



# TEAM VITAL

The United Methodist Church  
of Greater New Jersey

## Key Considerations in Team Selection

The members selected to form Team Vital in the local church should be selected to function well together and have complementary strengths. Members of Team Vital need to be open to and actively invite information from the diverse voices of the congregation in order to understand and work on behalf of the whole.

### A functional team is better than a representational team.

Representational teams must balance competing interests. They serve the interest of the people they are representing and the group as a whole. For example, if someone is asked to serve on the team as the representative the youth, that person is invited to be sure that the interests of their group are clearly understood and accounted for in any planning recommendations. If that same person is invited on the team as a part of the congregation, he or she will bring a different set of objectives.

Team Vital does not have to include all of the diverse voices of the congregation in a representational manner. **Team Vital does, however, need to listen to the full congregation.**

The principals for these considerations draw heavily from *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann. The Alban Institute, 2003. pp. 57-66. We recommend reading the pages referenced in this book for further clarification of the process.

### What Skills, Attributes and Attitudes Should Team Members Have?

Church council members should discuss what skills, attributes, and attitudes will serve their congregation best in a ministry planning process about the future. The Church council should develop two lists:

1. skills, attributes and attitudes needed.
2. skills, attitudes and attributes *not needed*.

The following are examples of the lists of skills, attributes and attitudes a church council might create, however, it is important for each board to shape a list that suits its own congregational needs.

### People to Invite:

- are open to what God is calling your church to be and to be about in the future .
- understand your church's strengths and weaknesses .
- understand the "political realities" of your church.
- value open deliberations and systems for keeping membership informed.
- actively support the current pastor.
- are willing to learn new things and think new thoughts.
- have a "voice" back in the congregation and are listened to when they speak.
- are willing to put time, energy, work and prayer into the effort of the committee.
- are comfortable discussing ideas (" purpose," "role," "mission").
- are active as volunteers in the life and ministry of the church.

### People Not to Invite:

- struggle with decision making or unable to consider potential consequences.
- are unwilling to change themselves or their church to accomodate the needs of other people.
- have "axes to grind" about the church.
- do not support the pastor.
- would rather go back in time to a favorite era in the church.
- are too busy to make reliable and consistent contributions to the team.
- focus on managing the details instead of looking at the big picture.

## How Do We Discern Nominations for the Team?

Church Council members should:

- Spend time praying for people who can help.
- Pay heightened attention to interactions with people at worship and in other activities within and outside of the church. Browse through congregational directories, if available. Read through congregational membership and attendance lists. What might God be revealing about potential members of the team?
- Discuss ideas about people with other Church Council members. The goal is to get a list for consideration and not to come to agreement about a particular person.
- Consider if they themselves have the skills, attributes and attitudes identified as helpful.
- Take time to complete the process. We recommend at least two weeks.

## How Do We Make the Final Selection?

We recommend the following:

1. At a church council meeting, have every member submit in writing the names of three people that best exemplify what is needed. Members can submit their own name in the list of the three nominations.

2. Order the nominees beginning with the person who received the most nominations and ending with those who received just one — until all nominees are listed.
3. Look at the full list. The ideal size of a planning team is eight to twelve people, draw a line under the seventh nominee to separate this top group from other nominations.
4. Review the two lists of skills, attributes and attitudes and discuss whether the top nominees as a group fairly and helpfully reflect these lists.
5. Look at the list of top nominees and consider the commonality and differences among the list. Are there too many men or women, too many people with finance background, not enough recent members and so forth?
6. Have open conversation about the list and make adjustments accordingly.

### **How Do We Invite Team Members?**

When the nominations list is completed, select one person from the council to invite the nominees to be a part of Team Vital. Make each invitation personal. Talk with the nominee privately, have the reasons why the council selected them and provide written information about Team Vital and member's responsibilities. The nominee should take time to discern his or her role on the Team.

### **How Do We Select a Team Leader?**

The church council can decide to name the team leader or the team can chose its own leader. In addition to leading the team during the process, the Team Leader's voice is usually the one that the congregation hears when the team reports progress, invites others to participate in the planning and offers results.