

The TAMBO Committee is grateful for your heartfelt and candid responses. This document is the compilation of 59 responses that we received.

SUMMARY OF TAMBO RESPONSES -

SECTION 1 - WHAT PEOPLE ARE MISSING ABOUT CHURCH

Everyone is missing something! Most respondents described missing being physically present and connected with other church members as part of a spiritual community. They miss feeling welcomed, smiling and shaking hands, greeting and hugging other members, being an usher, conversing with others, getting to meet and know others, getting advice or sounding others out on something, sharing laughter and tears, seeing children and young families, and seeing new people from all walks of life.

They miss sitting together in the pews, singing in the choir, hearing the choir, singing in the congregation, reading the lessons, praying the Lord's Prayer in a group, sharing communion, and putting flowers in the church. They miss being able to check in with people who may need support, and offer that support. They miss the beauty and familiarity of the sanctuary, the windows, the vestments and banners, and the surrounding gardens. They miss coffee time after church, pouring tea after church, church meals and celebrations. They miss UCW meetings, sharing study and learning with others, Reiki/Healing Touch sessions, centering prayer, book club meetings and discussions, the Nitelights group, volunteering for community dinners and other community service projects, Third Space and its activities focussing on discussion and interaction like Cafe Church and Death Cafe.

Sample Quotes regarding what people are missing:

- ...coffee and people and worship at Third Space...three great things all together...
- ...the genuine sense of welcome, acceptance and belonging
- ...being able to worship together, sing together, eat together....as a living worshipping community
- ...Cafe Church as a regular practice of worship prayer and discernmentThird Space Drop-in.....with possibility and opportunity in every new encounter
- ...the act of worshipping together as one...
- ...the very tangible spirit presence within the building during the service on a Sunday and during the Reiki/Healing Touch sessions
-how important it is to connect spiritually.....I have a deep yearning to be with the community
- ...the spontaneity of church worship...occasional sneeze, giggle or rattle of a page...miss singing, my heart never soars quite as high...
- ...gathering with others in person for centering prayer - it feels profound to pray together in

person

- ...being able to offer love and support in person to those in mourning or other crises
- ...receiving communion... offering oneself and making a commitment, which is something best done before witnesses
- ...worshipping together in person...experiencing the power of prayer and rituals
- ...the special connection with everyone around me as the Christ candle is lit
- ...knowing how everyone else is faring and.....who might need my help or my concern and caring
- ... the routine of going to church on Sunday morning... it is my tradition
- ...seeing and chatting with a variety of people....sometimes a visual check...tells how a person is doing....this chance to connect is important
- ...the relationships...with the children and families coming to our impromptu Nursery School Program in the library
- ...conversations with many of the older and wiser members of our church family

Some people listed more broadly what they are missing, including such activities as dinner with friends, using libraries, coffee with neighbours, students they teach, fun with grandchildren, music concerts and shows, spontaneous travel, outings to gardens, markets, festivals and celebrations, and generally being in the presence of other people. They also mentioned loss of daily routines and the satisfaction of accomplishments not possible right now. Others are struggling with separation from family members who need support, but restrictions prevent being with them. At the same time, many expressed gratitude for their health, home, family, financial stability, access to nature and being able to communicate with others using various technologies. Many have appreciated the chance to slow down and reflect, and have found it a time of renewal.

SECTION 2 - PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Respondents passionately, and at length, described what is of importance to them, how they see the church's role in the community now and in the future. Several themes emerged describing their hopes for what Peninsula United will do and be for themselves, our community and the wider world.

Be an Instrument for Sharing God's Love with our Community and Beyond

Respondents described their beliefs about why the church matters in the the community and the wider society, and their hopes for how the church will be perceived.

Sample Quotes

- [the church can ensure] that the reality of God continues to be known, experienced, lived and celebrated by ourselves and with others in ...and outside the church...
- [the church can] become a catalyst of God's love which opens up and morphs into God's love in the world through us
- [the church] inspires hopefulness
- The community at large can know there is a place where they are welcome and accepted without reservation... a place to celebrate together, mourn together, show gratitude for the riches of life together
- [the church] can be a reflection of God's love for all in the world and particularly in our

surrounding community

- ...a caring and compassionate community of faith can exert some influence in our broader secular community
-the church lets everybody know that we are not alone...the church will be there for everybody...we should always have a building, so that we are visible in the community
- ...the community knows that we the church and the Lord are there for them whenever they need to reach out
- [the church] shares the God we know and love with those that haven't met him/her yet and our ministers do this so splendidly at our Memorial Services...
- People know that the church is still alive which tells them God is still with us
- ...the church is important because the community benefits and it draws people together

Provide a Supportive Community of Faith

Respondents described how important it is to be in community with like-minded people. It is our spiritual home, where we have the structure of regular worship and study time together, share our joys and sorrows, and support each other in many ways through sickness and health.

Sample Quotes

-folks can share their concerns, wisdom and energy with like minded folks...
- We can come together with one voice...
- We can be together to celebrate our faith... very powerful, meaningful when we can physically be together
- Church members can know they are loved and supported by their church family
- ...come together as a church family to support one another.....
- ...fellowship and caring for each other...
- ...provide a community...of Christian faith...Connect with... role-models, kindred spirits endeavouring to live a life modelled on loving others as we are loved
- ...a place of support, nurture, study and challenge...
- ...a place to belong...that can centre us...We are welcome and embraced and cared for
- ...we can work together to care for each other and others in this world, supported by the Christian principles we find and are reminded of here
- ...being part of a congregation that shares my values and sees a future full of joy and camaraderie while fulfilling the mandate as stated in the mission priorities
- ...a place for all of us who want to share God's love to learn how to share that love...experience the joy of worshipping together
- ...worshipping God in a loving environment with like minded people
- ...support each other spiritually, emotionally and physically as needed
- Growing up in the United Church means I am most comfortable and most nourished by our church
- ..important that we have a constant, consistent, accepting safe refuge
- ...a [place] where people know they are welcome...when searching for people with whom [they] would/could feel a connection
- [our church] is a community we "belong" to in a community we live in - it becomes our "church" family
- ...those searching for a welcoming, non-judgemental, open-hearted church home can find their place of worship and be in community with like-minded people

- We can worship in community...reaffirm that we are not alone..share the burdens, share the joy of celebration...pledge to care for one another
- ...support the “body of believers”...as they travel through life, in a loving and caring way
- ...what really matters...is the opportunity to rejoice together...we gather to sing, learn, cry and laugh together
- A “home” in which to gather with our Church family together for worship, fellowship, and to experience the connection with spirit in others...

Welcome All, and Support Spiritual Exploration

Respondents see our church as an important Christian presence on the peninsula, a place of welcome and inclusivity, where everyone is seen as equal, and where spiritual exploration is encouraged within a more liberal theology.

Sample Quotes

- ...can help...by giving a home to people... seeking deeper meaning in their lives, who want to develop their spiritual side...Expose my children to spirituality ...and the sense of belonging and community that comes from being in a church...felt welcomed with open arms
- ...opportunities to share our beliefs (or our search for meaning) ...without judgment....Need to trust one another, this will come from knowing one another... Helpful to talk ...openly
- ...openness to explore faith questions without prescriptive answers
- ...find mutual support, receive and offer service without judgment and be challenged to imagine bigger things
- ...accessible, meaningful worship in a variety of formats to suit various needs
- ...a safe place for someone to challenge their beliefs in order to determine what nourishes their soul and brings them clarity
- ...all are welcome in love regardless of background, colour, sexual identification
- All spiritual searchers are welcome and can find a place of hope, inspiration, love and support for their journey
- Be inviting, inclusive, extending our open invitation to those searching for acceptance and guidance
- ...support people in their quest to discover and learn more about their personal faith

Work together as a Community

Respondents see much greater strength among us if we work together as a community, rather than acting as individuals.

Sample Quotes

- ...United we are stronger...United we can help each other (#1)
- ..the resolve, talents, and enthusiasm of individuals can be nurtured and enhanced by the collective/congregation
- We are more successful... as a...church community vs individuals
- Our voices can come together in song and prayer
- Our church is only as strong as its members

Encourage and Support Members to Live their Faith in the World

Respondents see the church having a major role in supporting individuals in how they each

contribute to the wider community and the world, sometimes through outreach projects at home or abroad, and also through prayer and study, through how they engage with others, and through actions they take in their everyday lives.

Sample quotes:

- there would be great value....to sometimes doing less and being more....being dedicated to prayerbeing kind...supporting each other to be like this
- ...learn new ways to delight in God's gift andoffer these gifts in the world
- ...[demonstrate] the gifts of faith, love, and hope in how we engage with one another and our community...
- ...carry on the work of Jesus...show by word and deed that all are loved by God
- ...developing relationships with one another and our wider community with love, kindness and respect using Jesus as our...guide
- ...my church community...emboldens me to 'swim against the tide' of our broader culture...supports, guides and inspires me in discerning God's unfolding plan for me ...offers me a place... to reflect on how I might live my faith
- ...committed to sharing the Word....in this newly emerging world
-disciples are created and empowered...faithful and humble servants and catalysts for the work of justice and mercy on the Peninsula and beyond...That All May be One...suggests evangelism and/or service
-be a reflection of God's love for...our church community...the larger community
- A place that challenges us to be the best version of ourselves, more caring, welcoming seeking, involved
- Our purpose is to grow disciples that will go out into the world and be faithful witnesses providing love and hope in these uncertain, polarized times
- We are called to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly, which calls us to outreach, healing of ourselves and our world, contemplating and listening for the needs in this new world... empowered by the Christ in all
- ...individually, we can...extend our help to others who are alone, may need assistance to shop for them, give them a call for a chat...
- Peninsula United is a receptive community...where we can grow our faith relationships and make a positive effect on our community by our actions
- ...important to demonstrate through our living the Love we profess
- Christians who have good intentions to follow Jesus, can easily get caught up in the "get ahead" "me first" way of doing life...Church each Sunday serves as a reminder of our connection to God and others
- ...being bold in our conversation...able to tell the story of "Good News"...be known for our caring, sharing within our community here and abroad
- "Feed" our parishioners to enable them to support the community at large
- ...Loved by God, Christ, Spirit, comforted, empowered, encouraged and strengthened to take that love out into the world...that all may be one
- We are called to bear witness to God's presence in the world

Focus on Messages of the Gospel and Teachings of Jesus

Respondents described the importance of connecting the gospel messages to current issues, and of using the teachings of Jesus to guide us in how we relate to each other and how we live in the

wider world. They also mentioned the importance of group study and learning.

Sample Quotes

- I am concerned ...we may abandon the scriptural message that it is making God's transforming love known that is our purpose
- The focus...on the deeper meaning...of the Bible...is a very valuable service that the Church provides...continue providing thoughtful and intelligent sermons and teachings on the deeper meaning of the Bible and spirituality...consider a Sunday School for kids and another for adults
- ...more effort into exemplifying Jesus's teaching
- ...connect the bible stories to today's realities
- ...everything [the Church] teaches about God's Love should not be forgotten
- ...a spiritual foundation for those who want to understand the Bible not in a literal way but as a serious part of their understanding of the word of God and the teachings of Jesus
- ...a place to gather to spread God's word and reinforce Jesus's message on how much we need Him
- Our true purpose and mission must have Jesus Christ as our foundation...would be good to have the Creed part of our service again
- [the church] is a community of Gospel people
- The Church and its ability to share the teachings of Jesus has never been more important...
- ...nurture those who like and appreciate...lessons from the Bible, familiar hymns, sermons that connect readings from the Bible
- ...relate to the congregation what the scripture and Jesus say to issues [going on in the world] ...Then we are challenged, and come back for more... a way to understand thescripture might be to discuss it either before or after worship
- I enjoy digging deeper through studies

Continue to Commit to Outreach and Social Justice

Respondents mentioned the church's long history of outreach and social justice activities, and the importance of continuing that commitment. Local initiatives or needs were cited, including Third Space, community dinners, safe year-round housing for people living on the street, the cold weather shelter, serving the marginalized, supporting the disenfranchised, providing resources for the lost/lonely/poor, preparing to serve others in any second wave of the pandemic, First United downtown, Coventry House. Also Mission and Service, and broader issues including an affirming church, acknowledging first world privilege, caring for the planet, helping those in need abroad, reducing use of plastics, safe care for seniors and the vulnerable, a guaranteed living income, reconciliation with First Nations, and international activities including Tierra Nueva, Amnesty, and Palestinian support.

Sample Quotes

- ...uniquely positioned on the crossroads of conventional Protestantism and willingness to change and adapt to the call of today's world....engaging with and advocating for the poor, homeless, marginalized, and lonely through non-judgmental offerings
- ...we are called to serve our community - help others, provide...programs...with a social justice purpose locally and globally
-special relationship with WR Muslim Community ...other churches on the

Peninsula...partnerships...more shared events can occur

- ...continue and expand on the works that are being done by this congregation...putting our shoulders to the wheel
- ...motivate people to address the greater threat of global warming...faith communities, ...have a critical role to play in the years ahead
- [it is important] that the community continues to be served by a social justice inspired theology which professes when one suffers, we all suffer
- ... United Church has been ahead of its time in recognizing and acknowledging the rights of all people...Ordination of gay people...led me on a journey to greater awareness of issues
- Housing for the homeless, continue and build on the dinners we have provided, find a space for ThirdSpace and really put our hearts and efforts into reaching our community neighbours
- Our mission needs to be our response to the call of the Gospel...serve the marginalized, look after the poor
- ...reach out to those in need...food, shelter, healthcare...I pray...that we are generous with our personal contributions
- Outreach group...incredible challenges met with a bigger heart over and over again. ThirdSpace a bold move from all I hear is getting stronger and reaching deeper

SECTION 3 MOVING FORWARD - IDEAS AND ISSUES

Covid-19 and Beyond

Respondents suggested that Covid-19 has opened the door for change, and provided an opportunity to move forward. They suggested and identified a variety of approaches. Respondents

Sample Quotes:

- ...take advantage of...new and changed situation...move forward boldly...new ways of worship, utilizing assets, and community involvement...huge opportunity for paradigm shift
- ...we can think in new ways, we can adapt and we can change... been given a gift...new ways of doing things are expected... rethink our relationship with ...God..Earth...Faith
- Community...create Tambo song with a good drumbeat..unique to 'our' situation... unite us and bring a feeling of togetherness
- Humble ourselves in our unknowing and listen as God reveals our next steps
- ...things are going to be...different from what used to be normal.. Will be pressure on people who plan...be as supportive as we are able
- I trust that the Spirit is guiding us through this time where 'the slow work of God' is unfolding
- ...an AWAKENING as to how inter-connected the human race is.....effort and resources ought to be spent - finding ways to love one another better...
- ...reinforced for me the ...inter-relationship of all things - the Universal Christ...
-look upon this unexpected situation as a gift...world needed to slow, to stop and smell the roses
- ...people depressed...afraid of the future, I wish we could do more to give people the love and security we have experienced in knowing God's love and care
- ...unprecedented, rapid changes in human behaviour...need to adopt a new lens through which we see, rather than thinking we will find our purpose in new ideas or activities alone

- ...more involvement of congregational members during the service...to lighten the work of ministers...more lay preaching instruction to prepare for some services
- ...draw on the many gifted and experienced communicators in our congregation, both lay people and our several retired ministers... at First United, several of us participated in a course on “preaching” and subsequently gave the Sunday message
- ... look afresh at the gospel...time of deep societal anxiety...Guide us in developing ways of living in a new world...through study groups, sermons, music
- ...try to get everyone onto cheques or PAR and become a cashless church...More people maybe willing now...afraid of handling cash
- ...log what we did right and be ready for a fall wave of Covid-19
- [God’s] telling us we are in this together and if we listen to His words we’ll find a way to comfort and care for each other
- ...as the world moves past this pandemic, we are called...to continue to create tolerance, kindness, and acceptance in our multi-cultural society
- ...good time for reflection and learning that things can be done differently
- ...learned that “church” is not about the buildings, the weekly “rituals” and desire to keep doing things that have long been done in the past...finding “church” at home, in my community, and in nature
- ...as we move through and past this pandemic [we are called to put] our energy and effort toward social change
- ...prepare...to serve others in anticipation of a likely resurgence of the pandemic
- ...pandemic has brought a lightning rod about what and whom are important....Will spend energy and time...at Third Space for the next 6 months and listen and learn this new way of being Church
- ...our lives will be changed but some things will need to stay the same...pause and think about what really matters

Continuation of Online Services

Almost every respondent expressed appreciation for the online services, which they said helped them to feel connected to the church. Enthusiastic and descriptive words of praise for the services included: wonderful, thoughtful, well-presented, amazing, and beautiful. There were many comments about how the services have reconnected to the church those members unable to attend regular services. Members have been sharing the online service with family and friends, and been able to replay parts of the service. Many respondents suggested that the online services continue in some format after we are able to hold services in the church building. The Zoom videoconferencing format, used to continue the church’s work, has also been appreciated.

Sample Quotes

-creative talents of our church community have enabled...us to experience church in a different way for a different time
- ...[so] we are not orphaned...online services and zoom connecting are vital
- ...grateful...able to continue in video-conferencing...men’s council, Third Space work, governance work
- ...can go back and watch the best parts, and send...to family and friends
- Our job as a Church community is to allow our doors to be open wide and that means electronically with our online services

- ... develop an [online] “message board” so people could let us know whatever they wish us to know
-we are getting a lot of views...people like what they are seeing....an invitation to our viewers to come and join us ...a gift to those who cannot get to church
- ...the messages of hope through Scripture, music, message and prayer....are impactful and meaningful...hope we can continue to offer our services by streaming video
- I do hope that there will be a continued online presence for our church services
- ...filming the church service is ...really great...should continue...know of people who watch it but who are not church people

Special Concern for Aging Members

Members expressed concern for the high number of aging members in our congregation. Many comments by and about these members recognize how the online services have enabled them to feel re-connected to the church. Some will need help with technology.

- ...Youtube our services to Care homes every Sunday afternoon...lonely folks would feel comforted and included
- ...providing support to those who do not have computer access is difficult...
- ...minister to the aging congregation...those away from family...feeling alone when they leave their home and move to a new location ...help re their iPads and computers...can group meetings be arranged
- Be more intentional at bringing the church experience to those who cannot physically join us....continued on-line presence
- ...pleased to hear a long time member who is now unable to attend church express her appreciation for the care and love she is receiving from the church community...a connection we must never lose
- ...focus intensively on supporting those already part of church community...[who are] dealing with major health challenges...We need to tend to them
- I would like to see more attention to the many seniors in our congregation
- ...many older people have worked very hard over the years, contributing to the work of the church... can no longer contribute in the same way...now is the time to figure out how to create meaningful experiences for our elders
- The video option is a good way to reach shut-in congregants so they can continue to feel part of the church
- ...caring for our membership...take worship ‘on the road’ for those unable to travel to Sunday worship...perhaps choir can offer ...to sing favourite hymns together
- ...helping and supporting the elderly in the community

Becoming One Church

There is concern that we are not yet “united”. There were expressions of feelings of loss and not belonging following amalgamation. There were suggestions that having multiple sites is contributing to fragmentation. Some reiterating a belief that “church” is the people, not the building.

Sample Quotes:

-have had to say goodbye and readjust.....missed...the space, the vestments, the familiar

routines, and the people I no longer see who chose not to attend..... still do not feel at home... if this is true for me, it is probably true for others

-longer we are apart the more I believe we may be able to come together as one church. Especially when we begin to realize the Church is Us.
- ...being church is not tied to a specific building
- ...amalgamation...thought that I was prepared...feelings of anger, not belonging, abandonment and resentment (...feelings not always rational)...have yet to successfully identify myself as a member of Peninsula United but rather see myself as a visitor to Crescent United
- Worship together...allow us...not to have to choose one [service] over the other. Doing church differently...has further divided us...
- ...sermons about the church not being a building...members still attached to them...like the idea of us worshipping outside “wild church”...drive message home - we are a community of people who worship together
- ...we have not become “ONE” congregation...missing many folks ...waiting for “their” building...Those actively involved in PUC...[might] reach out to those from their founding church who are not engaged....address in a faithful, personal way
- ...perhaps we can establish a worship experience for the entire family in one location so that we truly feel like one congregation
- ...need to do some mending and become united again...we voted for amalgamation... everyone was up-beat, mixing and working together with enthusiasm and enjoyment...we need to take care of it
- Have no idea after 3 years why we are not more at ease with one another and growing closer and larger
- ...we are not united...Sunnyside has melded, Crescent and First not so...some people just waiting until First build is complete
- ...a lot of people ...concerned about....where we will be worshipping when the First site has been completed...a feeling from the First people that we are going to meet in the new space... and yet this has not been presented to the congregation

Sites and Buildings

- ...we are called to be good “stewards” of our “land”.....we cannot keep 4 buildings...need to embrace opportunities for church land development...which could provide much needed affordable housing
- ...we have 4 sites which further divides us. Decisions must be made...
- ...we need clarity about the many buildings we are responsible for
- ...trying to maintain multiple buildings with only a handful of able-bodied individuals
- ...downtown White Rock is perfect, but the location of Ocean Park is not ideal if we really want to outreach to the community...once the building at the old site is finished we might consider moving there for good...I say that with a heavy heart because I so love our church at Crescent

Sustainability - Volunteers and Finances

A few members expressed concern about financial resources, and about people resources when we have an aging congregation with diminishing energy to volunteer. They are making suggestions regarding having to focus our resources realistically.

- ...trying to do so many things that we are spreading ourselves thin. Focus so that projects/programs are sustainable given people and financial resources
- ...encourage individuals to take action with other organizations in the community...rather than attempting to organize church based initiatives that require big inputs of time and energy
- We annually...draw down our reserve funds to cover expenses...maybe OK to use available funds faithfully and wisely and assume future generations will sort things out later...point of some discomfort to me, nevertheless
- Given our demographics....likely 10 to 15 years left...we have to plan on what we will leave behind...what will we look like in ten years and will we have a legacy that we're proud of
- ...as the congregation ages...we rely on...people aged less than 75 to volunteer....won't be long before volunteer fatigue sets in...Likely have little more than 10 years...with energy, stamina and will to undertake new initiativesHave under-utilized valuable property... affordable housing?...shelter facilities?...or put capital through a well-endowed, community managed foundation with a mandate that meets our outreach ambitions
- ...area of concern is the number of active volunteers...great many initiatives...may be getting overwhelmed or tired...Sustaining a healthy congregation involves involvement by ALL...to participate in some way, large or small

May 2020
TAMBO