



to 2020, but continued to be affected by Covid measures, new

Average weekly attendance, which includes Sundays and midweek attendance, grew to 605,000 in 2021 compared to 345,000 in 2020. But it was lower than in 2019 when average weekly attendance stood at 854,000 people.

The number of baptisms and weddings grew in 2021 compared to 2020, with 26,500 marriages and services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage and 55,200 baptisms or thanksgiving services for a child.

Many churches continued to provide 'church at home' services in 2021, offered online, by phone, post, email, and other means amid a range of Covid restrictions.

It comes as separate figures show the number of people praying online has continued to grow sharply over the past year with downloads of the Church of England's Daily Prayer audio at 3.2 million so far in 2022 – 62% higher than 2021 when it was launched. Total downloads now stand at 5.2 million.

Daily Prayer audio – across the Daily Prayer podcast and app – has now reached more than 1.1 million unique listeners.

Meanwhile, figures from the Church of England's digital channels show that social media content – prayers, Bible verses, reflection content, good news stories and encouragement – have been seen more than 65 million times this year so far.

This amounts to approximately 1.3 million impressions per week with content seen roughly 190,000 times a day.

And the Church of England's national online service averages around 150,000 views a week with an average of 300 written comments a week from regular online worshipping communities.

Dr Ken Eames, author of the Statistics for Mission 2021 report, from the Church of England's Data Analysis team, said: "2021 was another year of Covid-related disruption for churches, as the figures in this report show.

"The figures from 2020 and 2021 describe the extraordinary times that churches and their communities have been through and need to be understood in that context.

"My expectation is that we will see a further return of worshippers to churches in 2022."

In his summary to the report, he remarks that clergy, lay leaders and congregations had shown an "impressive and encouraging" adaptability throughout an uncertain year that was still affected by Covid restrictions.

The summary adds: "The pandemic continued to have an impact on the life of the Church of England, with some churches being closed for worship for parts of 2021 and some members of congregations continuing not to attend in-person services. It would be very surprising, \_\_\_\_\_

therefore, if Church of England attendance and participation in 2021 returned to their pre-pandemic levels.

“This report should be treated as a summary of another anomalous year, indicating the extent to which things have 'bounced back' but noting that further bouncing back is expected.”

**Read the full report:** [Statistics for Mission 2021 | The Church of England](#)

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