

6.1360 **Triennial Visits—Replaced in 2020 with the Congregational Advocate Program (see 6.1365).**

Triennial Visits are planned to establish a relationship and conversation between Presbytery and its sessions and Pastors, to listen and discuss mission and ministry of a particular congregation, and to encourage full participation in the life of the larger church.

6.1361 Plan:

1. **Three-year cycle:**
All churches will be visited by the Committee on Ministry based upon a three-year cycle. The schedule will also allow for additional consultation and assistance from Committee on Ministry for churches facing extraordinary challenges. Additionally, an effort will be made to balance the workload across the clusters.
2. **Participation:**
The triennial model will use a first-year review workshop within the first year of a new pastorate. For all continuing pastorates there will be a three-year rotation schedule. The regular triennial consultations shall involve a meeting with the pastor(s), clerk of session, 2-3 elders and 2 members of Committee on Ministry.
3. **Three meeting segments:**
The visit should be staged to allow three separate exchanges: the Committee on Ministry members to visit privately with the pastor(s) to focus on pastoral questions below, the Committee on Ministry members to visit privately with the elders, and the Committee on Ministry members, pastors and elders together. When multiple pastors are on staff the Committee on Ministry members will meet separately with each pastor.
4. **Assessment report:**
After the Triennial Visit, the Committee on Ministry team will prepare a one page report that summarizes the following: overall health assessment, mission goals (it is noted that the goals may require further dialogue between the church and Committee on Ministry team), current strengths and weaknesses. The report would be distributed to all Committee on Ministry members and to the church's session members along with the 10-year Statistical Report from PCUSA and the Executive Version of Mission Insite. (the data reports would be the same as provided to the small group of elders involved in the Triennial visit; see below).
5. **Follow-up activity:**
If the Triennial Visit reveals warning signals, a customized plan should be developed for the church with appropriate interventions planned. The following may be considered for intervention, launching a change effort or facilitating implementation: conduct a first-year review workshop, follow-up visits with Pastor, Session and/or selected elders, organize a Learning Community.

6.1362 Preparing for the Triennial Visit. Triennial visit members should go to the meeting equipped with the following, as applicable to the church:

1. Pastor(s) name(s), with their installation dates, and list of Session members that will be participating in the visit.
2. The church's previous written report on the Triennial Visit (will not be available until after the initial 3-year cycle.)
3. The church's year-end financial report (from the church or PRP).
4. 10-year Statistical Report from PCUSA.
5. MissionInsite Reports – www.missioninsite.com - (PRP's Agency # is E8YOR) – At this point, create Personal login and password.
6. Resources available to church on PRP's website. www.peacriverpresbytery.org
7. Committee on Ministry participants may bring additional resources available through PRP.

Questions:

It is anticipated that these questions will be used as discussion starters and may lead to the more specific questions that follow. The pastoral questions can be used to start the dialogue for the private discussion with the pastor(s).

1. In terms of ministry and programs, what are you excited about?
2. What are the questions you are asking yourselves?
3. What do you see as the most pressing issue/problem/concern in the life of your church?
4. What are the strengths, programs and emphases upon which you wish to keep building for the next three years? (The session may not be prepared to answer this question during the visit. If appropriate, a timeframe should be established for follow-up.)
5. Additional questions may address topics such as evangelism, long range planning, budgeting, officer training and community outreach.

Pastoral questions

1. In actual breakdown of time, energy and thought, is your ministry to this church in balance? Are your intended goals for ministry being realized in this congregation, or are the goals achieved different from your intentions?
2. What is the wonderful side of ministry with this church? What is the not so wonderful?
3. Are your financial needs being met? Over the long and short hauls, are your spiritual and physical needs being met? Your need for renewal?
4. How does the program of this church meet what you hoped it could?
5. You support a great many people. Are there people from whom you draw support? Are they readily available to you when you need them?

6.1363 First Year Review Workshop Purpose. To name the expectations, affirm the experiences, and appreciate the hopes that the PNC, the pastor, the session, and COM have for the church as the pastor begins his/her ministry as pastor/head of staff, and as the church moves into God's future. Two different models are available for adaptation to the situation; Great Expectations and From Gratitude to Hope. Both are outlined below.

Great Expectations:

Part I Table groups (Interview Conversations) – every table has both PNC and session members. Directions:

1. Table Group –need a timekeeper, recorder, reporter.
2. Pair Interviews - Turn to person at your table -- Take 10 minutes each to interview each other by asking the other all 4 questions.
3. Switch – 10 minutes.
4. Note: when you return to the Table Group you will be asked to introduce each other to the table group sharing.
 - a. Name, current role, number years of service, and their hometown or Presbytery.
 - b. One highlight from the interview.

Question 1:

(Opening - we are in this together) Share what excited you or attracted you about your initial invitation (call) to serve.

- on the session
- on the PNC
- or come as pastor
- What keeps you here?

Question 2:

(High Point) – Looking back over the past 3 years, what has been a high point, a time when you felt most alive, most inspired. What was it about that experience that made it a high point? Who was involved? Tell a story.

Question 3:

(Core Factors) - As you think about what it takes to be a faithful, healthy, growing, vibrant, alive, and spiritually and emotionally mature congregation, what are some of the core factors (life-giving forces) that will allow that to emerge at your church?

Question 4:

(Futuring) – If you were given three wishes to improve the health and vitality of this pastor- people-session-congregation-presbytery partnership, what would they be? (Write down on 3x5 cards).

Part II Questions discussed in PNC and Session table groups.

1) What has surprised you since pastor began? What has gone well? Where have there been bumps in the road?

2) PNC/Session- What are your top three expectations of your pastor during their first year at the church? How is it going?

Pastor - What were your top three expectations during your first year at the church? How is it going?

3) PNC/Session - When (not if) your pastor does something (or fails to do something) which bothers you or disappoints you, what will you do? (Most people say they will talk it over with the pastor. So, the follow up question is: If talking to the pastor about your concerns does not resolve the issue, what should you do next? What is not helpful from your perspective?)

Pastor - When (not if) a member of session does something (or fails to do something) which bothers you or disappoints you, what will you do? And when you do something that is of a concern to a member of the session, how do you hope they will handle that concern?

What is not helpful from your perspective?

4) PNC/Session - What are your three hopes for the church in the next year? What is the pastor's role in that? Pastor – What are your top hopes for church in the next year? What is your role in that?

5) What would you like to see the pastor do more of in the next year? What would you like to see the pastor do less of in the next year? What in your mind is essential for us to remember in the next year?

Pastor – What would you like the session and leadership of the church to do more of in the next year? What would you like to see less of in the next year? What in your mind is essential for us [pastor, session, congregational leadership] to remember in the next year?

6) Imagine it is 3 years from now and we have achieved everything we had set out to do during this time, what do you see? What has changed?

From Gratitude to Hope: A Guided Conversation: Introductions – The value of this kind of conversation

Gratitude – Looking back over the past year what has been a high point(s), a time when you felt inspired, hopeful. What was it about that experience that made it a high point? Who was involved? Tell a story.

Hope – on the threshold of ‘something new’ – What images, ideas, programs come to mind as you envision (church) doing ministry in the future?

Getting from here to there – Getting into one promise land is never a straight line (it took the children of Israel 40 years). Key is being aware – always seeking to grow up in Christ, etc.

- What roadblocks, internal and external, could keep us (as a congregation) and pastor from the preferred future?
 - o Attitudinal (e.g. how we make decisions, deal with conflict, exercise power, communicate, etc.)
 - o Externally (e.g. stewardship, resources, community realities, etc.)
- What do we – as a session – need in order to discern our new identity and mission and lead into it?
 - o need from ourselves as the session
 - o need from our pastor
 - o need from the congregation
 - o need from the Presbytery
- What is it our pastor needs from us? What have we learned over the past 10 years so that our pastor is able to:
 - o do well in this place as our pastor
 - o sustain him/herself
 - o serve with energy, intelligence, imagination and love

6.1364 Triennial Visit Invitation Letter. The following letter may be sent in advance of the Triennial Visit to prepare the ministers for the contact.

Dear Pastor _____,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee on Ministry (COM) to let you know that this is the year for a triennial visit with (name of church).

Shortly you will be contacted by _____ or _____ who are the Committee on Ministry team assigned to your church. They will work with you to schedule a date when the following can take place:

- A meeting between the pastor(s) and COM representatives. (If the church has multiple pastors a COM representative will meet privately with each pastor.)
- A meeting involving 2-3 elders, the Clerk of Session and the COM representatives.
- A joint meeting of all the parties (the pastor, the elders, Clerk, the COM representatives).
Each of these meetings should take about an hour. Discussions will focus on the church's strengths and challenges, its goals for the next three years, as well as any matter of importance to you and/or the Session.

We look forward to this opportunity to gain an insight into the life and work of the (church).

Sincerely,

Moderator, Committee on Ministry

6.1365 Congregational Advocate Program.

The purpose of this program is to establish and build a relationship between the Presbytery and its sessions and pastors so as to more effectively support the mission and ministry of specific congregations and to encourage more participation in the life of the larger church. It is expected that there will be some variety in the ways found to best build a strong relationship. With 37 churches and 21 COM members, each COM member is assigned 1-2 churches as a Congregational Advocate (CA). A position description for the CA is posted in the COM Tool Kit. The session is asked to select one active Ruling Elder as the primary contact person for the COM person. While a church may focus engagement on the CA, the approach is not meant to preclude interactions with other COM members.