
COVID-19 Survey Summary

What You Told Us and Our District Response

On September 21st, the District distributed a survey request to all Official Workers in an effort to understand the impact of the pandemic on your lives and ministries, and inform our efforts to support and encourage you. We are extremely grateful for your honest and thoughtful responses and in this document we'd like to summarize what you told us, encourage you with some common themes from those who are flourishing, and report on how your responses are shaping district initiatives.

We are also hoping to reinforce to those of us who may be struggling that you are not alone; many are experiencing isolation or discouragement as the pandemic drags on.

Number surveyed: 371

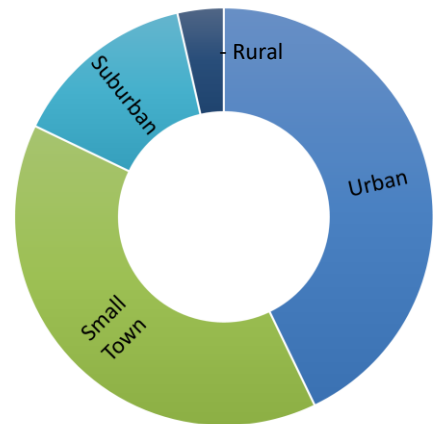
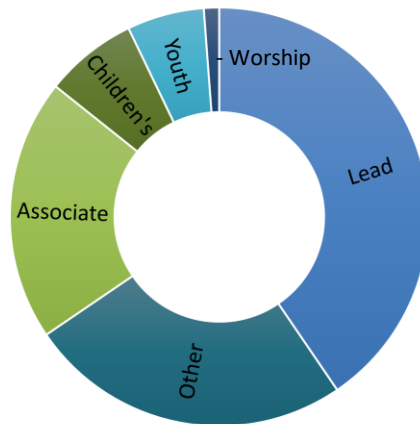
Number of responses: 84

Those who are flourishing*: **25%**

Those who are coping*: **29%**

Those who are struggling*: **46%**

*Our summary terms



How You're Doing

Throughout your 26 pages of responses, words such as *anxiety*, *stress*, *loneliness*, *grief*, *uncertainty*, and *fatigue* were mentioned over 200 times. It is evident that there has been a significant increase in anxiety and stress among us, as many feel the weight and weariness of the pandemic. We don't share this to discourage you, but to let you know that *you are not alone*.

Although the majority of us are feeling the burden of this season, many are finding positive ways to manage their stress and mental health. You used words such as *thriving*, *excited*, *rested*, and *anticipation*.

Many of us are seeking ways to maintain equilibrium and care for our health, holistically speaking. Here are some themes from those who describe themselves as flourishing through this season:

- Prioritizing time with the Lord, seeking his face and his adequacy, holding to his promises, and practicing spiritual disciplines.
- Identifying a mentor or another pastor to whom we can talk and be accountable; creating community to the extent that we can experience it given the restrictions with which we're living.
- Investing in our physical health, in exercise and in movement. Walking outdoors has become a daily discipline for many.

District Response to What You've Told Us

Your District Office team wants to continue to support you in the pandemic by creating helpful resources, brokering connections to skilled people, and facilitating nourishing relationships.

Here are some of the things we're working on or have already initiated:

- Three of our district preachers have graciously made sermons available to those of you responsible for preaching so you can have a 'guest' speaker and take a break from preaching. These sermons can be found [here](#).
- Lisa Rohrick is hosting a bi-weekly Zoom prayer meeting at 2:00pm (PST) on the first and third Thursday afternoon of every month. Details can be found [here](#).
- New resources on relevant topics are being planned.
- Watch for facilitated Zoom meetings focused on timely issues and conversations.
- Your District Lead Team has identified several experienced and highly regarded leaders of both genders offering spiritual direction. Many among us are finding the practice of listening for the voice of Jesus with the assistance of a spiritual director to be transformative. Lead Team members are happy to discuss this with you.
- Many of you told us that you feel that COVID-19 has shifted your ministry role and you are now working outside of your core giftings. For this reason, the District will communicate with all church boards encouraging a check-in with all pastors to discuss this reality and find ways to mitigate the negative consequences, including the possibility of providing further training.

- Lifeworks Employee Assistance Plan and [Wello Virtual Healthcare](#). Lifeworks' services include confidential counselling and support for issues including grief and bereavement, relationships, anxiety and depression, and solutions for work-related issues. Wello provides video consultations and assessments with healthcare practitioners who can provide referrals, prescribe medication, and recommend immediate coping strategies.

We value each of you, we are praying for all of you, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Where We Are: The In-Between

As we, the District Lead Team, have reflected on our circumstances in the pandemic and on how you've told us you're doing in those circumstances, we've been struck by the connections to the Old Testament imagery of the wilderness.

The narratives of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers portray the wilderness as 'the in-between,' the space between Egypt and Canaan.

The wilderness is the unfamiliar space of dislocation, of rootless wandering. It's dry and arid and surreal and feels dangerous. It brings unique temptations and threats. Resources appear limited, the sun is relentless and inescapable, enemies lurk.

And, simultaneously, the wilderness is the place of divine encounter and provision. It's the place of manna and quail and water from rocks at the command of God. It's the place of God's self-revelation in fire and cloud and commandments and tabernacle. 'The in-between' is the space where God shows himself to be covenant-keeping, good, and powerful on behalf of his people.

Collectively, we know neither when the pandemic will 'end' nor how life and culture may be permanently affected by it. It's 'the in-between.'

We believe that we can expect both deprivation *and* sufficiency, both frustration *and* fruitfulness, both discouragement *and* renewal on this journey.

And in the coming months we'll seek to serve you with resources, connections and conversations that we pray help you survive, maybe even flourish, during 'the in-between.'