Missional Vital Signs Explanations

This is an update with the changes of the Missional Vital Signs (MVS) for the local church. It is important to remember that these numbers are only indicators of the behaviors that produce them. This tool is to discern the health of the church - what works, what does not, where should we make changes, and most importantly, how can we bring more disciples to Christ?

This information is gathered weekly and reported monthly through electronic means by the local church to the Office of Congregational Vitality. Any questions or troubleshooting would begin with the district office administrative assistant.

Every church should have a designated person who is the MVS reporter. The MVS reporter’s e-mail will be used to send the reminders with quick links to report. Any change in the person designated to do the reporting should be changed through the church log in on the conference website. Contact the district office if unable to make those changes.

Passionate Worship/AWA

This number includes any service held weekly as a primary opportunity for worship, including alternative worship services in addition to regular Sunday morning services. Examples of alternative services are a separate youth worship service as part of youth ministry, a Celebrate Recovery service, and a service held on a week night or Saturday, including a Fresh Expressions type of worship that meets the above criteria.

Children who participate in a children’s service may be counted, but not infants. If a group is away together on a mission trip or retreat, those people may also be counted.

- Choir, ushers, other volunteers, or staff serving at more than one service should not be counted more than once per week.
- Do not count occasional and special services, such as Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Christmas Eve and funerals.

Online Viewing

(No current standard) This number measures online viewing by the number of clicks the first week after posting (data collected previous week). We recommend you use some kind of analytics like Google Analytics to view the number of clicks on that URL.

Special Services

The number of people who attend a service that is infrequent, not usual – beyond regular weekly services (Wed. night services counted with AWA if held weekly all year long) These are also valuable indicators of health and growth year to year seeing the change and the fruitfulness of these efforts.

Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Revival Service, Church Homecoming, Remembrance Service, Longest Night/Blue Christmas, Musicals, Healing Service, Blessing of the Animals, and Baptism Service (if held separately from a regular service and has all the components of worship).

Radical Hospitality/POF & RAF (Joining the Church)

Radical hospitality: the total number of persons received into membership measured by “profession of faith” (POF) and “reaffirmation of faith” (RAF). Continued....
**POF:** The first public expression of commitment to Christian faith by an individual in which she or he acknowledges commitment to Jesus Christ and pledges to learn to live as one of His disciples. This number includes youth who join the church through the confirmation process. It also includes adults who have never been a member of a congregation who come to faith and choose to live out that faith as part of your congregation.

**RAF:** Reaffirmation of faith indicates “a person who has been baptized at some point in his or her life, has made a profession of faith, and has possibly been a member of a congregation but has not actively been involved for quite some time. These people are renewing their faith as part of your congregation. They are not a transfer from another congregation.

**Commitment to Christ** (Evangelism, saying YES to Christ)

This number represents the number of persons making a first time commitment to Christ. (not same as POF)

Purpose: To see if “Commitments to Christ” translate into POF’s. Are we bringing people in with evangelism and then into a faith journey? Are there systems in place for people’s spiritual journey?

**Intentional Discipling Small Groups**

This measure is the number of persons involved in intentional discipling small groups. A discipling small group is defined as any group with two or more individuals who meet at least monthly (to be counted the week of meeting), share a commitment to become more like Jesus, read and reflect on scripture, explore what it means to apply God’s word to their lives, share honest feedback, and pray for one another. Examples include discipleship study, most Sunday school classes, alpha groups, youth groups, Emmaus reunion groups, Financial Peace, and Celebrate Recovery small groups. Not counted are Scouts, outside groups like AA, choir (unless intentional about the above criteria), or child care for group meetings.

**Salty Service (Redefined)**

For measurement purposes and understanding the health of the church, count the number of persons serving through church ministries to the community for a least one hour.

People serve other people in many ways and this is still very important (Rotary, Guardian Ad Litem, hospital volunteers). Please know this is great ministry. For our purpose of evaluating the health of the church, we are focusing on the outreach ministries, missions, serving through the local church.

**Extravagant Generosity**

This number is the total amount given to God’s church for budgeted operating and capital expenses and missional purposes in addition to or part of the budget. This includes all contributions received by pledged and unpledged giving, loose plate offerings, and funds given for capital debt, building or repairs, or special offerings to ministries beyond the church (UMCH, youth mission trip, Africa University, Habitat for Humanity, Storm Recovery or a sister congregation in Cuba or Angola).

Excluded are interest income, memorial bequeaths, facility use fees, income from child care, adult day care ministries, thrift stores, pumpkin patches and similar fundraisers, as these do not reflect the financial generosity of the congregation.