

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

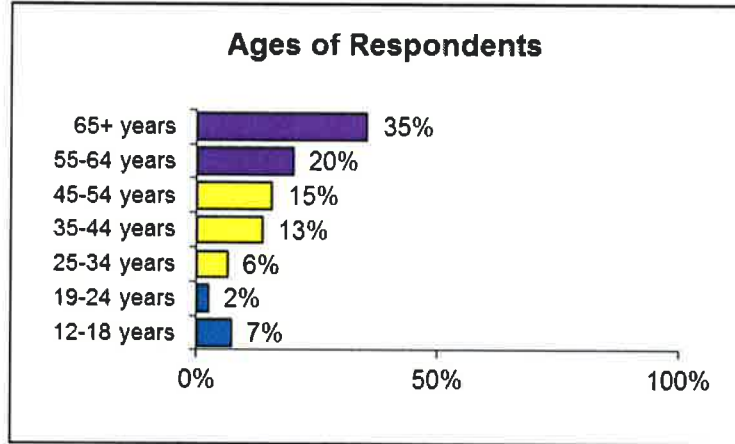
JENISON, MICHIGAN

**PASTORAL TRANSITION
REPORT**

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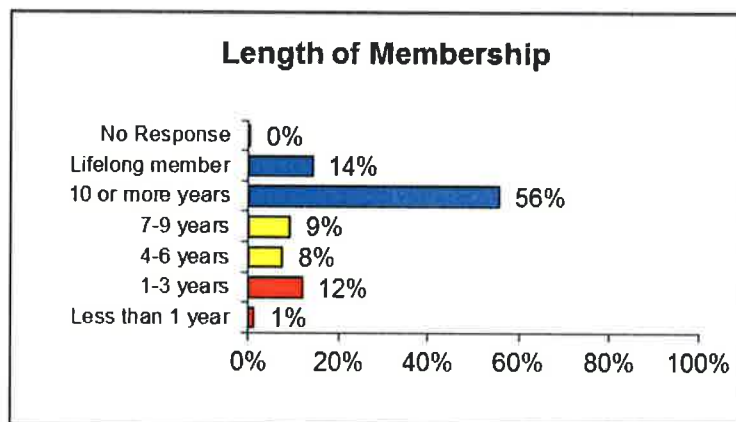
I. A general overview of the congregational survey (252 surveys returned)

A. Ages of respondents



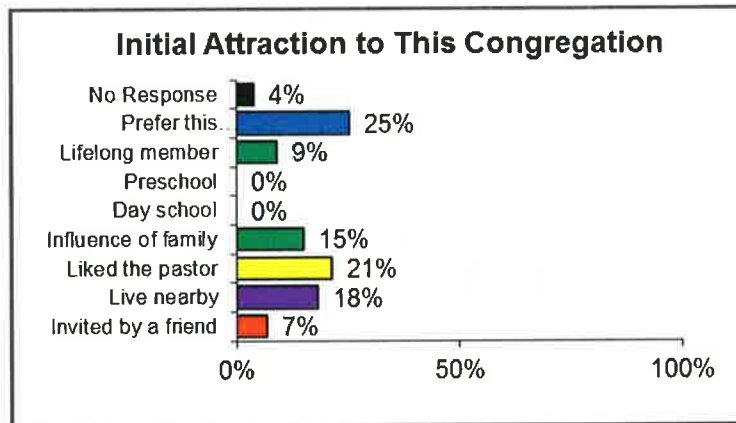
- 55% over 55 years of age (25% of congregation over 55; 31% of community over 55)
- 35% 25-54 years of age (43% of congregation 25-54; 36% of community 25-54)
- 10% 14-24 years of age (24% of congregation 14-24; 16% of community 14-24)

B. Length of Membership



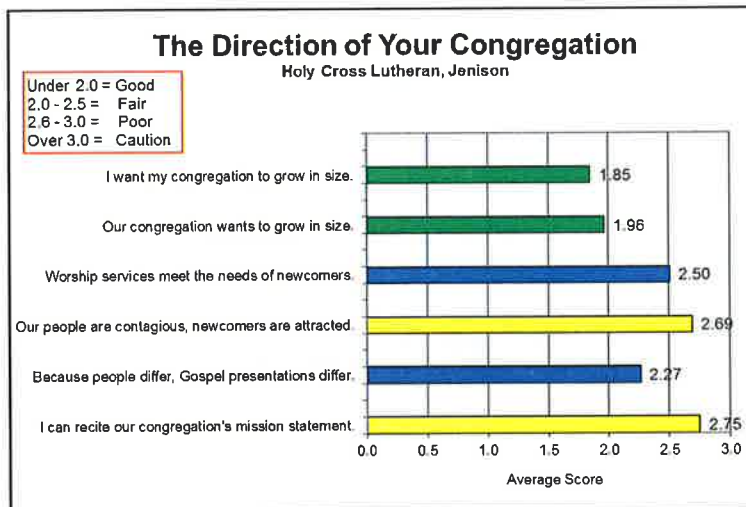
- 70% members more than 10 years
- 17% members 4-9 years
- 13% members less than 3 years

C. Initial attraction to Holy Cross



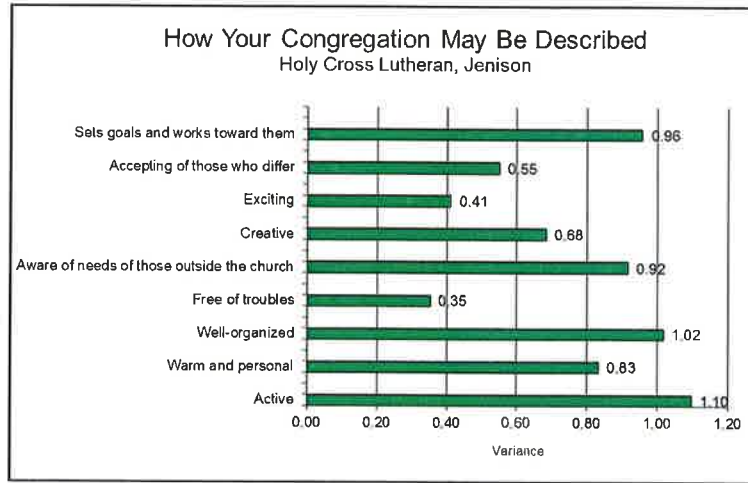
- 25% came to Holy Cross because it's "Lutheran"
- 24% came to Holy Cross as a result of family
- 18% came to Holy Cross because of location
- 21% came to Holy Cross because of pastor / staff / ministry
- 7% came to Holy Cross as a result of a friend's invitation

D. The direction of our church



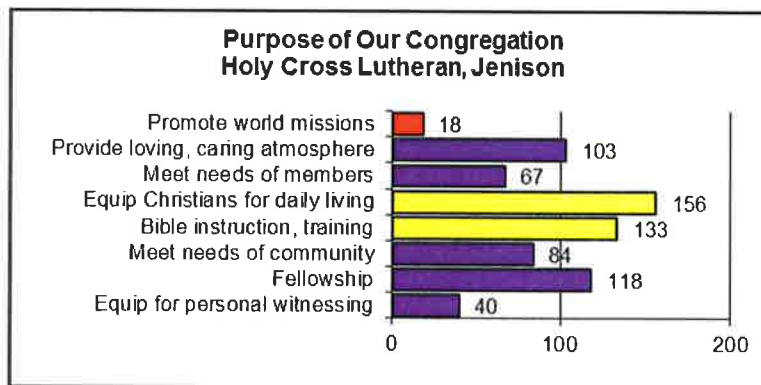
- 80% said they want Holy Cross to grow (there were 6 mildly disagree responses), and 79% said they thought Holy Cross wants to grow (there were 5 mildly and 1 strongly disagree responses)
- 54% said they felt the worship services meet the needs of newcomers
- 42% said they felt that Holy Cross did well at attracting newcomers
- 70% indicated agreement with presenting the Gospel in a variety of ways
- 48% responded that they could recite Holy Cross' mission statement (30% said they could not)

E. How our church may be described



- 75% describe Holy Cross as warm and personal, 74% say she is aware of the needs of those outside the church, and 57% describe her as being accepting of those who differ
- 81% describe Holy Cross as an active congregation, 64% describe her as creative, and 47% describe her as exciting
- Administratively, 79% described Holy Cross as organized and 78% thought she sets goals and works towards them
- 38% say Holy Cross is free of troubles

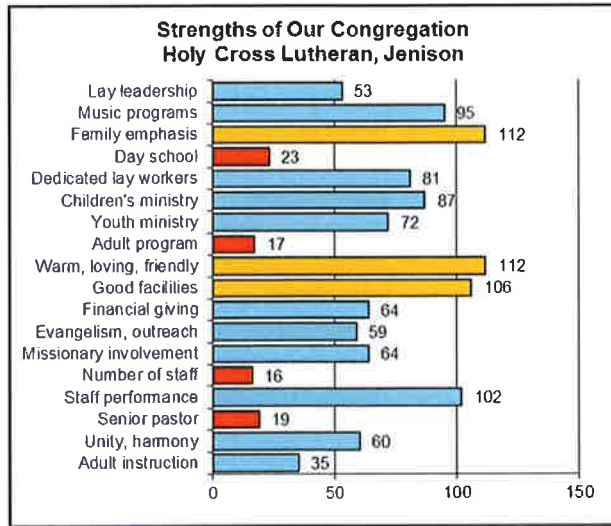
F. Holy Cross' purpose – why she exists



Equip Christians for daily living (53%)
Bible instruction, training (53%)

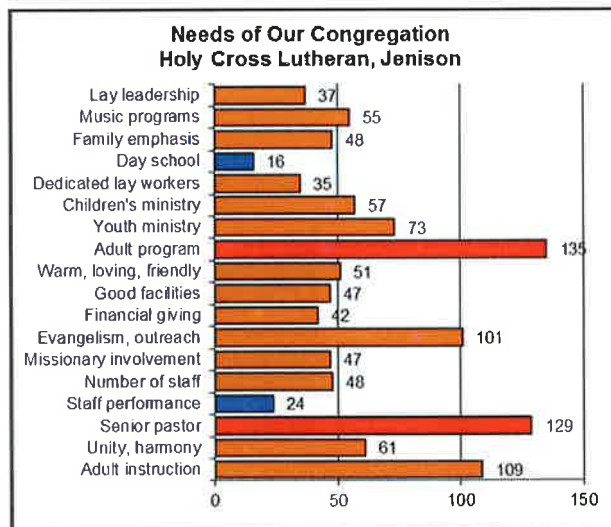
Promote world missions (7%)

G. Holy Cross' strengths



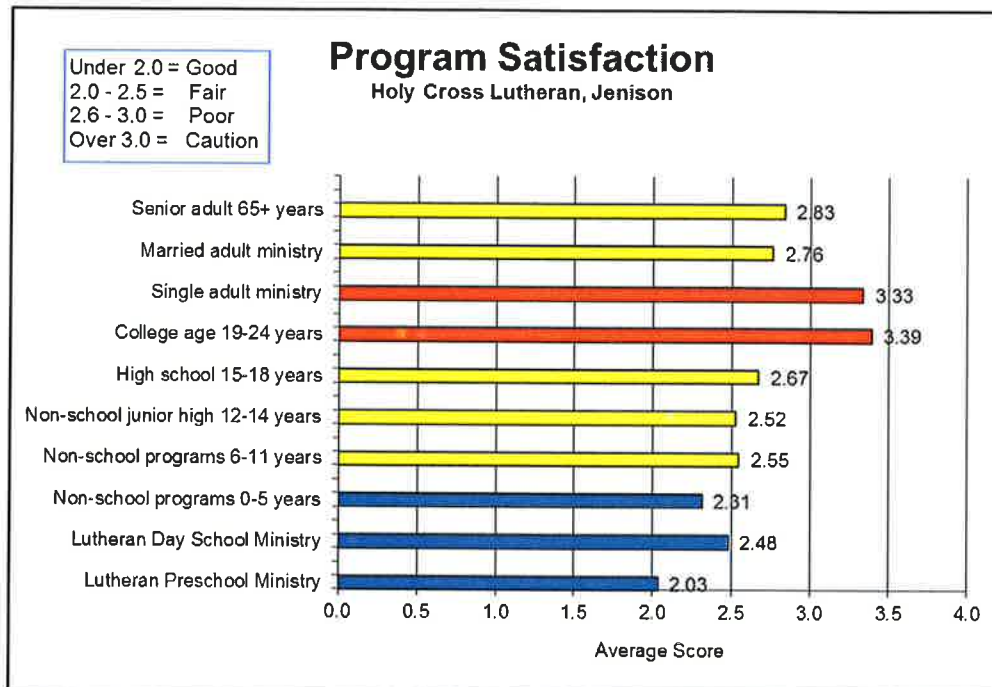
- Warm, loving, friendly (44%)
- Family emphasis (44%)
- Good facilities (42%)
- Day school (9%)
- Senior pastor (8%)
- Adult program (7%)
- Number of staff (6%)

H. Holy Cross' opportunities for improvement



- Adult program (54%)
- Senior pastor (51%)
- Staff performance (10%)
- Day school (6%)

I. Program satisfaction



- 46% feel relative satisfaction with the Pre-school ministry program
- 39% feel relative satisfaction with the School-age ministry program
- 38% feel relative satisfaction with the Junior High ministry program
- 38% feel relative satisfaction with the High School ministry program, while 15% feel relative dissatisfaction
- 38% feel relative satisfaction with the Married Adult ministry program, while 16% feel relative dissatisfaction
- 33% feel relative satisfaction with the Senior Adult ministry program, while 15% feel relative dissatisfaction
- 29% feel relative dissatisfaction with the Single Adult ministry program
- 33% feel relative dissatisfaction with the College Age ministry program
- 44% feel relative satisfaction with the Lutheran Pre-school ministry program
- 15% feel relative satisfaction with the Lutheran Day School ministry program

II. General observations from survey and personal interviews (in no particular order)

- A. Holy Cross has been tremendously blessed in the 52 years of her existence in many ways, including 5 acres of property, facilities, talented staff, and dedicated members.
- B. The area 2 miles around Holy Cross has grown 3.82% (from 24,425 to 25,357) since 2010, and is projected to grow an additional 4.7% (from 25,357 to 26,546) by 2022.
- C. The area is predominately (93.9%) of Anglo ethnicity, slightly older in median (38) and average (40.0) age [the average age in Michigan is 39.9; median age is 39], with an estimated average household income of \$72,367[state of Michigan average is \$66,760].
- D. The current facilities are well maintained and inviting, providing an adequate setting for the ministry needs at present, and the opportunity to expand facilities for future ministry.
- E. Holy Cross is perceived as a friendly, caring congregation by the members.
- F. Over the past ten years (2008-2017), membership and worship attendance has changed in the following way:

worship attendance	decreased 22%	[from 519 to 407]
Baptized membership	increased 2%	[from 1619 to 1655]
communicant membership	increased 9%	[from 1245 to 1356]
unconfirmed children	decreased 20%	[from 374 to 299]

- G. In the four weeks of the survey,

worship attendance averaged 362

there were 0 unchurched visitors

42% of attendees became members 15 or more years ago; 38% of attendees became members in the past 5 years

the age breakdown looks like this:

AGE	WORSHIP AVG.	% OF ATTENDEES	MEMBERS	% ATTENDING
0-12	54	18%	166	33%
13-18	28	10%	132	21%
19-25	8	3%	265	3%
26-35	15	5%	249	6%
36-45	37	13%	249	15%
46-55	40	14%	215	19%
56+	111	38%	414	27%

H. A comparison of the demographics of the congregation and the demographics of the community reveal...

Holy Cross' membership		Community (2 miles from church)		
0-13	10%	0-13	17%	(4,315)
14-17	8%	14-17	6%	(1,398)
18-21	9%	18-21	6%	(1,536)
22-24	7%	22-24	4%	(1,074)
25-34	15%	25-34	13%	(3,216)
35-44	15%	35-44	11%	(2,872)
45-54	13%	45-54	12%	(3,111)
55-64	12%	55-64	13%	(3,346)
65-74	9%	65-74	10%	(2,455)
75+	4%	75+	8%	(2,032)

I. It is estimated that

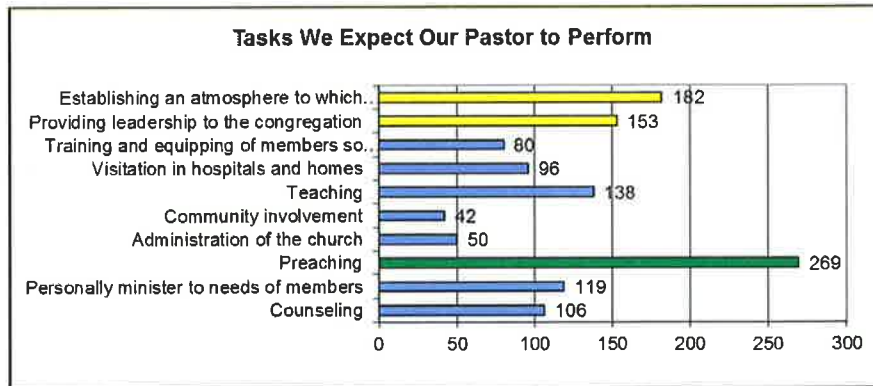
- 25% of the confirmed membership is involved in formal Bible study
- 31% of the Baptized children are involved in Sunday School
- 33% of the membership attended worship services in the past year
- 45% of the membership is actively involved in the life and work of the congregation
- It is not known how many members received Holy Communion at least once in the past year.

J. There is a commitment to missions and outreach, both national and international with financial gifts to District / Synod, financial support and mission trips to a missionary and mission in Haiti, and local outreach activities and events, both inviting the community to come to you and you going to the community.

K. Holy Cross is well situated to welcome a new shepherd and move forward in ministry in the name of Jesus.

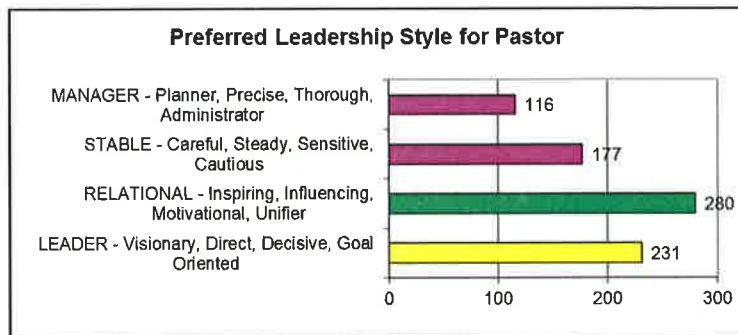
III. Thoughts on the new pastor

A. Tasks members expect pastor to perform



- There is a very high expectation and importance placed on preaching
- There is also an expectation that the pastor provide leadership to the congregation, as well as take the lead in establishing an atmosphere to which people are attracted and in which they can grow

B. Preferred Pastoral Leadership Style



- *Relational* – a style of leadership in which the pastor is characterized as a resource person, affirming, supportive and indirect, leading by example
- *Leader* – a style of leadership in which the pastor is characterized as progress- and results-orientated, willing to try new things, innovative, an achiever, comfortable in leading

C. Personal characteristics

1. Genuine, personable, approachable
2. Open / flexible in outlook
3. Able to relate to and connect with all ages
4. A man of integrity
5. A team player
6. Willing to connect with the community

D. Job strengths

1. Able to effectively connect people with Scripture in a winsome way, both in preaching and teaching
2. Seasoned in ministry, with experience in a larger congregation and demonstrated success in leading a staff team
3. Understanding and positive experience with policy based governance
4. Willing to equip God's people for ministry and allow them to do ministry
5. Comfortable with variety in worship style (traditional and praise)
6. Able to cast a vision for ministry that will focus ministry toward a common goal

IV. Challenges and opportunities facing Holy Cross and her pastor (*in no particular order*)

- A. Holy Cross is at an important point in her history. A pastoral change can be an opportunity to reflect on what God would have us do in ministry in the future. What would God have us do in ministry in 2019, and in 2021, and beyond? Those questions were asked by leadership before the vacancy, in light of the staffing gifts at that point. But now is an opportunity to consider what potential new ministry opportunities God has set before us. And as those questions are considered, what will we look like as we carry out our mission and purpose tomorrow? Consideration should be given to the broad topics of discipleship and outreach. What should we keep doing? What should we stop doing? What should we start doing? These are important questions to ask as you wait for God to provide you with your next shepherd – and they are important questions to ask with your new pastor when he arrives. And in the midst of these questions, generations must listen to one another – pray that the eyes of the older generation be opened to understand the concerns of the younger generation, and the eyes of the younger generation be opened to understand the concerns of the older generation. Also, how might we partner with our community and other congregations in ministry?
- B. Commit to a time of individual and corporate prayer, earnestly praying for one another and the ministry God has placed before the congregation to carry out in His name.
- C. In the two mile area around Holy Cross, religious faith is considered to be “important,” but “religiosity” – the practice of one’s religious belief – is “very low.” In Ottawa County, 47.2% of the population is unchurched. That would suggest that in the two mile radius around Holy Cross, nearly 12,000 people are unchurched. (However, when considering that of those who claim to be churched, 60% do not attend church or have a nominal connection with their church, the actual number could be closer to 19,000 people.) The fields are indeed white for harvest! What new “doors” could be opened – what could be done that is not currently being done to reach the community? As you ask such questions, remember that the target audience will be from a different perspective and experience than in the past, perhaps necessitating a different or additional approach.

One additional comment: In the written survey, no one indicated that their initial attraction to Holy Cross was through the preschool. It seems to me that a wonderful opportunity is being missed – parents are sending their children to your be in your presence. How might you introduce the children – and the parents (and maybe grandparents) – to Jesus?

- D. It is reported that approximately 46% of the membership are involved in some component of Christian education. This is indeed joyful to note. Growing in God’s Word is a vital component of the disciple’s walk of faith. However, this also points out that over half of the current membership is not involved in any formal study of God’s Word. An intentional commitment to participation in Christian education should be sought from every member – and it is critical that those in leadership positions model that commitment. Opportunities for study could be identified to provide both members not participating and neighbors in the community ways to connect with God’s Word.

Perhaps resources for small group or individual, personal study through print and electronic means could be pursued to provide for those with scheduling conflicts with existing studies, or something online connected to current topics or issues that could be accessed by those searching for answers (those who say religious faith is “important” but would not likely join a group study in person).

- E. Holy Cross has long valued ministry to children and youth. However, the survey and comments reflect the reality that the congregation is aging. A comparison of the demographics of the congregation and the demographics of the community highlight opportunities for ministry. While ministry to children is highly valued and a long-standing ministry in the congregation, how might Holy Cross intentionally connect with all ages, both in the congregation and the community? Consider an all-inclusive approach rather than an exclusive approach (i.e., when thinking of ministry to children, intentionally include older brothers and sisters, and parents and grandparents – “blood or not” – as well as the children), and intentionally including a senior ministry component (with 25% of the congregation and 31% of the community over 55, it is an important consideration in the “family ministry” discussion). And, in the community around you, research suggests that “devotion to family” is “somewhat weak.” How might Holy Cross become the “family church” in the area, where families and individuals of all ages are served and serving in Jesus’ name? However, note well that this ministry will not be for you – it will be for those not yet here (and the format must reflect that).
- F. Membership has increased while worship attendance has decreased. In light of the gap between those “on the books” (1,655) and those “in the pews” (407), an intentional plan of spiritual care of members should be developed and implemented under the direction of the Board of Deacons.
- G. It was reported that 45% of Holy Cross’ members are actively involved in the life and work of the congregation. This is cause for celebration and thanks to God for the working of His Spirit. In a healthy, vibrant congregation 50%-60% of the members are actively involved in the congregation’s ministry – being involved in what the ministry is doing for others. The Connection Ministry is functioning well. As potential areas of ministry are identified and people are connected to those ministries, be sure that no one can say: “I don’t have anyone coming to ask me to be involved.”
- H. Recommit to focusing on Jesus and the ministry He lays before Holy Cross Lutheran Church, and your individual role in that ministry.
- I. What would you be willing to do / change / begin so that your grandchildren and great-grandchildren (or their generation) will be blessed through the ministry of Holy Cross Lutheran Church?

