Historically, the Episcopal Church represented the English colonists who settled in eastern North Carolina, many moving in overland from Virginia. Over time this association has weakened, of course, and, as shown in Figure 4, above, but Episcopalians are still concentrated relatively heavily in northeastern North Carolina and in the Wilmington area. It may be that a number of in-migrants, both retirees and otherwise, are Episcopalians, as indicated by the somewhat higher proportions in the Triangle, the Triad and in the Charlotte area. In addition, proportions are higher in several retirement areas, notably Moore, Polk and Watauga counties, along with others in the far western part of the state. These congregations average 316 adherents apiece.

The relative strength of the Episcopal church in western North Carolina is another example of the holdover of historic patterns. In the pre-Civil war period, numerous plantation owners from eastern North and South Carolina would move to the mountains to escape the hot summers and the threat of malaria. They were predominantly Episcopalians and brought their denomination with them. Also, some Episcopalian missions were established in the west, an example being in the Valle Crucis community in Watauga County.

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