

Dear Friends of Hudson River Presbytery,

As of the fall of 2021 about one third of our congregations have been engaged in the exciting work of exploring one of Holy Cow's Congregational Assessment Tools – either the CAT or the Conversations model. (Please see the Holy Cow website, www.holycowconsulting.com.) The Healthy, Vital Communities of Faith Team knows that if the Holy Cow assessment process is going to make a difference in the life of our churches, we need to give our support in tangible ways. We are doing this in several ways.

First, the presbytery covers the cost of having a consultant visit with the leadership of your congregation to help interpret the assessment. (Note – congregations are responsible for paying for the cost of the assessment tool itself.) We are currently training members of our presbytery on how to interpret the CAT results with church leaders. This will take some time as these people grow in knowledge and experience. Thus we currently are contracting with a professional church consultant who works with congregations to move through the process of conducting a CAT and then having it interpreted. Again, the presbytery is paying this cost, assuming that the congregation has been approved to participate in the CAT process by The Healthy, Vital Communities of Faith Team.

We are also aware that in the past some churches have taken a variety of surveys, only to find that the results end up sitting on a shelf. We don't want that to happen with any of our churches. There are several ways that a congregation can follow up after having taken a CAT.

- 1) Some congregations may have people within their leadership who, following the interpretation of the CAT, can help guide the congregation to the "next steps".
- 2) Some congregations may choose to continue to work directly with a professional church consultant to work out the next steps of implementation that may grow out of doing a CAT. Should a congregation choose this route, the expenses for that consultant need to be paid by the congregation.
- 3) Another possibility, which we are excited about and for which the presbytery will pay for is that of follow-up coaching for the leadership of the congregation as it seeks to implement options that have grown out of the CAT interpretation. The presbytery will pay for 12 coaching sessions (one year) for the leadership of a congregation. Note that there must be a named leadership team in place in order for this to happen. This team may be the session or council, or some subgroup of the session along with other identified leaders within the congregation. If there is someone serving the church in a pastoral role or position of some type, that person should be included as well. The specific purpose of this coaching would be coaching around the CAT results and a plan of implementation. Rev. Chip Low is serving as the Coaching Coordinator for The Healthy, Vital Communities of Faith Team and the Holy Cow CAT. You can contact him at chip@fpcyorktown.org.

We look forward to having more of our congregations engaged in the Holy Cow CAT or Conversations process as we, the presbytery, seeks to support congregations by paying for the initial interpretation with a professional church consultant, and then with follow-up coaching for the leadership team of the church. If you have further questions and/interest in this process, please contact Susan DeGeorge at susandegeorge@hudrivpres.org.

Sincerely,

John Miller, on behalf of The Healthy, Vital Communities of Faith Team