

Speak Today, Shape Tomorrow

Introduction

The following pages are a summary of the responses received from our parish to the two Speak Today, Shape Tomorrow questions. As we reviewed the responses, several themes became apparent. To help us better understand and communicate the responses, we summarized the responses for each question according to theme category.

As you will see in the following summary, our parish highly values our strong sense of community, our commitment to service, our meaningful liturgy and worship, our staff, and our youth / adult education and formation programs.

Hopes for the future include a desire to build on our foundational strengths including more community building opportunities, increased inclusiveness, expansion of outreach and social justice activities, expansion of teen and children's programs, and expansion of adult formation and social programs (including young adults).

As we summarized the responses, we also calculated the total number of responses for each question and the number of "mentions" within those responses of the identified categories. That information is also included on the following pages and provides some insight into the priority of the theme categories among the respondents. Note that each response often touched on more than one category, which is why the total number of "mentions" is greater than the total number of responses received.

Under each category, we have listed some of the specific examples that were provided by the respondents. These are presented to help illustrate not only what topics were included in the category but to also capture some of the representative thoughts and ideas put forth. This information will also give the Parish Councils clarification as they develop future strategic plans that will incorporate the collective input from the Parish. These bulleted details in categories under Question 2, our Hopes, should not be taken as a specific direction that we will follow, but rather should be treated as illustrative ideas for discussion during our planning for the future.

Please take a few minutes to read the full detail in this report as it is very enlightening. Thank you to all who took the time to carefully and prayerfully respond. Your thoughts are invaluable in helping to shape our future as a parish community.

Question 1: What do you most appreciate and value about Good Shepherd? Why do you choose to be a member?

Summary of 132 Responses

(x) = Number of mentions

1. A strong sense of **community (90)**
 - Welcoming, friendly, faith-filled, energetic, compassionate parishioners & staff
 - Smaller parish feel (close knit)
 - Open, caring atmosphere and sense of belonging
 - Personal invitations to become involved
 - Fellowship opportunities, faith sharing communities, and social gatherings
2. Meaningful **liturgy** and spirit-filled **worship (49)**
 - Music (selection & quality of choir/musicians) (28)
 - Homilies (content, delivery) (9)
 - Willing participation of parishioners and level of effort put into the liturgy
 - Spirit of holiness & prayerfulness; feeling God's presence; joining hands during Our Father; good lectors
 - Sunday 5pm Mass (less traditional feel / teen participation) (3)
3. A culture of **reaching out to others** in need (22)
 - Outreach & Social Justice ministries / opportunities and awareness of Social Justice issues
 - Humble, gracious approach of volunteers
 - El Salvador twining
4. **Strong leadership (15)**
 - Fr. Jim / Staff
 - Caring / compassionate / helpful / open to change
 - Blessed with good priests; (Love Fr. Jim; Appreciate Fr. Luke / Fr. Tom)
5. Relevant **Youth programs (11)**
 - Oasis (5)
 - RAFT & Kids Creed (4)
 - Little Lambs, Nursery, Children's Liturgy (2)
6. Provides the **"whole package" (11)**
 - Diversity in programs and opportunities for involvement
 - Ability to meet a wide range of spiritual needs / spiritual growth, including adult formation & RCIA
 - Liturgy, community, youth programs, school, social functions, environment
7. Outstanding **School (10)**
 - Teachers, small class rooms, leadership, good education, Catholic environment
 - Stay because I am in or we have children in the school (possible challenge)
8. **Tradition / long history** with the parish (7)
 - "Initially joined because it was "progressive", now that it isn't we stay because of history"
 - Made commitment to "see it through" (referring to buildings)
 - Grew up in the parish and still love it
9. **Location (5)**
 - Close to home / within parish boundary
10. Beautiful, functional **facilities (2)**
 - Welcoming, well cared for, simple

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Question 2: What is your greatest hope for Good Shepherd and what is needed to make that happen?

Summary of 137 Responses

(x) = Number of mentions

1. Community (32)

- **We take the sense of community to an even higher level (27)**
 - Add programs and activities at convenient times targeted to meet the needs of Young Adults (4), singles of all ages (including divorce support) (2), seniors (bring back Silver Liners), young families (pre-school children) (2), (Note: consider opportunities to partner with other parishes). (12 total mentions)
 - More personal invitations and personal touches (5)
 - More outreach to new parishioners (e.g., mentoring program) (3)
 - More social activities at low / no cost to participate (3)
 - Increased number of parishioners participating in community building activities
 - More opportunities to connect school families and long-time parishioners/non-school families
 - More outreach to home bound / elderly in our parish
 - Improve our communication tools (website, FB, Google Calendar, mobile apps)
- **We practice a high level of inclusiveness (5)**
 - Age, race, economic status, liberal, conservative, giver/non-giver, GS School/Public School, etc.
 - We celebrate the cultural diversity we do have in the parish
 - Ensure everyone attending a function is noticed and feels welcome; be cognizant of new members

2. Service and Financial Stewardship (32)

- **Expanded Outreach and Social Justice Activities (16)**
 - More outreach and social justice activities, including advocacy and awareness (6)
 - Do more for the needy in our community; reach those in need, including marginalized in KCK (4)
 - More international & refugee/immigrant outreach and advocacy (3)
 - Dedicate more \$ resources to outreach and social justice (3)
 - Become environmentally friendly in our GS operations
 - More communications regarding what we are doing in outreach and social justice (some lack of awareness of all we do in this area)
- **We are financially strong (11)**
 - More people are engaged in giving and embrace stewardship; Do not always turn to the same people to give more; more fundraisers (5)
 - Continue to fund school and outreach
(Note: Some felt we are giving too much of our budget to diocese schools)
 - Work on being debt free (3)
 - Focus on the Word and Purpose of God and the \$ will come
- **More people are inspired to volunteer (5)**
 - Increase engagement

3. Youth Programs (30)

- **Expanded Oasis / Teen Programs (16)**
 - More dedicated resources (staff and \$) (5)
 - More overall engagement of our youth: growth in faith and belief, increased involvement in Mass (planning / participating) and other aspects of parish life, more teens involved in Oasis (4)
 - More like Holy Trinity (e.g., LifeTeen) (3)
 - More service and mission opportunities specifically for teens (2)
 - More emphasis on Confirmation and less on Graduation

- **Expanded Children Programs (11)**
 - New, fresh approach to Little Lambs and Kids Creed, including options for under 5 yrs (4)
 - More purposeful activities between GS school children & Kids creed (3)
 - Add Tekakwitha Bible studies (2)
 - Improve communications about activities that can apply to non-GS school children (example: not much knowledge of Trunk or Treat outside of GS School) and more communications to parents about what Kids Creed is studying
 - More nursery staff
 - Better times (earlier than 7:00 pm to accommodate bedtimes) for family programs and more child care options during programs
 - **School (3)**
 - More elective options for 6th-8th graders in GS School
 - Addition of a pre-school program
 - Better options for inclusive education for special needs kids
 - As stated above, more purposeful activities between GS school children & Kids Creed children
- 4. Exciting, meaningful liturgy and worship (27)**
- Add opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary, praying Novena and Divine Mercy, more inclusion of Blessed Mother, return bells during mass (5)
 - More excitement in Mass, especially for teens / young adults; more youth (of all ages) involvement in Mass planning / participation (4)
 - Continue great music, with options for more traditional and less traditional at various Masses (4)
 - Shorter Mass times (4) (Note: recently addressed)
 - Succinct homilies with key takeaways, call to action, challenges to grow spiritually (3)
 - Expanded Mass schedule (or preference for old schedule) (3)
 - Missals for those who are visual learners (3)
 - Materials (screens and printed) to support upcoming changes in liturgy
 - Older servers mentor younger ones
- 5. Expanded Adult Formation Opportunities (14)**
- More Bible studies / faith sharing (4). (Note: Consider more convenient days / times, providing childcare, online/mobile delivery, etc.)
 - More adult education on church teachings / stance on issues, personal spiritual growth - consider Fr. Jim leading some (3)
 - Conduct Christ Renews His Parishes (CRHP) (2)
 - More retreats - with emphasis on spiritual, especially for seniors / women
- 6. Evangelize (12)**
- Continue to grow in numbers (more parishioners, more young families) (7)
 - Reach out to those who have left (for another denomination or church) and invite them back, even if we have before; understand why they left. (4)
 - Continue the mission of Christ (evangelize)
 - Each parishioner invites someone to church
- 7. Spirit Driven (9)**
- Pray for God's direction
 - Trust that we will be given resources for his purpose
 - Value every person for being a child of God and not for what they give or participate in
 - Tend his vineyard
 - Grow spiritually through involvement
 - We are a sacred, nurturing place
 - Live our lives as Jesus wished and carry each other in times of trouble

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8. Continue On the Current Right Path (9)

- Caring/welcoming attributes (3)
- Whole picture of programs, liturgy, school, service to others, etc. (3)
- Stable / strong leadership (3)

9. Culture (9)

- **We should return to our more progressive roots - what made us unique. (6)**
 - Hold on to / recreate GS long standing tradition of liberal Catholic ideals (2)
 - Be a place for more liberal Catholics, many of whom we have lost to other denominations (2)
 - Be an advocate for social justice reform within the Catholic church, including: more openness on issues, less hierarchy, and better roles for women (2)
- **We should be more traditional (3)**
 - Getting there (2)
 - Obey the Pope