

PACKET #3

CONGREGATIONAL PREPARATION

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CONGREGATIONAL PREPARATION

CHECKLIST

- () Interim and the Session determine if enough interim work has been completed for the Congregation to move forward on electing a PNC
- () COM will appoint a Liaison who will meet with the Session to outline the Twelve Questions and the election of a(n) Associate Pastor/Pastor Nominating Committee. (Note: This may be included in a prior Session visit. But a review of the process is always appropriate.)
- () Session determines process for nominating members of the A/PNC. Nominees may be elected by the session or a nominating committee designated by the session.
- () A congregational Meeting is held to Elect the A/PNC. The Liaison should be present to present the congregation with the process
- () The PNC gathers information from the congregation, the general community, and the church record books; and drafts answers to the Twelve Questions. *(P3-5)* This may also be accomplished with focus groups within the congregation. It is entirely appropriate for the Interim to work with the A/PNC on the process of gathering information for the Twelve Questions. It is part of their role and training. *(See process samples P3-6-7)* and Information on Mission Studies, COM Handbook pages 315-317
- () Session reviews and approves the Twelve Questions.
- () The final draft of the church's Twelve Questions is approved by the Committee on Ministry team assigned to that church.
- () If the Twelve questions were prepared by a separate committee and the PNC has not been elected, then at this time the COM liaison notifies the Session that the Congregation's Nominating Committee can begin the process of preparing a slate of members to be elected as the Pastor Nominating Committee.

COM LIAISON MEETING WITH THE SESSION

NOTE: This information may be shared as part of an earlier meeting with the Session or as part of a regular Session meeting, of which you will need to ask for time on the docket time.

Be sure you discuss the following items with the Session:

- () Comment on the value of this phase in the process.
It allows time for the church to make a break between pastoral leadership
It provides an opportunity for the church to examine its ministry and for every member of the congregation to express his/her views.
It gives the church a way of being intentional and clear about itself and by so doing it helps reduce the chances of selecting the wrong pastor (if the church knows what it wants to do and can communicate that clearly, then it can help pastors evaluate the church and vice versa).
- () Indicate that the Liaison will work with the Interim Pastor and the A/PNC to help them complete this work.
- () Help estimate the length of time expected to complete the questions
- () COM Liaison may (if desired) provide copies of other Questions done by churches of similar size, location, and mission. These are on file at Presbytery office.
- () Liaison Team in approving the study will check for the following:
 - Number representation of persons involved in process
 - A concise understanding of their mission
 - Accurate description of congregation
 - Clear goals and direction.

Twelve Question Background and Purpose

This is a time in the life of the church for the congregation to consider the way the church functions in the way of activities to support the congregation in fellowship, worship, service, etc. The Twelve Questions takes a look at all of these activities, and assesses how these are appropriate for the congregation and a statement of goals for future growth. The answers to the Questions provide a vehicle for the congregation to review its strengths, weaknesses and to prioritize what it feels is the actual purpose of the particular church. And what type of Pastor they will need for their future.

The Twelve Questions have several functions :

1. They allow a church (congregation and/or leadership) to think about direction and emphasis in effort and resources for the future.
2. It is the basis for part of the Church Information Form submitted to the General Assembly Louisville offices as part of the pastor search process.
3. It allows a pastor nominating committee to evaluate a candidate in terms of his/her strengths and interests in the areas of the work to be accomplished at the church.
4. Sent to a candidate, it allows the applicant to evaluate the fit of the church and its goals with candidate.
5. It serves as a tool for the session and pastoral staff to assess the accomplishments, and discuss **programs and staffing** to be changed/deleted due to circumstances.

12 QUESTIONS STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CHURCHES SEEKING A PASTOR

The following process replaces the laborious and time-consuming mission study process that was previously required of all churches seeking a pastor. This new process is designed to help churches prepare for a successful search. The questions listed below are the kind of questions that will be asked by potential candidates. These questions can be answered by the session or the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) or a combination of both. Developing answers will help the church and PNC as you enter into the interviewing process. We leave it up to each session and PNC to gather the resources needed to answer the questions. You may need the input of the congregation or other resources available in your community. We ask you to answer at least 10 of these questions. The answers should be presented to the session for their input and approval. The Committee on Ministry will then take a look at the answers to determine if you as a congregation are ready to move forward in the search process.

This process is intended to create an opportunity for creative, extensive dialogue within your congregation, Session and PNC. If your PNC is not able to fully answer these questions, the Committee on Ministry may determine that a complete and more detailed Mission Study would better satisfy the needs of your congregation.

What does your church have to offer that the world can't live without?

What sets your church apart from other Presbyterian churches? What sets it apart from churches of other denominations in your neighborhood?

What demographic information about your community will shape the next five years of ministry?

Why do people join your church? Why do they stay? Why don't they join? (If you don't know, what's your best guess?)

Who is your target audience? Who is your ideal new member?

What issues of faith are engaging the congregation? What is exciting people theologically?

What do you see as the role of the pastor? Describe your previous called pastor – what were his/her strengths and weaknesses? How did he/she divide his time among such things as worship, teaching, pastoral care, administration, and church growth?

Who are you as a church? What are the demographics of age, sex, race, education, etc? How would you describe the culture of the church?

What is the current relationship among staff, session and congregation? Would you like those relationships to change with the new pastor? If so, how?

What do you see as areas of growth and challenge in the next few years?

What programs/areas of your church life are calling cards for your church? Which programs/areas need to be ended?

What has been your most energetic dispute?

Twelve Question Process used at Church of the Hills Evergreen – 2005

The church had in the past used geographical areas to cluster members. The clusters had not been used recently.

A volunteer with the help of an office staff person updated the "geo-zones" so that all members were included and those who had moved were removed.

An all church dinner was held on a Sunday following worship in mid or late August. The process was explained and the 12 questions distributed.

The process included:

Members were invited to meet 3 times in their "geo-zones."

This followed shortly after the PNC was elected. A member of the PNC was invited/expected to attend each geo-zone meeting. Usually the one in which they lived. But some of the groups by geographical location did not include a member of the PNC so it was up to the PNC to cover all groups.

Most groups met in homes, a few met at the church.

There were approximately 15-18 groups, I don't remember exactly.

Many groups did meet 3 times.

Each group was asked to have a scribe who took notes. Notes were often given at the following meeting for review by the group.

Some groups did meet 3 times. Some met 2 times. Some did not meet and individuals were free to attend another group.

The notes were given to the PNC which compiled its summary of those notes.

In mid or late October newsprint was posted in the Narthex by the PNC on a Sunday morning. Each sheet had a quality of our new pastor, that had come from the geo-zone meetings. People were given 3 or 4 stickers and encouraged to place the stickers on the most important qualities for them. Following worship members were asked to place their stickers and/or comment about the qualities sought in a new pastor.

The PNC then used all of this input as they wrote the 12 questions and ultimately the Church information form.

Lakewood Process – 12 questions

First Presbyterian Lakewood took several actions in securing congregational input in the 12 questions responses.

1. They sent out the questions to everyone who receives the newsletter. Anyone wanting to could then weigh in on a response and submit it to the PNC/Session.
2. One worship service was held in the fellowship hall and congregants met in small groups as part of worship, affording each an opportunity to participate in answering the questions.
3. For those who wanted to comment but remain anonymous, large sheets, each with a question, were hung around the fellowship hall, and anyone wishing to could make a response to that particular question.
4. A team from the PNC and Session compiled the responses and synthesized them into one collective response.

The process described above affording anyone wanting input to participate. This would work in a smaller congregation, but might pose a problem in a larger congregation, particularly #2.