

September, 2015

Dear Family of St. Stephen's,

Last Spring the Adult Faith Committee asked parishioners 55 years old and older to complete a questionnaire covering on a wide variety of topics. The following executive summary is an overview of the most important survey results, and some ideas for follow-up in response to the information gathered. If as you read it you have ideas regarding these results, please feel free to let a committee or vestry member know.

Special thanks to the following Adult Faith Committee members who developed, administered and analyzed the results of the survey: Kris and Ken Fuhr, Paula Somerville, Don Ingersoll, and Norma Ross.

Most important, appreciation is extended to the 50 members of our St. Stephen's family who took time to share their thoughts and demographic information with the Adult Faith Committee. The snapshot of our most experienced members revealed a portrait of very active, interesting, highly skilled, and world-class Christians, whose devotion and leadership established and continue to reflect the heart of the church.

Sincerely,

Norma Ross, Adult Faith Committee Liaison to the Vestry

## **Executive Summary: Adult Faith Committee Senior Questionnaire September, 2015**

The Adult Faith Committee (the Committee) surveyed parishioners who are at least 55 years of age to explore their relationship with St. Stephen’s, determine their satisfaction with aspects of experience in the church, and to identify personal needs, desires, and ideas that might suggest useful avenues for strengthening our household of God.

A total of 50 persons responded to items in the questionnaire. Some items encouraged individuals to mark all applicable choices.

### **Respondents are reasonably well satisfied with things,**

Respondents were asked to show their degree of satisfaction in five areas important to a healthy parish using a 5-point scale where 5 is highly satisfied and 1 is highly dissatisfied. Fours and fives dominated the ratings, indicating a solid level of satisfaction.

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Average rating</b>
<b>Spiritual growth</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Social environment</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Emotional support</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Intellectual stimulation</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>Physical environment</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Average = 43</b>	<b>3.9</b>

**“Three things you like most about St. Stephen’s?”** (Times mentioned)

- People (Friendly, welcoming, family atmosphere, music)– 27
- Services (Mo. Susan’s sermons, our ritual, all welcome at communion)–15
- Programs (Outreach, SOS, special events, Bible study)–10

**“Things you would like to see changed?”** (These were mentioned twice. Nothing else more than once.)

- Improving membership, especially children and young adults
- Improved financial picture
- Less noise in the sanctuary [presumably before services]

### **How can communication be improved?**

- Extend weekly bulletin to include most instructions for the service.
- Improve sound system

### **How do you preferred to be contacted and receive information?**

43% - Phone

30% - Hard copy mailed

28% - email

In retrospect, this information would have been more valuable had we linked the communication method with the various types of information folks might wish to receive.

**In response, the Communication Committee will be digging deeper into this topic. It plans to re-establish a phone-tree system for informing people who prefer this method for receiving information about important time-sensitive things such as funerals. The Communication Committee also will be evaluating our methods for getting folks signed up for the email chain.**

### **Service in the Household of God**

Respondents provided information regarding their current social and educational activities, their present church committee involvement, and what they would like to do in the future. Collectively our seniors are serving or have served on the **Vestry, and every committee, Choir, Ushers, Altar Guild, Greeters, Outreach, and Hospitality. They have taught Sunday school and been acolytes, volunteered for SOS, VBS, and helped in the office. They have served as Eucharistic Ministers, Lay Readers, and Eucharistic Visitors.** Some respondents indicated an interest in future involvement with different church committees. This information will be available to those committees.

## **World Travelers**

St. Stephen's "Jet Setters" have traveled to all points on earth, including—North and South America, Central America, Europe, The Middle East, Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Antarctica. See the travel map designed by Kris Fuhr! Imagine the stories of adventure they could tell!

## **Things We Like to Do -interests or hobbies?**

Reading, travel, family, exercising, piano, quilting, swimming, gardening, people, music, art, camping, crafts/knitting/sewing, classic cars, dogs, dance, yoga, zumba, biking, theatre, golf, cooking, photography, hiking/walking, WWI, WWII History, movies, sports, tax & finance, eating, newcomers, hospice, sorority alumnae, writing, singing, sailing, antique shops, model trains, model airplanes, model boats, computers, outdoors, woodworking bridge, painting.

## **More Activities We Might Enjoy!**

- Trips and tours of local/regional locations and events—19
- A senior column or newsletter (perhaps called "Senior Moments")—16
- Computer classes-16;
- Bridge or other card clubs—13;
- Travelogues—11;
- Exercise groups—9;
- Book club-9;
- Periodic senior breakfasts—9
- Craft classes—8;
- Weight loss group—5;
- A "Senior Bulletin Board" to highlight things of interest and better inform the congregation in general of the rich source of knowledge our seniors possess.
- Other ideas included more intellectual opportunities, mother/son or father/daughter dinners with special guest; a caregiver support group, bowling teams, and a computer room at the church.
- Inviting specific youth to participate in regular mission area activities,
- Having a youth/adult viewing of (or a trip to the theatre to see) "The Intern," a movie about a senior citizen who becomes an office intern and exposes generational differences.

## **Ways St. Stephen's Might Help/Enrich Senior Members**

- Twenty-five respondents said it would be helpful to have an online or hard copy list of resources available in Oakland County. **The Committee will organize this.**
- Twenty respondents said they would attend a seminar for seniors or those who care for aging parents. **The Committee will look into what is available from other sources, and if necessary, organize something on its own and invite community members to join us.**
- Twelve were interested in use of a handyman if a trustworthy service was available. **The Committee will look into whether there might be a parishioner who could do this, or if anyone knows a reliable handyman.**

The Faith Committee and Vestry believe these areas should be explored. In some cases, organizations in the community are planning such activities and events, and St. Stephen's might only need to match up member interests with these activities, and facilitate member involvement. For instance, Troy and other communities organize trips and outings. St. Stephen's role might be to make members aware of the most suitable ones, and facilitate/coordinate participation by our members and their family and friends.

## **Demographics in a nutshell**

All 50 respondents provided their gender, so we know that 18 (36%) were men and 32 (64%) were women. All respondents were members of St. Stephen's, and 62% have been members for 15 or more years. All but one reported attending church regularly. Eighty percent were retired

**Age:** 55 years - 65 (25%) 66-74 (27%) 75-84 (27%) 85-94 (16%) 95-104 (2%)

**Marital status:** Married (75%)

**Residence:** 80% live in single family homes, 20% in condos or apartments.

**Health:** 87% reported excellent or good.

**Education status:** 88% went beyond high school 63% earned a bachelor's degree or higher

**Present or previous field of employment** (Note the extensive array of expertise):

**Education:** teacher, librarian, piano teacher, editor

**Business:** Consultants to business and government, buyer, officer administrator, banking, CPA, billing clerk, sales, personnel, clerical, wardrobe supervisor – Detroit Opera Co., tax accounting,

tax preparation, auditor of DC Metro bus, corporate VP and Treasurer, engineers, engineering supervisor, nursery plant specialist, arbor culturist, landscaper, valet

**Government:** congressional investigations and research, school board

**Medical** – nurse, phlebotomy lab supervisor, medical social work,

**Social Work** – social worker, attorney, logician

**Religion** – priest, finance officer, administrator for Bishop

**Self-employed** – Pie maker

### **Limitations of the Survey**

We estimated that about 30% to 35% of our senior members responded and, although this provides useful information, the results cannot be projected to all senior members; nor should it be assumed that those who did not complete a survey would respond similarly to those who did. Notwithstanding these limits, we believe the responses are extremely useful for evaluating and enhancing current and planned operations and activities.

### **Strategic Considerations for Future Action**

As is common in research, analysis of the data revealed areas where additional probing might improve the ability to draw conclusions and craft action plans. The Vestry and others, including the Adult Faith Committee may wish to consider follow-up work to gain these additional insights.

To better serve our members and to encourage participation by others, the Adult Faith Committee will reorganize and operate similar to the way the YACYM Committee operates to ensuring proper planning, implementation and coordination of identified areas for adult activities and services. Ideas that surfaced from the survey results are being shared with other committees for their consideration.

The survey results confirm that we are a great congregation full of caring people who are ready and willing to help each other and do God's work together. As individuals we should not hesitate to ask when we need help, and we should continue to be ever alert for opportunities to help each other. God has blessed us in many ways and we should make the most of His gifts.