 and subsequent budgets are developed.
- **Aging Issues**
 - We are an aging population:
 - The Pastor, Session and Deacons have already begun to place greater emphasis on pastoral care for members who are seriously ill and provide training for Deacons and this focus will continue..
 - Session is sensitive to congregational aging issues. Planning for appropriate changes will involve staffing and budgeting decisions as well by the Administration committee beginning with the 2026 budget.
 - The Christian Education has and continues to provide valuable lunch and learn forums around aging issues. They've opened opportunities up to other Kirk committees on topics such as loss, County resources, probate, etc. beginning in 2025.
 - .
 - We have an aging building.
 - The Building and Grounds committee is in the process of developing an annual maintenance plan and is in early stages of developing a five year capital improvement plan beginning in 2026.
 - The Building and Grounds committee has recognized the need to hire additional building and grounds staff subject to maintain the facility, subject to available 2026 funding.
 - The Building and Grounds and Communications Committees can collaborate in publicity that invites members and neighbors to help

care for the woods paths, playground, and parking lot and building. Some neighbors have responded to church grounds work day invitations in the past. With creative promotion this could increase.

APPENDIX A

2024 Church Statistical Report

Church	Gayton Kirk	PIN	23379
Presbytery	James		
Address	PO Box 29635, Henrico, VA		23242
Phone	804-741-5254	Fax	
Email	gaytonkirk@gmail.com		
Web Site	thegaytonkirk.org		



Membership			
Prior Active Members	131	Adjusted membership	131
Gains		Losses	
Certificate	3	Certificate	2
Youth Professions	0	Deaths	3
Professions & Reaffirmations	1	Deleted for any Other Reason	0
Total Gains	4	Total Losses	5
Total Ending Active Members	130		
Baptisms		Average Weekly Worship Attendance	
Presented by Others	0	Friends of the Congregation	97
At Confirmation	0	Ruling Elders on Session	11
All Other	0	Do you have Deacons?	Yes
Age Distribution of Active Members		People with Disabilities	
17 & Under	0	Hearing impairment	6
18 - 25	5	Sight impairment	2
26 - 40	13	Mobility impairment	10
41 - 55	25	Other impairment	2
56 - 70	38		
Over 70	49	Gender Distribution	
Total Age Distribution	130	Women	88
		Men	42
		Non-Binary	
Youth in Congregation			
Age 4 and under	1	Middle School (6th – 8th grade)	5
Elementary School (K-5th grade)	4	High School (9th – 12th grade)	3
		Total Youth	13
Racial Ethnic			
Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	1	Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	0
Black/African American/African	2	White	124
Middle Eastern/North African	0	Multiracial	0
Hispanic/Latino-a	3		
		Total Racial Ethnic	130
Budgeted Income	203,032		
Budgeted Expense	215,453		
Receipts			
Regular Contributions	221,355	Bequests	0
Capital Building Fund	43,971	Other Income	0
Investment Income	24,467	Subsidy or Aid	0
Expenditures			
Local Program	216,094	Investment Expenditures	0
Local Mission	20,182	Per Capita Apprt	1,500
Capital Expenditures	53,505	Other Mission	1,000

A Summary of November 3rd Congregational Feedback Sessions from Celtic, 11AM and Jazz Services

If you had to use one word to describe The Kirk, what would it be?

Summary: friendly and welcoming, a community (caring, supportive, diverse in views and interests but inclusive and accepting), active, enriching and educational

What is meaningful to you about The Kirk?

Summary: A friendly and caring community, (a safe, supportive accepting and nonjudgmental environment). Opportunities for spiritual growth to learn, probe, question, , diverse services and approaches (discussion, conversational, preaching), creativity in worship and programs, using the congregation's talents, a flexible use of the Kirk building and connection to nature.

What do we do well at The Kirk?

Summary: Creative worship with a variety of services and styles, welcoming people, involving everyone in the congregation, including children, and caring for each other. Embracing imperfections, positivity, educational opportunities and mission projects. Grounded in the Reformed tradition. Incorporating Art, Positivity

What could we do better?

Summary: Outreach (to the community, through programs and events, attract more members including families), build community across services, more congregational involvement in music, attention to the building, classes on difficult questions of faith and doctrine, care for the building

What do we value?

Summary: Worship: creative, meaningful and diverse styles, weekly communion, a peaceful environment. Community, being together in a supportive, non-judgmental, open environment, where questions can be discussed. Outreach to neighbors by providing programs, events and the flexible use of building and grounds for artistic and fun programs, in addition to the sacred, that encourage involvement and connection. Spiritual growth and education, a participatory, environment conducive to creativity and collaboration

Why do you attend the Kirk?

Summary: Communion, feel closer to God, creative and diverse worship, feeds the soul, combines the sacred and secular, a feeling of belonging, a sense of community, the people, enjoy and want to be here.

APPENDIX C

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

A 21-question survey was sent to all members and friends on the newsletter mailing list as well as all members and friends in our database. In all, after removing duplications, surveys were sent to 215 people. We received 70 responses, which we believe is a very good representation, as our average worship attendance is 80 people!

THE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Tell Us About Yourself

1. What is your name?
2. I am (check one)
 - a. A member of the Gayton Kirk
 - b. A friend of the Gayton Kirk who participates in some Kirk activities
 - c. I no longer participate in activities at the Gayton Kirk
 - d. If you don't participate, please tell us why.
3. I am in the following age range:
 - a. Under 20
 - b. 20-29
 - c. 30-39
 - d. 40-49
 - e. 50-59
 - f. 60-69
 - g. 70-79
 - h. 80+
4. Check all areas in which you are involved with the Gayton Kirk
 - a. I attend worship services
 - b. I participate in study groups
 - c. I participate in other activities at the Gayton Kirk
 - d. Other (please specify)

Worship

5. How do you usually attend worship?
 - a. In-person
 - b. Livestream on Facebook
 - c. Zoom
 - d. Watch later on Facebook

6. What year-round worship service do you usually attend or prefer?
 - a. Celtic: Sunday at 8:30 a.m.
 - b. Traditional: Sunday at 11:00 a.m.
 - c. Jazz: Sunday at 5:00 p.m.
 - d. Midday Prayer: Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.
7. What draws you to this service? (check all that apply)
 - a. Worship style
 - b. Music style
 - c. Time of day
 - d. The people
 - e. Other (please specify)
8. If you could not attend your preferred service, would you be likely to attend another service?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If yes, which service (Celtic, Traditional, Jazz, Midday prayer)
9. The Gayton Kirk provides meaningful worship experiences for my spiritual growth.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Please comment:

Calling a Minister

10. What are the most important qualities in the next permanent pastor (Check all that apply)
 - a. Theological/spiritual guide
 - b. Good communicator (spoken, written, interpersonal, digital)
 - c. Teacher
 - d. Flexible
 - e. Equipping congregational leadership
 - f. Creative
 - g. Encouraging
 - h. Pastoral care: visits the sick
 - i. Honest; trustworthy
 - j. Inspirational
 - k. Sense of humor
 - l. Other (please specify)

Church Vision

11. Are there some goals that the Gayton Kirk should work toward over the next five years?
12. What does the Kirk do well?
13. The Kirk would be even better if . . .

Mission: The Gayton Kirk's mission priorities include helping those in need by addressing food, shelter, and health care insecurity and supporting faith formation opportunities for RVA youth (like VCU campus ministry and Camp Hanover).

14. Mission and service projects align with our priorities as a congregation.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Please comment
15. Would you like to be contacted to help with mission projects?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Please comment

Communications

16. How do you get information about what's happening at the Kirk?
 - a. Kirk Happenings
 - b. Facebook
 - c. Sunday announcements
 - d. Constant Contact
 - e. Word of mouth
 - f. Kirk Website
 - g. Other (please specify)
17. How could we communicate better?

Outreach

18. Which of the following are you likely to invite a friend to? (check all that apply)
 - a. Worship services
 - b. Study groups
 - c. Kirk Community Center activities like yoga, tai chi, art groups, ukelele, art openings, bridge, theater, auction, etc.
 - d. Fellowship events
 - e. Other (please specify)

Fellowship

19. I feel welcomed, connected to, and supported by the church community.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Please comment

20. What could enhance your sense of welcome and community at the Kirk?

Conclusion

21. Is there anything else about the Gayton Kirk that you wish to share?

Several themes have emerged:

1. An overarching approval of the Kirk's day-to-day operation and mission was apparent in the survey results.
2. The congregation is concerned about Pastoral Care and Congregational Care. Outreach to members who must deal with long term illness or other disruptions to their lives needs attention from the Kirk in one form or another. At the same time, they did not see Pastoral Care as a priority for the new pastor.
3. Our congregation needs more members. Since our congregation is aging, we need more and perhaps younger people to serve on committees and to serve as volunteers.
4. The survey validated the Kirk's need and desire for three worship services. Most responses were very positive about the type and number of services offered, and the commitment of members and friends to the service they attend.
5. Many people articulated the need for more fellowship within the congregation. One suggestion for bringing together the attendees of the three services was establishing a blended service on the fifth Sunday of those months which accommodated that date.
6. Hospitality and welcoming were seen as very effective, as were methods of communication.
7. There was overwhelming support of the mission emphasis in our church, and that it reflects their values.

Mission Study Team Survey Summary

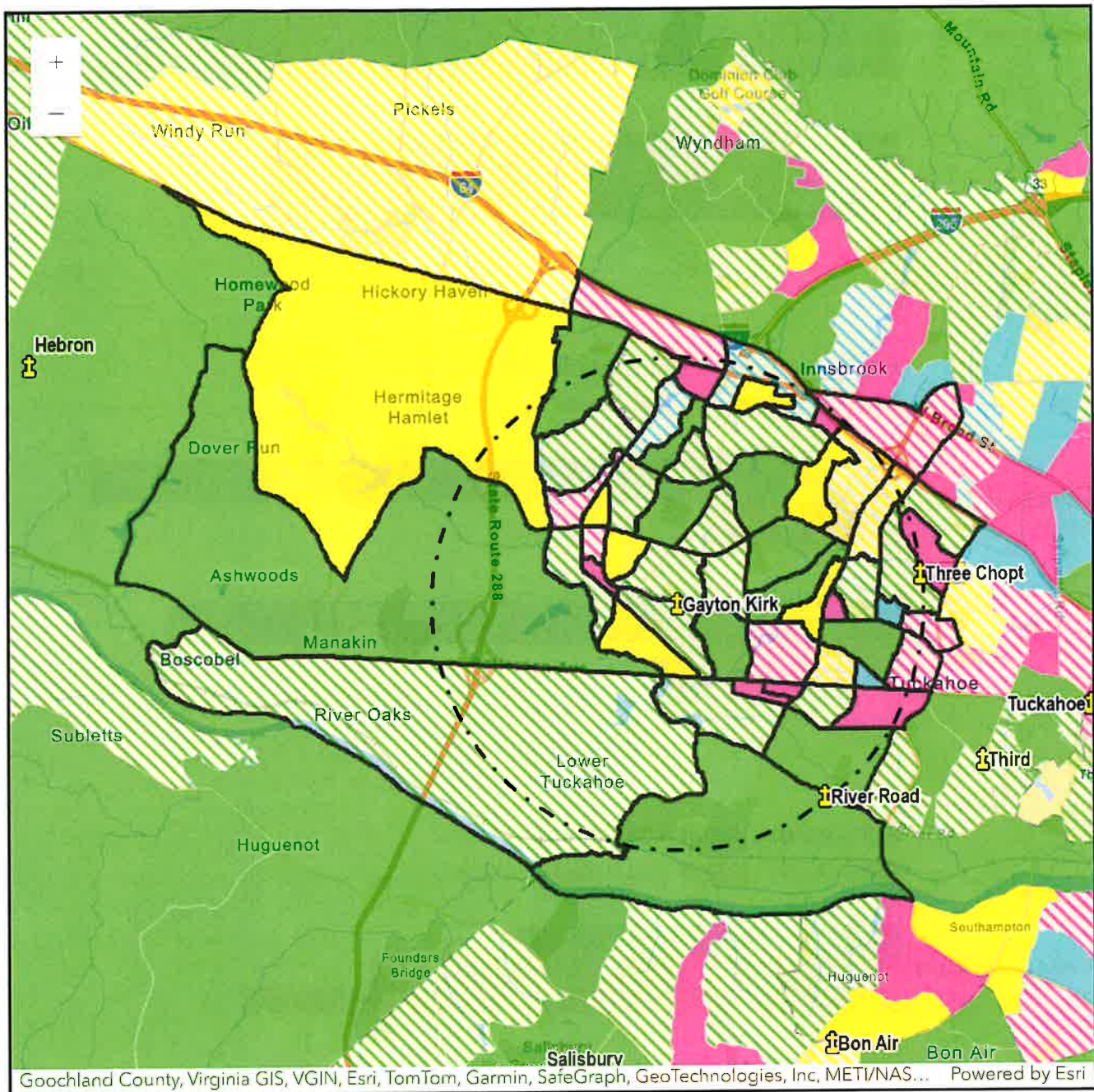
- 214 surveys were emailed to those on our members and friends database and on the Kirk Happenings mailing list.
- Seventy individuals have at least started the survey. 70% are members of the Kirk; 20% are friends; 10% are no longer participating – most because they have moved or got out of the habit; one because our programs are usually during the day when they work.
- 61 of respondents are over age 60.
- Almost 80% attend worship services; about half attend or have attended study groups, and about 2/3 attend other activities of the Kirk
- 77% attend worship in person; 13% attend on Zoom; 10% watch on Facebook, either live or recorded.
- About 1/3 of respondents prefer the Celtic service; close to half prefer 11:00, and about 16% prefer Jazz. It is notable that, when looking at the average attendance at each service since January, almost everyone who prefers Celtic responded to the survey, while a significantly lower percentage responded from 11:00, and lower still for Jazz.
- The main reasons given for why they attend their particular service were 1) worship style, 2) the people, and 3) time of day. Several mentioned that they like the interactive study of the scriptures at Celtic and Jazz
- About 2/3 said they would attend another service if they couldn't attend their preferred one, which means that 1/3 would NOT. All three main services had about equal numbers who would choose that service as their alternative. A smaller number said they would attend Midday Prayer as their alternative.
- 90% of respondents said they felt that their spiritual needs were met at the Kirk. Again, many mentioned the discussion and learning from one another.
- As far as qualities for the next minister, the top three (all above 85%) of those listed were: 1) Communicator; 2) Honest/trustworthy; and 3) Theological/spiritual guide. Many people checked them all, and some additional thoughts were: learning alongside the congregation; open-minded; address current affairs; progressive theology; forward-thinking; and passion for the work.
- Goals for the next five years (listing all):
 - Equipping members to be leaders
 - Promoting who we are – a progressive, inclusive congregation – target outreach to that
 - Increase fellowship/interaction between services (3)
 - Deeper focus on social justice

- Define who we are called to be in the present moment
- Financial security (3)
- Attracting young families/people/growth (about 1/3 mentioned this in some way)
- Discerning the needs of our community and doing something about it (2)
- Making the Kirk more visible
- Revitalize the music program (4)
- Decrease the number of services
- Better branding
- Transition to a community-based church
- Add children's programming
- Simplify
- Highest on the list of what we do well was hospitality/welcoming. Also mentioned several times was the variety of opportunities and worship styles we offer. Creativity and diversity were mentioned by several, as were the educational opportunities.
- Some things mentioned that we could do better were: getting more people involved so the few don't have to do so much; creating a mechanism to reach out to those who haven't attended in awhile; programs that appeal to men; connections between the services; interacting with other churches; having a choir; clearer sense of purpose; eliminate some services; more members; more children.
- **Everyone** who responded agreed that the mission projects aligned with the congregation's priorities.
- About half of respondents were interested in helping with mission projects.
- 95% get their information from Kirk Happenings. About 72% get information from Sunday announcements. Lowest was 12% for Facebook.
- Most people are happy with our communication, although there were a few suggestions for phone calls, increased social media, better updating of the website, and sharing the Session minutes.
- Most people who responded would invite a friend to worship or Kirk Community Center or fellowship events.
- Almost all who responded felt welcomed, connected to, and supported by the Kirk. Only two did not.
- To enhance connection, suggestions were for more connection between services, more snacks on Sundays, being more welcoming to younger people, and more men's events.

- Finally, there was overwhelming support of the Kirk and its hospitality; appreciation for the leadership of the Session and for the ways the Kirk has been important and helpful to them; a hope that we will revive the creativity of the church; a couple of people did not like Communion every week.

Community Demographics - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Summary Overview Report



Above average growth expected

- Many young adults, Many families
- Few young adults, Many families
- Many young adults, Few families
- Few young adults, Few families

Below average growth expected

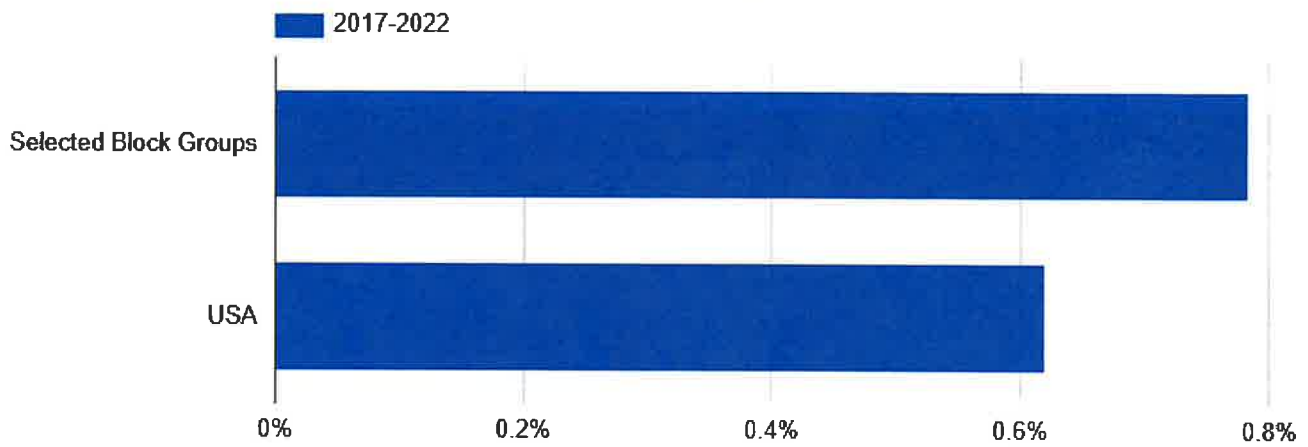
- Many young adults, Many families
- Few young adults, Many families
- Many young adults, Few families
- Few young adults, Few families

Block Groups selected: 56

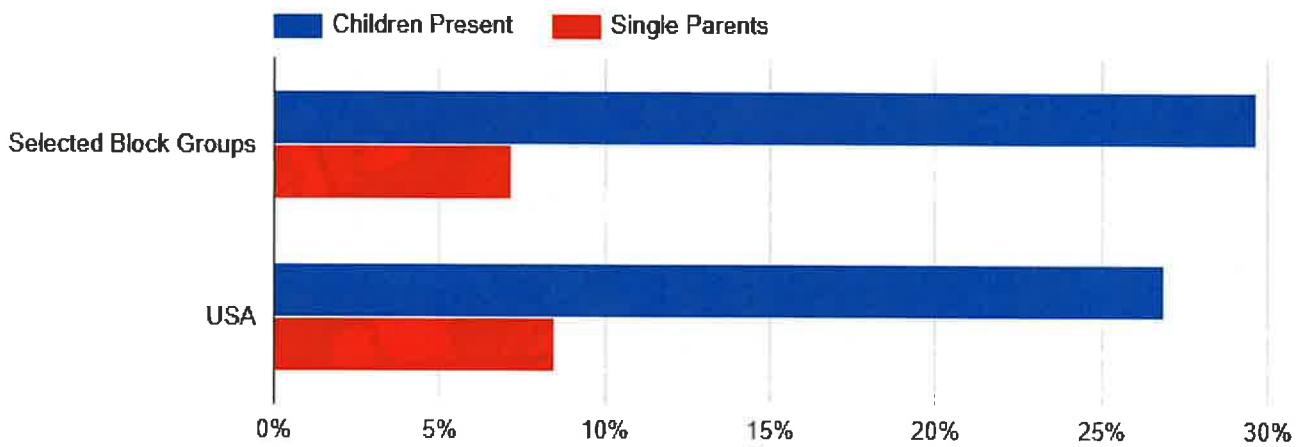
Radius: 3 mile(s)

The total population is 82,767.

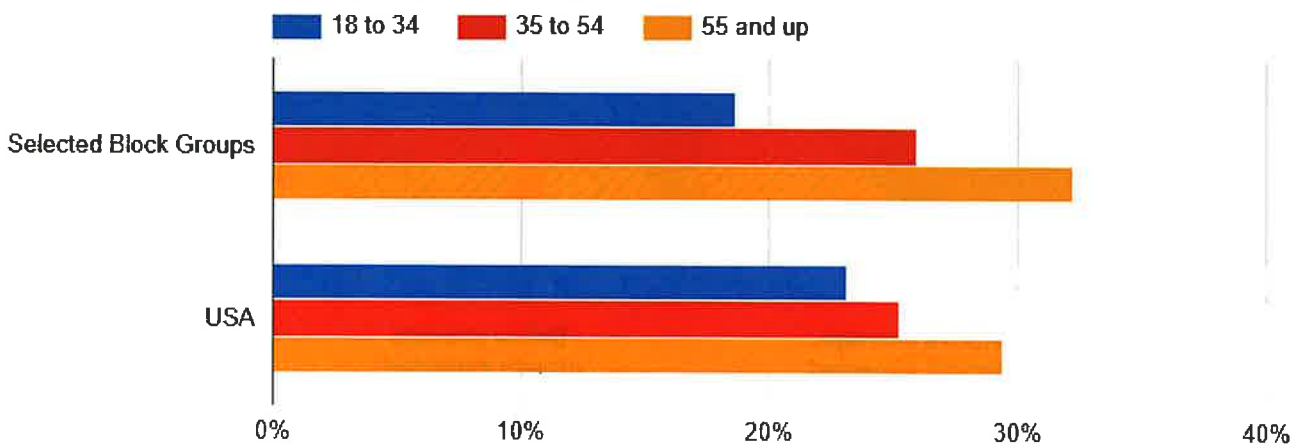
Population and Growth: Annual Growth Rate



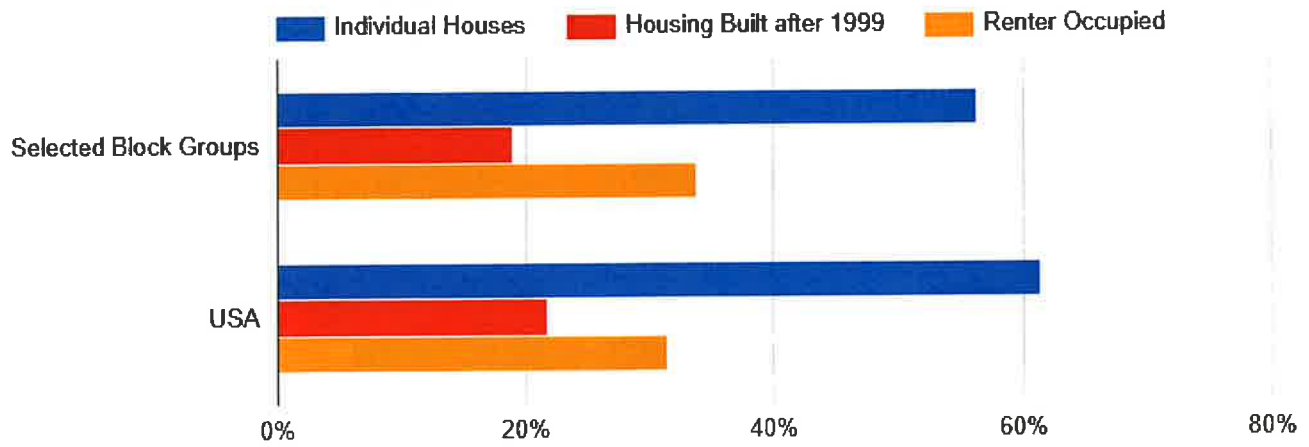
Family Structure: Households With Children



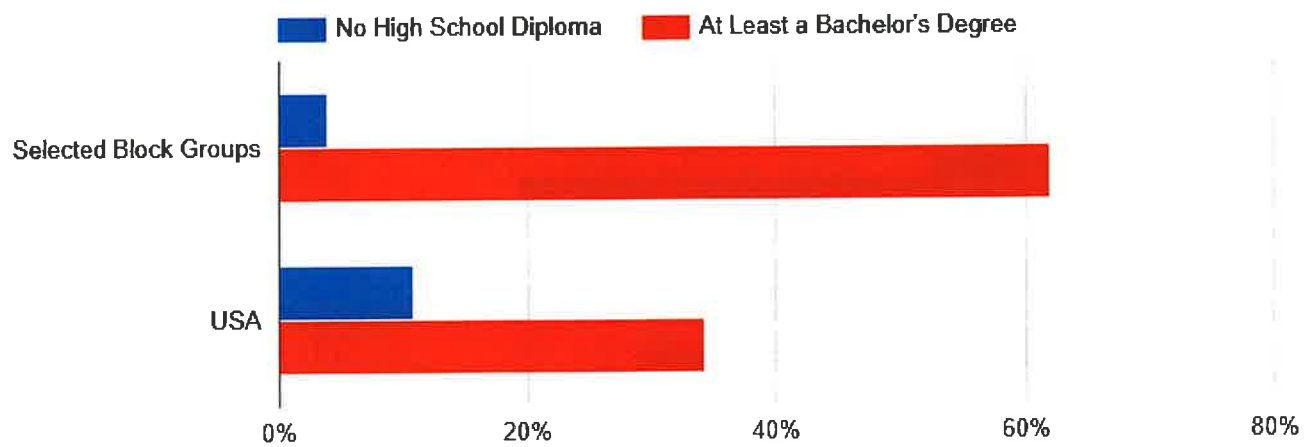
Age Groups: Adult Age Groups



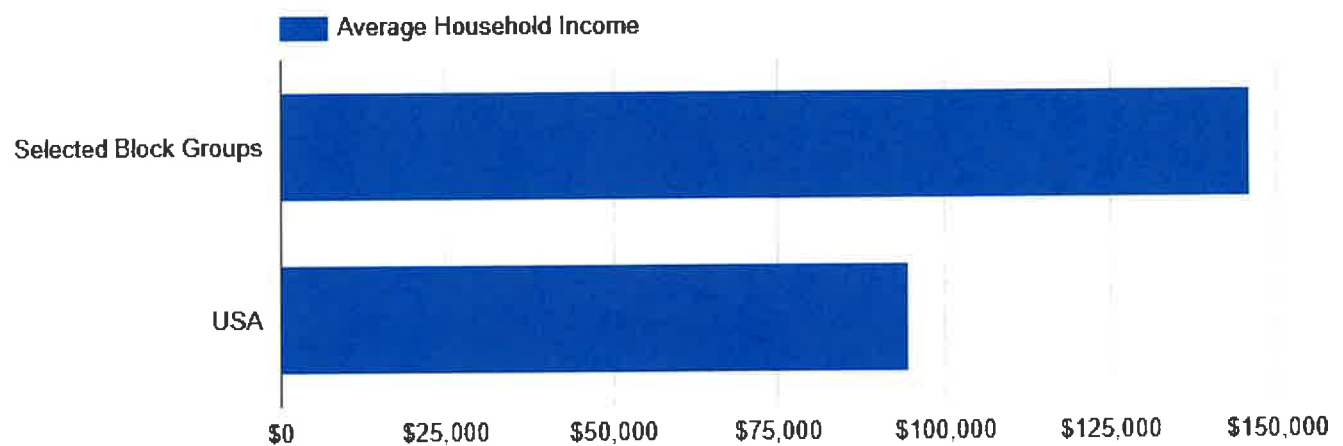
Housing Types: Housing Types



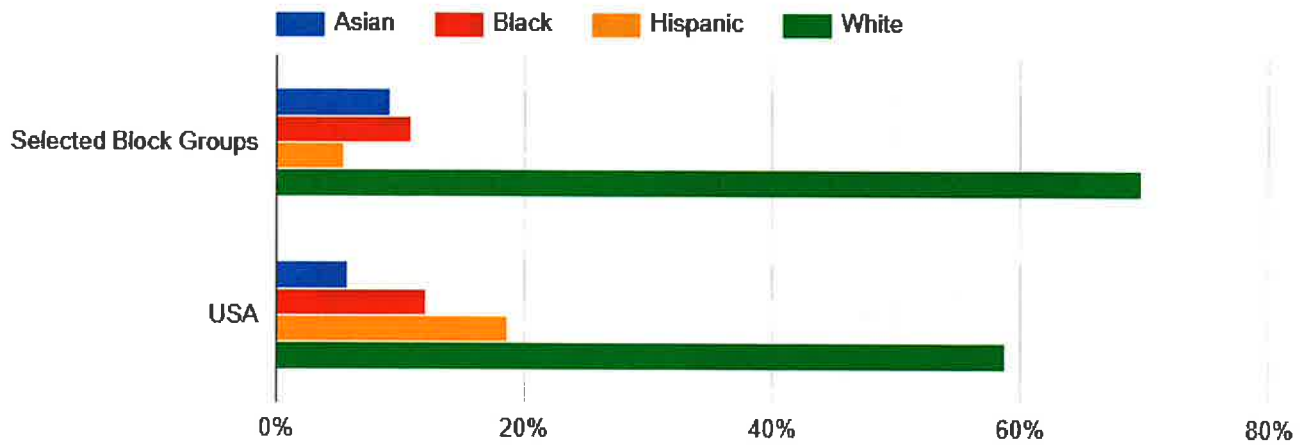
Education Levels: Educational Attainment of Adults



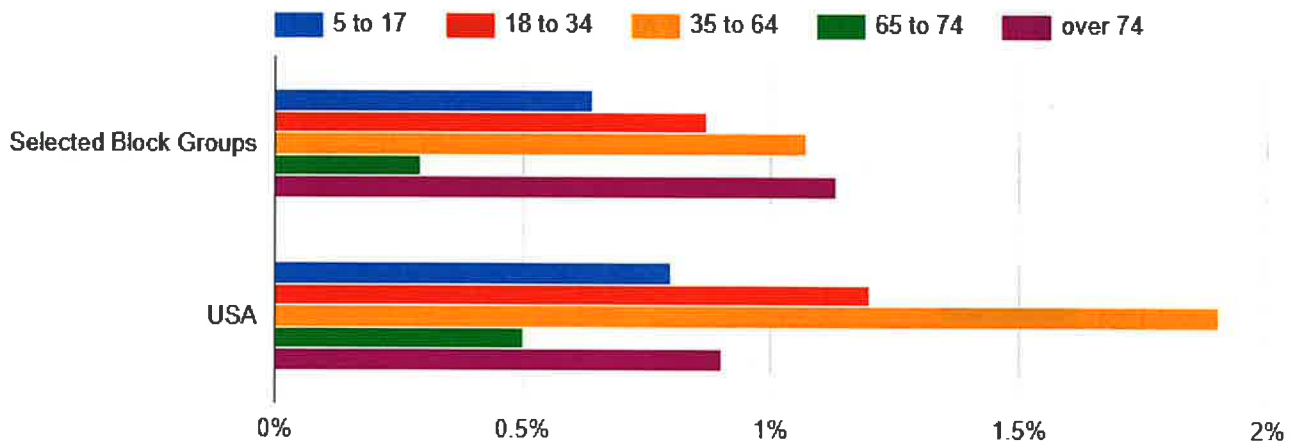
Economic Indicators: Average Household Income



Culture: Major Races



Disability: Cognitive Difficulty by Age



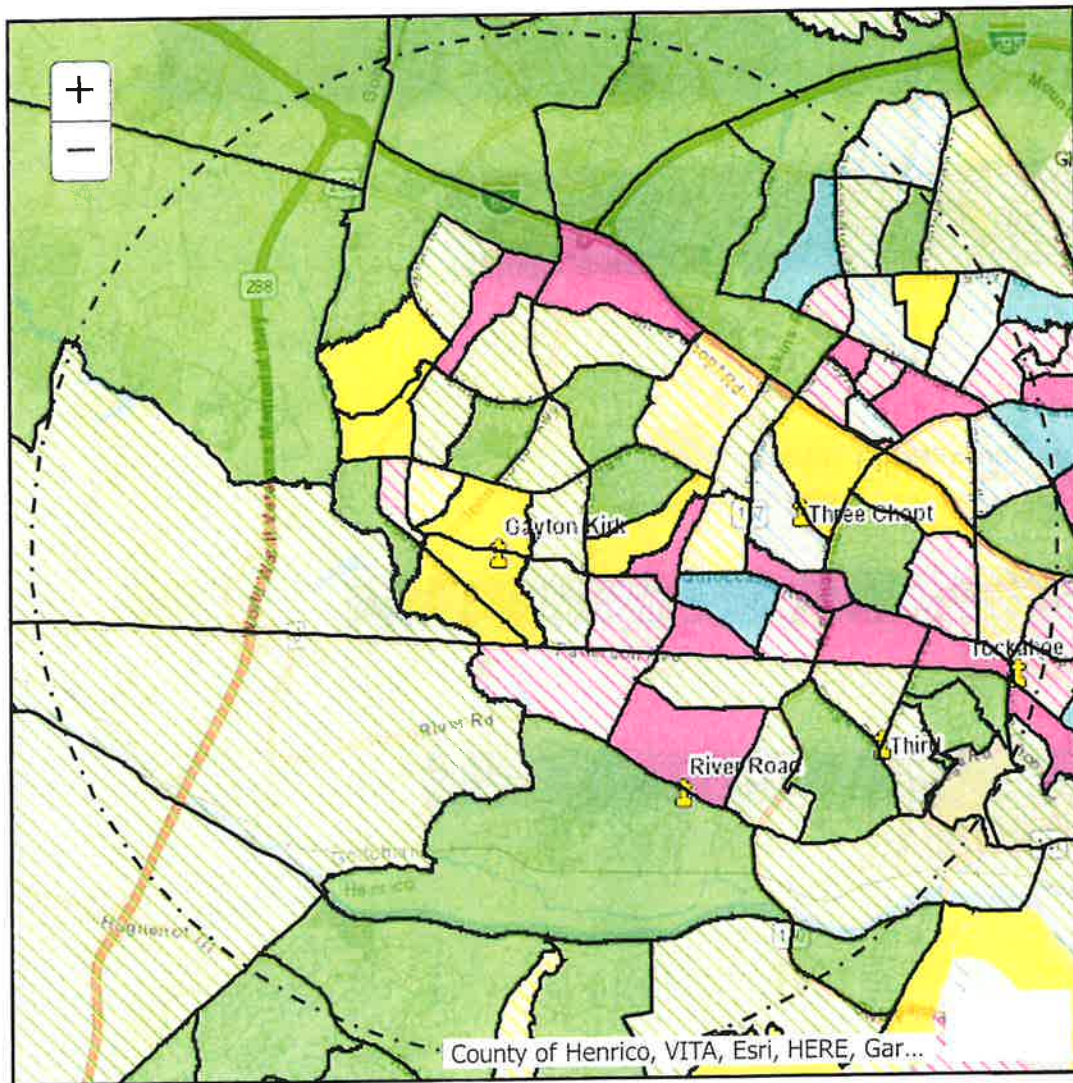
©Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 2024

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - ACS 2022 5-year estimates

2021/2019

Community Demographics - Presbyterian Church (USA)

Summary Overview Report

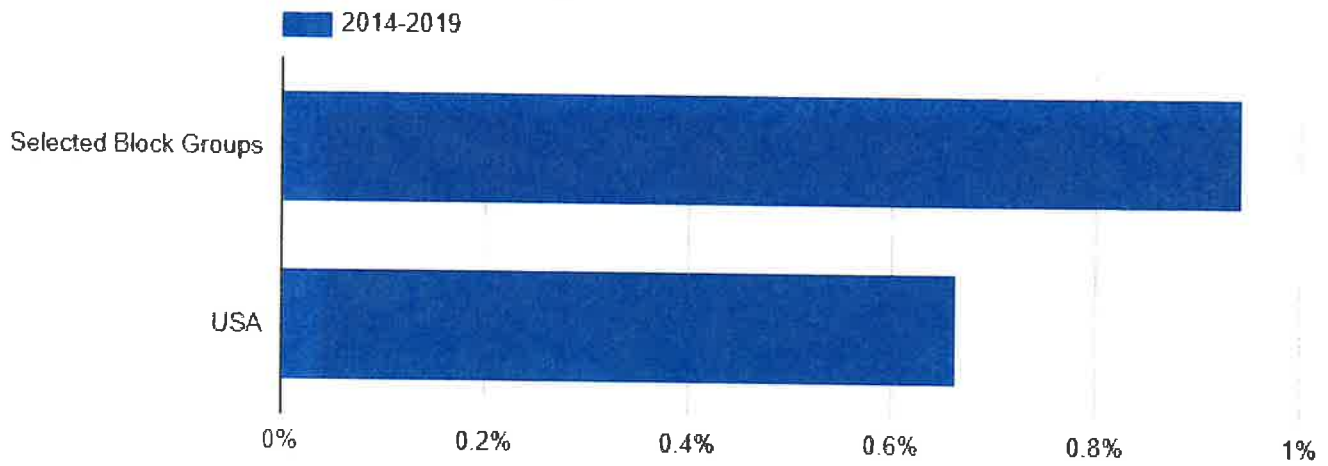


Block Groups selected: 93

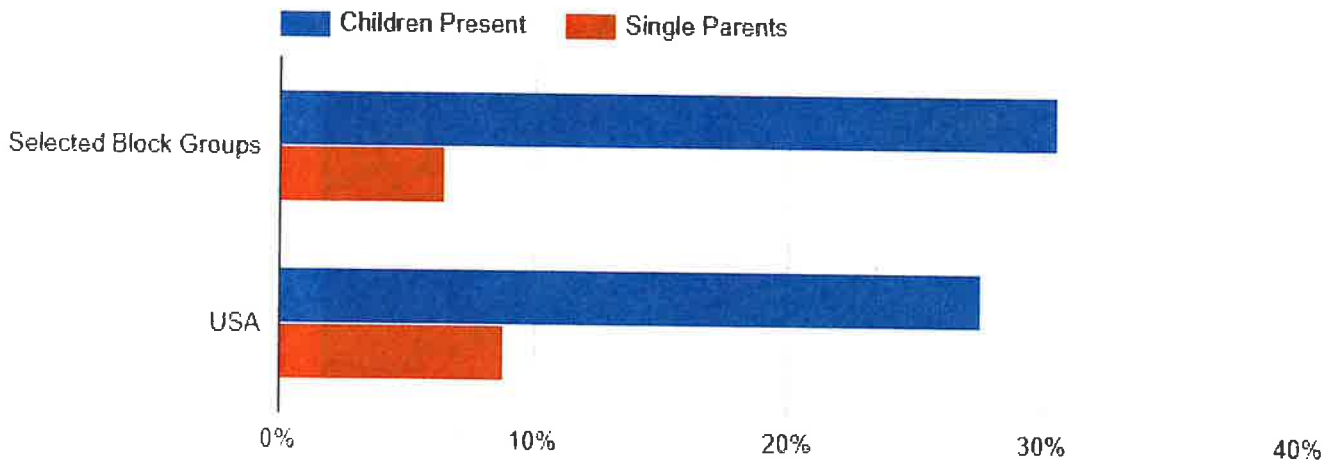
Radius: 5 mile(s)

The total population is 187,481.

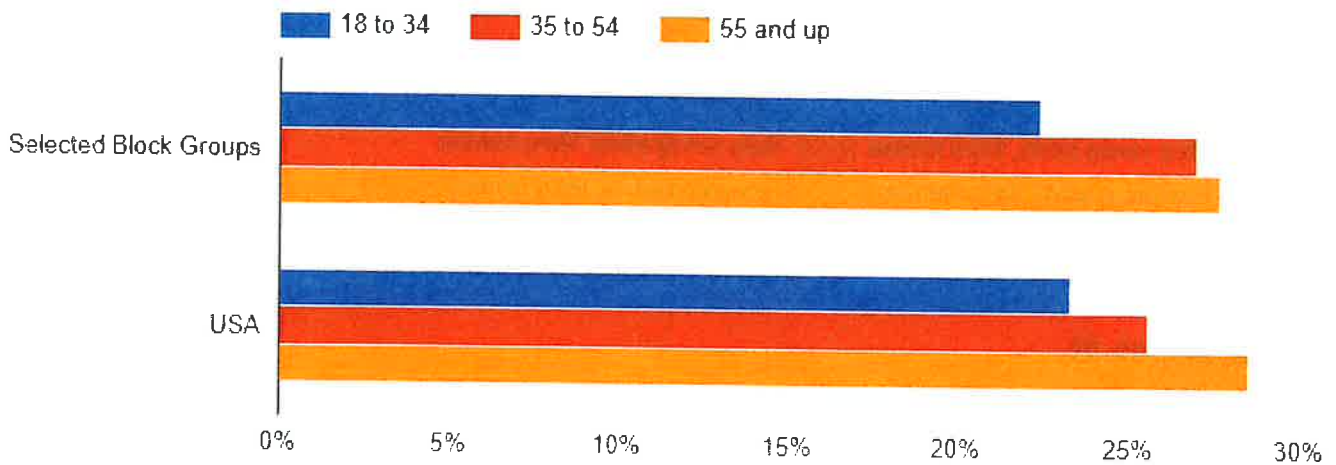
Annual Growth Rate



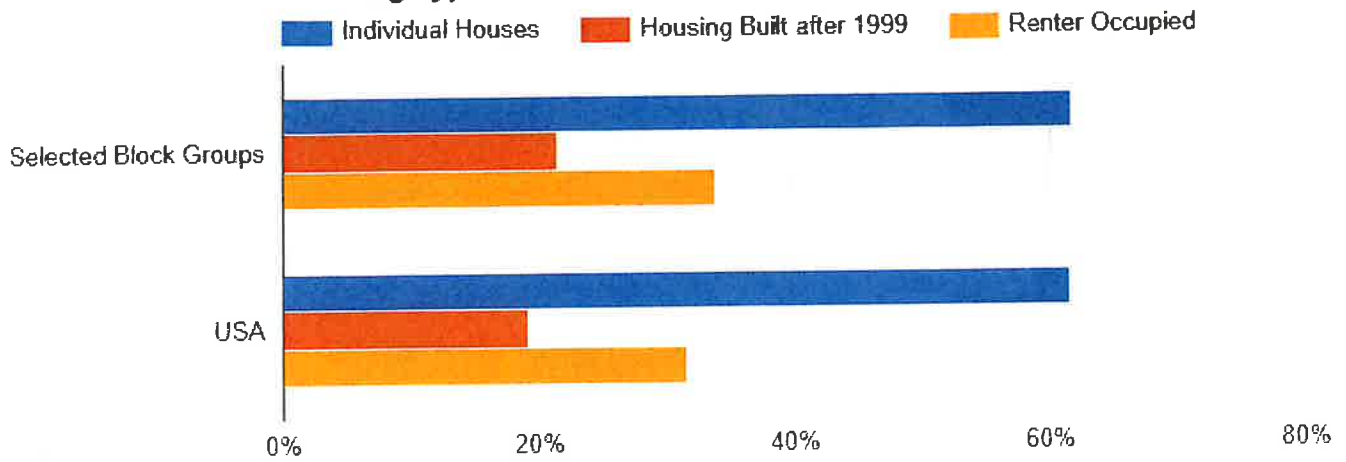
Households With Children



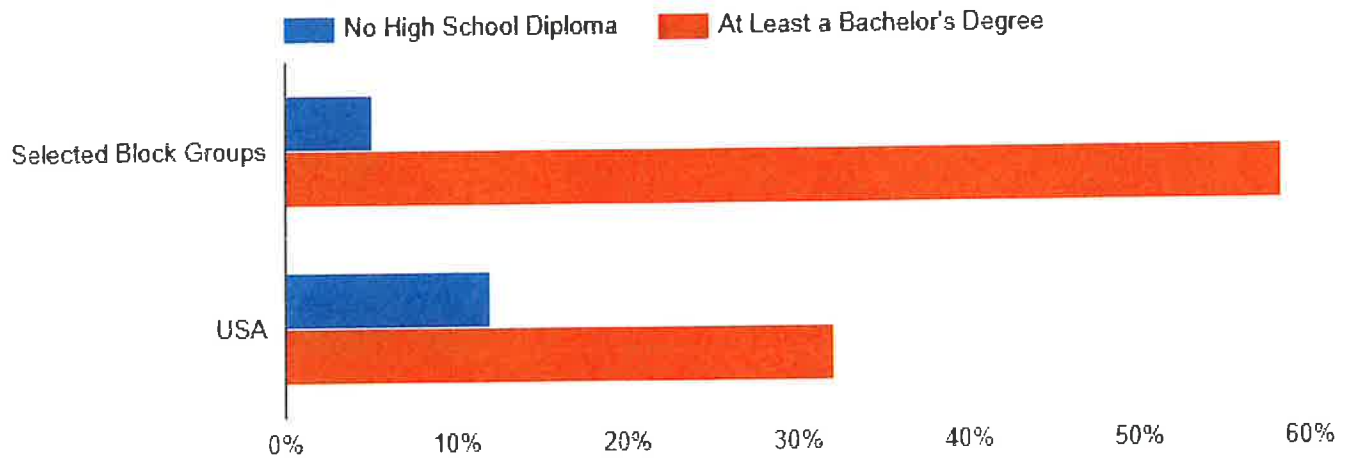
Adult Age Groups



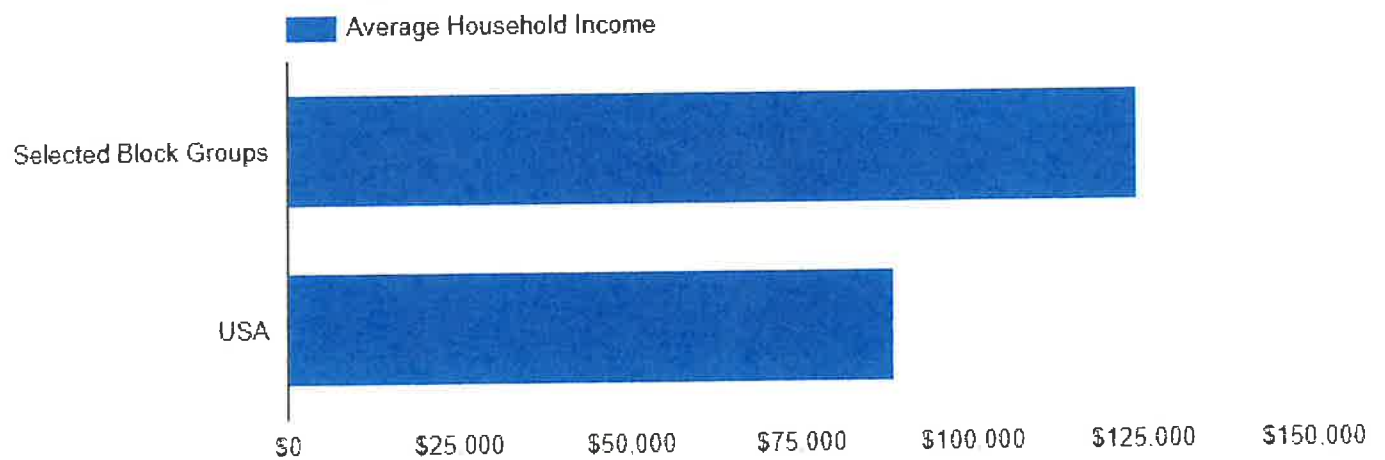
Housing Types



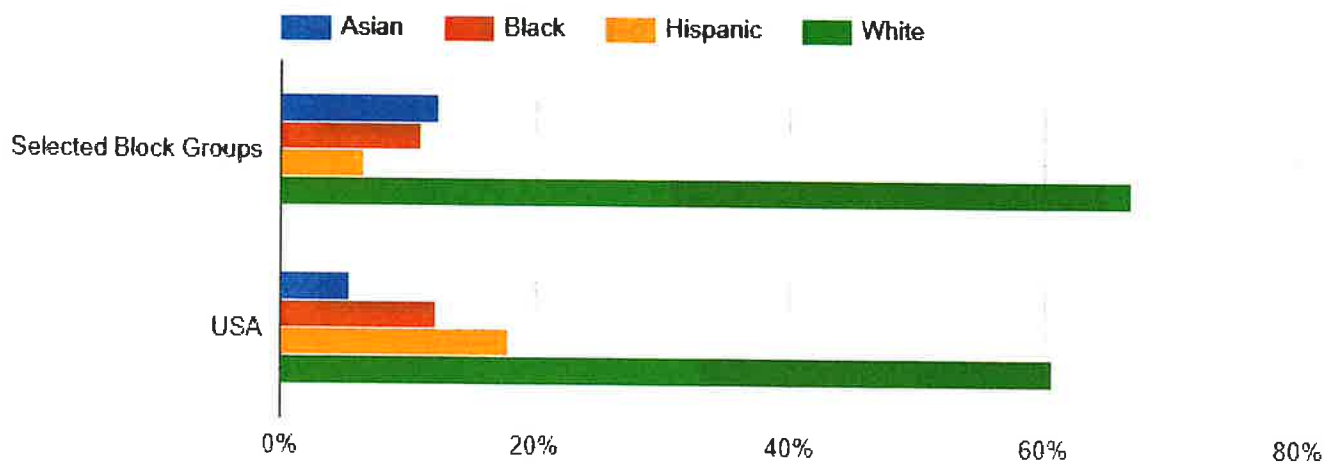
Educational Attainment of Adults



Average Household Income



Major Races



©Presbyterian Church (USA) 2021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - ACS 2019 5-year estimates

Gayton Kirk Membership

Church Members

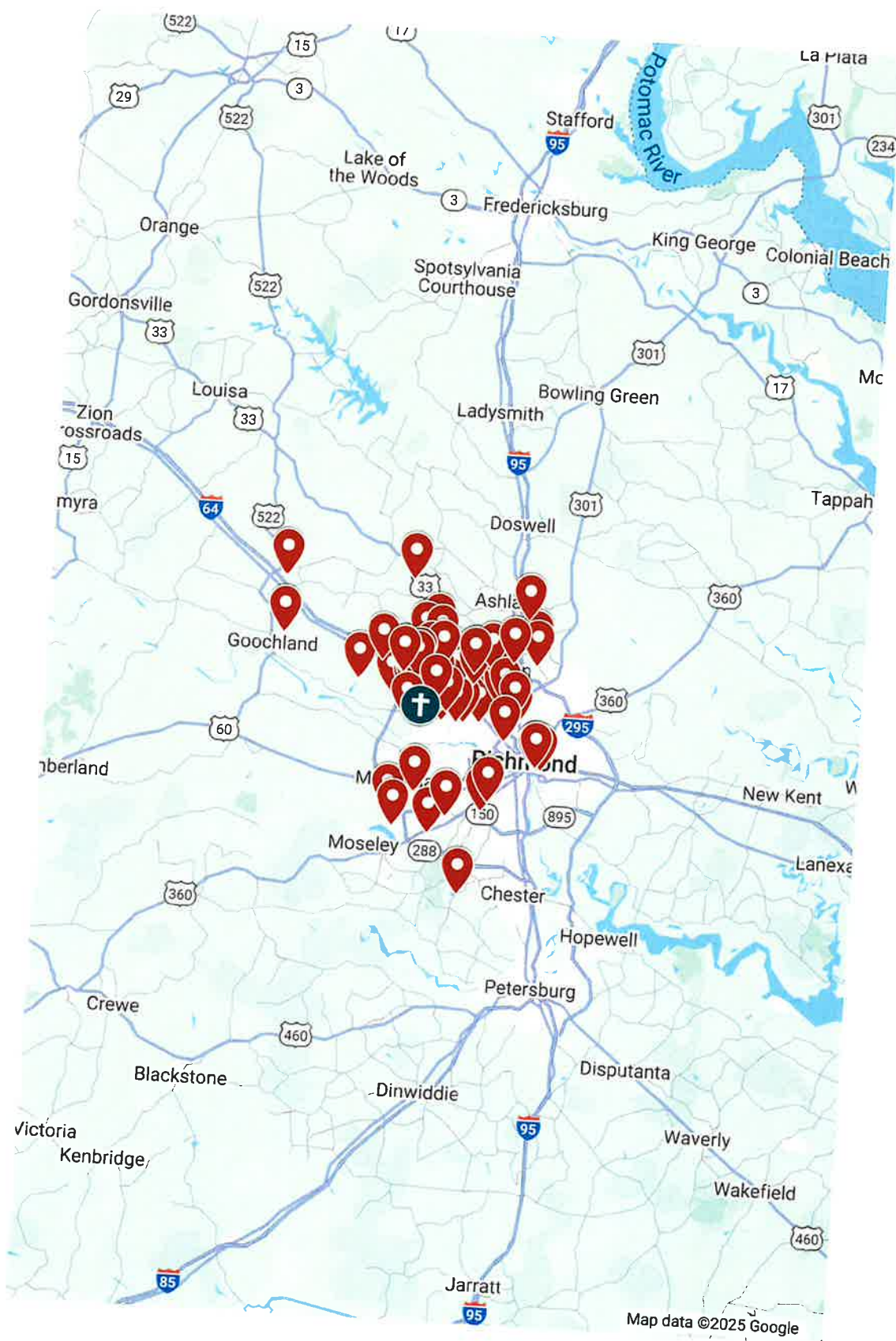


All Addresses

Gayton Kirk Church



11421 Gayton Road



APPENDIX F	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Admin	\$177,083.00	\$167,767.30	\$207,166.51	\$215,453.00	\$182,257.00
Operations	\$31,300.00	\$37,733.00	\$35,548.00	\$45,200.00	\$38,400.00
B&G	\$4,700.00	\$4,700.00	\$5,100.00	\$7,300.00	\$10,620.40
Christian Ed	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Communications	\$1,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00
Deacons	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$800.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Worship	\$1,000.00	\$1,070.00	\$1,565.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Music / Outdoor			\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Presbytery	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Outreach	<u>\$1,000.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
	\$219,083.00	\$219,270.30	\$260,679.51	\$273,653.00	\$236,977.40
General Pledge					
Building Pledge	\$172,416.00	\$173,520.00	\$164,963.15	\$155,492.00	\$160,210.00
Mission Pledge	\$14,100.00	\$13,130.00	\$12,600.00	\$16,942.00	\$12,230.00
	\$14,100.00	\$13,130.00	\$14,430.00	\$11,232.00	\$19,150.00
Actual Income	\$214,146.07	\$221,393.87	\$237,279.28	\$221,354.74	
Actual Spent	\$200,849.34	\$226,664.67	\$255,818.94	\$221,254.64	

