

Survey Findings Overview
Parish Survey December 2020
Emmanuel Episcopal Church
Staunton, Virginia

The Search Committee conducted a survey of Emmanuel's congregation as part of the process of seeking our next Rector. Given the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the survey offered a safe mechanism through which parishioners could provide input and participate in the prayerful discernment of our congregation's needs.

The survey contained questions developed by the Search Committee with input from Emmanuel's search consultant. The survey also included a five-item "Just for Kids" section for children age 5 to 11. The Search Committee encouraged anyone in our parish community age 12 or older to participate in the survey. Parishioners received notice of the coming survey during October through announcements in our weekly parish e-newsletter and contacts from Vestry members. Online access to the survey was available to parishioners from October 23 through November 15. A survey announcement and link to the survey appeared four times in the weekly e-newsletter (Oct. 23 and 30; Nov. 6 and 13). A special email announcement about the survey went out on October 28. A Wednesday Words message from Matthew Poteat (Search Committee Chairman) on November 4 also encouraged participation. In addition, we mailed hard copies of the survey to 27 individuals who lacked online access or stated a preference for paper.

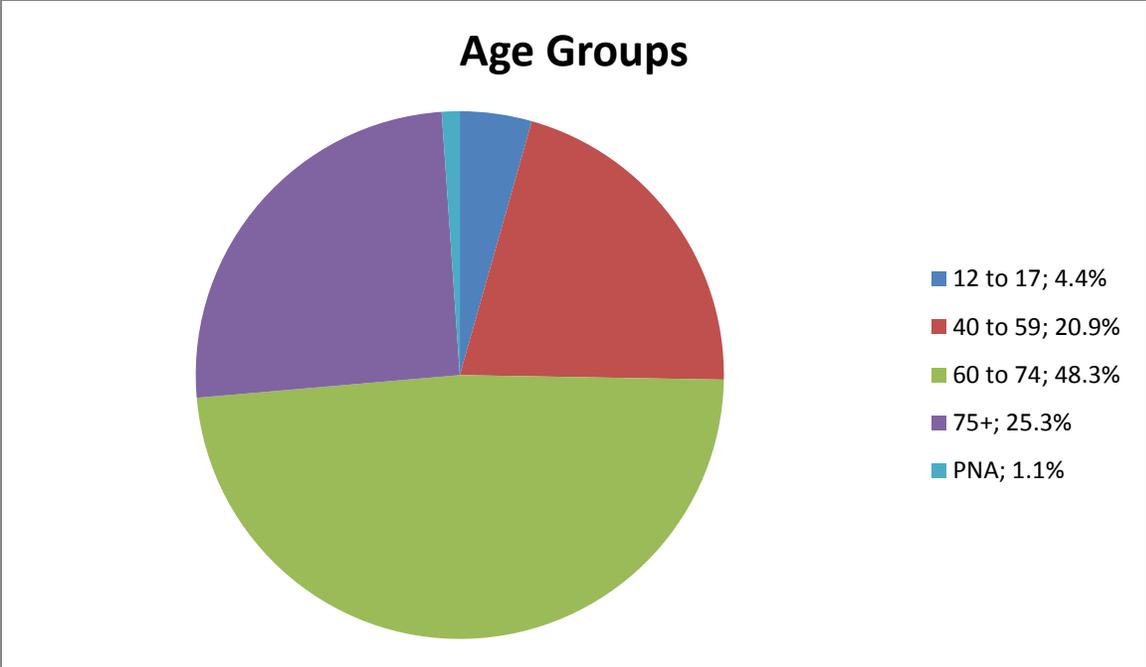
The Search Committee received a total of 92 completed surveys, with an additional five responses to the children's portion of the survey. Not all respondents answered all questions. These 92 responses represent about 30.7% of Emmanuel's total membership (around 300) and 76.7% of our pre-COVID average Sunday attendance (120 for the first ten weeks of 2020).

This overview report highlights primary survey findings. The report has three sections. The first section describes key characteristics of survey participants and their relationship to Emmanuel. The second section addresses the question "Who is Emmanuel?" and future challenges for our parish. The third section describes the critical personal attributes and skills that our future rector needs to possess. The report concludes with a closing statement and prayer.

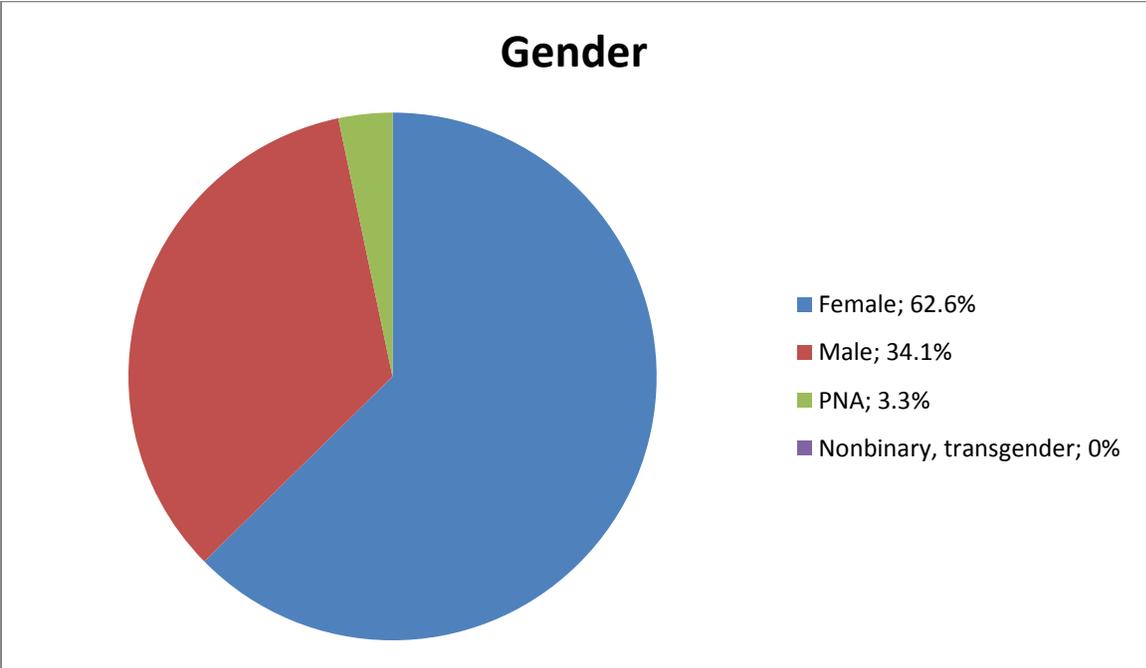
Survey Participants

Several different lists of personal characteristics appear in the survey. The survey asks participants to choose the item(s) in each list that best describe(s) them. Participants could skip an item without responding or select a "Prefer not to answer" (PNA) option.

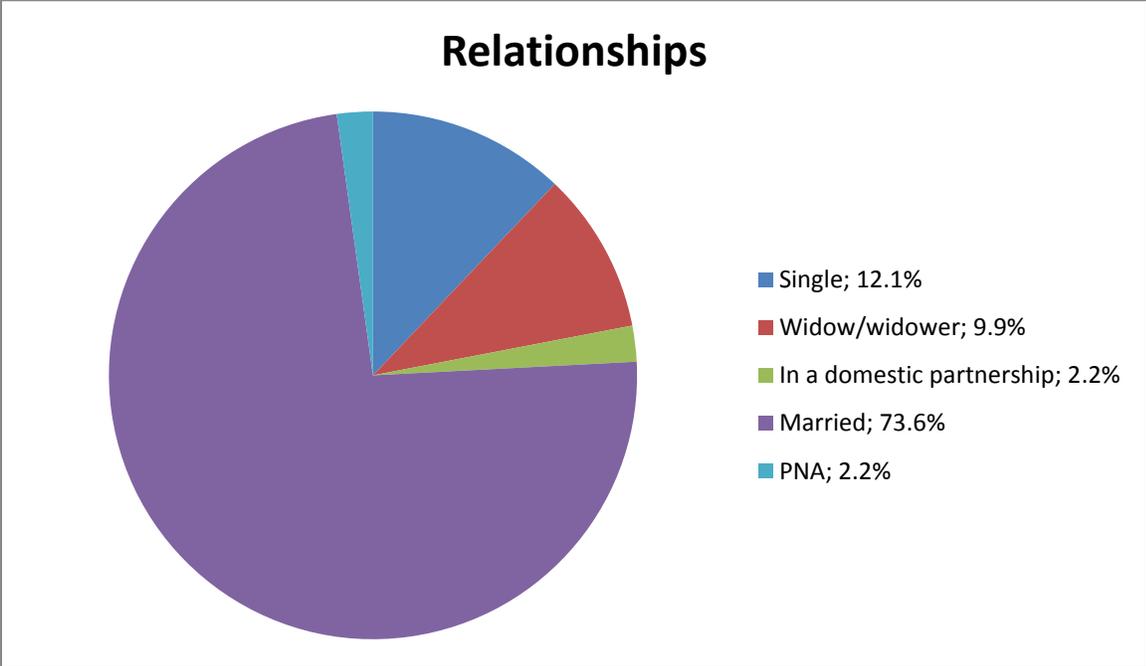
Age groups - Nearly all survey participants are age 40 or older (4.4% age 12 to 17; PNA 1.1%). We have no survey responses from individuals in the 18 to 24 and 25 to 39 age groups.



Gender - Females are 62.6% of survey participants, 34.1% are males, and 3.3% prefer not to answer.



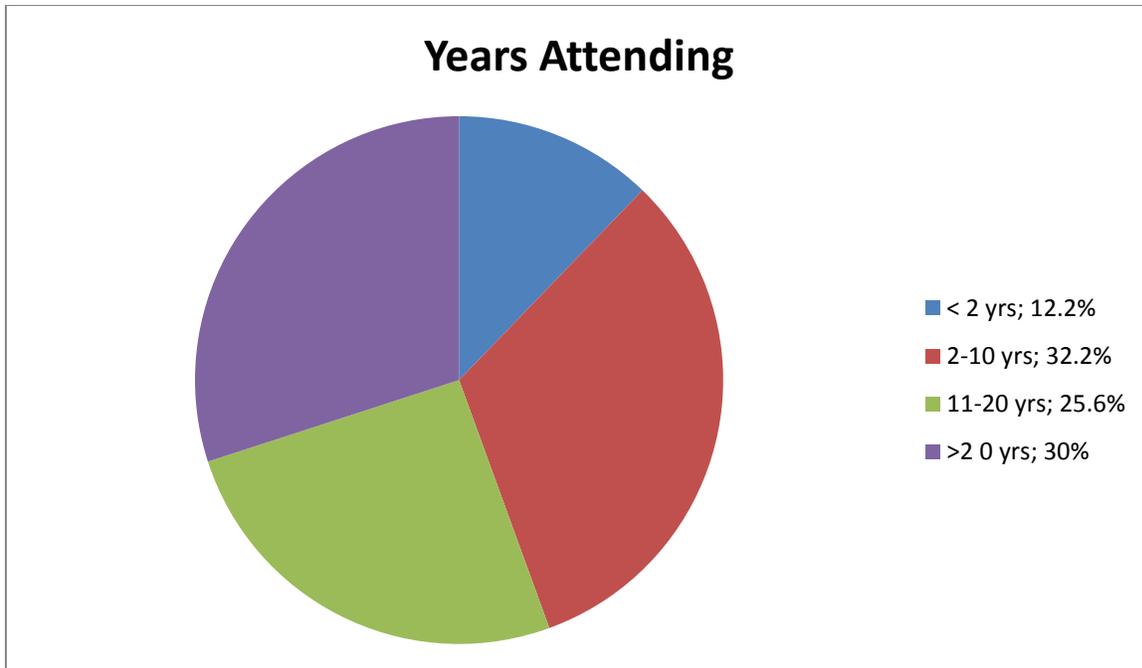
Relationships - Most survey participants are married or in a domestic partnership. About 20% of participants describe themselves as single or a widow(er). Parents (school age children or younger) make up 5.5% of participants across relationship groups.



Additional demographics - One of the lists in the survey combines several different types of attributes. The items below show how participants describe themselves using these attributes.

- 1.1% African-American/Black
- 95.6% White
- 5.5% Person with a disability
- 3.3% LGBTQ
- 4.4% Prefer not to answer

Number of years at Emmanuel - Survey participants represent relative newcomers, long-time members, and everyone in between. About 45% of participants have been attending Emmanuel 10 years or less; about 55% have been attending Emmanuel more than 10 years.



Connections to Emmanuel – Survey participants describe their connections with Emmanuel in the following ways.

- 86.5% Members
- 12.4% Attend and support Emmanuel as nonmembers
- 83.1% Usually attended the 10:30am Sunday service pre-COVID
- 11.2% Usually attended the 8:00am Sunday service pre-COVID
- 76.4% Have viewed online Sunday services or “Wednesday Words” videos during COVID
- 33.7% “Like” Emmanuel on Facebook
- 24.7% Have joined online groups such as Zoom Coffee, Lectio Divina, and Game Night during COVID
- 4.5% Unable to attend services but support and follow Emmanuel
- 4.5% Unable to connect with Emmanuel online
- 1.1% Connection to Emmanuel is outside the worship life of the parish

Support of Emmanuel’s ministries – Survey participants describe their support during the past year in the following ways.

- 76.9% Pledged financial support
- 23.1% Gave money when they could, without pledging
- 68.1% Made a designated financial gift (e.g., Harvest Day, stained glass restoration, etc.)
- 67.0% Donated items to the food pantry
- 53.8% Volunteered in a parish ministry

“Who is Emmanuel?” and Future Challenges

Q: What key words or phrases best describe Emmanuel?

The list of terms that participants offer has just over 200 words and phrases that describe Emmanuel. About half of them describe our parish as a **welcoming and accepting family**. Examples include “friendly,” “warm and welcoming,” “inclusive” and “respectful of all.”

Around one third of responses describe Emmanuel as a **caring community of faith**. Some responses use terms such as “caring,” “compassionate,” “a loving community” and “generous.” Other responses refer more specifically to Emmanuel’s worship and prayer life, using terms such as “a worshipping community,” “a prayer centered community,” “God seeking” and “spiritual home.”

The remaining responses fall into two groups. The first group describes Emmanuel as **engaged in community outreach**. Examples include “mission oriented,” “involved in the community” and “social justice.” The second group describes Emmanuel as an **active and lay led parish**, using terms such as “lively,” “having a ‘can do’ attitude” and “strong lay leadership.”

Q: Give an example of God at work in Emmanuel.

Survey participants offer widely varied examples of how God’s work is accomplished through the people of Emmanuel. About two thirds of the examples focus on **mission and outreach ministries** that extend beyond the doors of our church. Some responses speak of this work in general terms, while most mention specific efforts. These include prison ministry, the Haiti Collaborative, outreach funded by Harvest Day, and the different ways we offer food and meals to people who need them. Additional responses speak of efforts to promote social justice and community relationships. Examples include Building Bridges for the Greater Good, interfaith Know Your Neighbor gatherings, and joint programs with Allen Chapel AME Church.

About one third of the examples highlight the **spiritual life and sense of community within Emmanuel**. Nearly half of these examples focus on how the parish strives to share God’s love by being a warm and welcoming place that accepts all people. Survey responses show enthusiastic support for including children and youth in a wide variety of parish activities. Specific examples include Sunday School, Pentecost Pals, and the Golden Ladle Soup competition. Numerous responses mention our worship services, Lectio Divina, and centering prayer group, with special attention to our online Sunday services and Wednesday Words during the pandemic. Several responses note the use of hand bells and special services such as Blue Christmas and Pride Eucharist. Finally, several participants emphasize that a church is the people and not the building; that Emmanuel is persevering during the COVID pandemic. As one survey participant states: “We continue to grow. Grieve. Rejoice. Wow.”

Q: What are the most pressing challenges for Emmanuel's future?

This survey item presents nine challenges facing Emmanuel. Survey participants may select up to five challenges. The resulting responses fall into two groups.

Internal growth/development

- 67.8% Attracting new members and retaining current ones
- 57.8% Increasing diversity of all types among our members
- 56.7% Enhancing and maintaining our financial well-being
- 52.2% Providing engaging programs for children and youth
- 47.8% Encouraging participation to serve and lead
- 28.9% Providing engaging programs for adult education
- 28.9% Offering music that enhances our worship and parish life

External engagement

- 58.9% Working actively for social justice
- 47.8% Expanding and/or deepening our community connections

Our Next Rector's Key Attributes and Skills

Q: What key words or phrases best describe the qualities Emmanuel needs in our next rector?

Approximately 30% of responses highlight a rector's **life of faith and ability to speak effectively about it**. Many of the terms focus on God, Jesus, Spirit, and love. The words describe a spiritually open rector striving to lead a loving Christian life. Examples include "attentive to God's call," "enthusiasm for sharing the love of Christ," "loves Jesus" and "deep spiritual life." Additional terms refer to strong preaching and speaking. The words describe the rector as an inspired preacher who connects the Bible to life in today's world. Examples include "relates text to current world events and social events," "real-life sermons," "an inspiring speaker" and "speaks from the heart."

About one fourth of responses use terms describing a **caring, compassionate pastor and listener**. The words describe a rector with good listening skills who shows caring, kindness, and empathy. Examples include "compassionately do pastoral care," "pastoral care giver," "a counselor" and "listens deeply."

Terms expressing **warmth, friendliness, welcome, and acceptance** make up an additional one fourth of responses. The words describe an open, approachable rector who relates well to diverse people. Examples include "warm-hearted," "inclusive," "accepting of differences" and "comfortable with youngest and oldest members."

The remaining responses fall into two groups. The first group includes terms related to **leadership**. The words describe the rector as a flexible leader who develops leadership in others. Examples include "the ability to engender leadership among the laity," "willingness

to let others play leadership roles,” “servant leader” and “forward looking.” The second group of terms focuses on **social justice and connections to the larger community**. The words describe a rector engaged in her or his community across denominations. Examples include “a passion for social justice,” “active in social issues,” “community-minded” and “committed to outreach locally and internationally.”

Q: Which of the following **skill sets** does our next rector most need to possess?

This survey item presents nine skill sets for a rector. Survey participants may select up to five skill sets. The resulting responses fall into two groups.

Primary

- 90.0% Preaching (offering spiritual instruction, insight, and inspiration tied to Scripture; connecting faith to daily living)
- 83.3% Pastoral care and crisis management (availability for office hours, spiritual counseling; visiting sick and shut-in members, etc.)
- 67.8% Worship management (planning and conducting Sunday and major services (Rites I and II), administration of liturgy and sacraments, etc.)

Supporting

- 55.6% Focus on children and youth (appropriate Christian formation, inclusion in worship and ministries)
- 52.2% Lay ministries (supporting Emmanuel’s community involvement and outreach, prison ministries, Haiti Collaborative, etc.)
- 41.1% Preparing for the Church of the Future (change management, appropriate use of technology in worship and outreach, virtual church, etc.)
- 36.7% Christian Formation (developing Christian knowledge for adults through Bible Study, EFM, contemplative prayer, etc.)
- 14.4% Staff/office management (managing church business, staff, and financial/property concerns)
- 13.3% Focus on music (support for music as a ministry, encouraging variety in vocal and instrumental offerings to enhance worship)
- 2.2% Prefer not to answer

Q: Which of the following **personal attributes** does our next rector most need to possess?

This survey item presents 11 personal attributes of a rector. Survey participants may select up to five attributes. The resulting responses fall into two groups.

Primary

- 73.6% Open minded, accepting of different opinions, people, and religious practices
- 69.2% Flexible, improvising as needed
- 64.8% Inspirational speaker/preacher
- 58.2% Relates well to children and teens

Supporting

- 48.4% Energetic, outgoing, charismatic
- 47.3% Active in social justice and spiritual issues
- 35.2% Relates well to seniors and their concerns
- 31.9% Spiritual/scholarly/theological
- 23.1% Calm, cool, collected
- 16.5% Traditionalist in liturgy/service practices
- 4.4% Job experience outside the church
- 1.1% Prefer not to answer

Closing Statement and Prayer

The Search Committee is deeply grateful to each person who responded to the survey. Your participation is an important contribution to Emmanuel's rector search process. The Search Committee pledges to keep the congregation informed as the search process unfolds.

Information gathered from the survey will help the Search Committee to develop a Worshipping Community Portfolio (a nationwide position listing) for Emmanuel. Information from the survey will also help us discuss what makes Emmanuel unique when talking with candidates later in the search process. Our portfolio will appear on the Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) website, where potential candidates for our rector position can review it. We hope to post our portfolio on the OTM site and other venues in January 2021.

We invite everyone to continue praying with the Search Committee using the following prayer written for our rector search process.

O God, open our ears, our hearts, and our minds to discern your will and follow the movement of your spirit in our search for our new rector. Grant us wisdom and patience to embody the serving mind of Christ in our common task.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

