



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

God first. Loving others. Making disciples.

Q1 = What keeps you at St. Mary's?

- Community, Fr. Scott, Music, Being apart of a welcoming, far-reaching Church
- God
- Father Scott & friends
- Small Groups
- Closest church
- Welcoming (this came from a Methodist member of the Small Group)
- Friendly, more welcoming
- Fr. Scott- Kindness
- Coffee hrs.
- Inspiration, spirituality, Homilies - relatable to everyday situations
- Reverance of Mass, esp. During the Consecration
- Best funerals- personal
- Small groups build friendship, prayerful experiences
- Opportunities to volunteer - building friendships
- Welcome Desk, Greeters - very efficient
- Love Faith Formation kids coming
- Beautiful Baptisms
- Music is great
- Worship Aid is better than hymnals
- Community / inclusivity
- great priest
- lots of ways to get involved/volunteer
- Mission (comment from non-Catholic about their church)
- Welcoming
- Love the people
- Friendly
- School kids
- Music - Arts amazing
- Welcoming
- Fr. Scott - caring
- Faith Fiders - occasional Homily from Father Scott
- Coffee Hr. - building community
- Hometown USA feel
- Family
- The participatory culture. 1) Everyone is encouraged to contribute their time and talents and appreciated when they do. 2) A vision and plan for deepening our spirituality and growing the Church.
- Fr. Scott
- community



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- geographic location / hometown church
- meaningful Mass
- Welcoming / positive vibe
- Fr. Scott
- Music
- growing - not declining
- Father Scott has a good "pulse" in what creates a good homily...
- The welcoming community. Small groups have been such a gift! Our non catholic small group members really enjoyed and benefited from the series on the mass. They showed interest in attending St Mary's . They felt they also learned so much from Father Scott's video. Our Catholic members also raved about that series. Feeling like they understand so much better now even though they have been attending mass their whole lives.
- The people. I took a short hiatus from St Mary's with my husband and daughter. This has been my parish my whole life. The people are like a family. Father Scott is amazing. The music is enlightening.
- Being a 1968 SMA graduate with a priest who is a social-psychologist
- Having been a parishioner for 10 years in my youth at St Mary's Church, and returning almost 5 years ago as an adult (after having lived out of the area and/or attending other Catholic churches), this particular church, and I'm talking about the physical building itself, feeds my midlife need for nostalgia.
- and familiarity. I love the architectural style and the fact that I am so comfortable within its walls. Add to that the fact that Father Scott Vanderveer is so dynamic and cares so much about improving and sustaining the parish, I appreciate his energy and enthusiasm as well as the amount of care and thoughtful planning he brings to every mass. Finally, I have become more active as a parishioner and member of volunteer opportunities within the church. I have a sense of connectedness that way also. Believe it or not, my husband and I have considered moving out of the area multiple times in the last four years and St Mary's Church is one of the few anchors that keeps us here.
- The Christ-centered, prayerful atmosphere at Mass. Wonderful homilies. New spirit of



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Q2 = What do you need from a parish that you're not getting?

- A Welcome response or confirmation given to new parishioners (something to signify that they have joined the Church)
- Teen program
- Daily Mass (acknowledges priest shortage)
- 2nd reconciliation option (coordinate with other area churches to have varied times)
- Ladies group
- List of written items explaining all of the different ministries available to join/volunteer
- More Boy Scouts assisting in Mass
- KOC involvement
- Visit other faiths - Good Friday procession to other churches; interfaith Thanksgiving dinner
- More community involvement
- Ride share for those who aren't able to drive
- Program to help homebound, elderly
- Hospital ministry
- Phone tree/ Prayer line
- Rosary Society
- Youth ministry - interparish?
- Small Groups occasionally socializing together
- Nothing
- Mens or ladies group breakfast?
- Youth ministry - post Confirmation
- Book explaining different symbols in church - like film for adults
- A solid weekend experience. Greeters who open the doors, smile, and say good morning. Mass that is no longer than 60 minutes. Ushers that actually help the latecomers find seats rather than flounder around looking for an empty space.
- Misses former church's social outings
- adult catechesis
- more confession times
- a chance to greet Fr. Scott on coffee hour Sundays - can't get to him in the meeting room - could he have a "receiving line" outside of the meeting room?
- No more Matthew Kelly books (comment from husband and wife who also came up with bullet 2)
- Small Group books that are "deeper" than Matthew Kelly (they pick a different book on their own when needed)
- Creating ways to form community in addition to having "social events"...
- We are getting so much from St Mary's. We just want all of it to continue. Small groups have been such a blessing.



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- Would love to see healing prayer offered at mass. I would also love to be involved with A spirit filled prayer group. Would be willing to help if there was interest. Loved the charismatic masses.
- Camaraderie through summer and fall picnics.
- We could use, most certainly, an opportunity for daily confession/reconciliation. I understand this may not be possible due to Father's packed schedule, but if we were ever to be fortunate enough to have a second or even a third priest assigned to St Mary's, I would invoke that as one of the first orders of business. Reconciliation is one of the most immediate ways to become closer to God and it's hard to have to be held to a particular narrow schedule should the intense need arise. Also, I would be in favor of an adoration chapel open 24 hours a day staffed by volunteers.
- Nothing!
- Nothing I can think of.
- I am getting what I need at St. Mary's.



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Q3 = For three years Fr. Scott has said that donating 5% of our income is what it takes to have a vibrant parish. What is standing in the way of every parishioner giving at that level?

- Children, bills, life
- Math skills
- Different for each person/situation
- Bankruptcy concerns
- Affordability - fixed income
- Hand out explaining expenses & goals
- Graduated scale?
- Percentages are off-putting
- Monthly drawing, lottery, 50/50
- Big bad dance for 40's - 50's generation
- Could be contributing in other ways than financial
- Might question the way the money is being spent
- Fr. Scott does a great job thanking people for their contributions each week
- 2 tier message - regular collection & list of needs itemized
- Percentage is off-putting
- Detailed list of goals & needs
- Giving specific money to specific cause
- Reach out to known givers to raise funds prior to giving everyone the opportunity
- Parishioner vs. Non cost @ SMA
- I think it is a strong stewardship plan. I think it includes a message series about stewardship. Getting people excited about giving. Helping them connect giving as a STEP of discipleship. I think a lot of people don't understand the blessings that come when they give.
- Cost of living in the modern world
- With 20+% going to taxes, giving another 5% starts to hurt
- Suspect faith isn't a priority in many families when handling finances
- Haven't taken the time to calculate what 5% equates to for weekly collection
- In a habit of throwing a certain amount in the basket without thinking about it.
- Don't have a response.
- Not sure everyone understands that it is an obligation to donate at a high level not a suggestion.
- It is putting God first and trusting him that everything else will fall in place. In our group we have talked about giving to the church and one of the things we talked about was there are so many retired people on fixed incomes. Everything goes up but there is no way to change that retirement income.
- Living on a fixed income minus a part time job due to convalescing from ankle



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replacement surgery in November.

- That is a very personal question that I do not feel I can answer for other parishioners. I can tell you that my family donates money every week to the collection. We also donate significantly to the Food Pantry.
- People tend to forget to adjust their gifts as the years go by. And hard economic times are probably not helping.
- College Tuition, Wedding plans, fear of economic downturn. I appreciate the way Father Scott talks openly about his giving. Since enrolling in electronic giving, I find it easier to give. I'm not at the 5% level but more than I gave before Father Scott's discussion.
- I cannot speak for others