

St. Columba's guide for collecting personal histories and stories from parishioners for our understanding of "Parish Life Over the Years"

As you engage the whole family in pledging, it is helpful to reflect on the connection you have to St. Columba's and the role it plays in your life. Use the attached worksheets to explore how St. Columba's is part of your faith story and that of all the members of your family, including kids and youth. We would love to hear from you, so please feel free to share your answers with a member of the church staff or clergy. This step is optional.

Please note this guide is directional only

Suggested general questions

1. ***Name:*** What is your full name? What was your full name when you joined the church
2. ***Place of origin:*** Where you were born and raised?
3. ***Family:*** Do you have family members who are also affiliated with the church? If so, what are their names and what is their relationship to you?
4. ***Religious background:*** What was your religious background and experience before you joined St. C's?
5. ***Year joined:*** What year did you first start attending St. Columba's?
6. ***First impressions:*** How did you hear about St. C's, and what were your first impressions? What was St. C's like at the time in

terms of the leadership, congregation, worship, music, service, etc.? What 3-5 words best describe the church at the time you first joined?

7. **Decision to join:** Who played a role in encouraging you to join or stay at St. C's? Were there any religious traditions or practices that were important to you when you joined? What other aspects about St. C's inspired you to become a member?
8. **Impressions over time:** How has St. C's changed over time compared to your first impressions? In your view, what 3-5 words best describe the church for each of the decades that you have been a member? Maybe the words have stayed the same, or maybe they have changed - please let us know what they may be for each decade. You could also think of the 3-5 words as a "headline" or "chapter title" that would have defined each decade in terms of your impression of St. C's at the given time.
9. **Ministry involvement:** What ministries have you been involved in at the church? What are your memories of those ministries? What activities, experiences, people, events, or other aspects do you remember? (Note: It's especially helpful if you're able to attach things to specific dates or periods of time.)
10. **Memorable experiences:** What are the top 1-3 activities, experiences, people, events, or other aspects that have been most memorable to you at St. Columba's? (Note: It's especially helpful if you're able to attach things to specific dates or periods of time.)
11. **Personal periods of change:** Has there ever been a time when you stopped coming to church, or your relationship with St. C's

changed? If so, what brought on the change and what influenced you to return or stay active at St. C's?

12. **Major life milestones:** Were you baptized, confirmed, or married at St. C's? If so, what are the dates of those events? Were any of your children baptized or married at St. C's? If so, what are the dates of those events? Were any of your family members' funerals at St. C's? If so what are the dates of those events?
13. **External events:** What are some external events or milestones, either personal or more broadly in the Washington, DC community or world, that you perceive as having shaped St. C's over time? What impact did you see those external events or milestones having on St. C's? (Note: It's especially helpful if you're able to attach things to specific dates or periods of time.)
14. **Other:** What else would you like to share about your experience at St. Columba's?