



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

(week of July 9)

Dear clergy in charge, parish administrators, and wardens:

Your bishops and staff at The Commons have been working on ways to support collaboration in God's mission. This summer, we're rolling out a parish survey that's been in the works for two years. When it's completed by all the parishes and worshiping communities – and we're asking you to do this as a summer project -- we really believe it will help you and all of us participate more fully, and more collaboratively in God's mission.

For example:

- ... when your parish leaders call to ask if there are any parishes in ECCT with vergers – or with cemeteries – we can answer.
- ... when your region missionary wants to know which parishes have large meeting spaces with Wi-Fi – they can find out.
- ... when your bishops arrive for a visitation – they'll have more informed conversation about your ministries (in addition to your finances) with your clergy and elected leaders, as well as the rest of the congregation.
- ... when a group of parishes want to host an ECCT-wide acolyte festival – they can send the invitation directly to parish acolyte coordinators.
- ... when a ministry network wants to talk to a parish with a ministry in the category of "immigration services," – they can get that information.

You get the idea. ***The goal is a database that will support our ability to work effectively as well as collaboratively in God's mission as lay and ordained individuals, parishes and worshiping communities, Regions, and Ministry Networks.***

Note: A separate component of this database project is cleaning up and augmenting the data we have for clergy. In another component, we'll be tapping additional sources to add Region Leaders, Ministry Networks, and other non-parish-based data.

Right now, we're asking parishes and worshiping communities to help with their part.

Here's how it will work: Your parish or worshiping community, along with every other one, will receive a letter in the mail that includes a unique user ID number and a website address, which will let you log into the portal and complete the parish information survey. This first year will obviously be the biggest challenge. And the good news is that all the information will be there next time you log in! We'll remind you at least annually to review and update it.



Once you're done and you've submitted the survey online, the system sends a notification to a database administrator who securely uploads the data from the web portal to the ECCT database.

We have a set of policies to tell you what we're collecting, how we'll use the data, what data we are making available to you and how to access that, what we'll make public, and what we will keep highly restricted or private.

Here's an overview of what the survey will ask of you as parishes and worshipping communities:

1. Basic parish contact information including all your current social media.
2. Names and contact info on your elected leaders: Wardens, Vestry members, Treasurers, Clerks, Convention Delegates and Alternates.
3. Names and email contact info on your staff and volunteer leaders: Everything from parish administrator to sexton to nursery school director to acolyte coordinator, plus a little info their employment type, number of hours, and position title.
4. A few general questions such as whether you have a cemetery, memorial garden, recent Safe Church audit, etc
5. Partnerships local and global, and Episcopal memberships, such as CEEP or NAES.
6. "Faith in Action" ministries; options to add details.
7. Whether or not certain groups meet at your church, such as AA or Boy Scouts.
8. Assets in time of a disaster that could help a response
9. Questions about accessibility, wi-fi capacity, and room sizes to help those planning meetings
10. A text box (optional) for you to add more info you want your bishops and ECCT staff to know
11. We'll also ask that you send us, separately, your parish mailing list. One primary purpose of this is to mail all Episcopal households a copy of the annual magazine, CRUX. You can send this list anytime; many of you have already done this.

Included with this letter is an FAQ about this project and the current draft of policies that will govern data access and use.

Your ECCT team working directly on this project includes Karin Hamilton, Canon for Mission Communication & Media; Canon Louis Fuertes, Canon for Mission Finance & Operations; and Matt Handi, Office Manager. Contact any of us with your questions. The policies and the survey have been reviewed and edited by both ECCT bishops and other ECCT staff canons.

Blessings on your ministry and our shared collaboration in God's mission here in Connecticut.

- Karin Hamilton: khamilton@episcopalct.org, 203-639-3501, ext.130
- Louis Fuertes: lfuertes@episcopalct.org, 203-639-3501, ext. 123
- Matt Handi: mhandi@episcopalct.org, 203-639-3501, ext. 107



FAQs

Why are we doing this?

So that we can be more knowledgeable about each other and share contact information, allowing us to participate more fully, more effectively, and more collaboratively in God's mission.

Is the survey a requirement?

Yes. Similar to "Parish Information Sheets" that were completed and returned many years ago, all parishes and worshiping communities in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut are asked to complete their survey through the web-based portal.

Will all this data be public?

No. Direct access is limited to "authorized" users of the database, which includes bishops, canons, region missionaries, ECCT officers, and certain other ECCT staff. In some cases, information is limited or private. In other cases, information is available by request. Some information will be publicized in directories (PDF). See the policies for details.

What if I don't know all the information I need when I log onto the site?

You can save it anytime and return to it once you get the information you need. At your own discretion you may decide to share the login information among several people who would complete different sections. You can also use the print summary of the survey questions, sent with your login information, as a place to collect the information you need.

I am concerned about maintaining the privacy of our parishioners. Will any information shared with the ECCT be made available publically?

First and foremost, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut will not share or sell any data to third parties. Information including names and email addresses will be stored on secured servers and accessible to only those with the proper permissions to access such data. (Please see our rules related to data sharing in the document titled, "Database Policies" for further information.)

We recommend that parishes and worshiping communities obtain generic email addresses for each leadership position as one way to address those concerns as well as provide continuity for the positions. (AcolyteCoordinator@stswithens.org or AltarGuildChairperson@stswithens.org for example.)

What's the timetable?

The survey was developed in 2016 and piloted in the first five months of 2017. Please complete and submit the survey over the summer, before the end of August 2017. Requests for updates in succeeding years will have different dates.

I have more concerns, who do I contact?

While the formal launch is undertaken with the support of both bishops and all five canons, your specific questions can be directed to those who worked most closely on the database project:

Canon Karin Hamilton – khamilton@episcopalct.org 203-639-3501, ext. 130

Canon Louis Fuertes – lfuertes@episcopalct.org, 203-639-3501, ext. 123

Matt Handi, Operations Manager – mhandi@episcopalct.org, 203-639-35021, ext. 107