

2020 Survey of Independent & Nondenominational Churches

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N=2307 99% pre-COVID-19 Lockdown

Includes numerous large nondenominational Churches

Results weighted by region and size for sample group
and aggregate size, region and proportion of religious population.

Your Location, Building and Affiliation

Year official founded median 1970, if moved since (36%) then in what year at current location? median 1993
In what region is your congregation's place of worship physically located?

Northeast	4.5%
South	64%
Northcentral	24%
West	7%

Community Description

Rural or open country	26%
Village or town <10K	8%
Small city or town 10-50K	9%
Downtown/central large city	8%
Older residential large city	27%
Older suburb city 50K+	14%
Newer suburb city 50K+	10%

Do any of the following types of other organizations also use the facility where you worship? (Check all that apply.)

- 16% Another congregation(s)
 - 9% A school (K-6, K-12)
 - 4% A day care or preschool
 - 17% Nonprofit organization(s), e.g., Boy Scouts, food shelf, credit union
 - 19% Support group(s), e.g., A.A., Al-Anon, Alzheimer's
 - 8% Government, e.g., voting, town hall meetings
- IF another congregation, is the other congregation different in language or ethnicity?
Yes 14 %?
- IF another church is it different denominational affiliation or faith than yours?
Yes 69 %?

Is your church part of a Network, Fellowship, Association of Churches or Denomination? 75% Yes 25% No

If your church is Nondenominational or Independent, was it founded that way? 73% Yes

Worship

Please describe the worship services your congregation holds on a **typical weekend**:

Attendance Size Groups

1-50	49%
51-100	25%
101-250	18%
251 or more	9%

Percent of worship attendance change (Growth or Decline) in five years – median 0% change

- 27% Decline -25% or more
- 19% Decline btw. -5.0% & -24.9%
- 15% Stable btw. -4.9% & +4.9%
- 10% Growth btw. +5.0% & +24.9%
- 30% Growth +25% or more

Seating Capacity – median 250 seats

How well does the following describe your congregation’s **regular weekend worship services**?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	Not at all	Slightly	Sometimes	Well	Very Well
Choir.....	58%	12%	9%	8%	14%
Organ.....	63%	11%	8%	3%	16%
Electric guitar.....	47%	10%	12%	12%	19%
Lord’s Supper, Communion or Eucharist	5%	7%	34%	32%	22%
Reading or performing by children.....	32%	35%	16%	8%	10%
Reading or performing by youth	30%	27%	20%	12%	11%

How well do the following describe your congregation’s **largest regular weekend worship service**?

✓ ONE ON EACH LINE	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Quite Well	Very Well
Reverent.....	10%	7%	27%	38%	18%
Contemporary.....	20%	13%	24%	18%	25%
Thought-provoking	1%	4%	16%	37%	42%
Formal rituals or liturgy	54%	16%	23%	5%	3%
Innovative	8%	26%	32%	26%	8%
Informal	3%	10%	26%	31%	30%

Does your congregation provide: percent saying yes

- Wheelchair accommodations? 85%
- Sign Language accommodations? 8%
- Large Print accommodations? 34%
- Hearing Device accommodations? 33%

Other accommodations? - hearing suppression, translation, text on screen, classes, quiet rooms, ADA restrooms, special seating, gluten free, buddies, parking, special ministry.

Participants

How many persons (including children) **regularly participate** in worship or other religious activities in your church? Ave 463/median 72

So far in 2020, in 2019 and in 2015, estimate the **median attendance at your regular weekend worship services**. If you have more than one weekend worship service, estimate the attendance for all weekend services combined. Do not include special services such as weddings or funerals.

60	2020 Median Attendance
60	2019 Median Attendance
75	2015 Median Attendance

Of these participants, what percent is from the following racial or ethnic group:

- <1% American Indian/Alaska Native
- 15% Black or African American
- 5% Multiracial
- 2% Asian
- 6% Hispanic or Latino/a
- 0% Other:
- <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 72% White

63% of nondenominational churches did not have 20% racial diversity though almost all of these had some level of race diversity, and 37% of churches were at the 20% or more racial diversity with 5.7% of these having no racial majority in these churches.

Which label comes closest to describing the theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults? (**V ONE**)

20% Fundamentalist 14% Pentecostal 4% Moderate 3% Progressive 6% Missional
 42% Evangelical 10% Charismatic 2% Liberal .4% Seeker

Of all your regular participants, estimate the percent who are: **Mean percentage**

25 %	Senior adults, age 65 or older
35 %	Adults, age 35-64
19 %	Younger adults, age 18-34
8 %	Youth, age 13-17
14 %	Children, age 0-12

Of your total regular participants age 18 and older, estimate the percent who are: **Mean percentage**

58 %	Female
40 %	College graduates
30 %	New to this congregation in the past 5 years
25 %	Life-long members of nondenominational church
45 %	Adults who volunteer regularly
18 %	Adults living below the poverty level
66 %	Living within 15 minutes of the church
90 %	Adults who are American born
3 %	Adults who are recent immigrants (last five years)
6 %	Adults who are persons with Special Needs

Overall, to what extent are your congregation's active participants involved in recruiting new people?

3% Not at all 15% A little 38% Some 34% Quite a bit 9% A lot

Programs

Does your congregation have any of the following programs or activities? If yes, how much emphasis is given to the activity?

V ONE ON EACH LINE	No	Some	Yes	
			Emphasis	A lot of emphasis
Religious education for children	9%	32%	59%	
Adult religious education.	3%	36%	61%	
Prayer or meditation groups	17%	39%	44%	
Sports and exercise groups	74%	23%	3%	
Special interest groups (e.g., crafts, hobbies).....	60%	37%	2%	
Music program.....	35%	34%	31%	
Spiritual retreats	57%	36%	9%	
Support groups (bereavement, job loss, 12-step)	55%	26%	14%	
Community service activities	17%	41%	43%	
Parenting or marriage enrichment activities	30%	45%	21%	
Youth activities or programs.....	28%	41%	31%	
Young adult activities or programs	37%	54%	9%	
Seniors activities or programs.....	45%	40%	15%	

International/global ministry activities.....	36%	42%	22%
Social justice/advocacy groups.....	72%	24%	3%
Preschool and/or daycare center.....	90%	4%	6%
Elementary (Primary) school.....	85%	7%	8%
High (Secondary) school.....	87%	5%	7%
Special Needs Ministry.....	76%	18%	6%

How much does your congregation emphasize the following personal and family religious practices?

√ ONE ON EACH LINE	Not at all	A little	Some	Quite a bit	A lot
Personal prayer, devotions or other spiritual practices	0%	1%	6%	38%	56%
Fasting.....	15%	21%	44%	16%	4%
Talking about your faith with those outside the church.....	1%	7%	8%	32%	53%
Observing special practices or restrictions on holy days.....	20%	29%	21%	17%	13%
Living out one's faith in all aspects of one's daily life.....	0%	.5%	4%	19%	77%
Parents talking with their children about faith	2%	4%	24%	29%	41%
Regular worship attendance	0%	1%	13%	23%	62%

Overall, to what extent are your congregation's regularly participating adults involved in recruiting new people?

- 5% Not at all
- 19% A little
- 42% Some
- 29% Quite a bit
- 6% A lot

Mission and Identity

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? √ ONE ON EACH LINE

Our congregation:	Strongly		Neutral/		Strongly
	Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Agree
Is spiritually vital and alive	1%	1%	14%	46%	39%
Has a clear mission and purpose	1%	.4%	9%	38%	52%
Is willing to change to meet new challenges	3%	3%	21%	49%	25%
Is good at incorporating newcomers.....	1%	6%	6%	46%	41%
Is actively involved in our local community.....	3%	13%	20%	27%	37%
Is striving to be diverse (racially, ethnically, SES)	2%	2%	23%	25%	48%
Is actively looking for new members	2%	5%	20%	33%	41%

In the past decade did your congregation do the following:	No
Merged with another church(es)	99%
Split into two or more separate church(es)	98%
Opened satellite or branch location(s)	99%
Helped start or planted a new church(es)	93%
Changed the name of the church	94%
Changed the denominational affiliation of the church	99%
Left a denomination (to become unaffiliated)	98%

During the past 12 months, has your church been involved in any of the following ecumenical or interfaith activities?

√ ALL THAT APPLY ON EACH LINE

	No	Yes	
		With other Christian Groups	With other faith traditions
Worship services.....	61%	39%	8%
Educational or fellowship activities	52%	48%	6%

Community service activities..... 53% 47% 10%

Leadership

Which statement best describes the (religious) leadership of this congregation?

There is no clergy at present	2%
There is one clergy leader	41%
There are co-leaders	5%
There is a senior clergy leader with one or more assistant or associate clergy	49%
We are lay led	0.5%

Please describe the principal leader of your church (if co-leaders, answer about your oldest leader).

Age: 55 Years old (median) Became Pastor in 2009 (median) Median 11 years at church

Gender: 100% Male 0% Female

Race/Ethnicity:

White	82%
African American	17%
Hispanic/Latino	0.4%
Asian American	0.1%

Employment status

68% Full-time leader
32% Part-time leader if part-time how many hours each week? Mean 25 Median 30 hours

Compensation status

81% Paid leader
19% Unpaid leader if other paid work outside the church, how many hours? Mean 35 median 38

The leader:

Serves another church?	6%
Functions as chaplain?	9%
Has bivocational ministry	36%
Was previously retired	0.5%
Has an M.Div.	30%
Is first gen immigrant	0.4%

To what extent is there a good "fit" between the senior leader of this congregation and the members?

0% Not good
13% Just okay
7% Good
81% Very good

In the past 5 years, have you had conflict? (Check all that apply)

No	39%
Yes, but it/they were not serious incidents	21%
Yes, and some people left	40%
Yes, and some people withheld donations	13%

Yes, and clergy leader or staff member left 14%

Finances

What was the approximate dollar amount of your congregation's total budget for **2019**? (Do not count funds for capital improvements or primary/secondary schools) \$200,000 median

Total money spent in most recent fiscal year? \$100,000 median

95% of income comes from participant contributions.

What percentage of annual expenditures for: mean

Total staff salaries and benefits (clergy and non-clergy)	42 %
Buildings and operations (e.g. utilities, mortgage, insurance)	28 %
Program support and materials (e.g. education, evangelism)	11 %
Mission and benevolence (include Network assessments)	16 %
All other budgetary categories	6 %

How would you describe your congregation's financial health today and five years ago?

Today

4% Not Applicable
9% In serious difficulty
20% In some difficulty
29% Tight, but we manage
32% Good
6% Excellent

Technology

How much does the Church use the following technology?

	None	A Little	Some	A Lot
Website	8%	13%	25%	39%
Electronic/Online Giving	37%	13%	17%	34%
Facebook	6%	7%	22%	66%
Live Stream service/sermon	47%	3%	21%	28%
Video Projection	20%	9%	16%	55%
Online meetings	70%	12%	12%	7%

Safety and Security

To what extent is your congregation (when together for worship) concerned about personal safety and security when you gather?

Not at all concerned	19%
A little concerned	33%
Somewhat concerned	24%
Very concerned	23%

Does your church use any of the following:

	No	Yes, before 2015	Yes, since 2015
Alarm systems	36%	28%	16%
Security cameras	31%	18%	29%
Locked doors during service	35%	10%	36%
Volunteer security team/ministry from church	11%	16%	50%
Paid, professional security personnel	68%	4%	5%
Check-in procedures for infants and children	24%	42%	17%
Background checks for volunteers with children	14%	46%	25%

Safe conduct training for those working with children	22%	38%	19%
Training on general safety and security	17%	36%	26%