



Visioning Assessment Report 2025 by Lisa Rousey  
Presented at Congregational Meeting February 15, 2026

### Three Core Themes from Visioning Data

#### 1. Deep Commitment to Spiritual Practice & Community: The 40+ year membership highly values:

- Attending church services together
- Contemplative practices (meditation, prayer groups, spiritual arts)
- Fellowship and sharing meals
- Strong sense of caring and connection with one another
- Trust within the contemplative circle

#### 2. Exhaustion & Need for Replenishment: Members are personally and collectively:

- Tired and low on energy
- Disillusioned by political climate and sense of powerlessness
- In need of spiritual care and tending at this critical life stage
- Experiencing "too old for this, but too angry to stop fighting" sentiment
- Concerned about volunteer burden and protecting people's time and energy

#### 3. Gap Between Current & Future Church: The way current members identify "church" may not resonate with future generations:

- **Growth imperative:** 13.4% of all visioning comments (27 of 201) explicitly addressed need for growth, youth engagement, and attracting new members
- **Intergenerational focus:** Strong desire to build intergenerational congregation and focus on "next generation"
- **Visibility need:** Want to be "known in the local community as a destination"
- **Resource challenge:** Shrinking membership consuming more resources than generating, property maintenance requiring investment

### Key Strengths to Build Upon

1. Strong sense of community and mutual care
2. High value placed on church attendance and participation
3. Genuine commitment to spiritual growth
4. Commitment to equity and inclusion (voted on being "Open and Affirming" in the 80's)
5. Beautiful physical space and property (underutilized asset)
6. Dedicated leadership working tirelessly despite exhaustion

## Critical Challenges

### 1. Trust & Governance

- Historical trauma from ministerial misconduct echoes in contemporary mistrust
- Threats, back-channeling, and informal power-brokering undermines unity
- Governance structure not right-sized for 60-member church
- Lack of formal feedback mechanisms and accountability structures results in pushing for transparency

### 2. Sustainability & Resources

- Shrinking membership is consuming more than generating
- Property and building require significant investment
- Building and property are underutilized
- Volunteer burden on small, aging /willing population

### 3. Dual Focus Requirement

- Must simultaneously tend to church of today AND plan for church of future
- Current members need deep pastoral care during difficult life stage and political chaos
- Future sustainability could require attracting members with different expectations and spiritual orientations/practices
- Current congregation fears being left behind if focus shifts too dramatically toward future audiences

## Comments from October 12 Community Conversation

1. Culture and values 23%
2. Programs and activities 12%
3. Growth & future sustainability 11%
4. Community & fellowship 10%
5. Governance & leadership 10%
6. Volunteer energy & capacity 7%
7. Spiritual practice 7%
8. Communication & trust 3%

## Generational Context

Community Congregational Church is comprised of around 60 members, primarily Baby-Boomers (1946-1964) whose expressed values are aligned with the UCC values of inclusivity, value in diversity, and a commitment to social justice. Many of the church members have lived lives full of direct political actions that shaped the 1960-1990's, and the world today is echoing back to their youth. The emotional impact of the second term of the Trump administration and

the level of powerlessness these members are experiencing after a lifetime of progress being eroded, cannot be separated from what CCC is envisioning.

**Profound Disillusionment:** Many progressive Boomers describe feeling like they're watching their life's work unravel. They came of age during movements that felt like permanent progress. Seeing rollbacks creates a deep sense of betrayal at a time when they are questioning meaning, legacy and personal power in the face of political, economic and climate disaster. There is an expanded need for spiritual care and explains their strong reaction to seemingly normal, informal decision making from the church leadership.

- **Historical Déjà Vu with a Darker Twist:** Unlike their parents who fought fascism abroad, they fear they're watching authoritarianism take root at home. There's often genuine fear that we are watching the moment "democracy goes to die."
- **Anxiety for Future Generations:** Many express guilt and worry for their children and grandchildren. There's anguish about leaving a worse world than they inherited.
- **Exhaustion Mixed with Urgency:** At an age when they expected to step back, many feel they can't afford to. One progressive Boomer sentiment: "I'm too old for this, but too young to stop fighting."

This context is inseparable from the current reflection of CCC of Tiburon. The community is aging, low on energy, steeped in feminist ideology, deeply passionate about being part of the change they see needed, and lacking trust in those who hold power. Congregants are feeling the terror of Trump's second term and feeling increasingly more powerless at their age, to address it. Having survived the Vietnam War, the Cold War, The Korean War, The Civil Rights Movement, the assassination of JFK, Watergate, The Iran Missile Crisis, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the War on Drugs and the War on Terror, **this generation, more than any alive today- has a particular framework for expecting, and addressing, misuse of power.**

According to the interviews, misuse of executive power, rewriting democratic norms, stacking the Supreme Court in ways that will outlive them, rolling back gender and LGBTQ+ rights, and living with massive inflation while their friends and family die, is an existential load *that needs significant tending*. CCC itself has a long history, feeding deep relationships between one another, and living with the residue of a violation of trust with a former Minister who inflicted harm on many women and the church, while keeping the support of many in a major division. This division caused cognitive dissonance that still stokes fear for the remaining members.

- ***Building and maintaining trust will need to be a primary organizing principle for anyone joining or leading this congregation.***
- ***Trust must be built in the form of healthy relationships, with clear boundaries, honest conversations and clear accountability structures.***

**Still, there are many noteworthy and exciting things happening,** inside the walls of this special place, inside the community, and with the growth plan of the current Board & Rev. Jess Shine. Some things that should be celebrated:

- **Strong sense of community and care for one another**

- Church importance & attendance
- Genuine commitment to spiritual growth
- Commitment to equity & inclusion
- The space & offerings
- The church leadership & lay leadership are working tirelessly to maintain spaces they care about, despite exhaustion.

## Conclusion

Community Congregational Church stands at a critical juncture. The visioning data reveals a congregation with deep spiritual commitment, strong mutual care, and genuine desire for sustainability—but also exhaustion, trust issues, and urgent need for cultural intervention, pastoral care and strategic growth.

Success requires threading a challenging needle: tending deeply to the church of today while simultaneously launching initiatives that will create the church of tomorrow. This is not about choosing one or the other—it requires both.

The congregation has articulated their needs clearly. They want to be protected and nurtured, so they don't burn out. They want to build something lasting for future generations. They want trust, transparency, and healthy governance. They want to be known as a welcoming destination in the community.

With focused leadership, right-sized governance, creative use of assets, and commitment to both pastoral care and growth targets, CCC can navigate this transition successfully. The foundation is strong—the path forward requires clarity, accountability, and courage to make difficult choices that honor both the present and the future.

**Growth is imperative to the life of this congregation. Strategic action can be incremental and intentional- but the horizon must be clear.**