



## Director's Message

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I hope you are well this summer and have had some time away for rest and restoration. Rest is critical for engaging ministry with enthusiasm, wisdom, and faithfulness. I am grateful for the many ways we are experiencing God, bringing the beauty of life to people in our churches and communities. As we continue to partner in the work of nurturing and empowering the body of Christ for gospel ministry, we encounter daily the necessity of engaging congregational vitality. As we seek to center our work on this essential ministry, we are changing the name of this newsletter from "Grace and Gratitude" to "Vitality."

Vitality is all about joining in what God is doing to bring life, love, and justice into every community, relationship, and person on earth. Yes, the work we are called to do together is this big! And this work is all about good news. Good news is not good because it leads to something else, like church growth. The good news of the gospel is simply good news because God loves the world and is working to make things right!

The good news of the gospel is not about a program to grow our churches or even to teach people to share their faith. The good news of the gospel is that God has come to us, in flesh and blood, to bring life to all people. The good news of the gospel is that greed, hatred, division, and oppression do not have the last word. Love does! And people experience and know God's love through Christ's body--the church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are bringing life and love into our neighborhoods and communities. This is evangelism and it is always closely tied to justice because the good news is that the world is being transformed every day.

Evangelism Sunday is on September 17<sup>th</sup>. I invite you to explore the resources linked below, and I pray these resources will equip you to be the body of Christ where you have been placed in the world. May our lives show gratitude to God for the VITALITY we are experiencing in and through our congregations and new worshiping communities!

Ray G. Jones, III  
Director, Theology, Formation & Evangelism



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**New Resources for  
Evangelism Sunday!**  
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