

# Pastors' Views on the Impact of COVID-19

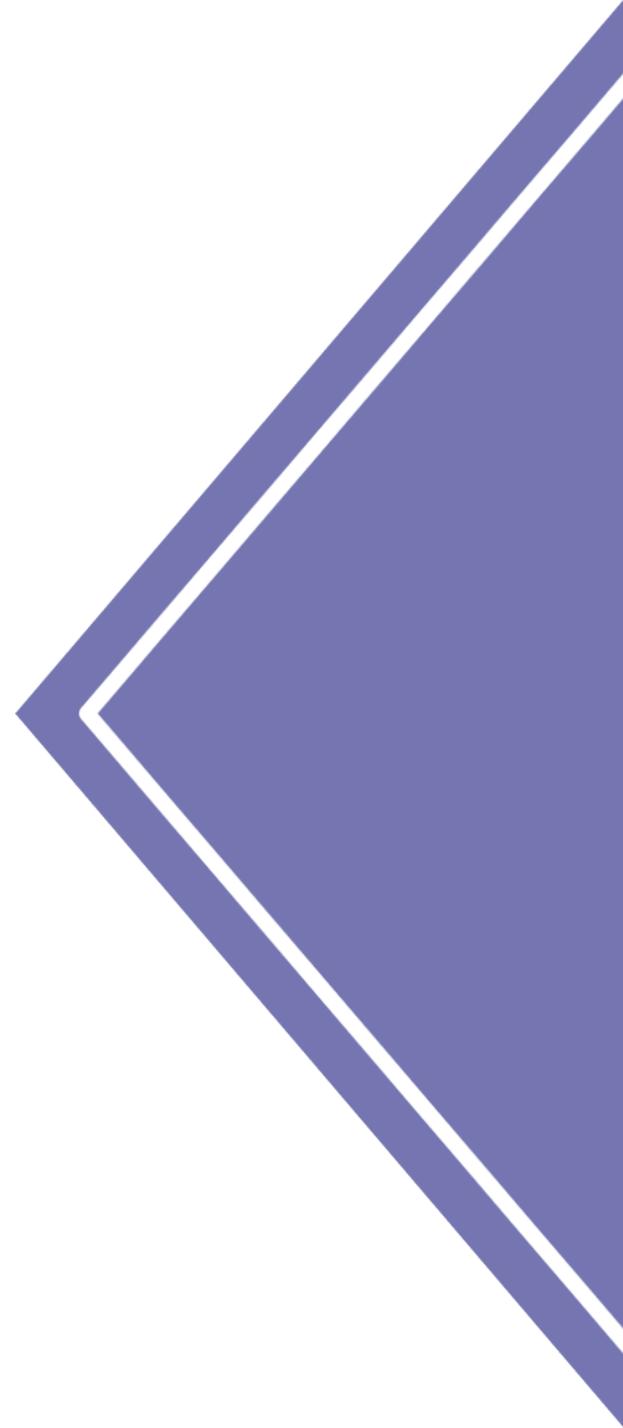
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Survey of American Protestant Pastors

# Methodology

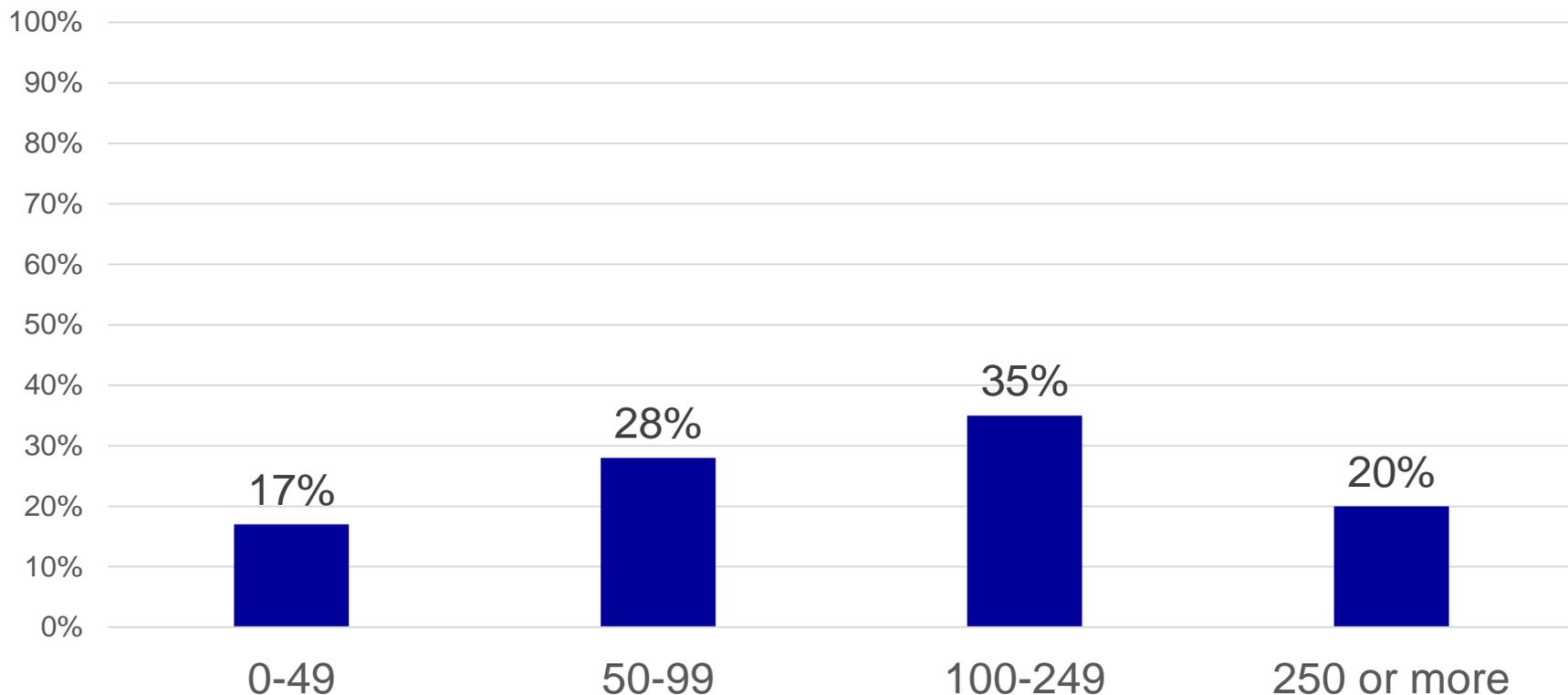
- The mixed mode survey of 1,007 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2–October 1, 2020 using both phone and online interviews
- Phone: The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Online: Invitations were emailed to the LifeWay Research Pastor Panel followed by three reminders. This probability sample of Protestant churches was created by phone recruiting by LifeWay Research using random samples selected from all Protestant churches. Pastors who agree to be contacted by email for future surveys make up this LifeWay Research Pastor Panel.
- Each survey was completed by the senior or sole pastor or a minister at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,007 surveys (502 by phone, 505 online)
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed  $\pm 3.4\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

# Survey Responses



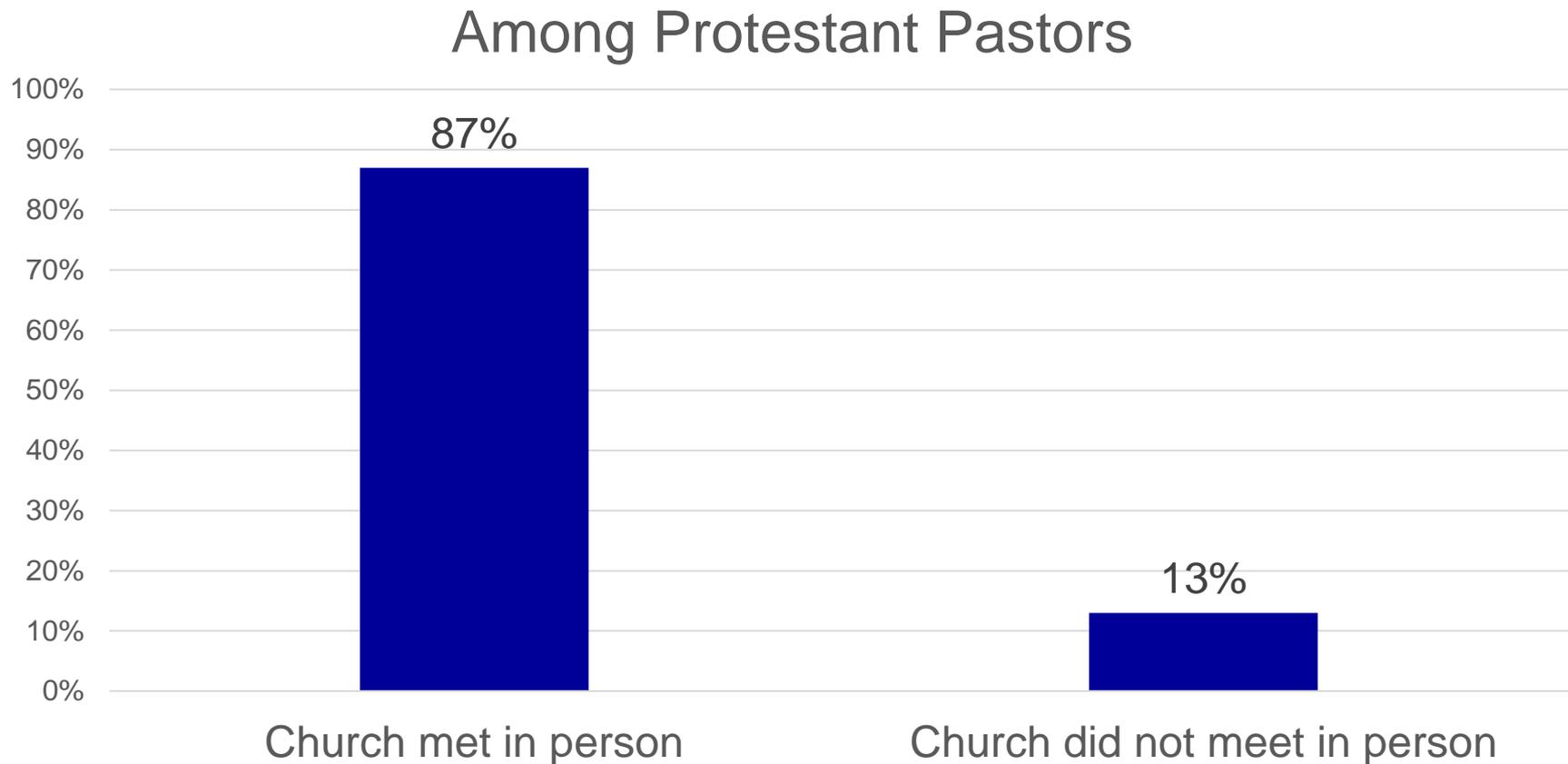
# February average attendance for reporting churches

## Among Protestant Pastors



Q: "As of February 2020, what was your church's average worship attendance on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" *n*=993

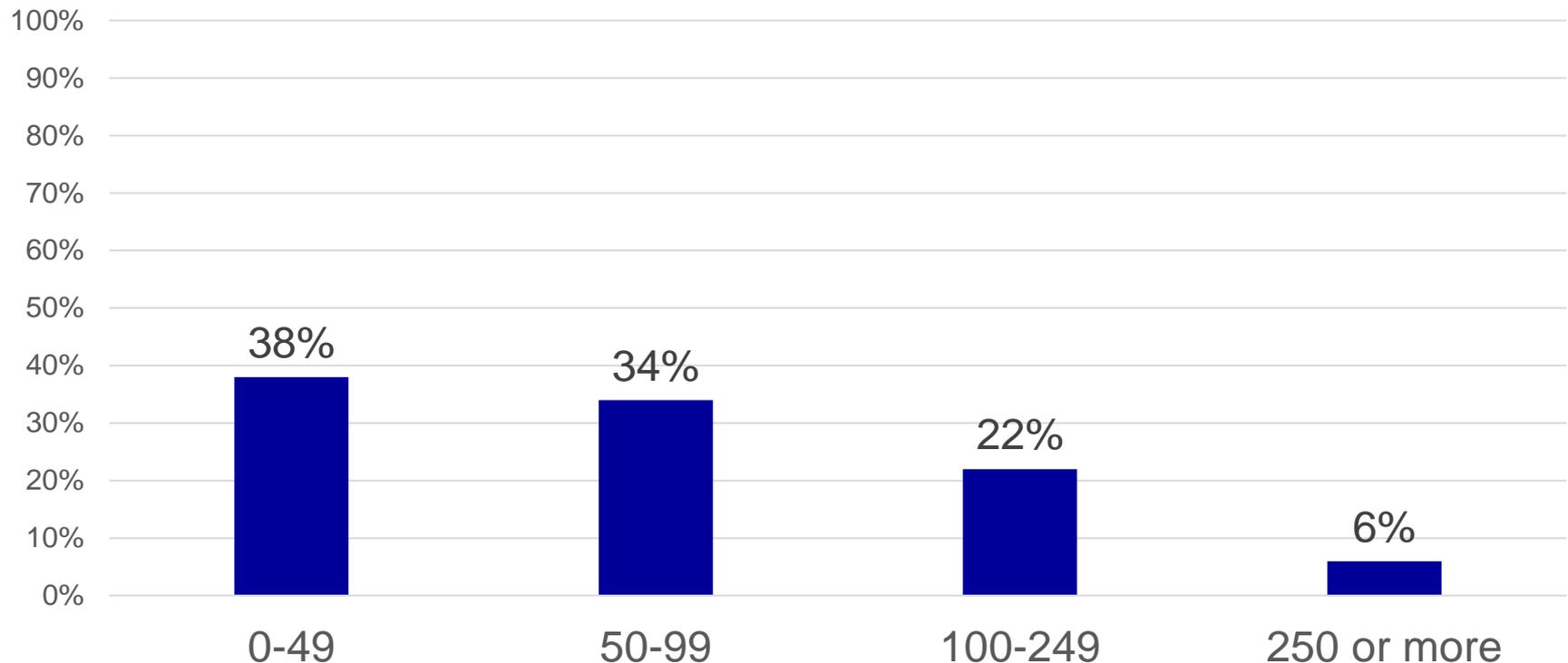
# 87% of pastors say their churches met in person in September



Q: "This month, what was your church's average worship attendance **in-person** on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" *n*=942

# September average attendance for reporting churches

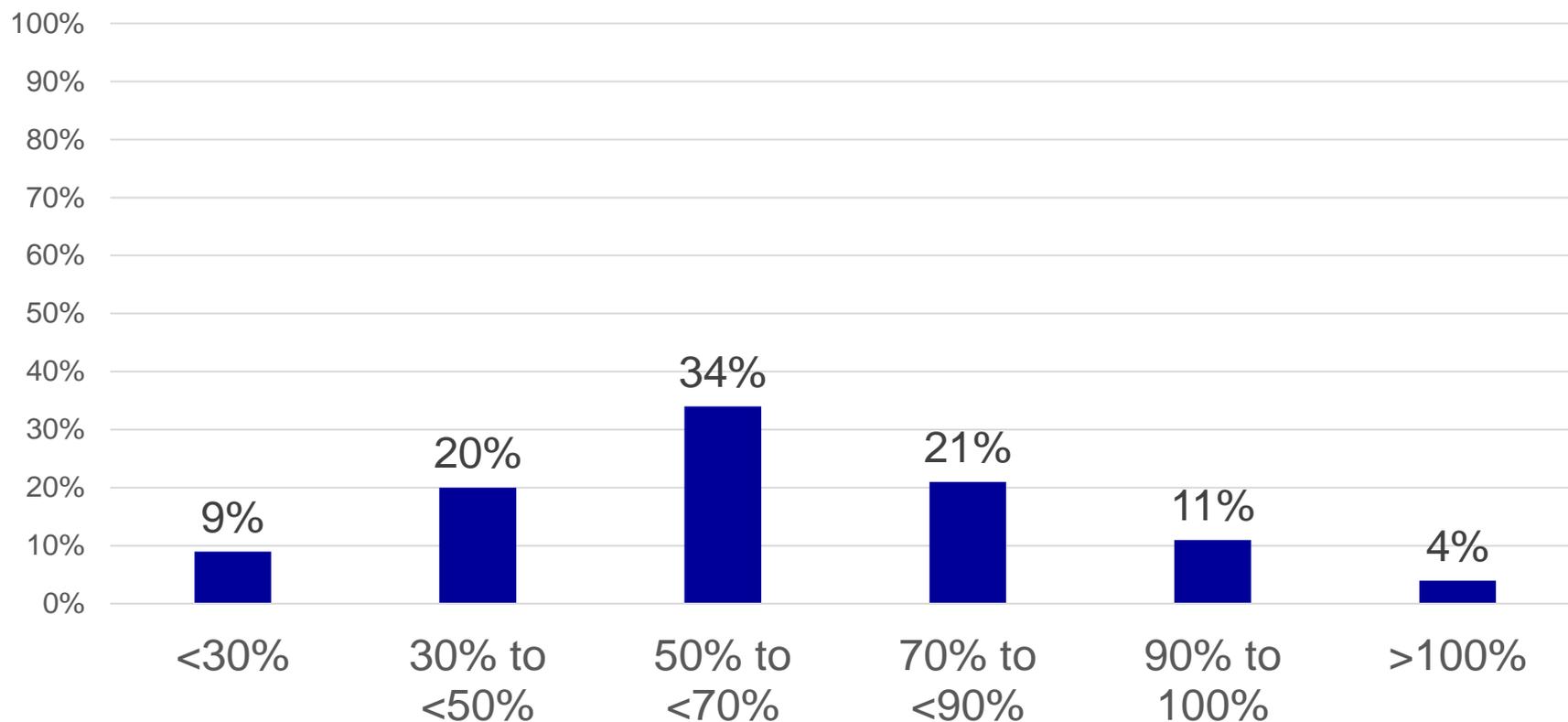
Among Protestant Pastors whose churches met in person



Q: "This month, what was your church's average worship attendance **in-person** on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" *n*=867

# September attendance as a percentage of February attendance

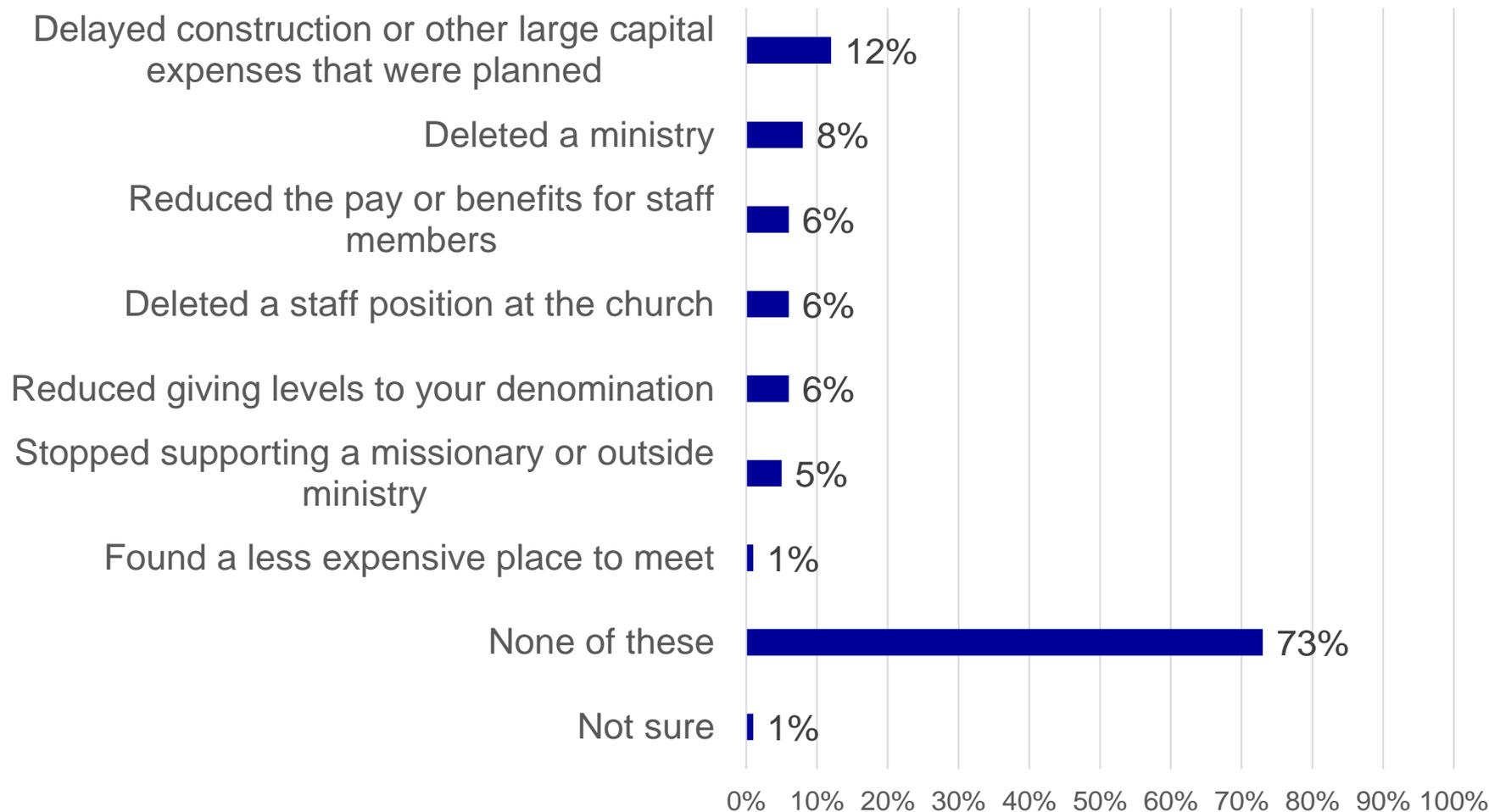
## Among Protestant Pastors



Q: "This month, what was your church's average worship attendance **in-person** on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?" *n*=861

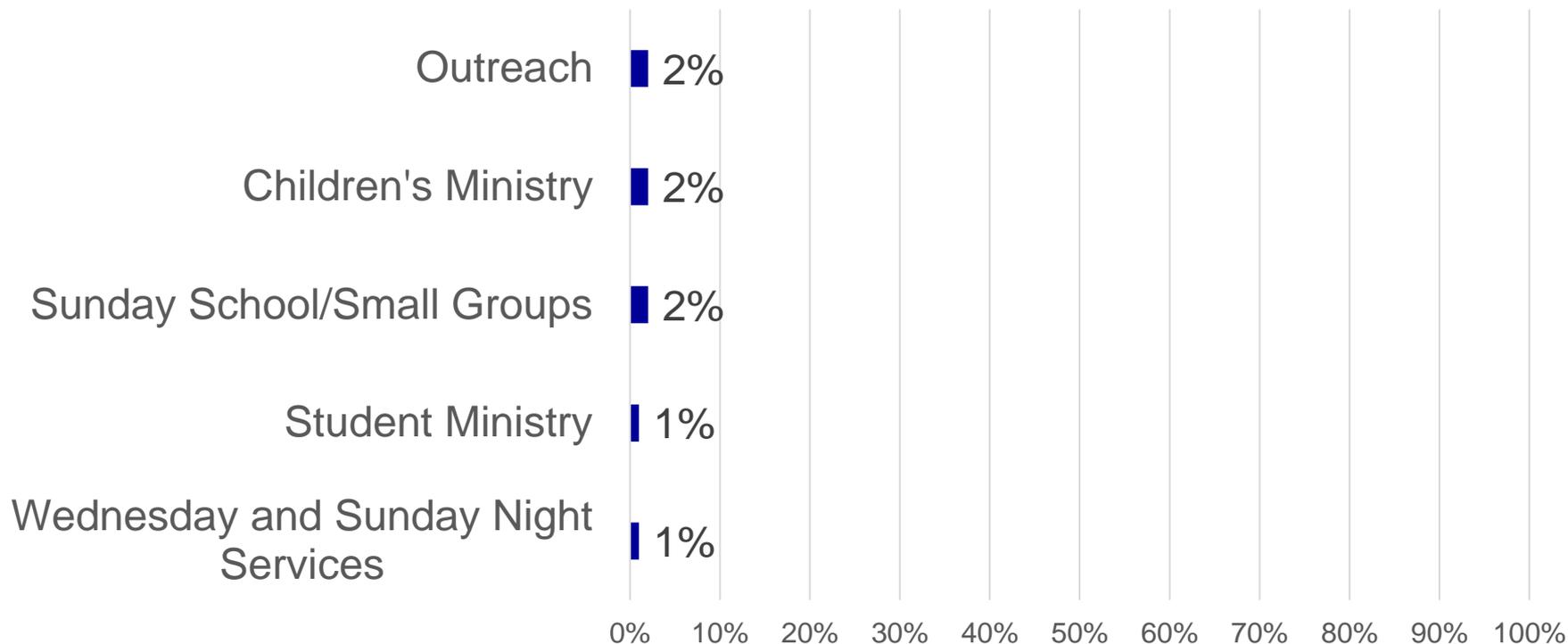
# “As a result of COVID-19, has your church made any of the following long-term changes to your ministry?”

## Among Protestant Pastors



# “Which ministry have you deleted?”

## Percentage of all Protestant Pastors



Q: “Which ministry have you deleted?” *n*=80 All other responses less than 1%

# Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor's ethnicity, age, gender, education, self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Self-Identified</b>
White	18-44	Male	No College Degree	Evangelical
African American	45-54	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
Other Ethnicity	55-64		Master's Degree	
	65+		Doctoral Degree	

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church's region, denomination, and attendance.

Region	Denominational Group	Attendance
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Lutheran	50-99
Midwest	Methodist	100-249
West	Pentecostal	250+
	Presbyterian/Reformed	
	Christian/ Church of Christ	

# **“This month, what was your church’s average worship attendance in-person on a typical weekend (including all ages from babies to adults but not counting anyone twice)?”**

- African American pastors are the most likely to select “Did not meet in person” (60%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Did not meet in person” than males (29% v. 12%)
- Evangelical pastors are less likely to select “Did not meet in person” than Mainline pastors (7% v. 31%)
- Pastors in the Midwest are the least likely to select “Did not meet in person” (7%)
- Methodists (22%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (23%) are more likely to select “Did not meet in person” than Baptists (9%), Lutherans (12%), and Christian/Church of Christ (10%)

# September attendance as a percentage of February attendance

- White pastors (22%) are more likely to answer “70% to <90%” than African American pastors (4%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select “<30%” (40%)
- Female pastors are more likely to answer “30% to <50%” than males (32% v. 19%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (39%) are more likely to answer “50% to <70%” than those with no college degree (27%) or a Bachelor’s degree (27%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to answer “70% to <90%” than Mainline pastors (24% v. 9%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (27%) are more likely to answer “30% to <50%” than those in the South (17%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (49%) are more likely to answer “50% to <70%” than Baptists (34%), Methodists (23%), and Pentecostals (30%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (42%) are more likely to answer “50% to <70%” than those with attendance of 0-49 (23%) and 250+ (29%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to answer “<30%” (20%)

# “As a result of COVID-19, has your church made any of the following long-term changes to your ministry?”

## Deleted a staff position at the church

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (18%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (13% v. 5%)
- Evangelical pastors are less likely to select than Mainline pastors (4% v. 10%)
- Methodists are the most likely to select (16%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (10%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (2%) and 50-99 (4%)

## Stopped supporting a missionary or outside ministry

- White pastors are the least likely to select (3%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (9%) are more likely to select than Baptists (3%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (7%) and 100-249 (7%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 250+ (2%)

# “As a result of COVID-19, has your church made any of the following long-term changes to your ministry?”

## Reduced giving levels to your denomination

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (17%)
- Pastors a Master’s degree (8%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor’s degree (3%)
- Evangelical pastors are less likely to select than Mainline pastors (4% v. 12%)
- Lutherans (9%) and Methodists (15%) are more likely to select than Baptists (3%)

## Reduced the pay or benefits for staff members

- African American pastors are the most likely to select (21%)
- Evangelical pastors are less likely to select than Mainline pastors (5% v. 10%)
- Pastors in the West (11%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (4%)

# “As a result of COVID-19, has your church made any of the following long-term changes to your ministry?”

## Deleted a ministry

- Pastors age 18-44 are the most likely to select (13%)
- Methodists are the most likely to select (18%)

## Delayed construction or other large capital expenses that were planned

- African American pastors (24%) are more likely to select than White pastors (11%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (16%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (9%) and 50-99 (9%)

## Found a less expensive place to meet

- No significant differences

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