LISTENING AND LEARNING

The Church of Scotland's Listening Project

May 2021

THE LISTENING PROJECT

Faith and the Church during the pandemic

Contents

'Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.'

1 Corinthians 12:14 & 26, NRSV

During three months between November 2020 and February 2021 people with any kind of involvement with the Church of Scotland were invited to share their experiences of faith and church during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were also asked to share their perspectives on what the Church had been or should be learning.

This report explains how the project was conducted and then explores and analyses the responses received. The emphasis is on enabling the reader to 'hear the voices' of participants from across the country and throughout the Church.

We each have our own unique perspective on the matters discussed in this report and we will be aware of the experiences and perspectives of some others, especially people in our own congregation, neighbourhood, family and friendship groups. However, this report brings to us the viewpoints of a broader range of people.

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This is not an academic paper, although those involved have adopted high standards of rigour. It is written to make the insights of this project accessible to as many people as possible. In the following pages we get to 'listen in' to a broad range of people in terms of age, gender, where they live, access to IT technology and how they are involved with the Church of Scotland, as they share what has been important for them and what they believe the Church has been or should be learning.

For those with an interest in the methodology employed and the finer details of the cohort of participants, you can find these in footnotes and appendices. These are set outside the main text to ensure that the words of those who responded to the invitation to share with the wider Church are front and centre. If readers have questions that remain unanswered by this report, queries can be sent to the project email address, which can be found on the final page.

As we listen with open hearts and minds we will find ourselves both encouraged and challenged, but ultimately enriched by a broader awareness and a deeper understanding of the lives and views of sisters and brothers. Before venturing into some of the most prevalent themes that emerged from the Listening Project, please hear the voices of a few of the 224 people who contributed to the project. These demonstrate the fact that people's experiences have been very different and that no neat set of conclusions can capture the real joy and pain, disappointment and fulfilment that are expressed in the more than 50,000 words shared with the project.

All text in italics is a word-for-word quotation of what was shared with the project. The only amendment to this has been if there was a very clear spelling error. Where an ellipsis (...) is used, this indicates that some text has been removed - usually in order to ensure the anonymity of the contributor.

'To answer before listening - that is folly and shame.'

Proverbs 18:13, NIV

'Before the pandemic, I had a deep faith and an active life in faith - but I could not become involved with the church. The timings of services were impossible for me. I also found it very hard to go because, on the one occasion when I did, I did not feel welcomed by the members of the congregation near to me. The minister was welcoming but, once I got to the pews, I felt as though I was gate-crashing an exclusive club of people who were not interested in strangers. My attempts to smile to people were blanked. This was compounded by all the many aspects of the service that assumed knowledge I didn't have, not having grown up in the Church. During the pandemic, the internet removed these concerns, enabling me to attend and assess what happens anonymously and find a church that I felt happy attending weekly, remotely, at a time that suits me and my home situation. I could relax and engage with the service. After the pandemic, I will have a much better understanding of the way that services take place and I might try going again in person on those occasions when it's feasible but, much more frequently, I will continue to attend weekly on the internet. I feel sure that there must be a great many people like me ...'

………………………

'The challenge of Covid had a surprisingly liberating effect on our congregation. We have spent the past three years in vacancy and faced with the reality that our building was no longer affordable to us. While we realised the challenges before us we were hesitant to address them as we were concerned that we may struggle to hold our community together in the process. Simply speaking, we could not imagine to be church without a dedicated time and place to worship together and gather socially afterwards.

Covid has forced us to shift online and, amazingly, the vast majority of our congregation from age 6 to 86 managed to stay connected through Zoom and other tools. In fact, our mid-week activities attracted much more attendance than the physical versions did before. For example, Bible study moved from twice a year (Lent and Advent) with about half a dozen in attendance to weekly with consistently more than 20 in attendance. As a gathered congregation ..., our wider community was always very transient …. Zoom allowed them to re-connect with us. Our website has had views from every continent!

At the same time, Covid again illustrated the limitations of our human resources. Our duty rota has shrunk into just 12 people after we took off everyone that must be considered in a risk group. The same two IT-savvy people have administered the online service every Sunday since March.

Discovering how to be community without our building and being confronted with our limits made the decision to progress the sale of our building not easier but it added confidence that this was the step we need to take and that we could do it without breaking apart.'
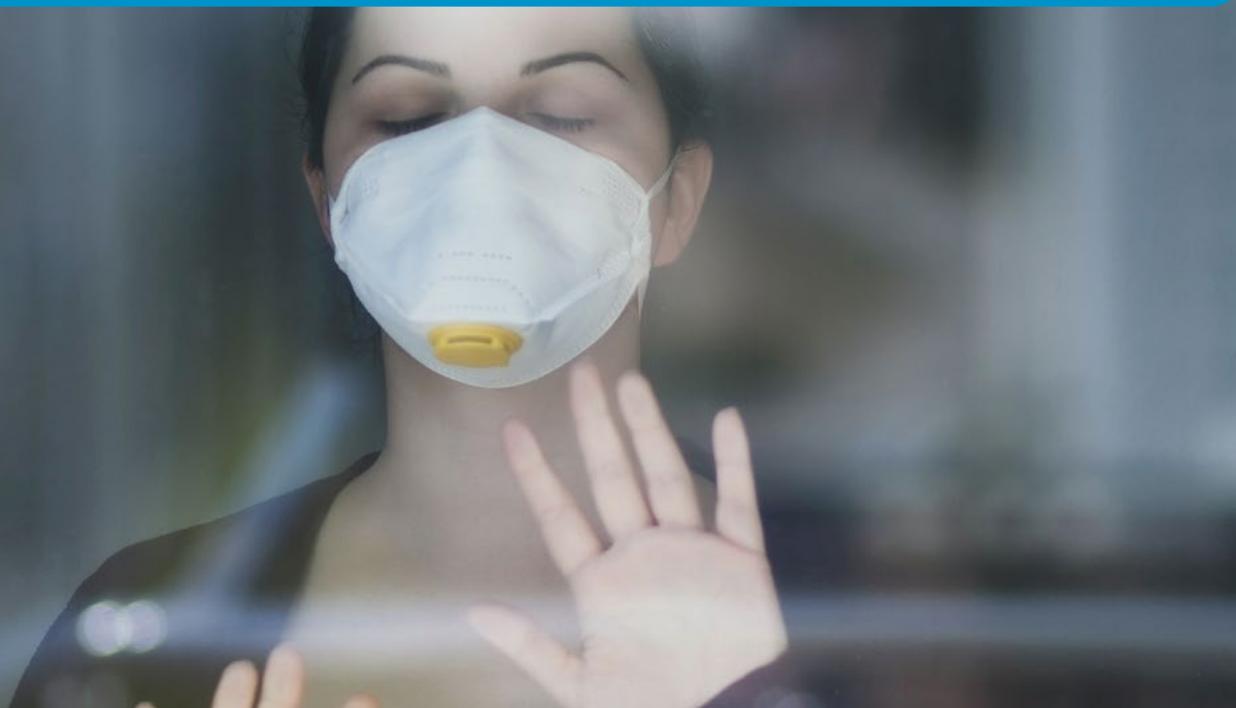
'I was in the shielding category so my wife and I were hardly outside for four and a half months. Our church elder phoned regularly and another elder did shopping for us. For the first six weeks or so our minister did a service which we got on YouTube. Then when worship in the church started again at the end of July the YouTube worship stopped. That was when we felt cut off from our church and its fellowship. We watched worship each Sunday on YouTube from another church that had decided not to open. This helped us a lot. My faith has wavered during the pandemic. I really think the churches were wrong in opening as soon as many did. Those like us who were unable to attend felt excluded. I miss worship in our own church and I miss the fellowship we enjoyed.'

………………………

'As a direct result of Covid, my family was thrown into a challenging situation. My husband and eldest daughter were made redundant as a result of the downturn in their industry, while my ex-husband couldn't pay child maintenance due to being forced to accept a situation of no salary for 3 months. My middle daughter felt forced to leave college and find employment due to being unable to cope with the sudden switch to online learning while my youngest child emotionally struggled as a result of not being able to interact with her friends and attend school. We couldn't afford to purchase a laptop to support the online learning and we were not entitled to any government support. Openings for employment in our area were few and far between and my wage barely covered the cost of our rent, council tax and utility bills. It has been a sink or swim situation for us.

My faith has remained constant; I asked myself, what would Jesus do? I chose to spread joy rather than judgement, I chose to be encouraging and empathic. I chose to share practical support rather than be preoccupied and self-orientated, I chose to remain positive. I shared positivity and joy via social media, I made efforts to check in on lonely neighbours, I supplied meals to struggling families and the elderly, I sent cards of encouragement to those who were not living close, I dropped food to food banks and sent flowers to those who were unwell, I made small gifts to leave on doorsteps or drop through letter boxes to brighten another person's day, I was a listening ear to women experiencing miscarriage and struggling as a result of baby loss - many facing hospital situations alone. We chose to shop local to support our local economy and we shared support for our local economy on media platforms.

I am no saint; nobody would have known our situation, nor did I choose to shout widely about what we were doing to help others. When I reflect on the past 8 months, I reflect on the huge changes in our lives and the big decisions that we have made, one of them being to leave our local church, a decision which was not quick though was certainly compounded by thoughts as a result of the situation we were thrown into.   Parishioners need to feel welcome, included and that they can relate to their parish minister. If there was ever a time that we needed to feel part of church (in whatever form that comes in), it is now.'
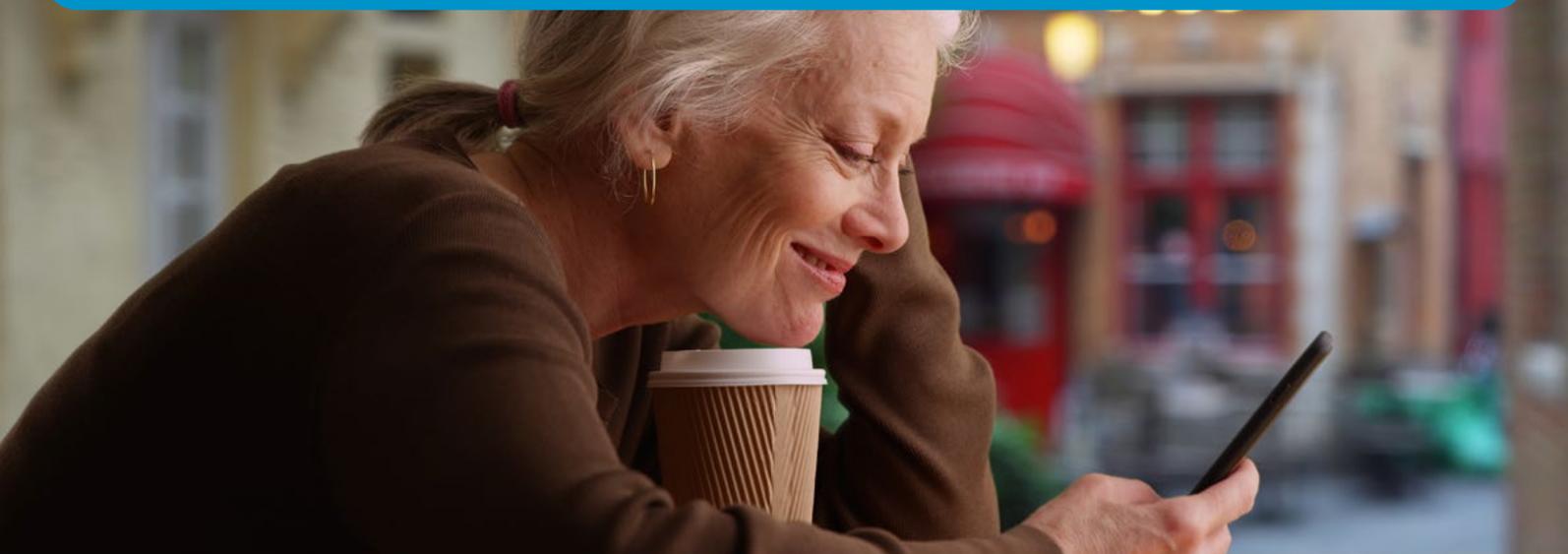
'Worship is an important part of my life. My church family are my friends. I have been shielding since March and have little contact with my church family as I don't live near the church. We had weekly Zoom meetings during lockdown, which were great to keep in touch. We sang hymns and chatted. We also have a Facebook group. Our worship has started again but I am unable to go due to medical conditions. I participate through YouTube, which is good, but here is no fellowship and I feel isolated from the congregation. The one good thing is being able to sing as loud as I like at home. I am deaf (wear hearing aids) so it is difficult not seeing people's faces due to masks and can't lip read or see body language. We are also having online session meetings, which is actually good for me as I can see and hear everyone. I am also involved in our local ecumenical Churches Together group and this has had to be put on hold since March so we have missed community involvement and fundraising for charities.'

....

'Hasn't God been amazing! We've been drawn to him through the created world around us as we rediscovered our local area with walks. He has been faithful and trustworthy. I have felt freer to share my faith and love for Jesus to my friends and community. We've had to be creative in the chaos and it's been great to use the God given creative parts of our brains. We've had to do faith at home with our kids and loved the ways families are engaging with God.

Our church community has been strengthened as we serve and love each other and local community. We've used technology to be there for each other, to share and study God's word. We've walked to each other's houses and waved or delivered encouragements. We've had to trust. We've had to dig deeper into our faith.

I've felt closer to other people doing similar jobs to me across the country than ever before. We've networked and built community.

A bible study on zoom works - parents don't need babysitters.

I am (while aware of the suffering and difficulties and heartbreak) thankful to God for 2020. It's been a significant time of growth in my walk with Jesus.'

'During unsettled times, I have felt the presence of the church within our community has more or less disappeared. The church has neglected to help members of the community during these difficult times, only offering online services irregularly, yet many members of our congregation are elderly with no way of accessing these.

I think the church should learn that in a crisis, it must step forward and lead those that follow it, something which has not been actively delivered this time. The church should provide spiritual guidance and pastoral care to every single person, not just those who can easily access the internet.'

'The most significant thing for me during the pandemic is that the church has been highly visible and active in the community, and has supported, reached out to and linked with the whole community, not just church members. Our services have reached more people than ever through our online mediums, we have collected weekly for the local foodbank with donations from the whole community, done shopping, collected prescriptions, made regular phone calls to people and offered many online activities for our whole community. The church has done what it has been called to do and reach out to our neighbours in both practical and spiritual terms and has been the backbone to the community.'
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1. Background

In August 2020 the Assembly Trustees initiated a process through which people from across the Church would be encouraged to reflect on their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic and share their perspectives on what the Church has been learning (or should be) learning. Over the following weeks a Working Group[1] was established, some guiding principles were agreed, a methodology was selected and a Steering Group[2] was appointed. 'The Listening Project' became one of three strands of 'listening', the others being the congregational statistics process and the research carried out by a partnership between Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), Brendan Research, and the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum (SCLF)[3].

2. Methodology

It was agreed that the project should adopt an 'inductive' approach (i.e. assume nothing, gather data widely, keep an open mind for as long as reasonable, look for themes to emerge from the data rather than testing preconceived ideas)[4]. The priority would therefore be on hearing the experiences and perspectives of a broad range of people. Participants would be asked to pause, reflect on their experiences, and then share 'the most important things' in their own words.

Having reflected on factors that might differentiate people's experience of the pandemic and their experience of faith and church, it was decided that the cohort should include a broad range of people in terms of generation[5], gender, involvement in church, geographical location, access to internet, and ability to use IT technology to connect with church.

Criteria around participants' involvement with the Church is worth special mention. The project wanted to ensure the inclusion of people who would normally participate in congregational worship 'occasionally'[6], 'often but irregularly[7] and 'regularly'[8]; those who would normally participate in other church-related activities 'occasionally', 'often but irregularly' and 'regularly'; elders; those in 'Recognised Ministries'[9]; people employed by the Church; those involved in leading children's activities; and those involved in leading youth activities.

With regard to geographical location, the project team wanted to ensure participation from across the urban-rural spectrum and from all presbyteries. This was checked by mapping postcodes.

In this kind of 'qualitative' research (where the focus is on understanding concepts, opinions, or experiences), what constitutes an appropriate sample size is dictated by evidence that a 'saturation point' has been reached i.e. no significant new data/insight is emerging from additional contacts.

The great strength of the data collected in this kind of project is its richness. The emphasis is on 'validity' (how close we get to respondents' real views) and this is prioritised over 'reliability' (how accurately different respondents' answers can be compared), by allowing contributors to speak for themselves.

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1   The Working Group comprised Steve Aisthorpe, Lynn Hall, Catherine Skinner, Fiona Tweedie and David Williams.
2   The Steering Group comprised Elizabeth Ashcroft (Assembly Trustee), Angus Mathieson (Interim Head Faith Nurture), Muriel Pearson (Parish Minister), Ruth MacLeod (Head of Communications), Dave Kendall (Chief Officer), Julie Main (Safeguarding Service Manager), Allan Simpson (Data Protection Officer).
3   That project sought to understand how congregations across the nation had responded to the first lockdown: https://www.brendanresearch.com/projects/sclf-acts-covid19
4   Trochim, W., & Donnelly, J. (2006). The research methods knowledge base. Mason, OH: Atomic Dog.
5   Generational theory explains that the era in which a person was born affects the development of their view of the world. The categories selected for use in this study are rooted in events that have shaped the lives of people in Scotland. They were: those aged 16 or over and born 2000 or later and those born during the following periods: 1920-45, 1946-64, 1965-81, and 1982-99.
6   'Occasionally' was defined as 'not usually weekly, but minimum six services per year - excluding weddings, funerals, Christmas and Easter' a practice-based definition widely used in other church-related research, pioneered by Hoge, Johnson and Luidens (1993) in 'Determinants of church involvement of young adults who grew up in Presbyterian churches' in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 32, 242-255.
7   'Often but irregularly' was defined as 'not weekly, but usually at least once per month'.
8   'Regularly' was defined as 'usually weekly'.
9   Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ordained Local Ministry, Deacons and Readers.

The recruitment of a suitable cohort began by issuing an open invitation through the Church's official communication channels. Then, after reviewing the responses against the criteria listed above, further waves of recruitment were focused on specific groups in order to ensure the full range of participation was achieved.

Participants shared contributions either via an online form or by telephone, through a trained facilitator.

The project engaged the services of an experienced qualitative researcher[10] to train a team of 10 volunteers to analyse contributions. Analysis team members received anonymised texts[11] and highlighted and annotated these according to topics ('codes'). This 'coding' process was managed in such a way that every contribution to the project was coded by at least two volunteers and then checked by a supervisor. An initial set of topics ('starting codes') was established by analysis of the first 20 contributions and further codes were added as new themes emerged.

A qualitative data analysis (QDA) software was then used to enable the cross referencing of the coded data with all the demographic information collected. This made it possible to see whether the experiences and perspectives of participants appeared to be differentiated according to particular characteristics (i.e. gender, generation, access to internet, nature of involvement with the Church etc.).

3. Timescale

The project was launched on 6 November 2020. By 5 February 2021 it became evident that a substantial volume of data had been collected and that no significant new insights were emerging from additional contacts (i.e. a 'saturation point' had been reached). A broad cross-section in terms of gender, generation, location, church involvement and access to technology had connected with the project. Having received 224 contributions, the project closed.

The period during which the project was open began more than seven months after the original UK lockdown in late March 2020. It was marked by some significant milestones in the pandemic. The COVID-related death toll in the UK totalled just over 48,000 as the project opened, reached 60,000 by early December and exceeded 100,000 before the project closed. New strains of the virus emerged during this time, the first vaccines were approved and the vaccination programme began. The level of restrictions varied during the project, but were significant throughout. The Church of Scotland issued advice and resources for congregations on a wide range of matters related to the pandemic during this period.

4. Who have we heard from?

The aspiration of the project was to hear from a broad range of people from across Scotland and beyond, who are involved in the Church of Scotland in a variety of ways. Ideally, we wanted to hear from sufficient people in terms of all the variables mentioned above. In practice, some groups were easier to connect with than others. We did manage to hear from all the categories of people we hoped to, but some specific groups were in small numbers e.g. in terms of generation, the youngest group and, in terms of location, people from presbyteries outside of Scotland[12].

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10 Dr Jill Hopkinson was engaged for one day per week for 12 weeks – to design and deliver training to the analysis team and support the first stages of the analysis ('coding' process).

11 Words or phrases that might enable people to identify the contributor were removed by one member of the Working Group before making texts available to the analysis team.

12 Appendix 1 is a chart with details of how many people participated from each group within the cohort.

5. Making sense of what we have heard

The project collected just over 54,000 words from 224 participants. As participants were requested to share what was, for them, 'the main things', the task of the analysis team was not to evaluate what was important; everything that was shared with the project was deemed important. However, by 'coding' the data, the analysis team identified themes that recurred across multiple contributions.

In total 33 'codes' were identified[13]. A further code was used to highlight text which was novel, unusual or constituted a narrative or story. Through this coding process, and by then uploading this into specialist software, electronic tags were applied to the text shared by each participant. This process enabled themes to be identified and made it possible to explore possible relationships between these codes and some of the differences between the people who shared their experiences.

Some codes were more commonplace than others[14]. Codes reflect the topic rather than whether it was positive or negative. So, for example, the code 'creativity' was used in cases where examples of creative thinking were celebrated, but also where a lack of creativity was lamented.

The most prevalent codes were used in analysing over 80% of the contributions (and often used multiple times within these). These were 'technology' (87%) and 'worship' (82%). Others, less commonplace but still used for the majority of contributions, were 'fellowship' (68%), 'loss' (56%) and 'communication' (55%). Two other codes, 'faith' and 'concept'[15], were used is almost half of contributions (49% in both cases).

Codes are an effective way of starting to make sense of a large volume of text. They often combine and form broader themes. For example, while 'technology' was the most commonly used code of all, it was sometimes combined with 'creativity' and 'worship' to express the ways in which some congregations have taken worship online. At other times it was combined with 'communication', 'loss' and 'isolation' to express how some people found themselves to be cut off from others because of a lack of access to technology. It is these broader themes that are the focus of this report.

6. What have we been learning?

In common with different kinds of research during other stages of the pandemic[16], the most conspicuous discovery of this project is the great diversity of people's experiences. The particular value of this report is in enabling us to become more aware of this breadth.

Associations between the various codes and participants' demographic details have proven to be few in number and weak in nature. The range of responses is considerable, but there are very few ways in which participants' experiences and perspectives seem to be associated with their gender, generation or location. What seems to be more significant is the specific local context of the participants, how they and their congregation and community experienced and responded to the pandemic.

Where there are more discernible patterns of association are between the nature of a participant's involvement in the Church and their perspective on some matters. Where these are noteworthy they have been highlighted in this report.

An important difference within the cohort was between those with and without access to the internet and to the technologies used by their church to connect, communicate, facilitate worship etc. This made a significant difference to the experiences of contributors, but not always in ways one might imagine.

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13 Appendix 2 explains these codes and gives an example of text where each was used.
14 Appendix 3 records the number of contributions in which each code was used.
15 The code 'concept' refers to reflections on the nature of 'the Church' e.g. We have learned that the Church is definitely not just a building but a living and diverse faith that requires us to reach out to our local community in much more practical ways.
16 See, for example, 'Adapt and be Flexible': https://www.brendanresearch.com/projects/sclf-acts-covid19

6.1   What have we been learning about… technology?

Technology was an almost universal topic within the accounts of those who took part in the Listening Project. The code 'technology' was used in the texts of 87% of contributions and it was often used multiple times within individual contributions. This code often overlapped with other prevalent codes, in particular 'worship' (used in 82% of contributions) and 'communication' (used to refer to 'communication with/between congregation members, with community groups, people outside the Church and with the central Church and used in 55% of contributions).

Although a small number of individuals expressed either entirely positive or negative observations in relation to the use of technology during the pandemic, most expressed both and many highlighted both perceived advantages and recognised shortcomings or difficulties for themselves and/or for others. No generalisations are possible in terms of ascribing positive or negative observations to particular groups within the sample. Even among those people who indicated that they had no access to the internet and/or were 'unable to use technology to connect with Church' both positive and negative observations about technology were expressed.

Typical positive contributions highlighted the ability of technology to connect people and many mentioned that the total number of people engaging in worship or other activities had increased since the initiation of more online activities and that people who had not previously connected with their congregation were doing so.

'CoViD has forced us to shift online and, amazingly, the vast majority of our congregation from age 6 to 86 managed to stay connected through ZOOM and other tools. In fact, our mid-week activities attracted much more attendance than the physical versions did before. For example, Bible study moved from twice a year (Lent & Advent) with about half a dozen in attendance to weekly with consistently more than 20 in attendance.'
………………………

'Our church has found that they have reached more people than had been coming to church and what we have been doing has reached all areas of the world. From this we have learned the importance of sharing God's word via technology and the influence on people's lives.'
………………………

In contrast, the main negative observations related to concern about people being excluded because of lack of access to internet technology.

'Not everybody has access to internet or zoom so one danger in the church is that we unintentionally leave people out.'
………………………

'But the great number of people who cannot or are not willing to use such means MUST not be forgotten and left out.'
………………………

'I do appreciate the dedication ministers have shown to clever and ever improving technology. Alas, online services deny real contact with individuals. I miss the real interaction. I feel out of touch and marginalised. It had been my hope pre-pandemic to find an active role to play in a fairly new congregation for me but opportunities have now been on hold for a year.'
………………………

'Frustrated that, at time of big change and restructure, I have little idea what is going on and how it will impact on church of my future - whether there are proposals impacting on older members for good or bad from my perspective, and how matters of integration, inclusion and equality are to be handled at local, parish level. Online worship has to be 'one size fits all' and one-way. There is little else available, from either church local or national, online that I can relate to.'
………………………

Most participants who indicated that they had no access to the internet and/or were 'unable to use technology to connect with church' reported that their congregations had ensured their inclusion in other ways (in particular by telephone).'

> 'Constant contact with the church. The minister and a group record the weekly service and because I've not got internet access there is a verbatim copy of the service for those who are not there delivered through the door. This has been going on throughout the pandemic. I keep all the copies and reflect back upon them whenever I want to. The contact has been vital... Appreciate the church group keeping in touch with us all.'
> ………………………

> 'Every week-day, the Session Clerk and her husband offer a Bible reading and chat on a dedicated phone number. This is wonderful, because each day I phone so that my daughter and I can listen to the Bible reading and hear their thoughts on the passage, and if we need anything we can leave a message and they respond.'
> ………………………

However, while it is encouraging to hear that these participants felt included and cared for, other contributions highlighted the fact that many others have felt cut off at this time. There are some tragic examples of this shared in 6.3, the section related to pastoral care.

Some people, although they had access to the technologies used by churches for online worship and other activities, found this unhelpful for them personally. Some people explained that, for them, online activities lacked much of what they appreciate about physical gatherings of Church.

> 'on occasions I felt that that "church" and worship on line didn't reflect or "touch" the reality of what I was facing personally and professionally.'
> ………………………

> 'I don't like the on-line meetings and I feel I'm becoming more detached.'
> ………………………

For some people, the idea of accessing Church online is undesirable because they spend so much of the rest of life online.

> 'I have to look at a screen all day for my professional life. I do not wish to do this on Sundays'
> ………………………

One impact of the widespread use of online technology in the Church is that 'local' has become less important to some people when deciding how to connect with the Church. Some participants reported that people from other parts of the world were connecting with their services. Others explained that they were choosing to connect with congregations in other places. As one contributor expressed it.

> 'It has opened up the Church worldwide so it is not so circumscribed by time and place'
> ………………………

More than a third (37%) of people who contributed to the Listening Project noted this experience of connecting beyond the local as something that had been important to them.

> 'However, I feel my faith has deepened and my interest in seeking after God has grown. I have found myself dipping into some of the Church of Scotland services and HTB services and getting a lot from them.'
> ………………………

'I have accessed other church services online not necessarily from Church of Scotland tradition. I have been amazed at the variety and quality of what's "out there".'
………………………

'I have a great connection with a church in America, and regularly participate in their online worship. Sometimes feel more part of that church than local church.'
………………………

Some people appreciated the flexibility of some online worship in terms of timing and some explained how joining worship from home allowed different ways of responding. Some described how technology was allowing them to join in shared worship with friends or family in other places.

'I have enjoyed the online services and feel much closer to God. I used to struggle praying but now I pray a lot. I work shifts so often missed services. Now I have more confidence and have grown spiritually.'
………………………

'I have really enjoyed the flexibility of online services and, as I take notes and make picture collages of the sermon, I've enjoyed being able to rewind and re-listen!! The pic-collages have also been a new introduction since the pandemic and it has really helped me to remember the sermons.'
………………………

'We could listen to the same service our children and grandchildren were watching.'
………………………

Another theme within the comments on technology was the idea that, although the Church adapted rapidly and provided online opportunities in many places, there is still much to be learned about being Church online.

'I think we still have a lot to learn about online worship. It's my view that we will need to end up with a variety of styles and online services.'
………………………

'If we are going to try and engage with people online we can't simply do a Sunday service with cameras and expect people to tune in. We need to decide if being online is important and, if it is, we must learn from companies and groups that do it well. Many congregations are persisting with Facebook while bemoaning a lack of young people, not realising that young people moved on two years ago. TikTok is now reaching a peak so what's next?'
………………………

Some contributions highlighted the fact that the move to online worship and other activities has had a differentiated impact on people with particular needs and capacities, sometimes positive and extending inclusion, sometimes difficult and leading to unintended exclusion.

'Positive. It enables me to access church more. I have a child with ADHD and it means I can attend church activities without worrying that he is going to be disruptive.'
………………………

'People like myself who have a deafness problem find it terribly difficult to join the Zoom sessions which benefit others more easily. Lip reading and the chaotic sounds from various people make it confusing to follow and thus they have to opt out, missing not only social interaction, but also meetings they should be part of.'
………………………

6.2   What have we been learning about... worship?

Most participants to the Listening Project mentioned worship in their response. With 82% of contributions having the 'worship' code ascribed to them, this was second only to 'technology' in terms of prevalence and readers should note that many of the quotations in relation to technology in 6.2 refer to its use in corporate worship. As there was a substantial overlap between these two codes it is fair to say that the interaction of worship and technology was the most dominant theme in what was heard. It is noticeable that many responses to the project expressed both a sense of loss regarding physical meeting for worship and an appreciation of how things have become.

'I have missed corporate worship a great deal, I have very much enjoyed the streamed service each Sunday.'
....

'The big negative is the ache, the longing to worship together, and the realisation that this could be for a while yet. Very badly missing the people, being able to visit folks in my district, the social occasions. Have not been able to meet as Kirk Session since January. Deep sadness that we cannot be at Church during Advent or at Christmas. Many positives: a full church service, from the sanctuary, every Sunday; online Bible Study, prayer meetings; congregation has made a point of contacting each other regularly, by phone, email, letter (our congregation is very large); minister has kept us all informed by social media and regular emails.'
....

'I miss the fellowship of the church. I miss being a leader in Messy church. I miss worshiping with others. I enjoy watching church services online and learning how other churches do things differently. I have enjoyed learning new technology enabling people to meet together and video sharing.'
....

'Not being able to attend worship in person has been very difficult. I've missed time with like-minded people and having the opportunity to worship together as a congregation. The online services have been great. I have enjoyed being able to tap into other congregations that I wouldn't normally be able to.'
....

'There will always be the sadness that we cannot get into our sanctuary but it is amazing how you can change what is really important to you in your adaptation of how you follow religion in your life.'
....

A significant thread within the worship theme reflects that some people have had new or different opportunities to be involved as a result of changes to corporate worship during the pandemic.

'It's been exciting as have been able to contribute in ways I hadn't before.'
....

'As church services were unable to be held in church I was invited to join the worship group and together we put a morning service on line every Sunday and a mid-week reflection. The Sunday service has continued on line every evening for those still unable to attend church. This has been so rewarding in seeing people working together being guided by God and growing in their faith and confidence in sharing their faith with others.'
....

Some contributors expressed eagerness for worship to return to its pre-pandemic format as soon as possible. Others articulated a hope that lessons learned from new ways of worshipping during the pandemic will shape things in the future.

'I am very unhappy that there seems to be those (younger ministers?) who don't want to see worship go back to the way it was. I miss traditional worship in the C of S and if it doesn't go back to the way it was I will probably not return. That is not to say that virtual worship has no place. But it should supplement traditional worship. Finally, I would want to pay tribute to all ministers who have worked so hard to bring worship and pastoral care to members and others during this awful time.'
…………………………

'Puzzled as to why people are so fixated about being in the church building and the longing for things to go back to 'normal' and not wanting to see where God is at work in this.'
…………………………

6.3   What have we been learning about... pastoral care?

About a third (32%) of participants shared experiences and perspectives that were coded 'pastoral care'. More than any other theme within the data these included extremes. At one extreme some people reported great disappointment and described a tragic lack of care at their local level. In contrast, others reported exemplary efforts to connect with and support people, including innovative ways of maintaining contact and offering support.

'My mother is a loyal church member, aged 97, no internet - and has had NO contact from the church since her Elder phoned her in March to say the church was closed until further notice. She is one I know of - there must be dozens in our Congregation and hundreds across the country in the same situation. Technology gives an "easy fix" for keeping in touch with many, but we need to work harder to keep those on the margins engaged and included. They are in many cases the most vulnerable at this time - often alone and isolated.'
…………………………

'Pandemic has brought people together and given a sense of responsibility during the pandemic. Cross-generational care, youngsters phoning up to ask if folk need messages. Local butcher, phone and he will deliver. People's thoughtfulness in how to support people is evident e.g. 6th year pupil set up a shopping support team via a phone number.'
…………………………

'No contact from the Minister even though the Village Resilience Team managed to speak to everyone in the Village. As far as I know, none of the vulnerable or elderly were contacted by anyone from the Kirk to check that they were okay.'
…………………………

'During the hard lock down as part of leadership of pastoral care I ensured that all our members especially the vulnerable had a dedicated person to call regularly to ensure they were okay meet any needs etc.'
…………………………

Overall, what has been shared with the Listening Project seems to suggest that, where there were already strong systems for pastoral care, the pandemic has been a catalyst for new ways of connecting and caring.

'Being on pastoral care and prayer teams have also been a means of support and giving too. I have felt more connected in some ways than before COVID!'
…………………………

'We have found practical ways to help people that we might not have thought of before.'
…………………………

Some of the most stinging criticism with regard to pastoral care was aimed at Ministers and yet others

were full of praise for them and some of the Ministers who contributed to the Listening Project reported having more time than usual for pastoral care due to pandemic-related changes.

> 'The Church of Scotland should know that some of their ministers are NOT there for their parishioners. My father's minister has been conspicuous in his absence. My father and I felt abandoned. Where was this minister's Christian kindness and faith? My father has now died and this minister is still being awful and unchristian. He has single handedly made me question if I want to carry on if he is the type of person left to us. I feel failed and let down by the church.'
> ....

> 'I have been very lucky during this pandemic to have had such good care from my church. I have periodical mental issues. They check up on me to make sure I am fine or need anything.'
> ....

> 'The work of the minister is much more rewarding when the institution of the Church is less time-demanding, and more time than usual is released for pastoral work.'
> ....

Where disappointment was expressed regarding a lack of pastoral care this was often expressed by, or in relation to, the youngest and eldest generations involved in the project.

> 'This has been a very odd time for everyone and I personally think I have been let down by receiving no kind of spiritual or pastoral guidance from the church. In fact, I have had no contact from them. (one of the youngest contributors).'
> ....

> 'Online is all very well but my 92-year-old mother has had no connection with her church at all. She is not online and too proud to request a phone call, it's something she is old fashioned enough to assume would happen without asking.'
> ....

Other aspects of the contributions regarding pastoral care highlighted the need for care for the carers and that the task of pastoral care can sometimes fall to a small number of people, both matters that appear to have been amplified by the pandemic.

> 'What has struck me is that those of us heavily involved do not receive any "caring" in return. I and my husband have been regularly phoning people within our circle of caring, but do not tend to be phoned in return. This is difficult to describe without sounding grumbling, but we have often said to each other our phone hasn't rung.'
> ....

> 'On another tack, we are pleased to find the church people are doing a good caring role, but it is a small group doing a lot of work.'
> ....

6.4 What have we been learning about… the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's faith?

About half (49%) of people who contributed to the Listening Project described how their personal Christian faith had changed in some way during the pandemic. Most of those people described a strengthening or deepening of their faith.

> 'For me, the most significant positive is that my faith has deepened.'
> ....

'My own faith has been strengthened as I have been praying more.'
…………………………

'My faith has been rejuvenated since the start of COVID-19 and during restrictions thereof.'
…………………………

However, a significant minority explained that their faith had been diminished or undermined during this time.

'My faith has wavered during the pandemic.'
…………………………

'Difficult to maintain faith, questioning it really.'
…………………………

Gender, generation, and location did not appear to make any difference to the way people described changes in faith. What did seem to make a difference was whether people's circumstances meant that they found they had more time. People who described a deepening of their faith often related it to either a 'slowing down' or having 'more time'.

'At the beginning I found I spent a lot of time listening to God, as I slowed right down.'
…………………………

'More time to spend with God, reading the bible, watching "The Bible Project" Clips, more walking and prayer walks, time to listen. Discovered Spotify and tons of new worship music that has been awesome! I feel like my love of Jesus has deepened so much over these months.'
…………………………

For some people an important factor in a diminishing of their faith was the lack of opportunity for corporate singing.

'The lack of singing in church has been difficult for me as I particularly connect to the Lord through praise and worship.'
…………………………

Many people (across all generations and among all the different groups in terms of how they are connected with the Church) spoke of how their faith had been a source of strength for them.

'I think during the pandemic I have realised how important my faith is. Without God's strength and promises at this time I don't actually think I would have coped as well as I have.'
…………………………

'Made us realise just how our faith can sustain us and that we are not alone.'

'I feel fortunate to have a faith that is rooted in love and has supported through this trying time. So although I have felt distanced from my "normal" perception of church, I have never been more dependent on my faith to help me see that there are still many things to be thankful for in our lives.'
…………………………

6.5   What have we been learning about… fellowship?

The code 'fellowship' was used to highlight contributions that referred to 'connecting with each other in church family, church community, congregation' and was applied in 68% of contributions. There was a

strong overlap with 'worship' and 'technology' and many of the quotations already included under those headings above mentioned fellowship.

Especially among the generation born 1920-45, but also to a lesser extent those born 1946-64, the actual word 'fellowship' was often synonymous with physical proximity.

> 'I think we have learned (quickly) the benefits of technology as an alternative form of worship but it does NOT replace face to face worship and fellowship. You can't be a church family on your own!'
> ………………………

> 'Our church is now open for services and it is good to 'see' people but not being able to socialize or sit next to others feels like the service lacks fellowship.'
> ………………………

While there was widespread appreciation of the fellowship that was made possible through technology (and a small number of participants stated that fellowship had been deepened or strengthened through the use of technology), the overwhelming sense (and this was true across all generations, irrespective of gender and regardless of how people are involved in church) was of loss. Fellowship that was either purely online or through restricted physical gatherings was seen as somehow less than pre-pandemic fellowship.

> 'Personally, I encounter and hear from God most through discussion with fellow Christians and through sung worship. Online worship and fellowship have proven difficult to truly engage with and largely unfulfilling for me.'
> ………………………

> 'Church places faith in the context of one's relationship with fellow believers and others to whom the Church is reaching out. Here, Covid 19 has had a significant impact. With church services going online, the intimacy of physical fellowship has been replaced by a new kind of fellowship in which we all relate more discretely and, of course, remotely.'
> ………………………

> 'Fellowship is fragile; it needs leaders; it needs facilitators. There has been a heavy reliance on Church leaders - ministers and elders. Often, the insular nature of church fellowship is a barrier in a virtual setting, it has encouraged group cliques. The dissemination of information beyond these groups is limited. Need to fight against this.'
> ………………………

> 'Through online studies, prayer groups and zoom worship we have become closer as a Church community.'
> ………………………

> 'Fellowship and the Mission of the Church can be undertaken in a variety of imaginative ways different our normal business approach.'
> ………………………

> 'One of the main things for me has been lack of fellowship and personal contact and although Zoom has been a blessing for some I have found it very difficult.'
> ………………………

> 'To love one another in a deeper, more meaningful way. We seem to be losing the real meaning of fellowship, which we need to rekindle.'
> ………………………

> 'older members who don't have access to internet feel isolated from the fellowship that they need.'
> ………………………

The data contains hints that congregations that had already developed IT systems for supporting fellowship probably suffered less of this sense of loss. Some people who have moved congregations or are new to church have found it difficult to build connections during this time. There are indications that some congregations that were fragile prior to the pandemic have struggled or declined further during the pandemic.

'Have made a lot of use of O365 to maintain some sense of community in our church context - we had this established so that was a blessing and has been a great benefit I would say.'
………………………

'It's hard being "new" during a lockdown. It's hard being new in a congregation; worse during a pandemic. I miss the fellowship, chatting and sharing with church friends. I miss the groups that I was attending and time with my prayer partner.'
………………………

'Our church has been in Vacancy throughout the closure. There has been a steady decline in vibrancy and fellowship over recent times, and this appears to have worsened during the pandemic.'

6.6   How has our concept of 'Church' been changing?

About half (49%) of contributions included content which was coded 'concept'. This is the code that was used when people seemed to be reflecting on the concept or nature of Church. It was used, for example, when people said things like 'the church is so much more than xxxx' or 'the church is not just xxxx'. It would appear that this has been a time when people have been rethinking their idea of what 'Church' actually means and how it could be reimagined post pandemic.

'We need to rethink how we engage locally and how to start back with activities to challenge people to think about how God fits into their lives - a hymn prayer sandwich fails completely.'
………………………

'The world has changed and the church needs to change with it and adapt. Church should not and cannot return to what it was or it will die out. We must not let that happen.'
………………………

'What comes to mind is that locally, and I believe nationally too, the Church has been shaken out of its complacency and inertia that "this is the Church and this is what we do". There have been many examples of "doing things differently". We cannot do much of "what we do" in the normal way. We have also had this time to seriously examine what the Church is actually for. I hope this is the legacy of these very difficult days, in fact I am very enthusiastic in believing that a new dawn awaits. This has gone on for so long, we will never be the same again.'
………………………

About half of the instances of people mentioning buildings were in this context of reflecting on what Church is or should be. In particular there was a recurring theme expressing a desire or need to be less dependent on or less attached to buildings.

'We have learned that the Church is definitely not just a building but a living and diverse faith that requires us to reach out to our local community in much more practical ways.'
………………………

'church needs to drive forward change - too building centric - needs more pioneer and community-based Ministers to address the needs of people and where they are at as opposed to focusing upon traditional forms of worship with fellowship time thereafter.'
………………………

'We should have been learning that church really is the people, not the building! The CofS has always stated this to be true but has not always put it into practice.'
………………………

'Get out the building! consider how to use outside green spaces. Trust him. what is important - Jesus, the Bible, personal time with God, community, love and connections, sharing the gospel. A time to refocus! It's exciting'
………………………

These kinds of comments are shared across all generations, with some of the strongest comments coming from the oldest generation (born 1920-45), as follows.

'Learning to be less precious about buildings.'
………………………

'However, all too often the focus and energy has been absorbed in coping with the restrictions in relation to opening the church buildings, rather than the focus being on introducing people to a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That is what happened in the early church, and what is still happening in many growing congregations in countries where Christians are persecuted and are unable to have church buildings. Our task is to share and show the love of Jesus in word and action, with buildings - if available - being an asset rather than an end in themselves.'
………………………

'I think we've learned that we don't need church buildings to get our message across, I'm not suggesting we knock down all our churches maybe just the walls around them :) And get out there into our communities. Keep all the online messages and services going after this pandemic eases.'
………………………

6.7   What have we been learning about... our capacity for flexibility, creativity, and innovation?

While technology has, for some individuals and congregations, been a means of adaptation and creativity, many participants spoke of the importance of flexibility, creativity and innovation more generally too.

'some congregations have responded in a variety of imaginative ways, e.g. in one congregation zoom prayer meetings, zoom bible studies, zoom encouragement slots, zoom holiday clubs using secondary young folk to help run it for primaries (with project bags being delivered to the youngsters beforehand), zoom services, encouragement pairing, zoom quizzes, etc + scripts to those not on the internet.'
………………………

'I've witnessed creative methods introduced to keep in touch with the whole church.'
………………………

'We've learned to be more flexible in terms of worship and how we engage.'
………………………

'We've become more creative in how we approach different parts of church life; pastoral care, communication, enabling people to worship.'
………………………

'We've had to be creative in the chaos and it's been great to use the God given created parts of our brains. We've had to do faith at home with our kids and loved the ways families are engaging with God.'
………………………

Other contributors expressed disappointment at the lack of flexibility, creativity and innovation in their experience.

> 'Disappointed - Could do more to connect with people / communicate - slow to utilise and maximise use of technology - not innovative, not forward thinking, not creative.'
> …………………………

Whether participants celebrated flexibility and creativity that had occurred or expressed discontent at its absence or lack is not predictable on the basis of generation, gender or how people were engaged with the Church.

Some participants expressed a desire to see the disruption to 'normality' caused by the pandemic be a catalyst for change and some explained how they are planning for the future.

> 'We should resist going "back to normal" because the necessity of change at the moment is an opportunity to maintain and develop much needed permanent changes.'
> …………………………

> 'COVID has made some more adventurous church leaders try to be more imaginative in how to communicate the word of God. Church leaders who refuse to think out the box - - doing church services in exactly the same way as usual -via zoom - and live in hope of "things getting back to normal" will find themselves failing to be relevant to the very people (unchurched and churched) who are looking for answers - looking for God.'
> …………………………

> 'It has brought clearly into focus that the Church is the body of Christ and we don't really need all the historical and costly ecclesiastical infrastructure that we are burdened with. Fellowship and the Mission of the Church can be undertaken in a variety of imaginative ways different from our normal business approach.'
> …………………………

> 'We have formed a "thinking ahead" group to look at what church could and should be going forward. I think now more than ever we should be doing this both locally and nationally and really looking at innovative ways to connect with our community.'
> …………………………

6.8   What have we been learning about… stewardship?

A number of interesting themes were identified by the code 'stewardship'. This was applied when participants referred to giving, Church finances and use of resources more generally and was used in 12% of contributions.

One theme related to the use of technology to save time and money, especially in relation to meetings. The general sense is that the pandemic has highlighted opportunities for online meetings beyond what we might have otherwise imagined. However, the value of face-to-face meetings and the importance of a mixture of the two is recognised.

> 'We waste a lot of money having people travel all over the country for meetings that could happen online - even GA!'
> …………………………

> 'meetings via Zoom or other platforms have been successful, and could become the norm for the majority of situations, saving time and money. Although, meeting personally and physically has a powerful meaning and should not be overlooked. Perhaps thinking about its value according to the topic/purpose should be part of the planning stage.'
> …………………………

There was a strong overlap between use of the 'buildings' and 'stewardship' codes, with people expressing a desire for substantial steps to rationalise the Church's buildings and releasing resources for other purposes.

'We have far too many buildings and maintain many far beyond their effective ministries. Because we are Presbyterian there seems to be no national planning but there would be huge economies of scale for building management (repairs and maintenance) and the possibility of the Church developing empty buildings rather than selling them off cheaply to developers'
…………………………

'We should not be heavily reliant on our church buildings, we have been too reliant on buildings propped up by tiny congregations for too long. We need to press on with radical plans to close buildings where the long-term outlook is bleak, while we need to financially support our congregations who are drowning, though have a future. As a result of Covid, there are some buildings that may never re-open.'
…………………………

'Resources need to be freed up from property and glebes.'
…………………………

'we are maintaining ancient properties instead of using our resources to further our mission here.'
…………………………

Other comments related to finance policy and practice suggest that this is a time for a re-evaluation of priorities and strategy, including the possibility of financial support between congregations at a local level.

'I fear that the focus of the Church remains on re-arranging the deck-chairs (with plans and diagrams and strategies), when the time has come to launch the life-boats: stop trying to run things from the centre, cut local congregations loose and, dare I say it, re-wild! Witnessing the brutal contraction of once mighty businesses should catapult the Church out of our current financial attitude (supporting unviable congregations, relying on a cushion of reserves). The only way to "future proof" is to insist on being self-supporting at every level, which also means becoming leaner as an organisation.'
…………………………

'The church remains awash with capital and an urgent solution needs to be found to convert it to revenue.'
…………………………

'The Church has shown fear and subservience to Covid-19, it has failed to maintain its overseas funding projects to the vulnerable and behaved like a failing business rather than like the Church of God.'
…………………………

Some contributions referred to experiences of giving and stewardship at the local level. Some participants suggest that some congregations have continued to be well supported and highlight the need for mechanisms for online giving to be communicated sensitively. Some contributions illustrate how changes in giving by some people have been influenced by the experience of the local congregation during the pandemic.

'The majority of members have continued to contribute financially in spite of shutdown provided they are approached in a sensitive manner. The need to make use of online and bankers order giving needs to increase.'
…………………………

'Since the pandemic has begun I have had no form of communication from the Minister at all, and neither has my daughter …. I am very disappointed and very upset that we have been ignored in this time of need and difficulty: I am a long-standing member of this church. It feels cold and uncaring, and I feel so angry that I have reduced my giving to the church and reassigned it to World Vision and to MS research. I am unsure if I will return to the church.'
………………………

6.9   How have people been connecting, reconnecting or disconnecting with faith and church?

Among the Listening Project's participants, some people reported that the changes in life's rhythms or in the way the Church has functioned has provided opportunities to explore faith and engage with the Church; some have found faith for the first time; some have disengaged with their local congregation at this time.

'I would not have found this type of fellowship or worship had it not been for the pandemic. My partner who would have classed himself as an atheist attended the alpha course on Zoom with me and became a Christian. We would not have attended in person due to childcare/travel/timing etc. Therefore, him becoming a Christian would either have been delayed or wouldn't have happened altogether if it hadn't been for the pandemic. We definitely needed it in our lives at this time- an absolute miracle!'
………………………

'When I reflect on the past 8 months, I reflect on the huge changes in our lives and the big decisions that we have made, one of them being to leave our local church, a decision which was not quick though was certainly compounded by thoughts as a result of the situation we were thrown in to.'
………………………

'My Church have been fantastic during lockdown. Managing to keep in touch with parishioners and the wider community. There have been new faces which is lovely to see.'
………………………

'I was an elder. I moved house and out my area 3 years ago and was looking for a new church but didn't feel welcomed in my new local church. My faith started to dwindle. During the pandemic, I was invited to attend an online Alpha course. This restored my faith. I have now been attending a Bible study on Zoom.'
………………………

6.10   How has the Church been engaging in outreach and service?

Three codes which often overlapped were those for 'community' (referring to 'wider community beyond church, the community of the village, town or city i.e. not the Church'), 'action' (referring to 'practical action, service of others') and 'outreach' (referring to examples of 'reaching out by initiating activities to connect with people beyond the current church family'). These codes were used in 36%, 21% and 25% of contributions respectively.

Participants typically described how the pandemic has provided impetus and opportunity for practical action and outreach in their local community. Sometimes this has been initiated by a local congregation, sometimes by other groups or organisations, sometimes in collaboration. In fact, the code 'collaboration' (referring to 'working with other churches and/or other organisations inside and outside of the immediate locality'), which was applied to 13% of contributions, was used almost entirely in relation to these kinds of activities. A few contributions expressed disappointment at a lack of community action or outreach, but most noted specific examples. Some contributions also highlight the need for advocacy and campaigning for social change.

'Our church has established a food bank and the Guild sends out regular small gifts, cards etc to members to show we are thinking of them. 800 angels and stars have been made and will be hung around town as a small gift for the townsfolk whatever they believe.'
………………………

'Loneliness and isolation are issues. These were addressed within our community by sending out lunches to those who needed them - phone calls and offers of help. At the moment our Cafe is very important in addressing these issues.'
………………………

'We have really tried to reach out to folk and I think every area has done something to try to help others, be it with phone calls, food bank, prescriptions, just anything we can think of to keep people in touch and for the word to be shared.'
………………………

'It is significant how much effort [name of place] Parish Church has put into still being the local church and helping the community.'
………………………

'Our church hosts the local church links with homeless and vulnerable people and although they have not been able to have meetings, they have kept the link going and given our food parcels once a week from the church. Food, toiletries and household items are still being handed in by our own and other congregations.'
………………………

'Need to be advocating, challenging and speaking up with regard to social living and economic conditions and plight. Many affected by pandemic have never experienced social services or having to apply for benefits - unemployment and debt and many have an inability to see how to manage not having supportive family or friends -will have a devastating untold effect on physical and mental health.'
………………………

'The team running the [name of café] Cafe for "new [name of place]", Syrian families, overseas students, has worked on online, throughout the pandemic too and people have been achieving their outcomes.'
………………………

'The churches which will thrive following this are those that loved and served their communities through the pandemic, rather than being inward looking and only taking care of the "members."'
………………………

6.11   What have we been learning about… leadership?

About a third (31%) of participants made contributions to the Listening Project that were coded 'leadership'. Some of these referred to a sense of leadership at a national level and these are explored in 6.12 below. Most referred to leadership at a local or congregational level. While there were no noticeable differences that could be associated with gender, generation or location, there were some themes that were particularly prevalent among people who identified themselves as Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ordained Local Ministers, Deacons or Readers. Among the contributions of these people (13% of participants) there was a sense of being undervalued or underappreciated and of a mismatch between the expectations of others and what is possible.

'Parish ministers should be valued.'
………………………

'That we need to appreciate those at the coal face more.'
………………………

'The disconnect between the expectations congregations place on their ministers, and what ministers can do, has been there for many years., That disconnect is even greater now than it ever has been, as ministers aren't "seen" as much, therefore there's a growing perception we've used the past months as an extended holiday. We need to move away from the minister being the one who does all the

pastoral care, leading worship etc. This is not reflective of the body of Christ.'
……………………

Where participants spoke of a lack of leadership locally this tended to be named explicitly.

'Our church is vacant and interim moderator is an elder from a neighbouring Parish. Lack of any leadership to take us forward.'
……………………

Where effective leadership had been experienced this was often expressed in relation to the initiative and actual activities that resulted from that or comments about particular individuals.

'Our minister has been fantastic from start in terms of using technology and we have had daily wee words in Lockdown 1. Digital sermons continued right through to now.'
……………………

'Communication is key in our local area and our minister has been so good with all this and always been approachable and available.'
……………………

'I am Guild Convener in my church, and myself and my committee divided our members between us and have kept in touch with people on a very regular basis throughout. This has been a lifeline for many of our more elderly members. Our Kirk session have also done the same with the members of our districts. I feel I have got to know people better which has been enriching.'
……………………

Comments received by the Listening Project regarding the leadership role of Kirk Sessions were equally split between positive appreciation of continued meeting and functioning with increased use of technology and others who observed a lack of meeting or changes to decision-making processes.

'Zoom also allowed us to start prayer triplets and hold Alpha and small groups and session meetings.'
……………………

'Zoom session meetings took a bit of getting used to and are not so relaxed'

'It was left to ministers to make local decisions, often against the wishes of Kirk Sessions. The minister is no longer first amongst equals but all powerful: the egalitarian construct has gone.'
……………………

'The kirk session has met (on Zoom) only twice in 12 months, with no future meetings planned (though they have been requested) and key decisions being taken by a small group chosen by the Minister.'
……………………

6.12 What have we been learning about… how people view the role of national/central Church?

What participants in the Listening Project contributed in relation to the national/central church could be divided almost equally between praise and disappointment. One matter that received universal praise was the role played by the previous two Moderators.

'The Moderator of the General Assembly has been a beacon of light in the way he has used his position to keep passing on the message'.
……………………

Contributors explained how they found encouragement in what was shared online from Colin Sinclair and then from Martin Fair.

> 'particularly liked the moderators leading services as I felt we needed someone in that position taking us forward as a flock, keeping our identity in Christ there... we did need that leadership and thank God it was there'.
> …………………………

> 'The Sunday Evening Prayer by the Moderator and other Church leaders has been excellent'.
> …………………………

Whilst the work of these Moderators met with universal praise, the institution and structures of the church did not. One area that received particularly harsh criticism was the way the closure of buildings for worship was managed[17]. A number of correspondents were of the opinion that the Church should have negotiated to keep buildings open throughout the pandemic.

> 'The doors of our local churches have been locked whilst supermarkets, restaurants, pubs and shops have continued to trade. The Church of Scotland's response to Covid has been a DISGRACE.'
> …………………………

> 'the Church should have argued from the outset to keep churches open, speaking out with faith rather than fear'
> …………………………

> 'Shut buildings have given the impression to local people that the church is the building and it is shut'.
> …………………………

Some participants felt that people should have been free to make their own decisions about whether it was safe to attend worship.

> 'I believe the churches to be the safest of places during this pandemic and yet we were among the first to be closed and certainly not among the first to be reopened and there was nothing from the Church of Scotland doing anything to open sooner'.
> …………………………

> 'the Church of Scotland seems to have chosen "fear over faith" for most of the pandemic and has let down the most vulnerable and elderly in our society who have been socially isolated with nowhere to go, with no access to church halls and no lunch clubs. The church needs to stand up and take responsibility for their actions.'
> …………………………

The provision of televised worship, especially Reflections from the Quay, was singled out for praise by some contributors and a desire to see this continue was expressed.

> 'We need a national push at the BBC/STV to provide regular service such as Reflections on the Quay as was in place during the start of the pandemic before it was axed, this is the type of interaction that those not online can enjoy and did enjoy during lockdown'.
> …………………………

17 The decision for the Church to closure building was taken in conjunction with the Scottish Government and involved the Principal Clerk and other Church officials in often twice weekly Governmental meetings with final decisions being made by an internal Church 'COVID-19' working group.

'The services on TV and during first lockdown the Reflections from the Quay – real pity this stopped as it was greatly valued by so many with and without church links'
………………………

'the BBC "Reflections from the Quay" is an excellent programme much appreciated by the elderly of my district. The wider church should try and work with the TV companies to ensure this keeps on going'.
………………………

A further topic that received negative comment was the way the Church made use of the government's 'Furlough Scheme'[18]. Along with thousands of other organisations countrywide, the Church of Scotland used the scheme to 'furlough' a large percentage of the staff who would normally be working in the Central Offices and/or in national roles during April – July 2020[19]. Some contributors to the Listening Project felt that important areas of work had been significantly disrupted as a result, youth work being one of these.

'Nationally the absolute chaos caused by the gut reaction to furlough'
………………………

'many decisions seem to be taken on "hunches" rather than firm facts, instead of furloughing so many staff some could have been used to collect actual facts e.g. predicted national deficit is way out'.
………………………

'it feels like the Church has failed young people during the pandemic. They furloughed all their staff working with young people, meaning that local Churches had nowhere to get help on how to engage with young people'.
………………………

Communications perceived as being from the national/central church was seen by some participants as excessive, by others as lacking. Others expressed appreciation and felt that communication had been good. Some contributions specifically commented on what they saw as a focus on finances in the communications they received.

'I think communication from the Church of Scotland generally has been sparse and slow'
………………………

'Communication by both our local and national church has been good' 'on a very personal level, I found the volume of email communication from "121" and Presbytery overwhelming at times during the pandemic … this is a very personal thought and others perhaps welcomed a high level of communication.
………………………

'I have been so disappointed that everything coming from the national church is negative. We need more money seems to be the main message.'
………………………

'I feel let down by the lack of support from my presbytery who have had little contact either and again have been mainly communicating about money.'
………………………

18   Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
19   The National Administration was reduced to the essential running mechanisms with, at one point, almost 70% of staff furloughed.

Along with the praise and criticism related to particular matters, some contributors recognised that the pandemic took the national/central church into new territory and that, while in retrospect mistakes had been made, valuable learning had taken place and there was a sense of rising to the challenge.

> 'Generally I think the Church of Scotland has done well. I don't think we got everything right, but there was a lot more right than not'.
> ……………………

> 'I think the church locally and nationally have been learning that we can reach people even when the buildings are closed. It made the church think outside the box. I personally think the Church of Scotland has really stepped up in such a difficult time.'
> ……………………

6.13   What have we been learning about... children and young people?

While the Listening Project was not able to hear directly from people under the age of 16, it did engage with a small number of participants in the 16-20 age range. Also, children and young people were mentioned by a range of participants. Some participants celebrated the involvement of young people in supporting others during the pandemic. Some appreciated developments that were intergenerational in character. Some expressed concern for the wellbeing of young people. The importance of the Church engaging effectively with young people was prevalent in 16% of contributions where the code 'children and young people' was applied. Some felt their local congregation had done well in this regard; others expressed disappointment in the response of the central Church or a local congregation to children and young people.

> 'I have been surprised by a couple of things - the apparent low uptake of Zoom-based youth group meetings (pretty universal this even in churches with a strong reputation for youth work e.g. [name of congregation] and say [name of congregation]).'
> ……………………

> 'We have lost contact, hopefully temporarily, with the young who were coming to Messy Church and Rhyme Time.'
> ……………………

> 'Communities have seen how churches have responded to their needs e.g. meals, activity packs for children, shopping etc. It was encouraging to learn of younger people helping with this.'
> ……………………

> 'The young have largely been forgotten - we should have been remembering them.'
> ……………………

> 'Young people are also the online generation, so an online presence is essential for the future. But it would have to be geared to a different age group.'
> ……………………

> 'I feel the church needs to reassess how much priority it places on its young people and although I understand finances are a challenge I feel they should not be the reason why young people are not engaged with.'
> ……………………

> 'It is possible to reach out to a worldwide audience which includes young people and provides them with an up to date form of worship that they can relate to i.e. services being online and not in a dusty, cold building. The same way they learn in schools and interact with people - (social media).'
> ……………………

> 'Reaching young people has been difficult even the social media platforms are not enough to keep a

strong connection, that relationship and fellowship matters.'
………………………

'some congregations have responded in a variety of imaginative ways, e.g. in one congregation zoom prayer meetings, zoom bible studies, zoom encouragement slots, zoom holiday clubs using secondary young folk to help run it for primaries (with project bags being delivered to the youngsters beforehand), zoom services, encouragement pairing, zoom quizzes, etc + scripts to those not on the internet.'
………………………

'During the pandemic, my daughter has been able to participate in communion because we have joined together as a church via zoom regardless of age. I hope this is something our church and others will build upon as I think we often underestimate the strength of faith our children have.'
………………………

'It feels like children & young people have become a separate part of church and not part of main online/ face to face worship; this needs to change.'
………………………

The following contributions come from two of the project's youngest contributors.

'I have quite enjoyed having bible class online and at different times during the week to suit us and we have been well supported.'
………………………

'I found the experience of a different way of leading worship and connecting via social media and livestream very refreshing. It created many new links and re-established many old ones. We had people sharing in our services from all over the world. I can't have imagined going in this direction without the pandemic. It created networks in terms of fellowship and faith which has been really positive.'
………………………

7.   Some closing observations and suggestions

7.1   The highly differentiated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The single most striking feature of this project is the sheer breadth and variety of experiences and perspectives that have been shared. People's experience of faith and church during this particular window of the pandemic varied significantly.

Cross referencing the various codes identified by our analysis team with the demographic details we collected when participants shared their contributions has enabled us to see where there are noticeable differences between different groups within the whole cohort of people we heard from. What is conspicuous though is that, while the data shows a huge range of responses, there are very few ways in which participants' experiences and perspectives seem to be associated with their gender, generation or location. Where that kind of pattern exists it has been noted, but we should be aware that these are exceptions to the general pattern – which is that the particular local context in which people are engaged seems to be far more significant than personal characteristics.

Where patterns of association are more visible is between the nature of a participant's involvement in the Church and their perspective on some matters. Again, where these are perceptible, they have been noted.

Whether a person had access to the internet and to the technologies used by their church to connect, communicate, facilitate worship etc., made a significant difference to the experience of those contributors. In most cases these people reported feeling connected and served in other ways, but there was also evidence shared with the project revealing that people known to participants have felt excluded and isolated due to their local church using technology to connect with some people, but

giving inadequate consideration for those without access to that facility.

7.2   So what? …Some suggestions for you and your congregation

One contributor to the Listening Project wrote, 'I was attracted to your project by the word listening. It is something that has been on my mind after something I read by a man who was once an extremist. He said never to argue with an extremist but ask them about why they think the way they do. That got me thinking about how quick I am at house group to say "But don't you think…" or "I think…" if someone says something I disagree with. When house group starts again I want to listen instead.'

Another person, in explaining what they had been learning during the pandemic, wrote, 'Just what is happening here, listening. My overwhelming experience has been how much easier it has been to talk about church life when it has been closed. I live in a small community and several non-churchgoers have asked how I am coping without church as I must be missing it. That has led to conversations about my faith being more than a Sunday church service (not put as bluntly as that!) which in turn has had people relating their church experiences, good, bad or none. It has been fascinating to hear their tales which I don't honestly think would have happened if the church had not been closed.'

Others too highlighted the importance of listening: 'Show love, give people opportunities to engage with us and above all… be willing to listen to and learn from them'; 'Reaching out and being alongside (within the confines of social distancing etc) people and listening is very important.'

- Thank you for taking the time to listen to the many voices you have heard through this report. Those who contributed to the Listening Project were asked to take some time to reflect on their experiences of the pandemic – especially in relation to faith and church. Why not do the same and set aside some time to think and pray?

- What have been the highs and lows of this past year? What have you been learning? What do you think the Church (locally and/or nationally) has been (or should be) learning? How might you express, take note or share this?

- How might you create 'safe' opportunities for people to share their experiences of the pandemic, what they have been learning and what they think the Church is (or should be) learning?

7.3   Acknowledgements

Thank you most of all to the people who took the time to reflect on their experiences and share them with the project. The amazing team of volunteers who came together to form the analysis team and who scrutinized hundreds of texts deserve a special word of thanks. The project was much enriched by the work of Dr Jill Hopkinson, who trained and supported the analysis team. Finally, without a number of volunteer telephone facilitators, some people would have been unable to share their contributions, which would have been sad for them and a loss for the rest of us.

7.4   Questions about the Listening Project

If you have questions about what you have read here the Listening Project Working Group would be delighted to hear from you by email: **research@churchofscotland.org.uk**

Appendix 1

Overview of contributors to the Listening Project

Demographic characteristic	Number of participants	Percentage of total participants
Aged 16 or over and born 2000 or later	3	1%
Born 1920-45	41	18%
Born 1946-64	110	49%
Born 1965-81	55	25%
Born 1982-99	15	7%
Female	176	79%
Male	48	21%
Internet access	219	98%
No internet access	5	2%
Able to use technology to connect with Church	174	78%
Not able to use technology to connect with Church	50	22%
Worship regularly[20]	176	79%
Worship often but irregularly[21]	4	2%
Worship occasionally[22]	17	8%
Other church activities regularly	95	42%
Other church activities irregularly	26	12%
Other church activities occasionally	31	14%
Elder	103	46%
Recognised Ministries[23]	28	13%
Leading children's activities	26	12%
Leading youth activities	15	7%
Employed by Church	19	8%

20 'Regularly' was defined as 'usually weekly'
21 'Often but irregularly' was defined as 'not weekly, but usually at least once per month'.
22 'Occasionally' was defined as 'not usually weekly, but minimum six services per year - excluding weddings, funerals, Christmas and Easter' a practice-based definition widely used in other church-related research, pioneered by Hoge, Johnson and Luidens (1993).
23 Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ordained Local Ministry, Deacons and Readers. or example, 'Adapt and be Flexible': https://www.brendanresearch.com/projects/sclf-acts-covid19

Appendix 2

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Accessibility	e.g. 'we have to make the church accessible' i.e. not about physical accessibility - rather the sense of being available, understandable, approachable etc	e.g. 'We have to make the church accessible. we must recognise that what goes on behind our big blue doors is a mystery to the majority of my local community… demystify, make it real, remember coming through those metaphorical doors is entering an unfamiliar world, with a language, customs and traditions which are outwith their experience. Show love, give people opportunities to engage with us and above all… be willing to listen to and learn from them.'
Action	Practical action, service of others, foodbank, transport, care, providing hot meals, homeless support etc	e.g. 'The most significant thing for me during the pandemic is that the church has been highly visible and active in the community, and has supported, reached out to and linked with the whole community, not just church members. Our services have reached more people than ever through our online mediums, we have collected weekly for the local foodbank with donations from the whole community, done shopping, collected prescriptions, made regular phone calls to people and offered many online activities for our whole community. The church has done what it has been called to do and reach out to our neighbours in both practical and spiritual terms and has been the backbone to the community.'
Buildings	Buildings/church-related property. Would include physical accessibility of/to building, as well as use or closure	e.g. 'We have far too many buildings and maintain many far beyond their effective ministries. Because we are Presbyterian there seems to be no national planning but there would be huge economies of scale for building management (repairs and maintenance) and the possibility of the Church developing empty buildings rather than selling them off cheaply to developers.'
Central Church	Central church/national church/'121'/Assembly Trustees	e.g. 'I think the church locally and nationally have been learning that we can reach people even when the buildings are closed. It made the church think outside the box. I personally think the Church of Scotland has really stepped up in such a difficult time.'
Children and Young People	Including youth worker/leader of children's activities/Schools, assemblies, children's activities	e.g. 'Our church (XXX) very quickly mobilised virtual services via YouTube. They have offered great comfort particularly during the Spring where the familiar voice of our minister offered some normality and also helped me feel comfort during the uncertainty, always saying what I needed to hear. They were also great for our young children. One Sunday they did a zoom kids party which was great to see other families from church.'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Collaboration	With other churches, with other organisations (partnership) inside and outside of the immediate locality	e.g. 'On a local level it also led to a lot of sharing between churches and other agencies beyond what had been the case before the pandemic.'
Communication	Communication with/between congregation members, with community groups, people outside the church and with the central church	e.g. 'I am Guild Convener in my church, and myself and my committee divided our members between us and have kept in touch with people on a very regular basis throughout. This has been a lifeline for many of our more elderly members. Our Kirk session have also done the same with the members of our districts. I feel I have got to know people better which has been enriching.'
Community	As in wider community beyond church, the community of the village, town or city i.e. not the church	e.g. 'I think we are experiencing the value of community, neighbours and kindness. Our Church buildings are cherished but many are old and in need of renovation so maybe this is time to realise we need to let them go and focus on a more community centred Church, meeting community needs in a more fruitful way linking with other local organisations. Faith in action.'
Concept	Concept of 'Church' e.g. 'the church is so much more than xxxx', 'the church is not just xxxx', 'church is…', including metaphors such as 'body of Christ'	e.g. 'We have learned that the Church is definitely not just a building but a living and diverse faith that requires us to reach out to our local community in much more practical ways.'
Connecting	Connecting with/having experiences of other parts of the Church [in local area, Scotland, UK or World], Church of Scotland, ecumenical partners, other traditions, that they would not normally have had. e.g. participating in online worship from another church or denomination or part of the world; making links through prayer groups or social media with other Christians.	e.g. 'I have accessed other church services online not necessarily from Church of Scotland tradition. I have been amazed at the variety and quality of what's "out there".'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Creativity	Creativity/innovation/initiating new things. Used when this word or a synonym is used or when there is a clear example of the concept. This code was only used if coders were confident that the word has been used with that understanding or purpose.	e.g. 'Disappointed - Could do more to connect with people / communicate - slow to utilise and maximise use of technology - not innovative, not forward thinking, not creative.'
Decision making	Decision making processes, including governance and governance structures	e.g. 'Nationally the absolute chaos caused by the gut reaction to furlough all staff and the loss of organisational knowledge by redundancy program. Cuts have been made before capacity there in new presbyteries to react to changes at national level.'
Discipleship	Discipleship i.e. growth of/in Christian character	e.g. 'I've been driven back to the Psalms, and to themes of Lament. At this time I'm also thinking of gratitude and patient endurance. It has been tough too - a kind of desert experience, but in a better place now than in September.'
Education	Education/Training i.e. Needed by or undertaken by adult church members [not related to schools]	e.g. 'My biggest gain otherwise has been education! |Through the work of the Eco-congregation Network, The Fairtrade Foundation, the Guild and the C of S. (Especial thank to our wonderful Moderator) and Christian Aid with which I have a long and sometimes close association. Through the online meetings and workshops I now know people not just all over Scotland but world-wide that I would never have met at local meetings or by travelling to Edinburgh. My faith has been deepened by these many contacts and I have a much clearer idea of where the Church and its teachings fits in with so many concerns and a greater conviction to speak out even more.'
Faith	Faith (personal – own or that of others) e.g. 'my faith', 'my belief in…', 'there is a thirst to explore faith'. God. Sharing Faith.	e.g. 'I feel that my faith has changed for the better during this pandemic. There will always be the sadness that we cannot get into our sanctuary but it is amazing how you can change what is really important to you in your adaptation of how you follow religion in your life.'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Fellowship	i.e. connecting with each other in church family, church community, congregation. NOTE: The word 'community' is often used in cases in a way that it should be coded as 'Fellowship' – do watch out for this. e.g. 'I have missed my church community.'	e.g. 'I found the experience of a different way of leading worship and connecting via social media and livestream very refreshing. It created many new links and re-established many old ones. We had people sharing in our services from all over the world. I can't have imagined going in this direction without the pandemic. It created networks in terms of fellowship and faith which has been really positive. We shared in 40 days of prayer for Advent via Zoom.'
Flexibility	Flexibility/ability to change. Used when this word or a synonym is used or when there is a clear example of the concept. Only used by coders when confident that the word has been used with that understanding or purpose.	e.g. 'We've learned to be more flexible in terms of worship and how we engage.'
Future	Future/Planning	e.g. 'I think the pandemic experience will force change at Parish Church level. Some will (maybe already?) fall by the wayside. Others will rise to thrive more strongly.'
Isolation	Isolation/exclusion/loneliness i.e. sense of, experience of, concern about	e.g. 'Online is all very well but my 92-year-old mother has had no connection with her church at all. She is not online and too proud to request a phone call, it's something she is old fashioned enough to assume would happen without asking.'
Home Life	Life at home/family life/issues related to being at home that are not about isolation or loneliness/items in the home	e.g. 'I had never managed to develop a 'strong prayer life' at home before the Pandemic and having a demanding toddler locked down with us while also trying to work from home full-time was especially deleterious to worshiping at home. Live services could never be watched live and zoom/skype fellowship could only take place in an evening and at the cost of rest, housework or spending time with my spouse or alone with God. Worshiping as a couple has been impossible - we can only take turns.'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Leadership	Leadership by ministers, elders, other people or examples of leadership. ('leading worship' coded as 'Worship'.	e.g. 'Church leaders who refuse to think out the box - - doing church services in exactly the same way as usual -via zoom - and live in hope of 'things getting back to normal' will find themselves failing to be relevant to the very people (unchurched and churched) who are looking for answers - looking for God.'
Learning	Learning generally, e.g. from other people, churches, denominations, organisations or groups etc., what the church is learning, learning the hard way. Used when learning or a synonym is used or when there is a clear example of the concept.	e.g. 'We have been learning how to show we care for each other in different ways.'
Listening	Listening	e.g. 'I would also like to note that as a student at XXX, our university Chaplin has gone above and beyond and represents an excellent example and I feel many others could learn from his willingness to listen to everyone despite the pandemic.'
Loss	Loss/'missing' things	e.g. 'I miss seeing and communicating face to face with others and feel that I have lost touch with many folk. I hadn't realised that attending Church is a social as well as spiritual event.'
Love	Love/care/compassion Use when this word or a synonym is used or when there is a clear example of the concept. Only use this code if you are confident that the word has been used with that understanding or purpose. Avoid interpreting it as love – even if you think it is – unless it is explicitly!	e.g. 'Church should be learning how to emphasize LOVE in our faith. And learn how to communicate with those of us who are alone, computer illiterate.'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Outreach	Outreach/reaching out Outreach/reaching out by initiating activities to connect with people beyond the current church family, a congregation or expression of Christian Faith, which might include but is not limited to: serving the needs of an excluded group or a specifically evangelistic activity. This is about activity.	e.g. 'The advantage of such YouTube services over Zoom is that we are not simply trying to gather together the faithful core of the church, but to reach out to the whole community in mission. I also have the advantage that I have been 27 years in these rural parishes and know a lot of people beyond the church. I was quite forward in inviting people to watch the videos online and gathering their e-mail addresses, and many people who never came to church say they watch the videos every week, or at least regularly.'
Pastoral Care	Pastoral Care	e.g. 'During the hard lock down as part of leadership of pastoral care I ensured that all our members especially the vulnerable had a dedicated person to call regularly to ensure they were okay meet any needs etc.'
Prayer	Prayer	e.g. 'The week of prayer was such a great time and hopefully we learned that that was beneficial to do nationally rather than only in little groups. It felt good to do something collectively.'
Reach	Reach (of local church) i.e. the scope of the church's impact in terms of area or among particular groups – whether this is increasing or declining – might be expressed in terms of 'attendance', 'connection' or 'engagement' This is about impact.	e.g. 'The numbers of non-churchgoers connecting with our live stream worship and in-line events has shown that people can be easily reached with the Gospel when they don't have to feel shoe-horned into a Sunday-at-11 pattern of religious engagement.'
Seeking	Seeking i.e. people seeking help, faith, connection with church	e.g. 'Church is not a building, church is the people. WE are the church. Technology has been a major method of communication but we need to address how to reach all not just those online. People have reached out to church; these contacts need to be nurtured.'

Name of code	Clarification for analysis team	Example quotation
Stewardship	Stewardship/giving/stewardship of finances and resources	e.g. 'We waste a lot of money having people travel all over the country for meetings that could happen online - even GA!'
Technology	Technology/Online/social media, including phones and email	e.g. 'That it needs to make better use of modern technology on a regular basis, but also find ways of keeping on board those who can't yet use it or have no wish to do so at their stage of life.'
Worship	Worship	e.g. 'Really miss the gathering for worship together - singing of hymns as I am in the church choir. As part of the worship group have missed the opportunity to lead worship with our team. As a positive have enjoyed our weekly audio services online particularly the new ideas of prayers/format/music which has been refreshing and new.'
Story	Examples of fuller narrative, a personal story – also things that seem novel or unusual	e.g. 'It has been an opportunity to reach out to others in the community with a village Hug magazine which the young people organised, shopping drops, friendly phone calls to those on their own or in need of support, and most recently a fish and chip delivery to those on their own or elderly couples (there has been huge support for this and funds given will mean more deliveries through the winter) We have linked with the local community care online group and together organised food parcels and food and clothes collection for a Glasgow food bank where some from our congregation volunteers. Great opportunities.'

Appendix 3

Number of contributions in which each code was used[24]

Name of code	Number of contributions in which this code used	% of total cases in which this code is used
Accessibility	58	26%
Action	48	21%
Buildings	96	43%
Central Church	67	30%
Children and Young People	36	16%
Collaboration	29	13%
Communication	124	55%
Community	81	36%
Concept	110	49%
Connecting	83	37%
Creativity	34	15%
Decision making	24	11%
Discipleship	44	20%
Education	11	5%
Faith	109	49%
Fellowship	153	68%
Flexibility	28	12%
Future	103	46%
Home Life	19	8%
Isolation	70	29%
Leadership	74	31%
Learning	75	33%
Listening	9	4%
Loss	127	57%
Love	15	7%
Other	56	25%
Outreach	55	25%
Pastoral Care	72	32%
Prayer	60	27%
Reach	63	26%
Seeking	17	8%
Stewardship	26	12%
Story	39	16%
Technology	197	87%
Worship	183	82%

24 Please note that this chart shows the number of contributions in which each code was used. A particular code may have been used multiple times in a particular contribution.