

MISSION STUDY



Black Mountain Presbyterian Church

A CONGREGATION OF THE PCUSA



This Mission Study affirmed and adopted by Session, April 23, 2018. All scriptures shown were chosen as our guiding scriptures from the "I Dream of a Church," Black Mountain Presbyterian Church retreat in 2016.



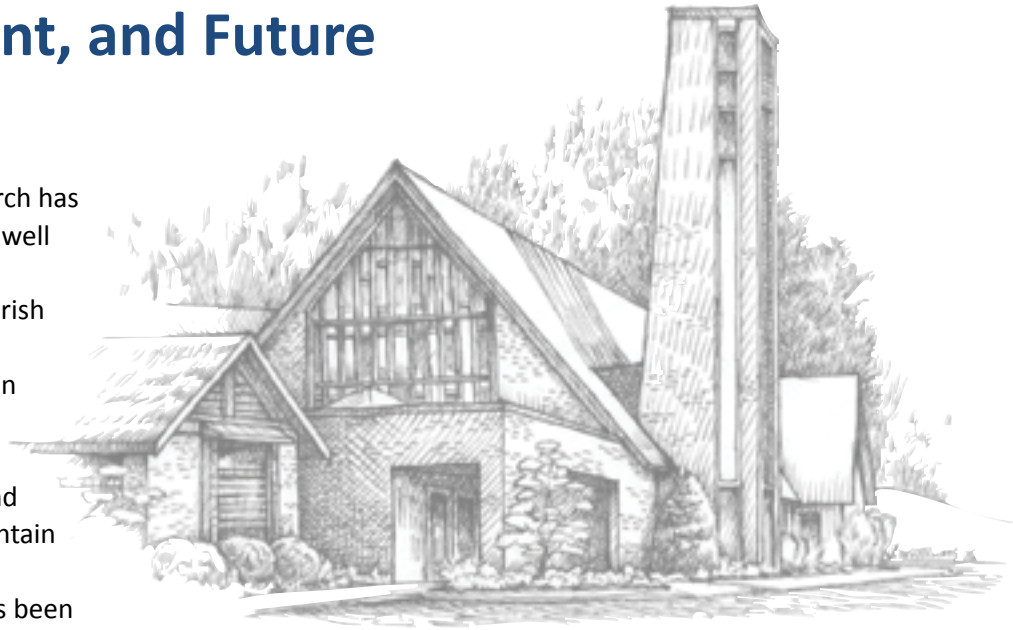
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Our Past, Present, and Future

A Brief History

Black Mountain Presbyterian Church has been a part of the community for well over 100 years. Some of the early settlers in the valley were Scotch Irish Presbyterians in the late 1700's. These settlers were instrumental in forming the Presbyterian Church. In 1908 a small group of thirteen Presbyterians banded together and organized what is now Black Mountain Presbyterian Church (BMPC).



Since that time the church has been through many changes and has grown into a vibrant, active, creative, and sometimes wonderfully chaotic faith community. The relationships we build with one another sustain us. We play together, study together, and work in God's world together. Part of our vision is to be a community in which the generations get to know and value each other.

The life of the church over its entire history has been grounded in mission work. There is a long-standing commitment to support missionaries abroad as well as reaching out into the community nearby to serve others. A strong sense of mission is central to BMPC.

Other commitments the congregation celebrates as part of its history are the Weekday School, the youth program, church school, the music program, and intergenerational programs.

BMPC has continued to thrive by faithful growth, reaching out to all who are searching for a church family, welcoming new ideas, being willing to take risks, and engaging the members to use their gifts and talents to enrich the life of the church.

Our Mission

For several decades, the vision and beliefs of the congregation were identified in a mission statement that read:

From the New Testament, we believe that as a church we are called by God to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ (Kerygma), to teach the truth of our faith (Didache), to nurture Christian community (Koinonia), to be Christ's servant people (Diakonia).



As we look to the future, BMPC has a renewed clarity regarding our mission and guiding vision.

Vision

Embodying the love of Christ, we are joyfully called to be a church in the heart of Black Mountain where the welcome to all never ends.

Mission

Inspiring through Christ centered worship and faith formation for all ages and stages with an emphasis on our children and youth.

Nurturing through fellowship, engaging in authentic relationships, connecting the generations as a family of faith and supporting each other in life and faith journeys.

Equipping through our faith put into action to serve Black Mountain and the world, taking risks to work for justice and continuing our legacy of generosity.

Welcoming to all as we actively embrace the lost, broken and doubting in our community and world.



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD
YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART, AND WITH
ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH
ALL YOUR STRENGTH,
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND;
AND YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.

Luke 10

Introduction

This Mission Study has been prepared to support the formal process required by The Presbytery of WNC to search for and call an associate pastor to serve Black Mountain Presbyterian Church. The process began in the Fall of 2017, when the Session commissioned the Strategic Planning Ministry Team with the goal of reflecting on the past, studying and reporting the current culture and health of our congregation, and identifying strategic aspirations of our church.

The Mission Study is designed as a guide for the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) and as support to church leaders and pastoral staff as they carry out our ministry goals. This is intended to be a living document that supports current and future ministries. We are uniquely privileged in this transitional period to listen to how God is moving in our midst and leading us toward God’s plan for our church. This time of transition from “what has been” to “what can be” serves as a time for reaffirmation, renewal, and rebirth. The Strategic Planning Ministry Team that developed this study was composed of the following members of our church: Skip Stansell, Chair; Wayne Mullis; Gay Mothershed; Beth Gunn; Joseph Matthews; Karen Davis; Alison Banzhoff; and Mary Katherine Robinson, Staff Liaison.

Strategic Planning Ministry Team

The Team was tasked with seeking discernment for our future role:

- Self-examination of where we’ve been
- Discernment of new needs
- Fact finding about the community and congregation – finances, demographics, needs, hopes

Our work encompassed the following areas:

- Studying the community where we worship and serve
- Engaging community leaders in conversations about the church’s role in the community
- Conducting an internal analysis of church membership, finances, and activities
- Engaging congregational members through surveys and conversations
- Ultimately: determining church priorities and opportunities for personal spiritual and congregational growth as we move forward to call an associate pastor



Holy Conversations

In the past year the Strategic Planning Team of BMPC has been engaged in a dialog concerning the future of the church. The “3x3”s (listed on right), are three simple questions aimed toward centering our discussion and priorities on who we are as a congregation and what we believe Christ is calling us to do. Strategic Planning has learned a lot about the congregation and have compiled the most mentioned answers. From this data, we have determined a path from which to better lead our church.

Strengths and Joys

- 1) Music, worship and arts – vibrant and creative
- 2) Welcoming open church – inclusive, non-judgmental
- 3) Green church – Earth Care Team
- 4) Strong and active youth program
- 5) Dynamic Weekday School
- 6) Members cherish congregational relationships and staff
- 7) Mission focus – refugee outreach, trips, local community
- 8) Calling Mary Katherine as our pastor and head of staff

Challenges

- 1) Call process slow in finding new associate pastor
- 2) Children’s ministry – church school and weekly programming
- 3) Maintaining physical plant (including church house)
- 4) Religious/spiritual opportunities outside of worship – contemplative worship
- 5) Refreshing FirstLight worship (8:30)
- 6) Aging congregation and financial impact on stewardship
- 7) Establishing a meaningful call process for BMPC disciples
- 8) Lack of diversity in congregation
- 9) Parental involvement

Hopes and Dreams

- 1) More connections with intergenerational opportunities
- 2) More vibrant ministries for children, continued strong youth ministry
- 3) Use of facility space by our community and being good stewards of our facilities
- 4) Small group opportunities, engagement, ministry, Bible study, prayer group, book club
- 5) Utilizing the expertise of retired clergy, educators and missionaries
- 6) Being more connected to our denomination/Reformed Faith PC(USA)
- 7) Better communication and follow through in every area of our church’s life

3x3s

What have been the congregation’s three greatest accomplishments/joys in the past three to five years?

What have been the congregation’s three greatest failures/challenges/disappointments in the past three to five years?

What are the congregation’s three greatest needs for spiritual, relational, and programmatic growth over the next three to five years?

Strengths of BMPC

Black Mountain Presbyterian Church is building on a firm foundation of strengths identified by the congregation throughout this mission study process.

worship services and music program

Our worship services, including our music program, are the primary places where church members find meaning. This was mentioned numerous times as a source of fulfillment in our mission study. We have two services: an 8:30 am contemporary service with a praise band and contemporary worship songs, and an 11:00 am traditional service. Members value and appreciate our church staff, who seek new ways to present the Word of God on a regular basis. We often use unique expressions of art in our sanctuary and seek to engage the congregant through various senses. "Vibrant" is a word that is often used to describe our worship services.

welcoming, inclusive

Our congregation values the fact that we are a "welcoming," inclusive congregation. People often speak of how friendly the church is. We are open to individuals from all walks of life and strive to be a place where everyone can find Christ. However, we recognize that we are predominantly white (which is similar to the community demographic) and above average socioeconomic class (which is not the average community demographic). We find these to be exciting areas in which to expand our diversity and build upon our inclusivity.

strong youth program

Our strong youth program surfaces again and again as a source of pride for the congregation. Youth are encouraged to participate in all areas of church life, including worship. We are a church that values our young people and sees them as assets. Youth often read liturgy, sing, or perform with musical instruments during worship. We also have a youth elder position on our



Session which rotates yearly. Our previous associate pastor equipped our youth advisors to build a very strong youth fellowship program for middle and high school youth. This has been maintained throughout this transition time due to the commitment of our youth advisors who have kept the momentum going. Our congregation would like to continue to build upon our youth and children's programs for youth of all ages.

earth care

Another strength valued by the congregation is in the area of Earth Care. We place a high priority on being good stewards of the earth. We are an official Earth Care congregation and seek to find green solutions when it comes to the care of our building and consumption, to protect the earth in which we live. We have installed solar panels and try to limit our use of disposable paper products for meals. We are in the process of installing all energy efficient lighting.

commitment to service and mission

Finally, both the congregation and community emphasize our church's commitment to service and mission. It is often what attracts and retains members, and we have a solid reputation in the community for our members' work responding to local, national, and global needs. If there is a volunteer organization in the community, one will always find members of our church there. Each year we have an alternative giving program during the Christmas season, where individuals can support a myriad of mission programs and give gifts in honor of someone. Local and global outreach opportunities are plentiful and are one way our congregation seeks to extend God's grace out into the world in which we live.



THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE
DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS
DID NOT OVERCOME IT.

John 1:5



Looking Ahead and Setting Priorities

As a result of the holy conversations, conducted by the Strategic Planning Ministry Team, the congregation and staff have provided feedback that will determine our priorities. Five areas have been consistently identified through the survey.

1 Empower staff and the congregation to broaden how children's ministry happens in the church

BMPC believes that the purpose of children's ministries is to help families develop and nurture their children's faith in Jesus Christ. We realize that children bring special gifts to the church, and those gifts need to be supported and celebrated. BMPC is exploring new and creative means to provide Christian formation to children and realizes that the traditional model of Sunday school may no longer meet the needs of children and their parents. As the church makes decisions about staffing and resources, how we support children's ministry will receive special attention.

2 Maintain a strong and vibrant youth ministry

The youth of BMPC consistently provide leadership in worship and are a critical strength of our church. Youth participation in worship, mission, music, and the community is valued throughout the congregation. Maintaining strong adult leadership for the program is essential. Current and past staff provides excellent guidance, planning, and leadership for the youth program. The reputation of the youth ministry has influenced youth from the community to participate even though they may not be members of the church.

3 Build stronger relationships in our congregation through small groups and intergenerational activities

Simply stated, many members do not know each other and rarely interact. With two unique worship services on Sunday mornings, some church members may never see or interact with each other. This is especially true if they do not attend Sunday school, which acts as a bridge between the two services. The congregation has responded well to intergenerational activities such as Rise Against Hunger and summer mission trips. More opportunities will be planned to bring the membership together for work and fellowship. BMPC will expand the options for participating in small group ministry. Several small groups are in place, including a men's group, Presbyterian Women, a sewing group, and a

WE HAD TO
CELEBRATE AND
BE GLAD,
BECAUSE THIS
BROTHER OF YOURS
WAS DEAD AND IS
ALIVE AGAIN;
HE WAS LOST
AND IS FOUND.

Luke 15:32



support group for parents of young children. “Bar Stool Theology” has been used successfully in the past to bring together young adults for a beer and Bible study. Staffing decisions will include the goal of identifying staff that can provide creative leadership for developing small groups that will focus on spiritual growth and nurture.

4 Maintain our facilities and improve how we use what we have

BMPC has been blessed to receive several large gifts, along with a number of smaller gifts, in the past two years. These gifts were given to assist with numerous maintenance items that had been delayed due to lack of funds. The church also secured a \$60,000.00 loan from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. The funds now available will allow the church to gain significant energy savings by upgrading lighting systems and by replacing outdated heating and cooling equipment.

All of the buildings on our campus are aging, with the newest building being about 25 years old. A challenge for the church will be to reach a decision about a building referred to as the “church house”. This house is more than 60 years old and requires constant attention to maintain the basics. This building is in poor condition and is used only sparingly. Estimates are that \$100,000.00 would be needed to bring the house up to a standard that could support church programs. The property committee is presently assessing options that would provide useable space at a reasonable cost. Investing \$100,000.00 or more in the old house would be a poor stewardship decision.

Other pressing needs, such as pipe organ upgrades, will require careful decision making. A recent gift to establish a property endowment will help provide a reliable source of revenue.

5 Expand opportunities for spiritual growth and nurture

With the noise and busyness of our lives, our congregation has requested more opportunities for contemplative worship. Members and staff will plan for more experiences that incorporate silence, reflection, prayer, and a time to rest in God’s presence. Plans may include opening the church for prayer during the week and developing worship services that will focus on centering prayer as a foundation for spiritual growth. Creative worship opportunities will be planned to incorporate the strong music program as a central element.



DO NOT FEAR, FOR I
HAVE REDEEMED YOU;
I HAVE CALLED YOU
BY NAME, YOU ARE
MINE. WHEN YOU PASS
THROUGH THE WATERS,
I WILL BE WITH YOU;
AND THROUGH THE
RIVERS, THEY SHALL NOT
OVERWHELM YOU

Isaiah 43: 1-3

Demographics of Black Mountain

Black Mountain, NC is nestled deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains, 15 miles east of Asheville. With a population of 7,500, it has been ranked “One of the 50 Safest Towns in North Carolina” as well as “Best Small Town in Western North Carolina.” Boasting spectacular mountain views, it was recently voted by Trip Advisor as one of the “Prettiest Small Towns in America to Vacation.”

Formerly home to renowned Black Mountain College, Black Mountain is nationally recognized for arts, crafts, furniture, and music. It is currently home to over 200 businesses, including restaurants, bed and breakfasts, specialty shops, breweries, and a recently announced large manufacturing operation. Because of its hospitality to visitors and businesses alike, it has been designated as a “Entrepreneurial Friendly Community.”

In our conversations with community leaders, they identified the following challenges for our community: affordable housing, food insecurity, and population growth. These challenges are being driven by several interrelated factors:

- Baby Boomer generation is retiring here
- Number of tourists increases every year
- Many properties are becoming short-term rentals
- Housing is scarce and expensive, complicating long-term growth potential
- Many people who work here lack the financial capacity to live here
- Many residents lack the resources to feed themselves well

Change for Black Mountain is inevitable and is apparent everywhere one looks. Black Mountain is a vibrant, consistently growing community that has the capacity to prioritize needed change and accommodate everyone in this (not so small) town.

Demographics of BMPC

We have asked ourselves if our church community reflects the broader community in which we live, work and serve. As of 2017, Black Mountain Presbyterian had 551 total active members. Both the communities of Black Mountain and nearby Montreat are home to a large number of retirees; we are privileged to have 50 faithful retired Presbyterian pastors and missionaries in our congregation. We also have 111 unconfirmed children in our church and we actively search for ways to include them in worship, faith formation, service and leadership.

In 2015, the session charged the Nurture Ministry Team to undergo an update of our active membership. The rolls had not been updated for over ten years. During the process over 100 names were taken off of our membership rolls. Our current total of members truly reflects the number of active disciples we have serving at BMPC.



Black Mountain

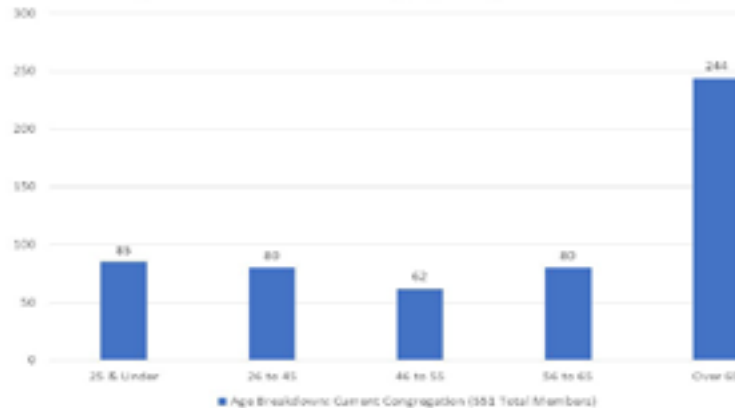
from US Census 2016

Population	8,384
Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years	4.2%
Persons under 18 years	17.4%
Persons 65 years and over	25.8%
Female persons	54.0%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone	88.2%
Black or African American alone	7.6%
American Indian, Alaska Native alone	0.3%
Asian alone	1.2%
Two or More Races	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino	2.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	86.2%
Housing	
Owner-occupied, 2012-16	59.7%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2012-16	\$205,900
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2012-16	\$1,166
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2012-16	\$376
Median gross rent, 2012-16	\$733
Education	
High school graduate or higher, persons age 25 years+	92.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher, persons age 25 years+	41.8%

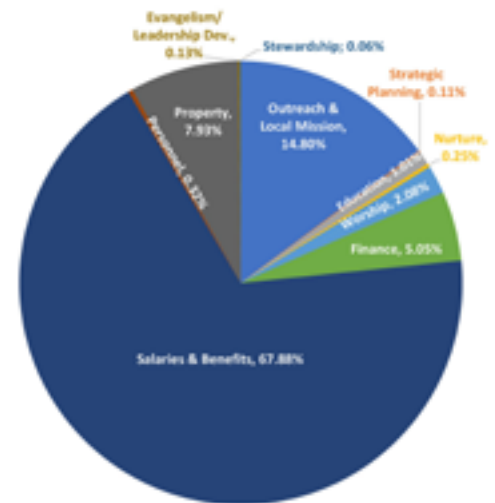
Our racial breakdown as a congregation is reflective of the community of Black Mountain as well as the demographics of the PC(USA). As of 2017, BMPC's congregation was 59% female and 41% male.



Age Breakdown: Current Congregation (551 members)



2017 Expenses



Review of the Financial Resources at BMPC

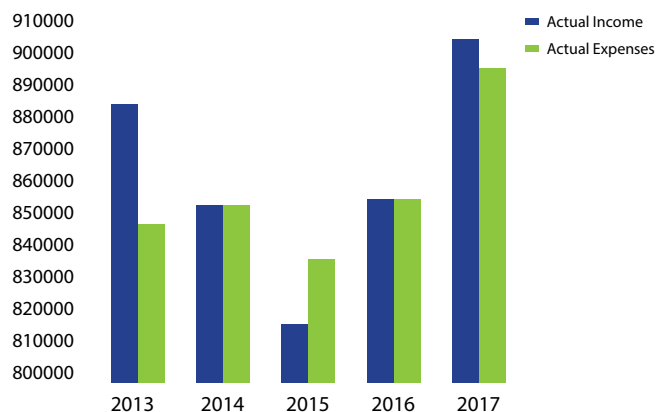
As part of the Mission Study process, we also engaged in an analysis of the budget and finances of BMPC. As part of this analysis, we sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the size of Black Mountain Presbyterian Church's annual budget, and how are these dollars allocated?
- How much revenue does Black Mountain Presbyterian Church collect on an annual basis?
- What have been the trends in sources and uses of funds?

In 2016 we restructured our staff to include a Church Business Administrator. This has allowed for more regular reporting and transparency in our finances. This change has resulted in a surplus and a contribution to our financial reserves.

In the late 1990s the Session established the BMPC Endowment Fund to provide members and friends an opportunity to extend their stewardship beyond their lifetime by making gifts directly or through planned giving to permanently fund the ministry and mission of our church. Our current Endowment principal balance is \$604,326.

Income/Expense (2013-17)



Presbyterian Mission Beyond BMPC

Our International and National Partners

BMPC has a rich history of being deeply invested in international missions and working with the PC(USA) on carrying God's love and mercy into the global community. We are the home to dozens of retired Presbyterian missionaries who have spent over 250 years of combined ministry to peoples and countries around the globe, including the Congo, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Zimbabwe, India, Indonesia, and many more countries. We also support five PC(USA) Mission Co-workers. To learn more about our Mission Co-workers, see our website: www.bmpcnc.org. Through prayers and financial gifts we partner with international ministries which are carrying out Christ's mission of compassion and mercy. In the Middle East: **Pilgrims of Ibillin**; In Africa: **Ministry of Hope** Malawi/Lesotho; In Asia: **Christian Friends of Korea**.

We continue to be blessed by our deep relationship with our partner church in Guatemala, **EbenEzer**. This church is in the town of San Antonio. For the past 22 years, members from BMPC have gone to visit our sisters and brothers at EbenEzer in Guatemala, and members from EbenEzer church have visited with us in NC. The partnership is based on a mutual learning from each other. In addition to over a dozen visits back and forth over the past 20 years, our partnership also includes a scholarship program where we help send 20 young people to school, and connect those young Guatemalan students with our children and youth to be pen pals, writing letters back and forth, and developing relationships.

In the past five years, BMPC has supported five of our members as they have attended PCUSA seminaries. We support Montreat Conference Center where conferences are offered for youth and adults.

Every May we join with **Bread For The World** in writing letters to our elected officials to encourage them to protect state and national funding for food programs that help feed our brothers and sisters in this country and around the world.

We continue to support and participate in **Rise Against Hunger**, an international hunger relief agency that seeks to end global hunger by engaging local volunteers and providing food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable. This project gives our congregation a chance to do hands-on mission to help end hunger in our lifetime.

Our Local Mission Partners

Due to our deep investment in the local community and our desire to encourage members to get involved with a ministry that is working toward a social issue that they feel called to be involved in, much of our mission and outreach is done through partnerships with local ministries and organizations that are dedicated to a specific goal. BMPC has a deep investment — with our prayers, our financial support, and our members who are involved in the leadership and work of these organizations listed on the next page.

Homelessness – Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry is a non-profit ministry that BMPC members helped organize in 1975 to address the immediate needs of the individuals in this community. BMPC members donate roughly 170 volunteer hours EVERY month, and our congregation donates over 350 items of canned goods monthly, and over \$10,000 annually to SVCM. We are excited to be a part of **Hope For Tomorrow**. This project is designed to provide transitional housing and support services for homeless women and their children. We have a long and deep relationship with **Habitat for Humanity**, working with them every fall to build a Habitat house in partnership with other Presbyterian Churches in the region. **Room In The Inn** partners with local faith communities to provide shelter for up to 12 women each night. Each week, a different congregation opens its facilities to welcome the women as guests, offering a warm safe place for them as they work hard to move forward to permanent housing. **Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry** is a family of Christian congregations providing emergency assistance, temporary shelter, medical support and prison ministry to local residents.

Food Insecurity – Bounty & Soul is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a health and wellness movement in underserved communities in Buncombe and McDowell Counties. Fresh, free food markets provide healthy, fresh produce and whole grains, along with nutrition education and health and wellness resources for children, families, individuals, and seniors who struggle with food insecurity and poor health. **Hand in Hand** raises funds and collects school-related items for students in the Swannanoa Valley. Their popular spaghetti dinners and hamburger/hot dog sales help ensure every child's dignity by providing help for school lunches, fee-related activities, clothing and more. **Open Table** is a community outreach in Black Mountain which provides a warm lunch every Wednesday for everyone in the community.

Prison Ministry – Ministry of Hope is a community funded chaplaincy program which employs on-site chaplains at the Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women. The chaplains conduct religious services and provide pastoral care and counseling to the inmates. **Kairos Prison Ministry** helps build Christian community in prison.

Advocacy for Children – Black Mountain Home for Children BMPC members work in the study hall and in the garden. Last year the garden at the Home grew produce for donation as well as for campus meals. We help to support a special academic incentive program that provides a special field trip for children who earn a required GPA at school. There is also an endowment fund set up at BMPC for BM Home for Children. **Asheville Youth Mission** gives young people an opportunity to explore the hidden needs and struggles of those who are living on the margins within and around a beautiful tourist town. Groups work with a variety of agencies working with those who are homeless, in poverty, or food insecure, both in urban and rural settings.

Compassion and Mercy – Black Mountain Pastoral Care and Counseling Center serves as a mental and spiritual health resource for the area and is supported by the ecumenical religious community as well as by civic and health care organizations in the Swannanoa Valley. **Helpmate** offers compassion for victims of domestic violence by providing safe, confidential shelter to women and children who are leaving dangerous and potentially lethal living situations. For over 30 years, Helpmate has been helping victims of domestic violence in Buncombe County.



Black Mountain Presbyterian Church

A CONGREGATION OF THE PCUSA

117 Montreat Road | Black Mountain, NC 28711 | 828-669-2725 | bmpcnc.org



an Earth Care Congregation



BMPC Child Protection Policy
providing a safe environment for children & youth

