

Small-Church Growth Strategy Handbook



Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Buffalo, New York

2007 Edition

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Small-Church Growth Strategy Handbook

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. (Ephesians 3:20-21 NRSV)

Introduction

This handbook represents a dynamic set of tools designed to affirm and strengthen vitality in small-membership churches (generally those with an average Sunday attendance of seventy or less). Small-membership churches represent approximately half of all Episcopal congregations.

The handbook begins with the associated General Convention legislation history, which was proposed and passed to strengthen small congregations. Next, a strategy is defined and specific resources are shared, as suggested by the results of the *Faith Communities Today 2005 (FACT 2005)* national survey of 4,100 congregations. The handbook concludes with stories of the vital mission and ministry in small Episcopal congregations and a list of organizations that can be of help to the small Episcopal congregation.

For more information, to share resources or submit stories for consideration in future editions, or for help with acquiring the information suggested via web link if you do not have access to a computer, please contact the Office of Congregational Development. This handbook is also available as a free download at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congdev.htm>.

May God bless all of our work and our congregations as, together, we accomplish abundantly far more than we could ever ask or imagine...



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History

The Standing Commission for Small Congregations (SCSC) canonical mandate is to concern itself with plans for directions for small congregations.

In the 2003 General Convention Report, the SCSC reported the development of the document entitled “Expanding Mission and Vitality in Small Congregations: A Framework for Affirming and Strengthening the Ministry of Small Churches.” Specifically, this report identified the characteristics of vital small churches and outlined a strategy to expand and sustain these characteristics. This document was passed by both houses at the 2003 General Convention as Resolution A133.

Three years later, at the 2006 General Convention, the Church in Small Communities (CSC) proposed Resolution A098, which directed the Office of Congregational Development to compile available resources to promote vitality of mission and ministry in small congregations and to communicate, disseminate, and provide access to the larger Church these resources in a variety of formats. It also encouraged the collecting and telling of stories of vitality in mission and ministry occurring in small congregations in such ways that those stories offer opportunity, encouragement, challenge, and hope to other congregations. (The resolution also acknowledged with thanksgiving the life and ministry of the Rt. Rev. William Davidson.)

The Small-Church Growth Strategy Handbook represents a compilation of research, resources, stories, and information designed for small congregations to meet the needs as identified by both the Standing Commission for Small Congregations and the Church in Small Communities legislative bodies over the past six years.

This material is also available as a download at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/congdev.htm>

The Strategy

FACTs on Episcopal Growth is a new look at the dynamics of growth and decline in Episcopal parishes and missions based on the *Faith Communities Today 2005 (FACT 2005)* national survey of 4,100 congregations. C. Kirk Hadaway, in a publication of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and Faith Communities Today, has produced a full report seeking to answer the question “Why do so many congregations do well and thrive but many others find growth to be elusive?” In seeking the answers to this question, various sources of congregational growth and decline were explored, including:

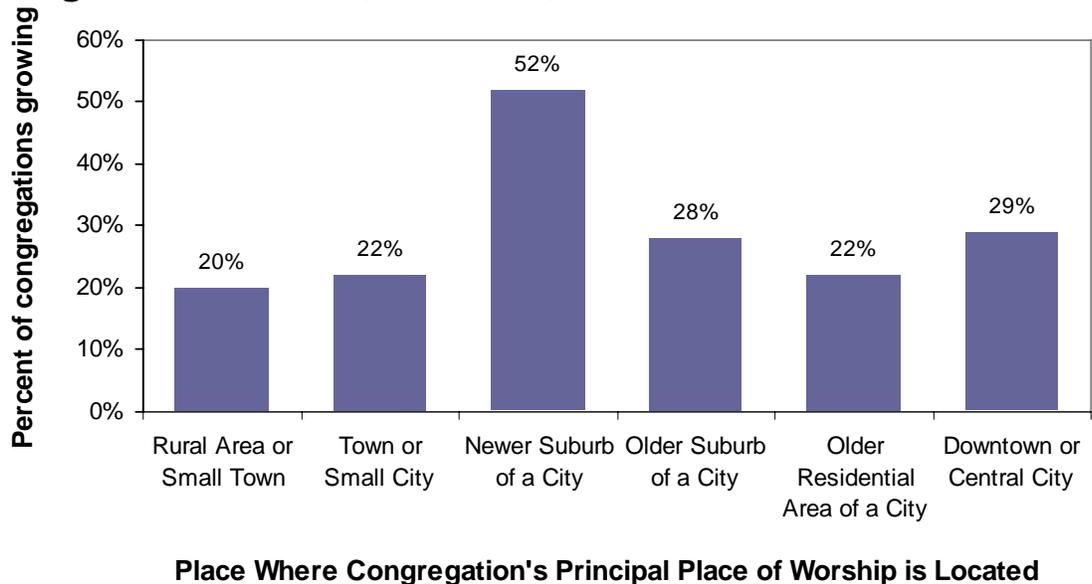
- the location and demographic makeup of the congregation
- the congregation’s identity
- the congregation’s worship
- the congregation’s activities
- the congregation’s leadership

Following the completion of this larger report, Hadaway computed the totals for the existing FACT charts for the small Episcopal congregations (those with 70 or less in Average Sunday Attendance). This document is referred to as *Why Smaller (ASA 70 or Less) Episcopal Churches Are Growing*.

This handbook is organized around the five categories of growth and decline as identified in the FACT survey, sharing the relevant findings from *Why Smaller (ASA 70 or Less) Episcopal Churches Are Growing* and suggesting relevant resources, articles, and publications to strengthen the smaller congregation.

The Location and Demographic Makeup of the Congregation

Figure 1. Location, Location, Location



Changing the location of your congregation is not an easy, but there are a growing number of examples of congregations that have taken this bold step as part of a revitalization strategy.

See Lyle E. Shaller's book, *Choices for Churches* (Abington Press, 1990) pp. 97-121, for more information on changing the location of your congregation.

Figure 2. Young Congregations Grow

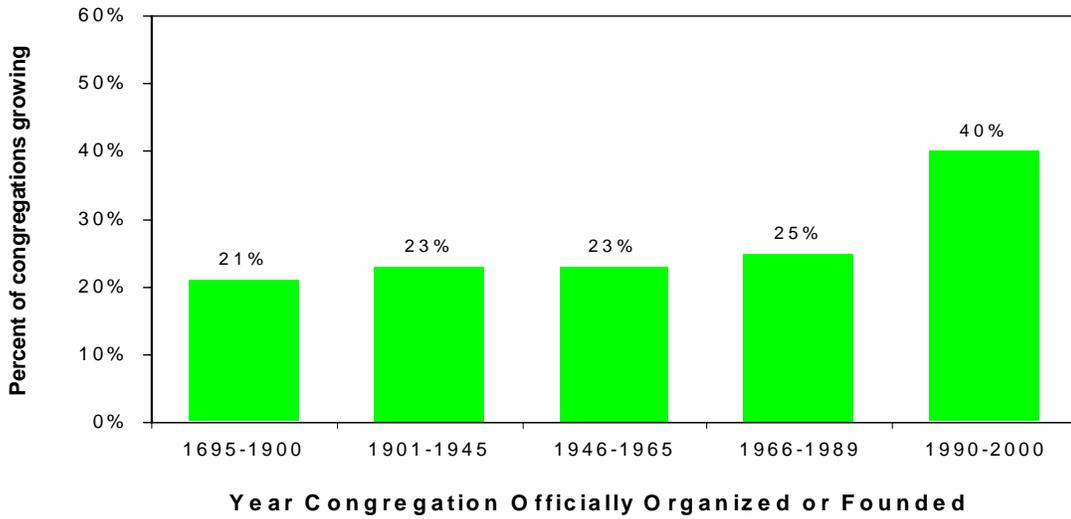
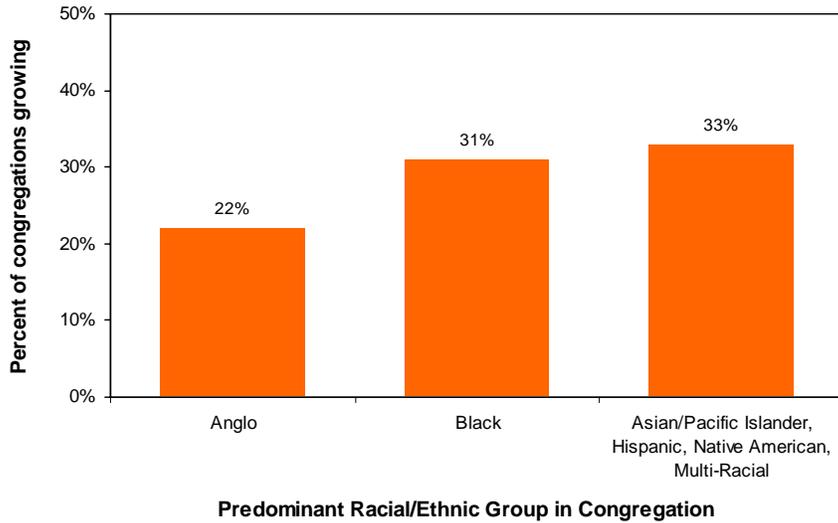


Figure 3. Race, Ethnicity and Growth



The Ethnic Congregational Development Team at the Episcopal Church Center includes Asian American Ministries, Black Ministries, Hispanic Ministry, and Native American Ministries.

The Ethnic Congregational Development Team strives to:

- invite all persons into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and to enhance the ministry of all baptized persons through multiple services and resources available through our offices.
- draw resources from regional, national, and international networks as well as from provinces and dioceses that strengthen congregations and their leaders.
- work in partnership with congregations, dioceses, provinces and organizations to respond to unique and diverse needs of Asian American, Hispanic, Black, Native American and multicultural congregations and communities.
- serve in a variety of settings: urban and rural, small and large congregations, reservations and inner-cities, and in communities faced with changing family structures.



The Ethnic Congregational Development Team (from left to right) Anthony Guillen (Hispanic Ministries), Janine Tinsley-Roe (Native American Ministries), Angela Ifill (Black Ministries), Fred Vergara (Asian American Ministries)

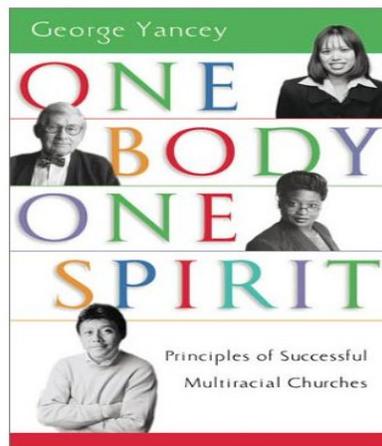
Ethnic Congregational Development offers a wide array of Biblical values and principles:

- Respect for the dignity of every human being
- Sensitivity to racial, ethnic and women's issues
- Provide a prophetic voice on social, culture, and economic injustices
- Equip laity and clergy to be effective leaders to empower and transform communities and churches
- Celebrate diversity
- Overcome barriers and to build transferable, replicable models for the whole church to move beyond maintenance to mission

Each office of Ethnic Congregational Development provides congregational development services and promotes leadership training. For more information visit <http://episcopalchurch.org/ethnic.htm>.

Additional Resources

- Interested in the current research on Multiracial Congregational Development? If so, visit the Hartford Seminary web site at http://hrr.hartsem.edu/cong/research_multiracl.html.
- Dr. George Yancey, associate professor of sociology at the University of North Texas, lists seven general principles for building multiracial churches in his book *One Body, One Spirit* (InterVarsity Press, 2003).



1. inclusive worship
2. diverse leadership
3. an overarching goal
4. intentionality
5. personal skills
6. location
7. adaptability

Figure 4. Aging Congregations Don't Grow

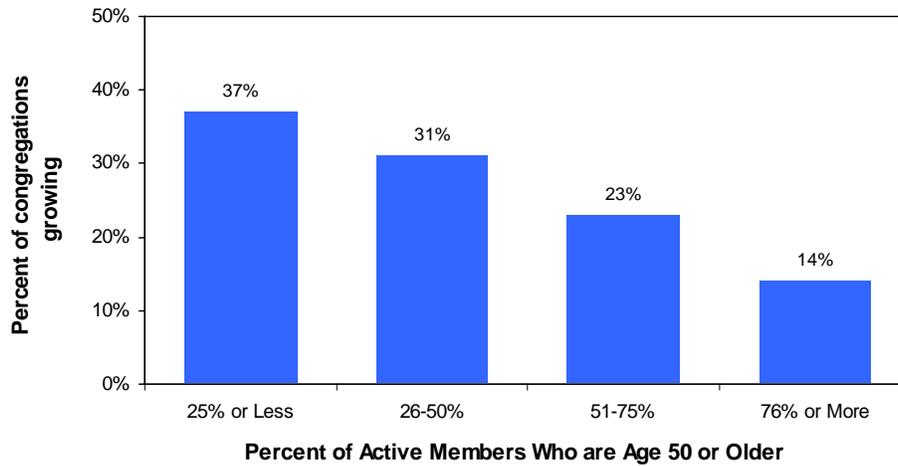
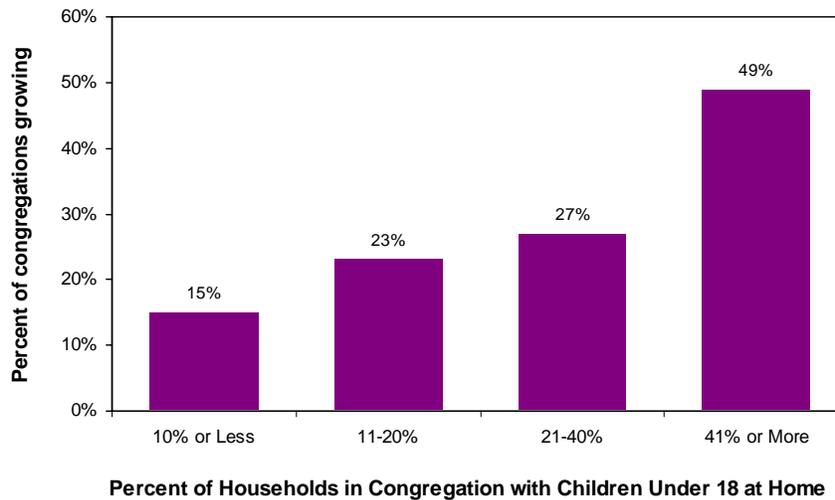


Figure 5. Households with Children and Growth



The Ministries with Young People cluster at the Episcopal Church Center includes Children's Ministries and Christian Education, Youth Ministries, Young Adult & Higher Education Ministries, and Ministries with Young People Resources. These departments work for the full participation and inclusion of children, youth, young adults, and students in higher education in the church of today and tomorrow.

There are three parallel provincial program networks served by the Ministries with Young People:

- Episcopal Council for Christian Education
- Provincial Youth Ministries Coordinators
- Provincial Coordinators' Group for Ministry in Higher Education.

The cluster has strong connections with ecumenical partners through the National and World Councils of Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and other agencies. International connections are maintained through the International Anglican Youth and Family Networks as well as the Anglican Observer at the United Nations.

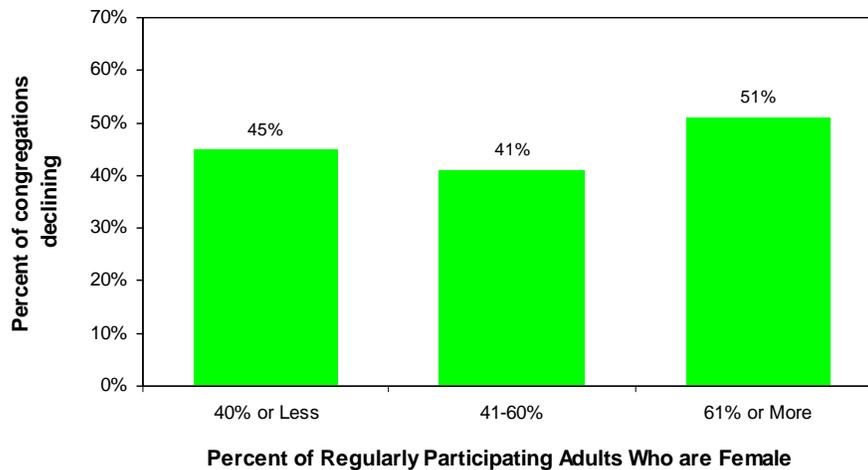
For more information on shifting the congregational demographics by reaching out to children, youth, and young adults, go to the Episcopal Church Center Ministries with Young People website at www.episcopalchurch.org/myp.htm. Here you will find a large number of resources (many available without charge), contact information for more help, and even a job board where congregations can post youth ministry position open bulletins, and youth ministers can post their availability.

Study Group Opportunity???

Interested in a study group on how your congregation might reach out to youth and young adults? Consider downloading (or requesting a DVD copy of) “Voices of Young Adults: Listening to 20-Somethings Talk About the Church.”

In June 2005, the Episcopal Church invited young adults from across the US to share their opinions about the church. Some of these young people are active in congregational life and some are not, but all share a wellspring of affection for the Episcopal Church. We invite you to listen to these voices. The documentary is available as a free download at http://episcopalchurch.org/49662_78132_ENG_HTML.htm.

Figure 6. The Gender Balance and Decline



Is your congregation gender balanced? If there are more women in your congregation than men, you might consider the following resources:

- *Is the Church Low on Testosterone? Missing Men*, an article and book review by Lillian Daniel in the April 3, 2007 issue of *Christian Century*. See <http://www.christiancentury.org> for more information.
- Consider forming a Beijing Circle. Beijing Circles is a name Women’s Ministries at the Episcopal Church Center has given to the group of circles that have formed around the issues of the Beijing Platform for Action. “*The creation of circles came out of work as AWE, Anglican Women’s Empowerment, as we attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women event held annually at the end of February. Beijing Circles are a tool which can help us educate ourselves and one another about the issues affecting women globally and then to advocate within our church and the world to bring about positive change.* For more information visit http://episcopalchurch.org/41685_73656_ENG_HTM.htm?menupage=73689
- Consider a study group focusing on the film “*Shall We Gather? Anglican Women Together.*” This documentary chronicles the Anglican Communion’s delegates to the 49th session of the United Nations commission on the status of women who put their faith into action. Available without charge through Episcopal Books & Resources (800-334-7626) or blucas@episcopalchurch.org .

The Congregation's Identity

Figure 7. Theological Orientation and Decline

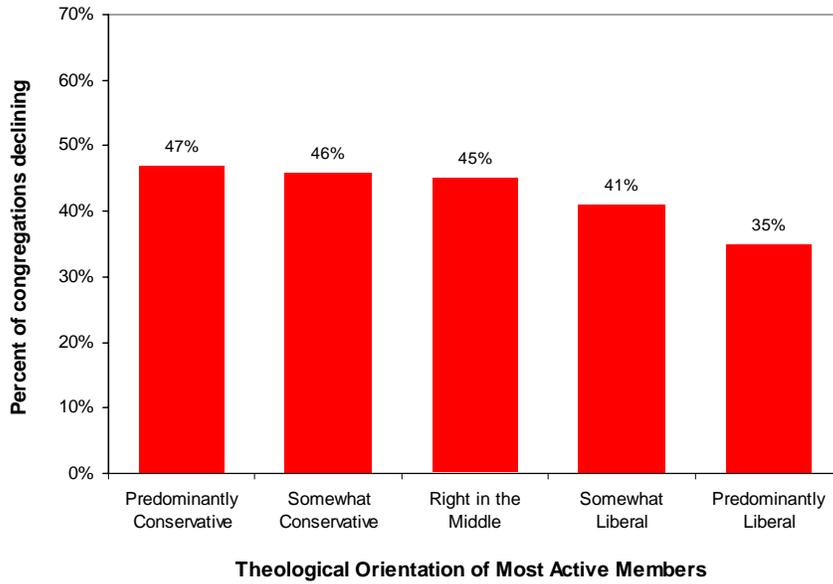
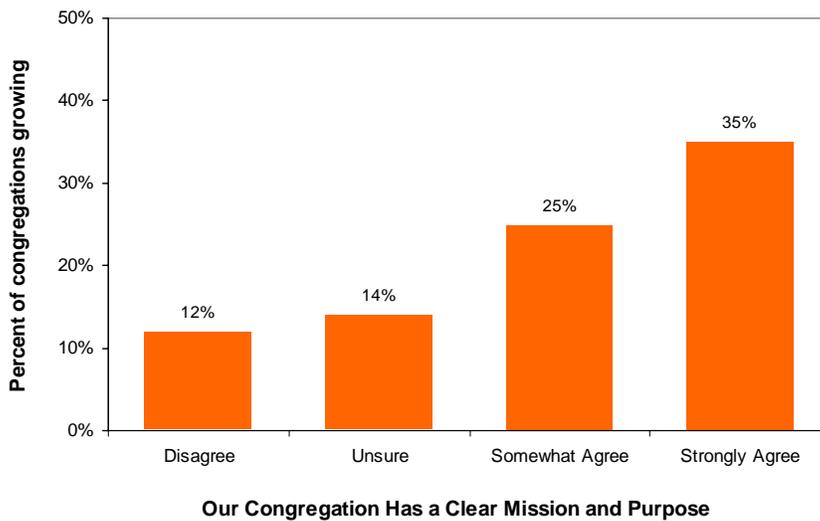


Figure 8. Purpose-Driven Growth



Exercise 1: Developing Your Church's Purpose Statement

A practical approach to leading your church to define purpose is to study the baptismal covenant and Bible passages, including the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. For a PowerPoint presentation of Bible passages with images that suggest the purpose of the Church, visit the Congregational Development website or e-mail swatson@episcopalchurch.org.

As your congregation begins to define/redefine your purpose, the following questions can be helpful. (Taken from The Purpose-Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission by Rick Warren. Copyright 1995 by Rick Warren. Used by permission of Zondervan.)¹

To begin to define/redefine your purpose statement ask:

- *Why does the church exist?*
- *What are we to **be** as a church? (Who and what are we?)*
- *What are we to **do** as a church? (What does God want accomplished in the world?)*
- *How are we to do it?*

Put the findings in writing and summarize your conclusions in a sentence.

When you have completed the first draft of your purpose statement, ask the questions:

1. *Is our purpose Biblical?*
2. *Is our purpose specific?*
3. *Is our purpose transferable? (Is it short enough to be remembered and passed on to everyone in your church?)*
4. *Is our purpose measurable?*

If you cannot, as a team, answer yes to all five questions, go back and revise!

Exercise 2: Purpose Vision Faith and Values: Questions for groups that gather in Jesus' name

PURPOSE: How does your group's existence support God's mission in the world? How does your group's existence support your congregation's part in God's mission?

Jesus Christ commissions his followers to, "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20, NRSV) The Church fulfills this mission by seeking to "restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ, through prayer, worship, proclamation of the Gospel, and promoting justice, peace and love. It is through the ministry of all its members that the Church carries out its mission. (BCP, 855).

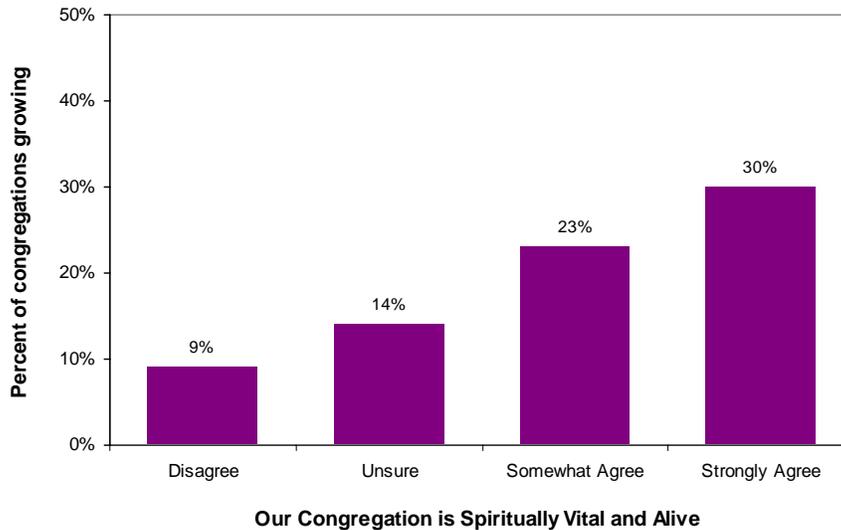
VISION: What is your group going to do to fulfill this purpose?

FAITH: What does your group believe?

¹ Rick Warren The Purpose-Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 98-101.

VALUES: How does your group behave and act?

Figure 9. Spiritual Vitality and Growth



Three Exercises to Help Increase Spiritual Vitality

Exercise 1 for Spiritual Vitality: Lifeline

The purpose of the lifeline is to assist congregations in examining their past and present, and to make some projections for the future. During this process they will be able to discern themes, patterns, and trends in the lifeline, which should provide information about the congregation's behavior.

1. Draw a lifeline of your congregation. The lifeline should be how you perceive your congregation. It can take a variety of shapes and forms (i.e., it does not need to be straight). A possibility is to have your lifeline parallel your congregation's average Sunday attendance.
2. Start with your earliest collective memory, and project to some point in the future, at least one year from today.
3. Note the significant events that have shaped your congregation's life. These events do not have to be earth-shattering, but they should represent milestones.
4. For clarification, use the following symbols to further illustrate your lifeline:
 - ! a risk or chance that your congregation took (or will take)
 - X an obstacle; something or someone that prevented your congregation from getting or doing what you wanted to do
 - O a decision made for your congregation by somebody else
 - + a positive, satisfying, or appropriate decision
 - a negative, unsatisfying, or inappropriate decision
 - ? decision that you anticipate making in the future

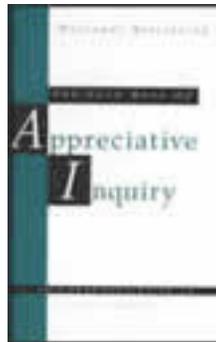
You may use any or all of the symbols as often as you like. A particular event could have all six symbols for further clarification. Also, feel free to create

symbols that represent your particular experiences, such as times when your congregation sensed God's presence most acutely, times of great creative energy, etc.

After the lifeline is completed, the leader can discuss it in detail. The leader should ask for feedback and clarification of various events and statements made on the lifeline.

The lifeline can be an excellent way for a congregation to begin to understand itself during times of transition. It could be used early in the calling process, when new ways of leadership are being discussed, or a way for a congregation to introduce itself to new clergy. It is also a good tool for congregations that desire to shift from looking backward in time to a more forward-looking outlook.

Exercise 2 for Spiritual Vitality: Vision for the Future



Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is frequently used by Episcopal congregations as a way to refocus on the vitality of mission and ministry in the congregation. Sue Annis Hammond in *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* identifies the three classic AI questions.² These classic questions could be adapted for use by a congregation as:

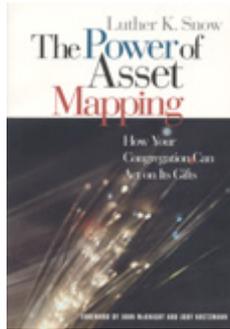
1. Think back through your time in this congregation. Locate a moment that was a high point, when you felt God's presence most intensely. Describe how you felt, and what made the situation possible.
2. Without being humble, describe what you most value about your own ministry, your congregation, and The Episcopal Church?
3. Describe three concrete wishes for the future of your congregation.

For more information on the principles of Appreciative Inquiry see *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* by Sue Annis Hammond (Thin Book Publishing, 1998), available at www.thinbook.com.

Another resource for Appreciative Inquiry is *Appreciative Inquiry in the Catholic Church* by Susan Star Paddock. This book can assist those congregations that wish to use the principles of AI for strategic planning, relationship building, transition, community development and for spiritual renewal. Visit www.thinbook.com or phone 888.316.9544 to order.

² Sue Annis Hammon, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* (Thin Book Publishing, 1998), 56.

Exercise 3 for Spiritual Vitality: Focusing on Your Congregation's Gifts



This exercise is a way to (re)focus on your congregation's gifts and assets. It is a good way to begin to change the focus from what is lacking/what you no longer have to recognizing that God has blessed your congregation with many gifts, and calls you to use them creatively and with gratitude.

The categories and questions below are reprinted from *The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts* by Luther snow, with permission from the Alban Institute. Copyright c 2004 by The Alban Institute, Inc., Herndon, VA. All rights reserved. Available at <http://www.alban.org>

Physical Assets: Physical assets are things you can touch, see or feel. These include land and natural resources, buildings and space, equipment, materials, and objects. People also sometimes think of strengths like location and visibility in response to these questions.

1. What are some physical assets of your congregation?
2. Think deeper: what are some very specific assets of your congregation?
3. What are some physical assets that are unique to your congregation?
4. What are some physical assets of your community?
5. What are some of your natural resources?

Individual Assets: These are the talents, experience, perspective, and skills of individuals.

1. What are some things you care a lot about? (Gifts of the heart)
2. What is something you know a lot about? (Gifts of the hands)
3. What's something you can do with your hands or body? (Gifts of the hands)
4. Sometimes people are shy about naming their gifts, or just don't see them.
What are some talents or skills you see in someone else in your congregation?
5. What are some talents or skills you see in someone you know who isn't here?
6. What talent or skill do you think people in the congregation know you for?

Associational Assets: These are voluntary groups, associations, networks, and organizations of individuals who gather to do or enjoy something together that they could not experience on their own. They might be more formal groups with a name, or they could be informal groups like the people who have coffee on Tuesdays at the café.

1. *What are some groups of people you get together with from the congregation?*
2. *What groups or associations are you part of outside the congregation?*
3. *What are some groups you know about but are not a part of?*
4. *What are some groups that are not represented here?*
5. *Who's the most powerful person you know about?*

Institutional Assets: These are business firms, public agencies, and nonprofit institutions with budgets, staff, and usually places of business. Institutions differ from voluntary associations in the motivation of participants. People generally participate in institutional activities because of salaries, sales, taxes, or other financial or legal considerations.

1. *What are some institutional decisions that affect the people in the congregation or community? Which institutions make those decisions?*
2. *What are some institutions represented in the congregation?*
3. *What institutions does the congregation itself partner with or do business with?*
4. *What institutions does the congregation itself partner with or do business with?*
5. *What institutions have something in common with the congregation?*

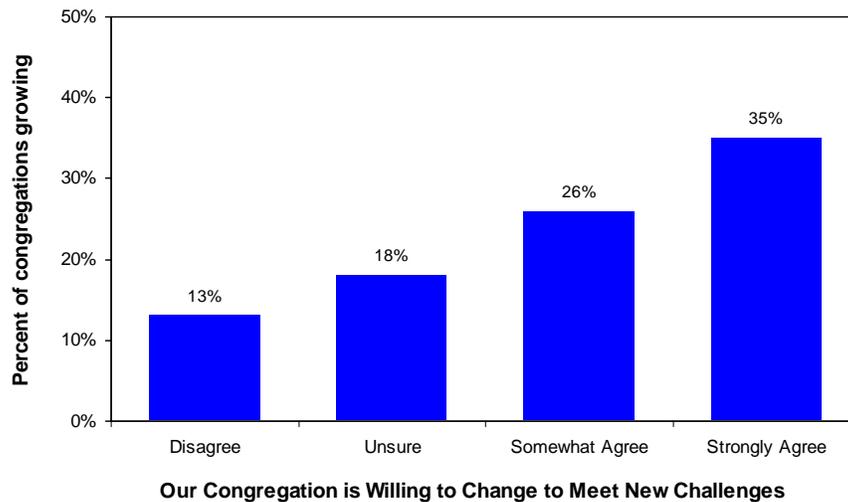
Economic Assets: Usually people think of local businesses as economic assets. We should also think of our spending power, our investing power, and our productive capacity to provide valuable goods or services.

1. *What's something the congregation spends money on?*
2. *What's something you spend money on?*
3. *What's something you can make or do, that people would pay you for?*
4. *What businesses are represented in the congregation?*
5. *Where does the congregation invest its money*
6. *What space does the congregation control that could be rented or charged for?³*

³ Luther K. Snow, *The Power of Asset Mapping* (The Alban Institute, 2004), 50-52.

Your Congregation, Change, and Stress

Figure 10. Living Things Change



How willing is your congregation to change to meet new challenges? And how well are you personally, as a leader, equipped to lead change? While sometimes leaders want to change, they may unwittingly be sabotaging their own efforts. Maybe they harbor hidden assumptions about what a congregation should really be like, or worship, or people who profess to be followers of Christ. Or maybe there are deep assumptions about what it is to be an ordained or lay leader. Or maybe there is an unhealthy dynamic between unmet personal needs and gratification from the congregation. Whatever the reason, leading change is challenging.

Suggested Resource for Leading Change:



A good resource to help identify hidden assumptions that might be undermining a leader's ability to effectively lead change can be found in Thomas Bandy's book, *Facing Reality: A Tool for Congregational Mission Assessment* (Abington Press, 2001). Bandy asks readers to rate their response to thirty statements about healthy, growing and vital congregations in an effort to identify assumptions that

may be blocking their ability to effectively lead change in the areas of **vision and identity, worship and spirituality, education and nurture, outreach and mission, organization and structure, stewardship and finance, and leadership and membership.** Examples include:

Statement: The youth are not the future of your church.

Truth: Transformed adults are the future of your church. (Adults who are changed, gifted, called, and equipped will take care of the children—and everything else!)

Statement: Nobody cares about the mere presence of God.

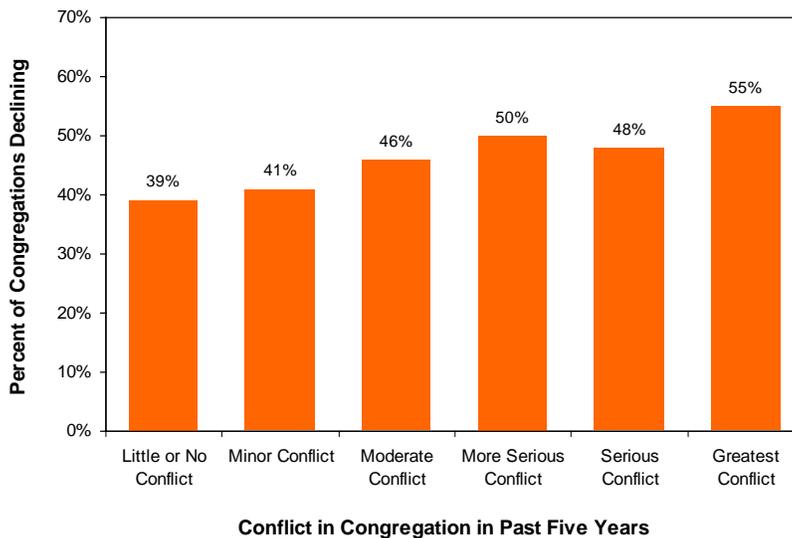
Truth: Everybody wants to be touched by the healing and transforming power of God. (The public is desperate to be changed, different, and liberated from their hurts and addictions.)

Statement: It doesn't matter what people retain following the worship service.

Truth: What matters most is how people feel following the worship service. (People want to feel alive for worship, and be motivated to learn and serve through the week.)⁴

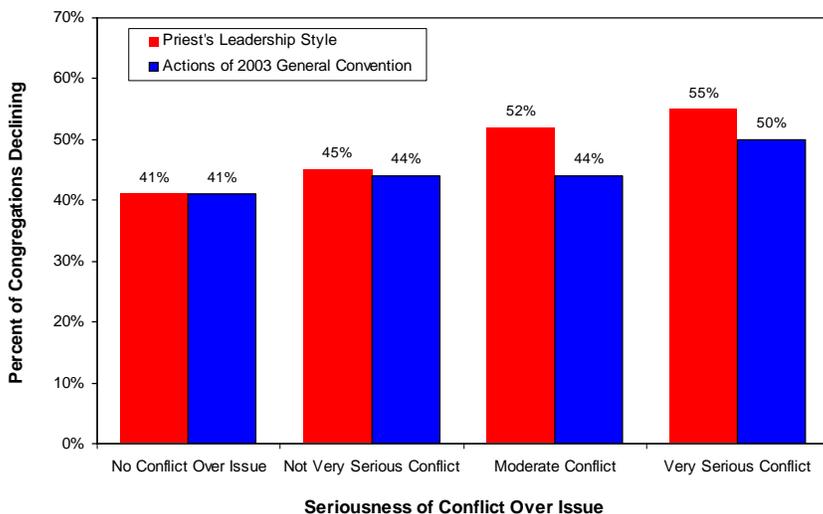
The book includes a CD with downloadable resources that a congregation can print and copy as they begin the process of change.

Figure 11. Conflict and Declining Attendance



⁴ Thomas Bandy *Facing Reality: A Tool for Congregational Mission Assessment* (Abington Press, 2001), 94-95.

Figure 12. Source and Seriousness of Conflict and Attendance Decline



Need help dealing with conflict?



Discover Your Conflict Management Style, Revised Edition, by Speed B. Leas (Alban Press, 1998), available for \$7 at <http://www.alban.org>. Leas, an Alban senior consultant and a nationally recognized authority on conflict in congregations, helps you to assess your conflict response and discover options appropriate to different levels of conflict. Leas draws on his years of experience helping conflicted congregations, providing valuable insights on the nature of conflict and its resolution. This new edition contains an improved Conflict Strategy Instrument, revised to reflect new learnings.

Upward Bound training event

Upward Bound addresses the personal work leaders need to do in order to lead in challenging times of growth and change and is designed for the congregational development leader who is ready to address the following situations:

- Your primary goals are sabotaged by distracting mini-fires.
- Emotional responses are disproportionate to the situation.

- You are leading ‘process’ with people operating in a ‘yes or no’ world.
- You are caught in a problem that is not yours to solve.
- There is a negative force that drains time and emotional energy.
- Passive-aggressive behaviors have reached an artful level.

The work is personal, intensive, and transforming. Agenda items include:

- Learn how to examine both a conflicted situation and your place in it.
- Explore your individual awareness of how you receive approval and support.
- Learn characteristics of the healthy self.
- Understand the different levels of needs and their implications for congregational behavior.
- Develop skills to stop participating in destructive games and negative cycles.
- Renegotiate relationships after conflict has erupted.
- Increase listening and feedback skills for clarity rather than inference or judgment.
- Distinguish between problems that are yours and others.

Upward Bound is designed for the congregational leader who has responsibility for leading and managing the congregation through change and growth.

The goal is to heighten your awareness and skills required to lead congregations in times of change and transition. The training is highly interactive, includes teaching, role-play, conversation, and personal reflection.

You will be invited to carefully explore your individual awareness and competence, examine the congregational setting in which you lead, and apply new models of interpretation to effect change.

In order to support a seminar format space is limited to 36 registrants.

Upward Bound is sponsored by the Office of Congregational Development and coordinated in partnership with the Episcopal Church Building Fund. To learn more call 800-334-7626, ext. 6003 or visit <http://episcopalchurch.org/upward.htm>.

The Congregation's Worship

Figure 13. Worship Services and Growth

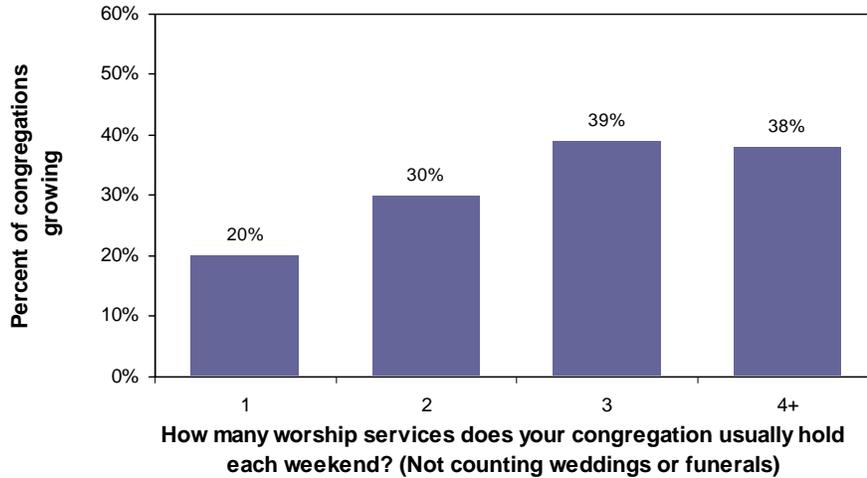


Figure 14. Making a Joyful Noise

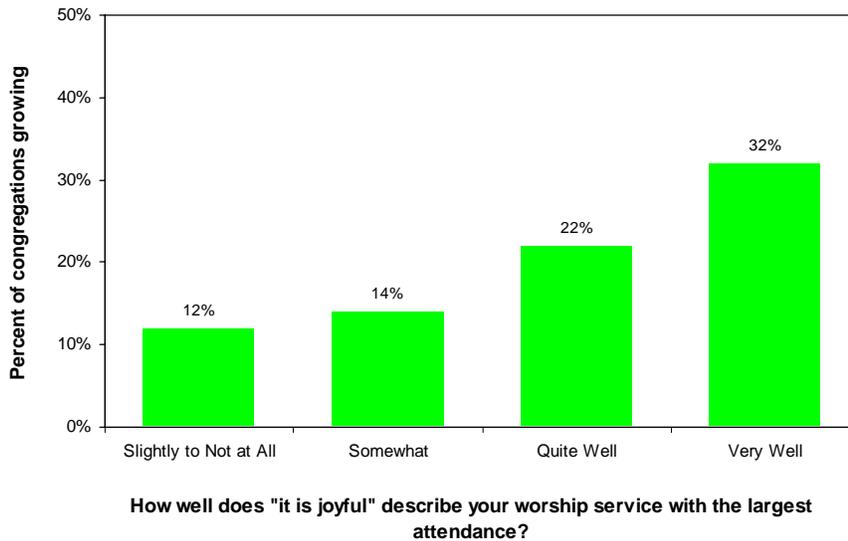


Figure 15. Predictability and Lack of Growth

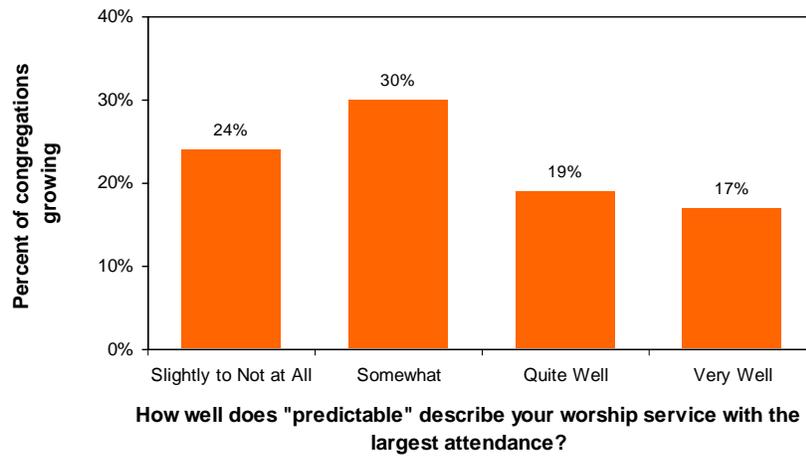
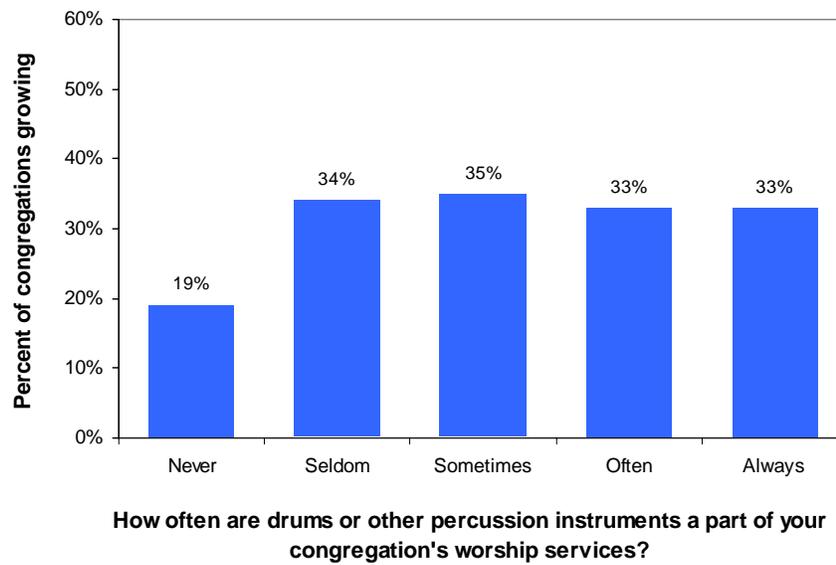


Figure 16. Drums, Percussion and Growth



Should Your Congregation Consider Starting a New Church Service with a Different Style?

Charles Arn, in his book *How to Start a New Service: Your Church CAN Reach New People* (Baker Books, 1997), begins with a chapter on which congregations should, or should not, begin a new church service. By new, he means new-style, with the goal of reaching out to a new people to continue Christ's mission to make disciples. Should your congregation consider starting a new-style service? The following questions help determine the answer:

1. Is your congregation's highest priority being "like a family"?
2. Is your congregation's highest priority preserving "correct" doctrine and "correct" interpretation of Scripture?
3. Has your congregation split from a more liberal church or denomination in the past 50-75 years?
4. Is your congregation's highest priority survival (i.e. with avoiding death than pursuing life)?
5. Does your priest/pastor/leadership team plan to leave in the coming year?
6. Does your congregation seem too small to add another service?
7. Is your congregation's attendance declining?
8. Is your congregation's sanctuary less than filled on Sundays?
9. Does your congregation lack the personnel to add a new service?
10. Does your theology or liturgical beliefs not allow for a different style?
11. Is your church in a bad location?

Response: Did you answer yes to question number 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5? If so, starting a new service is probably not the best strategy for your congregation at this time. About 50% of congregations fall into this category.

Did you answer yes to question number 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 or 11? Guess what? These are excuses for not starting a new service, but they are not reasons. If the idea of a new service (despite the excuses) seems like it might have merit, consider purchasing Arn's book. And watch the Congregational Development website for the results of an ongoing pilot program for small churches interested in making new disciples through a new-style service.

Worship Resources

- Visit *Sermons that Work* for sermons written specifically for small Episcopal congregations. Sermons in this series are in the public domain – they are not copyrighted – and all are invited to use them or draw from them as a resource at no cost. Go to http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work.htm.
- For free sermon help and starters, exegesis, liturgy and worship ideas, seasonal blessings and Prayers of the People and more visit <http://www.textweek.com>
- For resources and free downloads from the Episcopal Church Center Office of Liturgy and Music, visit http://www.episcopalchurch.org/19625_19614_ENG_HTM.htm?menupage=19613
- Visit The Worship Well, an online community for sharing and creating fresh, innovative worship resources in the Episcopal Church. at <http://www.theworshipwell.org/>
- For free downloadable music for the small church visit: <http://www.smallchurchmusic.com/>

Interested in learning more about the Emergent Church? Consider the following:⁵

- Johnny Baker’s “Worship Tricks”, more than 200 “fresh” ideas and examples for worship, are in the top right corner of his blog – <http://jonnybaker.blogs.com>
Baker also wrote a book on Alternative Worship in 2003 that is highly recommended with practical worship ideas – available at <http://www.amazon.com/Alternative-Worship-Resources-Emerging-Church/dp/0801091705>
- The Greenbelt Festival – <http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenbelt_festival
- Highly recommended book about the Emerging Church phenomenon, covering the US, UK, and some other locales is Gibbs, Eddie and Bolger, Ryan *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Communities in Postmodern Cultures* SPCK Publishing, 2006, available at <http://www.amazon.com/Emerging-Churches-Christian-Community-Postmodern/dp/0801027152>

Some other books to check out, by Emerging Anglicans in the UK...

- Mobsby, Ian. *Emerging & Fresh Expressions of Church* Moot Community Publishing, 2007. “Ian Mobsby is an ordained NSM Anglican priest licensed to work with the Moot Community, an Anglican Church of England Fresh Expression of Church Project in Westminster, Central London.”
- Rollins, Peter. *How (Not) to Speak of God* SPCK Publishing, 2006
Rollins is a post-modern philosopher, from Belfast, Northern Ireland, available at <http://www.amazon.co.uk/How-Not-Speak-Peter-Rollins/dp/0281057982>

⁵ Emergent Church information provided by Bowie Snodgrass, Web Content Editor at the Episcopal Church Center.

Reaching the Unchurched Through Alternative Style Gatherings

Interested in how other churches in The Episcopal Church, the ELCA, and in other denominations are creatively meeting the needs of the unchurched in different parts of the country? If so, check out the links below for ideas. But do keep in mind that what works in one context will not necessarily work in another. It is your wider community, their spiritual needs, and the ways they connect with God that should inform your efforts if you decide to reach out to new people in new ways.⁶

Church	Church of the Incarnation
Info	209 Madison Avenue at East 35 th Street info@churchoftheincarnation.org or call 212-689-6350 www.churchoftheincarnation.org
Type of service	a Contemplative Candlelight Communion service in the Anglican tradition with quiet, meditative singing from the Taizé community in France features radiant candlelight, water, greenery and music from the Taizé community spiritually centered with quiet meditative chanting and silence for reflection and contemplation

Church	St Mark's-In-The-Bowery
Info	http://www.stmarkschurch-in-the-bowery.com/
Type of service	BILINGUAL Vespers and Holy Eucharist featuring special music Wednesdays at 6:30pm. JAPANESE MINISTRIES have begun at St. Mark's. For info contact: Kyoko Mary Kageyama 914-723-6118 (MJM office) < kyokomary@aol.com > ND² New Day/Nuevo Dia: Sabados 5:00pm en el Parish Hall innovative multicultural bilingual worship and Eucharist. Lively and contemporary with interactive reflection on the scriptures through spoken word and the arts and music that crosses cultures and generations, includes a festive fellowship meal. Contact Father Frank Morales, Kathy Chase, Gina Figueroa Wednesday Evensong, 6:30pm Evensong, Meditation and Holy Eucharist. The first Wednesday of each month is a healing service .

⁶ Alternative worship options were compiled by Licia Affer, Seminary Intern from the Diocese of Arizona, Summer 2007.

Church	St Michael's New York City
Info	http://www.saintmichaelschurch.org/worship/schedule.html
Type of service	<p>The Word Made Young is our worship service designed for young children offered at 10:00 am in the Parish House. Children from age 3-2nd grade come together for worship, and then rejoin their parents at the Peace for Holy Communion.</p> <p>INTERSECTION (Sunday at 6:00 pm) is a quiet, meditative service, with a lot of lay involvement, a response to the Gospel and a beautiful liturgy for the confession of sins.</p>

Church	Church of the Epiphany
Info	<p>1393 York Avenue (at East 74th Street) New York, NY 10021-3407 http://www.epiphanynyc.org/</p>
Type of service	<p>Sunday evening alternative service Sanctuary http://www.sanctuarvny.org First and Third Sundays at 6:00 P.M. An alternative worship experience for adults, newcomers, and anyone searching for God.</p>

Church	Holy Trinity NYC
Info	http://www.bachvespersnyc.org/
Type of service	<p>The Bach vespers are unique in several ways, perhaps most notably in that there are loads of non-Christians who attend regularly. Also, Holy Trinity is the only church in the US that does all the existing Bach vespers as Bach wrote and scheduled them.</p>

Church	St. George's-by-the-River Episcopal Church
Info	<p>7 Lincoln Avenue, Rumson, NJ 07760 Phone: 732-842-0596 /www.stgeorgesrumson.org The Rev. Ophelia Laughlin</p>
Type of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Eucharist is every Wednesday evening. Short, child friendly, informal, intimate, sometimes with elements of instructed Eucharist for kids and adults. Lots of lay participation. Usually held in choir stalls but sometimes in

	<p>garden, social hall or elsewhere. Good turn out that appears to expand range of folks who make to worship in a given week rather than just cut down on faces seen Sunday. Followed by potluck certain week each month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also a children's chapel in Church School, during main Sunday service, roughly monthly. Kids creed, hymns, lectionary, homily, prayer candle basket (plant a candle in sand basket at altar, offer a prayer), followed by Eucharist for kids and teachers. Good personal connections between kids and clergy. Good worship and care for adult teachers. Hopefully nice alternative for clergy (two priests required if chapel is during main service).
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Church	Diocese of Maine
Info	http://www.diomaine.org/
Type of service	<p>The Parish of St. Andrew and St. John in Seal Cove and Southwest Harbor, the Parish of St. Mary and St. Jude in Mount Desert, St. Saviour's in Bar Harbor, and the Church of Our Father in Halls Cove share a rotating Taize service</p> <p>*St. John's also offers a contemplative prayer service every Wednesday at 6 a.m.</p>

Church	Saint Joseph's Episcopal Church
Info	<p>Boynton Beach, FL</p> <p>http://www.stjosephboyntonbeach.org/</p>
Type of service	Emerge: on Sunday night, is geared toward youth and young adults.

Church	St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral
Info	<p>138, Tremont St.</p> <p>www.thecrossingboston.org</p> <p>617.482.4826 x318</p>
Type of service	<p>Every Thursday: Worship & Community 6 pm / Spiritual Practice: We engage in spiritual practice before worship, from 6 to 6:30pm. Leaders step up to lead us in a month's worth of practice. If you'd like to share a spiritual practice that keeps you close to God, volunteer at thecrossing@diomass.org.</p> <p>6:30 pm / Worship: Come just to worship. Or, if you'd like to dive a little deeper, you could</p>

	<p>create beauty and help with set-up; lead reflections for all or part of a month; offer the prayers; share some art; sing your heart out; play an instrument. Volunteer at thecrossing@diomass.org.</p> <p>After worship / Connect: Help with clean up and then join the crew for some casual social time. Unless we're absolutely wiped, there's usually something going on!</p> <p>Every other month, after worship / Go Deep: We'll share a more in-depth conversation on something that will enrich our formation as individuals and as a community. We clean up quick and then head up to our community space to eat and go deep. Details in the "Life @ The Crossing" email updates (to get on the list, email us at thecrossing@diomass.org).</p>
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Church	King of Peace
Info	6230 Laurel Island Parkway Kingsland, GA 31548 912.5108958 www. Kingofpeace.org
Type of service	<p>A Soup Supper 5:30 p.m. is followed by a communion service with keyboard music at 6:15 p.m.</p> <p>We also offer a Children's Church that takes kids in kindergarten through third grade out for a portion of the service to hear the lessons for the day in a kid-friendly fashion. The kids return to take communion with their families. Once a month Kids in the Kingdom day. Kids stay after the service for a meal, a Bible story, crafts and music. Kids from age two to twelve are invited to stay after the service for the fun, while parents slip out for a lunch on their own.</p>

Church	Advent Lutheran NYC
Info	<p>Broadway at 93rd</p> <p>http://adventnyc.org/commonground.html</p> <p>Elise Brown is the contact there</p> <p>- jelisebrown@aol.com</p>
Type of service	<p>Common Ground: An Alternative Worship Experience</p> <p>Common Ground is a group of people; it is also a path forged by Advent Lutheran's young adults in the spring of 2006 after much discussion. This fall, we opened the front doors and began the journey. We are teachers, artists, business people, seminarians, nannies, musicians, dreamers, cooks, wanderers, and wonderers. We are struggling and are joyful with life's challenges as we look at the life of Jesus. Seeing the sturdy bridges Jesus sets before us helps us turn our challenges into blossoms and shows us ways to step out in a courageous, fun, and deepening love that can be accessed by all. We hope Common Ground offers ways for people in NYC and beyond to have a family night-light. The "family" we are forming and continue</p>

	<p>to seek is made up of individuals inhabiting our area whether single or coupled, with children or without. The feedback we have received says Common Ground is working to help people feel more connected to their humanity and spirituality, to connect with God and one another, to worship in new ways, and to stay down-to-earth. Something good is going on here in this time and place, with this group of people called Common Ground.</p> <p>Please join us! Come alone or with your friends. We meet from 7:30-8:30 every other Thursday night.</p>
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Church	Community Lutheran Church
Info	<p>3720 East Tropicana Avenue Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 702-458-2241 www.communitylutheran.com</p>
Type of Gathering	<p>Sunday 7:00 p.m. If you enjoy good ol' southern gospel hymns and a traditional liturgical format offered in a casual style, then our Country Western Gospel service is for you. Music and congregational singing is led by the Honky Tonk Angels. This unique country western band has provided music for this service for ten years. Community Lutheran is known nation-wide for this ground-breaking worship service. Holy Communion is served each Sunday.</p>

Church	Immanuel Lutheran Church
Info	<p>5955 S. Elm avenue Easton, CA 93706 555.237.7909 www.immanueleaston.com</p>
Type of Gathering	<p>Easton Country Gospel congregation; where the music is gospel, the style is country, and the message is the good news of Jesus Christ. This evening congregation refers to itself as a multi-denominational congregation. Its members come from many different Christian churches and from no church background at all. No matter what their church background is, or whether they have no church background at all, they feel welcome there. Membership in this congregation is by participation. Visitors are treated like new friends and everyone is a member.</p>

Church	St. Mark's Cathedral of Seattle
Info	<p>Broadway at 93rd http://adventnyc.org/commonground.html Elise Brown - jelisebrown@aol.com</p>
Type of service	Lovely Compline service sung by a men's choir attracts tons of young

	adults, who probably have little to nothing to do with church; they come and sit in the pews, on the chancel steps, even lie down, anything, in the darkened cathedral. It is a very meditative service and it reaches out to hundreds who don't seem to care much for the institutional church. There is no need for prayer book, hymnals, or bulletins. Everything is sung or said by the choir, and people can join in (such as the Lord's Prayer, which they choose to do) if they want to.
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Church	Church of the Beloved
Info	Church of the Beloved 15105-D John J. Delaney Drive #311 Charlotte, NC 28277 Phone: 704.752.8988
Type of service	An ever-deepening experience of God is what we hope worshippers find at Church of the Beloved. Our Sunday worship normally lasts about an hour and presents the timeless truths of Christianity in a way that is relevant to today's children, teens and adults . It includes an experience of timeless and holy mystery, practical biblical messages, multimedia , prayers for the needs of the world and sharing in the reception of communion (Jesus' Body and Blood). In our opinion, the best "church music" is simply music that leads people closer to God. So in a Beloved worship celebration you will find a wide variety of musical styles, from plainsong and hymns to U2 and Train.

Church	Christ Church United Methodist
Info	4845 NE 25 th Ave Fort Lauderdale, FL 954.771.7300
Type of Gathering	Celebrate Recovery - A Christ-centered, 12-step worship service on Friday evenings at 7pm with small groups following. The purpose of "Celebrate Recovery" is to experience God's healing power in our lives, allowing us to be changed. We open the door by sharing our experience, strength and hope with one another. In addition, we become willing to accept God's grace in solving our problems.

Church	Saugatuck Congregational Church
Info	www.Saugatuckchurch.org 245 Post Road East Westport, CT 06880 203-227-1261
Type of Gathering	Serenity Service . The Twelve Step meetings at Saugatuck Congregational Church cover many self help groups. Close to fifty meetings every week give help and support to anyone who is willing to learn from the greater wisdom of people who have participated for a long time.

Church	Walnut Creek United Methodist
Info	Tel: 925-934-4208, 1543 Sunnyvale Avenue, Walnut Creek, California 94596
Type of Gathering	<p>The Inner Life: Contemplative Worship Service</p> <p>If you are looking for a quiet place in the crazy making world of impacted schedules, impacted travel and impacted living, The Inner Life service could be meaningful for you. Using quiet, simple music, scripture readings, and silence, this worship experience creates an environment of quiet contemplation. People who seek this service appreciate the beauty of silence, and find the opportunity to quiet a busy mind to enhance their communion with God.</p>

Church	Crosspointe Meadows Church
Info	<p>www.crosspointemeadows.org/worship info@crosspointemeadows.org 39830 Grand River Suite B1-C Novi, MI 48375 (248) 427-2700 Rev. Danny L. Langley, senior pastor</p>
Type of Gathering	<p>Multisensory worship blends elements that appeal to all five of the human senses in order to provide a powerful experience to everyone. We use many different forms and media during our worship service including modern praise and performance music, drama, video, interaction, even food and drink. Feel free to bring your coffee in to the service with you!</p>

Church	Peninsula Bible Church
Info	<p>www.pbc.org 3505 Middlefield Rd Palo Alto, CA Vicky Powers, Children's ministry pastor 650.494.3840 x253 Vicky_powers@pbc.org</p>
Type of Gathering	<p>Children and parents see http://www.pbc.org/files/pdf/23588_VisionKidsinWorship.pdf</p>

Church	St Anthony on the Desert
Info	<p>12990 East Shea Boulevard, Scottsdale, AZ 85259, Phone: (480) 451-0860, Fax: (480) 451-4413 http://www.st-anthony.net/</p>

Type of Gathering	<p>Multiple-choice Monthly Gathering</p> <p>St Anthony has tried having 4 different gatherings for every Sunday of the month. The experiment was ended for different reasons, but Ms Jill Kyler (jillkyler@st-anthony.net) is available to talk about what worked and what didn't work for them.</p> <p>The services were Taizé, Praise and Worship, an outdoor gathering with pets in the courtyard and a “contemporary” service.</p>
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Church	St. Stephen's
Info	Rev. David Anderson in Richmond danderson@saintstephensrichmond.net
Type of Gathering	<p>The Celtic Eucharist: Rector Gary Jones used this service successfully in Memphis and brought it to Richmond in the last 6-12 months where it has also been successful.</p> <p>Highlights: 5 pm Sunday, different every week, candles, chanting, mystery.</p>

Church	United Methodist Church of Tarrytown
Info	27 S Washington St Tarrytown, NY 10591 (914) 631-6935 (914) 332.4489 umctt@hotmail.com
Type of Gathering	A family service for parents and children with autism

- If you are considering a **Gathering for women**, two good resources are the website of the Presbyterian Church women: <http://www.pcusa.org/women/celebratethegifts/index.htm> and the space devoted to Women ministries on <http://www.episcopalchurch.org>
- If you are considering a **U2charist** or a similar type of gathering, please refer to: <http://www.e4gr.org/pray/u2charists.html>
- If you are interested in reaching out to the **deaf and hard of hearing** within your community: <http://www.nvrc.org/content> Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons and <http://www.ncccusa.org/assembly/deaf.htm>
- The Church of the Holy Apostles in New York organizes a variety of gatherings for the **Homeless**. See www.holyapostlesnyc.org

- Trinity United Methodist, Huntsville, Alabama, has an early morning “Cappuccino and Christ” gathering
http://www.trinityhsv.org/praise_&_worship/service_schedule.htm

Church	St Ann’s Church for the Deaf
Info	209 E. 16th St. New York, NY 10003-3702 Cell: (917) 502-4935 ictus41@rcn.com ; mis_stann@sprint.blackberry.net
Type of Gathering	

- The Diocese of Massachusetts' Liturgy and Music Committee has compiled an **annotated bibliography of liturgy-planning resources**, including a broad range of suggested materials for inclusive language, liturgy planning, liturgical leadership training, worship in multiethnic communities and with young people, and much more. It can be found on the website of the Episcopal Church center in the context of its “Worship Well”:
<http://www.theworshipwell.org/word.html#fresh>

The Congregation’s Activities

Figure 19. Wishing Doesn't Make it So, But it Means Something

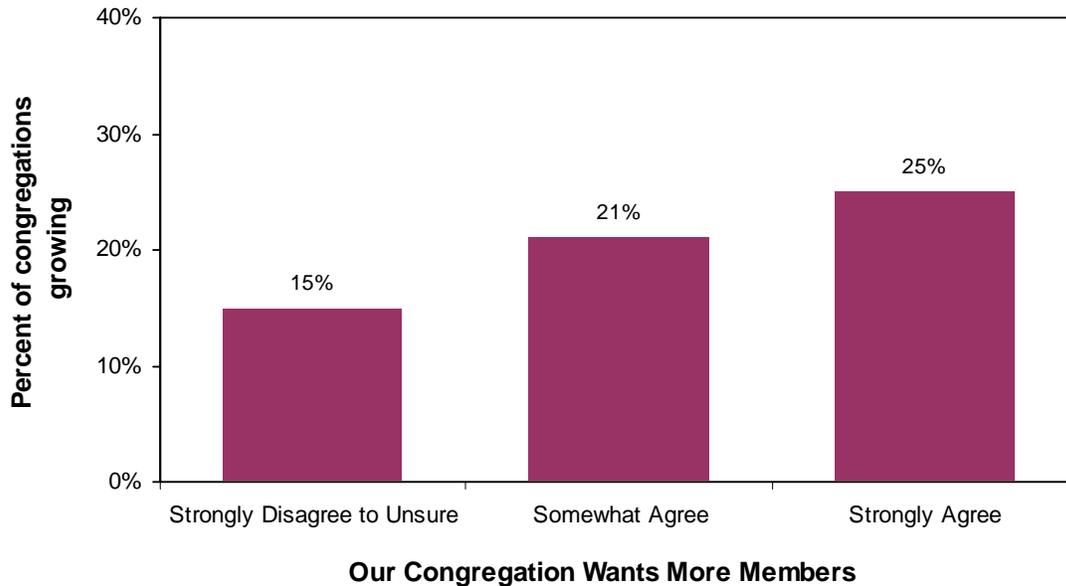
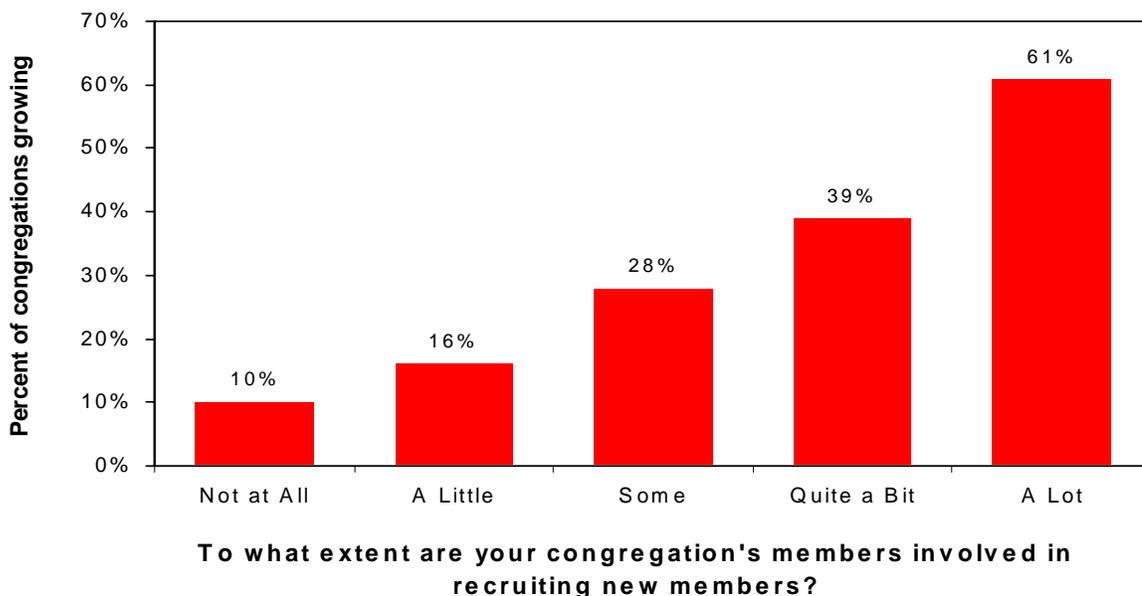


Figure 20. Recruiting New Members



Recruiting new members begins with Jesus Christ, and the knowledge that our lives have been and are being transformed by his love. Becoming aware of this transformation and being able to share that story is a key to proclaiming our faith. This exercise is designed to equip Christ's followers to do just that.

Preparing to Tell Your Faith Story

created by Charles Fulton and Susy Miller

1. Draw a timeline from left to right on a sheet of paper, the left being your birth, the right being the present. On the timeline, mark and identify (by year) significant events that were turning points in your life.
2. Above the line describe the context within which the event occurred. What else was going on in your life at that time?
3. Below the line describe your awareness of God at that point. Was God present or absent?
4. What was God doing with you in that event?
5. Look at the whole timeline. Are there patterns in the turning point events of your life? What initiates turning points, what is required of you, how were you different after these events?
6. What are the patterns in your experience of God and your relationship with God? Is there a consistency in God's actions and responses in your turning points?
Remember: God is the main character in this story, what God has done and is doing in your life. You are the acted upon.

7. Imagine telling someone about your insights into God’s presence and working in your life. Tell your story of how God has come into your life and what has been the result when you have recognized God’s presence. Tell the story to yourself, then tell the story to a friend. Listen for the story your story will trigger in your friend.
8. Tell your story to someone outside a faith community.
9. Commit to inviting God into your life as your life line lengthens into your future, regularly engaging the Gospel with others.

Figure 21. Luddites Beware!

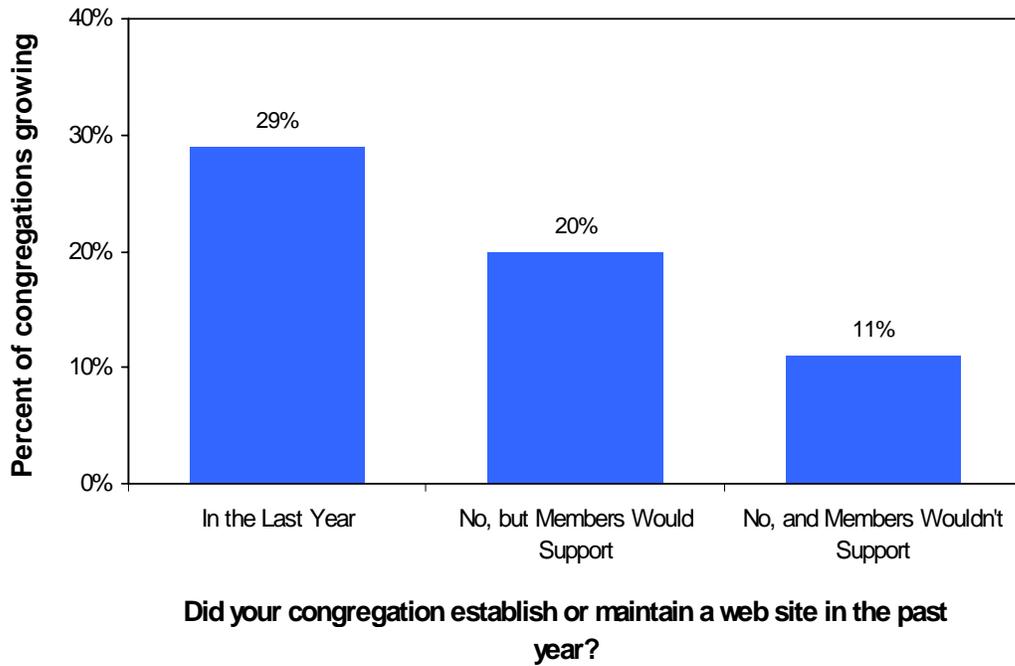
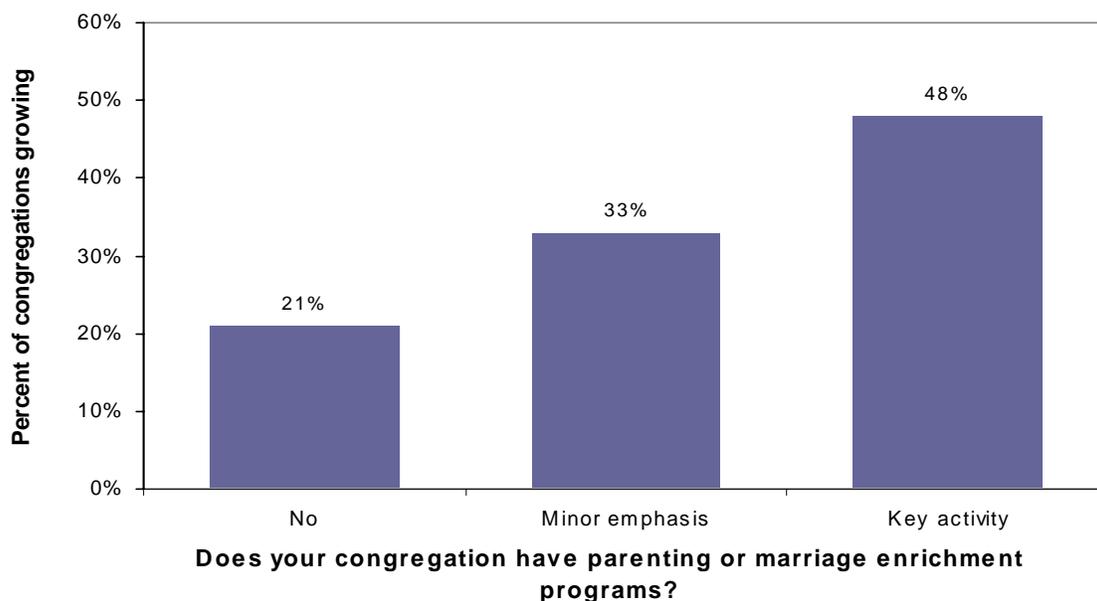


Figure 22. Parenting and Marriage Enrichment



Reaching Out by Learning About Your Neighbor’s Need: How to Find Your Congregation’s Percept Report

Percept is a company that provides the largest faith-based demographic research company in the United States.

To find your congregation’s Percept report and other valuable demographic-based congregational development tools and services (including downloadable resources), visit www.Percept.info.

For a complementary copy of your congregation’s Firstview Percept report (an \$80 value), along with average Sunday attendance and giving trends for your congregation and diocese visit the Study Your Congregation page on the Episcopal Church web site at: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/growth_60791_ENG_HTM.htm

1. When you reach this site, click on the name of your diocese first.
2. Once the diocese loads (which can take a moment), click on the name of your congregation.
3. Once the congregation loads (which also can take a moment), click on the desired link.
 - a. For the Firstview Percept demographic report, click on **Zip Code Profile**.
 - b. For your congregation’s Average Sunday Attendance and giving trends, click on the **View Church Chart**.
 - c. For specific suggestions for your congregation’s size, growth trend, and geographic location, click on **View Description and Resources** (this portion is currently being revised. While there is helpful content, check back periodically for updates.)

Reaching Out to Your Neighbor Using Your Congregation's Percept Report:

Are there people in your community who are not involved in a faith community?

From page 4 of your congregation's Firstview Percept Report, question P1, write the total number of people who currently reside in your area. From page 6, question F1, write the percentage of households estimated to have no faith involvement as a decimal number. Multiply these two numbers to estimate how many people in your community are currently with out any identified faith involvement.

Example: 10,000 people reside in area, 25% show no faith involvement.
 $10,000 \times 0.25 = 2,500$ people currently residing in area with no faith involvement

Who is your neighbor?

From page 4, chart D1, which lifestyle group is most prevalent in your community? Is there one that is predominant? If not, include all that apply.

From page 4, chart D2&3, which racial/ethnic group is most prevalent in your community? Is there one that is predominant? If not, write all that apply.

From page 4, chart D4, what are the major generational groups represented? Is there one that is predominant? If not, write all that apply.

From page 5, chart D5, how traditional is family structure in your community?

From page 5, chart D6, how educated are the adults? Is there one educational level that predominates? If not, write all that apply.

What are your neighbor's concerns?

From page 5, chart C1, which concerns are highest on the minds of the people in your community? Look over the description of concerns. List these concerns.

From page 5, chart C2, what is the overall community stress level in your area?

From page 5, chart C3, how much resistance is there to change in your community?

How can your congregation reach your neighbor?

From page 6, chart F1, how likely are people in your community to become affiliated with a historic Christian denomination such as the Episcopal Church?

Financial sustainability is becoming an increasing concern. From page 6, chart F2, does the likely giving potential for community suggest that your congregation can be financially sustainable, now and in the future?

From page 6, chart F3, what style of worship, architecture and music does your community prefer?

From page 6, chart F4, which programs or services are most likely to be preferred in your community?

From page 6, chart F5, how likely are people to have some religious preference? How could your community's religious preference (or lack there of) direct your congregation's intentional evangelism?

What is one learning from this Percept exercise that could affect the mission and ministry of your congregation?

Figure 23. If You Call Them You Will Grow

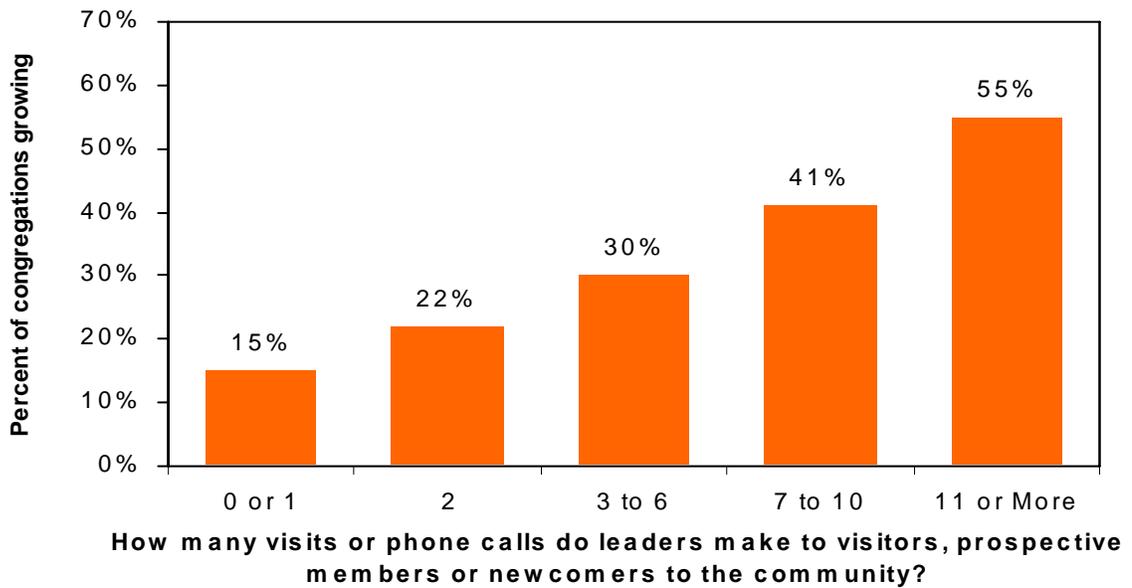
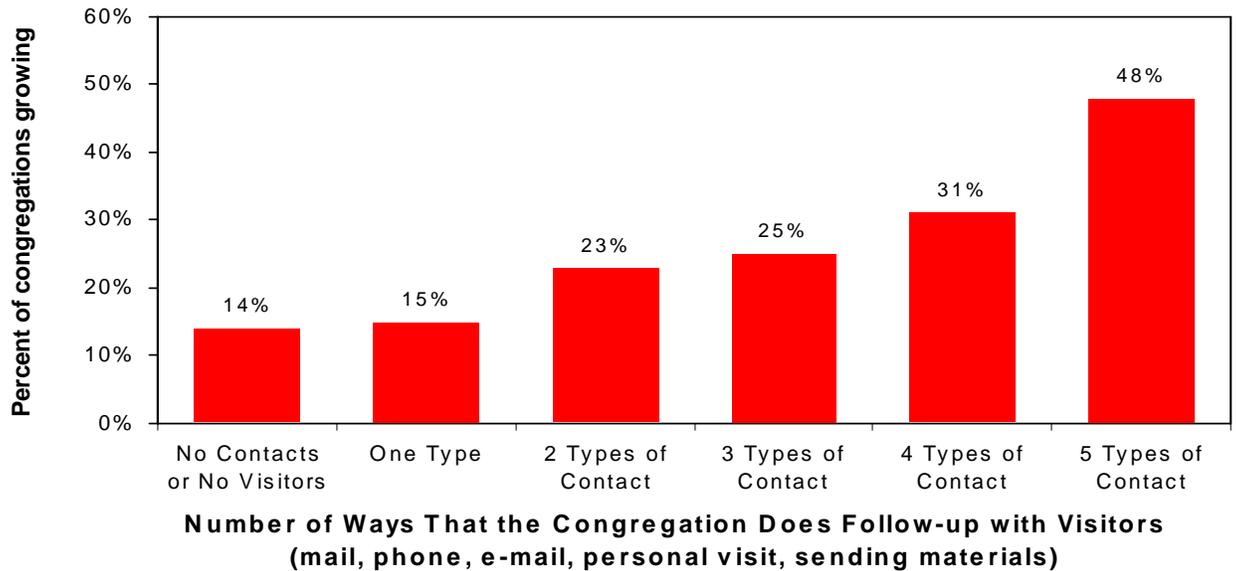


Figure 24. Letting Them Know You Care



Letting Them Know You Care: A Lesson in What Not to Do (John's Story)

Yes, this is really true. It is written by an acquaintance who had never worshipped in a church or with any faith community. He is at a point of transition in his life, having recently sold a business overseas and returned to the United States to take care of his elderly widowed mother who is ill...he was curious about Christianity and so decided to visit an Episcopal Church:

I looked in the phone book and found two Episcopal Churches listed. I went by the first one, but there was no sign and I thought it was abandoned. I wondered, "Can a church go out of business? I didn't think they could." I then went on to a larger church a little further on. I sat in the parking lot for a long time with my knees shaking, watching as people got out of their cars, and wanting to go in a little late to just sneak in to the back. However, when I finally mustered the nerve and entered the courtyard where I had seen people enter, I was faced with two closed doors. Not knowing which to choose, I opened one and entered. Unfortunately I had selected incorrectly and entered the front of the church. Trapped with everyone staring, I quickly found my way to the front row.

I was unable to follow anything anyone was doing, and no one brought me the program that they all seemed to be using. I was kind of freaked out--everyone stands, then they sit, they say prayers and words, they cross themselves, they change books. I didn't know what on earth they were doing or what was going to happen next. Increasingly intimidated, as I sat in the front row the preacher suddenly decided to "preach" from the center aisle, right next to where I was sitting. He mostly talked about something called a diocese (I wondered what a diocese is?) As he was preaching he then said something that made everyone start mumbling some phrases again, and the preacher, still in the center aisle, totally freaked me out and grabbed my hand. I thought I was being singled out, but

then realized that everyone was getting up and moving all around the church hugging and shaking hands with each other (the peace).

Next, something happened at the table up front, and then everyone got up to leave. But they all headed for the front door where I'd entered. As I followed them up I realized that they weren't leaving; instead, they all kneeled and someone brought around some bread, then we all went back to our seats.

Finally, after it was all over, someone came up to me with a card and asked me to write my contact information and answer a question. The question asked what my interest at St. Swithens was. As I really didn't know what to put, I remembered that I'd often heard Christians talk about Baptism, so I wrote baptism. All the people then disappeared off into another building, I watched, and then left in my car.

Two weeks later John received a card in the mail. It read, "Thank you for visiting St. Swithens. While we are pleased to learn of your interest in baptism, our confirmation classes in preparation for Bishop X's visit in six weeks began two weeks ago. To be considered for baptism and confirmation on that date you will need to join the classes on Wednesday night at 7PM." John's question to me? "What is confirmation, how is Bishop X involved, and how can I possibly attend when I work nights?"

While John's story reads like a farce, it is, once again, instructive to those of us who profess to be followers of Christ. We never know who it is that will walk in the door (maybe even the wrong door), what issue that person may be experiencing, and if this is the only opportunity they will ever have to be introduced to the transformative love of Jesus Christ.

Is your congregation equipped to radically welcome and incorporate guests?

Your Congregation's Loving Actions

In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus commands that we are to "love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (NRSV).

Part of congregational development therefore involves equipping the faith community to live out its part in Christ's mission of love of neighbor—this translates into loving action (acts of compassion, working to transform unjust structures in the world, and environmental justice to name just some).

Resources to assist your congregation as you reach out in love include:

- *God's Mission in the World: An Ecumenical Study Guide on Global Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals* is a study resource for congregations and

- other groups seeking to learn more about global poverty and to become part of the worldwide movement for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Material is organized into six easily implemented one-hour study sessions. For more information visit <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn>.
- *Beijing Circles*: a tool which can help us educate ourselves and one another about the issues affecting women globally and then to advocate within our church and the world to bring about positive change. Download at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/41685_73656_ENG_HTML.htm?menupage=73689.
 - “Shall We Gather? Anglican Women Together,” a film that documents a gathering of the Anglican Communion’s delegates to the 49th session of the United Nations commission on the status of women who put their faith into action. Available with out charge. Available through Episcopal Books & Resources (800-334-7626) or blucas@episcopalchurch.org
 - Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) continues to carry out the ministry to the uprooted it began over 60 years ago to resettle refugees, advocate with and for immigrants, and raise awareness of the plight of the uprooted in our church. The Gospel mandate to extend hospitality to strangers and our Baptismal covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons calls us to this ministry. For more information about EMM (including a free DVD entitled “A Map of Faith-Sharing the Journey with the Uprooted” which is a resource for faith formation that explores the theme of spiritual journeying, and comes with a study guide and web links to resources) visit <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/emm.htm> or contact John Denaro, Episcopal Migration Ministries (800-334-7626; jdenaro@episcopalchurch.org).
 - “Windows on Mission: Stories of DFMS Missionaries Around the World” highlights eleven unique mission journeys with missionaries who share their joys and challenges of doing God’s work throughout the world. 2 DVD Set, \$39.95. (each of the eleven segments run between 15 and 25 minutes in length.) An accompanying study guide will soon be available for download with out charge at <http://episcopalchurch.org/agr.htm> or contact Episcopal Books & Resources (800-334-7626) or blucas@episcopalchurch.org.
 - "Changing Lives: Behind the Walls at Angola" is a new feature-length video documentary following the effects of an Episcopal chaplain's ministry inside a prison once considered the bloodiest in America: the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, Louisiana This DVD follows Deacon Charles DeGravelles as he ministers to the men inside Angola, most of whom will never set foot outside the prison. Also featured in the documentary is the Rev. Jacqueline Means, prison ministries director on the Episcopal Church Center staff. Available through Episcopal Books & Resources, 800 334-7626 or blucas@episcopalchurch.org

Further Resources to Strengthen Your Congregation’s Activities:

Evangelism

- Church Ad Project: Advertising Tools for Powerful Episcopal Evangelism. Many reasonably priced options for the small congregation. <http://www.churchad.com/>

- “Voices of Young Adults: Listening to 20-Somethings Talk About the Church.” In June 2005, the Episcopal Church invited young adults from across the US to share opinions about the church. Some of these young people are active in congregational life and some are not, but all share a wellspring of affection for the Episcopal Church. We invite you to listen to these voices. Available for download without fee at http://episcopalchurch.org/49662_78132_ENG_HTML.htm.

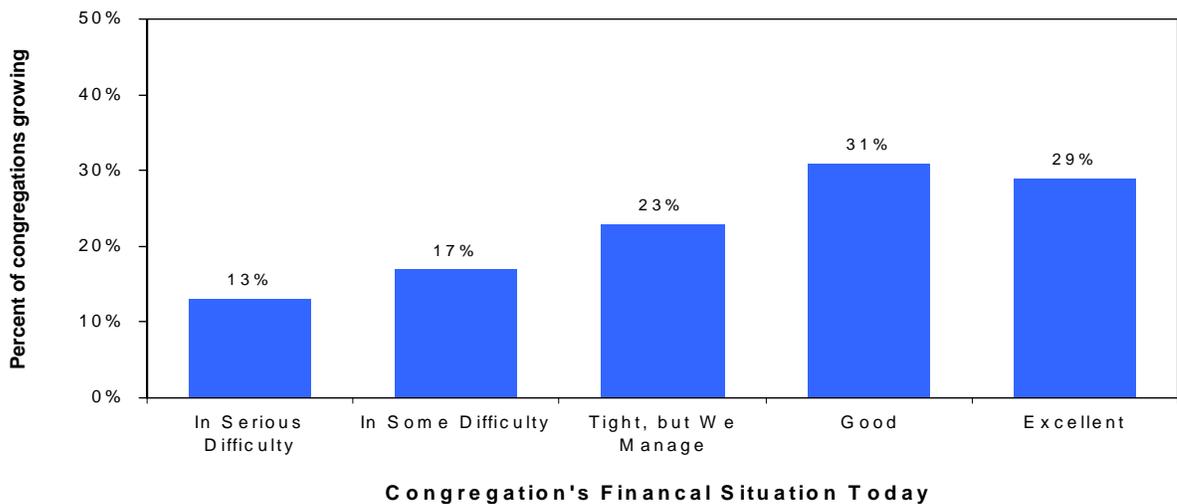
Education

For information on Christian Education, visit the Educators web page on the Episcopal Church website at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/48931_ENG_HTML.htm. Here you will find foundational and theoretical information on the catechetical process in the Episcopal Church along with resources to empower Christian Educators and others to engage in theological reflection in relationship to the ministry of lifelong faith formation.

- For lesson plans for small congregations, visit http://www.episcopalchurch.org/50534_ENG_HTML.htm?menupage=51914. Here you will find lesson plans that follow the Revised Common Lectionary for young children, older children and adults.
- For information on theological education, visit the Theological Education for All website at <http://www.teforall.org/> Here you will find a reference tool for Episcopalians and all who want to study scripture, learn about church tradition, and apply God given reason to the challenges of contemporary life. At this site you can put together your own learning plan, explore web reference tools and reading lists, find out what seminaries offer, or search a rich ecumenical data base of educational events. Christian educators will find ideas for celebrating Theological Education Sunday in your congregation.

The Congregation’s Leadership

Figure 25. Growing in Members and Money



Stewardship: Using the Gifts God Has Given Us to Do the Work that God Has Given Us to Do

- Visit the Stewardship pages of The Episcopal Church web site at <http://episcopalchurch.org/stewardship.htm> At this site you will find a large amount of downloadable and very useful information designed to help leaders in congregations and dioceses to development stewardship programs that help carry out the work God is calling them to do. Most of the information found in the *Stewardship Handbook* (on the display table at events and available through the Stewardship Office) is also in downloadable format at this site. For more information contact Terry Parsons, stewardship officer, Congregational Development, tparsons@episcopalchurch.org , (800) 334-7626, ext. 6284.

Figure 26. Clergy Tenure and Growth

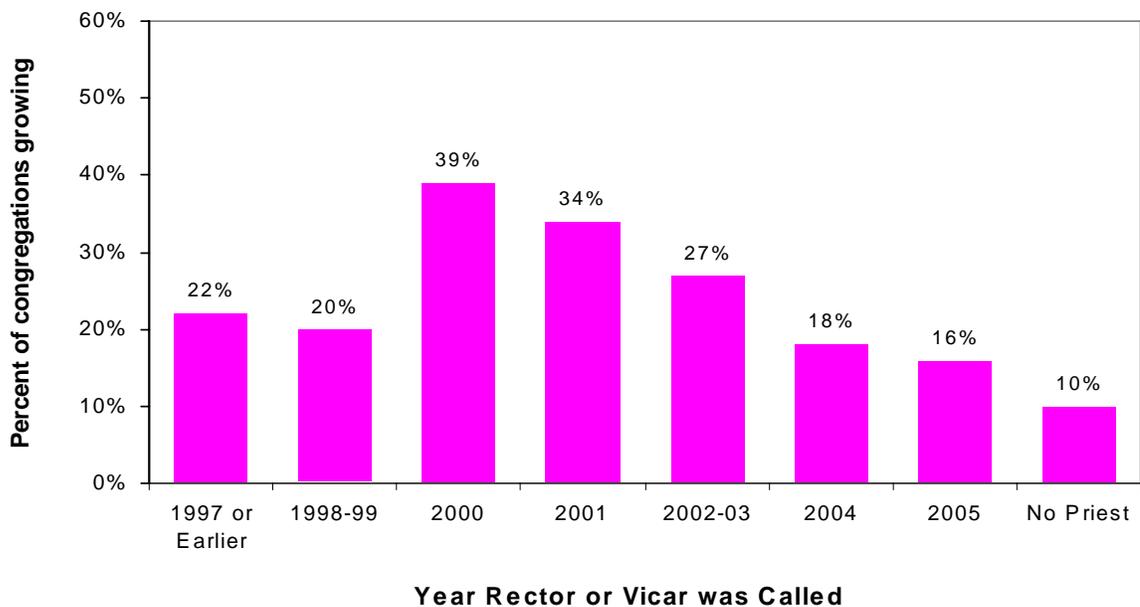


Figure 27: Generating Enthusiasm and Growth

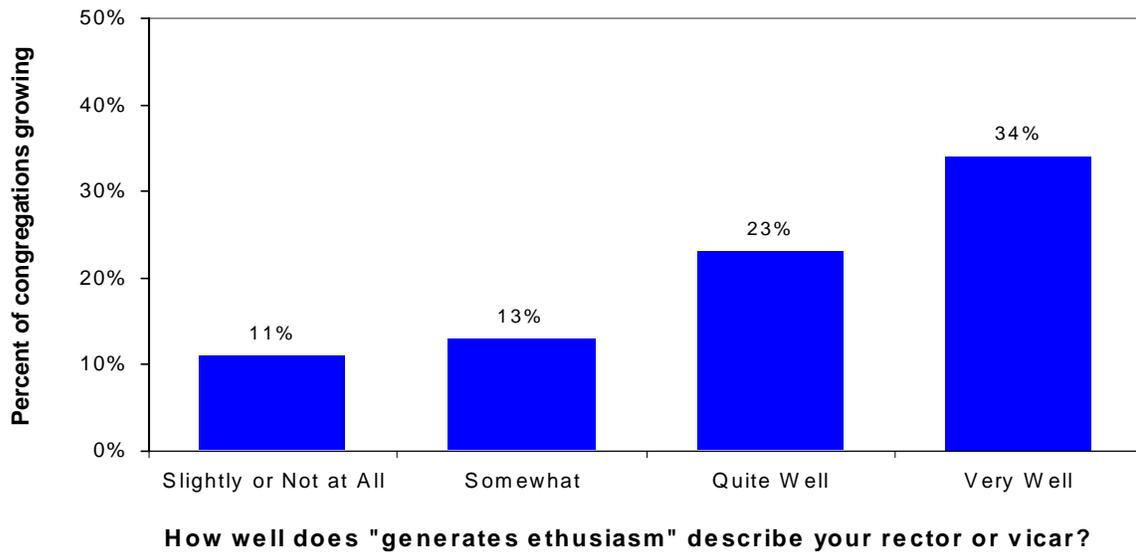
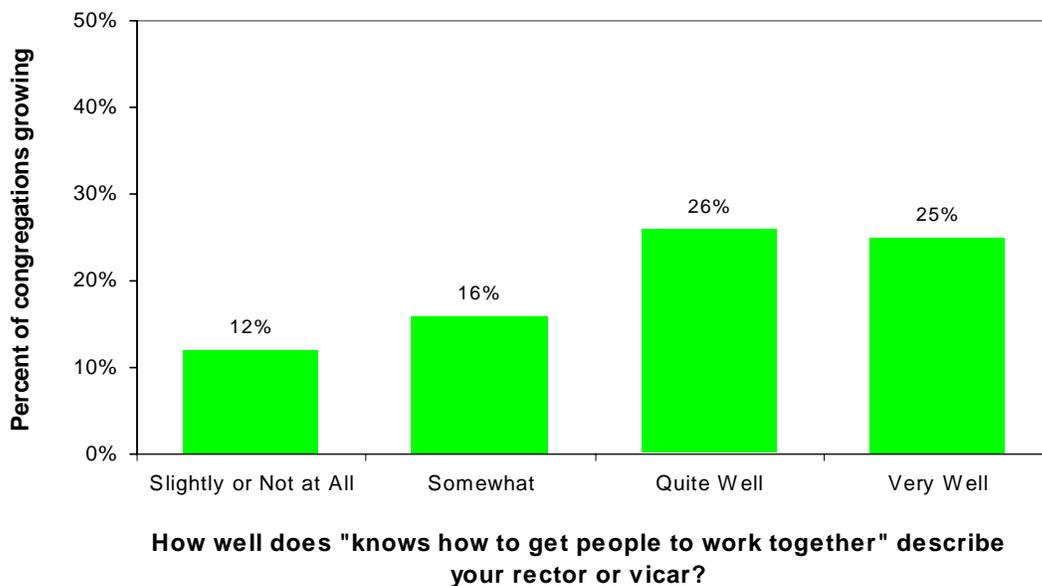


Figure 28: Cooperative Leadership and Growth



Sacramental Leadership Options in the Small Church: “There’s a New Model Born Every Minute”

A desire for a different type of leadership structure, finances, logistics, the diocese, clergy concerns, plus many other reasons prompt some small congregations to look at alternative models of ministry other than the traditional “one-priest—one altar” model. Below is a list that briefly describes some of the models. It is by no means exhaustive, and is continuously growing, changing, and evolving.

If alternative models of sacramental leadership are of interest to your congregation, consider attending the Creative Models of Sacramental Leadership conference October 7-10, 2007 at Kanuga, or request a copy of the resource that will be produced from this event (go to http://www.episcopalchurch.org/smallchurch_27512_ENG_HTML.htm)

Circuit Rider Priests: Team of priests rotate through group of churches. Can be organized, paid and deployed by the diocese.

Cluster, Solo Priest: Three or more congregations share the ministry of one priest. Strong local lay ministry team in each congregation and the existence of an inter-parish council where most successful.

Cluster, Leadership Team: Three or more congregations share the ministry of two or more clergy. Strong local lay ministry team in each congregation and the existence of an inter-parish council where most successful.

Cluster, Interdenominational: Three or more congregations with different denominational affiliation in different locations share the ministry of one or more clergy. (Ex: An ELCA congregation, an Episcopal congregation, and a Presbyterian USA).

Interdenominational/Ecumenical/Co-operating Parish: Two or more congregations with different denominational affiliation in different locations merge into one in one location.

Interfaith Congregation: Two or more faith traditions agree to share space/facilities, resources, and potentially mission.

Interim Priest: Priest hired for the transition period between sacramental leaders, or sacramental leadership models.

Merger: Two or more congregations merge into one in one location.

Minister at Large: Diocesan model where clergy is paid by the diocese and rotates through different congregations.

Pastors from other Denominations: Sacramental leadership provided by clergy from denomination other than Episcopal.

International Priests/Pastors: Sacramental leadership provided by recruiting clergy from locations other than congregation's country.

Retired Priest

Satellite Congregation Model: Larger congregation with multiple staff partners with smaller congregation and provides sacramental and other ministers (such as musicians). Can also be seen in the model where a larger congregation starts a new daughter church in a different location to reach new people and resources that congregation (ex.: store front church, middle-school location, etc.)

Seminary Student Intern: Seminary student provides sacramental leadership.

Self-Supporting Priest/Tentmaker Priest: Priest with second profession/source of income ministers to congregation with out financial compensation.

Solo Priest, Part Time

Solo Deacon: Deacon officiates at Reserved Sacrament Eucharist; periodic consecration by a neighboring priest.

Total Ministry (many styles and many names!): locally identified and trained team provides ministry of the priest as seen in the solo-priest model, including sacramental leadership.

Supply Priest: Priest paid for sacramental ministry on a service by service basis.

Yoke: Two congregations in different locations share the ministry of one priest

Tools and Events for Leadership Development

If **alternative models of sacramental leadership** are of interest to your congregation, consider attending the *Creative Models of Sacramental Leadership* conference October 7-10, 2007 at Kanuga, or request a copy of the resource that will be produced from this event. (Go to http://www.episcopalchurch.org/smallchurch_27512_ENG_HTML.htm.)

If you are **leading a congregation through change**, consider attending Upward Bound. Upward Bound is for the congregational development leader who is ready to address the following situations:

- Your primary goals are sabotaged by distracting mini-fires.
- Emotional responses are disproportionate to the situation.
- You are leading 'process' with people operating in a 'yes or no' world.
- You are caught in a problem that is not yours to solve.

- There is a negative force that drains time and emotional energy.
- Passive-aggressive behaviors have reached an artful level.

Visit <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/upward.htm> for more information.

The Office for Ministry Development (OMD) assists leaders to invigorate the ministry of God's people –in daily life and within the Episcopal Church. The goal is to expand the capacity of the Church for effective and transformative mission in response to the Baptismal Covenant and the gospel of Jesus Christ. To learn more about OMD, including the programs for leadership development such as Fresh Start, visit <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministry.htm>.

Stories of Mission and Ministry from Vital Small Congregations



Pictured above:

The Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund, Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Spokane, Washington
Story Submitted by Kristi Phillip for Episcopal Life, September, 2007 Issue

(SPOKANE, WA) Holy Trinity Church is rich with history, but it is the future that is on members' minds these days.

The small church is charting a new course after 112 years in Spokane's west central area, working hard to reconnect with the neighborhood, exploring some new worship forms and offering hospitality to everyone who comes their way.

But a lot of work lies ahead. "This is a true re-start," said the Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund, vicar. "There were only three people when we started." Lebens-Englund, Spokane's youngest priest at 33, serves half-time at Holy Trinity and half-time at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist across the Spokane River. "We're working to do some organic community-building in the neighborhood. Some of the old members are coming back. Some new folks are dropping in."

The brown, shingled building was once home to a large and lively congregation. For many years it was Spokane's Anglo-Catholic parish with an elaborate liturgy and an energetic outreach ministry. In the 1980s the church grew, attracting people who opposed the ordination of women and sought a more traditional parish. There were four liturgies each weekend to accommodate the growing congregation.

But by 1995 Holy Trinity's rector had persuaded most of the congregation to leave the Episcopal Church and form a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Church. They hoped to retain the parish property, but the courts ruled in favor of the diocese and the new Orthodox congregation moved out.

The small group who remained struggled to rebuild. The church was served first by a deacon in charge, then an interim priest and finally a part-time rector. The continuing decline led Bishop James Waggoner and the Diocesan Council to appoint new leadership and Lebens-Englund began his work there in March.

Holy Trinity is considered a "mission partner" with the cathedral and many parishioners have helped with tasks like cleaning the church, caring for altar linens, tending the garden and have joined in worship services.

There are two Sunday services, Lebens-Englund said. The 9 a.m. service is more traditional in flavor. The evening service, "Sundays@ 7" is more contemporary and a meeting place for Spokane's college-age and young adult Episcopalians. Each of those services draws 15-20 people.

During the summer the leadership is gearing up for the fall, planning ways to invite new college students into the community and to canvass the neighborhood to meet and invite the neighbors. Nursery care and Godly Play will be high priorities, followed by adult formation. A new website has already been launched at www.trinityspokane.org.

The church also hopes to offer an after school program, but the parish hall needs expensive electrical and plumbing repairs before the kitchen and bathrooms will be up to standards. "Plumbing is difficult because of the 19th century foundation," Lebens-Englund said.

The west central neighborhood is a historic, working-class area of the city that has declined. There are boarded-up meth houses, gang activity and the lowest per capita income of any neighborhood in Washington State.

But west central is beginning to change, Lebens-Englund said. Young families are moving in, buying affordable houses and fixing them up. A large residential and commercial development is planned just south of the church.

Hospitality is a focus of Holy Trinity's ministry. Lebens-Englund likes to keep the church doors open and is often in the church yard greeting people who pass. New picnic tables stand in the yard for neighbors to enjoy. "Just being hospitable is one of the keys to turning this place around," Lebens-Englund said.

Holy Trinity's list of hopes is growing. One of them is beginning a young adult internship program in the Diocese of Spokane in 2008 that would be housed in the church's rectory across the street from the church. Interns in the leadership formation program, would likely help with some of Holy Trinity's mid-week programming in the neighborhood as well as other service opportunities in the city.

In the meantime, though, the hard work of building a congregation, identifying leadership and getting the infrastructure organized continues. This small church has a large support system. In June some 150 people from all over Spokane packed into Holy Trinity for a Celebration of New Ministry on a sweltering Sunday afternoon.

Bishop Waggoner, in his homily, expressed gratitude for all who had worked hard to make the day of celebration possible. "These are people who never lost faith, who never gave up," he said.



Church of the Ascension: A Small Congregation with a Big Vision Buffalo, New York

The Rev. Canon Victoria Duncan is Mission and Ministry Developer and Transitions Officer for the Diocese of Western New York.

They knew his name but not where he lived; from all indications he might even live on the streets. He was probably the most faithful in attendance at Sunday worship of them

all, always on time. He often put something in the plate at the Offering, but sometimes he took some out. They welcomed him every week no matter what. But then he didn't show up at church for a week, and then two... They saw his name and description in the obituaries and many of them showed up at the mortuary service. They learned he had a family in town he had not seen for years. His family said that he couldn't maintain relationships or keep appointments; they feared he had lost all connection with society after completing his service as a Marine Corps officer. The family members who came to remember the man were consoled that he wasn't alone; he belonged to Church of the Ascension, the place where the outsider is welcomed. Ascension was able to embrace the man's family and they added a Eucharist to the service.

Ascension is a very small congregation in a large building with beautiful stained glass windows and grounds lovingly tended by one of the members. They also have had serious conflict in their not-too-distant history, struggle with a very small pledge base, find it challenging to heat their expansive worship space through the winter, and have been encouraged by some to close their doors considering the declining population in Western New York. They have every outward reason to feel discouraged.

Over the past year and a half the members of Ascension have decided that they will not dwindle away holding on to their resources and fears. They want to share with others the sense of belonging that each of them has found at Ascension. They've dedicated all of their hopes and dreams, time, energy, and endowment to be who God is calling them to be. Now what?

They prayed. They began to articulate their vision to others. They prayed some more. They sought help from the Diocese and National Church. They were joined by others in prayer. They opened their doors to a gathering with other small churches. They prayed for themselves and now others, as well.

They were blessed... with the knowledge and hope found in some of the saints in our Episcopal Church today... with a brilliant musician who found welcome in their midst... with a priest whom God is calling them to walk with as partner and friend...with bastions of support and encouragement from neighboring Episcopal churches:

“Ascension’s restart is a sign of hope for our Diocese and the City of Buffalo” said the Very Rev. David Selzer. “The Episcopal Church is not going to abandon the city, and we will use our facility and people resources to be the presence of God in Western New York.” The Very Rev. DeLiza Spangler, Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Buffalo, shares this enthusiasm. “As Christians,” she says, “we are to step out in faith, trusting that where we are being led is where we are called to go, even if we can’t clearly see every step along the way. The Church of the Ascension is doing just that, and I am grateful for the witness of faith, courage and discipleship which they are giving to us all.”

Ascension didn't know if they were going to make it or not; they still don't. What they do know is that this is not their issue. They have cast away fear and are living the precarious

and engaged life of Christian discipleship, focusing on doing the best job at worshipping God and reaching out to others that they can.

Please pray for the faithful members at Church of the Ascension, as you also pray for the small churches in your area. Let us join with Ascension and other churches, both small and large, who have changed their focus from the survival of the Episcopal Church to how to more profoundly make a difference as Christians in this place and time.

Congregation: Church of the Ascension

Location: Buffalo, New York, Province II

ASA: 21

Year founded: 1855

Current leadership structure/staff: Vestry, F/T Rector (as of 9/1/2007), P/T Organist, P/T Administrator

For further reading Canon Duncan suggests the following Alban Institute publications are suggested:

Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations, Gil Rendle and Alice Mann, The Alban Institute, 2003. ISBN 1-56699-286-9. Alban Code AL276.

Discerning God's Will Together, Danny E. Morris and Charles M. Olsen, The Alban Institute, 1997. ISBN 1-56699-177-3. Alban Code AL180.

Who Is Our Church? Imagining Congregational Identity, Janet R. Cawley, Alban Institute, 2006. ISBN 1-56699-321-0. Alban Code AL311.

Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline, Alice Mann, Alban Institute, 1999. ISBN 1-56699-226-5. Alban Code AL217.



All Saints' Parish, Las Vegas, Nevada

All Saints' Parish began with a worship service in the home of The Rev. Duncan McCoy on August 29, 1960 and was organized as a mission on December 12th. The letter of institution from Bishop William G. Wright, Bishop of the Missionary District of Nevada, reads that the new mission is "to have primary responsibility for churching the area of Las Vegas west of Rancho Road and North of West Charleston."

The first church building was completed in 1961 and worship began in the new church without pews; each family brought folding chairs and the children sat on rugs on the floor. By 1963 Church school enrollment was 135, and increased by 1966 to 160 and the average Sunday church attendance was 80.

On April 11, 1969 All Saints' was approved for parish status and in September The Rev. Donald Cole was installed as All Saints' first rector. By 1974, All Saints' was recognized as the fastest growing Episcopal Church in Nevada and All Saints' Day school opened in October of that year, with an initial enrollment of 12 students.

In 1981 a joint project with Christ Church established a food pantry. Fellowship grew with the membership and an annual custom of "Alls Fair" and "Oktoberfest" celebrations still draw members and guests from all over the valley.

A new worship space was completed and dedicated by Bishop Steward C. Zabriskie on September 15, 1996, and a custom-built organ was installed and dedicated in 1999. The parish had some difficult years and declined in membership and ministry and is now in full recovery, claiming once again the title of "the fastest growing Episcopal Church in Nevada." Outreach programs continue, with the food pantry in its 25th year and the relationship with a neighboring middle school growing in new ways each year. The congregation represents the full diversity of the Las Vegas valley in the geographic diversity of its membership, and the broad spectrum of ethnic, economic, and church backgrounds.

Holy Child Filipino Church began at All Saints' in 2003, and this year became a Ministry of the parish with the full membership joining All Saints' parish. They continue to have worship and fellowship appropriate to their culture and tradition and have their members in leadership roles of the parish.

All Saints' Day School is now a Day Care, Preschool, and Kindergarten, with 80 children, age 3 to 6 enrolled.

The area Bishop Wright gave to All Saints' care now has a population greater than the entire Las Vegas valley in 1960. The growing city population challenged the parish to adopt a philosophy of "keeping the doors open" to whomever comes in, and offering welcome and hospitality; good music, liturgy, and preaching. New member incorporation is a high priority to keep up with growth, as well as a growing Christian education and Youth ministry. Advertising is key in this "high tech" world where seekers are more likely to do an Internet search than read the yellow pages. A significant challenge is in the area of ethnic ministries, with an active and growing Filipino congregation whose goal is to grow into an independent parish, and to reach out to the neighborhood that has become predominately Spanish speaking.

Each week presents new opportunities for ministry and mission. The parish mission statement "To know Christ and make Christ known" is a reminder of the challenge to remain faithful to seek God's guidance, and to be open to new ways of encountering others in the name of Christ.

All Saints' Parish is located at 4201 West Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89107, and on the web at www.allsaintsepiscopal.com.

Stories of small congregations living out Christ's mission to the world are nearly limitless, and many are yet to be written. If you would like to share the story of your congregation for possible inclusion in this section, on the Small Episcopal Church Blog (www.smallepiscopalchurch.blogspot.com), or on the Congregational Development website, please e-mail a photo and story to swatson@episcopalchurch.org

Organizations that Serve the Small Church

Domestic Missionary Partnership

A group of dioceses engaged in diocesan and congregational development centered in missionary spirituality. For information contact The Rev. Canon Karen Lewis at klewis@diocny.org

Episcopal Appalachian Ministries

An organization working with Episcopal dioceses through Appalachia, providing training and work camp experiences in the region. For information not found on their website e-mail them at episappalmin@aol.com

Episcopal Health Ministries

A network with provincial representatives and a national coordinator, offering training in parish health ministries and parish nursing. Contact the coordinator, Matthew Ellis at mellis@stpaulsindy.org

Living Stones

A program that involves dioceses in an annual conference with case studies and models for total common ministry.

Rural Ministries Network

A support and prayer ministry for people who work in rural areas. Quarterly publication Crossroads and prayer list are included with membership. To become a member contact Sandra Elledge, PO Box 51931, Knoxville, TN 37950-1931. Membership is \$20.00/year.

If your organization serves the needs of small Episcopal congregations, please e-mail the name of the group, contact information, membership fee (if any) and a brief description of the group's work to swatson@episcopalchurch.org.

Standing Commission for Small Congregations

Canon I.1.2(n)(2) states that it shall be the duty of the Commission on Small Congregations to concern itself with plans for new directions for small congregations. For more information contact Richard Graybill at dick.gr+aybill@ecunet.org