

October 26, 2008

To: **St. John's Episcopal Church Membership**

Re: **Rector Search Survey**

Our parish's rector search committee conducted a parish wide survey to more fully understand the characteristics and skill-sets most desired in our next rector. Questions were also asked about general demographics, parish strengths and opportunities for improvement. The results, in combination with information discerned through Focus groups, will be used to develop a parish profile and the expectations for our next rector. The survey was available via hard copy and online means to any member of the parish age 13 and older.

### **Survey Response**

450 members responded; and it is projected the results of this survey are accurate to within +/- 4%, (a margin of error at least as accurate as most surveys found in any major news publication). Several demographic indicators suggest the population who responded to the survey represent our most active members as evidenced by higher than expected affirmative responses to questions like "do you make an annual pledge?" or "how many hours a week do you volunteer?".

### **Demographics**

The demographics of respondents highlight the diversity of our parish. Every category of age, worship service, gender, marital status, etc. was well represented in the responses to the survey. Other noteworthy points are as follows:

68% prefer more traditional worship experiences – with 22% preferring a mix of both traditional and contemporary

58% of respondents view the bible as the inspired word of God – with another 28% viewing it as the recorded response to God's word

70% of the respondents described their theological views in some way as moderate – representing moderate/conservative, moderate, or moderate/liberal

When asked to describe what attracted them to St. John's, respondents most often said: Children and Youth Programs or Worship. Clergy, Friendships and Location were also frequently mentioned. When asked to describe the most important part of their Sunday worship experience, participants overwhelmingly highlighted the Eucharist and Sermons.

### **Rector Expectations**

Survey participants were asked to rank the skills and personal characteristics they most desired in our next rector. For skills, responses were ranked 1 – 10, with 1 being most important. Two skills were significantly above all others based on the rankings of participants – Preaching and Spiritual Guidance. Other items receiving significant support were Teaching, Administration, Liturgical Leadership and Pastoral Care.

In terms of personal characteristics, two characteristics stood out above the rest – Inspirational and Leader.

### **Church Life – Importance and Satisfaction**

Participants were asked to rate the importance and satisfaction of certain aspects common to church life at St. John's. This information is viewed as important in terms of creating a view of our strengths and areas of opportunity. 91% of respondents stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied overall with St. John's.

In terms of importance, Worship Services, Sermons, Youth Programs and Children's Education/Care were clear favorites. With items like Building and Grounds, Evangelism, Relationship with Diocese and our Rite 4 Service rating as the least important.

With regard to satisfaction with these areas, respondents were most satisfied with our Youth Programs, Children's Education/Care, Buildings and Grounds, Communication, Outreach and Music. Areas for improvement include Bible Studies, Stewardship, Evangelism, our Rite 4 Service and our relationship with the Diocese.

### **Written Comments**

Over half of the participants took the time to respond with written comments to various questions. Common themes in the written comments centered around the following issues – although often opposing views were expressed:

- Style of worship
- Unity of our parish – working thru divisive issues and preserving a sense of community
- Our relationship with the Diocese and the Episcopal Church of USA
- Maintaining areas of strength in Youth Programs, Children's Education and Outreach

### **Detailed Survey Results**

The detailed survey results are available by request from the Church Office and have also been posted on the St. John's website via the Rector Search page.

The detailed written comments are not available for general viewing and will remain confidential given their context and personal nature. Questions about the survey, results or the search process in general should be directed to any member of the search committee or may be emailed to the rector search mailbox at [sjec\\_rectorsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:sjec_rectorsearch@yahoo.com)

A special thank you is worthy to the full search committee for many hours of hard work conducting the survey and preparing, analyzing and summarizing the results. Thank you also to the St. John's staff and clergy for their support and guidance in making the survey accessible to as many members as possible. Finally, thank you to all who participated in this survey; your voice is critical to the success of the search process.

God Bless,

William Sigmon

Rector Search Committee Chairperson