

Grace Episcopal Church

Honesdale, PA

Parish Profile



2021

Welcome Statement

We are a community of faith seeking to "promote charity, which is the chief of Christian graces," and we welcome all persons, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstances of life.



Our Mission.... *“A House of God for All.”*

With God's help, we the people of Grace seek to know and accept God's love in Jesus Christ for all people and to witness to God's love in word and action.



Prayer for the Search Committee

Gracious gifting God, we are reminded of your gifts in and for all the children of the church. Call on our gifts now, use us, in service of your whole church. As we work to call a new pastor to our congregation, may your Holy Spirit lead us to discern the gifts we seek and see those gifts clearly in the candidates you are sending to us. In our communications, interviews, and meetings with them, may we find ourselves once again who we surely are in Christ Jesus, stewards of your many gifts. Amen.



A Letter to Our Candidates

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The members of Grace Church's greet you and welcome you to this profile of our worshipping community. For almost two hundred years, Grace Church has served the people of Wayne County, PA. Through the grace of God and blessings of our community, we have since grown into a vital parish in the Diocese of Bethlehem.

We search for a part time priest in charge who can join our journey and flourish in our parish community. We are a parish in transition with people from various walks of life, many associated with education, health care, business, many otherwise affiliated or employed. We are locals and recent arrivals, retirees, singles and families, cradle Episcopalians and late- life converts to Christian faith.

As a House of God for All, we maintain a commitment to inclusion and mutual caring and support. We have long provided hospitality and sustenance to the broader community. Looking ahead, we seek a priest who can fulfill his or her ministry while helping us to increase our membership and deepen our spiritual life, achieve greater financial well- being, and continue to care for and share our resources.

Thank you for considering this profile of our beloved parish. We pray for you as you discern your own desires and purposes in this season of searching.

In trust and delight in the Lord,

The Search Committee

on behalf of the Vestry and People of Grace Church

Our Story



The year was 1829. The place was Honesdale, PA. The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company had just completed its 108-mile canal from the Hudson River to Honesdale with the express purpose of shipping anthracite coal being mined at Carbondale to market in New York City. A 16-mile gravity railroad had been constructed eastward from Carbondale to get the coal to the canal head at Honesdale.

Thus began a highly successful operation which spanned a period of nearly 70 years. Honesdale began to flourish and by 1832, there were enough Episcopalians in the town that a congregation was formed which later adopted the name Grace Church.

A modest frame building was created and served the growing congregation well until the mid-1850s. At this point, Honesdale, which earlier had become the county seat of Wayne City, continued to grow, and prosper. And so did Grace Church! It was decided that a larger and more permanent building should be erected. Thus, in 1856, a stone church of Gothic design was completed with seating for some 200 people. In the 1870's, a substantial stone rectory was constructed next door to the church, both of which face central park, a square block of green space in the center of the borough. In 1949, a 3-story stone parish house was constructed and given to the parish – the gift of one individual! It is a building of thoughtful design, and attractive appearance inside and out, and is connected directly to the rear of the church. And thus remains the footprint of Grace church Parish in Honesdale.



In the mid 1990's, the church building underwent a significant restoration, both inside and outside, for the purpose in maintaining its integrity and authenticity. The church also contains a Moller 19-rank pipe organ, a Steinway piano, and Tiffany stained-glass windows. As you walk by, or perhaps step inside, you immediately feel the warmth of its presence.



Grace Church remains a vibrant congregation of about 125 warm and friendly parishioners and a weekly attendance averaging 65. A home away from home, our congregants come to Grace Episcopal to find a place of peace, spiritual connection, music, and fellowship.

Today, about two-and-a-half hours from both New York and Philadelphia, Honesdale is considered “The Little Pocono Town That Accidentally Got Cool.” Our town boasts a growing hospital system, white collar government jobs, three regional bank headquarters, and a school district ranked in the top 15 percent for academic achievement. Main Street is dotted with a variety of restaurants and boutique shops, while offering recreational activities year-round, including camping, hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, skiing, and snowmobiling. The nearest city is Scranton, a forty-minute drive.

Historically, the congregation and vestries of Grace Church have exhibited excellent stewardship practices. Numerous trust funds have been established over the years, the income of which is a welcome ingredient to our annual budget. Even throughout this time pandemic our income has remained constant. There is a feeling of optimism among us today. A time of transitions and a time for making decisions that will guide us into the future as we continue our number one job: to serve God.

We hope to find a clergy person who will walk shoulder to shoulder with us in that journey. We need a strong priest with conviction and clear vision who can serve all parishioners and represent us in the community. We seek a spiritual mentor with strong preaching and teaching skills, compassion, integrity, and the ability to lead our modest congregation into a promising future.

Our Ministry

We have a long history of community outreach for more than 47 years; we were home to the “Thanksgiving Together” program which began as a single dinner and grew to other holidays and eventually to weekly Saturday lunches fully funded by donations from the community and volunteer staffing. Also, several 12-step groups, Habitat for Humanity, and the Boy Scouts have met in the parish house. All of these activities are presently on hold due to pandemic related issues and staff shortages. We are presently in the process of re-imagining what our outreach direction will be, as we move forward. Our parish has also adopted a chapter of Daughter’s of the King.

Worship & Liturgy



Worship Services

Grace Church offers two Eucharistic celebrations each week: one on Sunday (10:00 a.m.), the second on Saturday (5:00 p.m.)

Saturday 5:00 p.m. This Eucharist combines a simple, informal service which is held in our parish hall to allow parishioners with mobility issues to access worship more easily. Our participants usually gather early for fellowship prior to the service.

Sunday 10:00 a.m. Grace Church's most expansive and well-attended service uses Rite II of the Holy Eucharist. The adult choir accompanied by a pipe organ serves to lead and

encourage congregational singing. We have resumed music during our service. Sunday school is offered during the service. There is a strong sense of community during the service and fellowship during our well attended coffee hour.

From Our 2020 Parochial Report

Total Active Baptized Members:	116
Average Sunday (& Saturday Evening) Attendance:	65
Total Sunday & Saturday Evening Eucharists:	59
Total Private Eucharists:	08
Online Daily Offices Held on Sunday:	77
Marriages conducted in 2020:	04
Burials Conducted in 2020	03

Financial:

Plate and Pledges:	\$81,000	Operating Expense:	\$117,000
Other Sources:	\$ 25,000	Total Expense:	\$126,000
Total Operating Revenue: \$106,000			



Assessment of Strengths

- ✓ Warm, welcoming, and down to earth atmosphere
Eager for spiritual growth and development
- ✓ Vibrant, talented, and motivated congregation
- ✓ Opportunity for growth as more people move from metro to rural communities
- ✓ Positive community reputation for providing support to marginalized populations
- ✓ Excellent stewardship practices
- ✓ Numerous and established trust funds
- ✓ Beautiful gothic style church, rectory, and parish hall
- ✓ Community located in a growing rural area poised for additional growth from New York and Philadelphia.
- ✓ Area maintains a small-town feel with a close-knit community
- ✓ Area school districts are ranked in the 15 percent for academic achievement statewide.
- ✓ Traveling distance to New York, Philadelphia, and Scranton
- ✓ Access to numerous recreational activities; Lake Wallenpaupack, Delaware River, State Game Lands, and ski resorts.

Assessment of Challenges

- ✓ Revitalization of music program (organ repair, organist, and choir)
- ✓ Revitalization of Youth Programs
- ✓ Parish growth
- ✓ Returning to in person worship and community service activities after the pandemic.
- ✓ Rebuilding administrative staff

Our Community

Honesdale is the county seat of Wayne County. With a 2020 population of 4,305, it is the 230th largest city in Pennsylvania and the 5203rd largest city in the United States. Honesdale was growing at a rate of 0.28% annually but its population has decreased by -3.91% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 4,480 in 2010. Honesdale reached its highest population of 5,687 in 1940. Spanning over four-square miles, Honesdale has a population density of 1,109 people per square mile.

The average household income in Honesdale is \$45,690 with a poverty rate of 19%. The median rental costs in recent years comes to \$699 per month, and the median house value is \$121,900. The median age in Honesdale is 45.4 years, 37.4 years for males, and 52.8 years for females.

Honesdale Demographics

According to the most recent ACS, the racial composition of Honesdale was:

White: 96.04%
Two or more races: 2.47%
Asian: 0.86%
Black or African American: 0.63%
Native American: 0.00%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.00%
Other race: 0.00%

External Resources

Wayne County Visitors Bureau

<http://visitwaynecounty.com/>

Honesdale Borough

<http://honesdaleborough.com/>

Wayne Highlands School District

<https://www.whsdk12.com/>

Grace Episcopal Church
827 Church Street Honesdale, PA 18431
Parish Survey
November 2021

A parish survey was distributed by the Search Committee during October 2021. The survey was sent via the mail and electronically to seventy households on the parish mailing list. The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the parish composition and the needs of our parishioners. This information will guide the Search Committee and Vestry in the recruitment of a new priest. Thirty-three surveys were returned.

There are limitations to the survey. A printed survey was selected to allow a greater participation of individuals who might have limited familiarity with technology. A manual calculation made it difficult to differentiate between responses from individuals or household. The process could not account for multiple responses to questions.

We have compiled a list of topics which will be a part of our dialogue as we progress through the search. The profile/survey will serve as a brief sketch of life at Grace Church Parish. We thank you for taking the time to read the information. Please remember us in prayer, as we travel converging paths. You are in our prayers as we prepare for the future of our parish.

Yours in Christ,

The Search Committee

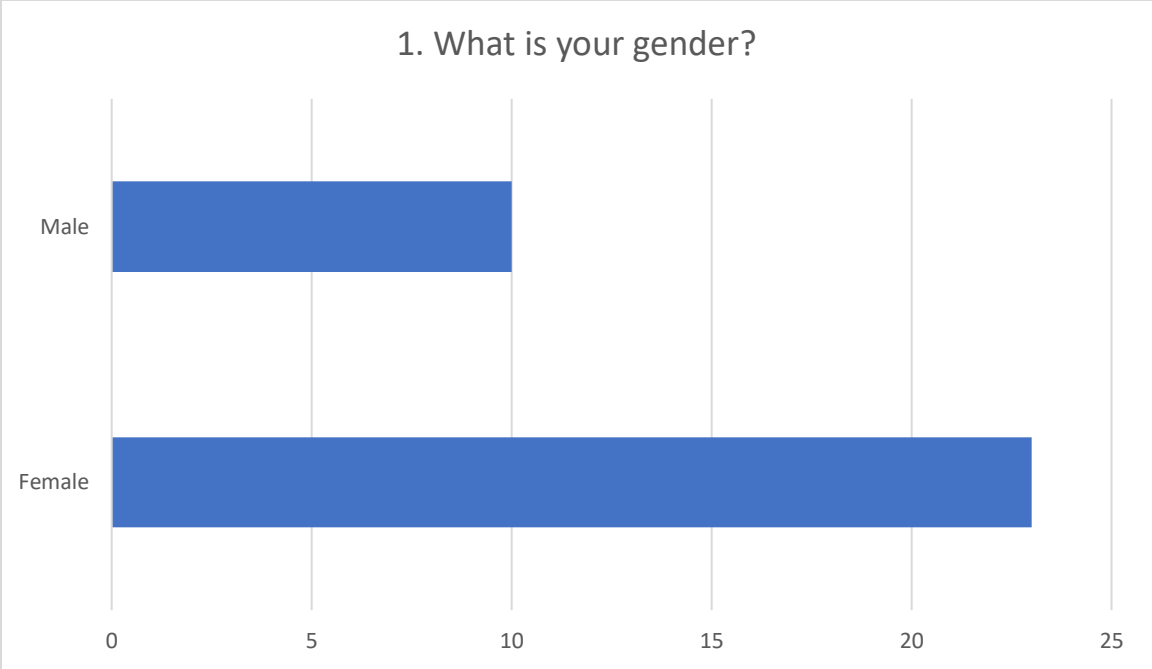
Summary

Demographics:

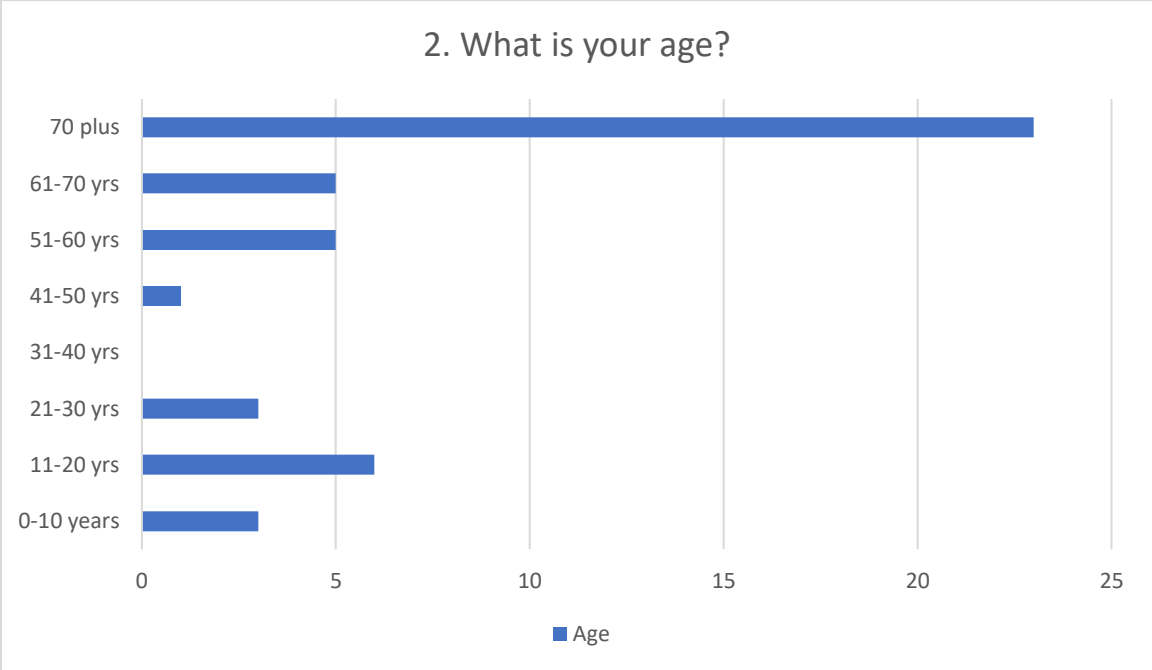
- 75 % of our parishioners attend church at least biweekly
- 79 % reside within a 12-mile radius of Honesdale
- 70 % are 70 years of age or older
- A very strong desire of increase quality and quantity of music.
- A strong desire to attract and involve youth.

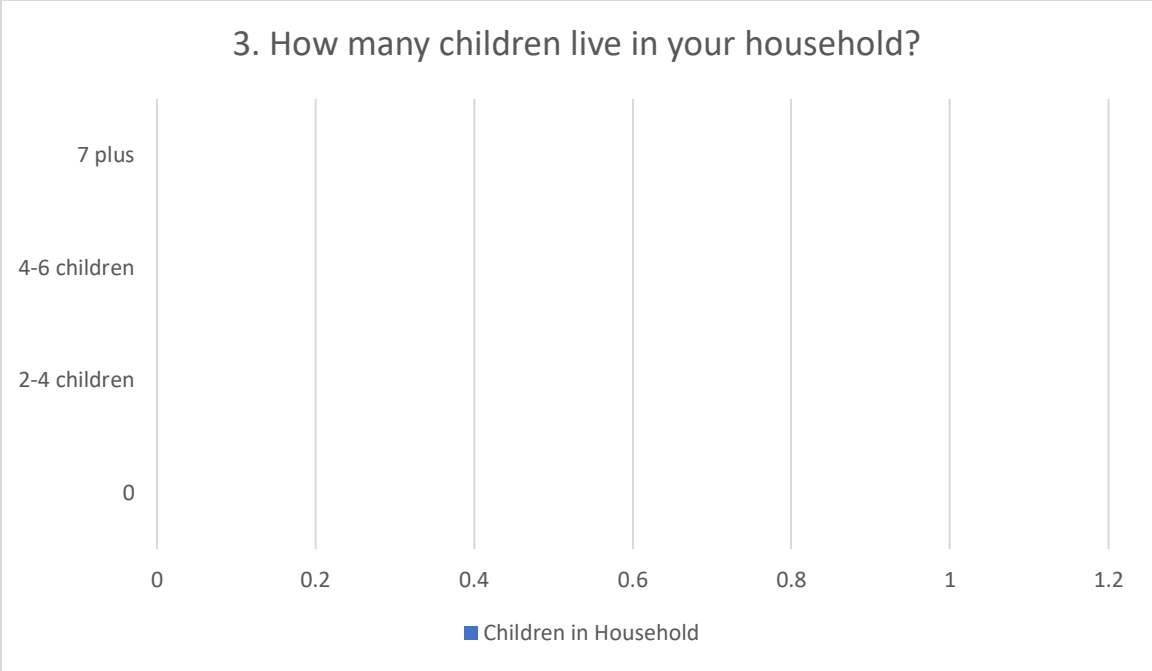
Desired Qualities of a New Priest:

- Leadership skills
- Strong preaching
- Collegial approach to decision making
- A friend to one and all
- Mutual respect
- Community outreach
- Care for the elderly and infirmed
- A positive presence in the community
- Help us learn how to grow
- Sense of humor

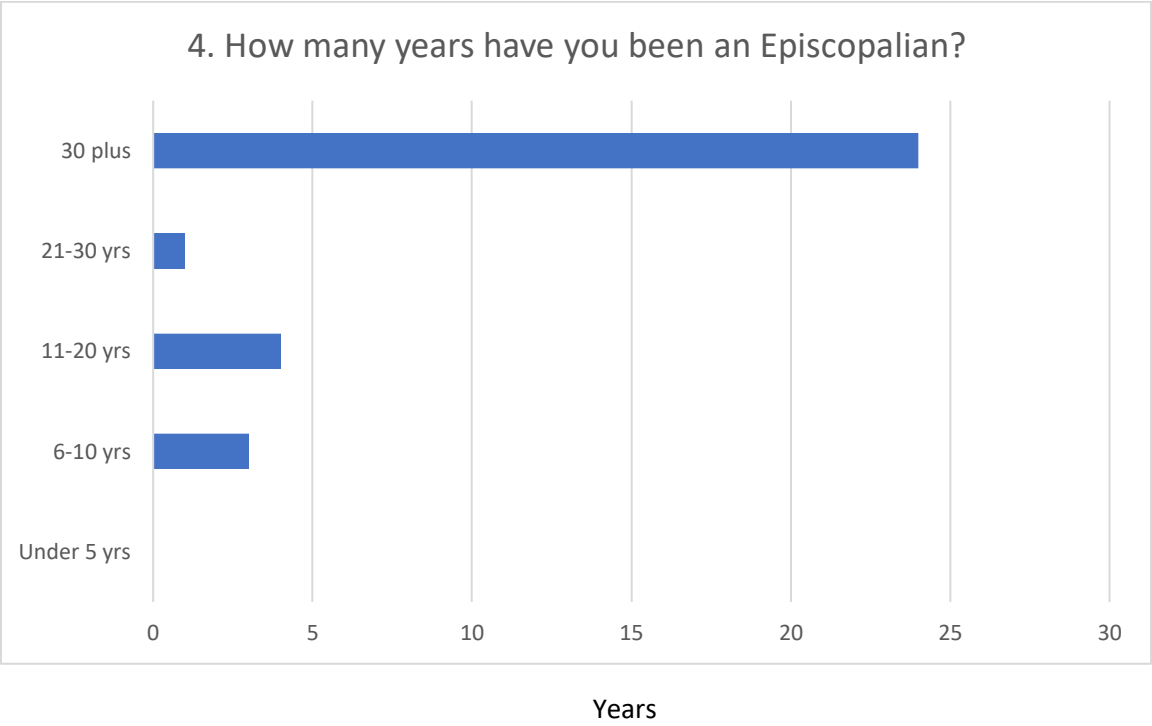


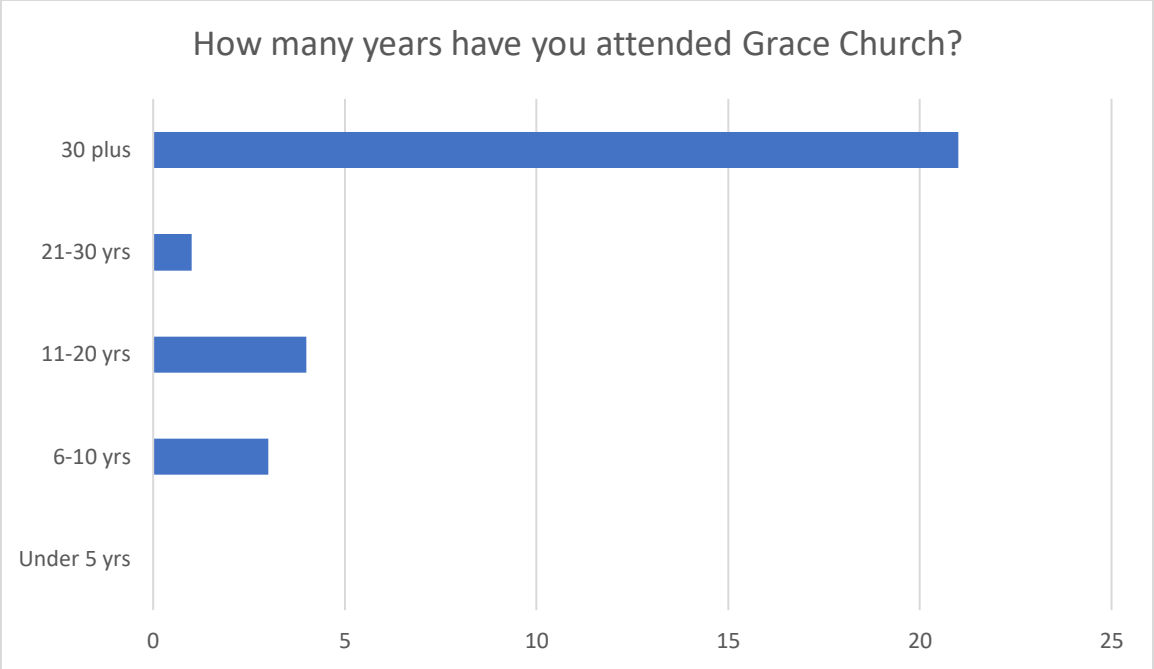
Female: 23 Male: 10



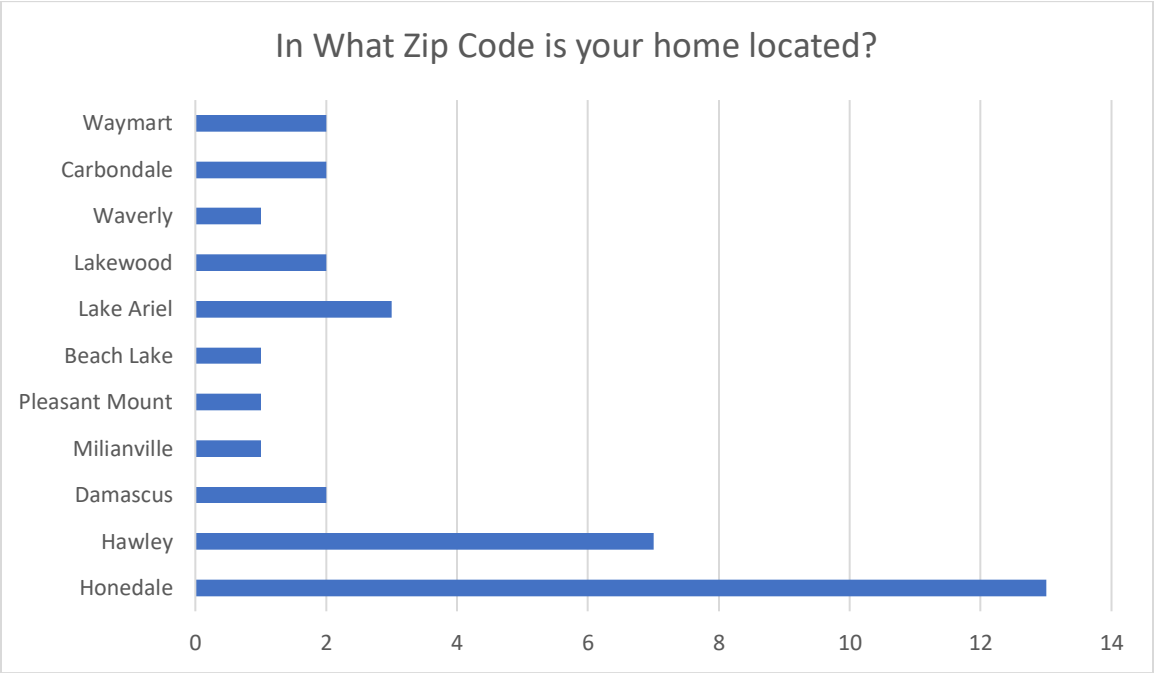


Comment: The survey question was flawed. It did not accurately capture the number of children in household. No results will be reported.



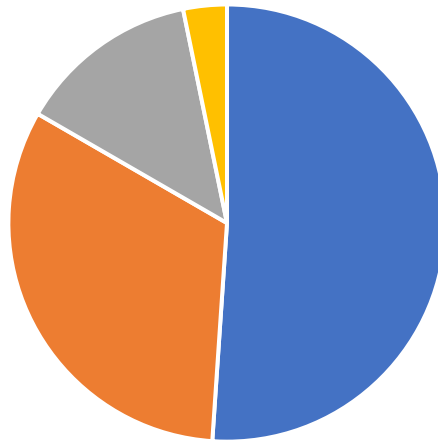


Years



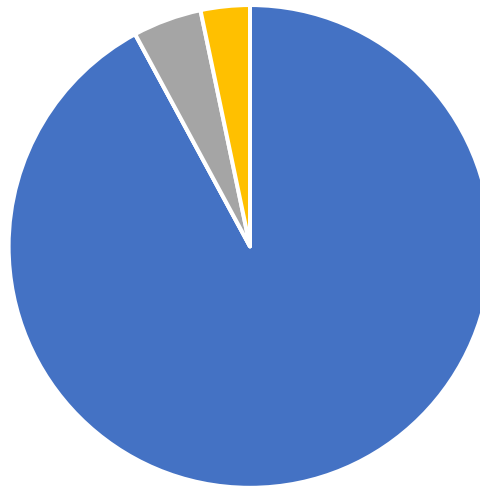
Number of people

7. Which of following best describes your current relationship status?



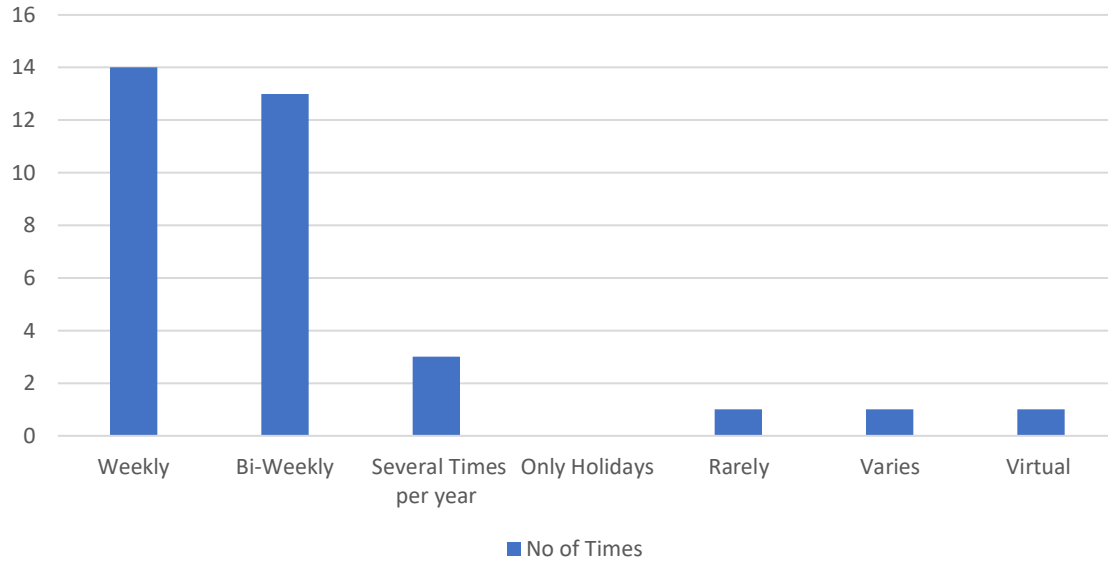
■ Married ■ Widowed ■ Divorced ■ Partnership ■ Single ■ Prefer not to say`

8. Which best describes your sexual orientation?

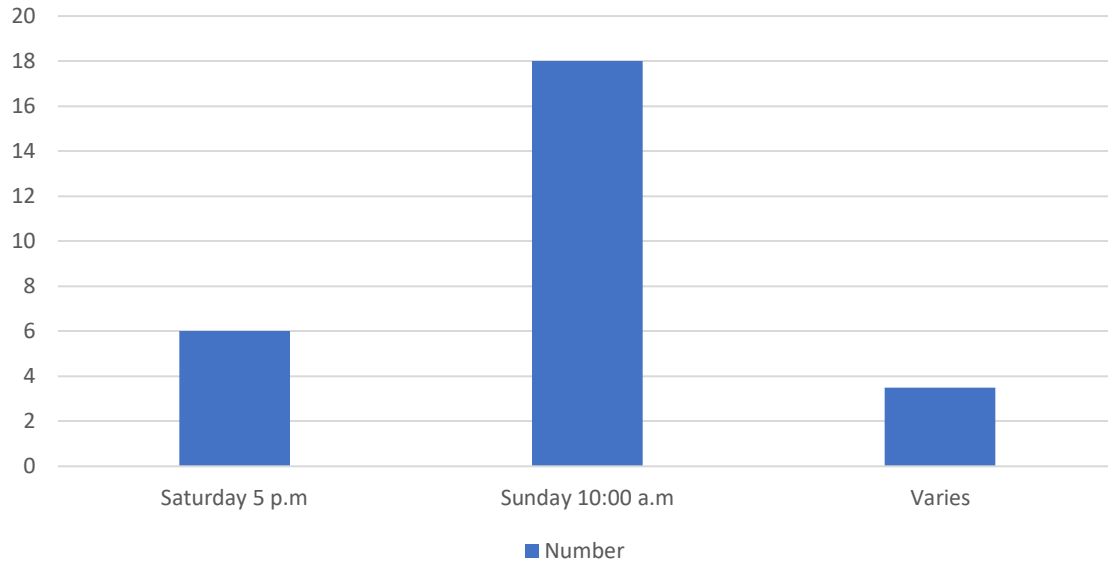


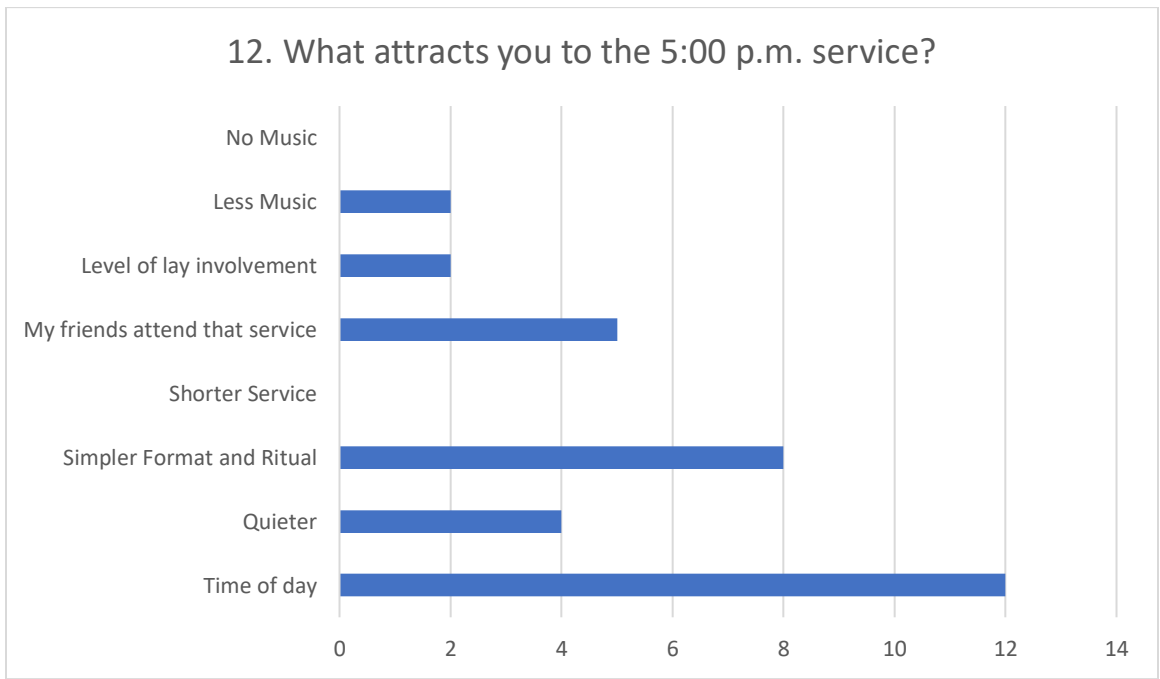
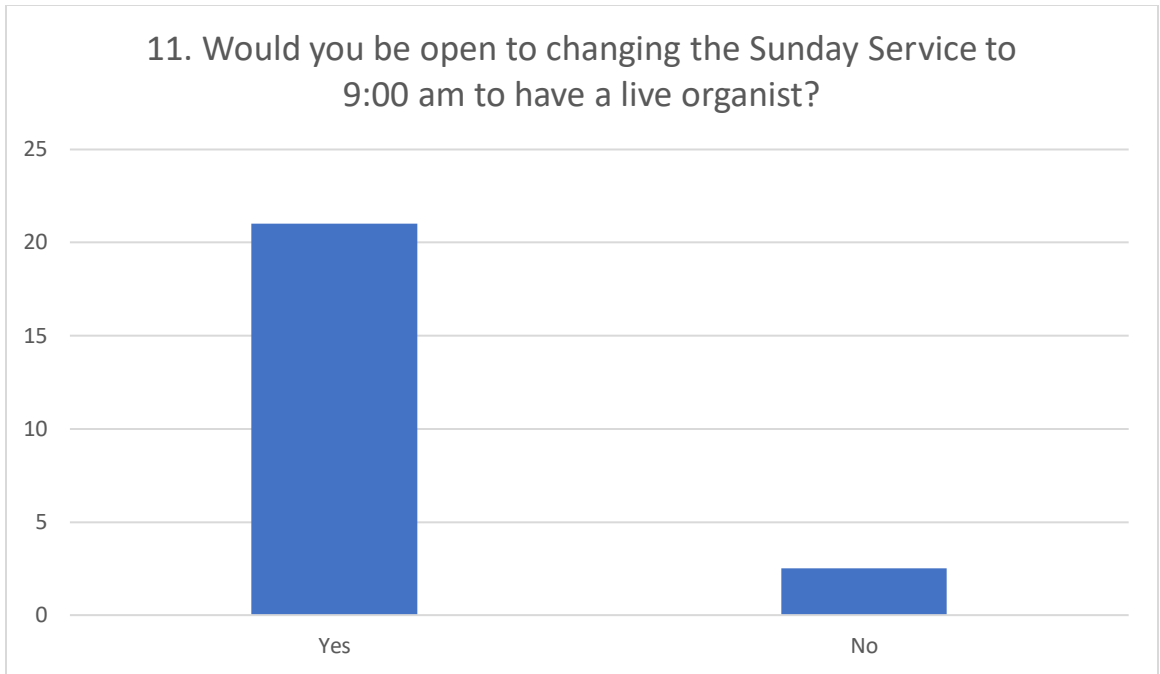
■ Straight ■ Gay/Lesbian ■ Other ■ Prefer not to say

9. How often do you attend weekend Eucharist ?



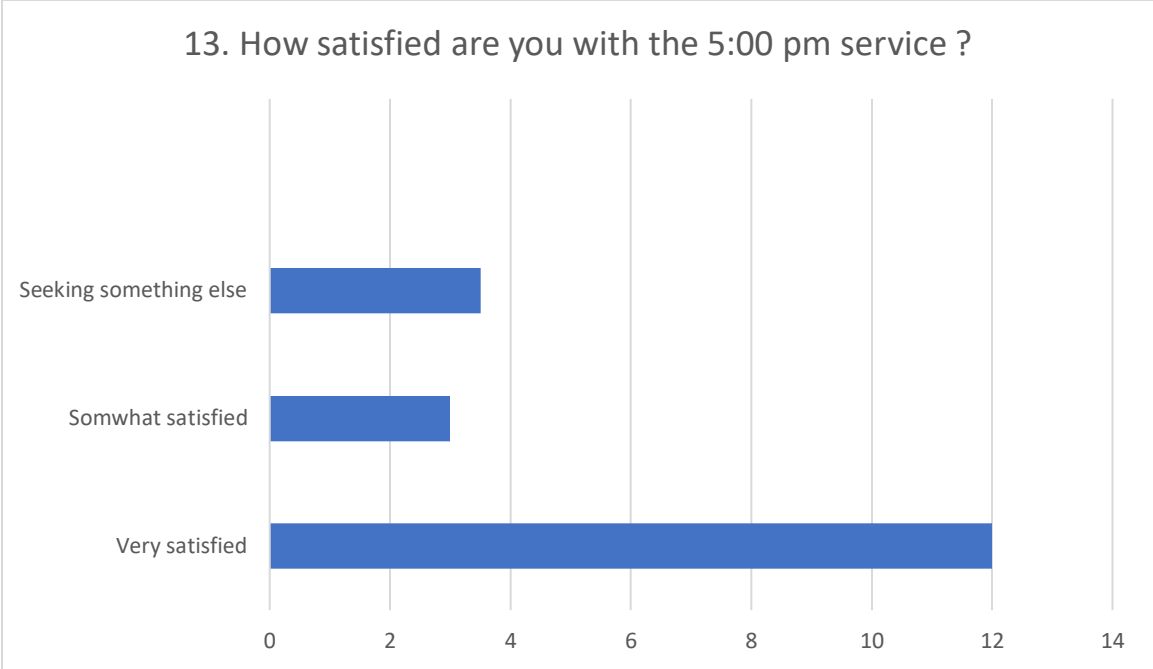
10. Which weekend service do you normally attend?





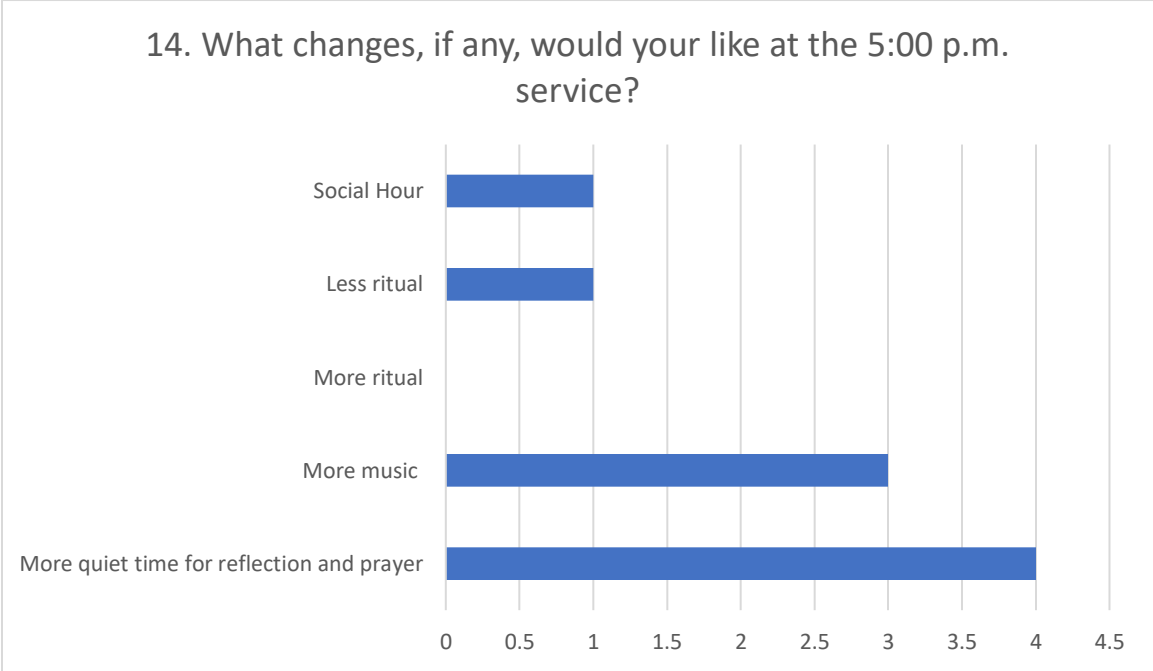
Number of Responses

Comments: (3) respondents indicated the Saturday priest as being a reason for attendance

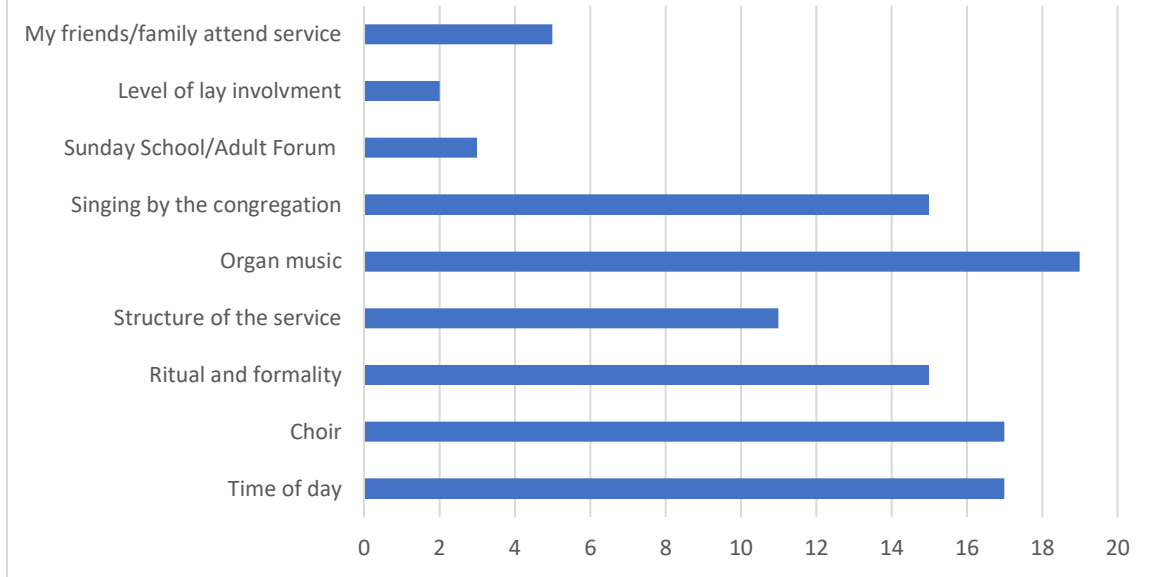


Number of Responses

Comments: Easier to talk to the priest
 Friendlier, we socialize

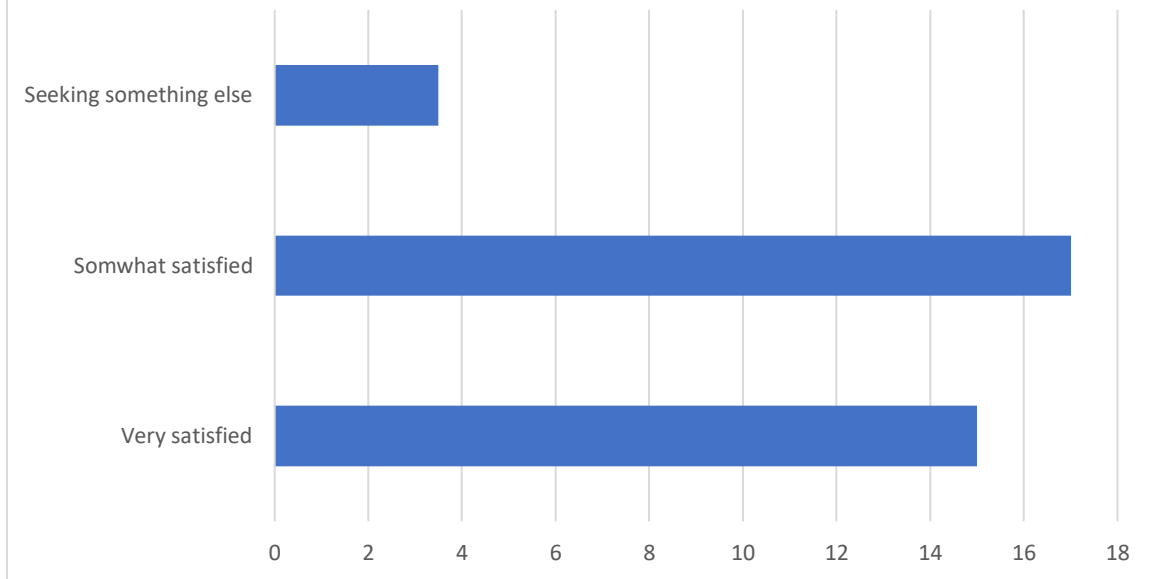


15. What attracts you to the Sunday 10:00 a.m. service?



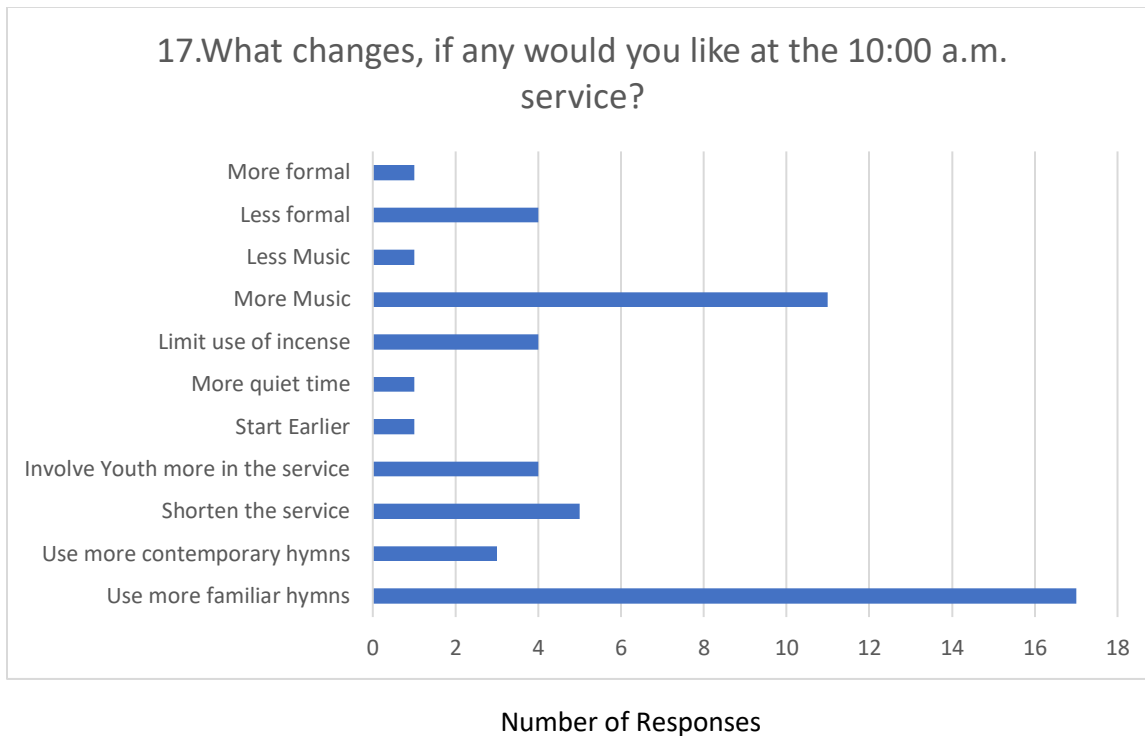
Number of Responses

16. How satisfied are you with the 10:00 a.m service ?



Number of Responses

Comment(s): Needs to be more relevant and accessible to all !



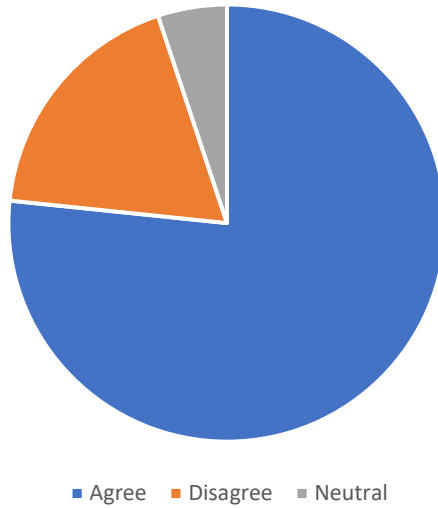
Comment: Better sound system

18. How can we better serve the children/youth of our parish?

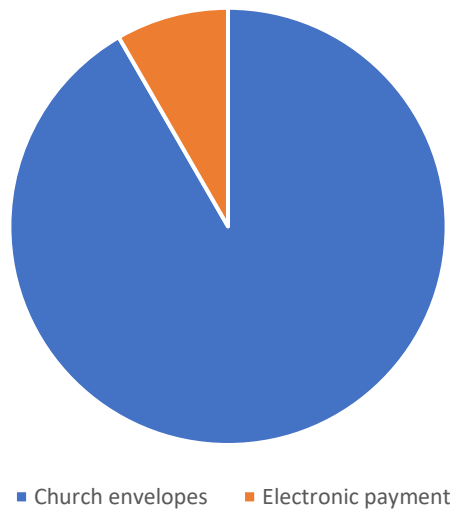
Comments:

1. Collaborating with other families
2. Sunday School and youth programs
3. More morning prayer and youth choir/musicians
4. Younger service once a month
5. Get more!
6. Previous programs
7. Engaging their help in parish projects when possible.
8. Bring back Sunday School
9. Hire a priest !

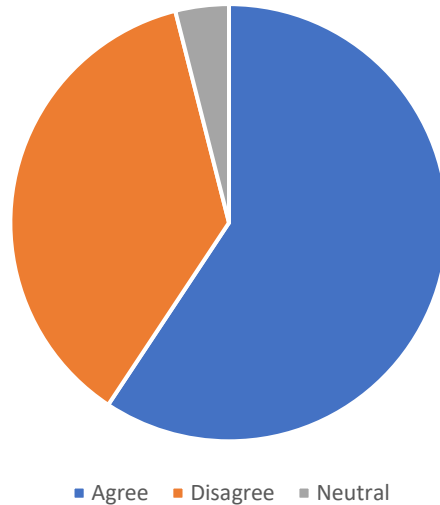
19. Should virtual services be continued after COVID restrictions are eliminated?



20. What is your preferred method of sending pledges to the church?

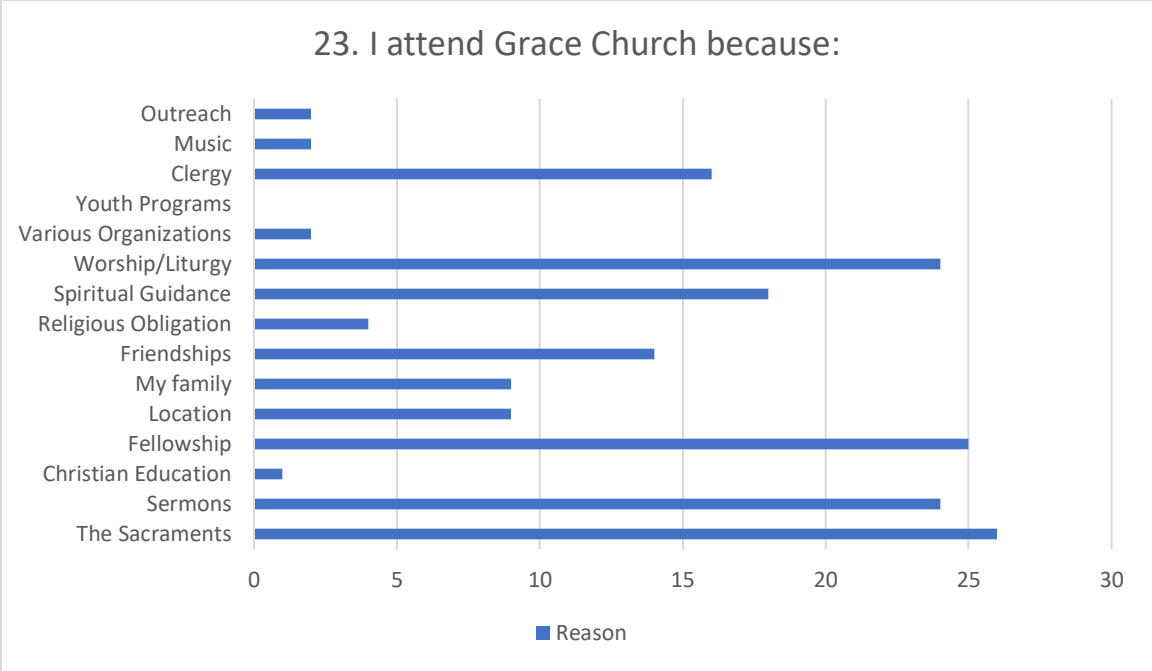


21. Should Grace Church continue to provide envelopes for weekly donations?



22. Please feel free to add any additional suggestions or needs not mentioned in the survey.

1. [Offer} Checks quarterly checks
2. Checks
3. It [envelopes] is definitely worth the cost !
4. [For} many this is important to continue.
5. Fear of decreasing funds.
6. Organ music from priest
7. Do not omit.
- 8 Don't change envelopes
- 9 Need envelopes

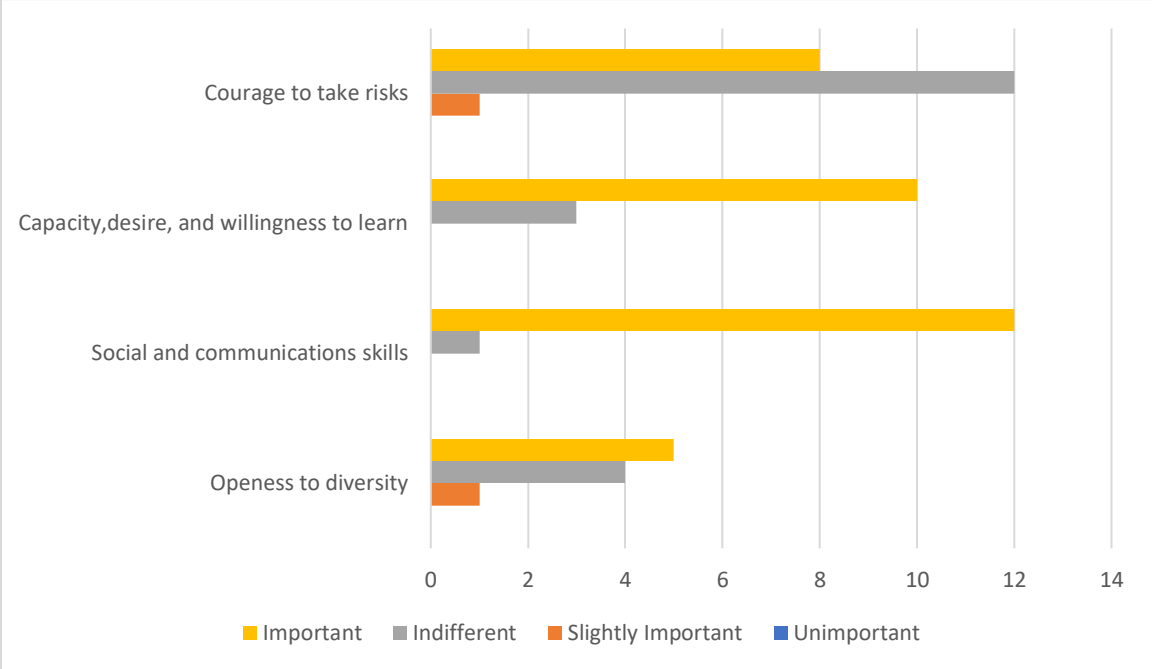
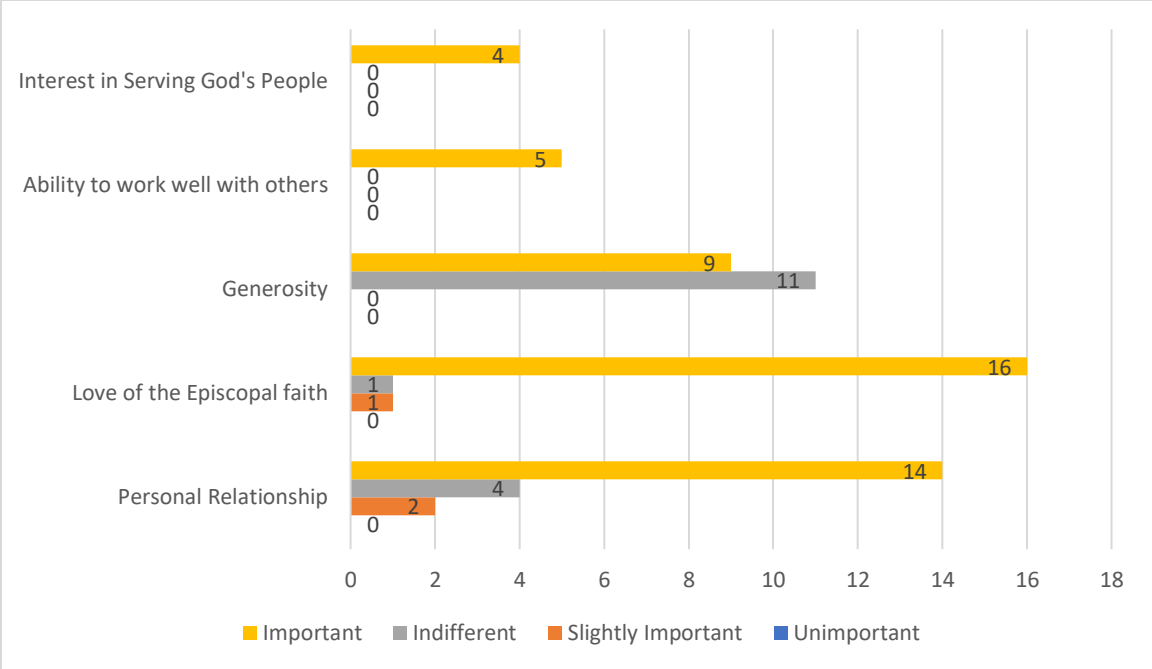


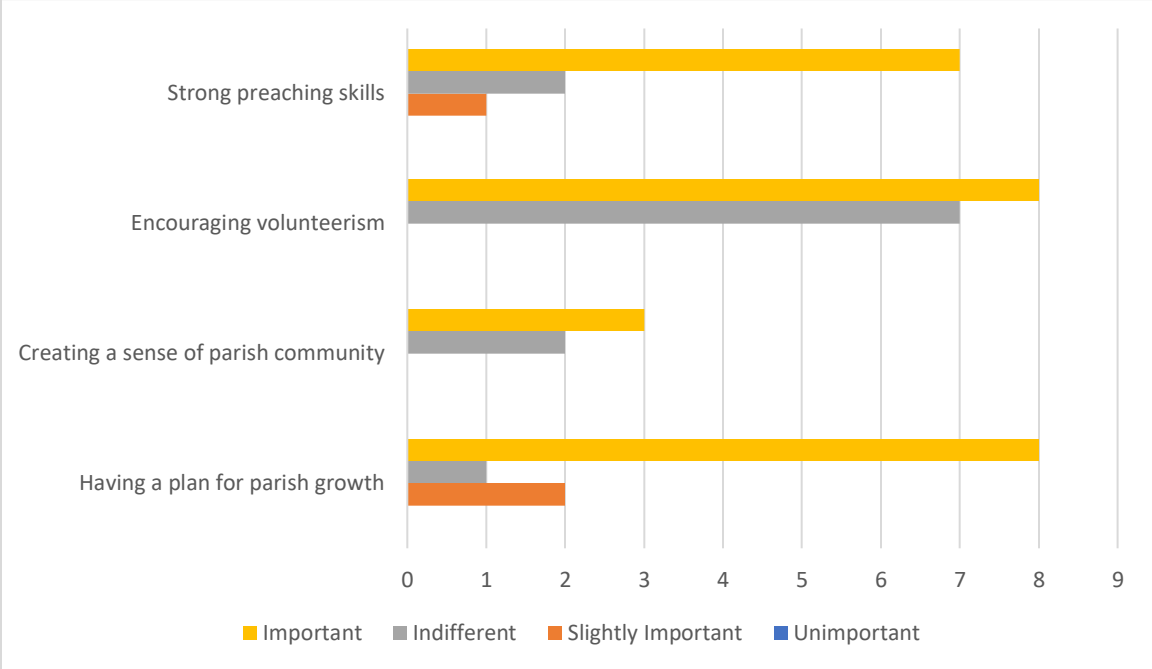
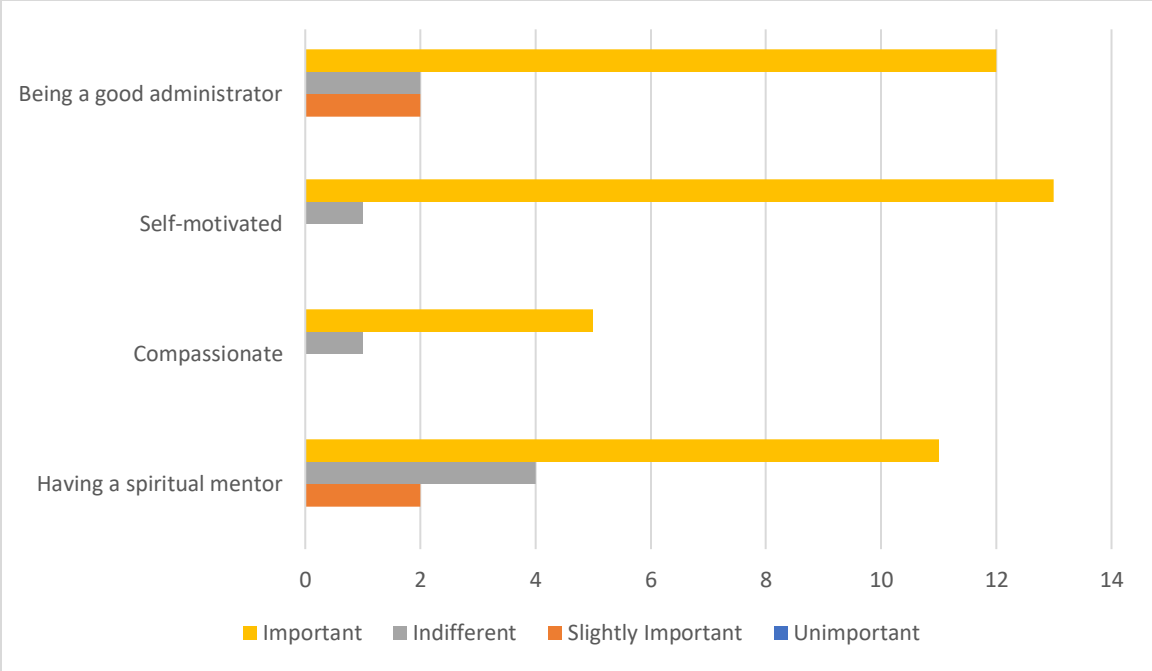
24. Where do you think Grace Church could expand its' mission/outreach?

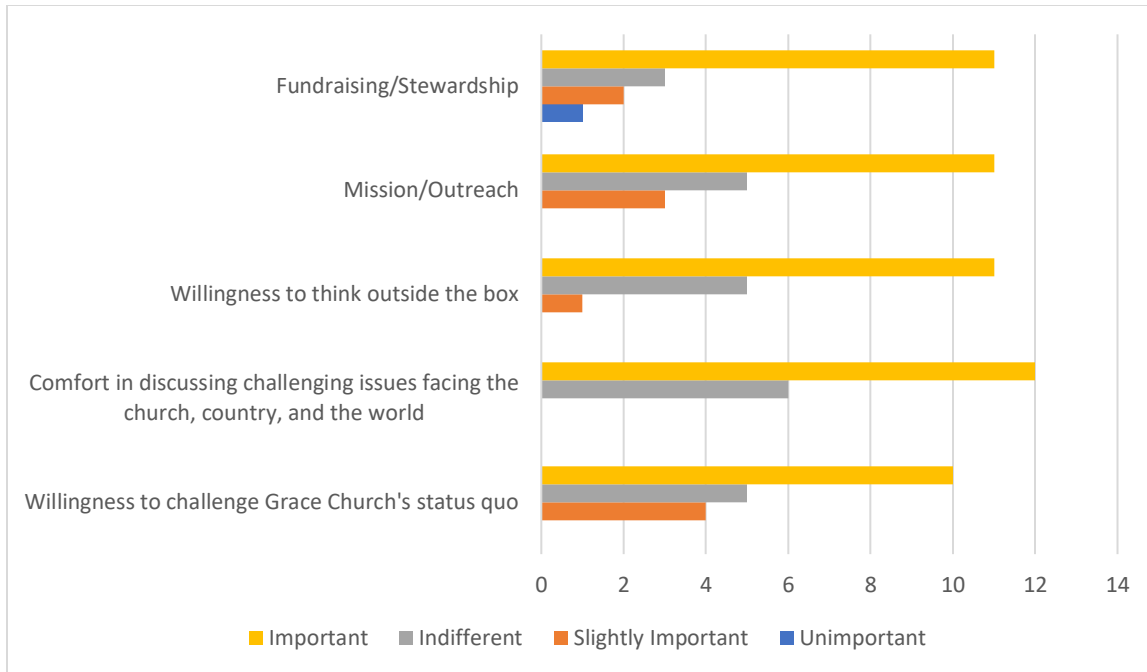
- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. No idea | 9. Focus on youth and family |
| 2. Thanksgiving Dinners | 10. What is everyone else doing? |
| 3. Saturday luncheons and holiday meals | 11. Collaborating with other churches |
| 4. To [be] determined | 12. First find a priest! |
| 5. Not ready | 13. Church not ready yet. |
| 6. Like Sue's outreach | 14. To be determined |
| 7. Start we getting to know us first! | |
| 8. Expanding us first! | |

Section II Qualities of Our New Priest

25. Please rate the importance of the personal qualities you would like to see in our new priest







26. Five (5) words/phrases you'd like to describe our new priest

leader collaborator spiritual mentor receptive to constructive criticism
 understanding of vestry rules cannon importance people's person open and honest
 relationship with the Lord real world cares about our church youth programs
 someone like Fr. Pearson compassionate relevant to today's learning support seniors
 good luck Father Pearson change kind caring Bible knowledge humor
 home visits with communion competent friendly flexible involved in community
 speaks audibly mindful should have a vision I like having what we have with two priests
 we