

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” – Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV

Mission

The mission of Christ Community Chapel is to **know Jesus, grow in him and serve him daily**. To help people know Jesus, grow in their personal relationship with Him, and help people find their place to serving Him.

In *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozier asked this question, “Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow.”

At Christ Community Chapel Highland Square we believe in **building community** through a Christian world view – a **common commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ** that promotes **diversity, prayer and collaborative ministry** in the city of Akron, Ohio, specifically Highland Square and West Akron. The study conducted in the spring of 2019 examines the perceptions and roles of Christ Community Chapel Highland Square, whose mission is to help people know Jesus, grow in Him and serve Him daily for the purpose of spiritual and social transformation in our city.

Methodology

Purpose: This study was conducted to gather congregation perceptions and attitudes related to how CCC HSQ is doing with regards to our ministry.

CCC HSQ conducted 82 interviews with current members and regular attenders of worship. The survey questions and instrument were developed and reviewed and edited by a small group of leaders – Doug Kohl, Joann Small, Keith Kirkland, Ken Mason, Dave Thomas and Pastor Brian Kunkler. Using resources provided by the Hudson campus, an online survey was distributed to members of the congregation.

Joann and Doug interviewed a small number of individuals/families who have been involved with CCC HSQ ministries over the past few years. We recognize that this was not a random sampling of the community, rather a group of men and women who already had knowledge of CCC HSQ and its mission and voluntarily completed the 18-question survey online.

Of the people interviewed, the range of involvement included 18 people who have been involved over 5 years. Seven have been involved since CCC HSQ was founded in 2011.

Survey Report to CCC HSQ Leadership

June 2019

- 18 respondents (22.0%) have been involved 5-8 years.
- 39 (47.5%) have been involved 2-4 years.
- 25 (30.5%) have been involved 1.5 years or less.

Of those who completed the survey 56 are members of the church, 24 are regular attenders and 2 identified themselves as occasional attenders. When asked “How did you become connected with CCC HSQ?”, 77% of respondents fell into only 3 categories. Number one was searching for a new church home. A significant number of respondents (25%) joined CCC HSQ from the Hudson campus.

Connection	Number of People
Searching for a new church home	25 (31%)
Came from the Hudson campus	21 (25%)
Live in the Highland Square neighborhood	17 (21%)
A friend invited me	5
Visited and kept attending	2
Introduced by the pastor’s wife	1
Participant in Celebrate Recovery ministry	1
Joined the staff	1
Wanted to attend church in Highland Square	1
Followed Brian from another church	1

Perceptions on Who We Are

The respondents were asked to list 3 words that describe CCC HSQ. There were approximately 230 words that people used to describe our church in this survey. Two-thirds of the respondents identified terms that related our church to being **welcoming, Christ/Bible centered, diverse**, family focused, and with a desire to serve the community.

Break out the top 3 responses from the top eight and nearly 40% of responses focused on 3 important concepts: (See Chart on page 3.)

- Welcoming
- Believing
- Diverse

The “rule of three” states that concepts or ideas presented in threes are inherently more interesting and more memorable. It’s no accident that the number three is pervasive in well-known stories and prominent in current strategic planning theory.

Three-part philosophies are remembered and passed on. **Know, grow, serve** are the three areas identified by Christ Community Chapel’s overall ministry focus as stated on the website.

CCC HSQ 2019 Survey - 3 Words Summary		
Welcoming/Friendly/Warm/Open/Uplifting/Genuine/Kind/Accepting/Loving	37	
Believing/Alive in Christ/Teaching Truth & God's Word/Christ or Jesus Centered/Bible Focus	27	
Diverse/Multi-Cultural	24	Top 3=38%
Family	15	
Community/Connected/Relationship/Relational/Fellowship/Village/Team	13	
Growth/Growing/Potential/Metamorphosis/Evolving	13	
Genuine/Authentic/Transparent	10	
Spirit-led/Spirit Filled/Emotional/Inspiring/Exciting/Alive/Grace Filled	9	Top 8=65%
Amazing/Spectacular/Wonderful/Good/Exciting/Vibrant/Joyful et al.	8	
Serving/Outreach/Active/Giving/Action	7	
Worship	7	
Dynamic/Forward/Transforming/Action	6	
Challenging/Fulfilling/Convicting	5	
Encouraging/Enriching/Energetic/Willing	5	
Challenging/Thought provoking/Progressive	3	
Fulfilling/Uplifting	3	
Passionate	3	
Youthful	3	
Solid/Chill/Nice	3	
City Focus/Local	2	
Heart	2	
Inclusive	2	
Seeking/Seeker Friendly	2	
Transitioning	2	
Untraditional/Unique	2	
White	2	
Shepherding/Pastoral	2	
All In	1	
Bright	1	
Distant	1	
Home	1	
Kingdom	1	
Mission Driven	1	
Music	1	
Organic	1	
Relative	1	
Structurally concerning	1	
Truth Seeking	1	
Uncomfortable	1	
Victory	1	
TOTAL RESPONSES:	230	

How Is the CCC HSQ Ministry Distinct & Unique?

When asked what distinguishes CCC HSQ from other ministries in Akron, one focus area stood out and was identified more than any other topic. Twenty-six percent of those responding to the survey identified multi-cultural emphasis or some related term as our most distinct characteristic. If you add the 7 people who responded that racial reconciliation and the desire to do better on black/white issues, the number jumps to 34%.

The number 2 response, “Christ-focused & Gospel leading“ was identified by 12% of respondents, closely followed by “city location & local focus” at 11%.

This seems to synch with the “3 Words” summary already mentioned, but in rank order:

1. Diversity and inclusive culture (28 votes)
2. Christ-focused and Gospel led (10)
3. City and local focus (9)

Striving for: multi-cultural/diversity/inclusive culture + a desire to do better with racial reconciliation on black & white issues.	28
A spirit led, Christ-focused and Gospel leading ministry with a love for the Lord	10
City location and local focus	9
Welcoming, caring, loving, kind, non-judgmental, approachable environment	4
Pastor and staff leadership	3
College and young adults participation	3
Accessible atmosphere – come as you are	3
Taking on difficult topics	2
Music and worship team	2
Non-denominational church	1
No permanent home	1
Authentic living	1
Willing to embrace new ministry	1

Notable narratives derived from this question:

“When we began attending, we felt a strong mission to reach the local neighborhood. That is what drew us in... I’m not sensing that in the last 18 months.”

“We are intentional about being inclusive without that being the sole reason for our existence. We remain first and foremost about preaching the Gospel.”

“We call ourselves a welcoming, multi-ethnic church, but we are a white college ministry that is unsafe for the LGBTQ community.”

Scope of Ministry – How are we doing?

Respondents were questioned regarding their perception of the CCC HSQ scope of ministries and then asked how well the church delivers on those ministries.

Many respondents embrace with enthusiasm the ministries of the church and feel we are delivering well on them. Only about 1% were not sure or left this question blank. Most had opinions and had a wide variety of responses.

CCC HSQ is delivering well on...

Connecting with the neighborhood and **servicing** the city. Reaching out to the community is a repeated theme. The desire to connect and serve is strong, however many seek more opportunities.

Numerous respondents mentioned the importance of breaking down walls and bringing people together as a unique characteristic of the CCC HSQ. **Breaking through the racial, cultural and congregational barriers is clearly important** to the people who responded.

Small groups are a plus and to be encouraged for ministry.

Worship and music are highly regarded by many respondents.

Seeking the Welfare of the City – Jeremiah 29:7

While CCC HSQ looks at the community through a Christian world view, it is helpful when planning to be familiar with our own **local community trends**. In 2018, a study led by the Akron Community Foundation and funded by the Knight Foundation was conducted. It was called “On The Table”. From local dinners to meetings in places of worship & living rooms, about 6,000 people from across the area gathered in October 2018 to discuss issues in the local community that affect their daily lives.

On the Table Greater Akron, offered an outlet for open conversation between friends and strangers with the goal of gaining deeper understanding of issues facing Greater Akron.

Respondents identified the following as Akron’s top five issues:

- Economic issues and poverty - 38 percent
- Equity and social inclusion - 31 percent
- Drugs and addiction - 31 percent
- Education and youth development - 30 percent
- Public safety and judicial system - 21 percent -

The survey revealed that more than 86 percent of respondents want to be involved in solutions that address top issues. So, what does this mean in the Christian community?

Another study was conducted in 2014 by the Love Akron Network. LAN is a Christian organization that works to bring together the colors, cultures and congregations in Akron. It is now headed by Kemp Boyd. Back in 2014, under the leadership of Mark Ford, respondents to a survey were asked, “What are Akron’s top three needs?” While 5 years old, it reflects important attitudes. The survey showed that 42% of responses from Christians were in these top four areas:

1. **JOBS** – Job creation/Economic Development/Employment
2. **CRIME** – Crime management, Youth violence/safe neighborhoods
3. **COLLABORATION** – Collaboration, cooperation, community development, city & church working together
4. **EDUCATION** – Working with schools, bridging the learning gaps (summer, economic disparity)

Add the next four most mentioned areas:

5. **LEADERSHIP**
6. **CIVILITY**
7. **POVERTY**
8. **CHURCHES COMING TOGETHER**

These priorities create an interesting landscape for a Christian congregation that is attempting to be **Welcoming, Believing and Diverse**.

CCCHSQ’s Ministry Scope & How Well Do We Deliver It

The CCC HSQ survey’s next question was narrative and harder to summarize. Not surprisingly, responses tended to center around topics that are becoming a theme for the congregation – **diversity, community, and pointing people towards a relationship with Jesus Christ**.

However, comments in this section started to illustrate the importance of three additional themes:

- **Youth Ministry**
- **Small Groups**
- **Pastoral Care**

The importance of these areas of ministry is prominent, however there were a wide range of opinions on how we are delivering them. A sampling of narrative comments from each of these areas of focus are listed below.

Youth Ministry

- Children's ministries, women's ministry, worship/music, Celebrate Recovery and more we do well with based on the resources provided. They will grow as we grow.
- From what I've seen, we do well with what we have to work with.
- I never hear much about high school programs.
- We have a Sunday school ministry which is understaffed.
- Children's ministry needs support.
- I don't see enough young people's ministries, especially young boys.

Small Group Ministry

- Women and men's fellowship seem to be where the greatest progress in diversity is taking place.
- We must continue to grow in our engagement with one another through small groups.
- Women's ministry, music ministry, hospitality, financial health and Celebrate Recovery are important. I see room to grow.
- Our scope of ministry is very basic. I feel we do fairly well with the few ministries we have.
- Most ministries happen organically which is appropriate for how our church family works. Sharing life around meals with brothers and sisters on a regular basis. Just sharing life and building community.
- There is not enough buy-in to our small groups.
- Men's small groups are sporadic but enjoyable.
- There seem to be many small groups, but I personally have not found my niche.

Pastoral Care

- Being all-inclusive and reaching out to the lost is important.
- When people are broken and hurting, they are more welcoming to the love we can share.
- There is a need to continue to support local, low income families.
- We need to continue to support those with addictions.

"Sunday mornings are our sweet spot. The worship and sermons are impactful and they embody a fuller scope of the Kingdom of God and life with Christ than I have seen or experienced at most churches. I am truly thankful for this. Beyond that, our church needs help and direction. There are so many gaps outside of Sunday morning. It's hard to see where to connect.

– Survey Respondent

Ministries You Would Like to See

No single suggestion really stood out, with the top vote getter being “Community Done in a Day” type projects.

Local community focus/Highland Square ministry. "Done in a day" projects	7
Men's discipleship/bible study	6
Sports/athletic ministry	5
Mentorship	4
Food pantry/food and clothing ministry	3
Neighborhood "place making"/gathering place	3
Caring for each other ministries	2
Community collaboration i.e. ECA, CANAPI, etc.	2
International connections with UA, International Institute, North Hill, etc.	2
Moms support ministry	2
Single and/or Divorced-with-children support	2
Small group choices in West Akron	2
Special needs ministry	2
Sunday morning classes/opportunities	2
Young adult ministry	2
40+ Singles	1
Abortion crisis response	1
Concerts/events to attract curious youth	1
Creative arts ministry beyond music	1
Family friendly events	1
Foster care support	1
Minority business support	1
Mission trips - Foreign	1
Neighborhood programs for high-risk youth	1
Older adult ministry	1
Partner with Rahab/sex trafficking	1
Retreats - short weekend getaway opportunities	1
Singles ministry	1
Teen ministry on campus	1
Women's discipleship/bible study	1

How Are We Doing? Areas for Improvement

“The secret of concentration is elimination.” – Dr. Howard Hendricks, Dallas Theological Seminary, Teaching Change

“If better is possible, good is not enough.” – Benjamin Franklin

When asked the question, “How are we doing?” many survey respondents were not afraid to share their opinions. While early survey results conveyed a congregation really pleased with our direction and our ministries, it was this section that really brought out strong opinions.

Doing well is certainly pleasing to the soul, but having people who love our church, yet share their deepest feelings is very important if our church is to move forward.

Sixty-four percent of our respondents feel that we’re doing an outstanding or acceptable job. However, 36% - most of whom love our congregation – feel we could be doing better.

Outstanding	23
Acceptable	30
Needs Improvement	28
Unacceptable	1
TOTAL:	82

An overwhelming majority of the **“Needs Improvement”** comments centered on **diversity. Diversity**

- Still white dominated even though our immediate neighborhood is much more diverse.
- Lately, it seems less racially diverse. Pastor Brian is doing a great job, but I think some former members wish that Pastor Brandon had been replaced by another minority pastor.
- Seems like diversity is in decline.
- We’re doing well, but staff and worship team needs more diversity.
- Totally neglecting seasoned individuals (older adults).
- I love the diversity I see, but I would always love to see more.
- We’ve lost some diverse families. We are re-building. It’s just slow going.
- I’ve had friends of color leave because of so much hurt. As a female I feel I could do so much more. When I have spoken up, I feel defensive.
- Diversity of congregation does not translate to diversity in thinking or structure.
- We are losing racial & age diversity.
- There needs to be more diversity up front.
- I believe we are doing well, but I do not see as much racial diversity as I did in the beginning of 2018.

Anything Else to Share?

Many comments in this section focused on the excitement that many are feeling about exploring new avenues and ways to reach more people in the city. **Many encouraged CCC HSQ to keep up the good work and to let the Holy Spirit guide our discussions and direction.**

We should never forget that we are working together to help others become whole in Christ and that our mission is to **work for the Glory of God and share His story with others.**

One respondent said that if we as Christians can't **embrace diversity**, what hope is there for the city at large? **Keep striving for transformation.** Good hearts and a willingness to change will go a long way. A transformative sign would be to have a black co-pastor. Many respondents feel this is important – critical, even.

It is notable that **not one** respondent mentioned a “new building”. While not specifically asked about our accommodations, it may be significant that most people focused comments on ministry and not bricks and mortar.

Our relationship with the Hudson Campus was never mentioned by respondents. Does no comment reflect comfort with the relationship or just that the question was not posed?

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” James 1:22

Summary & Key Take Aways...

We would suggest that **4 Big Ideas** have come from this survey...

Big Idea #1: *Jesus Christ is the foundation.*

Our survey reflects that Jesus provides the direction and zest for life. If we understand His teachings and His personality, He will make His own impression on our lives and it will be revolutionary.

Big Idea #2: *CCC HSQ aspires to be welcoming, friendly, loving, kind, accepting,*

and loving. We must keep coming together. A person once said, “We have allowed Satan to tie our hands with things that distract us from the big Christian picture.” CCC HSQ is uniquely positioned to bring people together and face the issues as an awesome army. We seek community & collaboration.

Big Idea #3: *CCC HSQ cares for and desires to build community.*

Our desire is not to “do church” but “be the church” in the community. Many perceive churches are ***out of touch*** with what is going on in the community around them and how the world has changed. We must continue to become more relevant and up to date in how to reach and relate to a changing community. The church is very sincere in what it is trying to do, but is just not reaching the lost except in small pockets. There are many good ministry choices, but not really in a coordinated fashion.

Big Idea #4: *CCC HSQ longs to be diverse and a place for bringing together races, men & women of all ages, and special abilities.*

There is a significant reservoir of untapped potential within CCC HSQ if we can bring together a broad spectrum of people. If the church will do what Christ commanded us we would transform the city. We must act out what love looks like.

We hope this survey will become a resource for developing a plan that will carry us forward in the next 3-5 years.

Submitted by:

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