Statistics for Mission show increase in regular worshippers and average weekly attendance.
Nearly a million people were regular worshippers last year as the Church of England continued its post pandemic bounce back, statistics from the Church of England show today.

The worshipping community of the Church of England – made up of regular worshippers – grew by nearly 20,000 people to 984,000 in 2022 compared to 966,000 in 2021. Average weekly attendance for all ages grew nearly 50,000 over the same period from 605,000 to 654,000.

Child average weekly attendance rose 17% from its 2021 level to 87,000 and there was an 85% rise in all age school service attendance from its 2021 level to 164,000.

But despite the rises over two years, the figures were lower than before the pandemic in 2019 when the worshipping community stood at 1.1 million and all age average weekly attendance was 854,000.

Child average weekly attendance stood at 120,000 and school service attendance was 182,000 in 2019.

The Church of England's Statistics for Mission showed that there were 81,800 baptisms and thanksgivings for a child, compared to 55,200 in 2021.

Nearly 10,000 more children aged between one and four years old were baptised in 2022 compared to 2019 as churches caught up on baptisms that had been postponed amid Covid measures.

Similarly the number of marriages and services of prayer and dedication after civil marriage rose to pre pandemic levels at 31,400 in 2022.

Christmas attendance rose to 1.6 million in 2022 compared to 970,000 in 2021 while Easter attendance rose to 860,000 compared to 520,000 in 2021.

Attendances for Advent services in churches in 2022 stood at 3.9 million, including community, civic and school services.

More than a third of churches, or 36%, continued to provide 'church at home' services in 2022, offered online, by phone, post, email, and other means.

Social action figures for churches showed more than 30,000 projects supported or provided by Church of England parishes with emergency food provision and community cafes on the rise amid the cost of living crisis.

Nearly two-thirds of Church of England churches – 60% – are involved in running or supporting food banks while more than one in five, or 23%, runs or supports a community café, typically offering low cost or free meals.

The figures show that churches are running 450 more food banks and community cafes in 2022 than in 2019.

The survey also showed that 500 churches reported for the first time in 2022 that they had offered a 'warm space' to help people struggling to heat their homes.
Overall the figures showed 31,300 social action projects supported or run by Church of England churches last year compared to 35,000 in 2019 before the pandemic, with the report noting the likely impact of Covid restrictions on some activities.

Churches reported running 14,100 projects themselves and hosting another 3,400. A further 4,200 projects were carried out in partnership with other organisations and an additional 9,700 projects were supported by churches in other ways.

More than 2,000 of those churches responding for the 2022 survey reported that they ran three or more different social action projects.

Separate figures show the number of people praying online continued to grow with 4.6 million downloads over the past year across all Church of England podcasts.

Daily Prayer audio – across the Daily Prayer podcast and app – has now reached more than 1.6 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 85 million times this year so far.

Posts shared by the Church of England were engaged with 16.5 million times – an increase of 380% on previous 12 months.

Dr Ken Eames, author of the Statistics for Mission 2022 report, from the Church of England’s Data Services team, said: “Churches did everything they could to return to normal life in 2022 following the huge disruption of 2020 and 2021 caused by the pandemic.

“But 2022 was not free of its impact, indeed official figures suggest that Covid rates were higher in October 2022 than in 2021.

“Although for many people things were getting back to normal, churches were still experiencing Covid-related disruption.”

You can read the full report here.