

United Methodists of Greater New Jersey

Draft - 2019 Vitality and Sustainability Report for - Draft

_____ United Methodist Church
Church Number _____

Within The United Methodist Church there are two important indicators about the health of a congregation's mission and ministry – vitality and sustainability indicators. **Congregational vitality** is an indicator of a congregation's ability to make new disciples, grow disciples, and involve disciples in worship, small groups, hands on mission and mission giving. These are essential for the health and growth of a congregation's mission. **Congregational sustainability** is an indicator of a congregation's ability to sustain its finances and property to carry out its mission and ministry.

Both vitality and sustainability are essential to the long-term ministry and mission of a congregation. GNJ is committed to helping congregations assess, understand and address the vitality and sustainability of their ministry. The following are the key indicators used to understand a congregation's vitality and sustainability. The indicators are taken from the yearly statistical reports submitted by the congregation.

Congregational Vitality Indicators

1. Disciples in Worship: The ability to attract and maintain worshipers. Indicator: worship attendance increased over the last three years?
Your congregation increased (decreased) over the last three years
2. Making new disciples: The ability to make new followers of Jesus Christ. Indicator: 1 new profession or reaffirmation of faith for every 20 worshipers.
Your congregation made ____ new followers of Jesus Christ for every 20 worshipers.
3. Disciples in small groups: The ability to gather disciples in small groups for continued learning, mission, growth and fellowship. Indicator: 60% of the worshipers are in small groups.
Your congregation's percentage of adults in small groups is ____%
4. Disciples in mission: The ability to organize and inspire worshipers to participate in hands on mission. Indicator: 50% of the worshipers participate in hands on mission projects.
Your congregation's percentage of adults engaged in mission is ____%
5. Disciples giving to mission. Indicator: 18% or more of the congregation's total expenses (excluding debt & capital) is given to mission. Mission giving includes shared ministry giving.
Your congregation gave ____% to mission.

A congregation with 3 of the five markers of vitality is considered vital and with 4 or 5 is highly vital.
Your congregation had ____ markers of vitality.

Congregational Sustainability Indicators

There are 10 indicators to determine a congregation's sustainability – the ability to sustain finances and property to serve mission and ministry.

1. Average worship attendance – The congregation's worship attendance is under 50 people which tends to make it more challenging to pay bills, grow worship attendance, engage in community mission and attract new people, particularly when the sanctuary seats 3 times or more of its worship attendance. (2 points)
Your congregation's average worship attendance is _____. While GNJ has and needs congregations of all sizes, its healthiest congregations average over 125 in worship attendance.
2. Pastoral compensation averages more than \$1,000 per worshiper – This indicates that there are fewer resources for ministry, community mission and administration. (2 points)
Your congregation's average per worshiper is \$_____. GNJ healthy congregations for under 25 in worship is \$____; 26-50 in worship \$____; 51-75 in worship 76-100 is \$____; 101-150 is \$____; 151 and above is \$_____.
3. Debt – Congregations with debt averaging more than \$7,000 per worshiper have difficulty paying off their debt and struggle with ongoing ministry and mission. (4 points)
Your congregation's average debt per worshiper is \$____. GNJ healthy congregations average \$377 per worshiper (this number is exclusive of a building campaign).
4. Debt greater than \$4,000 and average worship attendance less than 100 people – The combination of issues creates greater risk. (4 points)
Your congregation's average debt per worshiper is \$_____. GNJ healthy congregations worshipping under 100 average is \$1,808.
5. Pastoral and operational expenses are greater than the income of the congregation. (5 points)
Your congregation's pastoral expenses (is, is not) ____ greater than the congregation's income.
6. Reserve/endowment is less than the congregation's 6 month budget and/or the reserve/endowment has declined by 15% or more over three years. (6 points)
Your congregation's reserve/endowment is _____ and it (does, does not) exceed one year of budgeted expenses and your reserve/endowment has (grown, declined) by ____%.
7. Operational expenses greater than \$1,500 per worshiper – When congregations are spending more per average worshiper for utilities, insurance, building maintenance and other administrative expenses, they can no longer afford supporting a clergy person and ministry to attract new people, serve the community and make new disciples. (6 points)
Your congregation's average per worshiper is \$____. GNJ healthy congregations' operational expenses are \$____ per worshiper.
8. Shared Ministry – The congregation did not give 100% of its shared ministries? (7 points)
Your congregation gave ____%. GNJ healthy congregations give 100%.
9. The congregation is declining in worship attendance over the last five years. (7 points)
Your congregation's worship attendance (grew, declined) by ____%. GNJ healthy congregations grew by 3% over five years.
10. Accounts receivable arrearage – The congregation did not pay 100% of its property insurance, health insurance, pension and other direct bills from GNJ? (7 points)
Your congregation gave ____%. GNJ healthy congregations pay 100%.

Total sustainability indicator points _____

Your sustainability based on the indicators is _____. Your indicator correlates to the following.

- Sustainability 5** Very strong position to sustain mission and ministry – up to 10 points
- Sustainability 4** Strong position to sustain mission and ministry – 11-20 points
- Sustainability 3** Positioned to sustain mission and ministry – 21-25 points
- Sustainability 2** Requires assessment, a plan and improvement of sustainability 26-35 points
- Sustainability 1** Requires GNJ team assessment, and congregational plan and improvement of sustainability 26-35 points – 36-50 points

Five Year Trends for _____ UMC (a disciple is one of the active followers of Jesus Christ in your congregation)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Vitality (1-5) 5 most vital									
Sustainable (1-5) 5 most sustainable									
Disciples in Worship									
New Disciples									
Disciples in Small Groups	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Disciples in Mission	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Disciples giving to Mission	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Shared Ministries	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Direct Bill	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

How to Follow Up

Regardless of your circumstances, every congregation can improve or develop excellent ministry results year after year even during change or challenges by doing more of what is going well, understanding why things are going well in some areas and not others and developing paths for continual improvement. GNJ has a variety of resources to assist any congregation in becoming better or addressing current issues. These resources are in the areas of:

- **Leadership Development** – developing congregational leadership to lead to grow vitality and strengthen sustainability.
- **Congregational Development** – developing a plan and ability to carry out plans to grow the five markers of vitality – making new disciples and growing worship, small groups, mission engagement and giving.
- **Ministry Development** – developing student ministry, starting new faith communities and enhancing or starting outreach ministries or Hope Centers.
- **Organizational Development** – growing giving, addressing property needs, repurposing property, resolving conflict, growing investments through socially responsible investing.

Congregation’s Action Steps

Superintendent’s Feedback

District Superintendent _____

Resource Leader _____