

Last Sunday, our Congregational Mission Study Team held our third and final visioning exercise, during worship. We were presented with twenty desired pastoral skills/attributes. (Many of these came from the standard Ministry Information Form our Pastor Nominating Committee will use. The rest were generated by the CMST.) Those present were instructed to choose the ten items that they thought were the most important for our next pastor to have.

Which were the ten that we felt were most important for us going forward?
Which were the ten our next pastor would most need to guide us in the direction we believe God wants us to go?

Here are the results:

- 1 - Preaching & Worship Leader (61)
- 2 - Good Communicator (59)
- 3 - Motivator/Encourager (54)
- 4 - Heart for Children & Young Families (50)
- 5 - Skilled in Pastoral Care (45)
- 6 – Collaborator (44)
- 7 - Wants to be a visible presence in our community (42)
- 8 - Heart for Mission Work (Being the hands and feet of Jesus) (41)
- 9 - Heart for Proclaiming the Good News (40)
- 10 - Not afraid of sensitive topics (Money, Politics, Sexuality, etc.) (39)
- 11 – Hopeful/Optimistic (39)
- 12 - Heart for Christian Education (36)
- 13 - Good Administrator (36)

14 - Heart for Older Adults (35)

15 – Heart for Music Ministry (24)

16 - Change Agent/Facilitates Change (15)

17 - Second-Career Pastor with real-world experience (did not become a pastor until somewhat later in life) (10)

18 - Risk Taker (8)

19 - Technologically Savvy (8)

20 - Funds Developer (2)

Perhaps not surprisingly, the results indicate that our greatest desire is for a strong preacher/worship leader. This person will also be a skilled communicator (both oral and written) with the ability to motivate and encourage us. Additionally, this individual must have a keen interest in families with young children. (Notice the correlation with “Ten Important Things” item 3 and “Great Ends” item 2.) These qualities are essential and anyone not meeting them would be hard-pressed to guide us in the direction in which we believe God wants us to go.

Items 5 through 11 are secondary, but still important, expectations. The fact that these seven items are separated by only six votes suggests that they are of practically equal importance. Together, they suggest a minister with traditional pastoral skills who especially desires to be with us both ministering out in the community and navigating the sometimes-sensitive realities of our world today.

Items twelve through fourteen, separated by only one vote, are important, though in this case tertiary, pastoral gifts expected in a well-rounded solo-pastor. We still expect them, and they matter to us, but less than those listed above.

“Heart for Music Ministry”, # 15, received only twenty-four votes, eleven votes less than “Heart for Older Adults” and nine votes more than “Change Agent/Facilitates Change.” These are the largest gaps in the survey. We believe this indicates that, while we recognize music is important and we value it greatly, we do not expect the pastor to be in charge of it. Being supportive is sufficient.

Finally, the results suggest that the final five items, while admirable, do not seem to be necessarily key to our future.

No pastor does everything well. To expect otherwise is to set oneself up for a tremendous letdown. Are we willing to do without a particular item when the candidate excels at everything else? For example, a pastor who seems to excel at items 1 through 14 except pastoral care. Are we willing to provide the technical expertise needed to support a pastor who is exactly what we need but who struggles with technology?

These are important considerations, and we trust that our PNC will consider them prayerfully and discuss them frankly with serious candidates.