

Dear _____:

This is a reminder that _____, representing the Committee on Ministry of Baltimore Presbytery, will visit your Session on _____ at _____ PM. This visit is in accordance with the charge in the Book of Order that committees on ministry should visit churches every three years to discuss the "mission and ministry of the particular church and encourage the full participation...in the life and work of presbytery and the larger church."

We appreciate your willingness to set aside some time in your session meeting for this purpose. We anticipate that the conversation should take no more than one-half to one hour, unless your session members wish to continue it beyond that time. Our visitors come with no agenda beyond the Book of Order instruction quoted above. We want to hear from you and your elders how you see your church's ministry at this time, and how your congregation and the Presbytery can mutually support each other in furthering the mission of the Body of Christ. If you have suggestions for the Presbytery, we are glad to have them. We are enclosing some questions for you and your session to consider before the visit. They will be asked at that time.

Please emphasize to your session that this visit is in no way an indication that the Committee anticipates any problems in your congregation. These visits are simply scheduled as convenient to all the churches in the Presbytery in turn.

If you have any questions, please _____.

Sincerely,

The Committee on Ministry

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*“For I want very much to see you, in order to share a spiritual blessing...
what I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time,
you by my faith and I by yours.
(Romans I: 11-12)*

STEPS IN ARRANGING AND REPORTING TRIENNIAL VISITS

1. Regional representatives should note the churches which are due to receive a visit from COM in the coming year. Prioritize and make assignments within regional team. If you wish, you may visit in pairs (it's Biblical!).
2. Regional team members call pastors to arrange visits. This should be done as early as possible, as circumstances may sometimes require postponing or rescheduling of visits.
3. To confirm your visit, please call the Presbytery office (410-433-2012) and speak to Wanda Morgan, giving her the date of your visit. She will then send a letter of confirmation to the Pastor.
4. Following the visit, please complete your "Report of Visit with Session," and send copies to the Pastor, the Clerk of Session, the Secretary of COM, the Presbytery Office, attention of Wanda Morgan, and the regional representative of COM. Presbytery will file the copies electronically and on paper. You should briefly report the results of your visit via your Regional Report at the next COM meeting.
5. If the Session had any questions for which you promised to find answers, or any concerns which you promised to share with COM or some other Presbytery entity, be sure to do so. Follow-up is important.



Preparations by Session Members for Committee on Ministry Visits Presbytery of Baltimore

(Pastor: Please distribute copies of this to your session members)

"For I want very much to see you, in order to share a spiritual blessing...

*what I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time,
you by my faith and I by yours."*

(Romans 1:11-12)

Our visit with you is mandated by the Book of Order to keep lines of communication open between Presbytery and particular churches. The only agenda is given in G-11.0502(c), and that is to discuss with the session "the mission and ministry of the particular church and encourage the full participation of each session and congregation in the life and work of presbytery and the larger church."

It cannot be emphasized too much that this is a conversation among the church family about our collective ministry — it is **not** a visit of inspection. We wish to converse with you around the following questions:

What are your current emphases in your mission and ministry?

What makes your congregation and your opportunities unique?

Where do you see yourselves a few years from now? (Are you growing? Do you want to grow? What plans for growth do you have?)

What mission do you support locally, in the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly?

What mission are you excited about?

Your visitation team looks forward to sharing with you.



General Instructions for COM Visitors

Presbytery of Baltimore

*"For I want very much to see you, in order to share a spiritual blessing...
what I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time,
you by my faith and I by yours."
(Romans 1:11-12)*

Your visit to a session is part of an effort, mandated by the Book of Order, to keep lines of communication open between Presbytery and particular churches. The only agenda is given in G-11.0502(c), and that is to discuss with the session "the mission and ministry of the particular church and encourage the full participation of each session and congregation in the life and work of presbytery and the larger church."

It cannot be emphasized too much that this is a conversation among the church family about our collective ministry — it is **not** a visit of inspection. It is suggested that you open the conversation with the quotation from the Book of Order, and invite the session to tell you about what is going on at the present time in the ministry of their congregation.

What are your current emphases in your mission and ministry?

What makes your congregation and your opportunities unique?

Where do you see yourselves a few years from now? (Are you growing? Do you want to grow? What plans for growth do you have?)

What mission do you support locally, in the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly?

What mission are you excited about?

The second part of the charge from the Book of Order is to encourage participation in Presbytery and other bodies. The Committee on Ministry is also interested in the session's attitude toward the Presbytery of Baltimore and in any ways the staff or committees of Presbytery can be helpful to the local church. It is probably better not to approach this directly by asking: "What do you think of the Presbytery?" One of the concepts that is important to the Presbytery is not an "us and them", but rather a Pogo-like understanding: "We have met the Presbytery and it is us." Therefore, we suggest a discussion of Presbytery committees and ways in which their activities can help or complement the work of the local church. Ask if there is any suggestion or request you can carry back to any Presbytery committee or staff member.

Don't feel you have to keep the discussion with the session going for some arbitrary period of time. Just do what feels natural. When you feel it has run its course, thank the pastor and the session for the opportunity to visit with them and leave.