

Worship Issues Raised By Members During the Consultation (July – December 2001)

From 7/29/01 session

1. Overall Satisfaction with Parish Life & Ministry

Year-round				XXXXX XXXXX	XXXXX XXXXX	X
Summer +			**	**	***** *****	
	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Worship (common worship; equipping for personal devotions)

Year-round			XXX	XXXXX XXXXXX	XXXXX	
Summer +		*	*	****	*****	**
	1	2	3	4	5	6

Consultant Note: The ratings for worship are lower than is usual for an Episcopal parish. They are also lower than the overall satisfaction ratings. That is also unusual. If the ratings were done again there are two possibilities: 1. The ratings would be higher because some action has been taken on at least a couple of concerns (music by forming a choir and David playing, silence in the liturgy) or 2. The ratings would go down. In a change process it is common for ratings to decline because expectations are increasing. It's important to listen to what people say about the ratings they give.

Here is the section of the data gathering on size (I dropped off the larger size categories that no one indicated a preference for)

Parish Size

Type	Very Small	Small	Middle
Average Sunday Adult Attendance	Under 50	40 - 100	75 - 200
Characteristics	Tight-knit group; regular interaction	Familiar faces; Dominant core group	Full time priest; "full program"
Current Size	Winter 18	Summer 65 +/-	
Year-round – on year-round size	XXXX	XXXXX XXXXX XXXX	XXX
Year-round on summer size		XXXXX XXXXX XX	XXXXX
Summer + people on summer size		***** ***** *****	*

Consultant Note: This relates to worship in that any new space explored needs to allow for growth in the year-round attendance; also that improvements in the liturgy need to work for a larger group. The conversations at the session and since have indicated that people are thinking of seeking growth in the 40 – 45 average attendance range. It is important to note that once an effort to grow is set in motion the parish does not control the results. After 18 months of good marketing, great liturgy, etc. you might end up with 25 people or 75 people.

Issues, Concerns and Wishes Identified at Various Sessions

- Music; improve & experiment with music; Pre-programmed music is a problem
- need more ritual & participation
- “dunking of bread in wine (health issue)

- the peace degenerating into social hour
- unexamined variations in liturgy
- More defined form of participation by summer attendees – associate membership, role to play in liturgy, etc.
- more silence & stillness in liturgy
- stand or kneel for the last prayer & blessing
- update liturgy/prayers
- Choir in such a small church
- Not having our own building
- Standing in a circle is awkward during the summer when attendance increases (need a space that allows a large circle, a flow to the circle so it isn't like doing "tables" or use stations)
- Desire for more "expanded language"
- Desire to have more of a pattern to the use of various rites, e.g., use Rite II during most of the seasons, have Expanded Language Rite 12 weeks in a row or in two blocks of six weeks.

Some Practices Seemed to be Valued By Everyone (or at least no one raised concerns about them)

- Receiving communion standing in a circle (at least during most of the year)
- The congregation seems to "own" the worship -- a critical mass knew how to fully participate
- There was a sense of rhythm and flow to the worship that most people seemed to move with
- There was competent participation from the congregation
- The presider and others assisting were attentive, orderly, etc.
- Hospitality
- Singing
- welcoming; warm
- relaxed
- sense of community

From the 11/18/01 session

The group explored "possible futures" One that drew a mostly positive response is below.

5. A more radical departure from our existing approach, but one we have the resources to pursue might look like this. We focus our internal life & programs, and our external advertising --

On aspects of Episcopal spirituality – beauty, open mindedness, embracing the world, etc.

On environmental, feminist and community oriented values; attention to relationships and friendships; seeking a simpler life style; openness to mystery and wonder.

We maintain the existing characteristics of - hospitality, singing, caring, does a lot for the community; informed, thoughtful, intelligent members, enthusiastic, friendly, informal, flexible, welcoming; warm; relaxed, sense of community, etc.

We get our own space (rent, buy, or build). We work at creating a climate in the space that fits the above characteristics, possibly including traditional church music, jazz & Taize; religious art in the space done by local artists (Eucharistic vestments, hangings, etc.) We offer significant programs and ministries for adults and children around those themes. We actively work at "marketing" the parish; who we are & what we offer.

Low		High		
1	2	3	4	5
/		/	/	//// //

Consultant Note: There are many implications in the above, for example, the relationship between shaping such a parish way of being & doing and membership growth; the need to spend some funds on beautify liturgy in the arts; the need for a broader range of music, and so on.