

STEP 6

ASSESS THE CURRENT AND FUTURE MISSION OF THE CONGREGATION

The creation of a Church Profile is intended to produce a document that summarizes the church's unique character, its program, and its mission direction.

It is a systematic review of the church's life. It evaluates the needs of the congregation and the wider community outside of the church. Then it suggests a direction for engaging in mission based on the identified needs. In a time of transition, a Church Profile results in a thorough description of present ministry and future vision as a way to raise people's perspective toward a shared picture of what "good pastoral leadership" looks like.

The loss of a pastor presents an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the congregation in sharing the fullness of life in Christ with its community. The conversations, prayerful discernment, and listening that is required to construct a Church Profile may liberate the congregation from the tyranny of the way things have always been and provide the opportunity to experience a different approach to leadership.

The session will want to create a team to conduct this study and bring the findings to the congregation. Will the Church Profile Team also be the Pastor Nominating Committee or will a Church Profile Team complete its study and hand the results over to a separate Pastor Nominating Committee?

Many people might expect that the same team that carried out the Church Profile would also carry out the search. That has often been done, and perhaps successfully. But we recommend that these two tasks be done by two separate teams with one or two overlapping members. Here are three reasons why:

1

First, both the task of assessing the church's mission and the task of finding, interviewing, and selecting a pastor are long and intense. If a team is deployed to first study the mission and then find a pastor, they may be exhausted by the time they come to the final interviews, which is the most important time during these tasks.

2

Second, the potential for dysfunctional personal interactions to grow and become debilitating often increases as people work together over long periods of time and on such crucial tasks. After a careful effort to put together a balanced team, a congregation might end up having to replace some exhausted or nonproductive members right when they are at a crucial juncture in their search.

3

Third, the process of developing criteria for what is most important in a new pastor may galvanize a sense of the ideal person the team is looking for. This could be trouble when in the process of interviewing actual candidates. It is better all around to have one team write the mission study and develop criteria, and another team implement those criteria in a search.

ECO has two helpful resources that can guide you through this task: MissionInsite and the Vision Framing Process.



MissionInsite pulls together demographic information for community research and ministry development. On ECO's [MissionInsite webpage](#), you can watch a [short video](#) explaining MissionInsite and how it can help set the stage for your pastoral transition and search. Every ECO church has access to a free account. On the webpage there is a link to activate your church's free account. We have a designated staff member available to assist you with creating your MissionInsite study. For assistance with church registration or how to use the MissionInsite tool, email info@flourishmovement.org.



The [Vision Framing Process](#) is a helpful tool for a session, key staff, and other church leaders to dream and discern God's preferred future for your congregation. It will help you clarify your mission and vision. In turn, this will help the Pastor Nominating Committee in its search for the next called pastor, who will lead and implement this vision. For more information or assistance with the Vision Framing Process, email info@flourishmovement.org.