

Holy Cow Summary

**Presbytery of Milwaukee**

22 February 2017

Holy Cow, What a Success!

The Holy Cow survey initiative was a vehicle to determine the strength and condition of the presbytery and to ascertain where we were after the four years of implementing “What’s Next”. The council felt it was time to use the past four years’ experience of “What’s Next” to determine what new steps to take as the Presbytery moves forward into the years to come.

As was reported by Craig Howard to the Council, “The results were outstanding. The presbytery stood out as a transformational presbytery (the highest ranking) with high energy and high satisfaction. The presbytery also stood out in conflict management, engagement, governance, and leadership. The survey made it clear that the presbytery is doing well, but to maintain this level of excellence the presbytery needs to embark on a strategy that includes the core values of its membership.”

A committee was formed to gather information about member’s core values as they relate to their faith in Jesus Christ. Along with Craig Howard, there was myself, Jeannette Bell, as moderator, Sara Miles and Sarah Rand as members of the Implementation Committee. There were five regional meetings held where the results of the Holy Cow survey was shared with the participants. Individuals were then asked to write about an experience they personally had in this Presbytery where they thought “Wow! That is God working here” and “what does this experience tell you about what is important to you?” The goal is to determine what issues the presbytery should be focused on in the future.

All of the information gathered from the five regional meetings was put into a concise statement by Craig Howard before he left for his new position. It will serve as a guideline for the future. It is as follows, “**We seek experiences of collaboration and community where God is present and the Spirit is palpable: bringing hope, renewal, and energy that leads us to risk a variety of newness.**” As we wait for the identification for a new Director of Strategic Partnerships, the Presbytery will keep these ideas in mind but any dramatic changes in direction will wait for new leadership. The challenge will be to put these words into actual actions.

It was a great learning experience for me as your moderator during this process and I continue to value being a part of an exciting future for our Presbytery. We are strong in faith and our strength can lead us to take risks to improve our role as a presbytery.

*Submitted by Jeannette Bell, Ruling Elder at Good Shepherd Trinity; Moderator of the Presbytery*