

The *Church-24* survey

Since 2020, our research team conducted two surveys on churchgoing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Covid-19 and Church-21 surveys](#) had thousands of responses from across different denominations including the Roman Catholic Church. The data showed how churchgoers reacted to a variety of issues such as the closure of church buildings, the advent of online worship, and the stress of ministering when everything had changed in an instant. Results were reported over many months in journals and the religious press, including the articles in *The Furrow*¹ and features in the *Irish Times*².

Now, in 2024, we seek to update our understanding of churchgoing: what it feels like and what it means to people. The *Church-24* survey has three main objectives:

1. To listen to churchgoers on a range of long-standing issues and questions, particularly as they are being brought to light in the synodal process.
2. To explore some new issues that face us now, or soon will, but which were not talked about so much a decade ago, such as climate change, artificial intelligence, assisted dying or safeguarding procedures.
3. The Covid pandemic is over... or is it? What's happened to you and your faith community since lockdowns ended?

As with the previous surveys, *Church-24* invites you to reflect on big questions. You are being asked for 15-20 minutes of your time to complete a survey that will enable you to give your perspective, share what you believe about some significant issues, and relate your experiences of church life since the pandemic. The researchers will analyze the data, produce academic peer-reviewed articles, and report those findings back through the project website (<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/the-church-24-survey>) and in the religious press.

This is a survey for clergy, lay ministers, and lay people of any denomination or none, and you don't have to be a regular churchgoer to take part. The survey is designed to respond to you as

¹ 2021. Byrne, G., Sweetman, B. Responses of Clergy and Laypeople to the Covid-19 crisis. *The Furrow*, March 2021, see www.thefurrow.ie

² 2020, Byrne, G., Sweetman, B. Coronavirus in church 2020 vision on the meaning of faith in our lives. *The Irish Times*, 23rd June 2020. Available at <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/coronavirus-in-church-2020-vision-on-the-meaning-of-faith-in-our-lives-1.4285471>
2021, Byrne, G., Sweetman, B. Faith and Covid: Most people want a return to old worship patterns. *The Irish Times*, 11th May 2021 Available at <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/faith-and-covid-majority-of-churchgoers-want-return-to-old-worship-patterns-1.4560661>

you complete it, offering you the questions that are most relevant to your initial answers about context, denomination and role. If you would like to take part, you can access the survey [here](#) or scan the QR code with your smartphone or tablet. The survey is most easily done on a computer or tablet, but it can be completed using a smartphone. If you need to pause halfway through you can return to survey using the link on the same device within a week and it will pick up where you left off.



Feel free to encourage others in your church and beyond to take the survey by sharing this link. The more people who take part from a wide range of churches the more useful the results will be.

The survey will run for several months, and we will give updates on progress from time to time on the survey webpage. Your help with this project is greatly appreciated.

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