

St. Anselm Church 2017 Community Life Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the responses and commentary of individuals and families who responded to our 2017 St. Anselm Community Life Survey. Surveys were available through the St. Anselm's website and in the pews for a period of about one month. Announcements in weekly bulletins and during weekend masses encouraged participation. Blast emails were sent to members as a reminder to participate in the survey process.

We received 114 completed surveys, most of which were anonymously submitted. Respondents did not necessarily answer every question. In instances where the question was an open response, multiple topics could be included in one response.

We thank everyone for their candor. It is clear from the responses that there exists considerable passion among our community members towards St. Anselm Church. The survey results will definitely provide a solid foundation for discussion and prioritization of actions. This survey will also keep our church relevant and be a key component of our spiritual journey.

We recommend that rectorate leadership, both clergy and laity, accept these findings in the spirit in which they were offered to help identify areas of improvement that will enhance the total experience of all our members.

Table of Contents

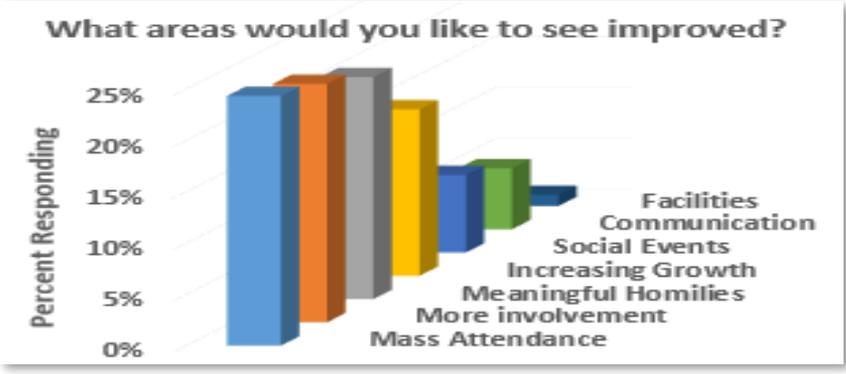
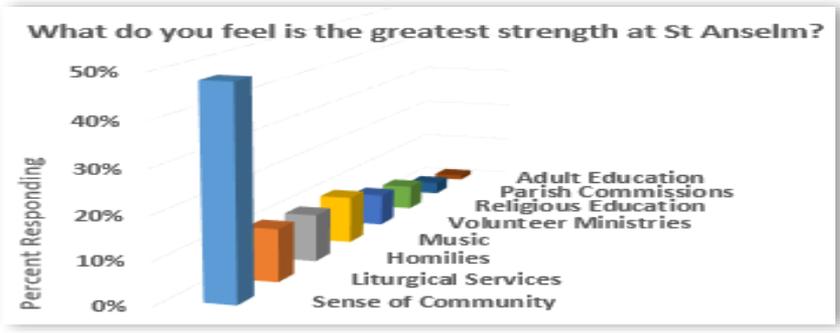
INTRODUCTION	1
SURVEY ATTRIBUTES.....	2
RATINGS OF THE EXPERIENCE	4
BEST LIKED ASPECTS	4
COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS.....	5
BULLETIN READERSHIP	5
SOCIAL GATHERINGS.....	6
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	6
GENERAL THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS	7
CONCLUSION	8

SURVEY ATTRIBUTES

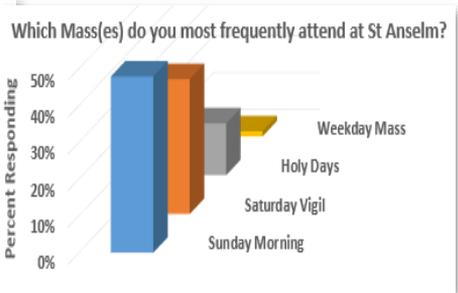
Summarizing the results of **2017 Community Life Survey**, the following are the characteristics of those responding.

- **114** surveys were **completed**
 - **99%** of these are **registered** members of St Anselm
 - **95%** of these **feel welcome** at St Anselm
 - **99%** **read the bulletin**
 - **75%** feel our **hospitality is sufficient**
 - **67%** feel our **social gatherings are sufficient**
 - **47%** feel a **call to a greater role** at St Anselm

Understanding why these respondents have chosen St Anselm and what areas they would like to see improved to assist with their spiritual journey were the basic purposes of the survey. The first two questions in the survey addressed both of these issues.



In addition, both frequency and type of participation could influence responses to the survey questions. Two questions in the survey attempted to identify these important characteristics.



At least two thirds of those responding attended St Anselm weekly for either Saturday Vigil or Sunday morning services. Drawing conclusions from the remainder of the survey information can use these basic characteristics to identify areas that might need improvement at St Anselm.

RATINGS OF THE EXPERIENCE

The survey also contained six questions that asked those responding to rate elements of the St Anselm experience on a scale from poor (1) to excellent (5). The following table summarizes the mean of these responses on this scale.

topic	mean
LITURGIES	4.1
HOMILIES	3.2
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CFF)	3.4
SMALL GROUP FAITH-SHARING	3.7
ADULT FORMATION/EDUCATION	3.3
MUSIC MINISTRY	3.5

The mean rating indicates how those responding perceive each of these elements. Utilizing these ratings indicates how to focus efforts to improve the overall religious experience.

BEST LIKED ASPECTS

We received feedback, which could be grouped into one of ten categories, from 64 respondents,.

The items cited by at least 10% of the respondents include:

- Community – welcoming, open, engaging (highest at 26%)
- Culture – friendly, closeness, family-like, inclusive
- Pastor – leadership, spirituality
- People – helpful, cooperative, volunteerism

The other areas mentioned are:

- Size – small, comfortable, and informal
- Ministries – opportunity to participate
- Liturgies – special events, church decorations
- Building and Grounds – beauty, cleanliness, appeal
- Location – physical proximity
- Lay Leadership – thoughtful, prudent

Generally, responses are in glowing terms of what attracted respondents originally and what keeps them involved in our faith community.

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

Eighty-five percent of respondents feel that communication is effective. Approximately 15% of respondents offered a specific comment. Improvement recommendations are directed at style, medium, content, and timing. In addition, respondents differentiated between communication with and among members and that which is targeted at external audiences. Specific suggestions included: offering discussion groups, use of community media, better promotion of church activities, and using social media. Some respondents also seek regular information about Council, Committee, and Commission activities and meetings.

Of those responding, the following indicates their preference for important church news and updates:

- 38% email
- 29% weekly bulletin
- 19% announcements during mass
- 8% website
- 6% phone call or text

BULLETIN READERSHIP

Ninety-nine percent of those responding indicated they read the weekly bulletin.

A large majority of our community relies on the weekly bulletin for church news. There were 16 comments concerning the content of our weekly bulletin. The common themes ranked from most frequent to least frequent are:

1. No changes recommended
2. Improve content to assure timeliness and accuracy of information
3. Add perspective on day's readings
4. Add reports by councils, committees, commissions
5. Reduce advertisements, focus on St. Anselm activities
6. Send it electronically when it is available

The bulletin continues to be a key communication tool for our community.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Many respondents are very satisfied with the type and frequency of church sponsored social events. In fact, respondents are so happy and the events are so successful that almost all comments were targeted at doing more and focusing on what respondents perceive as underserved segments of the community. Almost half of the input suggested offering activities for children and young adults. The other area of feedback centered around offering more activities, informal or smaller in scope, including events like potlucks on a somewhat regular basis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There were approximately thirty responses to the question of how to improve the experience here at St. Anselm Church.

Respondents' ideas are very wide ranging with themes often overlapping areas addressed in other sections of this survey.

Some new recommendations include:

- How do we reignite the passion and energy that was so abundant during and after our vigil?
- How can we improve the community experience of our youth and young adults to encourage them to participate more fully?
- Would our CFF program be strengthened by more parental involvement?
- How can we better welcome new members into our community and get to know them?
- How do we assure that social activities continue to meet the needs of our members?
- How do we make sure that all our spiritual interests of pastor, leaders, and members of all ages are being met?

GENERAL THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS

In many respects, the following comments reflect the passion that many members of our community have for St. Anselm Church. There is concern that while our community has not previously been significantly impacted by societal trends of decreasing religious practice, engagement, and involvement, perhaps those negatives are now at our doorstep. In addition, the authors of this report feel that it is our obligation to present all views in the survey responses.

1. Liturgies (35%) – While the Liturgy Ministry receives highest marks in response to specific questions on all ministries, nevertheless, it is cited by about one of every three respondents as an area that could improve.
 - a. About half of these individuals have issues with homilies: spiritual content, relation to readings, general quality, non-religious topics and length.
 - b. Another quarter of respondents in this category feel masses are too long.
 - c. A few respondents find the scheduling of masses too limited.
 - d. One person expressed a concern about accuracy of provided information.
2. Finance (16%) – Almost one in six of the responses cite issues with rectorate finances.
 - a. Half of these respondents want regular reporting and transparency.
 - b. Others express confusion about the ways in which financial support is generated (pledging, collections, other) and concern about whether the level of giving is adequate for meeting St. Anselm's needs.
3. Generally Positive (12%)
 - a. Approximately one in eight respondents chose this question as a way to express their gratefulness for St. Anselm Church and our community being a positive part of their spiritual journey and lives.

4. The remaining comments to this question touch on ten other areas of concern:
 - a. Sense of general overall decline since the vigil (4)
 - b. Call for a change in leadership (3)
 - c. Decline in CFF program (2)
 - d. Need for more youth involvement (2)
 - e. Better outreach to new members for opportunities to participate (2)
 - f. Improve music (2)
 - g. Redo the parking lot lines (1)
 - h. Increase the number of adult education opportunities (1)
 - i. Reenergize the Sunday coffees (1)
 - j. Expand community outreach efforts (1)

CONCLUSION

Many believe fervently that our model of lay involvement and leadership, in conjunction with the strong spiritual guidance and direction of our rector, is what makes our community so special and unique.

In that spirit, many of the comments in each section began with a statement to the effect of the love there is for our community and its members, but that we should always be open to self-examination to ensure continuous improvement.

Many thoughtful suggestions were offered, often passionately, with the goal of ensuring that we not just survive but thrive in the future.