



# In-Person Worship -A Second Survey

Questions Responses 230

230 responses

*Redacted to remove personal names.*



Accepting responses



Summary

Question

Individual

Written feedback is welcomed. What ...ip? What would you like us to know? ▼

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Written feedback is welcomed. What have you found meaningful about online worship? Do you have ideas for improvement? What feedback do you have for our leadership? What would you like us to know?

145 responses

Goddard UMC Ft. Smith has for me, a more enjoyable, full worship experience online. Small ensembles singing in the same acoustical space, minister robed and in the pulpit, actual hymns, et cetera. That being said, in my opinion, all online worship experience is lacking in enthusiasm, joy and warmth.

2 responses

We are so thankful for all that our church has done during these strange times and congratulate you all for using this as an opportunity. We love how you have added so many elements of in-person worship. We have "attended" every week. Just not sure we have remembered to sign attendance!

2 responses

I am so thankful for the time and effort placed into the prayers, the services, the music and everything that has gone into this online experience. I still don't feel safe and so appreciative that our church has found ways to reach out to it's members in so many ways.

2 responses

Thanks for creativity and working to keep us connected to God and each other. I like the blended online service and appreciate the work and the way we are learning how to do ministry in new settings and circumstances. God is with us.

2 responses

I don't think congregational singing in worship will be safe nor do I think it is safe for choirs to rehearse. We would need to rely on solos or other forms of special music.

2 responses

I think they keep getting better and better. We just need to keep getting better at the technical aspects such as microphones and editing. And we are getting better at that.

2 responses

Service is ok. Sermons seem less formal. What's the hurry to get back? Better to be safer now and take some time than to start and have to stop it again.

2 responses

I think you are doing a very good job of ministering to the congregation in the online service.

2 responses

I'm afraid we will come back too soon. Please, let's not make that mistake.

2 responses

In regards to question one, when the number of positive cases has declined for at least 14 days or the positivity rate has declined for that period or significantly lower. The 14 day decline I think was supposed to be part of the criteria for reopening. In any case the number of cases continues to make new daily records and the positivity rate has not trended down. If data and criteria set by CDC/health officials are the priority, then I don't think AR is currently meeting those. Online worship has certainly provided a connection to the church and the work of the staff and others involved is noticed and appreciated, realizing the challenges with creating community in this new world. Sometimes I wonder if guidelines for distancing is adequate for some of the musical portions and placement in front of wind instruments and among interviewers. Also I think an online presence of a live service might be more meaningful (vs pre-recorded), as pastors/leaders could address/respond to events/concerns in a more personal manner and not be limited to a message planned days earlier than the service. They could also verbally respond to Facebook comments in real time, possibly providing a more personal connection by the representative church. Examples include acknowledging grieving families or addressing/mentioning community events. Having a live version could provide an outlet for connection and support through the leader recognizing the importance of individual and community concerns and facilitating the connection to the greater church family through verbal recognition. This would also help bridge connections across platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube and in-person worship (when it happens), where not all participants in any one platform can interact with the another. I think the personal interaction is the key missing element right now. Perhaps a Zoom option could provide a work around for this using randomized breakout rooms before or after the service to allow for participants to interact as they would in-person. Then during the service an administrator could mute all and chat function could be utilized for feedback or use the poll option for prayer or sermon interactions. This live version could be while online is still the only option and/or continue when in-person starts as an option for those not comfortable with that yet.

1 response

There is still a disconnect Somehow, some are not attending, and for when those who are like us it's feels distant. I have a couple of thoughts: 1. TODDLERS' social worlds: I wonder if we can have a zoom connect for kids/toddlers with a "mother goose type reading"; where kids can be social interaction too. It is hard for [REDACTED] to pay attention, unless the music is on during the service. Maybe once a month (or incorporated into the service) we can have a quick toddler bible story read and/or kid sing along option during the service or perhaps a special separate one, once a month?, Maybe? It can be 15 min long and toddlers would love it! Then the parents of those kids could also connect briefly. 2. COFFEE HOUSE: I also feel our church family really needs to have the November coffee house! This is an event that is so bright and brings so many smiles and holiday spirit over celebration of Christ's birth! I would hate to see it go away. I think it could work to fund raise/order on-line, eliminate the "In person bidding process" and just put a single price suggestion for donation; then a Final drive through pick up for items and pick up a hot apple cider or hit chocolate in the drive through. We can have Christmas music playing in the parking lot for that festive cheer!!! We could then also announce raffle ticket winners the morning of the drive through which raffles are always fun! ☺ I just think covid is hard enough already; isolation and social struggles are part of our health and well being; it will only feel worse in Christmas, and this would be something to look forward to for many. -- Thank you to the whole Staff for serving our congregation family in such strange and difficult times! :) 🙏❤️🌸

1 response

Currently, 1% of the population in Arkansas has tested positive for this virus. 1% of those who have tested positive have died, mostly with known risk categories, with people of color and those with more economic struggles most effected. This mortality rate is going down – well below 1%, based on known cases. If it is true that there are many more unknown cases, it is even lower. In Faulkner country, the number of known cases has quadrupled in the last few weeks with 0% increase in deaths (around 800 cases with 3 deaths, or a .03% mortality rate of known cases). There are 130,000 people in Faulkner County. Also, the total numbers of deaths from all causes in Arkansas is not above normal. According to the CDC, there has only been two weeks in 2020 when the number of deaths rose slightly above the estimated number of expected deaths. There have been other years when this has happened more times In the U.S. as a whole there have been more weeks with excess deaths, but this is steadily going down. There is a lot we do not know and there is much hope that treatments will continue to improve. Caution is in order – masks, distancing, regular washing of hands – but perhaps these health concerns need to be balanced with other concerns. Being together builds immune systems and contributes to our overall health. We need shared "germs." Singing together, for example, has important health benefits. Also, people are being hurt economically, socially, and spiritually. Some are literally starving as a direct result of actions taken. Many are missing out of opportunities to learn and experience life. Church and School are important parts of this. What is the appropriate risk of living?

1 response

Online worship has allowed us to continue to feel some connection to our faith community, especially with being able to be "active" in choir through virtual means, although I deeply miss our Sunday school class time. We are all families with young children who rely on having others care for our children in the nursery during

the time we meet each week, and it has simply been difficult to find a meaningful way to virtually meet as a class while also caring for young children who are now with us 24/7. I think that while it has been difficult for us to come together, this is a time we could all use each others' support in a big way because of the demands of having young families in a pandemic, including all of the new roles we are all playing as teachers, chefs, coaches, and constant activity organizers on top of already being parents and employees. I also wish there was some way to establish more connection for our young children. My three year old son brings up almost daily how he misses his church and his church friends. We cannot drive anywhere near the church without him shedding tears over wanting to be able to go inside and see everyone. He loves each week when he gets to hear the music from church and see the pastors on screen, but I just wish there were more educational type opportunities geared toward these young ones like they would usually have in the nursery. We miss you all so much and look forward to the time it is safe to come together again in-person, but we so appreciate how the church leaders are handling the pandemic and trying to keep everyone safe instead of rushing back to that in-person experience.

1 response

Online worship has been wonderful for keeping us connected, as has zoom Sunday school. I think our staff has done a wonderful job adjusting and providing engaging services, instead of just posting a video of a sermon to be listened to later. I really love the way we've used technology to have participation from lay readers and musicians. While I desperately miss the in person time with my people, I don't know that the risks outweigh the benefits for opening too soon. i think opening with restrictions is problematic. i don't know the numbers for online participation, but I feel that restricted attendance policies will surely effect actual attendance. For instance, if a family loads up for in person worship but is turned away because we are at the restricted capacity, what are the odds they will return home and still tune in to the online option? Likewise, how do we soothe the lifelong member who came in person and tuned in online every week for years when they are refused entry because of a set number? How do we protect our staff during prolonged in person contact? If we reopen the children's programs, what will be our protocol for staff, for participants, and for follow-up/notification if and when a child or staff member contracts the virus? I apologize for my rambling. Like many people, I would be overjoyed to have church 'back to normal' as soon as possible, but we have to do it safely.

1 response

I would be comfortable resuming some form of in-person services once the Covid-19 numbers are truly down and continuing to fall - not that we're told that they're down. (I'll NOT get on my soapbox.) When they've been trending down for a month, minimum, I would be willing to attend Stage II services. Otherwise, not until a vaccine is available. I appreciate the understanding that worship can take many forms and teaching/learning are just as varied. Zoom/FB are a necessity right now if you want either of these things to take place. On the flip side, and I realize there's nothing to be done about this currently nor would I want to, I miss gathering as a body, singing together, raising our voices in prayer while hearing all the other voices. There is something powerful in that for me. Knowing that Zoom/FB experiences aren't necessarily taking place at the same time

makes the worship/prayer aspect of those mediums less heartfelt for me. Can we do more live communion? Or just live prayer sessions? Prayers of the People?

#### 1 response

The question beginning with "What precautions ..." did not include "Continue with no services for now." That is a viable precaution. Despite what the Conference and State Governor does, we are able to rise above a lowest-common-denominator solution. Churches are among the most dangerous places with respect to Covid. Ironically, so are bars. To be clear, I miss my church family, the choir, and, most especially, the pipe organ prelude, offertory, and postlude, and the occasional brass accompaniment, e.g., I miss church music performed to Janet's high standard. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~. But I am not willing to risk 'bursting my bubble.' I view the Church's desire to return to in-person service as a head-in-the-sand, lemming-like, rush to appease the Conference at the expense of individual well being. Our congregation enjoys an exceptionally high level of education. Let's use it to abide by good science and rise above the ignorant masses.

#### 1 response

COVID 19 cases are still rising, and there doesn't seem to be a leveling-off coming in the near future. Because of this, I feel it is premature to even think about in-person worship services at this point. While I realize that some will participate in services held in the church building, most likely I will wait until either (1) a reliable vaccine is available, or (2) virus treatment(s) are available, or (3) the case load has dropped dramatically. Please understand - I miss in-person worship, and look forward to being able to participate once again. I miss the music, the choir, the organ, and having 200+ church members around me in worship. However, at this point I do not miss it enough to risk my health/life or that of my loved ones. I will continue to support the church with my pledges and financial support, but not with my presence - not for a while!

#### 1 response

I really enjoyed the interview conversation with Michelle Morris. It felt more relaxed and natural than some of the other online worship services. I also love seeing the compilations of folks singing and playing instruments in unique ways. While it is meaningful to see the sanctuary, I also wonder about and would advocate for pastors modeling the importance of staying home, and that worship and God's presence is with us there, too. (I realize that home settings are varied and different and may not be the most conducive to recording worship). Thank you for the work you've already been doing to address race. It's of utmost importance to me to see this continued. Keep bringing it up, keep challenging folks and inviting them to this difficult but critical work.

## 1 response

I support resumption of in person gatherings, following all the guidelines, for those who want to attend. I will not be physically present until the numbers of new cases are close to zero, but I would not want to make my decision apply to everyone. Therefore, the online presence, in much the same form as currently available, is very much appreciated. Meanwhile, we should do all we can as individuals to stay safe and healthy and to do our part to help others stay healthy. (MASKS are just so important, especially as the research seems to be moving toward an understanding that airborne transmission is a greater threat that was originally thought.)

## 1 response

[REDACTED] are concerned about returning until things are a little normal - major declines in cases, less hospitalizations, fewer on ventilators, and fewer deaths. [REDACTED] are elderly, although we don't like that!, and both have issues that could create serious problems for us. We will always attend through online services but are not comfortable to return anytime soon. We miss church so much but we must realize where we stand in the area of safety. We love our church family and all the hugs and we will be back someday!

## 1 response

I look forward to the mid week devotional as well as Sunday's service each week. Both times of worship bring peace as well as joy to my heart! Christ's words as brought forth in the Bible provides the spiritual guidance that I need to be faithful, fruitful, and shine His loving light. I am thankful that Pastor Michael as well as Associate Pastor Lauren deliver the message with such passion and reflect Christ's love for us all.

## 1 response

I've appreciated the blended music offerings as well as hearing from both pastors on some Sundays. I have wondered if actual live Sunday morning worship from sanctuary might be possible. That being said, I know that planning and implementing online worship has been a big undertaking !! am grateful to all our staff and participants for meaningful online worship, Sunday school, devotional and study opportunities.

## 1 response

I greatly appreciate the innovative and thoughtful ways that community worship has been enabled. I was surprised, and pleased, that lay leadership has been maintained in unique ways, (though I must confess that I there were some of those participants who I could not hear (or understand) . Have also greatly appreciated (and been amazed at) the wonderful music offerings, in different genres.

1 response

I have appreciated the online worship, and I hope we can stream live worship once we resume. I hope we can invest in improving sound quality for music. We have a wonderful music ministry, and it is not seen in its full capacity with our current systems. I also appreciate willingness of the church leadership to protect the health of the congregation by not rushing to resume in-person services.

1 response

Thanks everyone for all the church folks are doing now to help others. Maybe the most difficult time for churches in the modern era. We will be back when things are safe but I also see online worship as a vital part of the church ministry for the future in reaching others for Christ. God always makes it clear when we are making decisions about ministry. God bless you.

1 response

have participated in the online worship services since they began, and we have really enjoyed each of them. Due to our personal health conditions and our ages, we are not comfortable coming back to regular worship services even with the changes at this time. We dearly miss FUMC and will continue to attend the online services.

1 response

I would like to see the faces of church members who will read the scriptures or say a few words about how they are worshipping during this altered time. I miss seeing the kitchen area, my SS classroom or even the halls of the church. Could a sermon or church member be filmed in various locations? Anything familiar would be nice.



## 1 response

The benefits of gathering together, even with precautions, don't outweigh the risks yet. The calendar won't tell us the correct "date" to meet together again, and we have seen our elected officials are NOT good judges of when we will be safe. Common sense and science will show us when it will be safe. These are our God-given gifts.

## 1 response

I commend and thank Michael and the members of his team for their efforts and effectiveness during this time of challenge and difficulty. In my opinion, they are laboring commendably to keep the FUMC responsive to the the diverse needs of the congregation and community. Sincere thanks, indeed!

## 1 response

I have enjoyed the online services and am glad for the option. I limit my activities out of my house due to Mom and Dad and caring for them, so this is perfect for me. The only problem I have is the volume. Some of the participants volume is very low and I'm constantly having to adjust.

## 1 response

I appreciate the online availability. The conversational techniques was a good introduction to our new pastor. It was a comfortable format. I suspect we will wait until we feel safe returning to lg. group (up to 50) gatherings. Our age bracket is a strong influence on our decision.

## 1 response

Thank you so much for leading so effectively during this difficult time. I know many of us miss worshipping together. There are a few who have been in crisis without access to a traditional in-person church service for so long. Thank you for your continued prayer and ministry to us all.

**1 response**

Personally I am significantly health challenged and just blessed to greet each day. Until vaccinated, essentially "sheltering in place" will be necessary for me. I am grateful for FUMC online but I would defer any in-person worship decisions to those for whom there are options.

**1 response**

We appreciated the call we received from the church and the Sunday services. We believe special attention from the ministers should be paid to those who are ill, infirmed or have other difficulties. We would also welcome feedback about the results of this survey.

**1 response**

We think over-65 members should not return as quickly as the younger adults and children. In- person church activities for the young , with masks and precautions, shouldn't be postponed until oldest adults are at less risk. That would take until the vaccine arrives.

**1 response**

Starting to feel disconnected and spiritually adrift. I miss the support and friendship I experience when worshipping in person. Also miss being part of other ministries and activities beside the food pantry (which I will have to stop when school starts).

**1 response**

I have enjoyed the creative ways the Praise Band and Chancel Choir have adapted to Sunday morning music. It has been wonderful! I also look forward to the new developments in worship as Pastor Michelle shares her phenomenal tech gifts and experience.

**1 response**

[REDACTED] appreciate all the effort the ministers and staff have put into our virtual worship on Sundays, weekly devotions, and special music. We feel very much part of the services. We don't really have any suggestions for changes of any kind.

1 response

To return to full worship services at this time would be irresponsible. We should still be in phase one. We are not in control of this situation yet, and pushing to return to more normal worship and daily activities is only making it worse.

1 response

I just want the church leadership to know how much our family appreciates all your hard work and inspiration. It has been a blessing to have our family continue worship through online services and Sunday school. Thank you!

1 response

I like the way all ages and worship styles are represented. The messages have been clear and easy to follow. The ability to go from a traditional service format to something less formal like the interview sessions.

1 response

Since we are finding out that COVID is air born and can last for many hours in the air what precautions or adjustments have been made to our heating and cooling and ventilation system to continually purify the air?

1 response

I have enjoyed the mix of traditional and contemporary that online worship has provided. While I prefer a more traditional service in person, having both mixed together reaches a larger audience and is fun to see.

1 response

I enjoy our Sunday morning service more when Pastor Michael delivers a message (sermon) as he did in the 8:45 service when we gathered in the sanctuary. I always enjoy the music--singing and bells.

1 response

With the shorter format, I find myself less distracted in worship by others around me. I also enjoy being able to watch at a time that is convenient for me throughout that Sunday.

1 response

I have enjoyed the Sunday and Wednesday Facebook videos along with my Sunday School Zoom classes. Sandra King has done a great job with Mid-Youth Zooms on Wednesdays & Sundays.

1 response

I love it but I would like it to be a little longer to accommodate an actual sermon. (Sorry, but I do not like the praise band. Please put it at the end so I can turn it off )

1 response

I love the Praise band, but all the music is beautiful. I like seeing volunteers participate, and the message is always beneficial. I think you're doing a great job.

1 response

I am so proud of our church leaders and their creativity and continued leadership in such an unprecedented time. Thank you for all that you do!

1 response

I will not be back for inperson worship until the Covid numbers are much , much lower and have held steady for a significant period of time.

1 response

I enjoy the online worship and zoom with Sunday School. I am not comfortable returning to church until there is a vaccine and it is safe.

1 response

Thank you for your hard work in making worship available and meaningful. Your efforts are appreciated by so many,

1 response

As much as I want people to come together, I'm very hesitant. Our Church Staff does a great online service.

1 response

It is easier for us to watch Pulaski Heights on TV each Sunday but we have been giving financially online

1 response

I like how the church has invited a variety of individuals and families to participate in the service.

1 response

I think it is perfect. I miss the real deal church, but keep doing what you're doing in the meantime!

1 response

I always enjoy seeing everyone commenting during the service. It gives it a much more personal feel.

1 response

I am 70+ and have to be very careful. I won't attend indoor activities until there is a vaccine.

1 response

I have enjoyed online worship. I wish that my Sunday school class had an online option.

1 response

Keep on doing all you are doing now, until the pandemic is controlled with vaccine.

1 response

Our Pastors have done a wonderful job with the online worship services. Thank you.

1 response

Involving as many people as possible; music; effort put in to making it happen

1 response

I love it! (In light of the health crisis) it is so much better than nothing!

1 response

I'm reading--books by Adam Hamilton (senior pastor, UMC, Leawood, Kansas)

1 response

I truly appreciate the time and effort given to the on-line services.

1 response

I like service to replicate traditional service.

1 response

We love the option & enjoy hearing our pastors.

1 response

Maybe some outside events on the parking lot.

1 response

I enjoy the current format and its evolution.

1 response

Overall it has been a good experience.

1 response

Thank you for all you're doing.

1 response

I appreciate having the music.

1 response

Just too early to come back

1 response

You're doing fine.



1 response

Regular sermon

1 response

no

1 response



