

### ***The Vitality Initiative for Congregations Overview***

The Vitality Initiative is divided into four-phase for learning and implementation.

1. The first phase challenges congregations to discover and nurture their unique call. Congregations will be given tools to ask, “Who are we?” and “Why do we do what we do?” Leadership teams will begin a deep exploration of the concept of vocation through a Lutheran lens, grounded in Luther’s own theology and the biblical roots of the church. This theological emphasis will be paired with Christian discernment practices, including the development and sharing of congregational call stories and prayer as a personal and communal practice.  
September 2021 – January 2022 (no cohort meeting in December)
2. In the second phase congregations will develop awareness of cultural and social trends. Congregations will be equipped to explore their community and trends that impact their context. Through exploration of external relationships with a congregation’s neighbors and of relationships to the larger church, congregations will imagine “Whom are we called to serve?” and “With whom are we called?”  
February - July 2022 (no cohort meeting April 2022)  
In-person Cohort gathering at Synod Assembly 2022
3. Equipped with a deeper understanding of congregational identity and context, the third phase will invite the process of synthesis: given one’s congregation’s identity, gifts, passions, histories, and the realities of its culture, context, and neighbors, what are the ways that the congregation senses the Holy Spirit is calling us to be church together? What are the ways the congregation can serve with its neighbors?  
August 2022 – February 2023 (no cohort meeting in December)
4. Coaches will continue meeting in with the leadership team for six additional months helping the congregation stay on track with their experiment.  
February – September 2023

#### Outcomes:

- This is an educational experiment with the intent of identifying effective means to significantly create, nurture and increase vitality of congregations.
- Success will be measured with metrics that move us beyond the number and product driven definition of success. The initiative encourages healthy risk-taking, experimentation and progressive learning experiences.
- Qualitative and quantitative increases in the vitality of congregations.
- Baseline vitality will be measures and tools used to track change.
- Traditional data such as membership, attendance and finances will be tracked.
- Each cohort will be encouraged and at some level expected to be learning posts for others.