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on American Life

# Faith After the Pandemic: How COVID-19 Changed American Religion

Findings from the 2022 American Religious Benchmark Survey

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# Methodology

- NORC conducted the 2022 American Religious Benchmark Survey on behalf of, and with funding from the American Enterprise Institute.
- The survey used AmeriSpeak, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US household population.
  - Participants were able to complete the survey online or over the phone.
- The same panelists were surveyed between 2018 and March 2020 (pre-pandemic) and again between February 3 and April 4, 2022.
- A total of 9,425 people were surveyed at both times.
- 95% confidence +/- 1.4 percentage points

# Survey Questions

- What is your present religion, if any?
  - Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, Nothing in Particular, Just Christian, Unitarian, Something else
- How often do you attend religious services?
  - Never, Less than once per year, About once or twice a year, Several times a year, About once a month, Two to three times a month, Nearly every week, Every week, Several times a week
  - Recoded
    - Never: Never
    - Infrequently: Less than once per year, About once or twice a year, Several times a year
    - Occasionally: About once a month, Two to three times a month
    - Regularly: Nearly every week, Every week, Several times a week



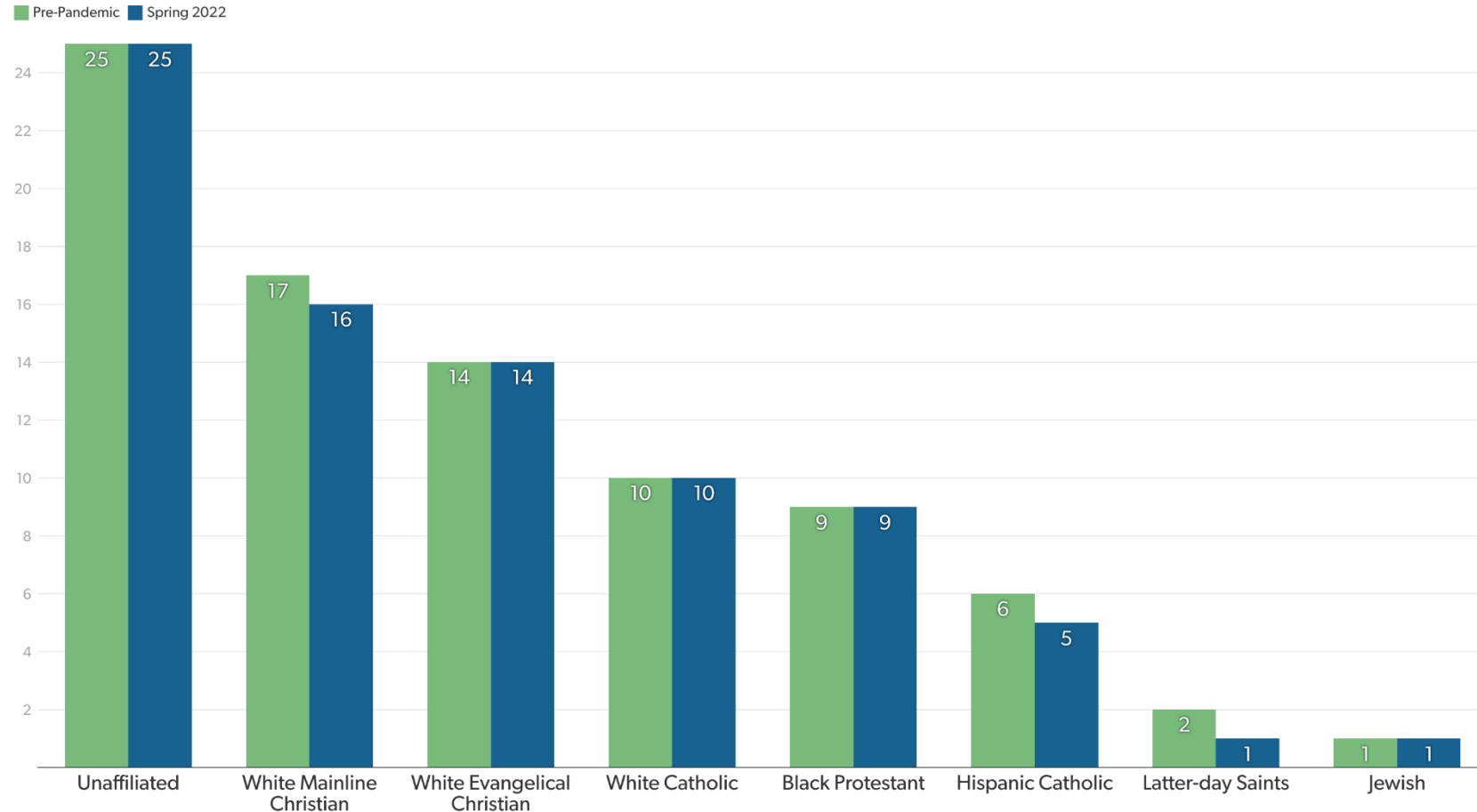
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# Breakout 1

In your experience, where have you seen changes in American religious life as a result of the pandemic?

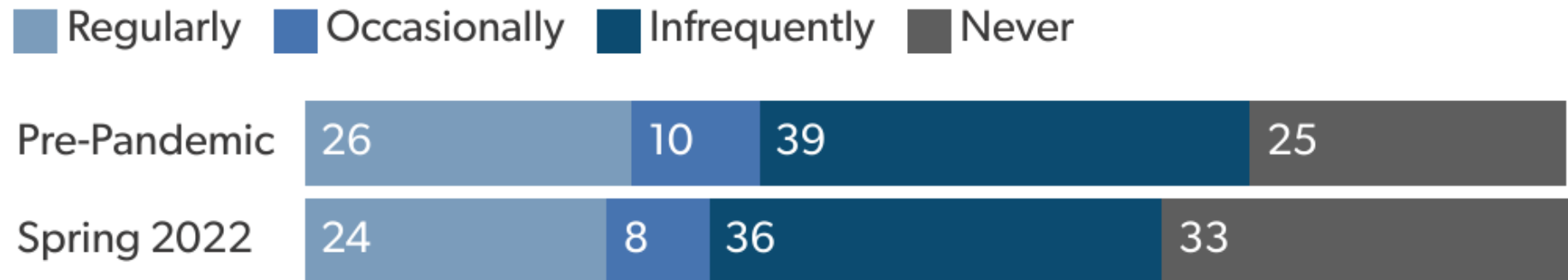
# Religious Affiliation Remained Largely Unchanged Over the Pandemic

Percentage of US Adults who identify as members of the following religious traditions . . .



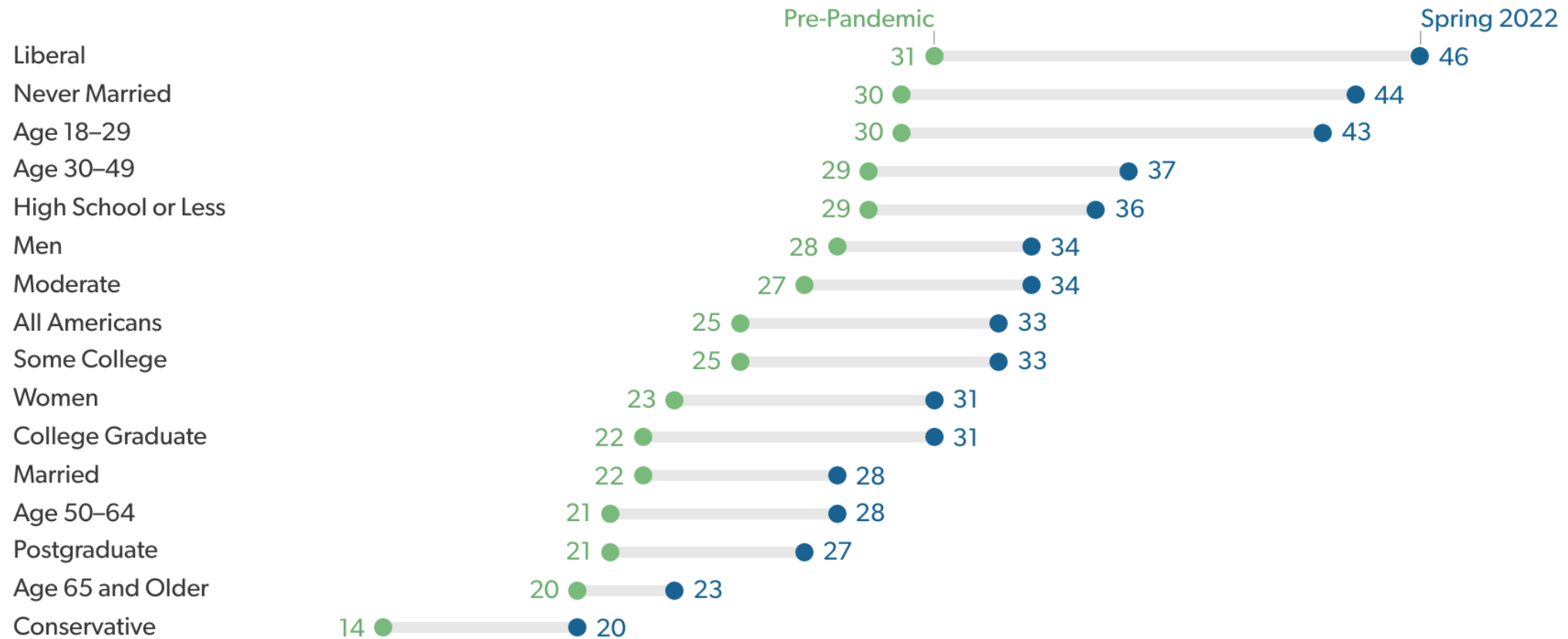
# Fewer Americans Attend Religious Services Following Pandemic

Percentage of US adults who reported attending religious services . . .



# Liberals, Young Americans Saw Greatest Declines in Worship Attendance

Percentage of each group who reported never attending religious services . . .



# Latter-day Saints (Mormons) Report Little Change in Patterns of Religious Attendance

Percentage of each religious tradition who reported attending religious services . . .

■ Regularly ■ Occasionally ■ Infrequently ■ Never

## Latter-day Saints



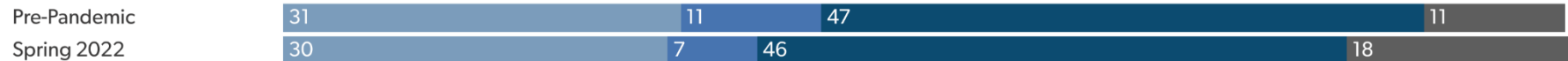
## White Evangelical Christian



## Black Protestant



## White Catholic



## Hispanic Catholic



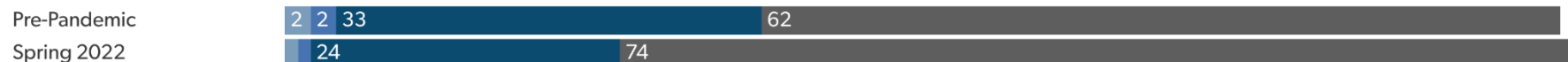
## White Mainline Christian



## Jewish

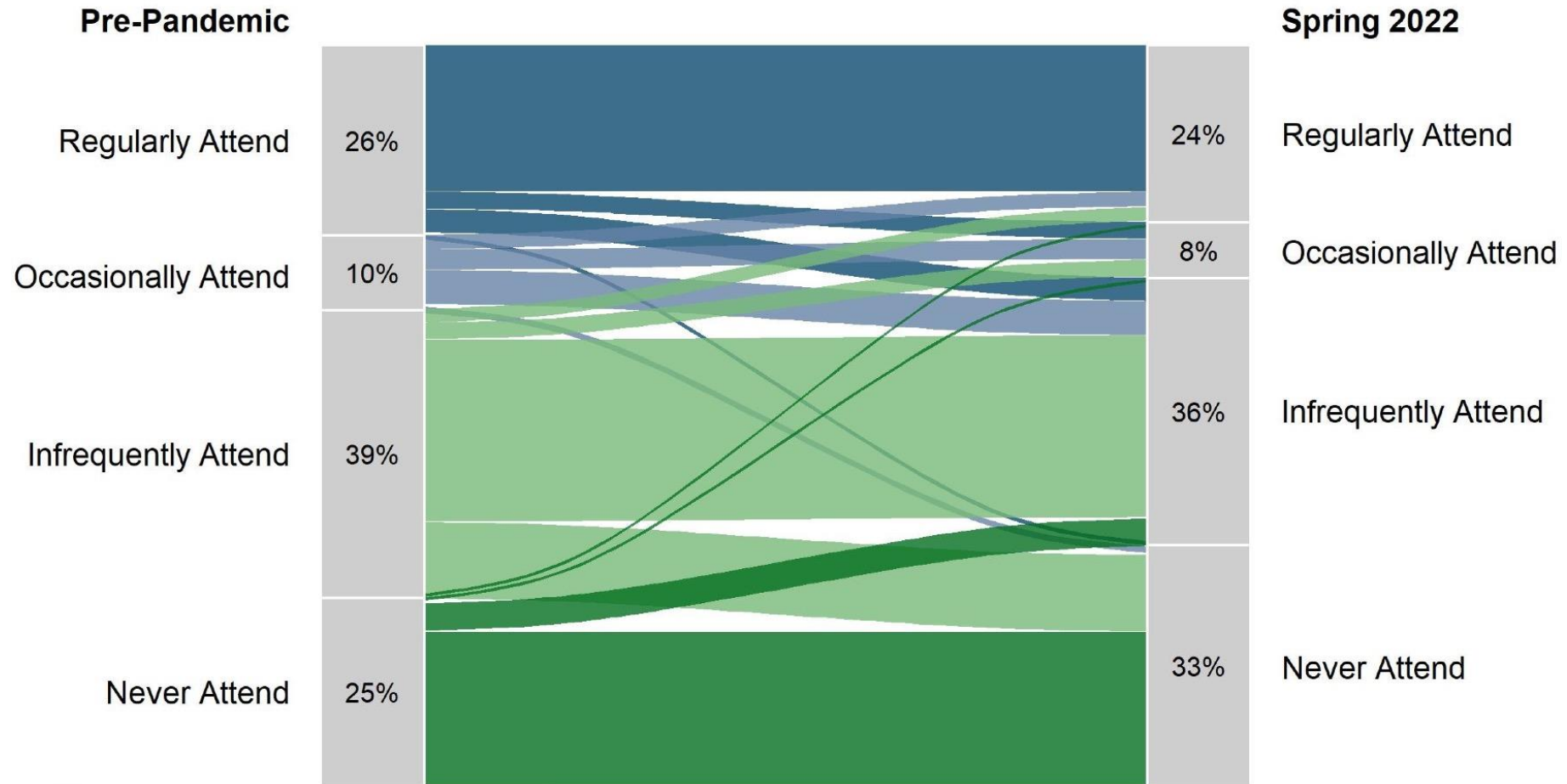


## Unaffiliated





# Americans Who Seldom Attended Religious Services Were Most Likely to Drop Out After the Pandemic

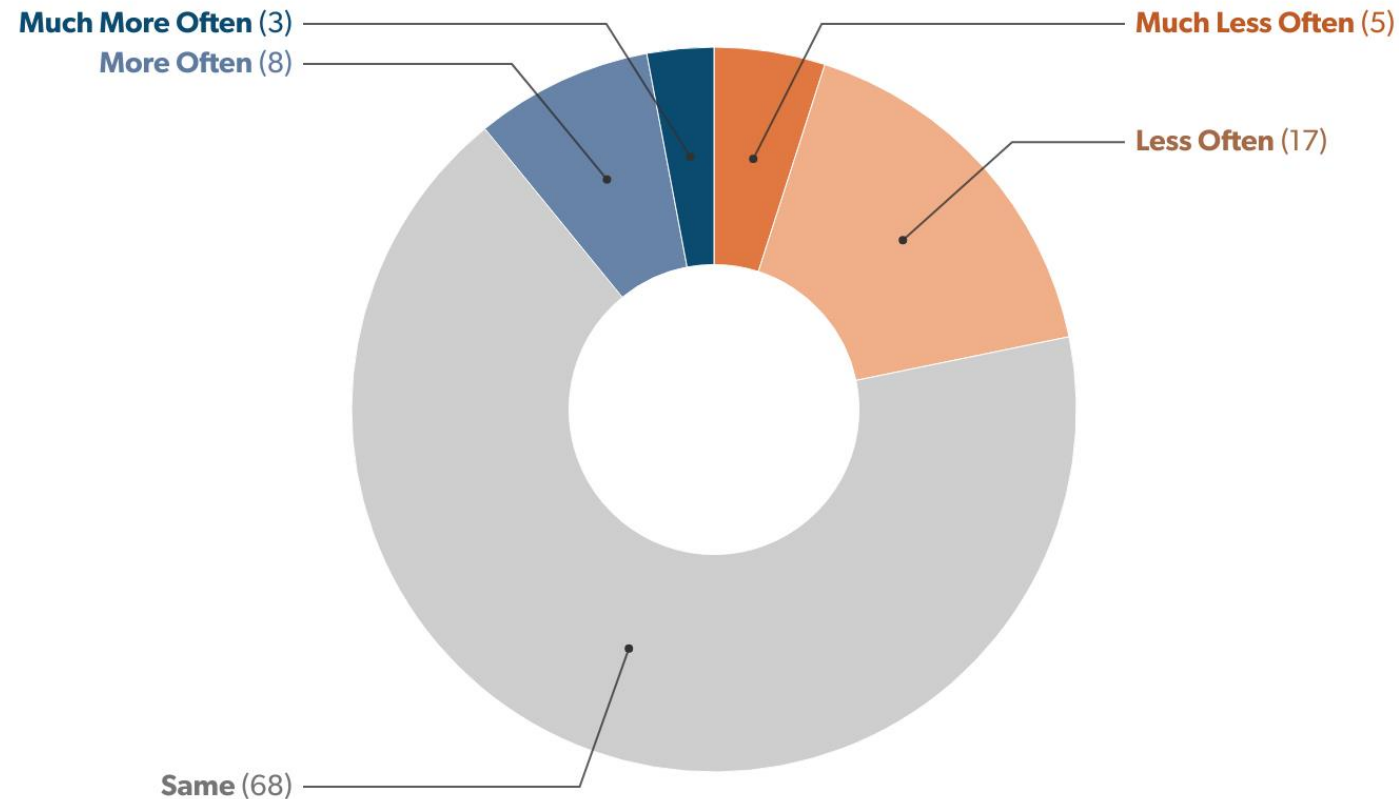


# Change in Attendance at Individual Level

- Never
- Infrequently
- Occasionally
- Regularly
- Much Less Often
  - 2 or more category change
- Less Often
  - 1 category change
- Same
- More Often
  - 1 category change
- Much More Often
  - 2 or more category change

# Most Americans Report Similar Levels of Religious Attendance as they did Pre-Pandemic

Percentage of US adults who attend religious services . . .

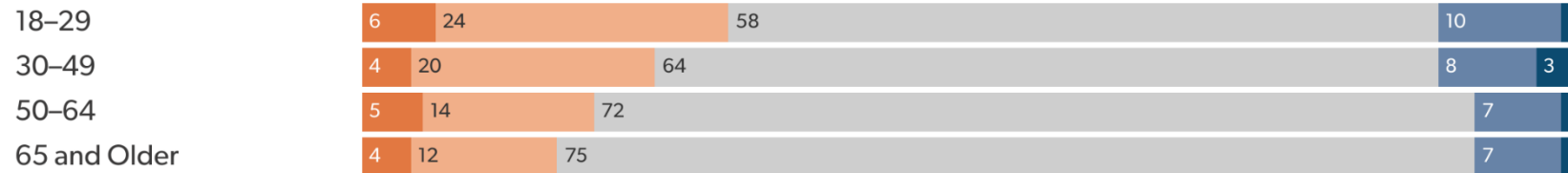


# Young Adults Experience Largest Change in Religious Attendance

Percentage of US adults who attend religious services . . .

■ Much Less Often 
 ■ Less Often 
 ■ Same 
 ■ More Often 
 ■ Much More Often

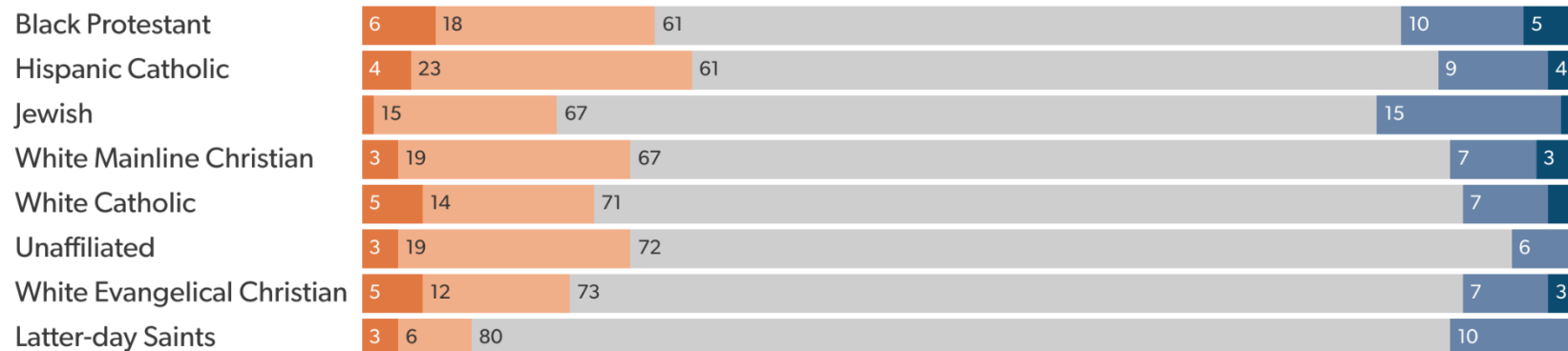
## Age



## Education



## Religion





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# Implications

Online Worship

Religious Polarization

# Want to learn more? Check Out:

## American Storylines

<https://storylines.substack.com/>

A newsletter about politics, religion and culture





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## Breakout 2

How should religious leaders and congregations respond to the decline of in-person worship after the pandemic?

Should we think about the practice of worship differently in the age of Zoom and online meetings?