

Episcopal Church of The Nativity



**Our mission is to follow the Light of Christ and
be a light for family, friends, and community!**

**Located in Crafton at
33 Alice Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205**

GREETINGS

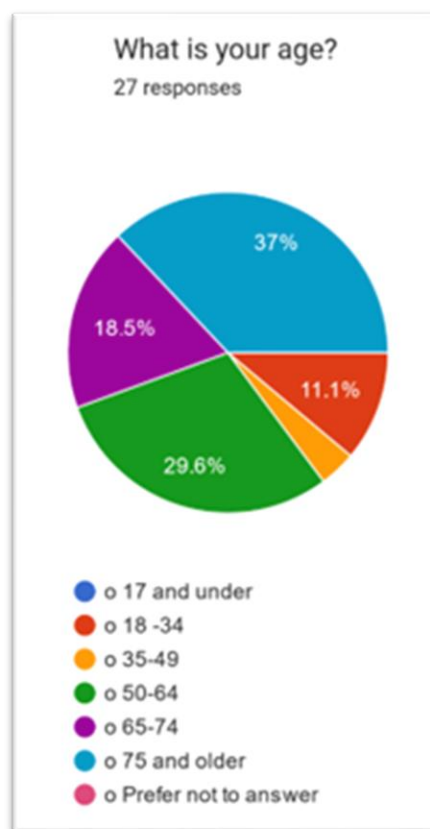
Welcome to the Church of the Nativity! Though small, our congregation is warm and friendly to all who come here, and we love the church we gather in! We believe strongly that everyone deserves respect, regardless of background, belief, or orientation. We seek to be inclusive and supportive to everyone in their personal journey of faith and love of God and Jesus. Nativity is a church that practices traditional liturgy with parishioners who enjoy listening to the Bible readings and the sermons of our priests. While the congregation has dwindled in the past few years, we are looking for a priest with fresh ideas to bring new life into our delightful community.

NATIVITY NOW

Our People

The Nativity congregation is comprised mostly of people ages 75 and older, but it includes an active group of members ages 50-70 who participate and help with church activities. While we do have a small portion of the congregation between the ages of 18 and 35, they are not as active, but we are working to improve this. Most of the congregation is retired, while the rest work full-time jobs or are self-employed.

Nativity's Vestry is comprised of 6 members who strive to be good stewards of the church's resources. The altar guild is a quiet ministry whose members assume their responsibilities with great care and dedication. They are responsible for everything that takes place on or near the altar and prepare the altar for weekly and special services. We have a dedicated organist who plays most Sundays for the 10 am service as well as a music minister/soloist.



Our Worship

The current worship schedule for Nativity is two services on Sunday, one at 8 am and the other at 10 am. The 8 am service is a simpler mass for those who prefer worship without music, and the 10 am is for those who prefer a more formal liturgy. Both have a loyal following of parishioners in attendance. We have Eucharist at most services, using mainly Rite II, but we have used Rite I on occasion. We use a prayer booklet that serves as an easy-to-follow guide for the service. As a general preference, we prefer sermons that draw on human experience, including the life of our priest, and that harken back to the readings, rather than educational (i.e., Bible study style) sermons.

Activities

On most Sundays, there is a volunteer-run coffee hour held in our Crafton Hall after the 10 am mass. All parishioners and visitors are welcome to come and socialize. We hold an annual church picnic, as well as an annual meeting to report on the prior year's finances and activities. In the past, we offered children's Sunday school, which occurred during worship. While it has been inconsistent due to our search for a priest, our Bible study is a popular program for our parishioners to attend. Nativity is looking forward to making this a more consistent offering!



As a congregation, we participate in several outreach or community programs throughout the year. We donate school supplies for children in West Virginia and collect coats and winter wear for local charities. We supported the Bradley House through an Angel Tree program at Christmas. We host a Blessing of Pets on the Feast of St. Francis, which is open to the community. Through the Crafton Ministerium, the clergy of the neighboring churches preach at each other's churches (pulpit swap), and have weekly Lenten worship and lunches following the services. The clergy meet monthly to plan community outreach.

Nativity is proud to be the weekly meeting place for one of the oldest Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings in Pittsburgh. The local Boy Scouts meet on a weekly basis and have assisted in doing various helpful projects for Nativity, such as re-wiring the light fixtures for our undercroft. Nativity is the initiation point for the Crafton House Tour during the holiday season. We celebrated our 150th anniversary the weekend of October 20, 2023, with an evening organ recital and a celebration mass the next day by Bishop Ketlen Solak and Rev. Scott Quinn.

Facilities

The present church building was built in 1910, with a wing added in 1955. Nativity is an “L” shaped church with three floors: an undercroft, the main floor, and a bonus second floor which has been used by other church groups as a worship space. The church has a traditional sanctuary with stained glass windows, a free-standing marble altar, and a Moller pipe organ installed in 1913. The main floor has the main sanctuary, the chapel, the priest’s office, restrooms, two furnished parlors, a playroom, a mini kitchenette, and two side rooms used as storage.

Our two lovely parlors are used for coffee hours, small meetings, and education. Craft Hall, one of the parlors, is comfortably furnished with antique furniture from the Charles Craft family (after whom the borough of Crafton is named). The undercroft is used by several community groups during the week and is fully furnished with restrooms as well. This is where Sunday School was held as well as where the Boy Scouts meet. There is a full kitchen and a large hall that is under the altar. There is a second floor that is a large mostly empty space which was previously rented to a small church community as their worship space.



The building is heated by two boiler systems. The system that heats the sanctuary is new. There is no air conditioning in any part of the building. Much of the building is not currently utilized to capacity, and updates are needed. There is no stairlift or elevator to allow elderly or disabled congregants to move between the main floor and the undercroft or second floor. There are six entrances to Nativity; four which lead to the main floor and three that lead to the basement.

Our Region

Nativity is located in Crafton Borough, which is a suburban community just west of Downtown Pittsburgh. Our parishioners are drawn from Crafton and surrounding communities. Within two miles of Nativity are several other Christian churches.

Pittsburgh, located just a few miles from Crafton, has often found itself at the top of the list of America's Most Livable Cities. Safety and affordable housing combine with a vibrant cultural scene and three professional sports teams to make Pittsburgh a great place to live and raise a family. The many ethnic neighborhoods, universities, and restaurants likewise add to the attractiveness of the Pittsburgh Region. Fans cheer the Pittsburgh Pirates at PNC Park, the Steelers at Acrisure Stadium, and the Penguins at PPG Paints Arena, all of which are located downtown, just a short drive or bus ride away.

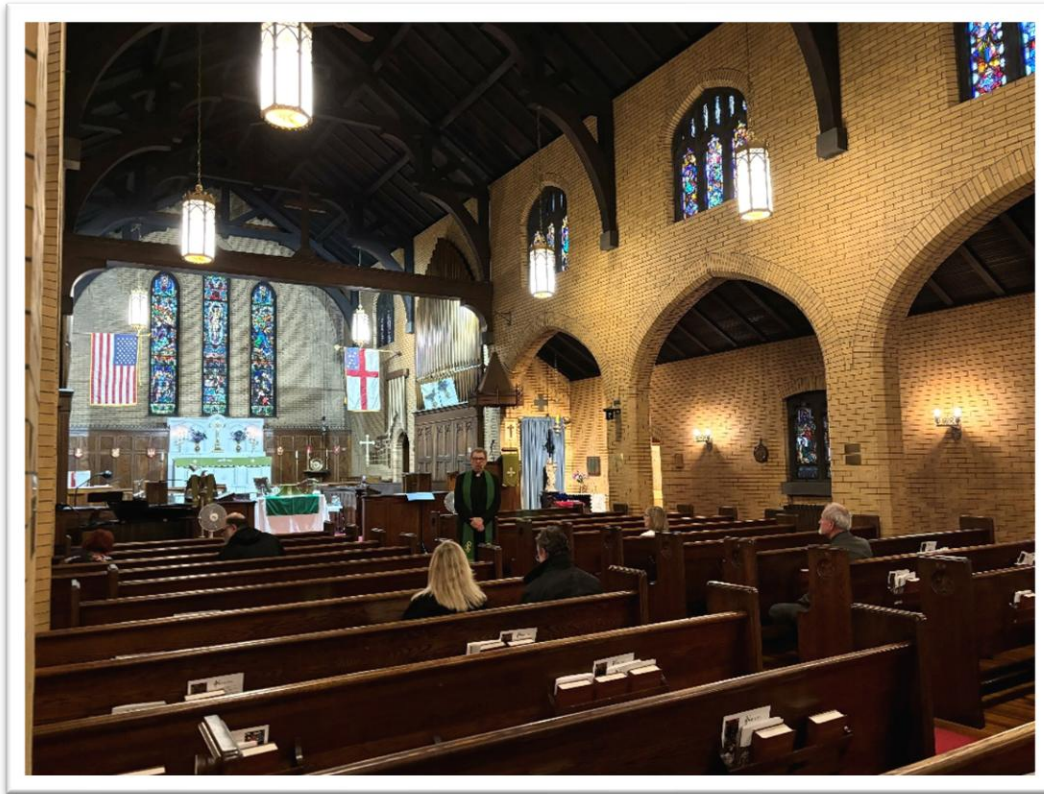
The Pittsburgh area offers a wide variety of cultural and recreational opportunities. Theater, ballet, opera, and symphonic music are all available in Downtown Pittsburgh's attractively developed cultural district. The Carnegie Museums, the Children's Museum, Phipps Conservatory, and The Pittsburgh Zoo are all located within a few miles of Downtown Pittsburgh. In addition, the area hosts numerous events and festivals including the Pittsburgh Marathon and the Three Rivers Arts Festival. Pittsburgh is located in Allegheny County, which maintains thousands of acres of parks. Within an hour of Nativity is an endless variety of outdoor opportunities for hiking, biking, camping, boating, hunting, and fishing.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NATIVITY

The Church of the Nativity has a long history in the Crafton community. In fact, we were founded by the family of Mr. James S. Craft, the founder of Crafton! The first gathering of a group of Crafton residents occurred in September 1872. They were interested in erecting a church near Crafton Station. Mr. Craft's son, Charles, was willing to donate an acre of land near the railroad station for this purpose. Sufficient money was raised for architect G.W. Lloyd to draw up plans, and for contractor E.T. Ewan to begin construction of the new church.

A charter was granted to the parish on March 15, 1873, and construction was complete for a service of dedication on October 19, 1873, by the Rev. John Scarborough, D.D. Over the years, the church continued to grow until 1903, when the church reached a turning point. The building was now too small to house the growing congregation, and parishioners were increasingly upset by the constant noise and smoke from the nearby trains. The decision was made to move up the hill to orchard land (presently Alice St) granted by founder Charles Craft to build a new and larger church. In October of 1908, the cornerstone was laid, and the new Nativity building was completed in January 1910.

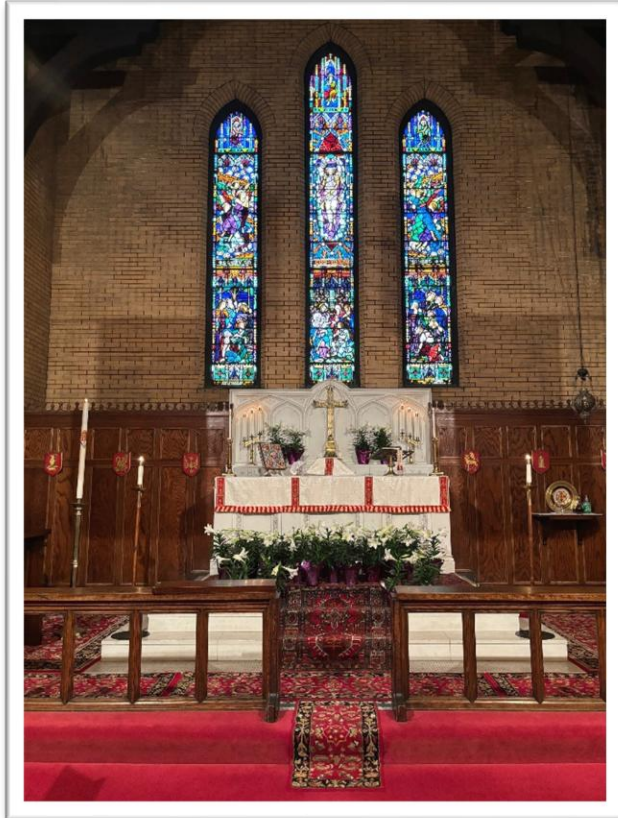
By 1923, its 50th anniversary, Nativity listed 159 families on its rolls and a Sunday School enrollment of 128. In 1948, the congregation held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Nativity Parish House wing. The new wing is used as a meeting space for church and community organizations. The last stained-glass window was dedicated in 1997. The following year, a drive was launched to raise funds for a new roof.



The Rev. Scott Quinn, who was appointed Rector in 1986, continued to lead Nativity until 2014, when The Rev. Shawn Malarkey came to Nativity. He was appointed Rector in 2016 and lead the church through the restrictions of Covid by utilizing social media to continue worship services and supporting the congregation's needs. He was offered a Rector position in early April 2023 in a church community in Virginia Beach and left Nativity to assume this position in May. While were sad to lose a wonderful priest, we are excited to see what God plans for us next!

NATIVITY OF THE FUTURE!

Room For Growth



While Nativity is filled with a wonderful, tight-knit congregation, we have seen a decline in membership over the years. Some families left to attend other Episcopal churches, because they offered more in the way of youth groups and church activities. While previous ministries had their strengths, programs were not the top priority, and thus programs that once flourished dwindled to the point where most are no longer active. Most everyone agrees that our outreach could be improved upon; members of the congregation have many great ideas for events, groups, and outreach, but lack the time or motivation to enact these ideas.

Furthermore, when we do have events, because of our limited social media presence and communication system, many people who might have been interested in attending aren't aware of them.

In addition, the Nativity community has the inclination to fall into a “this is how it’s always been done” mindset, which can come across as standoffish when someone new comes to the church. Despite this, everyone agrees that changes do need to be made to in order to bring more strength, vitality, and sustainability to our parish.

Strengths

Like any church, Nativity does need to improve on a few things, but we have many strengths that make Nativity stand out! Our church has been in the Crafton community for over 150 years. It is a landmark for many in the area and hosts both church and community programs.

The congregation is very generous with fundraising and donating to various charitable organizations. We do have plans to help increase our social media presence, as well as improve our communication ability. During Covid, we were able to stream our church services on Facebook and set up online giving!



We believe God loves everyone, and everyone is welcome at Nativity. Members are passionate for the teachings of the love of God and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Our church is filled with people who genuinely love Nativity and want to see it thrive for many years to come! We want to hear new ideas and learn ways to improve, strengthen, and grow our spiritual community!

What We're Looking for in Our Next Priest

Nativity wants its next priest to...

- 1) Have strong motivational skills to inspire the congregation to initiate change.
- 2) Be experienced with spearheading and managing new church programs and events.
- 3) Provide excellent pastoral care.
- 4) Desire to know everyone in the congregation and be able to engage one-on-one with parishioners, as well as in a group setting.
- 5) Possess a genuine love of God and of the teachings of Jesus; truly feel that their calling in life is to be a parish priest.
- 6) Have a more traditional approach to church services, but be able to lead the church to accept necessary changes.
- 7) Provide clear and concise sermons that stem from life experiences.
- 8) Have a hopeful and bright interpretation of the Bible. (We view the Bible as a book about God's love. Gloom or apocalyptic/fear-mongering sermons will not be accepted at Nativity.)
- 9) Accept the LGBTQ community. (If you are of the belief that this community doesn't deserve respect or belong in church, then Nativity is not your calling. We accept everyone.)
- 10) Show their passion and love of Jesus in their preaching as well as their actions – to lead through example, and not by words alone.
- 11) Have exceptional time management, communication, and organizational skills.
- 12) Have a proficient understanding of common computer skills (Word, Excel, etc.). A basic understanding of social media is preferred.

While this profile gives just a basic snapshot of the Church of the Nativity, we hope we have shown how eager and enthusiastic we are to call our new priest! If you believe you are a good match for us, we encourage you to apply! Thank you for your time!



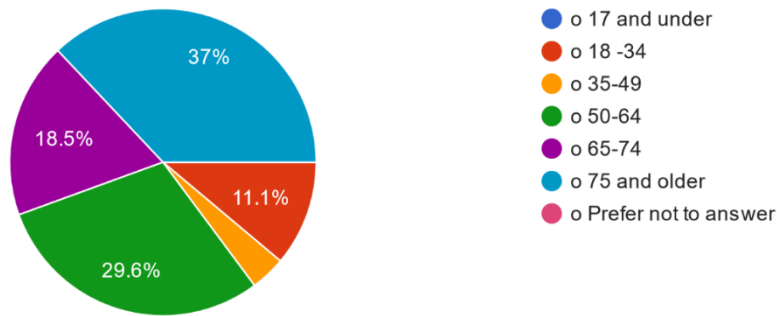
SURVEY RESULTS

To assist with the process of discerning who should be our next priest, a survey of our members was developed and administered to help illustrate who we are now and what we are seeking. The information below was collected in February-March 2024 and gives a rough picture of the diverse people and families who make up the congregation of Nativity.

Demographics

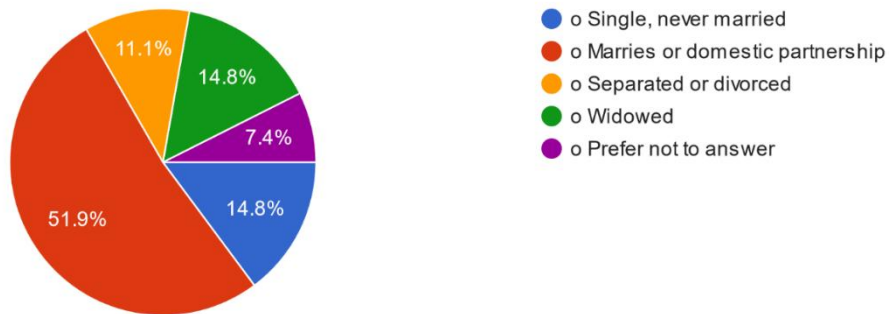
What is your age?

27 responses



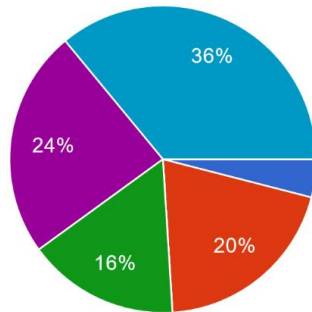
What is your marital status?

27 responses



What is the highest grade or level of education that you have completed?

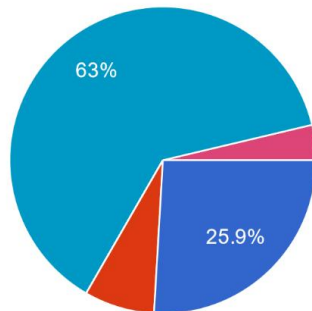
25 responses



- Did not graduate high school
- Highschool graduate or GED
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Some college or 2-year degree
- 4-year college graduate
- More than 4-year college graduate
- Prefer not to answer

What is your employment status?

27 responses

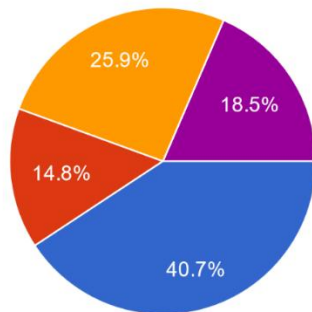


- Employed full time
- Employed part-time
- Not currently employed
- Homemaker
- Primary family caregiver
- Retired
- Retired, but still active professionally
- Student
- Prefer not to answer

About Nativity

How would you describe yourself?

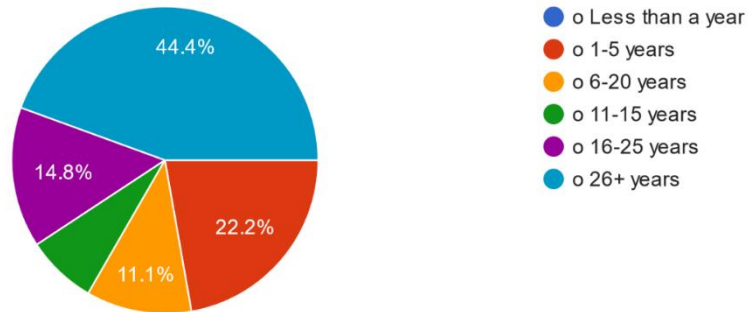
27 responses



- "Cradle" Episcopalian (born and baptized)
- Other Episcopal Denomination
- Teen/Adult Affirmation* of Christian faith* Decision to accept Jesus into your life
- Still Searching for a Spiritual Home
- Prefer not to answer

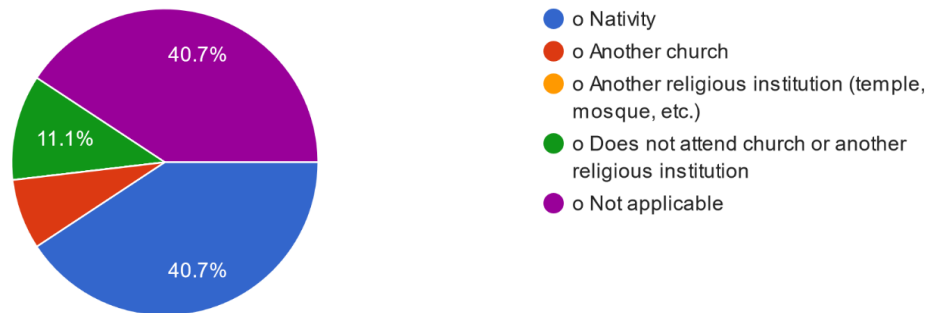
How long have you been worshipping at Nativity?

27 responses



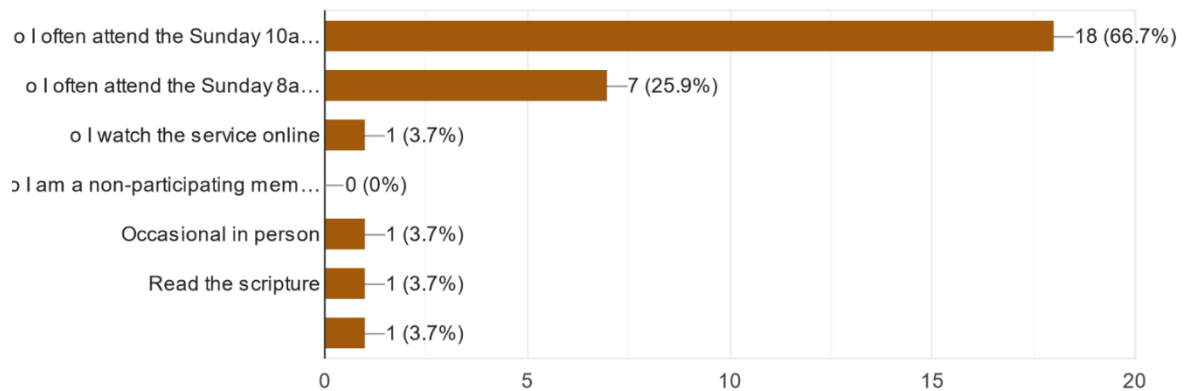
What church or other religious institution does your spouse or partner attend?

27 responses



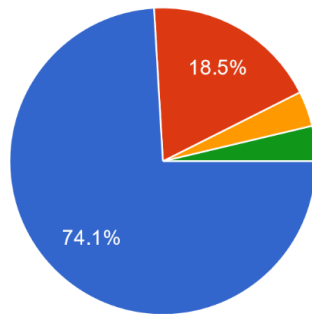
Which describes how you worship at Nativity? Select all that apply

27 responses



In the last five years, has your attendance at worship services changed?

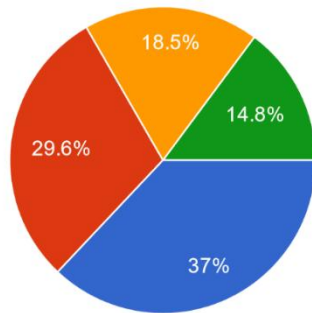
27 responses



- No, it has stayed about the same
- Yes, increased
- Yes, declined
- Down with Covid, but returned to normal

How satisfied are you currently with Nativity?

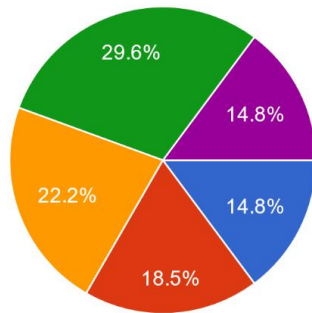
27 responses



- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

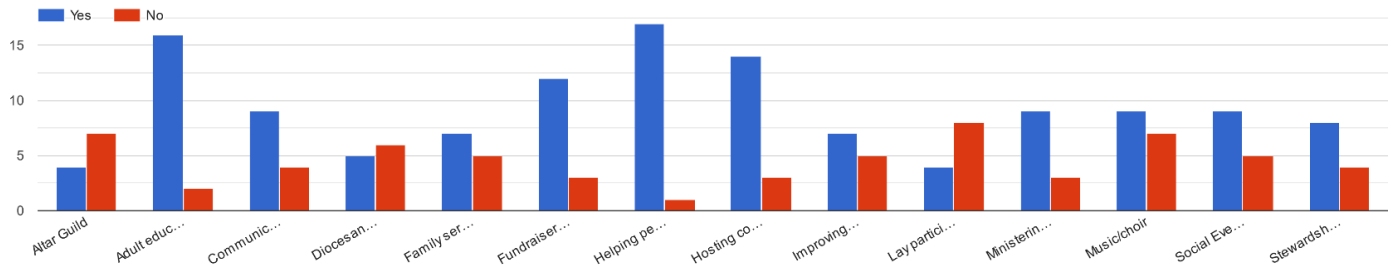
Aside from attending worship services, how active are you outside of worship services at Nativity?

27 responses



- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- Option 6

Which of the following ministries/activities at Nativity would you like to see grow or would you participate in?



**Top answers: Adult education (Bible study), Fundraising for church, Helping people in need, and Hosting community groups in our space (Boy Scouts, AA, etc.).

If someone asked you, “What kind of church is Nativity,” how would you describe it?

- Traditional
- A small community with very committed members who are aging.
- Church environment at this time in transition is not good. Prior was calming and welcoming. Church leadership at this time is Vestry, and while the Vestry members who are 'present and visible' are doing their best to keep things running, they need more support.
- Welcoming
- Accepting
- Participatory
- Nativity is a most comfortable church. The people are very kind and caring and are always finding new ways to enhance the worship service. The coffee hour after the service is a wonderful way to share and spend time with “church folk.”
- Traditional. Aged members. Proud of its history. Friendly
- A church that wants to survive and thrive. I feel Father Shawn was taking the church in that direction.
- Warm and kind church.
- God is present there. Simple, nothing fancy. People who worship there are faithful and good hearted.
- Small, but warm and welcoming.
- A traditional church. Close knit.
- An older congregation with too many of us at an age where we are restricted in activities.
- It is the right fit for me! I'm very comfortable, and I love the elderly members.
- Friendly, inviting to all.
- Beautiful.
- Welcoming. Accepting you as you are. Everyone friendly.
- In limbo. Not enough communication with membership.
- A welcoming church for everyone. Faithful to Jesus’ teachings.
- Friendly, but in a state of change right now.

What do you believe should be the primary mission of Nativity? (Where would you be willing to commit your time, money, and energy?)

- Outreach to those in need. Welcoming everyone.
- Supporting the new clergy and allowing them to minister their way without undue influence.
- Community outreach.
- Making everyone feel welcome and accepted.
- Focusing on our strengths, I think Nativity needs to outreach more - like encouraging people to “try us out.” It would require some effort, but it could possibly bring in more people, which brings with it more participation.
- A strong outreach committee of various-aged people might help.
- Growth.
- Community engagement and growth.
- Finding ways to grow our parish.
- Back to basics. Gospel message, worship, discipleship.
- Taking care of each other; service to others outside of our congregation; attracting more parishioners, especially young people.
- Christian outreach and being present in the community should always be in the church mission.
- To grow in numbers + younger families with children, a permanent minister to lead the parish.
- Grow. Recruit young folk and people looking for a good fit.
- To grow membership and thrive, preaching God’s community.
- As an overall mission, preaching God’s/Jesus’ message of love.

What characteristics are most important in a future priest?

Top answers:

- Strong spirituality and role model for parish and community
- Leads through example rather than words
- Listens and communicates well one-on-one
- Communicates well from the pulpit (ex. Sermon message is clear and connects well with congregation)
- Provides leadership for new and existing parish programs
- Knowledgeable in topics relevant to the Bible (such as history, geography, language, etc.)
- Easily learns about members of congregation and community and builds social relationships
- Strives to create a church climate in which everyone feels accepted as a child of God