



SURVEY SUMMARY

Thank you to all of our parishioners who completed the survey included in the Census Update Packet mailed in early August 2020. This summary, which we would like to share with the parishioners, will serve as a working document for our Parish Council, who is in the process of writing our vision and mission statements, as well as identifying core values and goals for the future. Follow up from those discussions will be shared with the parish in the near future.

The purpose of the survey was to find the personality of the parish as it stands today. This is a healthy and worthwhile endeavor, as life itself is always changing and evolving. By drawing out the insights of you, the people, we hope to use your responses to develop a comprehensive vision that engages all our parishioners on their faith journey. On a more practical level, your responses will help us identify future building projects, decide on new programs, and hear your concerns.

While reading this working document, please know that each and every response was appreciated and noted. For the sake of space and readability, though, not every comment could be shared here. The summaries below are based on common responses. Nonetheless, everyone's opinion is important and we had some very thoughtful and helpful one-time comments.

Sincerely,

Fr. Tony Davis, Pastor

Question #1 - What do you like best about St. Matthias Parish?

This question produced an abundance of positive comments. The likes most often stated were that it's friendly, welcoming, inclusive, and diverse. Others like the small parish size and the feeling of family. The pastor, the caring people, and the community also received many positive comments.

Question #2 - Are current parish programs and services meeting your needs?

It was very encouraging to know that 63 percent of the people felt the current parish programs and services were meeting their needs. Over the past few years, we have tried book studies, guest speakers, and a Bible study. A significant number of parishioners are wishing to see us continue and expand our programs and opportunities, including adoration, greeters, Knights of Columbus, and funeral ministry. Specific new ideas and suggestions will be addressed under question #4.

Question #3 - In what ways can the parish help you with your spiritual needs during this pandemic?

The pandemic has been a challenge for all of us and has forced us to find creative ways of staying connected. Obviously, many people miss seeing their fellow parishioners. Others have shared what other parishes they know of have been doing, such as livestreaming their masses. Some people suggested trying to hold a few safe activities with limited attendance. Most importantly, it was noted by many parishioners that we need to keep praying for each other and reach out if possible.

Question #4 – What new programs, activities, or services would you like to see started at St. Matthias?

As mentioned in question #2, there were many great new ideas for our parish to consider. Of course, many of these will take time to explore and implement, especially as the pandemic continues. These suggestions include: bible studies, small faith groups, prayer gatherings, a senior's group, more Religious Education for adults, a High School youth group, a young adult's group, more programs for children, a homebound ministry, among others. On a more social level, we also heard ideas of having a parish picnic, a festival, and spaghetti dinners. Perhaps a social committee could be formed with a special emphasis on celebrating our ethnic diversity and working together as one parish.

Question #5 – How often do you view our parish Website or Facebook page?

Approximately 35 percent of the surveys said they viewed the website or Facebook page weekly. Others were less frequent, with 27 percent saying that they don't view it at all. From the responses, it is clear that there is a divide among our parishioners between those who are comfortable with technology and those who prefer more traditional ways of communicating.

Question #6 – Would you like to see more virtual programs on our Website or Facebook page?

While personal contact is always the preferred way to engage with people, nearly 40 percent of those responding to the survey would like to see some increase in virtual programs on our parish website or Facebook page. Some of the desired requests were: online Mass, daily bible verse or prayer, virtual programs like book clubs, religious programs, Catholic speakers, bible studies, and inspirational programs, especially during this time of the pandemic.

Question #7 – What ideas or suggestions do you have to encourage more parishioner involvement/volunteers to help the parish?

The key to keeping parish ministries, programs, and activities alive and well is very much hinged on having enough volunteers willing to sharing their time and talent. St. Matthias Parish is very grateful to all of our current volunteers and encourage their renewed interest and commitment. We also see the need to provide space for new volunteers to step up.

Those responding to the survey suggested that we use a direct appeal, ask for help in person, get younger people involved, promote volunteerism of all parishioners on a regular basis, continue to announce our need for volunteers in the bulletin, website, social media and at mass, use Flocknote, be open to welcoming new volunteers to existing parish programs, have a welcoming process for new parishioners, do more social events, appeal to diversity of the parish, work in partnership with the St. Matthias School, DeSales High School, and the Northland community.

Question #8 – In what ways can we increase our community outreach to help those in need outside of our parish boundaries?

Many wonderful suggestions were shared as a result of this question. Parishioners suggested: create a food bank or pantry, partner with other churches in the area, work with local social service agencies, create awareness among parishioners, partner with causes like St. Stephen's, Christ Child, St. Vincent DePaul, do the corporal works of mercy, join BREAD (local community organizing chapter), have more coordinated work between Northland parishes, start a clothing drive, find a volunteer outreach coordinator, appeal to all ethnic groups for input, visit senior centers and nursing home, and so much more. Our parishioners truly expressed a sense of concern to help others. We are very grateful for their desire to reach out beyond parish boundaries.

Question #9 – Are there any improvements or changes you feel we need to make to our current buildings or facilities?

Generally, parishioners felt the facilities were well maintained, but being an older parish with buildings aging, things like roofs, parking lots, and lighting, require continued attention, repair, or replacement. Those items that parishioners feel need some attention, repair and/or replacement are: carpeting in church and lobby, kneelers in church, sound system, ceiling and lighting in church, school playground, spacing of pews, better handicap seating in church, proper space for choir, and automatic door at church entrance. All of this will certainly help our Finance Council in their discussions, as all of these cost money and require advanced planning.

Question # 10 – Which is the best way to communicate parish news and information to you? (*Check all those you prefer*)

The preferred methods were the bulletin (54%), email (48%), and mail (42%). Technological means were not as common, but still appealed to a decent portion of the parish with website (26%), Flocknote (26%) and Facebook (20%). We will continue to use as many means of communication as possible.

Other Comments

The additional comments mostly reiterated items already covered in the questions. Many of the comments called attention to the fact that we are in a transitional phase and many changes are taking place. Looking back, the memories of Sr. Marie Shields and Fr. Jim Smith remain in our hearts, the feelings of past traditions and relationships are still highly valued, and moving on is hard. Better communication before doing anything was also pointed out. Overall, there is some excitement present among a number of our parishioners for the direction we are moving in and the journey that awaits us.

Thank you for your input and commitment to St. Matthias Church and School!!