



Mission Study Design Guide Data Gathering for Ministry



New Castle Presbytery

1102 W. Church Road

Newark, DE 19711

www.ncpresbytery.org



Updated August, 2017



Why Do a Mission Study?

A Mission Study is an excellent tool and experience for your congregation to clarify who you are as a church, articulate what you stand for, explore why you operate the way you do and guide you in making decisions and setting goals for future ministry. A Mission Study should definitely be prepared if it has been more than 2-3 years since the last study.

The Mission Study is the foundation on which you build your ministry and mission for the next three to five years. Your Pastor Nominating Committee will use the results of this study to inform their search documents and priorities in their search for your next pastor. Through the Mission Study process, it is hoped that you will discover the gifts you offer and the gifts you will need in the next pastor with whom you will partner in ministry.

Throughout this study, strive to:

1. Ask Questions – Why do you do what you do as a congregation? What matters to you? Why don't you do what you might do? What's in the way? What is called for from you as people of faith in your time and place now?
2. Share experiences you have had that point to who you are as a faith community, and those in which the congregation seems most spiritually alive and faithfully motivated.
3. Imagine who you might be – what your next chapter could look like, if there were no obstacles? What ministries could be explored? What faithful difference would you seek to make in God's world in years to come?

A mission study is like a brochure to sell your church. It should make a first impression of what is uniquely you: how you express your faith through worship, through mission, in how faith is taught, in what experiences are shared. It should include information about the congregation, statistical make-up, activities, staffing, etc. It should have demographic information that is helpful to people who know nothing about the general area. It should feature committees, who does what, mission information, groups within the congregation. It should also include information about the congregation's financial resources and sustainability. And it should include hopes and dreams for the future.

Several tools are suggested to assist with this study:

- Percept – A ministry area profile accessible through the New Castle Presbytery.
- PCUSA:
 - Research Services – Congregational toolbox (<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research-services/help-for-congregations/>)

Congregational input and buy-in are an important investment in the Mission Study process, insuring a more realistic self-assessment and viable fit with the congregation's next pastor. There are many ways to gather information. A congregational survey can be conducted. This can be done through mail, email or at a fellowship luncheon

designed to introduce the study. Small groups are another way to gain congregational input and information, with the added advantage of fostering discussion about the congregation's mission and vision for the future.

The Session determines the composition of the Mission Study Design Team, with the Interim Pastor as an advisor to the entire process in collaboration with the Committee on Ministry liaison. Oftentimes, one or more Session members will be included on the Mission Study Design Team to facilitate communication. It is realistic to expect that the Mission Study Design Team meet at least twice a month to plan the process, compile information gathered and finalize the Mission Study document.

Once completed, the Mission Study must be approved by both the Session and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM). COM will then also give approval for the congregation to elect its Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The congregation's nominating committee proposes a slate of PNC nominees. Some overlap with the Mission Study Design Team is helpful for continuity. An effective PNC will also be representative of the congregation at large, as this will foster trust in the process.

After the PNC's election, one of the COM co-chairs, along with presbytery staff will obtain the necessary log in and password numbers with Church Leadership Connection (CLC) – the internet based matching and referral system for the PC(USA). This information will be given to the PNC chairperson and the church's Clerk of Session, to allow their access to this search process mechanism.

The PNC will access the Ministry Information Form (MIF) from the CLC site. <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/ministry-information-form2/>. Using the congregation's Mission Study as a guide and resource, the PNC will complete the Ministry Information Form (MIF). Once approved by both the Session and the Committee on Ministry, the Clerk of Session and a COM co-chair will attest online to these approvals in order for the MIF to become active.

The following pages present suggested schedules and possible survey questions that will assist you in planning a future for your congregation.

Also included is the Report on Financial Sustainability for Calling a Pastor. This assessment is a crucial piece of your study.

Please feel free to contact the Presbytery Staff for further assistance.

May the Holy Spirit guide you
and will for your church!



as you seek God's direction

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR MISSION STUDY

The order here provides for a smooth flow for the Mission Study.

1. **COVER** – Name of the Church, Date, "Mission Study," Picture/Design
2. **INSIDE TITLE PAGE – Mission Study Design Team** members, resource people
3. **PURPOSE STATEMENT**
4. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES** or Preserve, Strengthen, Change List
5. **BRIEF HISTORY OF CHURCH**
6. **DESCRIPTION OF PARISH AREA** (Demographics, etc.)
7. **COMMUNITY INFORMATION** (Concerns and Problems)
8. **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**
9. **WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE**
10. **MISSION ENGAGEMENT**
11. **EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONS, and ACTIVITIES** (Include committee structure and each committee's responsibilities.)
12. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**
13. **TECHNOLOGY**
14. **FINANCIAL SECTION** (Budget and Mission Support)
15. **STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTION**
16. **PRIMARY SKILL CHOICES (IF APPLICABLE)**
17. **APPENDIX** (Sample bulletins, charts, other information) **(IF APPLICABLE)**

Suggested Timeline

FIRST MEETING

1. Gather information on names, chairs, secretaries, etc.
2. Negotiate meeting schedule.
3. Share each member's story of involvement with church.
4. Distribute Mission Study Design Guide.
5. Outline the Mission Study process/PNC process.
6. Share the "Suggested Outline for Mission Study."
7. Assign tasks for the next meeting.

SECOND MEETING

1. Discuss and design process for gathering and giving information from/to congregation.
2. Review Membership report (2 people).
3. Review Properties report (1 person).
4. Review Worship and Attendance report (1 person).
5. Review Educational Programs report (1 person).
6. Mission Engagement (1 person).
7. Other Programs report (1 person).
8. Mission Causes (1 person).
9. Boards (1 person).

THIRD MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review remainder of reports from last meeting.
3. Assign general "editor(s)" with good writing/editing skills and, if possible, access to computer for putting together reports.
4. Assignment: Develop a list of those activities, programs, services and causes that you wish to see **PRESERVED**: preserved with few or no changes; **STRENGTHENED**: continued with significant changes; or, **CHANGED**: eliminated or begun.

FOURTH MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review Preserve/Strengthen/Change.
3. Begin discussion of strengths and weaknesses.
4. Assign small group to write Preserve/Strengthen/Change.
5. Assignment: What do you believe should be the five-year goals for your church? (I.e. what should be its mission and ministry?)

FIFTH MEETING

1. Any questions since last meeting.
2. Review Goals/Mission/Ministry (both the committee members' opinions and those of the congregation).

3. Assign editors the task of writing any summary statements and other narrative material for the Mission Study. Use other people in the congregation to read over the documents and give objective feedback.

SIXTH MEETING

1. Arrange to put into final form for Session approval.

Once the Mission Study is approved by Session and the Committee on Ministry (COM), the COM will give approval for the congregation to elect its Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). At this point, the Committee on Ministry liaison will become primarily involved with the work of the PNC, and the Interim Pastor's role will decrease once the actual search begins. Be sure to keep in touch with the Presbytery staff member resourcing the committee as well.

***For Sessions or Study Committees**

When the study is completed, the information may be shared at a congregational gathering, a newsletter article or in small groups. A Mission Statement may result and be shared with the members. In addition a ministry plan should be developed.



Mission Study Areas of Reporting

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The following questions and comments will serve as a guideline for the development of the report. Select what questions or suggested format will provide the clearest description of the membership of the Church.

1. Prepare a membership graph for the last 5-10 years. Indicate the current number of males and females.
2. What occupations are represented among your members? What educational levels?
3. Where do the members live in relationship to the church? You may use zip codes or create of a map with mileage radius markers and membership location.
4. Describe your congregation at worship. Include information about visitors as well as members; racial make-up, ages, gender and anything else that you think is significant.

WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE REPORT

1. Describe the Sunday morning service of worship. Include any special/unique parts of the service. Describe any changes which have occurred in the service over the past five years.
2. Describe any special or seasonal services of worship as well as any mid-week services.
3. Give the average, high and low attendance at worship during the previous year including seasonal fluctuations.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

1. Describe the area served by the church. Specify radius or distances used. Where is the church located? What kind of community surrounds the church? Do commercial or industrial areas exist nearby? What lifestyles, housing patterns, employment and economic concerns are in evidence? How does the membership of the church compare with the neighborhood?
2. What are the major issues that face your community now and in the years ahead? How has your church responded to past needs of the community and how is it likely to respond in the future?

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS REPORT

1. Describe the educational programs in which your church is involved and the facilities used by each program. Include adult education, leadership development (church officer training, teacher training) and any weekday programs.
2. Make a list of all church school classes by age/grade and give the number enrolled and the curriculum used.

REPORT ON OTHER PROGRAMS

1. Describe programs not considered part of the educational program. Include all organizations and activities which are a part of the ministry or mission of the church.
2. Tell the approximate number of people involved in each program and the frequency of occurrence. Also note if there is staff participation or leadership expected.
3. Are there programs that are not church related that meet in your facility? Do congregation members participate?

REPORT ON THE PROPERTIES

1. Describe your church's buildings and location. Be sure to include the general uses of each building. When were the buildings built and for what purpose? Have there been any recent additions or major changes? Why?
2. If the church owns a manse (or manses) include a brief description including the location. Is it currently being used by ministry staff?
3. Describe the church grounds. Are they used for outdoor events? Memorial gardens? Community gardens?

MISSION ENGAGEMENT REPORT

1. List all mission relationships, programs, and projects in which your church is involved. Include descriptions of local, national, or international missions. Indicate whether it is PCUSA or other.
2. Include amounts of money given and what percentage of the total budget that amount is. Also indicate if the support of a mission is other than financial.
3. How are members invited to participate in the mission of the church?

REPORT OF THE BOARDS OF THE CHURCH

1. Describe the functioning of the boards of your church and the committee structure of those boards. Where and how often do they meet? Has participation increased or decreased in recent years? How are members recruited?
2. What time commitment is expected on staff in working with the boards and their committees?
3. What boards or committees might be added or need to be re-evaluated?

TECHNOLOGY

1. Does your church have a website? Email? Facebook? Who is responsible for maintaining these sites?
2. Do you use technology in worship, education, fellowship, mission activities?

REPORT ON FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR CALLING A PASTOR

Describe your congregation's assets, financial and other, and how you foresee their stability over the next 5 years:

What changes do you anticipate over the next 5 years in terms of the following, and what impact might that have on your financial sustainability to support a new pastor?

Financial assets

Congregational demographics

Your community/context

Please also submit your financial statements for the last 2 years, indicating budgeted vs. actual figures. This information will be for the Committee on Ministry only and will not be included in the body of your Mission Study.

OTHER

What other questions or information might you need to complete your study? Feel free to add these to your lists of questions