

Saint Ann Town Hall Meeting

We continue to show a budget deficit. Why do you think that is?

Answer Options	Response Count
	48
<i>answered question</i>	48
<i>skipped question</i>	10

- Are less people coming to church? Don't know why this is.
- Has the budget been reviewed? Are members of the parish not contributing as in the past? We need to find out why. I wish I could offer some advice.
- Not enough communication about the parishes legitimate needs and expenses. tell people what you need and why.
- That is a difficult question. I have often wondered how much money is given by people in the parish. It would be good to know if everyone contributes weekly what they can afford.
I have a feeling that some parishioners do not give as much as they are able to.
- In tight economic times, giving to the church may be looked at as a low priority expense. The success of the July Parish Fair may lead some people to think that this is a revenue stream that offsets weekly envelope contributions.
- I know that talking about money is very difficult but we need to be more explicit in our asks.
- The Parish Pay system is very convenient to set a donation amount for regular giving, but unfortunately, it's also easy to forget to increase the amount as time goes by (and things get more expensive). It would be helpful to have a "finance" reminder once or twice a year.
- Wish I knew. Is it our economy ~ with GE and others moving?
- Maybe we need to talk more about who we want to be as a parish and while I think we've always been very polite about asking families for donations - maybe it's time to suggest an average increase - to see if everyone who gives could give X more each week or each month through the end of the year.
I think we have to talk a little about it - understand what the impact of the deficit might mean-- not as the homily but at the end of the masses.
- Because some people don't seem to feel they need to give, I also think there are many older folks who might be on limited incomes. (Well besides the summer festival, the dinner put on by the wonderful Sorrentino family drew many people, not just those from The Dale, so maybe something along those lines, maybe a Bingo game now and then or a Las Vegas Night). This goes to the next question , sorry about that
- Again, it appears we have lost members and younger families are not involved. Certainly the recent legal issues facing the Diocese has had a negative impact. We also have an aging population, particularly in Lenox where affordable housing is difficult to find for young families.
- Perhaps attendance is down

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- In my particular case, it is economic? Could it be because the parishioners are getting older and trying to live on their pensions and social security?
Have we had people leave the parish?
Does the finance council decide what we do to make money? If so, it should be opened up to parishioners or allow a new batch of people to rotate into the council. Do we vote on the members? What do other parishes do?
- A. Spend too much
B. Not enough income
C. A combination of A and B.
- It seems that weekly collections and endowments to the church are decreasing. Also think we have lost quite a few parishioners in the last months. Much of our membership is made up of older people on a fixed income with little opportunity to increase their giving.
- It is hard to know how much to give weekly or for monthly collections, e.g. grounds, etc.. I am kind of guessing as to the appropriate or needed amount. A report on these expenses and the number of registered families/ parishioners and a sense of each families recommended giving would be helpful. I understand this needs to be a range but perhaps expressing it as both a number and then the appropriate range for weekly giving and also the various monthly collections.
- I think we may need to address deficits-at least once per year-in a Sunday sermon---by the Pastor.
Not an easy topic, but if we are to have sense of ownership for parish, we need well communicated information, and ask directly for response.
- People have to understand that the church can only do what it has funds to accomplish what they want. They have to understand that it takes funds to keep the buildings and grounds in good condition. People are odd when change comes around. They step back and wait to see to see how the change will be at the end of a year. they appear to not want to put money into something that will not be to their liking. (Your "Town Hall" meeting should help out here somewhat.)
Your waiting to ask for larger contributions weekly for a year is prudent.
- We spend too much! Live within your means. God gives us what we need and we should live within those gifts and be thankful for them.
- For some people times are tough financially with family and health obligations.
Elderly and disabled and retired on fixed incomes.
I believe some people believe the church is not hurting financially, locally and globally.
Some people don't really care.

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Some people just can't.

Most people don't understand the financial needs of this parish and obligations, particularly to the Springfield Diocese.

People are angry or upset at the changes in pastor.

- I don't know
- Not everyone seems to donate in the collection basket when it's passed. Somehow people think that's "OK".
Maybe people think we don't really need the money.
Maybe we are spending more on buildings than on things that help people in the parish/community, and people are deciding not to give as much.
- I think it is important to thank parishioners for their generosity over and over!!!!
- The Parishioners need to be informed about budget deficits and the financial needs of the Parish each week.
Shared information is key here.
- It is quite obvious that fewer individuals and families see Sunday Mass as an important dimension of their lives...Re: the Budget, maybe it would help if the congregation were told what the particular collection would be for each Sunday?? Does it make a difference when the collection is made for the visiting Priest or Sister who comes for a special need? There has to be some way to engage the congregation so that they realize the importance of their contribution. So many financial demands are put on families today that they have to realize the importance of the Sunday collection.
- Fewer people at mass and I think just a general lack of understanding by parishioners on how much we each should be giving each week. Would be great if we could calculate a number per person or per family based on how many people show up to mass on a given weekend. For example, say there are about 50 families showing up to each mass (so 150 total) and we're trying to get to \$5000 per week... that's about \$33 per family. Would help calibrate folks - especially those who may think they are giving a lot but could easily give more (and may be happy to) if they knew what that "\$5000 per week" goal meant to them.
I think we also have quite a few expenses (multiple buildings, large property that must be maintained) that some of the other parishes do not.
- I would say contributions are not enough. Can we stress tithing, explain what it is and why? I think this is really for the finance folks to figure out. They have all the numbers.
- First, you need a lay volunteer position of Finance Director, responsible for fund raising.
- It appears there are less people at the Masses I attend! There were 10-15 familiar faces that are no longer seen.

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- I suspect the 'catholic' tradition is not one of strong financial parish support by weekly donations, it would be interesting to have a sense of what an average weekly donation per family would be to maintain the parish budget. I suspect many of us would be surprised.
- We don't know. I have wondered if it is a real deficit, or one that is based on a savings plan beyond the real annual needs.
- what percentage of parishioners use envelopes on a regular basis? Can this number be increased?
Should the finance council make parishioners more aware of the expenses incurred in operating the parish?
- I think that is a reflection on the current economic situation here in Berkshire County.
- Mass attendance is down and the older generation is in a decline.
- Lack of attendants!
Many older people don't have \$\$ for meaningful contributions and they are the majority of the parish (it seems).
Young people don't seem to care.
I watch people who CAN afford to help put single dollars in as a donation- what a shame.
Bring tithing back!
- May need a breakdown in showing actual expenses to whole parish family
- The economy today is mostly to blame. Many of us struggle to make ends meet. Prices continue to rise but incomes do not.
- More and more many Catholics are not going to Mass. There seems to be a need for Adult faith formation, a deeper and more empowering understanding of the importance of Faith in our lives.
- That is a mystery shared by other churches in our area who also are down in collections of late.
- Some parents who present their children for the sacraments don't seem to be invested in the health of the parish as a whole.
Families have very busy schedules and even if they are vigilant about attending weekend Mass it isn't always at St. Ann therefore unless they mail in their envelopes they aren't financially supporting St. Ann.
- Because most parishioners think of their faith 1 hour/ week. It is an obligation to them, not a way of living. By drawing people in to join our community and helping people to live their faith every day of the week, the budget deficit will disappear.
- Should never have built the Parish Center.

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- There is a limited pool of parishioners who are aging and are on a fixed or limited income. This is a demographic which is not going to change in the foreseeable future in Berkshire County.
- People don't give enough or there aren't enough parishioners to support the church. Maybe the parishioners don't realize how much they need to contribute? It is discouraging
- Well, today it's very hard to tight when you on a very limited income
- People don't see the deficit. The church and programs seem to be running well and most parishioners don't know or understand how the budget works or where the money to fill the deficit comes from.
- The younger people and families cannot give as much as the older folks.
- some of it is a change in pastors. Time should take care of that but there needs to be a draw to families and the elderly to make them feel welcome and like they are coming home to a bigger family.

In my upper teens, I used to join a friend at their church, a Baptist church, on Sunday evenings for "Fellowship". This was a group of high school aged youth and the associate pastor just talking, taking small local outings for pizza or bowling. It was a fun, friend-making time that wasn't classroom oriented.

Maybe in addition to the CCD program, we could offer a youth gathering time that was just a time to hang out, talk about what was going on, maybe go out once in a while.

Miniature golfing, water park, pizza, movie etc..