

## **Covid-19 & Church-21**

### **Paying attention to the voices of Church of England lay people**

Andrew Village

Professor of Practical and Empirical Theology

York St John University, York

Leslie J. Francis

Visiting Professor of Theology and Religious Studies

York St John University, York

## Structure

### Setting the context

1. Who took part?
2. Impact of the pandemic on personal wellbeing
3. Impact of the pandemic on lifestyle
4. Impact of the pandemic on religious life
5. Perceived help and support needed and received during the pandemic
6. Accessing and assessing online services during the pandemic
7. Assessing attending services in church during the pandemic
8. Attitude toward virtual church post-pandemic
9. Attitude toward local church post-pandemic
10. Attitude toward my faith post-pandemic
11. Attitude toward Holy Communion post-pandemic
12. Attitude toward the role of God in the pandemic
13. The pandemic and church-leaving: Giving up

## Setting the context

Between 8 May and late July 2020, the *Coronavirus, Church & You Survey* attracted good participation from both Anglicans and Catholics across Great Britain and Ireland. The findings from this earlier survey have been made widely available (see Appendix 1).

The *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey* was launched on 22 January 2021 in order to capture an update on how clergy and laity across Great Britain and Ireland were faring after such a prolonged period of disruption caused by the pandemic. It coincided with another national lockdown introduced earlier in the month to cope with a third upturn in infections in the UK. With a few months, colleagues in Canada and in the USA had been attracted by our earlier survey and asked to join in. By the time it closed in July 2021, the survey had collected around 6,000 responses from a range of denominations and countries, including 2,292 from the Church of England.

This brief paper has been designed to profile an overview of the responses of the 1,502 Church of England laity who participated in the *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey*. This overview will both provide immediate insights into matters of core pastoral and liturgical concern, and also stimulate further questions that can be addressed by more sophisticated interrogation of these data.

### 1. Who took part?

Table 1.1 provides an overview of the demographics of the 1,502 Church of England laity who participated in the *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey*. The majority of the participants were

- white British (93%)
- just over a third were from rural areas (36%), with only 7% from inner cities

The ratio between men (38%) and women (60%), after allowing for missing data, reflects what is known of the profile of many church congregations.

The age profile shows that half of the participants (67%) were in their 60s or older.

The employment status shows that one third (32%) of the participants were in full- or part-time work and over half (53%) were retired.

Table 1.2 provides the service attendance profile of the 1,406 participants who provided this information

- before the pandemic, 87% attended offline services at least weekly
- since lockdown, 68% accessed online services at least weekly

## 2. Impact of the pandemic on personal wellbeing

Our assessment of the impact of the pandemic on personal wellbeing draws on the psychological theory that positive affect and negative affect work as relatively independent systems. Potentially challenging situations may result in increases both in positive affect and in negative affect. Dynamically, increases in positive affect may offset some of the deleterious consequences of increases in negative affect.

Table 2 profiles the effect of the pandemic on ten markers of positive affect and ten markers of negative affect as reported by 1,343 participants who completed this aspect of the survey.

The results show that there were large increases in some of the markers of negative affect: 61% of the participants felt more frustrated, 46% felt more fatigued, 42% felt more stressed, and 41% felt more exhausted.

At the same time, the results show that there were large increases in some of the markers of positive affect: 61% felt more grateful, and 58% felt more thankful.

## 3. Impact of the pandemic on lifestyle

The survey included two rather different types of question to assess the wider impact of the pandemic on participants and to complement the information provided by the balanced affect approach reported in the previous section.

Table 3.1 assesses perceived changes in behaviour and in consumption. Overall, the major change occurred in the amount of time spent on screen: this increased for 77% of the participants. The impact on exercise was reflected in 45% whose level of exercise increased and 34% whose level of exercise decreased.

Overall, there were more participants who reported increase in consumption than who reported decrease in consumption.

- 23% drank more alcohol, compared with 20% who drank less
- 18% drank more coffee, compared with 7% who drank less
- 28% ate more chocolate, compared with 7% who ate less
- 35% generally ate more, compared with 14% who ate less

Table 3.2 assessed perceived changes in physical, mental, and spiritual health. These data reveal improvements in spiritual health.

- 39% reported better spiritual health, compared with 20% who reported worse spiritual health

The situation was more balanced for physical health and was less positive for mental health.

- 25% reported better physical health, compared with 26% who reported worse physical health
- 16% reported better mental health, compared with 34% who reported worse mental health

This table also shows a balance between approximately one third (35%) who found it easy to cope and one third (31%) who found it difficult to cope.

#### **4. Impact of the pandemic on religious life**

Table 4 assesses perceived impact of the pandemic on aspects of the participants' religious life. These data revealed some important positive signs where more participants reported increases than decreases.

- 48% reported increases in frequency of personal prayer
- 40% reported increases in their trust in God
- 38% reported increases in the quality of their spiritual life
- 37% reported increases in their motivation to serve

On the other hand, these data also revealed areas in which more participants reported decreases than increases.

- 43% reported decreases in their trust in the national Church
- 37% reported decreases in frequency of worship services
- 28% reported decreases in their trust in their local church

While these data reveal decreased trust in the local church (28%) and in the national Church (43%), there is even larger decrease in trust in the Government (61%).

#### **5. Personal help and support needed and received during the pandemic**

Table 5 assesses the perceived personal help and support needed and received by the participants during the pandemic. The first finding from these data highlights the areas in which needs were experienced

- keeping in touch with my congregation, 70%
- keeping in touch with the wider church, 60%
- faith, 49%
- Christian ministry 42%
- emotional difficulties, 37%
- isolation or loneliness, 33%
- practical difficulties, 29%

- mental health, 28%
- illness, 14%
- bereavement, 15%

The second finding highlights the areas of perceived needs for which no help was given, or it was given but not useful.

- keeping in touch with the wider church, 16%
- isolation and loneliness, 14%
- mental health, 13%
- faith, 13%
- keeping in touch with congregation, 15%
- emotional difficulties, 14%

The third finding highlights the areas of perceived needs for which the help given was rated highly.

- keeping in touch with the wider church, 20%
- faith, 14%
- practical difficulties, 8%
- isolation and loneliness, 5%

## **6. Accessing and assessing online services during the pandemic**

In assessing access to online services, the survey made a clear distinction between accessing pre-recorded services and live-streamed services.

Table 6.1 examines the proportions of participants who accessed different forms of online services. These data show that:

- 61% accessed live-streamed communion services
- 60% accessed live-streamed services of the word

This compares with:

- 38% accessed pre-recorded communion services
- 52% accessed pre-recorded services of the word

Table 6.1 also examines the proportions of participants who contributed to these services. These data show that:

- 45% did readings
- 29% led prayers
- 15% sang and/or played instruments

Those who participated in pre-recorded services or in live-streamed services were invited to assess their experience. Table 6.2 examines the responses to this invitation, once again employing the notion of distinguishing between positive affect and negative affect. These data suggest similar responses to both pre-recorded and live-streamed services. Drawing on the responses to live-streamed services (in which a larger number of participants were involved), items associated with positive affect indicated that during or after online services

- 65% felt blessed
- 53% felt inspired
- 54% felt energised
- 41% felt fulfilled

Items concerned with negative affect indicated that during or after online services

- 30% felt detached
- 30% felt frustrated
- 27% felt distracted
- 19% felt unmoved

Table 6.3 completes the picture by inviting the participants to rate the online services that they had accessed. These data suggest similar ratings for both pre-recorded services and live-streamed services. Drawing on the responses to live-streamed services

- 84% rated them easy to access
- 71% rated them fit for purpose
- 60% rated them professional

## **7. Assessing attending services in church during the pandemic**

When churches were able to open for services during the pandemic, what they could offer was limited by the restrictions governing safe practice.

Table 7.1 invites those who attended socially-distanced services in churches to assess how they felt about that experience in categories similar to those used to assess the effect of accessing online services. Setting the figures presented in table 7.1 alongside those assessing online services in table 6.2 illustrates two conclusions.

- more people during or after the off-line services felt fulfilled (57%), compared with 39% attending pre-recorded services and 41% attending live-streamed services
- fewer people during or after offline services felt distracted (19%), compared with 28% attending pre-recorded services and 37% attending live-streamed services

Table 7.2 completes the picture by inviting participants to rate the services in church that they had attended. Setting the figures presented in table 7.2 alongside those rating online services in table 6.3 illustrates two conclusions.

- similar proportions rated these offline services as fit for purpose (78%), as rated fit for purpose, pre-recorded services (71%), and live-streamed services (71%)
- a higher proportion rated these offline services as professional (80%), compared with pre-recorded services (63%) and live-streamed services (60%).

## **8. Attitude toward virtual church post-pandemic**

The *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey* concluded with five sets of attitudinal questions. The first set explored attitudes toward the virtual future for the Church. The responses to these questions presented in table 8 make the following key points.

First, there has been proper recognition that online provision has made an important contribution to sustaining church life during the pandemic.

- 80% agreed that the lockdown has helped the Church to move into the digital age
- 77% agreed that the lockdown is a great chance to re-think the Church's future

Second, there was also significant affirmation for the various application of social media and online platforms.

- 47% agreed that social media is a great pastoral tool
- 42% agreed that social media is a great evangelistic tool
- 49% agreed that online worship is a great liturgical tool

Third, however, there was less enthusiasm for virtual church becoming the norm for the future.

- 29% agreed that online worship is the way ahead for the next generation
- 26% agreed that we should put more effort into developing virtual churches
- 27% agreed that online services should replace some of our in-church services
- 7% agreed that virtual contact is as good as face-to-face

The consensus for the future remained with resourcing offline church.

- 81% agreed that we should put our effort into maintaining local churches

## **9. Attitude toward local church post-pandemic**

The second set of attitudinal questions explored attitude toward local church post-pandemic. The response to these questions presented in table 9 make the following key points.

First, fewer than half the participants imagined that the local church would not be changed by the pandemic

- 37% agreed that their church will eventually return to how it was pre-pandemic



Second, a significant number of participants identified key ways in which their church will be weaker post-pandemic.

- 33% agreed that many people will not return to church after the pandemic
- 39% agreed that the church's income will be permanently lower
- 29% agreed that key lay people will step down and be difficult to replace

Third, just under a fifth of the participants considered that the survival of their church was under threat.

- 19% agreed that their church building will not be financially viable
- 17% agreed that their congregation will be too small to be sustainable
- 17% agreed that they will not be able to serve children and young people
- 18% agreed that they will need to merge with other churches to be viable

## **10. Attitude toward my faith post-pandemic**

The third set of attitudinal questions explored attitude toward faith post-pandemic. The responses to these questions presented in table 10 make the following key points.

First, a large proportion of the participants considered that they would try to get back to their pre-pandemic commitment to their church.

- 70% agreed that they will get back to their previous pattern of worship if they can
- 61% agreed that they will cherish their local church more than they used to
- 33% agreed that they will give more time to serving their local church than they used to

Second, nearly half of the participants considered that they would develop their online expertise.

- 48% agreed that they will develop their online expertise
- 37% agreed that they will worship online more often than they used to
- 22% agreed that they will meet people online for daily offices or prayer
- But only 4% agreed that they will find a *new* online church to join

## **11. Attitude toward Holy Communion post-pandemic**

The fourth set of attitude questions explored attitude toward Communion post-pandemic. The response to these questions in table 11 suggest opinion was divided on whether to retain traditional practice and doctrine or introduce innovations that have suited Communion in lockdown.

- While 35% agreed that the priest needs to be physically present for the bread and wine to be consecrated, 43% disagreed
- While 41% agreed that properly prepared lay people should be authorised to preside at communion in their homes, 29% disagreed
- While 32% agreed that lay people should be allowed to preside at communion in their homes, 38% disagreed
- While 49% would be willing to share the cup in future, 28% would not.

## 12. Attitude toward the role of God in the pandemic

The fifth set of attitudinal questions explored attitude toward the role of God in the pandemic. The responses to these questions presented in table 12 demonstrate a rich diversity of views. For example:

- 65% maintained that God has always been in control during the pandemic
- 32% maintained that God could stop the pandemic at any point whatever we do
- 67% maintained that God's power to save us from the pandemic depends on human co-operation
- 52% maintained that God will save us from the pandemic through science
- 45% maintained that the pandemic is a solely 'natural' event without any relation to God
- 16% maintained that the pandemic is the result of human sin
- 5% maintained that God sent the pandemic to test our faith
- 2% maintained that the pandemic is a punishment from God

## 13. The pandemic and church-leaving: Giving up

The research group who designed the *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey* have had a long-established interest in the causes of church-leaving as displayed in the two books *Gone but not forgotten* (1998) and *Gone for good?* (2007). One of the main reasons for becoming a church leaver, voiced by 69% of the participants in our earlier survey, was simply 'getting out of the habit'. People had stopped going to church, found that they did not miss going, and even more that no one there seemed to miss them. They simply got out of the habit and found no good reason for returning. It seemed to us that closing churches in the face of the pandemic could, for some people, break the habit of a lifetime of church attendance.

We decided to close the survey with the simple question, 'Have you completely given up on online services, going to church, or God since the pandemic began?', which we asked of those who were not in active ministry. Of the 974 asked, 26% of the participants responded that they had given up on something: 13% on online services, 12% on going to church, and 3% had given up on God. It is this statistic that may well need to stimulate the next serious piece of research.

## Appendix 1

### Publications arising from Coronavirus, Church & You Survey

#### Qualtrics live between 8 March and 23 July 2020

#### Church press

- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2020). The emotional toll of Covid-19. *Church Times*, 16 October, 11.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2020). The writing is on the wall for fragile rural churches. *Church Times*, 20 November, 10.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Different angle on the pandemic: Retired clergy have a distinctive take on it. *Church Times*, 1 January, 11.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Shielding... but not shielded: Older churchgoers' views during lockdown. *Church Times*, 12 February, 13.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Eucharist in a time of lockdown. *Church Times*, 19 March, 15.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Survey reveals differing experiences during early coronavirus lockdown. *Methodist Recorder*, 26 March, 4.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Has the pandemic put men off church? *Church Times*, 14 May, 12.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Has there been a spiritual awakening in lockdown? *Church Times*, 2 July, 14.

#### Professional papers

- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Psychological type and responding to Covid-19: An enquiry among lay Anglicans. *Type Face*, 32(1), 29-31.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). The perceived impact of Covid-19 on the Church of England. *Future First*, 75, 1-2.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Considering the impact of Covid-19 on Christianity in the UK: Opportunity or challenge? *Challenging Religious Issues*, 18 (online).
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on Christianity in the UK: Opportunity or challenge? *Challenging Religious Issues*, 18 (online).

**Peer-reviewed articles (published)**

- Francis, L. J., Village, A., & Lawson, A. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 on fragile churches: Is the rural situation really different? *Rural Theology*, *18*, 79-86.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2020). Faith in lockdown: Experience of rural Church of England clergy and laity during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Rural Theology*, *18*, 79-86.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Viewing the impact of Covid-19 through the eyes of retired clergy. *Theology*, *124*, 24-31.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). Shielding, but not shielded: Comparing the experience of the Covid-19 lockdown for Anglican churchgoers aged seventy and over with those under the age of sixty. *Rural Theology*, *19*, 31-40.
- Francis, L. J., Village, A., & Lawson, S. A. (2021). Impact of Covid-19 on fragile churches: Listening to the voices of lay people. *Rural Theology*, *19*, 41-47.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Exploring affect balance: Psychological wellbeing of Church of England clergy and laity during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Religion and Health*, online first.
- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. (2021). Wellbeing and perceptions of receiving support among Church of England clergy during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, online first.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. (2021). The pandemic and the feminisation of the Church? How male and female churchgoers experienced the Church of England's response to Covid-19. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, online first.

**Peer-reviewed articles (in press)**

- Village, A., & Francis, L. J. Churches and faith: Attitude towards church buildings during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown among churchgoers in England. *Ecclesial Practices*.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. Introducing The Index of Balanced Affect Change (TIBACH): A study among Church of England clergy and laity. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*.
- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. Reading the Church of England's response to the Covid-19 crisis: The diverging views of Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical clergy. *Journal of Anglican Studies*.

**Peer-reviewed articles (under review)**

- Francis, L. J., & Village, A. This blessed sacrament of unity? Holy Communion, the pandemic, and the Church of England. *Journal of Empirical Theology*.

Village, A., & Francis, L. J. Shaping attitudes toward church in a time of Coronavirus: Exploring the effects of personal, psychological, social, and theological factors among Church of England clergy and laity. *Journal of Empirical Theology*.

Table 1.1

*Demographics (N = 1,502)*

	%
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
White British	93
Other	2
Missing	5
<i>Location</i>	
Rural	36
Town	32
Suburb	23
Inner city	7
Missing	2
<i>Sex</i>	
Male	38
Female	60
Missing	2
<i>Age</i>	
20s	3
30s	4
40s	8
50s	16
60s	30
70s	30
80s	7
Missing	2
<i>Living status</i>	
Live alone	22
Live with others in your household	75
Live in community	1
Missing	2

*Employment status*

Full-time work	19
Part-time work	13
Self-employed	9
Homemaker/carer	5
Unemployed	1
Student	3
Retired	53

*Impact of Covid*

*(of 536 who were in employment when the pandemic started)*

Furloughed	18
Hours reduced	13
Income reduced	19
Made redundant	3
Started new job	5
Given up work	5
Retired	6

---

Table 1.2

*Service attendance profile (N = 1,406)*

	%
<i>Church attendance pre-pandemic</i>	
A few times a year	3
Once a month	2
Twice a month	7
Once a week	79
Most days	8
<i>Online services since lockdown</i>	
Never	5
A few times	15
Once a month	4
Twice a month	8
Once a week	53
Most days	15



Table 2

*How would you rate how you are now compared with before the pandemic started? (N = 1,343)*

	Less %	Same %	More %
<i>Positive affect</i>			
Creative	25	45	30
Excited	57	37	7
Calm	32	54	14
Happy	39	51	10
Enthusiastic	40	49	12
Thankful	6	36	58
Hopeful	23	43	34
Confident	26	56	18
Grateful	5	34	61
Inspired	29	50	21
<i>Negative affect</i>			
Exhausted	16	44	41
Anxious	10	41	49
Stressed	17	41	42
Upset	12	56	33
Afraid	12	53	35
Irritable	11	53	36
Guilty	13	74	13
Despondent	17	52	31
Fatigued	15	40	46
Frustrated	9	31	61

Table 3.1

*Impact of the pandemic on lifestyle (N = 1,246)*

	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
The time I spend in front of a screen	3	20	77
The amount I exercise	34	21	45
The amount I eat	14	52	35
The amount of alcohol I drink	20	57	23
The amount of coffee I drink	7	75	18
The amount of chocolate I eat	11	60	28

Table 3.2

*How has the pandemic affected you? (N = 1,222)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Better spiritual health	39	41	20
Better physical health	25	49	26
Better mental health	16	50	34
Found it easy to cope	35	34	31

Table 4

*Impact of the pandemic on religious life (N = 1,222)*

	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
Frequency of personal prayer	15	37	48
Frequency of worship services	37	41	22
Frequency of Bible reading	16	55	29
Quality of my spiritual life	26	36	38
My motivation to serve	19	43	37
Volunteering in the community	27	47	26
My trust in God	7	53	40
My trust in my local church	28	47	26
My trust in the national Church	43	45	13
My hope for the Church	39	33	28
My trust in the Government	61	27	12

Table 5

*Personal help and support during the pandemic (N = 1,259)*

	Not needed %	Needed not given %	Given not useful %	Given some use %	Given helpful %
My faith	51	11	2	21	14
My Christian ministry	58	9	2	21	11
Practical difficulties	71	7	1	13	8
Emotional difficulties	63	12	2	15	8
Mental health	72	11	2	11	5
Keeping in touch with my congregation	30	10	5	35	20
Keeping in touch with the wider church	40	11	5	34	20
Isolation or loneliness	67	12	2	15	5
Illness	86	4	1	5	4
Bereavement	85	4	1	6	4

Table 6.1

*Those who accessed online services during the pandemic (N = 1,255)*

	Yes %
<i>Type of service</i>	
Service of the word: pre-recorded	52
Service of the word: live-streamed	60
Holy Communion: pre-recorded	38
Holy Communion: live-streamed	61
Children/youth/family worship: pre-recorded	17
Children/youth/family worship: live-streamed	18
<i>Type of contribution</i>	
Doing readings	45
Leading prayers	29
Singing	11
Playing an instrument	4
Live interactive contribution	15

Table 6.2

*During or after online services I usually felt*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
<i>Pre-recorded services (N = 842)</i>			
<i>Positive affect</i>			
Energised	47	26	26
Inspired	54	25	22
Blessed	64	23	13
Fulfilled	39	33	28
<i>Negative affect</i>			
Detached	37	19	44
Frustrated	29	24	47
Unmoved	21	21	58
Distracted	28	26	46
<i>Live-streamed services (N = 1,219)</i>			
<i>Positive affect</i>			
Energised	54	24	23
Inspired	53	26	20
Blessed	65	22	13
Fulfilled	41	33	26
<i>Negative affect</i>			
Detached	30	19	52
Frustrated	30	22	49
Unmoved	19	20	61
Distracted	27	23	50

Table 6.3

*How would you rate online services you accessed?*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
<i>Pre-recorded services (N = 842)</i>			
Easy to access	85	9	5
Better than face to face	10	29	61
Engaging	49	30	20
Professional	63	26	11
Innovative	30	37	33
Fit for purpose	71	20	9
<i>Live-streamed services (N = 1,219)</i>			
Easy to access	84	9	6
Better than face to face	12	31	57
Engaging	55	26	19
Professional	60	25	15
Innovative	33	32	35
Fit for purpose	71	20	9



Table 7.1

*During or after attending services in church I usually felt (N = 1,025)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
<i>Positive affect</i>			
Energised	62	24	14
Inspired	57	27	17
Fulfilled	57	26	16
<i>Negative affect</i>			
Detached	16	13	71
Emotionally drained	11	13	76
Unmoved	10	17	73
Distracted	19	16	66
Discontented	13	19	69

Table 7.2

*How would you rate the services you attended in church? (N = 1,025)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Easy to access	84	9	6
Better than pre-pandemic	11	38	51
Well received	73	20	8
Professional	80	16	5
Innovative	21	30	49
Fit for purpose	78	15	6

Table 8

*Attitude toward virtual church post-pandemic (N = 1,230)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Online worship is the way ahead for the next generation	29	31	40
Virtual contact is as good as meeting face to face	7	8	85
Social media is a great pastoral tool	47	28	25
Social media is a great evangelistic tool	42	37	22
Online worship is a great liturgical tool	49	27	25
Online services should replace some of our in-church services	27	21	53
We should put our effort into developing virtual churches	26	30	45
We should put our effort into maintaining local churches	81	14	5
We should do everything we can to keep church buildings open	73	15	12
The lockdown has helped the Church to move into the digital age	80	13	7
The lockdown is a great chance to re-think the Church's future	77	15	8

Table 9

*Attitude toward local church post-pandemic (N = 1,230)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Our congregations will be too small to be sustainable	17	26	57
We will need to merge with other churches to be viable	18	24	58
My church will eventually return to how it was pre-pandemic	37	34	29
Many people will not return to church after the pandemic	33	35	32
My church will emerge stronger than it was before	34	42	24
The church's income will be permanently lower	39	42	19
New people will join the church as a result of our online services	30	47	23
Our church building will not be financially viable	19	36	46
Key lay people will step down and be difficult to replace	29	36	35
We will not be able to serve children and young people	17	32	51

Table 10

*Attitude toward my faith post-pandemic (N = 1,230)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
I will go to services in church less often than I used to	12	13	75
I will worship online more often than I used to	37	19	44
I will get back to my previous worship patterns if I can	70	19	11
My religion will be less important to me than it was	4	7	89
I will develop my online expertise	48	31	22
My financial giving to the church will be less than it was	8	14	78
I will meet people online for daily offices or prayer	22	26	53
I will find a new local church to join	6	13	82
I will find a new online church to join	4	12	84
I will cherish my local church more than I used to	61	24	14
I will give more time to serving my local church than I used to	33	42	25

Table 11

*Attitude toward Communion post-pandemic (N = 1,230)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
We need to find ways of expressing communion spiritually without bread and wine	39	19	41
People at home should be allowed to take bread and wine during live-streamed services	54	24	23
People at home should be allowed to take bread and wine during pre-recorded services	45	27	28
The priest needs to be physically present for the bread and wine to be consecrated	35	23	43
In future I would prefer not to share the cup in church	28	23	49
Communion should not be part of online worship	15	22	62
I value online communion services even if I cannot receive	58	19	23
All lay people should be allowed to preside at communion in their homes	32	30	38
Properly prepared lay people should be authorised to preside at communion in their homes	41	30	29

Table 12

*Attitude toward the role of God in the pandemic (N = 1,230)*

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
God has always been in control during the pandemic	65	24	12
God sent the pandemic to test our faith	5	15	80
God will save us from the pandemic through science	52	33	15
The pandemic is a solely 'natural' event without any relation to God	45	27	28
God could stop the pandemic at any point whatever we do	32	25	43
The pandemic is punishment from God	2	8	90
God's power to save us from the pandemic depends on human co-operation	67	15	18
Science will save us from the pandemic without God's help	14	26	60
The pandemic is the result of human sin	16	17	67