

Dear Fellow St. James Parishioners,

The Discernment Committee hoped to provide a verbal summary, with time for discussion, of the results of the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) survey on a Sunday morning in the parish hall. Although we may be able to do this at some time in the future, it is not possible at the current time. The survey was completed two months ago, so we didn't want to wait any longer to provide some of the information to you.

First of all, thank you very much for your tremendous participation. We received 301 surveys, which is 98% of our average weekend worship attendance. This high rate of return increases our confidence in the reliability of the information. We learned a great deal about ourselves. This summary will focus on the highlights; the scores given are in comparison to other churches:

- Overall satisfaction with the way things are going is “high average”
- Energy level is “high”
- Participation in church activities beyond worship is “average”

The levels of satisfaction and energy are found to be reliable indicators of the health and vitality of a church. Together, these two scores place St. James in the High Satisfaction/High Energy quadrant. Churches in this quadrant are considered to be “transformational—sources of new meaning and purpose for their members.”

Members identified the top four priorities:

1. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
2. Reach new people and incorporate them into the life of our church.
3. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
4. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.

St. James has a high degree of theological diversity. This is a reflection of the wider world and is considered an asset. It suggests we need a pastor with “theological bandwidth.” St. James has a flexible style, which is in the middle between adaptable and settled.

Performance Indicators measure the feelings, beliefs, and perceptions of the congregation in the following areas:

- Hospitality - average
- Morale - excellent
- Conflict management – above average
- Governance - excellent
- Spiritual vitality (how central faith is in the life of members) – below average
- Readiness for ministry – above average
- Educational engagement – above average

- Worship and Music – excellent (this received the highest rating)

Financial information revealed that the average percent of household income given is 2.58%, which is above average.

Critical abilities for the next rector were ranked as: [1] Preaching, [2] Strategic leadership, [3] Pastoral care, [4] Teaching/Training, and [5] Administration.

Volunteer activities: 60% of parishioners are involved in church related volunteer activities; 55% are involved in non-church related volunteer activities; 40% would like a higher level of engagement.

While these findings show the overall results of the survey for all respondents, there are variations in the responses based on the service attended, age group, and other demographic criteria. The Vestry is looking deeper into these variations in order to determine what changes might be implemented to improve areas of weakness. We will be happy to hear any suggestions you may have or to address any questions about this information.

Regarding our search for a new rector, the Vestry has voted to postpone the discernment process until further notice. We will review the situation in early September to determine if it is feasible to reactivate the search at that time. All work of the Discernment Committee will be placed on hold until the process can be resumed. Unfortunately, the current conditions and restrictions related to COVID-19 make it impossible to implement or even plan for the next phase in the discernment process. We ask for everyone's prayers and patience as we make our way through this unique period of time.

The Discernment Committee and the Vestry