

St. Stephen's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Indianola, Mississippi



ST. JOHN'S
ALL ARE WELCOME

Leland, Mississippi

Combined Parish Profiles
2020

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Our Greater Community

Before we discuss our city of Indianola, we would like to describe one of the characteristics that makes this area and thus Indianola, unique. Indianola is in almost the exact center of the east part of a geological area called The Delta which lies east of the Mississippi River. On the west side, the west part encompasses parts of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri. This is a misnomer, because it is not a delta of the Mississippi River, but an inland flood plain of the Mississippi River and some of its tributaries. In Mississippi this 'delta' encompasses an area about 200 miles north to south and at its widest about sixty-five miles wide. The Mississippi Delta contains about six million acres and is home to about 300,000 people.

The entire area appears almost flat to the human eye. From its north to its south end [roughly 200 miles], the slope to the south is about 1/2 foot per mile. About 3.5 million acres of this area is cultivated land, cultivated because the rich alluvial soils were built up from thousands of years of overflow from the Mississippi River, continuing until levees to stop the flooding were completed during the last decades of the 19th century. It also is blessed to have an underground aquifer from which irrigation water is available.

Because of these good fortunes, the Delta on both sides of the Mississippi combined, is one of the greatest areas of agricultural production in the world. It is one of five large areas in the United States, and about 25 large areas in the world, that the human race depends on for its food and fiber. Thus the industry of the Delta is overwhelmingly agricultural production and the infrastructure necessary to support this production. There are roughly 50,000 jobs in farming and allied businesses in the Delta, and of these only about 7,500 are on the farm, and 42,500 are in the infrastructure sup-

porting agriculture. One thing is certain, there will always be talented and hard working people farming this land, because a good living can be made due to its productivity.

Many people as they ride down our highways don't realize the value of the land's productivity:

they just notice pretty crops without realizing their significance. When Alan Greenspan was Chairman of the Federal Reserve, he often stated that the greatest example of productivity increases in American was American agriculture. Yet this has a downside too. What most people see when they ride through the area are some towns emptying and a few maintaining their own or prospering. That's a result of these productivity increases. The economist Joseph Schumpeter coined the phrase 'creative destruction,' to describe the process by which technology driven productivity increases changed the economic landscape. This is certainly true of American and the Delta's agricultural industry.

Up until about 70 years ago the population of the Delta exceeded 500,000 people. That explains why some towns have practically disappeared why others have not. Fortunately, Indianola is one that is prevailing.

However, one result of the topographical similarity of this large area, and the fact that production agriculture is the driving economic engine, is that in many ways the central delta, in which Indianola is the geographical center, is like one dispersed community. About 2/3 of the Delta's population lives within 25 miles or so of highway 82, the main east-west artery through the Delta. Indianola is the county seat of Sunflower County, right in the middle. About 125,000 people live within 35 miles or so of Indianola. The largest city within this area has a population of 31,900 people, and so you can see that



the population truly is dispersed. The effect is that friendships and thus social life are formed across the area. Within this radius are two state universities, a state junior college, and one of the largest agricultural experiment stations in the world, with 200 PhD's and administrative staff and 400 research and support staff. It is like a third university, only one without students.

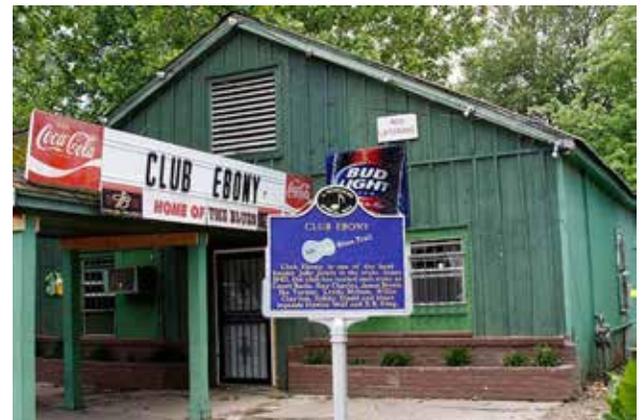


Sunflower County Courthouse



Grammy Museum

Within this radius also are two first class museums and numerous small ones. The Grammy Museum is the first satellite of the Grammy Museum established outside of Los Angeles. It was built in the Delta of Mississippi because on a per capita basis more Grammy awards have been won by Mississippians than any other state, and within Mississippi, these recipients are disproportionately from the Delta. In Indianola, the BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center tells the story of the life of BB King, whose hometown was Indianola, from boyhood and early career in the segregated south, the civil rights struggles, and of course his prominence as one of the most talented, if not the most talented, blues guitarist and performers of all time.



We could go on telling the story of our home. The point is that 'our homes' are Indianola and Leland, of course, but also encompasses all that this area offers within essentially a 35 minute drive. That is good restaurants, good entertainment, stimulating cultural education, and most importantly, good,



Lost Pizza Company

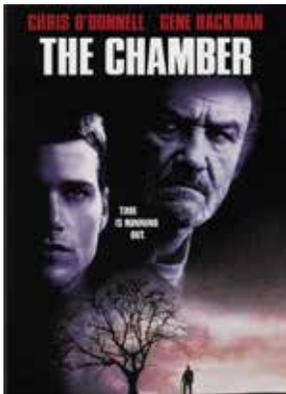
The City of Indianola

friendly people.

Welcome to the City of Indianola, a city with a population of approximately 9,250 people, located at the crossroads of the Mississippi Delta. Indianola was incorporated in 1886 and now serves as the County Seat of Sunflower County. In Indianola, you will find friendly people that have been willing to help the area and their fellow citizens for years.

In addition to the friendly hospitality, you will also find historic Delta Blues sites such as Club Ebony and Blues trail markers for BB and Albert King on historic Church Street and the new state-of-the-art BB King museum.

Indianola has several elements that make it a special place to be. The blues, history, food, and, most importantly, the people of the community who have worked together for many years, make this an attractive place to live.



Downtown Indianola is home to charming shops, art galleries, and restaurants. In the early 1900s, Front Street was home to the pharmacy of the first African American pharmacist in Mississippi. Hollywood invaded Indianola in 1995 to film scenes of "The Chamber," a movie based on John Grisham's novel

of the same name. The opening scene features the Planters Bank clock tower, which was built in 1905, while the Sunflower County Courthouse is featured prominently in the movie.

Agriculture and its supporting infrastructure continue to be the leading industry in Indianola. Crops such as cotton, corn, rice, and soybeans continue to thrive in the fertile delta soils common throughout this region. Catfish farming and processing also serve to boost the area economy. Delta Western, Farmers Grain Terminal, Consolidated Fish, Sta-

plcotn Warehouses, Irrigation Equipment, and Wade Inc. serve as examples of Agriculture based industries. Major distribution centers such as Dollar General and Supervalu Lewis Grocery division are located in the city due to the great location and access to major highways. Indianola is located halfway between Memphis and Jackson making it an easy day drive to many places in Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

Some of the most respected businesses in the state are located in Indianola. Gresham Petroleum, founded in 1920, is an Indianola business that has flourished over the years. Today Gresham is a significant supplier of propane, gas, and diesel fuels to residential and commercial customers throughout the Mississippi Delta and southeast Arkansas.

Double Quick, Inc. is a very successful convenience store brand with headquarters in Indianola, MS. Double Quick was founded in 1983 with the opening of its first Mississippi stores in Greenville, Indianola, and Rulville. In 1984 Double Quick acquired sixteen former "Mr. Quick" stores. It overnight became a factor in the Mississippi Delta convenience store market. Over a period of the last thirty (30) years, Double Quick has continued to grow and today operates 60 stores, 39 restaurants, and deli operations. It has grown to over 1,000 employees. Refuel, a South Carolina based Company, recently acquired Double Quick. With this acquisition, Refuel operates over 100 stores in South Carolina, Arkansas, and Missis-



issippi. Refuel plans to keep the name Double Quick and continue business operations in the area.



Planters Bank headquarters are located in Indianola and known throughout the region as one of the most well-respected sub-regional banks in the South. Planters Bank was established in 1920 and has experienced

a significant growth spurt over the last 25 years. They have expanded their footprint to the entire Mississippi Delta and other key markets in north Mississippi. As a result of this expansion and good business practice, Planters Bank has seen assets soar to over 1 billion. They continue to be a vital source of financing for area consumers and local businesses.

South Sunflower Hospital and the Indianola Family Medical Group and walk-in clinics provide



health services.

In July 2017, South Sunflower Hospital completed the most aggressive renovation project in its history. The project increased service lines to include a Swing Bed Unit, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Podiatry, Behavioral Health, Pain Management, ENT services, and a wound care center. The enhanced service lines include Lab, radiology, surgical suites, and a telemetry unit. Today South Sunflower Hospital is the 4th largest employer in the city. An excellent team of seven doctors and six nurse practitioners currently



lead Indianola Family Medical, which has served the community's needs for years.

Indianola is home to some specialty businesses that have excelled in their respective fields. Two Gourmet food companies, Indianola Pecan House and The Crown Restaurant, call Indianola home. Their Mississippi Made products, which vary from



smoked catfish pate, gourmet flavored pecans, and cheese straws, are distributed nationwide. Indianola is also blessed to have talented culinary experts.

Trish Berry of Blue Biscuit and Chris Grant of Nola are some of the most talented chefs in the state! Each uses their creative ability to keep their food offerings fresh and delicious.



Lost Pizza and Peasoups Lott-A-Freeze are two of Indianola originals that draw patrons from all over the Delta.

Another key to Indianola's economic stability is tourism, especially cultural tourism. Indianola has a rich history and has many great sights to see and

places to visit. One of the main attractions is the BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center, which is currently undergoing a \$2.5 million expansion.

The great BB King, winner of over 20 Grammy Awards during a 65-year career, grew up in Indianola Mississippi and called the small delta town, home. The museum is a tribute to its native son. Exhibits feature his love of music and how that love and talent helped him persevere through the Jim Crow era in the South. It features art, music, videos, educational programs, and other artifacts that honor one of the world's most influential musicians. At the same time, it celebrates the Delta Blues music heritage and local culture and dealing honestly with its history.

The mission of the BB King Museum is to empower, unite, and heal through music, art, and education and share with the world the rich cultural heritage of the Mississippi Delta.

The Enterprise Tocsin is Indianola's weekly newspaper.



The community is home to approximately 30 churches representing over 13 denominations.

Located in the heart of the city, you will find The Henry Seymour Library, which boasts over 57,000 volumes and circulates some 81,000 items per year.

Numerous lakes and the Miss River are located with a half-hour drive for fishing and boating activities. Indianola and the surrounding areas have abundant wildlife and have long been known as the desired hunting destination.



A wide variety of activities are available for the youth of Indianola. Some of these include lighted tennis courts, strong Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts programs, and excellent facilities for swimming tennis and golf at the local country club. We are also very fortunate to have a unique sports complex known as Chism Park.



The state of the complex provides an attractive and safe environment for spring and summer baseball, softball and soccer for the young boys and girls of Indianola.

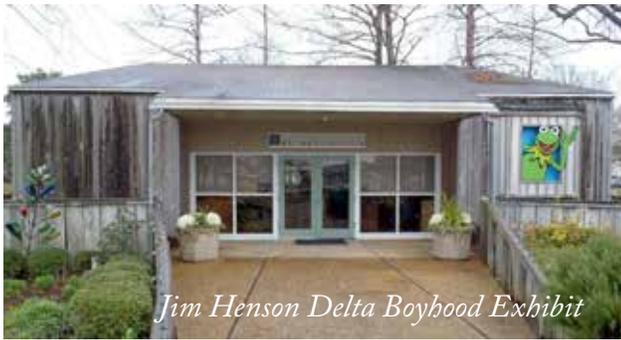
A local favorite offering live theater since 1978, the MDAA continues to entertain residents in the recently renovated Brindley Theater. Exceptional Local talent is showcased throughout the year, adding a touch of Broadway to the Delta!



The Indianola Chamber of Commerce/Main Street is a driving force in the community. They were recently spearheading the Indianola Harmony Guitar Project. The project's mission is to promote community pride and spirit; to instill within the citizens of the Delta, a deep love, thirst, and appreciation for art; to provide a sense of beauty and joy to our community. It is also a reminder as to what makes Indianola a unique community. The project represents the best of what happens when energetic and committed sponsors, team up with talented

The Town of Leland

Leland is a town of approximately 4,000 people located on the banks of Deer Creek, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. With its proximity to Stonyville, the home of one of the world's largest agricultural research stations, Leland may be able to claim more advanced degrees per capita than any other non-college/university town in the state and nation.



Leland is most noted for being the boyhood home of Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets. Along Highway 82 as you enter Leland you will find the Jim Henson Delta Boyhood Exhibit, made possible through a gift from the Henson Family. The Museum houses many artifacts and memorabilia from Henson's early creative years, and is a must-see for any Kermit enthusiast.



Historic Highway 61, the famous "Blues Highway" runs right through the center of Town, and along this route you will find the Highway 61 Blues Museum, a true gem for any blues-lover. In fact, the Museum is on the must-see list for many visitors around the world who tour the Mississippi Delta year-round. Leland was home to musician James "Son" Thomas for many years, and was the child-

hood home of musician Johnny Winter. Winter's grandfather and father, a former mayor of Leland, operated J.D. Winter & Sons, a cotton business. One of the Blues Trail markers in Leland is dedicated to Winter.



In early 2014, the Mississippi Legislature designated Leland as the official site for the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Museum. Housed in an old hardware store brimming with character in downtown Leland, the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Museum opened in 2016. It is a fascinating look at not only the fish and animals native to this area, but the tools used to harvest them.

The Mississippi Outdoor Hall of Fame features 17 members including former slave and bear hunter Holt Collier and Mississippi outdoor video and television personalities Will Primos, Toxey Hass, and Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland.



Each year, Leland hosts the renowned Christmas on Deer Creek celebration. All December long, the two-mile stretch of Deer Creek that runs through town features lighted holiday displays, which are lit every year on the first Friday in December.

Like most Delta communities, agriculture remains the backbone of the community and the land along Deer Creek is considered some of the finest in the world for the cultivation of row crops.

artists, and produce something memorable and valuable for residents and visitors alike.

Population Demographics

Indianola's population demographics are about 78% African American, 20% people who identify themselves as white, and about 2% Asians [far eastern and southern Asians] and Hispanics.

Being a small city is helpful in that so many people know each other personally across racial lines, primarily through working together, although purely social interaction is limited. In the opinion of this Search Committee, improvement continues, because the political, business, and religious leadership, bring progress. One small example: each Thanksgiving there is a city wide Thanksgiving service, alternating yearly between primarily African American and primarily white churches.

Education in Indianola Public Education

Lockard Elementary School for grades K, 1st and 2nd grade
414 students, teacher/student ratio of 17:1 with a minority enrollment of 96%
48% female - 52 % male

Carver Elementary School for grades 3 through 6
615 students, teacher/student ratio of 15:1 with a minority enrollment of 97%
47 % female – 53 % male

Merritt Middle School for grades 7 through 9
433 students, teacher/student ratio of 15:1 with a minority enrollment of 98%
48 % female - 52 % male

Gentry High School for grades 10 through 12
499 students, teacher/student ratio 12:1 with 93 % of the teachers having
over 3-years experience with a minority enrollment 98 %
53 % female 47 % male

All local public schools have experienced modest improvement in test scores.





Education in Indianola Private Education

Indianola Academy for grades PreK through 12th

400 students, teacher/student ration 10:1 with minority enrollment of 12%

Restoration Academy for grades PreK through 12th

100 students, teacher/student ratio 10:1 with minority enrollment of 94%

Higher Education

Miss Delta Community College in Moorehead, Mississippi

The school utilizes a semester-based academic year. The highest degree offered at Mississippi Delta Community College is an Associate Degree. The school has an open admissions policy.

Full-time students 1801 / Part-time students 519

Male 38% / Female 62%

Total: 2,320

Student teacher ratio 18:1

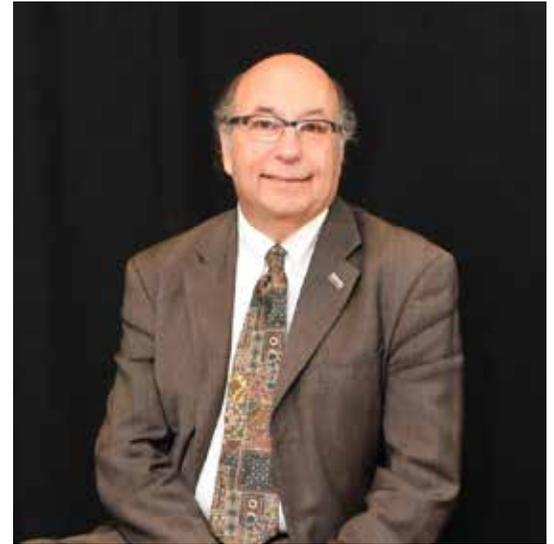
African American 65%, White 30%,
Hispanic 3%, Asian 2%



A Welcome Message from Steve Rosenthal

As the Mayor of the City of Indianola, it is my honor to welcome you to our city's website. Our website is designed to provide our residents, visitors, business owners and potential business owners with the information they need to fully appreciate all that Indianola has to offer.

The town of Indianola is a thriving community of 10,683 full-time residents, and is located in the Mississippi Delta. We are the "Crown of the Delta". Our quality of life is unmatched because of our small-town atmosphere and family-friendly environment. The hometown atmosphere abounds not only in the city limits but in the surrounding area as well. We have a prosperous business environment, a great school system and have numerous active churches of many denominations.



Our website is an excellent resource to residents and visitors alike. Whether you're here for business, vacation, or have lived here for years, we welcome you and hope you find your stay in Indianola a pleasant one. We encourage you to use the tools and resources on this site to assist you during your stay.

I encourage you to visit the City's website often or drop by City Hall for the latest information on our community programs, projects, and services. Feel free to contact me as I am always available to visit with residents and welcome their thoughts on improving our city.

I look forward to meeting you as we work together toward an exciting future in our great City. It is a true honor and privilege to represent the residents of Indianola, and I am thankful for this opportunity to serve as Mayor.

<https://www.indianolams.gov/>

Board of Aldermen

The governing body of the city consists of the Mayor and a five-member Board of Aldermen. Five members of the Board are elected from separate wards. The Mayor and members of the Board of Aldermen are elected for concurrent four-year terms. The Mayor is not a voting member except to break a tie. The Board of Aldermen meet on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM, in City Hall Annex.



Community Support

A cooperative spirit is very much alive and well in this community as evidenced by the following organizations that extend help to their fellow citizens in need.



Delta Missions

Under the direction of Rev. Herron Wilson, a native of Caile MS, and with the aid of the local community, Delta Missions began as a summer vacation bible school program for the local youth of Indianola . Since its inception Delta Mission has grown into a source of spiritual growth and development for many in our local community.



A Letter from Rev. Herron Wilson:

As director of Delta Missions Ministry, I am immensely grateful for St. Stephens Episcopal Church's on-going volunteer and financial support

of our ministry. As a Christian-based outreach ministry, Delta Missions has provided spiritual, mentoring, and recreational activities for seniors, adults, and



youth in Indianola and surrounding communities for the past 25 years. The adults and youth members of St. Stephens organize, provide materials and lead Vacation Bible School arts and crafts sessions reaching nearly 100 youth each year. At other times of the year, the church volunteers to

support our Easter celebration, and adopts many of our youth during the Christmas season. In addition to providing volunteer and financial support, a member of the church currently serves on the ministry's board of directors helping to guide Delta Missions in its various community outreaches. Several members of St. Stephens have previously served on the board. Delta Missions could not effectively impact lives without the generous and tangible support of St. Stephens Episcopal Church.

St. Stephens former priest, Giulianna Cappelletti Gray and I co-founded Mission Mississippi Sunflower County three years ago. The organization fosters racial reconciliation by hosting monthly fellowship gatherings of Christians from diverse backgrounds. During these gathering's participants pray together, hear a brief inspirational bible talk, share a meal and discuss ways to impact the community for Christ. St. Stephens' priest and members have done much to help lead the way.

They have made their church's facility available for fellowship gatherings, graciously provided lunch for the group during the course of the year, and provided administrative support for the organization. Mission Mississippi Sunflower County is bridging the racial divide in our area, and much of its progress is due in large part to St. Stephens' leadership and volunteer support.

Submitted by,
Rev. Herron Wilson, Director
Delta Missions Ministry



Delta Grace is a year-round mission hub that provides mission opportunities, beds, showers, kitchen facilities and a meeting room for mission teams willing to do home repair. Mission teams work on homes of many who have lost hope and do not know what tomorrow brings. As participants in Delta Grace, volunteers become that hope as they spend time with those in need and walk with them on their journey to experience God's grace.

The mission of Delta Grace is to bring healing and wholeness to a hurting community, by reaching out in the love of Jesus Christ and bringing together those that are willing to serve with those that are in need. Our goal is to provide safe, sanitary, and secure housing for the elderly, disabled, and others who do not have the means to provide adequate living conditions living within the Mississippi Delta. Our prayer is that volunteers will transform the lives of those they serve and, in turn, have their own lives transformed.

Headquartered just 6 miles North of Indianola in Sunflower MS – Delta Grace embodies the generous community spirit that is alive and well in the local area.

Quote from Veronica Pritchard, Executive Director of Delta Grace "St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Indianola, MS has been an important partner in our ministry by offering leadership on our board of directors, guidance in helping those in need during the recent flooding, financial support for our intern program and continued prayers as we seek to serve with the grace of God."

In the 1990's a gentleman from Harlem named Geoffrey Canada decided that the way to improve education and health results, and thus improve economic life in his community, was an intense program to monitor each child in the zone from birth (and in some cases before birth) through college. The goal was to move toward 100% college graduation.

The zone was defined as a zip code within Harlem. The funding came from grants augmented by large private donations. The program has been so successful that the Obama administration and Congress authorized funding for approximately 20 local communities to try to duplicate the results. Applications were competitive. A delta wide organization called Delta Health Alliance applied, seeking Indianola to be one of the 20 chosen nationwide. Indianola was selected, one of only two rural areas chosen. Initial government funding for the first 5 years was \$5 million a year.

It then decreased to \$2 million for the next three years, and then to \$1 million. The US Dept of Education graded Indianola's children's zone the best in the US in 2019. It focuses on early education only, due to lack of funding. It is making a difference. Four St Stephen's parishioners are on the Board of the Indianola Promise Community, one serving as co chairman. One parishioner is on the Board of the Delta Health Alliance.



St. John's Community Engagement

St. John's is proud of the outreach and community engagement we have as a church family in Leland and Washington County. Our mission is outwardly engaged in several different projects for and with the community.

Social Services

First, St. John's has a long history as the home of AA, NA, and mental health programs in the community. They have a key to the church and use it at least twice a week for meetings. Many members of our mission are active in those communities and are seen as crucial local, regional, and statewide leaders.

Fundraising

For almost a decade until this year, St. John's hosted a half-marathon that raised an average of **\$15,000 per year** for the "Hotter than Hades" race. This race attracts runners from all over the country who test their skills in the Delta's summer. The proceeds were all directed to Camp Bratton-Green, and we have enjoyed a long relationship with that vital touchstone of our diocese.



Children's Formation

We have many young children. In addition to weekly Sunday school, we host several special events



with churches in the Leland area, such as Halloween, Easter, and other special occasions.

Community Events



We hold an annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and host annual Lenten luncheons with other churches in the community. Also, we participate in hosting the Annual Thanksgiving Community worship service, and members participate in the Community Cantata.

Christmas Giving

St. John's sponsors special children and families during the Christmas season.

Taking Worship Outdoors

In addition to these programs, our church holds many special services in unique locations around the year, including annual services geared toward planting and harvesting crops to recognize our Delta roots.



St. Stephen's History

Members of the Episcopal Church have held regular worship services in Sunflower County since 1877 when St. Paul's Episcopal Church was founded in Johnsonville and later moved to Baird, Mississippi.

Property to build St. Stephen's Episcopal Mission, Indianola, Mississippi, was given by Joseph Holmes Baker, and the deed was recorded on June 30, 1904. The congregation was admitted to the Diocese of Mississippi on November 29, 1904. The first service held in the newly erected St. Stephen's Church was on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1909. Prior to that time, services were held at the First United Methodist Church.

Visiting priests conducted these services. John deDonahoo became the first resident priest in 1912, and St. Stephen's became a parish in 1921.

Pews, a lectern, and a baptismal font now being used by St. Stephen's were gifts from a small Episcopal church in Baird that was no longer having services.



In 1916 the present Pilcher pipe organ, the first pipe organ in Sunflower County, was given to St. Stephen's in memory of Virginia Brown Baker. This organ was completely renovated in 1993 after seventy-five years of excellent service. This renovation was dedicated to the memory of

Virginia Early Van Cleve, long-time communicant.

The church building was remodeled in 1951-52, and at this time three memorial windows were in-

stalled over the altar. The building housed a sacristy, vesting room, and restroom.

During the next few years, more memorial windows were installed in the nave and the vestibule of the church. Further renovations to the church in 1980 included vaulting the ceiling and expanding for thirty more seats. This gave the church square footage of 2,300 and a seating capacity of approximately 130. The altar was made a free-standing structure. Also at this time the sacristy was moved, new carpet was added, and additional memorial windows were installed.

Parishioners made needle-point cushions for the altar railing after the renovations.

In 1983 the bell was taken from the church belfry and placed in an attractive structure on the church grounds. The bell is rung before most Sunday services and on special occasions.



Around 2012 cathedral doors were installed between the narthex and the sanctuary, making it possible to enjoy the stained glass window above the front doors of the church.

The Parish House was built in 1955 and renovated in 1986 with the addition of a large kitchen. It has a

large reception room, two restrooms, and two large storage rooms. This building is used for most parish events and meetings, study groups, Sunday School, birthday parties and other church and community events.



The Early Building, consecrated on November 7, 1986, houses the priest's office, secretary's office, vestry room, library, parlor, nursery, five Sunday School rooms and three restrooms. There are approximately 3,000 square feet in this structure. The Early Building was named after life-long St. Stephen's communicant William Richards Early. Eight stained glass windows adorn this structure. In 2018 the library was redesigned as a counseling room with children's artwork along the walls.

In 2019 members of St. Stephen's made the decision to renovate the entry of the church to make it more accessible. Plans for this project were designed by Harry Harris, an architect from Richmond, Virginia who specializes in renovations of old church buildings. During this renovation the entry was widened, new light fixtures were installed, new metal railings were added, brick on the steps and walkway were redone, new landscaping was done at

the church and other buildings, and the old tin cross above the front door was replaced, along with other construction on the entry. Workers discovered that the birds had made it their home for many years!

St. Stephen's has a long and revered history in the community. That fact was reestablished on November 7, 2004, at the church's 100th anniversary celebration (1904-2004). The parish celebrated with a dinner at the local country club.

A highlight of the evening was the viewing of a long-awaited DVD that had been made by a local parishioner using pictures and videos from many previous years. A brunch was held at the church on Sunday morning after the 11 AM service. Families, friends, and former rectors of St. Stephen's thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. To remember the event, parishioners and visitors were given magnets with a miniature pen and ink drawing of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church designed by a former rector, the late Murray Lancaster. Church members also sold t-shirts, note cards, DVDs, and prints of St. Stephen's by young artist and St. Stephen's communicant Laurie Fisher.



St. John's History

St. John's was established in 1953 as an Episcopal Mission in Leland. A combination of lifelong Episcopalians and other citizens in the Leland area, including those who worked at Stoneville and the Greenville Air Force Base, wanted to band together to create an Episcopal presence in Leland. Previously, parishioners traveled to Greenville, Indianola, or other Delta towns to participate in Episcopal services.

The group met in the Temple Theater in Leland and decided to begin building a church. Bishop Duncan Gray met with the group and advised them that they were welcome to seed a church as long as they could go to the bank and guarantee it.

During construction, the group began meeting in the Masonic Temple. Our first priest, upon completion of the sanctuary in 1954, Jack Ryans, performed both 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. He has the distinction of being the only priest that St. John's did not share with another mission or parish.

After Jack left in 1957, the new mission was without a full-time priest for several years. Thanks to the chaplain at the Greenville Air Force Base and the priest at St. Stephen's in Indianola, Frank Bullock, St. John's continued to be a viable congregation.

The parish hall, which was constructed in 1965, cost \$17,000 and was unnamed until 2007, when the parish hall was named Monica Hall. The name was to honor the Women of the Church at St. John's, who, like Saint Monica, has nurtured and sustained our mission throughout the history of the church. Along with the Women of St. Paul's, the Women of the

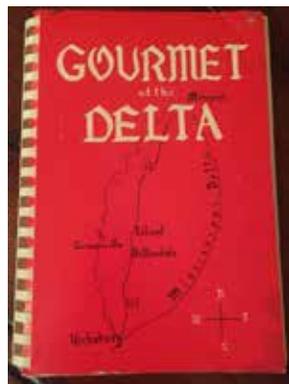
Church published a cookbook called The Gourmet of the Delta. It has been a tremendous best seller over the years and has allowed our church to do extra things we could not otherwise do.



For the next 60 years, St. John's continued to grow and thrive despite not having our own full-time priest. We have partnered at various times with other smaller missions such as St. Paul's in Hollandale, Redeemer in Greenville, and larger parishes such as St. Stephen's in Indianola and St. James in Greenville, under several different paradigms that have allowed for constant worship.

The lack of continuity has given our church a unique characteristic and the ability to come together and minister ourselves when necessary. In some respects, this has allowed our congregation to be closer. Furthermore, St. John's has adopted a more relaxed view of the formal church (sometimes to the chagrin of the Diocese), in line with our versatility.

St. John's remains a viable congregation, enjoying a robust attendance and a great blessing of 16 children under 16. That is why our new yoking with St. Stephen's is so timely. Each congregation brings different traditions and strengths to the table. St. John's and St. Stephen's are only separated by 14 miles of four-lane concrete on U.S. 82.



St. Stephen's Parish

St. Stephen's is a loving, active Christian congregation. Our Mission Statement: Our Mission is to be a growing Christian family united by the Holy Spirit as we love God and love our neighbors. We find it hard to be growing in numbers. Still, we can be and are growing in faith, in being united by the Holy Spirit, and in striving to meet the commandment to love God and love our neighbors. In our description herein of the parish and congregation, we try to reach a balance between enumerating dry numbers and trying to describe the feeling of being a congregant. However, we realize that both are necessary to reveal the nature of this congregation. We'll move back and forth between the two.



Parish Life

Our church directory, which is the list of those we consider our church family, contains 80 people, of which 69 or so are formal members of our parish. These are the names that are on our weekly mailing list. It includes those who attend very faithfully as well as those who attend very irregularly. These also are the people who we approached during our every member canvas. Most all respond. Additionally, many participate in the United Thank Offering [UTO] discipline of Thanksgiving.

Of course, we center parish life around Sunday worship. We know that communal worship is a vital component of living a Christian life. Over the last few years, we have had one Sunday morning service, starting at 11:00 during the fall, winter, and spring, preceded by Christian Formation [Sunday School] at 9:30. Between Christian Formation and the 11:00 service, we have a 30 minute or so social for all ages in the Parish Hall. We have not been having Sunday School during the summer months, and the main service begins at 10:00.

We are at the size, and our average communicant is at the age that the size of our Sunday School program for youth is small and varies year to year. However, we know that a good Sunday School experience is a Christian responsibility and a necessity. Average attendance at the Sunday worship service during the calendar year 2019 was 42. Holy Communion has almost always been our Sunday service

for the past six years. Please see the Parish Survey [attached] as to the parishioners' opinions as to our worship services. Other services are scheduled during Holy Week and on major feast days that do not fall on Sunday. We usually have our Christmas service on Christmas Eve, followed by a festive reception in the Parish Hall. One of the most enjoyable traits of our congregation is that we all know and like each other. We have no factions or alternate agendas of which the Search Committee members are aware.

The church employs a parish administrator, a bookkeeper, an organist, and a sextant. Our parish is financially very secure. We have no debt. As you can see from our budgets for 2017-2020 [copy attached], we are fortunate to have significant financial support for a parish of our size. We sold our rectory in 2016 when our most recent Rector arrived because she didn't need it. Those funds were escrowed in a restricted account in case we need them to purchase a replacement.

For a parish of our size, we have significant other funds in restricted or unrestricted escrowed accounts. Our annual contribution to the Diocese of Mississippi is 14%. In 2018 the Diocese asked each parish to pledge to support the Gray Center for four years. Our suggested amount over four years was about \$22,000. The Diocese permitted us to meet this request by donating \$20,000 in 2018, the first year of the campaign.

The best way to see the scope of our parish's activities, which we describe in some detail below, is to read over our Time and Talent Survey, attached.

You can also look at our website:
www.ststephensindianola.org.

Our Life in the Community

Several Indianola citizens have told us that for a church of our size, St Stephens parishioners accomplish a lot for the community and worthwhile causes. In doing this, there always is a sense of Christian and community duty. Still, these acts of giving time and talent reinforce themselves. The more you do it, it becomes more and more an expression of Christian love, and not of duty.

At St Stephen's, auditing and publishing our gifts of time and talent begins with the annual Time and Talent Survey. We ask everyone in the church directory to fill one out. This survey reminds us of our Christian duty to serve and makes us decide where we would like to serve the most. Because of this, it slots us each into areas to which we are attracted and makes our impact in those areas greater.

We usually have a congregational luncheon on a Sunday soon after the start of the school year as a start of the Christian formation year, and another in late May at the beginning of the summer. We have an annual blessing of the animals on a fall Sunday afternoon and a children's Christmas pageant with the Presbyterian Church.



Besides the regular governance of a Parish, the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry, we have an active Episcopal Church Women organization, Outreach

Committee, and In-Reach Committee, and an informally organized Episcopal Men's group.

Outreach

We budget funds for Outreach as part of the annual parish budget. Usually, some additional funds are contributed during the year. The Outreach Committee meets monthly to discuss areas, items, and people to support. The areas and organizations we support are not static from year to year. For example, last fall, the idea of having \$20 vouchers redeemable at a local grocery for food items for food challenged citizens was suggested. This program is just getting organized. Very recently, the head of our outreach committee met with representatives of other Indianola churches to expand the reach of this program. Hopefully, it will transition into part of the Mississippi Food Network.



Of course, Outreach encompasses time and talent as well as financial contributions. On the list, you will notice Rosewood Missions. Rosewood Missions is the formal name of a medical mission to Honduras. Annually, over more than 30 years, the Mission travels to rural towns in Honduras to supply medical and dental care and shoes and to evangelize. The volunteers come from the Indianola area. Several parishioners participate on the trip.

Additionally, parish members pack the shoes to be distributed. Already above, you have read of parishioners' support with time and talent for Delta Missions, Mission Mississippi, Delta Grace, and the Indianola Promise Community. Additionally, through our church, parish members 'adopt' for Christmas foster children in Indianola to purchase

and wrap Christmas presents for them. The Mississippi Department of Human Services supplies the gender, first names, ages, and sizes. We also began four years ago having a Meet Santa Claus party and supper at the Parish Hall. This party is for Indianola foster children and their birth brothers and sisters [usually also foster children living somewhere else] who can attend. Inclement weather caused cancellation last year. The committee discusses other ideas that come up during the year.



Inreach

The Inreach committee meets monthly to assure that our prayer list of parishioners, relatives and friends, and others of concern is up to date. They also visit with shut-ins, provide meals if necessary, and write cards and letters to those essentially shut-in. The committee members have the desire to care for those in need of caring contact and friendship. They participate in bingo at a local senior community. They have an evening of caroling our shut-ins shortly before Christmas.

ECW

The ECW probably is not as strong as in decades past, perhaps because Outreach and Inreach now encompass some of their previous activity. They do organize the altar guild. They meet four times a year for a scheduled program and speaker, spiritual development, or possibly a workday or a day trip.

Usually, during the holiday season, a joint program with the First Presbyterian Church is held. The ECW has its outreach budget collected from

voluntary contributions. About every five years, it organizes a rummage sale, the proceeds of which go to charity.



Episcopal Church Men

The Episcopal Church Men plan and carry out the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The Men mix pancakes from a special [perhaps secret] recipe, and usually, serve about 425 meals. Once or twice a year, the men have a men's steak supper at the Parish Hall.

Hopefully, this narrative gives you a good overview of our activities, but it is not a complete one.



Four-Year Budget

	2017 Budget	2018 Budget	2019 Budget	2020 Budget
Pledges by drafts and Checks	225,260.00	222,000.00	225,000.00	220,500.00
Plate	6,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Other Income	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Subtotal Receipts	231,510.00	227,250.00	230,250.00	225,750.00
Less Special Offerings	(250.00)	(250.00)	(250.00)	(250.00)
Less Rector's Fund	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)	(1,500.00)
Total Receipts	229,760.00	225,500.00	228,500.00	224,000.00
DISBURSEMENTS				
Rector's Compensation				
Medical Insurance	9,012.00	9,456.00	9,816.00	10,000.00
Stipend	60,600.00	67,000.00	69,010.00	70,390.00
Sabbatical Reserve	400.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Expense Allowance	900.00	900.00	900.00	900.00
Insurance Life	360.00	360.00	360.00	360.00
Travel	2,300.00	2,300.00	2,300.00	1,500.00
Pension Contribution	10,910.00	12,060.00	12,260.00	12,260.00
Civic/Country Club/Rotary	700.00	700.00	700.00	700.00
Continuing Education & Fresh Start	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Rector's Comp	86,182.00	94,776.00	97,346.00	98,110.00
Mission and Ministry				
Visting Priest	400.00	400.00	1,500.00	250.00
Christian Education Adult	2,000.00	1,000.00	1,500.00	1,000.00
Sunday School Children	1,500.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	500.00
Parish Life	3,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	1,500.00
Outreach	18,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00
Seminary	2,297.60	2,195.00	2,285.00	2,240.00
Evangelism	1,550.00	1,550.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Mission & Ministry	28,747.60	24,145.00	25,285.00	22,490.00
Operating Expenses				
Altar	1,500.00	1,500.00	2,000.00	1,500.00
Telephone	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
Utilities	8,000.00	7,500.00	7,100.00	7,100.00
Property Insurance W/C	4,700.00	4,700.00	5,500.00	5,500.00
Repairs & Maintenance	10,000.00	10,000.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
Grounds	3,500.00	3,600.00	4,500.00	4,500.00
Janitor	5,500.00	5,500.00	5,600.00	5,712.00
Nursery	2,600.00	2,600.00	2,700.00	2,700.00
Secretary & Bookkeeper	13,500.00	13,500.00	14,000.00	13,000.00
Office Supplies	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	5,000.00
Organ Maintenance	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Organist	9,500.00	9,500.00	8,500.00	8,500.00
Capital Improvements	5,000.00		-	
Council Exp.	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	1,500.00
Kitchen & Cleaning Supplies	600.00	500.00	700.00	700.00
Payroll Taxes	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	4,000.00
Rector's Fund				
Special Offerings				
Misc. Expense	3,264.00	1,109.00	279.00	328.00
Total Operating Expenses	82,664.00	75,009.00	73,879.00	72,040.00
Subtotal Disbursements				
	197,593.60	193,930.00	196,510.00	192,640.00
Pledge to Diocese	32,166.40	31,570.00	31,990.00	31,360.00
	-			
Total Disbursements	229,760.00	225,500.00	228,500.00	224,000.00



Time and Talent Survey for 2020

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
(Matthew 5:16)

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____ PHONE NUMBER(S) _____

Simply circle all opportunities that interest you and return by December 1st, 2020.

WORSHIP

Usher

Lector

Acolyte (both children and adults are welcomed)

Altar Guild (circle all below that interest you)

Flowers

Linens (wash and prepare linens used for weekly worship)

Altar set-up and take down

Clean / care for acolyte robes

Continue serving as a Worship Leader for 2020

Be trained to be a Worship Leader for 2020

Take communion to the sick and shut in for 2020 (Guidance will be provided)

LEADERSHIP

Serve on a future vestry committee

Serve as Junior Warden

Serve as Senior Warden

Serve as co-chair for annual Stewardship campaign

Serve as a delegate for the Annual Council of the Diocese of MS (February)

Episcopal Church Men

Men's Steak Supper organizer

Serve as Pancake Supper Chair or Co-Chair for 2020

Episcopal Church Women

Serve as an officer of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

Serve as Program Chair for the Episcopal Church Women

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR ADULTS

Lead a bible or book study for adults on Sunday morning

Host a study group or supper club on an evening or weekday

Assist with Confirmation Class for Older Youth and Adults

CURSILLO (Retreat Offered by the Diocese of Mississippi)

I have attended a Cursillo in the past

I would like to lead an Ultreya Group

I have not yet attended Cursillo but may be interested in the future

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN

Teach Sunday School on Sunday Mornings for:

PreK-Grade 3 Grades 4-9

Lead fellowship opportunities for youth of all ages

INREACH

Meet with others in a group to regularly pray for those on our prayer list

Assist with Indywood Bingo (we host one Tuesday morning per month)

Provide meals to the sick and shut-in (as needed)

Visit the sick and shut-in (as needed)

Send birthday and anniversary cards to parishioners monthly

OUTREACH

Engage in hands-on outreach with other parishioners (Circle below your interests)

- Adopt a Child for Christmas
- Foster Care Christmas Party
- Local rebuilding projects

Serve on a committee to plan future outreach and mission projects

Serve on a committee to distribute outreach funds

Serve to assist with the 2020 Rummage Sale

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

Answer telephones, help with bulletins, etc. when church office staff is on vacation

Distribute event cards and flyers in Indianola for special events

Distribute Forward Day by Day Devotional Books to Local Hospitals

Wash parish house and kitchen linens as needed

Take newspapers to local animal shelter

FELLOWSHIP & HOSPITALITY

Serve as Co - Chair of the Food and Fellowship Committee

Assist with (Please circle):

Annual Meeting Luncheon (likely to be held on Sunday, January 19, 2020)

Shrove Pancake Supper (February 25th, 2020)

Bishop's Visit Luncheon (March 1, 2020)

Lenten Lunches (Wednesdays at noon during Lent)

Easter Egg Hunt at St. Stephen's on Easter Morning (April 12, 2020)

Spring Picnic

Fall Fellowship Gathering (typically a picnic or evening meal)

Blessing of the Animals (October 4, 2020)

Advent Wreath Making (December 6, 2020)

Christmas Eve Wine & Cheese Reception (following 5pm Worship)

Epiphany Bonfire (Sunday, January 5, 2020)

What other gifts, abilities, or passions do you have that you would like for us to know about (artistic abilities, musical gifts, etc?)

Do you have other ideas about activities or ministries that St. Stephen's should do this year?

MY TIME

When you are most available:

Weekends

weekdays during the day

weekdays during the evenings

Are there certain months of the year when you tend to be out of town?

Is there anything else you would like for us to know about your availability?

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of how you will use your time and talents to serve!

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to Him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

- Ephesians 3: 20, 21

Skills and Talents Desired in a Rector

The majority of St. Stephen's and St. John's parishioners agree that pastoral care and preaching are the two top attributes sought after in a new priest. Following closely behind are counseling, administration, and worship. Parishioners would like their rector to be able to respond to the spiritual needs of the church, as well as inspire them to do God's work in the community. They also would like their rector to teach and lead discussions and study groups so that parishioners can continue to develop their spiritual lives.

Although most members in the congregation are middle-aged and above, parishioners realize the importance of the youth at St. Stephen's. Therefore, parishioners seek a priest who is able to work well with the youth and hopefully help attract more youth and young adults.

Members of the parish want a priest to plan and conduct worship services as a central event of the congregation. A priest who is a visible and vital part of the community and will visit the parishioners in their homes, especially the elderly and those in crisis, is very important to the congregation. Since Indianola is a small town, it is imperative to have a positive presence in this community.

Members of St. Stephen's enjoy worshiping in the Episcopal tradition, receiving Holy Communion, and hearing an inspiring sermon. They wish for a priest who is energetic and a good speaker with the ability to help members relate to the Gospel through formal and liturgical services and to train lay people to help with this endeavor.

The priest sought by St. Stephen's should have the ability to manage the affairs of the parish. He/she needs administrative skills in order to direct or manage staff, property, and records, as well as be able to help clarify the role of stewardship within the church.

Again, areas of most importance to the parishioners are: pastoral care, preaching, counseling, administration, and worship. These will lead to spiritual growth, community involvement, and Christian education. Being accessible, personable, having a positive attitude, and having the ability to relate to all age groups are also of utmost importance to the parishioners.



St. Stephen's Parish Survey 2020

"I have attended this parish for:"



"I have been a confirmed or received Episcopalian for:"



"I usually attend Sunday worship services at this parish:"



"I attend weekday activities at this parish:"



"I attend Christian Education classes"



"I have dependent children who regularly attend this parish's Christian Education:"



"I have children who regularly attend this parish's EYC:"



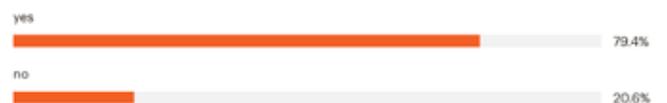
"I have children who regularly attend a youth group at another church:"



"I contributed financially to this parish last year:"



"I have made a financial pledge to this parish for the current year:"



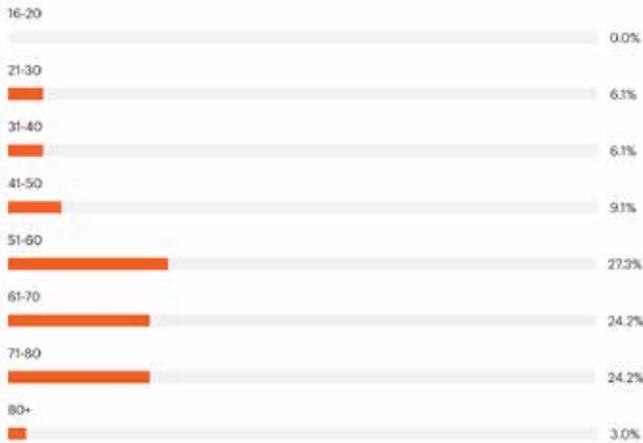
"The following best describe my level of education"



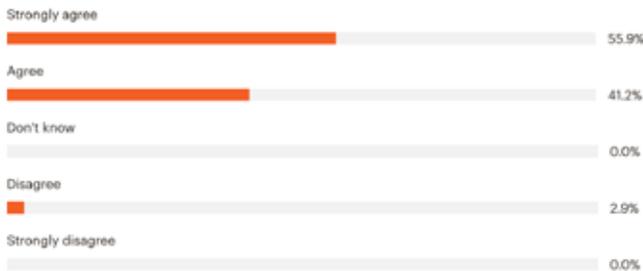
"My gender is:"



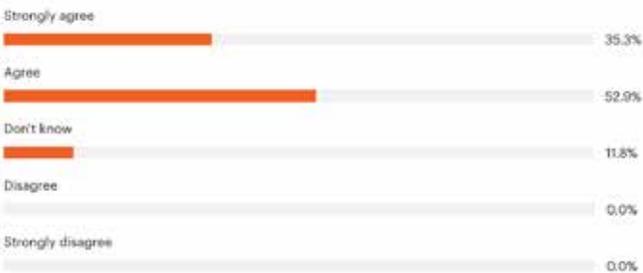
"My age is:"



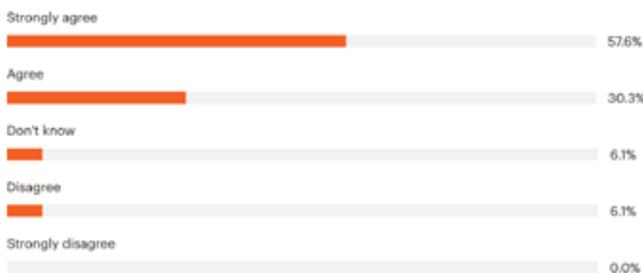
"Lay people minister effectively to our parishioners through such activities as taking communion to shut-ins, offering help in emergencies, or calling on the bereaved."



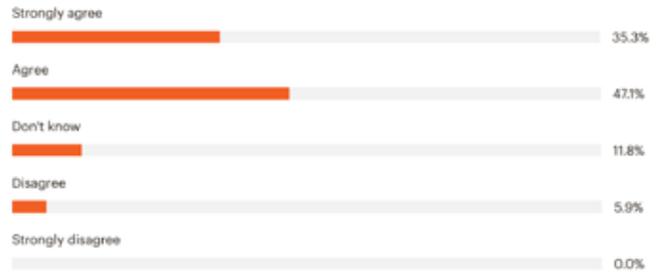
"This parish provides adequate training for lay ministry:"



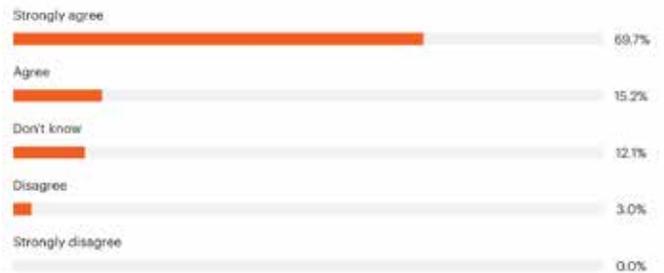
"The rector has responded to spiritual needs of parishioners unable to attend church."



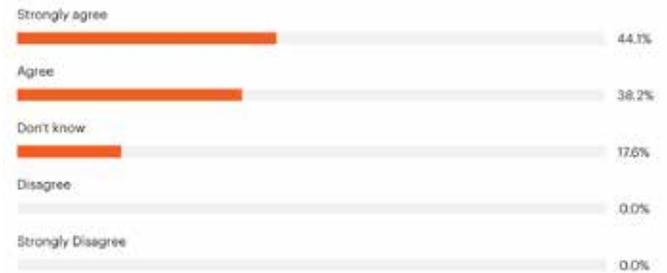
"Our laity has responded to spiritual needs of parishioners unable to attend church."



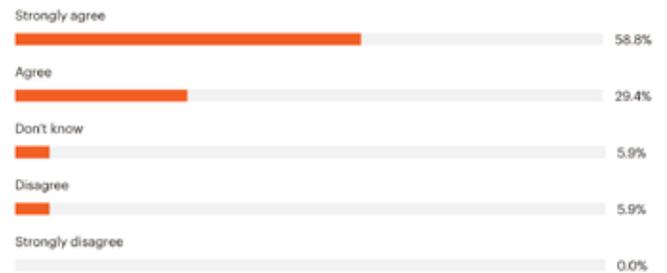
"The rector provided adequate support for parishioners in times of need."



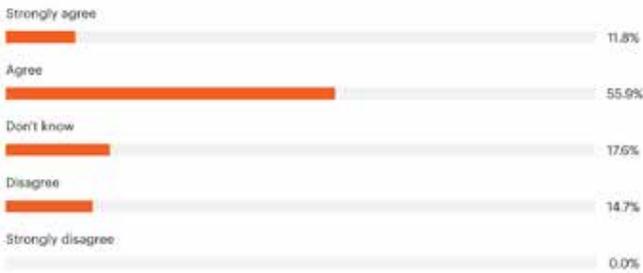
"Our laity provided adequate support for parishioners in times of need."



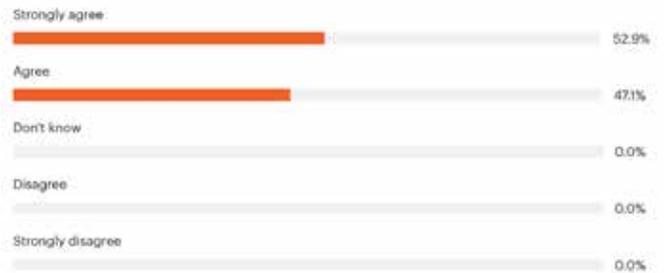
"In the past I would have been willing to contact the rector if I needed advice on personal or spiritual problems."



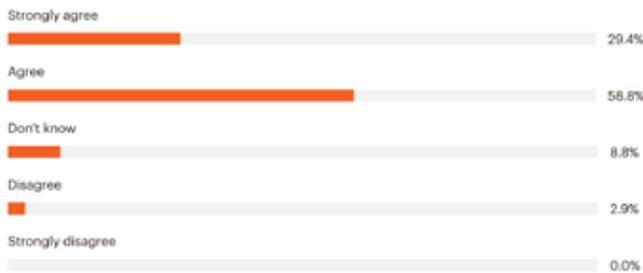
"As a parish, we actively seek new members."



"I like the style and feel of the worship service I attend."



"This parish does a good job of involving new members and confirmands in parish activities."



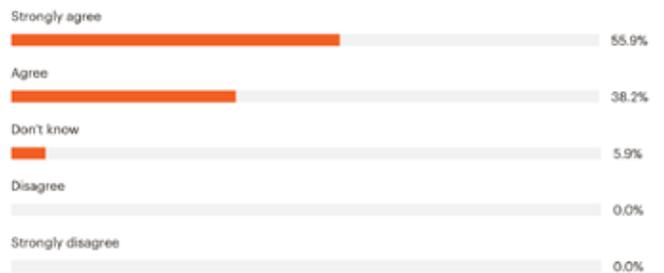
"I like the time and format of our service."



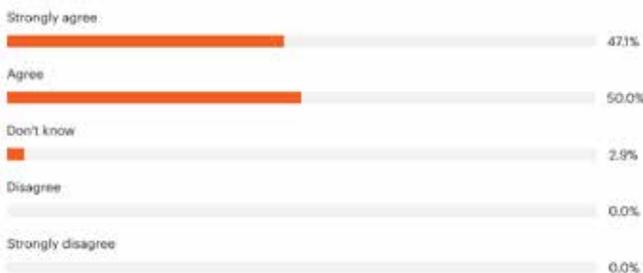
"Our parish effectively proclaims the Gospel in the local community."



"Music at this parish's worship services adds an important dimension to my spiritual life."



"I believe the parish should be open to growth in membership"



"We should increase the variety in worship services to include more informal services."



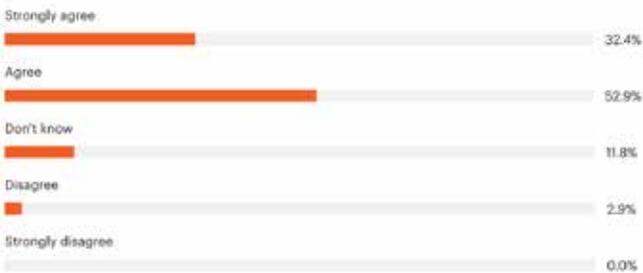
"I occasionally like Morning Prayer instead of Eucharist on Sundays."



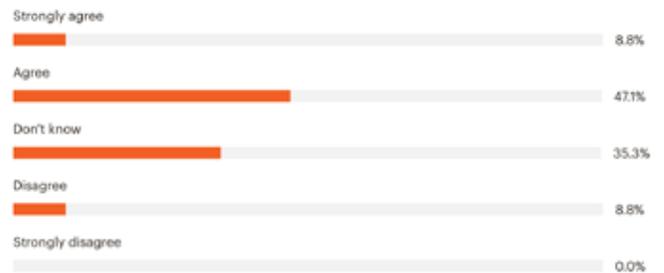
"This parish provides ample opportunity for adult Bible study."



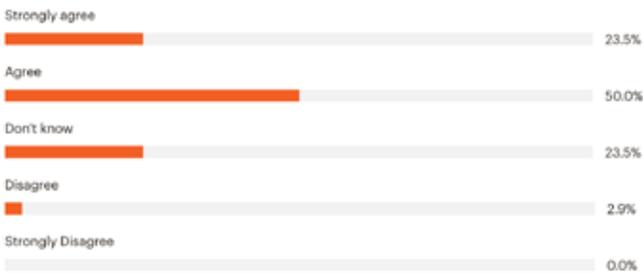
"Our parish is spiritually alive."



"I like the educational programs to provide exposure to a variety of theological views."



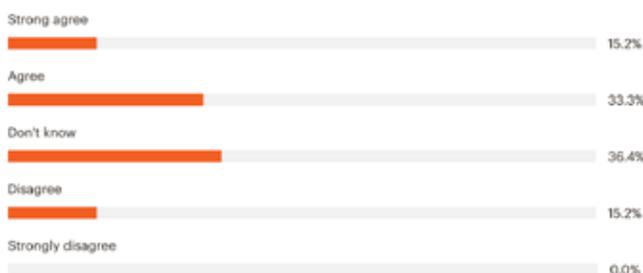
"In my experience, this parish offers an effective mix of topics for study or reflection on Sunday mornings."



"This parish provides effective youth education programs after confirmation."



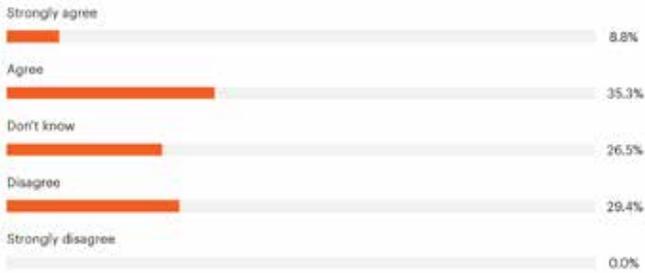
"In my experience, this parish offers an effective mix of topics for study or reflection on weekdays."



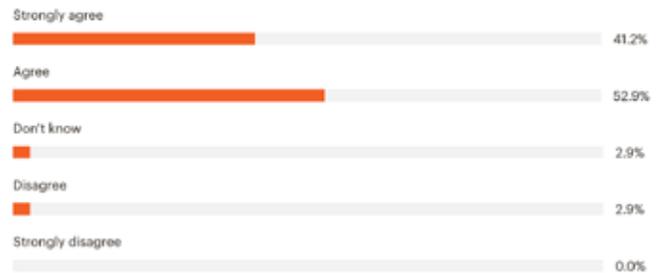
"The children's church school program is excellent."



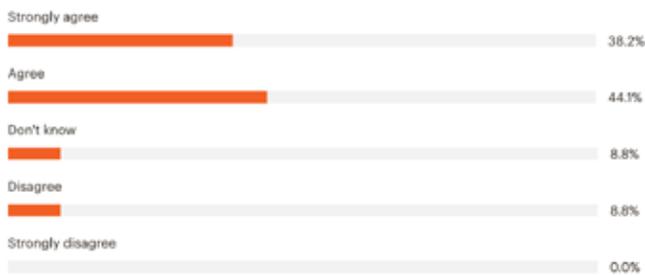
"There are ample opportunities to participate in small group study."



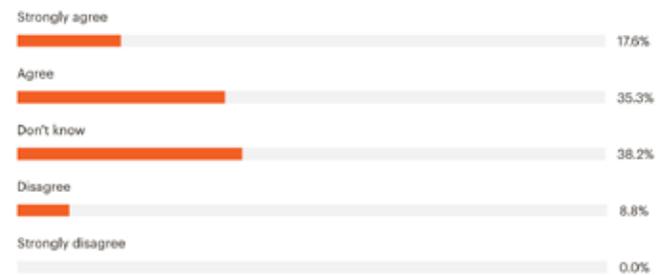
"Contributing time and talent to this parish is as important as contributing money."



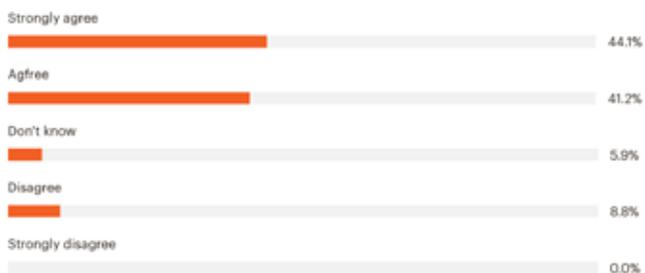
"Parishioners have many opportunities to participate in community programs supported by this parish."



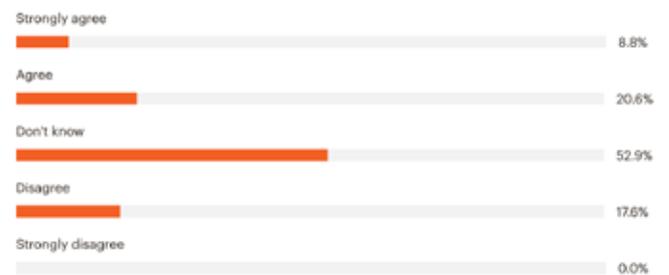
"Our parishioners would benefit from honest, open conversations about Christian stewardship."



"This parish has identified and is responding to specific needs in the community."



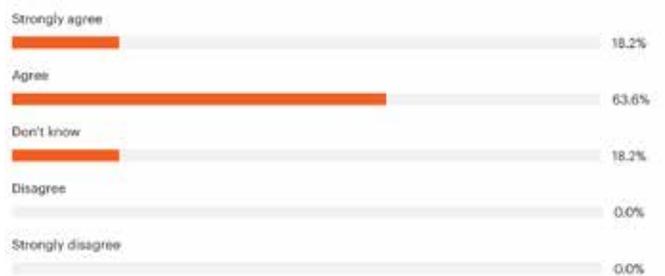
"This parish should have a focused program for planned giving - encouraging bequests or offer significant gifts to the church as a part of stewardship education."



"The amount of money we spend on outreach is"



"I believe the parish has the right budget priorities."



"I have a clear idea about the amount of money required to run the parish."



"This parish provides enough activities for single adults."



"This parish provides sufficient opportunities for social activities for parishioners."



"This parish provides opportunities for fellowship between parishioners and member of the community."



"This parish provides sufficient opportunities for older adults."



"Weekday activities at this parish are scheduled at convenient time for me."



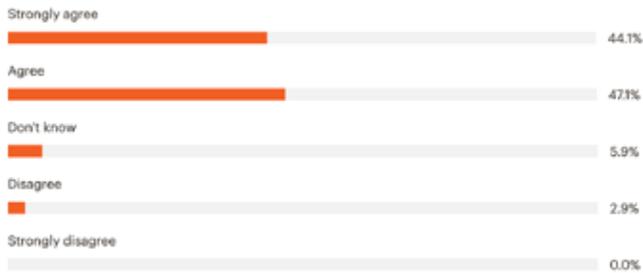
"This parish provides enough activities for young adults."



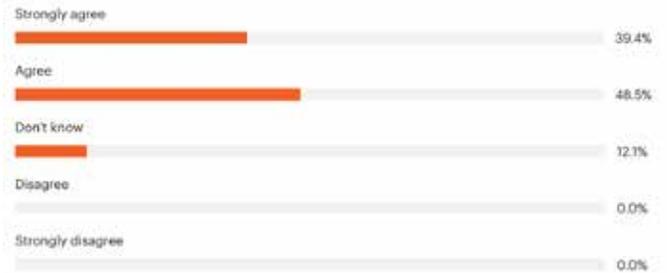
"The Vestry is responsive to concerns of parish members."



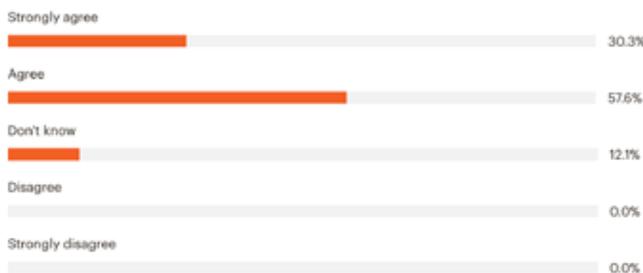
"Communication between the rector and parishioners historically has been good."



"I like the Episcopal Church being a safe place for people of a variety of perspectives."



"Communication between the Vestry and parishioners historically has been good."



"The Episcopal Church focuses on appropriate issues and concerns."



"The gender of our new rector does not matter to me."



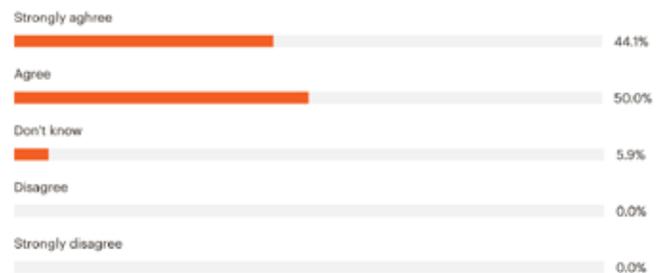
"I am comfortable with the role and understanding of scripture in the Episcopal Church."



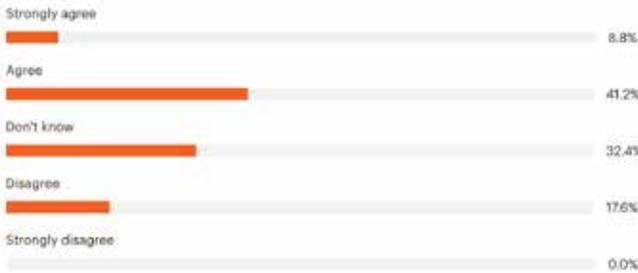
"I believe I have a solid understanding of the Episcopal Church and its teachings."



"I appreciate the members of the Episcopal Church are free to ask difficult question of faith."



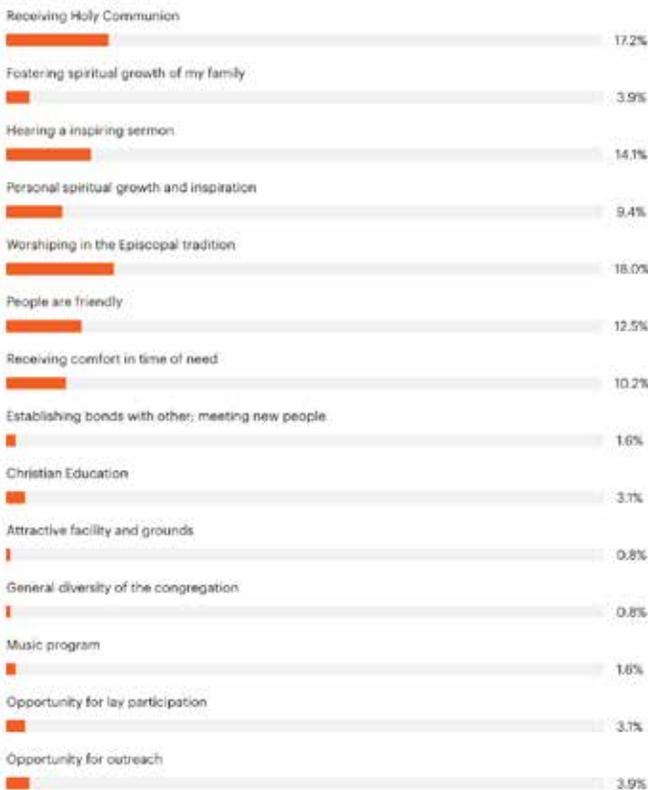
"I need more certainty in my faith."



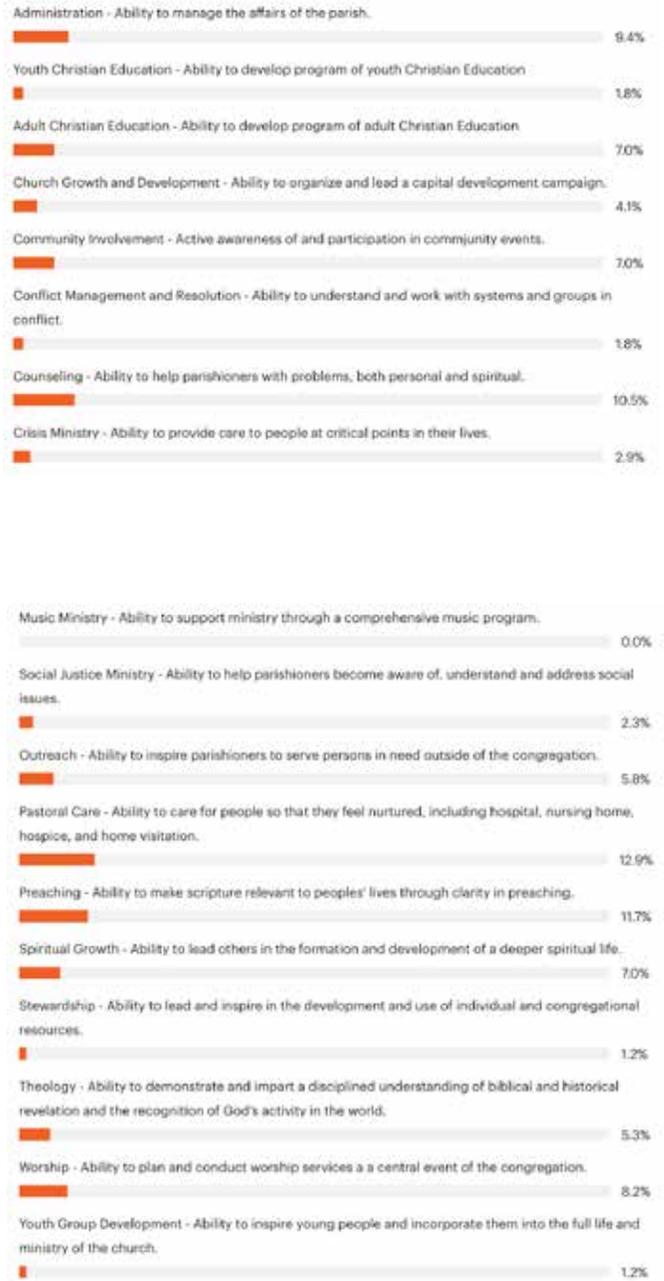
"I would characterize my theological views as:"



"What do you like best about this parish? Select four."



"From the following list, select the six area of ministry in which you most want he new rector to have gifts. Select only six."



"Under each characteristic or trait listed below, choose the one that matches how important it is to you that the rector has the particular quality. Energetic"



"Personaable/Outgoing"



"Good Speaker"



"Deeply spiritual"



"Married"



"Can Chant"



"Large Church Experience"



"High-church oriented"



"Small Church Experience"



"Low-church oriented"



"Experience as a rector"



"Moderate-church oriented"



"Experience in the Diocese of Mississippi"



"Work experience outside the church"



"Relates to all age groups"



"Organized"



"Parent"



"Has a spiritual director"



"Positive Attitude"



"Good sense of humor"



"Socialable"



"Accessible"



St. John's Parish Survey 2020

“What I like best about St. John's is ...”

Total Respondents: 27

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Receiving holy communion	74.07%	20
Hearing an inspiring sermon	70.37%	19
Personal spiritual growth and inspiration	66.67%	18
Worshiping in the Episcopal tradition	59.26%	16
People are friendly and welcoming	51.85%	14
Fostering the spiritual growth of my family	48.15%	13
Receiving comfort in times of need	37.04%	10
Make-up of the congregation	25.93%	7
Opportunity to gather socially with other members	22.22%	6
Christian education	22.22%	6
The St. John's community responds to the needs of our community	22.22%	6
Opportunity for lay participation and ministry	11.11%	3
Making strong friendships and meeting new people	7.41%	2
Opportunity for volunteering and outreach	7.41%	2

What are the personal and professional qualities you are looking for in a new rector?

Total Respondents: 27

Attribute	Total Responses	Score
Good sermons	24	13.46
Good interpersonal skills	24	13.29
Energetic	24	13.04
Compassionate	24	12.96
Approachable/accessible	27	12.48
Is a good leader and administrator	26	10.58
Liturgically oriented	24	10.50
Strong Theological Background	24	10.13
Experience in the Diocese of Mississippi	25	8.76
Experience as a rector	25	8.72
Work experience outside the church	27	8.04
Deeply spiritual	0	0
Organized	0	0
Good sense of humor	0	0
Is a good listener	0	0
Related to all age groups	0	0

What strengths do you want in a new rector?

Total Respondents: 27

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Worship - the ability to plan and conduct worship services as a central event of the congregation.	77.78%	21
Preaching - the ability to make scripture relevant to people's lives.	77.78%	21
Pastoral care - the ability to care for people so that they feel nurtured, including by hospital, nursing home, hospice, and home visitation.	70.37%	19
Spiritual growth - the ability to lead others in the formation and development of a deeper spiritual life.	66.67%	18
Christian Education - the ability to support and provide nourishing Christian education programs for children and adults.	55.56%	15
Church growth and development - the ability to build upon existing programs and activities and to create new ones, and to bring new people into our church.	51.85%	14
Administration; the ability to manage the affairs of the church in partnership with St. Stephen's and the vestry.	40.74%	11
Counseling - the ability to help parishioners with problems, both personal and spiritual.	37.04%	10
Theology - the ability to demonstrate and impart a disciplined understanding of biblical and historical revelation and the recognition of God's activity in the world.	29.63%	8
Outreach - the ability to inspire parishioners to serve persons in need of our community.	29.63%	8
Music ministry - to support the music ministries of the church.	25.93%	7
Stewardship - the ability to lead others in understanding the need for participation in good stewardship.	18.52%	5
Conflict management and resolution skills - ability to lead groups through conflict to resolution, and to manage change.	18.52%	5

The following questions were posed as a linear numeric scale from 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree.

How I see our church - Leadership, Evangelism, and Renewal

Respondents agree that the vestry is responsive to concerns of parish members. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 26

Respondents agree that good communication between the rector and parishioners, and between the rector and the vestry, is essential to our church. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 27

Respondents neither agree nor disagree that as a church, we actively seek new members. (Avg. number 3)
Total Respondents: 25

Respondents strongly agree that our church does a good job of communicating that we welcome anyone, no matter economic status, gender, race, or orientation. (Avg. number 5)
Total Respondents: 26

Respondents agree that as a church, we do a good job involving new members in the church. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 26

Respondents neither agree nor disagree that they believe our church is thriving and growing. (Avg. number 3)
Total Respondents: 26

How I see our church - Parish Involvement and Pastoral Care

Respondents agree that St. John's provides opportunities for them to be involved in the church. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 27

Respondents agree that they appreciate that they receive ministry from each other as well as from our priest. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 27

Respondents agree that St John's provides ample activities for children & adults of all ages. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 26

Respondents agree that Personal/phone contact when needed from a priest is important to me. (Avg. number 4)
Total Respondents: 26

Respondents strongly agree that they receive support from the church when I need it. (Avg. number 5)
Total Respondents: 27

How I see our church - Stewardship and Outreach

Respondents agree that contributing time and talent to the church is as important as contributing money. (Avg number 4)
Total Respondents: 26

The following questions are open answered. The respondents' answers are copied verbatim into this document, but have been organized by topic for readability.

The greatest need or challenge we have at St. John's is...

Total Respondents: 24

GROWTH

- Growing and finding new members
- growing
- More members
- Lack of growth
- More members
- The growth we have experienced in the last ten years may be stagnating. We need to hold those people and gain where possible.
- Dwindling population in our area
- To foster spiritual growth and attendance on Sundays and Holy Days
- Involved parishioner
- Consistency- be it a priest, parishioners or activities. We seem to have people interested for a bit and then back away. Also, I would like to see more music/choir/singing I know that the church has many musically talented parishioners - would like to have a choir or music for children as well
- Keeping the church community involved

FINANCIAL

- Finances
- financial-it is hard for us to afford a priest. Hoping this partnership with St. Stephens will provide us the opportunity to have a priest and continue to grow.
- being able to maintain financial stability in order to retain a priest thus being able to retain current and new members.
- Establishing the financial ability to maintain a permanent priest. This would allow for future growth. Both spiritually and financially.

COVID-19

- Hope to have in-person sermons without restrictions soon
- For Covid to go away so we can gather as a church family again.

RECTOR

- a priest that will preach religion and not politics
- Keeping a priest
- Finding a rector who understands the dynamics of a small parish and is not dependent on the diocese for approval.
- We are lucky to have a diverse range of ages- we need someone who can engage with our multi-faceted congregation.

OUTREACH

- Christian influence in the community
- Evangelism.

OTHER

- I'm not sure

The ONE thing about St. John's we should NOT change is...

Total Respondents: 20

INCLUSION

- our close family atmospher (sic)
- The friendly welcome
- Our welcoming and volunteer spirit
- Inclusion
- our inclusiveness to anyone seeking a church home.

RELATIONSHIPS

- The closeness we all have as members.
- Community of it
- The way our congregation comes together for each other
- Community
- The close relationships among the congregation, new or old members.
- Our support for each other and our community

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

- the teaching and principles of the church
- Wednesday night Bible study

TRADITION

- We need to continue to have a priest serve us. We cannot have morning prayer long term and be able to continue.
- I am a life long member of this church and feel MOST things should not be changed!
- It's identity as a Mission. The yoking with St Stephens should not be used to diminish the identity of St John's as a active mission in Leland.
- Our relatively "laid back" church culture- it is very welcoming to those who did not grow up in a "high" church tradition.
- Environment

OTHER

- unknown
- Nil

The most important thing we need from our new rector is...

Total Respondents: 24

PERSONALITY

- Caring
- Patience
- Kindness
- Compassion and devotion
- Good work ethic
- Strong work ethic and high energy.

LEADERSHIP

- Leadership
- guidance and leadership
- Leadership, youth direction and actively trying to recruit new members. I would also like someone who doesn't show political bias- I realize that empathy is a part of the Episcopal church , but feel as though people shouldn't "take sides" or try to persuade people one way or another. I do not feel that politics belong in church
- Humble strong leadership. One who is comfortable with small parishes.
- We need leadership that connects with and responds to the needs of the congregation.
- A spiritual leader who will aid the vestry in growing the congregation.

SERMONS

- Good sermon
- Good sermons

AVAILABILITY

- pastoral care and contact with priest.
- Meeting and Getting to know the congregation.
- Being able to contact and listening to problems and of course interesting sermons
- Availability
- Consistent schedule
- availability and being able to work with all members and the mission committee.
- a multi year commitment and constant interaction with parishioners and our community

GUIDANCE

- christian education for all ages
- Spiritual guidance and ability to stay involved in community outreach
- One who challenges us to continue our collective Christian mission in the world.

Additional Comments:*Total Respondents: 8*

- Nil
- The Episcopal Church and St. John's is an wonderful Christian institution, and its influence should be spread throughout the community.
- I would also like to bring acolytes back in to St. John's I, as well as my siblings and friends served as acolytes in this church and it seems so sad to not see anyone sitting and serving as we once did.
- None
- None
- Sharing the financial burdens with St Stephen's is a wonderful idea and reaching out with another congregation for new ideas is great
- n/a
- I would like to increase/grow our children's christian education programs.

I have attended St. John's for...*Total Respondents: 27*

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
More than 20 years	44.44%	12
6-10 years	22.22%	6
3-5 years	18.52%	5
11-20 years	14.81%	4
2 years or less	3.70%	1

I am a confirmed Episcopalian.*Total Respondents: 27*

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	92.59%	25
No	7.41%	2

I usually attend worship service at St. John's:*Total Respondents: 27*

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
3 or more times a month	48.15%	13
1-2 times a month	40.74%	11
Occasionally	11.11%	3

I have children who are regularly involved in the church*Total Respondents: 27*

Answer Choices	% Responses	# Responses
Yes	48.15%	13
No	51.85%	14