



Vision Statement for Vital Congregations Initiative

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

ISAIAH 43:19

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

See, the home of God is among mortals...See, I am making all things new.

REVELATION 21:3,5

Vision:

By the power of the Holy Spirit, and in authentic relationships with mid councils, we seek to equip, nurture and support church leaders to empower their congregations to renew, recover and live more fully into faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Vital Congregations Initiative is to work alongside mid council leadership, and leaders of existing congregations, in a process that seeks to help assess, discern and live into transformative actions that increase vitality. Through intentional spiritual practices and relational connections, this two-year process takes us deeper into following Jesus Christ, making disciples and being the vital community of Christ throughout particular communities and the world.

Values:

- Courage, conviction, and commitment to faithful discipleship
- Prayerful discernment
- Reliance upon Scripture
- Persistence — emboldened/enacted faith
- Honest assessment
- Resilience
- Intentional pursuits of reconciliation
- Hopefulness in change

What we believe:

- This is a necessary re-turn to God and re-forming of God's people
- This is a crucial time of awakening throughout our neighborhoods, nation and world
- The Holy Spirit's power is changing, re-forming, revitalizing the Church
- This is necessary to rediscover faithful discipleship in 21st century context
- God is calling the Church to transform and transcend cultures and contexts
- We must move from inward institutions to neighborhood relationships and mission

What this initiative is:

We hope that this is the beginning of intentional, authentic relationships between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency and mid council leaders and pastors to:

- Come together as the people of God
- Pray: re-turn to faithfulness in God
- Inspire openness to the Holy Spirit's transformation/change
- Honestly assess, discern and act
- Resource, equip and support leaders and pastors
- Practice missional evangelism and faithful discipleship
- Equip vital congregations and develop a praxis of sustainability and ongoing assessment
- Capture congregational stories and develop new measurements of vitality

What this is NOT:

- A universal program instructing churches and assuring vitality and sustainable life
- Another plan that promises an immediate fix
- A guarantee of revitalization for every congregation
- An attempt for the PC(USA) to tell churches what to do
- An institutional survival guide for membership, numbers and buildings
- An encouragement to tweak, yet remain the same
- A return to glory days gone by, nor a guidebook on calling the young pastor

Overview:

The Vital Congregations Initiative is a two-year covenant relationship between presbyteries and the PC(USA) to prayerfully walk with pastors and existing congregations in intentional efforts of revitalization.

Year 1 seeks to (re)build authentic relationships of faith. Churches will embark on an honest assessment, capturing their unique stories, confessing their realities, and discerning the Spirit's call to action. From Seven Marks of Vital Congregations, churches will determine a course within Three Actions:

- 1 **Re-forming churches** — re-envision and change how we are church together through the Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality
- 2 **Missional Clustering of churches** — revitalize by clustering congregations into new communities of worship and ministry
- 3 **Death and Resurrection of churches** — revitalize by grace and gratitude in the death and legacy of a congregation, in witness to the resurrection

Year 2 is about joining Christ in the new thing taking place, allowing the wonder of God to transform, and faithfully living into change. Through Seven Marks and Three Actions, we pray God will revitalize the church in missional action and faithful discipleship in Jesus Christ throughout our neighborhoods, our nation and the world.

• **Year 1: Relational**

• **Year 2: Incarnational**

Revitalizing Churches in Three Actions: Re-forming, Missional Clustering, Death and Resurrection