



August 26, 2019

To: Pastors of our Congregations

Clerks of Sessions

From: Reverend Randy Barge, Moderator Presbytery of Philadelphia

Reverend Ruth Faith Santana-Grace, Executive Presbyter

Re: Vital Congregations Initiative

As part of our larger Ministry and Leadership Incubator, we are excited to share that the Leadership Collegium of our presbytery has embraced participating in a denominational initiative focused on strengthening the local congregation. This is part of a continuing pilot coordinated by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to encourage churches with 300 members and under to embark intentionally on a two-year journey that will lead to discernment and the birth of new possibilities.

Although we have not yet been selected, we have submitted our letter requesting to participate - and given some preliminary conversations, we are hopeful we will be on their list when they announce the next class on November 25, 2019. As such, we are inviting you to consider being part of this initiative.

We have included a summary sheet of requirements for your information. It provides you with basic commitment and costs – a commitment of pastor and at least ten leaders, a one-time contribution of \$600 for the two year journey that will be supplemented by the presbytery covering costs for facilitators and training expenses, estimated at about \$15,000, and an estimated \$2,200 for training for pastor and 1 lay leader. This cost could be partially off-set by grants made available by the presbytery, Vital Congregation, and other sources.

Many of you have expressed a sense of weariness or distress for where the local church seems to be going. We believe this could help us move from focusing on a theology of scarcity to embodying a theology of abundance.

Please take some time to visit the website for more information - <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/vital-congregations/>

Rev. Greg Klimovitz, our Associate Presbyter, will be overseeing this initiative along with a team of leaders. We are hopeful that together we can renew the vision and hope of our witness so that we might even more intentionally be a transforming agent for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We will have an information meeting on **Wednesday, September 25th at 1p.m. at the Presbytery Office** to answer any questions you might have, with expectation that you will respond to this invitation by November 30, 2019.

Always grateful for your witness and faithfulness, trusting that God continues to do a new thing with and among us.

In Christ,



Rev. Ruth Faith Santana- Grace



Rev. Randy Barge