



Review & Restart

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral

Seattle, Washington

June 2021

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Executive Summary

The following is the *Review & Restart* report for St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Seattle, WA. The report reflects information, data, observations, and recommendations collected from the online survey and heard in the listening groups. The consultant focused on the areas of spirituality/formation, outreach, relationships, evangelism, and worship. Next steps, survey demographics, and resources can be found at the end of the report. Dean Thomason contacted Jamie Martin-Currie to conduct this *Review & Restart*. She met with six listening groups including leadership, youth, staff, parents, and other interested adult members. As of May 15th, 203 individuals responded to the online survey.

The overall need for St. Mark's Cathedral is to emerge from the pandemic with an intentional plan to be relevant to young families with children and teens and create innovative ways to form relationships within the parish and the surrounding community.

Formation offerings are rich and successfully developing the spiritual life of adults, yet the majority of congregants desire to build deeper relationships among each other. Restarting the previously planned neighborhood groups from summer 2020 is recommended.

The successful, formative choir camp is a draw for many of the youth and children, but opportunities for those not in choir need to be more robust and compelling. Mentorships with the youth to develop leadership skills in worship and social justice ministries is recommended. Additional adults and training are needed to create sustainable programming for children's church school. Lectionary and Godly Play resources should be shared with families at home as preparation/recap of Sunday or in the case of absence. Children's chapel should resume its previous liturgy, so it mirrors the adults' in church.

In addition to creating neighborhood gatherings to develop relationships within the congregation, more intergenerational programming is recommended. Intergenerational faith formation strengthens relationships among people of all ages, enhances their sense of belonging in the faith community, and increases participation in church life. Along with the scheduled seasonal offerings, these events should be developed around various occasions such as back to school/work, secular holidays, social justice, or simply fellowship. These experiences of intentional relationship building across generations could also be offered midweek. Setting up prayer partners among members of all ages is relational building as well.

St. Mark's Cathedral is a large organization of Christians who care deeply for the betterment of the larger community. In order to form relationships with those outside the cathedral community, a change of culture is necessary so that instead of doing for, congregants are doing with. This is accomplished by learning the gifts and talents of those in need and equipping them to help themselves by asking these three questions:

1. What can communities do for themselves?
2. What can they do with a little help?
3. What do communities need for a faith community to do for them that they can't do for themselves?

A Neighborhood Missional Intelligence Report will be helpful determining where to start.

The 2021 mutual ministry goals will guide the recommendations of this Review & Restart report. A council of 8-12 members, including youth, should be formed to begin prioritizing the recommendations. The consultant's role over the next year will be keeping the council accountable and on track with the goals they set.

It is recommended the cathedral hire a full-time intergenerational lay minister to discern and equip a team of adults to serve the children, youth, and parish family ministries. The primary function of this position is to work closely with clergy to create an overall vision, scope, sequence, curriculum, and communal rhythms of faith formation with all ages and stages from children and youth to adults, including family faith formation. This person would benefit from ministerial and administrative assistance based on the number of children, youth, and families reported in the database.

Culture and Scope

St. Mark's is an established community of 3,040 Christian believers. Of these, 1,177 are members in good standing, of which approximately 120 children are newborns to 11 years and approximately 80 are youth ages 12-18. The number of reachable families (in the database but not attending) is approximately 50.

This is a congregation of intelligent, competent, educated people who care tremendously for the betterment of the community. The cathedral is well known in the community for high quality music and worship, social justice ministries, and the Sunday evening compline service. St. Mark's is also recognized for its radical hospitality to all, the leadership's prophetic vision, respect for Native Americans, and being the "holy box on the hill".

The average Sunday attendance (ASA) pre-Covid was 752, and before reopening fully the ASA is currently (in person and virtual) approximately 500 total. The church's operating budget is \$2M of which \$6000 is dedicated to children's ministries, and \$6000 is dedicated to youth ministry. The choir school budget which includes children and youth is \$48,000. These budget lines do not include staffing.

The overall need is to find ways to become relevant to young families with children and teens and create innovative ways to form relationships within the parish and the surrounding community.

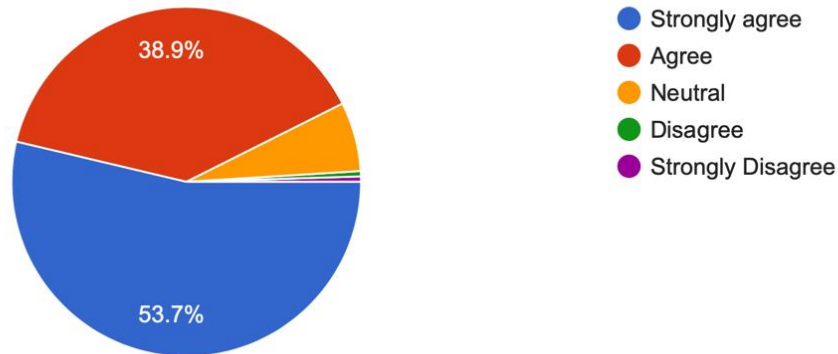
Adult Spirituality/Formation

Current Results

92.6 % of online survey respondents agree they want to grow spiritually and 94% said St. Mark's helps them apply their faith in everyday life. These statistics are incredibly high and prove the cathedral is doing an excellent job forming adult disciples. (see figures below) People stated that EFM (Education for Ministry), serving as a chalice bearers, lectors, and greeters help them grow spiritually. Small groups that create the space for conversations about questions related to faith and spirituality help people apply their faith to everyday life.

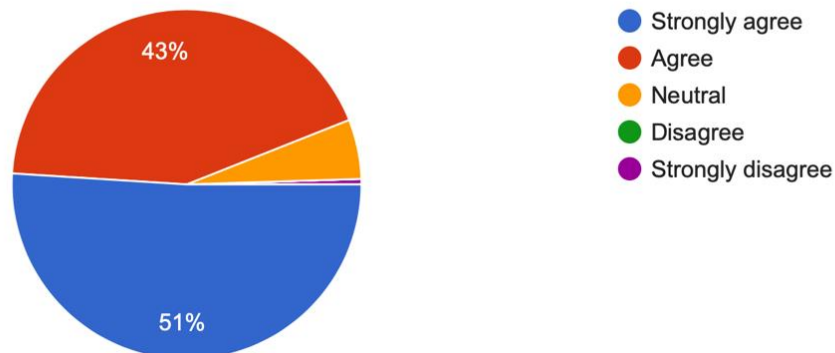
I want to grow spiritually and become more Christlike.

203 responses

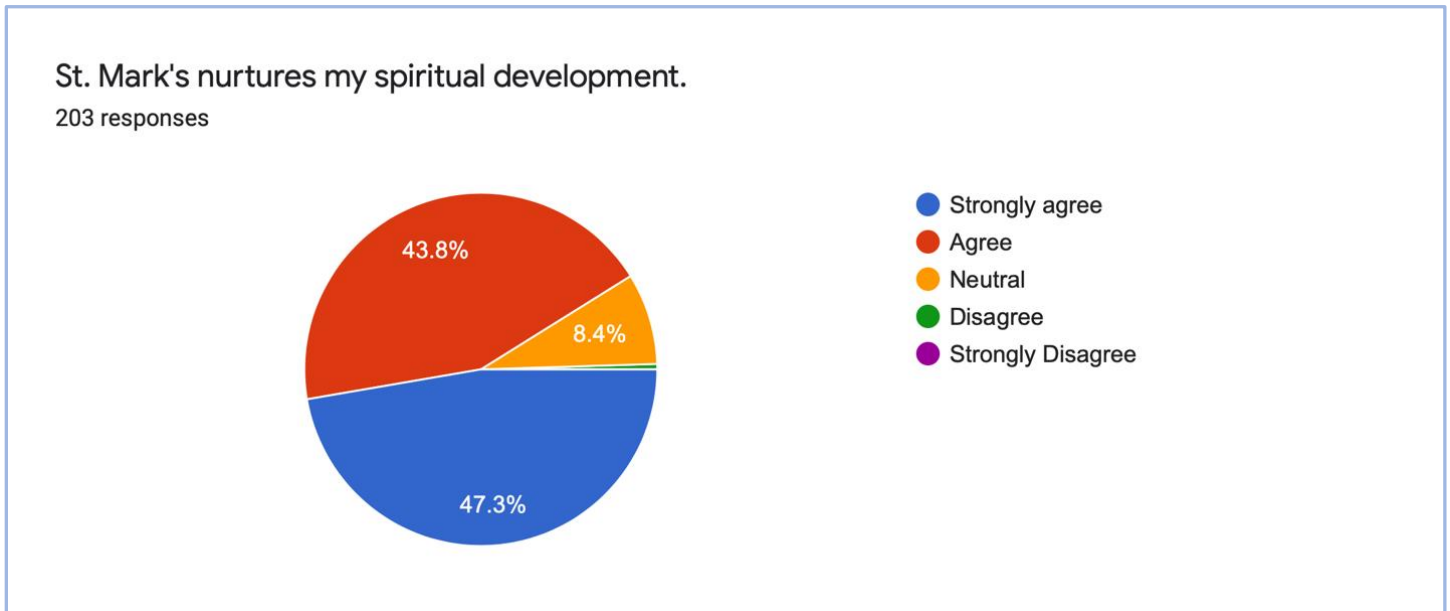


St. Mark's helps me apply my faith to everyday life.

200 responses



91.1% of people agree that St. Mark's nurtures their spiritual development which is also an incredibly high number. (see figure below)



The ways in which people feel nurtured is through well planned worship services, excellent preaching, transcending choral music, events for fellowship with people of all ages, in-depth spiritual formation classes, and liturgies that celebrate the seasons of the church year. The Radix groups, Wisdom School, and the Forums provide a wide variety of viewpoints on scripture, liturgy, and current events that consistently challenge parishioners to grow and reconsider their assumptions.

Although 91.1% agreed that St. Mark's nurtures their spiritual development, when asked how the cathedral could better do this, 144 of the 203 respondents commented with specific ideas while the other 59 were satisfied and feel St. Mark's is doing an excellent job. Mentioned repeatedly was the desire for avenues to connect with fellow congregants.

There was also a strong emphasis on contemplative offerings to help congregants develop more quiet time with God. Suggestions included contemplative prayer training and practice, learning spiritual practices, virtual group meditation, and retreats. The return of a Monday evening centering prayer worship service is being greatly anticipated. Congregants yearn to learn how they can integrate spirituality into everyday life in a pluralistic world. As one person commented, "I need help to put on the full armor of Christ to engage with those more meaningfully with whom they have political and theological disagreements".

In terms of content, a few individuals requested deep dive academic level theological studies that prove more progressive and challenging and programming with better information on context of biblical

mythology and how it relates to life today. Similarly, some EFM graduates would like to experience more theologically centered studies with deeper reading.

Others desire structured opportunities for fellowship outside of Bible study, similar to foyers dinner groups, kayaking, or bicycling, etc. Women voiced a need for specific programming for them at all stages of life and especially a group for mothers of teens. A few young parents stated they felt the 10am Sunday morning offerings appealed to older adults and wondered about adding a parenting class. Several people requested more attention to the seniors both intellectually and socially by integrating them more frequently with other age groups. The elders also hope the virtual gatherings continue.

Overall, the majority of commenters think their spiritual development could be better nurtured by strengthening caring and connections made between congregants. This quote from one parishioner was striking, “The leadership is doing an excellent job now. We all just need to let the process be and continue doing what we each are called to do. Continue the rich array of opportunities: continuing to build a non-judgmental and healing community which meets everyone where they are on their spiritual journey”.

Future Directions St. Mark’s offers connections to a range of experiences in faith formation with many opportunities to engage in social justice and ministry opportunities that invite people to live out their faith in immediate and direct ways. Given the size of the congregation it is not surprising parishioners are seeking avenues to connect with fellow congregants especially after the pandemic. Meeting in neighborhood-specific small groups could accomplish this by providing easier access during the week. This very idea was teed up to launch last summer, then anti-racism work and a summer series devoted to that superseded the plan. These neighborhood groupings would be more fellowship focused and could sustain over time with the intent of deepening relationships. House churches create intimacy and safety that allow vulnerability and deep pastoral relationships are formed.

There has been so much hurt over the past year and the cathedral has offered numerous practical opportunities of support and healing for parents, clergy, and pastoral lay leaders. Interfaith prayer vigils have been held and more are planned. If congregants need more at this time, there are plenty of resources they can use on their own.

- ***The Second Breath Center*** offers spiritual practices and encouraging audio reflections at one's fingertips, workshops, and courses to help dive deeper into spirituality and purpose, and brief reflections to put ancient Christian wisdom in context for the modern moment.
- Invite every parishioner to participate in ***My Way of Love*** an individual inventory followed by eight weeks of emails that trace the Presiding Bishop's Way of Love. It's an easy way for people to shape a rule of life that can guide them.
- You may have picked up newcomers to the Episcopal tradition who are unfamiliar with the liturgy. You may be welcoming back longtime churchgoers who recognize how much they've missed the eucharist and want to know what it's all about. Capitalize on this curiosity. A helpful resource about Holy Eucharist is Furman Buchanan's book, ***Gifts of God for the People of God***.

Young Adult Formation

Current Results

Not much was said about the 20's-30's group except that it was described as “small but mighty”.

It was noted that most young people do not attend the larger cathedral events, yet the Sunday evening compline is full of this demographic and several dozen young adults attend the Sunday morning services regularly.

Future Directions

Young people are in a stage of life full of growth—socially, spiritually, emotionally, and more. Even before the pandemic, they were navigating some of life's biggest questions around community, identity, and meaning. In essence, the pandemic has not been a slight speed bump as they navigate these big life questions; it was a sudden and dramatic left turn when several lost their jobs, some had to return to their parents' home to live, or some lost their apartments due to financial restraints.

- In February 2021, Springtide Research Institute asked 2500 young people 13-25 about their experiences, how they processed losses and gains, and what they expect from life on the other side of the pandemic. They gathered the insights and published ***THE NEW NORMAL: 8 Ways to Care for Gen Z in a Post-Pandemic World.***
 1. CREATE SAFETY to help young people regain their footing
 2. GRIEVE WHAT'S BEEN LOST without dwelling on the negatives
 3. CELEBRATE WHAT'S BEEN GAINED without insisting on optimism
 4. RESIST COMPARISON by making space for a range of emotions
 5. GET TOGETHER to combat isolation with intentional gatherings
 6. TAKE CARE OF THE BODY to help the body and mind process stress
 7. TURN TO THE ARTS to find new modes of expression
 8. FOCUS ON THE PRACTICAL
- ***The Power of Ritual*** by Casper ter Kuile, explores how young adults can nourish their souls by transforming common, everyday practices—yoga, reading, walking the dog—into sacred rituals that can heal their crisis of social isolation and struggle to find purpose—a message we need more than ever for our spiritual and emotional well-being in the age of COVID-19.
- Has the Sunday evening compline community ever been invited to return to the cathedral for an event catered to them? What if they were handed a ***Moo*** card on the way out with a QR code that leads to an event about the origin/history of compline or an invitation to hear a popular speaker like ***Vu Le*** (“voo lay”) who is a writer, speaker, vegan, and the former Executive Director

of RVC, a nonprofit in Seattle that promotes social justice by developing leaders of color, strengthening organizations led by communities of color, and fostering collaboration between diverse communities.

Youth Formation

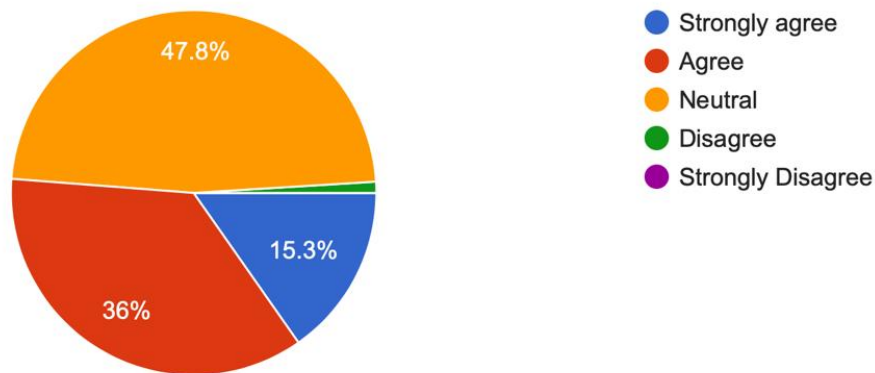
Current Results

The youth and children's ministries have been in flux with revolving leadership over the last ten years. In general, parents feel children and youth who are not choir school have not been a priority since they are not currently being connected/resourced to the whole mission and vision of the cathedral. Hence, one of the reasons for this *Review & Restart* process.

The survey responses were split fairly evenly among those who think that St. Mark's successfully nurtures the spiritual life of children and youth; 51.3% agree and 47.8% answered neutral. (see figure below) Many people commented they wished there had been an option to answer "do not know" but instead chose to answer neutrally. When asked their first two words or phrases about the children's and youth ministries, 77 of the 203 respondents did have the opportunity to write in "do not know". This is understandable since over 50% of the congregants who participated in the survey were over 50 years old and may not be involved in the youth and children's ministries.

St. Mark's successfully nurtures the spiritual life of children and youth.

203 responses

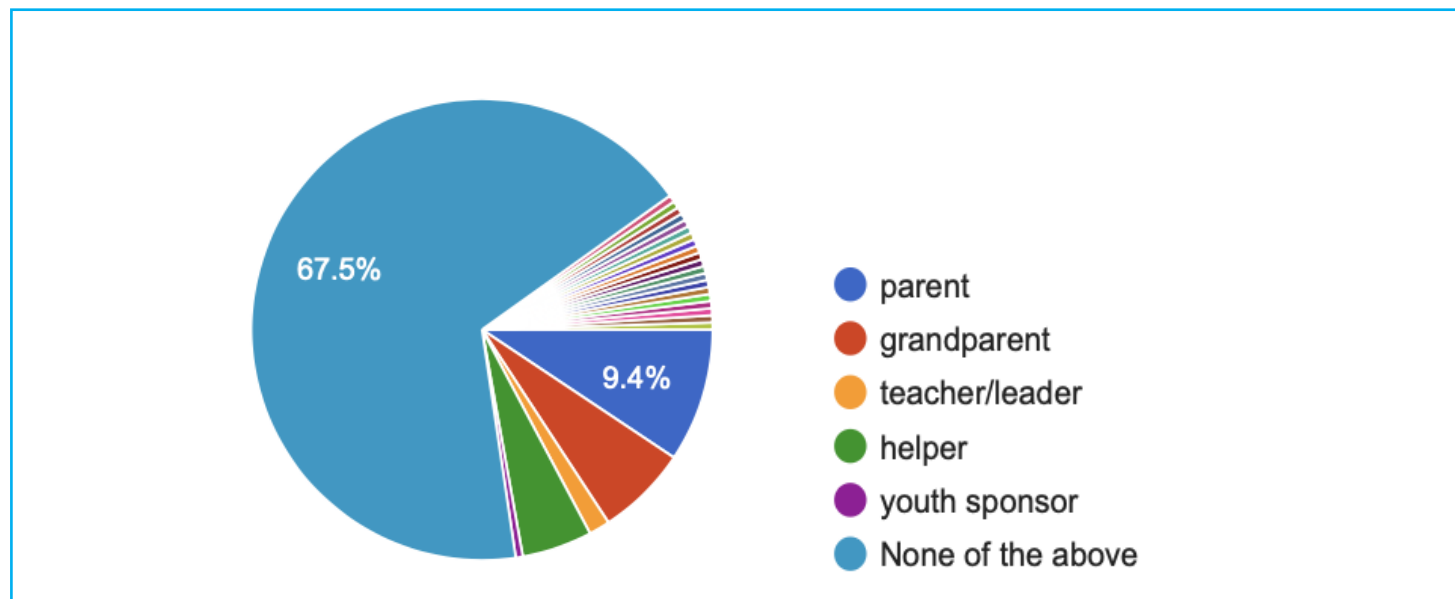


Considering that 67.5% of people who answered none of the above when asked about their involvement in the life and children and youth demonstrates a gap in the generations. (see figure below) This indicates the ages are segregated, and it seems there are very few relationships between the generations. Even though there are annual intergenerational events where the generations are in the same space, what is being offered for the generations to really get to know each other? When asked in the listening groups what people who did not have children at home thought their role was with

children and youth, they admitted they have little involvement besides supporting them financially yet know they need to try things to get out of their comfort zone. Others are eager to help if they are personally invited and given a “job”. The congregation loves children and youth but have an expectation that staff will tend to them.

What is your investment/commitment/involvement in the life of the children and youth at St. Mark’s?

203 responses



Most of the youth and many of the children participate in the choir school which is formative in multiple ways. The listening group of teenagers 14+ was comprised of both youth who are not in choir and some that are. The questions driving them today are about friends, planning for college, justice, sports, race, future, family, social media, and mental health. One thing we can count on is from these young people is their honesty. The youth desperately miss friends, playing games, and simply hanging out with one another. Some are interested in learning about the church guilds, i.e., quilting and bread baking and all like the idea of meeting with other generations. They enjoy doing community service and not just as a school requirement. When asked how important faith is on a scale of 1-10, they all answered 5-8. More than one shared that they were the only person in their class who attended church.

The challenge is that few students show up for youth group meetings or events so there is not a critical mass. The interim leader has done a remarkable job of creating space and keeping the non-choir school youth engaged during the pandemic. They need compelling reason to participate if there are only a handful of them.

When asked what qualities and/or values would you like to see in youth when they graduate from high school the responses were incredibly thoughtful. Following are quotes from parents and grandparents:

- Understand the intersection of spirituality and how to live in the world day in and day out. I am not looking for kids to go out and evangelize, I am looking for them to understand they are loved, they are part of a community, and they can change the world for the better by being who they are called to be.
- Firm in their faith, able to explain why it matters to them, integration of faith and everyday life to know to their core that they are absolutely beloved by God, to be able to see this in this community here.
- Gratitude, joy, and a commitment to share the love of God through compassion for and service to others.
- Commitment to social justice, curiosity, humility, kindness, compassion, empathy, curiosity.
- Some level of skill with spiritual discernment, discipleship, and theology.
- Inquiring and discerning hearts and open minds with a serious commitment to social justice.
- Conviction that God loves them and their faith journey matters.
- That they understand their faith enough to continue it through life.
- Confidence in their belovedness, tools/skills to find what they need or long for in their continued relationship with God, not needing the perfect program or role to make church a viable community experience.
- That all youth have a sense of self-worth, that they are loved and accepted exactly as they are, that they feel God is indeed in their daily life.

- Desire to do one's best and help others do the same, patience and willingness to listen.
- It's more I would like them to have an opportunity to grow their faith, be supported by the community, and to learn, lead, and inspire the congregation.
- Eyes open to the community and the world, and a belief that they have gifts to share that can lighten someone's burdens.
- Knowing they are loved by God no matter what, kids that have a good understanding of other faith traditions and how their faith is the same & different than others, the ability to make good decisions and to have folks they can trust with questions about the struggles they face as teens and young adults.
- Confidence in who they are and in what God calls them to be without feeling guilt.
- Confidence in themselves and their abilities to navigate their journey in life. Pursue a passion for lifelong learning.
- An appreciation for contemplative/spiritual development coupled with experience and appreciation for social justice.
- Knowing they will make a difference.
- Critical thinking (ability to look at questions of faith/science/etc. and make a critical and well thought out decision, rather than blindly following what they've been taught), comfort with doubt and lack of knowledge, hunger for justice.
- A foundation of faith that has Christ and discipleship at the heart. Knowing that some may fall away from the church, having the steadfast foundation to recall and return if needed.

Future Directions

The entire youth program needs to refocus with a strong curriculum emphasizing community outreach, faith formation, and fun. Right now, these students need to enjoy hanging out and being

active together. They have spent way too much time sitting at their desks and they crave something to do. It is time to create potential goals for the youth program using the list above.

What if the non-choir youth were invited into leadership on the various social justice ministry committees? The youth could apprentice the adults in learning how to lead a meeting, plan events, and the adults could learn more about communicating digitally by giving it over to the teenagers. This requires a one-on-one personal invitation to the teenager from the leadership with parent permission. Meetings would need to be a convenient time for the students. When these teenagers are part of the event planning, chances are they will invite friends to join in even if it is held on the church campus. The cathedral could become known as the Episcopal church in Seattle that lifts up youth with an intentional leadership development process.

- Coming in July is **Youth Ministry as Peace Education** which offers clergy, students, and practitioners a new approach to youth ministry--a way to equip young people to transform violence and oppression as part of their Christian vocation.
- A great book for teenagers interested in social justice is **Manna and Mercy: A Brief History of God's Unfolding Promise to Mend the Entire Universe** which conveys the continuity of God's covenant of life, justice, and inclusion to all people and all of creation.
- **D365** is a daily devotional specifically for youth that seeks to provide relevant reflections on scripture.
- **Teen Text** is an excellent lectionary curriculum for MS and HS that includes:
 - Questions to help understand the Bible text.
 - Questions to connect the text to our current world.
 - Questions to connect the conversation to the individual.
- Fuller Youth Institute spent a decade conducting its College Transition Project, studying over 500 high school seniors across the country during their first three years in college. Their research showed that roughly 50% of students walk away from the church after they graduate high school. **Sticky Faith Innovation** training is a 6-session, self-paced online training that will guide you and your team as you compassionately listen to your young people, respond creatively with fresh ideas, and take courageous steps to implement a new, purposeful approach in your ministry. What if you changed the usual ratio of leaders to students? Rather than aiming to have one adult leader for every five students, it's better to aim for connecting every teen with five adults who are willing to invest in the teen in some way, even if rather small.

- St. Mark's is full of welcoming and wise adults who could be part of a mentorship initiative. Having a mentorship team that is consistently involved in the youth ministries would strengthen faith formation for all involved. Setting up mentors with young people is a great way for them to be able to share their talents and time with a younger member of the church family. For instance, are there musicians or artists in the congregation? Quilters? Cooks? Writers? Computer people? Gamers? It is a lot easier to get to know a person when you are doing something with them. There are multiple resources to support a mentoring initiative including instructions on how to mentor, active listening tips, how parents can support this effort, and lists of questions to get the conversations going. Elders can encourage the youth of our parish to see God in their daily lives and in the people around them. They can also share how their faith has affected life decisions and helped them through rough times. Adults can be trained on how to build deeper relationships with young people through **Peer Ministry Leadership** training.

Whoever is leading the youth should be relational in nature by attending sports, music, and theatrical events in addition to connecting students to diocesan events.

- "Care for Creation" Labor Day Weekend September 3-5, 2021
- "Love Thy Neighbor" Veteran's Day Weekend November 12-14, 2021
- "Work for Good" Spring Camp May 21-23, 2022

This person should also join the youth ministry leaders from churches around the Diocese who gather for prayer, resource-sharing, and to discuss upcoming events and opportunities in their churches on first Thursdays at 10am.

Worship currently has opportunities for all ages as acolytes, choir, and bread bakers. Perhaps a teenager could serve as the digital usher during online worship. A way to involve the parents of the choir school students who are not cathedral members is to invite them to serve in worship while their children are singing. What if these families signed up to be greeters/ushers and help count the offering? Invite families to bring the elements forward on special days, such as a child's birthday or parents' anniversary. They can even arrive early to practice and stay after to learn about the altar guild.

Children's Formation

Future Directions

Godly Play is an excellent storytelling curriculum that helps children explore their faith through story, gain religious language, and enhances their spiritual experience through wonder and play. For this curriculum to be effective, teachers need to be appropriately trained in how to lead the lessons and manage the classroom. One storyteller is not a sustainable model, and training for the second safeguarded adult who manages the classroom is just as important. To entice additional people to become trained to serve in this ministry, it is recommended that a trained Godly Play teacher tell the congregation a story during a parish event so that they have a better understanding of this curriculum.

- The **Godly Play Foundation** is now offering core training virtually and there is a training scheduled for July.
- The 3rd-5th grade teachers are looking at **Brick by Brick**, a very good curriculum using Legos to build Bible stories. The author has recently published a second version that covers the parables. Using Legos to build Bible stories is tactile and fun for both students and adult leaders.
- If children's chapel continues, it is recommended the leaders resume what was in place previously to mirror the adults' experience in church. **God's Word, My Voice: A Lectionary for Children** and **The Children's Illustrated Bible** are age-appropriate resources created specifically for this purpose. Adult leaders lead a simple creed, ask for prayer requests then lead a simplified version of the Prayers of the People.
- Assuming the older elementary students stay in church, there is a helpful resource for adults to discuss the lectionary readings with them before or after worship. **The Sunday Paper** for ages 9 and up includes an excellent note for parents on the back side. This information could be emailed to parent's mid-week so they can prepare children for what to expect on Sunday. There is also **The Sunday Paper Jr.** for ages 3-10.
- **Faith@Home** is a free email that arrives in one's in-box on Wednesdays with the goal of helping families grow in faith as they spend time throughout the week reflecting on God's Word. Based on readings from the Revised Common Lectionary, the devotions invite families to engage in the discipleship practices of reading, reflecting, and responding to scripture in the context of community. Offerings include adult and small child, adult and elementary, adult and youth, and adult and adults, so people can have conversations with everyone, no matter what stage of life.

- ***The Children's Illustrated Bible*** would be an excellent addition to the elementary classroom or to every home since it includes useful historical information and illustrations, as well as the important context biblical stories have in the real world. Children's bibles could also be available for children along with worship bags as they enter the cathedral or even in the chair racks.

The parents at St. Mark's understand they are the primary role model of the Christian lifestyle but may need help when it comes to answering questions. Most do not feel equipped to lead a conversation about religion or spirituality and are stressed from being pulled in so many directions.

- If a family has a Sunday morning conflict and the children's ministry is no longer virtual, the church could support households of all ages in learning scripture and praying at home. That might mean making sure every household owns a Bible and prayer book. Developing a calendar with links to watch ***Godly Play Stories told on YouTube*** would be helpful as well.

The most important thing parents need to know is that whatever values their family prioritizes, they as parents need to model and embody that priority. In other words, children need to know that church is important to their parents. As public health restrictions continue to lessen, will parents reinvest their discretionary time into routines and activities that actually reflect what they truly want for their family? In particular, practices and activities geared toward faith development. If the family ministry is thriving, people will talk about it and others will come check it out. There is no better advertising than word of mouth. St. Mark's should capitalize on attracting families who want their children to be a part of a like-minded culture and appreciate the liturgical church.

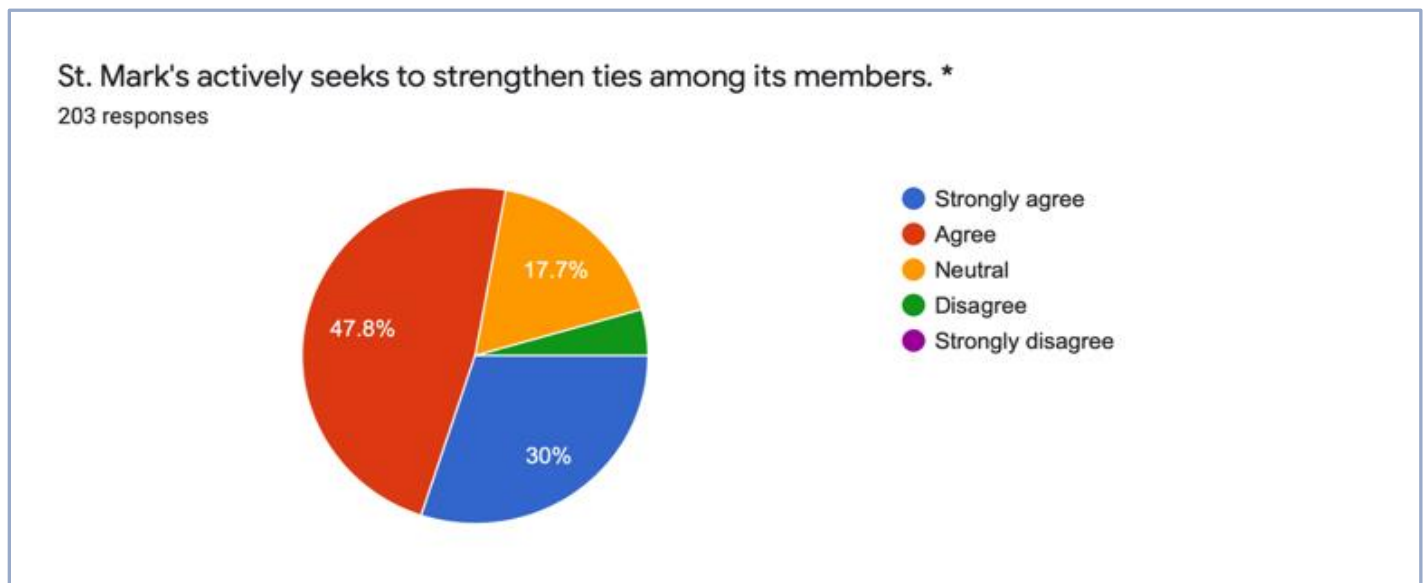
Relationships within the Cathedral

Current results

77.8% of people agree that the congregation seeks to strengthen ties among its members. The cathedral has a unique challenge. Lots of people come and don't really seem to want to be involved much vs. at a smaller church where people may come to be known. Many people at the cathedral seem to be fine with a limited experience of church, preferring not to go past worship and engage more fully in the community. For some reason these people may just need a personal invitation to get more involved.

Radix groups were repeatedly mentioned and have been a game changer for many. The seniors especially find these new groups to be a powerful tool, even via zoom. Seasonal events, service ministries, and Wednesday evening dinners were shared as vehicles that strengthen relationships. The music programs are a very strong asset in relationship building, particularly between generations and backgrounds on Wednesday evenings.

Here is a particularly meaningful quote from the survey, “There are so many events and the cathedral itself feels like a holy and sacred container for all these relationships”.

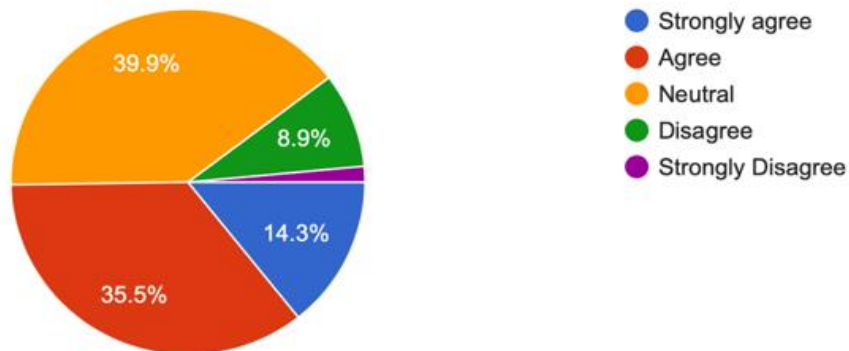


Only 49.8% people agree that the congregation is successful at building intergenerational relationships, yet 96% of survey respondents are willing to spend time with others who are at least a decade younger or older than they are and 89.2% are interested in attending events that foster communications across generations. (see figures below) This is fantastic, very positive, and hopeful

for the future of the cathedral and indicates that intergenerational ministry is a viable formation model for St. Mark's.

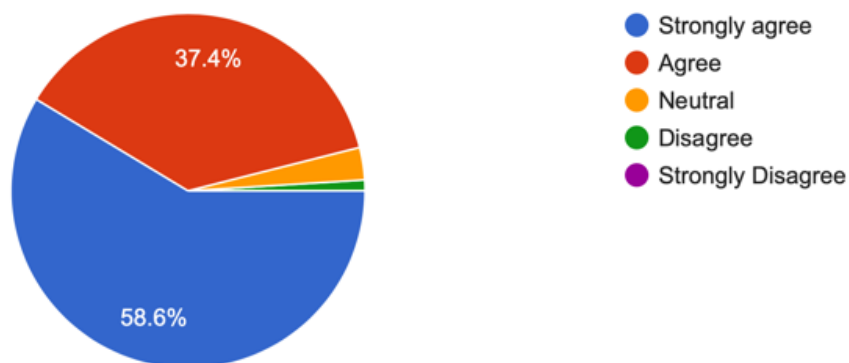
We are successful at building intergenerational relationships.

203 responses



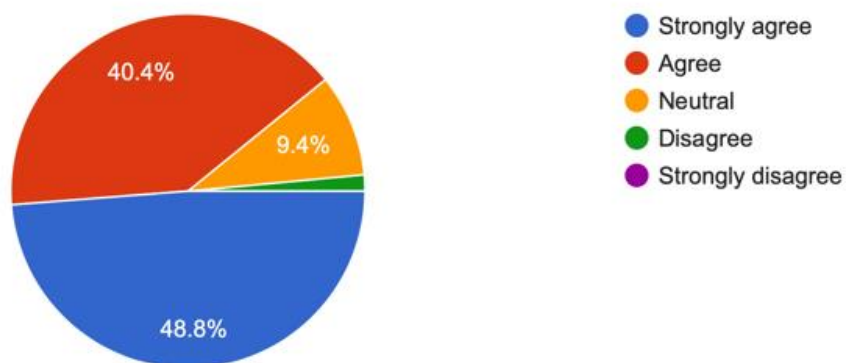
I am willing to spend time with people in our cathedral and community who are at least a decade younger or older than me.

203 responses



I am interested in attending events that foster communication across generations.

203 responses



Future Directions

The wide variety of offerings can be an asset and a challenge. This is a large community so finding one's place could be difficult and some people likely prefer to remain anonymous. Either way, the opportunities are there, and it is up to the individual to pursue them. The chance to work together toward a specified goal, provides an opportunity for friendships to develop as people come to recognize each other's particular skills, interests, and personalities. This has been made possible through intergenerational events such as Eat, Play, Love which was a huge success for not only the children but adults as well.

Disciples make disciples. There are many dedicated members of St. Marks who have wisdom and life experience to be shared with younger people. There are also older adults who can benefit from relationships with young people. In 2018, the GenOn Ministries Advisory Council conducted a survey, "A Study of Faith Formation in Christian Churches" across multiple denominations. A total of 1059 churches representing 20 denominations responded. Of these, 506 were mainline protestant parishes and 63 were Episcopal. Here are the top six ways that intergenerational faith formation has impacted these churches.

1. Intergenerational Faith Formation (IFF) strengthens relationships among people of all ages, enhances their sense of belonging in the faith community, and increases participation in church life.
2. IFF has a positive effect on both the older and young populations by creating intentional opportunities to meet together, share stories, and create something together.

3. IFF affirms each person's value in the total community (regardless of age) and promotes understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all stages and ages of life.
4. IFF creates a welcoming and safe environment conducive to promoting faith sharing, group participation, mutual support, and care for one another in the congregation and in the community.
5. IFF supports families by surrounding them with a community of faith and engaging the whole family in learning and practicing their faith.
6. People learn the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith through IFF as they participate with more experienced members of the church community.

There are four ministry areas where intergenerational community may holistically grow: worship, study, service, and fellowship. Which opportunities at the cathedral have the potential to incorporate more generations in planning, preparation, participation, and interaction?

- Now is the time to reimagine and plan upcoming events that include all ages and stages of spiritual growth. **GenOn Ministries** offers curriculum, training, and excellent support in how to get started. In addition to the seasonal events cathedral could offer intergenerational events every 5th Sunday or even every Wednesday evening. Choir school parents commented the content on this mid-week offering was geared for adults and wondered if there could also be programming for all ages. Since church school ends in May, obviously summer is also good time to offer these experiences. If another four-evening cathedral camp is planned for a future summer, it is an opportune time to go deeper with the approximately 15 hours into racism, inclusion, or other cathedral values.
- In addition to the intergenerational events already established the following could be added:
 - Back to school and work Backpack Blessing for all ages
 - October Trunk or Treat in the parking lot
 - St. Francis Day at a pet shelter as well as on campus
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - Day of Love
 - Abundant Living Garden Project in the current garden
 - The Church has Left the Building
 - Game Nights that enhance critical thinking for all ages
- **Love First** is not a curriculum, but a different approach to children's ministry that engages the whole church, not just the children. That means it can bring life to the entire parish. Not merely because having children in a parish makes it feel livelier, which it does. But because having

a Love First children's ministry means children are paying attention to others and others are paying attention to them in ways that typically don't happen.

- For people that do not do well in groups, the congregation could offer to connect people 1:1 as prayer partners. This would foster ties which could make them more comfortable to discuss spiritual development and faith with someone else.
- Since it has been such a long time that people have seen each other why not hold a name amnesty or general pardon for forgetting people's names and wear nametags all summer.

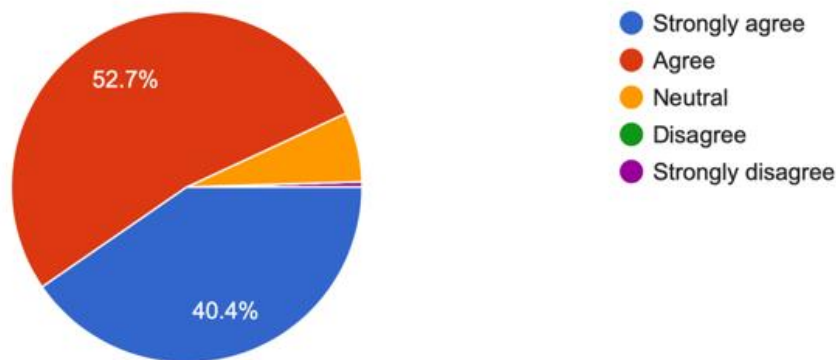
Relationships Outside the Cathedral

Current Results

93.3% of agrees that St. Mark's responds to the need of people outside of the church and 88.6% feel that the church encourages and equips them to share God's love while engaging in the work of social justice. (see figures below)

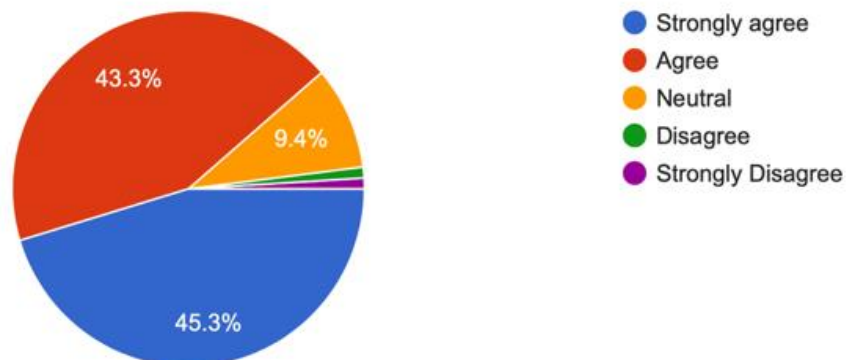
St. Mark's responds to the needs of people outside of the church.

203 responses



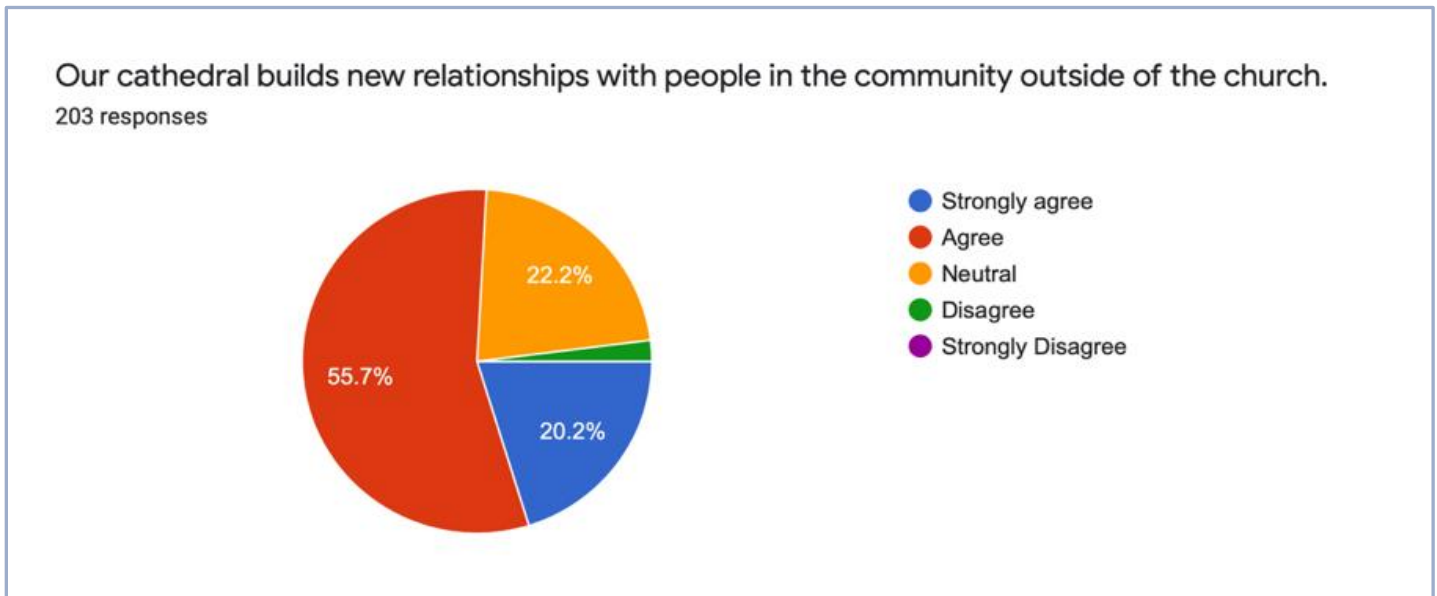
Our church encourages and equips me to share God's love when engaging in the work of justice.

203 responses



The number of social justice opportunities is very impressive and a rich example of how the cathedral puts its faith in action. The congregation is excellent at serving others but not really sharing life together with those they serve. Perhaps they could learn to see what is rising up from the community instead of congratulating themselves? Faith communities who understand asset-based community development work for the benefit of the community. They do it with not for.

75.9% of respondents agree St. Mark's builds new relationships with people in the community outside the church. (see figure below)



Future Directions Following are several proven ways to reimagine how the congregation can create innovative relationships outside the walls of the cathedral.

- ***Having Nothing, Possessing Everything; Finding Abundance Communities in Unexpected Places*** is about Mike Mather's journey from seeing the community around him as a place that is full of needs to be fixed by him to a place full of gifted, amazing, resourceful, imaginative people who are doing the important work of grieving, celebrating, and healing that is the bedrock that does change things.
- ***The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods*** is a movement that states "the consumer society tells us that we are insufficient and that we must purchase what we need from specialists and systems outside the community. We have become consumers and clients, not citizens and neighbors." John McKnight and Peter Block show that

churches have the capacity to find real and sustainable satisfaction right in their neighborhood and community. Here are three key questions from McKnight & Block's book:

1. What can communities do for themselves?
2. What can they do with a little help?
3. What do communities need someone else (faith community or other institution) to do for them that they can't do for themselves?

- The vision of **Heartedge** is of a global movement renewing the local church, sustaining lively and dynamic communities in a thriving society. The interdependence of commerce, culture, compassion, and congregational life is key so that the approach sustains itself, is open to the gifts of strangers, and exhibits the life of faith.
- **Holy Currencies** is a holistic model for stewardship and congregational vitality, moving beyond "time, talent, and treasure" to create missional and sustainable ministries. This model enables church leaders to understand, develop, and utilize five other kinds of currencies besides money that are essential for creating sustainable and missional ministries.
- **Messy Church** is a gathering for all ages of unchurched families to meet together to learn about Christ through games, crafts and activities, music, and storytelling from the Bible. A foundational ingredient of this intergenerational event is to gather around a table for a snack or meal and build relationships with each other, God, and the world.
- How often does the cathedral reach out to those who have stopped attending? Has anyone ever asked them why they have left? Create an **Invite Welcome Connect** committee to follow up and/or research public records that include real estate information of people who have moved into nearby neighborhoods. A handwritten welcome note from a cathedral member will go a long way when received. The NextDoor app is an excellent way to learn what is going on in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Request a Neighborhood Missional Intelligence Report from your consultant to learn more specific demographic data in the communities where the cathedral currently serves so the congregation can begin to change the culture of doing for instead of doing with or to.

Storytelling is a very powerful evangelism tool. In addition to listing the upcoming events in the newsletter, include follow up stories as well. Invite congregants to write a blurb and take a photo of an experience that was transformative for them. Post these meaningful stories on social media as a way of lighting a flame or planting a seed in someone. Posting these stories on the parish FB account and

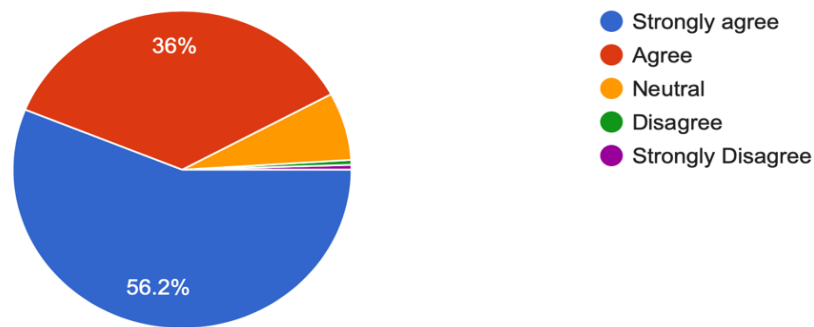
Instagram will strategically get the word out. Then parishioners could share it to their personal FB pages or even their stories which seem to get good responses. What about checking into Facebook advertising?

Worship

92.2% of people agree that worship is vibrant. (See figure below) Very few congregants think there needs to be a change in the worship schedule, but a few did remark it would be helpful to have more time between services for the education/formation time and definitely keep the livestream.

Vibrant worship challenges your assumptions and convictions, helps you understand scripture and inspires you to action. I consider worship to be vibrant at St. Mark's.

203 responses



Surveys

Interestingly, the results of a recent survey are very similar to today. Here is a snapshot:

- Get to know the neighbors; who are the St. Markans living in their own neighborhood?
- Deeper conversations
- More less structured, hang out time
- Further develop middle and high school programming
- Include children and youth at events already attended well by adults
- Youth on committees
- Grow an intergenerational mix of people
- Create programming that fosters connection across generations
- Focus on family engagement of children newborn to 5 years not in choir
- Foster community exchange

Next Steps

The first task is to create stakeholders to serve on an intergenerational council. This group consists of invested adults and dedicated youth who meet to calendar events and empower others for ministry. The goal of this group is to make family, children, and youth ministry, and intergenerational ministry a priority. Clear expectations will need to be set from the beginning that this council is commissioned to vision and plan. Designing this council to align with the 2021 mutual ministry goals adopted this spring will be key.

Mutual Ministry Goals-2021

-adopted by St. Mark's Vestry, April 27, 2021

1. Creation Care and Carbon Reduction

In solidarity with future generations, grounded in our Christian duty to preserve and protect God's creation and promote justice, we will educate, empower, and support the cathedral and its members to become carbon neutral by 2030.

2. Restorative Justice and Systemic Change

Drawing on our scriptural enjoinder to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, we will renew our commitment to seek and serve Christ in all persons, working toward restorative justice and the dignity of every human being while lamenting and working to change those systemic evils—in the church and the world—that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God.

3. Innovative and Intergenerational Community

As we envision ways of being Church in a post-pandemic world, we will foster spiritual growth and nourishing relationships among members of the cathedral community through intergenerational programming, small group gatherings, and innovative ways to incorporate those new to Saint Mark's as we seek to become Beloved Community.

Having a council of 10-12 members is ideal. Sub committees could include education, social justice, and fellowship. Each committee will be assigned an appropriate area to work on that match their gifts and interests. A dedicated staff member will need to support the work of these sub committees by helping to execute their vision.

The sub-committees could look like this:

Education- 4 people total, 1 to represent children, 1 to represent youth, and 2 to represent adults

Social Justice- 4 people total, 1 to represent children, 2 to represent youth, and 1 to represent adults (this should include someone from the already established social justice committee)

Fellowship- 4 people total, 2 to represent children, 1 to represent youth, and 1 to represent adults

The vestry and Dean will invite people to serve on this council then gather them to develop a clear mission statement for the children's, youth, and intergenerational ministries.

Closing Comments

Sharing another lovely quote to close, “Dean Steve's LEADERSHIP has been phenomenal and much needed especially this past year! GREATLY appreciate the email messages he sends out in response to events in the world (e.g., responding appropriately to The Pope's announcement, tensions/violence in the community, etc.). COMMUNITY - the older folks especially get isolated (especially, the single ones) and it has gotten even worse during the pandemic. Early on, I was literally brought to tears (but I didn't display it!) when someone called me just to "check in". It was very valuable and much needed. Who would have EVER thought someone like me would need something like that? Thank you, though.”

The cathedral is an amazing body of Christians! I look forward to working with you over the next year setting goals and keeping you accountable to engage St. Mark's in what God has in store for you. What makes a church grow is not any particular program, but the passionate love that is behind all of the programs, initiatives, handshakes, and hand-written notes that God is using to renew the Church.

APPENDIX 1: Resources

Adults

Second Breath App

<https://secondbreathcenter.com>

My Way of Love

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/my-way-of-love/>

Gifts of God for the People of God

<https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/2495/gifts-of-god-for-the-people-of-god.aspx>

Trauma Informed Priorities for Adult Christian Formation.

<https://buildfaith.org/trauma-informed-adult-formation/>

Young Adults

The New Normal

<https://www.springtideresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/springtide-the-new-normal.pdf>

How to Love Your Neighbor with Leigh Spruill and Winn Collier

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4usw0DIK4-Q>

The Power of Ritual: How to Create Meaning and Connection in Everything You Do

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/46258506-the-power-of-ritual>

Youth

Teen Text

<https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/teen-text-teen-curriculum-grades-9-12-electronic/>

D365

<https://d365.org>

Sticky Faith Innovation

<https://rise.articulate.com/share/N1A49BwXjl1SoPoZQCxtqqxSL4IPi6qK#/lessons/PH8tj7w9-EM79DdQHW-dXvosW2G52sC2>

Peer Ministry Training

<https://peerministry.org>

Youth Ministry as Peace Education

<https://www.fortresspress.com/store/product/9781506469454/Youth-Ministry-as-Peace-Education?fbclid=IwAR1Q50rOspcnpKcPBwww4ZaRiD7wXYsTLnHdcyggZ5kfLAF6s3PvZA9PGk>

Diocesan Youth events

<https://ecww.org/youth/>

Children

Godly Play training

<https://www.trailblz.info/GodlyPlay/EventComplete.aspx?eventid=404>

Brick By Brick

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/buildingfaithbrickbybrick2>

Love First

https://lovefirstproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Love-First_FirstChapter.pdf

God's Word, My Voice

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/godswordmyvoice>

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/childrenslectionary>

The Children's Illustrated Bible

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/237433.The_Children_s_Illustrated_Bible

Faith at Home

<https://www.dofaithathome.org>

Godly Play Stories told on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/GodlyPlayFndn>

Blessing of the Backpack tags and liturgy

<https://www.illustratedministry.com/2021/blessing-of-the-backpacks-back-to-school-worship-liturgy/?fbclid=IwAR2s-BTH8BFakO9PCIVBRoelSn8QKbNIA5a5bgSmDYGGsd3tnDBPVZujflo>

Intergenerational

GenOn Ministries

https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0177/8392/files/Faith_Formation_in_Churches_Research_Report.pdf?160 study

<https://www.genonministries.org/pages/intergenerational-ministry-all-about-intergenerational-ministry>

Relationships

Having Nothing Possessing Everything

<https://eerdword.com/meet-this-book-having-nothing-possessing-everything/>

The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods

<https://www.abundantcommunity.com/authors/>

Heartedge

<https://www.heartedge.org/about-us/vision>

Holy Currencies

<https://www.kscopeinstitute.org/holy-currencies-1>

Invite Welcome Connect

<https://www.invitewelcomeconnect.com>

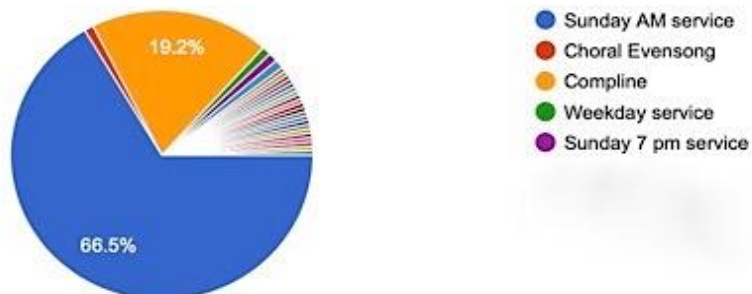
Messy Church

<https://messychurchusa.org>

APPENDIX 2: Demographics

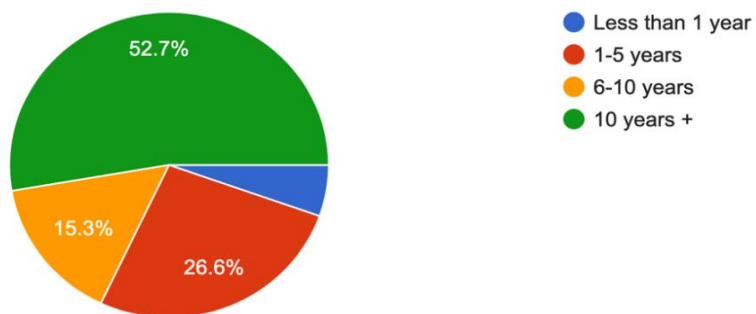
Which service did you first experience at St. Mark's?

203 responses



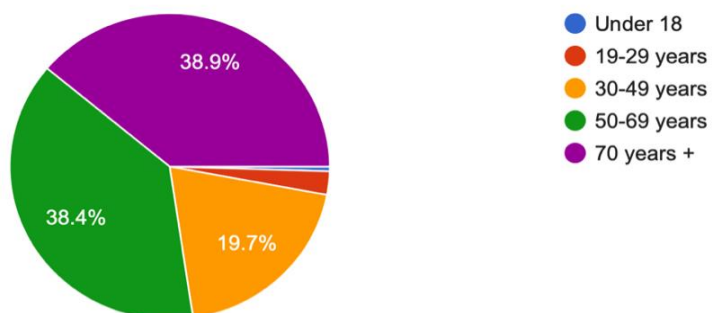
How long have you been attending St. Mark's?

203 responses



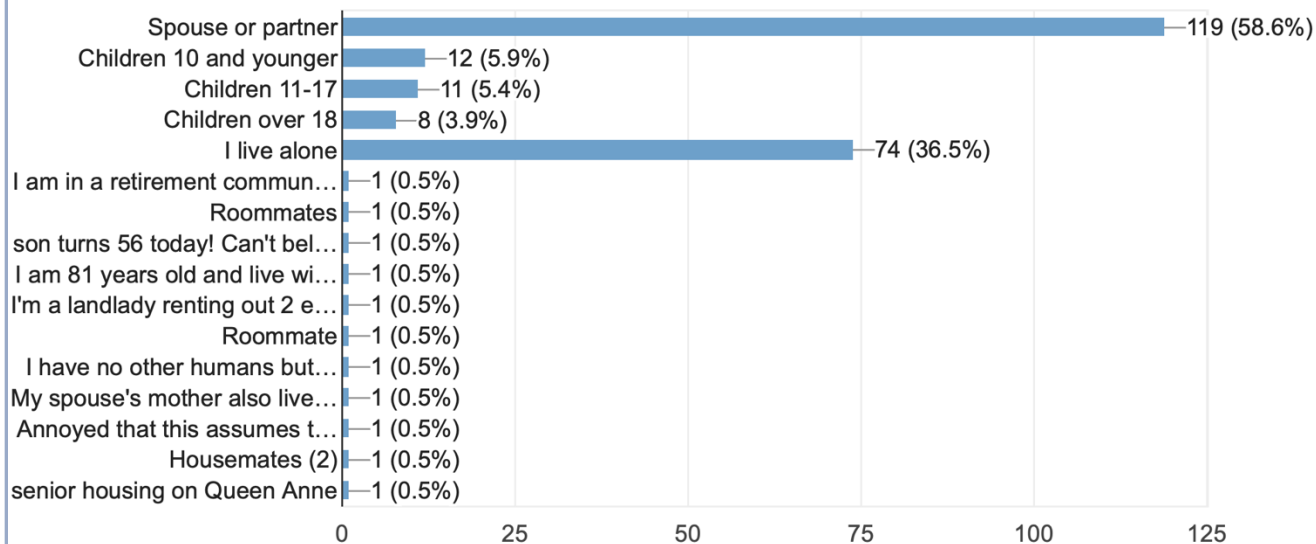
Age range

203 responses



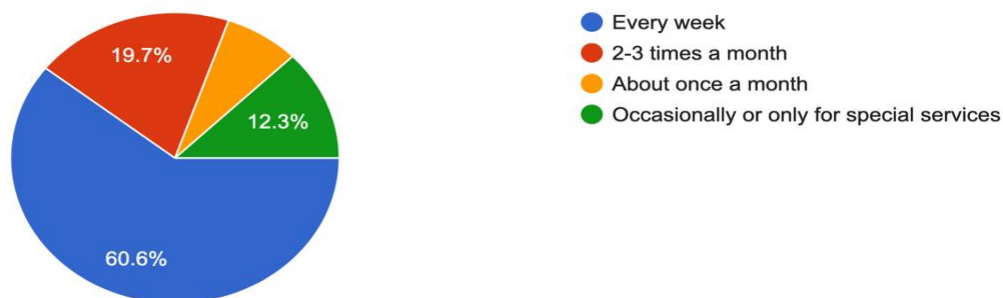
I live with my

203 responses



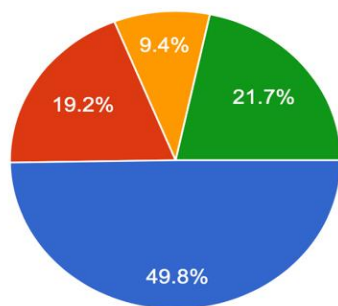
Pre-pandemic, how often did you attend worship at St. Mark's?

203 responses



During 2020 how often did you attend worship at St. Mark's?

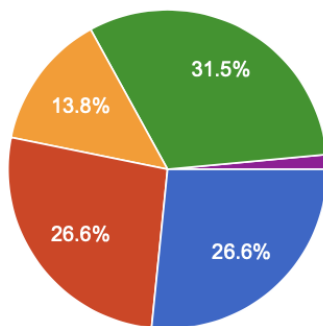
203 responses



- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- About once a month
- Occasionally or only for special services

How far away do you live from the cathedral?

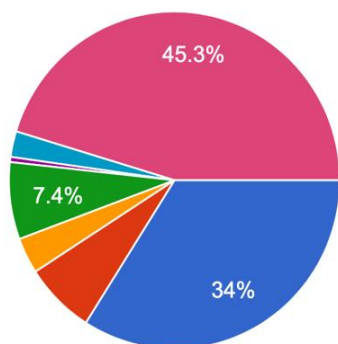
203 responses



- 0-3 miles
- 4-6 miles
- 7-10 miles
- 10 miles+

What is your employment status?

203 responses



- Work full-time
- Work part-time
- Full-time homemaker
- Self-employed
- Student
- Unemployed
- Retired