

GO WITH THE FLOW

A communication perspective on how to make online sermons flow on live streams.

Roos Jonkheer-Vos (2086697)

*Supervisor: Mark Van Vuuren | University of Twente |
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Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

A Delphi study was conducted to research the experience of online sermons and online services to improve practices based on what we learned from a time when services had to be fully online. Getting insight into this would benefit teachers preparing sermons.

Design

For this study, three panels, namely, stayed online church attendees, switched online church attendees, and stopped online church attendees, participated in three rounds of questionnaires

Findings

These suggestions fall under a) fostering a sense of gathering, b) creating a balance between good technology and good preacher, c) understanding the audience, especially the listeners at home, and d) evaluating the role of worship during the services.

Value

This research offers new insight into the experience of online sermons in online services. It also gives suggestions on what can be further improved and researched on this topic.

Keywords

Online sermons, online services, online church, streaming, live streams, church, sermons, technology in church, social cohesion in online church, worship in online church

1. INTRODUCTION

Since COVID-19 broke out in March 2020, many churches have been forced to move their services online. This global development has given an unprecedented challenge for preachers preparing sermons. Churches all undertook this challenge differently, throwing themselves into a fully tv-worthy scripted experience, others investing in a better media experience but keeping the same liturgy as before, and others are doing the bare minimum with a singular camera with no editing. There has been some research into sermons' offline'. There has been no research into how at-home church attendees experience sermons. Furthermore, getting insight into this would benefit teachers preparing sermons. Since many churches still currently have hybrid services and the precedent is set for transitioning into fully online services. The study will be focused on the appreciation and impact of online addresses. This research is done with Sermon Movement Centre, an organization that trains preachers grounded in theology and communication sciences. The results from this research will be used to train preachers to prepare sermons with an online audience in mind.

However, the online domain and its' impact on sermons have been poorly researched. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ: How did online church attendees experience online sermons in online services?

To further work on improving the impact of online sermons, it is beneficial to first look at how the church attendees are experiencing the online sermons. The current research field only gives some insight into the theological implications, such as Mulins (2011), who asks if the online church is a church. Some older articles go into the practical and technical consequences of doing church online such as Jenkins in

2008, who looked at a 3-D church experience. However, in the 14 years since 2008, a lot has changed in both the technical and social atmosphere. Hence a fresh look at today's experience of online churches could offer good insights into designing sermons fit for an online audience.

2. THEORY

Sermons are a form of mass communication; often, large groups of people listen to sermons online and offline. The fundamental effects of mass communication are cognitive. This effect depends on how much individuals respond to media content. The primary effects of mass communication are cognitive. It is also essential to consider that these effects differ because of both the mass communication and the receiver of said mass communication (Roberts & Bachen, 1981). Focusing on other types of communication, such as keynote speeches and different types of public speeches, those cannot simply be scripted but require managers to engage in bodily rehearsal and training to communicate strategies effectively (Wenzel & Koch, 2018).

One could look at sermons in the context of the field of homiletics. According to Armstrong (1884), homiletics can be defined as 'Rhetoric applied to sacred discourse.' This leads to a sermon being defined as sacred discourse. According to Etter (1883), the sermon is built up as follows: 1) selection of a bible verse, 2) interpretation of that bible verse, 3) Generalizing it into a theme, 4) framing of the proposition, 5) composition 6) delivery. Discourse is an important part of communication, and understanding how communication sermons have been researched can help understand how online sermons are experienced.

Impactful communication in sermons

As aforementioned, sermons are communication; hence it is beneficial to research how that communication can have an impact. According to Stoorvogel, Van Vuuren, Bernard, and De Jong (2018), three factors are crucial to creating impactful communication in sermons. (a) The connection of the message with hearers' internal

processes and needs, and (b) the ability of preachers to present old truths in a new light. Preachers must know their audience and realize the connection between hearers' processes and the preachers. Stoorvogel underlines the importance for preachers to know the questions, challenges, and values their audiences face. Additionally, they emphasize that many variables influence the impact of the sermon. Such as whether the hearer has had coffee, but in this context, that could also relate to the platform of consumption of the online address, with whom the hearer is attending, or possible connection issues that might occur while watching a sermon stream. Understanding the audience as a preacher is beneficial in creating impactful communication as a preacher.

There are tools that can be used to impact communication. Stoorvogel (2019) found that impact through a sermon can be increased through different communicative tools. However, it should be noted that there is a difference between what people value in an address and what is helping them to remember a sermon or to be changed by it. According to Stoorvogel, the challenge for the preacher is combining these tools in a speech in an appropriate mix. They studied six communicative elements, human-interest stories, humor, multimedia, direct appeal, ritual, and invitation. Sermons that are remembered most often contain either direct appeal or rituals. However, it should be noted that there is a discrepancy between the elements that help remember sermons and elements that are valued most, which are human interest stories and humor. The use of direct appeal to change creates a connection between the preacher and the listener. Using tools such as the six mentioned can help further increase the impact of sermons.

Communication theories well applied, as mentioned above, can improve the impact of sermons; therefore, it is beneficial to understand how preachers can

harness said impact. Stoorvogel, van Vuuren and de Jong (2019) found that if preachers need to preach with impact, there needs to be further research and training in these areas; this is due that the likelihood of transfer of information or impact through mass communication is limited. Hence preachers need to achieve clarity in their sermons. This clarity, according to Stoorvogel, can be achieved by language, structure, imagery, and application. A limitation of this research is that it is only focused on the sermon, not the complete service. Carrell (2007) states that crucial for a successful speech is clarity in structure and application (invention and arrangement), a solid composition of ideas (collection), and accurate delivery (delivery and connection with the listener. According to Campbell (2020), when moving church online the same principles apply when you communicate physically as online. it is essential to 1) know your listeners, 2) Know the medium, 3) know your message, 4) engage and empower your audience to 5) foster a connection. Creating clarity and structure based on your audience can help foster impactful sermons, both online and offline.

Digital churches

Multisite churches have several campuses and often use non-live sermons to ensure a 'stayed' experience across campuses. Hippias (2006), however, argues that this might have given the impression that only a few have the necessary qualities to preach. Churches that employ video venues might inadvertently communicate that being a preacher relies more on talent and celebrity than character or communal affirmation. Crumpton (2018) stated that the online church attendee is searching for social cohesion. They want an experience that helps create a sense of social identity.

Other places with similar dynamics

There is currently not much research into how online services are experienced; hence it might be beneficial to understand other, similar environments. Therefore, studying Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) might be beneficial. De Freitas, Morgan, and Gibson (2015) defined MOOCs as courses delivered via online media. They are short, and they reach large (international) audiences. They can support the learning needs of a large audience of learners and supplement formal learning. It could be argued that online services share these characteristics. Both MOOCs and online services are delivered via online media, reach large audiences, support listeners' (learner) needs, and can supplement formal or traditional (religious) education. De Freitas et al. (2015) also state some challenges for MOOCs. Some of these could also be relevant to understanding the challenges of online churches. These challenges include students that are not engaged, the difficulty level unaligned with the student's skills, little interactivity, and no peer or tutorial support. Anders (2015) suggests that a hybrid design may foster a greater diversity of learners and support engagement with different learning contexts. Paton, Fluck, and Scanlan (2018) found that good quality course design, opportunities for participants to collaborate, and roads for further understanding help engagement and retention of online courses. Additionally, Gamage, Fernando, and Perera (2015) found that interaction between course participants and their bonds impacts the rate of student dropouts. Creating supportive and positive peer influence will reduce the dropout rates. Other places with similar dynamics might give insight into how online sermons are experienced. However, there is still progress to be made in fully understanding online sermons in online services as a dedicated subject of study.

3. METHOD

To understand the experiences of online sermons in online services, a Delphi survey was conducted in three panels with three rounds.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

Three panels were composited to conduct the research, with a total of 45 participants (Table 3.1). One panel “stayed” with people who consistently watched online services from the same church/services provider. The second panel ‘switched’ consisted of people who regularly switched between different churches/providers of online sermons. The last panel, ‘stopped,’ consisted of people who stopped watching online, even if services would be entirely online again. All panels consisted of Dutch church attendees. The ‘stayed’ panel had 14 participants with a mean age of 36.1 with $SD=14.1$. With a minimum of 23 and a maximum of 60. The group contained six different denominations, and six participants reported going to an Evangelical church, two GKV (Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Liberated)), two Pentecostal, one Old-Catholic, one Baptist, and one CGK (Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands). The ‘switched’ panel had 15 participants with a mean age of 33.1 with $SD=15.1$, a minimum of 19, and a maximum of 65. The group contained six different denominations; two participants reported going to CGK, four Evangelical, one Confessional Lutheran, five PKN (Protestant Churches in The Netherlands), one Salvation Army, and two Hervormd (Reformed church). The ‘stopped’ panel had 16 participants with a mean age of 39.6, $SD=16.9$ with a minimum of 19 and a maximum of 75. The group contained eight different

denominations; six reported to be Evangelical, two Baptist, two CGK, two non-denominational, one NGK, one Hervormd, one Pentecostal, and one PKN.

Table 3.1

Number of panel responses per round

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
'stayed'	19	14	14
'switched'	12	13	13
'stopped'	16	16	14

3.2 PROCEDURE

The Delphi method (Figure 3.1) is a method that helps create consensus among a group of experts. There is a great variety of denominations in the Christian community, as also reflected in the variety of panel participants. Therefore, it will be beneficial to focus on agreements in the panels rather than differences to gain relevant insight. It is excellent for forecasting and issue identification/prioritization (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). This is beneficial when considering there is currently a lack of insight on the general experiences around online sermons and online services. It was designed by Dalkey (1969). According to Loo (2002), it has the following characteristics:

- (1) "The sample consists of a "panel" of carefully selected experts representing a broad spectrum of opinion on the topic or issue being examined.
- (2) Participants are usually anonymous.
- (3) The "moderator" (i.e., researcher) constructs a series of structured questionnaires and feedback reports for the panel during the Delphi.
- (4) It is an iterative process often involving three to four iterations or "rounds" of questionnaires and feedback reports."

It is also beneficial that the participants are anonymous, which is beneficial because the participants could feel vulnerable because their religious experience is discussed. In a focus group design, participants are faced with each other and might hold back on their real experiences due to social pressure. In this design, the participants still have a level of interaction that gives qualitative input.

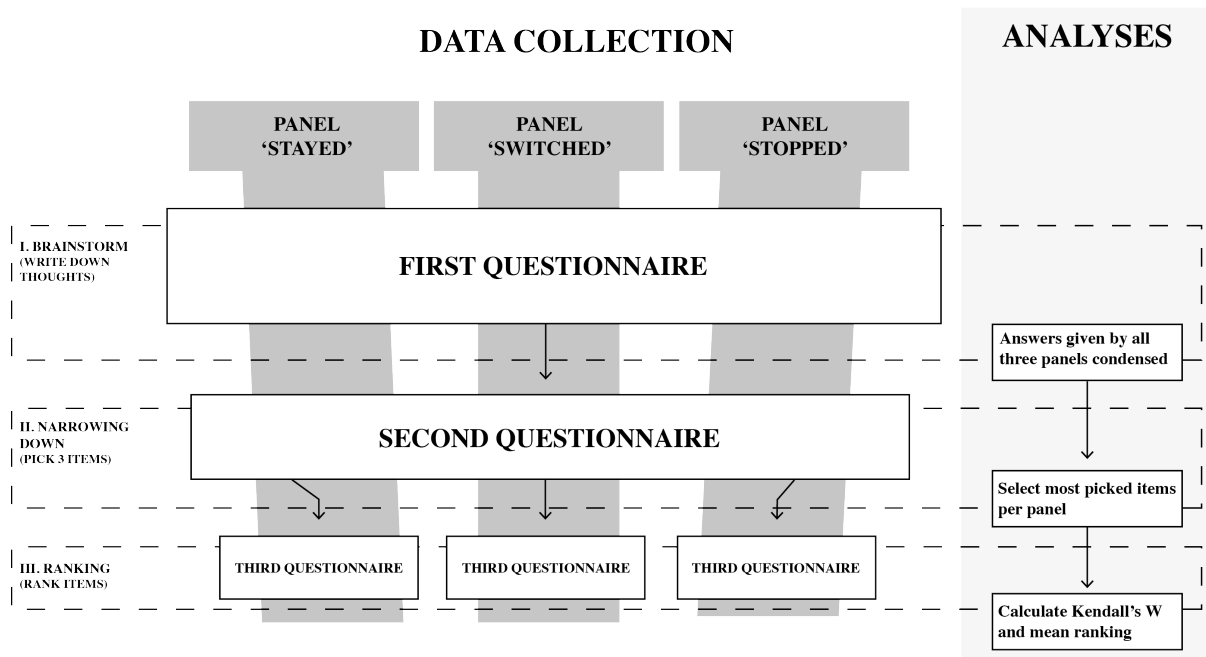


Figure 3.1. Schematic depiction of the Delphi method as applied in this study.

First, the panel members were selected, and the panel members were found in Christian networks. The participants were mainly approached personally in personal WhatsApp messages, group chats, Facebook posts, and Instagram stories. The interested online church attendees filled in a survey (originally in Dutch, see appendix A) indicating they would like to join the study. In the enrollment, survey participants could tell if they:

- 1) I have always watched the online service of the same sermon provider

- i) Observing a different online church service than your service provider was an exception.*
- 2) I have regularly switched between various online church service providers
 - i) Switching between various online church service providers was not an exception*
- 3) I stopped watching online church services
 - i) You have watched online church services in the past but decided not to watch anymore, even if the services would be entirely online again.*

The aim was to find around 15 participants per panel (Loo, 2002). The research was shared in different Christian networks and groups to create a diverse panel of various denominations.

3.2.1 Round I: brainstorm

The goal of this round is to brainstorm (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004) the different thoughts and opinions about online services and sermons. The survey (Table 3.2) was sent out to the participants over e-mail, and they were asked to fill it in within three days. The first questionnaire consisted of 3 different blocks, The first two elements were the same for all the panels, and the other block was panel specific. The first block contained demographic information about the participant, the age, and denomination. The second included general questions about church services and sermons. First, in part A, the focus laid on online church services, then, in part B, concentrate on online sermons and their impact. The last part, C, focused on panel-specific motivations from their watching behavior. The questionnaire is based on the research of Stoorvogel (2019) but adapted to work with this instrument and scope

Table 3.2

First-round questionnaire

A. Service-specific questions	
Q1.A.1	What was good about online church services?
Q1.A.2	What did you miss in online church services?
Q1.A.3	How did you watch online church services? Alone? With family, did you sing along? Did you watch the service live, or did you play back later?
Q1.A.4	How was your experience watching online church services?
B. Sermon-specific questions:	
Q1.B.1	Out of all the online sermons you have heard, which one do you remember? (Max 5)
Q1.B.2	What made you remember these sermons
Q1.B.3	What were the most significant differences between a good and bad online sermon?
C. Panel-specific questions:	
<i>'stayed' panel:</i>	
Q1.C	What are the most important reasons you regularly return to the same church service provider?
<i>"switched" panel:</i>	
Q1.SW	What are the most important reasons you regularly switched between different church service providers?
<i>'stopped' panel:</i>	
Q1.ST	What are the most important reasons for stopping watching online services altogether, even if the services would be entirely online again?

3.2.2 Round II: narrowing down

The second round of questionnaires (Table 3.3) is meant to narrow down the comments made in the first round of questionnaires (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). The comments received by all the panel participants for blocks A and B were condensed into lists of 9-21 items with original ideas. In these rounds, there is no variety in the comments offered the choice yet. In block C, the items were condensed into an appropriate list for each panel, resulting in 3 separate lists. The questions in table 3.2 were sent to the panels again via e-mail to choose three comments (in no particular order).

Table 3.3

Second round questionnaire

A: Service-specific questions	
Q2.A.1	Choose three comments you found to be most good about online services
Q2.A.2	Choose three comments you miss most in online church services
Q2.A.3	Choose three comments that are most applicable to your experience of watching the online service at home
B: Sermon-specific questions:	
Q2.B.1	Choose three comments that helped you the most to remember an online sermon
Q2.B.2	Pick three comments that made the most significant difference between a good and a bad online sermon
C: Panel-specific questions:	
	<i>'stayed' panel:</i>
Q2.S	Choose three comments that most describe why you have frequently switched between different online service providers
	<i>'switched' panel:</i>
Q2.SW	Choose three comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they online would be available online
	<i>'stopped' panel:</i>
Q2.ST	Choose three comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they only would be available online

3.2.3 Round III: Ranking

In this survey (Table 3.4), panelists are asked to rank all the comments that met the threshold in the last questionnaire (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). All the blocks in the panels had specific comments in their questions that corresponded with their choices in the second round.

Table 3.4

Round III questionnaire

A: Service-specific questions	
Q3.A.1	Which of these comments did you think was the most important good thing about the online services? Put in the correct order.
Q3.A.2	Which of these comments do you miss the most about online services? Put in the correct order.
Q3.A.3	Which of these comments are most important to your experience of watching the online service at home? Put in the correct order
B: Sermon-specific questions:	

- Q3.B.1 Which of these comments do you think is most important in helping you remember an online sermon? Put in the correct order.
- Q3.B.2 Which of these comments are the main differences for you between a good and a bad online sermon? Put in the correct order.

C: Panel-specific questions:

- Q3.S *'stayed' panel:* Which of these comments were the most important reasons describing why you regularly looked at the same online service provider? Put in the correct order.
- Q3.SW *'switched' panel:* Which of these comments most describes why you frequently switch between different online services? Put in the correct order.
- Q3.ST *'stopped' panel:* Which of these comments was the most important for why you stopped watching online services, even if there are no more physical services? Put in the correct order.
-

3.3 ANALYSES

3.3.1 Round I analysis

The first round was analyzed by condensing the answers to questions into items that did not have repeating content in the items, and references to COVID-19 were taken out. Blocks A and B of the survey were all condensed together, and block C was condensed per panel.

3.3.2 Round II analysis

The second round was analyzed by calculating which percentage of participants picked each comment of each panel separately. If a question had two or more items chosen by at least 50% of participants in one panel, those items were retained and put up for ranking in the next round (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). If there were less than two comments on a question that were picked by over 50% of the panel or more, comments were chosen by at least 30% were also taken to the following survey.

3.3.3 Round III analysis

Kendall's W was calculated for each question to determine how consistent the ranking among participants was. This instrument gives a number between 0 and 1. 0-0.1 means no agreement, 0.10-0.30 means a weak agreement, 0.30-0.60 means a moderate agreement, and 0.60-1 means a strong agreement (Moslem, Ghorbanzadeh, Blaschke & Duleba, 2019). Additionally, the mean ranking of each of the comments for every question was calculated. These values indicate how important the panelists generally considered the comment.

4. RESULTS

4.1 ROUND I

The answers of the 47 participants of the first round in blocks A and B comments were condensed into 9-21 items (see Appendix A table 4.1.1-5) to continue to the next round. The answers of blocks specific to the panels were condensed into 9-12 items to continue to the following round. Answers related to COVID-19 were taken out. Most participants had no difficulty coming up with good things and shortcomings of services. However, participants often had trouble recalling sermons that they had heard in the past. This consequently made it difficult to recall what made services memorable. However, they did know what made the difference between a good and a bad online sermon, so they did have more in-depth answers.

4.2 ROUND II

To determine which items will be ranked in the last round of questionnaires, it was calculated per panel how many percent of the participants chose an item in their three comments to be most applicable to the questions. Items selected by at least 50% of the participants are taken to be ranked in the last round. If less than two items were picked by at least 50% of the panelists, items picked by 30% or more were also taken to the next round.

4.2.1 General service experience (Q2.A)

Q2.A.1 Good in online services

In Q2.A.1 (Table 4.2.1), *Choose three comments you found to be most good about online services*, and item three (*Being able to determine the time yourself, live or watch*

back later) in the panel ‘switched’ had the highest percentage of participants in one panel that selected an item with 69.23%, the second most selected in one panel, ‘stayed’ is item two (*Being able to receive spiritual education, learning about God’s word*) with 53.85%. Number two and three both also met the threshold of 30% of participants to choose the item in all three panels. Items one (*The technical quality, image, sound, etc.*) and five (*Being connected to the congregation and being aware of what is going on*) only met the threshold in the panel ‘stayed’. Items eight (*Services are widely broadcasted, easily accessible for non-believers*) and eleven (*The ability to switch between different providers of church services*) only met the threshold in the panel ‘switched’. Panel ‘stayed’ and ‘switched’ had five items met the threshold. The panel ‘stopped’ had two items meet that threshold, items two and three.

Table 4.2.1

Q2.A.1 Choose 3 comments you found to be most good about online services, items that met the threshold, in percent

		‘stayed’	‘switched’	‘stopped’
1	The technical quality, image, sound, etc.	30.8	15.4	6.7
2	Being able to receive spiritual education, learning about God’s word	53.9	38.5	40.0
3	Being able to determine the time yourself, live or watch back later	46.2	69.2	46.7
5	Being connected to the congregation and being aware of what is going on	30.8	7.7	13.3
8	Services are widely broadcasted and easily accessible for non-believers	15.4	30.8	13.3
9	Being able to attend a service when coming to church is not possible (personal situations, illness, vacation, etc.)	30.8	30.8	20.0
11	The ability to switch between different providers of church services	0.0	46.2	20.0

Additionally, In Q2.A.1 (table Appendix B: 4.2.2), items seven (*Being able to follow the Lord’s Supper/Eucharist at home*), 15 (*Being able to learn from other*

traditions), 16 (*Decide last minute whether you will follow a service*), were picked least often among all categories. Items that were never chosen by the panel 'stayed' are seven, twelve (*Keeping Sunday in honor*), 13 (*Option to skip parts of the video*), and 15, and 17 (*Decide last minute which service you can follow*). Items that were never chosen by the panel 'switched' are seven, ten (*The ability to be lazy*), 16, 17, 18 (*The effort put into the services*), and 19 (*New talents that become visible in the production of the services (technique, creative, children's and teenage work)*).

Q2.A.2 Missed in online services

Q2.A.2, *Choose three comments that are most applicable to what you missed in online services*, had the largest number of items picked, over 50% by the panelists, with eight items. The item chosen most often in one panel is item one (*Meeting each other before, during, and after the service*), with 86.7% by the 'stopped' panel. The item chosen second most often by one panel was item one with 84,62% and item five (*Congregational Singing/ Worship*) with 84,6%, and both were in the 'stayed' panel. The 'stayed', and the 'stopped' panels had three items meet the threshold to be ranked in the last round of questionnaires. The 'switched' panel had two items that met the threshold to be ranked. Additionally, in Q2.A.2 (table 4.2.4), the least picked item by one panel is item three (*Good quality of music*) with 0.0% by panel 'stayed', and item four (*Good quality of technology (image/ sound)*) with 0.0% by panel 'stopped'.

Q2.A.3 General experience

In Q2.A.3: *Choose three comments that are most applicable to your experience of watching the online service at home* (Table 4.2.5). The most picked item by one panel was item twelve (*I miss the connection and the conversations before/during/after the service*), with 61.5% in the panel 'stayed' and 53.9% in the panel 'switched'. The third most picked item in one panel is item four (*I felt less*

involved in the congregation), with 53.3% in the panel ‘stopped’. Items that did meet the threshold for one panel but did not get chosen by anybody in another panel are item two (*I could not/poorly concentrate on the service*) with 0.0% by panel ‘switched’, item three (*It was easy to pick your moment to watch*) with 0.0% by panel ‘stopped’ and item five (*I got annoyed by the poor quality of the music*) by the ‘stayed’ panel. All panels had four items going to the next round.

Table 4.2.5

Q2.A.3 Choose three comments most applicable to your experience of watching the online service at home. Items that have met the threshold in percent.

		‘stayed’	‘switched’	‘stopped’
2	I could not/poorly concentrate on the service,	15.4	0.0	33.3
3	It was easy to pick your moment to watch	15.4	30.8	0.0
4	I felt less involved in the congregation	38.5	30.8	53.3
5	I got annoyed by the poor quality of the music	0.0	23.1	33.3
9	Relaxed. Not ‘have to’ dress neatly and be somewhere on time	30.8	23.1	26.7
12	I miss the connection and the conversations before/during/after the service	61.5	53.9	26.7
14	Congregational singing/worship does not work for me at home	38.5	7.7	20.0
18	I often combine watching with breakfast/coffee/food	15.4	38.5	33.3

Additionally, in Q2.A.3 (Appendix B, Table 4.2.6), the item picked least by all the panels was 15 (*I notice more loneliness, especially when I watch alone*). In panel ‘stayed’ items one (*Only the sermons are worth listening to.*), 15, and 17 (*Services often felt the same to me and relatively static. Like a script finished every week.*) were never chosen. In panel ‘switched’ item six (*I had problems due to poor quality technology (image, internet, sound)*), ten (*I felt less responsible for coming and therefore skip a service more often*), and 15 were never chosen. In panel ‘stopped’, item 8 (*It mainly*

brought the church experience back to consumption.), eleven (*I was less overstimulated by it than by ordinary services*), and item 16 (*Handy to be able to pause to take notes on a sermon*) were never chosen by the participants.

4.2.2 Online sermon experience (Q2.B)

Q2.B.1 Remembering online sermons

In Q2.B.1 (Table 4.2.7), *Choose three comments that helped you remember an online sermon*, the items that met the threshold were picked between 46.6% and 30.8%. Item one (*The sermon was made visual (for example, with a remarkable story or an object)*) met the threshold for each group. Item five (*Different, more intimate format than a regular service (close to the camera or in a living room)*) only met the threshold in the panel ‘stopped’ with 33.3%. Item 19 (*Succinctly*) only met the threshold in the ‘stayed’ panel. Item 15 (*The sermon was part of a series of the same theme*) only met the threshold in the ‘switched’ panel. In panel compatible, five items met the threshold, items one, seven (*There was a practical application of the sermon*), eleven (*Something personal was shared*), 14 (*Enthusiastic speaker*), and 19. In panel ‘switched’, five items met the threshold, one, four (*The content, which fit well with my life at the time*), eleven, 14, and 15. In the panel ‘stopped’, four items met the threshold, one, four, five, and seven.

Table 4.2.7

Q2.B.1 Choose three comments that helped you remember an online sermon most. Items that met the threshold in percent.

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
1	The sermon was made visual (for example, with an impressive story or an object)	30.8	38.5	33.3
4	The content which fit well with my life at the time	23.1	38.5	46.7
5	Different, more intimate format than a regular service (close to the camera or in a living room)	15.4	7.7	33.3
7	There was a practical application of the sermon	30.8	23.1	33.3
11	Something personal was shared	30.8	30.8	26.7
14	Enthusiastic speaker	30.8	30.8	13.3
15	The sermon was part of a series of the same theme	7.7	30.8	0.0
19	Succinctly	30.8	23.1	20.0

Additionally, in Q2.B.1 (Appendix B: 4.2.8), items two (*it was confusing*), 13 (*Own pastor spoke*), and 16 (*Different location than usual*) were all never chosen by any groups.

Q2.B.2 difference between good and bad

Q2.B.2 (Table 4.2.9), *Pick 3 comments that made the most difference between a good and a bad online sermon*, items that met the threshold ranged between 46.67% and 30.77%. Item seven (*Online succinctly*) was chosen enough to meet the threshold in all three panels. Item (*four encourage interaction with each other*) only met the panel 'switched' threshold with 30,8%. Item eight (*Not reading a sermon from a piece of paper*) only met the threshold in the panel 'stayed' with 30.8%. Items 13 (*Clear line in the sermon*) with 46.7% and 20 (*Still camera image with alternating angles, looking at the camera, possibly PowerPoints neatly in the picture*) with 40.0% only met the threshold in the panel 'stopped'. In panel 'stayed', four items met the threshold, six (*clear*

message), seven, eight, and eleven (*Whether the speaker was aware of the viewers at home, or whether it was more intended for the people in the room and I was allowed to watch at home*). In the panel, ‘switched’ items four, six, seven, and eleven met the threshold. In panel ‘stopped’, items seven, 13, and 20 completed the threshold.

Table 4.2.7

Q2.B.2 Pick 3 comments that made the most difference between a good and a bad online sermon. Items that met the threshold in percent.

		‘stayed’	‘switched’	‘stopped’
4	encourage interaction with each other.	7.7	30.8	6.7
6	clear message	30.8	46.2	20.0
7	Online succinctly	46.2	38.5	46.7
8	Not reading a sermon from a piece of paper	30.8	7.7	0.0
11	Whether the speaker was clearly aware of the viewers at home, or whether it was more intended for the people in the room and I was allowed to watch at home	30.8	30.8	20.0
13	A clear line in the sermon	23.1	23.1	46.7
20	Still camera image with alternating angles, looking at the camera, possibly PowerPoints neatly in the picture	0.0	7.7	40.0

Additionally, in Q2.B.2 (Appendix B: Table 4.2.8), items that were picked least often were five (*That you had to do/prepare / lookup / send in answers at home*), twelve (*Starting with an interactive online moment and using that in the sermon helped me maintain focus and made a sermon easier to follow*), and 19 (*The speaker stands and moves dynamically*). The aforementioned items were chosen by 0.0% of the two panels and picked by no more than 7.69% by the other panel.

4.2.3 Panel-specific questions (Q2.C)

Panel ‘stayed’

In Q2.C.S (Table 4.2.11), Choose 3 comments that most describe why you regularly watched the same church service provider. Items that met the threshold in percent, three items were selected by the ‘stayed’ panel. These items are two (Involvement in your congregation) with 92.3%, three (It was the church I always go to and I like to be fed by my congregation) with 61.5%, and seven (Relevant announcements and prayer for congregation members) with 61.5%.

Table 4.2.11

Q2.C.S Choose three comments that most describe why you regularly watched the same church service provider. Items that met the threshold in percent

2	Involvement in your own congregation	92.3
3	It was the church I always go to, and I like to be fed by my own congregation	61.5
7	Relevant announcements and prayers for congregation members	61.5

Additionally, in Q2.C (Appendix B: Table 4.2.12), items that do not meet the threshold are one (*I am attracted to the rituals in the services. Those rituals give me something to hold on to*), four (*Easy to find the service*), five (*I got to know the structure of the services, and I knew roughly what was going to happen*), six (*own pastor*) and eight (*Possibility of discussion with municipal members afterward*). These items were picked between 7.7% and 23.1% of the panel members.

Panel ‘switched’

In Q2.C.SW (4.2.11), Choose three comments that most describe why you have frequently ‘switched’ between different online service providers. Four items met the threshold. The item chosen most was item eight (*I like variety between various movements and theological backgrounds because I find it instructive, and it also*

regularly makes me think.) with 53.9%. After that, the most chosen items were items one (*Variety in experience, different churches appealed more online but wanted to stay connected with their congregation*), two (*See how others are doing their services. Without having to go there physically*), and three (*had seen an exciting service passing by via social media*) with 46.2%. Item four (*It differed with whom I looked and what I felt like/needed for*) also met the threshold with 30.8%.

Table 4.2.11

Q2.SW Choose 3 comments that most describe why you have frequently switched between different online service providers. Items that met the threshold in percent.

1	Variety in experience, different churches appealed more online but wanted to stay connected with their own congregation.	46.2
2	See how others are doing their services without having to go there physically.	46.2
3	had seen an exciting service passing by via social media	46.2
4	It differed with whom I looked and what I felt like/needed.	30.8
8	I do like the variety between different movements and theological backgrounds because I find it instructive, and it also regularly makes me think.	53.9

Additionally, in Q2.SW items that were not chosen were five (*My partner/roommate goes to another church, so we alternated it a bit*), six (*I also got inspiration from other live streams to see what we could improve on our live stream to get it better at home*), seven (*Due to the online services, the experience was lost, and content remained. This made it clear to us that there was little content in the sermons. That is why we started looking around to get ‘nutrition’ from the church service*) and nine (*Mainly because of the preference of others*). These items were chosen by between 7.7% and 23.1% of the members.

Panel ‘stopped’

In Q2.ST (Appendix B: Table 4.2.13), *Choose 3 comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services*; the item was chosen most often with 53.3% was two (*sense of gathering*). The other things that met the threshold are one (*Vocals are horrible digital*), three (*too hard to set aside time if you do not move out and still stay in your own home*), four (*I found it complicated to concentrate well and there are too many stimuli and distractions at home*) and 10 (*because I missed the involvement*) Additionally, in Q2.ST items were not picked (Appendix B: Table 4.2.13) between 6.7% and 26.7%.

4.3 ROUND III

Kendall's W was calculated for each panel and question to see the level of consensus. In the panel 'stayed', the question with a strong agreement (W between 0.60 and 1) is Q3.C (table 4.3.6), *what comments most describe why you regularly watched the same church service provider*, with Kendall's W=.692. The question with a moderate agreement (W between 0.30 and 0.60) is Q3.A.1; *what comments did you find to be most good about online services*, With W=.40. The questions with a weak level of agreement (W between 0.10 and 0.30) are Q3.A.2, *What did you miss most about online services*, with W=.265, Q3.A.3, *what comments are most applicable to your experience of watching the online service at home*, with W=.227, Q3.B.1, *What helped you the most to remember an online sermon*, with W=.135 and Q3.B.2, *What made the most difference between a good and a bad online sermon*, with W=.146. In the panel 'switched', the items with the weak agreement are Q3.A.1, with W=.257, Q3.B.1 with W=.162, and Q3.B.2 with .247. The questions with no agreement (W between 0 and 0.10) are Q3.A.3 with W=.013 and Q3.SW, *what comments describe why you have frequently 'switched' between different online service providers*, with W=.005. In the

panel ‘stopped’, the items with the weak agreement are Q3.A.2 with $W=.291$, Q3.A.3 with $W=.155$, Q3.B.2 with $W=.383$, and Q2.ST *Choose 3 comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they would be available online* with $W=.213$. The question with no agreement is Q3.B.1 with $W=.088$.

4.3.1 General service experiences (Q3.A)

Q3.A.1 Good in online services

All panels (Table 4.3.1) found good in online services that created the opportunity to receive spiritual education. They also all appreciated that they could determine for themselves if they would watch the service and sermon live or at a time that best fit their needs.

Table 4.3.1

Q3.A.1 what comments did you find to be most good about online services, mean ranking per item

		‘Stayed’	‘Switched’	‘Stopped’
	Kendall’s W	.401	.257	n.a.
1	The technical quality, image, sound, etc.	3.3		
2	Being able to receive spiritual education, learning about God’s word	1.9	2.0	1.2
3	Being able to determine the time yourself, live or watch back later	3.8	3.3	1.8
5	Being connected to the congregation and being aware of what is going on	3.2		
8	Services are widely broadcasted and easily accessible for non-believers	3.2	4.0	
9	Being able to attend a service when coming to church is not possible (personal situations, illness, vacation, etc.)	5.6	2.4	
11	The ability to switch between different providers of church services		3.3	

‘stayed’ panel

Participants in the panel with ‘stayed’ attendees found it very important to be connected and keep up with their community and their congregation through education and personal and spiritual involvement through announcements, prayer, or seeing a friendly face on the screen. They also appreciated having the freedom to decide where they could watch the service.

‘Switched’ panel

Members of the ‘switched’ panel found it reasonable that the online availability created an easily accessible medium for non-believers to find. They also appreciated the ability to switch between different service providers easily.

Q3.2.A Missed in online services

The general experience of all panels (Table 4.3.2) is that they felt less involved in the congregation.

Table 4.3.2

Q3.A.2 What did you miss most about online services? Mean ranking per item

		<i>‘stayed’</i>	<i>‘switched’</i>	<i>‘stopped’</i>
	Kendall’s W	.265	n.a.	.291
1	Meeting each other before, during, and after the service	1.4	1.8	1.4
2	Keeping the viewer engaged, I was more easily distracted during an online service than a physical service	2.4	1.2	2.5
5	Congregational Singing/Worship	2.1		2.1

‘stayed’ panel

By panel ‘stayed’ It was missed most being able to meet with each other. A certain level of engagement was also missed, as well as being able to sing as a congregation instead alone at home

‘Switched’ panel

They missed meeting each other and congregational singing and worship.

Q3.3.A general online service experience

Most panels (Table 4.3.3) agreed to some extent that, in their experience, they felt less involved in the congregation.

Table 4.3.3

Q3.A.3 what comments are most applicable to your experience of watching the online service at home, mean ranking per item

		‘stayed’	‘switched’	‘stopped’
	Kendall’s W	.227	.013	.155
2	I could not/poorly concentrate on the service,		0.0	2.2
3	It was easy to pick your moment to watch		2.4	
4	I felt less involved in the congregation	2.9	2.5	1.9
5	I got annoyed by the poor quality of the music			2.9
9	Relaxed. Not ‘have to’ dress neatly and be somewhere on time	3.1		
12	I miss the connection and the conversations before/during/after the service	1.8	2.4	
14	Congregational singing/worship does not work for me at home	2.2		
18	I often combine watching with breakfast/coffee/food		2.7	2.9

‘stayed’ panel

Generally, the ‘stayed’ panel felt less involved in online services, missing the conversations around services. They also concluded that singing at home does not

work for them. They, however, did find and most agree that it was more relaxed to visit the church from your living room without rushing and getting dressed for church.

‘Switched’ panel

The panel that switched regularly missed meeting each other and congregational singing and worship. Their general experience was that they found it easy to pick their own time for watching, often combined the service with a meal or coffee, and miss the connection and conversation around the service.

4.3.2 Online sermon experience (Q3.B)

Q3.B.1 Remembering online sermons

All panels (Table 4.3.4) reported that a sermon made visual with a story or an object generally helped them remember a sermon.

Table 4.3.4

Q3.B.1 What helped you the most to remember an online sermon? Mean ranking per item

#	Answer	‘stayed’	‘switched’	‘stopped’
	Kendall’s W	.135	.162	.088
1	The sermon was made visual (for example, with an impressive story or an object)	3.8	3.1	2.2
4	The content which fit well with my life at the time		2.54	2.1
5	Different, more intimate format than a regular service (close to the camera or in a living room)			2.9
7	There was a practical application of the sermon	2.5		2.7
11	Something personal was shared	3.1	2.7	
14	Enthusiastic speaker	2.4	2.6	
15	The sermon was part of a series of the same theme		4.1	
19	Succinctly	3.1		

‘stayed’ panel

The panel “stayed” when talking about remembering sermons, did not find it important that either their own or different pastor spoke, and the form or location did not seem to matter. It was also not relevant that the sermon looked like it would be in regular physical service. They also reported that having a practical application of the sermon, a brief sermon, and an enthusiastic speaker helped them remember the sermon.

‘Switched’ panel

To remember sermons, it helped if the speaker, preferably with enthusiasm, shared the content that fits well with their life and something personal. It also helped them remember if the sermon was part of a more extensive series.

‘Stopped’ panel

This panel has no agreement. However, the items generally ranked highest to make a difference are a different, more intimate format or something personal was shared.

Q3.B.2 difference between good and bad online sermons

The difference between a good and a bad online sermon that all panels (Table 4.3.5) agreed on was that an online sermon should be done succinctly.

Table 4.3.5

Q3.B.2 What made the most difference between a good and a bad online sermon, mean ranking per item

#	Answer	'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
	Kendall's W	.15	.247	.383
4	encourage interaction with each other.	2.0	2.7	
6	clear message		1.7	
7	Online succinctly	2.9	2.4	1.6
8	Not reading a sermon from a piece of paper	3.4		
10	Supporting PowerPoint	3.4		
11	Whether the speaker was clearly aware of the viewers at home, or whether it was more intended for the people in the room and I was allowed to watch at home	3.4	3.2	
13	A clear line in the sermon			1.6
20	Still camera image with alternating angles, looking at the camera, possibly PowerPoints neatly in the picture			2.7

'stayed' panel

For the 'stayed' panel, when discussing the differences between a good and a bad online sermon, this group did not explicitly care for advanced camerawork with a supporting PowerPoint in the image. A dynamic preacher that was not enthusiastic did also not make a difference. Interactive elements were also not brought up as a relevant difference. To this group, the biggest difference between a good and a bad online sermon was a clear message, not reading the sermon from a piece of paper, and whether they felt that the preacher was aware of the watchers at home.

'switched' panel

The difference between a good and a bad online sermon is that a good online sermon encourages interaction with one another.

4.3.3 Panel-specific questions (Q3.C)

‘Stayed’ panel

When mentioning when asked what the participants reported (panel 4.6) as the most important reasons for consistently watching the service of the same service provider, they mentioned that the involvement, amongst other things, through prayer and relevant announcements in their congregation, and the need to grow through the church they felt attached.

Table 4.3.6

Q3.C What comments most describe why you regularly watched the same church service provider, mean ranking per item

Kendall's W		.692
2	Involvement in your congregation	1.6
3	It was the church I always go to, and I like to be fed by my congregation	1.5
6	Own pastor	3.5
7	Relevant announcements and prayers for congregation members	3.4

‘Switched’ panel

Generally, this group varied strongly in reasons that they switched between different services. Overall, variety is something that attendees appreciated.

Table 4.3.7

Q3.SW, what comments most describe why you have frequently ‘switched’ between different online service providers, mean ranking per item

Kendall's W		.005
1	Variety in experience, different churches appealed more online but wanted to stay connected with their congregation.	2.9
2	See how others are doing their services without having to go there physically.	3.1
3	had seen an exciting service passing by via social media	2.9

4	It differed with whom I looked and what I felt like/needed.	3.2
8	I like the variety between different movements and theological backgrounds because I find it instructive and regularly makes me think.	2.9

‘Stopped’ panel

The reasons reported in the panel for stopping watching online services are that they could not stand the vocals online, that they had no sense of gathering, they found it hard to set apart time, especially since they had difficulty concentrating, and that they missed the involvement

Table 4.3.8

Q2.ST Choose 3 comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they online would be available online

	Kendall's W	
		.213
1	Vocals are horrible online.	3.7
2	no sense of gathering.	2.0
3	too hard to set aside time if you do not move out and stay in your own home.	3.6
4	I found it complicated to concentrate well, and there are too many stimuli and distractions at home	3.2
10	because I missed the involvement	2.5

5. DISCUSSION

A Delphi method panel discussion was conducted with three rounds of surveys.

This was done to answer the following question:

How did online church attendees experience online sermons in online services?

People found it good in online services that they had an opportunity to be connected to their congregation when they were not physically present. They also appreciated the opportunity to receive spiritual education. However, the appreciation did not go much further than that, which is relevant to consider when evaluating services, especially when you consider that the connection sought is not being delivered in the services. Sermons are considered important by the participants; it is spiritual education, after all. However, they also report that there is some progress to be made in the delivery of those sermons.

5.1 Theoretical discussion

When asked for the reason that sermons were remembered, participants reported that an illustrated sermon with either a story or object helped. Stoorvogel (2019) studied six communicative elements, human-interest stories, humor, multimedia, direct appeal, ritual, and invitation. They found Sermons that are remembered most often contain either direct appeal or rituals. This was not mentioned by the panel members; however, it should be mentioned that many participants had trouble remembering services at all. This, in turn, re-affirms the results of Stoorvogel because human-interest stories are valued most but are not an element that helps retention.

Gamage, Fernando, and Perera (2015) found that interaction between course participants and their bonds impacts the rate of student dropouts. Creating supportive and positive peer influence will reduce the dropout rates. This is reflected in the reasons reported for not watching online services anymore, the lack of connection with each other and the congregation. Additionally, the interaction between participants is also something that was found to be important in the online church experience. Therefore, it is important to really foster that sense of community to improve the online service experience.

5.2 Practical implications

Foster a sense of gathering

Something that comes back regularly is that people do not feel connected and the congregation while watching services. This yearning for connection is something that all panels have in common. Bringing more focus in a church service on what is happening in the local community or making the 'highlighted faces' such as the worship team and preacher more personal instead of just functional and pretty, sharing personal stories and personalities can help foster this sense of gathering. It could also be beneficial for the preacher to involve themselves in the current affairs of their audience and explicitly mention matters related to the community where the preacher is speaking. Bringing the community aspect further in the service than just the announcements and prayer can help engage the audience and thus help improve focus, which will ultimately help to foster more effective communication in sermons.

Create a good balance between good technology and a good preacher

If it meets the basic threshold of utility to function, the technology is not often mentioned as a dealbreaker in the online service experience. However, a clear line with a succinct message in the sermon is mentioned often. As well as the reason to find online services good is because of the spiritual education received. A preacher well trained in the communicative aspects can keep the attention longer, especially in a hybrid setting, as is often the case now, where they have two audiences with wildly different mindsets watching. Alternating angles and flashy technology can keep the attention for quite a bit. Still, if the preacher is not trained in delivering a shorter message with distracted listeners more quickly, it is not worth the investment.

Understanding the listener at home

It is always beneficial to understand the audience, whether you are preaching to a fully physically present audience, a hybrid audience, or a fully online audience. The listener tends to miss engagement with the church and preacher. Apart from acknowledging people at home, it can be beneficial to understand how everybody is sitting at home, especially in the hybrid setting where the online audience is quickly overlooked. The audience, as shown, appreciates that acknowledgment. To involve the audience, interaction can be a beneficial tool. However, it is essential that the interaction between the preacher and listener was not deemed relevant in the panels. However, the interaction between listeners was considered relevant and could help with involvement and thus concentration. It could even be a tool to differentiate between two audiences in different settings by encouraging interpersonal interaction during parts of the service and sermon that might be more difficult to be translated

into an online experience. One could consider that when the physical audience starts worship, the online audience gets a few questions from the preacher that they can discuss with whom they are watching the service. It is essential not to forget that not everybody is watching the sermon in real-time, so whatever call to interactivity or something like that needs to be considered in a playback environment.

Evaluate the role of worship over a screen

It could be beneficial for improving the experience and impact of sermons to evaluate the role and time spent in service on music. Mentioned often is that congregational singing/worship does not translate well over any bandwidth. Therefore, to save the listener's attention span for something deemed necessary, which, according to the panels, is spiritual education. It might be helpful to weave music more into the sermon by creating shorter, succinct sprints of education with short spans of worship woven into the fabric of the sermon.

5.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

This research gives insight into the general experience of online sermons in online services. Flowing from these conclusions, further insight was gained into what future research could contribute to the area of online sermons and services. Currently, there is little insight into what ratio announcements, worship, and sermon work in an impactful manner for both physical and online services. It was found that those are elements that had an impact on how participants appreciated services. Therefore, it will be beneficial if more insight is given into that element. In addition to existing research, it was suggested that adding an object as an illustration to help recollection of sermons however this was not included in earlier research. Understanding this

element can be of help to further develop a framework of moving sermons. Also, fostering a sense of gathering is not well researched from a communication perspective in churches. However, this research found that it is important. Therefore, to further develop this field, it is suggested to understand what exactly fosters this important sense of gathering. Studying the influence of different denominations and their perception of (online) services and sermons could therefore also be beneficial. This research did not focus on those differences. All in all, this research revealed insights in the general experiences, revealing a number of themes that could be beneficial to research to further the experience of online sermons in online services.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

This research method is based on self-report. What people say they think is beneficial might not be entirely accurate. However, understanding what people believe necessary can be an essential first step to researching what is important. It is also important to note that the panels contained many evangelist Christians. The average age between 31 and 39 participants is a little younger. In future research a population accurate quantitative research design could avoid an uneven balance in both denomination and age. It could also be beneficial to repeat a similar research design but instead focusing on a specific age group or denomination to gain more specific insights. Self-report can be resolved by focusing a survey or experiment around a specific sermon. Then it can be researched if elements, such as using an object as an illustration, does improve recollection of (online) sermons.

5.5 CONCLUSION

When understanding the experience of online sermons in online services and taking that understanding to improve that experience is essential to look at fostering a sense of gathering, creating a balance between good technology and good preacher, understanding the audience, especially the listeners at home, and evaluate the role of worship during the services. To come to an overall better understanding and create a more significant impact with sermons.

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Appendix A

Round I condensed answers per question

Table 4.1.1

Q1.A.1 What was good about online church services?

-
- 1 The technical quality, image, sound etc.
 - 2 Being able to receive spiritual education, learning about God's word
 - 3 Being able to determine the time yourself, live, or look back later
 - 4 No travel time to the meeting place, can look everywhere
 - 5 Being connected to the congregation, and being aware of what is going on
 - 6 If family / roommates can follow the service
 - 7 Being able to follow the evening meal / Eucharist at home
 - 8 Wide range of services, so accessible for non-believers
 - 9 Being able to attend a service when coming to church is not possible (personal situations, illness, vacation, etc.)
 - 10 The ability to be lazy
 - 11 The ability to switch between different providers of church services
 - 12 Honor Sunday
 - 13 Ability to flush
 - 14 Possibility of pausing
 - 15 Being able to learn from other traditions
 - 16 Let us decide whether you will follow another service
 - 17 Let them decide which service can follow you
 - 18 The effort put into the services
 - 19 New talents that became visible in the production of the services (technique, creative, children's and teenage work)

Table 4.1.2

Q1.A.2 What did you miss in online church services?

-
- 1 Meeting each other before, during and after the service
 - 2 Keeping the viewer engaged, I was more easily distracted during an online service than a physical service
 - 3 Good quality of music
 - 4 Good quality of technology (image/sound)
 - 5 Congressional singing/Worship
 - 6 A big stick behind the door, nobody will notice if you don't look.
 - 7 Celebrating the Lord's Supper / Eucharist
 - 8 A lot was compared with other services, so that own stream was always disappointing.
 - 9 The focus on contact, a 'show' or a 'concert' was put on which made the viewer feel like a 'spectator'

Table 4.1.3

Q1.A.4 Choose 3 comments that are most applicable to your experience to watch the online service at home

-
- 1 Only the sermons are worth listening to.
 - 2 I could not/poorly concentrate on the service,
 - 3 It was easy to pick your own moment to watch
 - 4 I felt less involved in the municipality
 - 5 I got annoyed by the poor quality of the music
 - 6 I had problems due to poor quality technology (image, internet, sound)
 - 7 I felt very anonymous
 - 8 It mainly brought the church experience back to consumption.
 - 9 Relaxed. Not 'have to' dress neatly and be somewhere on time
 - 10 I felt less responsible for coming and therefore skip a shift more often.
 - 11 I was less overstimulated by it than by ordinary services.
 - 12 I miss the connection and the conversations before/during/after the shift
 - 13 Nice to follow the service together as a family
 - 14 Congregational singing/worship doesn't work for me at home
 - 15 I notice more loneliness, especially when I watch alone
 - 16 Handy to be able to pause to take notes on a sermon, for example
 - 17 Services often felt the same to me and relatively static. A kind of script that was finished every week.
 - 18 I often combine watching with breakfast/coffee/food
-

Table 4.1.4

Q1.B.3 What made you remember these sermons

-
- 1 The sermon was made visual (for example with an impressive story or an object)
 - 2 it was confusing
 - 3 How I felt after the service
 - 4 The content, which fit well with my life at the time
 - 5 Different, more intimate format than a regular service (close to the camera, or in a living room)
 - 6 It looked like a physical service (so standing with lectern/stand)
 - 7 There was a practical application of the sermon
 - 8 It was loving
 - 9 It was discussed later with others.
 - 10 The profound message of the sermon.
 - 11 Something personal was shared
 - 12 Because something remarkable happened in the service
 - 13 Own pastor spoke
 - 14 Enthusiastic speaker
 - 15 The sermon was part of a series of the same theme
 - 16 Different location than usual
 - 17 Different predecessor than usual
 - 18 Different shape than usual
 - 19 Succinctly
 - 20 I learned something new
 - 21 It wasn't about the current news for a while
-

Table 4.1.5

Q1.B.3 What were the most significant differences between a good and a bad online sermon?

1	The enthusiasm with which they told made a big difference. With TV images, it often has to be a bit more 'exaggerated' to come across well.
2	The speaker is speaking to real people who are not on camera.
3	Personality and a close/intimate atmosphere.
4	encourage interaction with each other.
5	That you had to do / prepare / look up / send in answers at home
6	clear message
7	Online short and to the point
8	Not reading a sermon
9	The appearance that a predecessor has, being able to play with facial expressions and intonation.
10	Supporting PowerPoint
11	Whether the speaker was clearly aware of the viewers at home, or whether it was more intended for the people in the room and I was allowed to watch at home
12	Starting with an interactive online moment and using that in the sermon helped me maintain focus and made a sermon easier to follow.
13	Clear line in the sermon
14	Practical applicability
15	When people are involved at home. If someone mentions the people at home more often, you feel more involved and seen, even if there are people in the room
16	If speakers really made use of the medium of film by, for example, choosing locations, or doing or showing things that underline the message."
17	Visualizations
18	How static a sermon was (whether it was read or joked in between)
19	The speaker stands and moves dynamically
20	quiet camera image with alternating angles, looking at the camera, possibly powerpoints neatly in the picture
21	storytelling

Table 4.1.6

Q1.C What are the most important reasons that made you come back regularly to the same church service provider?

1	Meeting each other before, during and after the service
2	Keeping the viewer engaged, I was more easily distracted during an online service than a physical service
3	Good quality of music
4	Good quality of technology (image/sound)
5	Singing/Adoration
6	A big stick behind the door, nobody will notice if you don't look.
7	Celebrating the Lord's Supper / Eucharist

- 8 A lot was compared with other services, so that own stream was always disappointing.
 - 9 The focus on contact, a 'show' or a 'concert' was put on which made the viewer feel like a 'spectator'
-

Table 4.1.7

Q1.SW What are the most important reasons why you regularly 'switched' between different church service providers?

- 1 Variety in experience, different church appealed more online but wanted to stay connected with their own congregation.
 - 2 See how others are doing. Without having to physically go there.
 - 3 I had seen an exciting service passing by via social media
 - 4 It differed with whom I looked and what I felt like/needed for.
 - 5 My partner/roommate goes to another church, so we alternated it a bit
 - 6 I also got inspiration from other live streams to see what we could improve on our live stream to get it better at home.
 - 7 Due to the online services, the experience was lost and content remained. This made it clear to us that there was little content in the sermons. That is why we started looking around to get 'nutrition' from the church service.
 - 8 I do like variety between different movements and theological backgrounds, because I find it instructive and it also regularly makes me think.
 - 9 Mainly because of the preference of others
-

Table 4.1.8

Q1.ST What are the most important reasons that made you come back regularly to the same church service provider?

- 1 Zang lijkt nergens op digitaal.
 - 2 geen gevoel van samenkomst.
 - 3 te moeilijk om de tijd apart te zetten als u niet uit huis gaat en nog steeds in uw eigen huis blijft.
 - 4 Ik vond het ingewikkeld om mij goed te concentreren en er zijn thuis teveel prikkels en afleiding
 - 5 Wilde eigenlijk niet meer dan nodig achter mijn computer zitten.
 - 6 Er was een overvloed aan keuzes en dus bleef ik besluiteloos met wat ik dan wel wilde kijken.
 - 7 Omdat u veel vrijheid hebt in wat u kan doen is het ook gemakkelijk om dan anoniem te blijven en helemaal niet te kijken, er is geen sociale controle of samenhang.
 - 8 Persoonlijke geloofssituatie
 - 9 Ik merkte dat ik er niets uithaalde en dat ik puur voor de vorm mijn tijd aan het uitzitten was
 - 10 omdat ik de betrokkenheid miste
 - 11 dan las ik liever zelf wilde bijbellezen of bidden of zingen.
 - 12 Omdat de rest van het gezin niet echt mee luisterde.
-

Appendix B

Not-significant results of survey round II

Table 4.2.2

Q2.A.1 Choose 3 comments you found to be most good about online services, items that not meet the threshold, in percent

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
4	No travel time to the meeting place, can watch everywhere	15.38	7.69	20.00
6	follow the service as family / with roommates	7.69	23.08	13.33
7	Being able to follow the Lord's Supper / Eucharist at home	0.00	0.00	6.67
10	The ability to be lazy	15.38	0.00	13.33
12	Keeping Sunday in honor	0.00	15.38	20.00
13	Option to skip parts of video	0.00	7.69	20.00
14	Option of pausing the video	23.08	7.69	13.33
15	Being able to learn from other traditions	0.00	7.69	0.00
16	Decide last minute whether you will follow a service	7.69	0.00	0.00
17	Decide last minute which service you can follow	0.00	0.00	13.33
18	The effort put into the services	7.69	0.00	20.00
19	New talents that become visible in the production of the services (technique, creative, children's and teenage work	15.38	0.00	20.00

Table 4.2.4

Q2.A.2 Choose 3 comments you missed most about online services, items that did not meet the threshold, in percent

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
3	Good quality of music	0.00	7.69	13.33
4	Good quality of technology (image/sound)	7.69	15.38	0.00

6	Accountability, nobody will notice if you don't watch church.	15.38	30.77	26.67
7	Celebrating the Lord's Supper / Eucharist	7.69	7.69	13.33
8	A lot was compared with other services, so that own stream was always disappointing.	7.69	15.38	6.67
9	The focus on contact, a 'show' or a 'concert' was put on which made the viewer feel like a 'spectator'	15.38	46.15	26.67

Table 4.2.5

Q2.A.3 Choose 3 comments that are most applicable to your experience to watch the online service at home. Items that met the threshold, in percent.

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
2	I could not/poorly concentrate on the service,	15.38	0.00	33.33
3	It was easy to pick your own moment to watch	15.38	30.77	0.00
4	I felt less involved in the congregation	38.46	30.77	53.33
5	I got annoyed by the poor quality of the music	0.00	23.08	33.33
9	Relaxed. Not 'have to' dress neatly and be somewhere on time	30.77	23.08	26.67
12	I miss the connection and the conversations before/during/after the service	61.54	53.85	26.67
14	Congregational singing/worship doesn't work for me at home	38.46	7.69	20.00
18	I often combine watching with breakfast/coffee/food	15.38	38.46	33.33

Table 4.2.6

Q2.A.3 Choose 3 comments that are most applicable to your experience to watch the online service at home. Items that did not meet the threshold, in percent.

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
1	Only the sermons are worth listening to.	0.00	15.38	26.67
6	I had problems due to poor quality technology (image, internet, sound)	23.08	0.00	13.33
7	I felt very anonymous	7.69	7.69	6.67
8	It mainly brought the church experience back to consumption.	7.69	23.08	0.00

10	I felt less responsible for coming and therefore skip a service more often.	7.69	0.00	6.67
11	I was less overstimulated by it than by ordinary services.	7.69	15.38	0.00
13	Nice to follow the service together as a family	15.38	15.38	6.67
15	I notice more loneliness, especially when I watch alone	0.00	0.00	6.67
16	Handy to be able to pause to take notes on a sermon	15.38	7.69	0.00
17	Services often felt the same to me and relatively static. Like a script that was finished every week.	0.00	7.69	6.67

Table 4.2.8

Q2.B.1 Choose 3 comments that helped you the most to remember an online sermon. Items that did not meet the threshold, in percent.

		'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
2	it was confusing	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	How I felt after the service	7.69	0.00	13.33
6	It looked like a physical service (so standing with lectern/stand)	0.00	7.69	20.00
8	It was loving	0.00	0.00	6.67
9	It was discussed later with others.	23.08	15.38	6.67
10	The profound message of the sermon.	23.08	15.38	20.00
12	Because something remarkable happened in the service	15.38	7.69	0.00
13	Own pastor spoke	0.00	0.00	0.00
16	Different location than usual	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	Different pastor than usual	0.00	7.69	0.00
18	Different form than usual	0.00	7.69	13.33

Table 4.2.10

Q2.B.2 Pick 3 comments that made the most difference between a good and a bad online sermon, items that did not meet the threshold, in percent.

#	Answer	'stayed'	'switched'	'stopped'
1	The enthusiasm with which they told made a big difference. With TV images, it often has to be a bit more 'exaggerated' to come across well.	23.08	7.69	6.67
2	The speaker is speaking to real people who are not on camera.	0.00	7.69	13.33
3	Personal and a close/intimate atmosphere.	15.38	7.69	20.00
5	That you had to do / prepare / look up / send in answers at home	0.00	7.69	0.00
9	The appearance that a predecessor has, being able to play with facial expressions and intonation.	7.69	23.08	13.33
10	Supporting PowerPoint	0.00	7.69	13.33
12	Starting with an interactive online moment and using that in the sermon helped me maintain focus and made a sermon easier to follow.	7.69	0.00	0.00
14	Practical applicability	23.08	0.00	6.67
15	When people get involved at home. If someone calls the people at home more often, you feel more involved and seen, even if there are people in the room	15.38	7.69	6.67
16	If speakers really made use of the medium of film by, for example, choosing locations, or doing or showing things that underline the message.	7.69	7.69	13.33
17	Visualizations	23.08	15.38	0.00
18	How static a sermon was (whether it was read or joked in between)	0.00	15.38	20.00
19	The speaker stands and moves dynamically	0.00	7.69	0.00
21	storytelling	7.69	0.00	20.00

Table 4.2.12

Q2.ST Choose 3 comments that most describe why you regularly watched the same church service provider. Items that did not meet the threshold in percent.

1	I am attracted to the rituals in the services. Those rituals give me something to hold on to.	7.69%
4	Easy to find the service	15.38%
5	I got to know the structure of the services and I knew roughly what was going to happen.	15.38%
6	Own pastor	15.38%
8	Possibility of discussion with municipal members afterwards	23.08%

Table 4.2.14

Q2.SW Choose 3 comments that most describe why you have frequently switched between different online service providers. Items that did not meet the threshold, in percent.

5	My partner/roommate goes to another church, so we alternated it a bit	23.08%
6	I also got inspiration from other live streams to see what we could improve on our live stream to get it better at home. Due to the online services, the experience was lost and content remained.	7.69%
7	This made it clear to us that there was little content in the sermons. That is why we started looking around to get 'nutrition' from the church service.	15.38%
9	Mainly because of the preference of others	15.38%

Table 4.2.13

Q2.ST Choose 3 comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they online would be available online. Items that met the threshold, in percent.

1	Vocals are horrible digital.	33.33%
2	no sense of gathering.	53.33%
3	too hard to set aside time if you don't move out and still stay in your own home.	33.33%
4	I found it complicated to concentrate well and there are too many stimuli and distractions at home	33.33%
10	because I missed the involvement	33.33%

Table 4.2.14

Q2.ST Choose 3 comments that most describe why you chose to stop watching online services, even if they online would be available online. Items that did not meet the threshold, in percent.

5	Didn't really want to sit behind my computer any more than necessary.	6.67%
6	There was a plethora of choices, so I was left undecided about what to watch.	13.33%
7	Because you have a lot of freedom in what you can do, it is also easy to remain anonymous and not look at all, there is no social control or cohesion.	13.33%
8	Personal belief situation	26.67%
9	I noticed that I was not getting anything out of it and that I was sitting out my time purely for form	13.33%
11	I would instead read the Bible myself or pray or sing.	26.67%
12	Because the rest of the family wasn't really listening.	13.33%

