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On the cover: Word Cloud of most common words used in 76 prominent bible passages related to migration and refugees

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Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive; built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions: All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

—The Most Reverend Michael Curry,
Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church
in *Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus* (2013)

Members of the Task Force on Migrants and Refugees

Austin Rios served for seven years in the Diocese of Western North Carolina before coming to Europe to serve as rector of Saint Paul's Within the Walls, Rome. As diocesan Canon for Spanish-speaking ministries with a 95% undocumented Latin American community, Austin was tasked with articulating their needs to local leaders and law enforcement and with seeking common cause with partners in English-speaking corners of the diocese. In addition to his leadership of Saint Paul's, Austin serves as Director of the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, a day center housed in the church with 200 guests per day.

Elise Chapin has been involved with immigration issues ever since she moved from the US to Italy in 1985 and later joined Saint James Florence some 25 years ago. She was part of the first amnesty law granting work permits to foreigners and her career segued from English as a Foreign Language to maternal and child health. Currently she works for the Italian National Committee for UNICEF where she coordinates their Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) program.

Kim Powell moved from the US to Paris almost 30 years ago and embraced her lifelong passion for photography. For 20+ years, she has been a member of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity where she currently services as Chair of the Mission and Outreach Committee supporting migrants locally and abroad. She also volunteers with grassroots organizations that provide humanitarian, administrative and educational assistance to migrants and refugees in Paris' street camps.

Thomas Huddleston (*Chair*) is American by birth, Belgian by adoption and soon Episcopal by choice. Thomas' life decisions brought him to his passion and expertise on immigrant integration. For fourteen years, he has provided research and advice at the Migration Policy Group, a European "think-and-do-tank" created twenty-five years ago by European Protestant churches in order to help a wide diversity of stakeholders to improve their integration policies, practices and communications.

Waseem Zahoor: Born in Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan, Waseem came to Germany as an asylum seeker in summer 2016. Ever since his arrival in Wiesbaden, he has attended St Augustine of Canterbury's Episcopal Church. With an MBA and religious youth work in Pakistan, Waseem has become a member of St. Augustine's Vestry in 2018, its Finance Committee, Junior Youth Committee, prayer group, refugee support and integration coordination.

Shari Brown (Observer, Academy of Parish Leadership Keynote): As a dual national, Shari has enjoyed living in South Africa, Britain, Germany and now Belgium. She had her first exposure to meeting refugees through Caritas in Stuttgart, Germany.

For many years, Shari coordinated Restore, a project of Churches Together supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham, England. In 2018, Shari became the Executive Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels.

Carole Ducastel is a member of the Convocation's Council of Advice who served as the Liaison between the Council of Advice and the Task Force.

Overview of the Work

In his first Convocation Convention address of October 25, 2019, Bishop Mark Edington identified “migrants and refugees” as a key phrase missing from the Convocation’s Strategic Plan for the Episcopal Church’s mission in Europe:

I don’t know whether to laugh or cry when I hear political leaders in the United States whipping up fear among the people by bloviating about an “invasion of illegal immigrants.” Germany alone has accepted more refugees seeking asylum than the United States, and the European Union as a whole has accepted nearly three times as many.

I am immensely proud to be the bishop of a gathering of churches doing so much to provide compassionate and effective outreach to the least, the lost, and the last. I know how hard many of the people in your communities work to engage in ministries that help people who are displaced or refugees. Many of our congregations do this work.

I wonder whether it is now time for us to find some way to create a community of practice across the Convocation of people involved in these ministries. They are an example for the entire Episcopal Church of how to translate our words into work.

In response to this call, the 2019 Convocation Convention put in place this task force and set out its main objectives ahead of the 2020 Convention:

Resolution: CC2019–Res. 3: Refugees and migrants

Resolved, That the Convention ask the Council of Advice to appoint a task force on refugees and migrants to review previous and current initiatives and experiences across the Convocation, in order to index and benchmark parish responses, share best practices and serve as a guide for future Convocation actions.

- Review existing initiatives and aspirations among churches in the Convocation
- Share and reflect on recent changes in our context and on inspiring examples
- Brainstorm new initiatives, bring these ideas back to leaders in our parishes in the convocation and explore opportunities for joint initiatives via Task Force
- Improve communications on existing and proposed initiatives (within/between parishes and with the Episcopal Church – especially Episcopal Migration Ministries, with external groups);
- Develop a network to share best practice within the Convocation

Methodology

The Task Force on Migrants and Refugees engaged parish leaders in Europe in a yearlong process of reflection. The Task Force members were selected for their exceptional expertise and diverse experiences as migrant and refugee parish leaders. The Task Force agreed on four major themes for our work: solidarity, outreach, witness and welcome, which are defined and described in the sections to follow. The Task Force drew on the resources of the Convocation and the US Church, where relevant for the current European context. The Task Force took into account the many changes in Europe since the 2015/6 large-scale arrivals and, most recently, the Covid19 pandemic.

A comprehensive review and a community of practice have emerged from the work of the Task Force. A survey was designed and answered by 13 of the 19 Convocation parish churches and missions in order to index and benchmark parish responses as requested. Over three group calls in the first half of 2020, Task Force members reviewed these existing initiatives, shared best practices and experiences. Members also reached out to inspiring examples inside and outside the Convocation. The Senior Warden of Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand joined a call to share their outstanding approach as a small community to outreach to and welcome diverse new members. A World Refugee Week service was organised with All Saints Waterloo's parishioners active on these issues. Shari Brown, Executive Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, not only led our session at the Academy of Parish Leadership (APL), but then also contributed as an observer to all further Task Force activities.

The feedback from the dozens of APL participants led the Task Force to a provisional set of conclusions. Following the APL, each Task Force member took the lead in their area of expertise on each of our four major themes : Solidarity (Austin Rios), Outreach (Thomas Huddleston with Archdeacon Walter Baer from the Convocation Communications Committee), Witness (Shari Brown), Welcome (Kim Powell and Waseem Zahoor) and Sunday School (Elise Chapin with Youth/Children Task Force Chairs Joyce Chanay and Caireen Stewart). Each discussed bilaterally with the Chair to gather resources, brainstorm potential initiatives and draft recommendations and resolutions. The outreach sub-group included an analysis of the digital outreach of each of the Convocation's 19 parishes and missions. The Chair also assisted Bishop Edington for the Convocation's statement on the Moria Refugee Camp fire.¹

These notes and materials formed the basis of this report, which was compiled by the Task Force Chair. This report summarises the Task Force's missions, findings and recommendations. This report includes general recommendations of what parishes

1 Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, "Statement on the Fires at the Moria Refugee Camp, Lesbos, Greece," Episcopal News Service, 11 September 2020; www.episcopalnewsservice.org/pressreleases/statement-on-the-fires-at-the-moria-refugee-camp-lesbos-greece/

can do and some parish-specific recommendations based on their survey responses and our desk research. The report also provides Convocation-specific analysis and recommendations for the Episcopal Church as an “immigrant church” in Europe.

Why migrants? The Episcopal Church’s calling and future in Europe

The experiences of migration and exile are at the heart of our faith. As shown through the Word Clouds throughout this report, the Bible is rich with passages and stories of migrants and refugees, from the moment that Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden of Eden. Abraham leaves his country, his people and his family to seek the land that God will show him. The history of the Israelites is one of migration and flight. Jesus of Nazareth, in the years of his ministry, has no place to lay His head. The disciples, and Paul most famously, are sent out to a life of wandering. No wonder then, that Christ commands us to love and welcome the stranger. This report sets out practical ways how we, as congregations and parish leaders, can live out this call. We must remember that we are all citizens of Heaven. None of us has any greater claim over our neighbour. We are all new creatures in Christ—there can be no Other.

The Church’s call to love and welcome the stranger is both increasingly relevant and challenging for our diverse societies both in the US and Europe.

Firstly, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is called to respond to the crisis of solidarity within our democracies. Episcopalians in the US and Europe are confronted by the world’s worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War that is unfolding in the Global South. Most of the world’s 80 million forcibly displaced people are languishing in overcrowded camps in developing countries. Half of them are children, of whom only half are able to attend primary school. 10 million refugees are stuck in protracted situations with their lives in limbo, as conflicts now take on average 20 years to resolve. Only 1% of the world’s refugees ever get the chance to be resettled by national governments and these global resettlement numbers have collapsed under the US Trump administration. Without legal paths to protection and work in safe democratic havens like the US and Europe, too many men, women and even children have had to take great risks to come by land and sea on increasingly dangerous, deadly and costly routes. Those who arrive without the right to work often end up living in destitution or working in exploitative conditions, without any real protections. Both US and EU migration policies leave many migrants in distress at borders and in neighboring countries, in detention camps or at the margins of society.

Europeans impressed the world with their message of “Refugees Welcome” at the height of 2015/6 large-scale arrivals across the Mediterranean. Bishop Edington’s 2019 Convocation address refers to the specific charitable outreach of Episcopal Churches in Europe, which received generous support and recognition from Episcopalians in the US. These initiatives within the Convocation were part of a broader European movement of donations and volunteers behind citizens’ initiatives

that emerged across all four corners of Europe. While this “Refugees Welcome” message polarised a sizable minority of conservatives across the continent, especially in Eastern Europe, and contributed to political divisions like Brexit, these initiatives persisted. And today, the majority of European citizens and churches have emerged even more positive about migrants than they were in 2015. For example, majorities (69% EU-wide) in most EU countries agree that their country must help refugees (2019 Eurobarometer survey).

These “Refugees Welcome” initiatives have persisted, despite the continued politicization of migration in a few countries, decreased public attention in most others and increasing fatigue and frustration with many national and EU policy decisions. Similarly, much attention on migration within the Episcopal Church has rightly turned to the systematic violations of human rights and dignity in the US. Still, the shocking images of the homeless refugees on the Greek islands reminded Europe that humanitarian assistance and advocacy are still necessary today: on push-backs at borders, deportations, inhumane conditions in transit, detention and reception centres, access to asylum, safe passage, and now Covid19-related migration restrictions.

Secondly, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is called to serve and welcome the stranger in response to the changing composition of our Christian communities. The first Episcopal parishes in Europe were founded as the churches for some of the most privileged migrants in the world: American tourists and expats. These church communities were shaped by 19th century ‘Gilded Age’ millionaires, like the Morgans and Vanderbilts, and later by the postwar order of American military and corporate dominance. However, as this dominance has declined in recent years, and, with it, the number of native English-speaking expats, these communities have sustained themselves and attracted other members: bicultural families, bilingual locals and multilingual immigrants from diverse backgrounds. For the community, the English language usually acts and will likely remain as their lingua franca. In addition, both these new members and the traditional American/English-speaking members are often coming from secular or other Christian or faith traditions. For example, a 2006 survey by the Strategic Planning Committee found that only 25% of members in Europe were originally Episcopalians or Anglicans.

As a result, the congregations of the Episcopal Church in Europe are more linguistically and culturally diverse than most Episcopal Churches in the US. Each in their own way, the Convocation parishes are trying to create inclusive English-speaking faith communities as part of the Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican communion.

The Convocation has recognised this new reality and embraced this new calling. In 2010, the Convocation changed its name from “The Convocation of *American* Churches in Europe” [emphasis added]. Its mission was clearly proclaimed in the Convocation’s Handbook and its 2012 Mission statement:

For over two centuries, the parishes and missions of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe have ministered to Americans and other English-speaking people in Europe and, more recently, in other languages as well. Many people come to Europe for business, military, or academic reasons and stay for a few months or a few years. Others have found in Europe their second or permanent home. Recently, immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Asia, refugees from troubled parts of the world, and local nationals have also begun finding a home in our congregations. The Convocation today is a multinational, multiracial, multilingual, and multicultural communion within the European Union — a mirror image of the multinational, multiracial, multilingual, and multicultural Episcopal Church.

Handbook of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, page 1
("The Convocation Today")

The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is a welcoming community that knows God loves all people – no exceptions. We celebrate our diversity of languages, cultures, and nations. Worshipping together, we rejoice in reaching out to the world and becoming one in Christ.

Convention of the Convocation 2012, Resolution 1: Vision 2012 Statement

How can the Convocation live up to its mission to be relevant to Europe's diverse societies and both serve and welcome a diverse community? How can each parish find its own way to fulfill this common mission within their very different national and local contexts? How can these diverse communities grow and come together to become one in Christ?

The first step is to rethink our attitude not only to immigrants, but as immigrants ourselves. When we think about serving migrants and refugees, many of us may automatically think of "charity" and reduce this issue to outreach to vulnerable newcomers most in need. Instead, our starting point can be that the future of the Episcopal Churches in Europe depends on migrants because we are all migrants in one way or another. At the fortieth anniversary of the founding of All Saints Waterloo by English-speaking expats, Bishop Edington explained how Episcopalians in Europe are immigrants in three ways which can strengthen our communities if our parish leaders embrace this "Immigrant Attitude":

What does it mean for us, for us disciples, to have an immigrant attitude?

- (1) Most of us are, in a very specific way, immigrants. I would guess that only a small percentage of the people of All Saints are people who were born in Belgium."
- (2) But we are immigrants in more ways than that. The Episcopal Church is an immigrant to Belgium. We are not native to this place. We are latecomers. We are aliens.
- (3) And here is something even more challenging. We are immigrants in our own culture. From the time of Charlemagne, Europe was Christendom—the realm of Christianity. Those days are well and truly over. We are aliens in our own land, immigrants in a culture we fashioned. Today, we are people of faith in the midst of a culture that is radically secularized—to the point of hostility toward the claims of faith and toward the communities faithful people make.

If you come to worship in an Episcopal Church in Belgium, you are an immigrant no matter where you were born.

We are all equally aliens.

So what should our attitude be?

—“Immigrant Attitudes,” All Saints, Waterloo, October 13, 2019

Embracing our “Immigrant Attitude” reminds us of our communities’ strengths and our calling. People from different national, linguistic, religious and non-religious backgrounds have come together to worship and serve. We are building solidarity, outreach, witness and welcome among people who were once strangers to each other, strangers to their new home countries and, often, strangers to the Episcopal Church. The sustainability and future leadership of the Episcopal Church in Europe will depend on our ingenuity as immigrants to build new communities of faith.

Before this report proceeds with its analysis and recommendations, the reader can pause and join in this Confession of the Faith, inspired by Bishop’s Edington’s “Immigrant Attitude”:

A Confession of faith for a church on the move

I left the place of my birth and found a new community, where I try each day to see and understand the Many Faces of the Triune God.

For I am three times a migrant, sent out on three paths at once by Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with its own reason for migration.

I was once a migrant, when I arrived as a stranger in this church, coming from afar, like many in Europe’s cities and Episcopal churches.

No one should have to feel far from God. We must not abandon him, as he will never abandon us.

I believe we are all called to find our place in the House of God and that our churches are called to make everyone feel at home, amongst us.

I was two-times a migrant because I was also a stranger to this church, coming from another tradition, just like many in our community.

I take comfort that we are not alone. Across all churches, the new generation of religious leaders are more and more diverse, in their experiences of life and of the world.

I believe that we can serve as a bridge between the old and the new. We can choose to walk the path of Jesus, who used all his skills and strengths to break down the walls that separate us and to forge a new alliance between God and his creation.

Lastly, I am three-times a migrant because, as a member of a community of faith, I am sometimes seen as a stranger by our secular societies.

We seem like strangers because we speak a different language. Our customs may be strange and difficult to explain, even to our friends. Our attempts to share our faith may even be taken as a threat.

I believe that everyone can open to the Holy Spirit, let it in to flow through us, as did the disciples at Pentecost. We must use all the languages we speak and learn new

ways to communicate, so that, one day, we will find the message for the world of today.

The United Nations has spoken of “migration” as a journey through this world in search for a dignified life. We are all on this journey. Let us not be strangers. As a community of faith, let us find new ways together to keep moving and to welcome.

Current parish strategies: review of survey results

Nearly five years after the 2015/6 large-scale arrivals to Europe, the Task Force asked the 19 Episcopal parishes and missions to share their current actions and strategies towards migrants and refugees. Each congregation’s coordinator or most active volunteer on these topics was asked the following questions:

Questionnaire to parishes on state-of-play (spring 2020)

What does your church do currently? And how has this practice changed over the past five years?

Charity: To provide charity towards refugees and migrants in need (e.g. donations, fundraisers)

Outreach: A) To reach out to expats (i.e. newcomer British or US citizens) OR B) refugees and migrants in need, in order to welcome them into the church or help them get informed/oriented in the country?

Welcome: To accompany new church members of refugee and migrant background

Witness: To bear witness to the experience of refugees and migrants (e.g. special actions or services in or outside church, testimonies, protests, etc).

The Task Force received thirteen responses out of a possible nineteen, and used these as the basis for their discussions. The Chair then reviewed these 13 qualitative answers (and the websites/materials of the other 6) in order to identify potential strengths and weaknesses, where parish strategies were absent (0), partial (0.5) or extensive (1) in each of the four Task Force priorities. This basic overview is summarised in Table 1 (next page).

Charitable outreach to migrants in need emerges as a strength for the majority of Episcopal Churches in Europe, which have specific strategies and partners in their local area. These strategies could be strengthened, inspired by good practice from across the Convocation, and updated for Covid times to address migrants’ new needs and barriers to services. However, our Christian calling to welcome the stranger cannot be reduced to charity.

In most parishes, more attention can be directed to the other three priorities raised by the Task Force:

- **Communications and digital outreach** to reach newcomers and the local community.

- **Witness** in worship to migrants, refugees and the diversity of the congregation.
- **Welcoming** new members, with a renewed approach to hospitality and local leadership.

These three priorities reflect the long-term process of transformation underway in the Episcopal Church in Europe. Today, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe is looking for new ways to show God's love for all people and to worship together in our diversity to become one in Christ. Parishes are building up their local identities and communities by opening up to a more permanent, diverse and local membership and leadership.

These three priorities of outreach, witness and welcoming each require their own strategies and actions. In addition, the specific areas for improvement differ parish-to-parish. Fortunately, the diversity of the Convocation offers a wide range of experiences and good practice, from parishes with very different sizes and contexts: Clermont-Ferrand, Geneva, Mons, Orvieto, Paris, Rome, Waterloo and Wiesbaden. The Task Force's report and resolutions allow parish leaders to share and learn from each other's strengths in order to develop their own strong and comprehensive strategies in 2021.

Ways Forward

Parish leaders should connect this report and its recommendations with their broader goals for their parish. For instance, parishes can build on their strengths with charitable outreach in order to expand their local contacts and partnerships to better integrate in the local community and to build up local leadership. Charitable actions can be used for greater witness to the experience of migrants and refugees during worship. These actions have brought on active volunteers, local partners and newcomer migrant and refugee members themselves. In the years ahead, parish leaders can also look internally at these newcomer members, volunteers and local partners in order to cultivate new leadership among those more permanently settled in Europe, compared to the traditionally high-mobility 'expats'.

Our parishes can emerge from these times of Covid isolation to become catalysts of inclusion. Strategic planning and digital communications are the most feasible immediate steps forward. Leaders can use this time to consider the dynamics in their local area and reflect prayerfully on the mission and communities that they are called to serve. New forms of digital communications and remote charitable and religious services are critical now for parishes both large and small and for potential newcomers in these times of Covid isolation. The current obstacles and information available differs for English-speaking newcomers, for other migrants and refugees and for local nationals from different religious traditions. Parishes with different sizes and contexts can find ways to reach out to these potential newcomers and to identify and respond to their needs.

In the long-term, parish leaders can also reflect on how to use English as a language of inclusion. The position of English as a global lingua franca can attract non-native-speakers who prefer English over other language services. While parishes improve the accessibility of their English services for non-native-speakers, they can also encourage a culture of language learning and multilingualism in order to enable each parishioner to share their gifts and faith with the community.

The Task Force’s Resolutions propose concrete next steps over the next year for the Convocation and its congregations to develop their own strategies on migrants and refugees:

- Adopting a coherent approach: Building solidarity, community, witness and welcome
- Updating websites and social media accounts to reach newcomers and the local community
- Training welcomers for greater hospitality in each congregation
- Bearing witness to migrants, refugees and the diversity of the congregation
- Monitoring and reflection on the congregation’s welcoming approach

The four main sections of this report—charity, digital outreach/communications, witness and welcome—offer parish- and Convocation-specific analysis and recommendations, good practices and testimonies of the Episcopal Church as an “immigrant church” in Europe. Each section focuses on the main recommendations underlying the Task Force’s Resolutions:

- Charity:** From charity to solidarity in times of Covid isolation
- Outreach:** Greater digital communications to renew parishes’ identity and community
- Witness:** Key internal and external resources for worship
- Welcome:** Role and training of welcomers for greater hospitality

First Goal: From Charity to Solidarity

Solidarity with migrants & refugees in need

Our faith commands us to live in right relationship with our neighbor. We are constantly questioning who we consider as our neighbors, what we know and understand about them and how we give and receive the gifts that each of us has to share. Loving our neighbors is core to our mission to serve and brings life to our congregations.

The Episcopal Churches in Europe were highly responsive to the humanitarian needs of newcomers following the 2015/6 large-scale arrivals. These initiatives received generous support and recognition from Episcopalians in the US as well as from local partners in our local contexts. As noted in Bishop Edington's initial Task Force remarks, many volunteers across the Convocation remain active, serving migrants in need, regardless of their legal status, origins or beliefs: asylum-seekers, migrants in transit, returnees, undocumented and homeless people, recognised and resettled refugees and migrants in language and integration courses. The type of financial, material or personal support varies according to the needs of migrants, resources of the congregation and abilities and networks of volunteers.

The majority of Episcopal Churches in Europe remain engaged in charitable outreach to migrants in need, according to the Task Force's parish survey. Parish strategies for charitable outreach to migrants in need are relatively extensive and active in at least 7 of the Convocation parishes (Clermont-Ferrand, Frankfurt, Geneva, Paris, Rome, Waterloo and Wiesbaden), while this outreach is more ad hoc and needs-based in another 5 parishes. The situation is understandably more challenging for smaller parishes and for non-migrant-led missions. The most active parishes have developed long-term actions and partnerships, which have evolved with the changing needs and profiles of migrants over the past 5 years. All of these strategies can be strengthened and inspired by good practice within the Convocation.

Parish Example: St. Paul's Within the Walls Rome & Joel Nafuma Refugee Center

The ministry of the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center is the primary outreach effort of our parish. JNRC has 3 senior staff and 3 other staff who keep the center running with volunteers. Many volunteers come are professionals, often "trailing spouses" of UN agency workers, or from university programs in Rome.

While the JNRC has been in formal operation from the early 80's, the last five years have seen significant changes in the shape of our community. The primary goal of the JNRC is to help refugee guests rebuild their lives in a new context. We offer basic needs assistance (food, clothing, a safe place to be) on a daily basis. Over the last

8 years, we have expanded services beyond basic assistance, namely in language classes, therapeutic services, legal aid, and job readiness training. For more, visit www.jnrc.it

As JNRC expanded its services, the corps of volunteers have expanded from 5 to 70 and the ability to connect with guests increased in many ways. One innovation was that courses could be opened to both guests and those without refugee status, which reduced the dynamic of provider/receiver in services and increased the number of women present. We also hold fundraising dinners highlighting the cuisine and culture of the countries from which our guests come. These fundraising dinners have been successful community events, with supporters outside our volunteer network and church community.

Parish Example: All Saints Waterloo, Belgium

With the 2015/6 arrivals, All Saints work was initiated by one of our Rwandan refugee parishioners with half-a-dozen volunteers and with the current pastor dedicating half of her time to refugee service. The church has become a drop-off point for the parishioners, scouts and local community for donations of food, clothing and toiletry/sanitary materials. For example, an agreement was made with the scouts for the private International School to drop off all Lost & Found clothing after two months unclaimed. In addition to these donations, All Saints received a \$10,000 Episcopal Relief Grant for refugee support actions and the purchase of critical goods. For one and a half years, a group of 1-2 parishioners and the pastor in Brussels would head to Brussels 2-3 times per week to distribute these donations and feed around 120 migrants and homeless with fruit and coffee and tea. The undocumented and asylum-seekers at first congregated at the park in front of the asylum office and later at the main train station. For the distribution of donations, All Saints partnered with "Food for Friends" linked to the English-speaking global volunteer group "Serve the City". This programme "Food for Friends" was later incorporated into a new safe house near the station, with facilities for showers and laundry. Alongside this distribution channel, women's toiletries were distributed via the American Women's Club to women's reception centres. The church also donated \$5,000 to the Conference of European Churches so that protestant churches could participate in the Belgium government's "Humanitarian Corridor" pilot. This scheme was open to religious groups and provided the only legal way for civil society to sponsor refugees to immigrate to Belgium. Donations are currently going through "Belgium Kitchen" and "Solidarite Grands Froids".

Updating charitable outreach in times of Covid isolation

Given the new needs under Covid, the Task Force recommends that parishes look for opportunities in this extraordinary season to connect with the most vulnerable among the communities we serve.

Requests for support have diversified, as more people, especially newcomers with their family and social network abroad, are experiencing a wider range of needs, often for the first time: social isolation, loss of job/income especially for precarious and undocumented workers, overcrowded living spaces under lockdown, language/

practical obstacles for parents to support remote learning, delayed physical health interventions and greater need for local information, mental health and domestic violence support in English and other immigrant languages. For more examples, check out the Covid responses in the US churches by Episcopal Relief and Development: www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/Covid-19-response. While needs have only increased, the supply and accessibility of services have decreased. Humanitarian and social organisations have limited socially distanced options and spaces services, fewer volunteers and greater difficulties to access vulnerable groups.

How, in these times of Covid isolation, can we remain focused on those in need, whether or not they are currently part of our parish, family or friend circle? Parishes should certainly honour their previous charitable commitments and keep them up if they remain relevant in the new context. Extra efforts should not fall on just 1-2 of the most active volunteers who could risk burnout. Instead, this update of charitable outreach should be grounded in reflection, in prayer and in renewed commitments of volunteers and the parish community.

Involve migrants & the community to identify needs & solutions

Interested parish members, volunteers and partners can be invited to identify the new needs and obstacles for isolated and vulnerable groups and then identify or create solutions. Our communities can listen to the needs around them—what are the needs of people who are economically vulnerable, isolated without close friends or family nearby, newcomers who arrived during Covid? When building up your team, use the diversity of your parish and the Convocation. Your networks of local migrants and refugees can identify not only new needs, but also potential solutions and partners. Migrant community leaders have their own charitable strategies and potentially greater reach.

Parish leaders can then adjust the donations and the online/community information that they provide in order to reach out to those most vulnerable of different migrant and refugee backgrounds. Parishes can link those suffering under Covid isolation with volunteers from the community. Offering in-person, socially-distant activities will be necessary for some, while remote technological materials and assistance will work for others. For example, parishes could propose informal “buddy programs”, “language tandems” or “homework tutors”, which match people with similar interests for one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions.

Engage local partners with complementary roles

Who are your parishes’ local partners for charitable outreach to migrants and refugees in need? These partners are probably humanitarian or social organisations that can effectively use your financial and material donations and your parish’s (mostly English-speaking) volunteers. Given the major changes in needs and services under Covid, parishes may wish to reach out to listen/follow, discuss and make common

cause with new partners active on migration, whether secular or religious (i.e. ecumenical initiatives or Anglican/English-speaking churches or faith communities in your region).

You will also need partners to whom you can refer those in need by signposting their details via the parish website, bulletin board, parish leaders and word-of-mouth. For example, you may want to provide links to affordable local language and integration programmes, English-language information sources, migrant support organisations, mental health providers and domestic violence services. For example, take a look at the types of Covid resources identified for US churches by Episcopal Migration Ministries: <https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/Covidresources/>

Making clear decisions and promotion about your key charity and service partners will ensure that all who encounter the church are informed and able to help those in need.

Second Goal: Outreach

Building Community and Identity with Strangers

As Jesus was sent to us, so too are we now sent out into the world. We are asked to be fishers of people. This means that we should not wait till people come to us, expecting them to know us, expecting them to put in an effort for us. On the contrary, it is up to our church to reach out, open up, dare to be vulnerable, trusting in the Spirit, and—in a newfound community—gather others together to share our faith and become one in Christ. But how can all types of people—from local nationals to immigrants from both English-speaking countries and around the world—find a safe haven or a spiritual home in our congregations?

The parish survey suggested that most Episcopal Churches in Europe do not have explicit strategies for digital outreach and communications to newcomers and the local community. Strategies were lacking for migrants of diverse backgrounds, refugees and even newcomers from English-speaking countries. This residual weakness can be explained by the Episcopal Church's pre-2010 past as the Convocation of *American Churches* in Europe. In the past, Episcopal churches in Europe were founded and sustained by relying on traditional US/UK expat organisation and communication structures. While these US/UK expat structures were always relatively weak, especially when compared to better organised immigrant groups, they are increasingly strained under the mobility and political trends in today's world. Numbers are decreasing of these churches' traditional profile: US military, intra-company transfers, short-term expat workers, British EU officials and their free-moving families.

As a result, the way that most people would discover the Episcopal Church in Europe is *word-of-mouth*—i.e. direct contact with someone who knows the parish or the Anglican/Episcopal Church. Only small numbers of pioneers—those with similar traditions or strong personal motivations—are likely to take the big step into the unknown to show up on Sunday at an anonymous church.

This weakness can also be addressed in the Episcopal Church's current transition to serve in a diverse Europe. At the same time, migration trends within/to Europe bring many migrants and refugees from Christian traditions—some familiar with Global Anglicanism—while migrants of other faiths may lack the resources to provide their own spaces for prayer or safe havens for rest and hospitality. Global English is a *lingua franca* for communication between and with many newcomers on this multilingual continent, where the national language may seem complicated to learn or inhospitable.

table to some. Other Global Anglican communities practice in a diversity of languages as witnessed by the Convocation's growing migrant-led missions of Mons and Orvieto/*Comunidad Latinoamericana*.

Parish Testimony: Balthazar Nnahimana *Saint-Esprit mission, Mons, Belgium*

Frères et Sœurs en Jésus Christ : Construire une nouvelle communauté avec les nouveaux-venus, c'est une expérience riche d'exploit spirituelle. Pour construire cette communauté, il faut chercher dans ton âme, car tu n'es qu'un simple rassembleur, un Chrétien avant toute chose. C'est dur, car chaque nouveau membre arrive dans la communauté avec sa propre philosophie qui parfois diffèrent de la tienne. Chacun a son appel et tu dois le gérer. L'écoute active et la prière surtout sont fondamentales.

Et c'est dur car il faut connaître chaque nouveau membre, et ils sont nombreux. Les nouveaux-venus t'épuiseront, car tu ne peux pas surtout toujours compter sur leur présence. Vous devez les écouter, les orienter, être charitable en les donnant des vêtements si nécessaire, les invitant à table au souper, les conduisant—et les apprenant à conduire! Offrir et recevoir un cadeau est une geste qui procure de la joie, mais ce qui est le plus important c'est de lui enseigner un métier: *"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."* C'est l'expérience la plus difficile que j'ai rencontré dans ma Communauté. Il faut partager; l'église nous apprend à partager. Partager nos talents, et partager notre amour les uns pour les autres.

Nous avons commencé moi et ma famille de 6 et l'église grandit tout doucement. Maintenant, lors des fêtes, nous sommes autour de 49 membres, malgré les circonstances qui ne sont pas facile à l'intégration. Bref, toute cette expérience est liée à la tolérance, au partage, à l'écoute de l'autre et à l'entraide. Il faut se tenir et aimer au sens spirituel.

The Episcopal Church in Europe also attracts many younger, bicultural or internationally-oriented locals who use Global English as a lingua franca. Although attendance is way down in Europe's traditional national churches, the call to faith is still present for the majority of Europeans. While only a minority of people in Western Europe attend church, the majority identify as non-practicing Christians rather than as religiously unaffiliated and most want to raise their children as Christians.

These non-practicing Christians hold often divergent, ambiguous and complex views on Christian values, faith and the role of the church in society. The Episcopal Church in Europe will need to situate itself within each national context and to navigate the diverse expressions and expectations of these immigrant and native-born populations.

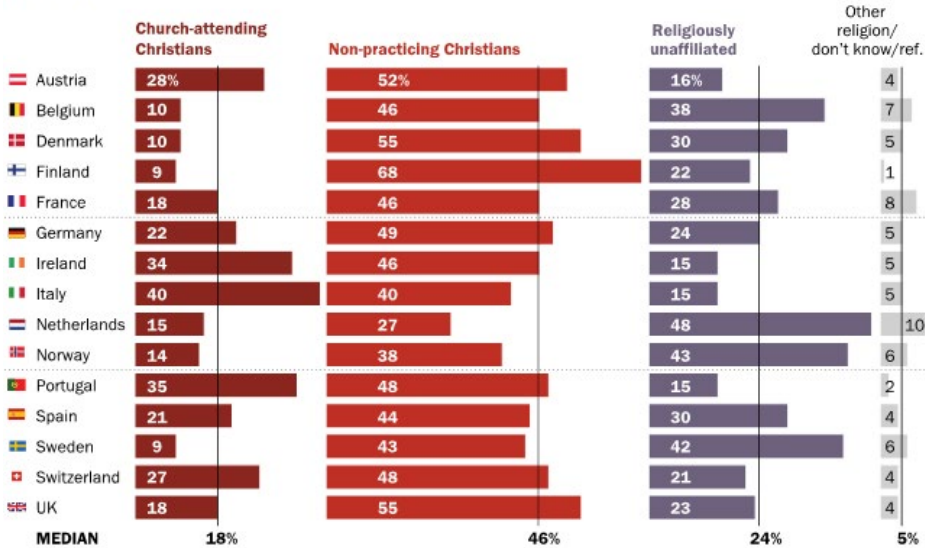
A great potential calling lies ahead for Episcopal Churches in Europe. It seems that the current numbers of newcomers able to find Episcopal Churches in Europe is more reflective of churches' current outreach/visibility strategies than of the size of their potential reach in their local area.

A good indicator of this potential reach can be identified through Facebook, which allows pages to estimate the potential audience for an ad, based on the information

that users provide. In fact, immigration researchers are increasingly using Facebook to survey immigrants because immigrants are better represented and easier to access on Facebook than through official channels. These Facebook statistics suggest that sizable numbers in our local areas could be potentially interested in the Episcopal Church. For example, at least 1500 people “like/follow” US mainline protestant denominations in the following countries: Istanbul, Athens, Budapest, Milan, Berlin, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Cologne, Zurich, Bucharest.² Looking at current parish and mission locations, the audiences are sizable but different in composition. While the number of people in each area who “like/follow” US mainline protestant denominations hover around 1000-3000, there are many more people who were born in the United States of America or who like/follow the Anglican church/communion.

In most Western European countries, non-practicing Christians are largest group

% who are ...



Note: Church-attending Christians are defined as those who say they attend church at least monthly. Non-practicing Christians are defined as those who attend less often. Other religion/don't know/ref. are mostly Muslim respondents. General population surveys in Western Europe may not fully capture the size of minority populations, such as Muslims. Therefore, these figures may differ from previously published demographic estimates. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted April-August 2017 in 15 countries. See Methodology for details. "Being Christian in Western Europe"

Source: "Being Christian in Western Europe," Pew Research Center, Washington, 29 May 2018

² The number of people who like/follow the Episcopal Church exceed 1000 in only three cities in Europe's non-English-speaking countries: Milan (1,500), Rome (1,200) and Paris (1,000).

Table 2: Potential interest in the Episcopal Church in Europe
 Facebook Estimates of the number of people who were born in USA or like/follow
 US mainline Protestant churches or the Anglican church/communion

<i>Within 15 miles of...</i>	<i>Born in USA</i>	<i>"Like" US mainline protestant churches</i>	<i>"Like" Anglican church/communion</i>
Waterloo	9000	2000	9400
Namur	1300	<1000	2800
Mons	2500	<1000	2800
Paris	45000	5100	33000
Clermont-F.	<1000	<1000	<1000
Montpellier	1900	1000	13000
Augsburg	1100	<1000	<1000
Frankfurt	6800	2100	3800
Karlsruhe	1700	<1000	1400
Nuremberg	3200	1000	2000
Munich	7300	2200	4900
Wiesbaden	6200	1700	3000
Weimar	<1000	<1000	<1000
Tbilisi	7100	2000	8500
Florence	3700	1000	20000
Rome	16000	3000	76000
Geneva	3200	2500	<1000

For parishes to be able to reach out, introduce their faith and invite newcomers, they would, at the very least, need an active website, social media and a few external/online activities. A review of our parish survey results and their websites/social media demonstrate that best practices exist within the Convocation in parishes large (Rome), medium (Wiesbaden) and small (Clermont-Ferrand as well as the migrant-led missions of Mons and Orvieto/Comunidad Latinoamericana). Moreover,

the Convocation's Communications Committee has significant talent and interest that can assist parish leaders.

Covid has made digital communications essential for the lives and worship of our parishes. Now is the right time to work on digital outreach and build up our parishes' online identities and communities for people seeking a faith community in these times of Covid isolation. The following section can help parish leaders to design a strategic communications plan targeting specific audiences and to revamp their website and social media strategies to reach newcomers of migrant, refugee and local backgrounds.

The first step is for each parish to revamp its communications strategy, target audiences and specific goals. Our parish survey results suggested that only a few parishes have strategies to reach out to English-speaking or other potential groups. The second step is to change the digital communication tools to reach those goals, by revamping each parish's website and social media strategies, based on the elements of good practice that they can choose from this report. The Task Force reviewed the websites and Facebook accounts of each of the Convocation's 19 churches and missions. This review identified where elements of good practice are present on each parish website/Facebook, in order to identify Convocation-wide strengths and weaknesses and to enable an exchange of sample text, templates and experiences. In terms of current experiences within the Convocation, parishes can learn from both the strategies and good practices developed in full in parishes large (Rome), medium (Wiesbaden) and small (Clermont-Ferrand) as well as in part in half-a-dozen more (Geneva, Paris, Waterloo and the migrant-led missions of Mons and Orvieto/Comunidad Latinoamericana). Moreover, the Convocation's Communications Committee has significant talent and interest that can assist parish leaders.

Building a communications strategy around community and identity

Digital outreach may seem like a big investment only to reach a large, unknown and potentially judgemental crowd. "Word-of-mouth" works so well because the majority of people—with or without an immigrant background—only join new groups when asked by a trusted friend—someone who knows what their specific experiences and questions are and what are the right words to use with them.

The challenge with virtual media is to provide strangers with the answers to the types of questions that they might ask a trusted friend who knew the church. Our website, social media and other external activities must focus on the key information and inspiration that they might need.

Providing regular and targeted information for newcomers is essential, but not, on its own, sufficient to secure their participation. Even if outsiders know or follow our community from a distance, many may not be ready to step across the threshold of our churches to discover our community for themselves. To take that big, uncomfortable

step, many outsiders will first need the certainty that they will feel welcome and wanted by a community that fully embraces new members of all different backgrounds.

Research on immigrant integration in Europe and North America can offer helpful ways to understand how to approach newcomers and how outsiders might perceive this outreach. "Acculturation" explains how institutions, immigrants and locals change in response to cultural diversity. Whether or not people with diverse backgrounds join the same socio-cultural groups and develop a common sense of belonging depends on two key factors. For our purposes, let's call them *community* and *identity*.

The following section provides concrete examples and tips to rethink your parish's communications strategy and then revamp its website, social media and activities in order to share your parish's community and identity with newcomers and provide the information and inspiration that they need. This section will also provide two checklists of elements of good practice on sharing community and identity. A review of the websites and Facebook accounts of all nineteen Convocation congregations identifies where good practices can be found across the Convocation and congregation-by-congregation (see annex to that section).

Good practice for sharing your community with the stranger

Community is your congregation's answer to the following question: *To whom* does this congregation belong?

- Is your parish primarily meant to serve its existing community?
- Or, does your parish aim to build a new, wider community with the stranger?

To understand this question, you can also think of how you would answer this for your personal life. Living in a diverse country of immigration, do I generally prefer to remain within "my own group" or to spend my time with people of diverse backgrounds? For example, are most of my close friends here from my same origin and language group? Or from different groups? Newcomers and locals who prefer to remain amongst themselves will find or create institutions organized along those lines. In contrast, people who embrace diversity are interested in new communities and experiences and willing to join groups based on their mission, activities and openness, rather than simply based on their background/composition.

How would you answer this first question: what type of community do you want your parish to be?

A church that exists primarily to serve its existing community does not necessarily need an online presence, because members already have or get the information through their established channels.

A church that wants to build community with the stranger will need a website, social media and external activities that offer the information and inspiration that newcomers need to join the community.

This first checklist contains elements of good practice on the type of information and inspiration that newcomers need to understand and share in your parish community. A review of the websites and Facebook accounts of all nineteen Convocation congregations identified where good practices can be found across the Convocation and parish-by-parish (see annex to this section). This information can be used to revamp your existing website and social media strategy based on examples, model text or templates provided from other parishes or the Convocation's Communications Committee.

Checklist of good practices for communicating your parish community		On website or Facebook of congregations*
	Simple explanation/video about what is the Episcopal Church	7
	Practical information/links about moving to the area	1
	Links to local English-speaking groups & integration services	3
	Overview and explanations of church social activities	9
	Practical info on getting to church by public transport	12
	Welcoming testimonies/videos by parish or former newcomers	0
	Join/Subscribe button prominent on website &/or social media	8
	Up-to-date church calendar prominent on website &/or social media	11
	Updates on website (monthly) &/or social media (weekly)	12
	Online services available (livestream or recording)	13
	Special online worship/prayer services (livestream or recording)	5

* Five parishes currently have no website and four parishes have no Facebook page.

Parish Example: Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand, France

One of the Convocation's smaller parishes, Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand is the only English speaking faith community offering services in English in Clermont Ferrand. Christ Church has its own active website oriented to the needs of newcomers: "New to Clermont-Ferrand?" "Already living in Auvergne and want to make contact?" "Is there something particular you need today?" "Just curious and want to explore?" Over the years, this facility has directed many expats or American citizens to become active members of our church. On its Facebook Page (@englishspeakingchurch), Christ Church is presented as the English-speaking, Anglican congregation easily located in Clermont Ferrand, the heart of the Auvergne region. As a result of these communication efforts, Christ Church is well known in the community and church details can be found on various company notice-boards, such as Michelin and Limagrain (the two major companies in the Clermont Ferrand area). The church also provides welcome packs at church which assist people to become better informed and orientated in France. This pack can be downloaded here: http://media.wix.com/ugd/2ee711_e9b7744afb144e4f948441add747f844.pdf.



"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" – Ephesians 2:19

Home Worship Church Services Schedule Weekly message People Contact & Locate Us
Recent Special Events Upcoming Events New to Clermont-Ferrand?
Already living in Auvergne and want to make contact? Is there something particular you need today?
Just curious and want to explore? Donate Priest-in-Charge Search



Home > Already living in Auvergne and want to make contact?

Already living in Auvergne and want to make contact?

This is a mixed congregation and one which is constantly evolving. While many of our parishioners are younger American families who are with us in Clermont often for a fixed period of time, a number of our members have moved permanently to the Auvergne. While our younger families tend to live in Clermont itself, others come to us over considerable distances from the larger region. Some of these are very regular members of our worshipping community. Others we see from time to time and they attend when they are able. You might choose to note the handful of key events which take place in the course of the year.



Source: <http://christchurchclermont.org/>

Earlier this section provided Facebook estimates from our local areas of thousands of people who were born in the USA or like/follow US mainline protestant churches or Anglican Church/Communication. But how can our parishes, given their size and means, reach these thousands of people potentially interested in the Episcopal Church? Facebook advertisements have become standard practices not only for businesses, but also for churches and immigrant-run organisations. These ads reach very specific and hard-to-reach audiences on the platform where they spend a lot of their time (Facebook) and they can easily follow a call to action (in our case, to like/follow our parish Facebook pages and/or events). Facebook ads can be low-cost, highly effective and generally positive when targeted at the specific audiences/demographics that you know are generally interested in your content. For example, the target groups mentioned above will be either happy or indifferent to see a sponsored ad introducing them to a community church with a positive message.

Parish Pilot: All Saints Waterloo, Belgium

The use of Facebook ads was piloted during the Task Force by the chair with All Saints Waterloo. The visibility committee, in consultation with the Vestry, chose a simple welcoming text and photo (see below ad as it appeared to Facebook users). The parish targeted their ad to the 5,600 users in Belgium who like/follow US mainline protestant churches (Congregationalist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, United Church of Christ) and to the 1,000 users in Belgium's Wallonia region who like/follow the Church of England, Anglicanism or Anglican Communion. They chose to only spend 1 euro per day, with the goal to get users to like/follow the All Saints page.

In terms of the results from June until September, the parish received a 22% increase in its number of followers (82 new followers) and a doubling in the page's "reach" (an additional 150-200 users per day who saw our content), all without receiving negative reactions or comments. Interestingly, the parish's Facebook reach also changed in composition. The parish's traditional followers/reach were mostly Facebook users *in the USA* (current and many former parishioners and their contacts). With the ad, the parish gained a much greater reach *in Belgium* and from a greater diversity of demographics (from more neighbouring towns, more women, more younger cohorts and more language speakers than just "US-English" according to Facebook's stats). The Vestry is continuing this Facebook ad and considering to update the content seasonally with the liturgical calendar.

 **All Saints' Episcopal Church, Waterloo**
Sponsored · 🌐

Join the Episcopal community in Belgium!
- with services in English and French
- both online and in Waterloo (En), Charleroi (En), Mons (Fr) and Namur (Fr)



All Saints' Episcopal Church, Waterloo
The Episcopal Church serving Belgium. English-speakin...

 Like Page

Source: <https://www.Facebook.com/AllSaintsWaterloo>

Good practice for sharing your mission with the stranger

Identity is your parish's answer to the following question: *Where* does this parish belong?

- Does your parish primarily draw its inspiration from the American Episcopal Church?
- Or has your parish also adopted local, multicultural practices from your specific context?

You can also understand this question by applying it to yourself. Living in a diverse country of immigration, do you only feel a strong identity and sense of belonging with your country of origin? Or only with your new home country? Or perhaps you identify with both, a mixture of the two, a dual sense of belonging? Your identity will shape the way that you present yourself, the words and language you use, the issues, realities and reference points that affect you the most.

How would you answer this second question: what type of identity do you want your parish to have? Do you feel closer and more at home with Convocation or American Episcopalians, even though they live in another country, than you do with other

churches or faith groups in your own country or city? Or is it possible in your local context to feel fully at home in both? Your parish’s answer will shape how and with whom you worship and express your faith in the future.

A church that primarily draws its inspiration from the American Episcopal Church can rely on their established practices and resources to build a community that will be easily recognisable to any Episcopalian—a familiar and comfortable “home away from home.” Every parish, regardless of its identity, must make efforts at full inclusion, so newcomers to the Episcopal Church will be welcomed in these types of parishes by receiving the “full Episcopalian experience”.

A church on the journey of multicultural adaptation will find ways to adapt its worship and activities to embrace the full linguistic and cultural diversity of its parishioners and the wider community. All newcomers, whether Episcopalian or non-Episcopalian, likely encounter something new and strange in the churches’ worship and activities, with languages and cultural references that they do not understand. But those familiar with the local context will understand, as parishioners will be participating and see themselves reflected in their church’s complex local identity. And those newcomers will be encouraged and supported to put in that extra effort to learn new things, meet new people and contribute their own talents, traditions and ideas to this open community.

This second checklist contains elements of good practice on the type of information and inspiration that newcomers need to understand and share in your local identity and the diverse origins and stories of your parish community. The review of the websites and Facebook accounts of all 19 Convocation communities identified where good practices can be found across the Convocation and congregation-by-congregation (see annex to this section). This information can be used to revamp your existing website and social media strategy based on materials provided from other parishes, the Convocation’s Communications Committee and the following sections on witness and welcoming strategies.

Checklist of good practices for communicating your parish identity		On website or Facebook of congregations*
	Explanation of parish and Episcopal Church in other local or immigrant languages (on website &/or social media)	8
	Explanation of history and contributions of the parish to its local area	9
	Explanation of local affiliations, religious, charitable & action partners	8
	Regular news and responses to local issues relevant for church	8
	Visuals and text showcase the diversity of parish community	11
	Visuals and text showcase the diversity of parish leadership	6
	Visuals and text showcase the diversity of church offer/witness	10

* Five parishes currently have no website and four parishes have no Facebook page.

Parish Examples:

St. Augustine of Canterbury, Wiesbaden and St. Paul's within the Walls, Rome

Within the Convocation, Rome and Wiesbaden provide examples of two "best practice" websites and Facebook pages that strongly communicate the parishes' inclusive community and local identities. Both provide extensive and updated information for newcomers introducing the Episcopal Church, the parish's social activities, complete calendar of worship/activities and local integration/English-speaking groups. They provide both online services and special worship/prayer services. Some information is provided where relevant in the local language (and in Spanish at St. Paul's given its Latin-American community). The parish is presented as rooted in its local context by sharing its history in the area, its local affiliations and partners and news on local issues relevant to the church's role in society. The parish's online presence clearly displays and celebrates the diversity of the existing community and the church's witness to the experiences of migrants and refugees.

Source: <https://staugustines.de/>



Source: <https://www.stpaulsrome.it/>



Annex: Congregation-by-congregation overview on digital outreach

	19 Parishes	Karlsruhe	Nuremberg	Munich	Wiesbaden	Weimar	Tbilisi	Florence	Rome	Orvieto	Geneva
Website		http://st.col	https://saint	www.ascens	https://siag	none	none	https://siam	www.stpa'u	https://episc	www.emmar
Facebook		none	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	https://www	www.facebook
Outreach: Who is our community?	Total (out of 19)	23%	14%	50%	73%	5%	18%	64%	73%	14%	59%
<i>Info for newcomers:</i>											
● Video/explanation on episcopalianism	7	0.5	0	0.5	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
● Moving to the area	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
● Integration/English-speaking local groups	3	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	0	0
● Intro to church social activities	9	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
● Getting to church by public transport	12	1	1	1	1	0.5	0	1	1	0	0.5
Welcoming Testimonies/Videos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Join/Subscribe prominent (website &/or social media)	8	1	0	0	1	0	0.5	1	1	0	1
Updated church calendar (website &/or social media)	11	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Regular activity (website &/or social media)	12	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0.5	1
Online services	13	0	0.5	1	1	0	0.5	1	1	1	1
Showcase special online services	5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0
Mission: In which identities are we rooted as a church?	Total (out of 19)	0%	14%	50%	79%	0%	57%	35%	86%	57%	79%
<i>Showcasing our community in its diversity:</i>											
Non-English text (website &/or social media)	8	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	1	0	1	1	0.5
History of this church in its local area	9	0	0	1	0.5	0	0	1	1	0	1
Local affiliations/partners	8	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
News/responses to local issues relevant for church	8	0	0.5	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Diversity of community	11	0	0	0.5	1	0	1	0.5	1	1	1
Diversity of leadership	6	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	0	1	0.5
Diversity of church offer/witness	10	0	0	0	1	0	0.5	0	1	1	0.5

	19 Parishes	Waterloo	Namur	Mons	Charleroi	Paris	Clermont-F.	Montpellier	Augsburg	Frankfurt
Website		www.all saints	www.st.seny	none	none	http://amca	www.facebook	http://azaces	https://stbor	www.christ-8
Facebook		www.facebook	www.facebook	www.facebook	www.epubch	www.facebook	com/amca	www.facebook	https://www	https://www
Outreach: Who is our community?	Total (out of 19)	50%	50%	5%	0%	68%	77%	8%	27%	50%
<i>Info for newcomers:</i>										
● Video/explanation on episcopalianism	7	1	1	0	0	1	0?		0	0
● Moving to the area	1	0	0	0	0	0	1?		0	0
● Integration/English-speaking local groups	3	0	0	0	0	0	1?		0	0
● Intro to church social activities	9	0.5	0	0.5	0	1	1?		0	1
● Getting to church by public transport	12	0	0.5	0	0	1	1	0.5	1	1
Welcoming Testimonies/Videos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0?		0	0
Join/Subscribe prominent (website &/or social media)	8	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	0	0.5	0.5
Updated church calendar (website &/or social media)	11	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0.5	1
Regular activity (website &/or social media)	12	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Online services	13	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Showcase special online services	5	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	0	0	0
Mission: In which identities are we rooted as a church?	Total (out of 19)	50%	64%	57%	14%	64%	50%	14%	29%	36%
<i>Showcasing our community in its diversity:</i>										
Non-English text (website &/or social media)	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	0.5	1	0
History of this church in its local area	9	0	1	0	1	1	0	0.5	0	1
Local affiliations/partners	8	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.5	0
News/responses to local issues relevant for church	8	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Diversity of community	11	1	0.5	1	0	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.5
Diversity of leadership	6	0.5	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0
Diversity of church offer/witness	10	1	1	1	0	0.5	1	0	0	1

Third Goal: Witness

Bear witness to experiences of migrants and refugees

We are a community onto which God has poured out His Spirit and all of us are called to bear witness to Jesus' message in our many tongues. In a church that embraces newcomers, migrants and refugees, this means that we welcome and integrate the many experiences of those whose faith is forged in hardship, challenges or distress, but who can also bring renewal through their diversity, their tales of hope and their resilience. In the Old Testament the Jews, when dealing with those less fortunate than themselves, were reminded they were once slaves in Egypt too. We have to continue to listen actively to those who keep that memory alive.

The parish survey results suggested that most parishes lacked a conscious strategy on how to bear witness. Ad hoc actions and services occur across the Convocation in response to the news and liturgical calendar. Parishes can prepare worship and actions that not only connect the biblical and contemporary experiences of migrants and refugees, but also celebrate the diverse traditions and talents of parishioners of migrant, refugee and local backgrounds. Convocation parishes can learn from good practices across the Convocation from parishes large (Rome and Paris), medium (Geneva, Waterloo, Wiesbaden) and small (Clermont-Ferrand) and especially from the Convocation's migrant-led missions in Mons and Orvieto/Comunidad Latinoamericana.

Each parish within the Convocation is different, in size, age profile, the origins of their members or whether they have a rural or urban or inner-city setting, etc. Likewise the immigrants who are part of the congregation, have different backgrounds and stories too. There is ONE Gospel of Welcome and Inclusion but there is not ONE way to bear witness to it. The Clergy and Parish Leadership will have to develop strategies that take into account the context of their parishes, both to create an environment in which people feel safe to come forward with their testimony and to ensure that the wider message is heard most effectively. In some parishes this is served best by an apolitical discourse; in others by a more prophetic approach. Some parishes count refugees and immigrants among their members who are ready to stand up and reach others; in others it is the Clergy who are best placed to come up with the words, prayers, hymns to move their congregation forward.

In her 2006 must-buy book *Radical Welcome*, Stephanie Spellers cites professor and pastor Kathy Black who describes a process of “culturally-conscious worship” which intentionally works with a consciousness of:

- 1) Our multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural society and world;
- 2) The cultural diversity (its gifts and challenges) present in the congregation; and
- 3) Persons who experience living on the margins and living with inequity of power.

For this, Spellers observes that some Episcopalians may need to refine their definition of what it means to be Anglican, heeding the words of former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams that “there is plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style, so long as we have ways of identifying the same living Christ at the heart of every expression of Christian life in common.”³

Whichever strategy or approach, there are some common goals and practices, as well as worship resources that Parish and Worship Leaders can draw from to truly become a community that listens and gives a place to the testimonies of migrants and refugees. With every action, the Parish Leadership will need to consider how they are honouring the diversity of their parish, of their local community and of society, ideally by using the languages and traditions of all church members when it is useful and appropriate. These goals will of course be best served by having fully inclusive church structures and a diverse leadership, which will be the subject of the chapter on Welcome.

Integrate witness to migrants & refugees in the liturgical calendar

Worship leaders are advised to incorporate at least one of the following international dates in their liturgical calendar:

- *June 20: UN World Refugee Day.* This day is dedicated to raising awareness of the experience of refugees. Of the two UN dates, it is the more widely observed and also more celebratory in nature. An example of a World Refugee Day service is provided from the Task Force’s “Wondrous Wednesday” service hosted by All Saints Waterloo in 2020.
- *October 3: The European Day of Memory and Welcome.* This day commemorates how, in 2013, 368 people including children, women and men, lost their lives in a shipwreck off the coast of Lampedusa. This is often a more solemn service involving the reading of the names and testimonies of migrants to and in Europe who recently died on their migration journeys.
- *December 18: UN International Migrants Day.* This day aims to highlight the contributions made by the roughly 272 million migrants, including more than 41 million internally displaced persons, and the challenges they face. It is more in-

³ Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006), 177.

clusive, bringing attention to the lives of both refugees and migrants. As it falls in December, it is also highly appropriate to be used as part of the Advent readings/ services.

- *Relevant National Days or International Holidays.* As our worship and activities can celebrate the diversity of our communities, parishes can honor the national holidays, festivals or cultures of major migrant communities within our parishes (other communities than the American migrants or expats to Europe that is—American holidays like Thanksgiving will probably already be on the agenda of most of the parishes in the Convocation).

Witness materials for worship leaders

The Task Force compiled a series of links to worship resources, such as prayers and hymns, that can be easily accessed online. These resources were compiled with Shari Brown, Executive Secretary of the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

1. The Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) has designed a toolkit *#sharethejourney Refugee Resource Toolkit: Understanding the Role of the Church in Refugee Resettlement*. It contains worship resources, facts and stories, to help parishes with services that center the experiences of refugees.

www.diomass.org/sites/diomass/files/webfm/Refugee%20Resource%20Toolkit%20%282015%29.pdf

2. Updated in 2018, the compilation *Day of Intercession in Memory of Those Who Have Lost Their Lives at the Borders of the EU* was initially produced by CCME, together with the German Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum, supported by the Evangelical Church in Berlin, Brandenburg and Silesian Oberlausitz and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). It contains information on a biblical perspective on immigration, ideas of worship, prayers and hymns and is especially useful for worship to commemorate people who have lost their lives on their way to seek safety in Europe.

https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-06-18_Commemoration_Day_June_2018_00000002_.pdf

3. The Evangelical Church of Westphalia has printed a booklet summarizing their biblical, theological, social and political reflections on the issue: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (also in English). However their website contains a lot more material, including videos and coverage of the 2019 Kirchentag (in German) where the commitment was made to launch a rescue ship (United4Rescue/Sea-Watch 4).

<https://www.kircheundmigration.ekvw.de>

4. The Alliance Biblique Française authored a little booklet entitled *On the Road. A Journey through the Bible for Migrants* which takes the reader on a journey through thirty-three Bible passages. The seven chapters correspond to different stages of the journey. The booklet also contains prayers, as well as stories of people who share their experience of leaving their home country. The book can be ordered online for under 1 EUR and is available in French, English, Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Norwegian, Spanish and Turkish.

<https://www.editionsbiblio.fr/parcours-bibliques/pour-les-migrants/sur-la-route-edition-en-anglais>

<https://scottishbiblesociety.org/our-work/on-the-road-a-journey-through-the-bible-for-migrants/>

5. The Reverend Inderjit Bhogal, Methodist Minister and founder of the City of Sanctuary movement in the UK produced a resource, revised and published in May 2019, with prompts for conversation and reflection on the theme of hospitality and sanctuary. It can be used by Churches, small groups or individuals to reflect on the theme of Welcome, Hospitality and Sanctuary.

[Hospitality and Sanctuary for All 2019 – CTBI Version](#)

6. The Hymn Society has compiled a wide selection of migration-related hymns and songs, under the title *Singing Welcome: Hymns and Songs of Hospitality to Refugees and Immigrants*.

<https://thehymnsociety.org/resources/singing-welcome/>

7. The Church of Scotland, in collaboration with CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) and Ev.K.Bayern, is working on a project entitled *God With Us*, an ecumenical anthology of worship resources on refugees and asylum seekers. The anthology is almost complete and possibly will have a launch on International Migrants Day as the name of the anthology lends itself to Advent.

Forthcoming

The Task Force hopes to see the creation of more multilingual material as well as material created *by* refugees and immigrants, bearing witness to the diversity and reality of migrants and refugees, not only as victims and those in need, but also as survivors and leaders (e.g. through hymns and prayers). This evolution will need to be monitored by the Convocation in order to include it in its worship resources.

Identify partners for witness & action

Parish leaders do not stand alone in their endeavours to stand up in witness and action to support migrants and refugees. Each Parish and Mission, independent of their charitable outreach work, can become a member, whether formal or informal of a

local migration-related action group or network, whether church-based, ecumenical, inter-faith or secular. These groups and networks will provide parish leaders with ideas for their actions and opportunities for collaboration and coalition-building.

On the local level, the Task-force recommends that Parishes continue to build local action coalitions, for example with other English-speaking and/or liberal protestant communities as well as NGOs representing or led by immigrants and refugees. These ecumenical, interfaith and cross-stakeholder coalitions can turn to more focused actions around common concerns faced by the local communities.

Parish Example: St. Augustine of Canterbury, Wiesbaden

We have visited and listened to the stories of our Pakistani Refugees as well as collected money for their families (Precious Saints) and provided information (adults forum) to the congregation. We have had Music evenings sharing their music and participated in church services in various churches in Wiesbaden. We are still providing 1-on-1 (case-by-case) support to refugees and other migrants and their families who ask for it. We are members of Wiesbaden's Alliance for Democracy, a broad alliance of political parties, charities, unions and churches that also organizes and a platform for organising demonstrations and counter demonstrations against anti-immigrant organizations. Many Wiesbaden members with migrant backgrounds are now helping support each other and new possible members.

On the European level, the Task Force proposes that the Convocation become a member of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). We confirmed the feasibility of membership with its executive secretary Shari Brown, who was the keynote speaker in the Academy of Parish Leadership.

CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe, founded in 1964. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches. CCME has institutional relations to many other Christian Brussels-based organisations, as well as to international and intergovernmental organisations. CCME is a member of and cooperates with many platforms and networks with other NGOs to foster the aims described in CCME's mission statement. CCME works on different projects and research. All activities aim to monitor European migration policy and to advocate for an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority groups, based on our faith's commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being.

CCME currently has thirty-five members from nineteen countries all over Europe, as well as two associated organizations. Membership of the Commission is open to churches and to organizations related to member churches of the Conference of European Churches and council of churches in European countries. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and Councils of Churches. This in-

cludes the Belgian EPUB, French FPF and Cimade, German EKD and Diakonie, Italian FCEI, Swiss PCS, European Methodist Council, United Reformed Church and Council of African & Caribbean Churches. Membership of the Convocation in CCME would provide four major benefits for parishes' future work:

- Provide advocacy on migration, refugees and anti-racism at European and national level.
- Provide contacts and networking for the Convocation and its parishes to find relevant European, national and local ecumenical and church partners for charitable outreach and for actions.
- Provide contacts, resources and best practices for the Convocation to improve future charitable outreach and actions (such as the recent Moria fire statement).
- Provide contacts, resources and best practices for the Convocation to improve their witness, welcome and partnership with migrant-led and anti-racism initiatives within European churches.

n the transatlantic level, the Convocation should make optimal use of the resources offered through the Episcopal Migration Ministries (<https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/>), as well the Office for Asian American Ministries (<https://episcopalchurch.org/asiamerica-ministries>) and the Office for Latino Ministries (<https://episcopalchurch.org/latino-ministries>).

Fourth Goal: From greeting to welcoming

Welcome new community members and leaders

Jesus tells us that there are many rooms in His Father's House, that no-one who turns to Him is turned away, but that He prepares a place for us there. As the living body of Christ, we are called to follow up on this promise. We too have to prepare a place for those newcomers in and to our church and our society, not merely at the door, but at the table.

Welcoming strategies are present in several Convocation parishes but require constant reflection and improvement. These strategies were mentioned in the same parishes leading on digital outreach and witness: Welcoming processes and/or positions were mentioned by Clermont-Ferrand, Paris, Rome, Waterloo, Wiesbaden and the migrant-led parishes of Mons and Orvieto/Comunidad Latinoamericana. An explicit strategy and "welcomer" role in each parish ensures that welcoming actually works as a two-way process. On the one hand, newcomers of all backgrounds are encouraged and supported to become members, trained volunteers and leaders at all levels. On the other hand, welcoming also means that the existing community supports, learns, adapts and fully shares the church with these new members and leaders as their equals. The future of the Episcopal Church in Europe will be in the hands of a diverse community of new leaders, with not only English-speaking, but also other migrant, refugee and local backgrounds.

Parish Testimony: Waseem Zahoor *St. Augustine's, Wiesbaden, Germany*

When I came to the church as a refugee, I was welcomed by some, but I was disappointed by the reactions and behaviour of some others. I think it is common in many churches all around the world. It's not their fault. Maybe they had a bad experience in their life or they are afraid of people who look different from them. Instead, I turned my mind from them and focused on the people who really did love and care for us. But then I started thinking about the story in the Scripture when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to flee to Egypt: it was always part of God's plan to save his son so he could fulfil what was foretold. I started to understand that it might also be part of God's plan for me to be there in this church. So I got more and more involved in the congregation. Slowly, everybody started to get to know us and ask about our stories. We started participating in different activities in the church. And we became members of the church.

I want to share an example from a movie called "All Saints" based on the true story of All Saints Episcopal Church in Smyrna, Tennessee (watch the trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdCDoEowA6k>). In 2007, the parish was going to close

because of a shrinking community and a mortgage it could not afford. However, the priest had a change of heart when Karen refugees from Myanmar started to attend. As farmers, they asked if they could work the land belonging to the church so they could get something extra to eat and help with the Church's bills; in the process, All Saints was not only able to survive, but come together and grow as a new community.

Before the refugees were able to succeed and be fully accepted at All Saints, the priest is offered a new job elsewhere and abandon the farming project, but his son asks him "what do you think will happen to [the refugees] when we leave [the parish]?" This is my question for all the Churches: What do you think will happen to the refugees if you will not welcome them in your churches? And what will happen to our churches if they do not reach out to the newcomers in our communities?

Welcoming new members and leaders

Welcoming is a long-term process of transformation. Research by CCME on the active participation of migrants in European churches advised that its recommendations would take time to implement: "The process of integration and active participation of newcomers concerns the structure and attitudes of the church towards all its members. It is a process that requires time, human resources and should be carefully structured in a participative way, without the predominance of some groups or people over others."⁴

Existing members agree to open up their parish community and mission. Newcomers come to church, bring new gifts and talents and develop relationships, leadership and belonging. The community expands and its mission and worship are renewed in unexpected ways. This process of transformation will be intimately tied and immensely helped by the survey and hard follow-up work of the Task Force on Racism and Reconciling the Beloved Community. These results will lead to difficult questions and solutions for welcoming strategies that address the obscured obstacles, inequalities, privilege and power structures within our parish communities.

Radical Welcome

The best source for designing a welcoming strategy, with step-by-step guides, questions and online resources (see section annex) is Stephanie Spellers's 2006 book, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*.⁵ The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers is Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's Canon for

4 Olivia Bertelli and Doris Peschke, "MIRACLE Models of Integration through Religion, activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange: Recommendations for Active Participation of Migrants in Churches" (Brussels, Belgium: CCME, 2010). https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2010-06-Guide_English_final.pdf.

5 Spellers also recommends: Andrew Week's 1992 *Welcome! Tools and Techniques for New Member Ministry* (1992), Roy Oswald & Speed Leas' *The Inviting Church* (1987), a 2004 Church of England booklet entitled *Creating a Culture of Welcome in the Local Church*, and Clayton Morris' 2005 book *Holy Hospitality: Worship and the Baptismal Covenant*.

	Inviting	Inclusion	Radical Welcome
The Message	“Come, join our community and share our cultural values and heritage.”	“Help us to be diverse.”	“Bring your culture, your voice, your whole self—we want to engage in truly mutual relationship.”
The Goal	assimilation: community invites new people to enter and adopt dominant identity	incorporation: community welcomes marginalized groups, but no true shift in congregation’s cultural identity and practices	incarnation: community embodies and expresses the full range of voices and gifts present, including The Other
The Effort	Systems and programs in place to invite and incorporate newcomers into existing structures and identity; rejection or marginalization of those who do not assimilate	Stated commitment to inclusivity, but less attention to ongoing programs, systemic analysis or power; emphasis on individual efforts	Systems and programs in place to invite and welcome people, including those from the margins; to ensure their presence, gifts and perspective will be visible and valued; and to ensure that these new communities, gifts and values influence the congregation’s identity, ministries and structures
The Result	Healthy numbers (perhaps with some members who claim marginal identity) but institution and its membership is overwhelmingly monocultural	Revolving door, with people coming from margins only to stay on fringe or leave; institutional structure remains monocultural, with some pockets of difference	Transformed and transforming community with open doors and open hearts; different groups share power and shape identity, mission, leadership, worship and ministries

Source: Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 64.

Evangelism, Reconciliation and Stewardship of Creation. Spellers traces step-by-step the process and reactions within American Episcopal parishes transforming from *inviting* congregations to *inclusive* congregations to *radically welcoming* communities:

The movement from inviting to inclusion to radical welcome is the move toward cultivating mutually transforming relationship. The terms and power have shifted. Both parties matter, and both are open to conversion. People on the margins will enter and discover resonances, time-honored wisdom and beauty in the congregation’s received tradition, even as they share love and stories and engage in ministry as part of the gathered body. But the existing community will also experience conversion, hearing with new ears the wisdom brothers or sisters bring from the margins, trying on new practices, engaging God with a different perspective, and expanding their sense of what is possible, normative, essential or holy for Christian life in their context. Structures are changing, and lives are changing, as well.⁶

At each step along the way, best practices exist for inviting, inclusive & welcoming parishes:

- Best Practices for the Inviting Congregation (see [link](#))
- Best Practices for Inclusive Congregations (see [link](#))
- The Practices of a Radically Welcoming Community (see [link](#))

⁶ Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, 72-73.

Spellers describes **five radical welcome signs** that you would find in a welcoming community and then provides questions for discernment to kickstart discussion for this process of transformation:

Mission and Vision

1. The community has discerned and claimed a clear, compelling, transformational mission and vision that incorporates radical welcome of The Other.
2. The mission and vision guide the continuing development of the community's identity, ministries, leadership and worship.

Guiding question: What would your mission and vision look and sound like if they signified a genuine, specific commitment to radical welcome of The Other?

Identity

1. The congregation values its history, traditions and denominational heritage; it also fosters an identity flexible enough to include The Other.
2. Leaders have consciously studied the make-up of the surrounding community and related communities, and intentionally welcomed those neighbors to join and help to shape their common life and common mission.
3. The congregation is developing critical consciousness of who is inside, who is marginalized and who is outside, and why, and seeks to eliminate exclusionary barriers blocking The Other.

Guiding question: What would your church identity look like if you included the story and engaged presence of The Other, alongside the long-standing history and traditions?

Ministries and Relationships

1. The congregation's activities have been thoughtfully organized to reflect and fulfill the radically welcoming mission.
2. Community ministries reflect a desire for mutuality, empowerment and transformation of all participants (doing with others, rather than doing for others).
3. Ministries draw members at the community's center and its margins into mutual, transforming relationship.

Guiding question: What would your ministries and relationships look like if they were geared to enhance and prepare people for cooperation, mutuality and reconciliation with The Other?

Leadership and Feedback Systems

1. Leaders are intentionally recruited, mentored and selected from the distinct groups in the community, with special attention to building power among the under-represented margins.
2. There is wide access to decision-makers and transparency regarding decision-making.
3. Different cultural and generational styles of leadership are understood and creatively accommodated.

Guiding question: What would your leadership and feedback systems look like if they supported sharing power, decision-making and access with The Other?

Worship

1. The make-up of the worshipping body—which may be spread over more than one service—reflects the surrounding community and communities with whom you seek meaningful relationship.
2. Liturgical texts, music, images and worship leaders reflect the congregation, surrounding community, and communities with whom you seek meaningful relationship.
3. The community's worship is lively and reflective, deeply rooted in lived traditions, yet open to fresh expressions (again, not necessarily in a single service).

Guiding question: What would your worship look like if it incorporated the culture, aesthetic sensibility and spirituality of The Other with your existing traditions?

Start with a trained welcomer in every parish

For this process to begin, we need welcomers! Inspired by good practices developed in Clermont-Ferrand and Wiesbaden, one of the Task Force's main recommendations is that each Parish and Mission appoint at least one welcomer. The welcomer works with parish leadership to design its welcoming strategy. They undergo a virtual training organized by the Task Force, take up this role when attending worship and church activities, exchange via a convocation-wide group and report back annually to parish leaders on the effects, challenges and possible improvements of the welcoming strategy.

While parishes have ushers and greeters, these roles are often focused on logistics. Task Force members could also not identify any specific Convocation or parish training/materials available for greeters. The new role of welcomer might interest ushers, greeters or perhaps new volunteers of diverse backgrounds themselves who know the kind of welcome that newcomers want to receive. This attention to equal representation in visible welcoming and leadership roles can create a feeling of welcome from the very first impression.

The profile for this welcomer position is a social and approachable person, preferably bi/multilingual, who can build bridges and break down barriers. In some contexts, this position is described as a befriender, a mentor or (inter)cultural navigator/mediator. The role of a parish welcomer is to inform and connect newcomers to parish members, leaders and the local community:

- Gather useful information and materials for newcomers for welcoming table and notice board (e.g. language courses, English-speaking support services and social groups, volunteering opportunities within the church e.g. conversation tandems, babysitting, homework tutors and externally with the church and its partners).

- Ensure that every newcomer is welcomed each Sunday
- Ensure that parish leaders are known to newcomers (e.g. nametags, introductions, and/or names & photos on notice board)
- Answer their basic introductory questions on the parish and life in the local area
- Listen to their personal or practical needs
- Identify the talents and interests of newcomers
- Collect and share this information and their contact details with appropriate parish leader(s)
- Update information on needs, mentoring and advice available from existing members
- Connect them with parishioners and parish leaders with solutions and similar interests
- Organise an annual “Time and Talent” event (parishioners show/talk about their talents and parish leaders share church volunteering, leadership, worship and training needs/opportunities)
- Propose bridge-building activities between new and existing members
- Listen for issues of inclusion and representation and find solutions with parish leaders

Parish Example: Christ Church Clermont-Ferrand, France

Christ Church is a small church with an “inbuilt welcoming spirit”, taking time to listen and be attentive to the needs of newcomers. As such, the Parish is conscious of the importance of greeting each person at the door, already inviting newcomers to refreshments after the service, initiating conversations with them or following up on attendance if possible. Parish leaders make a point of welcoming every newcomer and spending the time needed to get to know them personally and understand their specific needs. This information is relayed to the Vestry and appropriate action is taken for support. In the past, the parish has assisted new church members of refugee and migrant backgrounds by accompanying them to meetings and registration for government services. We assist them with translations, learning language skills and finding parish volunteering and leadership roles based on their interests and talents.

Together, welcomers across Convocation parishes may better define their role through training and exchange. Welcomers should be ready for the occasional difficult conversation—with newcomers about the Church’s values, mission or theology and with existing members about issues of inclusion. You cannot address every question or conflict, but instead listen, do your best and report back to the relevant parish leader(s). Welcomers want to not only answer one-on-one questions, but promote greater interaction, participation and leadership from new and existing members. Outreach and social activities provide good opportunities for “getting to know

you” among people of different ages, backgrounds and origins. Welcomers may also be interested to find resources and partners for the church to work more deeply on issues of migration, refugees and non-discrimination.

Welcoming children and volunteers for Sunday School

Two Task Force members met with the Co-Chairs of the Task Force on Youth and Children to discuss the possible links between the welcoming of migrants and the ways Sunday School is organized. The Youth Commission serves as a point of contact to accompany and support Parish Sunday School leaders in the questions and to address the new challenges in the training of new teachers.

Based on the survey conducted by the Youth and Children Task Force, multilingualism is not the main issue in Sunday School compared to the more pressing issue of increasing the number and capacity of Sunday School teachers. As part of parishes welcoming newcomers, more can be done to find out about the background and interests of those who start attending our churches, so that they can be asked to volunteer as teachers or as bilingual assistants.

When it comes to Sunday School, languages, expectations and cultures of newcomers, whether from migrant or local backgrounds, might differ from what is offered in the USA. There is a need to be sensitive to the bilingualism and different profiles of our children and youth. Clear information on the language offer of youth ministry in parishes should always be given from the start. Parishes that expect or hope to welcome children of newcomers who cannot understand English enough to participate, will first need to encourage volunteers with local language facilities to join. If it becomes clear that students struggle to follow in English, the focus should be on encouraging more volunteers and assistants who mirror the composition of our multilingual, multicultural parishes.

Annex: Bread for the Journey: Online Companion to Radical Welcome

(From Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other, and the Spirit of Transformation* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006).

Resources specifically designed to complement *Radical Welcome*, including downloadable 7-session book discussion study guides for leaders and participants, handouts, and resources to be used along with the book. Share with your congregation or ministry and travel even further along the road to radical welcome. (Note: The below items are hyperlinks to Internet resources for those reading on an interactive device.)

Seven-session Book Discussion

- [The Radical Welcome Book Discussion: Leaders' Guide](#)
- [The Radical Welcome Book Discussion: Participants' Guide](#)
- [Session 1 Handout: Radical Welcome Defined](#)
- [Session 2 Handout: The Biblical Roots of Radical Welcome](#)
- [Session 3 Handout: Moving from Inviting to Inclusion to Radical Welcome](#)
- [Session 4 Handout: The Dream of Radical Welcome](#)
- [Session 5 Handout: How Radical is YOUR Welcome?](#)
- [Session 6 Handout: The Sound of Fear](#)
- [Session 7 Handout: Moving Ahead Together](#)

General Resources

- [Wise Words for the Road: Sermons on Radical Welcome](#)
- [Bibliography](#)

Targeted Resources

Fear and The Other

- [About "The Other"](#)
- [In Your Shoes: Exercise](#)
- [Practicing Compassionate Awareness](#)
- [Reckoning with Fear and Embracing Change: Scripture Study](#)

Congregational Assessment and Planning

- [Studying Your Reality — Where Are We Now?](#)
- [Charting Your Dream — Where Is God Inviting Us to Go?](#)
- [Building the Bridge —How Will We Get There?](#)
- [Map the Journey](#)

Inviting, Including and Radically Welcoming

- [Best Practices for the Inviting Congregation](#)
- [Best Practices for Inclusive Congregations](#)
- [The Practices of a Radically Welcoming Community](#)



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