

Matthew 25 Initiative: Congregational Vitality Assessments Report

Compiled by Susan Henning, LRP Chair

12/16/20

At the August Session meeting, Session passed a motion to affirm First Presbyterian Church as a Matthew 25 church and to work on it to the best of our ability during the pandemic.

The Matthew 25 initiative of the PC(USA) includes 3 foci. Session agreed to participate in all three:

- o Building congregational vitality
- o Dismantling structural racism
- o Eradicating systemic poverty

To begin work on the first foci of the initiative, building congregational vitality;

- Long Range Planning assigned one or more of the Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality (as defined by The Presbyterian Mission Agency of the PC(USA) and located on the PC USA Matthew 25 Webpage) to various Session and Deacon committees and to the Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force.
- Committee/task force chairs were asked to review the Seven Marks with their committees to get a general sense of what congregational vitality means.
- Committee/task force chairs were asked to assess where current work fits into the marks assigned and to submit the assessment to LRP Chair in December 2020.
- Committee/task force chairs were also asked to use the seven marks as guideposts to structure work going forward.

Below are the Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality, along with the committee assignments, followed by a compilation of all assessments provided to Elder Susan Henning, LRP Chair, as of Dec. 16, 2020.

What is congregational vitality?

You might think that the vitality of a congregation or worshiping community is based on the number of members, the scope of programs, the size of financial gifts or some other statistics.

Not so — at least not entirely.

Rather, a community's vitality is primarily its spiritual strength and its capacity for purposeful mission. Congregational vitality is evident in a worshiping community when its structural systems, finances and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world, and they are powerfully focused on growing as disciples in the way of Jesus Christ. Faith comes alive when we boldly engage God's mission and share the hope we have in Christ.

What must we do to revitalize our own congregation?

To some extent, many local churches find themselves spiritually exhausted, financially fragile and structurally unsound. Sometimes, congregational life is discouraging — both for pastors

and other church leaders who see apathy in their members, and for members who see the numbers in the pews declining year by year.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency of the PC(USA) has made a profound commitment to help you turn things around.

We propose that there are seven marks to help you determine your current level of vitality — and then various processes for self-assessment, discernment and renewed commitment to the habits that foster an energetic engagement with the Spirit's work in the world.

Here are the seven marks:

1. A commitment to forming disciples over every member's lifetime. This leads first to personal transformation, as people put on the heart of Christ, and then to social transformation, as people joyfully go forth into the community and tackle the issues facing today's culture. **Faith Formation**
2. Embracing the call to evangelism. We show forth the love of Christ by our actions and our lives even more than by our words. Our relationships are genuine and caring. People know we are Christians by our love. **CC&E**
3. An outward focus. Our church is not a place to escape from the world, but rather our gateway to our community where we may be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Jesus Christ for people who are suffering or marginalized. **Mission, CC&E, Deacons Community Ministry**
4. Empowering every member to discover their individual calling and the gifts God has given them so they can go forth and serve. **CC&E, Nominating**
5. Spirit-inspired worship that challenges, teaches, transforms, convicts and energizes us so when we are sent out, we have experienced the wonder of God and are changed for the better from when we arrived. **Worship**
6. Caring relationships modeled on God's love. We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God's love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace. **CC&E, Faith Formation, Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force, Deacon's Hospitality & Seniors**
7. Congregations with healthy systems. Our mission focuses are clear. There is fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have thoughtful decision-making structures. Our leaders and staff enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time. **LRP, Business Affairs, Personnel**

Excerpt above from PC USA Matthew 25 Webpage:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/vitality/>

Compilation of assessments follow below:

Assessment by Faith Formation Committee:

Matthew 25 Initiative: Marks of Congregational Vitality Report from Faith Formation Committee December 1, 2020

Faith Formation Committee was asked to evaluate how we show vitality and to describe our vision for the future for two of the markers for Matthew 25 congregations. As with virtually everything else, the pandemic has had a major impact on our activities and initiatives: what had been traditional has been significantly modified or, in some circumstances, temporarily suspended due to social distancing guidelines. As we look to the future, there is uncertainty about when and if we will return to the old ways and to what extent we continue to embrace technology as a means of reaching a wider group. That said, Faith Formation Committee and Strategy Teams have thoughtfully considered how our current and upcoming work fits into the two marks assigned to us for reflection.

1. **A commitment to forming disciples over every member's lifetime. This leads first to personal transformation, as people put on the heart of Christ, and then to social transformation, as people joyfully go forth into the community and tackle the issues facing today's culture.**
2. **Caring relationships modeled on God's love. We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God's love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.**

We are showing vitality in these ways (not meant to be an all-inclusive list):

- A strong focus on making things special for children and youth. Examples are the distribution of Bibles to the third graders in October and including them in worship leadership during which they have read scripture and offered music. Traditionally, youth have led Sunday morning worship services twice each year, always a highlight of the worship calendar.
- During the First Fruits campaign, Amy Christian delivered a heartfelt testimony speaking to the value and quality of faith formation opportunities for all members. Jenny Bucciero and her son Ben also offered a delightfully creative and meaningful testimony.
- Establishing and participating in the FIDE Collaborative has extended opportunities for learning and developing relationships beyond our congregation.
- A wide range of communication resources is being employed to reach our congregation and the community: digital (across many platforms), hard-copy, postcards, banners.
- Pre-pandemic, FUSE (combining service learning and mission) held several events that were mission oriented within the framework of scripture.
- An evening working at Feed My Starving Children, incorporating a faith-based reflection, had become an annual event.
- We are embracing the Matthew 25 initiative to examine racism and poverty from a faith perspective.
- We are taking a relationship-based tack toward faith formation. We've developed opportunities for smaller groups to discuss and share their thoughts. *Be the Bridge* (September-October) and *One Body* (November-December) are excellent examples.
- Intentional efforts are being made to offer content that reaches the heart of the congregation. Rev. Wallace has sought input from the congregation and worked to implement suggestions and requests.
- Materials, encouragement and support are available for existing small groups from Faith Formation staff. The church now has a subscription to Amplify Media, providing online learning materials that can be shared on Zoom or used independently.
- Rev. Smith-Laubenstein reaches out to individual youth to encourage them, express her concern for them, and guide their faith development.

- Carol Boyce provides weekly amazing and inspirational online gatherings and activities for children. She reaches out to parents to encourage the work of faith development within their families.
- Each year, two youth serve on the Deacon Board.
- During spring, 2020, yard signs were made for the youth and children to remind them of their connection to First Pres.
- Pre-pandemic, children participated in the first minutes of worship including gathering for the children's message and then gathered in Sunday school classrooms. Summer Vacation Bible School has been an annual event, and had been undergoing some changes in an effort to encourage greater involvement of parents. During the most recent summer, *Growing with God* family activity groups substituted for the typical VBS.
- Pre-pandemic, work was being accomplished in developing omni-generational opportunities. This would include the Ash Wednesday evening gatherings as well as adults serving as confirmation partners to students in the confirmation class.
- Pre-pandemic, implementation of Faith Steps was progressing.
- Pre-pandemic, senior-high youth participated in an annual Mission Trip.
- Pre-pandemic, youth had opportunities for retreats, camps, and week-long trips to Montreat Conference Center.

Our vision:

- Faith formation will continue working to keep the momentum going in faithful hope that we will be able to be "in-person" in the not-so-distant future.
- We will continue to seek ways to reach out to Seniors, who are sometimes more challenged with using technology.
- We intend to continue to offer options in content as well as timing.
- The playground east of the Sunday school wing is undergoing renovations. Playground equipment has been removed and a committee is developing a vision for the space. People will be able to gather in a casual atmosphere and build relationships following worship and during programs for children, youth and adults. A generous donation has been offered to fund the transformation.
- We will review successes, be receptive to suggestions, and use our imaginations to continue our efforts to offer meaningful Faith Formation opportunities to our members as well as reach out to the wider community.

Respectfully submitted,
 Gail Starr, Clerk of Session
 Chair, Faith Formation Committee

Assessment by CC&E:

Subject: Assessment of CCE Committee Work Supporting Matthew 25 Congregation

Date: December 1, 2020

The work of the Congregational Care and Evangelism Committee (CC&E) is already focused on creating congregational vitality. The ministries we oversee focus both within and outside of the Church to help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who seek more information and/or a new Church home (Inquirer's Classes); to provide loving support to those who need help because of illness (their own or others'), bereavement, hardships (financial, housing, food insufficiency, transportation, etc); to provide learning opportunities to grow in Christian faith; and to provide opportunities for fellowship and community building.

The work that CC&E has done over the past six months that directly supports the Matthew 25 Congregation includes:

- Embrace the Call to Evangelism (with Faith Formation and the Anti-Racism Taskforce)
 - **Postcard Project** – outreach to 20,000 people between the ages of 25 and 45 within eight neighboring zip codes to share our anti-racism focus and invite them to join us for virtual worship and learning opportunities.
 - **Hope Persists** – Advent initiative offering hope to, and sharing and proclaiming our Christian faith with, the larger community, by displaying yard signs embodying the message of John 1:5: *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
- Outward focus on people who are suffering or marginalized
 - **Advent Support to Seniors** – Partnering with Deacons’ Senior Ministries to deliver Poinsettias, Advent devotions, and a “Hope Persists” pastoral Advent to seniors in need of a tender touch.
 - **Care Giver Support Group** (open to all Church members and the community at large) provides support, information and reassurance to those who are caring for individuals with chronic illnesses like Alzheimer’s and other dementias; diabetes; heart failure; COPD; Parkinson’s; and other debilitating diseases. Group meets twice a month via Zoom. Works closely with the Deacon’s Senior Committee.
 - **Commu-KNIT-y of Faith** and **Quilt Fellowship** makes blankets and quilts for our missions as well as Habitat for Humanity in Lake County, and Heifer International.
 - **First Light Service** (coming up December 10, 2020) – Rev Amy Heinrich is preparing a special virtual Advent worship service for those who have experienced loss over the past year, as well as those who are coping with despair, anxiety and fear created by the pandemic. CC&E will be encouraging people to attend and participate.
 - **Joint Meeting of Deacons and Session Follow-Up** -- Collecting feedback on the spiritual and emotional health of our Church leadership (Deacons and Session) to help us determine our continued outreach to leadership and the congregation as a whole.
 - **Men’s Fix It Crew** (offers home repairs, moving assistance and support to seniors and single moms).
 - **Post Card Project** -- with Faith Formation and Anti-Racism Task Force (see above).
- Identify and empower members to discover their individual call and God-given gifts to go forth and serve.
 - Work has begun to identify church members who may wish to serve in a larger capacity on either the Deacon’s Board or as a member of Session (with the Nominating Committee).
- (Continue to) Develop caring relationships modeled on God’s Love through these on-going ministries/programs:
 - Andrew Ministries
 - Be the Bridge Campaign (with Faith Formation and Anti-Racism Taskforce)
 - Caregiver Support Group
 - Lunch Bunch
 - Men’s Ministry
 - Postcard Project
 - Prayer Chain
 - Realm – Internal Church communication system
 - Small Groups

- Stevens Ministers
- Women's Circles
- Women's Ministry

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Monahan, Elder
Chair, Congregational Care and Evangelism

Assessment by Missions Committee:

Missions Committee

Matthew 25 Initiative Assessment

3. An outward focus. Our church is not a place to escape from the world, but rather our gateway to our community where we may be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Jesus Christ for people who are suffering or marginalized.

- There is a strong belief that Measure 3 represents what the FPCL and the Missions Committee are already doing.
- Our congregation is putting their pocket books towards Missions
- Fundraising shows broad support for FPCL and the missions it supports
- However, we should conduct community analysis to make sure FPCL's support is consistent with community needs.
- We should identify pressure points in the community and work to alleviate them.
- We should make space for members to grow in service.

Elder Jonathan McGormley, Missions Committee Chair

Assessment by Worship Committee:

In terms of an assessment of our current work and how it relates to the mark, the committee has not had an opportunity to discuss in detail yet, but below are my thoughts. Most of the work of the Worship committee for this year has been focused on how to best continue a meaningful Worship experience online in light of the ongoing Pandemic. Much of the focus continues to be on the wonderful musical gifts that are ever present in the worship experience that is coordinated amongst our gifted staff but involves so many talented members of the congregation. While maintaining this within the context of the ongoing virtual worship experience has been a challenge, the staff continues to deliver. As we look forward to 2021 and the eventual renewal of in person worship, we look forward to benefitting from the Chapel renewal project (started just before the pandemic), which is focused on improving the experience for our music-focused Chapel / Contemporary service.

Elder Matt Clemens, Worship Committee Chair

Assessment by Long Range Planning Committee:

Assessment of the LRP Committee's work as it pertains to the Seven Marks of a Congregational Vitality:

Mark #7: Congregations with healthy systems. Our mission focuses are clear. There is fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have thoughtful decision-making structures. Our leaders and staff enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time.

The Long Range Planning Committee ensures thoughtful decision-making by keeping the "big picture" of the church and its future vision in mind as we discuss topics that relate to the church as a whole. The role of the LRP Committee is to figure out who we are as a church, and to continually ask "What are we doing here?"

The Chair of the LRP Committee keeps track of what has been discussed in the past, takes stock of what has been left unresolved, and ensures those topics are brought up again in future agendas in order to resolve them.

The committee functions as a sounding board for the Rev. Dr. Brian Paulson, the head pastor of First Pres. The committee is a place where Brian can bring ideas which are then discussed, keeping the church as a whole in mind. Through the LRP committee, ideas which have been discussed and vetted can be brought to Session.

The LRP Committee's meeting agendas help to frame agendas for monthly Session meetings.

The Chairs of the LRP, Business Affairs and Personnel committees work together to ensure collaboration on large issues pertaining to the church. Traditionally the three committee chairs have met quarterly.

The LRP Committee's main work items since July 2020 have included:

- How the pandemic is intersecting with how we function as a church, and how it influences our long-range vision and work on Strategic Initiatives.
- Accepted the Master Plan as submitted by the Master Plan Task Force, thanked the task force for their work, dismissed the task force and assigned the work suggested in the Master Plan to various committees
- Together with Rev. Dr. Brian Paulson, planned the agenda for the August Session Retreat
- Brought forward a motion to become a Matthew 25 church
- Oversight of Be the Bridge/Matthew 25 Initiative work
- Assigned assessments for the Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality (one of the three Matthew 25 foci) to appropriate committees/task forces
- Collaborated with Business Affairs to review and recommend to Session applications for the disbursement of a \$300,000 gift to our church from an extremely generous anonymous donor to be used "where it is needed most".
- Appointed an Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force
- Reviewed the state of the church at each month's committee meeting

Elder Susan Henning, LRP Chair

Assessment by Business Affairs Committee:

Mathew 25 Church initiatives addressing focus towards "Building Congregational Vitality" Current initiatives for "Mark #7--Healthy Systems" with existing decision making structures, systems, processes and resources.

3 Bullet Points:

1. Implemented a new financial and accounting program/system intended to facilitate and improve fiscal and financial information maintenance and reporting.
2. Evaluated and adjusted investment alternatives and fund managers within the Church's Endowment to address perceived risk factors in the current investment environment.
3. Studied Church facilities...reviewed and prioritized anticipated building and facilities long range maintenance requirements and expectations. Coordinated financial resources and initiated projects with immediate priority.

Elder Ed Slack, Business Affairs Chair

Assessment by Personnel Committee:

#7: Congregations with healthy systems. Our mission focuses are clear. There is fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have thoughtful decision-making structures.

Our leaders and staff enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time. The Personnel committee shares the same mission as the overall church: To gather and grow disciples of Jesus Christ. For our part, that means we hire and support staff whose objectives are to follow that mission. The committee has fiscal responsibility over our yearly budget. The budget is monitored by our committee and also the Business Affairs committee. We as well as the Session and the Business Affairs committee hold the accountability for the budget. We have thoughtful decision-making structures in that we have the Personnel Manual which is the handbook that applies to all employees and is intended to provide guidelines and summary information about the Church's personnel policies, procedures, benefits, and rules of conduct. This document is the backbone in our decision making processes. Our leaders and staff do enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time. Based upon the Presbytery rules, and those set forth in our Personnel Manual, our Pastors have packages that carve out specific vacation time and study time. The balance of the staff have clear set vacation time allotments based upon their positions and number of hours worked.

Elder Brigitte Davis, Personnel Chair

Assessment by Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force:

Matthew 25 Congregation
ARETF

Caring Relationships Modeled on God's Love. We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God's love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.

The ARETF has engaged in a number of activities that would support this mark of a vital congregation. All of the work of the ARETF has been done to facilitate reconciliation with the world, especially with our brothers and sisters of color who have suffered oppression.

- Anti Racism and Equity Page on the First Pres website - A page was created with links to lots of information including different programs offered through the church, videos by the pastors on Biblical Grounding for Black Lives Matter and resources for adults and families to broaden their knowledge of racism and equity.
- Be the Bridge 101 (With Faith Formation) - In the fall of 2020, almost 75 people from Presbyterian churches in Libertyville, Lake Forest, Arlington Heights and Deerfield participated in this class, which focused on White Identity, White Privilege, White Fragility and White Supremacy. Feedback from the participants indicated that it was very well received and considered a valuable experience. This class will be offered again in early 2021 for First Pres members and others.
- How to Raise Anti-Racist Children (With Faith Formation) - in the summer of 2020, several young parents created a curriculum and facilitated groups for parents to explore big questions about how to raise children with anti-racist values. Between 25-30 people participated in this three part series. This class will be repeated in early 2021.
- Movie Discussions - In the summer of 2020, Rev. Melanie Hammond Clark led small group discussions of 3 movies related to the topics of racism and social justice. About 70 people participated in this experience. In December 2020, there will be two more nights when participants will watch a documentary and engage in a discussion afterwards.
- Postcard project with CC&E - A postcard was sent out in November 2020 to over 20,000 individuals in the area between the ages of 25 and 45, informing them about First Pres and inviting them to join us for Soul Circle, Be the Bridge 101 and a parent group early in 2021. It was hoped that the postcard not only welcomed all who received it into fellowship with our church but that their minds and hearts would be moved toward reconciliation if they participated in the programs.
- Encouraged the Session of First Pres to participate in Presbyterian Week, and to become a Matthew 25 congregation. Both of these affiliations support the awareness and eradication of racism and social injustice.
- Partnerships with churches of color - The ARETF is creating a plan to renew our relationship with Hope Presbyterian Church in Chicago and find new ways to work with this church in a

meaningful way. A relationship has also been created with Daniel Hartman, the director of Mosaic Ministries in North Chicago. The ARETF sought and was granted \$15,000.00 from the Session (Major Gift Money) to give to this ministry to support their Hub project. This project is creating a transformational gathering place in North Chicago where all members of the community can gather together and take part in activities such as youth development, creative arts, worship, and prayer. ARETF hopes to help facilitate events at this hub that would involve members of First Pres.

- Video/Forum - A video sharing information about ARETF was created by the co-chairs, Debra Alexander and Tucker Olson, and shown during the online service on 11/22/20. In this video the need and purpose for ARETF was clarified as well as the work they have been doing. Viewers were invited to engage with this task force if they have ideas, a desire to help, concerns or celebrations. Following the service that day, a forum was held to address the joys, concerns and next steps of the ARETF. Over 80 people participated, and their comments indicated a strong level of support for the work of the task force.
- Institutional Race Equity Audit - The task force has been exploring organizations that can help First Pres engage in an institutional audit. Such an audit would seek to create a shared understanding of systemic oppression in the US and its institutions. It would also assess how our programs, products, services, structure, policies and history may create and maintain structures and culture where systemic racism thrives, and identify and recommend changes to the culture and structures to make it more inclusive and antiracist.

ARETF has accomplished a lot since its inception in June 2020. The task force began with 6 Session members, and has now grown to 18, and includes a diverse representation of the congregation. We are hoping that the task force will be made a permanent committee to keep this work a regular part of First Pres life. The task force continues to seek and plan new ways to provide opportunities for members of First Pres and the broader community to learn about racism and inequity present in our country and work for reconciliation with our brothers and sisters of color.

Elder Debra Alexander, Co-chair Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force

Assessment by Stewardship Committee (not assigned a mark):

Although the Stewardship Committee was not assigned a task from the Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality, the committee approved the following statement at our meeting last evening regarding the stewardship campaign to add to the total session response. It would best fit mark #7, fiscal responsibility and accountability.:

"The Stewardship Committee conducted a focused three-month campaign entitled "First Fruits, Returned to God" to encourage giving estimates from members and friends for 2021. It entailed weekly articles in the online Parish Life newsletter, four-minute video testimonials from congregants and receivers of our mission monies during our online church services, and personalized follow up letters. This entailed detailed coordination with numerous committee members, church officials and video technicians. We ended the campaign with a fun filled church drive-by celebration with individual candy

gift bags for each car and blue balloons depicting our giving theme of handfuls of blueberries with a gratitude of thanks for their giving. This was all done during the COVID pandemic which made it all the more meaningful."

Elder John Blair, Stewardship Committee Co-chair

Assessment by Building and Grounds Committee (not assigned a mark):

Buildings & Grounds ensures that our facilities are welcoming, accommodating and in good working order for all the ministries our Church supports such as: PADS, Mobile Food Pantry, Boy Scouts and all other groups that use the Church facilities in any way. Buildings & Grounds works with various committees to ascertain their needs as it relates to the facilities of the Church and does everything possible to work alongside them to achieve their goals.

Susie Lawson, Building and Grounds Chair

Assessment by Deacons Community Committee:

Assessment of the Community Ministry of the Deacon Board's work as it pertains to the Seven Marks of a Congregational Vitality:

The Deacon Board functions as a sounding board for the Rev. Dr. Brian Paulson, the head pastor of First Pres. The committee is a place where Brian can bring ideas which are then discussed, keeping the church as a whole in mind. Through the Deacon Board and the three ministries, (Community, Hospitality and Senior), ideas which have been discussed and vetted can be brought to Session.

The Deacon Board, Session, and Ruling Elders of the church work together to ensure collaboration on large issues pertaining to the church. Traditionally the Deacon board and Session have a joint annual meeting. However, due to constraints added by the pandemic, the various Deacon Ministries have met virtually since assuming their roles in July 2020. The three ministries and the combined board meeting agendas help to frame the ministries actions for annual Session approval.

The Board ensures thoughtful decision-making by keeping the "big picture" of the church and its future vision in mind as we discuss topics that relate to the church as a whole. The role of the Deacon Board is to figure out how we as a church can serve our members and the community.

The co-chairs of the Community Ministry of the Deacon Board keep track of what has been discussed in the past, take stock of what has been left unresolved, and ensure those topics are brought up again in future agendas in order to resolve them.

Community Ministries is primarily an outward focus for the congregation in that we show our church is not a place to escape from the world, but rather to provide a gateway for our members to our community where we may be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Jesus Christ for people are suffering or marginalized. Specifically, the Community Ministry main work items since July 2020 have included:

- Providing work crews and funding for Waukegan Soup Kitchen on a monthly basis
- Collecting donations for Meal-A-Month (assigned food items) on a monthly basis, or funding in support of local food pantries 12/16/2020
- Annual drive for independence where clothing and disposables are collected for charities on an annual basis
- Collection of cash, gift cards and supplies for PADS Lake County, an organization that provides shelter for individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis. Currently this effort is now based in local hotels due to the pandemic.
- Annual Giving Tree (gift tag requests) in support of presents for five local charities
- Book Bag/School Supply Drive in August where back packs and school supplies are provided to Waukegan to College students, Mobile Food Pantry guests and Hope Presbyterian Church of Chicago school age children.
- Annual Winter Clothing Drive where winter clothing (hats, scarves, gloves, coats, snow pants, etc.) are collected from the congregation and provide to guests from First Presbyterian Mobile Food Pantry quests and Goodwill.
- Planning for annual clothing drive for clothing (socks, undergarments and garments) are to be provided for homeless quests in the PADS program.
- Planning for annual funding collection in support of food items and operating costs of the Waukegan Soup Kitchen.

Submitted by Richard Alexander, Deacons Community Ministry Committee Co-Chair

Assessment by Deacons Senior Committee:

As we look at the senior ministry:

1. Outward focus

- a. Understanding the needs of our senior community, their preferences, especially as we come back to church services in 2021.
- b. The direct contact has been key during COVID and we think this needs to continue even after COVID is stabilized
- c. Start back up with Services at the 4 senior centers once COVID is stabilized and partner with the those centers, so we are prepared for 2021. Continue to Build a strong partnership with them.

2. Caring Relationships modeled on God's love

- a. The Senior ministry has a calendar of events for 2021
 - i. Monthly services
 - ii. Home visits / calls

- iii. Lunches
- iv. Cards (holidays, birthdays, thinking of you, etc.)
- v. Yard signs
- vi. Grandparent Days
- b. Would like to plan out first 6 months – Valentines Day, Easter – so are ahead of it and ensure our seniors feel included in activities
- c. Continue to connect our pastors with our seniors and be that helping/extended hand of pastors.
- d. Feedback from our seniors on what they would like

Submitted by Deb Tischendorf, Deacons Senior Ministry Committee Co-Chair

Assessment by Deacons Hospitality Committee:

Deacons Hospitality Ministry
Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality
Assessment and update

The Deacons hospitality ministry has reviewed the seven marks of congregational vitality with a particular focus on number six, “caring relationships modeled on God’s love.” It is not a challenge to incorporate this into our work as it is essentially our mission statement. While most of our hospitality activities have been on hold due to the pandemic, we have continued to strive to provide opportunities for our congregation to interact and foster relationships beyond worship. Moving forward we would like to try to extend this same opportunity for members of our community, including but also moving beyond our congregation.

Sue Fosmoen and Lisa Mehta, Deacons Hospitality Ministry Committee Co-chairs