



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

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WEAR
RED

Poll: Religious attendance is shrinking, but those who remain are happy

*157% of Americans say they seldom or never attend religious services.
Among those who do, 89% said they were proud to be associated with their congregation.*

By Yonat Shimron, Religion News Service. A shrinking number of Americans — 16% — say religion is the most important thing in their lives, down from 20% in 2013. And nearly 3 in 10 — or 29% — say religion is not important to them at all, up from 19% 10 years ago. Those are among the findings in a new survey by the Public Religion Research Institute on religion and congregations fielded in 2022 and published May 16. The survey of 5,872 American adults finds that 57% seldom or never attend religious services (compared with 45% in 2019). And some of those who do are restless. The survey finds that 24% of Americans said they now belong to a religious congregation other than the one they grew up in; that's up from 16% in 2021.

But among those who remain churchgoers, there's a happier story, too.

Most churchgoers across Christian traditions — 59% — have attended their current church for more than 10 years, revealing remarkable stability. An overwhelming number of regular attenders — 82% — say they are optimistic about the future of their congregation. And a whopping 89% say they are proud to be associated with their church.

“What struck me about the findings is the paradox,” said Melissa Deckman, CEO of PRRI. “We see continued declines in the role of religion. But for those who attend regularly they seem pretty happy and satisfied, even proud of their congregations.”

Americans who attend church at least a few times a year are slightly more likely than those who seldom or never attend church to be civically or politically active. The survey shows they are more likely to have contacted a government official (23% vs. 19%), served on a committee (17% vs. 10%), or volunteered for a political campaign (7% vs. 4%). Higher levels of civic engagement are particularly strong for Black and Hispanic churchgoers. White Americans tend to be more politically engaged than nonwhites, regardless of whether they attend church.

The survey also asked Americans what subjects they hear about from the pulpit. Most churchgoers reported poverty and inequality, followed by racism and abortion. Election fraud and Donald Trump were among the surveyed subjects least discussed. Only around 1 in 10 churchgoers said their church sometimes or often discusses the former president (8%) or election and voter fraud (11%). In addition, 56% of churchgoers surveyed don't think their churches are more politically divided than five years ago (13% say they are more divided).

Most churchgoers also give their congregations high marks for welcoming gays and lesbians — 75% agreed or mostly agreed their church is welcoming of everyone, including LGBTQ people. And while 71% of churchgoers identified in the survey said their congregations should provide perspectives on social issues, only 45% agreed with the statement “Congregations should get involved in social issues.” (Black churchgoers were the exception — 63% said churches should get involved.) Continued

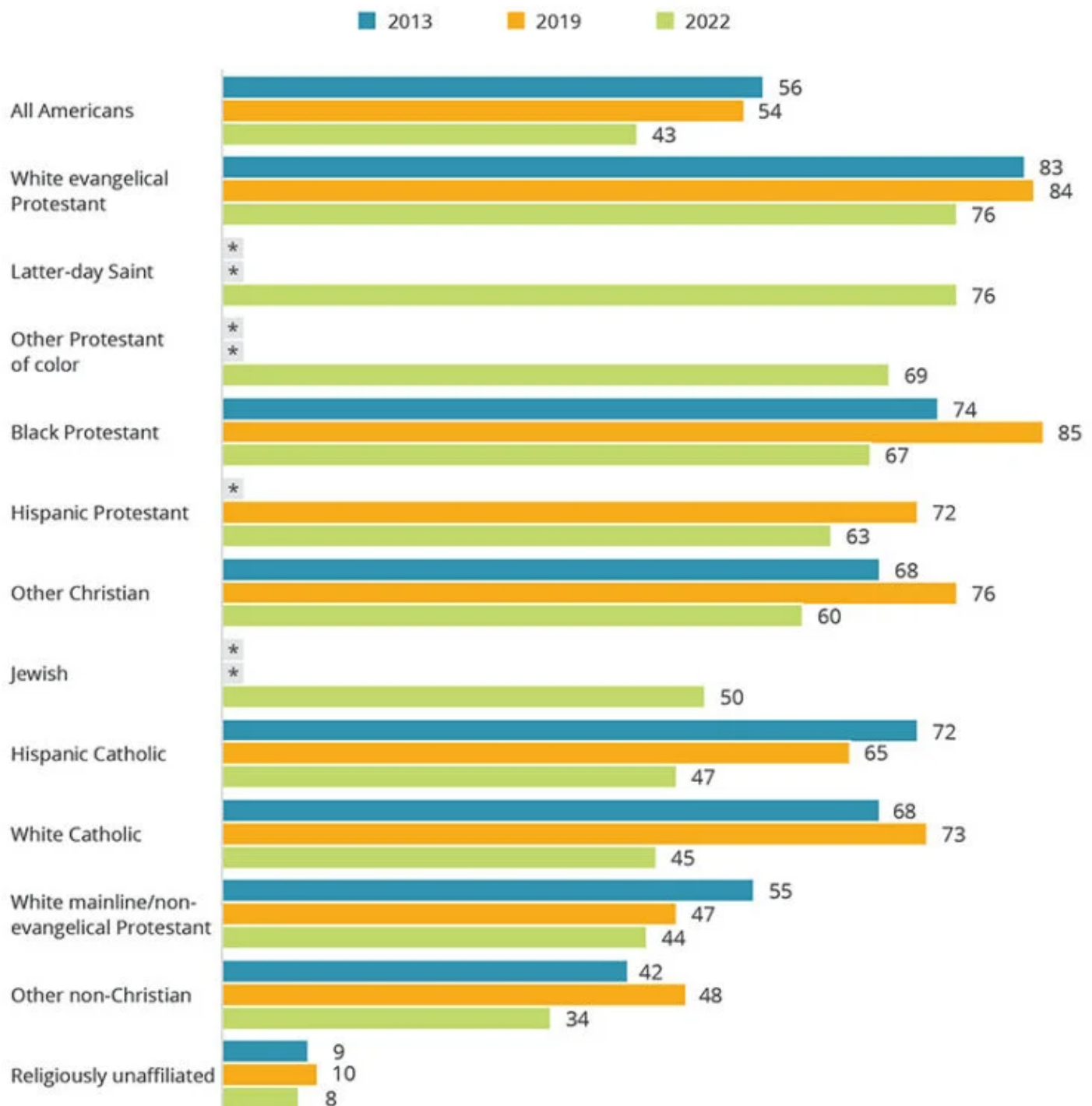
Poll: Religious attendance is shrinking, but those who remain are happy, continued

“There’s still a hunger to hear about social issues, as long as it’s not challenging conversation,” said Deckman. That may make some sense, she added, because “most people go to church for spiritual reasons,” not political reasons.

The survey was fielded in August 2022. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 1.86 percentage points.

FIGURE 3. Religious Attendance 2013-2022, by Religious Affiliation

Percent who report attending religious services at least a few times a year:



Music Notes for Pentecost.

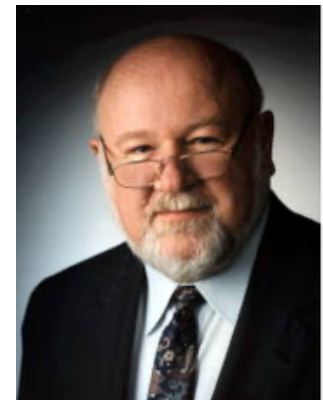
We celebrate Pentecost this Sunday with music inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Introit will be Daniel Iverson's *Spirit of the Living God*, followed by the opening hymn, *On Pentecost They Gathered*. The closing hymn will be *Lord, You Give the Great Commission*.

For the anthem, the choir will sing one of the most famous praise songs of the 1960s, *We Are One in the Spirit*, by Peter Scholtes. While serving as parish priest at (the now demolished) St. Brendan's Catholic Church in Chicago, Scholtes led a youth choir in the church's basement. The choir was to sing a hymn in a series of ecumenical, interracial events. When Scholtes couldn't find what he was looking for, he wrote the iconic lyrics and music in a single day in 1966.

Sunday's prelude and postlude are renditions of an ancient anonymous tune for which Martin Luther composed the hymn, *Komm, heiliger Geist (Come, Holy Ghost)*. The prelude was composed by Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707), the influential composer, organist and kapellmeister (music director) who worked in Lübeck, Germany. The postlude was composed by a man who spent much time soaking up all Buxtehude could offer, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). His chorale fantasia on *Komm, heiliger Geist* is a musical depiction of the swirling Holy Spirit under which the chorale melody thunders in the pedals.



Iverson (1990-1977)



Scholtes (1938-2009)

Worship for Pentecost

Psalm 104:24-34

1 Corinthians 12:3-13

Sermon: *What a body can do.*

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This Week in History.



The American Red Cross is founded by Clara Barton. In 1869, Barton travelled to Europe to work with the International Red Cross in the midst of the Franco-Prussian War. She would go on to organize the first American chapter in Danville, NY. The American Red Cross today provides volunteer disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad, along with various other services.

May 21, 1881

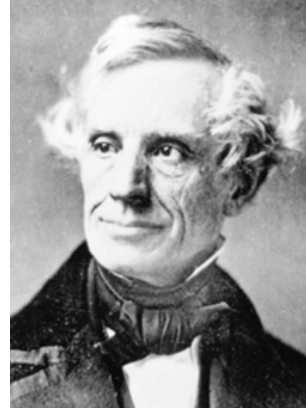
German composer Richard Wagner is born in Leipzig, Germany. He is best known for *The Ring of the Nibelung*, a series of operas based on old German myths which include: *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walkure*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*.

May 22, 1813



Margaret Fuller (Ossoli) is born in Cambridgeport, MA. She would become the first American woman to serve as a foreign correspondent, reporting for the *New York Tribune*. Her book Women in the Nineteenth Century, published in 1845, is considered the first feminist statement by an American writer, and brought her international acclaim.

May 23, 1810



"What had God wrought?"
Telegraph inventor Samuel Morse sends the first official telegraph message from the Capitol in Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, MD.

May 24, 1844

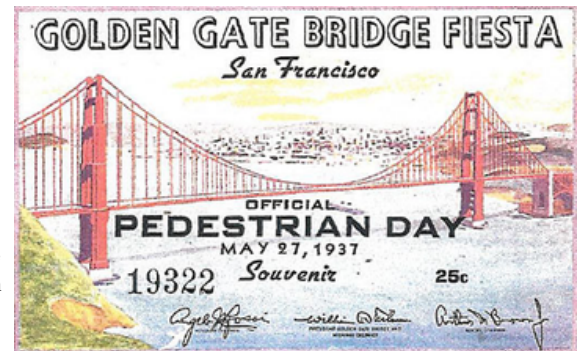


The Constitutional Convention convenes in Philadelphia, PA. Delegates from seven states would form a quorum.

May 25, 1787

The Golden Gate Bridge opens to the public with a stroll from San Francisco to by 200,000 people.

May 27, 1937



The British Expeditionary Force, trapped by advancing German armies on the northern coast of France, begin evacuating from the seaside town of Dunkirk. By June 2nd, English boats and vessels of all shapes and sizes would ferry 200,000 British and 140,000 French and Belgian soldiers across the English Channel.

May 26, 1940

