

# CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

All congregations want to thrive. A congregation (or any organization) is thriving when it achieves missional goals (vitality) and is likely to continue doing so into the future (sustainability). This checklist helps you quickly see how you rate your congregations' vitality and sustainability.

## Vitality

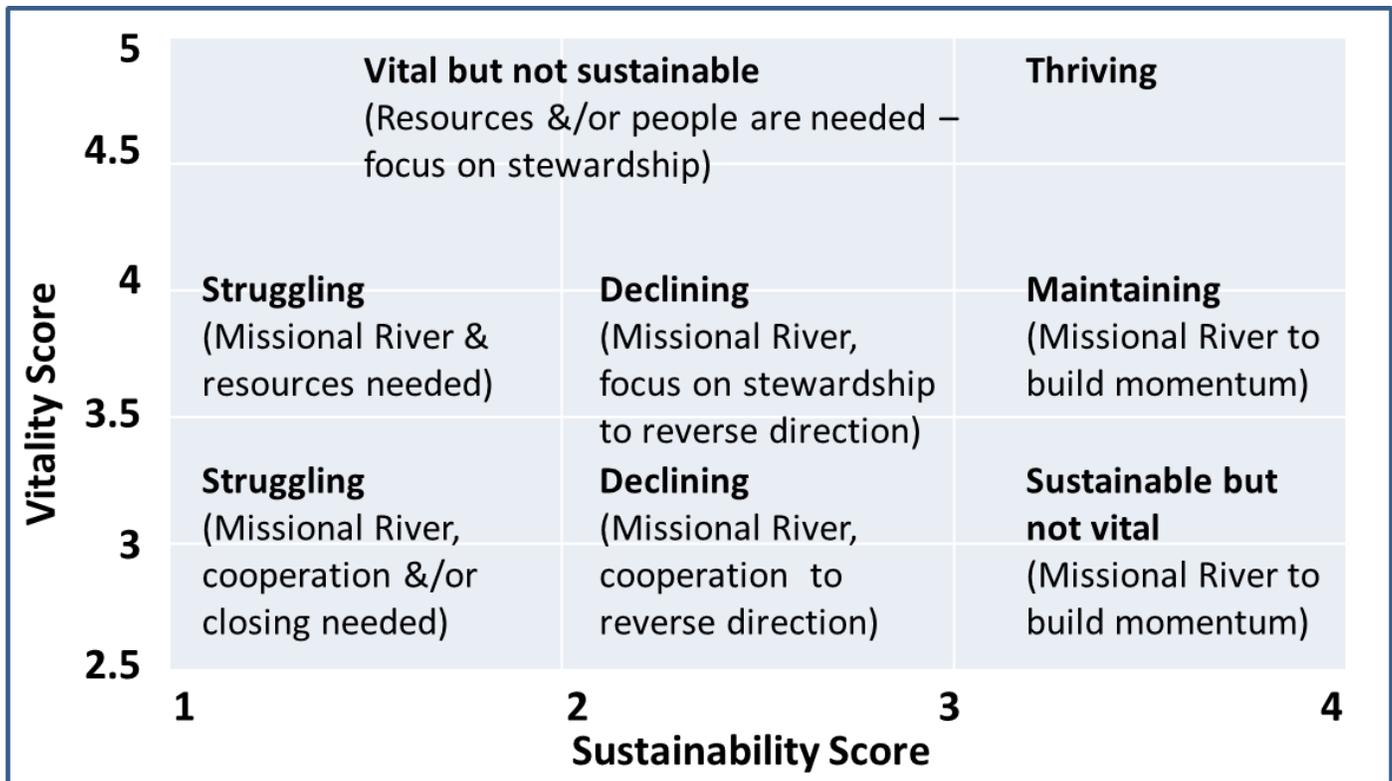
A vital congregation is one that lives out God's mission through strong relationships with God, each other and the world. The following questions can help your congregation determine its current vitality (mission orientation).

|  | Poorly        |   | Somewhat |   | Great     |                         |
|--|---------------|---|----------|---|-----------|-------------------------|
| How well do these phrases describe your congregation?  | 1             | 2 | 3        | 4 | 5         | Copy number from column |
| <i>Example</i>   |               |   | X        |   |           | 3                       |
| Worship nurtures people's faith                        |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Deepens people's relationship with God                 |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| A clear sense of mission                               |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Excitement about the congregation's future             |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Always ready to try something new                      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| A positive force in the community                      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Works for social justice/advocacy                      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| How well does your congregation...                     | Hardly at all |   | Well     |   | Very Well |                         |
| Incorporate new members into congregational life       |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Seek out and use the gifts of members of all ages      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Build strong, healthy relationships among members      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Manage disagreements in a healthy, respectful manner   |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Address social concerns (helping those in need)        |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Equip members to share their faith with others         |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Interact with the local community                      |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Help members live out their faith in their daily lives |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| Total all rows   |               |   |          |   |           |                         |
| <b>Vitality Score: (Divide total by 15)</b>            |               |   |          |   |           |                         |



## Balancing Vitality and Sustainability

Use the following chart to mark where your congregation falls in the matrix. Find your sustainability at the bottom and draw a line up. Find your vitality score from the first page and draw a line to the right. Look at where the two lines cross. This intersection **estimates** your congregation's most likely vitality/sustainability balance. This is not a perfect measure because these categories overlap some in real life. **Talk about how this estimate fits or doesn't fit with your experience and why.**



A congregation needs to be both vital and sustainable in order to be thriving. Vital congregations that aren't sustainable can't continue God's mission in their setting. Sustainable congregations that are not vital may have lost touch with God's mission for them in this time and place. **What are your congregation's strengths and challenges? What is God calling your congregation toward now?**