



A Snapshot of the Central Presbytery in 2016

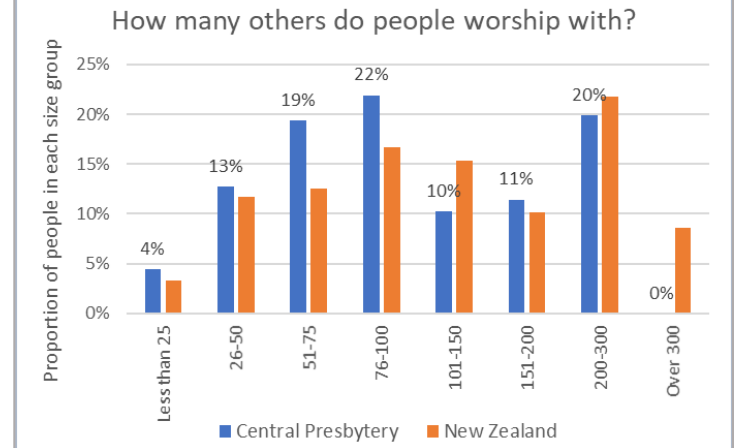
This report has been prepared by the Church Property Trustees as a resource for the wider church

Our Congregations

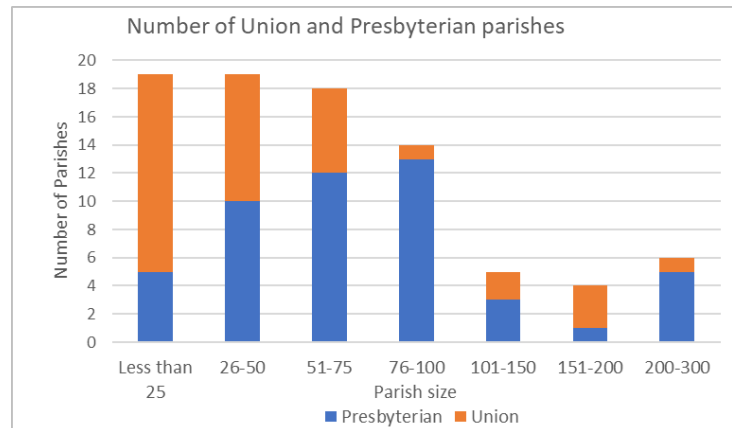
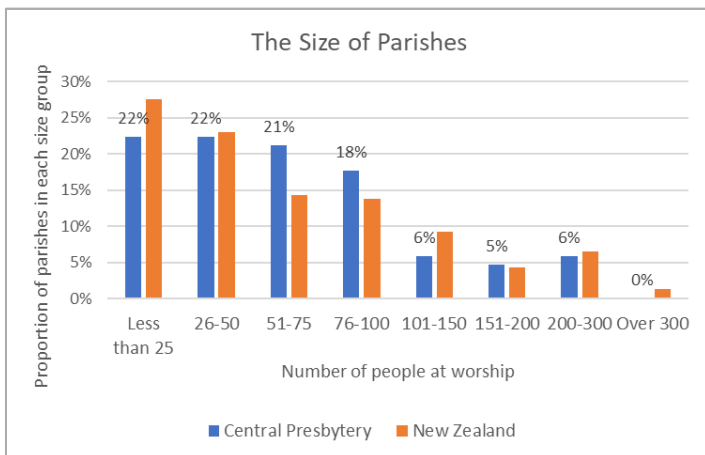
Key findings:

- Central Presbytery has a higher proportion of lower-mid-sized parishes and fewer very large ones.
- Over half of the parishes have less than 50 at worship, but most people go to the larger parishes, and about 60% of the people worship with more than 75 others.
- Parishes with 150 to 200 at worship have a higher proportion of their roll at worship.

- ❖ On the average June Sunday in 2016 almost 5,900 people worshipped in the Central Presbytery parishes, including almost 900 children and youth. About 22% of PCANZ members worship in the Central Presbytery. (This snapshot includes all union parishes in the area regardless of their current oversight.)

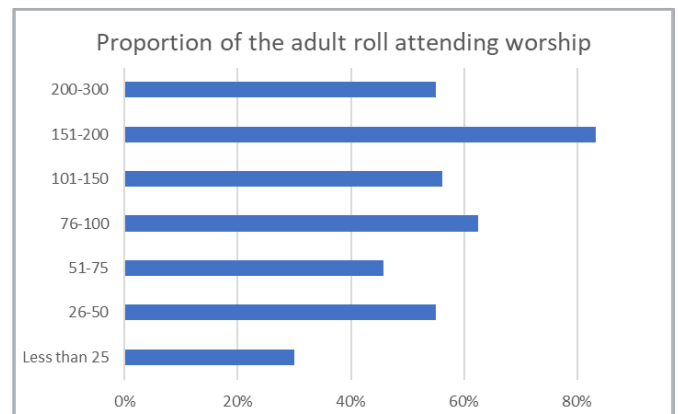


- ❖ About 40% of the parishes in Central Presbytery are Union and Co-operating parishes. The smallest parishes are more likely to be Union ones, but there are union parishes of all sizes. The Union parishes had an average of 53 at worship compared to 83 in Presbyterian ones.



- ❖ Almost half of the parishes have fewer than 50 at worship but this proportion is lower than the national average because the Presbytery has significantly more parishes with 50 to 100 people at worship, and fewer parishes with under 25 at worship. It lacks very large parishes with over 300 at worship.
- ❖ About 40% worship in a congregation of less than 75, but about 30% share their worship with over 150 others. The Presbytery has more people in small congregations than in New Zealand where these proportions are 28% and 60% respectively.

- ❖ Large parishes generally get a higher proportion of the people on their roll out to worship than smaller parishes, possibly because larger churches can offer more options to their membership. In Central Presbytery parishes with over 150 at worship have the best attendance rate.



Change since 2000

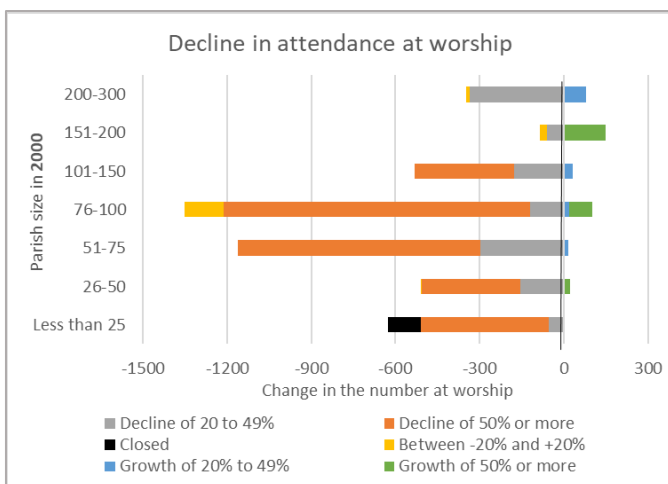
Key findings:

- Despite a slight growth in population attendance at worship has fallen by 45% since 2000
- Mid-sized parishes lost the most members. Large parishes did not grow enough to replace them
- The 2015 roll changes show the same pattern

- ❖ Between 2001 and 2016 the population in the Central Presbytery region grew by 7% to 563,000 people. But between 2000 and 2016 attendance at worship in the Central Presbytery declined by almost 45%, from an average Sunday all-age attendance of just under 10,700 to just over 6,000. This was a slightly faster decline than for the national church (38%).
- ❖ The pattern of decline is not even. The mid-2000s saw some growth and only since 2009 that the decline was large. While it is continuing, it is at a lower rate.



- ❖ The decline in church attendance found in parishes of all sizes, but the biggest decline was in smaller mid-sized parishes. Unlike the national figures, the larger parishes have not shown much growth.



- ❖ The net roll loss in Presbyterian parishes between 2015 and 2016 suggests the losses continue to be highest in the mid-sized parishes.
- ❖ Closing congregations has made little difference to the number of people at worship. Fifteen congregations closed between 2000 and 2015, Presbyterian congregations are on average larger, but all the closed congregations were Presbyterian parishes.

Markers of congregational health

There are three key markers of congregational health

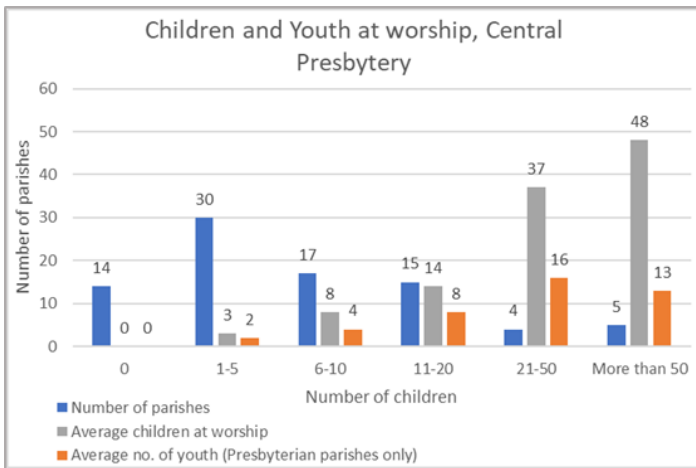
- **A good balance of age-groups.** The key metric for this is the number of children as a proportion of the congregation
- **The commitment level of members of the congregation.** The key metric for this is giving per adult attending
- **The leadership resources.** The key metric for this is the number of hours per parish

These metrics are “canary signs”. Like the collapse of the canary in the coal mine, their behaviour is not the cause what is happening, rather they show that it is.

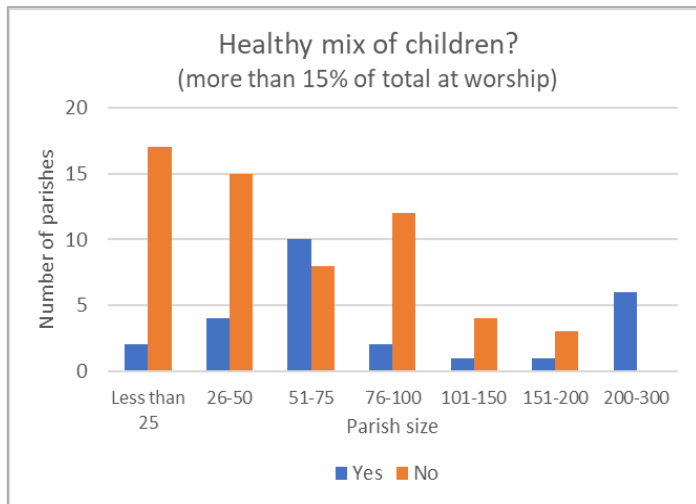
Our Children and Youth

Key findings:

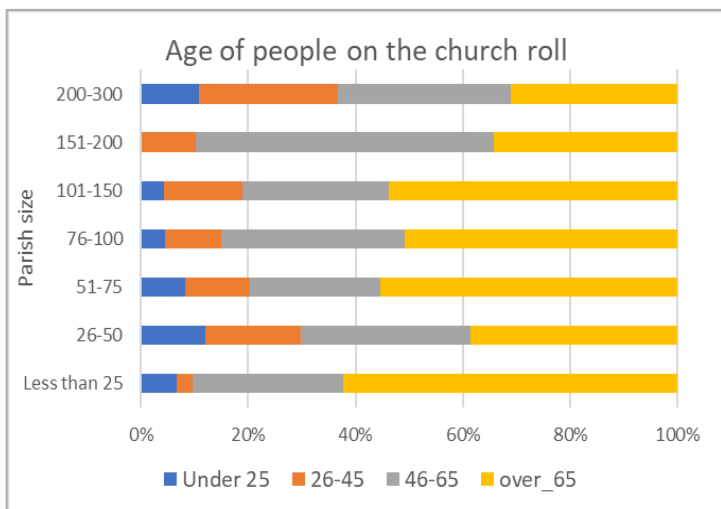
- Most parishes have some children and youth at worship, but most have less than 10
- Not all small parishes are “greying” and some have a healthy proportion of children. On the other hand, some middle-sized and large parishes do not.
- ❖ If children are present at worship, probably their parents are too. If there are reasonable number of children, then there is also likely to be enough youth for an active youth programme (since young people tend to like to be in groups.) This makes the number of children at worship an indicator of the likely age profile of the whole congregation.
- ❖ Most Central Presbytery parishes have some children at worship, but almost half had five or less, which is generally too few for good group dynamics. While we have only statistics for youth at Presbyterian (and not Union) parishes, small groups of children means a parish is unlikely to retain its youth.



❖ A healthy balance of children and adults can be found in parishes of all sizes, but parishes with less than 50 are more likely than not to have an unhealthy balance. Many of the larger parishes also fail to reach the required proportion of children, including some of the largest parishes.



❖ Parishes with over 150 at worship have a smaller proportion of their roll over the age of 65. Parishes under 25 are likely to have a particularly high proportion of pensioners on their roll.



Faith commitment

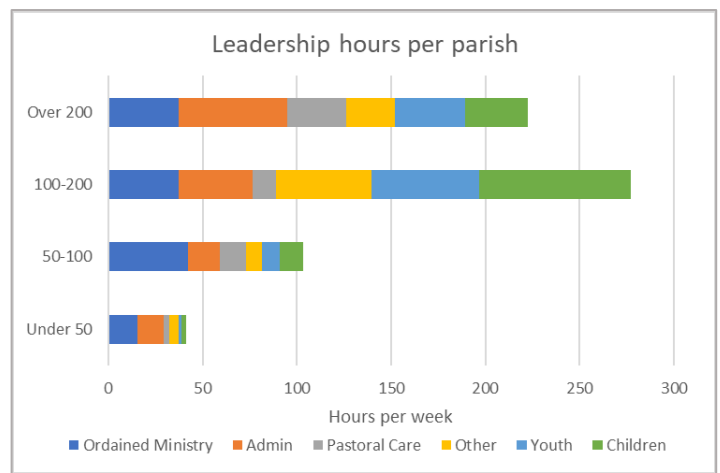
Key findings:

- The Church Life survey showed people in the Central Presbytery are committed to our faith and enjoy our church life
- Giving has been found to be a sign of commitment to a congregation, and about 20 parishes had extreme levels of giving that could be concerning

- ❖ 1,376 people in Central Presbytery filled in the 2011 Church life survey. The survey was completed by a reasonably representative sample of parishes from the non-ethnic parishes, but it did not have good coverage of the ethnic ones. Central Presbytery's results were almost identical to the total church.
- ❖ The survey showed that nearly two-thirds of the people read the Bible or had a personal devotion time either every day or a few times a week. This was about the same as the average Presbyterian, and also Catholics, Anglicans and Brethren, but it is lower than Baptists. This is important because people who do these two things are far more likely to say that their faith has grown over the last few years
- ❖ In all denominations, people over 45 are more likely to regularly read their Bible and have personal devotions than young people, and Bible reading is particularly low amongst people under 25.
- ❖ The most common faith traditions Central Presbytery's people identified with were: charismatic/pentecostal (20%), traditional (19%), and evangelical 18%). Liberal was chosen by 6%. About 9% of people did not identify with any of these traditions, and these were disproportionately young people.
- ❖ Over 80% agreed or strongly agreed that their parish was resourcing their spiritual growth well, and about 70% valued belonging this denomination.
- ❖ International research has shown that there was a clear pattern that parish growth was associated with higher giving in the past. This seems to be because giving is an indicator of commitment, and low levels of giving is often sign that the congregation is not enthusiastic about their faith journey.
- ❖ However, very high levels of giving, if it is not associated with some short-term project, can be a sign that the congregation is under stress and trying to maintain a level of activity that is unrealistic. Healthy congregations tend, therefore, to cluster around the average giving level.

- ❖ In 2015 each adult attending worship in the Central Presbytery gave on average about \$1,450 per year, but 13 parishes that have either much higher or much lower giving levels. In seven parishes giving was less than \$700 and in six parishes giving was over \$2,500.
- ❖ Parishes in the Central Presbytery had a combined income of \$13 million in 2016 year. They also had net assets of \$180 million. Most of these assets were land and buildings, but \$50 million was held in cash and investments.
- ❖ Most of the 75 parishes that provided information have under \$30,000 of assets for each person at worship. The 13 parishes with less than \$10,000 per worshipper may have inadequate facilities for their activities. On the other hand, the four parishes with over \$100,000 for each person at worship may have significantly more resources than are needed for theirs.

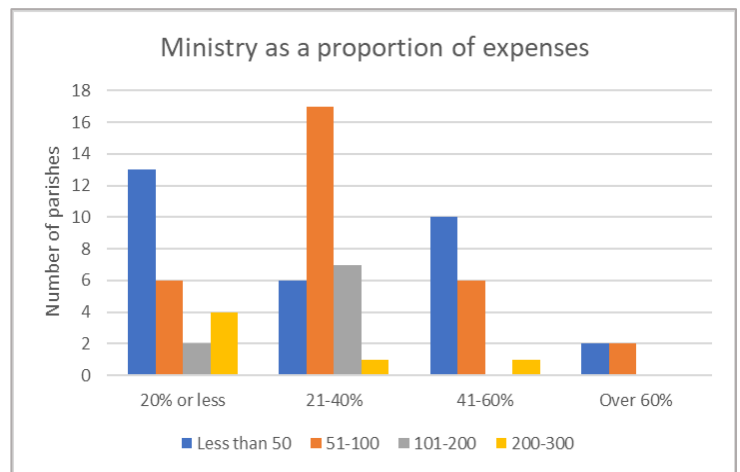
	No of parishes	Number at worship	Value of assets (\$ millions)	Average value per worshipper
Under \$10000	13	1334	\$6	\$4,446
\$10-\$29,999	30	2393	\$45	\$18,808
\$30-\$49,999	13	709	\$30	\$43,475
\$50-\$99,999	15	948	\$61	\$64,458
Over \$100,000	4	283	\$43	\$153,280



- ❖ There is a wide variability in the proportion of total expenditure committed to ordained ministry. Overseas research has identified that when parishes spend much more than 50% there is inadequate funds for other running costs. Only two of the smaller parishes exhibit very high levels.
- ❖ It may also be a concern when very little is being spent on ordained ministry, and many larger parishes seem to be in this situation, though this may be because of the way they returned their statistics.

Leadership
Key findings:

- As parish size increases so do the number of leadership hours available.
- These extra hours are disproportionately used for the youth and children’s ministry.
- Central Presbytery has a high proportion of larger parishes with low expenditure on paid ministry.



- ❖ As parish size increases, so do the number of leadership hours available and there is also an important change in what these hours are used for. In small parishes, leadership resources are primarily used for ministry and administration. As parishes get to middle size they devote more to the leadership of youth and children’s work and other activities.
- ❖ Only 16 of the 85 parishes in the Central Presbytery area are listed as having neither a National nor Local Ordained Minister. All these parishes have less than 50 at worship, and 10 have less than 25.

Some information on the source of these statistics.

These statistics are taken either from the Presbyterian Church’s June annual statistics for 2016 for Presbyterian parishes and 2015 for Union parishes. Union parishes with Presbyterian involvement have been included in all these statistics regardless of their current denominational oversight. When a parish has not submitted data the most recent year available was used.

The report also uses data from those Central Presbytery’s parishes that took part in the Church Life Survey in early 2011.

This report was prepared by Dr M N Galt, February 2018.

How to use your parish's June statistics to assist your leadership

Your June statistics, combined with the information in this short report, can be a guide to how your parish is going compared to other similar parishes. Ask someone to do the basic calculations below and then as a Session/Parish council consider what the numbers may tell you.

The preparation:

Get your latest June statistics – if you don't have them to hand you can download them from the national [Presbyterian church website](#). Write the following key statistics in here

The number of adults at worship		The number of additions to the roll**	
The number of youth at worship**		The number removed from the roll**	
The number of children at worship		The total amount of offerings	
Add these together to get the total number at worship		The total amount spent on Ministers (including accommodation)	
The total number of people on the roll (both members and associates)		The total spending	
Finally, you will need the population living near your church. The easiest way to get this is to go to www.mashblock.co.nz and put the address of your worship centre. Then click on Area Unit at the top. It will then show a map and the number of people living in the area. You want the population that is naturally centred on your location and this will probably mean adding together a number of neighbouring area units. When you have the number put it here.			
** These are only available for Presbyterian parishes, not union or cooperating			

If your parish took part in the Church Life Survey, you will also find it has useful information.

How well are you meeting the needs of your members?

There are two key metrics which have been shown to indicate the strength of your member's commitment

1. Divide the number of adults at worship by the number of people on the roll. **How does this compare with the graph on page 1? What might make them come more often?**
2. Divide the total offerings by the number of adults at worship. _____. Compare this with \$1,350. **If it is a lot lower, is this an indication of a lack of commitment? If it is a lot higher, is it because your circumstances are putting a strain on your members.**

The Church Life survey reports 3, 4 and 5 may give you a fuller picture of what your members think of your parish life.

How well is your parish placed to meet the needs of the future?

There are two key metrics for looking at how well your parish is going.

1. Divide the number of children attending worship by the total number at worship. _____. Parishes that grow generally have over 20%. Compare your results with those on page 3. **What conclusions do you draw?**
2. Subtract the number of removals from the roll from the number of additions _____. **How do you compare to the graph on page 2? What is the key issue?** You may want to also look at the kind of removals you have.
3. Divide the amount spent on Ministry including accommodation by the total spending. _____. **Parishes that spend significantly over 50% tend to not have enough for other leadership.** You may like to consider how you compare to the leadership distribution on page 4.

Report 2 of the church life survey lets you compare the ratio of new to old members to the figures quoted on page 2.

How well are you meeting your community's spiritual needs?

Multiply your population figure with the factor below, which is the approximate rate of attendance in each area. Compare this with your total Sunday attendance figure. Over the country as a whole the Presbyterian Church gets this proportion of the population to worship. _____ **Are you reaching your population? If not, which groups are missing from your fellowship?**

Factor: Northland and West Coast, 0.003; Otago and Southland, 0.015; Rest of NZ 0.007

Consider your neighbouring churches of all denominations. **Do you think any of them meeting your community's**