

First Church

First United Methodist Church of Seattle

Input for Pastoral Transition

Summary of Online Survey

March 2024 -- 33 participants (comprised of staff and congregation)

Why did you first come to First Church and why do you stay?

Why we came:

- Diversity: all are welcome (8 mentions)
- Social justice mission and focus (6 mentions)
- Music (6 mentions)
- Faith community (5 mentions)
- United Methodist Tradition (5 mentions)
- Preaching (3 mentions)
- Location (2 mentions)

Why we stay:

- Relationships (15 mentions)
- Social justice mission and focus (11 mentions)
- Warm welcome (8 mentions)
- Sermons (7 mentions)
- Choir (7 mentions)

We came to First Church in search of and found a community of faith seeking to follow the way of Jesus in today's context. We stay for the wonderful people we have met and for the commitment to justice (especially climate justice)

We came to First Church because of the diversity of the congregation and the excellent preaching. We have stayed because of the relationships that we have built as well as the mission and values of the church.

What are your most important expectations of our new pastor?

- Sermons that engage, inspire and challenge, relevancy in the modern world. Theologically sound. (14 mentions)
- Embraces vision of church (mentioned: diversity and inclusion, progressive, liberal, relevant spirituality) (9 mentions)
- Pastoral care – warm and interested in people (9 mentions)
- Supportive of the music ministry (5 mentions)
- Manage effective and responsive staff (6 mentions)
- Communication across all the teams (6 mentions)

I've observed no one pastor is adept at everything. For this church & mission goals, I expect the new pastor to be able to address social & environmental issues that is in the fabric of our church.

I like questioning and investigating what the Bible says to us today. I also don't want to leave church more depressed than I was coming in – regarding the news of the day.

What do you think our new pastor's top priorities should be in their first year?

- Get to know the congregation & staff
- Create strategy for growth (youth ministry mentioned often)
- Community connection and partnership
- Fiscal responsibility

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Results of Congregational Listening Sessions

April 2024 -- 12 participants, including SPRC

Overview

We conducted 2 listening sessions in April, one in person and one over zoom. These are the themes that emerged.

Themes

Worship service:

- Order of worship is appreciated as is involvement of lay leaders
- Appreciate the high-quality musicians and style of music
- Like the amount of music in our order of worship and that it is an anchor for the rest of the service.
- Sermons that are about current events, include humor, and are relevant to congregation. Appreciate personal stories about spiritual journeys. Want depth and to be challenged to grow.
- Desire was expressed to revisit how often we celebrate communion in the service.
- Appreciate allowing dogs in the service. Want more involvement of children.

Church mission:

- Value the inclusive, liberal perspective.
- Climate change and climate justice is important.
- Strong feeling that this church is doing something special that draws us together.

Pastoral leadership:

- Appreciate support of staff and strong delegation to volunteers.
- Supportive of ensuring pastoral self-care.
- Appreciate strong administrative skills by pastor, managing operations and staff.

Church building:

- Strong desire for more usage of the building including keeping the building open for drop ins when there are societal events, partnerships with community members like AA, Seattle Arts and lectures, office hours.

Ministry & Growth:

- Youth ministries is our biggest gap and there's a lot of concern about the future of the church if we don't attract more families.