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# Congregational Vitality Assessment Results

*The Congregational Vitality Assessment is designed to provide a congregation with an assessment of its Vitality (how healthy it is) and its Sustainability (whether it has the people, financial, and contextual resources necessary to survive). Below are the results for your congregation based on the answers received. For additional information or links to resources, please visit the [FaithX website](#) to explore FaithX resources and possible next steps on the road to greater congregational vitality, including a free 30 min next steps consult, or visit the [Episcopal Church Foundation website](#).*

## General Information

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**Church Name:** St. Swithen's in the Sticks

**City:** Sticksville

**State:** MD

**Role at church:** Vicar

**Best contact number:** (555) 555-5555

**Church's Average Sunday Attendance:** 50

**Annual Operating Budget:** 50,000

**What are your greatest areas of concern for your congregation?:** Vitality

**If you had to rank your concern from one to ten, ten being of greatest concern, what would be the level of your concern?:** 9

**What questions might you have for the Episcopal Church Foundation and FaithX?:** None yet.

## I. Vision, Mission, & Discernment

Score: 1.7 out of 4

### Notes:

It appears your congregation has some significant work ahead in order to determine who you are and what the congregation is called to be and do. To become more vital, your congregation would benefit from a common, unified vision and mission. Furthermore, the congregation should do some significant discernment of your core values. In order to define what success looks like, the congregation should determine 3-5 God-sized goals with benchmarks and assigned next steps.

## II. Lay Engagement & Empowerment

Score: 2.4 out of 4

**Notes:**

It appears your congregation has done a decent job of empowering laity to live more fully into their Baptismal Covenant. In order to become more vital, consider forming an equipping team made up mostly of lay leaders who are charged to recruit and equip folks to serve in ways that make their heart sing, matching them with their passion, skillset, and talents. Create and publish a list of all the potential ways one might serve with the church, and prepare written ministry (job) descriptions for every role. Evaluate the ways through which decisions are made, and consider ways clergy and staff might transfer some decisions to lay leaders.

**III. Context Awareness & Inclusion**

Score: 2 out of 4

**Notes:**

Based on your score, chances are your congregation has been more engaged on the people in the pews, rather than those who are not. Vital churches are aware of their surrounding community and can clearly name the ways they are meeting real needs because they have taken the time to build authentic and engaging relationships with those beyond the church walls. Consider ways your church can represent itself out in the community, and be more intentional about ways it communicates welcome and inclusion for all people.

**IV. Change Readiness**

Score: 2 out of 4

**Notes:**

Good news. Though your church scored low in this category, you took the time to fill out this survey, which is something to be commended. In terms of your congregation, however, there seems to be hesitancy about changing or adapting for the future. Perhaps the culture has been steeped in fear and anxiety. In order to prime the congregation to start embracing change, be mindful of the stories that are being shared about the reason why your church exists in the first place. Clergy and lay leadership need to examine their behavior and how they are communicating steadiness, hope, and joy that will inspire the rest of the congregation. Focus on making smaller, incremental changes and celebrate the small wins. Help communicate with love and compassion that when a congregation has low vitality and wants to be vital, not changing is not an option.

**V. Dealing with Differences/Conflict**

Score: 1.6 out of 4

**Notes:**

It's pretty safe to say your congregation is either conflict avoidant or has so much conflict that has been pushed under the rug, people are tripping over it. Chances are your congregation has its fair share of gossip mongering and/or power brokers (a.k.a. bullies) who wield their influence to get their way. This could be an affluent lay person, someone whose family has been a member of the church for decades, or even the clergy person. Regardless, your congregation would do well to enter into a church-wide discernment period and begin the tough work of covenanting and working through differences with open and gracious dialogue. Conflict isn't something to be avoided, it's something to transform.

**VI. Spiritual Life & Worship**

Score: 2.2 out of 4

**Notes:**

Based on your score, it appears you are doing a decent job engaging your congregation in worship. In order to increase your vitality, consider ways your congregation might engage lay people to plan and lead worship so it's not just up to the clergy person(s). Evaluate ways your worship might become more engaging for all ages, even your youngest children. Ensure all your meetings don't just open in prayer, but consider adding Bible study or devotion time.

**VII. Formation, Education, & Training**

Score: 2.4 out of 4

**Notes:**

Well done. Your congregation has been wrestling with the question: What is our church actively doing to encourage our members to grow in their life with Christ? In order to increase your vitality, ensure your clergy person(s) is preaching about and demonstrating the importance of prayer and scriptural engagement in the home. Develop a system through which all members may discern their spiritual gifts and help them serve in ways that make their hearts sing. Develop a clear scope and sequence for children and youth so the church is teaching them what it wants their kids to know, feel, and do by the time they graduate high school. Consider ways your church might equip and come alongside parents to raise their children in the Christian faith. Reimagine your existing Rites of Passage so they become branding moments in the life of the one experiencing it.

**VIII. Outreach**

Score: 2.2 out of 4

**Notes:**

Good job! You're attempting to make a real difference in your community. Chances are, you value service and have made some strides to answer the call to serve those in need. In order to increase your vitality score, evaluate the ways your non-regular programming might incorporate an outreach component. Instead of creating new programs, try partnering with a local organization who is already making a difference.

**IX. Leadership & Organization**

Score: 2.2 out of 4

**Notes:**

Healthy lay/clergy teams are at the very heart of all vital congregations. Fortunately, your church is in pretty good shape. Your relationships are most likely pretty strong, so it might be helpful to evaluate the process through which decisions are made and ensure lay leadership is celebrated and actively incorporated in developing and implementing the church's mission and vision. If you haven't already, establish an annual leadership retreat that includes clergy, program staff, and key leadership to vision cast, troubleshoot, and reaffirm core values and norms. Evaluate the overall cultural health of your team dynamics. Identify ways to instill fun, humor, playfulness and creativity in the ways you do ministry together.

**X. Stewardship**

Score: 2 out of 4

**Notes:**

It's clear your congregation needs to do a better job regarding stewardship as discipleship; it's not just about money, but the very way we relate to the abundance with which God has blessed us. Congregations with lower vitality scores tend to operate their stewardship as a "fall campaign or stewardship drive" rather than a year-long approach to raising awareness of how the church is managing its resources and welcoming others to participate more fully within its mission. Consider revamping your budgeting process to be one that is less about "what we did last year" and more inline with what your congregation is feeling called to be and do.

**XI. Internal Sustainability**

Score: 1.6 out of 4

**Notes:**

Perhaps you already know your church lacks the resources to be sustainable. Chances are your congregation is aging and/or is comprised of too few people to sustain the operations of your current facility. Furthermore, the mission quotient is limited due to the dwindling passion or lack of critical mass of people serving. Your church would benefit from considering ways to partner with the diocese and/or other neighboring churches to pool your resources. Ask yourselves how you're being called to bless others and whether or not a building and grounds is necessary to do that work. Do the hard conflict work necessary to understand the current reality that your church needs to reimagine what it is and what it might become.