



St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1600 Union Avenue, Fairfield, CA94533

Telephone: 707-422-4741

One Step at a Time into the Future Survey Responses by Ministry Area

A Survey to Assess the Congregation's Direction in the Next 5 Years

Profession of Faith—Stu Reid, Liaison

Worship and Music –Larry Nelson, chairperson

What do you like best?

- a. Act of worship (4)
- b. Mainstream Lutheran traditions still encourages the congregation to think
- c. Pastor Todd and the Pastor (20)
- d. Music/singing (15)
- e. Faith evident in the congregation (2)
- f. Choir, orchestra and other music opportunities (4)
- g. Sermons/preaching (11)
- h. Early traditional service (3)
- i. God is evident (3)
- j. Sanctuary is beautiful, spiritual, inviting (6)
- k. Spiritual maintenance provided
- l. Semyon Lohss's ministry with us (2)
- m. Liturgy conducted by a variety of people
- n. Having an option of two services (4)
- o. Worship assistants
- p. Open Communion for all
- q. Contemporary Service
- r. Lutheran (only ELCA in town)
- s. Willingness to try new things in worship and ministry (2)
- t. Time and space to self-reflect

What things would you like to change regarding Worship and Music

- a. Better sermons
- b. Ask people to submit prayer in writing for the pastor to read
- c. More soloists and small group ensembles

- d. Need more energy, engagement and vitality during the service—too stilted
- e. Quality of communion bread needs improvement; should have gloves to serve (clean hands more effective than gloves which are not sterile—sanitizer needs to be explained as do the rudiments of food safety in terms of serving communion- dlm).
- f. 9:00 a.m. service instead of 8:30 a.m.
- g. Use hymnal for services instead using all the paper to print the weekly bulletins.
- h. Songs in the hymnal are easier to see than the printed copies
- i. More traditional hymns at early service
- j. More folk-like hymns at early service –(Bread for the Journey type)
- k. Shorten announcement time (let people read bulletin)
- l. More choir offerings and bell choir offerings
- m. Stop Intercessory prayers from congregation (can't hear)
- n. Stop the hand shaking before communion (waste of time) (2)
- o. Kids running around—be more respectful
- p. More blended service at 8:30 with fewer traditional hymns
- q. Eliminate Hymn of praise –too long
- r. Sing only three verses per hymn
- s. Do not have Sunday School during service (I guess they mean Children's Church-dm)
- t. Quiet time before each service for reflection
- u. Start on TIME
- v. Less talking during the offertory; this is part of the service
- w. Celebrate EVERYONE's birthdays – once per month—not just some at worship
- x. Stronger liturgical service
- y. Make Contemporary Service more contemporary (4)
- z. Too many locked doors when they should be open
- aa. Too much standing. Allow people to sit more often
- bb. Like to hear speech from the minister
- cc. Information in the bulletin for volunteer opportunities
- dd. I feel there is a gradual devastation of the liturgical worship (need to stop)
- ee. Tradition service should be more tradition; less preaching off the cuff
- ff. Quit downplaying our Lutheran heritage! There is nothing wrong about being Lutheran.
- gg. Better prepared sermons
- hh. Variety of preachers
- ii. Different preachers every other Sunday

- jj. More congregational singing at contemporary service; I feel it is too much of a performance. The words help but the tunes are not present and we don't know them. Can we hear the tunes or see the music so we can learn the tunes before we sing?
- kk. Keep services to a crisp one hour
- ll. Get more people to sing in the choir

What new things would you like to see as related to Worship and Music?

- a. Saturday worship at 6 or so
- b. guest ORDAINED preachers

What do you like best about worshipping in this church?

- a. People (11)
- b. do worship in fun ways
- c. environment made by Justin is good
- d. quietness, church service (3)
- e. openness
- f. feels like home and family and feeling I belong (11)
- g. liturgy
- h. stained glass window
- i. 1st service
- j. early service offers security and ground that I need
- k. welcoming all people (2)
- l. sermons (4)
- m. openness to the Spirit (2)
- n. trying new forms of music
- o. the sense that I am a part of worship
- p. warm and inviting (2)
- q. relationship to congregation
- r. everyone is nice and kind (2)
- s. music
- t. greeting each other during the service
- u. contemporary music
- v. second service band
- w. music that goes with the service
- x. music (6)
- y. early service (4)
- z. peaceful feeling (2)

- aa. warmth of pastor and congregation
- bb. congruency of family
- cc. friendships I've made and friendly community (6)
- dd. comfortable feeling (2)
- ee. open atmosphere
- ff. contemporary service
- gg. ability to have our hands free now to clap and give praise
- hh. new music from the band
- ii. hearing the word of God (2)
- jj. fellowship (3)
- kk. my history here
- ll. worship style options
- mm. maintain Lutheran traditions
- nn. feeling I belong
- oo. singing (2)
- pp. Pastor Todd
- qq. worship service
- rr. my familiarity with service
- ss. Christ-centered
- tt. beauty of sanctuary

Do the liturgy, hymns and sermon connect, forming a clear theme for the day? Most YES; some no

What changes would you suggest for improved worship?

- a. Use more familiar hymns
- b. most of the time they do, sometimes it seems that need better planning for the theme connection
- c. include a variety of music offerings—choir does not need to sing every week,
- d. ask the congregation for hymn suggestions
- e. make the traditional service more reverential with traditional preaching style—not so 'off the cuff
- f. should have a shared focus on the continuity of the weekly theme
- g. don't always give the answer in the sermon, let me draw my own conclusions,
- h. less connection or sense of theme at the second service
- i. I would like more attention paid to the connections of the lessons, theme of the week
- j. no it is confusing to figure out the theme—more work on this
- k. appreciate the daily circumstance that tie into the sermon message
- l. only sing the hymns twice—not 5 or 6 times
- m. more anecdotal commentary, less conceptual
- n. make the contemporary service more contemporary
- o. Revised Common Lectionary helps to sense the theme
- p. make sure the hymns chosen reflect the lessons of the day
- q. once a month have a sermon about life in Jesus' time and apply it today

- r. apply a little more structure to the second service so people know when to stand or sit, etc.,
- s. make the sermon relate to the present time
- t. incorporate real life into the sermons more
- u. more sermons about everyday life
- v. sermons should draw on wider sources
- w. more hymns
- x. more solemn, quiet time during the service
- y. organized liturgical leadership
- z. I feel that sermons do not compliment the selected readings
- aa. shorten the liturgy
- bb. Use an overhead screen and projector rather than printed materials
- cc. sanitation regarding communion service (see earlier)
- dd. most of the time they are excellent
- ee. incorporate a positive approach to the service that connects all parts
- ff. link hymns to lessons better
- gg. connection of lessons and weekly theme could be improved
- hh. hymns do not always be related to church year
- ii. emphasize the theme, work with the lessons—demonstrate the relationship,

Do you prefer to attend traditional service or the contemporary service?

45 Traditional & 35 Contemporary

Comments:

- a. Enjoy the contemporary service but music should be more varied and performed off the chancel
- b. Enjoy the band; remember it is group not too many solos
- c. I prefer the traditional service but am rarely able to be at service by 8:30 so I attend at 11. I sorely miss being able to sing the great hymns of the church. Perhaps switch the Contemporary to 8:30 and Traditional to 11:00?
- d. I prefer a blended service with more Bread for the Journey type of hymns
- e. Would like Contemporary service moved to 8:30.

Do you want more worship services offered? 46 - No 11 - Yes If yes, what times would you prefer.

- a. 4:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. on Saturday(4)
- b. Saturday early evening and alternate traditional and contemporary
- c. just one service every 2 months or so
- d. mid-week in evening (2)
- e. yes—Saturday services in the summer and only one service on Sundays in the summer
- f. we should have more one service Sundays so we get to know one another better,
- g. Contemporary Service on Saturday at 5:30 or so (2)
- h. attendance is sparse at each current service, why would we have more?
- i. Evening, folk service
- j. music service
- k. more services--only if we had grown so much that we had space limitation

Strengths of this faith community that relate Worship and Music:

- a. everyone is included in the running of the service—using Children is an integral part of the service and it is wonderful
- b. strong worship service (2)
- c. genuine Word of God
- d. liturgists
- e. music
- f. PT's sermons and the way he presents them (2)
- g. PT's knowledge of the scriptures
- h. Pastor Todd's preaching
- i. friendly and outgoing choir
- j. great choir and choir director
- k. great music at both services
- l. good Sunday leadership

Things that could be improved in the Faith Community as related to Worship and Music

- a. we have only one choice of worshipping at the 8:30 service as we are not always able to get up on time
- b. contemporary service should focus on worship, not the band, which is too loud to meditate and communicate
- c. Make the Contemporary Service more contemporary
- d. Contemporary Service
- e. longer sermons
- f. less formal
- g. more interaction with pastor and congregation—more praise & worship
- h. incorporate other music styles
- i. I do like the music and songs I have been learning
- j. prayers of the church—don't have people add prayers from the pews—cannot hear them
- k. one hour services (2)
- l. limit sharing of the peace to those around you
- m. no need to go over the announcements—they are included in bulletin
- n. preaching, change use younger minister with fresh ideas
- o. content of sermons
- p. Use all talents in band
- q. it is priority to retain our Lutheran heritage as we seek the unchurched
- r. The music program and the traditional service is stagnant

- s. sometimes—need better organization of services
- t. services closer to one hour, communication
- u. In worship service, celebrate birthdays for every one in July, not just one person
- v. have pet blessings
- w. have house blessings
- x. better preparation in preaching
- y. if people volunteer to assist with worship---lector, communion asst. etc.—be sure they are ASKED to serve—some volunteered and were never called, parking
- z. Where are the pew bibles?
- aa. Why do we have communion EVERY Sunday
- bb. Why not have single service from Memorial Day through Labor Day?
- cc. Services and education classes feels rushed and hurried
- dd. Continue focus in bulletin about particular members

Stewardship—Jim Hanser. chairperson

What do you like best?

- a. Willingness to share/stewardship

What would you like to change?

- a. Make annual pledges of time (hours of service) as well as money pledges
- b. Use electronic debit for offerings

Outreach Liaison—Bette Noll, Liaison

Evangelism—chairperson currently vacant

What do you like the best?

- a. Care of members and guests
- b. Welcoming spirit (2)

What would you like to change?

- a. Bring in more members

Strengths in this faith community related to Evangelism ministries:

- a. welcoming (2)
- b. being welcomed
- c. connected
- d. inviting
- e. sharing our church with guests and newcomers
- f. loving, welcoming, a place you know it is safe
- g. efforts to include everyone

Social Justice—chairperson currently vacant

What do you like best?

- a. Focus on community service (20)
- b. Peacefulness
- c. Food Pantry (3)

What would you like to change?

- a. Better awareness of ecology and taking care of God's earth and resources
- b. Increase programming for justice concerns for local basis and nationally.

Strengths in this faith community related to Social Justice

- a. work well together for a common cause
- b. always willing to help others(3)
- c. outreach to external community
- d. food pantry is a big plus (5)
- e. community outreach (10)
- f. reaching out to others
- g. service with action

Resources—Tom Turner, Liaison

Property –Les Johnsen, chairperson

What do you like best?

- a. Sanctuary is beautiful, spiritual, inviting (6)

What would you like to change?

- a. More clean up days; church needs MORE maintenance
- b. Opportunity to have congregation know how to assist with maintenance

Strengths in this faith community related to Property ministries:

- a. our facilities (2)
- b. having other churches use our facilities

Personnel – Diane Metz, chairperson

Nurture-Congregational Life—Barbara Patterson, Liaison

What do you like best (as related to Congregational Life ministries?)

- a. Members in congregation (18)

- b. Church's potential
- c. Family-like at St. Mark's (9)
- d. Friendliness (21)
- e. Warm and happy members (4)
- f. Fellowship (4)
- g. Each person is welcomed for who they are (3)
- h. Social events such as dinners and fun(d)raisers conducted by Youth (5)
- i. Sense of community (2)
- j. People (4)
- k. Social hour between services (3)
- l. Activities (2)

What things would you like to change as related to Congregational Life ministries

- a. Need to visit elderly and shut-ins more
- b. Do more small events and less big ones
- c. More activities for younger families
- d. Shepherding groups—what happened? Start again!
- e. More diversity of ethnicity needed
- f. Neighborhood of the church
- g. Information in the bulletin for volunteer opportunities
- h. Phone number to offer assistance.
- i. After church groups and activities
- j. Organize outreach and activities better
- k. Poorly executed Sunday Social Hour—need chairpeople who get others to serve
- l. More W/ELCA groups (3)
- m. Information in the bulletin for volunteer opportunities
- n. Phone number to offer assistance.
- o. After church groups and activities
- p. Organize outreach and activities better
- q. Need more adult activities (4)

New Activities I'd Like to See related to Congregational Life ministries

- a. parent groups
- b. W/ELCA(2)
- c. more activities for ages 50-70 (not traditional senior citizens)
- d. retreats for various ages such as 20-30, 40-50, couples, etc.

- e. evening potluck honoring volunteers with photos of effort
- f. need activities for 20-30 year olds (3)
- g. more social events
- h. a senior social group like Time Travelers (2)
- i. Singles group for young or old (3)
- j. more small groups(4)
- k. sunshine group
- l. quilt making group
- m. Movies
- n. couples group
- o. day time groups
- p. book club(2)
- q. camping weekend for parents and youth
- r. social group and socials involving dancing,
- s. mission activities outside of our community—such as W/ELCA Health kits, etc.
- t. service groups
- u. Games (2), sports, game night such as bingo with prizes
- v. Food, concerts in the grass like we used to have,
- w. more fun activities
- x. events to welcome new families

Strengths in this Faith Community related to Congregational Life ministries

- a. Lots of people (4)
- b. friends, friendliness (5)
- c. visiting housebound people
- d. hospitality
- e. keeping in touch with the ill and homebound members
- f. good coffee hour (2)
- g. friendly atmosphere (3)

Things that could be improved as related to Congregational Life

- a. Longer coffee hour to promote fellowship, time to meet and get to know visitors/newcomers
- b. more and more reliable child care – during times other than worship and especially during the services
- c. sports and recreational activities
- d. more people involved

- e. Who has the keys to open the doors?
- f. more swings for the little children
- g. put a slide in the playground

Nurture—Education—Justin Devine, Liaison

What do you like the best related to Nurture-Education ministries?

- a. Spiritual maintenance provided
- b. Family Night
- c. Bethel Classes
- d. Pastor Larry's classes—he is a master teacher!

What would you like to change related to Nurture-Education ministries?

- a. Encourage more people to attend Tuesday night bible study
- b. More attention to Sunday School/Education Hour
- c. Prophecy and teaching
- d. Regular prayer groups

What new things would you like to see as related to Nurture-Education ministries

- a. Bible studies(2)

I enjoy attending education classes at St. Mark's. Yes = 55 No = 6. If not, how could the congregation improve educational offerings to better suit you and/or your family?

- a. Shorter, with more entry points
- b. current events topics
- c. have interesting instructors
- d. limited openings in schedule
- e. I will attend in Sept.
- f. stop interfering with the classes—no Council reports
- g. have day time classes during the week
- h. Mark Bible study
- i. the adult classes are too often around broad concepts and then run on and on, endless
- j. have a wider range of teachers
- k. sometimes I enjoy and some times they are not fun

Strengths in this Faith Community related to Education:

- a. educational opportunities (2)
- b. great Christmas program
- c. school for our children

- d. Sunday School and youth
- e. small group study
- f. more bible studies

Thing that could be improved related to Education:

- a. Services and education classes feels rushed and hurried
- b. adequate time for Sunday School at least 45 minutes, no interference with planned classes for announcements, Council report, etc. if necessary, for the Council Report, should be at an alternative site or planned ahead of time as that week's forum
- c. improve benevolence giving to Synod/ELCA (minimum 10%)
- d. level of monetary giving
- e. increase number of adults attending education classes
- f. More people to attend Wednesday Family Night services and to volunteer to help with the dinners
- g. Encourage participation in Sunday School and Family Night

Nurture—Youth—Austin Jansen, Liaison

What do you like the best as related to Youth ministries?

- a. Keeping youth involved (2)
- b. Playing games
- c. Taking trips (3)
- d. Youth group and youth programs (4)
- e. Skate board allowed (3)
- f. Hang out here
- g. Pizza (4)
- h. Fun
- i. See friends
- j. Play games

What would you change as related to Youth ministries?

- a. Make a skate park (4)
- b. Have a burger shop
- c. Add a hot tub
- d. Add a basketball court
- e. Have a football team
- f. Have sports
- g. More pizza
- h. More cool trips

- i. Increase support and staff for the Youth Group (Justin does too much)

New activities you would like to see as related to Youth ministries

- a. Pizza
- b. skate park
- c. basketball court
- d. build a sports center
- e. Build a hot tub
- f. sponsor a football team

Strengths in this Faith Community related to youth:

- a. Justin's work with the youth
- b. children's and youth activities and Rob and Justin (2)
- c. excellent youth program (3)
- d. growing youth program under Justin
- e. young people attending—thanks Justin and Rob

General Responses—not totally related to one ministry

What do you find like best about SMLC? Please name 3 things.

- a. Justin Devine (3)
- b. Openness (3)
- c. Programs and leaders
- d. June Johnsen's energy and devotion
- e. Size of congregation just right

What 3 things would you like to change at SMLC?

- a. Having a full calendar does not always lead to church health; evaluate ministries and retire those that are not working well.
- b. Evaluate current ministries for effectiveness
- c. Volunteers get tired of volunteering—build volunteer corps
- d. More people to volunteer
- e. More transparency
- f. More outreach and connection with Synod and greater community
- g. Consistent, correct communication especially when services start (5)
- h. Overspending
- i. Forsaking the preferences of members for the sake of attracting new people
- j. Use more grass roots decision making even though decision making can be more cumbersome.

- k. Executive Committee making the decisions and then informing the congregation is not effective; whole council or congregation should be more often involved.
- l. Conduct more long range planning; need 5 and 10 year goals (2)
- m. No more surveys in church; waste of time to answer these questions
- n. Pick only 3 areas of ministry to put effort into for a given period of time
- o. Consider a service Sunday once a month
- p. Decrease stubbornness to change

Do you feel welcome in this congregation? Yes = 73 No = 1. Sometimes = 2

What would encourage a friendlier environment?

- a. Better neighborhood
- b. more games and trips
- c. when you are alone, you stay alone
- d. keep wearing name badges
- e. be less of one group or another—let people in
- f. invite new members or visitors to breakfast
- g. more dinners for the congregation as a group
- h. encourage people to reach out to visitors and new members
- i. get Bev Duncan to tell us how to welcome
- j. need more people
- k. the pastor makes it a welcome environment
- l. do every member visits in the home
- m. get a welcoming team to visit with visitors
- n. some members cluster together and ignore guests
- o. greeting and greeters—make sure they are always there.

I feel that my personal interests and skills have been assessed and used well in this congregation?

Yes 46 No = 7 To Some Extent = 7 Comments:

- a. Sometimes I feel overwhelmed and I wish I had a list of people to contact
- b. I'm new
- c. I'm somewhat new,

How could the congregation improve on engaging people to share their interests and skills?

- a. Engage them, follow up with those who volunteer
- b. allow opportunity for variety of service
- c. more temple talks
- d. volunteer coordinator (3)

- e. we need to get more creative, relax and it will happen
- f. continue to offer invitation to serve
- g. having people in charge come up and ask you to do something—that is the best way
- h. how about discussing the question as part of the service?
- i. we need more volunteers
- j. more personal, individual contact specifically inviting to serve instead of just announcing
- k. distribute a simple form and ask people to put down their special talent or skills, put a list of talents and people who have them in the bulletin
- l. have people who are open to change
- m. theme night soup and salad dinners, 5 – 10 minute talk from each member,
- n. invite the people,
- o. group sessions,
- p. sometimes, I feel like we are put down if do not take a parting service to the church. I am involved in many community volunteer services. Adding more, equals more stress to me. I do not want church to be stress causing. Sometimes, I stay away because of this feeling
- q. make a suggestion box
- r. publicize various position descriptions of the volunteer positions
- s. be better listeners
- t. advertise opportunities
- u. follow up with new members about skills/talents
- v. ask to give ways in survey and then follow up on what people volunteer to do,
- w. ask new members to help with specific things
- x. personal contact (6),
- y. more fun(d)raisers, questionnaires,
- z. Larry Nelson is a master teacher

Have you been able to make friends in the congregation? Yes = 1 No = Overwhelmingly YES

Are there adequate opportunities for you to serve at St. Mark's? Yes = overwhelmingly

How could the congregation improve involving its members to help others?

- a. Open more doors of opportunity

Is there adequate communication to meet your 'need to know' what is going on in the congregation. Thinking about you and your family, in what ways would you upgrade communication in the congregation?

- a. Having regular Council Reports is an improvement
- b. lots is done without the congregation knowing 'why'
- c. communication has been better recently

- d. a video screen in the narthex advertising events
- e. A new sign out front regarding events and service projects
- f. improve communication to the larger community
- g. get a SMART Board
- h. get the service time correct in the newspaper
- i. get the events and calendar correct in the Weekly Messenger
- j. more one on one communication and recruitment by the Pastor and the Council
- k. weekly announcement projected on screen at end of service
- l. make sure that there are copies of Council minutes at the updates and for people to take to read
- m. use more electronic communication,

What is your age group? 8 3 2 27 32
 Under 18 18-25 yrs 26-40 yrs 41-60 yrs 61 & older

Other ages in family: 14 6 7 13 20
 Under 18 18-25 26-40 41-60 61 & older

GENERAL Strengths in this faith community or strengths that overlap ministries:

- c. willing to try new concepts
- d. financially sound
- e. solid pastoral leadership for a number of years
- f. willingness to want to be involved,
- g. we're becoming more diverse age wise great to see young children
- h. our ability to work as a team
- i. good people
- j. unity, leadership and communication
- k. togetherness in the belief of the Lord
- l. the leadership of our church
- m. family type community and taking care of each other
- n. ministry
- o. family atmosphere (2)
- p. spiritual
- q. I feel loved (3)
- r. very uplifting
- s. strengthening faith
- t. developing hope
- u. peace

- v. ministries
- w. leadership of June, Les and Pastor Todd
- x. willingness to assist and help others
- y. willingness to help church and congregational needs
- z. special people
- aa. PT's compassion and friendliness (3)
- bb. top priority is to involve surrounding community (3)
- cc. current congregation President
- dd. outreach, education, support and dedication of PT (2)
- ee. caring for each other
- ff. reputation of givers in the area, our location
- gg. unselfish commitment of the 20% of members
- hh. pastor's passion for congregation and community
- ii. committed lay members
- jj. the many opportunities to serve
- kk. caring, faithful, dedicated members who help others
- ll. love for each other –genuine friendship
- mm. willingness to think outside of the box
- nn. strong faith and reliance on God
- oo. generosity and involvement in the community--interracial, old and young
- pp. PT's knowledge of the scriptures
- qq. prayer offerings

General Things that could be improved at St. Mark's:

- a. Outreach to community
- b. Decisions are made by too small a group of individuals, apparently without following the set procedures
- c. visit members who do not attend
- d. more fellowship opportunities
- e. we are too scattered in various ministries—less is more sometimes
- f. are we servicing members adequately—shut ins, unemployed, in need, etc.
- g. I wish I would participate more but current health and employment issues prevent it
- h. getting more people involved in property, snacks between services and the pantry
- i. June has done a great job getting people involved in cleaning the church/needs to be continued
- j. adaptability to change
- k. draw in more people

- l. more evangelism towards 20 something group, we lose a lot of young adults in their late teens and very FEW ever return
- m. administration
- n. need more leaders of ministries
- o. training on how to recruit and train volunteers
- p. pride of campus
- q. effort to improve campus
- r. building fund donations marked monthly
- s. fund raiser drive from a special event open to public at Christmas, Easter, etc. but weekend before, dinner dance at Christmas, craft show, picnic and BBQ with baseball game or special event
- t. more people to volunteer
- u. PT reaching out to individuals, make home visits with families/following through on it (3)
- v. Justin needs to focus more on detail
- w. property management
- x. I give anonymously and don't need envelopes mailed
- y. bringing in the people to hear the gospel
- z. more members serving an active role
- aa. facilities improvement
- bb. congregational leadership integrity
- cc. pastor's organizational leadership (though pastoral leadership is very good)
- dd. volunteer coordinator (you do not have to hire someone)
- ee. encourage use of the nursery so children do not disturb the flow of the services
- ff. volunteering
- gg. home visits should happen at least every other year by the pastor
- hh. use electronic deposit