



This document contains an analysis of the Southborough Catholic Parishes survey that was administered by the Boston College Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment from May to August 2008. A total of 364 families attending St. Anne and St. Matthew parishes in Southborough, MA submitted a survey. The format of the report is a brief summary of the results, followed by data tables and graphs. All data are grouped by the parish that respondents currently attend.

When interpreting the results, please keep in mind the following limitations:

- Survey respondents are a self-selected portion of the population of church-going Catholics in Southborough, although demographics of the respondents generally reflect the known demographics of the parish populations.
- The data are presented based on the parish that respondents reported attending. In a minority of cases, it appears that the respondents (due to inconsistencies in their open-ended responses) selected a parish other than the one which they referred to in their survey responses.

Summary of Results

- More than half of the survey respondents (57.4%) currently attend St. Matthew's church; 38.2% of respondents attend St. Anne's.
- Pastoral leadership is the most valued attribute at both St. Matthew (78%) and St. Anne (67.6%). Sense of community was also a top-three ranked value for both parishes.
- A higher proportion of St. Anne respondents (25.4%) attend Lord's Day worship only, than at St. Matthew (20.1%).
- Household sizes are smaller at St. Anne than at St. Matthew.
- A greater proportion of St. Matthew respondents (34.6%) reside outside of Southborough than do St. Anne respondents (19.9%).
- The categories of attributes that parishioners most want to preserve from their current parishes are: sense of community, "smallness" pastors/staff, liturgies, and programs.
- The most often cited advantages for a combined parish were: a sense of unity among Catholics in Southborough, expanded programs, improved facilities, and more efficiency in resource use. However, more than 10% of respondents noted that they were not in favor of the proposal and/or could see no benefits to the proposed merger.
- Many respondents expressed questions and concerns about the proposed merger.

Data Tables and Graphs

The data tables, graphs, and open-ended responses are listed by survey question.

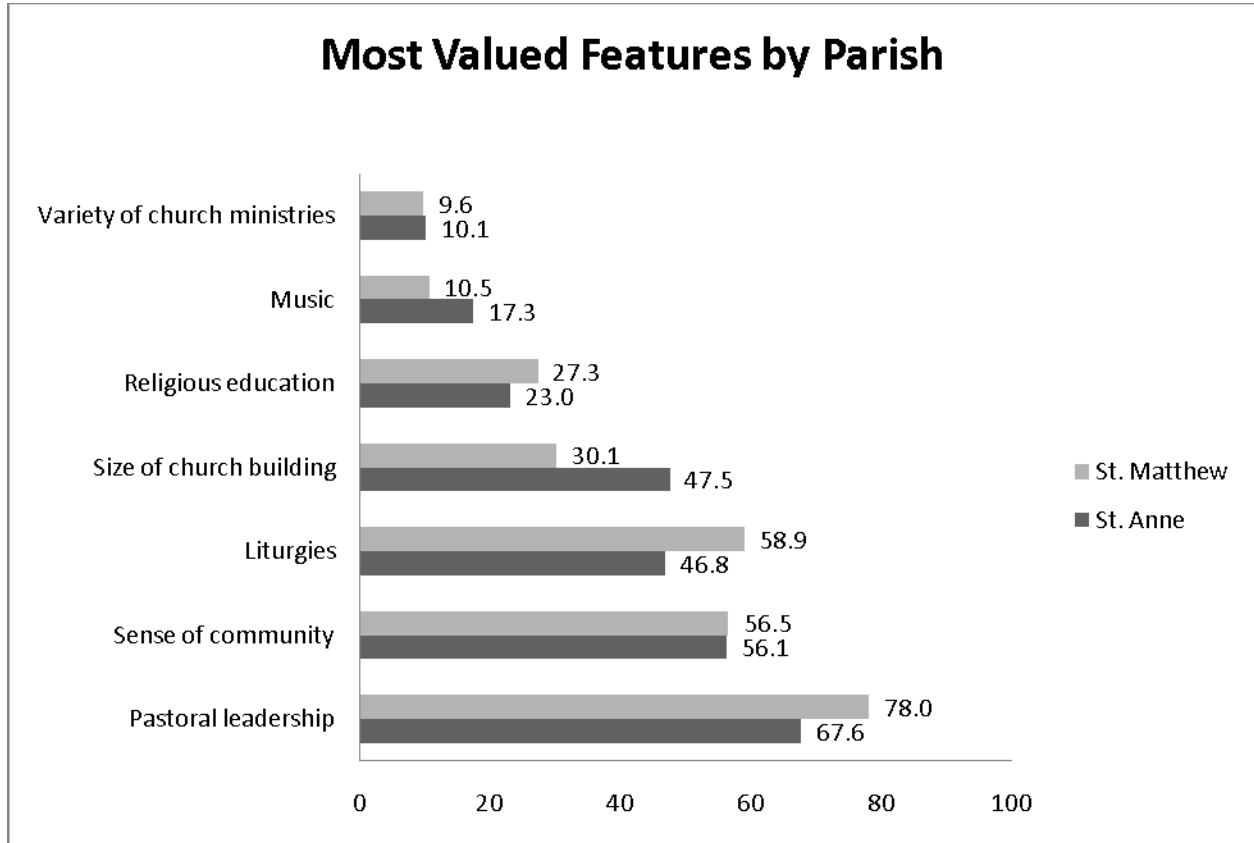
Question 1: At which parish do you currently worship?

	Number of Families	Percent of Survey Respondents
St. Anne	139	38.2
St. Matthew	209	57.4
I attend either church according to my schedule.	15	4.1
Did not respond	1	0.3
Total	364	100.0

Question 2: At which parish(es) are you registered?

	Number of Registered Families	Percent of Survey Respondents
Registered at St. Anne	148	40.7
Registered at St. Matthew	207	56.9
Registered at Neither	9	2.5
Not sure	2	0.5

Question 3: What do you most value about your current parish? Check no more than three.

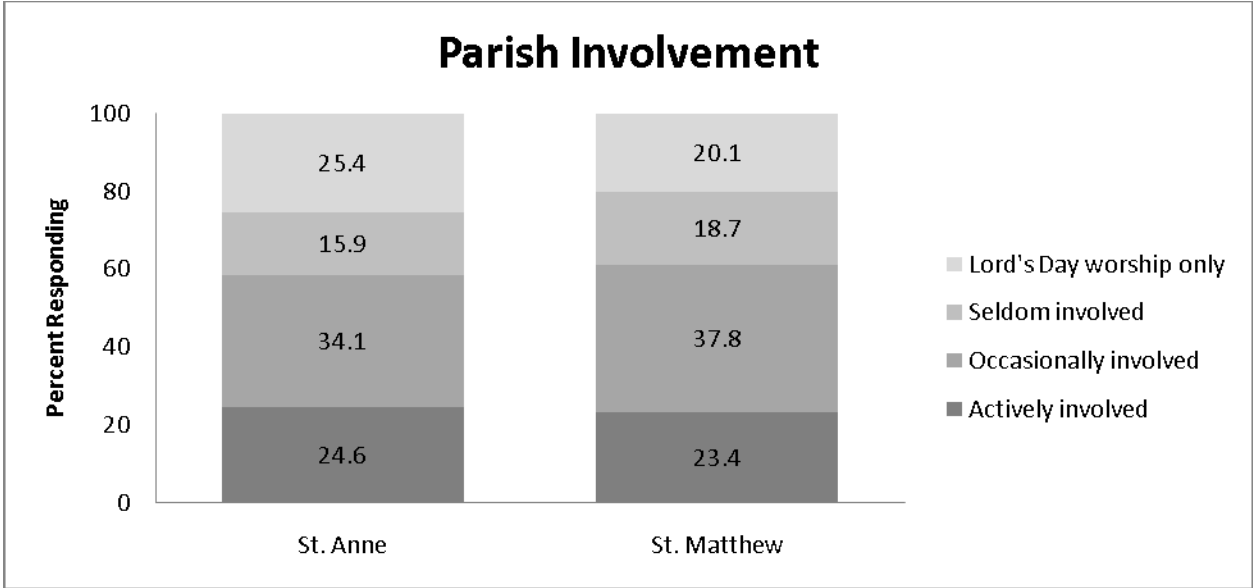


The most often selected attribute valued by parish families at both St. Anne and St. Matthew is pastoral leadership: 78% of St. Matthew respondents and 67.6% of St. Anne respondents selected the item.

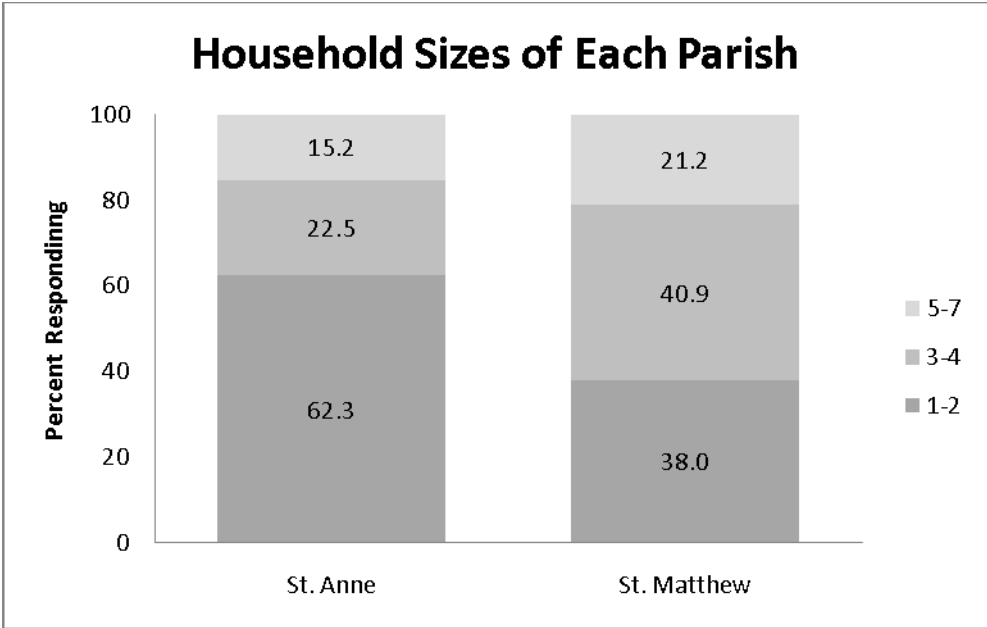
Forty-eight respondents listed other items that they most valued about the parish: 19 from St. Anne, 28 from St. Matthew, and 1 who attends either parish. The top two mentions by those attending St. Anne were *long relationship with the church* and the *location of the church*. Both were mentioned by six respondents. Other items mentioned by more than one participant were church appearance (three) and staff (two).

Of the 28 families responding from St. Matthew, 12 mentioned the pastor as a favorite attribute. Other items noted by more than one respondent were: location (four), homilies (three), and schedule (two).

Question 4: How would you describe your involvement in parish organizations, ministries, committees, and activities?



Question 7: How many people are in your household?



Question 8: Are you a resident of Southborough?

	St. Anne	St. Matthew
Reside in Southborough	80.1	65.4
Reside outside of Southborough	19.9	34.6

Question 8a: If you do not reside in Southborough, where do you reside?

A total of one quarter of respondents reside outside of Southborough. The following table shows the number of people residing outside of Southborough by parish¹. As noted in the table, Hopkinton and Ashland are the towns where the largest numbers of out-of-town parishioners reside.

	St. Anne	St. Matthew	Total
Ashland	1	18	19
Framingham	6	3	9
Grafton	0	1	1
Holliston	1	1	2
Hopkinton	2	29	31
Marlborough	7	6	13
Milford	0	4	4
Natick	0	1	1
Northborough	1	1	2

¹ Note that a few people who reside outside of the community did not list their place of residence.

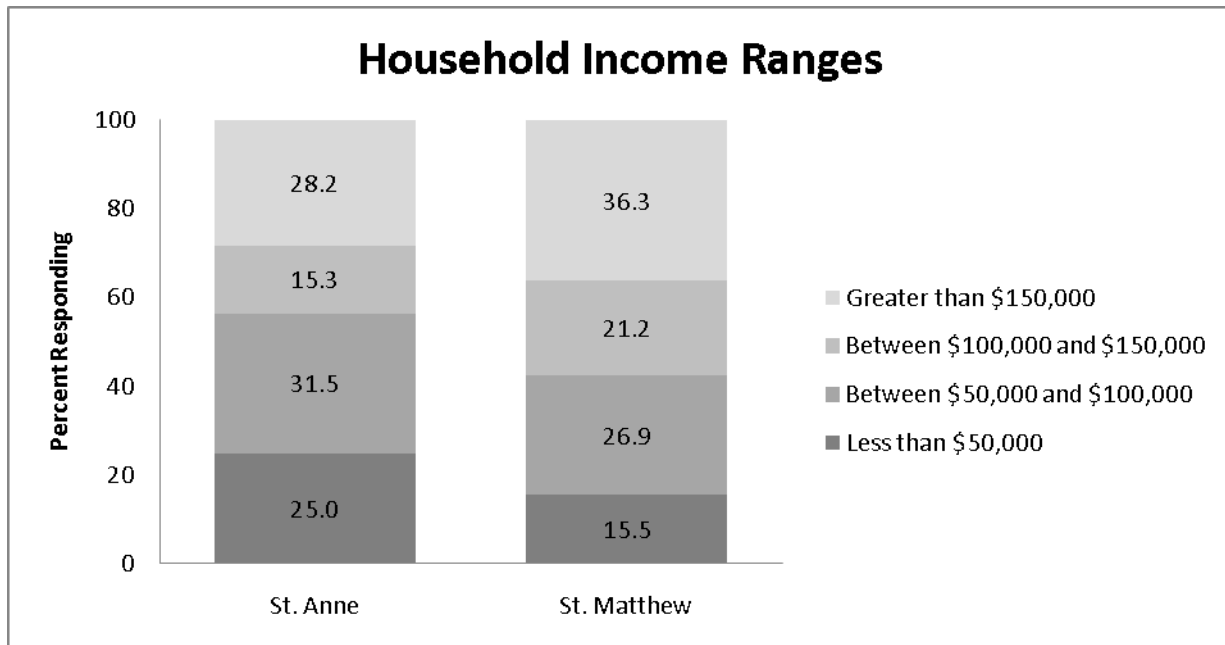
Shrewsbury	1	1	2
Westborough	4	1	5
Woodville	0	1	1
Total	23	67	90

Question 9: How many years have you lived there?

	St. Anne	St. Matthew
Less than one year	0.0	1.4
1 to 5 years	30.8	15.7
6 to 10 years	19.2	15.7
More than 10 years	50.0	67.1

The proportions in the table for question 9 include only parish families residing outside of Southborough. For example, 67.1% of St. Matthew parish families who do not live in Southborough have lived in their communities for more than 10 years.

Question 10: What is your estimated annual household income?



Question 11: What is your estimated annual contribution to your current parish?

	St. Anne	St. Matthew
Up to \$999	41.7	38.3
\$1000-2499	28.8	38.3
\$2500-4999	10.1	10.0
\$5000 and above	1.4	2.4
Did not provide an amount	18.0	11.0

Question 12: To build adequate parish facilities for a combined Church, approximately 6-10 acres of land and \$6-8 million would be necessary. St. Matthew and St. Anne have some foundational resources in land and savings. Nevertheless, substantial additional financial resources will be needed. If St. Matthew and St. Anne were to build a new parish, would you be willing to offer additional financial support to the new building?

	St. Anne	St. Matthew
Yes	45.1	30.9
Not sure	31.6	46.9
No	23.3	22.2

Question 13: We have been monitoring publicly-listed properties in Southborough over 10 acres but wish to know if you may be aware of any suitable properties?

A total of 11 respondents made recommendations regarding potential sites for a new parish church.

St. Anne

- Capasso Farm land
- MDC land-middle rd; Beal farm areas
- Present location
- The Flatly properties on Rt. 9
- You must pursue the land next to St. Anne's Church.

St. Matthew

- 26 Highland St. Southborough
- Adjacent to St. Anne's
- Dawco Farm; Deerfoot Rd; Next to St. Anne's
- I am a realtor in town and will keep a look out.
- Rt. 30/ Johnson Road
- South of Route 9 if possible

Open-Ended Responses

Question 5: What characteristics would you most wish to preserve from your current parish in planning a combined parish?

St. Anne - Sense of Community

- Sense of community (15) ²
- Sense of community that a small parish brings. (5)
- Sense of community and belonging (3)
- Feeling of closeness with other parishioners (2)
- Feeling comfortable with the community
- Just sense of community in the glory of God-pride in our Catholic roots and the encouragement from our Pastor and fellow parishioners to continue on our long journey to our life
- The church is a part of the community. Worshipping with neighbors.
- Attempts at sense of community (coffee hours, etc.)
- Community, friendliness
- Continued sense of community/welcoming
- It is nice to recognize the families attending each week.
- Family environment
- The closeness and caring of the priests and parishioners
- The feeling of attending a community church with fellow Southborough residents
- The feeling of belonging and friendliness
- The size of St. Anne parish has fostered community; we like knowing many of our fellow worshipers and the fact that the pastors, present and past, have personal knowledge of their flock.
- The small intimate feeling of "neighborhood community"
- The warmth of our Church. The feeling that we know the parishioners, they know us, and our Priest knows us, as well. It is the overall sense of community that is so important for us.
- To be able to have the feeling of belonging and the welcoming of each and every parishioner as family.
- To maintain the strong sense of community and the wonderful religious education programs.
- Warm relations between pastor and people and among each other
- Sense of community (some fear of loss if combined church is too large)

² Numbers in parentheses represent the number of respondents who listed that item.

St. Matthew - Sense of Community

- Sense of community (34)
- The small caring community (3)
- The family feeling I get from St. Matthews. (2)
- A casual feeling that everyone is an equal member
- A very close knit and involved parish. A parish that is an extension of family.
- At this time our parish is a small close community with great pastoral leadership! We should all enjoy our new center, etc. for a few years more; money [to build the facilities was] well spent.
- Closeness of parishioners
- Community, participation, knowing who we are to the priest
- Country atmosphere
- The feeling of belonging
- I have found St. Matthew Parish to be a very warm and personal Church, where all are welcome to worship. Secondly, the length of our Masses is just right.
- I also appreciate the intimacy of the church and the sense of community it lends to masses held there.
- I like the small parish relationships here at St. Matthews.
- Keeping St. Matthew's sense of family.
- Open, welcome feeling to all.
- Pastoral guidance/community spirit
- Pastoral leadership, sense of community, religious programs (CCD and adult programs that are offered)
- Preserving the close-knit feelings of a small parish.
- Recognizing familiar faces, simple and consistent message about being a good Catholic
- Sense of community. I believe this is possible now because of the size of the church. You tend to get lost in a bigger church. If necessary, [have] one priest but keep both churches open.
- Small community
- Small size and sense of community. It is a very warm parish.
- Strong sense of community. This is the first church I have attended where I don't feel like an anonymous stranger who attends weekly Mass
- The community of parishioners that give you the sense that you belong and that are always open to receiving new people and ideas.
- The intimacy of a smaller church...friendliness of community.
- The same sense of community I feel when I attend St. Matthew's.
- The sense of community in a small parish/church
- The small, intimate, community feel of the church
- To still have that close knit feeling about the church and the community.

- Community: St Matthews is made up of residents of Southborough, Ashland, Hopkinton and Westborough. As residents of Hopkinton, we enjoy a sense of community at St Matthews that extends beyond the limits of the towns.
- We feel like members of an extended family.
- We like the current structure of St Matthews and the open door policy to everyone.
- We would like to see the feeling of "community" continue if the parishes are combined.
- Welcoming, inclusive, active outreach

Either Parish - Sense of Community

- Familiar atmosphere--we know the priests and the priests know our family.
- Sense of community
- Sense of community among parishioners but would be thrilled to combine both parish communities
- Spiritual activities, community spirit

St. Anne - Church Staff and Pastoral Leadership

- Pastoral leadership (5)
- Father Thirb (2)
- Most important -- Father Thirb!
- The size of St. Anne parish has fostered community; we like knowing many of our fellow worshipers and the fact that the pastors, present and past, have personal knowledge of their flock.
- ...the pastoral leadership of Rev. Millott, always available and guiding us (me) spiritually. I love Sister Yvette's warmth, encouragement, availability and spiritual guidance.
- Warm relations between pastor and people and among each other
- Fr. Millott/leadership at St. Anne
- We have appreciated Fr. Millott's friendliness and welcoming manner.
- Father Flynn
- Fr. Millott's speaking with me nearly every Sunday at Mass. I have never had such a welcoming feeling at a church before.
- Friendliness and accessibility of the priests and staff.
The personal nature of the parish probably due in part to its smaller size.
- I love our pastor, Fr. Thirb Millott. He has a real connection with the parishioners.
- Of course I want Father Thirb to remain as our Pastor.
- Easy access to staff

- The church and staff
- The fact that the pastors know most of the parishioners by name.
- The personal touches expressed to all by the pastor. He knows and welcomes all by first name.

St. Matthew- Staff and Pastoral Leadership

- Father Flynn (14)
- Pastoral leadership (7)
- Priests (5)
- Fr Flynn as pastor (2)
- Fr. Flynn, Fr. Penna (3)
- At this time our parish is a small close community with great pastoral leadership!
- Knowing who we are to the priest
- Father Flynn is the main reason I attend mass at St. Matthew, [along with] the neighborhood feel. It is not one of those huge parishes where no one knows you. You feel like family here. The church is quaint, special. I'd hate to see it torn down for a monstrosity.
- Father Flynn's presence is a blessing! To me, the church isn't about the physical structure - it's the sense of community. Father Flynn's warmth, approachability, intelligence, good humor, etc. has influenced the loving spirit that breathes life into the church building.
- I most value Fr. Flynn's leadership of our parish and the collaborating priests who serve mass-their homilies are always outstanding. I also appreciate the intimacy of the church and the sense of community it lends to masses held there. It is also conveniently located (5 minutes from my house).
- Outstanding priests
- Pastoral guidance
- Retaining Fr. Flynn as long as he is able to serve as pastor.
- Pastoral Leadership, Appreciation of membership, Sense of loyalty to parishioners
- Pastoral support
- Father Flynn's great rapport with the parishioners, especially with the children. He's very open minded and willing to listen.
- Father Flynn, Ruth Flynn's openness and informed relationships with families
- A pastor like father Flynn. A visiting priest like Father Penna.
- The understanding of the pastor
- Vibrant leadership
- Pastoral leadership: Father Flynn is a terrific leader for this parish. He asks folks to get involved - and sometimes folks just need a personal invitation. So many folks volunteer in different capacities in the parish that there is more of a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Fr. Flynn does a wonderful job with the children and his homilies always mean something. We like the laid back atmosphere.

- Father Flynn is the best.
- Father Flynn is humble, caring.
- Fr. Flynn being the pastor. I especially love the influx of teenagers at Sunday evening 6pm mass and Fr. Flynn's calm demeanor accepting them whether they sit or stand. Whatever makes them continue to come celebrate Mass is very important. They feel welcome with Fr. Flynn at 6pm.
- We love Father Flynn, and Ruth Flynn's religious education program.
- An active priest who enjoys interacting with the parish.
- Can we preserve Fr. Flynn?? In all seriousness, St. Matthews is so wonderful because Fr. Flynn is so real and down to earth. Each week he leaves you with a few simple thoughts and something real to work on and take with you. Fr. Penna is wonderful too!
- Father Flynn and Father Penna are the principal reason we attend church. Our old parish did not have homilists of their ability, intellect or passion.
- Father Flynn and his select choice of priests who preside over the masses. Also Ruth Flynn does a wonderful job with religious education.
- Father Flynn must be the pastor.
- Father Flynn's approach-especially with children. My experience has been extremely family driven and positive.
- Feeling of integrity, pastoral leadership
- Fr. Flynn and his approach to the liturgy
- Fr. Flynn! His consistent message of love, selflessness and tolerance heals our parish. I also value the fact that he does not use our church as a vehicle for political statements. Also, Ruth Flynn and her highly organized and positive religious education program.
- Fr. Flynn's stewardship, Fr. Thirb's intent
- I like the priest at St. Matthews.
- I would most like to retain our current priests who are very accomplished in translating the Word of God to contemporary life. They make it "real" to all who enter St. Matthews which then trickles down to an excellent religious education program as well as other meaningful ministries within the parish.
- Inspiring priests / pastor, and a strong religious education program
- Keep someone like Fr. Flynn
- Leadership abilities of Father Flynn.
- Leadership I admire
- Leadership of priest and people
- Liberal minded priests (I don't mean politics),
- ... St. Matthews's atmosphere - Fr. Flynn and visitors (Penna, Kennelly) have practical real life sermons and are brief. They are not a team that preaches about irrelevant matters.
- Pastoral leadership/message: uplifting, positive message as to God's love/presence and our responsibility/commitment as Christians. Continued emphasis on religious education and youth ministries.
- Religious education - Ruth Flynn, and Father Flynn

- Open communication of pastoral staff
- Father Penna
- Staff
- Strong leadership
- The leadership of Fr. Flynn and his personal relationship with each of his parishioners
- The manner in which Father Flynn deals with the operation of the church and members of the parish, especially the youth.
- Fr Flynn and Penna are an integral part of our decision to attend mass and participate in St. Matt's.
- The pastor's close relationship with the people
- We think Father Flynn and Father Tony are great! Their homilies always leave us feeling spiritually inspired, and this is the main reason why we attend St. Matthew.

Either Parish - Staff and Pastoral Leadership

- Like to keep Fr. Flynn and Fr. Tony involved as long as possible

St. Anne - Liturgies

- Liturgies (5)
- Good, spiritual liturgies

St. Matthew - Liturgies

- Liturgies (8)
- The liturgies: We are blessed to have Fr. Flynn, and his able 'out of town' assistants. I often am struck by the message delivered by Father Flynn, or Father Tony Penna or Father Dan Kennelly.
- Length, content of mass. Sermons interesting and relevant
- Great Liturgies-Simple, Meaningful
- Fr. Flynn and his approach to the liturgy
- Like St. Matthews atmosphere - Fr. Flynn and visitors (Penna, Kennelly) have practical real life sermons and are brief. They are not a team that preaches about irrelevant matters.
- The more contemporary feel to the liturgies that we enjoy now, lead by someone who is clearly in tune with the church community and is realistic about current issues and challenges. (Again, this is what is truly special about St. Matthews today.)
- I would like to preserve the length and quality of the masses which includes Fr. Flynn and Fr. Penna celebrating the mass. (i.e. their sermons are fabulous!)
- Liturgies to the point
- Simple and consistent message about being a good catholic
- Short meaningful sermons.
- Liturgies that are meaningful.
- Fr. Flynn's liturgies
- The homilies given at St. Matthew's are always relatable to events that happen in our current lives and we appreciate that and would like to see those types of homilies continue.
- Meaningful message/sermon of the liturgy.
- Concise homily so you remember the take home message!!
- I find the homilies at St. Matthew's to be very meaningful. They are direct and to the point with a very timely, meaningful message
- Interesting homilies that pertain to our daily lives
- Keep the same tone of the sermons that are given at St. Matthew. They are very well thought out and intelligent.
- Short but meaningful sermons

- Small church feel and continued trend of shorter quality homilies that are straight to the point and applicable to today's life
- The mass, particularly the homilies are meaningful to both adults and kids, this is the reason we changed parishes and why we stay.
- The type of liturgies given by Fr. Flynn: strong and to the point.
- The variety of liturgical choices

Either Parish - Liturgies

- Great short sermons

St. Anne - Small Size

- Small size (5)
- 'Small' feel (2)
- The other important characteristic we would like to see preserved is the relative size of the parish.
- Friendliness and accessibility of the priests and staff. The personal nature of the parish probably due in part to its smaller size.
- Small feeling-easy access to staff-religious education program schedule
- Quaintness & size
- Intimacy of the smaller church building
- Small-sense of community, first communion and religious education not too big, and fits nicely in with church
- The 'small town' church feeling is special. The catholic mass itself is of course consistent regardless of what church you attend (homily aside).
- I would like to preserve the quaint atmosphere of the church, the "teachings" of the dogma and other aspects of the Catholic faith.
- A modest size church building.
- Keeping St. Anne's [small enough to maintain] the small town family church [atmosphere].
- Must have the feel of a small Church, but still be able to handle the entire community. Must be centrally located.
- Not grow mass sizes - too big is more impersonal.
- Small church community
- Small church with intimacy
- Small church, small church community...no change from what we have.
- Small warm welcoming feeling

St. Matthew - Small Size

- Small size (6)
- Small Community (3)
- A sense of smallness - perhaps not possible given the priest shortage.
- The intimacy of the worship space: No hiding at St Matthew's! It is a small and intimate space to hear and absorb the word of the Lord.
- Intimacy
- Localness, smallness
- Small church feel
- The church is quaint, special. I'd hate to see it torn down for a monstrosity.
- The intimacy of a smaller church
- We actually love the size of St. Matthew. We attend 7:30am mass and enjoy the people who fill the church. Our two year old knows that most Sundays we will see Fr. Tony and our church friends.
- The size of our parish community is very important to our family. A larger parish is not preferred.
- Keep it small and friendly
- Church size, which sounds impossible if the communities are combined.
- I actually like the small community feel and would be concerned if we build a big huge church, we would lose some of the closeness we now feel.
- I don't want to lose the small intimate feeling of my small parish.
- Size and openness of parish community
- Small town character of the parish.
- The atmosphere that accompanies a smaller parish
- The intimacy of the service

St. Anne - Programs

- Religious education program schedule
- First communion and religious education not too big, and fits nicely in with church
- Religious education
- Children's liturgy
- The CE program and children's mass
- Involvement in social issues; ecumenical activities
- Variety of church ministries, programs (3)
- The wonderful religious education programs

- CCD schedule (summer model)
- Variety of activities that reach across the broad spectrum of parish members (progressive dinners, pasta dinners at church hall, liturgies, children's liturgies)
- More community events (dinners, socials etc) and more religious educational and community service for all ages
- Music, Religious education
- The choir, music and especially the organist add so much for us.
- Music
- Musical variety

St. Matthew - Programs

- Music and varied programs for those who wish to participate.
- Religious programs (CCD and adult programs that are offered)
- The way religious education is run
- I would like no change. I love it the way it is at St. Matt's. But if it has to, the religious education is excellent and Father Flynn is the best.
- We love Father Flynn, and Ruth Flynn's religious education program. We also enjoy the coffee hours.
- Strong religious education program
- Continued emphasis on religious education and youth ministries.
- Religious education
- Religious education program approach, open communication of pastoral staff, youth ministry (combined a bit already)
- The priests and religious education program.
- The youth group activities, the music program
- Variety of Church ministries
- Strong teen program
- A church that would have good religious education
- Active children and teenager programs, community participation.
- Strong religious education program
- I appreciate the strong religious education programs and youth ministry programs too and... I enjoy the music.
- The religious education program is super.
- Welcoming, inclusive, active outreach
- Religious education is excellent
- Religious education, music-choir
- The excellent religious education for children

- The religious education - Ruth Flynn does an awesome job
- Music
- Music variety
- Music ministry

Either Parish - Programs

- Focus on religious education for children.
- Spiritual activities

St. Anne - Appearance

- 1. Small vs. large 2. Simple not flashy 3. styling for a small town
- The small feeling and beauty of the current building
- 1. Sense of community 2. History and beauty of the site
- The warmth of our Church. We love the quaint and simple architecture - it feels homey and inviting when you enter.
- I would like to see something from each parish (church windows etc) brought to new church so we feel a sense of belonging.
- Historic and traditional architecture and design.
- Stained glass windows, marble alters
- Windows and name of donor
- The charm and history in the design of the church.
- The church itself, it is beautiful!!

St. Matthew - Appearance

- The more traditional aspects of the surroundings within the church itself
- The beauty of the building
- Humble church setting
- Design a church and hall that fits into the character of the town of Southborough. It should make a statement that it is one of the important locations in our town.
- I love the building of Saint Matthew parish.
- Stained glass windows

Either Parish - Appearance

- I think the inside of the church building is so pretty. I love the feeling of it. I like the light colors with the whites.

St. Anne - Location

- Location (5)
- Must be centrally located.
- If possible I would love to see the church location remain at the St. Anne site.
- The property used as a church
- Strategic location

St. Matthew - Location

- I love the old building and would hate to lose it. It is also in walking distance from my house and is one of the reasons that we bought our house in the first place.
- Localness
- Proximity
- Location
- It is also conveniently located (5 minutes from my house)
- If it is to be so-closeness to current location of St. Matthew's parish.
- Location in Southville

St. Anne - Other Aspects

- Traditional mass
- I would like to preserve the quaint atmosphere of the church, the "teachings" of the dogma and other aspects of the Catholic faith.

- Convenience
- Having history
- Active member participation in transition and in building the new parish identity
- Both parishes free from debt
- Keep very "simple"
- Keeping it like it is
- Like it as it is but times and circumstances will make it necessary to combine parishes. Feel St. Anne's is more traditional and not "a hurry up and get out" kind of participation at Mass.
- Respect and caring
- Sunday 7:30am Mass
- We are flexible in terms of combining parishes.

St. Matthew - Other Aspects

- 8am week day and Saturday masses, 6pm Sunday mass
- Length and quality of service.
- To be frank, the other parish is perceived as exclusive and focused on social status. I need to have those characteristics that make St. Matt's special-small, diverse (in age), Fr. Flynn's liturgies, and sense of community in order to consider staying. And I don't see how those could be preserved in a combined parish.
- Length, content of mass. Comfortable environment to worship.
- Patience and teaching of children.
- We should all enjoy our new center, etc. for a few years more; money [to build the facilities was] well spent.
- Catholic identity
- Convenient mass schedule
- Keeping the mass times under 2hrs.
- I have found St. Matthew Parish to be a very warm and personal Church, where all are welcome to worship. Secondly, the length of our Masses is just right.
- Overcrowding is an issue. We like attending 9AM Mass.
- Keeping the buildings that we already have instead of- once again- begging for more money to build something that is not necessary.
- The choice in Mass times
- 2 churches- one priest, one rectory. Sell the other rectory.
- All of it, individual identities
- All of them
- Continue the 30 minute 7:30 mass

- Do not wish to have a combined parish
- History, memories, friends
- I see no need to combine.
- I would like to keep them separate.
- Keep it simple-nothing elaborate or special
- Larger church
- My wish is not to combine parishes.
- No combined parish
- No new parish
- Preserving the relaxed, casual atmosphere is very important, as is the flexibility afforded by the current variety of mass times.
- Short Mass
- Since I was a little girl I have prayed in St. Matthews looking up at the stained glass windows. I couldn't bear to lose that part of my life.
- Would prefer not to combine parishes, at least physically.
- Father Flynn's style, sense of humor, his devotion to the Youth Ministry program. The thoughtful, relevant homilies by Father Flynn and Father Penna. The characteristics we cherish are about people - not buildings.

Question 6: What new possibilities would you see for all of us in a combined Southborough parish?

St. Anne - Whole town/community in one parish

- A greater sense of community
- Sense of community, More of my kids friends
- A better sense of community. And more importantly the children will have more of an opportunity to form a community.
- A combined parish, incorporating the whole town, would lead to a cohesive Church community which would benefit all ages.
- A true sense of community - a variety of activities and committed volunteers
- A unity of Catholics in Southborough
- Both parishes have communities with so much to share with one another, I would hope for a greater sense of community if the parishes combined and enhanced programs.
- Building a unity within the town of Southborough and between the two parishes
- Combined as it was in the beginning, big mistake to separate.
- Community togetherness
- Community involvement
- Enhanced community-more people worshipping and working together sharing talents-enriching lives and activities
- Greater sense of community
- I believe we will all benefit by becoming one family that is no longer divided by real or imaginary boundaries.
- I think it would be beneficial for everyone in town to all go to one church. This could provide even a greater sense of community.
- I think that unity is an important factor in a town. Having moved from a town of 12,000 people, two Catholic Churches seemed to divide families - and especially teenagers
- Improved community
- It will benefit the children who see each other in school and now will be together at Church as well. Seeing and meeting other Catholics from across town - being more of a community. Being and doing church related activities together. A benefit for our Priests who work so hard to serve us all each week.
- Also it would be wonderful for the Catholic community of Southborough to work together as one parish.
- It would bring the entire town to unity.
- Larger community
- Larger community sense
- Larger community to know more people
- Less division.
- Meeting new people, greater sense of a Southborough Catholic community
- Meeting people in my community
- Sense of being part of an ACTIVE, growing, faith-based community.

- Southborough has made a solid commitment in its schools to have all kids from all sections of town together through each grade. We are one town when it comes to sports, girl and boy scouts, etc. The combining of the two parishes is a great opportunity to put an end to a division between the north Catholics and the south Catholics! If we are committed to being one town in everything but the way we worship, we have bigger problems than what we are addressing through this survey!
- Strength in numbers: stronger community
- Stronger identity of Catholicism within the community of Southborough-being able to have a stronger presence
- The combination could expand the sense of community while participation in the liturgies under a combined pastoral leadership could enhance our spiritual growth. I see this as a very positive opportunity but I'm aware that some parishioners on either side of Rt. 9 will not welcome this necessary action.
- There would be more of a larger Catholic community "togetherness" in the town by bringing both parishes together.
- More community feel since it will be one Southborough church-- more united feeling than we have now.
- Coming together would strengthen our faith -more hands, more faith, more blessings and joy!

St. Matthew - Whole town/community in one parish

- I see an opportunity for a unified sense of community and enhanced spirit of cooperation.
- The ability to meet more people in the town. A parish focused on the entire town not just the north side or the south side. A new beginning.
- A stronger Catholic community
- A united Catholic community in town
- A wider sense of community?
- An even greater sense of community -- no "rivalry" as Catholics in town
- Close knit Catholic community
- Enhancing our local sense of community
- Facilities that can better accommodate a large worshipping community and a greater sense of community/camaraderie across the members of the two parishes.
- Hopefully with a larger parish you would get the benefits of a bigger group. I think the pastor (our leader) would be the key in knitting the larger group.
- Hopefully, a friendly combined parish.
- I think a combined parish would provide us with mutual, shared goals--not the fracture due to the large number of non-community people who attend each parish.
- I think it would be fantastic - if we can keep a close knit community and involve the entire Catholic faith in the town at one church, I think it would be a plus for all of us.
- Increased community, larger gatherings, more participation

- New relationships
- Increased sense of community. Children will know more children and perhaps be more eager to participate in activities.
- It would promote unity in the community
- Larger community, parishioners,
- More people in one parish, less division in town
- Merging two churches could provide opportunity to create one, unified community of Southborough
- Potential to lessen the feeling (perceived or real) that there are two halves to the town.
- More members
- Sense of community
- Strength in numbers
- Stronger community involvement
- The continued effort for a strong sense of community with a variety of ministries that cater to ALL ages.
- The town has been and is split, this would be a healing for togetherness

Either Church - Whole town/community in one parish

- I like the idea of having one community. Not just one north of Route 9 and one south of it.
- I think it would be wonderful for the children, especially the teens, to have CE and sacrament preparation together. I think this would also bring those families together in another way. I think it's so nice to see familiar faces in church each week. I think it's important for teenagers to see their friends at mass and see that other families place importance on attending mass and practicing our faith. If our parishes unite, we'll all see more of each other at mass and other church events. It's a nice feeling!
- Meeting new Catholic people and making friendships
- Total community involvement-not one side or the other
- Union of the whole town at same masses
- Unity

St. Anne - Expanded Programs

- A variety of activities and committed volunteers
- Larger pool of people to fill ministries
- Continued open/honest leadership/communications; community involvement; more young children's programs
- Improved children's religious education, improved community, bigger teen population
- Variety of services, more space for holidays, etc..., more community feel since it will be one Southborough church-- more united feeling than we have now.
- With greater numbers we could do so much more to reach out and further parish ministries.
- Larger base will need more involvement from ministries
- More choices of mass times
- More frequent masses or at least the assurance of continued daily mass
- More mass options
- More masses on the schedule-Sunday evening for example!
- Pooling of resources, a greater variety of programs geared to faith formation, activities toward building community, would decrease the number of masses.
- Better Catholic education for the young
- Expanded programs for youth participation.
- Stronger youth involvement
- I would hope combining the parishes would help create more programs for children as well as adults.
- Do more things. More social service activities, more reaching out to the young and old and the disabled. More people could make a greater impact on both liturgies and activities.
- Maximizing the potential for dynamic parish ministries now divided.
- More active HS youth group
- More events and community involvement
- More ministry involved with community; more parish members doing things together socially, growth of Youth Ministry
- More participation of ministries, more participation of adoration.
- More variety of church ministries; More active participation in established ministries
- More volunteer opportunities for the whole family, First Eucharist "celebration" rather than the kids just attending Mass.
- Perhaps offering a wider range of programs or expanding on programs already available. For example, offering Bible Study groups, playgroups for moms with young children, coordinating retreats or group outings, expanded religious education for school age children, more adult education.
- Teen activities to enhance involvement

- To do more things as the population of the parish would be larger
- More active involvement of parishioners in parish activities.

St. Matthew - Expanded Programs

- Increased ministry
- More members--more variety--greater number of programs/interests and better ability to staff them.
- Variety of church ministries
- The continued effort for a strong sense of community with a variety of ministries that cater to ALL ages. Fr. Flynn's efforts to include adults in religious education/support via WINGS, his men's group and other groups over the years are very much appreciated. Our Father's Table is wonderful but I think more could be done in this area - community outreach is not just for youth.
- More choices for religious education for children, morning masses during summer on weekdays
- More masses, opportunities for children's programs
- Opportunities to get to know even more parishioners better; perhaps there would be more activities, both religious and social, with a larger parish. Perhaps the music program could be improved as well.
- A bigger children's music program
- A choir?? Maybe a sense of "rebirth" for the Catholic Women's Club.
- A younger feel to women's groups, re-enact the "cooty parties"
- Add Bible Study Groups/Adult Education/Book Groups - Purpose driven life, etc. Also maybe add more music that the children can relate to (There is a commercial that advertises music of praise - Awesome God, etc.). Also maybe adding or joining the singles group that a friend of mine goes to at St. Luke's.
- An active music program that would include various choirs
- Better music programs
- Chorus, more active youth ministry in community
- Improved adult programs.
- Mid week service for kids in grades 1-5 to feel more involved.
- More classes and support groups
- More family programs.
- More volunteers
- More opportunities for involvement; greater variety of activities; more modern configuration of building
- New ministries, new outreach opportunities
- Stability, more resources for charity work, youth ministry and religious education

Either Parish - Expanded Programs

- Additional ministries
- Improved ability to host successful parish events due to larger congregation.

St. Anne - Resources and Financial Interests

- Pooling of resources
- Less duplication of effort. Do more things.
- It would be beneficial for the parishes to combine their financial, social, educational, and spiritual resources.
- Greater financial efficiencies
- Combined increased revenue
- Greater financial strength, shared resources, larger attendance (which can be both positive and negative, i.e., losing the feeling of community and connectedness).
- Cost effective, as well as efficient utilization of human resources
- Efficiency of operations of all ministries and leadership and community resources
- Shared financial resources, lower overhead costs
- The combination will give better financial stability to the church and also not have the pastors overworked.

St. Matthew - Resources and Financial Interests

- Less overhead, more people in one parish
- More flexible and efficient use of people and funds.
- I see this as a financially based benefit. Consolidating resources will provide more opportunities to serve parishioners. However, the loss of a smaller community based worship may or may not offset this gain.
- By combining the parishes it would create a stronger parish both financially and spiritually.
- Greater financial resources
- Lower overhead
- Financial strength to add ministries in a variety of areas...
- Growth of resources
- Increased donations for St. Matthew's from St. Anne's members
- It's probably more efficient.
- More efficient use of limited resources

- Sharing costs and fewer priests
- Sharing of resources

St. Anne - Improved facilities

- More space for holidays, etc.
- If a new parish is built it should be air conditioned.
- Larger building

St. Matthew - Improved facilities

- Centrality, better parking
- A separate room for teens to call their own.
- More modern configuration of building
- Facilities that can better accommodate a large worshipping community
- A building in which our entire parish could worship together comfortably.
- A crying room and families use it!!!
- Better parking
- Building a new church would be a fantastic opportunity to design a new church using the guidelines of "Built of Living Stones" that could better serve the new community and its needs.
- Hopefully space problems would be solved - church is tight and parking is tight at St. Matthews.
- Larger church
- Larger church building
- More seating so that everyone can be together in the church.
- More size and good parking
- More space
- More space for parish functions.
- New building serving back churches
- Plenty of seats

Either Parish - Improved facilities

- Greater resources and improved facilities (adequate space, etc.).

St. Anne - Not in Favor

- None (3)
- Everything about St. Matthew Parish is perfect - - I'm not sure that a combined parish will be able to do as well.
- I don't know of any. I think the most important thing is to keep in touch with the Lord regardless of what is done
- I see no possibilities of a combined parish.
- I'd be sad to "lose" St. Anne's since I commute there from Holliston (and Framingham before moving) because it is so special.
- It will change what many of us have come to appreciate and enjoy-leave the success of this community alone-it is not broken! Take your money and do more of God's work-not build new churches.

St. Matthew - Not in Favor

- None (10)
- A loss of identity; a loss of the spirit of belonging to the parish family. In a large parish one is only a number and does not know the others in the parish.
- Don't know, prefer smaller parishes
- Don't see any- parish would be too large and the feeling of unity would be diminished.
- Don't see any, except to save the diocese money!
- For me, and my family,... nothing
- Have not warmed up to the idea
- High debts
- Honestly I like it as it is. If that is possible.
- I am afraid we would lose so much with the change
- I am not sure I see the value of combining the parishes. I think building a new church now with the economy isn't the best idea.
- I must say, a combined parish, resulting in bigger facilities (church and parish center) would diminish the feeling of community for us.
- I really love the ways things are.
- I see no need to combine.
- I see nothing that would be to our advantage. No new possibilities
- I see very few possibilities other than those that are already in place (combination of youth ministry and other limited ministries).
- I would think there would be a loss in community.
- If the parish were combined it would feel too big like that of a much larger town.
- Not much-I love St. Matthews

- Some money savings through combined things like religious education and administration but not enough to make enough for what it will cost to build.
- The positives all accrue to the Catholic Church, not the parishioners.
- Too big
- We have moved from Southborough but continue to go to St. Matthew because of our previous affiliation. If the parishes merge, we will find another church closer to home.
- With a larger parish community, I think that it will be difficult/impossible for the pastor to have personal knowledge of the parishioners!

Either Parish - Not in Favor

- Not sure we need a new church since we might not have a priest in ten years

St. Anne - Other

- Would decrease the number of masses. With openness and good will creative ideas would surface as we move ahead.
- Decreased sense of competitiveness
- Larger attendance (which can be both positive and negative, i.e., losing the feeling of community and connectedness).
- Greater certainty that priests will be available to offer the same level of liturgy that we have now
- More meaningful liturgies
- Experience with another priest who I hear wonderful things about...
- Don't know
- Input from more people
- Keeping the best of both churches.
- More pastoral leadership
- N/A
- Not sure
- Preserving the best programs from both parishes
- Shared growth in the Church; more people attending=greater spirituality
- Since there are no options, we better pray to God, live the commandments, and make the best of it. We would be lucky to have a new church and a priest when so many other parishes will not have a priest. Enjoy and live our lives.
- St. Anne's could attract more out of town worshippers.
- Tapestry of ideas
- The best of both parishes--St. Matthew's offers some programs that St. Anne's doesn't and vice versa.

- The infusion of the group of adults who are between the ages of 35 and 50-ish. Their ideas, their points of view, etc. would be beneficial for all of us. At the moment, it just seems like it's either the pretty young or the "more mature."
- Unsure
- Vibrant liturgies with more music. I would miss the warmth and size of St. Anne's.
- We pray the larger community will be strong and flourish even more than ever.
- Would like to see the Catholic religion become more up to date: women should be able to make their own decisions about their bodies

St. Matthew - Other

- Large church services, especially for religious holidays and more fresh ideas from the parishioners at St. Anne's. By combining the parishes it would create a stronger parish both financially and spiritually.
- More/diverse views & ideas
- Morning masses during summer on weekdays
- More masses, parking
- Opportunities to get to know even more parishioners better
- I see an opportunity for a unified sense of community and enhanced spirit of cooperation. However, a single combined parish would be significantly larger and would inevitably involve new challenges of dealing with larger numbers -- including traffic, parking, seating, mass scheduling, etc.
- The ability to meet more people in the town.
- ?
- Ability to maintain a quality parish with great priests.
- As a resident of Hopkinton, I would hope that a new combined parish would continue to be one that is inclusive of parishioners from other towns. St Matthew's has always done a great job of that.
- As hard as it is to imagine a new parish, perhaps we get more of the great people like those that help run St. Matthew's
- Better chance of keeping at least one church in Southborough as opposed to the diocese closing them both down and making us drive to Framingham or somewhere else.
- Central location (if at all possible)
- Combined efforts
- Community/town leadership in community service (such as Pilgrim church has)
- Do not know
- I am still new to the Parish, and cannot really make a judgment.
- I believe we would have to create a new church with a new name for equal footing
- I'm not sure.
- Meeting new people.

- New relationships or possibly seeing old friends that I didn't know were still in town.
- No difference for me
- Not really sure. We live in Hopkinton, so don't always know all the Southborough parishioners and would likely know less with a combined church.
- Possible conflicts
- To meet other families in town
- Unsure
- What does it really mean to be a Catholic
- Women as Priests. The need for a much bigger building. Greater budget and professional staffing requirements.
- That the tasks of running a church may be spread out to more individuals who may not have thought of volunteering before this. With a "fresh start" of a new community, you may find people eager to help out that may have somehow felt excluded in the past.

Either Parish - Other

- Always having a daily mass when scheduled
- Love, harmony, peace, respect for one another as Jesus wants us to be-faith
- Stronger commitment to the parish by both adults and youth; greater participation in parish ministries and events

Question 14: Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about the merger of the two parishes?

St. Anne - General Support

- It has to happen. In which part of the town...will be determined by what space becomes available.
- Since a merger will be a new situation, a new name or a combined name should be used.
- Please tread softly but this must happen even though some beautiful buildings and sacraments will have to be sacrificed. This merger has wonderful potential.
- A great idea. Though you must work on increasing Catholicism in general. We are weak on attending weekly mass. There is nothing there to make it inviting to children to want to attend. It has to offer religion and also make it part of the community and everyday life. (Like Orthodox churches or like Italian churches in the 70's). It has to be a community.
- Because of the shortage of priests we would be so grateful that our parish chose a merger rather than the option to close both.
- Both parishes are vibrant, healthy parishes. A merger of the two parishes would perhaps continue this same way. Reluctantly we would make such a change but change is necessary for our Catholic heritage to stay healthy.
- Good idea
- I feel the merger will go smoothly with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- I really think that the merging makes a lot of sense. Hope that the planning will be done thoroughly.
- I support a merger because right now the catholic community is very segregated between the two existing parishes. I would like to see more input from parish members on the way the church is run, music style, etc...
- I think it could be a great thing if the planning is done well.
- I think it is a very good idea in light of the shortage of priests. Let's also encourage the bishops to ordain women and support married clergy.
- I think it would be good.
- It seems inevitable.
- I hope and pray that both communities will be open to this.
- Keep up the great work!

St. Matthew - General Support

- A great idea
- It is the future of the church in Southborough.
- It's a reality-planning is necessary

- It's sad that this has to happen, but maybe in a good way we will become one instead of two. With two parishes combined into one - more volunteers
- Just remind St. Anne's and St Matthew's are all part of the same town. Come together as one - not a division in the town as there was years ago with the high school controversy. Best of luck!
- My wife and I grew our family up in Southborough and St. Matt's. It's been an important part of our life. We hate to see it go, but understand the realities of the situation.
- One thing we might lose as part of the merger is the Mass schedule flexibility we now have. Because of the staggered Mass schedule there is a built-in convenience that we likely won't have with the combined parish. A central location would be nice to have but isn't critical and is of course dependent on land availability. I think the disadvantages or shortcomings of combining the two parishes can be overcome and I don't think we should be deterred.
- Somewhat worried that the size will make us lose some of the closeness we now feel, but understand that with a shortage of priests this issue must be addressed.
- The parishes will have to merge at some point. I think the survey process is a good start.
- This is inevitable, and should be embraced (not resisted) by the two parish communities. I hope that that message can be cultivated.
- When a merger was proposed a while ago, I was hesitant. After attending mass at a large parish in another state during the winter months, I endorse the merger because the large community I experienced was wonderful.

Either Parish - General Support

- I like the two small buildings, but St Matt's is obsolete based on its numbers. St. Anne's is not far behind. It is time to go forward.
- We understand the reasons behind this decision and support this strategy. Optimistic that an even greater parish might be born from the combined strengths of St. Anne's and St. Matthew's parishes.

St. Anne - Program Suggestions

- Expand current facilities at St. Anne's. We would support.
- Hopefully on Holy Days masses could be the evening before too.
- I believe St. Anne's is more centrally located and has the best potential for expansion.
- Name? St. Anne-Matthew's
- Parish=community. Worshipping community is priority over building.
Much more needs to be done to form a single community before a single place of worship is planned. A parish with single pastor and staff with services in the two existing facilities needs to be worked at first.
- We can merge the two but keep the two buildings.

St. Matthew - Program Suggestions

- Although it seems inevitable, I will miss the beautiful historic Church we call home. I hope that if we build a new Church it will not be a modern-themed structure. I am 51 years old, and have been a member of several parishes over the years as we've moved around a bit, and this is just my personal preference.
- Having been a parishioner in both parishes (St. Anne - 30yrs., St. Matthew 33 yrs.) I deeply regret the closing of either, or both, of these churches, both of which hold some very special memories for my family and me. However, being a realist, I know the circumstances and that the situation is inevitable. In order to maintain something of the past, I am sure consideration has been given to retaining the existing St. Anne church building and rectory, adding on to the church building in the existing parking lot, razing the existing parish hall, and acquiring property and constructing a new parish center and parking on property to the rear of the existing hall.
- I have truly loved being a longtime member of St. Matthew's. I love the spirit of tolerance, acceptance of parishioners' differences, the excellent sermons, the understanding of the realities of daily life and the fabulous sense of humor - all of which is exemplified by Fr. Flynn's pastoral ministry. I hope we can replicate that!!
- I hope for a more welcoming approach. Maybe establish a welcoming committee
- I personally like the location of St. Matthews, everything in Southborough is on the St. Anne's side of town.
- I think you should tread lightly when it comes to parishioners' attachments to the actual buildings and sacramental objects in the buildings themselves. Perhaps something like the crucifix above the altar should be new to begin a new combined community, but certain items from each church should be brought forth to the new one and special care taken with items that won't be used so as to not offend any parishioners from either parish. I think parishioners will want assurance that what they worked so hard over the years to help maintain in their own respective parish church will not be cast aside lightly. There will be a lot of emotions in letting go of a place where people have seen their children baptized, confirmed, married, and, sadly, funerals of loved ones take place. Over the years of watching the Boston Diocese close parishes and seeing the anguish of the parishioners that appear on the news when this happens should be a lesson that we need to embrace the emotions of the parishioners when it comes time to close the doors of these two buildings and make sure they see it as a joyful new beginning, and not feel that they have lost their parish and their memories of it.
- If we must go to one parish, what about a new larger St. Anne Church on the current property. This would be the main church for all weekend masses. This would mean demolishing everything that is there now, including the church hall and rectory. Then rebuilding only the church on that site, but still using the rectory and other facilities at St. Matthew. The new St. Anne Church would have a larger upper church with similar space downstairs for large functions and the rest of the property parking. The priest could live at St. Matthew rectory and use the current St. Matthew church for daily mass and small liturgical functions and use the current parish center for some CCD. The St. Anne property is already available at no cost, is much larger than St. Matthew and located in the center of town. You may even have abutters who would like to sell to expand. This allows for a merger that uses both properties.
- It would be a shame to waste the recent upgrade to the basement of St Matt's and the addition of the parish center 9 years ago. I think we should try to keep both churches and cut to one priest, and split the Mass schedule between the two sites. We would have to be creative to solve the overcrowding problem at Masses.

- Keep people like Jim Flynn involved.
- Make it large enough and/or offer enough Masses to fit parishioners
- Must be centrally located.
- Retain crucifix on St. Matthew's alter and the stained glass windows
- Since the community center at St. Matt's is so new, I think it would still be in the best interest of both parishes to still use it after merger. Also with a new parish, what will be the name, St Anne's or St. Matthew's?
- The youth group is important and the small sense of community is important to keep with whatever we have to do.
- We hope Fr. Flynn remains active. He is one of the main reasons young families are attracted to and remain with St Matthews.

Either - Program Suggestions

- Daytime Bible study classes and parish retreats

St. Anne - General Opposition

- Am wondering if the merger is definite or possible. This may affect our final decision to register or not. We have been attending to get away from the "too-big" parishes in our own town. Afraid this might happen in your merger. The churches in Southborough are so quaint; something some of us search for. The huge mega-churches are too impersonal.
- Don't like the idea at all. I think the importance of the parish is the people who make it happen. Diluting the parish by making it bigger can only reduce the individual involvement.
- Hope it can be delayed as long as possible.
- I grew up in Southborough. If the parishes are combined into a new building, I'd probably start going to St. Luke's in Westborough because that "heritage" would be gone.
- I love attending St. Matthew Church. I'm not sure if I will be willing to commute to a new church if it is located further away in Southborough from Hopkinton.
- I must say, I am not interested in one large Church. I would like to see it continue as is. I would be willing to financially support bringing in additional priests to help the present small staff and help Father Thirb. Interested in additional ministries that would help the parishes integrate and see the benefits of the other. Thank you for asking our opinion.
- I used to attend St. Anne's with my young daughter when I lived in Southborough ten years ago. I purposely returned because I love the beautiful, small church, the strong sense of community, the wonderful religious education and outreach, the informality, and the availability and spiritual guidance of Rev. Millott and Sister Yvette. I feel connected to God, the parish and the pastoral leaders. I fear being swallowed up into a large group where we might lose feelings of community and connectedness.

- I wish it wasn't necessary. I love St. Anne's. The building is beautiful and it's so nice that it's small. It has a comforting feeling. I always imagined my daughter getting married there. What if you combine the parishes and then enrollment increases and a combined church can't accommodate? Will we lose that small welcoming feeling if we combine?
- It really doesn't seem to be broken- so don't try to fix it.
- It would be a pity.
- St. Anne is a beautiful church with much history, as is St. Matthew. I believe the parishioners of each parish would not want to see their church become inactive.
- These are horrible economic times to be asking for money for a capital campaign. My mother has a very large church but its community is not as close. In hard times, small may be more comforting.
- We are happy with our present set-up.
- We love the "homey" feeling of St. Anne's- its traditionalist feeling.
- We think it is silly and wasteful to spend money to build a new church when there are two perfectly fine ones already. It is only wise if it does not cost the people or the diocese any money.
- What has attracted me to St. Anne's is its small size which lends to a more personal experience. Fr. Millott actually visited me as a new parishioner and knows my name -neither had happened before in any parish I have ever joined. I feel at home there and not just an anonymous person. To lose that would be incredibly unfortunate.
- Why is it necessary to build a new church? It is so much money! Our family enjoys the small community in which to worship.
- You now have problems getting money participation from parishioners, what will it be like when you require more funding? You may think that the parish will sustain, but young people do not attend mass nor participate in financial up keep-this is your future. In case you haven't noticed, it is getting very expensive to live. How will this affect the new community? Everybody loves the intimacy of St. Anne's. Even if you can accomplish all of this with little or no money, you are challenging a community that enjoys St. Anne's for what it is- you will promote apathy!

St. Matthew - General Opposition

- A sad day....St Matthew's is such a great experience. I am not sure it could be duplicated elsewhere.
- After having been in the parish for over 30 years and contributing to the building of the parish hall, I don't feel comfortable with turning the church and hall over to another religious group.
- As mentioned before, if the parishes merge, we will find a parish closer to our home. Father Flynn and Father Penna keep us coming back!
- Can't see the benefit. Fr. Flynn and Ruth Flynn run an excellent church.
- Despite many similarities I feel the two parishes have a different feel. Currently, I believe people have chosen the parish that best suits them. It would be difficult to keep that diversity in a merged community.

- Do not like the idea of a merger. The fault lies with the Catholic Church for the shortage of priests. There are options but the church is too set with old rules which are 1,000 years old. The first 1000 the priests were married. Married ministers who convert are allowed, why not everyone?
- Don't do it!!!!
- Don't do it.
- I am not in favor of it.
- I am not in favor of the merge. When I moved to town 10 years ago I started at St. Matthews and never left. It is packed every weekend. Father Flynn's down to earth approach and his ability to speak respectfully to all as well as the neighborhood feel of this church is what has kept me attending throughout all the stir with the sex scandal. I attend faithfully on weekends, holy days and extra during lent.
- I am not sure I would attend the new church. I come to Southborough to St. Matt's because of Fr. Flynn and all the wonderful things he does. I like the way he allows the parish to be actively involved. I like the "down-to-earth" manner of the church. I love the church building and its proximity to Hopkinton! If any of these qualities change, I am not sure if I would travel to Southborough for mass.
- I believe Father Flynn holds this parish together. I wouldn't want that to change.
- I can't believe they would even consider closing our beautiful church, with all the money we donated to fix the building up like air conditioning and new halls, etc.
- I do not want to see a merged parish. Each parish is healthy with active participation. We are forced to merge because of a priest shortage, but I think there are alternatives to solving that without having to shut down two healthy and vibrant parishes.
- I don't like the idea. I am happy with St. Matthew's. Building a new church is about 50 years down the road. We have a new parish center, and the church is in good condition.
- I don't see the need to merge. I feel those who decided to seek out St. Matt's have. I would like to see surrounding parishes in Westborough and Ashland reach out to their folks and draw them back to their home towns rather than overcrowd St. Matt's.
- I don't understand why you need to dissolve two perfectly good churches and rectories. Why couldn't both be preserved by the help of outside priests and one pastor go between both places? I don't think 6 to 8 million would build another church and parish hall and a rectory-far more would be needed to accomplish such a big project and giving such a small amount as a target amount is misleading in my opinion. A more creative way of utilizing outside priests would also give the congregation the opportunity to receive a variety of homilies both weekdays and weekends and other priests to seek advice and help from if a specific priest truly appealed to them. If you did build another church that would mean selling our churches and that I think is very sad and upsetting idea for most parishioners- and not really necessary. Our churches are so small in comparison with most churches. If you alienate people by closing their church do you realize most of them will be angry enough to go elsewhere in spite of distance and the new church would not have a big financial base on which to count for ongoing expenses!!! I can easily see that happening particularly if the Pastor they like and want is lost to them. I would like a written statement from each Pastor as to their thoughts on this topic and the bishops so we have an idea who is pushing for this to happen.
- I hope it doesn't have to happen. I love the two churches just as they are-both are beautiful! This happened at my vacation parish in Meridith + Center Harbor and caused a huge deficit.
- I like having the two parishes-not in favor of combining. One priest for two parishes is needed.
- I prefer a smaller more intimate parish. That is why I left St. John's in Hopkinton to join St. Matthews

- I think if St Matthew's is combined with St. Anne's much of the closeness associated with St. Matt's will be lost. I think you will also lose some parishioners; especially if the distance to church is farther to travel.
- I think that we just spent a lot of money to build a beautiful parish center at St. Matthews. I understand there is a shortage of priests, but it seems a shame to have to combine the parishes.
- I think that this merger would be better received if the two churches were to be kept running and one priest would share visits/mass between the two. Some ministries could be combined. My family would likely leave the parish if it were to be fully combined and Fr. Flynn were to leave. I could not support a "beautiful" new structure. Why change something that isn't broken?
- If the merger does happen we may just begin to attend our church in Ashland, St. Cecilia's.
- I'm not in favor of it. St. Matthews is the best parish community that we have been a part of and I would be sorry to see it eliminated!
- It is so sad! I may look around for another church. I love St. Matthew's the way it is. The masses are always packed; it's a beautiful church, with a great priest...
- It sounds like an expensive solution to save a priest. The Catholic Church should look within itself and evolve so as to be in a better position to attract new priests. I should not have to pay extra for their pigheadedness. If the parish communities join to form one big church and membership, it will become a colder environment that I will be less likely to take part in, both in person as well as financially. I am in favor of the combined efforts for fundraising and youth ministry events - in fact I think that works quite well.
- Not a very good financial move at this time.
- Not liking the cost/benefit ratio, personally.
- Since we live in Hopkinton, I don't know if we would attend a merged church - we might feel like outsiders.
- St. Matt's just spent a lot of money building a new parish center-which many donated to. What will become of it? If St. Matt's and Anne's combine and build a new facility-you can be sure that we'll find ourselves another parish. I would not even think of donating anything to build a new church-what a waste of money. St. Matt's screwed up when they decided to not buy the Hubley land-that would have given us enough land to add and accommodate our growing needs. St. Matt's is an important piece of history in our town. Why would one even think of giving it up?
- The burden of the expense would be passed on to the parishioners and seniors living on very low incomes. They can't take on this burden.
- Traveling to Southborough for church is an effort we are GLAD to make, because of Father Flynn. No Father Flynn, no more traveling: there are 12 other churches within 6 miles of our home
- We are not in favor of this consolidation.
- We enjoy St. Matthew's parish and its affiliation with St. Anne's. We are strongly against combining the parishes. Our parish has existed for over 100 years and we would like to see it continue. The time and effort it would take to combine parishes should be applied to other worthy causes.
- We have been to parishes in New Hampshire and Maine where one priest runs two parishes (the sizes of the Southborough parishes) with the help of lay involvement. The smallness of the parish builds the Christianity of the community under the leadership of a caring leader who leads by good example. In these economic times, also, we cannot consider the outlay of millions of dollars for a large new facility. People are having trouble making ends meet and cannot take on an additional financial burden.

- We joined St. Matthew's because we were unhappy with another church and its priest and services. I would be unhappy to see St. Matthew's go. It is a very warm and welcoming parish and I think that is because of Fr. Flynn and the small size.
- We just helped to build the Community Center, now this? I do love my parish, and I have attended there all my life. That is why my family now travels out of town to attend it. If a new church were built, we would most likely leave and go to the church down the street from our house.
- We regret to hear that St. Matthew's will close. We have only been members for a few months.
- Would strongly urge St. Matthew and St. Anne remain separate parishes and continue to draw closer together building a spirit of community. See no sense in building a third church when we have two beautiful houses of worship bearing a strong and long history.
- You've never asked the biggest question: Do you want St. Matthew's to merge with another parish? It's the elephant in the room that no one wishes to acknowledge. We've visited many churches in Grafton, Hopkinton and Ashland and none compare to St. Matthew's. It's the quaintness that is attractive and our ministers are superb. If we merge and create a big building for the church we may need to find somewhere else to worship.

Either parish - general opposition

- Person is not in favor of proposal

St. Anne - Questions, Comments and Concerns

- Big Ideas! Parish weekly collections don't even pay for present overhead! St. Anne's site with our purchase and additional purchases should be adequate! Could either add or start over on site!
- Conduct focus groups by a third party lending privacy to find out the true feelings of the people. Until you do that, you won't receive true feelings. There are many frustrations in play that don't service in these types of surveys. Please remember that the definition of frustration is one's expectations not being met. The identification of these frustrations and their subsequent removal will increase attendance.
- Flexibility from both parishes will be key.
- For over 10 years the combination of parishes has been considered. It would have been better for the Southborough Catholic community to have proceeded earlier on our own terms. There was more land available in central locations that would have been financially more attractive.
- Geographics- St. Luke's (Southeast) and St. Anne's (Northeast)
- Good Luck! I have been disappointed in the lack of participation in the Sunday Masses and am not sure if there is going to be a continual decline in the parish. Would it make sense to close St. Matt's first and combine parishes by adding additional Masses.
- I think it could work on St. Anne property by tearing down all existing buildings then starting from scratch.
- It is most likely the final result but introducing change will be difficult
- Logically and financially it seems the merge would suit the diocese. Personally, many parishioners would lose the sense of family in the parish.
- Of course we will have to unite as one parish and go along with this. But the priests are quick to jump into a third church and shutting the other two.
- Our concern for merging is unimportant, we are too into our earthy possessions-those who survive the merger will be stronger for it-the Catholic Church in Southborough will always survive, it is up to us to make it flourish.
- So many churches are closed now, what will we gain?
- The two parishes are very historic and well attended. I would hate to see either of them closed; however, it now appears inevitable. This is a sad commentary on the state of the Catholic Church.
- We checked "not sure" under question 12 (financial support) solely due to the question of whether the church we commit resources to build will be staffed over the life of the building. We need to have a strategy in place to overcome this obstacle, which I think will be the most difficult one we face.

- We have lived in Southborough for about nine years and have just joined St. Anne's last September. We were parishioners at St. Jeremiah in Framingham for the 47 years of its life. In Feb. 2005, our pastor, Fr. Ron Calhoun moved the 9:00 Daily Mass Group to St. George church, our receiving parish, three months before the May closing of St. Jeremiah to facilitate our acceptance of our new parish. This helped us in the transition even though it added to our daily ride to church. After 2.5 years the transition had been completed for us for the daily mass group and many others and it was time for us to join our local parish, St. Anne's and we are very happy that we did this.
- Would the committee be able to provide the two parish communities with a transition plan? How would services and sacraments be administered during the building phase? Has the bishop given a timetable?
- Wouldn't 4-5 acres be more than adequate?

St. Matthew - Questions, Comments, and Concerns

- Any discussion on keeping one church that currently exists. Why build new?
- Certainly of concern is the size of the church. One drawback of attending mass is the difficulty of finding a seat. Of course, raising funds for a new church is a concern due to the economy and all of us having to cut back. In addition, the sex scandal in the Catholic Church has greatly affected our willingness to donate money to the church. My husband would probably not be apt to donate due to the sex scandal and his subsequent lack of faith in the church.
- Depends on location. We currently travel less than 10 miles one way to come to church.
- Hope some land becomes available before cost becomes a bigger issue. What will happen to St. Luke's which was supposed to be a part of this?
- How do we take care of people from surrounding neighborhoods? Some of them are actively involved in running our churches.
- I agree that merging the two parishes due to the shortage of priests is a logical decision but I strongly disagree with the community aiding in financing a new building. I cannot justify spending \$6-8 million dollars constructing a new place to worship when there are so many closed churches in the Metrowest area. I would rather travel to a vacated church and donate the \$6-8 million towards charity or Catholic education.
- I am very spoiled. I love living about five minutes from St. Matthew's. Is this necessary because of the shortage of priests?
- I believe the largest challenge for a combined parish is the pastor who will lead the people. Under that leadership, you will quickly see growth or reduction.
- I have seen parishes merge only to be disappointed. The spirit of the church goes away. I like the integrity of St Matthew. That is why we chose to be members of this church. I fear that merging could mean disaster. -- But I am hopeful. I chose St Matthew because it was the only church close to us that I wanted to attend.
- I pray that whatever comes to be that it is the best for both parishes. I think a new church is probably the best rather than having one or the other, but I realize that this is a huge expense. I wonder whether the membership will continue to be so high without the present priests. St. Matthew was down to about 150 families before Father Flynn came. Can we really support a whole new church if the membership falls again?

- I think merger is premature. Will we come to the day when there is only one pastor for the town--yes, it's inevitable. However, I think the fervent pursuit of a merged parish should wait until we have only one pastor and then see what is needed for a church. St. Matthew's is vibrant and well maintained. I'm not so sure about St. Anne's but once either pastor leaves for retirement, health, or at the bidding of the bishop, then the merger should be addressed. Should we pursue the purchase of land--definitely, so we are prepared for the day. But I think we should stop talking merger now or even asking for money.
- It's a difficult time for many people financially--keep in mind that contributions don't necessarily mean spirituality of the families.
- My husband I were initially drawn to St. Matthews for its simplicity, small, warm atmosphere and of course Fr. Flynn and folks who are warm and giving. We feel like family on some level. A large church does not have these attributes and we would miss that.
- One priest could easily run both parishes by saying a mass at both parishes each morning during the week and bring in a priest or two for Sunday masses as is done now during the weekdays. People have worked hard and contributed much over the years to support their parishes. Don't take the love for our parishes away and all we worked for. Sell one of the Rectories.
- Ordain females. Have closed circuit coverage of St. Matthew's services at St. Anne's and the reverse, just like events are shown in theaters. That way, one priest could say the same number of masses but split the revenues. Eucharistic ministers could dispense communion. The cost would equal some thousands versus some millions: I'd financially support this approach.
- St. Matt's parish is a quaint and personal church. It has much character and doesn't have a cold atmosphere.
- Still a little ambiguous about a merger since we live in Hopkinton and really like the current St. Matthews.
- Thank you for continuing to keep us informed and requesting our input.
- The leadership of this merger is going to have a great deal of effects on all of its members. You have the people who will only go to one or the other of the church. Trying to get them all to agree is not going to be easy.
- There is no need for a merge. Joint programming should continue and expand where possible but I believe a merge should only be considered in the future where it is clear that only one priest will be available for Southborough and that priest has been identified. In essence, I see a change from status in the July 2006 letter to the Bishop.
- We are torn with this possibility. While economically it makes sense, we are uncertain if the loss of smaller churches and communities will change our decision to participate in the new entity.
- We hope it happens only when absolutely necessary - not until the bishop says we must merge.
- We love St. Matt's so I have mixed feelings about this potential merger. We searched a long time to find a parish we liked and we finally did with St. Matt's.
- We love the fact that we go to a small church and look forward to having our daughter participate in religious education. Fr. Flynn married us and baptized our daughter. He knows our family! This connection is what is important to us. If combining parishes is the only way to sustain a Catholic community in Southborough, then we would do what we needed to help that happen. Is the merger necessary due to the number of available priests? Would the same number of priests / visiting priests (like Fr. Tony who is always here, but not technically a parish priest) still be the same? And what are the actual economic benefits? Both of these were mentioned in the Letter from the Parishes and we are curious as to the actual numbers.
- We would be very sad to lose Fr. Flynn.

Either Parish - Questions, Comments, and Concerns

- Our parishes serve Hopkinton, Marlboro, Framingham and Southborough. We are one community, not one town.