



### Application for Vitality Initiative – Fall 2023

Application Deadline – May 1, 2023

Fall 2023 Cohort congregations to be named by June 1, 2023

The Nebraska Synod's *Vitality Initiative for Congregations* is rooted in the conviction that any congregation earnestly seeking to discern, explore and innovate has the potential to increase its vitality. Congregations participating in the initiative will engage in learning on:

- congregational vocation
- discernment
- theological and biblical grounding
- spiritual practices
- institutional memory and storytelling
- culture change
- local asset mapping
- listening and imagining together that will culminate with a significant congregational experiment flowing directly out of the discernment process.

*Prior to reading and completing the application, review the Overview of the Vitality Initiative, and the included timeline overview to note all cohort session dates. If your congregation cannot participate in most of the dates as outlined, this may not be the right time to apply.*

#### Application Instructions

STEP 1: The pastoral leader(s), council president, and at least two other leaders in the congregation and other key congregational leaders should complete the Vitality Inventory section of the application individually with the freedom to answer honestly from each of their perspectives. As directed, once all leaders have completed the section, tabulate the results and average the scores to find the scaled group congregational score. Please submit all score sheets from the leaders who completed the inventory within your application.

STEP 2: The Capacity for Change and Risk-Taking sections require the full team's participation as you discern and generate your responses. Use additional pages for your responses and send as a PDF attachment with the Vitality Inventory scores and results.

### Vitality Inventory

Individually, please score your answer to these questions (on a scale of 1 being “no” to 5 being “yes”), and then total your score as indicated below.

SCALE:

1 = No

2 = Not really/not much

3 = Maybe/sort of

4 = Yes, to some extent

5 = Yes

#### Question

#### Score

- 1) Does the congregation have a clear sense of mission and understanding of who it is? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Does the congregation have a sense of excitement for what God may be up to, and for what the future may hold? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Does the congregation have a clear sense of who its neighbors are? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Does the congregation have clear and healthy connection to its neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) As a church which believes in the priesthood of all believers, does the congregation intentionally seek out and use the gifts of all disciples who are part of the faith community? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Do the disciples who are the congregation, have strong and healthy relationships with one another? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Do the disciples who are the congregation, feel that they are equipped to share their faith with others? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Do the disciples who are the congregation, have an understanding or awareness of how faith impacts and guides their daily living? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Are there enough people engaged with energy to lead and participate in the worship and ministry life of the congregation? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Does the congregation believe it has enough financial resources to pay for the facility, staff, and others costs necessary to make ministry happen? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please total the score for all ten questions.*

**Your score =** \_\_\_\_\_

*Then add the scores of the other leaders in your congregation who are filling this application out. (There should be at least four separate scorers- that of the pastoral leader, council president, and then two other leaders.)*

**Total Group Cumulative Score =** \_\_\_\_\_

*After adding all scores together, please divide by 4 (or how many people have answered these questions). If done correctly, the total scaled group congregational score should be between 0-5.*

**Scaled Group Congregational Score =** \_\_\_\_\_

## Capacity for Change & Risk-Taking

Working together as a team, answer the following questions using additional pages as needed to accurately reflect your congregation. Lengthy responses are not necessary; honest responses are expected.

1. The last 3-5 years have been filled with unexpected challenges for congregations. Reflect honestly on how they have gone, where you are now, and wonderings about where you might be going next.
2. What are the big questions you have about your congregation? What are the big questions your congregation has about itself?
3. What are your congregation's top strengths? What are its largest challenges currently?
4. What was the last significant change or experiment your congregation undertook?
5. Share an experience of your congregation taking a risk on behalf of the greater community you serve. What were the outcomes of the congregation's actions?
6. What are the most significant challenges to innovation and experimentation in your congregation? What resources, gifts or capacities does your congregation already have to address these challenges?

.....

**Send applications electronically in PDF format to [vitality@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:vitality@nebraskasynod.org) by May 1, 2023.**

**\*\*If you have any questions about the application or the Vitality Initiative, please reach out to Deacon Timothy Siburg at [timothy@nebraskasynod.org](mailto:timothy@nebraskasynod.org).**