

**Spiritual Practices Survey**  
**Cadboro Bay and St. Aidan's United Churches**  
**June 2018**

**Background**

After the reVision convergence summit in January 2018, there was sufficient interest in a spiritual practices focus that a group was formed to develop a plan for this topic to be put forward to the Summit in May 2018. This group met about every two weeks to develop their plan which was presented in May. One aspect of the plan was an initial survey of our congregations to determine interest in Spiritual Practices both currently and in the future. This report is the outcome of the survey.

**Communication and distribution of survey**

In late May 2018, members of the Spiritual Practices group from each congregation ensured that congregation members were made aware of the survey and had access to it- either in paper copy or online. Cadboro Bay United Church (CB) sent an e-mail with links to the survey to the 354 recipients on their e-mail list. Of these, 184 (52%) opened the document which is apparently similar to the number that usually open the e-mails sent from the church (data from Benchmark program used by church). St. Aidan's United Church (SA) sent an e-mail out twice to those 232 on the Life and Works e-mail list – on May 30 (41% opened) and on June 7 (38% opened).

In addition to the e-mail information, during June announcements were made in person or in the bulletins on Sunday mornings and members of the Spiritual Practices group gave out information and printed copies of the survey form after the church services.

**Results**

St. Aidan's received 16 paper survey responses for a breakdown of about 25% paper and 75% online responses. Cadboro Bay received 28 paper responses for a breakdown of about 24% paper and 76% online responses. The data collected from the survey was looked at from various ways – all responses as well as those from the two communities of faith broken down by two major age groups – those less than 66 years of age (there were no respondents 18 years of age) and those 66 years of age and older. Those looked at by the communities of faith broken down by age group are missing 16 respondents from the total as there were 8 who listed "other" when asked which was their community of faith and there were 9 who did not provide their age group and there was one person who didn't answer either of these questions.

**Question 1. Which is your Community of Faith? (173 respondents)**

A total of 173 people responded to the survey. Of these respondents, 99 (58%) were from Cadboro Bay, 66 (38%) were from St. Aidan’s and 8 (5%) were from other communities of faith (e.g., visiting from other cities (2), trying out churches (2), come occasionally (2), linked to church through a church-related group (1)).

Of all the respondents giving their age bracket (164 total), 38% (63) were less than 66 years of age. Of those who indicated both their age and community of faith, 60 people were less than 66 years of age - 62% (37) were from Cadboro Bay and 38% (23) were from St. Aidan’s.

For those respondents 66+ years of age who gave both their age and community of faith affiliation (96 people), 70% were 66 to 80 years (40 from CB and 27 from SA) and 30% were over 80 years of age (17 from CB and 12 from SA) from both churches.

**Question 2. What spiritual practice(s) do you use currently? (144 to 163 respondents – varied with each practice)**

Of the listed 9 spiritual practices, those which at least a quarter of the respondents used daily were prayer (46%), communing with nature (37%) and music (27%). Those most likely never to have been used were healing touch/pathway (58%), labyrinth (51%), journaling (39%) and art/craft (23%). For the 172 respondents to this question, an average of 6 of these 9 practices were being used currently at least once.

**Percentage of respondents indicating at least some current use of a spiritual practice**

<b>Spiritual practice</b>	<b>Using at least some time (%)</b>
Communing with nature	99
Prayer	95
Music	94
<b>Meditation</b>	91
Spiritual readings	87
<b>Art/Craft</b>	77
<b>Journaling</b>	61
Labyrinth	49
<b>Healing Touch/Pathway</b>	42

Those less than 66 years of age were more likely to have used journaling and art/craft and those 66+ years of age were more likely to have used meditation and healing touch/pathway.

**Written responses:** 45 - showed broad range of spiritual practices

**Prayer/meditation** - Hail Mary prayer as meditation

*Conversation/sharing with friends*- linking with friends, staying in touch with people in difficult times, conversation, discussions with friends, sharing thoughts with others, discussions, communing with people

**Intentional conversation**- focused group discussion, being present, sometimes listening to someone else (different than conversation), discussions about faith in general, being with/conversing with spirit-inspired people, connecting with others in a small group, discussion of issues/questions of faith with others

**Use of media** – channeled articles (goldenageofgaia/com), website sources (<https://progressingspirit.com/about/>; <http://integralenlightenment.com/home/>; <http://theshiftnetwork.com/AuthenticAwakeninginAction>); Hour of Power on Sunday before church, Vision TV morning shows while I get ready; Catholic Broadcast Jim Cantelon, 700 Club; TV documentaries about spiritual practices, movie nights at CBUC

**Body/Mind exercises** – Qui Gong (2), Tai Chi (3), Reiki (2), Yoga (2), energy flow exercises and breathing, working out using songs/music of meaning that enhance consciousness

**Service/sharing** – patient care, advocacy, service to others, reaching out “Improving the world through action”, volunteering at hospice and other places, hospitality – cooking for family, singing in church choir and community choir

**Outdoor activity** – time at Dallas Road almost daily, wonder walks

**Everyday activities** – swimming, walking, baking, letter writing, cooking, fishing, gardening, woodworking, reading

**Individual practices** – mindfulness every couple of days, seeing spiritual mentor every other week, going yearly to intense spiritual workshop, poetry, candle lighting, Epsom salt isolation baths, use of crystals, essential oils, colour, books (Thirty Miracles in Thirty Days by Irene Lucas), Doreen Virtue cards (Archangel Oracle), relaxing at home with a lit candle and soft sacred music and just listening to the silence, positive affirmations and gratitude (daily-often)

### **Question 3. Are you open to new learning of different spiritual practices? (168 respondents)**

Eighty-two percent of respondents (138) indicated that they were open to new learning- 92% of those less than 66 years of age and 76% of those 66+ years of age with slightly more interest (6-7%) at St. Aidan’s than at Cadboro Bay United Church in both age groups.

One person added “ I try to incorporate this kind of connection in all that I do...I don’t see it necessarily as a “spiritual” practice, as much as it’s a way of being in the world that connects me to my best self and to the beauty that is all around us if we are paying attention.”

**Question 4. If you are open to learning new spiritual practices, which one(s) would you like to explore with others? (145 respondents)**

**Percentage of respondents (all and by age groups) indicating that they would like to explore spiritual practice with others**

Spiritual practice	Would like to explore with others (%)	Would like to explore with others (%)	Would like to explore with others (%)
	All ages	Less than 66 years of age	66+ years of age
Communing with nature	41	56	30
Prayer	23	24	22
Music	38	42	33
Meditation	50	58	46
Spiritual readings	33	42	25
Art/Craft	32	46	23
Journaling	26	41	15
Labyrinth	32	44	23
Healing Touch/Pathway	n/a	n/a	n/a

(Healing touch/pathway was left out of the list on this question)

The spiritual practice which was most likely for respondents to be interested in exploring with others was meditation. For all eight of the spiritual practices listed, those less than 66 years of age were more likely to want to explore them with others than those 66+ years of age. However, meditation was the most popular for both age groups.

For those respondents who provided both their community of faith and age, meditation was the most popular for both churches for those 66+ and for those less than 66 years of age at Cadboro Bay but for those less than 66 years of age at St. Aidan’s the labyrinth and communing with nature tied as the most popular (with 59% (13) choosing these practices). The top two choices for those less than 66 years of age at Cadboro Bay were meditation and art/craft.

**Written responses:** 38 responses (both questions 3 and 4)

**Other religions/different practices** (8) - First Nations spirituality (2), Taoism, Hinduism, Khabala; Taize (2), Zen presence, practices that are more relationship and earth-based, yoga(2)- one added “as we did with Noel”

**Small group/study group** (6) – small group discussions, small group discussions or social groups, Book club, Conversation Circle on issues of our times, study group, walk and talk together

**More on own** (5) - Don't like groups, like to explore things in my own way, should be something that happens without a lot of structure attached to it, I usually engage in spiritual practice alone so unsure about doing them with others but willing to try

**Opportunity for more in depth experience** (3) – deepening/broadening all of the above, probably more creative ways to improve/expand my current practices, these are not “new” but I would like to be more supported/intentional in participating in them- perhaps moving from “practice” to “discipline”

**Learning** (3) - I am always open to learning new spiritual practices, short direct explanation of the ones I checked, all

**Other books** (1) John O'Donohue “To Bless the Spaces Between Us”, Richard Wagamese “Embers” for example

**Media** (1) – Documentaries like Christ Has Risen –excellent 8 part series

**Labyrinth** (1)-I have a method which ties this to the Lord's Prayer

**Time for prayer/meditation before service** (1)

**Maybe/not sure/depends what it is** (8)

**Question 5. If you are interested in learning more about spiritual practices, what would help? (149 respondents)**

The number of responses were almost equally divided between individual practices [i.e., list of on-line resources (34) and suggested readings (48)] and group practices [i.e., support groups (38) and gatherings (44)]. Transportation would help 3 of the respondents.

**Written responses: 18**

**Time** (3) – more time, time offered after service (once or twice a month) to discuss the sermon or reading

**Small groups** (8) – Small introductory groups to practice with initially. Like our small groups for reVision. It would also introduce us to even more people from each congregation; very small group discussions-large groups are too intimidating for me; I prefer oral explanations as reading is too difficult for me right now; I think perhaps workshops – spiritual study groups; friends; regular small groups; opportunities to support one another in living those practices

**Specific themes/groups-** course in miracles; something for families; the opportunity to converse with older lesbians about what spiritual practice means and how we've learned to navigate in a predominately heterosexual world; gatherings that offer the experience of a spiritual practice, calling out the mystic within

**Media** – films or other public learning/inspirational events covering a specific spiritual practice

**Whole body practices** – invite different cultural groups or First Nations spiritual leaders to help us find more “whole body” spiritual practices. We are too stuck in our heads – Louise Rose is great at pushing us to loosen up and feel what we are singing. We need way more of that!!

**Question 6. Would you be interested in attending a spiritual practice event later in August to comprise a Saturday evening at St. Aidan's church with a potluck supper and experiential introduction to a few Spiritual Practices and a Spiritual Practice focused Sunday morning worship service at Cadboro Bay church to include walking the Labyrinth? (166 respondents)**

Over half (59% or 98) of the 166 respondents to this question answered “yes”. There was more interest among those less than 66 years of age (70%) than those 66+ years of age (53%). There were 25 written responses to this question with many indicating they would definitely or possibly not be able to come in August due to other commitments, i.e. family visits, vacation. A few indicated that they would like to come to either the Saturday evening or the Sunday morning experience either because of preference or lack of energy. Some indicated it depended what was on offer. Other comments included “if it offers less “head” oriented practices and more “whole body” practices. If it is what we have traditionally done – well maybe”; “I'm familiar with many already, need support for practice”; “I am so willing to explore spiritual practices with others, as I believe that intimate small-group interactions are the way to go for the United Church, moving forward”.

Generally there seems to be a lot of interest in the type of spiritual practices event being proposed with almost 100 people willing to come to such an event, with a few coming either on Saturday or Sunday rather than the two days.

**Question 7. Would you be willing to share/teach others about a spiritual practice that works well for you? (158 respondents)**

Of the 158 respondents who answered this question, 25% (39) indicated that they would be willing to share/teach others. Those who were 66+ were more likely to reply “yes” (28%) than those less than 66 years of age (20%).

**Question 8. If you would be willing to share/teach, please provide your name and area of interest. (41 respondents)**

Janet Dillabaugh- interested in starting a Power of Eight group based on Lynn McTaggart's Philosophy (CB)

Bill Brathwaite – Prayer (CB)

Leny Winkel – the art of living (CB)

Eugene Hetherington – labyrinth, Lectio Divina (CB)

John McEown – What is successful living? Some ways of attaining it (CB)

Roe Campbell – Meditation, spiritual reading, lectio divina (SA)

Maryl McCay- different ways to learn and receive guidance (SA)

Ken Patterson – sharing (SA)

Lynne Crawshaw – quilting/sewing (CB)

Bill Sparks – don't want to teach but in a group explain what works for me – relationships with family and friends (CB)

John MacArthur – energy work (CB)

Veronica- Virtue cards (SA)

Mary Lou Whidden – willing to share “Looking for God in the world”, pastoral care, reaching out to others, within and beyond our fold (SA)

Eileen Campbell – labyrinth (share), Tai Chi Chuh (teach) (CB)

Phyllis McNaughton – communing with nature (SA)

Andrea Hubbard – share/teach/facilitate workshop or something but not at this time (SA)

Judith Bogod – journaling (SA)

Beverley Wright – positive affirmation, value of music as a spiritual practice and lead a song session for interested people. Sharing/teaching several easy songs which I find spiritually resonant, uplifting, etc. (SA)

Louise Rose – music and found texts (CB)

Betty Doherty – Virtues Pick (How are you really?), guided meditation (CB)

**Other areas where interest shown but no name left:**

I am a yoga teacher and yoga therapist and teach relaxation and meditation techniques, breath awareness and body scans, therapeutic touch

Yoga

Communing with nature (it's very simple though)

Sharing in small groups

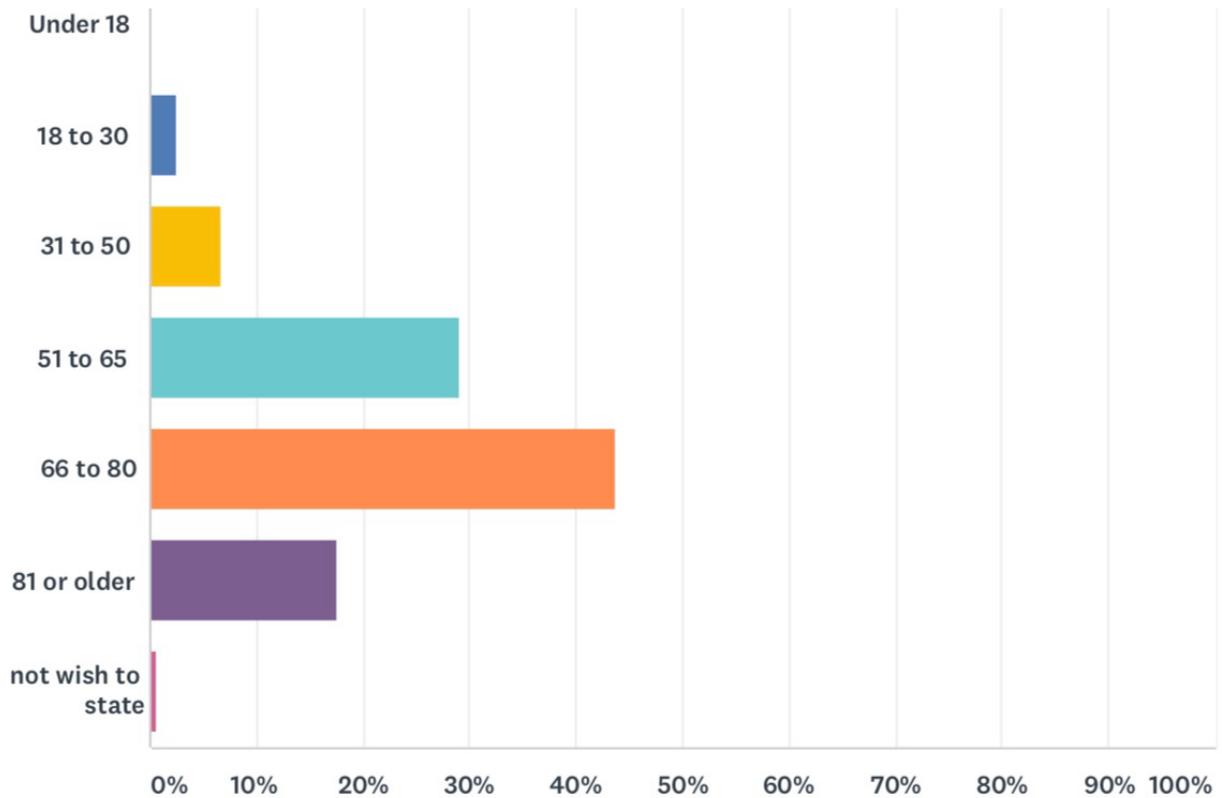
Healing pathway, meditation

Music and breathing

Art journaling

Personal growth, spiritual direction

**Question 9. What is your age group? (164 respondents)**



The respondents were mostly between the ages of 51 and 80 years of age with those 66 to 80 years of age being the more predominant age group represented by those answering the survey. Overall there were more responses from those 81 years of age and older than those less than 50 years of age and younger. This was true of both churches – CB 11% (10) of respondents 50 years or less and 18% (17) 81+ and SA 8% (5) of respondents 50 years of less and 20% (12) 81+ years of age.

### **Question 10. What other thoughts would you like to share about Spiritual Practices? (72 respondents)**

**Written responses – 72**

#### ***Spiritual Practice Survey Question 10 Age Under 66 Responses (22)***

**1. Gratitude (14%)**

6 I think it is wonderful that we are exploring this area. I love the openness and bravery we are demonstrating as a faith community.

8 I'm so glad you are asking these questions!!

19 Thank you for asking these questions

**2. Importance of Spiritual Practices (27%)**

1 I'm very impressed with and appreciate the progressive thinking of these church leaders because it's obvious the status quo (conventional church & thought) isn't working. I and the world need all the true spiritual healing we can get which at this time in my life focuses on Christ's love and teachings.

4 Spiritual practices are essential not an option to maintain a healthy balanced life.

7 SP is like oxygen, without it our soul deteriorates!

11 The importance of cultivating a curiosity and receptivity child-like wonder

14 So important! I welcome ways to make them part of my daily life.

15 Brings you back to yourself, calming, makes you grateful & happy (content)

**3. Need for both individual and shared Spiritual Practices (41%)**

5 I'm more Unitarian than monotheistic. I dislike the word god due to the patriarchal, hierarchal connotations. I'm tired of gender pronouns taking he so pervasively. I find creator.in the woods and on the mountain. I love the community in church but when I have to choose I exercise and engage in meditation and commune w nature and another person or two.

9 I don't have negative feelings about these practices, I just feel that I have what I need and am able to research on my own when I find a new one that strikes my fancy.

12 I think for me it is important to find a spiritual community, and at the same time, I often like to be alone with nature.

16 Not just classical practices but also everyday events – e.g. how can teeth brushing be a spiritual practice, bath time, getting up etc.

18 Each to his own... I feel most connected and in right relationship when I join with others to serve a greater purpose than myself OR I am outside in a natural setting paying close attention to the web of life. Mindfulness walking...

21 I find them very useful in my faith journey and I find it very useful in my St. Aidan's spiritual journey. It helps to know other people are on this journey as well.

22 Your church is a very comfortable place to worship and your music very uplifting. Inclusiveness and openness of the pastors messages resonate as one journeys through the coming week.

23 As an extrovert, my spiritual practices tend to be different, more mystical, than those commonly practiced by those whose personalities lean toward introversion. Things like walking, swimming, and cooking all are opportunities for meditation, mindfulness, gratitude and prayer.

24 want a group at Cadboro Bay United. Live close and don't want to travel, especially in evening or at night.

#### 4. **Suggestions (18%)**

2 Shifting thoughts to Gratitude, Blessings, Nancy Reeves, A match Made in Heaven 12 attitudes of change set up for groups

3 I am interested in hearing about other non-Christian spiritual practices including First Nations, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.

17 We need to make connections between churches and outside churches.

20 I would really like to see small groups take hold in our churches, with close bonds between our sister churches. We don't network enough, and the potential for learning from our neighbours is crucial to our survival as a social agent of significance. I would also like to see more liberal sharing of resources, with an emphasis on grass-roots ministry.

### ***Spiritual Practice Survey Question 10 Age Over 66 Responses (50)***

#### **1. Gratitude (20%)**

2 really appreciate the input of the Ministry ...and opportunities to share

4 Thank you for this effort

7 Thanks for asking

18 I am glad we have movies that matter cantering at CBUC and church picnic.

35 Thanks for the opportunity to participate and find out how we can enhance our nearness to the Divine.

41 I support the work being done to introduce others to spiritual practices I have been using all my life

42 Excited

46 I love the fact that we are focused on spiritual practices; in my opinion they are the basis of all we can do and be, and our constant source of love and energy! Thank you for bringing this about.

49 I find the terminology interesting and amorphous. Kind of makes me want to giggle. Thanks

## **2.Importance of Spiritual Practices (22%)**

9 It teaches discipline

21 Some situations reach out to me to do more reflections on how it involves me

24 I discovered how powerful the spiritual practices of spiritual reading and journaling were last fall

30 I think this is an important topic

36 It is necessary for continued growth

38 Its an ongoing 24 hour process like breathing. Sending love, healing and pray

39 I feel they are a very important part of my spiritual life

44 I try & make daily living a spiritual practice through awareness of thoughts, words & deeds...a challenge but worthwhile!

45 Spirituality as I define it is simple humanity; my commitment to listen to what others say, to be with them in understanding and humility as and when, and the return of the depth and warmth experience of a real good sharing. This is my concept of basic spirituality.

47 Like spiritual practices as they get rid of the "theistic" nature of God. Crucial to me today. Prayers need to be changed to reflect this.

50 With Nones and Dones Spiritual Inquiry and Discovery needs should be met first.

## **3. Need for both individual and shared Spiritual Practices (20%)**

1 Small group in the daytime would be useful

5 Evening vespers

6 would like to develop a daily practice

13 The beneficial value of both individual and intentional practice combined with sharing practices in small groups

16 I am not able to attend late August, but would like to participate in small group practice, and facilitate in areas that are part of my present practice ...

21 Some situations reach out to me to do more reflections on how it involves me

25 Not all spiritual practices fit well into a community setting, Many are very personal

29 that Spiritual Practices need not be just reflective, inward-directed activities, but could also include interaction with & serving others.

48 My way of spirituality is quiet and somewhat private and is likely different to normal practices

52 Group support is key for me

#### **4.Suggestions (28%)**

8 Reading the Bible

11 Those readings we were sent daily were helpful. Once a week would be preferable

12 Attempting to live daily in the "Spirit" and practice living in peace and harmony with all.

14 Perhaps learning about practices from other religions or a study of historical practices. Educate us about the variety of practices mankind has used

15 When you engage with soil, (balance it, feed it, tend it) it can then tend you: plunge bare hands into it, transplant plants, inhale it and feel its warmth in the sunshine.

19 I enjoy visiting Care Homes and hospital visiting. It makes me feel I am carrying out the teachings of my church and my need to help others.

26 Quiet practice. Do not enjoy the drums, guitar etc. during service.

28 more responsive prayers during Sunday worship service

31 More focus on Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, His death, and his Resurrection

32 Don't offer new practices after a Sunday service. Many people have family commitments on a Sunday.

34 I find reading thought provoking books and discussing them with others a good way for me to deepen my Spirituality.

37 Invite someone to share, briefly, about the impact of their personal spiritual practice during Sunday service.

43 The book we had as a reference for reVision small groups had interesting references to spiritual practice.

52 leader to guide in worship service

#### **5.Miscellaneous (10%)**

3 I used to do daily readings which followed the lectionary but I became disenchanted by the accompanying commentary

20 Too old to do it now but years ago I took part in all the above

23 understand it more

27 I guess I'd like to try it out before making a commitment

33 I enjoy expanding my knowledge and experiential "base" (my current level of understanding), but don't particularly like the seeming rigidity of imposed / recommended / assumed practices. And journaling is definitely low on my list of favourite / worthwhile activities or experiences