



Bethany Lutheran Church

Communications Task Force Survey

Final Results

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I. Survey and Data Collection Summary

The Communications Task Force survey consisted of 11 communications-related questions plus 4 demographic questions and an open-ended comments area.

The survey was distributed and collected during all three services on Sunday, January 24, 2010. It was also distributed during Worship on Wednesday on January 27, 2010. Over 500 responses were collected from surveys completed during services.

Additionally, over 1,000 current Bethany members were sent an email message on Friday, January 29, 2010 and were encouraged to complete the survey online if they had not already done so in service. This generated approximately 100 additional responses.

The online survey and the paper surveys were identical except the online survey included an additional question, "Which worship service at Bethany do you usually attend?" For the paper ballots, the service in which the ballot was collected was used as the response for this question.

In total there were 618 total responses to the survey.

Based on widely-accepted statistical norms, the margin of error for this study is **+/- 3.0%** at the 95% confidence level. This means that if the entire population responded, results would fall within 3.0% of the totals reported 95 times out of 100.

II. Response Summary

A. Overall Communications Summary

In general, the response to the “How well do you feel you are informed about events and programs at Bethany” was very favorable. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being “well informed”, 74% of respondents ranked 8 or higher on the scale with 88% ranking 7 or higher.

The weighted average response was 8.2.

11. In general, how well do you feel you are informed about events and programs at Bethany? (1=not informed and 10=well informed)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Weighted Average
1	1.0%	6	6
2	0.2%	1	2
3	0.8%	5	15
4	1.0%	6	24
5	2.8%	17	85
6	5.8%	35	210
7	14.2%	86	602
8	26.7%	162	1,296
9	21.4%	130	1,170
10	26.2%	159	1,590
<i>answered question</i>		607	5,000
<i>skipped question</i>		11	8.2

The “Bulletin” ranked #1 and the “Beacon” ranked #2 as the most frequently relied upon way for staying informed about events and activities. “Announcements at Worship” (46%) and “Email” followed next in popularity.

10. Which of the following do you most rely on for information about events and activities at Bethany? Check you top 3.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Beacon	69.1%	423
Bulletin	77.1%	472
Mail	21.7%	133
Email	44.1%	270
Website	15.5%	95
Telephone message	4.9%	30
Announcements at worship services	46.7%	286
Text messages	0.8%	5
Facebook	2.8%	17
<i>answered question</i>		612
<i>skipped question</i>		6

B. The Bulletin

77% of respondents indicated relying upon the Bulletin for information about events and activities at Bethany; the highest rating of all channels included on the survey.

Also, 87% of respondents indicated that they read the event and program information in the bulletin each week.

3. Do you read the event and program information in the bulletin each week?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.2%	531
No	12.8%	78
<i>answered question</i>		609
<i>skipped question</i>		9

C. The Beacon/Mail

Over 97% of the respondents indicated that they “usually” or “sometimes” read the Beacon with over 81% indicated that they “usually” read it.

The Beacon ranked #2 in popularity of the ways respondents most rely on for information about events and activities at Bethany (69.1%), second only to the Bulletin (77.1%).

Although 100% of the membership currently gets the Beacon mailed to them at home, 10% are willing to pick it up at church and 32% were willing to receive it via email on line.

Based on written in comments, there seems to be a willingness to switch to non-postal delivery of the Beacon if it would save some money for the church.

1. Do you (or someone in your home) read the Beacon newsletter each month?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Usually	81.8%	502
Sometimes	15.8%	97
Never	2.4%	15
<i>answered question</i>		614
<i>skipped question</i>		4

2. How would you prefer to receive the Beacon?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
mail to home	57.8%	351
pick up at church	9.9%	60
email online version	32.3%	196
<i>answered question</i>		607
<i>skipped question</i>		11

4. Do you read the mail (letters, postcards, flyers, etc.) you receive from Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Usually	81.7%	497
Sometimes	17.8%	108
Never	0.5%	3
<i>answered question</i>		608
<i>skipped question</i>		10

D. Recorded Phone Messages

There was a somewhat mixed response to the recorded messages questions. While 79% of respondents indicated that they had received such messages and 70% indicated that it was an effective way to provide information, there was a significantly strong negative response to the automated messages in the write-in comments. Of the 28 write in responses about phone messages, 11 were very negative.

8. Have you received a recorded message on your telephone from Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	79.5%	485
No	20.5%	125
<i>answered question</i>		610
<i>skipped question</i>		8

9. If yes, was a recorded telephone message an effective way to provide information to you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70.3%	348
No	29.7%	147
<i>answered question</i>		495
<i>skipped question</i>		123

E. Email Messages

Over 73% of the respondents indicated that they currently receive emails from Bethany with emails preferred 75% to 25% over direct mail.

5. Do you receive email alerts from Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	73.4%	445
No	26.6%	161
<i>answered question</i>		606
<i>skipped question</i>		12

6. If yes, do you prefer email or direct mail for information on events and programs at Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
email	75.0%	405
direct mail	25.0%	135
<i>answered question</i>		540
<i>skipped question</i>		78

F. Website

Over 77% of respondents indicated that they often or sometimes use the Bethany website.

7. Do you use the Bethany website (www.bethany-denver.org) to find out about events and programs at Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Often	11.8%	72
Sometimes	65.3%	399
Never	22.9%	140
<i>answered question</i>		611
<i>skipped question</i>		7

G. Demographics

12. Which age group best describes you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
under 18	1.8%	11
18-24	1.3%	8
25-40	8.9%	54
41-55	36.9%	224
56-70	33.9%	206
70+	17.1%	104
<i>answered question</i>		607
<i>skipped question</i>		11

13. Are you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	39.5%	231
Female	60.5%	354
<i>answered question</i>		585
<i>skipped question</i>		33

14. How many years have you been attending Bethany?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
less than 1	3.2%	19
1-5	19.7%	119
6-10	25.7%	155
10+	51.4%	310
<i>answered question</i>		603
<i>skipped question</i>		15

15. Which worship service at Bethany do you usually attend?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Sunday - 8 am	24.9%	149
Sunday - 9 am	42.5%	254
Sunday - 10:30 am	31.8%	190
Wednesday - 6:30 pm	0.8%	5
<i>answered question</i>		598
<i>skipped question</i>		20

III. Summary Observations

1. Generally, most of the respondents to the survey feel well informed about events and programs at Bethany. An average score of 8.2 out of 10 with 88% of all respondents ranking a 7 or higher is pretty good!
2. There seems to be a general sense of some things we could do better in our communications, but the feedback seems to tell us we're not doing all that bad keeping the congregation informed.
3. The general response to the survey itself was very positive (both through the numbers received and the write-in commentary). Many respondents expressed their thanks for collecting their input in this way.
4. Not surprisingly, the Bulletin ranked highest as the way most respondents stay informed about events and programs. Most frequent write-in comment was regarding the font size being too small.
5. The Beacon received very high marks in the survey. Many respondents, however, expressed a willingness to receive the Beacon sent to them either via mail or pick it up at church if it would save money.
6. Recorded messages seem to be generally well accepted, but there does appear to be a vocal group that has a very negative reaction to them (notable among a population that seems generally happy with communications). This does not seem surprising as automated phone calls for political messages have been on the rise in recent years and impersonal telemarketing, in general, seem to generate a negative response in our society. Perhaps this is a vehicle that needs to be used judiciously and for specific task. Also, "keep them short" was a noticeable write-in response.
7. Email seems to be very well accepted across the board. Many respondents expressed a preference for it and also recognized the cost savings benefits.
8. The website was visited by more respondents than we might have expected considering we are not proactively doing much to promote it or drive traffic to it. There were many encouraging comments and suggestions to expand its offerings and keep it more current.
9. Demographically, the profile seems what we would have expected and, given that we received over 600 responses to the survey, it probably accurately reflect the general population of the church.
10. A general concern...we are a very "gray" bunch. Where are all the 25-40 year olds? Have they given up on church or have they just given up on Bethany? A long term concern for the church?
11. No one method of communications fits all. Some suggestions...
 - a. We should consider ways to communicate more effectively via email based on its popularity and in conjunction with improvements to the information on the website.
 - b. The Bulletin works, but can we do something to make it easier to read?
 - c. The Beacon appears to be a keeper, but there was some willingness for change especially if there was an economic windfall.
 - d. Use recorded phone calls with caution to meet specific objectives. Need TLC to allow members to easily opt-out.