Saint Paul’s Church Congregation Assessment Survey Results Summary

The Saint Paul’s Search Committee engaged Holy Cow Consulting to conduct a survey of the congregation of the Church. The invitation to participate in the Congregation Assessment Tool was sent to the 612 people on our weekly newsletter list and, of these, 305 persons responded. This number of respondents represents 114% of our pre-Covid average Sunday attendance. A response from every member is not required to provide valid results. A summary of that report is provided below.

According to the analysis provided by Holy Cow, approximately 62% of our members are satisfied with things in the church, 31% are “on the fence”, and only 7% are unsatisfied. Members of our congregation tended to be more satisfied with the overall church when they felt more positive about the leadership’s clear vision, support for people in ministry, clear parish communication, action, and adequate opportunity for congregational input for important decisions. This means that when members feel less positive about these areas, they tend to feel less satisfied overall.

Compared to other churches: the survey showed that our congregation is: theologically diverse; fairly settled in our approach to liturgy; hospitable and welcoming; exhibits average overall morale; and shows high readiness for ministry. Not surprisingly, it also showed we are extremely satisfied with our music and liturgy.

Respondents were asked to provide demographic data. A synopsis of the data shows:

- 55% are over the age of 65, 12% are under the age of 45
- 50% of respondents have a Saint Paul’s tenure of more than 20 years, 34% have between 1 and 10-years tenure
- 60% are female, 40% male
- 96% travel more than 3 miles to church. Of those, 40% travel more than 10 miles
- 73% of respondents live in households of 1-2 people, and 37% have 3 or more household members

Financially, survey participants were diverse. Average household income is $138,257 with an average annual contribution of $2,270. This represents an average percent of household income given to the church of 1.64%. This statistic ranks in the 24th percentile in relation to other churches. A minor increase in the average percent of household income pledged could increase our church income significantly.

As we look to the future, our top goals as indicated by the survey responses are to:

- Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church
- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every stage of life

This seems to indicate a desire to grow youth programs, further our Invite-Welcome-Connect initiative, increase outreach, and grow our formation offerings. Also noted was that, in comparison to other churches, three goals that are unusually strong for our church are: a strengthening pastoral response; more opportunities for meaningful fellowship; and expanding of outreach.

Additional questions were chosen by the search committee, and a summary of those results follow:
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- Roughly 50% of respondents indicated (“strongly agree” or “agree”) they would like our clergy and congregation to play an active role in racial healing and reconciliation and believed that we should be more active in relationship with different races and different faith communities
- 46% were at least somewhat interested in being a part of a small ministry of parishioners dedicated to keeping other members updated and involved

The final question asked respondents what one thing Saint Paul’s is most known for makes them proud to be a member. The search committee has prepared the following word map showing the responses. The size of the word represents the frequency of the response.

All the information in this report will be reviewed and discussed in further conversations by the search committee. Survey data is not the end of the conversation but the beginning. It should be noted that as the survey was conducted during Covid-related absenteeism, the committee will continue to communicate with Holy Cow about how our results compare with other churches during the Covid era as meaningful data for that comparison is still being collected.