

Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) Survey Summary
St. Andrew's, Port Angles
July 23, 2021

In June 2021, members of St. Andrew's Church completed the on-line Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey in order to gather fact-based information that will be used in the search process as well as in future congregational planning. The survey measures the health and vitality of a congregation by identifying the factors that contribute to overall satisfaction (sense of purpose and meaning leading to action) and energy (sense of engagement leading to a desire to be involved) as well as priorities for the future. A total of 86 surveys were completed out of 130 invited to participate representing 93% of average Sunday attendance of 92.

The survey indicates that overall the congregation experiences high energy but lower satisfaction thus indicating the need to identify common values and a shared vision in order to best manage and utilize available resources. Factors contributing to greater congregational satisfaction include a focus on preparing and supporting members to be involved in ministry and creating an atmosphere that makes people want to be involved.

The theological perspective of the congregation is progressive in that members are open to diverse views and accept individuals where they are in their faith journey. With regard to flexibility and adaptability, members are willing to consider some changes, but generally prefer to stay with established tradition, especially with regard to worship.

In looking to the future, responses indicate the following top priorities – areas where there is a desire for **additional energy** to further the mission and ministry of the congregation.

1. Make *necessary changes* to attract families with children and young people to our church.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
3. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.
4. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.
5. Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners.
6. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society. (Priorities 1, 2, and 3 are indicated as top priorities by 90% of churches taking the survey. Priorities 4 and 6 are higher than most churches in the survey.)

In regard to specific areas of church life beginning with the highest rating:

Conflict management. There is general agreement that conflict is managed appropriately and where possible resolved satisfactorily.

Spiritual vitality. This index measures the centrality of faith in the lives of parishioners. The responses are very positive, and members believe that the spirituality connects with all aspects of their lives. (The spirituality index relates strongly to the amount of giving to the church.)

Morale. This is one of the best predictors of overall vitality of the congregation and measures the degree to which members feel a positive and passionate engagement in the mission of the church. The responses were generally positive, but there was a desire to increase the spirit of the congregation to make people want to be involved.

Hospitality. Members feel that a friendly atmosphere prevails in the congregation which welcomes and is enriched by persons from many walks of life. In order to attract new members and incorporate them into the life of the church (priorities 1 and 2), it will be important to build on hospitality and prepare

members on ways to welcome new persons.

Engagement in education. Members understand the importance of life-long learning and indicate that the church provides formation in a variety of ways to suit individual needs. However, priority #3 indicates the desire to provide more opportunities for high quality education that is appropriate to every age and stage of life.

Worship and music. Meaningful worship experience is central to the vitality and growth of a congregation and is a primary factor contributing to morale. The survey indicates satisfaction with the quality and spiritual content of worship. (See the results of the Worship Module for further information.)

Governance. This index measures the degree to which members believe that decision-making structures and procedures are open to their concerns and input. The responses indicated a generally positive attitude towards church leadership, but leaders need to insure that there is adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches when making decisions.

Readiness for ministry. We are called to ministry through our Baptismal Covenant, and it is the responsibility of the church to help individuals discern their gifts and connect them to appropriate ministries. Members feel more satisfied and energized when members are prepared for ministry – this is an area to focus attention and develop strategies.

Demographic data provided by those completing the survey indicates that 77% are 65 and older; 38% have been members for over 20 years with 8% two years or less. The majority of members live 3 or more miles from the church. The attendance trend is steady; 71% of members are women and 96% are white. There is a high level of education with 87% holding college degrees, and a majority of members live in 2-person households. The average household pledge is \$3,078 representing 3.23% of household income. The national average percentage of giving is 2%.

Additional Modules

Strategic Planning Profile

With regard to change, 68% agreed that some or moderate change is required to realize the vision for the church. Most agreed that the church has been effective in fulfilling its current mission statement, and there is no need to rethink its basic purpose and mission for the future.

Transition Profile

During this time of pastoral transition, members strongly agree that they will continue to be involved; will take on added responsibilities as needed; will continue financial giving at the same or higher levels and will remain at St. Andrew's. The majority (71%) are comfortable with the timing of the pastoral transition and believe that the next Rector should have approximately the same skills and responsibilities as the former Rector. While 60% agree the church should continue in the same overall direction, 54% are not sure. Although most agree that church leadership is representative of the congregation as a whole, 50% were “on the fence.”

Worship Module

Responses to issues around worship were very positive. Members affirm that the worship services are energizing and inspiring; prepare them to live a Christian life that makes a difference in the world; and help individuals examine and apply their faith in daily life. Services are child and family friendly; and there is a strong belief that prayer is a central element of vital worship. Topical and expository sermons that bring out the truth in Scripture and are applicable to direct life experience are preferred.

With regard to what is the most and least important about regular worship:

- Hymnal music – most important 21.92% and least important 13.70%
- Choral music – most important 15.71% and least important 11.43%
- Engagement of children in the service – 8.2% most important and 28.77 least important
- Time of the service – 22.97% most important and 16.22% least important
- Day of the service – 25% most important and 16.67% least important
- Location of the service – 18.06% most important and 16.67% least important
- Length of the service – 12.16% most important and 18.92% least important

Responses to “If I could add one thing to our worship it would be:” focused on music preferences, variety in liturgy, and more emphasis on silence and prayer in worship services.

Responses to COVID Questions

- 96.15% agree that the congregation has done a good job at adapting during the pandemic so that members stay connected.
- When the congregation comes back together after the pandemic, 23.08% believe we will be the same as before with 48.72% responding stronger or much stronger than before; 15.38 think the congregation will be weaker than before.
- During the pandemic the two main areas of concern or anxiety for themselves and their families were physical health (60.26%) and mental health (46.15%).
- “Something I would like to thank the church leadership for during this time is . . .” The written responses were positive and focused on appreciation for the work in providing on-line worship services along with communication that helped keep members informed and connected.

Written responses to a church experience that made you feel: “Now that's what it means to be the Church!”

- There was a wide variety of responses that reflected the importance of community, worship services, pastoral care in times of crisis and attention to diversity.

In Summary

Transition can be a very meaningful time for a parish to look at who you are and discern where God is calling you in the future. St. Andrew's has high energy and members generally feel that participation in church activities is an important part of their lives. Helping members identify and utilize their gifts for ministry will lead to greater satisfaction.

In order to achieve goals for growth and inclusion of new members, it will be important to channel that energy into a focused vision to maximize the best use of resources. What changes will be necessary to achieve those goals? The new Rector should have skills in leading change and working with the leadership to develop and communicate a clear vision.

This survey is the beginning of further conversation among the leadership and members of the congregation. During the pandemic St. Andrew's showed great resilience in helping members feel connected and maintaining a sense of optimism for the future. Building on that success, how will you use the resources and gifts that you already have as you support one another and continue your journey as a faith community?

Submitted by Paula Franck, Diocesan Consultant to the CAT survey. 7.22.21