

St. Elizabeth Parish Survey Results Summary

Parish Finance Council: Don Armstrong, Dawn Gomez, Mary Amato
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Survey Response

- Announcements at Masses April 22-23, 2023
- Surveys available April 22-May 28, 2023
- Surveys received:
 - 38 Paper surveys
 - 53 Online responses
 - Total: 91
- Summary of responses for each question
 - Categories of comments
 - Overall Insights and Recommendations
 - Appendix of all comments + PDF files of surveys available

1. How long have you been a member of St. Elizabeth Parish?

Response	Number	%
<1 year	2	2.2
1-5 years	3	3.3
5-9 years	7	7.8
10-19 years	13	14.4
20-29 years	23	25.6
30-39 years	22	24.4
≥40 years	20	22.2
Total*	90	

- *One response “all my life” not included in above table
- Range: “weeks” – 87 years

2. Do you regularly attend Mass at St. Elizabeth?

Response	Number	%
Yes	83	91.2
No	8	8.8

(91 survey responses)

- Comment included with one Yes answer: “(but less regularly since the pandemic)”
- Comment included with one No answer: “the mass times are not very convenient for me. NO Sat pm mass and no mass before 10:45 am on Sunday. Thus, I go to Holy Family or St. Irene’s more often than St. E's. Please make a change in mass times!”

3. How do you receive information about the parish?

Response	Number*	%
Weekly Bulletin	82	90.1
Collaborative Emails	67	73.6
AVCC Website	46	50.5
Announcements at Mass	78	85.7
Word of Mouth	37	40.7

* 91 survey responses (question was select all that apply)

4. What are the strengths of our Parish?

Summary of responses*:

- Describe St. Es as a welcoming, inclusive, vibrant community (n =64)
- Specific mention of the quality of the music and/or liturgy (n =35)
- Happiness with faith formation programs and activities offered, including youth ministry, mission trips, children's liturgy, LIFT, GIFT, alpha, volunteer service activities (n = 31)
- Praise for Fr. Jeff, staff, and volunteers at St Es (n = 26)
- Other mentions: multigenerational/opportunities for all ages, family oriented, church facilities maintained, church location, willingness to try new approaches/think outside the box, communication, new children's room, social justice activities, appreciation that this survey was conducted

*84 of 91 (92.3%) of surveys included comments for this question.

5. What is missing from or unsatisfactory at our Parish that you need or want?

Summary of responses*:

- More opportunities for social events, connection, community, and activities (bible study, book discussion, small groups, service activities, in-person Alpha) (n = 20)
- Different preference for homily/liturgy duration/content/style (n = 14)
- Better Mass times (n = 12)
- More comprehensive faith formation (adults, young children) (n = 10)
- Involvement of more parishioners, welcoming newcomers, outreach to homebound, online networking, community outreach (n = 10)
- Different music preference (n = 9)
- Concerns about less attendance/less energy in community after Covid (n = 6)

*71 of 91 (78.0%) of surveys included comments for this question

Other comments/suggestions for Question 5

- Request missals in pews for following along (n = 5)
- Opportunities to use parish center (n = 2)
 - Use group of volunteers for clean up
- Combine the two parishes (n = 2)
- Reduce noise distractions before/during Mass by closing back door and or discouraging socializing in pews (n = 2)
- More engaging experience, better marketing of what we have to offer
- More electronic, less printed materials, more online giving
- Cushioned pews, Bells during Mass, Novena
- Would like to provide input for upcoming synod, but no mechanism has been provided

6. Do you financially support St. Elizabeth Parish?

Response	Number	%
Yes	90	98.9
No	1	1.1

(91 survey responses)

7. If you financially support St. Es, how do you contribute?

Response	Number	%
EFT	46	50.5
Online	16	17.6
In-Pew Baskets	57	62.6
Mail-In	11	12.1

* 91 survey responses (question was select all that apply)

8. Do any of the following limit your ability to give, continue or increase your current level of giving?

Response	Number	%
I am unable to do so because of my current financial situation.	21	23.1
I haven't given to the Increased Offertory (please explain below)	10	11.0
I don't think the Parish needs the money.	0	0
I no longer itemize deductions on my taxes, so I don't get the financial benefit.	1	1.1
I give to other charities.	27	29.7
I don't think the Parish is moving in the right direction. (please explain below)	5	5.5
I'm concerned about the Parish's survival. (please explain below)	10	11.0
Other (please explain)	17	18.7
Blank, No, or N/A responses	23	25.3

* 91 survey responses (question was select all that apply)

Summary of Comments for Question 8* (reasons for not increasing giving)

- Financial situation doesn't allow increase in giving (n = 19)
- Concern about fewer people having to give more and more and/or already feel they are giving their share (n = 8)
- Lack of understanding about EFT, online giving, or parish financial information (n = 6)
- Unhappiness with or concern about something at AVCC such as parish center use for Boy Scouts, loss of sense of energy/community, decreased Mass attendance (n = 5)
- Unhappiness with positions or actions of the Catholic Church or Boston Archdiocese (n = 4)
- Other (concern about ability to maintain 2 parishes, conflicted about giving to only 1 of the 2 parishes, forgot but will initiate and increase)

*47 of 91 of (51.6%) of surveys included comments for this question

9. What would be helpful for you to better understand the parish financial situation?

Responses	Number	%
In-person meetings with PFC members.	4	4.4
Telephone call or zoom meeting with a PFC member.	2	2.2
Presentation at St. Elizabeth updating parishioners on our financial situation.	50	54.9
Other (please share your preference)	22	24.2
Blank/not answered	25	27.5

Summary of Comments for Question 9*

- Preference to meet live or on zoom (some suggestions to record the meeting for later viewing) (n = 12)
- Provide written financial report and ongoing details about finances (n = 11)
- Request additional information such as % of families that contribute, benchmarking for families of how their contributions compare to other families of similar size, how much of the budget goes to the Archdiocese
- Talk about stewardship in homilies
- Have parishioners share stories at Mass

*38 of 91 (41.8%) of surveys included comments for this question

Additional Comments Question at End of Survey*

- Budget and Finance suggestions and provision of more detailed information and efforts from PFC (n = 12)
- Suggestions to focus on bringing people back to Mass (n = 8)
- Recommendations to consider combining parishes (n = 8)
- Gratitude for asking for parishioner feedback via this survey (n = 8)
- Change Mass times (n = 4)
- Find other ways of bringing money (parking, rent out church hall for events)
- More help from volunteers among the parish
- More assistance from Archdiocese from Cardinal Appeal
- Question about returning to old rectory and selling current one

*44 of 91 (48.4%) of surveys included additional comments

Summary and Insights

- Most Parishioners perceive St. E's to be a welcoming, vibrant community and value the music, liturgy, programs, pastor and staff among many items mentioned, although there is a widespread concern about reduced Mass attendance and loss of some “energy” in the parish since Covid.
- More opportunities for connection with others in the community through small group meetings, activities and social events was the most common suggestion for improvement.
- Differences in preference for style and content of homily, liturgy, music were expressed by some parishioners, and included some suggestions to enhance experience including bringing missals back, re-evaluating Mass times/locations, varying music styles
- Some misconceptions about budget and finances and need for more information were identified in survey responses
- Suggestions to increase income by reopening/repurposing use of parish hall

Recommendations

1. Focus on efforts to bring people back to Mass and provide opportunities for connection and community
2. Explore potential for offering variety of Music, Missals in pews, different Mass times/locations for Liturgy
3. Consider offering use of Parish Center/Church Hall for income or parishioner meetings
4. PFC to focus on providing regular, more detailed information to parishioners both in written reports and meetings to better inform everyone about financial situation and decisions, and to clear up misconceptions.