Church Digital Transformation Plan Template

This template is based on a "[framework for digital wisdom](#)" and three characteristics of a "thriving congregation" as defined by the Lilly Endowment's [Thriving Congregations Initiative](#). It asks three questions that seek to align digital transformation with key congregational characteristics and a fourth question to identify next steps.

1.What is the shared *telos* or vision of your ministry?

> According to Lilly: "Thriving congregations have a striking clarity about their values and mission. Drawing on their theological and ecclesial traditions, they have developed a strong sense of identity and are able to articulate "why" they are called to love God and serve those in their congregations, neighborhoods, regions and across the globe. This clarity enables thriving congregation to identify specific areas of interest and then align its ministries and activities around those priorities. Some of the ministries created by thriving congregations may concentrate on strengthening the inner life of a congregation while others may focus on reaching out and serving others. Moreover, members of thriving congregations are not merely concerned with the roles and functions of sustaining a church and its programs but are focused instead on a vision of abundant life that connects them to God, one another and the world. While members are recipients of the congregation's ministry, they are more importantly agents of ministry who serve one another and their communities as they share life together."

2. How are digital technologies changing the social and cultural contexts of your ministry?

> According to Lilly: "Thriving congregations exhibit a nuanced understanding of the characteristics, interests, history and challenges of their communities and neighborhoods. These congregations attend closely to demographic and social changes in their communities, and they understand the particular qualities that make their communities both what they are and what they are becoming. As active participants in the community, the members of the congregation build face-to-face relationships with people in their neighborhoods and understand well the ways they live, play, work and gather. Through these close connections with their communities, thriving congregations are able to listen to the needs and interests of people in their local and regional contexts and develop ministries that are highly relational and relevant for those they seek to reach. These ministries are created by individuals and groups in the congregation and help the members of the congregation respond to specific changes in their congregation's community as well as to changes in the neighborhoods and regions the congregation seeks to serve."

3. What traditional and innovative practices should your ministry cultivate with respect to digital technologies?

> According to Lilly: "Many thriving congregations concentrate their attention on living out their common life and mission through time-honored Christian practices. These practices can take many forms and are rooted in and draw from a wide range of theological and ecclesial traditions. Some common examples of Christian practices include hospitality, testimony, Sabbath rest and singing, among others. Furthermore, thriving congregations attend to these practices in ways that are contextual for their ministry settings and rooted in the particularities of their traditions. Through these intentional Christian practices, congregations cultivate a rich sense of community as they help individuals identify with their congregations and experience belonging through a shared vocabulary and engagement in common rituals and activities."

4. Identify three strategic goals your ministry could pursue and three action items for each.