

## *Qualities Found in Vital Congregations*

1. Vital congregations know their contexts and are outwardly focused; they use organizational intelligence and are open to seeing the landscape of which they are a part. Vital congregations are clear about their identity purpose and its connection to the larger community.
2. Prayerful and intentional discern where God is calling them. They demonstrate strong and deep spiritual life as community.
3. Vital congregations put most of their energy into making their strengths even stronger.
4. Risk-taking and experimentation are valued.
5. Mistakes are viewed as learning events.
6. There is a major emphasis on developing a relational leadership culture – listening intently to the experience and aspirations of the congregation.
7. Leaders and members are self-differentiated; clear about where they stand and what they value, yet committed to staying connected to people of all points of view; non-anxious.
8. Fierce (robust) conversations are encouraged and engaged in. Tough conversations are not ignored.
9. “Radical hospitality” is a primary value.
10. Worship and music lead people to an experience of the transcendent; worship is adapted to the needs of those the congregation is trying to reach.
11. The congregation is constantly evaluating their progress and adjusting when necessary; they know how well they are doing or not doing. They use organizational intelligence.
12. The congregation knows that:
  - a. “culture “trumps strategy
  - b. “climate” trumps growth
  - c. adaptability trumps status quo
  - d. leadership trumps pastoral presence
13. Open leadership system not tightly controlled by a select few.
14. Membership with a thirst for life-long learning and formation.

15. Overwhelmingly affirm the quality of relationships that create a positive climate in the church.
16. Bear witness to a high level of flexibility rather than simply sticking to established/comfortable ways of doing things.
17. Question assumptions.
18. Quick to mend fractured relationships; and quick to identify anxiety in the congregation and deal with it openly.
19. Have given up on long-term strategic planning given how rapidly the world is changing.
20. Are adaptive; not relying on knowledge from the past, but open to learning how to lead in the uncertain present and future .