

# PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Transition Phase 2: Survey Synthesis

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR THE CALL COMMITTEE

Prepared by the Transition Team | May 2026

### About This Document

This Executive Summary distills the Transition Team's full Survey Synthesis Report (May 2026) for the Call Committee. It is designed to serve as both an orientation tool and a quick-reference companion to the full report — not a replacement for it. The full report integrates findings from two independent assessments: the Gallup Member Engagement Survey (119 respondents, 2025) and the Congregation Vitality Assessment (72 respondents, 2026), together with input from the Transition Team, Church Council, and the ELCA Northeast Ohio Synod.

### At-a-Glance: What the Surveys Tell Us

The table below provides a rapid orientation to the five most important signal areas, what each means, and its direct implication for MSP development.

| Area                  | Key Signal                                                                           | What It Means                                                                                     | MSP Implication                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Engagement            | 62% engaged; Grand Mean 4.15, up from 3.91 (2019) and 3.59 (2017)                    | POP is healthy, engaged, and improving over eight years.                                          | <i>Frame the call as leading from strength, not crisis.</i>                                                               |
| Worship               | CVA Worship 3.37/4 — highest domain; regular worshippers far more engaged            | Worship is both a current strength and a primary engagement lever.                                | <i>Seek a strong preacher and worship leader who deepens engagement across generations.</i>                               |
| Spiritual Life        | CVA Spiritual Life 3.17/4; Gallup Commitment 4.23                                    | Members are spiritually committed and generous.                                                   | <i>Look for a pastor who builds on maturity while developing clearer individual growth pathways.</i>                      |
| Growth Edge           | Gallup Progress 2.53 (lowest item); External Sustainability 2.42/4; Formation 2.87/4 | Internal health has not yet fully translated into personal spiritual progress or external growth. | <i>Prioritize formation, invitation, community presence, and strategic clarity.</i>                                       |
| Leadership Transition | Member voice strongly emphasizes stable, relational, long-term pastoral leadership   | The pastor is seen as central to momentum and renewed confidence.                                 | <i>Clarify shared ministry expectations so the pastor empowers lay leadership rather than becoming the sole solution.</i> |

## Section 1: Congregational Snapshot — Who We Are Right Now

Two independent surveys converge on a consistent and encouraging portrait of Prince of Peace. The congregation is healthy, spiritually committed, and genuinely ready for what comes next.

### 1.1 Gallup Survey: Engagement at a Glance

| Metric                          | POP 2025 | Protestant Avg. |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Fully Engaged Members           | 62%      | 39%             |
| Not Engaged                     | 34%      | 45%             |
| Actively Disengaged             | 4%       | 16%             |
| Grand Mean Engagement Score     | 4.15     | 3.79            |
| Grand Mean Spiritual Commitment | 4.23     | 4.21            |

POP's engagement score of 4.15 has risen steadily from 3.59 in 2017 — eight years of continuous improvement. Engagement is significantly higher than the Protestant average. This data reflects a genuinely healthy congregation.

#### Top Engagement Strengths (at or above Faith 75th percentile)

- Mission & Purpose (4.48) — Members know why this congregation exists and believe it matters.
- Cares About Me (4.52) — Members feel genuinely known and cared for.
- Opportunity to Do Best (4.44) — Members find meaningful ways to contribute.
- Spiritual Commitment (4.38) — The congregation's faith foundation is strong.

#### Priority Growth Areas

- Personal Spiritual Progress (2.53 — lowest score) — Members feel spiritually connected to POP, but many do not feel they are advancing in their personal faith journey. This is the single most important engagement gap to address.
- Invitation Behavior — Only 50% of members invited someone to church in the past month, despite high generosity (36% give \$5,000+/yr) and high volunteerism (80% volunteer 1+ hr/week). Internal strength has not yet translated into outward growth.
- Male Engagement Gap — 70% of female members are fully engaged vs. 51% of male members. This gap warrants targeted attention.
- Age 45–54 Cohort — The lowest-engagement age segment, suggesting mid-life programming gaps.

## 1.2 Congregation Vitality Assessment: Domain Overview

| Domain                              | Score  | Rating            |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Worship                             | 3.37/4 | High Vitality     |
| Spiritual Life                      | 3.17/4 | High Vitality     |
| Change Readiness                    | 3.14/4 | High Vitality     |
| Lay Engagement & Empowerment        | 3.08/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Vision, Mission & Discernment       | 3.00/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Outreach                            | 3.01/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Leadership & Organization           | 2.99/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Stewardship                         | 2.99/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Dealing with Differences / Conflict | 2.94/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Formation, Education & Training     | 2.87/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Context Awareness & Inclusion       | 2.80/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| Internal Sustainability             | 2.61/4 | Moderate Vitality |
| External Sustainability             | 2.42/4 | Moderate Vitality |

Note on Internal Sustainability: The CVA score of 2.61/4 reflects member perceptions and may not fully reflect POP's actual financial position (operating surplus, endowment, recent capital campaign). The Call Committee should seek clarification from the Transition Team on how to present this dimension accurately in the Ministry Site Profile.

## Section 2: The Member Voice — What POP Members Are Saying

The CVA included open-ended questions that surfaced powerful qualitative data. These responses are not statistics — they are the congregation speaking. Call Committee members should read them carefully; they are among the most important inputs for MSP development.

### What Members Love Most About POP

- Deep community, care, and genuine belonging — POP is described as family
- Welcoming to everyone
- Meaningful worship, strong music, and joyful faith expression
- Active service, mission, and community partnership — "a community we belong to, not just a church we attend"

### Top Five-Year Challenges Named by Members

- Pastoral leadership transition and stability (most frequently named concern)
- Engaging and retaining younger generations and young families
- Aging membership and leadership capacity sustainability
- Financial and physical sustainability over the long term

- Maintaining growth momentum while adapting to cultural and societal change

### Members' Greatest Wishes for POP's Future

- Long-term growth and vitality — numerically, spiritually, and in mission impact
- A stable, relational pastor who preaches well, connects across generations, and stays for many years
- Greater generational diversity, especially young families and children
- A welcoming, unified, inclusive community rooted in Lutheran Christian values
- Continued outreach, service, and visible mission in the community

### A Caution Worth Naming

The congregation's high expectations for pastoral leadership are both an asset and a risk. Healthy called pastoral leadership works alongside lay leadership — supporting and empowering the congregation in ministry — rather than doing everything alone. The Call Committee should ensure that shared expectations about this collaborative model are clearly established from the outset.

## Section 3: Core Themes — What Both Surveys Tell Us Together

### 3.1 Confirmed Strengths

#### Strength 1: Exceptional Spiritual Health & Commitment

Spiritual commitment grand mean of 4.23; 56% spiritually committed; inner peace and kindness are standout scores. The CVA rates Spiritual Life as High Vitality (3.17/4). This is the congregation's deepest asset — the foundation from which all other growth should flow.

#### Strength 2: Outstanding Worship Life

Worship is the highest CVA domain (3.37/4), ranking above all peer congregations in the comparison group. Gallup confirms that worship attendance strongly predicts engagement (69% engaged among regular attenders vs. 45% among non-attenders). Worship is both a strength and a strategic lever.

#### Strength 3: Clear Mission Alignment

Mission/Purpose scores 4.48 on Gallup — well above the Faith 75th percentile. Members feel deeply aligned with why POP exists. The opportunity is to sharpen this alignment into defined, measurable strategic goals. There is a clear disconnect on the understanding of the Vision for Prince of Peace to support the Mission.

#### Strength 4: Readiness for Change & Lay Empowerment

Change Readiness is High Vitality (3.14/4). Members feel their opinions count (4.17) and want to do what they do best (4.44). POP has a cultural openness to try new approaches — a significant asset for the next chapter.

3.2 Priority Growth Opportunities

Opportunity 1: Inviting & Growing the Congregation

Only 50% of members invited someone to church in the past month (Gallup). External Sustainability is the lowest CVA domain (2.42/4). POP's internal health has not yet been translated into external growth. A culture of invitation must be intentionally cultivated.

Opportunity 2: Deepening Personal Spiritual Growth

"Progress" (ME21) scores 2.53 — the single lowest Gallup item. Members feel spiritually committed to POP's community but do not feel they are advancing in their personal faith. The CVA's Formation, Education & Training domain (2.87/4) underscores the need for clearer individual growth pathways across all life stages.

Opportunity 3: Community Engagement & Outreach

POP members are generous and active volunteers, but Context Awareness & Inclusion (2.80/4) and Outreach (3.01/4) indicate the need to move beyond episodic service toward sustained, relationship-based community partnerships and a stronger presence in Westlake.

3.3 What the Two Surveys See Differently

| Gallup Uniquely Surfaces                                                                                 | CVA Uniquely Surfaces                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Male engagement gap (51% vs. 70% female) — a specific demographic gap invisible in aggregate CVA data    | Conflict management and community norms are underdeveloped — an organizational health gap                                          |
| Age 45–54 cohort is the weakest engagement segment — a mid-career life-stage challenge                   | Leadership & Organization (2.99/4) — need for structured lay leadership development and governance                                 |
| Personal faith progress plateau (2.53) — strong community faith without individual growth pathways       | Internal (2.61) and External Sustainability (2.42) — structural and financial dimensions not captured by member experience surveys |
| Invitation weakness despite high generosity — engagement does not automatically produce growth behaviors | Stewardship framed as a year-round discipleship opportunity, not just a financial/budget concern                                   |

3.4 Key Tensions to Carry Into MSP Development

These tensions do not have tidy resolutions. They are named here because the Call Committee will encounter them — in candidate conversations, in MSP drafting decisions, and in congregational

discernment. Understanding them clearly is more useful than pretending they have been fully settled.

| Tension                                                         | Why It Matters                                                                                                                  | How the Call Committee Should Use It                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Spiritual health vs. spiritual progress</b>                  | POP is spiritually committed, yet members do not strongly feel they are making personal progress in faith.                      | <i>Seek a pastor who can translate worship and community into intentional, individual discipleship pathways — not just strong services.</i> |
| <b>Welcoming culture vs. external sustainability</b>            | Members experience POP as welcoming, but growth, invitation behavior, and community connection remain weaker.                   | <i>Avoid generic "welcoming" language in the MSP; define what invitation, visibility, and newcomer integration actually require.</i>        |
| <b>Change readiness vs. actual appetite for change</b>          | Survey scores suggest high openness, but concrete changes — to worship, leadership structures, budget — may still be difficult. | <i>Use candidate interviews to assess ability to lead change with clarity, patience, and courage — not just enthusiasm for innovation.</i>  |
| <b>Desire for pastoral stability vs. risk of overdependence</b> | Members want a long-term relational pastor, but the pastor cannot be expected to carry everything alone.                        | <i>Name shared ministry, lay empowerment, and governance partnership directly and explicitly in the MSP.</i>                                |
| <b>Many priorities vs. true prioritization</b>                  | The action plan includes 14 good initiatives, but not all can be first — and no candidate can deliver all of them at once.      | <i>Distinguish essential pastoral competencies from supporting preferences. The MSP should be honest about what is urgent in Year 1.</i>    |

## Section 4: Five Strategic Priorities for the Next Chapter

The CVA Executive Brief, validated by the Gallup data, identifies five overarching priorities. These should directly inform MSP development.

### 1. Pastoral Leadership Stability

The congregation's most deeply expressed need. The next pastor must sustain momentum, provide visible and approachable leadership, energize worship and children's ministry, and guide change with confidence and care, demonstrating a high level of emotional intelligence — empowering lay leaders rather than replacing them.

### 2. Mission and Vision Clarity

Members are mission-aligned but struggle to articulate the mission clearly. Strengthening shared understanding and ensuring all ministry decisions are evaluated against mission, vision, and values is critical for the next chapter.

### 3. Generational Engagement and Formation

Urgent, intentional investment in youth, young adults, and parents — with clear faith formation pathways across the full lifespan. Generational renewal is both a member wish and a structural necessity.

#### 4. Sustainability and Long-Range Planning

Aging membership, leadership gaps, financial planning, and facilities stewardship point to the need to shift from maintenance-focused decisions to strategic, future-oriented leadership, including succession planning in every ministry area.

#### 5. Mission-Aligned Outreach and Community Engagement

Outreach is a core value and source of pride at POP. The opportunity is to increase impact by aligning outreach more intentionally with community needs and integrating service more fully with worship and formation.

### Section 5: What the Data Tells Us About Our Next Pastor

---

The survey findings provide direct, data-grounded input on the gifts, experience, and leadership style POP needs. This is not a crisis call — it is a call to lead a healthy, motivated congregation outward into bolder mission. The following is drawn directly from the Transition Team's full analysis.

| Dimension                      | What Prince of Peace Needs                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Preaching &amp; Worship</b> | Compelling, life-connecting preacher; engages both long-tenured and new members; strong ELCA liturgical grounding           |
| <b>Spiritual Formation</b>     | Passionate about individual discipleship; builds formation pathways; models personal spiritual disciplines                  |
| <b>Community &amp; Mission</b> | Outward-focused; visible in the community; inspires invitation culture; builds external partnerships                        |
| <b>Leadership Style</b>        | Equipping and empowering; develops lay leaders; collaborative; non-controlling decision-making; high emotional intelligence |
| <b>Strategic Vision</b>        | Data-informed; experienced with planning processes; can articulate and pursue bold, measurable goals                        |
| <b>Pastoral Presence</b>       | Known and knowing; relational; attentive to those at the margins of engagement (men, 45–54 cohort)                          |
| <b>Conflict &amp; Culture</b>  | Non-anxious; emotionally healthy; able to build community norms and navigate differences gracefully                         |
| <b>Stewardship</b>             | Frames stewardship as discipleship; comfortable with financial conversations; year-round advocate                           |
| <b>Denominational Fit</b>      | ELCA-rooted; open to collaboration with neighboring congregations; ecumenical spirit                                        |

#### Interview & Discernment Questions Suggested by the Data

The following questions are grounded in the specific findings from both surveys and may help the call committee assess candidate fit:

- How do you help individual members identify and pursue personal spiritual growth? Can you describe a system or approach you have used?
- Describe a time you helped a congregation build a culture of invitation. What worked, and what did you learn?

- How do you engage the community outside the church walls? What does being a 'community pastor' look like in your ministry?
- How do you develop and empower lay leaders? What decisions do you believe belong with lay leaders rather than clergy?
- Describe a situation where you used emotional intelligence to address an issue with a member, staff person, or community member? How did you assess the situation, what did you do, what was the outcome?
- Walk us through how you have approached strategic planning in a congregation. How do you set priorities and measure progress?
- How do you preach and teach about stewardship? How is stewardship connected to discipleship in your ministry philosophy?
- How do you approach conflict within a congregation? Can you share an example of leading through a difficult community dynamic?
- What experience do you have building worship that engages both long-tenured members and first-time visitors?
- How would you approach a demographic gap in engagement — for example, if men in a congregation were significantly less engaged than women?
- What is your theology of the church's relationship to its surrounding community, and how have you acted on it?

### **Suggested MSP Framing**

Prince of Peace should present itself as a healthy, engaged ELCA congregation with strong worship, deep community, generous service, and genuine openness to change. The MSP should be candid that the next chapter requires intentional movement from internal vitality toward outward mission, clearer spiritual formation, generational engagement, and sustainable shared leadership.

***The strongest candidates will not hear “come fix us.” They will hear “come lead with us from a strong foundation into a more focused and outward-facing future.”***

## Section 6: Strategic Questions for the Transition Team

### Purpose of These Questions

These questions are offered in a spirit of partnership, not critique. Their purpose is to surface any underdeveloped areas, ambiguities, or open questions in the Transition Team's synthesis before the call process moves forward — ensuring the Ministry Site Profile is built on a fully shared, accurate foundation.

### Question 1

**The CVA rates Internal Sustainability at 2.61/4, but the report notes this may not reflect POP's actual financial position. How should the Call Committee accurately characterize POP's financial health in the Ministry Site Profile?**

**Why this matters:** *The MSP is a public-facing document that candidates will read carefully. If member perceptions of financial health diverge from actual financial data — operating surplus, endowment value, recent capital campaign results — the Call Committee needs a clear, accurate narrative. Presenting an overly concerning picture could discourage strong candidates; presenting an unrealistically rosy one could undermine trust. The Transition Team's guidance on how to frame this accurately is essential before MSP drafting begins.*

May 18 Team Discussion: Analysis of the Endowment Question (#73) with “unsures” removed from responses reveal that Endowment being used for non-operating grants is well understood and in the first quartile of responses. The group discussed some concern with the survey focus on Operating Budget being driven less by year-on-year trends and more on specific mission investment. We believe that the Call Committee should consider Prince of Peace financial health is strong. We have grown our operating budget by over 20% (~\$400,000 per year to ~\$500,000 per year) and consistently met budget. We have successfully completed a Capital Campaign for the Peace Pavilion raising over \$600,000 and are on track to payoff liabilities early. We have over \$900,000 across endowments (General Endowment, Benevolence (Seminary) Endowment, and Legacy Fund)

### Question 2

**Where do you believe the congregation is genuinely ready for change, and where might the survey results overstate that readiness?**

**Why this matters:** *The CVA indicates High Vitality in Change Readiness, but “readiness” varies significantly by type of change. The Transition Team should clarify what kinds of change the congregation is actually prepared to embrace — worship patterns, leadership structures, mission priorities, budget choices, service times, communication norms, or staffing expectations. Candidates will probe for this in interviews, and the Call Committee needs to be able to give an honest, specific answer rather than citing a survey score.*

May 18 Discussion: The group discussed that Prince of Peace is ready for a new Senior Pastor given our recent history with Pastor Charlie. Group discussed some changes that would likely be difficult (e.g. service times, hymnal types); however, it was noted that changes such as summer worship schedule, staff changes, Pastoral transitions were embraced by the congregation. The group strongly suggests that to aid change management, direct discussions with congregational groups via “town hall” type discussions should occur. We have not formally reviewed the results of either the Vitality Survey or the Gallup Survey and this should happen in the near term. This provides a good opportunity for common messages and feedback from Exec Comm, Council, Call Committee, and the Transition Team.

**Question 3**

**How should the Call Committee interpret the tension between high spiritual commitment and the very low Gallup Progress score (2.53)? Is this a formation gap, a measurement issue, a pastoral leadership opportunity, or something else?**

**Why this matters:** *This is one of the most important discernment questions the Call Committee will carry into MSP development and candidate conversations. The Transition Team has lived with this data and discussed it at length. Their interpretation — whether this reflects a programming gap, an absence of small group infrastructure, a pastoral leadership void during vacancy, or members who simply lack a vocabulary for spiritual growth — should directly shape how the MSP describes the formation expectations for the next pastor. The Call Committee should not carry forward an unresolved ambiguity on POP's single lowest-scoring item.*

May 18 Discussion: Jim described the Gallup results which highlighted the low score of the question, “In the last six months, someone in my congregation has talked to me about progress of my spiritual growth”. Half of respondents rated this item a “strong no” and roughly 1 of 5 members are “angry” about the lack of individual discussions on the progress of spiritual growth. The group recognizes some members may not appreciate a very formal program, but Gallup recommends a focus on improving the quality of conversations and use of programmatic techniques. The next Pastor should be capable of leading (not doing) the congregation in this effort of improving individual spiritual health through conversation.

**Question 4**

**The Strategic Action Plan includes 14 priority areas across multiple time horizons. Which 3–5 does the Transition Team believe are truly non-negotiable for the first 12–18 months, and which are aspirational or longer-term? Does the Transition Team believe these priorities are achievable without a called pastor in place?**

**Why this matters:** *A 14-item action plan is comprehensive as a long-range vision, but the Call Committee needs to know what is genuinely urgent vs. what comes later. This matters for two reasons: First, it shapes how the MSP describes the role's immediate demands. Second, some of these priorities — particularly Spiritual Growth Pathways, Invite Culture, and Mission Clarity — may be difficult to advance meaningfully during a vacancy. If the Transition Team believes certain actions are already underway or already well-resourced, that context is important. If key actions are stalled awaiting pastoral leadership, the MSP should reflect that honestly.*

May 18 Discussion: The 14 priority items should be seen as a “starter list” based on feedback from the two surveys. It is recognized that once the Senior Pastor gets his/her “feet wet”, they would want to participate in shaping the strategic agenda and operating priorities. The group discussed the short term (i.e. this year) priority as Completing the Senior Pastor Transition (although we may not be able to control the timeframe) with potential additional priorities as, Developing and Executing a Communication Plan, Clarifying and Communicating our Mission and Vision. In addition, the group discussed the need to continue key priorities such as developing Spiritual Growth Pathways and fostering a more formal Invite Culture which are possible independent of the call process. This approach of the near term priorities should be communicated and aligned with Church Council.

**Question 5**

**Are there any tensions, unresolved conversations, or significant minority perspectives within the congregation that were present during the transition process but did not surface clearly in the survey data?**

**Why this matters:** *Surveys capture majority themes and aggregate scores, but they can obscure minority perspectives, quiet concerns, or unresolved relational dynamics that a new pastor will encounter. The Transition Team has been walking with this congregation through a significant period of change and may have observed dynamics — around leadership transitions, theological questions, unresolved conflicts, or anxieties about the future — that did not register in quantitative survey*

*scores. Naming these openly now, in a spirit of honest stewardship, is one of the most valuable gifts the Transition Team can give the Call Committee.*

May 18 Discussion: There are concerns over whether we are really progressing re: diversity and welcoming in this area. As stated above, there appears to be a small but significant group that believes they are not seeing spiritual progress on an individual level. There also may be opportunities to address specific group concerns (e.g. Male engagement, 45 – 54 age category).

## Section 7: Recommended Handoff Outcome

By the end of the Transition Team-to-Call Committee handoff meetings, the Call Committee should be able to state — in plain language — clear answers to each of the following:

1. The congregation's strongest assets — what POP brings to a new pastor and to the wider community
2. The two or three most important growth edges — what genuinely needs to change in the next five years
3. What kind of senior pastor is truly needed for this season — in specific, candidate-testable terms
4. What expectations belong to the pastor versus what belongs to lay leadership, staff, and council
5. Which findings from the report are settled enough to directly inform the MSP versus which require further clarification before drafting begins

If the Call Committee cannot answer all five clearly after the handoff, that is itself important information — and a signal that additional conversation with the Transition Team, Church Council, or Synod staff is warranted before MSP drafting begins.

### A Word of Encouragement to the Call Committee

*Prince of Peace is not a congregation in crisis. It is a congregation at a crossroads of opportunity. With 62% of members fully engaged — significantly more than the Protestant average — and eight years of continuous improvement, POP is ready for bold, faithful leadership. The work ahead is not to fix what is broken, but to lead a spiritually mature community outward: into bolder mission, deeper formation, and stronger community presence. The Call Committee has been entrusted with one of the most important decisions this congregation will make. The data is a gift to inform that discernment — alongside prayer, listening, and trust in the Spirit's guidance.*