

Healthy and Growing Churches

Solihull Deanery Synod

June 26th 2007

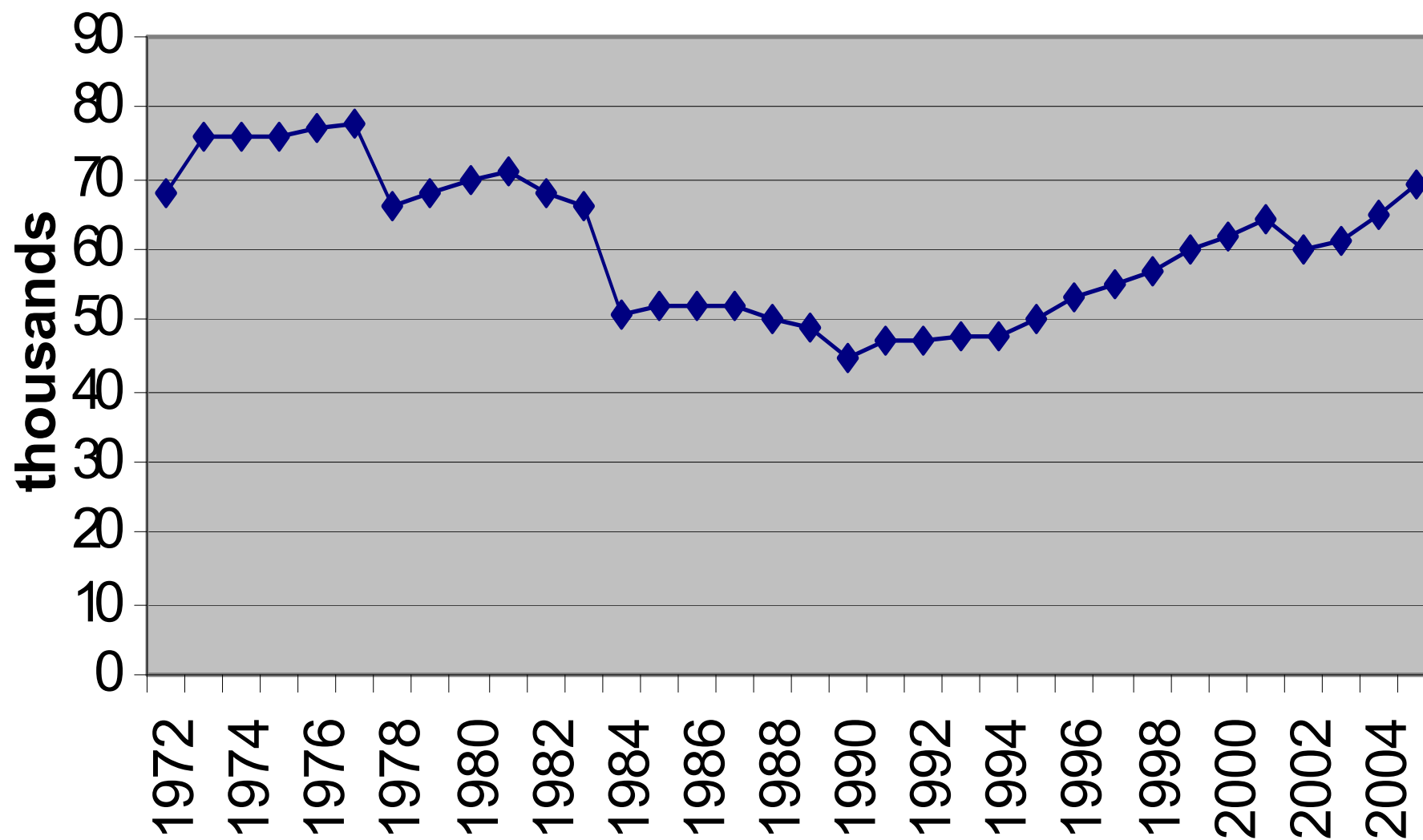
1 Corinthians 3v5-9

- Churches are planted & watered but God makes them grow
- Healthy plants are always growing
- The only alternative is dying
- Growth is a sign of health
- Quantity is a sign of quality
- Church growth is about health and quality

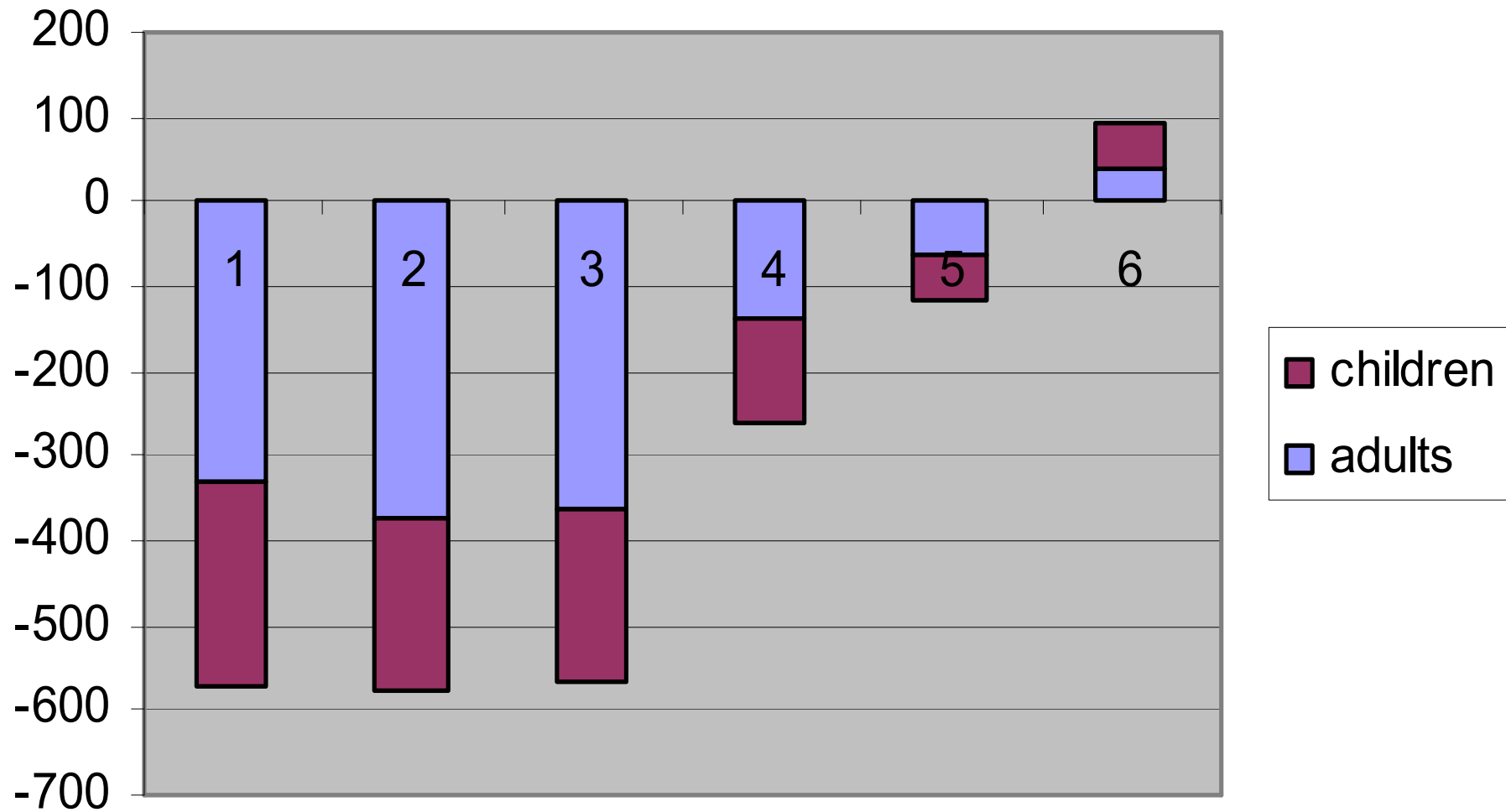
The myth of the dying church

- Numbers have fallen a lot in the last 30 yrs
- But may well have stabilised now
- And there are many areas and signs of new growth
- Much of our decline was our own fault
- So it can be put right

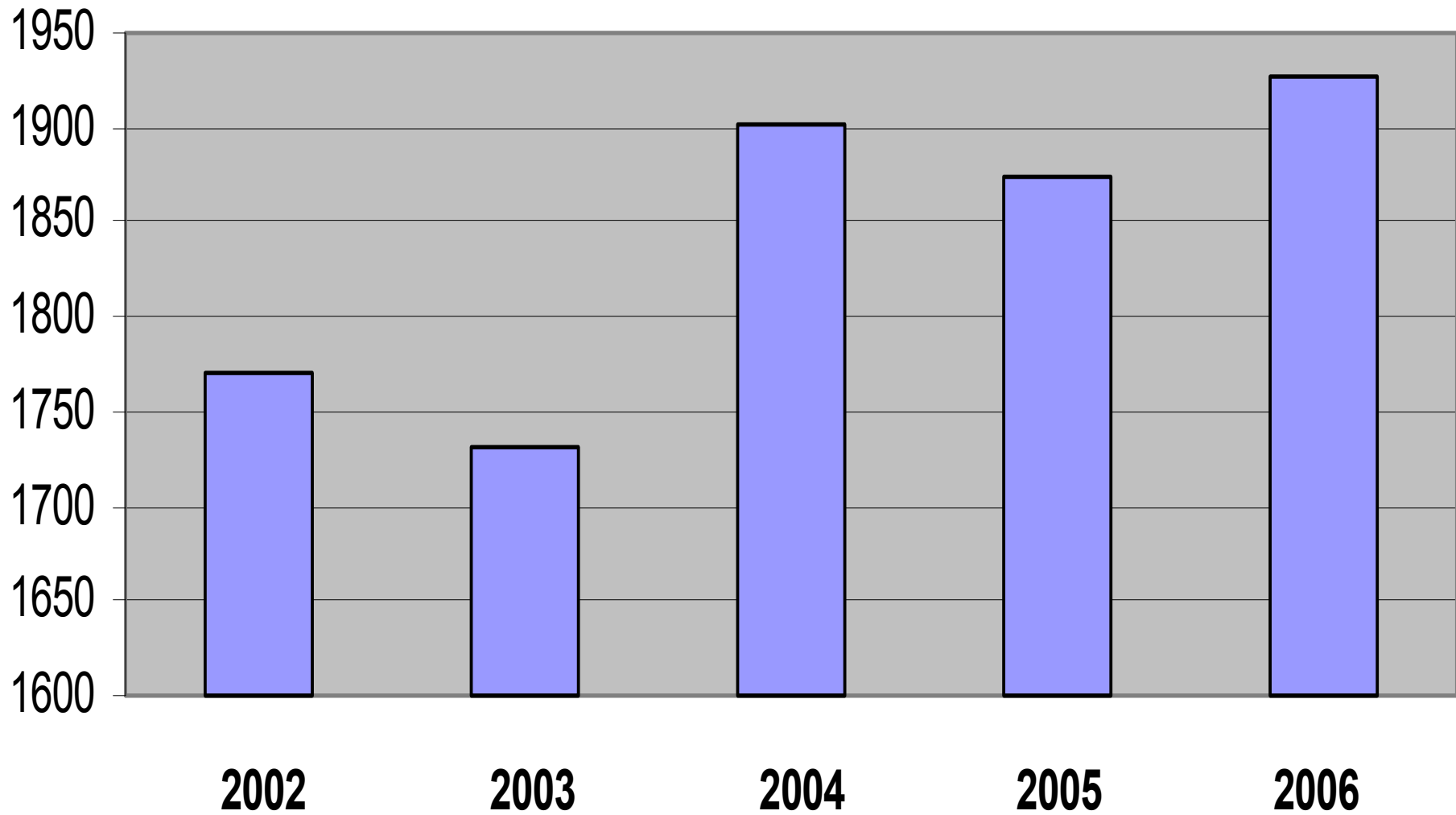
Diocese of London ER 1972 to 2005



Wolverhampton Episcopal Area Sunday attendance change 2001-2006



Solihull Deanery Sunday Attendance Count



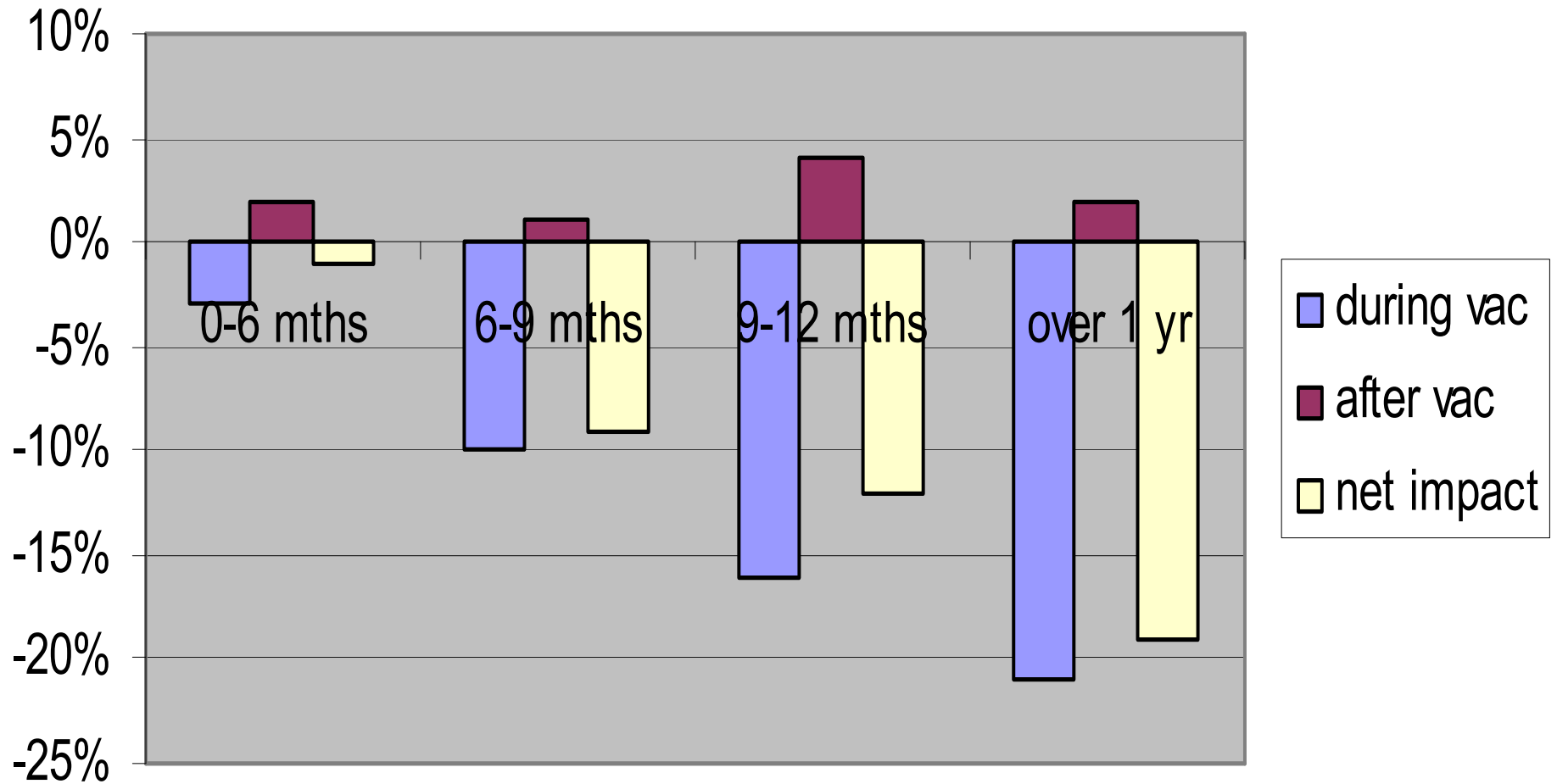
Where has attendance grown?

- The big ones have done best:
- Knowle +101
- St Alphege + 81
- (St Francis - 60)
- All Others + 51

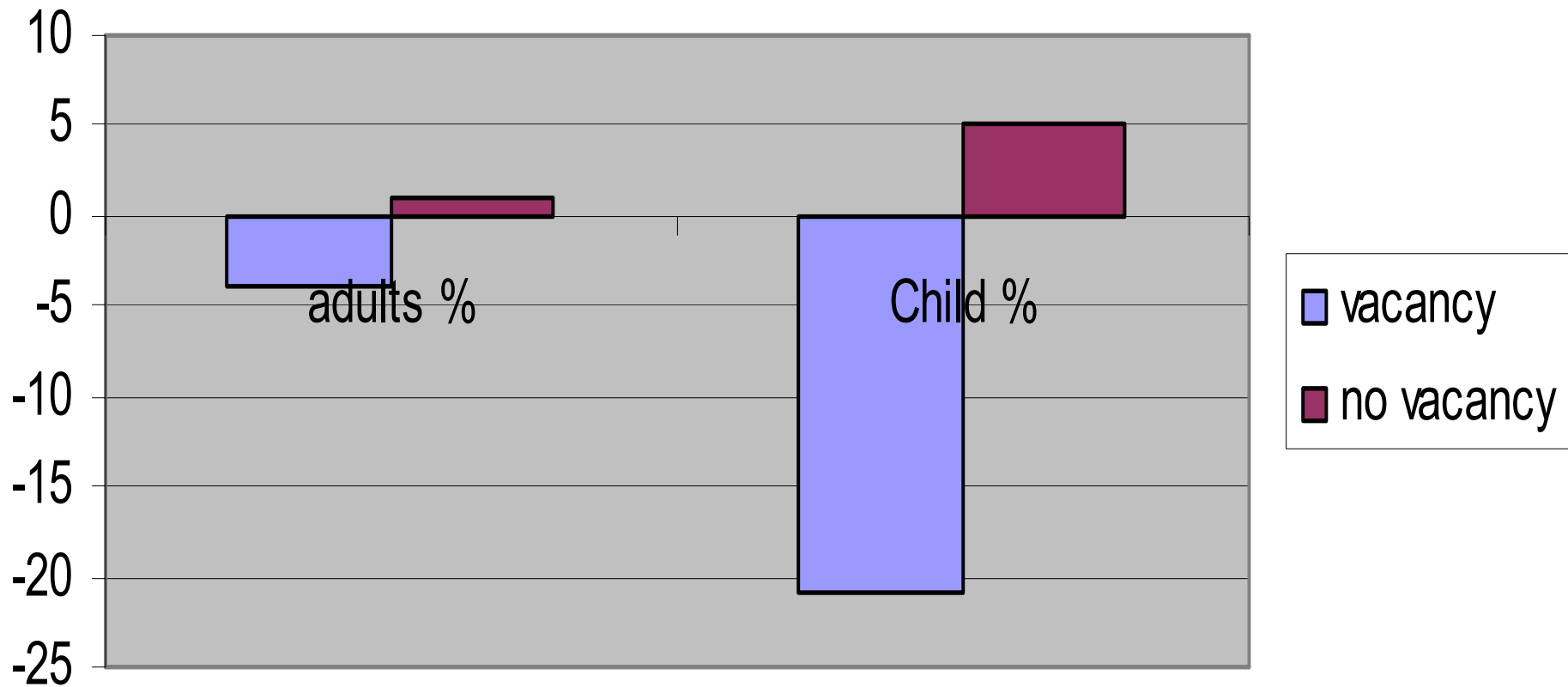
Healthy churches need to live in a healthy diocesan environment

- Long Vacancies
- Unhelpful Parish Share systems
- Job descriptions for clergy – leaders in mission and enablers of other people's ministries

uSa change during and after a vacancy (sample of 155 churches since 1998)



Walsall Archdeaconry % change in attendance 2005-2006 in 14 churches with a vacancy in 2006 and all other churches without a vacancy



Eight changes that lead to church growth

Usually, churches only grow when they change

- Surveys show that churches that don't change are shrinking, churches that do change are not shrinking
- Not every change is associated with growth – new prayer or hymn books cause no ripple
- But usually the choice is change or decay

Survey Results – innovation & electoral roll change

Churches Making	number of churches	% change to ER 1996-2002
No innovation	17	-22%
Min one change	32	+ 3%

Eight changes that lead to church growth

- Planting new congregations & fresh expressions

New Worship Events stimulated in Walsall Archdeaconry in 2005

- Monthly Youth Services
- Weekly Pub Service Sunday night
- Monthly services in Care Homes
- Sunday morning doubled up to 9.30/11am
- All age service in shop premises
- Café Church
- Monthly Memorial Services

New Worship Events stimulated in Walsall Archdeaconry in 2005

- Nursery Praise
- Sat evening for migrant workers & families
- Healing Services
- Monthly Taize or Iona style
- Tues lunchtime Bible exposition
- Young families Sunday 4.30pm
- So far found 33 new events in c90 churches

Eight changes that lead to church growth

- Planting new congregations & fresh expressions
- Making worship less stiff, more relaxed, varied (Joy and laughter = only growth universal)
- Better provision for children and young people (Family Services, Sunday Schools, Youth)
- Improving welcome & integration
- Better quality, more varied, contemporary music
- More lay involvement in leadership
- Better small groups & pastoral care
- Improvements to buildings

Some Hints for getting rid of congregations

- Make the teens do action songs in the Family Service
- Cling on to the traditional evensong
- In fact, never make changes of any sort
- To keep everyone happy make the service trad one week and contemporary the next
- Ensure the building is cold, the pews uncomfy and never serve coffee after – they may get to know each other

Some Hints for getting rid of congregations

- Have groups for junior children but not secondary – they soon get the message they should leave at 11
- Keep a very narrow music and worship culture and keep it the same for all services
- Make every service a formal eucharist – its really inaccessible to strangers & they feel excluded
- Control the service and keep them busy – never give them space to encounter God
- Ensure the church activities all suit pensioners

Some Hints for getting rid of congregations

- Don't notice newcomers
- Or say 'you can't sit there, that's Mrs Jones's pew'
- Don't follow people up when they seem to be drifting away
- Never set up small groups – they create dangerous relational glue
- Allow conflict to fester under the surface

Some Hints for getting rid of congregations

- Create a Team Ministry and invest a lot of time hammering out your differences with the other members
- Tell the student enquiring about ordination to go away, get a proper job and come back when they have some experience of real life
- Never preach about giving – encourage people to spend their time fund-raising

Some Hints for getting rid of congregations

- Leave unexpectedly – the best time for shrinking congregations is in vacancies that last longer than 6 months
- I could give you statistical evidence for all of these – but if you want that you'll have to buy my books!!

The notice board can be used to
put people off

SACRED MYSTERIES SLEEPY HOLLOW
SUNDAY SERVICES

Starting 11th May 1948

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Welcome to St Isosceles and All Angles

- 1st Sunday Family Service with Sandpit
- 2nd Sunday Solemn High Mass
- 3rd Sunday 'Old Hymns' Songs of Praise
- 4th Sunday Extra-loud Eucharist with rock band
'Terminal Explosion'
- 5th Sunday Baptisms by the riverbank –
whatever the weather!

Come every week!

Welcome to St Wooldyed

Come to St Wooldyed's for reverence and tradition:

8.00 Early Mass

10.30 Morning Mass

6.30 Evening Mass

We always use the proper Prayer Book at St Wooldyed

Three similar services – one type of person

THE UPPER CREEK GROUP OF PARISHES

Our services are as follows:

St Without's 9.30am alternate Sundays

St Paddle's 11am Family Service 1st & 3rd Sundays,
otherwise eucharist

Little Snoring 8am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
6.30(2nd & 4th Sundays)

Great Creek 9am (summertime) 11am (wintertime) –
see church notice board for local variations

Joint Services 5th Sundays and other feast days –
location varies

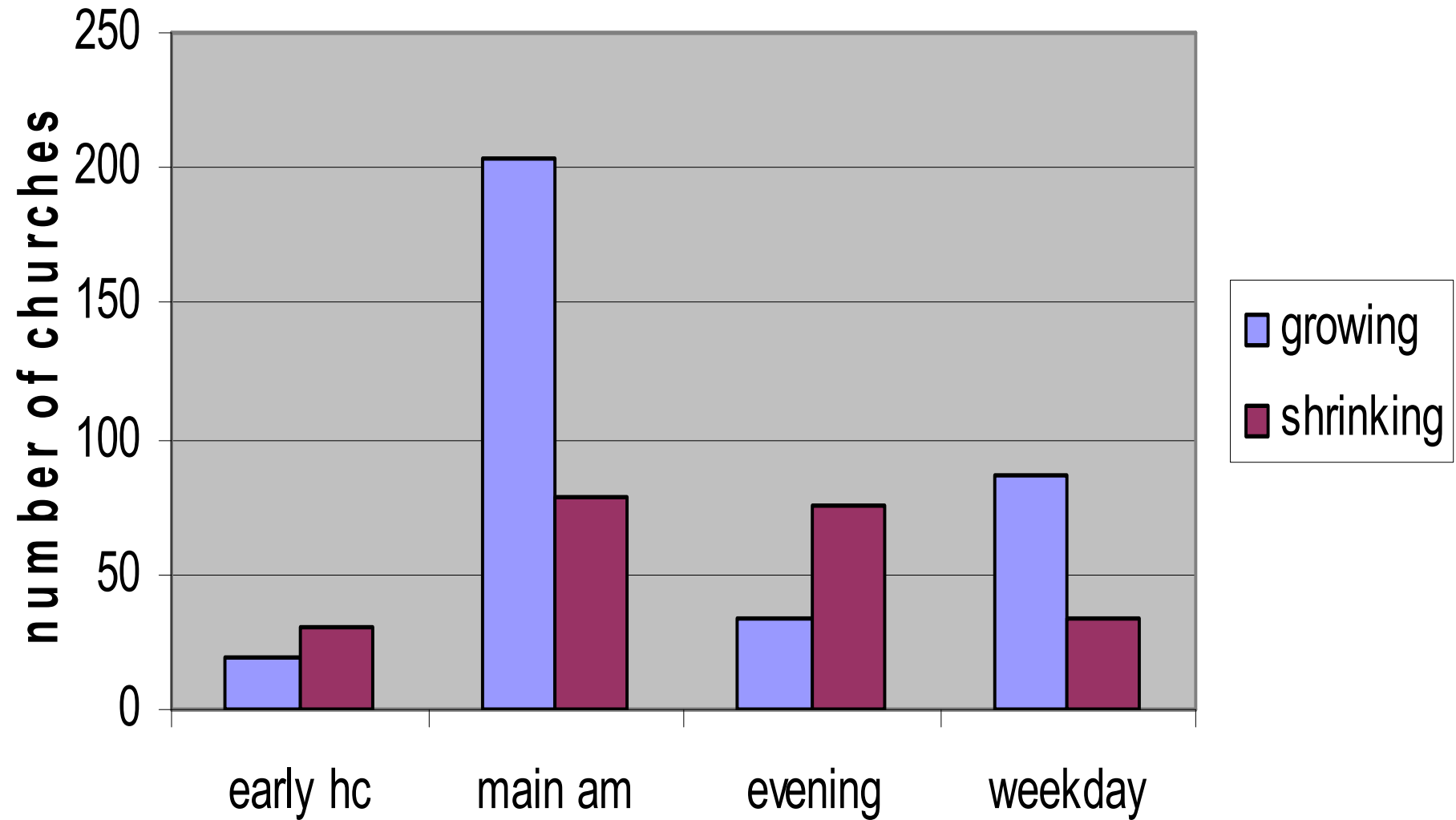
Come and join us!

Welcome to All Saints

Our service every week are:

- 9.30 Holy Eucharist with Choir
- 11.00 Family Service with groups for children
- 4.00 Service in Urdu
- 7.00 Contemporary Praise
- *Four distinct services-four types of people*

Attendance trends by service times



Healthy Churches keep up with changing times

- Service Times not set in stone
- Service Styles – multicultural church for a multicultural world
- Start new events and groups
- Strive for quality relationships and worship
- Mission focussed – MAPs
- Integrate newcomers
- Church life designed for and by younger generations
- Shepherd & flock to missionary communities