



First  
Presbyterian  
Church  
of Waynesboro, Virginia

# The Columns *Online*

October 26, 2022 | Waynesboro, Virginia | *a newsletter supplement*

## Study: Religion and spirituality can aid youth mental health crisis

*Religion and spirituality could help remedy the youth mental health crisis, Springtide Research finds.*

Religion News Service— It's no secret America's youth are in crisis. Born into a tech-saturated world shaken by domestic terrorism, ecological devastation and economic instability, Gen-Zers are more likely to report mental health concerns like anxiety and depression than older generations. In many ways, the pandemic has forced mental health discourse into the limelight, prompting the U.S. surgeon general to issue an advisory last December on COVID-19's "devastating" impact on youth mental health. A new study of 13–25-year-olds, from Springtide Research Institute, suggests spirituality could be part of the remedy — though for some young people, it also contributes to the problem.

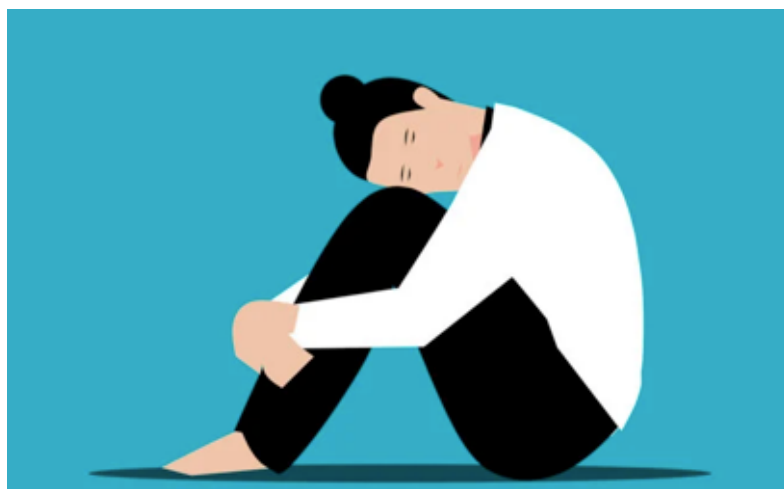
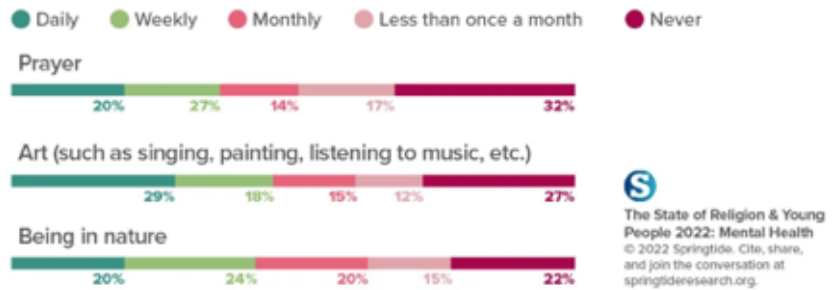


Image by Mohamed Hassan/Pixabay/Creative Commons

*Continued.*

“I think religion ... is a place to find belonging. It’s a place to connect with a higher purpose, which is a calling from God in my understanding,” said Mark, 22, an interviewee cited in the report. “I think it’s also, for many people, a restriction of freedom and sort of obligation, which creates a lot of shame in people’s lives.”

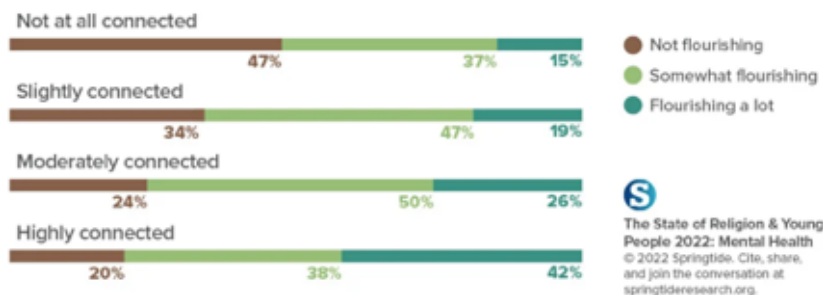
### How often do you engage in the following as religious or spiritual practices?



Graphic courtesy of Springtide Research

In general, the report — which is based on qualitative interviews as well as fielded surveys — finds that having religious/spiritual beliefs, identities, practices and communities are all correlated with better mental wellness among youth. A majority of all young people (57%) and nearly three-quarters of religious young people (73%) surveyed agree their religious or spiritual practices positively impact their mental health. Many participants cite prayer as playing a role in their spiritual practice — 51% said they started praying regularly during the pandemic — and 74% of participants who pray daily say they are flourishing, compared to 57% who never pray.

### Feeling connected to a higher power correlates with greater self-reported flourishing when it comes to mental and emotional health.



Graphic courtesy of Springtide Research

report having “discovered a satisfying life purpose,” as compared to 55% of those who used to be connected to such a community. Forty-two percent of those who feel highly connected to a higher power report they are “flourishing a lot” in their emotional and mental health, compared to 16% of those who say they do not feel at all connected to a higher power.

Still, findings are complex — 27% of religiously affiliated youth say they are “flourishing a lot,” but 28% also say they are “not flourishing,” a finding that suggests simply being affiliated with a religion is not a mental health cure-all. In interviews, participants also spoke about how religion can negatively impact their mental health.

“(Y)oung people make it clear that religion feels toxic when it is primarily presented as a pressure to live up to difficult expectations, rather than a vehicle for helping them navigate their current difficulties,” the report says. In a virtual press conference on Wednesday (Oct. 19), Josh Packard, Springtide’s executive director, noted it can be hard to predict which religious environments will harm mental health more than help.

*Continued*



## Spirituality *continued*

“Anything at the extremes is not very good for you,” said Packard, “but I don’t think that extremism has to be objectively fixed on a continuum from low to high.” He noted how, for a nonbinary person, for example, a mainstream church or synagogue that doesn’t welcome their identity may feel extreme.

The report’s findings come from a survey of nearly 10,000 young people in the U.S. ages 13–25 conducted between November 2021 and March 2022 and contain a margin of error of plus or minus 3%. The report also includes qualitative data from interviews with over 100 young people.

The report proposes three ways for organizations to effectively address youth mental health: foster belonging, provide practical tools to meet expectations and nurture a sense of purpose in young people. It also includes practical advice for faith leaders.

“Leading with that message of unconditional love doesn’t have to be a watering down of other parts of a tradition,” the report says. It also encourages leaders to lean into uncertainty. “(S)eeing answers and leaning into mystery can both be holy activities for young people as they navigate some of life’s biggest questions.”

At the same time, the report acknowledges young people aren’t flocking to religious institutions. Instead, many have a more fluid approach to spirituality — 62% of young people agree that “there are parts of many religions/spiritualities that I agree with,” according to the report, and 48% agree they could “fit in with many different religions/spiritualities.”

“One of the things that has shifted in our society over the last 50 years is the level at which people trust institutions of all kinds, not just religious institutions,” Packard said. Given this, religious communities may need to innovate when it comes to the ways they connect with young people, according to Packard. He referenced OneTable, a nonprofit that encourages young people to host in-person Shabbat dinners, as well as Christian campus ministries that meet in coffee shops as examples of groups supporting youth “outside of the walls” of traditional religion. Even as the shape of religion evolves, Packard says faith and spirituality will remain crucial tools for youth going forward.

Worship This Week  
Scripture lessons: Psalm 119:137-144  
Luke 19: 1-10  
Sermon: Come on down!

“Theology matters ... your purpose for being on earth is something only this segment of the population has cornered the market on.”

## Our Worship Channels

*click on the logos*



# Worship Info for October 30

The opening hymn for this week, *Your Law, O Lord, is Perfect*, takes its text from Psalm 19. The music was composed by the German composer Melchoir Vulpius (1570-1615). Despite a limited education, he composed more than 400 hymn tunes, nearly 200 motets and a *St. Matthew Passion*, sung in Germany, Sweden and Finland.



Worship at Iona.

The anthem for this Sunday, *The Summons*, was composed in 1987 by Church of Scotland minister and hymn writer John Lamberton Bell (b. 1949). He was ordained in 1978 and, two years later, joined the Iona community, an international, ecumenical Christian movement working for justice and peace, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship. The community was established in 1938 on the site of a 6th century monastery by St. Columba, who had formed an outpost on the remote island in far western Scotland and, from there, spread a founded Celtic form of Christianity that still resonates today.

The text of *The Summons* finds Jesus asking questions of those who will follow him, such as “Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?” and “Will you let my love be shown?” Bell set the text to the 18th century Scottish melody, KELVINGROVE.

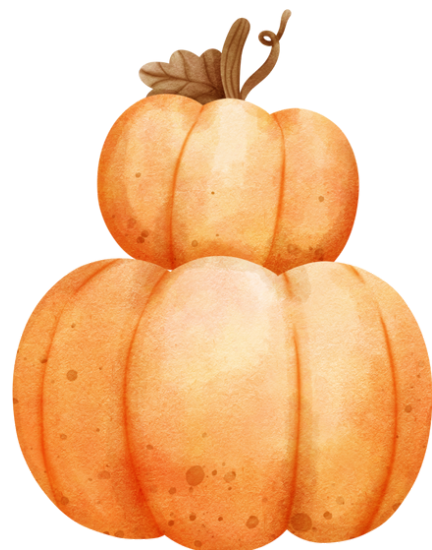
We also celebrate All Saints Day with two hymns. The Introit will be *I Sing a Song of the Saints of God*, and the postlude will be one of the most famous hymn tunes by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1959), SINE NOMINE (“without a name”). Paying homage to the numerous believers (saints) who have died and are not specifically commemorated by name in services of the church, it is commonly paired with the text *For All the Saints*, by William Walsham How (1823-1897).



How.



*"Oh, it's not haunted - it's just old and nothing works."*



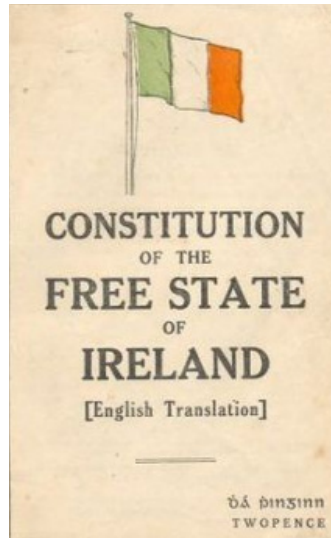


# This Week in History.



The terrorists affiliated with *Islamic Jihad* drove truck bombs into buildings occupied by the Multinational Force in Lebanon (MNF), killing 241 American Marines and sailors, 58 French soldiers, and 6 civilians.

**October 23, 1983**



The Irish Parliament adopts the constitution for the *Irish Free State*.

**October 24, 1922**



Lord Cardigan leads the British cavalry against Russian artillery at Balaclava during the Crimean War. In this *Charge of the Light Brigade*, 40% of the 673 British cavalymen were killed.

**October 25, 1854**



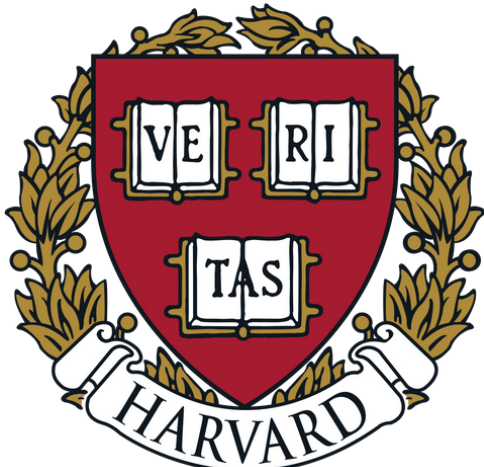
Hillary Diane Rodham is born in Chicago, IL. She would attend Wellesley College, and Yale Law School; marry Bill Clinton, serve as First Lady of Arkansas and the United States, Senator from New York, Secretary of State under President Obama, and Democratic Presidential Candidate.

**October 26, 1947**



The first underground/underwater rail system in the world begins operating in New York City. The *Subway* initially ran from City Hall to West 145th Street.

**October 27, 1904**



The oldest institution of higher learning in America, Harvard, is founded in Cambridge, MA. It was named after John Harvard, a Puritan who donated his library and half of his estate.

**October 28, 1636**



More than 16 million shares of stock are dumped amid tumbling prices, margin calls and panic, causing a market crash that would usher in the Great Depression.

**October 29, 1929**