

Report of the 2018 St. Charles Borromeo Parish Survey

In April of 2018 St Charles undertook a survey sponsored by the Pastoral Council to determine how well our church community is doing in the main purpose of any Catholic church –

To grow in love for God

and

Live our lives for others.

The survey laid out all of the church programs and ministries in 4 main categories plus one titled “Administration.” A total of 56 people responded over the 3 weeks that the survey was open.¹

Overall there was broad support for church programs and ministries. For example, the highest support in each category included Sunday mass under **Worship** (89%), First Communion under **Faith Formation** and St. Vincent DePaul Ministry under **Service to the Broader Community** (each 79%), and the Parish BBQ under **Building Community in our Parish** (66%). Facilities Rentals under **Administration** had 48%, which is higher than could be expected for an administrative function. Under “other,” the spaghetti dinner received 73% support.²

I. Main Areas of Programs and Ministries

1 Worship

The items under this category are shown below, from highest to lowest support.

Those with 50% or more support: Sunday Mass (89), Music (75), Other Cultural Celebrations (64), Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration (63), Saturday Mass (57), Word proclaimed in different languages (57), Lent Evening Prayer (54).

Those with 40-50% support: Non-priest homilies (48), Feast of San Lorenzo Celebration (45), and Altar Society (43).

¹ Although there is no way to tell for certain, the response rate is roughly between 18% (assuming 1 response per household) and 12% (assuming 1 response per household for half the households and 2 per household for the other half).

² The electronic version of the survey allowed respondents to check items under each area where as the paper version of the survey allowed respondents to check individual items or the whole area, or both individual items and the area. For comparison purposes checks of the whole area were dropped. If instead the general checks were added to each specific item, all of these percentages would all be significantly higher.

2 Faith Formation and Education

The items under this category are shown below, from highest to lowest support. All items in this category received more than 50% support.

First Communion Preparation (79), Children's Faith Formation (77), Confirmation (71), G.I.F.T (71), Baptism Preparation (70), Adult Faith Formation with Fr. Schwab (66), God Squad (61), and Summer Backyard Retreat (59).

3 Building Community in our Parish

The items under this category are shown below, from highest to lowest support. All items in this category received more than 50% support.

Parish BBQ (66), Sunday Hospitality (64), Multi-cultural Committee (64), Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast (55), and Youth Group (54).

4 Service to the broader community

The items under this category are shown below, from highest to lowest support.

Those with 50% or more support: St. Vincent DePaul Ministry (79), Housing Justice Committee (59), and Immigrant Justice Committee (59).

Only one item was under 50%: MACG - Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (47).

II. Comments

On the whole, respondents offered over one hundred comments. However when split between the many topics, the number of comments on any given topic is very small. In a case like this the comments can be seen not as a vote on any trend but as authentic feedback from individuals. If there were interest in testing the opinion of the parish as a whole on any of these topics they would have to be reoffered to all for full parish feedback.

Respondents addressed two questions and also offered additional comments.

1. What one thing would you like to see in our parish in the next 6 months? This could be a change or something new.

The thirty-two comments that addressed this question were split almost evenly between 3 main categories: general, mass, and ministries/programs.

The general comments expressed a desire for more growth, more involvement of parishioners, more diversity, and continued movement toward full inclusion of ethnic minorities.

Of the comments on mass, three addressed the need to better welcome visitors. Two comments expressed a desire for a “more reverent atmosphere before mass,” and less socializing during the peace exchange. Two comments expressed a desire for a reading in a different language (and native garb) every Sunday, and one suggested adding a mass in Spanish at least once a month. One requested more variety in music.

Of the comments on ministries, four addressed social justice -- suggesting a revitalized social justice committee, more consistent information on what was happening and opportunities to get involved, more information on MACG, and a new monthly soup kitchen. Three suggested more counseling and more homework days for teens. New ministries were recommended for 30-40s, families with young children, and people with disabilities and other populations. One comment suggested a new and vibrant catechumenate program and another mentioned anticipating GIFT sessions on calling. One comment suggested Bingo and a Christmas bazaar or yard sale coordinated with Concordia yard sale schedule.

In summary the 6-month list could look like this:

1. Grow the parish, increasing diversity and inclusion.
2. Get parishioners more involved.
3. Improve the way we welcome visitors.
4. Include a reading in a different language (and native garb) every Sunday
5. Add a monthly mass in Spanish.
6. Expand the variety of music.
7. Revitalize the social justice committee
8. Provide more consistent information on what is happening and opportunities to get involved, more information on MACG.
9. Start a monthly soup kitchen
10. Increase counseling and add more homework days for teens
11. Create ministries for 30-40s, families with young children, and people with disabilities and other populations.
12. Add Bingo and a Christmas bazaar or yard sale coordinated with Concordia yard sale schedule.

2. Which of the areas above would you like to see improved, changed or discontinued?

32 comments addressed this question.

Improved: More than half of these comments were suggestions for improvements. The majority of comments spoke to better care of our visitors. Several comments spoke to greater participation in mass, and one suggested more interchange in Sunday Hospitality. Two comments addressed the youth group -- one suggested more involvement of the youth in the parish and one suggested that the youth serve the parish. Two addressed the Altar Society – one suggested a special donation for them and another suggested improved dress for altar servers. Two comments called for an improved sound system, with the addition of a video display system on the wall behind the altar. One comment

requested more information on St Charles groups. One comment suggested racial, gender, socio-economic, and age diversity on the Parish & Administrative Councils and the Multi Cultural Ministry. One suggested more celebration of MLK day every year.

New: Two comments suggested starting a soup kitchen. Other suggestions included a mass in Spanish once a month, a children's mass every weekend, new adult faith groups, parish retreats, gathering to make and distribute essential bags to the homeless, more work with other church communities, and adding a Tongan celebration in the Summer.

Changed: Two of the three comments for change addressed the spaghetti dinner -- one suggested improving the taste and another suggested changes to the shifts. The third comment suggested dedicating a youth minister position to youth and bilingual.

Discontinued: One of three comments to address discontinuing a program was related to the youth ministry, especially due to the large dollar investment and small number of participants. One suggested discontinuing non-priest homilies; this is addressed more in the next section. The third comment suggested discontinuing Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast & Seder Meal because Holy Week is too full.

Unclear: For four items mentioned it was unclear which of the above categories they were intended to address: Altar society Spring Luncheon, Christmas decorating, Soup Supper, and preparation for first communion.

3. Additional comments.

Respondents had an opportunity to offer additional comments that did not directly address the two previous questions. Nine of these comments offered thanks and general support. One in particular wrote, "I love this church.... They treat you like family here. Don't change anything."

Six comments addressed non-priest homilies, 4 suggested that homilies be given only by the priest, one supported homilies by Leif and Sr. Phyllis, and one offered support for both priest and non-priest homilies.

Six comments addressed music. Three comments suggested the need to improve Saturday night music. While one comment suggested less new music in favor of familiar songs, another suggested more variety. One comment suggested more organ music.

Six comments addressed multicultural topics. Two offered general support and two offered support of the various cultural celebrations. One spoke to continued movement toward full inclusion of our ethnic minorities and another suggested more cross cultural conversations and activities. On the topic of readings in different languages, one comment was in favor while another was opposed.

Four comments spoke to the GIFT program, all in support as a "wonderful gathering of young and old of many cultures...well planned and carried out" and a way to build

community in our parish. One comment suggested that it would be improved through more involvement and one requested more sessions on calling.

Three comments spoke to facilities. One emphasized the need to find tenants that reflect our mission statement, another suggested letting people in our parish rent our gym for special occasions, and the third suggested painting and cleaning up the school, kitchen, gym, and church. A related comment suggested more regular workdays in our garden & front church area. “It's sad to see weeds growing ... regularly. I would help on those days.”

Two comments addressed the parish priest. One stated that we need to keep our priest in the future and both suggested that in the future we need a bilingual priest.

Finally, two comments addressed getting feedback. One was thankful for the assessment and suggested doing it more often, with the possible addition of group discussions. The second requested no more surveys for at least 6 months.

III. Conclusion

The 2018 assessment suggests that St. Charles is a vibrant and well-supported parish; many find a home here. For the most part, the programs and ministries are on the right track and there is general interest in continuing to grow.