

## Signals of Vitality

**1. MISSION CLARITY** -The congregation knows its mission and purpose and has given time and effort to its clarification. Decisions are made in relation to the congregation's mission. There is awareness of the congregational mission's history, present values and context, and future potential.

**2. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION** -The congregation is a community where people experience spiritual growth and transformation. Various styles and practices of spiritual life help people to become closer to God and to each other. The climate of the congregation is one of spiritual seeking and renewal.

**3. AWARENESS OF CONTEXT AND CONGREGATIONAL DYNAMICS** -A wide circle of congregational leadership is aware of its social, demographic, and religious context. Modes of learning about the surrounding community and its needs and characteristics are in place. The leadership has utilized congregational size and life cycle frameworks to understand its present situation.

**4. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT** -There are opportunities for learning for people of all ages and a congregational environment that highlights learning as a way of growth and transformation. Formation in faith is available for all ages

**5. EVANGELISM: PLAN AND ACTION** -The congregation has a commitment to the invitation, welcome, and incorporation of people into the life of faith. Leadership has identified those responsible for the ministries of evangelism. There is an intentional plan and real action.

**6. TRANSFORMATIONAL WORSHIP AND PREACHING** -Worship is alive, inviting, and exciting, using many resources. Music lifts the human spirit to God. Preaching is hopeful, biblical, and related to daily living.

**7. LAY AND CLERGY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** -There is a plan and opportunities for the development of the leadership of the congregation. External sources of leadership development are employed. Clergy are committed to their own learning and spiritual/professional development. Lay people experience empowerment in their exercise of leadership.

**8. DEALING DIRECTLY WITH CONFLICT** -Conflict is not avoided or denied when it emerges in congregational life. Honesty, reconciliation, and negotiation are employed when facing moments and issues of division. When necessary, outside assistance for conflict negotiation is employed.

**9. HOPEFUL CLIMATE AND FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE** -A spirit of hope and potential permeates the congregation. Leaders name the good and build on the strengths of congregational life as they envision and plan for the future. There is a respect for tradition and flexibility and openness for trying new things.

**10. CARING COMMUNITY** -People know each other, and there is a spirit of care and support in the congregation's life. Both clergy and laity share responsibility for pastoral ministry, and there is education for and recognition of lay pastoral ministry.

**11. COMPASSIONATE SERVICE** -The congregation embodies Christ's spirit of compassion and servant hood. There is a plan and action for ministries of outreach and service in the larger community involving a good representation of congregational members. Advocacy is a part of the ministry of compassion for the congregation.

**12. FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP** -Faithful stewardship is modeled and encouraged in the congregation throughout its life and the entire year. There are opportunities of stewardship reflection and learning. Leadership, both lay and clergy are clear about the call to stewardship and their own commitment.

+++++ **DISCERNMENT ON #3** +++++

**CORINTHIANS 9:19-23 Paul's understanding of his context**

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

***Awareness of Context and Congregational Dynamics***

*1. #3 Signals of Vitality – A wide circle of congregational leadership is aware of its social, demographic and religious context.*

*What might we say about our 'context'?*

*What might we need to learn?*

*2. Modes of learning about the surrounding community and its needs and characteristics are in place.*

*How might we go about achieving this?*

*What purpose would it serve?*

*3. The leadership has utilized congregational size and life cycle frameworks to understand its present situation.*