

# **Vision and Vitality Workbook for Congregations (A Mission Study Guide)**

That we may rise up with eagle's wings; That we may run ahead and not get tired;  
That we may keep going and not give up!  
(See Isaiah 40)

A Ministry Tool  
Of  
The Presbytery of Lake Erie

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# MISSION STUDY -AN INTRODUCTION

## Why should we do it?

- To help in the process of seeking a pastor or planning for our church's future.
- To help the Presbytery know us better, and so be able to better support our work.
- To help us and a new or current pastor understand the ministry our church has been called to do in the community and in the world.

## When should we do it?

- When a pastor leaves and a new pastor will be called.
- Whenever we as a congregation have not thought about our future.
- When we as a congregation have not updated our plans and goals for a period of 5 years or more.
- When we as a congregation are struggling to understand our life and ministry.

## What does it include?

- **A mission study attempts to answer four basic questions:**  
Who are we now, and how do we need to change to meet the future?  
What is our community, and how well do we minister to it?  
What is our purpose as an organization, and what are our important goals?  
What must we do to fulfill our purpose and meet our goals?
- **The mission study process:**  
Collects data and information vital to understanding the church and community;  
Engages the congregation and its leaders in conversation about the church's life;  
Calls upon the church's leadership to make important decisions about its life.

## Who is responsible? How long will it take?

- **The session is responsible** for seeing that the mission study is done. If it so chooses, it may assign the work to a sub-group or special task force which it appoints. Presbytery's Congregational Life Committee (CLC) will assign a facilitator to assist the Mission Study Committee (MSC); however, that person will not lead the process.

## How to use this guide

- The **Mission Study Guide** is designed to 'walk you through' the process, and guide you in the preparation of the final document. The Facilitator will meet with the MSC approximately four times, at the beginning of each crucial phase of the process. He/she will also be available for consultation or advice, as needed.
- Although the **length of time** will vary according to the energy level of your church's leadership, the complexity of the issues, and the commitment that they give to this important work, the 'average time' needed to complete the process is about three months. Very extensive or complex studies might take up to six months.
- Take the opportunity to share in the **devotions** at the beginning of each part of the study. Also, spend a few minutes at the beginning of each meeting to hear scripture, discuss a few minutes and pray. How can we know the will of God for our congregation without talking together with God about our ministry.
- Use the guide as a '**guide**' and not a rule book. The ideas and process in the book have been tried and work, however, when you see a better way to accomplish a particular task, use your way.

## **A Guide to the first meeting**

The following activity should occur prior to the first meeting:

1. The Session should allocate at least 1/2 hour at a meeting to meet with the CLC assigned facilitator
2. Copies of this study guide should be handed out.
3. The Session should determine the makeup of the Mission Study Committee and the procedure for selecting the committee.
4. The date for the initial meeting should be set.
5. After agreeing to serve, each member of the group should receive a copy of the guide and review it prior to the first meeting.

The following are tasks which should be accomplished at the first meeting:

1. An introductory period of Devotions
2. Review the purpose for the Mission Study (Introduction)
3. Walk through the study guide, highlighting the various tasks to be accomplished. This is a good time to answer questions regarding the purpose and necessity of tasks for which there are questions.
4. Organize the group, including selecting a moderator and recorder.
5. Determine how communications will be handled. A suggestion is that eMail has proved very effective at conveying information between meetings
6. Determine the next meeting time and hopefully a regular schedule for meetings
7. Make task assignments:
  - a) someone to compile the information requested on pages 3-5
  - b) someone to compile the financial information requested on page 6
  - c) a subgroup to review the demographic information provided on the CD
  - d) a group to begin planning the individual survey and gatherings

**DEVOTION TIME:** Read the Scripture and discuss for 15-20 minutes using the questions as a base.

**Scripture:** Romans 12:108 (9-21)

**Book of Order:** G-1.0200

**Questions:** How does Paul's image of the church in Romans compare with ours?  
What does the Book of Order paragraph say about the breadth of our study?  
Why are the opinions of the community and congregation important?

**Prayer:** Spend at least 2-3 minutes in silent prayer meditating upon the scripture and discussion, then all time for individuals to prayer aloud.

### **REMINDER:**



**SUCCESSFUL MISSION STUDIES** are the result of a wide involvement on the part of congregation members. When they are the main focus for the church's life during a period of several months, they can bring great energy to the church as it engages in conversation about its purpose and future. A wise session will involve as many people as possible at points along the way, and it will ask for regular reports on progress from those responsible for carrying out the work.

# PART ONE: WHO WE ARE

## **PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION:**

*To find out about ourselves and reflect upon what that may mean.*

In this section we will:

1. Gather statistical information about our church;
2. Survey all church groups and committees and involve them in our 'mission study' conversation;
3. Reflect upon the church's present and future leadership;
4. Gather financial information from the Treasurer and Financial Secretary;
5. Involve the entire membership in remembering the past and reflecting upon the future;
6. Gather individual 'Survey Forms' from members of the congregation;
7. Involve the building and property committee in an evaluation of our facilities and equipment.

This part of the process will require preparation, and could take four to six weeks to complete.

**DEVOTION TIME:** Read the scripture and discuss for 15-20 min. using the questions as a base

**Scripture:** Revelation 3:1-22

**Questions:**

How does our church compare (good and bad) to the churches in the scripture reading?

What does this study have to do with our church, in light of the scripture?

Spend at least 2-3 minutes in silent prayer meditating upon the scripture and discussion; then allow time for individuals to prayer aloud.

## Who We Are Now and How Do We Support the Church?

**Who are We?** Most of the data in this section should from the Clerk of Session

1. How many active members are on the church role?
2. How many of them are male?
3. How many of them are female?
4. How many of them are 'shut-ins' (**unable to attend worship or church functions**)?
5. How many of them are 'non-resident' (**live beyond a normal commuting distance**)?
6. How many non-member persons regularly support the church?
7. How many of them have handicapping conditions? What kind?
8. How many of them are not of Caucasian background?
9. Using your membership role and estimate the following: (**Don't worry if you are not 100% accurate**)
  - a) How many are younger than 18?
  - b) How many are between 18 and 30?
  - c) How many are between 31 and 50?
  - d) How many are between 51 and 65?
  - e) How many are between 66 and 80?
  - f) How many are older than 80?
10. How many 'Family Units'\* do we have in our church?
  - a) How many of our family units contain children below 18?
  - b) How many family units are made up of single adults who live alone?

**What about our program support? Estimate this information if specifics are not available. To gather this information more accurately, involve the various church organizations. Use the special GROUP questionnaire supplied for this purpose in the back of this Workbook. You may duplicate it for distribution. You may make modifications to the questionnaire which are pertinent to your church.**

1. What is our average weekly worship attendance (all services)?
  - a) What is the yearly high?
  - b) What is the yearly low?
2. Of our total membership, how many people participate actively in the leadership and ministry of the church by being involved regularly in significant activities or responsibilities of the church (in addition to worship)?
  - a) worship only
  - b) worship and one other activity
  - c) worship and two other activities
  - d) worship and three other activities
  - e) worship and four or more other activities

**What about our financial support? The Treasurer and Financial Secretary should be able to make this information available.**

1. How many family units\* give financial support *regularly* to the church?
  - a) How many family units make a 'pledge' at the start of the year?
  - b) How many family units give little or no support financially?
2. What % of our annual operating budget comes from these family units?
3. What % of our annual operating budget is used to maintain our building and pastor?

**\*A family unit consists of a parent(s) and all children under 21 in a household; or a single person who lives alone. It is possible to have two family units in a single household if one of those people is a working adult, over 21, who is self-supporting. It is also possible to have two units in a household if more than one generation (ie. retired parents loving with a son or daughter) live there together.]**

### **MSC CONSIDER AND DISCUSS**

1. What implications for the future do you see in the demographic data?
2. Do you see this picture of the congregation as being similar or dissimilar to the community?
3. Do you see signs of apathy or burn out in the program support information?
4. Is there a correlation between program and financial support?

**IN ADDITION TO THE DATA GATHERED THUS FAR:  
THE CLC REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**



1. Description of each church organization/group (use questionnaire to compile);
2. List of activities that are 'mission involvement' (doing for others);
3. List of all full and part time staff, and their Job Descriptions;
4. A paragraph describing 'personality' of your church – the way it gets things done and how people work together, informally and through the church structure (committees, etc.).

## **TRENDS – Who Are We Becoming?**

**The following information should be available from your church records (Session minutes, roll book, etc.). Your Clerk of Session can help you gather it. If you have problems, check with your MSC resource.**

1. Trends in Church Membership
  - a) What was our church membership **3** years ago?
  - b) What was our church membership **5** years ago?
  - c) What was our church membership **10** years ago?
  - d) What was our church membership **15** years ago?
  - e) What was our church membership **20** years ago?
  - f) What was our church membership **50** years ago?
2. Trends in Church School Membership
  - a) What was our church school enrollment **3** years ago?
  - b) What was our church school enrollment **5** years ago?
  - c) What was our church school enrollment **10** years ago?
  - d) What was our church school enrollment **15** years ago?
  - e) What was our church school enrollment **20** years ago?
  - f) What was our church school enrollment **50** years ago?
3. Of our total membership, how many people have joined the church:
  - a) Within the last 3 years?
  - b) Within the last 5 years?
  - c) Within the last 10 years?

| Age of Members | What is the current number of members in each group | In $x$ years they will be $y$ years old |           |           |            |           |
|----------------|---|---|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                |   | X=5                                     | X=10      | X=15      | X=20       | X=25      |
| Less than 18   |   | Y = 17-22                               | Y = 22-27 | Y = 27-32 | Y = 32-37  | Y = 37-42 |
| 18-30          |   | Y = 23-35                               | Y = 28-40 | Y = 33-45 | Y = 38-50  | Y = 43-55 |
| 31-50          |   | Y = 36-53                               | Y = 41-60 | Y = 46-63 | Y = 51-70  | Y = 56-75 |
| 51-65          |   | Y = 56-70                               | Y = 61-75 | Y = 66-80 | Y = 71-85  | Y = 76-90 |
| 66-80          |   | Y = 71-85                               | Y = 76-90 | Y = 81-95 | Y = 86-100 | Y = 91+   |

**Key Leadership:** The Church's highest energy levels for leadership and support tends to be with those who are between the ages of 35 and 65. This does not mean that younger and older members are not important. It only means that these are the core people upon whom the burden rests.

### **MSC CONSIDER AND DISCUSS**

1. What do these charts tell us about the make-up of our congregation now?
2. Who are today's leaders? Where will they be in 10 or 15 years?
3. What does it tell us about our future 5, 10 or 15 years from now?
4. Where are tomorrow's leaders right now? What does this mean to our ministry now?

## **Gathering Financial Information:**

You will need to assemble the following financial information about your church. Your church treasurer should have most of the information available and at hand.

A copy of the **ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT** from the last year, showing all income and expenses, and how they related to the budget for the year.

A copy of the **CURRENT BUDGET** including **projected income sources** for the year.

A record of all **SAVINGS ACCOUNTS**, CDs, memorial funds, and other church holdings. Please list them clearly on a separate page labeled 'CHURCH SAVINGS', even if they are also included in the other reports requested above.

A description of the church's **STEWARDSHIP PROCESS** – How does it go about communicating stewardship information and requirements to the congregation? How does it conduct its annual financial support campaign?

A record of **CONGREGATIONAL GIVING** for the past 3 to 5 years, noting whether giving has remained steady, increased, or decreased.

**AT MINIMUM, the CLC requires the following FINANCIAL INFORMATION be included in the Mission Study.**



1. Current Church Budget (displaying all staff salaries, etc.):
2. Stewardship strategy:
3. Changes in giving patterns (increasing/decreasing):
4. List of Savings:
5. Expectations about future needs – building projects, new programs, staff changes, etc.



## **Where We've Been – Remembering the Past**

This part of the Mission Study Report can best be accomplished in *small group settings*. It is suggested that the small groups be *led by active elders* currently serving on the session, and/or by other elders recently retired from active service.

Below are a couple suggestions for this process that have worked well for other churches. You are free, of course, to decide what will work best for your church.

- **On a particular Sunday, well announced in advance, structure the morning worship service around a theme of 'Honoring the Past'. Let it be a real celebration. Then, after worship, have a Tureen Dinner. After dinner, divide into small groups of 10 to 15 people. Using some prepared materials (see below), have a discussion about the past. The elder in charge leads the discussion, asking questions to keep things moving, and allowing for a full range of honest opinions. Another person, selected in advance, takes careful notes on the main points of the discussion and opinions offered. Special note should be made of points where there is wide agreement. A day or two later, the elders who led the discussion should meet with the MSC to help summarize and collate the main points and issues.**
- **Over a two week period members can be invited (personal invitations work best) to discussions like the one outlined above, but held either at the church or in the homes of church members.**

The important thing here is to allow church members to 'have their say' about how things used to be, and how they would like them to be in the future. This is a time for honest sharing of ideas --both hopes and past disappointments. If there are lingering irritations or resentments about the recent (or not so recent) past, this is a good time to allow folks to talk about them. All discussion should take place in an atmosphere of Christian love and patience. People with differing opinions should feel they can express them without prejudice. Personal arguments should be avoided, and the elder in charge should keep the atmosphere open, encouraging all to speak, but discouraging any one person from 'taking over'.

- **To facilitate discussion, the MSC should prepare in advance a list of pastors (including interims and associates) and their years of service. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each one's ministry? What were their 'styles' of leadership, and which were most effective? Should we look for a particular 'style of leadership' in our next pastor? What special gifts or knowledge would we like a new pastor to have? [If this is mission study for future planning and not for calling a new pastor, the discussion can center on the ways we can use our present pastor's gifts most effectively.]**
- **In closing the discussion, an individual questionnaire should be given to each participant. People should be asked to fill them out before they leave (don't allow them to be taken home --you'll get very few back). The questionnaire gives opportunity for people to express their personal opinions, and also indicates a measure of 'what folks are feeling' about particular issues related to the future. A sample questionnaire is included in the study guide.**

**AT MINIMUM**, the CLC requires that the following information about HISTORY and PASTORS be included in the Mission Study:



1. List of pastors and length of service,
2. Comments on recent pastorates – strengths / weaknesses
3. Congregational comments on next pastor
4. Effective leadership styles desired.

## **Information About Our Church Facilities**

The appropriate committee (Trustees, Building and Property, etc.) should be asked to provide:

1. A written description of the building(s) and church property,
2. An assessment of the adequacy of the facilities for the church's programs and activities,
3. A condition statement about the building(s) and grounds, including any major repairs or changes that are contemplated within the next 5 years, and including an opinion about the degree to which the building(s) meet existing codes (including accessibility),
4. A list of special equipment available for staff and members, including type and condition:
  - a) Audio Visual (TV, VCR/CD/DVD, Cameras, Projectors, projection electronics, etc.),
  - b) Musical (Organ, piano, keyboards, hand bells, etc.),
  - c) Recreational,
  - d) Office (furniture, computer systems, phone system, copier, etc.),
  - e) Maintenance (lawn tractor, snow blower/plow, etc.).
5. Insurance including major coverages and amounts.

[It is suggested that in completing this survey, the persons responsible should do their assessment in conversation with the people responsible for actually doing the programming. For example, Sunday School leaders could be asked "Are you satisfied with our present facilities and equipment? Are they large enough? Could we improve them somehow? What suggestions would you make?" Similar questions could be posed to other leaders involved in church activities. Making suggestions, of course, does not commit the church to changes immediately, but it does give the session an idea of what changes, if any, need to be made in the coming years].



**AT MINIMUM**, the CLC requires that the Mission Study include:

1. A description of the church plant and grounds,
2. Improvements needed or contemplated in the near future,
3. A description of insurance coverage and amounts.

# PART TWO: WHAT/WHO IS OUR COMMUNITY?

## How do we define our community?

### **PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION:**

To find out about our surrounding community and reflect upon its changes.

In this section we will:

1. Define what we mean by our 'community or 'parish' area;
2. Compile data from census and other objective sources;
3. Engage our members in a 'windshield survey' of the community;
4. Interview knowledgeable people of the community;
5. Survey people from our neighboring congregations;
6. Reflect upon the meaning of the ways community is or is not changing.

**DEVOTION TIME:** Read the scripture and discuss for 15-20 minutes using the questions as a base.

**Scripture:** Luke 10:30-37

**Questions:** How does our church compare to each of the people in the scripture reading?  
How does the idea of neighbor relate to that community?

**Prayer:** Spend at least 2-3 minutes in silent prayer meditating upon the scripture and discussion, then allow time for individuals to pray aloud.

'Community' means different things to different people. In reality, we each belong to many 'communities'. They are defined by geography, by interest, by the sort of work we do, by nationality, by social interests, etc. More and more, society has caused us to broaden our understanding of that term. The old question asked by Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" is still valid. Jesus answered the question, of course, not by geography or ethnic group, but by need. There is little doubt that according to Jesus, ANYONE IN NEED IS MY NEIGHBOR.

For our purposes, however, we will use our church's neighborhood as a starting point for our definition of community. It may be that as you define your church's neighborhood, you find a variety of possible neighborhoods. The following are a few different ways to think about the church neighborhood:

1. The area immediately around the church,
2. The area where your members live,
3. The area where your church does 'local mission',
4. The area where your expected new members live.

Obviously there is a great deal of overlap in these areas, but there likely are some important differences as well.

This is one of the most important tasks of this group. How we define the church community will have a lot to do with how we work as a church, the kind of programs we offer, the nature of our mission work, and many other aspects of church life.

Each congregation defines its community by how it functions. Our task is to get that definition on paper. This written definition of community is one of the things we will want to share with the Session and even the congregation as early in the process as possible. We need to listen to the feedback we get and be willing to modify our description so that we can have the most accurate definition possible. We will be using this definition as a framework for our discussions in the following portions of the study.

WE DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY AS:



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HOW IS THAT DEFINITION DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN  
10 YEARS AGO?

25 YEARS AGO?

50 YEARS AGO?

Once we have defined our church's community, there are the things we should do to become better acquainted with it. Even those who think they know the community well may be surprised by what they may discover.

### Census and Other Objective Data

Your local library and/or County Planning Commission (among other places) has information about your area. It should be readily available in a form that roughly corresponds to your defined parish community. There is also information available on the PCUSA website [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org), from the Presbytery office. School Boards and Real Estate offices also have helpful information. A great deal of information from the PCUSA website and other sources is available with additional information and methods of accomplishing some of the tasks in this guide. Once you collect the information, you must 'ask questions' of it in order for it to be useful.

Here are some sample questions you may ask within at least the MSG.

- **Is our community growing or losing population? Why?**
- **Which population segments are growing or being lost?**
- **Are there 'pockets of growth' in our community?**
- **How do income levels in our community compare with nation? State? Presbytery? County?**
- **What other changes / needs are highlighted by this demographic data?**

## Windshield or Walking Survey

Ask several people (3 to 5) to make a walking or driving survey of the community. That involves going up and down the streets and roads, keeping these questions (plus others you may think of) in mind:

- **Who are the people I see?**
- **Are they the same folks I've always known, or are many of them strangers?**
- **What age groups do I notice most?**
- **How do the houses and property appear? Are they in good shape, or are there many run down places?**
- **Is this a happy place?**
- **Are there lots of activities for people? Especially for children?**
- **What do I notice that I never noticed before?**
- **Have things changed much since I first came to this place? How?**

When the people have completed their surveys and written down their observations, there should be a gathering of them and the MSC (or session) to discuss the findings. Questions such as:

- **What do these observations mean?**
- **Is the community changing? How?**
- **Are there new and emerging needs?**
- **What are they?**

## Interviews with Community People

In talking about the community, it is important that we talk to people other than ourselves -that is, we should talk with others, who may or may not be church members, who are involved in the community's life. Several members of the MSC (or other church members they may assign) should interview 5 to 10 people who are involved in community service, government, or other areas of community life. Suggestions about those who might be interviewed include:

- **Township supervisor or city councilperson,**
- **Postal worker,**
- **Store owner,**
- **Neighbors who are not members of your church,**
- **Long time residents,**
- **Farmers,**
- **Human service providers,**
- **Real estate person, and**
- **School personnel.**

Some questions which could be asked:

- **How have you noticed our community changed in connection with your job?,**
- **What are some of the changes for the better?,**
- **What are some of the problems you are aware of?,**
- **Are there people (or groups) in our community with special needs? Who are they? How are their needs being met?**
- **What do you think is the 'image' of our church in the community? (Please be honest),**
- **What needs do you think our church meets in the community?**
- **What needs are we not meeting that we could be meeting?**

After the interviews, those who made them should 'report' to the MSC. Their reports and the discussion with the MSC should be summarized.

## Talking with Other Churches

Make a list of the churches in your community, or whose community you think might overlap with your community. Ask members of your church to interview someone from these churches. (It is possible to call their pastors and interview them, but it would be better to talk with individual(s) in their congregation - though pastors could also be interviewed. Use the CHURCH PROFILE Form to guide the interview.

**AT MINIMUM, the CLC requires this information about the COMMUNITY to be included in your Mission Study Report.**



1. Definition of community.
2. Population – trends and description (growth/loss), projections, age/ethnic/other characteristics,
3. Employment, school, recreational information,
4. Income levels/other social, cultural descriptions,
5. A description of community change and need.

# PART THREE: PURPOSE AND GOALS

## PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION:

*To review, with church leaders, the information gathered, and make decisions based upon its meaning.*

In this section we will:

1. **Review, with the Session**, the gathered information,
2. **Draft a Mission Statement** that defines our purpose,
3. **Lift up the important issues** discovered during the process,
4. **Establish 3 to 5 goals** that will guide us for the next 5 years,
5. **Set expectations** for the congregation, the session, and the pastor,
6. **Develop Job Descriptions** for staff

**DEVOTION TIME:** Read the scripture and discuss for 15-20 minutes using the questions as a base

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1-9

**Questions:** How does God's plan for our church compare to the plan for Abram?  
How does the idea of 'call' relate to a whole congregation?

**Prayer:** Spend at least 2-3 minutes in silent prayer meditating upon the scripture and discussion, then allow time for individuals to pray aloud.

## Putting All This Great Information to Use!

Up until now we have been gathering all sorts of data and information about our congregation and the community around us. At this point the MSC needs to take the information it has gathered thus far to the session.

These next steps will probably require 2 or 3 closely scheduled meetings, involving the entire session, the MSC members, and any others from the church that the session feels it should include. In these meetings we will do the following:

- **Review the information that has been gathered.** The MSC should lead this part of the process, summarizing all the information from Steps One and Two. It is helpful to provide the important information into a summary report of several pages so that each person can present a copy in their hands.
- **A Mission Statement should then be drafted** stating as clearly and succinctly as possible the purpose of this particular church. It could be broad enough to include as many people as possible, but clear about the overall reason that the church exists in the community where it has been call to serve. It may help if the group reviews some of the responses of church members in the Individual Survey Form regarding those things which mean the most to them --the first question on the form. The Mission Statement might also project the church's relationship to the surrounding community and the world. It can be useful to limit the statement to a length that most can memorize.

- **The group must then wrestle with the issues raised during the course of the information gathering and discussions.**
  1. Are there areas of particular concern?
  2. Are there conflicts within our congregation that need to be healed?
  3. Does the congregation seem helpful about our future or is it pessimistic or fearful?
  4. What things about our present way of ministry and program needs to be changed?
  5. What should we be doing better?
  6. What opportunities are there for new directions in our ministry and mission?
  7. How well are we meeting community needs?
  8. How well are we meeting world needs through our mission support and interpretation?
- **Finally, this group of leaders must project the future**
  1. What are the three most important things we need to do over the next five years? These are our 'Goals'. They should be stated broadly enough so that each group within the church can define what it shall do 'Group Objectives' to help reach them. They should be specific enough that we can keep track of our progress in meeting them.
  2. What must we expect from our members to accomplish this vision?
  3. What must we expect from the session to accomplish this vision?
  4. What must we expect from the pastor to accomplish this vision?
  5. If calling a new pastor, write a Job Description and a Person Description for the type pastor you seek. If not calling a pastor, make suggestions to the existing job descriptions to facilitate accomplishing the goals expressed in the report.

**AT MINIMUM, the CLC requires the following information about your FUTURE VISION to be included in your Mission Study Report:**



1. Summary of issues raised during the process – What changes need to take place. \*  
What are our concerns? At what points may we be in conflict?
2. What is our mission (Mission Statement)?
3. What do we project for the next 5 years? (Goals)
4. What do we expect from our members, the session, our (new) pastor, in carrying out these goals?



# **PART FOUR:** **ASSEMBLING THE MISSION STUDY REPORT**

## **Purpose of This Section:**

*To assist the MSC in assembling the report, as it will go to the session and the CLC of presbytery.*

You should now have all the information and decision-making results necessary to put your Mission Study together.

**DEVOTION TIME:** Read the scripture and discuss for 15-20 min. using the questions as a base  
**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1-9  
**Questions:** How does God's plan for our church compare to the plan for Abram? How does the idea of 'call' relate to a whole congregation?  
**Prayer:** Spend at least 2-3 minutes in silent prayer meditating upon the scripture and discussion, then allow time for individuals to pray aloud.

The CLC has established an outline for the way the information should be assembled. It is important that you follow the outline, because in reviewing the Mission Studies it is difficult to find the information that is needed if it is hidden away in unexpected places. The following outline can serve as your Table of Contents:

- 1. Mission Statement (on a page all by itself)**
- 2. Index to the information in the Mission Study**
- 3. Copy of a blank survey form(s) used for the Individual Survey as well as other survey forms**
- 4. Organization of the church**
  - Listing of committees and groups (a chart would be helpful to display this information)
  - Description of all groups and activities within the church (use the information on the group survey forms)
  - Listing of all staff positions (full and part time) and a summary of their job descriptions
  - A paragraph describing the church's personality
- 5. History of the church**
  - Times of growth or decline, member changes, etc.
- 6. Previous Pastors**
  - List and length of service
  - Comments on recent pastors - strengths, weaknesses, etc.
  - Leadership styles -- especially those most effective
- 7. Community Information and Demographics**
  - Population Trends
  - Employment / schools / recreation
  - Ethnic and age distribution
  - Income and Social characteristics
  - Community needs
  - Areas of Growth
- 8. Church Information and Demographics**
  - Gender / age distribution, marital status, etc.
  - Residence of members (how far from the church)
  - Length of membership

- Other data about common interests, socio-economic background, etc.
- All other relevant information gathered about the church's membership

#### **9. Budget and Financial Resources**

- Last Year's Annual Financial Report
- Current Budget
- Savings Resources
- Stewardship strategy
- Giving patterns -Number of family units, etc.
- Future needs that may require special funding efforts

#### **10. Description of the church plant (building(s) and grounds)**

- Result of building survey
- Equipment list

#### **11. Issues raised by the Mission Study Process**

- Areas of concern, conflict, hope
- What needs to be changed?
- What can be done better?
- Who in the community do we need to reach out to?

#### **12. Our Future Vision**

- Goals for the next five years
- What seems to be the 3 major concerns facing the church?
- Of those, what appears to be most important?
- Expectations of the congregational
- Expectations of the session
- Expectations of the pastor

#### **13. Job Description for the New Pastor (If seeking a new pastor)**

- Job description of other staff that changed significantly as a result of the study



**CONGRATULATIONS! Your job is done! But be sure, before you 'retire', to do the following:**

1. Make at least enough copies of the report for the session, 3 copies for your church files, 3 copies of the Congregational Vitality Committee, and several copies for the PNC to give interested candidates (if you are seeking a pastor),
2. Consider making additional copies for key leaders of the church, and a few extra copies for members of the congregation to borrow.
3. Pass the session copies to the Clerk of Session so the session can review it and approve it (session approval is required).
4. Give the copies for the Congregational Vitality Committee to your Mission Study Facilitator to be passed on to the committee.

# GROUP INFORMATION AND SURVEY FORM

The following information is needed as part of our church's Mission Study. Please discuss the questions with the members of your group and return the completed form to \_\_\_\_\_ no later than \_\_\_\_\_, Thank you.

NAME OF GROUP or ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

OUR GROUP EXISTS TO (Purpose): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

OUR GROUP HAS \_\_\_\_\_ MEMBERS. THEY ARE (Please list active members):

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF OUR GROUP DURING THE COURSE OF A TYPICAL YEAR ARE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continue on back).

OUR GROUPS MAIN GOALS OVER THE NEXT 3 TO 5 YEARS ARE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continue on back).

HOW DOES THE PASTOR RELATE TO YOUR GROUP, AND WHAT SORT OF GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT MIGHT YOU LIKE TO HAVE FROM THE PASTOR IN THE FUTURE?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continue on back).

WHAT SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOUR GROUP LIKE TO MAKE REGARDING THE FUTURE OF OUR CONGREGATION AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PASTOR?

\_\_\_\_\_ (continue on back).

**Please have your group complete this form and return it as soon as possible. Thank you.**

## INDIVIDUAL OPINION FORM

Name 3 things about our church that mean the most and are or have been most important to you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What are the 3 most important concerns our church faces over the next 5 years? (*List in priority order*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 changes you would like to see the church try.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

You do not need to sign your name, but tell us a little about yourself:

I am \_\_\_\_\_ below 18  
\_\_\_\_\_ 18-30  
\_\_\_\_\_ 31-50  
\_\_\_\_\_ 51-65  
\_\_\_\_\_ 66-80  
\_\_\_\_\_ over 80

I have been a member or attended approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years

I am \_\_\_\_\_ Female; \_\_\_\_\_ Male

**Thank you for your continuing thoughts and prayers for our church!**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

**Use the back of the form to communicate any other thoughts or concerns.**

# **SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION SURVEYS**

# **SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS**

## **SURVEY OF OTHER CHURCHES**

NAME OF CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT ARE ITS MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS?

| <b>Program or Service</b> | <i>Type of program-meeting time</i> | <i>Who attends and how many</i> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |
|                           |                                     |                                 |

WHAT IS THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

IN WHAT WAYS IS THE CONGREGATION LIKE OUR OWN?

IN WHAT WAYS IS IT DIFFERENT?

ARE THERE WAYS WE COULD BE COOPERATING?

# **RECORDING THE VISION FOR OUR CHURCH**

MISSION STATEMENT:

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