

Mission Study Guide for Congregations



Joining Together. Worshipping God. Loving People.

**Prepared by the Church Development Committee and
Committee on Ministry of the Santa Barbara Presbytery**

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Overview of Mission Study Process

What is a Mission Study?

A mission study is a process that a congregation goes through to help discern how God is guiding the church. It becomes a strategic document that includes a mission statement, casts or confirms a vision, includes strategic plans with the current state of the congregation and community, and what steps, such as hiring a pastor, helps accomplish the mission and vision. Generally, it consists of these sections:

- I. Who we are as a Church: You'll include the mission statement and a brief history of your church. Consider your aspirations but be honest with who you are. What is the heart of your church?
- II. Leadership and Programs: Provide a description of the church structure with elders and deacons, your staff and what each person does, your programs and description of facilities. State how these facilitate the accomplishment of your vision, mission, and strategies? Growth areas?
- III. Financials: Provide financial info with budget and giving info. How would you describe your financial situation? Is your church sustainable? Does your budget reflect your church's vision, mission and strategies?
- IV. Our community: Description of your city and demographics, sense of needs of your area, other non-profit ministries and other churches. Where do you see new opportunities to which God is calling?
- V. Our congregation: Describe the trends of your church's membership and participation. What have you learned from the congregational studies and discussions about the direction God is leading you? Which programs and leadership roles can you affirm? Where are growth areas? How is God using you?
- VI. Going forward: Conclusion and 2-4 specific recommendations for next steps (over the next 3-5 years) with hiring, staff or program changes, or affirming what should remain, as you live out your mission statement.

Most mission studies end up being 10-15 pages and can be shared at a congregational meeting. Consider a 1-page summary which includes the highlights, conclusion and recommendations.

Why do I have to do a mission study?

This process is meant to prepare you to be faithful to God's call as a congregation when one of the following happens:

- Your church is seeking a new pastor/associate pastor
- Your church is seeking to assess the state of health of the congregation
- It has been more than 7 years since your last Mission Study Process

As a Presbytery, we have found this process is what healthy churches do. This guide is addressed to the Sessions of churches in the Presbytery to help navigate seasons of change. This has been designed by the Church Development Committee alongside the Committee on Ministry. 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.

What if we just did a mission study?

If you just did one, don't worry, this may be a quicker process of affirming what you already know to be true. Understanding our different starting points will help determine a healthy process. Calling a new senior pastor to replace someone after 20 years will be different than an associate pastor leaving after 2 years. However, if you just had a short-term senior pastor or have a pattern of staff turnovers, then consider slowing down now for the long-term health of the congregation. Either way, you'll first re-read the previous study as a session. Consider including deacons and staff for reflection. Out of reading the previous one, ask yourselves:

- a) What aspects of this mission study (our vision, mission, and strategies) are still true? Is there a story or specific example you can think of that supports why?
- b) What aspects of this have changed or do we feel needs additional discernment?
- c) How much do we use our current mission study to guide our current goals, budget, and strategies? Has it been helpful at all in the past? Why or why not?
- d) Would a healthy process of discernment through a mission study serve as a value added for our session, deacons, staff, and congregation right now? Why or why not?

If you re-read the previous mission study and make simple updates, like a program or small staff shift, then update the study by giving it the title of "Revised in _____(year)" and then submit to the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery. The goal, both in requiring the process and inviting you to make it your own, is to help you communicate the vision and transform any uncertainty of the interim period into hope and possibility for your future.

What does the Mission Study require of us?

Session: The elders will lead this process. This will take extra time and energy. You may also find it to be a helpful event in terms of increased excitement and community. The elders will be reflecting on Scripture, engaging in activities, praying and making decisions on how to apply the principles and how to communicate these.

Congregation: The members of the congregation will have the chance to participate in special opportunities to give their thoughts and responses to the process of defining the church's purpose and shaping the call of the next pastor. They will also receive a great deal of content through the regular times of communication through worship and church publications.

Interim Pastor: Your Interim Pastor (IP) will play a key role in helping work through the process. This includes moderating Session and helping elders move forward effectively; preaching a series on the foundational purposes of the church; encouraging the congregation that God has the right person; helping the congregation heal from any issues so the church is prepared to receive your new pastor.

How long will the Mission Study take?

A mission study generally takes 6-9 months. The larger interim process generally takes 1-2 years. In a business environment such a change in leadership could take only a few weeks. There often is the temptation is to get this process done ASAP. Most of us, when we are going through change or transition, will feel like the exception and that we can finish more quickly than other congregations. The mission study process is not intended to only be a means to an end of just hiring a pastor, however, it will help achieve this.

The church takes time to process change because it is about discerning vision, listening, celebrating people and God's work, considering new opportunities, and inviting others into the process. This is a guide that invites us to do what we should be doing anyway: pray, read Scripture, and reflect on where God is calling. With this in mind, a representative from the Church Development Committee can walk alongside you through this, describe the process, and try to be helpful in recommending steps that may best fit your church.

Our goal in the process, and as a Presbytery, is to help foster a vibrant worshipping community seeking Jesus Christ!

Mission Study Steps

1. **Review your previous Mission Study:** Whether it has been many years or a few. Re-read it at session so you are familiar with what's been done in the past. Ask yourselves:
 - a) What aspects of this mission study (our vision, mission, and strategies) are still true? Is there a story or specific example you can think of that supports why?
 - b) What aspects of this have changed or do we feel needs additional discernment?
 - c) How much do we use our current mission study to guide our current goals, budget, and strategies? Has it been helpful at all in the past? Why or why not?
 - d) Would a healthy process of discernment through a mission study bring a value added for our session, deacons, staff, and congregation right now? Why or why not?

Take notes and discuss each of the above questions. Read the steps below *and then decide* if you are moving forward. The pastor or Interim pastor can provide helpful suggestions. Also, either someone from the CDC or COM of Presbytery can help listen and share what has and hasn't worked for churches to help you decide next steps. If you do not have or cannot find a previous mission study, contact the Presbytery Church Development Committee for help.

2. **Appoint from Session a Mission Study Team (MST):** The Session begins by assigning a small committee or team to lead the congregation through the Mission Study. Not everyone on session has to be on the team. The pastor or Interim pastor will help support the team through time at session meetings and communicating to the congregation. Everyone will go through the process, but the team makes edits, collects information, and decides details like what goes in the final report. Select a chairperson and consider having people on the team willing and gifted in administration, in writing, listening, finances and someone who knows the history of the church and a good grasp on current programs and staff.

This team should reflect the make-up of the congregation with a diversity of skills and experience. The following is a guide to help determine the size of the team:

Congregation under 100 members	2-4 team members
Congregation of 100–300	3–5 team members
Congregation of 300-600	4–6 team members
Congregation over 600	5-7 team members

3. **The Mission Study Team outlines a general plan with timeline:** As part of this, the MST should assign team members specific tasks. Below is a rough timeline but you should consider your own situation, church events, energy and time.

Months 1-3: Communicate, distribute previous study (consider deacons and staff). Ask each of them to review questions (*a, b, c, d*) above and start reading Scripture

and praying together. Choose someone to receive and take notes concerning these responses. If you are doing more than just revising a recent study, then you'll move beyond this step.

Months 3-5: Work with Interim or Sr. pastor to plan and prepare this timeline. Start Congregational Meetings. Conduct Congregational Surveys. What themes do you see developing? What surprises you? MST start organizing written report sections. Continue to pray together. Gather financials.

Months 5-8: Conduct Neighborhood Exegesis. MST have someone collect local demographic information. Hold a second congregational meeting. Start collecting recommendations and next steps. Collect good new ideas for programming, possible stewardship ideas, and possible staffing needs to reflect the strategies. MST should refine responses and develop a rough draft of the study and share with Session.

Months 6-9: Pray and edit down recommendations to 2-4. Discern between good ideas and filter ideas as they relate to your mission and vision statement. Present written draft of the mission study to Session. Complete study and share with Session, staff, deacons, and then congregation. Use it as celebration and to communicate next steps and recommendations. Receive it as a congregation and share with COM of Presbytery. Perhaps, connect this completion with your stewardship campaign for the next year or annual congregational meeting when presenting goals and budget.

- 4. *Congregational Reflection and Gatherings:*** (Family-oriented, Bible-teaching, mission-minded, fellowship-focused, worship-driven, prayerful, youth-centered, community-centered, staff or elder led, service-driven, study-driven, outward or inward-focused, or other) This is the heart of the Mission Study. The team will partner with pastor/interim to design a way for members of the congregation and leadership to gather and reflect. It allows for stories and prayerful reflection using God's word, to reflect on the church's past and discern where God is leading. It helps answer the question: What type of church are we? The first meeting focuses on the past and present. Celebrate stories. Be honest with past challenges and losses. Continue to use Scripture and prayer as guide. Listen for broad categories that help describe your church. For example, which 2-3 categories best describe your church? Which ones are lower on the list? Would others outside of Session and staff agree with this list?

Scripture Readings to guide discussion: Matthew 13:1-43; 28:16-20; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 6:17-49; John 1; John 3:16-21; 15:1-27; Romans 12. Interact through Scripture, prayer, creativity and stories. Consider small group discussions then large group presentations. Other books and resources may be helpful such as PCUSA Book of Order.

(See Appendix A for additional details and suggested books you can read)

5. **Demographic Study:** As part of the assessment, a demographic study is to be conducted to understand who our neighbors probably will be in the coming years. The community study will allow the details here to be more personal. We have available an online resource through our Synod called *Mission Insite*. You can see this at missioninsite.com. To receive a tutorial, contact the Presbytery Office. Also sample Mission Studies will show this clearly.
6. **Neighborhood and Community Needs:** Take some time to observe, listen, and get a better sense of your community before you fully define who you are and where you are going. Sometimes our community changes around us. We forget to ask people around us what they want, what they need, and how the church can serve. Consider doing a formal neighborhood exegesis to process this. Are there opportunities that we are missing? Where do our gifts and who we are intersect with the needs? A sample guide is provided. **(See Appendix B).**
7. **Congregational Survey:** A survey about who we are as a church and how we see ourselves. What we desire in the church is an effective tool for getting a decent amount of information from many members and presenting it in a single report. *We have sample surveys below you can use and adjust to your needs and situation. (See Appendix C).*
8. **Written Report Done by Committee:** This is approved by Session and reviewed by CDC, COM. Consider the rough draft and ask: Do we feel this is where God is guiding us and is this an accurate description of our church and community? Sample studies are available. You may contact CDC for additional sample reports.
9. **Report Presented to the Congregation:** You will share this at a Congregational meeting, or over a few different meetings.
10. **Session Implements Recommendations of Report:** Usually 2-4 recommendations are helpful so they can be implemented, revisited and reviewed. You will regularly refer to your recommendations for Session meetings, annual meetings, next hires, etc. Consider making available the mission study on your website. This is your guide for the next 3-5 years.

Overview of the larger Interim Process

(Guided with help of Committee on Ministry)

1. **Calling an Interim Pastor:** Who is God calling to help the Session and church to grow, to listen to God's direction, and to prepare for a new pastor? The Session interviews potential interims and discerns who God is calling to lead us.
2. **A Time for Healing:** Through personal conversations and small group listening/discussion, enable God's Spirit to bring about healing where there may be hurt.
3. **Completing Mission Study:** Who is God calling us to be? How are we to prepare for that? Look at our vision, mission, values, goals, strengths, and the needs around us, and discern God's purpose for this congregation.
4. **Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC):** Who is God calling to lead the search for a new pastor? Determine what is needed (gifts, skills, commitment, etc.), pray for guidance, and elect the committee in a congregational meeting. The Presbytery's Committee on Ministry will need to approve the election of the PNC.
5. **Building a Team and completing a Church Information Form (CIF):** The PNC writes the Church Information Form, including the information from the mission study, and has it approved by the Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry.
6. **Searching for a Pastor:** The PNC reviews Personal Information Forms (PIF) from potential candidates, interviews potential pastors, discerns who God is calling to be the church's next pastor, and makes this recommendation to the congregation at a congregational meeting.
7. **Calling and Electing the New pastor:** The PNC negotiates a tentative call to the pastor and seeks approval by the Presbytery through its Examination Committee and Committee on Ministry. Once approvals are in place, the congregation hears the PNC's report and elects the new pastor.
8. **Installation:** Installation of new pastor.

Session, Pastor and Mission Study Team Responsibilities and Checklist

Session Responsibilities:

1. Session initiates the Mission Study Process by contacting Presbytery

In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the Clerk of Session makes an official inquiry to Presbytery regarding "Pastoral Search" process. Session meets with the Committee on Ministry (COM) to complete a Session exit Interview after a Pastor/Associate Pastor has left. For a process to assess the health of the congregation, the Clerk of Session or Pastor notifies the COM. Date Completed: _____

2. Session appoints the Mission Study Team and Chair

The Session is responsible for the mission study and appoints a well-represented committee to complete the study Date Completed: _____

After the Mission Study Team process, Session has these additional responsibilities:

3. Session Reviews and Adopts the Mission Study Report

The team will submit the final draft of the Mission Study to the Session for review. Session can make any final revisions and move toward adopting the report. Date Completed: _____

4. Session Regularly Communicates with and involves the Congregation

Session has the responsibility to help promote ownership of the report by the congregation, as the envisioned mission. It will be the congregation's responsibility to move the church in the direction of their new mission. Dates of meetings: _____

5. After Session approval, send to Presbytery

Once Session adopts the Mission Study Report, Session submits the report to the Presbytery Office for review, comments and approval by the Committee on Ministry. Date of COM approval: _____

Pastor and Stated Supply Responsibilities

The role of the Interim Pastor during the mission study is one of support, communication and coordination. A meeting between the Interim/Stated Supply Pastor, Chair of the Mission Study Team and Presbytery liaison will occur to determine their roles and help interpret "what's going on" to the Session and to the congregation. Time should be designated when the Interim Pastor will create an opportunity for the congregation to share input as well as to begin to come to terms with issues of the past. Pastoral leadership can assist the MST by providing adequate opportunities to complete their work and report their findings. This can include: Docket time on the agenda of the Session meetings, reporting opportunities during worship and celebration times, space in church newsletters, websites and other congregational communication.

Mission Study Team (MST) Guidelines

Thank you for your extra time and work. The Chair of the MST will first arrange an orientation meeting with a Committee on Ministry (COM) or Church Development Committee (CDC) liaison, pastor, and the rest of the MST. You will grow in familiarity with this process. While there is no perfect way to do this, the target is to faithfully summarize through the mission study where God is leading through a healthy process of discernment. It is a good idea to take minutes to help capture ideas and will be a good reference point to track any changes.

Throughout this process, pray and give thanks. Look to celebrate and highlight stories of where God is working. Be honest with past hurts and be sure to include the minority voices. The MST should be able to capture the congregation's collective voices at the end of the process.

The following questions are meant to stimulate reflection by the Mission Study team about the congregation's health and identity:

1. Does the congregation have a strong sense of identity? What is that identity? Are there Christ-centered examples of this?
2. Is the congregation growing in membership?
3. Does the congregation support the overall mission of the church, locally, and the church-at-large? Does this support amount to a tithe or more of its mission income?
4. Does the budget reflect the heart of the church?
5. Is the congregation engaged in mission partnerships with other churches and ministries?
6. How does the congregation review and improve the quality of Christian education and the spiritual nurture of its members (children, youth and adults)?
7. How is the worship experience for the congregation as a whole?
8. What is the church's intentional plan for outreach and service to the community?
9. How is the mission statement of the church communicated and lived out?
10. Are there 2-4 specific steps where we feel God is leading this next season with programs and staff that best reflect the heart of Christ using our time, talents and treasures?

Checklist for Mission Study Team:

The following checklist will help the MST assure all components are in the Mission Study Report. The intent is not for "the" correct answers; rather it is included in the hopes that the process will yield new discoveries. The following components should be included:

Yes ___ No ___ Is there a clear mission statement?

Yes ___ No ___ Analysis of the congregation completed.

Yes ___ No ___ Analysis of financial resources completed.

Yes ___ No ___ Analysis of community demographics completed.

Yes ___ No ___ Analysis of pastoral leadership past and present completed.

Yes ___ No ___ Inventory of programs for the church and/or the community completed.

Yes ____ No ____ Long-range financial plan to support the goals and objectives of the mission study was developed.

Yes ____ No ____ The mission study process involved elders as well as deacons, interim pastor, staff, and opportunities for the congregation to provide input

Yes ____ No ____ The MST identified 2-4 specific next steps that can be accomplished in the next 3-5 years

Yes ____ No ____ Overall this Mission study report process was helpful in bringing us closer to Jesus Christ as a vibrant worshipping community

Comments:

Recommendations:

_____ Approve the Mission Study and inform the Committee on Ministry

_____ The Mission Study is not complete. The following parts are missing:

Date of completion: _____

Persons doing the Mission Study Review: _____

Completing the Mission Study Process

The Mission Study Team completes its work when the report it submits to the Session provides an accurate analysis of the current status and condition of the congregation's health and is accompanied by a report that provides 2-4 specific recommendations for the congregation. The report will include goals with measurable objectives and activities which support the overall mission and vision of the church.

Once the report is complete, it is submitted to the church Session for review and adoption. Upon adoption, a cover letter is written by the Mission Study Team and submitted to Committee on Ministry and Church Development Committee for review and approval.

Appendix A: Congregational Reflection Time

This is a vital part of the process of developing an honest and effective Mission Study. Thorough reflection on the past and current church culture, stories provide opportunities for people to share brokenness and joys of their church and their experiences as part of the community. While tempting, do not shortchange this stage in the process. Issues left unspoken will undoubtedly come back at a later time.

Using the timeline on page 6 of this guide, you may use the first couple of months to map out a process. When session meets, this is a great way to use Scripture and prayer as the first 30 minutes to reflect. The goal is a healthy process of honest reflection by staff, session, deacons, committees, and the congregation. Consider inviting other committees to do the same as session. Months 3-5 seem to be the good times to read a book together and listen for congregational feedback, and to discuss. Also consider what has been helpful and worked for you in the past or what other healthy churches are doing.

Consider using central Bible stories to reflect. If there are core stories that already are used to give identity to your church, then revisit those. Some sample scripture readings to guide discussion: Matthew 13:1-43; 28:16-20; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 6:17-49; John 1; John 3:16-21; 15:1-27; Romans 12. Consider using small group discussions, then large group presentations.

There are other good books and resources to invite discussion. Some suggestions:

- *Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren (Chapter 1-11). This book is good for re-evaluating your mission statement, for communication organizationally and developing common language. The organizational principals are still current.
- *Discovering Your Church's Next Step: Finding an entire congregation's heartbeat and direction for the future*, by Dr. Neal Nybo. We recommend the Participant's Guide as a workbook the mission study team, session, and others in the congregation can work through together. It offers a process for bringing together vision by identifying uplifting experiences and stories for a congregation to celebrate. The process invites participants to write down their stories and decide next steps for a church to take. Leader guides are also available on amazon and www.nealnybo.com.
- *Growing Local Missionaries: Equipping Churches to Sow Shalom in Their Own Cultural Backyard* by Dan Steigerwald. This is a helpful book if the church feels a disconnect with the local community or desires a fresh perspective on serving one's neighbor. It uses the Biblical teaching from Jeremiah 29, showing how to go from a feeling of exile to deepening roots right where you are. It is less of a step-by-step process but can help invigorate a congregation to see opportunities guided by the Holy Spirit.
- *PCUSA Book of Order, (F) Foundations of Presbyterian Polity*. This might be helpful for younger churches, or less denominational-aware communities, to help them understand some of the solid Biblical principles found in Presbyterian polity. It reminds us that we are connected to something greater than ourselves and are not isolated from other churches.

During this time of reflection, the congregation should address the questions:

1. What are the biblical images for the story of this congregation?
2. Under what circumstances did the previous pastor leave and what have been the effects on and reactions from the congregation?
3. What are the major events in the history of this church that have affected us today?
4. Was there a “High Point” or “Glory Days” time of the church? If so, what did that look like, what aspects of that time still exist and what, if changes occurred, brought about those changes?
5. What have been the most difficult “inside” issues facing the congregation over the past?
6. What have been the most difficult social and cultural issues facing the congregation over the past 20, 10 and 5 years and what effects have they had on the congregation?
7. Identify which 2-3 characteristics best describe your church and identify the ones that are lower on the list: Family-oriented church, Bible-teaching, mission-minded, fellowship-focused, worship-driven, prayerful, youth-centered, community-centered, staff or elder led, service-driven, study-driven, outward or inward-focused, or other that rise up from the discussions. Which do you embrace? And which do you want to work on? Would others outside of Session and staff agree with this list?

The reflection piece, like others, can be done in a variety of ways. Because this part is highly subjective and often more heart centered, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- Keep confidential information confidential. Check with folks about what is okay to share with the larger community.
- Share the joys and pains of the church. Chances are most folks already know them but have not had the opportunity to speak about them.
- It is possible that the congregation may discover “skeletons in the closet” during this reflection time. Please know this is a healthy part of the process; if dealt with directly it can lead to greater health of the congregation.
- Enter the reflective stage with a spirit of prayer and discernment. There will plenty of time later for an analytical approach.
- The reflection time is not a time to change people’s minds about past or current culture. This time is only for people to reflect on their experience as part of the community.

There are many ways to do congregational reflections, but the most important thing is to make sure that the congregation gets a chance to participate. Congregational surveys are another way. You can edit these based on your situation and needs, but a congregational survey that is complete invites all to be involved. There are Congregational Survey examples in Appendix C.

Appendix B: Community Study & Neighborhood Exegesis Guide

This “Neighborhood Exegesis” puts a face and heart to your demographic study. This can be done by ministry committee leaders, session, deacons, and those interested in participating.

Aim of Exercise: to give participants a hands-on experience of the power of missionary listening in particular areas or neighborhoods and to build on that toward a deeper embedding and expressing of the gospel. What is “neighborhood exegesis” and why is it important?

Exegesis means “a reading out” –This is a fancy theological term describing the activity of digging into the background, history, and literary context of Scripture. Thus, a “Neighborhood Exegesis” is digging into the background, history, and contextual issues of a particular area or people group. It is reading what’s really there. It is not like demographic studies unattached to real relationships or involving minimal relational investment. But it is a means by which a church or aspiring church plant can increase its awareness and responsiveness to those it is called to reach/serve. It is important because it helps us discern where God is at work, enhances our awareness (stewardship), helps us respond to need & potential, fuels prayer and the ministry of “peri-pateo” (walking about)...and it is fun for team building!

How do we conduct a listening exercise?

1. Select locale & time when residents are home or out and about in the community.
2. Gather for initial connecting - review why we’re doing this & pray.
3. Send groups of 2-3, w/maps & handout Q’s.
4. Groups interact as they observe....then perform the 3 actions (on handout).
5. Re-convene in the community or a home and debrief observations & experiences.

Questions to aid our listening to the soundings of context: We’re going to take time observing and learning a bit about a part of our city. As we walk and observe and listen in groups of 2-4 people, the questions below will help us see and experience our city in new ways. They will also hopefully help inform our understanding of and responsiveness to the neighborhoods and social groupings in this area. We will end by reflecting on what it might mean to seek the shalom of these places (Jeremiah 29:7).

1. As you stand at your starting point this morning, what do you see as you look in each direction? What do you hear or sense? What activity do you notice?

As you begin to walk about...

2. What do you notice about the front yards or entries to each house or apartment?
3. Does this neighborhood or part of the city feel like a cared-for place?
4. How many houses (buildings) are for sale? What indicators of transience do you see?
5. When you see a park, what do you notice about it? Does it feel inviting? Who is there?
6. Do you pass any churches or religious buildings? What does their appearance tell you?
7. What kinds of commercial buildings are there? Who makes up the clientele?

8. How many people do you see walking about or tending to their homes/yards or businesses? What age, race, and gender are they?
9. How pedestrian-friendly is this part of the city? Are there sidewalks, lights, crosswalks?
10. Are there places in this area or neighborhood that you would not go into? Why?
11. Where are the places of life, hope, beauty or community in this area or neighborhood?
12. What evidence of struggle, despair, neglect and alienation do you see?
13. In what ways do you sense God's presence in this area?

Along the way:

1. Talk to someone; asking them about their perceptions of the community.
2. Drink something or get something to eat or purchase an item from a local hangout.
3. Bring back a token, a symbol that captures your experience of the community and can be a visual for you to tell the story that you are observing.

DEBRIEFING...

First ask: What did I notice in myself – thoughts, strong feelings or reactions, etc.?

Groups share one at a time about the “soundings” they picked up from the area they traversed... How were your observations similar? How were they different?

- What signs of the Kingdom do you see here (i.e. where God seems already at work)?
- Do you get a sense there are better days or times to do this? How can we incorporate the principles of this activity into our regular pattern of life throughout the week?
- What might it look like to “seek the Shalom” of this sector of the city? In other words, how might I join others in ministering and enriching this area? Derivative to this: What forms of church are needed here that are not represented in current churches?
- Any early thoughts on what your church might do to enhance its overall listening skills? Have a resident of the area respond to the observations and fill-in the story of the area.

Sample Schedule:

8:30 am – Arrivals at Church (over muffins and pastries and coffee)

9:00 – 9:15 am --Leader explains exercise; assigns groups and target zones, with maps

9:15 – 10:45 am – Groups travel to and walk designated areas and answer the questions.

10:45 – 12:00 – Debrief the exercise together, with each group sharing their insights & a story about the token/symbol they collected. Consider how you would share your findings with the church?

Appendix C: Congregational Survey

The following can be adapted based on ideas of the Mission Study Team. Consider a combination of email, hardcopy letters to homes, and other ways to distribute and collect information.

Sample 1 (from Moorpark Presbyterian Church, 2012)

1. How often do you go to worship services at this church? (Weekly, 2 or 3x per month)
2. How long have you been going to worship services or activities at this church? (less than year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20, 20+)
3. How often do you attend/participate in adult Sunday school? (I serve, youth, half time, weekly)
4. How often do your children attend or participate in Sunday School? (no children, never, less than 50, most of the time, weekly)
5. Which statement comes closest to your views of the Bible?
 - a. The Bible is the word of God, to be taken literally word for word.
 - b. The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical and cultural context.
 - c. The Bible is the word of God, to be interpreted in the light of its historical context and the church's teachings.
 - d. The Bible is not the word of God but contains God's word to us.
 - e. The Bible is not the word of God but is a valuable book.
 - f. The Bible is an ancient book with little value today.
 - g. Don't know
6. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "All the different religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth?" (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
7. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "My spiritual needs are being met in this congregation"? (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree?)
8. Are you currently a member of this congregation? (yes; no, but planning on it; no, but regular attender)
9. Would you be prepared to invite any of your friends and relatives who do not now attend a church to a worship service here? (yes, and have recently; yes, but have not in several months; no, probably not; no, definitely not)
10. How satisfied are you with Sunday worship experiences for children (kindergarten through 5th)?

11. How satisfied are you with Sunday worship experiences for middle school (6-8th)?
12. How satisfied are you with Sunday worship experiences for high school (9-12th)?
13. Do you have a strong sense of belonging to the congregation? (yes, growing; yes, nothing new; no, wish I did; don't know)
14. Which of the following music styles do you prefer in congregational worship? (hymns, chorus, contemporary hymns, gospel, contemporary praise, no music, don't know)
15. Which of the following aspects of Sunday worship services do you personally most value? (sermons, preaching, communion, children/youth, social activities, prayer, missions, reaching non-attenders, wider community care)
16. Do you have close friends in the congregation? (yes, most; yes, some friends; no)
17. Before this congregation, were you participating in another church? (yes, no, never, a while ago, here always)
18. Previous church?
19. Have the congregation's leaders encouraged you to find and use your gifts and skills here? (yes, great extent; yes, somewhat; yes, small; not at all; don't know)
20. Your age and ages of family members in household?
21. Gender and gender of family members in household?
22. How long does it take to get to church? (1-5 minutes, 6-10 minutes, 11-15 minutes, 16-20 minutes, more than 20)
23. What is your participation level compared to 2 years ago? (more, same, less, n/a)
24. How often do you experience the following during worship services at this church? (God's presence, inspiration, joy, boredom, awe/mystery, frustration, spontaneity)
25. Does this congregation have a clear vision, goals, or direction for its ministry?
26. Could you generally summarize the mission statement?
27. Could you describe an example of how the church is living out its mission statement?
28. "I have a sense of excitement about our congregation's future." (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
29. Description of Pastor's Leadership style? (take charge, inspires people, acts on goals set by others, other people start most things, no leader here, don't know)
30. Style and content of sermons preached are engaging, thought-provoking, and Biblically sound (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)
31. Feelings toward sermons, children's ministry, worship music, youth, missions, weekly Bible studies, outreach? (satisfied, mixed feelings, dissatisfied, no opinion)
32. Rank the church's strength in these areas
 - 1) Worship
 - 2) Fellowship
 - 3) Education and Discipleship
 - 4) Community Service
 - 5) Evangelism

Congregational Survey (Continued)

Sample 2:

Please answer the following questions as they best fit your view of this congregation. At the end of each section, you will find opportunities to offer comments.

• **What is Important?**

Rank each in order of importance (1 being most important; 5 being least important} I would like to see:

Education _____
Fellowship _____
Mission _____
Stewardship _____
Worship _____

• **What Does Our Congregation Do?**

For the following questions, please use the scale below :

- (1) Very much so
- (2) Somewhat
- (3) Adequate
- (4) Needs much improvement
- (5) Not at all

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Our worship experience reflects who we are. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Our worship experience connects us with God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) There is Christian education for all ages. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) The Church provides enough opportunities for individual and group spiritual growth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) The church reaches out to the greater community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) There are adequate fellowship opportunities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) In this church there is clear understanding of what it means to be presbyterian. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| h) The church is active in mission work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i) The church takes good care of those in need:
the ill, shut-ins, ones in crisis, grief | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j) Stewardship - use of time, talents and money is
Clearly understood as expressions of God's grace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

What does this church do best? _____

Where does this church need the most improvement? _____

Other comments: _____

Summarizing and Analyzing the Information

A. Church Demographics and priorities

1. Write out the demographics, such as how many are in each age range (preschool, kindergarten-5th grades, middle & high school, young adult, 31-50 years old, 50-75, 75+)
2. What opportunities do we see here?
3. What does the church feel are the most important priorities?
4. What are our characteristics of our congregation?
5. What are the striking changes that have occurred in the congregation's membership over the last 5, 10 or 15 years? Can you identify factors? If no changes, why?
6. What programs reflect best the time, talent, and treasures of the congregation?
7. Which ones seem to be growth areas or need change?
8. Do our priorities match our focus with goals and budget?

B. Community Demographics (Incorporate Mission Insite and Neighborhood Exegesis info)

1. How is our congregation similar to the surrounding community?
2. How are we different? How would we need to change to better represent and serve our community?
3. How do our current goals, programs, and staffing meet the community's needs?
4. What opportunities do we see in our community? Are there partnerships to build on?
5. Are there new opportunities worth placing time, talents, or treasure?

C. Financial Information

1. What do we receive in tithing annually? What do we spend?
2. What are the 5, 10, 15-year trends and their implications? What does the financial data say about the financial status of the congregation?
3. Can we support our current programs and staff with our budget?
4. Does our budget support areas for new growth?
5. What is our current stewardship campaign, or do we need one?

D. Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Do the existing church programs support the mission of the church? Do they meet current church goals and objectives?
2. Are there organizational changes needed that require new staff, communication or process changes, leadership structure, or other?
3. Are there facility or property changes needed to support the mission of the church?
4. What pastoral leadership characteristics were helpful in achieving the church's mission goals in the past? Not helpful in achieving the church's mission goals in the past?
5. Can you identify the top few pastoral leadership characteristics that will enhance the church's mission?

Thank you for joining together, worshipping God, and loving people.

The Vision of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara

We enthusiastically and steadfastly envision a day when all our churches, elders, deacons, pastors, and ministry leaders will build ministries to glorify God, share tools for the ministry of Jesus Christ, connect with colleagues, do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

The Strategy of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara is to:

*Dedicate ourselves to prayer, worship, study, and service;
Equip our pastors, sessions, and ministry leaders for discipleship;
Provide pastoral care and fellowship to member ministers;
Facilitate consistent ministry practice through administrative support and governance*