

## Seven Marks of Vital Congregations

A review of a denominational resource by Committee on Ministry member, Connie Happell

*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?*      *1 Corinthians 3:16*  
*See, the home of God is among mortals....See, I am making all things new.*      *Revelation 21:3, 5*

### **We know that God is always at work in and around us to bring new life.**

How do we become more mindful of the Spirit's presence and activity?

What are the identifying marks of the Spirit's work in and among us?

How can our congregations can keep in step with the Spirit?

What is the Lord doing in our communities and how might we be invited join?

Through study, prayer and collaboration, the PCUSA office of Theology, Formation and Evangelism has developed the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations. The "marks" are characteristics of churches that are present in healthy congregations. They are:

- a) Lifelong Discipleship Formation
- b) Intentional Authentic Evangelism
- c) Outward Incarnational Focus
- d) Empower Servant Leadership
- e) Spirit-Inspired Worship
- f) Caring Relationships
- g) Church Health

On this foundation, they developed a program for church revitalization. While Flint River Presbytery has opted not to participate in the program, helpful resources are available online and free for all to use in the Immediate Toolkit Resources (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/vital-congregations-immediate-toolkit/>).

- **7-week Bible Study on the Seven Marks (page 3-1)** -- Includes prayer, scripture, background information on the passage and reflection questions. **Can be used for church leadership or any group bible study.**
- **Survey of Congregational Vitality (page 6-1)** -- **A sample of a discernment tool for Sessions.**
- **Neighborhood Analysis (page 7-1)** -- **An exercise for churches to grow in understanding of the neighborhood surrounding the church building.**

We hope these resources are helpful to you as you love and serve Jesus Christ!