

Vital Signs for **Healthy Congregations**

 The *South Georgia* Conference
of The United Methodist Church

www.sgaumc.org/vitalsigns

Vital Signs Assessment Tool

Vital signs are measurements of the body's most basic functions and are routinely monitored to help assess general health, give clues to possible diseases, and show progress toward recovery. For congregations, vital signs measure and point towards the effectiveness and fruitfulness of a church. Worship is one vital sign of a healthy church.

This assessment tool uses the 4-D process (Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver) to help laity, clergy, and congregations gauge their own health, vitality, and wellness as we seek to become more Alive Together in Christ through worship. This tool invites personal reflection as well as direction for crucial conversations with the leadership of your local church. Visit www.sgaumc.org/vitalsigns for additional conversation starters.



1. Make Personal Time With God (PTWG) a priority.

Discover: *What does PTWG look like in my life?*

Dream: *Recognizing that I will eventually become what I pay attention to, how might PTWG become more a part of my life?*

Design: *What am I already doing to live into this vision? What might I try? What help do I need?*

Deliver: *How will I know when I get there? What will I be doing, seeing, and saying?*

2. Think about when your local church was alive together in worship in the past year.

Discover: *Where was the service? Who was involved? What caused it be so alive?*

Dream: *Where is God calling us to be more Alive Together in Worship at this time? If we were living into that what would our church be doing, seeing, saying?*

Design: *What are we already doing to live into this vision? What might we try? What help do we need: people, resources? How might the unchurched and/or inactives be invited to join in planning?*

Deliver: *How will we know when we get there? What will be happening in our church, in our community, and in our own lives?*

3. What were our 10 worship services with highest attendance in the past year?

(Note: This may include days other than Sunday. Christmas Eve, for instance, is often one of the highest attended services of the year.)

Discover: *What makes each of these services alive? Where is God moving? What has God blessed? What are our strengths in worship?*

Dream: *What dreams might we have for increasing attendance in each of these services in the coming year? What is God calling us to be more of at this time? How do we build on our strengths in worship?*

Design: *What are we already doing to live into this vision? What might we try? Who do we need to invite to join us?*

Deliver: *How will we know when we get there? What will be happening in our church, in our community, and in our own lives?*

4. Pay attention to those you seek to reach.

Discover: *Are we paying attention to those around us? Do we think about worship from the perspective of those we are seeking to reach, those who are not an active part of the church or not attending church at all? What do people in our community care about?*

Dream: *What kinds of people are we reaching and who is missing? Think about young adults, singles, Baby Boomers, racial and ethnic groups, youth, children, men, etc.*

Design: *How can we be intentional in reaching out and designing worship for diverse groups of people? Do we have a visitor feedback survey and, if so, how do we use it to enhance how we are reaching out?*

Deliver: *How will we know when we get there? What will be happening in our church, in our community, and in our own lives?*

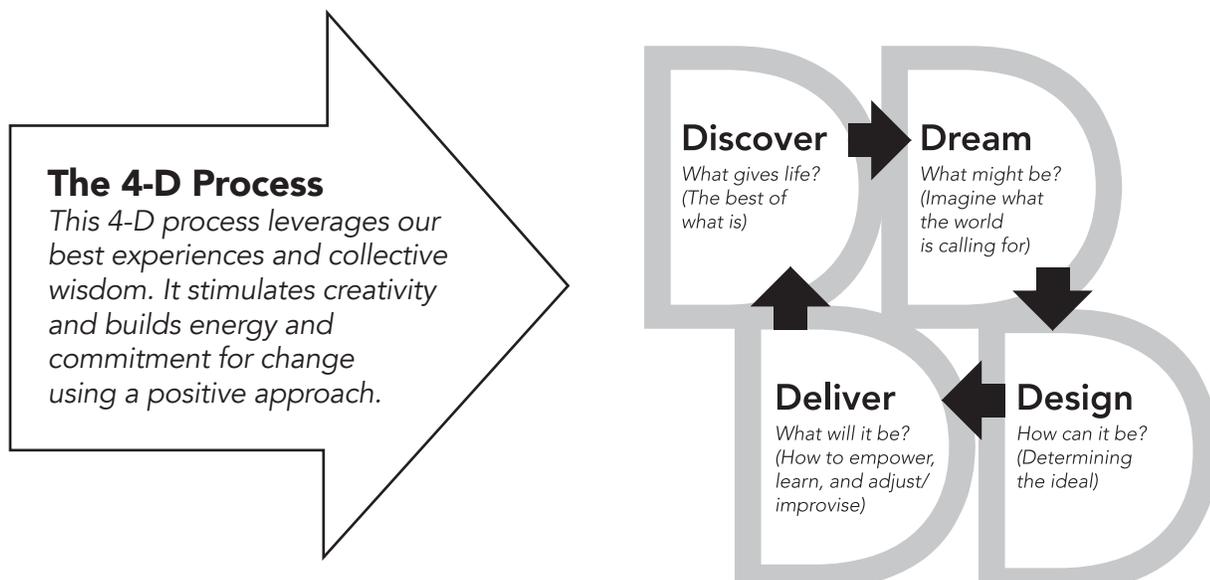
5. Pay attention to attendance seasons and patterns.

Discover: *What are the trends and patterns for our church around big days, prime seasons and low times?*

Dream: *What information could we gather to help us evaluate and monitor attendance? How would this information help us in planning for transformative worship and programming?*

Design: *What tools could we use and develop to assist us in providing a continuous big picture of our church members' participation?*

Deliver: *How will we know when we get there? What will be happening in our church, in our community, and in our own lives?*





Worship Matters!

Worship is the primary arena in which we experience firsthand what it means to be Alive Together in Christ. So when I think about vital signs in terms of the life of the Church, I immediately think of worship.

In his book *Overflow*, Dr. Lovett Weems says, "Worship is powerful. It changes lives. If you want to do something to increase the joy of God and bless others, than it will be important to figure out how to make worship more real, more communal, more personal, and more inclusive. In ways small and large, worship is a key to the transformation of the world."

Worship matters because what you worship is what you become. We eventually become what we pay attention to. And paying attention to our heart's desire for God builds us up in the Christian faith and connects us with others who are alive in Christ.

Will you join me in looking at practical ways to increase worship attendance as we move towards our goal of a 10 percent increase in the South Georgia Conference?

I am thankful for you and for your faithful ministry to the Church. My prayer is that we may be filled with the power of God so that nothing in the world can defeat us as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

May we all seek to grow more Alive Together in Christ through worship!

R. Lourenson Bryan