

Renew 145 Frequently Asked Questions

What is Renew 145? Renew 145 is not a church grown program designed to ‘fix’ struggling churches. Renew 145 is an intentional effort to strengthen congregational vitality by helping congregations focus on growing deeper in relationship with God, in relationship with one another and in relationship with their community.

How did Renew 145 come into existence? Renew 145 is being developed by the Virginia Synod Mission Table as a part of a pilot program through the Congregational Vitality Unit of the ELCA. The approach we are using was developed and implemented in the Lower Susquehanna Synod by Pastor Dave Daubert (Keynote Speaker at 2019 Gathering of the Ministerium) and Pastor Richard Jorgensen, the DEM for the Lower Susquehanna Synod. The Virginia Synod Mission Table attended a training on Congregational Vitality in August 2019 and began adapting the approach to fit our context in the Virginia Synod.

Where did the name Renew 145 come from? The Mission Table considered a series of scripture passages and stories that could serve as an inspiration for our congregational vitality ministry. As the group discussed options, Pastor Philip Bouknight asked how many congregations we have in the Virginia Synod. The answer was 145. Pastor Bouknight started reading Psalm 145 and the Mission Table very quickly determined that Psalm 145:10-21 would serve as the scriptural inspiration for this opportunity to support the congregations of the Virginia Synod as they seek to be healthy, vital ministry outposts in their community.

How does my congregation get involved? The first cohort of 8 congregations participating in Renew 145 will launch on March 6-7, 2020. If you are interested in having your congregation considered for the first cohort, complete the application on the Virginia Synod website and submit it to Pastor John Wertz, Jr.

Who should be on the Renew 145 team? A Renew 145 team will consist of 4-6 individuals from the congregation, plus the pastoral leader(s). Team members should be willing to commit to multiple meetings, two involving travel and an overnight stay. Team members should be passionate about Jesus and excited about the ways God is active in their congregation and community. Ideally, the team will include one member of the Congregation Council to help keep the Council informed on the Renew 145 process, but that is not a requirement.

What will Renew 145 cost? Thanks to grant money from a Churchwide Congregational Vitality Grant, the cost per team will be \$600 (which includes 2 overnight retreats for your team).

When will the rest of the meeting schedule be announced? The plan is to use digital and distributed learning techniques to help limit the amount of travel as much as possible. Once we establish which congregations will be participating and where they are located, then the Mission Table will finalize the dates for the remainder of the schedule.

If we don't participate now, will we have another opportunity? Yes. The next Renew 145 Cohort is scheduled to launch in Fall 2021. If there is tremendous interest from congregations, then it is possible a second cohort will launch sooner. The plan is to have Renew 145 cohorts on a regular basis moving forward.

