



Who Cares About Parochial Reports Anyway?

**Bishop Jon Anderson*

Who cares?

Pastors looking at a congregation as a potential place to serve, check parochial reports to see how the congregation has been doing. There is one thing that is hard to explain, a congregation who has not taken the time to update their numbers. It sends a bad message. Congregations who are thinking about calling a pastor look at the parochial reports to get a sense of the quality of ministerial leadership.

Some visitors look to decide how large a congregation is and how vital it is. My daughter was looking for a church home in the Twin Cities. I taught her how to look at these reports. Through the years I have routinely used parochial reports to see how congregations were doing in towns where I did not know the congregations and pastors.

Synodical leaders appreciate the statistical information that helps them plan for the work of the synod. It also gives us a snapshot of the congregation on one set of indicators. We know that congregations are much more than numbers can reveal. National leaders in our denomination also appreciate the ability to see how our congregations are doing in their mission and ministry.

Who cares – a lot of people who use this information. I would encourage you to go to the www.elca.org web page, look up your statistical report and discuss it with your leadership. In big picture

If you have not made the time to delegate or complete the work of your annual parochial report I would ask that you do so this week.