

EKKLESIA

Understand | Love more | To serve

Research done by the Unit for Innovation and Transformation

for ELCSA (Cape Church)

August 2023

Intergenerational Ministry in the Cape Church

Background

The question about intergenerational ministry came up during the discussion on the youth requesting that the role of the youth/young adults in the church should be focused at synod. But having a synod about youth, without many young people as delegates is not helpful. Yet we want to engage with them through a survey, virtually, and include them as guests at synod, if not enough are elected as delegates.

A challenge for the Cape Church is not just that the youth seem to be not active in many congregations, but also that different age groups in different congregations have moved to the fringes of church life. On contacting them they confirm their membership but remain absent from church life.

Worldwide we hear the comments that the church has changed after the pandemic. This survey is to help us understand the church post-pandemic and to understand what is needed so that we do not keep saying “*we ought to*” but that we go over to action in such a way that congregations take ownership.

The following invitation was sent to congregations:

Dear Pastor and leaders,

Attached you will find a questionnaire (SurveyMonkey link) regarding your views and experience of intergenerational ministry in your congregation. The questionnaire is part of a listening or research project of the Cape Church conducted by the Unit for Innovation and Transformation of the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch. The responses will be handled anonymously by the Unit, so you are welcome to be as honest as possible in your response.

We advise you to ask all congregational council members and at least 20 members in your congregation (variety is important) to partake in the research.

The Research

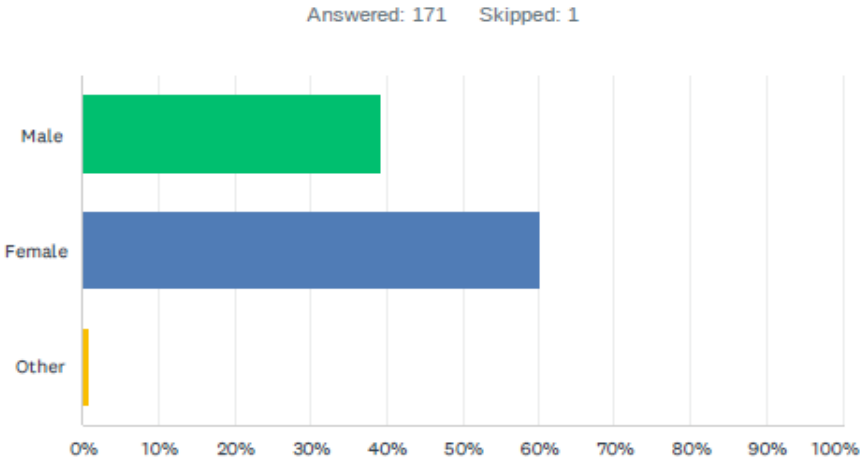
172 respondents participated in the research.

While we counted the respondents and clustered them in categories of gender, age, etc. we mostly relied on qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to gather and analyse non-numerical (descriptive) data in order to gain an understanding of individuals' social reality, including understanding their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation. Qualitative research is often used to gain insight into people's experiences and perspectives on a particular topic. It is particularly useful when researchers want to understand the meaning that people attach to their experiences or when they want to uncover the underlying reasons for people's behavior.

172 respondents gave rich data that we sorted into patterns for thematic analyses as the primary basis for organizing and reporting the study findings.

Note: In the report that follows, all direct quotes from the answers are placed between quotation marks.

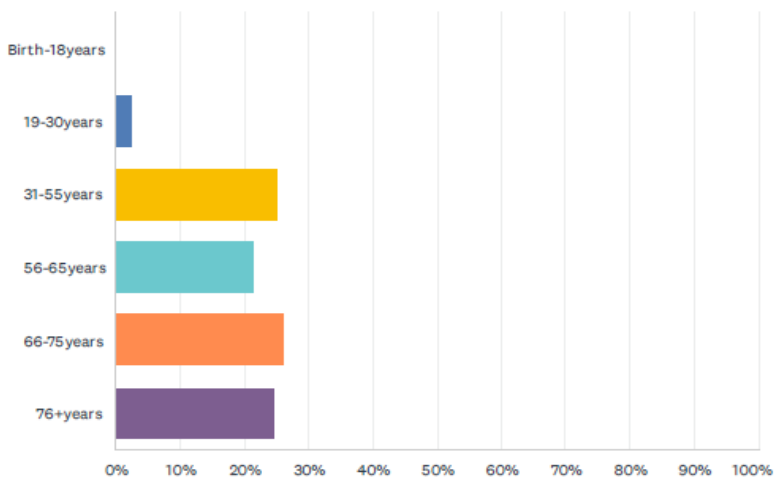
Personal Information of respondents



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Male	39.18% 67
Female	60.23% 103
Other	0.58% 1
TOTAL	171

Q2 Age

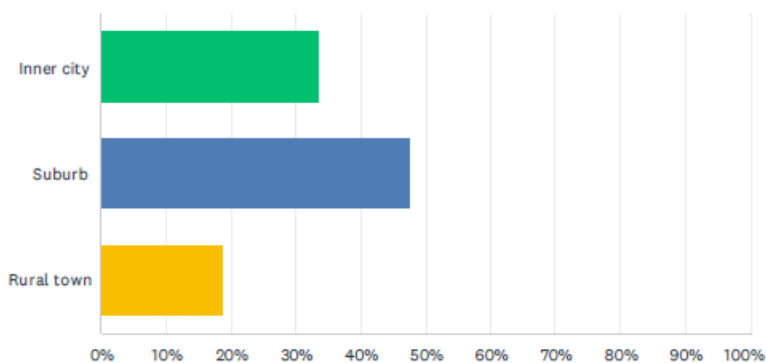
Answered: 171 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Birth-18years	0.00%	0
19-30years	2.34%	4
31-55years	25.15%	43
56-65years	21.64%	37
66-75years	26.32%	45
76+years	24.56%	42
TOTAL		171

Q3 Where is your congregation situated?

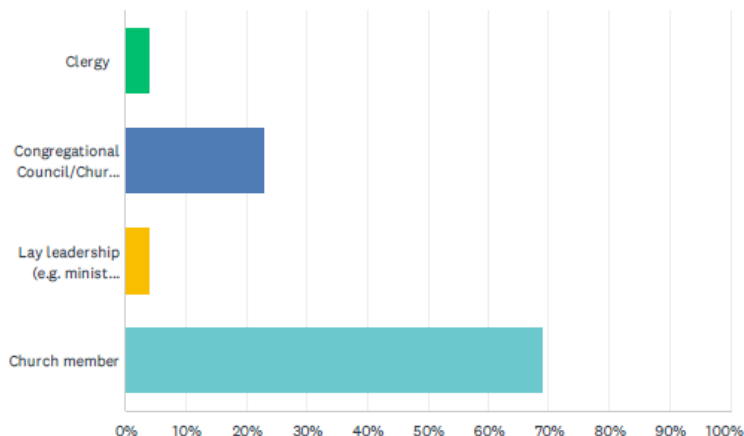
Answered: 170 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Inner city	33.53%	57
Suburb	47.65%	81
Rural town	18.82%	32
TOTAL		170

Q4 Your role in the congregation

Answered: 171 Skipped: 1

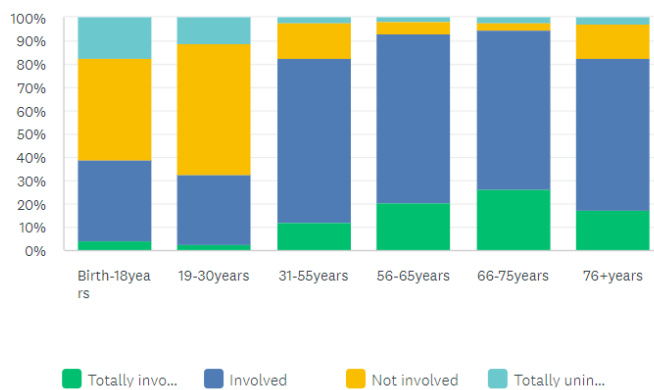


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Clergy	4.09% 7
Congregational Council/Church Committee	22.81% 39
Lay leadership (e.g. ministry leader)	4.09% 7
Church member	69.01% 118
TOTAL	171

Q5 Please share your views on the following.

How active are the following groups in your congregation?

Answered: 165 Skipped: 7



	TOTALLY INVOLVED	INVOLVED	NOT INVOLVED	TOTALLY UNINVOLVED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Birth-18years	4.11% 6	34.93% 51	43.84% 64	17.12% 25	146	2.74
19-30years	2.80% 4	30.07% 43	55.94% 80	11.19% 16	143	2.76
31-55years	12.00% 18	70.67% 106	15.33% 23	2.00% 3	150	2.07
56-65years	20.53% 31	72.85% 110	5.30% 8	1.32% 2	151	1.87
66-75years	26.45% 41	68.39% 106	3.23% 5	1.94% 3	155	1.81
76+years	17.42% 27	65.16% 101	14.84% 23	2.58% 4	155	2.03

Q6 After the pandemic what changes do you see in the ministry of your congregation regarding different age groups? (name 2 or 3)

Answered: 151

Skipped: 21

34 Respondents said they were not aware of any changes. They answered with phrases like the following: *“not much”, “no comment as have no factual knowledge on this subject”, “no change”, “none”* en *“unbekannt”*.

By far the most respondents refer to attendance/involvement¹ (x52) and the youth (x40) when recounting the changes that have occurred after the pandemic.

The following themes occurred repeatedly:

- 1. Decrease in Young Families, Youth and Children:** There seems to be a consistent observation of fewer young families attending church services, and Sunday school participation has also declined. This might be due to various factors such as scheduling conflicts with school and other activities, as well as changing priorities. Many comments indicate a perceived decrease in youth and young adult attendance and involvement, for example:
 - *“Sadly the young folk have disappeared.”*
 - *“The youth and children are absent as the attendance by parents is noticeably lacking.”*
 - *“Less children attending Sunday School. Youth - confirmand age do not attend. Families with school going children less attendance.”*
 - *“I have noticed that there are even less members who are active between the ages of 15 - 30.”*
 - *“We are missing the children; it is very difficult to get them and their parents to come to church. The young adults are also missing.”*
- 2. Elderly Attendance:** There's a mention of the elderly being more committed to attending physical services and being active in the church. They may value the fellowship and spiritual support provided by the church community.
- 3. Mixed Impact on Middle-Aged Group:** The impact on the middle-aged group seems mixed. Some mention a decline in attendance and involvement, while others suggest increased participation and involvement in church activities.

¹ In terms of attendance and involvement, it is mainly the decline thereof that is reported, while there are also a few places where it has improved.

There is a noticeable disparity in attendance among different age groups. While elderly members (mostly) continue to attend in person, there has been a decline in participation among young families, children, and youth. This generational gap poses challenges for maintaining a diverse and engaged congregation.

- 4. Efforts to Encourage Participation:** Some churches are trying to encourage people to come back to physical services by implementing strategies like house visits, social media engagement, and providing varied content like live video streaming.

- 5. Shift to Online Platforms:** Many churches have adapted to the pandemic by offering online services and utilizing social media platforms for engagement. Virtual services, livestreaming, and online communication have become more common, especially for those who are unable to attend in person.

The use of technology for communication has increased, such as newsletters being distributed electronically, WhatsApp groups for church updates, and sharing services through YouTube. One respondent commented that: *“Availability of livestreaming of services is a blessing for elderly people who cannot attend worship services”*. Another respondent tries to explain the challenge: *“The online streaming of services are all well received for those that really aren't able to attend due to illness / old age etc, but for some congregations, it is a conflicting situation as the members are not attending church anymore - which translates to not receiving collection and also not being able to brain storm ideas / problem areas after church. We normally chat at the entrance after each service, and at times a problem comes up (silly example: trees need to be cut back) while chatting to those at the service, a solution is quickly obtained.”*

- 6. Community and Fellowship:** Church attendance is seen not only as a religious practice but also as a way to connect with the community, especially among the elderly.

Despite changes in attendance, the church continues to play a vital role in providing a sense of community, especially for the elderly. The social interactions, support networks, and fellowship that the church offers are highly valued by congregants.

Q7 *What does the congregation do to reach out to the teenagers? (name 2 or 3 examples)*

Answered: 153

Skipped: 19

While the responses are somewhat fragmented, we have gathered the following common themes and approaches:

- 1. Confirmation Classes (and Sunday School):** Many congregations offer confirmation classes and programs to educate teenagers about their faith and prepare them for confirmation and involve them in church activities.
- 2. Youth Services and Events:** Some churches organize special services and events tailored to the youth, which may involve modern music, engaging activities, and a more relaxed atmosphere. Congregations also involve teenagers in church services by giving them responsibilities like reading scriptures, operating projectors, taking offerings, and more.

Some churches are even considering adapting services to include more modern elements, as well as adjusting the language of services to accommodate younger generations.

- 3. Family and Social Activities:** Churches often create family-oriented events that encourage teenagers to bring their parents and other family members. These events include activities like “bingo”, “meals”, and “outing”. Some churches focus on creating a sense of community among teenagers through hangouts, youth groups, and other social gatherings.
- 4. Engagement Efforts:** There's an awareness of the need to engage teenagers. There seem to be specific challenges as: involvement in boarding schools, academic demands, changing priorities, and career aspirations. Some churches are trying to engage teenagers through online services and activities, recognizing the changing ways in which people connect.

There are also congregations that mention they have very few teenagers to engage with, which can limit the options for targeted activities: *“There are hardly any teenagers in our congregation. The two or three who are members desire company with others.”* and *“We have virtually none in our congregation.”*

Q8 *What does the congregation do to reach out to the young adults?(name 2 or 3 examples)*

Answered: 148

Skipped: 24

Almost half of the respondents answered this question with: *“nothing”, “don’t know”, “zero”* or *“not much”*.

Here's a summary of the key points and suggestions based on the data we received:

1. Existing Activities:

- Social events, outdoor activities, and gatherings for young adults
- Bible studies, informal meetings, and special services aimed at young adults
- Involvement in music ministry
- Modernizing services

2. Challenges and Suggestions:

- Difficulty in sustaining interest and enthusiasm for activities aimed at young adults.
- Suggested solutions include having a young adult leader or pastor for better understanding and engagement.
- Encouraging young adults to participate in children's ministry and fundraising activities.
- Utilizing modern communication tools like WhatsApp groups for invitations and interaction.

3. Successful Elements:

- Online devotions have helped establish rapport and openness between pastors and young adults.
- Monthly evening services for students have attracted attention and interest.

4. Challenges with Student Population:

- A significant portion of young adults are students, and their transient nature might affect their long-term involvement in the congregation.

5. Communication and Outreach:

- Utilizing newsletters, WhatsApp groups, emails, and personal invitations for communication.
- Engaging with student representatives from local universities and institutions.
- Creating a user-friendly monthly bilingual newsletter for all age groups.

6. Suggestions for Further Engagement:

- Consider reinitiating Bible studies or small groups with clear goals and regular meetings.
- Hosting regular social events, talent shows, and game evenings.
- Involving young adults in liturgy, council duties, and various ministries within the church.
- Offering specialized services or events that cater to the preferences of young adults.
- Collaborating with neighboring congregations to share resources and ideas.
- Creating space for open dialog and addressing the challenges young adults face in their lives.

Q9 Name one example of the role that children play in your congregations' life.

Answered: 146

Skipped: 26

1. Children's Participation:

- Children's participation in church activities like Sunday School, nativity plays, choir performances, bazaars and family services (example "*Candlelight services*"). Respondents also suggest children sitting near the altar when attending church services and being involved in various aspects of worship like singing hymns and participating in devotions.
- Respondents also express their concern about challenges in involving children due to their busy schedules and modern demands.

Quite a few remarks were made about the importance of children in congregations, for example:

- Children's role in ensuring the church's survival and future growth.
- Emphasis on children as an integral part of the congregation's family.
- Children's involvement in events like Christmas plays, blessings, and candle lighting.
- Special concentration on involving children in church services despite their small numbers.

Respondents hope for future generations to carry on the church's legacy.

2. Youth and Family Involvement:

- Importance of involving children and youth in church activities for future congregation growth is stressed.
- Efforts to attract families through children's ministries, family services, and kid-friendly initiatives.
- Limited youth participation due to the small number of children in the congregation.
- Mention of special events for parents and families, such as Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations.

3. Sunday School and Religious Education:

- Frequent mention of Sunday School, its regularity, and its role in educating children about religion.
- Incorporating biblical stories, lessons, and teachings in a child-friendly manner.
- Children's interaction with the pastor and role-play to illustrate sermon points.
- Importance of early childhood development in shaping future congregation members.

4. Outreach and Community Support:

- Involvement in community outreach, assisting the aged, and supporting children's organizations.
- Mention of church collections and fundraisers for various causes, including children from other congregations.

5. Lack of Children in the Congregation:

- Recognition of the limited presence of children in the congregation.
- Expressing hope for increased child-friendly initiatives and a role for children in the future.

Q10 Name one example of the role that teenagers play in your congregations' life.

Answered: 142

Skipped: 30

Overall, there seems to be limited engagement from teenagers in church activities and services.

The themes most frequently mentioned are:

- 1. Confirmation Classes:** Many teenagers are involved in confirmation classes, where they learn about their faith and the church's teachings.
- 2. Role in Services:** Teenagers occasionally participate in various roles during services, such as readings, collections, and greetings. Teenagers sometimes contribute musically to services and other church events. Some teenagers are involved in technical aspects like operating projectors and managing live streams.
- 3. Event Involvement:** Some teenagers help with events, fundraisers, and church bazaars, contributing to the community's activities.
- 4. Youth Group:** A few references to youth groups or gatherings for teenagers are mentioned.

There's an evident effort to involve teenagers in church life to ensure the continuity of the congregation. Teenagers are seen as bringing a different perspective and energy to the congregation.

Factors affecting attendance seems to be boarding school commitments, sport, and demographic challenges.

Q11 Name one example of the role that young adults play in your congregations' life.

Answered: 137

Skipped: 35

Many young adults are not regularly attending church services or events. Their absence is attributed to university studies, work, and busy lifestyles.

Young adults are mainly involved in the following:

1. **Special Events:** Young adults are often engaged in helping with special occasions like fundraisers, bazaars, and Christmas plays.
2. **Musical Involvement:** Young adults frequently participate in the church band, playing music during services.
3. **Leadership and Service Roles:** Young adults hold leadership roles within the church, including being part of the church committee and they assist with various duties during church services, such as readings, tech support, and liturgy.
4. **Community and Youth Engagement:** Young adults are involved in youth meetings, events, and services geared towards younger members. They play a role in setting an example for younger individuals within the congregation.
5. **Supporting Older Generations:** Young adults contribute to lightening the burden on older members by assisting with church services and functions. They engage in tasks like readers, service helpers, and tea duty.
6. **Family and Children Involvement:** Young adults provide Sunday School lessons and serve as role models for children. They also bring their own children to church.

It is mentioned that various efforts are made to include young adults in church functions and activities.

Q12 *Name one example of the role that young families play in your congregations' life.*

Answered: 135

Skipped: 37

Many respondents have limited knowledge of young families' activities or roles. Some mention the absence of young families in their congregation, while others state that young families are busy with life's pressures and business commitments.

1. **Church Attendance and Participation:** Most of the comments are about church services, for example family services and modern services. But it is also frequently mentioned that young families don't attend services regularly or are not actively involved. Some young families prioritize family adventures on weekends, impacting their church attendance.
2. **Involvement in Church Activities:** Young families assist in church events, such as bazaars and social gatherings. They help with organizing meetings and events. They contribute to fund raising efforts, including Easter and Christmas Markets. Young families are gradually taking on leadership roles from older members.

Young families bring friends, neighbors, and colleagues to church and social events. They play a role in building a sense of community within the congregation.

3. **Sunday School and Family Services:** Young families bring their children to Sunday school and family services. Attendance in Sunday School is relatively low, with a few exceptions.
4. **Role in Church Growth:** Young families are seen as essential for the growth and continuation of the congregation. They play a role in maintaining Christian fellowship and social needs.

Respondents mentioned that young families bring enthusiasm, new perspectives, and joy to the congregation. They are stepping stones for congregation growth and future leadership. Their presence provides a sense of new life and continuity.

Q13 What does your congregation do for children's ministry?

Answered: 139

Skipped: 33

Respondents mentioned the following:

1. **Sunday School:** Regular Sunday School sessions, attendance, and variations in frequency.

Respondents mentioned the focus on teaching children biblical concepts and values, as well as structured teaching around specific themes. Congregations also equip teachers for effective teaching by providing materials, books, and resources to create conducive spaces for learning.

2. **Children's Church:** Special services or activities for children during regular church sessions.
3. **Family Services:** Services that involve families or children.
4. **Youth/Teen Ministry:** Mentions of activities or groups for teenagers and youth.
5. **Kindergarten/Kids' Activities:** Interaction with kindergartens, children's activities, and engagement (for example: quizzes, excursions, and creative exercises for children)
6. **Devotions/Bible Stories:** Regular sharing of Bible stories and devotional content.
7. **Prayer for Children:** Mention of prayers for children during services.
8. **Outreach/Community:** Interaction with nearby institutions, creches, orphanages, etc.
9. **Christmas Play/Advent:** Participation in Christmas plays and activities during Advent.
10. **Church Facilities:** Renovations for child-friendly environments.

The desire for parents to attend, participate, or engage more are frequently mentioned.

Q14 What does your congregation do for youth ministry?

Answered: 132

Skipped: 40

1. **Confirmation Classes:** Many congregations hold confirmation classes to educate and welcome young individuals into the congregation.
2. **Sunday School:** Most congregations have Sunday School programs to teach young children about faith and the Bible.
3. **Youth Programs and Activities:** Churches organize various youth activities, programs, and groups, such as youth camps, hangouts, clubs, retreats, and outings.
4. **Family Services:** Services and activities geared towards families encourage parents and grandparents to bring younger family members to church.

Efforts are made to involve youth in church affairs, ministries, and events to foster engagement and commitment. They are encouraged to participate in church services, including reading, projection, offering collections, and other roles.

Q15 What does your congregation do for young adults' ministry?

Answered: 125

Skipped: 47

A few statements reflect a lack of knowledge about the current state of young adult involvement.

Many statements suggest that young adults are not actively involved in various church activities and ministries. Most activities have low attendance or are not well-utilized by young adults.

There is mention of **various church activities and ministries**, such as:

- Bible study groups,
- cell groups,
- Sunday services (by reading, handling multimedia aspects, contributing to music, etc.),
- confirmation classes,
- youth and music groups, etc.

Some statements express a desire to involve young adults more actively in the congregation, church committees, and leadership roles.

The busy schedules of young adults, often with work and family responsibilities, are mentioned as a challenge for participation. Geographic factors (not all living nearby) are also cited as a barrier.

Some initiatives have been attempted to engage young adults, such as "*Coffee with God*," but they might not have been as successful as hoped.

Some churches offer activities specifically targeted at young adults, such as:

- student gatherings,
- men's and women's events, and
- mid-week Bible studies.

Q16 What does your congregation do for family ministry?

Answered: 132

Skipped: 40

Several respondents mention a lack of young families, which may affect the extent and nature of family ministry initiatives.

- 1. Family Services and Worship:** Many congregations offer family services, often once a month or on specific occasions. These services are tailored to families and children and aim to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members.
- 2. Support and Assistance:** Several congregations emphasize supporting families in need, whether financially, emotionally, or otherwise. This can include providing food, clothing, toiletries, and even accommodation. Home visits and pastoral care are also mentioned.
- 3. Community and Fellowship:** Activities that encourage community interaction and fellowship among families and congregants are quite prevalent. These include events, tea or refreshment times after services, social gatherings, and even games.
- 4. Bible Study:** Regular Bible study sessions, both for families and individuals, are mentioned as a way to deepen understanding and faith.

Efforts to involve young people in the congregation are highlighted. This includes inviting them to services, organizing youth events, and incorporating them into various activities alongside adults.

Some congregations use modern communication methods like WhatsApp and emails to keep families updated about church activities, services, and news.

Q17 What does your congregation do for working professionals?

Answered: 123

Skipped: 49

Quite a few respondents (x63) are not aware of specific initiatives or programs and lack knowledge about activities for professionals.

The following themes occurred regularly:

1. Bible Study and Spiritual Growth

- Regular Bible study groups and sessions, often in the evenings.
- Bi-weekly Bible study.
- Devotionals and messages sent out daily.
- Equipping and encouraging through devotions and streamed services.

2. Church Services and Worship:

- Sunday services are a common offering.
- Inviting working professionals to attend church services.
- Participation in duties around divine services.
- Participation in choir, brass band, and worship activities.

3. Social and Discussion Groups:

- Men's and women's groups meeting separately.
- Discussion groups, faith conversations, and home groups.
- *"Coffee with God"* initiative for socializing and discussion.
- Informal socializing and casual chat sessions.

4. Online Efforts:

- Online services streamed live.
- YouTube and website outreach.
- Using Zoom and WhatsApp to connect after hours.

5. Support and Community Involvement:

- Providing prayer support for professionals.
- Involvement in church committees, events planning, and ministries.
- Serving the community through various initiatives (craft groups, camping, hikes, weekends away).
- Offering support through phone calls and meetings.

6. Challenges and Limited Participation:

- Challenges of time constraints and demanding schedules.
- Poor attendance due to busy work lives.
- Bible studies and events poorly attended.

Q18 What does your congregation do for Seniors?

Answered: 153

Skipped: 19

1. Spiritual and Religious Activities:

- Bible study groups and discussions
- Devotions, prayer meetings, and church services
- Holy Communion for those unable to attend services
- Traditional German services and hymns
- Pastor visits and pastoral care
- Support for members' spiritual needs

2. Fellowship and Community Building:

- Monthly coffee gatherings with talks or presentations
- Regular meetings and get-togethers
- Seniors' tea parties and social events
- Coffee and tea after church services
- Engaging in church activities like choir, kitchen service, etc.
- Acts of kindness and support among members

3. Outreach and Visitation:

- Regular visits to retirement homes and care facilities
- Home visits and personal phone calls
- Providing transportation to services and events
- Delivering printed newsletters and sermons
- Support for those who are elderly, lonely, or infirm

4. Seasonal and Special Events:

- Christmas lunches and functions
- Birthday celebrations and cards
- Soup evenings and German-themed events
- Fundraising activities involving seniors' skills
- Senior-specific parties and gatherings

5. Caring and Support:

- Offering lifts to church services and outreach activities
- Providing food takeaways for those who can't cook
- Ensuring accessibility for mobility-impaired seniors
- Assisting with specific needs like reduced vision

6. Technology and Communication:

- Streaming services for those unable to attend
- Providing printed materials for those without internet
- Utilizing smartphones for communication and coordination

7. Mentions of Specific Activities:

- Rummy Cub games evenings
- Men's and ladies' breakfasts
- Talks, lectures, and presentations
- Group meetings at old age homes
- Activities in retirement villages

A few remarks about the German cultural influence like German-themed events and music and also references to traditional German practices and terms are made by respondents.

Q19 What does your congregation do for Singles?

Answered: 126

Skipped: 46

Some respondents (x82) are not aware of any specific programs or initiatives for singles in their congregations or just answer "*nothing*". Many respondents mention that there aren't any specific programs or initiatives exclusively for singles within their congregations.

It seems like most congregations include singles in general church activities like Sunday services, Bible studies, and social gatherings. The emphasis is on integrating singles into the wider community.

Some congregations offer support to singles through calls, visits, and assistance with daily tasks. Interaction and socialization are encouraged.

Several responses highlight the importance of making singles feel valued and preventing them from feeling left out. Efforts are made to ensure they are not overlooked and to ensure that singles feel included and valued within the congregation. Some churches involve singles in ministries and groups based on age or gender, providing them opportunities to connect with peers.

A few mention the potential for growth in initiatives that cater to singles' needs, such as "Coffee with God" sessions.

A couple of responses reference past attempts at events like dance evenings or senior lunches, even if they may not be ongoing.

A few respondents state that the church isn't a dating site, indicating a perspective on the purpose of congregational activities.

Overall, the most common themes are the inclusion of singles in existing activities, the absence of dedicated programs for singles, and the focus on making sure singles feel valued and part of the community.

Q20 Tell a story where you experienced God (Kingdom of God) through any of the above ministries.

Answered: 120

Skipped: 52

From the stories that were told, respondents experienced God through the following:

1. Community and Fellowship:

- Strong emphasis on bonding with church members: *"I do experience Gods love through the care and friendship I receive from congregation members", "The children coming from the children's church after the service coming to me and telling me how much they enjoyed the children's service. People standing outside the church after the service talking to one another and not finding their way home. People talking to me how the daily devotion helped them through a difficult moment. Getting a message online from a non-member who watched our life stream telling me how uplifting the service was. People from*

different backgrounds and different cultural groups feeling at home in the congregations and being embraced."

- Participation in various ministries and groups: *"As part of women's ministry, our weekly fast and prayer has sustained me and brought me closer to God and renewed my faith.", "J4A was a definite winner in the past.", "At baking with the ladies - you get to meet and talk to what would be strangers", "At our yearly tea party at the Old Age Home one of our Ladies has accepted an invitation to our monthly Ladies meetings, she is now also contributing to our Care Ministry in town", "At the Seniors meetings I experience how God uses me to make people feel welcome and loved.", "The basar brings people of different ages together, with fellowship and joy being evident."*
- Interaction with youth, children, and adults, fostering a sense of unity and support: *"I myself have been a member since birth, gave had many life changing situation good and bad, illness, death in family, congregation was always there to assist beyond expectation. So I myself try to assist where ever possible.", "the interaction between people of same and different groups coming together and understanding each other"*

2. Spiritual Growth and Transformation:

- Personal growth through sermons, Bible study, and prayer: *"I had an perforated ulcer the minister came to see me in hospital and he prayed for me in church.", "The sermons that pastor delivers at Divine Services are excellently prepared and delivered and instills one with much hope and encouragement, and the experience is spiritual.", "In a bible study where participants can voice their ideas and feelings."*
- Overcoming doubts and uncertainties in faith: *"Then came the question of my faith and belief. I wrestled with this and was very unsure of myself. One day I heard a sermon on faith and belief. Seemingly contradicting words from that sermon have stuck with me over the years: "Lord, I believe. Help me in my unbelief" They have given me peace in all my confusion."*
- Experiencing God's love, forgiveness, and peace: *"I have not had a big wow moment, but so many little moments during a sermon when you get to realize that you can be quite critical of yourself, but God does not see you like that and that He loves you as you are."*

3. Worship and Connection to God:

- Meaningful worship experiences during services.
- Participation in Holy Communion and baptism: *"Holy communion - the solemn ceremony which includes all (eg homeless people, members of the community eg CoCT workers ie the openness to everyone to receive God's blessings)."*
- Valuing the sacraments and their significance in spiritual life: *"The Divine Services and Family Services are always a 'God at work' experience where we come together as God's family and are served with His Word and Sacrament.", "When our minister carries the baby that has just been baptized down the aisle to introduce him/her to the church."*
- Feeling God's presence through music, hymns, and sermons: *"As a working family person and feeling not sure where I belonged as far as church going was concerned I returned to the Church in which I had grown up as a child. At that time services were only in German,*

and although English speaking, I can speak German, I struggled to read font and texts in the old Hymn books. I lost interest as I also struggled with dialect and understanding what a sermon was really about. Later in my working life I decided to go back to the church I attended as a youngster. Things had changed, I could read the "normal" hymn book font much better and generally started to feel "at home" again.", "I felt his spirit in me when I lead the worship in the service", "Singing in church during a "modern service" with the church band."

- *Sharing the Gospel and experiencing God's kingdom at work: "Whenever the pastor preaches the gospel CLEARLY (and without fancy tricks), and puts a lot of thought into prayers (puts into words that i myself cant even find), and leads the full lithurgy - I taste the Kingdom of God. Where I see a humble conductor trying his best to get choir music going etc, I see God at work, or someone is willing to ring the bell at 9h30, or light the candles on the altar, or make tea, I see God at work."*

4. Acts of Compassion and Outreach:

- *Engaging in outreach activities such as feeding the homeless: "I experienced God in me feeding the homeless. I wish I could do more because the need is great out there. The desperation that you see in their eyes hits home every time", "projects of supporting poor community members in those congregations such as clothes for children in winter or food parcels for needy families", "During the two Covid years, the congregation offered weekly soup kitchens. This was well received by homeless people and the gratitude showed by them reflected something of God's Kingdom."*
- *Welcoming newcomers and showing care for those in need: "Welcoming new (baptised, confirmed) members to the congregation. It's always a joyous moment."*
- *Supporting struggling families and members of the congregation: "They have taken me in and helped me get through tough stages. Now I'm so grateful that I do what i can to help in every way."*
- *Encounters with God and faith beyond traditional Sunday services.*
- *Acts of compassion, outreach, and support outside of formal gatherings: "Fellowship with other young adults - learning, sharing experiences that enrich our lives. Recognising the power of God through shared experiences. Encouraging each other and praying for one another during good(job interviews) and bad times(illness, death etc)".*

5. Positive Impact on Lives:

- *Witnessing positive changes in individuals' lives through the church: "Even though our Sunday services are small, I do feel in the services and at the social afterwards, but we share a fellowship. I heard about a lady at the old age home who was very negative, but by people visiting her and her attending the once a month service, she's doing very well. She smiles and laughs again."*
- *Providing a sense of belonging and purpose: "The dedication of members who do attend regularly and their welcoming loving attitude to each other and visitors"*

6. Challenges and Overcoming:

- Navigating personal challenges, such as illness or doubts: *"My St Crucis prayer partner was there for me when I heard I needed and op for cancer and follow-up treatment. That was a life changing experience and I felt an amazing sense of peace and from that experience I just grew spiritually. My walk has been amazing and I find myself talking to strangers and comforting them."*
- Finding strength and solace in God and the congregation: *"I personally have been through a very traumatic year. The warmth extended to me by Frank and the members of the congregation was truly special"*.
- Seeking guidance and direction from God during challenging times: *"It is hectic running a house hold, working, having kids, co-ordinating the personal and school events etc. I more often than not, have these sort of "blips" - moments of calmness where i feel that God is just sitting next to me saying everything is going to be ok. It sparks a need to talk to him and sharing my frustrations of the day / moment and just having that conversation in prayer, gives me the needed strength."*
- Recognizing God's presence and comfort during personal struggles.

7. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:

- Embracing diversity within the congregation: *"Through the children's ministry a group of migrants have become part of the church. This resulted the baptism of a number of baptisms of infants and adults. The language barrier needs more focus."*
- Highlighting experiences with language barriers and cultural differences: *"Missing more proper German preaches"*

8. Youth and Children's Ministry:

- Importance of engaging youth and children in church activities: *"I have joy in my heart each week when I witness the very young babies, toddlers and children being blessed before they leave the service to go across to the Sunday School area with the Sunday School teachers. The way in which the little ones are also included when there are Christenings, is truly heart-warming. Praise the Lord."*, *"Every Sunday, be it a ordinary or special service when i see how these young people take their place in the congregation, i see God at work in our congregation"*
- Impact of children's ministry, camps, and youth groups on spiritual growth: *"I experienced God through the youth work that our children were privileged to attend: Kids' Faith Club (previously Jungschar), Camps, Y-Not (Youth now on track) for teenagers, Cook and Eat for students, Cell group (Hauskreis) for young adults, the Band and the worship songs."*
- Highlighting the growth of faith within families, from young children to adults: *"Perhaps the places/time where it makes me most excited is when I see children (for example during family services of devotion in the pre-primary school) get excited about the gospel, or when the teens from our confirmation group have deep questions and seek for truth."*
- Passing down Christian values and teachings through generations.

Q21 Where would you like to serve and use your gifts in your congregation? (name 2 or 3 examples)

Answered: 136

Skipped: 36

Many individuals express their current and past active involvement in various church activities, committees, and ministries. They mention roles such as Sunday School teaching, being on the church committee, choir, music, outreach, maintenance, and more (ex teaching, leading cell groups, fundraising, gardening, liturgy, youth ministry, reading during services, counseling). Several individuals mention involvement in administrative roles, such as serving on committees, handling finances, and organizing events.

A significant number of respondents emphasize their willingness to serve and contribute to the congregation in different ways, despite factors like age or physical limitations. They express a desire to use their skills, gifts, and experiences to benefit the church community.

Many respondents highlight the importance of community, fellowship, and interactions within the congregation. They mention greeting, visiting, interacting, and creating a supportive environment for members of all ages.

Some respondents mention challenges they face, including changes in the congregation's direction or the need for younger members to step up. Some express concerns about the lack of support or changes they disagree with.

Several respondents mention their desire to grow spiritually and engage in activities that promote learning, discussions, and understanding of religious topics.

A few respondents mention the importance of extending their service beyond the church walls to the broader community, promoting empowerment, skill-building, and support for others.

Some individuals mention their limitations due to age, health, or personal circumstances that affect their level of involvement.

A few respondents mention their creative skills, such as art or music, which they use to contribute to the congregation.

Overall, the themes reflect a deep commitment to the congregation, a desire to serve in meaningful ways, and a recognition of the importance of community, spirituality, and personal growth within the church context.

Q22 *What gifts do you have that you would like to share with the congregation/greater church?*

Answered: 106

Skipped: 66

The following were mentioned:

1. **Music Ministry:** singing and playing music, being part of the choir, playing instruments during services, or even leading a singing group.
2. **Artistic and Creative Skills:** creating visual art for church events, designing materials like banners or posters, or helping with stage decoration for special occasions.
3. **Counseling and Support:** Grief/Share counselor to help others, ability to listen, cry with others, and offer spiritual guidance.

How could you make use of this skill to provide support to those in need, whether within the congregation or the wider community?

4. **Technical and Administrative Skills:** printing, PC usage, and internet skills

This could for example be valuable for creating documents, newsletters, and maintaining the church's online presence.

5. **Leadership and Organizational Roles:** respondents with extensive experience with people (HR) and the gift of hospitality.

How could this expertise be valued and used in congregations?

6. **Community Building:** respondents are willing to chip in and help wherever needed, combined with skills in engaging with people, could foster a sense of community and belonging within the congregation.

7. **Financial Management:** familiarity with financial services and planning.

8. **Education and Teaching:** background of education and teaching can be used for leading Bible studies, workshops, or even Sunday school classes.

Q23 *Regarding the relationship between different age groups in your congregation. Where and when do different age groups meet?*

Answered: 129

Skipped: 43

1. Sunday Services and Worship:

- The most common gathering for all age groups is the Sunday service.
- Interaction occurs during and after the service, especially over coffee or tea (a consistent trend is socializing over tea or coffee after Sunday services, this provides an informal setting for interaction and conversations)

2. Fundraising Events and Bazaars:

- Many age groups come together during church bazaars, fundraising events, and markets.
- These events provide social interaction and activities for all ages.

3. Social Gatherings and Meals:

- Activities like dinners, braais (barbecues), picnics, and breakfasts bring different generations together.

It seems like events that involve families and people of all ages contribute to intergenerational bonding.

4. Bible Study and Discussion Groups:

- Various age-specific Bible study groups exist, including youth, seniors, and women's ministries.
- These groups encourage dialogue and sharing of knowledge.

5. Special Events and Celebrations:

- Different age groups participate in special events like Easter services, Christmas Eve, and annual functions.
- Church-related celebrations provide opportunities for interaction.

6. Elderly Home and Care:

- Some interactions occur in old age homes or care facilities, catering to the elderly.

7. Women's Ministry and Discussions:

- Women of different ages engage in discussions on topics affecting them.
- These discussions create an environment for sharing experiences.

8. Meetings and Planning:

- Church councils, ministry leaders, and planning meetings facilitate collaboration among different age groups.

9. Choir and Music Practices:

- Choir practices and musical activities offer an avenue for interaction and shared interests.

Overall, while there's a tendency for interactions to revolve around church services, teas, and bazaars, there's also a recognition of the need to better involve younger age groups in discussions and activities. There's an emphasis on creating inclusive environments for dialogue, sharing, and fellowship across generations during both religious and social gatherings.

Q24 Regarding opportunities for intergenerational ministry. Where and when could different age groups meet and interact?

Answered: 124

Skipped: 48

1. **Sunday Services:** Many respondents mention Sunday services as a common time when different generations gather, and activities like tea, coffee, and discussions after the service offer opportunities for interaction.
2. **Social Events:** Events such as church bazaars, social evenings, film nights, and fundraisers are highlighted as occasions where people from different age groups can come together.
3. **Youth Activities:** Youth groups, Bible studies, and events like youth camps are seen as platforms for intergenerational interactions, potentially involving both older and younger members.
4. **Outreach and Service Projects:** Collaborative efforts in projects, maintenance, outreach programs, and community service offer settings where different age groups can work side by side.

5. **Family Focus:** Family services, outings, and events that involve children and families could encourage intergenerational connections.
6. **Discussion Groups:** Structured discussions, roundtable talks, and workshops are mentioned as potential forums for meaningful conversations among different generations.

Several respondents point out that considering real-life commitments, like work and school schedules, is essential for planning events that can accommodate various age groups. A few responses touch on the importance of inclusivity in terms of language and culture to make all members feel comfortable and engaged.

It was suggested that collaboration with adjacent institutions, like kindergartens or schools, could provide opportunities for cross-generational interactions.

Some respondents express concerns about the future of the congregation as older members pass away and emphasize the need to involve younger members to sustain the community.

Overall, it's clear that respondents recognize the value of intergenerational connections and is looking for ways to foster these interactions in various aspects of church life. There is a strong desire to bridge generational gaps, build community bonds, and ensure the longevity of the church's activities and mission.

Q25 *What role does language play for intergenerational ministry?*

Answered: 122

Skipped: 50

From the data provided, language plays a significant role in intergenerational ministry in several ways:

1. **Generational Communication:** The data suggests that different generations within the congregation have varying language preferences. Older members might lean towards German and traditional formats, while younger members prefer English and modern liturgies.

This highlights the importance of using language to bridge the communication gap between generations.

2. **Inclusivity and Engagement:** Language choices directly impact how effectively different generations can engage in church activities. Using a language that accommodates the majority helps ensure that all members, regardless of their age, can actively participate and feel included in the community.
3. **Respecting Heritage and Tradition:** For the older generation, language is closely tied to cultural heritage and traditional practices. Preserving the German language, might be a way of respecting their connection to the past and their sense of identity within the church community.
4. **Transition and Transition Challenges:** The mention of transitioning towards using more English indicates that the church is adapting to changing demographics and preferences. This transition can pose challenges, especially for older members who might feel more comfortable with the language of their upbringing.
5. **Unity and Common Ground:** Language can act as a common ground for fostering unity among different generations. Offering bilingual services or using translations can provide a space where both older and younger members can come together to worship and engage in meaningful ways.
6. **Balancing Tradition and Modernity:** Finding the right balance between honoring tradition and embracing modernity is crucial in intergenerational ministry. Language choices are a part of this balancing act.
7. **Adapting Services:** The data suggests that adapting services to accommodate different language preferences and styles can enhance intergenerational ministry. Services that incorporate both German and English elements, like hymns and readings, can help bridge the generational gap.

In essence, language in this context serves as a means of communication, connection, and negotiation between different generations within the congregation. It reflects the complexities of honoring tradition, embracing change, and fostering unity across age groups in the pursuit of effective intergenerational ministry.

Q26 *What role does music play for intergenerational ministry?*

Answered: 130

Skipped: 42

Music holds a central and vital role in church services, the following was mentioned:

- It's considered an integral part of worship, evoking feelings, inspiration, and joy.
- It helps congregation members express themselves, connect with the message, and experience personal and spiritual emotions.
- Music brings people together, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.
- It's seen as a platform for congregants of all ages to connect and share their talents.
- When executed well, music has the power to uplift, inspire, and enhance the reception of the message.
- It's considered a tool that can deepen the spiritual experience of the congregation.
- Congregations make use of a variety of musical instruments and formats, including organs, pianos, guitars, choirs, bands, and even children using instruments. This diversity enriches the worship experience and caters to different tastes.
- Music has the potential to bridge generational gaps, create an atmosphere of worship, and contribute to the overall spiritual experience within the congregation.

Challenges:

- Different generations have varying preferences when it comes to music. Although there is a desire to be inclusive by incorporating songs in different languages and styles, the older members tend to prefer traditional hymns, while the younger ones lean towards more contemporary styles. The challenge lies in finding ways to bridge this gap and create an inclusive musical experience. While traditional music holds value, there's recognition of the need to adapt and include modern, contemporary gospel songs. This involves introducing newer styles, revamping traditional hymns, and offering opportunities for musical education.
- Language barriers.
- Providing training for younger musicians.
- Finding ways to update hymns while retaining their meaning.

Overall, the sentiments expressed highlight the crucial role that music plays in bringing congregants together, expressing faith, and creating an inclusive and dynamic worship environment. Balancing tradition with innovation seems to be a key consideration as you navigate the diverse musical preferences within your church community.

Q27 *What role does worship style play for intergenerational ministry?*

Answered: 119

Skipped: 53

Many comments highlight the need to strike a balance between traditional and contemporary worship styles to cater to different generations while maintaining Lutheran doctrine. The desire for a variety of worship styles, with flexibility to switch between traditional liturgy and more modern approaches, is frequently mentioned. While some respondents prefer traditional liturgy, hymns, and structured services, the younger generations show a preference for contemporary music and more relaxed worship settings. However, there's also recognition that individuals within the same generation may have diverse preferences.

Respondents are of the opinion that worship style significantly influences attendance and engagement. Engaging and uplifting services tend to attract more attendees. The pastor's role in making services interesting and engaging is also acknowledged as crucial for attendance.

The use of technology, like live streaming and online content, is emphasized as a way to enhance accessibility and reach a broader audience.

Although there is an openness to incorporating new sounds, worship methods, and modern worship music, there's a concern about finding a balance between contemporary elements and avoiding an extreme that turns worship into mere entertainment.

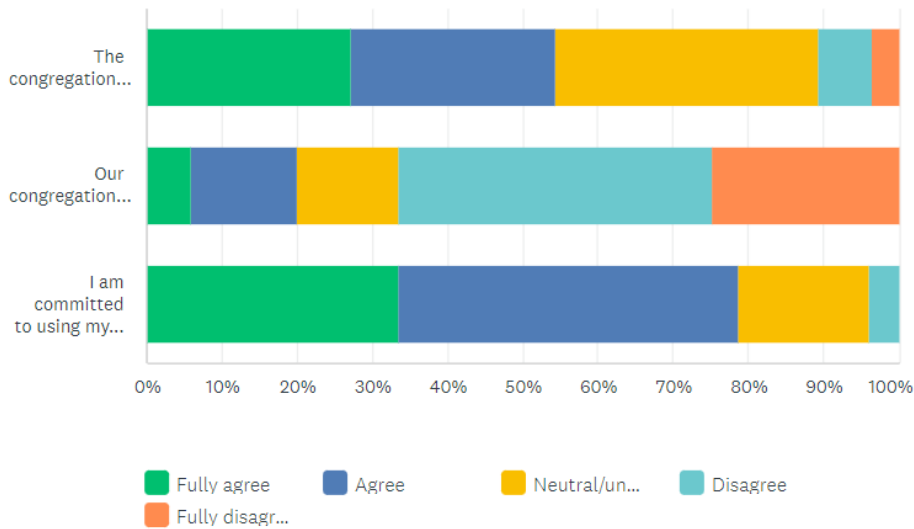
Some challenges in implementing changes or introducing new worship styles are mentioned, especially when met with resistance from conservative or older members.

In summary, finding a balanced approach to worship style that accommodates the preferences of various generations, while maintaining core Lutheran doctrine, is a central concern. The impact of worship style on attendance, as well as the potential for technology to enhance accessibility, are also recurring themes. There's recognition of both the importance of tradition and the need for evolution to cater to contemporary tastes and engage the younger generation.

Q28 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Answered: 170

Skipped: 2



	FULLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL/UNCERTAIN	DISAGREE	FULLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
▼ The congregation is still going to exist in 10 years' time.	27.22% 46	27.22% 46	34.91% 59	7.10% 12	3.55% 6	169	2.33
▼ Our congregation will cope well without a full-time pastor.	5.88% 10	14.12% 24	13.53% 23	41.76% 71	24.71% 42	170	3.65
▼ I am committed to using my gifts to assist the Pastor/Congregational Council in achieving the goals of the congregation.	33.55% 52	45.16% 70	17.42% 27	3.87% 6	0.00% 0	155	1.92

Q29 What do you think is the congregations' calling in the next 2-6 years?

Answered: 140

Skipped: 32

- Youth and Young Adult Engagement:** There's a strong desire to attract and involve the younger generation in the church's activities, services, and ministries. Recognizing their importance as the future of the church, finding ways to make the church more appealing and relevant to them is a significant theme.

2. **Community Outreach and Relevance:** The need to extend the church's presence beyond its doors and become an active, meaningful participant in the local community is emphasized. This involves engaging in outreach, addressing community needs, and making the church a relevant and valuable institution within its context.
3. **Inter-generational Connection:** Fostering connections and unity between different age groups within the congregation is highlighted. Creating spaces and activities where different generations can interact, learn from each other, and support one another is a recurring theme.
4. **Adapting to Change:** Acknowledging the fast-paced changes in society and adapting the church's practices, communication, and approaches to stay current and effectively address the needs of the congregation and community is a central concern.
5. **Spiritual Growth and Outreach:** Alongside practical initiatives, there's a strong emphasis on maintaining the church's core mission of spiritual growth, outreach, and sharing the message of faith with others. This includes a focus on evangelism, offering support, and creating a welcoming environment.

Q30 *What skills need to be developed for intergenerational ministry to work in your congregations (name 2 or 3)?*

Answered: 123

Skipped: 49

1. Effective Communication:

- Embrace modern communication methods to reach different age groups effectively.
- Use various platforms like social media, podcasts, videos, and emails to disseminate information about events, services, and activities.

2. Worship Styles and Music:

- Blend traditional and contemporary worship styles to cater to different preferences.
- Incorporate a mix of hymns and modern worship songs during services to engage both older and younger members.
- Consider having different types of worship services throughout the month to cater to the diverse preferences of the congregation.

3. Leadership and Involvement:

- Encourage young people to take leadership roles and contribute their skills to the church community.
- Create opportunities for older members to mentor and guide younger ones in various aspects of church life.

4. Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity:

- Embrace diversity and promote understanding among different cultural backgrounds within the congregation.
- Plan events that celebrate various cultures, languages, and traditions to foster inclusivity.

5. Intergenerational Activities:

- Organize events that bring different generations together to interact, share experiences, and learn from one another.
- Engage in community service projects that involve both young and old members.

6. Youth Ministry:

- Develop a dynamic youth ministry program that addresses the specific needs and interests of teenagers and young adults.
- Create a safe and welcoming space for young people to express their faith and ask questions.

7. Training and Skill Development:

- Offer training sessions for lay preaching, counseling, and leadership roles.
- Organize workshops for music training, teaching, and other relevant skills that can benefit the church community.

8. Personal Relationships:

- Encourage church members to connect on a personal level, both within and across generations.
- Develop a culture of caring and support where members look out for each other's well-being.

9. Outreach and Evangelism:

- Develop outreach strategies that resonate with the interests and concerns of both older and younger generations.
- Invite members to share their faith stories and experiences with others.

10. Flexibility and Adaptation:

- Be open to trying new approaches and strategies, even if they might not always succeed initially.
- Embrace change and adapt to the evolving needs of the congregation and society.

11. Regular Feedback and Evaluation:

- Seek feedback from both older and younger members about their experiences and needs.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of your initiatives and make adjustments as needed.

Rev. Ankia du Plooy (on behalf of the research team)

Stellenbosch

August 2023