

## **Vision: What and How**

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Vision is the congregation's story imagined, but yet to unfold. It is not an ideal future, but a core story that relates a congregation's history and faith heritage with its present and imagined future. Vision emerges from imagining with the heart. This imagery arises from the interplay of various congregational voices and perspectives engaged in dialogue: bright glimmers of hope and possibility; dark struggles of pain yearning for healing and transformation; the hard edges of fact; and the voice of faith.

Hope is sustained by the creative passions and commitments of members of the congregation. Pain is carried forward from unreconciled conflicts and the exigencies of life. Practical concerns create their own added pressures. Progressive faith embraces the totality of this soul-felt dialogue, and moves the congregation toward healing and wholeness. Hope, yearning, fact, and faith encounter one another as they orbit around the resonant voice of the congregation's soul. Members with vision listen for that voice.

From this conversation, members discern the shape, the character, and promptings of the congregation's soul. How? By noticing the effects of congregational life; by imagining and anticipating emerging effects. They center on two questions:

- 1) **“What yearnings, hopes, realities, and wisdom call our congregation forward?”**
- 2) **“What effect do we want our congregation to create in the world, and in each of us?”**

Images surface and coalesce from this collective inquiry, deepening the purpose and direction of the faith community. From the compelling images and scenarios that shape the unfolding story, fueled by the prophetic-poetic passions of the congregation and its transformative faith, vision emerges. That deep vision needs to be seen, sung, spoken, and celebrated often and in many ways, especially in the worship life of the congregation.