

# **VITAL CONGREGATIONS**

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Presbyterian Mission Agency

Theology, Formation, and Evangelism

## Rev. Dr. Kathryn Threadgill

Kathryn is the Associate for Vital Congregation for the Presbyterian Church (USA). She obtained her B.A. from Montreat College, PC(USA) where she majored in Bible and Religion with a concentration in Youth Ministry. Kathryn studied at Columbia Theological Seminary for both her Masters of Divinity and her Doctorate of Educational Ministries degrees. As an ordained minister of the Word and Sacraments for nearly ten years, Kathryn has served churches in Greensboro, NC. and Mobile, Alabama. She is the beloved daughter of Ollie Rix and Dorothy Threadgill, and has twelve siblings from all over the world.



VITAL  
CONGREGATIONS  
WITNESS



**CALL TO SPIRIT-INSPIRED WORSHIP**  
*PSALM 95*

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of God's hand. O that today you would listen to God's voice!**

## Opening Sentences of Scripture:

**Kathryn:** Jesus said: I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (*John 8:12*)

**ALL:** The king will say to those on his right hand: Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited. (*Matt. 25: 34-36*)

**Presbytery Leader:** The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life into which we enter through baptism. It is possible because in Jesus Christ we have been set free from the bondage of sin and death.

Let Us Pray

10 You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. 11 I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. 12 I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord. 13 I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?

Continued...

18 Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

19 I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

20 The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, 21 the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.



## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

**What do you hear in the passage? What word(s) or phrases that speak to you?**

**What challenges you in this passage?**

**How does this passage speak to congregations today?**

**What questions does this passage leave you with?**

## WHAT MAKES A CHURCH VITAL?

Holy Communion Episcopal Church  
New York City, NY.  
1840





- \* 1970 the building was bought by a commune. It was owned by a drug counseling organization

- \* 1983 it became one of New York's hottest clubs, called the Limelight. Known for their drug-fueled parties.

- \* Currently it is an upscale Chinese restaurant.



*I AM ABOUT TO DO A NEW THING; NOW IT SPRINGS FORTH, DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?*

*ISAIAH 43:19*

*DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ARE GOD'S TEMPLE AND THAT GOD'S SPIRIT DWELLS IN YOU?*

*CORINTHIANS 3:16*

*SEE, THE HOME OF GOD IS AMONG MORTALS...SEE, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.*

*REVELATION 21:3,5*

**Name the struggle?**

# MARKS OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

- **1. Lifelong Discipleship Formation** VS. *Complacent “Christian” piety, simply teaching good morals, or offering the latest programs.*
- **2. Intentional Authentic Evangelism** VS. *“Jesus Freaks”; “Christian” hypocrisy; A Committee*
- **3. Outward Incarnational Focus** VS. *Inward Institutional Survival; Closed communities of assimilation/exclusion*

# MARKS OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

- 4. **Empower Servant Leadership** VS. *The Pastor's job; monopolized leadership; hiring the young energetic pastor*
- 5. **Spirit-Inspired Worship** VS. *Self-gratifying worship; stale ritual divorced of meaning; consumer entertainment worship*

# MARKS OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

- **6. Caring-Relationships** VS. *Any other social club; facades, hypocrisy, and judgment of “church” and “religion”*
- **7. Ecclesial Health** VS. *Unhealthy dysfunction; toxic environments; obsolete and irrelevant buildings*



Vital congregations

# VITAL CONGREGATIONS PILOT



Grand Canyon  
De Christo  
San Jose  
Newark  
Trinity



# VITAL CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE

2-Year  
Initiative +  
1 Year  
Foundational  
Preparation

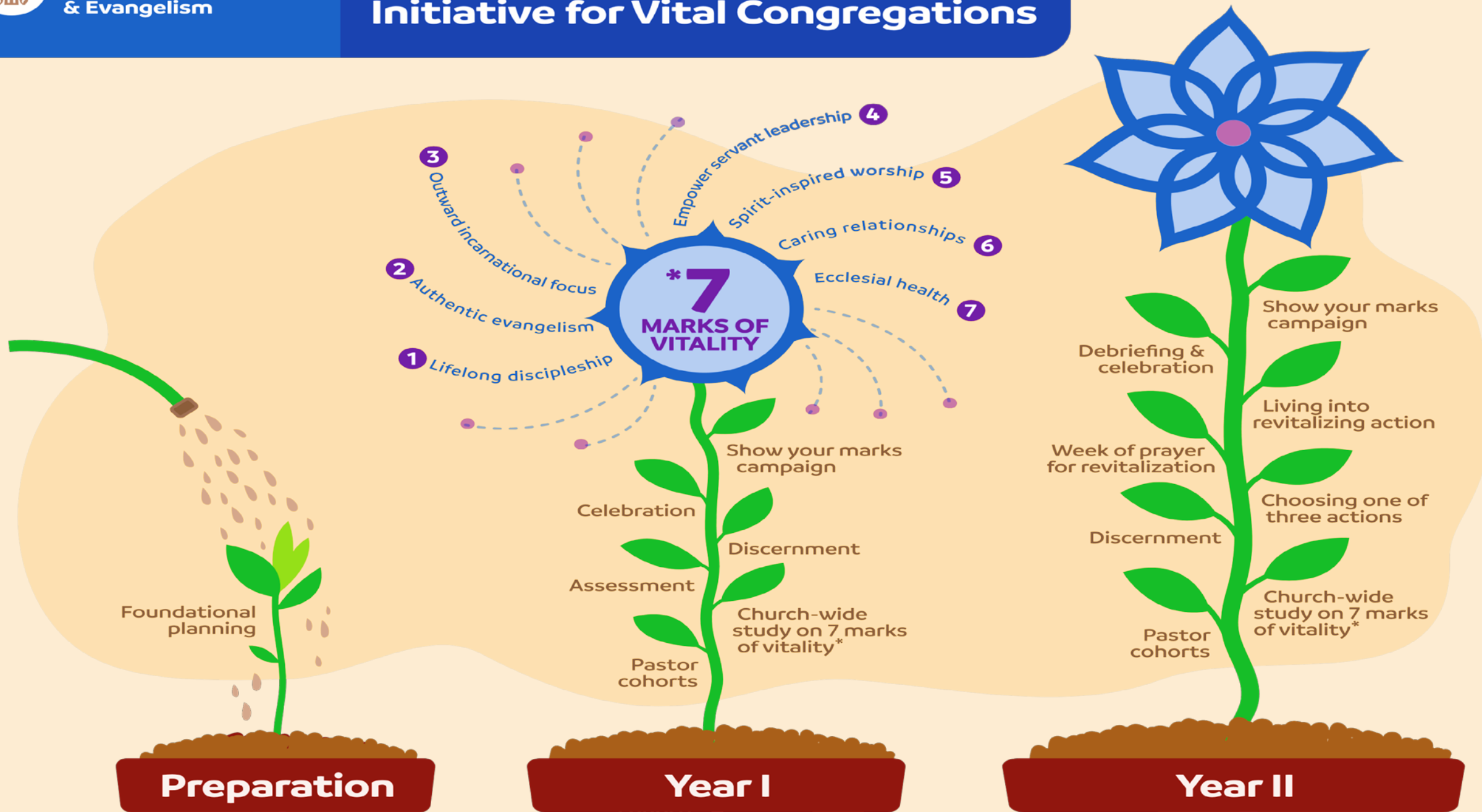
- **Year 1:** Relational: Authentic Relationships & The Honest Assessment & Discernment of Congregations
- **Year 2:** Incarnational: Revitalizing Church in 3-Actions: Re-forming, Missional Clustering, Death & Resurrection

7 Marks &  
3-Actions of  
Revitalization

- Re-forming
- Missional Clustering
- Death & Resurrection



# Two-year Revitalization Initiative for Vital Congregations



Vital Congregations, PCUSA:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/vital-congregations/>

Click the green RESOURCES area on the VC main page OR search “vital congregations” “Immediate toolkit” or “revitalization” they will get a link to the toolkit here:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/vital-congregations-immediate-toolkit/>



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**GO IN PEACE!  
LOVE AND SERVE  
THE LORD!**

