

*Vital & Viable Congregations Working Group Report
Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference UCC
2018 CAM
June 15-17, 2018
Tracy Heilman & Roger Lynn, co-conveners*

At the Conference Board Retreat which took place in September 2017 at Camp Mimanagish the energy in the room was almost tangible. The Rev. Dr. Felix C. Villanueva (Conference Minister for The United Church of Christ in Southern California and Nevada) led us through an exciting visioning process that resulted in identifying three mission priorities which will guide the work of our Conference as we move into the future. One of those priorities was that **“all congregations in the Conference will be vital and viable.”** One of the powerful strengths of this priority is that it is not a one-size-fits-all description. What it means to be “vital and viable” will be different for each of our congregations. And no matter what form that vitality and viability takes, it will be something to celebrate. A working group was formed to begin exploring how we can begin living into this priority. We have met regularly since September (usually via ZOOM). We worked on developing some marks of vital and viable congregations, and then became aware of the work being done by the Rev. Courtney Stange-Tregear (Minister for Church Vitality, Pacific Northwest Conference UCC). We invited her to come share her work with us at a retreat which was held in Great Falls in February. More than 20 participants from across the Conference attended. Working from the marks found in Micah 6:8, she has developed a model which is at once simple, profound, and inspiring. Out of that experience, our working group has changed our name from Vital and Viable Congregations to Micah 6:8. We continue to explore and live into the implications of her model. We have invited Rev. Stange-Tregear to be with us at CAM to lead us through more exploration of the model. Next steps will include exploring ways to reach more congregations with resources and support (including a DVD of Rev. Stange-Tregear’s CAM presentation. We also hope to identify additional leaders from across the Conference to work with us in furthering this process. If you are interested, please contact the Conference Office, Tracy Heilman, or Roger Lynn.