

## Evangelism Questionnaire – Report on Responses

August, 2011

Dear St. David's family and friends,

The Evangelism Committee spent prayerful hours forming the survey that was given to the people of St. David's to gather feedback to enhance our congregation's mission and ministry of welcome. Our mission at St. David's is "to live faithfully, to make disciples, and to bring God's love to all."

The survey was distributed to the congregation on the weekends of May 14/15 as well as May 21/22 with coffee and cake provided in the Fellowship Hall. Our goal was to provide a place where people could take time and answer the questions prayerfully. We distributed copies in the St. David's *Herald* and *E-Herald*, and people who do not receive the *Herald* were identified and a copy was sent to their home. In all we distributed 322 questionnaires.

From the questionnaires distributed, we received sixty-six (66) responses. Fifty-two of these represent the age group between 51 -75+ (78.7%). We are grateful for the thoughtful responses, encouraged by the core values, and have listened to the issues and concerns they raise.

Although the number of responses received was not large, it was enough to identify issues that can be addressed. What follows represents the findings of the evangelism committee.

The responses to the first question: **"What I need – or seek – most to receive as I come to worship at St. David's \_\_\_[fill in the blank]\_\_\_"** give an encouraging description of the heart and pulse of our St. David's family. Here are a few of the responses:

*"Getting closer to God and getting to know the Bible better,; "Christian growth, worship, praise, prayer, a presence," "to seek strength, courage, understanding and peace to carry on," "hearing the message, to be spiritually fed, fellowship," "God's blessing, word, and communion," "spiritual guidance, friendship, religious education for children," "forgiveness and mental peace," "a welcoming, warm, spiritual atmosphere," "prayers, fellowship, inspirational music," "my quiet time with my Lord," "music, fellowship, meaningful sermon," "comfort during times of difficulties," "a place of worship, peace, community, friendship and a sense of belonging."*

These responses highlight the centrality of the Word of God, Holy Communion, the means of grace, the importance of being in the presence of God. They provide the rationale for the responses that follow in the next two questions.

1. In answer to the question, **"What things bring you closer to God as you worship at St. David's?"** respondents identified the following in order of importance: holy communion, prayer, music and hearing the Word as their core values in our worship service. Among the comments respondents wrote in about music: "Good music always, fits the Gospel;" "Just wish for a few more old time hymns. . . All are done wonderfully well;" "Led by the Spirit;" "Really

enjoy the new organist – great pianist.” “Especially sets the tone for prayerful and receptive worship;” “Too many unfamiliar hymns – organ music much too loud (love, love piano);” “Have more uplifting music.” Comments about worshipful atmosphere include: “Very important;” “I appreciate the way Pr. Hartford settles the congregation before the service;” “I think we need to strengthen a more worshipful atmosphere.”

2. In answer to the question, “**What are the things that sometimes ‘get in the way’ of your coming closer to God as you worship at St. David’s?**” respondents identified the following in order of importance: preaching the gospel, being able to hear scripture, worshipful atmosphere and baptisms. A few comments: “Conversations between people often make hearing difficult;” “Trouble hearing pastor speak;” “I would like it (preaching the gospel) to relate more to everyday life;” “More focus on /application of Biblical principles;” “Sermons are too long . . . Should be no longer than twelve minutes;” “Need more leadership in singing hymns;” “Length of service.”

- **This is how we are addressing these issues:**

A. Preaching the Gospel:

- The Pastors agree that they will be aware of the time and the length of their sermons.
- When possible, Pastors will make connections in their sermons when there are issues, problems or concerns within the congregation.
- Since sermons are based on the prescribed Lectionary readings, the Pastors will endeavor to convey the scriptural message in a meaningful manner, making connections in their sermons with issues, problems, or concerns within the congregation when appropriate.

B. Being Able to Hear the Word:

- Pastor Meyers has contacted Chuck Schultz who has examined our sound system. He suggested that two additional speakers be placed in the rear of the church.
- In addition, our sound system can be configured to work off “Led by the Spirit’s” sound board located in the choir loft.
- Working off the sound board will give us the ability to amplify the sound of the piano.

C. Worshipful Atmosphere:

- In order to limit the amount of distractions and noise at the beginning of the service, the doors to the narthex will be closed after the announcements. The doors will be reopened after the beginning of the Processional Hymn.
- In the service bulletin, participants will be asked to be quiet and prayerful by a printed reminder stating,

*“Welcome to St. David’s. As you enter, be thoughtful, silent and reverent for this is the house of God.*

*Before the service, speak to the Lord.*

*During the service, let the Lord speak to you.*

*After the service, speak to one another.”*

- To limit the amount of socialization during “The Peace”, the Pastors will remind congregants of its intended meaning. Please greet those nearest you and keep the center aisle clear for the ushers. When the organ begins to play, people should be back in their seats.
- The Worship Committee, Education Committee and Pastors have taken a good look at the First Family Fellowship service on the first Sunday of each month. It was noted that less than half of the Sunday School students and fewer parents regularly attend that service. Therefore the First Family Fellowship will be suspended beginning in September. In its place, an Opening Worship component for the Sunday School will be held in the Historic Nave. Suspending the First Family Fellowship will give our congregants the opportunity to hear an adult sermon each week.
- Another issue identified was having continuous Communion. Communion will be given by table, except when there are extenuating circumstances, such as a large number of communicants, when there are baptisms or during the summer when the number of those assisting at the altar is decreased, the Pastors may call for continuous communion.

D. Baptisms:

- Because we are baptized into a community of faith, it is appropriate that we welcome new member as a gathered community. The Pastors will direct secretarial staff to put reminders of upcoming baptisms in the weekly bulletin, as they already are in the Herald and the calendar. This will enable those for whom baptism might be a distraction, to plan their attendance accordingly.

3. Regarding the question, “**What ministries do we at St. David’s Congregation do well?**” respondents identified the following as ministries we do well: worship, fellowship, social ministry/service and care ministries.

4. Regarding the question, “**What *other* activities in the following areas of ministry would you like to see at St. David’s?**” respondents identified the following areas of interest:

- Fellowship
- Christian Education
- Outreach/Evangelism
- Youth Activities
- Adult Groups
- Bible Study
- Care Ministries
- Seniors
- Family Activities
- Special Interest
- Social Ministry
- Worship

The above suggestions are being passed along to the appropriate committees for consideration. These committees would greatly appreciate your involvement.

5. Regarding the question, **“Would you like to see a true fellowship hour between the Sunday worship services, even if it involved adjusting the service times?”** 21 responded that they would like a fellowship hour, and 20 people responded no to that question. There were 16 that gave no response and 9 that gave an ambiguous answer.

**These are the actions under consideration:**

a. Beginning in September, worship times on Sunday will be changed from 9:30 to 9:00 a.m. The 11:00 service will remain the same time. This will allow for a true Fellowship hour, passing time in the parking lot between services, and no conflict with the service running longer than the Sunday School.

b. Sunday School will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a 15 minute Opening Devotion led by one of the Pastors, Deacons, or Lay Leaders in the Historic Nave.

c. Sunday School Classes will then run from 9:20-10:15 allowing ample time for instruction following the Opening Worship in the Historic Nave. After the 9:00 a.m. service, parents will be able to meet their children in the Fellowship Hall and enjoy refreshments.

**Where do we go from here?** While the number of respondents who were recent new members was not large their responses can be helpful. In answer to the question: **Please tell us what things affected your decision to join St. David’s?** the following comments were expressed: “I wanted a more personal relationship with God;” “Referral from member of former church;” “Location. Pastor;” “People are like family – never judge you;” “My daughter and grandchildren come here;” “Welcoming atmosphere, encouragement by all, availability of Pastors’ support; a comfort zone to ask any and all questions.”

**Are there any suggestions you have that might help us to attract new members?**

Here are a few of the ideas you shared: “Invite a Friend Sunday;” “Perhaps an ‘express service’ for those who are new as an introduction;” “Fellowship and perhaps a mentor family;” “Maybe a Buddy –type system – to keep the new person well informed and feeling welcome. . . until they feel more independent;” “Continue the very helpful ‘welcome new comer bags’;” “If we lift up Christ – the rest will follow.”

Our mission at St. David’s is “to live faithfully, to make disciples, and to bring God’s love to all.” Thank you for your responses. Here’s one that provides a good summary to this report, and a springboard into the future:

**“I am new to St. David’s. I have enjoyed being fed at your Church! Thank you!”**

**To all of you who responded: Thank you!**