

CHURCH STREET
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“Covid-19 Check-In” Fall 2020 Survey

Report of Findings

November 30, 2020

BACKGROUND

For charts and information comparing “Fall” and “Spring” findings, references to **“Fall” survey** are for this second “check-in” conducted in October/November. References to **“Spring” survey** are for the one conducted in May.

Second “check-in” survey. Follow-up to survey conducted in May 2020

Invitation to respond emailed to church’s database on October 22, 2020. Invitation also announced via Messenger on October 23, 2020. Survey closed to responses on November 15, 2020

N = 230 documented responses
(N = 356 for Spring survey)

94% of respondents are current members

BACKGROUND: RESPONDENTS

For the Fall survey, questions were included to collect gender and age information

Gender:

Female: 69%
Male: 31%

Age:

Under age 34: 5%
Age 35-54: 22%
Age 55-69: 41%
Age 70 or older: 32%

Percentages based on number of respondents answering

BACKGROUND: CAVEATS

This sample of respondents should not be considered statistically representative of the church's membership as a whole. Rather, it is a convenience sample of people who opted to respond to the survey. Nevertheless, the number of respondents provides an acceptable base for useful comparisons among all those who participated.

Likewise in this report, information and percentages comparing "Fall" survey findings with "Spring" findings are shown only to illustrate noteworthy degrees of differences. Actual statistical values are subject to variation due to the limited sizes and characteristics of the convenience samples.

As shown on previous slide, the respondent base skews female and older
(7 in 10 are female; and 7 in 10 are age 55+)

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FINDINGS IN BRIEF

- A critical mass of worshipers still exists for resuming in-person worship (contingent on safety precautions for some). However, an increased reticence to do so is apparent, compared to the Spring survey
- Mixed opinions surface regarding respondents' preferences for types of gatherings, although cumulatively two-thirds prefer some form of in-person gathering (32% indoor worship; 19% outdoor worship; 16% small group gatherings)
- Favorable levels of openness to alternatives for in-person worship exist; alternatives include - -

Pre-registration and
assigned seating

Alternative locations,
other than the Nave

Alternative worship
days/times

Willingness to attend
outdoor services

- Declining case counts, vaccine availability and widespread testing availability continue to be the best indicators of when in-person worship should resume
- As in the Spring survey, widespread viewership of online worship services continues, but to a lesser extent for other online meetings/events

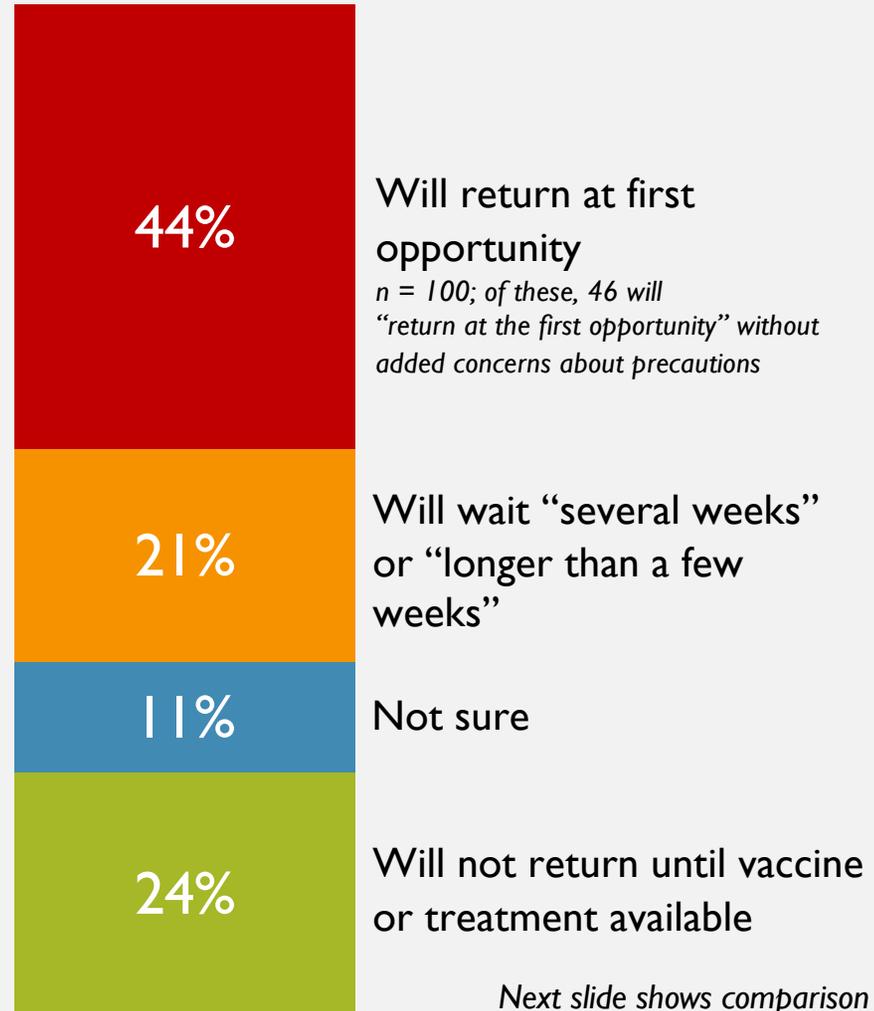
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FINDINGS IN BRIEF

(CONTINUED)

- Interest and viewership of online music presentations continues, with nearly two-thirds of respondents watching one or more events.
 - Most viewing of online worship services centers on Church Street
 - Rev. Jan Buxton Wade's daily prayers continue to be widely followed
 - Music events and spiritual enrichment services continue to lead a list of several other desired online offerings
 - Survey indicators suggest the pandemic has not had adverse effects on people's physical health. Mental health, financial stress and job stability are still perceived to have diminished, mirroring the Spring survey. Importantly, however, self-rated levels of these factors are still mostly at positive points on the ratings scales.
- Nearly all respondents have contact with one or more people to provide support
 - More than half of respondents claim spiritual growth during the pandemic
 - Open-ended comments most frequently fall under three themes:
 - 1) Gratitude for (and commendations) of church's clergy, staff, leadership and online offerings
 - 2) Expressions of lament of the absence of in-person worship and other gatherings
 - 3) Expressions/reasons why regathering should begin now

Attending in-person worship when permissible



Next slide shows comparison to Spring survey

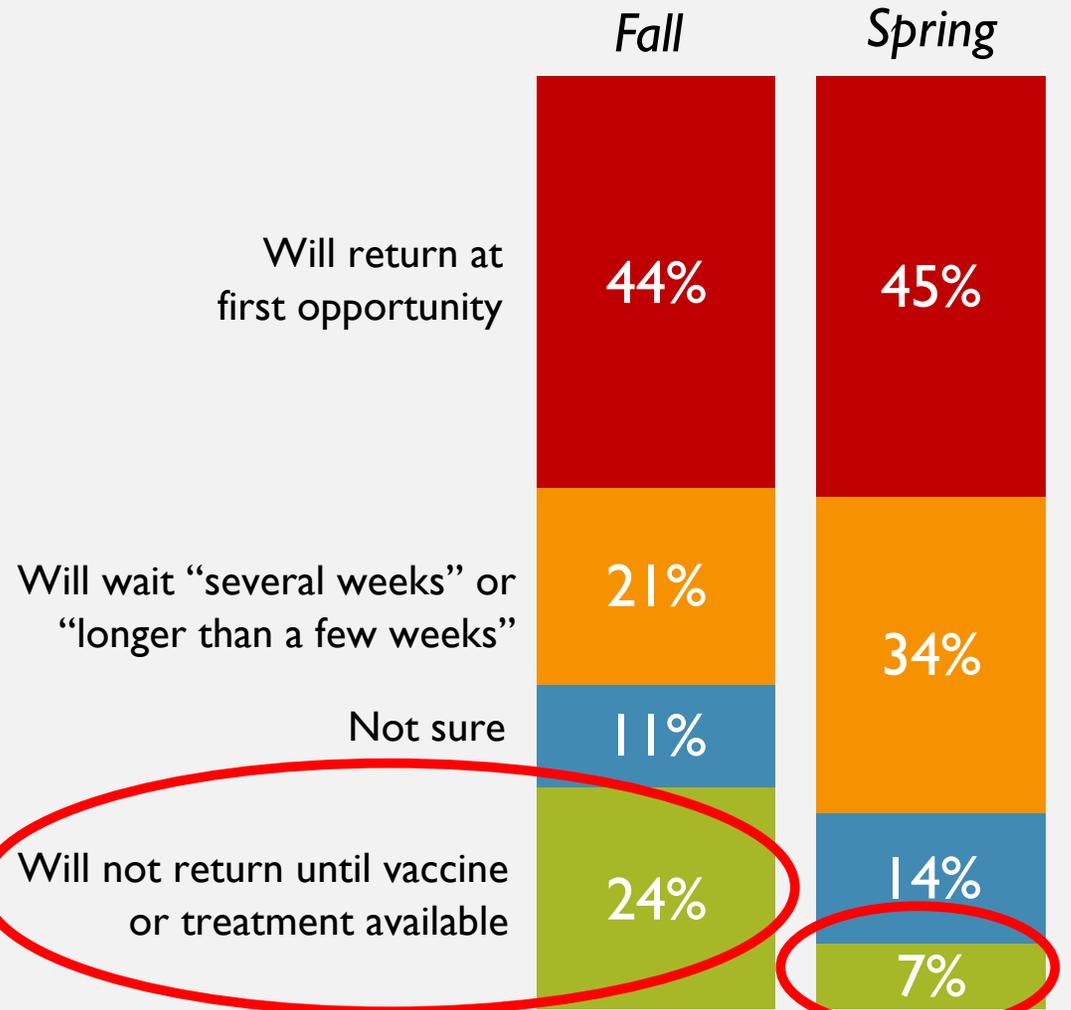
FINDINGS:

CRITICAL MASS
EXISTS TO SUPPORT
IN-PERSON
WORSHIP

FINDINGS/COMPARISON:

ALTHOUGH A CRITICAL MASS LEVEL IS STILL APPARENT, RETICENCE TO “RETURN UNTIL A VACCINE OR TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE” HAS INCREASED SINCE THE SPRING SURVEY

Attending in-person worship when permissible



FINDINGS:
CRITICAL MASS
EXISTS TO SUPPORT
IN-PERSON
WORSHIP,
CONTINGENT ON
PRECAUTIONS
FOR SOME

Commentary

- 100 respondents noted intent to “return at the first opportunity” for in-person worship. Given that (1) the pool of survey respondents represents less than 20% of the church’s full membership; and (2) the respondent base’s ages skewed older, it’s plausible to expect additional people share that intent to attend in-person worship, although they did not participate in the survey. Conceivably, at least 150 people -- and most likely more -- would attend worship when services recommence.
- Degrees of reticence about attending are apparent, and this has increased since the Spring survey. Still, the majority of respondents plan to start attending at some point after in-person worship services begin.
- A reasonable expectation is that even those who initially are apprehensive will begin attending as they observe other family/acquaintances attending, and as many other churches continue to “re-open.”

FINDINGS:

REGATHERING - -
MIXED OPINIONS,
ALTHOUGH
CUMULATIVELY 67%
PREFER SOME FORM
OF IN-PERSON
WORSHIP OR
SMALL GROUP
GATHERINGS

32% indoor worship + 19% outdoor worship
+ 16% small groups

Preferred scenario for resumption of gatherings

Resume indoor, in-person services; continue online worship for those who do not attend in person 32%

Keep all activities online only; wait to see what happens with the virus as others re-open 21%

Resume limited outdoor, in-person worship; continue online for those who do not attend in person 19%

Resume limited in-person small groups; continue small group online offerings; worship and other larger events remain online 16%

Not sure 7%

Other* 5%

See next slide for
comparisons to
Spring survey

*Eleven respondents offered verbatim responses; six of these advised to resume indoor/in-person worship with added contingencies

Preferred scenario for resumption of gatherings

Comparisons of Findings from Spring and Fall Surveys

NOTE: Response options in each survey differed. Similar/comparable ones are shown here.

SPRING: Resume limited in-person worship, limited small groups, and continue online offerings

FALL: Resume indoor, in-person services; continue online worship for those who do not attend in person



SPRING: Keep all activities online only; wait to see what happens with the virus as others re-open

FALL: Keep all activities online only; wait to see what happens with the virus as others re-open

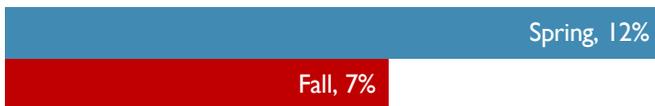


SPRING: Meet in smaller groups or size-limited gatherings for a few more weeks before resuming in-person worship

FALL: Resume limited in-person small groups; continue small group online offerings; worship and other larger events remain online



SPRING/FALL: Not sure



FINDINGS:

REGATHERING - -
MIXED OPINIONS,
ALTHOUGH
CUMULATIVELY 67%
PREFER SOME FORM
OF IN-PERSON
WORSHIP OR
SMALL GROUP
GATHERINGS

*32% indoor worship + 19% outdoor worship
+ 16% small groups*

Commentary

- Respondents' desire for opportunities to regather has been made more apparent by way of this question
- However, no overwhelming preference for indoor worship. Among the base of the 67% selecting some form of regathering:
 - 47% prefer "indoor, in-person"
 - 29% prefer "limited outdoor, in-person"
 - 24% prefer "limited in-person small group offerings"

FINDINGS:

OPENNESS TO ALTERNATIVES FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Pre-registration and assigned seating



Findings for Fall survey unchanged, compared to Spring survey

Alternative worship days/times



Findings for Fall survey unchanged, compared to Spring survey

Location other than the Nave (Not a query in Spring survey)



Willing to attend outdoor worship or special services (Not a query in Spring survey)



FINDINGS:
OPENNESS TO
ALTERNATIVES
FOR IN-PERSON
WORSHIP

Commentary

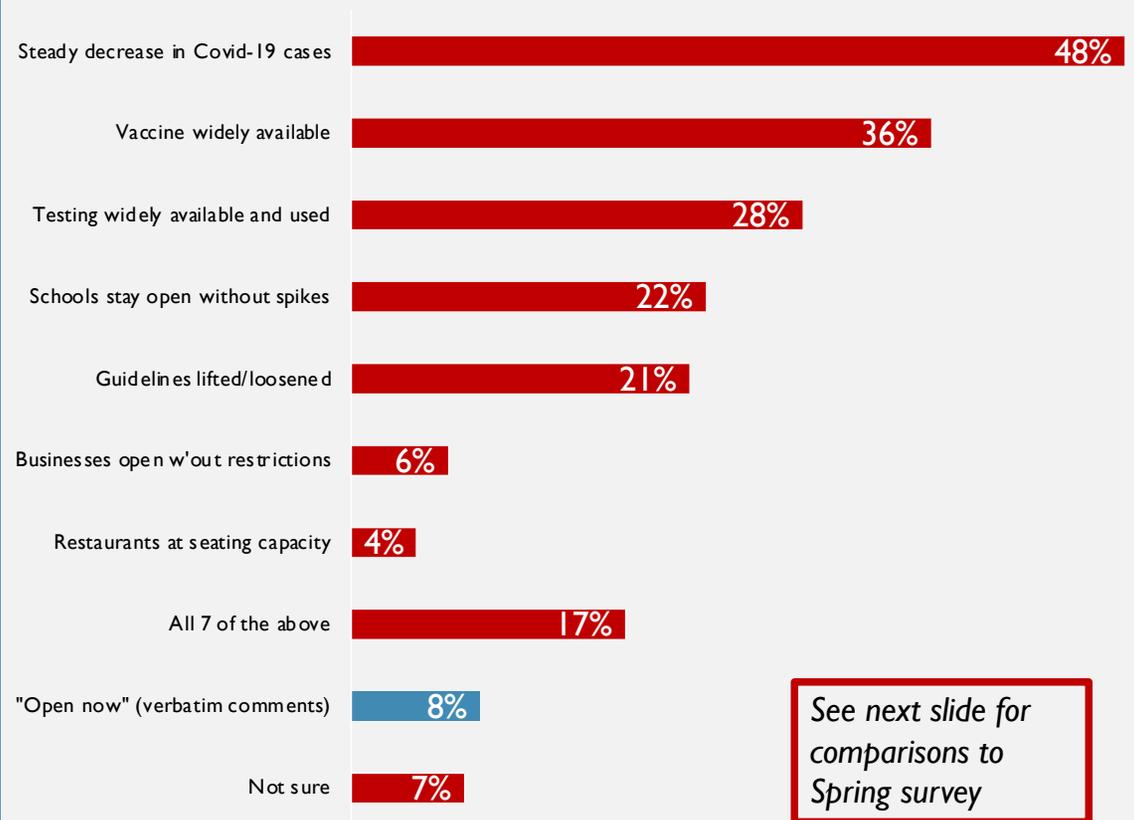
- As long as the virus persists and is communicable, 60%+ of respondents express willingness to accept alternatives for in-person gatherings.
- Highest metric of opposition is for pre-registration and assigned seating (23% said neither of these would be acceptable)

FINDINGS:

REGATHERING - -
CASE COUNTS,
VACCINE AND
WIDESPREAD
TESTING CONTINUE
TO BE LEADING
INDICATORS OF
WHEN TO RESUME
IN-PERSON
WORSHIP

*“Best signal” that it is time for
in-person worship*

Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses

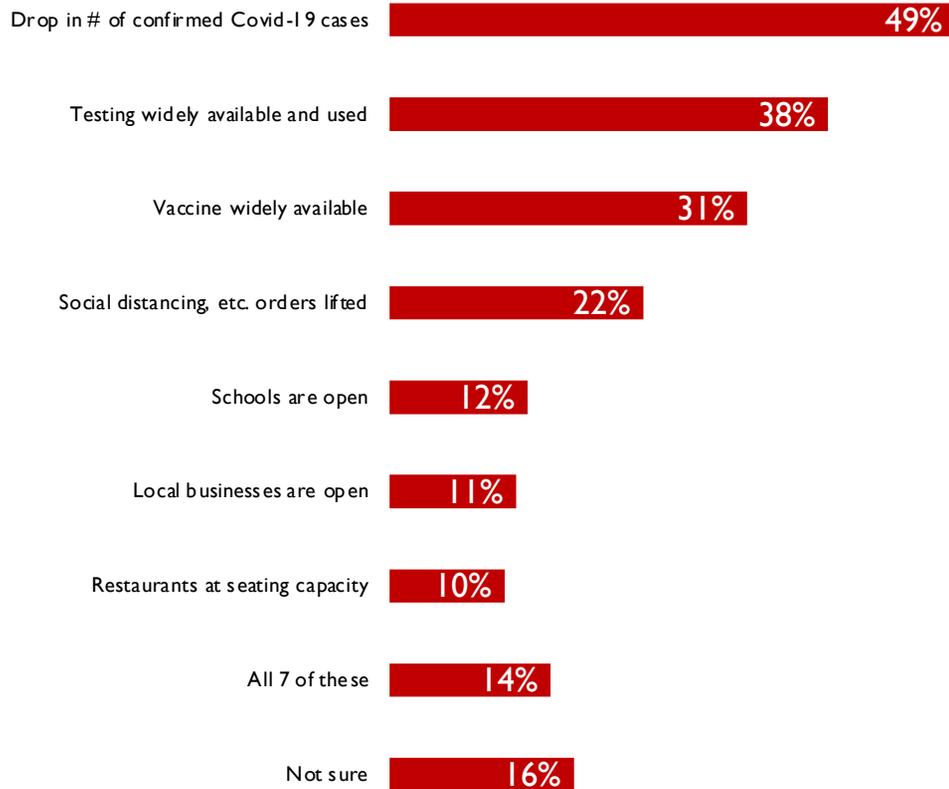


See next slide for
comparisons to
Spring survey

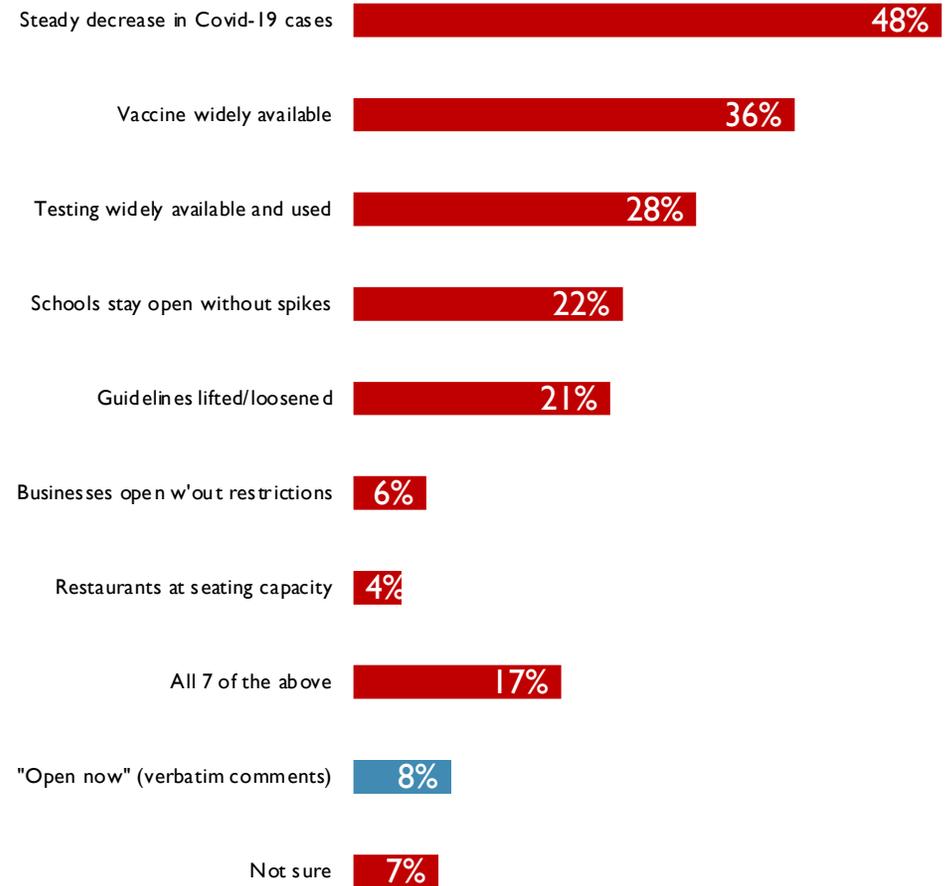
“Best signal” that it is time for in-person worship

Comparisons of Findings from Spring and Fall Surveys

SPRING



FALL



FINDINGS:

REGATHERING - -
CASE COUNTS,
VACCINE AND
WIDESPREAD
TESTING CONTINUE
TO BE LEADING
INDICATORS OF
WHEN TO RESUME
IN-PERSON
WORSHIP

Commentary

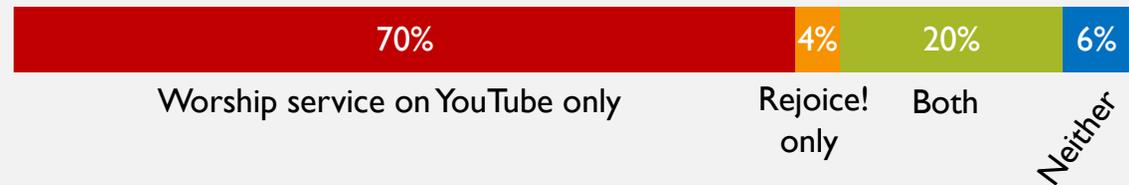
- Even though a shift of ranking for testing and vaccine availability shows up in the findings for this Fall survey, the statistical differences between the two aren't notably significant. The more important point is that these two, along with declining case counts, are the "best signals" for most respondents.
- Nevertheless, 19 respondents voiced verbatim opinions to "return now." Several included references to other churches now gathering in-person, schools re-opening, etc.

FINDINGS:
WIDESPREAD VIEWERSHIP OF ONLINE WORSHIP, BUT LESS PARTICIPATION IN OTHER ONLINE MEETINGS/ EVENTS

Worship services & Rejoice!

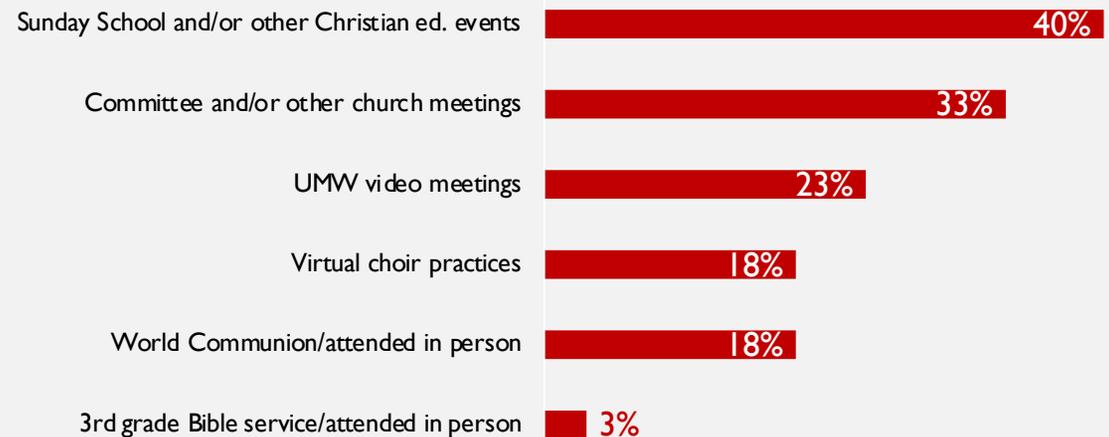
94% have watched the worship service (on YouTube) and/or Rejoice!

Findings for Fall survey unchanged, compared to Spring survey



Other meetings & events

Compared with Spring survey (for items that can be compared), notable increases in participation



FINDINGS:
WIDESPREAD
VIEWERSHIP OF
ONLINE WORSHIP,
BUT LESS
PARTICIPATION IN
OTHER ONLINE
MEETINGS AND
EVENTS

Commentary

- Among the respondents, a worship experience -- even online -- is significant and presumed to be of high importance.
- Rejoice!, though viewed by fewer people than the YouTube worship telecasts, plays a key role in the overall worship opportunity, especially for people who do not use or underutilize the Internet.
- Although viewings of other online meetings and events are somewhat less than worship, the broader array of other events, meetings and online gatherings collectively provide opportunities for more rounded church engagement.

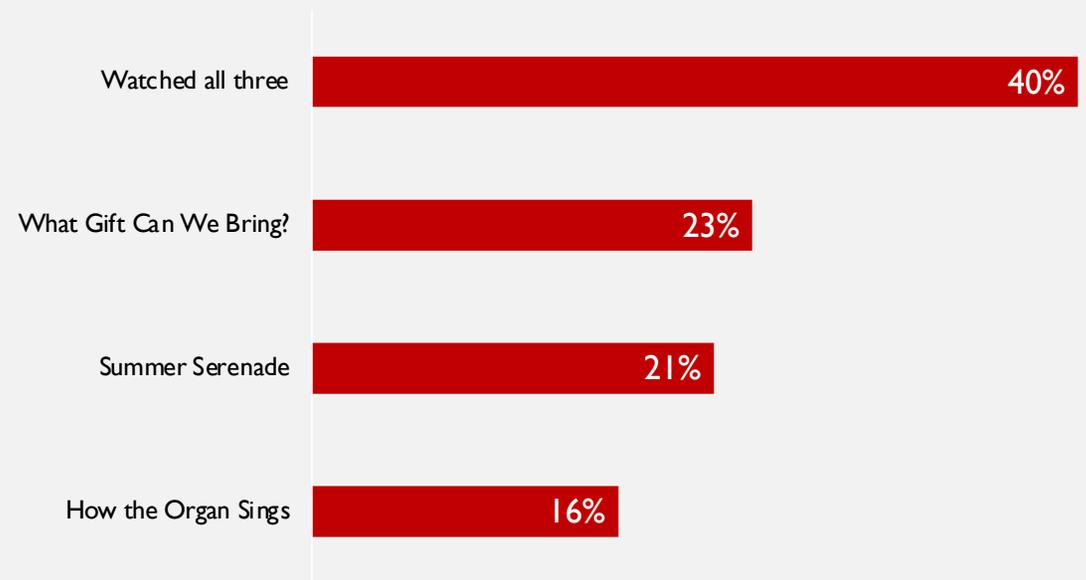
FINDINGS:
CONTINUED
INTEREST AND
VIEWERSHIP OF
ONLINE MUSIC
PRESENTATIONS

Summer and Fall online music presentations

63% viewed at least one of the three events

55% in the Spring survey

Of this group of respondents - -



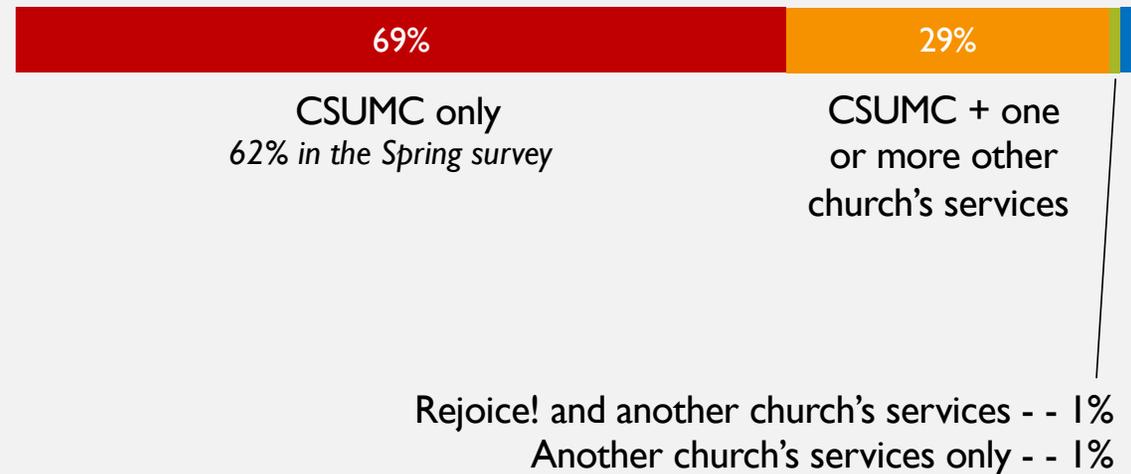
FINDINGS:
CONTINUED
INTEREST AND
VIEWERSHIP OF
ONLINE MUSIC
PRESENTATIONS

Commentary

- The online music events continue to represent the second-most viewed online offerings (online worship ranks first) by respondents. This underscores the high value of the music ministry during these challenging times.
- Fall survey findings indicate increased viewership of one or more music events, compared to Spring survey.

FINDINGS:
MOST ONLINE
WORSHIP
“ATTENDANCE”
CENTERED ON
CHURCH STREET

Online viewing of services from other churches



Commentary

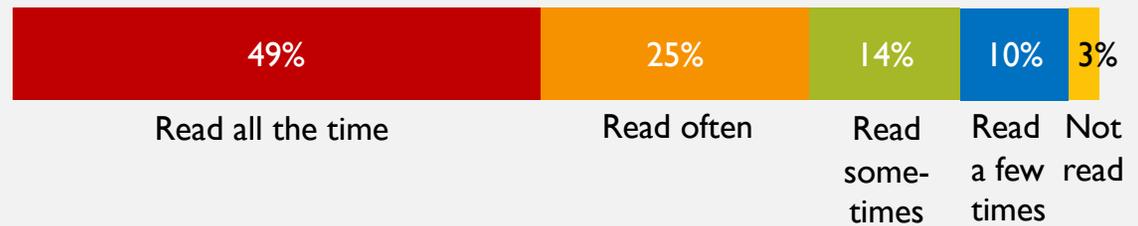
- Among nearly all survey respondents, Church Street is the primary source for worship

FINDINGS:
**REV. JAN WADE'S
 DAILY PRAYERS
 CONTINUE TO BE
 WIDELY FOLLOWED**

Reading of Pastor Jan's prayers

97% read her prayers at least "a few times."

74% read them "all the time" or "often"



Findings for Fall survey (above) unchanged, compared to Spring survey

Reading of Pastor Jan's prayers

among sub-group of respondents* who "have grown spiritually" during stay-at-home orders

98% read her prayers at least "a few times."

81% read them "all the time" or "often"



* In a separate survey question, 53% of respondents said they had "grown spiritually during the stay-at-home guidelines/orders of the pandemic" (n=117)

FINDINGS:

REV. JAN WADE'S DAILY PRAYERS CONTINUE TO BE WIDELY FOLLOWED

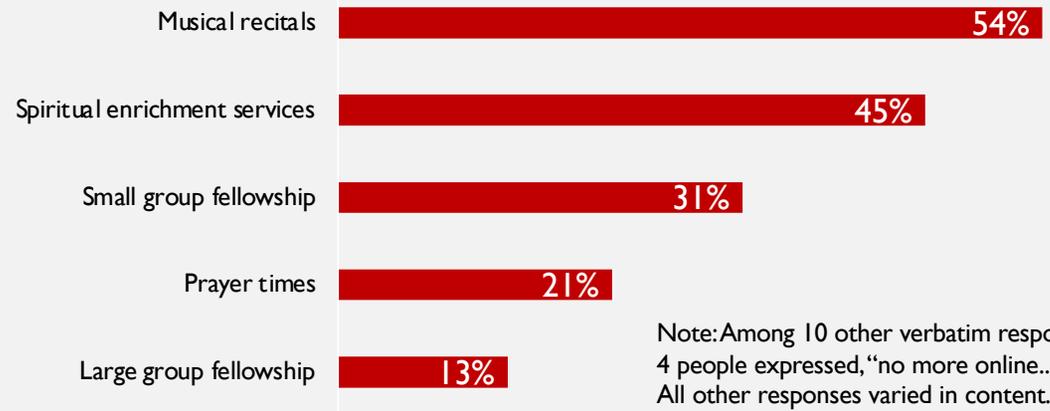
Commentary

- In addition to online worship opportunities, Rev. Jan Wade's daily BINDING SOUL AND SOURCE prayers have been widely noticed and read.
- People's attentiveness to these prayers appear to have a correlation to their spiritual nourishment and growth, based on the higher percentages of prayer following among people who responded "Yes" to the question, "Have you grown spiritually during the stay-at-home guidelines/order of the pandemic?"

FINDINGS:
MUSIC EVENTS AND
SPIRITUAL
ENRICHMENT
SERVICES
LEAD A LIST OF
SEVERAL DESIRED
ONLINE OFFERINGS

Preferences for “other online offerings”

Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses



Note: Among 10 other verbatim responses, 4 people expressed, “no more online...”. All other responses varied in content.

Findings for Fall survey unchanged, compared to Spring survey

Commentary

- Along with other related findings, the importance of music is again underscored with the responses to this survey question.
- As in the Spring survey, only 70% of all respondents answered this question (the lowest response rate for all in the survey, except the final open-ended one). This may indicate that many people are generally satisfied with the current online offerings.

FINDINGS:

NO INDICATION OF
PANDEMIC HAVING
ADVERSE EFFECTS
ON RESPONDENTS'
PHYSICAL HEALTH

Respondents were asked to self-rate their pre-pandemic and current perceptions of **physical health** on a 1-to-5 scale

Self-ratings: **Physical health**

Pre-Pandemic: Average rating = **4.37**

86% rated "4" or "5"



Now: Average rating = **4.23**

84% rated "4" or "5"



"Poor" = 1 (red)

2 (orange)

3 (green)

4 (blue)

"Excellent" = 5 (yellow)

Findings for Fall survey unchanged, compared to Spring survey

FINDINGS:

INDICATION OF PANDEMIC CONTINUING TO HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON RESPONDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH. HOWEVER, RATINGS ARE STILL MOSTLY POSITIVE.

Respondents were asked to self-rate their pre-pandemic and current perceptions of mental health on a 1-to-5 scale

Self-ratings: Mental health

Pre-Pandemic: Average rating = 4.55

96% rated "4" or "5"



Now: Average rating = 4.01

74% rated "4" or "5"



"Poor" = 1 (red) 2 (orange) 3 (green) 4 (blue) "Excellent" = 5 (yellow)

Compared to Spring survey, margin of diminished self-ratings slightly more pronounced in the Fall survey:

Average Rating		
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	4.49	4.55
Now	4.11	4.01
Decrease	.38	.54

% "4" or "5"		
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	94%	96%
Now	77%	74%
Decrease	17 pts.	22 pts.

FINDINGS:

INDICATION OF PANDEMIC CONTINUING TO HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON RESPONDENTS' FINANCIAL-RELATED STRESS. HOWEVER, RATINGS ARE STILL MOSTLY POSITIVE.

Respondents were asked to self-rate their pre-pandemic and current perceptions of personal financial stress on a 1-to-5 scale

Self-ratings: Personal financial stress

Pre-Pandemic: Average rating = **4.33**

85% rated "4" or "5"



Now: Average rating = **4.04**

75% rated "4" or "5"



"Poor" = 1 (red) 2 (orange) 3 (green) 4 (blue) "Excellent" = 5 (yellow)

Compared to Spring survey, margin of diminished self-ratings less pronounced in the Fall survey:

Average Rating		
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	4.25	4.33
Now	3.88	4.04
Decrease	.37	.29

% "4" or "5"		
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	87%	85%
Now	69%	75%
Decrease	18 pts.	10 pts.

FINDINGS:

INDICATION OF PANDEMIC CONTINUING TO HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON PERCEIVED JOB STABILITY. HOWEVER, RATINGS ARE STILL MOSTLY POSITIVE.

Respondents were asked to self-rate their pre-pandemic and current perceptions of **job stability** on a 1-to-5 scale

Self-ratings: **Job stability***

Pre-Pandemic: Average rating = **4.66**

97% rated "4" or "5"



Now: Average rating = **4.25**

80% rated "4" or "5"



In a stable job situation?:
 "Disagree" = 1 (red) 2 (orange) 3 (green) 4 (blue) "Agree" = 5 (yellow)

* Calculations exclude "Does not apply to me" responses

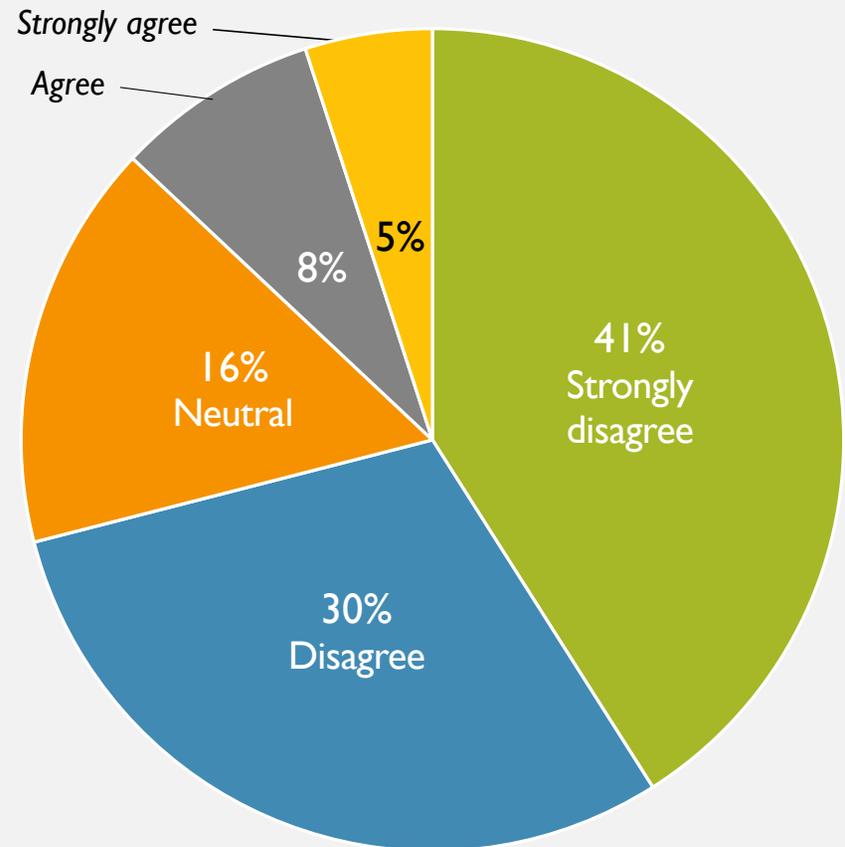
Compared to Spring survey, margin of diminished self-ratings mostly unchanged:

	Average Rating	
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	4.72	4.66
Now	4.23	4.25
Drop	.49	.41

	% "4" or "5"	
	Spring	Fall
Pre-pandemic	97%	97%
Now	82%	80%
Drop	15 pts.	17 pts.

FINDINGS:
SELF-REPORTED
JOB STATUS
GENERALLY
CONSISTENT WITH
“JOB STABILITY”
RATINGS METRIC
(ON PREVIOUS SLIDE)

“My employment status has destabilized since June”...



Calculations exclude "Does not apply to me" responses

FINDINGS:

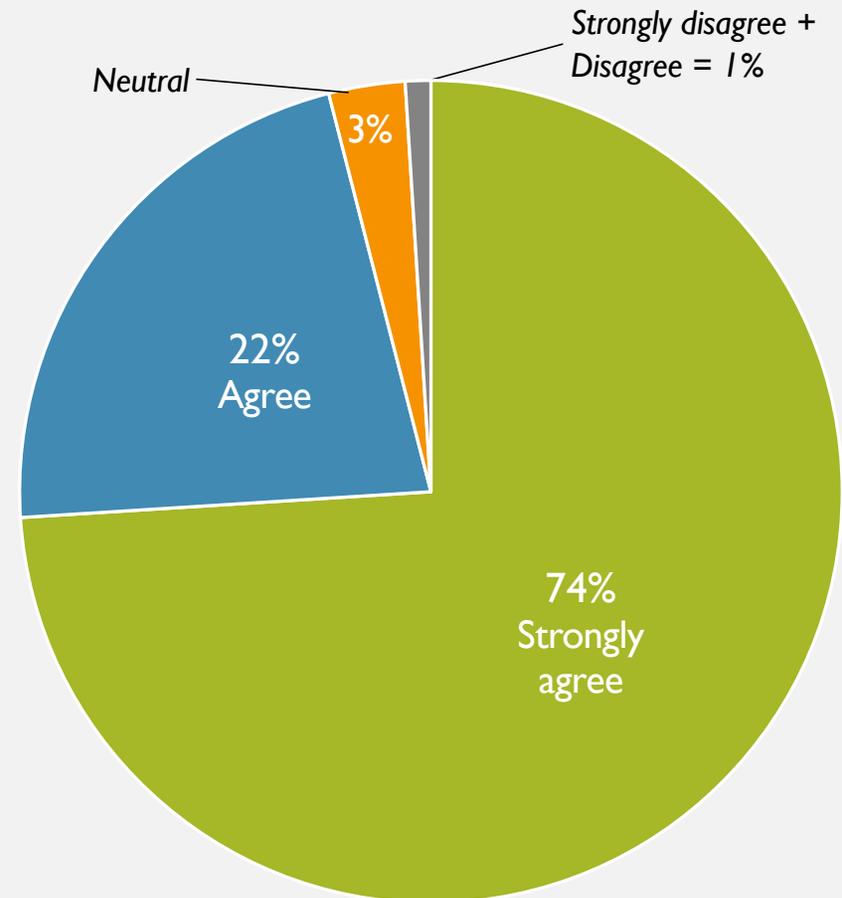
INDICATIONS OF
PANDEMIC HAVING
ADVERSE EFFECTS
ON MENTAL
HEALTH, FINANCIAL
STRESS, AND
JOB STABILITY.
HOWEVER, RATINGS
ARE STILL MOSTLY
POSITIVE.

Commentary

- As was found in the Spring survey, the effects of the pandemic appear to have adversely impacted people's perceptions of their state of mental health, while adding to their financial stress levels.
- Additionally, there has been a slight erosion in perceived job stability among respondents who were/are employed.
- Nevertheless, perceptions for all these measures remain mostly positive/favorable. The potential digressions from pre-pandemic to the present time, however, are worthy of note and sensitivity to the congregation.
- 96% said they are "in contact by phone, in-person or online with people" in their lives they can count on to help them "no matter what happens." (see next slide)

FINDINGS:
FAMILY/FRIEND
SUPPORT SOURCES
AVAILABLE TO
ALMOST
EVERYONE

“I am in contact with people that I can count on”...



FINDINGS:

MORE THAN HALF
OF RESPONDENTS
CLAIM SPIRITUAL
GROWTH DURING
THE PANDEMIC

*Have you grown spiritually during
the stay-at-home guidelines/orders
of the pandemic?*

Not sure

29%

No

18%

Yes

53%

*Findings for Fall survey
unchanged, compared to
Spring survey*

FINDINGS:

MORE THAN HALF OF RESPONDENTS CLAIM SPIRITUAL GROWTH DURING THE PANDEMIC

Commentary

- The church's responses to the pandemic, and perhaps other unnamed resources of spiritual enrichment, have provided means for spiritual growth for more than half of the survey respondents. Less than 1 in 5 said they have **not** experienced spiritual growth.
- Although spiritual enrichment during such challenging times could seem to be a paradox, perhaps it is further evidence of a key foundation of our faith: That God always finds ways to nurture and strengthen the souls of God's people, even amid strife and adversity.
- In verbatim responses to the survey questionnaire's request for open-ended feedback, several respondents referred to spiritual enrichment by Rev. Wade's daily prayers, the online worship services, online music presentations and other efforts by the church to help people continue to feel connected. Some also referred to the pandemic-forced "slow down" of their previously busy lives and a more introspective spiritual awareness.

FINDINGS:
HIGHLIGHTS OF
VERBATIM RESPONSES
TO “ADDITIONAL
FEEDBACK”
QUESTION

Respondents were invited to provide additional open-ended feedback. 79 people submitted responses.

In summary, based on synthesis of words, feelings and forms of written expression that appeared multiple times, three themes surfaced:

Gratitude for (and commendations of) church’s clergy, staff, leadership and online offerings

Expressions of lament over the absence of in-person worship and other church-centered gatherings, although respondents understand and accept why it is necessary

Expressions/reasons why regathering should begin now

The following three slides help illustrate each of these themes

FINDINGS:
HIGHLIGHTS OF
VERBATIM RESPONSES
TO “ADDITIONAL
FEEDBACK” QUESTION

1 of 3 themes

Gratitude for (and commendations of) church’s clergy, staff, leadership and online offerings

The gratitude and commendations theme is the most prevalent of all in the comments and feedback. This tracks similarly with comments in the Spring survey.

Some of the expressions refer to the church’s endeavors generally, while others cite specific programs and/or individuals.

Of 41 expressions under this theme, 22 relate to things such as the online worship services, as well as online meetings, Sunday School classes, choir rehearsals, UMW meetings and other spiritual/Christian education offerings.

The other 19 expressions relate to clergy, staff and “leadership” in general.

FINDINGS:
HIGHLIGHTS OF
VERBATIM RESPONSES
TO “ADDITIONAL
FEEDBACK” QUESTION

2 of 3 themes

Expressions of lament over the absence of in-person worship and other church-centered gatherings, although respondents understand and accept why it is necessary

Like the previous theme, this also mirrors one of the themes from the Spring survey.

18 “emotional” specifications (e.g., “I miss...”, “I’m disappointed...”, “feel isolated”) of lament, plus numerous others which imply these feelings

Expressions often coupled with words of gratitude for how the church is striving to do all it can under the circumstances

FINDINGS:
HIGHLIGHTS OF
VERBATIM RESPONSES
TO “ADDITIONAL
FEEDBACK” QUESTION

3 of 3 themes

Expressions/reasons why regathering should begin now

19 comments related to “It’s time to begin Sunday services at the church...”; “...open ASAP”; and similar

In most cases, rationale for opening is included; e.g.: “other churches have started”; “re-gather, and continue online services so people have a choice”; and “it can be managed safely”