



AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

**Westminster's
Appreciative Inquiry
Dream Team
Report to the Congregation**

September, 2017





APPRECIATIVE

INQUIRY

ALSO KNOWN AS "AI"

"At its heart, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the strengths-filled, opportunity-rich world around them."

Excerpt from: Stavros, Jacqueline, Godwin, Lindsey, & Cooperrider, David. (2015). Appreciative Inquiry: Organization Development and the Strengths Revolution.



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS



Discovering Westminster's DNA Through Appreciative Inquiry

Discover

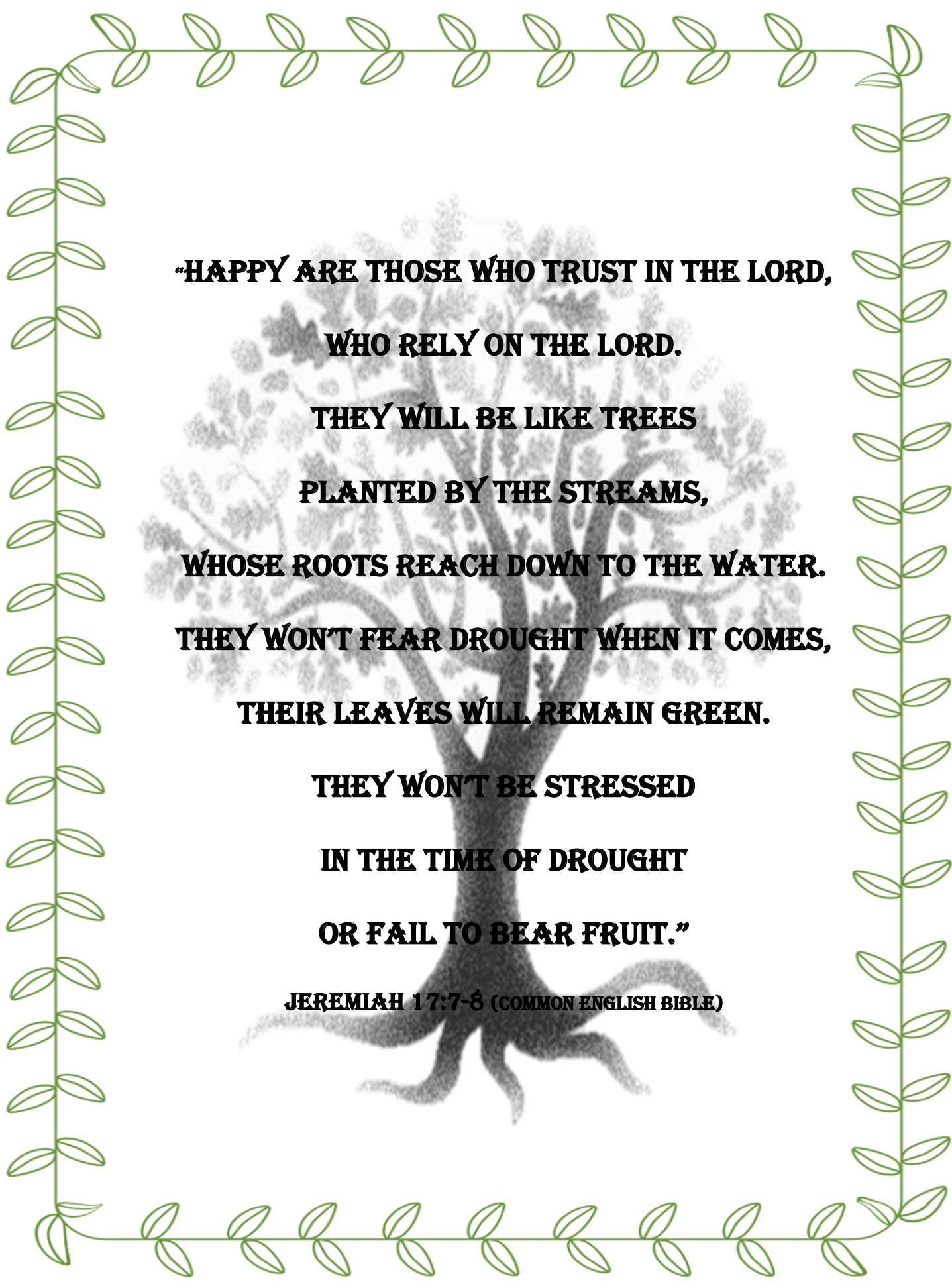
Dream

Design

Deliver

Dream Team Members: *Kirsten Adams, Cindi Chinnock, Bill MacMorris-Adix, John Mayhew, Jay Morris, Reg Tenney and Rev. John Moody.*

Chair: Lucy Foster



**“HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD,
WHO RELY ON THE LORD.
THEY WILL BE LIKE TREES
PLANTED BY THE STREAMS,
WHOSE ROOTS REACH DOWN TO THE WATER.
THEY WON’T FEAR DROUGHT WHEN IT COMES,
THEIR LEAVES WILL REMAIN GREEN.
THEY WON’T BE STRESSED
IN THE TIME OF DROUGHT
OR FAIL TO BEAR FRUIT.”**

JEREMIAH 17:7-8 (COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE)



TREE SYMBOLISM

It seems appropriate to use the symbol of the tree to tell you what we learned. Our campus is filled with them, and they give us peace and inspiration every time we enter.

Each part of the tree is meaningful. In the roots, we see the obvious analogy to our history. In the trunk, we see who we are as a congregation; the branches symbolize our core values, and in the leaves, of course, we can see our future hopes and dreams.

The following section is a record of the information shared during September 2017, including the points displayed on the tree in the narthex and in the bulletin inserts, as well as the text of the Minutes for Mission.

Each segment also includes quotes and stories gathered from the interviews. They were selected by the team that processed the interviews in January 2017.



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY:


HOW DID WE GET HERE?

FROM MINUTE FOR MISSION

GIVEN BY LUCY FOSTER 8/27/17

It has been a long road to bring this information to you today. Your church leaders began the latest phase of planning for the future over 3 years ago with a special session committee led by Christine Heyen, supported by fellow Core Team members Barbara Wolfe, Reg Tenney, and Bill Foster, with Rev John Moody. Cindi Chinnock later joined this group. That work eventually led to a decision to use a self-study process known as Appreciative Inquiry, which is the “search for the best in people, their organizations, and the strengths-filled, opportunity-rich world around them.” AI (as it is affectionately known) has 4 stages: Discover (what is great about Westminster); Dream (what we might become); Design (the future); and move to Deliver (on our plans).

With the aforementioned team leading the way, church leaders had several retreats over the course of the years 2014-2016, to plan , train , and then finally conduct the most intimidating piece of the AI process: interviewing church members to find out what you see as our strengths, possibilities and successes. Those interviews are the core of the Appreciative Inquiry process. They were conducted by Deacons, Elders and other leaders in the spring and summer of 2016. We gathered answers to the questions from 110 of congregation members and friends, via interviews and questionnaires .



Of course, following this process, we had to evaluate what you told us. There were hours of work at the computer, followed by a work team session in Boulder Hall during that lengthy snowstorm in January. This session was organized and led by Lucy Foster, joined by Ken Archibald, Nancy Ritter, Christine Heyen, Bill MacMorris-Adix, and Reg Tenney as well as Rev John Moody. That effort was followed by more computer work, preparing for the Leadership Retreat a few weeks later. Deacons and Elders will remember sticky notes and sticky dots as a part of the long day hearing about and participating in the process of evaluating information. Still there was a great deal more work to be done when the retreat was over, and a new leadership group, (dubbed the “AI Dream team” since that is the current stage of the AI process,) was organized to continue the work. Some members from the former committee carried forward, and others brought on board. This new team has been led by Lucy Foster, joined by Kirsten Adams, Cindi Chinnock, Bill MacMorris-Adix, John Mayhew, Jay Morris, and Reg Tenney, as well as Rev John Moody. Many hours have been spent going over the results, trying to find common themes across the responses in preparation for sharing this information with you. We’ve been meeting monthly since March, 2017.

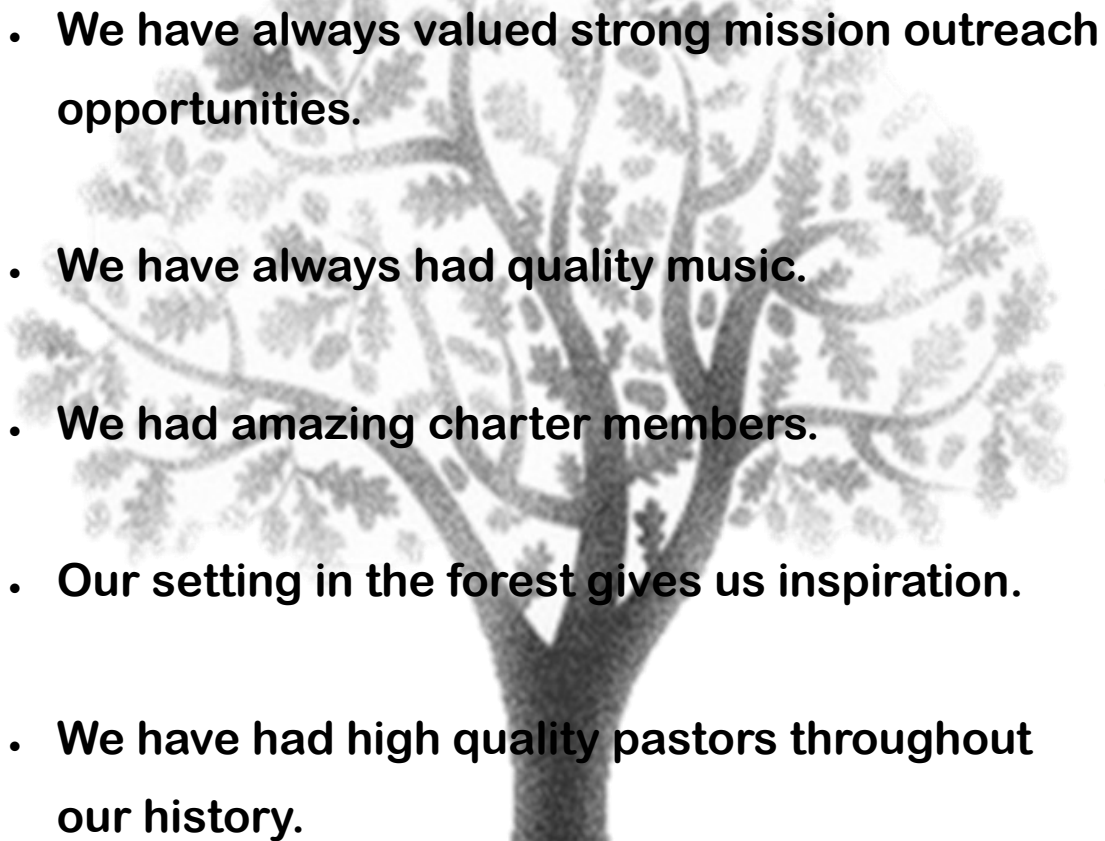
To give life to our narration, we chose the analogy of the tree. The roots symbolize our church history. The trunk represents who we are and what makes us strong. The branches stand for our core values, and of course the leaves are our future hopes and dreams. Many thanks to the Friday family: Barbara, Mike and Chrysta Friday for the tree artistry.

We, the Dream Team, hope you will enjoy reading what you and your fellow congregants told us.

ROOTS:

OUR HISTORY

FROM THE TREE DISPLAY

- 
- We have always valued strong mission outreach opportunities.
 - We have always had quality music.
 - We had amazing charter members.
 - Our setting in the forest gives us inspiration.
 - We have had high quality pastors throughout our history.



ROOTS:

OUR HISTORY

MINUTE FOR MISSION

BY JAY MORRIS AND REG TENNEY

SEPTEMBER 3, 2017

Westminster has a rich history. Let's begin with the folks who took a leap in faith, became charter members, and put down roots that today run very deep. The first 49 people who signed their names in the membership book signed on October 7, 1956 (a time when Ike was running for second term). Among the many "pioneers" of WPC, the "Charter Members" included the following couples and families: the Howells, the Bales, the Handleys, the Schalks, the Tompkins, the Fields, the Morgan family, the Walkers, the Hawkins, the Fujiis, the Caves and the Wanns. These and many others guided Westminster through what must have been very challenging times. A few highlights of those first days: in 1955 Reverend Dwight Russell was named as the organizing pastor. The low bid on our building was \$42, 385, and ground was broken in the spring of 1956. The first service in the new building was November 25, 1956, and the Charter membership role was closed on February 3, 1957 with 215 members.

The amazingly beautiful setting for Westminster was a 5.2 acre heavily wooded property that had been part of the estate of a Salem cannery owner, and included a four bedroom house which became the manse. Many improvements and upgrades have been made during our 60 years, but the Boulder Knoll setting continues as an inspiration and joy to all of us.

Our congregation has always been a very giving and generous one. Imagine the faith and courage of our original members who took financial responsibility for the establishment of a new church, and called pastor Russell at a salary of \$4,666. This generosity blesses our church and our mission to this day.

The leadership and faithfulness of the founding pastor, Dwight Russell, has continued through all the pastoral leadership of WPC and remains true today as pastor John Moody, who has guided us through more than 20 of our 60 years, helps us prepare for the next era of Westminster history. As one questionnaire respondent put it, WPC has been blessed to have had, from the beginning, amazing, approachable pastors. All of whom have helped us to this 60th anniversary.

So, our roots in Boulder Knoll, planted by those who came before us, and maintained by the generosity of our congregants, and the leadership of our pastors, continue to run deep and strong.



ROOTS: OUR HISTORY

QUOTES AND STORIES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

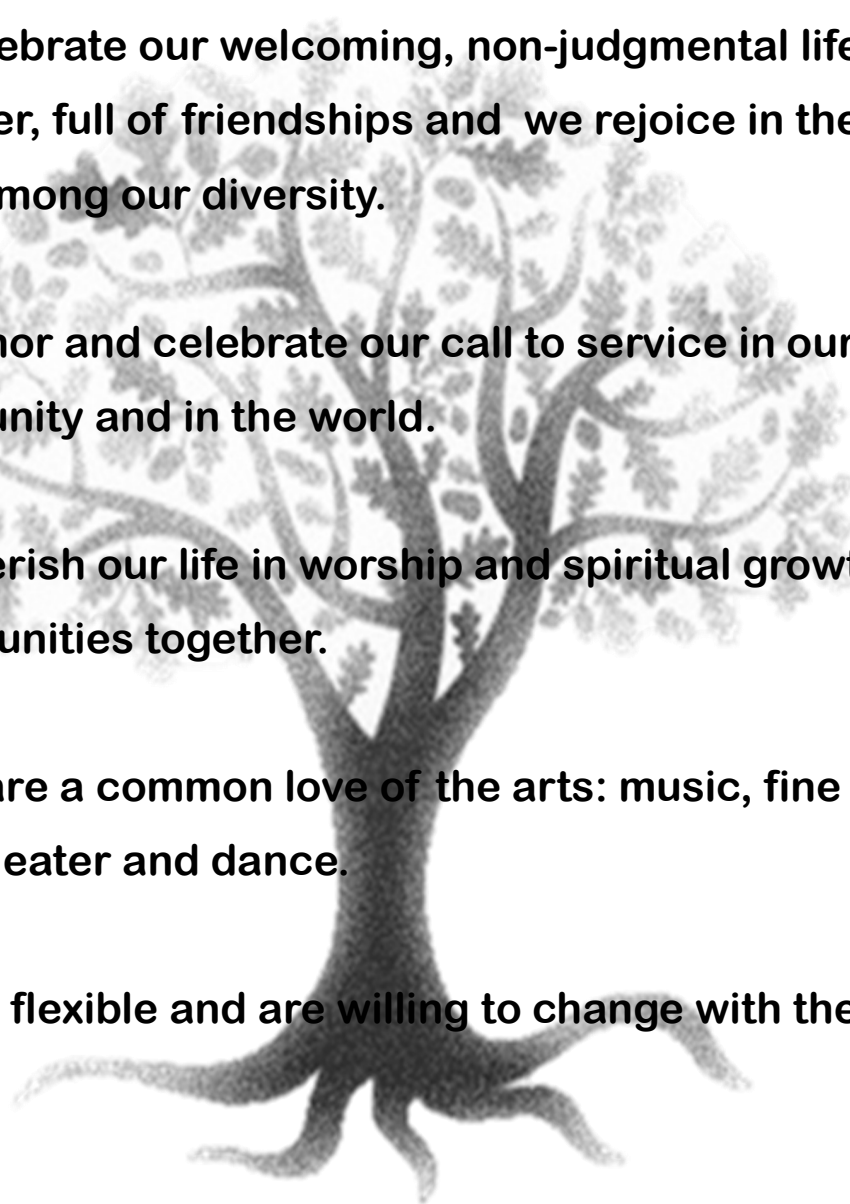
- “One element of the new sanctuary project was incorporating some artwork into the design. The committee worked with the artist Leroy Setziol, a former Presbyterian minister, meeting with him several times. His work includes the three round carvings, joined by the ‘river of life,’ the baptismal font, and a commissioned piece in the narthex. Our time interacting and socializing with him was delightful.”
- “A vivid memory was when our ‘new’ sanctuary was being constructed, our children’s services committee (which I was on) decided that we needed to give the children a special curriculum during our construction phase, since it would really impact their class space: the manse was being torn down, and that was the place where the older elementary students and middle school groups had their Sunday School classes. We would need to combine grades and would be really pressed for space. So we invented our own theme: the building of the temple in Jerusalem. Another member and I wrote the curriculum and headed the project to build a model of that temple with the SS kids. We had the component of Bible Study about the temple and its building specs, but also the theme that our modern day church is NOT a building, so while we met in a local elementary school for worship, we were really NOT a church, we were just being God’s people, fulfilling a new vision, It was exciting. Also getting VBS up and running and seeing it through the building construction, choosing curriculum, etc. Those were exciting times! It was a great way to get to know other people in our church.”
- “It is obvious that when our congregation takes on a prayer request, God hears it and responds.” An appreciation for Westminster “staying up with the times” and continuing “to do worship that is relevant,” keeping sight on the “essentials even though the ‘packaging’ might be changing.”
- “I know that through my childhood involvement at the church I have become a hard worker (both physically and mentally) thanks to mission trips; more inclusive and open-minded thanks to countless sermons and lessons on loving your neighbor; more humble thanks to my performances which began when I was 4 or 5; and more spiritual thanks to the love and grace of God, whom I see 100% in Westminster,”

THE TRUNK:

WHO WE ARE

FROM THE TREE DISPLAY

- We celebrate our welcoming, non-judgmental life together, full of friendships and we rejoice in the unity among our diversity.
- We honor and celebrate our call to service in our community and in the world.
- We cherish our life in worship and spiritual growth opportunities together.
- We share a common love of the arts: music, fine arts, theater and dance.
- We are flexible and are willing to change with the times.





THE TRUNK:

WHO WE ARE

MINUTE FOR MISSION

BY KIRSTEN ADAMS & JOHN MAYHEW

SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

In the last two weeks, we talked about the appreciative inquiry process and the tree metaphor. Last week, we outlined the church's roots. This week, we are talking about how the church's appreciative inquiry process helped us identify who we are as a church. In the tree metaphor, this would be our trunk. Most importantly, we have unity among our diversity of theology, political views and ages. We are nonjudgmental. Our community is built on friendship and family, which shows through our strong fellowship. We are involved and dedicated to community service. We value the arts, from the Art Festival to music and dance.

One of the most repeated sentiments was that we are a welcoming and kind group. This has brought people here and kept them coming, and will hopefully continue for years to come.



TRUNK: WHO WE ARE

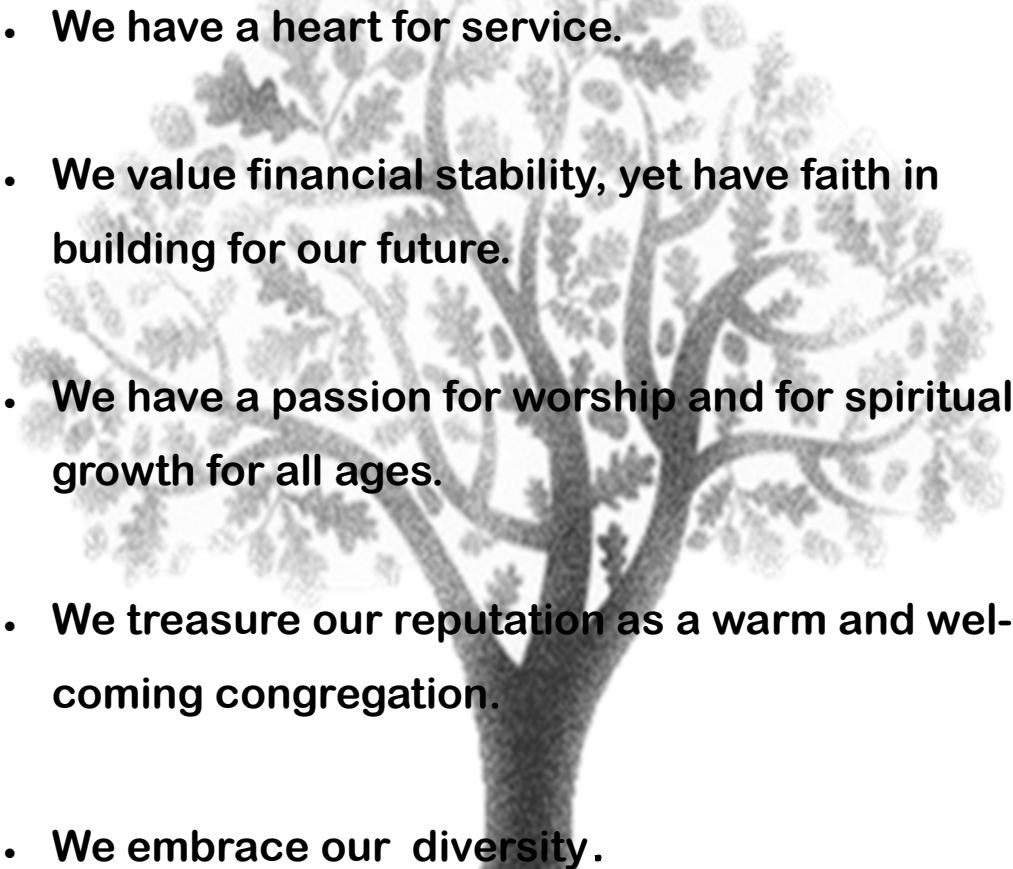
QUOTES AND STORIES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

- “Everything a person does, no matter how little, is cherished. The church accentuates the positive, not negatives. Everyone is accepted here.”
- “We weren’t judged by people on our first visit.”
- “[Helen Schafer] came by with a plant. She is so amazing and friendly”
- “Westminster, with few exceptions, seems to be able to resolve differences without too much controversy,”
- “On our first visit we signed the attendance book at the service with only our names. A lady who we did not know handed us back the book and suggested we add our address and phone number. She was loving and sincere and it made a positive impression. We also appreciated John Moody standing at the door taking the time to meet and greet us.”
- “It was really important to me that when my mother’s health was failing, I know that I could get her out of the assisted living center, bring her to church on Sunday mornings, and she would be cherished. My children, who wheeled her into the sanctuary while I was in choir, would feel supported by church members, and my mother would be welcomed simply for being there. I felt embraced by loving care during those difficult times. She gave many years of service to churches in other places, but she was embraced warmly here during her final years. The same happened when we brought my mother-in-law to church with us during her final years.”
- “A growing, vibrant, and engaged congregation that nurtures and supports members of the congregation.”
- “My participation in Adult Bible Study, felt alive. It was fun. Reading contemporary authors to prepare for leading Bible Study. It is a gift when it feels like an ancient piece of text comes alive. The professor from Willamette presented ‘the life of Paul’ series and you could see how the history impacted the lives of folks at this time.”
- “An event that stands out was an intergenerational, interactive Seder many years ago led by Arlene Pate. We learned of this lovely event in the Jewish faith of which, until then, we were totally unaware: its history, the foods, the involvement of the children in games...well, I’ve remembered it all these years. It was immensely special.”
- “The fact that helping is a passion. Participation leads to more committed members.”
- “I feel that my husband and I have seen role models to try to emulate in our own marriage and family life. The church has given us a place for spiritual growth and a structure for service that expresses our calling. We have made many friends here who share our values, and we can enjoy fulfilling our call to service with people we care about.”

BRANCHES:

OUR CORE VALUES

FROM THE TREE DISPLAY

- 
- We have a heart for service.
 - We value financial stability, yet have faith in building for our future.
 - We have a passion for worship and for spiritual growth for all ages.
 - We treasure our reputation as a warm and welcoming congregation.
 - We embrace our diversity.



BRANCHES

OUR CORE VALUES

MINUTE FOR MISSION

BY BILL MACMORRIS-ADIX AND JAY MORRIS

SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

My comments are inspired by John 15.5. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing”

Today I'm talking about the branches that represent our values as a congregation.

Our behavior indicate what we value. Our values are influenced by what we believe. Two people can offer the same help to a person in need and have different values and beliefs. One such person will help a person in need because he values being kind. He believes that random acts of kindness is there a way to make the world a better place. The other person provides the same help because she values having a relationship with that person to communicate care and God’s Love. She believes and knows she has a relationship with God through Jesus who response to her needs. We value making meaningful worship a priority. Through worship we affirm our shared value of being generous and reaching out to those in need and asking for support. We actively seek opportunities to care for the homeless, forgotten in the individuals who seek justice and peace. More than just providing tangible hope we seek to be in a relationship with others in need. We affirm that we are no better or worse than those for whom we make care available. Mary Von Schimmelman summed it up by making love a verb. She said “I love people's love for one another in the unity in spite of the diversity.” The people at Westminster value getting involved.



BRANCHES:

OUR CORE VALUES

QUOTES AND STORIES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

- “I value the friendships and feel valued.”
- “I value a sense of belonging that I feel every time I attend church, even now with long gaps between visits. It’s a lot like that old definition of a family that ‘when you go there, they have to take you in.’ That’s the feeling our church gives me! Many years ago, our family took turns reading the Christmas Story on Christmas Eve in the old sanctuary when Jack Chan was our interim pastor. I had been asked to be the reader, but at the last minute as we were getting ready at home, I realized that it might be nice for the four of us to alternate reading from the Children’s Bible. We had a quick rehearsal before we went to church that evening, got approval from Jack, and it was a lovely moment for us. I still remember what our kids wore and how earnest they were—a precious memory.”
- “I love the people’s love for one another and the unity in spite of the diversity.”
- “Attending Westminster has given us a family and made us better people.”
- “She found lots of opportunities for her family, ‘despite all the older people.’ On her first visit she saw all of the walkers outside the sanctuary and thought this might not be a good church for her young family. Once they were in the service, they saw all ages of people and activities for all ages.”
- “Several years ago Gail Moody asked a particular member to lead one of the Sunday evening small discussion groups. She said that Gail’s confidence in her ability boosted her self-confidence and made her feel very valued.”
- “I also like the fact that so many people are involved in so many church activities.”
- “I would say the three years that I served on Session (2010-2013). I enjoyed working as a team to help with many issues of the church. It gave me a wider picture of the church as a whole. During this time, Session was trying to work out both the church budget and the new building budget. This was also the height of the depression. All of the committees were asked to trim down their budget requests. I loved that the Session pulled together for the good of the church and individuals stepped forward with their talents to keep the church going.”



BRANCHES: OUR CORE VALUES

QUOTES AND STORIES FROM THE INTERVIEWS, (CONTINUED)

- “I joined the Building and Grounds Committee soon after joining the church. Having retired from a career in natural resource management, it was very interesting to get involved in the management of the church forest. The building of Boulder Hall was also under design and eventually constructed which was also very interesting. When I joined Building and Grounds, the forest was overgrown with brush and made the church difficult to see from Liberty Street. I volunteered to hire and work with a contractor to clear the brush to make the church more visible and received excellent support from other members. When Boulder Hall was build I took photographs to document all phases of construction.”
- “It’s a springboard for service beyond Westminster.”
- “Many years ago, when our kids were young, we were youth group advisors. Joe was on the financial advisory committee and occasionally played his saxophone in worship. I helped plan Christmas banners decades ago and decorate the old sanctuary for Advent. I appreciated serving twice as mentor in the communicants’ class. I really enjoyed serving as a deacon, contacting and visiting members of my care group. I also felt honored to prepare and serve communion and to serve as an usher.”
- “I was looking for a Big Job. I loved the work. I loved the work of serving with a team of others, and the ability to exercise my gifts. I realized that I had not lost the touch of serving Christ.”
- “I value the personality of the minister. He brings out the best in everyone and makes you want to greet everyone.”
- “John has an amazing way of connecting on a personal level with each member of the congregation. [He] made a point of getting to know me and connecting with me as an individual. John has a great ability to make the Bible relevant.”

LEAVES:

OUR FUTURE HOPES AND DREAMS

FROM THE TREE DISPLAY

- Continue to focus on bringing in young people and families with children.
- Sustain or increase our community service outreach.
- Increase programs for spiritual growth for all ages.
- Financial stability: pay off the mortgage debt.
- Get help for pastor.
- Keep our warm, caring, compassionate ways.



LEAVES:

OUR FUTURE HOPES AND DREAMS

MINUTE FOR MISSION

BY LUCY FOSTER, KIRSTEN ADAMS & CINDI CHINNOCK

SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

In the last few weeks you have heard from our Appreciative Inquiry team as we have shared information from the 110 interviews conducted in the spring and summer of 2016. It has taken a long time to decipher what we heard, and it's been an all-volunteer-led effort. You know by now that we chose the symbolism of the tree for our sharing. You have heard about our history, our vision of who we are, and about our core values, and you can review those points in your bulletin insert, and on the tree display in the narthex. Today I would like to share what you told us about your future hopes and dreams.

In many ways, you feel that our congregation is in a good place right now. There were many expressions of a desire to keep what we have: friendliness, openness, caring, and our compassion in serving others near and far. We all seem to agree that key to our future is attracting and retaining young people and families. Strong programs for families and youth are vital ingredients to this. Many agree that we would like to see our pastor get some assistance. We value financial stability, and would like to see our mortgage debt paid off as quickly as possible, while sustaining our programs and services. There were also concerns that as future transitions happen, we want to do all we can to make sure they will go smoothly.

This is a summary of the most frequent comments. We heard many other ideas and these will be considered as well, as leaders plan for the future of our congregation.



LEAVES:

OUR FUTURE HOPES AND DREAMS

QUOTES AND STORIES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

- “Westminster is an aging congregation and an active church. The first wish would be for many younger people to become part of the congregation and willing to serve.”
- “To me, the priority is to attract and retain young people and families Not sure what it would take to do that, as I am neither.”
- Three wishes for the next five years: “woman pastor, racial/sexual diversity, more outreach” which would manifest itself in a “diversity of approaches to the message [of the] Bible, more perspective on the word, more outreach, and [an] experience [of] discomfort.”
- “Paradigm shift from believe > join > participate to participate > join > believe (paraphrased from an Adam Grosch presentation).
- “Have youth Elders on Session and be progressive in the relationship with [our sister] Japanese Church.”
- “I wish I could have distributed communion without having to be a deacon.”
- “I am calling for greater transparency in the sharing of the budgeting process with the congregation. I’d like to see enhanced description of how contributions support programs.”
- “Congregational empowerment and lay leadership growth through the interim period will be important. Excitement as favorite programs evolve under new leadership and others change, combine, or go away to make way for new ideas. There will be new ideas, and hopefully those with new ideas will be given support to see how they can work.”

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS,
PROCEDURE,
STATISTICS,
AND OUTCOMES**





The questions that were asked

These are the questions asked in the interviews. They are a variation of questions often asked in the Appreciative Inquiry Interviews.

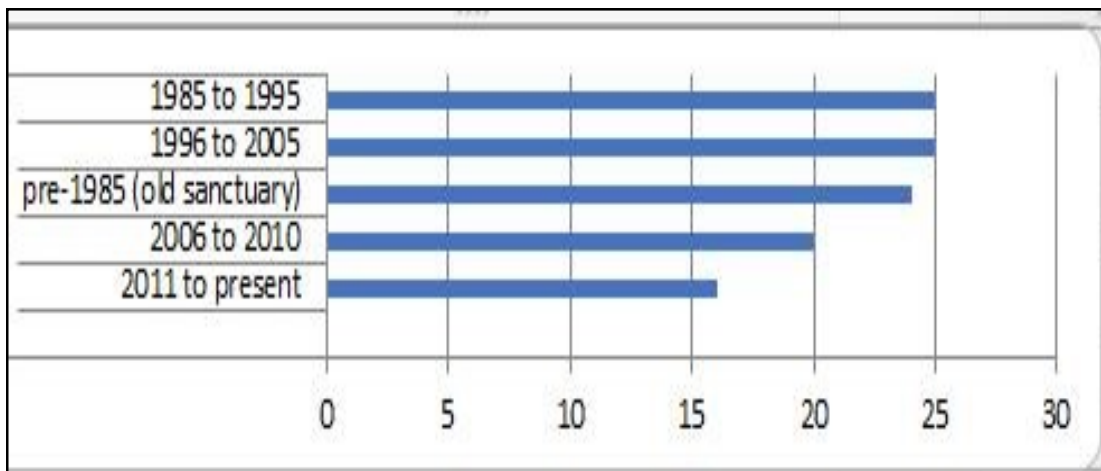
We asked people to volunteer to answer the following six questions. You will notice that some have multiple parts:

1. When did you first start attending Westminster, and what was it about the church that attracted you or caused you to want to stay?
2. As you look back over your years here, when were you most alive, most motivated and excited about your involvement? What made it exciting? What was your part? Do you have a story to illustrate what excited and energized you about the church at that time?
3. What do you value most about our church? What activities or ingredients or ways of life are most important?
4. What have you contributed to the ministry of Westminster in your years here that has added value and helped you to feel connected? And, if you are new here, how would you like to contribute?
5. What do you value most about the way Westminster has contributed to your life? Tell about a time when your involvement at Westminster made a difference in your life.
6. As you think about the next five years for Westminster Presbyterian Church, what three wishes do you have for the church? Describe what church would look like if we took these steps? What is the most important step we need to take to have the biggest positive impact?

Procedure, data and meaning

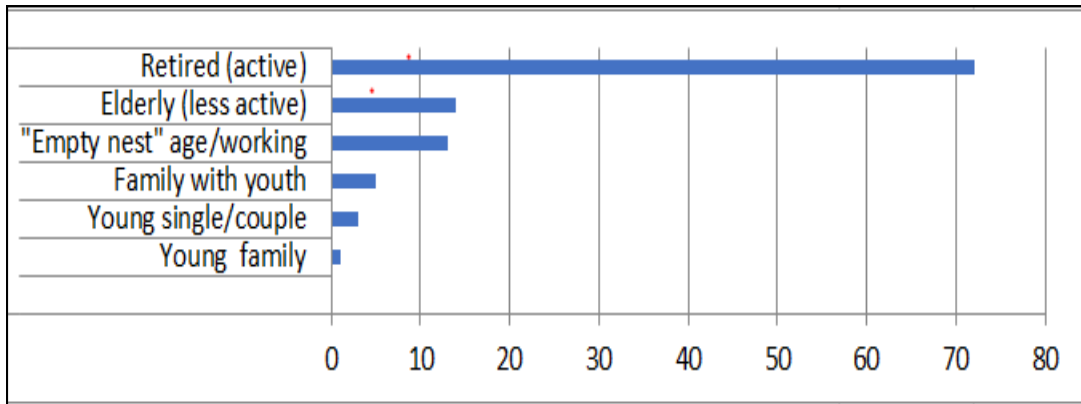
We began by noting something about the people we were interviewing, beginning with when they first joined our church family, which in the first question. Here is that information. You can see that there's a good balance of people who have been here a while and those who have come more recently.

Question: How long have you been attending Westminster?



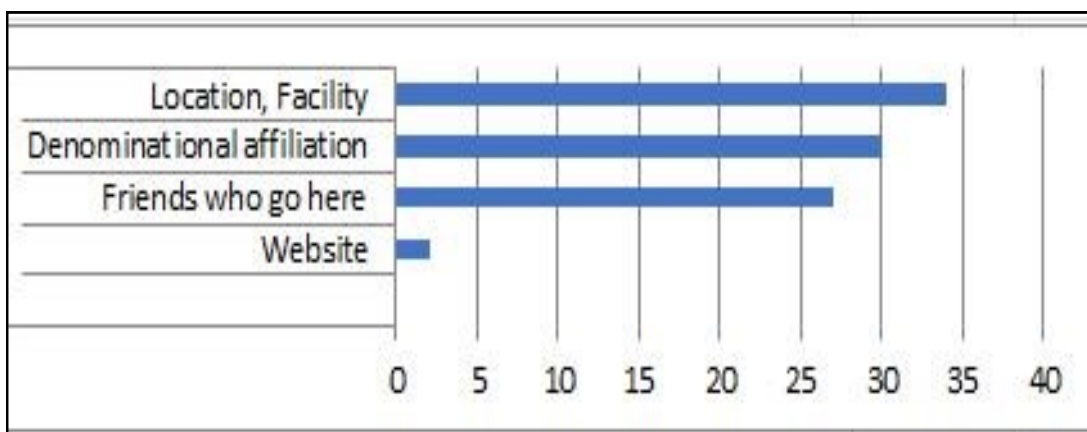
**You will note that the numbers on the bottom of the bar graph represent the number of people that gave that answer.*

Although not an actual part of the AI process, the question had been raised about the age representation of our responders, so we did our own informal “best guess” in identifying at what stage of life our information was coming from, based on personal acquaintance with the individuals. Here, you can see, the overwhelming number of respondents were from the “active retired” age range.



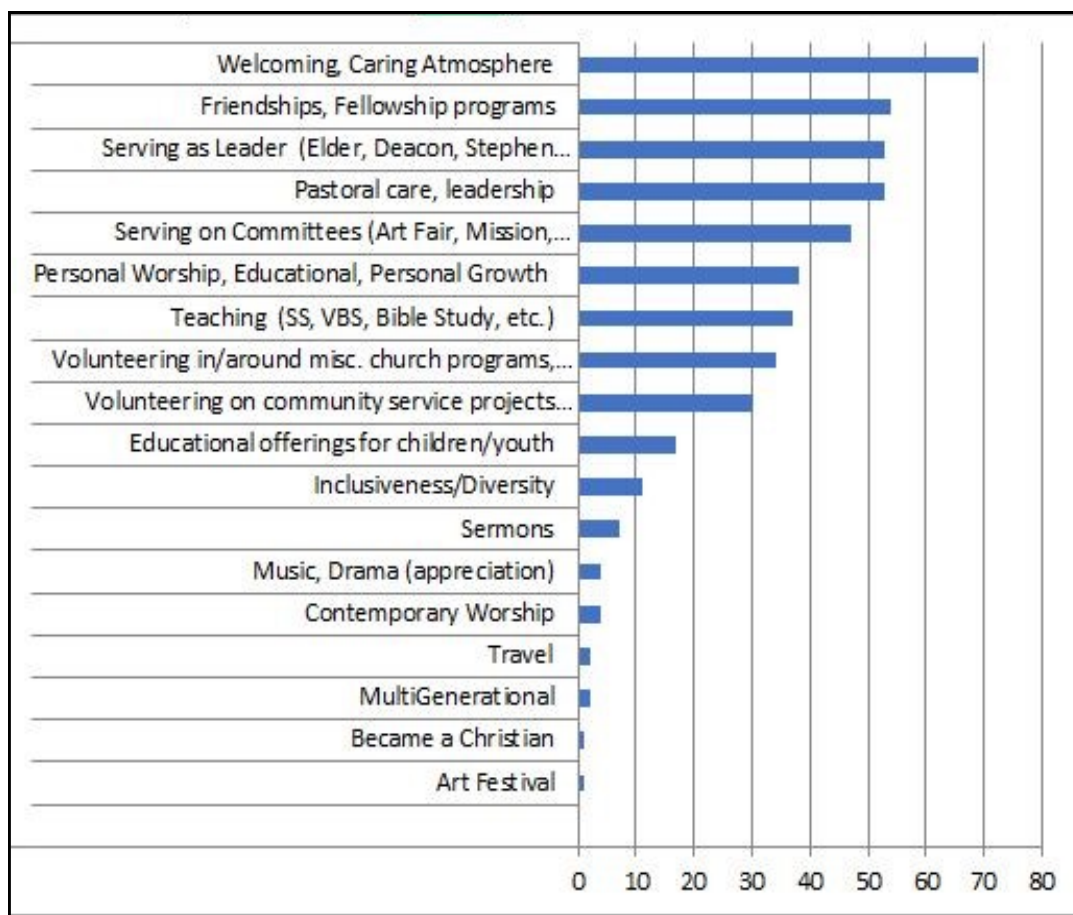
Question: What brought you to Westminster the first time you came?

The next question asked “What Brought You to Westminster?” Many people did not really speak to that, but of those who did, we see that mostly they liked the location, setting and facility here, as well as the Presbyterian denominational affiliation.



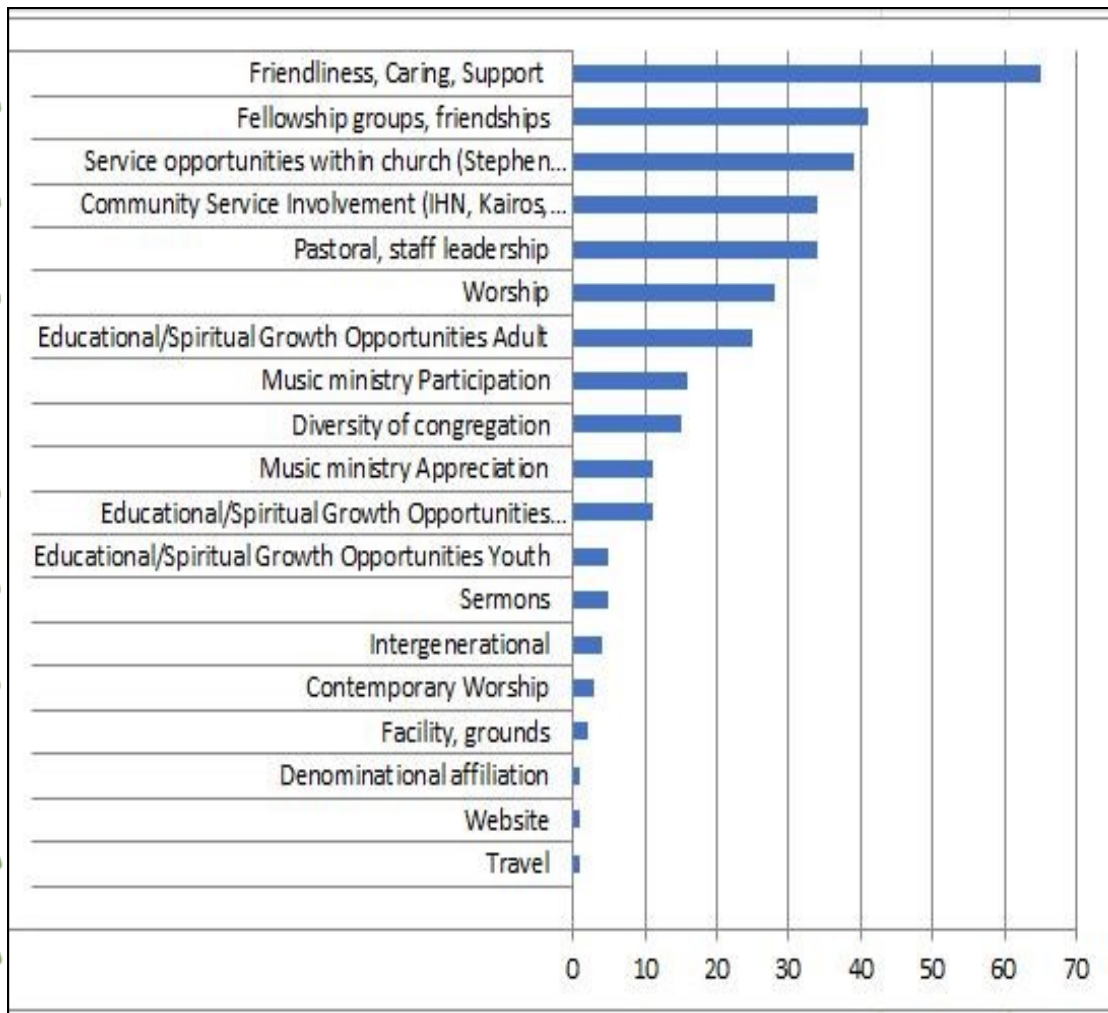
Question: “What keeps you here? What motivates you? What have you contributed?”

This question addressed the issue of what is keeping people here, or what motivates them, as well as asking what they have contributed to our church’s ministry. The responses seemed to flow into and repeat one another, so they were grouped together for evaluation purposes. You can see that the most common answers described our welcoming, caring atmosphere. Then there are the friendships and fellowships, as well as the pastoral care and leadership. Those answers that mentioned appreciating the pastors named many of our pastors (current as well as former) by name, indicating that there is consistency in this area across time. People mention finding fulfillment in service opportunities here as well, and they frequently said that they stay involved and motivated because they have become leaders, or serve on various projects and committees around the church. They seem to find gratification in teaching tasks, as well as participating in the educational programs here.



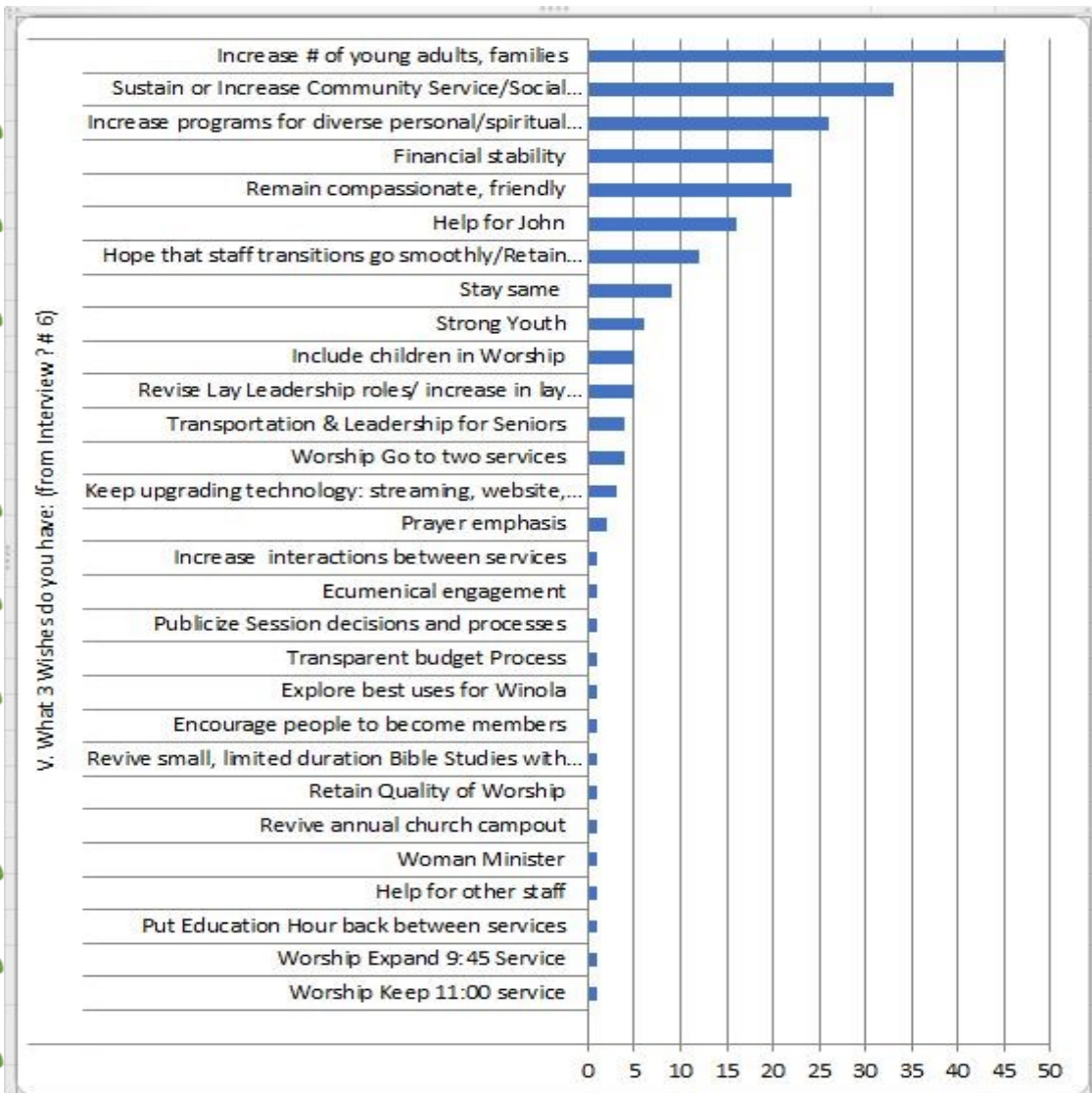
Question: What do you value most?

The following question involved what people feel they value the most in their life here. Again, there were many different answers, as you can see. But by far and away the most common response was about the friendliness, the caring and the support they find here. The next most common responses pointed to the fellowship groups and the friendships found and formed here, followed loosely by appreciation of the service opportunities both within the church, and also in the surrounding community. You can see for yourself what some of the other things are.



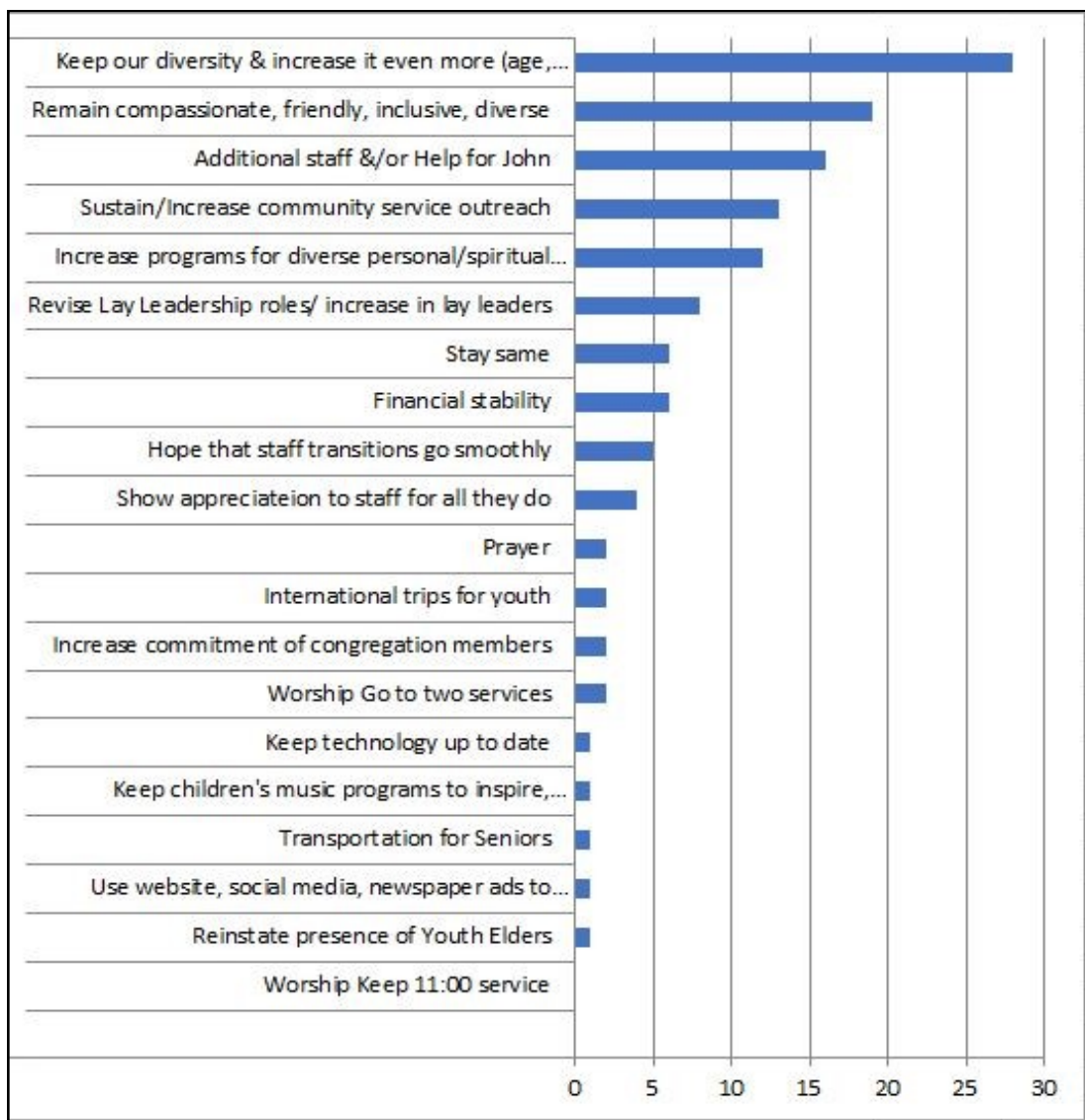
Question: What three wishes do you have for Westminster's future?

This question asked people to describe three wishes they have for Westminster as it goes into the future. The most common answers included some form of reference to increasing our diversity. Most people mentioned something like attracting more young adults, or young families, etc. This has been a desire for decades at Westminster. But there were also comments that referenced other kinds of measures of diversity, such as theological, or racial/ethnic, and even sexual orientation, etc. There were a number of replies referencing a focus on keeping what we have, in the way of being friendly, and welcoming, etc.



Question: What's most important for our future?

The last question asked people to tell what they felt was the most important, as we plan for the future. Here again, we see that people want to be sure we keep our friendly, warm, welcoming atmosphere, and to continue being cognizant of embracing the diversity that we have. People would like to see help for John, and also would like to see us deal with our debt load...paying down the mortgage. And finding new ways to entice people to accept lay leadership roles, which may be revised as we go into the future.



What happens next?

"The biggest mistake most churches, indeed, most organizations of every variety make in the engagement of mission studies or visioning processes, is that they drop the process as soon as the interviewing is over and the result is created.-

James Blade, San Luis Obispo Presbyterian Church

The Appreciative Inquiry Dream team will continue working through June, to address some of the issues raised through this process. The plan is to then hand the responsibility off to the Design and Deliver stage planning group.



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Consultants:

Vanessa Becker, MPH; Vanessa Becker Consultants, Roseburg, OR; vconsults.com; February 7, 2015 Leadership Retreat facilitator

Rev. Dawn Talayo, Associate Pastor at Trinity Covenant Church in South Salem, OR.

Consultant for retreat held February 5-6, 2016 to launch the Appreciative Inquiry interview process by training Deacons and Elders.