



Matthew 25 in Blackhawk Presbytery

Building Congregational Vitality

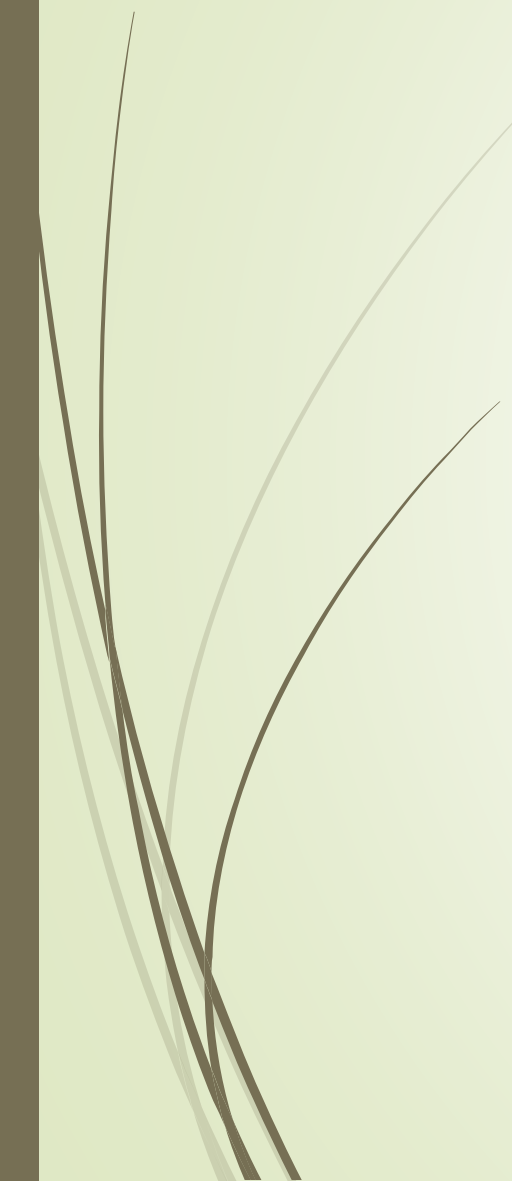


Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ Building congregational vitality by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.
- ▶ Building congregational vitality by deepening and energizing our faith and growing as joyful leaders and disciples actively engaged with our community as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed
- ▶ Building congregational vitality refers to the intentional and continuous faith development of pastors and members of a congregation that leads disciples who are members in a church to actively engage with their community.



Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ Congregational vitality is not determined by the size of a church or its budget, but by a church's faithfulness in demonstrating the love and justice of Jesus.
 - ▶ One good test of a congregation's vitality is to see how its members and neighbors answer the question, "If this church were to close, who would miss it and why?"
- 

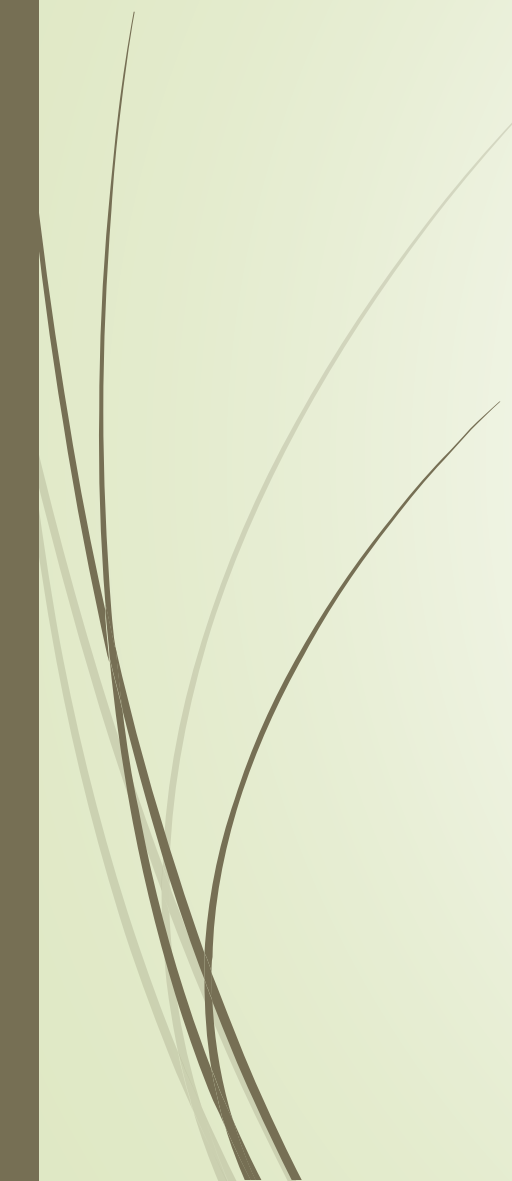


Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ Some think the vitality of a congregation or worshiping community is based on the number of members, the scope of programs, the size of financial gifts or some other statistics. Not so—at least not entirely.
- ▶ Rather, a community's vitality is primarily its spiritual strength and its capacity for purposeful mission.
- ▶ Congregational vitality is evident in a worshiping community when its structural systems, finances and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world, and they are powerfully focused on growing as disciples in the way of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Faith comes alive when we boldly engage God's mission and share the hope we have in Christ. In other words, we put our feet into action!



Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ When a congregation is committed to the work and witness of Jesus Christ, its mission becomes an essential part of the local community. This is the example set by Jesus.
 - ▶ He would gather his followers, teaching them and modeling a very different way of life. Then, out of compassion for those in need, he would send them out in mission to teach, heal and con-front evil (see Matthew 9–10).
 - ▶ This rhythm of gathering and scattering is at the heart of the worship and service of the church: We learn from Jesus and are sent out, then return to experience more of God's reign of justice, hope and peace.
- 



Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ Congregational vitality arises from the development and practice of faith. It leads to church growth and the development of new disciples in communities with large populations.
 - ▶ The congregational vitality focus in the Matthew 25 vision encourages congregations, mid councils and other groups to choose specific initiatives that fit their interests, resources and mission.
 - ▶ In building congregational vitality and carrying out Jesus' mission, a congregation may choose to work on areas such as human trafficking, gun violence or earth care.
- 



Matthew 25: Building Congregational Vitality

- ▶ The Presbyterian Mission Agency has developed a comprehensive curriculum to help a church become a vital congregation; see pcusa.org/vitalcongregations.
- ▶ The Vital Congregations Initiative is a two-year process designed to be used in the context of presbytery support. The Vital Congregations Toolkit is intended for congregations.