



CHRIST CHURCH  
DARTMOUTH  
An Inclusive Church Welcoming Everyone.



**To:** The Parishioners of Christ Church Dartmouth  
**From:** The Ministry Vision Sub-Committee – Vision 2020  
**Re:** Summary Findings of the Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Survey

Dear Friends,

As part of our parish's visioning process a survey was sent to the congregation in September. Holy Cow Consulting who administered the survey presented their findings to Parish Council in November. The survey is just one part of a larger process and we wanted to update the parish on where we are on the visioning process.

The survey is the starting place on the path to a new Parish vision. It asked us to look at parish life and ask ourselves how we felt about the parish, our involvement, and to identify what is going well, what could be better and what we hope for in the future. It also asked us to look deeply at different parts of the parish and worship experience.

The 100 responses received are a number that is close to 90 percent of our average weekly attendance. Those responding are frequent attendees (65% at least three times a month), over the age of 55 (90% of respondents) and live near the church (75% within 4 miles). Unexpectedly only 19 % of the respondents were men.

Overwhelmingly you believe that change is necessary to achieve your vision of the future church, (90%), and 40% of us indicated a willingness to take a more active role in parish life but were unsure of how their energy could be best used. You spoke up and told us that Christ Church needs to re-think its basic purpose and mission if it is to be effective in the future.

The survey looked at the concepts of satisfaction and energy and found us lacking in both. From their collective experience at studying congregations within the wider Anglican Communion, Holy Cow indicated to us that satisfaction is driven by transparency in lay leadership, representation, decision making, taking input on decisions and in support for ministry leaders. Drivers of energy include the spirit of the congregation fostering involvement, education and formation, support from leadership and tolerance for differing opinions and beliefs.

Those who responded to the survey know it asked a lot of questions in overlapping areas and different ways. Holy Cow's analysis of the data indicated several future directions and priorities but indicated the top four for respondents were:

***Make changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.***

***Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.***

***Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.***

***Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church, building coalitions with partners.***

Holy Cow's body of experience in examining churches like ours was used by J. Russel Crabtree, founder of Holy Cow and an organizational intelligence researcher, in his analysis of the guiding practices of successful churches within our communion. While recognizing that each church is different, and that strategic plans and visions are not transferable from successful churches to those seeking change, there are some guiding ideas that are common. The visioning committee believes these guiding practices may be instructive to us as a place to start our process of engagement with each other as we work on building a vision and plan for the parish.

***Our church will be one where worship experiences are exceptional and inspire, engage, and enrich our spiritual lives.***

***Our church will be one where involvement is good for the soul and does not lead to disillusionment or disappointment.***

***Our church will be one where every person understands the significance of their life in the universe and is supported in fulfilling the purpose that they were born to.***

***Our church will be one in which people strive to live in peace with each other but resolve conflict in ways that foster respect and are restorative.***

***Our church will be one where the parish experiences leaders who listen deeply with open hearts and who make courageous decisions with good intentions.***

These promises or intentions are not the strategic plan or vision, but they stand as good guides in the process of defining our vision.

**And what is that process?**

In the coming weeks we will be sharing the survey results and embarking on a series of reflective meetings or conversations in which you the congregation will be asked to consider how we saw ourselves and how we want to see our future selves.

**Stay tuned for more!**