

7 Marks of Vital Congregations (even during Covid-19)

Mark #1: Lifelong Discipleship Formation

Share in reading aloud the entire scripture texts and quotes below:

Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 11:18-21 “ . . . what does the LORD require of you? Only to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, and to serve the LORD . . . ”

Matthew 25 “Be prepared (25:1-13). . . put your resources to work (25:14-30) . . . live out your faith through actions (25:31-46) Ellen Sherby, *Mission Crossroads*, Fall 2020

The church’s job is to till the soil, prepare the heart, ready the mind, still the soul, and stay awake so we notice where God is on the move, and follow. -Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian*

*Christian “discipleship” or “spiritual formation” is training for apostleship, training for mission. From this understanding we place **less** emphasis on . . . lineage, rites, doctrines, structures, and terminology . . . and **more** emphasis on . . . actions, service, outreach, kindness, and effectiveness.* -Brian McClaren – *A Generous Orthodoxy*.

Lifelong Discipleship Formation = “from cradle to grave, seeking to be formed for right living with God and with all people, . . . being awakened and engaged in issues facing today’s cultures. Versus: complacent Christian piety, simply teaching good morals, or offering the latest educational programs. PCUSA VCI Manual

Sample Reflection and Discussion questions:

- 1) Revitalizing often requires adjusting to new circumstances and using different words.
 - a. What did you think of when you heard the phrase “Lifelong Discipleship Formation”? How else could you define this mark?
(i.e., “faithful living,” “disciplines of faith”)
 - b. What parts of the scripture and quotes above speak to your experience of “faithful living” during the pandemic?
- 2) In what ways has your life journey or faith grown?
- 3) In what ways does or could our congregation enable people of all age levels to grow in their faith and put their faith into action?