Church Leader Survey Results

Senior Pastors / Executive Pastors from Barna Group’s Church Panel
March 20-30, 2020
Methodology

Protestant, senior and executive pastors from Barna Group’s Church Panel
Total sample size, n=434

Week 1, n=222, March 20-23, 2020
Week 2, n=212, March 21-30, 2020

Each week, minimal weighting is used to ensure the data set is nationally representative based on region, church size, and denomination.
How are you doing today?

Question: Overall, how are you doing today?
Question: Overall, how is your family doing today?
How are the people in your church doing today?

**Question:** To the best of your knowledge, how are the people in your church doing today?
How much has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the overall well-being of the people in your church?

**Question:** How much has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the overall well-being of the people in your church?
Our church facilities are currently . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed/unavailable to all congregants and staff</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open for staff only</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open for small gatherings or meetings only</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are open to provide crisis services to our community</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open for normal use, with some precautions in place</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open for normal use, with no precautions in place</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Our church facilities are currently . . .
Last week, how did online participation compare to typical (in person) Sunday attendance?

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[base: Don't know / Don't stream removed]
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[base: Don't know / Don't stream removed]
What happened with financial giving last weekend?

- **It was significantly down**: 42% (Total), 47% (Week 1), 37% (Week 2)
- **It was slightly down**: 28% (Total), 25% (Week 1), 32% (Week 2)
- **It stayed about the same**: 26% (Total), 35% (Week 1), 16% (Week 2)
- **It increased slightly**: 2% (Total), 1% (Week 1), 3% (Week 2)
- **It increased significantly**: 1% (Total), 1% (Week 1), 1% (Week 2)
In the next week, what will work look like for your staff?

Question: In the next week, what will work look like for your staff?

- Our staff will go to the church or office as usual: 22% (Total), 27% (Week 1), 16% (Week 2)
- We are adapting our workspace to practice social distancing and other protective measures: 27% (Total), 27% (Week 1), 28% (Week 2)
- We will be working remotely for the indefinite future: 32% (Total), 25% (Week 1), 40% (Week 2)
- Staff are making their own workspace choices: 18% (Total), 21% (Week 1), 16% (Week 2)
What's primarily happening with small groups or Bible studies?

- They continue to meet in person as usual: Total 5%, Week 1 7%, Week 2 2%
- They are meeting in real time using video or conference calls: Total 31%, Week 1 30%, Week 2 31%
- They are using social media or group chat to stay in touch: Total 17%, Week 1 11%, Week 2 22%
- They are meeting outdoors or practicing social distancing when together: Total 3%, Week 1 4%, Week 2 2%
- They have stopped meeting: Total 41%, Week 1 44%, Week 2 38%
- We are not sure what they're doing: Total 4%, Week 1 4%, Week 2 4%

**Question:** What's primarily happening with small groups or Bible studies?
What is the greatest priority for your church this week?

- Putting in place technology solutions for streaming our services and/or online giving: Week 1 - 26%, Week 2 - 23%
- Collecting and distributing needed items like food, supplies, emergency funds: Week 1 - 4%, Week 2 - 4%
- Putting in place the right safety measures to protect staff and congregants: Week 1 - 4%, Week 2 - 1%
- Communicating a message of faith and hope to people in the middle of the crisis: Total - 61%, Week 1 - 58%, Week 2 - 64%
- Offering ongoing digital or distance ministry options for our children/youth: Week 1 - 2%, Week 2 - 3%
- Mobilizing people to serve our local community: Week 1 - 4%, Week 2 - 1%

**Question:** What is the greatest priority for your church this week?
What is the primary way your church is serving your local community?

- We do not have an official / organized church response at this time: 28% (Week 1), 29% (Week 2)
- Providing childcare for those who need it: 1% (Week 1), 1% (Week 2)
- Helping distribute food and supplies: 1% (Week 1), 20% (Week 2), 29% (Total)
- Providing financial resources to those who are struggling: 5% (Week 1), 4% (Week 2), 6% (Total)
- Provide housing and resources for students who may be ‘stranded’: 3% (Week 1), 0% (Week 2)
- Cleaning schools and other community buildings to help mitigate risks: 0% (Week 1), 0% (Week 2)
- Making our church available as a COVID-19 testing site: 0% (Week 1), 0% (Week 2)
- Reaching out to elderly, isolated and at risk community members: 34% (Week 1), 28% (Week 2), 40% (Total)
- Other: 5% (Week 1), 8% (Week 2)

Question: What is the primary way your church is serving your local community?
Who is providing you with the most help in terms of information, tools and resources to deal with this crisis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our denomination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our church network or association</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other local church leaders</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-local colleagues and friends</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other leaders on our church's leadership team</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of our own congregation</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and/or local government leaders</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendors or organizations that serve churches</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News and media outlets</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Who is providing you with the most help in terms of information, tools and resources to deal with this crisis?
Currently, what do you see happening with congregants' personal faith journey during this pandemic?

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As of today, when do you think you'll be able to host church services again in your usual building / location(s)?

**Question**: As of today, when do you think you'll be able to host church services again in your usual building / location(s)?
In the next week, I expect disruptions related to the coronavirus will...

- Get much worse: 31% (Total), 37% (Week 1), 25% (Week 2)
- Get a little worse: 47% (Total), 49% (Week 1), 44% (Week 2)
- Stay about the same: 19% (Total), 3% (Week 1), 29% (Week 2)
- Improve a little: 0% (Total), 5% (Week 1), 1% (Week 2)
- Improve a lot: 0% (Total), 3% (Week 1), 1% (Week 2)

Question: In the next week, I expect disruptions related to the coronavirus will...
Once this crisis has resolved, I expect our church attendance will have . . .
Based on everything you're seeing right now, how confident are you that your church will survive?

**Question:** Based on everything you’re seeing right now, how confident are you that your church will survive?
Which of the following describes your staffing decisions in the last week?

- Reducing staff hours: 20% (Week 1), 18% (Week 2), 21% (Total)
- Reducing staff compensation: 1% (Week 1), 0% (Week 2), 1% (Total)
- Reducing the number of staff: 1% (Week 1), 0% (Week 2), 1% (Total)
- All of the above: 4% (Week 1), 4% (Week 2), 3% (Total)
- Adding staff: 2% (Week 1), 2% (Week 2), 3% (Total)
- Nothing / none of the above: 73% (Week 1), 75% (Week 2), 71% (Total)

Question: Which of the following describes your staffing decisions in the last week?
Week 2 Questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation around technology</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church leaders are taking more initiative and caring more deeply for congregants</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased commitment to prayer</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater spiritual openness in people’s hearts</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and unexpected leaders are stepping up</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our church stepping up to help our community</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased small group engagement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and engagement is increasing</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth opportunities for staff</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t seen any of these</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: Where have you seen your church grow most in this unprecedented time?
Question: What do you plan to do for Easter service(s) this year?

- Livestream online: 45%
- Record an Easter message to send out (video / podcast): 13%
- Hold an outdoor service: 10%
- Find another unique way to convene: 5%
- Postpone our Easter celebration: 5%
- Plan to meet as usual for Easter service: 2%
- Provide resources for families or small groups to conduct their own service: 0%
- No plan in place yet: 20%
This week, out of the following, what is your primary strategy to encourage financial generosity to your church?

- Direct people to our existing online giving: 38%
- Highlight options for check and cash donations: 19%
- Implement online giving for the first time: 15%
- Model generosity as a church community: 3%
- Talk about generosity more often during the church service: 3%
- Highlight our existing text-to-give process: 2%
- Implement text-to-give for the first time: 1%
- Share testimonies of generosity impact: 1%
- Show congregants how funds are being used: 1%
- Other: 3%

We did not specifically strategize about generosity this week: 14%
Where are you at in considering changes related to digital worship and weekend services, and how is it going?

We aren't making any changes. We’re just going to ride this out. 1%
We are planning changes. 6%
We have just begun making changes. 8%
We have made changes, but we’re continuing to adjust. 70%
We have made changes, and we’re satisfied with where we are. 12%
We don’t know if we’re going to make changes. 3%

**Question:** Every church is having to consider changes to its methods of ministry, especially related to digital worship and weekend services. Overall, where are you in this transition, and how is it going, in light of the new realities?
Week 1 Questions
### What do you plan to do about Easter services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livestream online</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record an Easter message to send out (video/podcast)</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet outdoors (Meet together in a different way?) and practice social distancing</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide resources for families and/or small groups to conduct their own service at home</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are cancelling all services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This week for your church, has ______ been impacted by the pandemic?

- Small groups / Bible studies: 82%
- Giving: 63%
- Communion: 30%
- Weddings: 10%
- Funerals: 8%
- Baptisms: 7%
- Other: 15%

**Question:** This week for your church, has ______ been impacted by the pandemic?
On a scale of 1 to 5, how well have your church leaders responded to this crisis?

- Very Well: 49%
- Well: 42%
- Neither Well nor Not Well: 7%
- Not Well: 2%
- Very Not Well: 0%

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well have your church leaders responded to this crisis?
Do you think your church leaders have done a good job creatively responding to this crisis?

- We've done well with being creative: 36%
- We've done ok with being creative: 32%
- We've done very well with being creative: 11%
- We haven't been creative with our response, and that was an intentional choice: 8%
- We've been struggling with being creative: 8%
- We haven't been creative with our response, but we should be: 4%

**Question:** Do you think your church leaders have done a good job creatively responding to this crisis?