

SURVEY OF SENIOR PASTORS

October 2021



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Table of Contents

- 2 Executive summary
- 3 Infographic
- 4 Church statistics
- 5 Attendance trends
- 6 Attendee demographics
- 7 Church and organization strengths
- 8 Impact of pandemic
- 10 Appendix A: Respondent demographics
- 12 Appendix B: Methodology
- 13 Appendix C: Survey questionnaire

Executive summary

This report summarizes an inaugural survey of senior pastors with the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). The goal of this survey was to gather information to help Districts and Ministries at UPCI fulfill the mission of bringing the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church.

The survey was available in English and Spanish from October 1, 2021, to October 22, 2021. It received 996 responses with at least one response from each of the 57 Districts in the US and Canada.

To be included in this report, respondents must have been a senior pastor of an active self-governing work and a credentialed minister with the UPCI. Responses that were incomplete or inconsistent were omitted from this analysis.¹ Individual responses will remain anonymous. Responses have been combined in a way to protect the identity of individual pastors and churches.

The survey was distributed via email to all senior pastors of active self-governing works via the General Superintendent's newsletter. The survey was also strategically promoted at General Conference to collect a representative sample and reduce sample bias. Responses represent the actual distribution of pastors, so this analysis treats this sample as representative of the organization as a whole.²

Key findings:

- The average of typical church attendance was 113. The average of peak church attendance was 141. In 2021, estimated peak attendance in the US and Canada was 585,000.
- In 2021, typical church attendance was around 60 people. Almost half (43 percent) of pastors reported attendance between 26 and 75 people.
- For every 100 attendees, 62 were non-Hispanic White, 19 were Hispanic or Latino, 13 were Black or African American, 4 were from Native People groups, and 2 were Asian or Pacific Islanders.
- The typical church surveyed was 40 years old, and the typical senior pastor tenure was 10 years.
- Pastors strongly believe the UPCI maintains Biblical standards and report spiritual growth and unity as the top strengths of local churches.
- Majority of pastors reported lower attendance and higher giving compared to pre-pandemic levels. Churches with 75 or fewer attendees reported a more negative impact in comparison to larger churches.
- Online service options increased after March 2020 and most churches retained this strategy in 2021. Most churches with no online services had 75 or fewer attendees.

¹ See Appendix A for more information on respondent demographics.

² See note i in Appendix B for more on survey bias.

Senior Pastor Survey

October 2021

Typical attendance of

113 people

per church on average

Half of churches reported typical attendance above

56 people

Half of churches reported peak attendance above

85 people

Peak attendance of

141 people

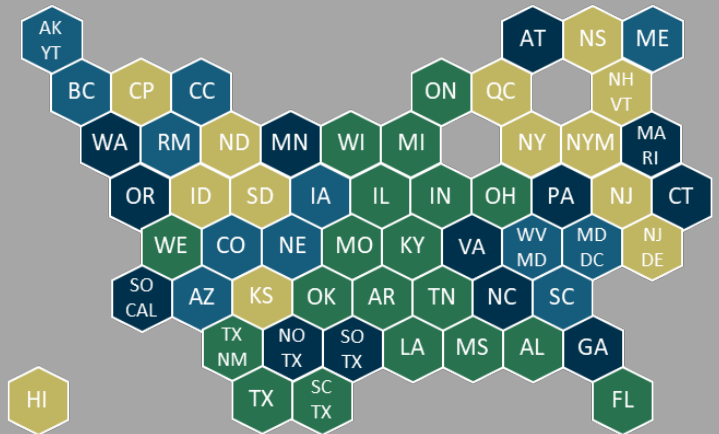
per church on average

996 pastors responded

with at least one response from each of the 57 Districts in North America and represents 23% of all pastors.

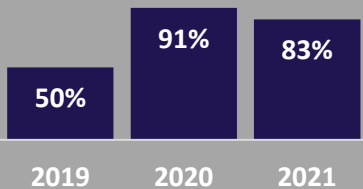
Responses

■ 1 to 5 ■ 6 to 10 ■ 11 to 20 ■ More than 20

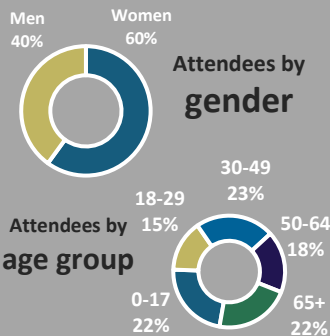


More churches with livestream services

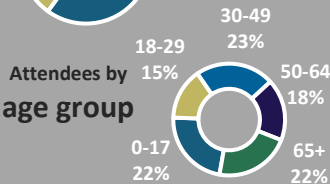
% of churches with online option



Attendees by gender

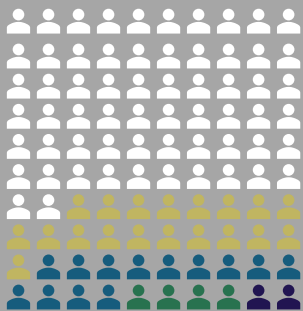


Attendees by age group



North American peak attendance in 2021 of

585,000 attendees



For every 100 attendees in North America, there are 62 non-Hispanic white, 19 Hispanic or Latino, 13 Black or African American, 4 Native people groups, and 2 Asian or Pacific Islanders

Pastor tenure
(median)

=

10
years

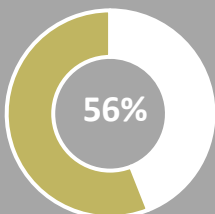
Church age
(median)

=

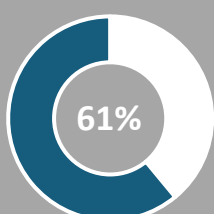
40
years

Majority of pastors reported.....

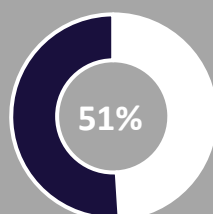
Lower attendance since pandemic



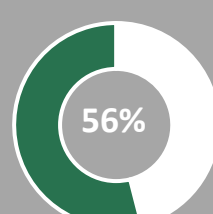
Higher giving since pandemic



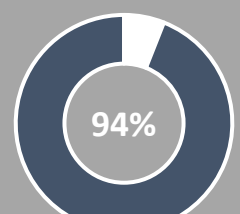
Negative impact from pandemic



At least 25 first-time guests

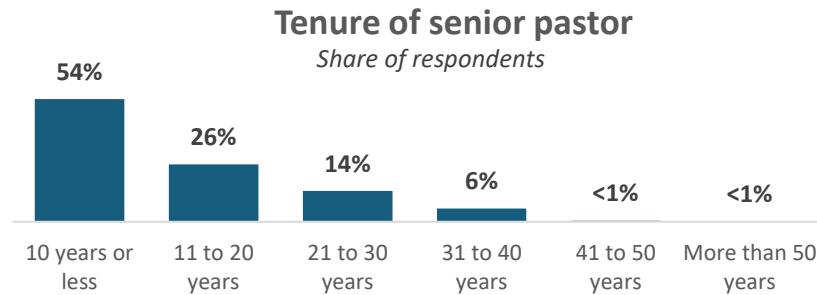


Local church is unified



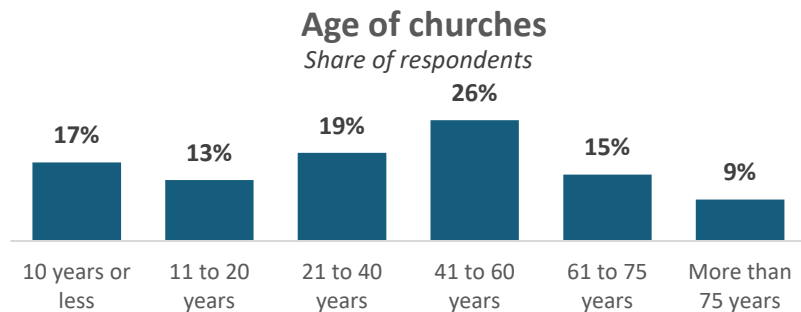
More than half of surveyed pastors have tenure of 10 years or less

Pastor tenure in this survey ranged from a few months to more than 50 years. More than half of pastors (54 percent) surveyed have been the senior pastor for 10 years or less. About one-quarter of respondents have been the senior pastor for 11 to 20 years. The remaining 20 percent of senior pastors surveyed have been in that position for more than 20 years.



Average church surveyed is about 40 years old

Pastors identified the year of establishment for the church they currently pastor. Responses indicate the average church surveyed was established in 1982 for an average church age of 39 years. 17 percent of churches surveyed were established within the last 10 years. About one-third was established between 11 and 40 years ago. About one-quarter was established between 41 to 60 years ago. The remaining quarter was established more than 60 years ago.



Evangelism efforts are proportional to church attendance

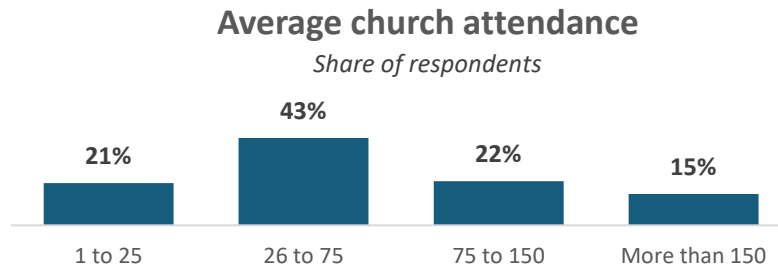
In general, as churches get larger, there are more Bible studies, guests, and church plant efforts. The number of Bible studies and first-time guests are roughly 10 and 50 percent of typical church attendance. The table shows the median number of Bible studies and first-time guests and the percent of churches with either a daughter work or preaching point by attendance.

About one quarter (27 percent) of pastors surveyed had either a daughter work or preaching point associated with their church. Collectively, these responses represent 339 daughter works and 221 preaching points. As reflected in the table above, most churches larger than 150 people have either a daughter work or preaching point.

Attendance	# of Bible studies	# of first-time guests	% with DW or PP
1-25	2	10	7%
26-75	5	23	20%
76-150	12	50	33%
150+	25	109	68%

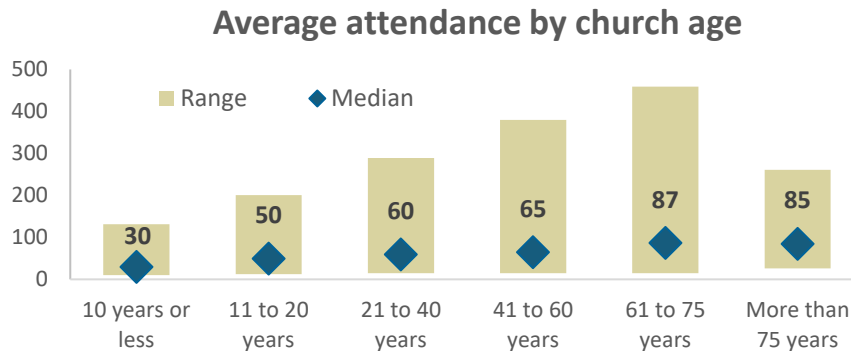
Most churches report typical attendance below 100 people

Typical attendance in 2021 was around 60 people for most churches. 64 percent of pastors reported typical attendance of 75 or fewer people. More specifically, 21 percent reported typical attendance of 25 or fewer people. Only 15 percent of pastors reported typical attendance above 150 people.



Attendance increases with church age in combination with larger ranges

The chart below shows the median and range of attendance by church age. The blue diamond represents the median (or middle value), and the yellow bar represents the range (low to high values) for churches in each age group.³ This illustration intends to quantify trends within a large, diverse group. Generally, attendance increases with age, but the range varies significantly within each group. Attendance can be related to many factors, so being above or below the median does not imply one church is better or worse. For example, a 15-year-old church of 100 and a 15-year-old church of 30 would both be normal given these distributions.



Notice the range for churches older than 75 years is a smaller than the range of younger churches. Based on this analysis, it *cannot* be assumed that attendance in these churches has declined. Churches planted 75 or more years ago could be different today due to many factors not captured in this survey, specifically urban geography (e.g., in the last 20 years, the UPCI has planted more churches in metropolitan areas with 1,000,000 or more people). However, the median (middle) value of churches older than 75 years is comparable with those planted a generation before.

The survey also asked pastors about their highest attendance in 2021, which was around 85 people for most churches. 30 percent of pastors reported peak attendance between 75 to 150 people. One-quarter of pastors reported peak attendance greater than 150 people.

Several comments indicated that attendance has been lower since the onset of the pandemic and restrictions vary significantly across geography. Please consider this when interpreting statistics on church attendance in 2021.

³ See note ii in Appendix B for more on how this range was calculated.

Survey estimates half a million UPCI attendees in North America in 2021

This section reports aggregate statistics for the UPCI fellowship in North America using individual responses of typical attendance and the breakdown of church attendance by gender, age groups, and race and ethnicity. Combining information from almost 1,000 UPCI churches reveals a multi-generational, multi-cultural body.

These survey responses represent 23 percent of all self-governing churches and reflect between 106,000 to 133,000 attendees in North America from survey responses.⁴ Assuming this sample reflects the larger fellowship, there were between 470,000 and 585,000 attendees in UPCI churches in North America in 2021.

Canadian pastors represented about 7 percent of survey responses, and their attendance numbers represented between 5 to 8 percent of attendance in North America.

Majority of fellowship is female

Women represent majority of attendees (60 percent) which is consistent with anecdotal reports. Within individual responses, the share of women ranged from 20 to 99 percent. Conversely, the share of men ranged from 1 to 80 percent.

Diversity across attendee age groups

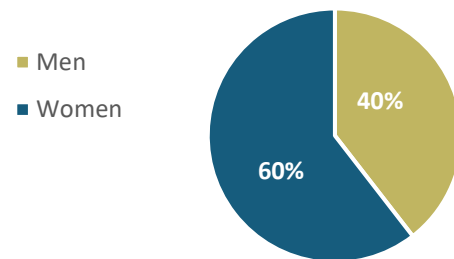
Responses show a healthy distribution of attendance across all age groups. Almost a quarter (23 percent) of the fellowship is represented by children under the age of 17. Another 15 percent is represented by young adults between the ages of 18 and 29. 41 percent of attendance is adults between the ages of 30 and 64. Older adults (aged 65 and older) represent the remaining 22 percent of attendees.

Almost two-thirds of attendees are non-Hispanic white

Senior pastors provided their best estimates for the percentage of their church by race and ethnicity.⁵ Majority of attendance (62 percent) is represented by non-Hispanic white attendees. Hispanic and Black attendees represented 19 and 13 percent of overall attendance respectively. Native people groups represented 4 percent of the attendees. Asian and Pacific islanders represented 2 percent of the attendees.

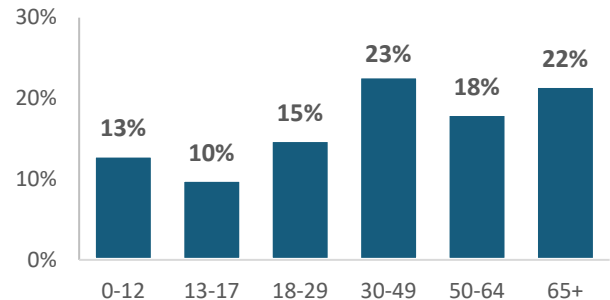
Attendees by gender

Share of all responses combined



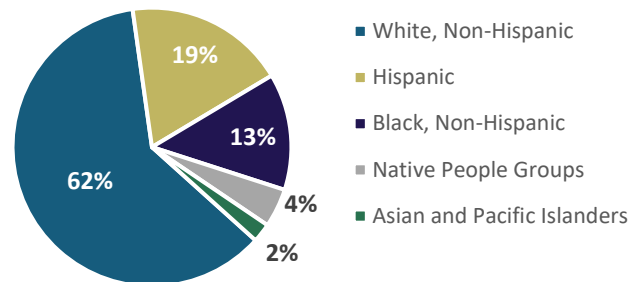
Attendees by age

Share of all responses combined



Attendees by ethnicity

Weighted share of all responses combined

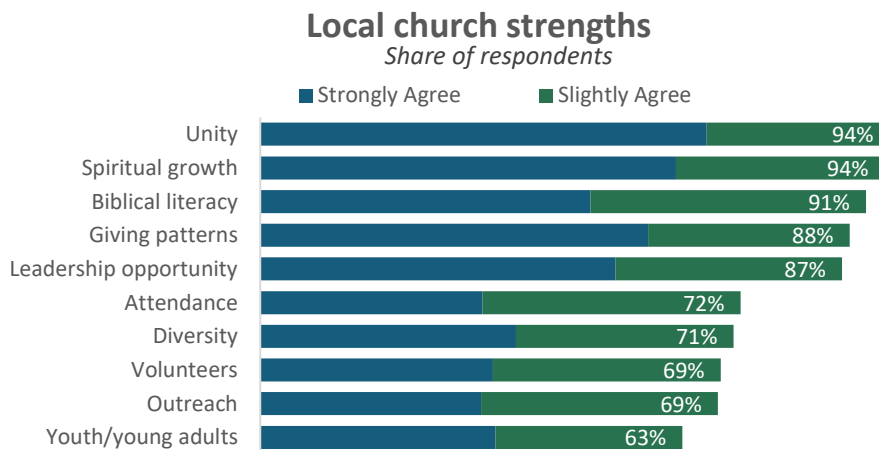


⁴ These numbers are estimated using typical and highest attendance for each church. Pastors provided both attendance statistics in the survey. The total mark-up between typical and highest attendance in 2021 was 25 percent.

⁵ See note iii and iv in Appendix B for clarification on racial and ethnic groups and the response weighting methodology.

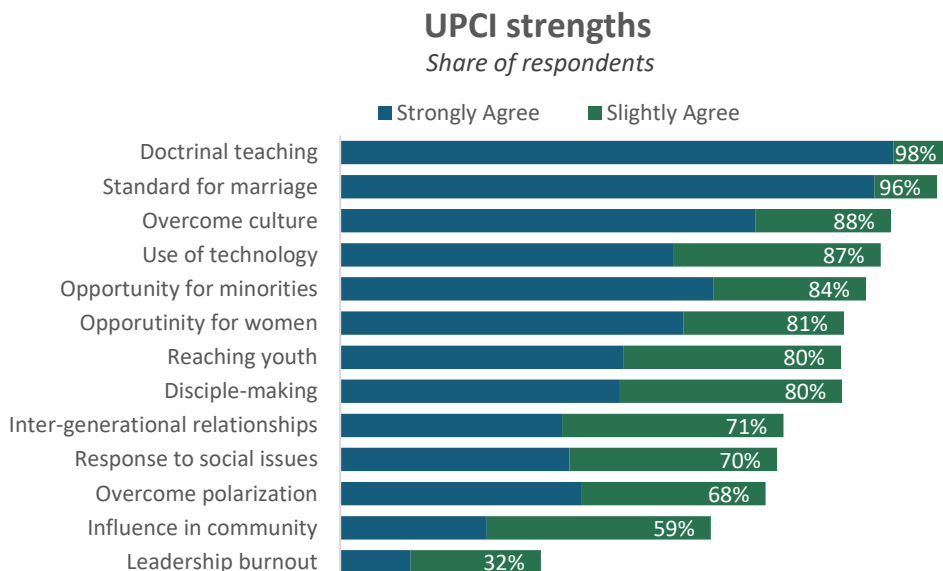
Local church strengths are spiritual growth and unity

Overall, survey responses show that most pastors feel their church is strong across a wide variety of topics. More than 90 percent of pastors agreed that unity, spiritual growth, and Biblical literacy is strong in their church. More than 85 percent agreed their church is financial stable and offers leadership opportunities. Attendance, diversity, volunteer, and outreach efforts also received a majority of positive responses. About two-thirds (63 percent) of pastors agreed that their church had a strong group of youth and young adults. Conversely, more than one-third of pastors are less confident in the strength of their younger attendees.



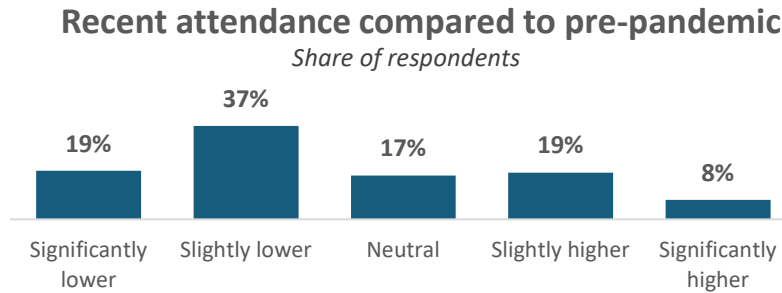
Pastors strongly believe the UPCI maintains Biblical standards

More than 95 percent of pastors agree that UPCI teaches the whole gospel (98 percent) and maintains the Biblical standard for marriage (96 percent). The majority of respondents agreed with a variety of statements ranging from the UPCI’s effective use of technology and disciple-making to the provision of adequate opportunities for women and minorities. Interestingly, 80 percent of pastors felt the UCPI was effectively reaching a younger demographic but only 63 percent felt they had strong youth and young adults at their church. One criterion received an overall neutral response. When asked whether UPCI is adequately addressing leadership burnout and exhaustion, approximately one third of respondents each agreed, disagreed, and remained neutral.



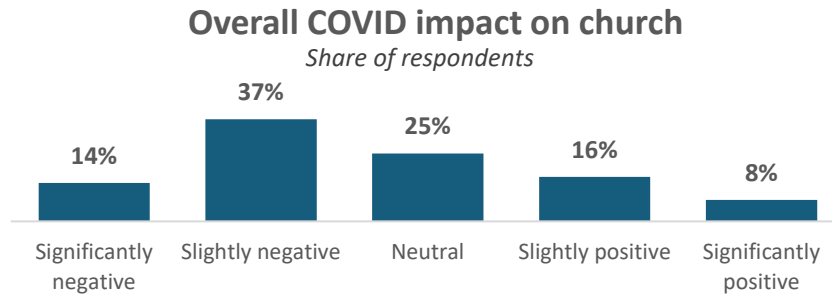
Overall attendance in 2021 is lower than pre-pandemic attendance

Only about one-quarter of churches experienced higher attendance since the onset of COVID. More than half (55 percent) reported lower attendance and 17 percent remain neutral. However, some Districts reported increasing attendance in 2021. For example, about half of pastors surveyed in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin reported higher attendance compared to pre-pandemic levels (55, 48 and 45 percent respectively).



Impact of COVID largely reflects attendance patterns

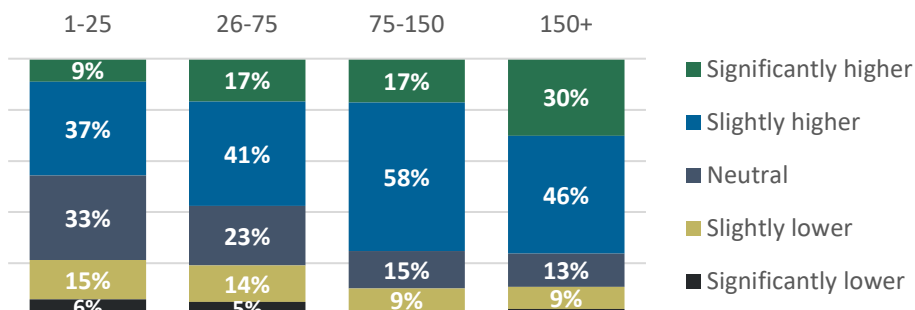
About half of pastors reported the impact of COVID was negative. One quarter each indicated the impact was neutral and positive respectively. In most cases, churches that reported lower attendance or giving patterns also reported a more negative impact of COVID and vice versa.



Pastors of larger churches reported higher giving patterns compared to pastors of smaller churches

Overall, majority of pastors (61 percent) agreed that giving patterns are increasing in their church compared to pre-pandemic patterns. However, this share of pastors in agreement varies based on the church size. Of churches with at least 75 people in attendance, 75 percent of those pastors agree giving patterns are higher. By comparison, of churches with 26 to 75 attendees, 58 percent of pastors reported higher giving. Finally, of churches with less than 25 people, 46 percent of pastors agreed giving was higher.

Recent giving patterns compared to pre-pandemic levels
Share of respondents, By typical church attendance



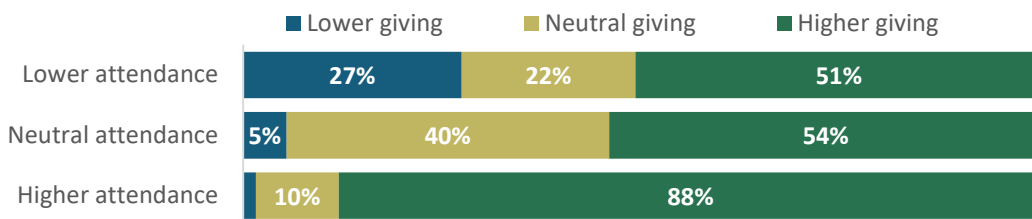
Nearly all churches that reported higher attendance also reported higher giving

Survey responses suggest a relationship between attendance and giving. Only 2 percent of churches with higher attendance reported lower giving. The majority (88 percent) of churches that reported higher attendance also reported higher giving. Recall that only about one-quarter of all churches surveyed reported higher attendance, so approximately 22 percent of churches surveyed reported *both* higher attendance and giving.

In comparison, about half of churches that indicated attendance was neutral (or similar) to pre-pandemic levels reported higher giving and 5 percent reported lower giving. Similarly, about half of churches that reported lower attendance reported higher giving and about one-quarter reported lower giving compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Giving and attendance patterns compared to pre-pandemic levels

Share of respondents, By recent attendance patterns

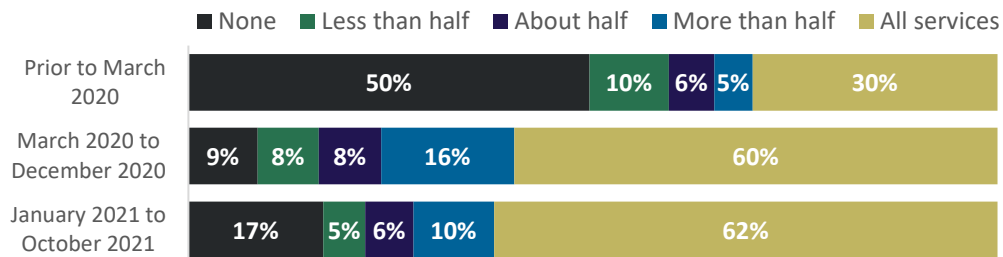


Most churches increased online service options due to pandemic and retained strategy in 2021

Majority (60 percent) of churches made all services available online from March to December 2020 — compared to only 30 percent with all services online prior to March 2020. In general, the digital strategy adopted in 2020 has largely remained in practice by many churches in 2021. Currently, a small share of churches (17 percent) do not offer any services online. This represents a small increase from the share of churches who had no services online in 2020 (9 percent), implying that some churches made services available in the remaining months of 2020 but stopped in 2021.

Online services available during 2020 and 2021

Share of respondents



Half of pastors surveyed had no services available online prior to the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. Of those with no online services prior to the pandemic, 28 percent had 25 or fewer attendees and another 45 percent was between 25 and 75 attendees. Smaller churches may have been less prepared, but they adapted. Churches with 75 or fewer attendees represent about 70 percent of those that indicated no online service options. This is relatively consistent across each of the three time periods

Appendix A: Respondent (Pastor) Demographics

This survey was intended for senior pastors of self-governing works credentialed with the UPCI. Survey respondents were asked about a variety of demographic factors including age, gender, and ethnicity to measure how well the survey sample reflects the real distribution of pastors.

The survey collected 996 responses, but 39 responses were omitted because they were not taken as a credentialed minister or on behalf of the senior pastor.

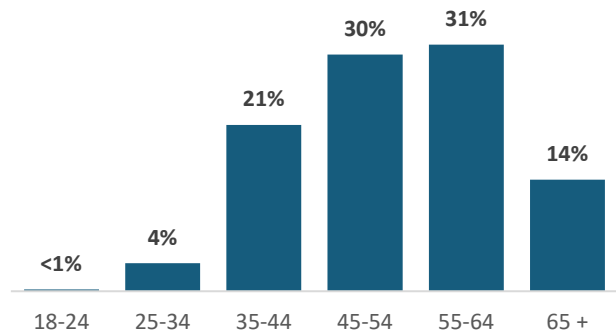
Median age for surveyed pastors is around 50, and roughly 75% of pastors are 45 or older. Almost all (99%) of responses were male.

Most senior pastors in this survey are ordained (71 percent), but there remains a significant group (10 percent) pastoring with a local license.

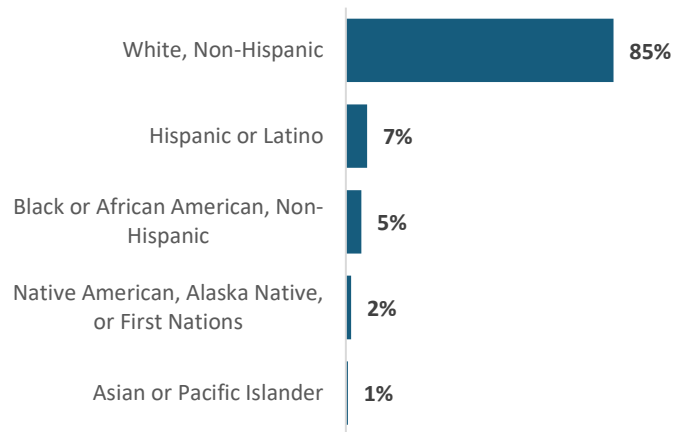
The survey was available in English and Spanish. Less than 1 percent of all participants completed the survey in Spanish; however, 7 percent of pastors who took the survey identified as Hispanic or Latino.

This sample includes participation from all 57 Districts in the US and Canada. The next page shows the distribution of responses by District, which is consistent with the actual distribution of churches in North America.

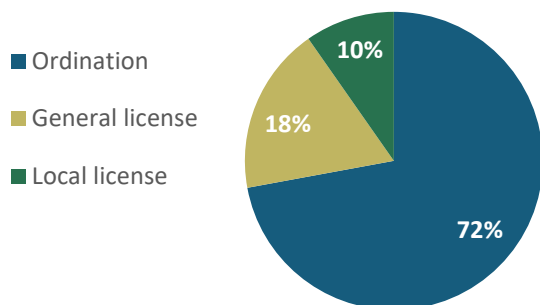
Respondents by age
Share of respondents



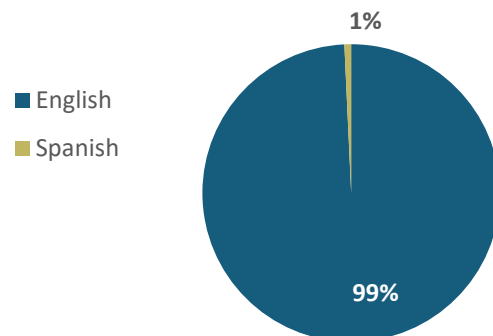
Respondents by ethnicity
Share of respondents



Respondents by credentials
Share of respondents

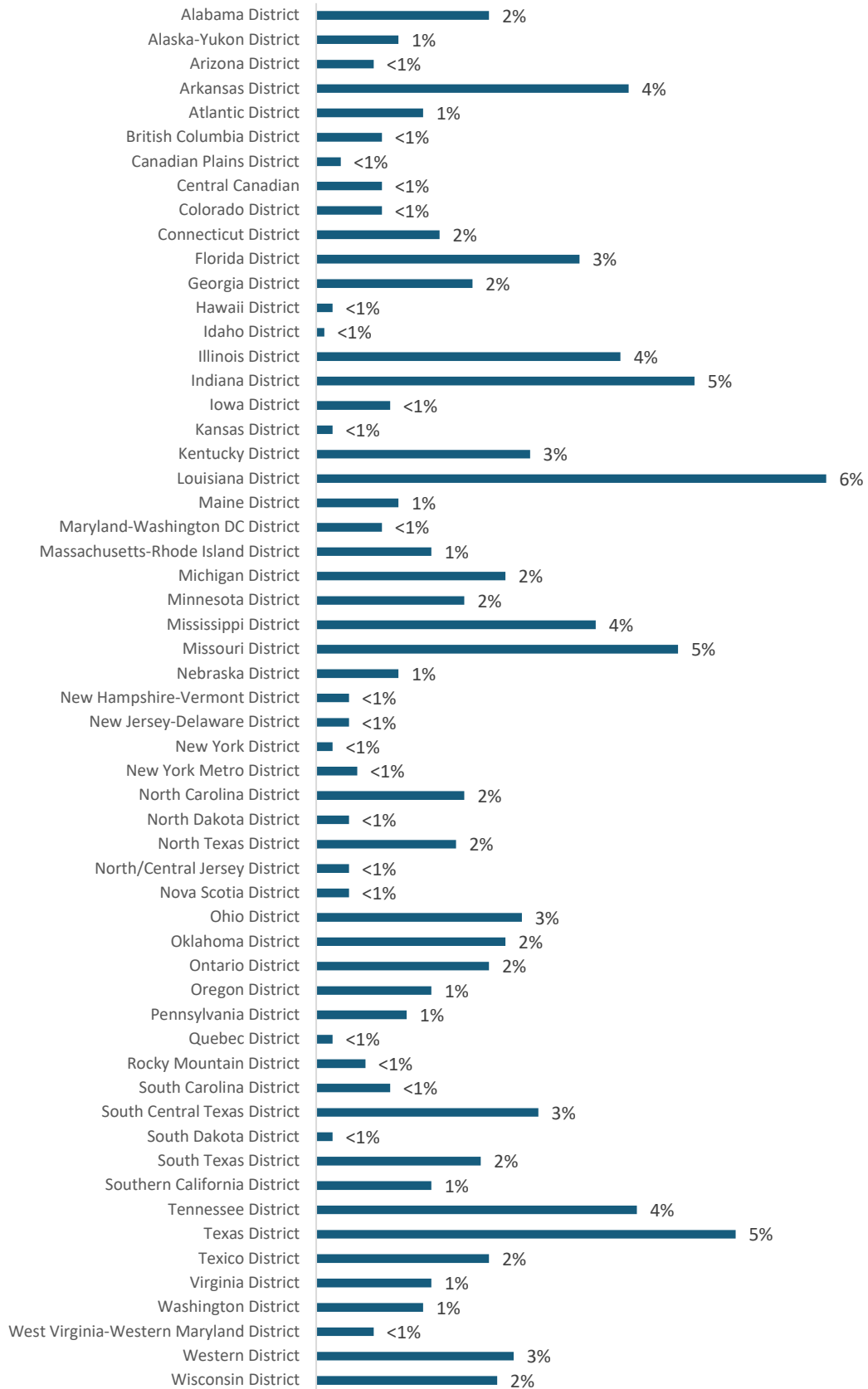


Respondents by (survey) language
Share of respondents



Respondents by District

Share of respondents



Appendix B: Methodology:

i. The survey included several questions to measure respondent demographics. Some might suggest that distributing the survey via email biases the sample towards a younger demographic with more technical fluency. Responses show that less than 5 percent of pastors surveyed were younger than 35. About 75 percent of pastors surveyed were 45 or older. Given this information, there is no evidence to support the survey was subject to an age bias.

Similarly, some might be concerned that smaller Districts or those geographically farther might not be fairly represented. Email distribution allowed all pastors to participate regardless of their location. During the survey period, Districts with proportionately lower response rates were contacted on an individual basis and reminded to participate in the survey to ensure their accurate representation. Responses received are proportional the size of Districts, so it is not evident this survey was subject to a geographic bias.

ii. The range for typical attendance by church age is calculated using percentiles. The median is represented by the middle observation, or 50th percentile. In this analysis, the range reflects the 5th to 95th percentile observed in survey responses. In other words, extreme values are omitted from the range.

iii. The survey asked pastors to approximate the share of their attendees into six racial and ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American, Non-Hispanic; Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and White, Non-Hispanic. We understand that individuals may identify with several (or potentially none) of the listed categories. While this method may not appropriately reflect every individual’s preferred identification, the intention of this question was to better understand the general distribution of attendance by race and ethnicity.

In the summary, the term “native people groups” includes Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and First Nations, and the term “Asian and Pacific islanders” includes Asians, Pacific islanders, and Native Hawaiians. Some group labels were shortened from the original survey language to simplify the summary text. For example, “Hispanic” refers to Hispanic or Latino and “Black” refers to Black or African Americans in the context of this document.

iv. In collaboration with Church Advancement and internal analysis of Church Records, the attendee ethnicity results were adjusted (weighted) by pastor ethnicity. The survey likely oversampled pastors identifying as white, non-Hispanic and under sampled Hispanic or Latino pastors. To estimate attendee demographics for North America, survey responses were weighted by pastor ethnicity to be proportional to UPCI Church Records. The table below shows the breakdown of attendee ethnicity collected in the survey along with the adjusted estimates.

Ethnicity	Pastors (Survey)	Attendees (Survey)	Pastors (Church Records)	Attendees (Adjusted survey)
White, Non-Hispanic	86%	64%	80%	62%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	15%	13%	19%
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	5%	14%	4%	13%
Native People Groups	2%	5%	1%	4%
Asian and Pacific Islanders	1%	2%	2%	2%

Appendix C: Survey questionnaire:

This survey is intended for **senior pastors** credentialed with the United Pentecostal Church International. The goal of this survey is to gather information that can be used to help Districts and Ministries at UPCI fulfill the mission of bringing the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. All responses will be compiled and remain anonymous. Your information and that of your local church will be protected.

Pastor demographics

1. Select your level of credentials with UPCI: (Select one option)

- Local license
- General license
- Ordination
- Not credentialed with UPCI

2. Select your age group: (Select one option)

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 +

3. Select your gender: (Select one option)

- Male
- Female

4. Select your race/ethnicity: (Select one option)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White, Non-Hispanic

5. Select your District: (Select one option)

[Drop-down list with all Districts in North America]

6. Are you a senior pastor of a self-governing work? (Select one option)

- Yes
- No
- No, but I am taking this survey on behalf of my senior pastor

Church status and statistics

7. Does your church have any daughter works or preaching points? (Select one option)

- Yes
- No

8. How many daughter works or preaching points are associated with your church?

- Number of daughter works: _____
- Number of preaching points: _____

9. What year was your church established? (Select one option)

[Drop-down list with years from 2021 to 1946, or '1945 or before' option]

10. How many years have you pastored this church? (Select one option)

[Drop-down list of numbers from 1 to 49, or '50 or more' option]

Answers do no need to be exact. Estimates are okay but should be representative of actual numbers.

11. In 2021, what was your church's highest attendance and average attendance?

- Highest attendance: _____
- Average attendance: _____

12. In 2021, how many people were taught home Bible studies by your church members?

- Number of people taught home Bible studies: _____

13. In 2021, how many first-time guests attended your church?

- Number of first-time guests: _____

Demographics of local church

Note: For the next set of questions, please enter the percentage of your church membership by the following demographics.

Answers for each question should sum to equal 100. Enter only numbers. Do not include "%".

Answers do no need to be exact. Estimates are okay but should be representative of actual numbers.

14. Percentage (%) of church attendance by gender:

- Men: _____
- Women: _____
- Total: _____

15. Percentage (%) of church attendance by age:

- 0-12: _____
- 13-17: _____
- 18-29: _____
- 30-49: _____
- 50-64: _____
- 65+: _____
- Total: _____

16. Percentage (%) of church attendance by race/ethnicity:

- American Indian or Alaska Native: _____
- Asian: _____
- Black or African American, Non-Hispanic: _____
- Hispanic or Latino: _____
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: _____
- White, Non-Hispanic: _____
- Total: _____

Consider the following with respect to your local congregation.

17. How do you feel about each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our church has a strong group of youth and young adults.					
Outreach efforts are increasing (or consistently strong) at our church.					
Our volunteer base is increasing (or consistently strong).					
Our church is growing spiritually.					
Attendance is increasing (or consistently strong) at our church.					
Our church has strong Biblical literacy.					
Giving patterns are increasing (or consistently strong) at our church.					
Our church creates opportunity for new leaders to develop.					
Our church is diverse and reflects our community.					
Our church is unified.					

Consider the following with respect to the UPCI Organization.

18. How do you feel about each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
UPCI teaches the whole gospel.					
UPCI excels at making disciples.					
UPCI is reaching a younger audience.					
UPCI will overcome political polarization.					
UPCI has influence in the community.					
UPCI adequately addresses leader burnout/exhaustion.					
UPCI will prevail despite hostile culture towards Christianity.					
UPCI addresses social issues appropriately.					
UPCI models inter-generational relationships.					
UPCI maintains God's standard for marriage.					
UPCI provides adequate opportunities for women in ministry.					
UPCI uses technology to better reach our world.					
UPCI provides adequate opportunities for ethnic minorities in ministry.					

19. How would you compare recent attendance relative to pre-COVID-19 attendance in your local congregation?
(Select one option)

- Significantly lower
- Slightly lower
- Neutral
- Slightly higher
- Significantly higher

20. How would you compare recent giving relative to pre-COVID-19 giving in your local congregation? (Select one option)

- Significantly lower
- Slightly lower
- Neutral
- Slightly higher
- Significantly higher

21. How would you rate the overall impact of COVID-19 on your local congregation? (Select one option)

- Significantly negative
- Slightly negative
- Neutral
- Slightly positive
- Significantly positive

22. How many of your services were available online during the given time periods?

	None	Less than half	About half	More than half	All services
Pre-COVID (Prior to March 2020)					
Onset of COVID (March to December 2020)					
Currently (October 2021)					

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey!

Your responses are valuable, and we hope to share these results soon. If you have any comments that you would like to share, please do so below.

23. Any comments you would like to share: _____
