

ST. ALBERT UNITED CHURCH  
**RESULTS OF CHURCH RE-OPENING SURVEY**  
JULY 10, 2021 REPORT

***Overview***

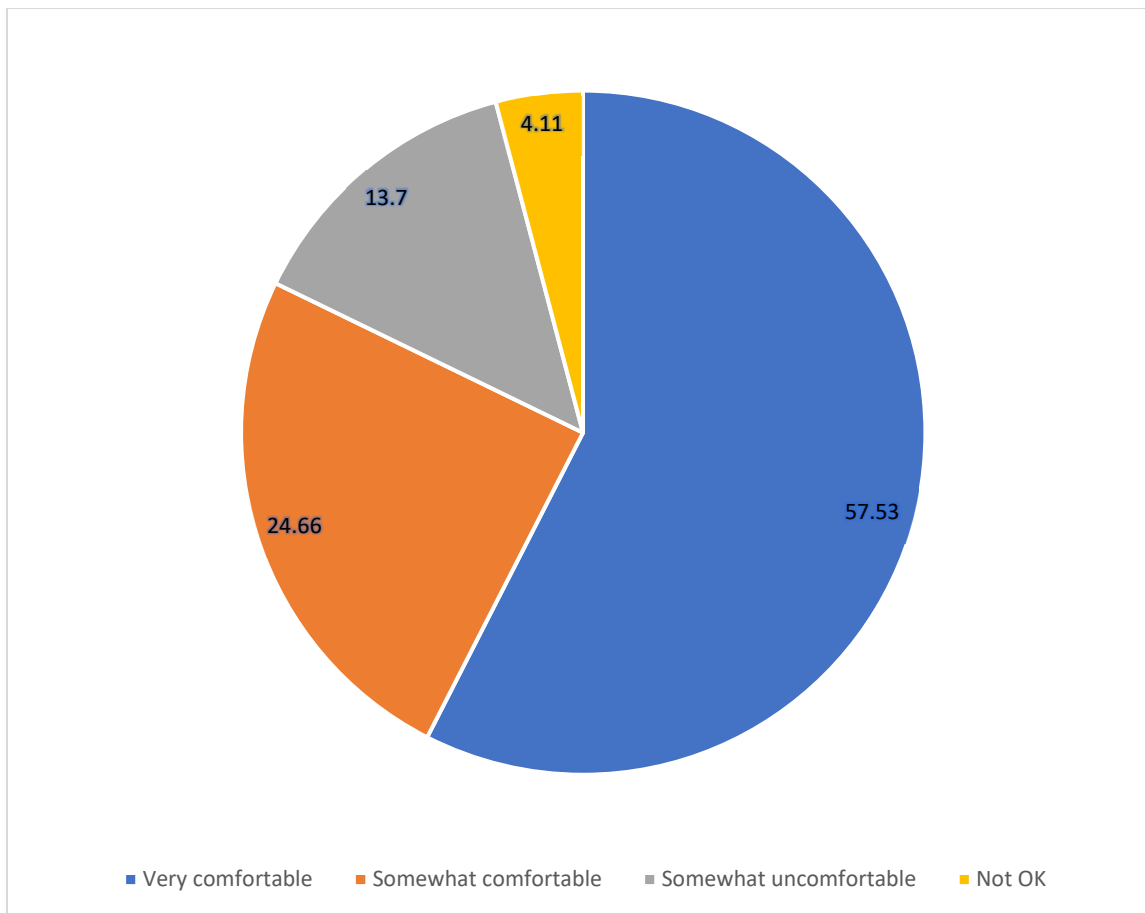
The majority of the survey respondents is very or somewhat comfortable attending an in-person worship service in July and August providing physical distancing and sanitizing requirements are followed. This includes maintaining physical distancing; extra cleaning and disinfection measures with hand sanitizers upon entry and throughout the building; no congregational or choir singing; no offering plates; changes in communion procedures and providing contact information (information only kept for 2 weeks).

Respondents are optimistic that COVID rates are likely to be lower by September and the percentage of fully vaccinated Albertans higher. However, they support a thoughtful approach based on provincial and health guidelines in effect at that time. Survey respondents appreciate having the option of live-streamed/recorded services once in-person worship resumes.

A total of 78 survey responses were received between June 25 and July 9, 2021 consisting of 75 on-line responses and 3 submitted in hard copy.

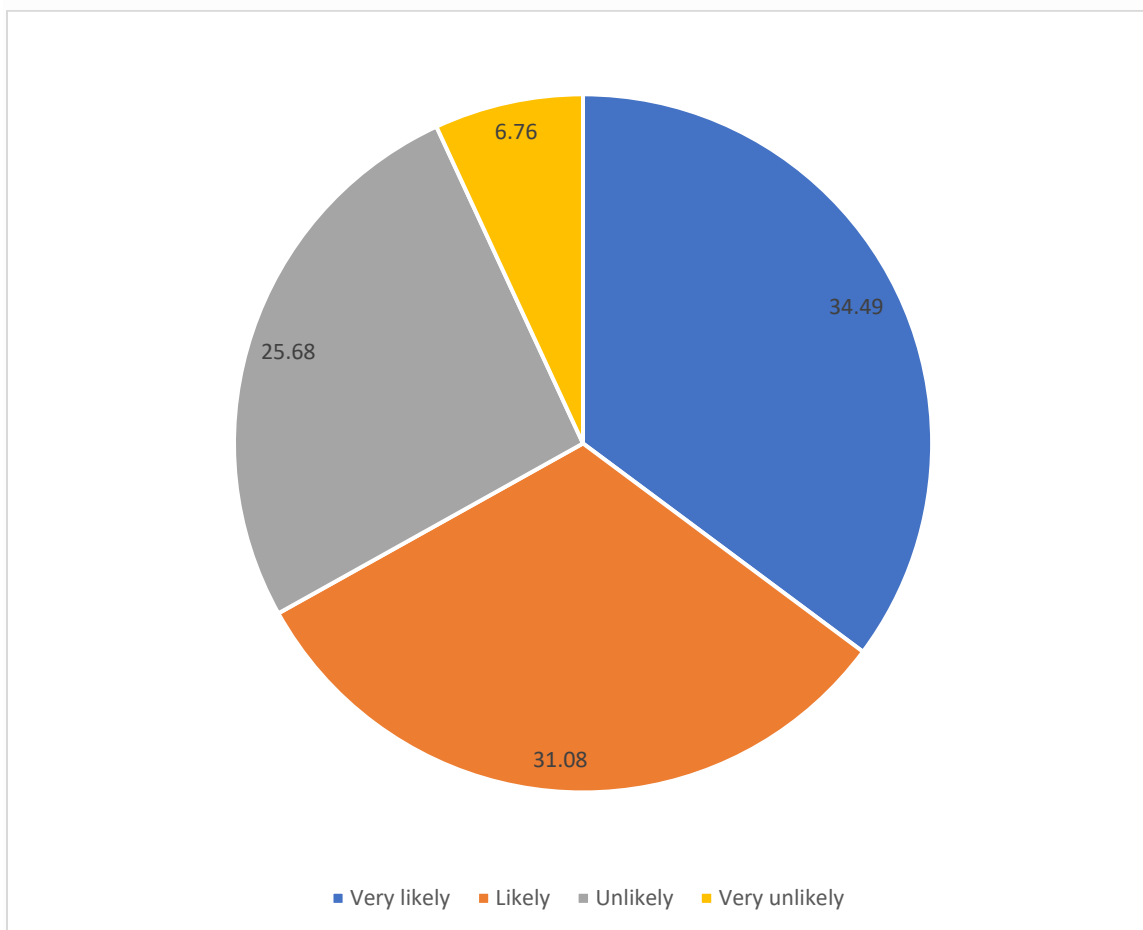
### ***Comfort Level Attending In-Person Services in July/August***

Members of the congregation were asked how comfortable they would feel attending an in-person service in July and August providing physical distancing and sanitizing measures were met.



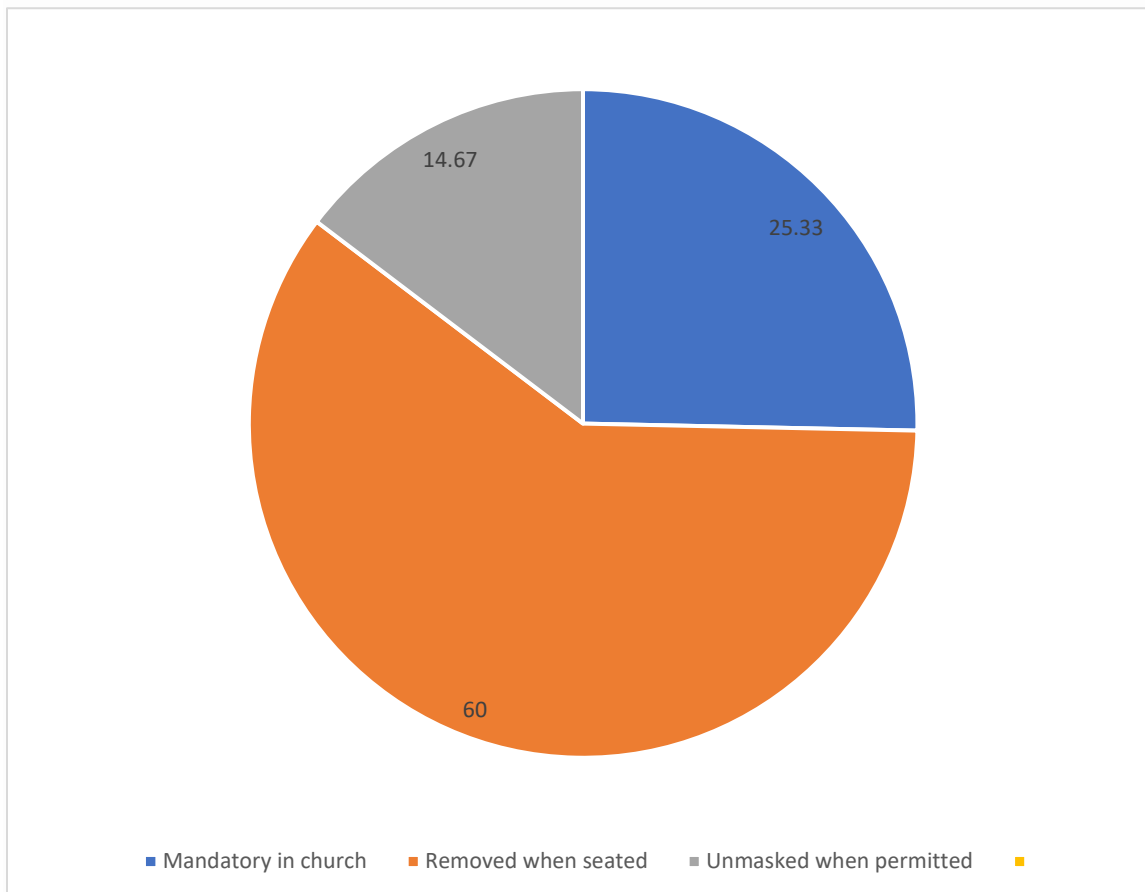
### ***Watching Live-Streamed SAUC Sunday Worship Services if Unable to Attend***

On-line worship services will continue once in-person worship resumes in July. The services will be live-streamed and recorded as they take place on Sunday mornings. The congregation was asked how likely they were to watch live-streamed St. Albert United Church worship services when they were unable to attend in person.



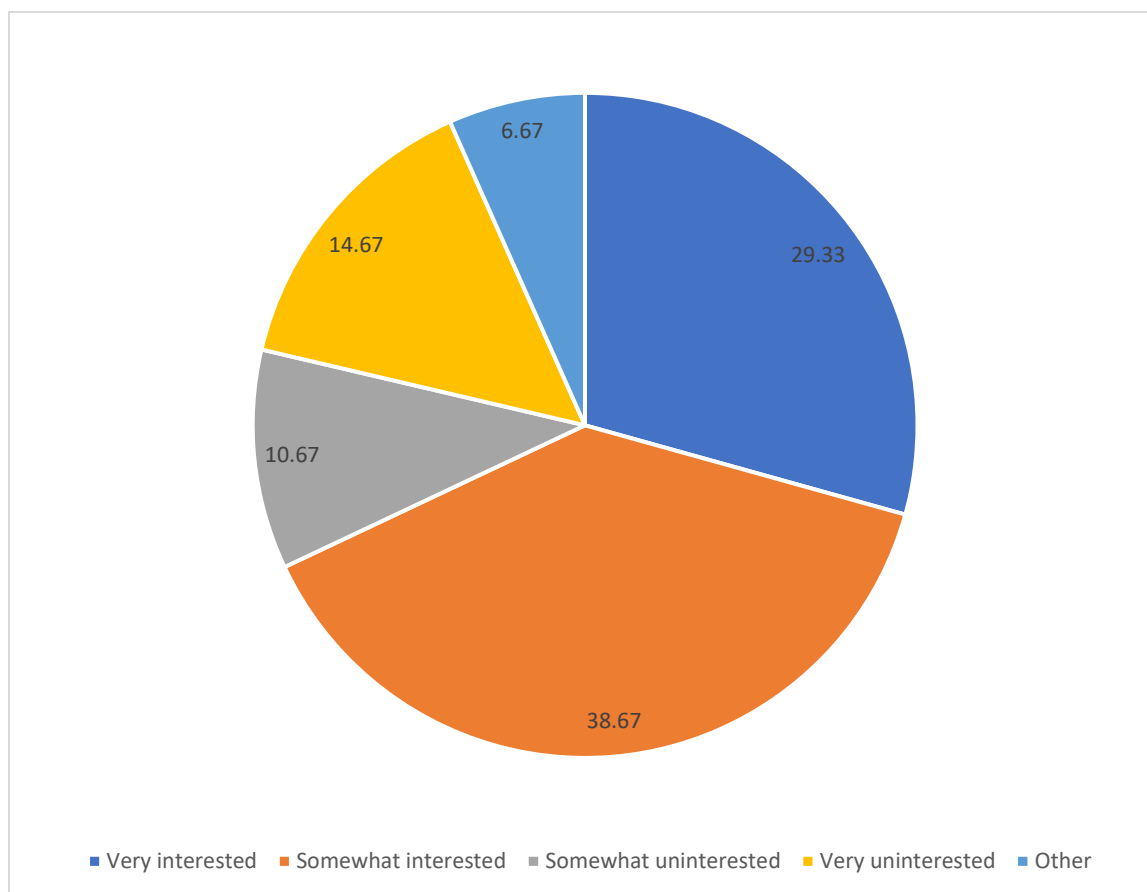
### ***Preference For Wearing Masks During In-Person Worship Services.***

Under Step 3 of Alberta's COVID re-opening plan, masks are no longer mandatory in most indoor and outdoor settings. The congregation was asked for their preference when it comes to wearing masks at church. The majority of respondents preferred the option of people remaining masked when moving in the building but permitted to remove their masks once seated. Other options were mandatory wearing of masks in church or removing the mask requirement once government guidelines permitted.



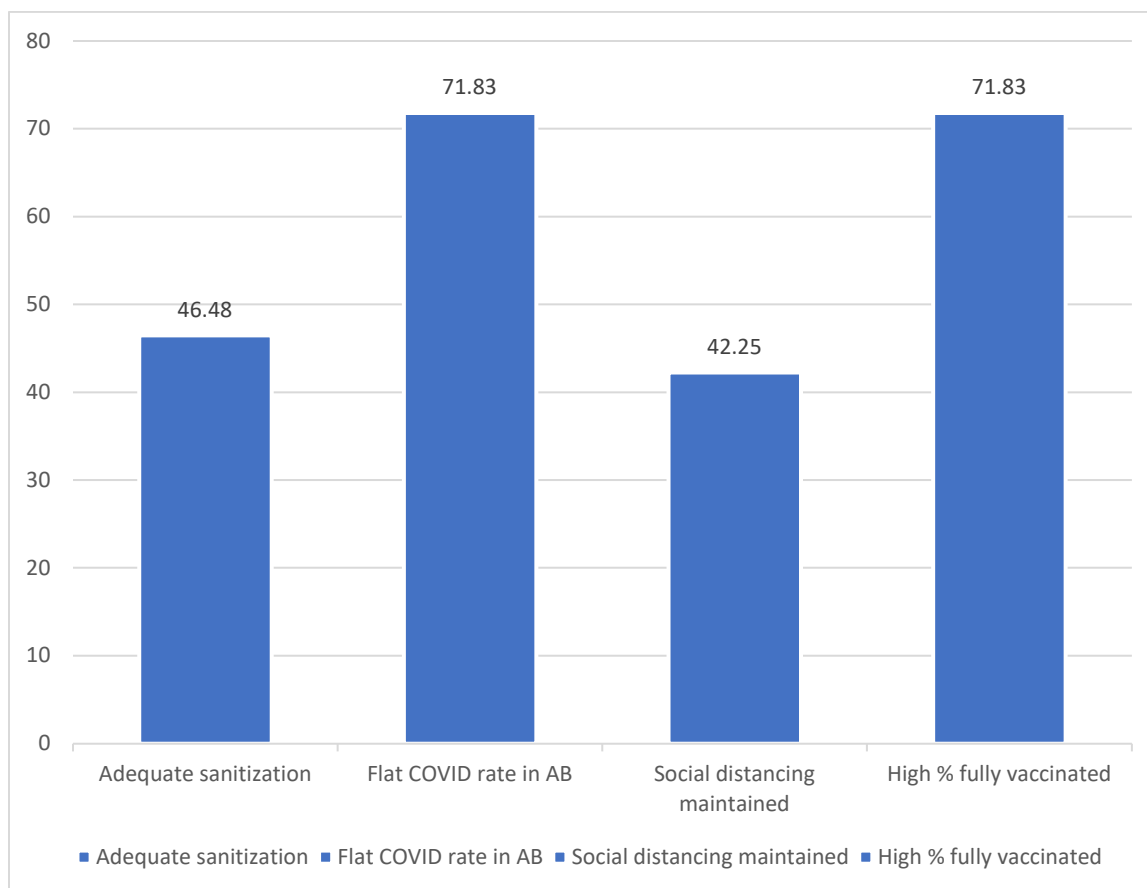
### ***Willing to Stay After Church for Coffee***

During July and August, socializing over coffee can take place outdoors, weather permitting. The congregation was asked about their interest in staying after church for coffee. While the majority of respondents were very or somewhat interested, there were a few other responses: being comfortable if held outdoors now but possibly not in September; making sure members know social distancing still applies; concern about Delta variant suggesting in-person activities should not resume unless there is proof of full COVID vaccination.



### ***Minimum Restrictions Required In-Person Services in September***

The congregation was asked what minimum restrictions would keep them comfortable coming back to in-person services in September. Suggested responses included confidence that SAUC is adequately sanitizing the church; the rate of COVID19 infections is flat in Alberta; social distancing is maintained; and a high percentage of the population has received both COVID vaccinations. Two responses were particularly important: a flat rate of infections in the province and a high rate of fully vaccinated people.



### ***Option to Resume Small Group Meetings in the Church***

Members who belong to a small group/ministry were asked if they would be interested in having the option to resume in-person meetings in the church. The majority of respondents said that they were interested. However, a significant number qualified their response by saying they were in favour of resuming in-person meetings if social distancing and other guidelines were maintained. Meeting outside, weather permitting, or continuing Zoom meetings were options preferred by some respondents. It was mentioned that vaccination rates are increasing and, particularly by fall, would increase comfort levels with in-person meetings.

### ***Having Your Children Attend Sunday School in September***

This question was not applicable to 88.41 per cent of the people responding to the survey. 6 of the 8 people who answered this question were very/somewhat interested in having their children attend Sunday School on a Sunday morning once the church re-opens in September.

### ***Other Considerations for Re-Opening the Church in July and August***

The majority of responses were positive towards re-opening and favoured the cautious approach the church was taking, supporting the physical distancing and sanitizing measures in place. People recognized the importance of connecting with others in person. Another pointed out that COVID vaccination rates need to be higher in Alberta given on-going concerns about variants. Suggestions included keeping doors and windows open for good air flow; considering a separate section for fully vaccinated members; and asking unvaccinated people to always wear their mask in the church.

### ***Other Considerations for Re-Opening the Church in September***

The most common consideration mentioned was making decisions about September based on provincial and health guidelines and the COVID status at the time. If COVID numbers are low and the attendees are vaccinated, church activities should largely be able to resume as usual in the fall. The comment was made that the people most affected by the closure of the church were seniors who are now the group which has been fully vaccinated. A few people mentioned how much they appreciate maintaining the option of live-streamed/recorded services once the church opens. One suggestion was to find a way to recognize those who choose to watch from home but want to be considered part of the congregation. Others are looking forward to choir singing again and perhaps discontinuing the pre-registration process for in-person worship. The importance of not shaming people who want to continue following pandemic rules in the fall was also mentioned.