

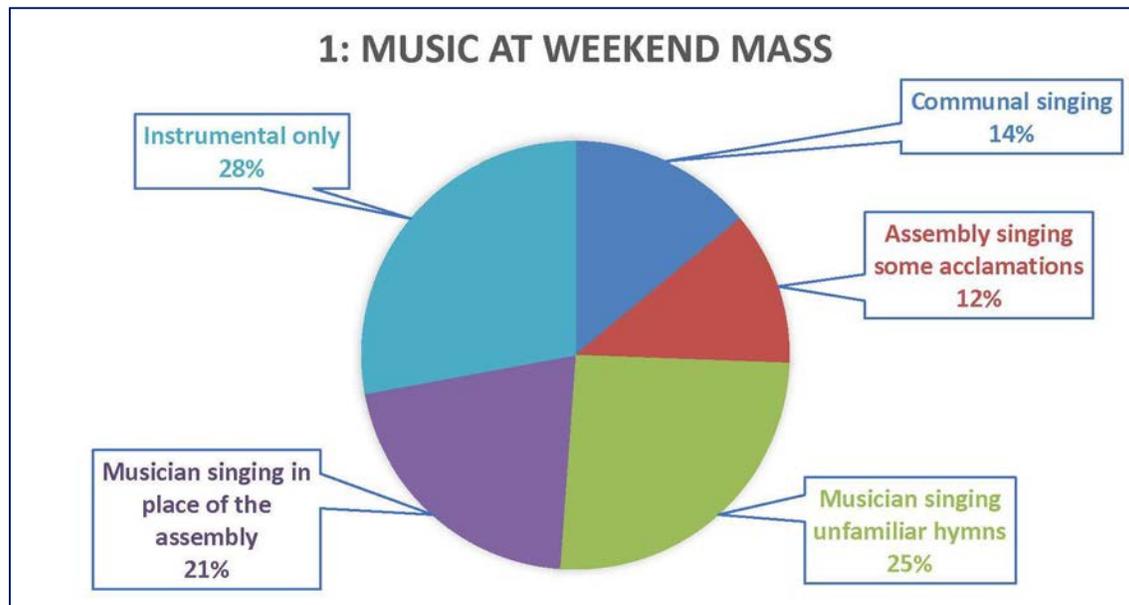


Cleveland Diocesan Musicians Pandemic Survey: RESULTS

In these unprecedented times, we are all facing a myriad of complex emotions and trying to make the best decisions in our ministry. The Cleveland NPM thought it might be helpful to know how colleagues are proceeding, where we find inspiration, and what future plans may look like. To that end, we identified email addresses for the music directors of 136 of the 185 parishes that make up the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, and sent each a survey of 21 questions. 43 responded, which is 31.6%. We recognize that this is a fluid situation, and the survey results provide a snapshot of our ministries as they existed in July of 2020. Following is a summary of the responses.

1. Is there music at weekend liturgies at your parish?

Just as every parish and staff are different, so, too, our approaches to music during the pandemic. Responses ranged from no singing at all, to full communal singing (with masks). Some are singing music that is unfamiliar to the assembly (including the proper antiphons), while others are singing for the assembly and encouraging them to meditate on what they hear. A number of musicians are singing the psalm in the style of liturgy of the hours, with the refrain once at the beginning and once at the end, and the verses all together.



2. Are you using a cantor?

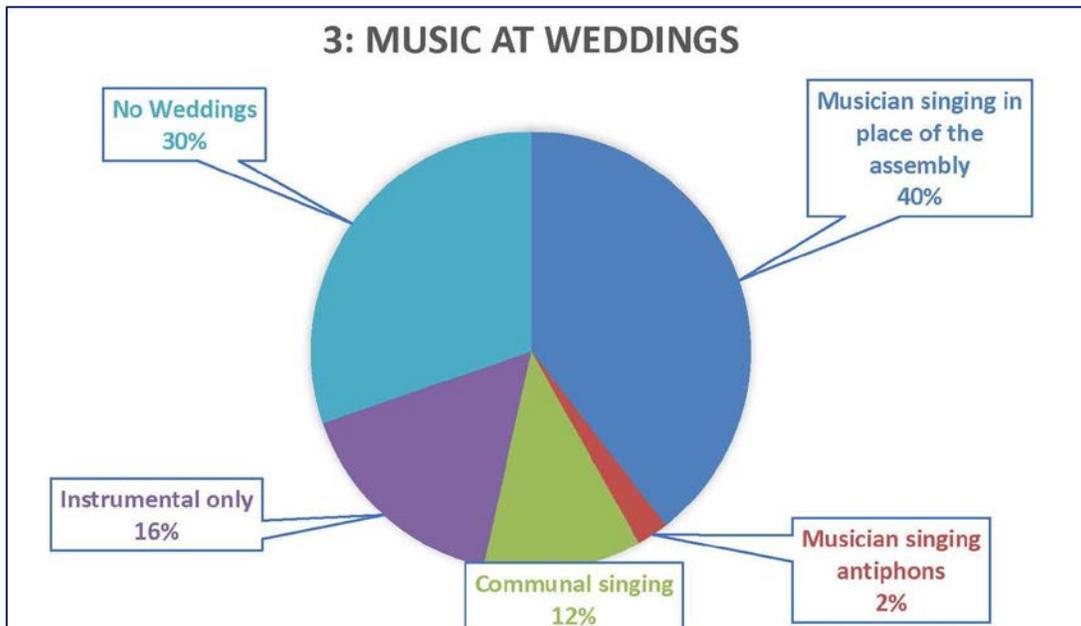
Again, responses to this question were split. **47%** of the responses indicated Mass has **no cantor**, or the musician is serving as cantor from the piano/organ. **53%** are using a cantor with social distance. Several indicated they have added plexiglass around the cantor stand, or that the cantor is in a choir loft.



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3. What happens musically at your parish for weddings?

Of the parishes that have celebrated weddings during the pandemic, many have the musician singing in place of the assembly. However, some commented that they did not agree with this approach. Others suggested that the assembly never sings at weddings anyway.

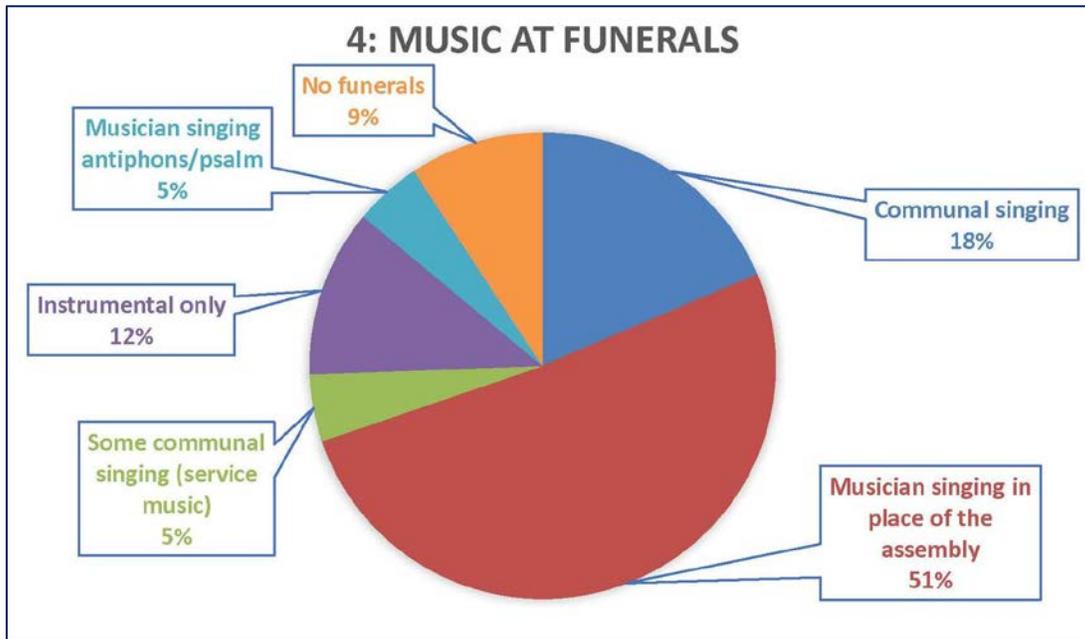


4. What happens musically at your parish for funerals?

Similar to weddings, many funerals have the musician singing in place of the assembly, or singing the antiphons or psalm.

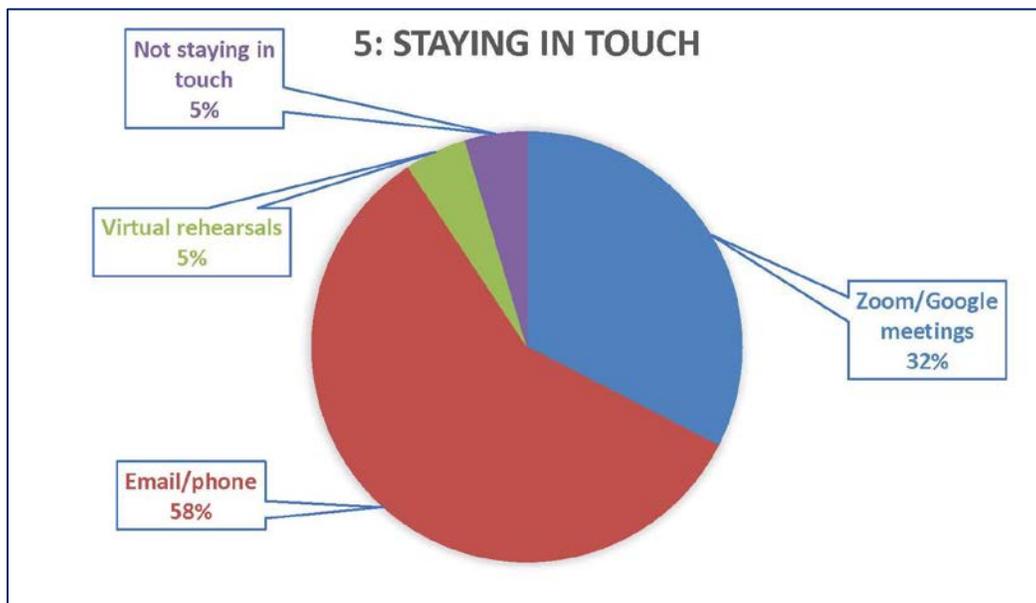


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5. Are you staying in touch with members of your music ministry?

Most directors responded they are staying in touch with their music ministry, one way or another. However, several indicated that members of their music ministry are showing limited/little interest in staying connected, and some Zoom meetings are better attended than others.

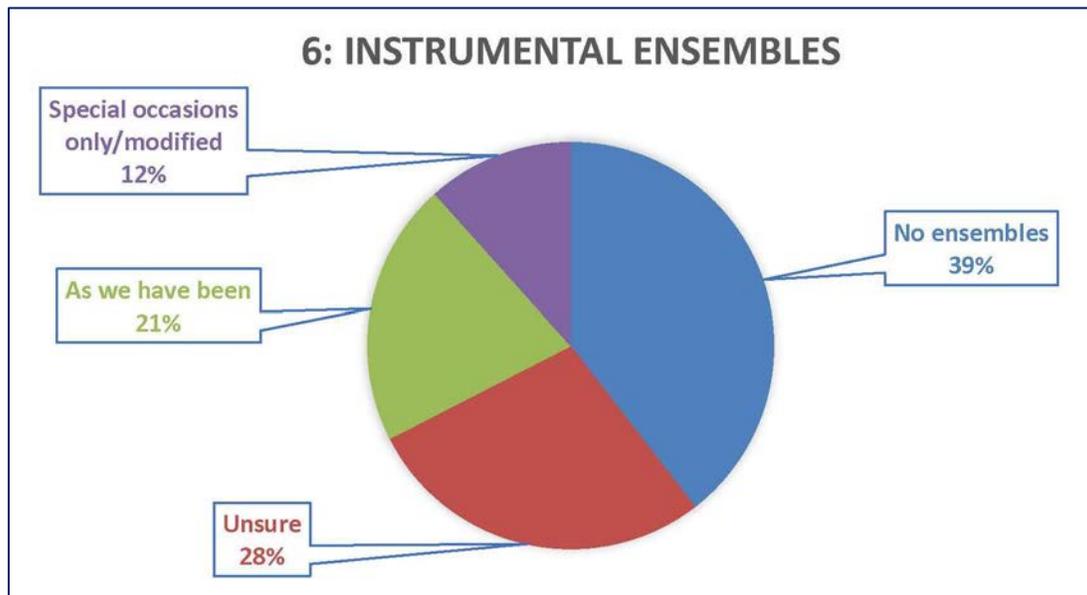




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6. How are you planning for instrumental ensembles in the fall?

Answers to this question were also split. Most that have instruments indicated they are only using guitar, strings, and handbells – no woodwinds. Several are waiting for results of ongoing studies. For those with handbell choirs, a couple indicated they would be reviewing repertoire to accommodate not passing bells.



7. How has attendance been since resuming public worship? What percentage are wearing masks?

All of the responses indicated attendance is down. The majority who supplied metrics reported attendance at 30%-40% of pre-COVID numbers. Nearly all worship spaces have been modified to accommodate social distancing, so some churches have masses that are coming close to capacity with these modifications. The majority of responses indicated masks are required of all attendees, with most in compliance. There are some churches that provide a mask or turn away those who don't have one or refuse to comply. There were a couple of responses that different masses had different requirements with respect to masks and social distance, and one church where temperatures are taken prior to admittance. A number of churches are offering outdoor Mass, or streaming so that the assembly can listen in their cars, and then Communion is distributed in the parking lot.



As of August 2, 2020

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8. How have collections been affected since the shutdown?

Of those who were privy to collection information, 60% indicated collections are down – anywhere from 5% to 45%. Some said they are holding steady, and two have met or surpassed their goal for the fiscal year. Several commented that their online giving has been very helpful, and others have noticed an increase in contributions to their food pantry.

9. Have your hours and pay been affected?

86% of those who responded said their pay has not been affected, although many of them now have modified duties, such as getting involved with live-streaming, disinfecting spaces, etc. One said their hours and pay have both increased. Others indicated they are working harder now, for the same pay – but are grateful to be employed.

10. Did you attend the NPM virtual convention? Thoughts?

83% of those who responded did not attend the convention. Of those who did, responses were generally favorable, though they felt the cost was a bit high and they definitely missed the social aspect of convention. Several indicated appreciation for the offerings that the Cleveland NPM has provided, and one recommended the Cleveland NPM should offer a similar convention on a smaller scale.

NOTE: A search of 2020 NPM Convention attendees shows 14 registered from the Diocese of Cleveland.

11. What sources of information do you rely on for decision making?

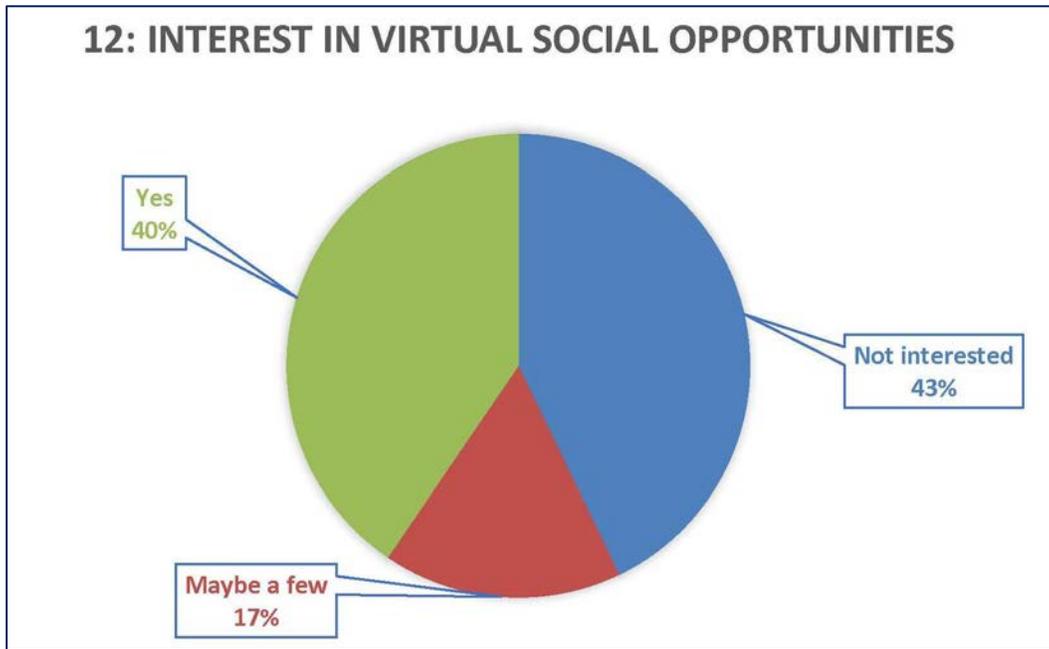
Responses ranged from reliance on diocesan updates, webinars, scientific studies, publishers, NPM, their pastor, the governor, etc. The majority of responses indicated they consider diocesan guidelines, but several felt the diocese has been too “wiggly” on the directives, and they would appreciate more support, particularly from the Office of Worship.

12. Have you been staying in touch with your music ministry friends? Are you interested in virtual social opportunities with other diocesan musicians?

The vast majority of responses indicated music directors are staying connected with friends, or those with whom they want to stay in touch. Several indicated they are weary of Zoom meetings. Responses were split regarding interest in virtual social opportunities, with some indicating the timing and offering needed to be right for them to attend. One suggested educational (rather than social) virtual gatherings.



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13. Has there been disagreement with your pastor over the ways to proceed? If you do not fall into line, is your job at risk?

The vast majority of responses indicated no major disagreements, or a collaborative approach with their pastor. Many said their pastor considers and values their input. Of those who find they aren't on the same page with their pastor, one felt their job was at risk, and one thought it could be if they pushed too hard.

14. As we work through the pandemic, what has been your biggest challenge? What have you learned? Are you tending to self care? Have you sought continuing education? Is your prayer life stronger?

Responses to this question reflected the stress of the times. Concerns include the loss of socialization, singing alone, the challenge of finding appropriate music, staying motivated, and finding ways to keep the congregation connected. Several indicated concern over the disparity between parishes, unclear direction, and the differences in how seriously directives are upheld. While some mentioned the Mass feels sterile, others experienced guilt for being able to receive Eucharist during the lockdown. Many reflected that "not knowing" is a definite source of stress. While some indicated time off has affected their voice, others have been using the time for learning. Some are enjoying the quieter pace, while others find it challenging to manage work and family with everyone home. The majority of responses indicate this extraordinary time has strengthened their prayer life.



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15. As we grieve over the loss of how things were, how could the diocese and the Cleveland NPM help you?

While some responses expressed gratitude for what the Cleveland NPM has been offering, particularly with this survey and the virtual convention Zoom meetings, suggestions included providing a central forum where directors can share information, publishing results of scientific studies & medically based data, delving into Church documents on music & liturgy, sharing inspiration, hosting a socially distant outdoor gathering, and perhaps initiating an NPM virtual choir recording so that music directors can experience the process and learn how to do it with their own choirs. Many expressed the desire for more support from the Office of Worship, in the form of music suggestions, webinars, and outreach. A positive approach is appreciated, with focus on what we CAN do, as is support for enforcing the guidelines. At least one response pleaded that we not close parishes again.

16. Is your parish live-streaming or recording Mass and posting it online?

79% of responses indicated they are live-streaming or recording Mass and posting it online. Of those who are, 68% plan to continue to do so after the pandemic, 29% plan to stop, and the rest are unsure.

17. What is helping you most with coping through the pandemic and more?

The majority of responses indicated a strong home life, family, and friends are a primary source of strength during these unprecedented times. Strategies include taking walks, reading, exercise, writing, and prayer. Some suggested it is important to seek inspiration and live in the present, without dwelling too much on the past nor what is yet to come, and others rely on gratitude – they are grateful to still be employed. Some are taking this time to work on sight reading and brainstorming musical events to offer the parish.

18. Creative ideas to help your music ministry stay alive and positive?

The most popular response was constant communication. Responses also included actively seeking hope, maintaining a positive attitude, praying regularly, practicing, trying new music, and recognizing that things have to change and we need to go with God's flow. One responder said they are taking this opportunity to explore more repertoire with their handbell choir, while others recommended virtual choir recordings and Facebook sing-alongs.

19. Are you using audio or video platforms to work virtually with your choirs?

95% of responses said NO. Of those who are, two are using Audacity and one recommended the Choral Coach. Several indicated their members are not tech-savvy, and also questioned the use of a virtual recording since recorded music is not appropriate for liturgy. A couple of responses said they are considering exploring the options, and would be open to recommendations.



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20. What is your favorite website or article that gives you life and inspires you to evangelize in these crazy times?

Responses ranged from websites like NPM, GIA, OCP, FDLC, and LPi to Facebook and YouTube. Some seek inspiration from the writings of theologians and saints, other directors, and priest colleagues. Some recommended OSV, Pipe Dreams, and blogs from Msgr. Charles Pope and the Pray Tell blog. One suggested meditating on the hymn *In Christ Alone*, and one recommended cranking up Spotify and dancing!

21. For those with a concert series, what are your plans for the 2020-2021 season?

61% of responses indicated they do not have a concert series. Of those that do (or typically host a Christmas concert), some have cancelled all, some have cancelled this calendar year, and about half are taking a “wait and see” approach to planning. One suggested they would record a Christmas concert.

Thank you to those who participated in this survey. These results will be posted on the Cleveland NPM website: www.clevelandNPM.org.