

Church during pandemic: *use of social media by various denominations in Latvia*

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FLPP
FUNDAMENTAL AND
APPLIED RESEARCH
PROJECTS



**UNIVERSITY
OF LATVIA**



My context

PhD candidate in communication sciences,
in University of Latvia.

Part of a research project about the media
ecology of Latvia.

Interested in topics related to self, identity and
social networking sites.

Also a Catholic. For year and a half I have been
the Head of the Information Centre of the
Catholic Church in Latvia.

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Please, stay at home, **use technologies**. If you attend the church, keep distance.
Janis Bordans, Ministry of Justice



Context of the church in Latvia during pandemic

first

**ATTENDANCE
FORBIDDEN**

then

**LIMITED
ATTENDANCE**

Research questions

1. How did various denominations communicate holding the services online?
2. What were the practices of taking part in online services?

Method = case study (incl. content analysis of social media) + survey (n=625)

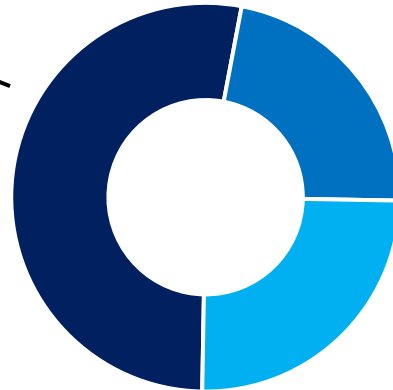
Is online service the same service?

Denominations that have a theology that includes the concept of sacrament (Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran church) were more likely to emphasize that «**while it is not possible to take part in services**, let us be connected at least in this way...»

Other denominations (including Baptist church and various Pentacostal parishes) were either paying **no attention** to changed circumstances and holding the services on social media, or emphasizing that **home and family is the place where service takes place**, thus online service is just a sign of being together.

How should we call it?

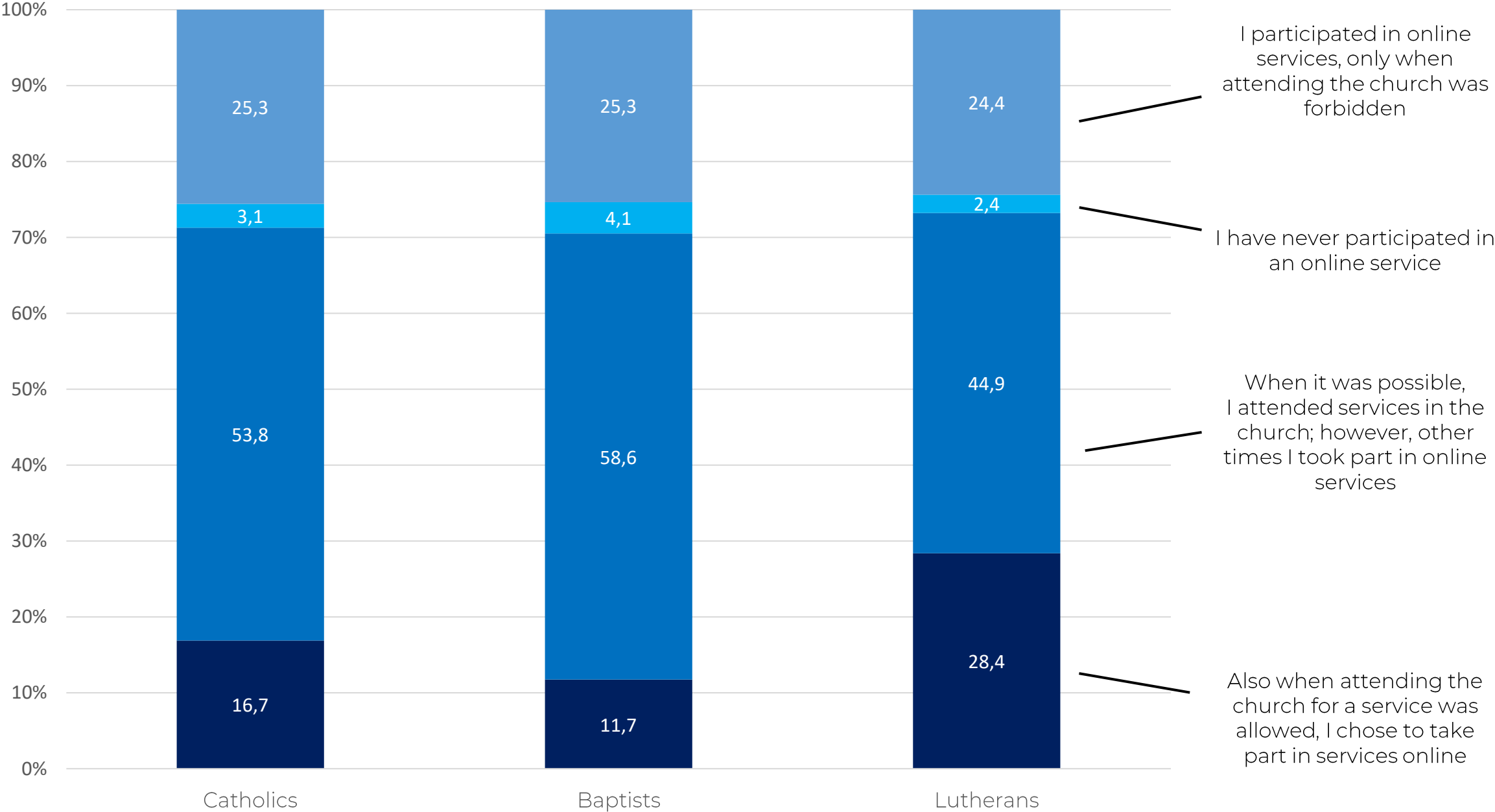
Taking part in an online service (52,7%)



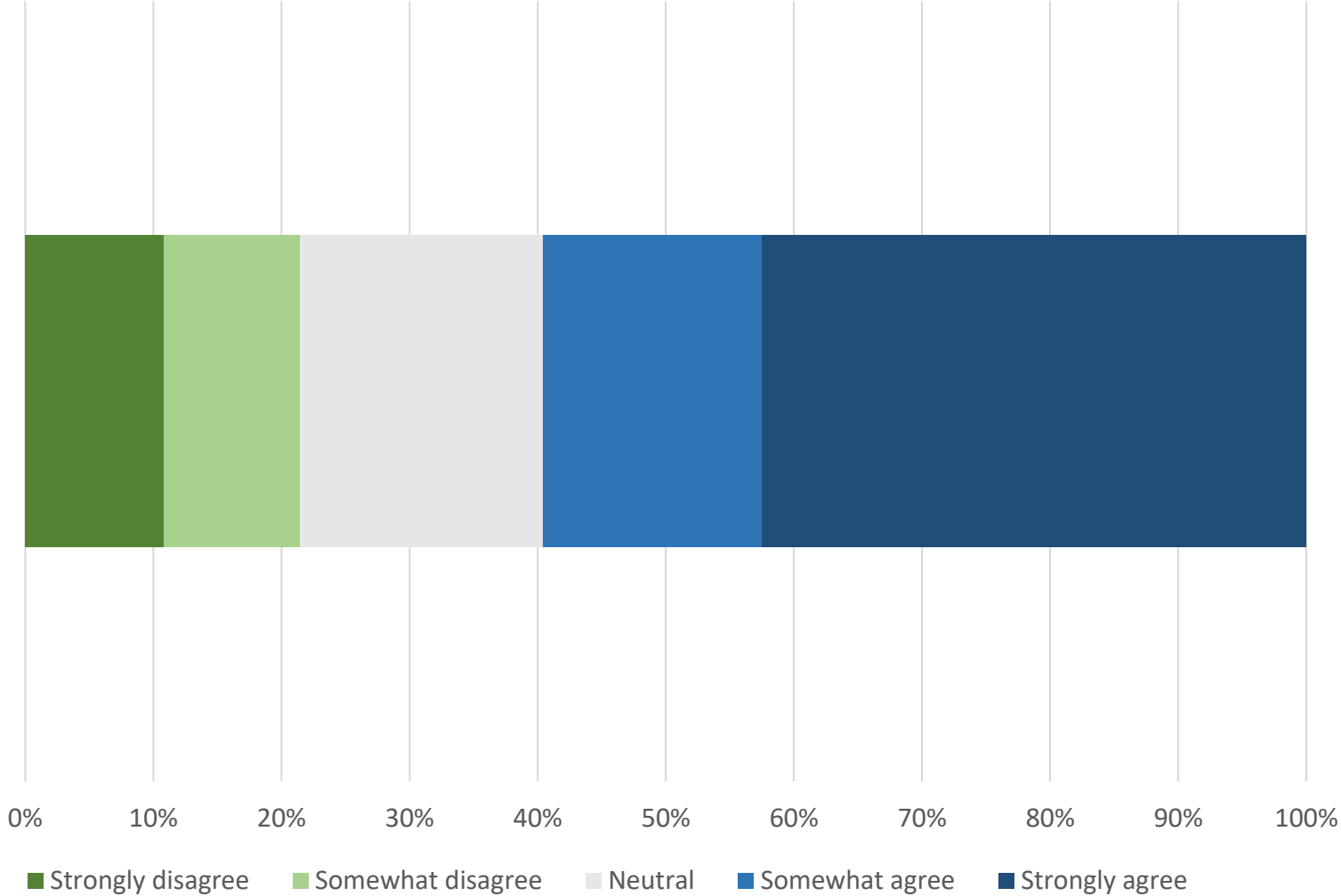
Both terms are equally correct (25,3%)

Watching an online service (22,3%)

attending the church vs online services



I SEE THIS ONLY AS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION.



What is the new ritual?

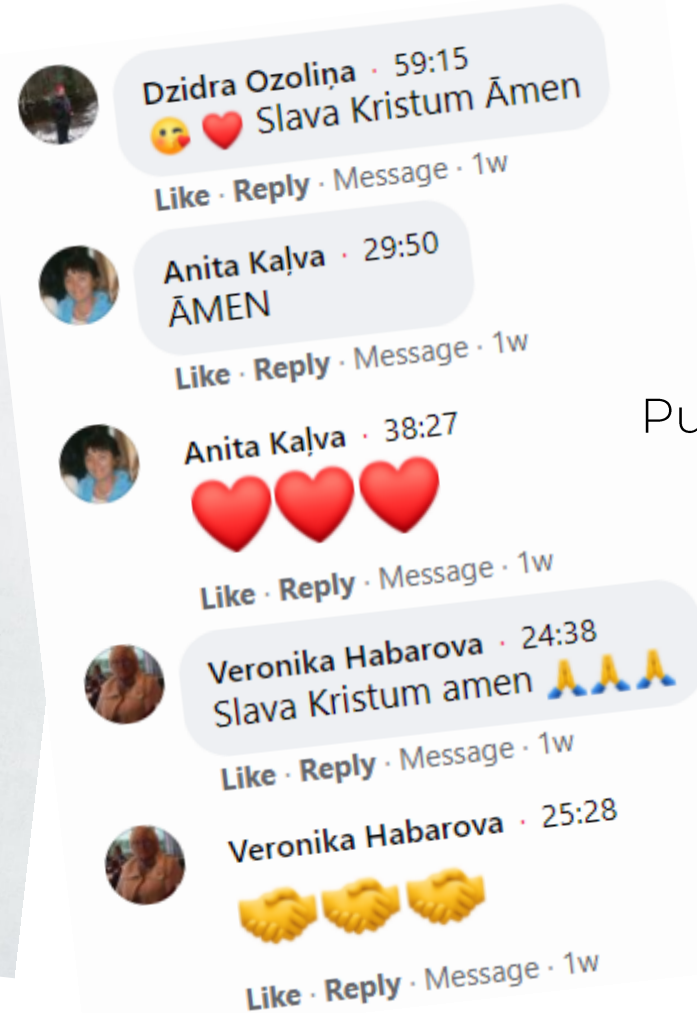


For some churches – no big changes.

Worship, sermons and testimonies are broadcasted live just as they were taking place on the stage.

What is the new ritual?

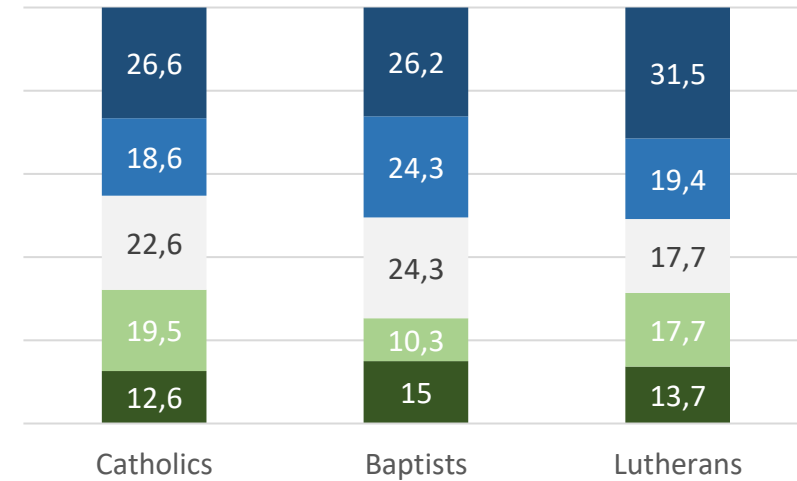
«Buy your own bread and pour a glass of grape juice! Let us celebrate the service just as generations before us did.»



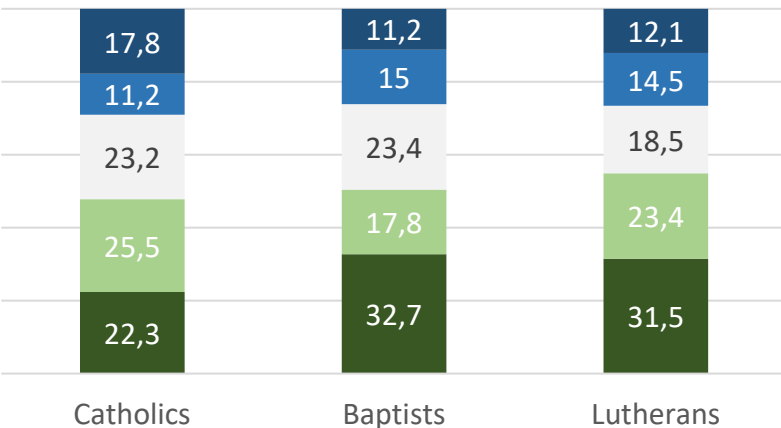
Public interactions

What is the new ritual?

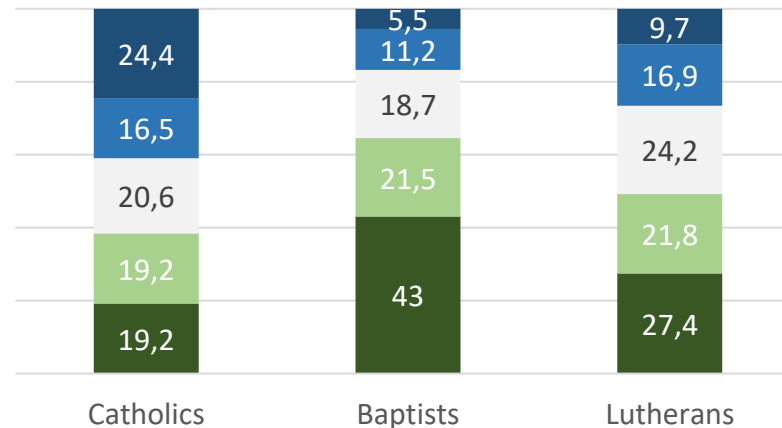
When taking part in an online service, I used to sing along.



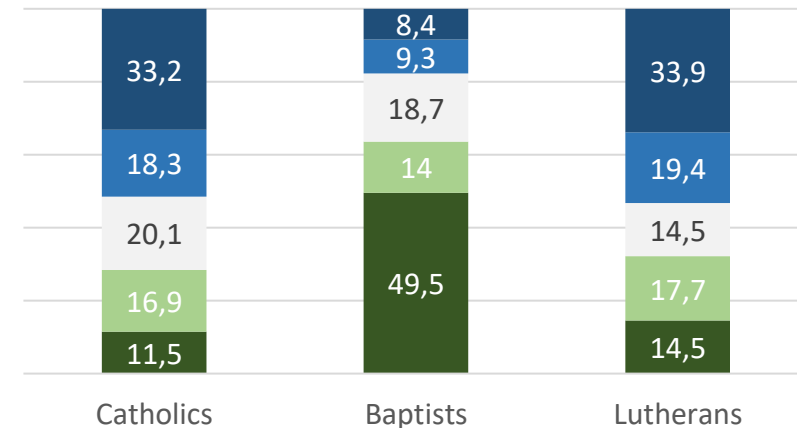
When taking part in an online service, I arranged the space around me.



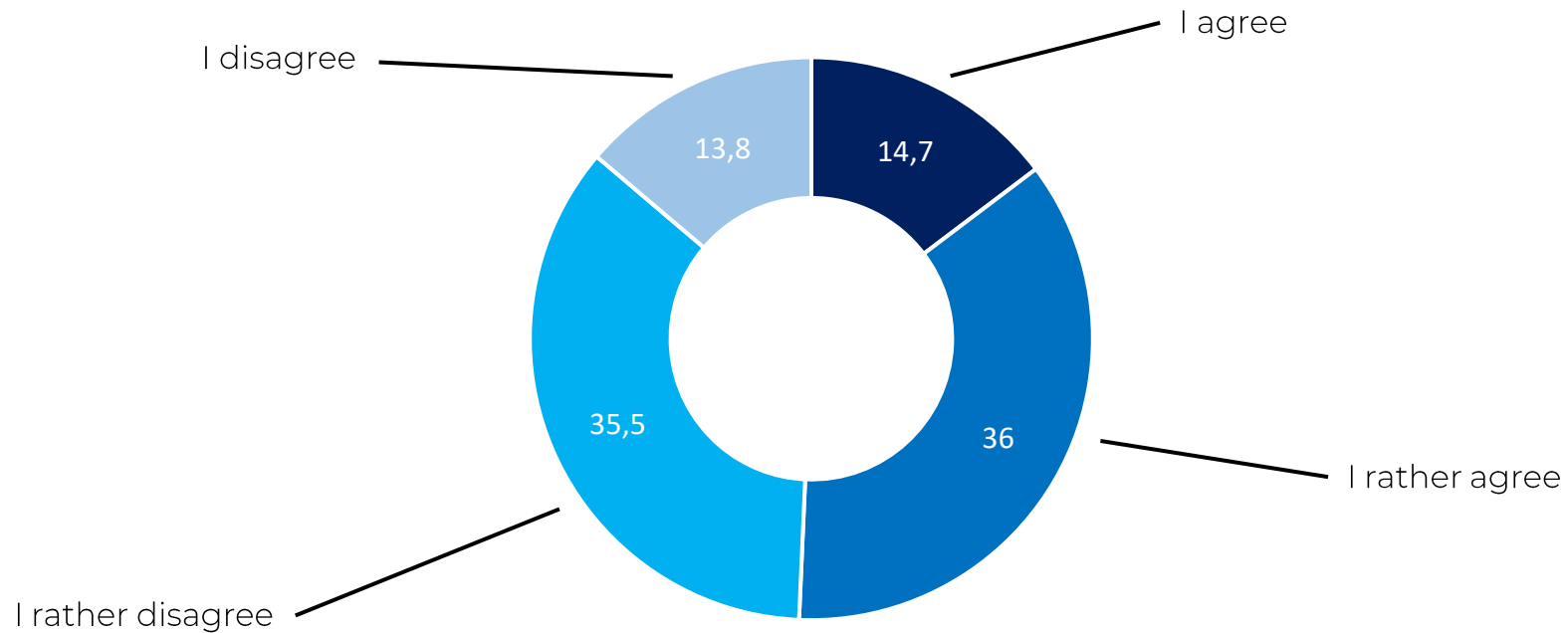
When taking part in an online service, I performed the relevant actions (i.e., kneeling).



When taking part in an online service, I said the answers out loud.



An online service can broadcast the same spiritual experience as attending one in a church.



Some other facts...

8% used the possibility to send in their prayer intentions before the service.

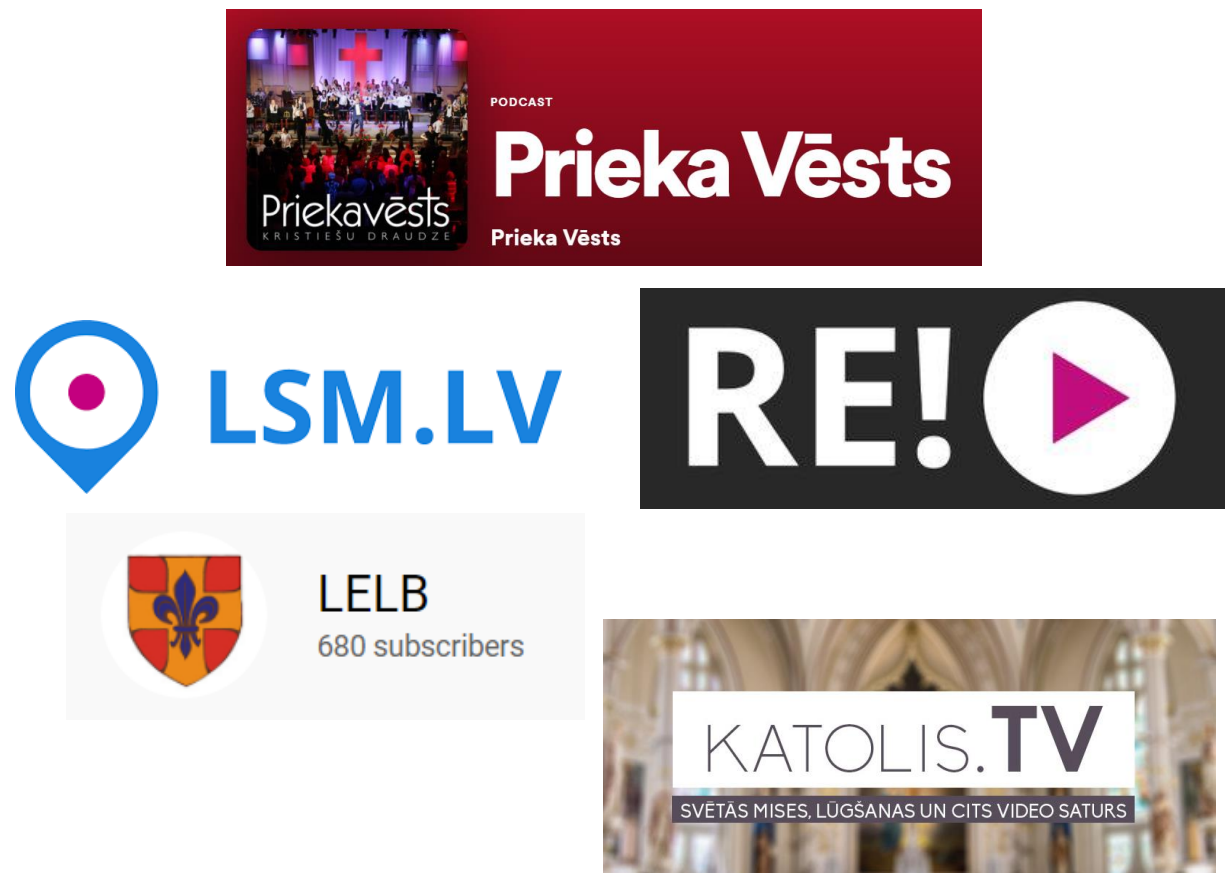
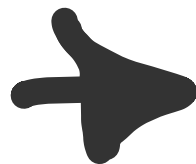
40% took part in other spiritual activities (such as prayer groups) via social media platforms.

25% felt alienated from their parish due to pandemic.

10% felt alienated from their faith due to pandemic.

Transforming

THE PRACTICES OF MEDIA USAGE




LATVIJAS EVANĢĒLISKI LUTERISKĀ BAZNĪCA
Viena miesa - viena Kristus draudze
BAZNĪCAS NOTIKUMU PLĀNS 19.-25.04.

SVĒTDIENA	Dievkalpojums
PIRMDIENA	Rīta kafija ar mācītāju Bībeles lasījums Bībeles stunda
OTRDIENA	Rīta kafija ar mācītāju Bībeles lasījums
TREŠDIENA	Rīta kafija ar mācītāju Bībeles lasījums Svētdienas skolas nodarbība
ĢETURTDIENA	Rīta kafija ar mācītāju Bībeles lasījums Bībeles stunda
PIEKTDIENA	Rīta kafija ar mācītāju Bībeles lasījums Alfa kurss
SESTDIENA	Bībeles lasījums Iesvētes mācības

Svētās Mises tiešraides **KATOLIS.TV** kanālā

SVĒTDIENĀS

- 09:00** Jelgavas Bezvainīgās Jaunavas Marijas katedrāle (*krievu val.*)
- 11:00** Saldus Svētā Pētera un Pāvila baznīca
- 11:30** Rīgas Vissvētākās Trīsvienības draudze
- 12:00** Siguldas Jēzus Sirds baznīca
- 15:00** Daugavpils Jēzus Sirds baznīca (*krievu val.*)
- 19:00** Aglonas bazilika (*latgaliešu val.*)

DARBA DIENĀS UN SESTDIENĀS
07:30 , 08:00 (trešd.) , 18:00 , 18:30 , 19:00



transformation of media use

use of social media maintains reference to traditional media

Conclusions



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

& STAY SAFE!

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