

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF HOLY COW! SURVEY RESULTS

We engaged Holy Cow! Consulting to conduct a self-study survey of our congregation to inform our search process for a new rector. Our self-study revealed the following information about our parish.

Our Congregational Statistics

- There are 206 households/463 members: 1% are under age 35; 9% are under age 65; 90% over age 65
- 60% of our members live less than 5 miles away from the church building.
- Average weekly church attendance is 140.
- Over 90% of parishioners indicated participation in church activities is meaningful to them.
- “Growth” and “financial giving” are extremely important to all age groups.
- Our membership level and church attendance have been consistent over the last few years.
- 93% of our parishioners are white; 4% of our parishioners are black; Hispanics and other groups comprise the remaining 3%.
- Over half the congregation is involved in activities in the parish beyond worship.

Our Theological Perspective

St. John Divine’s core values place us on the more traditional (conservative) end of the progressive/conservative spectrum, and our flexibility style is more settled than adaptive. We focus on a clearly defined faith that is lived out in a community with structure and stability. Our members appreciate the clarity provided by the unchanging nature of the message proclaimed and lived. The line between right and wrong is usually easily articulated. Where a Biblical mandate is perceived, our members provide services to those in need, often with remarkable perseverance. There is a deep-rooted sense of family among members of our congregation. That said, with this perspective, there is the potential to lose sight of our mission due to a tendency to focus on the concrete side of things. Parishioners may be resistant to change due to a feeling of guardianship over traditional understandings and practices. They may also become detached from contemporary issues if the intellectual side of faith is not adequately explored.

Our “Personality”

We are a church that is in the “reinvention/recovery” mode; it will require significant effort to recover our sense of purpose and well-being. That said, we scored well on the morale index, indicating people are engaged and enthusiastic.

- We are a hospitable community — our members are very welcoming to newcomers and guests.
- Our spiritual vitality is good.
- Our rate of giving is very high as a percentage of household income. Financially there is almost no room to grow and steps should be taken to sustain this level of giving over the long term. Acquiring new members and developing their sense of financial generosity will help with financial growth.
- Educational engagement is high —we provide opportunities for learning and formation in a variety of ways.
- Our decision-making is distributed and representative of the congregation and not confined to a small group of individuals.

Our Primary Goals

All three age groups in our parish agreed on these priorities:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
- Add and fund programs such as Sunday school and youth activities to attract families with children to our church. Offer a variety of worship services to accommodate families with children as well as other demographics.
- Foster the spiritual generosity that exists among our current members and engender that same generosity among new members to financially support the ministry of the church.

Critical Abilities We Desire in Our Next Rector

1. Preaching—the capability to provide intelligent and engaging sermons that touch our lives to Jesus.
2. Strategic leadership — skills that translate to growing our congregation and accomplishing the primary goals the parish identified:
 - a. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
 - b. Add and fund programs such as Sunday school and youth activities to attract families with children to our church.
 - c. Offer a variety of worship services to accommodate families with children as well as other demographics.
 - d. Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church.
 - e. Change management — up to the challenge of helping a congregation with a culture that is resistant to change and values stability and tradition.

Additional Strengths We Desire in Our Next Rector

- Knowledgeable regarding the dynamics of a pastoral-sized church and affirming of the distinctive opportunities for ministry it offers to grow to a program-sized church.
- Leads by delegating authority, assigning responsibility, and recognizing the contributions of others.
- Ability to manage, support and equip members for ministry participation and leadership.
- Expertise to develop a Christian education and formation ministry that reaches people at every age and stage of life.
- Ability to create worship experiences that deepen members' relationship with God and one another.

Interests We Desire in Our Next Rector

- Appreciative of a variety of theological perspectives but intellectually resonant with a moderately conservative perspective.
- Energized by the style of ministry that characterizes a community-focused, rather than a regionally focused, church.
- Attracted to informative resources that offer effective strategies for a church that is characterized by stability, tradition and Biblical clarity.