



**Save the Date**

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This past weekend, seven of our congregations completed the Small Church Vitality program, and they left asking about when we'd have a reunion. Since the beginning of the year, leaders of these small churches prayed together, shared their struggles and joys as leaders, experimented with new approaches, questioned expert speakers in our denomination, and worshipped. There was a significant time commitment because in addition to the six sessions, we also gave out homework! Horror!

The sessions covered six principal topics that many agree are the marks of a vital congregation: healthy decision-making and conflict resolution; spiritual development; mission and outreach; evangelism; empowered leaders; and inspired worship. In our six sessions, we looked at each topic, drawing on Holy Cow findings and grappling with how we can be vital in these areas of ministry when the church has limited membership and resources. We learned it's possible, but it takes hard work and practice. Thankfully, we don't shy away from hard work when it comes to supporting our congregations.

I mentioned in last week's article that I went to a consultation for the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) Board in Baltimore. When I wasn't gawking at the My Little Pony fans, I was working with other presbytery and synod leaders about the priorities we have for our congregations. Across the board, our denomination is working on congregational vitality as a top priority. We hear your hunger for ideas and resources to improve the vitality of your churches.

So, the Presbytery is pleased to announce an upcoming Congregational Vitality Week from October 28 – November 3. During the week, we will hear from the head of the Vital Congregations ministry in the PMA and from a national speaker on worship design. We'll host workshops and webinars and offer resources for you to tailor to your congregational setting. All churches, small and large, will find inspiration and ideas to ignite the vitality that God desires for you.

A wonderful aspect of our connectional church is that we can draw on the expertise and experiences of congregations nationally, and we can take comfort in knowing we are not facing alone the unprecedented challenges of ministry in this day and age. Together, we can experiment...dare I say, take risks for the sake of the gospel, a core value of this Presbytery!

I invite you to save the date for Congregational Vitality Week. You won't want to miss it!