

TRIENNIAL VISITS PLANNING TIMELINE

Planning

Contact pastor to schedule date

Communicate time needed for visit

Arrange time to meet with staff prior to visit

Regular session meeting OR Special called meeting

Meet with pastor prior to meeting with session

Inform pastor and session of topic areas that questions will cover

Stress that visiting team wants to learn about church so that Presbytery can be supportive.

It might be helpful to have some records available, i.e., budget, terms of call.

Preparation homework

Visit church website to learn about church prior to visit

Intended audience?

User friendly in terms of navigation and information

Read files at Presbytery office

Assign responsibilities between COM visitors

Choose questions

Questioner and scribe

Conducting

Meeting with pastor 1 hour - 1 ½ hours

Meet with installed pastors separately

Introductions and purpose of visit

Choose 1-3 questions in each topic area

Note responses, especially specifics, strong emotions

Express appreciation for time spent; inform what happens next

Pastor will be excused from session meeting

Meeting with session 1 ½ hours - 2 hours

Excuse pastor to meet with session (30 minutes)

Introductions and purpose of visit

Choose 1-3 questions in each topic area

Note responses, especially specifics, strong emotions

Express appreciation for time spent; inform what happens next

Pastor returns to session; inform pastor of issues discussed

Reporting

Complete report form

Input from both COM visitors

Include information about all topic areas

Send to church, both pastor and session

Include resource information requested

Express appreciation for time spent; look forward to ongoing relationship

Send to COM

Moderator, stated clerk files

Online availability?

**SUGGESTED TEMPLATE FOR NOTICE TO SESSION MEMBERS
REGARDING TRIENNIAL VISIT**

Dear session member,

As members of Denver Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, __ (name _____) and I are planning a triennial visit with you on __ (date) _____. The purpose of our visit is to learn about _____ (name) _____ church and to learn ways that the Presbytery of Denver can be supportive of your work.

Introduce partner. Introduce self. Bruce is the newly installed pastor of Elizabeth Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth.

I am an elder at Calvary Presbyterian Church in Denver. The Committee on Ministry is one of the committees required by the Book of Order and is charged to "serve as pastor and counselor to the ministers of the presbytery, to facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, and the presbytery, and to settle difficulties on behalf o presbytery when possible and expedient."(Book of Order G-11.0501)

We will be asking questions about these topics:

- Lay leadership at (name of church), your role individually and as a session
- Your relationship with the pastor, individually and as a session
- Church's mission
- Church's building
- Budget issues at (name of church)

Our visit will probably take about 1½ hours. It might be helpful to have some records available, i.e., budget, terms of call.

We look forward to our time together and pray that it will be informative and fruitful for everyone involved.

Blessings,
Your Name

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR TRIENNIAL VISITS

Questions for the session

Lay leadership

Paint a picture of (Describe) your lay leadership—invitation, education, training, empowerment, evaluation

Do you see yourselves as spiritual leaders? How?

Relationship with pastor

What system/method do you use to evaluate your pastor?

How do you support your pastor?

What's the season of your individual/session relationship with your pastor?

Talk about the personnel committee and how it works.

Brag about your pastor.

Mission

What is your mission statement and how do you fulfill it?

How are you involved in missions outside the church walls?

If your church closed, who would suffer?

How do you prioritize missions?

Building

Tell us about the adequacy of your building—accessibility, security, program, etc.

What message does your building convey to the community?

What's the future of your building?

Budget

What's your philosophy of budget for your church?

What are the sources of stress and/or joy around budget?

What long-term budget plans do you have?

Questions for the pastor

Health, personal and family

How do you balance work, family, etc. to avoid burnout?

How do you define and maintain boundaries?

Growth, study leave, vacation

How have you used your study leave? Vacation time?

How does your congregation support your study leave?

How do you determine how to use study time?

Are involved in a support group?

Financial

Is compensation adequate to your needs?

How are terms of call presented to and interpreted to/by the congregation?

Do you take advantage of clergy tax credits, financial planning, etc.?

Relationship with church, concerns, rewards

Explain how your leadership style—strengths and weaknesses—match with your congregation.

What leadership style does session have?

Relationship with Presbytery

What connections do you have with your colleagues?

How are you living out being a presbyter?

In what ways, if any, has Presbytery been involved with your congregation?

Where do you serve at Presbytery?

How do you support Denver Presbytery staff?

What message do you want to give COM?

TRIENNIAL VISIT REPORT FORMAT

Church _____ Date _____

Pastor _____ Clerk of Session _____

COM members _____ and _____

The report may be written as an essay or as separate paragraphs. It should address all topic areas by responding to 1 to 3 questions in each area. Please include specifics when applicable and available.

SESSION

Lay leadership

Relationship with pastor

Mission

Building

Budget

PASTOR

Health, personal and family

Growth, study leave vacation

Financial

Relationship with church, concerns, rewards

Relationship with Presbytery

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS OF COM VISITING TEAM