

SASKATOON EPARCHY CONFERENCE ANALYSIS

November 29, 2021

DISTRICT REPORTS SUMMARY:

Dormition District

- Vibrant, Active

District Missions: largely inactive during pandemic; little change in 15-year plans

Hafford District:

- Vibrant, Active;

District Missions: working together to provide for spiritual and social needs; sharing costs; aging population; younger generation not always involved

Five Year Plan shows definite plans for improvement are needed.

All churches, but one, in good repair.

District fundraiser is a positive.

Sts. Peter & Paul, Saskatoon:

- Demographic forecasts fairly accurate.
- Covid effects a big factor in less activity and attendance.

St. Athanasius/Moose Jaw District:

- Forecasts fairly accurate.
- Expenses and Income stable.
- Buildings and cemeteries well cared for by volunteers.
- Kindersley church will be decommissioned in 2022.
- On-line services and offerings from UCREC have kept District parishioners engaged.

Canora District:

- Very large District (33 churches and 50 cemeteries). Canora, Kamsack, Norquay serving as hubs of activity; several Missions have only a church cemetery. Forecasts fairly accurate.

St. Basil's Regina:

- Forecasted to remain vibrant beyond 15 years (over 300 parishioners)
- Revenue is stable; no debts or liabilities
- Youth/Young Adult ministry shared with St. Athanasius

Montmartre District:

Montmartre Parish:

- Aging parish
- On-going building repairs will be required.
- Financially viable for 5-7 years

Candiac:

- Church, hall, cemetery in good repair
- Financially sustainable for 10 years

Weyburn:

- Financially viable for 30 months; expenses exceeding revenue
- Building dated, but only minor repairs required
- Meeting to be held shortly to discuss future

Tribune:

- 5-6 members; finances stable; church and cemetery in good condition

Grenfell:

- 4-6 parishioners attend regularly; church in good repair
- last minute revenues

Ituna and Wynyard Districts:

- Melville Included in the District in 2019
- Forecast: 2022 = 195; 2032 – 108 .
- Hubbard -beginning decommissioning process.
- Goodeve Town – projected for 3 more years.
- Melville – projected for 7-10 years.
- Ituna – aging parish but viable for 15 years.

Wynyard District:

- Wadena and Kuroki came into the District in 2021 (approximately 250 souls of which 30 are under age 18).
- Wynyard – projected for 10 years.
- Foam Lake/Model Farm – 12-15 years (younger families).
- Wishart Town and Farms – 5-7 years.
- Krasne and Holar – Have the most youth and young families in the District; projected for 20 years.

Yorkton District:

Our Mother of Perpetual Help (St. Mary's):

- Monastery being dismantled due to age and high maintenance costs .
- Aging population; younger people not attending.
- Decline in financial support.
- District Missions include Beaverdale, Calder, Insinger, Willowbrook and Whitesand with 47 families.

- 18 baptisms in 2010; 8 in 2020
- 12 marriages in 2010; 1 in 2020
- 46 funerals in 2010; 20 in 2020
- St. Mary's continues with daily Liturgies.
- UCBC, UCWLC, K of C., Blue Army, Golden Agers help with many volunteer tasks.

In Conclusion:

1. Demographic forecasts are fairly accurate. In most cases, urban centres project greater longevity than rural counterparts.
2. There is a steady decline in numbers of souls in most Districts.
3. Some District Missions work well together and could serve as a model for others.
4. Eparchial Ministries tend to serve urban centres where population is greater.
5. Cemeteries and Buildings are reported to be generally in good repair.

EPARCHIAL CONFERENCE ANALYSIS

November 29, 2021

On-Line and In-Person Groups:

Question A

How is your parish responding to the number of services per year, number and age of parishioners, building condition and location in the District, demands of large area on clergy?

- Main concern is finances; numbers down; expenses up; need to prioritize projects
- One parish lost members because of condition of the church building. Hard to meet the demands of keeping the building in good repair.
- A parish is people, not the building.
- Depends on how far people are willing to travel
- Where there are very few parishioners, attendance is sporadic, building is deteriorating and usually only one Liturgy per year(only in summer)
- In a few areas the District cooperates in sharing expenses.
- Some will only attend services in home parish. Need to build community with neighbouring parishes.
- Weekend services preferred to weekday services in rural areas.
- Because of reduction in services in 2020, participation in services has been falling. Now looking for people to return to church.
- Some say the idea of faith is changing. One can study the Gospel at home so no need for church building.
- Fundraising is an issue in rural communities.
- Volunteer burnout is real.
- Connection with Catholic schools in some communities has provided an opportunity to connect with youth.

Big Picture:

Financial pressures

Aging church buildings

Volunteer burnout

Fewer people attending

Need to build community

Question B

How is your parish sustained by the Eparchy? How is the Eparchy sustained by your parish? How are roles changing?

- Information provided by this conference is important.
- Sometimes the reason parishes don't make use of ministries like Youth and Young Adults is because there is no youth. No children. Cities tend to use the ministries, but not rural parishes. UCREC greatly supports parishes.
- Concern about sustainability of the parish due to aging population. No Eparchy if no parishes. It needs to be a two-way street.
- Suggestion of phoning people to call them back to church
- Bishop needs to be seen out and about.
- There is a belief that the Eparchy is not helping parishes; much mistrust of the Eparchy
- Some rural parishes have had a negative experience with the Eparchy but fail to realize that they only exist because of the Eparchy.
- Need to focus on spirituality rather than money; need two-way communication between Eparchy and parishes
- Eparchy provides for much family life in one large urban parish. Connection between Eparchy and parish is essential.
- Sometimes parishes are unaware of programs from the Eparchy until it is too late. Better communication needed.
- It isn't the Eparchy that needs to support the parish, but the parish needs to take responsibility.
- Sometimes clergy don't take leadership in explaining the role of the Eparchy. Clergy should see themselves as the "agent" for the Eparchy as well as for the parish.

Big Picture:

Communication between Eparchy and parishes is key.

Ministries used more by city parishes

Some ministries are providing excellent programming/service.

Lack of young people in some areas

Clergy to advocate for Eparchy and for parishes

Question C

How are cemeteries cared for now and in the future when a parish might close and a cemetery becomes a concern of others who are not used to care for a cemetery?

- Some cemeteries are returned to municipalities.
- A parish should have a succession plan for cemeteries. Need to rely on volunteers, but the problem is that often there are no young families to take on cemetery care.
- Need to overcome mistrust of the Eparchy
- There is a lack of funds for looking after cemeteries. The Eparchy needs to start a cemetery fund now.

Big Picture:

Succession plans for cemeteries are needed.

Lack of funding

Question D

What are the advantages for parishes of a pastoral district to work together in areas of priests' salaries, rectory expenses, service schedules, etc?

- Builds community
- Advantages are shared costs, shared upkeep, ability to fund raise together.
- There is a cut back in services in some areas due to clergy burnout brought on by long travel distances.
- Rural parishes are struggling.
- Need to talk about going to another church in the District when there is no service in your church

Big Picture:

Many advantages when churches in a District work together.