

March 2023

*Parish, Ecclesial and Socioeconomic Statistics
for the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020*

*A Report for the
Future Church*

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March 31, 2023

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Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
Georgetown University
Washington, D.C.

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This report was commissioned by FutureChurch. The report was researched and written by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
How did the number of parishes change over time in each diocese in the context of changes to other ecclesial statistics?	2
How many parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed?.....	3
What socioeconomic factors may be related to parish (re)openings/expansions on one side and parish closures/absorptions on the other?	4
Diocese of Bridgeport	8
Introduction	10
Findings for the Diocese of Bridgeport	13
1. Diocesan - Level Description	13
1. Total and Catholic Population	14
2. Number of Baptisms	15
3. Number of First Communions	16
4. Number of Confirmations.....	17
5. Number of Faithful Received into Full Communion.....	18
6. Number of Recorded Catholic Marriages	19
7. Number of Recorded Catholic Deaths	20
8. Number of Priests.....	21
9. Number of Parishes.....	22
10. Number of Catholics per Parish.....	23
2. County - Level Description	24
1. Number of Identified Parishes.....	25
2. Catholic Population Size	26
3. General Population Size.....	27
4. Average Household Income.....	28
5. Number of People Below Poverty Line	29
6. Proportion of People Below Poverty Line.....	30
7. Number of Unemployed People.....	31
8. Proportion of Unemployed People.....	32
9. Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	33
10. Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	34
11. Number of Blacks/African Americans.....	35
12. Proportion of Blacks/African Americans	36
13. Number of Hispanics/Latinos.....	37
14. Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos	38
15. Correlation Between the Number of Identified Parishes and Diocese’s Socioeconomic Characteristics	39
3. Census Tract - Level Description	41
1. Number of Identified Parishes.....	42
2. Average General Population Size	45
3. Average Household Income.....	46

4. Average Number of People Below Poverty Line	47
5. Average Proportion of People Below Poverty Line	48
6. Average Number of Unemployed People	49
7. Average Proportion of Unemployed People	50
8. Average Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	51
9. Average Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	52
10. Average Number of Blacks/African Americans	53
11. Average Proportion of Blacks/African Americans	54
12. Average Number of Hispanics/Latinos	55
13. Average Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos.....	56
14. Correlation Between Parish Closures/Absorptions and Census Tracts' Socioeconomic Characteristics	57
Appendix I: Methodology	58
Research Question	58
Diocesan – Level Analysis	58
County – Level Analysis	60
Census Tract – Level Analysis.....	61
Appendix II: About CARA	68

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Executive Summary

FutureChurch (FC) commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct this study to explore parish, ecclesial, and socioeconomic characteristics of the following 11 dioceses between 1970 and 2020: Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archdiocese of Chicago, Archdiocese of Detroit, Archdiocese of Miami, Archdiocese of New Orleans, Archdiocese of New York, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Archdiocese of St. Louis, Diocese of Bridgeport, Diocese of Cleveland, and Diocese of Memphis. Those dioceses were selected to fit specific needs of FC and they are not meant to constitute a nationally representative sample.

More specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore the following research questions:

- How did the number of parishes change over time in each diocese in the context of changes to other ecclesial statistics?
- How many parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed? When did it happen? Where were those parishes located?
- What socioeconomic factors may be related to parish (re)openings/expansions on one side and parish closures/absorptions on the other?

CARA explored those questions in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023 using several secondary data sources which include:

- Official Catholic Directory from 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, 1986, 1981, 1976, and 1971.
- ASARB's U.S. Religious Census for 1971, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.
- Neighborhood Change Database of normalized census tract data for 2010, 2000, 1990, 1980, and 1970.
- U.S. Census Bureau's data Decennial Census and American Community Survey for 2020.
- Census Bureau's GeoCoder database.
- MassTimes.org database of parish addresses.
- Other available sources (e.g., lists of closed parishes published on diocesan websites).

The description below summarizes the main findings organized by research question for all 11 dioceses (starting with the first question below) and for the Diocese of Bridgeport specifically.

How did the number of parishes change over time in each diocese in the context of changes to other ecclesial statistics?

The overall number of parishes nationwide decreased by 9% between 1970 and 2020. The average number of parishes per diocese decreased faster (by 27%) because new dioceses were created in this period. Among dioceses included in the study, the Archdiocese of Miami experienced the smallest decrease (2%) and the Archdiocese of Detroit the largest decrease (38%).

Over the 50-year period, the general population of all dioceses in the United States increased by 65% (according to the OCD data). The total Catholic population increased by 46% (so, 19 percentage points slower than the general population). And, the overall size of a Catholic parish increased by 60% in total (or by 59% per diocese, on average). Among dioceses included in the study, the Archdiocese of New York experienced the biggest increase in average parish size (118%) while the Archdiocese of Miami saw the biggest decrease (13%).

The table below summarizes selected diocesan - level ecclesial statistics derived from the Official Catholic Directory for each of the 11 dioceses included in the study and for all dioceses in the country altogether (as a total and on average).

Percentage Change in Ecclesial Statistics by Diocese between 1970 and 2020*													
	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit**	Memphis***	Miami**	New Orleans**	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis	National Average	National Total
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Total Population	39	16	>-1	-10	-10	.	104	-4	22	6	17	39	65
Catholic Population	42	46	-14	-30	-29	.	-15	-21	53	-7	-4	17	46
Baptisms	-51	-71	-70	-81	-83	.	-34	-73	-82	-66	-69	-65	-57
First Communion*	-46	-30	-86	-87	-56	18	-29	-54	-63	-48	-71	-43	-39
Confirmations*	-20	-10	-64	-69	-50	86	-15	-45	-60	-70	-48	-19	-13
Full Communion	-76	-69	-94	-74	-76	.	-39	-12	-89	-90	-85	-51	-41
Catholic Marriages	-83	-88	-84	-84	-88	.	-79	-79	-90	-74	-78	-82	-78
Catholic Deaths	-33	-11	-57	-24	-47	.	-8	-43	-60	-32	-32	-31	-14
Priests	-51	-46	-49	-56	-62	.	-40	-47	-51	-60	-50	-51	-40
Parishes	-4	-7	-36	-22	-38	.	-2	-29	-30	-32	-29	-27	-9
Catholics per Parish	48	57	34	-10	15	.	-13	11	118	37	35	59	60

* Change in the number of Confirmations and First Communion is calculated for 1990-2020.

** During the analyzed period, the geographic territory of these dioceses has decreased.

*** Diocese of Memphis was established in 1970. The available data starts in 1975.

**** Biggest absolute change for each statistic is marked in bold.

How many parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed?

The breakdown of the total (i.e., actual) number of parishes is not possible due to the limitations of available data. The tables below show the number and the percentage of identified parishes (where identified parish is a parish for which census tract data could be identified) that (re)opened/ expanded (to incorporate another parish), remained opened, and closed/were absorbed (by another parish) by diocese between 1970 and 2020.

	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/ Expanded	20	8	40	32	57	9	37	30	9	13	11
Remained Opened	108	62	244	138	141	29	51	71	276	183	146
Closed/ were Absorbed	23	20	187	80	146	2	17	45	111	104	70

* Biggest number in each category is marked in bold.

Between 1970 and 2020, there were between 218 and 352 parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit (the actual numbers reported in OCD). Of these, 344 parishes could be identified (and 8 parishes could not be identified). Among the identified parishes, 42% (146) were closed/absorbed while 17% (57) were (re)opened/expanded, and 41% (141) remained opened over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, in the Archdiocese of Miami, 35% (37 identified parishes) (re)opened/expanded, while 16% (17) closed/ were absorbed, and 49% (51) remained open.

	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/ Expanded	13	9	8	13	17	23	35	21	2	4	5
Remained Opened	72	69	52	55	41	73	49	49	70	61	64
Closed/ were Absorbed	15	22	40	32	42	5	16	31	28	35	31

* Biggest proportion in each category is marked in bold.

What socioeconomic factors may be related to parish (re)openings/expansions on one side and parish closures/absorptions on the other?

The relationship between socioeconomic variables and parish (re)openings/expansions on one side and parish closures/absorptions was explored in two ways. The first approach focused on exploring relationships between changes in the number of identified parishes and socioeconomic changes aggregated on diocesan level. The second approach explored socioeconomic differences between neighborhoods where parishes closed/were absorbed and neighborhoods where parishes opened/expanded.

Based on the first approach, the table below summarizes percentage changes in county statistics between 1970 and 2020 aggregated by diocese. It shows, for example, that the proportion of people below poverty line (i.e., poverty rate) in counties in the Archdiocese of Detroit increased by 70% over the 50-year period while the number of identified parishes declined by 31%.

	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
# Identified Parishes	-2	-15	-34	-21	-31	23	29	-13	-26	-32	-27
Catholic Population Size	-16	-26	-31	-27	-44	65	160	-4	-5	-19	-1
General Population Size	47	57	2	-3	-2	98	151	24	30	9	24
Average Household Income	53	56	31	7	6	21	24	29	57	44	26
# People Below Poverty Line	23	109	27	48	61	73	179	4	40	30	20
% People Below Poverty Line	-13	37	29	58	70	-10	13	-14	14	25	<1
# Persons Unemployed	164	293	137	98	42	263	377	118	158	134	52
% Persons Unemployed	40	105	89	63	18	49	48	32	72	74	-5
# Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	7	5	-40	-19	-24	58	1	-8	-23	-19	6
% Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	-21	-25	-34	-12	-17	-16	-40	-19	-35	-21	-9
# Blacks/African Americans	74	107	5	23	29	109	251	32	21	20	34
% Blacks/African Americans	27	48	14	34	41	11	103	15	5	18	15
# Hispanics/Latinos	1,227	708	422	327	269	2,330	690	233	137	530	429
% Hispanics/Latinos	839	414	411	356	276	1,129	215	169	82	477	338

* Analysis is limited to counties included in each diocese as of 2020, for which data were available.

** Biggest absolute change for each statistic is marked in bold.

*** The population size by county and altogether (i.e., the total population of all counties in a diocese) (that is derived from Census data) does not match the general population size found in the diocesan – level analysis (that derived from the Official Catholic Directory).

The table below shows correlations between the number of identified parishes and each socioeconomic variable by diocese, between 1970 and 2020. Those correlations are measured by Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Negative values indicate negative correlation and positive values positive correlation. Absolute values greater than 0.7 indicate strong correlation, values between 0.5 and 0.7 indicate moderate correlation, values below 0.5 indicate weak or insignificant correlation.

Correlation between the Number of Identified Parishes and by Diocese between 1970 and 2020											
	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]	[PCC]
General Population Size	-0.25	-0.97	-0.63	0.38	0.31	0.77	0.73	0.65	-0.83	-0.92	-0.96
Catholic Population Size	0.37	0.36	0.95	0.88	0.75	0.76	0.55	0.49	0.45	0.56	0.67
Average Household Income	-0.32	-0.48	-0.86	-0.49	-0.31	0.58	0.65	-0.65	-0.64	-0.84	-0.79
# People Below Poverty Line	-0.43	-0.95	-0.57	-0.85	-0.71	0.27	0.77	0.88	-0.42	-0.85	-0.80
% People Below Poverty Line	0.07	-0.55	-0.47	-0.80	-0.71	-0.56	0.87	0.72	0.02	-0.63	-0.54
# Persons Unemployed	0.27	-0.77	-0.52	-0.40	0.04	0.80	0.71	0.09	-0.33	-0.53	-0.39
% Persons Unemployed	0.53	-0.33	-0.41	-0.35	0.11	0.74	0.70	0.01	-0.06	-0.24	-0.02
# Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	0.86	-0.62	0.92	0.73	0.83	-0.29	0.58	0.80	0.69	0.87	0.55
% Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	0.37	0.73	0.92	0.81	0.75	-0.65	-0.50	0.37	0.72	0.94	0.97
# Blacks/African Americans	-0.16	-0.74	-0.01	-0.69	-0.36	0.76	0.72	0.59	-0.21	-0.78	-0.91
% Blacks/African Americans	-0.20	-0.24	-0.29	-0.76	-0.55	0.73	0.59	0.13	-0.14	-0.76	-0.92
# Hispanics/Latinos	-0.61	-0.91	-0.95	-0.93	-0.94	0.41	0.61	-0.79	-0.77	-0.98	-0.96
% Hispanics/Latinos	-0.60	-0.75	-0.95	-0.92	-0.94	0.41	0.68	-0.85	-0.70	-0.97	-0.96

* Statistically significant Pearson's Correlation Coefficients or PCC ($p < 0.05$) are marked in bold.

** Analysis is limited to counties included in each diocese as of 2020, for which data were available.

*** Analysis is based on a time series limited to six observations (i.e., data for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020).

The table above shows that in 9 out of 11 dioceses included in the study, the number of parishes was positively correlated with the Catholic population size and the White/Anglo/Caucasian population (both as a number of people of this race and as a percentage of the population). On the other side, the number of parishes was negatively correlated with the:

- Hispanic/Latinos population (both as number and percentage) in 9 dioceses.
- Population living below poverty line as a number of people in 8 dioceses and as a percentage of the overall population in 7 dioceses.

Notably, some but not all of those correlations are strong. Not all of those correlations are statistically significant. Correlation does not imply causation.

A separate approach to the analysis focused on exploring socioeconomic differences between neighborhoods where parishes closed/were absorbed and neighborhoods where parishes opened/expanded. The table below summarizes those differences for selected socioeconomic variables for each diocese between 1970s and 2010s.

Caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from those findings. It should be noted, in particular, that census tract is an approximation of a neighborhood (as opposed to a parish). And, socioeconomic characteristics (e.g., proportion of Blacks/African Americans) apply to all people living in a census tract (as opposed to all Catholics belonging to a parish).

	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
People Below Poverty Line	16	11	10	11	11	28	14	12	13	16	18
Persons Unemployed	7	4	5	5	6	13	5	5	4	7	7
Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	-30	-24	-31	-30	-31	-81	-32	-28	-26	-32	-49
Blacks/African Americans	27	17	24	26	27	81	27	30	11	26	48
Hispanics/Latinos	3	12	10	3	1	<1	-2	2	18	5	<1

* Biggest absolute change for each statistic is marked in bold.

The table above shows that in each of the 11 dioceses included in the study, the average proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians was lower in those neighborhoods where parishes closed/were absorbed than in those neighborhoods where parishes opened/expanded. Conversely, in all 11 dioceses, the average proportion of people below poverty line, people unemployed, Blacks/African Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos was higher in those neighborhoods where parishes closed/were absorbed than in those neighborhoods where parishes opened/expanded with one exception (for the proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in the Archdiocese of Miami).

The table below shows correlations between different socioeconomic variables for a neighborhood and the event that transpired (i.e., parish closure/absorption into another parish as opposed to parish opening/expansion), by diocese, between 1970s and 2010s. Those correlations are measured by Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients. Negative values indicate negative correlation and positive values positive correlation.

In almost all dioceses included in the study (between 9 and 11 out of 11 dioceses), there was a negative correlation between the parish closures/absorptions and the size of White/Anglo/Caucasian population in the neighborhoods where those parishes were located (both as number of

people of this race and as a percentage of the population). On the other side, in almost all dioceses (between 10 and 11 out of 11 dioceses), there was a positive correlation between the parish closure/absorption and the size of Black/African American population, Hispanic/Latinos population, population below poverty line, and population unemployed in the neighborhoods where those parishes were located (both as number and percentage). Notably, many but not all of those correlations were statistically significant. And, only a few were strong.

Correlation between and Parish Closures/Absorptions (as opposed to Openings/Expansions) by Census Tract by Diocese in 1970s-2010s

	Baltimore	Bridgeport	Chicago	Cleveland	Detroit	Memphis	Miami	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	St. Louis
	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]	[PBC]
General Population Size	0.05	-0.10	0.02	-0.03	0.25	0.68	0.49	-0.05	0.20	0.20	0.35
Average Household Income	-0.34	0.11	-0.24	-0.30	-0.33	-0.72	-0.14	-0.21	0.02	-0.37	-0.33
# People Below Poverty Line	0.24	0.34	0.20	0.17	0.31	0.78	0.51	0.24	0.23	0.26	0.35
% People Below Poverty Line	0.46	0.41	0.29	0.30	0.30	0.69	0.50	0.40	0.25	0.34	0.40
# Persons Unemployed	0.57	0.19	0.16	0.21	0.34	0.84	0.46	0.30	0.26	0.27	0.42
% Persons Unemployed	0.58	0.42	0.24	0.26	0.29	0.93	0.49	0.42	0.21	0.28	0.33
# Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	-0.31	-0.34	-0.22	-0.26	-0.11	-0.51	0.12	-0.30	0.04	-0.10	-0.04
% Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	-0.44	-0.43	-0.33	-0.41	-0.38	-0.87	-0.46	-0.38	-0.22	-0.27	-0.46
# Blacks/African Americans	0.27	0.30	0.15	0.22	0.28	0.86	0.39	0.31	0.18	0.19	0.37
% Blacks/African Americans	0.39	0.36	0.22	0.31	0.30	0.87	0.38	0.40	0.12	0.21	0.41
# Hispanics/Latinos	0.22	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.06	0.49	0.17	0.09	0.20	0.10	0.13
% Hispanics/Latinos	0.21	0.28	0.13	0.12	0.03	0.19	-0.04	0.21	0.20	0.11	0.02

* Statistically significant Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients or PBC ($p < 0.05$) are marked in bold.

It should be noted that correlation does not imply causation and that those correlations are limited to exploring relationships between two variables. The relationships may be different when multiple variables are considered simultaneously when, for example, using regression models.

While this type of analysis goes beyond the scope of this report, preliminary results from logistic regression models, for all 11 dioceses altogether, indicate that parish closures/absorptions (as opposed to openings/expansions) were more likely in later decades, in neighborhoods with higher poverty rates, with higher proportion of Black/African Americans, with lower proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians, and with larger populations. Notably, it appears that poverty rate is a substantially bigger predictor of parish closings than racial composition.

This concludes the comparative summary of the main findings organized by research question. The description below provides a summary of the main findings for the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Diocese of Bridgeport

The diocesan - level analysis of ecclesial data found that in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

- The number of Catholic Marriages decreased by 88% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of Baptisms decreased by 71% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of faithful received into full communions decreased by 69% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of Catholics per parish increased by 57% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of priests decreased by 46% between 1970 and 2020.
- Catholic population increased by 46% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of First Communions decreased by 30% between 1990 and 2020.
- Total population increased by 16% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of Catholic deaths decreased by 11% between 1970 and 2020.
- The number of Confirmations decreased by 10% between 1990 and 2020.
- The number of parishes decreased by 7% between 1970 and 2020.

The county - level analysis of socioeconomic decennial census data and ecclesial parish data found that between 1970 and 2020 in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

- The number of Hispanics/Latinos increased by 708% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.91).
- The proportion of Hispanics/Latinos increased by 414% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.75).
- The number of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed increased by 293% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.77).
- The number of people below poverty line increased by 109% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.95).
- The number of Blacks/African Americans increased by 107% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.74).
- The proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed increased by 105%.
- The general population size increased by 57% and shows strong negative correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of -0.97).
- The average household income in 2020 dollars increased by 56%.
- The proportion of Blacks/African Americans increased by 48%.
- The proportion of people below poverty line increased by 37%.
- The Catholic population size decreased by 26%.
- The proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians decreased by 25% and shows strong positive correlation with changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade between 1970 and 2020 (PCC of 0.73).

- Number of identified parishes decreased by 15%.
- The number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians increased by 5%.

The census tract - level analysis of demographic decennial census data and ecclesial parish data found that between 1970 and 2020 in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

- There were 8 identified parishes that (re)opened/expanded, 62 that remained opened, and 20 that were closed/absorbed.
- The average proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in neighborhoods where parishes were (re)opened/expanded is higher by 24pp than in neighborhoods where parishes were closed/absorbed.
- The average proportion of Blacks/African Americans in neighborhoods where parishes were (re)opened/expanded is lower by 17pp than in neighborhoods where parishes were closed/absorbed.
- The average proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in neighborhoods where parishes were (re)opened/expanded is lower by 12pp than in neighborhoods where parishes were closed/absorbed.
- The average proportion of people below poverty line in neighborhoods where parishes were (re)opened/expanded is lower by 11pp than in neighborhoods where parishes were closed/absorbed.
- The average proportion of unemployed in neighborhoods where parishes were (re)opened/expanded is lower by 4pp than in neighborhoods where parishes were closed/absorbed.

Introduction

Across the country there is heightened awareness of historic and systemic racism within civil and religious organizations and structures in recent years. Within the Catholic community, national attention has focused on the extent to which Church entities were actively engaged and directly benefited from the enslavement of Africans (i.e., the Jesuits at Georgetown University selling over 200 enslaved persons to cover University debts). At the same time there were efforts to evangelize and educate African-Americans particularly among Catholics in southern Maryland and along the Gulf Coast that helped create an African-American Catholic community. By and large this small African-American Catholic community developed within the structures of segregation and Jim Crow laws. With the Great Migration in the early 1900s the African-American Catholic community became more geographically diverse and grew in number in major urban areas especially through Catholic schools in those areas. At the same time there was a “White flight” out of the urban neighborhoods where African-Americans were now residing. Catholic parishes and schools that had developed serving ethnic Irish, Polish and Italian immigrant Catholics now had parish neighborhoods that were African-American. The population of Catholic parishes (that are geographically defined) had rapidly changed. Beginning in the 1970s Catholic dioceses, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, began to re-align parishes because of changing populations, a decreasing number of available priests to serve as pastors, and a drop-off in parish engagement. This reconfiguration of parishes has continued to the present day.

In this context, FutureChurch (FC) commissioned Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct this study to explore parish, ecclesial, socioeconomic statistics for 11 dioceses between 1970 and 2020: Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archdiocese of Chicago, Archdiocese of Detroit, Archdiocese of Miami, Archdiocese of New Orleans, Archdiocese of New York, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Archdiocese of St. Louis, Diocese of Bridgeport, Diocese of Cleveland, and Diocese of Memphis.

The study was prepared in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023 using several secondary data sources, which include:

- Official Catholic Directory from 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, 1986, 1981, 1976, and 1971.
- ASARB’s U.S. Religious Census for 1971, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.
- Neighborhood Change Database of normalized census tract data for 2010, 2000, 1990, 1980, and 1970.
- U.S. Census Bureau’s data Decennial Census and American Community Survey for 2020.
- Census Bureau's GeoCoder database.
- MassTimes.org database of parish addresses.
- Other available sources which primarily included lists of closed parishes published on diocesan websites.

This report provides a description of the findings from the study for the Diocese of Bridgeport. For a succinct overview of the overall research project and summary of the main findings, proceed to the **Executive Summary**.

To examine more detailed analyses, including tables and/or charts with verbose interpretation of those results, proceed to the Findings for the Diocese of Bridgeport. This part of the report consists of three sections: diocesan-level overview (Section 1), county-level overview (Section 2), and census tract-level overview (Section 3).

The **diocesan-level overview** is based on the analysis of data from the Official Catholic Directory for years 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020. The variables explored in this overview include total population and Catholic population, as well as the number of Baptisms, First Communion, Confirmations, faithful received into full communion, Marriages, deaths, priests, parishes, and Catholics per parish. Diocesan values over time for each variable are compared to national average (in charts and tables) and to national total (in the text description).

The **county-level overview** is based on the analysis of data from several sources: the Official Catholic Directory for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, ASARB's U.S. Religious Census for 1971, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, Neighborhood Change Database for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, Census Bureau's website data for 2020, and diocesan websites / documents.

- One variable was derived from the Official Catholic Directory- the number of identified parishes by county (as opposed to the actual number of parishes shown in diocesan-level overview in Section 1). In general, the number of identified parishes only includes parishes for which addresses could be identified (see Appendix I: Methodology for more information).
- One variable was derived from the ASARB's U.S. Religious Census- the Catholic population size by county.
- Overall, 12 variables were derived from the Neighborhood Change Database and Census Bureau's website: general population size, average household income (in 2020 dollars), poverty (as a number and proportion of people below poverty line), unemployment (as number and proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed), Whites/Anglos/Caucasians (as a number and proportion), Blacks/African Americans (as a number and proportion), and Hispanics/Latinos (as a number and proportion).

County-level overview includes a chart(s), a map, a table, and text description for each variable to describe how values have changed over time for each county and for the entire diocese (both as a change in number and as percentage change).

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between the number of identified parishes and 13 socioeconomic variables. The description includes minimum, average and maximum Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for all counties in the diocese for which data was available for the entire studied period (1970-2020). Pearson's Correlation Coefficients are also calculated for the diocese as a whole.

The **census tract-level overview** is based on the analysis of data from several sources: the Official Catholic Directory for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, Neighborhood Change Database for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, and diocesan websites / documents.

- The variables from the Official Catholic Directory are based on the identified parishes (as opposed to the actual number of parishes shown in diocesan-level overview in Section 1). In general, the number of identified parishes only includes parishes for which addresses could be identified (see Appendix I: Methodology for more information). The specific variables include: the number of parishes that (re)opened/expanded (i.e., merged to include another parish) during each decade, the number of parishes that remained opened over the course of each decade, and the number of parishes closed/absorbed (i.e., merged into another parish) during each decade.
- The variables from the Neighborhood Change Database include general population size, average household income (in 2020 dollars), poverty (as a number and proportion of people below poverty line), unemployment (as number and proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed), Whites/Anglos/Caucasians (as a number and proportion), Blacks/African Americans (as a number and proportion), and Hispanics/Latinos (as a number and proportion). Those variables are calculated for census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed each decade.

Census tract-level overview includes a chart, a table, and text description for each variable explaining how values differ between census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed. Additionally, two maps are included to show identified parishes in the diocese (one showing the entire diocese and the other showing a close up of the main metropolitan area).

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between parishes' status (opened or closed) and each of the 12 socioeconomic variables. The description is based on Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients for all parishes / census tracts in each diocese for which data was available.

The report also includes two appendices:

- **Appendix I** describes study's methodology.
- **Appendix II** includes a brief description of CARA and its services.

Findings for the Diocese of Bridgeport

This part of the report describes findings for the Diocese of Bridgeport. This includes the diocesan-level overview (in Section 1 below), county-level overview (in Section 2), and census tract-level overview (in Section 3).

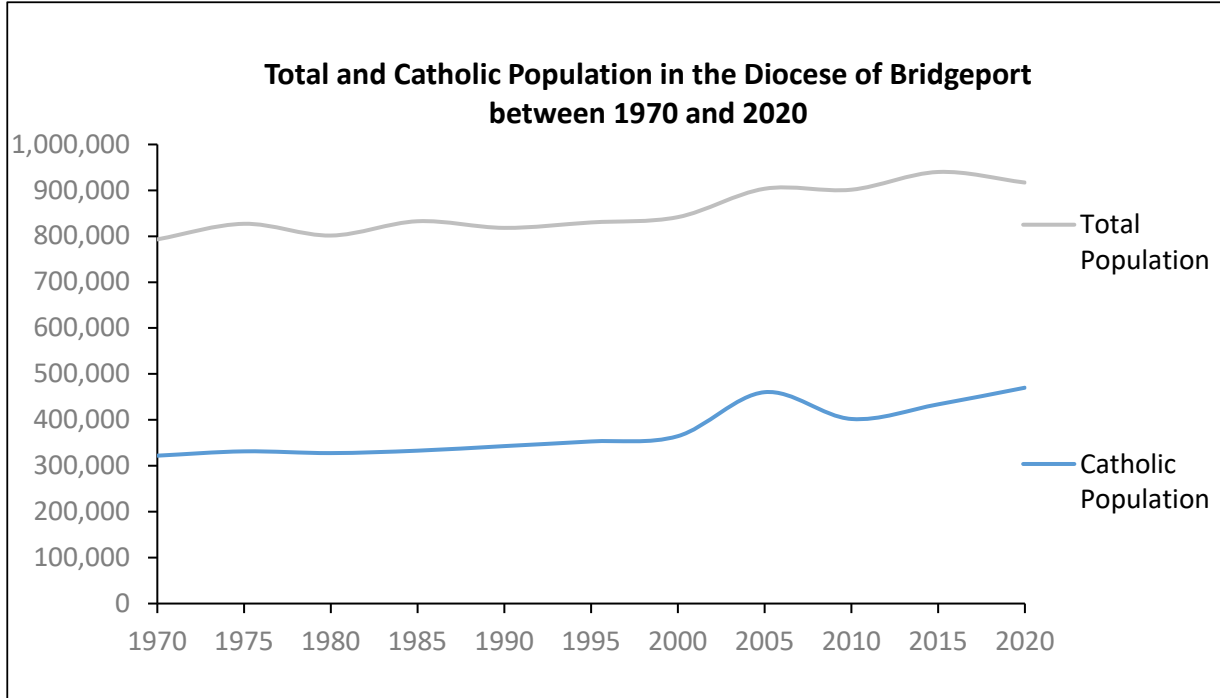
For the summary of the main findings from this analysis, see the Executive Summary at the beginning of this report.

For the description of how the analysis was prepared, see Appendix I: Methodology at the end of this report.

1. Diocesan - Level Description

The diocesan-level overview is based on the analysis of data from the Official Catholic Directory for years 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020. The variables explored in this overview include total population and Catholic population, as well as the number of Baptisms, First Communion, Confirmations, faithful received into full communion, Marriages, deaths, priests, parishes, and Catholics per parish. Diocesan values over time for each variable are compared to national average (in charts and tables) and to national total (in the text description).

1. Total and Catholic Population

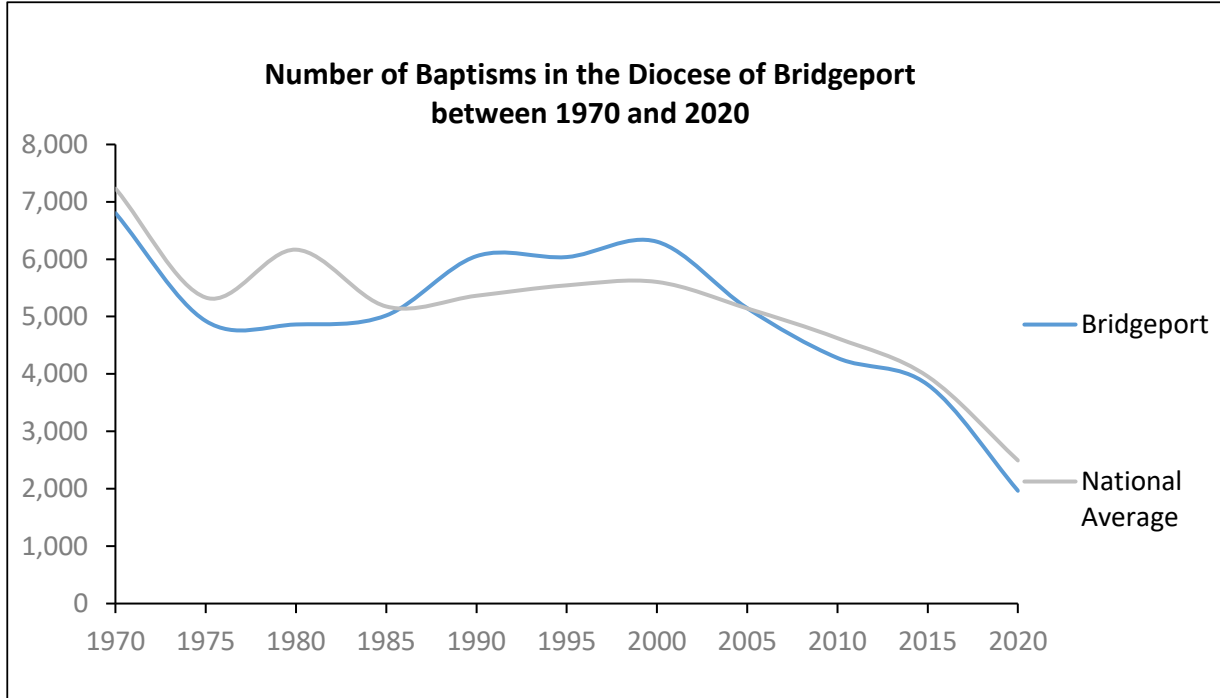


The number of Catholics in the Diocese of Bridgeport increased from 322,340 in 1970 to 470,000 in 2020. This means that the number of Catholics in the diocese increased by 46% over those 50 years.

By comparison, the total population of the Diocese of Bridgeport increased from 792,814 in 1970 to 916,829 in 2020. So, the overall population increased by 16% in the same period.

Total and Catholic Population in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Total Population	792,814	801,177	817,900	841,334	901,208	916,829
Catholic Population	322,340	327,973	343,139	364,685	402,136	470,000

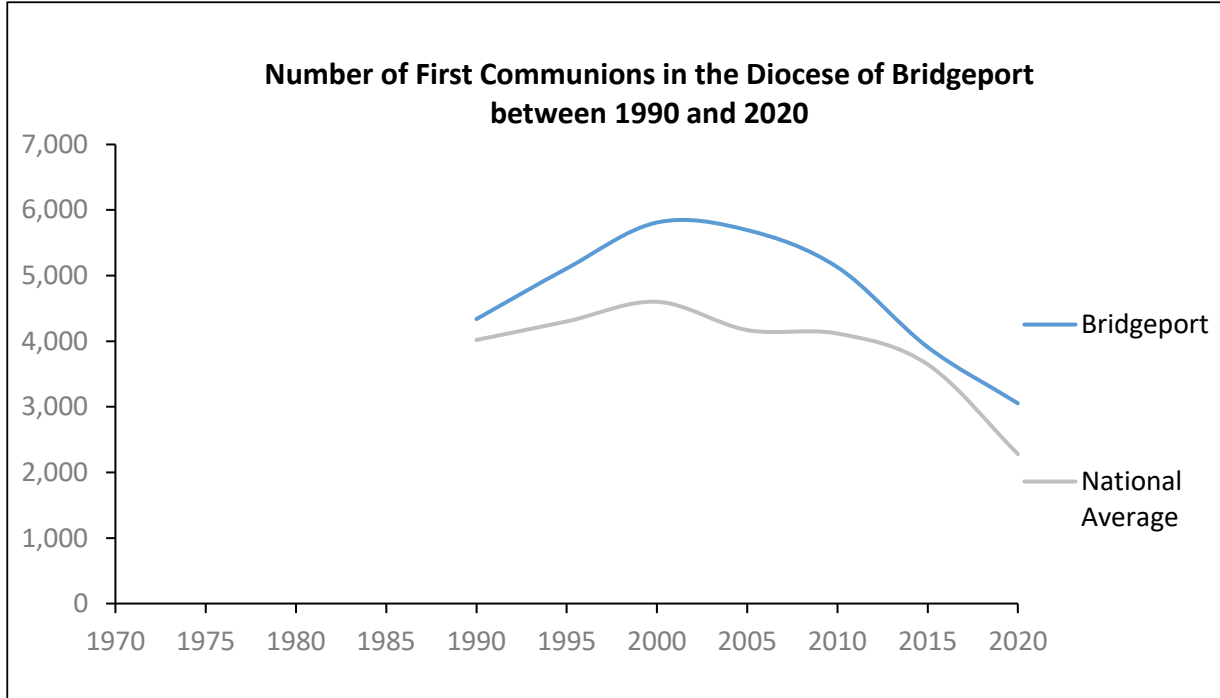
2. Number of Baptisms



The number of Baptisms in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 6,799 in 1970 to 1,969 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 97 fewer Baptisms each year over those 50 years. It also means that the annual number of Baptisms in the diocese declined by 71% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of Baptisms in the United States declined by 57% in the same period.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	7,226	6,164	5,362	5,602	4,623	2,495
Bridgeport	6,799	4,863	6,052	6,303	4,280	1,969

3. Number of First Communion

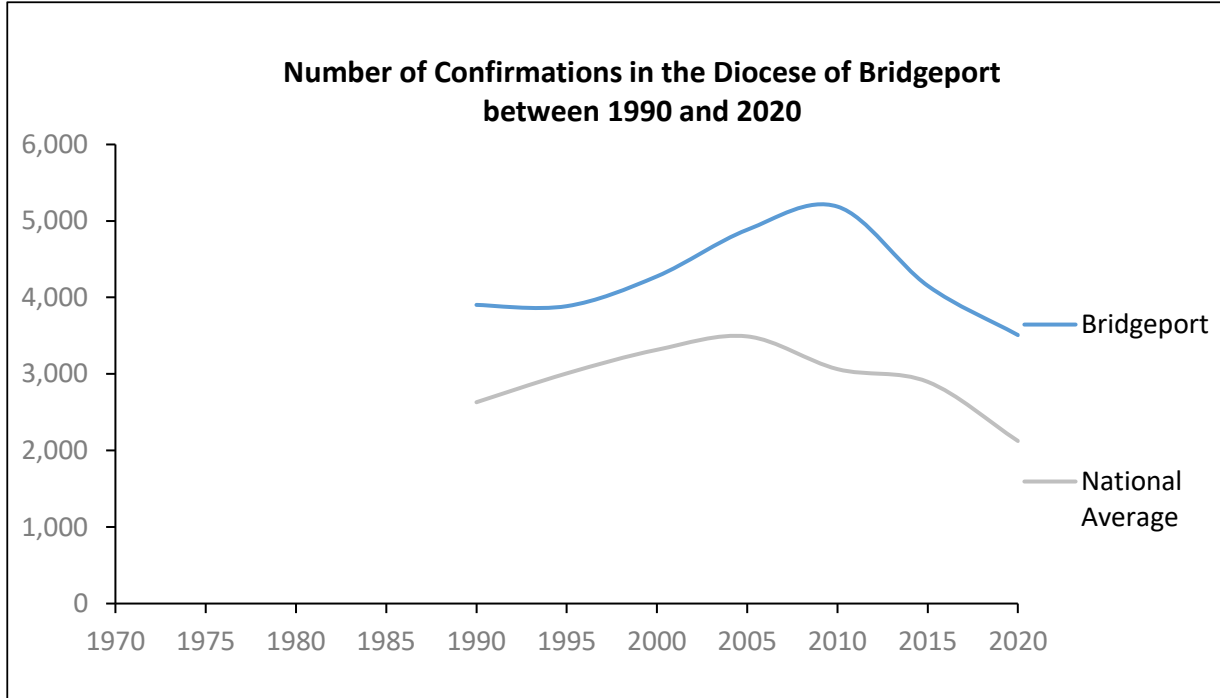


* The available data on First Communion starts in 1990.

The number of First Communion in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 4,338 in 1990 to 3,055 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 43 fewer First Communion each year over those 30 years. It also means that the annual number of First Communion in the diocese declined by 30% over the entire 30-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of First Communion in the United States declined by 39% in the same period.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	.	.	4,020	4,602	4,117	2,279
Bridgeport	.	.	4,338	5,809	5,128	3,055

4. Number of Confirmations

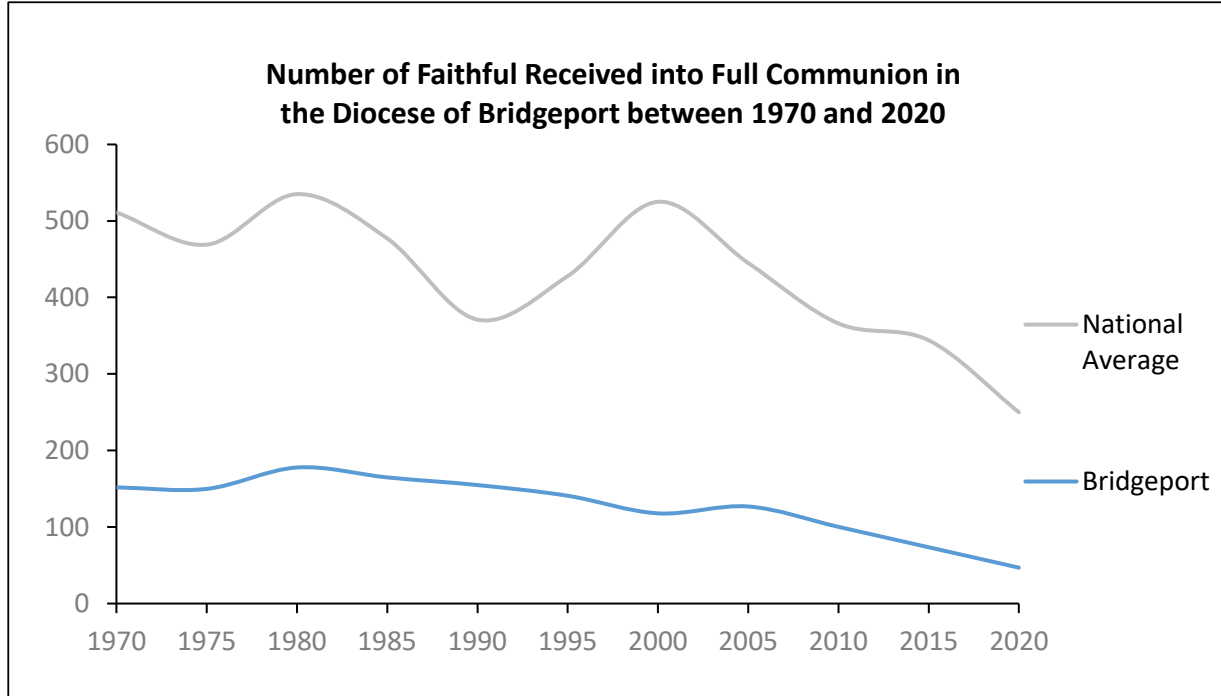


* The available data on Confirmations starts in 1990.

The number of Confirmations in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 3,902 in 1990 to 3,507 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 13 fewer Confirmations each year over those 30 years. It also means that the annual number of Confirmations in the diocese declined by 10% over the entire 30-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of Confirmations in the United States declined by 13% in the same period.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	.	.	2,631	3,315	3,063	2,125
Bridgeport	.	.	3,902	4,275	5,187	3,507

5. Number of Faithful Received into Full Communion

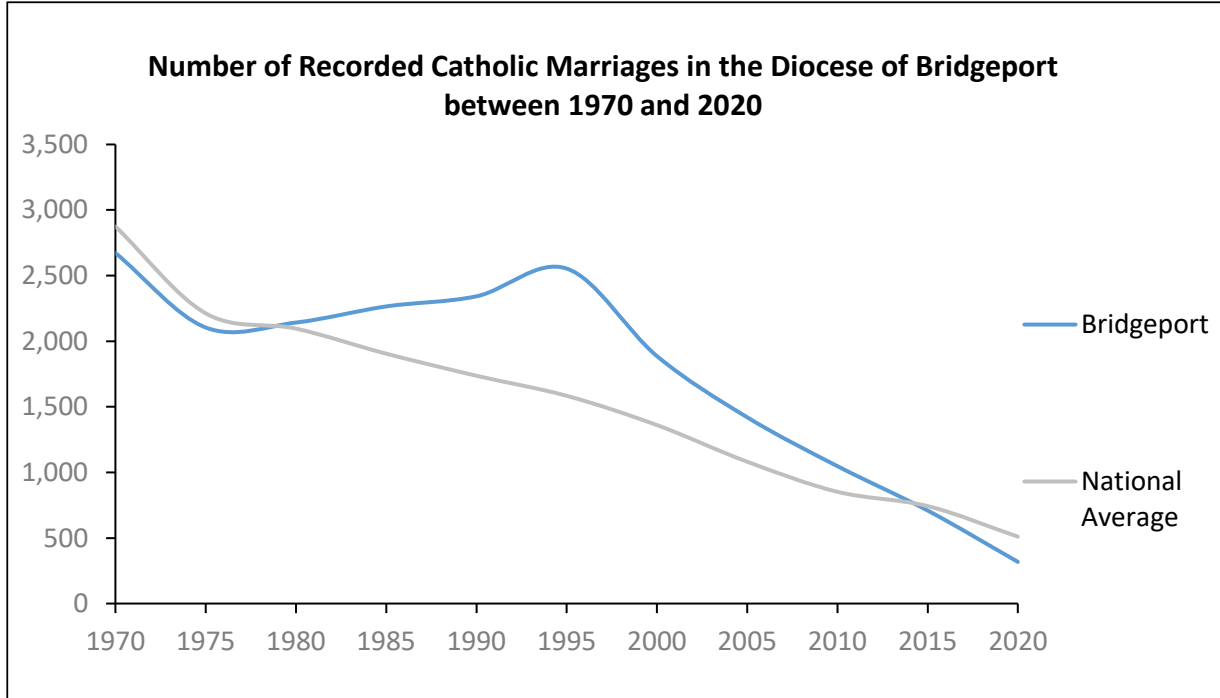


* Data for the Diocese of Bridgeport, for years 2010 and 2015 are interpolated.

The number of faithful received into full communion in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 152 in 1970 to 47 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 2 fewer of those faithful each year over those 50 years. It also means that the annual number of faithful received into full communion in the diocese declined by 69% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of faithful received into full communion in the United States declined by 41% in the same period.

	1970 [#]	1980 [#]	1990 [#]	2000 [#]	2010 [#]	2020 [#]
National Average	511	535	371	525	366	250
Bridgeport	152	178	155	118	.	47

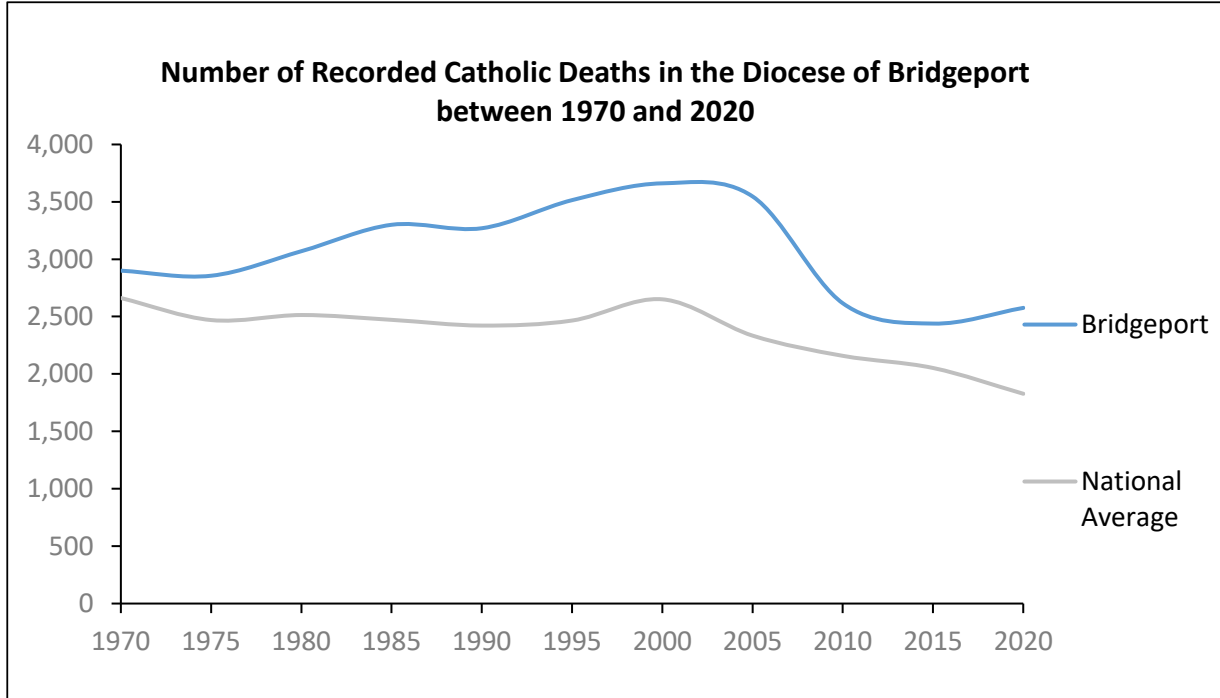
6. Number of Recorded Catholic Marriages



The number of Marriages in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 2,670 in 1970 to 318 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 47 fewer Marriages each year over those 50 years. It also means that the annual number of Marriages in the diocese declined by 88% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of Catholic Marriages in the United States declined by 78% in the same period.

Number of Recorded Catholic Marriages in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	2,873	2,096	1,737	1,361	853	511
Bridgeport	2,670	2,141	2,341	1,885	1,047	318

7. Number of Recorded Catholic Deaths

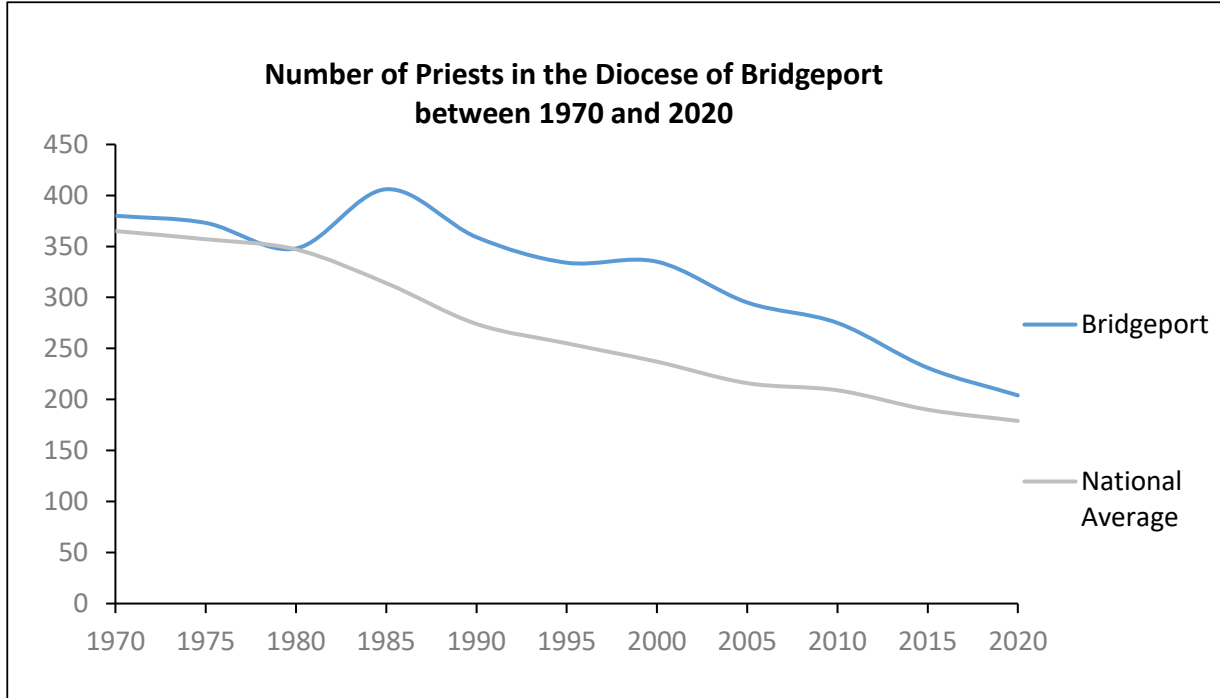


* The Archdiocese of Military Services is excluded from the national average.

The number of deaths (i.e., Catholic funerals) recorded in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 2,899 in 1970 to 2,575 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 6 fewer recorded deaths each year over those 50 years. It also means that the annual number of recorded deaths in the diocese declined by 11% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total annual number of recorded Catholic deaths in the United States declined by 14% in the same period.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	2,662	2,514	2,422	2,651	2,158	1,827
Bridgeport	2,899	3,069	3,269	3,660	2,614	2,575

8. Number of Priests

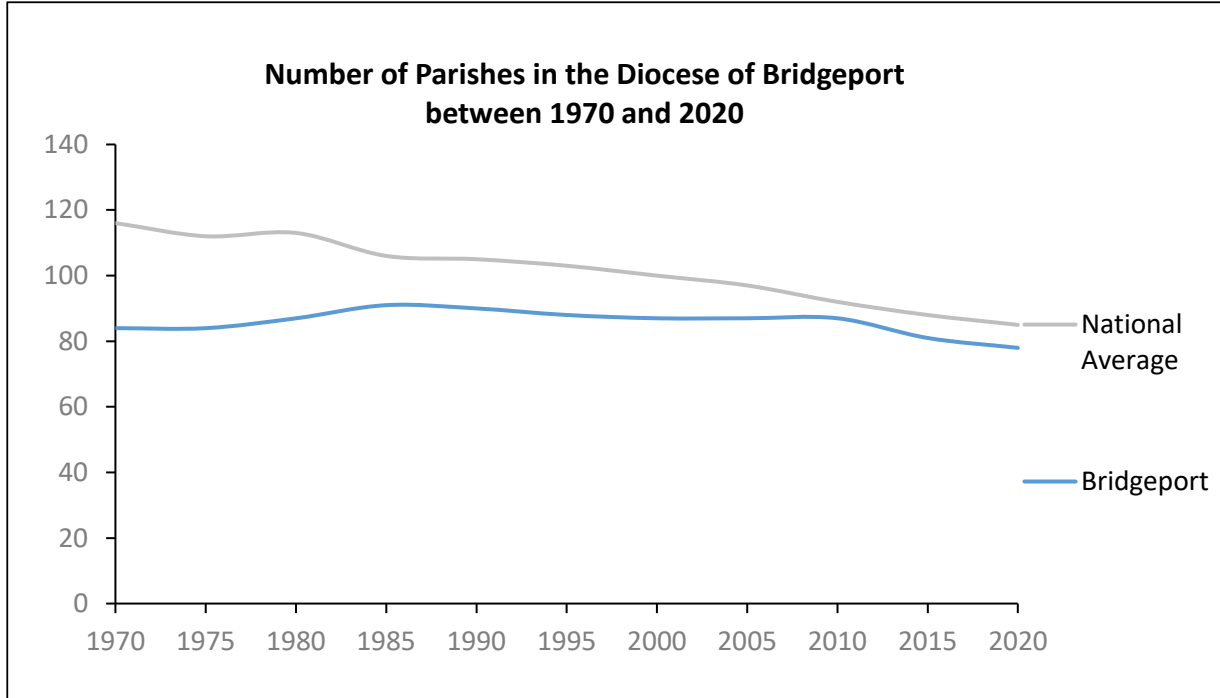


The number of priests in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 380 in 1970 to 204 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 3.5 fewer priests each year over those 50 years. This also means that the number of priests in the diocese declined by 46% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total number of priests in the United States declined by 40% in the same period.

**Number of Priests in the Diocese of Bridgeport
between 1970 and 2020**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	365	347	274	237	209	179
Bridgeport	380	348	359	335	275	204

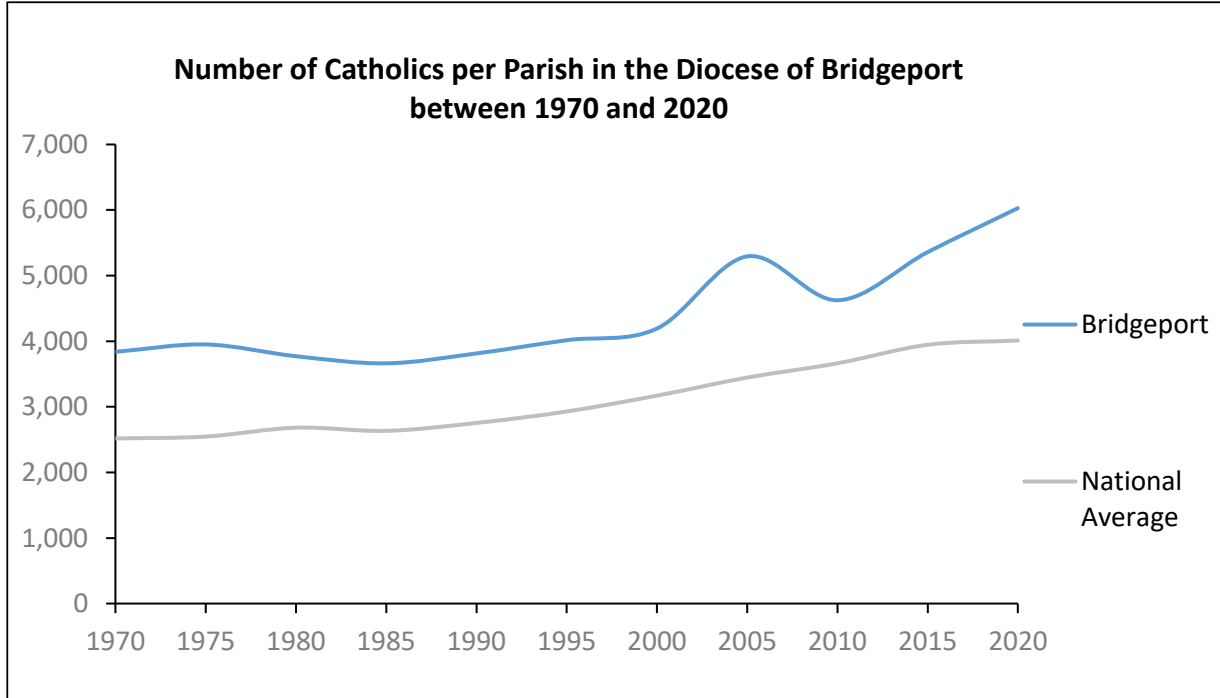
9. Number of Parishes



The number of parishes in the Diocese of Bridgeport decreased from 84 in 1970 to 78 in 2020. This means that, on average, net 1.2 parishes were closed each decade over those 50 years. This also means that the number of parishes in the diocese declined by 7% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total number of Catholic parishes in the United States declined by 9% in the same period.

Number of Parishes in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	116	113	105	100	92	85
Bridgeport	84	87	90	87	87	78

10. Number of Catholics per Parish



The number of Catholics per parish in the Diocese of Bridgeport increased from 3,837 in 1970 to 6,026 in 2020. This means that, on average, there were 44 more Catholics per parish each year over those 50 years. This also means that the number of Catholics per parish in the diocese increased by 57% over the entire 50-year period. By comparison, the total number of Catholics per parish in the United States increased by 60% in the same period.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
National Average	2,516	2,680	2,753	3,170	3,664	4,012
Bridgeport	3,837	3,770	3,813	4,192	4,622	6,026

2. County - Level Description

The county-level overview is based on the analysis of data from several sources: the Official Catholic Directory for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, ASARB's U.S. Religious Census for 1971, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, Neighborhood Change Database for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, Census Bureau's website data for 2020, and diocesan websites / documents.

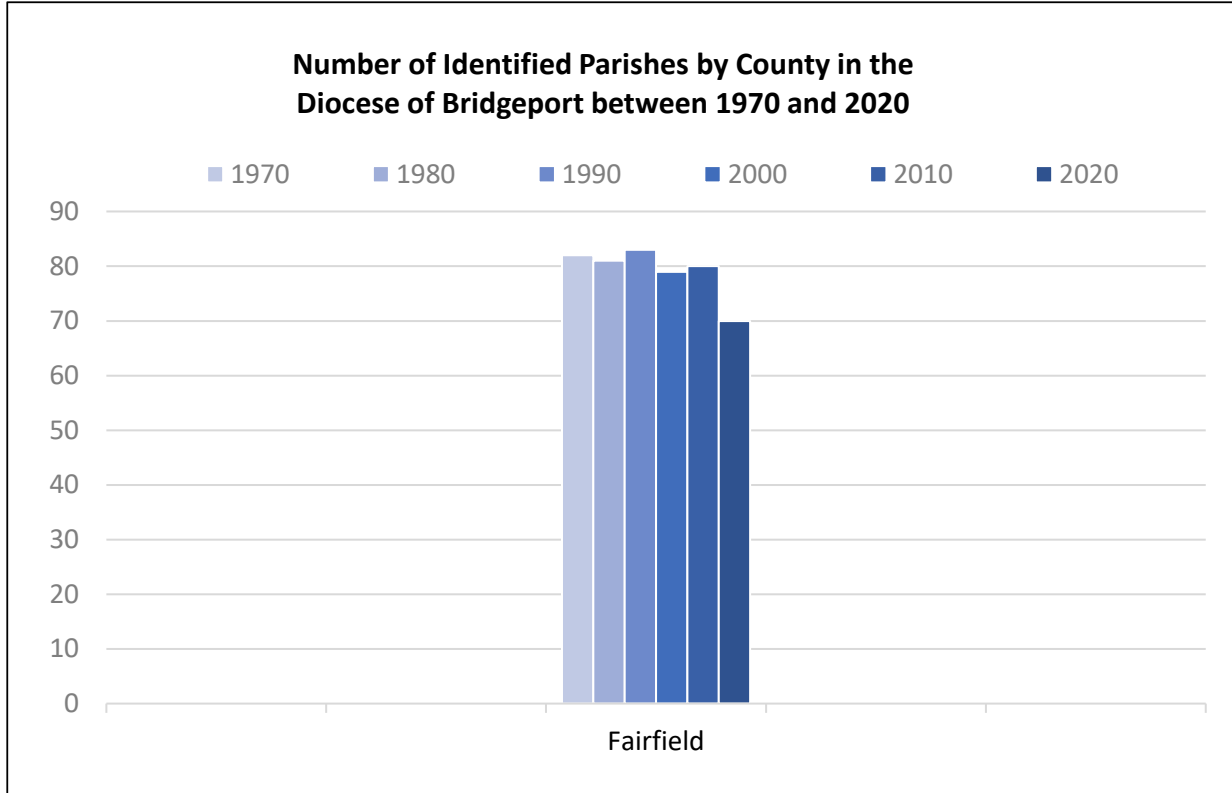
- One variable was derived from the Official Catholic Directory- the number of identified parishes by county (as opposed to the actual number of parishes shown in diocesan-level overview in Section 1). In general, the number of identified parishes only includes parishes for which addresses could be identified (see Appendix I: Methodology for more information).
- One variable was derived from the ASARB's U.S. Religious Census- the Catholic population size by county.
- Overall, 12 variables were derived from the Neighborhood Change Database and Census Bureau's website: general population size, average household income (in 2020 dollars), poverty (as a number and proportion of people below poverty line), unemployment (as number and proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed), Whites/Anglos/Caucasians (as a number and proportion), Blacks/African Americans (as a number and proportion), and Hispanics/Latinos (as a number and proportion).

County-level overview includes a chart(s), a map, a table, and text description for each variable to describe how values have changed over time for each county and for the entire diocese (both as a change in number and as percentage change).

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between the number of identified parishes and 13 socioeconomic variables. The description includes minimum, average and maximum Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for all counties in the diocese for which data was available for the entire studied period (1970-2020). Pearson's Correlation Coefficients are also calculated for the diocese as a whole.

If instead of the detailed description, you would like to see the summary of the main findings from this analysis, please go to the Executive Summary at the beginning of this report. If you would like to better understand how the analysis was prepared, please go to Appendix I: Methodology at the end of this report.

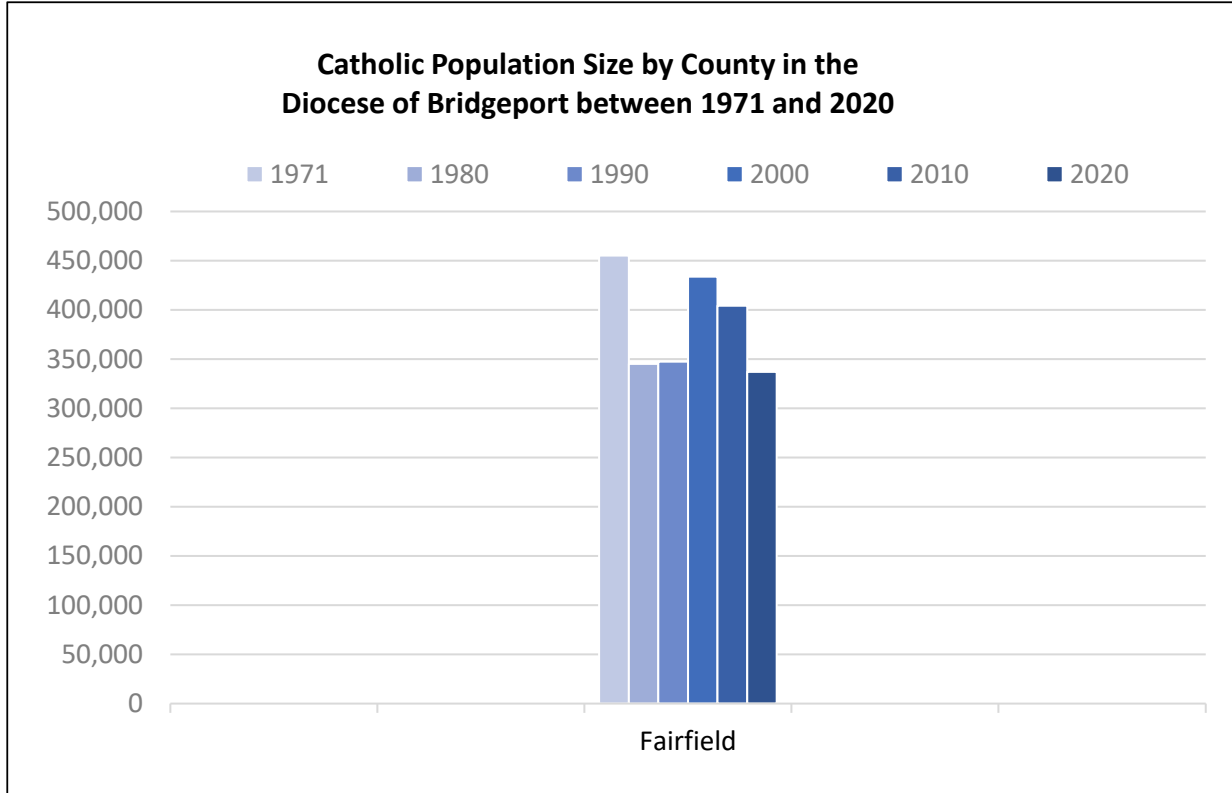
1. Number of Identified Parishes



Between 1970 and 2020, the number of identified parishes (as opposed to the actual number of parishes- see Appendix I for more information) in Fairfield County decreased by 12 parishes (by 15%).

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	82	81	83	79	80	70

2. Catholic Population Size

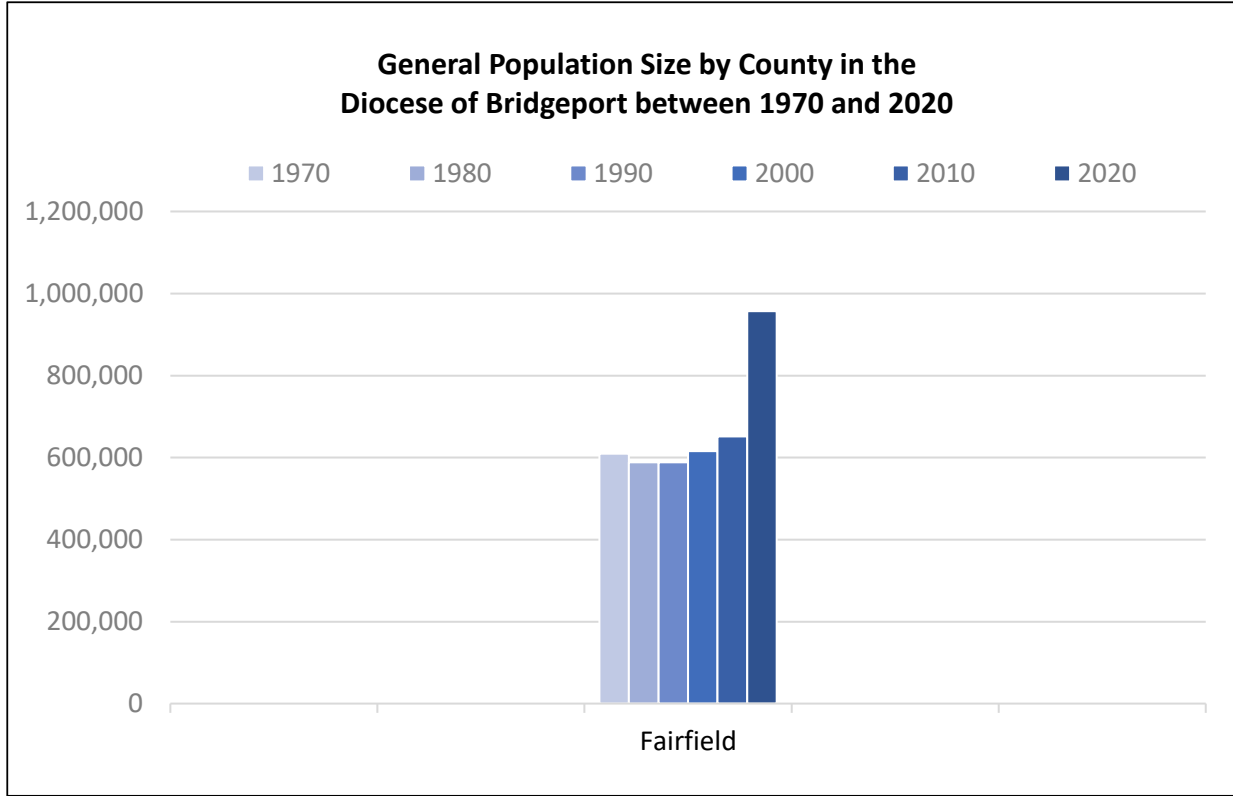


Between 1971 and 2020, the Catholic population size of Fairfield County decreased by 118,281 people (by 26%).

Catholic Population Size by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1971 and 2020

	1971	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	455,387	345,244	347,526	433,832	404,341	337,106

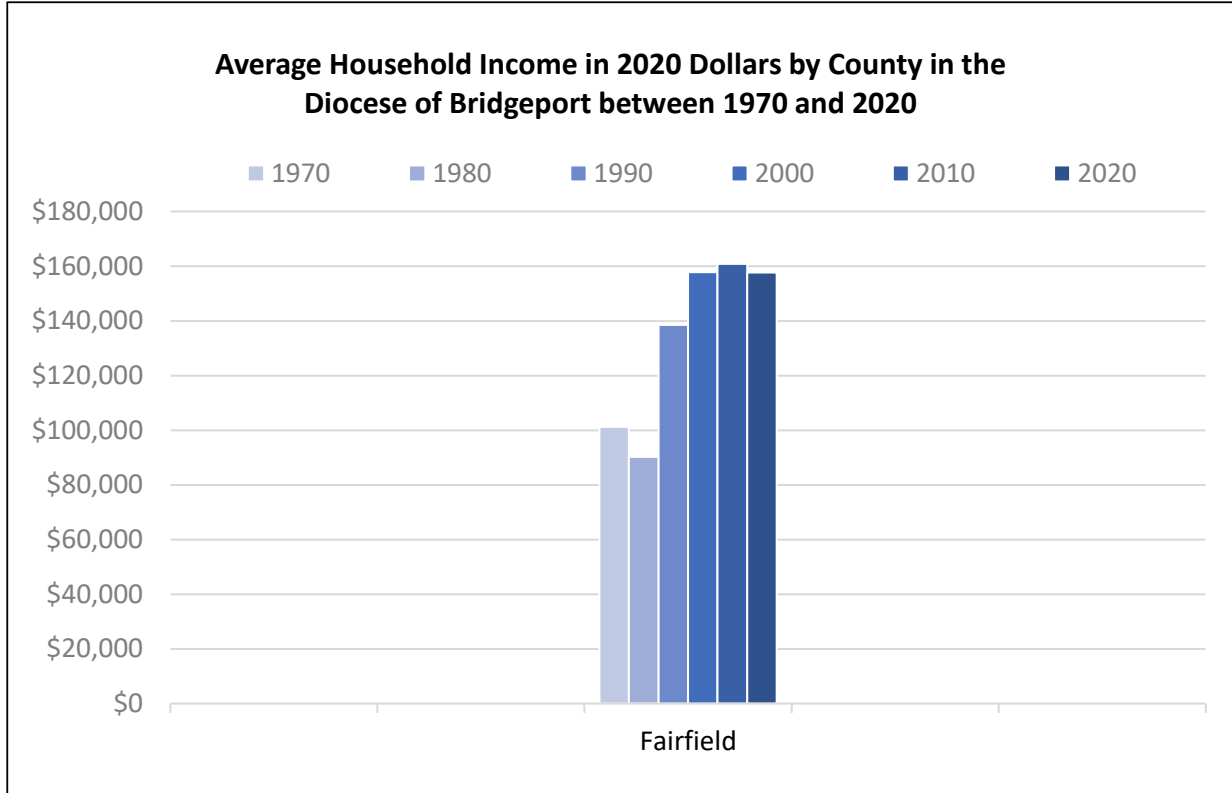
3. General Population Size



Between 1970 and 2020, the general population size of Fairfield County increased by 348,148 people (by 57%).

General Population Size by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	609,271	588,297	588,901	616,155	651,832	957,419

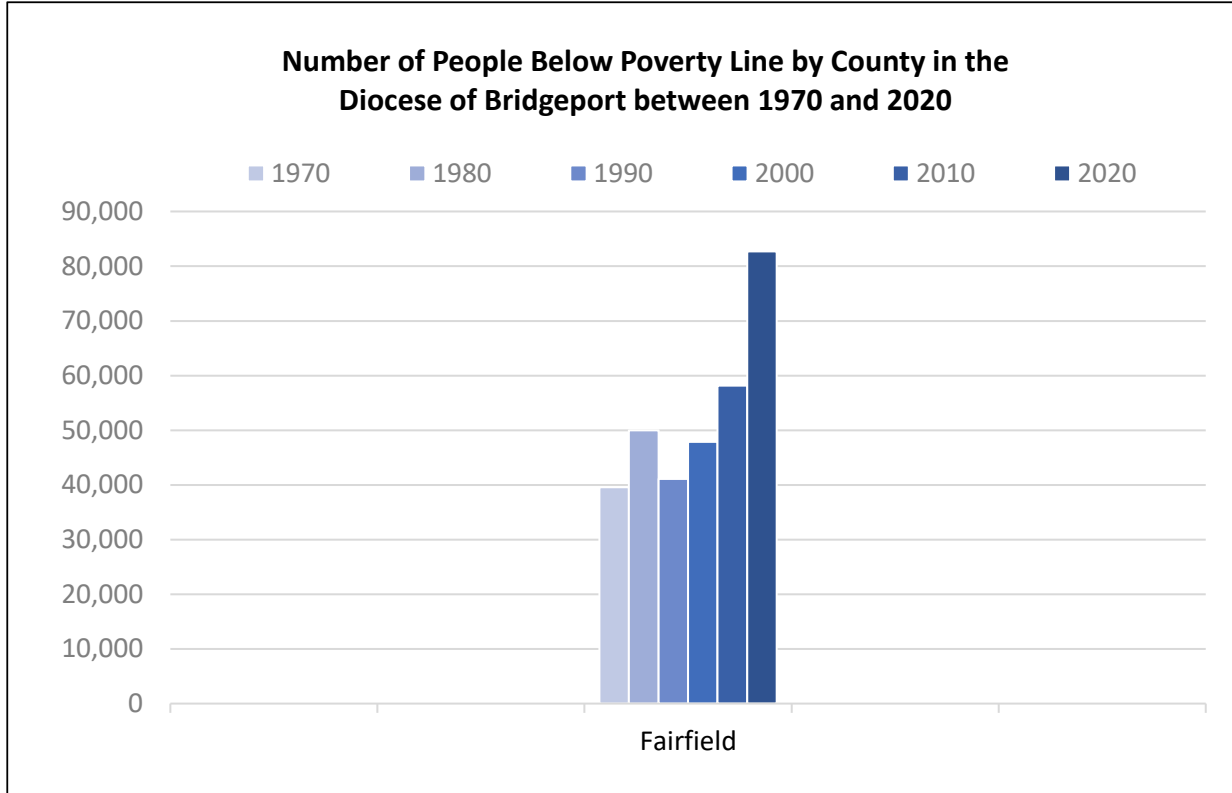
4. Average Household Income



Between 1970 and 2020, the average household income in 2020 dollars in Fairfield County increased by \$56,553 (by 56%).

Average Household Income in 2020 Dollars by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]
Fairfield	101,212	90,259	138,547	157,873	160,891	157,765

5. Number of People Below Poverty Line

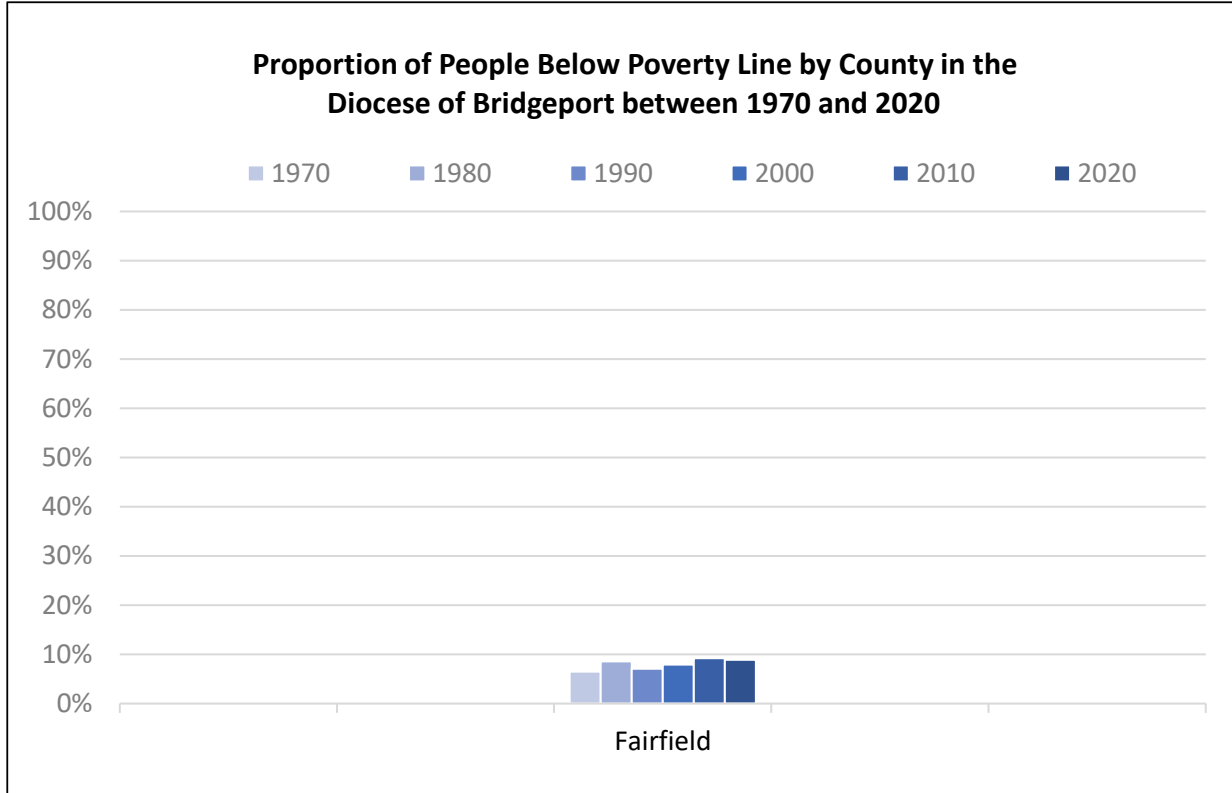


Between 1970 and 2020, the number of people below poverty line in Fairfield County increased by 43,148 people (by 109%).

Number of People Below Poverty Line by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	39,570	49,989	41,124	47,865	58,180	82,718

6. Proportion of People Below Poverty Line

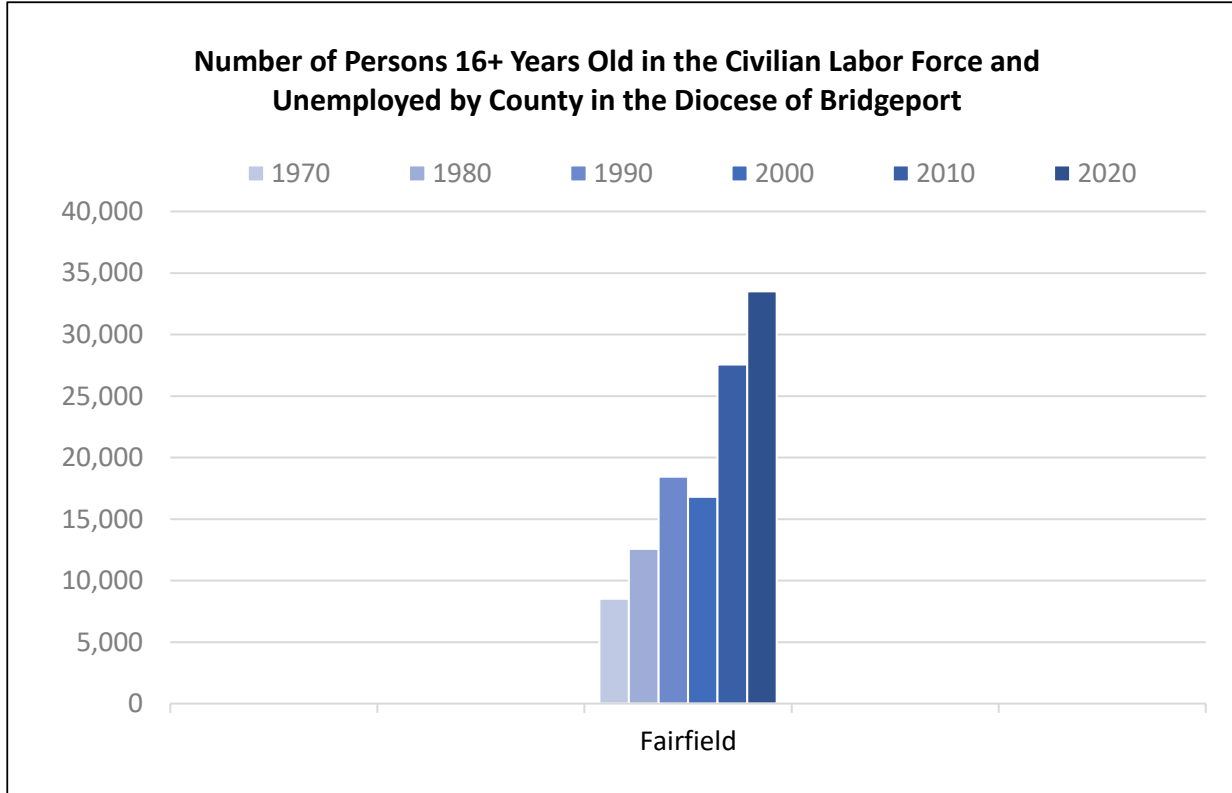


Between 1970 and 2020, the proportion of people below poverty line in Fairfield County increased by 2pp.

Proportion of People Below Poverty Line by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Fairfield	6	9	7	8	9	9

7. Number of Unemployed People

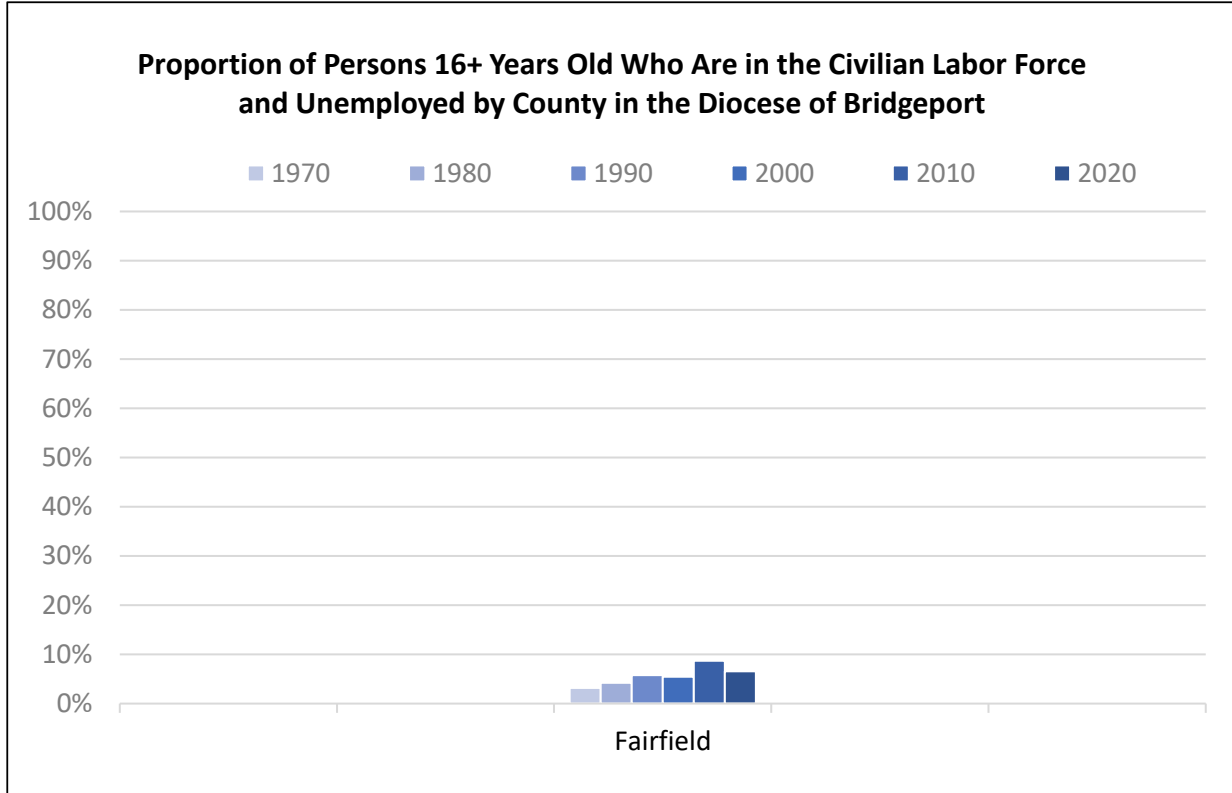


Between 1970 and 2020, the number of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed in Fairfield County increased by 24,999 people (by 293%).

Number of Persons 16+ Years Old in the Civilian Labor Force and Unemployed by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	8,519	12,569	18,457	16,812	27,556	33,518

8. Proportion of Unemployed People

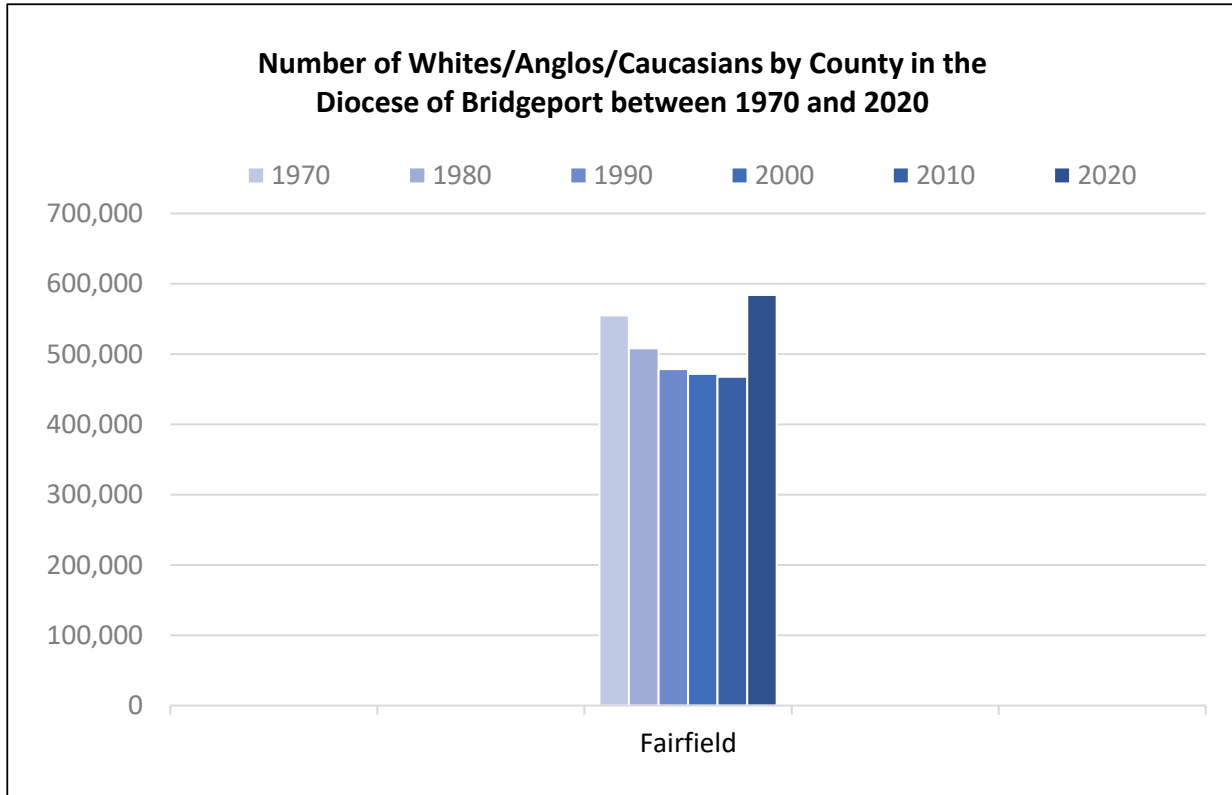


Between 1970 and 2020, the proportion of persons 16+ years old who are in the civilian labor force and unemployed in Fairfield County increased by 3pp.

Proportion of Persons 16+ Years Old Who Are in the Civilian Labor Force and Unemployed by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Fairfield	3	4	6	5	9	7

9. Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians

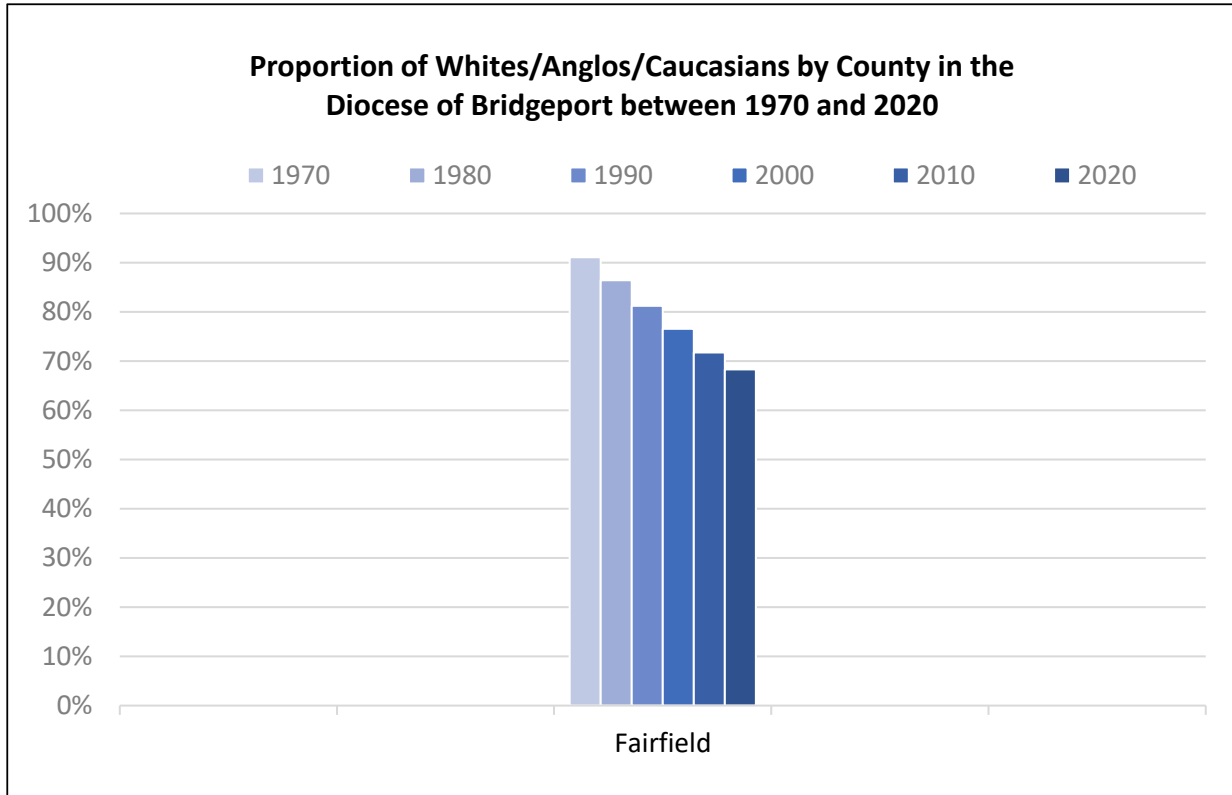


Between 1970 and 2020, the number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in Fairfield County increased by 29,099 people (by 5%).

Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	555,085	508,453	478,568	471,804	467,687	584,184

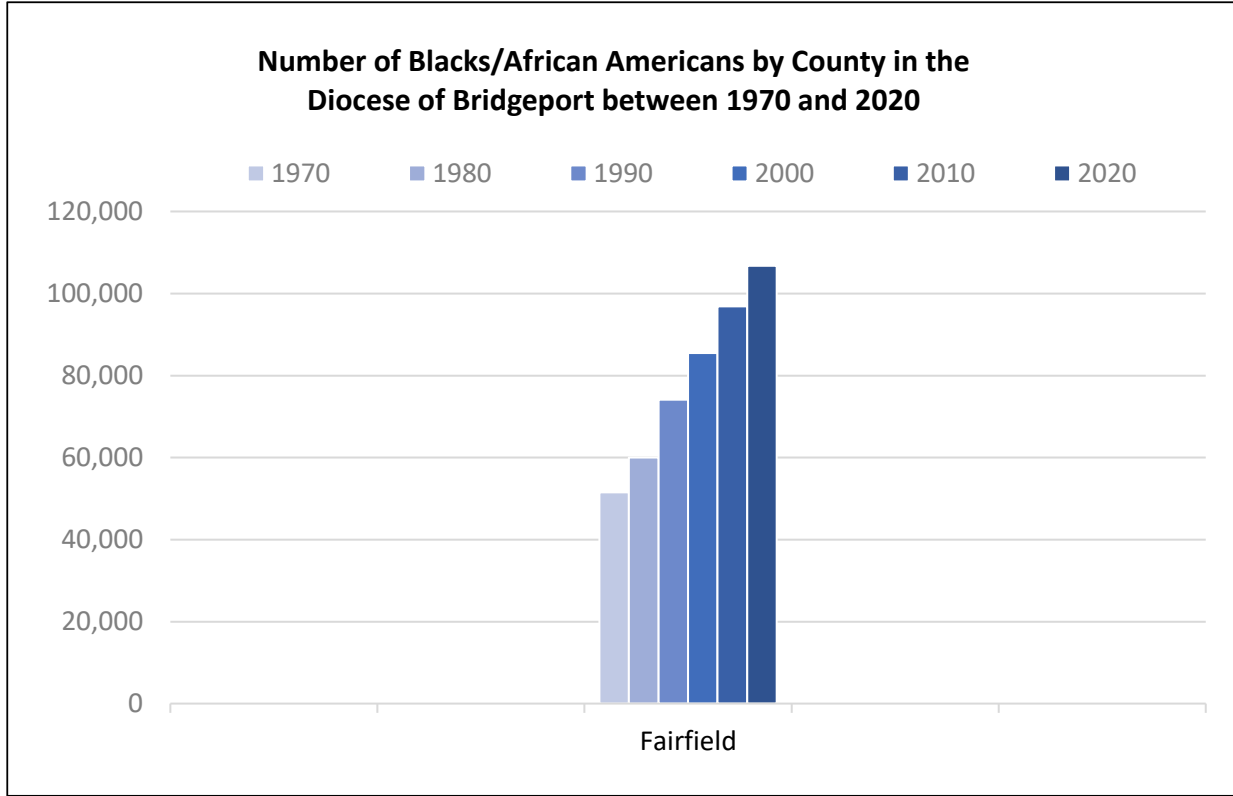
10. Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians



Between 1970 and 2020, the proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in Fairfield County decreased by 23pp.

Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Fairfield	91	86	81	77	72	68

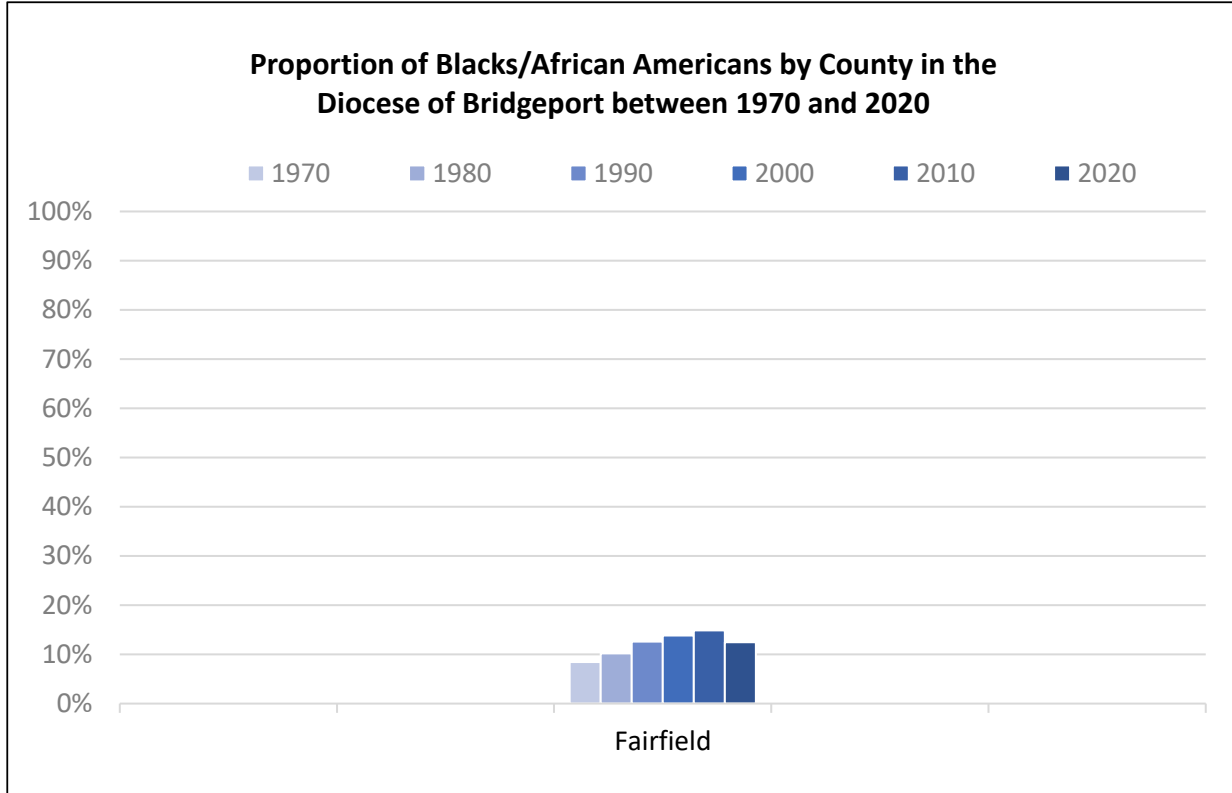
11. Number of Blacks/African Americans



Between 1970 and 2020, the number of Blacks/African Americans in Fairfield County increased by 55,206 people (by 107%).

Number of Blacks/African Americans by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	51,550	60,031	74,149	85,474	96,888	106,756

12. Proportion of Blacks/African Americans

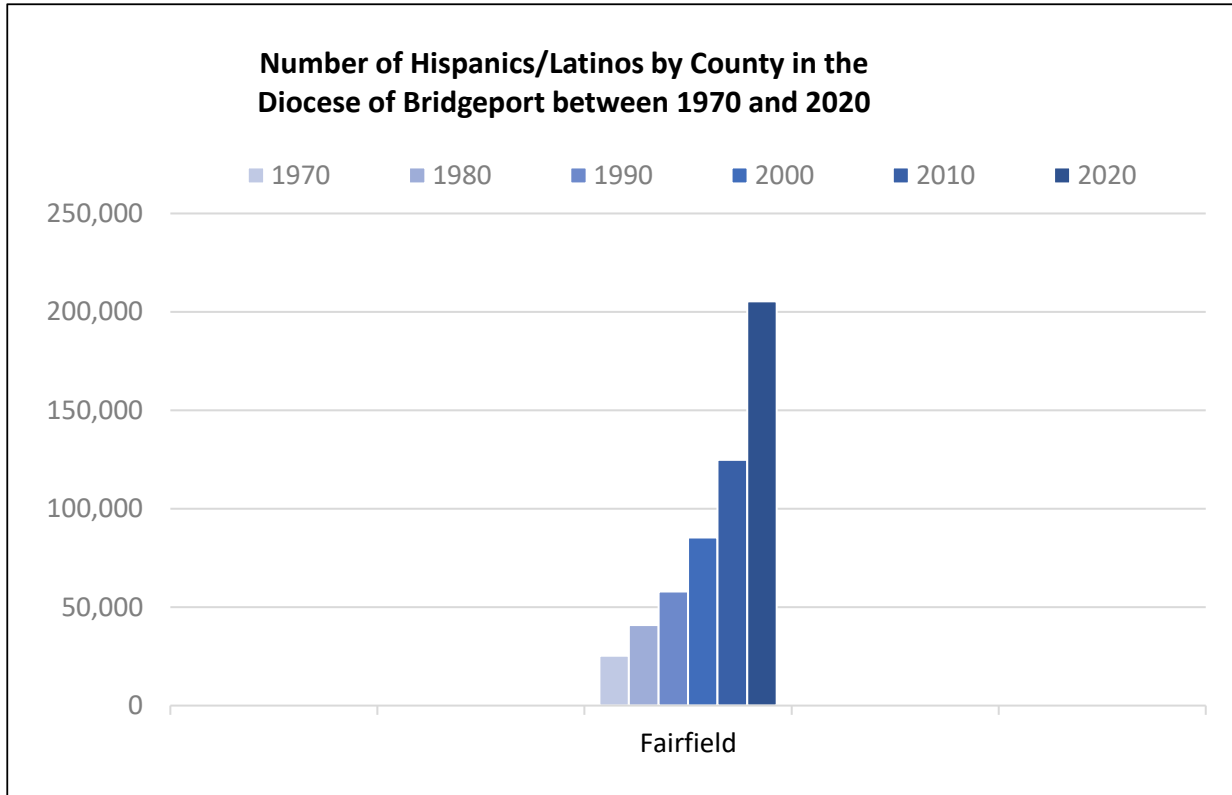


Between 1970 and 2020, the proportion of Blacks/African Americans in Fairfield County increased by 4pp.

Proportion of Blacks/African Americans by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Fairfield	8	10	13	14	15	12

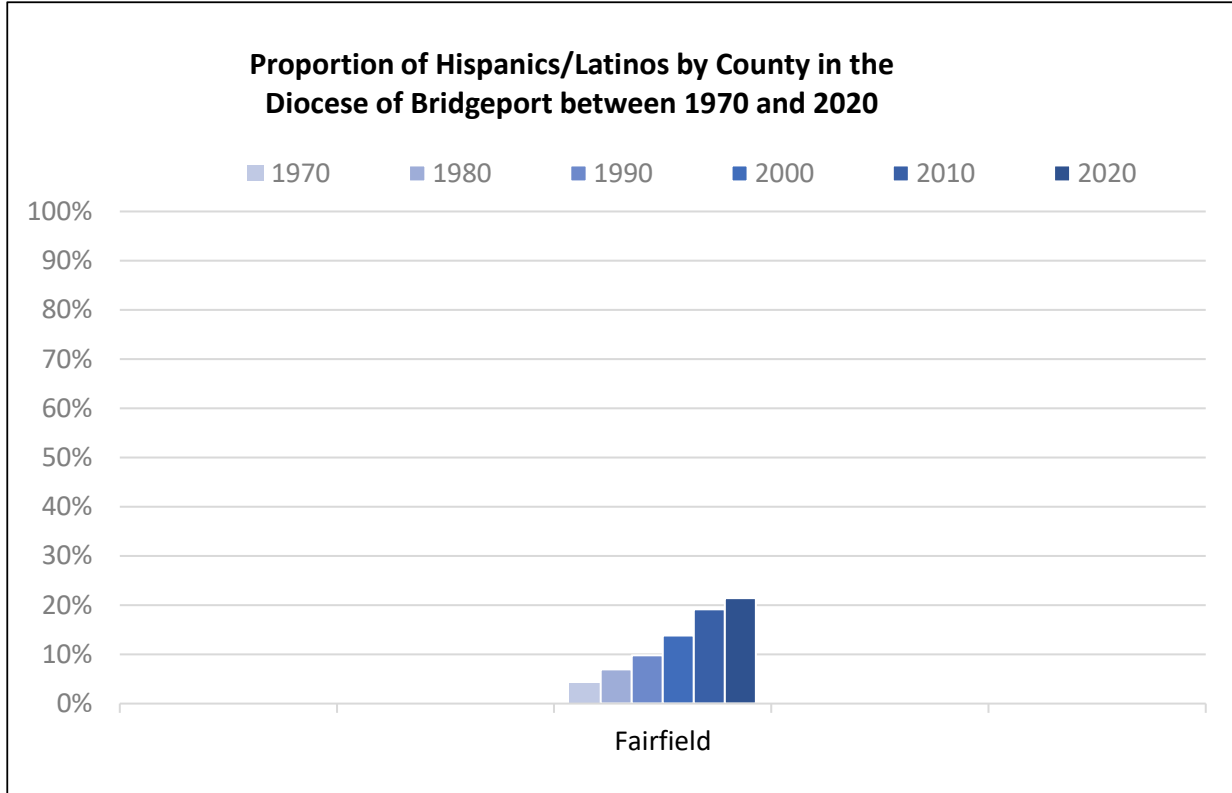
13. Number of Hispanics/Latinos



Between 1970 and 2020, the number of Hispanics/Latinos in Fairfield County increased by 179,938 people (by 708%).

Number of Hispanics/Latinos by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020						
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Fairfield	25,413	40,983	57,940	85,362	124,836	205,351

14. Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos

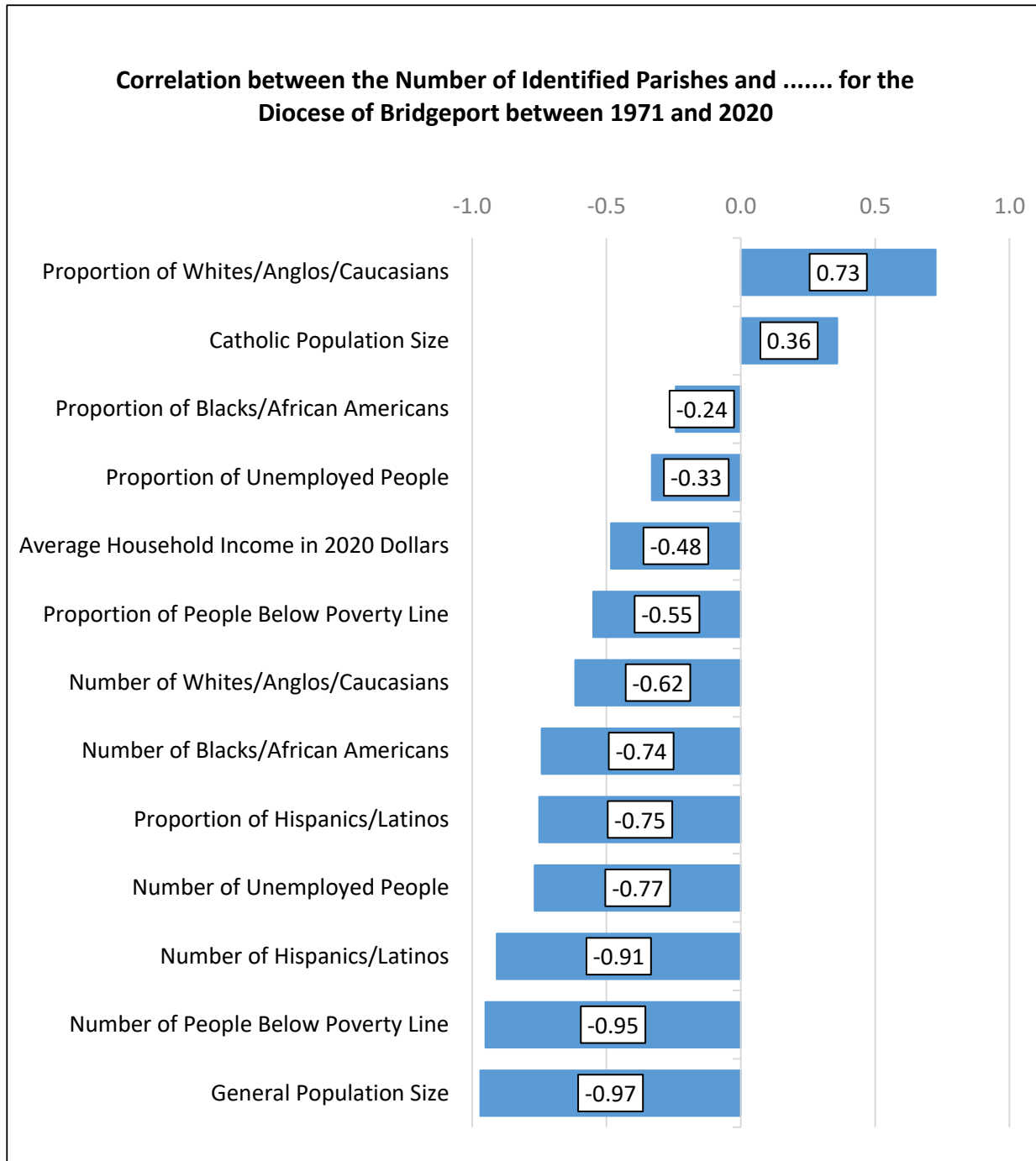


Between 1970 and 2020, the proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in Fairfield County increased by 17pp.

Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos by County in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
Fairfield	4	7	10	14	19	21

15. Correlation Between the Number of Identified Parishes and Diocese’s Socioeconomic Characteristics



The chart above shows correlations measured by Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Negative values indicate negative correlation and positive values positive correlation. Absolute values greater than 0.7 indicate strong correlation, values between 0.5 and 0.7 indicate moderate correlation, values below 0.5 indicate weak or insignificant correlation. Note that this analysis is based on a time series limited to six observations (i.e., data for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020).

**Correlation between the Number of Identified Parishes and for the
Diocese of Bridgeport between 1971 and 2020**

	County			Diocese
	Minimum [PCC]	Average [PCC]	Maximum [PCC]	Altogether [PCC]
Catholic Population Size	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36
General Population Size	-0.97	-0.97	-0.97	-0.97
Average Household Income in 2020 Dollars	-0.48	-0.48	-0.48	-0.48
Number of People Below Poverty Line	-0.95	-0.95	-0.95	-0.95
Proportion of People Below Poverty Line	-0.55	-0.55	-0.55	-0.55
Number of Unemployed People	-0.77	-0.77	-0.77	-0.77
Proportion of Unemployed People	-0.33	-0.33	-0.33	-0.33
Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	-0.62	-0.62	-0.62	-0.62
Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73
Number of Blacks/African Americans	-0.74	-0.74	-0.74	-0.74
Proportion of Blacks/African Americans	-0.24	-0.24	-0.24	-0.24
Number of Hispanics/Latinos	-0.91	-0.91	-0.91	-0.91
Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75

* Strong correlations (i.e., Pearson's Correlation Coefficients or PCC above 0.70 and below -0.70) are marked in bold.

** This analysis is based on 1 county for which data were available.

Changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade (between 1970 and 2020) show strong positive correlation with the changes in the proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians (0.73).

Changes in the number of identified parishes from decade to decade (between 1970 and 2020) show strong negative correlation with the changes in the:

- general population size (-0.97).
- number of people below poverty line (-0.95).
- number of Hispanics/Latinos (-0.91).
- number of unemployed people (-0.77).
- proportion of Hispanics/Latinos (-0.75).
- number of Blacks/African Americans (-0.74).

3. Census Tract - Level Description

The census tract-level overview is based on the analysis of data from several sources: the Official Catholic Directory for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020, Neighborhood Change Database for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, and diocesan websites / documents.

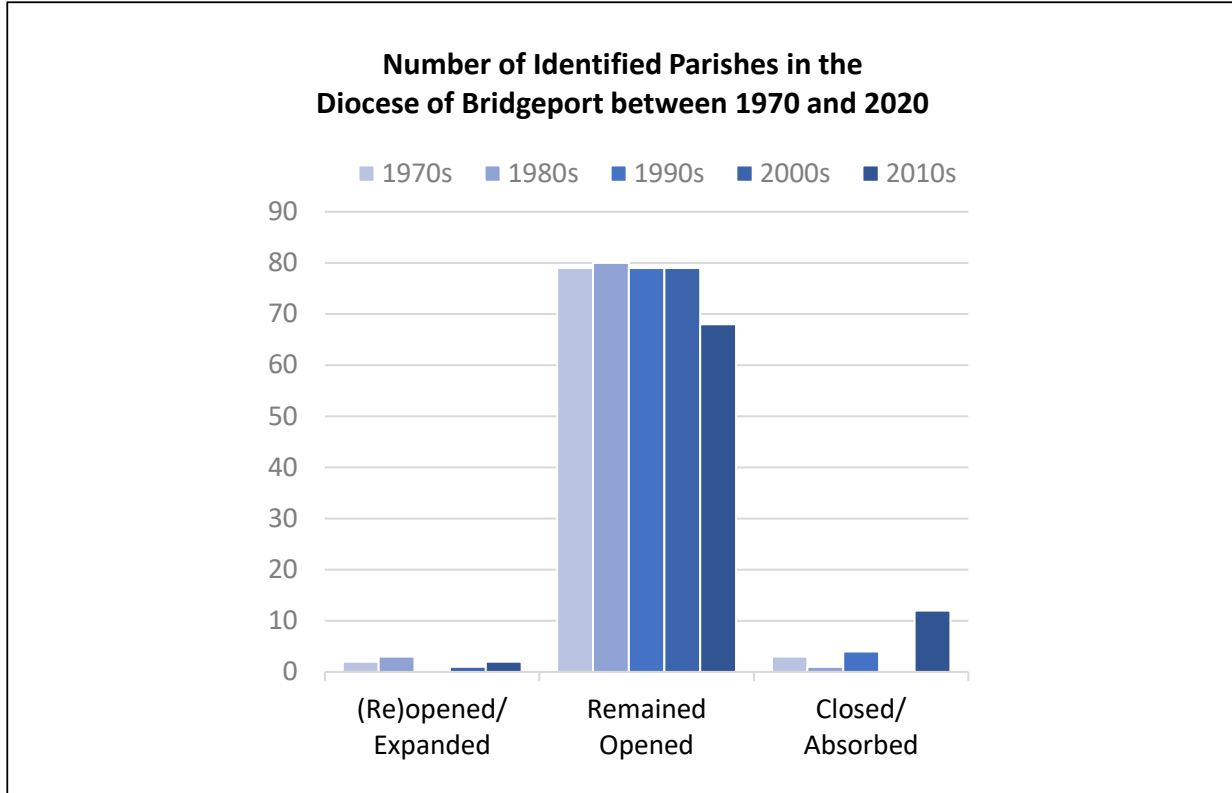
- The variables from the Official Catholic Directory are based on the identified parishes (as opposed to the actual number of parishes shown in diocesan-level overview in Section 1). In general, the number of identified parishes only includes parishes for which addresses could be identified (see Appendix I: Methodology for more information). The specific variables include: the number of parishes that (re)opened/expanded (i.e., merged to include another parish) during each decade, the number of parishes that remained opened over the course of each decade, and the number of parishes closed/absorbed (i.e., merged into another parish) during each decade.
- The variables from the Neighborhood Change Database include general population size, average household income (in 2020 dollars), poverty (as a number and proportion of people below poverty line), unemployment (as number and proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed), Whites/Anglos/Caucasians (as a number and proportion), Blacks/African Americans (as a number and proportion), and Hispanics/Latinos (as a number and proportion). Those variables are calculated for census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed each decade.

Census tract-level overview includes a chart, a table, and text description for each variable explaining how values differ between census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained opened, and closed/were absorbed. Additionally, two maps are included to show identified parishes in the diocese (one showing the entire diocese and the other showing a close up of the main metropolitan area).

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between parishes' status (opened or closed) and each of the 12 socioeconomic variables. The description is based on Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients for all parishes / census tracts in each diocese for which data was available.

If instead of the detailed description, you would like to see the summary of the main findings from this analysis, please go to the Executive Summary at the beginning of this report. If you would like to better understand how the analysis was prepared, please go to Appendix I: Methodology at the end of this report.

1. Number of Identified Parishes



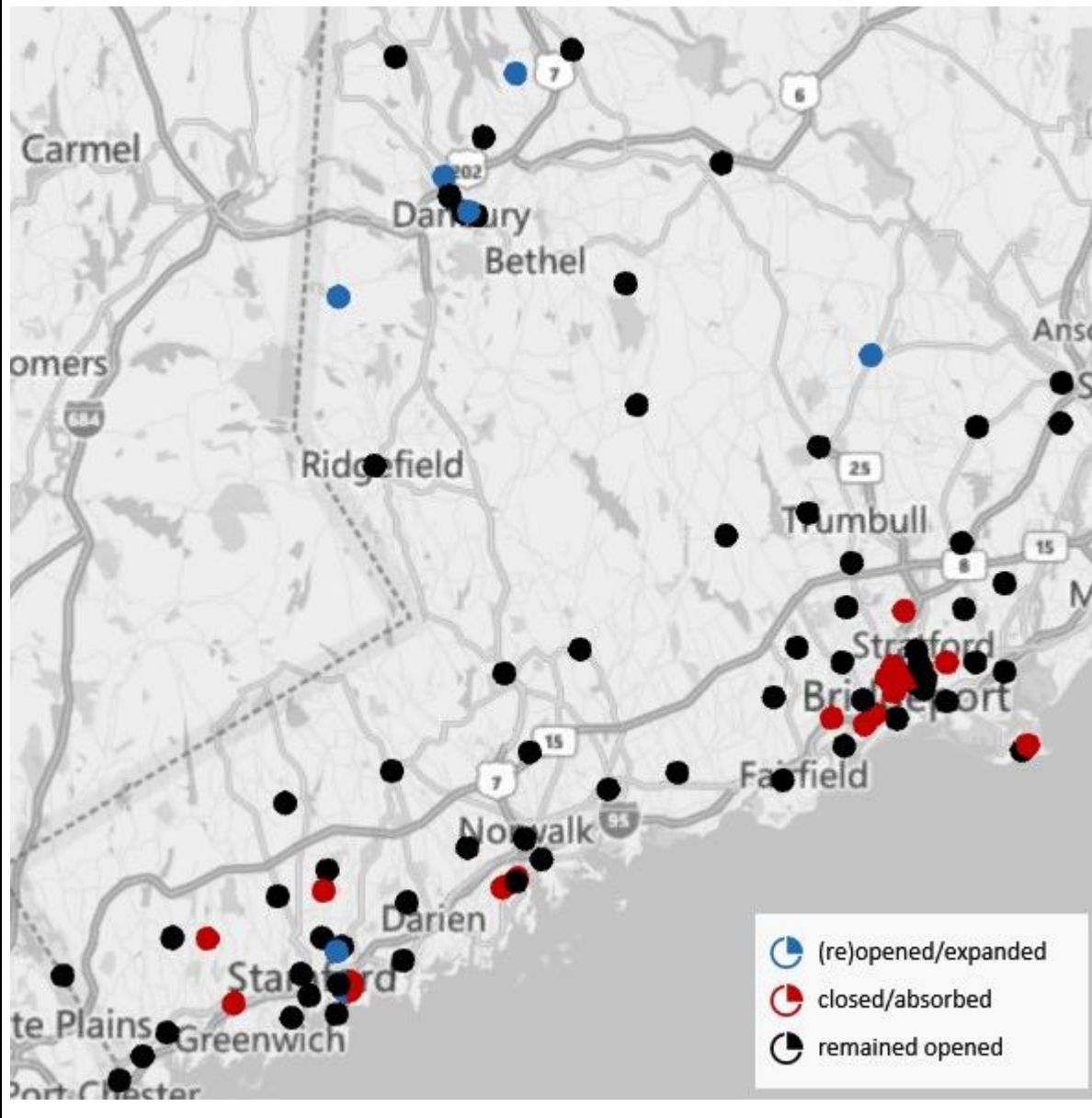
Over the entire 50-year period, a total 90 parishes were identified in the Diocese of Bridgeport (the actual number of parishes may be higher- see Appendix I for more information). This includes:

- 62 parishes that remained opened.
- 20 closed/absorbed parishes.
- 8 (re)opened/expanded parishes.

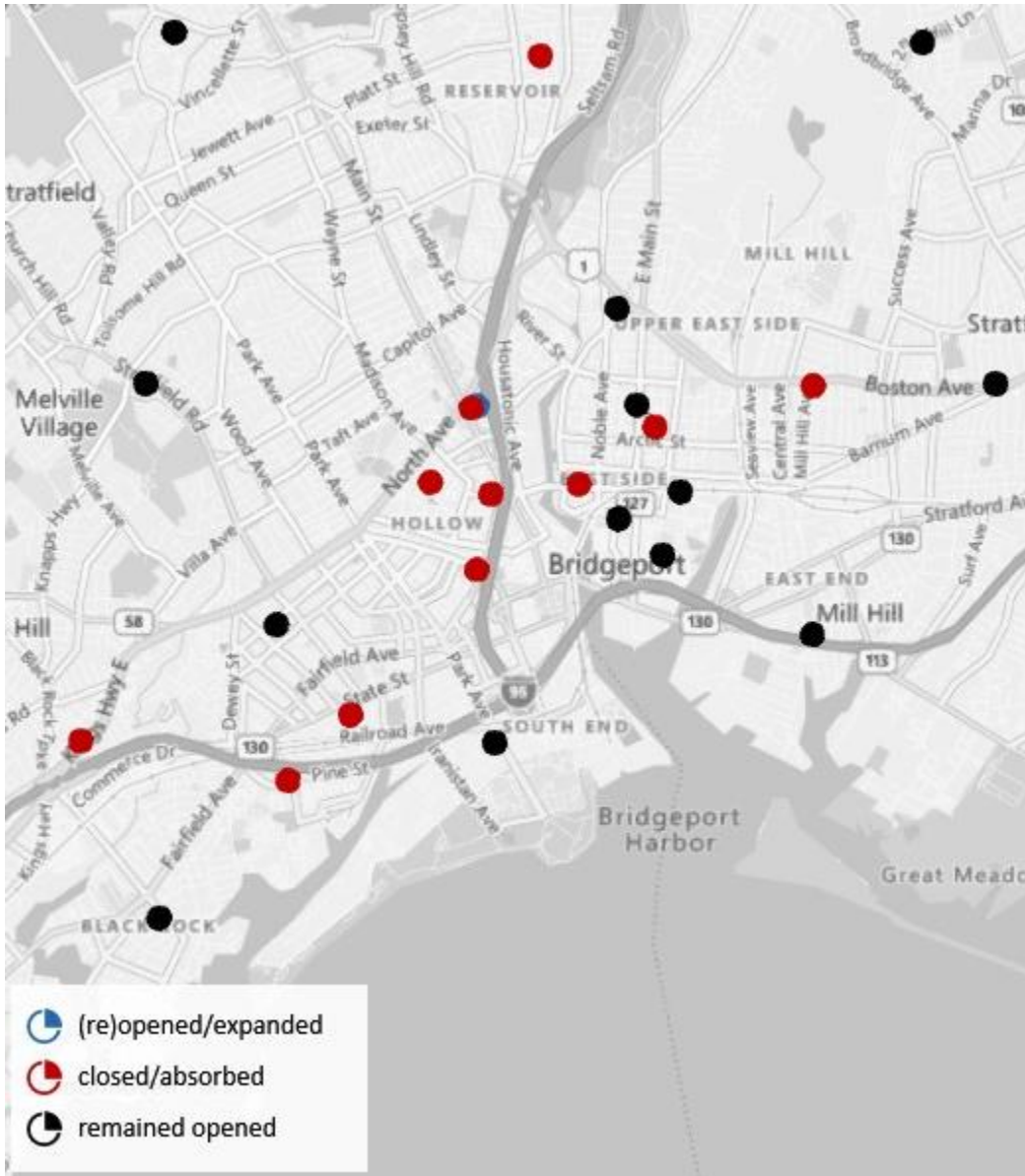
**Number of Identified Parishes in the
Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020**

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	2	3	0	1	2	8
Remained Opened	79	80	79	79	68	62
Closed/Absorbed	3	1	4	0	12	20
Altogether	84	84	83	80	82	90

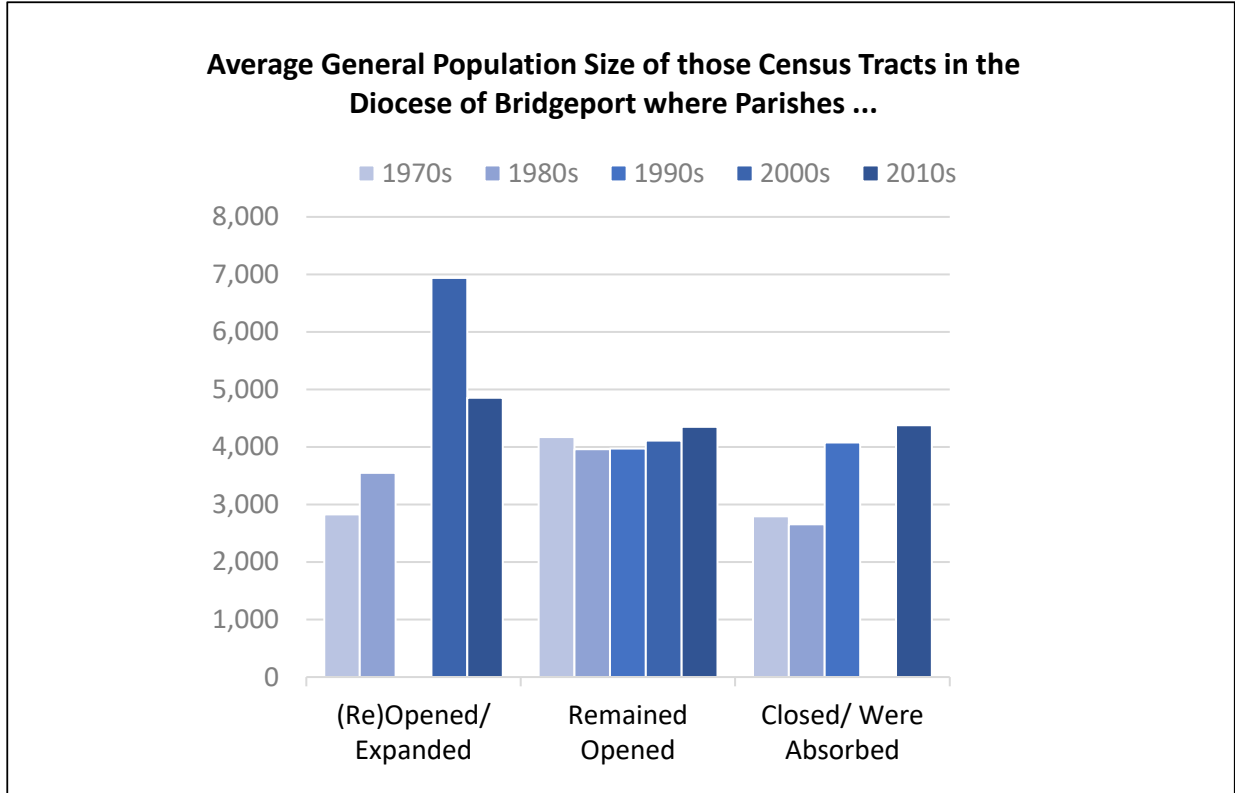
Identified Parishes in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020



Identified Parishes in the Diocese of Bridgeport between 1970 and 2020
(Close Up)



2. Average General Population Size



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

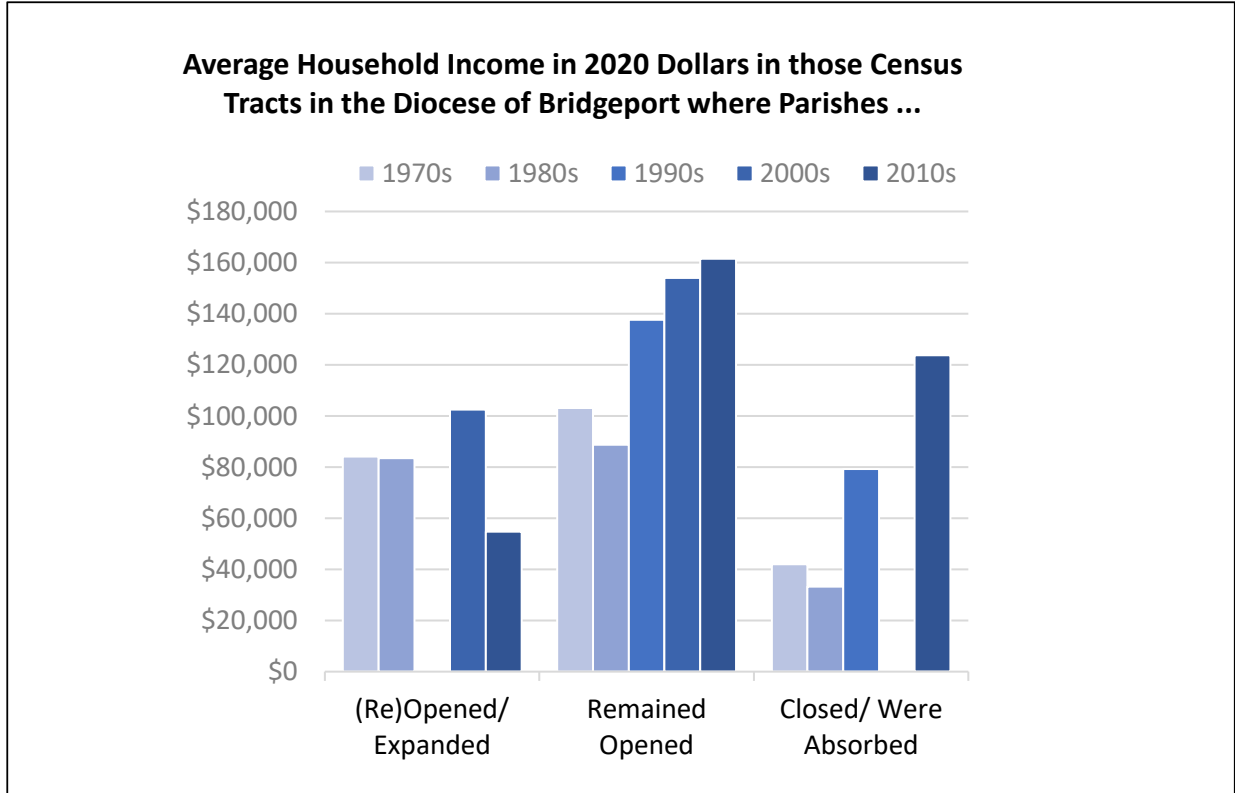
** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 4,105 people in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the general population size in those census tracts where parishes were:

- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 198 people (by 5%).
- Closed/absorbed was lower by 111 people (by 3%).

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	2,830	3,548	.	6,939	4,854	4,303
Remained Opened	4,173	3,963	3,971	4,112	4,350	4,105
Closed/Were Absorbed	2,794	2,655	4,076	.	4,378	3,994
Altogether	4,098	3,932	3,976	4,147	4,367	4,103

3. Average Household Income



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

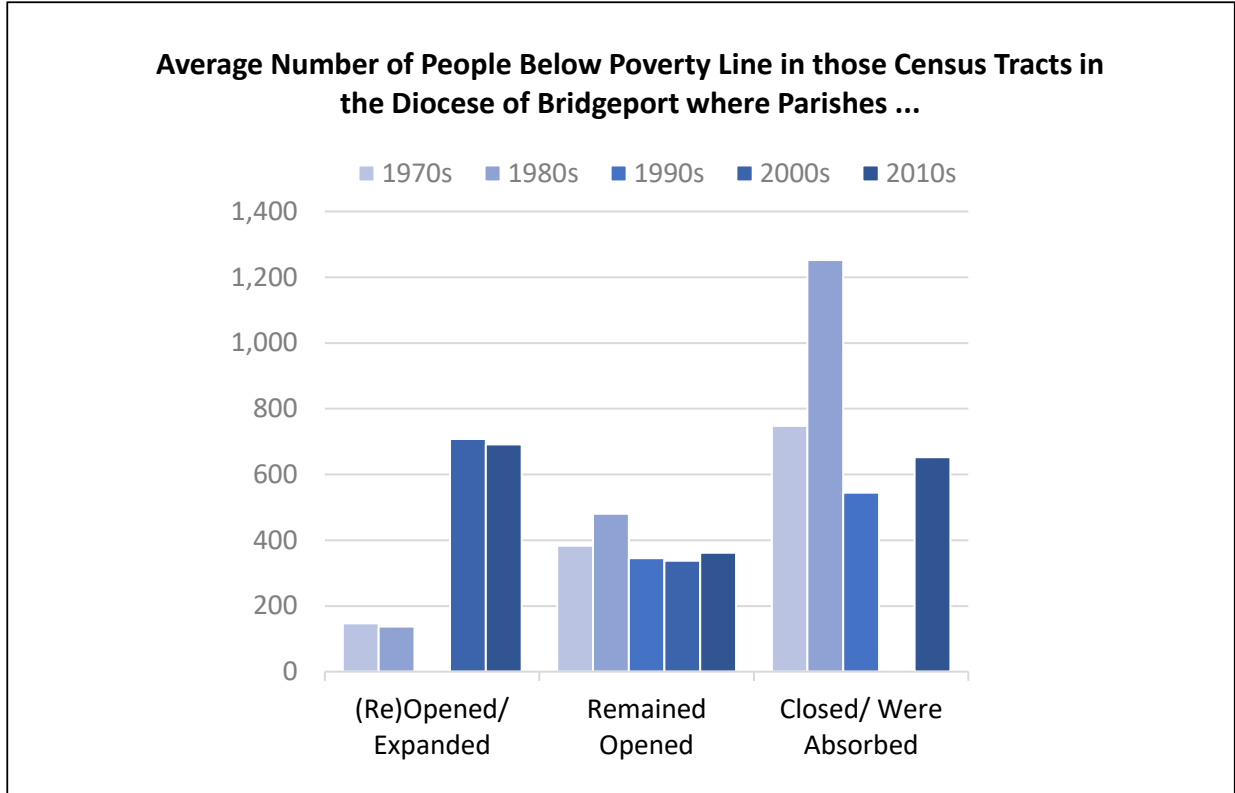
Over the entire 50-year period, the average household income in 2020 dollars in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled \$128,642. By comparison, the household income in 2020 dollars in those census tracts where parishes were:

- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by \$50,481 (by 39%).
- Closed/absorbed was lower by \$30,505 (by 24%).

Average Household Income in 2020 Dollars in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]	[\$]
(Re)opened/Expanded	84,219	83,599	.	102,537	54,785	78,161
Remained Opened	103,112	88,774	137,660	154,001	161,511	128,642
Closed/Were Absorbed	42,002	33,300	79,297	.	123,853	98,137
Altogether	100,342	87,929	134,848	153,357	153,397	126,245

4. Average Number of People Below Poverty Line



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

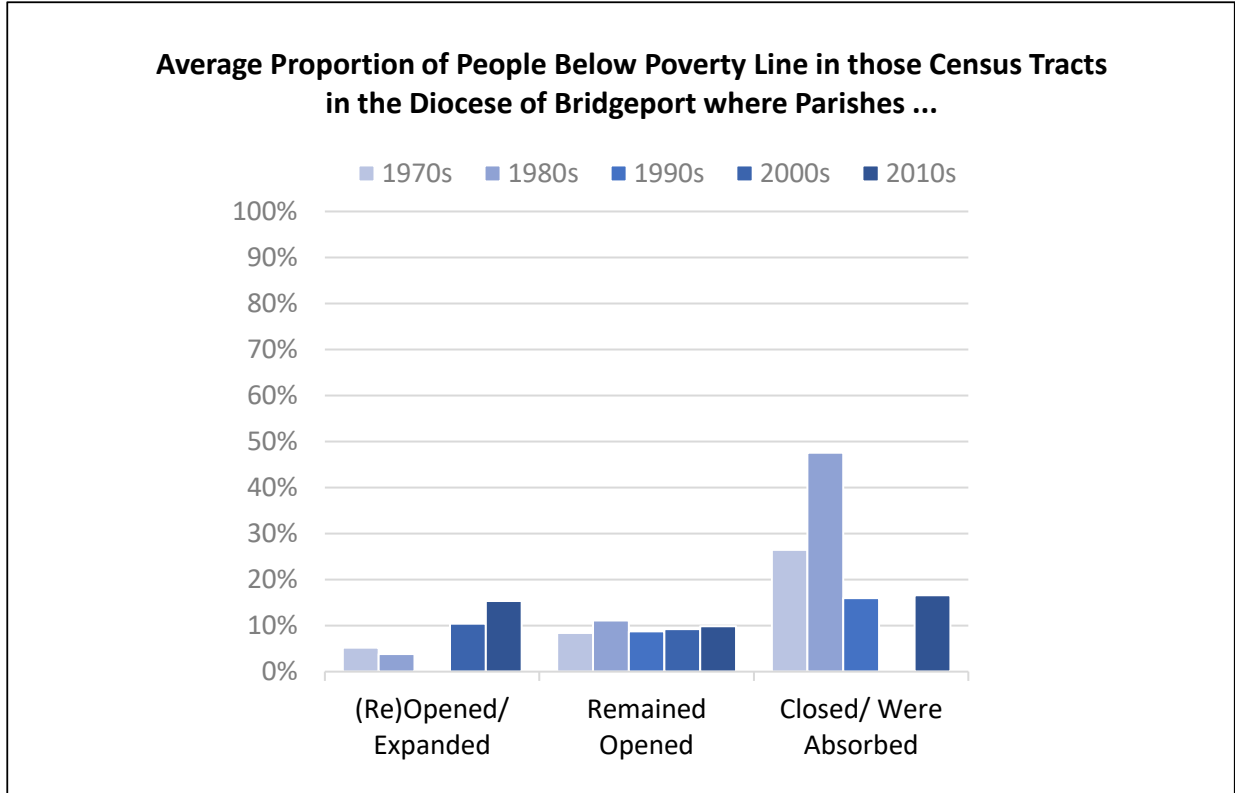
** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 382 unemployed people in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the number of people below poverty line in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 293 people (by 77%).
- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by 4 people (by 1%).

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	147	137	.	708	692	379
Remained Opened	383	480	346	337	362	382
Closed/Were Absorbed	748	1,253	545	.	653	676
Altogether	395	477	355	342	413	397

5. Average Proportion of People Below Poverty Line



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

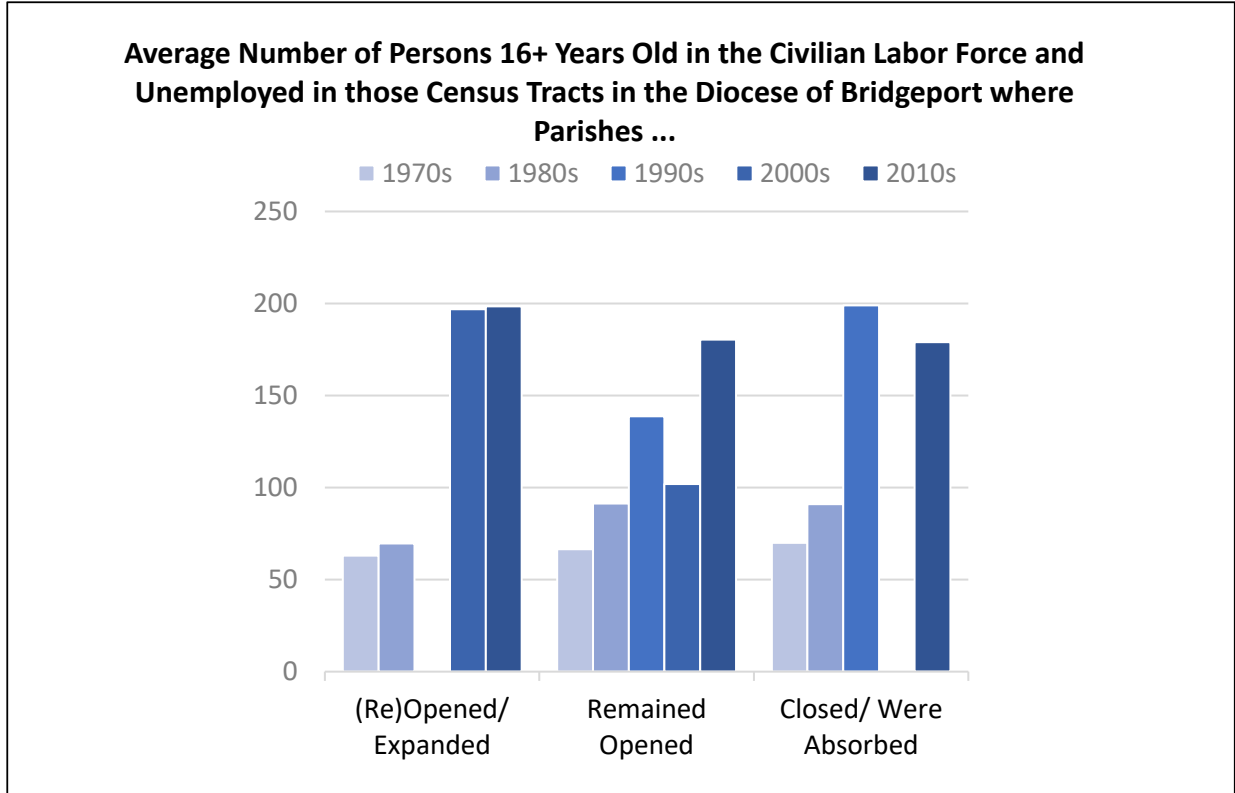
Over the entire 50-year period, the average proportion of people below poverty line in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled 10%. By comparison, the proportion of people below poverty line in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 10pp.
- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by 1pp.

Average Proportion of People Below Poverty Line in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/Expanded	5	4	.	10	15	8
Remained Opened	8	11	9	9	10	10
Closed/Were Absorbed	26	48	16	.	17	20
Altogether	9	11	9	9	11	10

6. Average Number of Unemployed People



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

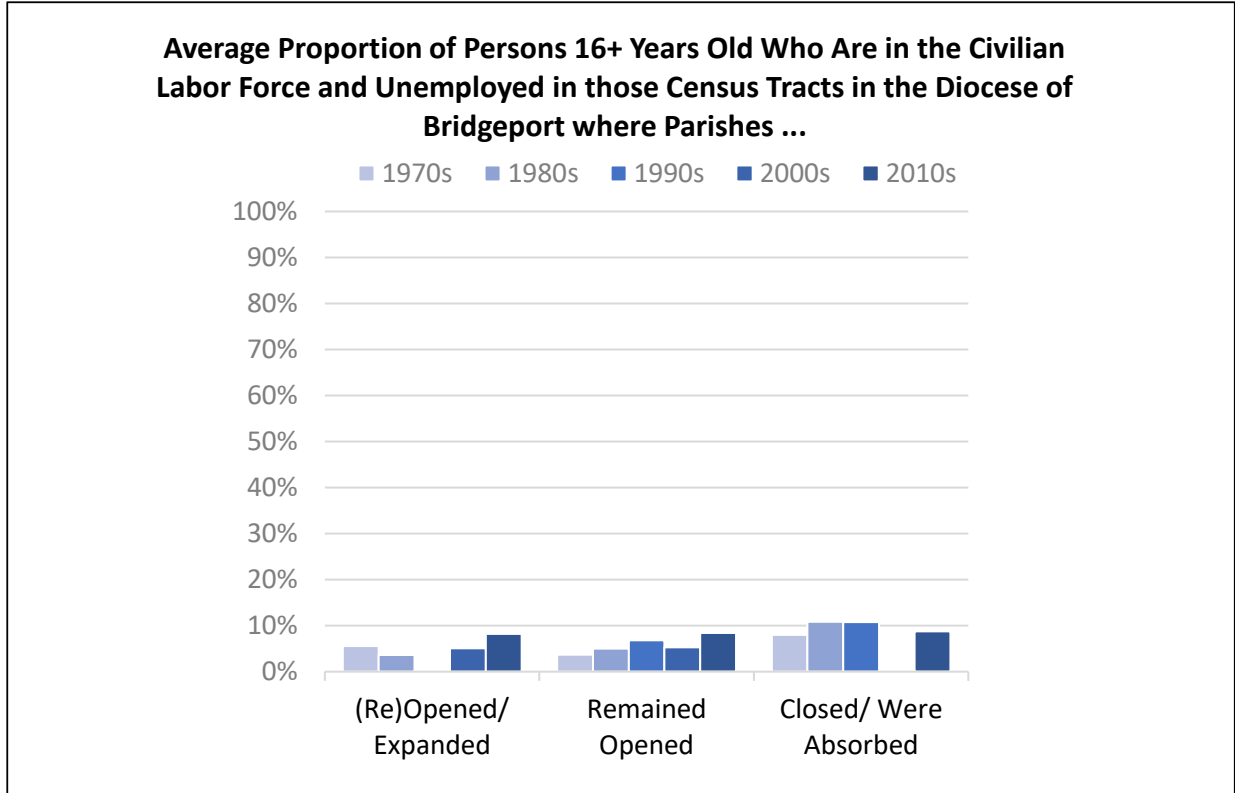
Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 115 unemployed people in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the unemployment in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 47 people (by 41%).
- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 8 people (by 7%).

Average Number of Persons 16+ Years Old in the Civilian Labor Force and Unemployed in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	63	70	.	197	199	124
Remained Opened	67	91	139	102	181	115
Closed/Were Absorbed	70	91	199	.	179	162
Altogether	67	91	142	103	181	118

7. Average Proportion of Unemployed People



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

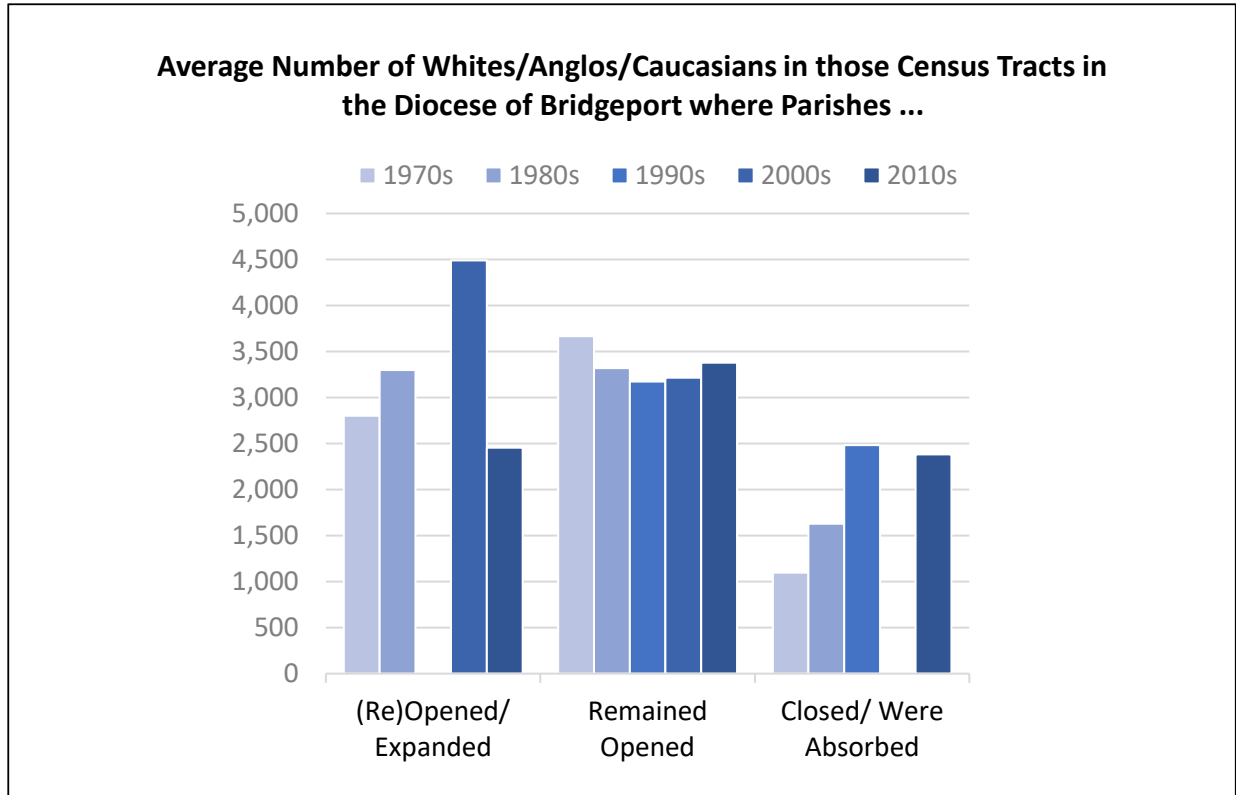
Over the entire 50-year period, the average unemployment rate in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled 6%. By comparison, the unemployment rate in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 3pp.
- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by less than 1pp.

Average Proportion of Persons 16+ Years Old Who Are in the Civilian Labor Force and Unemployed in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/Expanded	6	4	.	5	8	5
Remained Opened	4	5	7	5	8	6
Closed/Were Absorbed	8	11	11	.	9	9
Altogether	4	5	7	5	8	6

8. Average Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

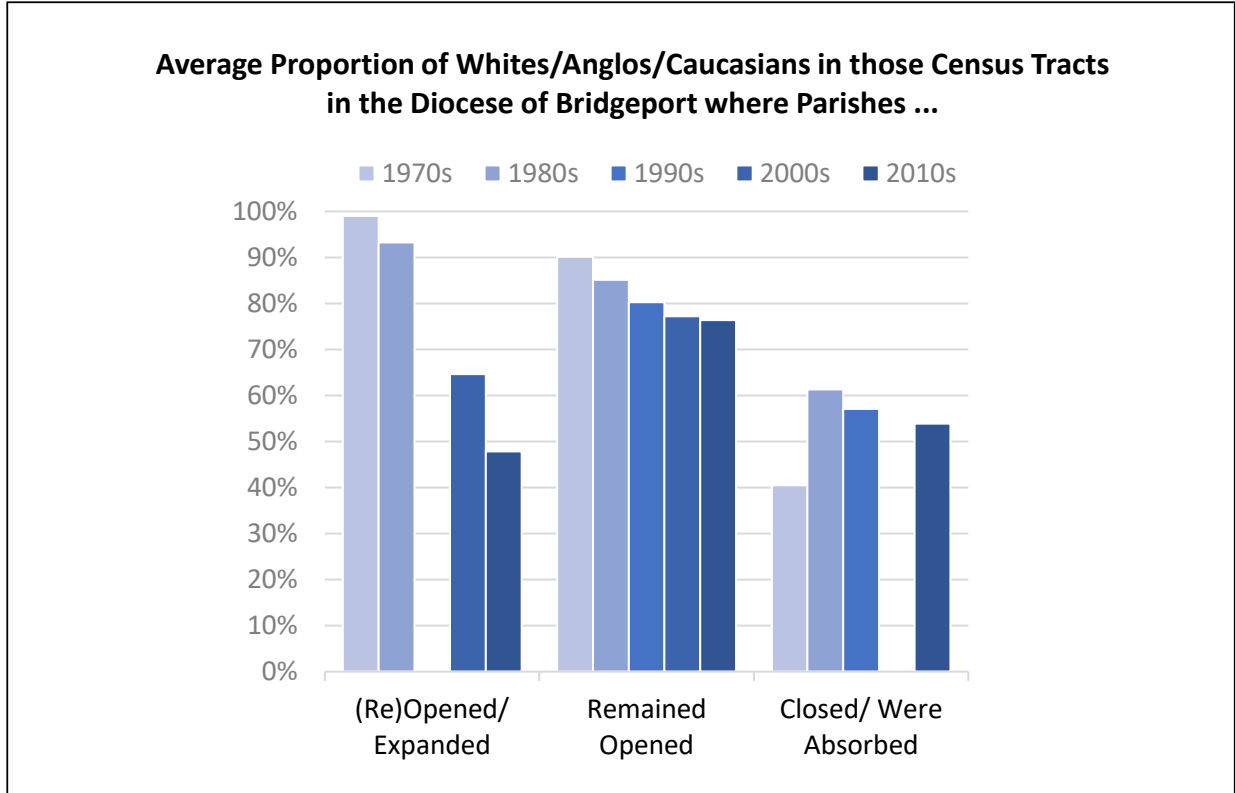
Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 3,342 Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was lower by 1,169 people (by 35%).
- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by 185 people (by 6%).

Average Number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	2,803	3,298	.	4,490	2,455	3,157
Remained Opened	3,666	3,320	3,173	3,217	3,379	3,342
Closed/Were Absorbed	1,097	1,629	2,484	.	2,383	2,173
Altogether	3,549	3,299	3,140	3,233	3,211	3,280

9. Average Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

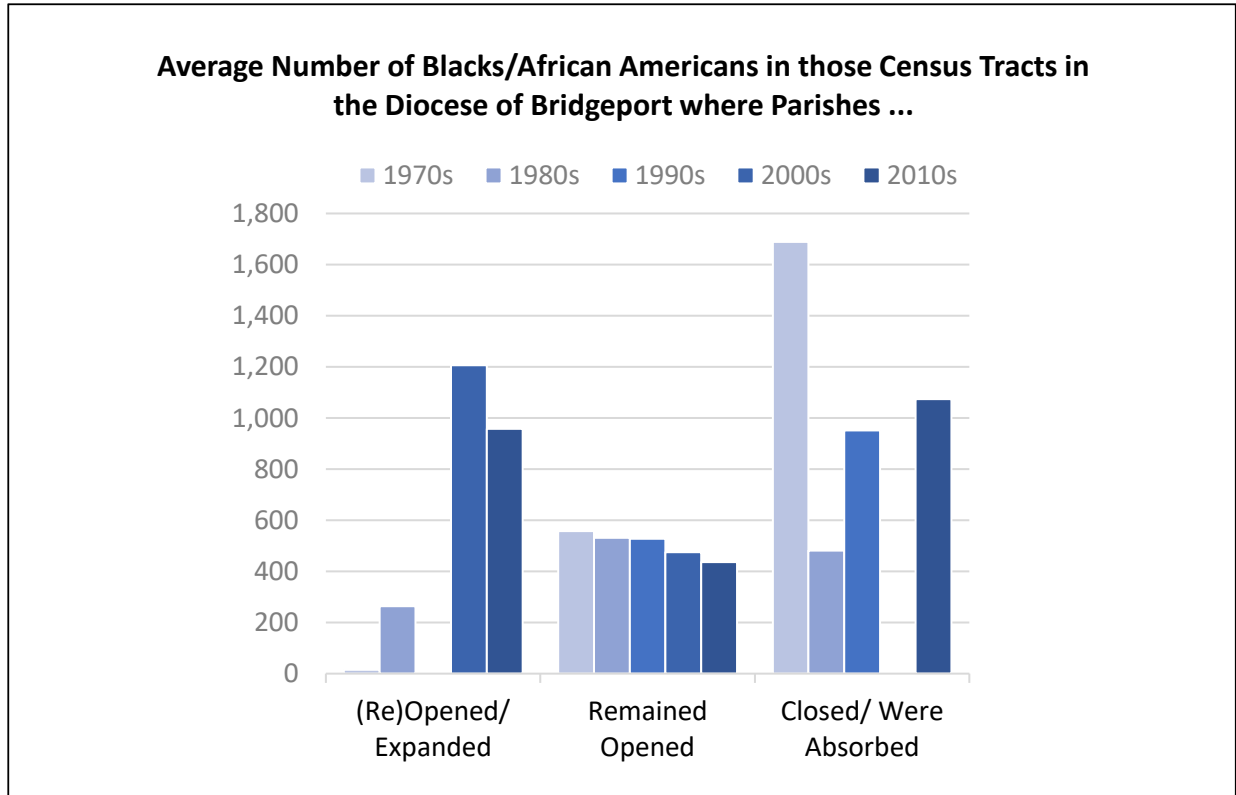
Over the entire 50-year period, the average proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled 82%. By comparison, the proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was lower by 29pp.
- (Re)opened/expanded was lower by 5pp.

Average Proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/Expanded	99	93	.	65	48	77
Remained Opened	90	85	80	77	76	82
Closed/Were Absorbed	41	61	57	.	54	53
Altogether	88	85	79	77	72	80

10. Average Number of Blacks/African Americans



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

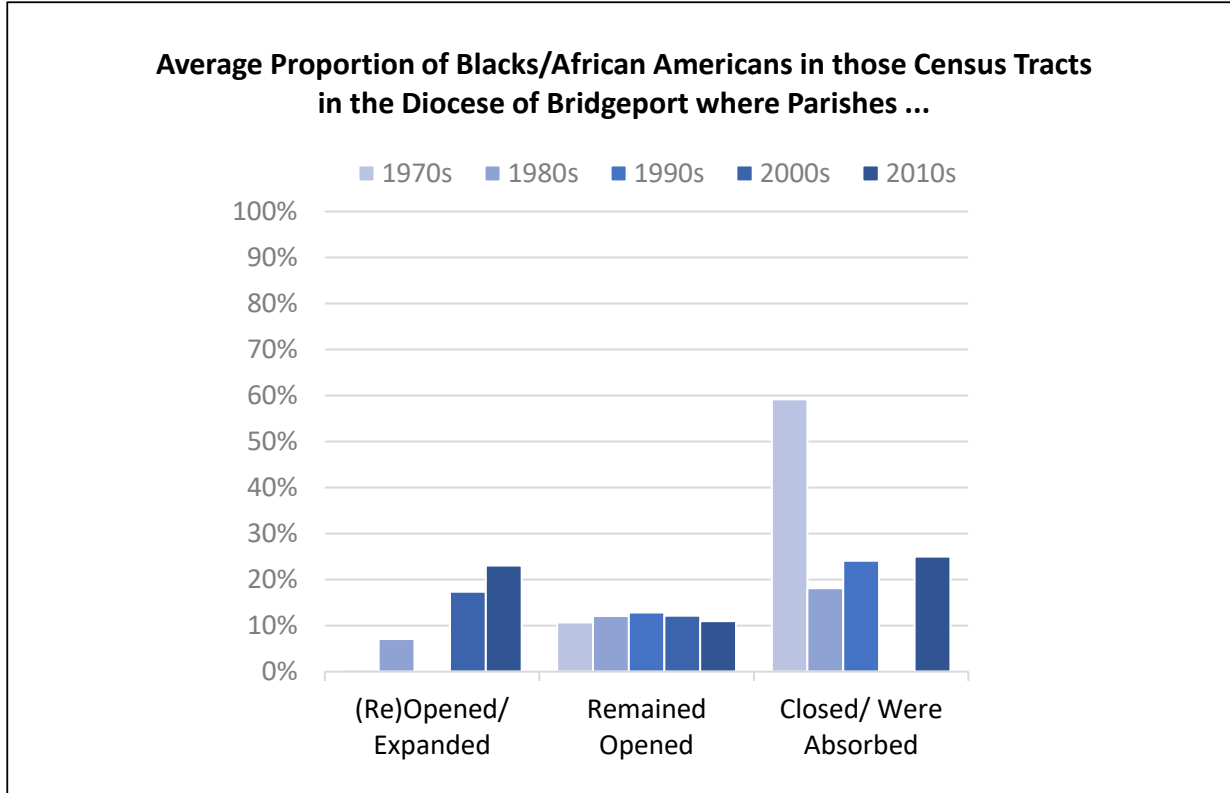
Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 504 Blacks/African Americans in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the number of Blacks/African Americans in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 608 people (by 121%).
- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 106 people (by 21%).

Average Number of Blacks/African Americans in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	15	264	.	1,207	958	611
Remained Opened	558	532	528	476	437	504
Closed/Were Absorbed	1,690	481	952	.	1,074	1,112
Altogether	602	524	550	485	543	538

11. Average Proportion of Blacks/African Americans



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

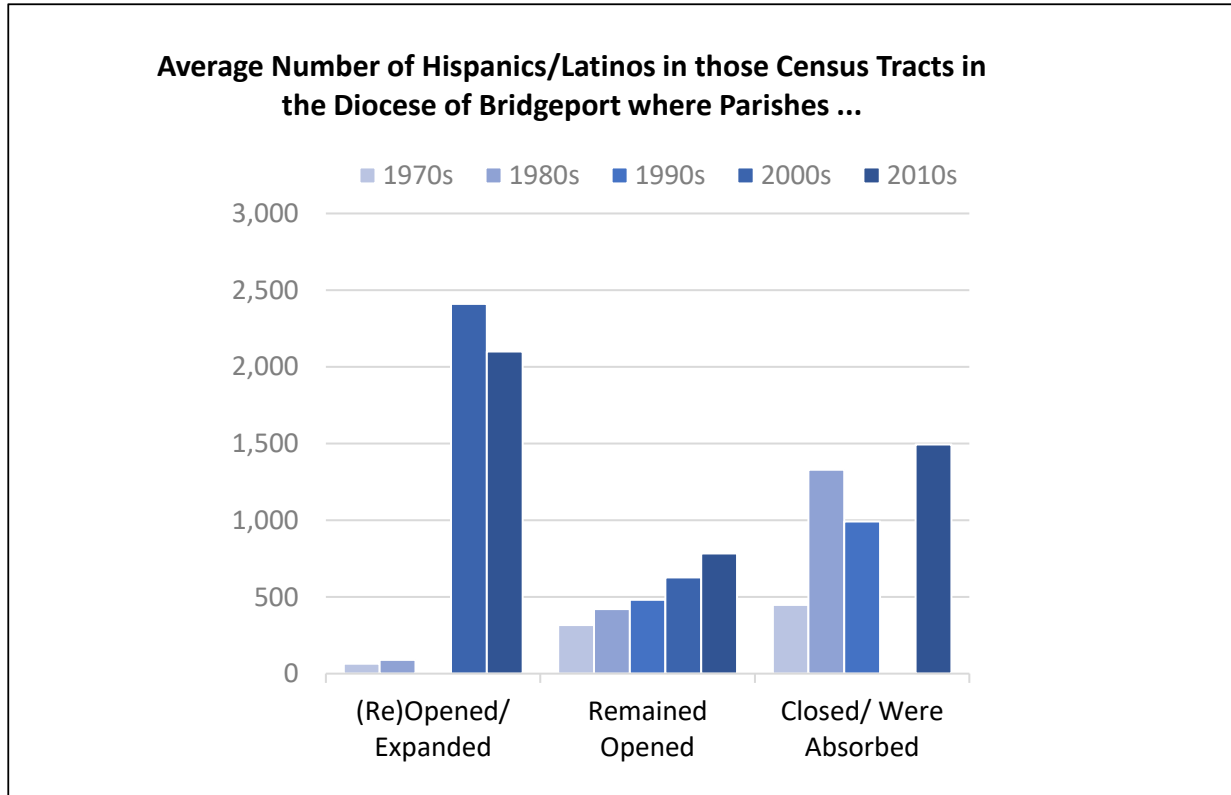
Over the entire 50-year period, the average proportion of Blacks/African Americans in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled 12%. By comparison, the proportion of Blacks/African Americans in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 18pp.
- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 1pp.

Average Proportion of Blacks/African Americans in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/Expanded	1	7	.	17	23	13
Remained Opened	11	12	13	12	11	12
Closed/Were Absorbed	59	18	24	.	25	30
Altogether	13	12	13	12	13	13

12. Average Number of Hispanics/Latinos



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

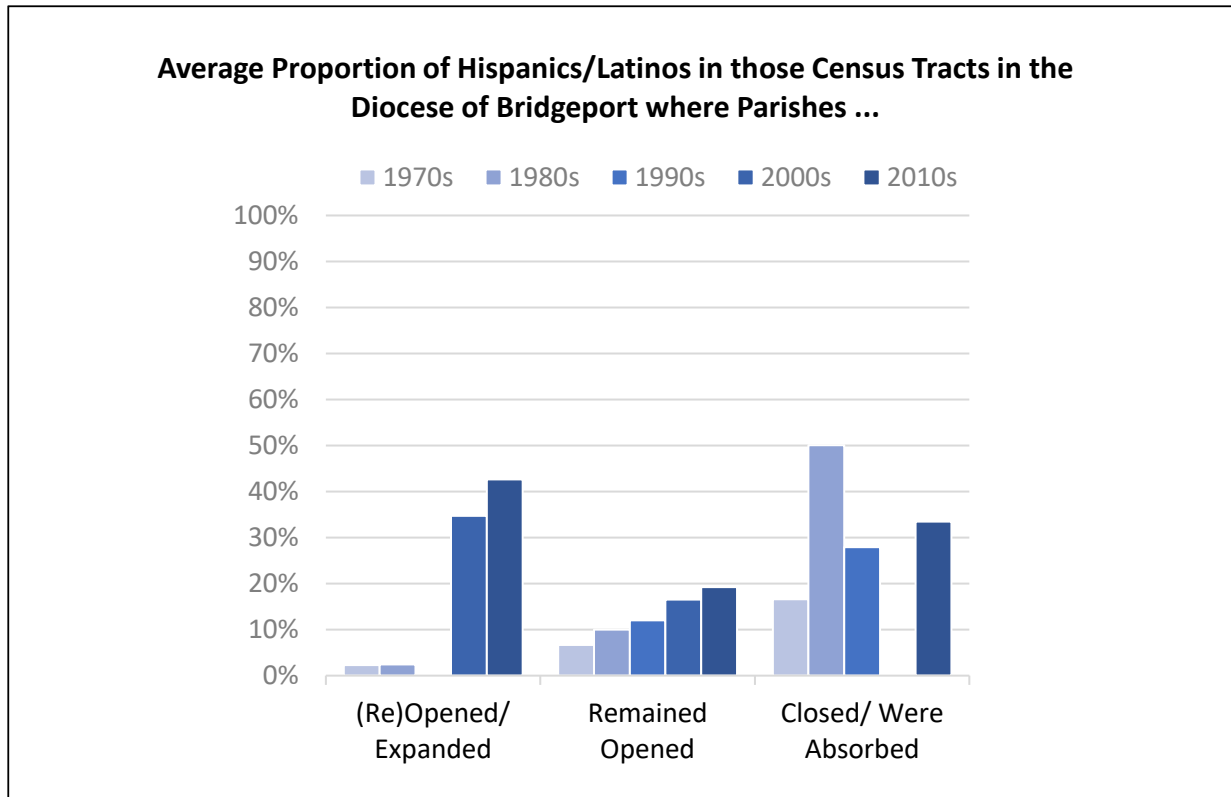
Between 1970 and 2020, there were, on average 527 Hispanics/Latinos in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened. By comparison, the number of Hispanics/Latinos in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 701 people (by 133%).
- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 465 people (by 88%).

Average Number of Hispanics/Latinos in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
(Re)opened/Expanded	66	89	.	2,412	2,101	992
Remained Opened	316	422	482	628	784	527
Closed/Were Absorbed	448	1,330	993	.	1,494	1,228
Altogether	318	421	507	651	920	571

13. Average Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos



* Fewer than 30 identified parishes were (re)opened/expanded over the entire period.

** Fewer than 30 identified parishes were closed/absorbed over the entire period.

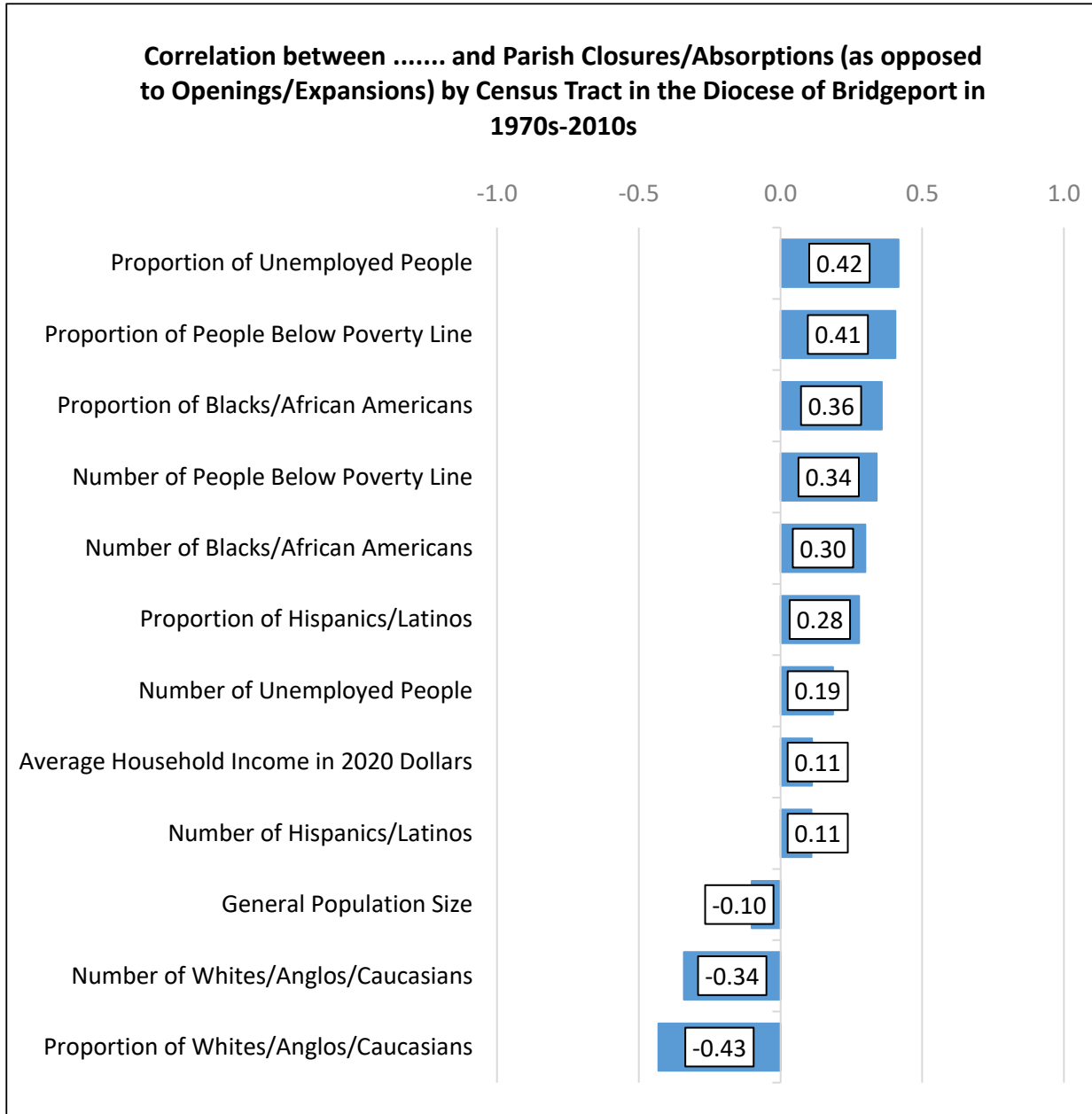
Over the entire 50-year period, the average proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in those census tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where parishes remained opened equaled 13%. By comparison, the proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in those census tracts where parishes were:

- Closed/absorbed was higher by 18pp.
- (Re)opened/expanded was higher by 6pp.

Average Proportion of Hispanics/Latinos in those Census Tracts in the Diocese of Bridgeport where Parishes ...

	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	All
	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]	[%]
(Re)opened/Expanded	2	2	.	35	43	19
Remained Opened	7	10	12	17	19	13
Closed/Were Absorbed	17	50	28	.	33	31
Altogether	7	10	13	17	22	14

14. Correlation Between Parish Closures/Absorptions and Census Tracts' Socioeconomic Characteristics



The chart above shows correlations measured by Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient. Negative values indicate negative correlation and positive values positive correlation.

Appendix I: Methodology

This appendix describes the research question as well as data collection and data analysis methodology used in the diocesan – level, county – level, and census tract – level overviews.

Research Question

FutureChurch (FC) commissioned Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct this study to explore parish, ecclesial, and socioeconomic statistics for 11 dioceses between 1970 and 2020. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to explore the following research questions:

- How did the number of parishes change over time in each diocese in the context of changes to other ecclesial statistics (e.g., prevalence of sacraments)?
- How many parishes (re)opened/expanded (to incorporate another parish), remained opened, and closed/were absorbed (by another parish)? When did it happen? Where were those parishes located?
- What socioeconomic factors may correlate with parish (re)openings/expansions on one side and parish closures/absorptions on the other?

FC selected the following 11 dioceses for the study: Archdiocese of Baltimore, Archdiocese of Chicago, Archdiocese of Detroit, Archdiocese of Miami, Archdiocese of New Orleans, Archdiocese of New York, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Archdiocese of St. Louis, Diocese of Bridgeport, Diocese of Cleveland, and Diocese of Memphis. Those dioceses were selected to fit specific needs of FC and they are not meant to constitute a nationally representative sample.

To investigate the research questions, CARA prepared diocesan – level overview, county – level overview, and census tract – level overview. The data collection methodology and data analysis methodology for each is described below.

Diocesan – Level Analysis

Diocesan – Level Data Collection Methodology

The dataset for diocesan – level analysis (included the first section in the overview of each diocese) was prepared in the following way:

- CARA compiled an electronic dataset including all (arch) dioceses and (arch) eparchies in the United States.
- The data came from 11 volumes of the Official Catholic Directory: 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, 1986, 1981, 1976, and 1971.
- The variables in the dataset include: total population and Catholic population, as well as the number of parishes, priests, Baptisms, First Communion, receptions into full communion, Confirmations, Marriages, and deaths.
- The table below shows the total number of parishes by decade and diocese.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Baltimore	143	150	154	155	153	137
Bridgeport	84	87	90	87	87	78
Chicago	452	444	389	378	357	290
Cleveland	236	246	241	235	174	185
Detroit	352	338	304	308	271	218
Memphis	29	43	41	42	42	41
Miami	111	134	107	108	100	109
New Orleans	157	135	145	146	108	111
New York	407	409	411	412	370	285
Philadelphia	315	307	302	283	267	214
St. Louis	249	246	245	228	188	178
Sum	2,535	2,539	2,429	2,382	2,117	1,846

Diocesan – Level Data Analysis Methodology

The diocesan-level analysis includes the exploration of change over time (as a number and percentage) for 11 variables for each diocese as compared to the national average (i.e., the average of values from all dioceses around the country) (which is shown in charts and tables) and national total (i.e., the sum of values from all dioceses around the country) (which is referenced in the text description).

The variables included in this analysis are:

- Total population.
- Catholic population.
- Number of Baptisms.
- Number of First Communion.
- Number of Confirmations.
- Number of faithful received into full communion.
- Number of Marriages.
- Number of recorded deaths (i.e., Catholic funerals).
- Number of priests (both diocesan and religious priests altogether).
- Number of parishes.
- Number of Catholics per parish.

County – Level Analysis

County – Level Data Collection Methodology

The dataset for county – level analysis (included in the second section in the overview of each diocese) was prepared in the following way:

- CARA aggregated the number of parishes by county using census tract database (that was prepared by CARA as described in the next section).
- CARA aggregated county-level socioeconomic data for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 using Neighborhood Change Database. Out of 7,088 variables included in this database, CARA selected 125 variables most relevant to the analysis.
- CARA compiled county-level socioeconomic data for 2020 using U.S. Census Bureau’s data from Decennial Census and American Community Survey.
- CARA compiled county-level dataset for the number of Catholics by diocese for 1971, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020 based on the U.S. Decennial Religious Census published by the Association of Statisticians for American Religious Bodies (ASARB).
- The four datasets described above were combined into one. And, all the counties that are not a part of the 11 dioceses included in the study were removed (as determined by data from the Official Catholic Directory 2021).
- The final county – level dataset includes data for 85 counties (as well as civil parishes, cities, and boroughs) for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020.

County – Level Data Analysis Methodology

The county – level analysis provides a description of parish data and of census data for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020. The variables included in this analysis are:

- The number of identified parishes by county and altogether (i.e., the sum of all identified parishes in all the counties of a diocese). Notably, the number of identified parishes here does not match the actual number of parishes found in the diocesan – level analysis. See the section on the census tract – level data collection methodology to see how exactly the number of identified parishes was established.
- The Catholic population size (i.e., the Catholic population of all counties in a diocese). Notably, the Catholic population size here (that is derived from the U.S. Religious Census data) does not match the Catholic population size found in the diocesan – level analysis (that derived from the Official Catholic Directory).
- The population size by county and altogether (i.e., the total population of all counties in a diocese). Notably, the general population size here (that is derived from the U.S. Census data) does not match the general population size found in the diocesan – level analysis (that derived from the Official Catholic Directory).
- The average household income in 2020 dollars by county and altogether (i.e., the average income for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties’ population size).
- The number of people below poverty line by county and altogether (i.e., the total number of those people across all counties in a diocese).
- The proportion of people below poverty line by county and altogether (i.e., the average proportion for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties’ population size).

- The number of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed by county and altogether (i.e., the total number of those people across all counties).
- The proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed by county and altogether (i.e., the average proportion for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties' population size).
- The number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians by county and altogether (i.e., the total number of those people across all counties in a diocese).
- The proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians by county and altogether (i.e., the average proportion for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties' population size).
- The number of Blacks/African Americans by county and altogether (i.e., the total number of those people across all counties in a diocese).
- The proportion of Blacks/African Americans by county and altogether (i.e., the average proportion for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties' population size).
- The number of Hispanics/Latinos by county and altogether (i.e., the total number of those people across all counties in a diocese).
- The proportion of Hispanics/Latinos by county and altogether (i.e., the average proportion for all counties in a diocese weighted by counties' population size).

County-level overview includes a chart(s), a map, a table, and text description for each variable to describe how values have changed over time for each county and for the entire diocese altogether (both as a change in number and as percentage change).

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between the number of identified parishes and each of the 13 socioeconomic variables. The description includes minimum, average and maximum Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for all counties in the diocese for which data was available for the entire studied period (1970-2020). Pearson's Correlation Coefficients are also calculated for the diocese as a whole (if available data is incomplete, some counties are excluded from this calculation).

Notably, a correlation marked as strong in the report points out an important finding but it should be carefully interpreted. It should be noted that correlation does not imply causation and that correlations are limited to exploring relationships between two variables. Those relationships may be different when multiple variables are considered simultaneously.

Census Tract – Level Analysis

Census Tract – Level Data Collection Methodology

The dataset for overview by census tract (included in the third section in the overview of each diocese) was prepared in the following way:

- CARA compiled an electronic dataset including all parishes in the 11 dioceses. The data came from six volumes of the Official Catholic Directory: 2021, 2011, 2001, 1991, 1981, and 1971. The parish records were matched between volumes. CARA identified numerous inconsistencies, errors and missing data points between different dioceses and between different volumes.¹ Those problems were manually resolved whenever possible.

¹ Examples of problems with parish records include the following:

To reduce the likelihood of introducing new errors during transcription, CARA manually double checked all the records.

- Separately, CARA compiled an electronic dataset of parishes for the 11 dioceses from other available sources. Those sources primarily included lists of closed parishes published on diocesan websites. Those sources were cross-checked against the main dataset. Wherever possible, parish records were manually matched between different sources and inconsistencies were resolved. The resulting dataset included 3,000 parishes.
- Out of this number, 33 parishes were removed because they were closed before 1970 or opened after 2020.
- The parish address information in the Official Catholic Directory often includes the address of the residence (rather than address of the church). To increase the validity of address information, CARA accessed the database of all parishes in the United States from MassTimes.org. This database was cross-checked against the main dataset. Wherever possible, parish addresses were matched between the two sources and inconsistencies were resolved.
- CARA identified duplicate parish records. This includes records for parishes located in the same diocese that share the same address. This also includes records for parish located in the same ZIP code that share the same parish name. The reasons for those duplicates could sometimes be identified (e.g., an ethnic parish sharing the same church

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1. In most dioceses, parish records included opening year. But, in some dioceses, opening year was missing for some parishes or for virtually all parishes (e.g., Chicago). In those cases, CARA had to infer the opening year based on whether a particular parish was listed in consecutive volumes. For example, St. Felicitas in Chicago is listed in OCD 2011 but not in OCD 2021, thus it is inferred that this parish was closed in 2010s.
 2. Sometimes, opening dates are inconsistent from one OCD volume to another (e.g., Mary, Mother of the Church in St. Louis, MO was opened in 1981 according to OCD 2021 and in 1971 according to OCD 2011).
 3. Some parishes appear only once (across the five decades) without enough information to compile a complete record (e.g., St. Agnes in St. Louis appears without address or year in OCD 2001 and not in other volumes).
 4. Some dioceses had different ways of denoting that a parish is closed or merged, which caused delays in coding.
 5. Most parish records include information about address of residence (as opposed to address of the church). Changes to the address of residence created difficulty with matching parish records across OCD volumes.
 6. Parish records outside the main city are organized by the town where they are located. Over decades some of those towns got absorbed, which created difficulty with matching parish records across OCD volumes.
 7. Sometimes, the same church is listed in two different cities (e.g., in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, St. Joseph church is listed under the city of Neier in Franklin County but the full address for this church indicates that it is located in Union).
 8. Sometimes parishes share the same address. This may be due to one of these parishes serving ethnic populations (e.g., St. Matthew and Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Stanislaus Kostka- Polish are both located at 616 Warburton Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706).
 9. Sometimes the name of the same parish does not match exactly across OCD volumes (e.g., St. Mary of the Angels in Chicago in OCD 1991 is just called St. Mary).
 10. Some records are not parishes as defined for the purpose of this study (e.g., Our Lady of Loreto at Terminal 2 of O'Hare Airport Listed in OCD 1981).
 11. Some parishes are listed twice in the same volume of OCD (e.g., St. Joseph in Odenton at the Archdiocese of Baltimore is listed twice in OCD 2021).
 12. Sometimes OCD listings are incorrect (e.g., St. Francis of Assisi in Brunswick at the Archdiocese of Baltimore is listed as open in OCD 2021 but it is closed according to diocesan website).
 13. Some parishes are missing (e.g., Holy Korean Martyrs in Baltimore is listed in OCD 2021 as opened in 1989 but these parishes cannot be found in OCD 1991).
 14. Often OCD would describe a parish as closed if it closed the same year for which data was collected (e.g., St. Lawrence in Cleveland is marked as closed in OCD 2011 for 2010 and it was closed in 2010).

building with an English-speaking parish). The duplicate records were merged, which reduced the number of parishes by 140 from 2,967 to 2,827.

- The geographical jurisdiction of some dioceses changed between 1970 and 2020. CARA identified counties that no longer belong to the 11 dioceses. CARA removed parishes located in those counties from the dataset. This reduced the number of parishes by 86 from 2,827 to 2,741.
- Wherever possible, CARA used the Census Bureau's GeoCoder database to increase the validity of address information. In order to match parish data with census tract data, GEOIDs had to be identified for each parish. CARA was unable to assign GEOIDs to 221 records, reducing the number of parishes from 2,741 to 2,520.
- CARA acquired the Neighborhood Change Database² that includes normalized census tract data for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. This database includes 7,088 variables. Out of this number, CARA selected 125 variables most relevant to the analysis.
- All the parishes could be matched to the census tract database. So, the final dataset includes 2,520 parishes.
- The table below shows the number of identified parishes by decade and diocese, in the final dataset.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]	[#]
Baltimore	126	136	141	138	138	128
Bridgeport	79	81	83	80	80	70
Chicago	428	421	401	368	346	285
Cleveland	221	237	235	225	194	176
Detroit	287	305	285	283	246	198
Memphis	31	37	38	39	39	38
Miami	67	82	94	96	87	88
New Orleans	112	127	136	136	100	101
New York	381	378	381	380	361	285
Philadelphia	282	278	275	263	244	196
St. Louis	214	215	211	195	163	157
Sum	2,228	2,297	2,280	2,203	1,998	1,722

Census Tract – Level Data Analysis Methodology

The census tract – level analysis provides description of census tract data tabulated by three parish subgroups: parishes that (re)opened/expanded to incorporate other parishes, parishes that

² This database appears to incorrectly assign 0 values to missing values. In the analysis for this report, 0 values are treated as missing values.

closed/were absorbed by other parishes, and parishes that remained open over the course of each decade (i.e., 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s).

The dataset consists of normalized census tract data from the beginning of each decade (e.g., data for 1970s is taken from the 1970 census) calculated for those census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained open, and closed/were absorbed for the following variables:

- The number of identified parishes. Notably, the number of identified parishes here is equal or lower than the actual number of parishes found in the diocesan – level analysis. See the section on the census tract – level data collection methodology to see how exactly the number of identified parishes was established.
- The population size. Notably, the general population size here (that is derived from Census data) does not match the general population size found in the diocesan – level analysis (that derived from the Official Catholic Directory).
- The average household income in 2020 dollars.
- The number of people below poverty line.
- The proportion of people below poverty line.
- The number of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed.
- The proportion of persons 16+ years old in the civilian labor force and unemployed.
- The number of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians.
- The proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians.
- The number of Blacks/African Americans.
- The proportion of Blacks/African Americans.
- The number of Hispanics/Latinos.
- The proportion of Hispanics/Latinos.

Census tract-level analysis overview includes two maps to show identified parishes in the diocese (one showing the entire diocese and the other showing a close up of the main metropolitan area). Additionally, the overview includes a chart, a table, and text description for each variable explaining how values differ between census tracts where parishes (re)opened/expanded, remained open, and closed/were absorbed.

The overview concludes with analysis exploring correlations between parishes' status (opened or closed) and each of the 12 socioeconomic variables. The description is based on Point Biserial Correlation Coefficients for all parishes / census tracts in each diocese for which data was available.

The census tract-level analysis comes with several caveats. Notably, the underlying census tracts data are normalized by adjusting the boundaries and characteristics of each tract. In general, this allows for valid comparisons of socioeconomic characteristics between different census years. However, it's important to keep in mind that there are some limitations to comparing census tract data over time:

- Changes in the methods used to collect and tabulate census data, as well as changes in the questions asked on the census, can affect the comparability of data collected in different census years.
- Some census tracts may be split or combined during the normalization process, which can also affect the comparability of data collected in different census years.

Caution should be exercised when interpreting the findings for “number” variables such as the number of Blacks/African Americans (as opposed to “proportion” variables such as the proportion of Blacks/African Americans) included in the text description. This text description makes a comparison of census tract data aggregated over time and, for example, it may give disproportionately higher weight to more recent years (if population was growing and if there were more parishes at the beginning of the studied period).

Caution should be exercised when drawing the implications of the findings from Census data for the Catholic dioceses. For instance:

- Census tract is an approximation of a neighborhood (as opposed to a parish).
- Socioeconomic characteristics (e.g., proportion of Blacks/African Americans) apply to all people living in a census tract (as opposed to all Catholics belonging to a parish).

Caution should be exercised when trying to generalize findings from 11 dioceses included in the study to all the dioceses in the United States. The dioceses included in the study were selected at the discretion of FutureChurch based on their particular interests. These dioceses are not meant to constitute a nationally representative sample.

Caution should be exercised when trying to generalize findings for the relationship between two variables (e.g., difference between the average proportion of Blacks/African Americans in census tracts where parishes were closed/absorbed and the average proportion of Blacks/African Americans in census tracts where parishes were opened/expanded in the Diocese of Cleveland or, another example, correlation between proportion of Blacks/African Americans in a census tracts and parish’s status: opened/expanded or closed/absorbed in the Diocese of Cleveland). Those type of generalizations would benefit from more sophisticated statistical analysis that is beyond the scope of this report.

Preliminary examples of such analysis for all 11 dioceses altogether would be logistic regression models aimed to predict whether a parish closes/gets absorbed (as opposed to opens/expands) (see the table below). Overall, the results from those two models indicate that parish closures are more likely in later decades, in census tracts with higher poverty rates, with higher proportion of Black/African Americans, with lower proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians, and in larger populations. Notably, it appears that poverty rate is a substantially bigger predictor of parish closures than racial composition.

For example, in the first model, the odds of parish closing (as opposed to opening) are predicted to:

- Grow about 1.02 times larger with each additional 1pp increase in the proportion of Blacks/African Americans in a neighborhood (while controlling for decade, poverty rate, and population size).
- Grow about 1.04 times larger with each additional 1pp increase in poverty rate (while controlling for proportion of Blacks/African Americans, poverty rate, and population size).

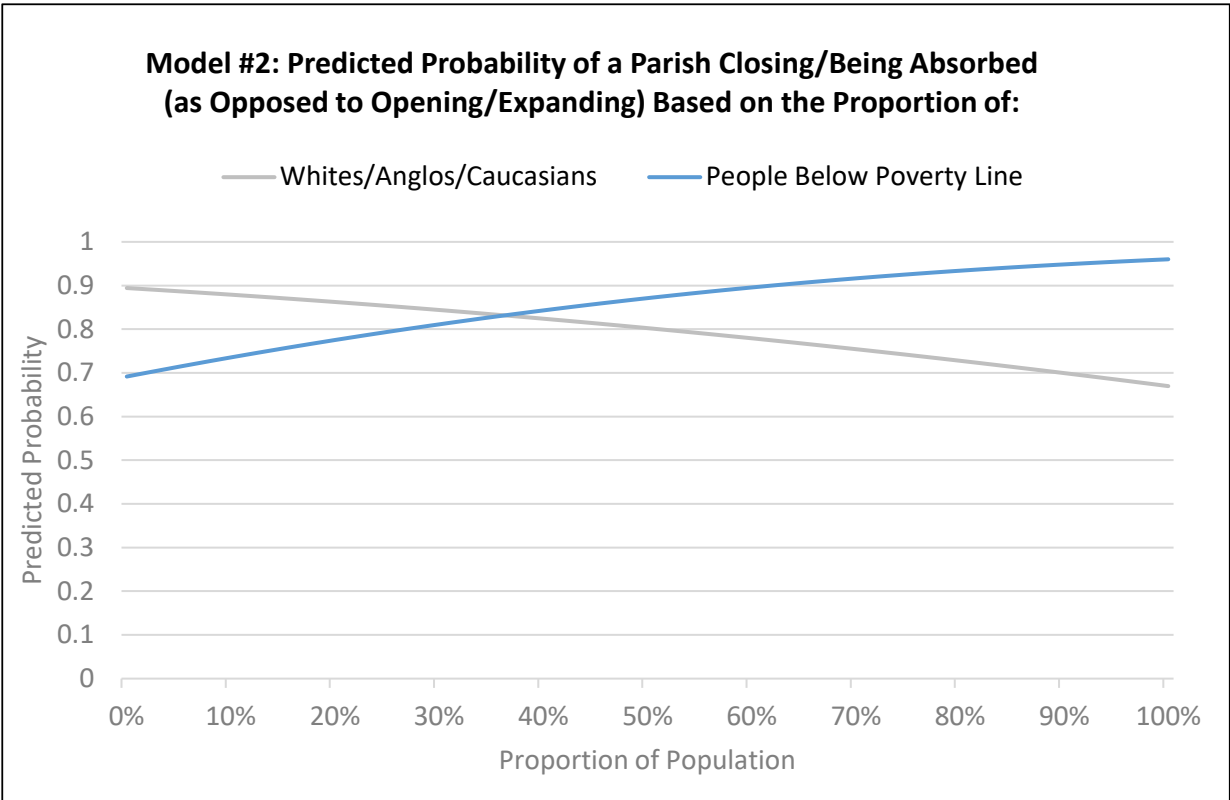
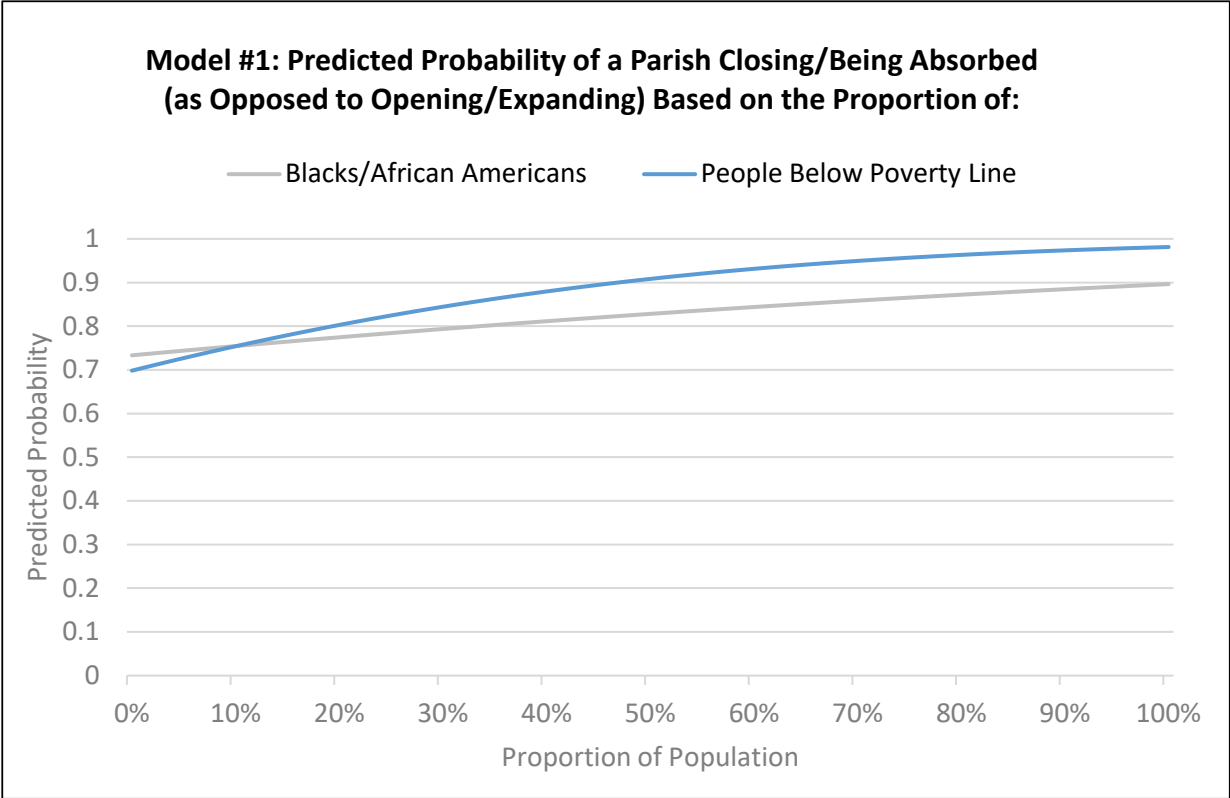
In the second model, the odds of parish closing (as opposed to opening) are predicted to:

- Shrink by a factor of about 0.02 with each additional 1pp increase in the proportion of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians in a neighborhood (while decade, poverty rate, and population size are constant/ unchanged).
- Grow about 1.03 times larger with each additional 1pp increase in poverty rate (while controlling for proportion of Whites, poverty rate, and population size).

Odds Ratios for Parish Closing/Being Absorbed as Opposed to (Re)opening/Expanding		
	Model #1	Model #2
Decade (1970s)		
1980s	1.4364	1.3972
1990s	4.3588 **	3.5141 **
2000s	8.6180 **	8.2607 **
2010s	9.5232 **	8.3210 **
Proportion of		
People Below Poverty Line	1.0373 **	1.0307 **
Blacks/African Americans	1.0147 **	
Whites/Anglos/Caucasians		0.9819 **
Other		
Population Size	1.0002 **	1.0002 **
Constant	0.1442 **	0.7836
Model Assessment		
Number of Observations	993	1,055
AIC	780.5190	833.1605
BIC	819.7248	872.8508
Proportion of Correctly Classified Observations	85.50%	85.02%
Pseudo R ²	0.2576	0.3011
Wald test	$\chi^2(7)=187.30$ (p=0.0000) $\chi^2(7)=232.24$ (p=0.0000)	
Max VIF	4.45	4.01
Mean VIF	2.68	2.61

* p<0.05, **p<0.01

The charts below show different predicted probabilities at different proportions of Blacks/African Americans and different poverty rates (for Model #1) as well as different proportions of Whites/Anglos/Caucasians and different poverty rates (for Model #2).



Appendix II: About CARA

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) is a non-profit research center that has been conducting social scientific studies about and for the Catholic Church since 1964. CARA's mission has three aspects: to increase the Church's self-understanding, to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers, and to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism. To this end, CARA provides assistance through custom-tailored research programs for various stakeholders:

Services to dioceses: include a number of rigorously designed and empirically proven programs, such as:

- **Cultivating Unity:** A program offered by CARA in collaboration with the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC), to strengthen solidarity among priests and their bishop. The centerpiece is a convocation where presbyteral unity is fostered through presentations, group discussions, prayer and reflection.
- **Diocesan Demographic Review:** A comprehensive demographic summary illustrating socio-economic characteristics of the Catholic and total population in a diocese. The report presents data on the size and distribution of the Catholic population in the diocese overall and within counties, deaneries, or vicariates.
- **Diocesan-wide Parish Life Studies:** A survey based on an extensive database of tested questions. The survey is administered in-pew to some or all parishes in the diocese. The data collected captures information about parish life and vitality.
- **Presbyterate Surveys:** Studies intended to assist dioceses with pastoral planning and understanding their priests' needs. Surveys are conducted among active and retired diocesan priests and religious priests active in parish ministry. Questions are adapted to meet diocesan needs.
- **Priest Personnel Projections:** Used in more than 75 dioceses over the past 40 years. Known for their precise methodology, these projections are an invaluable tool for clergy planning. The report presents likely projections of the number of diocesan priests available to serve in the future.

Services to religious institutes: CARA conducts a variety of studies for religious institutes (congregations, provinces, and monasteries). Those projects may include a combination of member surveys, focus groups, membership projections, and ministry site studies. They are often used in strategic or pastoral planning processes.

- **Membership Surveys and Focus Groups** are designed to assess attitudes, priorities, and needs in areas such as mission, ministry, charism, prayer, spirituality, community life, vocation promotion, initial formation, ongoing formation, and retirement.
- **Custom Studies** are designed to provide insight in areas such as sponsorship, mission integration as well as collaboration with associates and colleagues in sponsored institutions and works.

Services to individual parishes: For more than 20 years, CARA has served the research and planning needs of over 900 parishes. CARA provides its Parish Life Survey to help parishes develop

information-based pastoral plans that are attentive to the needs of the people of the parish community.

Services for Catholic Media and Publishers: CARA is a national leader in the study of Catholic media use. CARA regularly includes questions regarding media use in its CARA Catholic Polls series. CARA has also conducted studies specifically focused on media use including surveys and analysis of other national data sources.

- **Diocesan Level Surveys:** Assist in the analysis of subscription trends over time and map subscription areas. Using survey research and/or focus groups, CARA collects information about readers and subscribers as well as their attitudes and preferences for a publication. Those surveys can be used to make decisions about content and format as well as produce the information needed to attract potential advertisers. CARA can provide comparisons between readers, diocesan newspaper readers nationally, adult Catholics nationally, and/or the general U.S. adult population.
- **Research for Catholic Publishers:** CARA utilizes surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand readers' and educators' interests in and satisfaction with material. These studies are typically custom designed to evaluate a product in development or already out in the marketplace. CARA helps publishers understand their markets and refine their products from religious education textbooks to online media.

Services for Catholic Schools: CARA offers different approaches for Catholic schools to surveying their community, depending on how they plan to use the resulting data:

- **Surveys of Parents of enrolled students:** In consultation with school staff, CARA can design a questionnaire for parents of students enrolled in the school. This questionnaire covers such topics as satisfaction with school administration, opinions of parents on the school facilities, the likelihood of parents to recommend the school to family and friends, and other topics useful for planning.
- **Surveys of Parents in the Parish:** CARA surveys all people in the pews on a given weekend. These surveys can be designed to ask specific questions of those parents in the parish who do not have their children enrolled in the parish school.

Services for Catholic Higher Education: CARA offers a number of services focusing specifically on the needs of those working in higher education:

- **Surveys of Students:** CARA conducts surveys designed to meet the unique needs of campus ministry. A combination of in-pew surveys of Mass attenders and/or residence hall surveys can be used to collect information for use in pastoral planning, in evaluations of programming, and in understanding the unique ways that college students express their spirituality. Additionally, for residence hall surveys, special survey items can be included for those of other faith traditions or denominations.
- **Surveys of Faculty, Staff, and Boards:** conducts surveys of faculty and staff at Catholic colleges and universities to evaluate the expressions of mission found on campus. These surveys include program-specific issues, staff development, and the unique charism of the institution, and are developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including mission officers, campus ministers, and senior administrative leaders.
- **Surveys of Alumni:** CARA prepares surveys of alumni of colleges and universities. For Catholic colleges and universities, surveys focus on faith change over time, reflection on

time at the university, and the impact of attending a Catholic college or university, as well as development and other issues pertinent to alumni.

Services for Catholic Organizations and Institutions: CARA offers many research services custom-tailored to specific needs of different Catholic organizations and institutions. Some of those projects involve handling of mission-central and highly confidential information. For example:

- CARA helped Catholic Charities USA maintain an accurate record of the size and scope of services provided by its approximately 175 member agencies and affiliates.
- CARA collected data from all U.S. dioceses and eparchies for the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to document the response of bishops to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.
- CARA carried out a survey of salary and benefits for priests and lay personnel for the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators and the National Federation of Priests' Councils.
- CARA carried out a program evaluation for L'Arche USA that involved a national survey of assistants and staff.

CARA provides those services as one-time projects that address decision needs at a specific point in time or as multi-year studies that allow tracking trends and provide up-to-date insights on changing needs and emerging opportunities.

To learn more about how CARA may be able to assist you, contact: cara@georgetown.edu or visit cara.georgetown.edu.

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