

NARRATIVE

In our baptism we promise to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, seeking and serving Christ in all persons. You are invited here to reflect on your ministry by responding to the following questions (approximately 1200 characters each). Answer the questions here or attach a sheet with the answers. In either case, please use an application (e.g., MS Word) that allows copy and paste so the answers can be electronically transferred into the online system.

The answers below were compiled from two different group brainstorming discussions attended by about the majority of our congregation.

1. Describe a moment in your worshiping community's recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

With the encouragement of a very wise interim rector, we have developed a robust Lay Ministry beginning with a well-attended and lively Adult Forum Bible Study which serves as a biblical basis and theological grounding and inspires service to the greater community. An outgrowth or extension is seen in the following: Anam Cara Centering Prayer Group, Eucharistic Lay Visitors, Healing Prayer Group and our Worship Team. These efforts have been rewarding to our parishioners, successfully involving many more parishioners in the life of the church.

Many of our parishioners are choosing to have an active role in our spirituality through worship, learning, service, and caring for our community.

2. Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship in your community.

As a parish, St. Andrew's appreciates tradition. Services typically follow Rite II, but Lenten services use Rite I. Parishioners would not describe our services as "high" or "low" church but "mid" church. A service booklet has been prepared to accompany our service and is a valuable resource to newcomers. We have developed a dedicated choir which sings two Sundays a month. We commission Eucharistic Lay Visitors on the fourth Sunday and have Healing Prayers on the third Sunday. In the absence of a rector we have begun Morning Prayer two Sundays led by Lay Worship Leaders.

3. How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

St. Andrew's has established a practice in incorporating other parish members in ministry. The Worship Committee includes invited members from the Altar Guild, Choir, Greeting Committee and the pastor. This group holds discussions and makes plans about upcoming Liturgical events. Volunteers assist with Bible Study, Altar Guild, Lay Eucharistic ministers, coffee hour, Intercessors, visiting shut-ins, hosts/greeters and Choir. Youth are encouraged to begin training for becoming acolytes.

4. As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

The Book of Common Prayer (p. 855) says:

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

We take our place in service to each other in a variety of ways:

-Spiritual-our parish is positive and is focused on lifting each other up. The practice of "Looking forward and not backwards" is important to us. The parish is able to draw on multiple activities to promote this growth. Included are: Bible study, Anam Cara Centering Prayer group, healing prayer, Lenten programs and pastoral care.

-Emotional/Social- many events focus on this. Included are: coffee hour, pet blessing and picnic, TGIF evening get-togethers (last Friday of the month) and our outreach programs.

-Physical- St. Andrew's has recently made several physical changes to our building to support our parish. These include: installation of a ramp into the parish hall, handrails, paving improvements and a designated parking space to increase accessibility, and church grounds maintenance.

5. How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Remembering the words of Archbishop William Temple:

The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members.

St. Andrew's participates in multiple community charities:

-Food Pantry/Clothing Closet- University Baptist Church

-Spirit of Christmas Drive- Interfaith Council

-Souper Bowl Sunday- Good Samaritan Ministries

-Knitting hats for veterans

-Sock drive for homeless

-UTO

-Clothing/Supplies for babies- Clarity Women's Care

Of late, we are seeking to be more active in community service. Several members assisted Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with their school backpack/supplies giveaway.

We've also held events open to the residents of the buildings near the church, including:

-St. Francis Day pet blessing and picnic

-Trunk or Treat for neighborhood kids

St. Andrew's has helped multiple homeless individuals with clothing and has welcomed them to worship with us. A parishioner-developed reference list of community organizations was created to refer individuals in need.

We also allow space for a local AA group (New Radicals Young People's AA).

6. Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

St. Andrew's is involved in multiple activities in the wider Church and the community.

They include:

- General Convention Deputy (a member served in 2024)
- Diocesan committees (members have been and are active)
- Synod Delegates
- AA group
- Lion's Club collection of eyeglasses
- Church Camp Counselor and attendee
- Facebook page
- Parishioner's public discussion series on his book on consciousness.
- Campus Ministry- this could be fruitful ground for a priest with calling or aptitude for youth ministry

For several years now, St. James Episcopal Church in nearby Marion, a very small congregation, has been a chapel administered by a combined vestry and (until his retirement) served on Saturday evening by our priest. Our present bishop, noting the strong growth in the Marion area, has recently indicated a desire to make St. James a mission of the diocese... with a separate priest serving St. James and another mission in the area. This is a fluid topic, and the members of all three parish/churches are eager to see how it plays out.

7. Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past 5 years. Who can be contacted about this project?

St. Andrew's is participating in a city-wide initiative led by Hopewell Baptist Church to provide new backpacks complete with age-appropriate school supplies (as recommended by local schools). Members of St. Andrew's parish helped to fill and sort backpacks, and donated money to purchase supplies for over 2000 children.

Outreach is a win-win-win: it helps the community, it pleases God, and it makes us feel good.

Contact: Tony Goodin.

8. How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

By being a welcoming place to everyone: 'for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28 NRSV)

By offering the joy of service: "For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45 NRSV)

In today's world we hope for meaning and purpose. To those who listen with ear and heart, our weekly worship services offer both of those things. When we invite people to live out that hope with us, we serve them as much as the community.

We have made changes to become more open to both our own congregation and the wider community:

- Open communications with parish- announcements at Sunday services, a dedicated email domain used by our priest and leaders to send regular updates in a formal manner.
- Development of Worship Committee

- Development of Anam Cara Centering Prayer group.
- Development of Host roles to welcome visitors- the 2nd CLA highest response was, "We are a welcoming congregation to the visitor who comes through our doors."
- Volunteer-led clean up of church grounds/areas
- Reaching out to the surrounding diverse community

9. What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshiping community?

Our practice of stewardship extends beyond financial measures, as members not only offer monetary support but to also offer their time and talent.

Our stewardship program involves letters and pledge cards, as well as personal reflections from church members during Sunday services.

Time and talent offerings include real-world activities that draw the community together. For example, landscaping and cleaning up the church property, coffee hour, and involvement in worship services (Altar Guild, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, hosts, choir, intercessors).

In order to be better stewards of the earth, and to lessen our financial burden, we installed solar panels several years ago.

10. What is your worshiping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

Among parishioners, conflict is very rare. Our members are reasonable and thoughtful and there is more which unites us than divides us. The community of Carbondale is progressive. At St. Andrew's, we strive to be a "big tent" and speak the truth in love. But it would be fair to say that we often opt for polite avoidance of divisive issues rather than active engagement.

With clergy: we have faced challenges in our relationships with some rectors. One had a desire for control, and used "divide and conquer" strategies which pitted members against one another. The other, an otherwise good-natured, thoughtful and engaging person, had inexplicable, toxic interactions with a small number of parishioners. In both relationships, we tried to mediate the issue and failed. The difference came from the diocesan level. In one instance, the Bishop intervened under Title III to mediate, arranging interventions for both vestry and priest. That led to recommendations that we take a larger role in the life of the church, beginning an organic healing process which has helped make us a more vibrant and vital church.

11. What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

We have not actively pursued change very often, and therefore we have experienced little associated failure. The recommended changes referenced in the previous question, are most evident in three areas:

-Adult Christian Education is parishioner-led. It is well attended.

-We have a **Worship Committee** which works with our priest to enrich and provide a variety of meaningful worship experiences which meet the needs of our members.

-We have more active engagement in **community outreach and service**.

These efforts have been well-received. One challenge is how to involve more members while respecting those who choose to serve and participate in more traditional ways.

In 2024, part of our sanctuary ceiling drywall collapsed. We set up a temporary altar in the parish hall. As stressful as this was, most parishioners responded graciously to this change. They pitched in to clean up before and after reconstruction. Church leadership regularly updated the congregation on the progress. When our insurance claim was denied, we consulted a parishioner with insurance expertise. She explained the basis of the denial, saving us the stress of an appeal. We have now returned to our sanctuary.

12. If you were to identify the gifts/skills you need in leadership as you move into the future, which words would you use to best describe these?

(Enter no more than four descriptions made up of one or two-words each. For example: administration, asset management, preaching, pastoral care)

The following are based on the highest-ranking responses from the "Characteristics of a Desired Priest" survey we done for this search:

- Listener/Empathy
- Faith applications
- Traditional worship
- Faith examination