

## **FAQs REGARDING MISSION STUDIES**

### **What is a mission study?**

It is a disciplined study of a congregation's culture that is designed to

- open the quest for congregational self-understanding
- gather and interpret information to envision future identity, purpose, and mission
- examine dynamics that shape its morale and climate
- reveal patterns that lie beneath multiple issues
- review past successes and failures, values, and behavior patterns that shape its life and culture

### **Why have a mission study?**

Since the mission study is designed to involve all members of a congregation who will participate, it will provide

- a good overview of the congregation's history, which will be especially helpful to newer members and enjoyable for long-term members
- opportunity for members to interact with one another around important questions concerning the congregation's present status
- opportunity for members to discern who God is calling them to be and what God is calling them to do in the future in order to be a faithful witness to the claims of the Gospel upon them
- new ways for members to see themselves as an organic system instead of as an organization
- clarification of values that are most important to the congregation's life and ministry
- a valuable resource of information to church officers, committees, the PNC and serious pastoral candidates (if the study is conducted between installed pastors)

### **When should a mission study be conducted?**

- when a congregation is experiencing significant change (e.g., the time between installed pastors, changing social environment, declining membership)
- 3 to 5 years into a new pastor's tenure
- when a congregation becomes stuck in a holding pattern, experiencing neither growth nor decline in membership
- when a congregation lacks a clear sense of purpose and direction
- when a congregation has worked through a serious conflict

### **Who conducts the mission study?**

An appointed representative team of congregational members, under the supervision of someone, not a member of the congregation, who has the necessary resources, coaching skills, and objectivity to guide them in information gathering, sharing, and interpretation.

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