

Baptist Denomination Report

National COVID Church Attendance Project

Report Drafted: 06.14.2021

Data Updated: 06.01.2021

1 Key Takeaways

1.1 Baptist Churches Synopsis

- There was a significant decline to in-person attendance during the pandemic.
- Attendance is beginning to return to its pre-pandemic state.
- Virtual attendance increased significantly.
- Small churches are recovering more quickly than larger churches.
- Giving slightly under-performed as compared to budgeted.
- Staffing continued largely as it stood in January 2020.

1.2 Comparison to All Churches

- In-person attendance decreased more in Baptist churches when compared to all survey respondents.
- Baptist churches were as likely to accept loans via the CARES act as other respondents.
- Small Baptist churches saw quadruple the attendance drop seen by small churches across denominations.
- A higher fraction of Baptist congregants attend church remotely relative to all churches surveyed.
- Baptist church-goers have been slower to return to in-person services than other denominations.
- Baptist giving behavior had more deficits than the full survey.
- Baptist staffing behavior is largely consistent with the full survey.

2 Attendance

Among surveyed Baptist churches, attendance¹ saw a decline of around sixty percent during the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are beginning to see a recovery. Since January of 2021, Baptist churches have recovered slightly over a quarter of the lost attendance.

Total Baptist Church Attendance Throughout the Pandemic

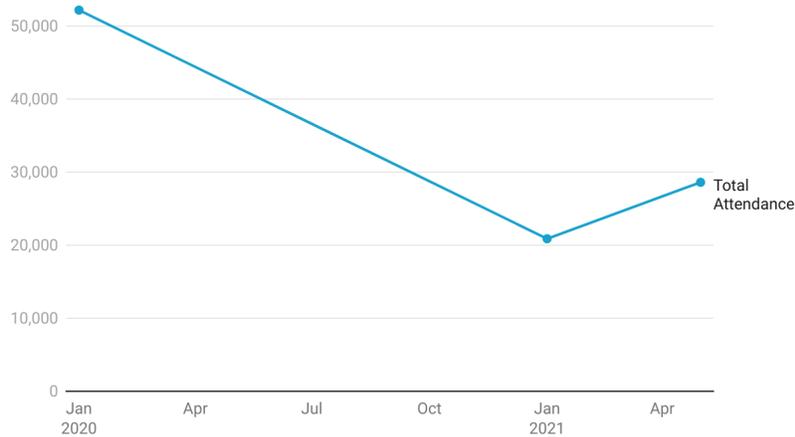


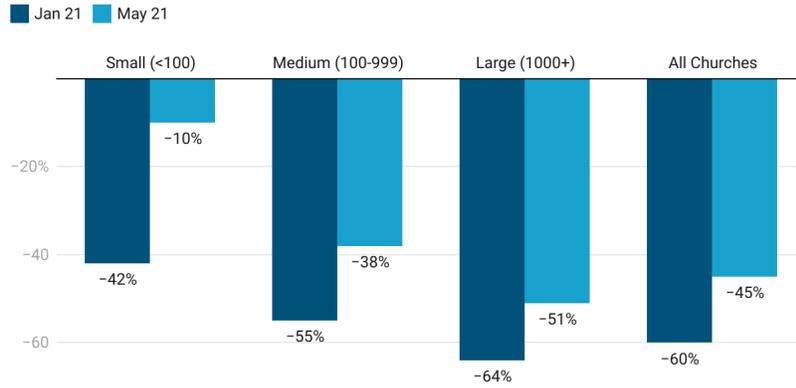
Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

2.1 In-Person Attendance

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, most churches have seen a significant decline to in-person attendance. However, when churches are further divided, different attendance patterns by church size are uncovered. Across all churches surveyed, small churches saw very minor changes to in-person attendance (a decrease of roughly nine percent as of January 2021). While this pattern was maintained for Baptist churches, the drop to in-person attendance at smaller churches was much greater (a decrease of forty percent relative to pre-pandemic levels). Fortunately, we are beginning to see returns to church across all categories, likely due to vaccinations. Small churches are seeing faster recovery than any other category, already almost back to their pre-pandemic norms.

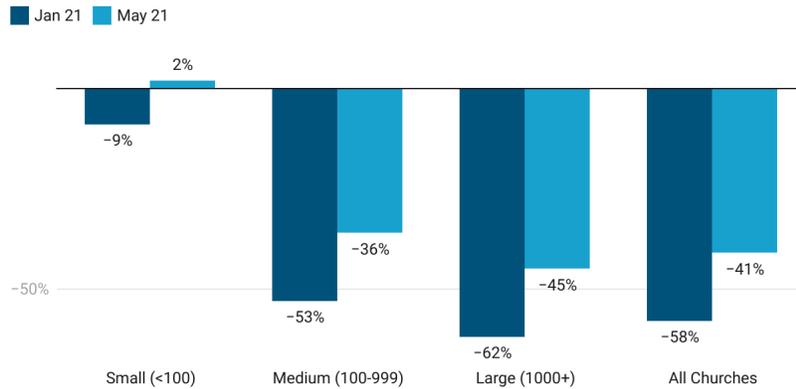
¹Attendance is calculated by combining in-person and virtual attendance. This comparison is not perfect, as churches use different means of reporting virtual attendance, some using a multiplier, some using peak viewership, others using average viewership.

Change in January 2020 In-Person Attendance by Church Attendance (Baptist)



N=116; Size of church is based on in-person attendance as of January 2020
 Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

Change in January 2020 In-Person Attendance by Church Size (All Churches)



N=812; Size of church is based on in-person church attendance as of January 2020
 Chart: National Covid Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

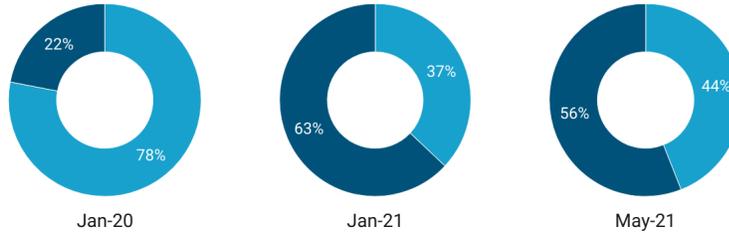
2.2 Virtual Attendance

Across churches, virtual attendance has increased. In the case of many Baptist churches, virtual options predate the pandemic. Before the pandemic, about 1 in 5 Baptist congregants were attending online as compared to 1 in 7 generally. After 2020, there was a substantive increase. Since January of 2021, this trend has begun to reverse. However, remote connections remain nearly thirty percent higher than pre-pandemic norms and make up over half of current church-goers.

Attendance Composition by Date (Baptist)

Based on Survey Responses received as of 06/01/2021

■ In-Person ■ Online



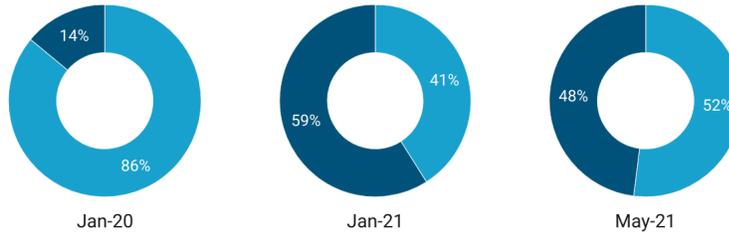
N=116; Online attendance has increased substantially during COVID. Prior to the pandemic, roughly 1 in 5 attendees was remote. As of May 2021, roughly 1 in 2 attended remotely.

Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

Attendance Composition by Date (All Churches)

Based on Survey Responses received as of 06/01/2021

■ In-Person ■ Online



N=669; Online attendance has increased substantially during COVID. Prior to the pandemic, roughly 1 in 7 attendees was remote. As of May 2021, roughly 1 in 2 attended remotely.

Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

3 Budget

Baptist churches did not fare as well as other survey respondents on the giving patterns of congregants. Forty-six percent of Baptist churches had a deficit, whereas in the full survey this number was thirty-eight percent.

Calendar Year 2020 Actual Giving Relative to Budget

■ Less than Budgeted ■ More then Budgeted ■ Equal to Budgeted

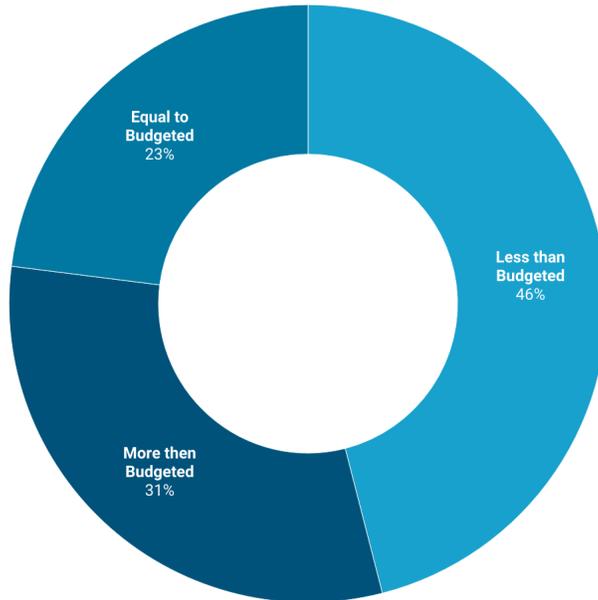


Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

4 Staffing

Similar to budget, staffing remained fairly stable. Approximately the same number of churches increased and decreased staffing. The majority of Baptist churches maintained the same amount of staff. The CARES Act could help explain the maintenance despite the dip in giving.

Staffing Change from January 2020 (Baptist)

■ Remained the Same ■ Increased ■ Decreased

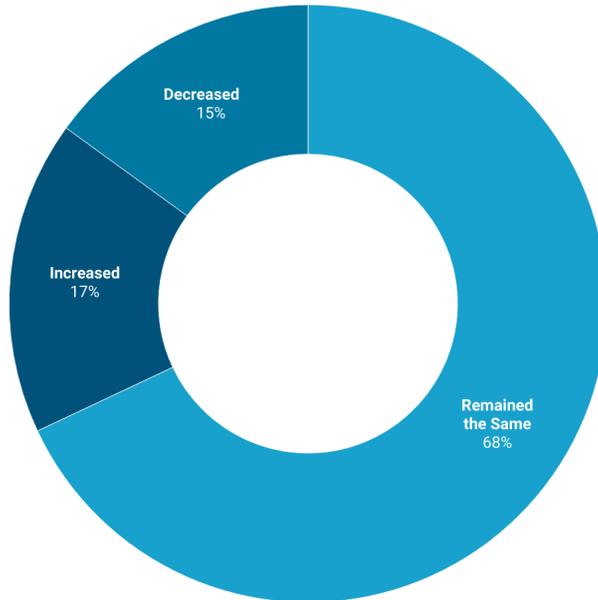


Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

4.1 CARES

The majority of Baptist churches received CARES Act loans. There is a negligible amount of difference between Baptist churches and the full survey average.

Share of Churches That Received a CARES Act Loan (Baptist)

■ No ■ Yes

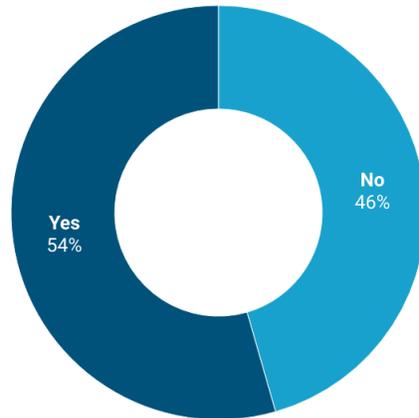


Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

Share of Churches that Received a CARES Act Loan (All Churches)

■ No ■ Yes

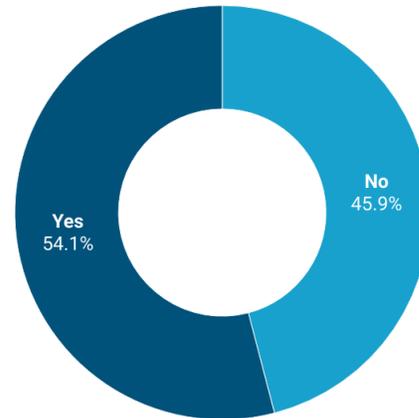


Chart: National COVID Church Attendance Project • Source: NCCAP • Created with Datawrapper

5 Partners

- CDF Capital
- Exponential
- Humanitarian Disaster Institute
- Leadership Network
- Outreach Magazine
- PCA Retirement and Benefits
- Wheaton College
- Wheaton College Billy Graham Center