

Church Assessment Tool (CAT) Summary
St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Bainbridge Island
December 18, 2016

In November 2016, members of St. Barnabas Church completed the Church Assessment Tool (CAT) survey in order to gather fact-based information that will be used in the search process for the next Rector as well as for future planning by the Vestry. The CAT measures the health and vitality of a congregation by identifying the factors that contribute to overall satisfaction and energy as well as priorities for the future. A total of 124 surveys were completed representing 96% of average Sunday attendance of 129. Congratulations on such a high response!

The survey reveals that St. Barnabas is a transformational church with members indicating high satisfaction and very high energy as compared with other churches. A transformational congregation is characterized by high morale, a distinct mission, vibrant worship, open and shared leadership, and adaptability along with an emphasis on life-long learning and spiritual vitality.

Factors contributing to overall energy and satisfaction include confidence in the lay leadership of the congregation as well as the ability of the Rector to lay out a vision for the church and bring out the best in everyone.

The survey responses are consistent with a progressive theological culture that values diversity and intellectual curiosity. With respect to worship, members are open to variety yet value traditional practices and forms. At its best, the parish has gifts of compassion and healing; is intellectually curious and open to receive others wherever they are in their spiritual journey. However, in times of stress, the congregation can become rigid, overwhelmed and sentimental.

In looking to the future, respondents indicated these top five priorities – areas where there is a desire for *additional energy* to improve ministries:

1. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth 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. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
 5. Enlarge or improve the physical facilities of the church to expand or enhance our ministries.
- (Reflects support for the Elijah Project)

These priorities were consistent with all age groups as well as those who attend less than once a month and those who attend more often. There was also a desire to strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and to strengthen the pastoral response of the church to people with special needs.

In regard to specific areas of church life: (from highest to lowest rankings)

- Worship and music – 95% of members agree that the music and worship of the congregation are exceptional.
- Conflict management – 95% agree that there is a healthy tolerance of differing opinions; conflict is resolved through mutual effort.
- Morale - in measuring the positive energy generated in the congregation, 90% indicate

satisfaction with how things are in the church; however, 60% are not sure that the spirit in the congregation makes people want to get as involved as possible.

- Governance – indicates a strong trust in congregational leadership.
- Hospitality – members believe there is a genuinely friendly atmosphere in the congregation
- Readiness for ministry – although the majority of respondents feel that the congregation provides opportunities for engaging in ministry, there is also a desire for more efforts to help members discern their gifts for ministry.
- Educational engagement – in a reflection of the 3rd priority, members of the congregation understand the importance of life-long learning, and there is a desire to provide high quality education for all ages.
- Spiritual vitality – members feel that their faith is central to their lives.

Demographic data: 71% of the respondents to the survey are over 65 years of age thus the priorities to attract and incorporate younger members. Attendance and giving remain stable. Members are well-educated and 75% live 1-9 miles from the church. Average percentage of income giving is 2.86% (average percent of income giving is 2%)

During this transition time:

96% of members indicate that they intend to be involved at the same or greater level.

92% will be available to take on further responsibilities.

97% will continue financial giving at the same or higher level.

4% may consider exploring other churches.

69% indicate trust in the current leadership as representative of the parish as a whole.

63% are comfortable with the timing of the transition.

90% believe that the church should continue in the same overall direction.

91% believe the next Rector should have the same responsibilities and skills as the former

Rector.

In the additional questions: 53% attended St. Barnabas during the last Rector search in 2006, and 90% indicated understanding of the search process. With regard to the Elijah Project: 54% attended the presentation about the project: 64% feel informed about the current status of the project; 57% intend to support the project with 26% indicating they don't know.

As a transformative congregation with high degrees of satisfaction and energy, St. Barnabas is in a good position to begin the process to call a new Rector. Morale is high, members are generally satisfied with the direction the church is going and are committed to continuing to be involved during this transition time. The challenge will be to maintain this energy and satisfaction into the future.

As you look at the priorities identified by the survey what *changes* and preparations will be needed to carry out these goals? What programs are already in place and what new resources will be needed? This time of transition can be very rich for St. Barnabas as you continue to look at where you are, discern where God is calling you and determine the qualities you seek in a new Rector to walk with you into the future.

