State of the Church Report - 2011

Vital Congregations – Preparing to Set Goals for the Future of Our Church

Churches across the United Methodist Church and throughout the Virginia Conference will be preparing to become Vital Congregations. For 2011 charge conference we begin the process of setting goals for the next four years in five key areas: Worship, Disciples, Small Groups, Mission Participants, Mission Giving. A website (umvitalcongregations.org) is established to show the results of your congregation for the past three years and will continue to measure your progress.

Each church will submit their goals between the end of 2011 and March 1, 2012. At General conference our goals will be presented before the entire denomination as we work together to become Vital Congregations for Jesus Christ.

Website for resources: http://www.umvitalcongregations.org

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." (Matt 28:18-20 & Matt 22:36-40) This mission is achieved through vital congregations that equip and empower people to be Disciples of Jesus Christ in their homes and communities around the world.

Spiritual goal setting is aligning our ministry with and for God's calling for the United Methodist Church. It is a unique opportunity for our churches to work with one another and for one another as we serve as one Church for the world.

Making disciples, growing vital congregations and transforming the world is part of a spiritual adventure that is empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit as churches engage in the means of grace. Spiritual goals are accomplished by connecting the means of grace with proven vital church practices such as planning, strategic direction, prioritization, clear focus and alignment.

Through prayer and discernment, every congregation is invited to set spiritual-goals as a gift for God. Every congregation is invited to celebrate these goals and then strive to do all in their power to achieve these goals. Together, God will bless us and increase our numbers because of our faithfulness to God's call for our denomination.

What will we measure and why? What we measure receives attention. Across the denomination, we want to give attention to and, therefore, we will measure:

1. *Disciples in worship* - worship attendance;
2. *Disciples making new disciples* - number of professions of faith;
3. *Disciples growing in their faith* - number of small groups;
4. *Disciples engaging in mission* - number of disciples doing outreach in the community and the world; and
5. *Disciples sharing their resources for mission* - amount of money given to mission.

While churches may measure different activities and results, across the entire connection we will have five common measurable fruits/goals so that we can learn from one another and focus resourcing on achieving particular fruit. There is synergy, learning and power when we do things together.

These measures are essential for the body of Christ. They were demonstrated in the Acts 2 church (Acts 2:41-47), and they are the areas of a church's life that are most often described in the New Testament.

These measures are core to the values of United Methodism — building up the body of Christ, doing evangelism and engaging disciples in changing the world.

Churches will use the following chart to identify their goals and submit this chart to their district superintendent by the end of 2011, March 2012 at the latest. Bishops will present to the 2012 General Conference their congregations' goals as a gift to the ministry of The United Methodist Church in the next quadrennium. This chart may be completed and submitted on line by going to www.umvitalcongregations.org and selecting the *Setting Goals* tab and following the instructions for setting goals.

Note: 2007 - 2009 statistics are calculated and on the umvitalcongregations.org website.

People and Ministry	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
Disciple worship – Average Worship Attendance							
Disciples make new disciples – Number of people who joined by profession of faith							
Disciples engage in growing their faith – Number of small groups, Sunday school classes and Bible studies							
Disciples engage in mission – Number of people from the congregation engaged in local, national and international mission/outreach activities							
Disciples give to mission – The total amount given by local church to other organizations for support of benevolent and charitable ministries (includes apportionments paid and support for all United Methodist and non-United Methodist organizations active in work such as advocacy, education, health, justice, mercy, outreach and welfare anywhere in the world)							

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