

RECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

PRESENTS

**RESULTS OF CAT &
SMALL GROUPS**

JUNE 3, 2018



The CAT

In April as part of its information gathering process the Rector Search Committee engaged the services of Holy Cow! Consulting to administer its **Congregational Assessment Tool** (CAT). The CAT is an assessment instrument that has been used by over 3,000 mainline Protestant congregations (predominantly Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist). It provides a snapshot of parishioners' perceptions and priorities, which the Committee has complemented with the open-ended questions in the small group discussions that took place in May.



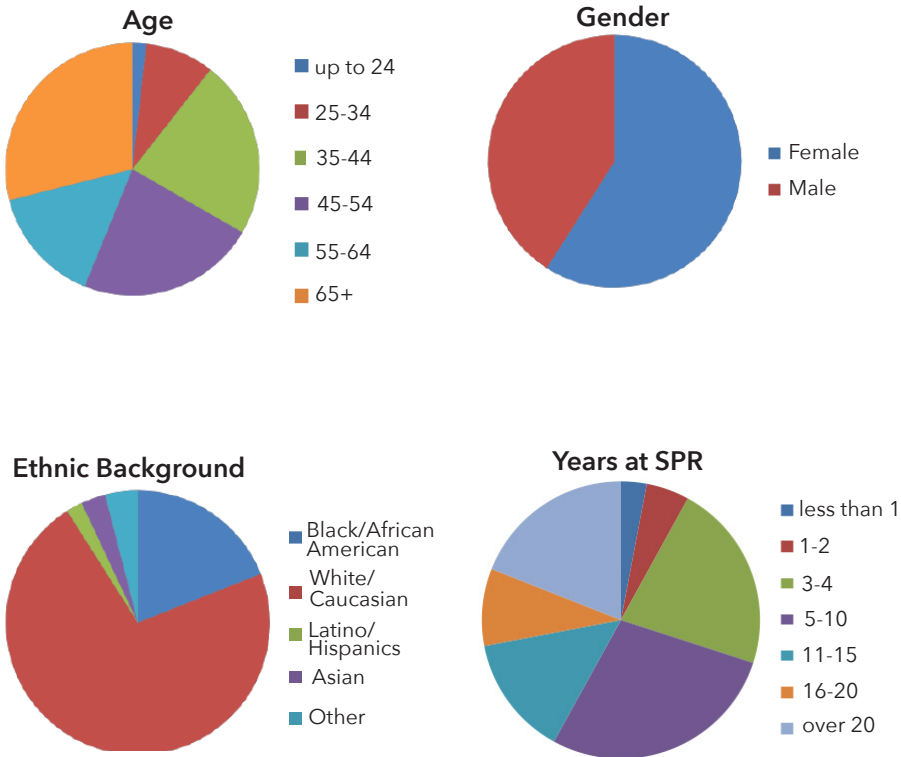
THE CAT IS DESIGNED TO HELP A CONGREGATION:

- Measure its level of satisfaction and energy.
- Pinpoint the strengths of congregational culture.
- Discover where members would like to go in the future.
- Gauge readiness for change.
- Prepare for a search for its next priest.

308 persons from SPR were invited to participate; of these, 161 persons, or 52%, responded.

52%

RESPONDENTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS



Holy Cow! has recently shared its detailed analysis with the Search Committee and the Vestry.

IT HAS ORGANIZED ITS KEY FINDINGS INTO THREE BROAD AREAS :

WHO ARE WE AND WHERE ARE WE IN OUR LIFE AS A PARISH?

.....

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO IN THE FUTURE?

.....

**WHAT SKILLS AND TRAITS ARE MOST IMPORTANT
FOR OUR NEXT RECTOR?**

**WHO ARE WE AND WHERE ARE WE IN
OUR LIFE AS A PARISH?**

Our parish exhibits very healthy levels of satisfaction, energy, and appreciation for activities beyond worship.

KEY INDICATORS

69%

CLEARLY AGREE

Overall Satisfaction

On the whole, I am satisfied with how things are in our church.

60%

CLEARLY DISAGREE

Overall Energy

It seems to me that we are just going through the motions of church activity. There isn't much excitement about it among our members.

70%

CLEARLY AGREE

Value of Activity Beyond Worship

On the whole, participation in church activities is very meaningful to me.

The CAT identified these specific areas as “Drivers of Satisfaction” or areas of strong agreement in SPR members’ sense of satisfaction:

- Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership. –
- Our former Rector communicated with people in a way that kept us informed and connected. –
- Our former Rector helped us accomplish our mission by bringing out the best in everyone. –
- In important decisions in our church adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided. –
- Our church provides opportunities for members to engage in active ministry within the church and to the world. –

A single factor emerged as a

**“DRIVER OF
ENERGY”**

or area of strong agreement:



Our church does a good job helping each member understand that he or she is called to ministry.

How do we describe ourselves?

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

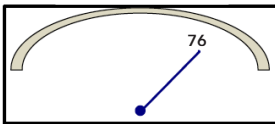
The members of SPR hold progressive views regarding such issues as the nature of the Scripture, the role of conversion in social change, and their relationship to the historic declarations of the church.

FLEXIBLE STYLE

The responses show that there is a strong degree to which the church is willing to make adjustments in the way it goes about its ministry and adapt to the particular context in which it is serving to meet either the needs of its members or those of the community. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 87th percentile in its flexibility.

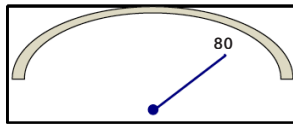
How are we performing?

Hospitality



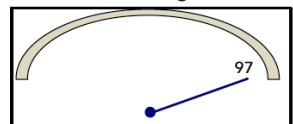
The Hospitality Index seeks to measure the degree to which members perceive that the congregation is engaged in offering themselves and their resources to people who are new, different, or in need. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 76th percentile in its hospitality.

Worship & Music



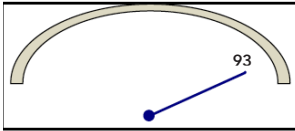
The worship experience is central to the vitality and growth of a congregation. The Worship and Music Index seeks to capture the congregation's feelings about the quality of the worship experience. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 80th percentile on this index.

Conflict Management



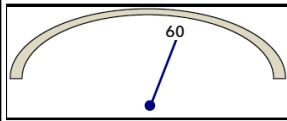
The Conflict Management Index measures the degree to which members believe that conflict is appropriately managed and, where possible, resolved. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 97th percentile on this index.

Engagement in Education



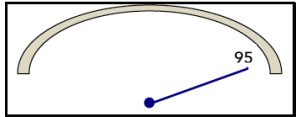
Christian education is a life-long process that enriches a person's spiritual life and better prepares him or her for service in the world. The Engagement in Education Index measures the degree to which members share in that understanding. It also gauges the degree to which the church provides developmentally appropriate education across the entire span of life. In addition, it recognizes that members are living with a variety of schedules and that education must be provided in a way that adapts to member needs. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 93rd percentile on this index.

Readiness for Ministry



In the last thirty years, a shift has taken place in our understanding of ministry. Some churches call it lay ministry, some lay leadership, others, the ministry of the baptized. In each case the basic concept is that all members of a church are called to ministry, and it is the responsibility of the church to help members identify their gifts and connect to ministries that best fit those gifts, whether in the church or in the world. The Readiness for Ministry Index measures the degree to which the church has helped members make this transition in their understanding and equipped them for their own particular ministry. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 60th percentile on this index. This may point to an area in which our new rector may help us to grow.

Governance



The Governance Index measures the degree to which members believe that the decision making structures and processes of the church are open to their concerns and input. While church polity may lodge almost all decision-making in one group of persons, a Board for example, there are many creative ways in which that authority can be delegated or shared. Committees, commissions, task forces, leadership assemblies, and joint meetings expand the decision-making circle. Regular input from surveys, focus groups, and interviews can give people a sense of involvement in the way decisions are made. As people perceive openness in the way leaders make decisions, they are more likely to have high morale and support the decisions that have been made. Compared with other congregations SPR is at the 95th percentile on this index.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO AS A PARISH?

*The CAT instrument asks respondents to rank potential priorities for the parish in the future. For St. Paul and the Redeemer these were the 10 highest. Three of these (marked ***) are unusually high in their rank when compared with other congregations.*

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
2. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
3. Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners. ***
4. Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God. ***
5. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.).
6. Strengthen the pastoral response of the church in serving people with special needs. ***
7. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society.
8. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership.
9. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.
10. Strengthen the management and support of persons in various ministries.

**WHAT SKILLS AND TRAITS ARE MOST
IMPORTANT FOR OUR NEXT RECTOR?**

The CAT instrument asked respondents to rank critical abilities for the next rector.

THE FOUR TOP RANKINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS

1. PREACHING

Capacity to inspire and connect people to God's word.

2. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Capacity to cast a vision and lead the church toward realization of that vision.

3. PASTORAL CARE

Capacity to engage people empathetically and care for persons in times of need.

4. TEACHING/TRAINING

Capacity to deepen understanding, form character and equip members with new skills.

The SMALL GROUPS

23 Small Focus Groups were offered to parishioners over a three week period.

18 groups convened and 68 parishioners of varying race, age, gender and tenure at SPR participated. Each group was asked four questions:

1. What is unique about our church that compels you to worship here?
2. Where should our congregation be heading?
3. What might be holding us back?
4. What skills and traits do we need in our next rector to make our dreams a reality?



ANALYSIS

The analysis of the small group responses supported much of what the CAT findings revealed. Each comment was sorted into themed areas and counted. There were a few areas that offered additional insight and gave important narrative to aspects where we can grow and challenge ourselves as a community. The descriptors below were derived from specific comments provided by small group participants and prioritized by how often they were heard.

WHAT SKILLS AND TRAITS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR OUR NEXT RECTOR?

Preaching - *"Good preaching" is that which connects people and is rooted in biblical integrity, is relevant to the concerns of a community like ours, provides an opportunity for learning and balances emotion and intellect.*

Pastoral Care - *Someone you can call in a crisis, and has scheduled hours for companioning parishioners through spiritual formation and discernment.*

Leadership - *This area included administrative skills, outreach/visibility in the wider community and style--small group participants want someone with a non-hierarchical, collaborative leadership style that inspires and empowers others—especially lay persons—to meaningful ministry.*

Political/theological - *There was general consensus that we need a rector who agrees with the progressive/liberal politics and theology that are dominant at SPR. There were also calls for a "wide band-width of theology"—someone who can accept and speak to a (moderately) broad range of views, and maintain a connection to the traditions of the Episcopal church.*

There is a desire that the person integrate social justice/anti-racism into every aspect of church life and that this commitment must be established and demonstrated in our next rector.

Music - *Someone who supports the music program. This was mentioned by several people as being important.*

Personal Characteristics - *openness, approachability, professional extroversion, empathy, maturity, sense of humor, kindness, authenticity were among the many characteristics mentioned. In addition small group participants desired intellectual abilities and a spiritual life. Someone with humility, biblically grounded in their own spiritual practices, yet open and questioning. Especially someone who is not easily intimidated by the academic rigor of this setting.*

A substantial supporting theme of this idea is that this will require considerable skill in discernment, recognizing the strengths and challenges facing both individuals and SPR as a whole, and making social connections across groups.

The desire is to have a rector with passion, "contagious energy" and a "sense of abundance."

WHERE SHOULD WE BE HEADING?

Community Outreach - Overwhelmingly parishioners talked about a desire for SPR to have a greater presence and collaborative relationship with the wider community. Partnering with other churches, faith traditions and organizations within the neighborhood and in Chicago.

Social Justice / Anti-racism - Small group participants named these themes as important work for the church going forward. Specifically that social justice and anti-racism programming needs to be integrated in all aspects of church life. Bringing to bare “the broader responsibility” we have as a Christian and Episcopal organization to address corporate and systemic racism, as well as white privilege.

Continue or strengthen existing programming - Many people are pleased with the programming and ministries offered by the church and would like to see them expanded or fine-tuned. In addition opportunities to discuss faith and increasing times for Bible study were suggested.

Communications / Welcoming - Comments supported the desire for the church to offer opportunities for drawing in a wider diversity of people, “especially those with differing socio-economic backgrounds”. And once arrived, enhancing ways to invite people into community through “themed” small groups, fellowship opportunities and outreach. Pastoral care is another aspect of deepening relationship that was mentioned.

Marketing plan and strategizing how to grow the church - This includes discipleship and “evangelizing” who we are in the community, as well as attracting more families and children. There were significant comments about a traditionalist vs a non-traditional approach.

Diversity in staffing - Having a staff that represents the diversity of the congregation is important. In addition, growing our awareness around patriarchal language and sexism is fundamental to supporting all parishioners.

WHAT MIGHT BE HOLDING US BACK?

Privileged / Traditionalist / Elitist - A significant number of participants in the small groups named these characteristics (as well as others) as limiting our ability to be a place that practices the radical hospitality of Jesus. A few participants questioned our educational and music offerings, and whether or not their appeal would be welcoming.

Cliquish / Siloed - Given the size of our parish, participants commented that we can be separated into our own ministries, programs or areas of interest, and there are not enough opportunities to cross-over and learn about others.

Fear / Resting on our laurels / Complacency - There was concern expressed that we would not challenge or push ourselves to expand our vision beyond the walls of SPR. Participants desired more partnering in the community and recognize we are in a time of transition where there is not a clear strategy and vision. At the same time, some participants were very comfortable with our direction and cautioned making too great of a "course correction".

Time and other commitments - Participants recognized that other commitments, and priorities can limit involvement and activity levels.

Pastoral care and expression of faith - Opportunities to discuss our faith life and an arena to explore transitions, spiritual formation and to question our tradition are needed.

WHAT COMPELS YOU TO WORSHIP HERE?

Culture - Participants find SPR to be open, diverse, lively, intellectually curious, "Gospel grounding", warm, accessible, theologically minded, energizing, "we walk the walk", and welcome all to the Table

Parish life - People come to SPR for community, the educational opportunities for all ages, trust in the leadership/governance, transparency, clergy presence, and commitment of parishioners

Sunday morning experience - People come to worship for renewal, transformation, music, liturgy, ritual, traditional/flexibility balance, preaching

Worldly action - Outreach in the neighboring community and beyond, anti-racism and social justice focus, discernment and collaboration

The Rector Search Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in completing the CAT and all who attended the Small Group discussions. Your feedback has been invaluable to our process and to the wider community in helping us discern more clearly who we are as a community at this time.



St. Paul & the Redeemer

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