

Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT)
Executive Summary for Church of the Incarnation, Dallas
“Transformational Church”

Overview

We have recently completed the survey phase of the new Rector search. We really appreciate everyone who took the time to provide feedback. This information is integral in the process of finding whom God has chosen to be our new Rector.

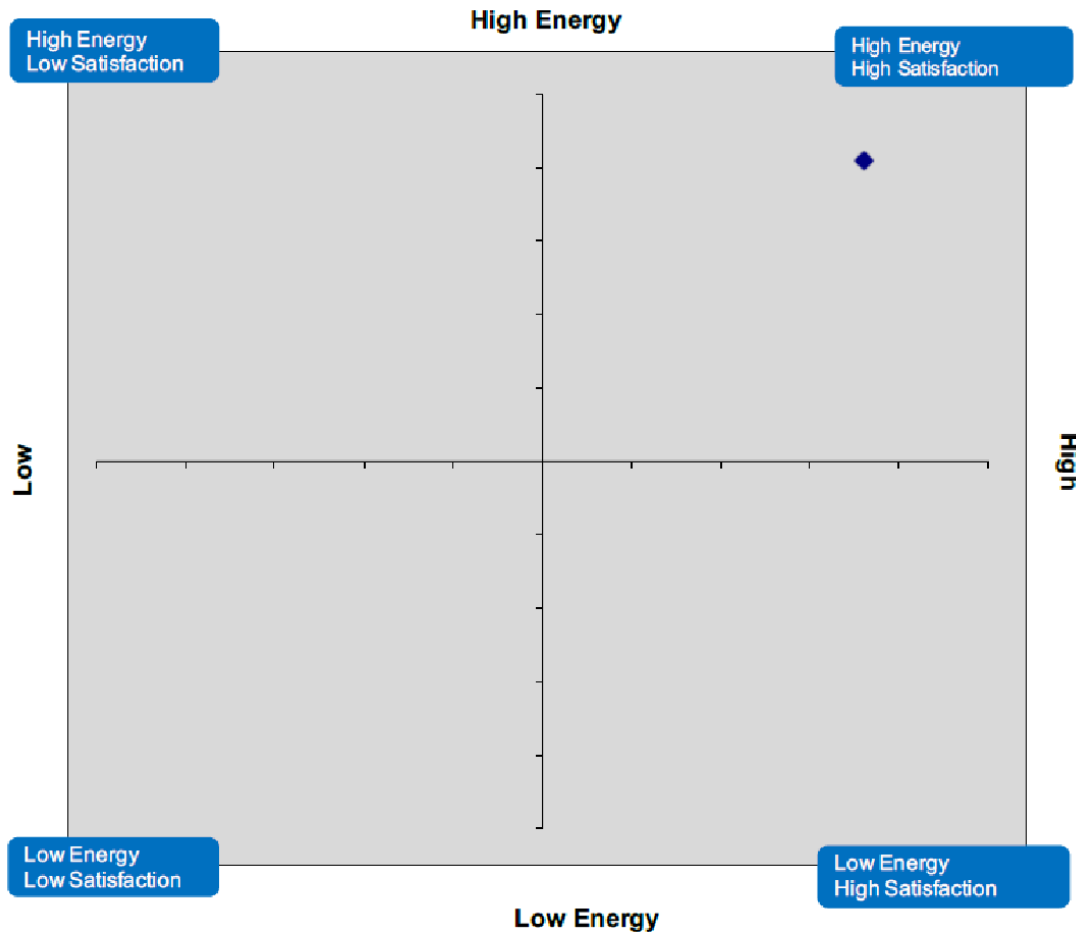
The Congregation Assessment Tool (“CAT”) is designed to measure our parish’s climate, culture and various performance milestones. The survey was customized for Incarnation with supplemental questions. Below is a summary of what we learned.

Our Climate: Member satisfaction and member energy.

Church climate is measured by two indicators: One is member *Satisfaction* (sense of well-being, peace, joy, lack of discord); and the other is *Energy* (force of engagement in mission). Compared to other congregations, our Satisfaction and Energy are high to very high, which defines us as a “Transformational Church”. This categorization puts Incarnation in the top 20-25% of all congregations nationwide who have participated in the CAT. As a parish, we have a clear sense of mission and vision, alignment of and strengths in ministry and worship, all of which provides us the opportunity to transform the lives of those we touch with our ministries.

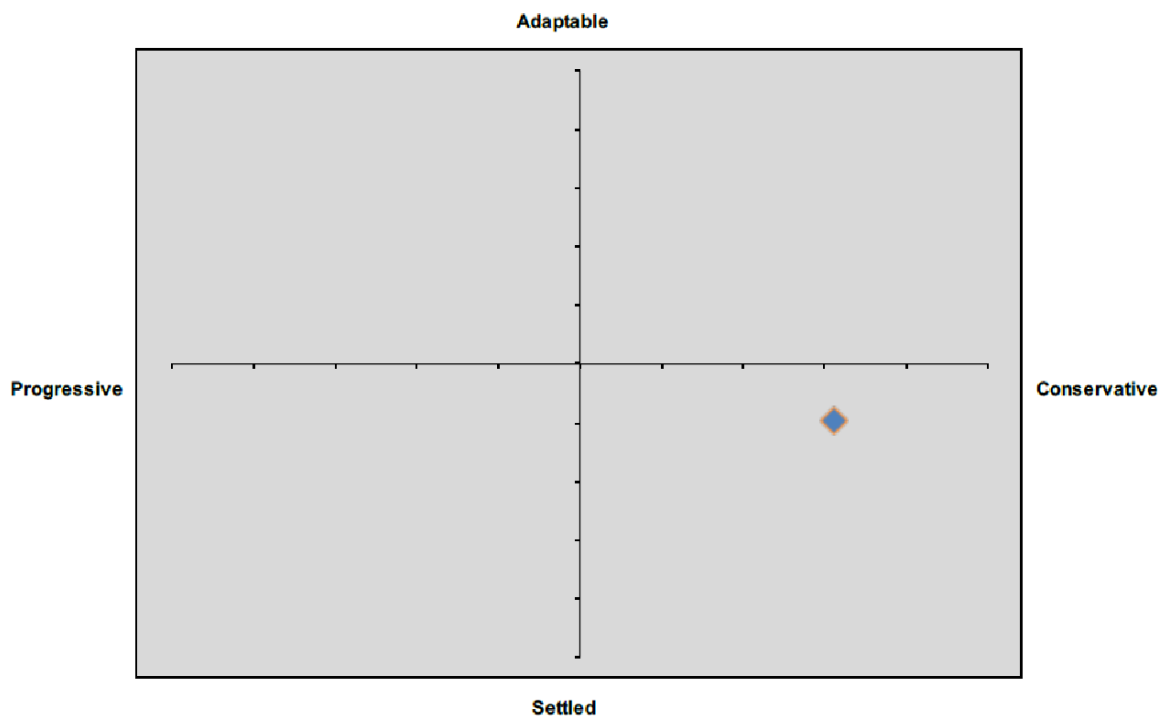
Transformational systems have very different strategic and leadership needs. Their positive morale and organizational capacities place a stewardship responsibility upon their shoulders. The more tangible expressions of transformational systems include:

- an external focus;
- a distinctive mission;
- inspired worship;
- healthy, healing and meaningful relationships;
- purposeful activity in the world; and
- a palpable atmosphere of well-being.



Our Culture: How we operate.

- We are theologically conservative, which means we place a high value on evangelism, the “unchanging, historic faith”, and Holy Scripture.
- We have a slightly settled culture... This surprised our committee. The committee interprets these results as we want to keep worshipping in the Great Tradition but we are open to new ways of extending God’s kingdom to the surrounding community, Dallas, and beyond. For example, we scored “more settled” in response to “Our members welcome changes in worship” but we scored “more adaptable” in response to “We are willing to adapt our worship to the needs and circumstances of the people we want to reach in our local community”. Regardless, we should take note.
- A conservative-settled congregation is known as a “Home and Hearth” culture. These systems are ultimately concerned with a clearly defined faith that is lived out in a community valuing structure and stability. At their best, these cultures serve as guardians of time-honored traditions and a measure of shelter from the frenetic change in the world. In their outreach to others, they not only invite them into faith but also to ‘come home’ to a faith community that has all the expectations and rewards of a family.



What Else We Learned...

We scored exceptionally high in Worship and Music, Spiritual Vitality, Engagement in Education and Morale. Additionally, the priority responses showed a balance of internal and external focus. Our parish highly values outreach, pastoral care, and opportunities for fellowship.

In terms of the dynamics of this transition time, we demonstrate that we are more willing to be involved, more willing to take on additional responsibilities, and more willing to give more financially. The commitment to the church appears to be strong during the transition period.

Our profile as a “Transformational Church” helps us understand the characteristics and skills needed in our next Rector – who fills a role as what might be known as a “field marshal” – because our nature requires optimizing a large array of strategic resources – visionary, excellent in preaching and presiding, a developer of people.

Overall, Incarnation is a strong, thriving congregation. We have taken ownership of our baptismal call through our involvement in the ministries of this congregation. We have vibrant worship, preaching, and community. We are motivated in our responsibility for life-long learning and formation. There is much to celebrate and for which to be grateful. May we look to the future, maintaining our strengths, growing through our weaknesses, and holding fast to the one who is our “Prophet, Priest, and King”.