

ST MATTHEW 2020 WORSHIP SURVEY COMMENTS. Respondents were given an opportunity to leave comments based on the four prompts below. Each respondent's comments are represented horizontally. For additional information, please contact Dan Tuve, Worship and Music Committee chair, or Pastor Julie.

What would you like like more of? What would you like to change? What would you like to keep the same? What else would you us to know?

| | | | |
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| <p>I would love more variety in musical settings, more opportunities to focus on special festivals and themes, more people planning creative worship!</p> | <p>Communion practice is confusing for visitors.</p> | <p>the wonderful people!</p> | |
| <p>More time for individual responses for prayer.</p> | <p>Nothing</p> | <p>Current use of liturgy.</p> | <p>Time is not an issue with me.</p> |
| <p>Contemporary/praise music</p> | | <p>Sermons and children's sermons</p> | <p>It's not always easy to make because of schedules outside of our control but we really do love it</p> |
| <p>The choir, assistant ministers and pastors opening the service by processing to the altar</p> | <p>More traditional hymns Confession and forgiveness</p> | | |
| <p>More people in attendance!</p> | <p>Things like communing at the altar that extend the length of the service without much benefit (in my mind) could be gotten rid of to keep the service at an hour.</p> | <p>The mix of traditional and new music; the children's sermons; the children singing on the 4th Sunday of the month</p> | <p>This isn't the worship itself, but could we give some thought to tightening up the timeline on Sunday mornings? Sunday School could begin right at 9:30 and/or the 11:00 service moved to 10:45. There is a lag between the end of Sunday School and the beginning of the late service that is difficult to fill timewise for</p> |

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| | | | those of us who are picking up children from Sunday School and who want to attend the late service. It's tough to entertain kids in a settled way in the hallways of church for 20 minutes. |
| Settle into a weekly routine rooted in tradition. | Rehearsal during service. Solo performances. | Familiar hymns, traditional prayers. | |
| Wider variety of music selections in choir anthems. | | | |
| | | The formality- it is a special occasion, not just a get-together. | New music director is adding a wonderful dimension. |
| Fewer new aspects so often. At time i feel like i'm just being taught new things each week. This takes away from my ability to focus on worship and my faith journey. | Music has become too much of a performance. Accompaniment of hymns should focus on the melody and allow us to easily sing hymns, especially those that are new to us. Also I find the choir standing and singing during communion to be disruptive. I feel that as a member in the pews I am not part of the music during worship anymore and that I should just listen to others who have rehearsed. | I think the stability in the order of worship is important to allow for some predictability. This allows us to focus on worship not just keeping up with things that may have changed from week to week. | I enjoy a quiet sanctuary before the service to pray and get in the mindset for worship. Lately there have been lots of preparation and rehearsal/conversation right up until the prelude to worship time. |
| Children | Sermons, while very good, can tend to be | Children's sermons are great | Worship is a respite from daily conflicts. I |

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| | <p>longer than needed to make the points. Keeping the service to an hour when communion at the rail, or 45 minutes when there is no communion would be appreciated, without cutting too much familiar liturgy</p> | | <p>prefer not to have sermons with heavy themes of politics, social justice</p> |
| <p>I'd love to see a little more diversity but might be a reflection of the town's demographics.</p> | <p>I don't care for anything political. I only noticed it in one sermon that pastor Brian did about immigration. I'm actually pro-immigration but don't like that in church. Otherwise I have enjoyed his sermons and got a lot out of them!</p> | <p>Pastor Julie is wonderful, great sermons, beautiful voice, and confirmation classes are good!</p> | <p>We really like the flexibility of joining you when we can and always feeling welcome. My husband has been going to Asylum Hill but I have my kids in confirmation at St Matthews.</p> |
| <p>More personalization. Eg. During communion, say "John, this is the body of Christ..." given that we now wear nametags, this should be easier. It helps to bring the service to a more personal experience with God.</p> <p>Additionally, the organ music help me to reflect and prepare for service. Perhaps 2 pieces before the service begins would provide other</p> | <p>I like the traditional service (organ and words), which is why I stay at St. Matthew. If parishioners would like to move to a more contemporary service (i.e. clapping, signing, etc.), consider adding or converting one of the services. For example, in a past ELCA congregation, there was a Saturday 5:30 evening contemporary service, followed by 2 traditional Sunday morning services. This</p> | <p>Music. Choir. Communion at the communion rail. I like that the messages are not political. Also, I like that the service is kept to 1 hour -- if you go over, you'll lose members!</p> | <p>Please consider a rotation/season where the traditional music from the Book of Worship is used. These were the melodies that many of us grew up with, and bring some familiar comfort/memories to the service.</p> |

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| parishioners additional time to prepare as well. | flexible service/schedule attracted many new, younger (contemporary) members to the church, without alienating the long-standing members who greatly value the traditional service. | | |
| | More contemporary music | | |
| Nothing | nothing | everything | I find St. Matthew's a very friendly and welcoming congregation. |
| Sermons that are more spirit-filled and Christ-centered and less about social causes - I want to know what Jesus said and did and how I can grow closer to him. | I feel I answered that above. | The children's sermons are always right on target - so well-planned and prepared - love the objects and visuals - they help tell the story - and Pastor Julie is excellent at teaching in the children's sermons | The music is always inspiring. I love everything from the chants to spirituals to Bach - and I love when Dick plays cute little relevant pieces as folks are moving or getting to their places (when lectors read, when the children's sermon is over). I absolutely love Pastor Julie's voice and the fact that she uses this gift often. We are so blessed to have her. |
| Nothing | Nothing | Nothing to change | Would love to see the congregation double in size. In today's world it seems to be a difficult thing to do. |

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| | | I am pleased with our current worship service. It is the proper length, has the right amount of praying and singing. The sermons are interesting and make me think of others in the Farmington valley and greater Hartford. | |
| More music somewhat like negro spiritual type hymns. Music that makes you want to stand up and dance, | Nothing | The Sermons | |
| | | Variety | It is my main focus |
| I would like to see more tradition in the form of prayers (confession & forgiveness), giving thanks for the offering and traditional music as the gifts are brought forward. Each time I'm there, it seems different and not consistent. There is so much more music focus than prayer focus and that isn't important to me. I don't need the hundreds year old history of music or the composer to appreciate the music and give thanks for it. | I'd prefer a traditional format; praying the order of confession and forgiveness (as in the book, not a new prayer each week). LESS paper...there's talk of being earth friendly, but the handouts are extensive and repeat what is already printed in the Book of Worship or Hymnal. This seems wasteful and contradictory of our goal to be stewards for the environment. I prefer communion at the rail. I noticed the question above regarding the time it takes this way & I've not noticed it taking longer because there are fewer people attending worship than have been there in | I'd like something much different, quite honestly. I've not been comfortable here for awhile, but continue to attend because of the history and friends sitting with us in the congregation. It feels like this is becoming a music focused church and that's not a priority for me. | |

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| | years past. I'd rather spend time on communion than discussing a composer's mindset about a particular song that will be played. | | |
| Sometimes less formal and more personal connection | The music. Would love more of an open mic experience to connect with others. Maybe less of a scripted opening message. | Openness of mind. | In a time when people are skeptical of churches, sometimes it feels so formal. The sermons are great and we get to the heart of that, but then it seems like there is not a lot of vulnerability. Sometimes I think there is too much tradition. |
| More time to reflect in silence | not shaking hands during "peace be with you"- is there another way? | mostly everything | |
| None | Only one service, at 10am. The number of congregants is clearly dwindling. | | |
| More upbeat modern music | more contemporary upbeat music, organ toned down a bit, sometimes over powering | the warm welcome and inclusion of all | love St Matthews members leaders. the out reach and pay it forward is amazing, youth programs are so great under PB and PJ |
| More in-depth biblical teaching rather than a cursory mention - I want to learn more | already stated above | the music and children's sermons and liturgy (both old and new) | |

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| <p>about biblical examples, people, saints, stories and less about social issues</p> | | | |
| <p>The pastors leading the prayers rather than the lay people</p> | <p>I would like to have more tradition rather than change</p> | | <p>I do not have the peaceful feeling that I always felt when leaving church</p> |
| <p>Sermons are amazing at 'reminding' us of our connection to the outside world and what we should be doing about it. I would love to see the messages more balanced with going within to heal our own lives- getting at our humanness at a deeper level to help us relate very personally - sometimes I feel like I'm being preached at to do more and feel I've attended a lecture rather than something that opens me for new insights into my particular experiences in life.</p> | <p>Love the energy - I'd change attendance! People come when they get something they can't anywhere else - we need to keep figuring out what they need that we can provide in worship</p> | <p>Liturgical approach</p> | <p>Pastors and people are amazing! Wish more people attended to create and benefit from that "fellowship"</p> |
| <p>Really like the children's sermon. Sometimes it is my favorite part of the service. Pastor Julie does a great job connecting the gospel to something simple to understand, but that I</p> | <p>while I enjoy the music, sometimes I think it is too long especially around offering. offering is usually very quick, but sometimes the music goes on for several minutes after. Also, when the music</p> | <p>Confession and forgiveness is a very important part of the service for me</p> | <p>I like it when we have the opportunity to hear new/different kinds of music, but I don't like when everything is different in service at the same time (prayers, responses, music, etc...). I would like to</p> |

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| often find myself thinking about later. | changes tempo(?) in a familiar song, sometimes it is hard to continue to sing along. | | have some traditional elements that are consistent. |
| We're very happy with the worship service as is. We'd love to see more people attending. | Please see answer above. | The service is very meaningful for us. We feel blessed to be members of St. Matthew. | Please see answers above. |
| Would like to see a little more of the "standard confessions". | Would like to see more the traditional liturgy that has a comfort element to it, vrs. change in the structure of the service so often. | Prayers of intercession, variety of hymns | |
| Music from spirituals | | The Lutheran liturgy gives me comfort | |
| More progressive music | Go back to the rail for communion | The liturgy | |
| Use the same confession that was used weekly by pastor carter every week | lower the volume of the organ before and after worship, it is so hard to talk & hear | use the same confession that was used weekly by Pastor Carter every week | |
| The involvement of young people | The tendency of people to sit toward the back. If everyone moved forward, the back would be more available to visitors. | Sermons, children's sermons | Permanent name cards was a great idea. |
| | | | |
| Filled pews | Not a huge fan of lay ministry | The liturgy, readings and sermons | Most of the changes are positive. Like the new focus on |

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| | | | community and reaching out |
| I get back to you on this question. | I get back to you on this one. | I am good with the services. | How to convert? |
| Sermons that don't present an opinion on politics. Pray for a problem, but political views don't belong in church | Sometimes the service lasts too long, and congregation responses change too frequently for me. Go back to using the hymnal. | | I'm rather traditional with religion. |
| | continue to relate worship to todays world so we can continue to see the connections | love the sermons- always enjoyable and reflective | |
| | | I enjoy the split use of the Early Lutheran and the Now the Feast settings. I love tradition, it is like being home, but I also like learning new settings. | |
| More youth involvement and maybe introduce some contemporary Christian music | More time for deeper reflection during the Confession & Forgiveness portion. | The communion service schedule. | n/a |
| More prayer | Communion at all services | Maintain as is | It is comforting and gives me peace and joy |
| Young families involved. Children singing. | | | |
| Continuity/consistency | Fewer solos. More and better coordination of acolytes, greeters, ushers, lay ministers, etc. It has been feeling | I like the bulletins instead of flipping through the book all the time. I love how our exchange of peace | I think these questions are too vague and fairly leading. St. Matthew does feel like home to me, but I would not say |

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| | <p>kind of disconnected, whether people don't show up, they don't know what to do, or there are so many people on the altar it looks confusing and distracting.</p> | <p>has expanded and people greet people up and down the rows. I like the Children's Sermon. All of these things have been new in the last three years and are wonderful. I also appreciate keeping the general format of the Lutheran service.</p> | <p>it is an oasis and peaceful anymore. With new practices and elements appearing consistently, it is difficult to be peaceful and reflective because I am taken by surprise and begin to wonder what else is going to be new. It doesn't matter if the change is announced in advance, it is still new. So, my definition of peaceful obviously includes what's familiar. That said, the new does eventually become familiar, but when introducing new things is the norm, it does not lend itself to peace.</p> <p>There are many sermons that move me to tears, but there are many that also feel very liberal and fairly judgmental about us as a congregation. There are ways to inspire us to act as Jesus did without the shaming tones at times.</p> <p>I like organ better than piano. I like the guest accompaniments and the choir. I am not a fan of solos, by anyone. I like to sing and feel</p> |
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| | | | <p>less of a participant when I do not get the opportunity. I think perhaps we should have a contemporary service in addition to a traditional service. I have had young families describe their dislike of organ music.</p> <p>I do not mind having lay ministers - do they effectively lead me in prayer? It is not my place to judge their effectiveness. They feel called to serve in that way and they do what they are asked - their role is not to lead in my opinion, but to support Pastor's leadership.</p> |
| <p>Expanded youth participation and youth presence where possible.</p> <p>The sermons focused on the meaning of the scripture and relatability to our lives are most spiritually meaningful for me. Thank you!</p> <p>quiet time ahead of the service for reflection.</p> <p>Feeling the joy of god's</p> | <p>Music that is more accessible to the Congregation as a whole. For me that means fewer solo performances, use of the organ in a way that puts the Congregation's singing first and the organ second, and generally a more joyful tone to the music. Sometimes I feel like a member of an audience, not of a Congregation.</p> <p>Adding a weeknight</p> | <p>Being Lutheran- that's really important to me.</p> <p>The Children's sermon</p> <p>Moving around the sanctuary during Passing of the Peace. Nice to say "peace" to people more than two pews away!</p> <p>The people - that's a huge part of why I come to St Matthews</p> <p>Two services</p> | <p>The people of St Matthews are my extended family. Being with my extended family on Sunday mornings and worshipping together is the most important part of worship for me.</p> <p>There were two questions in the survey related to Musical Settings - I left them both blank. Honestly, and I apologize, I couldn't recall either setting with any</p> |

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| <p>love and forgiveness with my friends</p> | <p>evening service in addition to our two Sunday Services. Hopefully that would appeal to a broader set of Christians who would want to join for Service and Supper.</p> <p>Explore options to our traditional music in order to appeal to a broader set of Christians.</p> <p>One of the survey questions references "serving others" and "working for justice". I see those as very different things and regard "justice" as a political hot button. St Matthews needs to remain a place free from judgment and politicized speech.</p> | <p>The Sunday Worship bulletin</p> <p>Alternating sermons between the two Pastors - the mix of messages is good</p> | <p>certainty. I have come to expect and have grown desensitized to the shifts in the service.</p> <p>For me music is a vehicle to feel God's presence and that feeling is amplified when I can participate. That said, I am not a musician. I can sing, but not well and with a limited range. Musical selections which are too challenging for me to sing limit my opportunity to participate and feel God's presence.</p> |
| <p>I value some consistency and familiarity. More hymns I know, sung in a way I can sing them. I appreciate the settings in the hymnal, as well as Now the Feast.</p> | <p>At times, it feels like music is the focus over other parts of worship. Music is essential, but not at the forefront. Spoken word matters. Quiet time matters. I come to hear God's word and be comforted by the familiar and my fellow parishioners. Need to strike that balance.</p> | <p>I appreciate the sermons. I like the prayers and peace. I would like a familiar sense of confession and forgiveness weekly.</p> | <p>Recently, at the 8:30 service, there are times the choir is still practicing after 8:20. I think we need a chance to enter the sanctuary before that for some quiet, contemplative time. The parishioners are lined up waiting to go in. We need to not rush that meaningful</p> |

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| Sermons that leave you with a quote or thought that can stay with you all week. | Less chanting from the pastors | | part of preparing for worship. St. Matthew is comforting, peaceful, loving, uplifting and in this crazy world, a place where I go to be refueled to face life with Christian values and joy. I'm so grateful that the Lord directed me here. |
| Traditional hymns | Extended musical interludes tend to disrupt the flow for the speakers/readers | Confession and forgiveness along with the blessing are important components to me. | |
| Slightly longer sermons | Volume of organ--too loud often | Sermon and communion | Meaningful |
| New musical liturgies - I like trying new tunes and words to hear praise to god in new ways. | I would like to responsively sing the psalms with the chanting melodies. | Keep all the corporate singing. | I feel at home in SMLC's worship. A comforting but dynamic home. |
| Its fine the way it is | as above | as above | its good |
| Nothing more is needed - a perfect balance | Sing only two verses of hymns | The choir | Very comforting and personal |
| More explicit references to scripture and current behavior in our American culture | Additional vocal and instrumental music | The time allocations between service c0omponents | |
| Forums based on scripture | The organ (and sometimes piano) are WAY, WAY TOO LOUD!!!! QUIET THE | Traditional music | Please avoid politics in sermons---stick with the direct Scripture--- |

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| | ORGAN DOWN. I WOULD RATHER NO MUSIC WHAT SO EVER THAN A LOUD, BLARING ORGAN. IT IS NOT MEDITATIVE!!!! | | and not a political "spin" |
| | | Core traditional Lutheran worship format and centered on Christ and the scriptures. | We are blessed with our Pastors, our worship leaders, and a loving congregation. |
| Consistency | Less focus on music, no hand gestures | Traditions | Use prayer book, change maybe once per month, reduce length of service |
| Stay the same | Stay the same | I like the pamphlets we use during the service, better then using the hymnal. | Nothing |
| Band type music | Feeling loved and accepted by God | Kids singing | |
| | | The liturgy | Having cancer and being pretty much confined to home , I greatly appreciate the home visits by Pastors Julie and Brian |
| Perhaps a little more consistency in the confession. Change is good but perhaps less often. | | | |
| Condensing of sermon time- saying the message in less time. | Though I like the different music selections, it would be | Events, fellowship, stewardship, hours of service, the basic | Thank you for your consistent and hard work. You have big |

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| Less preachy structure and more relatable to life's blessings and challenges in an easy going nature. More like the children's sermons. | nice to keep some of it consistent for comfort of familiar ritual. Easier for the singing challenged...Less rallying and more supportive of our faith and bringing it into today. | structure of the service, music. | shoes to fill add are doing great. Thank you for asking for my input. |
| Familiar hymns integrated with new songs. | Avoid becoming too busy. | The above | Appreciate that worship remains at core of St. Matthew. |
| Familiar hymns | Pastor leading prayers at the end of the service not lay members | General format of the service | I enjoy the music sung by the choir |
| Consistency - the week to week changes in liturgy have been difficult to adapt to | One service with communion on Sunday morning at ~9:30, an alternative service (possibly Contemporary themed for younger people) on another day or evening (e.g. Sat pm or Wed evening) | | The musical experience has changed. The organist is gifted but often overpowers the congregation and it has made the experience less enjoyable. I also feel like the liturgy changes significantly on a week to week basis, and some of the traditional worship elements have been disregarded. I don't mind change but have found it difficult to adapt to the changes. |
| Youth | I would like to see more children | The people | It is wonderful |

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| | Not interested in healing prayers with lay ministers | | |
| | We like the opportunity for healing prayers on the 5th Sunday, but are not comfortable with the involvement of the lay prayer ministers | | |
| | one service at 10am | communion and children's sermons | |
| People we have never seen before who perhaps have never been to a church at all. | Direct our focus to Evangelism totally, from its current totally introspective micro focus | Traditional, predictable, familiar, comfortable true oasis in a really troubled near Sodom world. | |
| More new members to join us in traditional worship services. More programs for youth-future of the church | would like more middle-of-the-road, rather than liberal ideas, which have turned off some members. | Traditional services with familiar Lutheran hymns. | |
| More signs of Christmas with candles and wreaths in windows and a tree. An annual youth service with scripture and music they provide. Families lighting the advent candles weekly (as a group). | I would enjoy more of the prayers and scriptures and the communion to be presented by our two clergy. I like the piano and organ but do not enjoy them played extremely loudly as it takes away from worship. | keep things as natural as possible without adding electrified music and not doing away with our hymnal and not projecting only words on screens as some churches have done. | |