

## State of the Congregation of First Presbyterian Church- Winchester

### Report about the CAT Experience to the Committee on Pastoral Transition

<p>Following the CAT interpretation and congregational discussion, the session's discernment about <b>congregational Vitality and Energy</b>, based on the Vital Signs report, pages 3-4,6 is:</p> <p>The Session agrees with the CAT's characterization of FPC as a "high energy/high satisfaction" or "transformational" church. Churches in this category are sources of new meaning and purpose for their church family. However, churches in this category also may have a tendency to intellectualize issues and may have difficulty in establishing identity and vision.</p>	<p>Comments on members' <b>priorities for additional energy</b>, per Vital Signs Report Pages 8-12:</p> <p>As our church family looks to the future, our top four priorities are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.</li> <li>2. Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.</li> <li>3. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership.</li> <li>4. Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society (i.e., homeless, immigrant, transient persons).</li> </ol>
<p>Session's summary comments on <b>Drivers of Member Satisfaction</b>, based on respondents' perceptions, Shown in the Vital Signs Report, Page 5:</p> <p>According to our CAT results, the following issues correlate with our overall satisfaction level; when our church family members feel more positive in these areas, they tend to feel more positive overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership.</li> <li>• The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.</li> <li>• The leaders of our church show a genuine concern to know what people are thinking when decisions need to be made.</li> <li>• In important decisions in our church, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided.</li> </ul>	<p>Comments on the congregation's <b>theological perspective and flexible style</b>, based on the Vital Signs Report, pages 13-15:</p> <p><b>Theological Perspective:</b> The CAT told us that FPC is a moderately progressive church in that we interpret our faith and the role of the Bible in relationship to the time and place believers exist. The results reveal diversity in the CAT participants' theological perspective.</p> <p><b>Flexible Style:</b> CAT respondents acknowledge that changes in worship are unsettling to them. Our recent experiences with our worship schedule support this perception. The added question on worship scheduling we posed in the CAT, the worship forums, and the appointment of a Congregational Worship Team to study worship needs at FPC indicate a willingness on the part of the congregation to work toward meeting the worship needs of the members. The New Stone worship service reflects FPC's willingness to adapt to changing needs.</p> <p>Overall, the CAT identified FPC as a progressive – adaptable church, open to changes that will help us discern the will of God and move toward being better disciples of Christ.</p>

Comment on Vital Signs Report, Page 5: What improvements/changes could have the **greatest impact on how members are feeling about the church overall?**

FPC rated “moderate” on the four drivers of satisfaction. Of the four drivers, only the “Representative Leadership” driver was listed as a critical factor, but did not score in a range that indicated this needed the attention of Session. Therefore, there are no strong indicators of areas that need to be changed in order to affect members’ satisfaction with the church.

Where should attention be given in response to indicators in the **Performance Indices**, Vital Signs pages 17-24?

In comparison to other churches, our spiritual vitality and the hospitality index are areas where there is certainly room to grow.

- The CAT Team held several congregational forums to address the issue of “hospitality”. Partly, this was done to address CAT participants’ perception of our hospitality, as compared to other churches. The forums carried forward a Sunday School theme from 2015. A variety of suggestions were made on ways to improve the church’s physical space, small groups, and shared meals in order to foster a more hospitable environment.
- The “morale” and “conflict management” indices showed that FPC ranked a bit above average compared to other churches, and FPC ranked very high in the “governance” index. These areas appear to be managed in keeping with CAT participants’ desires.
- On the other hand, FPC ranked lower than other churches on the “spiritual vitality” index. Their spiritual life is important to them, but CAT participants didn’t indicate it is a driving force in their lives. On an almost contradictory note, participants perceive their readiness for ministry as higher than in other churches. In this category, only one indicator scored lower, and that related to involvement by the laity in leading worship. This might be an area for further review.
- The final index pertained to “worship & music”. Although this area was also rated "above average" a number of congregational forums were held on this topic, as well. The reasoning was that a review of the four-service schedule was needed. Music at FPC reflects diversity due to the existence of both traditional and contemporary worship services, and CAT participants considered the quality of our music program to be quite high. Ultimately, even though over half of the membership has indicated that they might be open to a modification to the worship schedule, any changes must be given thoughtful consideration. The Congregational Worship Team is currently working on worship schedule issues and will report its recommendations to Worship and Discipleship Council and Session later this spring.

<p>What was learned from the <b>Transition Profile</b>, Vital Signs Report, page 29?</p> <p>FPC will maintain the status quo during its transition period with respect to engagement and financial commitments. A very small percentage of CAT participants may look for another church. Most congregants believe Session represents the church body. In response to the CAT, Worship and Discipleship Council has added representatives from each worship service to better connect with the congregation. Most congregants believe that the church should continue in its current direction. The majority would like a pastor with the same skill set as the former pastor.</p>	<p>For congregations, where the financial situation may impact on the next pastoral call: <b>Will it be possible to formulate a (1) full-time call or (2) part-time call.</b> Explain, please?</p> <p>This pastoral call is for a full time position. FPC currently has 3 pastors serving a congregation of 400-450 worshippers and membership of 950. In addition, all three of our pastors are involved in a number of ministries within the surrounding community that are very important to our members. The CAT team took into account the recent Youth Renovation Team conclusion that FPC would benefit from a director of youth ministry. The findings of the Congregational Worship Team and other decisions facing Session (e.g. our marriage policy) may impact FPC staffing. Staffing our church to support its mission is an on-going process and one that requires attention as we move through this transition phase of our church's life.</p>
<p>What are the <b>three most important critical abilities for the next pastor or associate pastor</b>, per Vital Signs Report, page 32?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preaching – The pastor must be able to deliver the message. He/she must have the capacity to inspire and connect people to God's word.</li> <li>2. Strategic leadership- The pastor must be a strong leader with a vision for our church and the capacity to lead us to a realization of the vision.</li> <li>3. Pastoral Care- The pastor must have the capacity to engage people empathetically and care for persons in time of need. He/she must have the desire for great pastoral care with our congregation.</li> </ol> <p>In addition, "Teaching/Training" and "Conflict Management" rated as highly desirable abilities in our next senior pastor.</p>	<p>Other comments:</p>
<p>Do the critical abilities above match the session's discernment, based on the overall Vital Signs Report? If not, why?</p> <p>The Session generally concurs with the results of the CAT regarding critical abilities needed by our next senior pastor. However, the list of "critical abilities" presented to CAT participants in the ranking exercise did not adequately capture some of our participants' top priorities, such as developing or expanding "ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances" and "outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society." In addition, our Session discerns the need to call an individual who will see it as part of the senior pastor's mission to help the church itself become more racially, ethnically, and educationally diverse and</p>	<p>Other comments:</p>

find a way to speak effectively to those increasing numbers in our midst who profess no religious identity or affiliation.	
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**Please attach a copy of the CAT Executive Summary provided the congregation.**

**March 15, 2016**