

Shaped by a Living Hope

A Listing of the Benchmarks for Healthy Congregations

VISION

The vibrant and faithful congregation is inspired and guided by the presence and promises of a loving and generous God.

- The congregation consistently celebrates, shares, reflects upon and makes decisions based on God's grace and promises in light of the story of Jesus Christ crucified, risen and ascended, and the other narratives of faith found in Scripture.
- The congregation's primary concern centres on love for God and neighbour, in devotion to Christ.
- The greater part of the congregation is engaged enthusiastically and imaginatively in a clearly articulated and realized missional purpose.
- The congregation sets bold and generous goals as a response to, and reflection of the extravagant nature of God's love.

VITALITY

The vibrant and faithful congregation places priority on those practices and activities that shape its life according to the promised and immanent Reign of God.

Worship

- The congregation participates in joyful and engaging Anglican liturgy that opens people to the transformative presence and purposes of God.

Formation

- The congregation reclaims the deep traditions of Christianity by intentional, creative and reflective engagement with characteristic practices of Christian Faith.
- The congregation consistently and intentionally creates caring groups in which people find mutual support, reflect upon scripture, pray together, share faith, and participate in the missional purpose of the congregation.
- The wider congregation regards its youth and children as participants in God's mission rather than as targets of its mission.

Common Life

- The members of the congregation support and care for one another and those of the wider church through visitation, socialising, pastoral care, common mission and the sharing of resources.
- The congregation consistently and intentionally creates caring groups in which people may find mutual support, reflect upon scripture, pray together, share faith, and participate in the missional purpose of the congregation.
- The congregation practices reconciliation and demonstrates mutuality, respect, trust and love, particularly in the resolution of disagreements and conflict, in openness to “minority insights” and in dealing with agents of antagonism.
- The wider congregation regards its youth and children as participants in God’s mission rather than as targets of its mission.

Service and Hospitality

- The congregation exercises and experiences the radical friendship of Jesus by extending the care and support of its common life to the stranger.
- The congregation employs a systematic and effective process of welcome and personal follow-up with visitors/guests and newcomers.
- The greater part of the congregation engages in activity directed beyond its congregational life that is rooted in a healthy vision and missional purpose.
- The congregation participates in meaningful missional partnerships and demonstrates an active commitment to service as part of the wider church.

Initiation

- The congregation employs a systematic and effective process of welcome and personal follow-up with visitors/guests and newcomers.
- The congregation has a deliberate and flexible process for introducing and incorporating individuals into life in Christ through worship, formation, common life, service and hospitality.

VIABILITY

The vibrant and faithful congregation allows vision and vitality to drive efforts toward sustainability and growth.

Innovation and Change

- The congregation nurtures a culture of imaginative innovation and faithful change in all aspects of its life.

Physical Resources

- The physical resources of the congregation facilitate dynamic worship, the effective formation of disciples, a vibrant common life and a fruitful missional purpose.
- The condition and use of the congregation's facilities demonstrate a responsible stewardship of the environment.

Financial Resources

- The congregation fosters and exhibits a culture of generous and joyful giving.
- The financial resources, practices and structures of the congregation (including its constituent groups) reflect healthy vision and vitality, responsive to a clear missional purpose.

Leadership

- The congregation supports and provides for the development of leadership that motivates, guides, elevates and oversees its ministries, assets and activities in a manner consistent with the benchmarks of healthy congregations.

Communication

- Vision and missional purpose, ministry needs and opportunities, encouraging stories of grace and hope, and other aspects of church life are consistently and compellingly communicated in and beyond the congregation through a wide variety of means.
- The congregation actively listens to the stories, needs, aspirations and concerns of the surrounding community.

Copyright © Diocese of Algoma. Portions copyright © D. Jay Koyle and Eighth Day Perspectives. For those outside the Diocese of Algoma wishing to copy or adapt this resource, please contact the Congregational Development office for permission.

Congregational Development - The Diocese of Algoma Anglican (Episcopal) Church of Canada
 P.O. Box 1168 Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 5N7 Canada 705-256-5061 x22
 congdevelopment@dioceseofalgoma.com www.dioceseofalgoma.com