

MIF #1

What is the congregation's or organization's vision for ministry? Additionally, describe how this vision is lived out?

Attending worship is an important part of church life, but our commitment to our Lord does not end there. We envision a lively and productive congregation, deepening its knowledge of God's plan for humankind and broadening the ways in which it serves. We look for hope in a world so often not in sync with the ways of our Lord. We are a shared ministry of two small churches, 15 miles apart, in active and ongoing worship, fellowship, and missions—living our faith and sharing the message of Christ's love. While Gilbertsville is the church of call, ministerial services are shared with Garrattsville Presbyterian Church. The PNC includes 3 of its members who contributed their ideas and vision to this MIF. We enjoy a close reciprocal relationship between the two churches.

Until many young people aged out, we had an active youth group involved in mission trips and activities, including twice attending Triennium. We hope for more youth participation going forward and would also welcome the need for a Sunday School, although at present we do not have one.

By extending our hands to others, whether welcoming them to our church on Sunday morning or providing a meal or raking their leaves, we are also extending the grace and love of Christ.

Hearing the Word preached, attending Bible study groups and special programs, and maintaining personal devotional time are vital to helping us better understand our faith and to grow as Christians. When we share that faith with others, we grow even more.

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MIF 2

How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of your community or constituency?

In our rural area church and school are the centers of local life. Our church population is aging but remains active. We are New Light and Matthew 25 churches going beyond spiritual support by providing economic sustenance (cash, clothing, food) through our pastor's discretionary fund, our children's closet, a local food pantry, and other means. We commit to volunteerism and community spirit by sponsoring Cub Scouts, hosting free dinners, providing disaster relief, donating Christmas gifts and shoeboxes, putting on a live nativity, offering wifi for remote learning, sharing our building, and live-streaming worship. Funding beyond weekly giving comes from events such as our harvest supper and bake sales, with PW being strong leaders in fellowship and mission. To supplement pastoral care, members pitch in—calling and visiting, providing meals during hardship, and serving receptions after funerals. Easter Sunrise service, Advent and Lenten studies, baccalaureate, and other ecumenical traditions are highly-valued. Our members volunteer in a number of civic-minded organizations such as Fire/EMS, Grange, Rotary, Scouts, school programs, village projects, and personal missions. Twice a year we clean a section of roadside.

With all this, we realize there is always more to be done. But in these ways, some of which may seem small, we attempt to be the hands and feet of Jesus on the ground locally, as well as in India, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, through mission giving and PC(USA) support.

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MIF 3

How will this position help you to reach your vision and mission goals?

A strong leader who shows kindness and compassion to all encourages an environment in which spiritual growth is strengthened and goals are accomplished. The reinforcement of our faith in God's presence within and among us allows us to rejoice in our blessings, keep up our courage, and manage whatever challenge is thrown in front of us. This leader helps us achieve our Christian potential as *unique parts* of the body of Christ, equipped to share our faith and our means with those around us. In addition, we are inspired to act as a *whole body* in witness to the power of God's presence right here or wherever we are.

In partnership, the pastor, lay leaders/members hope to

- Be a visible and accessible presence in each community
- Work in cooperation as multiple churches with different traditions, yet one main goal in mission
- Demonstrate our commitment to unity, compatibility, openness, growth, engagement, participation, stewardship, and moral and financial support within our congregations and beyond them into the community and world
- Take advantage of opportunities in continuing education and development of skills to keep pace with demands, advancements, and challenges now and in the future
- Meet regularly in worship and fellowship, as well as to conduct the business of the congregation(s)
- Promote health, safety, dignity, and inclusivity

We acknowledge the idealized tone of this list, and we emphasize our willingness to work alongside our pastor in moving ever closer to these goals.

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MIF #4

Provide a description of the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation.

Like most congregations, we desire someone who is Christlike, as we, too, aspire to be. However, we are deeply mindful of our own flaws and shortcomings and realize that only God's perfect

intervention transforms our ministry into what is useful and pleasing to our Lord. As we consider an ideal pastor, we do so fully aware that all humans are unique works-in-progress with strengths and weaknesses. That being said, we look forward to working with someone who exhibits a rich combination of the following attributes, in approximate order of importance:

- Commitment to the ministry's call and the example, teachings, and promises of Jesus Christ
- Ability to connect to aging but young-at-heart congregations who welcome growth in numbers and involvement; willingness to visit facilities and homes to develop and maintain relationships; openness to all people; "people skills," compassion, strength of character
- Thoughtful, relevant and Bible-sourced teaching and preaching aimed at the spiritual growth and maturity of the flock
- Ability to network with and contribute as led to local communities, schools, other churches and organizations, and to be active in the church beyond the local level; a servant's heart committed to mission
- Sense of humor, flexibility, creativity, leadership, accountability; respect for traditions and practices
- Desire to be part of an ecumenical team that inspires and aspires to leadership, discipleship, and good will among our members and the wider community.

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MIF #5

For what specific tasks, assignments and program areas will this person have responsibility?

The major responsibilities of the pastor are proclaiming the Word, ministering to the congregations' needs, facilitating discovery of our gifts, equipping us for our own ministries, and overseeing the business of the church.

Responsibilities include developing and leading weekly and special worship services, moderating two sessions, and fulfilling all other usual pastoral duties at both FPC Gilbertsville and Garrattsville Presbyterian Church (~24 members, weekly attendance of ~10). Time commitment to each church is 75/25. Presently a local Baptist congregation also worships with us and shares resources, although they continue to search for a permanent pastor. These friends have enriched the life of our church.

Pastoral care is an important component of the work in our area. We seek a minister of compassion and sensitivity who is willing to visit shut-ins and nursing homes, check in with parishioners, and be present in times of need. Key attributes are a genuine willingness to integrate into our communities while working with residents and other churches to spread the Good News.

Other desirable aspects of ministry include leading Bible study, pastoral counseling, leading youth, use of technology, attending church functions, coordinating with music directors, and attending meetings of presbytery/working on its committees as the spirit leads. As with any small church, we have a solid core of active members who work well together and are used to stepping up to support the pastor.

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