

Pastors' Views on Highest Attended Worship Services

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

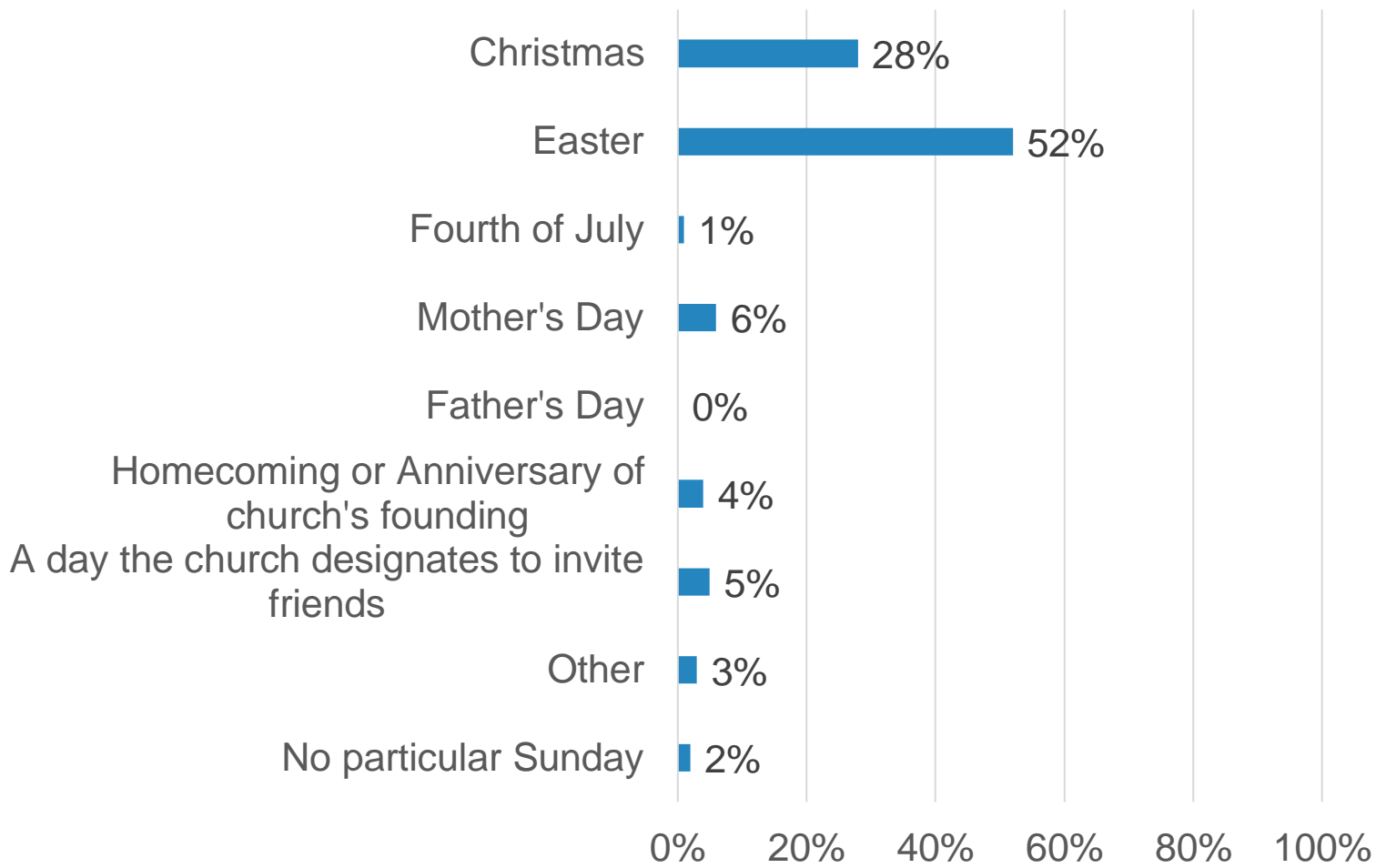
Lifeway research

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,004 Protestant pastors was conducted August 29, 2023 - September 20, 2023
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,004 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.2\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to a phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors conducted May 18 - 25, 2011

52% say that Easter has the highest attended worship services

Among Protestant Pastors

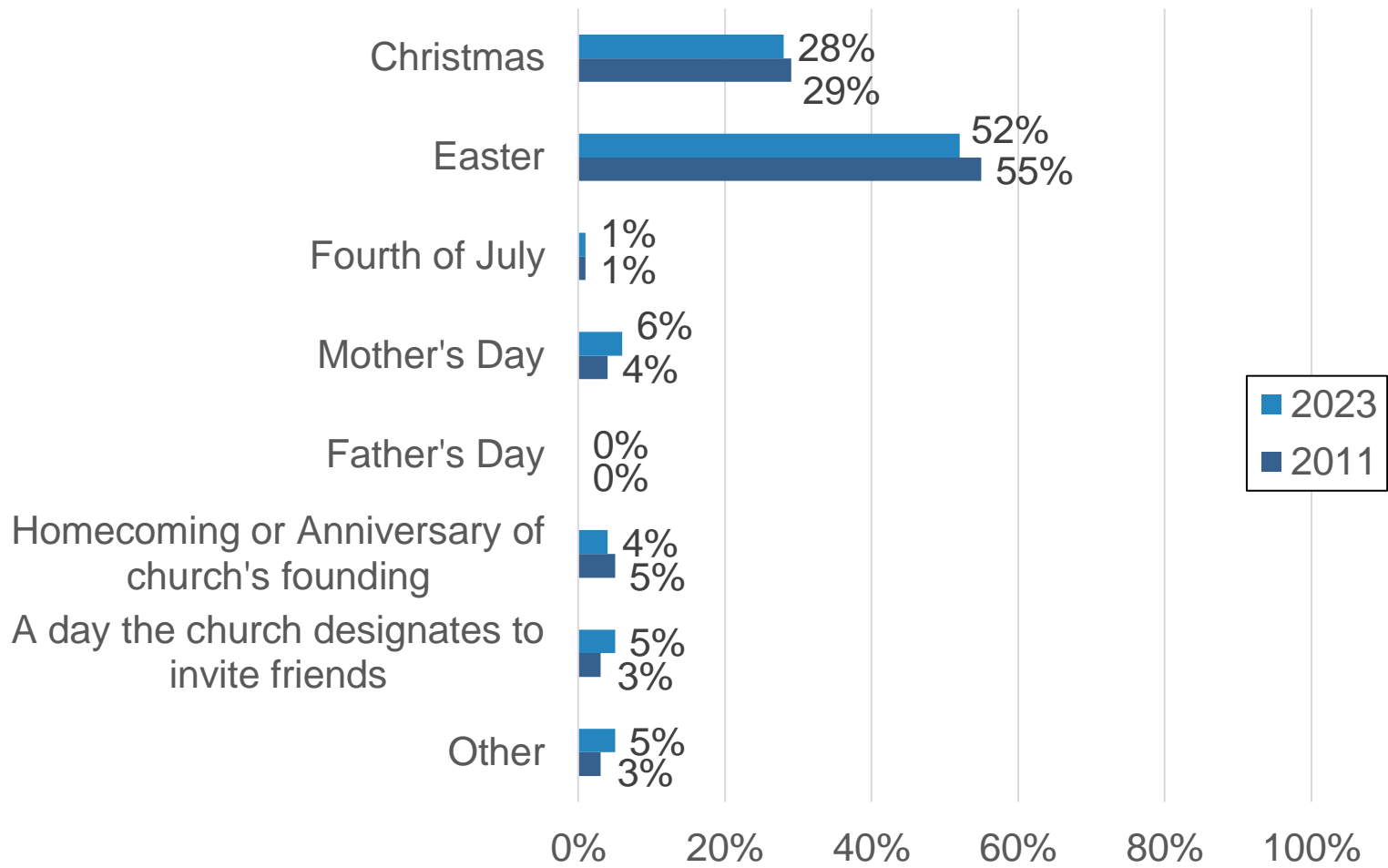


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Q: "At your church, which day typically has the highest attendance for worship services? (Select one)" n=1,004

The majority of pastors continue to say Easter is the highest attended worship service at their church

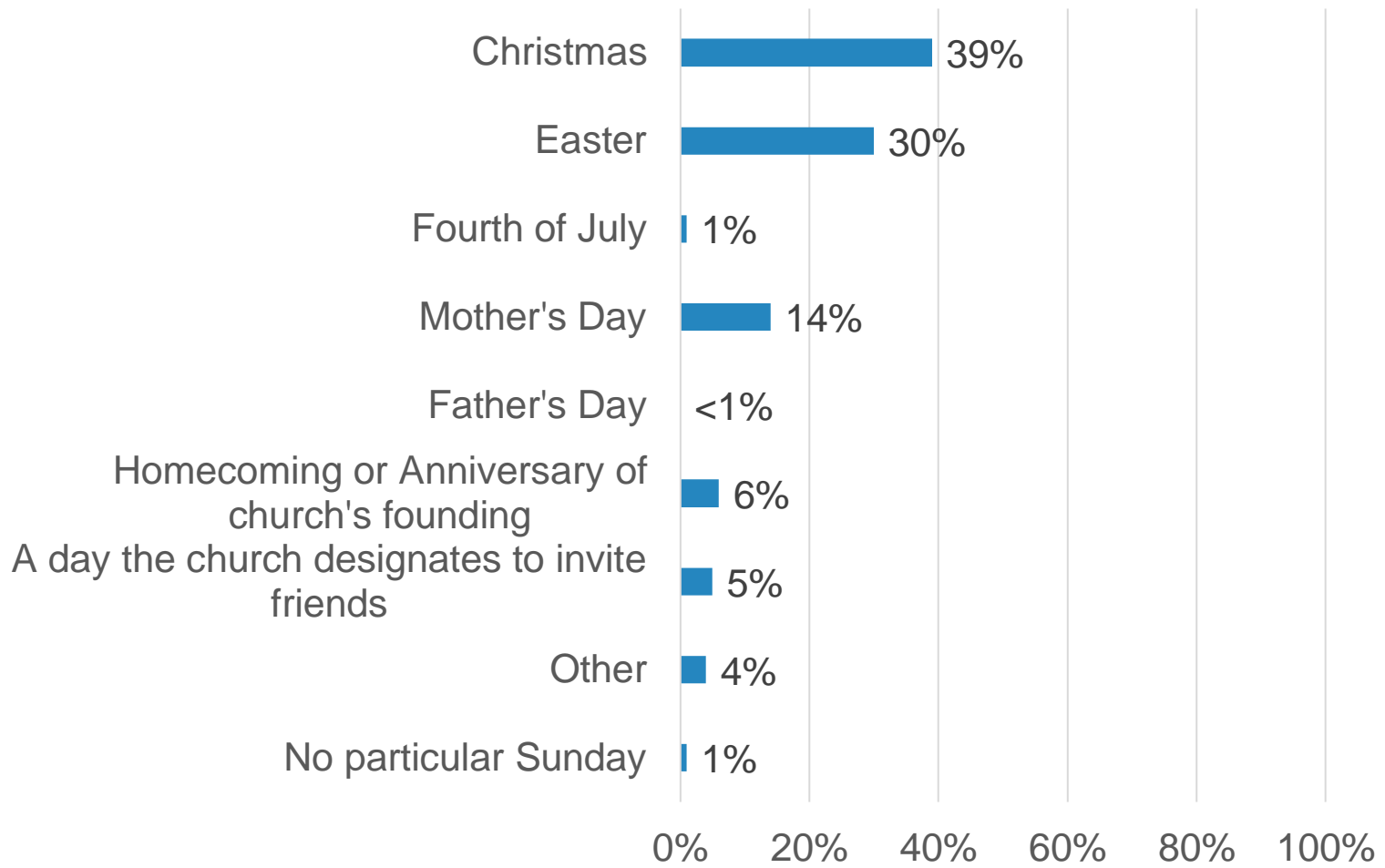
Among Protestant Pastors



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39% say that Christmas has the second highest attended worship services

Among Protestant Pastors

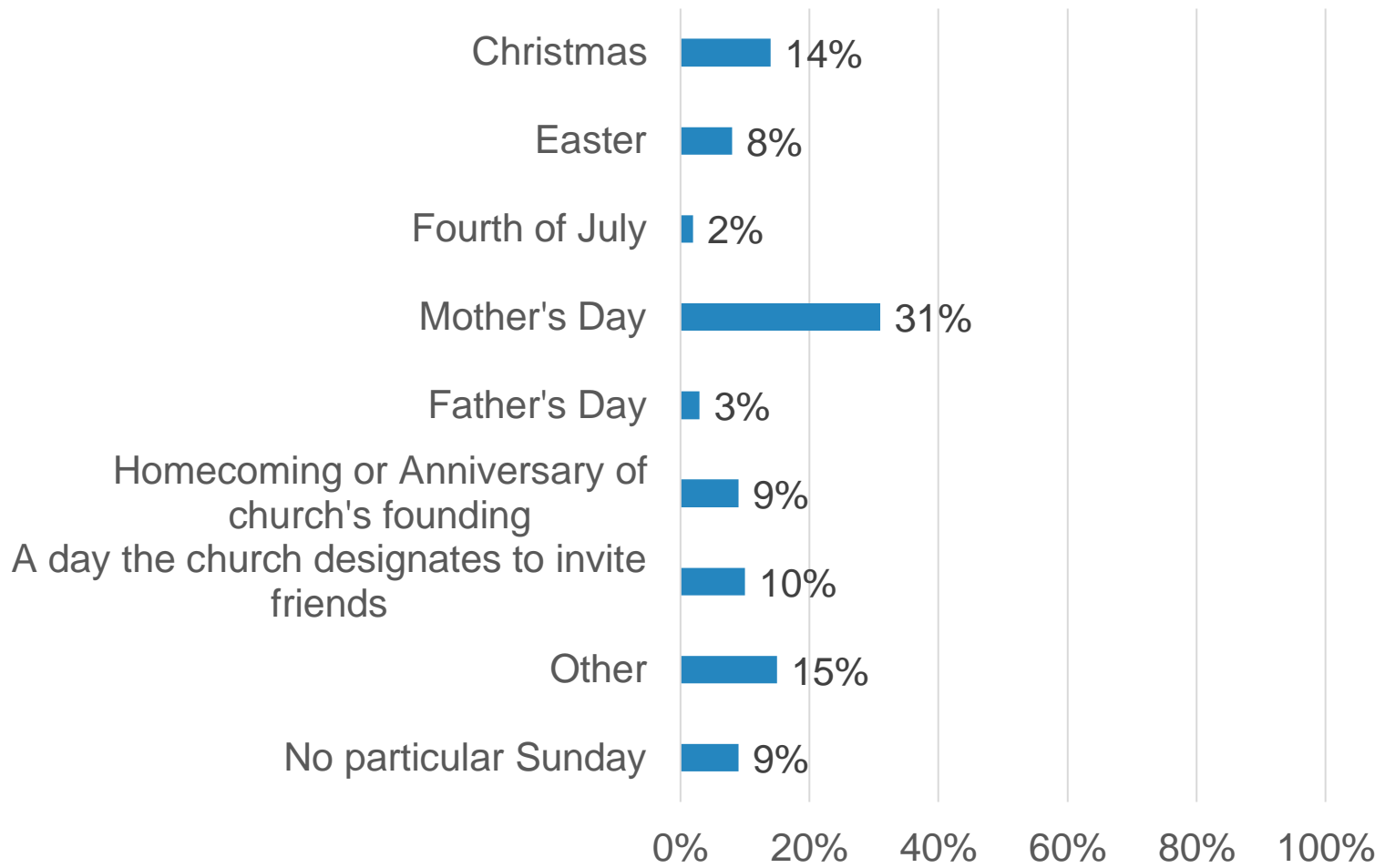


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Q: "At your church, which day typically has the second highest attendance for worship services? (Select one)" n=1,004

31% say that Mother's Day has the third highest attended worship services

Among Protestant Pastors

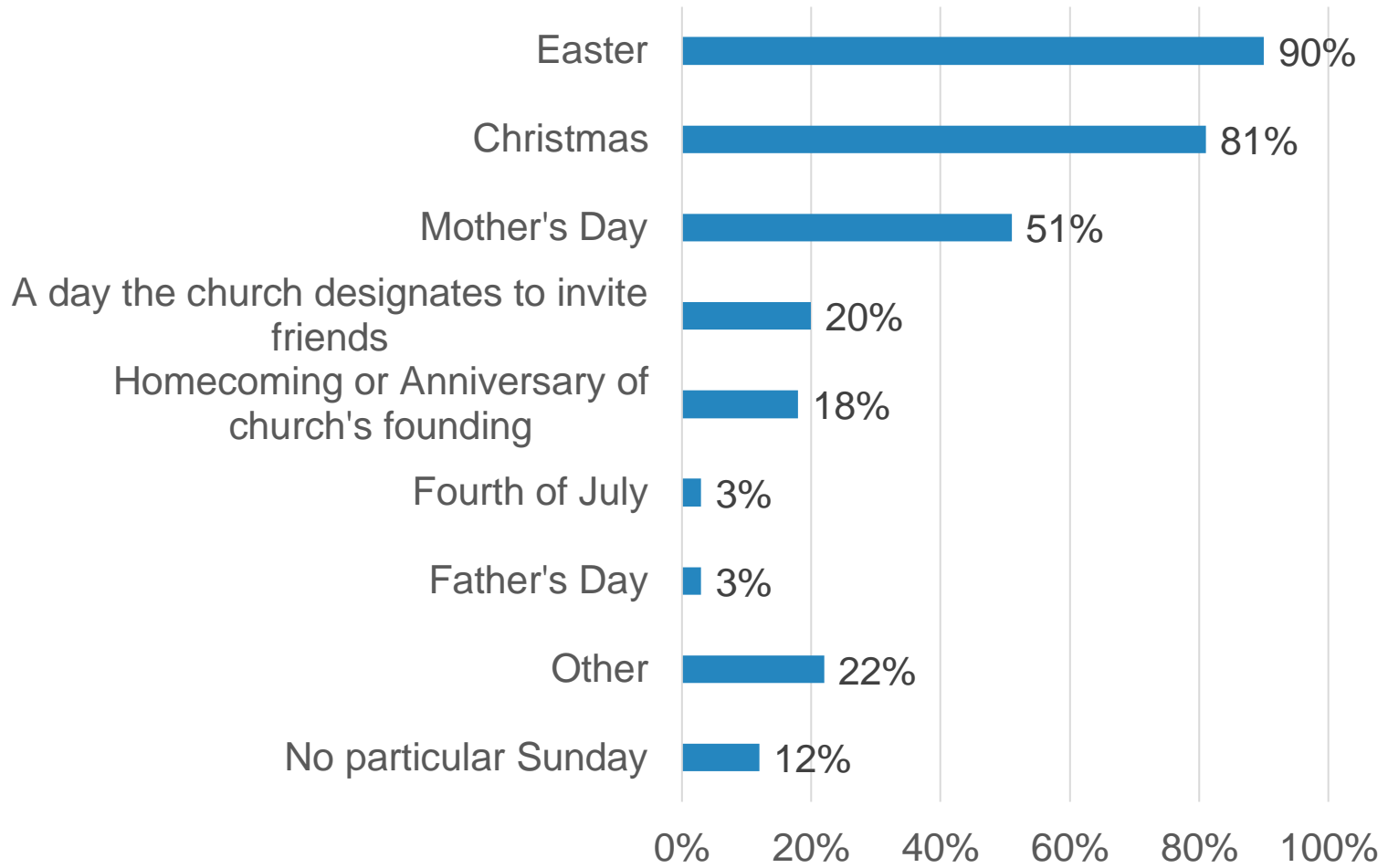


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Q: "At your church, which day typically has the third highest attendance for worship services? (Select one)" n=1,004

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Among Protestant Pastors

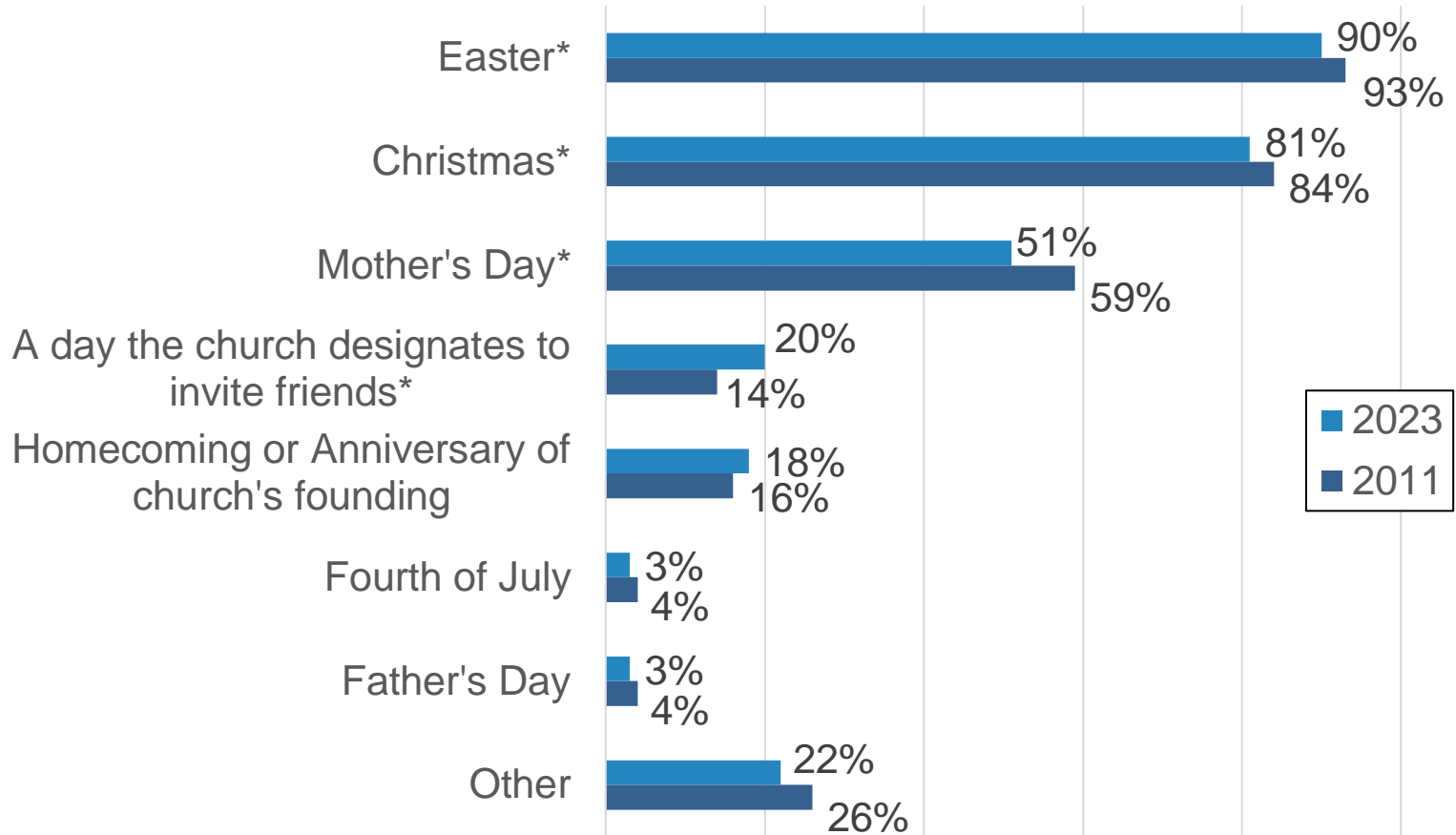


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Q: "At your church, which day typically has the highest (second highest, third highest) attendance for worship services? (Select one)" n=1,004

Top 3 Attended Worship Services: Designated invitation weeks have grown while Mother's Day, Easter and Christmas have declined since 2011

Among Protestant Pastors



*Statistically significant difference

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

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“At your church which day typically has the highest (second highest, third highest) attendance for worship services?”

Most common “other” specific days mentioned:

- Thanksgiving
- Palm Sunday
- Baptism service
- Reformation Day
- Confirmation Sunday
- Christmas Eve
- All Saints Day

Each of these had fewer mentions than any of the options listed in the question

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

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Significant 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.

AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION	Self-Identified
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
55-64		Hispanic	Graduate Degree	
65+		Other Ethnicities	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	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Lutheran	50-99
Midwest	Methodist	100-249
West	Pentecostal	250+
	Presbyterian/Reformed	
	Christian/Church of Christ	
	Non-Denominational	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“At your church, which day typically has the highest attendance for worship services?”

- Pastors age 65+ (9%) are more likely to select “Mother’s Day” than pastors age 18-44 (6%) and 55-64 (4%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “Easter” than females (54% v. 44%)
- African American pastors (12%) are more likely to select “Mother’s Day” than white pastors (5%)
- Pastors with no college degree (9%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (8%) are more likely to select “Mother’s Day” than those with a Master’s Degree (4%) or a Doctoral Degree (1%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select “Christmas” than Evangelical pastors (35% v. 26%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (33%) are more likely to select “Christmas” than those in the South (24%)
- Non-denominational (64%) are more likely to select “Easter” than Presbyterian/Reformed (45%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 100-249 (60%) and 250+ (67%) are more likely to select “Easter” than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (44%) and 50-99 (51%)

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Christmas

- Pastors with a Master's Degree (83%) are more likely rank in the top three than those with no college degree (75%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (84%) are more likely rank in the top three than those in the South (78%)
- Lutherans (94%) and Methodists (90%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (83%) are more likely rank in the top three than Christian/Churches of Christ (67%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ (89%) are more likely rank in the top three than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (79%)

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Easter

- White pastors (92%) are more likely rank in the top three than Hispanic pastors (83%)
- Pastors in the Midwest (94%) are more likely rank in the top three than those in the South (89%)
- Lutherans (98%) and Methodists (95%) are more likely rank in the top three than Pentecostals (84%), Presbyterian/Reformed (87%), and Christian/Churches of Christ (78%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (93%) and 250+ (98%) are more likely rank in the top three than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (87%)

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Fourth of July

- No meaningful significant differences

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Mother's Day

- Pastors age 65+ (55%) are more likely rank in the top three than pastors age 18-44 (45%)
- African American pastors (66%) are more likely rank in the top three than white pastors (49%)
- Pastors with no college degree (60%) are more likely rank in the top three than those with a Master's Degree (47%) or a Doctoral Degree (43%)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the least likely rank in the top three (35%)
- Baptists (59%), Pentecostals (54%), Christian/Church of Christ (59%), and Non-denominational (64%) are more likely rank in the top three than Lutherans (30%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (39%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (56%) are more likely rank in the top three than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (46%)

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Father's Day

- No meaningful significant differences

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

Homecoming/Anniversary of the church's founding

- African American pastors are the most likely rank in the top three (33%)
- Pastors in the South (23%) are more likely rank in the top three than those in the Midwest (13%) and West (15%)
- Baptists (28%) are more likely rank in the top three than and Lutherans (12%), Methodists (16%), Pentecostals (17%), Presbyterian/Reformed (14%), and Non-denominational (13%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (20%) and 50-99 (21%) are more likely rank in the top three than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (8%)

Top 3 Attended days for worship services

A day the church designates to invite friends

- Pastors age 55-64 (24%) are more likely rank in the top three than pastors 65+ (16%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor's Degree (24%) are more likely rank in the top three than those with a Doctoral Degree (14%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (29%) are more likely rank in the top three than those in the South (17%) and Midwest (18%)
- Pentecostals (32%) are more likely rank in the top three than Baptists (21%), Lutherans (14%), and Methodists (15%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (24%) and 100-249 (21%) are more likely rank in the top three than those at churches with attendance of 250+ (11%)

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