

Profile of St. Mark's

2005 Episcopal Overview Study: Findings (St. Mark's responses for 2008)

Congregational Setting

- Majority of churches founded before 1901. (*St. Mark's—basically started around 1910*)
- Seating in worship space—median is 175; 25% have less than 100 seats. (*St. Mark's—just under 100 seats*)
- Most congregations have facilities in good or excellent condition. (*St. Mark's—good to excellent condition*)
- Largest proportion (45%) of churches in cities or towns between 2,500 and 50,000 in population. Small towns, rural areas and open country are home to only 17% of churches. (*St. Mark's—Montesano, about 3,000 population*)

Worship

- Vast majority (98%) of churches hold regular worship services each week. 77% hold worship services only on Sunday. (*St. Mark's—weekly on Sundays only*)
 - More than half (60%) hold two or more services on the weekend. (*St. Mark's—just one service*)
 - Less than half (39%) have worship service attendance of more than 60% of capacity. (*St. Mark's--~20-25% of capacity*)
 - Worship almost or always includes: Eucharist—98%, Organ music—88%, Kneeling—80%, Choir—66%. (*St. Mark's—Eucharist, except for Morning Prayer once/month, Organ, Kneeling-optional, no Choir*)
 - Only 15% have worship services changes of large magnitude in last 5 years; 31% have little changes, or 30% have had moderate changes. (*St. Mark's—moderate changes*)
 - These descriptors characterize their worship service “very well”:
 1. Filled with sense of God's presence (40%)
 2. Participatory (40%)
 3. Welcoming to newcomers (39%)
 4. Formal Liturgy (32%)
- (*St. Mark's—all of the above*)

Participants and Members

- % of churches that most, nearly or all of their adult participants were:
 - College graduates (40%) (*St. Mark's--Some*)
 - Female (27%) (*St. Mark's--Most*)
 - Live very near the church (14%) (*St. Mark's—Very small amount*)
 - Live in households with more than \$85k annual income (11%) (*St. Mark's—Not Many*)
 - Life-long Episcopalians (11%) (*St. Mark's—A few*)
 - Newcomers in the last 5 years (6%) (*St. Mark's-Yes*)
 - Households with children under 18 (4%) (*St. Mark's--Yes*)
 - Median church has 177 active members & average worship attendance of 75 in 2004 (*St. Mark's—35-40 active, 18-20 attendance*)
 - Most churches (89.9%) are at least 60% white/European American (*St. Mark's—Yes*)
 - More than half their members are age 50+ (56%)(*St. Mark's—Yes*)
 - 27% of Episcopal church members are age 65+, as compared to 12% of the US population in 2005. (*St. Mark's—Yes*)
 - Episcopal churches with greater proportion of older members (age 65+) are typically smaller in membership and are found in rural settings. (*St. Mark's—Yes*)

Conflict

- 93% of churches reported having disagreements or conflicts in the past 5 years (up from 86% in 2000). 37% reported having very serious conflict, up from 32% in 2000. (*St. Mark's—not much, if any, conflict*)

Finances

- Same proportion of churches (9%) describes current financial health as excellent as those who say they are in “serious difficulty”. Excellent or Good—32%, down from 56% in 2000; Serious problems—25%, up from 13% in 2000. (*St. Mark's—Excellent*)
- Median church has total revenue for 2004 of \$152k, operating revenue of \$128k. (*St. Mark's--~\$23k for both in 2008*)
- Staff expenses—about 50% of budget. Small churches tend to be less because they rely on part-time, supply or volunteer staff. (*St. Mark's--all volunteer*)
- Majority (58%) of churches report no giving to Episcopal seminaries or divinity schools. (*St. Mark's--none*)
- Only 7% of churches report having a commitment to give 0.7% of annual budget in support of the Millennium Development Goals. (*St. Mark's--Yes*)

Leadership

- Nearly ¾ of churches (72%) have solo vicar or rector. (*St. Mark's—2 priests, plus 2 deacons*)
- 27% of clergy describe their call as part-time. (*St. Mark's—part-time, non-paid*)
- Typical rector or vicar is age 57 and was called in 2001. (*St. Mark's—72 (called in 1993) & 57 (called in 2008)*)
- 76% of rectors or vicars are male; 19% have doctorate. (*St. Mark's—2 female priests, no doctorates*)
- Descriptors for rectors or vicars that fit them well: (*St. Mark's—all apply*)
 1. Cares about people (68%)
 2. Effective worship leader (59%)
 3. Good liturgist (56%)
 4. Hard worker (51%)
 5. Knows the Bible (51%)
- Descriptors which fit least well were: charismatic leader, evangelistic, effective administrator, “knows how to get people to work together”, and “knows how to get things done”. (*St. Mark's—first three do not apply, but last two items are not too bad*)

Programs, Practices and Ministries

- Programs that at least ½ of congregation consider to be a key activity are:
 1. Church School (73%)
 2. Fellowship and social activities (71%)
 3. Choirs and music programs (59%)
 4. Community service (57%)
 5. Children's programs (51%)
 6. Bible study (50%)(*St. Mark's—all apply, except for organized choir or music*)
- Programs that larger % of congregation do not conduct as key activity are:
 1. Parenting or marriage enrichment (71%)
 2. Support groups (50%)
 3. Senior adult programs (50%)
 4. Spiritual retreats (49%)
 5. Evangelism or recruitment activities (31%)
 6. Youth ministry (30%)(*St. Mark's—basically true for St. Mark's*)
- Over half (59%) of churches emphasize personal prayer, meditation, or devotions. About ½ emphasize studying the Bible and tithing or sacrificial giving. Less emphasize keeping the Sabbath Holy (38%) and family devotions (32%). (*St. Mark's—Yes to personal religious practices*)

- Most churches (81%) operate or support food pantry or soup kitchen to help those in need. (*St. Mark's—Yes*)
- Other services offered by most congregations: Cash or vouchers given to families or individuals (68%); Hospital, nursing home, or assisted care (57%); Counseling services (32%). (*St. Mark's—Yes, to some level*)

Recruitment & Evangelism

- Very few churches (17%) report that their members are heavily involved in recruiting new members. More typical response is “a little” (38%) or “some” (39%). (*St. Mark's—“some”*)
- Only a few churches say they rarely, if ever, have any visitors to their worship services (13%), and even fewer say they contact the visitors they have (8%). (*St. Mark's—not really true for us, and we follow up to some level*)
- Most churches have conducted some form of recruitment the past year:
 1. Encourage members to invite non-members (86%)
 2. Advertise—radio/TV/newspaper (75%)
 3. Encourage members to talk about their faith with non-members (72%)
 4. Held special events to attract non-members (60%)
 5. Developed a recruiting plan (43%)
 6. Contacted newcomers to the area (33%)
 (*St. Mark's—Yes, to all above to some level, except #5*)

Congregational Identity

- Congregational characteristics:
 1. Desires membership growth (58%)
 2. Celebrates Episcopal heritage (51%)
 3. Is a fun place to be (49%)*
 4. Deepens relationships w/God (48%)
 5. Is like a close knit family (41%)
 6. Is spiritually vital and alive (35%)*
 7. Helps members struggle w/tough questions (34%)
 8. Inculcates strong beliefs and values (31%)
 9. Clear mission and purpose (28%)*
 10. Keeps community well informed (20%)
 11. Changes to meet new challenges (18)*
 12. Works for social justice (17%)
 (*these attributes are the main ones with growing churches)
 (*St. Mark's—Desires growth, deepen relationship with God, works for social justice*)

- Episcopal churches vary a lot in their theological outlook:
 1. Predom. Conservative (18%)
 2. Somewhat conservative (25%)
 3. Middle of the road (27%)
 4. Somewhat liberal (22%)
 5. Predom. liberal (8%)
 (*St. Mark's—Middle of the Road to Somewhat Liberal*)

[Episcopal Overview is based on responses from 4,102 Episcopal churches that completed the all-church 2005 Faith Communities Today Survey (57% response rate).]