

FOR RELEASE MARCH 28, 2023

How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services

Stable share of Americans have been participating in some way – either virtually or in person – during the pandemic, but in-person attendance is slightly lower than it was before COVID-19

BY *Justin Nortey and Michael Rotolo*

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Gregory A. Smith, Associate Director, Research

Michael Rotolo, Research Associate

Anna Schiller, Senior Communications Manager

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, March 2023, “How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services”

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, computational social science research and other data-driven research. It studies politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science; and immigration and migration. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center 2023

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at pewresearch.org/religion.

Research Team

Gregory A. Smith, *Associate Director, Religion Research*

Michael Rotolo, *Research Associate*

Justin Nortey, *Research Analyst*

Alan Cooperman, *Director, Religion Research*

Becka A. Alper, *Senior Researcher*

Besheer Mohamed, *Senior Researcher*

Patricia Tevington, *Research Associate*

Methods Team

Courtney Kennedy, *Vice President, Methods and Innovation*

Andrew Mercer, *Senior Research Methodologist*

Scott Keeter, *Senior Survey Advisor*

Ashley Amaya, *Senior Survey Research Methodologist*

Dorene Asare-Marfo, *Panel Manager*

Dana Mildred Popky, *Associate Panel Manager*

Arnold Lau, *Research Methodologist*

Editorial and Graphic Design

Michael Lipka, *Editorial Manager*

David Kent, *Senior Copy Editor*

Rebecca Leppert, *Editorial Assistant*

Bill Webster, *Senior Information Graphics Designer*

Communications and Web Publishing

Stacy Rosenberg, *Associate Director, Digital*

Reem Nadeem, *Associate Digital Producer*

Anna Schiller, *Senior Communications Manager*

Achsah Callahan, *Communications Manager*

How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this analysis to continue tracking trends in Americans' attendance at religious services – both virtually and in person – during the COVID-19 era. The newest survey included 11,377 U.S. adults and was conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022. We also include data from several other surveys over the last few years, in some cases limiting the analysis only to those respondents who took all the surveys.

The surveys measure religious attendance in a few ways. One question asks how often respondents attend religious services in general (more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never). Another question asks whether respondents have attended religious services *in person within the past month*, while a similar question asks whether respondents have watched religious services *online or on TV within the past month*.

Because the Center started asking about virtual participation in religious services only after the coronavirus outbreak, we cannot definitively say whether overall attendance (both in person and online/on TV, combined) is higher or lower than it was before the pandemic. However, this report analyzes the available data in multiple ways to try, as best we can, to address the big-picture question: How has the pandemic affected attendance at religious services?

All respondents to the surveys are part of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education, religious affiliation and other categories. For more, see the [ATP's methodology](#) and the [methodology for this report](#).

The questions used in this analysis can be found [here](#).

How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services

Stable share of Americans have been participating in some way – either virtually or in person – during the pandemic, but in-person attendance is slightly lower than it was before COVID-19

Since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic three years ago, observers of religious life in America have wondered whether – and how – the upheaval would impact religious worship. Would the temporary shuttering of churches and other houses of worship accelerate the [longer-term decline](#) in attendance, especially if many people who stopped attending religious services in person during the pandemic never go back? Or could the widespread introduction of virtual services extend congregations' geographic reach, increase their appeal to young people and help them attract new audiences?

There are some indications that in-person engagement in religious services has declined slightly since 2019, before the COVID-19 outbreak. The share of all U.S. adults who say they typically attend religious services at least once a month is down modestly but measurably (by 3 percentage points, from 33% to 30%) over that span, and one-in-five Americans say they now attend in person less often than they did before the pandemic.

At the same time, the share of U.S. adults who take part in religious services in some way (in person, virtually or both) in a given month has remained remarkably steady since the early days of the pandemic – even though *how* they participate has shifted dramatically.

Key takeaways from this report

To assess the impact of the pandemic on worship attendance rates, this report looks at Pew Research Center's survey data in four different ways:

- Five surveys conducted since the start of the pandemic (beginning with a survey in July 2020) show that a remarkably steady share of Americans – about 40% – say they have participated in religious services in the prior month *one way or the other* (either in person or virtually, i.e., by streaming online or watching on TV).
- Asked directly whether they now attend religious services more or less often than they did before the pandemic, more Americans indicate that their attendance habits have declined than risen. But it's a complicated picture: As of November 2022, 20% say they are attending *in person* less often (while 7% say they are going in person more often). On the other hand, 15% say they are participating in services *virtually* more often (while 5% say they are watching services online or on TV less often).
- The share of U.S. adults who say they generally attend religious services once a month or more has dropped slightly, from 33% in 2019 to 30% in 2022.
- A longitudinal analysis of the survey data – tracking the same individuals' answers on four annual surveys from 2019 to 2022 – finds that the vast majority (87%) report no change in their rates of worship attendance over that period. But among those who *do* indicate a change, more report attending services less often (8%) than report attending more often (4%).

Pew Research Center has conducted five surveys since the summer of 2020 in which we asked U.S. adults whether they attended religious services in person in the prior month and, separately, whether they took part virtually (by streaming online or watching on TV).

In the first of those polls, in July 2020 – when many churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship were limiting attendance or closed to physical worshippers – 41% of adults said they had joined in religious services in one of these ways (either in person or virtually) in the past month. Most of them (27% of all U.S. adults) said they had participated only virtually. An additional 9% said they had attended in person *and* watched virtually. Just 4% said they had gone to church or other religious services *only in person* in the month prior to the July 2020 survey.

Roughly four-in-ten Americans have participated in religious services, either virtually or in person, throughout most of the pandemic

Among all U.S. adults, % who in the last month ...

	NET Participated in religious services in some way	Attended in person and online or on TV			Only attended in person	Only watched online or TV	NET Did not attend in person or watch online or on TV
Nov 2022	40%	12%	16%	12%		60%	
Mar 2022	43	14	13	16		57	
Sept 2021	42	12	14	16		58	
Mar 2021	41	10	7	23		59	
July 2020	41	9	4	27		59	

Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals due to rounding. Estimates for March 2021 and July 2020 based on respondents who participated in both surveys.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

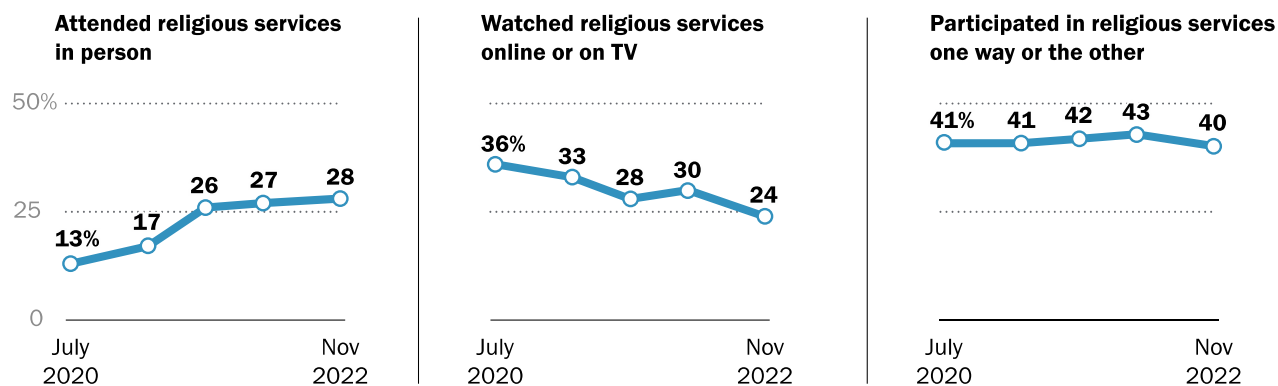
Since then, the total share of U.S. adults participating in religious services has barely budged, hovering around four-in-ten. But as the pandemic has run its course and many religious congregations have reopened their doors to worshippers, the percentage of Americans participating virtually in worship services has been dropping. Meanwhile, in-person attendance quickly rebounded and then appears to have plateaued. In the most recent survey asking these questions, in November 2022, 12% say they participated *only virtually* in the past month (down from 27% in the first year of the pandemic), while 16% say they attended *only in person* (up from 4% in 2020). An additional 12% say they did both.

Trends in attendance among religious groups

Overall, 28% of U.S. adults now say they attended religious services in person in the last month, practically unchanged from the last time we asked this question in March 2022 (27%) and only slightly higher than in September 2021 (26%). Those surveys indicated a significant rise of in-person attendance from March 2021 (17%) and July 2020 (13%). By contrast, the share of Americans who say they watched religious services online or on TV in the last month dropped in the new survey, from 30% in March 2022 to 24% in November.

After rebounding from early pandemic lows, in-person attendance at religious services has leveled off

% of U.S. adults who say they have _____ in the last month



Note: Estimates for March 2021 and July 2020 based on respondents who participated in both surveys.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Throughout the pandemic, White evangelical Protestants consistently have been the most likely of the country's major religious groups to attend services in person. The portion of White evangelicals who report that they physically went to church in the past month has not dropped below 30% at any point since July 2020. In the most recent survey, fully half of White evangelicals (52%) say they attended in person.

Black Protestants have experienced a substantial bounce in physical attendance, from a low of 14% in July 2020 to 41% in the recent survey. But Black Americans also have suffered a disproportionately high share of [COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths](#) relative to White Americans, and Black Protestants remain the U.S. religious group most likely to be viewing services virtually. In the most recent survey, about half of Black Protestants (54%) say they participated in services online or on TV in the last month, compared with 46% of White evangelical Protestants and smaller shares of Catholics (20%), White non-evangelical Protestants (19%) and Jews (16%). (This report cannot analyze the attendance patterns of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and other [smaller non-Christian religious groups](#) due to sample size limitations.)

When it comes to party affiliation, Republicans and Republican-leaning independents have been much more likely than Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents to attend religious services *in person* – as well as somewhat more likely to participate *virtually* – throughout the pandemic.

Older Americans tend to be more religious than young adults, and despite being at greater risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19, Americans ages 65 and older have generally been somewhat more inclined than young adults (ages 18 to 29) to go to religious services in person. Older Americans also report participating in religious services virtually at higher rates than the youngest adults.

Share of Americans watching religious services online or on TV has declined since early in pandemic

% of U.S. adults who say they have _____ in the last month

	Attended religious services in person					Watched religious services online or on TV				
	July 2020	March 2021	Sept 2021	March 2022	Nov 2022	July 2020	March 2021	Sept 2021	March 2022	Nov 2022
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	13	17	26	27	28	36	33	28	30	24
Christian	18	25	35	38	41	49	45	38	40	34
Protestant	20	26	36	38	43	56	51	46	47	40
White evangelical Protestant	30	40	51	53	52	64	58	52	56	46
White Protestant, not evangelical	9	13	19	24	27	33	32	28	30	19
Black Protestant	14	17	30	30	41	66	60	58	52	54
Catholic	13	21	30	35	33	36	32	23	27	20
White Catholic	16	22	29	36	33	33	31	20	23	18
Hispanic Catholic	11	18	30	31	32	39	31	24	28	22
Jewish	10	24	n/a	n/a	38	17	18	n/a	n/a	16
Religiously unaffiliated	2	2	5	4	5	8	7	7	7	6
Republican/lean Rep.	21	27	35	36	37	42	38	32	34	28
Democrat/lean Dem.	7	9	19	20	21	31	29	24	26	20
Ages 18-29	11	16	23	24	21	26	25	18	23	16
30-49	12	17	24	24	28	33	28	24	24	20
50-64	15	18	26	28	30	42	38	35	35	28
65+	16	18	30	33	33	46	43	35	37	31

Note: Figures for Jewish respondents in September 2021 and March 2022 not shown due to insufficient sample size. March 2021 and July 2020 estimates for all U.S. adults, partisan groups and age groups are based on respondents who participated in both surveys.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

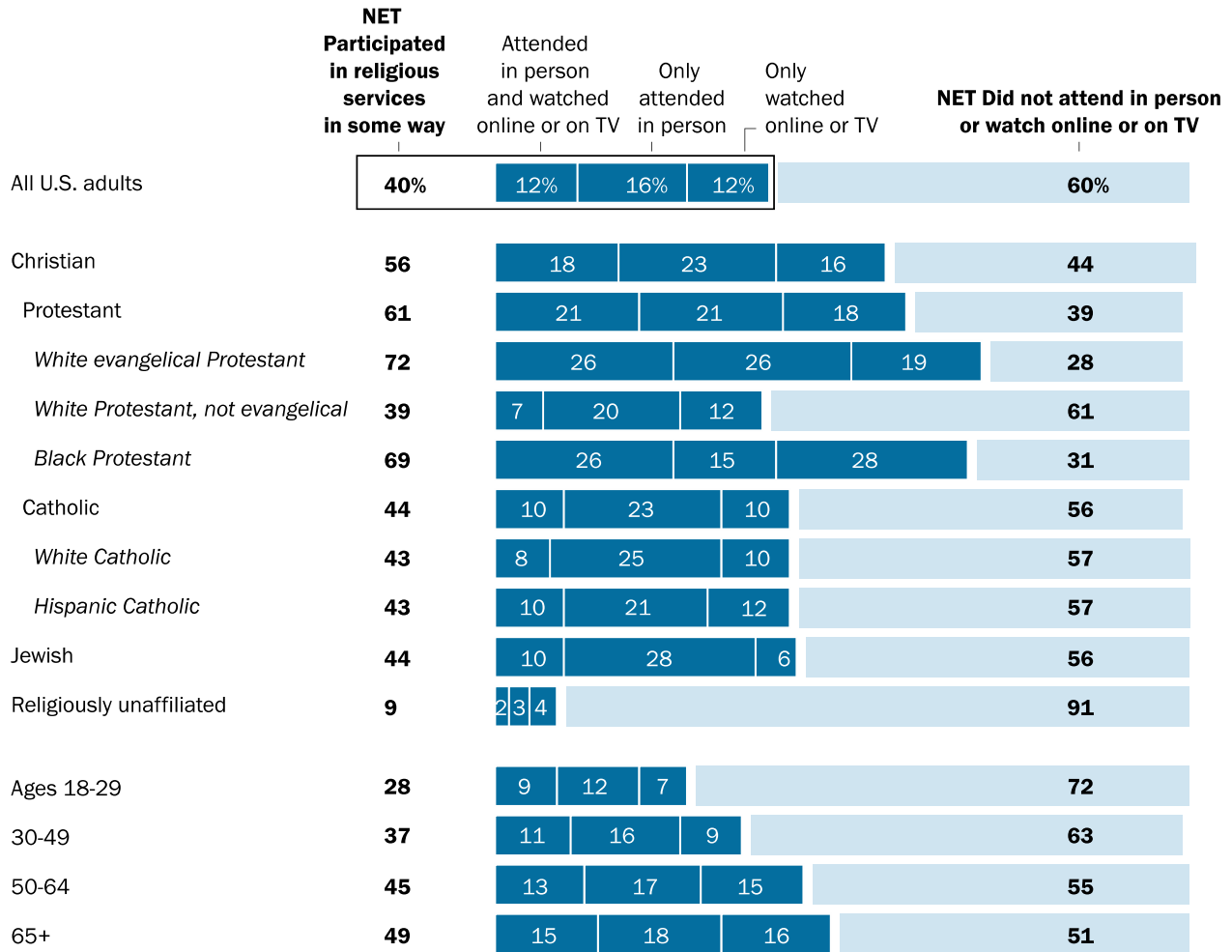
In the most recent survey, about half of adults 65 and older say they attended services in the past month, including a third who went either *only* in person (18%) or *both* in person and virtually (15%). That compares with roughly three-in-ten adults under 30 who say they participated in religious services in any way, including about one-fifth who went either only in person (12%) or both in person and virtually (9%).

Throughout most of the pandemic, about six-in-ten Americans have not taken part in religious services in any way. In the new survey, this includes roughly seven-in-ten adults under 30 (72%)

and about nine-in-ten religiously unaffiliated adults (those who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular”).

About seven-in-ten U.S. adults under 30 have not participated in religious services of any kind in the last month

Among all U.S. adults, % who in the last month ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.

“How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These are among the key findings of a new analysis of Americans’ religious attendance, based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, on the nationally representative [American Trends Panel](#), as well as several older surveys.

Survey questions have changed since the pandemic began

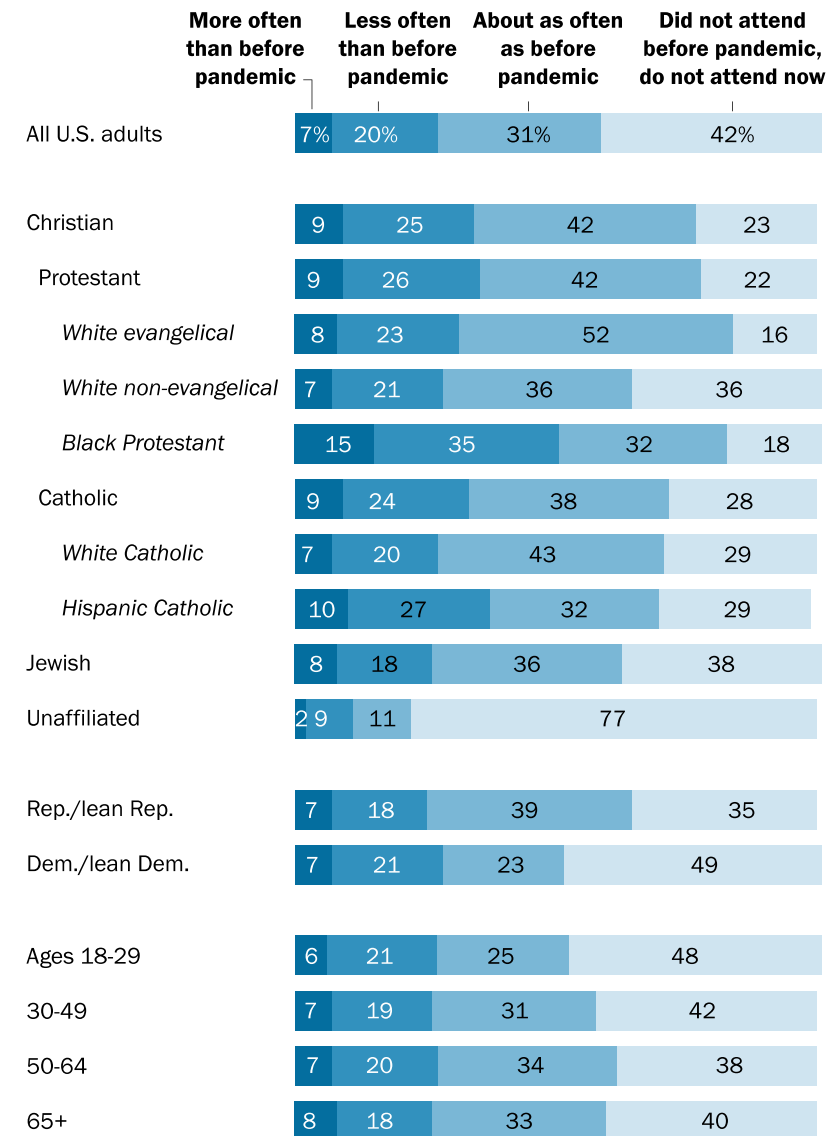
Prior to the pandemic, the Center did not routinely ask people whether they watched religious services online or on TV. And although our surveys have long asked respondents how often they generally attend religious services, we did not regularly ask whether they *actually went to services in the prior month*. Consequently, there is no clear, pre-pandemic baseline with which to compare these current indicators of participation in religious services.

However, the new survey posed a question to respondents asking whether they currently attend religious services in person more often, less often or about as often as they did before the pandemic. A second question asked the same thing about how often they watch services virtually now, compared with before the pandemic.

One-in-five U.S. adults say they now attend religious services in person less often than they did before the pandemic. This share is partially offset by 7% of

One-in-five Americans say they attend religious services in person less often than before pandemic

% of U.S. adults who say they attend religious services in person ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.
 "How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Americans who report attending in person *more* often than before COVID-19.

Furthermore, among those who say they attend religious services *in person* less often than they did before the pandemic, about a third (7% of all U.S. adults) say they now watch religious services *online or on TV* more often than before the pandemic.

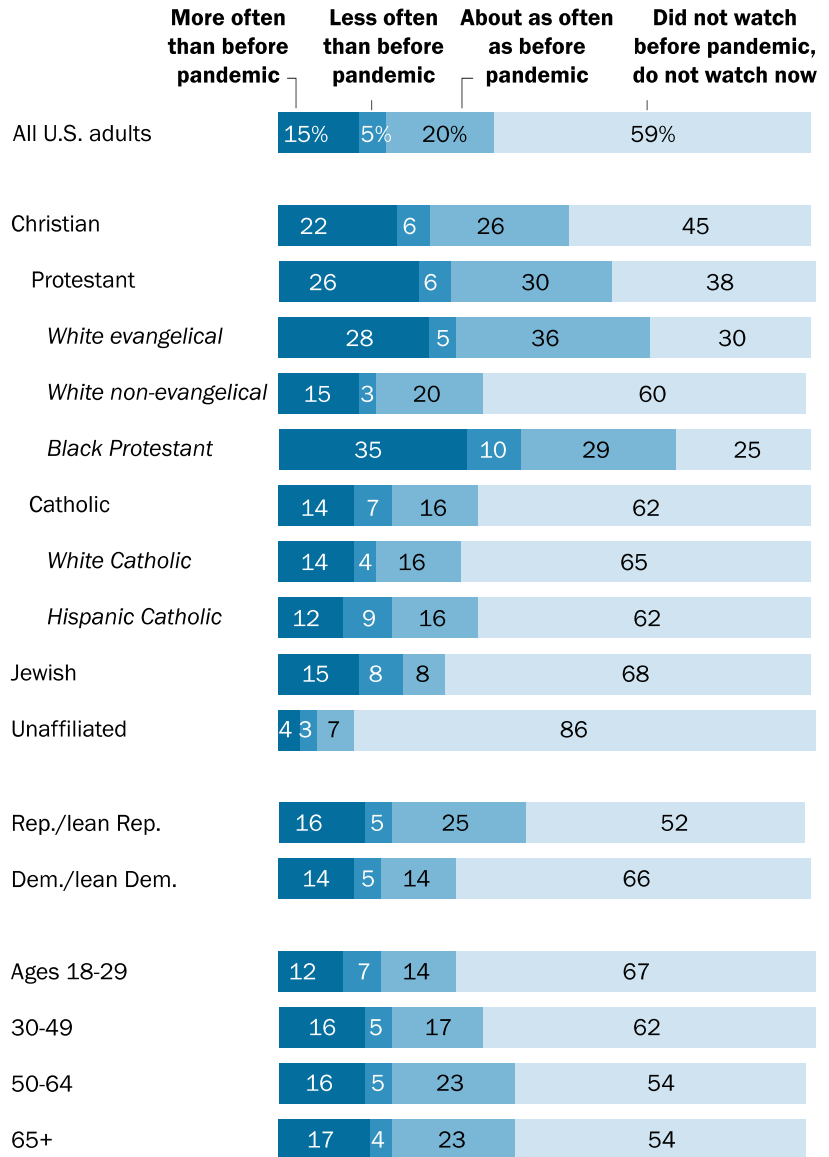
Most Americans either say they attend in person at about the same rate as before the COVID-19 outbreak (31%) or that they did not attend religious services before the pandemic and still do not (42%).

Overall, 15% of U.S. adults say they now watch religious services online or on TV more often than they did before the pandemic, compared with just 5% who report doing this less often. About eight-in-ten say their participation in virtual worship is little changed, including 59% who say they did not do this at any time.

Black Protestants stand out as being particularly likely to say they attend in-person services less often than they did before the pandemic (35%), although an identical share say they now watch religious services online or on TV more often than they used to – a number that is also higher than in other U.S. religious groups.

Net increase in virtual worship since before pandemic

% of U.S. adults who say they watch religious services online or on TV ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Tracking the same respondents over time: How individuals' religious attendance habits have changed

While it was only after the outbreak of the pandemic that Pew Research Center started asking respondents whether they attended religious services in person in the past month or watched them virtually during that same period, we have used a different question to measure religious attendance for decades. This older question asks, "Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services? More than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?"

One advantage of the American Trends Panel is that it surveys many of the same respondents repeatedly over time, allowing researchers to compare how nearly 6,000 people described their general religious attendance habits before the pandemic with how the same individuals answered that question at various points more recently.

This longitudinal analysis finds a slight decrease in the share of respondents who say they generally attend religious services at least once a month, from 33% in 2019 (prior to the pandemic) to 30% in 2022. It is not clear whether the dip is continuing a [longer-term trend](#) or mostly reflects the short-term impact of the pandemic on religious Americans, particularly Black Protestants.

The share of Black Protestants who say they generally attend religious services at least once a month is now 15 points lower than in 2019 (46% vs. 61% then). No other religious group has registered a decline of this magnitude.

Compared with pre-pandemic levels, religious attendance rates reported by Americans have declined slightly

% of U.S. adults who say they attend religious services monthly or more

	2019	2022
	%	%
All U.S. adults	33	30
Christian	49	43
Protestant	53	46
White evangelical Protestant	63	58
White Protestant, not evangelical	31	28
Black Protestant	61	46
Catholic	37	34
Jewish*	26	23
Religiously unaffiliated	3	4
Republican/lean Rep.	40	37
Democrat/lean Dem.	27	22
Ages 18-29	24	20
30-49	32	28
50-64	35	32
65+	44	41

* These surveys included 133 interviews with Jewish respondents, with an effective sample size of 78 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 11.1 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50.

Note: Only respondents who took part in four American Trends Panel surveys in 2020-2022 that asked about monthly religious attendance are shown.

Source: Surveys conducted Aug. 7-Nov. 30, 2019, and July 18-Aug. 21, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The vast majority of respondents who took all four annual surveys (87%) described their attendance habits in roughly the same way in 2019 and 2022.¹ Specifically, a quarter of Americans said they attended services at least monthly in both 2019 and 2022, while 62% said they attended less than monthly both before the pandemic began and more recently.

While most Americans did not report significant changes in their religious service attendance over the course of the pandemic, the share who now indicate they are attending *less often* than they did before the initial COVID-19 outbreak shuttered many in-person services is slightly larger than the share who say they are going *more often*: 8% of respondents to both surveys said in 2019 that they typically attended at least monthly but say in 2022 that they now typically attend less

than monthly, including 4% who say they seldom attend or no longer attend at all. An additional 4% of Americans said in 2019 that they typically attended religious services less than monthly but

Nearly nine-in-ten U.S. adults say they attend religious services at about the same rate as before pandemic

% of U.S. adults who said in 2022 that they attend religious services ...

	At the same rate as in 2019	Said in both 2019 and 2022 they attend monthly or more	Said in both 2019 and 2022 they attend less than monthly	More than in 2019	Less than in 2019
	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	87	25	62	4	8
Christian	84	38	45	5	11
Protestant	83	42	42	5	12
White evangelical Protestant	83	52	31	6	10
White Protestant, not evangelical	90	25	66	3	6
Black Protestant	75	42	33	4	18
Catholic	84	28	56	6	9
Jewish*	92	21	71	2	5
Religiously unaffiliated	97	2	94	2	1
Republican/lean Rep.	87	33	55	5	7
Democrat/lean Dem.	88	19	69	4	8
Ages 18-29	87	16	71	4	8
30-49	88	24	64	4	7
50-64	86	27	60	5	8
65+	89	37	52	3	7

* The surveys included 133 interviews with Jewish respondents, with an effective sample size of 78 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 11.1 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50%.

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. Only respondents who took part in four American Trends Panel surveys in 2020-2022 that asked about monthly religious attendance are shown.

Source: Surveys conducted Aug. 7-Nov. 30, 2019, and July 18-Aug. 21, 2022, among U.S. adults.

"How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

¹ This analysis only looks at changes between two broad categories: those who say they attend religious services monthly or more, and those who attend less often. If a respondent said they attend religious services at least once a week in 2019 and once or twice a month in 2022, this would not be coded as a change in whether they attend regularly. But if a respondent said they attend religious services once or twice a month in 2019 but only a few times a year in 2022, this would be considered a change. This approach could explain why a greater share of respondents report attending in person less often than they did before the pandemic (20%) than show a decline by this measure (8%).

say that as of 2022 they attend at least monthly, including 2% who seldom or never attended prior to the pandemic (and who now indicate they attend at least monthly).

A similar pattern can be found among a variety of demographic subgroups, including several religious traditions, political parties and age ranges. In most groups, a slightly larger number of respondents reported attending less often in 2022 (compared with 2019) rather than more often, though the vast majority of respondents showed no change in their self-reported general level of religious service attendance over this period.

The way Americans have engaged with religious services has changed dramatically over the last few years. But among respondents who said before the pandemic that they *typically* attended religious services at least monthly – and who took each of four annual surveys that asked about monthly attendance between July 2020 and November 2022 – the share who say they *actually* participated either in person or virtually in the month prior to each survey has remained stable over the course of the pandemic, at around or just above eight-in-ten.

In July 2020, only about one-third of pre-pandemic typical attenders (32%) said they actually had attended in person in the last month. But nearly three-quarters (73%) said they attended religious services virtually, including some who attended in person as well, making for a total of 82% who attended in at least one of these two ways.

The November 2022 survey shows how much things have changed: About two-thirds of U.S. adults who said they *typically* went to church or other religious services at least monthly prior to the pandemic (67%) say in the new survey that they *actually* attended in person in the last month, while 46% watched virtually (including 31% who did both). But, in total, the share who took part in religious services either in person or virtually (81%) is nearly identical to what it was in July 2020.

While half of pre-pandemic regular attenders said in July 2020 that they *only* watched religious services virtually, this percentage dropped to 15% in November 2022. Meanwhile, the share who attended *only* in person has risen from 9% in July 2020 to 36% in November 2022.

Among pre-pandemic regular religious service attenders, a steady share continued to worship in some way

Among U.S. adults who said they attend **at least monthly** in summer 2019 (prior to the pandemic), % who say they participated in religious services _____ in the last month

	July 2020	March 2021	March 2022	November 2022
	%	%	%	%
Only in person	9	14	27	36
Only virtually	50	41	23	15
Both in person and virtually	23	27	33	31
NET Participated in some way	82	82	84	81
Total in person	32	41	60	67
Total virtually	73	68	56	46

Note: Only respondents who said they attended religious services at least monthly on a survey conducted Aug. 7-Nov. 30, 2019, and took part in four American Trends Panel surveys in 2020-2022 that asked about monthly religious attendance are shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults. "How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Just as some people who describe themselves as regular attenders at religious services may not actually watch religious services virtually or attend in person in a given month, some people who say they *do not typically* attend religious services report that, actually, they *did* attend in the past month. This share also appears stable over the course of the pandemic: In each survey, among people who said before the pandemic that they typically attended religious services less than monthly, about one-in-five say they *actually* participated in services in the last month either in person or virtually.

At the beginning of the pandemic, monthly participation was overwhelmingly virtual among this group (17% attended virtual services, compared with 3% in person). However, in the most recent survey, the shares who say they engage in each type of attendance are more evenly balanced (13% virtual, 9% in person). There was little change between attendance levels in March and November of 2022, which may indicate that in-person and virtual participation has leveled off within this group of people.

Across the pandemic, roughly one-in-five who were not regular attenders in 2019 say they attended in person or virtually in the last month

Among U.S. adults who said they attend *less than monthly* in summer 2019 (prior to the pandemic), % who say they participated in religious services _____ in the last month

	July 2020	March 2021	March 2022	November 2022
	%	%	%	%
Only in person	1	2	5	6
Only virtually	15	15	12	10
Both in person and virtually	2	2	4	3
NET Participated in some way	18	18	20	19
Total in person	3	4	9	9
Total virtually	17	16	15	13

Note: Only respondents who said they attended religious services less than monthly on a survey conducted Aug. 7-Nov. 30, 2019, and took part in four American Trends Panel surveys in 2020-2022 that asked about monthly religious attendance are shown.
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 16-27, 2022, among U.S. adults. "How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted from Nov. 16 to Nov. 27, 2022. A total of 11,377 panelists responded out of 12,402 who were sampled, for a response rate of 92%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 11,377 respondents is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,504
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	882
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	434
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,119
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,477
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,542
May 29 to July 7, 2021				
Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	790
May 24 to Sept. 29, 2022	ABS	3,354	2,869	1,654
	Total	42,894	30,283	12,402

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 23,176 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 20,341 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 30,283 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,402 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.² The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older, living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. All active panel members were invited to participate in this wave.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

² AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)”

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Nov. 16-27, 2022. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on Nov. 16.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Nov. 16. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Nov. 17.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	Nov. 16, 2022	Nov. 17, 2022
First reminder	Nov. 19, 2022	Nov. 19, 2022
Final reminder	Nov. 22, 2022	Nov. 22, 2022

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, two ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of ATP recruitment surveys from year to year. Finally, the weights are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2021 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2022 American Trends Panel Annual Profile Survey/2019 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	
<i>Additional weighting dimensions applied within Black adults</i>	
Age	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Gender	
Education	
Hispanic ethnicity	
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population. Volunteerism is estimated using a model to account for potential changes in volunteering behavior due to the coronavirus outbreak that began in February 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following tables show the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...	
All U.S. adults	11,377	1.4	
Christian	7,271	1.8	
Protestant	4,817	2.1	
<i>White evangelical Protestant</i>	1,775	3.2	
<i>White Protestant, not evangelical</i>	1,373	3.8	
<i>Black Protestant</i>	1,004	4.7	
Catholic	2,207	3.4	
<i>White Catholic</i>	1,404	3.6	
<i>Hispanic Catholic</i>	641	7.3	
Jewish	235	9.8	
Religiously unaffiliated	3,330	2.6	
Ages 18-29	966	4.3	
30-49	3,624	2.4	
50-64	3,231	2.5	
65+	3,520	2.4	
	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	
Rep./lean Rep.	5,222	46	2.0 percentage points
Dem./lean Dem.	5,839	48	2.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	11,377
Logged onto survey; broke off	2.12	78
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	72
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	873
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		2
Screened out		0
Total panelists in the survey		12,402
Completed interviews	I	11,377
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	1,025
Non-contact	NC	0
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		12,402
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		92%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	71%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 117	48%
Response rate to Wave 117 survey	92%
Cumulative response rate	4%

Longitudinal analysis

In addition to analyzing the results of the Nov. 16-27, 2022, survey, this report includes a longitudinal analysis examining how individuals who participated in multiple ATP waves changed over time in the way they describe their religious attendance patterns. This analysis is based on respondents who participated in each of four ATP waves, including the November 2022 wave, a March 2022 wave, a March 2021 wave, and a July 2020 wave. Methodological details for each of those earlier waves can be found at the following links.

- [March 2022](#) (Wave 104)
- [March 2021](#) (Wave 84)
- [July 2020](#) (Wave 70)

Each respondent who participated in all four of those ATP waves also participated in two ATP profile surveys – one conducted Aug. 7-Nov. 30, 2019, and another conducted July 18-Aug. 21, 2022.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the longitudinal analysis.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
<i>Among respondents who participated in each of four Pew Research Center surveys: Wave 70 (conducted July 13-19, 2020), Wave 84 (March 1-7, 2021), Wave 104 (March 7-13, 2022) and Wave 117 (Nov. 16-27, 2022)</i>		
Total	5,933	2.1 percentage points
Christian	3,959	2.4 percentage points
Protestant	2,532	3.0 percentage points
White evangelical Protestant	1,045	4.5 percentage points
White Protestant, not evangelical	809	5.3 percentage points
Black Protestant	346	7.6 percentage points
Catholic	1,294	4.4 percentage points
Jewish	133	11.1 percentage points
Religiously unaffiliated	1,581	4.1 percentage points
Ages 18-29	575	6.0 percentage points
30-49	1,895	3.4 percentage points
50-64	1,847	3.4 percentage points
65+	1,587	3.6 percentage points
	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %
Rep./lean Rep.	2,864	46
Dem./lean Dem.	2,898	48

© Pew Research Center, 2023