



ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH SURVEY-2008

Dear Friends at St. Thomas,

To help us evaluate our work and plan for the future, the Vestry asks that all adult members (16 and over) complete this survey. Spouses should complete separate forms. Additional copies of this form are on the church's website at www.stthomasdiamondhead.org

This survey is important for future plans at St. Thomas. It is not necessary to complete it all at once. Feel free to work on it for a while and come back to it later. However, we ask that you return the completed survey to the church office **by Sunday, June 22**.

Please do not sign this form, as it is intended to provide anonymous responses. We realize that people view surveys differently. Some people might prefer not to answer certain questions, while others would do so. If you do not want to respond to any question, please skip over it and go on to the next one.

We thank you in advance for your important input to the church

In Christ

Fr. Bill

Dick Park, Senior Warden

Jack Allen, Junior Warden

The survey covers ten areas: (1) Demographics and Background Information, (2) Worship, (3) Discipleship, Fellowship, and Pastoral Care within the church, (4) Outreach into the Community, (5) Youth Programs and Sunday School, (6) Adult Christian Education, (7) Budget and Finance, (8) Church Growth, (9) Communications, and (10) Personal Comments.

I. Demographics and Background Information

1. Age. 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-65 Over 65
2. Gender. Male Female
3. Marital Status. Single Married Widowed or Divorced
4. If you are married, please check the most accurate statement below.
 Spouse is not involved in any church.
 Spouse attends another church.
 Spouse attends St. Thomas but is less involved in the church than I am.
 Spouse is about as involved as I am in St. Thomas.
 Spouse is more involved than I am in St. Thomas.
5. Apart from worship, I am involved at St. Thomas A Lot Some Not Much
6. How many children do you have of any age? _____(one answer per household)
7. How many children live in your household? _____(one answer per household)

8. Which of the following best describes your current situation?
- Employed full time Employed part time Retired
 Retired, working part time Homemaker Student
 Unemployed Other _____
9. What is your annual household income before taxes? (one answer per household)
- \$0-14,999 \$15,000-\$24,999 \$25,000-\$49,999
 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$75,000-\$99,999 \$100,000-\$149,999
 \$150,000+ Someone else in my family answered this question
10. How long have you been attending St. Thomas?
- Less than 2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 11-20 years
 More than 20 years
11. Do you consider yourself an Episcopalian? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, for how long?
- Less than 2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 11-20 years
 More than 20 years. If *no*, do you plan to become an Episcopalian? ___ Yes ___ No
12. What was your church involvement before coming to St. Thomas?
- Other Episcopal church on the Coast Other Episcopal church elsewhere
 Mainline Protestant (Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) Roman Catholic
 Orthodox Baptist Evangelical Pentecostal Non-Christian
 None Other _____
13. What initially drew you to St. Thomas? Please *check all that apply*.
- A friend Closest church Only Episcopal Church in Diamondhead
 Style of worship and liturgy Reputation Ministries Advertising
 Sunday School/Youth Programs The Rector Fellowship The Building
 Sermons Music and choir Holy Spirit Other _____
14. On average, about how many times have you attended worship services at St. Thomas during the last twelve months?
- Almost weekly Once or twice a month
 Several times during the year Infrequently
15. What service do you usually attend? Please *check all that apply*.
- Sunday 8:00 am Sunday 10:00 am Wednesday 6:00 pm
16. Please check the statement below that is most accurate concerning your closest friends. Do not consider relatives.
- Most of those with whom I share social time attend St. Thomas.
 About half my social time is shared with people who attend St. Thomas.
 Less than half my social time is shared with people who attend St. Thomas.

II. Worship

1. Please *rank order* (1 through 5, with 1 being the best) the five parts of worship (listed in alphabetical order below) that mean the most to you.

_____ Eucharist
_____ Familiarity with the Service
_____ Flowers
_____ Liturgical Style and Forms of the Prayer Book
_____ Music and Choir
_____ Presence of the Spirit
_____ Sermons
_____ The Physical Setting in the Church
_____ Worshipping and Praying with Other People
_____ Other (please specify) _____

2. Please *check as many of* the statements below that are mostly true for you

- I attend the 8:00 service, and have no opinions one way or the other about music.
 I like our music at 10:00 am just about the way it is.
 I would like our music at 10:00 am to be more traditional.
 I would like our music at 10:00 to be more contemporary.
 If you would like the music to be more contemporary, then *check any of the boxes* below where you think contemporary music would be appropriate.
- Processional (Entrance) Sequence Hymn (before the Gospel is read)
 At the Offertory Communion Hymns Recessional (Exit)
- We should try to have more different types of musical instruments play on Sunday.

3. If you do not attend our regular Wednesday evening during the year, please *check all of the statements* about that service that are mostly true

- My schedule prevents me from attending the service on Wednesdays at 6:00.
 Sunday worship is meaningful, and I don't feel a strong call to midweek worship.
 I would consider attending the regular Wednesday 6:00 service if I knew more about it.
 If the regular Wednesday service was only a Eucharist I would be more likely to attend.
 If the regular Wednesday service was only a Healing Service I would be more likely to attend.
 I would like to attend midweek worship, but not on Wednesday. A better day and time for me would be _____ at _____pm.
 I would attend a service of Eucharist on *Saturday evenings* around 5:00 pm. In this event I probably (___would) (___would not) attend the following Sunday.

4. Please *check any of the* statements about Lent and Holy Week services that are mostly true.
- I have not been able to participate in the Wednesday evening Lenten programs.
 - I have not been able to participate in the Wednesday evening Lenten programs, but have the following suggestion(s): _____

 - I have been able to participate in the Wednesday evening Lenten programs, and have no suggestions
 - I have been able to participate in the Wednesday evening Lenten programs, and have the following suggestion(s): _____

 - Our Holy Week schedule is fine the way it is.
 - We have too many services during Holy Week. We should not do Daily Eucharist at noon, Tenebrae on Wednesday evening, Holy Saturday (morning), Easter Vigil (Saturday Evening).
5. I have the following suggestion(s) about worship services at St. Thomas: _____

III. Discipleship, Fellowship, and Pastoral Care

This section covers how we relate to each other within the St. Thomas family. "Discipleship" is *how we extend the Gospel* to each other. "Fellowship" is *how we extend Christ's love* to each other. "Pastoral Care" relates to how we care for the ill, infirm, and homebound.

1. Please *check all of the statements* below that are mostly true for you.
- Members of the church do a good job on an informal and personal basis of providing discipleship and fellowship to each other.
 - Members of the church do not do a very good job in an informal and personal basis of providing discipleship and fellowship to each other. We should do more by _____

 - The Church's formal, organized programs for discipleship and fellowship are good and do not need to be changed.
 - The church should develop additional formal organized programs for discipleship and fellowship. Suggestions are: _____

 - The church and its leadership do a good job of providing pastoral care to people
 - The church and its leadership could do a better job of providing pastoral care to people. Suggestions are: _____

2. I have the following other suggestion(s) about discipleship, fellowship, or pastoral care at St. Thomas: _____

3. There has been conversation about parish retreats. Please check *all the statements* with which you agree. Options for locations include the Gray Center, the Solomon Center of the Diocese of Louisiana, or possibly a conveniently located hotel.
- We should have an off-site overnight parish retreat with an organized program having a specific purpose to build or strengthen our church community.
 - We should have an off-site one day retreat for a similar purpose.
 - A retreat should be for adults only.
 - A retreat should be a family retreat.
 - There should be an overnight mens' weekend.
 - There should be an overnight womens' weekend.
 - If I go on an overnight retreat, it would be important that the accommodations be sufficient for my medical and health needs.
 - Other Comments about a Retreat: _____

IV. Outreach into the Community

Whereas the preceding section looked inward to our relations with each other in the church, this section looks outward to our relations with the community beyond St. Thomas.

1. Please check the statement that is the most accurate.
- St. Thomas does a good job of outreach into the community.
 - St. Thomas could do more to reach out to help the community.
2. In what ways do you believe St. Thomas is known by others in the community for outreach activities? *Check all* boxes that describe how you think others perceive us.
- Active Katrina recovery
 - Providing food for the hungry
 - Helping to prepare or serve meals to the hungry
 - Helping disadvantaged and underprivileged children at Christmas
 - Helping disadvantaged and underprivileged children during the year
 - Helping to provide assistance to people who need housing
 - Supporting private charitable organizations that help needy people
 - Collecting items (other than nonperishable food) for distribution to the needy
 - Other ways in which St. Thomas is known in the community are _____

3. I would like to see St. Thomas become even more involved in the following outreach programs in the community.
- Providing food for the hungry
 - Helping to prepare or serve meals to the hungry
 - Helping disadvantaged and underprivileged children at Christmas
 - Helping disadvantaged and underprivileged children during the year
 - Helping to provide assistance to people who need housing
 - Supporting private charitable organizations that help needy people
 - Collecting items (other than nonperishable food) for distribution to the needy
 - Other ways (specify) _____
-
4. I have the following suggestion(s) about community outreach programs at St. Thomas: _____
-
-

V. Sunday School and Youth Programs

Note: It is not necessary to have children in Sunday School or Youth Programs to respond to questions in this section. Even if you have no children at St. Thomas, we welcome your views. *Sunday School* = ages 5-12. *Youth Group* = Jr. and Sr. High School.

1. Please check if you have children or grandchildren who participate in or are of appropriate age for either Sunday School Youth Group for older children
2. If yes to No. 1, they attend Regularly Occasionally Hardly Ever
3. Please *check all of the statements* that you believe are mostly true about Sunday School and the Youth Group. I do not have an opinion
 - Our *Sunday School* Programs are well designed and operated
 - Our *Sunday School* Programs could be better designed and operated
 - Our *Youth Group* Programs are well designed and operated
 - Our *Youth Group* could be better designed and operated
 - Our *Sunday School* Programs could be improved by the following: _____

 - Our *Youth Group* Programs could be improved by the following: _____

4. It is (___ convenient) (___ inconvenient) for the Youth Group to meet at 5:00 pm on Sunday evenings. I have no opinion.

5. Please *rank order* (1 through 5, with 1 being the most important) those *Sunday School* activities that you think are most important to the least important. I do not have any firm opinions

_____Activities during Sunday School that are fun but not religious

_____Activities during the week or on week-ends that are fun but not religious

_____Bible Teaching

_____Biblical and Religious Games

_____Games, generally

_____Group Outings

_____Popcorn Theology (Friday night movie at the church with discussion)

_____Religious Arts and Crafts

_____Religious Movies and Videos (at Sunday School)

_____Other Sunday School Activities (specify) _____

6. Check the statement that is mostly true for you. I do not have an opinion.

We should continue to have Sunday School at 10:00 am during the first part of the regular adult service.

We should change Sunday School to 9:00 am so the kids can attend the entire 10:00 worship service.

7. Other comments about Sunday School at St. Thomas: _____

8. Please *rank order* (1 through 5, with 1 being the most important) those *Jr. and Sr. High School Youth Group* activities that you think are most important to the least important. Note: The Youth Group normally meets at 5:00 pm on Sunday evenings. I do not have any firm opinions.

_____Activities on Sunday evenings that are fun but not religious

_____Activities during the week or week ends that are fun but not religious

_____Bible Teaching

_____Biblical and Religious Games

_____Field Trips (canoe trips, beach parties, etc.)

_____Games, generally

_____One-on-one Mentoring, as needed

_____Outside Activities

_____Mission Trips to Another Diocese (fun and public service components)

_____Public Service Activities in Hancock County

_____Religious Arts and Crafts

_____ Religious Movies and Videos

_____ Other Youth Group Activities (specify) _____

9. I have the following opinion about Youth Group members attending youth camps and youth activities at Camp Bratton Green (the diocesan youth facility near the Gray Center north of Jackson).

Very Important Moderately Important Not Very Important No Opinion

10. Other comments about the Youth Group at St. Thomas: _____

VI. Adult Christian Education

Note: Adult Christian Education programs normally have been held in the large Sunday School room at 9:00 am on Sundays between the two services.

1. Please check *only one statement* below that is the most accurate.

Adult Education classes are a very important church program.

Adult Education classes are a moderately important church program.

Adult Education classes are not a very important church program.

Adult Education classes are OK for those who want to attend, but they are not very important to me.

My view of the importance of Adult Education in the church is _____

2. Please check *all of the* statements below that are mostly accurate.

I try to attend the 9:00 am Adult Education presentations whenever I can.

I have attended only a few 9:00 am Adult Education classes.

I have never attended a 9:00 am Sunday Adult Education class.

I would prefer Adult Education classes on Wednesday evenings

I would prefer Adult Education classes on Wednesday evenings if combined with some sort of pot luck dinner

3. It would be the *most* difficult to attend Adult Education classes during (*check one*)

Summer Fall Winter Spring No Difference

4. Please check *only one* statement below that is the most accurate

I would like to attend Adult Education classes, but because we don't always have them I do not know which Sundays they are scheduled.

I usually am aware of when Adult Education classes are scheduled, and my attendance depends on other factors.

5. (If applicable) It is difficult for me to attend a 9:00 am Adult Education class on Sunday because _____

6. (If applicable) I would be more likely to attend a 9:00 am Adult Education class on Sunday if _____
-
7. Please check *only one statement* below that is the most accurate.
- I believe that I understand the purpose of the 9:00 am Adult Education classes and what happens at those classes.
 - I do not understand very much about the 9:00 am Adult Education classes
8. Please check *only one statement* that is most true for you.
- Topics for Adult Education classes should be selected by Father Bill or others who lead the classes
 - Adult Education classes should focus mostly on the Bible
 - Adult Education classes should focus mostly on theological questions that are raised by or related to our faith
 - Adult Education classes should focus mostly on the Church History
 - Adult Education classes should focus mostly on _____
-
- I don't have any opinions to offer about Adult Education
9. Other comment(s) about Adult Education at St. Thomas: _____
-

VII. Budget and Finance

The questions in this section are designed to help the church plan its expenses and stewardship campaigns in ways that respond to how people feel.

1. Please check *all of the statements* that you think are true about our expenses.
- Our levels of expenses are about right.
 - We spend too much money on _____
 - We do not spend enough money on _____
 - Other comments on expenses are _____
-
- I do not know enough about our expenses to offer meaningful comments.
2. Please check *all of the statements* that you think are true about your level of giving to the church.
- I give as much to St. Thomas now as I reasonably can.
 - I could/would give more to St. Thomas if _____
-
- I believe that tithing (10%) is a good idea for people who can afford it
 - I believe that basing a pledge on a percentage of income even though less than 10% is a good idea when people are not able to tithe.
 - I do not believe in the idea of tithing or percentage giving.

Other comments on giving are _____

3. Please check *all of the* statements that you believe are true about stewardship.
- The purpose of stewardship is to pay the expenses of the church.
 - The purpose of stewardship is to give back to God for the blessings given to us.
 - The purpose of stewardship is to participate in a spiritual discipline.
 - I think the purpose of stewardship is _____
-
- If I am not able to make a pledge to the church, or must pledge less than I want, it is OK to make up the difference by doing volunteer work for the church as a substitute.
- I am not sure how to define stewardship.
4. Please check *all of the statements* below that you think are true concerning our stewardship campaigns at St. Thomas.
- Our stewardship campaigns seem to be effectively managed and presented.
 - Our stewardship campaigns should give us more information about why the church needs money.
 - Our stewardship campaigns should give us more information about why I should give money to the church.
 - Our stewardship campaigns put on too much pressure to give.
 - Our stewardship campaigns should be more emphatic or assertive.
5. Please check *only one answer* below.
- Most of the requests to give to the church should come from Father Bill.
 - Most of the requests to give to the church should come from the Stewardship Committee.
 - It doesn't really make that much difference whether the requests to give to the church come from Father Bill or the Stewardship Committee.
6. Please check *only one answer* below.
- I do not pledge to the church, but give on Sundays during the collection.
 - I mostly know how much I am going to pledge to the church even before the fall Stewardship Campaign begins.
 - The fall Stewardship Campaign is helpful as I consider my decision to pledge to the church for the next year.
7. Please check *all of the* responses below that are mostly true for you
- An every-member-canvass, where each family in the church is contacted by phone or a personal visit in the fall, would be a useful part of a Stewardship Campaign.
 - I would not be in favor of an every-member-canvass.
 - I do not have an opinion either way about an every-member-canvass.
 - I appreciate a few sermons that discuss stewardship.
 - I do not like sermons that discuss stewardship.

- I do not have an opinion either way about stewardship sermons.
- I probably would participate in small group meetings to discuss the various aspects of stewardship.
- I probably would not participate in small group meetings to discuss the various aspects of stewardship.
- I have made or would consider making a provision in my will for St. Thomas.
- I would not consider making a provision in my will for St. Thomas.
- I would need more information before I would consider making a provision in my will for St. Thomas.

7. Other comment(s) about Stewardship at St. Thomas: _____

VIII. Church Growth

1. Please *rank order* (from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most effective) the following ways (listed in alphabetical order) which would be most helpful in bringing new members into the church. Use zero (0) if you think something is a bad idea.

- _____ Events at the church where meals are served
 - _____ Evening programs at the church during the week
 - _____ Father Bill joining community service organizations
 - _____ Mailing of information about the church to new residents of Diamondhead
 - _____ Making our liturgy and music more contemporary
 - _____ More signs placed in different locations on the church grounds
 - _____ Paid Advertising
 - _____ Personal invitations to others from church members
 - _____ Picnics and other events open to the public using the new Pavilion
 - _____ Stories (free news) in newspapers such as the *Diamondhead News*, the *Sea Coast Echo*, and the *Sun Herald* about church activities
 - _____ Sunday School and Youth Programs
 - _____ Welcoming visitors to the church
 - _____ Word-of-Mouth
 - _____ Other (specify) _____
-

2. Please check *all of the* statements that you believe are mostly true.

- _____ We should start a pre-school day care service at the church during the week that is open to local residents. We would charge a reasonable fee to cover our expenses. We would have to hire at least one supervisor and replace our playground equipment. It would be centered in Johnson Hall.
- _____ We should research some ways to reach into the Latin American community in and around Diamondhead and create activities at the church for them.

_____ We should organize Bingo nights or Bridge activities, or raffles, or draw-downs, or similar activities at the church (the Methodists already do Bridge, but perhaps there is room for more).

_____ The Vestry has had a blanket policy (adopted several years ago) of not allowing profit-making activities at the church even though they might bring people into the church. We should review this policy.

3. Other comment(s) about church growth and new members at St. Thomas: _____

IX. Communications at St. Thomas

1. Please check *all of the* statements below that are mostly true for you.

- The church does a (___ good) (___ average) (___ not very good) job of keeping me informed about what is going on at the church.
- I regularly read the church newsletter, *The St. Thomas Times and Tidings*.
- I do not regularly read the church newsletter, *The St. Thomas Times and Tidings*.
- I regularly read the *News and Announcements* in the Sunday bulletins
- I do not regularly read the *News and Announcements* in the Sunday bulletins
- I am familiar with the church's web site. www.stthomasdiamondhead.org
- I am not familiar with the church's web site.
- I (___ would) (___ would not) like to be on a list to receive e-mail messages about church activities

2. Other comment(s) about communications at St. Thomas: _____

X. Personal Comments

Please use this space to add any other comments or suggestions _____

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation!