

NEXT STEPS

As a team, prayerfully discern which of the following statements realistically best describes your congregation's direction for the future. Take some time in prayer, silence, and discussion until you feel God's peace about the way you have discerned to move forward. Again, remember that while it is important to aspire to great things, it is equally important to realistically ground your conversations and discernment in the information you collected in your Pathways Worksheet.



1 We humbly recognize that our best days are behind us, and it is time to discontinue. We are ready to take the next steps to do so and ensure resources are available to reach future generations with the good news of Jesus Christ. We would like to explore affiliating with another United Methodist congregation nearby to best use our limited resources.

2 We recognize that our ministry and mission is important to our community. We also acknowledge that our church cannot be sustainable in the future and need to discuss possible actions to adapt our congregation's ministry to its current realistic capacity so that we can envision and plan for sustainable ministry into the future.

3 We recognize that our ministry and mission is important to our community. We also are encouraged by the progress we are making in our key ministries and recognize there are areas with opportunities for development that will lead us to further health and fruitfulness in ministry, that if not address could lead to decline.

4 We recognize that our ministry and mission is important to our community and that our ministries exhibit significant health and fruitfulness. We are ready to take the next steps towards continued growth so that our congregation increases its impact in the community and the world.

After review, conversation, and prayerful discernment, enter your team discernment in the *Pathways Worksheet*. At this point, work with the facilitator partnering with your congregation about your discernment to understand your next steps.

Plan and Mobilize

- A. We do not feel we need any support from GNJ right now.
- B. We are ready to take the next steps to grow in health and fruitfulness as a congregation. We will work with our coach for the right next step. *Pathways* offers a number of unique paths for your congregation to move into the future God has for you. Select the module(s) that will be most helpful for your congregations:
1. *Fruitfulness Module* is for congregations that desire to create an intentional discipleship system and grow their fruitfulness in the 5 core ministries: worship, small groups, new disciples, missions, and generosity.
 2. *Sustainability Module* is for congregations that desire to reduce risk factors that are or may create obstacles for sustainable ministry.
 3. *Organization Module* is for congregations that wish to shift their governance structure into a simplified mission leadership board.
 4. *Community Engagement* is for congregations that desire to become partners with neighbors, community leaders and organizations for sustainable community transformation, and for churches wanting to start Hope Centers.
 5. *Graceful Conversations Module* is for congregations that are wrestling with differences within the congregation, especially in the areas of theology and human sexuality. This work will include writing a covenant that outlines how to honor one another.
 6. *Conflict Resolution Process* is for congregations experiencing conflict about direction, mission, leadership, or programming. The congregation will engage in a clear and healthy process to work through conflict that will empower the congregation to move forward in the midst of the challenges and increase faithfulness and fruitfulness.
 7. *A Journey of Hope Congregational Opportunities*: There are three points of entry into GNJ's work to end the sin of racism within the church. 1) Pathways modules are for congregations who would like to begin the conversation around cultural competency. 2) Bridges Program where vital congregations may engage cultural competency more deeply with the goal of creating a spiritual practice that allows for continued growth and community outreach. 3) A Journey of Hope Congregational Plan, which is for congregations who want to explore cultural competency more deeply and begin to do the work of ending the sin of racism in their congregation and community.
 8. *Next Gen Module* is for congregations wishing to reach younger generations to grow younger and more diverse.