



ATTRACTING NEW DISCIPLES

The Vital Congregations study that was commissioned by The United Methodist Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table identified 16 ministries/strategies, called “drivers of vitality”. In examining these drivers, as we seek to attract more who are professing their belief in Jesus Christ, a key factor is related to the hospitality extended to those new to the faith and new to the congregation.

Whether we call this “hospitality” or “evangelism” or “outreach”, the goal is opening the congregation to those who are seeking God through Jesus Christ. In doing so, a congregation incorporates the following into its ministry:

- Faith-sharing preparation to those in the congregation. Opportunities to explore and talk about faith enable people to be more comfortable with “faith talk.”
- Visitation of those who come to the congregation, in a way that is appropriate to the generation or culture of the seeker. For instance, while some older adults are comfortable with a visit in the home, some younger adults are more appreciative of an email contact with someone from the congregation.
- Recognition that milestone events in the life of a person may open up an opportunity for that person to welcome involvement in a congregation. These include such transition times as job change, marriage, divorce, life-threatening illness, moves in and out of a community.
- Identification and cultivation of multiple entry points for connecting with a congregation. Worship is only one of those entry points. Community service opportunities are another. And small groups may be another.

Kwasi Kena, Director of Evangelism Ministries At The General Board of Discipleship provides further direction in his pamphlet, “[Create An Evangelistic Church Culture.](#)”