

Practical Ideas for planting & growing churches

By Bishop Ron Ferris, Rector, Church of the Ascension (Langley, BC, Canada)
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Although some suggests are specific to British Columbia, forming churches in other provinces and states will find these ideas most helpful.

1. **Sandwich boards** – Have 24" x 28" coloured signs printed on corrugated plastic panels (about \$40 for two). Mount them on plastic saw horses from London Drugs. This gets the cost around \$50 vs \$200+. ANiC will do the artwork for you at no charge. See: www.anglicannetwork.ca/communication_collateral.htm for information on this and all of the other ministry support tools ANiC offers at little or no cost to you.
2. **Belgian pewter chalice and patten** – Have the look and feel of Anglican silver but at a fraction of the price. Available through St Andrew's Church Supply: www.standrewschurchsupply.com, go to "Metalware/Communion", then "Chalices". Select those \$0-\$200. You'll see a 10 oz chalice for \$128 (#195-1835).
3. **Community newspaper ads** – A business card size ad costs us about \$48 per week in the Langley community newspaper. It brings in about 25% of newcomers to Ascension and directs people to our website. Another paper, "Coffee News" offers a larger ad for \$10 a week, but without home delivery.
4. **A professional looking website** – ANiC Communications offers easily adaptable website templates. ANiC's professional web designers are able to set up a professional looking site for you for just a few hundred dollars - and less to maintain. For more information and to see templates, see: http://anglicannetwork.ca/parish_website_templates.htm. Or contact mjacobson@anglicannetwork.ca. Check out www.ascensionlangley.ca for an example of a finished website. In our digital world, websites have become churches "front door". Most people will check out the church on your website before visiting in person.
5. **Household postal mailings** – The Canada Post website can tell you the number of homes and apartments in each neighbourhood you are trying to reach. Attractive postcards can be printed for 12 cents and mailed for 12 cents. It will cost \$2,400 to reach 10,000 homes. 25% of newcomers in the first year at Ascension, came because of householders. See: www.canadapost.ca, go to "Business", find household counts and maps, and look up your areas.
6. **Electronic newsletters** – Ask newcomers for email and ask if you can put them on your "friends" list for newsletters. Send out a brief and upbeat newsletter every few weeks with special events, activities, and your contact info.
7. **Service sheets** – The Church of England website gives a general copyright permission for congregational use: www.churchofengland.org. Go to "Worship", then "Common Worship", then to the "Copyright instructions" and the texts you want. You can cut and paste electronically or the old fashioned way with real

paste! Tri-fold 8½ " x 14" coloured copies can be made from your customized paste up for each service you need. There are no books to carry and store.

8. **Initial public meeting** – A local restaurant often will provide their meeting room free for community groups. When your planning group is ready to go public, use upcoming event columns to invite the community to a short, upbeat and informative meeting, followed by coffee. Gently ask for contact information. Widen your circle. Is there now enough to move to monthly or weekly services?
9. **Registers** – Vestry Books (\$59.95) to record weekly services, and a composite register for Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Burials (\$63) is printed by A.B.C. and available through the toll free number at Augsburg 800-265-6397
10. **Incremental stipend** – Small churches that are just starting probably cannot afford a full time stipend. Think of the stipend in 20% increments. Each increment represents a day of a 5 day week. The congregation commits to giving 50% of income to support ministry. With a full time salary of approximately \$60,000, twelve thousand is needed for each day up to full time. By using the formula you know that a congregation with an income of \$36,000 over the past year can afford \$18,000 towards ministry. The level of paid ministry is set at one and a half days per week. The remaining \$18,000 goes toward Diocesan tithe, rent, office, educational, and altar supplies, publicity and insurance.
11. **How church plants are formed** – On the ANiC website, you'll find an essential step-by-step document for ANiC church plants. The *Church Planting Working Group* and your regional Bishop can help you with each step along the way. Go to http://anglicannetwork.ca/church_planting.htm. Select the "Critical Pathways" document.
12. **Canada Revenue Number and BC Society Registration** – The ANiC office can refer you to a lawyer. It is possible to do both of these steps yourselves at no cost. See: www.bcregistryservices.bc.ca. Go to "Corporate", then "Societies" and you will find all of the instructions and forms. Also www.cra-arc.gc.ca. Go to "Charities and Giving", then applying for registration, and you will find the instructions and forms.