

St. James' Episcopal Church Vision Survey  
— Final Report —

July 2010

## Research Objective

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- ▶ The primary objective of the survey was to solicit parishioners' input in creating St. James' Vision for the next 3-5 years
  
- ▶ Specific areas addressed included:
  - ▶ Interest in continuing goals included in the current vision
  - ▶ Level of importance personally in continuing each goal
  - ▶ Level of engagement in ministries/programs that help to accomplish current goals
  - ▶ Preferred focus of activities related to St. James' property and facilities, i.e. expansion vs. renovation/adaptive reuse of current facilities
  - ▶ Preferred distribution of hands-on service projects among local, national and international projects
  - ▶ Identification of new goals and ministries/programs to be included in the next vision

## Research Methodology

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- ▶ Research was conducted via a self-administered Internet survey, which was available to all parishioners
  - ▶ The survey was also available in a printed format; this format was used by 12 participants
  - ▶ Responses from the printed versions were keyed into the Internet survey for ease of data analyses
- ▶ Survey responses were collected from May 10-24, 2010
- ▶ Announcements at the Parish Weekend at Shrine Mont, during Sunday services, in the Sunday bulletin and in the E-pistle were used to inform parishioners of the survey, its purpose and timeframe available for their participation
- ▶ Following initial analyses of the survey results, five focus groups were conducted from early to mid June, 2010 with the purpose of sharing the survey results and soliciting parishioner's opinions of these results and any additional recommendations of goals/ministries/programs for inclusion in the vision for the next 3-5 years
- ▶ Copy of the survey is included in the Appendix

## Conclusions

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- ▶ St. James' efforts through the current vision have been successful for the goals of *Ensure that each parishioner of St. James' is inspired, equipped and empowered to serve as an active disciple within the Christian community of St. James' and Further extend Christ's love to the world by enabling and encouraging each parishioner to become involved in hands-on service projects in the local community, the nation and the world*
  - ▶ Majority of participants feel these goals are important to them personally and are participating in ministries/programs that help to accomplish these goals
  - ▶ Most frequently mentioned types of ministries/programs in which both adults and youth/children currently participate
- ▶ Parishioners agree that these current goals should be continued in the vision for the next 3-5 years

## Conclusions

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- ▶ Activities related to St. James' property and facilities should focus on renovation/adaptive reuse of current facilities instead of expansion
  - ▶ While not mentioned by a majority of participants, there is concern among some parishioners about paying off current debt before incurring new debt and maintaining/upgrading current facilities before considering expansion activities
- ▶ Parishioners do not perceive that an entirely new direction for St. James' (a new goal) is necessary, but some parishioners perceive there is opportunity for improvement and changes in emphasis under current goals
  - ▶ Many participants identified new ministries/programs as new goals; these recommendations are reported under new ministries/programs instead
  - ▶ Recommendations for improvement/change by a few participants each included financial stabilization for the church (paying off current debt), purchasing a new organ, increasing opportunity for adult Christian education, and increasing pastoral care and fellowship opportunities within the congregation

## Conclusions

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- ▶ Parishioners are interested in more hands-on service projects at the local level
  - ▶ Slightly more than half of opportunities for hands-on service projects should be at the local level, one-quarter at the national level and the remainder at the international level
  - ▶ Improving current and offering new, local outreach activities were most frequently mentioned as new ministries/programs to be included in the new vision
  
- ▶ New ministries/programs that enhance and expand adult and youth/children discipleship and/or provide outreach/pastoral care to “seniors” within the congregation are desired by some parishioners
  
- ▶ While not an issue to most parishioners, St. James’ clergy, lay leadership and staff should always be vigilant about improving communications with the congregation (e.g., reaching out to parishioners who are encountering difficult times, vestry decisions and reasons for the decisions, information about new ministries/programs) and enhancing coordination among the various ministries/programs to improve overall effectiveness

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# Survey Findings

## Goal I: Ensure that each parishioner of St. James' is inspired, equipped and empowered to serve as an active disciple within the Christian community of St. James'

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- ▶ Nearly all participants agree that this goal should be continued over the next 3-5 years (96%; n=245)
  - ▶ **Strongly agree: 62%**
  - ▶ Agree 34%
  - ▶ Neutral: 4%
  
- ▶ This goal is personally Important to a majority of participants (77%; n=242)
  - ▶ Somewhat important: 21%
  - ▶ Not at all important 2%
  
- ▶ Majority of participants are at some level of engagement in the ministries/ programs that help to accomplish this goal, with slightly more half being Engaged/Somewhat engaged (87%; n=243)
  - ▶ Extremely engaged: 9%
  - ▶ Very engaged: 19%
  - ▶ **Engaged: 32%**
  - ▶ **Somewhat engaged: 26%**
  - ▶ Not at all engaged: 13%

## **Goal II: Further extend Christ's love to the world by enabling and encouraging each parishioner to become involved in hands-on service projects in the local community, the nation and the world**

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- ▶ Nearly all participants agree that this goal should be continued over the next 3-5 years (92%; n=240)
  - ▶ **Strongly agree: 51%**
  - ▶ Agree: 41%
  - ▶ Neutral: 7%
  - ▶ Disagree: 1%
  - ▶ Slightly lower percentage of participants Strongly Agree than for Goal I
  
- ▶ This goal is personally Important to a majority of participants (75%; n=231)
  - ▶ Somewhat important: 23%
  - ▶ Not at all important: 2%

## Goal II: Further extend Christ's love to the world by enabling and encouraging each parishioner to become involved in hands-on service projects in the local community, the nation and the world

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- ▶ Majority of participants are at some level of engagement in the ministries/ programs that help to accomplish this goal, with equal distribution among Engaged, Somewhat engaged and Not at all engaged (72%; n=234)
  - ▶ Extremely engaged: 6%
  - ▶ Very engaged: 14%
  - ▶ **Engaged: 25%**
  - ▶ **Somewhat engaged: 27%**
  - ▶ **Not at all engaged: 28%**
  
- ▶ Participants prefer that the highest percentage of total opportunities for hands-on service be available locally
  - ▶ Locally: 58%
  - ▶ Nationally: 25%
  - ▶ Internationally: 17%

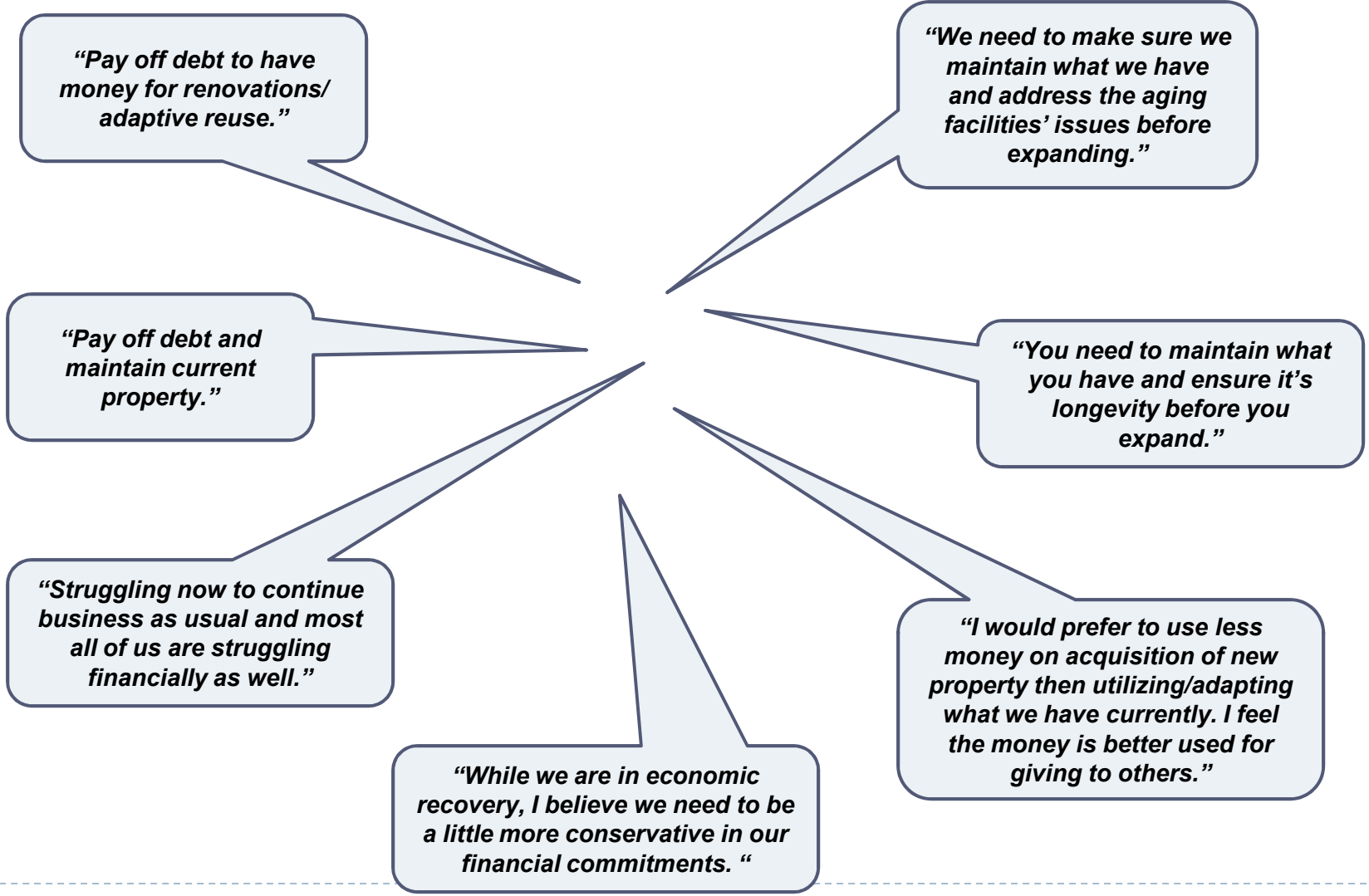
## Focus of Our Activities Related to St. James' Property and Facilities – Renovation/adaptive use of current facilities

- ▶ **KEY TAKEAWAY:** Large majority of participants (85%; n=220) believe the focus should be on renovation/adaptive reuse (e.g., as was done with changing the rectory into meeting space) of current facilities; the need to pay off current debt and/or maintain/upgrade current facilities were reasons mentioned most frequently for selecting this focus

| Reasons for selecting Renovation/adaptive reuse (e.g., as was done with changing the rectory into meeting space) of current facilities instead of expansion | Number of Mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Need to pay off current debt before incurring new debt</b>   | <b>24</b>          |
| <b>Current facilities need to be maintained/upgraded</b>  | <b>20</b>          |
| Current economy inhibits additional financial resources   | 18                 |
| Reserve financial resources for missions/outreach and/or other critical activities  | 15                 |
| Current facilities are adequate for needs   | 12                 |
| More effective use of financial resources   | 8                  |
| Make current facilities more effective and efficient/better use of current facilities   | 7                  |
| Financial instability of church and/or parishioners   | 5                  |
| Create reserve/endowment for facilities   | 4                  |
| Expansion is too expensive  | 3                  |
| Need to upgrade current facilities to meet ADA compliance   | 2                  |
| Keep the tree   | 2                  |
| Need to complete past renovation before expanding   | 2                  |
| Expansion would change the look of the property/facilities  | 2                  |
| The church is its people not the buildings/are we trying to build the spirit or buildings   | 2                  |
| Leesburg community may perceive St. James' as trying to build a compound instead of focusing on "important" needs   | 1                  |

## Focus of Our Activities Related to St. James' Property and Facilities – Renovation/adaptive use of current facilities

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## Focus of Our Activities Related to St. James' Property and Facilities – Expansion

- ▶ Small percentage of participants (15%; n=220) believe the focus should be on expansion (e.g., new construction on site, acquisition of surrounding property); providing adequate space for present and future membership/ministries were reasons mentioned most frequently for selecting this focus

| Reasons for selecting Expansion (e.g., new construction on site, acquisition of surrounding property) instead of renovation/adaptive reuse of current facilities   | Number of Mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| Enables long range plan/property and facilities for future generations/secures St. James' ability to grow in the future (consolidation of the block bounded by Wirt, Cornwall, North and King streets)/as Loudoun County continues to grow, property is becoming more expensive and less available | 6                  |
| More room needed for growing membership and ministries   | 6                  |
| Provides more opportunities for outreach on the property   | 3                  |
| Acquire surrounding property, but do not do new construction   | 2                  |
| Expand the children's programs through expansion of facilities; "if you build it, they will come"  | 1                  |
| Current facilities limit worship and fellowship accessibility of disabled individuals  | 1                  |
| No real gain in just "tweaking" current facilities   | 1                  |
| Expansion can be a motivator for change  | 1                  |

## Focus of Our Activities Related to St. James' Property and Facilities – Expansion

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*“The church membership and ministries are growing at a very fast pace and more room is needed.”*

*“Expansion and acquisition may take longer to accomplish, but it will have a longer lasting effect on future generations of St. James parishioners.”*

*“We continue to grow and while renovation makes sense in some cases, it is only a band-aid. We need to ensure that we have the property for expansion when needed and we will need it. Big picture needed, not short sightedness.”*

## Recommendations for Changes in Emphasis Under Current Goals

- ▶ **KEY TAKEAWAY:** New goals (entirely new directions for St. James') were not recommended; many participants identified new ministries/programs as new goals, these recommendations are reported under new ministries/programs instead
- ▶ Several recommendations for changes in emphasis under current goals were offered; financial stabilization and purchasing a new organ were recommended most frequently

| Recommendations for Changes in Emphasis Under Current Goals  | Number of Mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Financial stabilization for the church</b>  | <b>14</b>          |
| <b>Purchase a new organ</b>  | <b>13</b>          |
| Nourish and equip parishioners on the word of God (i.e., Bible study)/extend adult Christian education beyond Sunday                   | 9                  |
| Increase pastoral care within the congregation   | 9                  |
| Increase fellowship opportunities within the congregation  | 6                  |
| Increase evangelism within the community   | 4                  |
| Utilize King Street property in outreach   | 4                  |
| Better coordination of current ministries  | 2                  |
| Help parishioners establish a sanctuary from a busy life in God/Christ   | 2                  |
| Expand music program: a small chamber choir and/or instrumental group; small performing groups including Christian focused productions | 2                  |
| St. James' become a convener and champion of community in Leesburg   | 1                  |

## Recommendations for Changes in Emphasis Under Current Goals

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***“Pay down existing debt. Only by being financially strong can the parish realize its other important goals.”***

***“Purchase a new organ; however, we are not the National Cathedral...we do not need a ‘Rolls Royce,’ we just need one that fills the space and honors God through its music. “***

***“My choice for a new goal is financial solvency. Debts must be repaid so we can remain solvent. We have great goals and wonderful programs. A specific plan for financing them needs to be in place. Acquiring new debt should not be considered.”***

***“Engage each member in Bible study/education to further meet goals of equipping and mission.”***

***“Better ways to reach out, get to know and ‘check-in’ with all the members of the congregation who may not be able to attend events at church or at homes in the evening. We have members who have stopped attending St. James because they felt no one paid attention to them or their needs, e.g., no one noticing that they have not attended church for several Sundays or not following up when they had profound personal issues.”***

***“Extend same help and support to parishioners and families of parishioners that church members are going out of state or out of the country to provide to others. We are hurting and in need too.”***

## Improving Communications and Better Coordination Among Current Ministries

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- ▶ A few participants indicated that communications could be improved and/or there could be better coordination among current ministries, for example
  - ▶ Increased advertisement of mission opportunities and the formation of new ministries/groups within the parish
  - ▶ Greater transparency and communication with parishioners by the Vestry, e.g., post Vestry meeting minutes and decisions
  - ▶ Better integration and bridging between ministries that could naturally work together, e.g., some literacy program elements combined with Grace to Go
  - ▶ Better coordination between the Vestry and other groups in the care of the buildings and grounds

## Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs

- ▶ **KEY TAKEAWAY:** Outreach (improving current and offering **new, local**), followed by adult and youth discipleship were recommended most frequently for new ministries/programs

| Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs  | Number of Mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Outreach</b>  |                    |
| <b>Continue:</b> Current ministries (Grace To Go, Literacy, The Woods were specifically noted) but improve/expand/fine tune/get more people involved in existing ministries  | <b>24</b>          |
| <b>Continue:</b> Ecumenical/Cross Denominational Activities  | 3                  |
| <b>Continue:</b> Men's Service ministry/Bible study  | 3                  |
| <b>New: (local)</b> helping the needy by providing educational assistance, job assistance, clothing assistance (clothing drives), home repairs assistance, parenting education, literacy education, food kitchen, illness support, after school recreation center, meal support, tutoring; providing a resource center, matching people to appropriate needed resources; creating a directory of community resources for those in need; involving/leaders & organizations within the community to help with our programs; establishing a community garden; creating a mini directory of local laborers for parishioner use; consider working with new senior center; utilizing the Arts in outreach. | <b>25</b>          |
| <b>New: Seniors -</b> Senior Center/activities/meetings/local outreach involvement/retirement issues/support for illness and death <b>(can be considered as pastoral care as well)</b>   | 10                 |
| <b>New: Hispanic:</b> include Hispanics in worship/Spanish language ministry/involve Hispanic population in Honduras Water Project/expand Literacy Program to Honduras   | 5                  |
| <b>New: Orphan ministry</b> – encourage parishioners to adopt children from other countries  | 1                  |
| <b>New:</b> Fully support Bromley  | 1                  |

## Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs

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| Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs   | Number of Mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Discipleship</b>   |                    |
| <b>Adult:</b> Workshops/Forums/skill-building/Christian Education/Sunday School (Small Groups)/space and time for prayer/offering more member class times/involve lay sharing, e.g., parishioners' Lenten reflections         | <b>17</b>          |
| <b>Youth:</b> Involve youth in Worship (all ages of youth)/stronger religious education, especially during Children's Chapel and Sunday School for 3rd grade and above/strengthen general programs for all children and youth | <b>12</b>          |
| <b>Worship</b>  |                    |
| Music program - youth music program (choirs for all youth)/Filling Dr. Cooksey's Shoes  | 8                  |
| Services - Saturday Eucharist/recognizing Armed Forces on related holidays  | 1                  |
| <b>Fellowship</b>   |                    |
| Social Programs/Athletic/Neighborhood Groups/Mother's Group/Fieldtrips/Potlucks/Picnics   | 7                  |
| <b>Pastoral Care</b>  |                    |
| Financial/financial health and security of parishioners/estate planning/endowment   | 4                  |
| Ministering to parishioners/unemployed/homebound/young professionals/clergy home visits   | 3                  |
| Younger families/more emphasis (ages 16-40 and 20-30s groups)   | 2                  |
| Provide an onsite counselor/cognitive therapist   | 1                  |

## Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs

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| Recommendations for New Ministries/Programs  | Number of Mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Property and Facilities</b>   |                    |
| More use of facilities/building and maintaining a working and productive Property Committee  | 3                  |
| <b>Other</b>   |                    |
| Follow calling that inspires new ministries  | 4                  |
| Ministry heads/place limits on service time/analyze why some ministries don't attract members/write handbook for ministry responsibilities | 2                  |
| Volunteer coordination/appreciation and recognition for volunteers   | 1                  |
| Resume a monthly newsletter, e.g., Loaves and Fishes   | 1                  |
| Have a religious drama program   | 1                  |
| Hold fund-raising concerts   | 1                  |
| Increase Membership  | 1                  |
| Teach people and clergy humility   | 1                  |
| Location/gym where kids could come and participate in after school activities which would be supervised                                    | 1                  |

## Profile of Participants

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- 71% of participants live in the immediate Leesburg area (zip codes: 20175/20176) (n=206)
  - 5 % live in Ashburn
  - rest are scattered among a variety of locations
- Majority of participants are female (61%), 39% are male (n=210)
- Majority of participants are between the ages of 35-64 (72%; n=210)
  - 16-18: <1% (2)
  - 25-34: 2%
  - **35-44: 23%**
  - **45-54: 23%**
  - **55-64: 26%**
  - 65-74: 17%
  - 75+: 8%

## Profile of Participants

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- Nearly all participants have their own copy of the Bible (or ready access to one) (97%; n=213)
- Occasionally/sporadically was the most frequently mentioned frequency of reading the Bible (n=211)
  - Daily: 13%
  - Several times a week: 21%
  - **Occasionally/sporadically: 43%**
  - Rarely/hardly ever: 23%

## Profile of Participants

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- ▶ Majority of participants pledge to St. James' (82%; n=207)
- ▶ Majority of participants determine the amount of their annual giving based on the dollar amount they feel comfortable giving (65%; n=204)
  - ▶ Tithe: 10%
  - ▶ A percentage of annual income: 16%
  - ▶ **A dollar amount that I/we feel comfortable giving: 65%**
  - ▶ Other: 10%
- ▶ Most participants attend Sunday services weekly or two to three times a month (86%; n=210)
  - ▶ **Weekly: 54%**
  - ▶ Two to three times a month: 32%
  - ▶ Once a month: 6%
  - ▶ Less than once a month: 7%
  - ▶ Primarily on holidays: 1%

## Profile of Participants

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- ▶ All three Sunday service times represented in the survey responses, with equal representation between 9:00 and 11:15 am services (n=202)
  - ▶ 7:45 am: 12%
  - ▶ **9:00 am: 42%**
  - ▶ **11:15 am: 47%**
  
- ▶ Majority of participants have attended St. James' for  $\geq 5$  years; equal representation from those attending 5-10 and 10-20 years (62%; n=212)
  - ▶ <1 year: 6%
  - ▶ 1-3 years: 14%
  - ▶ 3-5 years: 19%
  - ▶ **5-10 years: 24%**
  - ▶ **10-20 years: 21%**
  - ▶ 20+ years: 17%

## Ministries in which Adults Currently Participate

- ▶ **KEY TAKEAWAY:** There were a total of 338 mentions of ministries in which adults currently participate; outreach, followed by worship were mentioned most frequently as the types of ministries in which adults currently participate

| Ministries in which Adults Currently Participate  | Number of Mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Outreach</b>   | <b>127</b>         |
| Grace to Go   | 50                 |
| Mission trips   | 27                 |
| Literacy program  | 22                 |
| Kids with Purpose, Preschool, The Woods, Paxton, Jeremiah's Table and Prison            | 21                 |
| "Outreach," no specific ministry identified   | 7                  |
| <b>Worship</b>  | <b>96</b>          |
| "Worship," no specific ministry identified  | 19                 |
| Music   | 19                 |
| Usher   | 17                 |
| LEM/Lector  | 17                 |
| Altar Guild, Children's Chapel, Compline, Morning Pray, Temple Teller, Greeter, Acolyte | 24                 |

## Ministries in which Adults Currently Participate

| Ministries in which Adults Currently Participate   | Number of Mentions |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Discipleship</b>  | <b>83</b>          |
| Small groups   | 13                 |
| Sunday School  | 13                 |
| Adult forum  | 7                  |
| Shrine Mont, Foyer Groups, Men's Service group, Personal Finance, Tweeners, Library, Lunch and Learn, Newcomers, Youth Group, Book Club, VBS, EfM, Stewardship, Coffee Hour, Fellowship; single to few mentions each | 50                 |
| <b>Pastoral Care</b>   | <b>17</b>          |
| Pastoral Associates  | 7                  |
| Healing  | 6                  |
| Intercessory Prayer , Caregivers of Aging Parents  | 4                  |
| <b>Administration</b>  | <b>11</b>          |
| Vestry service   | 4                  |
| Property   | 3                  |
| Personnel committee  | 1                  |
| Building committee   | 1                  |
| Office associate   | 1                  |
| AV/ad hoc needs  | 1                  |
| Trustee, Delegate to Council, Columbarium  | 4                  |

## Ministries/Programs in which Youth and Children Currently Participate

- ▶ **KEY TAKEAWAY:** There were a total of 127 mentions of ministries/programs in which youth and children currently participate; outreach, followed by discipleship were mentioned most frequently as the types of ministries/programs in which youth and children currently participate

| Ministries/Programs in which Youth and Children Currently Participate | Number of Mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Outreach</b>   | <b>59</b>          |
| Kids with Purpose   | 19                 |
| Grace to Go   | 12                 |
| Preschool   | 9                  |
| Pizza with a Purpose  | 8                  |
| Literacy program  | 5                  |
| Mission trips   | 5                  |
| The Woods   | 1                  |
| <b>Discipleship</b>   | <b>43</b>          |
| Sunday School   | 30                 |
| Youth Group   | 12                 |
| Vacation Bible School   | 1                  |

## Ministries/Programs in which Youth and Children Currently Participate

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| Ministries/Programs in which Youth and Children Currently Participate | Number of Mentions |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Worship</b>  | <b>24</b>          |
| Children's Chapel   | 11                 |
| Acolytes  | 7                  |
| Choir   | 6                  |
| <b>Pastoral Care</b>  | <b>1</b>           |
| Healing team  | 1                  |

## Focus Groups Findings

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- ▶ A total of 11 parishioners participated in the focus groups
  - ▶ Some participants were fairly new to St. James,' others have been part of the St. James' community for many years
  - ▶ Two groups only had one parishioner attending
- ▶ Feedback/comments from these participants were similar to those communicated through the survey
  - ▶ Participants in one focus group were surprised by the low participation of parishioners below the age of 35; otherwise, were impressed with the number of participants and the age distribution
- ▶ Five of the eleven parishioners attending the focus groups expressed the significant need for a new organ (primarily parishioners involved in the music ministry)
  - ▶ Comments ranged from *“When you are building for 70 years, you have to do it right!”* to *“We should have a quality solution, but it does not need to be Kennedy Center standards, nor expense.”*

## Focus Groups Findings

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- ▶ Comments related to the goal of *Further extend Christ's love to the world by enabling and encouraging each parishioner to become involved in hands-on service projects in the local community, the nation and the world* included:
  - ▶ One participant indicated, that based on experience at other churches, participation levels at St. James' in hands-on service projects are fairly consistent with the participation levels at other churches
  - ▶ To accomplish activities related to this goal, there needs to be drive and some evangelism; things left to the church bureaucracy tend not to get done
  - ▶ An inquiry was made as to whether there was a town or county office that might provide some community needs analysis, which would provide guidance on needs for local outreach activities
  - ▶ Interest was expressed in knowing how today's interest in local outreach activities compares to 5 years ago, before the personal hardships linked to the economy began to take such a toll

## Focus Groups Findings

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- ▶ Comments related to the St. James' property and facilities included:
  - ▶ Needed maintenance on current facilities was identified by two focus groups
  - ▶ Some surprise by one focus group at the responses from the survey indicating the current facilities are adequate for St. James' needs
    - ▶ Strong disagreement was expressed by these participants about the physical state of the property, including the kitchen and grounds.
    - ▶ One participant commented that St. James' should not consider grounds and physical property as "superficial," but as outreach, because so many people walk by the church, take pictures of the church and themselves in those pictures. *"If we do not care for our property, do we care for each other?"*
    - ▶ It was suggested that maybe someone should start a "weeds to go" ministry

## Focus Groups Findings

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- ▶ There were no specific recommendations by participants in the focus groups for new ministries/programs to be included in the vision for the next 3-5 years
  - ▶ One participant suggested that new things should be tried and if they don't work out, move on ... try to avoid inertia
  - ▶ Another participant remarked that our current approach is if someone wants to start a new ministry, just do it
  - ▶ There was discussion in one group indicating the need for better communication about ministry opportunities; parishioners are not always aware of which ministries are available and which are "closed" to new members

## Appendix

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- ▶ To view the survey questionnaire, double click on the icon



St. James Vision  
Survey

## Contact Information

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- ▶ To provide feedback to clergy and Vestry members, or for more information, please contact the Church Office at (703)777-1124 or [info@stjamesleesburg.org](mailto:info@stjamesleesburg.org).