

## CVUUS 2020 Survey Results

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Co-convener Council of Ministries

Thanks to Google Forms and human beings, Connor Timmons and Jean Terwilliger for help with analyses. Surveys were collected between October 1 and November 2, 2020

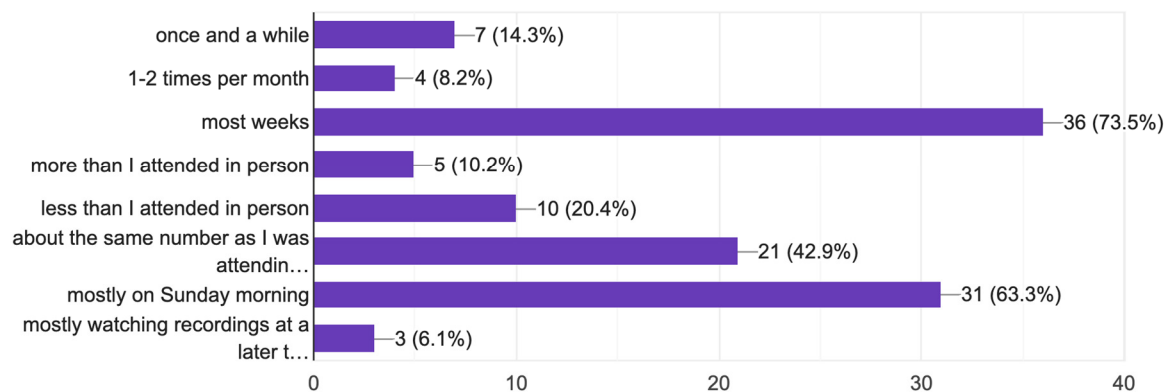
### First, who responded?

Most respondents (~90%) were over 50 years-old, 76% used female pronouns, and 20% (#=40) who responded indicated an identity other than heterosexual (80%).

### How are we doing with retaining folks for worship?

Are you attending and/or watching online services (check all that apply)

49 responses



### Regarding feeling connected?

Seventy-two percent (n=50) of respondents said they were in “frequent communication” with CVUUS people. Happily, 53% (n=51) said they feel “well connected” to other CVUUS people, 35% said maybe and 12% answered no. Of concern, but not surprising, 67% said they did not feel well connected with CVUUS families. Respondents were mostly over 50. We should see this as an opportunity.

Seventy-two percent (50 responses) said they feel connected to our CVUUS *groups*, while over a quarter who responded said they did not. Out of 35 responses, the most people (16 people) mentioned small group ministry among the numerous groups they are involved in.

### Would people like more groups to join?

People voted for more *small groups* not committees! Among them, eight said they’d like a group discuss philosophical matters and eight said groups to socialize. There is a need for small groups as a way to connect. What should they focus on? How should they identify? The only

other groups people said they would join were those working specific tasks. 84 percent (44 responses) said they would not like to receive a call about strengthening connections, and the names of those who did have been passed to the fellowship group for thoughtful follow-up.

**On two open ended questions about connections we found the following:**

**How are connections providing us with spiritual sustenance or sense of meaning?**

Most people mentioned they got sustenance from communicating, talking, planning, sharing with each other either intellectually i.e., “thinking deeply about spirituality and meaning”, or personally, as one person put it, “open hearted sharing and caring with each other.” Others mentioned things like helping others, taking actions and “doing together”. Choir and singing were it for several people. A number of folks were less specific, alluding to their involvement with CVUUS giving them a sense of purpose, role, or place. Some examples are, “Just knowing CVUUS is there provides a sense of strength,” “...get beyond myself”. “helps keep me grounded,” and “I like to have a well-defined role or job.”

**Ways CVUUS can support us:**

Thirty-two people responded. Several sounded vexed, “I wish I knew”. Twelve said they do not need more from CVUUS. Seven others mentioned safely-held face-to-face gatherings either to hike or to work together, and one person mentioned meeting for a service outside in a big space in the country when the weather supports it. Continue CVUUS dinners for families, Barnaby’s messages, and small group ministry. Continue worship services that help us “keep perspective on what matters” one person said. New ideas included zoom debates or discussions, small group ministry focused on the outdoors, and identifying small opportunities to help others (rather than big commitments).

**How can we better connect with each other?**

Thirty people responded. At least nine mentioned a desire for some sort of face to face interaction. Lots of ideas about small groups (10 mentions) either virtual or in-person. How about a firepit distanced gathering outside at CVUUS? A monthly small group to read the poetry we are writing or show and tell objects? There was an offer to lead drawing practice; how about a buddy system within small groups to call each other regularly; apple picking, and maybe a new small group at East View.

Helping each other in concrete ways resonated for some.

*“I wonder if there’s a COVID-appropriate way that the 50- and 60 - and 70-somethings can support those families. Maybe you could ask those parents?”*

At least 5 people wanted to gather specifically at CVUUS, as one person said, we should do “the hard work of figuring out” how we can safely use the buildings for our own and other groups’

gatherings. Suggestions included at Christmas, for lectures, and even creating safe, smaller, in person/remote worship services. Several suggested calls and visits to elderly people and creating opportunities for older people to participate in general. But others broadened that idea:

“Perhaps each of us could send an email or make a phone call to someone we have not seen to let them know that we miss them.”

### **Comments by the COM analysts:**

A few elements ran through the survey responses. Despite our current best efforts, people aren't hearing—or don't feel like they are hearing—about CVUUS opportunities, offerings, and news. Rethinking or targeting our communications may make us all feel more connected. What are we doing? How are we doing? And a lot of us need reminders.

*“Sharing news about how people are doing is nice. It could be fun to have a space for those little updates in the weekly blast. We don't always wind up watching the service videos, so getting to know about milestones & passages in the email and/or newsletter could be a nice way to feel more connected.”*

We don't know what we don't know. Only a sample of current congregants (180 members plus friends and children) responded. We did not hear equally from people who identify themselves with male pronouns (only 9) and only three people 30-50 years-old and one person under 29 responded.

Among those who did complete the survey, a handful of people said their needs are not, or inadequately, being met by CVUUS. Others did not answer. Our challenge in the coming months is to connect this knowledge with new programming, sensitive outreach, meaningful projects, new ways to gather in person, and then...to make a big deal about it so people hear the great news.