

A congregational survey was undertaken in February 2016 two years after the last one, aiming to get information and feedback on areas of church life to help the leadership team and Church Council with future planning.

A big 'thank you' to the 114 people who completed this survey: the many and varied comments have given us a very rich feel for how you are encountering God, and the practicalities of Sundays. The survey was very encouraging, with much positive feedback, but also helpful suggestions and ideas. Some we can progress, others we cannot: not surprisingly some things generate different views. Most importantly, however, the survey showed that we remain a united body committed to furthering the Kingdom of God.

Steve Newbold, Vicar and the Leadership Team

"I have found St Stephen's to be very welcoming without being overwhelming. It has a real sense of community spirit and it's wonderful that everyone has the opportunity to become more involved if they so wish as there is not a feeling of hierarchy. The church reaches out to the local community in many ways and not only collects money for charities but puts on events to raise the money. St Stephen's is the most giving church I have come across and this has influenced my own thinking. The church also has an amazing support network, not only through the prayer ministry team but also through its general sense of family spirit"

Some of the 'best things' about St Stephen's

- "I find the sung worship at the 10.30 service inspirational and the bible teaching in sermons often helps support and enrich my own personal bible reading."
- "Being relatively new to St Stephens (1yr), I found it very welcoming and the people are friendly. Non-judgemental. Positive approach to involving all families/people therefore making them feel inclusive and not isolated."
- "Church is a place you come to feel closer to God in fellowship with other like-minded people. St Stephens has always given me that sense of belonging and the atmosphere that allows me to feel that closeness. The St Stephens community strives to include everyone and seeks to make us all one big family in Christ"
- "Firstly, the Vicar Steve, the Curate Andrew and Caroline. Secondly, there is a very warm and welcoming feel to the Church in general and I will always be very grateful to Steve for being there for us - without any quibble that we were not regular churchgoers or had ever been to St. Stephen's - at a time of great need."
- "Sharing the ups and downs of life within the Christian community, with old and new members. The strong commitment of the leadership team to living out their faith and to caring for all the people who have contact with our church. James Harvey on the piano, and his enthusiasm in directing the music"

“I realise that social events must be organized and catering etc. arranged, but feel that these events bring in non-Church-goers! The popularity of Quiz nights, and the Barn Dance etc. must boost attendance, as does Shining Stars, and of course the splendid Pantomime”

Looking ahead

Improvements and innovations you have suggested that we will be exploring:

- More Connect groups (let us know if you feel God is calling you to run one!)
- More teaching like 'Just 10'
- Have coffee more often after the 10.30 service, as well as the 10am café
- Make sure we have regular shared lunches and other events, to get to know each other better; More family events
- Extend friendship to new members outside Sundays
- Making opportunities across the generations, to support the whole church family (eg give stressed parents a break)
- Better toilets; new chairs; clean the curtains
- Holiday Club (in plan this summer); parenting course (in plan for 2017)
- Open church more during the week
- More resource to support children or youth work
- Dedicated crèche; streamers so children can dance!
- More 'This Time Tomorrow'; mentoring opportunities
- Share some of the business side of church (just started - brief summaries issued after church council meetings)
- Make sure we communicate with people who don't have computers
- In our community, explore: support for the lonely, or those living alone, people from non-British backgrounds needing help with English and general integration, seeking work; how to reach the comfortable / monied middle class; safe place for youth

And we will continue to have in mind the wide ranging and rich feedback (of all sorts) including:

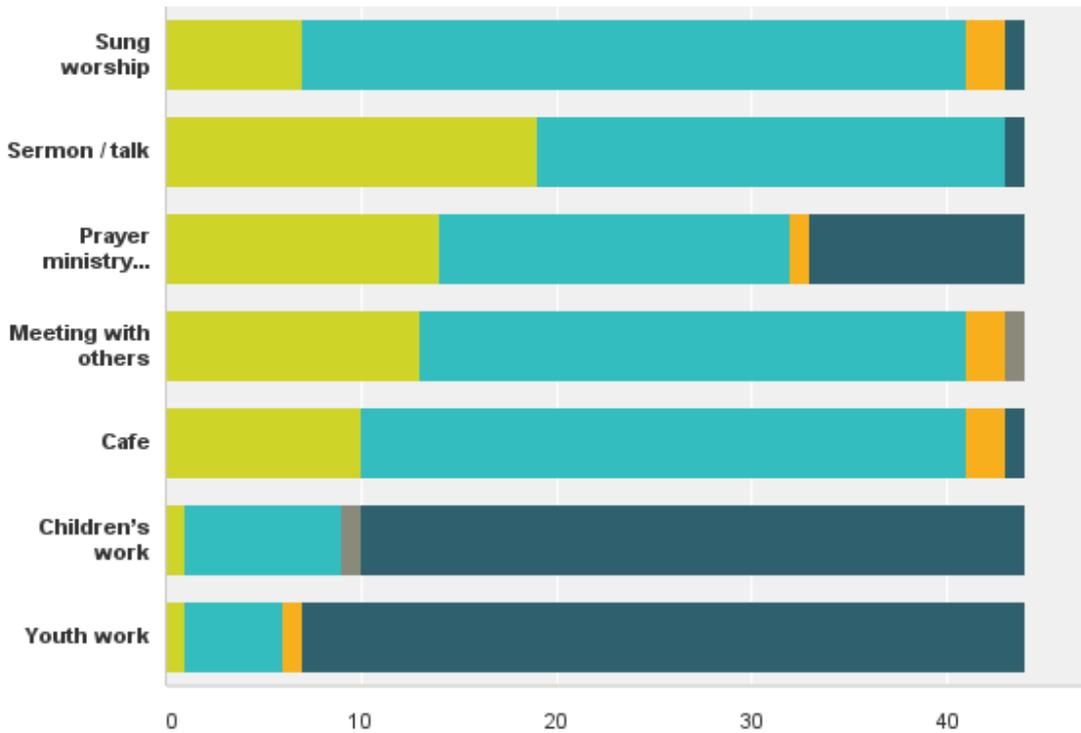
- Making sure All Age Services are of interest to children
- Find opportunities for silence – and also for more exuberance in worship!
- Many recent joiners, simply started by coming on a Sunday, possibly with a friend, so excellent welcome continues to be crucial
- But people come from a huge variety of contact points so welcome must be wide and all-embracing

“I look forward to my time at St Stephen's - on Sundays and during the week. I have made many good friends here over the past seven years and my faith has developed significantly during this period. I greatly admire the vision and hard work put in by fulltime staff and other leaders in building St Stephen's into the vibrant community that it is today”

Q14 How do you rate your experience of the following parts of this service? (please answer all rows)

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

9am Service

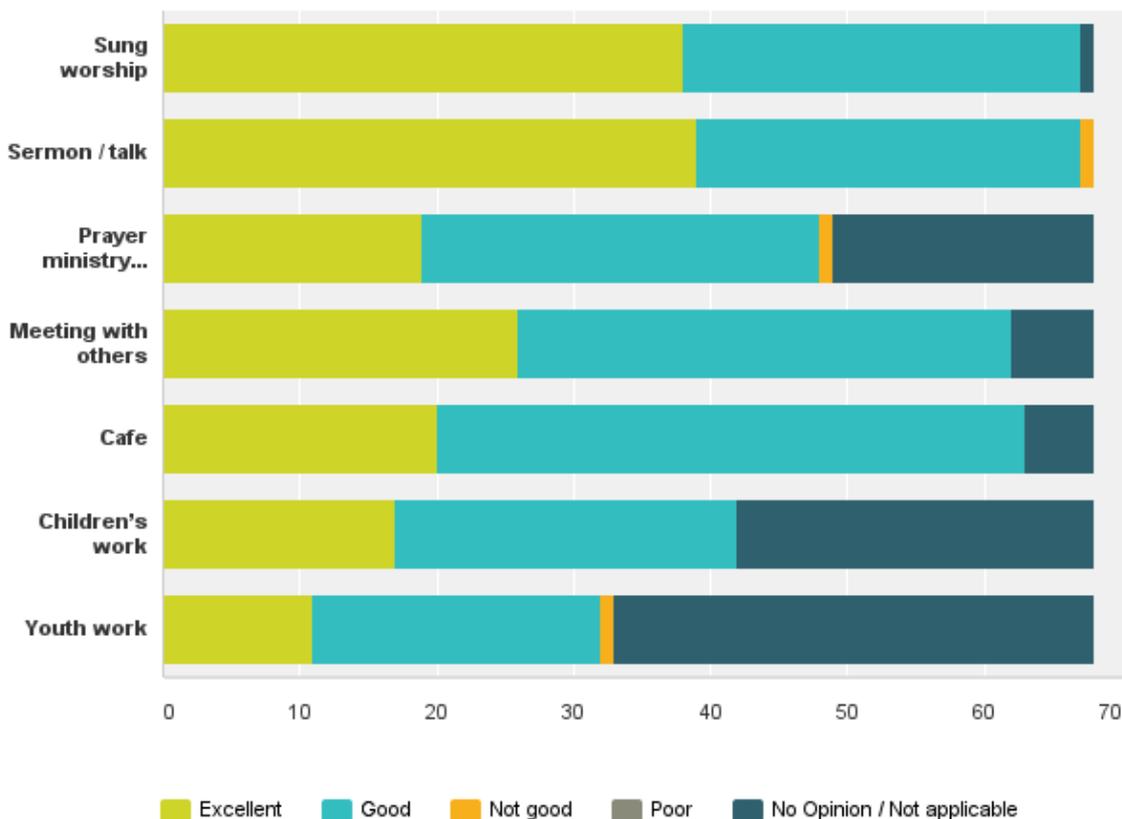


"A very good place to be. I am constantly encouraged in my faith and feel very supported."

"I love the opportunities to share faith with a great bunch of friends and meet new people"

Answered: 68 Skipped: 0

10.30 am Service



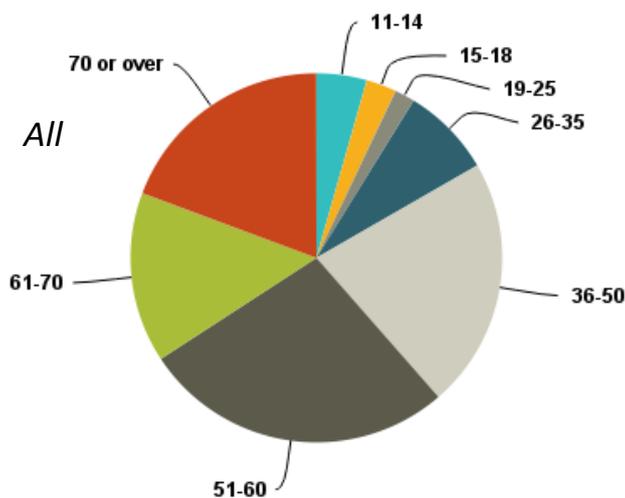
"The church has allowed me to transform my life with Jesus as a central element. It has changed my relationship with my loved ones. Our Church leaders have a unique gift in attracting newcomers and allowing them to grow in their faith. The sermons / reading / teaching has been of a very high quality"

About the people who completed the survey

- 114 people responded to the survey (age 11+)
- A higher % of 9.00 attendees completed the survey than 10.30 people: 44 respondees had 9.00 am service as their preferred service (average attendance at that service is 47), 68 the 10.30 (average over 11 attendance is approx. 95)
- 39% of responders were 50 or under (up from 29% in 2014)
- 17% were 35 or younger (up from 11% in 2014)
- 14 (12%) reported English not their first language
- 83% say they come to church 3 or 4 times a month (up from 75% in 2014)
- 52% had done Alpha here or elsewhere
- 54% said they go regularly or occasionally to a Connect group
- 65% of you use the website, mainly to listen to a sermon (or listen again), to check times or details of a service or event, or to tell someone about St Stephen's
- 72% serve in a team (lower for more recent joiners, we'd love to help you find the right team)
- Remember of course we don't have information from those who didn't fill in the survey!

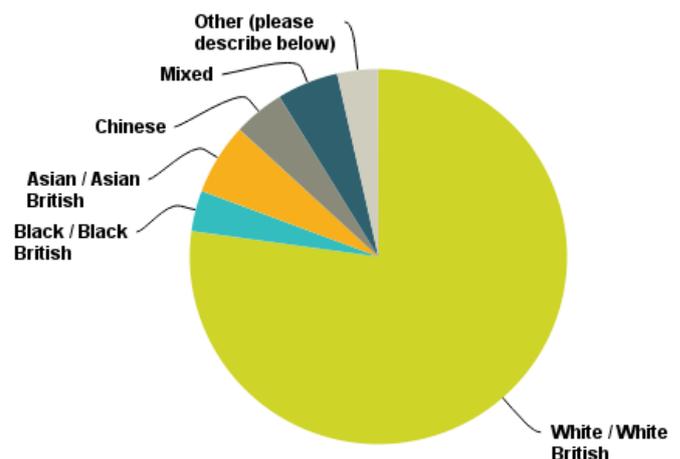
Q3 Please indicate your age range

Answered: 114 Skipped: 0



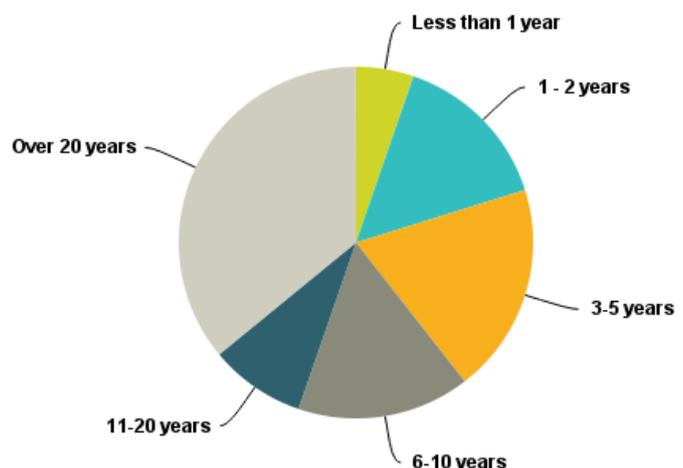
Q4 Please indicate your ethnicity

Answered: 114 Skipped: 0



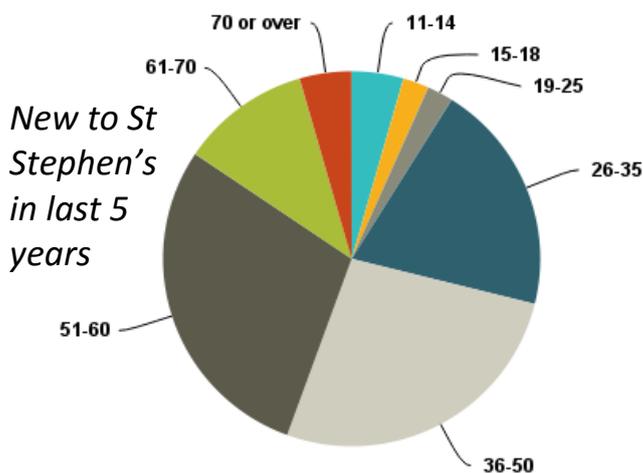
Q7 How long have you been coming to St Stephen's?

Answered: 114 Skipped: 0



Q3 Please indicate your age range

Answered: 45 Skipped: 0



St Stephen's is a wonderful example of a thriving church which encourages the active involvement of the whole congregation. We must keep it up!"