

# Trinity Lutheran Church

Return to In-Person Worship – Member Survey

June 22, 2020

# About the Survey

# Overview

- Survey was open between 6/15 and 6/22.
- Promoted during services, via Facebook message, direct email and outreach calls to members 75 years and older. Responses gathered by phone were manually input into the survey.
- Questions:
  - Intention to attend in-person worship?
  - If “Don’t know,” then follow-up question about why/what other information needed.
  - If “Yes,” then follow-up question to learn more about what most looking forward to/how church could make service meaningful.
  - Worship times (Sun at 8, 9 and 10)
  - Willingness to usher
  - Name/contact information for ushering and follow-up.

# Survey Introduction

The introduction **set expectations** about the types of things Trinity will do to protect the health of members if services do resume, and assured people that Trinity will **continue to offer options** for participating in service online or via radio.

## We Need Your Input to Plan Our Return to In-Person Worship

Based on recommendations from the Health Committee, our Church Council will soon decide on when and how we will begin to return to in-person worship.

**To protect the health of our members, the worship experience will be different than what we're used to.** For instance, **we expect that:**

- The number of people who will be allowed in the sanctuary will be limited so we can maintain a distance of 6 feet between individuals and families.
- However, couples and families who live in the same household will be allowed to sit together.
- Members will be required to wear masks.
- We will not be able to sing together, because singing is a proven risk for the spread of Covid-19.

We are thrilled to provide the opportunity for in-person worship, but we acknowledge it will be a different experience, and that even with the safeguards we're putting in place, some may not be comfortable with the risk of exposure. For that reason, **we will continue to broadcast worship services online and via WDUX 92.7 FM.**

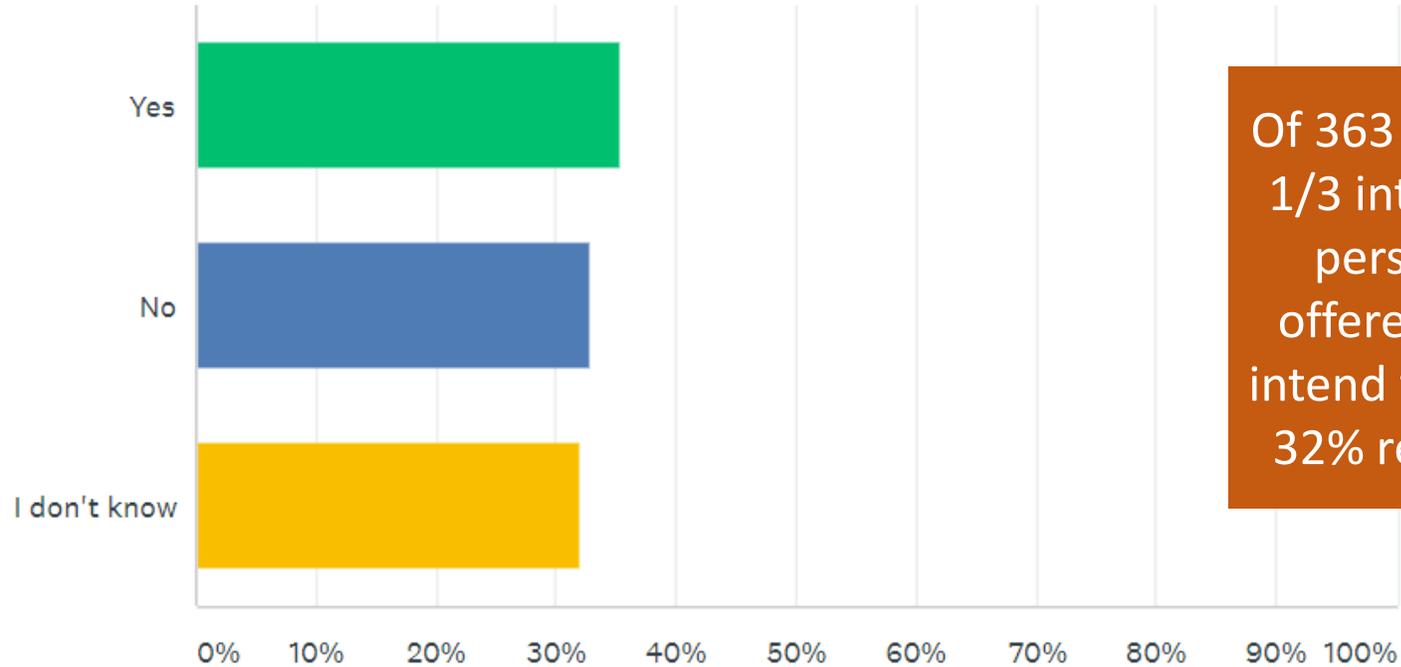
With all of that as background, we want to get a sense of how many members intend to join us for in-person worship services and how – despite the precautions we must take – we can make the worship experience as meaningful as possible.

# Survey Responses

Data based on **364 responses** received by 10:15 a.m. on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

# 1. Do you intend to join us for in-person worship services?

Answered: 363 Skipped: 1

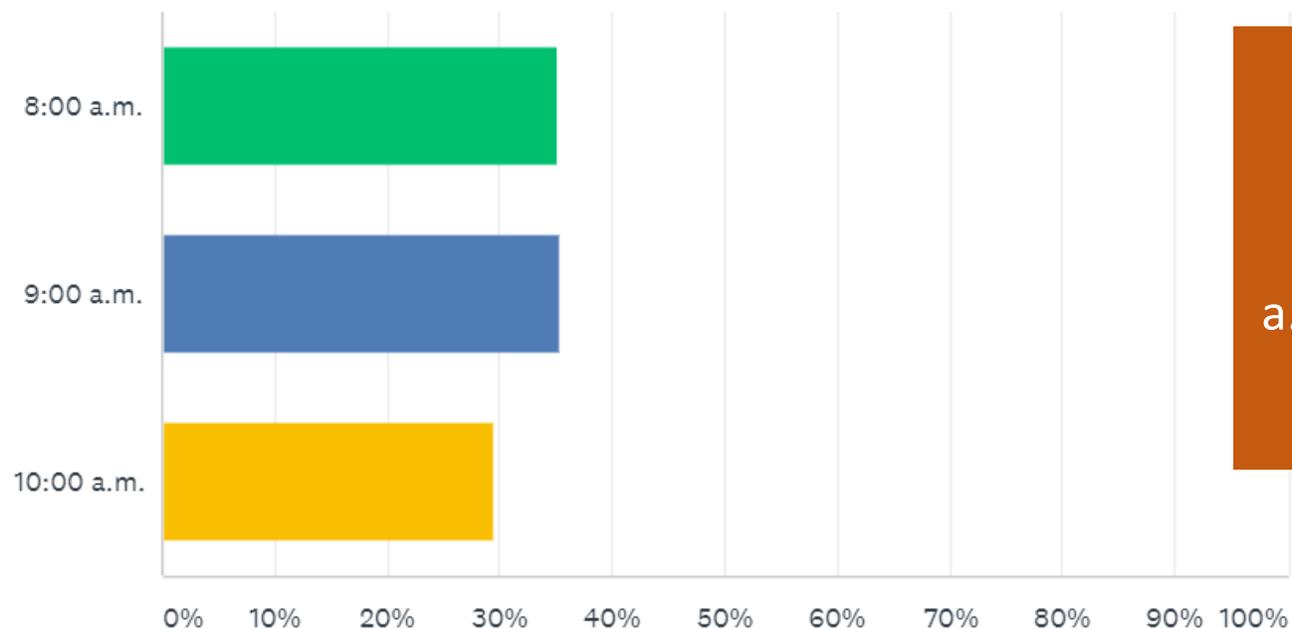


Of 363 who answered, just over 1/3 intend to participate in in-person worship services if offered. Another third do not intend to participate, and about 32% responded “don’t know.”

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes	35.26% 128
▼ No	32.78% 119
▼ I don't know	31.96% 116
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>363</b>

## 4. What time on Sunday morning would you prefer to attend an in-person worship service?

Answered: 271 Skipped: 93

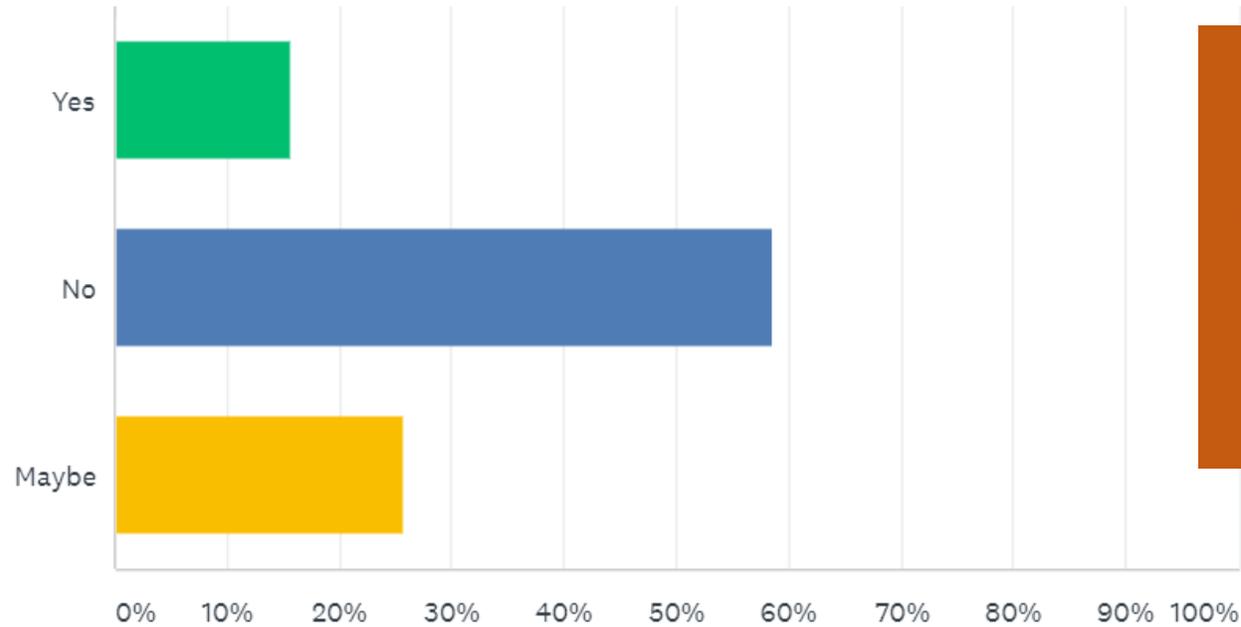


Of 271 who answered, 35% indicated a preference for 8 a.m. and another 35% for 9 a.m. Thirty percent indicated a preference for 10 a.m.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 8:00 a.m.	35.06% 95
▼ 9:00 a.m.	35.42% 96
▼ 10:00 a.m.	29.52% 80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>271</b>

## 5. Would you be willing to be a greeter or usher for our new in-person worship services?

Answered: 273 Skipped: 91



Of 273 who answered, just under 16% (43 people) indicated a willingness to help usher for in-person worship services. Another 26% (70 people) indicated "maybe."

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	15.75% 43
No	58.61% 160
Maybe	25.64% 70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>273</b>

# Data Summary

Based on 364 completed surveys, we can anticipate:

- Just over 1/3 of members intend to participate, while about 30% don't know/are unsure.
- 8:00 and 9:00 are the most preferred worship times.
- We have 43 respondents willing to help with ushering.

# What People are Looking Forward To

People who indicated “Yes” they intend to attend in-person worship were invited to share thoughts about:

*“...what is it that you are most looking forward to? Are there things we could do that would make your in-person worship experience particularly meaningful?”*

**129 respondents** took time to share their thoughts. The following pages summarize **key sentiments** from all the thoughts shared.

# Looking Forward To – Key Sentiments

Sentiment	# of Mentions
Worshiping together/being with others (including “friends” and “family”)	56
The live/in-person worship experience/atmosphere/praying together/miss church	20
Being in church/in the sanctuary	13
Having communion in person	13
Hearing sermons in person	13
Music	10
Singing (want to and wish we could)	6
Getting back to normal	4

Simply worshiping together with others again is – by far – the main thing people are looking forward to, followed by the experience of live worship, being in the sanctuary, partaking in communion and hearing sermons live.

# Concerns of People Who “Don’t Know”

People who indicated that they “Don’t Know” if they intend to attend in-person worship were invited to share thoughts about:

*“...what information do you need so that you can make a decision? What concerns do you have that perhaps can be addressed?”*

**157 respondents** (including many who answered “No” regarding their intent to attend in-person services) took time to share their thoughts. The following pages summarize **key sentiments** from all the thoughts shared.

# Looking Forward To – Key Sentiments

Sentiment*	# of Mentions
Safety concerns – will protocols be in place? Can enforce? Will people comply? How control attendance vs. capacity?	35
Covid #s locally – is disease still spreading? Advice from authorities	25
Just too soon, will wait and see, need more time	16
Will return if masks are <b>not required</b>	16
Concerns over personal health/health of other living with/caring for	15
Online options has been good/will continue to use for now	14
Will wait until we have vaccine/until Covid-19 no longer a threat	7
Interested in Saturday service	6
Interested if service is outside	5

\* Many good questions in remarks that will need to be addressed in communications efforts.

Most questions/concerns focus on protecting health in the midst of an ongoing pandemic with local cases continuing to rise. People want to know the plan for making in-person worship safe – protocols and assuring compliance. A strong minority of people indicate disagreement with a mask-wearing requirement, with some saying they will not attend if they have to wear a mask.

# Mask-Wearing – Strong Opinions from a Significant Minority of Members

- Wearing a mask and not being able to talk to members does not feel welcoming or makes members feel like part of the church community.
- I refuse to wear a mask.
- If we are spread out, why are masks required? And why no singing?
- Not going to attend if I have to wear a mask and can't sing.
- I will not wear a mask should you require it.
- I will not wear a mask, that poses a health risk to me!
- I think we won't attend until masks are no longer required.
- Can not require me to wear a mask.
- ...I do not like to be forced to wear a mask in order to worship. I have tried to wear one, but I don't feel like a person in them.
- Just have hand sanitizer out and if people want they can wear a mask
- With practicing social distancing, I do not feel it is necessary to require masks. This will definitely make a difference as to our family returning to worship at Trinity when there are other options in the area for worship that are not requiring masks.

# Conclusions and Implications

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- Over 1/3 of Trinity members intend to participate in in-person worship if offered.
- Another 30% don't know if they will attend in-person worship.
  - A majority of these are concerned about their safety (or the safety of those in their household/under their care). They will wait until Covid-19 is less of a threat in the community and want to be sure that the church has appropriate protocols in place AND that attendees will comply with those protocols.
  - A minority of these have an almost opposite perspective, concerned about and objecting to the imposition of a mask-wearing requirement
- Preferred service times are 8 or 9 a.m.
- We have a good pool of people willing to usher so we can implement protocols to provide safe in-person worship.

# Implications

- Enough members are interested in attending in-person worship to warrant offering it.
- Safety is a top concern, so it will be critical for the church to adhere to the guidance set forth by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ELCA and other authorities (recommendations of the Health Committee)
- A comprehensive communications effort will be needed to make sure members understand what measures are being taken to protect member health and the rationale/evidence base for key measures.
- Ushers will need to be prepared to manage potential issues with attendance/capacity, non-compliance (e.g., refusal to wear a mask) and other potentially contentious issues.