

## A NOTE FROM THE THRIVE TEAM - RESULTS OF SURVEY

In January, our Thrive Team connected with a handful of members and friends to get their responses to three questions. This was an exercise suggested as a part of *The Examen(ed) Church* program we took part in over the past two years through Marquette University.

- 1.) *What activities of the church best reflect who we are as a congregation?*
- 2.) *What aspects of the church bring you the most joy?*
- 3.) *What in church life saddens or drains you?*



We followed up in February with an open survey for anyone in the congregation to complete anonymously online. We found the feedback from all the responses to be both encouraging and challenging, and it has played a strong role in further meetings. We provided Church Council with the responses.

As a group, we recently decided we ought to share results with the full congregation. After all, many of you took time to share your thoughts and we should report back on what we received. Rather than share each and every response, and in an effort to keep the feedback anonymous, we want to share the themes we took from the responses to each question. Our hope is that this will be thought-provoking and encourage deeper reflection and discernment on who we are as a church and how we can support our mission, values, and fellow congregants as we navigate uncharted territory. The following information was also recently shared by our team member, Scott Symes, during the October 27 church service.

Mission and Values Focused Questions & Responses:

1.) *Activities that reflect who we are as a congregation:* Responses to this question were broad, with congregation members valuing our Sunday worship, open Communion, Fellowship Hour, Christian Education programs for our youth, and contributions to community organizations. Members also expressed gratitude for the many church volunteers who maintain our property, such as the Property Team.

2.) *Aspects that bring me joy:* Many expressed that joy comes from the communal activities like Passing the Peace, our diverse music programs, and the beautiful sanctuary. The dedication of volunteers, the tradition of selling trees, and the relationships formed within the church community also bring happiness, along with special services and fellowship events.

3.) *What saddens or drains me:* Financial issues and declining membership are the major concerns, exacerbated by the post-COVID uncertainty about active members. Some respondents expressed disappointment that our minister did not live in the community while others questioned the intersection of our church values and individual beliefs related to political/social issues. The low attendance at services, the burden on a small number of active members, and the decreasing number of pledgers contribute to a sense of uncertainty regarding the congregation's future trajectory.

The Thrive Team thanks those who participated in the survey earlier this year. We encourage reflection and discernment on this feedback and hope that it leads to respectful and constructive conversations as we move forward as a congregation.

The Thrive Team - Terry McManus, Louise Mollinger, Scott Symes, Gary and Meg Tackes