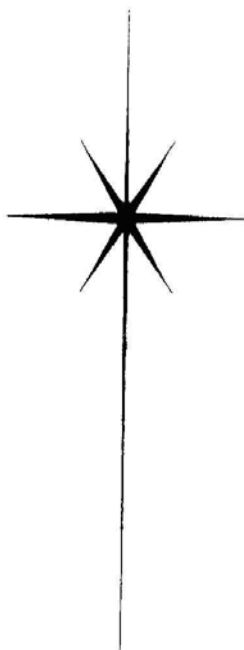


**NORTHUMBERLAND  
PRESBYTERY  
MISSION STUDY  
GUIDELINES  
&  
HANDBOOK**



# THREE PHASES OF DEVELOPING A MISSION STUDY

---

## PHASE 1 DISCERNING THE MISSION

**Discernment is a critical part of the ministry plan process. Discernment is the “listening to God's call” that clarifies to what ministry God is calling this congregation. The calling must reflect:**

**THE GREAT COMMANDMENT:** Mat 22:37-39 “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment.<sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

**THE GREAT COMMISSION:** Mat 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen

**THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS TWO FOLD:-to make disciples and to teach disciples, so that we might love God and love each other.**

- The session has a responsibility to develop a mission strategy that is balanced between outreach (evangelizing—sharing the Good News with non-believers; and nurturing (discipling those who are already believers).
- Issues of Social Justice and evangelism (outreach) must be considered in the overall Mission of the church.

**Step One:** Writing the Mission Statement (does it reflect Ma 28:19-20)

**Step Two:** Develop & write—Vision Statement

**Step Three:** Develop & write—Value Statements (core values)

THIS SHOULD BE A ONE PAGE DOCUMENT THAT PROCEEDS THE MISSION STUDY

## PHASE 2: GATHER THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. A description of the community
  - a. A demographic study will be provided by the Presbytery
  - b. Information for the local chamber of commerce or community web site might be helpful
  - c. Information about schools, parks, museums, cultural events
2. A description of the church
  - a. History (Ten Year statistical History will be provided by the Presbytery)
  - b. Typical membership of congregants
  - c. Current worship style
  - d. Past accomplishments
  - e. Community involvement
  - f. Christian Education
  - g. Mission Emphasis
  - h. Current committees and their functions
  - i. Current Staffing of church and volunteer workers
  - j. Building and grounds
  - k. Current financial picture
3. Membership, Attendance & financial Statistics: provided by the presbytery (10 year)
4. Congregational Surveys

## PHASE 3: WRITE THE MISSION STUDY

# PHASE 1, STEP ONE

## DISCERNING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH WRITING THE MISSION, VISION, & VALUE STATEMENTS

### OVERVIEW

A good Mission Statement is the essential first component in a successful Ministry Plan. You cannot proceed to any other Phase or Step without one. If a church already has a written Mission Statement that members of the session or the church can articulate and support, you can follow Track One below. If they do not, follow Track Two.

### TWO POSSIBLE TRACKS

- First Track: Reviewing the *Current* Mission Statement
- Second Track: Writing a *New* Mission Statement

### Overview

- ✓ Assess the present Mission Statement.
- ✓ If the mission statement is over five years old, review it carefully for possible re-write.
- ✓ If you are not satisfied, move to Second Track.
- ✓ If you are satisfied, then move on to reviewing or developing your vision statement
- ✓ Assess the vision statement
- ✓ Clarify the value statements and or Core Values
- ✓ Write a one page Mission, Vision, Value Statement<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Obtain the approval of the Session to adopt the Mission, vision, and value Statement and communicate the results to the congregation.

### *Principles for a Viable Mission Statement:*

1. *Is it one sentence, easily memorized?*
2. *Does it include a reference to God's call to ministry?*
3. *Does it reflect what we are called to be, not only what we are doing?*
4. *Is it conceptual, not concrete?*

---

<sup>1</sup> See example of Susquehanna Medical Center

## First Track: Reviewing the *Current* Mission Statement

Often a team/session will express satisfaction with the current Mission Statement. However, it is important to review its usefulness. Assumptions about the meaning can sidetrack constructive work. Take time to review what is already written and make sure everyone on the team understands the full meaning. If the church has a mission statement that is less than three years old and fits the principles, you do not have to re-write. However, it is good to test the viability of the Mission Statement. Does it hold up to the principles? Test it out.

### Assessing the current Mission Statement

1. Does this Mission Statement make sense?
2. Does it include elements of the Great Commission?
3. Does it reflect the Great Commandment?
4. Can the members of the session repeat the Mission Statement verbatim?
5. Is it an over-arching direction against which all aspects of the ministry can be measured?
6. Is it conceptual, not concrete?
7. Does it reflect what we are called to be, not what we are doing?

The present mission statement may only need small adjustments. Work for consensus. When the team is satisfied, write the Mission Statement on newsprint and place in a prominent location for future reference.

Note: If the team is uncomfortable with the present statement or it does not match with the owning governing body's mission statement, move to the Second Track for writing a new mission statement. If the mission statement is not viable, then the process for discerning the Mission will be compromised.

## Second Track: Writing a *New* Mission statement

### 1. DESIGNATE A WRITING TEAM

A. The Session designates a team of people to write the Mission Statement with a definite timeframe for accomplishing the task and for having it approved by the session. **Note: It is imperative that the session and the writing team ultimately agree on the Mission/Vision/Value Statements.**

B. A good size for the team is five with the addition of the moderator or the interim pastor for a total of six. It is important to note that the writing team needs to reflect all the members of the congregation. At least two of the members should be active elders.

C. The main challenge is to get *everyone* talking. Remember to designate a leader and a secretary to take notes or minutes during the process of discerning God's will for the Mission of the congregation.

## 2. Brainstorm the current MISSION OF THE CHURCH

[Have plenty of newsprint and markers ready for this process.]

### A. Clarifying the mission

1. **List the present program strengths.** Take time to talk about and affirm the strengths. (Put on newsprint then set aside and move to the next step.) It is important to keep the focus on strengths. It is easy for some people to slip into the "if we only could do" syndrome. At this point in the process it is the strengths that matter.

- a) To begin the discussion, one may ask the following question(s)
  - 1) What is a time you remember most about the ministry of this church?
  - 2) What is it about this church that stands out most to you?
  - 3) What do you feel the church does the best?
  - 4) What do you celebrate most about the ministry of this church?
  - 5) Are you passionate about the ministry of this church?
  - 6) What are the unique attributes of the ministry of this church?
- b) Another option may be to develop a Time Line of significant things that have happened in the ministry of the church. There can be two layers to the Time Line: time line for the church (What positive feelings/experience do you have for/with the church?) and a time line for personal experiences and feelings about the church. Ask the same questions.

**After you have developed a good list, set aside the newsprint, and move on to the next step.**

### B. DISCERNMENT

Move into a time for prayer and discernment. Ask for God's guidance and clarity. Do not rush this part of the process. Once the instructions are given there will be no talking. Take 20-30 minutes for this step.

Ask each person to study the lists carefully and prayerfully.

Meditating on the lists, have each person select *three* items that they will share with the group. These are the things the person feels strongly that the church must do, or remember, or believe.

## C. WRITING THE MISSION STATEMENT

Divide into small groups to write a mission statement on newsprint.

- Let each person have the opportunity to share in the small group the three things they identified in the Discernment process. Write them down as they are shared. When each person has shared, talk about how these things can be integrated, how they are similar, what is their essence?
- Determine as a small group that are most important and write a new list to be presented to the whole group.
- Second, using the items that the group has discerned to be most important, begin to fashion a Mission Statement. When the groups are finished have them come together to share what they have written.

### **REMEMBER:** Principles for a Viable Mission Statement:

- Is it one sentence, easily memorized?
- Does it include a reference to God's call to ministry?
- Does it reflect what we are called to be, not only what we are doing?
- Is it conceptual, not concrete?

### 3. COMBINE AND REFINE

Reassemble as a whole group.

- Read the statements and discuss.
- Select/modify one of the statements *or* write another statement reflective of the discussion that has taken place. Remember to take time to discern God's will for the site. Encourage the group to be prayerful. Don't rush the process. If the group is having trouble coming to a quick conclusion, take time away from the process, returning after a period of discernment.

### 4. COMPARE STATEMENTS

Review the mission statements and priorities. Through a consensus of the whole group narrow your choice of mission statements down to just one.

### 5. STAY CONNECTED

Remember that you will need to get the approval of the session for your Mission Statement.

<p><b>Use the same process for discerning the Vision and value statements steps two and three</b></p>
---

## STEP TWO: DISCERNING THE VISION STATEMENT(S)

The Vision Statement should fill out the challenge of the Mission Statement by identifying both current strengths and goals for the future. The vision statement should be practical and action oriented. The Vision statement is change-oriented and strategic. The vision statement should focus on those things that affirm the current strengths and restates the purpose of the church for a comprehensive ministry.

Principles for a vision statement:

- Gives direction, purpose, and clarity to the concept of the mission
- Reflects openness to new ideas
- Encourages possibilities for the future
- Improves productivity by providing clear direction

Guidelines for writing a vision statement:

Vision Statements are—

- Consistent with the mission statement
- Focused
- Concise (1 sentence)
- Faith oriented
- Consistent with the past history and mission but focused on the future
- Both realistic and challenging

### DISCERNMENT

Discernment takes time. Discernment is a spiritual practice and helps a person or group open himself or herself to the voice of God. Discernment helps the individual and group refocus and prepare their thoughts for the next step. Using the Mission Statement, ask each person to *individually* and *quietly* ponder the following:

***Imagine your church had unlimited resources, how would you answer the following questions?*** (People may wish to take notes.)

1. What three wishes do you have to enhance the vitality of this church?
2. In light of the present strengths and the challenges what kinds of programs would you hope the church would continue or develop during the next 3-5 years?
3. Is there something in particular you would like to see accomplished programmatically as you seek to fulfill the Mission Statement?

**Take notes if you desire for the next step in discussion.**

### BRAINSTORM

Hand out large Super Sticky Post-It Notes (Or you can use 3x5 cards). Allow at least 15 minutes for this part of the exercise.

- Write down *one* idea per note
- Unlimited number of ideas per person – be creative
- No talking to others

*Brainstorming rules:*

- No evaluation of the offerings
- No negative comments are made
- Only ask for clarification
- Be creative
- All ideas are recorded

## **SHARING AND CLARIFYING**

The Post-It notes are given to the facilitator, as they are finished. The facilitator sticks the notes on a wall, in no particular order.

Note: Place the Mission Statement in a prominent place for reference during the exercise

Remember: this exercise reflects both what the site is doing well and what they might like to add to their program.

The facilitator then reads the idea on each note, asks if there are any questions for clarification or comment. *Remember the rules.*

- As each idea is read, it will become clear that they fall into like categories. Begin to place the similar ideas into columns by rearranging the sticky notes.
- Take plenty of time – do not rush the process. Allow ideas to generate discussion.
- Other ideas can be added to a column as they are stimulated by the discussion.

## **DISCERN**

When the group is done sharing all the ideas, ask the following questions for general discussion.

- Which of the ideas make the most sense in light of the Mission Statement?
- Which of the ideas make the most sense in light of the program strengths of the site?
- Which ideas make less sense or seem less feasible?

After adequate discussion, ask: Which ideas should be eliminated from the list? It may be that you have already gotten into removing notes during the discussion. However, this is a time to weed out the ideas that are wonderful but may not be practical, for whatever reason.

- Trust the group, they will instinctively know what will or will not work.
- However, keep them optimistic. This is still a “dreaming” phase of the process.

*Reasons to eliminate may be:*

- *It doesn't relate to the Mission Statement,*
- *Would not be possible without a lot of investment in support functions,*



- *Good but may not be the time,*
- *Financial issues,*
- *Are not feasible on the present site.*
- *Other*

Pull off the notes that the group decides should be eliminated.

## VOTING

Once all the ideas are read, categorized or eliminated, use the dot voting process (dots) for people to prioritize the important ideas. "Vote" for the ideas with the following process:

- Give each person 5 dots
- Each dot counts as 1 vote
- A person can put no more than two dots on an idea.

Count the dots and write each of the top 1-5 ideas on separate newsprint.

*Rule of Thumb: 3-5 Vision Statements are workable; the ideal is one overarching vision.*

## WRITE VISION STATEMENT

Together (or in small groups depending on the size of group with which you are working) write a clarifying, concise two-sentence (or 25 words or less) Vision Statement for each idea. If the group has divided into small groups, come back together to share the statements. Work until consensus is achieved.

## PRIORITIZE

Prioritize the Goal Statements as a group.

- Come to a consensus through group discussion.
- *Or* Vote with the dots (See instructions in previous section).

See Example of Susquehanna Mission Statement:
---

## STEP THREE: DISCERNING THE VALUE STATEMENT(S)

1. **Develop a clear list of the core values by which the church operates.** Core Values are those things that consistently drive the work of the ministry. Core Values are the life-giving factors for the ministry.

-Framework for determining the core values: Ask some or all of the following questions before the discussion to get the group thinking.

**REMEMBER: The core values are both spiritual and operational.**

- ✓ What do you most value about the work of the ministry?
- ✓ What are to core factors that give life to this ministry?
- ✓ What are some of the unique attributes of this ministry, without which it would not be the same?

- ✓ What theological principles guide the ministry?
- ✓ Which biblical standards are not to be compromised?
- ✓ What are the ideals that drive the ministry?
- ✓ What standards are used in hiring staff?
- ✓ Other? Determine as a group.

### **Examples of Core Values<sup>2</sup>**

*Faith in God Inclusiveness Challenge Growth Acceptance Change Community  
Hospitality Equality Excitement Spiritual Mission Respect Helping  
Belonging Evangelism Compassion Heritage Safety*

***Reach consensus about the most important/key Core Values. Keep a list of the Core Values on newsprint***

**Example of a good one page mission/vision/value statement:**

### **Mission Statement**

**Our Mission is to extend God’s healing mercy by improving the health status of those we serve.**

### **Vision Statement**

**Our Vision is to become the healthiest region in the United States**

### **Value Statement**

**We Value those who provide our care, those who receive our care and servant leadership rooted in:**

- **Quality Service**
- **Dedicated Partnership**
- **Responsible Stewardship**
- **Commitment to our community**

**Susquehanna Health Care:  
The art of caring, the Science of Healing**

---

<sup>2</sup> See example of core values provided

## Example of Core Values

Acknowledging our heritage as Presbyterians embracing the Theology of the Reformed Tradition, Eastminster Presbyterian Church sets forth its Core Values as follows:

We value the **Lordship of Christ** as head of the Church and the center of our lives. (*Proverbs 3:5-6; John 11:25-26; 14:6; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:1-11; Colossians 2:6-7; 1:15-20; Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-3; I Peter 3:15; Revelation 1:9-20; 5:6-14; 19:11-18; 22:12-16*)

We value **Praise and Worship** where we experience God through Word & Sacraments, inspiring music, personal and corporate prayer, invitation to ministry, mission and stewardship of our lives for Jesus Christ. (*Genesis 1,2; Exodus 20:1-3; I Chronicles 16; 7f, 25; 22:17-19; II Chronicles 6:12f; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Psalms 8; 24; 34:1-3; 95; 100; 122; 123; 103; 139; 150; Isaiah 6:1-8, 40:9-31; Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11; John 6:48-51, 14:12-14; Acts 2:46-47, 16:25; Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 11: 2-34; 12, 13, 14; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; I Peter 2:9 10)*

We value the power of **Prayer** and encourage its thoughtful use in all that we do. (*Psalm 34:1-7; 42, 63, 130; Luke 3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:19; Mark 1:35; Matthew 26: 36-44; John 17; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:24-25; I John 2:1, 5:14-15; Mark 14:36; Romans 8:14-17, 26-28; Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21, 6:18; Philippians 1:3-11; II Thessalonians 3:1-5; I Timothy 2:1-4; James 5:16-18; I John 5:14-15.*)

We value **Bible-centered preaching and teaching** in the Reformed tradition through which we experience God personally and through which the Word of God comes alive in our everyday lives. (*Psalms 1, 19, 119; John 1:1-4, 14; Romans 10:14-15; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6-8; II Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 4:12-13; II Peter 1:12-2:22*)

We value **Genuineness** which encourages us to be truthful with each other and with God and enables us to share life and community at the deepest level. (*Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 6:5-6; Matthew 5,6,7; Romans 12:1-2, 9-21; I Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:17-32; II Corinthians 4:1-12, 12:1-10; Galatians 1:11-24; 2,3,4,5,6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:6, 2:1-11, 3:7-16; James 2:14-26, 5:7-12; I Peter 1:13- 23, 3:1-11, 5:1-10; II Peter 1:3-11)*

We value **Mission** -- God's calling us to the work of spreading the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ by helping those in material and spiritual need. (*Exodus 19:1-6, 20-23:9; Leviticus 19:9-18; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 5:13-16, 28:18-20; James 2:14-17; Matthew 25:31-46*)

We value **Evangelism** through which people are encouraged to know God's unconditional love and marvelous grace through a personal and transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. (*Exodus 19:1-6; Matthew 5:13-16, 28:18-20; Mark 10:45; John 1:12-14; 6:44, 15:16, 20:21- 23; Acts 16:13-14; 17:22-23; I Corinthians 9:19-21; II Corinthians 4:3-12; 5:11-21; Galatians 5; Ephesians 1:3-14,2:1-10; I Peter 3:15; I John 5:11-12; Revelation 3:19-20)*

We value **Family** as God's institution where Christian values are taught, nurtured and lived in everyday lives. (*Deuteronomy 6; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 2:11-21, 5:21-33, 6:1-4; Philippians 2:14-16; I Peter 3:1-7*) We value **Fellowship** where we discover Christ in the midst of the community of faith in groups large and small as we worship, witness and do ministry and mission together. (*Mark 10:35-45; John 13:34-35, 15:5-8; Romans 12:9-21, 14-15; I Corinthians 1:10-2:5, 3,8,9,12-13; II Corinthians 12:11-21; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:16; Philippians 1:3-8, 2:1-11; James 3:1-12, 4:1-12; I John 1:1-4; Revelation 3:20)*

We value **Caring** as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve each other, the community and the world. (*Leviticus 19:9-18; Psalm 23, 121; Acts 2:42-47; Philippians 1:3-11, 2:1-11, 4:10-20; Philemon; James 1:19-2:13; I Peter 3:9-11)*

We value the **Theology of the Reformed Tradition** and the polity of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., as set out in its Constitution, which consists of the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order. (*Exodus 18:13-26; Psalm 100; Acts 2:38-39, 15:1-32, 16:4-5; Matthew 5:23-24, 18:15- 8; 11:28-30, 28:18-20; Luke 18:15-18; John 11:25-26; 13:12-17, 34-35, 14:6, 21:15-17; I Corinthians 11:17-19, 15:1-11*)

**The following pages can be used as handouts for small or large group discussion.**

**To facilitate steps one through three of writing a mission/ vision/ value statement**

Take time to talk about and affirm the strengths. (Put on newsprint then set aside and move to the next step.) It is important to keep the focus on strengths.

**To begin the discussion, one may ask the following question(s)**

- 1) What is a time you remember most about the ministry of this church?
- 2) What is it about this church that stands out most to you?
- 3) What do you feel the church does the best?
- 4) What do you celebrate most about the ministry of this church?
- 5) Are you passionate about the ministry of this church?
- 6) What are the unique attributes of the ministry of this church?

Another option may be to develop a Time Line of significant things that have happened in the ministry of the church. There can be two layers to the Time Line: time line for the church (What positive feelings/experience do you have for/with the church?) and a time line for personal experiences and feelings about the church. Ask the same questions.

# WHAT IS OUR MISSION

## Clarifying the mission

List the present program strengths.

Below or on the back of this page draw a time line of significant events that have happened in the ministry of this church.

## THE VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement should fill out the challenge of the Mission Statement by identifying both current strengths and goals for the future. The vision statement should be practical and action oriented. The Vision statement is change-oriented and strategic. The vision statement should focus on those things that affirm the current strengths and restates the purpose of the church for a comprehensive ministry.

Principles for a vision statement:

- Gives direction, purpose, and clarity to the concept of the mission
- Reflects openness to new ideas
- Encourages possibilities for the future
- Improves productivity by providing clear direction

Guidelines for writing a vision statement: Vision Statements are—

- Consistent with the mission statement
- Focused
- Concise (1 sentence)
- Faith oriented
- Consistent with the past history and mission but focused on the future
- Both realistic and challenging

## FOCUS YOUR VISION

Take ten minutes to answer the following questions:

Imagine your church had unlimited resources, how would you answer the following questions?

**What three wishes do you have to enhance the vitality of this church?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**In light of the present strengths and the challenges what kinds of programs would you hope the church would continue or develop during the next 3-5 years?**

**Is there something in particular you would like to see accomplished programmatically as you seek to fulfill the Mission Statement?**

IN SMALL GROUPS DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS:

## WHAT ARE THE CORE VALUES OF MY CHURCH?

**Develop a clear list of the core values by which the church operates.**

Core Values are those things that consistently drive the work of the ministry. Core Values are the life-giving factors for the ministry.

**REMEMBER: The core values are both spiritual and operational.**

What do you most value about the work of the ministry?

What are the core factors that give life to this ministry?

What are some of the unique attributes of this ministry, without which it would not be the same?

What theological principles guide the ministry?

Which biblical standards are not to be compromised?

What are the ideals that drive the ministry?

What standards are used in hiring staff?

## WHAT DO WE VALUE AS A CHURCH?

Take time either as individuals or as small groups to come up with lists of core values that define who you are as a congregation: