

PARISH SURVEY 2018: PRELIMINARY REPORT:

As of August 22, 2018, we had received 67 responses from 63 parishes (4 parishes had 2 individuals complete the survey)

We heard from parishes large and small, and from all parts of the diocese: 17 from each of the Trent-Durham, York-Credit Valley and York-Scarborough areas, and 12 from the York-Simcoe area.

The survey allowed for multiple answers to the following questions, so the answer totals do not add up to 100%.

INVOLVEMENT

Who is involved in addressing social and ecological justice in the parish?

- 18% said the incumbent did most of the activity in this area
- 46% said a few parishioners were involved
- 40% said the whole parish was involved in various ways
- 28 parishes (44%) have an Outreach or Social Justice Committee
- 6 parishes (9%) have a Green Committee, but 3 more are planning to start one soon.

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Forms of outreach in which parishes are involved (Again, the survey allowed for more than one answer)

- 86% host or contribute to a food bank/food hamper program
- 75% raise funds for FaithWorks and/or FaithWorks Ministry Partners
- 60% are engaged in refugee sponsorship either currently or within the past 2 years.
- 59% raise funds for relief and development beyond the Diocese, through PWRDF or other organizations
- 51% host or contribute to a community meal program
- 30% have or are part of a community vegetable garden
- 21% host or contribute to an Out of the Cold program
- Many parishes are also engaged in other forms of outreach, including outreach to seniors, hospitals, shelters, and schoolchildren, functioning as a Good Food Box donation hub, and supporting local and international organizations.
- Over half (51%) of parishes were engaged in 5 or more outreach activities.

Advocacy activities in which parishes are involved (Again, the survey allowed for multiple answers)

- 90% of responding parishes present and pass Social Justice Vestry Motions
- 33% have met with elected officials (municipal councillors, MPPs and/or MPs) on justice issues
- 25% have participated in postcard or letter-writing campaigns to elected officials
- 7.5% have hosted all-candidates' meetings or town halls on justice issues

Some responses indicated that individual parishioners were involved in advocacy, but that it was not a parish effort. However, 17% of parishes are involved in 3 or more advocacy activities.

PARISH EDUCATION

How do parishes help their parishioners learn about social and ecological justice issues?

- 83% bring social justice themes into sermons and/or prayers during Sunday worship
- 62% bring creation care/ecological themes into sermons and/or prayers in Sunday worship
- 78% use bulletin inserts or other resources to provide information
- 49% make social or ecological justice the focus of a particular Sunday service, such as Earth Day or National Indigenous Sunday
- 46% hold special events or presentations on justice issues
- 24% hold book or film study series on justice issues.
- 30% use 5 or more of these means to spread awareness of these issues in their parish

GREENING

What steps has your parish taken to reduce energy use?

- Virtually all parishes (94%) take care to turn off lights, fans, etc. when not in use
- 63% have upgraded to energy-efficient (CFL or LED) lighting
- 60% have installed programmable thermostats
- 44% have improved the insulation of their building, doors and windows
- 44% have upgraded their heating/cooling systems to energy-efficient models.
- 21% have upgraded other appliances (dishwashers, refrigerators, etc.) to energy-efficient models
- 9 parishes (13%) have had professional energy audits, with another planned.
- Only 4 parishes (6%) have participated in an energy benchmarking program

10 parishes (16%) have taken 5 or more of these steps. Some parishes have installed solar panels, special panels to insulate stained glass windows, or use timers to control their electricity consumption. Several parishes mentioned that their energy conservation measures were in progress, or that they would like to do more, but lacked funds for upgrades.

What steps has your parish taken to reduce solid waste?

- 90% recycle paper bulletins and office paper
- 84% have recycling and, when applicable, compost bins available throughout the building
- 81% serve water in jugs or carafes rather than providing bottled water
- 79% use paperless communications whenever possible (although several parishes noted this was not feasible as many of their parishioners were not on the internet)
- 65% serve coffee, tea and other refreshments in reusable (i.e. china) cups
- 63% compost kitchen waste and altar flowers.

Most parishes (84%) take at least 4 of these measures; nearly one third (32%) take all 6. Some respondents noted that paperless communications were not feasible if many parishioners lack an internet connection. Others noted the lack of municipal composting facilities in their community, although one Peterborough parish mentioned that food waste from the parish's daycare was taken home to the daycare supervisor's pig!

What steps has your parish taken to conserve and protect water?

- 48% have installed low-flow toilets
- 43% choose landscaping that requires less watering
- 41% use non-toxic cleaning products
- 24% have installed efficient dishwashers and/or aerators in water taps to conserve water
- 16% collect rainwater for their grounds or garden

Some parishes also mentioned fixing leaks promptly or turning off water supply when not in use. Generally there has been less involvement in water conservation overall. Only 22% of responding parishes take 3 or more steps to conserve water, and several parishes mentioned that they had taken no action. However, one parish is involved in a local stream regeneration project, which is encouraging.

DIOCESAN SUPPORT

How can the Diocesan Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant and Committee support your parish in its ministry of outreach, advocacy and creation care?

- 83% want written resources (bulletin inserts, advocacy toolkits, lectionary reflections, prayer on social justice, etc.
- 51% would like us to visit their parish to preach on social justice and/or creation care
- 51% would like us to visit their parish to give a presentation or workshop
- 37% want to be connected with other speakers
- 36% want to be connected with the advocacy campaigns of the wider church
- 31% would like us to visit their parish to help them discern the future of their outreach or creation care ministry
- 22% would like us to help promote social or ecological justice events they are hosting
- Only 3% would like us to help them set up a meeting with local elected officials. (Given that 33% already participate in this form of advocacy, maybe most parishes feel they don't need the support of the Diocese to engage in this).

The response suggests that parishes are generally receptive of written resources and personal visits. One rural parish noted the need for "rurally-appropriate suggestions" in Diocesan materials. A number of parishes also expressed interest in hearing more about what other parishes are doing.