

2024-2025 Holy Cow! Consulting Survey Results

Episcopal Church of the Advent

Overview

The Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) was administered at the Episcopal Church of Advent November 2024 – January 2025. 640 parishioners were invited to participate, of whom 291 responded. With an average of 229 weekly attendees, this represents a 127% response rate which enabled us to capture a broad base of our congregation.

Our responses were compared to those of the last 2,800 congregations that have participated in the CAT over the last 3-4 years. This information provided a benchmark to help us understand what is typical and what is exceptional about our congregation. We were reminded that “Survey data is not the end of a conversation but the beginning.”

Congregational Climate

Two characteristics are necessary to create a vital congregation – high levels of member satisfaction and energy. While 49% of responders are clearly satisfied with how things are here and 43% feel that there is a compelling sense of purpose, almost one-half of responders are undecided, waiting during this time of transition to see what is going to happen next before stating whether they are clearly satisfied or energized. Compared to other congregations nationally, our member satisfaction and energy are average or typical. Our over 65 age group experience a vibrant congregation, and those under 65 felt a part of a congregation that is more static. This indicates that the church has opportunities which include growth, expansion and external impact.

Survey results indicate that there is high focus on the role and function of Christian education and formation. These results include the following:

- The worship services at the Advent are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.
- The whole spirit in our congregation makes people want to get involved.
- The Advent provides opportunities for education and formations in a variety of ways.
- Our church provides high quality education that is appropriate to every age and stage of life.
- Our church does a good job supporting people by reminding them that they are making a difference.

As we look to our future, the following priorities emerge where additional energy could be placed to achieve our future vision:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people.
- Make necessary changes to attract families and young people to our church.
- Develop spiritual generosity of members to financially support the ministry of the church.
- Expand outreach ministries to support those in need.

Future Priorities/Aspirations

Strengths and challenges revealed through indices assessed in eight areas showed that in five, we scored higher than most congregations nationally; in two we scored as average; and in one we scored below average. The five areas in which we scored higher than most congregations nationally are: Morale, Spiritual Vitality, Readiness for Ministry, Engagement in Education, and Worship and Music. Average areas included Conflict Management and Governance. The below-average area was Hospitality. When our results were compared with other congregations, this remains an area for ongoing improvement especially given our focused desire for growth.

Congregational Culture

- Theologically we lean conservative with an average level of theological diversity, and we are strong in our ability to hold a variety of theological perspectives together without conflict.
- We seek growth and change, yet if we are to attain our goals, we must adapt to the needs of those whom we want to reach. We seek leadership that will help us navigate the challenges inherent in making changes that will spawn growth.
- We are considered a conservative, settled congregation with opportunities for vitality, innovation, and growth. Flexibility and vulnerability are identified as critical characteristics that must be fostered to enable us to embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Our Commitment

We commit to what is necessary to become a stronger and more vibrant congregation. In particular, we commit to better align our culture with our aspirations for the future. There are many strengths to celebrate as we work together to achieve our goals for the future.