

*Our Way Forward*  
*Welcoming • Serving • Connecting*

2023 Mission Study Report



**TAZEWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**Black's Presbyterian Chapel**

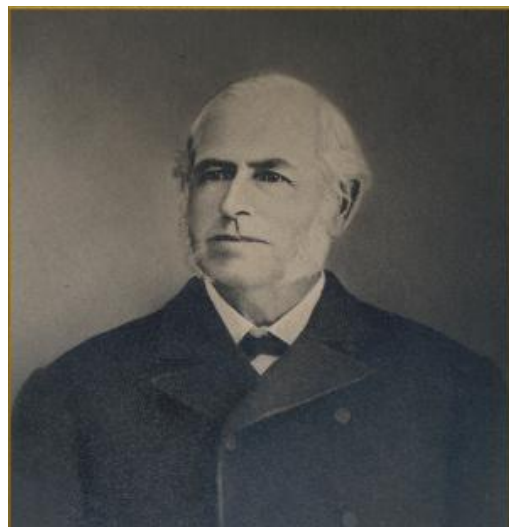
The mission of the Tazewell Presbyterian Church and Black's Chapel is to continue to show the love of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, by welcoming, serving, and connecting to our community.

## Where We Have Been

Established in 1850, Tazewell Presbyterian Church (TPC) has been serving the Tazewell, Virginia area for over 170 years.

### **Chronology of Tazewell Presbyterian Church**

- 1851 The Presbyterian Church of Jeffersonville is organized by the Rev. Isaac Newton Naff
- 1902 Support of foreign and home missions
- 1912 Support of Mission School at Foster's Falls, now Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands
- 1930 Establishment of Black's Chapel (BC)
- 1950 Establishment of Litz Presbyterian Church
- 1952 Establishment of Mary's Presbyterian Church
- 1959 The church building destroyed by fire
- 1960 Completion and dedication of the present church building
- 1961 Sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 93
- 1964 Sponsorship of Cub Scouts
- 1978 Establishment of Preschool for 3-4 year olds
- 1987 Start of the Adventure Time (AT) and The Adventure Gang (TAG) after school programs
- 1992 Establishment of A Child Shall Lead Them food pantry following youth mission trip
- 1993 Implemented Community Outreach Program for seniors
- 2001 Celebrated 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with reenactment at Crab Orchard
- 2003 Good Friday Tenebrae Service developed by Music Director
- 2003 Festival of Choral Music programs started
- 2004 Capital Funds Campaign for foundation work and renovations
- 2005 Pastoral Care Team started
- 2006 Adult Mission Trip to Long Beach, Mississippi, following Hurricane Katrina
- 2013 Youth mission trip with Abingdon Presbytery
- 2015 Implemented Sunday Night Live education series
- 2017 Tuesday Book Study started
- 2019 Broadcasting of Sunday morning worship via radio
- 2020 Broadcasting of Sunday morning worship via You Tube



# Where We Are

## 1. Tazewell Community Demographics



Tazewell is located in Tazewell County, Virginia and is the county seat. Tazewell is known as the Jewel of the Clinch River and the Gateway to the Heart of the Appalachian Mountains. The 2023 population is 4,325 and is declining at a rate of -1.12% annually (census in 2020 was 4,473). Spanning over 7 miles, Tazewell has a population density of 630 people per square mile.

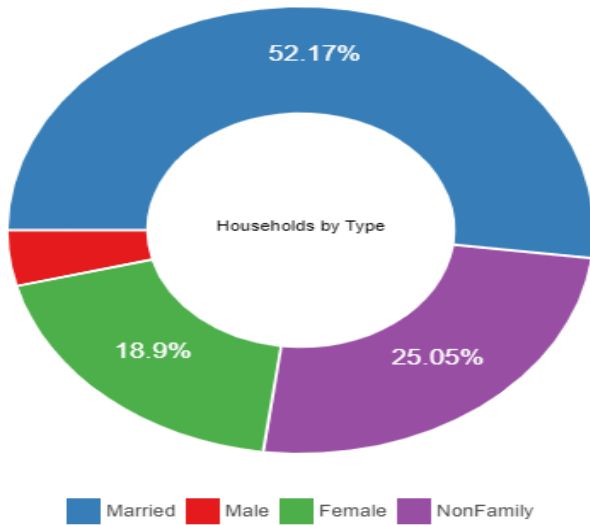
The average age of the residents is 44.1 years old. 77% of the residents are adults with 840 seniors (19% of the population). 825 residents are 10 years old or younger (19%).

### Tazewell Demographics (based on ACS):

White	87.5%
Black or African American:	9.7%
Two or More Races:	2.1%
Native American:	0.5%
Asian:	0.2%

**Households by Type:** Average Household Size 2.6

Rate of Homeownership 65.5%



### Average Income:

Name	Median	Mean
Households	\$37,048	\$56,068
Families	\$54,682	\$64,955
Married Families	\$66,827	-
Non Families	\$24,004	\$27,584

17.65% Overall Poverty Rate  
 8.96% Male Poverty Rate  
 19.91% Female Poverty Rate

## 2. TPC and Black's Recent Church Attendance and Finance

Year	Members	Average Attendance	Income	Expenses
2018	132	67	\$ 272,968	\$ 301,221
2019	113	69	\$ 237,007	\$ 232,821
2020	110	34	\$ 213,169	\$ 204,206
2021	104	43	\$ 311,146	\$ 260,957
2022	99	52	\$201,506	\$ 221,776
June 2023	98	50		



## 3. Ministry Accomplishments and Challenges

The TPC/BC Transition Team has engaged in a dialogue concerning the future of the church. The 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.

“Lunch and Conversation”

- What have been the congregation’s greatest accomplishments/joys in the past five years?
- What have been the congregation’s greatest challenges/disappointments in the past five years?
- What are the congregation’s hopes and dreams for the future of TPC and BC?

The Transition Team 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.

### Accomplishments/Joys

The TPC and BC congregations identified many joys and accomplishments from over the last few years, remembering programs and activities that have strengthened and sustained us, and many of which continue.

A list of the most commonly mentioned ones follows:

- Thoughtful, well-prepared sermons that not only inspire, but also educate
- Wonderful children’s sermons
- Exceptional music programs, involving musicians from the community and college
- The beautiful and moving Tenebrae Service
- Help from church members in times of need
- The Sunday Night Live study program
- Book Studies that pulled in folks from outside the church membership
- Keeping our traditions



- Community Outreach Program for seniors in the community and “drive by” meals provided during the pandemic lockdown
- The continuing support for “A Child Shall Lead Them” food pantry, through monthly focus on specific food item needs
- Adventure Time and TAG (The Adventure Gang) after school programs for children
- Hearts and Hammers program, which provided assistance with minor household repairs to seniors
- Staying a strong church family despite recent challenges, with the work of the staff and a small group of volunteers keeping the church going
- Adjusting to COVID pandemic such as streaming the worship services on You Tube, hybrid meetings in person and via zoom, and resuming “live” activities following the period of lockdown

## **Challenges/Disappointments**

The TPC and BC congregation list of challenges and disappointments seemed to follow a common theme. The loss of programs and activities, as well as members, and the challenge of retaining members and finding new people/families to join.

This is a list of some of the more common responses:

- Loss of members
- Loss of Sunday School classes
- Loss of Preschool
- Dwindling attendance
- Lack of younger members/families
- Challenge of retaining members
- Challenge of attracting new members
- Challenge of not forgetting about older members
- Challenge of maintaining the church’s financial stability
- Challenge of coming up with new ideas to solve old problems



## **Where We Hope to Go**

What are the congregation’s hopes and dreams for the future of TPC and BC?

Current congregational members have many hopes and dreams that seem to focus on reaching out to serve and connect with the community around us.

We hope to see

- Coordinating with neighboring churches for Bible School, Preschool, Youth Group and Sunday School
- Homecoming
- Enhancing our ministry to our seniors - connection, care, compassion
- Investigate other Presbyterian denominations - some are doing well
- More youth and young people involved in our church life
- Rebranding - “What are we known for?”
- Garage Sale - advertise to the community and get people on the church property
- Find our passion as a congregation
- More internal fellowship
- More external fellowship

- Finding the unchurched with children to become members. Adventure Time is a great way to get them here.
- More youth involvement - working with those that have a financial need
- More community involvement
- More inter-church cooperation
- Restart preschool program
- More emphasis on Food Pantry
- New and caring minister that will work to grow our congregation
- Strong leadership - a minister who lives in the community with family getting involved in the community
- Serve the community around us
- More participation by members in the physical care of the church building
- Assign 1 or 2 members to talk with new visiting people to find out their interests

### **Setting Our Mission Priorities**

As a result of the conversations with the congregation, interviews with local leaders, and community service members we have identified three areas as our mission priorities:



#### **1. Welcoming · Serving · Connecting to our community in need**

: Participate in the Tazewell County Department of Social Services (DSS) Care Portal. This program will connect our congregation with specific needs within our community and facilitate a partnership with other groups in our area to help meet these needs.

#### **2. Welcoming · Serving · Connecting to our church members**

: Implement a system of visitation to those in need of connection with the church (including shut-ins and group home members).

#### **3. Welcoming · Serving · Connecting to the younger generations**

: Expand and develop new programs to serve children and youth within our community.

