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# Online Services mission opportunities

The gospel has always utilised the cutting-edge technology of the day

- The Roman Road
- Printing and the Bible in the vernacular
- The Internet



WELCOME TO  
**ONLINECHURCH**



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## From Acts of Uniformity to Deliberate Diversity

- The Anglican distinctive is no longer seen as a worship style but as being there for everybody
- The journey from holding to traditions to generating mixed ecology is uncomfortable, controversial and inexorable
- Why should we not want Jesus to be worshipped and disciples to be made in the living rooms of the nation?

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Traditional onsite and online



Contemporary onsite and online



Fresh onsite and online



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## 2022 Online church – onsite church

*The new post-restrictions freedom and opportunity*

- Traditional **and** contemporary
- Established **and** fresh expressions
- Onsite **and** online
- Sacred spaces **and** living rooms
- Diversity is strength in the mixed ecology church
- A multi-cultural church for a multi-cultural world



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Recover onsite,  
stay online, be trad,  
modern and fresh,  
theological, pastoral and  
technical

- Mesmerising?
- Feeling out of your depth, retreating to the familiar?
- Is this moment of maximum opportunity also the moment of maximum confusion and exhaustion?



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Time for clear thinking,  
serious praying and  
wise choices

- It helps to see the big picture and work out our place in it
- The Great Commission to make disciples is unchanged – methods have multiplied, but the aim is the same
- A healthy church does not exhaust itself on a thousand scattergun activities but does a few things well



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So how is online church developing in the C of E?

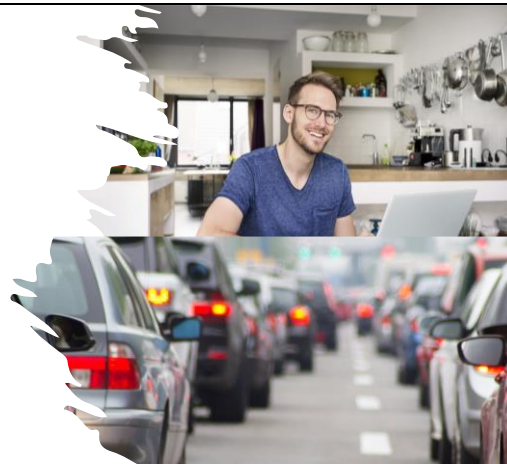
-  Easter Attendance in four dioceses
-  50% response rate – 755 churches
-  Onsite numbers and online estimates



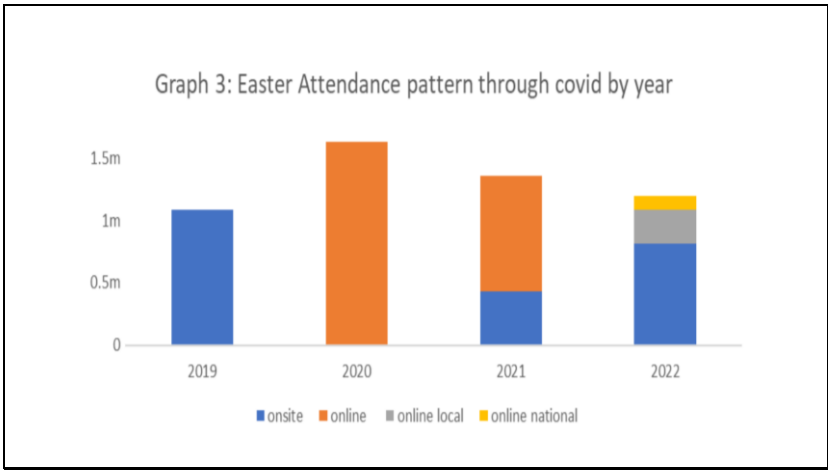
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Accelerated,  
permanent  
change

- Online shopping, entertainment, home working, have all receded from their lockdown peaks but they are much bigger than before covid
- The same is true for online church



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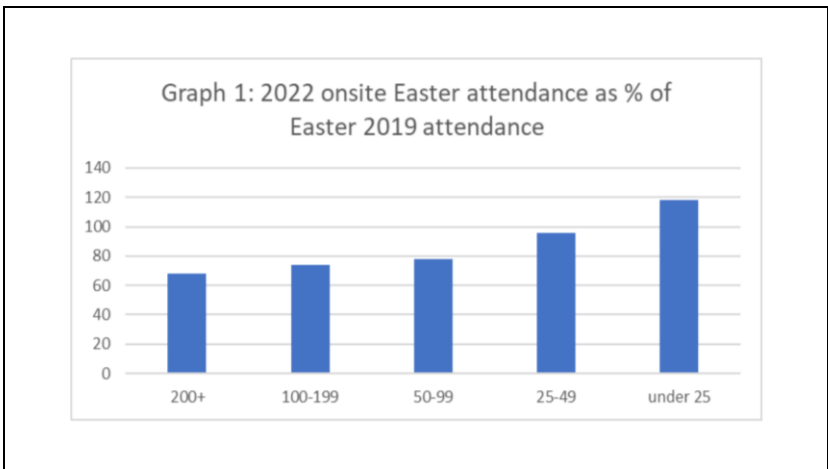
### Small churches have recovered onsite better than big ones

- Scattered & mobile - harder to re-assemble
- Front door closed but back door stayed open
- Fear of a crowd
- Small village communities
- No fear of a dangerous crowd in our church!



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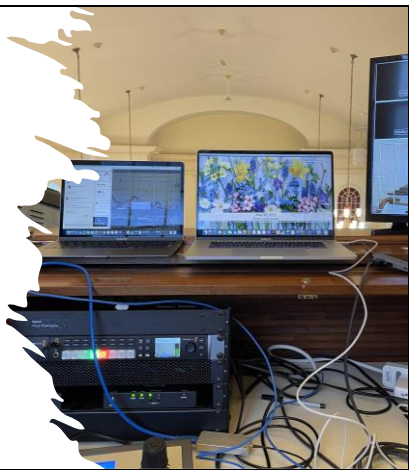


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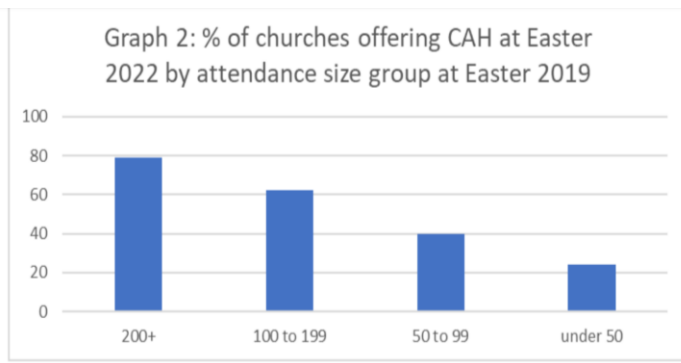
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### But large churches are more likely to be online

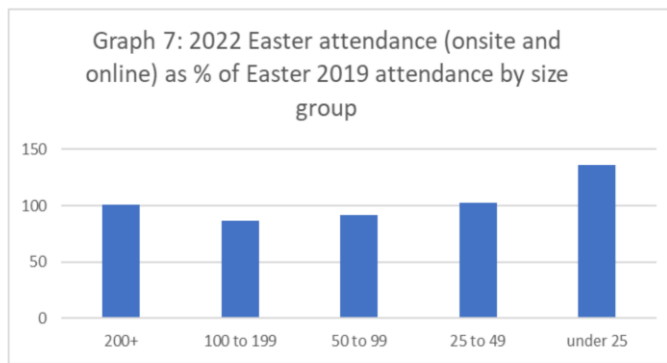
- Only 44% of the 755 churches offered 'Church at Home' at Easter 2022 compared with 57% in October 2021 and maybe 80% at the peak in 2020
- But these still covered 59% of the churchgoers



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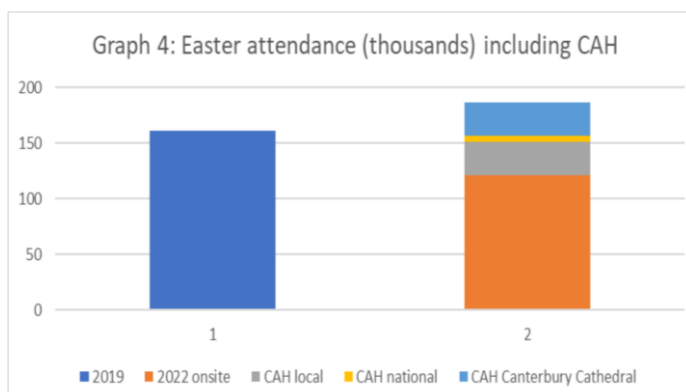
A few churches with a national or regional reach had very large online attendance numbers

Twenty or so churches between them add maybe 10% to total C of E Easter attendance simply from their YouTube views:

- Canterbury Cathedral 50,000
- King's College Chapel 33,000
- Holy Trinity Brompton 22,000

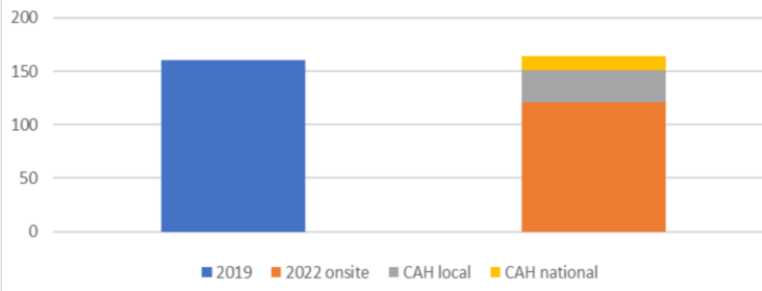


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Graph 5: Easter attendance (thousands) including CAH but excluding Canterbury Cathedral



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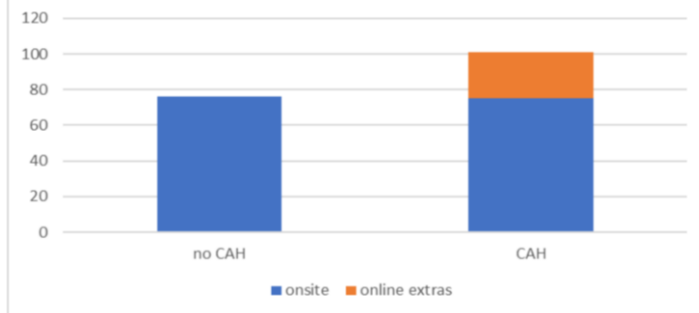
Onsite attendance change 2019-22 was the same whether or not online was offered

- So, the online numbers seemed additional to onsite
- Churches stopping online to force people back onsite may be making a big mistake



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Graph 6: Easter 2022 attendance as % of Easter 2019 attendance



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Trying the church out online first is increasingly the way into onsite attendance

- They used to check out the notice board
- Then they checked out the website
- Now they check out the online service
- So, a good online offering is now important to onsite growth



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## A higher proportion of online views are now catch up not as-live

- Probably only 10-15% view as live on YouTube – others catch up all through the subsequent week
- In lockdown it was maybe 25-50% as live
- If the time does not suit, people are unlikely to be enticed back into the building
- People are busy again – there may be fewer 'glances' among the YT views



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## Who is choosing Online in the long term?

- Housebound, elderly, care homes
- Nervous of close human contact
- New to church, nervous of attending in person
- A step along the way to attending onsite
- Families failing to organise everyone out of the house at the same time e.g. sport-clashes



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## Who is choosing Online in the long term?

- Shift workers, Sunday workers, non-regular lifestyles
- One person out of a non-churchgoing household
- Can't get to church this week – holiday, ill, working, visitors etc
- So, many people are not 'either-or' but mix onsite and online. This increases attendance frequency



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## Who is choosing Online in the long term?

- Online Community is natural and normal, especially for some young adults
- Unable or unwilling to shape life round church but will fit church into life
- Live too far away but identify with this church – historic links and strong brands



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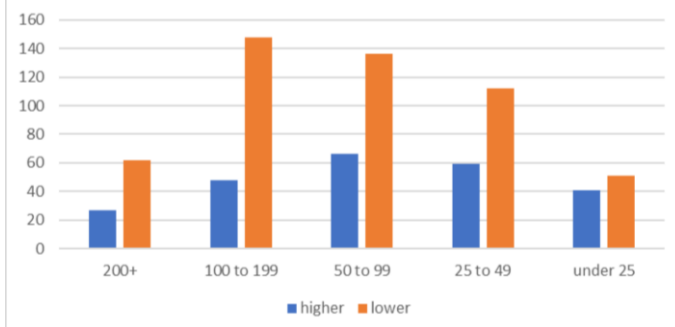
There was huge variability between individual churches

- Many had less than half the 2019 congregation onsite
- Some had more than double
- It is not yet clear whether this is simply because some congregations are taking longer to come together again or because there are many churches with large permanent losses



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Graph 8: Numbers of churches with higher or lower 2022 Easter attendance by 2019 attendance size groups



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### Some recent trends

- Less Zoom & FB – mainly YT now
- Less live more catch-up
- Online now extra to onsite not instead of
- Some online giants emerged – cathedrals, strong branding
- Some just TV, others try to incorporate onliners
- Some churches (13% Oct-Easter) stopping their online offering
- But online resilience - 60% of Anglicans still have online available from their own church
- Short formats – daily office, sermons, segments, online-only
- Weddings, baptisms and funerals
- Too few trying fully hybrid

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### Types of Online Service

- Simple livestream
- Zoom
- Professional TV livestream
- Hybrid livestream
- Online livestream
- Daily Office
- Online only
- Short formats and extracts
- Online Church

