



# Trinity Covenant Church

Manchester, CT

November 2011



# Introduction

*Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought,  
but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. Romans 12:3*

Thank you for participating in PULSE. You care about your church, and so do the Conference and the Denomination. Our fervent prayer is that every Covenant church would become a healthy missional church. By “healthy” we mean pursuing Christ. By “missional” we mean pursuing Christ’s priorities in the world.

PULSE is a survey that flows out of the Veritas experience. As we say in Veritas, “There is no vitality without reality.” Jesus said, “You shall know the truth (that’s reality) and the truth will set you free (that’s vitality).” *John 8:32*.

Paul tells Christians to speak the truth in love. *Ephesians 4:15*. This is why the PULSE behavioral covenant is so important. The behavioral covenant is the conversation before the conversation, so that our words will be full of grace and truth. Jesus is full of grace and truth. *John 1:14, 17*. *You may also insert your own behavioral covenant.*

PULSE diagnoses the vitality of the church using the Ten Healthy Missional markers and a number of other factors. The Ten Healthy Missional markers are identified and explained in section 1.

Section 2 provides a summary of missional marker scores. Questions 1-41 of the survey were grouped by the missional marker to which they pertained. Based upon the statistical analysis of participant responses\*, a score was assigned to each marker, using a 4.00 scale. The score for each marker is then plotted based on that scale. A breakdown of each individual question sorted based on its standing is also provided.

Section 3 reveals important internal demographic information about Trinity Covenant Church. These are presented in pie chart format for easy identification.

Section 4 highlights the responses to the open ended questions. These are grouped according to topics mentioned in the responses. Although more can be said, please note that there are a few interpretive comments attached to the end of this section.

Section 5 contrasts participants’ responses. One chart shows how the participants’ responded based on how long they have attended the church (tenure). The other chart contrasts responses of leaders and non-leaders.

Section 6 graphs the church’s attendance and income trends. These numbers were taken from the annual report that is sent by the church to the Denomination each year. Although numbers do not tell the whole story, they do tell part of the story.

Section 7 identifies the level of VIM: Vision, Intention and Means. All three are needed in high concentrations to become a healthy missional church. These categories are explained and applied to the current reality at Trinity Covenant Church.

Section 8 identifies the church type and trajectory. In the Covenant there are four types of established churches: Healthy Missional, Stable, Critical Moment, and At-Risk. Using all the information from PULSE and what we know of other churches in the Covenant, an assessment is made about the type of church that Trinity Covenant Church is right now and the direction it seems to be headed. An “X” and an arrow are plotted on the Veritas architecture to indicate current location and direction.

Section 9 summarizes the next steps that the Denomination and the Conference suggest that you take as a church. This section is divided into two parts, one for the congregation and one for the pastor(s). The suggestions themselves are categorized according to Spirituality, Chemistry, and Strategy. We ask that you prayerfully consider and discuss these recommendations in a timely manner. The Conference Superintendent or staff is available to answer any questions you may have.

Section 10 summarizes the entire PULSE report. The intent of PULSE is to help you as a church reach your full Kingdom potential in Christ and grow in ways that matter to God.

One of the goals of PULSE is to stimulate conversation, not to solve every problem confronting the church. The answers are not in the data, the answers are in the conversations that the leadership and the congregation have regarding this information.

Thank you again for letting us take your PULSE. Please remember that PULSE is a reflection of what *you* say and think about your church. These are the scores you have given about your church. We are merely reporting them back to you, along with some interpretation.

\*For Trinity Covenant Church, **192** surveys were completed and submitted for data analysis in ***October and November 2011***.

# Trinity Covenant Church

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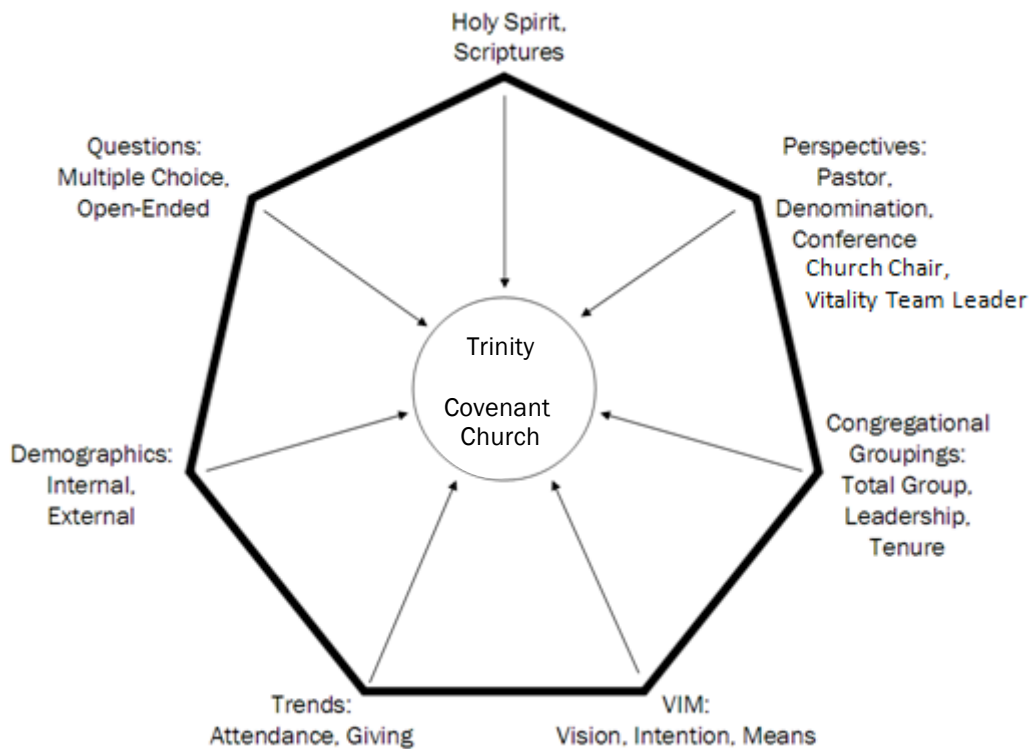
# The Purpose of PULSE

The purpose of PULSE is to edify and strengthen Covenant churches. In other words, PULSE...

- P**rovides awareness of current reality
- U**pdates progress annually
- L**inks the church more closely with the mission and message of Jesus
- S**uggests next steps
- E**ncourages spiritual discernment

# How PULSE Works

PULSE works due to a powerful combination of factors, depicted in the chart below.



These factors help the church get a fix on their current position. Awareness and acceptance of one's current reality is an important step in becoming a healthy missional church. Admitting the truth is the first step toward change. Acting on the truth may even be more challenging.

The seven letters of Revelation were addressed to seven distinct churches to help them develop a deeper awareness and acceptance of their current reality. Only then could they overcome and reach their full kingdom potential in Christ.

## PULSE Behavioral Covenant

### Colossians 3:12-14

*In our work and conversations at Trinity Covenant Church, we realize that there can be conflict, disagreements, and misunderstandings. We can be guided by healthy norms in order to maintain clear communication and personal assumptions. We seek to have conversations that are civil, compassionate and Christ-honoring. Therefore, we covenant together in these guidelines for loving relationships and values to guide our conversations. How we treat each other goes beyond words.*

#### Gratitude with Humility

We are grateful for the blessings of church and community with which God has graced us. With contrite hearts, we acknowledge that we have fallen short of the desires of our Lord for his church. We are thankful for God's grace and love as we acknowledge our shortcomings and seek to follow His direction for the church's future, whatever that may be.

#### Relationships that are God-Honoring

In every way, by thought, word, and deed, we seek to build God-honoring relationships with each other. We will build each other up and not tear down. We will respect everyone's participation and contribution as a joyful response in expressing love for God.

#### Always Gentle, Loving, and Open Communication

We accept disagreement, conflict and evaluation as normal and natural. Our approach to dealing with difficult issues will be gentle and loving. Whenever any of us has a disagreement with or criticism of another, we will communicate directly with that person, we will speak for ourselves only, and we will do so in the Christ-honoring and compassionate spirit of this covenant.

#### Considerate and Respectful, Graceful, and With Empathy

We will constantly strive to be respectful of one another's point of view, graceful in our manner of communication, and always acting with empathy and understanding of another's ideas or position. We will listen, with an open mind, to the opinions, ideas, and concerns of others and respond with thoughtfulness and sensitivity. We will focus on issues and not personalities. We will deal with behaviors, not motives. We will respond, not react.

#### Everyone Seeking Unity through Sacrifice

We recognize that we are in a church built on the cornerstone of Jesus Christ and that He is the head as well. We will seek unity by willingly sacrificing our own desires to those of our risen Lord. This is Christ's church, not ours'.

## Section 1: Healthy Missional Markers

### Centrality of the Word of God (*2 Timothy 3:16*)

- We believe that the Bible is the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine and conduct.
- Our preaching and teaching in all settings reflects careful preparation, relevance, and creativity.
- Our people are equipped and growing in their ability to study and apply Biblical truth in ways that lead to a scripturally integrated life.

### Life transforming walk with Jesus (*John 3:3,30; Phil. 1:6*)

- We teach our people how to be attentive to Christ in all circumstances.
- Our people understand the radical nature of the message and mission of Jesus that continually deconstructs and reconstructs a person's life.
- Our people are equipped and growing in their ability to use a variety of spiritual growth resources, experiences, and settings.

### Intentional evangelism (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

- We are burdened for the spiritual condition of those who do not yet know Christ.
- We have identifiable pathways for evangelism to take place in our ministries.
- Our people are equipped and growing in their ability to build spiritual friendships and know how to share their faith as God-birthered opportunities arise.

### Transforming communities through active compassion, mercy and justice ministries (*Micah 6:8*)

- We are burdened for the hurting people in our community and beyond.
- We have identifiable pathways for compassion, mercy and justice ministries to take place.
- Our people are equipped and growing in their ability to see and address the hurts and the causes of hurt in our community and beyond.

### Global perspective and engagement (*Acts 1:8*)

- We raise the sights of our members beyond our congregation and community by developing a Biblical worldview and often pray for and reference global matters.
- We have identifiable pathways to support the cause of Christ globally.
- Our people are equipped and growing in their ability to participate in the global dimensions of our ministry.

### Compelling Christian community (*Acts 2:42-47*)

- We understand that our love for one another is a powerful testimony to the deity of Jesus.
- We love each other as we are, not as we should be.
- We share life together beyond the worship service.

### Heartfelt worship (*Psalms 138:1a; John 4:23*)

- We exalt and celebrate God for who he is, what he has done, what he is doing and what he will do.
- Worship reflects careful preparation to help give voice to many dimensions of response to God such as adoration, praise, contrition, lament, and commitment.
- People leave worship knowing something more about the heart of God and about their own hearts.

### Sacrificial and generous living and giving (*Romans 12:1-8*)

- We help people discover, develop and deploy their spiritual gifts.
- We regularly, graciously, and unapologetically teach on the importance of financial stewardship in the spiritual growth of the Christian.
- We have many examples of lifestyle choices being made on the basis of stewardship and the priority God plays in the lives of our members.

### Culture of godly leadership (*Hebrews 13:7*)

- Our leaders at all levels serve with character, competence, and conviction.
- A spirit of collegiality pervades, with our people trusting our leaders and our leaders trusting our people.
- We continually identify and train godly leaders for all dimensions of our ministry.

### Fruitful organizational structures (*Exodus 18:13-26, Acts 6:1-7*)

- We can articulate a compelling, Christ-honoring vision for our church.
- We embrace evaluation as normal and natural and work through conflict constructively.
- Our organizational structures are designed to be efficient at making decisions while at the same time building congregational ownership for those decisions.



## Section 2: Summary of Missional Marker Scores



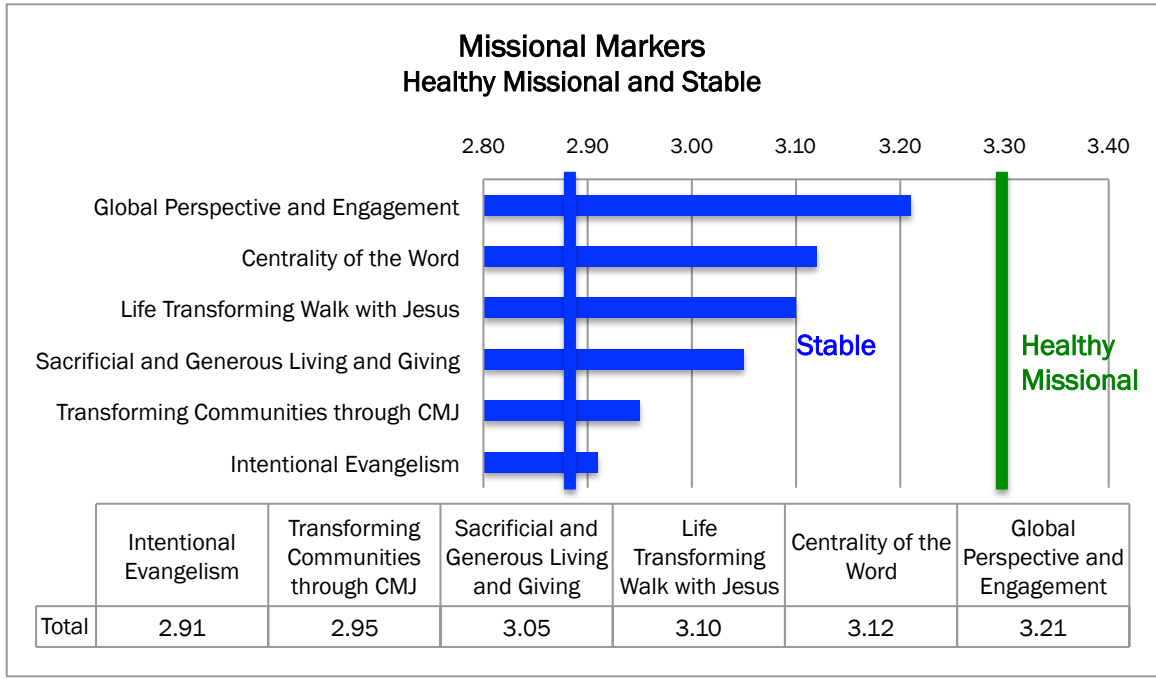
Missional Marker Rankings	
Marker:	4.00 scale
Global Perspectives and Engagement	3.21
Centrality of the Word	3.12
Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.10
Sacrificial and Generous Living and Giving	3.05
Transforming Communities through CMJ Ministries	2.95
Intentional Evangelism	2.91
Culture of Godly Leadership	2.86
Compelling Christian Community	2.84
Engaging God in Worship	2.76
Fruitful Organizational Structures	2.71
<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>2.95</b>

### Grading Scale:

Healthy Missional	3.30 – 4.00
Stable	2.90 – 3.29
Critical Moment	2.50 – 2.89
At-Risk	0.00 – 2.49

Trinity Covenant Church  
Stable 2.95

## Summary of Healthy Missional and Stable Markers



## Questions with Healthy Missional Scores

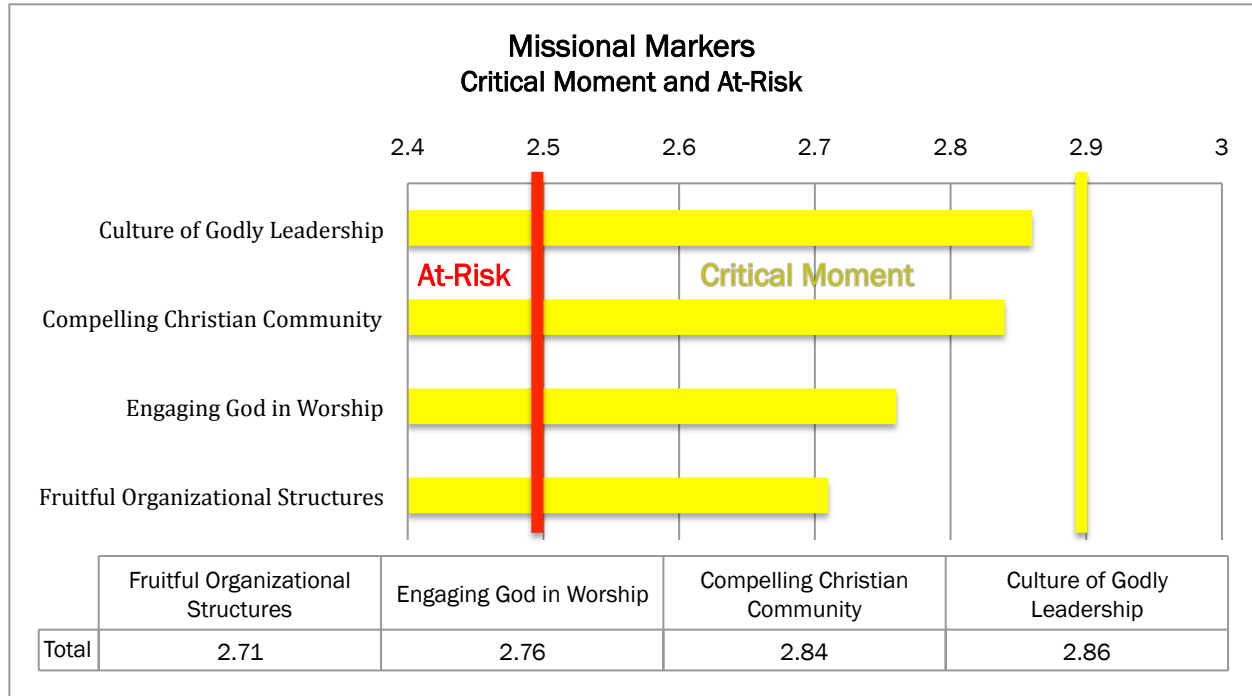
Question	Marker	Score
5 In using my spiritual gifts to serve my church and/or community, I feel that:	Sacrificial Giving and Living	3.64
2 Trinity Covenant Church has sponsored one or more mission projects in which members and attenders could participate:	Global Perspective	3.62
21 I experience joy in my relationship with God.	Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.38
36 I can adequately describe the overall story of the Bible to others.	Centrality of the Word of God	3.34
9 Of my three closest friendships, at least one was made through our church.	Compelling Christian Community	3.31

Questions with Stable Scores

Question	Marker	Score
11 My relationship with the Lord is growing.	Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.24
6 I give the following portion of my income to God for the support of the ministry of Trinity Covenant Church:	Sacrificial Giving and Living	3.23
16 I believe that our church leaders (lay/pastoral) are competent in leading us forward.	Culture of Godly Leadership	3.22
10 The programs of our church support Trinity Covenant Church's mission statement.	Fruitful Organizational Structures	3.21
12 I feel inspired by the musical portion of the worship service at Trinity Covenant Church.	Engaging God in Worship	3.18
3 I study the Bible with other Christians in a small group or Sunday school setting:	Centrality of the Word of God	3.17
13 I believe that people are coming to know Christ through the ministries of our church.	Intentional Evangelism	3.14
25 I am growing in my understanding of the Holy Spirit's influence/guidance in my life.	Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.14
14 My church offers specific ways in which I can join in ministries of compassion, mercy and/or justice.	Transforming Communities through CMJ	3.13
7 I hear prayers in our church for the broader concerns of our world (e.g., AIDS, human trafficking, world hunger):	Global Perspective	3.11
4 I hear reports/prayers for our church's/denomination's missionary efforts around the world:	Global Perspective	3.10
33 If I made my need(s) known to Trinity Covenant Church, I am confident the church would respond in a caring manner.	Compelling Christian Community	3.07
38 My church is aware of needs that call for compassion, mercy and/or justice in our community.	Transforming Communities through CMJ	3.07
24 In the last few months, my behavior has changed in at least one specific way as a result of applying God's Word to my life.	Centrality of the Word of God	3.03
40 I sense that prayer is a significant part of the life at Trinity Covenant Church.	Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.01
29 I can name at least one ministry or organization with whom our church partners.	Global Perspective	3.01
23 I have had at least one conversation in the last two months with someone who said that the sermon was relevant to his or her life.	Engaging God in Worship	2.94
1 On average, I read the Bible:	Centrality of the Word of God	2.94
15 In my church, I receive biblical instruction about financial giving.	Sacrificial Giving and Living	2.93
17 My church clearly demonstrates God's heart of compassion for poor people.	Transforming Communities through CMJ	2.90
27 I am building relationships with people who need to know the Lord.	Intentional Evangelism	2.90
34 I am actively praying for my unsaved friends to meet	Intentional Evangelism	2.90

Christ.

## Summary of Critical Moment and At-Risk Markers



### Questions with Critical Moment Scores

Question	Marker	Score
19 I see the leaders of our church (lay/pastoral) skillfully managing change.	Culture of Godly Leadership	2.85
20 I see that Trinity Covenant Church operates with effective ministry teams/committees.	Fruitful Organizational Structures	2.78
31 I believe that the leaders of our church (lay/pastoral) are able to manage conflict in a healthy way.	Culture of Godly Leadership	2.76
35 I would go to my church if I needed help to break free from addictive behaviors.	Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	2.74
18 Through the training/teaching at Trinity Covenant Church, I have a better grasp of how to share the Gospel.	Intentional Evangelism	2.71
26 During the week, it is common for me to catch myself thinking about something positive I experienced while worshipping at Trinity Covenant Church.	Engaging God in Worship	2.71
28 I have been challenged to obedience by our church's teaching on issues of compassion, mercy and/or justice.	Transforming Communities through CMJ	2.70
37 After decisions are made in congregational business meetings, I sense that people have additional "parking lot" conversations that can thwart those decisions.	Culture of Godly Leadership	2.60
22 I sense that there is an unspoken tension in our church.	Compelling Christian Community	2.55
39 Our church is willing and/or able to eliminate programs that are no longer working.	Fruitful Organizational Structures	2.55





Questions with At-Risk Scores

Question	Marker	Score
30	It seems to me that at Trinity Covenant Church, being polite is more important than being authentic with each other.	Compelling Christian Community 2.45
41	God called his creation good and gave instructions to care for the garden. Our church has challenging teaching regarding our God-given responsibility for the wise use of God's creation.	Sacrificial Giving and Living 2.42
32	The ministries of our church are regularly evaluated for their effectiveness.	Fruitful Organizational Structures 2.33
8	I have invited some of my friends to a worship service at Trinity Covenant Church within the last:	Engaging God in Worship 2.22

## Section 3: Demographic Results

### Internal Demographics






47. Please select the statement that best describes you.

I am a member who attends Trinity Covenant Church at least once a month.		155	81%
I am a member who attends Trinity Covenant Church less than once a month.		3	2%
I am not a member, but I attend at least once a month.		32	17%
I am not a member, and I attend less than once a month.		2	1%
Total		192	100%




48. I have been attending Trinity Covenant Church for the following number of years:

0 to 2		20	10%
3 to 5		28	15%
6 to 10		50	26%
11 to 20		52	27%
21+		42	22%
Total		192	100%

49. I am in the following age category:

12 to 21		4	2%
22 to 35		25	13%
36 to 50		59	31%
51 to 64		85	44%
65+		19	10%
Total		192	100%

50. I am:

Female		102	53%
Male		77	40%
Prefer not to answer		13	7%
Total		192	100%

51. In the last 10 years, our worship service attendance has:

Declined		24	12%
Stayed the same		65	34%
Increased		60	31%
Don't know		43	22%
Total		192	100%

## Section 4: Responses to and Interpretation of Open-Ended Questions

Summarized by Topic

42. In your opinion, what is the single greatest strength of Trinity Covenant Church? (176/192)

Caring Community/Welcoming (25/176; 14%)  
Youth and Children Ministries (22/176, 13%)  
Pastors/Leadership (16/176, 10%)  
Commitment to Christ (16/176, 9%)  
Worship: Music (15/176, 9%)  
Outreach/Service (15/176, 9%)  
Ministries/Programs (14/176, 8%)  
Worship: Preaching/Teaching (13/176, 7%)  
Worship (11/176, 6%)  
Centrality of the Word (10/176, 6%)  
People (9/176, 5%)

43. In your opinion, what is the single greatest area for improvement? (175/192)

Community/Hospitality (31/175; 18%)  
Church Leadership Structure (22/175, 13%)  
Worship (15/175; 9%)  
Ministries/Programs (12/175; 7%)  
Mission/Vision (12/175; 7%)  
Worship: Sermon (12/175; 6%)  
Communication (11/175; 6%)  
Outreach/Service (10/175; 6%)  
Volunteers/Lay Commitment (8/175; 5%)

44. In a few sentences, how would you describe the overall health of Trinity Covenant Church? (168/192)

Healthy Missional (36/168; 21%)  
Stable (102/168; 61%)  
Critical Moment (26/168; 15%)  
At Risk (0/168; 0%)

45. If you could change one thing about Trinity Covenant Church, what would that be? (162/192)

Church Leadership and Structure (21/162; 13%)  
Worship: Sermon and Service (20/162; 12%)  
Community and Hospitality (18/162; 11%)  
Pastors/Staff (16/162; 10%)  
Worship: Music (15/162; 9%)  
Ministries/Programs (15/162; 9%)  
Outreach/Evangelism/Service (14/162; 9%)

Q46: Is there anything else you would like to share about Trinity Covenant Church? (141/192)

We Love Our Church (32/141; 23%)  
Ministries and Programs (16/141; 11%)  
Community (12/141; 9%)  
Vision/Mission/Focus (12/141; 9%)  
Spiritual Growth (10/141; 7%)  
Change Leadership/Governance (7/141; 5%)



## Interpretation of Open-Ended Responses

The following is a list of observations and questions for the congregation, based on their responses to the open-ended questions (42-45). Although there are other questions to be asked, these are the ones that are most apparent. Please prayerfully consider these observations as you discern God's future for your church.

### OBSERVABLE STRENGTHS

#### 1. STRONG OWNERSHIP OF THE MINISTRY

There is a strong appreciation and commitment to the wellbeing of Trinity Covenant Church. This is evidenced by numerous comments on the love of their church and its diverse ministries. The people are generous and lives are being touched. This loyalty to each other will be needed as you address the change that comes from moving from a very stable church to a missional one. This strong ownership can, however, be the basis for resistance to change. Still, you are to be commended for the broad ownership of the church.

#### 2. COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL OUTREACH

It is clear that your church is mission driven. Global outreach is high on your list of values as a church. This is to be commended. There is also a commitment to local mission but this area might need clearer focus. You have the needed perspective that will move people to focus your ministry outward as a church. This is often a challenge for most churches.

#### 3. APPRECIATION FOR PASTORS/LEADERS

There appears to be love, respect and appreciation for the leadership of the church. The congregation feels that the leadership can address the challenges in the future. There is respect for the Senior Pastor's guidance of the church and by in large an appreciation for the staff.

### GROWTH AREAS

#### 1. CREATE A RENEWED VISION

There appears to be either competing visions, a lack of clarity or too much program activity in the church. To move from being a Stable to Healthy Missional church, the congregation needs a focused and renewed compelling vision that mobilizes them to move into the future. This vision needs to honor shared values and heritage of the church as well as accurately assess the cultural, demographic and spiritual realities of the surrounding community. This can be the motivation for embracing needed change for the overall health of the church.

#### 2. A NEED FOR A FULL MINISTRY ASSESSMENT

It seems that there is a need to conduct a full ministry assessment. There is a sense that the governance structure is far too complicated for focused and effective ministry. There very well could be too many programs. A good system of assessment to determine if the programs are effective and accomplishing the mission of the church is needed. Find ways to breathe life into some tired programs as well as letting some of them die. These decisions need to be made based upon your mission of the church.

#### 3. FURTHER DEVELOP A WELCOMING MINISTRY TO OUTSIDERS

Trinity Covenant Church sees itself as a caring, welcoming church. It is probably more caring for the people who are integrated into the life of the church. This is generally a characteristic of very stable churches. This is good but it can be the very barrier that prohibits new people from feeling welcome. It is critically important to become genuinely welcoming to outsiders and usher them into the inner life of the church.

## Section 5: Tenure and Leadership

Marker:	Score by Years at the Church:				
	0-2 (20)	3-5 (28)	6-10 (50)	11-20 (52)	21+ (42)
Centrality of the Word	3.05	3.09	3.16	3.17	3.06
Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.14	3.09	3.14	3.12	3.02
Engaging God in Worship	2.71	2.76	2.84	2.75	2.71
Intentional Evangelism	2.76	2.82	2.96	3.01	2.86
Transforming Communities through CMJ Ministries	2.83	3.10	2.98	2.98	2.85
Global Perspective and Engagement	2.96	3.32	3.27	3.21	3.18
Compelling Christian Community	2.80	2.93	2.89	2.86	2.74
Sacrificial and Generous Living and Giving	2.99	2.99	3.06	3.12	3.04
Culture of Godly Leadership	2.98	3.04	2.89	2.76	2.77
Fruitful Organizational Structures	2.64	2.83	2.68	2.75	2.68
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>2.89</b>

Note:

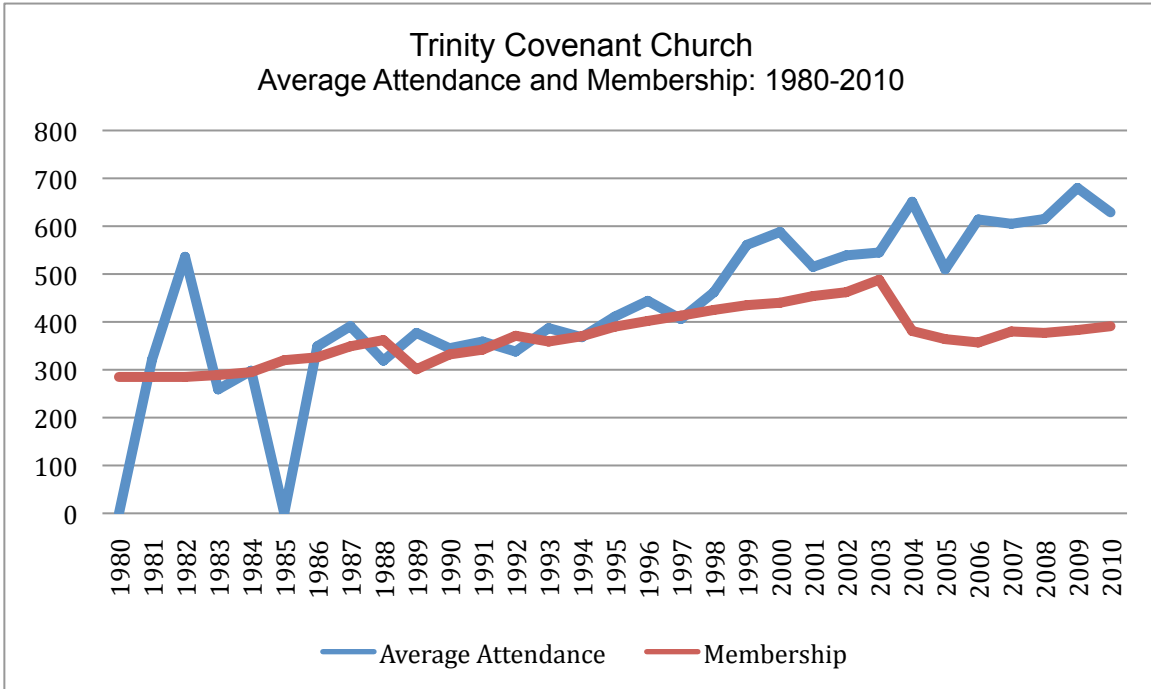
Marker:	In Leadership (92)	Not in Leadership (100)
Centrality of the Word	3.20	3.04
Life Transforming Walk with Jesus	3.12	3.08
Engaging God in Worship	2.81	2.73
Intentional Evangelism	2.94	2.89
Transforming Communities through CMJ Ministries	2.96	2.94
Global Perspective and Engagement	3.26	3.16
Compelling Christian Community	2.86	2.83
Sacrificial and Generous Living and Giving	3.15	2.97
Culture of Godly Leadership	2.80	2.91
Fruitful Organizational Structures	2.68	2.75
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>2.93</b>

Note:

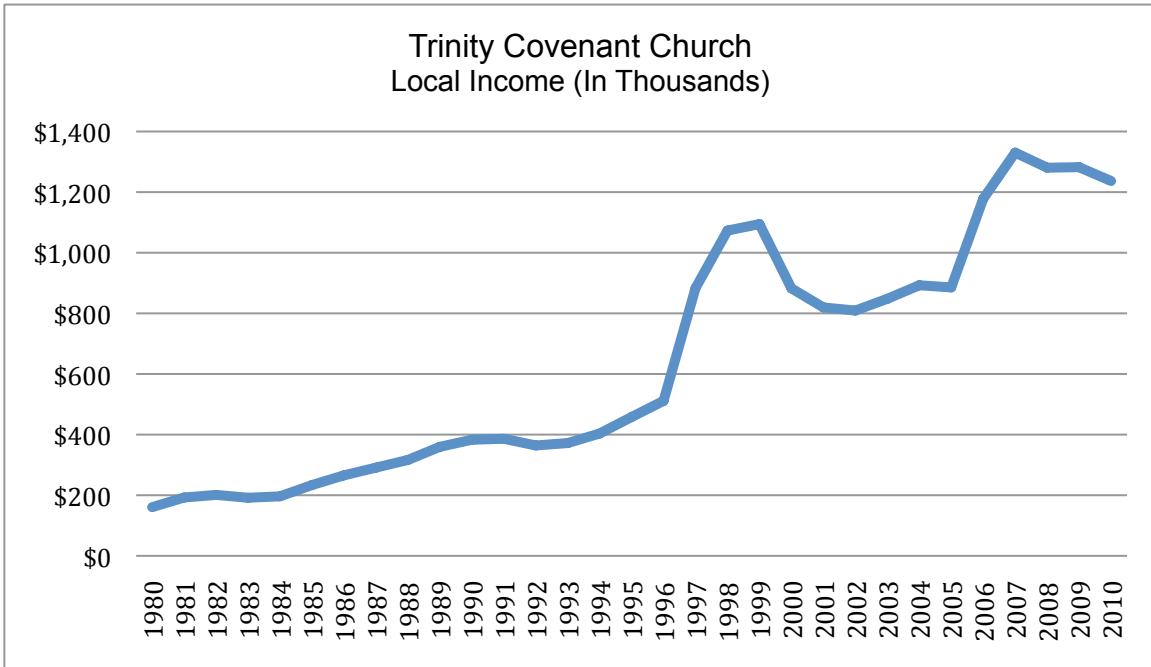
\*Parentheses () indicate number of responses in each category, of a total **192** responses.

## Section 6: Attendance and Income Trends

As reported to the Department of Church Growth and Evangelism every November



Note:



Note:

Gaps in the lines of data indicate no data was reported for that category, for that year. Also, it is important to delineate between weekly giving and bequests.

## Section 7: VIM Assessment

Healthy Missional churches are full of vim and vigor. VIM stands for Vision, Intention and Means. While these dynamics are sometimes difficult to rate, they do provide another look into the current reality of the church. The VIM rates are measured in terms of low, medium and high. There is a correlation between the type of church and the rate of VIM. For example, healthy missional churches have a VIM score of High Vision, High Intention and High Means. At-risk churches have a VIM score of Low Vision, Low Intention and Low Means.

The VIM score is a result of deduction and discernment, not statistical analysis. The PULSE team takes into account all the results, combines the information with what is known from other established churches in the ECC, and prayerfully discerns the VIM levels.

Vision is the picture of a preferable future – God’s future for the church. Vision gives people a target and gets people in the game. Vision helps dreams become bigger than memories. Christ honoring vision is compelling and inspires people to move forward to reach their full kingdom potential in Christ. It is communicated with clarity, urgency and passion.

*Based on the responses from PULSE and information about other ECC churches, the rate of vision for Trinity Covenant Church is Low-Medium.*

Intention is the resolve to move forward and the will to live, the willingness to count the cost and pay the price. It is the commitment to do whatever it takes to move forward and become a healthy missional church. Intention also embraces the understanding of what it means to carry out the message and mission of Jesus in a post modern, post Christian culture. There is a willingness to accept the degree and the kind of change that is truly necessary to become a healthy missional church in this culture. Churches often underestimate just how much change is needed in order to thrive. There is a belief that “we can grow without change and change without pain.”

*Based on the responses from PULSE and information about other ECC churches, the rate of intention for Trinity Covenant Church is Medium.*

Means are the available resources to accomplish the vision and follow through on the church’s intentions. Means refers to the ministry muscle of the church. Ministry muscle includes factors like stamina, children and youth, finances, building, leadership, number of volunteers. This asset base provides a sufficient platform for moving forward.

*Based on the responses from PULSE and information about other ECC churches, the rate of means for Trinity Covenant Church is Medium-High*

VIM Summary:

*Low-Medium Vision, Medium Intention, and Medium-High Means is a pattern consistent with other ECC churches that are Stable.*

## Section 8: Church Type and Trajectory

There are four types of established churches in the ECC: Healthy Missional, Stable, Critical Moment and At-Risk. These are churches that have been in existence for at least ten years.

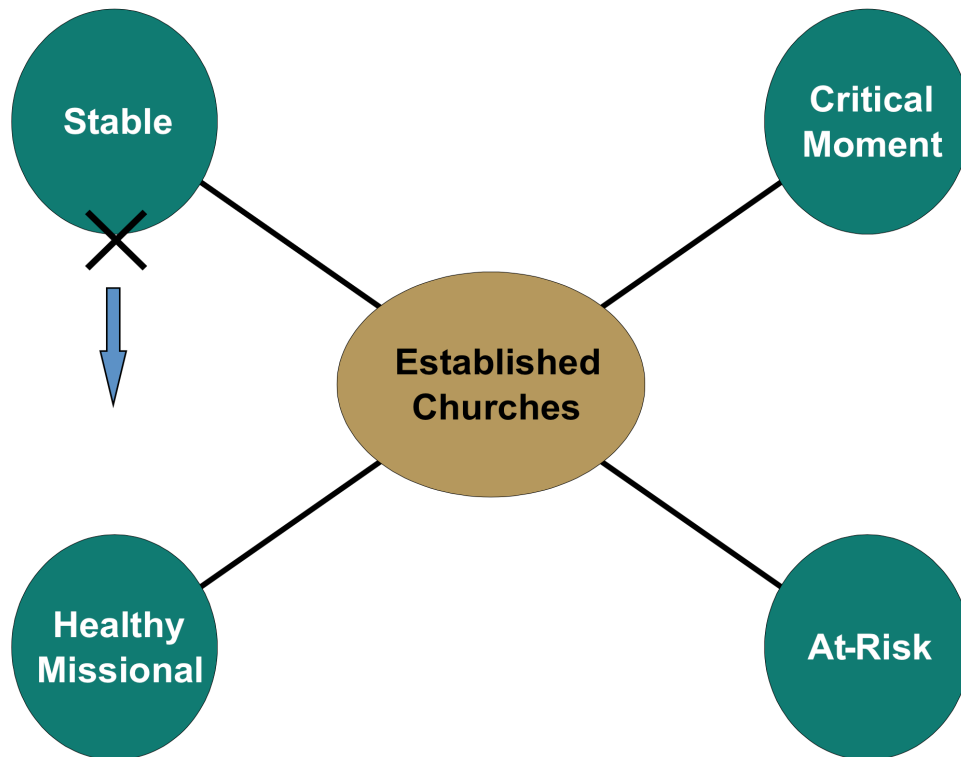
Jesus loves each of these churches equally, just as he loves the seven churches in the book of Revelation. Even though churches come in different shapes and sizes, it is comforting and reassuring to know that each one matters to God.

In a healthy missional church, the ten markers are lived out consistently. There are no perfect churches, but a healthy missional church generally displays all the signs of life and vitality.

Based on the responses from PULSE and information about other ECC churches, the church type that most closely describes Trinity Covenant Church is Stable.

The trajectory of the arrow is more important than the location of the "X". Trinity Covenant Church is Stable, moving towards Healthy Missional.

How can a church that is Stable move forward in the journey of becoming a Healthy Missional church? The next section is devoted to answering that question.



## Section 9: Next Steps and Recommendations ...for the congregation and leadership

As a Stable church, Trinity Covenant has incredible potential to become a Healthy Missional church. The following recommendations are made in a spirit of humility and gentleness.

### Spirituality

- Stability can be the enemy of vitality. What needs to happen for you to move from a Stable church to a Missional one? There are many people that are satisfied with the way things are but there is a growing uneasiness with the present and future of the ministry. Staying where you are is not an option. You must move courageously forward.
- Set aside time for prayer as you revision the future direction of the church. Engage people in prayer through the whole process of ministry assessment. People praying for the future is essential. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, search the Scriptures to see how your reenergized vision matches the desires of God for the church.
- Keep alive the deep sense of global mission. This brings joy to God's heart as you fulfill the great commission. Keep focusing people on the incredible opportunities for touching people's lives in your city.
- Refresh worship services. They are greatly appreciated very by most people. It is difficult to appeal to all people. It might be necessary to refresh and move the services to profoundly touch the next generation of people who will come to your church home.
- Strong church bonds. Keep the strong church bonds alive and well as your navigate through the difficult change of moving a stable church to become intentionally missional.

### Chemistry

- Being authentic and honest is more important than being polite. Good communication is critical in the climate of change. Keep creating a climate of trust and candor. Keep working on these dynamics. The journey from being Stable to Missional will not be easy
- Generational dynamics are at work. Read, "The Multi-Generational Congregation: Meeting the Leadership Challenge" by Gilbert Rendle. It might be helpful. It addresses how you can move forward as a body without demanding that everyone think, worship or grow the same way.

### Strategy

- Re-envision the ministry. It might be wise to begin a comprehensive re-visioning process. Build on the past vision but be open to a whole new unfolding of the ministry at Trinity Covenant Church. You might want to bring in a consultant to help with this process.
- Conduct full ministry assessment. Give careful, honest analysis of each ministry of the church and make the necessary changes to better focus and strengthen the effectiveness of your ministries. Based upon renewed vision, assess your programs in regard to staffing, structure simplification, program enhancement and elimination. It might be necessary to bring in a third party to advise you on the process because we often are too close to the situation to see clearly and make the tough choices.
- Understand the change dynamics. It is critical in the midst of the change that needs to occur that you have a handle on the processes that move you forward. Tension is often not over the issue but how it is processed. Be sensitive to the pace of change. It is important that the decisions are made based upon mission not just the sole desires of the various people.
- Establish a strong welcoming and connecting ministry for outsiders. The church needs to further develop an assimilation program. This often requires a significant shift as people get out of there established groups and truly reach out to outsiders.

## Next Steps and Recommendations ...for the Pastor(s)

### Spirituality

- There is always the ongoing need for personal growth. Keep developing a personal growth plan so you can maintain spiritual vitality. With the pressures of maintaining vital ministry, we can often forget the need for continual spiritual growth. Be honest growing and vulnerable.
- Keep working on preaching so it has depth and relevancy. Your messages are appreciated but you should keep developing your preaching skills.
- Lead and champion the need for new ministry wide vision. This is your role and you are in a position to lead the charge because you are appreciated and respected. You need to follow through on this next stage of the church's ministry with clarity and persistence.
- Do not get discouraged in maintaining so many church programs. It is difficult at times to carry the weight of the expansive ministry. God is our source of encouragement.
- For the Senior Pastor, you are in the later season of ministry, so end strong! You have an opportunity to take the church through a new season of church life.

### Chemistry

- You need to understand that your church is at a crossroads. There is the needed stability to build a new season of ministry but moving from a stable church to a healthy missional one is a difficult but necessary step. Your leadership is crucial to the next step.
- Lead the congregation carefully through change. This is the role of leadership. It is important to balance stability with necessary change.
- Keep developing a climate of candor and trust. As you lead your congregation through the necessary conversations regarding visionary change, be sure to exhibit non-anxious leadership.

### Strategy

- If you do not have a personal growth plan, we would encourage you to develop one that will keep you spiritually strong in the context of change.
- Monitor the pace and depth of change. The "system" can only take so much change at any time.
- Study the dynamics of organizational life and structural change. This will be important as you move forward

## Section 10: Conclusion

*“...Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Ephesians 4:15-16*

The intent of PULSE is to speak the truth in love so that churches will reach their full Kingdom potential in Christ and grow in ways that matter to God. Your church matters to God regardless of your current state of health. Just like the words to the seven churches of Revelation, the message of PULSE contains a call to awareness, rugged hope and redemptive warning.

*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches? Revelation 2:7*

According to your responses and from what we know about other established churches in the Covenant, Trinity Covenant Church is Stable and moving toward Healthy Missional. There is some great ministry happening at your church, take time to celebrate what God is doing among you. You have many strengths and a rich heritage. With stability comes the potential of stagnation and being stuck in the establish patterns of church life. There is a deep need to move beyond being stable and envision a new future that faces the new realities and makes the painful choices to become more healthy and missional. Be sure to make your decisions based upon the God’s purposes for the church, your unique vision and the mission of the church. May God bless you as you move forward with courage, persistence and clarity!

As stated in the introduction, the answers are not in PULSE, the answers are in the conversations you have about PULSE, as the Holy Spirit leads and guides. These conversations need to be civil, compassionate, and Christ honoring. This is why a behavioral covenant is vital.

As you ponder, discuss and pray about these recommendations, may you sense God’s empowering presence and love for you. This is a matter of spiritual discernment and we commend you to the Lord,

as you listen to the still small voice  
as you love one another  
as you discern what God’s desire is for you and your community.