



Introducing The CAT

The CAT, or the Congregation Assessment Tool, is a unique opportunity coming soon, for everyone to participate in an opinion survey and eventually the future mission of our church! Get ready to give feedback, and that data collected will be an indication of the health of our church and will thereby develop strategic planning for our church's way forward. The privilege to receive the congregation's individual and collective opinions, will allow the Leadership Team the comparative analysis to determine the health and wellbeing of our church. It will also provide us the direction we need to head towards, to get to where we want to go. We hope at least 100 people from the Sturgeon Bay United Methodist Church and Jacksonport will complete the survey, because the greater the number of participants, the more accurate we can be in getting the directions to reach our destination.

Several years ago SBUMC developed a strategic plan which reaffirmed alignment with our mission statement, but since that time many things have changed. The current reality is that churches are changing, due to the pandemic, demographics, and differing viewpoints. All of these issues have led to uncertain times and the realization that the very existence and wellbeing of our church is going to be different than it was in the past. For that reason, strategic planning for our future is vital. The Leadership Team has decided to work with "Holy Cow Consulting." While we *do* live in America's Dairyland, actually "Holy Cow Consulting" chose that name due to high levels of satisfaction proclaimed by churches using their help.

Why do we need a consulting firm now when we have done successful strategic planning and capital campaigns on our own previously? In the past we have used "count data" such as church attendance, financial giving, and new membership data. This information was easy to retrieve, but is data of past occurrences. It does not give us what is referred to as "witness data" which involves **Perspectives, Experiences, and Aspirations** of congregants. To get that we must listen to the people within our congregation.

So could we not just create a survey to get that feedback? We could but it would be a snapshot in time, mainly an approval rating. Under these circumstances, it is important to use a consulting firm for anonymity of respondent's surveys, and critical analysis as we plan for our future.

Holy Cow Consulting has been in operation for over 25 years; it has worked with over 1800 churches and has the largest database in that area available. Their average church attendance is about 140 people with a range of 50 to over 1000. Holy Cow Consulting can analyze and compare our responses with other churches' responses. Our survey then becomes a part of a comparative analysis, what is called "Organizational Intelligence." The intelligence we are organizing becomes a strategic plan.

CAT has a series of modules each of which contains statements or questions relevant to it. Module 1 is a baseline module. Module 2 is Critical Abilities which deals with expectations of the church for their pastor. Module 3 is the Methodist Social Justice Module dealing with how faith translates into action which every church fills out. There are also other modules which are optional depending on what is the purpose for doing the study. Some churches are in the midst of searching for a new pastor. Others are interested in strategic planning, or planning a capital campaign. For us Strategic planning is our greatest need.

Next Steps:

Starting the week after Easter, we will do the following for 3 weeks:

1. Brief presentations at each Sunday Service about CAT
2. Send mailing to the congregations explaining CAT and encouraging participation
3. Have copies of the survey available to review
4. Verify participants committing to complete survey

Mid-May through June surveys will be completed online or on paper:

1. People can go online and complete the survey. **Surveys done online must be completed in one sitting and all statements need to have a response.** If you are online you can not complete part of the survey and hope to finish it at a later date. **Also the program will not allow you to proceed to the next statement unless you have responded to the current one.**
2. People can fill out the survey on paper to be handed-in. **If you fill out a paper survey you must respond to each statement.** If a statement does not have a response, the person entering the data online cannot proceed to enter further data and therefore the survey can't be used.
3. The surveys must be anonymous but we need to know who has participated, in order to verify all congregants are given the opportunity to complete the survey or encourage them to do so.
4. Once the surveys are completed, the entered data will be analyzed.

On August 26 & 27, Dr. Jaye Johnson will provide an analysis of the submitted surveys, discuss the health of our church, and considerations in moving toward our new mission.

We are at a critical point in our church. We are going through some difficult times. We have an opportunity to help keep our church energized and moving forward in a positive way. We urge your support in helping us in that endeavor.

Rod Krueger
member of the Logistics Committee