

**Kirk of Kildaire, Presbyterian  
Cary, NC  
Summary of Questions for Reflection – Questionnaire I**

Prior to the Session Retreat in January, all Kirk elders (ruling and non-ruling and those who were elders at a previous church they attended) were asked to respond to two questionnaires regarding the church. These responses were used as talking points during small group meetings as we discussed the health of the Kirk.

Questionnaire I provided questions for reflections and the responses are correlated below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times this comment was provided. Questionnaire II was “Strength at the Center, A Congregational Health Inventory” developed by Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute. This questionnaire focused on key elements needed for growth and vitality in a congregation. Numeric responses are assigned to each question that when compiled and averaged provide an overall score that reflects the congregations health based on its size. The Kirk is a corporate-sized church (350+ average Sunday attendance). Scoring range is: Good (270 points or higher), Fair (220 or higher), and Poor (180 points or higher). The Kirk’s average score was 255, which is fair. This is a fairly accurate assessment as it indicated what we know we do well and areas we know we need to improve upon, such as communication. This questionnaire has not been posted as it is copyrighted.

**1. If you have joined the church in the last 5-7 years, what were the reasons you chose this church? If you are a longer term member, what are some of the special things you remember about the church?**

- ◆ Strong children/youth programs/youth group (13)
- ◆ Strong music program (all ages)
- ◆ Very friendly/caring/joyful people (20)
- ◆ Many meaningful and fun activities
- ◆ Wonderful Circle
- ◆ Preschool
- ◆ Roger Jackle– great person/sermons/relationships (5)
- ◆ Lots of children and young families (5)
- ◆ Membership of people with wide differences in background and religious experiences as Cary has grown (3)
- ◆ The Kirk has grown
- ◆ Support during personal crisis (2)
- ◆ Remember knowing or at least recognizing every name in the church directory (3)
- ◆ Small and close knit community (10)
- ◆ Attracted to church because of quality of children’s programs (4)
- ◆ Impressed with the creativity and dedication of the congregation
- ◆ Congregational
- ◆ When we joined worshipping in the Great Hall felt very comfortable as that was similar to the church we had come from
- ◆ Joan McCarthy made me feel very welcomed and was a big reason I joined (2)
- ◆ Willingness to let people try new programs (3)
- ◆ Relevant messages and sermons (2)
- ◆ Dedication of new space (2)

- ◆ Acceptance and encouragement of those who are still on their spiritual journey without all the answers (2)
- ◆ Varied adult Sunday school classes for member with differing spiritual needs (2)
- ◆ Small groups
- ◆ Lining up chairs in the Great Hall for worship
- ◆ A way for us to extend our family since all are so far away – remains true today
- ◆ Very similar to previous church that I loved
- ◆ Singspiration by Janet Holcombe (2)
- ◆ Challenging sermons that didn't leave me comfortable
- ◆ A place I feel at home away from home surrounded by people who genuinely love and care
- ◆ Many good members trying to follow the Lord
- ◆ Responsiveness to a vision for Mission
- ◆ It's liberal stance
- ◆ Excitement about the future
- ◆ Adventure of being part of a younger church
- ◆ When smaller had a higher percentage who participated in church activities, seemed to be more "ownership" than today, more committed (3)
- ◆ Extended family were already members
- ◆ Kirk offered a way for me to heal spiritually and form a relationship with God
- ◆ Wanted larger size church to attend with many opportunities for programs, worship, fellowship
- ◆ Wonderful nursery/childcare (2)
- ◆ Joined because my friends (who are members) kept telling me how vital the Kirk has been in their lives and the lives of their family

## **2. What are the most important things about the church to you now?**

- ◆ Senior choir/handbell choirs (7)
- ◆ Keeping that friendly, smaller atmosphere as we grow much larger
- ◆ KOALA tutoring (4)
- ◆ Ministry outside the church (8)
- ◆ Quality of worship/sermons (20)
- ◆ Small/K groups (15)
- ◆ Quality of Sunday school (adult and children) and youth programs (23)
- ◆ Quality childcare in nursery
- ◆ Love our church staff – they bring excitement, encouragement, and new ideas to the congregation (5)
- ◆ Love the way we have stepped into the global missions field/quality and quantity of mission opportunities (9)
- ◆ Happy the church is growing and enjoy meeting new families
- ◆ Continue to maintain the sense of community among members (5)
- ◆ Willingness of congregation to try new things (mission trips, etc.) (4)
- ◆ Congregation is an amazing asset
- ◆ Having a great staff/working with staff (5)
- ◆ Care shown by congregation to others (5)
- ◆ Diversity of congregation (3)
- ◆ As senior citizens we are part of a close knit family
- ◆ Traditional service

- ◆ Serve communion
- ◆ A place to find love, grace, faith, and find God's will (4)
- ◆ Variety of opportunities to contribute and volunteer
- ◆ Circles (2)
- ◆ Place to nurture all its members (3)
- ◆ Grow in inclusion and diversity
- ◆ Kirk's participation in the discernment of my call to ministry (former youth now seminarian)
- ◆ A place to serve (2)
- ◆ Helping to create a place that welcomes all, especially those that feel they don't fit in or care to attend (2)
- ◆ Stephen Ministry (5)
- ◆ A place where everyone is valued
- ◆ A place where people can see Jesus and feel his presence (3)
- ◆ A place where people can come and pour out their hearts to God
- ◆ Growing sense of warmth, joy, and welcome throughout the congregation (3)
- ◆ The people/fellowship (6)
- ◆ Feeling of "home" and belonging
- ◆ Sense of purpose to mission of church
- ◆ Dedicated volunteers
- ◆ Christian family with authentic compassion
- ◆ Range of activities to participate in and fellowship opportunities

### **3. What are the things I would like to strengthen and/or change?**

- ◆ More mission/outreach programs (8)
- ◆ Continue to grow all levels of the music ministry/another choir for early service (4)
- ◆ More Bible study opportunities (4)
- ◆ Have a Wednesday night program(s)
- ◆ Explore and strengthen adult education (6)
- ◆ Energize the congregation for Mission (neighborhood, town, country, world) (8)
- ◆ Worship – enrich worship elements as a way of heightening the experience (3)
- ◆ Still seems that while "newer" and "older" members mix there is some division
- ◆ Have an older, single ministry (2)
- ◆ Have a married couple without children program
- ◆ Improve young adult ministry (2)
- ◆ Communication between session and other groups so that session realizes how one action can affect others
- ◆ Intentionally finding a place for all to serve (3)
- ◆ Committees being responsible for overseeing sub-committees under them so there is accountability
- ◆ Increase member involvement and have people recognize their spiritual gifts (11)
- ◆ Improve communication in all aspects of the church (Krier not enough, have Minute for Mission or Special Program) (6)
- ◆ Large volunteer base without constant begging (4)
- ◆ Stronger dollar base to support staff and programs
- ◆ Welcome of visitors and members who don't attend regularly
- ◆ Worry less about what our members believe and more about how they act

- ◆ Strengthen and expand small groups to help benefit new member assimilation, spiritual growth, members become more committed/involved and provide more support and care for each other (3)
- ◆ Take a more active approach to interviewing new members to match their interests to volunteer opportunities and actively help them get connected
- ◆ Contemporary worship (7)
- ◆ Worship services seem rushed and don't permit a time of reflection during transitions
- ◆ Fellowship after services
- ◆ Strengthen message of church – one loving God for an imperfect loving people
- ◆ Shorter and more to the point sermons that give me things to apply to my life throughout the week
- ◆ Celebrate the Holy Days in the Lectionary (e.g., Lamb of God Sunday, Christ the King Sunday)
- ◆ Undertake a three-year mortgage reduction campaign
- ◆ Review intinction communion process at 9 AM and change back to traditional passing of the elements (2)
- ◆ More potlucks
- ◆ Assess that as we grow and add programs/activities that no one gets left behind (2)
- ◆ Program on our Presbyterian and Scottish Heritage
- ◆ Those that live alone are contacted daily just to make sure they are ok
- ◆ Pledging emphasized and increased/time for every member canvass (5)
- ◆ Fix sound system, still not working properly and lots of what is said is missed (5)
- ◆ Help Glenaire residents get to bus without having to push through the crowd, many have difficulty walking
- ◆ Current 9 AM worship hurts Sunday school (time cut by 25%) since time is curtailed, impacted participation in Sunday school or choir, this must be reversed (4)
- ◆ Reaching out to Kirk's immediate neighborhood
- ◆ Starting another "Kirk campus" in Apex/Holly Springs area (2)
- ◆ New member integration (4)
- ◆ A place where people care for each other and is of an outreach mindset where there is always strength, peace, and a sense of Christ-centeredness, and outward looking rather than inward-looking
- ◆ Grow small group ministry (3)
- ◆ Consider LOGOS and other disciple-making ministries
- ◆ Grow beyond thinking of church as a Sunday activity, think of it as 7 days a week when it comes to offering classes, meals, etc. (2)
- ◆ People should have to meet higher standards to join, be willing to commit to time, talent, and money
- ◆ Evaluate the Session size and responsibilities – even out the workload and seek to fill the Session with true leaders (2)
- ◆ Careful analysis of and use of available space
- ◆ Encourage members to see need for regular attendance
- ◆ Not grow larger
- ◆ Update Krier and printed material to be more user-friendly, attractive, and concise
- ◆ Welcome Team Member (good start), need lay visitors team to follow-up
- ◆ Although we are a Christ-centered church, the message of salvation is rarely heard (altar calls aren't necessary)

- ◆ Need an immediate, short-term contingency plan (long-term too) to deal with parking issue (shuttle service, alternate parking), moving time of early service has helped but this isn't dealing with the problem positively
- ◆ Need an extended class for new Christians or people who haven't have CE while growing up (2)
- ◆ More space for CE Adult (2)
- ◆ Spiritual development opportunities (5)
- ◆ Older members are somewhat forgotten – we need to visit them too
- ◆ Connecting ministries with one another, having an overarching mission that all committees can work towards – cohesion/alignment (2)
- ◆ Deepen the biblical/devotional aspects of members lives
- ◆ Strengthen the art on banners for the worship services
- ◆ Establish a Friendship Fund to assist the needy, possibly administered by the minister, people who have needs could also be ministered to at the same time
- ◆ The Kirk's "bigness," it feels like we a running a big business, not a community church focused on its members and their well-being
- ◆ More young people playing or singing music
- ◆ Rotation potlucks so that more can participate
- ◆ New piano in Sanctuary
- ◆ More adult choir members
- ◆ More fellowship time
- ◆ To determine and move into a direction with the Kirk. To be an important part of the community with our chosen direction and to become a magnet for people seeking to be a part of our direction
- ◆ Help people obtain leadership skills (3)
- ◆ Provide benefits to all of church staff (did not come from a member of the staff)

#### **4. How have the members seen the church change in the last five years?**

- ◆ Bigger church staff/stability of staff/staff changes (37)
- ◆ Much larger membership (20)
- ◆ More thoughtful programs (9)
- ◆ Strong pastoral leadership (5)
- ◆ Growing music program (6)
- ◆ Mission opportunities/outreach and support (15)
- ◆ Return of disenchanting members
- ◆ Strong CE children programs (5)
- ◆ Believe leadership is set to take us forward for the next 10-15 years
- ◆ Jody's arrival has started the reenergizing (3)
- ◆ Grow and seek to do God's work
- ◆ Core group of members who have held the Kirk together the past few years (2)
- ◆ We have learned to forgive a little more and allow everyone to speak (2)
- ◆ Core group of volunteers
- ◆ Rich sermons relevant to my needs (2)
- ◆ Youth program moved away from service/study/service/worship to a more social program
- ◆ Youth program seems less focused
- ◆ Moved from members doing the work to paying someone to do the work
- ◆ Focused on growing the congregation and adding programs, hopefully not at the cost of caring for the congregation

- ◆ Special worship services (e.g., grieving)
- ◆ Seems like it is the same people (those who have been members 10+ years) are still doing the majority of the work
- ◆ Less visible conflict
- ◆ Greater outreach within the congregation, e.g., older members reaching out to newer members (3)
- ◆ Maintain intimacy and warmth as we grow
- ◆ A more welcoming congregation and a greater connection with one another
- ◆ Restoration of order and positive outlook
- ◆ Giving seems to be growing slower than expenses
- ◆ For the first time in the history of the Kirk, Christian Education has become a second tier priority, this is a major problem for me and others who have provided very consistent financial support for a long period

**5. What has happened in the last three years that has helped me grow in my faith and relationship with God and in demonstrating God's love to others?**

- ◆ Fellowship activities have brought me closer to other members in faith (3)
- ◆ I became an elder, and the elder training was a meaningful experience – I became closer to God (4)
- ◆ Becoming an elder (8)
- ◆ Efficiently run Session meetings and other church business thus avoiding unnecessary conflict
- ◆ Jody was a wonderful leader (for elder training)
- ◆ Working with Caregivers (4)
- ◆ Sunday school (7)
- ◆ Bible study (Kirk and other locations) (5)
- ◆ More inspiring sermons/Worship (10)
- ◆ Jody's special classes (4)
- ◆ Installation of Jody as senior pastor has added to worship/strong pastoral staff (3)
- ◆ Regular Sunday school/other Kirk teaching commitments
- ◆ Preaching
- ◆ Teaching (3)
- ◆ Kerygma (3)
- ◆ ASP
- ◆ Becoming part of the Kirk staff
- ◆ Circles (3)
- ◆ Serving on PNC
- ◆ Outreach ministries, such as Habitat. WIHN, KOALA, Meals on Wheels, Mission trips (10)
- ◆ Friendship with folks who have a common interest
- ◆ K/small/youth group experiences (10)
- ◆ Taking on new role in the church (2)
- ◆ Seeing my children's/grandchildren's faith grow (2)
- ◆ Becoming more politically active
- ◆ Prayer and meditation and prayers of others for me (2)
- ◆ Having children (2)
- ◆ Personal crisis or loss of loved ones – love and support shown universally by the church was both overwhelming and humbling (4)
- ◆ Participating in and leading AIMS
- ◆ Refugee resettlement (2)

- ◆ Contemporary worship
- ◆ Starting Ethiopian fellowship
- ◆ Helping newcomers from church in Ethiopia have a home here
- ◆ Music ministry
- ◆ Guatemalan mission trip (3)
- ◆ Working with Session and key leaders (2)
- ◆ New staff has given me more energy
- ◆ Growing older and becoming more tolerant of others
- ◆ My faith has been broadened and deepened by working and living with Christians from diverse places, denominations, and theological positions while strongly committed to a common service project
- ◆ Bible conference
- ◆ Listening to others
- ◆ Writing curriculum
- ◆ Stephen Ministry (6)
- ◆ Boy Scout leader
- ◆ Enhanced awareness of problem of world hunger and active participation in Rotary Club

**6. What things would help me grow in my faith and showing love to others?**

- ◆ Slow down. Turn my life to God's time and schedule, not my own time and schedule
- ◆ Be more understanding of others views
- ◆ More Bible and Christian education study/personal study/teaching/other offerings (small group/ K-group marriage enrichment, prayer, the journey to spiritual maturity, etc.) (25)
- ◆ Mission work/new mission opportunities (12)
- ◆ More emphasis on prayer (2)
- ◆ More experience in doing so (ability to show faith and love to others) (3)
- ◆ Inspiring stories
- ◆ Covenant group leader (2)
- ◆ Knowing where people serve (many serve the Kirk and the community – how far do we reach)
- ◆ Pastor's continue to provide spiritual growth via relevant sermons
- ◆ Becoming more comfortable with others that I don't know
- ◆ Taking a bigger role in ministry as an elder (2)
- ◆ Young adult programming
- ◆ Support of those less fortunate
- ◆ Feeling accepted and loved by various members
- ◆ Having more support by immediate family in church activities
- ◆ Getting to know more people in the church
- ◆ Finding a niche to fit in and use my talents
- ◆ Offering education to those who want it (e.g., English as a second language, math skills, etc.)
- ◆ Help people better their employment and interactions with their children's teachers
- ◆ Show kindness to others
- ◆ Minister in words and deeds with God's help
- ◆ Continue to support and be supported by the Kirk
- ◆ Participating in meaningful programs, such as ASP
- ◆ Everyone wearing nametags to encourage fellowship
- ◆ Watch for ways to serve

- ◆ Grow in fruits of the spirit
- ◆ Increased fellowship (3)
- ◆ Start a small group for parents of young children – fellowship with activities, so young families can have fellowship outside of Sunday worship, with childcare supported by Kirk members and budget
- ◆ Start saying no to more programs that do not enhance the vision and mission of the Kirk
- ◆ Volunteer (serve) (7)
- ◆ Mid-week Alpha series program (12) weeks)
- ◆ Learn more about how other churches handle the challenges we face

## **7. What are your hopes and dreams for the church in the future?**

- ◆ More students in the KOALA program (2)
- ◆ More staff to provide leadership and we are still short staffed (4)
- ◆ More outreach (Mission)/influence felt in our community (local, nation, world) (24)
- ◆ Closer relationship to our God (2)
- ◆ Continue to have a great youth and children programs (4)
- ◆ Pay off debt/reduce debt/more generous giving/a move to ask people to give with the expectation set that they will give (16)
- ◆ Pay off debt so we can do more Missions/other programs (5)
- ◆ Find a way to ease the burden of our present debt
- ◆ Become financially secure while serving the Lord in the local, national, and world community
- ◆ Debt retirement – “I recognize that the new building (now 10 years old, I think) made it possible, or at least easier, for the Kirk to participate in certain important ministries, such as WIHN, but at the same time the mortgage is such a large part of our budget that our hands are often tied by it. Think how our outreach ministries will flourish when finally, way on down the road, this is no longer so.”
- ◆ Continue to grow and be an exciting, spiritual nurturing place for all people (14)
- ◆ Find creative ways to solve problems that seem to always be in the way (specifically space and mortgage) (2)
- ◆ Explore new avenues of mission and ministry (7)
- ◆ Improve the way we “train” (not sure we always train – teach, nurture, challenge) new Christians, parents, teachers, etc.
- ◆ Faithful to the commission of Jesus to disciples (3)
- ◆ Seen as a place of vital ministry (3)
- ◆ Continued growth in membership and/or programs (2)
- ◆ For more/all members to become more involved in the life of the church (11)
- ◆ To grow our kids into involved members by revitalizing our involvement in Presbytery Youth Committee, etc. (2)
- ◆ Improved participation in activities of Presbytery
- ◆ To educate what is God’s word
- ◆ To provide the extended family that most of us do not have living here (2)
- ◆ To have every member involved in Missions (4)
- ◆ For all member to find opportunities that connect them closely to each other and to our faith family (8)
- ◆ Mid-week opportunities where we have an opportunity to develop deeper relationships with God and others (2)
- ◆ Continued traditional style of worship

- ◆ Continue interesting youth in seminary
- ◆ Establish Contemporary Worship service (9)
- ◆ Return of Praise Band, more emphasis on old tunes and African spirituals (3)
- ◆ More programs/activities for all ages, especially for teens (2)
- ◆ More church-wide vision and focus
- ◆ Sermon series on spiritual disciplines
- ◆ More spirituality – transformation (2)
- ◆ Continue to be a keystone church for Cary
- ◆ Continue to support and encourage the staff
- ◆ Follow up with those who have recovered from serious illnesses or family members after a death
- ◆ That everyone connected with the church feels truly blessed by its members and whatever participation they share
- ◆ Kirk be a beacon of light and hope where there may be darkness
- ◆ Replace Activities Building
- ◆ No staff changes for a long time (4)
- ◆ Grow closer faster than we grow larger, keep a sense of belonging (2)
- ◆ Restore Sunday school time and worship times
- ◆ Consider a Saturday evening service
- ◆ More people in the choir (5)
- ◆ More diverse (4)
- ◆ A drama/performance group(s) to share the word of God with the Kirk, community, nation/world (2)
- ◆ Develop deeper relationships with God and healthier relationships with each other in our children, youth, and adults (6)
- ◆ Grow Stephen Ministry (2)
- ◆ Kirk remains true to what it has been doing and not change too much (3)
- ◆ Stay true to the scripture and its calling in these changing and challenging times (2)
- ◆ That it is awakened by the Holy Spirit from time to time with a call back to the Word, back to God, back to the cross
- ◆ Partnership with Guatemalan community
- ◆ Be a disciple-making congregation (3)
- ◆ Develop a comprehensive adult education ministry
- ◆ Transform the lives of members who participate
- ◆ To always be reaching higher
- ◆ To find an identity and build congregational support and enthusiasm around it, e.g., build a Habitat house, everyone can participate in some way (4)
- ◆ Wise use of space
- ◆ Update web site and other media
- ◆ Many fully-dedicated Christians
- ◆ Less emphasis on growing bigger and more towards becoming a neighborhood church (2)
- ◆ Have some group (maybe Presbyterian Women) create a mentoring program for women of young children to connect the generations, this will help build a stronger foundation for the growing and maturing congregation (2)
- ◆ Stay strong in supporting established programs
- ◆ Find a way to park more cars (4)
- ◆ Pipe organ

- ◆ Commitment to spiritual development (2)
- ◆ Develop a strong year-round stewardship program
- ◆ Improve our finances so that 50% of our contributions goes for benevolences
- ◆ Implement a strong Disciple Bible Study program
- ◆ New education building
- ◆ Organize the growth of the church (long term plan) so that we can remain a close knit community (3)
- ◆ More family fellowship (4)
- ◆ Find a curriculum for high school Sunday school
- ◆ I would hope we can decide on a uniform hope and not just wonder without direction
- ◆ See the Endowment Fund grow to ensure the long term growth of our church
- ◆ Plan for being a local “downtown” church
- ◆ Increase service to local area – Hispanic population (2)
- ◆ A mission trip to the Middle East with a peacemaking focus and led by Fahed Abu-Akel