

# VITALITY PATHWAY



## *Immeasurably More*

BY AMY GRONLI

As we walk along the Vitality Pathway, we might begin to worry when we doubt we are passing as many milestones as those spaced out on a human-made trail. We might look down at our weary feet and see the apparently same ground under our shoes that was under them at the beginning. Our logical sides demand to see tangible outcomes for the time, energy, and resources being spent in this endeavour.

We want Newton's Laws to apply to the spiritual realm: we want every action to lead to an equal and opposite reaction, and we want to avoid all opposing forces that might stop our forward momentum.

We want to see mountains of change overnight, but...we will not see an anthill of it if we are measuring outcomes by human standards. Ephesians 3:20 says that God

“is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.” After all, it is impossible to know what God can do with our efforts. When we give a child encouragement, he might not change into a perfect angel overnight, but those words might just be enough to bring him through a tough week at home. When we pray for an elderly friend's health, it might not bring physical healing, but it might bring a much-needed sense of being loved. When we donate to a charity, it might not just provide physical essentials for a person but could also lead to her salvation. In our church as we walk the Vitality Pathway, we should not count our progress by the milestones we reach but the time spent in the journey, praying that God uses us to do so much more for Him than we can possibly imagine.

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*For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...*

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called...*

*Eph. 2:14 & 4:3-4*

## *Vitality from the Rearview Mirror*

BY PASTOR KEVIN MELIN

One story involving our parsonage from the 60's is so telling, refreshing and has a spirit to repeat. We were between pastors in 1965 and an issue that became potentially divisive involved our then parsonage and the issue was whether "to remodel the old house or build new." As a church we were divided as to what to do. Well as things were, the problem kind of took care of itself ... sort of...

Late in the fall of 65, "one of our men, we don't know who, went and drained the pipelines and turned off the water. Later yet in that fall someone else, we don't know who," went and turned the main water 'off' only to really turn it 'on.' The next winter, when things turned very cold, pipes froze, cracked and with spring thaw, water spilled throughout the parsonage going undetected for quite some time. Absolute ruin!

Our congregation's response was to 'rebuild' with all the men donating time and work. All put their hands to the task with the ladies of the church providing food, coffee and refreshments along with painting and staining the interiors. Discovered ruin in late February, torn down in March and finished by May 10th at the total cost of \$15k+ with

all volunteer labor! A Nehemiah like feat! Wow!!

Now here is my point... it is SO refreshing to have NO finger pointing, NO accusations, NO conspiracy theories. No disclosers of who did it nor recollections of what side of the 'rebuild or remodel' original conflict either men held. I have 37 years of history in this congregation and though I've heard this story recounted numerous times, never has anyone divulged the men's identities!

We simply see ONE people of God sacrificially doing their part to do the best in unique circumstances to move forward TOGETHER. In a day where everyone wants their way and so much blame is being laid to demonize the other side, vitality and health is found in coming together and finding a way to rebuild and remake what is broken in a spirit of true unity. What a great faith vitality lesson in keeping with the gospel that we should want to repeat!

Christ came, mounted a cross and broke the dividing wall of hostility creating ONE humanity, 'the Church.' Let's do all we can to maintain the unity of the body of Christ for the sake of the Kingdom of God moving forward.





# Let's review the Vitality Pathway

BY MELISSA CHRISTIANSEN

We are approaching the end of Phase 1 in the Vitality Pathway! The pathway laid out for our congregation has 3 phases, and as Phase 2 comes into focus it's a good time to review the process.

Phase 1 is the beginning of the pathway and generally lasts 4-6 months. It began with our Veritas workshop where the truth of our congregational vitality was discussed and questions were asked. Do we see ourselves as healthy missional, stable, critical moment or at risk? The overall response placed us somewhere around stable with some arrows pointing toward healthy and some pointing toward critical.

After the veritas workshop, we formed what we call our "vitality team". This team has been tasked to fulfill 8 functions and Phase

1 has seen the team prioritizing 5 of those functions. Our priorities have been establishing a process of pervasive prayer, initiating a relational covenant, finding our biblical story, clarifying the mission, and developing a plan for communication. Each team member has been busy prayerfully seeking answers to fulfill their specific roles.

Phase 2 will see the church committing itself to the journey of vitality. We expect this next phase of the journey to last another 4-6 months. Here our priorities will be learning from history, developing an internal profile and accessing the community through an external profile. While Phase 1 has largely been completed by the Vitality Team, Phase 2 will see the congregation at large becoming more involved.

Part of phase 2 will be a workshop for strategic leaders within the congregation about empowering people and inspiring change (EPIC). EPIC will equip them with the necessary skills they need to lead the congregation on this pathway of change. There will also be a Service of Consecration during Phase 2 which will be

a public gathering where we will recommit our hearts to the Lord and commit to follow his leading. Near the end of Phase 2 we will ask the congregation to participate in an online PULSE assessment of the church. This assessment will give special emphasis to the primary characteristics of a healthy and missional church that are referred to as the "Ten Healthy Missional Markers". Phase 2 will be accompanied by Pastor Kevin preaching on these 10 missional markers as a sermon series.

Phase 3, the final phase, will be the home stretch. At that time the Vitality team will present their work to the congregation. The leadership team will then prepare and implement a church wide plan for focus on those ministries where the church feels it's being led. It is expected that Phase 3 will last about 6 months.

What an exciting and educational journey we are on! We ask that you continue to pray for this process and for the leading of the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our ministry. Transparency is the goal, so please reach out to any Vitality Team members or church leadership with questions or feedback you may have.

## VITALITY TEAM MEMBERS

**Jeff Koehler**  
Relational Covenant

**Barry Lynch**  
Clarify the Mission

**Mike Erickson**  
Biblical Story

**Sara Barber**  
External Profile

**Kevin Melin**  
Learn from History

**Mike McCain**  
Pervasive Prayer

**Melissa Christiansen**  
Communication

