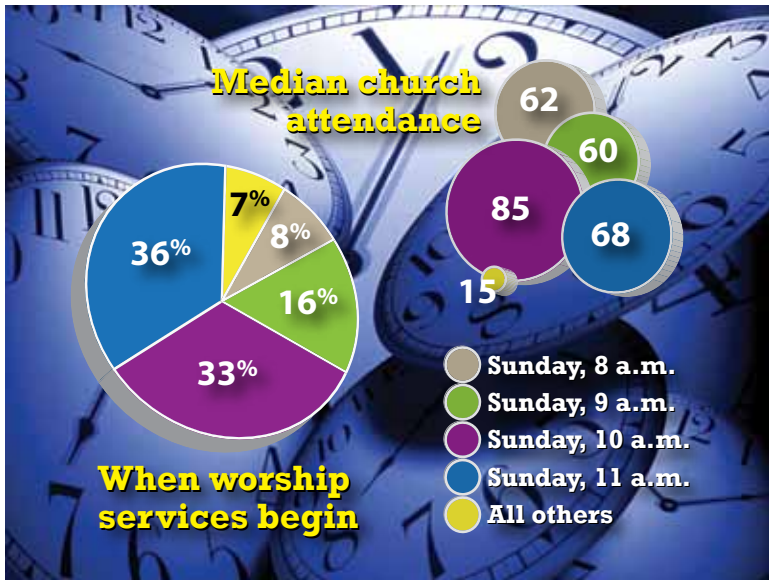


GO FIGURE

JACK MARCUM and JOELLE ANDERSON



What the research shows

It's interesting that so few services take place other than on Sunday mornings. The Sunday evening service, once widespread, has all but disappeared. While some congregations have services on other days of the week, they typically have low attendance—equal to 3 percent of their Sunday morning worship attendance—suggesting that attendance at most of these services is marginal.

Even on Sunday mornings, worship is concentrated in the second half of the 8 a.m.-to-noon period. As noted in the data at left, few surveyed congregations with single services start worship before 10 a.m. And congregations with second or third services that begin before 10 a.m. average less than two-thirds as many worshipers (62 percent) for them as for services starting later in the morning.

In effect, Presbyterians are staking our future as a worshipping community on the ability to attract people during a brief period on Sunday mornings. While it is a traditional time for Christian worship, these few hours a week are no longer exclusively ours. To the extent congregations succeed, it will be because they make a compelling case for regular church participation in an era when an increasingly secular society provides ever more opportunities to do other things. □

When Presbyterians worship

When do Presbyterians worship? The stereotype is 11 a.m. on Sunday mornings. While there is some truth to that, it doesn't tell the whole story, as findings from 292 PC(USA) congregations participating in the 2008–2009 U.S. Congregational Life Survey show:

- **Almost all weekly worship services occur on Sunday morning** (93 percent). Of the rest, the largest numbers occur on Wednesday (4 percent), Saturday (1 percent) or later on Sunday (1 percent).
- **Most Sunday morning services begin around 10 a.m.** (36 percent) **or 11 a.m.** (38 percent), although a fair number begin earlier, with 8 percent starting around 8 a.m. and 18 percent around 9 a.m.*
- **Most congregations** (79 percent) **have just one Sunday morning service.** Nearly two in ten (18 percent) have two; and 2 percent have three.
- **In congregations with two Sunday morning services,** they typically occur at 9 and 11 a.m. (in 34 percent of such congregations) or 8 and 11 a.m. (26 percent).
- **The earliest services in congregations with a single Sunday morning service** begin around 9 a.m. (15 percent), though most begin around either 10 a.m. (44 percent) or 11 a.m. (41 percent).

*"Around 8 a.m." refers to services that begin anywhere between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m.; "around 9 a.m.," beginning between 8:31 and 9:30 a.m.; "around 10 a.m.," between 9:31 and 10:30 a.m.; and "around 11 a.m.," between 10:31 and 11:30 a.m.

OTHER FINDINGS www.pcusa.org/research

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