

Healthy and Whole

An Inventory of the Vitality of the Congregation

Pastor Mae Jean Zelle, Dallas, Texas

Social-Interpersonal Wholeness

R 1. What opportunities exist for deepening relationships between members?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Members mostly just catch up on each others' lives in the narthex or over Coffee Fellowship.				Many members participate in small group ministry focused on building relationships and sharing their faith journey.	

R 2. How are connections maintained when people are not attending worship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
The pastor or certain unofficially-designated members visit shut-ins and those who are hospitalized.				Church office sends out the bulletin and members initiate and maintain contact with folks in their ministry groups	

R 3. How are newcomers invited to participate in the activities of the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
New members are often approached to volunteer in the areas of most pressing need.				A staff person or member gets to know the new member and extends invitations to activities in which they might participate.	

R 4. How readily are newcomers integrated into the life of the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There are cliques; seniority matters; and it takes a long time for a new person to be considered part of the congregation.				Members are intentional about getting to know newcomers and including them in fellowship, service and leadership.	

R 5. How well does the congregation reflect the diversity of the community in which it is situated?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Everyone at the church is pretty much the same. Someone of a different race or socioeconomic level would probably not fit in too well.				The congregation includes people from a variety of races and socio-economic levels. Anyone would feel welcome.	

Emotional Wholeness

E 1. How do members process shared emotion over events in the life of the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Those who feel the need to do so converse with one another privately.				Opportunities are created to process emotions, both positive and negative, in the context of worship. Pastoral care is extended to help resolve negative emotions.	

E 2. What modes of communication predominate when negative emotions run high?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Anonymous notes and mass emails are exchanged and often exacerbate the situation.				Direct, respectful communication between involved persons is sought. Indirect communication and gossip is actively discouraged by both leaders and other members.	

E 3. When anxiety is high, how is it moderated?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Little is done. Given time, the anxiety usually dissipates.				Cooler heads prevail. The less anxious members step up and speak out to buffer the anxiety and call for calm.	

E 4. How does the congregation deal with the concerns that arise from chronic anxiety within the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
As well as able, the chronic complaining is simply ignored. Occasional appeasement is made.				Griping, sniping and complaining are playfully, yet directly, discouraged. Positive support of the whole ministry of the church is actively encouraged.	

E 5. What is the prevailing attitude about the congregation's abilities and outlook?

1	2	3	4	5	6
It seems as if the cards are usually stacked against the congregation. There always seems to be some problem that keeps the congregation from moving forward.				There is a prevailing positive attitude about the congregation's ability to take on new challenges and be successful in its ministry endeavors.	

Physical Wholeness

Hard Structures

P 1. What is the condition of the physical plant of the church?

1	2	3	4	5	6
The church can use a lot of work.				The physical plant is inviting, well-maintained, easy to navigate, safe, and wheel-chair accessible.	

P 2. How well is your physical space utilized?

1	2	3	4	5	6
A lot of space is rarely used, except for storage. OR There are ministries that cannot happen because there is nowhere to do them.				There is a good balance between space and ministries. Most areas are used for multiple purposes throughout the week.	

Soft Structures

P 3. How well-matched are the boards and committees of the church and the ministries which they carry out?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There are too many committee meetings for the amount of ministry that is accomplished. OR Everything is done ad hoc and occasionally confusion arises over who is doing what.				The working groups have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They effectively and efficiently carry out the ministries of the congregation.	

P 4. How well are the activities of the working groups communicated with the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Few formal reports are made. Most communication happens informally during announcements at the end of worship. There is no newsletter or website.				The newsletter, bulletin and website effectively convey the activities and ministry opportunities to members. The Council is well-informed by effective formal reporting.	

P 5. How are group decisions that affect the whole congregation made?

1	2	3	4	5	6
A small group of long-time members express their opinion and everyone pretty much goes along with them.				Group conversation is facilitated to hear from all members of the community to decide what best serves the whole congregation and its purpose.	

Financial Wholeness

F 1. How well does the church follow financial fiduciary guidelines?

1	2	3	4	5	6
One or two trusted people take care of all the money matters				Procedures for handling money, generating reports and auditing as outlined in <i>Guidelines for Treasurers</i> are consistently followed.	

F 2. How does the congregation prepare and plan for future spending?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Budgets remain largely unchanged from year to year. People give what they can.				There is an intentional, consistent, and transparent system for pledging and budgeting. Capital campaigns are carried out as needed.	

F 3. What sort of giving do the pastor(s), leaders, and the congregation itself model for the members?

1	2	3	4	5	6
The congregation gives what it can when it can. The giving record is not considered pertinent to a person's service as leader and decision-maker.				The congregation itself tithes to the work of the greater Church. Leaders are consistent proportional, first-fruits givers.	

F 4. What kind of attitude surrounds major financial decisions?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There is a prevailing sense of scarcity and caution that leads to pessimism and reluctance to risk financial undertakings.				There is a prevailing sense of resilience, sustainability, and generosity that leads to optimism about major financial undertakings.	

Vocational Wholeness

V 1. How well-focused is the congregation's sense of purpose?

1	2	3	4	5	6
The congregation has lost sight of any sense of purpose beyond meeting once a week for worship and conducting pastoral acts as needed..				The congregation has a clear sense of its role in God's plans to love and redeem the world and fosters ministries that fulfill that purpose.	

V 2. How does the congregation go about implementing ministries that fulfill God's mission?

1	2	3	4	5	6
If someone wants to start a ministry a proposal is brought to the Council. Once approved, he/she is allowed to proceed.				The congregation intentionally explores both the gifts and talents of its members and the needs of its community so as to create purposeful ministries that utilize the gifts of the members.	

V 3. How well-balanced is the constellation of ministries of the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Almost all ministries are focused on the members of the congregation. OR Almost all ministries serve those outside of the congregation.				There is a good balance between ministries that serve those beyond the church walls and those that serve members of the community.	

V 4. Are members encouraged to follow their own sense of vocation and service beyond the church walls?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There are so many unfilled opportunities to volunteer at the church that other opportunities to serve are seldom mentioned.				Members are encouraged to find and follow their sense of calling to ministry in daily life. Opportunities for such ministries are regularly published in bulletin and newsletter.	

Intellectual Wholeness

I 1. How vital is the Sunday School and Confirmation program?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There are few children and the primary responsibility for the program is carried by the pastor and parents of the Sunday School and Confirmation-aged children.				Sunday School and Confirmation are well-attended and well-supported by the church's budget and members' time and energy.	

I 2. What opportunities exist for adult faith formation within the congregations ministries?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Aside from the occasional Lenten series, there is no regular Bible Study or Adult Sunday School				There are multiple, regular, well-attended adult study opportunities that engage in Bible Study, study of Social statements and other forms of faith formation.	

I 3. What is the level of participation in outside opportunities for adult faith formation and leadership development?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Synodical workshops are rarely publicized or attended.				Synodically-sponsored opportunities for lay leader development and faith formation are consistently published and often attended. Some members have attended/completed the Parish Lay Ministry Academy.	

Spiritual Wholeness

S 1. How well does worship feed the spiritual lives of the congregants?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Worship is rarely, if ever, inspirational. It's pretty rote and most people attend out of a sense of obligation.				Worship regularly provides a rich opportunity to be spiritually nourished by both Word and Sacrament. People come because they would miss it if they hadn't.	

S 2. How fully is the Holy Spirit's presence sought in the day-to-day activities of the congregation?

1	2	3	4	5	6
A cursory prayer usually begins or ends most activities.				God's presence is consistently sought and felt throughout meetings, study, and fellowship. A group may routinely stop and pray at a particularly difficult juncture.	

S 3. How does the church foster spiritual growth on the part of its individual members?

1	2	3	4	5	6
There is little, if any, conversation about spiritual growth.				People are regularly educated about and encouraged to undertake spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, meditation, tithing, service, and regular study of the Bible.	

S 4. How well do members of the congregation extend the grace of God to one another?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Members are not as gracious to each other as they could be. Grudges are held for a long time. There is division and disrespect that seems untouched by the Spirit's power to heal.				There is a lot of grace. As needed, people seek and extend forgiveness. There is a sense of acceptance of each others' humanity and a desire to see Christ in each other.	