

THE ANSWER TO:

# WHAT IS A VITAL CONGREGATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH?

What is a vital congregation? It is a congregation that recognizes Jesus as the head of the church, with congregants assembling to worship God in spirit and in truth. It is a faith community committed to helping people meet, know, love, and serve Jesus. It is a congregation dedicated to lifelong discipleship formation, where people experience authentic growth in their relationship with God and with all people. It engages in both acts of mercy and justice ministries that seek to address the social, economic, and political realities that make such acts of mercy necessary. It is a congregation devoted to expressing care and compassion for both its members and its community. It is a congregation where members share the love of Jesus with others as a natural result of the overflow of Christ in their own lives.

What is a vital congregation? It is a congregation where leaders know, own, and live out their clearly stated mission, vision, and values of the church. It is a congregation dedicated to empowering servant leadership. It encourages all members to identify, nurture, and use their spiritual gifts in ministry and mission. It is a congregation where worship services inspire long-term members and first-time guests, who are warmly welcomed just as they are to sense the presence of God. It is a faith community where both leaders and members are excited about the future of their congregation and have a sense of urgency to demonstrate their mission to reach the last, the least, and the lost while celebrating the glory of God for His grace and mercy.

What is a vital congregation? It is your congregation—or at least it can be! God calls every congregation to be a vital congregation. Small, mid-sized, or large, every congregation can overflow with spiritual energy and renewed life. It does not matter whether it is a new worshipping community or one celebrating its 250th anniversary—every congregation can reach new people with the life-transforming message of Jesus Christ. Rural, urban, or suburban, every congregation can radiate with joy, love, hope, faith, and peace.

What is a vital congregation? It is the divine destiny desired by God for every congregation. Being vital should be the goal of every congregation. Anything less, and your congregation is trading the power of the Holy Spirit for mere existence. Vitality is inclusive and involved.

All churches in Trinity Presbytery can be a part of creating vitality by engaging in 21st-century training in leadership development or improving leadership skills for growth. Sessions and ruling elders can receive leadership training beyond polity and engage in self-assessment to discern and determine a path for increasing membership and ways to reach out into the community while strengthening ministries and missions in the church. Training can be in person or online.



*From the Office of Vital Congregations, Trinity Presbytery. Call Phyllis Sanders today and let's talk about how your church can increase vitality (803-794-1225, ext. 3 OR 803-622-2590).*