**Mission Study** –

WHAT IS IT

***An intentional process for reflection and visioning*** for Churches and organizations during an Interim or Transitional time or at regular intervals in a Church’s life (as a matter of practice and/or in response to specific circumstances).

Usually required by Presbyteries for Churches that are between installed pastorates. Know your denominational/regional requirements, guidelines, resources.

**WHO DOES IT**

Mission Study Team leads the whole congregation in a process with guidance from Presbytery Consultant, outside consultant hired by Church, Interim Pastor (potentially).

*The interim pastor may, if the session and the Committee on Ministry approve, work with the session in a mission study or assist the Pastor Nominating Committee in gathering data for the writing of the Ministry Information Form. With those possible exceptions, the interim pastor may not be involved in the work and discernment of the PNC.* (1<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministers/interim-pastors/>)

**Find the language that resonates** – (pay attention to language that repels)

*Transformation Process, Strategic Planning, Re-Development*

**Key for all types of processes:**

* Congregation-wide involvement, understanding and ownership;
* Shared results – clear, consistent and integrated communication,
* Attainable and measurable goals;
* FOLLOW THROUGH – what do we do with it now that it’s done?

**WHY IS IT DONE? (Beyond Requirement):**

**HOW IS IT DONE?**

Know your context – your congregation’s history with similar processes – is it remembered positively? What did they like about it? What did they not like? Is it time for a new approach?

PCUSA Denominational Resources: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research/help-congregations/>

## Help for Congregations

To help congregational leaders understand more about their church and its needs, we developed the Church Home Improvement Toolbox. The toolbox offers a variety of "do-it-yourself" research strategies for positive church improvement. These tools are particularly helpful if your congregation is conducting a mission study, preparing to call a new pastor or working on a long-range plan.You wouldn't try to build a new home using just an electric drill – why work on congregational improvement without a full set of tools?

1. [Ten-Year Trends in Your Congregation](http://www.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/): Statistical summary based on the Session Annual Statistical Reports submitted to the Office of the General Assembly. See how things have been changing in your congregation.
2. [Demographic Report](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research/help-demographic-report/): Learn about the people who live in the community around your church. The Demographic Report can help your congregation identify mission and outreach possibilities.
3. [Congregational Surveys:](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research/help3) A survey can give your congregation a picture of who worships there (including age and marital status of members, average length of church membership, etc.), information about the strengths and priorities of church programs, and tools for strategic planning. Use a congregational survey to identify and build on your congregation's unique strengths.
4. [Research Strategies for Congregations:](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research/help4) A packet of easy information gathering tools designed to help you learn more about your worshipers and your local community.
5. [RCMS data (Religious Congregations & Membership Study)](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/research/help5): Details about the number and types of congregations and their members in every state, county, and metro area in the United States. Learn more about the religious landscape where your church is located.

**Mission Statement** – A succinct statement about the core purpose of the Church’s/Organizations existence and ministry. “Why are we here?” “What is our Purpose?”

**Vision Statement** – A succinct statement (usually one phrase or sentence) – that conveys specific focused ministry goal(s) of the Church/Organization. Can be time-related (i.e. next 3 years) “Where are we going?”

Options for creative and interactive Mission Study

**Questions to Ask:**   
COM’s requirements for Church Mission Study – including involvement or non-involvement of Interim Pastor

1. When should it happen – before, during or after PNC? At what point in Transition?
2. Who should do it? PNC, separate team, Interim, Session?
3. How does/should it inform the work of the PNC?
4. What studies have been done in the past?
   * 1. How recent? (Can it be incorporated?)
     2. How was it received/is it remembered?
     3. How was/is it implemented/
     4. Whom did it involve? (Selected members, all members, Session only?)
     5. How was final product/data/results/goals shared?
5. What is the role of Data (Demographics) in Mission Study?
6. What is congregation’s perception/attitude about doing (another) Mission Study?
7. Is there anxiety?
   1. What is the source/how could it be relieved?

**Some Resources:**

*Creating the Future Together* – Mead/Alban

*Discerning Your Congregation’s Future* – Roy Oswald

*Holy Conversations* – Gil Rendle

*The 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations* – Robert Schnase

*Memories, hopes and conversations*: *Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* – Mark Lau Branson

*Transforming Congregational Culture* – Anthony B. Robinson

Acts 16:5 Program – E. Stanley Ott

*Healthy Congregations* Mission Study – Dropbox

Faithful Listening – Dropbox

Small Church Self-Study by Gary R. Weaver - Dropbox

Mission Insite (demographics) (your Presbytery may have membership)

*On Calling a Pastor* (2015 PCUSA) - Dropbox