

September 10, 2025

Dear Friends,

We are happy to be able to share with you our Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Tool ("CAT") survey results.

First, a big thank you to everyone who participated in the survey! This is a significant milestone in our Vision150 process. We had 172 responses, which enables us to rely on the accuracy of the survey results.

The CAT provides us with valuable information in four key areas: (1) congregational vitality, (2) priorities for the future, (3) parish culture, and (4) performance metrics benchmarked against other parishes. In addition to providing an assessment of the present state of the parish, your input in the CAT shows us how we can become a stronger parish and lay the foundation for the growth and ministries we desire.

We will be tailoring the listening session questions to key themes identified in the survey, and the Strategic Planning Committee will be working with the Vestry to make sure the findings from both the survey and the listening sessions are appropriately addressed.

You may find the results summarized below surprising, just what you expected, or a mix. As your Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chairs, we hope you will also share our view that this data is a gift to the parish, and one that will empower us to move forward with Strategic Planning, and indeed in our collective life together, with a better sense of the course we should chart to grow in faith, hope and love.

Sincerely,
Katherine Brown & Sarah Atwood

Congregational Vitality

The CAT uses two measures of congregational vitality: satisfaction and energy. Together, these provide a measure of the health of the church and underpin our ability to achieve our priorities for the future. On both of these metrics, we have scored ourselves at just over 40% "clearly satisfied" and "compelling sense of purpose and energy."

Importantly, an even larger percentage of us are on the fence (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). Setting the right strategic vision for the future will be critically important to this group, who are waiting to see the direction we take as a parish. Compared to the 2,800 other main-line denomination parishes surveyed by Holy Cow in the last six years, Trinity is in the low-average to average range of congregational vitality. We are committed to addressing this.

Per the CAT, Trinity's focus areas to improve vitality and make our priorities for the future more likely to come to fruition are:

- The Rector's ability to bring out the best in everyone and articulate a clear vision
- The quality and spiritual content of worship services
- A unified spirit that makes us want to get as involved as possible
- The positive mutual resolution of conflicts when they arise

These focus areas are not a list of identified concerns but are key drivers for Trinity's future vitality.

Priorities for the Future

The CAT presented 17 options for where additional energy might be placed. Of these, five stood out, though the ranking of these priorities varied by age of the respondent.

- Make necessary 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
- Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life

The Strategic Planning Committee will be reflecting on these priorities and how we might make this vision a reality.

Cultural Assessment

Holy Cow's experience is that particular church cultures, like particular personalities, have certain hallmarks, and that knowing these can help a parish play to its strengths and go carefully in areas of weakness.

Trinity's culture is identified by Holy Cow as "Paraclete." This culture is often intellectually open and reflective, adept at understanding that we may all be on a different spiritual path. It is a culture that values hospitality and inclusiveness. Paracletes find deep meaning in the spiritual structure and rituals of their worship and prayer. This culture is typically well-equipped and ready to engage in ministry that involves healing and active community work. Vulnerable areas for Paraclete cultures are loss of missional focus, difficulty adapting, and a tendency to

overcommit. Often in this culture, congregants are so focused on acceptance that accountability has been lost.

Performance Metrics

The CAT assessed Trinity's performance in the areas of hospitality, morale, conflict management, governance, spiritual vitality, readiness for ministry, engagement in education, and worship and music. Holy Cow benchmarked Trinity's responses against the other 2,800 parishes in their database.

Trinity performed in line with other parishes on most metrics, with strengths in governance and education. The most opportunity for improvement is in the areas of hospitality, conflict management, and spiritual vitality. Holy Cow observed that spirituality and hospitality are both undermined by conflict, which also suggests all three metrics would benefit from better addressing conflict when it arises.

Your Comments

Many of the comments in the CAT survey are extremely thoughtful and insightful. They reflect a parish who cares deeply, and they include a wealth of ideas about how to strengthen our community and ministry. We appreciate your taking the time to share your thoughts, and are looking forward to talking about them in detail as a committee as we shape our Vision 150.