



POST-COVID CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND GIVING



Dunham+Company[®]
Cause+Effect



A Dunham+Company study in partnership with SecureGive

INTRODUCTION

In 2016 and again in 2022, Dunham+Company fielded comparable national studies of American donors. The goal was to understand generational differences in giving behavior to both churches and other charitable organizations. The studies also shed light on the intersection of church attendance and giving.

In light of lockdowns and the advent of virtual services, Dunham+Company expected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to be pervasive across life in the U.S., especially in terms of church attendance. The comparison of these two studies delivered some surprising results.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

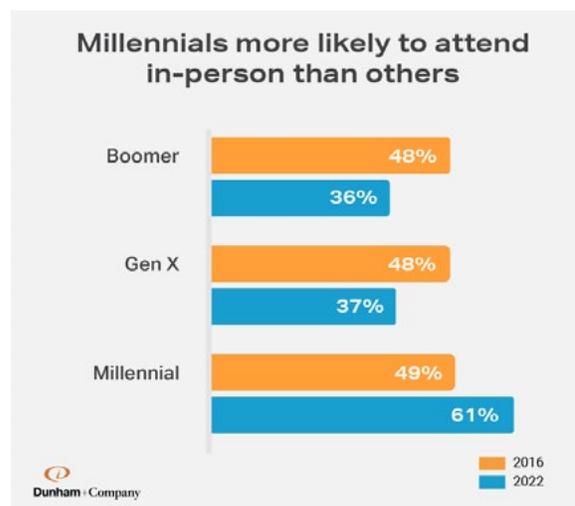
To provide context for the findings regarding church attendance by donors, it's important to note that data from 355 churches in the U.S. and Canada from church software provider ACS Technologies shows that COVID lockdowns did indeed have a severe impact on attendance.

- + Live worship attendance fell by 68% year over year in the early months of the pandemic.
- + Attendance recovered slowly by August 2020, but even at the end of 2021 attendance remained 42% below pre-COVID averages.

The Dunham+Company research shows that overall, the percentage of U.S. donors who attend church services almost every week or more has dropped from 40 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2022. This disparity suggests that despite the pandemic, U.S. donors have been more consistent attenders than the overall church-going population.

The studies also reveal that Millennial donors are increasingly engaged in their faith compared to other generational groups.

For example, 61 percent of Millennial donors now say they attend a church in-person at least a few times a month, up from 49 percent in 2016. By contrast, in-person attendance by GenX donors dropped from 48 percent in 2016 to 37 percent in 2022, while attendance by Boomers and older donors has also dropped, from 48 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2022.



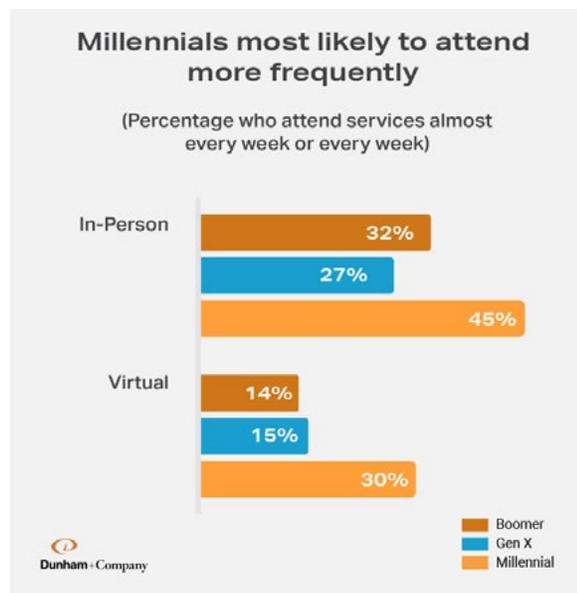
Notably, live attendance is also higher for Millennial donors who attend every week or almost every week compared to older generations of donors. This holds true regardless of whether the Millennial donor attends virtually or in person. Specifically...

Those who say they attend in-person almost every week or every week:

- + **Millennials:** 45 percent
- + **GenX:** 27 percent
- + **Boomers+:** 32 percent

Those who say they attend services virtually almost every week or every week:

- + **Millennials:** 30 percent
- + **GenX:** 15 percent
- + **Boomers+:** 14 percent

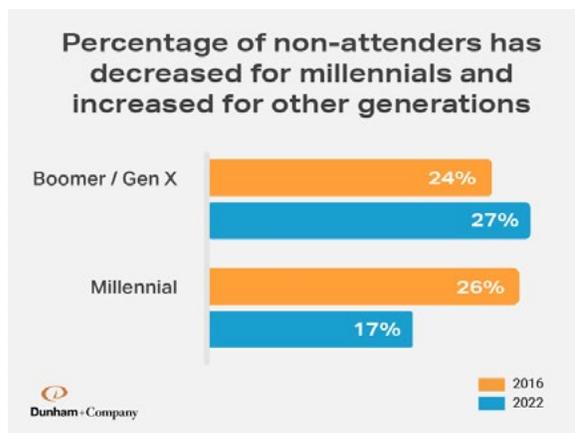


As you can see, Millennial donors are much more likely to attend services in-person or virtually than donors in either the GenX or Boomers+ generations. And it's especially

instructive that their engagement has gone up since 2016 while the other two generations have gone down.

It's also important to note that with every generation, those most engaged with their faith prefer to attend in-person versus attending virtually.

Finally, the percentage of Millennial donors who say they never attend services has dropped from 26 percent in 2016 to 17 percent in 2022, while GenX and Boomers have remained unchanged at about 1 in 4 (24% and 27%, respectively).

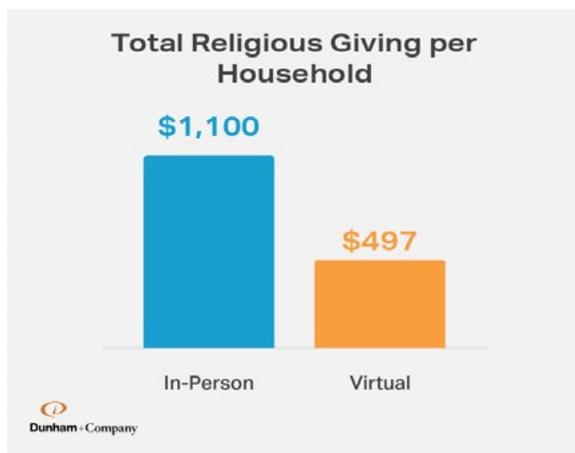


GIVING AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Donors who reported attending live services only are more generous than those who attend only virtual services, with live-services attendees giving three times more to a place of worship compared to their virtual-only counterparts (\$888 vs. \$262, respectively).

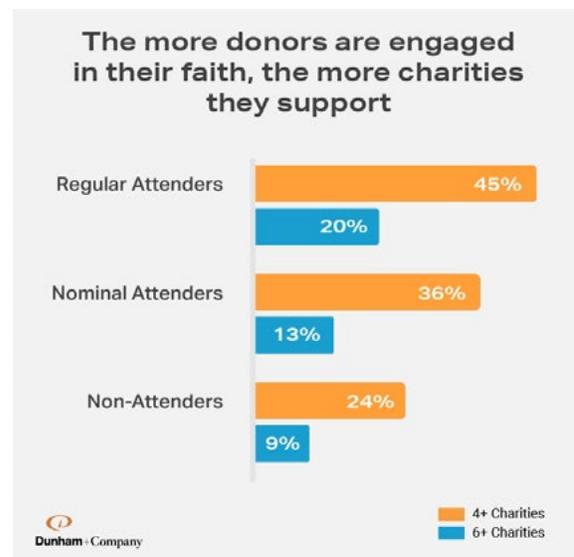


This holds true for giving to outside religious groups as well. Donors who attended only live services contributed an average of \$1,100 to both their church and religious charities (54 percent of their total giving). Donors who attended only virtual services contributed less than half as much to both their church and religious groups at \$497 (39 percent of their total giving).



Beyond this, the more donors are engaged in their faith, the more charities they support. For example, nearly half (45 percent) of donors who attend services at least a few times a month support four or more charities, and 20 percent support six or more charities.

By contrast, the share of those who attend less often (just a few times a year or almost never) who support four or more charities drops to just 36 percent, and to 13 percent for those who support six or more. Those percentages drop to 24 percent and 9 percent respectively for donors who reported never attending services.



Looking at total charitable giving, donors who attended only virtual services gave overall 63 percent of the level of those who attended live services (\$1,279 virtual only vs. \$2,023 in-person only).

When it comes to household income, those who attend services in-person reported a higher average household income (\$96,000) and gave away a higher percentage (2.1%), compared to those who attend only online services who reported a household income of \$71,000 and gave away 1.8%.

A couple of other points of differentiation of those who attend services (in-person

and/or virtual) at least a few times a month compared to those that don't:

- + Seventy-four percent of those who attend services in-person at least a few times a month or more are more likely to give an online gift, compared to 63 percent of nominal attenders and 69 percent of non-attenders.
- + Those who attend at least a few times a month or more give more frequently online, having given online an average of 10 times in the last 12 months compared to 6 times for nominal attenders and 7 times for non-attenders.



CONCLUSION

The most significant takeaway from this year's study compared to 2016 is that a greater percentage of Millennial donors are engaged with their faith than in 2016 and they are more active compared to other generations. By contrast, attendance by GenX and Boomer+ generations has fallen and has not recovered post-pandemic to pre-COVID levels.

In addition, those who make the effort to attend in-person services give significantly more than their virtual counterparts and are more likely to give online. And while the average household income is less for those who attend virtually, it's clear there is an advantage to motivate people to attend in-person.

METHODOLOGY

This 15-minute online survey of 1,400 U.S. donors who gave at least \$20 to charity in the past year was conducted in April 2022 by Campbell Rinker. The margin of error is $\pm 2.6\%$ at the 99% confidence level. The research used a stratified random sampling methodology to proportionally recruit donors from four different generational groups – GenZ (18-23) Millennials (24-40), Gen-X (41-60), and Boomers (61+). Younger donors were oversampled to allow more accurate generational comparisons. After fielding, the researchers weighted the response by generations to reflect the national population.

ABOUT DUNHAM+COMPANY

Dunham+Company is a strategic, integrated fundraising, marketing, and communications consulting group solely focused on helping organizations build a sustainable and scalable fundraising program. In partnership with organizations, we create custom, integrated fundraising, communications, and constituency development programs that are designed to meet their unique needs. We don't believe in syndicated fundraising programs built on a "rinse and repeat" philosophy.

It's why we've created our carefully honed five-step Cause+Effect approach:

1. A biblical foundation to fundraising
2. Holistic thinking that builds sustainable growth in income
3. Integration that connects on multiple levels through multiple channels
4. Trusted advisor partnerships that bring the highest level of expertise
5. Proprietary data and research tools

Just like the law of cause and effect, we join forces with our client's cause to create a catalytic effect that not only transforms their organization, but also touches more lives all around the world.

Visit www.dunhamandcompany.com to keep up with our latest research, and join our mailing list to receive fundraising insights and leading industry trends.

