



Pass-a-Grille Beach Community Church, U.C.C.
A Local Church, with a Global Vision

SR PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

REPORT: RESULTS OF 2023 CONGREGATION SURVEY

January 22, 2024

Executive Summary

The Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church Senior Pastor Search Committee was appointed in early 2023 and tasked with finding and recommending an individual to serve as the new Settled Sr Pastor for the church. An important step to achieve that goal involves matching the needs and desires of the congregation with the characteristics of Pastor candidates. Early in their process, the Search Committee determined that more information was needed about the needs and desires of the congregation before they could confidently move forward with the search and selection process.

In July and August of 2023, the Committee conducted a voluntary survey of church participants to identify the needs and desires of the congregation. Over 1,100 individuals were invited to participate in the survey by email, pulpit announcements, and, in some cases, U.S. Mail. This number included almost everyone in the church's membership database: current congregants, former congregants, and visitors. The survey opportunity was shared widely because the Search Committee sought to be as inclusive as possible.

A total of 219 individuals responded to the survey. This Executive Summary provides a high-level overview of the survey responses. Details about the responses to each of the 24 survey questions follow this Executive Summary.

Who Responded to the Survey?

Most respondents...

- *have been attending Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church over 10 years,*
- *grew up in a church setting,*
- *came from Protestant backgrounds,*
- *are year-round members,*
- *attend the 10:0 AM service,*
- *are 65 and older,*
- *are female,*
- *have a college or graduate degree, were professionals or in business while employed, and are now retired, and*
- *are couples without children living at home.*

How Do Respondents Participate at Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church?

- *Adult Groups,*
- *Bible Study and Prayer Groups,*
- *Worship Support,*
- *Mission Trips,*
- *Church Council/Committees,*
- *Community or Outreach Groups,*
- *Choir, and*
- *Youth and Young Adult Groups.*

Why Do Respondents Attend Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church?

- *Engaging Sermons,*
- *Fellowship and Community,*
- *Sunday Experience,*
- *Music, and*
- *Location.*

Respondents said Pass-A-Grille Beach Community Church excels in:

- *Worship Service,*
- *Community Outreach,*
- *First Impressions,*
- *Youth Programs,*
- *Connecting with Younger Generations,*
- *Building Community within the Church, and*
- *Teaching.*

Respondents said our Church can use the most improvement in:

- *Building Community Within the Church,*
- *Connecting with Younger Generations,*
- *Retaining Membership,*
- *Community Outreach, and*
- *Engaging More Volunteers.*

Church Leadership Model

- *85% of respondents prefer a shared-leadership model, where the pastor inspires and encourages members to take action and make related decisions.*

Respondents desire these Strengths and Leadership Qualities in our new Senior Pastor (in rank order):

- *Inspiring and Motivating Preaching,*
- *Compassionate Pastoral Care,*
- *Planning and Leading Meaningful, Theology-based Worship,*
- *Building Fellowship in the Congregation,*
- *Effective Administrative Skills,*
- *Attracting and Retaining Members,*
- *Encouraging Faith Practice in Daily Life,*
- *Effective Teaching,*
- *Embracing Our Open & Affirming (ONA) and Racial/Social Justice Ministries,*
- *Being a Visionary,*
- *Of Strong Moral Character,*
- *Responsive to Church Needs, and*
- *Open to Diverse Ideas and Viewpoints.*

Respondents said the Focus for our new Senior Pastor in their first 1-2 years should be (in rank order):

- *Getting to Know us,*
- *Increasing/Renewing a Vision for our Church,*
- *Pastoral Care,*
- *Attracting and Retaining New Members, and*
- *Focusing on Ministries and Staff Management.*

Respondents ranked the Most Important Components in a Sermon as:

- *Application to Everyday Life,*
- *Strong Biblical Knowledge/References,*
- *Explanatory Teaching,*
- *Humor,*
- *Intellectual Stimulation, and*
- *Less Politics.*

The respondents said their Vision for our Church in the next 5-7 years is:

- *A Christ-centered, caring environment with strong fellowship and transparency,*
- *An inspiring worship experience full of beautiful music and biblical teaching,*
- *An active and growing youth component, to include our Montessori school, and*
- *A vibrant and growing community of faith with increased community outreach.*

Additional Comments:

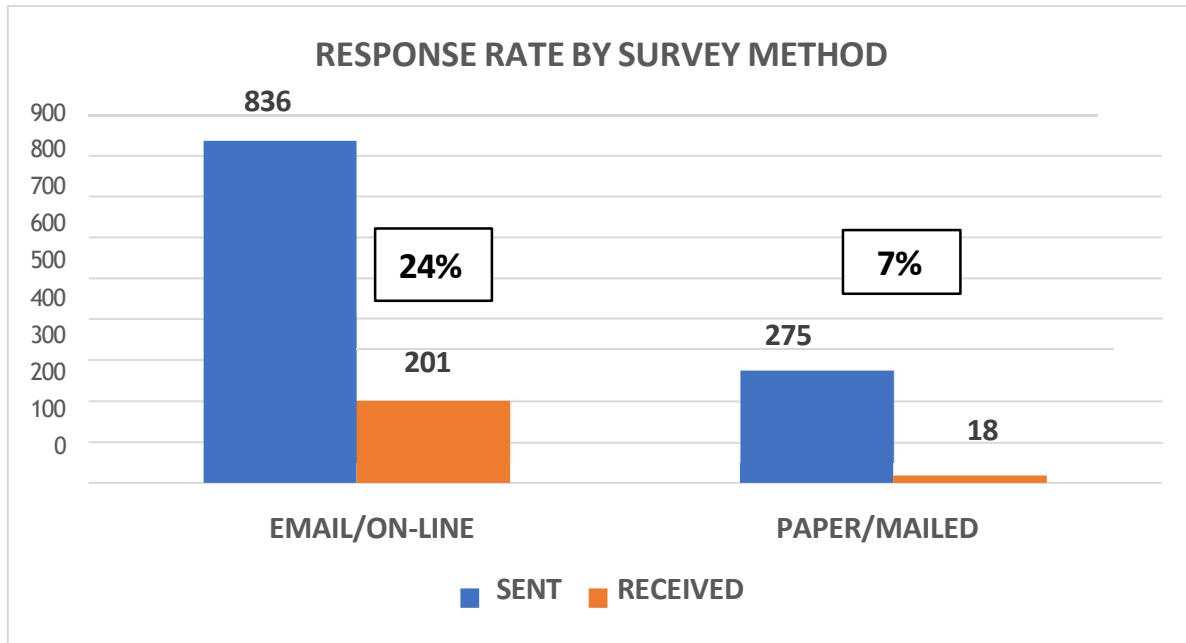
- The survey results provide valuable information that the Search Committee will use to help identify an individual who is a good fit for our congregation as our next Settled Senior Pastor.
- The survey results may also provide opportunities and direction for the Church Council and congregation at large to strategically plan for the future.
- The respondent group included a surprisingly small number (44/20%) of seasonal congregants; it may be that those congregants are materially under-represented in the survey results.

The members of the Senior Pastor Search Committee are – Bob Herb (chair), David Christein, Donna DeSpain, Vivian Fueyo, Gail Murphy, Dane Petersen, and Judith Wright.

SURVEY RESPONSE DETAILS BY QUESTION

SURVEYS SENT & RESPONSES RECEIVED

	SENT	RECEIVED	RESPONSE RATE
EMAIL/ON-LINE	836	201	24%
PAPER/MAILED	275	18	7%
TOTALS	1,111	219	20%



SURVEY QUESTION 1

How many years have you been attending the church?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Over 10 Years	113	52%
1 – 5 years	51	23%
6 – 10 years	45	21%
1 year or less	10	5%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 2

What is your age?

AGE RANGE	COUNT	PERCENT
Over 75	100	46%
65 – 74	60	27%
55 – 64	39	18%
45 – 54	10	5%
35 – 44	6	3%
19 – 34	3	1%
UNDER 18	1	0%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 3

What is your gender?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Female	130	59%
Male	87	40%
(blank)	2	1%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 4
Education Level?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Graduate school	84	38%
College graduate	78	36%
Some college / voc school	45	21%
High School	9	4%
Blank	3	1%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 5
What is your family unit?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Couple without children at home	135	62%
Single	48	22%
Couple with children at home	18	8%
Single parent without children at home	15	7%
Single parent with children at home	2	1%
(blank)	1	0%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 6
Employment Status?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Retired	168	77%
Employed	46	21%
Unemployed / Seeking Work	5	2%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 7
Church membership type?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Year-Round	170	78%
Seasonal	44	20%
Blank	5	2%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 8
Occupation (Current or Before Retirement)?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Professional	137	63%
Business	52	24%
Clerical	14	6%
Other (please specify)	8	4%
Blank	4	2%
Student	2	1%
Tradesperson	2	1%
Laborer	0	0%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 9
Did you grow up in a church setting?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Yes	199	91%
No	20	9%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 10
What is your denominational background?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Protestant (Prsbytrn, Methdst, Luthrn, UCC)	159	73%
Catholic	45	21%
Nondenominational	8	4%
Other (please specify)	4	2%
Blank	3	1%
New to church	0	0%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 11
Participation in our church (select all that apply)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Adult groups	97	51%
Bible Study	62	32%
Worship support	59	31%
Mission Trips	56	29%
Church Council committee	49	26%
Community / Outreach groups	42	24%
Choir / Music	37	19%
Prayer or Meditation groups	26	14%
Youth groups	17	9%
Young Adult groups	8	4%
Other (please specify)	4	0%
Thrift Store	2	0%
Racial Justice Ministry	1	0%
Stephens Ministry	1	0%

*Because respondents could choose any number of responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their responses. For example, "Adult groups" was listed as one area of participation by 97 (51%) of the 192 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 12
Which service do you normally attend?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
10:00 am	140	64%
8:30 am	69	32%
Online	8	4%
Blank	2	1%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 13
Why do you attend our church (select your top 3)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Engaging Sermons	161	79%
The fellowship / community	125	61%
Sunday experience	123	60%
Music	113	55%
Location	72	35%
Bible Study / Classes	27	13%
Youth Program	18	9%
Outreach	5	2%
Other (please specify)	5	2%

*Because respondents could choose 3 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 3 responses. For example, "Engaging Sermons" was listed as one of their top 3 by 161 (79%) of the 204 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 14

**Where do you feel our church could use the most improvement
(select your top 3)?**

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Building community within the church	129	64%
Connecting with younger generations	66	33%
Retention of membership	62	31%
Community Outreach	59	29%
Engaging more volunteers	55	27%
Worship Service	37	18%
Utilizing Technology (live streaming, etc.)	35	17%
Teaching	25	12%
Other (please specify)	22	11%
First impressions	19	9%
Youth Programs	19	9%
Evangelism	11	5%
Transparency / Communication	6	3%
Under Current Leadership	3	1%

*Because respondents could choose 3 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 3 responses. For example, "Building community within the church" was listed as one of their top 3 by 129 (64%) of the 201 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 15**Where do you feel our church excels (select your top 3)?**

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Worship Service	133	66%
Community Outreach	69	34%
First impressions	65	32%
Youth Programs	60	30%
Connecting with younger generations	54	27%
Building community within the church	41	20%
Teaching	40	20%
Utilizing Technology (live streaming, etc.)	27	13%
Music	20	10%
Retention of membership	16	8%
Other (Specify)	16	8%
Engaging more volunteers	10	5%
Evangelism	4	2%
Missions	2	1%

*Because respondents could choose 3 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 3 responses. For example, "Worship Service" was listed as one of their top 3 by 133 (66%) of the 201 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 16

Which model of church leadership do you prefer?

OPTIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
A lay-directed congregation where the lay leaders identify most initiatives and make related decisions	11	5%
A pastor-directed congregation where the pastor identifies most initiatives and makes related decisions	19	9%
A shared-leadership congregation where the pastor inspires and encourages members to take action and make related decisions	187	85%
Blank	2	1%
TOTAL	219	100%

SURVEY QUESTION 17

What do you prefer to be our new Sr Pastor's top strength (choose your top 5)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Inspiring / motivating preacher	184	86%
Compassionate pastoral care	116	54%
Plans and leads meaningful worship	114	54%
Builds fellowship in the congregation	91	43%
Educational preaching	60	28%
Good administrative skills	59	28%
Attracts and retains members	57	27%
Encourages faith practice in daily life	57	27%
Effective teacher	55	26%
Embraces ONA, Racial, and Social Justice Ministries	55	26%
Visionary	52	24%
Effective in resolving conflicts	41	19%
Inspires service to support church ministries	37	17%
Leads church outreach into the community	30	14%
Inspires generosity to support church goals	23	11%
Models evangelism/shares gospel outside of church	16	8%
Honest & Ethical	11	5%
Financial Security	1	1%
Education	1	1%
Other (please specify)	1	1%

*Because respondents could choose 5 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 5 responses. For example, "Inspiring/motivating preacher" was listed as one of their top 5 by 184 (86%) of the 213 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 18

What are the most important leadership qualities that our new Sr Pastor must possess (select your top 5)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Strong moral character	131	62%
Love of congregation	99	47%
Joyful	84	40%
Responsive to church needs	81	38%
Strong leader	77	36%
Flexible and adaptive	73	35%
Good listener	67	32%
Open to diverse ideas and viewpoints	66	31%
Theology-based approach to ministry	59	28%
Strong work ethic	52	25%
Effective facilitator	51	24%
Knows what to say in difficult situations	44	21%
Collaborative	43	20%
Maintains confidentiality	41	19%
Lifelong learner	38	18%
Transparent	36	17%
Adheres to tradition	16	8%
Change agent	13	6%
Other (please specify)	6	3%

*Because respondents could choose 5 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 5 responses. For example, "Strong moral character" was listed as one of their top 5 by 131 (62%) of the 211 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 19

Where should our new Sr Pastor focus more of their energy/time on in their first 1-2 years (select your top 3)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Getting to know us	166	79%
Increased / renewed vision for our church	116	55%
Pastoral Care	72	34%
Attracting new members and retention	69	33%
Ministries	57	27%
Staff management	43	20%
Inspiring generosity and stewardship	27	13%
Outreach and Evangelism	18	9%
Professional development & continuing ed	18	9%
New Programing	16	8%
Small social groups	16	8%
Meeting physical needs of the community	11	5%
Healing the Church	6	3%
Other (please specify)	6	3%
Youth Programs	2	1%

*Because respondents could choose 3 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 3 responses. For example, "Getting to know us" was listed as one of their top 3 by 166 (79%) of the 211 respondents who answered this question.

SURVEY QUESTION 20

In a sermon, which of these components are most important to you (select your top 3)?

OPTIONS	COUNT*	PERCENT*
Application to everyday life	194	91%
Strong biblical knowledge / references	114	53%
Explanatory teaching	90	42%
Humor	84	39%
Stimulating intellect	83	39%
Challenge of the status quo	48	22%
Illustrations	32	15%
Other (please specify)	8	4%
Compassion / Empathy	1	1%
No Politics	1	1%

*Because respondents could choose 3 responses, in this case the "Count" and "Percent" columns reflect the respondents who chose each option as one of their top 3 responses. For example, "Application to everyday life" was listed as one of their top 3 by 194 (91%) of the 214 respondents who answered this question.

Responses to Open-Ended Question 21:
What is your vision for our church for the next 5-7 years?
What do you hope will be different / expanded / changed with our church?
Grouped into Broad Vision Areas

NOTE: The response counts in the below table should be interpreted as the number of respondents who mentioned each vision area. Many responses to this question identified multiple vision areas and all such inputs were counted. On the other hand, some responses suggested specific actions (e.g., welcome committee, fitness classes, keep/change staff, etc.) or focused on the past, rather than describing a future vision, and are not reflected in the below counts.

Vision Area	Count	Percent
Strong Fellowship / Shared Vision / Transparency	66	36%
Biblical Preaching / Inspiring Worship Experience (including music)	47	26%
Strong Youth Focus	35	19%
Expanded Outreach / Social Justice Ministry	18	10%
Membership Growth	15	8%
TOTAL	181	100%

**Responses to Open-Ended Question 22:
What would you like to hear more about in sermons?
Grouped by Category**

Category	Count	Percent
Application	83	56%
Bible	19	13%
Keith	10	7%
Misc.	10	7%
Love	8	5%
History	7	5%
Inspire	6	4%
No Change	6	4%
TOTAL	149	100%

**Responses to Open-Ended Question 23:
What would you like to hear less about in sermons?
Grouped by Category**

Category	Count	Percent
Politics	36	34%
Guilt	13	12%
History	13	12%
Stories	12	11%
Inclusion	11	10%
Misc.	10	9%
Bible	3	3%
Irrelevance	3	3%
Keith	3	3%
Length	2	2%
TOTAL	106	100%

**Responses to Open-Ended Questions 24: Anything Else?
Grouped by Category**

Category	Count	Percent
Sr Search	20	21%
Miscellaneous	19	20%
Keith	16	17%
Guillermo	14	15%
Inclusion	8	8%
Hope	6	6%
Sermon	6	6%
Fellowship	3	3%
Finances	3	3%
TOTAL	95	100%