

**CONGREGATIONAL SELF-STUDY**  
**Presbytery of Geneva**  
**Committee on Ministry**

**Congregational self-study and/or revision of church mission and vision statements**

Depending on the situation of the congregation – how long the pastor has served, the last time the congregation conducted a congregational self-study or updated its mission statement – the COM may recommend that the congregation conduct a congregational self-study (also known as a mission study) and/or develop new mission and vision statements before beginning the search for a new pastor.

A congregational self-study is an opportunity for a congregation to discern who they are, why they exist, and who God is calling them to be. There are many ways to conduct a congregational self-study, but in general it should involve the whole congregation, not just the church leadership. It typically describes the church's

- History
- Mission and vision (revised statements)
- Demographics (of the congregation and local community)
- Programs
- Finances
- Hopes and plans for the future

The congregational self-study should examine both the church's strengths and weaknesses. It should honestly describe any conflicts or difficulties. It should consider the type of leadership needed to help the congregation live into its mission and vision. Engaging the congregation in the self-study can be done in many ways: surveys sent out to all members, facilitated conversations before or after church, and deliberate discussions at committee meetings are a few options. Some discussion questions might come directly from the MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile), the information that will be posted online about the position you are seeking to fill as well as details about your church and community.

While the congregational self-study is carried out by lay leaders and involves the whole congregation, the transitional pastor may assist in organizing the self-study and encouraging congregational involvement. Any role of the transitional pastor in the congregational self-study should be described in that pastor's covenant agreement.

A final Congregational Self-Study Report must be approved by the session and it should be shared with the congregation. It must also be approved by the COM. It is helpful if one or two people from the church meet with the COM as they review the Congregational Self-Study Report.

The time spent on a congregational self-study will be time well spent. Engaging the congregation in answering the questions "Who are we?" and "Who is God calling us to be?" is a critical step in preparing the congregation for a new pastor.