

Phase 1 – “Inquiry” – More Information & FAQ’s

The first eight weeks (or so) of the Committee’s work involves “assessment”: listening to the church, the kingdom around us, our community, and our church’s history.

These assessments are critical to the Committee’s success in identifying and calling the right candidate to become the next pulpit minister for Mesa. They will help us understand the qualities and qualifications needed for our next minister in order to address the challenges of the congregation’s future.

Consider this:

Before we can find who we need, we must first discover who we are.... Until we can answer the question “Who are we?”, we’re not ready to answer the “Who are we looking for?” question. We don’t know what skills we need in a minister, what experience and training, what passions and gifts. Ministers do not come in “one size fits all” ... just as churches aren’t pressed from a cookie cutter. Understanding oneself is the first and most important step to recognizing what and who we need.

God has been telling our church—for a long time—who he has shaped us to be:

1. He has been speaking to us directly by his Spirit: through his guidance in Scripture and in prayer.
2. He has been speaking to us through our church: the people he has brought together to form our congregation ... the gifts and resources he has blessed us with ... the experiences and skills he has assembled.
3. And he has been speaking to our church through our circumstances: where we live ... the shape of the surrounding community ... the needs that are present in our neighbors and neighborhoods.



Thus, **phase one** involves the spiritual discipline of listening...hearing what God has been saying to our congregation about our mission and the kingdom difference he is calling us to make.

During Phase One, the committee will conduct the following assessments to “listen”:

1. Congregational Assessment (listening to the Church)
2. Kingdom Assessment (listening to how God is moving in various churches around you)
3. Community Assessment (listening to your neighbors)
4. History (listening to your past)

Phase 1 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

How does our search for a pulpit minister begin?

- Not, as you might expect, by seeking applicants and accepting resumes.
- The first phase of our search process is called “Inquiry” and involves intensive listening: to God, to our church, and to our community.
- Only as we listen to important information about God’s will, our needs, and opportunities in our community can we begin to discern the sort of person who can best help us into a productive future.

Why are we conducting a ‘Congregational Assessment’?

The decision about a new pulpit minister has real and obvious implications for all of us. This person will be a spiritual guide, a leader of our church, a key link to our community, and a friend and brother. So, it is important for you to tell us some things (about yourself, the church, and your hopes for our future) so the Search Committee can represent you well. Here are the areas covered by the Congregational Assessment:

1. Church demographics (e.g., gender, age, length of time as a Christian, etc.)
2. Personal spiritual health (e.g., how often do you read your Bible or pray? Are you actively involved in ministry?)
3. Congregational Culture (e.g., the extent to which our church’s vision/mission is known and embraced; is our church involved with the community?)
4. Minister preferences (What is most important to you in a minister: e.g., inspiring sermons, visionary leader, ministerial care?)

Jeff Green is leading the congregational assessment.

What is involved with the Community Assessment?

We need to listen to our neighbors ... the people we live with in community. We intend to:

- Gather as much information as possible about our city: demographics, projections, population, education, divorce rates, etc.
- Talk to as many community leaders as possible: mayor, city manager, police chief, social service agencies, non-profit ministries, child-services, etc..
- To collate and analyze responses so that we capture a snapshot of the community’s character and learn important information about the community that relates to our search endeavors.
- To report results to the congregation and church leaders in an encouraging and informative way.

Maria Leos is leading the Community assessment.

What is a Kingdom Assessment?

We want to listen to the ways God is already at work around us, how he is changing and impacting lives, and who he is partnering with in doing so. What churches are obviously doing kingdom business in our area? What ministries are transforming lives? Where is the Spirit of God most evidently at work in the churches around us?

Among other characteristics, we will be identifying:

1. Churches that are experiencing rapid and evangelistic growth
2. Churches deeply involved in ministries that are widely recognized and highly appreciated (e.g., outreach to the homeless, marriage ministry, campus work, etc.)
3. 'Networked' churches (where partnerships with other churches and municipal agencies are valued and pursued)

Then we will talk to these churches: interviewing ministers and other leaders, asking questions, learning from their experiences.

***Marc Engle** is leading the Kingdom assessment.*

I heard someone is writing a Church History?

Yes. One of the things we must listen to is our own history, the story of what God has been doing in and through us over the decades. This will not be an exhaustive history (225 pages with footnotes and indices!). But it will provide an overview of the life of our church, key events and people, a summary of growth (and decline?) in membership, etc. This overview will help candidates get to know us quickly and have a context for who we are today. We will be happy to share this history with you when it is done.

***Gwen McNeil** is leading the Church history development.*