

## ***Church Assessment Tool***<sup>®</sup>

### **Executive Summary**

Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle, WA

The *Church Assessment Tool*<sup>®</sup> was recently administered in your church. 545 persons were sent either a letter or an email inviting them to participate. Of these, 324 persons responded. A response from every member is not required to provide valid results. For a complete readout, please review the *Vital Signs*<sup>®</sup> report that was sent to your church. A summary of that report is provided below.

Overall, approximately 48% of your members are clearly satisfied with things in the church which is average compared to other churches in your peer group. The level of energy and excitement in your church is also average. The satisfaction and energy levels in a church are important components of church morale and serve as one of the best predictors of overall health and numeric growth. A closer look at your satisfaction and energy scores suggests that the church might be struggling with a level of chaos as it tries to provide structure and direction to its energy in a way that is agreeable to those who are involved.

An examination of the pattern of responses to your survey reveals that the questions that are most important to your members in evaluating how they feel about the church overall are

- Our Canon Missioner helps us accomplish our mission by bringing out the best in everyone.
- Our Canon Missioner has ensured the development of a plan to care for members with special needs.
- Our Canon Missioner communicates with people in a way that keeps us informed and connected.
- In preaching, our Canon Missioner engages people with a message that enriches their lives in the world.
- Our Canon Missioner articulates a clear vision for our church and keeps it before the people in a compelling way.

These are called drivers of satisfaction. The fact that a majority of your drivers of satisfaction are focused on the Rector suggests that you are a Rector-centric church. To say that a church is Rector-centric does not necessarily mean that the Rector is making all the decisions or that the Rector is doing all the work. It means that members are determining how they feel about the church overall based upon their evaluation of the work of the Rector rather than their evaluation of other aspects of the ministry of the church. In Rector-centric churches, positive changes in various areas of ministry may have little impact on how people are generally feeling about the church.

At this point, the issues that appear most critical to improving morale include

- how well the Canon Missioner's plan ensures pastoral care
- the degree to which leaders are representative of the congregation
- the concern that leaders show to know what people are thinking

Pastoral care issues appear as a consistent theme in the report. In addition critical issues around governance suggest that steps may need to be taken to clarify channels for input and lines of authority. The level of urgency in dealing with these issues is high. This suggests that the leadership may want to focus soon on one or more of these issues for further understanding and possible action.

Your church has a number of important strengths including

- A strong worship experience led by an exceptional music ministry
- An educational ministry that provides a variety of opportunities to fit different lifestyles
- A wealth of opportunities for service in the church and in the world
- A diverse congregation that is open to those from different walks of life
- A high level of spiritual engagement with impact on the way members view life

The conflict management score for the church is average. Approximately 17% of members are clearly disturbed by the level of conflict. There are probably areas of conflict that are persistent but not debilitating at this point. In a Rector-centric church it is likely that a significant portion of whatever conflict does exist will become focused on some aspect of the work of the Rector.

Theologically, your member responses indicate that the church tends to be very progressive in its perspective. On the flexible style index, your church appears to be adaptable. This suggests that in your life as a church you may be comfortable making frequent adjustments to the way you do things. As a progressive-flexible style church with a very high level of education, it is likely that you have strengths in the areas of exploration, analysis, advocacy, and reflection. It is important to build on these strengths in developing the ministry and mission of the church by making sure that reflection leads to concrete action. It may also be important for you to attend to aspects of your shared life that are not as natural to you such as developing boundaries, clarity, accountability, and relational skills.

As members look to the future, their top four goals are:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people.
2. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
3. Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.
4. Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership.

The energy that members want invested in these goals is high. This suggests that members not only have a clear sense of priorities they also realize that a significant amount of energy is required for the future.

Two goals that are unusually strong for your church are

- Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.
- Work as an advocate for social and institutional change.

These may warrant attention from the leadership even if they are not at the top of the list.

The financial information in the report suggests that the church may have additional financial capacity. The average household income is \$103,000. With an average per household gift of \$1,698, this translates into an average percentage of household income given at 1.65%. Using these figures, if the church were to bring its level of giving up to the national average of 2.1%, it would have an additional \$300,000 to support its ministry and mission.