



“Experiencing Worship at St. Andrew’s”: A Summary Report on the Spring ’08 Survey

Earlier this year the Worship Committee of St. Andrew’s undertook a survey of worshippers in order to gather feedback about how people are experiencing our Sunday gatherings. Some 57 people took time that morning to fill out the questionnaire and the committee is presently reviewing those responses and considering ways to strengthen and enhance our worship life in the light of what was said. This report summarizes the responses and indicates (in italics) some of the areas where changes will be explored, or have already begun.

What is your age ?

- 1 was under 20 years
- 1 was 20- 35 years
- 9 were 35-50 years
- 20 were 50-65 years
- 26 were 65 + years

Length of time you’ve been attending St. Andrew’s?

- 4 have attended less than 1 year
- 6 have attended for 1 – 5 years
- 11 have attended for 5-10 years
- 11 have attended for 10-20 years
- 25 have attended for more than 20 years.

How often do you attend worship at St. Andrew’s?

- 49 come almost every Sunday
- 3 come about once a month
- 2 come two or three times a month.
- 1 said: “whenever I can wake up on time”

The Survey asked people to think of their overall experience and not just of that Sunday, and to write 2 or 3 words to describe their experience of, feelings about, or reaction to, each of the following parts of the Sunday morning worship at St. Andrew’s United Church...

Parking

- 19 out of the 57 respondents made a comment to the effect that paving the parking lot might be a good thing, or commented on the sloppy conditions.
- 4 commented that the parking could be better organized.
- 9 said we need more parking.
- The worship committee is making some very informal inquiries about what it might cost to pave our lot. This has been explored by the Board in the past.
- These comments will also be reported to the Church Board.
- Additional handicapped parking has been added
- Note: a graveled lane on the north side of the building leads to ‘overflow parking’

Entering the Building & Being Greeted

- all the comments made here were essentially positive
- Note: Terry Archer recruits greeters and ushers – speak to him to volunteer.
- The Pastoral Care Committee (Ruth Smith convenor) organizes the “welcomers” who meet newcomers and help orient them to the church – speak to her to volunteer

Lobby/Washrooms/ Coat Racks

- 49 out of 57 comments were positive
- 8 offered suggestions of various kinds
- Comments about the coldness of the women’s washroom will be referred to our heating maintenance contractor.

Order of Service/ Bulletin

- 46 of 57 responses were positive in nature.
- Suggestions included: using less paper, simplifying the order, varying it more, and, when possible, shortening it.

Yellowpage - Newsletter

- 43 essentially positive comments
- 7 negative comments and/or suggestions
- The YellowPage has now been phased out and in its place we have up-graded our bulletin boards in the lobby with one for each major area of church life and work – check them out !
- The recently introduced communication binders also have announcements and other information.

Seating

- 46 positive comments out of 57
- 6 with suggestions including that people should sit closer together, or closer to the front, and that no one “owns” their pew even if they habitually sit in it !
- Worship committee is considering removing the very front row of pews to create more room at the front.

Lighting

- 44 comments basically positive
- 6 suggestions ranging from ‘too bright’ or ‘too harsh’, to ‘too dim’
- The property committee will be asked to look at the lights under the side valances: some are out, perhaps brighter lights are needed there.

Hymn Books

- 22 basically positive comments
- 21 with suggestions, including:
 - o 10 about “juggling” too many books
 - o 5 about using the ‘brown’ book more
 - o 3 about moving to digital projection
 - o 1 not liking the ‘brown’ book
 - o 1 that books are too heavy
 - o 1 asking for more tuneful hymns
- the Worship Committee discusses hymns and music at every meeting. Future hymn selection guidelines will include attempting to have at least one ‘brown book’ hymn each week. We will work at planning the order to reduce book juggling, and keeping a balance of new and familiar music.

Pre-service/ Gathering Music

- 38 out of 57 basically positive comments
- 11 with suggestions including 7 asking for ‘more familiar’ songs in this part of the service.
- one suggestion that we should have coffee and donuts for those who linger at the start !
- A time for quiet reflection between the announcements and beginning of the formal service will be introduced.

Announcements

- 38 out of 57 basically positive comments
- 9 with suggestions or comments including
 - o 2 – everyone needs to use the microphone
 - o 6 – announcements should be brief
 - o 1 – people who come in late miss the announcements.
 - o Posting announcements on St. Andrew’s web page: www.sprucegroveunited.org
 - o Using digital projection for announcements.

Printed Community Prayers

- 32 out of 57 essentially positive comments
- 5 with suggestions, including preference for the minister saying the prayers, using digital projection, and preference for less printed material.

Hymn Selection

- 29 basically positive comments
- 14 with suggestions including:
 - o 6 - `too many new hymns`
 - o 8 - `more old familiar hymns`

Hymn of the Month

- 27 basically positive comments
- 23 with suggestions or comments including:
 - o 9 – difficulty learning new songs
 - o 4 – too much repetition
 - o 2 – choir needs to know new songs
 - o 7 – don`t like the new hymns
- The worship committee notes that song teachers tell us it take at least 4 repetitions to get a new hymn tune firmly into our musical repertoire – repeating a new hymn helps with this.

Learning Together

- 36 basically positive comments
- 12 with suggestion or comments including:
 - o 8 – this part of service often too long
- The worship committee feels that this part of the service is an essential part of welcoming children and their families to our church family.
- When the learning together time involves essentially telling one of the scripture stories, it will no longer be repeated during the regular scripture readings

Choir Anthems

- 52 out of 57 basically positive comments

Choir Anthems (continued)

- 7 with suggestions or comments including : more variety, choir should be closer to the congregation, `not like they used to be`
- Leader Jannie Smith and the Choir are exploring new ways to position the group to allow for best projection of sound.
- Other kinds of “Special Music” – solos duets, instrumentals will be explored.

Introduction to Scripture

- 32 out of 57 positive comments
- 16 with suggestions including:
 - o 9 – this part is `too wordy`

Scripture Readings/ Psalm

- 35 basically positive comments
- 17 with suggestions including : 11 suggesting that there are too many readings.
- A special Scripture Readers Workshop will be held in the fall to review the basics of effectively communicating this important part of our worship.
- We are looking at having Bibles available in the pews and at digital projection of the readings

Sermon/Reflection

- 48 out of 57 essentially positive comments
- 11 with suggestions including: could be shortened, `lighten up`, more personal or emotional punch, too slow to get to the point, too much like a Bible study.

Minute For Mission

- 43 out of 57 positive comments
- 8 with suggestions including:
 - o 2 – should be less often
 - o 2 – should be about local concerns
 - o 3 – should be shorter

Offering/Doxology/Dedication

- 43 basically positive comments
- 5 with suggestions including not changing the doxology so often.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern

- 47 out of 57 basically positive comments.
- 2 with suggestions – requests for prayer could be made before the service, and, would prefer a general prayer with quiet time.
- All are reminded to seek permission if possible before raising names as prayer concerns.

Benediction/Commissioning

- 46 out of 57 positive
- 3 with suggestions including preference for having the minister do the benediction.

Choral Blessing

- 49 of 57 essentially positive comments
- 3 suggestions – keep it simple, don't change too often, keep it short.

Leaving the Sanctuary

- 43 basically positive comments
- 10 with suggestions of various kinds including:
 - o Should happen at 11 am sharp !
 - o Everyone should invite someone for coffee
 - o Handshaking is a bit routine – not very personal

Coffee/ Social Time

- 46 basically positive comments
- 8 with various suggestions including:
 - o 4 suggesting importance of including all and welcoming new folks into our familiar circles.
- Pastoral Care committee will be asked to consider having a greeter during coffee time to help newcomers get introduced and oriented.
- We will consider an occasional “icebreaker” during coffee time to mix people up a bit, and help us get to know each other.

Communion Services

- 44 positive comments out of 57 surveys
- 10 with suggestions including:
 - o 3 concerns about hygiene in the intinction method of serving communion
 - o 3 comments on communion services being too long.
- Worship committee is considering removal of the front pew and each side to open the space more.
- We will look at hand cleanser dispensers in the lobby.
- We will have the communion bread pre-cut to make it simpler and more hygienic to serve.

Baptism Services

- 40 basically positive comments out of 57
- 7 with suggestions including comments on the service getting too long, and that it would be nice to see the families again.
- Note: we do try to stay in touch with baptism families and send out cards on the anniversary of the baptisms. This fall we will send a special letter out to the last three years of baptismal families with information and an invitation to participate in Sunday School

Other Comments

- there were 41 people out of the 57 who completed the survey who made comments in this section, ranging from just a few words to whole paragraphs.
- 20 of the 41 had essentially positive things to say
- 25 of the 41 had suggestions to make.
- These comments are all being considered, discussed and acted on by the Worship Committee, or referred to Board or other committees for consideration.

The Worship Committee thanks everyone who participated in the survey for your comments and suggestions. It all becomes grist for the mill and food for thought in our ongoing efforts to create a worship life at St. Andrew's United that is faithful, welcoming, and life giving.

If you did not have a chance to fill out the survey and would like to share your thoughts and suggestions please feel free to get in touch with a member of the worship committee:

- Wendy Sterling (Chairperson), Shirley Kabachia, Ann Klapstein, Kathy Manyk, Maxine Anderson, Jannie Smith, Laura Weed, Sharon Madge, Rev. Nel Ouwens and Rev. Curtis Tufts.

New Members are welcome on the Committee as well – we meet once a month.

Any comments/suggestions can be emailed to the Worship Committee care of standrews@cruzinternet.com