

Church Activities During the Pandemic Survey Results

This is a brief analysis of the results of the survey questions followed by a sorted compilation of comments: “Question 23 - Anything else” responses sorted by theme, followed by the comments found in “other” responses to individual questions.

Who responded?

-137 members and friends out of possible 380 or 36%. However, average pre-Covid average attendance was 140 in a similar time of year, we estimate that we have reached about two thirds of the people who actually attend services.

Q 3 Age - generally reflects those who normally attend — the ‘junior seniors’

- Just a few responses from younger than 50 (9)
- older seniors well represented
- >69% over 65

Q 4 Pre-Covid Attendance - 69.34% (95) attend 3 or more times per month prior to pandemic

Q 5 Vulnerabilities

- 27.21% none in particular
- 72.9% have some vulnerability
- Some respondents cite personal vulnerabilities while others refer to household members or job situations that would make it difficult for them to be in large groups
- see Appendix 2 comments

Q 6 Current level of personal contacts/comfort level

- While 61.76% (84) of respondents say they are comfortable in small groups outdoors, only 22.79% (31) are comfortable with large groups (≤ 50) indoors.
- The significant number of people 13.97% (19) who indicated that they are strictly limiting their contacts to essential errands is indicative of a deep level of caution among the congregation even though some of these individuals also indicate that they are comfortable with somewhat more contact in outdoor settings.
- Many more are comfortable with outdoor gatherings than indoor.. (84 vs 45 in small groups).
- Those who are comfortable in larger groups are not as particular in choosing outdoor over indoor (36 outdoor vs 31 indoor large groups)

Q 7 Zoom service attendance

- 60.29% (82) attend 3 or more times per month. This is a drop of 13 compared to Q4.
- When considering those who attend 2 or more times per month, this drop is 17.
- This drop is not apparent when we compare attendance figures on the worship google doc from the same period of time last year. Those comparisons show slightly **more attend on zoom this spring than in person last spring.**

Q 8 Satisfaction with zoom services:

- 3.73% (5) respondents prefer zoom to in person
- 20.9% (28) enjoy zoom services
- 58.21% (78) feel that zoom is a good alternative given present circumstances
- 14.93% (20) would prefer to gather in person — even though.
- only 3 people state that they are unable to join zoom services

Q 9 Readiness to attend in person

- now, enthusiastically - 14.81% (20)
- now, reluctantly - 6.67% (9)
- wait until fall and reassess - 40% (54)
- want until provincial rules allow >50 - 38.53% (52)

Q 10 Who gets to attend zoom if more want to attend?

- first to register but prioritize those who have not attended in the past month
48.85% (64) is clearly preferred.
- little preference for other options (<20%), although a few creative options were mentioned... some comments under 'other' said they didn't want congregants to risk passing the virus so should not attend. Others suggested elders go first!
- See Appendix 2 for comments

Q 11 Volunteers for in-person services

- 63.43% (85) are **not** interested in volunteering
- there is a smattering of volunteers for other positions (from 8 to 23), but only 16 of those actually want to attend now.
- in the 'other' section, there are some creative offers and a note from several people saying they are already fully utilized as volunteers. Some disagree with in person services so will not volunteer. Others will volunteer only at a distance.
- See Appendix 2 for comments

Q 12 Barriers

- will not attend until all restrictions are lifted 39.58% (53)
- would feel unsafe attending with proposed plan 23.32% (31)
- unacceptable two tier system 24.05% (32)
- unable to travel to church during covid 3.01% x(4)
- no restrictions 28.57% (38)
- See Appendix 2 for comments

Q 13 Need for accessing online

- only three needs expressed a need (we should track these down and see what can be done)

Q 14 Zoom vs Livestream

- enhances 40.91% (54)

- nice but not essential 46.21% (61)
- *distracting 21.97% (29)
- prefer live-streaming 6.82% (9)
- choose not to/unable to participate — total of 13 respondents (may be duplicates)
- many more positives than negatives
- *Has the distraction issue been resolved with limiting the chat during the homily and other spoken parts of the service?

Q 15 Group viewing

- 21 people interested in this option (gather names)
- Most of the comments here fell into the 'maybe' and 'yes/but ' categories. Others were keen to meet within social distancing guidelines and one said they are already doing it with family members!
- See Appendix 2 for comments

Q 16 Church zoom other than services

- 46.21% (61) yes Impressive reach!

Q 17 Small groups meeting together

- very much in favour 7.58% (10)
- neutral 26.52% (35)
- stay online for equal opportunity 24.24% (32)
- could not meet in person 5.3% (7)

Q 18 New group?

- very much want 25.76% (34)
- willing to organize? 1.52% (2)
- not needed 62.12% (82)
- Not able to attend 10.61% (14)
- **action: put organizers together with wanters.**

Q 19 Picnic - large group outdoor

- very much want 35.88% (47)
- willing to organize 3.05% (4)
- not needed 44.27% (58)
- not able to attend 16.79% (22)
- **action: forward names of organizers to A.L.**

Q 20 Children-in-congregation sample

- note that zero answers were totalled with positive answers...
- very few recorded... note that very few younger people responded to the survey
- 11 offspring including one post secondary
- 7 in programming

Q 21 Family programs attended

- Social Justice story time 5
- Sunday Children's program 4
- parent/caregiver check-in 1
- some duplication (3 non unique responses)

Q 22 Outreach

- make phone calls, etc 23.66% (31)
- help C&C coordinator 10.69% (14)
- already do 39.69% (52)
- sorry, can't 32.82% (43)
- many people feel they are engaged in outreach as comments indicate
- action: get volunteer names to C&C Coordinator, categories a+b
- See Appendix 2 for comments

Appendix 1

Q 23 Sorted Comments

a) About the task force and the survey itself...

Kudos: (21)

- These are complex problems, thank you for your work to move ahead!
- Thank you for taking on this valuable task. It is not an easy one.
- Thank you for preparing this survey.
- Thanks for doing this!
- John and Liz. Good work.
- Thank you for the survey!
- Well thought out survey! Kudos to those who put it together.
- Good work with the survey!
- Not at the moment. Thanks for taking the time and trouble, J. and L., to create this survey!
- J. and L. have done a super job with the survey!!
- Thank you so much for all the work put into this survey!
- Thank you for all the work that you are putting into this.
- Thank you for working on this. **I would also be interested in being on the task force** if you want any more people. I guess when you started up I was occupied with school and remote learning.
- I am grateful for the **thoughtful** approach to our situation as a congregation, which has included this questionnaire.
- Thank you for this comprehensive, thoughtful survey to **ensure our decisions are safe and inclusive.**

- Thank you for doing this.
- Thank you for all your efforts to do the right thing in such difficult circumstances.
- Thanks for all those working to keep things rolling in this difficult time.
- Thank you. Good luck. Whatever you choose **I trust you to do what's doable.**
- Thank you all involved!

Concerns:

- This survey seems to be **negative biased** to in-person services.
- Sometimes in this survey my response would not fit in one of the 4 buttons and there was not a place to add my response. Thanks for asking our opinion - this is a very tough and new situation to navigate
- It would be good if many of these survey questions also said "other." None of the answers applied, so I didn't answer those questions.
- I found your emailed instructions to take the survey difficult. You said you had 2 questions, then only asked one and the link for the survey was at the very end of the email. If you do not get a great response, I would hope you would try again and be clearer.
- In questions 17 and 18 it's not clear to me whether the small groups of up to 10 would meet outside or inside. I would meet outside but not inside.
- we saw a spelling mistake in question 11, 'ese' for else

b) About opening to in-person services

Be cautious:

- Be cautious and not have open service as it's still **way too early.**
- I guess in general I don't yet have a super high degree of comfort with how humanity is dealing with the virus, and I am feeling cocooned and very cautious.
- Until we are all vaccinated I am really only comfortable with small groups meeting out of doors. This due to both age and ongoing health issues.
- My answers may change depending on how things go in the Fall, e.g., if the Covid cases increase on Vancouver Island I may not feel so comfortable with in-person services. If they open up the US border I may want to just hide at home!
- We think we should use extreme caution until all govt. restrictions are removed.
- As an 80 year old, I am maintaining strict distancing and very limited activities. I do go to the Island View Beach.
- It also feels **responsible and safe** to do it through zoom and to be able to have our family watch together rather than being split up with in person and livestream.
- I do not have a real pull to attend in person until it is safe to do so.

It's time to re-open:

- There is nothing to beat face to face and my book group of 12 does that successfully.
- There is a demand for in-person gatherings and I am glad that we are planning to offer summer programs. We are **losing connection** with one another and hunkering down in our own bubbles. Just like with businesses opening up in Phase Three of the Re-Start program, I would like us to be encouraging to people who wish to involve themselves in person. There is almost no communication between **staff** and congregation. Staff could be encouraged to become more engaged during this Phase 3 Re-Start. This would help them to understand what the congregation needs.

*I believe that it is very doable to have **summer services on the church lawn**. There are several technically able people in the congregation that could advise about reaching out to those unable to attend. Pre registration for services with a cut of 50 people in total would be needed, and rotating those that would like to attend ensures everyone that wants can participate. There would need to be monitors that would ensure social distancing.

- A church is a place for humankind to come together for community and spiritual growth. I feel that every opportunity, such as our permission to gather in groups of different size, should be exercised and built upon in order to **keep the life and energy of the church alive**.

c) About zoom services

Kudos:

- Good work on the Zoom presentations!
- A huge thank you to the ministers and all the folks who make zoom happen! An amazing job done by all!
- I enjoyed the **chat** after the Zoom Service.
- I have really enjoyed the Zoom services, I've **attended more often** than when it's in person, I can attend from wherever I may be (even from out of town). Thanks for trying to come up with something that fits the majority's wishes, tough job in these challenging times. Good Luck and thanks for doing this.
- Being an introvert, I am **quite satisfied** with watching services and connecting online for the most part, and gathering occasionally in small groups.
- Gladys, 93, and I are very much enjoying our zoom services! Thank you!

- I would like to applaud all those who have contributed to organizing and presenting Zoom meetings. The meetings have been **getting better and better**. I look forward to signing in on Sunday morning, but do miss in person contact.

- I do not have a camera for zoom and watch only and that is OK for me for now.- The services have been so **helpful, comforting and inspiring** during this time.

- I really miss coming to church and being/seeing everyone. However, I **can adjust and will do so**.

- It is an **opportunity** for me to learn to use and feel more comfortable with technology.

- The quality of the homilies has been amazing and the choral harmonies so up-lifting. Thank you all for these extra efforts!

- I appreciate all the work that goes into our Zoom services.

- For a variety of reasons, I tend to avoid crowded spaces and noise. I've been surprised to learn that in some ways my Zoom service experiences have been **more satisfactory** than my in-person ones; however, I look forward to when small-group (NG) gatherings become a safe and viable likelihood AFTER we know more about what the next few months bring with regard to the anticipated 'second wave' of COVID-19 pandemic in conjunction with a generalized 'flu season'.

Concerns:

- I have tried twice to view the service on zoom but I **cannot hear well enough** so it is a waste of time for me. I do best meeting one on one.

- Zoom's **audio is sub-standard** especially concerning music.

- I'm enjoying the Zoom services, but **miss the fellowship** and the singing we do together in person.

d) About both/and

- A **picnic** at the church sounds great! **Small group gatherings** at the church or in someone's backyard over the summer with all appropriate precautions are great! I would wait to start church services at the church in till Mid September when the ministers are back. Small group chats via zoom after in church or on line services should continue. We could try **alternating in church services one week and on-line zoom another week**. Sharing these types of services is pretty Unitarian.

- I disagree that the remote viewing of Sunday services has to be only via livestream. **We CAN do both -- have live, in person services, AND an engaging experience for those remote.**

- I think we can creatively have the in person and video services and keep both groups of people happy.

- Our worship team continue to create videos which use copyrighted music or videos with congregant photos. We share these in the Zoom service but block them for streaming to Social Media. When we start hybrid services, we'll need to determine how to deliver those works to both in-Sanctuary and Zoom audiences.

- A **combination of zoom and gatherings** would be optimal to me, for now and the future

e) Suggestions

- If the church decides to return to some kind of limited face-to-face service that is live-streamed, I suggest **either we do two services a week (one live and one Zoom) or we alternate between live one week and Zoom the next week**, so we don't cut anyone off. I am happy with Zoom services. I've tried the livestream on occasion and find my mind wanders when there is no possibility of two-way communication.

- If zoom can be cast to a TV we may have members without internet interested in joining a **small group at a members home or the Lion Hall**.

- I miss CHOIR, if Nick organized small groups like a chamber choir I would participate. If the **BELL CHOIR** could organize with physical distancing that would be wonderful.

* I'm deeply impressed and super grateful for the work of the task force. I'm very happy with the framework they have provided. I'm most in favour of **outdoor in-person social gatherings, probably at parks that are geographically easy to access to serve those most isolated, if they want to participate. I would consider doing outdoor doorstep or balcony visits with isolated folks if that is something care and concern sees a need for. I really struggle to imagine worship in person without singing. I'm deeply concerned about overtaxing our ministers, staff and volunteers if we were to attempt weekly in person worship. ... Perhaps if there is an appetite for it, instead of our previous jazz vespers, a monthly evening musical meditation with Nick or our accompanist playing any style of music that people will not want to sing along to, music alternating with 1 presenter sharing 2-5 minute speaking bits: musical history notes, sharing poems or quotes by others, vignettes, stories, personal reflections or homilinis, this could be live-streamed, as music might do better on livestream than it does on zoom. Maybe try 1 of these on a Saturday or Sunday night as an experiment? My ideal is that whatever we did in person would be very different that anything we did before to avoid the grief of comparison....**

*I would like to explore the option of having **some services in-person with live-streaming, and some on Zoom**. This would help us feel like a vibrant congregation

while allowing for connections with those who don't or can't attend gatherings in person. The thought of attending Zoom services only for a whole year is disturbing to me. I support the idea of **slow and cautious re-opening of more in-person activities while listening closely to the advice of provincial and local health experts**. We will need to manage the needs of those who can't attend in-person events with those who can and do want to connect without resentment on either side. Neither group should seek to impose their needs/wishes on the community as a whole, but should look for ways to provide for diverse experiences. **We are really going to be living our values in the next year!**

f) General

- I could have 2 for tea
- I have a great deal of confidence in our Board and in our ministers.
- Thank you for all the creative ways you care for us.
- Some folks have expressed concern that if we don't start holding 'in person' services, we will lose some of our members to other churches. I don't agree. I think people choose to come to UUC with focussed intention and likely with a level of dissatisfaction with other kinds of churches, and as such, would highly likely continue to connect and participate with UUC, even if only on-line.
- USE AN ALCOHOL BASED DISINFECTANT RATHER THAN BLEACH (CHLORINE) BASED. ALCOHOL IS AS GOOD OR BETTER AGAINST THE VIRUS, IT DOES NOT DETERIORATE AFTER BEING MADE UP TO AT LEAST 70%, AND IT IS NOT CORROSIVE AS IS BLEACH
- Thank you for being willing to work on this. I feel easily overwhelmed by this topic. I don't like the idea of exclusion. I don't like the idea of prohibiting those who are ready to attend and would benefit from it. I can always see 2, or more, sides and am a reluctant decision maker!
- All responses to in-person gatherings are dependent on my ability to get transportation.
- E. W. has offered to assist with phone calls and floral arrangements for individuals in need of contact within our Esquimalt NG. I am very enthusiastic about this! She and I will work out something.
- East Saanich neighbourhood group meeting on my extensive lawn next week, a first for us after several zoom meetings, we expect 18 -20, will observe all restrictions
- I am praying that our congregation doesn't become divided because of this.

- It has been very very very very very very lonely. I have missed church services so much that I've even considered going to the Catholic Services which have resumed , - by gosh

g) Children

- If you go to in-person services I assume it excludes families with young children who require care/programming during the service?

- Please find out why some of the lovely congregants and recent Worship Associates with kids are no longer showing up. Why? Is there something that they need or want / don't need? How can we make FUCV more responsive to their needs and interests?

Appendix 2

Comments from Individual Questions

Q5 Do you have any Vulnerabilities

I'm personally vulnerable

- compromised immune system
- Driving in the winter time is difficult
- We live far from the church.
- minor mobility challenges
- I have the ability/willingness but need to be careful due to age and health.

My contacts are vulnerable

- contact with elderly parent
- Ability to work with vulnerable people
- musical group members have vulnerabilities
- Roommate who does frontline work
- Work in a restricted setting so need to limit exposure
- I currently work on the frontlines of a famous tourist attraction; I have Phase III transmission concerns despite being characteristically asymptomatic.
- Work with vulnerable clients
- Elderly in-laws who need our attention in bubble.

Q10 Who gets to go to church

Ideas not previously mentioned

-By neighbourhood is good, but could also go by birthday month (e.g., everyone with birthday in September-October one week, in November-December the next week, etc.)

- first to register, prioritized by health status, transmission risk assessment and previous attendance -relative to waitlist (assuming one would be established to meet demand).
- Voluntarily attend only one service a month (based on having two in-person services a month), but the other options are feasible also.
- Combination of first to register and holding some seats (10 or 15?) for neighbourhood priority rotation
- Consider by lottery of those who sign up for each weekly service registering online or by phone but likely the same people would always be first, rotate through the list so everyone gets to go to church, random selection of those who registered, offer 2 services
- This is a tough one and i don't think we will know the right answer until we try. I hope that we will be open to evaluate and redesign with experience. I do not support the first come first serve option
- level of interest to attend
- I can't see how this serves us as a community at all. The spiritual communities I have heard working have rotating groups who come every first, second, third or fourth Sunday. Or have 3 services on Sundays.first, people without access to the online options, and then by neighbourhood
- Simplest method, to avoid a nightmare for staff
- Divide congregation into groups. People could choose the group-- first Sunday, second Sunday, third Sunday etc
- Elder members first priority, then members who register online/by phone

Should not do this

- I don't believe it's worth the effort and stress to hold in person services with current restrictions.
- Neither, since I do not think we should divide our congregation by giving privilege to a few, while having the rest of us having to do with less do not think it's right to ask this of our ministers or presenter, and I don't think it should be church policy to allow people the right to possibly spread the virus to others in our congregation, or other vulnerable family members, even if those people think it's their right to do so.

Other

- I really appreciated and enjoyed the trial of having services closer to my home - the Cedar Hill Rec. trial. If that could be done, outside, I would be interested in attending. None of the answers to question 9 really fitted for me.

Q11 Volunteering

What I can do

- On weeks I am not Worship Associate or backup, I would be willing to help wherever needed.

- Open to requests.
- Singing
- just to support Rebecca's notion that there must be a way to share the service or at least the coffee time if you can't attend in-person service, I wouldn't expect the service leaders or ministers to do both, but I would be willing to do what was necessary to make it work
- Continue Worship Associate role
- Moderate zoom for online viewers, and virtual coffee hour

Only at a distance

- I could do some work from home if there is paperwork that could be completed at home and communicated by Computer.
- I can help with assistance at a distance (like the pre-registration help)
- Other events not indoor
- Could help with pre- registration some of the time.

Not me

- **I am signed up to be a worship assistant beginning this September. I am currently not comfortable with in-person services. If they resumed, and covid 19 were still a factor to the degree that it currently is, I would need to decide if I am still willing to be a worship assistant. I have been looking forward to participating in the church as a worship assistant and would struggle with this choice.**
- your questions are ableist and biased. I would love to volunteer and I cannot due to disability
- I have poor balance and severe hearing loss
- don't want to say I'm not interested but I have volunteered a lot in my time!
- My prime responsibility is to escort my mother and ensure there are no falls.
- I don't believe it's prudent to proceed with in-person services, hence my reticence to lend support despite proximity.
- I would usher or greet with some **reluctance due to age** but am available to be called.
- increase my giving to hire attendant
- I am already a WA

Q12 Barriers to accessing services

Not comfortable yet

- I would prefer to wait until we are all vaccinated
- Unsafe, but probably larger for me is that I am totally hung up on having to make decisions about who is in the 40 and who is excluded.
- I'm very uncomfortable with a mask on
- Even when provincial restrictions are lifted, based on personal observation I remain reticent to gather in large groups due to the variables in 'new normal' diligence for in-person contact. The risks are high and our church's demographic features many that are vulnerable.

I'm struggling with grief anxiety and depression so don't feel like being around people for idle chat. Zoom is great with breakout rooms even better

- Would attend outdoor services.
- I might want to see what the indoor set up would look like
- I would feel it unsafe because of the unknown social contacts of others who would be attending.
- Unsure at this time but might in unique circumstances or if i were personally involved
- At this point. I may feel differently if numbers stay very small on the island.
- I won't feel comfortable attending until a vaccine, or other significant shift as related to the virus, NOT as related to the economy. So I hesitate to check the box beside 'Until all provincial restrictions are lifted I will not attend in-person services'. This is because restrictions are lifted as related to the economy and hospital load, not safety from the virus.
- I'm just not comfortable yet, due to the lack of a vaccine, insufficient knowledge of viral mechanisms, and related inability to treat. As such, it is difficult for me to be comfortable with other people. I have no way of knowing how careful others are being, or who they are in contact with. I look after my mom, and can't put her at risk. So, until I know more or we have better treatment and prevention or prophylaxis, I will limit my human contacts.
- These are all negative — I will feel comfortable as soon as there is a clear and safe plan.

Other things I would do

- I would attend a small gathering like Jazz Vespers, but not a regular service.
- As above, I'd attend if closer to my home.

Technology issues

- I am not opposed to attending services, but the technology to do both a live and on line service is not available at present. This would likely produce a less satisfactory service both at home and in the church.
- It seems to me that these types of two-tier services involve an unacceptable amount of additional work for the ministers and volunteers.
- I don't feel unsafe with proposed guidelines but the idea of worshipping like that...no singing, no coffee, etc. just doesn't appeal.
- May put some more emphasis on live streaming
- I think in-person services, with live streaming or a moderator, could happen once a month
- I think Zoom, plus Neighbourhood events would be fine. I keep in touch with a number of people by phone or e-mail.

Two tier system

- There is already a two tier system - those who have a way to get to/from church and those who do not.
- I recognize that for some people, online services only present an "unacceptable two-tier system. They are off line for various reasons, cognitive, financial or fear of Zoom security issues.

I don't think a "two-tier system" is inherently unacceptable. Aesop's "The Dog in the Manger" applies (with apologies for whatever connotations "dog" may suggest to readers.)

Q15 Zoom in a group

Yes

- I would certainly give it a try. I certainly miss meeting with people after church but I mostly miss the live service. The physical and emotional mindset that happens from being in the sanctuary.

Yes, with conditions

- Yes, provided I have some way to get to the TV venue
- As long as physical distancing is adhered to.
- Yes if a small ongoing same safe bubble.
- I like the idea of attending an indoor or outdoor physically-distanced Zoom service with an appropriately limited number of members of my NG.
- We could gather in small groups in peoples' homes and participate in keeping within the Provincial rules.
- Possibly depends on where and the environment
- with zoom, I am able to share the service with those who don't attend church, like my daughter-in-law and my granddaughter's friends, so we already have a little group sometimes.

Unsure

- Possibly
- Not sure
- Maybe. keep me posted.
- Not sure about that but certainly worthwhile to try out
- maybe
- Unsure -perhaps occasionally
- Could perhaps be an "overflow" solution.

Q22 Reaching Out

New volunteers

- 4 of us Unitarians as Berwick Royal Oak: opportunities for connection if we so wish
- I am available for video chat as well.

Already doing...

- I am C&C Coordinator and am attempting to do some small groups (probably 6 folks) with members in my backyard. (Much more complicated than anticipated as it is warm now and too hot to sit in the sun. I am now tracking the location of the shade to find when it works for proper social distancing.)
- I am a Care and Concern person, so make regular phone calls, etc.
- I am one of those people!

- I've already been in touch with Barbara Boyle about my availability to reach out to congregants by phone
- Doing some of that now.....willing to do more
- I'm already doing this as convenor of GC neighbourhood group
- I do call people along with L.D. in the Oak Bay Neighbourhood Group.
- Co-ordinating a few others to make regular/infrequent phone calls to chat plus my C&C duties is keeping me quite busy at the moment so I do not think that I am able to take on anything more.
- I am a care and concern coordinator
- I can have a small group (4) outside,
- I do already reach out occasionally to people I have previous relationships with.

Other

- I'll give it more thought