

November 3, 2014

Dear partner in ministry:

Since 1973, church leaders have turned to the Presbyterian Panel to learn more about the beliefs and practices of Presbyterians. Now we are in the process of establishing another Panel to serve the next three years so we can continue to provide useful information about the individuals and congregations that comprise the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Your congregation has been randomly chosen to assist us in this task, and we need your help! Please send us the list of ruling elders currently serving on your congregation's session. Once you send us this list, we will be able to sample a few of your congregation's session members to be part of the Presbyterian Panel. Only 500 churches have been chosen to take part in this project. For the Panel to represent all current session members in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is very important that we hear from you.

The directions for sending us your congregation's list of current session members are on the enclosed Questions and Answers sheet. Once we receive your session list, we will randomly sample a few session members from your congregation and contact each individual directly, asking him or her to complete a questionnaire and become part of the Presbyterian Panel. These session members will not be obligated to participate in the Panel.

The session list you provide to us will be used only for the Presbyterian Panel. We will not share the information with others.

The Panel provides a unique opportunity for individual Presbyterians to share opinions with the larger church and to affect its direction and policy. There are direct benefits for local congregations, too, because those who participate in the Panel become better informed about our denomination.

Please take the time to send us your session list. If you have any questions, give us a call at 800-728-7228, ext. 2040, or email us at panel@pcusa.org.

Thank you for your help.

Blessings,



Joelle Kopacz
Panel Administrator



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Fall 2014

Dear Pastor or Clerk of Session:

Listening to each other is one of the most important forms of Christian ministry. It is a ministry that needs to be taken seriously, especially by those who have been called to leadership in our church.

Agencies and councils across the denomination have turned to the Presbyterian Panel since 1973 to find out what Presbyterians think and do and what they want for their church. Over the years, the Panel has been a help to the church in listening to its members, ruling elders, and teaching elders.

Participants in the Presbyterian Panel respond to occasional mailed questionnaires over a three-year period. Through their responses, this select group of Presbyterians has a unique chance to communicate their beliefs and ideas to the leadership of the denomination. Additionally, the Panel provides us with a demographic profile of Presbyterians that is not available through other forms of reporting. Individual answers to the questions are confidential, and many panelists report that participation has helped them to learn more about the church and to strengthen their faith.

The enclosed letter from the Presbyterian Research Services office asks for your help in selecting participants to serve on the Presbyterian Panel. I hope you will provide that help. You are a vital link in enabling us to listen and respond to our constituencies.

Please give this request your enthusiastic support.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gradye Parsons".

Gradye Parsons,
Stated Clerk
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



Q: What is the Presbyterian Panel?

A: The Presbyterian Panel consists of four groups of Presbyterians—members, ruling elders, pastors, and specialized ministers—who respond to occasional surveys either online, by mail, or by phone. Beginning this year, the surveys will be available in three languages: English, Spanish, and Korean.

Q: How was our congregation chosen?

A: Congregations are randomly sampled in order to represent Presbyterians throughout the United States, including Puerto Rico. It is important that your congregation participates in the Panel so we can confidently say that the survey results reflect all Presbyterians.

Q: What does our congregation need to do in order to participate?

A: All we need is a copy of your congregation's membership list (also indicating the current session members), or the list of ruling elders currently serving on your congregation's session. (The letter included in this mailing specifies which of these lists we need from your congregation.)

Q: What does the list of members or ruling elders need to include?

Please include the name, address, and email address (if possible) of each member or of the ruling elders currently serving on session (depending on which list you have been asked to provide). Also indicate whether anyone on the list has physical or mental attributes that might make it difficult or impossible for them to complete questionnaires online, by mail, or by phone.

Q: What if some people on the list are not very active in our congregation?

A: Please do not delete anyone from the list that you send us. We need to hear from people with various levels of involvement within the denomination. If some people in your congregation are not very active, they would still represent others like them in the PC(USA).

Q: How do we send you our list?

A: Preferably you will email your list to panel@pcusa.org in an electronic spreadsheet format. You may also send us the list by fax (502-569-8736) or by mail (to Research Services, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202).

Q: How will this list be used?

A: We will **only** use the list to select a random sample of your congregation's members or ruling elders serving on session. We will then invite this random sample to be panelists for a three-year term, starting in 2015. The sampled members and ruling elders will not be obligated to participate.