

**73 - Welcoming Family & Community-** Sense of Family; Comradery; A Welcoming Community, Fellowship is good; Whole community works well together; During coffee hour I am seeing people get involved, and build relationships; Very welcoming parish—I've heard from numerous people that they've attended all 3 Greek churches and the Cumming church was the only one that said "hello," invited them for coffee, introduced themselves, etc.; Also nice to include a visitor's parking spot and special table at coffee hour; Most genuinely naturally American parish and anyone can walk in without feeling like and outsider; Very welcoming; Good greeters in front of church welcoming everyone; We are a family; Welcoming to Newcomers; Welcoming Parish; Welcoming Community; Parish Council Greeting upon entrance to the narthex; Good Relationship & Standing in the Cumming community; Good fellowship; Familial atmosphere; Friendly; Feeling like Home; Welcoming with southern culture; Church for everyone; All 3 engendering the feeling of non-judgmental inclusion and acceptance to those that visit our Parish; welcoming – Country Church feel; Welcoming to people of different faiths and ethnic origins; Welcome newcomers; Genuine people; Lots of loving members; Lots of community and family; Inclusivity; Friendliness; Family – Our church community is a strong family that shows love and kindness; I see and hear from others that there is a lot of carrying and love, Friendly congregation; Culture; Christ-Like; Open friendly community to all newcomers and current members; The feeling of family we have when we attend liturgy, coffee hour, or other Church functions, something we haven't experienced at other parishes, We are a family and that is evident; Welcoming to new people; Warm, welcoming family environment; Our parish celebrates and does fellowship a lot; Welcoming to all new visitors; They like the hominess feeling, the fellowship we have in the PLC after liturgy, and the whole feeling of the service versus the other churches, The Parish community building a strong family feel to all that visit; They are not having to sit alone; Love. I have been to many churches across the country and this is unique and special; Whether a passerby or someone looking at Orthodoxy and where to hang their hat, they can come to Sts RNI and be greeted by the Priest and have a place to sit, amongst the parishioners; Father having a special table for new people/ visitors; All these areas of service help to create a very family atmosphere; Friendly- I was told by a person that has come to our church several times this year that out of our church, Holy Transfiguration, and St Elizabeth's that we are the friendliest; Altoh St Elizabeths is small they did not feel as welcomed or that the parishioners were as friendly thus it brought them to try us out; We do a pretty good job of reaching out to visitors and making them feel welcome; Sense of community- our church is very strong in this area and does a pretty good job of giving people a feeling of belonging and love; Love and concern will solve most challenges our church faces. John 13:35, Maintaining church "family" atmosphere while growing; I believe that our inclusivity is one of the places that our Parish shines, we are very good at making people feel welcomed and answering questions; teamwork approach to so much of what we do; It helps to reinforce we are the family of God; "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"; Loving Parishioners; Warm, friendly community; The welcoming atmosphere towards visitors to our services; We are a church that feels unchanged by a constant changing

crazy world leading to a feeling of refuge and a sense of time stopping when stepping on campus, Kind, Welcoming to newcomers; The mutual love and support among our parishioners; Appeal to newcomers; The Parish does an incredible job of making people feel welcomed and loved; as well as reaching out to the community and attending to its needs; Helping families within the Church body with various needs, especially when emergencies or troubles arise; Over the past seven years, my brother and I have attended Sts. RNI, I have not only seen many individuals but whole families join the Orthodox Church with many new inquirers attending our Church over the past several months and feeling welcomed by the community; Our communities open and welcoming attitude towards everyone that walks through the door; One parishioner heard my daughter singing in service and afterwards insisted on having her pick out a prayer rope or cross necklace from the bookstore because she wanted to encourage her that her singing was a GIFT to God and to the church; I love coming into service and always seeing friendly and welcoming greeters/Parish Council; Brochures and literature in the narthex, great for “Not Yet Orthodox” people visiting our parish; The Parish does an incredible job of making people feel welcomed and loved; Good Reputation; community; Strong parish.

**40 - Dynamic Clergy-** Father is an engaging and influential speaker; Fr. Barnabas, Devoted Priest to offer many services/vespers/Liturgies; Dynamic Priest who invites Liturgy attendees to meet him personally at Coffee Hour; Dedicated Worship leadership; Priestly Leadership; Father B video interviews: Engaging Priest who understands converts; Strong charismatic clergy; Father Barnabas – Father Barnabas' ability to communicate powerful messages to both our Church parishioners and those outside the church; Encouraging, engaging Priest; Father B is an incredible orator; Message.; Father Barnabas' spiritual leadership; Fast growing community due to Father B; Fr B's ability to relate his sermons to what is going on in the world today; Our priest; Our priest, Father Barnabas; Father Barnabas “gifted preaching”; We have a priest that is passionate and driven to see the parishioners under his care take their faith seriously, and weigh what it means to “be Orthodox on purpose” against the hedonistic message coming from today's culture; Father Barnabas “gifted preaching”; Father's verbal affirmation and leadership in this priority; As much as Father is able to provide, we appreciate that ministry and all of the services faithfully conducted in our parish; Priest is good; Willing to share Fr Barnabas with the rest of the world; We have the blessing of a parish priest who truly strives to care for us as his children; While exhortation is necessary, Father uses loving reproof sparingly, and it is always couched in a context of Fatherly love; His steady faithful presence to show up and pray and conduct the services in spite of attendance communicates a stability of our community; Our priest and staff are engaging; Have a deacon; Having a Deacon to help Father; Charismatic leader in Fr B.; A great deacon; A recent graduate of deaconate program; Fr Barnabas online watch; Dedicated clergy; History of Perseverance; Parish Priest; Parish Deacon; Father doesn't transfer a spirit of anxiety or base his treatment of his spiritual children on external “performance.” His verbal affirmation of pride in us individually and collectively as a parish is HUGE; Strong Priest.

**27 - Youth Programing-** Sunday School program for younger kids is strong; Sunday school; Vacation church camp; VCC for young and older kids; Sunday School and Youth Education – The youth enjoy Sunday School and youth education; The youth is engaged in the activities; Sunday School after communion keeps the children in church, Strong Religious Education for younger children; Education (children, adult); Winter Youth Rally; Large Children’s Ministry; Sunday School; GOYA; Vacation Bible School (Camp); Recognized opportunities for young adults through youth program to assist during church; Children; Lots of youth; Sunday school for children and youth; Church community programs for all ages; Exposure to giving at an early age- passing the tray during services; Active programs such as Sunday school; Sunday school; Church community programs for all ages; Lots of young adults; Large group of children who love to participate; Speaking from a youth standpoint, we do have a motivated group of young adult and GOYANs who are enthusiastic about participating in church activities; Sunday School.

**22 - Appeal to Converts-** Converts are most definitely an asset to securing our faith's future, Mix of “cradle” Orthodox and converts; Fr. Barnabas & parish has done an amazing job of gaining converts to Orthodoxy, Open to non-Greek and non-Orthodox people to join our Church; Journey to Fullness; Journey To Fullness – Journey To Fullness professional content and the Q & A is superb, Keep Zoom so more can be part of Journey To Fullness; Journey to Fullness; Conversions; Status as majority convert church in GOARCH; Mostly Converts; Parish has a significant number of converts engaged and supporting Orthodoxy. (can also be viewed as a weakness—see below); Recruiting. We are blessed and fortunate to have a majority congregation which is converted to Orthodoxy, but not necessarily Greek; Non-Orthodox; Large number of converts; Brochures and literature in the narthex, great for “Not Yet Orthodox” people visiting our parish; attractive to new folks to orthodoxy; Our high number of converting people to the faith; information classes by Priest for those interested in becoming Orthodox; the Journey to Fullness classes; all speak to our church’s desire to see new converts to the faith and meet the spiritual AND physical needs of our community.

**22 - Technology Utilization-** Strong growth in Technology use for ministry; Technology for transmitting Services virtually as well as during live Services; Parish website; You Tube live streaming and replays; Parish website; Far reaching parish through social media; Online media presence; Livestream and Faith Encouraged Ministries; and one can feel his passion for Orthodoxy and love for the Trinity; AV infrastructure, we have a nice setup for a church our size; Good technical base, we are able to DIY a lot of technical projects; Live streaming service and other church activities; Streaming services to get the message out; Great media outreach; The Parish Priest and his reach to converts and Orthodox across the world; Offer Adult classes both Journey to Fullness & Bible Study – especially virtual option; Spiritual Retreats for Adults; AV/Livestream of services; reachable and equipped; Use of technology and communications to reach a global audience; Sts. RNI was exemplary during COVID with live church services streaming on YouTube and FB; An online presence and parishioners who use their gifts in the tech realm to keep our website and streaming ministry going;

The use of digital media for outreach and instruction; Use of technology and communications to reach a global audience; Faith Encouraged.

**22 - Greek Festival;** Well attended Greek festival; Bring people into church through festival; Greek festival; Greek Festival; Greek Festival – We have one of the best and friendliest Greek Festivals that reaches out to our community, Festival not being about making money but as an outreach to the community; This makes the festival a success for us as where it is not for others, Willingness of community to work, when necessary, i.e., festival; Our Greek Festival brings in people from all over North Georgia and introduces them to the Orthodox faith as well as our culture; Successful Greek Festival: exposure, enjoyed by community; Greek fest, Successful Food Festival that introduces guests to Orthodoxy; Popular festival; Popular and strong Greek Festival to draw in the community and creates entire parish volunteer involvement; Greek Festival, and the like, We consistently demonstrate a cohesion yearly at the Greek Festival; Greek Festival is very positive in community & supports Building Fund; Successful Food Festival that introduces guests to Orthodoxy; Popular and strong Greek Festival to draw in the community and creates entire parish volunteer involvement; We consistently demonstrate a cohesion yearly at the Greek Festival; our yearly Festival.

**19 - Ministries** – We are engaged in a lot of ministries that reach our community; Dedicated areas of genuine service and ministry; Wide variety of ministries and activities for all ages and interests; Many parish activities and ministries; Sts. RNI, although smaller than most Greek parishes, has numerous diverse opportunities to become involved with time and talent as well as learning/growing; I believe our church has a lot of strengths from opportunities to serve in; services with choir, reading scripture, chanting, bread making, alter service, fellowship, coffee hour, etc.; Many activities for parishioners both in church and outside of church; Ability for ministry leaders to organize their staff, make decisions, and even make minor changes when necessary; Ministry involvement – emphasis on participating; congregation that enables addressing a wide variety of activities and projects; Rich parish life with activities and ministries for everyone to engage with; Ample opportunities to get involved in the church, ministries, and events if you choose to be more involved; Plenty of opportunities to get involved – lots of ministries; Willingness of significant portion of community to get involved in different ministries; Sts. Raphael Nicholas and Irene’s greatest strength is our missionary outreach; parish life; Generosity: I am not personally involved with the Philoptochos, or other church-led means of meeting needs in the church and community, but I know it is prioritized and am blessed knowing it is happening behind the scenes; Knowing this is happening gives me comfort that should my family ever need their ministries, something is in place; I don’t know especially about men in the congregation, but the older ladies in the congregation clearly enjoy spending time together when doing acts of service; opportunities to serve in baking, etc. It is clear in our few years at Sts RNI, the parishioners value each other and gathering together; I have not had the opportunity to be a part of it, so I cannot speak to Bible studies, Philoptochos, or other gatherings outside of services that have an intentionally

spiritual purpose, but I assume those gatherings only strengthen the bonds of the ladies in the church in particular.

**19 - Community Outreach**- Family Promise outreach; Community involvement with Boy Scouts; community outreach; Family Promise; community outreach; Involvement and community support; Strong sense of generosity towards benevolence needs We work to engage in the community; Strong Forsyth County community outreach; Engaged in missions such as Family Promise; Support for Family Promise; Supports numerous outreach programs such as Family Promise and Boy Scouts; Community events and outreaches; such as Family Promise; outreach (Family Promise), etc.; as well as reaching out to the community and attending to its needs; Community events and outreaches; such as Family Promise; Part of community through Family Promise and Greek festival; Support of people in need; Outreach: and commitment to Family Promise.

**19 - PC Leadership**- Church leadership; Parish Council; Good leadership; Current Leaders total involvement in their Leadership roles; Active Parish Council members; Continuity in Leadership; The Parish Council; Strong but not micro managed, Parrish council leadership; Leadership, Engaged staff take load off priest; Well organized leadership team/council; Parish Council – substantial effort and concern with vision, Dedicated leaders; We have Parish Council leaders that take their service to the church seriously, and demonstrate their love for the parishioners in consistent acts of kindness and attention; annual goals; Leadership team is visible; Ability to leverage skills and business resources of some Parishioners; Many of our members have high level professional careers or experienced skill sets which contribute to our success in our current environment and to our future growth; Parish Council; Strong Leadership.

**16 - Liturgical Worship**-Our church does regular services to meet anyone's schedule needs; well observe the liturgical calendar during the business week; lead them to Orthodoxy; Strong sense of spiritual worshiping God; Faith. Congregational singing; Timeless Truth of Orthodox Worship and Faith; Seriousness of spiritual development of community; Exposure to giving at an early age- passing the tray during services; Spiritually Strong; Solidarity of purpose; Lots of people engages in serving; Do services in English mostly; Lots of church services ; Orthodox faith, divine liturgy, and treasure of faith to partake of and share; Clear routine; like weekly services; Strong evangelical emphasis; Weekly, faithful Divine Liturgy (even and especially during pandemic pressure.

**16 - Diversity**- Diverse mix in our congregation – Age, Economic, Ethnic, Religious background; mix of people from various backgrounds; Services in English; Sts RNI has a very diverse;i.e., ethnic-family background; Diverse members; Do lord's prayer in as many languages as we have people; Women of parish are best leaders of parish; Melting pot of different people and faiths and culture; Parish members are from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, but are all joined through this common factor of the Orthodox faith; Our growing and energetic parish includes a good mix of ages and families; Our

growing and energetic parish includes a good mix of ages and families; Good representation of age span, youth to elderly; Age diversity – wisdom of elders and enthusiasm of new comes and converts; Large talent pool with lots of professionals from different industries; We integrate Greek and non-Greek culture well so that both are respected (at least from my own non-Greek perspective); Good representation of age span, youth to elderly.

**15 - Location & Property**- Location. Located in a growing community with land to grow our future; Valuable Property/Room to Grow; Plenty of property; Lots of land; plenty of space for future growth; Large paid off property in a desirable location; Great piece of land; Large, beautiful property and excellent location; Large piece of property and great blank slate to grow; We need to build a building. In our history, the founders took out a mortgage that was immense to them at the time when they began the church simply to buy a piece of property on 3074 Bethelview Rd. in Forsyth County. So, we have a history of making a big investment and taking a risk. Even when we had this mortgage, we added to it by buying 3090 Bethelview Rd, a single-family home. The question now is, if we go in this direction, how much risk are we willing to take?; Lots of property; Large paid off property in a desirable location; Great piece of land; An amazing property in a growing area.

**14 - Communication**- communication through emails, bulletins, announcements in church, social media, etc. and also well organized, Communications, Communications and Administrative staff responsive to parish members' queries; Thoughtful front office; great announcements; phone calls; Emails; Information emailed 2x weekly about Services and other events; Excellent communication of all Parish business to the congregation; overall great reach to the non-orthodox community via: a)Congregation; announcements after Liturgy; Communication to membership is good; Strong communications with news and; The care and thoughtfulness with which it communicates is very much appreciated; The care and thoughtfulness with which it communicates is very much appreciated.

**11 – Church Services Participants**- Amount of Altar Boys – good participation from young boys; Chanter, Choir, Readers are growing and including more parishioners; Passionate Volunteers; Choir, Chanters; Our choir; liturgical staff; Small group of dedicated parishioners who are consistently present for all activities; youth participation in the life of the Church whether serving at the Altar, at the chanter's stands, in Vacation, Bible School, Greek Dance, and other activities; Service is participatory and part of the service; This brings a myriad of views, life experiences, and ideas that are needed to grow our faith here in America today; We have members who are eager to serve in the various opportunities available; Choir. Alter Boys.

**10 - Strong Presence of Young Families** - Strong and Stable Core Group of Members; Large number of children and young families; Our parish has a large number of young people including young couples, young adults (college graduates and undergrad students), teens, children, and infants; Another strength of our parish is in the age of the parishioners; We are a young Church with tons of children; This is a sign our parish is not a dying community but a lively and thriving one; On top of having a large presence of young people, We are a group of believers who recognize the value of having our children in the services, and encourage parents of young ones that their presence is vital and important; I feel that young people are encouraged that their help is welcome and needed in service opportunities in our parish community; but also my children have often been praised that their PRESENCE and PRAYERS are vital; Children and the next generation are clearly a priority in our parish; Their presence is welcomed and celebrated both in the services, as well as in Sunday School.

**10 - Church Attendance** - Long term membership; Attendance on Sundays continues to grow; Engagement; Growing Base of Committed New Members; Participation, Enthusiastic engaged membership; Dedication. Parishioners who come to mass on time and not 30 – 45 min. late; Strong Sunday attendance and participation in liturgy.

**10 - Financial Strength** - We have a member at least one steward who was a steward from almost the beginning and remembers those years and still others who remember the times when we had large debt as a church. They can be reliable sources as to the reasoning for the founders taking on our original mortgage and purchase our current property, We have a reasonable amount of money as a down payment on new debt and other than routine operating expenses, no existing debt; Gala fundraising, Transparency for finances and budgets; Transparency dealing with the Parish's finances and books; Growing Financial Generosity; Sts RNI has historically demonstrated its ability to manage its finances to invest in steady growth while managing and limiting the risks to the church resources; Building fund; Generous parishioners who share their time and talents as well as treasure; income, age group, personal and business, etc.; No debt; Building fund;

**7 - Bible Study** - Bible Study is excellent, Keep Zoom so more can be part of Bible Study; Bible Study; Live and Zoom Bible Study conducted by Priest; Bible Study; Journey to Fullness and Bible study for adults.

**5 - Fellowship Hour** - Coffee Hour/Fellowship (just need to reduce amount of food); Fellowship hours for socialization is growing; We practice hospitality well, and truly present a feast during Coffee Hour, which serves another tangible, physical symbol of the spiritual reality of the feast ready for us through practicing the Orthodox faith; We have a consistent way to welcome visitors with a lively coffee hour and an opportunity for them to connect personally with Father at his table; Community: eating together weekly at coffee hour;

**5 - Food Ministry** - The food ministry is helping build relationships, Meals; Baking for community and relationship; Good cooks;

**3 – Bookstore** - We have a bookstore with excellent resources that are reasonably priced, thus helping parishioners to find more instruction on deepening their faith; Bookstore (great icons and books);book club

**2 - Greek Culture** - There is something to be said about the richness many of us know about the Greek culture and influence on our church, Another of our strengths is our cultural Greek heritage which is becoming less evident in our daily church lives;

## **One offs**

- ~ Up to date.
- ~ Wish I could be there more often;
- ~ Many churches with good intentions have allowed themselves to become a place for programs and betterment when some of those things are good and even helpful, they need a limited place, priority, and season within church life if we elect to institute any programs with a clear goal in mind;
- ~ The parish council should consider proposing to the general assembly the possibility of floating a new mortgage to build a multipurposed building, or a church building proper;
- ~ As a result, we need to keep our eye on this timeless faith and not allow outside or inside influence to divert us from the mission of worship, and love for one another;
- ~ Trail Life;
- ~ Positive relationship with Forsyth county commission;
- ~ Strong Philoptochos that reaches out to the community ;
- ~ Strong Participation in Metropolis Camping;
- ~ Momentum of year over year growth in numbers;
- ~ It ultimately isn't up to us;
- ~ Mid-week services seem to have a very low attendance, but Father does not guilt-trip anyone (at least publicly that I know of)!
- ~ We get prettier;