

November 24, 2020

Dear Friend and Parishioner of St. John Vianney Parish and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish:

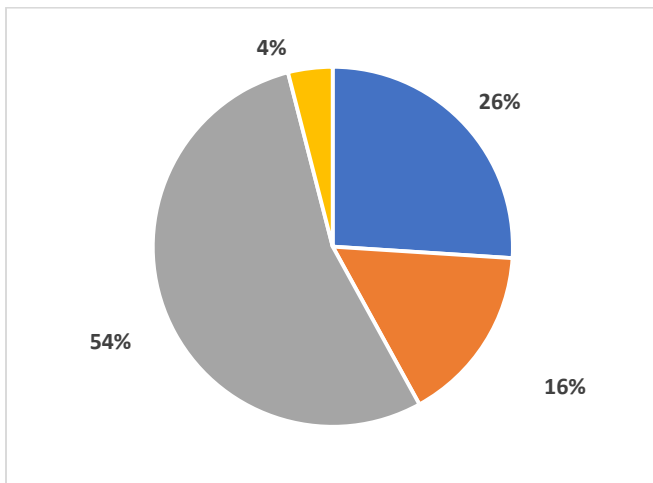
We have been asking what our vision for the Catholic Church in Bettendorf should be for the immediate and long-term future. As understood through Vision 20/20, we are on “a journey to fill every heart and life with the Joy of the Gospel through a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ and his church.”

33% responded to the survey.

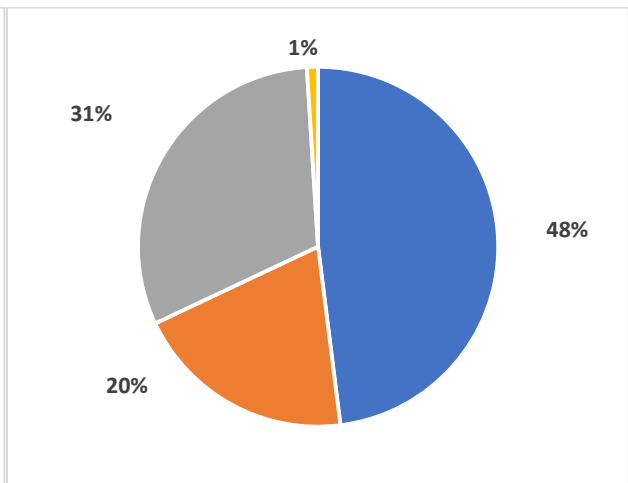
To refine the vision, a survey testing various options was conducted among all parish households of St. John Vianney Parish and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Thank you to everyone who participated. Here are the highlights:

CHOICE OF OPTION FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE FUTURE

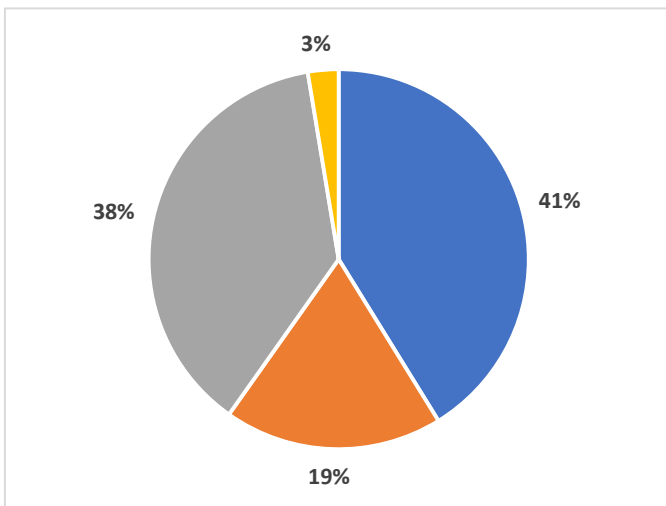
Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes



Parishioners of St. John Vianney



All Respondents



- Relocate OLOL church and school toward growth area. SJV remains.
- Merge parishes as two sites relocating OLOL and SJV remains.
- Merge parishes as one new site with school.
- No response

The survey points to two major areas of support for the future:

1. There is a majority who support a form of merger or, at a minimum, greater collaboration between the parishes.
2. There is a majority who support the St. John Vianney site staying open and a new site for Our Lady of Lourdes.

The ranking of rationales provided insight into why merger and functioning at two sites are the clear directions which have emerged from the survey. The most influential rationales were availability of priests and condition of the facilities/ability to expand.

In the Diocese of Davenport there are currently 55 active priests. However, by the year 2030 only 22 will be under the age of 70, the retirement age. Already, 52 of the 72 parishes in the diocese share pastors. At some point in the future, it is likely the parishes in Bettendorf will share a pastor with some priest assistance. Because the administration of parishes is one of the called duties of the pastor, only certain men are gifted and prepared for this role particularly in larger parishes that by nature are more complex. New models of priestly ministry are defining how priests and pastors best care for the administrative (temporal) and the pastoral (spiritual) needs of people.

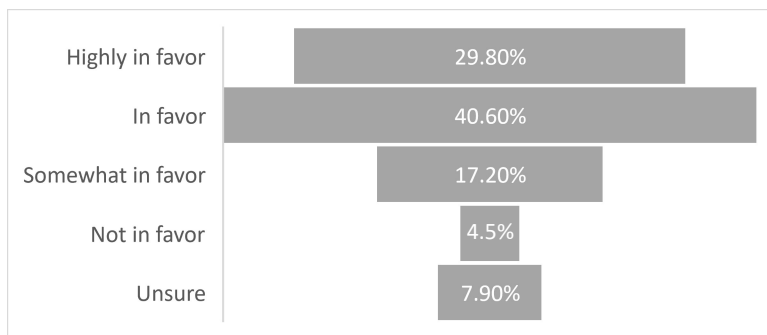
The condition of the facilities and ability to expand was a major driver in initiating the study. There is no question the need for new facilities is greater for Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and School than St. John Vianney Parish. But it has also been determined St. John Vianney facilities need improvements and lack options for further expansion. All three options involved Our Lady of Lourdes moving to a new site and building new facilities.

A number of questions have emerged from the retreats and listening sessions that reflect concerns about a construction phase: Can Our Lady of Lourdes afford to build on its own? Can new facilities serve a broader Catholic mission for both parishes in the City of Bettendorf? What will the Catholic community support financially?

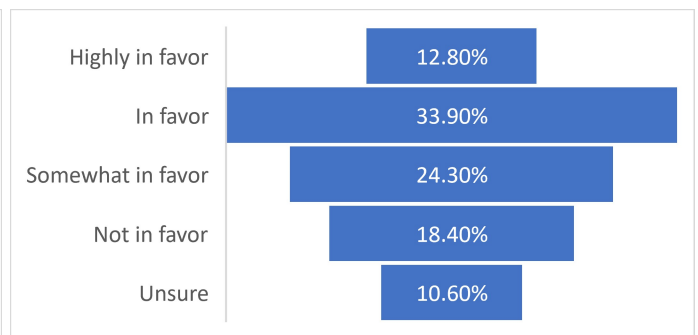
Whenever the topic of new construction or building improvements is raised, the topic of funding the project and raising capital always follows. The survey provided some initial feedback on potential support for a capital campaign:

POTENTIAL SUPPORT FOR A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

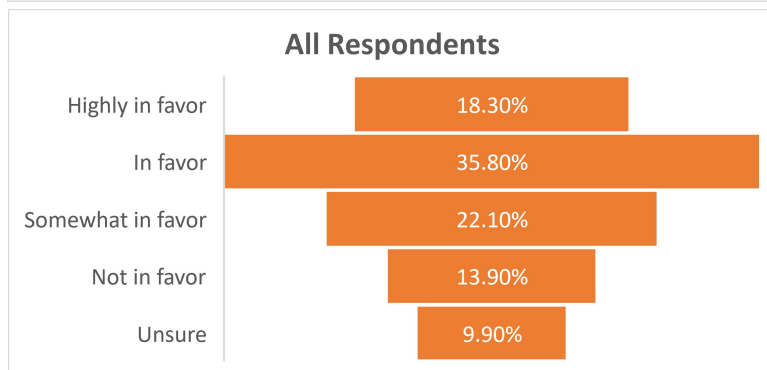
Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes



Parishioners of St. John Vianney



All Respondents



- **54%** of respondents “highly in favor” or “in favor” of a capital campaign
- **32%** of respondents “somewhat in favor” or “unsure”
- **14%** of respondents “not in favor”

More than 1,500 comments were received. All the comments were compiled and reviewed by members of the Vision Committee. The following general themes were identified and grouped as concerns and affirmations:

AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT FUTURE OPTIONS

- Merging makes sense.
- New location will allow for growth of parish and school.
- Need to be located where the people are now and will be in future.
- The new location is where young Catholics are moving.
- Have more resources, staff, and offerings.
- Strong support for a new Catholic school.
- St. John Vianney's buildings are in good condition.
- I have seen mergers to be successful for other parishes.
- Merger is the most practical and effective option for the future.
- Merger makes the most financial and mission sense for long term.
- Merger allows for a rebirth of both parishes.
- Merger is the best option for the future because of the fewer number of priests.
- There would be convenience to be on one site.

CONCERNS ABOUT FUTURE OPTIONS

- Expensive and too costly.
- Size will be too great, impersonal, lack intimacy.
- Bettendorf needs two churches.
- Need a church in the older part of Bettendorf.
- St. John Vianney church is too modern.
- Like our church the way it is.
- Churches should not move to follow where the money is.
- There are cultural differences between the two parishes.
- Concerns about future enrollment at Our Lady of Lourdes School
- Questions about investing in Catholic schools.
- Worried the voice of one parish or the other will dominate if the parishes merge.

Since Catholic Schools were mentioned many times, it is important to clarify not having a Catholic school to serve the Bettendorf community is not an option. There was a Diocesan wide study done around Catholic education in Scott County looking at all Catholic schools including Our Lady of Lourdes. After careful analysis, the conclusion was Our Lady of Lourdes School is a viable and a necessary option for Bettendorf Catholic elementary age students. The Bishop has agreed with this conclusion.

After looking at all the results of the surveys and listening sessions and reflecting on the 1,500 plus comments given, a vision for the Catholic Church in Bettendorf might be captured in this phrase:

“One in Christ and Together in Mission”.

With a vision like this leading our thinking, what is the potential and what are the possibilities? Initial proposals to answer this question have been formulated and are being discussed at the level of parish pastoral and finance councils, boards of education, and diocesan leadership in the months of December and January. Future communications will share the proposals so we all can consider how they could shape the Catholic church in the future.

Thank you everyone for your thoughtful and prayerful participation in the process. All your feedback is important to finding the right path forward.