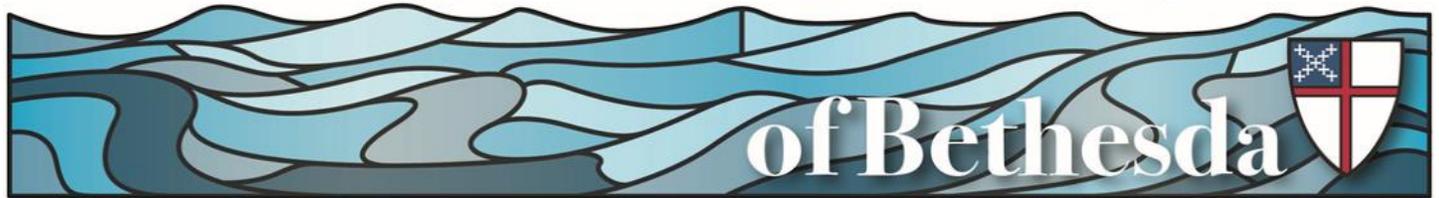


The VOICE



Spring 2018

Annual Meeting

2/3/19

27 church members and one dog were in attendance.

Father Vang called the annual meeting to order at 11:50 AM on Sunday, February 3, 2019, and appointed Mayumi Kato to serve as clerk for the meeting and to take minutes. Father Vang welcomed attendees.

Election Committee: Catherine Berheide, Junior Warden and Chair of the Nominations Committee, introduced the committee. The vestry has nominated Darren Miller to serve as Sr. Churchwarden, Mayumi Kato as a Clerk, John Van der Veer as a Treasurer, Pamela Houde, and John Hup-puch, all for re-election. Catherine asked if there were any additional nominations. All present were in favor of electing the slate. Catherine reminded those that may be interested that they can always volunteer for next year's election

Interim Rector's Report: Bethesda statistics to be reported to the national church in our Parochial Report: In 2018 11,714 people worshiped at Bethesda. 9971 communions received, 106 Sunday Eucharists, 208 weekday Eucharists, 245 private communions. Father Vang has enjoyed serving as interim rector but, now that the search process is uncertain timewise, he is willing to remain at Bethesda until an election has occurred.

Financial Reports: John Van der Veer Treasurer, reviewed 2018 budget vs. actual (Figure 1) and those were very close. He showed the comparison between 2017 and 2018. There was a 10% increase in Income and 11% de-

crease in Expense in 2018 compared with 2017. This is good news! He explained what our major expenses are. Those are Payroll, Rector Expenses, Building Expenses, Diocese Assessment, Program Expenses, Professional Fees, Employee Benefits, Office Supplies in order of significance. He showed Endowment and Investment which help Bethesda's operation as Restricted Income. Griffith Fund, Wiedemann Fund, ML Church Restoration are donor restricted funds, so we can use the money in those funds only for the very specific purpose for which they were given to the church, which are the choir, Christian education, and church building restoration respectively.

Budget 2019: John Van der Veer showed the comparison of Expense Budget between 2018 and 2019 "Rector Expenses" is budgeted \$15,211 more than 2018 to accommodate 4 months of New Rector Expenses in 2019 (Sep-Dec). This is based on our estimation that it would cost us \$100,089/year for a new rector. For the Income Budget, Pledge and Plate still makes up more than 80% of our Operational Income. He emphasized "Pledge and Plate (Unrestricted) makes up over 80% of Bethesda's income, and he concluded with "Your giving supports Bethesda's Ministry and Mission".

Expense Budget 2019

Pledge & Plate	\$246,0482
Griffith Fund (choir)	\$27,5233
Flowers	\$4,3304
Wiedemann Christian Education	\$3,6005
Funeral & Wedding Income	\$3,5006
Parish History Book Income	\$2,1607

Parke Music Fund	\$2,0408
Other Revenue (e.g., rental)	\$1,4289
Fuel Donation	\$1,22610
Memorial Donations	\$1,050
2019 Estimated Income	\$292,905

Church Restoration Progress: One more window has been restored and will be reinstalled shortly. We have received an estimate for cleaning and protecting the reredos. We do not yet have an estimate on the Front Doors project, because the architect is still finalizing the design. Current plan is double doors, with the new grass doors enabling people to see inside during the day.

Rector Search: A full time rector will cost about \$100,089/year (about \$50,000 more than we're currently paying). Only a few candidates applied, fewer than we expected. This may be due to Bishop Love's conflict with the national church over same sex marriage. The Vestry still is continuing the evaluation process with current candidates.

Closing Remarks: Dean Vang closed the meeting with a prayer

Mercy House Advances with NYTHA Support

Bethesda's newest corporate creation, Mercy House of Saratoga, Inc., is making steady progress in gathering support for its mission of providing supportive housing for persons in need. In February, MH received the news of a two-stage generous grant from the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association. The grant of \$25,000 will be made by way of BEST (Backstretch Employees Service Team) which will occupy the

fourth floor of Mercy House during the Thoroughbred training season (April to November).

"It is hoped that the partnership between Bethesda/Mercy House, BEST and NYTHA will inspire other members of the community who care about the backstretch workforce," said Gordon Boyd, President of Mercy House. "There would be no horses on the race track without these workers, so we are delighted that our mission is inspiring others to be supportive, in a way that serves the entire Saratoga community." Although Shelters of Saratoga declined Mercy House's proposal to house the Code Blue program, other agencies are eagerly approaching Mercy House for opportunities to provide emergency housing to individuals and families in need, especially during the winter months. Boyd is "guardedly optimistic" that a groundbreaking will occur during 2019.

Other housing partners of Mercy House include Veterans and Community Housing Coalition, Transitional Services Association, and Well-spring. These groups, as well as BEST, have entered into Letters of Intent with Bethesda/Mercy House for the numerous apartments in the new building. Parish space on the First Floor is actually larger in today's plans than previous versions. An area that was to be rented is now to be the parish library/archives, plus a venue for meetings.

Help Needed!

The Altar Guild is looking for help at the 8 am and 10 am Sunday services. Please call Mary Withington at 518-584-0253.

The Rector's Lenten Meditation Lent, 2019

Gospel Text: John 5:19-29

Reflection

Music, and hymns in particular, grace the offering of our worship. Especially pleasing to the ear is the rich harmony a composer brings to a sacred text. It seems more than an ordinary combination of notes played or sung in simultaneous harmony. Instead, we welcome a sound we might deem as delicious to the heart and soul. Heaven indeed draws nearer and near-

er. Today's Gospel invites us to fathom both prayerfully and responsively the harmony in the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. As the Evangelist records, The Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. This relationship is not governed by passivity. Rather, it expresses an absolute harmony of activity between the Author and Giver of Life and Jesus. To recall one of Archbishop Michael Ramsey's sayings, What you see in Christ you get in God.

How might we assess our relational harmony with our Advocate and Mediator? Jesus' mission is to dispense to us the life that is the Father's gift to the Son. And so we ask ourselves, Is there dissonance in my relationship with the Savior? What are the causes? Be specific. Where is harmony lacking? What am I going to do about it as I make my way to Jerusalem? Consider Matthew 25:31-45.

Prayer: Hymn

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
And bring me to the Lamb. [William Cowper, 1772]

Most cordially and gratefully,



The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector

Thank You to Everyone Who Has Submitted a 2019 Pledge

The vestry wants to thank all the members of the congregation who have submitted a pledge to support Bethesda in 2019. By the end of February, we had received 67 pledges, 6 more than last year. The pledges total \$182,000, which is \$23,000 more than last year. That increase brings us about half way to the \$50,000 we will need to pay the costs of the first full year of a new rector.

If you have not yet pledged, there is still time. Your pledge enables the vestry to know whether we have enough financial support to call a new rector. If you need a pledge card, they are available on the table at the back of the church or you can contact

Barbara Latzko, the parish administrative assistant,
at 518-584-5980 or
barbara@bethsdachurch.org.

Catherine Berheide to Give Moseley Lecture on April 4

Catherine Berheide, Bethesda's junior warden, is the recipient of the 2018-2019 Edwin M. Moseley award. Established in 1957, this annual award recognizes a Skidmore faculty member for his/her/their outstanding scholarly achievement, artistic accomplishment, academic research, and/or creative work. The individual selected gives the Moseley Lecture, which is one of the college's major public events of the year. Members of the larger community, including from Bethesda, are invited to attend her lecture, "Still Gendered after All These Years: Pay, Promotions, and Faculty Well-being." Kate will give the lecture on Thursday, April 4, at 8 pm in Gannett auditorium on the Skidmore campus.

Bethesda's Christian Education

Our collaboration with the First Baptist Church continues to be a success during our 2018-2019 school year. Led by Corina Stam-palia, at least 4-6 students from Bethesda attend on a weekly basis. We also did our annual children's Christmas Pageant with the Baptists, which was a huge success with many volunteers and young participants. *Sara Manny*

Little Improvements Make a Big Difference

Many thanks to Mark Griffin for the installation of the baby changing table and grab bar in our church bathroom. We have already received a positive response from a very grateful mom.

These two small additions are a big help. It is greatly appreciated!



Bethesda Episcopal Church Survey Results

As part of the process of searching for a new rector, we created and administered a survey to gather input about the parish and its parishioners to inform the search. Respondents completed this survey either online, via email, or on paper. The following is a brief report on the results of the parish survey.

Characteristics of the Parishioners Who Answered the Survey

As seen in Figure 1, 36 percent of the respondents were 65-74, 30 percent were 50-64, and 19 percent were over 74. Only 14 percent in total were younger than 50. Only 18 percent have at least one child who is under 18 living at home, while the vast majority (82 percent) do not.

Over three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) have been worshipping at Bethesda for more than 10 years, and two-thirds (65 percent) attend services at Bethesda every week or nearly every week. We asked respondents which service they prefer to attend, and 67 percent of people answered Sunday at 10am (see Figure 2).

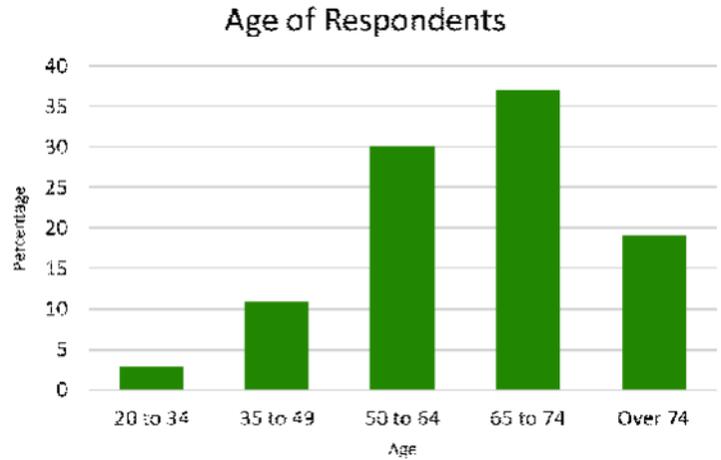


Figure 1

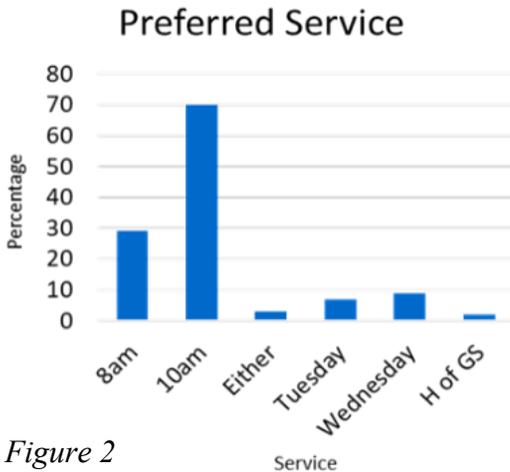


Figure 2

In terms of why respondents selected certain services, “Convenient time” and “Music” were the most popular answers, but people also listed tradition, community, liturgical structure, and scheduling conflicts as reasons they prefer the service they attend. As for those who reported changes in their attendance over their time at Bethesda, 25 percent reported decreases in attendance and 14 percent reported increases. However, the majority of respondents (66 percent) did not report changes in the frequency of their attendance. Those who reported decreases gave reasons such as health and schedule changes.

Opinions about the Parish

We asked respondents a set of questions about their opinions of the parish. They could answer "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Somewhat Agree," "Neither," "Somewhat Disagree," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree." Figure 3 indicates that in response to the statement, "I like the style and feel of the worship service I attend," 84 percent answered "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," 49 percent answering the latter. Only 2 percent disagreed, and no one strongly disagreed.

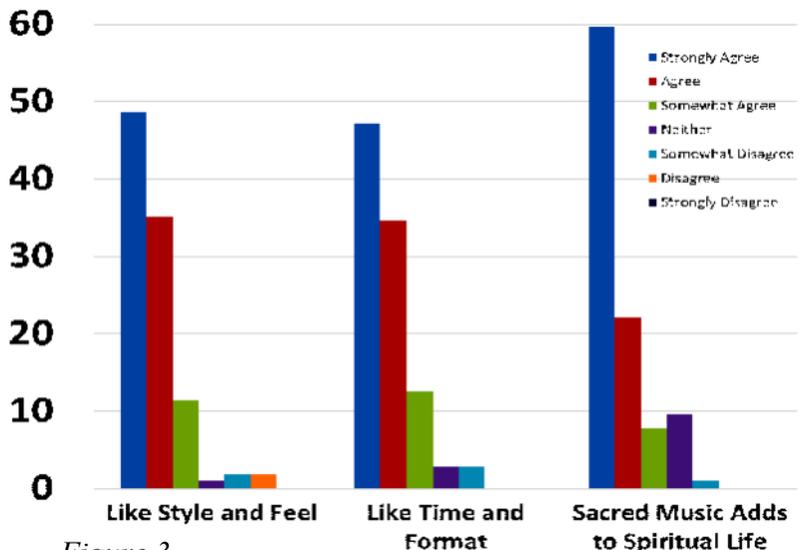


Figure 3

In response to the statement, "I like the times and format of our Sunday Services," 82 percent agreed or strongly agreed, once again with "Strongly Agree" being the most common answer at 47 percent. No one disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, in response to "Sacred choral and organ music at Bethesda's worship service adds an important dimension to my spiritual life," 81 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with 59 percent alone strongly agreeing. Once again, no one disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In regards to the statement, "Our clergy and parishioners respond to the spiritual needs of members unable to attend church," one-third (32 percent) agreed and one-quarter (23 percent) strongly agreed. One percent each responded "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." One-third of parishioners (32 percent) agree with the statement, "Our clergy and parishioners provide adequate support for members in times of need." However, the next largest response category is "Neither Agree nor Disagree" with 27 percent. The responses to the statement, "Bethesda does a good job of involving new members in parish activities," vary: 21 percent agree, 25 percent somewhat agree, and 22 percent neither agree nor disagree (see Figure 4).

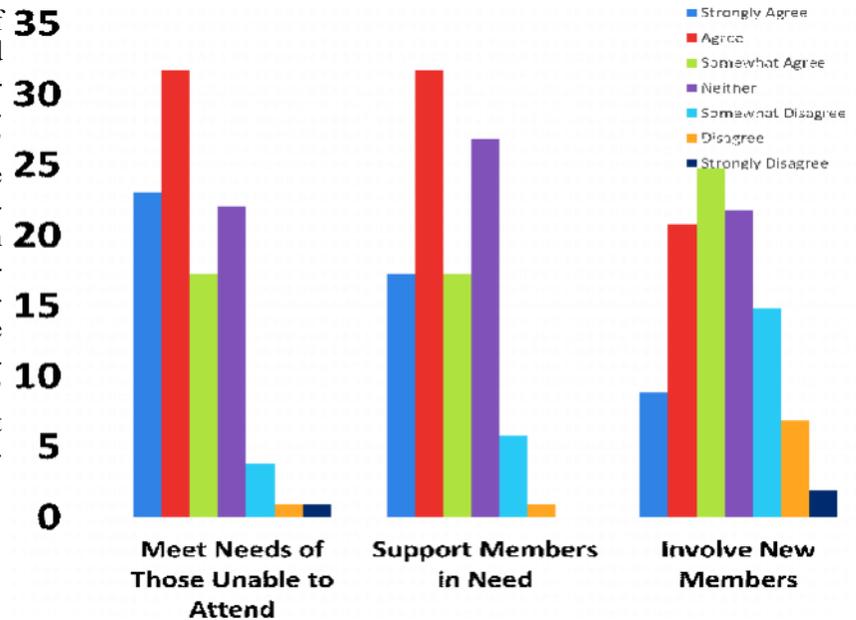


Figure 4

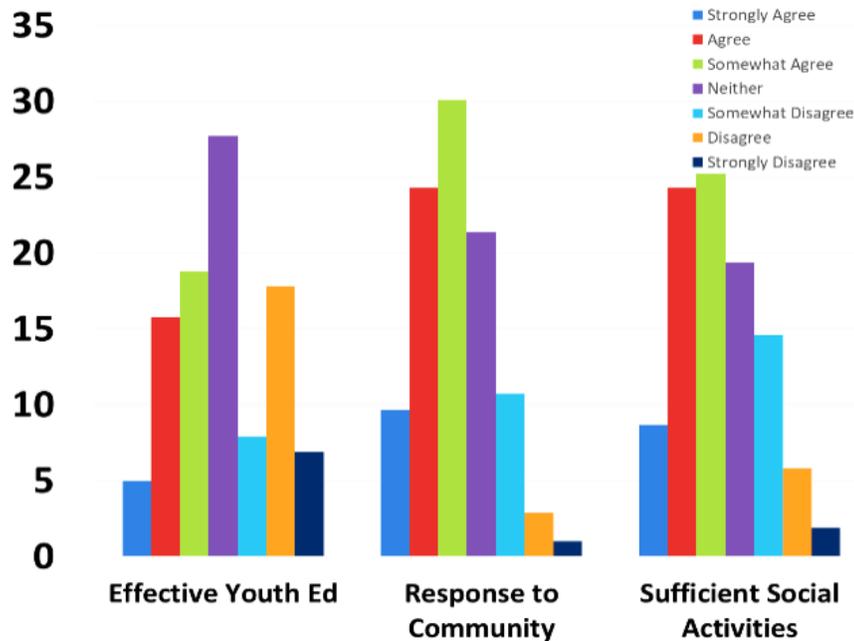


Figure 5

Figure 5 presents more data. Opinions are quite varied about the statement, "Bethesda provides effective youth education programs." Over one-quarter (28 percent) neither agree nor disagree, 25 percent disagree, another 25 percent strongly disagree, and 21 percent agree or strongly agree. This question produced the most negative opinions about the parish. The statement, "Bethesda has identified and is responding to specific needs in the community," received a slightly more positive reaction with 30 percent of respondents somewhat agreeing. One quarter (25 percent) somewhat agree with the statement, "Bethesda provides sufficient opportunities for social activities for parishioners," and another 24 percent agree with it.

Figure 6 provides the results for another set of questions. The statement, "Bethesda's governing board, the vestry, is responsive to concerns of parish members," received a relatively positive response, with half of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Most parishioners either agree or somewhat agree (22 percent) with the statement, "I have a clear idea about the amount of money required to run the parish" as well and no one strongly disagrees. Lastly, "Bethesda is a welcoming church that attracts people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, and orientations" received mostly positive responses, with just over half of the parishioners agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, 3 percent strongly disagree.

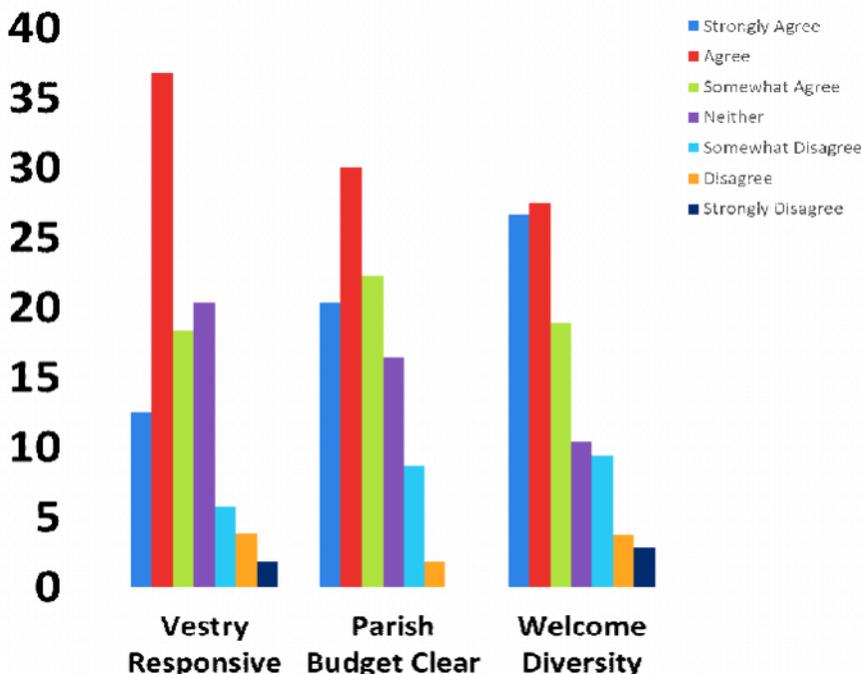


Figure 6

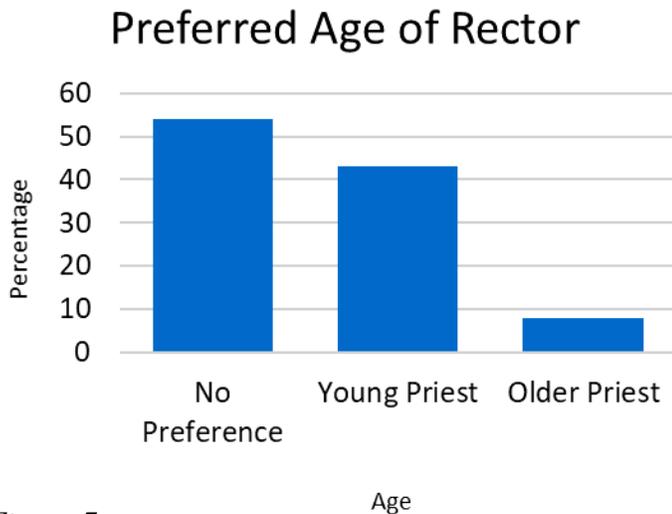


Figure 7

What Are Parishioners Looking for in a New Rector?

We asked parishioners for the preferred characteristics of a new rector. Half (51 percent) said they have no preference about the age of the rector, while 41 percent prefer a young rector and only 8 percent an older rector (see Figure 7). As for gender, 26 percent would prefer a man, 4 percent would prefer a woman, but 70 percent have no gender preference.

As for marital status, 72 percent of respondents have no preference, 28 percent prefer a married rector, and no one prefers a single rector. Additionally, 71 percent have no preference on the rector's sexual orientation, while 3 percent prefer LGBT and 26 percent prefer a heterosexual rector. In terms of whether the rector has children, 80 percent have no preference, 16 percent prefer that he or she have young children, 3 percent prefer grown children, and only 1 percent prefer no children.

When it comes to previous experience, most parishioners, 69 percent, prefer some experience, 22 percent prefer a lot of experience, 9 percent have no preference, and no one prefers a rector with no experience. As for liturgical orientation, 59 percent of respondents prefer High Church, 13 percent prefer Low Church, and 30 percent have no preference.

When asked about Biblical orientation, 46 percent prefer a liberal orientation, 44 percent prefer a traditional one, and only 11 percent have no preference (see Figure 8).

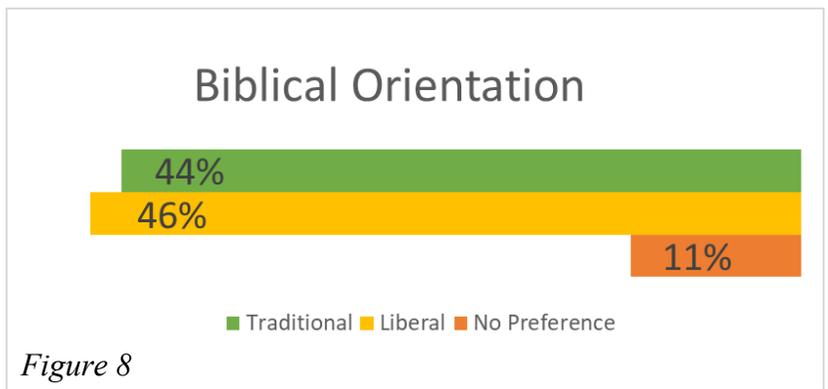
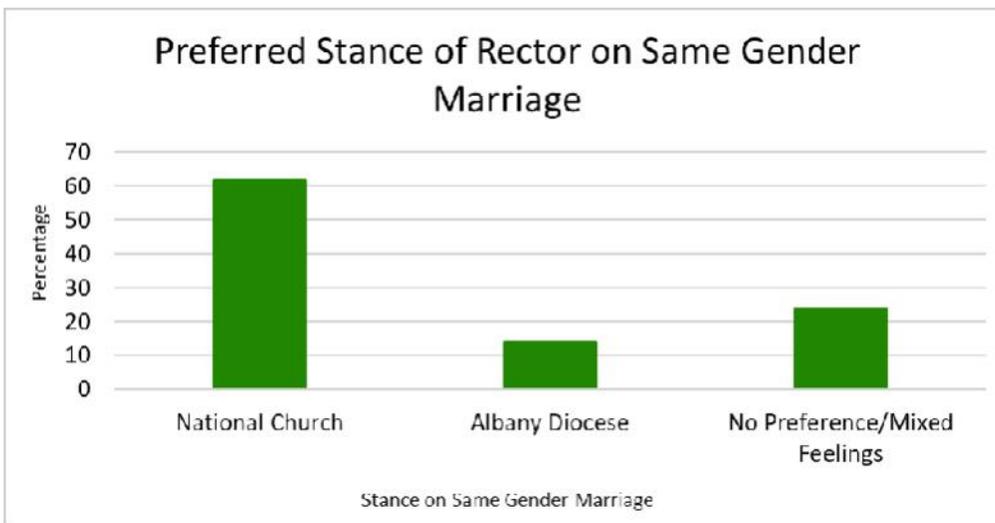


Figure 8



In the last few years, the Albany Diocese has forbidden same-gender marriage while the National Church has permitted it. Almost two-thirds of parishioners (62 percent) prefer a rector who follows the National Church while only 14 percent prefer one who agrees with the Albany Diocese's opposition to same-gender marriage. One quarter (24 percent) have no preference or mixed feelings on the subject (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Respondents were asked what they are looking for in terms of future music and worship preferences. In terms of music, the majority, 82 percent, prefer formal/traditional music. Similarly, 77 percent prefer formal/traditional worship as well. Only 2 percent prefer informal music and 4 percent informal worship.

Just less than half of parishioners (44 percent) prefer both Rite I/Rite II services being conducted at Bethesda while 30 percent expressed a preference for only Rite I service, and 24 percent have no preference (see Figure 10). Similarly almost half of the parishioners (47 percent) also say that they have no preference as to which direction the priest faces while celebrating the Eucharist, 29 percent prefer that he or she face the altar, and 24 percent prefer a rector who faces the congregation.

Having reaffirmed the commitment to more formal/traditional forms of worship and of music along with a preference for a High-Church rector, many members are open to using Rite II at some services. Almost half have no preference about which way the priest faces when celebrating the mass. These results suggest that parishioners are open to some change in our form of worship.

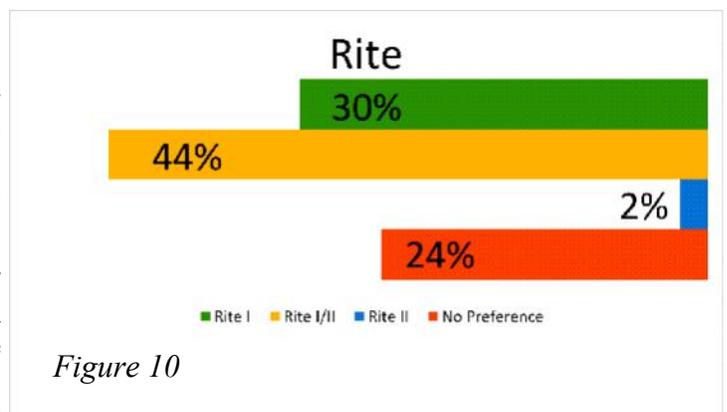


Figure 10

The survey allowed respondents to select items in the area of pastoral care as the most important for the new rector. Two-thirds (65 percent) selected personally ministers to the sick, dying, and bereaved and 51 percent selected establishes an effective program to visit the sick, homebound, hospitalized, and bereaved as the most important forms of pastoral care they want in the new rector. Of the three items in the area of lay leadership/ministry, "Works well with the vestry to achieve parish mission" was chosen as most important by 49 percent. 30 percent said, "Recruits, empowers and equips lay people in church activities." Of the seven items in the area of worship/liturgy/theology, the survey allowed parishioners to select two abilities that they felt were the most important for the new rector. The two selected by the most respondents were "effective preaching" and "supports parishioners of all backgrounds."

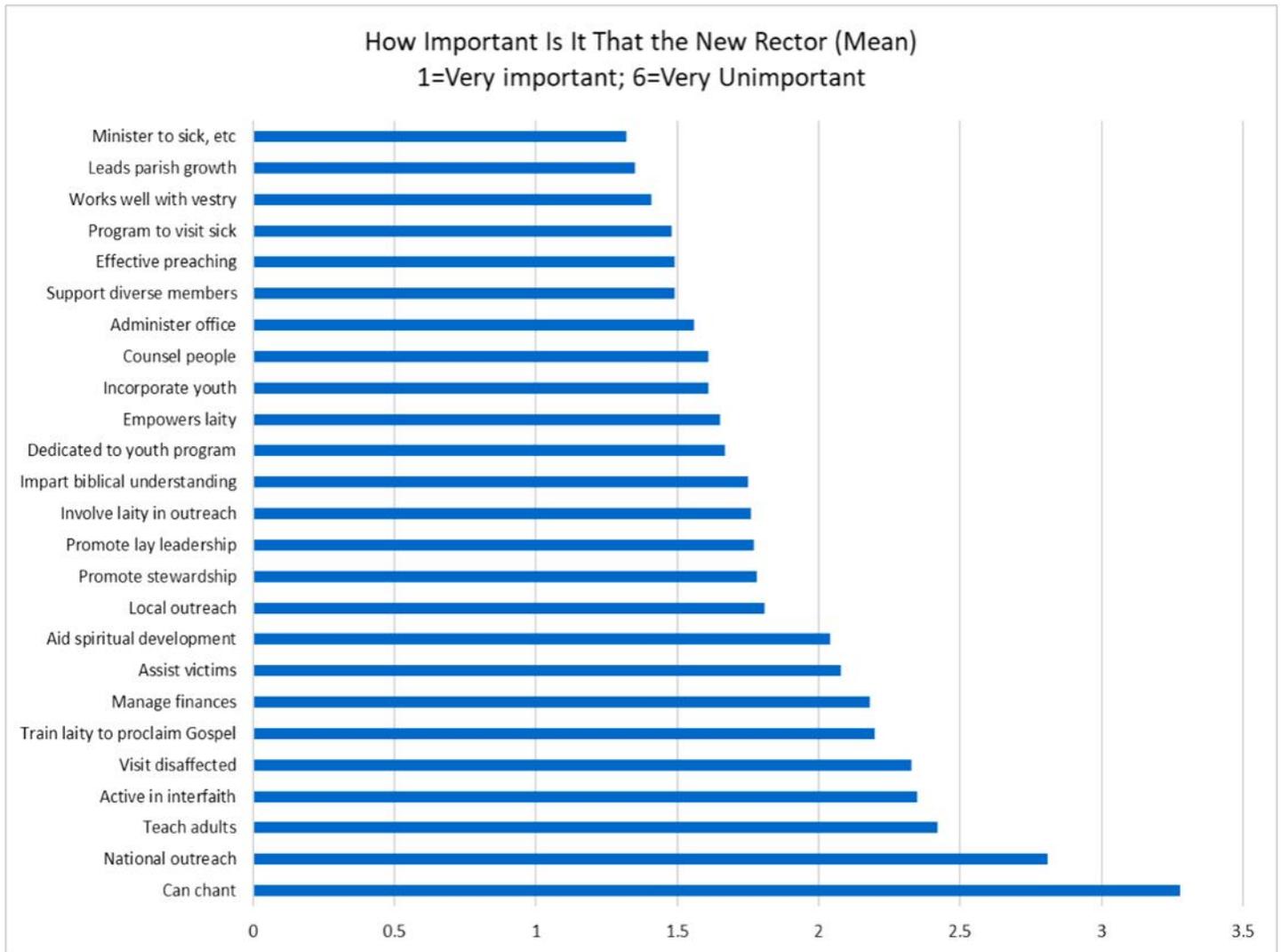


Figure 11

Four out of every ten parishioners (40 percent) stated that the most important ability for a new rector is to involve parishioners in outreach. In the area of parish growth and development, 78 percent chose "Provides effective leadership for parish growth" as the most important ability for the new rector. Just over half (51 percent) selected "Administers church office and staff efficiently and amiably" as the most important ability for the new rector in the area of management and leadership. Figure 11 shows, on a scale from 1-6 where 1 is most important and 6 is least important, parishioners' rankings of on the importance of these characteristics of a new rector. The chart displays the average (mean). The higher the average, the less important parishioners thought the skill to be. Thus, the chart ranks the answers from the most important at the top (with the smallest bar) to the least important at the bottom (with the largest bar).

Bethesda Episcopal Church
43 Washington Street
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Weekly Parish Schedule

A Bethesda Holy Week 2019

Sunday

7:30 A.M. - Morning Prayer
8 A.M. - Holy Eucharist
10 A.M. - Sung Eucharist
11 A.M. - Church School, *First Baptist Church*

Tuesday

6:30 P.M. - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday

12:10 P.M. - Holy Eucharist with healing, *Transept Altar*
10:00 A.M. - (1st and 3rd weeks)
Holy Eucharist: *Home of The Good Shepherd Wilton.*

Thursday

9:30 A.M. - Holy Eucharist, *Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga*
10:00 A.M. - Holy Eucharist, *Home of the Good Shepherd Memory Care, Saratoga*

The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, April 14

7:30 A.M. - Morning Prayer
8:00 A.M. - Holy Eucharist
10:00 A.M. - Solemn Eucharist

Monday in Holy Week, April 15

12:10 P.M. - Holy Eucharist

Tuesday in Holy Week, April 16

12:10 P.M. - Holy Eucharist
6:30 P.M. - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday in Holy Week, April 17

12:10 P.M. - Holy Eucharist
7:00 P.M. - Stations of the Cross

Maundy Thursday, April 18

7:00 P.M. - Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Supper with The Watch

Good Friday, April 19

12:00 P.M. - Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion & Death

Easter Eve, April 20

7:00 P.M. - Solemn Vigil of the Resurrection

The Sunday of the Resurrection, April 21

7:30 A.M. - Morning Prayer
8:00 A.M. - Holy Eucharist with Hymns
10:00 A.M. - Solemn Eucharist with the Great Procession