

**St. John’s Strategic Planning Project  
Assessment of Current Practices**

This is the third in a series of articles that describe the strategic planning process in greater detail to keep the congregation informed of the team’s progress and status.

We have previously reported on Project Organization and Average Weekly Worship Attendance at St. John’s compared to seven other “benchmark congregations” in the Minneapolis Synod. This month’s article will focus on our Assessment of Current Practices at St. John’s. Detail reports from all these areas are available on the St. John’s website at: <http://stjohnsofmound.org/> via the Strategic Plan hot link.

We conducted the self assessment process as a trial run before visiting the other congregations. This established our baseline of information and satisfied the team that the results of our visits are likely to be helpful in setting our strategic goals and objectives. In addition to gathering examples of materials we use in our current practices we decided to conduct a survey. The survey was created using material from Kennon Callahan a nationally known church consultant. Callahan identified 12 keys to an effective, thriving church. The first six are relational characteristics (Callahan says the more of these that are ranked highly the healthier the church) and the second six are functional. Callahan recommends that churches focus on their strengths and that for planning purposes we only try to improve “a couple characteristics” at a time. Furthermore he states “Effective churches result when the pastor and key leadership motivate the congregation by focusing on compassion and community. Identifying our key strengths and matching them to appropriate motivations can help us build more effective and stronger churches.” A more complete description of Callahan’s ideas can be found at: <http://www.naccc.org/CCD/New%20Vitality%20for%20your%20Church.htm> .

The team decided to survey two of our groups here-the Church Council and recent New Members. The survey was provided with the instruction that the participants should complete only those questions they believed they understood and had knowledge of by providing a rating from 1 (poor) to 5 (great). The results are:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	<u>New Members</u>
Dynamic worship	Relational	4.2	4.2
Adequate parking	Functional	3.9	2.3
Strong leadership	Relational	3.7	4.3
Several excellent programs	Functional	3.6	3.7
Effective shepherding	Relational	3.3	not rated

<b>Good group ministry</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>A concrete mission</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Adequate facilities</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Open accessibility</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Generous giving</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>High visibility</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Effective decision making process</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>

**As the team had hoped and expected the results indicate the Relational Characteristics rank higher at St. John's than the Functional Characteristics.**

**We are now in the process of visiting each of the benchmarked congregations to determine what "best practices" they follow that we should consider implementing at St. John's to improve our performance. We will report results when this step is completed.**

**We welcome input and help from any member. If you have comments, questions, and suggestions or want to participate on the project please see any team member or send an email to Skip Smith at: [hssmithiii@frontiernet.net](mailto:hssmithiii@frontiernet.net). Other members of the team are: Pastor Ed, Cheri Fischer, Marshall Saunders and Rob Beyer.**