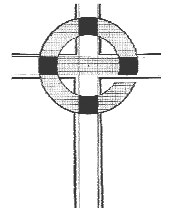




# The Presbyterian of The Presbytery of Elizabeth



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## Message from Greg:

The Mission Study of Elizabeth Presbytery will be composed of three kinds of research: Demographic, Anecdotal, and Empirical. Demographic research includes both discovering how our 49 churches have been doing over the past ten years and “who’s out there” in our geographical region. Anecdotal research involves face-to-face conversations with our constituency, especially Sessions. Finally, the Empirical research uses an internet-based survey that any leader in the presbytery can fill out.



In terms of a timeline, the Demographic research is complete. The data gathering for the Empirical research will take place over a period of 5-6 weeks this fall. The Anecdotal research will be done this fall and, possibly, into 2011. The reason I say “possibly” is because it depends on how many Sessions are interested in receiving one of the trained Visitors. I am hoping that there will be at least twelve such visits.

A formal letter will be going out next week to the Moderator and Clerk asking for an invitation to a Session meeting sometime this fall. The Visitors will be asking for feedback on what the Presbytery has done well, what it should be doing now, and where it should be going in the future. If you are a member of a Session in this Presbytery, you can help us by encouraging your Session to “sign up” for a visitation.

At some point, hopefully by year-end, all of this research will be compiled into a document with recommendations called the Mission Study. I hope you will be part of this process because the more voices we hear, the better. Of course, the most important “voice” is that of the Christ which I believe will be heard through the corporate voice of Elizabeth Presbytery. Please join me in praying . . .

*O God, be with us in this Mission Study process. Please use the information we gather to help us see ourselves as You see us and use it to show us the way into Your future for us. This we ask in the name of the one who is the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.*

The Rev. Greg Albert  
Interim Executive Presbyter  
Presbytery of Elizabeth

## We've got some **GOOD NEWS**

Want to  
contact the  
IEP directly?  
Just dial this  
Toll Free  
Number

1-866  
806-8974

To serve you  
better we have



new office hours:  
**Monday—Friday**  
**From 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

## Responding to Visitors



Let's talk about visitors, the lifeblood of your Membership Development efforts.

First, not all visitors walk through the church door on Sunday morning. More and more – probably well over half, depending on your context – come to your web site first. That is their “door.” Another sizable group come to a small group or activity first.

Second, not all visitors are the same. Those with extensive prior church experience are quite different from first-time churchgoers. Those who were wounded at their last church are different from those who are hoping to replicate a positive experience.

Third, age plays an important role. So does family status, race, gender and wealth.

In other words, a one-size-fits-all strategy for receiving visitors is almost guaranteed to fail.

You need a dynamite web site. Anything less than excellent will play poorly for those who explore opportunities on the Internet. (See the Communications Strategy section of the Church Wellness Project for guidance on effective web sites.)

You need doors – Sunday church, small groups, preschool, Saturday mission activity – that are radically open. The slightest suggestion of barriers and filters will discourage prospects, even if they aren't the types being filtered out.

You need a Sunday experience centered in people, not in facilities, artistic beauty, liturgical excellence or tradition. Visitors study the people around them. Are people engaged or bored, participating eagerly or by rote, listening intently or checking cell phones?

It's a complex process, and much of it is beyond your sight or control. Just realize that everything your people do is being observed.

Visitors don't want to be pounced on by eager greeters. Many will slip out the side, not because they have had a negative experience, but because they want to remain invisible for the time being. You want your people to be friendly, but not aggressive.

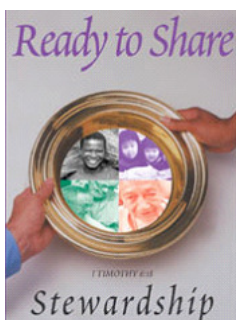
Visitors aren't offended by requests for e-mail addresses, but forms that ask for mailing and telephone data will seem too intrusive.

The quality of your follow-up – needs to be done within two days of their first visit – will speak loudly. Pay careful attention to how you word an e-mail follow-up or personal call.

Most important, this whole process is about people. People want to connect with other people. A good web site conveys personality; so does a Sunday service.

If your people are decent, open-minded, warm-hearted, and enthusiastic, your church will grow and grow. If your people are closed, haughty, dull and negative, you're swimming upstream.

*(The above article was written by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, founder of the Church Wellness Project.)*



## We Want Your Stewardship Campaign Ideas!

**If it's in a binder, we'd like to copy it.**

**If it's on the computer, we'd like an email of it.**

**If it's in your head, we'd be glad to help you write it down.**

Our goal is to share the best ideas with the churches of Elizabeth Presbytery.

*For more information Contact:*

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