

Appendix: Tables

This appendix contains four tables. Tables 1 and 2, “Continuity and Change in American Congregations,” facilitate comparisons over time, giving results for virtually all items asked in more than one NCS wave. Table 3, “2018–19 National Congregations Study Basic Findings,” gives results for almost every item on the Wave IV questionnaire and provides a simple overview of the 2018–19 data. Table 4, “Characteristics of Ministerial Staff, 2018-19,” provides information about the congregational labor force, taken as a whole.

Tables 1–3 contain two kinds of numbers: those from the congregations’ perspective and those from the attendees’ perspective. Both sets of numbers are meaningful, and they provide slightly different views of the average congregation. Look at the congregations’ perspective results if you want to know about the characteristics of the average congregation or the percent of congregations of a certain type. Look at the attendees’ perspective results if you want to know about the characteristics of the congregation attended by the average worship service attendee or the percent of persons in U.S. congregations of a certain type.

A contrived example helps clarify the difference between these two perspectives. Suppose that the country contains only two congregations, one with 1,000 regular attendees and the other with 100 regular attendees. Suppose further that the 1,000-person congregation supports a food pantry and the 100-person congregation does not. We can express this reality in one of two ways. We can say that 50% of the congregations support a food pantry (1/2), or we can say that 91% of people are in a congregation that supports a food pantry (1,000/1,100). Both of these are meaningful numbers. The first number views congregations from the perspective of the average congregation; the second views them from the perspective of the average attendee.

Here is another example using actual NCS data. You might be interested in the percent of *congregations* that are led by women. Table 1 and the congregations’ perspective column in Table 3 both show that 13.8% of congregations in 2018-19 were led by a woman. On the other hand, you might be interested in the percent of *people* who attend congregations that are led by women. Table 2 and the attendees’ perspective column in Table 3 both show that, in 2018-19, 8.1% of worshippers were in congregations led by a woman. This percentage is smaller than the percentage of congregations led by a female clergy person because the congregations led by women tend to be smaller.

The tables include many endnotes. While some of these notes provide clarification on item wording or other issues across surveys, most indicate the subset of congregations for which a given number is calculated. It is important to pay close attention to these notes because the correct interpretation of these statistics depends on which congregations are included in the calculation. For example, Table 3 shows that 38.9% of congregations participated in 2018–19 in lobbying or marching activities related to immigration. However, note 23 tells us that this is not 38.9% of all congregations, but 38.9% of *congregations that participated in any lobbying or marching*. Only 8% of all congregations lobbied or marched about immigration (38.9% of the 20.6% who lobbied or marched). Thus, instead of concluding that more than one-third of American congregations have recently marched or lobbied about immigration, we conclude that only 1 in 12 congregations did this in 2018-19. Interpreting this percentage correctly requires knowing the subset of congregations to which it applies.

Table 1

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

This table provides statistics for many items contained in more than one NCS wave. The "Trend" column indicates whether there is a statistically significant linear trend on that item between the first and most recent times the item was included in the NCS.¹ An upwardly sloping arrow (↗) indicates that there is a statistically significant positive trend for that item, a downwardly sloping arrow (↘) indicates that there is a statistically significant negative trend, and "ns" (meaning "not significant") indicates that there is no statistically significant linear trend on that item. The statistical significance of trends was assessed using means even when only medians are reported.² "NA" indicates that a statistical assessment of a trend reported as a median was not applicable because we assessed it on a separately reported mean. Sometimes a mean trend is statistically significant even when the medians are unchanged.

These tables are based on slightly updated versions of the 1998, 2006–07, and 2012 datasets, so these numbers may not exactly match values produced from previously available datasets. Means and medians refer to the average congregation.³ Percentages give the percentage of congregations with the stated characteristic. Sample sizes are 1,234 in 1998, 1,506 in 2006–07, 1,331 in 2012, and 1,262 in 2018–19.

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
AGE AND SIZE					
Median founding date	1938	1944	1954	1959	
Median congregation age (years)	60	62	58	59	ns
Number of people associated in any way with the congregation's religious life⁴					
Mean	414	396	404	460	ns
Median	150	150	135	130	NA
Number of people regularly participating in the congregation's religious life					
Mean	185	184	183	187	ns
Median	80	75	70	70	NA
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life					
Mean	120	124	120	118	ns
Median	50	50	50	50	NA
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life two years ago					
Mean	--	--	126	145	NA
Median	--	--	50	50	NA
Percent for whom the number of regularly participating adults in the last two years has:					
Increased	--	42.5	26.6	32.5	
Remained about the same	--	40.3	35.7	28.4	
Decreased	--	17.2	37.7	39.1	

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
RELIGIOUS TRADITION⁵					
Roman Catholic	7.3	6.0	5.5	6.1	ns
Predominantly white evangelical/ conservative Protestant	45.7	47.8	46.1	42.7	ns
Predominantly white moderate/liberal Protestant	26.3	19.7	20.4	20.9	ns
Black Protestant	15.8	23.4	21.4	21.3	ns
Non-Christian	4.9	3.1	6.7	9.0	↗
Percent with no denominational affiliation	18.1	20.4	23.5	18.0	ns
BUILDING AND FINANCE					
Percent owning their own building	87.6	89.7	84.6	84.2	ns
Percent meeting in a:					
Church, synagogue, temple, or mosque	87.3	92.7	88.9	89.3	ns
School	5.0	1.0	1.8	1.3	↘
Other kind of building	7.8	6.3	9.3	9.5	ns
Percent whose building is used by other groups⁶	50.1	--	--	52.1	ns
For those whose building is used by other groups, median number of outside groups using the building ⁷	3	--	--	4	↗
Of those whose building is used by other groups, percent with another congregation using their building for worship services ⁸	--	--	9.7	7.9	ns
Percent where other congregation is primarily recent immigrants to the U.S. ⁹	--	--	39.3	47.8	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with weekly worship services at more than one location¹⁰	--	--	3.4	10.6	
Percent with a formal written budget	72.8	75.3	76.4	75.9	ns
Median income in past year	\$60,000	\$96,000	\$95,000	\$105,000	
Median income from two years ago	--	--	\$100,000	\$100,000	ns
Median income from individuals in past year	\$55,000	\$85,000	\$84,000	\$100,000	
Median budget for past year	\$60,000	\$94,000	\$85,000	\$100,000	
Percent receiving income in the past year from sale or rent of building or property¹¹	24.0	21.3	22.3	34.9	
Median amount of income from rental or sale of building or property in past year ¹²	\$1,500	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	ns
Percent giving money to denomination in the past year	73.6	74.2	62.7	68.4	
Median amount given to denominations in past year ¹³	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,500	\$7,200	
Percent with an endowment, savings account, or reserve fund	59.8	57.3	60.5	66.5	ns
Median amount in endowment, savings, or reserve ¹⁴	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$33,000	\$50,000	

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
LEADERSHIP					
Percent with a head clergy person or leader	92.3	95.0	94.2	93.8	ns
Percent with full-time head clergy person or leader¹⁵	--	63.2	71.4	70.1	↗
Percent with female head clergy person or leader	10.6	7.9	11.4	13.8 ¹⁶	ns
Percent with head clergy person born in the United States	--	--	90.5	85.1	ns
Percent with head clergy person or leader of each race or ethnicity					
White	76.9	69.2	67.5	64.6	↘
Black	18.6	25.0	23.3	25.9	ns
Hispanic	1.8	1.9	5.7	5.2	↗
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.7	2.5	2.7	4.2	ns
Other	0.9	1.4	0.9	0.1	ns
Median number of years senior clergy person in current position	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	↗
Median age of senior clergy person	49	53	55	57	↗
Percent for whom head clergy person has highest education level of:					
Less than a bachelor's degree	28.1	--	28.4	23.7	ns
Bachelor's degree	19.8	--	22.9	20.9	ns
Graduate degree	52.2	--	48.7	55.4	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE



	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with head clergy person having following characteristics:					
Graduated from seminary or theological school	--	61.9	--	67.5	ns
Currently attends seminary or theological school	--	4.8	7.0	6.4	ns
Ordained to full clergy status	--	94.0	92.6	--	ns
Paid for work in congregation	--	80.7	86.3	81.3	ns
Also serves another congregation	--	13.6	16.3	18.3	ns
Also holds another job	--	37.0	34.3	35.0	ns
Was a regular participant in the congregation before becoming the head clergy person	--	23.3	--	26.9	ns
PAID STAFF					
Percent with the following characteristics:					
No paid staff ¹⁷	23.0	13.5	16.1	14.3	
No full-time staff	39.7	34.6	35.9	37.2	ns
One full-time staff person	34.5	36.0	39.7	36.2	ns
Two or more full-time staff people	25.9	29.4	24.5	26.6	ns
No full-time ministerial staff ¹⁸	--	36.8	37.6	39.7	ns
One full-time ministerial staff person	--	43.8	46.2	42.0	ns
Two or more full-time ministerial staff people	--	19.5	16.2	18.4	ns
No part-time staff	41.6	34.5	36.2	32.6	
One part-time staff person	17.3	18.4	18.3	18.9	ns

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	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Two or more part-time staff people	41.1	47.1	45.4	48.5	ns
No part-time ministerial staff	--	--	56.0	49.4	ns
One part-time ministerial staff person	--	--	29.2	29.7	ns
Two or more part-time ministerial staff people	--	--	14.8	20.9	
Number of full-time paid staff¹⁹					
Mean	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	ns
Median	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	NA
Number of full-time paid ministerial staff					
Mean	--	1.1	1.0	1.1	ns
Median	--	1.0	1.0	1.0	NA
Number of part-time paid staff					
Mean	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.5	ns
Median	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	NA
Number of part-time paid ministerial staff					
Mean	--	--	0.8	1.0	
Median	--	--	0.0	1.0	NA
Percent currently searching for a full-time staff person²⁰					
	--	10.8	--	9.7	ns
Percent for whom the number of full-time paid staff in past year has:					
Increased	--	6.8	5.3	4.7	ns
Stayed the same	--	86.9	90.9	90.6	ns
Decreased	--	6.3	3.8	4.7	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with youth minister²¹	--	55.6	54.9	--	ns
WORSHIP					
Percent with one service in typical week	26.6	28.5	38.1	38.3	↗
Percent with two or more services in typical week	72.8	71.4	61.9	60.5	↘
Percent reporting important differences between services on typical weekend²²	--	47.9	30.3	36.2	↘
Important differences consisted of:²³					
Level of formality	--	--	69.3	71.4	ns
Language(s) used	--	--	10.5	12.0	ns
Kind of music	--	--	46.3	54.9	ns
Percent participating in a joint worship service with another congregation	66.7	69.4	--	62.6	ns
Percent participating in a joint worship service with a congregation with a different racial or ethnic make-up	28.3	28.8	--	31.4	ns
Median length of most recent main service (minutes)	75	75	75	80	ns
Median length of most recent sermon (minutes)	25	30	30	30	ns
Median number of minutes of music at most recent main service	20	20	20	20	ns
Median number of socializing minutes before/after typical service	30	30	30	--	ns
Median attendance at most recent main service	70	65	60	60	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE










	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Median total attendance (adults and children) at all services during the past weekend	--	90	76	70	ns
Median number of regularly participating adults attending more than one service in past week²⁴	15	25	25	--	
Percent of most recent main services with each characteristic:					
Sermon or speech	95.3	95.3	96.5	96.2	ns
Speaker came down from the chancel during sermon	--	50.6	48.6	--	ns
Singing by congregation	96.8	97.2	96.4	96.3	ns
Singing by choir ²⁵	53.9	44.1	45.3	41.9	
Time to greet one another	78.4	80.7	81.4	79.3	ns
Congregants joining hands	--	34.0	40.3	--	ns
Leader wearing robe or special garments	--	32.1	30.2	38.7	ns
People saying "amen"	60.7	70.7	66.7	69.0	ns
Applause	54.6	61.3	65.3	58.5	ns
Adults jump, shout, or dance spontaneously	19.2	25.8	26.5	27.9	
Raise hands in praise	44.6	56.7	59.4	62.7	
Written order of service	72.0	67.8	62.2	66.0	
Visual projection equipment	11.9	26.5	35.3	46.0	
Projected song lyrics	--	--	31.5	42.1	
Organ used	53.0	--	42.0	46.8	
Drums used	19.9	32.5	34.3	40.8	
Guitar used	--	33.5	29.3	35.3	ns

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	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with the following in any worship in past year:					
Speaking in tongues ²⁶	24.0	27.0	30.0	29.4	ns
People told of opportunities for political activity	26.2	21.4	14.5	15.6	↘
People told of opportunities for volunteer activity	--	93.6	91.8	--	ns
Time for people other than leaders to testify	77.6	85.0	84.9	--	↗
Percent with Spanish or bilingual services	--	6.3	8.8	10.0	↗
DOCTRINE & CULTURE					
Percent encouraging use of NIV Bible rather than other translations²⁷	20.8	--	21.2	--	ns
Percent considering Bible to be literal and inerrant²⁸	76.2	82.6	83.7	82.3	↗
Percent saying their congregation would be considered politically:					
More on the conservative side	62.0	58.1	54.9	45.8	↘
Right in the middle	30.6	34.6	33.7	39.1	↗
More on the liberal side	7.4	7.4	11.5	15.1	↗
Percent saying their congregation would be considered theologically:					
More on the conservative side	59.8	62.8	62.8	54.1	ns
Right in the middle	29.9	29.5	25.0	33.9	ns
More on the liberal side	10.3	7.7	12.2	12.0	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
GROUPS & SPEAKERS					
Percent with a group or event in the past year focused on the following:					
Discussing politics	6.4	6.3	5.8	10.6	↗
Voter registration	8.3	17.8	11.1	22.9	↗
Getting out the vote during an election	--	22.8	19.8	26.5	ns
English as a second language	3.6	5.8	4.8	4.8	ns
Offering services for immigrants ²⁹	--	--	9.5	14.3	↗
Receiving/practicing gifts of the spirit	13.2	11.4	17.0	16.4	ns
Training new teachers	38.0	39.4	41.3	--	ns
Discussing/learning about another religion	20.3	25.2	25.9	24.7	ns
Discussing/learning about managing personal finances	21.9	--	30.6	32.6	↗
Discussing management of congregation's money	46.9	--	66.2	--	↗
Assessing community needs	36.9	48.4	56.7	54.0	↗
Support for people living with HIV or AIDS	--	--	7.5	13.9	↗
Helping people who are unemployed find or train for a job	--	--	34.9	26.6	↘
Support for people struggling with drug or alcohol abuse	--	--	37.6	42.8	ns
Support for people with mental illness	--	--	23.0	26.2	ns
Support for military veterans and their families	--	--	27.3	29.0	ns

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	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Volunteer/service project with people from another faith	--	34.8	51.5	48.2	↗
Strategic planning and future goals of congregation	--	82.4	86.1	--	ns
Exercising or promoting physical activity	--	--	29.1	36.2	↗
Traveling in U.S. to assist people in need	--	30.9	34.2	25.3	ns
Traveling abroad to assist people in need	--	25.2	27.3	27.5	ns
Discussing issues related to the environment	7.4	--	--	17.6	↗
Discussing issues related to race and race relations	16.3	--	--	28.8	↗
Percent with organized effort to help members of congregation	--	80.8	80.0	--	ns
Percent with organized effort to provide members with health-focused programs	--	22.0	28.1	--	↗
Percent having any visiting speakers in the past year	83.2	81.4	78.6	76.4	↘
Speaker was: ³⁰					
Elected government official	8.0	10.1	6.6	8.9	ns
Denominational representative	62.4	68.6	71.4	57.0	ns
Representative of social service organization	26.7	37.6	39.9	37.1	↗
Someone running for office	5.5	6.8	6.7	8.5	ns
Percent with members serving on denominational committees in past year	--	66.1	62.8	--	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES					
Percent distributing voter guides³¹	17.0	17.2	12.9	24.0	ns
Group met in past year to lobby an elected official	4.4	7.9	6.6	9.8	↗
Group met in past year to participate in demonstration or march	9.2	8.3	12.5	17.3	↗
Lobbying/marching was related to: ³²					
Immigration	--	--	13.0	38.9	↗
Abortion	--	--	33.3	28.0	ns
Poverty	--	--	37.4	--	NA
Poverty or economic inequality	--	--	--	48.2	NA
SOCIAL SERVICES					
Percent who applied in past two years for a government grant	--	3.6	4.9	4.0	ns
Percent who have started a separate non-profit organization in past two years for human services or outreach ministries	--	6.1	8.9	7.2	ns
Percent participating in any social service programs in past year	--	80.8	83.1	79.6	ns
Number of projects or programs ³³					
Mean	--	--	5.7	5.0	ns
Median	--	--	3	3	NA
Median amount spent on social service programs in the past year	--	\$1,400	\$1,500	\$2,640	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with anyone on paid staff spending more than 25% of their time on congregation's social service projects	--	13.6	16.9	19.1	ns
Percent with outside funding support for social service programs	--	13.3	10.8	14.7	ns
Percent with outside funding support from local, state, or federal government	--	5.0	1.9	3.2	ns
SOCIAL COMPOSITION					
Median percent of regular adult participants:					
Who are female	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	ns
With a four-year college degree or higher education	15.4	20.0	25.0	30.4	↗
Over 60 years old	25.0	30.0	30.0	40.0	↗
Under 35 years old	25.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	↘
Who live more than a 30-minute drive from meeting place	5.0	5.0	5.0	--	ns
With household income under \$25,000/year	30.0	20.0	--	--	↘
With household income under \$35,000/year	--	--	30.0	20.0	↘
With household income higher than \$100,000/year	0.0	2.0	--	--	↗
With household income higher than \$140,000/year	--	--	1.0	5.0	↗
Living in households with two parents and at least one child	40.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	↘
Serving in leadership role in past year	33.3	30.0	28.6	30.0	↘

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE




	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with regular adult participant composition:					
At least 80% white and non-Hispanic	71.2	62.6	57.1	53.4	
At least 80% Black	17.0	23.8	21.2	21.6	ns
More than 0% Hispanic	33.3	35.7	37.6	51.0	
At least 80% Hispanic	1.4	2.2	6.0	5.0	
More than 0% Asian or Pacific Islander	18.2	22.6	23.9	31.2	
More than 0% American Indian	--	11.1	11.2	--	ns
More than 0% immigrated to the U.S. in past five years	17.9	20.4	18.4	27.7	
Number of regularly participating teenagers					
Mean	--	19.9	22.3	17.5	ns
Median	--	10.0	8.0	8.0	ns
MEMBERS & LAY LEADERS					
Percent allowing someone who drinks alcohol in moderation to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	71.7	--	84.7	
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	52.6	--	64.5	
Percent allowing an unmarried couple who live together to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	53.7	--	68.4	
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	27.6	--	39.8	
Percent allowing openly gay or lesbian couple in committed relationship to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	37.4	48.0	53.7	

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE



	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	17.8	26.5	29.8	
Percent allowing women to:					
Hold all volunteer leadership positions that men can hold	--	73.7	79.3	--	ns
Serve as full-fledged members of main governing body	--	84.0	86.4	88.8	ns
Teach by themselves a class with adult men in it	--	83.7	85.7	--	ns
Preach at a main worship service	--	65.3	67.8	71.8	ns
Be head clergyperson or primary religious leader	--	46.8	57.7	56.4	
GEOGRAPHY					
Percent in each region³⁴					
Northeast and Mid-Atlantic	12.7	12.9	12.1	13.1	ns
East North Central and West North Central	20.1	25.0	23.2	23.8	ns
South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central	48.8	47.7	50.5	46.4	ns
Mountain and Pacific	18.4	14.4	14.1	16.8	ns

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	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS					
Percent in census tracts with at least 30% of individuals below the poverty line	11.8	14.1	17.1	15.3	ns
Percent in census tracts with at least 5% Hispanics	25.4	28.2	50.2	59.6	↗
Percent in census tracts with at least 80% African-Americans	3.7	5.2	2.8	3.9	ns
Percent in predominantly urban census tracts	41.8	44.1	50.2	59.8	↗
Percent in predominantly rural census tracts	43.4	32.6	31.7	24.7	↘
OTHER					
Percent with an elementary or high school	6.1	4.7	5.6	3.7	↘
Percent with a website	17.1	44.3	55.7	71.6	↗
Percent with a Facebook page	--	--	40.1	72.5	↗
Percent affiliated with nationally recognized community organizing group, organization, or network	--	--	25.5	18.9	ns
Percent with a member publicly acknowledging HIV infection	--	4.4	7.3	--	ns

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

Notes

- 1 Trends were assessed by regressing each item on survey year. Ordinary least squares regression was used for continuous variables; logistic regression was used for binary variables. A statistically significant trend means that the coefficient associated with survey year was different from zero at least at the .05 alpha-level.
- 2 The value of the weighted median is the first observed value which is greater than 50% of the weighted data. Other methods for calculating the weighted median may yield slightly different results for some variables.
- 3 To get results that represent the average congregation, data are weighted to discount the fact that larger congregations are more likely to be included in the NCS sample. Weights also take into account other relevant characteristics of the survey. The weighting variable used for this table is called WT_ALL4_CONG_DUP in the publicly available dataset. For more information on weights, see the detailed documentation of NCS weights available at <https://sites.duke.edu/ncsweb/files/2020/10/WeightsDocument.pdf>.
- 4 One extreme outlying observation in 2012 has been removed from this and the following two size variables.
- 5 The largest denominations in the predominantly white moderate/liberal category are the United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Unitarian Universalist Association. The largest denominations in the predominantly white evangelical/conservative category are the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, Churches of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, Baptist General Conference, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed Church, Freewill Baptist, Church of God (Anderson), and Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The Black Protestant category includes all predominantly Black Protestant churches, whatever their denominational affiliation. The largest denominations in this category are the National Baptist Convention, USA, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of God in Christ, Missionary Baptist, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Predominantly white Protestant congregations that are unaffiliated with any denomination are included in the conservative/evangelical category unless we have good reason to include them elsewhere. Congregations are placed within a religious tradition even if they do not have a formal denominational affiliation, so the categories in the Religious Tradition section sum to more than 100% when including those with no denominational affiliation.
- 6 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building.
- 7 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building and report other groups using their building.
- 8 Calculated only for those congregations that owned their own building. In 2018-19, this question was only asked of congregations that also indicated other groups used their building.
- 9 Calculated only for those congregations that reported another congregation used their building for worship services.
- 10 The 2018-19 NCS included two different indicators of being a multisite congregation. The first measure (called MULTISITE_1 in the cumulative dataset) is comparable to the question in the 2012 NCS and codes congregations as multisite if they report having multiple locations. The second measure (called MULTISITE_2 in the cumulative dataset) is only available in the 2018-19 NCS. MULTISITE_2 addresses likely over-reporting of multisite status by only including congregations that confirm in a follow-up question that not all of their religious services take place on the same campus. In order to make comparisons between years, the values shown here are from MULTISITE_1. Note that the proportion of congregations that are multisite here is likely an over-estimate. See Table 3 for the percentage of multisite congregations produced by MULTISITE_2.
- 11 In 1998 and 2006, this question asked about both rental and sale income, but in 2012 and 2018-19 it asked only about rental income.
- 12 Calculated only for those congregations that earned rental or sale income from property in past year.
- 13 Calculated only for those congregations that gave any money to their denominations.
- 14 Calculated only for those congregations with an endowment, savings, or reserve account.

TABLE 1. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

- 15 This and all following head clergy person characteristics are calculated only for those congregations that have a head clergy person. Details about co-leaders were gathered for the first time in 2018-19. In congregations with co-leaders, and with the exception of gender, the 2018-19 statistics about leader characteristics reflect the characteristics of the first leader reported. See the next note for details about clergy gender.
- 16 Details about co-leaders were gathered for the first time in 2018-19. In 2018-19, a congregation with co-leaders is considered to have a female leader if any of its co-leaders is female. That means that the reported 2018-19 percentage of congregations led by women (13.8%) is not exactly comparable to the percentages in earlier NCS waves, which did not consider co-leaders. But the difference is very small. If only the gender of the first co-leader mentioned in 2018-19 is considered, 13.5% of congregations in 2018-19 were led by women.
- 17 Although respondents were asked in all waves how many people work in the congregation as paid staff, in 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-19 the question was prefaced with "including you" (if the respondent was an employee), and interviewers were trained in 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-2019 to probe to make sure that informants included themselves. We believe this difference is behind the initial decrease in the percent of congregations with no paid staff.
- 18 Ministerial staff members are those primarily engaged in religious work, that is, not secretaries or custodians.
- 19 One congregation with extreme values on staff variables in 2012 was removed from this analysis and other calculations of mean and median staff members per congregation.
- 20 In 2006-07, the question asked if the congregation was searching for a full-time staff person of any sort. In 2018-19, the question asked if the congregation was searching for a full-time ministerial staff person.
- 21 Congregations were asked if they have a youth minister or other leader specially designated to coordinate activities for youth. The question did not specify that the youth minister had to be paid.
- 22 Calculated only for those congregations that report two or more services in a typical week.
- 23 The following items related to important differences in worship services were only calculated for those congregations that report important differences in their worship services.
- 24 Calculated only for those congregations that report two or more services in a typical week.
- 25 Choirs often take the summer off, and some NCS waves included more summer interviews than others. The decline in choir singing at the main worship service remains statistically significant even when July and August NCS interviews are ignored. The choir-singing percentages when summer months are excluded are 54.4, 49.7, 42.8, and 46.2 for NCS Waves I thru IV, respectively.
- 26 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 27 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 28 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 29 In 2018-19, but not in 2012, this question included "English language instruction" as an example of a service for immigrants.
- 30 Calculated only for those congregations that hosted a visiting speaker in the past year.
- 31 In 1998, respondents were asked if their congregation had ever distributed voter guides. In 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-19, respondents were asked if their congregation had distributed voter guides within the past two years.
- 32 Calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials or demonstrated/marched.
- 33 This item and the following social service values are calculated only for those congregations that participated in social service programs or projects in the past year.
- 34 Northeast states are ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT. Mid-Atlantic states are NY, NJ, PA. East North Central states are OH, IN, IL, MI, WI. West North Central states are MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS. South Atlantic states are DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL. East South Central states are KY, TN, AL, MS. West South Central states are AR, LA, OK, TX. Mountain states are MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV. Pacific states are WA, OR, CA, AK, HI.

Table 2

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

This table provides statistics for many items contained in more than one NCS wave. The "Trend" column indicates whether there is a statistically significant linear trend on that item between the first and most recent times the item was included in the NCS.¹ An upwardly sloping arrow (↗) indicates that there is a statistically significant positive trend for that item, a downwardly sloping arrow (↘) indicates that there is a statistically significant negative trend, and "ns" (meaning "not significant") indicates that there is no statistically significant linear trend on that item. The statistical significance of trends was assessed using means even when only medians are reported.² "NA" indicates that a statistical assessment of a trend reported as a median was not applicable because we assessed it on a separately reported mean. Sometimes a mean trend is statistically significant even when the medians are unchanged.

These tables are based on slightly updated versions of the 1998, 2006–07, and 2012 datasets, so these numbers may not exactly match values produced from previously available datasets. Means and medians refer to the congregation attended by the average religious service attendee.³ Percentages give the percentage of attendees in congregations with the stated characteristic. Sample sizes are 1,234 in 1998, 1,506 in 2006-07, 1,331 in 2012, and 1,262 in 2018-19.

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE





	1998	2006–07	2012	2018–19	TREND
AGE AND SIZE					
Median founding date	1924	1940	1945	1953	
Median congregation age (years)	74	66	67	65	ns
Number of people associated in any way with the congregation's religious life⁴					
Mean	2558	2399	3278	3036	
Median	750	700	800	650	NA
Number of people regularly participating in the congregation's religious life					
Mean	1183	1167	1540	1373	
Median	400	400	400	363	NA
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life					
Mean	779	794	1068	948	
Median	275	280	310	250	NA
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life two years ago					
Mean	--	--	1024	1028	ns
Median	--	--	300	250	NA
Percent for whom the number of regularly participating adults in the last two years has:					
Increased	--	49.2	36.5	34.9	
Remained about the same	--	36.2	34.0	32.3	ns
Decreased	--	14.6	29.6	32.8	

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
RELIGIOUS TRADITION⁵					
Roman Catholic	28.8	27.9	27.7	26.7	ns
Predominantly white evangelical/ conservative Protestant	33.4	37.3	37.6	37.2	ns
Predominantly white moderate/liberal Protestant	24.0	20.0	17.2	18.2	↘
Black Protestant	10.5	11.4	12.9	12.3	ns
Non-Christian	3.4	3.3	4.7	5.7	↗
Percent with no denominational affiliation	10.4	14.0	15.0	14.6	↗
BUILDING AND FINANCE					
Percent owning their own building	94.9	94.9	92.6	90.9	ns
Percent meeting in a:					
Church, synagogue, temple, or mosque	92.9	97.3	95.7	94.3	ns
School	3.3	0.8	1.0	1.0	↘
Other kind of building	3.8	2.0	3.3	4.7	ns
Percent whose building is used by other groups⁶	71.0	--	--	66.4	↘
For those whose building is used by other groups, median number of outside groups using the building ⁷	5	--	--	6	↗
Of those whose building is used by other groups, percent with another congregation using their building for worship services ⁸	--	--	8.3	9.3	ns
Percent where other congregation is primarily recent immigrants to the U.S. ⁹	--	--	51.9	47.2	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with weekly worship services at more than one location¹⁰	--	--	10.3	17.0	
Percent with a formal written budget	87.7	88.8	90.8	90.2	
Median income in past year	\$260,000	\$380,000	\$450,000	\$470,000	
Median income from two years ago	--	--	\$450,000	\$460,000	ns
Median income from individuals in past year	\$230,000	\$330,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	
Median budget for past year	\$250,000	\$350,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	
Percent receiving income in the past year from sale or rent of building or property¹¹	38.2	30.6	35.2	42.6	
Median amount of income from rental or sale of building or property in past year ¹²	\$4,845	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$9,000	ns
Percent giving money to denomination in the past year	82.8	80.2	74.8	77.5	
Median amount given to denominations in past year ¹³	\$20,700	\$25,000	\$32,000	\$36,000	
Percent with an endowment, savings account, or reserve fund	73.9	73.3	77.2	75.9	ns
Median amount in endowment, savings, or reserve ¹⁴	\$70,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
LEADERSHIP					
Percent with a head clergy person or leader	95.5	97.0	95.7	95.4	ns
Percent with full-time head clergy person or leader ¹⁵	--	87.0	89.9	88.3	ns
Percent with female head clergy person or leader	5.5	4.6	6.2	8.1 ¹⁶	↗
Percent with head clergy person born in the United States	--	--	88.0	84.4	↘
Percent with head clergy person or leader of each race or ethnicity:					
White	83.9	79.5	75.5	72.1	↘
Black	11.9	13.0	14.6	16.1	↗
Hispanic	2.1	3.3	6.0	6.9	↗
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.4	3.1	3.5	4.7	↗
Other	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.2	↘
Median number of years senior clergy person in current position	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	↗
Median age of senior clergy person	51	54	55	55	↗
Percent for whom head clergy person has highest education level of:					
Less than a bachelor's degree	10.8	--	13.0	11.6	ns
Bachelor's degree	15.0	--	15.4	15.2	ns
Graduate degree	74.1	--	71.6	73.2	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with head clergy person having following characteristics:					
Graduated from seminary or theological school	--	83.7	--	79.8	
Currently attends seminary or theological school	--	2.2	7.6	2.9	ns
Ordained to full clergy status	--	97.1	96.9	--	ns
Paid for work in congregation	--	92.5	94.3	91.6	ns
Also serves another congregation	--	11.2	11.1	10.4	ns
Also holds another job	--	17.4	17.7	18.8	ns
Was a regular participant in the congregation before becoming the head clergy person	--	19.0	--	23.5	
PAID STAFF					
Percent with the following characteristics:					
No paid staff ¹⁷	7.1	5.2	5.2	5.9	ns
No full-time staff	14.8	11.5	11.9	13.3	ns
One full-time staff person	20.4	22.6	21.5	21.9	ns
Two or more full-time staff people	64.8	65.9	66.6	64.8	ns
No full-time ministerial staff ¹⁸	--	12.6	13.0	14.6	ns
One full-time ministerial staff person	--	32.9	31.9	31.8	ns
Two or more full-time ministerial staff people	--	54.5	55.1	53.5	ns
No part-time staff	17.0	16.7	15.4	15.6	ns
One part-time staff person	10.0	9.7	10.1	10.3	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Two or more part-time staff people	73.0	73.6	74.5	74.1	ns
No part-time ministerial staff	--	--	43.9	38.6	↘
One part-time ministerial staff person	--	--	23.0	22.1	ns
Two or more part-time ministerial staff people	--	--	33.1	39.3	↗
Number of full-time paid staff¹⁹					
Mean	7.7	9.1	9.4	9.7	↗
Median	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	NA
Number of full-time paid ministerial staff					
Mean	--	3.6	4.4	4.4	ns
Median	--	2.0	2.0	2.0	NA
Number of part-time paid staff					
Mean	5.9	5.8	7.4	7.5	↗
Median	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	NA
Number of part-time paid ministerial staff					
Mean	--	--	2.1	2.5	ns
Median	--	--	1.0	1.0	NA
Percent currently searching for a full-time staff person²⁰					
	--	16.6	--	14.1	ns
Percent for whom the number of full-time paid staff in past year has:					
Increased	--	17.5	14.2	15.4	ns
Stayed the same	--	74.5	76.1	76.2	ns
Decreased	--	7.9	9.7	8.4	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with youth minister²¹	--	77.2	76.6	--	ns
WORSHIP					
Percent with one service in typical week	14.3	14.5	17.8	19.2	↗
Percent with two or more services in typical week	85.6	85.3	82.2	80.6	↘
Percent reporting important differences between services on typical weekend²²	--	50.1	42.3	39.2	↗
Important differences consisted of: ²³					
Level of formality	--	--	57.4	59.7	ns
Language(s) used	--	--	35.2	30.1	ns
Kind of music	--	--	71.9	68.9	ns
Percent participating in a joint worship service with another congregation	66.5	56.3	--	54.1	↘
Percent participating in a joint worship service with a congregation with a different racial or ethnic make-up	30.8	25.8	--	31.2	ns
Median length of most recent main service (minutes)	70	70	70	70	ns
Median length of most recent sermon (minutes)	20	20	22	23	↗
Median number of minutes of music at most recent main service	20	20	20	20	ns
Median number of socializing minutes before/after typical service	30	30	30	--	ns
Median attendance at most recent main service	230	200	225	190	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Median total attendance (adults and children) at all services during the past weekend	--	350	400	300	ns
Median number of regularly participating adults attending more than one service in past week²⁴	50	45	50	--	ns
Percent of most recent main services with each characteristic:					
Sermon or speech	97.2	98.0	98.4	97.5	ns
Speaker came down from the chancel during sermon	--	43.4	42.3	--	ns
Singing by congregation	98.1	97.1	98.4	97.2	ns
Singing by choir ²⁵	72.3	58.0	57.2	53.8	↘
Time to greet one another	84.6	86.7	88.2	81.4	ns
Congregants joining hands	--	38.0	43.2	--	↗
Leader wearing robe or special garments	--	52.2	46.3	49.2	ns
People saying "amen"	52.8	60.4	59.5	64.7	↗
Applause	58.7	59.1	62.2	62.0	ns
Adults jump, shout, or dance spontaneously	13.1	17.3	22.1	20.9	↗
Raise hands in praise	48.1	55.2	59.0	62.3	↗
Written order of service	84.2	75.4	69.1	68.3	↘
Visual projection equipment	14.8	32.4	45.0	51.7	↗
Projected song lyrics	--	--	42.1	49.0	↗
Organ	70.1	--	56.0	52.4	↘
Drums	25.1	36.4	45.5	49.1	↗
Guitar	--	43.7	49.2	50.3	↗

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with the following in any worship in past year:					
Speaking in tongues ²⁶	19.5	20.6	24.7	22.0	ns
People told of opportunities for political activity	36.8	29.5	24.3	19.7	↘
People told of opportunities for volunteer activity	--	96.2	95.3	--	ns
Time for people other than leaders to testify	72.1	78.7	74.4	--	ns
Percent with Spanish or bilingual services	--	16.3	19.4	20.5	↗
DOCTRINE AND CULTURE					
Percent encouraging use of NIV Bible rather than other translations²⁷	21.9	--	15.8	--	↘
Percent considering Bible to be literal and inerrant²⁸	63.0	70.7	71.8	75.7	↗
Percent saying their congregation would be considered politically:					
More on the conservative side	55.2	54.1	52.2	44.8	↘
Right in the middle	37.0	38.7	37.8	41.5	ns
More on the liberal side	7.8	7.2	10.0	13.8	↗
Percent saying their congregation would be considered theologically:					
More on the conservative side	52.7	57.8	59.0	53.4	ns
Right in the middle	37.6	33.4	28.8	35.2	ns
More on the liberal side	9.8	8.8	12.2	11.4	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
GROUPS AND SPEAKERS					
Percent with a group or event in the past year focused on the following:					
Discussing politics	12.5	15.5	13.2	14.0	ns
Voter registration	12.4	27.3	23.4	27.0	↗
Getting out the vote during an election	--	25.0	26.4	27.7	ns
English as a second language	9.0	14.2	15.5	--	↗
Offering services for immigrants ²⁹	--	--	22.9	27.3	↗
Receiving/practicing gifts of the spirit	19.9	16.1	19.6	19.7	ns
Training new teachers	67.6	65.1	69.1	--	ns
Discussing/learning about another religion	29.8	37.4	37.8	30.2	ns
Discussing/learning about managing personal finances	33.1	--	47.7	45.2	↗
Discussing management of congregation's money	55.6	--	72.2	--	↗
Assessing community needs	48.1	57.1	67.8	63.2	↗
Support for people living with HIV or AIDS	--	--	12.0	16.9	↗
Helping people who are unemployed find or train for a job	--	--	51.0	32.0	↘
Support for people struggling with drug or alcohol abuse	--	--	52.1	58.3	↗
Support for people with mental illness	--	--	31.4	37.1	↗
Support for military veterans and their families	--	--	40.2	37.8	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Volunteer/service project with people from another faith	--	51.9	65.5	59.6	↗
Strategic planning and future goals of congregation	--	89.0	93.8	--	↗
Exercising or promoting physical activity	--	--	47.7	48.1	ns
Traveling in U.S. to assist people in need	--	49.8	44.7	42.0	↘
Traveling abroad to assist people in need	--	42.2	41.8	42.0	ns
Discussing issues related to the environment	13.6	--	--	26.0	↗
Discussing issues related to race and race relations	22.2	--	--	36.0	↗
Percent with organized effort to help members of congregation	--	89.1	85.4	--	↘
Percent with organized effort to provide members with health-focused programs	--	41.3	42.8	--	ns
Percent having any visiting speakers in the past year	89.6	86.2	86.7	82.0	↘
Speaker was: ³⁰					
Elected government official	13.8	14.3	12.9	12.3	ns
Denominational representative	69.2	74.6	70.9	64.1	↘
Representative of social service organization	44.0	54.0	54.9	46.8	ns
Someone running for office	7.1	7.5	6.9	7.2	ns
Percent with members serving on denominational committees in past year	--	77.9	75.4	--	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES					
Percent distributing voter guides³¹	26.5	25.6	24.2	25.0	ns
Group met in past year to lobby an elected official	12.0	14.5	15.7	15.2	↗
Group met in past year to participate in demonstration or march	21.5	20.2	24.8	27.2	↗
Lobbying/marching was related to:³²					
Immigration	--	--	24.1	35.4	↗
Abortion	--	--	63.4	52.0	↘
Poverty	--	--	42.0	--	NA
Poverty or economic inequality	--	--	--	41.7	NA
SOCIAL SERVICES					
Percent who applied in past two years for a government grant	--	9.5	9.2	7.1	ns
Percent who have started a separate non-profit organization in past two years for human services or outreach ministries	--	10.1	12.3	9.3	ns
Percent participating in any social service programs in past year	--	89.3	91.7	88.5	ns
Number of programs or projects³³					
Mean	--	--	14.3	10.6	ns
Median	--	--	4	4	NA
Median amount spent on social service programs in the past year	--	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with anyone on paid staff spending more than 25% of their time on congregation's social service projects	--	20.8	23.5	22.5	ns
Percent with outside funding support for social service programs	--	16.5	14.3	17.8	ns
Percent with outside funding support from local, state, or federal government	--	5.8	3.9	4.8	ns
SOCIAL COMPOSITION					
Median percent of regular adult participants:					
Who are female	60.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	ns
With a four-year college degree or higher education	30.0	40.0	40.0	50.0	↗
Over 60 years old	25.0	30.0	30.0	36.0	↗
Under 35 years old	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	↘
Who live more than a 30-minute drive from meeting place	5.0	5.0	5.0	--	ns
With household income under \$25,000/year	20.0	10.0	--	--	↘
With household income under \$35,000/year	--	--	20.0	20.0	↘
With household income higher than \$100,000/year	5.0	10.0	--	--	↗
With household income higher than \$140,000/year	--	--	10.0	10.0	↗
Living in households with two parents and at least one child	50.0	50.0	45.0	40.0	↘
Serving in leadership role in past year	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent with regular adult participant composition:					
At least 80% white and non-Hispanic	71.6	65.6	57.4	52.5	
At least 80% Black	12.1	12.0	13.6	13.2	ns
More than 0% Hispanic	57.0	64.0	65.4	73.7	
At least 80% Hispanic	1.5	4.0	7.7	7.1	
More than 0% Asian or Pacific Islander	41.0	49.7	48.8	55.0	
More than 0% American Indian	--	21.0	15.8	--	
More than 0% immigrated to the U.S. in past five years	39.4	50.7	48.1	53.0	
Number of regularly participating teenagers					
Mean	--	100	144	112	ns
Median	--	30	35	30	NA
MEMBERS AND LAY LEADERS					
Percent allowing someone who drinks alcohol in moderation to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	84.9	--	90.9	
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	70.6	--	77.2	
Percent allowing an unmarried couple who live together to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	64.8	--	73.9	
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	31.0	--	39.6	

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE


	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
Percent allowing openly gay or lesbian couple in committed relationship to:					
Hold full-fledged membership	--	48.8	51.1	59.1	
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	--	21.9	27.0	29.4	
Percent allowing women to:					
Hold all volunteer leadership positions that men can hold	--	79.6	82.0	--	ns
Serve as full-fledged members of main governing body	--	86.1	87.8	90.7	
Teach by themselves a class with adult men in it	--	87.8	89.7	--	ns
Preach at a main worship service	--	56.7	53.6	59.1	ns
Be head clergy person or primary religious leader	--	39.3	42.3	45.8	
GEOGRAPHY					
Percent in each region³⁴					
Northeast and Mid-Atlantic	19.5	15.4	12.8	12.9	
East North Central and West North Central	24.3	24.4	26.0	24.6	ns
South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central	38.5	38.7	42.2	42.2	
Mountain and Pacific	17.7	21.5	19.1	20.4	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE







	1998	2006-07	2012	2018-19	TREND
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS					
Percent in census tracts with at least 30% of individuals below the poverty line	10.1	10.4	14.4	15.2	
Percent in census tracts with at least 5% Hispanics	29.2	39.6	55.8	64.0	
Percent in census tracts with at least 80% African-Americans	5.0	4.0	3.6	3.8	ns
Percent in predominantly urban census tracts	60.9	66.8	73.1	76.9	
Percent in predominantly rural census tracts	23.3	17.8	14.7	13.1	
OTHER					
Percent with an elementary or high school	23.4	20.9	23.5	18.7	ns
Percent with a website	28.7	74.3	83.0	87.4	
Percent with a Facebook page	--	--	55.9	83.3	
Percent with member publicly acknowledging HIV infection	--	9.4	11.6	--	ns
Percent affiliated with nationally recognized community organizing group, organization, or network.	--	--	33.4	24.8	ns

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

Notes

- 1 Trends were assessed by regressing each item on survey year. Ordinary least squares regression was used for continuous variables; logistic regression was used for binary variables. A statistically significant trend means that the coefficient associated with survey year was different from zero at least at the .05 alpha-level.
- 2 The value of the weighted median is the first observed value which is greater than 50% of the weighted data. Other methods for calculating the weighted median may yield slightly different results for some variables.
- 3 To get results that represent the average attendee, data are weighted to preserve the fact that larger congregations are more likely to be included in the NCS sample. Weights also take into account other relevant characteristics of the survey. The weighting variable used for this table is called WT_ALL4_ATTENDEE in the publicly available dataset. For more information on weights, see the detailed documentation of NCS weights available at <https://sites.duke.edu/ncsweb/files/2020/10/WeightsDocument.pdf>.
- 4 One extreme outlying observation in 2012 has been removed from this and the following two size variables.
- 5 The largest denominations in the predominantly white moderate/liberal category are the United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Unitarian Universalist Association. The largest denominations in the predominantly white evangelical/conservative category are the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, Churches of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, Baptist General Conference, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed Church, Freewill Baptist, Church of God (Anderson), and Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The Black Protestant category includes all predominantly Black Protestant churches, whatever their denominational affiliation. The largest denominations in this category are the National Baptist Convention, USA, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of God in Christ, Missionary Baptist, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Predominantly white Protestant congregations that are unaffiliated with any denomination are included in the conservative/evangelical category unless we have good reason to include them elsewhere. Congregations are placed within a religious tradition even if they do not have a formal denominational affiliation, so the categories in the Religious Tradition section sum to more than 100% when including those with no denominational affiliation.
- 6 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building.
- 7 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building and report other groups using their building.
- 8 Calculated only for those congregations that owned their own building. In 2018-19, this question was only asked of congregations that also indicated other groups used their building.
- 9 Calculated only for those congregations that reported another congregation used their building for worship services.
- 10 The 2018-19 NCS included two different indicators of being a multisite congregation. The first measure (called MULTISITE_1 in the cumulative dataset) is comparable to the question in the 2012 NCS and codes congregations as multisite if they report having multiple locations. The second measure (called MULTISITE_2 in the cumulative dataset) is only available in the 2018-19 NCS. MULTISITE_2 addresses likely over-reporting of multisite status by only including congregations that confirm in a follow-up question that not all of their religious services take place on the same campus. In order to make comparisons between years, the values shown here are from MULTISITE_1. Note that the proportion of congregations that are multisite here is likely an over-estimate. See Table 3 for the percentage of multisite congregations produced by MULTISITE_2.
- 11 In 1998 and 2006, this question asked about both rental and sale income, but in 2012 and 2018-19 it asked only about rental income.
- 12 Calculated only for those congregations that earned rental or sale income from property in past year.
- 13 Calculated only for those congregations that gave any money to their denominations.
- 14 Calculated only for those congregations with an endowment, savings, or reserve account.

TABLE 2. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS: ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE

- 15 This and all following head clergy person characteristics are calculated only for those congregations that have a head clergy person. Details about co-leaders were gathered for the first time in 2018-19. In congregations with co-leaders, and with the exception of gender, the 2018-19 statistics about leader characteristics reflect the characteristics of the first leader reported. See the next note for details about clergy gender.
- 16 Details about co-leaders were gathered for the first time in 2018-19. In 2018-19, a congregation with co-leaders is considered to have a female leader if any of its co-leaders is female. That means that the reported 2018-19 percentage of attendees in congregations led by women (8.1%) is not exactly comparable to the percentages in earlier NCS waves, which did not consider co-leaders. But the difference is very small. If only the gender of the first co-leader mentioned in 2018-19 is considered, 7.4% of attendees in 2018-19 were in congregations led by women.
- 17 Although respondents were asked in all waves how many people work in the congregation as paid staff, in 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-19 the question was prefaced with "including you" (if the respondent was an employee), and interviewers were trained in 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-19 to probe to make sure that informants included themselves. We believe this difference is behind the initial decrease in the percent of congregations with no paid staff.
- 18 Ministerial staff members are those primarily engaged in religious work, that is, not secretaries or custodians.
- 19 One congregation with extreme values on staff variables in 2012 was removed from this analysis and other calculations of mean and median staff members per congregation.
- 20 In 2006-07, the question asked if the congregation was searching for a full-time staff person of any sort. In 2018-19, the question asked if the congregation was searching for a full-time ministerial staff person.
- 21 Congregations were asked if they have a youth minister or other leader specially designated to coordinate activities for youth. The question did not specify that the youth minister had to be paid.
- 22 Calculated only for those congregations that report two or more services in a typical week.
- 23 The following items related to important differences in worship services were only calculated for those congregations that report important differences in their worship services.
- 24 Calculated only for those congregations that report two or more services in a typical week.
- 25 Choirs often take the summer off, and some NCS waves included more summer interviews than others. The decline in choir singing at the main worship service remains statistically significant even when July and August NCS interviews are ignored. The choir-singing percentages when summer months are excluded are 72.3, 58.0, 57.2, and 53.8 for NCS Waves I thru IV, respectively.
- 26 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 27 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 28 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 29 In 2018-19, but not in 2012, this question included "English language instruction" as an example of a service for immigrants.
- 30 Calculated only for those congregations that hosted a visiting speaker in the past year.
- 31 In 1998, respondents were asked if their congregation had ever distributed voter guides. In 2006-07, 2012, and 2018-19, respondents were asked if their congregation had distributed voter guides within the past two years.
- 32 Calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials or demonstrated/marched.
- 33 This item and the following social service values are calculated only for those congregations that participated in social service programs or projects in the past year.
- 34 Northeast states are ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT. Mid-Atlantic states are NY, NJ, PA. East North Central states are OH, IN, IL, MI, WI. West North Central states are MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS. South Atlantic states are DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL. East South Central states are KY, TN, AL, MS. West South Central states are AR, LA, OK, TX. Mountain states are MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV. Pacific states are WA, OR, CA, AK, HI.

Table 3

2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

This table provides statistics for almost all items contained in the 2018-19 NCS (Wave IV). Values for each variable are presented from two different perspectives. In the "Congregations' Perspective" column, means and medians refer to the average congregation, and percentages refer to the percentage of congregations with the stated characteristic. In the "Attendees' Perspective" column, means and medians refer to the congregation attended by the average religious service attendee, and percentages give the percentage of attendees in congregations with the stated characteristic. The 2018-19 NCS contains data from 1,262 congregations.

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
AGE AND SIZE		
Median founding date	1959	1953
Median congregation age (years)	59	65
Number of people associated in any way with the congregation's religious life		
Mean	460	3036
Median	130	650
Number of people regularly participating in the congregation's religious life		
Mean	187	1373
Median	70	363
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life		
Mean	118	948
Median	50	250
Number of adults regularly participating in the congregation's religious life two years ago		
Mean	145	1028
Median	50	250
Percentage for whom the number of regularly participating adults has:		
Increased	32.5	34.9
Remained the same	28.4	32.3
Decreased	39.1	32.8

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
RELIGIOUS TRADITION		
Percent with no denominational affiliation	18.0	14.6
Percent associated with each denomination or tradition:¹		
Roman Catholic	6.1	26.7
Baptist conventions/denominations	20.4	16.0
Methodist denominations	12.3	8.9
Lutheran/Episcopal denominations	6.6	6.7
Pentecostal	13.3	8.2
Presbyterian/Reformed	6.8	5.8
Other Christian	25.5	22.0
Jewish	3.2	2.2
Muslim	0.5	0.9
Buddhist	3.1	0.8
Hindu	0.7	0.7
Other non-Christian	1.4	1.0
Percent belonging to each broad religious group:²		
Roman Catholic	6.1	26.7
Predominantly white evangelical/ conservative Protestant	42.7	37.2
Predominantly white moderate/ liberal Protestant	20.9	18.2

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Black Protestant	21.3	12.3
Non-Christian	9.0	5.7
BUILDING AND FINANCE		
Percent owning their building	84.2	90.9
Median year building was built ³	1961	1962
Percent meeting in a:		
Church, synagogue, temple, or mosque	89.3	94.3
School	1.3	1.0
Storefront	3.1	1.4
Other kind of building	6.3	3.3
Percent whose building is used by other groups⁴	52.1	66.4
For those whose building is used by other groups, median number of outside groups using the building ⁵	4	6
Of those whose building is used by other groups, percent with another congregation using their building for worship services ⁶	15.2	14.0
Percent where other congregation is primarily recent immigrants to the U.S. ⁷	47.8	47.2
Percent with worship services at more than one location⁸	6.3	11.4
Median number of locations ⁹	2.0	3.0
Percent who have the same sermon for different locations	15.7	36.9

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent who have the same music for different locations	29.6	27.5
Percent with a formal written budget	75.9	90.2
Median income in past year	\$105,000	\$470,000
Median income from two years ago	\$100,000	\$460,000
Median income from individuals in past year	\$100,000	\$400,000
Median budget for the past year	\$100,000	\$450,000
Percent receiving income in the past year from rental of building or property	34.9	42.6
Median income from rental of building or property in past fiscal year ¹⁰	\$6,000	\$9,000
Percent giving money to denomination in the past year	68.4	77.5
Median amount given to denomination in past year ¹¹	\$7,200	\$36,000
Percent with an endowment, savings account, or reserve fund	66.5	75.9
Median amount in endowment, savings, or reserve ¹²	\$50,000	\$200,000

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
LEADERSHIP		
Percent with a head clergy person or leader	93.8	95.4
Percent with coleaders	2.8	2.3
Percent with no leaders	0.9	0.4
Percent with full-time head clergy person or leader ¹³	70.1	88.3
Percent with female head clergy person or leader ¹⁴	13.8	8.1
Percent with head clergy person or leader of each race or ethnicity:		
White	64.6	72.1
Black	25.9	16.1
Hispanic	5.2	6.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.2	4.7
Other	0.1	0.2
Percent with head clergy person born in U.S.	85.1	84.4
Percent with a head clergy person who is married	82.4	67.8
Median number of years head clergy person in current position	6.0	6.0
Median age of head clergy person	57	55
Percent for whom head clergy person has highest education level of:		
Less than a bachelor's degree	23.7	11.6

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Bachelor's degree	20.9	15.2
Graduate degree	55.4	73.2
Percent with a head clergy person having the following characteristics:		
Graduated from seminary or theological school	67.5	79.8
Currently attends seminary or theological school	6.4	2.9
Paid for work in congregation	81.3	91.6
Also serves another congregation	18.3	10.4
Also holds another job	35.0	18.8
Was a regular participant in the congregation before becoming the head clergy person	26.9	23.5
PAID STAFF		
Percent with the following characteristics:		
No paid staff	14.3	5.9
No full-time staff	37.2	13.3
One full-time staff person	36.2	21.9
Two or more full-time staff people	26.6	64.8
No full-time ministerial staff ¹⁵	39.7	14.6
One full-time ministerial staff person	42.0	31.8
Two or more full-time ministerial staff people	18.4	53.5

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
No part-time staff	32.6	15.6
One part-time staff person	18.9	10.3
Two or more part-time staff people	48.5	74.1
No part-time ministerial staff	49.4	38.6
One part-time ministerial staff person	29.7	22.1
Two or more part-time ministerial staff people	20.9	39.3
Number of full-time paid staff		
Mean	1.8	9.7
Median	1.0	3.0
Number of full-time paid ministerial staff		
Mean	1.1	4.4
Median	1.0	2.0
Number of part-time paid staff		
Mean	2.5	7.5
Median	1.0	4.0
Number of part-time paid ministerial staff		
Mean	1.0	2.5
Median	1.0	1.0
Percent currently searching for a full-time ministerial staff person	9.7	14.1

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent for whom the number of full-time paid staff in the past year has:		
Increased	4.7	15.4
Stayed the same	90.6	76.2
Decreased	4.7	8.4
WORSHIP		
Percent with one service in typical week	38.3	19.2
Percent with two or more services in a typical week	60.5	80.6
Percent reporting important differences between services in a typical weekend ¹⁶	36.2	39.2
Important differences consisted of: ¹⁷		
Level of formality	71.4	59.7
Languages used during service	12.0	30.1
Kind of music during service	54.9	68.9
Percent with a worship service on days other than Friday, Saturday, or Sunday	70.6	70.8
Median number of people who attend a weekday service without also attending on the weekend. ¹⁸	10	15
Percent participating in a joint worship service with another congregation	62.6	54.1
Percent participating in a joint worship service with a congregation with a different racial or ethnic make-up	31.4	31.2

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Median length of most recent main service (minutes)	80	70
Median length of most recent sermon (minutes)	30	23
Median number of minutes of music at most recent service	20	20
Median attendance at most recent main service	60	190
Median total attendance (adults and children) at all services during the past weekend	70	300
Percent of most recent main services with each characteristic:		
Sermon or speech	96.2	97.5
Singing by congregation	96.3	97.2
Singing by choir ¹⁹	41.9	53.8
Time to greet one another	79.3	81.4
Leader wearing robe or special garments	38.7	49.2
People saying "amen"	69.0	64.7
Applause	58.5	62.0
Adults jumping, shouting, or dancing spontaneously	27.9	20.9
Raising hands in praise	62.7	62.3
Written order of service	66.0	68.3
Song lyrics projected on wall or screen	42.1	49.0
Organ	46.8	52.4

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Drums	40.8	49.1
Guitar	35.3	50.3
Percent with the following at any worship in the past year:		
Speaking in tongues ²⁰	29.4	22.0
People told of opportunities for political activity	15.6	19.7
Time for people other than leaders to share joys, thoughts, or concerns	64.4	40.8
DOCTRINE AND CULTURE		
Percent considering the Bible to be literal and inerrant²¹	82.3	75.7
Percent teaching that God gives financial wealth and good health to those with enough faith²²	25.0	15.3
Percent saying their congregation would be considered politically:		
Extremely conservative	11.0	7.8
Moderately conservative	29.0	32.2
Slightly conservative	5.5	4.5
Right in the middle	39.4	41.7
Slightly liberal	1.1	1.6
Moderately liberal	9.4	9.7
Extremely liberal	1.3	2.6

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent saying their congregation would be considered <i>theologically</i>:		
Extremely conservative	19.0	13.9
Moderately conservative	30.9	34.2
Slightly conservative	3.8	4.9
Right in the middle	34.2	35.5
Slightly liberal	1.8	2.7
Moderately liberal	5.4	5.4
Extremely liberal	4.9	3.4
GROUPS AND SPEAKERS		
Percent with a group or event in the past year focused on the following:		
Discussing politics	10.6	14.0
Voter registration	22.9	27.0
Getting out the vote during an election	26.5	27.7
Offering services for immigrants	14.3	27.3
Receiving/practicing gifts of the spirit	16.4	19.7
Discussing/learning about another religion	24.7	30.2
Discussing/learning about managing personal finances	32.6	45.2
Assessing community needs	54.0	63.2

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Participating in a volunteer activity or service project with people from another faith	48.2	59.6
Travelling in U.S. to assist people in need	25.3	42.0
Travelling abroad to assist people in need	27.5	42.0
Supporting military veterans and their families	29.0	37.8
Exercising or promoting physical activity	36.2	48.1
Helping people who are unemployed find or train for a job	26.6	32.0
Support for people living with HIV or AIDS	13.9	16.9
Support for people struggling with drug or alcohol abuse	42.8	58.3
Support for people with mental illness	26.2	37.1
Support for recently divorced people	23.5	39.3
Organizing or participating in a blood drive	18.6	37.9
Discussing issues related to race and race relations	28.8	36.0
Discussing issues related to race and the police	18.8	21.5
Discussing issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity	19.4	25.3
Learning about living wills, advanced medical directives, or other end-of-life-issues	20.3	32.8
Workshop or event for religious leaders not part of the congregation	30.6	41.3

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Discussing scientific issues or the relationship between science and religion	14.6	25.4
Discussing issues related to the environment	17.6	26.0
Percent having any visiting speakers in the past year	76.4	82.0
Speaker was: ²³		
Elected government official	8.9	12.3
Denominational representative	57.0	64.1
Representative of social service organization	37.1	46.8
Someone running for office	8.5	7.2
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES		
Percent distributing voter guides within the past 2 years	24.0	25.0
Percent with a group in the past year to lobby an elected official	9.8	15.2
Percent with a group in the past year to participate in a demonstration or march	17.3	27.2
Lobbying/marching was related to: ²⁴		
Poverty or economic inequality	48.2	41.7
Immigration	38.9	35.4
Percent of those lobbying/marching on immigration that supported immigrants/immigration ²⁵	96.8	99.0

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent of those lobbying/marching on immigration that encouraged stricter immigration enforcement	3.2	1.0
Abortion	28.0	52.0
Percent of those lobbying/marching on abortion that were pro-life ²⁶	83.8	96.6
Percent of those lobbying/marching on abortion that were pro-choice	16.2	3.4
Issues concerning LGBT people	18.8	14.1
Percent of those lobbying/marching on LGBT issues that supported more rights for LGBT people ²⁷	90.8	94.4
Percent of those lobbying/marching on LGBT issues that opposed more rights for LGBT people	9.2	5.6
Environmental issues	30.6	21.4
Percent of those lobbying/marching on environmental issues in favor of protecting the environment ²⁸	92.8	97.4
Percent of those lobbying/marching on environmental issues to oppose environmental regulations	7.2	2.6
Percent publicly supporting or opposing a candidate for office in the past two years	4.3	2.2
Percent who would have supported or opposed a candidate for office if doing so would not put the congregation's tax status at risk ²⁹	17.2	13.0
Percent declaring themselves to be sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants	4.1	3.5

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent who discussed becoming a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants ³⁰	9.0	11.3
SOCIAL SERVICES		
Percent who applied in past two years for a government grant	4.0	7.1
Percent who have started a separate non-profit in the last two years	7.2	9.3
Percent participating in any social service programs in the past year	79.6	88.5
Median number of social service programs ³¹	3	4
Median number of social service programs completely run by congregation	2	3
Percent with one of top four programs focused on:		
Victims of rape or domestic violence	1.5	2.5
Clothing, blankets, rummage sales	14.6	16.3
Disaster relief	5.5	6.5
Support for schools/non-religious education or training	15.5	18.8
Senior citizens	6.5	7.5
Feeding the hungry	48.1	57.3
Males or females in particular	7.0	11.1
Individuals' physical health needs	18.0	20.5
People who are homeless	14.9	23.6

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Home building, repair, maintenance	13.7	21.4
Habitat for Humanity projects	1.5	4.0
Immigrants, migrants, or refugees	2.4	5.4
Beneficiaries outside the U.S.	11.0	16.3
Job placement	1.7	2.6
Youth and children	32.0	36.9
People in legal trouble or their families	3.8	5.1
People struggling with substance abuse	2.9	3.4
St. Vincent de Paul	0.8	3.9
Percent with all of their social service projects involving collaboration	48.1	44.5
Percent collaborating on social service projects with: ³²		
Other congregations	65.7	70.8
A nonprofit service organization	69.6	80.1
An office or program of the same denomination or religious group	43.5	54.2
A public elementary, middle, or high school	33.9	43.8
A college or university	10.3	17.3
A business	22.8	31.7
A local, state, or federal government agency or program	29.1	33.4

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Median amount spent on social service programs in the past year	\$2,640	\$10,000
Percent with a paid staff person spending more than 25% of their time on social service projects	19.1	22.5
Percent with outside funding support for social service programs	14.7	17.8
Percent with outside funding support from local, state, or federal government	3.2	4.8
Percent sponsoring any refugees	6.6	8.5
Percent who discussed sponsoring any refugees ³³	7.2	10.3
Percent helping people respond to or recover from a natural disaster	58.2	71.4
Natural disaster help consisted of: ³⁴		
Raising or contributing money	82.0	90.6
Donating food, clothing, or furniture	57.4	53.7
Providing temporary shelter	7.2	9.3
Sending a team to a disaster area	27.1	33.6
HEALTH PROGRAMS		
Percent with any health-focused programs	33.2	42.9
Health-focused program involved:³⁵		
Blood pressure checks	74.5	75.7
Screening for any type of cancer	27.0	28.3

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Offering flu shots	23.7	34.2
Testing for diabetes or checking blood sugar levels	40.4	40.8
Testing for HIV or AIDS	8.9	11.1
Helping people get health insurance or Medicaid	29.6	25.7
Educating people about nutrition or healthy eating habits	69.6	65.6
TECHNOLOGY		
Percent with a website	71.6	87.4
Percent with a Facebook page	72.5	83.3
Percent live streaming their service	20.2	28.0
Percent recording the service for later listening or watching	49.7	57.2
Percent with recordings of their worship services available on their website	31.9	52.6
Percent with a system to allow people to make financial donations electronically	48.2	72.7
Percent that make or recommend apps for people to use on their phones or tablets	22.9	40.0
Percent encouraging smartphone use during worship services	33.0	32.7
Percent with smartphones used in the service to: ³⁶		
Read scripture	56.8	50.9

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Donate money to the congregation	15.0	23.7
Interact with social media	16.4	11.0
Take pictures, video, or sound recordings	29.4	16.0
Engage with the sermon or message	13.3	20.3
Engage or interact with the music	5.3	4.0
Main worship service included:		
Visual projection equipment	46.0	51.7
Watching video clips	18.2	25.2
Cameras to project images of speakers in the room	8.8	16.8
Percent with a head clergy person who uses the following to communicate with the congregation:		
Facebook	40.4	36.4
Social media accounts other than Facebook	17.8	19.5
Blog	12.2	12.3
Percent with a paid staff person spending at least 25% of their time managing social media	4.5	19.2
SOCIAL COMPOSITION		
Median percent of regular adult participants:		
Who are female	60.0	60.0
With at least a four-year college degree	30.4	50.0
Over 60 years old	40.0	36.0

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Under 35 years old	20.0	25.0
With annual household income under \$35,000	20.0	20.0
With annual household income higher than \$140,000	5.0	10.0
Living in households with two parents and at least one child	30.0	40.0
Serving in leadership role in past year	30.0	20.0
Percent with regular adult participant composition:		
At least 80% white and non-Hispanic	53.4	52.5
At least 80% Black	21.6	13.2
More than 0% Hispanic	51.0	73.7
At least 80% Hispanic	5.0	7.1
More than 0% Asian or Pacific Islander	31.2	55.0
More than 0% immigrated to the U.S. in past five years	27.7	53.0
No one ethnic group comprises 80% or more of the people	15.1	24.3
Number of regularly participating teenagers		
Mean	17.5	112
Median	8	30

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
Percent of people who only attend services without participating in other ways in the congregation's life		
Mean	20.9	27.1
Median	0.0	0.0
MEMBERS AND LAY LEADERS		
Percent allowing someone who drinks alcohol in moderation to:		
Hold full-fledged membership	84.7	90.9
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	64.5	77.2
Percent allowing an unmarried couple who live together to:		
Hold full-fledged membership	68.4	73.9
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	39.8	39.6
Percent allowing openly gay or lesbian couple in committed relationship to:		
Hold full-fledged membership	53.7	59.1
Hold any volunteer leadership positions open to other members	29.8	29.4
Percent allowing a same-sex wedding to take place in their building³⁷	15.8	12.7
Percent allowing women to:		
Serve as full-fledged members of main governing body	88.8	90.7
Preach at a main worship service	71.9	59.1
Be head clergy person or primary religious leader	56.4	45.8

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

	CONGREGATIONS' PERSPECTIVE	ATTENDEES' PERSPECTIVE
GEOGRAPHY		
Percent in each region:³⁸		
Northeast and Mid-Atlantic	13.1	12.9
East North Central and West North Central	23.8	24.6
South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central	46.4	42.2
Mountain and Pacific	16.8	20.4
NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS		
Percent in census tracts with at least 30% of individuals below the poverty line	15.3	15.2
Percent in census tracts with at least 5% Hispanics	59.6	64.0
Percent in census tracts with at least 80% African-Americans	3.9	3.8
Percent in predominantly urban census tracts	59.8	76.9
Percent in predominantly rural census tracts	24.7	13.1
OTHER		
Percent with an elementary or high school	3.7	18.7
Percent affiliated with nationally recognized community organizing group, organization, or network.	18.9	24.8
Percent with an organized effort, designated person, or committee to increase racial or ethnic diversity within the congregation	9.7	14.1

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

Notes

- 1 Congregations are placed within a religious tradition even if they do not have a formal denominational affiliation, so the numbers in this section sum to more than 100% when including those with no denominational affiliation.
- 2 The largest denominations in the predominantly white moderate/liberal category are the United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ, American Baptist Churches in the USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Unitarian Universalist Association. The largest denominations in the predominantly white evangelical/conservative category are the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witness, Seventh Day Adventists, Churches of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, Baptist General Conference, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed Church, Freewill Baptist, Church of God (Anderson), and Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The Black Protestant category includes all predominantly Black Protestant churches, whatever their denominational affiliation. The largest denominations in this category are the National Baptist Convention, USA, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of God in Christ, Missionary Baptist, National Baptist Convention of America, Progressive National Baptist Convention, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Predominantly white Protestant congregations that are unaffiliated with any denomination are included in the conservative/evangelical category unless we have good reason to include them elsewhere. Congregations are placed within a religious tradition even if they do not have a formal denominational affiliation, so the numbers in this section sum to more than 100% when including those with no denominational affiliation.
- 3 Calculated only for those congregations that own their building.
- 4 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building.
- 5 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building and report other groups using their building.
- 6 Calculated only for those congregations that own their own building and report other groups using their building.
- 7 Calculated only for those congregations whose buildings are used by another congregation for worship services.
- 8 The 2018-19 NCS included two different indicators of being a multisite congregation. The first measure (called MULTISITE_1 in the cumulative dataset) is comparable to the question in the 2012 NCS and codes congregations as multisite if they report having multiple locations. The second measure (called MULTISITE_2 in the cumulative dataset) is only available in the 2018-19 NCS. MULTISITE_2 addresses likely over-reporting of multisite status by only including congregations that confirm in a follow-up question that not all of their religious services take place on the same campus. The values shown here are from the stricter, and probably more accurate, MULTISITE_2. Note that these values are not directly comparable to multisite values from the 2012 NCS.
- 9 This and the following two items are calculated only for those congregations that have worship services at more than one location.
- 10 Calculated only for those congregations with income from the sale or rent of their building or property.
- 11 Calculated only for those congregations that gave any money to their denomination.
- 12 Calculated only for those congregations with an endowment, savings, or reserve account.
- 13 This and all following head clergyperson characteristics are calculated only for those congregations that have a head clergyperson. In congregations with co-leaders, the statistics about leader characteristics, with the exception of gender, reflect the characteristics of the first leader reported.
- 14 A congregation with co-leaders is considered to have a female leader if any of its co-leaders is female.
- 15 Ministerial staff members are those primarily engaged in religious work, that is, not secretaries or custodians.
- 16 Calculated only for those congregations that report two or more services in a typical week.
- 17 Calculated only for those congregations that report important differences between weekend services.

TABLE 3. 2018–19 NATIONAL CONGREGATIONS STUDY: BASIC FINDINGS

- 18 Calculated only for those congregations that reported having a worship service on days other than Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.
- 19 When July and August NCS interviews are ignored, these percentages are 46.2% from the congregations' perspective and 53.8% from the attendees' perspective.
- 20 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 21 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 22 Calculated only for Christian congregations.
- 23 Calculated only for those congregations that had a visiting speaker in the past year.
- 24 Calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials and/or demonstrated or marched.
- 25 This and the following item are calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials and/or demonstrated or marched on issues related to immigration.
- 26 This and the following item are calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials and/or demonstrated or marched on issues related to abortion.
- 27 This and the following item are calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials and/or demonstrated or marched on issues concerning gay, lesbian, or transgender people.
- 28 This and the following item are calculated only for those congregations that lobbied elected officials and/or demonstrated or marched on issues related to the environment.
- 29 Calculated only for those congregations that reported not publicly supporting or opposing a political candidate.
- 30 Calculated only for those congregations that had not declared themselves to be sanctuaries.
- 31 This item and the following social service variables are calculated only for those congregations that participated in social service programs and projects in the past year.
- 32 The following items on collaborations are calculated only for those congregations that participated in social service programs and projects in the past year.
- 33 Calculated only for those congregations that had not sponsored any refugees.
- 34 The following natural disaster relief items were calculated only for those congregations that reported helping in response to a natural disaster.
- 35 Calculated only for those congregations with health-focused programs.
- 36 The following items relating to smartphone use were only calculated for those congregations that reported encouraging participants to use smartphones during the service.
- 37 Calculated only for those congregations that own their building.
- 38 Northeast states are ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT. Mid-Atlantic states are NY, NJ, PA. East North Central states are OH, IN, IL, MI, WI. West North Central states are MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS. South Atlantic states are DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL. East South Central states are KY, TN, AL, MS. West South Central states are AR, LA, OK, TX. Mountain states are MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV. Pacific states are WA, OR, CA, AK, HI.

Table 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTERIAL STAFF, 2018-19

This table provides statistics concerning certain characteristics of clergy and others who do ministerial work in congregations. It gives the percentages of all relevant staff in the labor force with each characteristic. For example, if there were only two congregations, one with two male full-time assistant ministers and another with one female full-time assistant minister, this would mean that the full-time secondary ministerial labor force, taken as a whole, is two-thirds male.

We provide percentages for three categories of ministerial leaders. "Solo or Senior Leaders" refers to a congregation's primary leader, whether a solo leader or the senior leader of a multi-person staff. The "Solo or Senior Leader" percentages given here may differ slightly from analogous percentages in earlier tables because co-leaders are included in the denominators here. See Tables 1–3 for more information on the senior and solo leaders of congregations.

"Secondary Ministerial Staff" refers to clergy and other paid staff primarily engaged in the congregation's religious mission, but not including the congregation's senior leader. The NCS asked congregations to tell us about "ministerial or other religious staff, such as youth ministers, other pastors, pastoral counselors, directors of religious education, music ministers, and so on." The NCS did not specify how many hours constituted full- or part-time positions. Instead, we asked congregations to specify staff members as full-time or part-time as they saw fit. We assumed that solo or senior leaders would not specialize in any one area of congregational work, so we asked about areas of specialization only for the congregation's secondary ministerial staff.

TABLE 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTERIAL STAFF, 2018–19

	SOLO OR SENIOR LEADERS	FULL-TIME SECONDARY MINISTERIAL STAFF	PART-TIME SECONDARY MINISTERIAL STAFF
PERCENT OF EACH TYPE OF MINISTERIAL STAFF WITH THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS			
Race or ethnicity:			
White	64.4	71.5	69.7
Black	26.2	11.8	20.5
Hispanic	5.3	10.4	7.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.2	6.3	2.7
Under 40 years of age	9.5	50.4	42.2
Male	86.3	64.6	54.1
Graduated from seminary or theological school	67.6	39.0	20.5
Without a seminary degree, but currently attend seminary or theological school	6.3	10.6	7.3
Were regular members or participants before current position	26.7	39.3	61.1
Specialize in one or more areas of ministry	--	62.9	73.8
Of those who specialize, percent who specialize in: ¹			
Religious Education	--	32.3	13.5

TABLE 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTERIAL STAFF, 2018–19

	SOLO OR SENIOR LEADERS	FULL-TIME SECONDARY MINISTERIAL STAFF	PART-TIME SECONDARY MINISTERIAL STAFF
Spiritual Growth	--	28.7	15.1
Music	--	24.5	56.5
Community Engagement	--	23.4	9.0
Youth Ministry	--	20.3	17.7
Children's Ministry	--	18.1	15.6
Psychological Counseling	--	18.1	1.9
Volunteer Coordination	--	16.7	9.1
Outreach	--	15.6	12.0
Young Adult Ministry	--	14.8	7.5
Pastoral Care	--	13.9	9.1
Administration	--	12.3	5.5
Family Ministry	--	10.6	7.0
Media	--	7.0	5.4
Worship Technology	--	6.4	8.2
Technology, not worship-related	--	4.5	3.7

1 Respondents could indicate that secondary staff specialize in multiple areas of ministry.