



Where are we now?

RenewalWorks[™]

**Spiritual Life Inventory Data Findings for
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**

**Part 1: For use with Workshop #2
March 2019**

© 2019 RenewalWorks

The Spiritual Life Story of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Introduction

As you and your congregation embark on the workshops of RenewalWorks, it is important to understand that a focus on the spiritual life is hardly a new topic. From the first pages of the Bible, God encounters Adam and Eve with this question: Where are you?

The work ahead is about answering that question. Where are you personally and where is the parish as a whole in relationship to God? In the Christian tradition, we look to the life and ministry of Jesus to answer this question. When Jesus was asked to name the greatest commandment, he referred to his own scriptures, quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5:

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and
with all your soul and with all your might.*

In the Jewish tradition, faithful people would recite these verses several times a day as a way to focus on what their own spiritual journey was about: love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus told his listeners this commandment was key to their discovery of a deeper, more vital life with God. Often the vitality of a parish is quite simply reflected in where people give their hearts (beliefs and attitudes) and how they live that out in service.

Two pieces of advice as you read this report:

1. The report information is more about your people than your church. Parishioners brought with them to this church a lifetime of experiences, biases, beliefs and habits.
2. Find your story in the numbers but do not get bogged down by individual data points. Instead, look for trends.



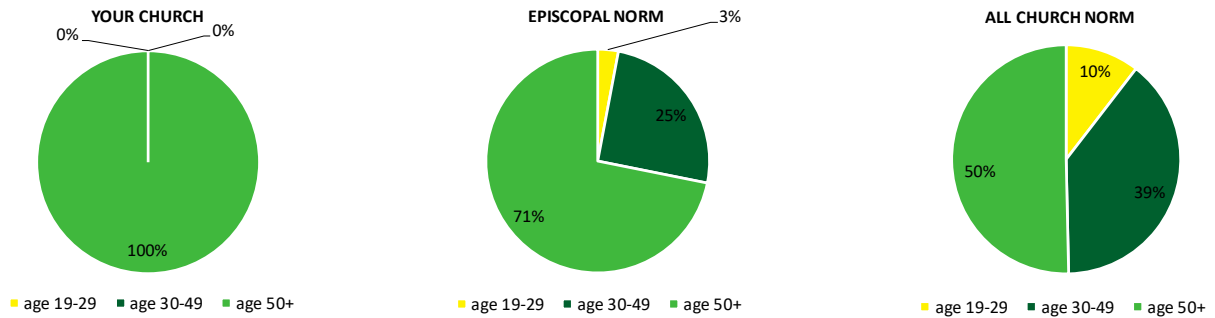
Of note: the data findings in this report compare results to two different databases. The first is the Episcopal Norm, of which nearly 200 churches have participated. The second is the All Church Norm, which represents more than 2,000 churches that have participated since 2008. For this report, the All Church Norm is based on a comparison of churches with an attendance of 250 or fewer.

Response Rate and Demographics

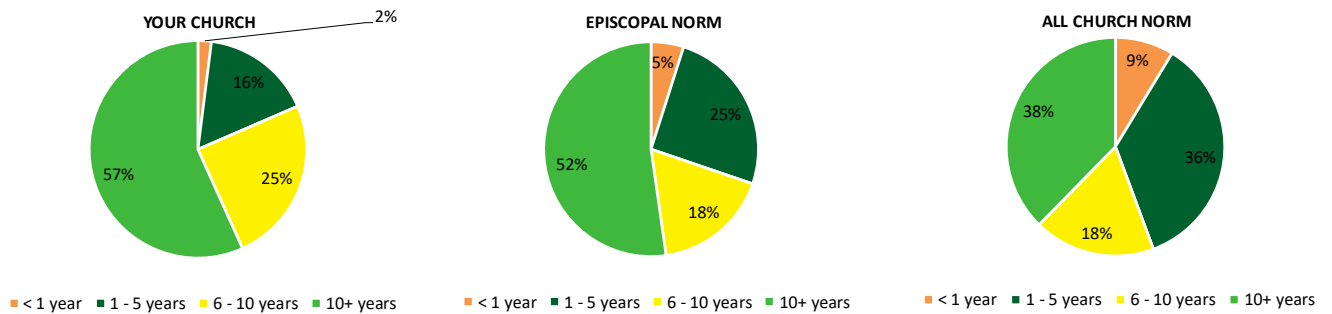
Based on your average Sunday attendance of 110, 97 people responded to the Spiritual Life Inventory, resulting in a 88% response rate.

Please note that the average response rate for the Spiritual Life Inventory is around 40 percent, although smaller churches have much higher response rates.

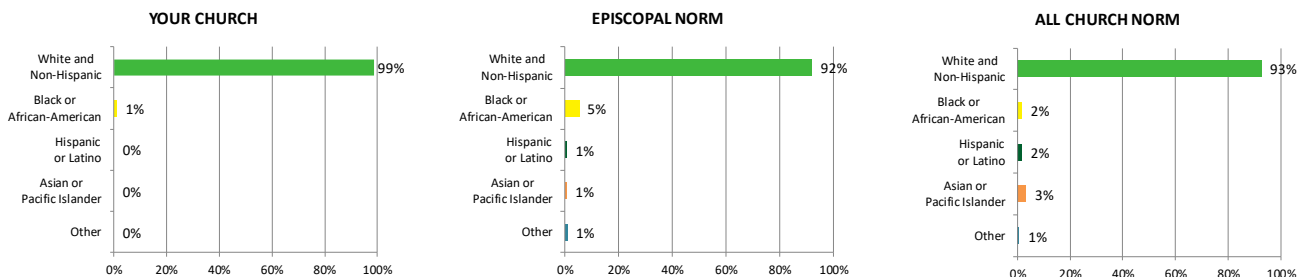
Age of Parishioners



Tenure/Length of Time Attending This Church

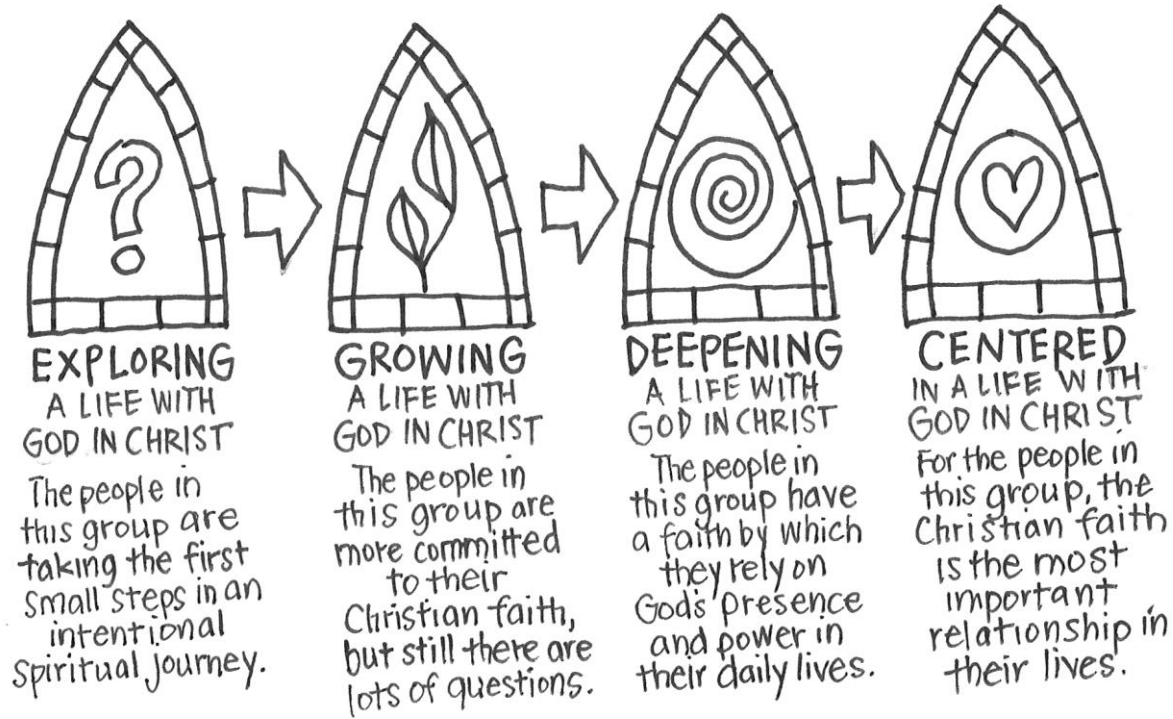


Diversity



Spiritual Continuum Profile

This chart profiles how your parishioners view their place on the spiritual continuum. Comparison to the Episcopal Norm and the All Church Norm is provided. The booklet *Footsteps* by Jay Sidebotham offers detailed information about the four stages in the continuum. Remember that the continuum represents the path of an individual's relationship with God. Our hope is that parishioners will continue to deepen that relationship and continue to move along the continuum.



26%
Episcopal Norm 19%
All Norm 10%
Parishoners 25

46%
Episcopal Norm 56%
All Norm 40%
Parishoners 45

24%
Episcopal Norm 21%
All Norm 26%
Parishoners 23

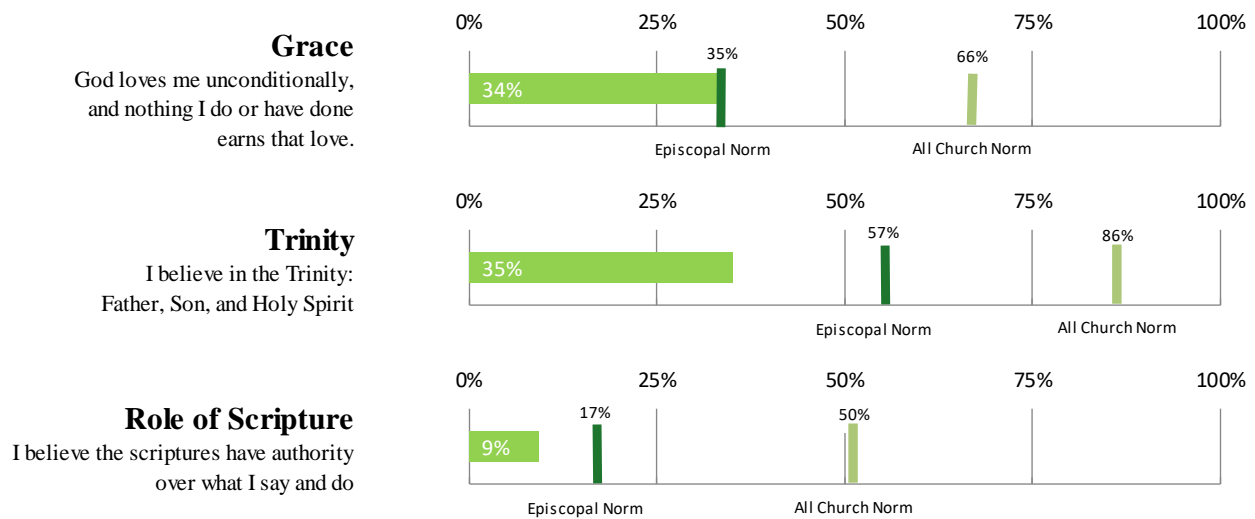
4%
Episcopal Norm 4%
All Norm 24%
Parishoners 4

Spiritual Vitality Components: Beliefs

Three distinct components—beliefs, practices, and faith in action—make up the measurement of the spiritual vitality of your parish. A key element to understanding spiritual vitality is the extent to which people understand and embrace core Episcopal **beliefs**. How do people understand the eucharist, language of the trinity, or the notion of salvation by grace?

- Episcopalians place a high value on Holy Eucharist. Participation and understanding of this sacrament, in all its mystery, is close to the heart of most parishes and parishioners.
- Episcopalians place a high value on understanding the reality of God through the doctrine of the **Trinity**. **While other denominations may seem more focused on Jesus, research shows that** Episcopalians value the understanding of God as creator, redeemer, and sustainer.
- For parishioners in the first two (earlier) stages of the spiritual continuum, the church and church-led activities will be crucial to moving their spiritual journey forward.

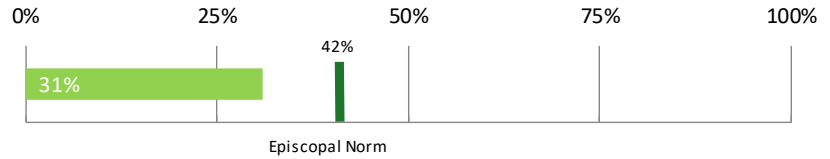
Spiritual Vitality Components: Beliefs (at a glance)



Spiritual Vitality Components: Beliefs (at a glance)

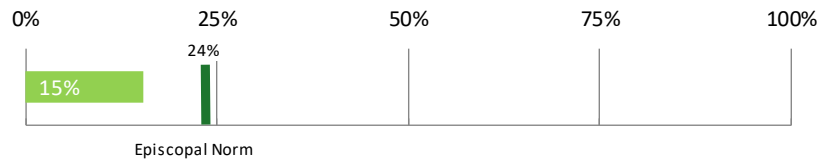
Eucharist

I participate in the Eucharist to give me strength to persevere in my spiritual life



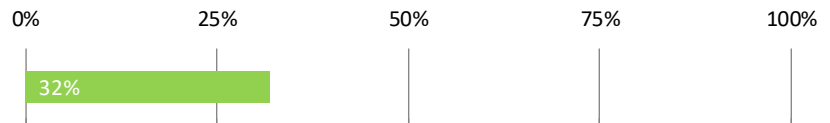
Baptismal Covenant

I believe the Baptismal Covenant is the central guide for my spiritual life



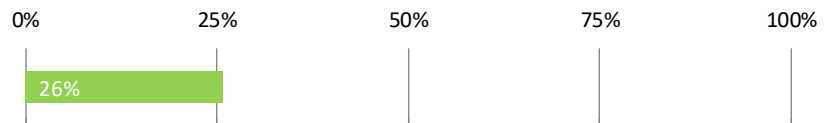
Spiritual Growth

I believe we are called by God always to be moving deeper in our faith and making a difference in our world



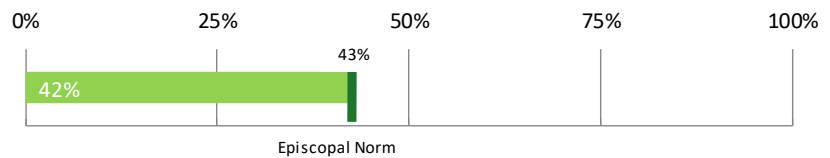
Creeds

I believe the words I say when I recite the Nicene and Apostles' creeds



Interfaith Conversations

I believe it is important for people of different faith traditions to be in conversation



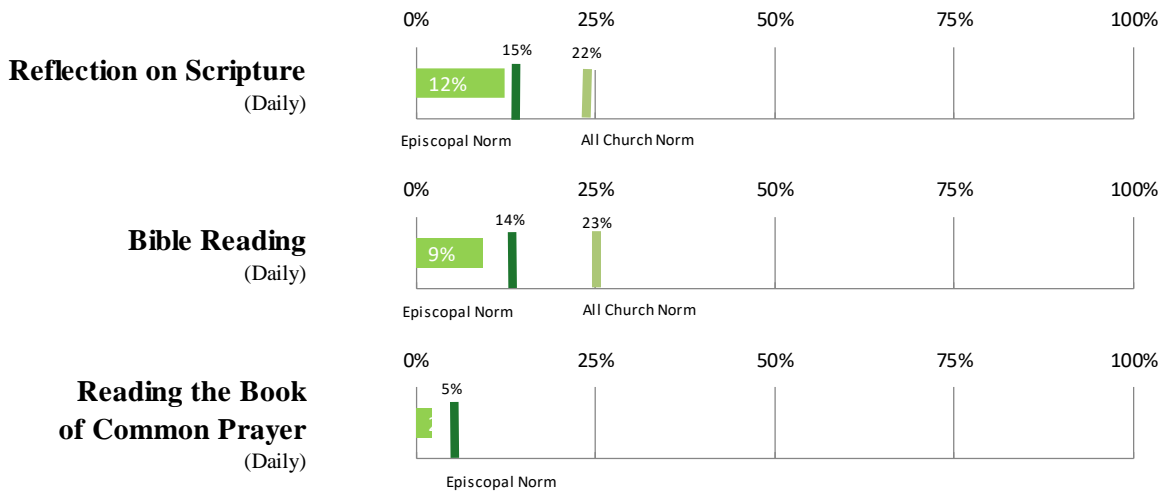
Of note: the graphs included in this report measure how individual parishioners strongly agree with each of the belief statements listed. A comparison to the Episcopal Norm and the All Church Norm is also provided to give context in understanding how your parishioners compare with a larger sample. In a few cases certain items are more recent additions to the inventory, and as such "Episcopal" or "All Church" norms are not yet available for comparison.

Spiritual Vitality Components: Practices

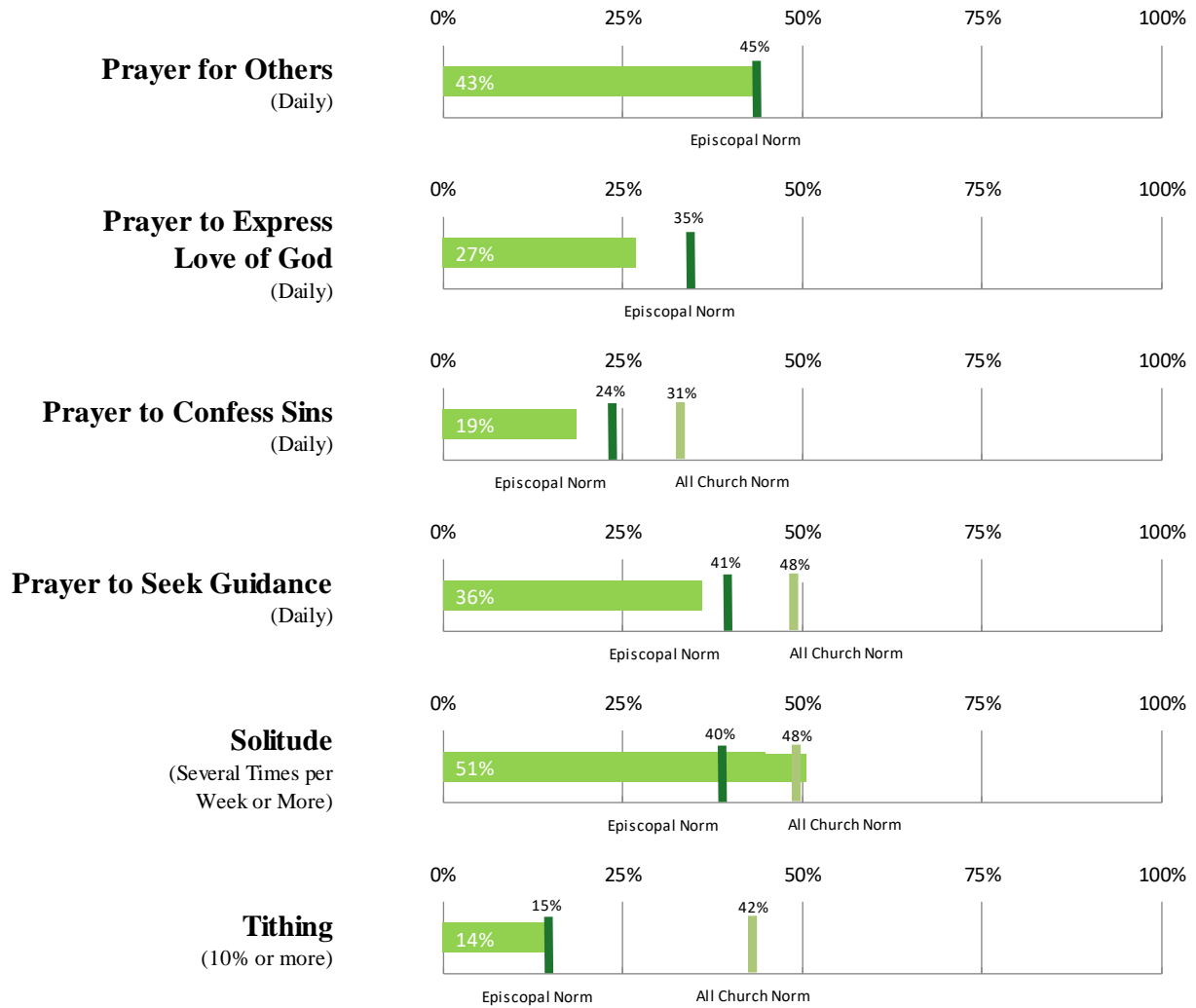
Each individual has a responsibility for the **practice** of his or her faith, not just for an hour on Sunday but in his or her own life. There is an element of ownership here, a call to take responsibility for one’s own spiritual journey much like you would for your physical well-being. For example, are people engaging in scripture or prayer outside of church? Vibrant healthy churches are made up of people who practice spirituality every day. We cannot overstate the power of personal spiritual practices as a way to catalyze spiritual growth. The results in this section explore what spiritual practices are important to your parish and parishioners.

- Engagement with scripture is the single most influential spiritual practice for ALL stages of spiritual growth. Make sure to concentrate on ways your parish engages in scripture. One way to facilitate meaningful spiritual conversation is through small groups.
- Prayer to confess sins is significant for those in more mature stages of spiritual growth.
- Higher tithing responses link to higher spiritual maturity, indicating those who will support God’s work regardless of their contentment with the individual church.

Spiritual Vitality Components: Practices (at a glance)



Spiritual Vitality Components: Practices (at a glance)



***Of note:** the graphs included in this report measure how individual parishioners strongly agree with each of the practices listed. A comparison to the Episcopal Norm and the All Church Norm is also provided to give context in understanding how your parishioners compare with a larger sample. In a few cases certain items are more recent additions to the inventory, and as such “Episcopal” or “All Church” norms are not yet available for comparison.*

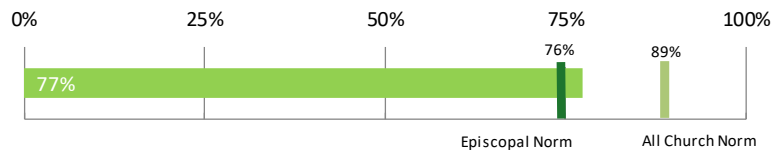
Spiritual Vitality Components: Faith in Action

Sometimes referred to as service, **faith in action** is the way that parishioners seek and serve Christ in all persons, in fulfillment of the baptismal covenant. This service can take many forms, inside or outside of the church. As the New Testament letter to James says, faith without works is dead, so one measure of spiritual vitality is service. A characteristic of Episcopal practice is a strong service component.

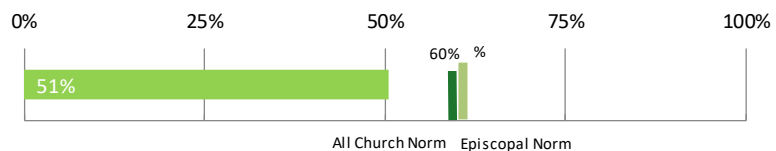
- Episcopalians demonstrate a strong commitment to service to people in need. A growth opportunity emerges in deepening an understanding of how that service is an expression of our faith, indeed our discipleship of Jesus.
- The Baptismal Covenant, with its five promises describing the commitments made in the Christian life, can be useful in focusing on service in the world. Three out of five of those promises have to do with ministries of outreach.
- Small group systems in a church help people to connect in spiritual friendship and mentoring relationships.

Spiritual Vitality Components: Faith in Action (at a glance)

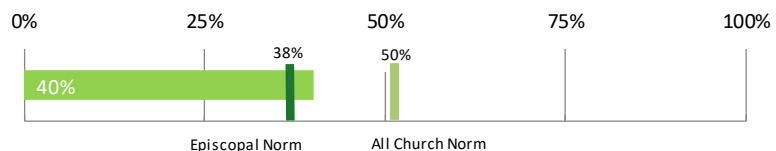
Attendance at Principal Sunday Service
(3 to 4 times per month)



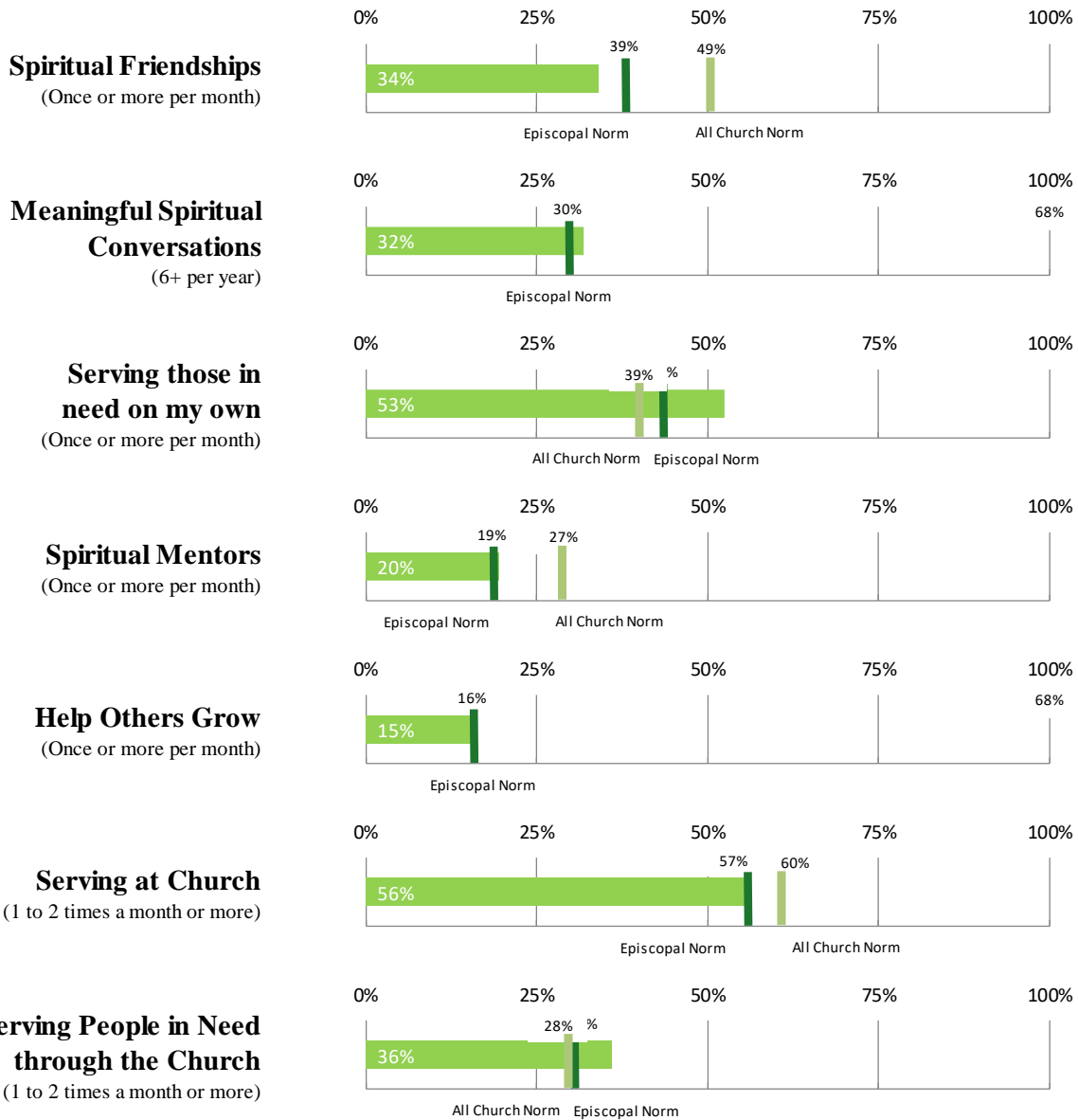
Satisfaction with Principal Sunday Service
(% Extremely or very satisfied)



Small Groups
(1 to 2 times a month or more)



Spiritual Vitality Components: Faith in Action (at a glance)



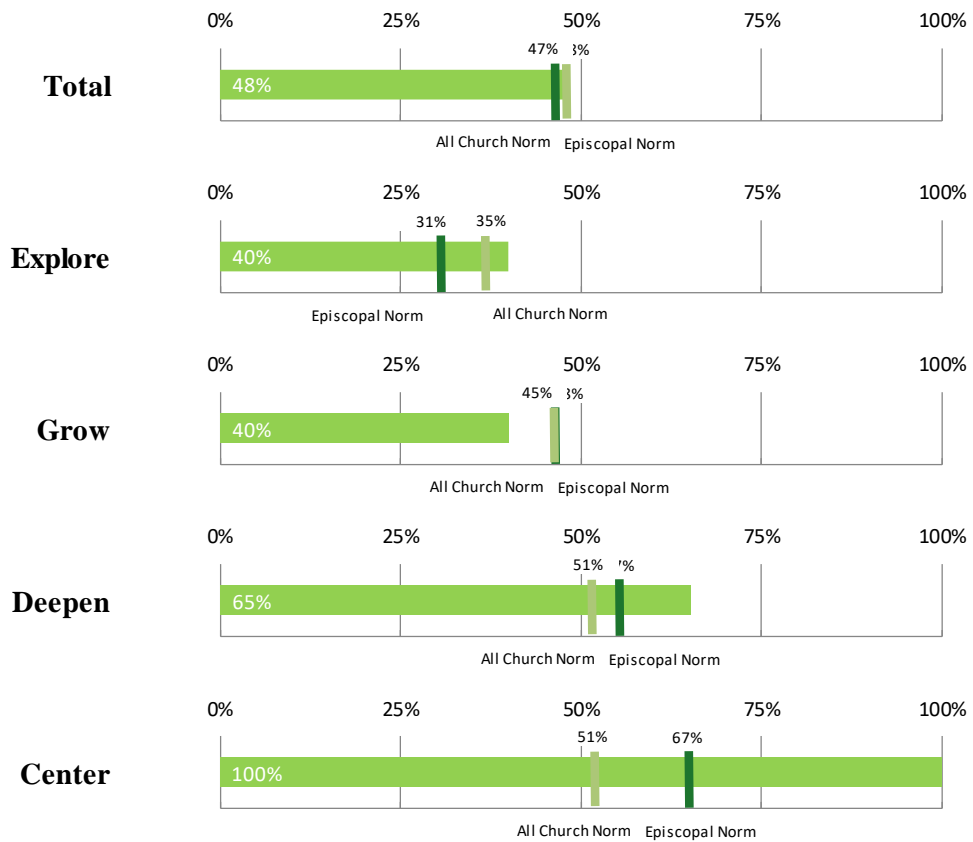
***Of note:** the graphs included in this report measure how individual parishioners strongly agree with each of the faith in action items listed. A comparison to the Episcopal Norm and the All Church Norm is also provided to give context in understanding how your parishioners compare with a larger sample. In a few cases certain items are more recent additions to the inventory, and as such “Episcopal” or “All Church” norms are not yet available for comparison.*

Satisfaction

Every congregation includes people who express some level of dissatisfaction with “the church’s role in my spiritual growth.” The All Church Norm is 18%, although numbers vary widely, from low single-digits to almost half the congregation.

The following chart indicates overall satisfaction with your church’s role in spiritual growth (% extremely or very satisfied).

Overall Satisfaction with your Church’s Role in Spiritual Growth (% extremely or very satisfied)



Based on your church sample size of 97

Satisfaction (continued)

The number of respondents at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church indicating some level of dissatisfaction with "The Church's Role in My Spiritual Growth" is 22.

To shed some light on what causes dissatisfaction, the following chart uses the Priority Score calculations to highlight the top five priorities for the dissatisfied people in your congregation. In other words, out of the 37 factors assessed in the survey, these are the five areas that are highly important but people are dissatisfied with the way they are being addressed.





Priority Ranking	Top Five Priorities for the Dissatisfied (Based on level of importance and satisfaction)
1	Provides worship that is challenging and thought provoking
2	Clergy and lay leaders are actively engaged in helping people get started on their spiritual growth
3	Provides a clear pathway that helps guide my spiritual growth
4	Helps me develop a prayer life that connects me with God regularly
5	Helps me feel like I belong

Spiritual Catalyst Profile

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

As you consider the spiritual continuum as it represents your congregation (see "Spiritual Continuum Profile") what are the catalysts that will help people to move from one stage to another. Your data indicates the following areas of strength and opportunity for your church:



-  The biggest opportunity areas for your church.
-  An opportunity area for your church.
-  Not an area you need to focus on.
-  An area of strength, but possibly over-resourced.

Spiritual Vitality Index

The Spiritual Vitality Index was created for parishes wanting an overall comparison to the All Church Norm database. Although this number offers some insights, it also shouldn't be the sole focus. Your Spiritual Vitality Index number is not a pass/fail or letter grade like in school. Rather it is a window into where your parishioners currently are in their journey of faith. Use this information to create a culture that more fully supports the spiritual growth of parishioners. And note that perhaps the most useful insight from the inventory will be discovered when in a couple years, your congregation goes through this process again.

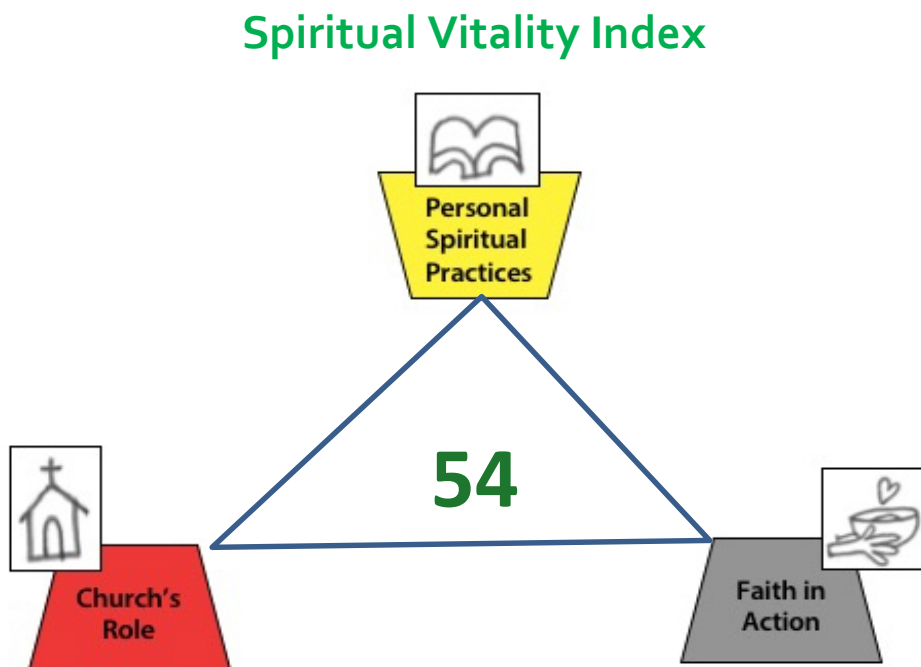
Episcopal churches tend to score between 45 and 75. A score of 70 or higher would place a church in the upper 50% of churches in the "All Church" norm.

Three main areas are used in determining the Spiritual Vitality Index:

The Church's Role. Does your church set clear and high expectations for growth in relationship with God, through deeper discipleship of Jesus? How does the church encourage/focus parishioners on a spiritual journey? Is scripture embedded in all activities and meetings?

Personal Spiritual Practices. Does your church teach and encourage personal spiritual practices?

Faith in Action. Does the church provide opportunities to serve God in a way that parishioners understand their service as an expression of their love of God and neighbor?



Summary of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Spiritual Profile

We understand that this report presents a lot of data and information that can be overwhelming to process in a single sitting. Digest it over time, taking time to pray and reflect on the contents. Look to identify trends rather than focusing on a single data point to create overall conclusions.

Often, churches ask for help interpreting their reports. We have provided a brief summary for you below. Ultimately how you use this information is completely up to you, the workshop team and the congregation - our hope is that it begins a conversation and a commitment to move forward in the journey to deepen your love of God and neighbor.

PARISH SUMMARY FOR YOUR CHURCH

Your data shows the congregation has a persistent hunger for a focus on spiritual growth that is not currently being met. They are interested in, and open to, more focus on spiritual movement. This is an important distinction, as parishioners are not complacent about their faith and church but are in fact seeking to go deeper in their spiritual journey. Currently they do not feel they have the tools to do so or that the leadership is challenging them to grow in this area. As such, the Heart of the Leader will be crucial to jumpstarting, rejuvenating and renewing the overall health of the parish. (Please note that by leader we mean clergy, staff, vestry and ministry lay leaders.) The leadership must be seen as role models and should provide catalysts for the parish to move forward. (The leadership group may consider a retreat, planning session to explore this concept and their overall church mission further.) It will be very important for the leadership team to be united, challenged and inspired to embrace the idea of spiritual growth as a priority. This is also an opportunity for leaders (clergy and lay) to focus on their own discipleship, their own spiritual journey. How are they being fed? How is the congregation supporting and affirming them?

Bold, church-wide initiatives would be welcomed by the parish. Working to shore up parishioners understanding of core Episcopalian practices (such as deeper engagement and understanding of the eucharist, encouragement of public/private morning and evening prayer or a church-wide bible reading campaign) should be explored. In addition, setting expectations for personal spiritual practices should be encouraged and taught. Overall a greater focus on scripture in all church activities is needed.