

Surveys for Mission

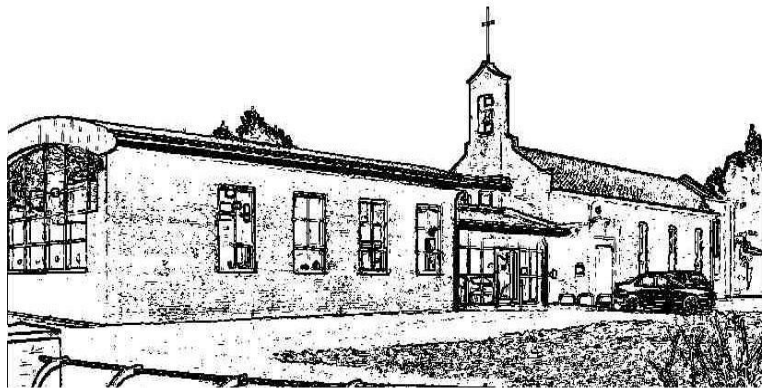
Specialists in Empirical Investigation

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Christ Church, Barnston

St Michaels, Pensby



The Parish of Barnston with Pensby [Diocese of Chester]

Barnston is an urban Church of England parish situated on the Wirral, about twelve miles north-west of Chester. The parish covers the civic districts of Barnston, Pensby, Thingwall, Heswall Hills, and part of the northern fringe of Heswall

An attendance survey was undertaken in the parish over

10 weeks
from

Sunday 24.01.2010

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Introduction

Why Conduct a Survey?

Church communities are comprised of people with different lives, different family structures, and different priorities. Some attend every week, others every other week, and some once a month. There are those who attend less than once a month, although there may still be a pattern to their churchgoing. Then there are others who only come occasionally or are newcomers to church.

The size of the weekly congregation is influenced by this range of different frequency patterns. During an average week it will include three quarters of those who attend three times a month, half of those who attend every two weeks, a quarter of those who attend once a month, and an eighth of those who attend every two months.

This blend of different patterns means the weekly congregation is a constantly changing group, both in size and people. Those present during any single week are merely a 'snapshot' in time and do not reflect the number of different people who will attend over two weeks, a month, or a longer period. In fact there is evidence to show that because of the different patterns of attendance any worshipping community may be at least twice as large as the average weekly presence.

Knowing the size of a church community is important for practical and pastoral reasons and the most effective way to measure size is to count those who attend worship. However, simply counting the number of people present each week can give a distorted view of the real size of the community. Why? Because it focuses on attendance not attendees. It determines the number of people who are present or take communion on a single day but it fails to take account of those who are missing. A more effective way is to conduct a survey and identify everyone who attends over several weeks. A survey is also an opportunity to determine a wide range of demographic factors that are likely to prove important for the organisation and pastoral well-being of the faith community.

Methodology

The parish decided to conduct a survey which was designed to identify everyone who attended a regular service of worship. It was timed to take place during a period when attendance was unlikely to be unduly influenced by holidays, festival services, or other special occasions and events that form part of the church calendar. Everyone who attended was encouraged to complete an attendance card and families were requested to ensure that a card was completed for every one of their attending members (including babies). Attendees were asked to identify themselves (giving their name and address), indicate their age group (under 5, 5-10, 11-15, 16-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-80, 80+) and the time of the service they were attending. It was important to distinguish members of the faith community from other attendees e.g. visitors (temporarily in the area), guests (only attending to be present at a baptism or family thanksgiving), transients (their normal place of worship was elsewhere but they attended, perhaps even routinely, for a specific service), and parade only attendees (only present for a parade service) so these people were asked to indicate their reason for being there on the card. Every week a separate set of cards were distributed and collected at every service.

Other Information Considered

Existing parish data

Local neighbourhood statistics from the 2001 census

Key Findings

- The average weekly attendance of all attendees was 331
- The number of different people who attended during the survey was 884
- The faith community was comprised of
 - 393 adults aged at least 25 years
 - 12 youth and young adults aged 16 to 24 years
 - 14 children and teenagers aged 11 to 15 years
 - 92 children under 11 years of age
- The proportion of each gender amongst adult members of the faith community aged 25 years or over was
 - 35% male
 - 65% female
- The proportion of the adult members of the faith community aged at least 25 years who attended monthly or less frequently was 35%
- The number of adults from the faith community aged at least 25 years who came to church alone e.g. without spouse/partner or children, was 174
- The proportion of Electoral Roll members who attended during the survey was 70%
- The proportion of adult members of the faith community aged at least 16 years who were not members of the Electoral Roll was 29%
- The proportion of adult members of the faith community aged at least 25 years who reside within the parish was 76%
- The proportion of households located within the parish from which there was at least one attending adult member of the faith community aged at least 25 years was 77%
- The proportion of adults in the faith community aged 16yrs and over who participated in the life of the church by performing a role at services and/or in other areas of church life, or were a member of a church group was 61%

Church Services

The survey measured attendance at the parish churches of

Christ Church, Barnston

St Michaels, Pensby

The regular services were

Christ Church

Sunday 8.00am

Every week

Sunday 10.30am

Every week

Sunday 6.30pm

1st & 3rd weeks only

St Michaels

Sunday 9.00am

Every week

Sunday 10.45am

Every week

Sunday 6.30pm

2nd & 4th weeks only

Wednesday 10.30am

Every week

Tuesday 3.30pm

Once a month

Regular Group Meetings were

Housegroups	Usually meet twice a month. Groups study Biblical and Christian themes and each has a specific area of special parish concern. Sometimes the groups work on church life tasks
Youth Group	Meet weekly to explore Christian themes
Alpha & Beta	A twelve week introduction to Christianity and a great way of meeting people. Plus the opportunity to meet further to explore other aspects of the Christian faith
Mothers Union	Meets once a month for fellowship and once a month for corporate communion. The union draws together some of the most committed and prominent women (and men) in the church family
Meeting Point	A meeting twice a month for the over 50s. Tea and conversation with a programme of interesting speakers
Contact	A programme for younger women. Some events are thought provoking, some are purely social

Allcomers

1 Who comes to Church?

Churchgoers can generally be grouped into five main categories

- A. *Visitors* who are only temporarily in the area
- B. *Guests* who come as family or friends to be present at the specific occasion of baptism, or a service of blessing or thanksgiving
- C. *Transient Attendees* whose principle place of worship is elsewhere but who come from time to time, perhaps even routinely, for a specific or specific type of service
- D. *Parade Only Attendees* who only come to attend a parade service involving the uniform groups
- E. *The Faith Community* for whom this is their centre of worship and who attend simply to be present at, and to be part of a regular service of worship

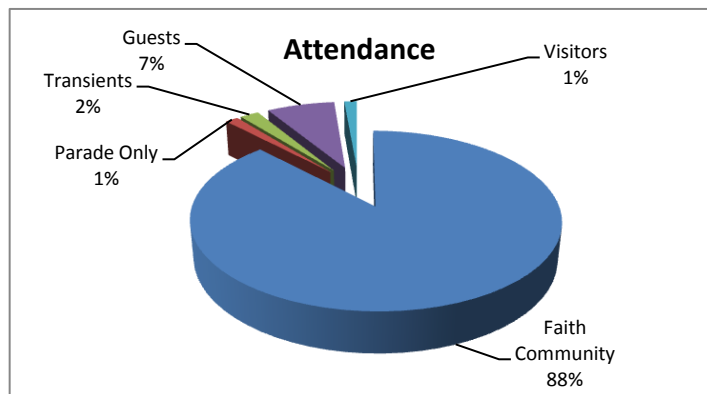
During the survey these different categories between them accounted for

- 3,306 attendances at worship
- 331 attendances during the average week

Visitors	45
Guests	242
Transient Attendees	67
Parade Only Attendees	46
Faith Community	2,906
Total Attendance at Worship	3,306

The number of attendances during the survey by each category of attendee

The proportion of attendance represented by each category

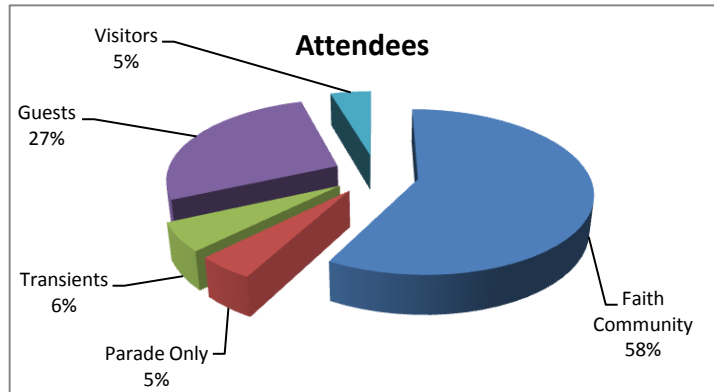


A breakdown of the number of individuals in the different categories shows

Visitors	40
Guests	241
Transient Attendees	50
Parade Only Attendees	41
Faith Community	512
Total Attendees at Worship	884

The number of different individuals in each category of attendee

The proportion of attendees represented by each category



During the survey

The <u>highest</u> weekly attendance at worship was	413
The overall number of identified attendees at worship was	884

The number of identified attendees was	
2.14	times greater than the highest weekly attendance
2.67	times greater than the average weekly attendance

We also identified other individuals who are part of the community but did not attend worship.

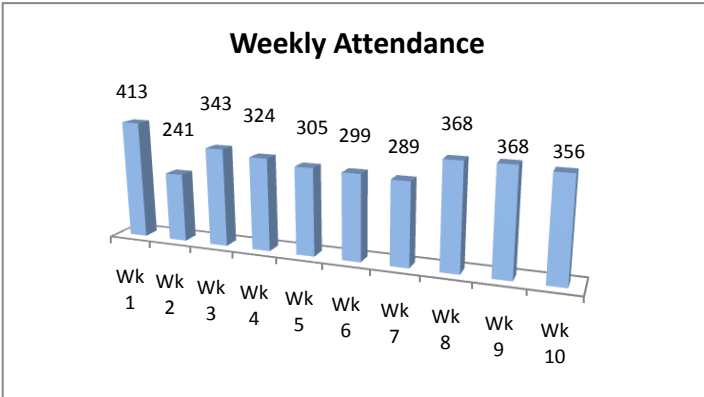
These non-attendees included	
2	who perform a church role
35	others who are members of a church group
114	others who are members of the Electoral Roll

Comparing the overall number of identified individuals with the size of the parish population shows

Parish Population	16,155
Identified Individuals	1034
Equivalent proportion of the parish population	6%

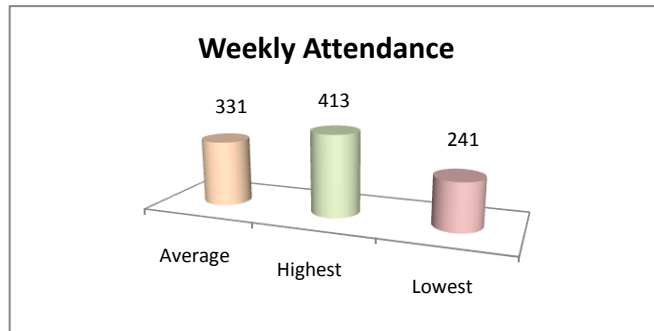
2 Weekly Presence

The attendance of all comers each week of the survey was

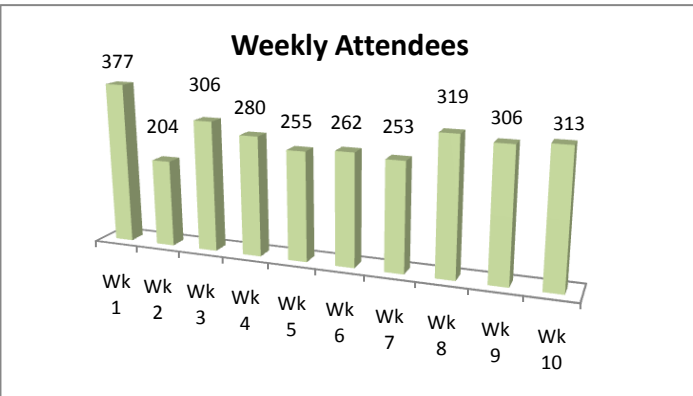


Attendance each week of the survey

Fluctuating weekly attendance

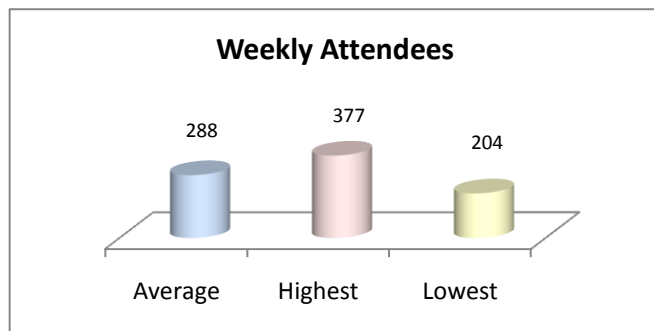


The number of actual attendees counting people only once each week was



Attendees each week of the survey

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees



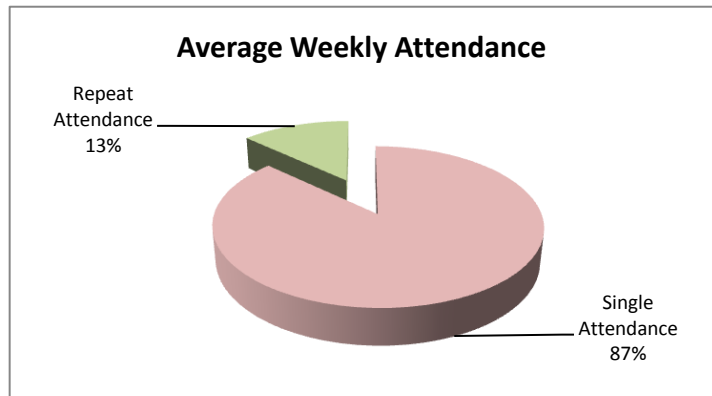
3 Repeat Attendance

Some churchgoers attend more than service during the week. A few do this most weeks, others only occasionally

The number of repeat attendances was

- 43 during an average week
- 431 during the survey

The proportion of attendance that was repeat attendance during an average week of the survey



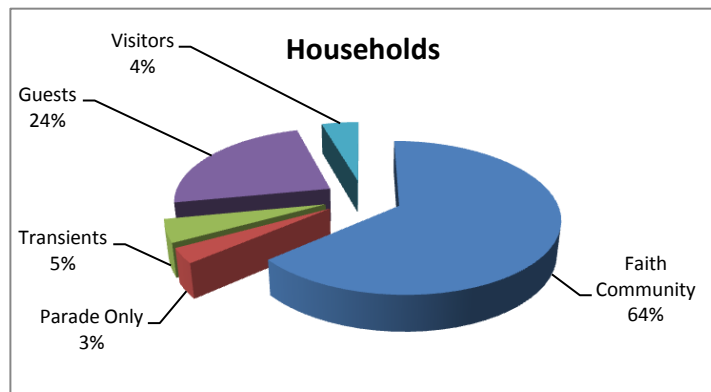
4 Households

The number of households with at least one adult aged 25 years or over attending worship during the survey was 467

Visitors	21
Guests	110
Transient Attendees	23
Parade Only Attendees	15
Faith Community	298
Total Attendance	467

The number of households with at least one adult aged 25yrs+

The proportion of households in each category



5 Service Attendance

The attendance by all comers at each service was

Christ Church

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Total
8.00am	19	18	31	23	18	21	33	31	29	25	248
10.30am	138	67	124	66	70	85	77	96	62	141	926
6.30pm			36		35		28				99

St Michaels

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Total
9.00am	34	30	46	37	20	39	44	45	42	42	379
10.45am	98	70	93	132	75	89	90	124	68	87	926
6.30pm	30	41		35		44		31	64	43	288
10.30am	16	15	13	31	25	21	17	41	20	18	217
3.30pm	78				62				83		223

The fluctuation in weekly attendance was

Christ Church

	Average	Highest	Lowest
8.00am	25	33	18
10.30am	93	141	62
6.30pm	33	36	28

Weekly Attendance

St Michaels

	Average	Highest	Lowest
9.00am	38	46	20
10.45am	93	132	68
6.30pm	41	64	30
10.30am	22	41	13
3.30pm	74	83	62

Weekly Attendance

The Faith Community

6.0 Members of the Faith Community

A faith community is a complex mixture of people. Some will restrict their involvement to churchgoing, whilst others will attend worship but also take part in other activities organised by the church. Some will perform a role at worship and/or in non-worship areas of parish life. Others will simply belong to a church group and attend meetings or other regular events.

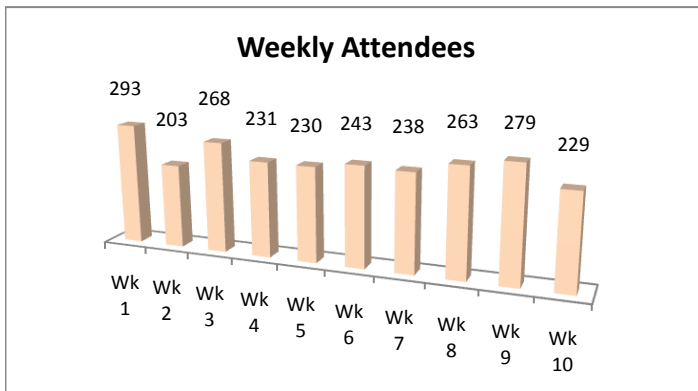
A few will probably take part in non-worship activities but not attend regular services, some by choice, others because of demands in their lives which conflict with worship attendance i.e. employment, family commitments, the role of a carer. Some may be regularly involved in non-worship events but only occasionally attend services.

As a result of the survey we identified

512	who attended a regular worship service
37	who took part in a non-worship activity but did not attend a worship service
114	who were members of the Electoral Roll but did not attend a worship service or non-worship group

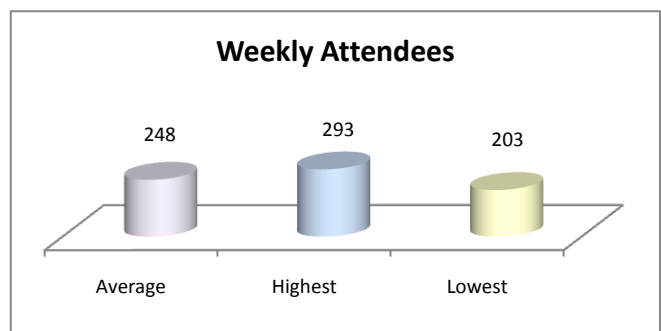
7.0 Weekly Attendees at Regular Services

The number of members from the faith community who attended each week during the survey was



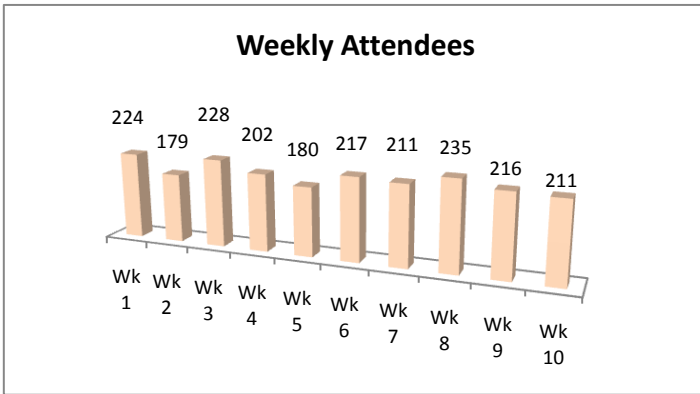
Weekly attendees from the faith community

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees



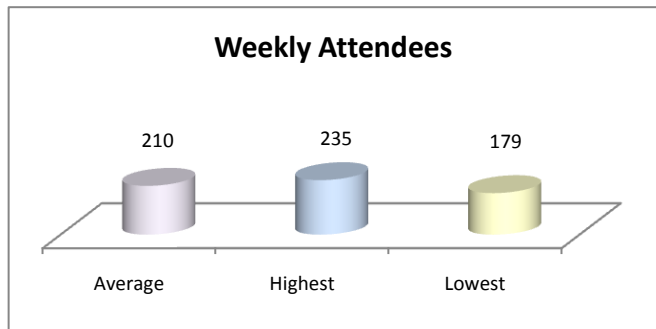
8.1 Weekly Attendance by Adults aged at least 25 yrs

(counting attendees only once per week)



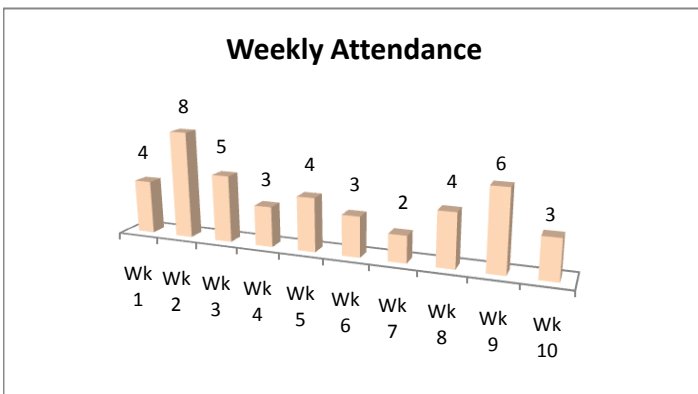
Weekly Attendees 25yrs+

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees aged 25yrs+



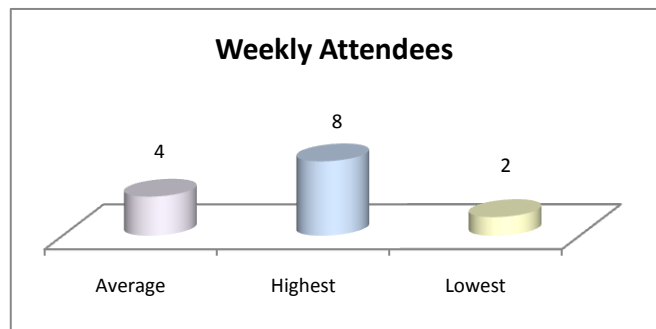
8.2 Weekly Attendance by Youth and Young Adults 16 to 24 yrs

(counting attendees only once per week)



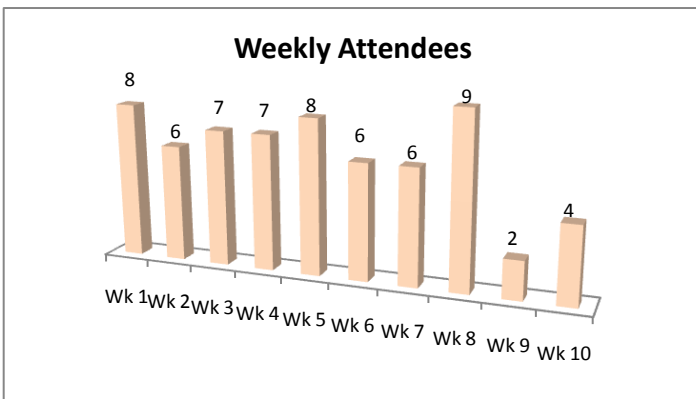
Weekly Attendees 16 to 24yrs

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees aged 16 to 24yrs



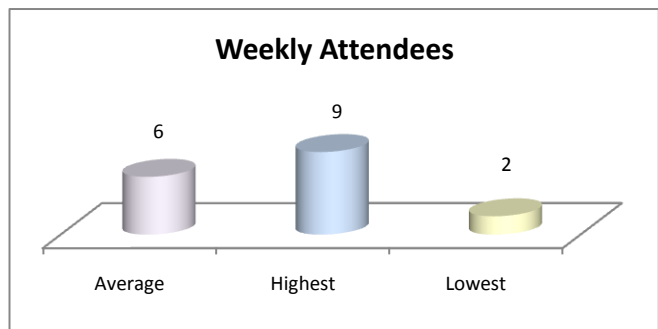
8.3 Weekly Attendance by Children and Teenagers 11 to 15 yrs

(counting attendees only once per week)



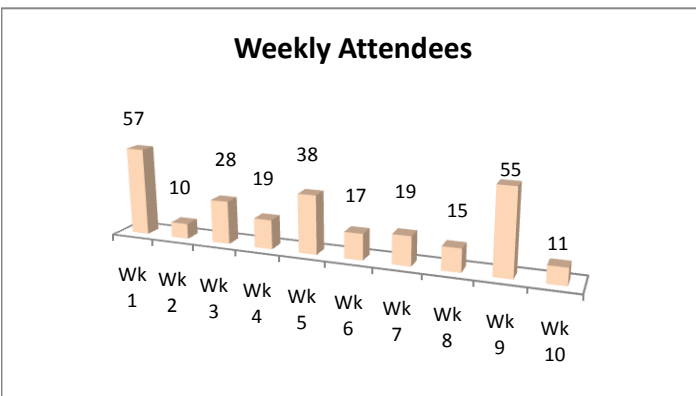
Weekly Attendees 11 to 15yrs

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees aged 11 to 15yrs



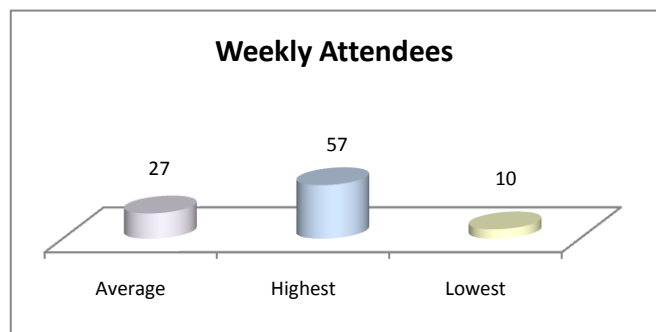
8.4 Weekly Attendance by Children under 11 yrs

(counting attendees only once per week)



Weekly Attendees Under 11yrs

The fluctuating number of weekly attendees under 11yrs



9.0 Service Attendance

The attendance by members of the faith community at each service was

Christ Church

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Total
8.00am	19	18	31	23	18	21	33	29	29	25	246
10.30am	73	67	89	66	60	68	66	91	61	64	705
6.30pm			36		35		28				99

St Michaels

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Total
9.00am	34	30	46	37	20	39	43	43	42	42	376
10.45am	94	69	90	85	70	87	87	79	64	81	806
6.30pm	30	41		34		44		30	61	40	280
10.30am	16	15	13	30	25	21	17	40	20	18	215
3.30pm	63				52				64		179

The fluctuation in weekly attendance was

Christ Church

	Average	Highest	Lowest
8.00am	25	33	18
10.30am	71	91	60
6.30pm	33	36	28

Weekly Attendance

St Michaels

	Average	Highest	Lowest
9.00am	38	46	20
10.45am	81	94	64
6.30pm	40	61	30
10.30am	22	40	13
3.30pm	60	64	52

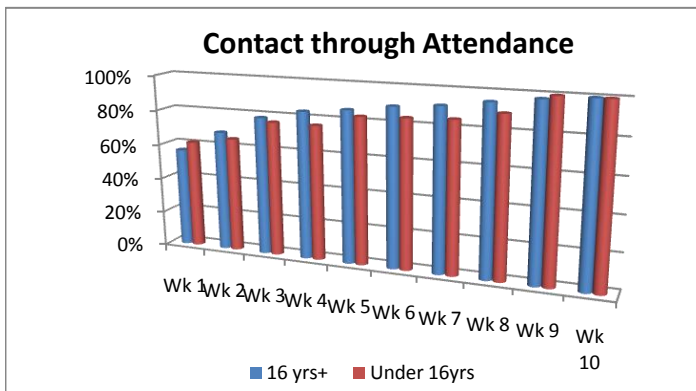
Weekly Attendance

10.0 Contact through Attendance with Adults and Children

Communicating information to the faith community about church matters, events to take place, changes in service arrangements, and other important issues is vital. However, information given from the front of church or via a weekly news sheet handed to churchgoers only reaches the limited proportion of the community who attend.

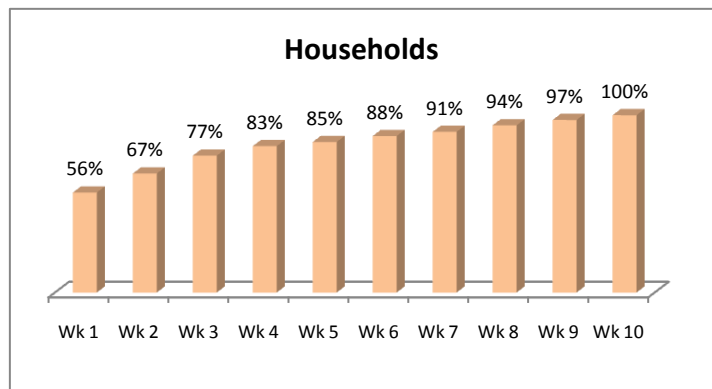
Different attendance patterns mean that the same information would have to be given out every week for several weeks before it is received by the bulk of members.

The proportion of the community who were reached directly by these means of communication during the survey is shown below. Children and youth under 16 years are shown separate to adults because their attendance patterns often follow a different trend when compared with older generations.



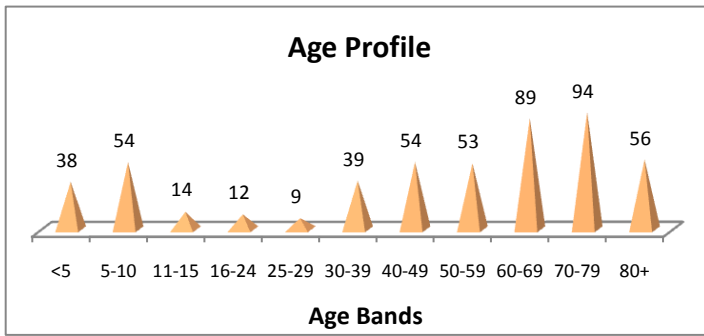
The accumulation of contact with members of the faith community at worship showing the increasing proportion reached week by week during the survey in the age ranges of under 16 yrs and 16yrs+

Accumulation of contact with households through the attendance of at least one adult 25yrs+ member of the faith community at worship showing the increasing proportion reached week by week during the survey



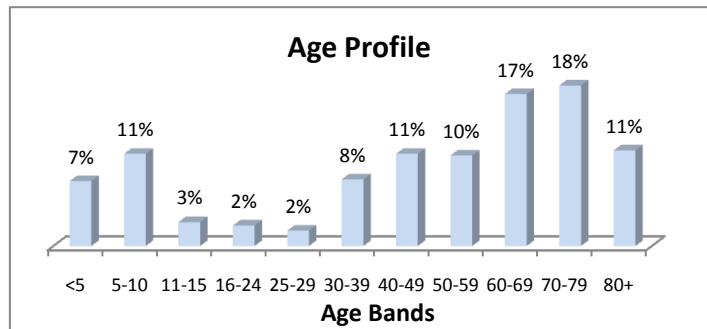
11.0 Age Profile

The age profile of the members of the faith community who attended during the survey was



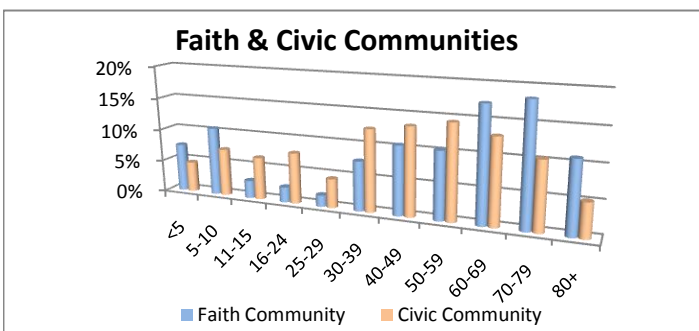
The age structure of the faith community shown in age bands

The proportion each age band represents of the whole faith community



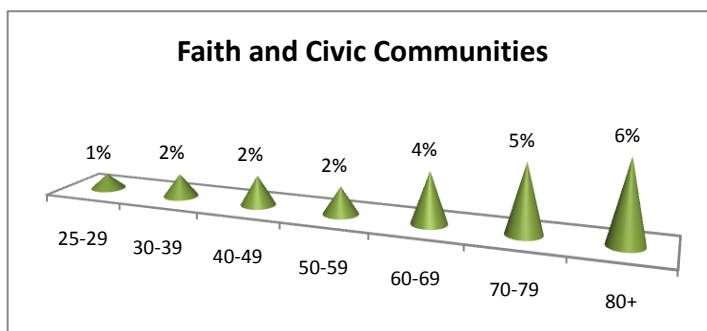
12.0 Faith and Civic Communities

Comparing the age profiles of the faith community and the local civic communities within the parish provides an indicator of whether local church strategies are successful in drawing people of all ages to church, or whether they only achieve real success amongst selective age groups



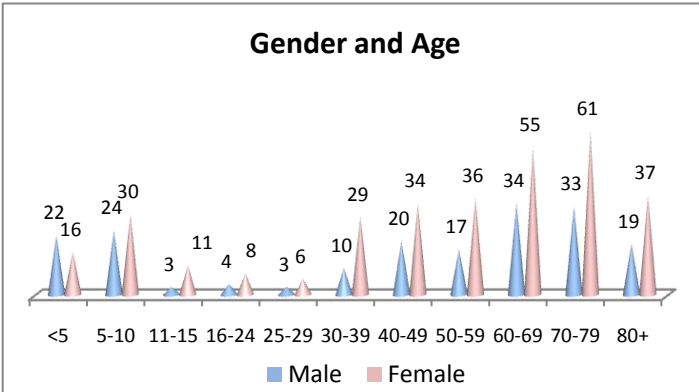
A comparison of the age profiles of the faith and local civic communities

The proportion each adult age band in the faith community represents of the local civic community



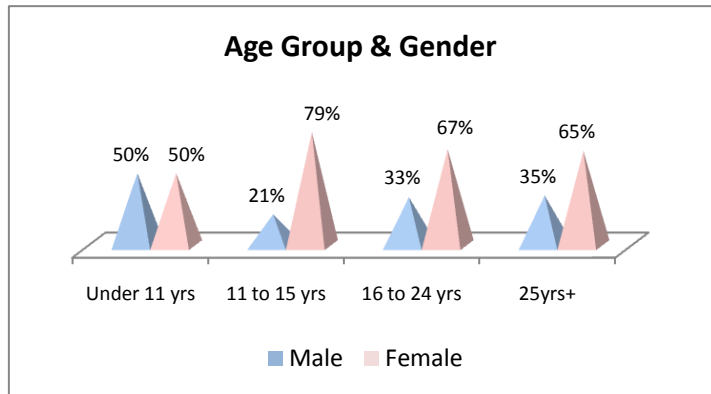
13.0 Gender and Age Profiles

The age profiles of male and female members of the faith community who attended during the survey were



The number of attendees of each gender in each age band during the survey

The proportion of each gender in the main age groups

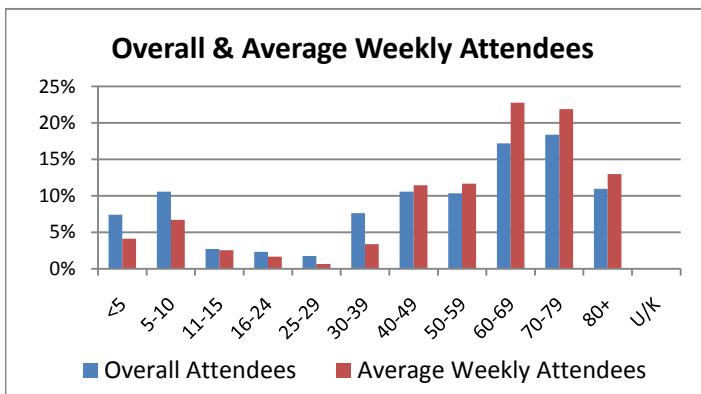


14.0 Average Weekly Congregation

The age profile of the average weekly congregation is often different to the profile of the whole community, frequently being skewed towards the older generations. There are two reasons. The first is that older churchgoers invariably attend more regularly i.e.

Whole Community		
	Attendees	Proportion
Under 60 years	273	53.4%
60 years & over	238	46.6%

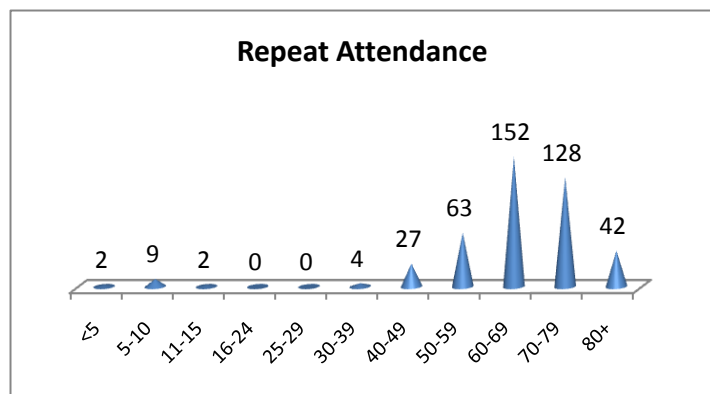
Average Weekly Attendees		
	Attendees	Proportion
Under 60 years	105	42.3%
60 years & over	143	57.7%



A comparison of the age profiles of the whole faith community and the average weekly attendees

The second reason is that repeat attendance (the practice of attending more than one service during the week) is dominated by the older age groups i.e.

The age profile of repeat attendees

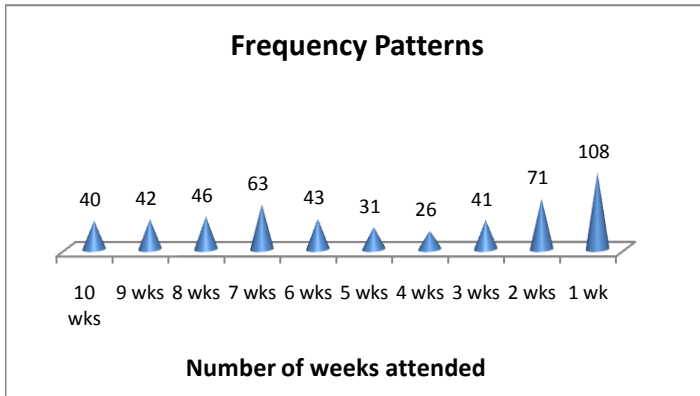


The combination of these two factors means that the average weekly congregations present a visual impression of the faith community that is considerably older than it really is e.g.

	Under 60 years	60 years & over
Attendees during the survey	53%	47%
Attendance during an average week	34%	66%

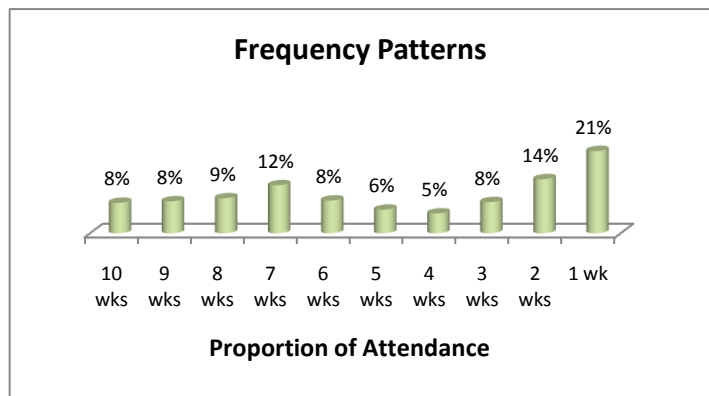
15.0 Frequency Patterns

The frequency by which members of the faith community attended during the survey varied widely. The overall number of members (all ages) who attended in each frequency pattern was

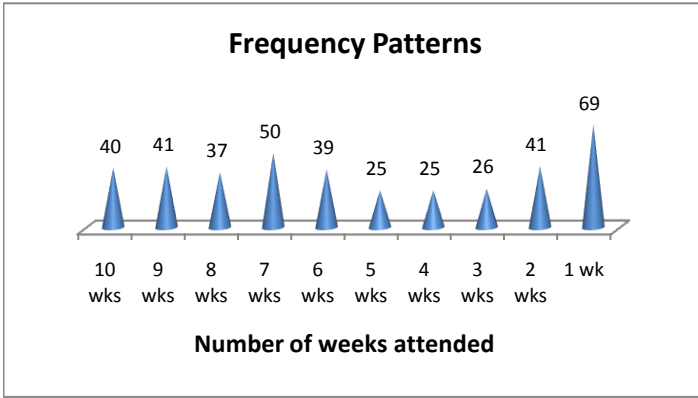


The number of faith community members of all ages in each frequency pattern

The proportion of the faith community represented by those in each frequency pattern

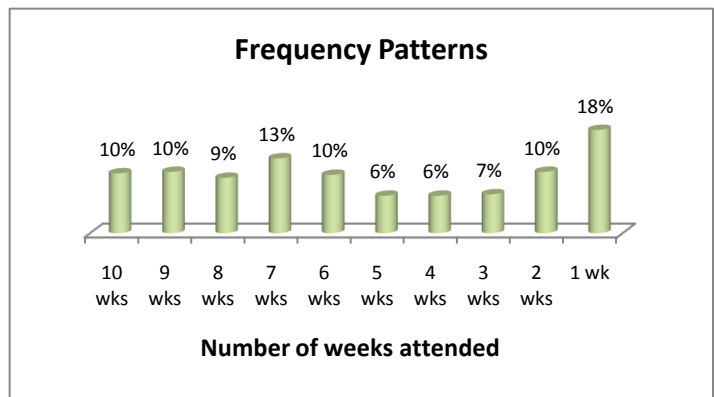


16.1 Frequency Patterns of Adults 25 yrs and older

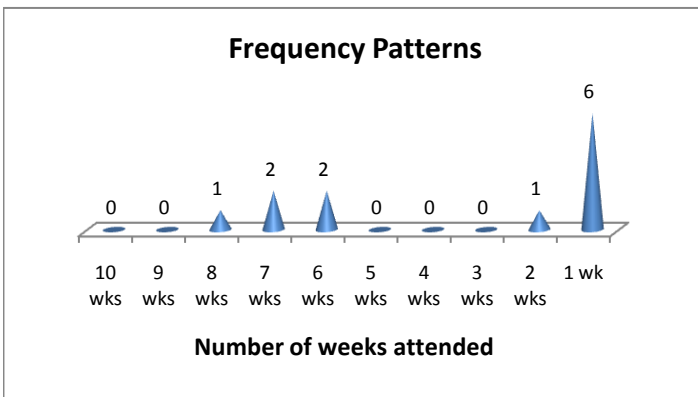


The number of adults 25yrs+ from the faith community in each frequency pattern

The proportion that each frequency pattern represents of all the 25yr+ adult members of the faith community

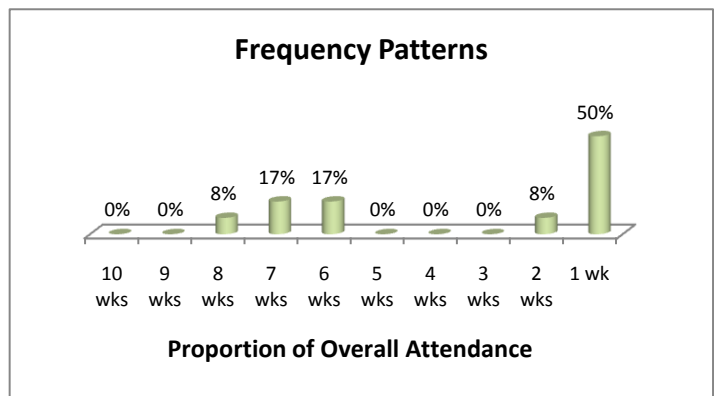


16.2 Frequency Patterns of Youth and Young Adults 16 to 24 yrs

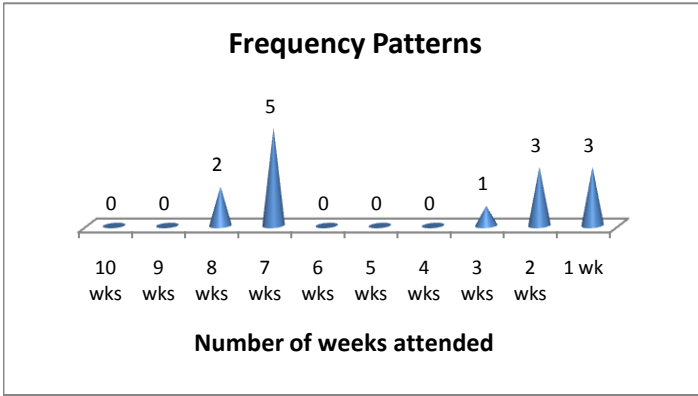


The number of children & teenagers 16 to 24yrs from the faith community in each frequency pattern

The proportion that each frequency pattern represents of all the 16 to 24yr members of the faith community

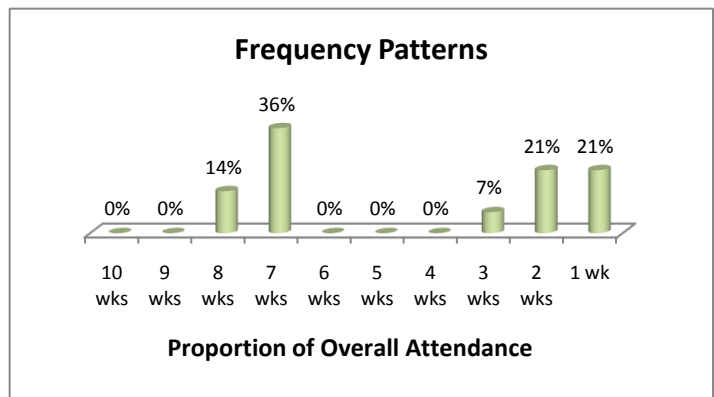


16.3 Frequency Patterns of Children and Teenagers 11 to 15 yrs

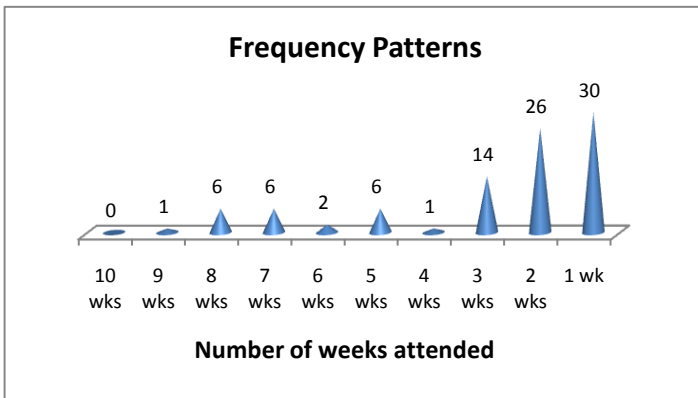


The number of children & teenagers 11 to 15yrs from the faith community in each frequency pattern

The proportion that each frequency pattern represents of all the 11 to 15yrs members of the faith community

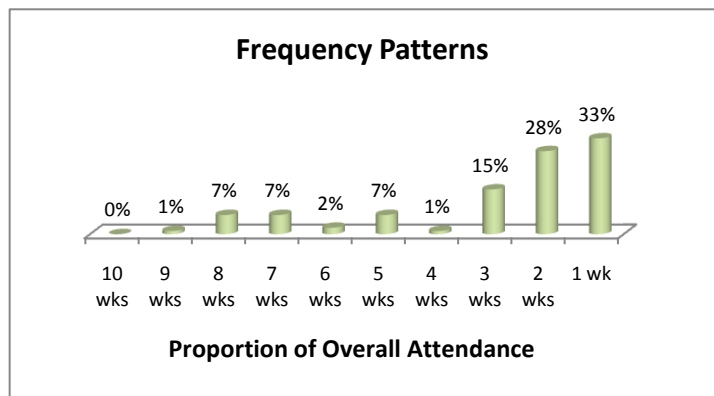


16.4 Frequency Patterns of Children Under 11yrs



The number of children under 11yrs from the faith community in each frequency pattern

The proportion that each frequency pattern represents of all the under 11yrs members of the faith community

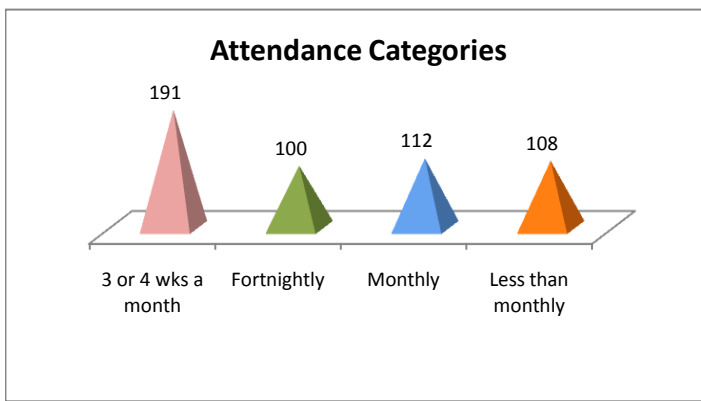


17.0 Attendance Categories of the Faith Community

A simpler way to show attendance practice is to condense the frequency patterns into the attendance categories of

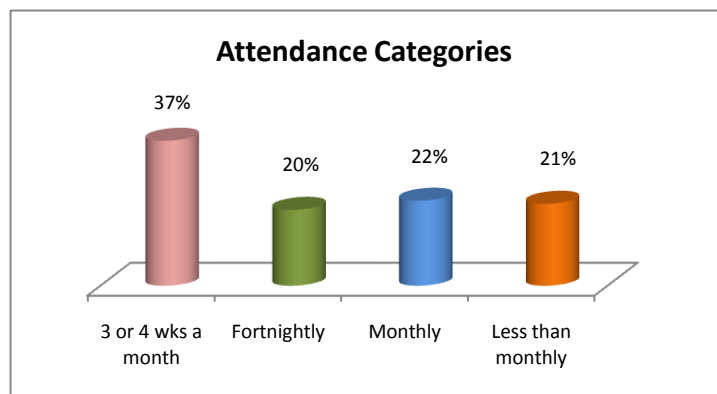
- 3 or 4 weeks a month
- fortnightly
- monthly
- less than monthly

Shown in this way the number of members (all ages) who attended in each category was



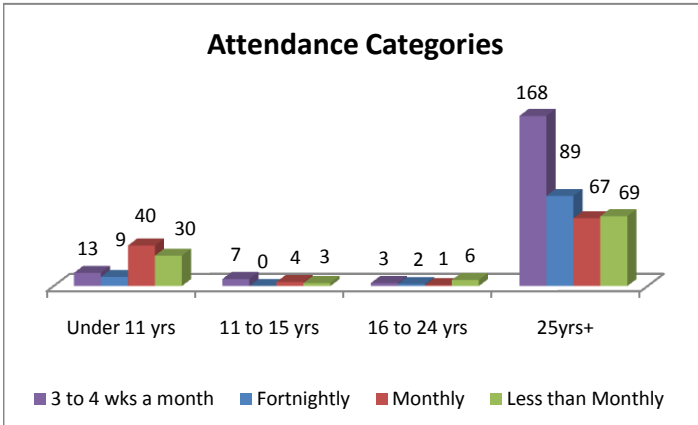
The number of churchgoing members from the faith community in each attendance category

The proportion each category represents of the whole faith community



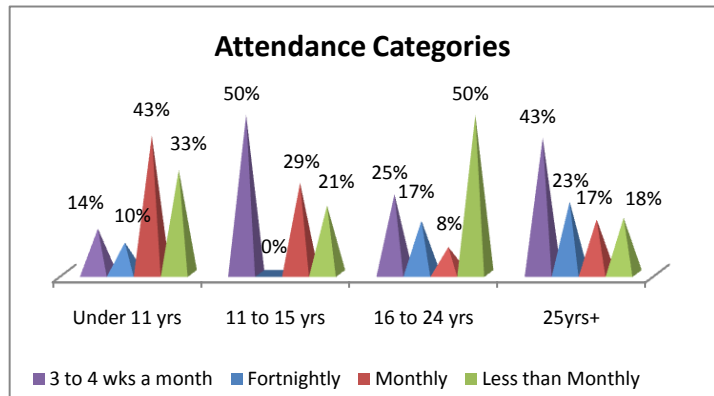
18.0 Attendance Categories of Different Age Groups

The number of attending members in each category for the different age groups was



The number of members of different age groups in each attendance category

The proportion of each age group represented by each category

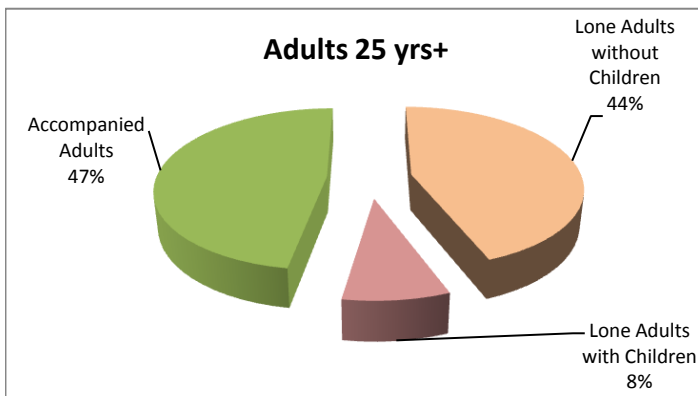


19.0 Lone Adults

Evidence from surveys in other parishes shows that significant numbers of adults often attend church alone i.e. without spouse/partner or children.

The number of adults from the faith community aged at least 25 years who attended	
▪ throughout the survey without a spouse/partner or children was	174
▪ throughout the survey with children but not a spouse/partner was	33

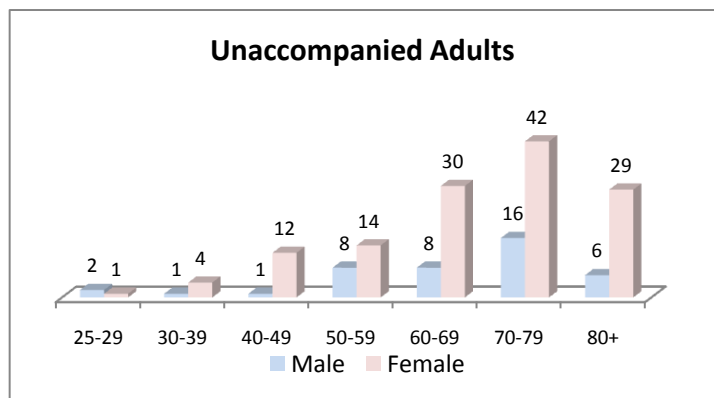
The proportions of accompanied and unaccompanied adults from the faith community were



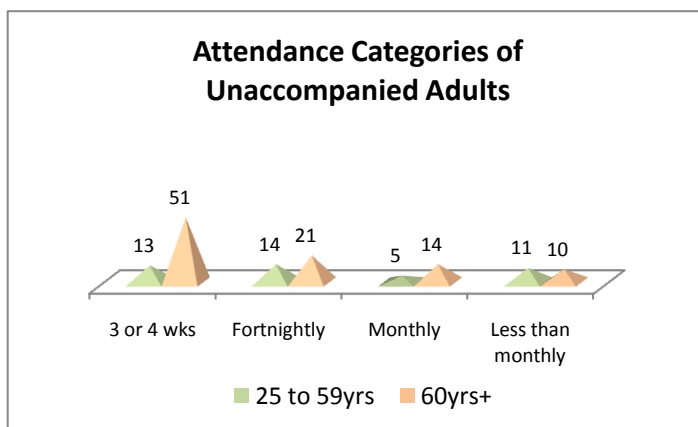
The proportion that adults aged 25yrs+ who attend alone and those who are accompanied by another adult from the same household represent of the adult faith community

The age profile for each gender of unaccompanied adults attending was

The number of adults aged 25yrs+ in the faith community who attended alone (e.g. without spouse/partner or children)



The attendance categories for the different age groups of 25 to 59 years and 60 years and over were

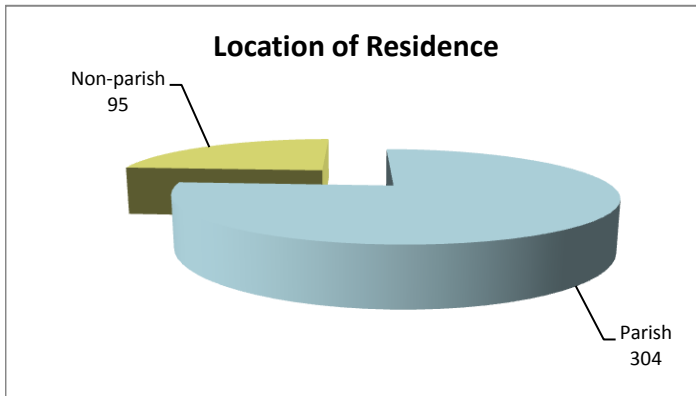


The number of adults in the different age groups of 25 to 59 yrs and 60 years+ attending alone in each of the attendance categories

20.0 Residency

Not every member of the faith community lives within the parish.

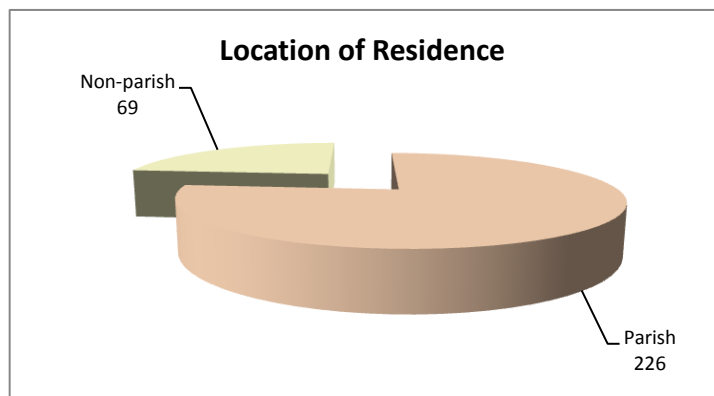
The proportion of adult members aged at least 16 years who attended during the survey and live outside the parish was 24%



Residence of individual adults in the faith community aged 16yrs+

The proportion of households with at least one adult member aged at least 16 years who attended during the survey that are located outside the parish was 23%

Residence of households with at least one adult 16yrs+ from the faith community



21.0 The Electoral Roll

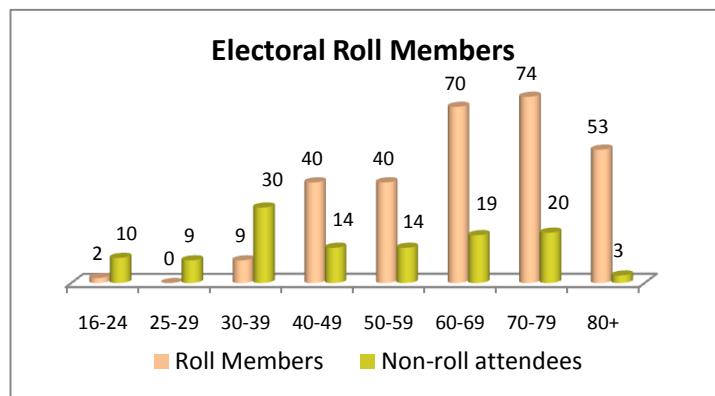
Evidence from surveys in other parishes suggests that the Electoral Roll is generally not a reliable indicator of the size of a faith community nor an effective record of the adult churchgoing members.

The proportion of members of the roll who attended during the survey was 70%

The proportion of adult members of the faith community at least 16 years of age who attended during the survey and were not members of the roll was 29%

The age profiles of roll and non-roll members of the faith community who attended during the survey are

Roll and non-roll members at least 16 yrs of age



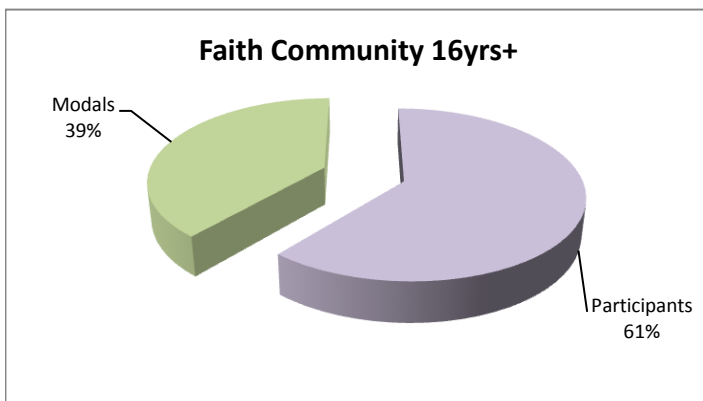
22.0 Church Life

In most parishes there are opportunities to actively take part in the life of the church by

- i. performing a lay role at worship services
- ii. performing a lay role in some other area of church life
- iii. taking part in a group meeting or activity

At the time of the survey the number of adults aged 16 years or over who participated in church life (although not all of them attended worship) was 248

The proportion these church life participants represented of the whole faith community aged 16 years and over was 61%



Participants and non-participants in church life from the faith community aged at least 16 years

23.0 Church Roles

There are a variety of ways that church members can perform a lay role in church life

There are

- roles for which there is specific training by the diocese or at parish level e.g. reader, pastoral worker, parish evangelist
- roles that use secularly acquired skills e.g. treasurer, secretary, parish clerk
- roles that involve on the job learning e.g. church warden, Sunday school teacher, clerical assistant
- roles that may simply require aptitude and commitment e.g. committee member, sidesperson, lesson reader, intercessor, housegroup leader

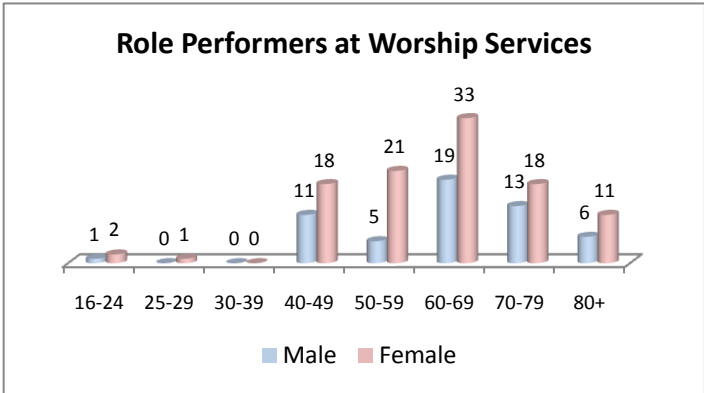
At the time of the survey

46 different lay roles were performed by church members

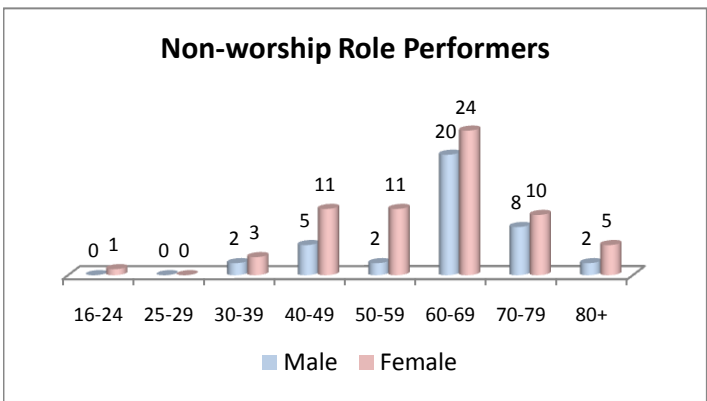
178 different members performed a role of some nature in church life

The age profiles for each gender of those who performed a role at worship services were

Age profiles for each gender of role performers at worship services



The age profiles for each gender of those who performed a role in other areas of church life were



Age profiles for each gender of role performers in non-worship areas of church life

24.0 Church Group Membership

Members can take part in church life during the week by attending meetings organised by different groups which cater for a range of teaching, fellowship, and social opportunities.

At the time of the survey there were

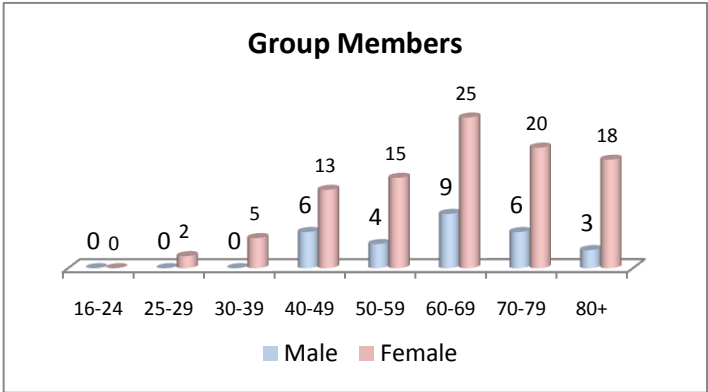
163 people who were members of a teaching, fellowship, or social group

Some attended more than one group. The overall membership of each group at the time of the survey was

	Members
Housegroups	58
Youth Group	7
Alpha & Beta	31
M U	55
Meeting Point	40
Contact	27

The age profiles for each gender of those who were members of a group were

Age profiles of group members



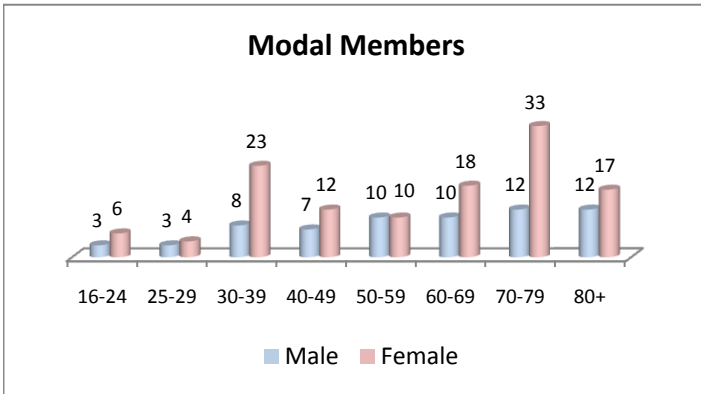
25.0 Modal Members

People who didn't perform a role and didn't attend a group were modal members whose only involvement and direct contact with the church was through their attendance at worship services.

At the time of the survey there were

188 modal members over 15 years of age who neither performed a role or attended a meeting

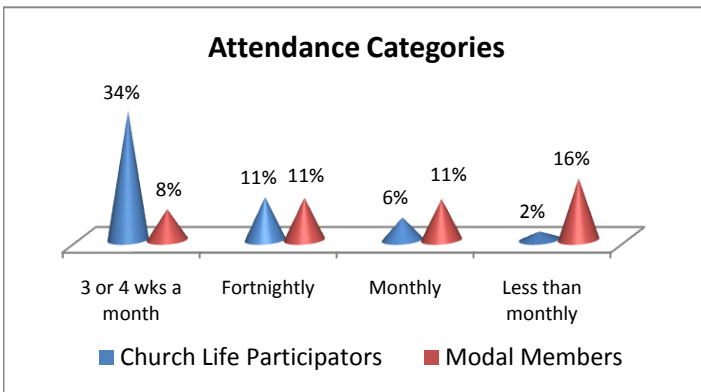
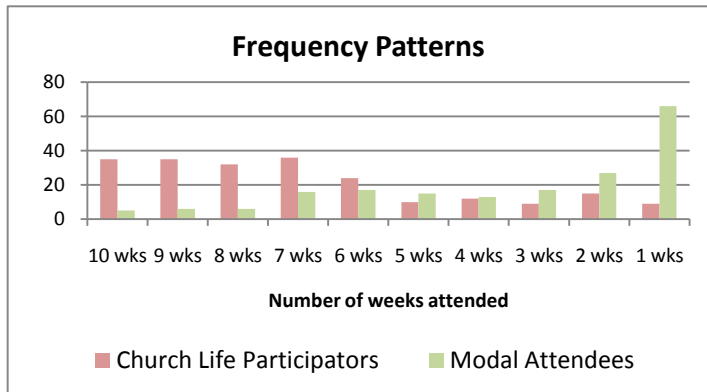
The age profiles for each gender of these modal members were



Age profiles of modal members of the faith community

The majority of modal members attended worship services less frequently than members who also participated in church life as shown in the weekly patterns and attendance categories below.

Weekly patterns of church life participants and modal members aged 16 years and over



Attendance categories shown as a proportion of the whole faith community aged 16 years and over

Glossary of Terms

Visitor

A person whose normal place of residence is outside the parish area and indicated on their survey card "I am a visitor".

Guest

A person who indicated on their survey card "I am only attending for a special service (e.g. baptism)".

Transient Attendee

A person who came perhaps even routinely for a specific or specific type of service and indicated on their survey card "I usually worship at another church". Such a person is really part of a worshipping community elsewhere.

Parade Only Attendee

A person who only attended for a parade service involving the uniform groups.

Member of the Faith Community

A person who attended any regular worship service during the survey and is recognised as regular attendees and/or indicated on their survey card "I worship regularly at this church".

Frequency Pattern

The number of weeks a person attended church for worship during the survey.

Attendance Category

The number of weeks a person attended church for worship each month during the survey.

Church Life Participant

A person who engages in the life of the church by performing a role, either at worship services or other areas of parish life, or who attends meetings organised by different groups that cater for a range of teaching, fellowship, and social opportunities.

Modal Member

A person who attends regular worship services but does not engage in the life of the church by performing a role, either at worship services or other areas of parish life, and does not attend meetings organised by different groups that cater for a range of teaching, fellowship, and social opportunities. This person's only involvement with the church is to sit in a pew at worship (modal attendance).