

**Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT)**  
**Executive Summary**  
**Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd**  
**August 2022**

## Overview

We had excellent participation (82) representing 126% of our most recent average Sunday/weekend attendance. Thank you. This level of participation enables us to hear from and respond to a broad base of our congregation. We were seeking to meet the threshold of 33% participation that provides us with valid, reliable and representative data. We certainly met this threshold and are confident that the results reflect our entire congregation.

In this assessment, our responses were compared to the responses of the last 250 congregations (nationally) that have participated in the CAT over the last 20-22 months. Although every congregation is unique because of history, geography, size and denomination, congregations do hold much in common. This information provides a benchmark for comparative purposes.

## What did we learn?

***Our strengths are many and are revealed and explained through the Performance Dashboard and Performance Indicators.***

The scores shown below indicate the percent of benchmarked churches for which our scores were higher:

- Hospitality (92<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *The degree to which members perceive that the congregation is engaged in offering themselves and their resources to folks who are new, different or in need.*
  
- Morale (90<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *Morale is the positive, passionate and persuasive engagement of the members in the mission of the church.*
  
- Conflict Management (91<sup>rd</sup> percentile)
  - *The degree to which members believe that conflict is appropriately managed and, where possible, resolved.*

- Governance (77<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *The degree to which members believe that the decision-making structures and processes of the church are open to their concerns and input.*
- Spiritual Vitality (52<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *The degree to which members believe that their faith is central to their lives.*
- Readiness for Ministry (71<sup>rd</sup> percentile)
  - Some churches call it lay ministry, some lay leadership, others, the ministry of the baptized. This index measures the degree to which the church has helped members make this transition in their understanding and equipped them for their own particular ministry.
- Engagement in Education (20<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *Christian education is a life-long process that enriches a person's life. This index measures the degree to which members share in that understanding*
- Worship and Music (75<sup>th</sup> percentile)
  - *Captures the congregation's feelings about the quality of the worship experience*

**We learned what drives the overall satisfaction of our members**

Overall, 70% of our members are clearly satisfied with things in the church. When asked how satisfied you are, members tended to focus on the issues addressed in the questions below:

- Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership
- In preaching, our interim Rector engages people with a message that enriches their lives in the world.
- A friendly atmosphere prevails among the members of our church
- In important decisions in our church, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided.
- Our interim Rector communicates with people in a way that keeps us informed and connected.

**We also learned our congregation's priorities/our aspirations for the future – where we want additional energy placed to enhance or improve our ministries**

The survey also indicates that our members look to the future, their top goals are:

- Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporated them into the life of our church.
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.
- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.

**Our Climate: Member satisfaction and member energy reveal the most about a congregation's health, morale and vitality.**

Our responses to questions on Satisfaction and Energy define us as a "transformational" church. This puts us in the top 25% of all congregations who have participated in the CAT across the country. This demonstrates a clear sense of mission and vision, alignment of and strengths in ministry and worship, all of which provides us the opportunity to transform the lives of those we touch with our ministries.

The climate, culture and spiritual vitality of our congregation leads to our financial giving. Our average contribution to the church per household is about \$4,200. This represents an average percent of household income given to the church of 3.9%. While this is well above the national average in the Episcopal church of 2.5%, our household income profile demonstrates that there is much untapped potential for our stewardship.

Our profile as a 'transformational' and 'performance church helps us understand the characteristics and skills needed in our next Rector – who fills a role as what might be known as a 'field marshal' – because our nature requires optimizing a large array of strategic resources – visionary, excellent in preaching and presiding, a developer of people.

**Overall**, we are a strong, thriving congregation. We have taken ownership of our baptismal call through our involvement in the ministries of this congregation. We are motivated in our responsibility for life-long learning and formation. There is much to celebrate and for which to be grateful. And... we are left with some important things to ponder about our future. Our pondering and prayer will take us into the next phase of this journey.