

FOSTERING

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

in the Northwest Conference



northwest conference
developing leaders. thriving churches.

NORTHWESTCONFERENCE.ORG

WHAT IS CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY?

Congregational Vitality is a result of the living God breathing new life into the heart of a congregation.



Vitality is the wind of the Spirit ... “a rushing wind so wild and strong,” as the old hymn goes. Our role is to raise our sails and catch this wind.

Vitality is nothing less than a spiritual awakening in Christ. It is not about sustaining and maintaining; it's about thriving, growing and depending on God to lead us deeper in Christ and further in mission.

WHY WE INVEST IN CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

► **God's desire is for every church to be healthy and missional.** Simply defined: to be healthy is to pursue Christ; to be missional is to pursue Christ's priorities in the world.

► **God's plan** has the Church being the primary vehicle for advancing His mission in the world.

► **Churches tend to lose vitality rather than gain it as time passes.** It is easier to look

back at the past and smile on yesterday's accomplishments than it is to look ahead to the future and think about tomorrow's possibilities.

► **In vital congregations** there is a strong and clear sense of a greater purpose.

► **Healthy churches** encourage and empower their people to share their gifts both within and beyond their congregation.



“God made you to **flourish**—to receive **life** from outside yourself, creating **vitality** within yourself and producing **blessing** beyond yourself. Flourishing is **God's gift** and **plan**, and when you flourish you are in **harmony** with God, other people, creation and yourself. Flourishing means **becoming** the person God had in mind in creating you.” – John Ortberg



CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY IS ABOUT LIFE, PASSION AND AWAKENING

The question you are probably asking is, “Why should we do this?”

Why should we spend energy on something that may well disturb our contentment and place new demands on our leadership? There is only one answer. You will only do this if you want to renew clarity of purpose and missional momentum within your congregation for God’s greater purposes in the world.

If you want to flourish, to be where Jesus is, to help others experience the holy, and to be a blessing beyond yourselves with people hungering for hope, then it will be worth all the effort to renew your congregational life. **Congregational Vitality** is about **life, passion** and **awakening**.

In the end, it is God’s mission and the Gospel that matter most. Everything else is secondary and should align with them.



ECC + NWC PARTNERSHIP

Congregational Vitality is a collaborative effort of the local church, the NWC and the Evangelical Covenant Church encouraging, supporting, learning and growing with one another in our shared pursuit of Christ and His priorities through His Church. As scripture reminds us, “A cord of three strands is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Signs of Vitality: MORE NWC CHURCHES ARE ...

- ▶ Prayerfully discerning, forming and pursuing a renewed mission and vision clarity for their current contexts.
- ▶ Welcoming newcomers and finding ways to connect them into their mission and their faith community.
- ▶ Renewing a commitment to being “good neighbors” and finding fresh ways to bless their communities.
- ▶ Experiencing an increase in whole life stewardship by their people and a joy in giving and participating in ministry and mission.





congregational vitality pathway

VITALITY IS NOT A PROGRAM; IT IS A PATHWAY...a transformative process that occurs over time. With these excellent resources and supportive coaching along the way, many established churches are discovering hope as they walk the congregational vitality pathway. The answers are not in the information presented in this brochure; the answers are in the conversations you have about this information as the Holy Spirit leads and guides.

VIM Conversation
with the pastor



Behavioral/Relational
Covenant

Vitality Team



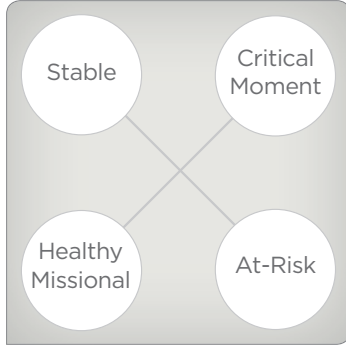
Service of
Consecration
Joshua 3:5



You shall know the truth
and the truth will set you free.
John 8:32



Strategic Ministry
Planning Team &
Implementation



"X" Marks the Spot...

There are four types of established churches in the Covenant: healthy missional, stable, critical moment, and at-risk. Using the ten healthy missional markers as a metric, mark an "X" where you would put your church. Draw an arrow from the "X" in the direction your church is moving.

Rating Guide:

- Healthy Missional: The markers are strong (80-100 percent of the time)
- Stable: The markers are average (50-79 percent)
- Critical Moment: The markers are weakening (15-49 percent)
- At-Risk: The markers are faint or non-existent (0-14 percent)



navigate

A Journey of Vitality

A dynamic partnership with other churches, the conference and denomination to catalyze your journey on the congregational vitality pathway. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

veritas



Telling the Truth about Congregational Vitality

A workshop that introduces the language of vitality, including the four types of churches and the ten healthy missional markers. The truth will set you free.

epic



Empowering People, Inspiring Change

A workshop that offers tools for change management, including helpful constructs for your leadership and church. All living things change.

pulse



A Congregational Vitality Assessment Tool

A congregational assessment that measures your church's current reality and trajectory using the metrics from Veritas. There is no vitality without reality.

one



A Unifying Approach to Strategic Ministry Planning

A workshop that guides the congregation in the discovery, development and deployment of a strategic ministry plan. Jesus himself had a strategic ministry plan.

co-op



Coaching of Pastors

Organizational leadership coaching for the pastor. Every Moses needs a Jethro.

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT, WHEREVER HE LEADS

Our desire is that every NWC church be healthy and missional. By healthy we mean pursuing Christ. By missional we mean pursuing Christ's purposes and priorities in the world. As churches pursue Congregational Vitality, it is our prayer that the movement of the Holy Spirit will foster and catalyze good ministry over a long period of time through each of them.

MARKS OF A HEALTHY MISSIONAL CHURCH

- 1 Centrality of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
- 2 Life-transforming walk with Jesus (John 3:3, 30; Phil. 1:6)
- 3 Intentional evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20)
- 4 Transforming communities through active compassion, mercy and justice ministries (Micah 6:8)
- 5 Global perspective and engagement (Acts 1:8)
- 6 Compelling Christian community (Acts 2:42-47)
- 7 Heartfelt worship (Psalm 138:1a; John 4:23)
- 8 Sacrificial and generous living and giving (Romans 12:1-8)
- 9 Culture of godly leadership (Hebrews 13:7)
- 10 Fruitful organizational structures (Exodus 18:13-26; Acts 6:1-7)



Congregational Vitality is
not a program, it is a pathway!



REFLECTIONS OF VITALITY

“We realize that we cannot be a missional church without being healthy and we can’t be healthy without being missional. They are tied together.”

“Veritas, EPIC and PULSE have inspired us as a church to prioritize and focus ministry both inwardly and outwardly. We are now challenged to make ministry a lifestyle, calling us to ‘love like Jesus’ and ‘to be a bigger blessing to our community.’”

“Participating in the Congregational Vitality Pathway allowed our church leaders to establish a common language when thinking about assessment and change.”

Regarding the need for healthy missional change one person observed, “If the sheep stay in the same pasture all the time, you eventually end up with a field of mud.”

“The Vitality journey launched us into a new season of productive ministry and brought new energy and excitement to our fellowship.”

“The Congregational Vitality Pathway helped us to discern what the Holy Spirit was already doing in the community, gave us tools to negotiate conflict, inspired cultural change, and fostered growth of a healthy and missional identity within the congregation.”

DO YOU WANT TO FLOURISH?

Pastor and author John Ortberg offers the following reflection: “God made you to flourish—to receive life from outside yourself, creating vitality within yourself and producing blessing beyond yourself. Flourishing is God’s gift and plan, and when you

flourish you are in harmony with God, other people, and yourself. Flourishing means becoming the person God had in mind in creating you.”

We believe this sentiment also captures God’s collective desire for the gathered people

of God, the Church. Flourishing is about each of us being found faithful and fruitful within the mission of God as lived out through the Church—God’s instrument in advancing His mission.

“When we stand before Christ, He will not evaluate us on the SIZE of our ministry but on the SORT and SUBSTANCE of ministry we led.” – Jim Cymbala

SCHEDULE A CONVERSATION

- ▶ Pray about what the Lord would have you do moving forward.
- ▶ Consider pursuing the Vitality Pathway as a congregation.
- ▶ Schedule a vitality workshop with the NWC.

If you’d like to explore Congregational Vitality further, please contact:



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