

**PRESBYTERY OF HAMILTON
CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT
SESSION REPORT FORM (REVISED NOVEMBER 2017)**

ANNOTATED VERSION

CONGREGATION: _____

DATE: _____

Sessions within the Presbytery of Hamilton are asked to conduct an assessment of the health of their congregations, using the Congregational Health Criteria, and to forward a summary of the results to the Presbytery. The document found in the following pages has been developed as a template for preparing a report of the session's findings.

Once completed, please forward to the Visitation committee of Presbytery

c/o the Clerk hampresby@gmail.com

REPORT PART I:

SELECTION OF CHARACTERISTICS WITH SPECIFIC DETAILS AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please read and consider each of the characteristics on the following pages.

Choose all characteristics that apply to your congregation. Indicate your choices by placing an “x” in the left-hand column.

Support your choices by providing specific examples. You are welcome as well to provide additional comments.

A. Overall Health and Leadership

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	<p>A1: The congregation has a clear sense of mission that is founded in the Gospel, and supported by the leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mission means: a purpose beyond ourselves; bigger than “survival of congregation”</i> • <i>Mission means: more than giving money</i> • <i>Mission means: reaching out beyond ourselves for healing, reconciliation, justice and bringing good news</i> 	-
	<p>A2: The leadership of the congregation seeks to understand the community context in which they abide, and is visible and vibrant in that community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This means: we look out (at our neighbourhood or town or city or globally), seeking to understand needs, and have an active presence in some form</i> 	
	<p>A3: The process of decision-making is clear and effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe how decisions are made</i> 	
	<p>A4: The leadership of the congregation seeks to identify and equip new leaders.</p>	-
	<p>A5: Communication is open.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are intentional</i> • <i>We try to be as transparent as possible</i> • <i>We think about different ways to reach people</i> • <i>We try to avoid inner/outer circles</i> 	-
	<p>A6: Conflict is dealt with in a spirit of love and understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Every congregation experiences differences in goals, ideas, values, strategies. These differences can either be discouraged (as threatening) or welcomed as occasions to grow and learn. Conflicts vary in intensity, from disagreements to battles. What are common tensions in this congregation and what do you do with them?</i> 	-
	<p>A7: The congregation is not mission focused, but driven by self-preservation.</p>	
	<p>A8: The congregation is inward-looking and makes no</p>	

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	difference in the surrounding community.	
	A9: Decisions are not broadly based.	
	A10: Leaders are long established. There are no new leaders being developed.	
	A11: Communication is limited.	
	A12: Conflict or tension interferes with effective operation.	
	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: .	

B. Worship

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	B1: Worship nurtures people’s faith by allowing them to encounter God corporately and in their daily lives.	-
	B2: The membership of the church (those on the roll) is accurately reflected in attendance at worship and in participation in the life of the church. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How does the roll function in this congregation?</i> 	-
	B3: Worship engages those in attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does worship involve people in participating and offering leadership in a variety of ways? What ways?</i> • <i>What diversity of voices is heard during a typical worship service?</i> • <i>How do you gauge that people are interested; moved; learning; growing; something happens in worship!</i> 	-

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	B4: Worship has clear biblical and theological foundations.	-
	B5: Worship equips people to share their faith with others.	-
	B6: Visitors are frequent.	-
	B7: Worship fails to engage those in attendance. Few people involved in worship.	
	B8: Attendance at worship is very low (small percentage of membership). The roll is not properly maintained (many inactive members).	
	B9: Visitors are infrequent, and very rarely return.	
	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	

C. Discipleship

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	<p>C1: Opportunities exist for all members to be “equipped with practical guidance for living one’s faith in the world.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practical guidance: it connects with the everyday lives of people</i> 	-
	<p>C2: Discipleship activities are carefully structured to build up followers of Christ, at various ages and/or stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A disciple is one who follows and learns, so is always growing in faith and love</i> • <i>Expectation for life-long learning</i> • <i>Expectation that people will grow to maturity</i> 	
	<p>C3: People talk about the role of their faith in their life during the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is about a spirituality that impacts more than Sunday morning; faith weaves through our daily lives and we need to talk about it because it is real. What does this congregation do to encourage people to both recognize and talk about their faith life?</i> 	-
	<p>C4: Faithful leaders continue to be identified and engaged in discipleship ministries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>People’s gifts are intentionally identified</i> 	-
	<p>C5: There is some emphasis on newcomers.</p>	-
	<p>C6: Discipleship opportunities are structured to appeal to newcomers and to engage them in a faith journey.</p>	-
	<p>C7: Members are equipped to share their faith with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a specific emphasis on sharing of our faith because we either have contact with people who are seeking and interested or actively seek that contact. We are continually encountering situations where we have opportunity.</i> 	-
	<p>C8: New leaders are being identified and mentored to ensure continuity of programs as the</p>	

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	congregation grows.	
	C9: There are few opportunities for discipleship. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>This means: there are few programs that specifically encourage growth (bible studies, prayer groups; service groups; activity is mostly limited to worship and fund raising)</i>	
	C10: Programs for children and youth are virtually non-existent.	
	C11: There may be great difficulty in finding leaders for discipleship programs.	-
	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:	

D. Fellowship

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	<p>D1: Opportunities exist for all members to be involved intentionally in the sharing of God’s love with each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What opportunities exist beyond worship to form spiritual community?</i> 	
	<p>D2: New members can be integrated into the community of faith, and feel that they are part of the Body of Christ.</p>	-
	<p>D3: Apart from the post-service coffee hour, there are few opportunities for members to be in relationship with each other.</p>	
	<p>D4: Fellowship consists mainly of closed gatherings for members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Friends speak mostly with their friends</i> 	
	<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:</p>	

E. Mission

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	<p>E1: The congregation addresses need in the community within and beyond the walls of the church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does “the need of the community” become a major goal of ministry?</i> • <i>How does the congregation go about assessing the needs?</i> 	
	<p>E2: The community (beyond) knows that the church meets needs and heals in Jesus’ name.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the community outside the congregation aware of and impacted by the congregation’s activity?</i> 	
	<p>E3: The congregation uses its knowledge of the community in which it abides to be effective witnesses to Christ within that context.</p>	-
	<p>E4: The congregation and its leaders are active in welcoming the community and bringing new people to (or back to) Christ.</p>	-
	<p>E5: The congregation is growing rapidly as the community responds to a visibly active congregation.</p>	
	<p>E6: The congregation is not engaged in mission activities (beyond an occasional food drive and/or PWS&D appeal).</p>	
	<p>E7: There is no active mission group (or there is one that has little impact).</p>	-
	<p>E8: The needs of the congregation are so pressing that there are no financial or human resources available to reach beyond their own walls.</p>	

Report Part II: One-Page Summary

	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
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F. Stewardship

	Characteristic	Specific Examples
	F1: The resources of the church (finances and building) match the size and structure of the congregation.	-
	F2: Members give of their time and income “with glad and generous hearts” to sustain the work of the church, as well as maintain the building.	-
	F3: The congregation makes a reasonable attempt to meet its suggested allocation to Presbyterians Sharing.	-
	F4: There are resources (human and financial) for mission and service in the community.	-
	<p>F5: Members give of their time and income “with glad and generous hearts” to further the ministry of the church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This means: they can support the ministry but not also the building</i> 	-
	<p>F6: The human resources of the church are strategically allocated to grow the congregation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a focus on reaching out to new people and the community and this is shown in job descriptions</i> 	
	<p>F7: Grants may be used as seed money, but givings are increasing such that the church is expected to become sustainable by the time grant money runs out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is aimed at grant-receiving congregations</i> 	-
	F8: Mission may be supported by church sources outside the congregation in situations where mission in this community is needed.	-
	F9: The congregation is unable to maintain the church property on a day-to-day basis, or has significant repair needs they are unable to fund.	
	F10: The congregation has been depleting capital assets to pay for current expenses over several years.	
	F11: Commitment to Presbyterians Sharing falls far short of the suggested allocation, and the congregation struggles or is unable to meet this commitment.	
	F12: Much of current income is from sources beyond congregational givings (rentals).	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Report Part II: One-Page Summary

REPORT PART II: ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

In this section of the report you are asked to transfer your selections from Part I to the one-page summary document that follows.

If you are working on paper, use highlighter pen to mark the same characteristics selected in Part I.

If you are completing this report on computer, use BOLD COLOURED font to mark the same characteristics selected in Part I.

Report Part II: One-Page Summary

	Sustainable	Strategic	Unsustainable
Overall Health and Leadership	A1: Mission: clear, Gospel foundations, leadership support		A7: Mission: no mission focus; self-preservation
	A2: Visible and vibrant in community: understood by leadership		A8: No community impact; inward-looking
	A3: Decision-making: clear effective process		A9: Decision-making: not broadly based
	A4: New leaders: identified, equipped		A10: New leaders: none
	A5: Communication: open		A11: Communication: limited
	A6: Conflict: with love and understanding		A12: Conflict: interferes with effectiveness
Worship	B1: Faith: nurtured by encountering God together and in daily life		B7: Worshippers not engaged; few involved in worship
	B2: Membership roll: active	B5: Equipped to share faith with others	B8: Membership roll: many inactive; very low attendance
	B3: Engages worshippers	B6: Visitors: frequent	B9: Visitors: infrequent; rarely return
	B4: Clear biblical/theological foundations		
Discipleship	C1: Opportunities: for all	C5: Some newcomer emphasis	C9: Opportunities: few
	C2: All ages/stages built up as Christians	C6: Appeal to newcomers: engage in faith journey	C10: Children/youth: no programs
	C3: Role of faith in daily life: talk openly	C7: Equipped to share faith	
	C4: Leaders: identified, equipped	C8: New leaders: identified, mentored	C11: Leaders: none or hard to find
Fellowship	D1: Opportunities: for all		D3: Opportunities: only coffee hour
	D2: New members: integrated; feel part of Body of Christ		D4: Closed gatherings for members
Mission	E1: Addresses community needs		E6: No mission activities
	E2: Community knows church's work		E7: No active mission group
	E3: Effective witnesses to Christ	E5: Rapid church growth as community responds	E8: Congregation's needs dominate: no money/people for outreach
	E4: Welcome community, bring to Christ		
Stewardship	F1: Funds and building match congregation	F5: Members give generously (time/\$) to further ministry	F9: Building: cannot maintain
	F2: Members give generously (time/\$) to sustain ministry and building	F6: Human resources: used strategically for growth	F10: Capital assets being depleted for operational expenses for several years
	F3: Presbyterians Sharing: allocation is met	F7: Givings increasing: will be enough when grants run out	F11: Presbyterians Sharing: allocation not met
	F4: Human and financial resources used for mission and service in community	F8: May receive outside \$, if community needs this ministry	F12: Much current income: from sources other than member givings (rentals)

Post-exercise

Now that you have completed this exercise:

1. What did your Session learn about the congregation by doing this exercise? (anything surprise you?)
2. What will be your next step(s) in response to what you learned?
3. What would you need in order to act upon what you have learned, and is there anything that Presbytery might do to encourage or assist you in some next steps? (try to be as specific as possible)