

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

COMMITTEE HANDBOOK



Presbytery of Florida

(Rev. May 2023)

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Information	Page 1
Flowcharts for Engaging in Discernment	Page 2
Congregational Consultants	Page 7
Local Arrangements Team	Page 9
Local Revitalization Team	Page 11
Revitalization Grants:	
Awarding Revitalization Grant Policy	Page 15
Equipment Grant.....	Page 17
Emergency Repairs Grant.....	Page 21
Pastoral Leadership Grant	Page 25

RESOURCES

Revitalization Toolbox	Page 31
Consultant Handbook	
Local Arrangements Team Handbook (For distribution to the LAT)	
Local Revitalization Team Handbook (For distribution to the LRT)	

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD) understands that there are at least three distinct reasons why congregations will seek to engage in a process of discernment. These reasons include a healthy congregation's desire for adjustments or redirection of ministry, 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 process of discernment regarding 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.

If the possibility of revitalization is to be explored, a thorough examination of the congregation and its current focus of ministry must take place. Such an undertaking will be a disciplined assessment 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 where possibilities of revitalization are discerned, to 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.

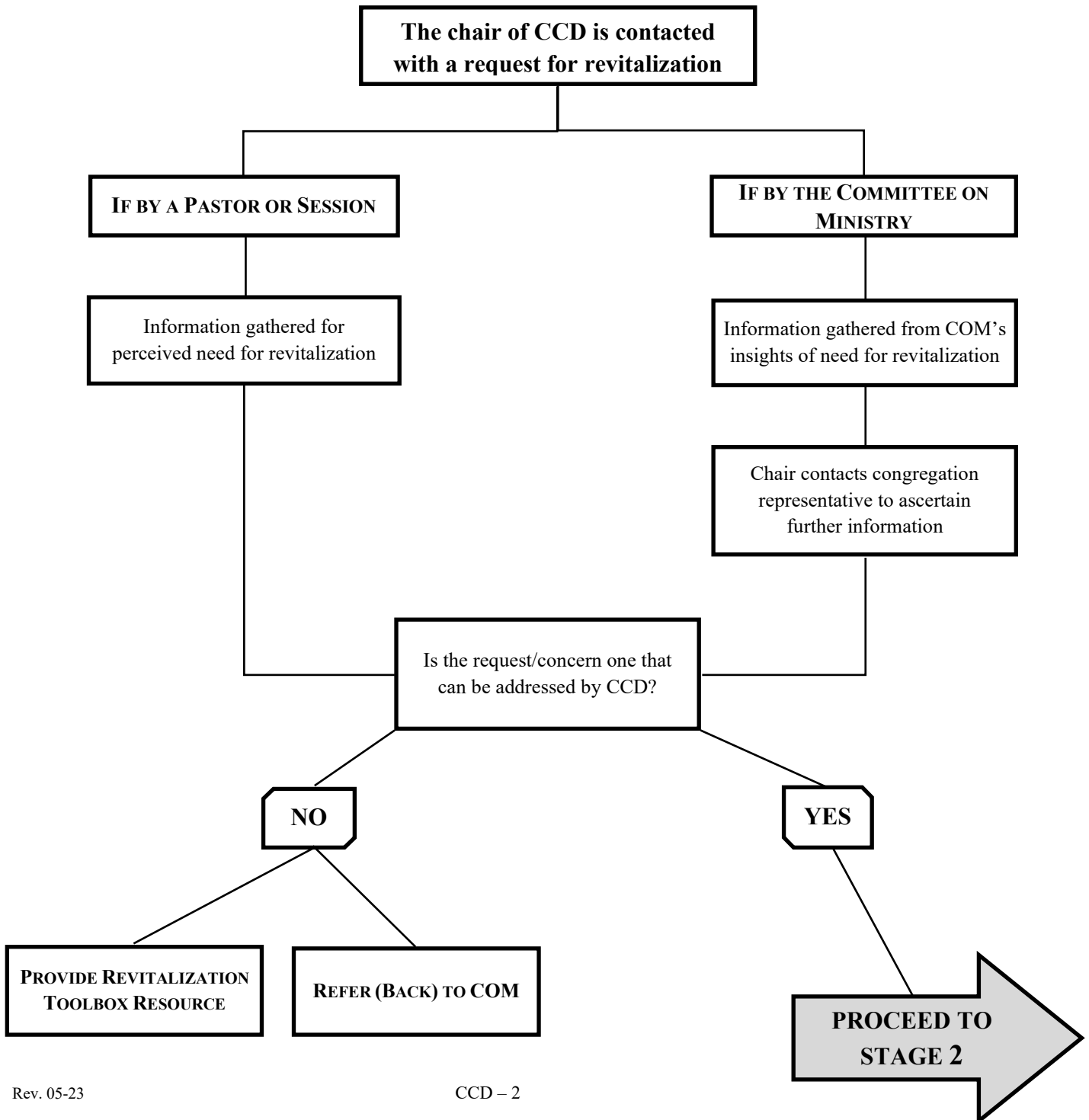
It is important to understand that this process of exploration may reveal some areas which the congregation may not like to acknowledge about the congregation and in truth may be painful. In spite of the potential challenging nature of what is discovered, it will be important to faithfully confront those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

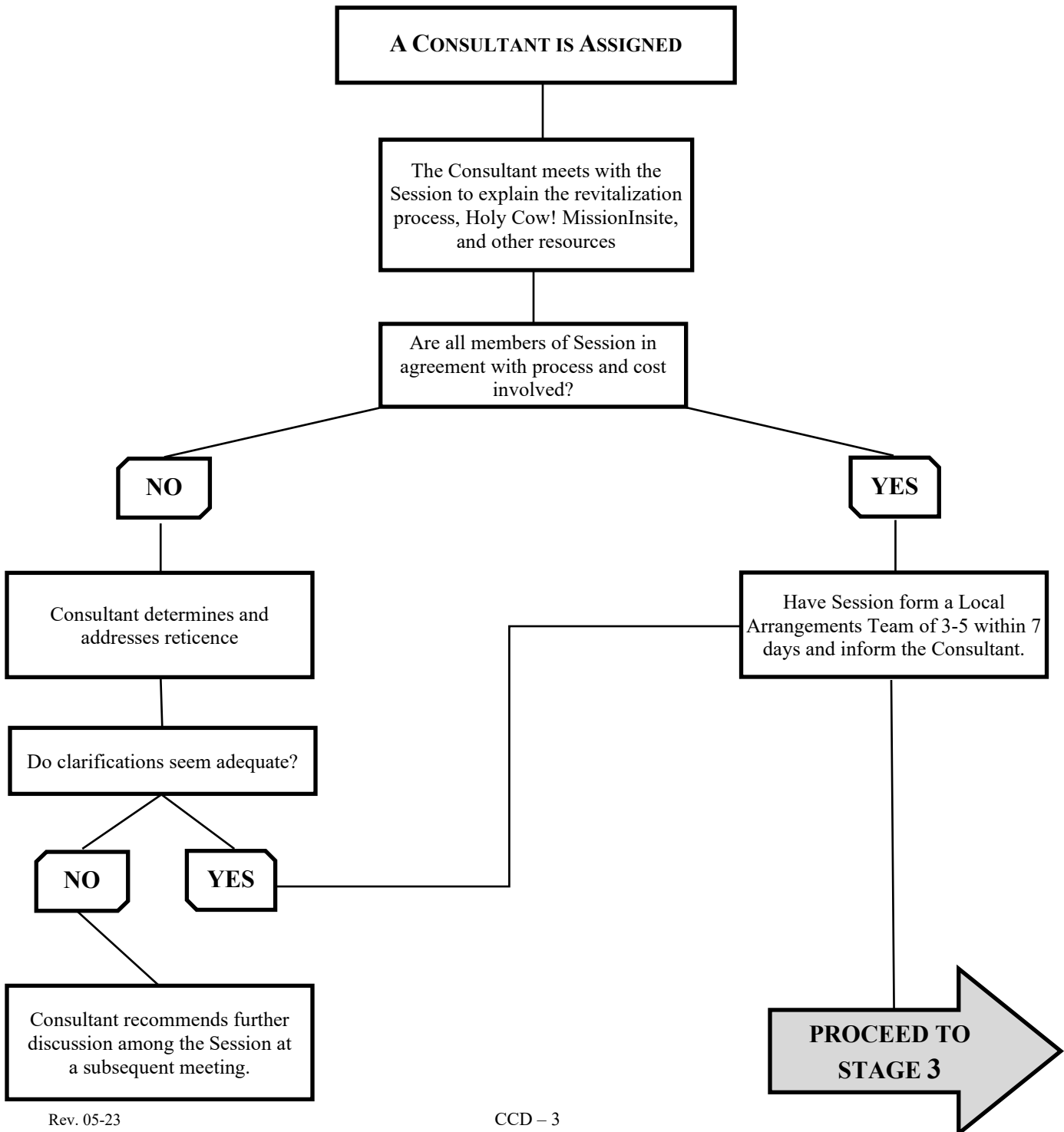
Process For Engaging in Discernment

STAGE ONE: THE REQUEST FOR DISCERNMENT ASSISTANCE



Process For Engaging in Discernment

STAGE TWO: THE PRESENTATION



Process For Engaging in Discernment

STAGE THREE: THE ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGING HOLY COW!

The Consultant meets and trains the Local Arrangements Team

The Team 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

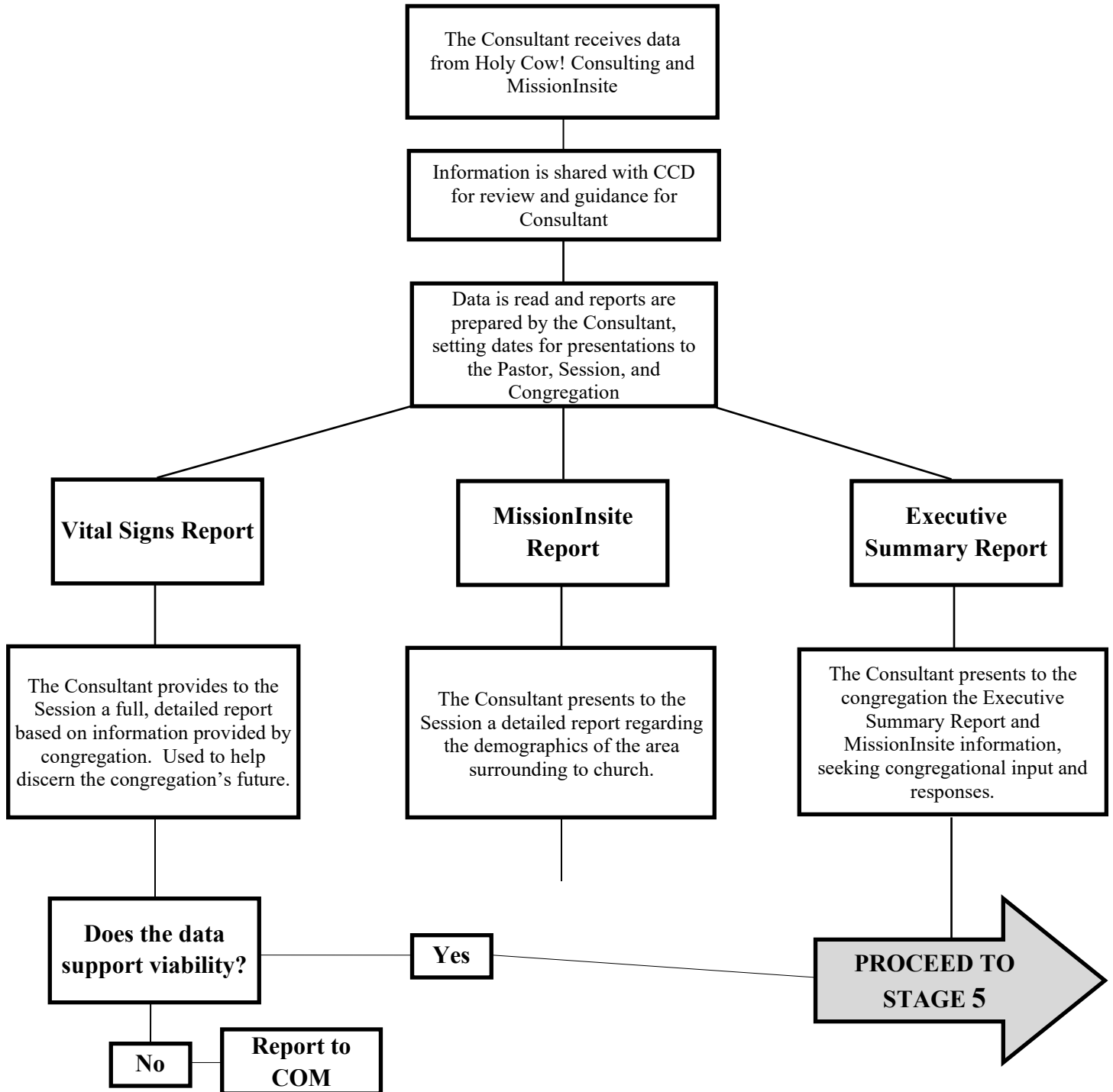
Consultant requests CCD to run MissionInsite data

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

**PROCEED TO
STAGE 4**

Process For Engaging in Discernment

STAGE FOUR: THE ANALYSIS



Process For Engaging in Discernment

STAGE FIVE: THE NEW MINISTRY

Discerning the Future God has in Store

The Consultant helps the Session establish a Local Revitalization Team 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 graduated strategic 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 DISCERNMENT

CONGREGATIONAL CONSULTANTS

The Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD) 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 Discernment 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 Discernment 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 initial process will take several months.

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

- The Consultant meets with the Session to explain the revitalization process utilizing the Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment Tool, MissionInsite, and other resources.
- The Session agrees with the process and cost.
- The Session appoints a 3–5 person Local Arrangement Team within 7 days of the initial agreement to move forward.
- The Consultant trains the Local Arrangements Team and provides supervision.
- As the surveys are being completed, the Consultant requests that CCD run MissionInsite statistics and prepares the presentation of information.
- Once the surveys are complete, the Consultant receives from Holy Cow! the data gleaned, and ensure the cost for the Holy Cow! Assessment has been remitted to the Presbytery.
- The Holy Cow! Vital Statistics Report is shared with CCD prior to reporting to the Session.

- Data is read, reports are prepared, dates are set for presentations to the Session and congregation.
- Vital Signs 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 Local Discernment Team of 5–7 charged with pulling together all received information and beginning to discern God’s future direction for ministry.
- Establish a graduated strategic plan with a timeline of expectations and measurable steps.
- A final report is turned in to CCD.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

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! Congregational 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 approximately 3–4 months of service to the Local Arrangements Team.
- 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 DISCERNMENT

LOCAL REVITALIZATION TEAM

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 Local 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 Local 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! Congregational 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.

REVITALIZATION GRANTS

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

POLICIES FOR AWARDING REVITALIZATION GRANTS

The Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD) has been blessed with funding to help revitalize congregations in their service to the Lord and the community in which they are situated. This will be extremely helpful as the climate toward “church” continues to evolve and refocus drastically. To aid congregations in their attempt to revitalize and refocus their ministry, funding through CCD may be available.

TYPES OF GRANTS AVAILABLE

There are three categories for which revitalization assistance may apply. *All grants, if approved by the Committee on Congregational Discernment, are considered to be matching grants up to the amount specified in this policy. Grants may be applied for once every 18 months.*

- **Updating Equipment (up to \$1,000)**

In a day and age of electronic communication and learning opportunities, “old fashioned” learning tools do not have much appeal to younger generations. If just cause can be presented demonstrating how updating equipment will play a key role in revitalizing and refocusing a congregation’s ministry, a request for equipment will be considered.

- **Emergency Repairs (up to \$5,000)**

There may be occasions when repairs to church facilities are needed in an attempt to be more visually appealing to potential newcomers to a congregation, as well as for the safety of all. A leaky roof leaving water stains, rotting wood that needs to be replaced and painted are just a couple examples.

- **Calling a Pastor (up to ½ the Presbytery minimum compensation requirements)**

Congregations that have completed the Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT), the MissionInsite demographic study, and devised strategic plans showing viability for future ministry may apply for a Pastoral Leadership Grant. This would be to help call a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastor to serve the congregation for a minimum of three years. There will be a stringent review process prior to awarding this grant.

INITIAL CRITERIA

As Presbyterians we are part of a connectional system. We work together and are a part of each others’ lives. When a grant request is submitted, several initial criteria will weigh heavily on considering the request:

- Have members of the congregation been serving on committees of the Presbytery?

- Has the Session been faithful in sending commissioners to attend Presbytery meetings?
- Has the congregation been faithful in financially supporting the work and ministry of the Presbytery?
- A copy of the congregation's financial budget and holdings will be required.
- At least two (2) estimates will be required for the Emergency Repair Grant.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

There arise occasions when a congregation within the Presbytery of Florida has fulfilled its ministry to our Lord. The completion of that ministry is celebrated at a time of worship and thanksgiving for the work accomplished.

But the influence of that congregation, its assistance, and aid to its sister congregations is not completely over, even though its doors are closed.

As is the policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbytery is responsible for the disposition of the church property (G-4.0205). The funds received from the sale of the property is used to give witness to the connectional nature of our denomination, and further the work of our Lord in our sister congregations and the Presbytery of Florida.

In 2020 the Presbytery of Florida passed the following in order to spread the funds in such a way as to best serve the Presbytery:

“After the equivalent of one half of the current year’s budget is set aside, which can be used to zero-balance the current year’s budget before closing the books for that year,

- 10% of the remainder shall be set aside for special, unbudgeted presbytery projects defined by that policy,
- 50% shall be assigned to the Committee on Congregational Revitalization (now Committee on Congregational Discernment) to be used as defined by their policy for such funds, and
- 40% shall be assigned to the Committee on New Congregational Development to be used as defined by their policy.
- Any growth in the Reserve Fund shall be distributed pro rata.”

Resources have been afforded the Committee on Congregational Discernment through investments made possible from the sale of church properties whose congregations have concluded their ministries. With the approval from Presbytery, the maximum amount to be invested will be no more than \$650,000 the interest of which will be used to assist qualified projects and requests for assistance.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

EQUIPMENT 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 grants will be based on a demonstrated need to update/upgrade equipment used in worship and/or educational opportunities that will lead toward renewed and refocused avenues for ministry.

Administration

The fund shall be administered, and grants awarded by the Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD). *All grants, if approved by the Committee on Congregational Discernment, are considered to be matching grants up to the amount specified in this policy. Grants may be applied for once every 18 months.*

Definitions

- ***Small Membership Congregations:*** 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.
- ***Demonstrated Need:*** How the lack of the needed equipment, or out-dated equipment, has hindered forward progress of ministry.
- ***Equipment:*** Those tangible items used to enhance the worship and educational experience, (e.g., audio-visual devices) of the congregation.

Evaluation

Within the first six months of receiving the grant, an accounting of the equipment's use and effectiveness in helping revitalize the focus and practice of ministry will be submitted by the Session for review by CCD. Failure to do so will potentially disqualify a congregation from receiving future grants.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

**COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT**

EQUIPMENT 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 Weekly Worship Attendance: _____

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1. For what item are you seeking a grant? (Please be specific) _____

2. Amount requested from CCD? _____ (It is understood the congregation will match this amount.) Please attach the latest copy of the congregation's financial budget and holdings. 3. What will this item replace? _____

4. Where and how will this item be utilized? _____

How frequently? _____

5. What role will it help play in revitalizing the life and ministry of the congregation? _____

6. What are the anticipated results to be achieved by using this item? _____

7. In the past three years how have members of the congregation been involved with various aspects of the Presbytery? _____

The Session of _____ met on _____ and voted
(church) (date)
affirmatively on this matter, understanding the expectations of this request.

Signed:

Clerk of Session

Date

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

EMERGENCY REPAIRS 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 grants will be based on a demonstrated need to do urgent repairs that will lead toward renewed and refocused avenues for ministry, as well as increase safety for all.

Administration

The fund shall be administered, and grants awarded by the Committee on Congregational Discernment (CCD). *All grants, if approved by the Committee on Congregational Discernment, are considered to be matching grants up to the amount specified in this policy. Grants may be applied for once every 18 months.*

Definitions

- **Small Congregation:** 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.
- **Emergency:** Circumstances that pose an immediate and significant risk to further damage if not rectified quickly. Matters that are a risk to safety or health.
- **Repairs:** Not new construction, unless needed to reduce a risk to safety or health issues, or to prevent further damage to the facility.

Evaluation

Within three months of receiving this grant, a report on the completion (or continuing progress) of the repairs will be submitted to CCD for its review. Failure to do so will potentially disqualify a congregation from receiving future grants.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA
COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

EMERGENCY REPAIRS 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 Weekly Worship Attendance: _____

.....

1. For what repair(s) are you seeking a grant? (Please be specific. Attach photos when possible.) _____

2. Amount requested from CCD? _____ (It is understood the congregation will match this amount.) Please attach the latest copy of the congregation's financial budget and holdings.

3. How will the repairs enhance the revitalization process of your congregation's ministry? _____

4. In the past three years how have members of the congregation been involved with various aspects of the Presbytery? _____

5. Please attach at least two estimates for needed emergency repairs.

The Session of _____ met on _____ and voted
(church) (date)
affirmatively on this matter, understanding the expectations of this request.

Signed:

Clerk of Session

Date

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP 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 Discernment in consultation with the Committee on Ministry. The fund shall be administered, and grants awarded by the Committee on Congregational Discernment.

Definitions

Small Member Congregation: 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! Vital Signs Report and a MissionInsite Consultation, and must include, but not be limited to:

1. a statement of the congregation's vision and mission as it relates to congregational revitalization;
2. specific strategies for implementing that vision and mission;
3. identified goals and benchmarks for assessing the congregation's progress in implementing its plan;
4. 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 Pastoral Leadership Grant, a congregation will have completed, with the assistance of a Presbytery Consultant, both the Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment Tool and a MissionInsite

community demographic assessment. Those tools are essential to the development of the congregation's strategic plan for revitalization.

A Viability Assessment Form must also be completed to determine the potential life and vitality of the congregation and the promise it holds for future ministry. The Committee on Congregational Discernment will review this information.

After review of the Viability Assessment Form, the congregation will need to submit a Grant Application form which will aid CCD in determining its decision.

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 Discernment 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 Session.
- 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 CCD.
- 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 CCD 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 CCD will jointly determine next steps for the pursuit of the congregation's continued life and ministry.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

**COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT**

CONSULTANT VIABILITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Church Name

CONFIDENTIAL

In order to determine if engaging fulltime called and installed pastoral leadership will be appropriate for this congregation, please provide answers to the following questions. There is an assumption that by this time both the Holy Cow! Congregational Assessment Tool and MissionInsite data search have been completed. *Please keep this information confidential until you present this report to the Committee on Congregational Discernment for review.*

Please respond to the following:

1. How does the Holy Cow! Assessment data describe the level of vitality in the congregation?

2. How does the MissionInsite data describe the level of vitality in the community?

3. To what degree does the congregation espouse a willingness to bring about change? How has this been expressed?

4. Please attach to this form the financial health of the congregation for the past 3 years, e.g., budget revenue, investment funds and their restrictions, pledging/giving history, other sources of income.

PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA

**COMMITTEE ON
CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT**

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP 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.

RESOURCES

**PRESBYTERY OF FLORIDA
COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT**

REVITALIZATION TOOLBOX

CCD 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 CCD.)
- **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
 - *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 – 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 Lots of valuable information about revitalization, church growth, leadership renewal.
- **CongregationU** – 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
 - *Leadership Institute* – offers online (and when possible, in person) classes on Bible, administration, polity, theology, and pastoral care

- **Duke University** – 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 – 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 – 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 – offers a host of downloadable resources related to finances
- **Theocademy** – 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 – 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.