

Greetings from ECC Springfield!

We are delighted that you have an interest in our Senior Pastor position. As you navigate your way around our website and review the Church Profile, you will have the opportunity to learn much about our ministry and our church community.

Over the last nine months, our Church has been actively preparing for the next phase of our ministry in Springfield. We are approaching 120 years of existence yet, rather than being bound by tradition, we are always exploring new ways to bring Christ's never-changing message to today's society. Our stated goal is to "Know God and to Make Him Known." You will note that 1 John 2:5-6, the verse sited on the home page to our website, reads as follows:

But if anyone obeys His word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.

We as a Search Committee are praying and fasting as we seek the Lord's guidance and wisdom as to whom He is calling to serve as our next Senior Pastor.

If you have any questions, please contact me at either of the phone numbers listed below, or e-mail me at dave@davidgcarlson.com. God bless you!

Dave Carlson, Search Committee Chair
413-525-1313 (office)
413-596-9649 (home)

EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Springfield, Massachusetts

*To know God through His Word,
and to make Him known to our world through our lives.*



Church Profile

February 2008

Introduction

This Church Profile was compiled by the Senior Pastor Search Committee of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Springfield, Massachusetts. Our Church is currently in transition as we recently bade farewell to our Senior Pastor and two Associate Pastors (one accepted a Senior Pastor position in Turlock, California; the other is now approved as a Covenant Church Planter and established a separate Chinese congregation at our Church). We eagerly anticipate the arrival of our new Senior Pastor. We have many committed members who diligently serve the Lord and who are excited as we await the next chapter in our history. As a Search Committee we are fasting and praying as we begin to seek the Lord's will for our congregation. This Profile is intended as a tool to assist both the Search Committee and potential candidates for Senior Pastor to understand our Church better.

Our Theology

We believe in God, The Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of all that is.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, who, through His life, death, and resurrection, gives salvation to all who believe in Him and follow Him as Lord.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, God's presence with and in us who believe.

We believe in the necessity of the new birth, God's great gift to all who believe in Jesus Christ, which brings the forgiveness of all sin, new direction and purpose in living, and the assurance of Eternal Life.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is the only trustworthy guide for salvation, for doctrine, and for Christian living.

We believe in the Christian church as the fellowship of believers.

We believe in the importance of spiritual growth for every Christian, so that we might reflect the Good News of God's love, both here and around the world.

Our Next Senior Pastor

We recently completed an All-Church Survey, which gave the Search Committee direction in seeking God's will for the next Senior Pastor of our Church. When asked what gifts the congregation would like to see evident in our next pastor, the following four were mentioned most frequently:

- ***Preacher/Teacher***
- ***Pastor/Shepherd***
- ***Compassion***
- ***Communication***

Attached at the end of this document are a copy of the survey and graphs indicating responses received.

Our Present Ministries

Our current professional staff members are:

- **Interim Pastor** Rev. Rob Fisher
- **Youth Pastor** Rev. Tim Ramgren
- **Music Ministers** Dennis and Marcia Bunten

We have four office/facilities management staff, a part-time Nursery Volunteer Coordinator, and a part-time Sunday School/FRIENDS Coordinator.

Our congregation now averages about 250 people at Sunday worship. Our membership currently consists of 282 people, with age ranges broken down approximately as follows:

- Ages 24-34 6%
- Ages 34-49 22%
- Ages 50-64 59%
- Age 65+ 13%

We have a blended style of worship that incorporates a traditional choir and hymns, as well as a full contemporary band leading praise songs. Since the departure of our Senior Pastor in June 2007, many individuals have been involved in assisting and leading worship. There is nursery for infants/preschoolers and Children's Church during the sermon for grades K-2.

Our Church has a strong history of youth ministry, from Sunday School through Hi-League. Our Sunday School ranges from nursery through adult. We currently have five adult Sunday School offerings. Our confirmation class begins in 7th grade and culminates with Confirmation Sunday in the spring of the 9th-grade year.

We currently have a Council system of government. The Church Council recently voted to propose to the congregation this year a Bylaws change. If passed, it would change our system to the Leadership Team model as described on the Covenant website. Our current Council system has the traditional officers and the following boards:

- Christian Education Oversees all aspects of Christian education
- Finance and Stewardship Is responsible for Church finances and assets
- Music and Worship Coordinates worship and supervises musical activities
- Deacons Nurtures the spiritual life of the congregation
- Community Ministries Provides opportunities for outreach
- Missions Oversees foreign and home missions
- Trustees Maintains Church property

We also have a Spiritual Advisory Team consisting of four individuals who offer their assistance with conflict resolution and serve as consultants on Church discipline.

Each pastor on staff has a representative on our Pastoral Relations Committee who works with the pastor as a liaison with Church leadership and the congregation.

Our Church is committed to the following purposes known as the "Four E's:"

- To EXALT God in worship as mankind's true hope and Lord.
- To EVANGELIZE those who have not trusted Christ as Savior and entered into His new life.
- To EDIFY in Christ-like living those whom God has brought into His family, the church.
- To EQUIP believers for ministry according to the spiritual gifts each has been given.

In applying these purposes, our ministries are many:

- Hi-League Grades 9-12; meets Sunday evening; meets for Bible Study on Wednesday.
- JVs Grades 7-8; meets Wednesday evening.
- FRIENDS Grades K-6; meets Wednesday evening.
- Christianity Explored Evangelistic program designed for seekers and new Christians; meets Monday evening.
- MOMs Bible study/fellowship for young mothers; meets Tuesday morning.

- Senior Drop-In About 60 seniors from the Church and community come for fellowship/lunch; part of our “Triple-ZIP” ministry; meets Thursday.
- Family Dinner Over 100 members of the Church family gather before family activities on Wednesday evening.
- Bible Studies Various small groups meet throughout the week; on Wednesday evening there is a large women’s Bible Study.
- Sanctuary Choir Meets Wednesday evening.
- Spirit and Truth Contemporary worship band; meets Monday evening.
- Handbell Choir Meets seasonally.
- Vacation Bible School Summer outreach to young people in the Church/community.
- Men’s Breakfast Meets first Saturday of each month for prayer.
- ACTS Inner-city tutoring and mentoring program; meets on Monday.
- NHCC New Hope Community Health Clinic meets on Tuesday evening; provides health care to the uninsured and under-insured; established as part of our “Triple-ZIP” ministry effort.
- Prayer Ministry Many small prayer groups meet weekly, along with a phone and email prayer chain for emergency requests.
- Praise and Worship Quarterly Praise and Worship nights.
- Missions Trips Several weeklong mission trips (foreign and domestic) occur every year, from Hi-League through adults.

Our Community

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

Our Church sits at a strategic location. The area immediately surrounding our Church has come to be known as the “Triple-ZIP” ministry area (3ZIP). This is because the Church, located in the Sixteen Acres neighborhood of Springfield, sits at the intersection of the 01119, 01118, and 01109 ZIP codes. The 3ZIP contains about one-third of Springfield’s population and gives a representative cross-section of the city. In addition to 3ZIP, our Church’s members and regular attenders come from other parts of the city as well as the surrounding towns. Of those families/individuals listed in the current Church directory, 15% live in 3ZIP, 15% live in other parts of Springfield, and the remaining 70% live outside of Springfield.

So, in keeping with the scripture reference above, our Church’s “Jerusalem” is the 3ZIP ministry area. Our “Judea and Samaria” are the greater Springfield area and the New England region, while our “ends of the earth” is the world at large.

The City of Springfield lies on the Connecticut River in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. Springfield is home to three major hospitals; three four-year colleges (American International, Springfield, and Western New England); a community college (Springfield Technical Community); the MassMutual life insurance and financial services company; Merriam-Webster; Smith & Wesson; and Peter Pan Bus Lines. Springfield prides itself as the birthplace of Dr. Seuss and the home of the Basketball Hall of Fame. Springfield contains many well-kept residential neighborhoods as well as the sprawling and beautiful Forest Park and Zoo. (The park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who also designed Central Park in New York City.)

The greater Springfield area includes the corridor from Hartford, Connecticut (30 minutes south), to Amherst, Massachusetts (30 minutes north), and contains about 1 million people. Within it are Bradley International Airport, several top colleges and universities, numerous major businesses and industries, and an abundance of cultural and recreational opportunities. Boston is 90 minutes east while New York City is 2.5 hours southwest.

Springfield has about 150,000 people. Approximately 56% are white, 21% are black, and 2% are Asian (the remaining 21% identify themselves as some other race or multiracial). About one-third of Springfield residents identify themselves as Hispanic (of any race). Spanish is spoken in about 21% of Springfield homes. In total, 28% of residents speak a language other than English at home. Also, about half of those who speak a language other than English at home said they did not speak English “very well.”

Of those people at least 25 years old, 75% have at least a high school education and 16% have at least a bachelor’s degree. About 29% of the employed workforce works in education/health care/social services. Other large segments include wholesale/retail trade (13%) and manufacturing (12%). The median household income is about \$31,000.

About 28% of residents and 25% of families are below the poverty level. Of people aged 65 and over, about 20% are below the poverty level. Of those families with a female householder and no husband present, almost half (46%) are below the poverty level. Families comprise 60% of Springfield households but married-couple families are in the minority: 28% of households are married-couple families and 32% are other types of families.

Community Ministry Opportunities

Like all cities, Springfield needs to know Jesus’ love more than ever. The demographic information highlights just some of the ministry opportunities that God has placed on the hearts of our congregation.

The congregation is committed to seeing our 3ZIP ministries grow and expand. They currently include the New Hope Community Health Clinic, the Senior Drop-In Center, an Action-Centered Tutoring Services (ACTS) site, Mothers of Miracles (MOMs) moms’ group, Vacation Bible School, prison ministries, and Open Pantry donation programs. The Health Clinic has provided free medical care, tests, and screenings to hundreds of under- and uninsured people since its inception in 2003. Senior Drop-In provides 50 to 100 seniors each week with a meal, games, exercise classes, computer training, and special speakers and field trips. Our ACTS site, one of several in Springfield, provides free tutoring, mentoring, and Christian education to elementary and middle school students, especially those at risk.

The biggest expansion opportunity our Church sees is the opening of a Christian day care in our building. Much of the groundwork has been laid already. Beyond that, our Church desires to see our ministries grow in responding to the needs of the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the Church.

Area Covenant Churches

Orchard Covenant Church in Indian Orchard, Massachusetts is approximately five miles away from our Church; Pilgrim Covenant Church in Granby, Connecticut is about 20 miles away; and the East Coast Conference Office is 40 miles south in Cromwell, Connecticut.

Our History

A visitor worshiping with us today in our current facilities might be surprised to learn that we are actually quite an old congregation – at 119 years, one of the earliest Covenant churches in the Northeast. In June of 1889, a group of 12 Swedes who had been meeting for several years in homes and rented rooms chartered *Svenska Missionsförsamlingen i Springfield, Massachusetts*, or The Swedish Mission Church of Springfield, Massachusetts.

But with no church building in which to worship, they rapidly added to their congregation and to their funds and in just five years purchased a sturdy wooden structure in Springfield’s North End for the formidable (at that time) cost of \$4,000. Under the leadership of the early pastors, writings indicate that “many souls were added to the Kingdom.” But in 1906 a terrible fire gutted the Church. Far from destroying the congregation, within a year a larger and more beautiful Church rose from the ashes “To the Glory of God.”

In keeping with the rich musical tradition of the Swedish people, an Austin pipe organ was added in 1914, and the 1930s saw a deep spiritual revival in the very active “Young People’s Society,” some of whom remain with us today. The onset of World War II found many of our boys serving abroad, but things were not idle at home. The Sunday School grew, and in 1950 our first full-time youth worker, Mae Simonson, was “imported” from California.

Under Rev. John Lind, our congregation broadened its vision and in 1953 we moved to our present Plumtree Road site, after building a new and larger sanctuary. The Lord so blessed the work here that over the years three needed additions were made to the original structure. A parsonage was also built on adjacent land, and it accommodated Rev. Richard Sandquist’s family of eight. Under the fruitful 13-year ministry of Rev. Darryl Larson, Sunday Worship expanded to two, then three services. Just prior to our Centennial Year we welcomed our 14th pastor Dr. Donald Madvig, assisted by Rev. Matthew Burt. Rev. Burt later became Senior Pastor and served for 18 years. During this period a new sanctuary was built seating some 650 worshippers, and a group from our congregation joined and undergirded a struggling “sister Church” in Indian Orchard. After Rev. Burt’s departure in mid-2007, our congregation remained without a Senior Pastor until January 2008, when Rev. Robert Fisher became our Interim Senior Pastor.

Our Facility

On Sunday, November 7, 1999, a special dedication service was held in our new sanctuary celebrating the completion of a major facility expansion that more than doubled our space to over 50,000 square feet and tripled our seating capacity. We now have ample space for continued Church growth. Our facility includes:

- An expanded 650-seat, 10,000-square-foot sanctuary
- A significant increase in space for Christian education
- An updated nursery
- Numerous large meeting rooms
- A 7,000-square-foot gymnasium
- A beautiful 100-seat chapel
- New kitchen facilities
- Full handicap accessibility (four-level elevator)

Senior Pastor Salary and Benefits

The salary is commensurate with experience, education, and salary history. The benefit package will include:

- 100% coverage under the Bethany Benefit Plan (health/dental/vision/disability)
- Four weeks vacation
- Two weeks study leave
- 12.5% annual pension contribution
- Reasonable continuing education/travel/professional book/hospitality expense reimbursements/relocation expenses

Links to Browse

Evangelical Covenant Church of Springfield
<http://www.ecovs.org/>

The City of Springfield
<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com/>

Springfield Public Schools
<http://sps.springfield.ma.us/>

Pioneer Valley Christian School (located next to our Church)
<http://www.pvcs.org/>

Springfield Museums at the Quadrangle
<http://www.springfieldmuseums.org/>

Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame
<http://www.hoophall.com/>

Greater Springfield and Pioneer Valley Convention and Visitor's Bureau
<http://www.valleyvisitor.com/>

U.S. Census Bureau (receive a Fact Sheet for Springfield, Massachusetts)
<http://factfinder.census.gov/>

Attachments:

- (1) All-Church survey form (2 pages)
- (2) Graphical summaries of survey results (8 pages)
- (3) Photographs (2 pages)

Evangelical Covenant Church All-Church Survey

The Senior Pastor Search Committee thanks you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey. In order to identify the congregation's preferences and priorities for a new Senior Pastor, please complete the following survey.

PART 1: Tell us a little bit about yourself...

Your Age: 12-18 19-24 25-34 35-49 50-64 65+

How long have you attended the Evangelical Covenant Church of Springfield?

< 1 year 1-2 years 3-8 years 9-14 years 15-20 years 21+ years

Are you a: Member? Regular attender? Visitor?

Were you in a Bible study or small group during the past year? YES NO

Do you attend: Sunday School Morning Worship? Both?

Why do you go to church? Circle ALL that apply.

Instruction Spiritual Growth Praise & Worship Family Attends

Comments:

PART 2: Please circle your individual preferences on a scale of 1 to 5.

Church Music Traditional 1 2 3 4 5 Contemporary

Worship Style Formal 1 2 3 4 5 Informal

Sermon Style Textual 1 2 3 4 5 Topical
(Scripture Based Topic/Book of the Bible Study) (Issue Oriented)

Pastoral Style Managerial 1 2 3 4 5 Transformational
Managerial = Tells one what to do and how to do it. "Hands on" style: A Director
Transformational = Encourages one to decide what to do and how "Hands Off" style: A Coach

Charismatic Movement

Not Involved 1 2 3 4 5 Highly Involved
Display of Spiritual Gifts (speaking in tongues, interpreting, prophesying, etc.)

Ministerial Focus Discipler 1 2 3 4 5 Evangelist
Discipler = Concentrates on nurturing the body of believers into maturity
Evangelist = Concentrates on bringing unbelievers to Christ

Missions Focus Local 1 2 3 4 5 Denominational
(Triple Zip/Locally Organized Missions trips) (Foreign/out of state)

PART 3: What qualities would you like to see in our next Senior Pastor?

Choose 5 items below that are MOST IMPORTANT to you and rank them in order of priority with **1 being MOST important and 5 being LEAST important** (All are important, but choose only 5!)

- _____ Adult Sunday School (plan, staff, occasionally teach)
- _____ Children's Ministries (help with vision, administration, equipping)
- _____ Counseling (Private counseling and develop "lay-counselor" specialists)
- _____ Evangelism/Community Outreach
- _____ Family & Marriage (develop a ministry that offers help and teaching)
- _____ Leadership Development (continual program of growing leaders)
- _____ Men's Ministries (motivating, encouraging and supporting believers who are sent)
- _____ Pastoral Care
- _____ Prayer/ Prayer ministries
- _____ Preaching
- _____ Small Groups (oversee, expand, plan, train leaders)
- _____ Women's Ministries (help with vision, administration, equipping)
- _____ Youth Ministries (help with vision, administration, equipping)
- _____ Other _____

Considering the priorities you chose above, please choose **5 STRENGTHS/GIFTS** you feel the next senior pastor should possess, and rank them in order of priority **1 being the MOST IMPORTANT and 5 being the LEAST IMPORTANT.**

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| _____ Administration | _____ Leadership |
| _____ Communication | _____ Leadership Development |
| _____ Compassion | _____ Missions |
| _____ Discipleship | _____ Pastor/Shepherding |
| _____ Encouragement | _____ Preaching/Teaching |
| _____ Evangelist | _____ Relational abilities |
| _____ Hospitality | |
| _____ Other | |

PART 4: Additional Thoughts

What would you like to see our church accomplish in the next 3 years?

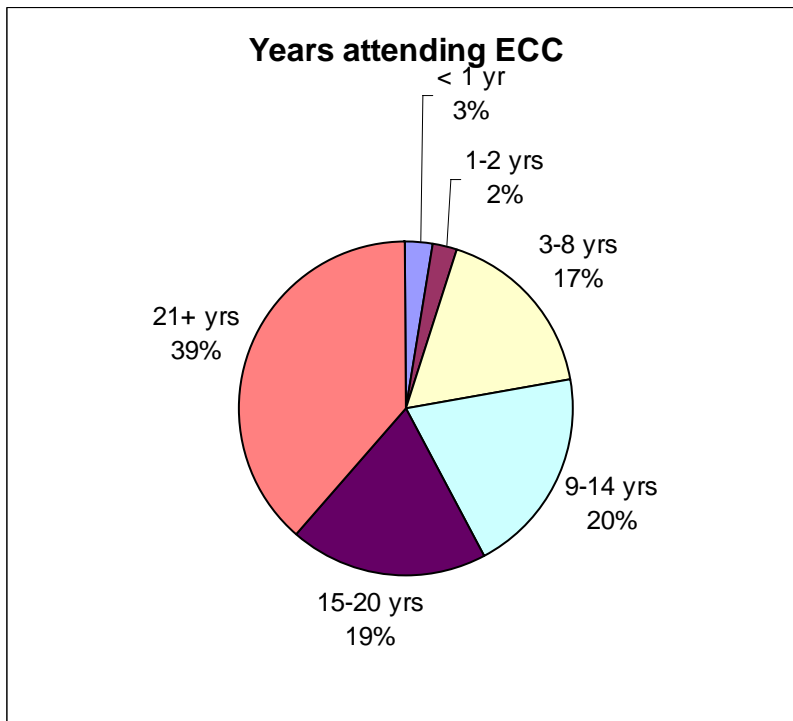
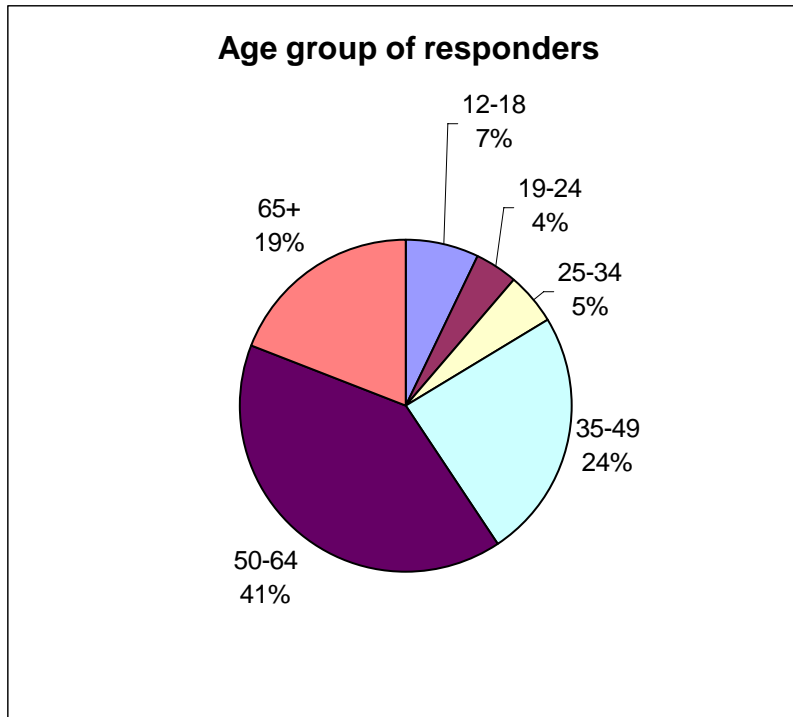
Please identify 1 or 2 strengths you see in our church:

Please identify 1 or 2 weaknesses you see in our church:

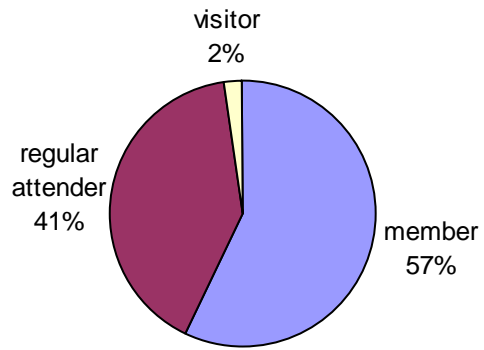
Additional comments that you would like to share with the Search Committee:

Again, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and we appreciate your input. The Senior Pastor Search Committee asks for your prayers and patience as we seek God's will for a new pastor of this church.

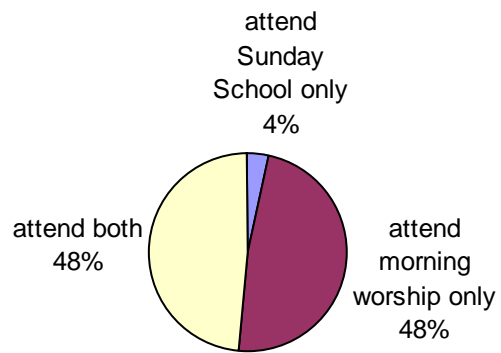
PART 1: Who responded to the survey?



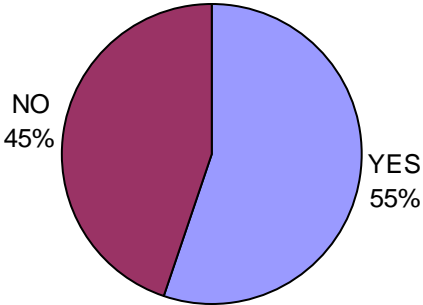
Type of responder



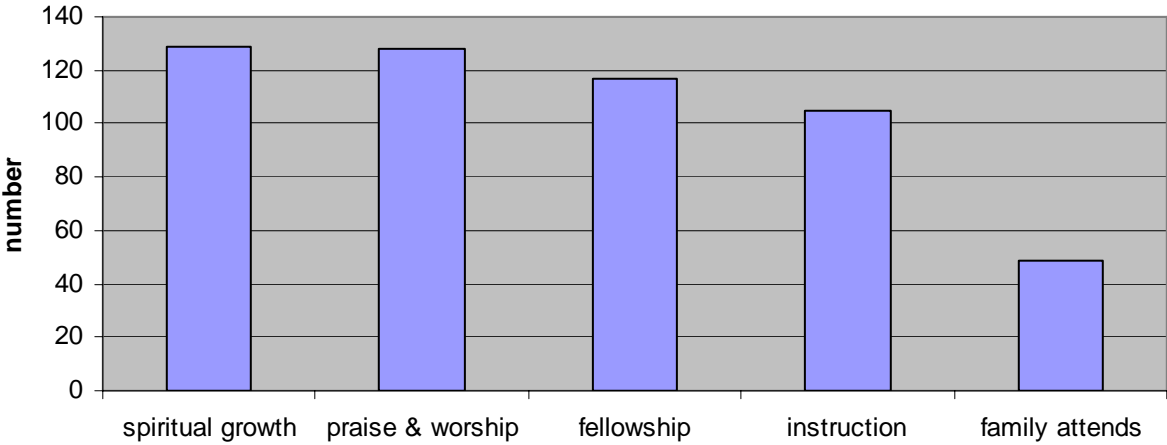
What do you attend?



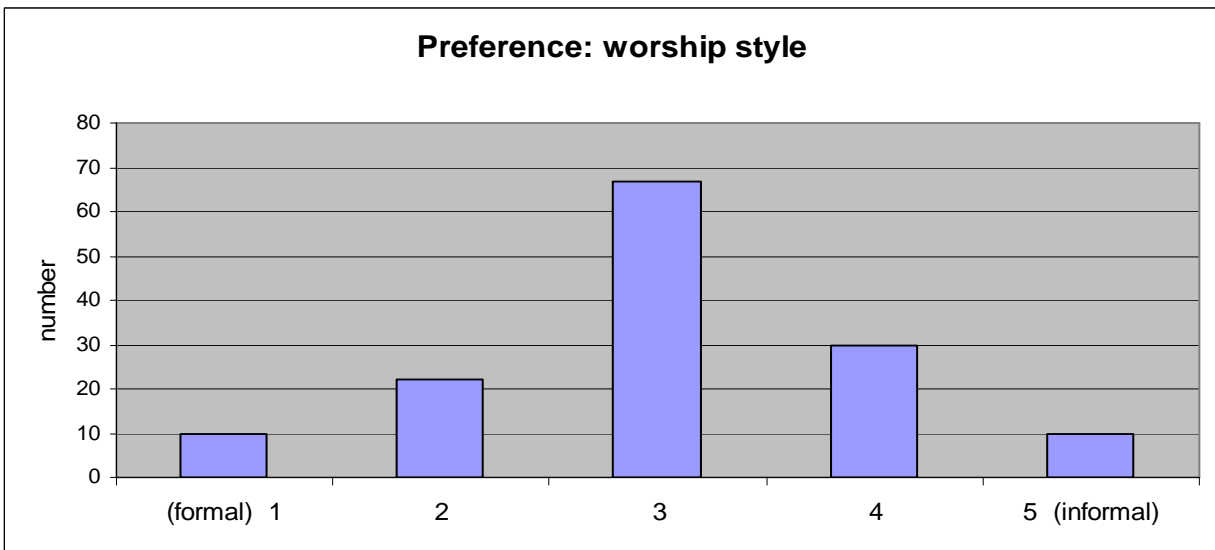
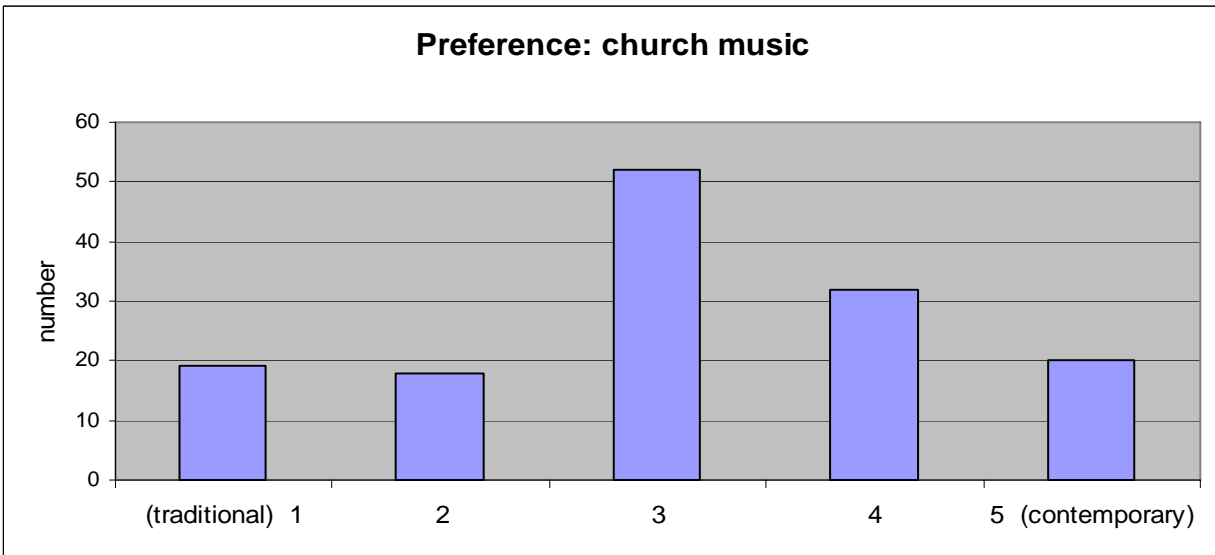
Were you in a Bible study or small group during the past year?

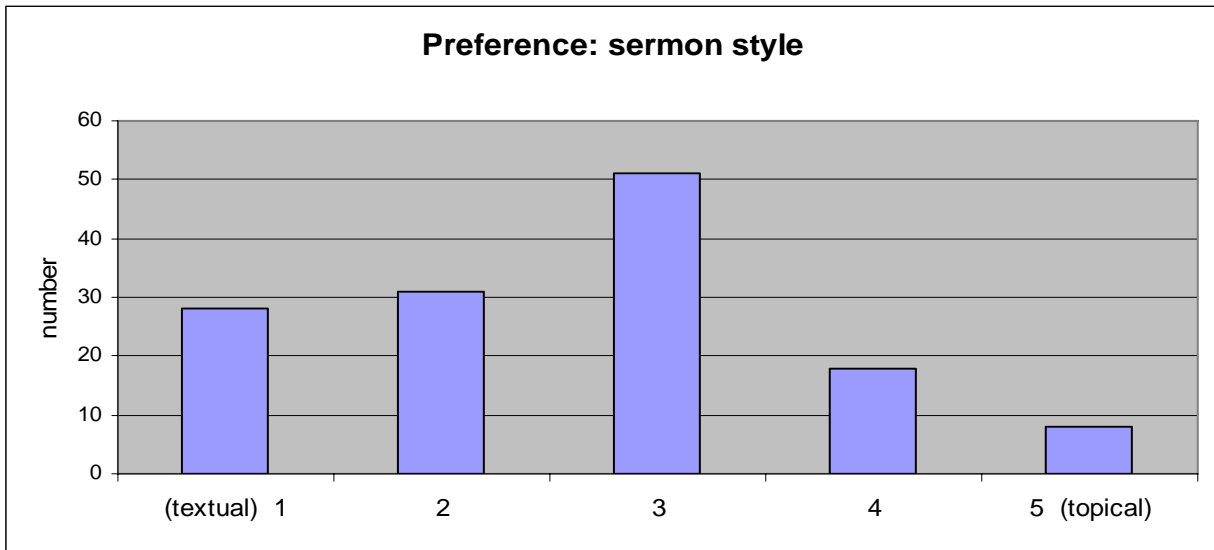


Why do you go to church?

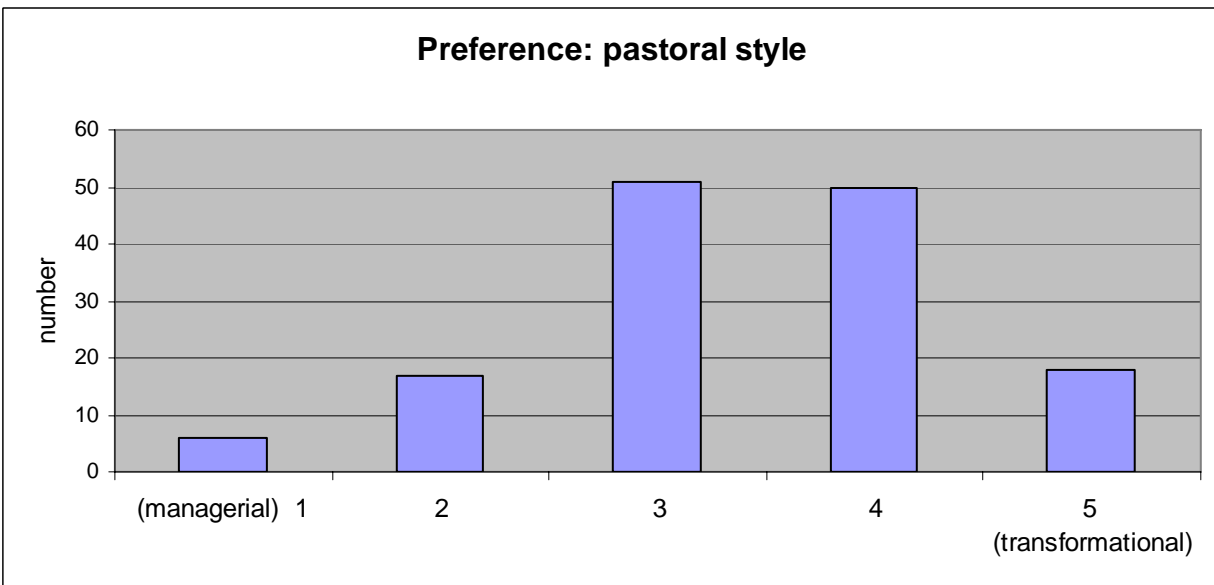


PART 2: What are your preferences?

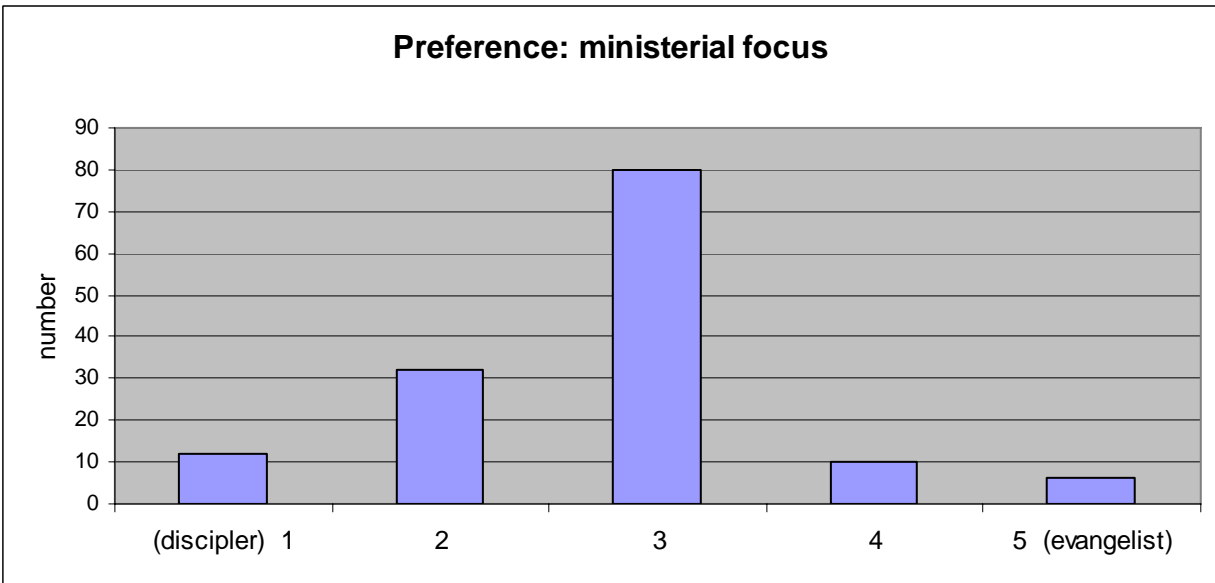
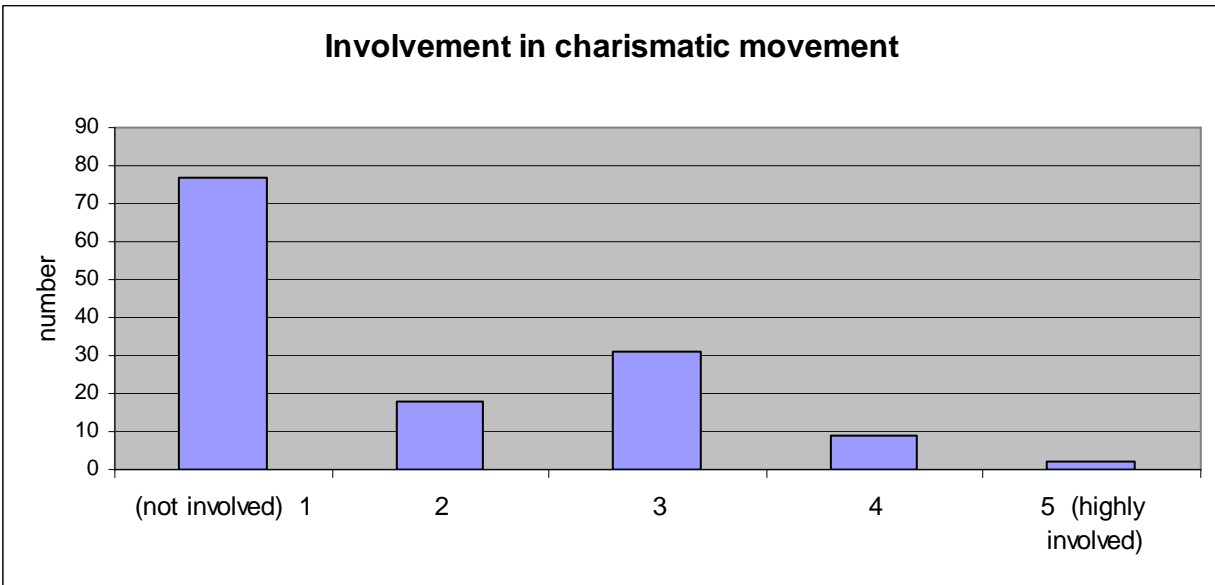




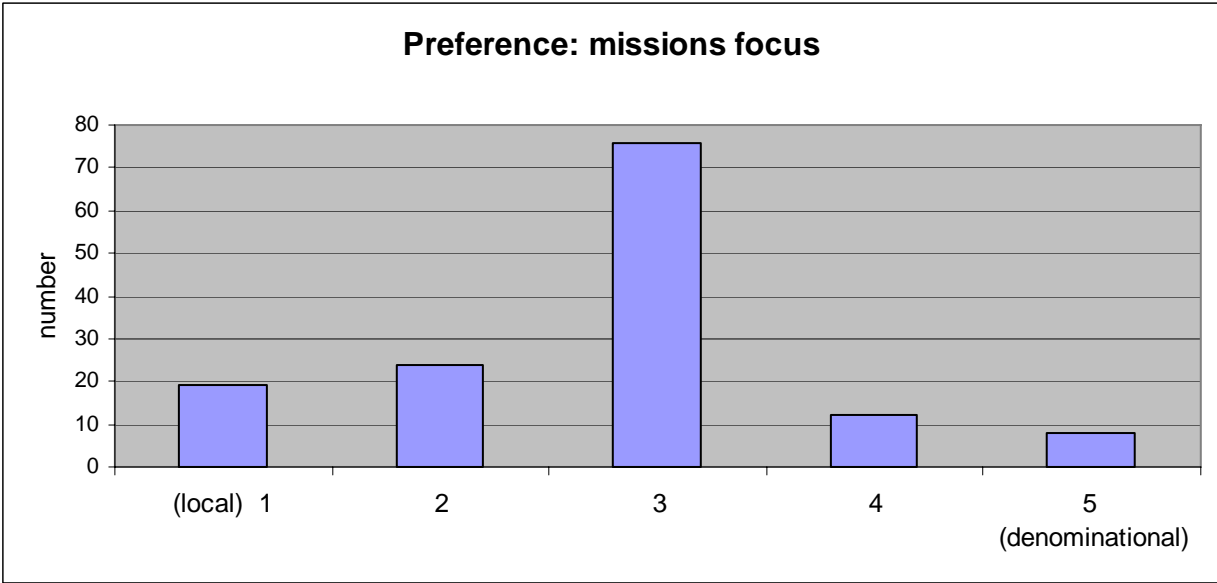
*NOTE: “Textual” – What does this particular book of the Bible say to us?
 “Topical” – What does the Bible say about this particular topic?*



*NOTE: “Managerial” – tells one what to do and how to do it; a hands-on style; a director
 “Transformational” – encourages one to decide what to do and how; a hands-off style; a coach*

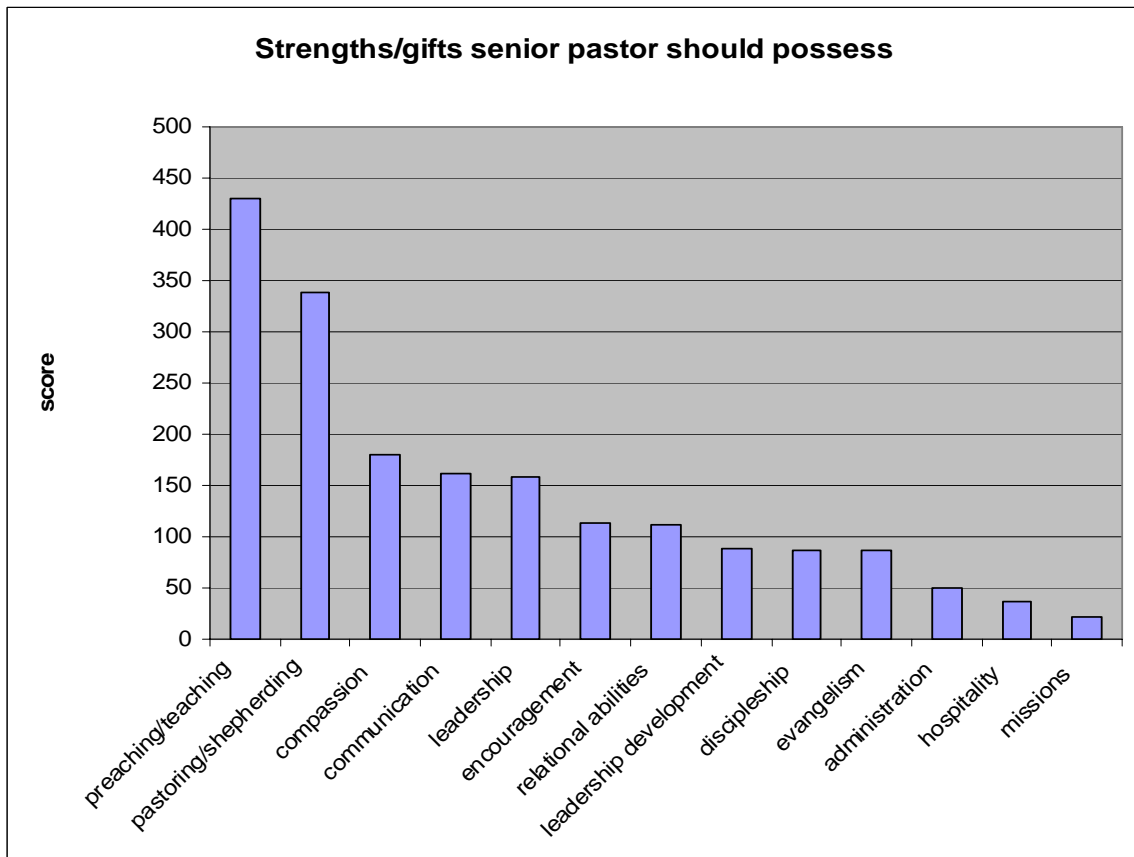
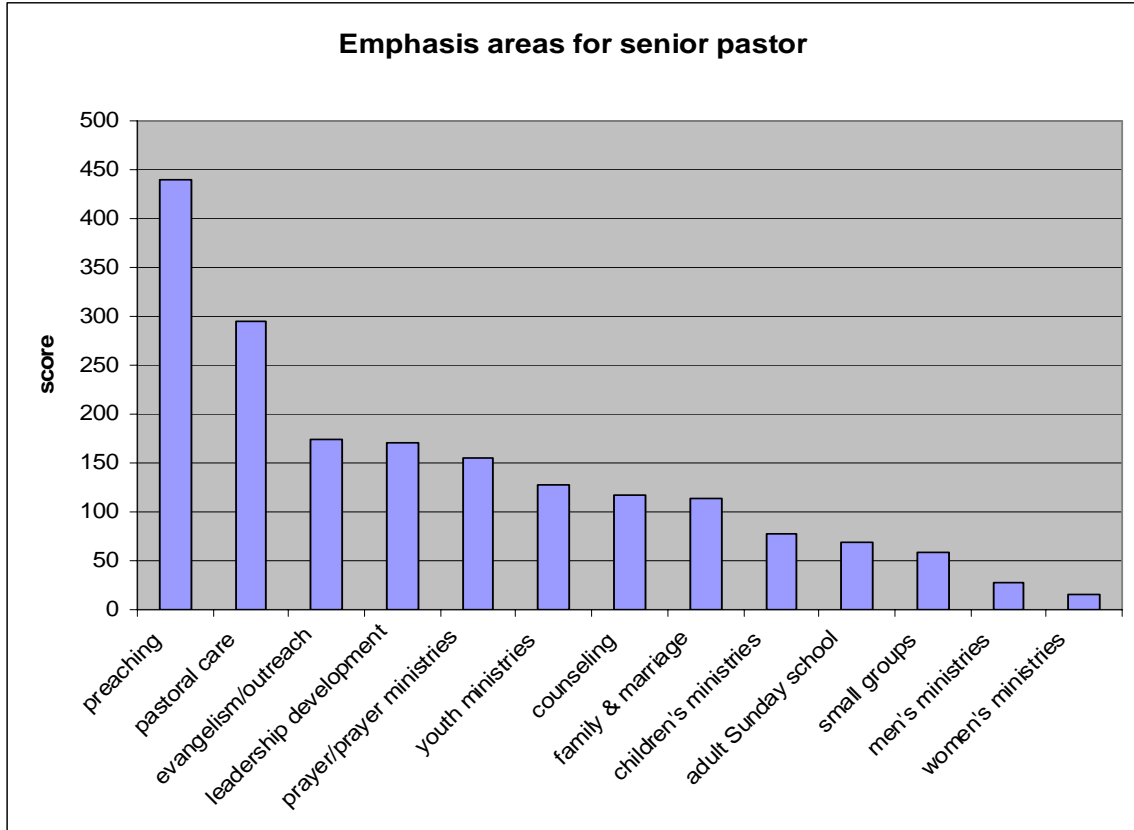


*NOTE: “Discipler” – concentrates on nurturing the body of believers into maturity
 “Evangelist” – concentrates on bringing unbelievers to Christ*



*NOTE: "Local" – missions organized around needs of local community
"Denominational" – missions that involve foreign or out-of-state locations*

PART 3: What qualities would you like to see in our next Senior Pastor?



Photographs



The sanctuary from the outside



Entrance side



Fellowship Hall and the gymnasium on the left



Plenty of parking!



The sanctuary decorated for Vacation Bible School

More Photographs



Spirit and Truth, our worship band performing at the most recent Praise & Worship night



Fun at the dessert social after the Praise & Worship night