



**First Congregational**  
United Church of Christ

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Churches would be wise to regularly ask: How well are we doing at living the Good News of Christ? at being vessels of God's grace and joy? at lifting the glory and name of God?

Just prior to the 2020 pandemic, after a church-wide leadership retreat and a year of exploring our vision and values with everyone from elementary-age children to our most senior and seasoned members, we were ready to take on the world! And then came Covid.

Our priorities shifted dramatically. We jockeyed between in-person and online worship. Our online participation has grown fourfold to nearly 400 a week, and over a hundred people per week are viewing our online Bible Study *Church Without Borders*. **And** we purchased the neighboring property.

As we regroup for the fall, we'd like to begin our new ministry season asking these questions: Who are we today? Where is God's Spirit leading us? In what ways can we reach those who've not heard of us or a church like us before? We have been working with Convergence, a progressive Christian consulting firm that works with churches like ours, to help us live into our full potential before God. Church leadership has been working with Convergence to gather information about who we are and who our community is.

We've put together a two-part survey. One is for ONLINE church participants, including former members who've moved away, people who have tuned in during the pandemic, those physically unable to worship in person, folks who have discovered us online but may not have attended in person. The second part being for LOCAL church folks like you and me, who come to First Congregational and call it our church home.

Why are we taking this survey? To see:

- 1) what the values and priorities are among our membership
- 2) how those values align with new participants
- 3) where are growth opportunities to meet the ministry needs of people we are reaching.
- 4) how we may deepen our connection to our online community
- 5) where we are today because of the pandemic.

These answers will provide an excellent platform to look more critically at future ministry efforts such as the long-term usage of the new property.

We are asking everyone over 18 to fill out the survey. So yes, you and your spouse/partner should each do one independently. We will run the survey through September or until we hit the mark of at least 70% participation. We will provide opportunities both online and in worship, and if you need a paper version to fill out, we will provide and collect from you.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you for helping us in this critical endeavor for the future of our church.

Pastor Scott Oberle and the Futures Working Group\*

\*(Cyndy Davenport, Harriet Plump, Phil Sumida, Pastor Michelle McNamara, Greg Skiba & Dave Williams)

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