

## PARISH DEVELOPMENT SESSION TWO – Tuesday June 16, 2015

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### SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION

#### DEFINITION REMINDER

*Parish development is the development of parishes into more faithful, healthy and effective communities of faith that focus on and are faithful to their **unique reason for being** as local manifestations of the body of Christ*

In Session ONE we considered WHAT IS UNIQUE about the ministry of the Church of the Advent.

Now we go deeper and in more detail to discover our *uniqueness in worship*.

**SPECIFICALLY:** *What is our unique ecclesial tradition, ethos and character?* In an age when people “shop around” for a church, what do they notice about worship at our church? What attracts them? What simply does not work for them? This assumes they are motivated to try new things which certainly is not always/often the case. We know we retain those steeped in Anglican tradition. What about others? Do we, must we change? What strengths should we celebrate and stress? What should we now leave behind, if anything?

**We heard the story of the parish of St. Paul’s, Seattle** which used the term “Westcoast Anglo-Catholic” to describe their liturgical, spiritual and community life. This term poses the question for us, what term would we use to describe ourselves and our worship life?

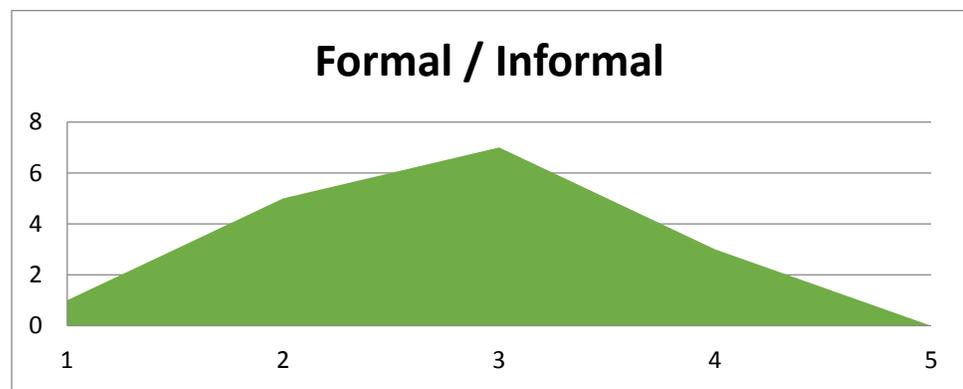
To that end we shared a **GROUP PROCESS: HOW WOULD WE DESCRIBE** worship to someone visiting our church of the first time. We considered and rated the following: Results are in the data section which is expressed graphically below.

Formal (ritual)	1	5	7	3	0	Informal (spontaneous)
Musical	0	7	7	1	0	Comprised of speech
Noisy (active)	0	4	5	7	0	Silent (reflective)
Intellectual (heady)	0	8	6	0	0	Charismatic (emotional)
Individual (private)	1	5	3	7	1	Social (communal)

Tidy	1	7	8	2	0	Rough at the edges
Prosaic	0	6	8	1	0	Poetic
Inward looking	1	9	4	1	0	Outward looking
Settled (consistent)	1	9	4	2	0	Searching (provocative)

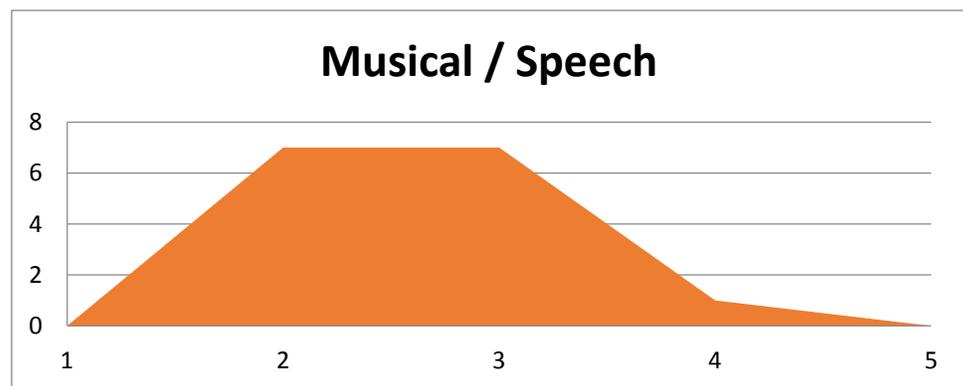
COMMENT ON PROCESS: It was a mistake to include a midpoint selection: Some understood this to be a measure of success in indicating a kind of balance or effectiveness. The point of the project was actually to discern leanings and tendencies. This deficiency noted, trends did emerge even within such a small sample:

Our preference is towards the centre-left, but the preference is subtle. Based on personal exit interviews and anecdotal evidence we



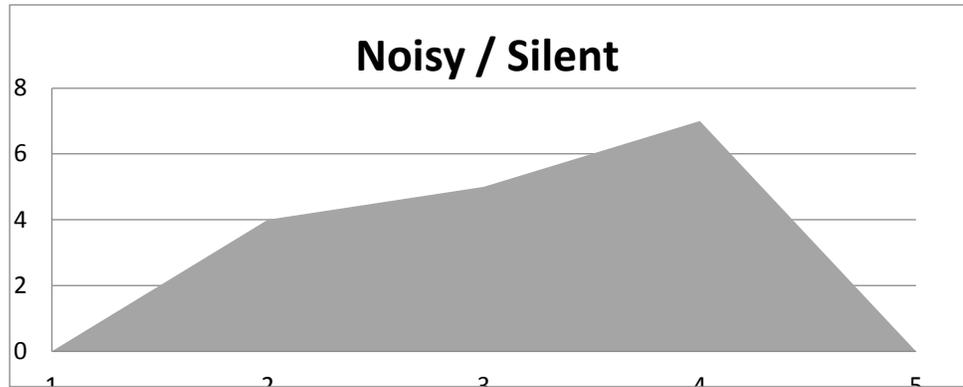
have gained and lost folks with preferences for both formal and informal worship. Our present balance might be just fine but when compared with the dominant, charismatic, entertainment-centred worship styles of evangelical WestShore churches we are definitely out of step.

A strong preference for ambience created by music over textual content is evident here. This does explain some of the

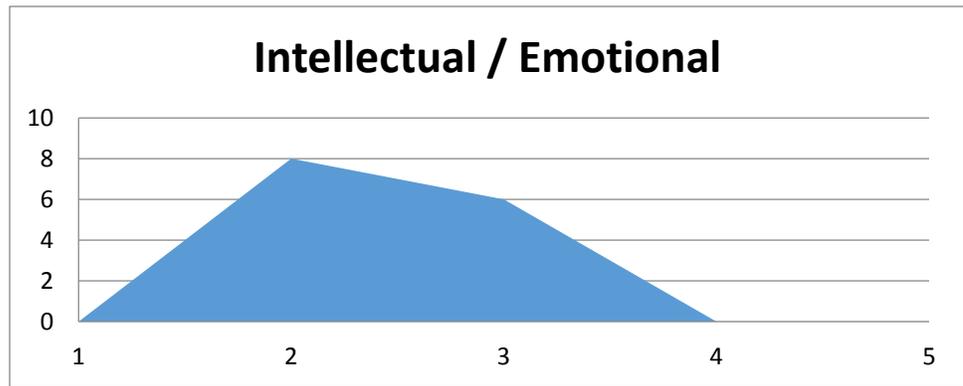


reactions to preaching I sometime shear. Curious however is the leaning towards music in a congregation which as a whole does not sing that lustily. There is of course no music at 830.

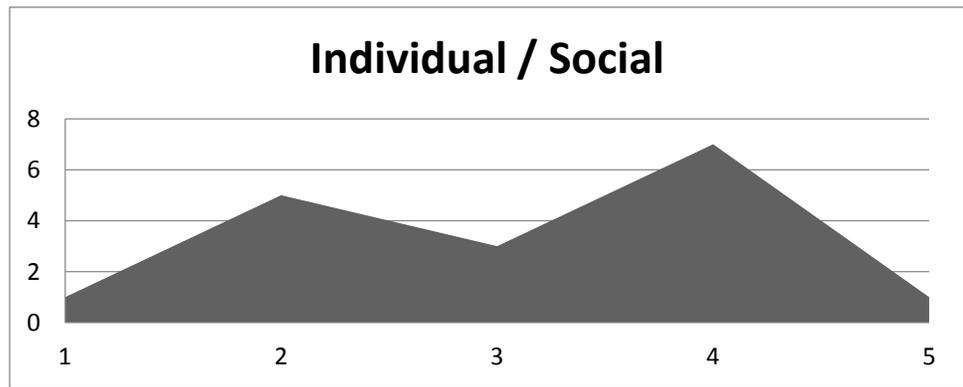
We do prefer a certain busy-ness and can accommodate some noise and interruption though within limits. So we can welcome busy children and the occasional snoring sermon follower. This seems however contrary to expressed desires for silence and reflection found in the data from session ONE.



The data demonstrates a clear preference for *thought* over *feelings*. The two are of course never disconnected. The preference falls off more emphatically than in other indicators. .

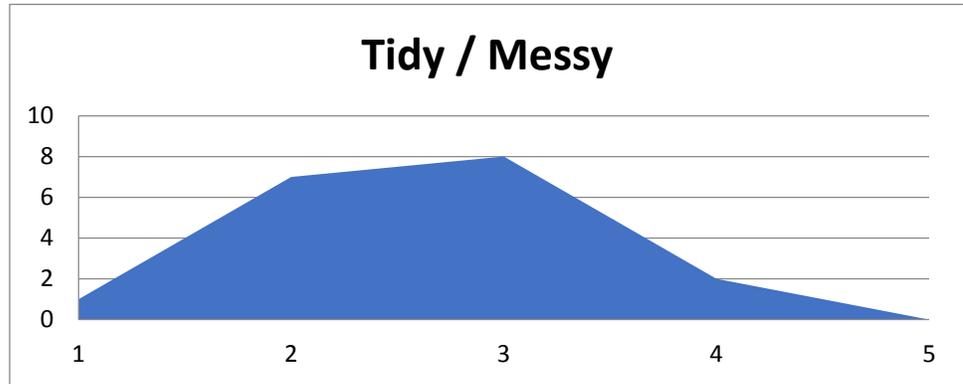


Between “you in your small corner and me in mine” and “we’re in this together” the data suggest a preference for the latter.



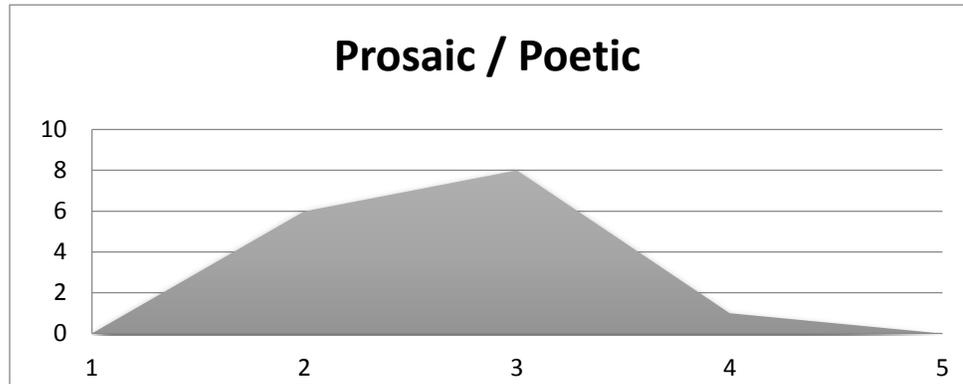
We value community, so when we sing “we the Lord’s people” this indicates either who we think we are or who we seek to become.

It seems that all things must be accomplished within good order. It also seems that the week-to-week experience and management of

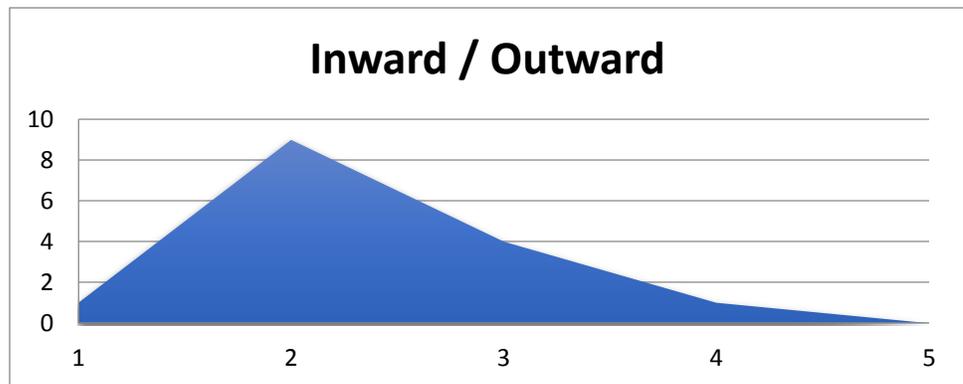


worship is consistent. “Messy church” does not happen on Sunday mornings, but neither do we have the most children or visitors gathered at that time.

Essentially the question is do you want to be *taught through* language or *moved by* language. We prefer the former quite noticeably.

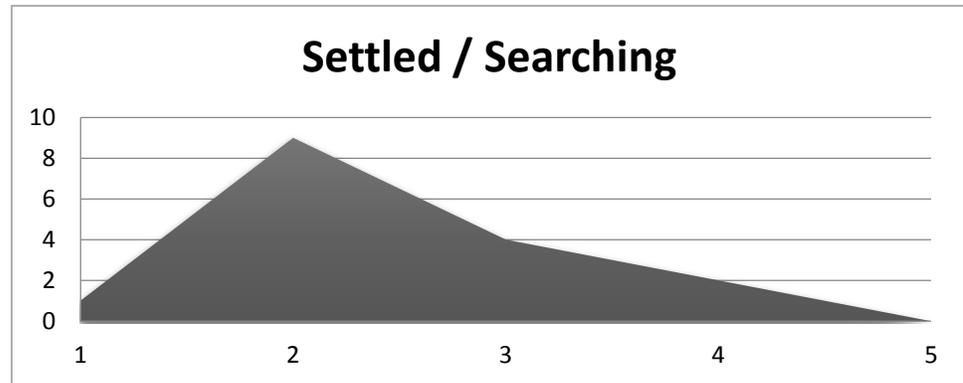


Contrary to the above, when asked a similar question as before, we prefer the “quiet centre” rather than “Christ in the city centre.”



Outreach, in its many aspects is not a core value and cherished practice

Most telling of all? Don't change anything! Despite our contemporary worship space and occasional experiment with



different rites, those surveyed value stability over experiment where worship is concerned. This is problematic on almost every level and may explain the real difficulty we experience with vision exercises, including this ministry development work.

All of the above is a sample from fifteen people for whom what we presently do works well for them. It is impossible to survey those who have little or no connection with church or worship. This data speaks only to our experience as we hypothetically try to invite someone into "our space."

**So how does the Church of the Advent understand its worship style. I would suggest PREDICTABLE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN. What do you think?**

In session three in August we will look at the "ministry at the door" which describes how we welcome folks and send them/ourselves out.

Stay tuned, and thanks for reading. Ken+