

Pastoral Transition Interim Task Force

REPORT ON THE CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY, MARCH 2026

We give thanks for the 600 Covenant members and regular attendees who prayerfully responded to the congregational survey in January. This robust response represents nearly 90% of our average weekly worship attendance and underscores a deep commitment in our congregation. Our results provide a clear snapshot of our current strengths and priorities. These results will guide planning and decision-making in the months ahead and will be integrated into the narrative questions of the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) that will be submitted to Mission Presbytery before the pastor search begins.

Key Results

Covenant is a vibrant and growing church community committed to:

- Christ-centered worship,
- opportunities for spiritual growth,
- education for all ages and stages,
- mission, and
- loving relationships across differences.

A majority of members travel 5 miles or more to attend worship at Covenant.

Most respondents have been at Covenant 5 years or longer and attend worship three times a month or more.

As a congregation, we seek additional opportunities for meaningful relationships.

Our survey partner, consultant Michelle Snyder from PneuMatrix, met with members of the interim task force, pastors, staff, Session, and committee chairs in February to present the results and provide analysis based on benchmarking Covenant against several thousand churches that have used the validated survey. Most of the churches in the database are mainline Protestant denominations, primarily Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Lutheran. The following report contains the highlights of what Michelle shared and her expert interpretations.

Finding: Covenant expressed a high level of satisfaction with how things are going with the church as well as a high level of energy and commitment to activities beyond worship. This high level of satisfaction and vitality was shared across all age groups, tenure, and worship service attended.

Interpretation: This combination of high satisfaction and high energy places Covenant in what researchers often describe as a 'transformational' church. While this is a healthy and encouraging place to be, it also means that the next pastor will step into a congregation that is thriving and deeply appreciative of its current leadership. In many ways, the new pastor will have significant expectations—and big shoes to fill.

Finding: The key drivers of satisfaction at Covenant (as worded in the questions in the survey), listed in order, are:

Our pastors communicate with people in a way that keeps us informed and connected.

The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.

Persons who serve as leaders in our church are representative of the membership.

Our church provides opportunity to engage in active ministry within the church and to the world.

In important decisions in our church, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided.

Finding: Covenant scored higher than average on every index: hospitality, morale, conflict management, governance, spiritual vitality, readiness for ministry, engagement in education, and worship and music.

Finding: Covenant demonstrated theological diversity and tended to skew slightly theologically conservative. We also indicated willingness to make changes to meet the needs of members. This combination points to a firm foundation in scripture combined with an adaptable approach to change.

Interpretation: *Our theological diversity is a significant strength. The data suggests Covenant has developed the capacity to hold different perspectives together in unity. This ability to live faithfully with difference is an important part of our identity and will be important for a future pastor to understand and support as they lead the congregation.*

Finding: The top three opportunities to expand or improve our ministries (as worded in questions in the survey), listed in order, are:

Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.

Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual education at every age and stage of life

Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, as small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals).

Interpretation: *Transformational churches typically channel their energy into growth, replication, and meaningful community impact. Covenant's responses suggest that the strongest shared interest lies in expanding our impact through deeper relationships within the congregation and more intentional mission in the wider community.*

Finding: People deeply value the church's warmth, multigenerational relationships and sense of family. However, newcomers, singles, and some mid-life and senior adults reported difficulty finding meaningful connection pathways.

Finding: The top four traits members seek in a new senior pastor, ranked in order, are preaching, strategic leadership, teaching and pastoral care.

Interpretation: *In a transformational church context, the role of the senior pastor often functions less as a manager of ministry and more like an orchestra conductor—equipping, coordinating, and empowering people to do what they do best. The emphasis on preaching, strategic leadership, teaching and pastoral care reflects a desire for a leader who can inspire vision, nurture people, and mobilize the congregation for ministry.*

As we move into the next season of discernment, we give thanks for the strong foundation these survey results demonstrate. Covenant is marked by vitality, deep commitment, and love across generations. At the same time, we hear a clear call to deepen pathways for meaningful connection, spiritual growth, and healing ministry.

These insights will guide us—pastors, Session and Diaconate, committees, staff, and the Pastor Nominating Committee—as we seek our next pastor and continue to be the church in the world. We know that the Holy Spirit who has sustained and strengthened Covenant for 65 years will continue to guide us in wisdom, unity, and hope—and we trust that, as a congregation, we will continue to follow with open minds and open hearts.
