

Returning to Ascension for In-Person Worship - Summer 2020

52 responses

"How long, O LORD? Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me" Psalm 13:1



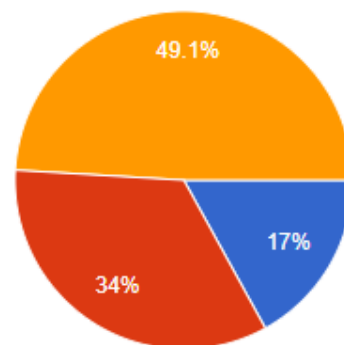
Thank you for opening this survey. Providing your name will help in the event that we can follow up to better understand your thoughts, concerns and hopes and, if possible, to let you know of developments in this fast-changing time. Please also provide contact information if you believe we don't otherwise have it.

Your answer 28 of 52 respondents have shared their names

Sharing your general age will help us know how many respondents (those over 65) are at higher risk for coronavirus infection AND how many are in the large group of young adults more recently taking part at Ascension. Are you ...

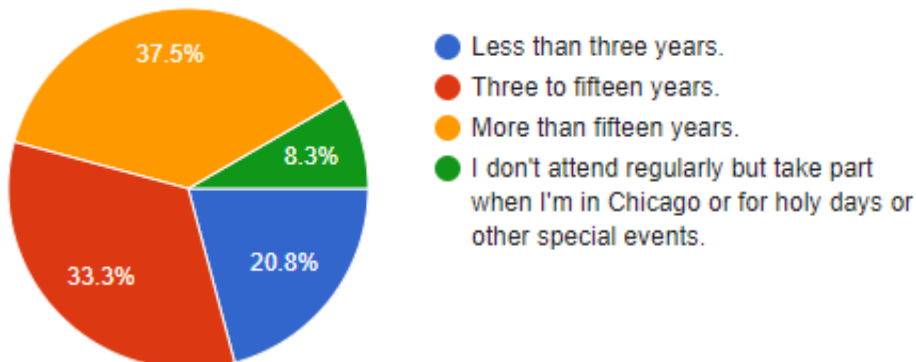
53 responses

- Under 40-years-old?
- 40-years-old to 64-years-old
- 65 or older



How long have you regularly taken part at Ascension?

53 responses



PLEASE NOTE: Your thoughts about returning to Ascension for in-person worship may be shaped by knowing that, initially, in-person worship will be unlike past 'normal' Sundays (or other worship, music, gatherings or meetings) as before. In compliance with direction from our bishop, mayor and governor, the following protocols and limitations will pertain from the time we resume in-person worship until further notice (likely for months):

- All individuals entering the church will provide name, telephone number and email address (in the event we need to contact you if someone at the service you attended develops COVID-19).
- All worshipers in the church, including clergy, organist and any other ministers, will be required to wear masks or have another appropriate face covering. (We will provide masks for those without.)
- Worshipers will only sit in designated seats in the pews, to allow for appropriate social distancing. Attendance at any one worship service will be limited to 45 persons in the pews.
- No singing (choir, soloist, hymn singing, chanting by priest, organist or others) will be included in any in-person worship. Research and recent super-spreader incidents suggest that singing indoors significantly increases the risks of transmission by anyone (symptomatic or not) with COVID-19.
- There will be no common Communion chalice and very likely no opportunity for the People to share in Blood of Christ.
- Until circumstances change, there will be no indoor coffee hour or receptions and no nursery care provided. Any socializing will be informal, outdoors and with safe social distancing.

IS THERE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE AT THIS TIME IN ANTICIPATION OF RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT ASCENSION?

24 responses

See answers on following pages.

(IS THERE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE AT THIS TIME IN ANTICIPATION OF RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP AT ASCENSION?)

Any information on cleansing of pews?

The guidelines are very disheartening, but understandable. Will the ushers be in charge of getting personal information from parishioners and visitors?

I have some ideas for reading the hymns out loud, done by one person on either of the far side, front parts of the nave... by Mary Shrine and Michael Shrine opposite.

Some of us come to church from afar.

How can you guarantee that I can attend Mass once I get there? I'd hate to drive a good distance, fight traffic, get to church, then be turned away because the limited amount of people has already been reached. Also, I'm very uncomfortable knowing I will have to sign in & give personal information. Who will get or will keep this information safe? If someone at the service I attended does get Covid19, who will contact me? Will it be forwarded to medical authorities?

No more information required.

I don't understand why our organist can't chant or why there can't be a soloist up in the choir loft. There certainly would be the necessary distance. I think music is extremely important to the service. I also wonder if we couldn't bring our own small glasses for wine.

As details get ironed out:

-Should participants be prepared to be seen on camera as part of a livestream? -What's the ventilation / HVAC situation?

-How will the bathrooms work?

-If it's actually 45 people, that feels like a leap after months of isolation. Anyone interested in options for smaller group, distanced interactions indoors or outdoors (personal prayer or small group devotions)?

Given the recent protests/demonstrations near Ascension and the apparent increase in other disturbing activities around the church, will there be enhanced security available? I am particularly concerned about the safety of older members walking to church or coming from the parking lot.

I'm guessing there will be a few additional things the acolytes, if any, will need to know, but that won't be relevant to share with everyone.

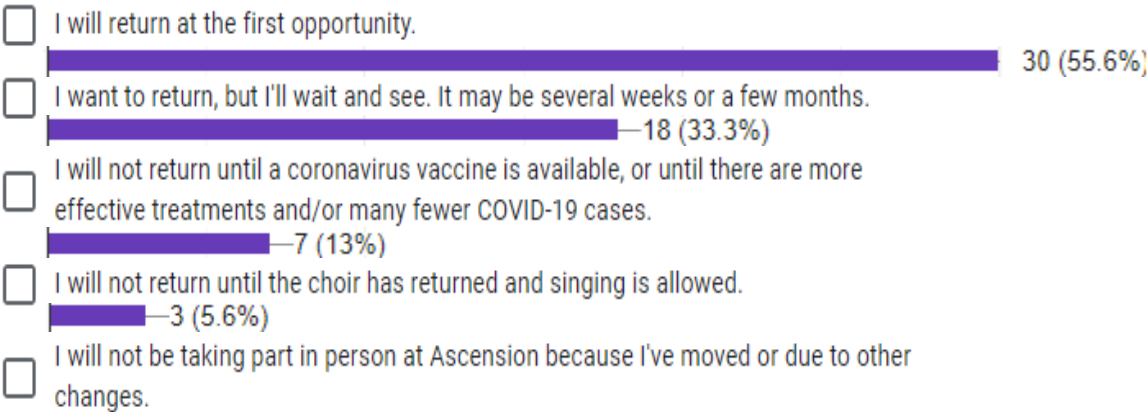
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Which one or more statements below reflect your present intentions about returning to in-person worship at Ascension.



Other: I will go when the Eucharist is available.

Other: Safe public transportation to & from church is part of the issue of returning

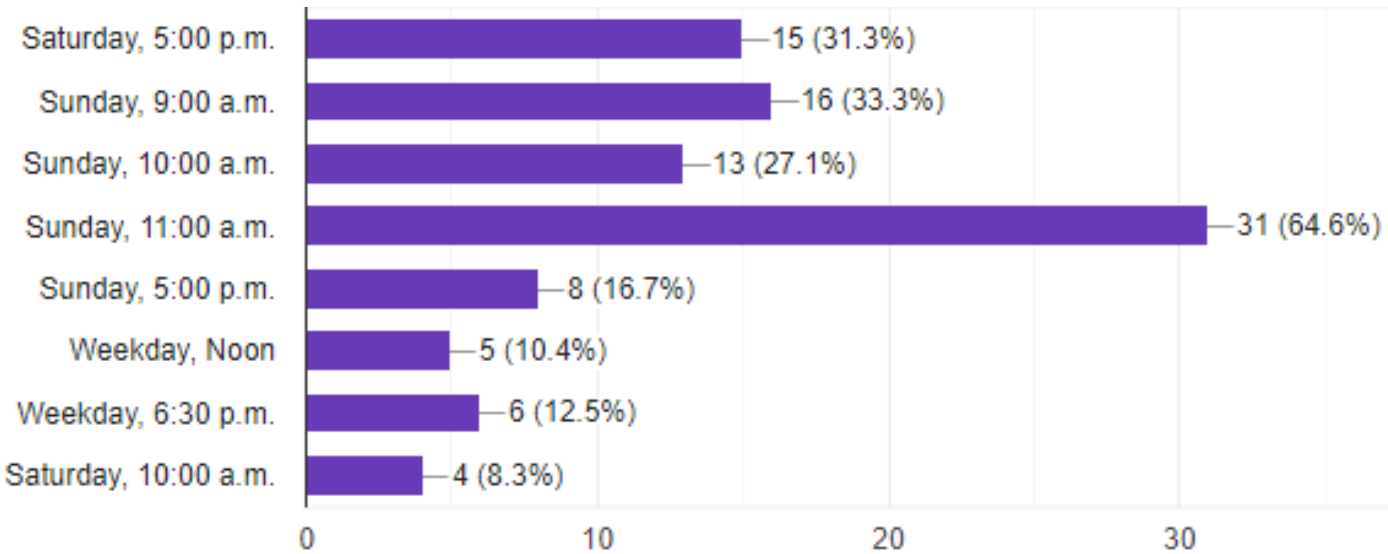
Other: I will admit to some trepidation.. but given the chance to safely distance I will take it.

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Other: I may come occasionally! The distance makes the trek from Su Casa (50th/La Ascension quite a hike, but I'd love to come by when possible.

If you indicated that you would return at the first opportunity or in coming months, what time or times would be best for you to attend an in-person mass at Ascension? Please check no more than three options. Note: Saturday evening or Sunday morning masses would likely include organ music. Others wold be said masses.

48 responses



If you believe you will be taking part in person at Ascension, are you also willing to serve in one or more of the following roles, whether or not you have participated in the past? Training would be available, and yes, you may check more than one box.

- ☐ 14 Usher/Greeter
- ☐ 26 Lector/Intercessor (Read Scripture or Prayers from the ambo/pulpit.)
- ☐ 5 Tech Team: to help with continued online presence by live-streaming or recording in-person masses in the church.
- ☐ 14 Acolyte (Initially one per mass with social distancing protocols.)
- ☐ 13 Cleaning/Transition Team (Share in sanitizing/safety checklist after each mass.)
- ☐ 2 Other: _____

We have provided a variety of online worship and gathering opportunities since mid-March. Which statement below best describes your participation?

54 responses



If you have participated in our online worship or gathering opportunities, even if only a few times, what has been either helpful, edifying or meaningful and/or difficult or troubling?

36 responses ›

I have been moved by the efforts to conduct a mass, even under these extraordinary circumstances. Even though not physically partaking in the sacrament, I find myself more in adoration through seeing it and knowing it exists. I gravely miss physical communion, but I only want to do what is safe at this time.

Lovely to hear the recorded music! Appreciate the effort put in to bring us virtual mass.

Morning Prayer and Eucharist

The tech hurdles are too great for my old PC equipment.

Making sure that solely online services are not too long.

Effective, quality tech (streams well, high resolution, etc). It'd just be nice to see services with the church as background.

Easter Day was a triumph! I like the mass brought together from varied recordings. I prefer Facebook live to Zoom. Zoom is so off putting and it's difficult to concentrate on the mass.

I am always glad to hear the mass and familiar words of a church service.

It's been WONDERFUL! I've been more a part of the parish than ever before!

It's fine. I vastly prefer in-person services. Some people want to continue Zooming even after Covid. I think that would cannibalize our attendance and dilute our level of attention to what ought to be our overriding focus: the quality of our in-person worship and liturgy.

Continued ...

I get nothing out of on line services.

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I get nothing out of on line services.

It has been better than I would have thought.

Meaningful: sermons & music

Difficult: staying focused during Mass due to distractions at home, hard as I try

Too distant

I am just not a zoom person. Although I admire that the church has had it available.

I think it has been fine.

I find it more meaningful when the acolyte/lector (in this case, Brooke) is on-site and the mass is livestreamed. Though I appreciate the effort that goes into recruiting people to read, chant, or say the responses in a 'zoomed' mass, I find it distracting and disjointed when disembodied voices are speaking/singing, and when the camera shifts periodically to someone's home rather than focusing on the altar.

Continued ...

If you have participated in our online worship or gathering opportunities, even if only a few times, what has been either helpful, edifying or meaningful and/or difficult or troubling? [Continued ...](#)

I understand the reason for using Zoom rather than Facebook Live, but for me the switching from person to person is distracting.

I found it troubling; Holy Week services left me feeling alone and empty.

Zoom gatherings (coffee hour) have provided connection and an opportunity to chat and build relationships. Scripture discussions have also been interesting. The pre-recorded liturgies for Palm Sunday and Easter were outstanding--for music, visual artwork, and participation of parishioners as readers. Participatory formats are most engaging. The Facebook livestreams do not hold my attention.

I am now in the habit of participating in both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer every day. It gives definition to the structure of my day. I like hearing the scriptures. It also allows me to stay connected with my friends, if only briefly. I really like the convenience and brevity of the on-line office. I like it that EP is attended by more people than we ever had in the church. Our attendance is usually around 5 or 6. When I was officiant in the church on Wednesday evenings, I left home at 4:30, got to Ascension 45 min to an hour later, set up for mass, officiated EP, served, put things away after mass and returned home around 8:00-8:30. I always felt honored to serve, though it took a lot of time. In the not-so-good column is the dependence on technology. It's not terrible, but it is an issue. Because I am always available, I have covered or helped at least five times due to technical difficulties. I have also been kicked off during the office.

I really appreciate having this. I'm often distracted by technical needs (settings, etc., when I've had a role to play), but they're probably nothing compared to what it takes to get the service "on the air." Feels like a house of cards, with so many factors that could fail, but that seems inevitable. Fr. Raymond, your voice, preaching, and continuity of service are much appreciated and comforting during this time. And the gathering opportunities have been fun and helpful; during those, technical glitches are just something to chat about (or help someone with) and less of a distraction. I've enjoyed starting a "watch party" via Facebook just before a service starts, and I've been surprised how many of my Facebook friends visit at least to see what we're doing.

It has been done with reverence and dignity. However, the miking has not always been good.

The biggest challenges have been on my side making space at home for participating.

I don't feel observing a service is a satisfactory substitute for participation in worship.

Honestly, I miss the other youngins!

Edifying and meaningful

Proof of concept for developing a video customary.

I strongly prefer services where I feel more like a participant (Zoom) and not a spectator (Facebook). I have some trouble with the "Orders of Service" sometimes published, especially the screen sharing in Zoom. I find them difficult to read and much more burden than blessing, so I use the Prayer Book.

[Continued ...](#)

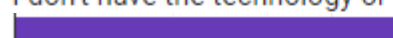
If you have participated in our online worship or gathering opportunities, even if only a few times, what has been either helpful, edifying or meaningful and/or difficult or troubling? [Continued ...](#)

Edifying/Helpful: Seeing the faithful step up in various ways; the surprising degree of connection possible online; worshiping with friends around the world; knowing that we're involved in something meaningful; discovering possibilities and opportunities that would not come up ordinarily; tackling exciting new challenges; being pleasantly surprised by others; finding commitment to the community as well as the beauty; being of service; coming out of our silos to make history together.

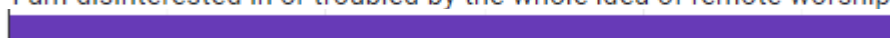
Difficult/Troubling: Videoconference fatigue; fatigue in general; not being able to contribute normally; not feeling able to engage those who don't enjoy or have access to tech; feeling deprived of direct sensory beauty; missing the sense of being drawn up together at the high altar; limitations of current technology; feeling like we're "camping" instead of being home; being distanced from the spiritual aid of the Sacraments, especially knowing that the chalice in particular will need to be a ways off.

If you have not participated in our online worship or if you tried it but stopped, can you tell us why? You may check more than one box and share your remarks after 'Other.' 26 responses

I don't have the technology or find the technology too hard to use.

—6 (23.1%)

I am disinterested in or troubled by the whole idea of remote worship.

—14 (53.8%)

Other: 8 'other' responses

We intend to continue online worship and fellowship opportunities in coming months. Are there features we can add or other changes that could make these easier or more meaningful for you?

27 responses

Facebook live over Zoom.

none at this time - thank you for continuing online for those of us that are high risk!

See my earlier response. I do not think continued online services, once things are back to the status quo ante, is a "cost-free" option. And the costs will not outweigh the benefits.

Don't use Zoom. It's too difficult.

Return to putting services on YouTube. Please!

none at this time - thank you for continuing online for those of us that are high risk!

I think we need rotating coffee hour hosts.

It would be helpful to "rewind" the Mass. I often hit refresh several times around nine only to land on the live recording when you have finished the opening prayer.

Better miking.

I tried the 'virtual coffee hour' and 'reflecting on the text' but did not find them meaningful or enjoyable, and probably will not participate again.

Continue with Zoom for fellowship. This format allows for lots of informal back and forth, and that, to me, is its best feature. Further education opportunities or short presentations might attract a weeknight audience during special times of the year---Advent, Lent, All Saints/All Souls. It might be possible to get a pastoral care support group started on Zoom.

It's quite good now.

For participating (reading a lesson from home, chanting, etc.), I'd love it if there emerged a set of best-practice settings that pretty much always work. This might be just a dream of mine and not possible, but if someone finds a setup that works consistently without a lot of experimentation, we might want to share that. Probably too many uncontrollable factors out there. I need to just do the fiddling and not get frustrated too easily! Time may bring stability...I try to set things up and then when the hour arrives, things happen.

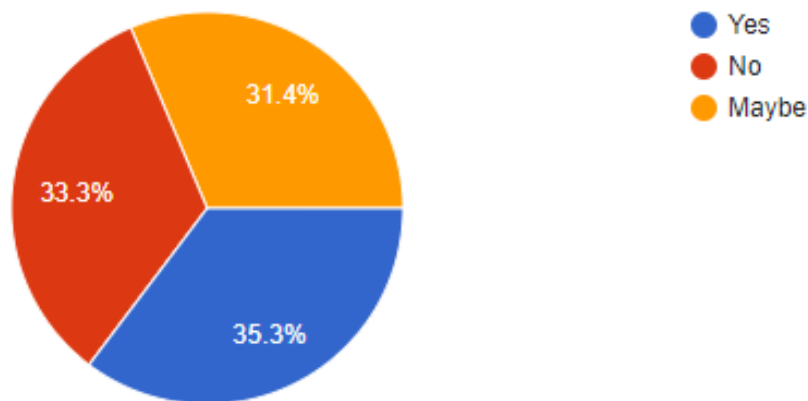
I'd like to improve our network connection, sound quality, and visual resolution, provide different camera angles, and try an east-facing celebration.

I'm enjoying the continued attention to and innovation in providing both music to hear and music to participate in.

Some congregations are experimenting with combining online experiences with an "offline" component. While I am NOT advocating "drive-in Mass," virtual consecrations, or casual distribution of the Sacrament, I'd be open to wondering whether there's a way in which the ancient traditions of sending bread to the absent, or some other token of blessing or care, may begin to have some applicability to our circumstances if pandemic conditions improve.

Are you willing and able, if trained, to help with our online worship? Examples would be serving as a 'Zoom host' for a mass, reading a lesson or offering Prayers of the People from home, or posting recorded features to our Facebook page or YouTube channel.

51 responses



Thank you for your faith, for your love for and support of Church of the Ascension and for taking part in this survey. Is there anything else about any parish-related matter that you would like to communicate to the Rector, Wardens and Vestry at this time?

24 responses

Thank you for your continued efforts. Be strong and keep the faith.

I've been out of touch and throwing myself into many other projects (writing, in particular) but have been trying to pay attention to the newsletters and updates. Thanks so much for all you do for our little house of God.

Hoping for a good future :)

If possible I would like the Rector to make a pastoral visit to St. Michael House in the coming months.

How soon will we be able to take communion?

It's just the flu.

Masses. On. YouTube. Get. On. It.

Even though we will not be able to sing, could a recording of (one of) the choir members be played during the Mass?

Thank you for seeking out our input!

I would love times that one could just come and sit and pray in the church- wearing gloves and masks- there is a peacefulness that is hard to duplicate in other venues.

I believe we need to continue to reach out to those who do not have the technology. So many are missing out on seeing their community.

Thank you for your faith, for your love for and support of Church of the Ascension and for taking part in this survey. Is there anything else about any parish-related matter that you would like to communicate to the Rector, Wardens and Vestry at this time?

24 responses [Continued ...](#)

Keep experimenting! Challenge us to try new things. Ascension is filled with people who possess special knowledge, gifts and talents, so let's find a way to share these with a wider audience.

Have you considered using the garden as a worship venue? There is an altar there that has been blessed (I'm pretty sure).

I read in the latest email about the coach house of the Church. While I am not a retired priest or a web developer, I would like to inquire about it and possibly be considered.

I would also like to add that the Church of the Ascension has been an incredible outlet of positivity and hope for me in the short time that I have attended. I was introduced to the church through Enrique Vilaseco and am very grateful that he did. It has filled a spiritual void that I have had for too long. Regardless of the outcome from this email, I desire to establish a stronger bond with the church and look forward to attending services again as soon as I am back in Chicago.

Thank you for your support and I wish everyone good health and all the best.

Hearty, sincere thanks to Fr. Patrick and Brooke Raymond for Masses from the Rectory; to David and Benjamin for adapting music leadership to online; to MB for the huge amount of time and work, and leadership in helping us get online; to Br. Nathanael and George and the Vestry for great work during a very strange time. Our parish community feels very much intact even though challenged in new ways. May this strengthen us and show us anew how we might bring the Faith to many more.

We really appreciate EVERYONE'S efforts to pull these Masses off!!! Jim Drury/Jim Berger

No, thank you.

I appreciate all your efforts during this difficult time. I continue to look forward to in-person worship with music, singing, social interaction and contact and the beauty of holiness that is part of the Ascension experience.

I would love it if it were sometimes possible for the Mass to be offered "ad orientem," as at the former 7 and 11 o'clock Masses. Not always. But just occasionally.

No, keep on keeping on

I hope you are exploring ways to have a hybrid worship experience (in person and on-line) through the transition; I have no specific suggestions as to how that might work, but I hope the tech-mavens will find something.

Keep praying for an early end to the pandemic

Thank you for your leadership and care during these challenging circumstances!

It would be great if the parish hired a curate who could live in the coach house now that it is empty.

