

Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Innovation Lab

Congregational Application

About the Innovation Lab

The Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Innovation Lab is a **six-month learning and experimentation experience** designed to help congregations strengthen their capacity for imagination, innovation, and faithful experimentation.

The Lab begins with a **one-day, in-person retreat January 9, 2027**, and continues for six months through **monthly virtual gatherings**, congregational experimentation, reflection, and shared learning.

Throughout the Lab, participating congregations will:

- Pay attention to what is changing within their congregation and community.
- Explore emerging needs, opportunities, and possibilities.
- Strengthen practices of imagination and innovation.
- Design and implement small, faithful experiments.
- Learn from what works, what does not, and what they discover along the way.
- Learn alongside other Mid-Kentucky Presbytery congregations engaged in similar work.

The Innovation Lab is **not a competition for the best ministry idea**, and congregations do not need to arrive with a fully developed project or solution. In fact, we encourage congregations to enter the Lab without being overly committed to a particular solution.

We are looking for congregations willing to bring **curiosity, openness, imagination, and a willingness to experiment** as they discern what God may be inviting them to try next.

Each participating congregation will form a team of **up to five people** for the Lab. At this stage, you do not need to identify all members of your team.

Only the designated Team Lead should complete this application on behalf of the congregation.

SECTION 1 — CONGREGATION INFORMATION

Congregation Name

Street Address

City, State, ZIP

Congregation Website, if applicable

Approximate Membership

Approximate Average Weekly Worship Attendance

Pastor/Primary Congregational Leader

Pastor/Primary Leader Email

Pastor/Primary Leader Phone

SECTION 2 — TEAM LEAD INFORMATION

The Team Lead will serve as the primary point of contact between the Innovation Lab and the congregation and will help coordinate the congregation's participation throughout the six-month experience.

Team Lead Name

Role in the Congregation

Email Address

Phone Number

Preferred Method of Contact

☐ Email

☐ Phone/Text

SECTION 3 — YOUR CONGREGATION AND CONTEXT

1. Tell us briefly about your congregation.

What would you want someone who has never visited your congregation to understand about who you are, your community, and your ministry?

Suggested response: 150–250 words

2. What changes are you noticing?

What changes, challenges, opportunities, or emerging needs are you noticing within your congregation or the community around you?

Suggested response: 150–250 words

3. Where do you sense possibility?

Where do you currently see energy, curiosity, opportunity, or possibility for something new or different in the life of your congregation or community?

You do **not** need to have a specific project or solution in mind.

Suggested response: 100–200 words

SECTION 4 — INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION

There are no "right" answers to these questions. Congregations do not need previous experience with innovation or experimentation to participate in the Lab.

4. How would you describe your congregation's experience with trying new things?

For example, you might tell us about a new ministry, partnership, worship experience, community engagement effort, use of space, organizational change, or another experiment your congregation has tried.

Suggested response: 150–250 words

5. Think about one new idea or experiment your congregation has tried—whether it succeeded, failed, or landed somewhere in between. What did you learn from the experience?

If your congregation has not recently tried something new, tell us what you think has made experimentation difficult.

Suggested response: 150–250 words

6. When someone proposes a new idea in your congregation, what typically happens?

What helps new ideas gain momentum? What tends to slow them down?

Suggested response: 100–200 words

7. Which statement best describes your congregation right now?

Select the statement that comes closest. There is no preferred answer.

☐ We know something needs to change, but we are not sure where to begin.

- ☐ We have several possibilities and need help discerning where to focus.
- ☐ We have an emerging idea and want help exploring it.
- ☐ We are already experimenting and want to strengthen our capacity to learn and innovate.
- ☐ We are not sure what innovation might look like for our congregation, but we are curious and willing to explore.

SECTION 5 — READINESS FOR THE LAB

8. Why is your congregation interested in participating in the Innovation Lab at this particular moment?

What makes this a meaningful time for your congregation to engage this work?

Suggested response: 150–250 words

9. What do you hope might be different because your congregation participated in the Innovation Lab?

This could relate to a particular ministry opportunity, but it might also involve how your congregation approaches imagination, decision-making, experimentation, community engagement, or change.

Suggested response: 150–250 words

10. Innovation requires a willingness to learn through action.

How willing is your congregation to try small experiments without knowing in advance whether they will succeed?

- ☐ Very willing
- ☐ Willing, but this will stretch us
- ☐ Unsure, but interested in learning

☐ This would be significantly challenging for us

Optional: Tell us more about your response.

SECTION 6 — PARTICIPATION COMMITMENT

The Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Innovation Lab is a **six-month experience**, beginning in January 2027.

Participation includes:

- A **two-day, in-person opening retreat in January 2027**.
- **Monthly virtual Innovation Lab gatherings** throughout the six-month experience.
- A congregational team of **up to five people**.
- Learning and experimentation between gatherings.
- Opportunities to share learning with other participating congregations.
- A willingness to try small experiments and learn from the results.

The Lab works best when congregations approach it as a shared team experience and when team members are able to participate consistently throughout the six months.

Please confirm your congregation's commitment:

- ☐ Our congregation understands that the Innovation Lab is a six-month commitment.
- ☐ Our congregation is prepared to form a team of up to five people if accepted into the Lab.
- ☐ Our congregation understands that the Team Lead will serve as the primary point of contact throughout the Lab.
- ☐ Our congregation is committed to having its team participate in the two-day January retreat.
- ☐ Our congregation is committed to participating in the monthly virtual gatherings throughout the six-month Lab.

- ☐ Our congregation understands that the Innovation Lab will involve learning, reflection, and experimentation between gatherings.
- ☐ Our congregation is willing to approach the Lab with curiosity and openness rather than expecting a predetermined solution.
- ☐ Our congregation understands that experimentation includes the possibility that some ideas will not work as expected—and that learning from those experiences is an important part of the process.

FINAL QUESTION

11. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your congregation or why participation in the Innovation Lab feels important at this time?

Optional response

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Application submitted by:

Congregation:

Date:

By submitting this application, I confirm that I am applying as the designated Team Lead on behalf of my congregation, that congregational leadership is aware of and supports this application, and that we understand the six-month commitment involved in participating in the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Innovation Lab.