

Presbyterians expect fewer full-time pastors

News in the [May 17, 2011](#) issue

More signs of tough times: Large majorities of Presbyterians expect that a decreasing number of their churches will be led by full-time pastors. At present, fewer than half of the congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have a full-time, installed pastor—mainly because of financial hardship.

Instead, findings from the November 2010 Presbyterian Panel survey say more churches will have to rely on supply pastors, lay pastors of various categories—or no formal pastoral leader at all, according to the Presbyterian News Service.

Most PCUSA members (82 percent) and elders (72 percent) agree that it is important that every congregation have a full-time, installed pastor. However, only about two out of five PCUSA ministers—43 percent of pastors and 36 percent of ministers not serving churches—feel that it is important to have a full-time pastor.

"Presbyterians in the pews want every church to have a full-time pastor, but they think fewer congregations will be able to afford one in the future," said Perry Chang, administrator of the Presbyterian Panel.