



Sharing Faith's Journey

PLYMOUTH CHURCH

C O N G R E G A T I O N A L

Worshiping, Working, Serving

Church Planning Inventory

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help our church think about its present life and plan for the future. To assist in this effort, the survey not only asks several sets of direct questions about your perceptions of the congregation's current ministry and future goals, but it also includes sets of broader questions regarding your own involvement. Simply check the appropriate box or supply the required information as indicated. When answering questions with a limited number of choices, please choose the answer that comes closest to the right answer for you, even if it does not fit perfectly. Unanswered items reduce the usefulness of the inventory.

Please do not sign your name on the questionnaire. We want to guarantee that your individual answers will be held in the strictest confidence. To reduce costs each mailing address is receiving only one inventory. Every member is encouraged to respond, so if you need additional inventories you may print them out from our website (www.plymouth-church.net) or pick them up from our church office. Please work independently and complete separate questionnaires. It is important that everyone participate in this survey! Please return your completed inventory to the church office by September 14, 2008. A basket will be located on the office counter to receive them.

Feel free to share any comments or concerns you have about the inventory. Space is provided on the back for that purpose and for sharing any additional information that you think would be helpful. Thank you for your cooperation. We hope you enjoy filling out the questionnaire and that, in addition to assisting your church, you may find it a helpful means of reflecting on your faith and the meaning of your church experience.

The results from this inventory will be made available to the congregation around the middle of October.

Thank you for your help in moving Plymouth Congregational Church forward,

The Growth Committee

1. How long have you been a member of this local church?

- Not a member 2 - 4 years 10 - 19 years
 One year or less 5 - 9 years 20 or more years

2. How long does it usually take you to travel from home to church?

- 5 minutes or less 11 - 15 minutes 31 - 44 minutes
 6 - 10 minutes 16 - 30 minutes 45 or more minutes

3. On the average, about how many times have you attended church worship services during the past year?

- None About once a month
 About once or twice a year About two or three times a month
 Once or twice every three months Four times a month or more

4. In how many church organizations, committees, and groups do you hold membership (not counting congregational membership itself)?

- None One Two Three Four or more

5. Has your involvement in the congregation increased, decreased or remained about the same in the last few years?

- Increased Remained the same Decreased

If your participation has increased, which of the following are reasons for that?
(check all that apply):

- More time available Better health
 Because of children Stronger faith
 Accepted office or other More positive attitude toward the church
 New responsibility in the church

If your participation has decreased, which of the following are reasons for that?
(check all that apply):

- Less time available Health problems
 Because of children Decreased faith
 Given up office or other More negative attitude towards the church
 Responsibility in the church

6. How many persons or families have you invited to visit or join your church in the past year?

- None One Two Three Four or more

7. How many of your closest friends attend this church?

- None One Two Three Four or more

Listed below are a number of tasks that a local church is likely to perform. Please respond to each item by indicating whether you feel your congregation needs to give it more emphasis; whether you are very or generally satisfied with your congregation's current performance of the task; or whether you feel the task currently receives too much emphasis.

	Needs More Emphasis	Very Satisfied	Generally Satisfied	Receives Too Much Emphasis
1. Offering worship that provides a meaningful experience of God and the Christian tradition	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Providing worship that expresses the Gospel in contemporary language and forms	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Providing Christian education for children and youth	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Providing Christian education programs for adults	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Helping members deepen their personal, spiritual relationship with God	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Sharing the good news of the Gospel with the un-churched	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. Engaging in acts of charity and service to persons in need	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Encouraging members to act on the relationship of the Christian faith to social, political and economic issues	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Providing a caring ministry for the sick, shut-ins and the bereaved	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Providing pastoral counseling to help members deal with personal problems	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. Providing fellowship opportunities for members	[]	[]	[]	[]

	Needs More Emphasis	Very Satisfied	Generally Satisfied	Receives Too Much Emphasis
12. Helping members understand their use of money, time and talents as expressions of Christian stewardship	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. Supporting the global mission of the church/denomination	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. Helping members discover their own gifts for ministry and service	[]	[]	[]	[]
15. Participating in activities and programs with other local religious groups	[]	[]	[]	[]
16. Expressing our denominational heritage/tradition	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please read over the preceding list of 16 church tasks, and answer the following two questions by writing in the number of the appropriate task.

1. Overall, which *one* task does your congregation do best? _____

2. For the sake of your own personal involvement in your congregation, which *one* task would you most like to see strengthened? _____

In order to carry out its tasks, every church must deal with certain organizational issues, such as making decisions, sharing information, and developing resources. Listed below are a number of statements describing such issues. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each statement describes your congregation? A “Don’t Know” (DK) response is provided, but please use it only when absolutely necessary.

Agreement That Statement Describes Congregation

	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Disagree	DK
1. Members are well informed about what the various committees and groups in the church are doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The activities taking place in the congregation are well publicized to the surrounding community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Study of the needs of the and the community is regularly undertaken congregation as the basis for church planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Members and groups get a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in the congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Members are encouraged to discover their particular gifts for ministry and service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Lay leaders are provided the training they need for their committee and task assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Every member who is capable and interested has an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The theological and biblical implications of important decisions are regularly discussed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Important decisions about the life of the church are rarely made without open discussion by church leaders and members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agreement That Statement Describes Congregation

	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Disagree	DK
10. Disagreements and conflicts are dealt with openly rather than hushed up or hidden behind closed doors.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
11. It is easy to summarize for visitors and non-members how our congregation differs from other congregations in the area.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
12. Members help each other out in times of trouble.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
13. Cooperative programs with churches of other denominations are highly valued in our church.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
14. The current morale of our church membership is high.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
15. There is a sense of excitement members about our church's future.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Listed below are several alternatives touching upon important dimensions of a church's identity. Using the seven point scale between each set of alternatives, please circle the number which best describes where our congregation falls, "1" meaning most like the characteristic on the left, "7" meaning most like the characteristic on the right, "4" meaning an equal mix of both.

1. Our church is more influenced by history and tradition.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Our church is more influenced by contemporary ideas and trends.
2. Members are similar to the people who live immediately around the church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Members are very different from people who live immediately around the church.
3. Our church is very involved with the community around the church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Our church is not at all involved with the community around the church.
4. Our church is primarily oriented to serving our members.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Our church is primarily oriented to serving the world beyond our membership.

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|---|
| 5. Our congregation feels like one large family. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Our congregation feels like a loosely knit association of individuals and groups. |
| 6. Our church is known as a prestigious one in the area. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Our strengths notwithstanding, our church is not considered one of the “status” churches in the area. |
| 7. Our church’s approach to social issues is basically educational, leaving any action to individual conscience. as a congregation. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Our church’s approach to social issues is decidedly “activist”. We take stands on social issues |
| 8. Our congregation’s approach to individual salvation emphasizes education, nurture and gradual growth in the faith. experience. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Our congregation’s approach to individual salvation stresses conversion and a born-again |
| 9. Our congregation gives strong expression to our denominational identity and heritage. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | It would be difficult for a visitor to know to which denomination our congregation belongs. |
| 10. Our congregation strives to create partnerships with other local churches. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Our congregation prefers to work by ourselves or through our denominational channels. |

All congregations have an identity, or sense of who they are, that all members share in and yet any individual member stands somewhat apart from. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements from your perspective as an individual looking at your congregation’s overall identity and vision.

- | | Strongly
Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------|----------|----------------------|
| 1. Our church’s identity, as it is, is one with which I feel comfortable. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 2. It is easy for me to tell my friends what is unique about our church. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 3. I have a clear understanding of what our church stands for. | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| 4. An effective effort was made to instruct me in our church’s mission. | [] | [] | [] | [] |

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Being at this church has made a difference in my spiritual life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each of the kinds of programs or groups listed below, please indicate:

A. Whether you think your congregation needs more or better adult programs of this kind; is doing about right; is already over-emphasizing or doing too much in the area; or, if your congregation currently doesn't have such a program and you see no need for beginning it. If you don't know about programming for adults, please leave the questions blank.

B. Whether it is likely that you would attend if more or better adult programs of this kind were offered by your congregation. If you currently attend such a program at your church or if it is likely that you would if more or better such programs were offered, check yes.

	Need More or Better	About Right	Too Much Already	Don't Have/ No Need	Attend Yes
1. Study groups dealing with the Bible and theology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Study and discussion groups dealing with contemporary issues, topics and problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Prayer, meditation and spirituality groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Support groups in which members share with each other at the level of feelings and personal experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Fellowship events or hobby groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Evangelistic outreach and visitation groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Need More or Better	About Right	Too Much Already	Don't Have/ No Need	Attend Yes
7. Social concern groups for planning and working on projects directed at community or social issues/problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Recreation/athletic activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Literary/culture groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Groups and classes that explore marriage, the family and parenting issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you were going to attend adult programs, which three of the following are the best times for you? Which three are the worst times?

	Three Best Times	Three Worst Times
1. Weekend retreat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Saturday morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Weekday evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Weekday morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Weekday afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Sunday morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sunday evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your congregation's Sunday worship? Please respond to each item by indicating whether you are very satisfied or generally satisfied or whether you feel your congregation needs to have more emphasis given to it; or whether you feel the task currently receives too much emphasis.

	Needs to Have More Emphasis	Very Satisfied	Generally Satisfied	Receives Too Much Attention
1. Providing time for members to greet one another	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Providing worship that is emotionally moving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Providing worship that is intellectually challenging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Attention given to sacraments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Lay participation in leading worship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Use of creeds or statements of faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Silent prayer/meditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Having parts of the worship especially for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Use of new or unfamiliar hymns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Corporate prayer in which the entire congregation participates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Providing worship at times other than Sunday morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In thinking about the many possible ways your congregation could be involved with community and social issues, what priority would you give to each of the following?

	Highest Priority	High Priority	Moderate Priority	Low Priority	No Priority
1. Providing or supporting social services for persons in need	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Providing meeting rooms in the church for community groups working on various issues and problems	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Encouraging the minister to use a portion of his/her time working with community and social action groups	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. Calling attention to social, community and world issues from the pulpit and in study groups	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. Organizing social issue advocacy or action groups	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Linking interested lay members to denominational, ecumenical or non-church social service or advocacy programs	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. Giving money to denominational programs	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
8. Giving money to ecumenical or non-denominational programs	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
9. Helping organize or support disadvantaged groups to pursue their own causes	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
10. Lobbying and petitioning corporate government officials on peace and justice issues	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

In thinking about what originally brought you to this congregation and what keeps you here, select from the list below those reasons that best match your reasons for coming and staying at this church. *You may select more than one.*

Then		Now
<i>What originally attracted you to attend this congregation?</i>		<i>What is the foremost reason you remain a part of this congregation?</i>
_____	The Minister(s)	_____
_____	My friends are here	_____
_____	The church's reputation	_____
_____	Adult education program	_____
_____	Child and youth program	_____
_____	The music program	_____
_____	The social outreach	_____
_____	The worship style	_____
_____	The self-help groups	_____
_____	The denominational ties	_____

Which one of the following best expresses your view of the Bible?

- The Bible is an ancient book of history, legends and cultural stories recorded by man. It has little value today except as classic literature.
- The Bible is a valuable book because it was written by wise and good people. I do not believe it is really God's word but it can teach us many moral precepts.
- The Bible is the record of many different people's response to God and because of this, people and churches today must interpret the Bible's basic moral and religious teachings for themselves.
- The Bible is the inspired Word of God and its basic moral and religious teachings are clear and true, even if it reflects some human error.
- The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally.

Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following belief statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral or Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. There is no other way to salvation but through belief in Jesus Christ.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. Human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead was an actual event.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. All religions are equally good ways of helping a person find ultimate truth.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. The Bible has answers for all of the basic questions of life.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
6. Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
7. It is often difficult to live out my faith in daily work, leisure and community life.	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please indicate how often you engage in the following practices.

	Daily	Few Times a Week	Once a Week	Few Times a Month	Seldom or Never
1. How often do you spend time in private devotional activity such as prayer, meditation, reading the Bible or other spiritual books?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
2. How often do you use the Web at home or at your office?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
3. How often do you use email?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
4. How often do you look at religious Internet sites?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
5. How often do you volunteer your time in social service?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Background and information about yourself

1. Gender?

Male Female

2. Age?

Under 20 25 - 34 45 - 54 65 - 74
 20 - 24 35 - 44 55 - 64 75 or over

3. Racial/Ethnic Background?

White Black Hispanic Asian
 Native American Pacific Islander Mixed

4. Marital Status?

Single, never married Widowed
 Living in a committed relationship Separated or divorced
 Married

5. Number of children living at home?

_____ Age 0 - 5 _____ Age 19 and over
_____ Age 6 - 12 _____ No children living at home
_____ Age 13 - 18 _____ Do not have children

6. Which best describes your current household?

One person living alone Two or more adults with child/children
 A couple without children Several adults living in the same household
 One adult with child/children

7. What is your highest level of formal education?

Less than high school graduate College degree
 High school graduate Post graduate work or degree
 Some college, trade or vocational school

8. Are you (*check one*)?

Retired Employed part time
 Employed full time Full time "house person" or student
 Not currently employed

If currently employed, presently job-hunting or retired, what is/was your occupation?

- (1) Service worker: policeperson, barbers, janitors, beauticians, waiters, ushers, etc.
- (2) Clerical worker: bookkeepers, secretaries, mail carriers, telephone operators, etc.
- (3) Farmer/Rancher
- (4) Operative or Laborer: semi-skilled and unskilled workers in construction and manufacturing, etc.
- (5) Tradesperson: carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians, machinists, etc.

- (6) Sales worker: insurance and real estate agents, brokers, salespersons, etc.
- (7) Proprietor, manager or public official: city manager, credit officers, buyers, floor managers, etc.
- (8) Professional, technical: teachers, doctors, computer programmer, architects, accountants, financial managers, artists, etc.
- (9)

Other: _____

Are you self-employed or an independent business person?
 Yes No

If married, is your spouse employed?
 Yes, full time Yes, part time No

9. How many years have you lived in this general area?
 One year or less 5 - 9 years 20 or more
 2 - 4 years 10 - 19 years

10. How likely is it that you might move out of this general area within the next few years?
 Definitely will move Might move (50/50 chance) Very unlikely to move
 Probably will move Probably will not move

11. In what denomination were you raised? If you were involved with more than one denomination when you were growing up, with which did you have the greatest identification?

- (1) Baptist
- (2) Disciples of Christ
- (3) Episcopal
- (4) Lutheran
- (5) Methodist
- (6) Presbyterian
- (7) United Church of Christ
- (8) Unitarian/Universalist
- (9) Other Protestant: _____
- (10) Roman Catholic
- (11) Other: _____
- (12) None

Now that you have spent this time reflecting on the congregation's present situation, think for a bit about your vision for the future of this church. Please take a few minutes and write about your hope for the church's future on the back page of this inventory. What are your dreams, desires, and wishes for the church over the next five years?

Thank you for your time and help in moving our church forward in its journey of worshiping, working and serving together.