

What is the Church Empowerment Assessment? It is a mini mission study that can be completed within a day. The purpose is to provide an objective means for articulating realistic considerations as churches discern how God is calling them into the next chapter of their faith family history.



1) What is your story? This is one of the most central questions for any church. Every church has a unique family history of how they have stood in service to God (like fingerprints!). As you prepare to complete the CEA, please take a few moments to either remember that story or to capture it in a means that is transferrable to future generations. This story is your starting point because you are stranding on the edge of writing the next chapter.



2) The CEA is divided into 3 parts: Financial, Property, and Spiritual assessments. The best way to think about these is that we are in triage mode and need a baseline to understand realistically how to connect some of the dots in what each church's strengths and weaknesses are in order to empower them in pursuing next steps in their ministries:

1. The Financial piece is the means a church uses for monthly tracking of the budget and expenditures made against it. It is important to understand what is being included and what may be missing.
2. Salem Presbytery Property Inspection Document – this is a helpful checklist (especially for folks who don't have property committees) to guide churches through a more thorough and intentional understanding of property maintenance; these are potential cost landmines that can decimate a church's finances. Not all of the items may apply (it covers everything from gargoyles to leaky faucets!), but it is a good guideline.
3. Spiritual Assessment (to be filled out by the Session) – these questions are designed to understand the vitality and the energy level of church leadership. This becomes critical when assessing potential future options.



3) Church Empowerment Assessment Summary: Once the three components are completed, a one page assessment is prepared that outlines strengths, weaknesses, additional questions for consideration, and potential options for ministry.

Shepherding Team: The Salem Presbytery Committee on Ministry (COM) will provide 2-3 folks additional "helping hands" to walk alongside a Session and support the church in the evaluation and/or pursuit of a discerned option(s).



When A Pastor Leaves: Checklist for Churches with Uninstalled Ministries

Step 1: Pastor announces Departure/Last Session Meeting Prior to Departure

- Designated Presbyter for Transformational Ministry is contacted by the pastor (and/or session clerk, if necessary) regarding the pastor's departure.
- Designated Presbyter attends the next stated session meeting (preferably before the pastor's actual departure) and will:
 - Discuss the Church Empowerment (CEA) documents (found on the Presbytery website at LINK) and offers explanation
 - Conduct a brief exit interview with session (without pastor present)
 - Conduct a brief exit interview with departing pastor (can take place before or after the session meeting)
 - Submit exit interview notes to Christine Ratledge for church and pastor files.
 - Inform the Salem Presbytery Commission on Ministry (COM) which will appoint a session moderator for the transitional time period and identify resources for securing Pulpit Supply.

Step 2: Sunday Worship Leadership

- As soon as possible, session will discern one of two plans for Sunday worship leadership during the transitional time:
 - Plan A: Self-Scheduled Sunday-to-Sunday Pulpit Supply, using the Salem Presbytery Pulpit Supply list. A designated member of session will schedule worship leaders for each Sunday.
 - Plan B: Pre-Scheduled Seminary Student rotation (coordinated by the COM and will include non-Presbyterians) Seminaries represented include Hood, Union Charlotte, and Wake Forest. A designated member of session will be given a copy of the (pre-determined) rotation and will contact the student prior to their worship leadership each week.
- The session clerk will inform the Designated Presbyter of their choice.

Step 3: Session completes CEA and submits it to the Designated Presbyter

Step 4: Salem COM Shepherding Team Begins work with Session

- Upon receipt of the CEA, the Salem COM will appoint a 2-3 member shepherding team.
- The shepherding team will meet with the session and facilitate the discernment of options. The shepherding team and the session will meet over a period not to exceed six months.
- The session will discern an option and lead the congregation in the development of the next step in the life of the congregation.