

A Report to the Members of Trinity Lutheran Church  
The C.A.T. Has Spoken (Church Assessment Tool)  
August 3, 2023



Leaders of Trinity met with Pastor Kurt Jacobson of Mustard Seed Consulting, LLC on Wednesday, August 2, to receive and discuss the results of the Congregation Assessment Tool recently administered in your church. 359 persons responded, which is 160% of average worship attendance. The goal was 80%. This means you have statistically solid data about your church.

Overall, approximately 44% of your members are clearly satisfied with things in the church. 45% are unsure. This, along with other information, indicates that members can imagine a church with a higher level of vitality than they are currently experiencing and are searching for a pathway that will lead them to a stronger church.

All the information in this report should be explored and validated in further conversation. Survey data is not the end of a conversation but the beginning.

### Key Indicators about Trinity Lutheran from the data:

- Among members age 65+ there is a clergy focus, meaning evaluation of the church's ministry is strongly determined by how they evaluate the pastor.
- Members believe Trinity offers opportunities to discover their spiritual gifts and engage them in ministries of the church, the world and their daily lives.
- Members believe Trinity provides high-quality education appropriate to all ages.
- There is a diversity among members regarding theological perspectives, with members age 65+ theologically conservative and members under age 44 holding theologically progressive stance.
- There is a diversity of views regarding whether there is a disturbing amount of conflict in the congregation.
- There is a need to develop more certainty across the congregation on matters of friendliness, an atmosphere of genuine care and concern among members in times of personal need as well as a sense that Trinity gives new meaning to people's lives.
- There is a wide diversity of views between age groups on whether *"the worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content."*

### Priorities For All Members of Trinity

The CAT identifies 17 priorities in rank. Your top two are seen in 98% of churches in the database:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.
2. Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.

One priority appears across all demographics of the membership:

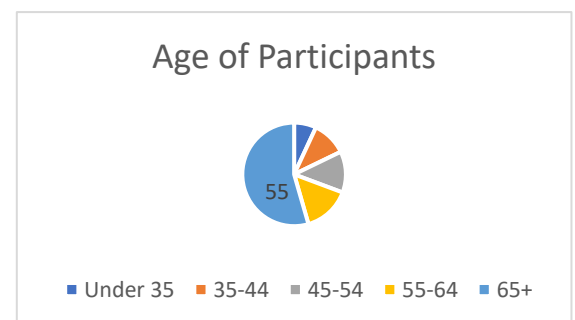
- Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (for example, small groups, nurtured friendship, shared meals, etc).

In comparison to other churches, another priority which is unusually strong for your church is:

- Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society. (i.e. homeless, immigrant, transient persons)

### Quick Facts about Who Participated in the CAT

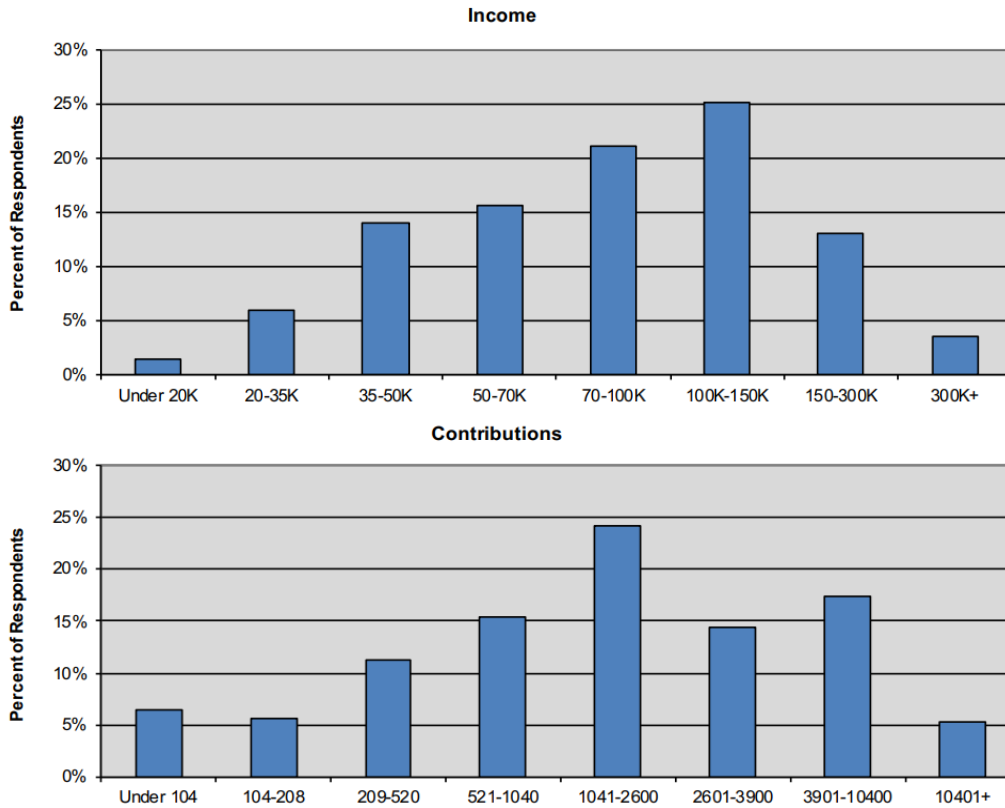
- Age demographic: 7% are 0-34; 11% are 35-44; 13% are 45-54; 15% are 55-64; 54% are 65+.
- Households: 17% are one-person; 52% are two-person; 21% are three- to four-person; 10% are five persons or more.
- Tenure: 55% have been members 20+ years; 22% under 11 years.
- Worship trend: 14% indicate worshipping more than 3 years ago; 30% indicate less than 3 years ago.
- Education attainment: 14% high school diploma; 21% some college; 31% college graduate; 8% some post graduate work; 24% graduate degree.



## Financial Information

The CAT asked one person per household to confidentially reveal information regarding annual income and contribution to the church.

- Average annual household income: **\$108,191**.
- Average annual contribution: **\$1,665**, which is in the **18<sup>th</sup>** percentile in the CAT's database of 2,800 churches, meaning 82% of churches have a higher average annual contribution.
- Average percent of income given: **1.54%**. (The average across ELCA congregations is 2.3%.)



**\*\*Survey data is not the end of a conversation, but the beginning. Anticipate learning more from your leaders. Then, please join the conversation for the sake of your mission in the future.\*\***

## About the Consultant

Pastor Kurt Jacobson is a trained interpretive consultant of Holy Cow! Consulting assessments. He is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. For 28 years he served Trinity Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI. He started Mustard Seed Consulting, LLC in 2017. He has served as an interim pastor and consultant for congregations across the NW Synod of WI and beyond. Since being diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer ALK-positive, he has provided low-cost consulting services to over 45 congregations in MN and WI.

Jacobson holds a BA in Business/Hospital Administration and Organizational Communications from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN and a Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. Additionally, he holds a certificate in Intentional Interim Ministry from the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors.

He is the author of "Welcoming Grace: Words of Love for All" and "Living Hope: Messages of Faith." In addition, the book "The State of the ELCA" by J. Russell Crabtree, founder of Holy Cow! Consulting, Inc. includes a chapter detailing the work the members and staff of Trinity Lutheran Church did to become a transformational congregation.

He lives on a lake near Cumberland, WI.

Email: gomustardseed@gmail.com

Facebook: Mustard Seed Consulting