



LISTENING TOGETHER

A Reflection on the Voices, Hopes, and Calling
of Christ Episcopal Church

*Will you continue in the apostles'
teaching and fellowship, in the breaking
of bread, and in the prayers?*

Why We Listened

Every act of discernment begins with listening.

Not because something is wrong, but because God is always inviting the Church to grow more deeply into its calling.

This parish assessment was one way of listening—to one another, to our neighbors, and to the movement of the Holy Spirit among us. Our own parishioners shared their gratitude, hopes, concerns, and prayers. Their voices shape the pages that follow.

This is our invitation to continue listening together.

I will, with God's help.

WE GATHER

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

I will, with God's help.



You consistently described worship as the heart of Christ Church. Again and again we spoke of the Eucharist, thoughtful preaching, beautiful music, and the reverence and warmth that shape Sunday mornings.

Where do we grow from here? We heard a desire to continue growing in faith through Bible studies, social groups, and opportunities for Christian formation. Discipleship is formed not only in the sanctuary, but in classrooms, in kitchens, and in relationships across generations. Will you help us gather more intentionally?

“We have a beautiful service, and we are supportive of each other's efforts. I never hear anything being said that is disparaging or gossip.”

“This church feels like family.”

WE WELCOME

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

I will, with God's help.



You consistently described Christ Church as welcoming, caring, and compassionate. What we hear is not a request to *become* a friendly church; we're to make our existing warmth easier for newcomers to experience.

Where do we grow from here? We imagine a future in which every visitor is greeted, their name shared, invited intentionally to our abundant Coffee Hour afterwards, and drawn into the life of the parish. And we imagine a future where our church family gathers for social events, special services, and in each other's homes for worship and community. Will you offer your time and talent to welcome newcomers and make our shared spaces especially inviting?

“We are a friendly & welcoming family to all who come.”

“Families with small children feel welcome, or at least we felt welcomed.”

WE SHARE

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

I will, with God's help.



The Good News is proclaimed not only from the pulpit but through everyday acts of hospitality, service, learning, and joy out and about in our community.

Where do we grow from here? You all expressed hope that Christ Church will continue investing in children, youth, and families while sharing our story more confidently with the wider community through evangelism, invitation, and outreach. Will you share your faith stories with the people in your lives, and invite them to be a part of our gatherings?

“We need new, younger faces in church every week. Our parish is aging out of being able to handle the heavy lifting of planning, finances, and activity.”

WE SERVE

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.



One of the survey's most hopeful discoveries was the abundance of gifts already present. You're all blessed with gifts of teaching, music, administration, hospitality, finance, pastoral care, craftsmanship, technology, prayer, and encouragement. We also heard a desire to engage in more hands-on outreach and community service.

Where do we grow from here? Rather than asking who will do the work, we ask how God is already equipping Christ Church for the work ahead. How do we help people recognize how their God-given gifts fit into our mission and ministry? Will you share your time, talent, and treasure to support our church and our outreach efforts in the community?

"I am here and am ready to help."

What areas do we need to strengthen or improve?

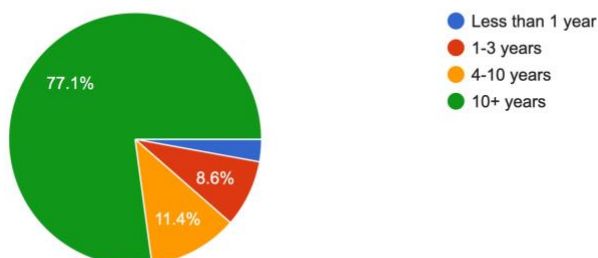
"Financial planning and management."

"I firmly believe the church needs to dramatically improve its fiscal discipline."

WHAT WE HEARD—BY THE NUMBERS

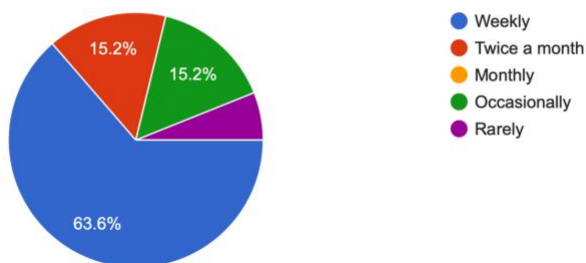
How long have you been part of our congregation?

35 responses



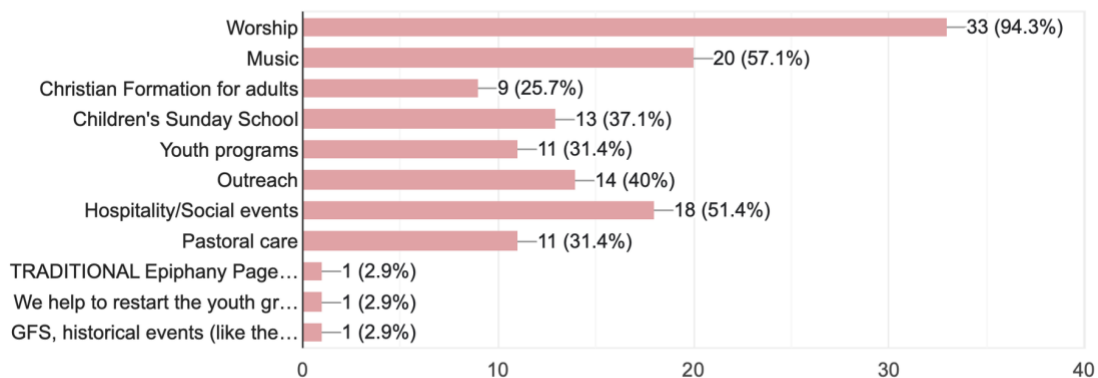
How often do you attend worship services?

33 responses



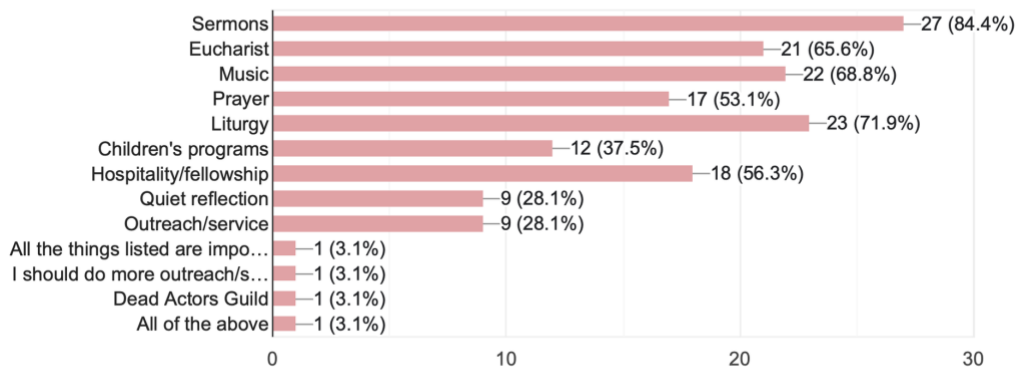
What ministries or programs have been important to you and your family?

35 responses



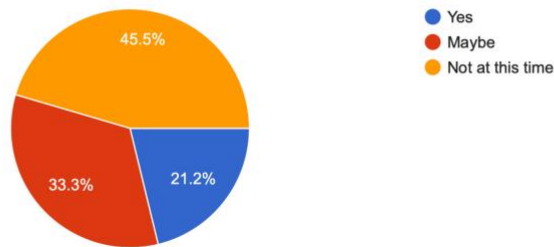
What aspects of worship are especially important to you?

32 responses



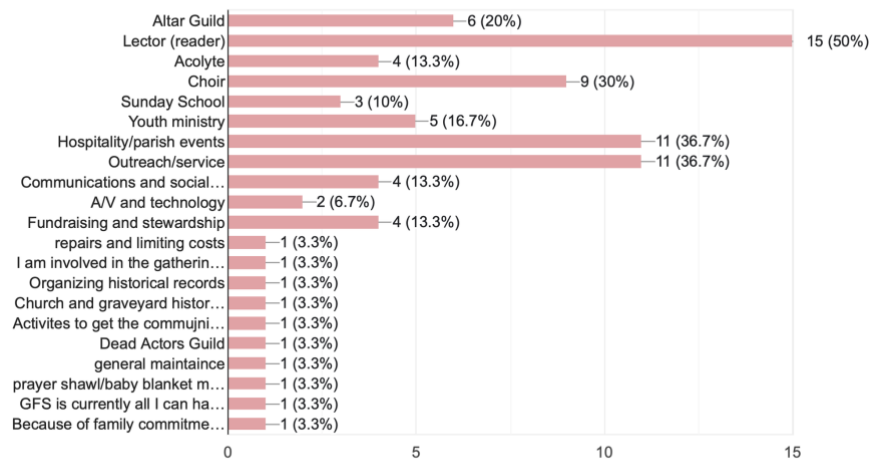
Would you like to become more involved in parish ministries?

33 responses



Which ministries interest you?

30 responses



WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share honest, thoughtful feedback in this year's parish assessment survey. Your voice shaped real decisions. Below are the changes already underway, along with ways you can get more involved — whenever and however works for you.

✓ A New Worship Schedule

The most common piece of feedback we heard was about the 9:00 AM Sunday service time. We listened — and we're pleased to share our new worship schedule, effective in September and beyond:

- Saturdays at 5:00 PM
- Sundays at 10:00 AM
- Wednesdays at 12:15 PM
- Contemplative Centering Prayer on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm
- Special services of healing, October 24th and December 21st at 5 pm

✓ New Adult Formation Opportunities

You also told us you wanted more opportunities to grow in faith together. Starting now, join us for:

- Brown Bag Bible Study – Thursdays at 12:00 PM. Bring your lunch and your questions; all are welcome, no experience necessary.
- Dinner Church—throughout the fall and winter, we'll gather in small groups to share a meal and Communion in someone's home. This is a great way to dig deeper into our faith practice and get to know each other!
- Peak in the Week with Donna Devlin, continuing at 11:00 am on Wednesdays.

✓ New Outreach Opportunities

Along with our consistent participation in food and gift collection for local organizations, Christ Church is re-establishing our partnership with St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Keansburg. We'll bring people together for cooking teams in our own kitchen space, then share and serve what we've made with the folks there.

The Ministry Challenge

Many of you told us you'd consider getting more involved, but weren't ready to commit to an open-ended role. So we're trying something new: a low-pressure way to test out a ministry, get trained, and decide for yourself if it's a fit.

Here's how it works:

- 1. Opt in. Choose one ministry you're curious about from the list below.
- 2. Get trained. Attend a short, hands-on orientation — no prior experience needed. Trainings begin in October.
- 3. Give it a try. Serve in that role 3 times over the following 6 weeks.
- 4. Reflect together. Join a short listening session with others who took the challenge to talk about what worked, what was hard, and what we could do better.
- 5. Decide. Choose to continue in the ministry, take a break, or try something else next time — entirely up to you.

This is a trial run by design — its purpose is to lower the barrier to trying something new, and to give us honest feedback on how to support volunteers better.

I'd like to take the Ministry Challenge in:

- ☐ Serving as a Lector (reader)
- ☐ Hospitality & Coffee Hour

- ☐ Choir / music ministry
- ☐ Altar Guild
- ☐ Acolyte
- ☐ Fundraising, stewardship, or Finance Committee
- ☐ Sunday School
- ☐ I have a specific skill to offer (please describe below)

Not ready for the Challenge, but still want to help?

- ☐ Hosting a Dinner Church
- ☐ One-time / as-needed help (events, projects, etc.)

Name: _____

Phone or Email: _____

Skill or interest to share:
