

A message from Fr. Ken...

We set our single Sunday Eucharist worship at 10:00 a.m. This is new. The new time is a “must” and set for this school year only. I am grateful that our parishioners are willing to experiment. You have told me that. It will be reviewed at the April 2016 Vestry meeting.

We have read the 2014 Study of the national Episcopal Church. That report tells us that:

- 45% of our national congregations have one Sunday worship service due to their size of membership. St. John’s is among this 45%.
- 36% of congregations grow over the year when they are willing to change to meet new challenges. We are definitely willing to meet the challenge of increasing our membership with youth, young and middle aged families.
- 31% of our national church has far more senior members 65 years of age and older, compared to youth members (16%), young adults who are married (29%), and middle aged members (24%). St. John’s is taking the opportunity to grow in the middle and younger ages. Those congregations expect to grow by 36% to make the percentage of regular participants aged 34 and younger.
- Growth is much more prevalent among Episcopal Churches where the proportion of those ages 50 and up is 35% or less of membership.

The report goes on to say that “a clear sense of mission and purpose, vibrant worship, and involvement in recruitment and evangelism” promote growth. We have a list of many volunteers who serve as lay readers, Eucharistic ministers, ushers at the door of the church, and members to make “chaotic” coffee hours. Outside of Sunday worship times, we have special events planned for social events by the Growing St. John’s Committee. All of this and more is planned and encouraged.

The report affirms how the Holy Spirit can and is working in us. “Congregations are also able to reach younger adults in general – people who are less frequent attendees – implying that they have qualities that go beyond advantageous location. They tend to be more exciting, innovative and are more involved in recruitment. They want to reach people and make the effort to do so.” Let us be one of those churches and make growth happen. We can do this.

Father Ken+