

**PRESBYTERY OF SAN FERNANDO**  
**CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE**  
**GUIDELINES FOR A VIABLE CHURCH**

The basis for determining a healthy viable church is stated in the Book of Order G-7.0102:

**The particular church carries a vital responsibility in the mission of the church. There God's people perform especially the ministries of worship, proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, evangelism, nurture, counseling, personal and social healing, and service. Without this basic ministry to persons, neighborhoods, and communities, and the support given at the congregational level through prayer, personnel, and money, any other significant ministry of the church becomes impossible. Congregations serve as essential mission arms of the presbytery and of the larger church.**

Using the G-7.0102 as the base, the following guidelines will be used to define a viable church. All the following guidelines must be demonstrated.

**I. MISSION**

1. The clergy and congregation clearly articulate the church's set of beliefs, its mission, and its ministry, and are committed to that vision.
2. The church's vision comes alive as the congregation establishes ministry directions and standards to measure progress.
3. The church's vision and mission are in agreement with the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s confessions and polity.
4. The church carries out ministry beyond nurture and service to itself.
5. The church actively is supportive of and involved in the work of our various governing bodies.

**II. MINISTRY PROGRAMS**

**A. Worship-Proclamation-Sharing the Sacraments**

1. A church which has joy pervading the congregation.
2. The church emphasizes the importance of God's presence in the lives of the congregation.

3. The local church has worship and preaching that meet the spiritual needs of community residents.
4. Celebrations of worship are seen as a source for nurture and growth as well as central to the congregation's life and mission.

#### B. Evangelism

1. The church offers a variety of ministry relative to the size of the church, so that the church makes an impact on its membership and the surrounding community.
2. The church makes a high volume of contact with non-members for the purpose of influencing them toward Christ and the church.
3. The church uses systematic methods for encouraging prospective members to make positive decisions about Christ and church affiliations.
4. The church, continually within the last two years, has members join by professing and reaffirming their faith as well as by transfer of membership.

#### C. Personal and Social Healing

The local church has a feeling of wholeness that leads to greater health through relationships, worship, prayer and altered life-styles.

#### D. Service

The church has a strong emphasis on outreach in the local community and the world, and this emphasis is evident in mission giving and membership participation.

### III. SUPPORT OF PROGRAMS

#### A. Prayer

1. The church supports its ministry through prayer.
2. The church seeks faithfully to discern God's will in its decision making processes.

#### B. Personnel

1. Members and clergy are known as persons who genuinely care for people.
2. The minister is able to be a catalyst, change agent and risk taker in leading the congregation.
3. Policy and methods are developed to facilitate the expansion of lay participation in the life of the church with the polity of the denomination.
4. There is an adequate number of laity who are involved in leadership and contribute with energy and willingness to most, if not all, activities of the church.
5. The church involves new attenders and new members in small groups, church activities and leadership roles.

6. All aspects of the church are continuously evaluated in order to improve the quality of the ministry of the church.
7. The church has a willingness of leadership and members to consider, if necessary, alternatives regarding future existence.

C. Stewardship

1. The church is able to sustain its ministry either by being self supporting or by responsible use of intentional outside resources.
2. The buildings and property facilitate and enhance the mission of the church, and are not a financial burden.