

COMMITTEE ON  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION

A

# REVITALIZATION CONSULTANT HANDBOOK



PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA  
REVISED SEPTEMBER 2021



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## **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. Once the chair of CCR has been contacted by a Pastor or Session, a Congregational Consultant will be contacted to work with that congregation. To that end, the Consultant is responsible for the following tasks.

- The Consultant meets with the Session to explain the revitalization process utilizing the Holy Cow! instrument and other resources.
- The Session agrees with the process and cost.
- The Session appoints a 3–5 person Local Arrangements Team within 7 days of the initial agreement to move forward.
- Within 7 days of the Local Arrangements Team being formed, Consultant trains the Local Arrangements Team and provides supervision.
- As the surveys are being completed, the Consultant requests that CCR run MissionInsite statistics and then prepares a presentation of the information.
- 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.

- The Holy Cow! report and MissionInsite data are provided to the whole Session. This gives a full, detailed report on the information provided by the congregation.
- The Executive Summary Report and MissionInsite data are presented to the congregation. Congregational input and responses are sought.
- The Consultant works with the Session to establish a Revitalization Team of 5–7 charged with pulling together all received information and begin to discern God’s future direction for ministry.
- Establish a graduated strategic plan with a timeline of expectations and measurable steps.
- The Consultant continues to work with the Revitalization Team as progress is made on the revitalization process, providing assistance through Presbytery resources.

A final report is turned in to CCR.

## **PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

### **COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

The importance of this team 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 team 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 Team will do the following:

- Commit to 3–4 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 presentations 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  
LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

**PROCESS FOR HOLY COW! ASSESSMENT**

<b>Consultant Name</b>	<b>Consultant Contact Information</b>	<b>Congregation Assigned</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM MEMBERS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**PROCESS**

<b>Completed Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
_____	Session Introduction
_____	Session Agreement to Engage the Holy Cow! process
_____	Session approves Local Arrangements Team (See below)
_____	Local Arrangements Team Trained
_____	Clarify who can/should participate in the Holy Cow! Assessment
_____	Set start date and deadline for ending responses for Holy Cow! assessment Start _____ End _____
_____	Establish method(s) for helping those without computer access/knowledge
_____	Promotional Ideas Brain-Stormed
_____	Holy Cow! survey ordered

- \_\_\_\_\_ Promotion begins
  - \_\_\_\_\_ First Bulletin/Newsletter/Email/Letter Announcements
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Second Bulletin/Newsletter/Email/Letter Announcements
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Third Bulletin/Newsletter/Email/Letter Announcements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Begins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow-up Email/Letter Reminders
  - \_\_\_\_\_ First
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Second
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Third
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request MissionInsite demographic study
- \_\_\_\_\_ End date for questionnaire completion reached
- \_\_\_\_\_ Received results from Holy Cow! Consultants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive results from MissionInsite
- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Interpretation of Results
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consultant presents interpretation of Holy Cow! and MissionInsite data to Session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consultant presents Executive Summary and MissionInsite data to the Congregation

## SPECIFICS

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

**PREPARING FOR THE HOLY COW! ASSESSMENT**

**IDENTIFY WHO** is going to take the assessment.

The list of participants is called the Assessment Roll.

The words to keep in mind when developing this list are *“invested and able.”*

A person demonstrates their investment in the future of the church through some combination of worship attendance, participation/leadership in ministry/education, and/or financial support.

An able person is someone with the maturity and experience in the church to understand the importance of the assessment and who can accurately interpret the questions. They must also possess the ability to complete the assessment in one sitting.

The Assessment Roll is typically a list of adult members and active non-members with the following categories removed:

- Those who live permanently out of town
- Those who have neither contributed nor attended in the last 12 months
- Those who are physically or emotionally unable to cope with the assessment
- Those under 16 years of age

**IDENTIFY WHEN** you will run the assessment, typically a 3-4 week window.

**IDENTIFY HOW** you are going to deliver the assessment. You will likely be using a combination of a unique web link distributed by email and paper copies.

Compile a list of members on the Assessment Roll that have current email addresses (it is unlikely that you will have one for everyone). Develop an email blast template with these addresses.

For those without email:

- You will need to make paper copies from the pdf provided for the few who cannot take the survey on-line.
- Decide how you are going to distribute these surveys.
- Consider making them available only in the church office.
- In addition, it will increase your return rate if you provide a self-addressed stamped envelope with the church’s address also in the return section.
- We strongly recommend that you **DO NOT** provide for general distribution of the paper copies. It is important that folks do not discuss questions before taking the survey.

- You may want to make arrangements for church computers to be available to those who do not have access to computers at home. If your church has wireless internet capabilities, some folks will be willing to share their laptops to set up “computer labs” at designated times.

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

**SAMPLE PROMOTIONAL ITEMS**

It is important to prepare your congregation to take the CAT. To this end, you will want to announce the Session's decision to administer the CAT to the congregation and when it will be available.

Research shows that folks are more likely to comply with a request if they understand *why* they are being asked to do so. To this end, we strongly recommend that you introduce the CAT by sending an initial letter by snail mail to everyone on your Assessment Roll. The letter should reach each person by name, whether living in the same household or not. If your church regularly communicates with your congregation via email, this will work well, too. Please make sure that your non-computer users get a snail-mail letter.

The introduction should:

- Tell them that they have been selected to participate in the assessment
- Explain the specific purpose(s) of the assessment
- Emphasize the importance of their individual participation
- Detail the process of delivery (that an email link or web-page access will be provided and the availability of paper surveys).

**Preparation Letter**

*This letter should be sent approximately 1 week prior to launching the survey.*

*At the same time, start verbally publicizing the upcoming assessment in worship, committee meetings, education classes, choir rehearsal, church bulletins, and any other time and place you can think of. These announcements should include the same information as above.*

*Sample Letter*

**WE WANT TO KNOW YOUR STORY!**

As you know, we recently agreed to move forward with Holy Cow! Consulting to help us plan our future. You have been selected to participate in the first step which is to conduct a congregational assessment. This assessment will provide a clear picture of who we are as a church and what directions are most important for our future. The tool we'll use is the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT), which will provide key indicators of our congregational health along with areas of challenge and potential growth. It will help us to collect and understand the range of views that exist at insert your church name and the possibilities, willingness, capacity and energy for moving our ministry into the future.

If you have provided us with a current email address, within the next few days, you will receive a unique web link to complete the assessment online. If you would prefer to take the assessment using a paper copy, please stop by the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

NOTE: If there is only one email address for all members of your household, it may be tempting to have one person take the survey on behalf of the family. However, *please be sure your spouse and all young adults living in your home have an opportunity to complete the survey.*

**INDIVIDUAL INPUT** is key to our gaining insight into overall perceptions and experiences.

Please set aside enough time to answer all the questions. This will take about \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. All survey responses are strictly anonymous.

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of this congregational assessment and for helping to build your church name future.

If you have questions, please contact insert name(s) at insert email and phone contact information

### *Sample Bulletin Article*

#### **PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER!**

We are inviting you to complete the Church Assessment Tool (CAT), an on-line instrument that will help leaders gauge the strength, vitality, and trends in our church. The information gained from this assessment will be valuable in helping the leaders of insert name of church as they make decisions about the future of insert name of church.

In a few days, you will receive an email with a unique link to the CAT. Beginning insert date, we are asking you to go online by clicking on the link provided and tell us about your experiences in and priorities for our church. Please do not discuss the survey or your answers with others as this may influence their answers.

If you need a paper copy, please come to the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

All answers are strictly anonymous. We have no way of matching any assessment to a particular person, so please feel free to candidly share your perceptions, opinions and experiences. Our future together is dependent on your participation and honest answers.

If you have questions, please contact insert name and contact information of team member who is available to answer questions

Many thanks,

Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.

## SENDING THE LINK

Launching your CAT is easy, and it is exciting to finally get it “out there.”

Email Launch:

The Local Arrangements Team will receive a unique web link that has been created using a service called Survey Monkey. When you click on this link, it takes you directly to your assessment. This link can be copied from your account and pasted directly into your email notification.

On the day you have designated to start, send an email blast to everyone on your Assessment Roll with the Survey Monkey link in the body of the email.

*Sample for First Email Announcement with the Link*

### **PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER!**

Our church has entered into a time of discernment during which we are gathering information to guide our decisions for our future. Recently, you have heard and read about one aspect of this process: *The Church Assessment Tool* (CAT). This tool will provide a clearer picture of who we are as a church and what directions might be important for our future. **Your response is very important to us.**

This email indicates that you have been selected to participate in the CAT. It is not transferable; please do not forward it. We ask that you take the on-line assessment as soon as possible, but before enter date.

All answers are strictly anonymous. We have no way of matching any assessment to a particular person, so please feel free to candidly share your perceptions, opinions and experiences. The assessment will take approximately enter # minutes to complete. Please set aside enough time to complete the survey all at one time. Our future together is dependent on your participation and honest answers.

When you are ready, click on this link and begin. Copy and paste the Survey Monkey link here.

If you have questions, please contact insert name and contact information of team member who is available to answer questions

Many thanks,

Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.



**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

**MAXIMIZE THE RETURN RATE**

Maximizing participation in the assessment requires continuous reminders. Some guidelines and templates are provided below.

**EMAIL BLASTS**

*After the initial launch, follow up with a reminder email blast every 3-4 days.*

*Sample First Email Reminder*

**DO WE KNOW YOUR STORY YET?**

A few days ago, you should have received the link to your CAT. If you haven't already, please set aside (fill in estimate of time) to complete the assessment. Your *personal story* is critical to your leaders as they plan for our future. ***Please make this a priority this week*** if you haven't already shared your experiences and perspectives by participating in this important process. For your convenience, the link to your CAT is provided again below.

[Insert CAT link]

Please remember - this link is not transferable. Please do not forward it.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions.

Many thanks,

[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

*Sample Second Email Reminder*

**IT IS SAID THAT CATS CAN SEE IN THE DARK, BUT THIS CAT CAN'T**

To be honest, we don't know if you have completed the CAT or not because each person's answers are anonymous. BUT, if you haven't already, please shed some light on your experiences at insert name of church. It will only take fill in estimate of time. For your convenience, the link to your CAT is provided again below. *Please Don't Keep Us In The Dark!*

[Insert CAT link]

Please remember - this link is not transferable. Please do not forward it.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

With our sincere gratitude,

[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

### *Sample Third Email Reminder*

#### **ARE WE STILL IN THE DARK?**

Please do not underestimate the importance of your individual input into this process. If you have already shared your story – we know these reminders are getting tiresome – please know your contribution is greatly appreciated. BUT, we are still waiting to hear from some of you. Sharing your story will only take [fill in estimate of time], and no one can do it for you. Please shine the light on your experiences and opinions at fill in name of your church. Your input is absolutely anonymous. No light will shine on *you*, just your experiences as *only you* can tell them.

For your convenience, the link to your CAT is provided again below.

[Insert CAT link]

Remember - this link is not transferable so please do not forward it.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

With our sincere gratitude,

[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

### *Sample Last Email Reminder*

#### **WE CAN'T WAIT MUCH LONGER**

If you haven't taken the CAT yet, you may be thinking that, by now, other people have said the same things you would say in one way or another. Friends and family may share your thoughts in some areas and some folks may share your thoughts in yet other areas. But, the truth is that there is *only one you*, and your unique combination of experiences and perceptions are what we need. Even if your answers are very similar to someone else's, that is still important information for the church to have. The results from this assessment need to shed light on *what* our members are feeling, and *how many* share those feelings. This is critical to guiding us on our journey together. *Please don't make the mistake of letting others speak for you.* Sharing your story will only take [fill in estimate of time], and this is your last chance. The window on this opportunity closes at [fill in time] on [fill in date]!

For your convenience, the link to your CAT is provided again below.

[Insert CAT link]

Remember – this link is not transferable so please do not forward it.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

With our sincere gratitude,  
[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

### **SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS**

These are just samples. Please feel free to customize the style and theme, however, we strongly suggest that the basic content stays intact. These are follow-up articles, which is to say, they are used after the CAT is launched.

*Bulletin Follow-up #1*

#### **THE TRAIN HAS LEFT THE STATION!**

You have been hearing and reading about the Church Assessment Tool, and by now you should have received the link to the CAT. If you haven't already, please set aside [fill in estimate of time] to complete the assessment. The information gained from this tool will be critical to your leaders as they plan for our future. ***Please make this a priority this week*** if you haven't already shared your experiences and perspectives by participating in this important process.

If you need a paper copy, please stop by the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

Many thanks,  
[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

*Bulletin Follow-up #2*

#### **HAVE YOU TAKEN YOUR SEAT YET?**

***Now is the time*** to share your story. We need to know how you think and feel about your experiences at [insert name of church]. We are asking for [fill in # minutes] of your time to help shape the future of our church. ***How about making it a priority today*** if you haven't already shared your perspectives by participating in this important process.

If you need a paper copy, please stop by the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

Our sincere thanks,  
[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

*Bulletin Follow-up #3*

### **OUR DESTINATION IS IN SIGHT**

So many of you have shared your thoughts and feelings by completing the Church Assessment Tool. You have our gratitude. Rest assured that your responses are 100% confidential. If by chance you have not completed the assessment yet, you have just one more week to make your voice heard. ***How about today!***

If you need a paper copy, please stop by the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member who is available to answer questions]

Many thanks,  
[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

*Final Bulletin Follow-up*

### **LAST STOP! HEAR THE WHISTLE BLOWING?**

We are coming to the end of the first step in shaping our future together. On [insert date] at [insert time], the window of opportunity to join us on this journey will close. You are probably one of many who have already shared their experiences and perspectives. If you have not, this is your last chance. Although our response rate has been great, if we don't have your input, we are still missing an important piece of the puzzle. PLEASE - share your opinions with us using this highly confidential assessment instrument.

If you need a paper copy, please stop by the office, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

If you have questions, please contact [insert name and contact information of team member] who is available to answer questions

A very special thanks to everyone who has participated in this process,  
[Enter names of leadership team charged with the administration of the CAT.]

## **OTHER IDEAS**

- Appoint someone whenever people gather to make a short appeal. This includes worship, coffee hour, choir practice, committee meetings, education classes, pot luck dinners, and any other place and time you can think of.
- Try something fun and unique to encourage participation. Some churches have handed out small kit-kat bars, others cat or cow buttons/stickers. Some have built a CAT goal meter and placed in a prominent location displaying the number of folks who have participated. One church even had a member who collected CAT sweaters and wore a different one each Sunday when she made the appeal in worship.
- Have fun with it but be persistent!



**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA  
CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

**LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS TEAM**

**Guidelines and Instructions For Using Paper Surveys**

You will have already decided how to distribute the paper copies of the assessment and the return envelopes. At first, make only a few copies (unless you know you will have a need for many).

Once again, we encourage you to make it as easy as possible for people to take the assessment on-line. It is our experience that paper copies frequently contain skipped questions or entire pages. In addition, without the requirements that are enforced in the on-line version, many folks will misinterpret or not read instructions which often results in answers that cannot be used.

Paper surveys are frequently returned incomplete and/or filled out incorrectly. When this happens, the data that can be used from that survey is limited. Therefore, we suggest the following guidelines:

1. Before distributing a paper survey, it is helpful to make sure that all on-line options for taking the survey have been exhausted. For example: have you made use of “computer stations” at the church? This can be done by borrowing laptops from willing members and inviting folks to take the survey at an allotted time. Many folks who are mildly computer phobic can easily manage the survey with a little help.
2. When a paper survey must be used, a little coaching goes a long way. There are several ways to go about this.
  - Encourage folks to read the instructions!
  - Emphasize that incomplete surveys result in data that cannot be used.
  - Set up a coffee and cookies before/after worship and invite those that want to take the assessment this way to take it together. A person from the leadership team should be available to answer questions, guide respondents through questions with more complex formatting such as ranking questions, and, with the respondent’s permission, look over the survey to make sure it is complete.
  - Train the office staff in coaching those that come to pick up the survey. For example, show that only one answer can be filled in per question and that ranking questions must be filled out so that each ranking option is used only once.
  - If you anticipate that many folks will need to use this format, it may be helpful to utilize a simple PowerPoint presentation at an appropriate time during regularly scheduled services to demonstrate the correct and incorrect way to fill out the survey.
3. Data from paper surveys should be entered by a trusted person using the Survey Monkey link. The first set of consecutive questions from incomplete surveys can be entered, but data from the first skipped question and beyond cannot be used, as the system will not allow you to proceed without answering each question, as is the case on the on-line version.



## HOLY COW! CHURCH ASSESSMENT TOOL

### CHURCH DATA FORM

1. What would you estimate has been the population trend during the past 3 years with in one mile of you church?

- Rapid Decline
- Slow Decline
- Static
- Slow Growth
- Rapid Growth
- Commercial Area

2. What would you estimate has been the trend in income level during the past 3 years within one mile of your church?

- Increased more rapidly than our larger community
- Increased the same as our larger community
- Increased but somewhat less than our larger community
- Some increase, but considerable less than our larger community
- Has remained about the same
- Has decreased
- Commercial area

3. Please enter the numerical size of your church based on the most recent time to count membership.

4. Please enter the numerical size of your church 1 year earlier (using the same criteria above).

5. Please enter the numerical size of your church 2 years earlier (using the same criteria in Q3).

6. Please enter the numerical size of your church 3 years earlier (using the same criteria in Q3).

7. Please enter the number of new members received by your church in the past 12 months.

8. Please enter the number of new members received by your church 1 year earlier.

9. Please enter the number of new members received by your church 2 years earlier.

10. Please enter the number of new members received by your church 3 years earlier.

11. Please enter the number of your average weekly worship attendance over the past 12 months.
12. Please enter the number of your average weekly worship attendance 1 year earlier.
13. Please enter the number of your average weekly worship attendance 2 years earlier.
14. Please enter the number of your average weekly worship attendance 3 years earlier.
15. How many persons were on the Church Assessment Roll you created before launching the assessment (the number of persons asked to take the survey)?
16. How many different households were represented by the person on the Church Assessment Roll? For example, a husband and wife would be 2 people on the church Assessment Roll, but count as only 1 household.
17. How many different households contributed financially to the church in the most recent year (those for whom you have a record of their contribution)?
18. Please enter the dollar amount of your total receipts in the past 12 months. Please INCLUDE income for capital campaigns, debt–reduction campaigns, and special mission offerings. (Please DO NOT INCLUDE income from endowments, income from facility rentals, preschool tuition, etc.)
19. Please enter the dollar amount of your total receipts 1 year earlier (same inclusions/exclusions apply).
20. Please enter the dollar amount of your total receipts 2 years earlier (same inclusions/exclusions apply).

## **PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

### **COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

#### **REVITALIZATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

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 Team 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 team 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 Team members, the Consultant will help the team pull together all input and information received from Holy Cow! and MissionInsite 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 strategic plans with timelines, benchmarks, and persons responsible for various steps. Share with the Session for discussion, guidance, and approval.
- Implement short-term steps.
- Revisit long-term plans in light of success or failure of short-term plans.
- Constantly keep ears to the ground, listening for congregational responses and address issues that may arise.

**COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION  
REVITALIZATION TEAM**

<b>Consultant Name</b>	<b>Consultant Contact Information</b>	<b>Congregation Assigned</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>

**REVITALIZATION TEAM MEMBERS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**PROCESS**

Be deeply in prayer as you seek God’s guidance for the ministry to which God is leading. This is first and foremost for remaining faithful to what and where God is leading you.

Reflect deeply over the information gleaned from the Holy Cow! analysis and what the congregation has said about itself. Discern strengths, weaknesses, and passions expressed.

Reflect deeply over information presented by the demographic study from MissionInsite. What is being said about the make-up of the surrounding community, its perceived needs, its future life.

How do the congregation’s gifts and the needs and make-up of the community match? How may the congregation be of service in the community, reflecting the love and presence of Jesus Christ?



PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION  
REVITALIZATION TEAM

REVIEWING THE DATA

Start Date	Completed Date	Item
		Discuss the following from Holy Cow! Analysis: the congregation's health and energy level; what the congregation seems to be saying about its future direction.

Notes:

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Start Date	Completed Date	Item
		Discuss MissionInsite information to determine trends in the area surrounding the church.

Notes:

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Start Date	Completed Date	Item
		Discuss how the congregation's analysis and demographic data may or may not be compatible.

Notes:

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**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA**

**COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION  
REVITALIZATION TEAM  
PLAN OF ACTION**

On any journey, it is very helpful to know in what direction you are heading. You are now embarking upon a new journey of life and ministry. Where are you ultimately being led by God’s Holy Spirit? How will you know you are on the correct path? Sometimes it is by trial and error, trial and success. As you continue to be in prayer over the Holy Cow! and MissionInsite materials, discern where God is leading your congregation. What steps need to be explored and put into place? Be sure to start small. Change can be challenging for many folks.

Put together some long-term goals, and with each one, discern short-term steps to put into place that will lead toward your ultimate goal. Establish a plan of action with timelines, benchmarks, and persons responsible for various steps.

In addition to expected successes, you may also expect some failures. This is normal, so don’t be surprised. And instead of seeing failures as failures, look at them as lessons learned as simply something that doesn’t work, and move on to the next challenge.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ONE**

What is your first Strategic Plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**First Step to Attain this Plan**

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Second Step to Attain this Plan**

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Third Step to Attain this Plan**

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## STRATEGIC PLAN TWO

What is your second Strategic Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

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### First Step to Attain this Plan

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Second Step to Attain this Plan

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Third Step to Attain this Plan**

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## STRATEGIC PLAN THREE

What is your second long-term goal? \_\_\_\_\_

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### First Step to Attain this Plan

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Second Step to Attain this Plan

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Third Step to Attain this Plan**

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom to Lead: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

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When to Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark(s) (to know if step is effective): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Benchmark(s) check: \_\_\_\_\_

Success? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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Continue? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Presbytery of Florida  
**COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL REVITALIZATION**

**REVITALIZATION TOOLBOX**

CCR wants every congregation to know that **you are not alone!** We are honored to partner with you as we journey together toward greater wholeness and vitality as the Body of Christ in the Presbytery of Florida. This toolbox of resources may be a great starting place for exploring revitalization within your congregation. What is offered here is certainly not exhaustive, but we do hope and pray it is helpful.

**EVALUATIVE RESOURCES CURRENTLY USED IN FLORIDA PRESBYTERY**

- **Holy Cow! Consulting** – Congregational assessment with a presbytery consultant. (Greatly reduced fee when used through CCR.)
- **MissionInsite** – Community demographic assessment with a consultant from MissionInsite (Free use for our congregations.)

**ONLINE REVITALIZATION RESOURCES**

- **Appreciative Inquiry** - <https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction> A method of inquiry and assessment that begins with what is right in a congregation. (Trained consultants are required.)
- **Board of Pensions PC(USA)** – [www.pensions.org](http://www.pensions.org)
  - *Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations* - The Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations program restores the financial health and wholeness of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastors so they may revitalize their congregations.
  - *Pathways to Renewal* - offers qualifying congregations a significant dues reduction on new calls to ministers of the Word and Sacrament
- **Church Innovations** – [www.churchinnovations.org](http://www.churchinnovations.org) – CI partners with churches to innovate their capacities to be renewed in God’s mission, discerning what God is up to in your church community and neighborhood.
- **Congregational Consulting (formerly Alban Institute)** – [www.congregationalconsulting.org](http://www.congregationalconsulting.org) Lots of valuable information about revitalization, church growth, leadership renewal.
- **CongregationU** – [www.congregationu.com](http://www.congregationu.com) - provides online training on the practical aspects of church life, from risk management to human resources to overall health and wellness.
- **Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond, VA)** – [www.upsem.edu](http://www.upsem.edu)
  - *Leadership Institute* – offers online (and when possible, in person) classes on Bible, administration, polity, theology, and pastoral care

- **Duke University** – [www.duke.edu](http://www.duke.edu)
- *Faith and Leadership* - A learning resource for Christian leaders and their institutions from Leadership Education at Duke Divinity
- **Fresh Expressions** – [www.freshexpressionsus.org](http://www.freshexpressionsus.org) – From the United Methodist Church, FE addresses changing culture, with an eye toward mission and evangelism primarily for those who are not yet part of any church.
- **Kaleidoscope Institute** – [www.kscopeinstitute.org](http://www.kscopeinstitute.org) – From the Episcopal Church, KI trains leaders to create gracious space for courageous conversation and consulting to heal and transform local organizations.
- **Texas Presbyterian Foundation** – [www.tpf.org](http://www.tpf.org) – offers a host of downloadable resources related to finances
- **Theocademy** – [www.theocademy.com](http://www.theocademy.com) - a series of videos on a variety of church leadership/faith formation topics, developed by Synod of Mid-America.
- **Vital Smarts** – [www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com) – Helps leaders (not specifically church-focused) become more effective by turning proven behavioral science principles into learnable, repeatable skills delivered through exceptional learning experiences.

## BOOKS AND PRINTED RESOURCES

*All of these resources are available through Amazon.com.  
This, however, is not an endorsement of Amazon.com.*

- ***A Change of Pastors and How it Affects Change in the Congregation*** – Loren B. Mead  
Mead shares the wisdom he gained from 35 years of studying congregations, wisdom that he hopes will allow congregations to take full advantage of this “extraordinarily pregnant moment” during which incredible congregational change can happen.
- ***A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope*** – Peter L. Steinke  
We resist change less when we associate it with mission and fortify it with hope. Steinke explores the relationship between the challenges of change and our own responses to new ideas and experiences.
- ***Becoming a Blessed Church*** – N. Graham Standish  
This book provides guidance to discern God’s purpose and the path God is calling your congregation to walk. This book will help you find Christ in your midst and become aware of the many ways the blessings of God’s Spirit flow through your congregation.
- ***Canoeing the Mountains – Christian Leadership in Unchartered Territory*** – Tod Bolsinger  
Drawing from his extensive experience as a pastor and consultant, Tod Bolsinger brings decades of expertise in guiding churches and organizations through uncharted territory. He

offers a combination of illuminating insights and practical tools to help you reimagine what effective leadership looks like in our rapidly changing world. If you're going to scale the mountains of ministry, you need to leave behind canoes and find new navigational tools.

- ***Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*** – Paul L. Steinke  
Anxious times hold not only the potential for loss but also for creation, important learnings, and changes that will strengthen the congregation. With this new book, internationally respected consultant Peter Steinke goes deeper into the requirements of effective congregational leadership. Born from the wisdom of Steinke's distinguished career, this new volume will both enlighten and embolden leaders. Steinke inspires courage in leaders to maintain the course, unearth secrets, resist sabotage, withstand fury, and overcome timidity or doubts.
- ***Everywhere You Look: Discovering the Church Right Where You Are*** – Tim Soerens  
The emerging generation is opting out of the church in large numbers. Soerens sees this as an extraordinary opportunity: the church, he says, is on the edge of a new possibility at the very moment so much of it feels like it's falling apart. In his extensive travels in all kinds of neighborhoods, Soerens has seen the beginnings of this movement firsthand, and lays out practical, actionable steps for building collaborative communities in any neighborhood.
- ***Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*** – Robert Schnase  
Over the past ten years, thousands of church leaders have successfully transformed congregations with the principles from the original *Five Practices*: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. However, much has changed in the world and the Church. Leaders have discovered new ways to implement the *Five Practices* in settings that were not imagined when the original book was released.
- ***Gathered and Scattered Church, Equipping Believers for the 21st Century*** – Edward H. Hammett  
Hammett takes seriously the issue that we are now living and serving in a secular culture. The message of Christ can penetrate the world when Christians learn to be and do church both inside and outside the walls of the church. He offers suggestions about understanding, activating, and evaluating the church and how we can equip believers for effective ministry in the 21st century.
- ***Healthy Congregations, A Systems Approach*** – Peter L. Steinke  
Steinke takes readers into a deeper exploration of the congregation as an emotional system. He outlines the factors that put congregations at risk for anxiety and conflict. Learn ten principles of health, how congregations can adopt new ways of dealing with stress and anxiety, as well as how spiritually and emotionally healthy leaders influence the emotional system.
- ***Holy Conversations - Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice*** – Gil Rendle  
Popular Alban consultants and authors Gil Rendle and Alice Mann cast planning as a “holy conversation,” a congregational discernment process about three critical questions: Who are we? What has God called us to do or be? Who is our neighbor? Rendle and Mann equip congregational leaders with a broad and creative range of ideas, pathways, processes, and

tools for planning. By choosing the resources that best suit their needs and context, congregations will shape their own strengthening, transforming, holy conversation. They will find a path that is faithful to their identity and their relationship with God.

- ***Igniting Passion in Your Church*** – Steve Ayers  
Ayers relates the Christian experience to a courtship and marriage. His writing and ideas are in harmony with Scripture and every principle found in this book, traces its origin back to the Bible. In this presentation, the author has reduced the spiritual passion that all believers were created to enjoy into simple illustrations.
- ***Imagining the Small Church - Celebrating a Simpler Path*** – Steve Willis  
This book bears witness to what God is doing in small churches. Steve Willis tells stories from the small churches he has pastored in rural, town, and urban settings and dares to imagine that their way of being has something to teach all churches in this time of change in the American Christian Church.
- ***Making Your Church More Inviting*** – Roy M. Oswald  
This contains fifteen sessions designed to help clergy or lay leaders guide committees or study groups through a dynamic exploration of their congregation's IQ (invitation quotient). Discover how well you invite, welcome, and incorporate new members. As participants uncover the inviting elements of your church, they develop a personal witness style that emerges comfortably from their individual gifts.
- ***Neighborhood Church – Transforming Your Congregation into a Powerhouse for Mission*** – Krin Van Tatenhove & Rob Mueller  
The abandonment of the church by the millennial generation is ubiquitous; no denomination is escaping it. This is, in part, a consequence of disconnection from our communities. Van Tatenhove and Mueller believe that, parish by parish, we can reverse this trend. They dare to have an audacious hope for local congregations not only as signs of God's kingdom but as life-giving institutions that anchor their neighborhoods.
- ***Owl Sight – Evidence-based Discernment and the Promise of Organizational Intelligence for Ministry*** – J. Russell Crabtree  
Crabtree identifies a missing component in congregations and names it organizational intelligence. In spite of the fact that leaders and members may be immersed in the life of their church, they typically have little clarity regarding how people are experiencing the church overall, their hopes for the future, or the patterns of thinking and behavior, unique to their congregation, that must be addressed to realize their vision.
- ***Raising More than Money – Redefining Generosity, Reflecting God's Heart*** – Doug M. Carter  
Carter shows how to teach givers to participate in ministry with their gifts and offerings. Using examples from EQUIP and from EQUIP partners who have successfully used these principles in their churches and ministries, Doug shows the reader how to build relationships into stewardship and then create partnerships for ministry.
- ***Transforming Congregational Culture*** – Anthony Robinson  
Robinson prescribes concrete changes in the practice of ministry that have been tried, tested, and lived out to great success. At the heart of his framework for church renewal is what he

calls "cultural change." According to Robinson, technical or programmatic change is not sufficient to address the needs of the day. He argues for changing the very culture of mainline congregations, which involves recognizing and fostering their particular gifts and genius rather than trying to remake them into something they are not.

- ***Turnaround Church: The Inspiration and Tools for Life-Sustaining Change*** – Mary Louise Gifford  
People in dying churches will find assurance that they are still a part of the body of Christ. Clergy serving these struggling churches will discover tools and resources to help them guide change. Judicatory leaders will appreciate an inspiring story they can tell about a church that turned around in spite of the odds. While not a prescription for all churches, is a call to make long-lasting, life-sustaining changes.
  
- ***Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church*** – E. Stanley Ott  
Arguing that the crisis in the church today is due to a loss of personal spirituality and congregational vitality, Ott challenges pastors and church leaders to adjust the style of their ministries to attract new people while continuing to encourage current members. He examines the characteristics of the "traditional" church, extols the features of the new "transformational" church, and lays out inspiring yet practical proposals to help congregations make the transition from traditional to transformational.

## **OLDER BUT STILL GREAT INFORMATION**

- ***Effective Church Series: The Vital Congregation*** – Herb Miller  
A vital church helps people: Form a spiritual connection with God, Form a loving connection with other people, Form a committed connection to great causes.
  
- ***Making the Small Church Effective*** – Carl S. Dudley  
Dudley offers helpful resources, practical exercises, and tested and reshaped tools to highlight and affirm the admirable internal strengths and gifts that small churches uniquely possess.
  
- ***Natural Church Development*** – Christian A. Schwarz  
Schwarz uses the illustration of a barrel with eight staves to symbolize the eight quality characteristics. The barrel can only hold water to the height of the lowest stave. So too, Schwarz argues, a church can only grow as far as their 'Minimum factor,' which is the lowest of the eight quality characteristics in their church. He challenges churches to resist the temptation to work on improving areas in which they already excel, for by doing this they do not increase their minimum factor or their church quality.
  
- ***The In-Between Church*** – Alice Mann  
Often, congregations experiencing size change do not recognize the need to change culture and form as part of the successful adaptation process. Mann details the adjustments in attitude—as well as practice—that are necessary to support successful size change. Mann draws on her lengthy experience in helping congregations deal with the hurdles and anxieties of expansion or contraction in size.

- ***The Once and Future Church*** – Loren B. Mead

Mead takes a broad look at past and present changes in the church, and postulates a future to which those changes are calling us. Denominations, once structured to deliver resources to far-off lands of foreign mission, now encounter the mission field in the layperson's workplace and the community surrounding the local congregation. Thus, the church is called to reinvention for this new mission frontier