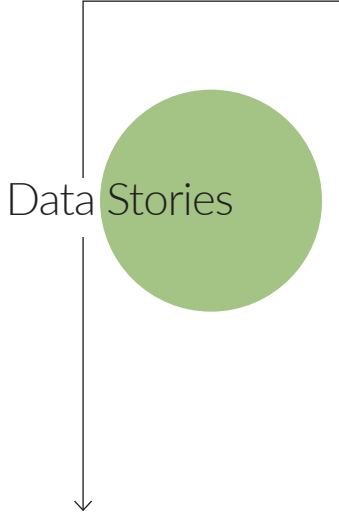


Knowing Your Neighbors



Do you know how many potential parishioners live within a mile of your church? If your neighborhood is changing, do you know who is moving in?

Starting in 2018, the diocese began working with Data Story, which pulls in demographic and parochial report information to chart vitality, sustainability and potential for growth. “Taking a look at the data on your community helps a church better understand where to focus resources and how to effectively communicate with the people around you,” said Canon Kirk Berlenbach, canon for growth and support, who meets with churches to help them understand the data and then envision what this means for their futures. “This is useful for evangelism, mission and, when your church is seeking a new priest, in creating a parish profile.”

Changing demographics affect almost all of the 134 churches in the diocese. “Often the people who attend our churches don’t reflect the changing

communities around them, at least not to the same degree. But unless we know who they are, it is difficult to engage them effectively. This is where we can help.”

In addition to Data Story there are several resources which churches can access on their own:

The Episcopal Church

- Access via the Offices of the diocese
- Can track 49 fields from your parochial report

Mission Insite

- Access directly through TEC
- Can track ASA and Income
- Provides demographic data on surrounding community

Data Story

- Access via the Offices of the diocese
- Provides demographic data based on different parameters
- Provides strategic analysis to project potential for growth

When churches request data for a church, diocesan staff draws upon all three. The final packet shared with churches includes maps, statistics, detailed descriptions of the predominant “lifestyle” cohorts that live around your church and a summary of key insights “that we have gleaned from studying it all,” according to Berlenbach.

“Of course data is no substitute for personal relationship, but it can provide valuable insights and thus better help you discern your missional priorities and find more effective ways in which you can proclaim the Gospel and change the world in the name of Jesus Christ.”

If you are interested in finding out more on how your church can benefit from this resource, please contact Canon Berlenbach, kberlenbach@diopa.org.