



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VERONA

CONGREGATIONAL
SURVEY REPORT OF THE
MISSION STUDY TEAM

APRIL 2024



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

WE HAD AN EXCELLENT RESPONSE

- The online link for the Congregational Survey was released via Constant Contact @ 10:00am on 2/25/24 and was concluded at 11:59pm on 3/14/24. The overall distribution was to 160 email addresses. This was a large survey pool which intentionally included former members or participants that we hadn't seen in a while.
- For a 105-member church with an average worship attendance of about 45, we received 43 responses. Most polling firms would tell you that this is an excellent response.
- Of the 43 responses, 26 were provided with names given and 17 were provided anonymously. Most of the responses were from church members, although 8 responses were submitted by friends of the church in regular attendance and participation.



THE LARGEST SHARE OF RESPONDENTS:

- Worship at FPCV on a regular basis.
- Are currently members.
- Travel 10 minutes or less from their home to the church.
- Have been involved in the life of the church for more than 20 years.
- Participate in the work and worship of the church at about the same level as 2 years ago.
 - For those with increased involvement in the life of the church, it was primarily because they had undertaken new responsibilities at the church (such as being ordained an officer) or because a vocational change afforded them more time to contribute elsewhere (such as retirement).
- Are not very familiar with what it means to be Presbyterian.
- And prefer traditional worship and music.

**ATTRIBUTES OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE, IN DESCENDING ORDER, ARE:**



- Worship & Music
- Fellowship
- Mission
- Education
- Stewardship

ATTRIBUTES OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

THAT ARE SAID WE “*DO BEST*” ARE THESE,
IN DESCENDING ORDER:

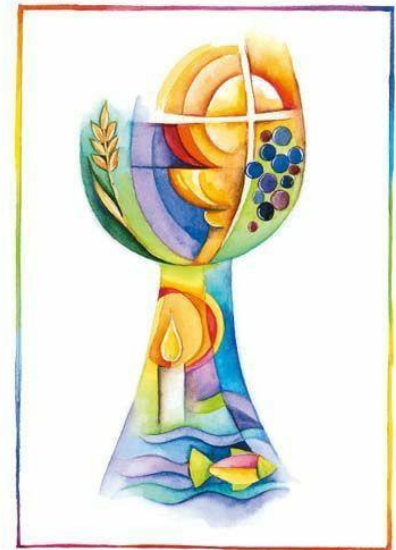
Worship

Fellowship/Friendship

Welcome/Inclusion

Thrift Store

Christian Education



**WORSHIP AND MUSIC ARE
OF KEY IMPORTANCE--
COMMENTS INCLUDED:**

Worship satisfaction is above adequate.

- Important aspects of worship include (in this order):
 - ❖ Sermons
 - ❖ Communion
 - ❖ Prayer
 - ❖ Music
- The sense of worship as inspirational, joyful, and spiritually uplifting was significant.
- But, while worship was one of the characteristics it was said we do “best,” inviting a friend to worship is only *somewhat likely*.



FELLOWSHIP IS ALSO SAID TO BE OF KEY IMPORTANCE

Fellowship and being part of a church family is also said to be above adequate.

But, to the surprise to the Mission Study Team, while Fellowship is one of the characteristics it was said we do “best,” coffee hour didn’t rate very highly.



MISSION ALSO MEASURED SATISFACTORILY

- While mission was measured with good satisfaction, the mission emphases most important to respondents were very local:
 - ❖ The Thrift Store
 - ❖ The Food Pantry
 - ❖ Outreach to the homebound, ill, and grieving.
- The Thrift Store was one of the characteristics of the church that was said we do “best.”



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY

THE ATTRIBUTES OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
THAT MOST NEED IMPROVING ARE THESE
(IN DESCENDING ORDER OF IMPORTANCE):

- New Members (The overwhelming “favorite” in this category—named by nearly 1/3 of the respondents.)
- Outreach (Primarily understood as outreach for new members.)
- Christian Education program expansion
- Organization/Communication
- Community Involvement/Partnerships
- Attendance/Participation
- Stewardship



CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

We are a caring and welcoming church fully engaged in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we live and worship in joyful fellowship with God, proclaiming the Good News through an active program of Christian Education and music for children, families, and individuals of all ages. We are committed to sharing our gifts and talents to implement God's will and to assume leadership in our community, guided by the principles of Christian love.

(adopted 09/06)



IS OUR MISSION STATEMENT STILL APPLICABLE TODAY?
THESE ATTRIBUTES STILL RATE HIGHLY (IN DESCENDING ORDER OF
IMPORTANCE):



Hospitality

(Although being a
“more light” welcoming
congregation
measured only a
moderate response.)



Christian Nurture



Christian Education

(Although “study”
measured a low
response.)

**IS OUR MISSION STUDY STILL APPLICABLE TODAY?
THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE SHOWN TO BE OF LESS IMPORTANCE:**

Discipleship

**Leadership
in
Community**

PRIORITIZING OUR MISSION EMPHASES

Most Important

- Food Pantry
- Thrift Store

Neither Most nor Least Important

- Collection of Goods (Ukraine, Socks, etc.)

Least Important

- Christmas Giving Tree
- Blessing Box
- Denominational Missions



PRIORITIZING THE PC(USA)'S CURRENT INITIATIVES:

Most Important

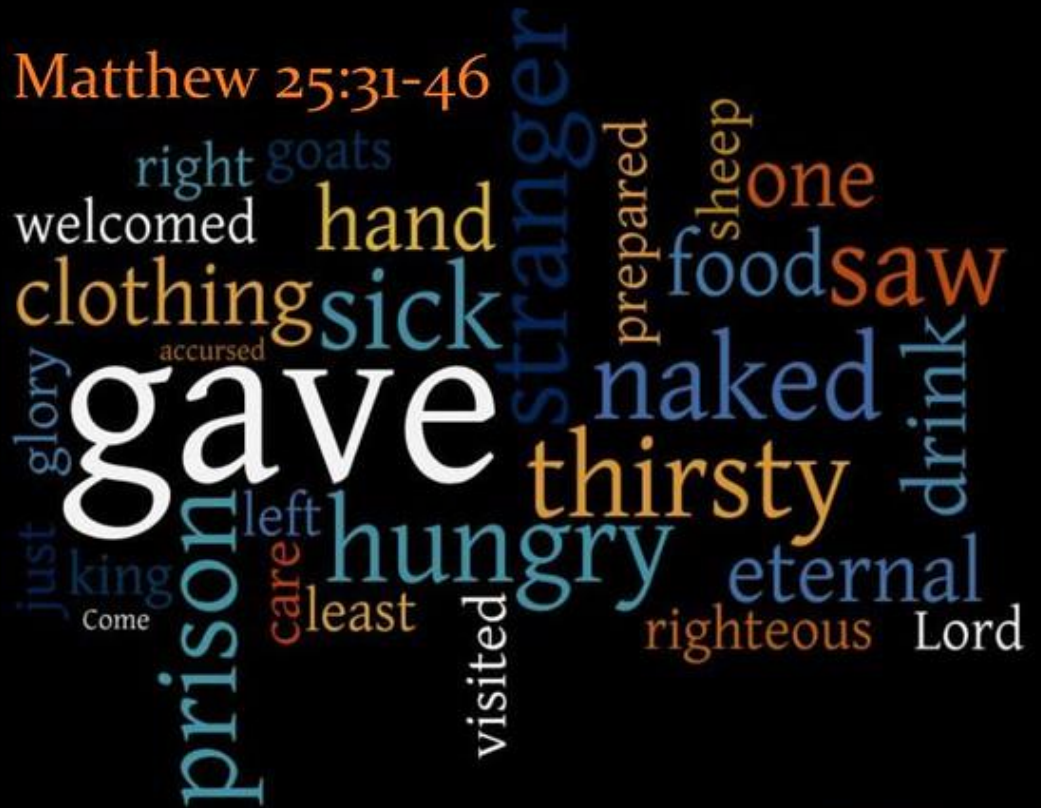
- Matthew 25
- Welcoming

Neither Most nor Least Important

- “More Light”/LGBTQIA+ Inclusive

Least Important

- Peacemaking
- Earth Care



PRIORITIZING THE GREAT COMMISSION

Most Important

- Building Community
- Nurture

Neither Most nor Least Important

- Prayer

Least Important

- Study/Christian Education
- Justice Ministries



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED IN A NEW PASTOR

- Inspirational
- Welcoming
- Energetic
- Connects Well with Others
- Fine Preacher





**PREACHING
STYLES NEEDED
IN A NEW PASTOR**

- Expository/Exegetical
- Topical
- Fluid

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS SOUGHT IN A NEW PASTOR



Approachable



Good
Communicator



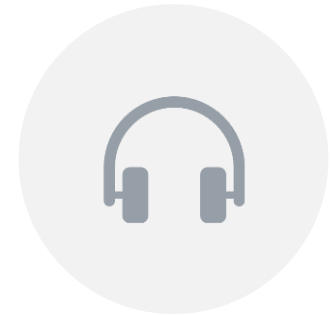
PASTORAL SKILLS SOUGHT IN A NEW PASTOR



COMPASSIONATE/EMPATHETIC



NURTURING

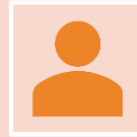


GOOD LISTENER

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS SOUGHT IN A NEW PASTOR



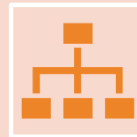
Strong Leader



Team Player



Effective Head of Staff



Well-organized



INSIGHTS FROM THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

- The congregation comes from a wide theological spectrum, from fairly “liberal” to fairly “conservative” on matters of biblical interpretation, faith exploration, discipleship, and more.
- Some questions seemed particularly hard to answer, especially regarding life after death and how to view the Bible (Inspired? Inspired but written by human hands? Literal?).
- The congregation has a strong sense of human responsibility for engaging the world in ways that afford a positive influence.

READINESS FOR THE FUTURE?

There is only adequate confidence that:

- The vision/direction of the church's future is clear.
- There is financial viability.
- There is sufficient human capital to achieve the vision/goals.
- The future holds in store some exciting things.
- We will be open to new programs, new partnerships, and new mission opportunities.



ASSESSMENTS

The factors that most affect the well-being of any congregation are **Energy** and **Satisfaction**.

FPCV surveys at Lower-than-Average Energy and Higher-than-Average Satisfaction.

- Church Consultants would classify us as a “Hearth and Home Congregation”—comfortable enough with things the way they are that we choose not to mess with the status quo.
- We like the warmth and intimacy of worship, fellowship, and local mission projects. But even Inviting a Friend to church is a stretch for us.

Takeaway: There are 3 key areas of strength here:

- Worship
- Fellowship
- Local Mission

These present the best opportunities for growth.





ASSESSMENTS

(CONTINUED)

But the congregation would also like more:

- More Energy
- More Vitality
- More Participation
- Greater Attendance
- More Members
- More Programs
- More....

HOW IS *MORE* MADE POSSIBLE?
IT BEGINS (AND ENDS) WITH SPIRITUAL VITALITY.
TO FOSTER THAT VITALITY, WE BEGIN BY ASKING:

What does discipleship in Jesus Christ mean to you/us?

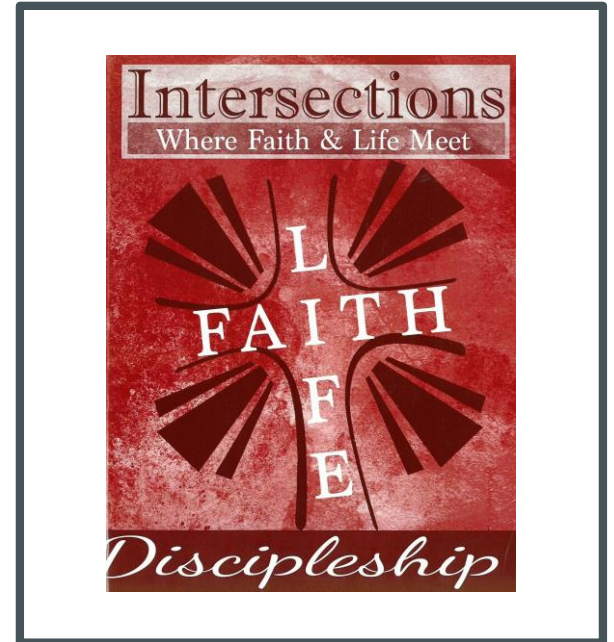
What is your/our story as Christians?

Why are we a church?

What is our purpose? How well do we live into that purpose?

Why are you a Christian?

Are we willing to commit to more opportunities for study—
bible study, book study, small group discussions, etc.?



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A VITAL CHURCH TODAY?



7 Marks of vital congregations

- Growing in Faith
- Becoming Invitational
- Being Christ's Body at work in the world
- Leader Training and Empowerment
- Spirit-Inspired Worship
- Caring Relationships
- Growing a Healthy Church

SOME OF THE OTHER FINDINGS INCLUDE THESE:



- There is a need for greater shared responsibility among members—some need to “pass the baton” and others need to “receive the baton.”
- There are significant generational danger signs—what some call an “Age Longevity Membership Bubble,” which cannot be ignored.
- There is a need to expand our missional ministries.

A photograph of a small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves growing out of a crack in a grey asphalt surface. The background is a blurred, light-colored surface, possibly a road or sidewalk. The seedling is the central focus, symbolizing growth and resilience.

CRITICAL AREAS GOING FORWARD FOR THE CHURCH AND A NEW PASTOR

- Growing in Spiritual Vitality
- Greater Shared Responsibility
- Expansion of Missional Ministries and Partnerships
- Addressing the Generational Danger Signs by Transfer of Authority to younger generations.



Q & A

NEXT WEEK—APRIL 21, 2024



The
Mission
Study
Team
thanks
you for
your
time.



Next week, we will be hosting small group discussions to further explore some of these topics. This work is important to completing a Mission Study Report. Please sign up to be a part of one of those discussions!