

Notes for Rethink Church Readiness Assessment

The following should be used to guide the discussion and scoring of the **Rethink Church Readiness Assessment** document:

The primary purpose of the document is to promote discussion of the readiness of a church to proceed with the Rethink Church process. The use of the document will result in a numerical score that is indicative of the readiness of a local church to undertake the Rethink Church work.

The score for the local church is calculated by (1) multiplying the number of check marks in the “Strongly Agree” column by 5, the “Agree” column by 4, the “Neither Agree nor Disagree” column by 3, the “Disagree” column by 2 and the “Strongly Disagree” Column by 1 and (2) then adding the results from all columns to obtain a total score. Conclusions about the total score should be based on the following:

- If the total score is > 63 , the church is ready to proceed with the Rethink Church process and is likely to have success in implementing changes/ideas that are developed.
- If the total score is > 45 but < 63 , the church may be successful especially if there are high scores on questions 1-4, but extra effort may be needed to communicate the results to the congregation and strive to reach consensus on a path forward.
- If the total score is < 45 , serious questions may exist that indicate that the church may not be ready to use the Rethink Church process at this time without additional discussion, consensus building and prayer within the congregation. While the total score provided by the Rethink Church Assessment document is important, the most valuable aspect of using the tool is the discussion that is generated. The final decision to proceed or postpone Rethink Church work at the local church level should not be based on the score alone. Instead, the decision should be primarily based on the tone of the discussion and the discernment of those involved as to whether the local church really is ready and eager to move forward.

It is helpful if a third party facilitate and guide the discussion during the Readiness Assessment meeting and help the local congregational team come to a consensus about how to score each statement using the following information and “anchor points”. (Do not pass copies of this guide out to the meeting participants because it may prejudice the scoring – it is best to use the guide to help the participants achieve consensus during the discussion).

- 1. Leadership: Our church leadership (pastor and the lay leadership) have a clear understanding of the mission of the church and have developed a clear vision of what our church can become in the future. *If the mission can be clearly stated and a vision has been developed, score 5. If there is no consensus about the mission and vision or if the mission is stated in terms of “serving each other”, score 1.***
- 2. Leadership: Our church leadership (pastor and the lay leadership) are eager to make our church more vital even if it means significant changes to our worship services, ministries and/or the size or makeup of our congregation. *If there is clear agreement that church vitality is more important to the leaders than status quo, score 5. If there is reluctance to change, score 3. If there is clear opposition or fear of change, score 1.***
- 3. Leadership: Our church leadership (pastor and the lay leadership) clearly accept responsibility for leading any needed changes. *If there is agreement that church leadership is key to any change effort, score 5. If there are differences of opinion about who leads change but the leaders generally understand that they must be involved, score 1. If there is a feeling that any change must be voted on by the congregation, score 1.***
- 4. Leadership: Our church leaders focus on key issues (mission, strategy and ministries) and do not spend significant time or resources on things like an “uncut” lawn, “messy” pots left in the kitchen, etc. *If church leaders focus on major issues related to mission, vision, strategy and ministry, score 5. If***

leaders spend significant time on mundane operational issues, score 1 (note: Trustees, or other committees must spend time on operational issues but these should not be the priority of the pastor or Church Council).

5. **Mission and Vision:** There is a sense of urgency among our leaders and members that our church needs to change to better meet the needs of our community and to remain a viable and vital entity in the future. ***If there is agreement that change is needed to be a vital congregation, score 5 (even if change is in progress). If there is awareness that the status quo is not working, score 3. If there is satisfaction with the status quo, score 1.***
6. **Mission and Vision:** Our ministries are primarily focused on serving others outside the church and offering Christ to a world in need. ***If priority is given to those ministries that focus on reaching others for Jesus Christ (making new disciples) and meeting the physical needs of others, score 5. If the priority for ministries is on serving others by meeting the physical needs of others, score 3. If the priority is on ministries that only focus on meeting the needs of church members, score 1.***
7. **Mission and Vision:** The congregation thinks more about its future than maintaining the status quo. ***If the focus is on moving forward with ministries that will result in new disciples and church growth, score 5. If the making of disciples is considered to be a good thing but not a priority at this time, score 3. If there is fear of bringing in new members to the church or “breaking” tradition, score 1.***
8. **Sense of Unity and Community:** The morale of our members and staff is high. We have a positive outlook towards serving others. ***If morale is considered to be high and being together in service is very important, score 5. If there are morale problems within the congregation and/or staff, score 1.***
9. **Sense of Unity and Community:** Decisions in the church are made based on input from a wide array of members and are not the result of the personal preferences of a small number of people. ***If decisions are made***

by the most appropriate person/committee/council, are well understood and are supported by the vast majority of members, score 5. If decisions are made in the “parking lot” or are not well communicated, score 1.

10. **Sense of Unity and Community:** Our church deals with conflict in a healthy manner by openly discussing issues and praying for guidance. Once decisions are made the vast majority of members support the chosen direction. *If there is no evidence of divisiveness among the congregation and a feeling of trust exists, score 5. If conflict has had an impact on church ministries and decisions but most initiatives move forward, score 3. If conflict has resulted in “paralysis” within the church and positive change is difficult, score 1.*
11. **Sense of Unity and Community:** Our lay leadership is diverse in terms of age, gender, income, etc. *If diversity exists and is valued, score 5. If the lay leadership is essentially homogeneous in terms of age, gender and income, score 1.*
12. **Sense of Unity and Community:** The congregation trusts its leaders and is willing to follow their guidance (based on the belief that they have the direction of the Holy Spirit). *If the leadership feels they understand the preferences of the congregation and the congregation does not “second guess” the leadership when key decisions are made, score 5. If the motives or intent of the leadership is questioned and consensus decisions are difficult to achieve, score 1.*
13. **Sense of Unity and Community:** The membership of the church generally reflects the demographics of the community. *If the demographics of the community and the church are generally homogenous, score 5. If the demographics are significantly different, score 1.*
14. **Support for Change:** There are no significant “pockets” of negativity in the congregation. *If there is a harmonious feeling within the congregation, score 5. If the leadership and the congregation are generally in*

communication and agreement on key issues, score 3. If there are obvious areas of significant disagreement among the congregation and within the leadership, score 1.

15. **Support for Change:** Our church likes to try new things. People feel free to implement new ideas on a consistent basis. *If there are signs that new ideas and new ministries have been implemented within the past year to address known gaps and improve attendance/participation, score 5. If the church has continued to provide the same ministries and maintain the same traditional worship in the face of declining attendance, score 1.*
16. **Support for Change:** Our church regularly evaluates its ministries in light of our mission and makes changes to realign priorities as needed. *If the church has clearly reexamined its ministries in light of its current effectiveness, score 5. If the mission of the church has been discussed and suggestions have been made to introduce new ministries or reach new people but no significant progress has been made, score 3. If there has been no discussion of the effectiveness of the church in light of its mission, score 1.*
17. **Support for Change:** Our church has managed significant changes and/or the implementation of new ideas effectively during the past few years. *If new ministries or significant new ideas have been implemented successfully over the past few years, score 5. If attempts have been made to implement new ministries have been made without much success, score 3. If no attempt has been made to implement new ministries/ideas, score 1.*
18. **Support for Change:** The congregation has adequate resources in terms of finances and active members to engage in change. *If the financial position of the church is sound and members are willing to volunteer for new ministries, score 5. If new resources (financial or human) are difficult to obtain, but can be secured with some “arm twisting”, score 3. If the church is “strangled” by debt or a shortage of volunteers, score 1.*