

Our mission is to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world. This requires pastoral and congregational leaders to work together to provide a clear vision and direction as well as focused attention and action to leading the church in the five markers of vitality:

1. Inspire disciples through worship
2. Involve disciples in small group ministry to connect, learn, and grow
3. Engage disciples in community hands-on mission
4. Inspire disciples to give generously especially to mission
5. Make new disciples (people who join the church through a profession of faith)

Throughout the appraisal it refers to congregational vitality and the five markers of vitality. Use the above paragraph as a reference point for congregational vitality and the five markers of vitality. For the purpose of this appraisal, "congregation" can be best defined as the weekly worshipers. "Leaders" refers to the elected leaders and non-elected leaders who lead ministries like small groups, Sunday school, mission teams, etc.

The following appraisal is to be completed at least once a year by the church council as part of the church conference paperwork.

Steps:

1. Print blank copies of this appraisal for all members of the church council.
2. Each member of the church council then completes the appraisal independently.
3. The church council gathers to review the appraisals and develop a composite appraisal.
4. Finally, the church council chair inputs the appraisal online in Arena at <http://member.gnjumc.org>

If you would like someone to assist you with completing this document, please contact Nicola Mulligan at the Bishop's office at nmulligan@gnjumc.org.

Date

Church #

Church Name

District

Pastor's Name

Pastor's Email

Church Council
Chairperson's Name

Church Council
Chairperson's Email

Section I – Characteristics and Qualities of the Congregation

Section 1 gives feedback about the growth opportunities that will enhance the congregation’s vitality. Check all the areas the congregation and congregational leaders demonstrate consistently. Then answer the question at the end of each section using Strongly agree, Agree or Not yet.

1. Attitude

The Congregation:

- Learns and is:
- ai. Open to learning new ways of doing things
 - aii. Open to learning from other congregations
 - b. Perseveres to become better when difficult challenges and situations arise
 - c. Welcomes and accepts all people the same regardless of race/gender/class/age/education/culture/faithful member or non-member
 - d. Has a joyful spirit (laughter/positive meetings/upbeat attitude)
 - e. Is hopeful (believes there is a great future for the congregation)

The Congregational Leaders:

- f. Demonstrate a servants heart (people readily step forward to serve)
- g. Encourage and talk optimistically about the congregation
- h. Attend workshops to grow skills to lead and grow the congregation/its ministry and community ministry

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership have a great attitude toward the ministry, congregation, and community.			

2. Care

The Congregation:

- i. Listens to one another
- Connects with others:
- ji. Connects well with people in the congregation
- jii. Connects well with people in the community
- jiii. Goes out of its way to welcome others and demonstrate hospitality
- k. Has self-awareness and understands how it is perceived in the community and by visitors

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership demonstrates a caring spirit and is aware of others needs and feelings.			

3. Thinks Strategically

The Congregation and its leaders:

- l. Discuss regularly strategies to make disciples and grow the congregation and engage in hands-on mission in the community
- m. Plan by setting and achieving ministry, property, and financial SMART goals. (SMART stands for Specific/Measurable/Attainable/Relevant to your ministry/Time specific. Refer to Google for more information.)
- n. Evaluate regularly its progress toward mission and goals
- o. Understand the people in the community and think about how to effectively serve the community
- p. Leadership knows and understands the state of the church's finances, worship attendance and progress toward congregational vitality

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leaders plan, organize and carry out ministry to grow disciples, the mission, and the congregation.			

4. Time

The Congregation:

- q. Starts and ends meetings on time
- r. Focuses reports on the vision/mission/goals and is clear and to the point
- s. Prepares for meetings and activities
- t. Plans and carries out activities and meetings with excellence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leaders use time efficiently. They are punctual and prepared for church meetings and activities.			

5. Growth

The Congregation:

- u. Has vibrant worship that is inspiring and attracts new people which increases average worship attendance
- v. Is constantly inviting family/neighbors/co-workers/friends and especially those who do not have a church home to make new disciples
- w. Is constantly starting new Bible studies and small groups as well as inviting new people from the congregation and community to these groups
- x. Sees service in the community as a priority and plans ministries to serve people in the community
- y. Is growing in the number of people attending small groups and doing hands-on mission

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leaders are connected to the community and continue to evolve in ministry.			

Section 2 – Evaluating the Five Areas of Effective Congregational Leadership

Section 2 is designed to evaluate congregational effectiveness in areas that lead to health and vitality. Check all the areas the congregation and congregational leaders demonstrate consistently. Then answer the question at the end of each section using Strongly agree, Agree or Not yet.

1. Trust

The Leaders:

- a. Follow through with commitments
- b. Consistently treat people fairly and honestly
- c. Are reliable (on time/faithful/consistent)

The Congregation:

- d. Does not gossip
- e. Is growing in love and respect for one another and all people

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership build and grow trust within the congregation as well as with the people in the community.			

2. Disagreement and conflict

The congregation and its leaders:

- f. Respect one another and each others ideas
- g. When conflict arises people listen to each other so people feel heard
- h. Challenges and issues are thoroughly discussed and addressed right away
- i. When there are differences of opinion people engage in meaningful conversation rather than ignoring or deflecting difficult issues
- j. When serious conflict arises the congregation is quick to get help in dealing with the conflict
- k. The congregation addresses issues when they arise

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership listen and honor others ideas and concerns, have a non-anxious presence in the midst of conflict, and lead individuals and the congregation to resolve conflict for the good of the mission.			

3. Commitment

The congregation and its leaders:

- l. Are committed to growing their own faith and deepening the faith in one another
- m. Want to come to worship and the activities of the church
- n. Are generous with their time to the ministries and activities of the church
- o. 90% of the people follow through with tasks and assignments
- p. Step forward to provide leadership

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership demonstrate and communicate commitment to the congregation, the community, and The United Methodist Church.			

4. Responsibility

The Congregation:

- q. Has a relevant vision for its future ministry that connects with the people in the community
- Communicates clearly the direction of the church

The Leadership:

- r. Plans a vital and balanced ministry of worship/small groups/mission/stewardship/pastoral care/growing disciples
- s. Keeps committees and groups informed about progress toward its mission and goals
- t. People are well prepared for meetings
- u. The church building is neat and clean and maintenance issues are dealt with right away
- v. The leadership promotes a healthy relationship with and understanding of the denomination and the conference

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Yet
The congregation and its leadership take responsibility when challenges arise, initiate solutions, and are consistently prepared for worship, meetings, and church activities.			

5. Results

The Congregation:

- w. Establishes and achieves SMART goals each year
- x. Has sufficient leaders to deepen faith and better understand the Bible and the church and the community mission field around the church
- y. The congregation follows through and accomplishes ministry and tasks
- z. The congregation is growing in each of the following: Worship, Professions of faith, The number of people in small groups, The number of people in hands-on community mission, Giving generously

Written Assessment:

What gifts, achievements, and strengths do you identify in your congregation?

What one or two areas from the appraisal do you want your congregation to further develop and grow? How will this help to better your congregation?

Section 3 - Assessing Section 2 of the Appraisal

Which of the three responses below best identifies the Church Council's responses. Follow the instructions at the end of the option you select below.

The Church Council agrees that the congregation is making appropriate progress toward growing vitality. Identify 2-3 specific competencies (lettered in each section) in which you would like the congregation to continue to grow and develop. Bring copies of this appraisal for your participants to your charge conference and retain a copy with the church files.

The Church Council agrees that the congregation is making progress and there are important areas to improve. Work with your pastor to develop an improvement plan. Addressing these concerns immediately will prevent these areas from impacting the congregation's overall ministry. Send a copy of the improvement plan to the district superintendent.

The Church Council agrees that the congregation is not making the kind of progress they would like and has concerns about areas of decline. The Church Council chairperson is to send the compiled appraisal and comments to the district superintendent who will then identify someone to come and work with the congregation.

After completing the appraisal, select the option that best describes the congregation:

We are a highly vital congregation and seek to continue to serve God and grow our disciples and grow our vitality by strengthening the five markers of vitality.

We are on our way to becoming more vital and are working to grow the five markers of vitality.

We want to build on our current ministry and become more vital and request assistance in growing our vitality.

We are satisfied with our current ministry and do not desire to change.

Our best years are behind us and we request assistance in how we can be a gift to future generations and the future ministry of the larger church.

Our best years are behind us and we know that we will cease to exist in the future.