

Congregation Survey Results

Fall 2008 Congregational Survey (30 respondents)

&

March 2009 On-line Congregational Survey (500 respondents)

Fall 2008 Congregational Survey – A Summary

Following the visioning sessions and as the initial nine task teams were beginning their work, the Steering Committee rolled out a brief congregational survey. The survey asked two open-ended questions: (1) What is important to you as you consider the future of Fourth Church in the next ten years, both for the church community and for the community as a whole? And (2) What do you think Fourth Church needs to do to achieve that goal? About 30 people responded to the survey.

In general, the survey comments were thoughtful and expressed satisfaction with Fourth Church, its worship offerings, programs and engagement with the community. “Don’t change much” is a pretty fair summation of respondents’ generally expressed sentiments. Many respondents praised the quality of preaching and the excellence of the music. More than one respondent stressed the need to maintain a traditional worship service.

The great majority of comments had to do with expanding and improving programs and initiatives which are already a part of Fourth Church. For example:

- Be a leader in calling for inclusiveness in the church,
- Continue to lead on teaching tolerance of other religious traditions,
- Continue and expand care groups such as Angels on Call,
- Continue and increase urban mission projects in the Chicago area, and
- Continue the pattern of innovative, relevant and effective mission.

Some areas in need of improvement or innovation were noted, particularly:

- Create opportunities for children, youth and lay adults to participate in worship,
- Provide more opportunities for intergenerational interaction in the church,
- Create opportunities of service for children,
- Provide more opportunities for Bible study, whether led by pastors or by lay leaders, and
- Be sensitive to the needs of disabled members who want to participate in mission or other volunteer opportunities.

A recurring theme was the need for greater connection among church members, and between church members and staff. The idea was expressed that greater connection and participation in mission and leadership will lead to greater participation in financial support of the church.

Finally, three major areas of concern were evident in the survey responses—planning for John Buchanan’s succession, creating a sense of community among Fourth Church members as well as between members and staff, and making a decision regarding Project Light.

March 2009 On-line Congregational Survey Results

The March 2009 on-line survey contained 34 questions and was designed to gauge respondents' reactions to the themes that emerged during the "Refreshing the Vision" process. 500 people responded to the survey. A detailed reporting of the results is presented in the following pages.

In general, respondents expressed commitment to the church's vision (79%), and a clear majority expressed excitement about the future of Fourth Church (83%). The vast majority agreed that Fourth Church is strongly focused on serving the Chicago community beyond the congregation (97%) and 78% feel a strong sense of belonging to the church. More than two-thirds of the respondents who shared an opinion on programming for adults and children were satisfied with the church's offerings in these areas.

Support for greater participation in worship services for children, youth and lay leaders was not particularly strong, but only 20% expressed disagreement with the idea of trying these options. Outside of worship, fully 80% of respondents believed that community mission was important, and 88% felt that Fourth Church is successful in this area. The areas that respondents identified as needing the most attention were openness to multiculturalism and diversity and opportunities for inter-generational connection.

Only 2% of respondents were opposed to the idea of providing personal information for a database, and 80% of respondents were comfortable with staff using this information to identify members with particular mission or adult education interests. This result was surprising, in that it indicates that members are generally supportive of a database resource for member information. It is worth noting that the written comments also reflected support/desire for such an information source.

Finally, the survey asked respondents to prioritize 8 space needs, not because these are the sole needs identified through the Refreshing the Vision process, but rather because these 8 had received the most support at the Task Team Prioritizing meeting in February. The results are not as dependable as desired, because many respondents did not understand the relative nature of the ranking system. In addition, a few respondents commented through written comments that the prioritizing exercise was too difficult, because the needs for all program areas were important. However, it is safe to say that the multi-purpose space and the dedicated classrooms for children and youth ministry received strong support, with fully 37% of respondents rating the multi-purpose space as either a number 1 or number 2 priority, and 46% of respondents doing the same for dedicated classrooms. With respect to the other space needs, results were split and not conclusive.

March 2009 On-line Congregational Survey Results (cont.)

The written comments added to the richness of the survey responses, but were exceptional in only a few areas. In general, the written comments tracked themes that had been raised in the task team reports—the need for more space to adequately serve programs, the need for ways to make connections with others in such a large congregation, the desire for closer connection with clergy. A couple of comments are worth mentioning in this summary, however. With respect to space, a volunteer who works with the music library commented on the need for properly conditioned space to preserve the scores. This was a need the Worship, Music and the Arts Task Team had not raised. With respect to programs, two areas came up which had not been substantially highlighted in the task team process. One need expressed was for evening opportunities for adult small groups that focus on spiritual matters, as opposed to socializing. A second was for a greater number of adult education/small group opportunities focused on spiritual development and growth. It seems the respondents who wrote these comments sense a need that is not being met.

The on-line survey results are encouraging because such a large number of people participated. The results supported the themes that arose in the visioning and task team meetings. It is clear that Fourth Church needs more and more well-equipped space to carry out its mission, a mission which the vast majority of survey respondents support heartily. Though some areas of need came to light in the survey for the first time, these are not inconsistent with the overall themes arising out of the Refreshing the Vision process.

A detailed reporting of the survey results is presented in the pages that follow...

Fourth Presbyterian Church Congregational Survey: "Refreshing The Vision"

Response Status: Completes

Filter: No filter applied

Mar 25, 2009 8:06 AM PST

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1. What is your age?		
11 through 18	15	3%
19-25	11	2%
25-35	48	10%
35-39	39	8%
40-50	97	21%
50+	257	55%
Total	467	100%

2. What is your zip code?

464 Responses

3. How long have you been attending Fourth Presbyterian Church?		
Under 1 year	7	2%
1-2 years	35	8%
3-5 years	66	14%
6-10 years	115	25%
10+ years	241	52%
Total	464	100%

4. Do you have children in your family who attend Fourth Presbyterian Church?

Yes	127	27%
No	337	73%
Total	464	100%

5. If yes, what are their grade levels? (Please mark all that apply.)

Not applicable	225	66%
0 to 2 yrs	34	10%
Preschool - 5th grade	62	18%
6th - 8th grade	29	9%
9th - 12th grade	33	10%

6. Does Fourth Presbyterian Church have a clear vision or direction for our mission and ministry?

Yes, and I am strongly committed to them	256	56%
Yes, and I am partly committed to them	115	25%
Yes, but I am not committed to them	9	2%
I hear about ideas, but do not perceive any clear vision or direction from the church	65	14%
I am not aware of the vision or direction of the church	15	3%
Total	460	100%

7. How would you respond to the following statements? "Fourth Presbyterian Church is strongly focused on serving the Chicago community beyond the congregation."

Strongly Agree	343	73%
Agree	111	24%
Unsure/Neutral	9	2%
Disagree	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	468	100%

8. "I have a sense of excitement about our congregation's future."

Strongly Agree	215	46%
Agree	178	38%
Unsure/Neutral	60	13%
Disagree	10	2%
Strongly Disagree	4	1%
Total	467	100%

9. "Fourth Presbyterian Church's congregation is always ready to try something new."

Strongly Agree	87	19%
Agree	200	43%
Unsure/Neutral	129	28%
Disagree	44	9%
Strongly Disagree	6	1%
Total	466	100%

10. Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation?

Yes, I have a strong sense of belonging	289	63%
Yes, I have a strong sense of belonging, but not as strong as in the past	72	16%
No, I am new to the church	18	4%
No, but I am content as I am	24	5%
No, and I wish I did feel a strong sense of belonging	49	11%
I don't know	9	2%
Total	461	100%

11. Which statement best describes your involvement in the making of important decisions for the congregation of Fourth Presbyterian Church?

I have been given the opportunity and often participate in the decision making	108	24%
I have been given the opportunity and occasionally get involved in the decision making	130	28%
I have been given the opportunity, but do not usually get involved in the decision making	98	21%
I have not been given the opportunity to be involved, and this is fine with me	69	15%
I have not been given an opportunity to be involved and I am not happy about this	53	12%
Total	458	100%

12. Are the adult members of your family regularly involved in any group activities at Fourth Church? (Check all that apply)

Yes, we are involved in adult education classes	120	27%
Yes, we are involved in fellowship, mission or social groups	210	48%
Yes, we are involved in volunteer opportunities at the church	224	51%
No, we are not regularly involved in group activities, but would like to be	80	18%
No, we are not interested in involvement in group activities	36	8%

13. If you have children or teenagers in your family, are they regularly involved in group activities at Fourth Church?

Not applicable	332	77%
Yes, they are involved in Sunday school or confirmation class	79	18%
Yes, they are involved in children's or youth choir	33	8%
Yes, they are involved in mission trips or projects	36	8%
No, they are not regularly involved in group activities, but would like to be	12	3%
No, they are not interested in involvement in group activities	7	2%

14. How satisfied are you with programs offered here for children under 11 years of age?

Not applicable	312	71%
Very satisfied	44	10%
Satisfied	50	11%
Mixed Feelings	27	6%
Dissatisfied	3	1%
Very Dissatisfied	1	0%
Total	437	100%

15. How satisfied are you with programs offered here for children over 11 years of age?

Not applicable	345	79%
Very satisfied	41	9%
Satisfied	28	6%
Mixed Feelings	22	5%
Dissatisfied	1	0%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	437	100%

16. How satisfied are you with the offerings for adult education and programming?

Very satisfied	100	22%
Satisfied	193	43%
Mixed Feelings	81	18%
Dissatisfied	13	3%
Very Dissatisfied	4	1%
Not applicable	62	14%
Total	453	100%

17. How would you respond to incorporating greater participation of children and youth during morning worship services?

Strongly Agree	100	22%
Agree	142	31%
Unsure/Neutral	132	29%
Disagree	61	13%
Strongly Disagree	27	6%
Total	462	100%

18. How would you respond to incorporating greater participation of lay leadership participants during morning worship services?

Strongly Agree	69	15%
Agree	135	29%
Unsure/Neutral	168	36%
Disagree	67	14%
Strongly Disagree	27	6%
Total	466	100%

19. Outside of worship, which of the following activities and opportunities most align with your values within Fourth Presbyterian Church? (Choose five)

Social activities or meeting new people	273	59%
Global Mission	227	49%
Community Mission	371	80%
Bible study/prayer groups	148	32%
Adult education activities	271	59%
Openness to multiculturalism and social diversity	244	53%
Opportunities for inter-generational connection	142	31%
Ministry for children	127	27%
Ministry for youth	126	27%
Ministry for college campus	29	6%

20. How would you rank the success of the following aspects of the Fourth Presbyterian Church community? Social activities or meeting new people

Very Successful	93	20%
Moderately Successful	196	42%
Neutral	73	16%
Needs attention	83	18%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	20	4%
Total	465	100%

21. Global Mission Programs

Very Successful	146	32%
Moderately Successful	172	37%
Neutral	43	9%
Needs attention	14	3%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	84	18%
Total	459	100%

22. Community Mission Programs

Very Successful	277	60%
Moderately Successful	133	29%
Neutral	15	3%
Needs attention	9	2%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	30	6%
Total	464	100%

23. Bible Study/Prayer Groups

Very Successful	67	14%
Moderately Successful	125	27%
Neutral	64	14%
Needs attention	51	11%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	157	34%
Total	464	100%

24. Adult Education opportunities

Very Successful	165	36%
Moderately Successful	143	31%
Neutral	45	10%
Needs attention	20	4%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	89	19%
Total	462	100%

25. Ministry for children

Very Successful	98	22%
Moderately Successful	83	18%
Neutral	24	5%
Needs attention	19	4%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	229	51%
Total	453	100%

26. Ministry for youth

Very Successful	81	18%
Moderately Successful	85	19%
Neutral	24	5%
Needs attention	10	2%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	255	56%
Total	455	100%

27. Ministry for college campuses

Very Successful	5	1%
Moderately Successful	12	3%
Neutral	49	11%
Needs attention	39	9%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	351	77%
Total	456	100%

28. Openness to multiculturalism and social diversity

Very Successful	100	22%
Moderately Successful	183	40%
Neutral	62	13%
Needs attention	74	16%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	43	9%
Total	462	100%

29. Opportunities for Inter-generational connection

Very Successful	27	6%
Moderately Successful	123	27%
Neutral	95	20%
Needs attention	101	22%
I don't know/I have no experience with this	118	25%
Total	464	100%

30. Which of the following statements best describe how you would respond to the development of a secure member database? (Please check all that apply)

I would provide contact information	348	75%
I would provide information about my professional activities and interests	228	49%
I would provide information about my volunteer activities and interests	255	55%
I would provide limited contact and interest information	108	23%
I would not provide any information	9	2%

31. How would you best describe your attitude toward the use of a secure member database? I think church staff should be able to use information in the database to identify my abilities for volunteer/mission opportunities.

Strongly agree	185	40%
Agree	196	42%
Neutral	50	11%
Disagree	23	5%
Strongly Disagree	8	2%
Total	462	100%

32. I think church staff should be able to use information in the database to identify my interest in adult education/spiritual enrichment opportunities.

Strongly agree	168	36%
Agree	207	45%
Neutral	55	12%
Disagree	29	6%
Strongly Disagree	4	1%
Total	463	100%

33. I think lay leaders should be able to use information in the database to make deeper connections with other members of the community.

Strongly agree	113	24%
Agree	167	36%
Neutral	98	21%
Disagree	69	15%
Strongly Disagree	17	4%
Total	464	100%

34. How would you rank the urgency of the following space needs of Fourth Presbyterian Church? (Instructions: There are eight examples provided. Please rank them from 1 to 8 based on your perception of what is most urgently needed, '1' being the most urgent, '8' being the least urgent. Only one selection per column is allowed.)

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship and Multi-purpose space with a capacity for 500 people	93 27%	51 15%	38 11%	33 10%	29 8%	28 8%	34 10%	41 12%
Dedicated Classrooms for Children's and Youth Ministry	82 24%	76 22%	39 12%	36 11%	31 9%	33 10%	24 7%	18 5%
Michigan Avenue Welcome and Info Center	40 12%	33 10%	37 11%	30 9%	36 10%	42 12%	46 13%	82 24%
Renovated Kitchen and Dining Area	52 15%	55 16%	73 21%	59 17%	34 10%	34 10%	21 6%	13 4%
Gymnasium for youth and community mission	30 9%	38 11%	40 11%	39 11%	42 12%	35 10%	55 16%	71 20%
Music Rehearsal Space	15 4%	24 7%	38 11%	68 19%	52 15%	64 18%	48 14%	45 13%
Expanded facilities for Congregational Care (i.e. counseling rooms)	15 4%	44 13%	51 15%	58 17%	56 16%	50 15%	48 14%	22 6%
Renovated Elam Davies Social Center	44 11%	55 14%	67 17%	55 14%	64 16%	44 11%	33 8%	29 7%

35. Please take a moment to give any feedback or comments you may in regards to Fourth Presbyterian Church's "Refreshing The Vision" initiative.

171 Responses