

Who responded to the survey?

Invitations to participate in the survey were mailed and emailed to 250 members and 185 friends, and were handed to all Sunday worship attendees for three weeks in September-October 2016. 176 people responded to the survey: 144 members (58% of the total membership) and 32 friends. Many people who responded to the survey have been involved in the church for a long time (the majority– 65%– for least 6 years) and attend Sunday services regularly (61% attend 3-4 Sundays/month). People with children in RE were well represented among the survey respondents; 29% of people in the church database have children in RE, compared to 32% of the survey respondents.

How engaged are we?

The level of participation in the church (beyond attending Sunday services or RE) was fairly evenly split across a continuum from ‘not at all’ (23%), ‘a little’ (25%), ‘somewhat’ (20%) to ‘very’ (32%) involved.

What do we value about FPB?

Respondents were asked to rank seven aspects of life at FPB as it is today, from 1=most important to 7=least important. An efficient way to capture responses is to examine how respondents ranked their top 3 elements of church life. There appear to be three distinct categories:

- Sunday services and adult community were ranked in the top three by majorities of respondents
- Kids’ community, diverse community, and social action were ranked in the top three by substantial minorities
- Adult RE and personal development were infrequently ranked in the top three

The biggest difference between respondents with children in RE and others was in the ranking of kids’ community, which was 4 times more likely to be ranked in the top three among respondents with children in RE. Respondents without children in RE were nearly twice as likely to rank diverse community and social action in the top three. There was very close agreement between respondents with and without children on the [high] ranking of Sunday services.

The biggest differences by length of involvement were that, for respondents who are new to FPB, adult community was substantially less likely to be in the top three, while diverse community was substantially more likely to be in the top three

Which of these aspects of church life do we support with our time and talent?

The largest fractions of people (more than a third) actively commit to adult community, Sunday services, and kids community, largely in line with the overall ranking of these elements. Looking at aspects of church life that people plan to commit energy to, 10% or more of respondents rank adult community, diverse community, and social action in their top three.

How do we value aspects of the Mission Statement? How is it influencing us?

Transitions Conversations Survey – Summary Report Excerpted from full report 2016-12-05

All elements of the mission were considered either “most important” or “important” by a substantial majority (77-93%) of respondents, indicating strong support for the mission statement in the congregation. Similar numbers of people said its influence has been:

- Strongly positive (26%)
- Mixed (30%), or
- That they do not know its effect (32%).

Only 3% said it had had no effect, and 2% a strongly negative effect. People who are very involved were significantly less likely to say they didn’t know about the influence of the mission statement.

Finances

A quarter of respondents know a lot about the finances and another quarter know very little. A significant majority of respondents think a sustainable draw is somewhat (29%) or very (51%) important.

An open-ended question asked respondents what FPB could do to increase their pledge. 31% indicated there was nothing, often because they were already at their maximum level of donation. The second most common response was that a sound financial plan would motivate a pledge increase.

A second open-ended question asked respondent what FPB might do that would lead to a decrease in their pledge. The most common category of comments indicated that a change in the character of the church would motivate a decrease in their pledge. The second largest category of comments indicated that nothing would motivate them to decrease their pledge.

Almost a third of respondents indicated they would commit their time and talent to fundraising events. The most common category of comments on fundraising events indicated enthusiasm and willingness to help.

Survey respondents had access to estimates of the legacy assets’ value and were asked to share their thoughts on selling legacy assets and their willingness to lend their time, talent, and treasure to shape how FPB handles these assets. Among 131 responses:

- 23% urged not selling any of the legacy assets (for a range of reasons, including that the amount of money to be gained was not worth it and/or that the assets were too precious to be sold)
- 35% advocated selling at least some of the legacy assets; these comments included a wide range of opinion, from advocating the sale of just the small furniture/antique items to advocating the sale of the windows, organ, and/or entire church building.

The survey asked respondents to share their suggestions on saving money. The most common coded response was to reduce staffing, with many comments about a single-minister model.