

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT



Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

Up to now, we have been doing necessary preparations to answer this question:

What might God be calling our church to be and do in God's mission in our town?

These include:

1. A Timeline Event to review our church's history and major themes.
2. Interviews with members of our congregation
3. Data gathering about our surrounding community



TIMELINE EVENT – MAJOR FINDINGS

- We appreciate and value our clergy
- We are proud and passionate about our outreach programs
- We want more gatherings and fellowship
- Some staff transitions have been difficult
- COVID was hard but live service streaming was a big win.
- We are positive about the future and want to grow our community.



INTERVIEWS

How do people participate in the life of the church?

- Volunteer (committees, vestry, greeters, choir, herb garden, etc.)
- Worship
- Reaching Out (FOTH, food drives, care packages, Warm Winter Nights)

Describe this congregation to someone new?

- Warmly inclusive
- Diverse, relaxed, positive
- Close, supportive, caring
- Notably an older congregation



INTERVIEWS

Tell a story about how you sense God's presence and activity in this congregation?

- Being strongly supported in a time of personal crisis
- Relatable sermons that speak to personal experience
- Infectious dedication of members and vestry

Tell a memory that gives you anxiety about the future;

- Dwindling numbers
- Aging congregation
- Staff changes

Tell a memory that gives your hope:

- New members/younger families joining
- Younger, hard-working priest that attracts younger people.
- Dedication of faithful volunteers.



INTERVIEWS

Tell about how you feel about changes in this congregation in the past 3-5 years.

- **Positive:** projection, Todd and Susan have complementary gifts, good collaboration, video equipment, strong outreach, strong adaptability/resilience.
- **Negative:** Loss of diverse musical experiences and program, loss of youth, loss of members, aging, loss of intergenerational experiences.
- **Wish to See:** More musical diversity, return of small groups/Foyer groups, more outreach and community focus.



INTERVIEWS

Tell about the ways people fight in this congregation. Tell about a situation where you and other people were involved in a problem at church and how it was handled.

- Many mentioned that they were not aware of any large conflicts or not ever involved in one.
- Staff transitions
- How conflicts are handled was an issue.
- Backing away/withdrawing from participation/disengaging.



COMMUNITY DATA STORY

Sources:

1. Survey data from congregation members,
2. Operations data from the church itself,
3. Census data from the local area.



WHO ARE WE?

Many of our church community have been active for over 20 years.

Most are 60 and over and retired.

We typically attend church weekly (or 2-3 times per month).

We are involved in mission/outreach, faith formation, and music/choir.



WHERE ARE WE?

Median Age	46
People with Disability	5%
People experiencing food insecurity	2%
Median Household Income	\$192K
Income spent on Rent	26%

Total Population 44,605. Most have Associate's Degree or higher.
16K total households, mostly married couples.



HOW DO WE SHOW UP?

How are members of our congregation and the church itself involved in our local community?

Most feel that the church prepares and supports them for activity outside the congregation.

Our concerns for the community include:

1. Environment/climate
2. Crime
3. Housing insecurity
4. Racial equity
5. Schools



VITALITY PRACTICES (DIOCESE OF CA)

1. Diversity (racial justice and reconciliation)
2. Collaboration (abundant sharing)
3. Community Embeddedness (engaging neighbors)
4. Invitation (evangelism)
5. Sustainability (long-term thinking)

We believe our church scores well on Diversity, Collaboration, and Community with room for improvement on Invitation and Sustainability.

