



PROJECT  RESOURCE

presents

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH PARISHIONERS DURING COVID AND BEYOND

STEWARDSHIP SERIES: WORKSHOPS ON ZOOM
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022 | 7:00 PM

in partnership with



SESSION 2:

APPLYING STRATEGIES & TOOLS FOR ENGAGEMENT

TODAY'S AGENDA

Opening Prayer

1. “One Struggle, One Success, and One Question”
2. Starting with your Parish List ...where do you go next to encourage greater church participation?
3. Congregational Development, with Rev Canon Dr Rob Droste+
4. Re-engaging through New & Pivoted Ministries

Closing Prayer

OUR STRUGGLES, SUCCESSES, AND QUESTIONS

PARISH DIRECTORY

“An Outdated Directory,
with no idea who anyone is...”

“Who and how to contact M.I.A. people...?”

As a newcomer, given Pictorial
Directory allowed face to name... How
welcoming is that!

ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES

“People are used to
watching church in their
slippers...”

“Online-only is better than
not showing up at all...”

“The way Zoom operates, ...
we’ve somewhat lost the
socialization incentive to
come to church”

Weekly email blast...
what’s important for the
upcoming week

What happened to those active
parishioners that stayed home during
Covid and never **connected**?

“Not all of our former parishioners
are back. How do we get them
involved with us again?”

“There wasn’t much
connection going on within
the parish outside of a few
people”

ENGAGEMENT & CONNECTION

What is the Connection
between Keeping in Touch
and Stewardship?

STEWARDSHIP

ENGAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP

“Engagement is everything.” – About being with people, about their relationship with God, and their relationship with their community of faith.

“Engagement drives spiritual commitment.”

- Ten times more likely **to invite someone** to participate in their church
- Three times more likely to say they are **extremely satisfied with their lives**
- Likely to **spend more than two hours per week** serving and helping others in their communities
- Likely to **give at least three times** more to their faith communities annually

“Engaged” – loyal churchgoers, strong psychological connection to their church

“Not Engaged” – may attend regularly but not psychologically connected, connection may be more social than spiritual

“Actively Disengaged” – attend once or twice a year, can tell you which church they belong to, but not otherwise connected

ENGAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP

“If you don’t know *how* those who are less involved are feeling about church, then one thing to do is *talk to them...*”

- Reach out with the mission of truly connecting
- People want to be listened to...

- A phone calling campaign
- One-to-one connection is the most meaningful
- Personal (rather than group) emails
- Postcards with a handwritten note added

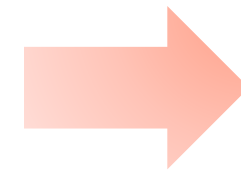
At Holy Spirit Lebanon, we held Zoom calls... “Gathering of Minds,” “Gathering of Holy Spirit Parents,” “Gathering of Voices & Musicians” & sent out summaries with outcomes... followed up...

- They want to know that their church cares
- Share news and upcoming dates for activities
- Add a personal invitation... *“_____, I hope you’ll join us on Good Friday for our Day of Service...”*
- Match up less engaged members with discrete volunteer tasks to support an existing ministry (easy, social)

PARISH LIST – GOOD PRACTICE

Gather → Consolidate

- ✓ Membership Register
- ✓ Sacrament Register
- ✓ Pastoral Index Cards
- ✓ Mailing Lists – address labels for church mailings & newsletters
- ✓ Donor Records
- ✓ Ministry Rosters
- ✓ Email Lists – office, pastor, lay leaders & committees, Constant Contact, Mail Chimp
- ✓ Personal Address Books – pastor, lay leaders
- ✓ Existing Parish Directory (Public)
- ✓ Existing Parish Directory (Office)
- ✓ Website Contact List
- ✓ Markups of existing Parish Directory – clergy, office, wardens, past wardens
- ✓ Scraps of Paper – clergy, secretary, warden, clergy



Master Parish List

*When in Doubt,
Keep Them in The Sheep Count*

PARISH LIST – GOOD PRACTICE

Parent → Child Files

Master Parish List

Living document



Parish
Directory

Mailing
Labels

Donor List
Reconciliation

Email List

E-Blast
List

Dated versions

TRACKING CONTACTS

POLL &
DISCUSSION

What are the ways we keep the Parishioner List trustworthy enough to use?

Please take a minute to answer the 3 poll questions.

1. What triggers an update to the Parish List?

- **53%** Returned church mailings
- **47%** Undeliverable emails that are kicked back
- **65%** Phone numbers no longer in service
- **29%** Coffee hour chats
- **65%** Pledge card info
- **29%** Annual Parish Meeting preparation/certification/eligibility to vote
- **18%** Parochial Report
- **12%** Existing canonical processes with an annual cycle
- **41%** Parishioners can update their own information

TRACKING CONTACTS

POLL &
DISCUSSION

What are the ways we keep the Parishioner List trustworthy enough to use?

Please take a minute to answer the 3 poll questions.

2. Do you have a “Registrar” or Points of Contact who maintain your lists?

- **47%** Yes, officially – a lay person (e.g. church office administrator or other lay leader)
- **24%** Yes, officially – our priest or clergyperson
- **18%** Yes, but unofficially (e.g. self-appointed, conscientious volunteers)
- **6%** No
- **6%** Maybe / Not Sure

3. Do you track your parishioners’ communication preferences & use them? (e.g. paper mailings, email, text, self-serve on social media)

- **35%** Yes
- **6%** No
- **29%** In some cases, but not others
- **29%** Not sure

TRACKING CONTACTS

POLL &
DISCUSSION

What are the ways we keep the Parishioner List trustworthy enough to use?

What are the challenges and benefits to keeping it up to date?

- Time spent synchronizing and cross-checking between lists
- Are parishioners inadvertently missed (excluded, not invited) due to lists being inaccurate?
- How easy is it to "get the word out" quickly? To all who need to know?
- What context do we lose if we overwrite information in the list? (historical? relational?)

Try to do *something* with whatever you have...

- to engage as many as we can in fellowship & formation opportunities to worship, grow & serve
- to help match individuals with the right activities of interest
- to build & strengthen relationships & community

STRATEGIES FOR “KEEPING IN TOUCH”

CASE
STUDY

Case Study: Epiphany House Blessings at Holy Spirit, Lebanon

- ✓ Our priest blesses every home in the parish - 158+ *(unless they specifically ask to be skipped)*
- ✓ Opportunity for parishioners to volunteer to help *(falls after the holiday crush, during a quieter time)*
 - 9 drivers: 2-4 hours driving Fr Phil+ along a house blessing route *(of 10 to 30 homes)*
 - 8 beaders: fashioned 170 St Benedict door hangers
 - 2 route organizers send postcards during Advent
- ✓ Piggyback our annual giving campaign *(small bag left behind with stewardship materials)*
- ✓ Parishioners can have their neighbors' houses blessed *(a little evangelism? sharing one's faith)*
- ✓ Pre-pandemic, a family on each route hosted a "Neighborhood Gathering" *(the gift of hospitality)*
- ✓ Conclude with Consecration Sunday celebration *(we show video of every door blessed and acknowledge the volunteers who made it happen, and serve breakfast between services)*

Results:

- Affords us an annual refresh of the full Parish List
- Re-engage members who used to be more involved or are new to the congregation
- Once-and-done volunteering often yields deeper future engagement or repeat volunteering
(e.g. we now have more willing volunteer drivers than routes... "drivers on standby")

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH THE REV. CN. DR. ROB DROSTE

*Canon for Congregational Development
and Mission*



MISSION



discipleship

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NJ

Effective Engagement

(Lessons From Congregational Development)

Project Resource Mini-Course, Session #2 - March 22, 2022

Some Pitfalls in Encouraging Participation

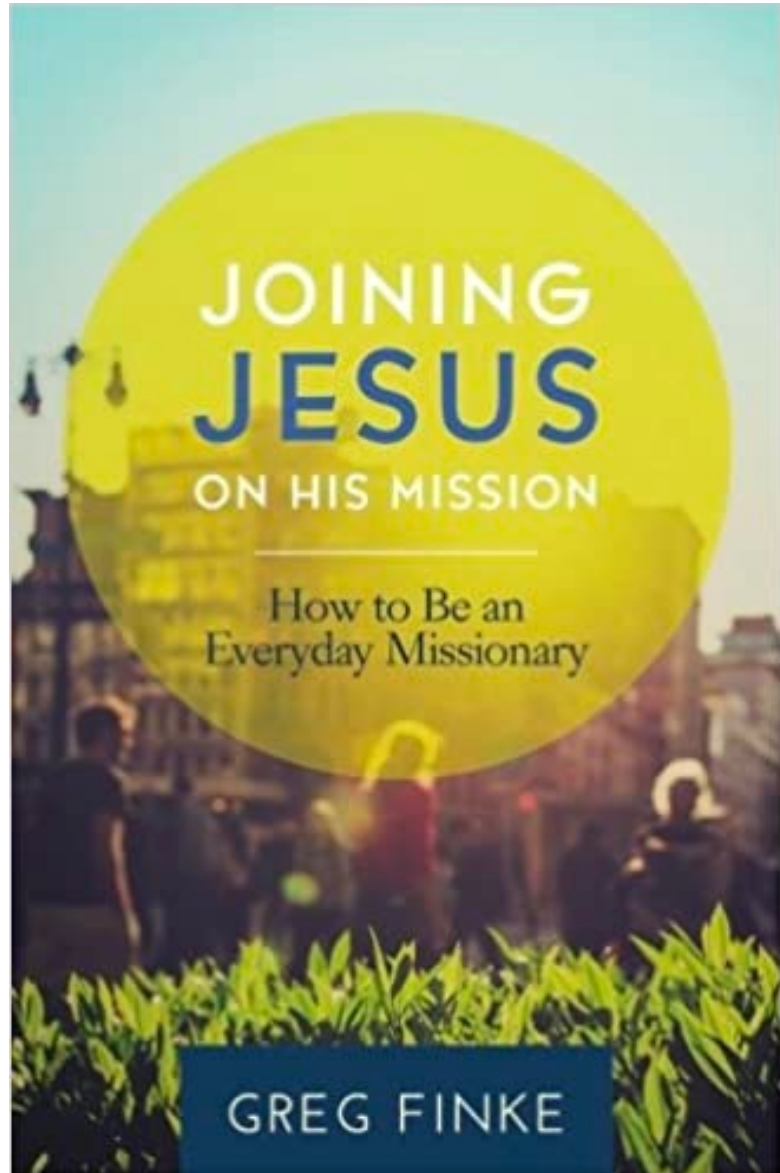
- Making it about **us**/what **we** want/need people to do
 - Not managing **our** fears or frustrations well
 - Not understanding their choices, hoping they'll be convinced by the same things **we** are
-

Avoiding the Pitfalls &
Gaining Effectiveness Means
Focusing as Much as Possible on
Them

Our Purpose

To develop lifelong, committed followers
of Jesus for the world.

Is focused on them, not us



Excellent
“how-to book”
for congregations

The Proven Engagement Approach – Core Beliefs

1. Jesus is working in everyone's life
2. Our job is to help him (i.e., commitment to our purpose)
3. Our job is to help him develop lifelong, committed followers for the world

Nobody is exempt from this activity!

What Does Jesus Do In People?

1. Grows them through pain, grief, suffering
 2. Helps them change destructive patterns
 3. Frees them from the bondage of self-centeredness
 4. Makes them more creative, more brave, more compassionate; more patient, kind and forgiving
 5. Helps them see reality more clearly
-

The Proven Engagement Approach – Simple Practices

1. Arrange time with them **for them**
 2. Do something enjoyable (don't just sit!)
 3. During the time, wonder: What is Jesus up to in their life?
How is Jesus messing with them?
 4. During and after, pray: How can I help him with them?
What small action can I take?
-

Just for Fun

1. Think of someone you know.
 2. Wonder: what new thing do you think Jesus is inviting them to be or to do?
 3. What one, simple thing could you do in the next 24 hours to help him do that?
 4. Who will you share your efforts with?
-

Summing It All Up

1. Make their increased participation about them, not us
2. Remember that our purpose (not just the church's) is to help develop people – that's right, you!
3. Jesus is busy developing people; help him do that
4. Don't try any of this alone – collaborate!



MISSION



discipleship

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NJ

FOR NEXT TIME

	MUSIC & WORSHIP	CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES	SENIORS	FELLOWSHIP	FORMATION	SERVICE TO OTHERS
NEW						
PIVOTED						
ON HOLD						

FOR NEXT TIME

	MUSIC & WORSHIP	CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES	SENIORS	FELLOWSHIP	FORMATION	SERVICE TO OTHERS
NEW		<i>"Cooking with Fr Phil+"</i>				
PIVOTED	Online Readers			"Picnic Paloozas" in the Parking Lot		
ON HOLD	Choir Acolytes LEMs	<i>Sunday School</i>				

*"Holy Spirit
Parents"
(2 Zoom Gatherings)*

*"Gathering of Minds"
(3 Zoom Gatherings)*

FOR NEXT TIME

Continuing to Apply Tools & Strategies for Engagement

Tuesday | March 29, 2022 | 7:00 PM via ZOOM

- Sharing your New & Pivoted Ministries
 - Music & Worship
 - Children, Youth & Families
 - Seniors
 - Fellowship
 - Formation
 - Service to Others
- When did “Covid Church” online become “Pajama Church” ?
 - Combating fatigue & languishing
- How do we thank people for their time, talents, and treasure?

APPENDIX

COMPILATION OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES
TO
“ONE STRUGGLE, ONE SUCCESS & ONE QUESTION”

ONE STRUGGLE

- “In 2020 the vestry was good about staying in touch with phone calls (we divided up the directory), but by 2021, people had given up – maybe they were tired? But also, we were worshipping in person, although outdoors when we could.”
- “My biggest struggle is an outdated directory with no idea who anyone is. My former Wardens walked me through it about two weeks after I arrived. But between COVID and losing their Priest almost 18 months prior, there wasn't much connection going on within the parish outside a few people.”
- “What happened to those active parishioners that stayed home during Covid and never connected with our church in any way, at any time, even though we called, wrote, and tried to keep in touch with them?”
- “The hardest thing for me has been the distraction of changing practices. I feel like I'm starting over "doing church" every 4-6 months! This makes it difficult to be as attentive, pastorally, as I want to be.”
- “To figure out who and how to contact MIA (missing in action) people we need some kind of consistent data collection method. Right now it's really just *[our priest taking]* headcount on Sunday (from # of people in church, # on Zoom, and # on Facebook) and his recollection of who he hasn't seen in a while. Obviously there are gaps in this method.”
- “Live-streaming our services.” (also a success)
- “We were all about having church leaders assigned people to call and check in with on a bi-weekly basis when Covid first shut the Chapel down. We were closed for the 2 1/2 months and then opened up again. Although not all of our parishioners returned we pretty much stopped making those calls and communicating.”
- “Now that the Covid risk has subsided we're having issues with getting people back physically in the church. Zoom is too good and convenient - people are used to watching church in their slippers! And the way Zoom operates, people can see and talk to each other virtually every week so we've somewhat lost the socialization incentive for people to come to church.”
- “Where are our families with Tweens?”
- “It's hard with weekend tournaments and meets.”
- “I was not there during 2020 & 2021, not for sure what they were.”

ONE SUCCESS

- “Our biggest success has been regrouping our families and reengaging (slowly but surely – so far anyway).”
- “New people joined our church (they retired and were church shopping and found us), and they immediately stated that this was their church, and jumped into activities and leadership positions.”
- “Still reaching people by email, social media, recorded and livestream worship. People remain in touch with the congregation.”
- “We have offered diverse options for people to engage, each according to their own situation. I'm not worried about pajama church. There is much value in being in-person, and those who want it will be there. Online-only is better than not showing up at all. Some fragile/concerned people have been participating in small groups online very consistently (though not necessarily in worship!).”
- Live-streaming our services. (also a struggle)
- “Because we opened up for in-person services before many other churches, we attracted many new people from local surrounding areas and faiths.”
- “The email blast sent once a week gives you the service booklet, and most importantly what's important for the upcoming week. This keeps us connected. One of the best things is during my first month there I was given a pictorial directory. As a newcomer that has allowed me to place a name and face together. How welcoming is that!”

ONE QUESTION

- “How to keep fellowship going with people who don't feel comfortable coming back onsite yet?”
- “How do we bring back those that have become comfortable in their inactivity?”
- “Connecting is a challenge for me as an introvert and a single-employee parish (no secretary, etc.). I'm here gathering ideas and encouragement in that project.”
- “Shepherding our people falls under a broader definition of Stewardship. I am trying to push [our church] in the direction of Holistic Stewardship which is something TENS advocates for. I would love to hear more from Project Resource on this concept and *how what we're doing in this workshop is connected to Stewardship*. I know it kind of seems self evident (at least to me) but it's a stretch from the Time, Talent, Treasure model that we're all used to.”
- How to best communicate to the "homebodies" what they're missing by not being physically at the church without irritating/upsetting those who really can't come (shut-ins, health concerns, etc.)?
- “Not all of our former parishioners are back. How do we get them involved with us again.”