

Executive Summary of Diocesan Wide Survey & Listening Sessions Conducted July 2024 – September 2024

Diocesan-wide Survey

To inform the Bishop Coadjutor profile and the qualities sought in our next Bishop, the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas (“EDOD”) partnered with [Holy Cow! Consulting](#) (“Holy Cow”) to conduct a diocesan-wide survey in July 2024. EDOD and Holy Cow previously conducted the same survey in 2016 to aid with strategic planning. Within the Diocese, 1,835 persons responded to the 2024 survey, offered in both Spanish and English translations. The following is the breakdown of those responders:

Roles of Responders		Tenure in Congregation	
Lay People	1480	Over 20 Years	31%
Clergy	154	11 to 20 Years	19%
EDOD Staff & Committees	45	6 to 10 Years	17%
Convention Delegates	53	3 to 5 Years	17%
Vestry/Bishop Committee	103	1 to 2 Years	10%
		Less than 1 Year	6%

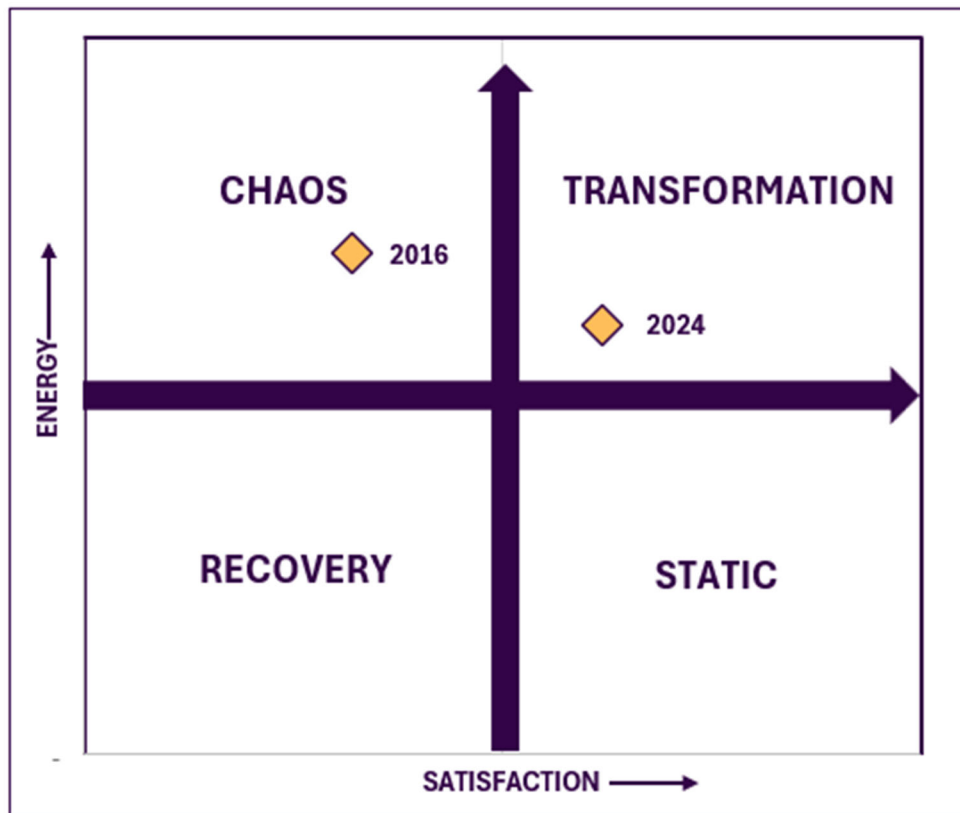
This response represents 23% of EDOD’s 2023 Average Sunday Attendance (“ASA”) and includes responses from all 62 parishes and missions indicating a high level of investment by the leadership, parishioners, and clergy in this process. It also indicates that many laity who are newer to their congregations participated. The responses have been benchmarked against 79 other Regional Associations/Dioceses (63% Episcopal) in the Holy Cow database to determine what is typical and what is exceptional about the Diocese of Dallas.

Vitality Measures:

By Holy Cow’s standard, two things are needed to be a vital Regional Association or Diocese: high levels of satisfaction and energy. Satisfaction is the sense of peaceful contentment when working with each other within the organization. Energy is passion with intention and a compelling sense of purpose within the organization.

Compared to other Dioceses, the overall vitality of EDOD is in the typical or average range. This level of satisfaction and energy is different from the level of vitality that people in the Diocese were experiencing in 2016 survey.

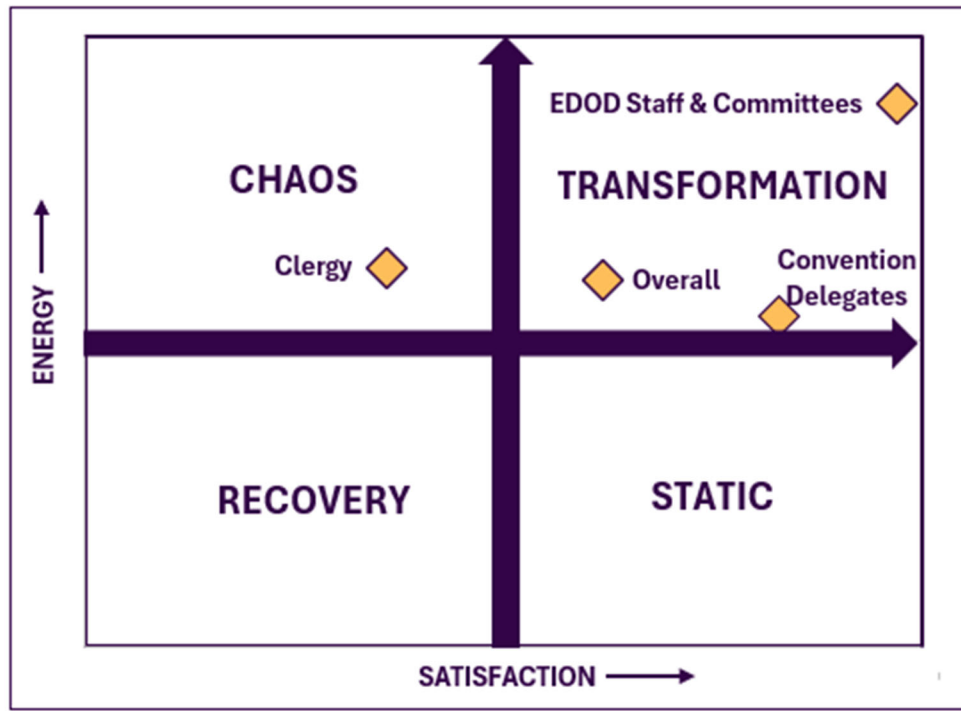
Satisfaction and Energy Chart



Overall, the Diocese moved from the Chaos quadrant with higher energy but lower satisfaction in 2016 to the Transformation quadrant in 2024, demonstrating a significant increase in satisfaction in the responders.

On the chart below, the further break out by role highlights the variance of experience for each of the different roles within the Diocese. At the suggestion of Holy Cow, Laity and Vestry members were not asked detailed questions about the diocese, as they typically aren't familiar with the day-to-day functions of EDOD and are excluded from the analysis below.

Satisfaction and Energy Chart by Role



Clergy

The responses from the EDOD clergy align with the Chaos quadrant of the energy and satisfaction map. In this quadrant, clergy may be experiencing high levels of energy and a desire to try new things and engage in new programs or ideas within the Diocese. These initiatives may not be tied to a common vision or mission. They may feel like they are missing alignment within the Diocese. Confusion about ways to achieve identified goals and the vying of various groups for resources, or to have their voices heard, can generate a climate of uncertainty in this quadrant.

EDOD Committee Members and Staff

On the whole, these members of the Diocese are experiencing a very high level of vitality within the Diocese. This can be reflective of a strong sense of collegiality for these individuals, a sense of belonging, purpose, and a clear vision for their shared work across the Diocese.

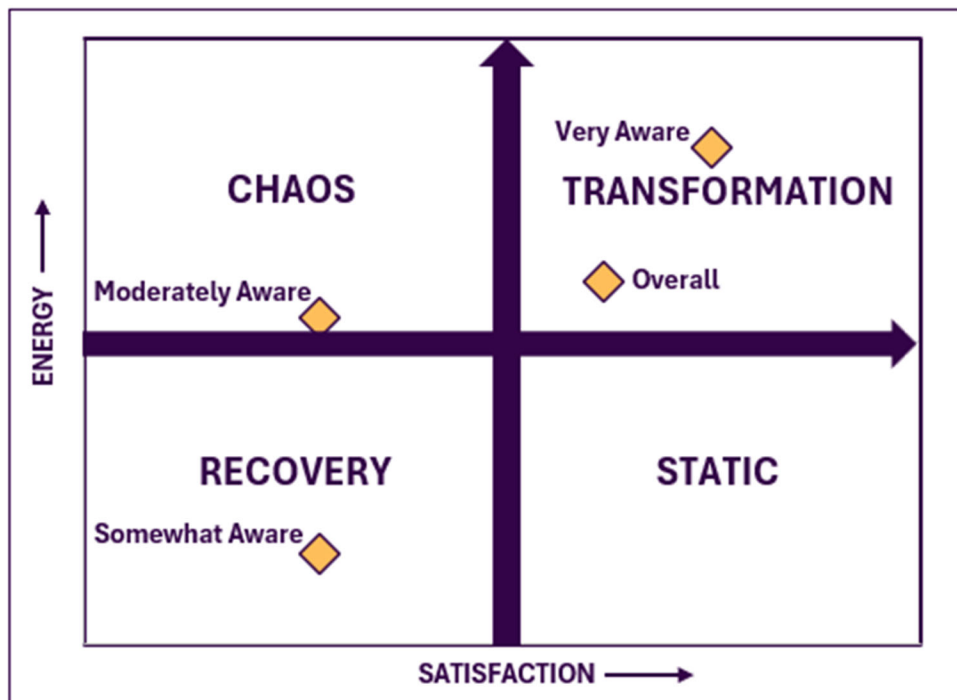
Convention Delegates

Individuals who identify with this role are on the line between the Transformational and Static quadrants. This can be reflective of a strong sense of connection and appreciation for their work together as delegates. However, they may find it difficult to invest the energy required to make changes that are critical to the future.

Level of Awareness

Overall, the data indicates that the level of awareness of the work of Diocese had a significant impact on the respondent's level of satisfaction and energy (see chart below). In response to the question "What would you say your level of awareness regarding the work of the Diocese is?" 17% responded that they were very aware of the work, 40% were moderately aware, and 34% were somewhat aware of the work of the Diocese. This likely explains why diocesan staff and diocesan committee members, who are exposed to the day-to-day operations of the Diocese, experience higher vitality.

Satisfaction and Energy Chart by Level of Awareness



Areas of Focus and Critical Success Factors

To determine how satisfied people are within the Diocese, Holy Cow focuses on the top five criteria, that increase both satisfaction and energy. If people perceive the

Diocese is performing well in these five areas, then the data suggests that their satisfaction and energy will go up. Likewise, if people perceive that the Diocese is not performing well, then their satisfaction and energy levels decrease. One factor, unity around a shared vision, appears as a driver for both satisfaction and energy. Below are EDOD's factors, ranked in priority order.

Critical Success Factors	
What would increase Satisfaction? <i>Peaceful Contentment</i>	What would increase Energy? <i>Passion & Purpose</i>
When we feel like the diocese is doing these things well...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our Diocese leadership has done a good job of developing a shared vision that unites us. ✓ The whole spirit in our Diocese makes people want to get as involved. ✓ Our Diocese is effective in recognizing trends in the larger society and in helping us adapt. ✓ In important decisions in our Diocese, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided. ✓ I trust our Diocesan leadership to provide strong and competent support to my congregation during challenging times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There is not a disturbing amount of conflict in our Diocese. ✓ I experience a high level of collegiality as members work together in various Diocesan functions. ✓ Our Diocese leadership has done a good job of developing a shared vision that unites us. ✓ Avoiding a decision-making model where most important decisions about what our Diocese should do as a whole are really made by the same, small group of people. ✓ Persons serving in various Diocesan endeavors exhibit a genuine hospitality toward one another and new persons

Future Priorities:

What do we need in the future?
✓ Equip Clergy and leaders with strategies that enable them to reach new members.
✓ Take a leadership role in working with churches that are struggling.
✓ Cultivate a higher level of trust within our Diocese.

While the first two future priorities are typical of Dioceses, the third priority is unusually high on the priority list. This may indicate a unique need within EDOD to spend time thinking through how to systematically work to build trust across the Diocese.

Performance Areas

There are seven performance areas/indexes reported in the survey: Morale, Conflict Management, Engagement, Governance, Collegiality, Leadership, and Support to Congregations. Within these performance areas, Conflict Management performs within the low range when compared to other Regional Associations. Collegiality and Leadership performance areas were in the average or typical range, with the area of Governance being in the low-average range. The areas where the Diocese scored high were in the areas of Morale, Engagement, and Support to Congregations.

When compared with other Regional Associations, the data reflects a need to build conflict management skills and address any unmitigated disagreements or sources of tension impacting the community of faith or potentially eroding trust within the Diocese.

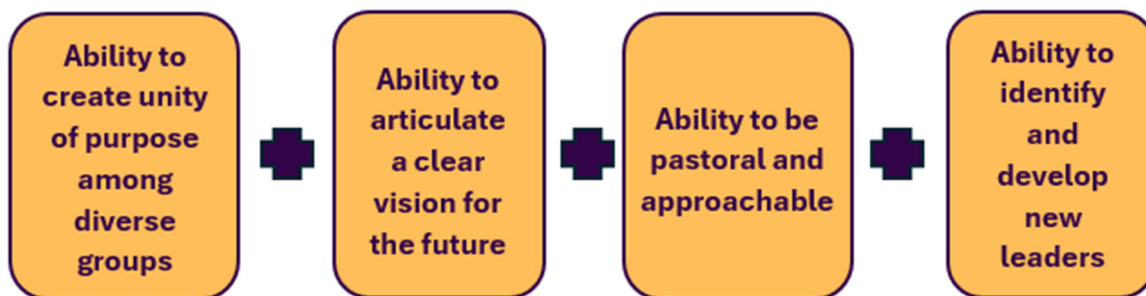
Responders perceived EDOD to be less flexible in comparison to the responses from other regional associations in the Holy Cow database. This suggests that future changes should be incremental and sparked by a shared and impassioned vision for the future. Thirty seven percent of responders feel that only a moderate amount of change is necessary in order for their vision for the Diocese to be realized. Thirty four percent are looking for a large amount of change, and 9% of responders seek to change almost everything. This indicates that respondents are longing for a moderate amount of change so that the Diocese can be reflective of what they envision for the future. This desire, coupled with the flexibility score noted for the Diocese, will require strong strategic leadership with a calculated and multiprong communication strategy committed to building trust and relationships.

When asked how engaged the responder's congregation has been with the work of EDOD within the last 12 months, 38% of responders stated that their congregation is moderately engaged and 32% of responders stated their congregation is highly engaged. This places the level of engagement for this Diocese in the high range.

In terms of gift utilization, 21% of the responders indicate that when they think about their gifts, interests, and time they feel that they have something to give the Diocese but don't know how to give it.

Critical Abilities

When asked to rank the critical abilities that the future Bishop of EDOD needs to have, responders prioritize the following:



Critical Success Factors:

In summary, the survey results indicate the following qualities will increase diocesan vitality:

- 1 **Strategic Leadership** that provides a shared vision, strong communication, and support for churches during times of change.
- 2 **Leadership Development** that supports different approaches in decision making, listening to and understanding others, building trust, and having strong representation of the overall diocese.
- 3 **Cultivating Relationships** through managing differences in healthy ways, increasing conflict management skills, and growing a sense of hospitality while supporting the spiritual growth of all its leadership across the Diocese.

Listening Sessions:

To share the survey results and ask for feedback, EDOD conducted nine listening sessions (eight in person, one virtually) across the Diocese during August and September. Of these sessions, two were for priests, one was for deacons, one was for EDOD staff and committees, four were held regionally for laity, and the final virtual session was for anyone unable to attend the in-person sessions. During these sessions we asked four questions:

1. Over the past 20 years, where have you found successes in our Diocese?
2. What are your best personal experiences in the Diocese?
3. Over the last 20 years, where have opportunities been missed?
4. What would you like the next Bishop to be like? What would you want to tell the next Bishop?

Responses to the first two questions, areas celebrating successes, included:

1. Ordination of young clergy, especially those “on the Canterbury trail” who came from non-liturgical traditions.
2. Church planting initiatives
3. Expansion of Latino Ministries to seven congregations in Spanish and several other [foreign language worship](#) services being offered
4. [Stanton Institute for Theological Education](#) – Named for a former bishop, this teaching center is co-located with the Diocesan offices. Coursework is available to local students, and across the Episcopal Church and the broader Anglican Communion. Class offerings include foreign language classes, Christian discipleship, and curriculum for those aspiring for ordination to the diaconate or lay leadership positions such as lay catechists or lay evangelists. Many have found great joy when teaching at or learning through this institute
5. Interactive experiences, such as the Affiliated Parishes of Northeast Texas ([APNET](#)), [RADVO](#), and clergy gatherings
6. Collegial Opportunities, such as [summer camp](#) and [diocesan committee work](#)
7. Interactions with the Bishop where people felt heard and acknowledged

Further discussion on these successes can be found in the Bishop Coadjutor profile document.

Respondents felt the Diocese had missed opportunities in the following areas:

1. Clergy and Leadership Development:

- Efforts to bring in and retain a more diverse clergy and leadership body, especially female clergy (women currently lead 3 parishes in this Diocese) and Latino clergy
- Preparation and ordination of vocational deacons
- Opportunities for women and people of color in leadership roles
- Collegiality among clergy and increased clergy cohesion
- Clergy desire a more pastoral relationship with their bishops
- Many of our laity realized through the listening session process that they have no idea what the role of the Diocese is and hoped the bishop would use future congregational visits to help them learn

2. Evangelism and Outreach:

- Engagement in global Anglican communion and inter-diocesan collaboration

- Emphasis on outreach to the disadvantaged, diverse communities, and rural areas
- Engaging and attracting younger parishioners and diverse backgrounds

3. Church Life and Worship:

- Church planting and expanding campuses across the Diocese
- Mixed feelings about the renovation of the cathedral and sale of the surrounding property
- Diocese was slow to adapt to and recover from COVID related challenges
- Outreach through digital mediums

4. Diversity and Inclusivity:

- The theme of disconnection and lack of inclusion was felt by the three alternative oversight parishes, the LGBTQ community, refugees, and people of color
- Inclusivity within worship services and ensuring information is accessible in multiple languages (e.g., Spanish)
- Some advocate for the inclusion of same-sex partnerships and marriage teachings: others wish to retain traditional beliefs on marriage as outlined in the 1979 prayer book
- How do we ground ourselves in the Gospel, with a unity of purpose, given the tension of our differences

5. Youth and Family Ministry:

- Development and enhancement of youth programs and leadership initiatives
- Development of college ministry
- Some question the transfer of the Camp All Saints lease to a third party

6. Administrative Improvements:

- Desire for staff member overseeing congregational development
- Improved staff cohesion
- Streamlining diocesan administrative processes, including better communication and financial management
- Expanding the role of technology in church operations and outreach
- Emphasis on better budget alignment with mission goals

7. Community and Global Engagement:

- Building stronger relationships within local parishes and the global Anglican community
- Collaborative efforts between churches across denominations and Dioceses
- Focus on outreach to marginalized and underserved communities.

Aspirations for the next EDOD bishop included:

Personal Characteristics:

1. **Prayerful and Spiritual:** The candidate should have a deep spiritual life, be prayerful, and embody the qualities of a pastor who listens and is emotionally aware.
2. **Integrity and Humility:** These qualities, plus a strong sense of ethics are critical. The bishop should be self-reflective, self-aware, and demonstrate moral courage.
3. **Visionary Leadership:** Coadjutor candidates should possess strategic planning skills and communicate effectively, understanding both the present and future needs of the Diocese.
4. **Adaptability:** The ability to navigate and respect traditions while being open to necessary changes and innovations.
5. **Compassionate and Approachable:** The ability to connect with clergy and parishioners on a personal level are essential.
6. **Listening Skills:** A strong emphasis on listening over talking, with a focus on understanding the complexities of the Diocese.

Professional Abilities:

1. **Evangelistic and Missional Focus:** The next bishop should have a passion for evangelism, church planting, and reaching out to the broader community, including youth and young adults.
2. **Change Management:** EDOD is divided on the issue of same sex marriage which will necessitate our Bishops needing to be adept at conflict management and bridge building.
3. **Commitment to Social Justice:** There is a call for a bishop committed to justice, racial reconciliation, and supporting marginalized communities, with an emphasis on continued work in these areas.
4. **Administrative and Managerial Skills:** The bishop should possess strong administrative skills, be effective in conflict resolution, and be able to manage diocesan staff well.

Theological Orientation:

The Diocese is mixed on its desires:

1. We heard many wishes for a theologically sound and conservative bishop, with a strong grasp of orthodox beliefs, and able to teach at a level that resonates with a broad audience. Someone who upholds traditional Christian teachings, especially on controversial issues, while also being compassionate and understanding.
2. Others wished for an inclusive bishop who embraces all and would remove alternative oversight, allowing marriage equality in congregations that desire it.

Community Engagement:

1. Connection with Parishes: The next bishop should prioritize building relationships with parishes across the Diocese, including rural and small churches, and be a visible presence in the community.
2. Inclusivity and Diversity: The ability to work with diverse populations and support the inclusion of various groups, including women clergy and ethnic minorities, is highly valued.
3. Youth and Vocational Support: A focus on developing youth ministries and supporting the vocational diaconate is seen as crucial.

Vision for the Diocese:

1. Unity and Reconciliation: A unifier who can bring together different theological perspectives and promote a sense of diocesan unity under a common vision.
2. Strategic Growth: The next bishop should be able to guide the Diocese in strategic growth, particularly in areas of church planting and developing new leaders.
3. Global Connection: Maintaining and enhancing the Diocese's role within the broader Anglican Communion is important, particularly in connecting with global partners.
4. Evangelism and Outreach: Emphasis on outreach to the disadvantaged, diverse communities, and rural areas. Continue work on engaging and attracting younger parishioners (ages 18-30) as well as family and youth programming and youth leadership initiatives.
5. Clergy: Continue raising up younger and more diverse clergy, with an emphasis on recruiting and retaining female and Latino clergy and vocational deacons.

Our Future: Challenges and Opportunities

We are resurrection people.

The mission of the church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

We have the privilege of being the Church in a time of both great need and great hope. Where the eyes of the world might see risk and decline, the church sees opportunity for life and life to the fullest. We are called, then, to see our challenges and opportunities through Gospel lenses.

EDOD is energized to confront the challenges of our era and eager to welcome a Bishop Coadjutor who will join Bishop Sumner to unite the Diocese around a shared vision of growth and evangelism.