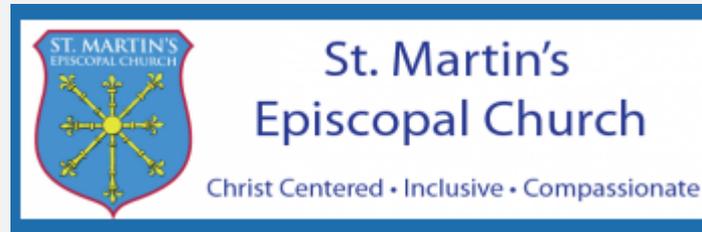


St. Martin's Digital Congregational Conversation



May 2020

Methodology & Summary

Methodology

- Input gathered from **parishioners via an online survey**
- The survey was distributed to ~100 parishioners with **40 responses received**
- **Five open-ended questions** were asked as noted below
 1. How are you feeling about the present status of St. Martin's?
 2. What experiences at St. Martin's help you most to grow in following Christ?
 3. Over the next five years how would you like St. Martin's to change?
 4. How might the next priest help lead St. Martin's forward?
 5. Any other comments?
- For each question, members were asked to provide **up to five responses, limited to three to five words each**
- The results for each question are summarized on the following pages
 - On each page a Word Cloud with counts of key words is shown
 - Example comments and a summary of the key sentiments is also provided

Summary

- **Current Status:** Parishioners **are generally hopeful for the future**, enthusiastic about Father Tim's interim ministry and the St. Martin's community, although there were **some concerns raised** relative to low attendance, the need for growth and better communication
- **Growth in Christ:** Members noted a **number of areas helping them grow in Christ** including the Sunday services and worship, the various Outreach programs, the Adult Forum, Father Tim's sermons, fellowship events, prayer/readings and participation in groups such as Bible study
- **Areas of Change:** Parishioners noted several **key areas of change in the future**, including more new and young families, more outreach activities, more community involvement, more participation across the congregation and additional fellowship and social events
- **The Next Priest:** Members **would like a new Priest** who is engaging, is a strong preacher, can bring new ideas and families, can motivate involvement, is inclusive, can connect the Church to the broader community and the Diocese and is technologically savvy
- **Other Sentiments:** Members expressed a number of other sentiments about the Church that were generally very positive, like the one below
 - *"St. Martin's and its people have been a constant source of love, acceptance and spiritual light in my life for 30 plus years. I trust that God will send us a new rector whose gifts will not only preserve that but enable St. Martin's to share in greater numbers what we have."*

Q1: How are you feeling about the present status of St. Martin's?

- There was a range of sentiments expressed on this question, **both positive and of concern**
- **Positive emotions** included hope for the future, the interim service provided by Father Tim, being thankful for the Church, being encouraged and the strong community
- There were also underlying sentiments of **concern expressed**, including anxiety, worries related to low attendance, the need for growth of the congregation and better communication

Q1 Key Words

Anxious (3) attendance (5) Blessed (2) Cares (3) challenges (2) church (5) community (8)
 Concerned (4) congregation (4) connected (2) considering (4) current (2) education (2) Encouraged (4) exist (2) Faith
 (2) families (5) Father (3) feel (2) Fr (5) future (7) grateful (3) grow (4) Happy (2) help (2)
 Hopeful (12) interim (2) love (3) meet (2) members (3) ministry (2) miss (4) parish (3) parishioners (3)
 participation (4) people (6) permanent (2) pleased (2) pretty (2) priest (4) school (3) services (5) strong (4)
 Sunday (4) Support (2) thankful (4) Tim (7) times (3) worried (5) worship (2)

Examples of Positive Comments

- "I love it. The parish people seem to like each other..."
- "St. Martin's is a font of God's love"
- "Hopeful for the future"
- "I am so grateful for Father Tim's ministry"
- "Father Tim is the perfect interim"

Examples of Concern Comments

- "Anxious about low membership"
- "Need to grow the congregation"
- "Worried about lowering attendance"
- "Sorry that we can't meet in reality"
- "Need to communicate what groups exists within the Church community"

Q2: What experiences at St. Martin's help you most to grow in following Christ?

- There were a **number of areas mentioned as helping parishioners to grow in Christ** including the Sunday services and worship, the various Outreach programs, the Adult Forum, Father Tim's sermons, fellowship events, prayer/readings and participation in groups such as Bible study

Q2 Key Words

adult (7) Beautiful (4) bible (2) church (6) Coffee (3) community (10) connecting (2)
 conversation (2) education (3) Eucharist (3) events (4) experience (2) faith (2) Father (2) fellowship (5) following (2)
 forum (7) group (4) Healing (2) hour (2) inspiring (3) involved (3) life (2) liturgy (3) meet (2) morning (2) music (3) Opportunity (2)
 opportunities (2) others (2) outreach (8) outside (2) parishioners (4) participate (3) people (5) programs (2)
 Reaching (2) Readings (2) sermons (9) service (12) study (4) Sunday (7) Tim (2) Volunteer (2)
 Weekday (2) welcoming (2) worship (5) Youth (3)

Example Comments

- "Attending Sunday service"
- "Coffee hour and other events"
- "Community and fellowship"
- "Fellowship events"
- "Adult forum"
- "Lenten bible study"
- "Outreach activities"

- "Participation in the liturgy"
- "Participation in various committees"
- "Prayer"
- "Readings"
- "Sermons"
- "Sermons relating to everyday life"
- "Worship"

Q4: How might the next priest help lead St. Martin's forward?

- Parishioners **would like a new Priest** who is engaging, is a strong preacher, can bring new ideas and families, can motivate involvement, is inclusive, can connect the Church to the broader community and the Diocese and is technologically savvy

Q4 Key Words

Bringing (5) challenge (2) church (4) **community** (8) congregation (3)
 connect (5) Continue (4) current (2) diocese (3) Embrace (2) energy (2) **engaging** (7) families (3)
 financial (2) groups (2) grow (2) help (3) **ideas** (5) inclusive (3) Increase (3) Innovative (2) inspire (2) **involved** (4)
 leadership (4) live (2) manage (2) media (3) members (3) needs (3) **open** (5) outreach (2) outside (2) parishioners (2)
 pastoral (3) **people** (5) personal (4) **priest** (4) programs (2) Provide (4) relate (3) sense (2)
sermons (7) sharing (3) skills (2) social (3) **strong** (6) **technology** (5) worship (3)
 young (3) younger (2)

Example Comments

- "Bringing in new families"
- "Bring fresh ideas"
- "Challenge us to grow"
- "Digitally competent"
- "Engaging sermons"
- "Good listening skills"
- "Have empathy for all"

- "Have pulse on needs of the community"
- "He/she will inspire us all to believe and hope"
- "Help recruit more diverse congregation"
- "Market St. Martin's to the public"
- "Motivate involvement"
- "Provide a new energy"
- "Technically capable"

Q5: Any other comments?

- A few parishioners also **expressed additional sentiments as provided below**, most of which are very positive
 - "God Bless our Leaders through this difficult time"
 - "Hope our Finances improve"
 - "Hope we remember all the new ways, liturgies, hymns, learnings... we have been introduced to by Father Tim"
 - "I am new and feel very much at home at St. Martins"
 - "I liked Father Bruce and very much like Father Tim. Father Tim seems to have a sense of time in and when to cut lessons short, as if he senses he is losing the congregation. I think that this ability is important. The new rector should be able to relate to today's life and share stories that relate to everyone."
 - "I would like biweekly updates on what is happening in the Church, parishioners who may need help, and our search for a new priest. We are very fortunate to have Father Tim, wish he would stay!"
 - "Keep up the good work"
 - "Our faith (and attitude towards each other) help us to achieve these things that have just been surveyed - not just the new Rector. He/she should support these ideas full-time and may have more to offer or ways to steer us closer to God that we have not yet realized ourselves. Have faith in the Holy Spirit & thank you, Discernment Committee for your hard work."
 - "Short and concise"
 - "So thankful for St. Martin's! A very special place"
 - "St. Martin's and its people have been a constant source of love, acceptance and spiritual light in my life for 30 plus years. I trust that God will send us a new rector whose gifts will not only preserve that but enable St. Martin's to share in greater numbers what we have."
 - "Thank you for asking these important questions"
 - "Thanks to the vestry for your help"
 - "There is a lot of hope at this time during our interim pastor father Tim which tells us that we need not be afraid to go forward and experience new direction and this is where our next pastor should take us and how the church should head"
 - "This is a most wonderful church and church community and want to keep it going...I think the answer is music, it attracts all of us in a good way....it needs to be uplifting and not like a funeral....Jesus was a happy person and wants us to be happy...."
 - "We are very happy at St. Martin's. We appreciate the congregational warm welcome that we have received. We look forward to welcoming the new future of St. Martin's Church."

Appendix

Q1 Detailed Responses

A little strong on wanting more money
A little disconnected
A special place of worship
Anxious
Anxious about low membership
Anxious about our size
Appreciate Sunday worship over Zoom
Attendance and volunteerism is very low
Believe we fill a need
Better communication to Parish
Blessed
Blessed with potential
Cares about kids
Caring people
Church doing well considering
Comfortable
Communication is pretty good considering
Concerned
Concerned - clean enough for preschoolers?
Concerned with lack of income for church
Confident in the future
Congregation committed to each other
Content
Definitely an adjustment
Disgusted - cutting ties with non-pledgers
Doing well considering the restrictions
Ecstatic with Father Tim's ability to help us navigate throughout this
Encouraged
Encouraged - virtual services
Encouraged by the way people are participating online
Encouraged to see connections made with local community
Enjoy the adult educational opportunities
Excellent people
Excellent service and adult education
Exciting times for the parish
Expectations met for now
Faith centered
Father Tim is a good leader
Father Tim is perfect interim
Feeling cared for by ministry
Financial trouble
Fr. Mulder very helpful
Good
Good
Good leadership during void
Good to stay in touch
Grateful for each other
Grateful for our congregation
Great to see the evolution
Greater liturgical participation
Good leadership during void

Good to stay in touch
Grateful for each other
Grateful for our congregation
Great to see the evolution
Greater liturgical participation from youths
Happy with Fr. Tim
Happy with Sunday services
Have future challenges due to declining attendance which seems unavoidable given societal changes
Hope we get a permanent minister soon
Hopeful
Hopeful
Hopeful
Hopeful for our future
Hopeful for that a new priest will help us to grow
Hopeful for the future
Hopeful for the future
Hopeful for the future
Hopeful for the future
Hopeful money will continue
Hopeful with Fr. Tim
I am so grateful for Fr. Tim's ministry
I am thankful for the faithfulness of St. Martin's people
I am worried about how to keep it solvent
I have been a member since about 1975
I like the interim priest
I love it. The parish people seem to like each other...
I miss the services
I would like to have a permanent minister
Impressed by the embracing of technology during these difficult times
In flux
In good hands with Fr. Tim
Included
Insecure
Intimate relationships with congregation
Lenten study was great
Looking to experience Sunday service
Lost some dedicated families
Love the current priest
Many steadfast parishioners
Miss some of the regular announcements on Sundays
Missing in person interaction
Missing many formerly active members
More traditional music - "Old Chestnuts"
Need definition of what committees exist and do within Saint Martins
Need more families
Need more feedback on happenings
Need more people to participate
Need to communicate what groups exist within the church community

Need to consider part-time rector
Missing many formerly active members
More traditional music - "Old Chestnuts"
Need definition of what committees exist and do within Saint Martins
Need more families
Need more feedback on happenings
Need more people to participate
Need to communicate what groups exist within the church community
Need to consider part-time rector
Need to cooperate more with other churches
Need to grow
Need to grow the congregation
Need to have more collaboration with school community that is mutually enjoyable and beneficial to both
Need to recruit new members
Need to restructure programs to be easier to execute, more relatable to everyday life
Need young families
Not enough parishioners
Overall feel pretty good
Pleasantly surprised by positivity
Pleased that the Church family is still strong
Sad
Satisfied
Social media is progressing
Some volunteers
Sorry that we can't meet in reality
Spiritually eager to grow
St. Martin's is a font of God's love
St. Martin's is welcoming
St. Martin's Outreach to Community is wonderful
Strong Community
Strong participation from a few
Support for school is wavering
Support of parishioners
Surprisingly connected during these challenging times
Thankful for St. Martin's Family
Thankful for St. Martin's School
Thankful for Zoom Meetings
This process for priest has taken too long
Total attendance a concern
Uncertain
Unhappy about reduced e-mail list
Unstable
Very pleased with current status
We are holding steady
Worried
Worried about attendance
Worried about falling numbers
Worried about lowering attendance

Q2 Detailed Responses

Acceptance
Adult discussion groups
Adult education
Adult education opportunities
Adult Forum
Adult Forum
Advent and Christmas Services
Amazing solutions that appear to impossible challenges
Attending Sunday service
Beautiful and thoughtful worship
Beautiful liturgy with music
Beautiful music
Being a lector
Bible study and other sessions, even offline
Child education
Choir singing
Church events and conversations interacting
Church music
Clergy, either past or current interim
Coffee hour
Coffee hour and other events
Coffee hour connecting with everyone
Communion and ritual
Community
Community
Community
Community and fellowship
Community on Sundays
Community Outreach/charitable giving and doing
Connecting with others in faith
Early Sunday service has some great people
Eucharist
Examples of other parishioners
Father Tim recognizes me weekly
Father Tim's sermons
Fellow Parishioners
Fellowship
Fellowship Events
Fellowship Events
Fellowship with other parishioners
Following gospel of the day
Food and clothes drives for Outreach
Forum
Forum
Forum

Fr. Bruce being so down to earth
Friendships
Gatherings
Good adult forums on Sunday morning
Having served many different roles
High level of outreach
Insight from ministries
Inspirational worship
Inspiring young people to participate
Intelligent conversation
Involvement
Journey
Keeping up with parish friends
Learning about our faith traditions
Lent and Easter Services
Lenten film study
Less bureaucracy
Lessons of life from people we meet
Meaningful Homilies
Meetings following service
More small group study
More transparent decision making
More welcoming
My single greatest experience was doing ASP
Opportunity to embrace new experiences
Opportunities to get involved
Our church community
Outreach
Outreach
Outreach activities
Outreach programs
Outreach programs
Overly friendly and helpful people
Parishioner's shared God-moments the pulpit
Participating in the liturgy
Participation on various committees
Prayer
Priest
Quite times of prayer anywhere on the property (Maundy Thursday)
Reaching out to others
Reaching out to those outside of the community
Readings
Readings
Rectors sermons

Regular church service
Sermon
Sermons
Sermons
Sermons
Sermons relating to everyday life
Sermons with personal tidbits
Service
Services
Stimulating new people to long-term commitment
Sunday Morning Zoom
Sunday service
Sunday Services
The adult forum
The beauty of the surroundings and building itself

The inclusive love that pervades the liturgy
The sermons are always inspiring
The wonderful sense of community
Thursday bible study
Tranquil interior and exterior grounds
Visiting shut ins
Volunteer Opportunities
Volunteer work outside Church confines
Weekday Healing and Eucharist Services
Weekday Healing and Eucharist Services
Welcoming community
Witnessing the Appalachian Project stories
Worship
Worship
Worship
Youth getting involved in church
Youth group
Youth groups

Q3 Detailed Responses

100% financial participation
A minister who knows the congregation individually
A permanent minister will inspire others to join
Addition of contemporary music
An amazing, young, inspirational pastor
Attract more younger families
Attract new families
Be better prepared digitally
Beautiful space that can be better used with minor upgrades
Believe children can love God
Better communication
Better marketing
Better outreach
Better participation overall
Bridge services
Bring in more people
Bring in young families
Bring parish members new members
Broader inclusive community
Broader outreach
Children's choir
Church members accepting school
Communication continued technology used
Community involvement
Continued outreach opportunities
Continued youth involvement wherever possible
Development of younger families
Diverse leadership
Do more collectively with neighboring parishes
Do more to help those outside the church
Do more with outside churches
Don't want it to change
Enhance stained glass added donations
Enlarge size of Congregation
Establish an endowment
Evolution of programs to current needs and topics
Expand fellowship
Expand the core of volunteers
Family oriented new Rector

Financially stable
Find a rector with a good personality
Find ways to add new congregants
Find new Minister for our Church
Get a better organ
Get more active parishioners
Gradual change vs. radical genre
Grow
Grow attendance for financial stability
Grow community of all age groups
Grow in Numbers
Growth of congregation
Have new members join our Congregation
I am happy to let the parish evolve as God wills
I'm new so I don't have any suggestions
Inclusive leader
Increase in Discipleship (& attendance)
Increase attendance
Increase in parishioners
Increased number of members
Increased number of members willing to serve
increased presence of young families
Increased Sunday school enrollment
Large choir
Larger congregation
Limit spending
Members involved more not 20/80%
Mend ties with school
Modernization
More adult learning opportunities
More children in Sunday school and attendance in general
More church activities
More commitment to stewardship
More community engagement
More connection to other episcopal and non-episcopal parishes
More current members getting involved
More family functions
More fellowship
More fellowship events
More inter-convocation activities
More involvement in community outreach
More love and less judgment
More members committed to serving
More music
More neighborhood outreach

More outreach activities
More parishioners
More participation
More participation in leadership positions
More services during the week
More social events
More technology to deliver services
More volunteers
More young families
More young families with children
Move ahead upgrade of kitchen
Need new young people very much
New families
New organ
No answer for this
Now grow a lot - too impersonal
Obviously more membership
Offer youth more service activities
Priest engaged in the congregation
Priest who can manage Church and Diocese
Priest who gets control of school
Priest who provides good spiritual support
Priest/lay visitation of homebound
Provide direct outreach to our local community
Provide even more volunteer opportunities
Regular cadence of events
Sell the rectory
Senior services
Social events outside of Sunday Services
They should find a permanent minister
They should keep the Montessori school
Transparent decision making
Uplifting music
Welcome children into community

Q4 Detailed Responses

Appreciative of current programs
Attract new families
Be able to communicate using new methods
Be active in the Diocese and outside causes
Be apolitical
Be aware of financial endeavors
Be open to all different types of people
Be open to innovations in worship
Be open to new ideas
Be open to new thought
Be personable, not saintly
Become bigger part of community
Being approachable
Bible study
Bring fresh ideas
Bringing a following
Bringing in new families
Bringing new Evangelism ideas
Broad connectivity with episcopal community
By "hands on" with all age groups
By technology fluent for outreach
Challenging us to grow
Connect to younger parishioners community
Connections with members
Continue outreach programs
Continue vibrant worship and adult education
Continued adult education
Developing an inclusive community
Deepen understanding of Christ
Develop more of a shared ministry
Digitally competent
Don't be afraid to challenge the parish
Dynamic new ideas
Embrace technology and social media
Embrace technology on social media
Encouraging sharing with other churches
Energetic and Open to input
Energy in sermons
Engage with congregation more
Engaging sermons
Engaging sermons like Father Tim
Focus on practical Church needs - less on birthdays, etc.
Full-time support of "big wish" items

Get more involved with the school
Get more involved with the town
Get rid of concept of heretic
Give inspirational sermons
Good leadership qualities
Good listening skills
Good with or able to learn new technology
Greater role for young people
Grow the congregation and pledges
Have connection with outside world
Have empathy for all
Have pulse on needs of community
He/She will give a sense of permanence
He/She will help the sick and reach out to new people
He/She will inspire us all to believe and hope
Help "recruit" young families
Help recruit more diverse congregation
Hold some digital Information Sessions
I don't know
Improve relationship with school
Inclusiveness
Increase community engagement
Increase financial stability
Increased ministry to youth
Information pivotal from diocese to congregation
Innovative ideas on worship services
Insightful engaging speaker
Keep continuity of services
Keep politics out of church
Know all of us
Market St. Martins to the public
More and better advertising about us
Motivate involvement
Needs to be engaging
New priest new members
Not do everything him/herself
People should want to be around them
Personable and warm
Personal pastoral care
Prayer groups
Prefer Rector who is married with children
Priest who can manage and push back on Diocese
Priest who engages with all members
Priest who understand social media and can connect with youth

Provide a new energy
Provide strong leadership for spiritual growth
Provide strong leadership over the management of church
Provide strong pastoral skills
Reach out to new couples
Relate the Gospel to a sermon to our lives
Sense of humor
Should know each of us individually
Someone that relates to our young people
Stress Christianity while making it enjoyable and not too pious
Strengthen relationships among parishioners
Strong administrator
Strong pastoral role
Strong preacher sharing personal tidbits
Support leadership
Tech savvy
Technically capable
Technologically savvy
Tie sermons to all everyday life experiences
To answer the question why there is a God?
Topical sermons that relate to current situations
Try some new things
Views that reflect community/demographics
Vision to bring St. M into the future
We live in a secular country and would like to reinforce belief
Welcome, inclusive
Willing to be involved
Willingness to make tough decisions
Younger