

Parish Wide Survey Summary Report

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

September 28, 2021

Presentation to Parish



Introduction

As you know, our parish is in the midst of developing our Parish Strategic Plan and a key element of that process is to garner as many insights, from as many parishioners, as possible.

Recently, over 200 parishioners completed our parish survey and offered thoughtful opinions, insights and recommendations about our beloved parish.

In an effort to provide full transparency in the development of our plan, our Strategic Planning Team has chosen to share the results of the survey with all of those on our parish email list, whether or not they participated in the survey.

When reviewing the Survey results, here are some things to keep in mind:

1. You will see the actual results for the survey, categorized into a number of topics for easy reference. However, due to the nearly 1000 written comments received you will see only subject summaries for each of the 4 open-ended questions. Although each (and every!) written comment was reviewed and categorized by the Survey team, the real value in the responses is to see and understand the “trends” which emerge from the survey feedback.
2. This type of survey is an excellent way to capture many views on many topics. It also provides direction for further exploration of a topic. When reviewing data from a survey, it is very normal to ask, “what did that response mean?” or “why did people answer that way?” That is the challenge with surveys, they frequently generate additional questions that can only be answered through speculation (not a good idea) or further research. And that is why we have a Strategic Planning Process. From the information received through the survey, we have already identified key areas to explore more fully. In fact, we are now in the process of forming parish “Vision Teams” (teams of parishioners who will study an area of our parish and provide recommendations which will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan). Going forward, you can expect to see additional information and plans as they emerge.

Finally, on behalf of the entire parish and our Strategic Planning Team, to all of you who completed the survey, thank you. Your efforts are very much appreciated!

In Christ,

Fr. Dean Kouldukis and Gus and Kristina Mehas (Strategic Plan Co-Chairs)

Survey Overview

- Survey Dates: July 26 –August 16, 2021
- 228 participants
- 77% completion rate
- 11 Minutes to complete the Survey
- 988 written comments to 4 open-ended questions
- 95% Confidence Level. Due to the large number of survey participants, as a percentage of our entire parish community, our survey findings, statistically, carry a very high level of confidence in the accuracy of the results.

Demographics

Who Participated in our Survey?

- **Miles they live from Assumption** 6 – 10 Miles 31%; >20 27%; 11 – 20 23%; 1 - 5 18%; <1 2% > 6 miles = 80.53%
- **Age** 65+ years 36%; 41 – 56 25%; 57 – 65 24%; 25 – 40 12% <24 4% > 57 years old = 59.21%
- **Female** 55%
- **Married** 58%; Single 19%
- **Have Children Living at Home** No 63%
- **Consider Assumption Their Home Parish** 88%

Key Themes

Based on the survey findings, the following areas have emerged as the leading themes for Assumption.

- Parish communications and the ability to keep parishioners informed was the leading strength noted in the survey.
- Parish Clergy, specifically Fr. Dean Kouldukis, is well-liked and very well respected.
- The parish perceives itself as very welcoming and loving.
- Youth programs - and reconnecting with youth - was clearly the leading area for improvement and opportunity.
- Future growth will be driven by converts.
- Religious and spiritual education is well perceived.
- The understanding of the parish's mission and vision, as well as a general optimism for the future, are areas for improvement.
- The parish is perceived as well-run.
- Participation in ministries is a significant opportunity. A majority of respondents said they are “uncertain or unlikely” to participate in ministries this year, while another majority stated they have “never or infrequently” participated.
- Attendance in Sunday Divine Liturgy has significant room for in-person attendance growth and improved timeliness of arrival.
- Weekday Liturgical attendance is nearly non-existent.
- A strong sentiment to connect more effectively with the local community, and local causes, was clearly expressed.
- There are mixed reactions, and degrees of comfort, regarding the overall safety and security of the parish.
- Stewardship is well-understood with good participation.
- There is evidence that the recent move to tithing is progressing well, but continued reinforcement would be beneficial.
- Concerns regarding long-term financial health and recovery due to Covid pandemic was evident.
- Facilities are positively perceived, a general wariness about on-going or long-term maintenance was mentioned frequently.
- Overall, there appears to be a good level of unity present within the parish.
- The opportunity to move from being a welcoming parish to being more inclusive is apparent.
- 40% of respondents indicated they would like to volunteer more.
- The current mix of language used in the Divine Liturgy was identified as the preference.
- Commute and parking remain key obstacles to in-person attendance for ministries and worship.

How Assumption Views Itself

Highest rated statements about our parish, combining “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses.

- Assumption is welcoming of visitors: 87% agree
- Parishioners at Assumption show love to one another: 80%
- Assumption provides opportunities for fellowship: 73%
- Assumption is comfortable inviting non-parishioners to activities: 68%
- Assumption is a well-run parish: 66%
- Parishioners at Assumption experience spiritual growth: 66%
- There is a sense of unity within the parish: 61%

Uncertainty

Shown below are the leading “uncertain” ratings (shown with the % of respondents who rated the statement as “uncertain”). Each item represents an opportunity for further development and the potential to have a positive impact.

- Assumption is actively spreading Christ’s message within Seattle – 49%
- Assumption provides a diverse set of programs for our youth – 46%
- I find it easy to join a ministry or group I’m interested in – 47%
- I would like to volunteer more of my time and talent to Assumption – 45%
- Assumption is open to new ideas – 42%
- I am optimistic about the future of the church – 34%
- Assumption has a clear mission and vision – 33%
- Assumption does a good job bringing the youth into worship – 33%
- Youth of our parish are actively involved in our Church community – 35%

What We Said

The Survey contained 4 open-ended question as shown here. These questions garnered 988 comments, ideas and recommendations, each of which was reviewed and categorized by content.

Shown here are the leading areas, as measured by the highest frequency of response:

“3 Things We Do Well”

326 Comments

- Welcoming Environment
- Clergy
- Liturgy/Worship Experience

“3 Things We Could Improve Upon”

268 Comments

- Youth Programs
- Being a Cohesive Community
- Friendliness

“Most Pressing Issues Facing Assumption”

324 Comments

- Parish Engagement
- Youth Retention
- Financial Uncertainty (i.e.: post – COVID recovery)

“Other Comments”

71 Responses

- Comments, while all were read, the findings were too diverse to categorize into themes

Communication

Parishioners Feel Most Informed About:

- ✓ *Important Parish Issues 76% Agree*
- ✓ *Ministries & Programs 83% Agree*
- ✓ *Service Dates & Times 94% Agree*

Preferred Communication methods in keeping you informed

Method	Very Important	Important	Not Important
The Good News (monthly email bulletin)	47.03%	42.70%	10.27%
Special emails about parish schedules and events (other than the church bulletins)	46.49%	47.03%	6.49%
Announcements after Liturgy	45.95%	46.49%	7.57%
Weekly email bulletin	41.08%	48.11%	10.81%
Sunday paper bulletin	36.76%	42.70%	20.54%
Assumption website	34.59%	44.86%	20.54%
Parish phone blasts (pre-recorded messages)	29.73%	47.57%	22.70%
Video messages from Fr. Dean	22.16%	48.65%	29.19%
General assemblies	21.62%	55.68%	22.70%
Assumption Facebook page	14.05%	22.70%	63.24%

Growth & Connection

Sense of Unity

63% agree
26% uncertain
12% disagree

Fellowship Opportunities

74% agree
16% uncertain
10% disagree

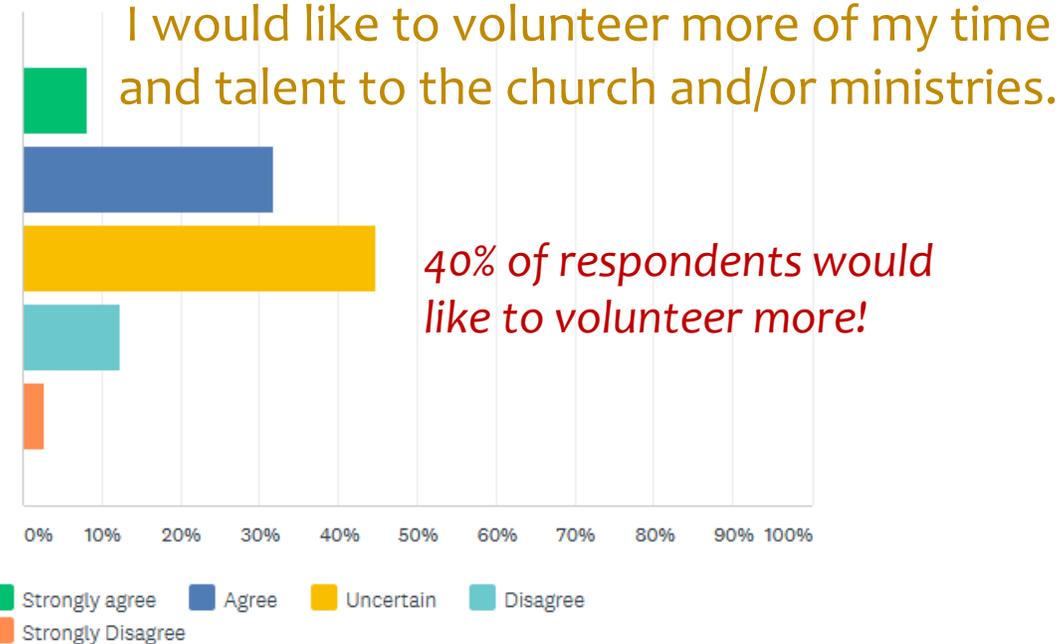
Show Love

80% agree
15% uncertain
5% disagree

Inviting Non-Parishioners to Church

69% agree
18% uncertain
13% disagree

Growth & Connection



“Our future growth will rely on bringing more converts into Orthodoxy.”
 Agree 54% Uncertain 35% Disagree 11%

Preferred Methods of Connecting with Others

More intimate, smaller group setting	39.46%
Social groups with like interests	39.46%
Culture-focused groups such as Greek language, Greek dance, etc.	34.05%
Outreach Project helping others	32.43%
Large project where I can be a team member	30.27%
Spiritual growth focused studies, workshops, discussion groups	28.11%
Prayer groups	10.27%
Online groups	6.49%

Leadership & Direction

Mission & Vision

Assumption has a clear mission & vision

53% agree

34% uncertain

13% disagree

Our Future

I am optimistic about the future of the parish

53% agree

34% uncertain

13% disagree

New Ideas

Assumption is open to new ideas

41% agree

42% uncertain

27% disagree

Parish Management

Assumption is a well-run parish

67% agree

20% uncertain

13% disagree

Ministries

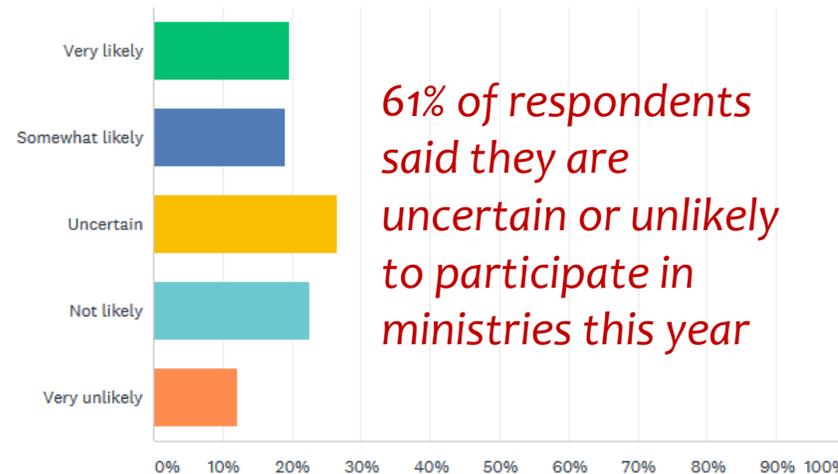
Obstacles to Participating in Ministries

Did not fit my schedule	34.55%
Long commute distance	28.18%
Family obligations	28.18%
Have never experienced any difficulties in joining a ministry	20.91%
I didn't feel connected to the Parish community	12.73%
There are not any ministries/social groups aligned with my interests	12.73%
Inadequate parking	10.91%
Conflicts with activities/sports for my children	10.91%
I am a member of another Parish and involved with ministries there	8.18%
Ministry/social groups participation is not important in my life	8.18%
I do not feel safe on our Church campus	8.18%
Personal health issues	7.27%
There are not any ministries/social groups aligned with my age group	7.27%
Other (please specify below)	7.27%
Unaware of ministries/social groups that are offered	6.36%
I don't have any friends at Assumption	5.45%
Unaware of ministry/social groups meeting times	4.55%
Transportation is difficult for me	3.64%
Ministry was not welcoming to additional participants/members	3.64%

Frequency of Participation in Ministries

65% of respondents said they infrequently or never participate in a ministry

Likelihood to Participate in Future Ministries



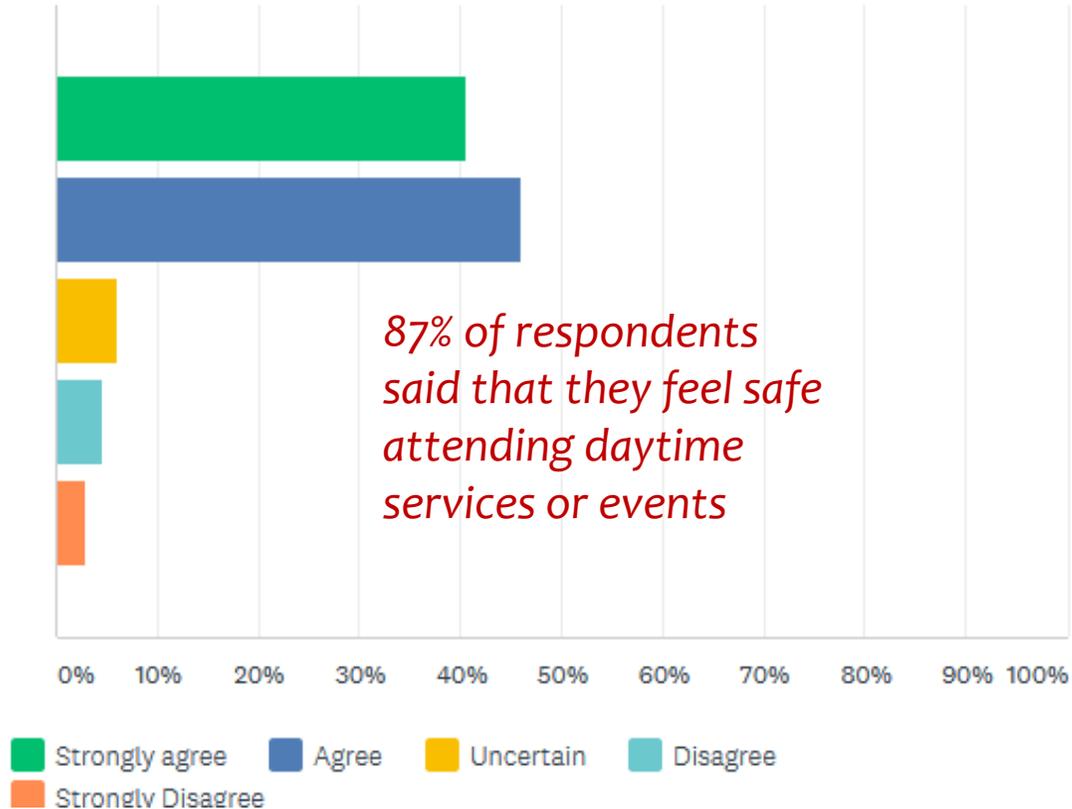
61% of respondents said they are uncertain or unlikely to participate in ministries this year

Ease of Joining Ministries

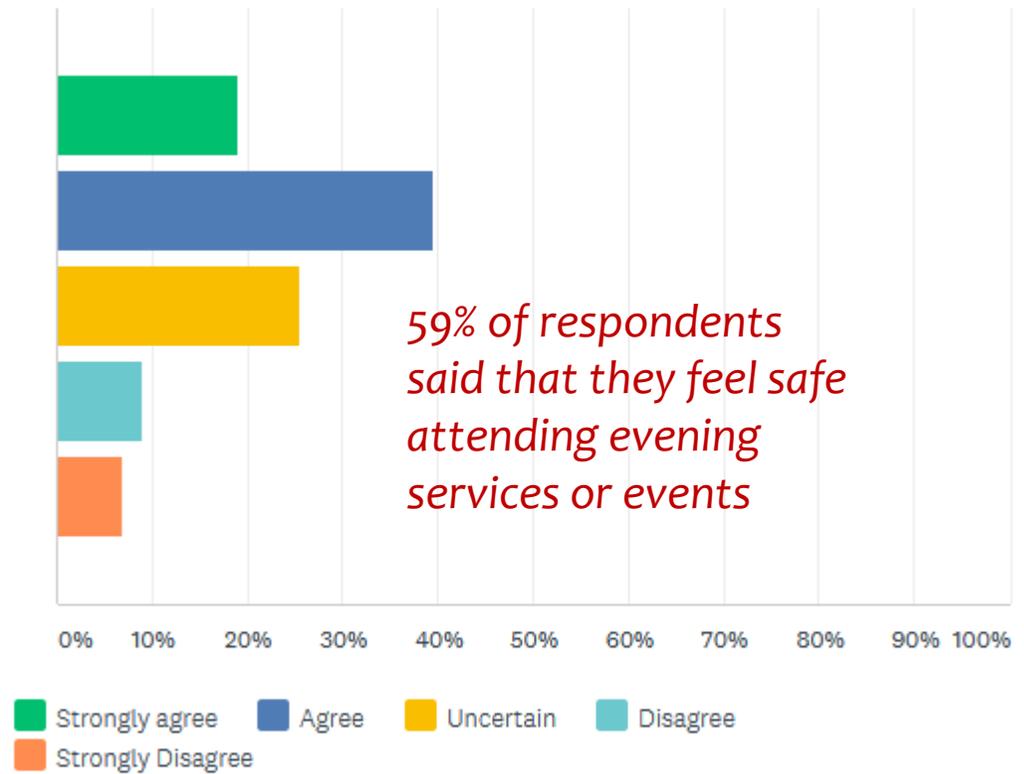
*39% agree
46% uncertain
15% disagree*

Safety & Security

Safety at Daytime Events

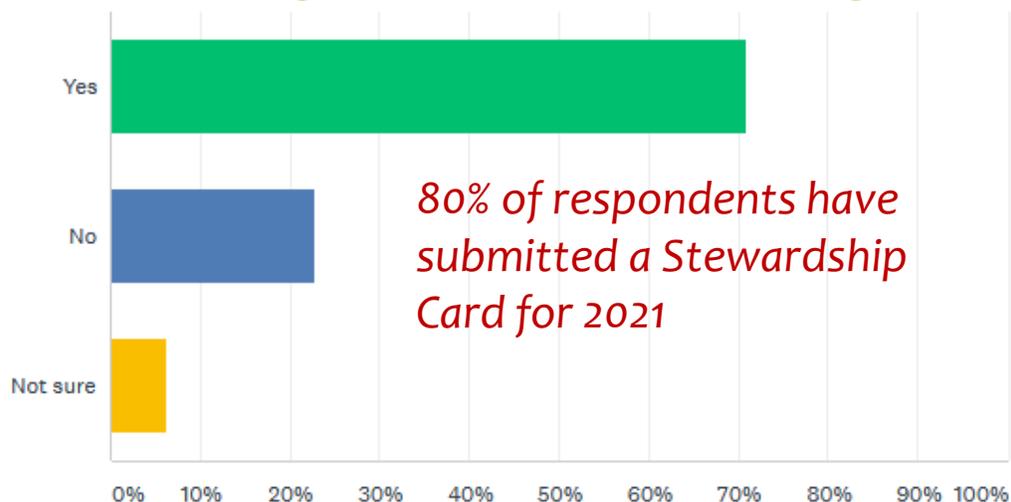


Safety at Evening Events



Stewardship

Have you signed a Stewardship Pledge card for 2021?



If not, would you be willing to?

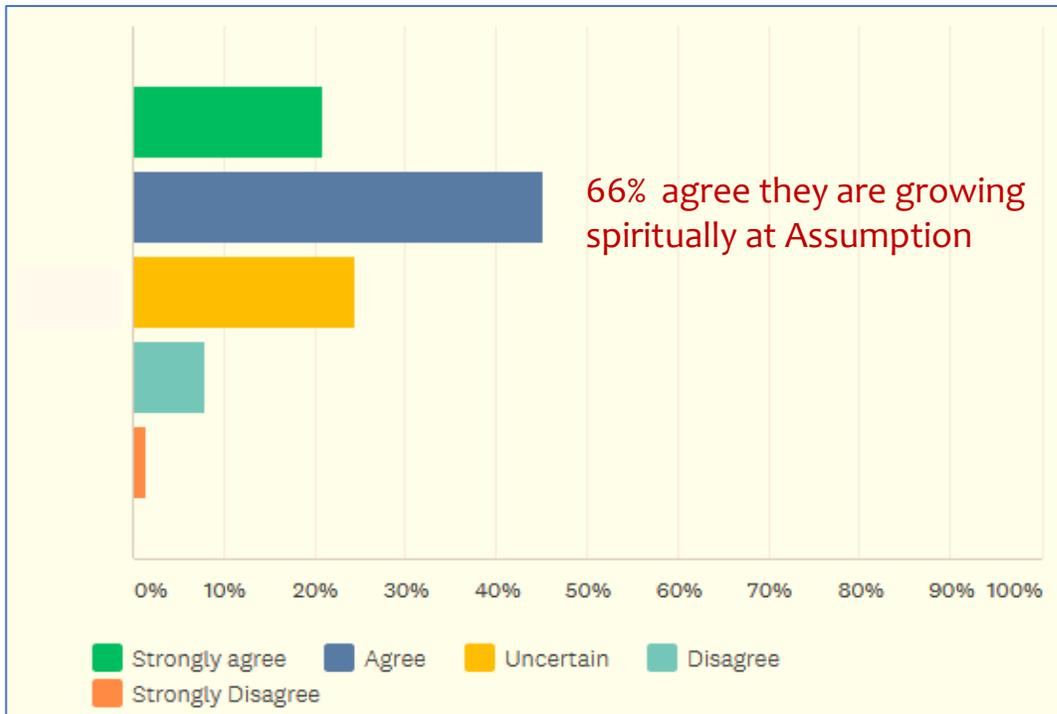
46% Yes 41% Uncertain 13% No

What motivates you to give financially to Assumption?

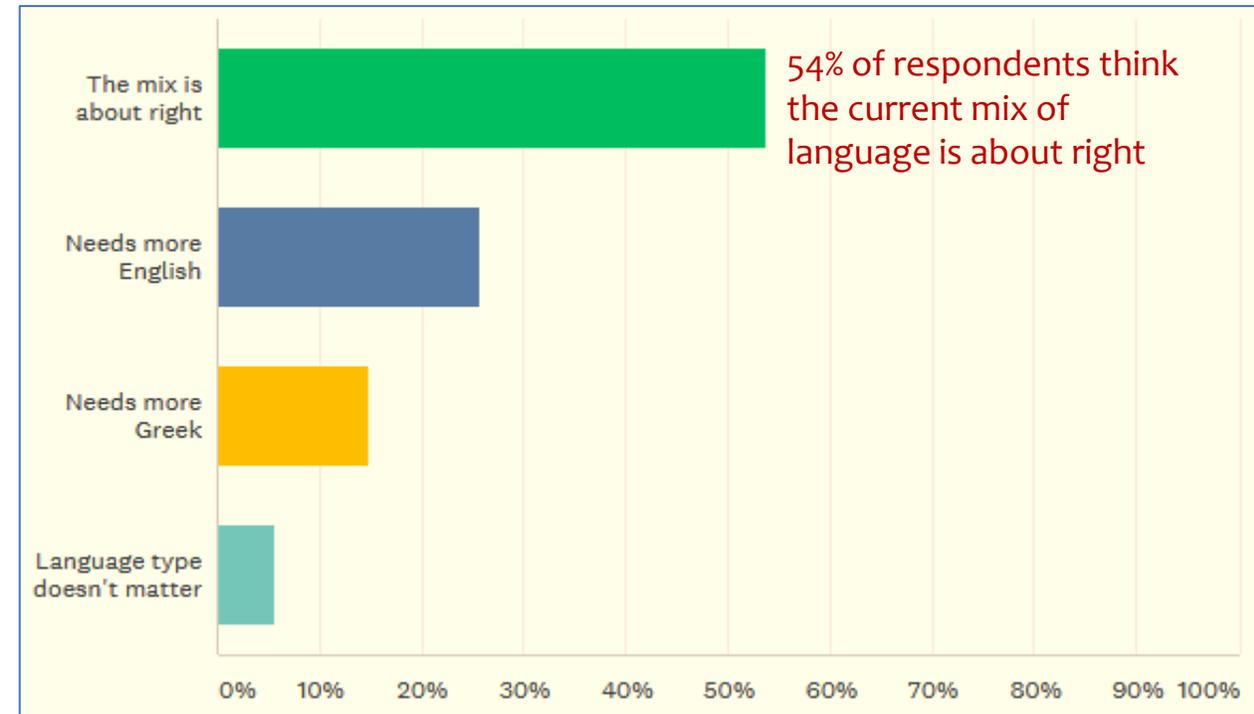
Love of God	70.97%
Fulfillment of my Stewardship Pledge	51.15%
Duty	49.31%
Biblical teachings	33.18%
Cause for which I am personally passionate	29.95%
Personal presentations/appeals delivered in Church	20.74%
Defined Stewardship program in which I can participate	18.89%
Personal relationship with someone linked to a program or ministry	11.06%
Other (please specify below)	9.22%
Letter/email sent to me	3.69%
Emergency request	1.84%

Worship/Spirituality

Our Spiritual Growth



Language of the Divine Liturgy



Orthodox Education

76% believe Assumption does a good job educating parishioners on the Orthodox Faith

Worship/Spirituality

When do you arrive for the Divine Liturgy?

- ❖ 54% of respondents arrive before/at the start of Liturgy
- ❖ 86.38% arrive before the Gospel reading

ARRIVAL TIME	RESPONSES
At the beginning of Orthros (8:45 am)	3.29%
During Orthros (8:45 am - 10 am)	16.90%
Start of Divine Liturgy (10 am)	36.62%
Between the start of Divine Liturgy and the Gospel reading (10 am - 10:20 am)	32.86%
Between the Gospel reading and Communion (10:20 am - 11 am)	8.45%
Right before Communion (11 am)	1.88%

Top Rated Factors Preventing On-Time Arrival

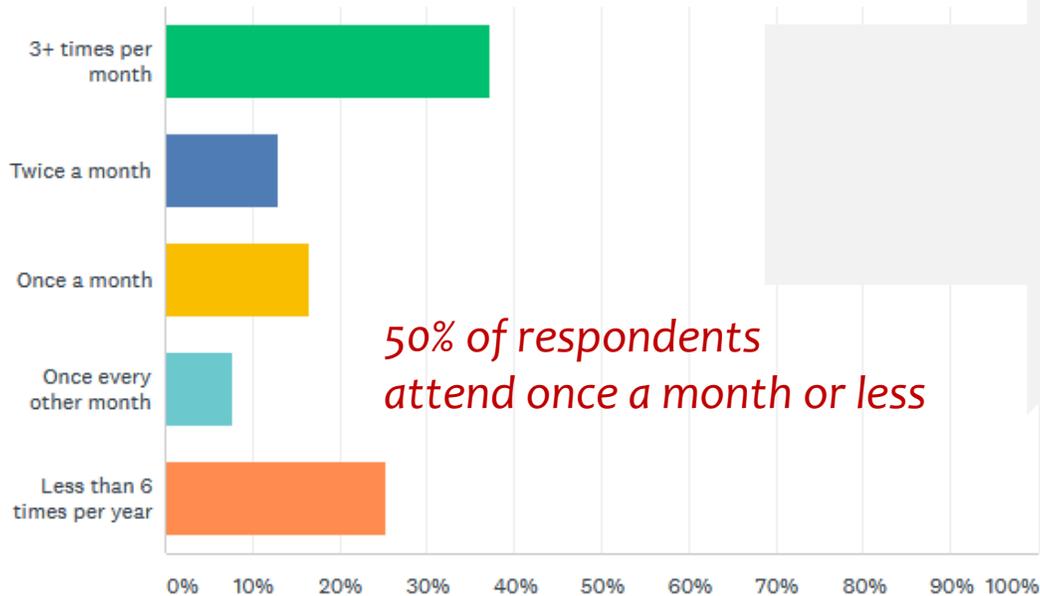
1. Long Commute
2. Getting Family Ready
3. Competing Priorities on Sundays

Key Factors Influencing Arrival Time

Long commute distance	31.11%
Getting family/children ready	30.00%
Competing priorities on Sundays	27.78%
Inadequate parking	21.11%
Other (please specify below)	16.67%
Service start time is too early	10.00%
Personal health	8.89%
Work commitments	7.78%
Service start time is too late	5.56%
Transportation is difficult for me	5.56%

Worship/Spirituality

Pre-Covid, Over 1 Year, How Frequently Did You Attend Sunday Divine Liturgy?



Likelihood of Returning to In-Person Worship in 2021

- 76% of respondents are very or somewhat likely
- 20% are still uncertain
- 4% are unlikely

Obstacles which limit attendance for Sunday Divine Liturgy

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Family Obligations | 4. Children's Sports/Activities |
| 2. Long Commute | 5. Personal Health |
| 3. Inadequate Parking | 6. Work |
| | 7. Not Important |

Family obligations	28.57%
Long commute distance	27.62%
Inadequate parking	20.00%
Conflicts with activities/sports for my children	19.05%
Personal health issues	13.33%
I have to work on Sundays	13.33%
Other (please specify below)	13.33%
Church attendance is not important in my life	13.33%
I don't feel connected to the parish community	9.52%
I prefer to attend Divine Liturgy via the streaming option	9.52%
I am a member of another Parish and attend there more regularly	7.62%
Service start time (10 am) is too early	4.76%
Service start time (10 am) is too late	4.76%
Transportation is difficult for me	4.76%
I don't have any friends at Assumption	3.81%
I do not feel safe on our Church campus	2.86%

Youth

36% of respondents have children living at home. Of those 36%, almost half have children who are not school age

Assumption is Welcoming to Children
73% of respondents think Assumption is welcoming for children; 8% do not

Assumption Provides Diverse Programs for Youth
24% agree
46% uncertain
30% disagree

Youth Presents a Significant Opportunity for Our Parish

Youth of our parish are actively involved in our Church community.
35% agree
35% uncertain
30% disagree

Assumption Does a Good Job Bringing our Youth into Worship
33% agree
58% uncertain
24% disagree

Open Comments

3 Things Assumption Does Well

Welcoming/Friendliness	29.82%
Fr Dean	22.37%
Liturgy (includes chanting)	11.40%
Communication	10.96%
Culture/Events	9.65%
Outreach	7.89%
Sunday School	4.39%
Operation	3.95%
Greek/English Balance	3.51%
Facility	3.07%
Fiscally responsible	1.32%

3 Things Assumption Could Improve Upon

Youth Programs	17.54
Unwelcoming/Friendliness	7.02
Community	7.02
Outreach	6.14
More English	5.26
Religious Education	4.82
Communication	4.82
Parking	4.39
Facilities	4.39
Ministries	3.95
Greek Cultural Activities	3.07
More Greek	3.07
Leadership	2.63
Operations	2.19
Safety	1.75
Social awareness	1.33
Worship/Spirituality	0.88
Technology	0.88
Fiscal	0.88
Distracting Kids	0.88

Top 3 Issues Facing Our Parish Today

Parish involvement/Growth	20.61%
Youth Retention	17.11%
Financial Uncertainty	14.47%
Safety	7.89%
Parking	4.82%
Community Outreach	4.39%
Lack of Programs	3.95%
Neighborhood shifts	3.95%
Not conservative enough	3.51%
Lack of Leadership	3.51%
Too much Greek	2.63%
Commuter church	2.63%
Loosing Greek Identity	1.75%
Repairs	0.88%
No Choir	0.44%