Statistics in Context:
Understanding the multiple realities of our Church

with data from Parochial Reports and other surveys

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House of Bishops, September 2023

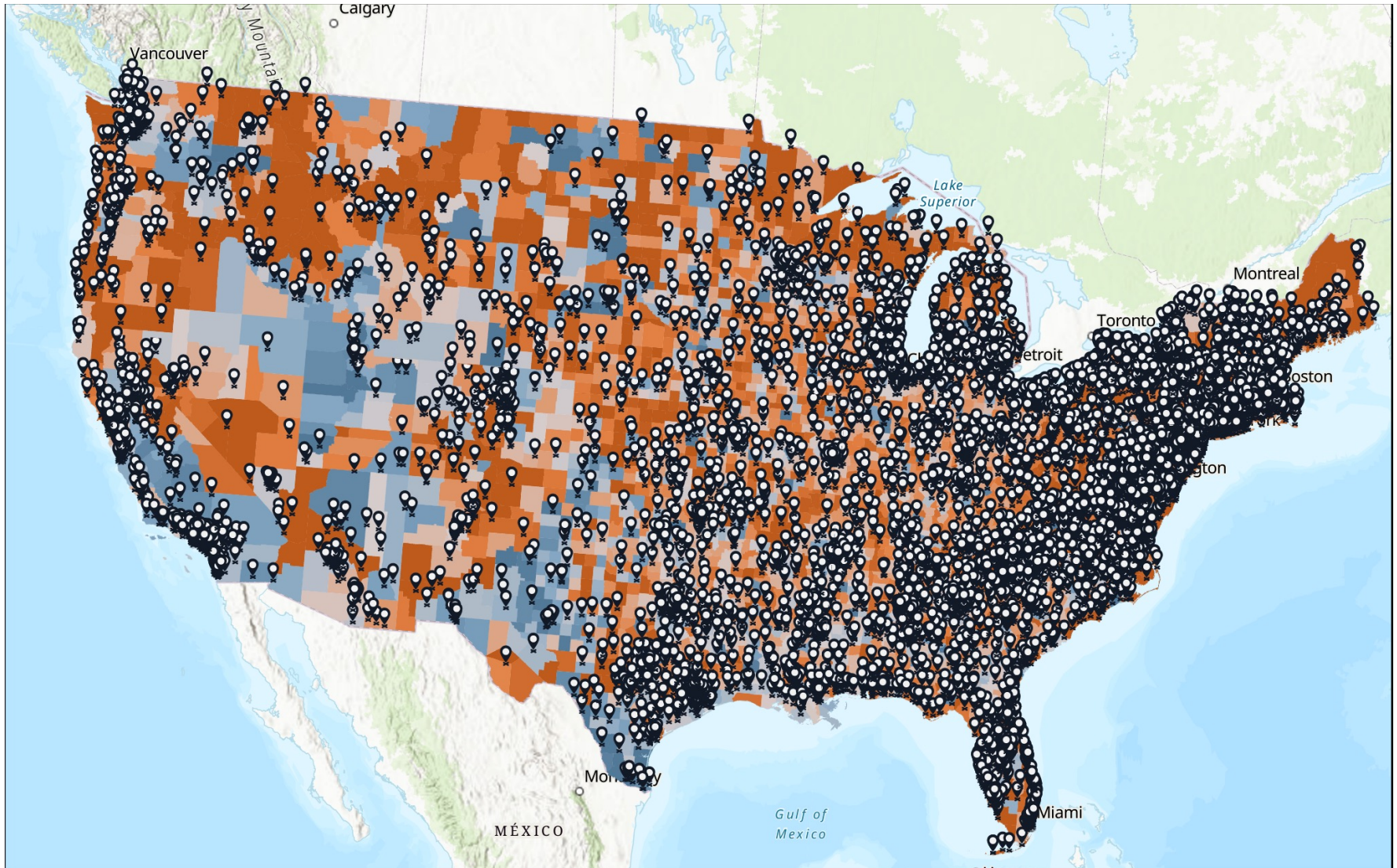
Context and Reminders







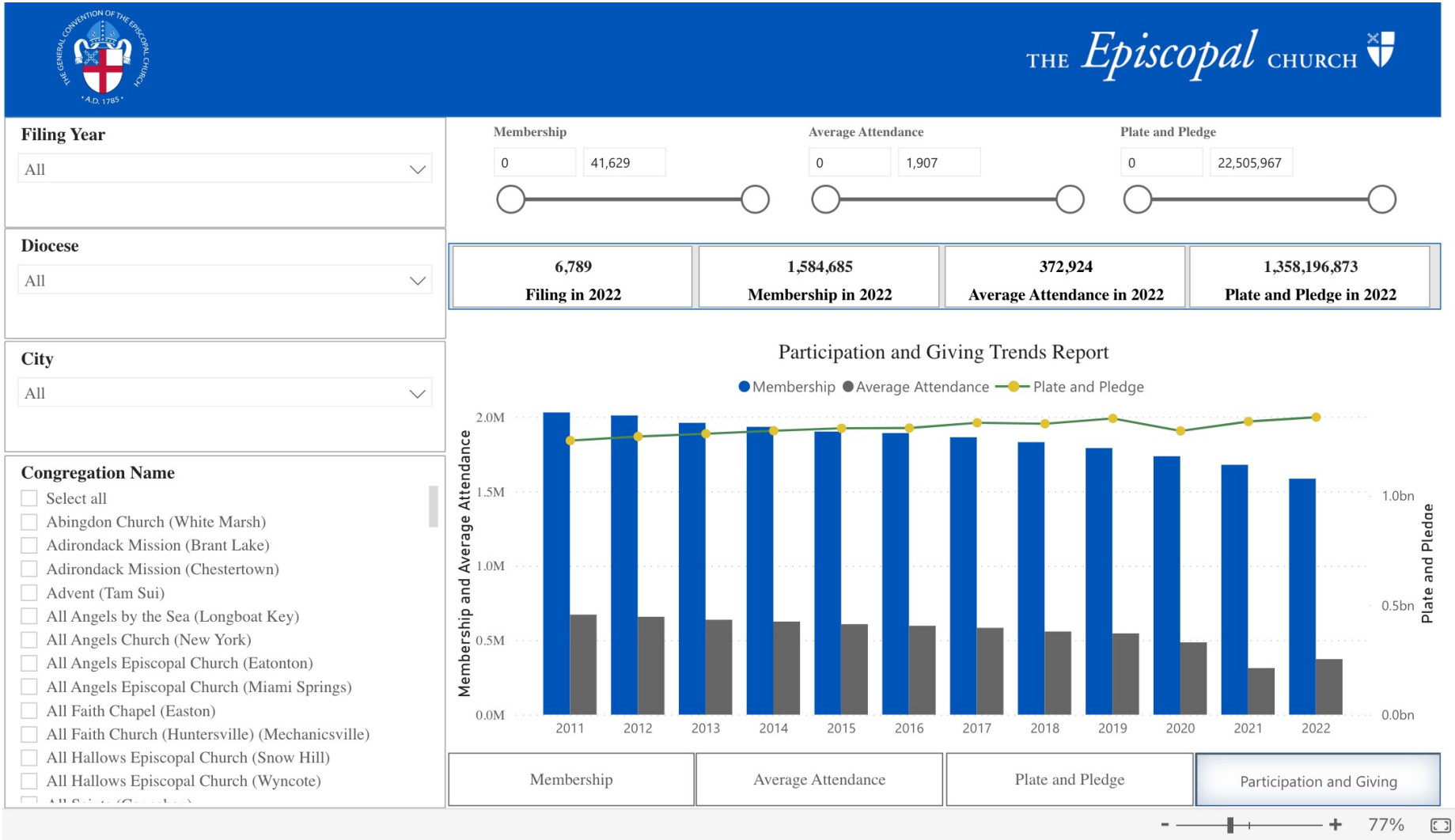
Context and Reminders



The Parochial Report

- Collection of congregational data, per Canon I.6
- Designed by the House of Deputies' Committee on the State of the Church and approved by the Executive Council of the General Convention
- An annual insight into the life, ministry, finances, and membership of The Episcopal Church
- Has been collected for 100+ years
- A tool for strategic planning

Participation and Giving Trends



Changes in Plate and Pledge

Year	Plate and Pledge	Number of parishes
2010	$1.27 billion	7067
2015	$1.32 billion	6996
2019	$1.35 billion	6897
2022	$1.34 billion	6789

Changes in Operating Revenue

Year	Operating Revenue	Number of parishes
2010	$1.64 billion	7067
2015	$1.73 billion	6996
2019	$1.69 billion	6897
2022	$1.82 billion	6789

Total Income for all Dioceses

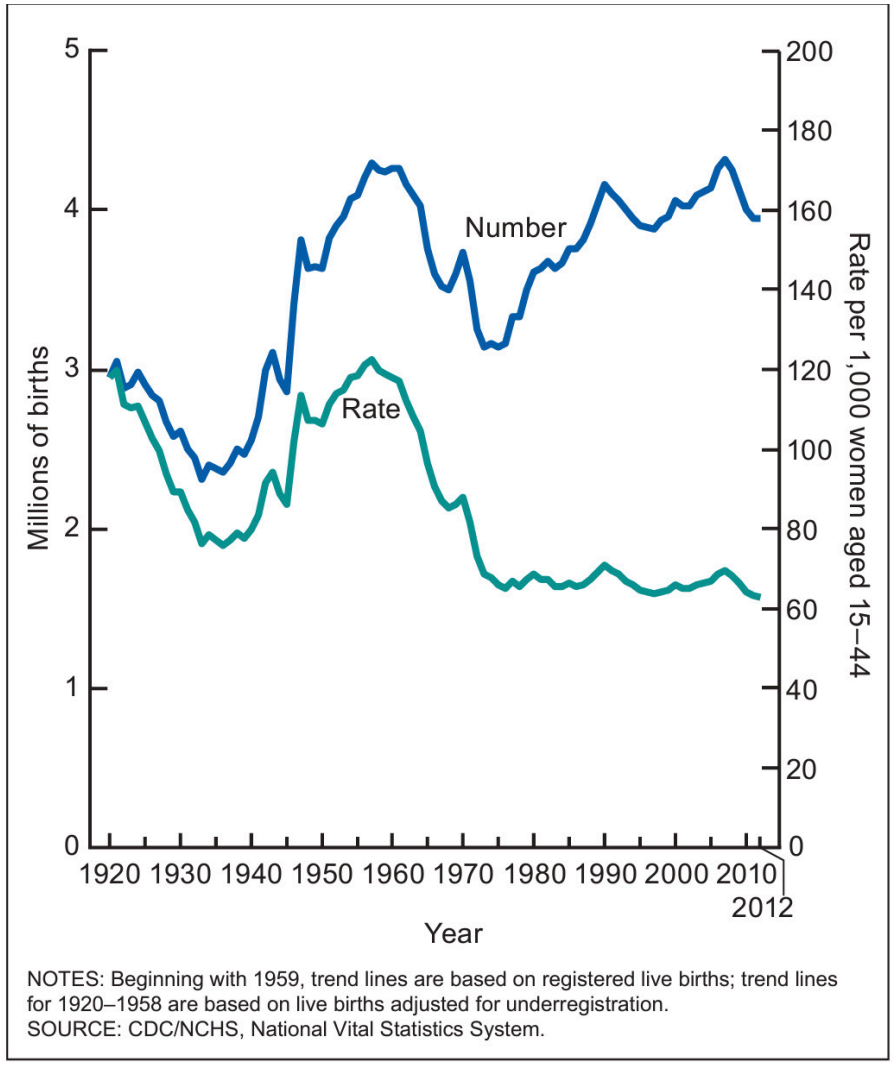
Year	Operating Income	Number of Dioceses
2018	$251 million	110
2019	$228 million	110
2020	$230 million	111
2022	$219 million*	110

* The actual total for 2022 is higher – 29 dioceses still have not completed their 2022 diocesan report.

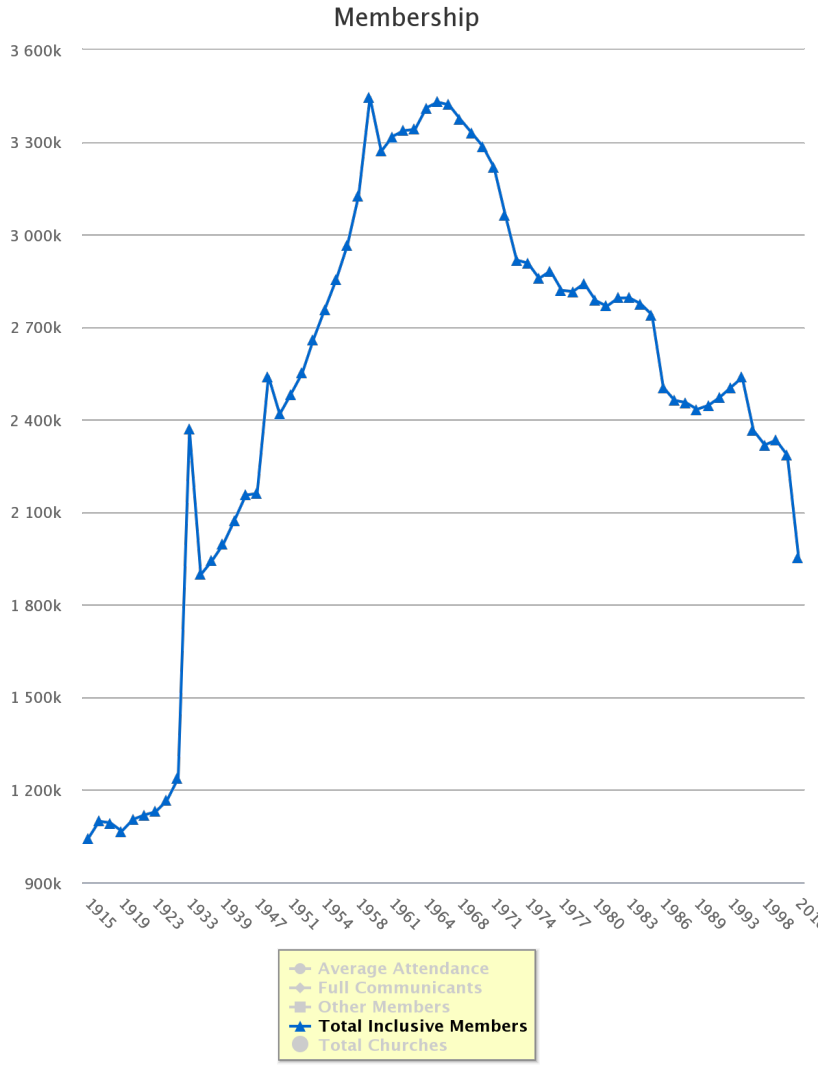
Sacramental Trends, 1980 - 2022

Year	Baptisms	Marriages	Burials
1980	64,367 children 8,611 adults	39,862	50,070
2000	49,904 children 7,259 adults	24,054	40,117
2019* (pre-Covid)	19,716 children 3,866 adults	6,484	26,667
2022	15,272 children 2,147 adults	5,562	25,905

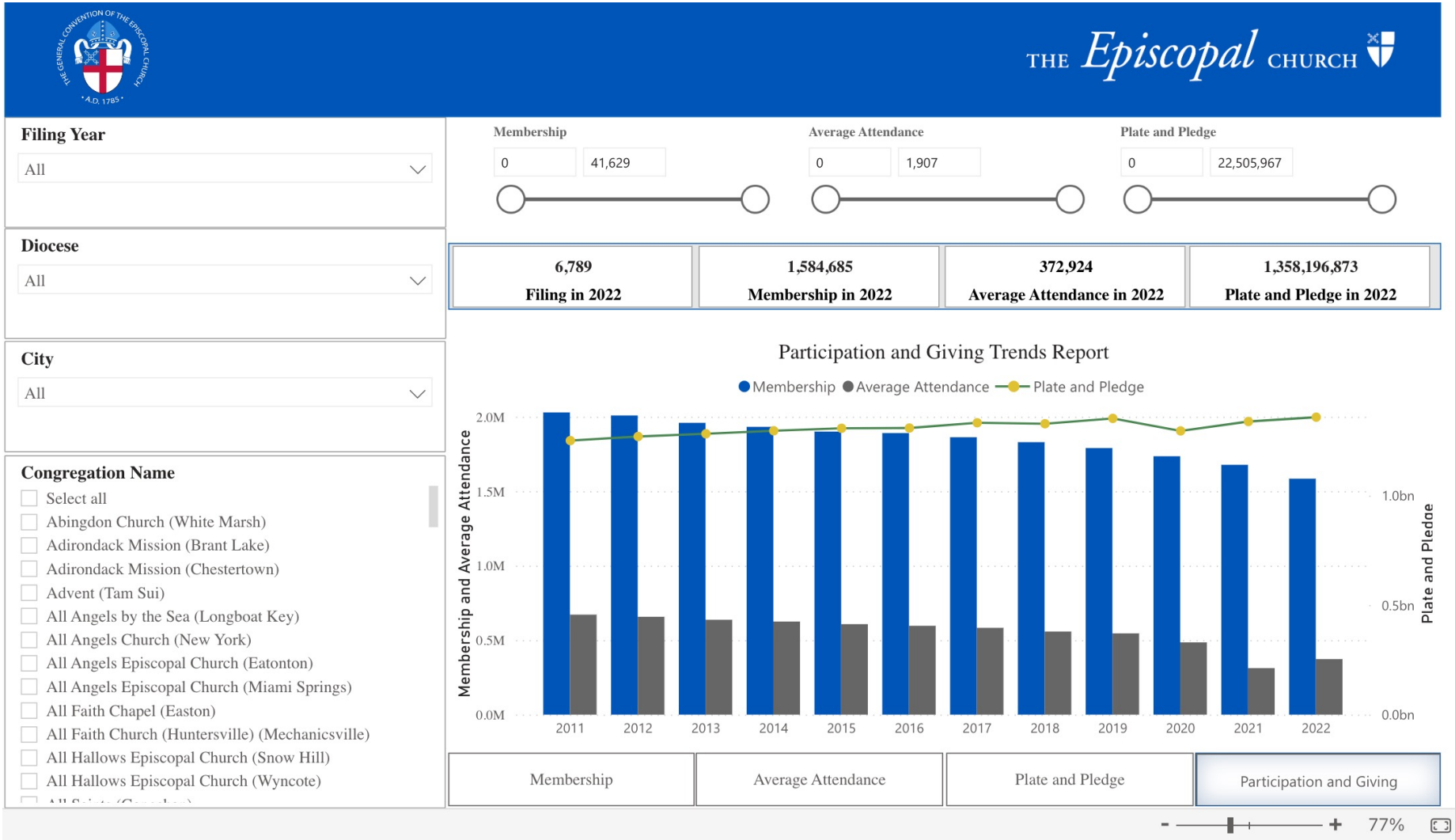
Population and Membership



NOTES: Beginning with 1959, trend lines are based on registered live births; trend lines for 1920–1958 are based on live births adjusted for underregistration.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System.



Membership Overall



Membership, ASA, and Plate and Pledge Comparisons

(Average Sunday Attendance)

ASA Range	% Total Congregations (6789)	% Total Membership (1,584,685)	% Total Plate and Pledge ($1,358,196,873)
Under 25	30%	7%	1%
26-50	25%	17%	16%
51-150	28%	42%	43%
151-250	4%	15%	17%
250+	2%	14%	17%

Themes from Narrative Questions

Returning to Worship: A desire to re-engage former parishioners in worship & ministry.

Sustaining Growth: A vision for how to incorporate newcomers into the parish.

Recovering Generations: A plan for supporting generational growth in parishioners.

Planning for Longevity: An uncertainty in how to grow financially and invest in buildings.

Full report available at: https://www.generalconvention.org/parochialreportresults

Diocesan Structure

Time Period	# of Dioceses Founded	% of Total (110 in 2023)
1780-1800	10	10%
1800-1850	19	18%
1851-1900	36	32%
1901-1965	23	20%
1965-2023	22*	20%

Note there are 25% more dioceses in 2023 than there were at our numeric peak (in terms of membership) in 1965.

Diocesan Financial Support & Assessments

Support

- Just over 1,000 parishes receive diocesan support
- Support ranges from $100 to $4 million
- Median is $13,000

Assessment

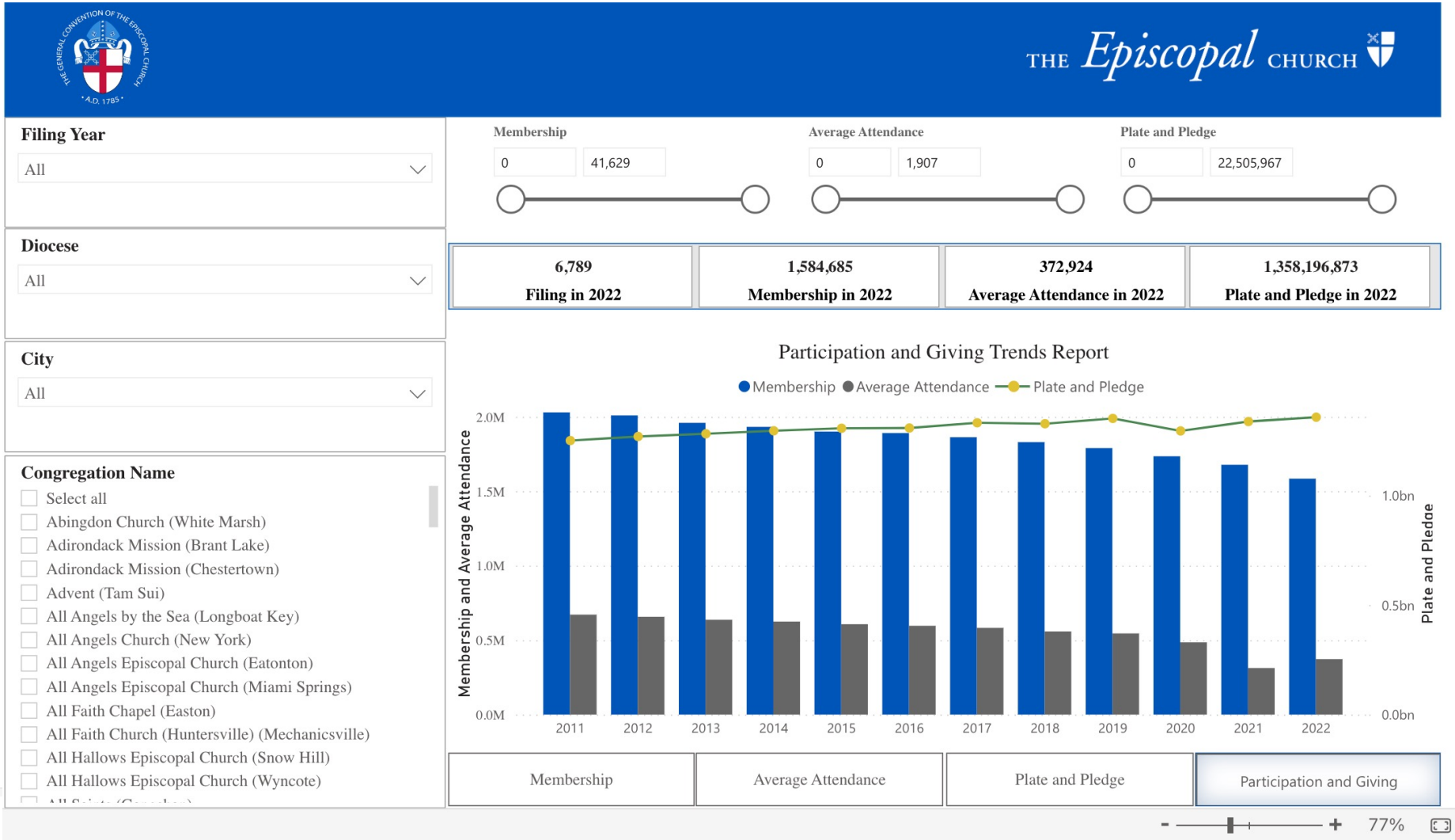
- Ranges from voluntary to 25%
- Most common is 10-15%
- Most dioceses provide a staggered/tiered assessment with some exemptions for parishes with lower incomes

Clergy Trends

- 18% of our congregations have multiple clergy on staff
- 12% (or just over 800) of our congregations are served by a priest who is either retired or not active in the Pension Fund
- In 2022, 54% of our clergy are listed as part-time on the parochial report
- In 2010 that number was 26%

Tools for Exploring Data*

https://www.generalconvention.org/explore-parochial-report-trends



Tools for Exploring Data
https://www.generalconvention.org/data-trends

A Toolbox for Understanding Data Trends in The Episcopal Church

Introduction and Overview

Basic How Tos

Unpacking Lagging Indicators

Money and Finances

Unpacking Demographics

Theological Framework

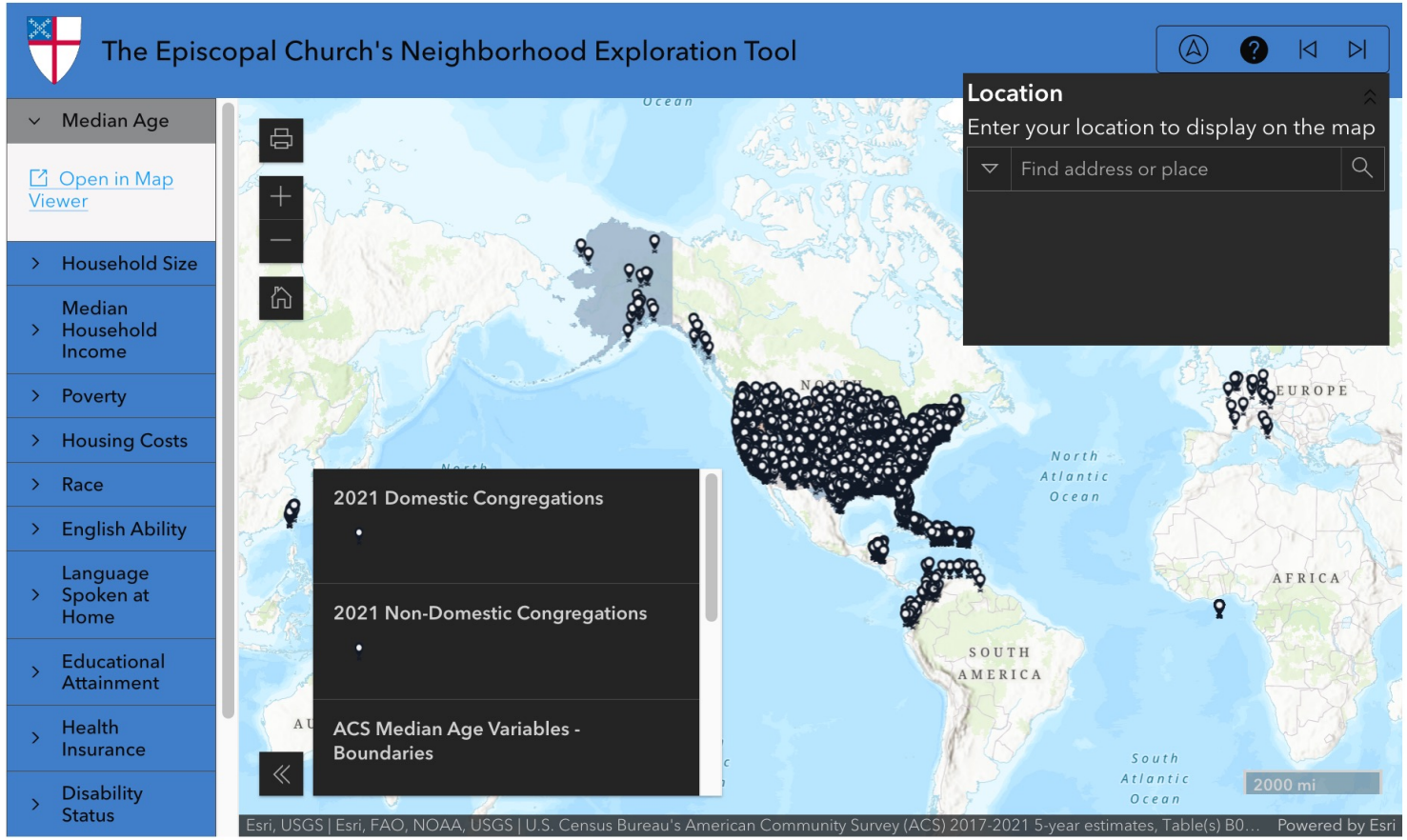
Visioning Possibilities with Data

Updated Conversation Toolbox

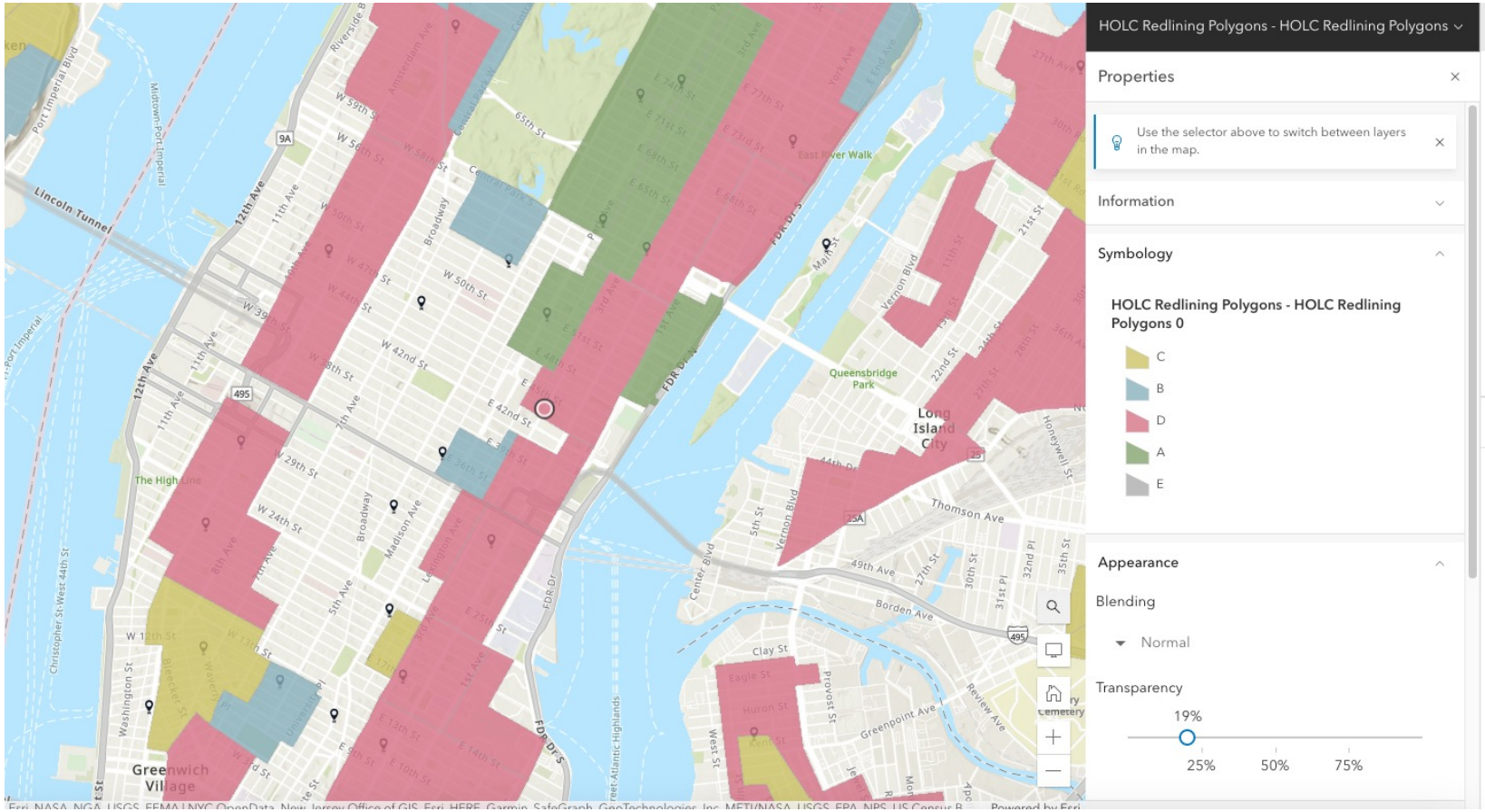
Discussion Questions:

Tools for Exploring Data

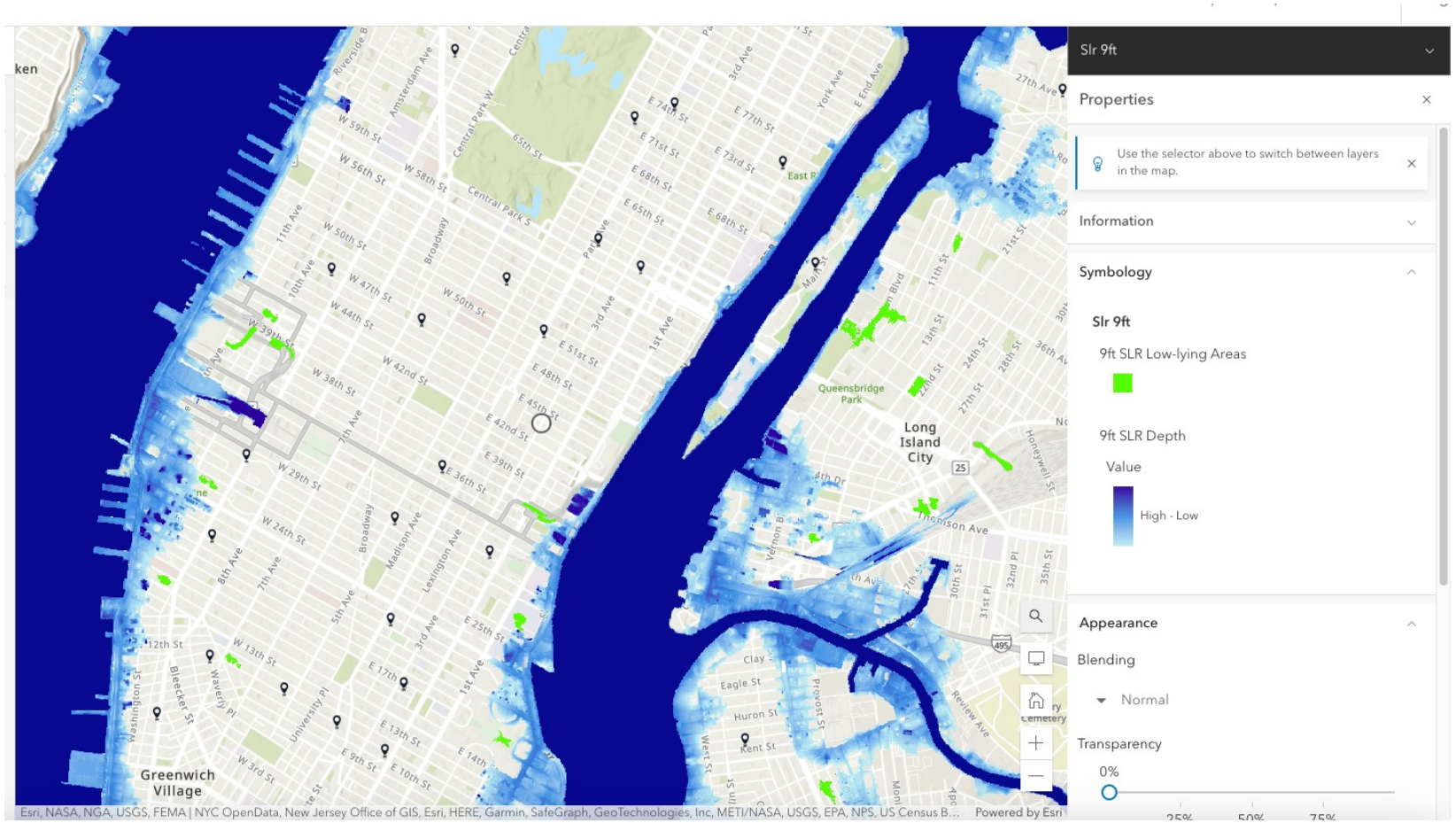
https://www.generalconvention.org/explore-your-neighborhood



Adding an Ecojustice layer



Adding an Ecojustice layer



Collaborations

https://www.generalconvention.org/collaborations

Partnerships:

Faith Communities Today
Exploring the Impact of the Pandemic on Congregations (EPIC)
Hartford Institute for Religion Research

Surveys:

Currently the surveys we have partnered with are in collaboration with other denominations trying to capture comparison data.

FACT (Faith Communities Today) Survey – This survey is conducted every five years which we attach as a supplementary survey with the Parochial Report. The last one was conducted in 2020.

EPIC (Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations) Project– Done in partnership with FACT to study the impact of COVID-19.

FACT 2023 Survey – An interim survey to ask some of the same questions in the FACT 2020 survey and to continue to explore the impact of the pandemic.

Webinars:

Recently, The Rev. Molly James, Ph.D., held a webinar session that went over where one can find various information on the General Convention website that relates to ‘what we do with the parochial report data’, as well as go over a summary of the results of recent FACT and EPIC surveys.

Sources of Pride

FACT survey asked about our sources of pride in our congregations. Across all the responses the following five themes emerged:

- Sense of Community
- Love
- Hospitality
- Faith
- Outreach ministries
- Diversity

EPIC Data Insights

Optimism in congregations is highly positively correlated with:

Positive attitude toward change

Larger congregational size

Percent of young adults

Sense of being vital and alive

Having a clear mission and purpose

†

And highly negatively correlated with:

Sense of financial threat

Percent of seniors

Sense of existence of congregation being threatened

Looking Ahead

- Additional data from EPIC and our own congregational reporting - much to explore in understanding vitality and sustainability
- Trends continue of declines in membership and in person attendance
- Finances continuing to hold steady – remarkable given the realities of the pandemic and that this means fewer people are giving more funds

HOPE

- Challenges of decline are not new to The Episcopal Church or Christianity
- Tremendous resources – financial, material, and human
- Community, Hospitality, Love – meaning making
- Opportunity for transformation

Additional resources for Exploring Data

https://www.generalconvention.org/explore-your-neighborhood

https://www.generalconvention.org/data-trends

To see our data in a wider context:

https://faithcommunitiestoday.org/fact-2020-survey/

October 2021 Issue of Theology Today (all about FACT 2020)

https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/