

HANDBOOK  
COMMITTEE ON  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION  
(REVISED 2021)



Presbytery of Florida

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## **PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

### **COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

#### **INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION**

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR) understands that there are at least three distinct reasons why congregations will seek to engage in a process of revitalization. These reasons include a healthy congregation's desire for adjustments or redirection, a struggling congregation that desires to become revitalized for life and ministry, and those congregations in the midst of a neighborhood/area undergoing demographic change and the need to discern how to best minister to the changing needs of the community.

No matter the reason, those who enter into a conversation about revitalization must realize they need do so with both great humility and care. This is because the subject of this work is a community of faith filled with people whose lives must be treated with both love and respect.

In order for revitalization to occur, a thorough examination of the congregation and its current focus of ministry must take place. Such an undertaking will be a disciplined examination of the congregation. The purpose for this assessment is to help provide an understanding of what is valued by the membership of the congregation, offer priorities for focusing direction in ministry, give clarity to congregational leadership in their work and ministry, and help engage the congregation and leadership in developing healthy directions for ministry and mission.

Another consideration is the context in which ministry takes place. How has the area around the congregation changed? What is the population like? Tools will be utilized to ascertain to what degree, if any, the contextual situation of the congregation has changed.

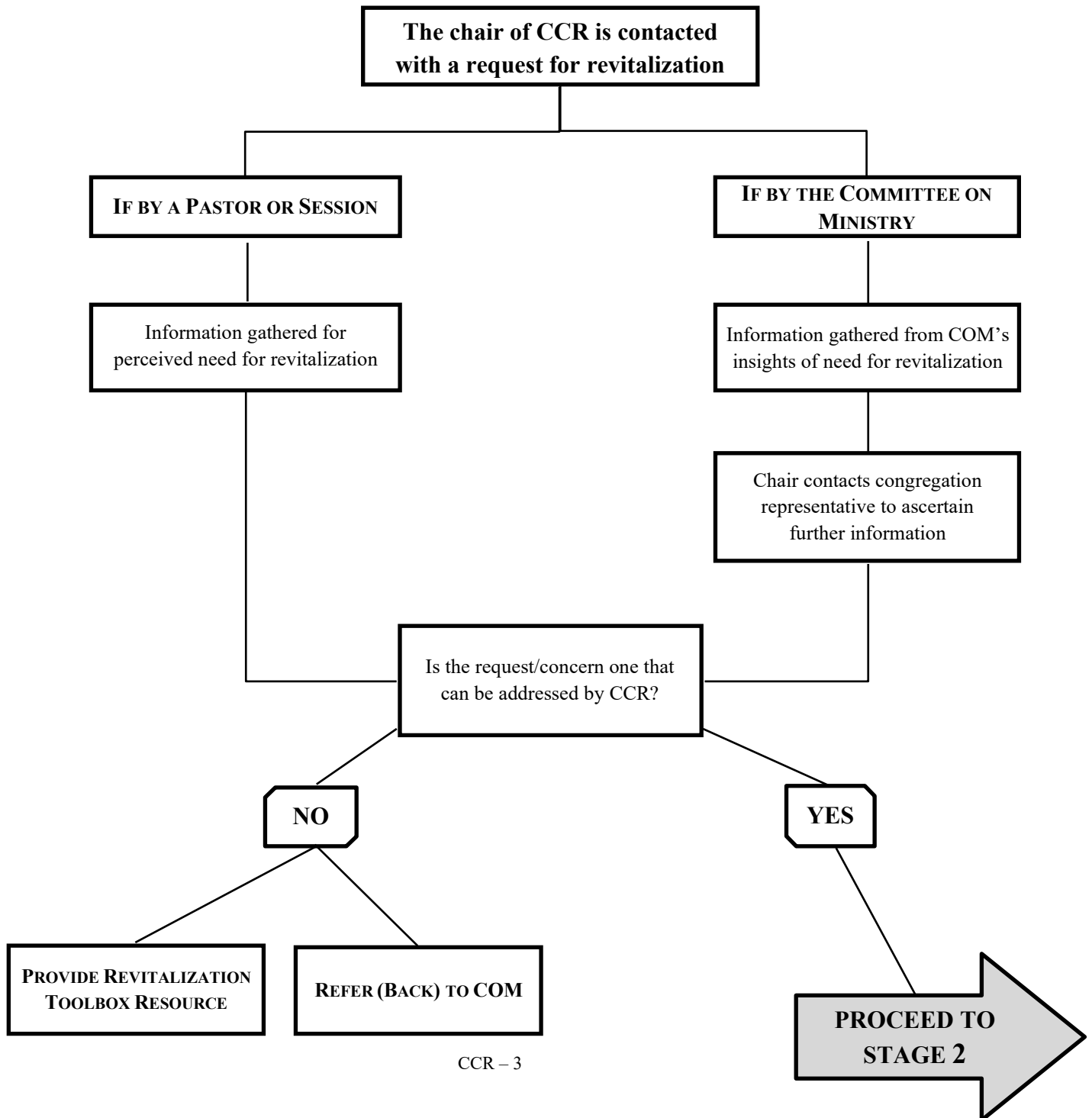
It is important to understand that this process of exploration may reveal some areas which the congregation may not like to acknowledge about the congregation and in truth may be painful. In spite of the potential challenging nature of what is discovered, it will be important to faithfully confront those revelations in a constructive fashion, which will allow both the leadership and congregation to react and to address them.

Remember, the overall goal is to discern as near as possible the future God has in store for the congregation as it serves the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It is ultimately Christ's church. Through prayerful discernment, his desires will be revealed as the congregation faithfully follows as the Lord leads.

Mistakes and mis-steps may occur. That will be okay. Perfection is not expected... just faithfulness.

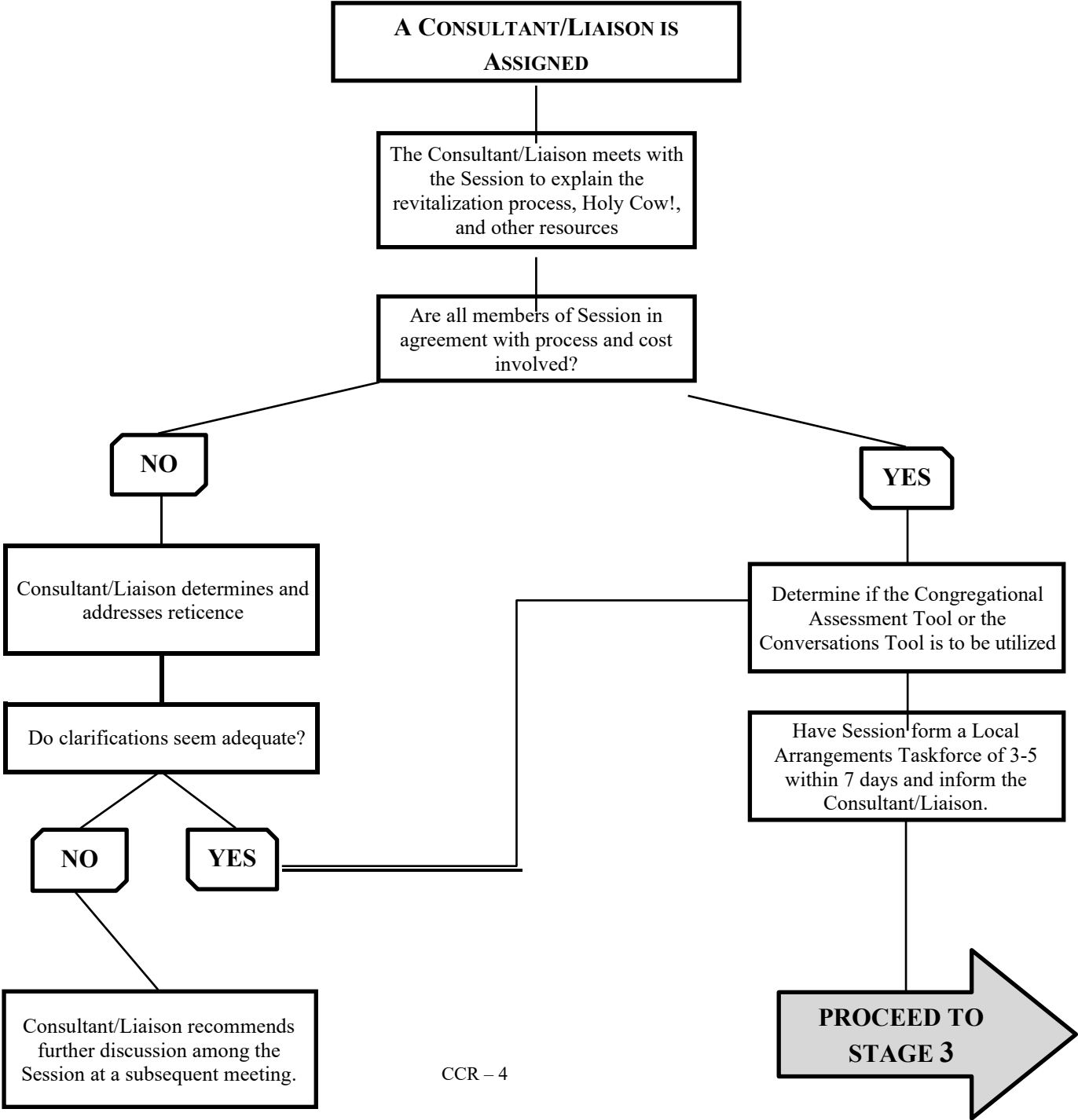
# Process For Engaging in Revitalization

## STAGE ONE: THE REQUEST FOR REVITALIZATION ASSISTANCE



# Process For Engaging in Revitalization

## STAGE TWO: THE PRESENTATION



# Process For Engaging in Revitalization

## STAGE THREE: THE ENGAGEMENT

### ENGAGING HOLY COW!

The Consultant/Liaison meets and trains the Local Arrangements Taskforce

**The Taskforce establishes deadlines for...**

Clarification on who can/should participate in the assessment

Develop a presentation on Assessment Tool for congregation

Enthusiastic and continuous promotion of participation

Set start date and deadline for ending responses

Method for helping those without computer access/knowledge

Verbal and written publicity begins

Assessment tool is engaged

Deadline for submission is reached and a generated report is sent to Consultant/Liaison

**PROCEED TO STAGE 4**

# Process For Engaging in Revitalization

## STAGE FOUR: THE ANALYSIS

### PRESENTING RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Consultant/Liaison receives data from Holy Cow! Consulting

Data is read and reports are prepared by the Consultant/Liaison, setting dates for presentations to the Session and Congregation

#### Vital Signs Report

The Consultant/Liaison provides to the Session a full, detailed report based on information provided by congregation. Used to help discern the congregation's future.

#### Executive Summary Report

The Consultant/Liaison presents to the congregation the Executive Summary Report culled from the full Vital Signs Report, and seeks congregational input and responses.

**PROCEED TO STAGE 5**

# Process For Engaging in Revitalization

## STAGE FIVE: THE NEW MINISTRY

### Discerning the Future God has in Store

The Consultant/Liaison helps the Session establish a Revitalization Taskforce of 5-7 persons charged with pulling together all received input and begin to determine future direction for ministry.

#### Holy Cow! and Congregational Input

What has the congregation said about itself? What is the health of the congregation? What direction seems to be best?

#### Data from MissionInsite

MissionInsite provides data about the demographic trends surrounding the church.

Identify demographic trends in the area and discern what ministry may be needed.

Establish a plan of action with timelines, benchmarks, and persons responsible for each portion.

#### The Revitalization Toolbox

A list of resources to provide guidance and information for congregational revitalization.

**GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES...**



## **PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

### **COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

#### **CONGREGATIONAL CONSULTANTS**

The Committee on Congregational Revitalization (CCR) in conjunction with the Committee on Ministry, and with the approval of the Presbytery of Florida has engaged with Holy Cow! Consulting and MissionInsite for its major resources in the Congregational Revitalization process. These two resources necessitate the use of trained persons to interpret gathered information from the tools utilized in an assessment process.

To interpret the results of these resources the Committee on Congregational Revitalization trains capable persons within the Presbytery to provide a clear explanation of the data given. Congregational Consultants play a vital role in helping congregations understand the health, wellbeing, desires, and possible future direction of the congregation, therefore are carefully chosen and trained.

Once a consultant has been appropriately trained the person will be able to visit and work with a congregation. Once engaged, the process will take several months.

The work of the local Holy Cow! Consultant is essential to helping congregations understand their current setting in life and move forward in healthy directions. To that end, the Consultant is responsible for the following tasks. Once the chair of CCR has been contacted by a Pastor or Session, a Congregational Consultant will be contacted to work with that congregation.

- The Consultant meets with the Session to explain the revitalization process utilizing the Holy Cow! instrument and other resources.
- If the Session agrees with the process and cost, it needs to be determined if the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) or the Conversations Tool (CT) is more appropriate for the congregation.
- The Session appoints a 3–5 person Local Arrangement Taskforce within 7 days of the initial agreement to move forward.
- The Consultant trains the Local Arrangements Taskforce and provides supervision.
- Once the surveys are complete, the consultant receives from Holy Cow! the data gleaned.
- Data is read, reports are prepared, dates are set for presentations to the Session and congregation.
- Vital Signs Report is provided to the whole Session. This gives a full, detailed report on the information provided by the congregation.

- Executive Summary Report is presented to the congregation. This is culled from the full Vital Signs Report. Congregational input and responses are sought.
- The Consultant works with the Session to establish a Revitalization Taskforce of 5–7 charged with pulling together all received information and begin to discern God’s future direction for ministry.
- Establish a set of goals with a timeline of expectations.
- A final report is turned in to CCR.

## **PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

### **COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

#### **LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TASKFORCE**

The importance of this taskforce cannot be overstated. The energy and effort this group puts into the congregational engagement of the Holy Cow! assessment tool is critical to its use in helping a congregation move forward in mission and ministry.

Those who serve on this taskforce should include members of the congregation who are passionate about their church and its future, have organizational and communication skills, and can engender excitement among other members for connecting with this revitalization process. Depending on the size of the congregation, 3 to 5 people are needed to serve.

After appointment by the Session, the Taskforce will do the following:

- Commit to 6 months of ministry.
- Be trained by the Consultant in the Holy Cow! process and follow all guidelines.
- Clarify who can/should participate in the assessment.
- Develop a presentation to inform and excite the congregation.
- Enthusiastically and continuously promote participation.
- Set a start date and a deadline for completing the assessment process.
- Work out ways for helping those without computer access or knowledge.
- Work with the Consultant to organize a plan and presentation for the congregation with Session approval.

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

**COMMITTEE ON**

**CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

**REVITALIZATION TASKFORCE**

Quite often, we Presbyterians are good at gathering information, but can be very slow to implement specific plans or goals gleaned from that information. In order for revitalization to take place, a plan of action must be developed and implemented in stages. A good portion of the implementation and future planning needs to remain flexible.

Not all ideas will work. Occasional failures must be considered an option. At the same time, failure must not be construed to be that the whole plan is to be abandoned. One step, or one phase may have looked good on paper, but in practicality, fell short. That's okay. That makes it not a failure, but a learning of something that did not work.

The Revitalization Taskforce becomes the backbone of the revitalization process. Great care, consideration, and prayer need to go into the selection of 5 to 7 persons to serve on this. A minimum of three years needs to be committed to this ministry.

Those who serve on this taskforce are to be members of the congregation who are passionate about their church and its future, have organizational and communication skills, and can generate excitement among other members for connecting with this revitalization process. A mix of "detail oriented" persons and "broad picture" persons is needed. An open mind is essential.

Once the Session has formed and approved the Revitalization Taskforce members, the Consultant will help the taskforce pull together all input and information received to determine the congregation's direction for future ministry. Each step of the process must be surrounded with prayer – not simply telling God what is wanted, but also (and more importantly) listening for God's guidance and direction.

- Pray. Pray some more.
- Discuss what the congregation has said about itself through the Holy Cow! assessment tool.
- Discuss the congregation's health and energy level.
- Discuss what the congregation seem to be saying about its future direction.
- Consult MissionInsite data to determine trends in the area surrounding the church
- How do the congregation members' information and neighborhood trends mesh?
- What does the congregation hear God saying about what is unfolding?

- Establish a plan of action with timelines, benchmarks, and persons responsible for various steps. Share with the Session for discussion, guidance, and approval.
- Implement short-term goals.
- Revisit long-term goals in light of success or failure of short-term goals.
- Constantly keep ears to the ground, listening for congregational responses and address issues that may arise.

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

**COMMITTEE ON**  
**CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

**REVITALIZATION GRANT**  
**DEFINITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Purpose**

The Presbytery of Florida has established a Congregational Revitalization Fund to provide grants to its congregations with small membership in support of a congregation's specific plan for its revitalization. The awarding of a grant will be based on the attraction and retention of designated pastoral leadership to enable and guide the congregation's implementation of its plan for revitalization.

**Administration**

The congregation's Revitalization Plan shall be approved by the Presbytery's Committee on Congregational Revitalization in consultation with the Committee on Ministry. The fund shall be administered and grants awarded by the Committee on Congregational Revitalization.

**Definitions**

***Small:*** While the definition of what constitutes a small congregation may vary, in the Presbytery of Florida it is generally considered to refer to congregations with an average weekly attendance at worship of less than 50 persons.

***Pastoral Leadership:*** will ordinarily be understood to mean a Minister of Word and Sacrament who holds ordination in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

***Plan for Revitalization:*** A congregation's Plan for Revitalization, also known as a *strategic plan*, shall reflect findings from a "Holy Cow!" consultation and a "MissionInsite" assessment, and must include, but not be limited to:

1. a completed Ministry Information Form if the congregation is seeking Pastoral leadership;
2. a statement of the congregation's vision and mission as it relates to congregational revitalization;
3. specific strategies for implementing that vision and mission;
4. identified goals and benchmarks for assessing the congregation's progress in implementing its plan;
5. a means of evaluating annually how the congregation and/or community have been transformed, including the congregation's next steps in its revitalization.

## **Qualifications**

To qualify for a Revitalization Grant, a congregation will have completed both the Holy Cow! congregational assessment with a presbytery consultant and a MissionInsite community demographic assessment with a consultant from MissionInsite. Those programs are essential to the development of the congregation's strategic plan for revitalization.

## **Terms**

Ordinarily, a grant may be awarded annually for up to three years, depending upon the Fund's financial growth and the congregation's active participation in its Revitalization Plan. Failure to meet conditions of the congregation's strategic plan may constitute a default of the provisions of the grant and result in its early termination. Funds are to be disbursed to the congregation annually following the awarding of the grant, and each year thereafter following assessment of agreed upon benchmarks and achieved goals.

## **Evaluations**

- Evaluations shall be conducted by the Committee on Congregational Revitalization every six months following the call of a pastor and the initiation of a congregation's Revitalization Plan. Each evaluation will be preceded by a written self-evaluation to be submitted by the congregation.
- The six month evaluation will focus on the investment and energy of the members of the congregation. It will include written recommendations for modifications to the Plan that may be considered desirable, along with other feedback.
- The twelve month evaluation will assess the progress of the congregation toward the achievement of the goals set forth in the Plan. Steps taken to date and all tangible results observed will be examined. The evaluation will include any written modifications to the Plan deemed appropriate along with other recommendations and feedback from the CCR.
- The eighteen month evaluation will focus on progress observed toward the goals of the revised Plan and the results of the implementation of any recommendations contained in the six month evaluation. The CCR will provide recommendations and additional feedback to the congregation.
- The twenty four month evaluation will examine the achievements of the congregation in the fulfillment of the goals of the Plan.
- The thirty month and 36 month evaluations will examine the achievements of the congregation in the fulfillment of the goals of the Plan. In addition, the congregation and the CCR will jointly determine next steps for the pursuit of the congregation's continued life and ministry.

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**  
**COMMITTEE ON**  
**CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**  
**GRANT APPLICATION**

Congregation Name: \_\_\_\_\_ PIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Session Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_ Session Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person for Grant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ Average Worship Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

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In what ways is your congregation demonstrating its commitment to the process of congregational revitalization?

In what ways has “Holy Cow!” impacted your thinking on congregational revitalization?



In what ways has “MissionInsite” impacted your thinking on congregational revitalization?

Where do members of your congregation see God at work in your community?

As you seek God’s call and based on what you have learned through participation in “Holy Cow!” and “MissionInsite,” what three things do you intend to pursue in the process of revitalizing you congregation?

Provide plans, goals, and timelines for each of them.