

How to Make a Mission Study Fun and Fruitful!

A Guide for Mission Studies

Peace River Presbytery

Revised October 23, 2017

What makes a mission study fun and fruitful? You do! You can make any transition time a terrific experience for the congregation you serve. Transitions are very significant times for your congregation, and you want to make the most of them. There is a tremendous need for focused, humble leadership. Your leadership can help chart a new course for congregation that will lead to grow, maturity, and even greater service in Jesus' name.

Mission Study, sometimes called a Self-Study, is a process of congregational examination and envisioning. While one goal is to compose a thoughtful, comprehensive document (no more than 3 to 50 pages, with a one-page summary to share with your congregation), the ultimate purpose is to develop a roadmap that *defines* your congregation and *describes* a sense of direction for the future mission of your congregation.

There are some things that a mission study *is not*:

- A Mission Study is not just problem solving
- A Mission Study does not necessarily fill in gap

There are some other things that a mission study *is*:

- Engaging: developing the process of planning our mission and ministry and putting together a mission statement.
- Futuring: in community projections and needs (schools, services); projections of church and community growth and/or decline.
- Visioning: “choosing the future we prefer,” setting goals and directions. What is it we would like to do and be? What kind of church does God want us to be? What should we be doing in this community? What is our special mission? What is realistic? This process includes the developing of a concise goal and mission statement.
- Implementation: Developing a timetable; carrying out the plan, who’s going to do what when.
- Evaluation: How’s it going? Was it realistic? Where are we going from here?

A Mission Study is as opportunity for the congregation to work together in faith while intentionally listening to God for guidance and direction.

Overview

A Mission Study is a process that a congregation goes through to seek discernment about how God would have that church to be and to act in the future. It is led by a committee of Session, often charged to the Transition Team or separately populated Mission Study Team. The process results in a Mission Study Report that is presented to the Session for approval and to the Committee on Ministry (COM) for review. This review is a necessary step before a congregation is allowed to elect a Pastoral Nominating Committee and begin the search for a new pastor—but there are many other opportunities for you to dream—and go forward—together.

A Mission Study is not the entire process. Rather, it is the beginning, in which a congregation identifies where it is at this time, and projects some directions to explore in the future. Its primary purpose is to assist the congregation to project a clear, fair picture of where it is and where it would like to go, so that a new pastor can be called who will be traveling in the same direction and can walk together in fulfilling a larger, broader vision of a shared future. Accordingly, a Mission Study is the first step in a larger process of moving forward in ministry. The details of the journey will be identified and implemented after the new pastor has arrived and is acclimated to the congregation. It is also the opportunity to recheck coordinates, confirm an earlier direction, or chart a new course.

For the Congregation and By the Congregation

A well-founded Mission Study includes fact-finding about the congregation and the community in which it ministers. It provides an opportunity for members of the congregation prayerfully to study what scripture says about the church, to learn new information about its community and its needs, to learn who they have been and who they are as a congregation, and to celebrate their gifts as a church. Once this period of learning is complete, then the congregation has the information it needs to begin to design its Vision and develop new Goals and Objectives for its ministry in the coming five years. The written report that is a product of the congregational Mission Study should describe the process followed for the study, provide all the information discovered during the process about both the community and the church, and present the new Vision, along with Goals and Objectives for living out the Vision. This report will be implemented by the Session as it assigns responsibility to different bodies within the congregation for different tasks. A Mission Study is very much a process executed and owned by the congregation. However, especially in congregations where a pastor has recently left and that are enjoying the services of an interim pastor, that person should be drawn on as a precious resource. All trained interim pastors should be familiar with the Mission Study process.

When to Engage in a Mission Study

Many think that a mission study should only be done when a pastor leaves. Far from it! There are many opportunities for a congregation to benefit from—and enjoy—a mission study:

- Times of transition: change of pastor, associate pastor, key program leadership
- Times of significant change in community and/or congregation
- When there's a sense of being "stuck," and you have a growing desire to seek new directions
- Every three to seven years of meaningful ministry—just for fun!

Seven Ways to Make Your Mission Study Fruitful

1. **Emphasize the Conversation:** the goal is to help people have a purposeful and meaningful conversation about who they are what they believe is important to do. It is not the plan that will change people and give direction to the congregation. It is the conversation of the people with one another and with God—that is part of the planning process—that changes people.
2. **Get Comfortable with Conflict:** arguing over important things is the way congregations come to agreement, not only about their own future, but also about they in fact shape and re-shape their faith tradition to be passed on to successive generations.
3. **It's All About Maturity:** to submit to the disciplines of faith means to open ourselves to change and maturity to move into a fuller life—to follow a path drawing us closer to what God thinks we are capable of.
4. **Key is Connecting to Context:** to be a people of faith is both to search within ourselves for growth and reach others in service and invitation.
5. **Prepare the Congregation for Envisioning:** help others to want to be different, want to move beyond where they currently are.
6. **Get the Right People on the Envisioning Bus:** the Mission Study Task Force needs to have high credibility, high trustworthiness, not agenda driven, and able to set forth a mandate.
7. **Manage the Process and Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**

Benefits of a Fun and Fruitful Mission Study

1. People will experience the presence of God.
2. It will generate energy and momentum.
3. People will know the joy of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) and a deeper participation in Christian community.
4. The search process will be shorter.
5. There will be a better match between congregation and new installed Pastor.
6. The new Pastor will be able to hit the ground running,
7. You can see a visible, tangible outcome that will look good on your Ministry Information Form (MIF).
8. The Kingdom of God will have advanced.

One Study—Two Approaches

Perhaps even more than in the other parts of the Guide, the name *Guide* is a key part of this document's title. Peace River Presbytery is blessed to be comprised of a wide variety of sizes and types of congregations, and it would be impossible to write a definitive guide to Mission Studies that would address every need and concern in the Presbytery. Therefore, we have included four styles to assist you. See the Appendices for several examples—all of which can be expanded, condensed, adapted and revised to help your congregation. Use this guide as a map for the process of celebrating who you, as a congregation, have been and discovering who you long to become. Tailor, replace or add activities as you see fit!

While COM requires you to go through this process, the process is for your congregation. The goal both in requiring the process and inviting you to make it your own is to help you transform the uncertainty, concern and frustration of the interim period into hope, vision and possibility for your congregation's future. We consider our participation on COM to be ministry to congregations as we come alongside the relationship between pastors and churches. We want to help you.

Approach One—an Important Process with Several Possibilities

Churches will benefit by a broad-based approach to the Mission Study in those cases where leadership resources are available. The usual process is outlined as follows:

1. **Appoint Committee of Session to Design & Lead Mission Study:** The Session begins by assigning a committee or team to lead the congregation through the Mission Study. Often this will be the Transition Team but may be separately populated as a Mission Study Team. They will have the responsibility for designing and implementing each step of the Mission Study.
2. **Demographic Study:** Part of the process of understanding what work God has to do for us in a certain time and place is getting to know the needs of the community to which we minister. As part of the assessment of the community, a demographic study is to be conducted, in order to understand who our neighbors are now and who they probably will be in the coming years. Mission Insite is a good resource for this step in the process. www.missioninsite.com – (PRP's Agency # is E8YOR) – At this point create personal login and password and discover the neighborhood around your church.
3. **Community Study:** In addition to the numbers of a demographic study, there's benefit to getting to know your neighbors. Another way of learning about the community to which we minister is to interview community leaders about what they perceive as the needs of the community. This is often an eye-opening experience for the congregation.

4. **Congregational Survey:** A survey of the congregation, about who they are and what they desire in the church, is an effective tool for getting a decent amount of information from many members. Updating our congregation's demographic makeup and comparing it to our community can be informative. Again, we often think we know what everyone in the church thinks but we rarely ask them and are often surprised by the results when we do.
5. **Congregational Gatherings:** This is the heart of the Mission Study. This is the heart of the Congregational Mission Study. Everything done up to now has been in preparation for the Congregational Gatherings and everything afterward will be to report the findings of the congregation in these gatherings. The Mission Study Team will design a way for members of the congregation to gather for an extended period of time to do the work of the Mission Study. This time will include at a minimum: • prayer • group building • scripture study and faith sharing • recollections of the history of the congregation • receiving the reports of the demographic study • receiving the reports of the community study and the congregational survey • an assessment of the gifts of the congregation • an assessment of the needs of the congregation and the community • the beginning of a design of a new Vision with related Goals and Objectives.

Prayer, scripture study, and faith sharing are all important in setting the tone for these gatherings and for shape of the discussions. Unlike the corporate model of strategic planning, the church's mission study is about seeking to know what God intends in a particular place and time. You are not deciding what you want to do over the next five years, but what God wants you to do. Part of our Reformed tradition is that we believe that when we gather prayerfully, listen to God's Word, and listen to each other, God's purpose will emerge from our sharing and our seeking to be faithful. Recollections of the history of the church are important for us to remember that we exist in a context that includes who we have been and what we have done. We can celebrate our achievements and learn from our mistakes (or the mistakes will repeat themselves). Hearing the reports from the demographic study, the congregational survey and the community study will set your decision making in the context of who you are today and to whom you are called to minister (your neighbors).

After sharing and hearing all this information, the gathering defines what it has heard and what it knows to be the needs of the community and it describes what gifts God has given this congregation to meet those needs. Finally, the gathering is ready to begin to delineate what it understands God's Vision for this church to be and what Goals and Objectives must be achieved in order to make this Vision a reality. The work of the Transition Team/Mission Study Team must be not only to choose what approach to use in the Congregational Gatherings, but must also be to build wide-spread excitement and commitment to this work within the congregation in order to get as much involvement as possible

6. **Final Report and One-Page Summary, Written by Committee, Approved by Session and Reviewed by COM:** After the congregational gatherings, the Transition Team/Mission Study Team will continue to develop the ideas gathered from the congregation and write the Mission Study Report.
7. **Report Presented to Congregation:** Once both the Session and COM have reviewed the Mission Study Report, it should be presented to the congregation.
8. **Session Implements Recommendations of Report:** The Session should begin to decide how to use the Mission Study and how to implement the new Vision with its Goals and Objectives.

Approach Two—A Shorter Route with Several Possibilities

There are circumstances and churches where the expanded process to the Mission Study is not feasible. What follows is a process that is centered on gathering the input of church leadership, but does not extend across the breadth of the congregation:

1. **Appoint Committee of Session to Design & Lead Mission Study:** The Session begins by assigning a committee or team to lead a Mission Study. Often this will be the Transition Team, but may be separately populated as a Mission Study Team. They will have the responsibility for designing and implementing each step of the Mission Study.
2. **Congregational Reflection:** Among the Bible stories choose one that best exemplifies your congregation today and explain why this narrative represents the congregation.
3. **Spiritual Gifts:** Consider the gifts of the last pastor there were identified as helpful during his or her tenure. Look at the list of competencies on the Mission Information Form, available in the Committee on Ministry tool kit on the Presbytery website. Identify the five skills believed to be most important in the next 10 years and explain why each of those skills will help your church respond faithfully to God's call. What assets does your congregation have – whether fixed assets or the gifts of the members of your congregation – to bring hope in the name of Jesus Christ.
4. **Demographic Study:** Mission Insite is a good resource for this step in the process. www.missioninsite.com – (PRP's Agency # is E8YOR) – At this point create personal login and password, and discover the neighborhood around your church. Talk to the area school principal(s) or superintendent about the projected school population in the next five years. Walk around your neighborhood. What will your next pastor need to do to help to bring the needs of your community and the gifts of congregation together in a way that honors God?
5. **Handling Crisis:** Imagine that a fairly controversial issue has come before the session. Describe what the debate will be like. What decisions will have to be delayed until the congregation or members of it are consulted? How will the session report its decision once it is made? What do you notice about the way you imagine this scenario? What will the next pastor need to know about how you make decisions and handle controversial topics in his congregation?
6. **Imagining the Possibilities:** Compile a list of the highlights during the former pastor's tenure. Tell stories about each of them. Identify what part the pastor played in those events. Identify the part that other members of the congregation or community played. Now imagine your congregation five years from now. What will be the highlights of those five years? What will the pastor have played? What part will members of the session have played? What part will members of the congregation have played? What part will members of the community have played?
7. **Final Report and One-Page Summary, Written by Committee, Approved by Session and Reviewed by COM:** After the congregational gatherings, the Transition Team/Mission Study Team will continue to develop the ideas gathered from the congregation and write the Mission Study Report.
8. **Report Presented to Congregation:** Once both the Session and COM have reviewed the Mission Study Report, it should be presented to the congregation.
9. **Session Implements Recommendations of Report:** The Session should begin to decide how to use the Mission Study/how to implement a new vision with its goals and objectives.

Appendix One - Four Paths for Congregational Involvement

Path One: “The Congregationalist”

“The Congregationalist” is an approach that emphasizes the congregation’s involvement and input into the process. This design has a small congregation in mind and assumes gathering the whole congregation and using break-out-groups. While some congregations may use all five sessions, most will choose to combine, adjust or adapt the sessions as appropriate for their situation.

Preparation

- Plan your meeting times and places. Try to have the meetings about a week apart so that what is learned and shared will have time to percolate through the congregation.
- Make sure ample notice is given to the congregation, and special attempts are made to invite everyone personally as well as through announcements.
- In order for everyone to have a chance to be involved, childcare arrangements - provided by non- church members – must be made for children of all ages. Consider asking the youth group (and their advisors) from another church and then make a donation to their ministry. Remember - your confirmed youth are members of the church and should be encouraged to participate in the mission study process.
- Identify comfortable rooms to use, with heat or air on and make sure there is no conflict of use of space.
- Make refreshments available - not too heavy or folks will go to sleep! Coffee, tea, water, juices, etc. Perhaps fruit or vegetables for snacking.
- Make sure you have more paper, markers, Bibles, hymnals or song sheets, pencils, tape, etc. than you think you will need. Better to have too much than not enough. Large pieces of newsprint or flip-chart paper is particularly helpful. You may need to order some ahead of time.
- Prepare and copy handouts as indicated in the Session instructions. The content for the handouts is included in the Session instructions; you will need to make your own originals for duplication.
- Allow ample time for presenters to conduct their required research and prepare to present their findings. (Session I: History of the Church, Session II: Demographics, Session III: Community Leaders, Financial Statement and Congregational Survey).
- Arrange not only for leaders for small break-out groups but for recorders (note-takers) as well. Major points shared in every session should be recorded to be used by the MST later in its work.

Points to remember throughout the process

- Do advance preparation so you are not running around looking for things during gathering.
- After you have designed the meeting, be sure to go through each step as it comes. Don’t skip ahead of yourself!
- Give everyone the time to know and understand the information that is gathered. Sometimes groups want to jump right into debating ideas that are sparked before they understand all the material. When it comes time for discussion, make sure they hear each other well enough to understand new ideas before taking off on a new idea.
- Observe the instructions and time allotted. Try to keep everyone on track time-wise.
- Take it easy! This should be a fun experience for you and for the whole congregation. Not only will it be a time of blessing in your church’s faith but also of renewal in its sense of community and purpose.
- Don’t afraid to laugh! Keep a sense of perspective and humor.

SESSION I (2 – 2½ hours)

30-35 minutes Introduction

Open with prayer

Introduce yourselves with names and your reason for joining or attending this church (allow one minute each, so if you have more than twenty people at your gathering break into smaller groups). Make a record of these stories.

Present: The purpose of this Mission Study - why you are doing it

The process of this Mission Study - what will happen when

Guidelines for our work together - openness, willingness to listen, etc. The process of Session I - what will happen in this meeting

15 minutes Become acquainted on a different level

For each of the following questions, invite participants to stand along the wall according to where they ‘stand’ personally with regard to the question. (participants will make a continuum from one extreme to the other):

- How long have you belonged to, or participated in, this church?
(continuum: since earlier this year - for your entire life)
- How long have you been a Presbyterian?
(never - since earlier this year - entire life)
- How many of your family members have ever belonged to, or participated actively in this church?
(only myself - many relatives)
- Do you consider yourself a thinking person or a feeling person? (thinker - feeler)
- Do you consider yourself an introverted person or an extroverted person? (introvert - extrovert)
- When you think about the ministry of the church do your initial thoughts tend to be more about individuals and their needs or about the needs of the larger body?
(individuals - larger body)

As you wrap up the exercise, acknowledge that we approach life differently and that is both a blessing and a challenge. Discuss how this truth may affect your working together as a congregation.

30 minutes Explore our faith

Prepare *Exploring Our Faith* handouts from the related pages in this Guide.

Distribute handouts and complete as individuals for five minutes.

Divide the larger group into threes and discuss for twenty minutes. Re-gather as a group and spend 5 minutes discussing learnings. 25-35 minutes **Recollections**

Divide the larger group into groups of 15 or fewer people.

Have people sitting in a circle so they can see one another as they speak.

Tell the group that each person will have about one minute to share his or her recollections. You may want to use timers to help the stories move along. Remind the participants that remembering is an important part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. You may want to read Deut. 6:10-12 with its warning to take heed “lest you forget”.

Have a recorder taking notes in each group.

Ask each participant to share:

- Recollections of the most significant event in the life of the congregation since you have been a member? Details?
- List special or traditional things your congregation does every year.

When all have shared their recollections, ask the church historian or a person who searched the session records to report on ten important things that have happened in the life of the congregation. (you will need to ask someone to prepare this ahead of time).

10-15 minutes **Timeline**

Post a paper Timeline on a wall, beginning with the beginning of the church and continuing to the present day.

Have people go to the Timeline and add the following information to it:

- Identify when you or family became members of the congregation.
- What are the earliest memories of the congregation?
- Note important events in life of congregation - building changes, new programs, pastoral or staff changes, etc.
- Include significant events in the community, region, nation, world, and PC(USA) (mergers, factory closings, war, etc.)

Leave the timeline up and encourage the congregation to add to in the coming weeks.

10 minutes **Closing**

Reflect on Session I — Share discoveries about ourselves and the church.

Introduce Session II — when, where, major focus Close with a song and prayer.

EXPLORING OUR FAITH HANDOUT

1. “Faith” has held many different meanings for people. Which statement comes closest to your view of faith? (circle only one response)
 - a. A life of commitment of God, demonstrated by trying to do what is right.
 - b. A decision to accept Christ, instead of continuing in one’s own sinful ways.
 - c. A trust in God’s grace
 - d. A belief in all that the Bible says
 - e. As long as people are sincere in their beliefs, they show faith.
 - f. The idea of faith does not seem meaningful to me.
 - g. I am not sure, although I am convinced that faith is important.
 - h. None of these applies; my view is _____

2. Which statement comes closest to your view of the way in which God influences what happens in the world? (Circle only one response)
- God sets history in motion but does not interfere with it anymore.
 - God influences individuals who then shape events.
 - God influences individuals but also shapes events directly through nations and social affairs.
 - I do not think of God as “influencing” the things that happen.
 - I am not sure, because I have not thought about it before.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____
3. People often wonder how a merciful God allows terrible things to happen, such as the killing of six million Jews during World War II or the destruction of 9/11. Which response comes closest to your view of how God lets these things happen? (Circle only one response)
- God allows terrible things to happen in order to punish people for their sins.
 - We do not know why these things happen, but God is able to use them for good.
 - God does not have anything to do with these things; the devil causes them.
 - People cause these things to happen, not God.
 - I do not know how God can allow these things to happen; it does not seem right to me.
 - I am not sure about this topic.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____
4. Which statement comes closest to your view of life after death? (Circle only one response)
- There is no life after death.
 - There must be something after death, but I have no idea what it may be like.
 - There is life after death, but no punishment.
 - There is life after death, with rewards for some people and punishment for others.
 - The notion of reincarnation expresses my view of what happens to people after death.
 - I am not sure if there is life after death.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____
5. Which statement comes closest to your view of the Bible? (Circle only one response)
- The Bible, though written by individuals, has been so controlled by the Holy Spirit that it is without error in all it teaches in matters of science and history as well as in matters of theology.
 - The Bible, though written by individuals and reflecting their personalities, has been so controlled by the Holy Spirit that it is trustworthy in matters of theology and ethics, but not necessarily in matters of science and history.
 - All of the Bible is both the inspired word of god and at the same time a thoroughly human document.
 - Portions of the Bible, including some of its theological and ethical positions, may not be the inspired word of God.
 - The Bible is merely a record of the moral and religious experiences of Hebrews and Christians.
 - I am not sure that I can say.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____

6. Which statement comes closest to your view of people in other countries who have never heard about Christ? (Circle only one response)
- I desire to share the love of Christ with them.
 - If we do not preach Christ to them, then they will be damned forever.
 - We should not worry about them, because so many people in this country have not heard about Christ.
 - We should respect their religions and stop trying to impose Christianity upon them.
 - I am not sure, because I have not considered it.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____
7. Christians sometimes describe God as a “God of Justice” or a God who commands us to bring about justice. Which statement comes closest to your view of what this means. (Circle only one response)
- The Church should work for justice and should support groups that are working to end inequality and oppression.
 - At a personal level, I should try to be just and fair in all of my dealings.
 - This is a spiritual term that refers to God’s punishing evil, rather than to activities of the church or to individuals.
 - The concept of god’s justice does not hold meaning for me.
 - I am not sure to what it refers.
 - None of these applies; my view is _____

SESSION II (2 – 2½ HOURS)

20-25 minutes Introduction

Open with prayer (and a song if you like)

Reintroduce yourselves with name and a hope for this Mission Study (be sure to record these)

Reflect upon Session I - things that stood out, learnings, discoveries, etc. Discuss the process of Session II - what will happen today.

10 minutes Focus on the timeline, noting changes/revisions from first meeting

Be prepared to comment on the changes over the years, past trends, etc., noting:

- what significant events happened in the immediate past decade, and
- what significant events happened in the decade prior to that one. Continue to leave the timeline up during the mission study process.

5-10 minutes Distribute and discuss a handout listing

12 Assumptions that Guide Thoughts on the Church of Tomorrow by Bill Easum.

- North America is the new mission field.
- Society will become increasingly hostile toward Christianity in the twenty first century.
- The distinction between clergy and laity will disappear in the twenty-first century.
- If churches only improve what they have been doing, they will die.

- e. The best way to fail today is to improve yesterday's successes.
- f. Bureaucracies and traditional practices are the major causes of the decline of most denominations in North America.
- g. Traditional churches that thrive in the twenty-first century will initiate radical changes before the year 2001.
- h. God exists and creates everything.
- i. Jesus Christ is the center of all human life.
- j. The Bible is our primary source of faith and practice.
- k. The purpose of the Body of Christ is to bring the world to faith in Jesus Christ.
- l. A way will be found to avoid world ecological and economic disaster.

15-20 minutes Bible/Theological Study

Prepare handouts or newsprint with the following questions:

- What does being the salt of the earth look like for you as a church?
- What are some of the ways your church has been the light of the world?
- How does the outside world see your good works?

Read Matthew 5: 13-16

Divide into groups of 3-4 and consider the questions.

Re-convene as a larger group and invite people to share a few comments in the whole group about what they discovered. Ask them NOT to report for their small group, but to respond to the question, "What was an insight you had about the Bible Study as you talked with each other?"

60-75 minutes Present the Demographic Study

Someone will need to have studied the demographic information and be prepared to present the data and an analysis of it.

Use of overhead projector and maps is great. Some of the information may need to be duplicated and handed out.

Take questions as they come up to make sure that this material is understood.

10 minutes Closing

Reflect upon Session II - major learnings. Introduce Session III - when, where, major focus. Close with a song and prayer.

SESSION III (2 – 2½ HOURS)

20 minutes

Open with prayer (and a song if you like)

Reintroduce yourselves with name & concern for the church you feel (be sure to record these)

Reflect upon Sessions I & II — major learnings

Discuss Session III — what will happen today

15-20 minutes Reports on Community Study

Each person who contacted a community leader needs to state who was interviewed and why, and then share briefly what their response was to the questions.

There should be a written report of these interviews already filed with the Mission Study Team. Only take questions for clarification.

5 minutes Financial Health of the Church

The Session should make a brief report on the current financial health of the church.

30-40 minutes Congregational Survey

Present results of tabulation using overhead projector and analysis of major learnings from the Survey.

5-8 minutes Strengths of the Church

Brainstorm: compile a list of strengths of this church

Now combine the ideas lifted up into groupings of similar issues. Save compiled list for use in Session V.

20 minutes Study Scripture

Prepare a handout with these questions on it:

1. What does Paul's description say to you about the Church?
2. What three factors from Paul's description ought to apply to all churches?
3. How does Paul's description fit this particular church?

Distribute pencils, Bibles, and the handout for the Bible Study. Divide into groups of four or five and in each group:

- Have a volunteer read aloud I Corinthians 12:413
- Write individual responses to the questions for five minutes
- Discuss the questions in the small groups for 10 minutes

5-8 minutes Reconvene and share significant insights from the Scripture study

15-20 minutes Identify Needs of Church and Community

Distribute newsprint and markers to the groups.

Explain that brainstorming means that all ideas that are lifted up are accepted without debate and listed on sheets of newsprint.

Brainstorm 1: compile a list of needs of *church*

Combine the ideas lifted up into groupings of similar issues

Brainstorm 2: compile a list of needs of *community*

Combine the ideas lifted up into groupings of similar issues

Save the combined brainstorming lists for Session V

10 minutes **Closing**

Reflect upon Session III — major learnings. Introduce Session IV — when, where, major focus. Close with a song and a prayer.

SESSION IV (2 – 2½ HOURS)

20 minutes

Open with prayer (and a song if you like)

Reintroduce yourselves with name & a thought or feeling that has arisen about the church since this study began. (record these)

Invite the group to reflect upon Sessions I & II & III - share major learnings

Discuss Session IV - what will happen today

5-10 minutes **Timeline and Community Study**

Comment briefly on any significant changes in the timeline

Invite any reports on interviews which have not been made yet

15-20 minutes **Study Scripture**

Prepare a handout with the following questions:

1. What do Paul's words say to you about setting goals for the future?
2. What does Scripture say to you about planning?
3. What does the life of Jesus say to you about planning?
4. What does the early Church say to you about planning? Distribute pencils, Bibles and handouts.

Divide the larger group into groups of four or five and in each group.

In each group:

- Have a volunteer read aloud Philippians 3:12-14.
- Write individual responses to the questions.
 - Discuss the questions and answers as a small group

5 minutes **Reconvene and share significant insights from the Scripture study**

10 minutes **What is a Vision Statement?**

Spend some time explaining what a Vision Statement is using these *Characteristics of a Good Vision Statement*:

- The vision is faithful to the congregation's best understanding of its religious heritage.
- The vision statement is oriented to the future.
- The vision is appropriate to this congregation.
- The vision statement is realistic in terms of the congregation's context.
- The vision statement contains both judgment and promise, good news and bad news.
- The vision is, in so far as is possible, a shared image of the desired future.
- The vision statement is specific enough to provide direction for the congregation's life, but broad enough to encompass multiple but complementary visions important to groups within the congregation.

Make clear that a Vision Statement is not goals nor objectives; rather, goals and objectives will be built upon the Vision Statement.

20 minutes **Visioning**

Re-divide the larger group into small groups, ensuring individuals are with all new group members and no family members in the same group. Distribute newsprint and markers to the groups.

Each small group should write two sentences describing a vision for the future of this church.

These sentences should seek to address the questions:

1. What kind of community of faith are we called to be?
2. What kinds of activities are we called to do as a people of God?

15-30 minutes **Share Vision Statements**

Post each group's work and have each group read its sentences aloud.

Discuss similarities and differences in the sentences.

Work toward consensus on some major points, perhaps by choosing important words and phrases to recommend to the Mission Study Team for their on-going work.

10 minutes **Closing**

Reflect upon Session IV — share major learnings. Introduce Session V — when, where, major focus. Close with a song and prayer.

SESSION V (2 – 2½ HOURS)

20-25 minutes

Open with prayer (and a song if you like)

Reintroduce yourselves with name & joy about this church for which you are thankful. (record these)

Have the group reflect upon Sessions I & II & III & IV — share major learnings

Discuss Session V — what will happen today

15-20 minutes Study Scripture

Prepare a handout with the following questions:

1. What do the words of Hebrews say to you about persevering?
2. What does Scripture say to you about the community of faith?
3. What does Hebrews say to you about the joy of life in faith?
4. What example does Christ set for us in living lives focused on God's goals?

Distribute pencils, Bibles and handouts.

Divide into groups of four or five.

In each group:

- Have a volunteer read aloud Hebrews 12:1-2
 - Write individual responses to the questions
- Discuss the questions and responses.

5 minutes Reconvene and share significant insights from the Scripture study

5 minutes Vision Statement

Recap of the Vision Statements developed at the last gathering

Report of the Mission Study Team on its rewrite of the Vision Statement based on those statements.

Post the new Vision Statement for all to see.

5 minutes Introduction to Goal Setting

Post the newsprint results of the brainstorming exercise in Session III Quickly review the clusters of items on the list.

Spend some time introducing the process of goal setting:

- Introduce the importance of goal setting by stating that the purpose of planning is to organize our ministry.
- Remind the folk that we plan because the reason behind our planning is important - namely the mission of the body of Christ.
- The best way to plan is to give ourselves some goals to achieve.
- For goals to be workable they must have three characteristics:

S - Specific: Peace on earth is too broad, safety in our neighborhood is specific

A - Attainable: Can it be done in the time allotted and with the resources available?

M - Measurable: Will you know when you have attained your goal?

How?

- Goals begin with some kind of verb: for example, “to develop...” When you write your goals, consider the following verbs:

CHOOSE, DECIDE, RESOLVE, BUILD, EXPAND, SERVE, STUDY, INCREASE, DESIGN

- As you think about the church, imagine several kinds of goals that MAINTAIN a solid existing program; goals that DEVELOP a weaker existing program; goals that ADD brand new programs, and goals that REMOVE the ineffective programs. (Sometimes adding a new program requires deleting an old one).

20-30 minutes **Developing Goals**

Divide into at least three small groups no larger than 10 each, encourage family groups to split among small groups.

Distribute newsprint and markers.

Have each group develop 3 goals, write them on newsprint, and bring them back to the larger group.

15-20 minutes **Sharing Goals**

Have each group post their newsprint and present their goals.

After all the groups have shared, invite a conversation by asking two questions:

- Where do you see some similarity among these goals?
- Where do you see some differences that will need to be reconciled?

Try to reach some consensus on three to six goals that seem most important.

If you have difficulty doing this, you can find suggestions on pg. 18.13 in Congregational Mission Studies.

15-20 minutes **Developing Objectives**

Help the participants understand Objectives:

- An objective is a way to begin to reach the goal. For instance, if your goal is to grow in membership by 10% each year for the next five years, your objectives would be specific things you could do to help you attain that goal.
- Once again, groups will need to apply the SAM characteristics:

S — Specific, A — Attainable, M — Measurable.

Divide the larger group into evenly sized groups of 8-20 people.

Distribute newsprint and markers to each group.

Assign three to six goals to each group. Note: In larger churches, some groups might work on the same goals; in smaller churches you might only be able to assign one or two goals to each group. Ensure that all goals are assigned to at least one group.

Ask each group to develop two or more objectives for each goal.

Invite the groups to list their objectives on newsprint and bring them back to the whole group.

10 minutes **Report Objectives**

Invite each group to report on the objectives it developed.

Remind the gathering that these may well not be the only objectives needed to reach these goals, but it is a way to begin thinking about what will be needed.

10 minutes **Closing**

Thank everyone for participating in the Congregational Gatherings.

Path Two: “The Presbyterian”

“The Presbyterian” is designed to emphasize the session’s role in discerning the position and direction of the church. While it works well in congregations of any size, larger congregations may appreciate the more centralized approach and process.

The Mission Study is the responsibility of the session—during a time of transition or whenever the urge arises. It may avail itself of the help of an interim pastor in completing it or may complete it on its own. Written answers to these questions must be submitted to the Committee on Ministry before a Pastor Nominating Committee can be elected. If undergone with installed leadership, the session works together with congregation and staff to journey together. The session may consult with its congregation in whatever way works best in its context to create the answers to the questions.

1. Among the Biblical stories identified by the pastor and session members, choose one that best exemplifies your congregation today. Explain why this narrative represents this congregation.
2. Look at the list of gifts of the last pastor that were identified as helpful during his or her tenure. Look at the list of gifts that may be needed by the next pastor.
3. Look at the list of skills listed on the Ministry Information Form from which the Pastor Nominating Committee will choose. Identify the five skills that you believe to be the most important in the next 10 years and explain why each of those skills will help you to respond faithfully to God’s call.
4. Compile the list of highlights during the former pastor’s tenure. Tell stories about each of them.
5. Identify what part the pastor played in those events. Identify the part that other members of the congregation or community played. Now imagine your congregation five years from now. What will be the highlights of those five years?
6. What part will the pastor have played?
7. What part will members of the session have played?
8. What part will members of the congregation have played? What part will members of the community have played?
9. Imagine that a fairly controversial issue has come before the session. Describe what the debate will be like. What decisions will be made at the session table? What decisions will have to be delayed until the congregation or members of it are consulted? How will the session report its decision once it is made?
10. What do you notice about the way you imagine this scenario. What will the next pastor need to know about how you make decisions and handle controversial topics in this congregation?
11. What assets does your congregation have - whether fixed assets or the gifts of the members of your congregation - to bring hope in the name of Jesus Christ into this picture?
12. What will your next pastor need to do to help to bring the needs of your community and the gifts of congregation together in a way that honors God?

a. Path Three: “The Universalist”

“The Universalist” is a streamlined approach designed for any congregation on any size. Its simplicity works well for congregations that have had recent turnover of pastors, having completed a Mission Study in recent years. These questions can be used first with the session, and then the session can lead the congregation in discussion.

1. How has our community and congregation changed in the last twenty years?
2. In what ways has our congregation adapted its ministry and mission to respond to these changes?
3. What areas of ministry and mission could be adapted to further respond to these changes?
4. What resources could assist our congregation in making these changes?

Path Four: “The Episcopalian”

“The Episcopalian” option approaches a simple question, “Who is God calling us to serve?” from several perspectives—biblical, theological, and local—providing numerous opportunities for discerning God’s direction for your congregation. The option works particularly well in larger congregations, in which interim leadership can assist in the teaching portions.

Session One: Who is God Calling Us to Serve?

Some Biblical Perspectives

Please note the highlighted question on your page and find your “partner” in the room. After introducing yourselves, review your scripture and question, and prepare a two-minute response for the whole group. We will be timing your answers—so be precise and concise!

“Blessed to Be a Blessing”

Genesis 12:1-4

“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

Question: When God called Abram (Abraham) to go into a new country, Abram is promised that he would be “blessed...so that (he) would be a blessing.” How would you describe “blessed to be a blessing” in modern terms and/or images?

Extra Credit: What is the retirement age for being one of God’s people?

“A Kingdom of Priests”

Exodus 19:2b-6

“There Israel encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.’”

Question: When God called Moses up the mountain to give the ten commandments, God first reminded him of the people’s deliverance as well as the new covenant. If being God’s people means to be a “kingdom of priests,” what is our role in helping people relate with God?

“Build, Support and Pray”

Jeremiah 29:4-7

“⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

Question: During this time when God’s people were exiles in a strange and foreign land, they had to grapple with many difficult questions of adapting to a new situation. What does it mean for today’s Christians to “seek the welfare of the city...and pray to the Lord on its behalf?”

“Laborers in God’s Fields”

Matthew 9:36-38

“³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Question: In Jesus’ day, these types of laborers were common and easily understood. What is a modern image for “the laborers in the field?”

“Go, Teach and Make Disciples”

Matthew 28:18-20

“¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

Question: No one group can go into “all nations.” What part of the world is God calling us into in order to teach and make disciples?

“Serve as Jesus Served”

Mark 10:43-45

“⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Question: How can we as elders model this sense of service Jesus describes?

“Abide and Bear Fruit”

John 15:1-11

¹ “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”

Question: Producing “good fruit” requires staying connected to God. By what attributes/measures would God consider a “fruitful” church?

“Building Up the Body of Christ”

Ephesians 4:7, 11-12

“⁷ But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift....¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

Question: Paul describes God’s church as different people do different jobs for the common good of the whole. List three ways we as a session can “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ.”

Extra Credit: How many gifts/jobs must an elder have in order to “worthy” of their calling?

Additional Scripture Texts Related to Mission

The congregation's vision, purpose, identity, context, program, future, i.e., who it is, what it does, where it is, where it's going

- Matthew 28:16-20: The Great Commandment—Jesus' commission to his disciples; what are we about?
- Luke 10:29-37: The Good Samaritan: who is our neighbor?
- Acts 2: 41-47: Characteristics of a healthy church.
- Corinthians 5: 16-21: Christians as a new creation; the ministry of reconciliation; ambassadors for Christ.
- Peter 2:4-10: The "holiness" of God's people; images of the church as a spiritual house, living stones, a holy priesthood. How is God "building" our church?
- Corinthians 12:1-11: Spiritual Gifts in their great variety; how we use God's gifts to us; how we relate and respect one another's gifts.
- Corinthians 12:12-27: The Body of Christ; members of the body work together, suffer together, rejoice together.
- Ephesians 4:1-16: An appeal for unity; with spiritual gifts, the Body of Christ builds itself up in love.
- Micah 6:1-8: What does the Lord require of you?

Additional Texts Related to Call

- The call to follow, to serve, to lead, now and in the future.
- Genesis 12:1-9: The call of Abram and Sarai, and a people of faith.
- Isaiah 6:1-13: The call of Isaiah, and how our context affects our call.
- Jeremiah 1:1-10: The call of Jeremiah. What does God's Word have to do with it?
- Matthew 5:1-14: The Beatitudes—Jesus' blessings upon the characteristics of his followers; the "call of blessing," styles and characteristics of leadership.
- Acts 9:1-9: The call of Paul (conversion of Saul) on the road to Damascus.
- Acts 1:15-26: The call of Matthias and gathering of the Twelve to elect a replacement for Judas, moving forward following disappointment.

Session Two: Who is God Calling Us to Serve?

Some Theological Perspectives

“Presbyterian Theology”

Doctrine/Teaching	Implications/Applications	Sample Scriptures
Sovereignty of God	God is at work in the lives of us and others We serve God’s plan—not other way around	John 3:16-17 Mark 10:42-45
Sinfulness of All Humanity	No human is perfect/holds all truth Judge others humbly/do not condemn	Romans 3:9-12 Luke 6:37-42
Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior	This is the essential—the rest is negotiable Based on what God did—not what we do	Ephesians 2:8-10 Philippians 2:1-11
Call to Witness and Service	Begin with God’s message Relate to people’s needs—where they are Growth is by-product of faithfulness	Luke 10:1-12, 17-19 Matthew 28:18-20
Church is God’s Witness to World	We are called to be one as Trinity is one How we act reflects on God and church	John 17:20-21 Galatians 3:25-29

A “Big Tent” Church

- History and Legacy of our church—a “Big Tent” church
- Everyone is welcome and included—conservatives, liberals, and everyone in between
- Makes us a “true” Presbyterian church—
- Consistent with our theology— “Reformed and Always Willing to be Reformed”
- Challenging to live out in our polarized society

“Peace, Unity and Purity”—Conservative/Liberal Complementarity

- Seeking “peace, unity and purity” has been a part of the church’s struggle from inception
- Each is having a valued foundation and valuable contribution
- Different combinations of emphases develop different outcomes
- Consensus has been that we must work together, with God’s help, to fulfill all three in God’s community as a sign of God’s kingdom in heaven and on earth

Five Foundations of Morality (The Righteous Mind, J. Haidt, pp. 124-154)

1. Care/Harm
 2. Fairness/Cheating
 3. Loyalty/Betrayal
 4. Authority/Subversion
 5. Sanctity/Degradation
- “Liberal” tends to emphasize Care and Fairness
 - “Conservative” tends to emphasize Authority and Sanctity
 - Both value Loyalty
 - Organizations need all five to be balanced, healthy and fruitful

Theological Questions for Our Presbyterian Church

1. What does God desire of our church?
2. Does God desire our church to be a “Big Tent” church?
3. Can we be faithful while acknowledging/respecting another’s differing views?
4. Are we willing to work together to follow and embody God’s desires?

A Concluding Word from Jesus (John 13:34-35)

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Who is God Calling Us to Serve?

Some Theological Scriptures

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Mark 10:42-45

⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their ruler’s lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Romans 3:9-12

⁹ What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, ¹⁰ as it is written:

“There is no one who is righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one.”

Luke 6:37-42

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Philippians 2:1-11

² If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was^[a] in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God

also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 10:1-12, 17-19

10After this the Lord appointed seventy* others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹²I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!’ ¹⁸He said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

John 17:20-21

²⁰ ‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Galatians 3:25-29

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Session Three: Who is God Calling Us to Serve?

Some Local Perspectives

Please note that these questions are to be answered during/following a thorough examination of a demographic study of your community and congregation. Any member(s) of your Mission Study Team may present this demographic information. See MissionInsite information above.

1. Who has God called us to serve in the past? Who are the people already involved in our congregation? What do they look like? What do they value?
2. Who has God brought into community? What do they look like? What do they value? Are they presently being served by other congregations?
3. Let's list the groups of people living in our community that God *could* be calling us to serve?
4. What gifts and resources has God placed within our congregation to serve the people in our community? What are we presently doing to serve them? What could we be doing to serve them?
5. What gifts and resources will we need to develop in order to serve the people in our community? How much bandwidth (resources of members, leaders, finances, etc.) do we have to serve the people in our community?
6. Considering the groups of people available to be served and the church members who can serve, who is God calling us to serve? Let's list a few options and some possible approaches to reach and serve them.

Appendix Two: Demographic Studies (TBD)