

# Developing a Mission Statement

Office for Church Life and Leadership

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## Definitions and Introduction

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**Ministry** All activities motivated by our faith in Christ are ministry. This is the definition used throughout this booklet and in *The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches*.

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**Volunteer** A person who does a task without financial compensation or without being forced to do it is a volunteer.

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**Volunteer Ministry** The ministry of Christians, the ministry of church members, is primarily the ministry of volunteers.

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**Volunteer Ministry Program** A church's intentional, planned work with its volunteers is its volunteer ministry program.

A church's volunteer ministry program, as described in *The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches*, consists of the following ingredients or components.

- Developing a mission statement
- Preparing volunteer ministry position descriptions
- Identifying volunteers
- Matching volunteers and ministry positions
- Recruiting volunteers
- Training volunteers
- Supporting volunteers
- Completing volunteer ministries
- Evaluating the volunteer ministry program

These components are explained in a condensed form in "The Church and Its Volunteers." For more extensive information about each component of a volunteer ministry program, order the appropriate booklet as indicated on the inside back cover.

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## This Booklet

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This booklet is one of seven which together compose *The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches*.

This booklet is written to guide the work of a group of persons in the church who have responsibility, or are given responsibility, for seeing that the church has a clear mission statement which is familiar to the members of the church, and which provides a foundation and purpose for the church's volunteer ministry program.

This booklet can be used as a self-contained resource by a group in the church even if there is no effort being made to develop an organized volunteer ministry program. If this is the case, it is recommended that the leader of the task group working on the mission statement secure and become familiar with some of the other booklets in this series.

Ideally, this booklet will be used by a group in the church that is part of an organized volunteer ministry program. Such a program will be giving attention to all or most of the components identified here.

The booklet in this series entitled "Guiding the Church's Volunteer Ministry Program" provides guidance for organizing a complete volunteer ministry program. If the plan described there is adopted by the church, this booklet becomes the primary resource for the Ministry of Volunteers Team.

# Developing a Mission Statement

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Philadelphia, PA 19144



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***Developing a Mission Statement, a booklet in the series,  
The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches***

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One of the major elements of the church's volunteer ministry program is the sense of mission or purpose which the church members feel and understand and to which they are committed.

In this booklet we are dealing with the church's vision of where it believes it ought to be—its sense of mission and purpose. A given church's sense of mission will change from time to time in response to community needs and the perceptions of members.

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### **Suggestions for Use**

This booklet "Developing a Mission Statement" is intended for use by a small group of leaders who are given responsibility for planning ways in which the church can develop or discuss, evaluate and revise, if necessary, its statement of purpose or mission.

Leadership for this activity could be provided by members of the official board, by the deacons or elders or by a special group appointed to do this specific task.

Those responsible will want to read through this booklet in order to understand what is to be accomplished and to become familiar with the various methods of working on the task.

It is important for those who use this booklet to see how it relates to the other components of the church's volunteer ministry program. An overview can be found in the booklet in this series, "The Church and Its Volunteers," which is recommended for study as background information.

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### **What This Booklet Contains**

This booklet is divided into three sections:

Section One presents a biblical and theological perspective on volunteer ministry.

Section Two presents principles which provide a foundation for the work of developing a mission statement.

Section Three contains a series of procedures for meetings of church members to work on the church's mission statement. Step-by-step instructions are included in this section.

The procedures outlined in this booklet are *suggested*. While they have been tested and found to be helpful in many churches, they cannot be used the same way in every church. Feel free to adapt and alter the procedures so they are comfortable and compatible with the way things are done in your church. However, do not hesitate to attempt some new approaches simply because they have never been tried in your church before.

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### **Related Resources**

*Church Planning* is a resource for a church to use in moving from developing its purpose to developing goals, strategies and actions.

*Good to Be Together*, a folder of Faith Exploration resources to be used at church dinners, contains "Building with Essentials," an exploration of the life and mission of the church.

These resources are published by the Office for Church Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ and are available from Church Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, Missouri 63166. For information about the booklets in this series, see the inside back cover.

# Section One: A Biblical and Theological Perspective on Volunteer Ministry

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*The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches* is written by church people for church people. The booklets in this series attempt to articulate in simple terms an interpretation of what

God intends the church to be and do. This section contains a summary of some fundamental affirmations which undergird the principles and procedures outlined in the guidebook.

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All people are created and sustained in the mystery and power of God. God has a dream for us and works patiently and persistently to bring that dream to fulfillment. Through the centuries, people have perceived God's working uniquely in their time and have expressed their faith in the presence and power of God in their lives in ways uniquely meaningful to them. And yet, we are drawn together by our conviction that God's intention for a world of peace, justice, freedom and love has not wavered.

Our understanding of God has become clearer in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can say that to know Jesus is to know God. Moreover, God's love which was expressed so

completely in and through Jesus, changes us and leads us, as disciples, to witness and work for the fulfillment of God's dream—the coming of God's reign.

The church is entrusted with Christ's ministry in the world and is empowered by his loving Spirit. Each one of us—every man, woman and child who bears the mark of baptism—shares in this ministry. Ministry is not limited to the ordained clergy, but is given to all of us who call ourselves Christians.

The mission of the church is the mission of Jesus Christ—to witness to the living power and presence of God, to offer healing and hope in the world, to love people and to join God in the movement toward God's reign.

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One way we express our conviction that the mission of Christ is now the mission of the church is through the image of the church as the Body of Christ. This image is rich in revealing the meaning of our life together.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single

unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In this one Spirit we were all baptized, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

*I Corinthians 12:12-13*  
*The Jerusalem Bible*

## **The Mission of the Church**

## **The Church as the Body of Christ**

**Body of Christ  
(continued)**

Each part in the human body contributes to and is sustained by the whole body, and so it is in the church envisioned as the Body of Christ. Christ is the head and we are members of the body. Each person is unique and precious and has a worthy ministry to perform. Christ's Spirit, working in and through us, draws the strengths of our ministries into mutual support and common purpose.

...[Christ] appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, to build up the body of Christ.

*Ephesians 4:11-12  
Today's English Version*

**The Gifts of  
the Spirit  
for Mission**

God has not only empowered the church with the Spirit of Christ but has endowed it with the resources it needs to carry out its mission in every time and place. God's graciousness and initiative with us are seen in the gifts given to us—the talents, abilities, skills, knowledge, temperament and attitudes—which enable us to respond with faithfulness to the mission we have been given.

As the church discerns the gifts which have been placed within it and begins to apply them to its mission, it is responding faithfully. Persons need to discern and affirm the gifts they have been given and offer them to the church's mission. Some gifts seem to be simply inherent in a person. Others are developed through study, training, experience and discipline. Every person possesses gifts of ministry.

Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he [or she] has received from God.

*1 Peter 4:10  
Today's English Version*

The church, also, needs to discern and affirm the gifts of its members and apply them to its mission. Each church discovers the uniqueness of its mission as it discovers the gifts within its members.

Where needed gifts are not apparent, the church will challenge the potential in persons and find ways to inspire and support them in securing the training or experience needed that their gifts might blossom and grow. The most faithful response to Christ's Spirit is when the church becomes a sensitive and creative steward of the gifts of ministry.

The term *ministry* comes from the idea expressed by the Greek word *diakonos* meaning *one who serves*. In this fundamental way, all who serve in the name of Christ—those who are ordained and those who are not—share the Christian ministry together. Distinctions between the ordained and unordained have to do with mutually determined functions, not with more or less important ministries.

Every moment of our lives provides opportunities for ministry. All the many facets of our lives—our work, family life, leisure, public service—need to be seen in relation to ministry. We sustain and support one another in these ministries. Likewise, what we do in the life of the church should be experienced and affirmed as meaningful ministry. We should enable one another to appreciate the varieties of ministries being done in our midst. We are called, nurtured and sometimes remarkably transformed as we join our gifts with others in the Body of Christ to bear Christ's own ministry in the world.



Covenant is a theme which pervades all the Bible and expresses the church's understanding of its relationship with God. Our faithful ancestors in the Old Testament believed God selected them for special responsibility in relation to God's mission. They believed that the presence and will of God had been revealed to them in a special way and that they had a special responsibility and relationship with God. The relationship was one in which God promised sustenance and power in expectation of their faithfulness and obedience. This relationship was a covenant relationship.

The church continues in a renewed covenant relationship with God. This covenant relationship is characterized by the gift of Christ's Spirit to the church and the gift of faith to its members.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called

you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

*I Peter 2:9-10*

*Revised Standard Version*

### **Covenanting Together in Mission**

Through our commitment of membership in the church we not only bind ourselves in covenant with God, but with those who have made the commitment of membership with us. To be a covenant community suggests a group of persons are bound by vows of loyalty to one another; care for, serve and minister to one another; stand beside and support one another through the experiences of life. When we are in covenant we form a visible and concrete expression of the Body of Christ in a specific location and time. It is our covenant with God and one another which keeps us together and provides us with energy for mission.

Christ's ministry is now our ministry, for we are the Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ we are sustained by his Spirit and given the gifts for ministry. As we discern, affirm, offer and apply our gifts to the church's mission we respond faithfully.

All of us who call ourselves Christians are called to bear Christ's own ministry in our homes, jobs, community service and church. Persons like ourselves, with all our strengths and frailties, are chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God and to witness to a world of peace, justice, freedom and love which God intends and is bringing into being.

### **Summary**

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# Section Two: Principles Underlying Developing a Mission Statement

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The basic foundation on which any organization is built is its purpose. This is no less true of the church. We all have understandings about the purpose of the church. It is helpful, nevertheless, to take time occasionally to talk about and renew our common understandings. Sometimes, in the midst of much

activity and busyness, it is renewing and energizing to remind ourselves why we are doing what we do and what we hope to achieve through our efforts.

There are several facets to reviewing and renewing the church's understanding of its purpose and mission.

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## **Constitution or Covenant**

First, most churches have a constitution or covenant which contains a statement of purpose. To involve both new and long-time members in study and discus-

sion of this statement strengthens the relationship between persons, and the programs of the church are influenced and enriched.

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## **Setting Goals**

Second, many churches have found writing annual goals for themselves to be a valuable activity. This practice recognizes that it is impossible to do everything in one year, so that decisions have to be made about what needs to be accomplished each year. Setting goals translates broad purpose statements into more specific tasks for the year. It gives the church and its members a sense of where they are going.<sup>1</sup>

Regular reference to the church's purpose and its goals for the year is important to the volunteer ministry program. It is vital for persons who have been asked to undertake a volunteer ministry to be able to see how their ministry contributes to the purpose and goals of the church.

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## **Factors of Uniqueness**

Third, every church is unique. While it is possible to write a purpose statement which might be applicable to any church, each church's own characteristics make it different from every other church. Thus, the way it understands

and states its purpose, the goals and programs it undertakes and the way it organizes its life will be unlike any other church. Some factors which shape each church's uniqueness include:

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<sup>1</sup>This booklet focuses on the church's statement of mission or its purpose. For information and procedures for developing goals, see *Church Planning* which is available from Church Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, Missouri 63166 for \$10.00.

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- a. Its biblical and theological understandings; the vitality of its worship, preaching and study; its theological roots; the interpretations of its purpose and mission which have influenced and guided it in the past.
  - b. Its setting; where it is located; what is happening in the community; the needs of the people and the community around it.
  - c. Its people; the experiences and gifts they bring; where the people are located in the community; the positions they hold; how they identify and follow through on opportunities for ministry in all areas of their lives.
  - d. Its history and tradition; what the members themselves and the community expect of this church; the strengths developed through the years.
  - e. Its resources; how many members it has and their interests and abilities; its facilities; available financial support.
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How a church develops and decides its purpose and goals is important. It has become increasingly clear that one of the major ingredients of health and vitality in a voluntary organization is the degree of participation by its members in important decisions. Persons are

more committed to and motivated by the purpose and goals of the church when they have participated in creating and making decisions about them. This insures a broad base of involvement and participation in all important decisions made by a church.

### **Participation**

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# Section Three: Procedures for Developing a Mission Statement

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This section of procedures is a guide to the group responsible for planning the way in which the church or groups within it will study, review and make

revisions in the church's statement of mission or will write an entirely new mission statement.

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## **Planning and Leading Meetings**

Suggestions for planning and leading task group meetings:

1. Study the list of materials needed for each meeting and make provision for all supplies and resources.
2. Begin and end the meetings promptly at the announced time.
3. Provide brief group building activities at the beginning of the meetings and a time for reflection and sharing about the meeting at the end.
4. Continually look for ways to relate the work of the task group to ministry using the principles of the volunteer ministry program.
5. Provide a break for each hour or hour and a half of the meeting.
6. At the beginning of each meeting always share the objectives for the meeting and preview the agenda. (It is good practice to outline these on newsprint.)
7. At the end of each meeting, summarize accomplishments, review assignments to be done between meetings and preview the next meeting.
8. Each meeting plan has suggested times stated for each step. It is important to maintain the pace of the meeting to complete the agenda in the agreed-upon time. The task group chairperson should keep in mind that the meeting plans are flexible and feel free to make the needed changes. However, it should be noted that the meetings build on one another, and tasks not undertaken or completed may affect later plans and the work of task groups dealing with other aspects of the church's volunteer ministry program.
9. The size of the task group affects how the group works together. If the task group is only 4-6, then all group work can be done together. If there are more than four members, some group assignments could be done in sub-groups. For example, the personal sharing in each meeting plan could be done in small groups of 2-3 persons.

## Activities Outlined in this Section

*This section contains detailed instructions for the following activities to be carried out by a task group working on the mission statement of the church.*

Activity	Time	Purpose
Developing the Church's Mission Statement:		Write a new mission statement for the church
Option A	3¾ hours; more is optional	
Option B	1½ to 1¾ hours	
Reviewing and Evaluating the Church's Mission Statement:		Review the church's present mission statement or purpose and make necessary revisions
Option I	1 to 2 hours	
Option II	1 to 2 hours	
Option III	1 to 2 hours	

## Meeting to Develop a Mission Statement: Option A

This is a meeting plan for an activity which may take place every three to five years in the life of a church. It is hoped a church will review, revise and renew its mission statement each year.

A mission statement is a brief statement which expresses a church's understanding of its present mission. It is based on the church's perception of what God is saying to it at the present time. The mission statement should be expressive of a church's setting, opportunities and resources. In most cases, it will be more

specific than the statement of purpose found in a church's constitution, yet not as specific as goals and objectives. It is faithful to the church's history and tradition, but focuses on ministries the church is called to do currently and in the future.

This is a meeting for the entire church. It may be held in conjunction with an annual meeting, on a Sunday afternoon and evening, after Sunday morning worship or at some other time the church is gathered.

### Arrangements

The meeting plan presented here is very complete and demanding. Since the plan requires intense participation in both small groups and the total group, it would be advisable to include a meal, which would provide a break and relaxation for the participants. Additional time would be necessary for the meal. An alternative would be to plan an all-day retreat, expanding the design to allow more time for some steps and building several periods of free time.

Four similar sets of study and discussion steps lead to the writing of the mission statement. Each step deals with one way God speaks to the church (through our personal history and understanding, through the Bible and tradition, through needs of the community and the world, and from the future). It would be possible to shorten the meeting by eliminating or combining some of these steps. This, of course,

decreases the richness of the experience and the quality of the mission statement.

In setting up for the meeting, use a comfortable room with chairs arranged in a circle. The room should be large enough for the total group with enough space for small cluster meetings. It will save time if the small groups can gather in the same room in which the total group meets. This will permit quick movement from small-group to total-group activities and allow the leader to give instructions to everyone while they are in small groups.

Name tags should be provided and worn by all participants.

Light refreshments available as people arrive and during breaks add to community building and conversation.

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### Preparation for First Presentation

The meeting plan calls for two brief presentations by the leader of this meeting. These presentations need to be developed prior to the meeting. They should be no more than 5-7 minutes long and would be enriched if accompanied by pictures, charts, slides or other graphics.

The first presentation is in Step 10. It is based on the assumption that God speaks to the church through the needs of its community and world. The church is called to be sensitive to its world and to the needs of persons who are hurting. The presentation could cover some of the following areas and issues:

1. What is happening within the church? What has been the recent trend in membership growth, age of members, finances, church program, leadership, church property, participation, etc.? Are there members whose needs are not being met—such as the lonely, youth, elderly, singles, widowed,

divorced, unemployed, physically or emotionally ill, handicapped, etc.?

2. In the immediate vicinity of the church what problems are people facing in the areas of housing, social services, health, crime and delinquency, hunger, education, unemployment, etc.?
3. Is the neighborhood experiencing any changes in size or age of population, racial and ethnic groups, condition of housing, etc.?
4. What local issues keep reappearing in the news because they are of concern or pose problems for persons, such as the quality of local government, the welfare system, recreational and cultural facilities, public education, etc.?
5. What state, regional, national and world problems and issues are calling for Christian response and action?

The presentation should offer factual data about some of these issues. It also could present the impressions of the leader or of a small group that together prepare the presentation. Members of

the group will add their own impressions and perceptions, so the presentation needs to be more provocative and stimulating than comprehensive.

The second presentation is in Step 15. It is based on the assumption that God goes before us calling us to be participants in a new future which God is creating. Images of the future help determine what we do today. A great deal of planning and projecting about the future is currently taking place in our secular society. The church needs to be aware of these projections, to critique them from a Christian perspective and to offer its own images based on its perception of God's will for the world.

The second presentation projects five to fifteen years into the future and could cover some of the following areas and issues:

1. If present trends in membership, finances and leadership continue, what will our congregation look like, what kind of ministry will it be offering, what problems will it be facing?

2. If present trends continue, how will our community be different in five to fifteen years? Will it be more or less populous? Will it more or less commercial? What problems will it face which it does not face now? What will be the age, racial, ethnic, occupational and economic make-up of the community?
3. What will family life be like in five to fifteen years? Will people be more or less lonely? Will values be different in any way? Will relationships and living arrangements other than marriage be common?
4. How will science and technology affect our church and community? Will people live longer, and if so, what will that mean? What will be the common illnesses affecting people? What kind of issues of medical ethics will be major in five to fifteen years?

### Preparation for Second Presentation

There are a number of resources which could be used in preparing either presentation. A good workbook for uncovering factual data about one's church and community is *Discovering Our Mission*, available from Church Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, Missouri 63166 for \$1.75.

*The Futurist* is a monthly publication devoted to the study of the future. It is available from The World Future Society, P.O. Box 30369, Bethesda Branch, Washington, D.C. 20014 for \$15.00 annually.

### Resources

Most larger newspapers and news magazines (e.g., *Time*, *Newsweek*) carry regular features about projections of the future and their implications for the nature and quality of life. A careful reading of several issues should provide ample materials for a brief presentation.

# Developing Statement: Option A

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## Objectives of the Meeting

The church members will be engaged in developing and writing a statement which expresses their understanding of the mission of their church.

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## Materials Needed

- Hymnals or song sheets
- Name tags
- Newsprint, markers and masking tape
- Paper and pencils
- Light refreshments; meal (optional)

The following materials will be used in small groups of 4-6 persons. Each small group should have copies of one of the following: a Bible passage, a creed, a covenant or a faith statement for each person. Enough sets of material should be prepared for the number of small groups anticipated at the meeting. Each small group should have a different Bible passage, creed, covenant or faith statement. Suggestions for these materials are noted below. Please feel free to select others.

- Creeds, Covenants and Faith Statements
  - The United Church of Christ Statement of Faith (use either the complete Statement of Faith or the paragraph beginning "God calls us into the Church...")
  - The Apostles' Creed
  - The Salem Covenant
  - The Purpose Statement or Covenant from your church's constitution

- Bible passages:
  - Genesis 12:1-3
  - Exodus 20:1-17
  - Leviticus 25:1-46
  - Deuteronomy 10:12-22
  - Deuteronomy 15:1-11
  - Deuteronomy 16:18-20
  - Isaiah 1:12-17
  - Isaiah 5:8-23
  - Isaiah 58:6-9
  - Isaiah 61:1-3
  - Jeremiah 22:13-18
  - Ezekiel 18:5-19
  - Ezekiel 34:1-16
  - Amos 5:6-15
  - Zechariah 8:9-10
  - Matthew 25:31-46
  - Matthew 28:16-20
  - Mark 8:34-9:1
  - Mark 10:17-22
  - Mark 10:35-45
  - Luke 17:12-14
  - John 13:12-20
  - John 15:12-17
  - Acts 2:43-3:10
  - Romans 12
  - Galatians 5:1-15
  - Galatians 5:16-24
  - Ephesians 4:17-31
  - Philippians 2:1-11

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## Time Required

3¾ hours if used as designed; more if a meal is planned

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## Overview of the Meeting

- Welcome, objectives, agenda
- Worship
- Hearing God speak through personal history and understanding



- Hearing God speak through the Bible and tradition
- Hearing God speak through the needs of the community and the world
- Decision about what to include in a mission statement
- Hearing God speak from the future
- Agreement on a mission statement for the church
- Reflection, commitment, worship

**1**

The leader of the meeting welcomes the church members, expresses appreciation for their attendance, shares the purpose of the day and previews the type of activities and the process to be used.

The leader of the meeting briefly introduces the volunteer ministry program and the leaders of the program and describes how the product of the day—a mission statement for the church—is needed and will be used in the volunteer ministry program. (10 minutes)

**Detailed  
 Outline of  
 the Meeting**

**2**

The pastor leads a brief worship experience, talking about God's unfolding revelation to the church. God reveals to the church its mission and purpose, which is always new and challenging, and is perceived in new ways. God continually reveals what the church is called to be and do through the Bible, through the creeds and covenants of the church written across the centuries and through the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the faith community. The purpose of this meeting is to listen afresh to the many ways God has spoken and is speaking, to

share our perceptions and understandings about that, and to write a new mission statement for the church.

The worship experience may include hymns such as "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Be Thou My Vision," "God of Grace and God of Glory."

An opportunity could be provided for people to move around and greet one another, offering one another welcome and the peace of God.

Prayers for the church and its mission and for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit during the work of this meeting may be offered. (10 minutes)

*God Speaks to the Church through  
 Our Personal History and  
 Understanding*

**3**

The leader of the meeting reminds the group of the many ways God speaks to the church. One way is through the personal faith journeys and experiences of its people.

Persons are invited to get comfortable so they are not distracted by others. All are asked to reflect individually on what the church has meant to them personally; how it has ministered to them; how it has enabled them to relate to and serve God; how it has supported and strengthened them. (5 minutes)

## Developing Statement: Option A

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### 4

The leader of the meeting invites persons to form small groups of 4-6

persons each and to share their reflections. (10 minutes)

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### 5

The leader invites each small group to talk about what they believe the church

is for, why the church exists and what God expects the church to be and do based on their personal sharing. (10 minutes)

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### 6

The total group reconvenes. The leader of the meeting heads several sheets of newsprint: "Why the church exists."

Persons call out the responses shared in small groups and these are recorded on the newsprint. Additions will be made to this list later in the meeting. (10 minutes)

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### *God Speaks to the Church through the Bible and through Tradition*

### 7

The leader of the meeting reminds the group that God speaks to the church in many ways. One way is through the Bible. Another is through creeds, covenants and faith statements developed by the church through the centuries. The group is invited to listen anew to these sources today.

The leader explains that later in the meeting a sub-group composed of one person from each small group will be asked to help formulate a mission statement. Each small group should quickly decide who will represent it.

The small groups reconvene and select their representatives for the sub-group.

Every person in each group is given a Scripture passage or a creed, covenant or faith statement which has been prepared before the meeting. Each small group is given a different passage or statement.

Individuals read the selection silently. In the small groups, people discuss what the selection says about why the church exists. A member of each small group records responses on newsprint. (30 minutes)

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### 8

The leader of the meeting reconvenes the total group. The responses are

displayed on newsprint and reviewed. The small groups are invited to add ideas and statements to the lists. (10 minutes)

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### 9

Break. (10 minutes)

*God Speaks to the Church  
 through the Needs of Its Community  
 and World*

**10**

The leader of the meeting or another person responsible for the task presents information, both factual and impres-

sionistic, about the needs of the community in which the church is located and needs in the world through which God may be calling the church to respond. (10 minutes)

**11**

Persons return to their small groups to reflect on the presentation and add their

own perceptions. Based on these, the groups add to their lists about why the church exists. (15 minutes)

**12**

The leader of the meeting reconvenes the total group. Persons are invited to

share additional ideas and statements added to their lists in the small groups. (10 minutes)

**13**

The leader of the meeting indicates it is time to translate the insights and perceptions of the day into a mission statement.

A new sheet of newsprint is posted and headed "The Mission of Our Church Includes..."

The leader invites the group to review the lists of "Why the Church Exists"

and suggest words or phrases that complete the sentence about their church's mission.

When all ideas have been written on newsprint the group breaks for light refreshments. The leader of the meeting announces that toward the end of the break, the sub-group working on the mission statement will meet. (10 minutes)

**14**

Break.

Toward the end of the break, the leader of the meeting calls the sub-group together to begin its work. The assignment is to take the sheets of newsprint, to shape their ideas into a brief

paragraph which expresses the mission of the church at this time and to record the paragraph on another sheet of newsprint.

The sub-group will report the mission statement to the total group. They have approximately 20 minutes to complete their task. (15 minutes)

*God Speaks to the Church  
 from the Future*

**15**

The leader reconvenes the total group (except for those working on the mission statement). The leader presents information, both factual and

impressionistic, which projects what the community might be like in five to fifteen years, and what clues this might provide about why the church exists. (10 minutes)

## Developing Statement: Option A

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### 16

The small groups reconvene to reflect on the presentation and add their own perceptions and ideas. (10 minutes)

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### 17

In the total group the small groups share some of their ideas and under-

standings generated in the conversation about the future and what that says about why the church exists and its mission. (10 minutes)

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### 18

The task group working on the mission statement reports and shares the draft of the church's mission statement which it has developed.

The total group reflects on the draft based on two questions:

- a. Is the summary statement faithful to the previously developed list?

- b. What changes need to be made in the mission statement in light of the conversation about the future?

The mission statement is modified as needed.

The leader of the meeting reminds the group how the mission statement will be used in the volunteer ministry program. (20 minutes)

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### 19

The pastor or other selected person leads a closing worship service of commitment and affirmation. Persons are invited to stand close together and share personal

reflections about the meeting. The group reads the new mission statement together. The group is invited to offer sentence prayers that express to God their feelings about the church and its mission and their part in it. The group sings a joyful hymn of praise and has a benediction. (10 minutes)

## Meeting to Develop a Mission Statement: Option B

This is a flexible plan which may be used in a variety of settings in the church. The result will be a brief mission statement for the church which expresses a sense of vision about where the church wants to be in the future and what kind of church it wants to be.

This meeting should provide an opportunity for brief devotional or biblical insights relating to the mission of the church. This may be a brief formal presentation, or a discussion by the group of selected Bible passages. This might include the use of Ephesians 4 or New Testament images of the church, such as saints, Body of Christ, chosen people, slaves/servants, people of God, children of God, disciples.

The presentation can fit into the meeting plan at several points. It could begin the session, come at the beginning of Step 5 or come at the end of the meeting as a time of celebration and reflection. The leader of the meeting should determine the appropriate time in the meeting plan.

There are a variety of alternate ways in which this plan may be used:

1. Congregational meeting. Everyone in the church is invited to participate in this meeting. The advantage of this approach is that it involves a significant cross-section of the church in the experience (adults, youth, children).

2. Separate group events. In this plan each group within the church (official board, committees, fellowship groups, classes, etc.) develops a separate mission statement. Then, either representatives from each group meet together to develop a single summary statement or a special group is given this responsibility.
3. Leadership event or retreat. It may be effective to gather members of all committees and groups in the church together on one occasion to carry out this plan. Each committee and group could go through the experience on its own, and toward the end of the event, the groups could come together to make a final, common mission statement for the church.

The more members of the church involved in creating a mission statement, the more representative and accepted the statement will be. Periodically all members need to consider the basic reason for the church's existence. While it may be easier to involve only a few persons or groups in the development of this statement, it will be very worthwhile to plan for wide participation.

### Background and Preparation

The purpose of this meeting plan is to assist church members in identifying and sharing with each other their

present understanding and future hopes about the mission of the church and to communicate that statement in writing.

### Objectives of the Meeting

## Developing Statement: Option B

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### Materials Needed

- Newsprint, markers and masking tape
  - 3" x 5" index cards and pencil for each participant
  - Hymnals or song sheets
- 

### Overview of the Meeting

- Welcome, objectives, agenda
  - Personal sharing
  - Decision about what to include in a mission statement
  - Agreement on a mission statement for the church
  - Celebration
  - Summary
- 

### Detailed Outline of the Meeting

#### 1

The leader of the meeting welcomes the participants to the meeting, expresses

appreciation for their attendance, shares the purpose of the meeting and previews the agenda. (5 minutes)

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#### 2

Each person is asked to think about the question: "What do you consider to be the greatest strength of this church?"

The group divides into small groups of 4-6 persons, and each person shares his or her response to the question. (10 minutes)

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#### 3

Each person is given a 3" x 5" index card and 5-10 minutes to write his or her own concept of the mission of the church. In introducing this activity the leader might include some of the following:

- a. Our purpose is to focus on the mission of our church at this time and as we move into the future.
- b. When we use the word *mission* we are referring to the purpose of this church, its particular reasons for existing, those things that make our church unique from any other group of persons.
- c. A mission statement answers the question, "Why do we exist as a church?"
- d. The objective of this activity is not to come up with highly polished sentences in precise language, but to express our genuine beliefs and feelings.
- e. It will be most creative if reference to formal statements of purpose such as those contained in the constitution not be consulted at this point.
- f. The statement should be approximately one paragraph or three to five sentences long.
- g. The statement should not merely offer a reflection of the church's present program but should reflect the direction in which the person feels the church ought to be moving. (10-15 minutes)

**4**

After writing individual statements, participants gather in small groups of 3-4 persons.

In the small groups, individuals share their statements and discuss them until

all can agree on a mission statement which represents the strengths in the individual statements.

The new statement should be the same length as the individual statements and should be written on newsprint.  
(15-20 minutes)

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**5**

The total group reconvenes. One person from each small group reads its mission statement to the total group and displays the statement on newsprint.

The leader of the group summarizes the presentations made by the small groups.

This procedure will take some time and should lead to quite a bit of discussion, which is to be encouraged.  
(20-25 minutes)

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**6**

After all small groups have reported, the leader assists the group in formulating a

single mission statement which reflects the thinking of the participants in the meeting. (15 minutes)

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**7**

The total group celebrates its work. This celebration should include the

reading of the final mission statement by the group, prayers, Scripture readings and hymns. (10 minutes)

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**8**

The leader summarizes the accomplishments of the group, indicates how the

mission statement will be used in the life of the church and thanks all for their participation. (5 minutes)

## Meeting to Review and Evaluate a Mission Statement: Option I

### Background and Preparation

Most churches have a statement of purpose, mission statement or church covenant which briefly states the church's "reason for being." It can be helpful and creative to review that statement from time to time and revise it, if necessary, in order for it accurately to reflect what the church intends.

This is the first of three suggested designs for engaging the church in an evaluation of its present mission statement. Each begins and ends in the same way but uses a different method of evaluation.

Plans for reviewing the mission statement should be shared with the official

board of the church and agreements reached about how to get the new or revised mission statement officially adopted following the meeting.

Any of the three optional designs could be used with some adaptation in a variety of settings in the church. This design could be used with a meeting of the entire church, a meeting of leaders from each of the church's committees and groups or individually by each committee and group in the church.

Whatever method is used, it is important to share the results with the entire church in order to offer everyone an opportunity for suggestions and comments.

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### Objectives of the Meeting

Church members will study the church's statement of purpose and mission, evaluate its adequacy for the present life of the church and make

whatever changes are necessary so it is expressive of the church's hopes and intentions.

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### Materials Needed

- A copy of the church's present statement of purpose (mission statement or covenant) for each participant or the statement written on newsprint
- Bible for the leader
- Hymnals or song sheets
- Newsprint, markers and masking tape
- Light refreshments (optional)

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### Time Required

2 hours

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### Overview of the Meeting

- Welcome, objectives, agenda
- Personal sharing
- Study of the present mission statement and questions about it
- Decision about how to revise the present mission statement
- Summary and worship



**1**

The leader of the meeting welcomes the participants to the meeting, expresses

appreciation for their attendance, shares the purpose of the meeting and previews the agenda. (5 minutes)

**Detailed  
 Outline of  
 the Meeting**

**2**

The leader reads II Corinthians 3:2-3 and calls attention to the image of the church as "a letter from Christ." Each person is asked to think about the question:

What message is our church communicating to the world about Christ?

The group divides into small groups of 4-6 persons and each person shares his or her response to the question. (15 minutes)

**3**

Copies of the present statement of purpose (mission statement or covenant) are provided each person in the group, or the statement is displayed on newsprint.

The total group is divided into smaller groups of 4-6 persons. Each group is assigned one or more of the following questions to discuss. Each question should be considered by one or more groups.

- a. Is the language used in this statement understood by the church members and readily understandable by someone new to the church? Are there words or phrases which could be changed to make the statement clearer?
- b. Do we really believe this statement? Is this a statement that most of our members could support and to which they could be committed?
- c. Is this statement still relevant to our present situation? Has the nature of our church or our community changed in any way since this statement was written which makes it less compelling?

- d. Does the statement reflect a good balance between maintaining and enriching the life of our church, and reaching out in mission to our community and world?
- e. Is the statement faithful to our biblical understanding of the church?
- f. Is the statement inclusive of the commitments and points of view of different groups of people within the church (e.g., adults, older adults, children, youth, minorities, singles, long-time members, newer members)?
- g. In what way is the statement unique to our church? Could the same statement have been written by almost any church?
- h. Are there any cliches in the statement that sound good but which do not mean much, or mean different things to different people?
- i. Would the statement clearly represent the church's stance to a visitor or prospective member?

(10 minutes)

**4**

Each group is instructed to review and critique the purpose statement from the

perspective of the questions assigned it and to propose changes in the statement which the group believes will improve the statement. (20 minutes)

**5**

Each small group agrees on a rewording of the present statement based on its discussion. (10 minutes)

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**6**

Break. (10 minutes)

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**7**

The total group reconvenes and each small group reports on its proposed

changes. The total group discusses the proposed changes and agrees on changes to be made. (25 minutes)

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**8**

The group makes suggestions of ways for other church members to become

familiar with the revised mission statements. The chairperson outlines plans for official adoption of the new statement. Assignments are made. (10 minutes)

---

**9**

The total group celebrates its work. This celebration should include the

reading of the final mission statement by the group, prayers, Scripture readings and hymns. (10 minutes)

---

**10**

The leader summarizes the accomplishments of the group, indicates how the

mission statement will be used in the life of the church and thanks all for their participation. (5 minutes)

## Meeting to Review and Evaluate a Mission Statement: Option II

Most churches have a statement of purpose, mission statement or church covenant which briefly states the church's "reason for being." It can be helpful and creative to review that statement from time to time and revise it, if necessary, in order for it accurately to reflect what the church intends.

This is the second of three suggested designs for engaging the church in an evaluation of its present mission statement. Each begins and ends in the same way but uses a different method of evaluation.

Plans for reviewing the mission statement should be shared with the official board of the church and agreements reached about how to get the new or revised mission statement officially adopted following the meeting.

Any of the three optional designs could be used with some adaptation in a variety of settings in the church. This design could be used with a meeting of the entire church, a meeting of leaders from each of the church's committees and groups, or individually by each committee and group in the church.

Whatever method is used, it is important to share the results with the entire church in order to offer everyone an opportunity for suggestions and comments.

Prior to the meeting, mission statements from other churches should be collected and reproduced so that each participant has access to them. You should seek a variety of statements. Two samples are provided which can be used in place of, or in addition to, those which you solicit.

### Background and Preparation

Church members will study the church's statement of purpose and mission, evaluate its adequacy for the present life of the church and make

whatever changes are necessary so it is expressive of the church's hopes and intentions.

### Objectives of the Meeting

- A copy of the church's present statement of purpose (mission statement or covenant) for each participant or the statement written on newsprint
- A copy of statements of purpose collected from other churches or a copy of the two sample purpose statements included with this design

for each person

- Bible for the leader
- Hymnals or song sheets
- Newsprint, markers and masking tape
- Light refreshments (optional)

### Materials Needed

## Evaluation: Option II

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### Overview of the Meeting

- Welcome, objectives, agenda
  - Personal sharing
  - Study of the present mission statement and comparison of it with others
  - Decision about how to revise the present mission statement
  - Summary and worship
- 

### Detailed Outline of the Meeting

**1**

The leader of the meeting welcomes the participants to the meeting, expresses

appreciation for their attendance, shares the purpose of the meeting and previews the agenda. (5 minutes)

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**2**

The leader reads II Corinthians 3:2-3 and calls attention to the image of the church as "a letter from Christ." Each person is asked to think about the question:

What message is our church communicating to the world about Christ?

The group divides into small groups of 4-6 persons and each person shares his or her response to the question. (15 minutes)

---

**3**

Copies of the present statement of purpose (mission statement or covenant) are provided each person in the group, or the statement is written on newsprint.

The total group is divided into smaller groups of 4-6 persons. Each group discusses the church's statement of purpose by sharing responses to the following three questions:

- a. What do we like about this statement? (What are its strengths?)
  - b. What don't we like about this statement? (What are its weaknesses?)
  - c. What is mission as defined by this statement? (20 minutes)
- 

**4**

Each group is given one or more of the statements collected from other churches (or the sample statements)

and compares them with their church's mission statement.

Each group identifies ways the other mission statements address some of the inadequacies it has discussed as being in the current statement. (15 minutes)

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**5**

Break. (10 minutes)

**6**

Each group proposes how the present statement could be rewritten based on

insights gained from its discussion. (15 minutes)

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**7**

The total group reconvenes and each small group reports its proposed

changes. These are compared and contrasted with one another and a final wording decided upon. (25 minutes)

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**8**

The group makes suggestions of ways for other church members to become

familiar with the revised mission statements. The chairperson outlines plans for official adoption of the new statement. Assignments are made. (10 minutes)

---

**9**

The total group celebrates its work. This celebration should include the

reading of the final mission statement by the group, prayers, Scripture readings and hymns. (10 minutes)

---

**10**

The leader summarizes the accomplishments of the group, indicates how the

mission statement will be used in the life of the church and thanks all for their participation. (5 minutes)

## Sample Mission Statements

### Sample One

The purpose of our church is to make Christ and his gospel known in the world; to provide opportunities for fellowship, for sharing in experiences of worship, renewal and refreshment, for learning to cope with the problems of life, and for understanding the faith; to be a force in the community helping to establish a more Christian social order; to be aware of the needs of our members and the community and to serve those needs with concern.

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### Sample Two

It is our biblical understanding that the purpose of the church is:

To proclaim and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ;

To be an agent of reconciliation among people, breaking down the barriers that separate and alienate, and to make all persons friends of God through Christ;

To be an instrument of the love of Christ in the world, working for justice and righteousness for all persons;

To strengthen one another in faith, to build one another up in love, making the most of our individual differences.

Therefore, we make it our aim to be and to do the following:

To provide the occasion for regular and special services of worship of high quality and variety in which participants can express praise and thanksgiving to God; in which participants are intellectually, emotionally and spiritually involved; and in which all persons might be offered both the promises of God and the demands of discipleship;

To provide an educational ministry to children, youth and adults so that each person might continually grow in understanding of what it means to be a Christian;

To be in mission toward the world about us in those avenues that make for a more humane society and for true freedom for all persons and to be an agent of reconciliation in society; to bring healing where there is hurt; and forgiveness where there is anger, by breaking down barriers and bringing the spirit of Christ to the wounds of society;

To provide motivation, training and experiences which shall enable each member to measure his or her own commitment, identify his or her personal ministry in the world and equip him or her to pursue it with the highest devotion and excellence.

## Meeting to Review and Evaluate a Mission Statement: Option III

Most churches have a statement of purpose, mission statement or church covenant which briefly states the church's "reason for being." It can be helpful and creative to review that statement from time to time and revise it, if necessary, in order for it accurately to reflect what the church intends.

This is the third of three suggested designs for engaging the church in an evaluation of its present mission statement. Each begins and ends in the same way but uses a different method of evaluation.

Plans for reviewing the mission statement should be shared with the official board of the church and agreements reached about how to get the new or revised mission statement officially adopted following the meeting.

Any of the three optional designs could be used with some adaptation in a variety of settings in the church. This design could be used with a meeting of the entire church, a meeting of leaders from each of the church's committees and groups, or individually by each committee and group in the church.

Whatever method is used, it is important to share the results with the entire church in order to offer everyone an opportunity for suggestions and comments.

Prior to the meeting the leader will need to have prepared a set of priority cards for each participant to use. This is the basis upon which the design rests.

### Background and Preparation

Church members will study the church's statement of purpose and mission, evaluate its adequacy for the present life of the church and make

whatever changes are necessary so it is expressive of the church's hopes and intentions.

### Objectives of the Meeting

- A copy of the church's present statement of purpose (mission statement or covenant) for each participant or the statement written on newsprint
- A set of "priority cards" for each participant (See Step 3.)

- Bible for the leader
- Hymnals or song sheets
- Newsprint, markers and masking tape
- Light refreshments (optional)

### Materials Needed

2 hours, 10 minutes

**Time Required**

**Overview of the Meeting**

- Welcome, objectives, agenda
- Personal sharing
- Decision about priorities and comparison of them with the present mission statement
- Decision about how to revise the present mission statement
- Summary and worship

**Detailed Outline of the Meeting**

**1**

The leader of the meeting welcomes the participants to the meeting, expresses

appreciation for their attendance, shares the purpose of the meeting and previews the agenda. (5 minutes)

**2**

The leader reads II Corinthians 3:2-3 and calls attention to the image of the church as "a letter from Christ." Each person is asked to think about the question:

What message is our church communicating to the world about Christ?

The group divides into small groups of 4-6 persons and each person shares his or her response to the question. (15 minutes)

**3**

The following priorities<sup>1</sup> are written on 3" x 5" index cards with one statement on each card. A set of cards is made for each person who will be participating in this activity.

- Help the poor and oppressed
- Proclaim the gospel in preaching and administering the sacraments
- Minister to individuals and families in time of crisis, sorrow and joy
- Help support church-related homes, hospitals, colleges and seminaries
- Provide opportunities for religious education
- Be a prophetic witness to Christ in both this community and the world
- Be an agent of hope
- Serve as a strong moral influence in this community

- Work for a better community and a better world
- Support the Christian missionary effort around the world
- Maintain a place and organization for all these things to happen
- Provide opportunities for the personal and spiritual growth of members
- Be a sustaining and supportive community for members and constituents
- Save souls

Each person is given a set of cards with the list of potential priorities. Each person is asked to arrange the cards in the sequence showing what he or she believes should be the order of the priorities in defining the purpose of this church. Persons should not discuss with others what they are doing or the reasons for their choices. (10 minutes)

<sup>1</sup>These procedures have been developed by Lyle Schaller and are adapted here to assist a group in evaluating its church's mission statement. Copyright 1973, Christian Century Foundation. Reprinted by permission from the January 1973 issue of *The Christian Ministry*.



#### 4

When everyone has completed arranging the cards in order of importance, the group is divided into smaller groups of 4-6 persons. Within each group one person is selected who turns over his or her top priority card and tells why he or she has chosen this as the top priority. This continues around the table until everyone has participated. Discuss what

the cards reveal. Are they all the same? Are there differences? If so, what do the differences suggest?

Continue the same pattern with each person laying his or her second priority card just below the one placed on the table earlier. Discuss what the trend appears to be.

Continue until all cards have been turned over. (30 minutes)

#### 5

Break. (10 minutes)

#### 6

Post the church's mission statement on newsprint, or hand out copies to everyone. Each small group studies and discusses the mission statement in light

of its discussion of priorities. Each group rewrites the mission statement so it more accurately reflects its understanding of the church's purpose and priorities. (15 minutes)

#### 7

The total group is reconvened and each small group shares its revisions. The

leader assists the total group in writing a single, revised mission statement for the church. (20 minutes)

#### 8

The group makes suggestions of ways for other church members to become

familiar with the revised mission statements. The chairperson outlines plans for official adoption of the new statement. Assignments are made. (10 minutes)

#### 9

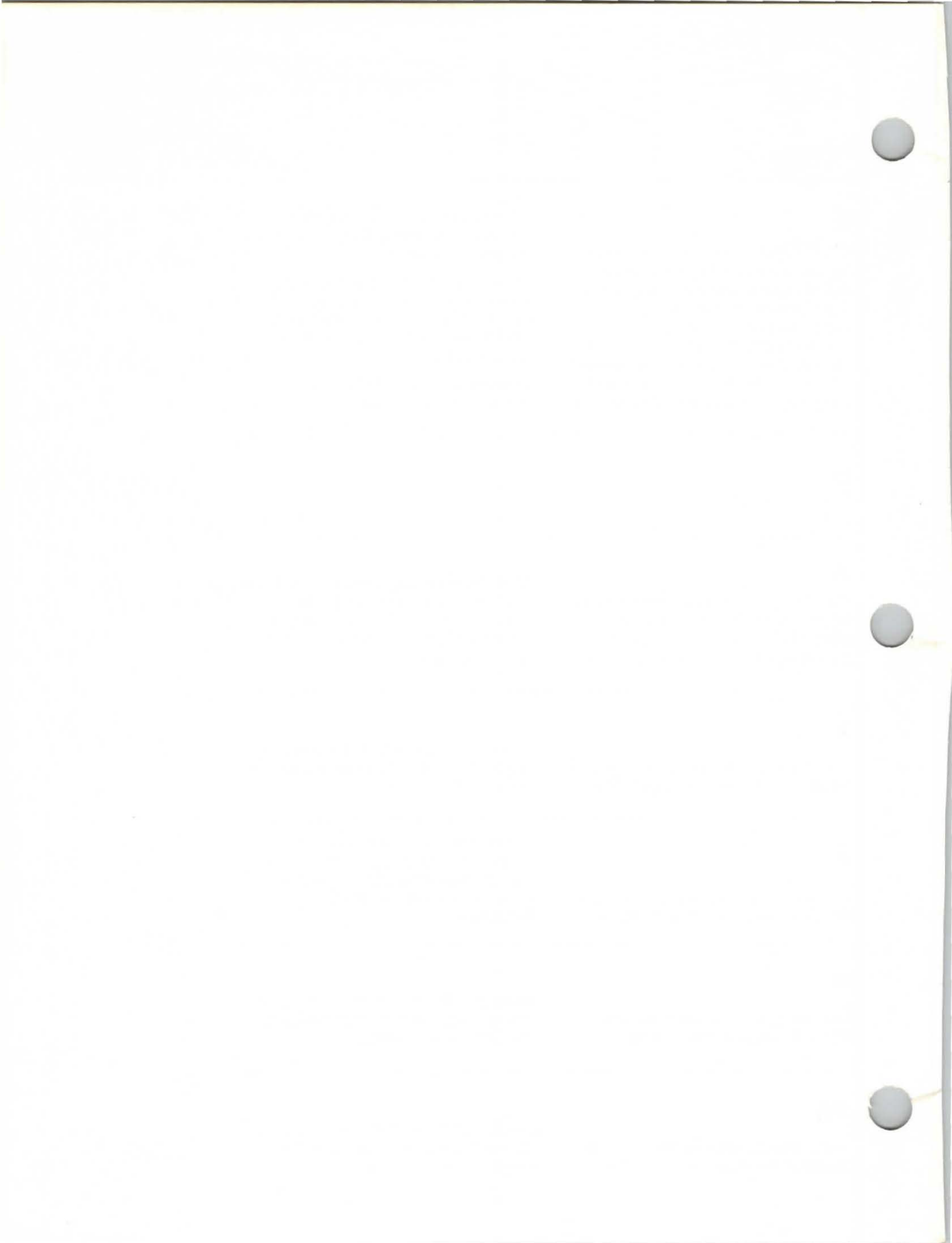
The total group celebrates its work. This celebration should include the

reading of the final mission statement by the group, prayers, Scripture readings and hymns. (10 minutes)

#### 10

The leader summarizes the accomplishments of the group, indicates how the

mission statement will be used in the life of the church and thanks all for their participation. (5 minutes)



## **The Ministry of Volunteers: A Guidebook for Churches**

This resource developed by the Office for Church Life and Leadership of the United Church of Christ is designed for use by local churches. Its purpose is to assist local churches in relating to all members who are engaged in volunteer work motivated

by their Christian faith. This includes volunteer ministries within the life of their church, in the wider church, in the community and in all settings of their lives where they can bring a Christian perspective and influence.

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### **The Church and Its Volunteers**

This booklet provides a basic overview of a volunteer ministry program, describes all its components, contains a questionnaire to help churches assess

how they are doing in their work with volunteers and gives a number of "how-to" suggestions.

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The following booklets each include a biblical and theological perspective on volunteer ministry. They explain further one or more of the components of a volunteer ministry program.

### **Guiding the Church's Volunteer Ministry Program**

*(includes the evaluation component)*

This booklet provides a detailed plan for organizing, leading and evaluating the volunteer ministry program in a local church. It contains detailed examples of how three very different churches might have set up their volunteer ministry program. It is the basic resource for leadership of the church's volunteer ministry program.

### **Developing a Mission Statement**

This booklet outlines principles and procedures for insuring that the volunteer ministry program is guided by an overall purpose.

### **Training Volunteers**

This booklet outlines principles and procedures for equipping and enabling volunteers to do their ministries effectively.

### **Volunteers and Volunteer Ministries**

*(includes the components of preparing volunteer ministry position descriptions and identifying, matching and recruiting volunteers)*

This booklet outlines principles and procedures for identifying and describing each volunteer ministry and for getting the right person in the volunteer ministries that seem right for them and for the church.

### **Supporting Volunteers**

This booklet outlines principles and procedures for undergirding volunteers in their work.

### **Completing Volunteer Ministries**

This booklet outlines principles and procedures for recognizing volunteers when a specific ministry is concluded and assisting them in finding new volunteer ministries.

These booklets may be ordered separately or together in a binder. Order from Church Leadership Resources, P.O. Box 179, St. Louis, Missouri 63166.

