

Covid-19 & Church-21

The Episcopal Church in the USA during the Coronavirus pandemic:

Clergy and Churches

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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 the [survey webpage](#)).

The *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey* online 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. Colleagues in Canada and in the USA who had become aware of our earlier survey asked if the survey could be run in their countries. We designed a survey for the Episcopal Church in the US (TEC) which was a slightly shorter version of the UK survey, and which contained some modifications to items that suited the US context. It was publicised and distributed through Virginia Theological Seminary, ran from 1 June to 23 August 2021, and collected over 5,000 responses from across the USA.

The survey included a section designed to be completed by incumbents or others who were in a position to be ‘key-informers’ about what services and online platforms were used during the pandemic. The survey also identified clergy within the overall sample. This brief paper has been designed profile an overview of the TEC clergy and key informers who participated in the *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey* and who resided in the USA. Of the 4,536 responses from TEC, 3,463 (76%) were from lay people, 1,073 (24%) were from clergy, and from these two groups there were 747 responses from key informers (which we assume report on different churches). The samples may not represent TEC as a whole, but they do indicate the activity and experience of those who participated. This paper needs to be read in conjunction with a report of the 3,463 lay people from the same survey. Where clergy and laity were asked the same questions, we have included lay responses in the tables for comparison.

1. Who took part?

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographics of the 1,073 clergy who participated in the *Covid-19 & Church-21 Survey*.

- The majority of the clergy were white (92%) and living in towns or suburban environments (75%), with 15% from rural areas, and a just over a tenth (13%) from inner cities. These figures were similar to those for laity.
- The ratio between clergymen (49%) and clergywomen (51%) showed a much higher proportion of men than in the lay sample (30%).
- The age profile was slightly younger than in the lay sample, as might be expected, with 56% of the clergy aged between 40 and 69.
- The majority of the clergy (76%) were living with others in their household during the lockdown.

- Just under half the clergy (46%) were in stipendiary ministry in parishes, and only 9% were retired and not active in ministry. The clergy sample was mostly made up of Rectors or equivalent status (55%).

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 1,007 clergy and 3,025 lay participants who completed this aspect of the survey.

The clergy results were generally similar to the laity, but clergy showed even larger increases in some of the markers of negative affect: 61% felt more fatigued, 49% felt more frustrated, 64% felt more exhausted, 49% felt more anxious, and 58% felt more stressed. In most cases, less than 20% reported declines in negative affect.

At the same time, the results show that there were large increases in some of the markers of positive affect, which were similar to those among laity: 72% felt more grateful, and 71% felt more thankful. Other aspects of positive affect were either mostly unchanged, but a few showed declines: 41% felt less excited, 33% less enthusiastic and/or less calm, and 23% less happy.

In general, it appeared that clergy may, on average, have felt the negative effects of lockdown slightly more keenly than did lay people.

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 79% of the clergy participants, even higher than for laity (70%). The impact on exercise was reflected in 35% whose level of exercise increased and 37% whose level of exercise decreased. As with laity, 47% felt their overall fitness had declined. A slightly higher proportion of clergy than laity reported that they had consumed more alcohol (22% versus 19%), eaten more (38% versus

36%), drank more coffee (15% versus 14%), eaten more chocolate (20% versus 19%) or eaten more junk food (24% versus 22%). Individually these differences may not be statistically significant, but the fact that they are all in the same direction is unlikely to be due to chance.

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

- Better spiritual health was reported from 50% of clergy and 44% of laity, compared with 18% of clergy and 19% of laity who reported worse spiritual health

The situation was less positive for physical and mental health, especially so for clergy:

- 29% reported better physical health, compared with 34% who reported worse physical health
- 23% reported better mental health, compared with 34% who reported worse mental health

While among laity 32% found it easy to cope and 30% found it difficult to cope, among clergy the figures were 30% and 36%, a slight shift to a more negative outcome. More detailed work is needed to see if these trends relate to the different profiles of the two groups in this study, but the *prima facie* evidence seems to show that clergy were slightly more vulnerable than laity to the stressful effects of lockdown.

4. Impact of the pandemic on religious life

Table 4 assesses perceived impact of the pandemic on aspects of the participants' religious life. Clergy, like laity, showed positive signs where more participants reported increases than decreases, though for clergy the figures were even higher than for laity.

- 53% reported increases in frequency of personal prayer
- 46% reported increases in their trust in God
- 48% reported increases in the quality of their spiritual life
- 39% reported increases in their motivation to serve

The proportions of clergy reporting decreased trust in the local (24%) or national (20%) church were similar to those among laity. Decrease in trust in the Government was reported by 51% for clergy and 48% of laity.

5. Perceived help and support needed and received during the pandemic

Clergy, like anyone else, needed support during the pandemic. Table 5.1 assesses the perceived personal help and support needed in various aspects of life. Not all clergy needed support in all aspects but, when they did, most were able to get help that was of at least some use. The data highlights the areas in which needs were most often experienced

- keeping in touch with the wider church, 76% (versus 64% of laity)
- keeping in touch with my congregation, 78% (versus 79%)
- practical difficulties, 71% (versus 35%)
- emotional difficulties, 62% (versus 44%)
- faith, 61% (versus 55%)
- isolation or loneliness, 53% (versus 42%)
- mental health, 57% (versus 38%)
- illness, 25% (versus 19%)
- bereavement, 29% (versus 25%)

The trend suggests clergy were either more forth coming in admitting they needed help, or generally felt more needy than lay people during the pandemic.

The second finding highlights the areas of perceived needs for which no help was given, or what was given was of no use.

- isolation and loneliness, 21% (versus 17% of laity)
- emotional difficulties, 20% (versus 17%)
- mental health, 18% (versus 16%)
- Christian ministry, 16% (versus 14%)
- keeping in touch with congregation, 13% (versus 17%)
- keeping in touch with the wider church, 14% (versus 14%)
- practical difficulties, 16% (versus 13%)
- faith, 10% (versus 12%)
- illness, 8% (versus 7%)
- bereavement, 12% (versus 9%)

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

- Christian ministry, 22% (versus 14% of laity)
- practical difficulties, 18% (versus 7%)
- keeping in touch with congregation, 27% (versus 31%)
- keeping in touch with the wider church, 23% (versus 20%)
- faith, 23% (versus 22%)

The picture is mixed, but seems to suggest that clergy felt the need for support related to wellbeing and practical issues more keenly than did laity, and when they needed that support they found it less often and less often rated it as helpful.

Table 5.2 lists various sources of support, which were not all the same as the list for laity. In each case respondents were asked to indicate if they had expected support from that source and whether any support they did receive was useful.

The results show that expectations of support varied, which in some cases might be because that source was not relevant: for example, lay people living alone would not expect support from their household and people without lay ministers in their church would not expect this sort of support. There were some cases where sources would be common to most people, but expectations varied:

- 68% did not expect support from the public
- 36% did not expect support from their church nationally
- 21% did not expect support from their congregation and 23% from their ministry team
- 15% did not expect support from their bishop and 18% from their diocese
- 11% did not expect support from fellow clergy

The second finding highlights the church-related sources where support was expected but not given, or it was given but not useful.

- Bishop or diocese, 19%
- Church nationally, 15%
- Congregation, 12%
- Fellow clergy, 12%
- Ministry team, 11%

These figures are low, but nonetheless suggest a group of clergy who looked for help from the church and did not feel they got it.

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

- My household, 56%
- Friends, 52%
- My family elsewhere, 45%
- Fellow clergy, 35%
- Ministry team, 31%
- My congregation, 27%
- My church nationally, 13%

As with laity, support from more socially (and physically) distant sources was rated really helpful by fewer people.

6. 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 6 make the following key points.

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

- 85% agreed that the lockdown has helped the Church to move into the digital age
- 88% agreed that the lockdown is a great chance to re-think the Church's future

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

- 55% agreed that online worship is a great liturgical tool (versus 54% of laity)
- 53% agreed that social media is a great pastoral tool (versus 51%)
- 59% agreed that social media is a great evangelistic tool (versus 43%)

Third, however, there was less enthusiasm for virtual church becoming the norm for the future. These figures were very similar to those among laity.

- 28% agreed that we should put more effort into developing virtual churches
- 24% agreed that online services should replace some of our in-church services
- 8% agreed that virtual contact is as good as face-to-face

The consensus for the future remained with resourcing offline church.

- 76% agreed that we should put our effort into maintaining local churches

7. 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 7 make the following key points.

First, fewer than a third of clergy imagined that the local church would not be changed by the pandemic

- 29% agreed that their church will eventually return to how it was pre-pandemic (versus 44% of laity)

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

- 42% agreed that many people will not return to church after the pandemic

- 25% 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, worry about viability was generally low, though slightly higher than among lay people:

- 17% agreed that they will need to merge with other churches to be viable (versus 10% of laity)
- 13% agreed that their church building will not be financially viable (versus 11%)
- 16% agreed that their congregation will be too small to be sustainable (versus 12%)
- 17% agreed that they will not be able to serve children and young people (versus 14%)

8. Attitude toward my faith post-pandemic

The third set of attitudinal questions explored attitude toward faith post-pandemic. Clergy had a different set of questions to laity in this section. The responses to these questions presented in table 8 make the following key points.

First, opinion seems to be mixed among clergy on how far they would return to previous patterns of ministry and attitudes towards church

- while 37% agreed that they will get back to their previous pattern of ministry, 28% disagreed
- while 37% agreed that they will devote more time to virtual church, 34% disagreed
- while 32% agreed that they will cherish their local church more than they used to, 43% disagreed

Second, there was strong support to develop commitment to online worship.

- 74% agreed that they will promote online services
- 68% agreed that they will promote online meetings for prayer or Bible study
- 44% agreed that they will meet people online for daily offices or prayer

9. Attitude toward Holy Communion post-pandemic

The fourth set of attitude questions explored attitude toward Communion post-pandemic. As might be expected, there was more consensus among clergy than among laity about clergy retaining a key role in celebrating the rite:

- 60% agreed that the priest needs to be physically present for the bread and wine to be consecrated, 22% disagreed
- 21% agreed that properly prepared lay people should be authorised to preside at communion in their homes, 58% disagreed

- 10% agreed that all lay people should be allowed to preside at communion in their homes, 70% disagreed

In general, clergy seemed more content to retain the status quo than were laity.

10. 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 10 demonstrate a sense that while the pandemic was not sent by God, God has some control in how events unfold.

- 71% maintained that God has always been in control during the pandemic (versus 66% of laity)
- 30% maintained that God could stop the pandemic at any point whatever we do (versus 26%)
- 73% maintained that God's power to save us from the pandemic depends on human co-operation (versus 66%)
- 59% maintained that God will save us from the pandemic through science (versus 54%)
- 49% maintained that the pandemic is a solely 'natural' event without any relation to God (versus 51%)
- 11% maintained that the pandemic is the result of human sin (versus 5%)
- 1% maintained that God sent the pandemic to test our faith (versus 3%)
- 1% maintained that the pandemic is a punishment from God (versus 1%)

As with laity, very few clergy saw the pandemic as somehow sent by God, but they were keen to maintain the idea that God was somehow in control.

11. Data from key informers

One section of the survey asked those who were in a position of overall leadership to report what churches had done by way of offering services and other ministry during lockdown. Of the 747 people who answered questions in this section, 565 (76%) were clergy and 182 (24%) were laity. Nearly all (92%) were in a single-church benefice, 6% had 2 churches, and 2% had 3 or more churches. The usual Sunday attendance pre-pandemic was less than 20 in 7% of these churches, 21-50 in 31%, 51-100 in 32% and over 100 in 30%.

11.1 Services online

Nearly all the churches (96%) offered some sort of online services during the pandemic (Table 11.1). Live-streamed services were generally more popular than pre-recorded ones. Of the 700 who replied to these items, 78% of churches had offered some live-streamed services of the Word and 75% had offered live-streamed Communion, compared with 51% and 30%

respectively for pre-recorded services. During the week, live-streamed morning or evening worship was most often offered (45% of churches) compared to 22% for pre-recorded. Weekly morning services of the word were live-streamed by 24% of churches, with 11% offering it most days.

11.2 Services in church

We asked about changes in the frequency of services offered in church during the pandemic compared with pre-pandemic: some churches with socially distanced seating could accommodate fewer than their normal Sunday attendance, so we wondered if some had put on more services. Where respondents were able to answer this (Table 11.2), most reported fewer, rather than more services.

11.3 Other online ministry during the pandemic

As well as offering services online, churches also used online platforms to run a range of ministry and administration during the pandemic (Table 11.3). The most frequent use was for PCC meetings (94% of churches had done this at least once and for 65% it was now normal practice). There were slightly lower figures for Ministry Team meetings, Bible studies, and fellowship/prayer groups. Less often tried was using online platforms for work with young people.

11.4 Parochial ministry during the pandemic

Church ministry involves a variety of pastoral and outreach work in the community. We asked key informers how their churches had coped with maintaining this ministry during the pandemic. Respondents were asked if a ministry had not been tried, tried but found to be not possible, done mostly poorly, or done mostly well. Table 11.4 indicates a few trends that have been found in the *Coronavirus, Church & You* survey in the UK and may have been widespread among Anglican churches:

- Ministries that were most often either not tried or tried and found not possible included baptisms (46%), being a spokesperson/lobbying (55%), weddings (51%), and working with other denominations (44%). Some of these were not possible in lockdown, but some churches may rarely have engaged in these ministries anyway.
- Ministries that were most frequent also tended to be rated as done mostly well, and included supporting the congregation (84% rated this as done mostly well), dealing with funerals (59%), working with fellow ministers (64%), and offering prayer/Spiritual support (77%).
- Ministries that had the highest ‘mostly poorly’ ratings were those that involved working beyond the church fellowship in the wider community: dealing with the sick or dying (25% rated mostly poorly), outreach and mission (19%), dealing with the bereaved (25%), and working in the local community (21%).

11.5 Support offered by churches in the pandemic

The pandemic led to new needs for support in the community, and some churches found themselves developing services such as food banks or delivering medicines. Table 11.5 shows that 31% of churches increased food provision while 21% saw a decline in this ministry. In terms of more frequent pastoral ministry:

- 57% saw an increase in keeping in touch with core members, and 26% a decline
- 53% saw an increase in helping the elderly or lonely, and 19% a decline

In other areas, more churches saw a decline in ministry:

- 16% saw an increase in supporting the sick, but 35% a decline
- 16% saw an increase in working with community organisations, but 39% a decline

These figures give an overall impression of how churches adjusted to changing ministry demands in the pandemic. More detailed work is needed to understand how this has impacted congregations, and how far changes may persist into the future.

Table 1

Demographics

	Clergy <i>N</i> = 1,073	Laity <i>N</i> = 3,463
	%	%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
White	92	90
Black or African American	4	4
Latino or Hispanic	3	2
Other	1	4
<i>Location</i>		
Rural	15	13
Town	29	29
Suburb	43	46
Inner city	13	12
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	49	30
Female	51	69
Non-gender binary	< 1	< 1
Prefer not to say	< 1	< 1
<i>Age</i>		
20s	1	1
30s	5	3
40s	10	4
50s	17	11
60s	29	29
70s	29	39
80s	9	13
<i>Living status</i>		
Live alone	23	29
Live with others in your household	76	70
Live in community	1	1

	Clergy <i>N</i> = 1,073	Laity <i>N</i> = 3,463
	%	%
<i>Ministry status</i>		
Stipendiary parochial	46	-
Stipendiary extra-parochial	6	-
Self-supporting: active	10	-
Self-supporting: retired	6	-
Retired with active bishop's license	17	-
Retired no longer licensed	3	-
Other	12	-
<i>Clergy role</i>		
Parish / congregational ministry	77	-
Chaplaincy (please specify)	4	-
Church planting	1	-
Cathedral ministry	1	-
Diocesan / regional ministry	6	-
National ministry	1	-
Other	6	-
Within a religious order	<1	-
Intentional Interim Ministry	2	-
Theological Education etc.	2	-
<i>Clergy status</i>		
Seminarian / Curate	1	-
Vocational deacon	10	-
Associate / Assistant priest / Cathedral clergy staff	11	-
Bivocational / licensed	3	-
Rector / Priest in Charge	55	-
Interim Rector / Vicar	1	-
Regional President / Dean	3	-
Diocesan staff	0	-
Archdeacon (Deacon)	1	-
Canon to the Ordinary / Archdeacon (priest)	1	-
Cathedral Dean	1	-
Bishop	1	-
Other	13	-

Table 2

How would you rate how you are now compared with before the pandemic started?

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 1,007)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 3,025)		
	Less %	Same %	More %	Less %	Same %	More %
<i>Positive affect</i>						
Creative	26	32	41	23	53	23
Excited	41	37	22	37	49	14
Calm	33	51	16	31	54	16
Happy	23	55	22	24	56	20
Enthusiastic	33	43	24	29	55	16
Thankful	3	26	71	4	29	67
Hopeful	16	37	47	19	40	41
Confident	20	44	36	19	57	24
Grateful	2	25	72	4	29	67
Inspired	23	40	37	18	55	27
<i>Negative affect</i>						
Exhausted	10	27	64	11	46	43
Anxious	14	36	49	14	40	46
Stressed	15	26	58	17	39	44
Upset	19	53	28	19	54	27
Afraid	23	50	28	20	52	28
Irritable	18	42	40	18	48	34
Guilty	30	63	7	26	67	7
Despondent	30	56	13	28	58	14
Fatigued	14	25	61	15	43	42
Frustrated	16	35	49	15	42	42

Table 3.1

Impact of the pandemic on lifestyle

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 717)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,817)		
	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
The time I spend in front of a screen	5	16	79	4	26	70
The amount I exercise	37	29	35	40	32	28
My overall fitness	47	27	25	47	33	20
The amount I eat	22	40	38	20	45	36
The amount of alcohol I drink	19	59	22	15	66	19
The amount of coffee I drink	11	74	15	8	78	14
The amount of chocolate I eat	16	64	20	12	70	19
The amount of junk food I eat	27	50	24	23	55	22

Table 3.2

How has the pandemic affected you?

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 861)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,684)		
	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Better spiritual health	50	32	18	44	37	19
Better physical health	29	37	34	24	47	29
Better mental health	23	43	34	21	48	31
Found it easy to cope	30	34	36	32	38	30

Table 4

Impact of the pandemic on religious life

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 900)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,817)		
	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %	Decreased %	Same %	Increased %
Frequency of personal prayer	13	34	53	11	38	51
Frequency of worship services	36	39	26	40	40	21
Frequency of bible reading	13	56	32	16	62	22
Quality of my spiritual life	23	30	48	23	35	42
My motivation to serve	25	36	39	23	40	38
Volunteering in the community	41	39	20	35	44	21
My trust in God	4	50	46	7	52	41
My trust in my local church	24	47	29	24	44	32
My trust in the national Church	20	54	25	19	57	25
My hope for the Church	31	30	39	25	39	36
My trust in the Government	51	28	22	48	29	23
Trust in State/Local Government	44	29	27	44	31	25

Table 5.1

Personal help and support during the pandemic (N = 916)

	Not needed %	Needed not given %	Given not useful %	Given some use %	Given helpful %
My faith	38	7	3	28	23
My Christian ministry	25	11	5	36	22
Practical difficulties	29	11	5	37	18
Emotional difficulties	38	15	5	29	13
Mental health	43	14	4	25	14
Keeping in touch with my congregation	21	8	5	38	27
Keeping in touch with the wider church	24	6	8	39	23
Isolation or loneliness	47	18	3	26	6
Illness	75	5	3	11	6
Bereavement	71	9	3	13	4

Table 5.2

Sources of support during the pandemic (N = 916)

	Not expected %	Expected: not given %	Given: not useful %	Given: some use %	Really helpful %
My household	21	2	0	20	56
Family elsewhere	18	3	1	33	45
Friends	6	3	2	38	52
My ministry team	23	8	3	35	31
My congregation	21	9	3	44	23
The public	68	5	4	18	4
My bishop	15	12	7	34	32
My diocese	18	11	8	39	24
Fellow clergy	11	8	4	42	35
My Church nationally	36	9	6	36	13
External organisations	59	2	3	24	11

Table 6

Attitude toward virtual church post-pandemic

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 869)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,855)		
	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Online worship is the way ahead for the next generation	41	30	30	32	33	35
Virtual contact is as good as meeting face to face	8	10	83	7	8	85
Social media is a great pastoral tool	53	24	23	51	23	26
Social media is a great evangelistic tool	59	27	14	43	33	25
Online worship is a great liturgical tool	55	23	22	54	22	24
Online services should replace some of our in-church services	24	21	54	19	22	59
We should put our effort into developing virtual churches	28	32	40	21	31	48
We should put our effort into maintaining local churches	76	17	6	87	10	3
We should do everything we can to keep church buildings open	50	24	26	78	14	8
The lockdown has helped the Church to move into the digital age	85	10	5	77	15	8
The lockdown is a great chance to re-think the Church's future	88	8	4	74	17	9
All churches should live-stream their services in future	56	26	18	56	28	16

Table 7

Attitude toward local church post-pandemic

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 869)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,855)		
	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
Our congregations will be too small to be sustainable	16	31	53	12	31	57
We will need to merge with other churches to be viable	17	28	55	10	27	63
My church will eventually return to how it was pre-pandemic	29	32	39	44	33	23
Many people will not return to church after the pandemic	42	36	22	35	41	24
My church will emerge stronger than it was before	39	44	17	39	44	17
The church's income will be permanently lower	25	41	34	23	46	31
New people will join the church as a result of our online services	47	35	19	38	41	21
Our church building will not be financially viable	13	32	54	11	33	56
Key lay people will step down and be difficult to replace	29	30	41	22	34	44
We will not be able to serve children and young people	17	28	55	14	30	56

Table 8

Attitude toward my faith post-pandemic (N = 783)

	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
I will draw inspiration from the new practices I have acquired	69	20	11
I will promote online services	74	16	10
I will get back to my previous ways of ministering	37	34	28
My ministry will be less important to me than it was	11	14	75
will devote more time to virtual church	37	29	34
My financial giving to the church will be less than it was	6	13	81
I will promote online meetings for prayer or Bible study	68	21	11
I will meet people online for daily offices or prayer	44	30	26
I am more likely leave my current ministry	16	21	63
I will cherish church buildings more than I used to	32	25	43
I will give more time to serving my local community than I used to	34	46	19

Table 9

Attitude toward Holy Communion post-pandemic

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 869)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,855)		
	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
We need to find ways of expressing communion spiritually without bread and wine	34	17	49	36	21	43
People at home should be allowed to take bread and wine during live-streamed services	39	20	41	51	30	18
People at home should be allowed to take bread and wine at home during pre-recorded services	27	23	49	42	35	23
The priest needs to be physically present for the bread and wine to be consecrated	60	18	22	39	23	38
In future I would prefer not to share the cup in church	17	21	62	28	21	51
Communion should not be part of online worship	22	20	58	14	24	62
I value online communion services even if I cannot receive	62	15	22	66	17	17
All lay people should be allowed to preside at communion in their homes	10	19	70	32	38	30
Properly prepared lay people should be authorised to preside at communion in their homes	21	21	58	50	31	20
A congregation/assembly must be physically present at the Eucharist	47	19	34	23	30	47

Table 10

Attitude toward the role of God in the pandemic

	Clergy (<i>n</i> = 869)			Laity (<i>n</i> = 2,855)		
	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %	Agree %	Not certain %	Disagree %
God has always been in control during the pandemic	71	13	16	66	20	13
God sent the pandemic to test our faith	1	4	94	3	11	86
God will save us from the pandemic through science	59	26	16	54	29	17
The pandemic is a solely 'natural' event without any relation to God	49	19	32	51	28	21
God could stop the pandemic at any point whatever we do	30	21	50	26	27	47
The pandemic is punishment from God	1	2	98	1	4	95
God's power to save us from the pandemic depends on human co-operation	73	10	17	66	16	17
Science will save us from the pandemic without God's help	13	20	68	20	26	54
The pandemic is the result of human sin	11	11	78	5	10	86

Table 11.1

Online services offered during the pandemic (N = 700)

	Never	Some Sundays	Most Sundays	Every Sunday	
	%	%	%	%	
Pre-recorded Service of the Word	49	19	9	23	
Pre-recorded Holy Communion	70	19	5	6	
Live-streamed Service of the Word	22	18	20	40	
Live-streamed Holy Communion	25	25	25	25	

	Never	Some weeks	Most weeks	Every week	Most days
	%	%	%	%	%
Pre-recorded morning Service of the Word	77	10	3	6	4
Pre-recorded evening Service of the Word	80	12	2	4	2
Pre-recorded Holy Communion	88	7	2	2	1
Live-streamed morning Service of the Word	55	14	6	13	11
Live-streamed evening Service of the Word	54	17	6	14	9
Lived-streamed Holy Communion	72	13	5	7	2

Table 11.2

Changes in the frequency of church services offered when this was possible during the pandemic

	<i>n</i>	Fewer services	Same	More services
		%	%	%
Sunday Service of the Word	622	28	61	11
Sunday Holy Communion	699	41	51	8
Weekday Service of the Word	622	28	55	17
Weekday Holy Communion	627	40	56	4

Table 11.3

Online delivery of ministry during the pandemic (N = 692)

	Never	Tried as one-off	Used sometimes	Normal practice now
	%	%	%	%
Bible study	24	8	24	44
Fellowship/ prayer groups	31	6	36	27
Lent (or Advent) groups	35	9	32	24
Work with primary-aged children	56	10	20	14
Work with teenagers/young adults	59	9	22	10
Ministry team meetings	21	2	32	45
PCC / PPC meetings	6	1	28	65
Online pastoral care	37	8	44	12

Table 11.4

Parochial ministry during the pandemic (N = 678)

	Not tried	Tried but not possible	Mostly poorly	Mostly well
	%	%	%	%
Supporting your congregation	1	1	13	84
Offering prayer/spiritual support	8	2	13	77
Working with fellow ministers	16	4	16	64
Dealing with funerals	18	4	20	59
Dealing with the bereaved	13	3	25	59
Working with the local community	14	9	21	56
Dealing with the sick or dying	13	6	25	56
Outreach and mission	29	5	19	48
Supporting fellowship groups	27	5	22	46
Dealing with baptisms	46	5	9	41
Working with other denominations	44	7	18	32
Dealing with weddings	51	7	10	31
Being a spokesperson/lobbying	55	4	15	25

Table 11.5

Support offered by churches during the pandemic (N = 678)

	Never provided this support	Used to, but not now	Declined during pandemic	Same as before	Increased during pandemic
	%	%	%	%	%
Keeping in touch with core members	1	1	26	16	57
Keeping an eye on the elderly or lonely	1	1	19	26	53
Delivering or providing food	10	6	21	31	31
Keeping in touch with occasional attenders	5	5	30	33	27
Working with community organisations	7	7	39	31	16
Supporting the sick	2	3	35	44	16
Supporting the bereaved	4	2	26	52	15
Delivering medicine	82	2	4	8	5