

# Protestant Churchgoer Views on their Church's Decade and Tone

A SURVEY OF 1,008 AMERICAN PROTESTANT CHURCHGOERS

Lifeway research

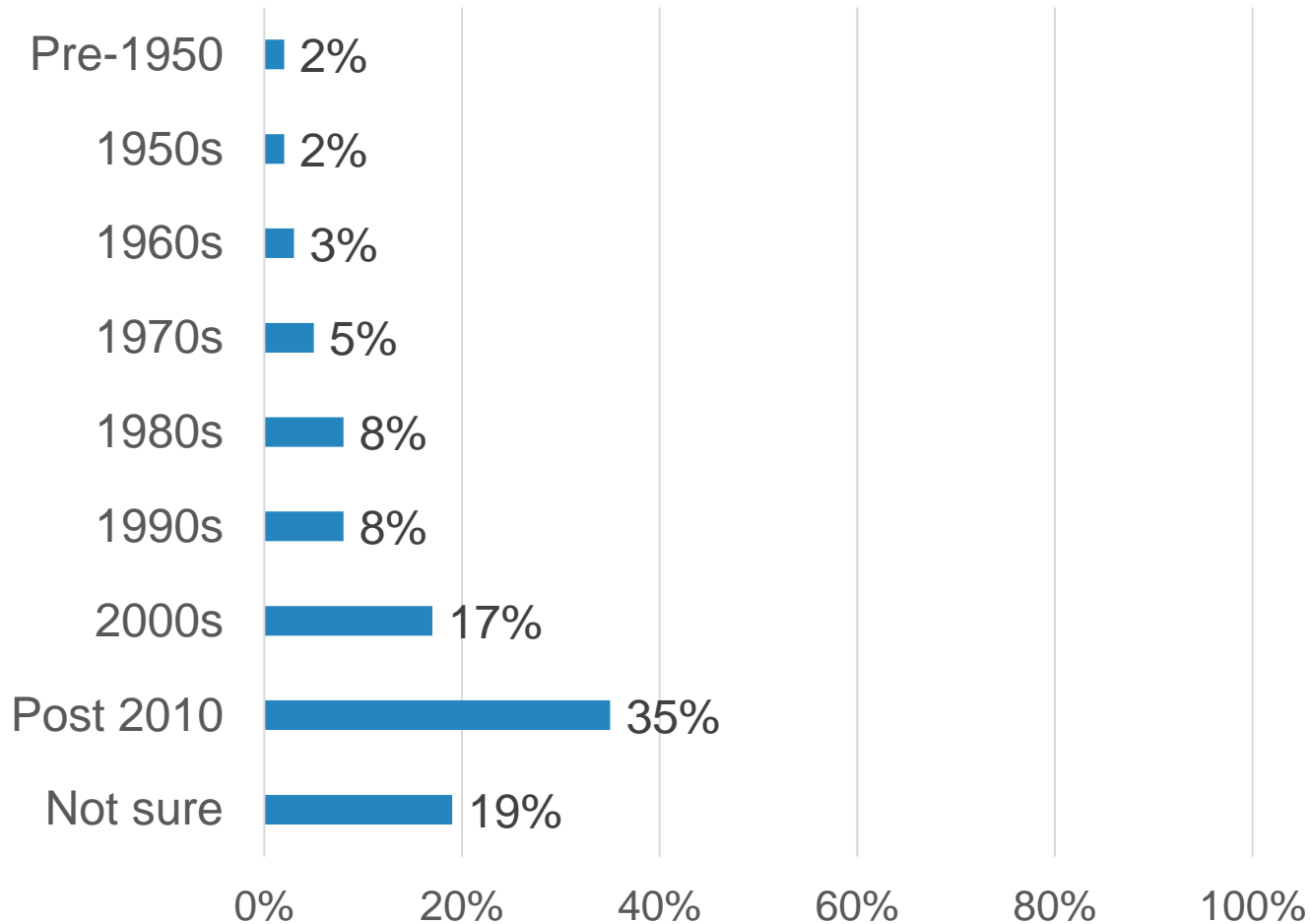
# Methodology

- The online survey of 1,008 American Protestant churchgoers was conducted September 19-29, 2023, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Respondents were screened to include those who identified as Protestant/non-denominational and attend religious services at least once a month
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,008 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed  $\pm 3.2\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

# Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
  - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
  - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
  - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
  - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

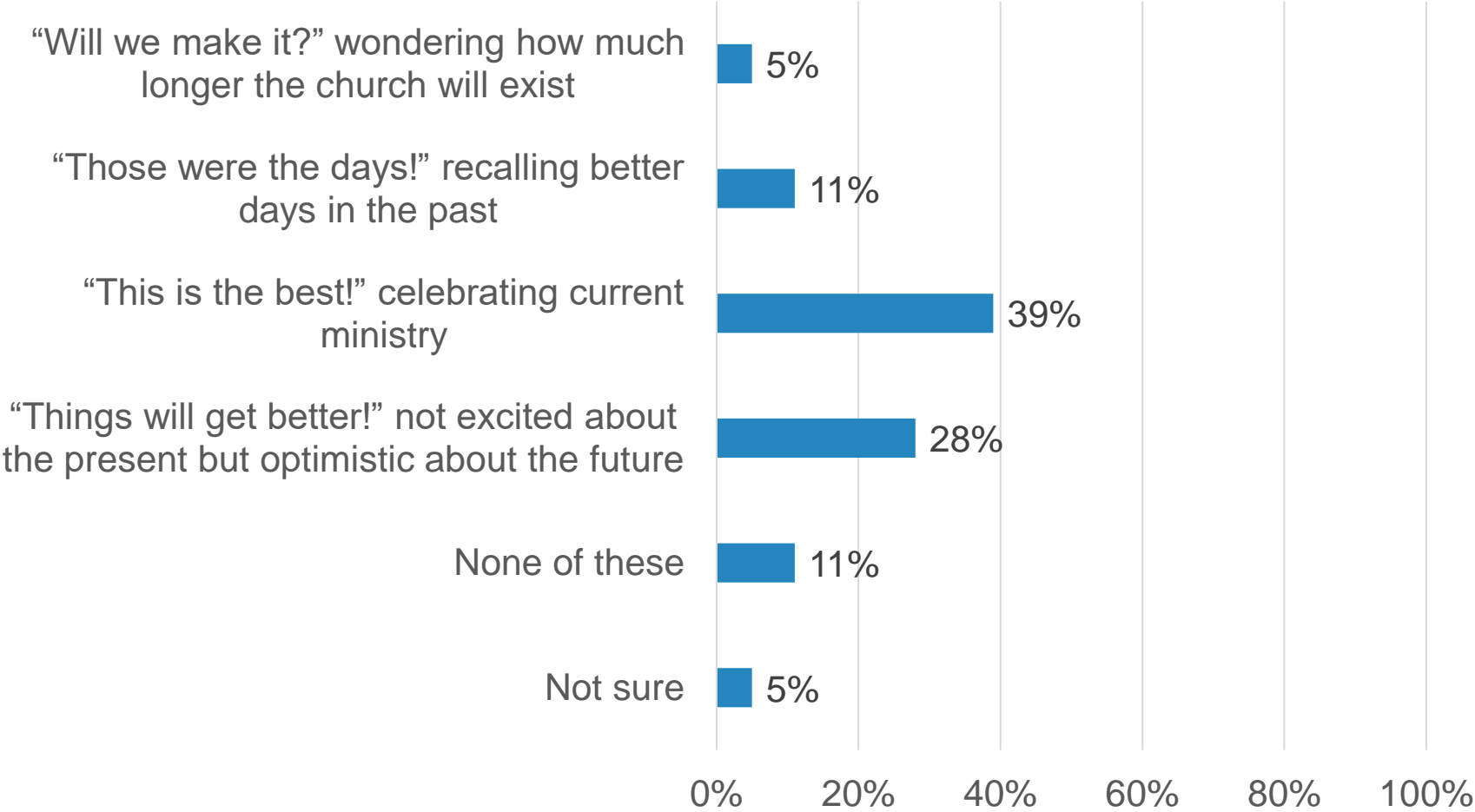
# 52% say 2000's or later best describes the time period of their church's activities and methods of ministry



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Q: "Many clothing and hair styles had a time period in which they were popular. As you think of your church's activities and methods of ministry, which time period best describes your church?" n=1,008

# 39% say that the tone of conversations at their church celebrate the current state of its ministry



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Q: “As you listen to conversations at your church, which fits the tone of most of them? (Select one)” n=1,008

# Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Denomination

Worship Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

# Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among denomination, worship service attendance, and evangelical beliefs.

DENOMINATION	WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Baptist	1 to 3 times a month	Yes
Methodist	4 or more times a month	No
Lutheran	Not sure	
Presbyterian/Reformed		
Christian/Church of Christ		
Non-denominational		



**“Many clothing and hair styles had a time period in which they were popular. As you think of your church’s activities and methods of ministry, which time period best describes your church?”**

- Females are more likely to select “Post 2010” than males (38% v. 31%)
- Those age 18-34 (22%) and 50-64 (19%) are more likely to select “2000s” than those 65+ (13%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Not sure” (29%)
- African Americans (13%) and Hispanics (17%) are more likely to select “1990s” than Whites (6%)
- Those in the Northeast are the most likely to select “1950s” or “1960s” (15%)
- Those with a Bachelor’s Degree (46%) or a Graduate Degree (42%) are more likely to select “Post 2010” than those who are High School Graduates or less (26%) or with some college (31%)
- Non-denominational are the least likely to select “1980s” (3%)
- Methodists (14%) are more likely to select “Pre-1950” than Baptists (2%), Lutherans (2%), Presbyterian/Reformed (1%), and Non-denominational (2%)
- Non-denominational (45%) are more likely to select “Post 2010” than Baptists (34%), Lutherans (28%), and Christian/Church of Christ (28%)

**“Many clothing and hair styles had a time period in which they were popular. As you think of your church’s activities and methods of ministry, which time period best describes your church?”** *Continued*

- Those who attend a worship service 4 or more times a month (39%) are more likely to select “Post 2010” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (29%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “1990s” than those with evangelical beliefs (11% v. 6%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 500+ (62%) are the most likely to select “Post 2010” followed by those with attendance of 250 to 499 (46%), 100 to 249 (30%), 50 to 99 (29%), and less than 50 (27%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (20%), 50 to 99 (19%), and 100 to 249 (19%) are more likely to select “1980s” or “1990s” than those with attendance of 250 to 499 (10%) or 500+ (3%)

## **“As you listen to conversations at your church, which fits the tone of most of them?”**

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select “‘Things will get better!’ not excited about the present but optimistic about the future” (20%) and the most likely to select “None of these” (18%)
- Whites (42%) are more likely to select “‘This is the best!’ celebrating current ministry” than African Americans (34%) and Hispanics (29%)
- African Americans (15%) are more likely to select “‘Those were the days!’ recalling better days in the past” than Hispanics (5%)
- Hispanics (44%) and African Americans (36%) are more likely to select “‘Things will get better!’ not excited about the present but optimistic about the future” than Whites (23%)
- Those in the West (46%) are more likely to select “‘This is the best!’ celebrating current ministry” than those in the Northeast (31%)
- Those in the Northeast (36%) are more likely to select “‘Things will get better!’ not excited about the present but optimistic about the future” than those in the Midwest (24%)

## **“As you listen to conversations at your church, which fits the tone of most of them?” *Continued***

- Baptists (14%) and Christian/Church of Christ (16%) are more likely to select “Those were the days!” recalling better days in the past” than Non-denominational (7%)
- Those who attend a worship service 1 to 3 times a month (15%) are more likely to select ““Those were the days!” recalling better days in the past” than those who attend 4 or more times a month (8%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of less than 50 (13%) and 50 to 99 (9%) are more likely to select ““Will we make it?’ wondering how much longer the church will exist” than those with attendance of 100 to 249 (1%), 250 to 499 (1%) or 500+ (2%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 500+ are the least likely to select ““Those were the days!” recalling better days in the past” (2%)
- Those attending churches with worship attendance of 500+ (60%) are more likely to select ““This is the best!’ celebrating current ministry” than those with attendance of less than 50 (24%), 50 to 99 (34%), and 100 to 249 (41%)

## **“As you listen to conversations at your church, which fits the tone of most of them?”** *Continued*

### **“‘Will we make it?’ wondering how much longer the church will exist”**

- Those who describe their church in the “1980s or 1990s” (9%) are more likely to select than those who describe their church in the “2000s” (4%)

### **“‘Those were the days!’ recalling better days in the past”**

- Those who describe their church as “Pre-1950 to 1970s” (21%) and “1980s or 1990s” (25%) are more likely to select than those who describe their church as “2000s” (10%) and “Post 2010” (4%)
- Those who describe their church as “Post 2010” are the least likely to select (4%)

### **“‘This is the best!’ celebrating current ministry”**

- Those who describe their church as in the “2000s” (42%) and “Post 2010” (56%) are more likely to select than those who describe their church as “Pre-1950 to 1970s” (28%) and “1980s or 1990s” (28%)
- Those who describe their church as “Post 2010” are the most likely to select (56%)

## **“As you listen to conversations at your church, which fits the tone of most of them?” *Continued***

### **“‘Things will get better!’ not excited about the present but optimistic about the future”**

- Those who describe their church as “Pre-1950 to 1970s” (34%) and “2000s” (32%) are more likely to select than those who describe their church as “Post 2010” (24%)

### **None of these**

- Those who describe their church as “Post 2010” (10%) are more likely to select than those who describe their church as “1980s or 1990s” (4%)

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