

# Canyon Hills Presbyterian Church

## Annual Report for the year 2015

As we look back and review this previous year, the results of our work together might be captured by the prose of endearing singer/songwriter Willie Nelson in the song, "On the Road Again". From many vantage points it feels like our church is on the road again – a new journey, created by God, with destinations of wonder, amazement, and blessings.

As Willie sings it:

*On the road again, just can't wait to get on the road again*

*The life I love is making music with my friends*

*And I can't wait to get on the road again...*

*Goin' places that I've never been, seein' things that I may never see again...*

We are on the road again, a holy adventure awaits us, we are making music with our friends in worship and fellowship, we are making music with our friends through mission and service, we are making music with our friends as we deepen our faith through the penetrating gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is likely that our Lord Jesus Christ will take us to places we have not yet been and we will see through the eyes of our creator things we have never seen and as a family of faith we will celebrate this glorious mission.

We are on the road again, called as God's people, in a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ, just as Abraham was called into a covenant relationship with God to be a great nation, to be blessed and be a blessing, we too are those called by grace to be a blessing. The Apostle Peter reminds us that, "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

We begin each New Year with a Leadership Retreat with all our elders, deacons and staff to review where we have been and look forward to where we are going. As we looked forward to 2015 and began discovering with clarity the path that was being set out before us, 3 areas of focus emerged from our core values of welcome, worship, fellowship, grow and serve that helped us refine our direction. We have recognized the desire for enhanced community service connections and service work that is needed in our own neighborhoods and towns. We also recognized that our mission work in Mexico and the relationships built over 25 years of partnership and ministry was a cornerstone of our own congregation and we wanted to make sure that we had the correct infrastructure to continue our work with our brothers and sisters in our own region. And finally we recognized a need for communication that makes connections throughout our family of faith.

As we sought ways to enhance our ministry with those in need – physical need, emotional need and spiritual need we endeavored to deepen our understanding of scripture and how we might identify the various ways God is calling our congregation to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ through mission and service. Early in 2015 our session began to explore how a church wide educational campaign using The Story would help draw our congregation

together and help focus our ministry in the places God is calling us. A communication team was created to assist our various committees of session to launch this church wide campaign. During the summer months we successfully distributed more than 300 books related to The Story to our members and friends of our congregation. The Story campaign has enabled our congregation to engage in biblical study through a variety of methods giving a greater overall understanding of scripture and God's desire to be in relationship with each of us.

Our congregation's drive for mission and service remains very strong and many dedicated leaders in this area continue to expand and enhance our opportunities for service to those in need. This past year we looked more intently for the places near to our neighborhoods and community that could use our support while continuing our support of Mercy House, Giving Children Hope, Working Wardrobes and other local charities. In 2015 we raised funds and goods for several local and national agencies including the OC Food Bank and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance fund. Our Family Ministry Coordinator, Staci Ashby, has also been working with the Mayor's Office for the City of Anaheim, seeking additional programs we may partner with in the future in support of those in need. Additionally, our new Christmas Alternative Market was a smashing success in support of local and worldwide artists and businesses. Finally, we have begun a new partnership with Garden Grove 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church in support of their homeless shower ministry.

God does continue to bless us with renewed vision and vigor and yet we have also endured loss and contraction in some areas. While our worship attendance saw growth this past year our session made the decision to remove from our active membership rolls those who we hoped would return to our family of faith following the conclusion of our transition but have not. Many efforts have been made to invite and welcome back into active membership those we have missed these past several years.

As we look to expand our opportunities for service our foundational ministries including worship, spiritual formation, stewardship and the operations of our campus remain strong. Our educational ministries began innovative programs for all ages which resulted in successful new programs for children, new partnerships with other churches through our youth programs and expanding adult education experiences. Due to careful financial management and prudent spending we ended the year with a small surplus. In this lean year we were still able to complete many facility projects and needed property maintenance.

Even with some of our contractions our congregation responded enthusiastically to an audacious stewardship program and we have also received some generous designated gifts to help maintain our church campus and continue our mission and programs that serve our community, congregation and beyond.

We are on the road again, called to a journey set forth by God, a journey that invites our congregation, our family of faith, to be blessed and be a blessing to others. As we walk, run, hike, climb and maybe even stumble at times on this path 2016 is a year of continued growth and spiritual awakening as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ of all who are in need.