



A Snapshot of the Alpine Presbytery in 2017

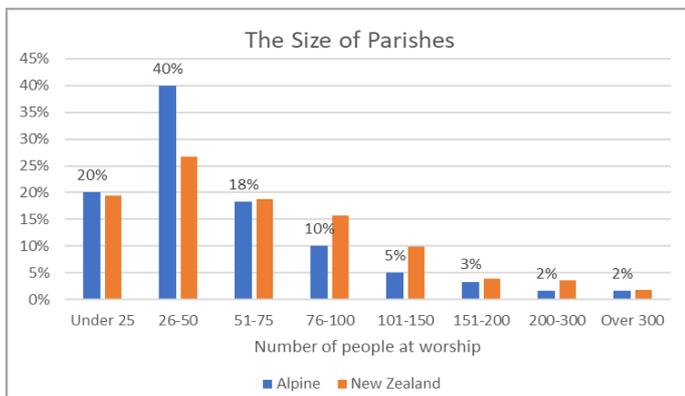
This report has been prepared by the Church Property Trustees as a resource for the wider church

Our Congregations

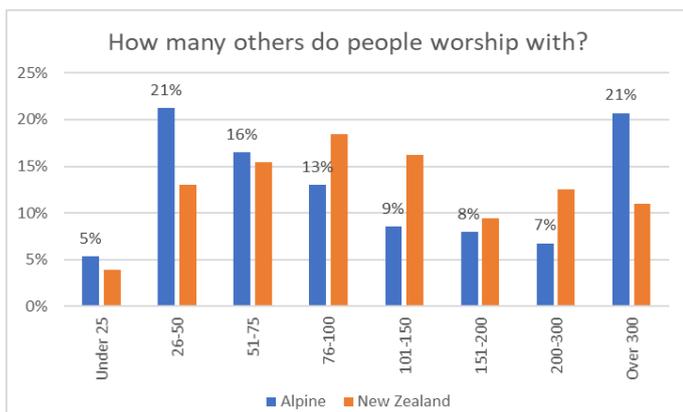
Key findings:

- Alpine Presbytery has a higher proportion of small parishes and fewer very large ones.
- Over half the parishes have fewer than 50 at worship but 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 2017 almost 4,100 people worshipped in the 60 Alpine Presbytery parishes, including almost 630 children and youth. About 15% of PCANZ members worship in the Alpine Presbytery. (This snapshot includes all Union parishes in the area regardless of their current oversight.)



- Sixty percent of the parishes have fewer than 50 at worship - much higher than the national average - largely because of the higher proportion of parishes with 26 to 50 at worship (a total of 24 parishes).

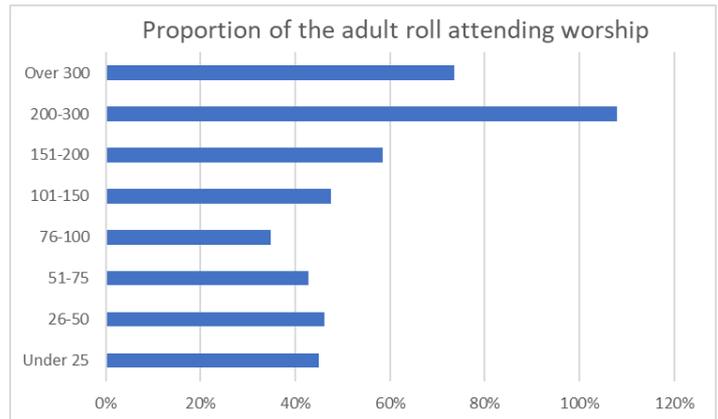


- On the other hand, a high proportion also go to the largest parishes with over 300. Relatively fewer worship in mid-sized parishes the PCANZ average.

- Forty percent of the parishes in Alpine Presbytery are Union and Co-operating parishes, but only 30 percent of the people at worship at them. This is because Union

parishes are smaller, with an average of 40 at worship compared to 88 in Presbyterian parishes. All the Union parishes had fewer than 100 people at worship.

- Nationally, the larger parishes tend to get a higher proportion of their roll to worship, possibly because larger churches offer more options to their membership. But this pattern is less clear in the Alpine Presbytery, with the mid-sized parishes getting a similar proportion to the small ones.

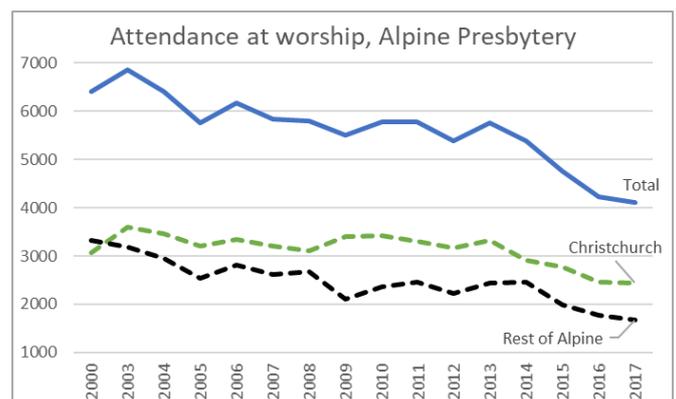


Change since 2000

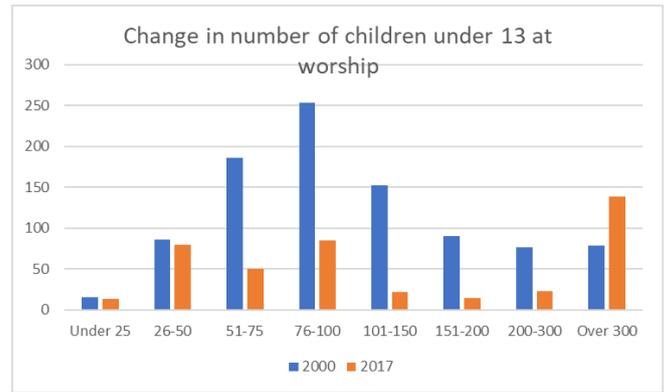
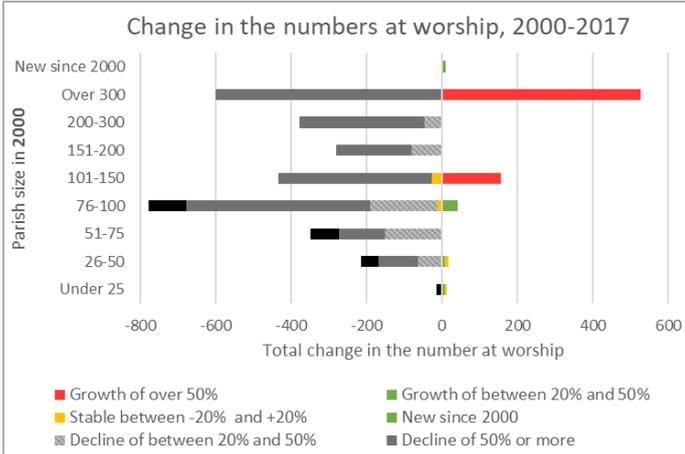
Key findings:

- Despite significant population growth, attendance at worship has declined by 38% since 2000
- The decline was faster outside of Christchurch
- All sizes of parishes showed decline, but the mid-sized parishes declined the most

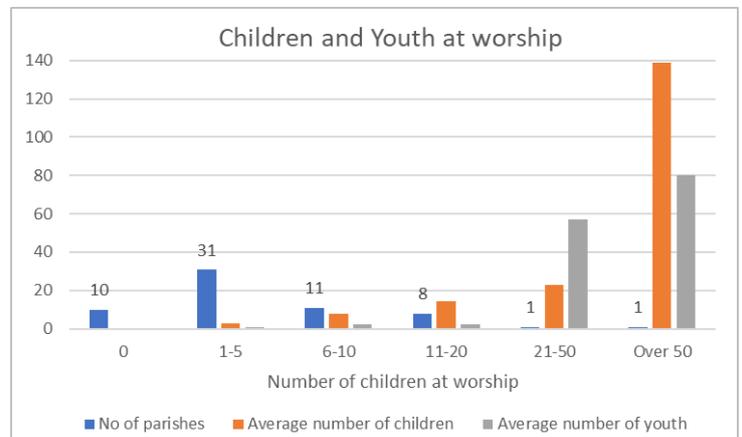
- Between 2001 and 2017 the population in the Alpine Presbytery region grew by 21 percent to almost 800,000 people. But attendance at worship declined by almost 35%, from an average Sunday all-age attendance of nearly 6,400 in 2000 to just over 4,100 in 2017. (The national average was 38%). The rising population and falling attendance means that attendance at worship has fallen from about one in a thousand people to one in two thousand people.



- ❖ The decline in attendance has been faster since 2013. While the Canterbury earthquakes may have contributed to this, the remainder of Presbytery has been dropping faster and more persistently than that the wider Christchurch area.
- ❖ Parishes of all sizes have got smaller since 2000 but the decline was largest in smaller to mid-sized parishes and the net roll loss in Presbyterian parishes between 2016 and 2017 suggests the losses continue to be the case.



- ❖ If children are present at worship, probably their parents are too. If there are reasonable numbers 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 Alpine Presbytery parishes have some children at worship, but almost half had five or fewer, which is generally too few for good group dynamics. While we have only statistics for youth at Presbyterian (and not Union) parishes, only having a few children means a parish is unlikely to retain its youth.

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.

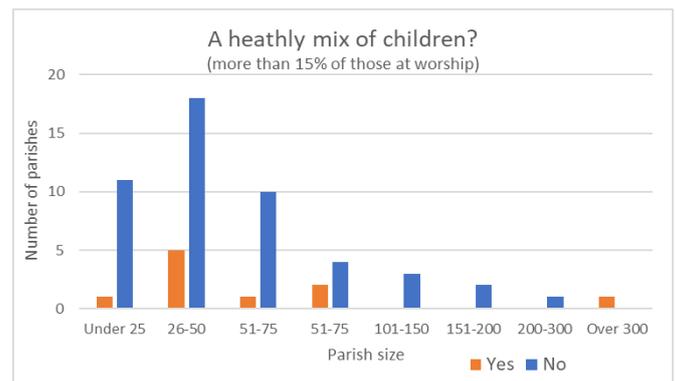
Our Children and Youth

Key findings:

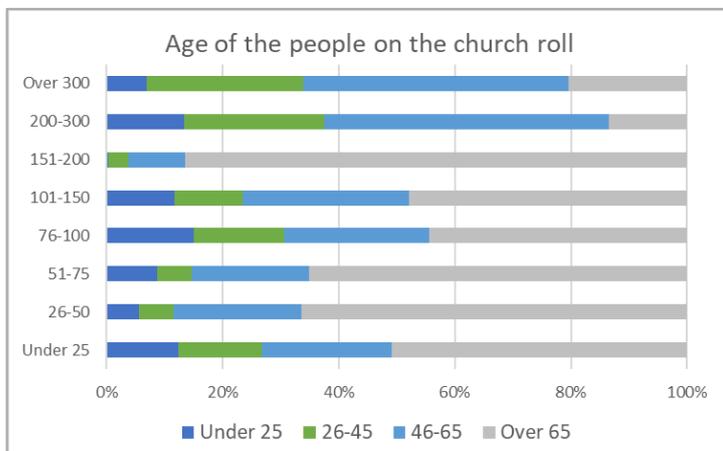
- Most parishes have some children and youth at worship, but most have fewer than 10
- Not all small parishes are “greying” but a very high proportion of the Alpine parishes have too few children to be classified as healthy.

- ❖ Between 2000 and 2017, children under the age of 13 at worship declined from over 940 to under 430. Most of this decline has happened at the mid-size parishes. Both the largest and the smallest parishes have held or increased the number of children at worship.

- ❖ A healthy balance of children and adults can be found in parishes of all sizes, but Alpine Presbytery has a far higher proportion of small parishes with too few children to meet the required 15% level to be classed as having a healthy mix.



- ❖ Parishes with over 200 at worship have a smaller proportion of their roll over the age of 65. Nationally, small parishes have a very high proportion of people aged over 65, but in Alpine Presbytery the mid-sized parishes also have a higher than average proportion.



- ❖ Most parishes have under \$30,000 of assets for each person at worship. The 14 parishes with less than \$10,000 per worshipper may have inadequate facilities for their activities. On the other hand, the 6 parishes with over \$100,000 for each person at worship may have significantly more resources than are needed.
- ❖ As parish size increases, so do the number of leadership hours available, but even more importantly these extra hours are used for different activities. Across New Zealand, small parishes primarily use their leadership resources for ministry and administration, but mid-sized and larger parishes devote more to the leadership of youth and children's work and other activities.

Faith commitment

Key findings:

- 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

- ❖ International research shows that parish growth is often associated with higher giving. This seems to be because giving is an indicator of commitment, and often low levels of giving is a sign that members are not enthusiastic about their faith journey.
- ❖ On the other hand, very high levels of giving, if it is not for some short-term project, can be a sign that the congregation is under stress and trying to maintain an unrealistic level of activity. Healthy congregations tend, therefore, to cluster around the average giving level.
- ❖ In 2017 an adult attending worship in Alpine Presbytery gave, on average, about \$1,350 per year. (This was also the national average.) However, in 16 parishes giving was less than \$700 and in 3 parishes it was over \$2,500.
- ❖ Offerings provide about 50 percent of the income, with the rest coming from investments and other sources. In 2017 parishes in the Alpine Presbytery had a combined income of \$9.5 million and net assets of \$125 million, mainly in land and buildings but \$35 million was cash and investments.

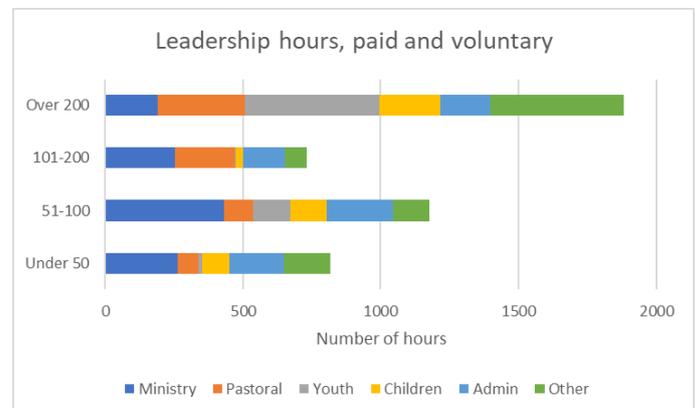
Assets per worshipper	No of parishes	No at worship	Value of assets (\$ millions)	Average value per worshipper
Under \$10000	14	1425	\$35.50	\$2,490
\$10-\$29,999	15	1200	\$22.90	\$19,083
\$30-\$49,000	13	753	\$29.90	\$39,708
\$50-\$99,999	12	487	\$31.30	\$64,271
Over \$100,000	6	251	\$38.30	\$152,590

Leadership

Key findings:

- As parish size increases, the number of leaders increase, and these extra hours are largely used for the youth and children's ministry.
- Alpine Presbytery's mid-sized parishes have very low leadership hours.

- ❖ The Alpine Presbytery does not follow this typical pattern and a significant proportion of leadership hours in small parishes is used for youth and children's work. On the other hand, the mid-sized parishes devote less of their leadership resource in this area.



- ❖ Overseas research has identified that when parishes spend much more than 50% there are inadequate funds for other running costs. Of the 53 parishes that provided financial statistics, 8 spent significantly more than 50 percent on ministry.

Some information on the source of these statistics.

These statistics are taken from the Presbyterian Church's 2017 June annual statistics. Union parishes are always included regardless of their current denominational oversight. When a parish has not submitted data the most recent year available was used.

This report was prepared by Dr M N Galt, July 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](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz). 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 spiritual needs better? If so, what can you learn from them?**