

christ church  
*frederica*

Worship Town Hall Meeting Information  
March 2016

Approximately 130 parishioners attended one of four Town Hall Meetings in March. Below is the information shared at those meetings, including feedback received at those meetings.

## Why are we meeting?

- We are at or near capacity at two of our weekend services
  - Sunday 9:15 am
  - Saturday 5:30 pm
- 80% Rule
- Hospitality, Welcome, Growth



We hosted these Town Hall meetings because we acknowledge that two of our four services are regularly “full”. It is an assumption that when a church finds that there are more people trying to attend than it can handle, that it make room, one way or another. Our mission is to build disciples in Christ. We are blessed that so many want to worship with us, and it is fundamental to our mission as a parish church that we address issues of capacity when they arise. Where are we right now in terms of attendance?

## Where are we today?

- 2015 ASA 332; highest in ten years
- 8:00 averaged 38
- 9:15 averaged 156
- 11:15 averaged 88
- Saturday averaged 50



The 80% Rule in church building and development circles states that when a worship space has reached 80% of its “comfortable” seating capacity, it is, for all intents and purposes, full. Full worship spaces do not allow for sustained growth. Research suggests that when we reach capacity and do not add capacity, there will be decline back to a comfortable level. While the 80% rule is not a hard and fast rule, and the type of seating affects the true sense of fullness (theatre style seating creates space for higher comfortable capacity; pews among the lowest), it is one aspect of addressing space needs.

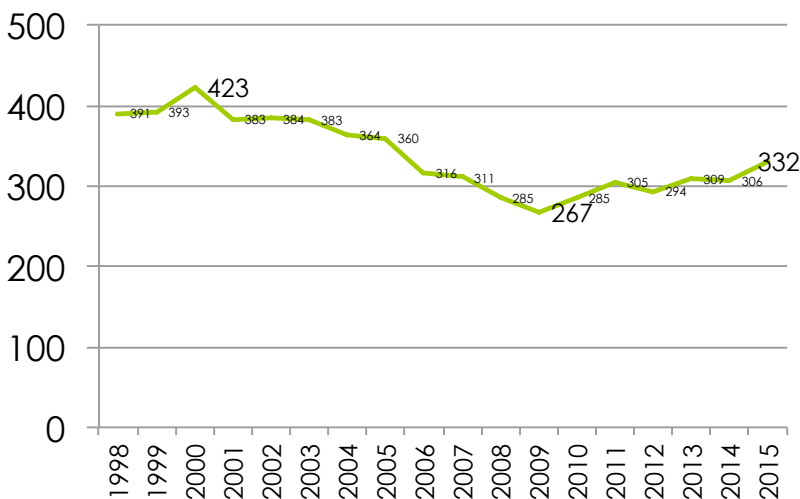
## 80% Rule: Space is “filled up” at 80% of comfortable seating capacity

- Christ Church:
  - 140: 80% Comfortable Capacity
  - 9:15 Averaged 154 or 110%
- Saint Ignatius
  - 50: 80% Comfortable Capacity
  - SI Averaged 50 or 100%
- Comfortable is 24-28 inches per person
- Does not include front rows or seats from which you cannot see well

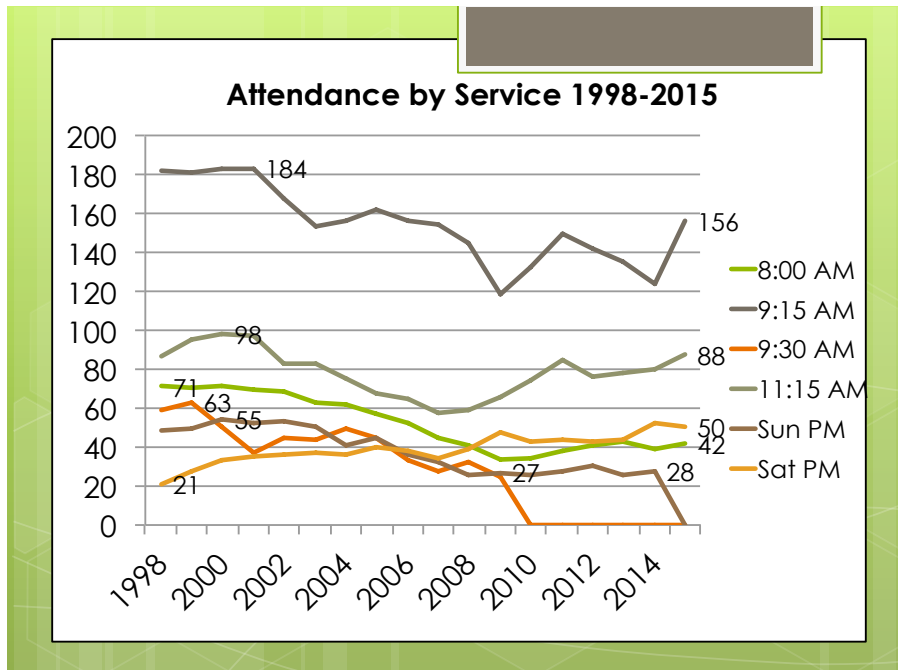
In this slide you will see how our average attendance by service compares to our comfortable capacity. The idea is not to make room for Easter attendance every week, but to have enough capacity to manage a typical Sunday, with some room to grow. Theme parks and other industries use such a seasonal approach to manage their size effectively. They do not build for peak attendance, but a percentage of peak attendance.

For a glance at overall attendance trends, you can see what our averages have done over the years:

**Average Sunday Attendance 1998-2015**



When you look at that by service, it looks like this:



Recognizing what we are facing today, the Vestry embarked on a process to investigate the current realities and the existing options to address space needs. The first and most immediate part of a larger process is to look at Sunday morning attendance needs and try to address them this year. The process for this looks like:

## Christ Church Worship Learning Process

- Step 1: Town Hall Meetings
  - Discuss the pros and cons of existing options
- Step 2: Use parish survey to investigate preferences and needs for new service(s)
  - Whole congregation surveyed
- Step 3: Share results and get feedback from congregation
- Step 4: Rector and Vestry take action in the fall of 2016 or spring of 2017

What follows are the original slides with parishioner commentary added after each slide:

**Do Nothing**

**Benefits**

- Inexpensive
- Easy

**Challenges**

- Continue to turn people away
- Continue to disrupt many person's Church experience
- Limits growth; no room to grow
- Unpleasant Sunday morning experience
- Longer service times (communion)
  - Affects Sunday School
- Contrary to mission; share the gospel and be welcoming
- Leads to decline over the long term

## Sunday AM in Parish Hall

### Benefits

- More seating capacity, up to 150
- Pinpoint most desirable liturgy
- More relaxed atmosphere
- Provides another option
- Flexible seating options
- One-building access to formation, coffee hour, and childcare
- "We've done it before and it went well"
- May help attract people who do not like the physical space at Christ Church
- Uses existing resources
- Inexpensive
- Easy

### Challenges

- Requires competent celebrant and preacher in two places
- Requires two priests to write sermons
- Requires a third priest at all times
- Requires quality music
  - Financial impact of musicians
- Further divides parish
- Complicates Coffee Hour
- People may not want/like to worship in the Parish Hall
- No choir
- PARKING
- Confusion by guests on where to go on Sunday morning
- Recruit/train additional volunteers

Additional Pros: None

Additional Cons:

- No kneeling is a draw back
- More expenses for supply priests to allow for clergy vacations, absences
- Acoustics are bad in the parish hall

Other Comments:

- Can all clergy use the same sermon that one of them writes? (Response: No, it general doesn't work well to try to preach someone else's sermon.)
- We would have to build more parking
- In the past this was an overflow service, as needed, then became a "family service". Concern about whether this option would be designated as family service; some families would want to stay in the church.
- Shift choirs between 9:15 and 11:15 to move attendance around; use junior choir on alternating Sundays
- Utilize existing musicians in the parish for music, specifically, Brad Hamil
- Make it a more casual service
- Incorporate Kidurgy into the second service
- Hire acoustics person to address the parish hall problems

## 4 Consecutive Sunday Services

### Benefits

- More seating capacity up to 150
- Worship is in CCF
  - We know people currently attending probably like the space
- Pinpoint liturgical preference
- Sermon already written

### Challenges

- "Rushed" Sunday am schedule
- Clergy are not as free to teach on Sunday
- Clergy are not as free to participate in Coffee Hour
- Need for two coffee hours?
- Requires additional quality music
- Staff burnout (four back to back is a challenge)
- May lead to "waiting" to get into the church at start of services
- Parking overlap problems
- It shuffles everyone's Sunday morning time
- Recruit/train additional volunteers
- Additional wear and tear on CCF

Additional Pros: None

Additional Cons:

- We could experience under-capacity at more services
- The wait to get into the sanctuary is not welcoming to newcomers or enjoyable for regulars
- Adjustment to times could impact Sunday School and children's ability to attend worship if parents worship while kids are in Sunday School and then go home

Other Comments:

- Serve breakfast along with a 7:30 service
- Have only morning prayer at one service to shorten the services; do morning prayer on the 5th Sunday; have two of the four be Morning Prayer

## Sunday AM at St. Ignatius

### Benefits

- More seating capacity up to 50
- Pinpoint liturgy
- Could alleviate both SI PM and CCF AM
- Captures new growth on south end
  - This is a valid question independent of what takes place at CCF on Sunday AM
- Missional endeavor to reach southern end

### Challenges

- Challenge of two campuses at same time (Sexton duties, etc.)
- Requires two priest to write a sermon every week
- Takes one priest away from main campus
- No formation space
- No fellowship space
- Poor bathroom facilities
- May require music
  - Financial impact of additional musician(s)
- Impact on neighboring Episcopal Churches (Holy Nativity)
- Recruit/train additional volunteers

### Additional Pros:

- Likely to draw new people as well as folks from CCF
- Some would prefer the more relaxed atmosphere and casual dress
- Land exists to easily expand the parking lot

### Additional Cons: None

### Other Comments:

- Put a small building for Sunday School, formation, hospitality that could be at the expense of extra parking
- Add seating back into the St. Iggie's transept



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday PM at St. Ignatius

### Benefits

- More seating capacity up to 50
- Helps SI PM
- May alleviate a small amount of strain on CCF Sunday AM
- We're already there on Saturdays

### Challenges

- Additional clergy energy
- May need to add music to one services
  - May be financial impact to bring in musicians
- May negatively affect monthly hospitality
- Parking overlap
- Recruit/train volunteers

There were no comments on this option.

## Add Sunday PM at St. Ignatius

### Benefits

- More seating capacity up to 50
- Picks up weekend travelers and those who miss Sunday AM
- Could help Sun AM at CCF
- We've done it before

### Challenges

- Services on both weekend nights is difficult for clergy, particularly clergy family
  - Likely means additional preacher, time spent on sermons
- We've done it before – people “decided” that Sunday PM wasn't preferable, had history of declining and very low attendance
- We have become active with supporting the Sunday evening service at Marsh's Edge

### Additional Pros:

- Convenient for those who cannot attend Sunday am, especially those with children
- More casual, relaxed service
- Missional value associate with the southern end of the island

### Additional Cons:

- The convenience factor; we could add five services at convenient times but it wouldn't address the overall situation
- Overlap with EYC schedule

### Other Comments

- Can parishioners attend the Sunday night Marsh's Edge service (which CCF clergy have been more actively filling in for)? (Answer: The service is offered to residents of Marsh's edge in their very small chapel which can only accommodate a dozen or so)

## Change 8 or 11:15 am Services

### Benefits

- Alleviates some of the strain on 9:15
- Fits in existing schedule

### Challenges

- Affects sizeable portion of the congregation
- Will require additional music
  - Financial impact for additional musicians
- Does not solve major issues, but rather moves it around. 11:15 is big enough it can't take much pressure off of 9:15
- Will not be possible to make either service just like 9:15
- Potential negative effect on Kidurgy

Additional Pros: None

Additional Cons: None

Other Comments:

- Change the 8:00 am liturgy to make it more appealing
- Question about the length of the different liturgies (5:30 = 50-60 min; 8:00 = 40-50 min; 9:15 = 60-70 min; 11:15 = 55-70 min)
- Changing either of these liturgies may not really help alleviate crowding at 9:15

## Sat or Sun PM Service at CCF

### Benefits

- More seating capacity up to 150
- Alleviate stress on Saturday SI and Sunday AM CCF

### Challenges

- Requires two priests on Saturday to be in two different places
- Regular services on both weekend nights are hard on staff and their families
- Likely requires additional priest for rotation
  - Financial impact of additional support
- Likely requires music
  - Financial impact of additional musicians
- May affect existing parish plans for concerts and events

Additional Pros: None

Additional Cons:

- Could affect weddings
- Retired clergy are not as available to help alleviate schedule strain

## Build a New Church

### Benefits

- Plenty of room
- Flexible space
- Excitement and energy
- Larger core capacity  
Choose what we want/  
need in space
- Appeal to those who do  
not like CCF physical  
dynamics
- Preserves CCF physically  
from wear and tear
- Accommodate large  
weddings and funerals
- Accommodate  
community events
- Better sound/visual
- Better Organ
- Faster, more efficient flow  
of liturgy
- More parking and  
improved traffic safety
- Close handicapped  
accessible parking,  
building, and facilities
- Preserves 3-service model,  
two in CCF, one in new  
building
- Brings more people  
together, which means  
greater energy
- Historic data tells us we  
have been trying to grow  
for decades

## Build a New Church

### Challenges

- Expensive to build,  
added cost to maintain
- Congregation not of one  
mind on building
- Congregation not of one  
mind on type of church  
to build; flexible and  
open vs. pretty and  
ornate, etc.
- Growth trends in the  
future unknown

#### Additional Pros:

- Allows us to do mission-related things we have been constrained from doing
- A place for public use; the arts
- We have available land

#### Additional Cons:

- Fundraising takes time; the overcrowding problem needs a near term fix
- Visitors typically want to experience the historic church

#### Other Comments:

- How much seating capacity would clergy like to see accommodated? (Answer, without research, 300)
- How does a new church affect St. Ignatius (not at all)
- Comment on current demographic – i.e. getting younger families
- Useful to examine average attendance by month
- Move graves and reconfigure (make-over) the parish house into a worship space
- Whether repurposed current building or a new building, need to have church and parish hall in same building
- Reconfigure the current space we have, e.g., move the wall of the Winn building; push the altar area further out along with the transepts
- How large a growth in congregation is needed to service the debt on a new church?
- Try some things first without spending money on a new church
- Sell some of CCF's land to help finance a new church
- How would building parking across the street impact Wesley Garden
- Other Island churches have successfully built
- We've outgrown the parish hall
- This has been debated for years, it's time to trust in the Lord and step out in faith

## Other: Bubble Church

### Benefits

- Allows larger space with fraction of cost
  - Leaves more money for mission
- Most of the same benefits from a typical build
- Limits some of the drawbacks of permanent brick and mortar building in terms of cost and uncertainty about the future

### Challenges

- Many might find it unattractive
- It is not permanent
- Poor acoustics

“Bubble Church” is shorthand for a temporary-ish structure

Additional Pros: None

Additional Cons:

- High maintenance for external appearance due to heat and moisture

## Other: Satellite Congregations

### Benefits

- Allows additional seating capacity without cost of additional clergy or musicians

### Challenges

- Technology reliability
- Impersonal connection
- Complicated communion distribution
- Not best theology of community

## Other: Midweek Services

### Benefits

- Allows greater reach
- May pick up folks who cannot attend other services
- May add some breathing room to weekend services

### Challenges

- Needs music which may bring additional cost
- Typically not the time people are looking to go to church



Other Options for addressing space as shared in the Town Hall meetings:

- Change the space we have now: add wing to left and right of altar, building of/lengthening transepts; lengthen the church towards the rear
- Make over the parish hall into worship space while retaining other functions; would require modest expansion of horizontal footprint; would allow larger space without as much additional maintenance costs
- Make over Dodge Home property into multipurpose building to accommodate some of the parish hall's current activities.

Items shared at Town Hall meetings in response to questions:

What are our regular service offerings:

- Saturday, 5:30 pm, St. Ignatius: Rite II, spoken eucharist, our most informal service
- Sunday, 8:00 am, CCF: 1928 BCP, spoken eucharist, has not changed dramatically in decades, our smallest service, our most formal service
- Sunday, 9:15 am, CCF: Rite II, choral eucharist, our largest and most energetic service, offers Kidurgy during the liturgy of the word
- Sunday, 11:15 am, CCF: Rite I, eucharist with hymns and special music, more formal than 9:15; Choral Morning Prayer on first Sundays; the time when most baptisms take place

What properties does Christ Church have now?

- Main CCF campus includes the historic church, the parish hall, and the cemetery; parking is largely unmarked and in the County right-of-way
- St. Ignatius campus includes our other historic church, plus a gravel parking lot
- The Dodge Home Property is a two acre parcel with the last building used as the Dodge Home on it; the house is in disrepair. It is located on Frederica Road ½ mile north of Christ Church.
- There is a 9-acre lot across from the main CCF campus, between Frederica Road and the Wesley Memorial Garden, much of which is likely too low to build on
- There is a 6-acre lot north west of the main CCF Campus, adjacent to the cemetery and running along Stevens Road. This lot was the result of a land swap with Fort Frederica many years ago to be available for a potential new church
- The church also owns a Rectory on Serenity Lane (Not available for worship space!)

Reference:

Raising the Roof: The Pastoral to Program Size Transition, Alice Mann, Alban Institute, p. 20. For additional reading on the 80% rule visit <https://alban.org/archive/the-80-percent-rule-fact-or-fiction/> for the article, The 80 Percent Rule: Fact or Fiction?, from Alban at Duke Divinity School.

<http://www.churchnumbers.com/2014/06/04/the-80-percent-rule-not-what-you-think-part-2/>