

# Pastors' Views on Welcoming Guests

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

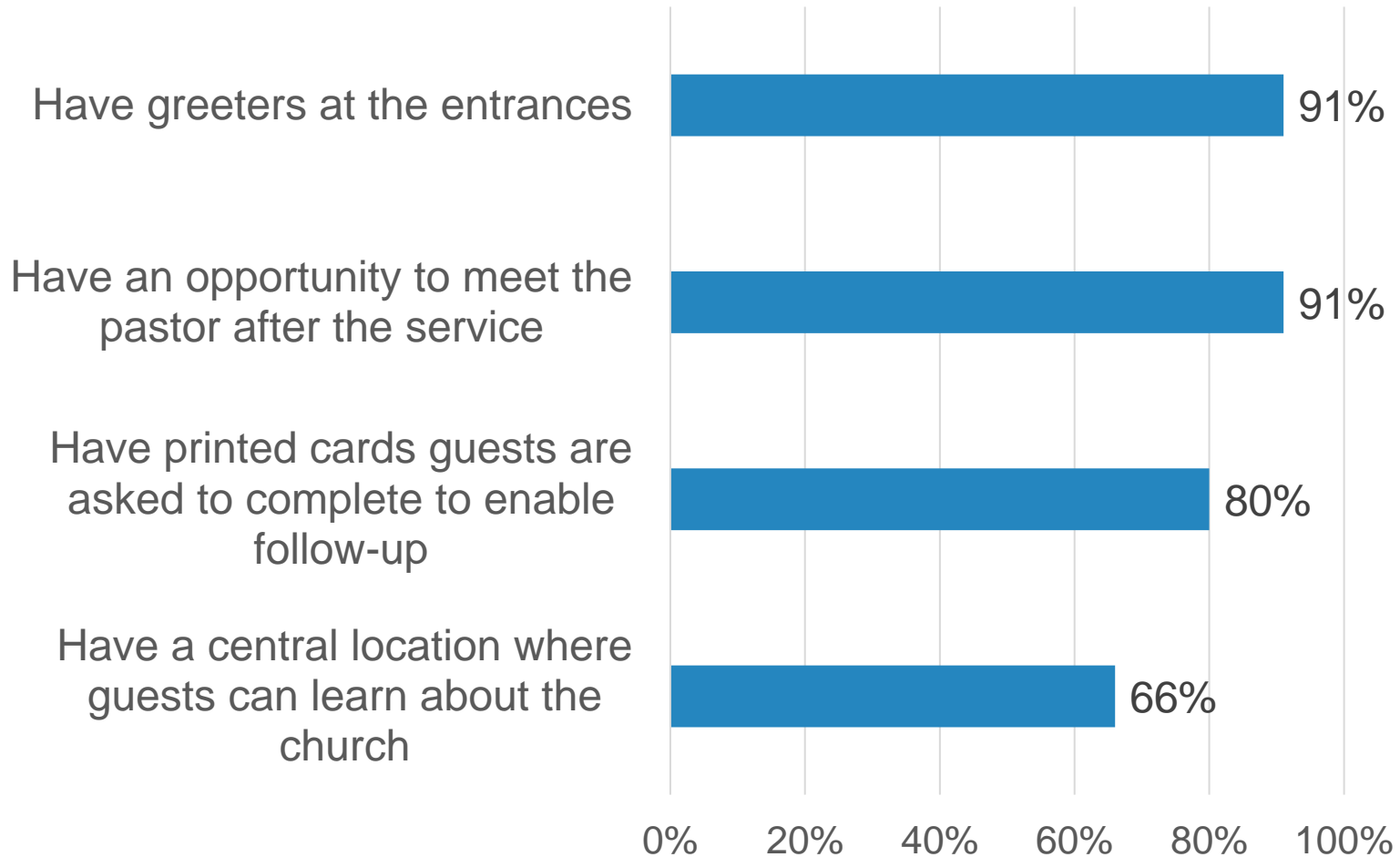
Lifeway research

# Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted August 8 – September 3, 2024
- 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 1,003 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed  $\pm 3.3\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors conducted August 30 – September 18, 2017, using the same methodology

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

Among Protestant Pastors

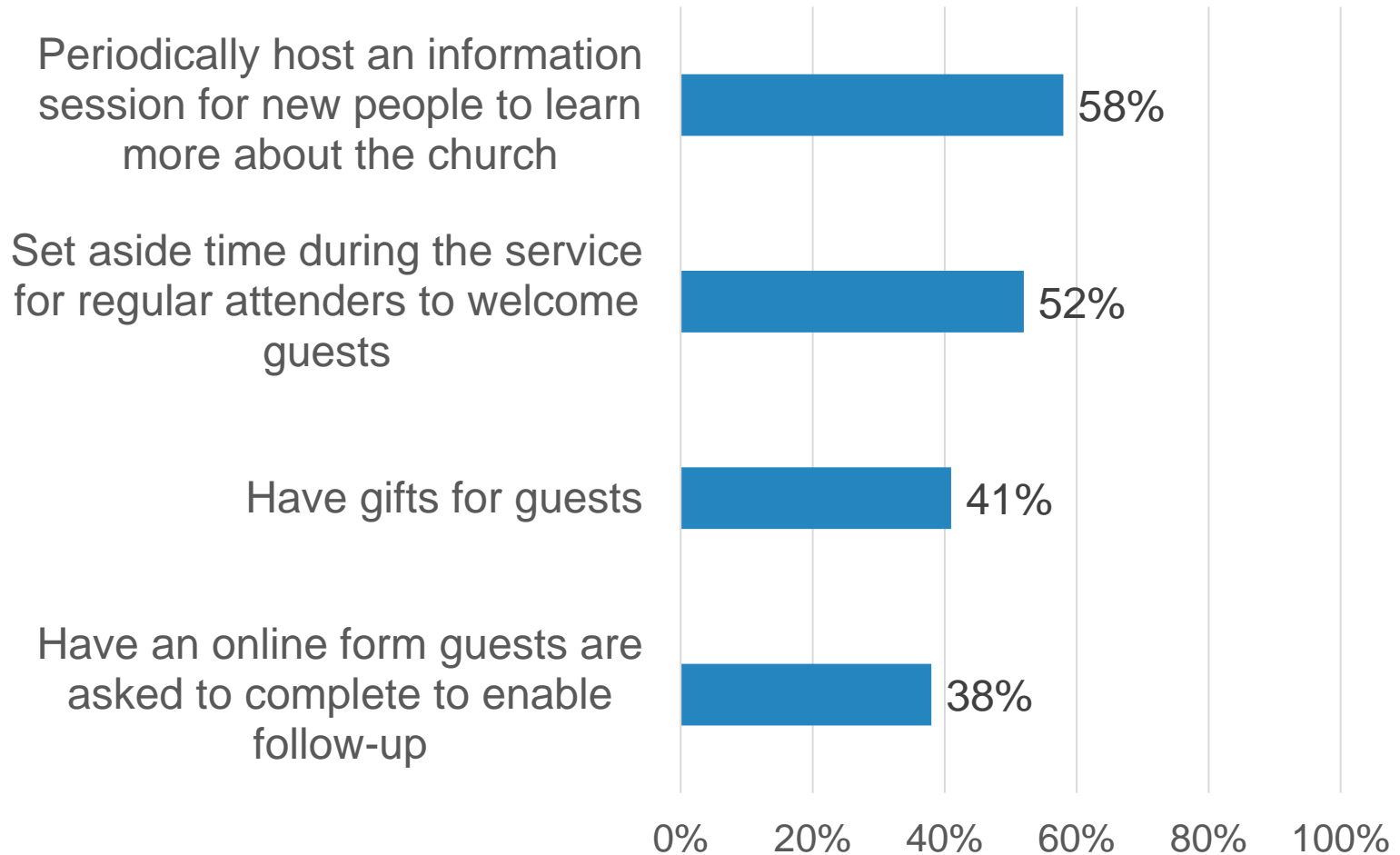


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Q: “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests? (Select all that apply)” n=1,003

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Among Protestant Pastors

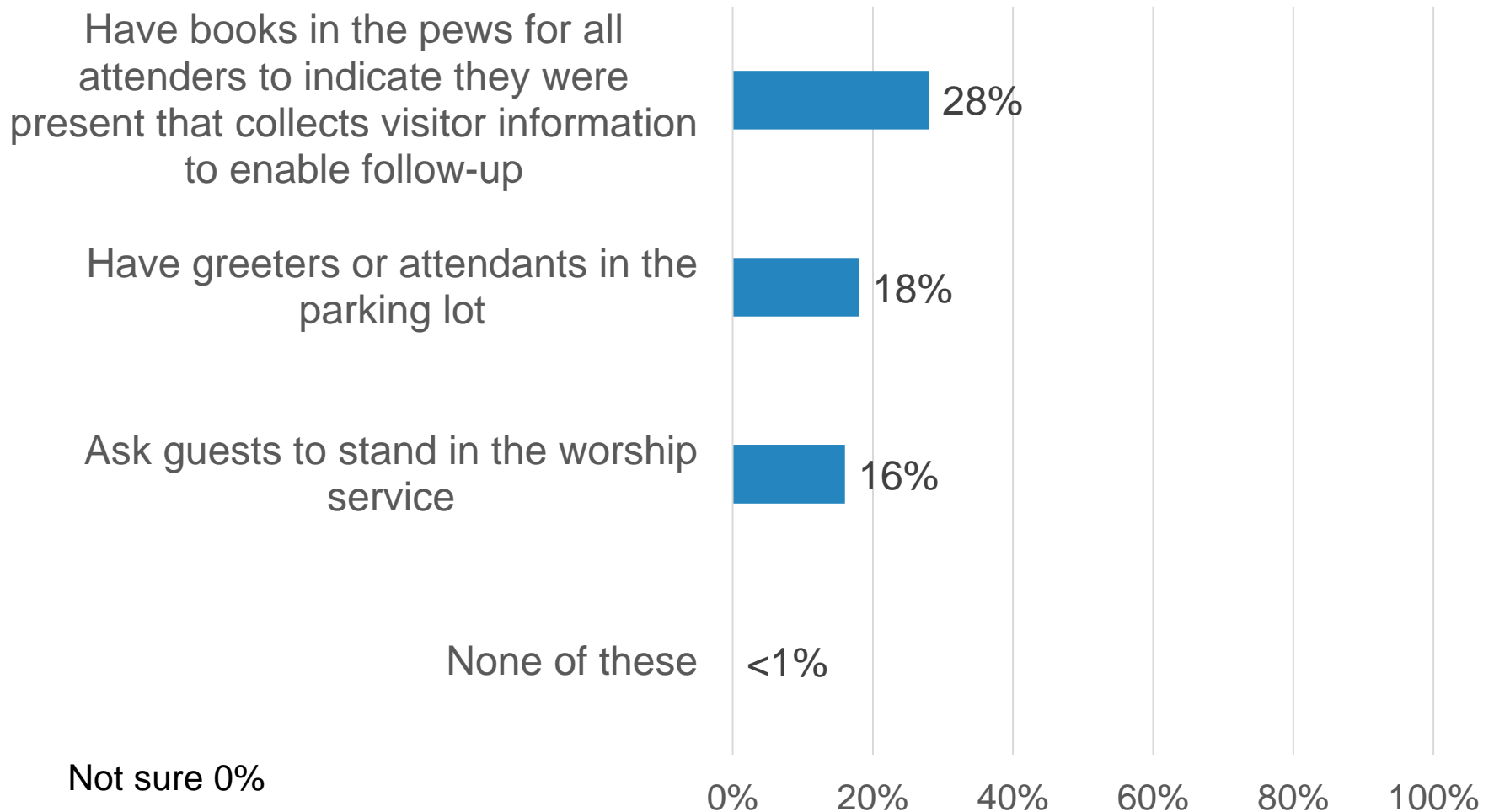


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Among Protestant Pastors



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Q: “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests? (Select all that apply)” n=1,003

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Have gifts for guests (specify type of gift)

Among Protestant Church Providing Gifts to Guests

21% Mug/cup

21% Pen

14% Gift bag/Gift basket

10% Food/drink item (e.g. candy, coffee, cookies, bread, etc.)

8% Book

8% Informative/welcome packet about church

6% Bible

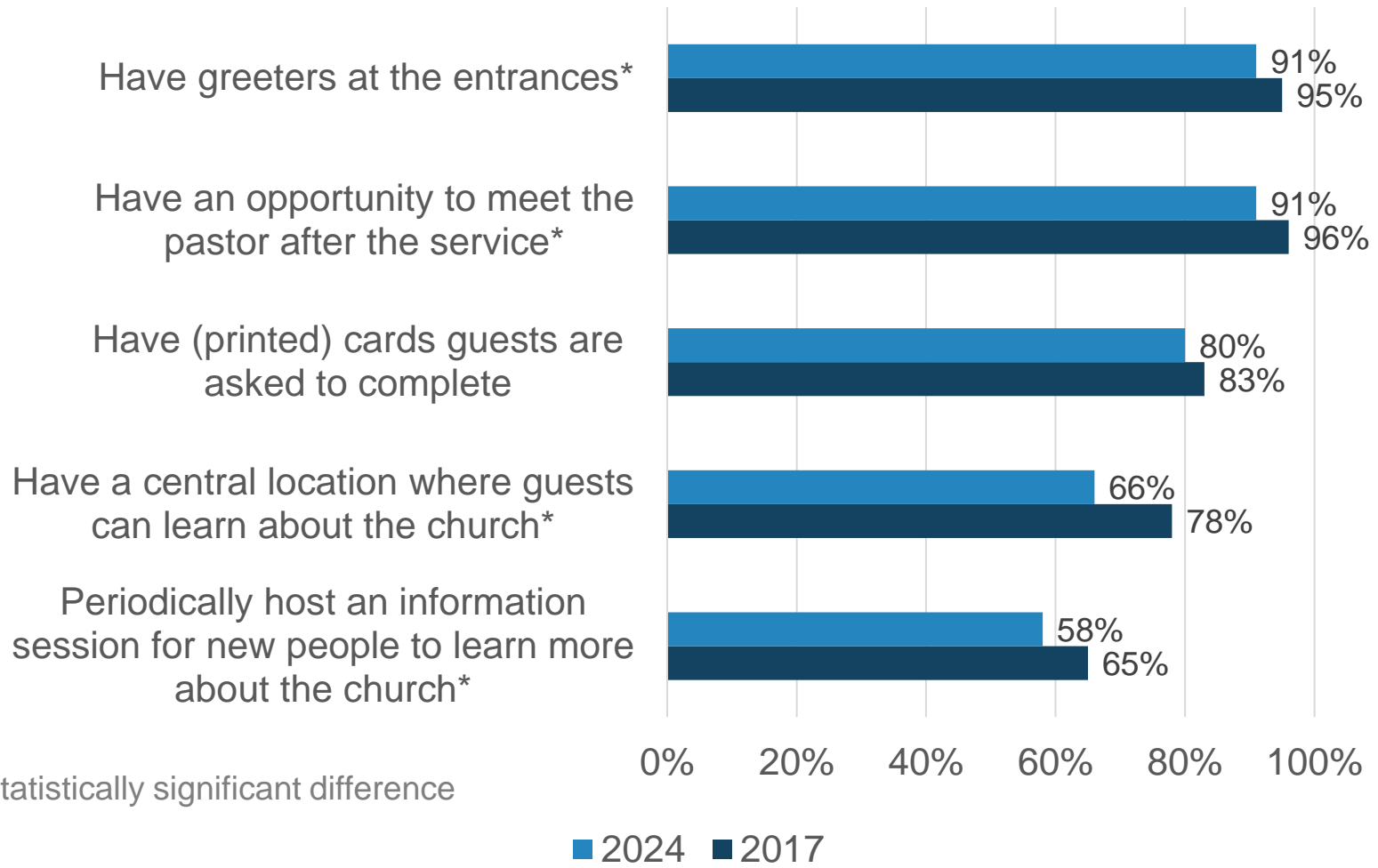
5% Gift card

2% Bookmark

6% Other gifts

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?” 2024 v. 2017

Among Protestant Pastors

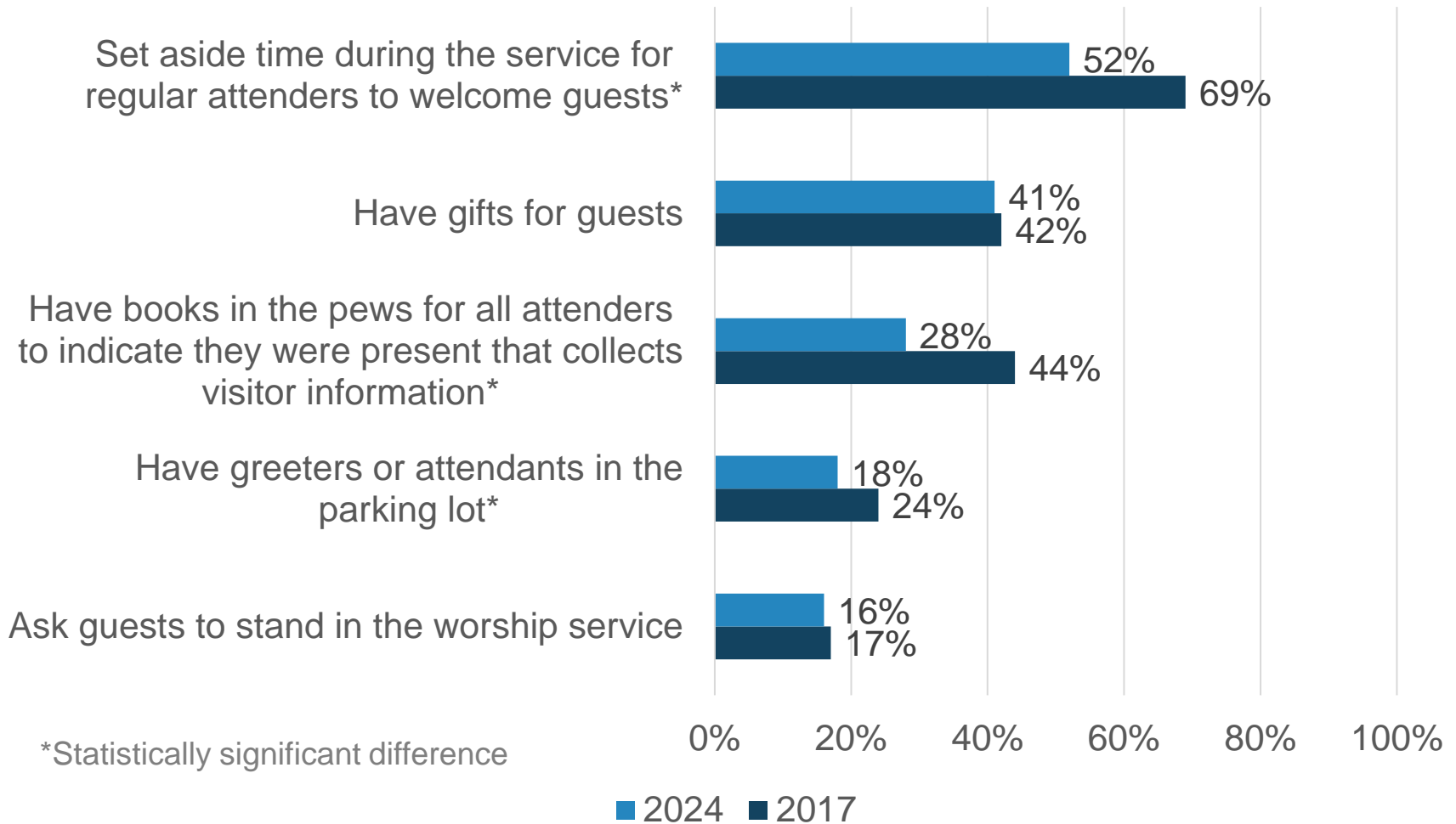


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Among Protestant Pastors



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Q: “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests? (Select all that apply)” n=1,003



# 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		Other Ethnicities	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	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

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Have greeters at the entrances

- White pastors are the most likely to select (92%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (92%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (85%)
- Baptists (93%) and Methodists (95%) are more likely to select than Presbyterian/Reformed (86%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (80%)

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Have greeters or attendants in the parking lot

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (28%) are more likely to select than white pastors (16%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (23%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s Degree (16%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (21% v. 13%)
- Pastors in the South (29%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (14%) and Midwest (12%)
- Lutherans are the least likely to select (6%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (52%)

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Have a central location where guests can learn about the church

- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (68%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (58%)
- Christian/Church of Christ (76%) are more likely to select than Baptists (62%) and Presbyterian/Reformed (62%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (90%) followed by those with attendance of 100-249 (75%), 50-99 (66%), and 0-49 (51%)

# **“Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”**

## **Have an opportunity to meet the pastor after the service**

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (96% v. 90%)
- Pastors in the South (93%) and Midwest (92%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (86%)

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Ask guests to stand in the worship service

- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to select (24%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (57%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (22%) or a Doctoral Degree (20%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s Degree (12%)
- Pastors in the South (20%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (14%)
- Baptists (20%), Methodists (19%), Pentecostals (23%), Presbyterian/Reformed (16%), and Christian/Church of Christ (18%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (8%)



# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Set aside time during the service for regular attenders to welcome guests

- Pastors age 45-54 (56%) and 65+ (55%) are more likely to select than pastors age 18-44 (44%)
- African American pastors are the most likely to select (82%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (58%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s Degree (49%)
- Pastors in the West (63%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (43%) and Midwest (49%)
- Methodists (65%) and Pentecostals (69%) are more likely to select than Baptists (49%), Lutherans (38%), Presbyterian/Reformed (51%), and Christian/Church of Christ (38%)

## **“Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”**

### **Have printed cards guests are asked to complete to enable follow-up**

- Pastors in the Midwest are the least likely to select (74%)
- Baptists (87%) and Pentecostals (88%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (68%), Presbyterian/Reformed (73%), and Non-denominational (77%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 are the least likely to select (70%)

## **“Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”**

### **Have online form guests are asked to complete to enable follow-up**

- Pastors age 18-44 (41%) and 45-54 (43%) are more likely to select than pastors age 55-64 (32%)
- Pastors in the South (47%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (32%) and Midwest (35%)
- Pentecostals (59%) are more likely to select than Baptists (41%), Lutherans (28%), Methodists (39%), Presbyterian/Reformed (26%), and Non-denominational (44%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (74%) followed by those with attendance of 100-249 (48%), 50-99 (34%), and 0-49 (25%)

## **“Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”**

### **Have books in the pews for all attenders to indicate they were present that collects visitor information to enable follow-up**

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (37% v. 26%)
- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (43%) are more likely to select than white pastors (26%)
- Lutherans (41%) and Methodists (39%) are more likely to select than Baptists (26%), Pentecostals (25%), Presbyterian/Reformed (26%), Christian/Church of Christ (23%), and Non-denominational (22%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (35%) and 250+ (35%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 0-49 (24%)

## **“Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”**

### **Periodically host an information session for new people to learn more about the church**

- Female pastors are more likely to select than males (65% v. 57%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (64%) or a Doctoral Degree (62%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (48%)
- Lutherans (68%) are more likely to select than Baptists (53%) and Methodists (53%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (85%) followed by those with attendance of 100-249 (70%), 50-99 (57%), and 0-49 (43%)

# “Which, if any, of the following does your church do to welcome guests?”

## Have gifts for guests

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (56%) are more likely to select than white pastors (39%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (47%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s Degree (38%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (45% v. 36%)
- Pastors in the South (49%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (38%) and West (38%)
- Baptists (50%) and Pentecostals (54%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (27%), Methodists (38%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (28%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to select (62%) followed by those with attendance of 100-249 (49%), 50-99 (39%), and 0-49 (30%)

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