



**MESSAGE FROM OUR SR. WARDEN
PAM FERGUSON (8.26.18):**

First and foremost, many thanks to **Sally Williams** for leading our Focus Groups on August 19th! We appreciate all that attended and shared their thoughts regarding “**How We Worship**”. Our final Focus Groups will be held on **Sunday, September 9th** and will once again be led by Sally Williams. We will continue to explore: “What will be our congregation’s three most exciting, energizing and important accomplishments over the next three years”. Please plan to join us!

The Vestry also wanted to share the **recaps** from our initial Focus Groups which took place on July 15th. We continue to incorporate this information as well as recent feedback into our Parish Profile.

1. High points at St. Mary’s REMEMBER A MOMENT THAT WAS A HIGH POINT, WHEN YOU FELT OUR CHURCH WAS DOING GOD’S WORK AND FULFILLING ITS MISSION... WHAT WAS HAPPENING?

Responses to the question about “high point” in St. Mary’s history revolved around the themes of being a welcoming community within the church, having wonderful outreach outside the church, and building of the new church. The theme of feeling “welcomed” and “accepted” by Father Scott and the parishioners at St. Mary’s was heard loud and clear. People at St. Mary’s feel comfortable being who they are because of the acceptance, friendship, and connectedness they all feel. Many also made reference to the number of outreach services the church provides; connecting, caring, and helping people outside the immediate church. Finally, the new church building. People referenced how it represented the growth the church was experiencing, the member’s ability to come to agreements on difficult decisions, and the successful ownership it gave all of us.

2. NAME THREE THINGS YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT YOUR CONGREGATION.

Question 2 asks for THREE things we value. There really is one thing that stands out way above and beyond any others found in the multitude of answers. While there were synonyms to the term (inclusion, acceptance, inviting, empathetic), the one word that appeared over and over again was nonjudgmental. People at St. Mary's obviously value the welcoming atmosphere that includes ALL members. In order to round out the "three" things we value; the sermons were mentioned as was the educational opportunities.

3. LOOK BACK OVER YOUR ENTIRE LIFE...RECALL A TIME WHEN YOU MOST APPRECIATED THE MINISTRY OF A PRIEST. WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DID YOU APPRECIATE?

The common theme that was an answer to this question revolved around the Priest's availability and willingness to listen; especially at the time of crisis. Having someone who is nonjudgmental be there when grieving is necessary. It also seemed apparent that the church membership values sermons that are meaningful and easy to connect with.

4. WHAT WILL BE OUR CONGREGATION'S 3 MOST EXCITING, ENERGIZING, AND IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO YOU OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS?

Our three most important accomplishments (in order) will revolve around growing our youth ministry, matching our facilities to our needs, and continuing our membership growth. Finding a permanent youth minister who is going to be part of growing that very important part of our church. Facility needs continue to be of high importance to our membership community. Finally, maintaining and promoting membership growth was mentioned as well.