

Church Information Form

Introduction

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the individual pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and for evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and commitment to open communication.

The Church Information Form presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will be of help in facilitating the search process, assisting the church in focusing on future directions, and pastors in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

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Please return the completed document to:

Office of the Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
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Livonia, MI 48152-7912
Phone: (734) 742-2020 Fax: (734) 742-2033
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November 2009

Church Information Form

Part I: Church Information

1. Name: City of Refuge

Address: 3150 Yellowstone Blvd., Houston, TX 77054-2306

Telephone: (713) 664-5033 Fax: (713) 664-5253

E-mail: corsearch2011@gmail.com Web sites: www.cityofrefuge.org www.corsearch2011.org

2. Presbytery: Central South

Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison: Bob Vincent

3. Search Committee Co-Chairmen: Keith Bower & Nathan Kim

Address: 3150 Yellowstone Blvd., Houston, TX 77054-2306

Telephone: (713) 664-5033 E-mail: corsearch2011@gmail.com

4. List all paid staff positions

Worship Leader	Full time
Youth Ministry Director (age 0 to 18)	Full time
Interim Executive Staff Leader	Part time
Counseling & Spiritual Renewal Leader	Full time
College Ministry Director	Full time
Children's & Nursery Director	Part time
Counselor	Part time

5. Membership (please state approximate numbers and percentages)

	<u>Five years ago</u>	<u>Currently</u>		
a. Number of church members	192	180		
b. Number of family units	74	105		
c. Worship attendance	264	250		
d. Profile of church members				
(1) Age: 10% 0-11	8% 12-18	12% 19-24	20% 25-34	30% 35-49
15% 50-64	5% 65+			
(2) Occupation: 20% Business	15% Professional	25% Trades		
10% Stay-at-home parent	0% Agriculture	5% Retired	25% Students	
(3) Educational level of adults				
10% some high school	40% high school	30% college	20% grad. school	

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(4) Percentage of members belonging to the congregation (CoR is approaching 14 years old):

- Less than one year 15%
- 5 years or less 53%
- 6-10 years 18%
- 10 years or more 14% (including 10 charter members)

(5) Racial/Ethnic composition of congregation

10% Asian 5% Hispanic 30% African American 55% Caucasian

6. Worship

- a. Time: Sunday 10:30 Average Attendance: 250
- b. Frequency of communion celebration: 13 per year.
- c. How are members involved in planning and participation in the liturgy/worship?
Worship Leader plans the worship with input from elders and pastoral staff.
- d. Style of liturgy used in worship: Free - including reading Scripture and reciting Nicene Creed
- e. Type of music used in worship: Blended, Wide Variety – especially Contemporary Gospel

7. Church/Sunday School

- a. Average attendance in Church School (under 18 years) 35
- b. Average attendance in Adult Education (Sunday) 85
- c. Small group adult participation during week averages 50

8. Community Setting: Growing, Inner City, College/University

Approximate population of Greater Houston = almost 6 million. Zip 77054 neighborhood = 21,162.

Racial/Ethnic composition of immediate neighborhood Zip code 77054 :

23% Asian 13% Hispanic 40% African American 27% Caucasian 10% Other

9. Program Information: List major boards, committees and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.):

Name	Purpose of Group	Number of members	Frequency of meetings	*Leadership role
Session	Leadership	7	monthly	2
Deacons	Serve needs of congregation	9	monthly	3
Staff	Various ministries	7	weekly	1

*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:

1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
3. Laity take primary initiative and responsibility.

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Part II: Building/Financial Information

1. Current 2011 annual budget: \$580,000* Last year's 2010 annual budget: \$712,000
 *The 2011 budget reflects a smaller staff – reduced by two full time and two part time employees.

2. Property owned by church:
 - a. Buildings and property: A two-story building of 15,000 square feet plus modular buildings of an additional 1436 square feet, on a one-acre corner lot.
 - b. Are your buildings adequate for your present program? Yes
 - c. Is a building program projected? No
 - d. Does the church own a manse? No

3. Pastor's compensation will be based on the candidate's ability and experience. The benefit package includes those required by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. It is comprehensive and attractive, including health insurance, a pension plan, and a flex-plan that covers medical and dependent care expenses. Relocation costs to the Houston area are negotiable.

Part III: Church Characteristics

Check the number that most closely describes the current congregation characteristics and future goals:

Our congregation...	<u>Currently</u>				<u>Goal</u>			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
1. supports the pastor.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	X2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. places a high priority on sound biblical preaching.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
4. gladly welcomes visitors and new members.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. is involved in local evangelistic ministries.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	X3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	X2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6. is often found living their faith in their communities.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. has a spirit of unity.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. cares about each other.	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
9. looks to its Session for leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	X2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	X2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
10. ministers well to members who are hurting.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	X2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	X1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

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11. uses members' gifts in its worship. 1 X2 3 4 X1 2 3 4

12. contains people willing and able to lead the congregation. X1 2 3 4 X1 2 3 4

13. is capable of change when and where appropriate. 1 X2 3 4 X1 2 3 4

14. is spiritually alive. X1 2 3 4 X1 2 3 4

15. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

- Joint services with other community churches of different denominations – particularly at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
- Partnerships with other churches in support of the Forge for Families community development center and Yellowstone Academy, a private Christian school for children living in poverty.

16. Describe the strengths of your congregation:

- Clear and widely shared culture of compassion and diversity
 - a clear, palpable, unique and relevant church culture
 - ability to attract cultural diversity
 - willingness for involvement in compassion ministries
 - COR reflects social, racial, and economic composition of the neighborhood, making it attractive to local prospects
- Strong Bible-based preaching, worship, and small group orientation
- Facility adequate for current needs

17. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:

- Small volunteer base;
- Inadequate communication, support, and training;
- Limited communication regarding opportunities with partner ministries such as Star of Hope, Forge for Families, Yellowstone Academy;
- Few large group social activities to deepen relationships across races/classes outside worship;
- Inadequate facilities for some desired future ministries such as limited kitchen, uncomfortable seating for counseling, lack of secure storage spaces, near-capacity parking.

18. List major goals that this congregation has set for itself:

- Ministry development: Improve congregational assimilation and participation in ministry and community transformation programming to 80% participation.
- Facility development: Increase facility utilization and parking capacity to accommodate growth.
- Fellowship development: Increase church wide cross-congregational fellowship opportunities.
- Prayer life development: Refresh and re-emphasize COR's approaches to corporate prayer.

19. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation? No

20. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation? No

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21. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement and/or a strategic plan for your congregation? Yes Completed Summer 2010. Available upon request.

Part IV: Leadership Expectations:

Below are listed 42 items which represent a range of qualities in the ministry of the church. **Choose the 12 items which your church feels are the most important aspects of ministry for your church at this time. Then place the numbers in the blanks following the list.** All the qualities are important and there are other qualities that are not listed. Please choose those 12 which you feel are highest priority at this time. Do not rank the items. **Write no more than 12 numbers in the blanks at the end of this list.**

Our church needs a person who...

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. is an effective preacher/speaker. | 21. is effective in working with adults. |
| 2. continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills. | 22. inspires a sense of confidence. |
| 3. helps people develop their spiritual life. | 23. works regularly at bringing new members into the church. |
| 4. helps people work together in solving problems. | 24. regularly encourages support of the EPC's missions and outreach. |
| 5. is effective in planning and leading worship. | 25. reaches out to inactive members. |
| 6. has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry. | 26. works regularly in the development of stewardship growth. |
| 7. regularly encourages people to participate in denominational activities and programs. | 27. is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate. |
| 8. helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice. | 28. is a person who cultivates a close, devotional relationship with God. |
| 9. is a helpful counselor. | 29. writes clearly and well. |
| 10. ministers effectively to people in crisis situations. | 30. works well on a team. |
| 11. makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes. | 31. is effective in working with youth. |
| 12. makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes or in hospitals. | 32. organized people for community action. |
| 13. is a good leader. | 33. is skilled in planning and leading programs. |
| 14. is effective in working with children. | 34. plans and leads well-organized meetings. |
| 15. builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works. | 35. encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives. |
| 16. helps people develop their leadership abilities. | 36. is accepting of people with divergent backgrounds and traditions. |
| 17. is an effective administrator. | 37. encourages others to assume and carry out leadership. |
| 18. is effective with committees and officers. | 38. is mature and emotionally secure. |
| 19. is an effective teacher. | 39. has strong commitment and loyalty to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. |
| 20. has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church. | 40. maintains confidentiality. |
| | 41. is a compassionate and caring person, sensitive to others' needs. |
| | 42. deals effectively with conflict. |

1, 9, 13, 15, 17, 20, 27, 28, 36, 37, 41, 42

Part V: Church History

Born of a vision for reaching out to “the least, the last, the lost, the locked out and left behind,” the City of Refuge Church was originally a dream of Founding Pastor, Dr. Dick Druary. Dick had a desire to plant a church with a focus on reaching out to those in need. At the same time, this church would have a warm fellowship, be grounded in prayer and the Word of God, and fill the needs typically addressed by a mainstream, Christ-centered church. The church would welcome and encourage a membership of believers from all walks of life.

With the blessing of a parent church, Christ Evangelical Presbyterian in Houston, City of Refuge officially began in June, 1996, in the auditorium of St. Thomas University. The original intent was to be located in Houston’s Montrose area, but God never opened doors for a permanent home there. Thus, the City of Refuge began to hold services in an assembly room provided by the Star of Hope Transitional Living Center on Yellowstone Boulevard in the Third Ward area. Shortly thereafter, Pastor Dick was called to another ministry. The City of Refuge elders recognized the opportunity for service in the Third Ward and made it a priority in their search for a pastor. The Search Committee did not have far to look for Pastor Rufus D. Smith, IV. Pastor Smith was the director of Spiritual Life for all three of the Star of Hope Mission’s facilities, overseeing three full time chaplains. Pastor Smith possessed a huge heart for those who were “weak, wounded and without.” Under his leadership the church added a full-time Youth Pastor, a full-time Church Office Manager, and a full-time Worship Leader.

By its location, City of Refuge Church bridges the great divide between two modern worlds.

Strategically positioned in the Third Ward just across the street from our previous place of worship at the Star of Hope Mission, we entered our newly constructed \$1.2 million worship/study facility and gymnasium in December 2003. With a dynamic staff and worship, the fellowship doubled in size in two years. This location is only blocks from the world-renowned Houston Medical Center. Sprawling new housing units and businesses are developing in this area, which has been one of the city’s centers for disadvantaged families struggling economically, technologically and spiritually.

The City of Refuge Church makes excellent use of our multi-purpose “gymnasium” and classroom space. The building is used for school during weekdays and for Worship, Sunday school, and Children’s/Youth Programs on weekends and weeknights.

For three years, The City of Refuge housed Yellowstone Academy, a Christian School in the Third Ward for low-income students. When Yellowstone purchased a much larger home for their future needs, COR teamed with the KIPP Academy, which pioneered a school for 5th and 6th graders in our facility. When that school built its own campus, COR began to host another start-up KIPP charter school for young children.

In 2001, City of Refuge started its own 501(c)(3) Community Development Center. In 2006, that CDC merged with another, and the new ministry became known as “The Forge for Families,” with multi-dimensional ministries including basketball, football, and softball for youth; adult life-skills training with vocational guidance for the chronically unemployed and underemployed; support for ex-offenders through partnership with State Parole authorities, addictive-behavior support groups led by licensed counselors, a summer youth entrepreneurial program, and after-school enrichment programs.

The City of Refuge Church has also always had a very active prison ministry. From the outset volunteers conducted a weekly Bible Study at the Jester 3 Prison Unit in Sugar Land. A large segment of the church turns out twice a year at Easter and Christmas to lead worship with the entire prison population.

To view a 2008 PBS special about multi-cultural congregations that featured COR, along with Southwest Houston’s Wilcrest Baptist, visit <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/july-31-2009/interracial-churches/1734/>

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- A. What have been the three most important events in the history of your church?
- June, 1996, Founding of the church to minister hands-on to the lost in inner-city Houston
 - February, 2000, Calling of Rufus D. Smith, IV as Senior Pastor
 - December 2003, Move into newly constructed facility at 3150 Yellowstone Boulevard.
- B. What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years? Pastor Rufus Smith's call away from COR to Hope Presbyterian Church of Memphis, September 1, 2010.

Part VI: Other Information

1. List the previous persons in this position: Position: Senior Pastor

<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>
Dr. Dick Druary	1996 to 1999
Rufus D. Smith, IV	2000 to 2010

2. Please list names of any persons whose profiles you wish us to mail you:
3. Do you want the Office of the Stated Clerk to suggest some names of pastors whom you might consider for a call? If so, completed Personal Information Forms will be sent. Yes, please.
3. Please indicate if there are any special preferences based on gender, age, race or national origin in consideration of persons' profiles that may be sent: We prefer a man as senior pastor.

Chris Weber
Clerk of Session

Keith Bower and Nathan Kim
Co-Chairmen, Search Committee