

TRANSITION TEAM

FINAL CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

October 2011

Evolution of the PHCPC Transition Team

At a regular meeting of the PHCPC session held on February 22nd, Gary Gallo from the Pittsburgh Presbytery Committee on Ministry, along with Pastor David Antonson presented and reviewed a proposed Transition Plan and Timeline for the church, which included a number of steps leading to the eventual installation of a new senior pastor. The session discussed and then approved the Transition Plan and Timeline in March 2011. The next step was for the Congregational Nominating Committee to appoint a nine-person Transition Team, a special committee reporting directly to session, to survey, and then collect information directly from congregants via focus group interaction.

Nominations for the Transition Team Members were collected throughout the rest of March, and the session approved the team members at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 26th. The PHCPC Transition Team held its first meeting on May 2, 2011. The team proceeded to contract with Russ Crabtree and Holy Cow! Consulting to survey the congregation, with particular emphasis on the transition period and vital leadership characteristics. The survey was prepared, opened to the congregation throughout June, and closed on July 4th. Results of the survey were presented to the congregation at a church Leadership Conference held on Monday, July 18th.

Next, the Transition Team prepared to gather personal input from members of the PHCPC congregation via a series of Focus Group meetings, which were concurrently scheduled with existing church groups and organizations. Stand-alone meetings and personal interviews were also conducted, and then the Focus Group phase of the teams work concluded on September 27th. The Focus Group summary analysis was presented to PHCPC members at a church Congregational Conference held on October 3rd.

Introduction

This is a report of the Transition Team's findings of common indicators from the Holy Cow Survey and the Focus Group Meetings. As a team, we sought to find the comments that were consistent throughout the process of meeting with different groups and the best reflection of the majority of our church participants. Some of those comments are provided here in this Final Congregational Report.

Members of the Transition team: Dave Boger, Linda Stout, Tami Licht, Jerry Reeves, Diane McQuirk, Gary McQuirk, Rob Bootay, Chuck Weber, and Bruce Webster. In addition to the 9 member base team, we have 9 Facilitators that assisted with the Focus Group meetings. They are: Scott Carey, Dot Foote, Christine Haythorn, Jill Greiner, Liz LaMarca, Gary Molinaro, Steve Shidel, Jean Simpson, and Joanne Weber.

His Plan For Our Hope And Future

Opening Prayer - Scott Carey

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.



This past March, under Pastor Dave’s guidance and direction, the Session sent out a letter asking for volunteers to serve on a Transition Team that would assist with the process of calling the next Senior Pastor for our church. With Pastor Dave serving as our Interim Pastor, this team would move us through to the next steps in helping us become the great church that God has hoped for us to be.

So -- As a team we began the process by contracting with Holy Cow Consulting to conduct a church-wide survey.

In late May, the Holy Cow Survey was mailed to members. In July, Holy Cow came to our church to present their findings of our survey results. These results were made available to everyone. The survey gave you the opportunity to answer questions but not really give your thoughts on the questions. So, in August we began holding focus group meetings so that you could express your thoughts more fully than the survey allowed.

There were 29 focus groups with additional comments given in one-on-one meetings, emails, and handwritten comments. All total – we have over 1,000 comments – showing a wonderful response by the congregation. Thank you everyone.

This is a terrific time in the life of our church with such wonderfully open communication. We are now positioned to develop great leadership that will move us forward in Christ.

This report gives you the findings of the focus group meetings and how they integrate with the results of the survey. But more important, we are here tonight to align with the things that will get us closer to the will of God for PHCPC and to how we can obediently serve Him. It is very important that we note that the comments we have collected from the various Focus Group meetings are just that – comments about how people feel about things here at PHCPC. All Focus Group comments were recorded as individual opinions with no statistical method to measure them.

The survey results are measurable because they are statistically representative of the responses you gave for the survey. Keep in mind as we present this information tonight that the Focus Group comments were used in conjunction with the survey results – so that we can give further depth to those results.

The TT categorized the focus group results to closely match the categories in the survey. We further classified the input to determine whether it was a strength, weakness, or opportunity. You will see a slide that has a bar graph that summarizes the focus group input by these categories and classifications.

Focus Group Meetings

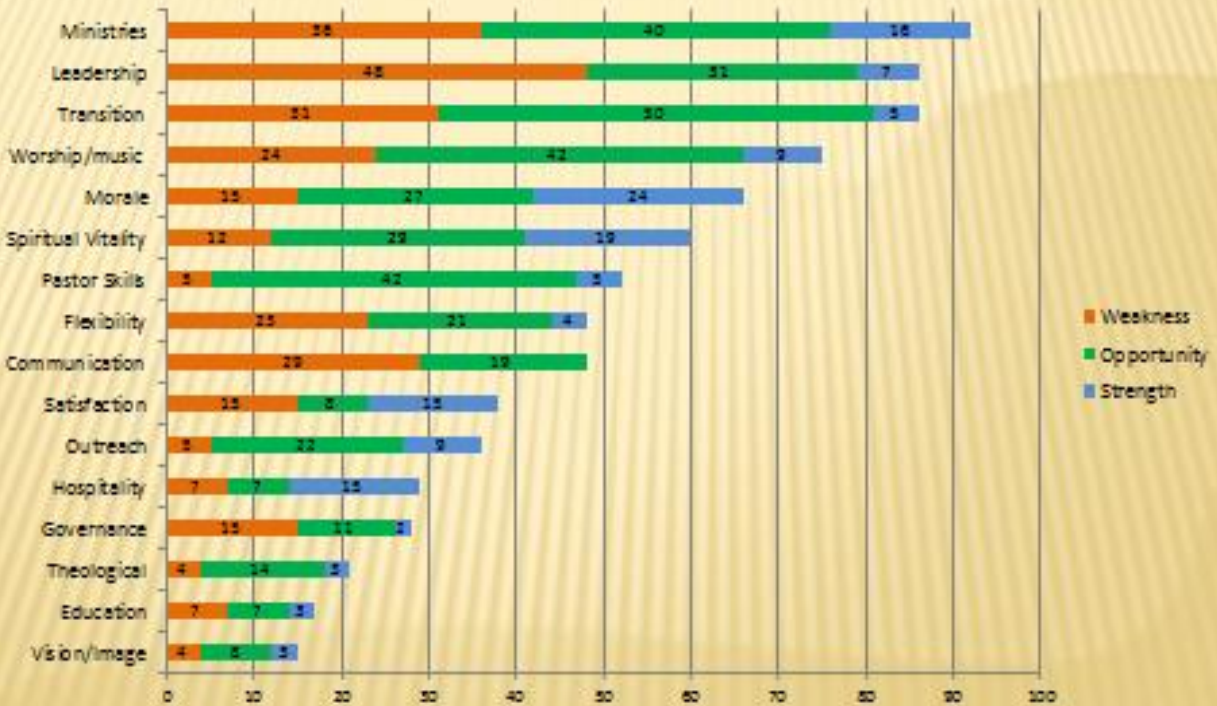
- ✦ 29 Focus Groups held in August and September
- ✦ In addition
 - + A number of one-on-one personal meetings
 - + Emails and handwritten comments.

A listing of the groups that met for Focus Group Meetings:

Adult Discipleship Ministry Team
After church service groups – 4 meetings
Choir
Circles
Children’s Ministry Leadership Team
CrossOver Leaders
Deacons – 3 meetings
Executive Old Timers Group
Facilitator Training groups – 2
Flash
Friendly Group
Mens’ Groups – 3
MOPS Steering Committee
Praise Team
Prayer Ministry
Renovare
Session
Staff
Stephen Ministry
Various Open Groups – 3

Over 200 people contributed comments either through meetings, emails, or personal meetings.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS



This bar graph shows you the number of comments made by each category along with the classification of weakness, opportunity, or strength. They are listed with the most comments made at the top moving to the least comments. The slides to follow will give you some insight as to comments that were frequently made.

The Categories used for the Focus Group comments:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Communication | Conflict | Education |
| Financial | Flexibility | Governance |
| Hospitality | Leadership | Ministries |
| Morale | Outreach | Pastor Skills |
| Readiness for Ministry | Satisfaction | Spiritual Vitality |
| Theological | Transition | Vision/Image |
| Worship/Music | | |

The Classifications used --- Weakness, Opportunity, and Strengths

Comments were categorized and classified as to which areas the Transition Team felt they best fit.

TOP
LOOK



FOUR
LOOK

✦ Attract young families.

PRIORITIES
KEY THEMES

✦ Reach new people.

✦ Deepen our connection to God.

✦ Christian education:

+ Every age and stage of life.

TO REFRESH YOUR MINDS FROM THE SURVEY RESULTS --

1. Make necessary changes to attract young families.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people.
3. Deepen our sense of connection to God and one another through stronger worship services.
4. Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.

Refer to Appendix 1 to read “The Transition Summary” from Holy Cow Consulting.

MINISTRIES

- + CHILDREN!
- + YOUTH!
- + SMALL GROUPS
- + YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY – 20'S – 30'S
- + MEN'S & WOMEN'S MINISTRIES
- + MISSION

Have a thriving children's ministry

Have a children's music program.

CROSS OVER – vibrant ministry – it attracts the community.

MOPS --- great ministry for attracting young families into the church life.

People want more activities that provide childcare.

Small groups can be a strong driver of growth within the church.

Want ministries to accommodate all age groups/generations

We want to grow our ministries to glorify God, grow disciples, and meet human need.

Be intentional on getting together as groups --- do something to combine the efforts of all ministries.

LEADERSHIP

- ✘ Stable future
- ✘ Headed in right direction
- ✘ Develop new leaders to serve the Lord
- ✘ We are all called to be ministers of the Word

We have a stable future because of a good base, staff, and foundation.

We are ready to take action before the new pastor comes.

We want leadership to help us to become one of God's great churches in the South Hills.

TRANSITION CONCERNS

- ✘ Find a dynamic Senior Pastor
- ✘ Leave the past behind; be transparent
- ✘ Glorify God through the decisions the Transition Team makes
- ✘ The future holds great changes and accomplishments
- ✘ Compromise is **key**

We are getting unified now – church wants move forward.

We all need to be more tolerant of all of the generations and be willing to meet each other in service to God.

Everyone (young and old) would compromise.

We all need to face some changes and both the young and the old will be better at understanding the needs of each other.

WORSHIP & MUSIC

- ✘ Important to have both traditional and contemporary services
- + Different music & worship styles
- ✘ Create a place for children and youth in worship
- ✘ Consider some blended services

The people that attend the 9:30 traditional service feel the Sanctuary is solemn and respectful

The people that attend the Contemporary service on Sunday want the service to be a real contemporary service - not blended.

We all need understanding and respect between 9:30 and 11:00 church services. Both services are worship and praise to God!

Possible to consider having the contemporary service in the Sanctuary.

Consider having some blended services throughout the year to bring the two services together to get to know each other.

MORALE AT PHCPC

The positive, passionate, and persuasive engagement of congregants in the activities and mission of the church.

- ✦ Learn God's Word and hear His plan for us, not being afraid to follow it!
- ✦ Spread God's Word
- ✦ God + People + Pastor = PHCPC
- ✦ **God is alive here.**

We continue to be a great church, with a caring congregation

We desire to stay positive and keep our minds open to new ways to please Him

We stand firm in the hope that we will continue to learn God's Word and hear His plan for us, not being afraid to follow it.

We have been broken and are being strengthened for great things ahead.

We strive to work as a united team

The pastor cannot do it all. We are all called to be ministering saints.

SPIRITUAL VITALITY

Measures the degree to which members believe their faith is central to their lives.

HolyCOW!

- **87%** - Spiritual experiences impact the way they look at life
- **88%** - Experience the presence of God in their lives
- **78%** - Connect their faith to all other aspects of their lives
- **63%** - This church has given new meaning to their lives
- **64%** - Genuine care and concern among the congregants

I hope God will continue to fill our hearts with the Holy Spirit

Less of us, more of Him

Be united – reaching, serving and loving others in Christ

Have “people eyes”

Key goal: to hear the Word and to combine it with faith actions.

We are a spiritually centered, Bible based church - with a servant attitude.

We want to transform lives for Christ.

Vibrant passion for people of all ages.

FLEXIBILITY



Deals with the degree to which the church is willing/or not willing to make adjustments in the way it goes about its ministry.

The survey revealed that the respondents feel:

- ✦ 45% said our church tends to stay very close to established ways of doing things.
- ✦ And that less than 7% of the members are open to changes in worship.
- ✦ **Yet – an overwhelming amount** of comments surfaced at the **Focus Groups** about the **need for flexibility** in our church – worship, education programs, ministry programs, staffing, leadership, etc.

May need to “soften” our traditions, but remain biblically centered

Everyone needs to work together

Don't limit the search for the new pastor – be flexible –

Take risks, try new things

Ephesians 4:3 Paul tells the people of Ephesus - Be humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love ---

Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together.

COMMUNICATION

The **Holy Cow** survey revealed that approximately 34% of those who took the survey feel we have areas of concern in our church.

- ✦ Some of the tension that did exist has been replaced by a sense of hope.
- ✦ There has been a positive response to the transparency and increases in communication that this transition process has provided for.
- ✦ Church website and internet communications are not effective in attracting visitors.
- ✦ With differing styles of worship and music – traditional and contemporary - and services held in opposite sides of the church, there is a perception that we are two different congregations.
- ✦ The Transition Team process this year has helped us to see the relationship between decision making and communication.

There needs to be a healthy balance in people's perception of the different worship/music styles

You felt that the Focus Group idea was an excellent way to let the people have a voice.

Need improved outdoor signage.

Improve communications between the different ministries.

Need more communications about what is going on in the church.

SATISFACTION ISSUES

Change the attitude of our church from “can we?” to “we can!”

We can do that by:

praying for those God has called to leadership for our church

and

Volunteering to step up with this leadership for the many service opportunities God puts before us here at PHCPC

Great facility - good location - good reputation.

I feel good about being here at PHCPC, we have many good people.

Let's get mobilized to move forward with God!

OUTREACH

Keep in mind that the church's name is
Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church

- Family social events --- Intergenerational involvement.
- I hope we draw young families back-they are the future of our church.
- More entry points of ministry (Illumination, VBS, JAM, Middle school dances, family movie nights).
- Remember *why* we provide these programs and *who* we are trying to reach and *why* we are trying to reach them.

CrossOver is a strong outreach program at our church.

HOSPITALITY

HolyCOW!

The perception of the congregation is that we are welcoming and there is a genuine sense of caring and concern.

- ✦ We know **who we are** and **whose we are** – a **church centered on God** with “**people eyes.**”
- ✦ We are a **family who cares about each other.**
- ✦ A **giving church**, to members and the community.
- ✦ We want to **continue to grow** to be a **welcoming church** where a wide range of people come and feel comfortable worshipping.

Some comments were made that we are not as welcoming to people coming to church on Sunday's.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Holy Cow survey showed that –

67% of the people that responded affirm that Scripture is the literal Word of God without error.

We are a spiritually-centered,
biblically-based,
conservative congregation
that is rooted in the Word of God.

Seeking Biblical ideas over man's.

Seeking God and following His Word - not to be bound by rules of man -- only the Word.

PHCPC needs to implement traditional/conservative ordination standards prior to the commencement of the search process for our new Senior Pastor

The PCUSA decisions make it hard for us to grow.



*Passing your faith
to the next
generations!*

EDUCATION

Reach – Grow – Send

Dynamic speakers

Great classes for Adult Ed

Stronger Children's Education

Train our children to be Godly,
holy, and disciples of Christ.

Have interactive events like the old children's ministry teaching

We need to nurture the young families that we have as members

VISION - IMAGE

Be a church of defined vision and direction.

I hope we can be a church of leaders – and be a leader of
churches.

That PHCPC will once again be the shining light on the hill,
a church that knows where it is,
where it wants to be,
and how it is going to get there.

Desired Pastoral Abilities



Focus Group Input

Quantitative

1. Preaching
2. Strategic Leadership
3. Change Management
4. Pastoral Care
5. Teaching/Training
6. Administration
7. Negotiate/Resolve Conflict
8. Community Catalyst

Qualitative

1. Strategic Leadership
2. Preaching
3. Administration
4. Pastoral Care
5. Change Management
6. Teaching/Training
7. Negotiate/Resolve Conflict
8. Community Catalyst

1 and #2 --- same in survey and focus group

Preaching – capacity to inspire and connect people to God’s Word

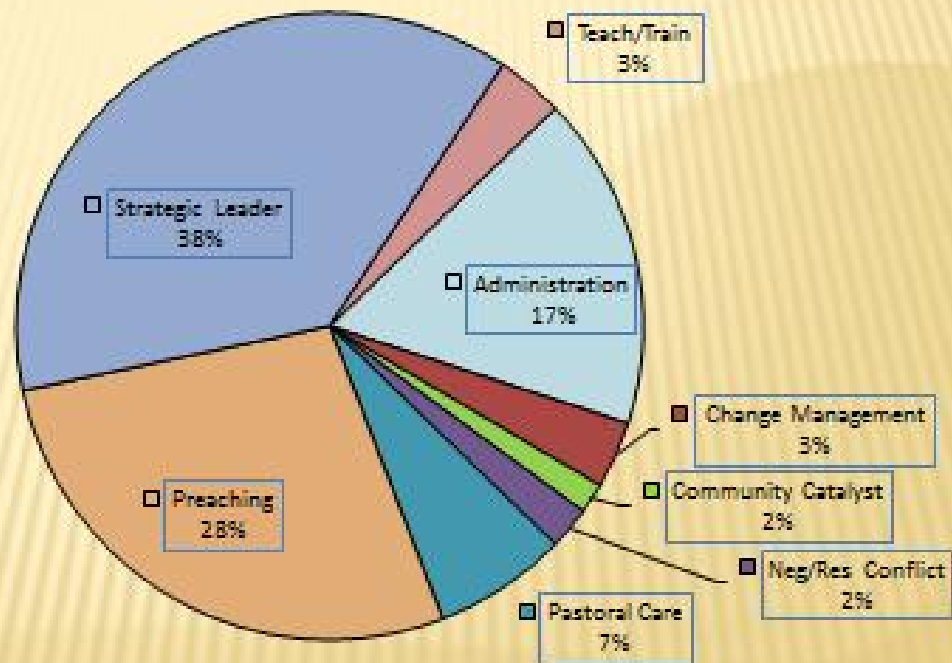
Strategic Leadership – capacity to cast a vision and lead the church forward toward the realization of the vision

Change Management – capacity to lead a church through a significant and necessary period of change

Administration – capacity to manage a church operationally including facilities, finances, and staff

Refer to Appendix 2 to read the “Vital Leader Profile” provided by Holy Cow Consulting.

Pastor Skills: Focus Group Comments Total



Embrace change so that we can reach new people and deepen our sense of connection to God and one another

Call a younger pastor so that he/she can relate to the needs of attracting young families and younger people.

Preach sermons that bring the Bible teaching into our everyday lives.

A preacher that preaches and prays God's vision so the people can get excited about serving Him

Good communication skills. Ability to relate to the members & lead at the same time

The Categories used for the Focus Group comments are the same as what was used in the Holy Cow Survey:

Administration

Negotiate/Resolve Conflict

Strategic Leadership

Change Management

Pastoral Care

Teaching/Training

Community Catalyst

Preaching

His Plan For Our Hope And Future

Romans 5:2-5 (GNT) He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and His approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

Ephesians 3:20 (NIV) Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

In closing, the survey and focus groups could not have come at a better time in the life of our church. We have been battle tested and are fiercely loyal. As we all know and our survey indicated, we were a congregation somewhat disheartened and struggling with communication.

The good news is there is a renewed hope and vitality. These steps – the survey and focus groups – have really led to increased communications and increased optimism for the future of this church. This was evidenced by the increasingly positive demeanor of the focus groups as we progressed through August and September.

PHCPC is known for its hospitality. Our church has the power through Christ to do all things. He has a hope and a future for us. The heartbeat of this church is to remain faithful to His Word as we worship Him. God is the light for our path and He can start with us.

Just imagine our sanctuary and Great Room overflowing with joyful people, young and old, caring together in worship, taking our hope into the community, and drawing still more people. We are moving into the great hope and future that God has for us, and I know that we are going to move forward together - each of us in different ways, but all in love.