

**42 - FACILITIES** - Accessible building; Size of church - small amount; Vision for the sanctuary; Chairs – moving people up to the front; Choir space; Choir space limited; Sunday School space limited; Building is too small; Parking; Old building; Small nave – chairs minimize available standing room; inadequate space for Sunday school; Building will soon be too small if we keep growing; No kitchen; future kitchen will not be full-service; lack of parking; inaccessible building for those with mobility issues; Need to get better on maintaining the church property and building; Need to learn how to park a car properly; Building is small (chairs too big); Bad wi-fi; Security system; Kitchen issue; Older building that will need repairs/upgrades; Our building is not at all handicapped-accessible. The parish hall, food pantry, and bathrooms can only be reached via a long, steep staircase. The nave can be reached by a chair-lift, but that apparatus is old and rickety. This puts the life of our parish out of reach for a disabled person; Limited resources (funding, staffing, and facilities) may affect our church's ability to do more for the local community; Our building is nearly a century old, and maintenance is a growing financial burden; Our building is already too small (worship space, social space, Sunday school space). We want to grow, but have no room.; Parking is a major and worsening problem.; Beginning to outgrow current space; No room to expand space at current location; Accessibility, especially for those not local in terms of parking and the like; Building was not built when ADA was a thing; As our church is growing, seating is starting to become difficult as it tends to get fairly crowded.; Aging bldg.. with accessibility issues and inadequate parking as well as no facility for growth within the existing bldg.; Need for a full-service kitchen not just for feeding parishioners and our neighbors but also for teaching purposes.; Old building = terrible Wi-Fi; No security system; Parking and people not respecting the loading zone; More space for choir; Limited space for coats; Need the kitchen finished; limitations of building that can be fixed (i.e. handicap accessibility, chairs in the nave, lack of kitchen/facilities).

**30 - STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT** - Not financially stable; Unbalanced budget; 80/20 with too few doing too much of the work; Burn out; Finances; Not a tithing church; Some of the younger men need to buck up and help around the church so the women aren't having to take care of everything; Not financially stable yet; Not a tithing parish yet; 20% of people do 80% of the work - volunteer burnout; Limited financial stability; Lack of abundance mentality; Need larger core of active workers/doers; Unstable finances, and excessive dependence on a tiny number of big donors. This puts us at financial risk.; A small number of volunteers do most of the work. We need to expand the circle of involvement or burnout may be a problem.; Financial instability; Financial fragility; not having a fully funded budget.; Not enough members are active in church life; financial limitations/lack of tithes and regular giving; Disproportionate tithing to income ratio causing budgetary and financial issues and instability which insinuate into the parish's other weaknesses.; Parishioners are not fully engaged beyond Divine Liturgy services.; Finances; People not fulfilling pledges; Lack of pledges; Amount of pledges needed in order to

have a good budget; uninvolved of a portion of regular attendees (due to unknown or external factors); Possible burnout of the few members of the Church who do too much work.; Imbalance among congregation when it comes to volunteer work, donations, etc.; Could be better at seeking our/meeting needs of less engaged members (meal trains, etc.).

**14 - DIVISIVE - TOO POLITICAL - UNWELCOMING** - Attacking others who have differing views – watch “we’re right”; Avoid defining ourselves negatively; Attacks within coffee hour; Polarization; Some elitist or good ol’ boys club mentality seen; Need to be more inviting to people not like “us”; A couple members wanting to have a “good ole’ boys” club....exclusionary to others who don’t fit their mold.; A couple members wanting to have a “good ole’ boys” club....exclusionary to others who don’t fit their mold.; Need to increase inviting, welcoming; Politics and public education stances; Politics and people not being respectful of others differing beliefs. Some people’s tendency to attack conservatives and be vocal about it....to the point of calling for their execution.; some members are not discerning about leaving politics at the door – can be off-putting at a minimum, and chase people away at the worst; Get too hung up on politics sometimes; Some leaders and members seem to be captured by the ideology of the Democrat party. Witness the internal meltdown that occurred after the 2016 presidential election, leading to an anti-Trump march sponsored by this parish on inauguration day 2017. And then there were the high-profile attempts by members of this congregation to overturn the Iowa electors in Des Moines.; Sometimes I wonder what we are building, whether a congregation of faithful Christians or a meeting of the Democrat party.

**10 - YOUTH / YOUNG ADULT/ COLLEGE MINISTRY** - Not all students who are part of college ministry are coming to weekly services on a semi-regular/regular basis; Not all students part of said ministry are active inquirers, catechumens, or are Orthodox; College Ministry; See the college ministry as simply a hangout; Dependency on college students for some ministries; Full of grad students, not many undergrads; a proportional lack of younger members in their late twenties to thirties compared to members in their forties and fifties (which would ensure longevity of leadership as people retire from taking positions on the council, etc.); Need for youth leadership; Minimal opportunities for social activities for children, outside of Sunday School.; Lack of social events for teens as they transition into adults.

**6 - LACK OF VISIBILITY/COMMUNICATIONS** - Don’t know we exist; Communication to outside community, college, and county; Need advertisement; lack of external communication/advertising – people don’t know we’re here; Need to advertise more/in more ways; congregational resistance to adopting new forms of communication (slack, etc.).

**5 - STAFF SHORTAGES** - No Deacon in place; The need for a church secretary; Limited support for Father (e.g. catechesis classes or other classes); Lack of cantors/psaltiri to lead singing for weekday services; Too much reliance on parishioner volunteering with maintenance – cleaning and general maintenance and upkeep of the bldg.

**5 - LACK OF OUTREACH & EVANGELISM** - Fleeing of the protestants and Catholics to the church – need heart for the unchurched of Iowa City; Being able to tell the Gospel to the unchurched; Not able to attract more yearning people to Orthodoxy (both Orthodox & Non-orthodox as well as others) who would naturally be attracted to what we offer as a Church in this college town.; Not able to attract more yearning people to Orthodoxy (both Orthodox & Non-orthodox as well as others) who would naturally be attracted to what we offer as a Church in this college town.; Limited community outreach events; Passivity about inviting people to church.

**5 - POOR / INCONSISTENT ATTENDANCE** - Unattended/low attendance for services other than Divine Liturgy; Attendance is low for Vespers and Matins services; Sparse attendance at weekday worship and other activities, which can discourage those who do attend. Church should not be for Sunday mornings alone.; We also have many members that are no longer attending or attending very sporadic.; Weekday/Saturday services can suffer from spotty attendance, especially on important feast days like St. Raphael Day.

**4 - CHOIR ISSUES** - Choir repertoire; Choir rehearsals; Need more choir rehearsals; The slowness of the choir when one director is leading.....the pace becomes too slow so that people cannot hold notes, thus the choir sounds bad. You can be reverent but sing at a better pace. Lack of addressing this, even though the prior priest was told of this by numerous people.....people don't like to ruffle feathers and let those who are not skilled in leading continue to lead.

**4 - SMALL SIZE / TURNOVER/TRANSIENCE** - Not enough church members; Lots of turnover in membership; Not able to discern & rectify why past regular members of the Church no longer participate in Church services & activities.; With a few exceptions, the members of the community tend to be quite transient.

**3 - LITURGICAL ISSUES** - Spoken parts of the liturgy are read from books, making the pace breathtaking, as when racing through the Nicene Creed and the Lord's Prayer. It's not a race to the end. These are heartfelt prayers and should be paced according to a spoken, not reading, voice.; Sung parts are drawn out unnecessarily, leading to music that is lacking in spirit. These liturgical pieces, while they are not strictly timed, should have a natural cadence that imitates a conversation between congregants and priest. It doesn't have to be painfully slow to be meditative.; The

broadcasting of the different services is great, but it is very hard to see and also has a very bad lag that makes it difficult to watch Liturgy.

**3 - HOMOGENEITY** - Lack of racial diversity; We have very few members of African, Asian, and South American ancestry, which may make it hard for other folks in these groups to feel comfortable joining, especially if ethnicity and race matters to them a lot; Inclusivity of people that are different (African Americans, Asians, South Americans, Mexicans, etc.).

**2 - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** - Education of newcomers; Educated about what we believe.

### **ONEOFFS**

- ~ No set (regular) cleaning scheduled for parish;
- ~ How often do we have the Bishop visit? Seems very infrequent;
- ~ People dumping stuff at church without letting anyone know;
- ~ I worry there is a chance we'll become too programmatic.;
- ~ People talking during Liturgy, showing videos to others during Liturgy, asking questions of others during the Eucharist;
- ~ It's a supportive gesture to people from other countries to have prayers spoken and sung in their native language, but it is distracting to the rest of us native English speakers. This is America, not Ukraine, not Lebanon, not Syria, and not Russia. If I go to one of those countries, I would not expect them to do any prayers or hymns in English. Please do all the parts of the liturgy in English.;
- ~ I've had a lot of things to say for a very long time. But the leaders of the church always get defensive when I push back, or they just go silent. And I'm a pretty tactful person. If the leaders of an organization want improvements, you're going to have to get used to constructive criticism. If you use it in the spirit in which it is intended, it will only help things be better.;
- ~ Isolation;
- ~ Not a consistent theme of theological talks/discussions;
- ~ More communication between the parishioners and council rather than going to Father on everything;
- ~ Lag in moving from a mission church to an official Antiochian Orthodox parish;
- ~ Lack of communication between different factions of regular attendees (i.e. cleaning crew vs. parish council);

## WEAKNESSES

- ~ Possible disconnect between the priorities and interests of the various member groups (students, long-term residents, ethnic groups, etc.);