

Vitality Initiative

Four phases for learning and implementation

The phases are as follows:

Phase 1:

1. Discovering where your congregation is on the journey of vitality
2. Grounding Yourselves in God's Mission
3. Listening to Discern your Congregation's Vocation
4. Getting into Shape through a Process of Listening and Discernment of Vocation
5. Listening to Congregational Stories and Sharing Your Story: Congregations are challenged to discover and nurture their unique call. Congregations will be given tools to ask, "Who are we?" and "Why do we do what we do?" Leadership teams will begin a deep exploration of the concept of vocation through a Lutheran lens, grounded in Luther's own theology and the biblical roots of the church. This theological emphasis will be paired with Christian discernment practices, including the development and sharing of congregational call stories and prayer as a personal and communal practice.

Phase 2:

1. Marking Your Movement in the Process
 2. Finding out, "Who are Your Neighbors?"
 3. Coordinating and Listening in Neighborhood interviews
 4. Discerning Through What You Heard
 5. Focusing Your Emerging Vocation through Faith Language
 6. Telling the story of what God is doing in process of vocational discernment
- Congregations will develop an awareness of cultural and social trends. Congregations will be equipped to explore their community and trends that impact their context. Through exploration of external relationships with a congregation's neighbors and relationships to the larger church, congregations will discern "Who are our neighbors?" and imagine "Whom are we called to serve?" and "With whom are we called?"

Phase 3:

1. Narrowing Down to Your Congregation's Unique Vocation
 2. Telling the story of what God has given in process of vocational discernment
 3. Experimenting in Your Neighborhood as a tool for discernment, not just a project
 4. Staying in Vocational Shape
- Equipped with a deeper understanding of congregational identity and context, the third phase will invite the process of synthesis: given one's congregation's identity, gifts, passions, histories, and the realities of its culture, context, and neighbors, what are the ways that the congregation senses the Holy Spirit is calling us to be church together? What are the ways the congregation can serve with its neighbors?

Phase 4:

Coaches may continue meeting with the leadership team for six additional months following the final cohort session, helping the congregation stay on track with their discerned next steps and/or experiment(s).