

# St. Anne's Episcopal Church

## PARISH SURVEY NARRATIVE

The Discernment Committee has completed its Parish Survey process and a summary of results follows. The narrative here is more general; however, specific data are available from Christine Felker or other Discernment Committee members.

A total of 92 surveys were distributed to individual members of the parish via THE ANNALS or by member pick-up in the Parish Hall. 37 surveys were returned. A little less than two-thirds of those who responded have been attending St. Anne's for more than twenty years and attend services three to four times a month. Twenty-two of the respondents were 65 years or older, thirteen respondents were between the ages of 18 and 64 and two members were under the age of 18.

What draws us to St. Anne's is varied and at the same time three areas are primary. We are drawn by the church structure itself - the sanctuary and the parish hall. The members of the Parish draw us. We are drawn by the Episcopal tradition. Important as well, but to a slightly lesser degree, we are drawn by the music/choir/liturgy and by the priest. Finally, we are drawn by our social activities and community outreach projects. It is interesting to note that respondents over 65 more often selected "1" (indicating highest priority) as response and respondents between 18 and 64 by a margin of 2 to 1 more often selected a lower priority. This may indicate that our older respondents have stronger feeling about what is of value to them here at St. Anne's than our younger members. The degree of feeling, however, did not change the nature of what we value.

Of those responding to the survey, there is little that seems to keep us from coming to St. Anne's. The two areas that evidence some concern are parish leadership (of "some importance" to seventeen respondents) and to a lesser degree the time of services/scheduling of activities.

Responses on preference for a full-time or part-time priest showed 15 preferring full-time and 7 preferring part-time and 12 answering: "depends on the priest." There is again some difference in response from those under 65 and those 65 or older. Of those under 65 a total of 25% prefer a full-time priest and of those 65 or older a total of 50% prefer a full-time priest. This suggests that as we continue the process to call a priest, we interview candidates expressing interest in either full-time or part-time service. Additionally, there are varied perceptions of what "part-time" means to a parish. The common threads indicate preference for Eucharist available as many Sundays as possible, availability by telephone and availability in person at least 2 to 3 days each week. At least half of all respondents indicated that if we were able to call a full-time priest, they would be willing to try to increase their giving or their pledge to support this choice. This was true in both younger and older respondent groups.

Responses to the open-ended question on the most important attribute for our next priest were varied with no clear trait or quality emerging. Attributes mentioned were kindness, openness, balance, good communicator, engaged, energetic, able to draw people, approachable and

knowledgeable. Responses on expectations of our next priest indicate heavy emphasis on Sunday Eucharist services, involvement in church activities and community activities around Calais, maintaining the status quo in tradition of service and music. To a lesser degree there is expectation for hospital visitation and for availability at least three days in the area. Responses to this were similar regardless of age of respondent.

Responses relating to the best accomplishments of the last five years show clear consensus, regardless of age group, that the Parish Hall building and the Sanctuary renovation and restoration and general upkeep and care for the physical structure of St. Anne's are valued accomplishments. There is value placed also on perceived increased community interaction and outreach by the Parish. Finally, there is strong support and value for the Food Pantry and new outreach and ecumenical activities.

Future hopes for St. Anne's include protecting and maintaining our physical structure, continuing and increasing our involvement in community outreach and service, sharing our facility and gifts, welcoming others and increasing our membership.

We clearly see financial support and declining membership as critical issues going forward. Secondary concerns include the physical structure and also respect for the service/Eucharist traditions. There is some concern with personality dynamics and leadership problems.

The data collected indicate we are a parish with some clear and commonly shared values and concerns. We highly value the Episcopal tradition, the Eucharist, music, and the aesthetic of the Service. We seem to value one another and our connectedness, and our service and actions in the community around us. We value the history and beauty of the Sanctuary and the structure and opportunity in our Parish Hall. The number of responses we received, the varied responses to each question, and the candidness of answers to open-ended survey questions suggest we are trying to be honest and earnest in our assessment of ourselves, energetic and practical and creative in becoming the best stewards we can be, a caring community of souls.

St. Anne's Discernment Committee