

Flourishing Congregations Institute Operating Principles

Identity

The Flourishing Congregations Institute is an interdisciplinary, ecumenical research centre, currently housed at [Ambrose University](#). We collaborate with scholars and practitioners from diverse disciplinary and theological traditions and institutions, across Canadian regions.

Mission

Our mission is to gather, curate, and share Canadian Church data, research findings, theological reflection, and practical application *for* the Canadian Church. This mission both supports and extends the larger [mission](#) of Ambrose University.

Function

The Flourishing Congregations Institute has seven overlapping functions:

1. To encourage and conduct research Canadian congregations/parishes across the theological spectrum.
2. To establish and strengthen strategic ecumenical networks and partnerships across Canadian regions.
3. To share our research findings with those who wish to see their congregations/parishes/denominations flourish.
4. To provide congregations/parishes and denominational leaders with empirically informed practical resources, tools and insights in support of their flourishing.
5. To be a hub for research activity among scholars who study congregations/parishes in Canada.
6. To train and develop students, scholars, and practitioners who seek to serve in various local church contexts, with research and practical skills for the advance of their ministry effectiveness.
7. To bolster the reputation of host and partner institutions as places where original empirical research takes place that informs local congregational/parish practices.

Anticipated Outcomes

We anticipate the following outcomes from the Flourishing Congregations Institute:

1. To develop a multi-faceted understanding of what constitutes a flourishing congregation/parish in Canada, attentive to variation across social contexts (e.g., theological tradition, church size, region, intercultural, church plants), demographic experiences (e.g., gender, race, social class), and topics (e.g., intercultural congregations, church plants, clergy well-being, bi-vocational, globalization).
2. To identify the conditions and catalysts for congregational/parish flourishing.
3. To generate an ecumenical network of collaborating congregations/parishes and church/denominational leaders.
4. To provide meaningful dissemination of research findings to academic and professional audiences (e.g., denominations, districts, dioceses, congregations) in the form of (for instance) articles, books, social media.
5. To develop and refine data-driven tools and processes for use by congregations/parishes in diverse environments (e.g., theological tradition, church size, region) to assess and enhance qualities associated with their vitality.



Canadian Data. Theological Reflection. Practical Application.

6. To offer consultative services, symposiums, expert panels, and workshops to denominational and church leaders and congregations/parishes as it relates to church well-being.
7. To help train and equip students, scholars, and practitioners who seek to serve in various local church contexts or pursue careers in research by including them in the research process and enhancing our teaching curriculum based on the knowledge acquired through this research.
8. To host and facilitate conversations and research publications with other academics who are studying various aspects of congregational life in Canada.