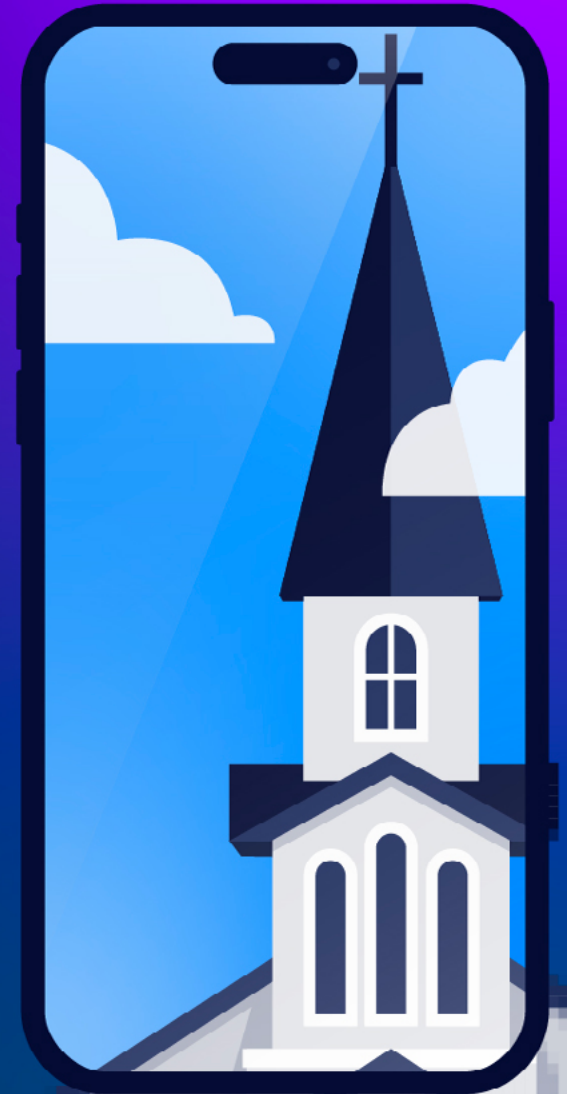


CATHOLIC EDITION



STATE of CHURCH TECH 2024

PRESENTED BY





[Pushpay](#) is a leading technology company that delivers digital solutions to help churches achieve their mission. Our ParishStaq, ChurchStaq, and Resi Media suites simplify engagement, giving, administration, and video streaming—enabling our more than 14,000 customers to increase generosity, drive participation, and build stronger relationships with their communities. Learn more at [Pushpay.com](#).



Mastercard is a global technology company in the payments industry. Our mission is to connect and power an inclusive, digital economy that benefits everyone, everywhere by making transactions safe, simple, smart and accessible. Using secure data and networks, partnerships and passion, our innovations and solutions help individuals, financial institutions, governments and businesses realize their greatest potential. With connections across more than 210 countries and territories, we are building a sustainable world that unlocks priceless possibilities for all. [www.mastercard.com](#)

FOREWORD FROM FR. BRANDON MACADAEG

We started a new tradition at the Cathedral of Christ the Light. When you visit my parish on Sunday, you'll see people gathering after Mass to pray for one another and share stories about their relationship with Jesus. To fulfill our mission in today's world, we knew that we needed to start changing the Sunday culture, and it has been a truly transformative experience for my community.

But the question remains—how do we keep them coming back Sunday after Sunday?

In Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, he instructs leaders to examine times, schedules, and the way we've been doing things

so that our resources are channeled for evangelization. This year's Catholic State of Church Tech report indicates that the pope's message resonates with 96% of parish leaders who believe that using technology to engage parishioners beyond Sunday is important. As a pastor, I couldn't agree more.

Our parish's game plan this year is simple—faith sharing, Sunday Mass, and being together as a community. Using technology to organize our small groups, promote events, build relationships, and keep track of our progress helps us to be accountable to our mission, allowing us to achieve our ultimate goal of bringing more people into a relationship with Jesus.

This report isn't just a collection of data points. It represents the work that parishes all over the country have invested in evangelization, engagement, and discipleship, all to achieve that ultimate goal.

In learning more about the State of Church Tech, I can't help but think of the leaders in the early Church who are models of resilience, fortitude, and innovation. May the Lord continue to bless you with the tools you need to succeed in your mission.

Fr. Brandon Macadaeg successfully unified two churches in the Diocese of Oakland to become Divine Mercy, the diocese's newest parish. He leads two other cluster parishes and serves as rector of the Cathedral of Christ the Light, a parish setting the standard for excellence in the 21st century.





INTRODUCTION

As the world continues to embrace digital advancements at a rapid pace, parish leaders have been cautious about mixing faith and technology. The Church remains one of the few places where technology hasn't fully taken root. This became evident during the pandemic when digital tools were used as a quick fix for an urgent need while other sectors were able to adapt quickly.

Over our three-year study, we have observed attitudes toward technology shift as parish leaders consistently (and overwhelmingly) agree that technology is important to achieving their mission (Figure 0.1). We're also learning that parish leaders are striving to catch up to the rest of the world and face a growing list of new digital tools flooding the market every day, adding another layer of challenges for those whose prerequisites to ministry didn't include technology. This year's survey revealed that 47% of parish leaders felt "anxious, but learning what I need to know" when making technology purchasing decisions for their parish, and another 6% felt "completely unprepared" (Figure 0.2). Evaluating new digital tools for ministry is clearly unfamiliar territory and an overwhelming task for them to undertake.

Now in our third year of the Catholic State of Church Tech report, we have a better picture of their outlook on technology. This annual benchmark study surfaces digital trends in the Church and uncovers the technology priorities, concerns, and expectations of parish leaders around the U.S. Our hope is that understanding these trends and insights will better prepare you to minister to your community more effectively in the digital era. As clear as your vision is for the future of your parish, this report can provide further clarity as you plot a course forward.

FIGURE 0.1
Importance of Technology for Mission

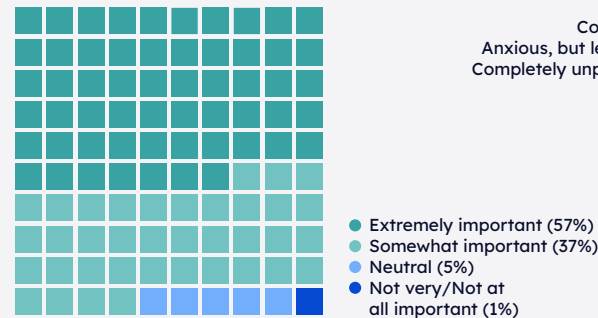
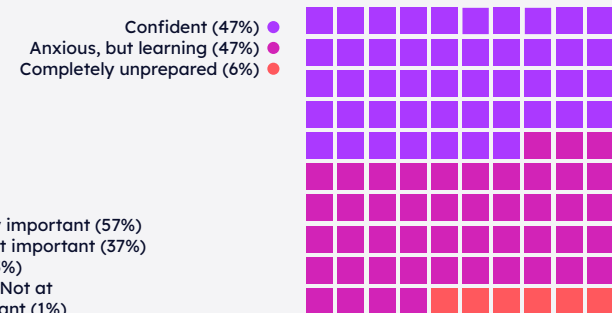


FIGURE 0.2
Confidence in Tech Purchases



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The Catholic edition of the third annual State of Church Technology report is derived from an October 2023 online poll. As part of a larger survey of over 2,200 church leaders in the U.S., across all branches of Christianity, we reached 210 parish priests, staff, and leaders.

Every respondent described themselves as a “decision maker” or “influencer” regarding technology purchases within their parish, with significantly more influencers participating in this year’s study (Figure 0.3). These results reflect the views of the leaders choosing if, when, and what tech their parish will adopt.

Parishes of all sizes are represented in this year’s study, with significantly more large parishes participating (Figure 0.4). 44% of surveyed parishes operate on an annual budget of over \$1 million (Figure 0.5) and, they commit widely varying amounts to technology each year (Figure 0.6).

FIGURE 0.3
Role In Tech Purchases

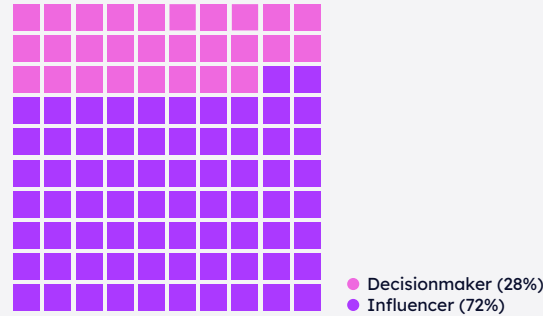


FIGURE 0.4
Weekly Attendance

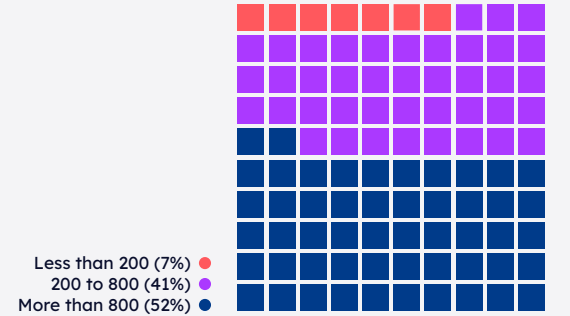


FIGURE 0.5
Operating Budget

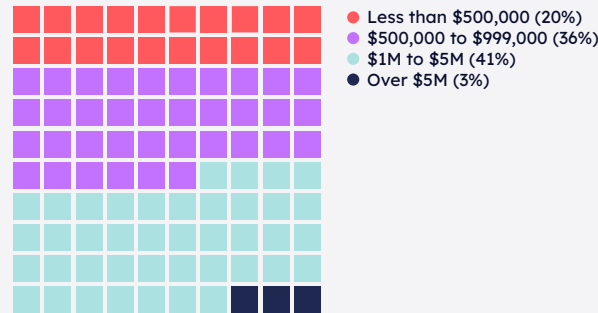
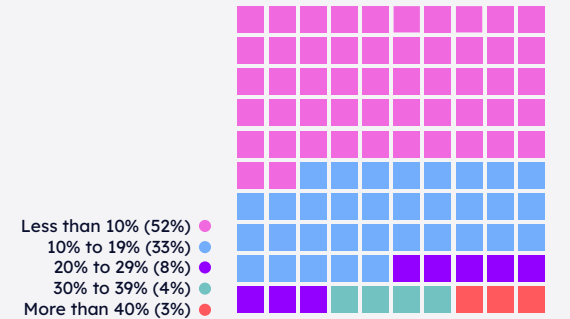
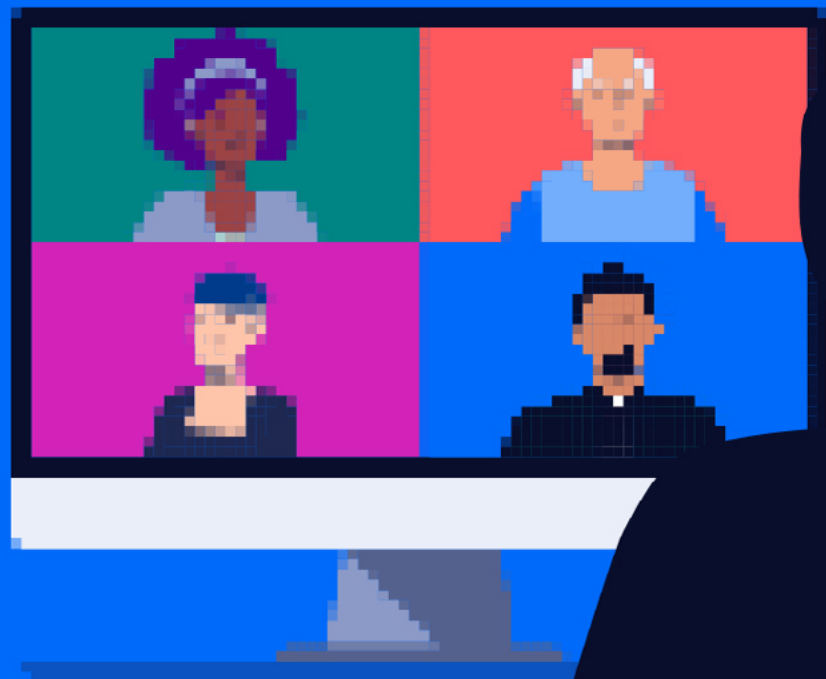


FIGURE 0.6
Percentage of Budget Allocated for Tech





HYBRID WORSHIP ISN'T DIMINISHING IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE

Despite initial debates and concerns, hybrid worship services remain a strategy that parishes rely on.

In 2024, 75% of parishes currently offer hybrid worship services (Figure 1.1). When asked to speculate what types of services they plan to offer in twelve months, a majority selected hybrid while a few chose more than one answer (Figure 1.2). While last year’s survey participants were unsure about the future of hybrid, this year’s leaders report hybrid as a clear plan for invitation and community.

Hybrid worship is Mass, perpetual adoration, praise and worship nights, and celebrations of sacraments available to viewers online, in-person, and in the metaverse. Canon Law is clear on the Sunday obligation—“On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.” However, Catholics on the other side of the debate argue that hybrid worship opens the door to evangelizing people needing spiritual guidance, allowing parishes to invite them into their communities to nurture their faith journey.

FIGURE 1.1
What type of worship services do you currently offer?

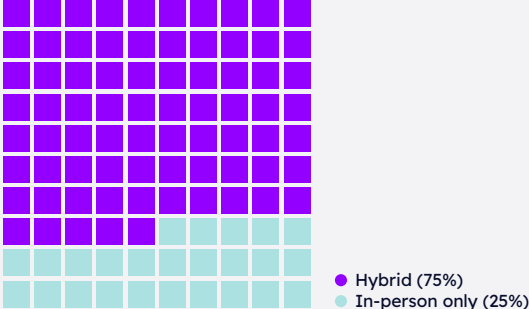
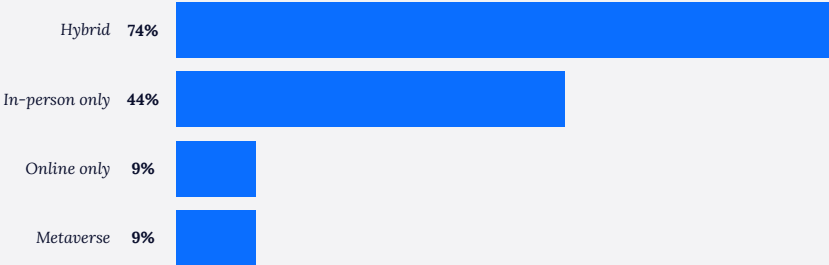


FIGURE 1.2
Worship Services You May Offer a Year From Now



LIVESTREAMING

Livestreaming Mass is one of the top tools used among parishes who believe technology is important in fulfilling the Church's mission (Figure 1.3). For parish leaders, completing that mission means embracing the Sacramental life and, like the apostles, reach people in new places and bring them into a relationship with Jesus.

While leaders see the value of livestreaming to expand the mission field, they're struggling with how it may impact in-person Mass attendance, a core belief in the Catholic Church. This may also be the reason why livestreaming numbers have not increased significantly over the last three years of the study. However, a majority of survey respondents are from midsize (200 to 800 weekly attendees) and large parishes (over 800 weekly attendees). These parishes not only continue to embrace hybrid worship but also have plans to sustain it in the future. This suggests that hybrid worship is not diminishing in-person attendance but instead meeting the needs and preferences of a broader community.

FIGURE 1.3
Top Tools for Fulfilling the Mission of the Church



FIGURE 14
Mobile Church App Usage

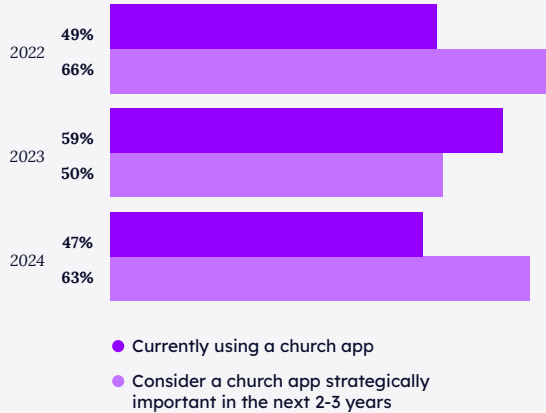


FIGURE 15
Mobile Church App Features

MOST POPULAR APP USES	
Calendar	1st
Tithing/Financial giving	2nd
Content	3rd

MOBILE GIVING AND APPS

Throughout the last three years of the study, leaders have held mixed perspectives on mobile church apps, facing evident challenges around adoption. In the initial survey, 49% of parishes utilized mobile apps. Fast-forward two years, and not much has shifted, with only 47% incorporating mobile apps. Nevertheless, leaders view a custom app as a pivotal tool for future ministry (Figure 1.4).

Effectively managing any mobile app demands expertise in software development and a foundation in digital content marketing to keep users actively engaged. The varied responses to mobile church apps and the preference for calendars over content in leaders' mobile

app strategy (Figure 1.5) show that while mobile strategies are acknowledged as crucial, obstacles in staffing and a lack of knowledge in the tech space hinder efficient app management and broad adoption.

Despite facing these challenges, leaders are finding ways to leverage mobile technology by focusing on utilizing the calendar feature of their apps. This highlights the crucial roles of event planning and mobile technology within their hybrid strategy.

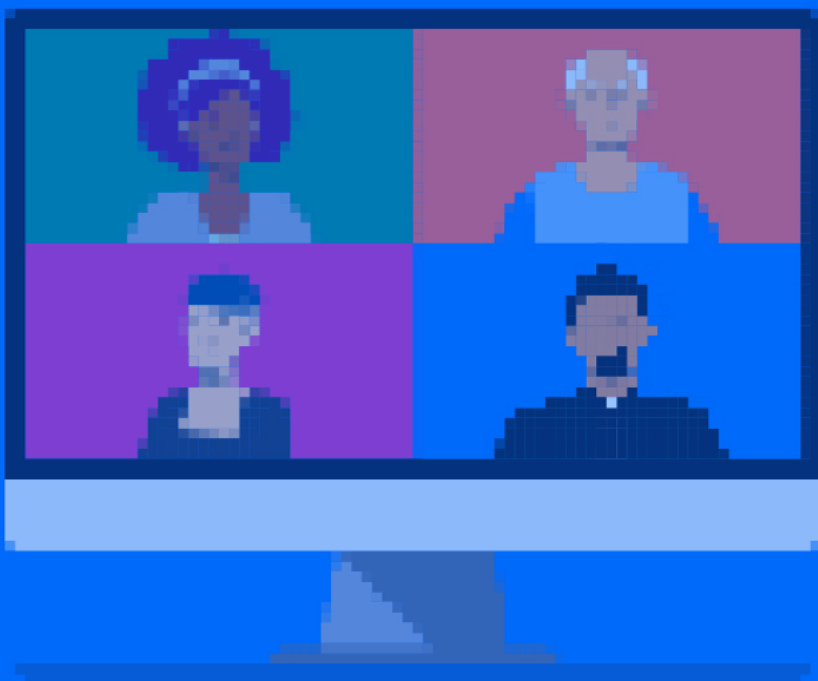
This year's data also reveals a significant increase in the popularity and importance of mobile/online giving. From 82% in 2023 to a staggering

94% in 2024 (Figure 1.6), more parishes are opting for the convenience and accessibility of digital donations.

This shift is not just a passing trend; it represents a fundamental change in how leaders want people to engage with their faith and contribute to their parish.

FIGURE 16
Tech Product Usage





CATHOLIC VOICE

Fr. Duy Le and David Calavitta recently joined Pushpay for a conversation on “The State and Future of the Catholic Church.” They share their approach to hybrid ministry, the current reality of the U.S. Church, and how they’re investing in technology to create experiences that meet people where they are.

“I would encourage my brothers to not be scared of technology... I was a network administrator before entering the seminary, and I know the importance of information. We decided to go with Pushpay because I know that this technology will help me do my ministry better and bring more people to the Lord. With this great software, I’ll be able to know my people, better engage with them, and at the end of the day, spend more time walking with them in their faith journey.” —Fr. Duy Le, pastor of Solano Church

[Watch the webinar](#) and learn how technology can help parishes like yours enhance connection, engagement, and community.



LEADERS
**PROTECT THEIR
FLOCK** WHILE
NAVIGATING AN
**EVOLVING TECH
LANDSCAPE**

Software consolidation is being driven by the need for more robust cybersecurity.

FIGURE 2.1 Mean Number of Tools Used



TAKING CONTROL

Two data patterns suggest a major shift away from one-off tools —the number of digital tools that parishes are using has decreased significantly since 2022 (Figure 2.1) and the growing popularity of Church Management Software (ChMS) and Donor Management software over the last three years (Figure 2.2).

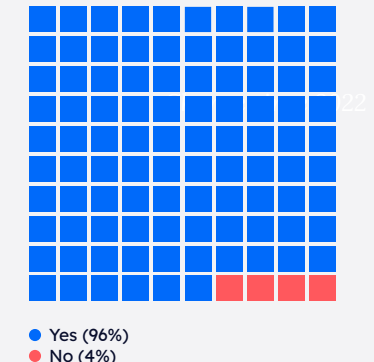
Separate tools are commonly found in many parishes, putting them at increased risk for costly security breaches. As religious organizations become a target of cyber attacks and with data breaches occurring at every level of the Church, leaders are taking back control of their technology. They've learned that all-in-one platforms are easier to manage and implement consistent security procedures.

Leaders are taking charge in other areas as well. Their reliance on ChMS and Donor Management software suggests an emphasis on streamlining back-office operations and leaning into data to enhance their ministry. Through these systems, parishes have gained the ability to organize parishioner contact information, record sacraments received, manage finances, predict budgets, and track digital and envelope-based giving. For the 96% of leaders who believe in engaging parishioners beyond Sunday Mass (Figure 2.3), data is becoming an increasingly valuable asset in facilitating effective outreach initiatives.

FIGURE 2.2 Parishes Currently Using Church and Donor Management Software



FIGURE 2.3 Do you think it's important to engage your parishioners beyond Sunday morning using technology?



FORTIFYING CYBER DEFENSES

As parishes increasingly rely on ChMS, Donor Management software, and new technologies, concerns about cybersecurity are on the rise. When considering new tech purchases, 98% of parish leaders believe in the importance of IT security and data protection (Figure 2.4). While we may not know if the specific solutions used by parishes are cloud-based, it is evident that security has become a priority.

Cybercriminals have found a way to take advantage of the trust that parishes have built with their people, but leaders are fortifying their defenses as they explore new technology. They're prioritizing security when considering new tech purchases (Figure 2.5) and over half discuss data protection with their parishioners.

Awareness and education for both parishioners and leaders alike are key steps toward protecting parishes from any attack. The Safe Environment program is a great example of the Church uniting at every level to ensure that abuse is prevented from happening in churches. As cybersecurity weighs on the minds of parish leaders, a similar comprehensive and collaborative approach may be what parishes need to protect their flock from cyber attacks in the future.

FIGURE 2.4 Importance of Digital Security

Digital security is important when considering technology purchases **98%**

FIGURE 2.5 Factors Influencing Tech Decisions

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN CONSIDERING NEW TECH	
Easy to use	1st
Aligns with my church's values	2nd
Meets latest digital data security standards	3rd
Provides implementation/migration support	4th
Good reputation	5th
Best software to solve the problem	6th
Provides a help desk	7th
Price	8th
Provides demonstrable return on investment	9th
Integrates with existing products we use	10th

FIGURE 2.6 AI Usage

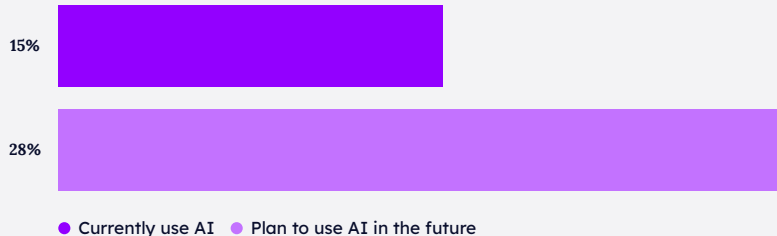
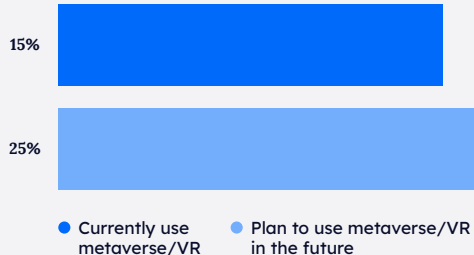


FIGURE 2.7 Metaverse/VR Usage



SEIZING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

While data security is clearly paramount for parishes, and ChMS and Donor Management software continue to be popular tools for effective ministry, emerging technologies show promising potential for boosting evangelization efforts as well.

For example, 15% of parishes are utilizing AI, with 28% planning to incorporate it in two to three years to generate social media content, develop devotionals/small group content, and create ideas for pastoral care (Figure 2.6).

Similarly, 15% are using metaverse/VR, with 25% planning to explore its potential further to engage young people, facilitate small group activities, services/Mass, and mission trips (Figure 2.7).

These statistics highlight the value of technology in fulfilling the Church's evangelizing mission. Yet, given their emphasis on digital security, parish leaders should research and stay informed about potential security risks related to emerging tech like AI.

As these new digital tools are further developed and the Church's relationship with technology continues to evolve, it will be interesting to track how parishes use these technologies in the future.

Coincidentally, our survey was distributed soon after parishes participated in the diocesan phase of the Synod on Synodality. One of the primary topics of discussion from the Synod of Bishops October 2023 report is the need to evangelize in digital spaces and forming Catholics to become digital missionaries.

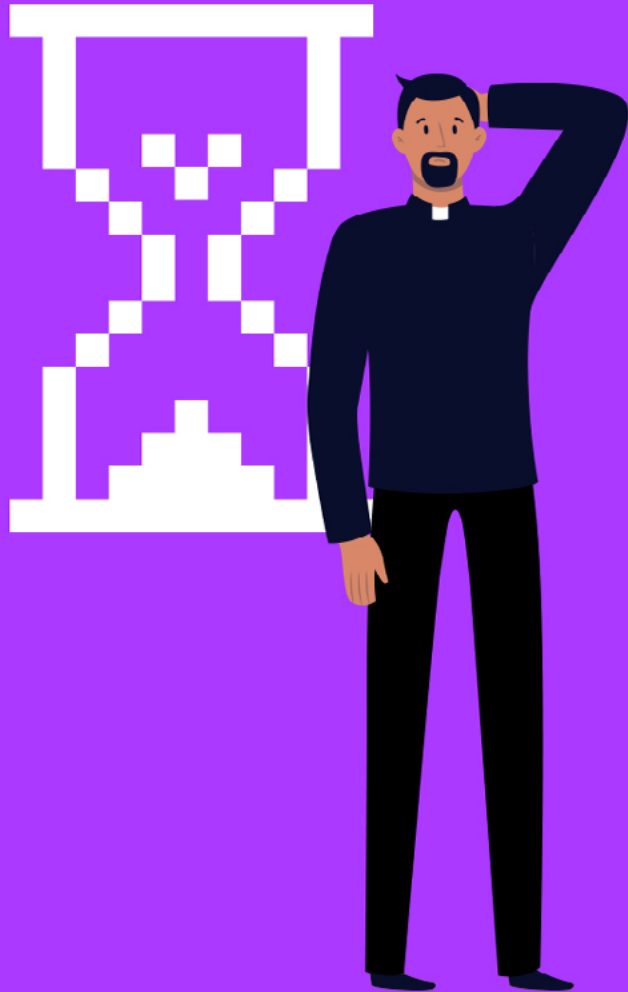


CATHOLIC VOICE

As leaders explore new frontiers and work towards ensuring data protection, they're also investing in tools to continue nurturing their faith and personalize their experiences. St. Bartholomew Church consolidated information from five different databases into one platform, empowering leaders to effectively fulfill their mission.

“We’re trying to establish a lifelong model of formation. Pushpay really covers the pain points we had with other systems, and it allows us to walk with people from their birth and baptisms all the way to the funeral, and actually staying connected throughout those life experiences. I really see Pushpay as not just a tool, but an actual participant in accompaniment, staying connected, and making sure that no one falls through the cracks.” —**Stephen Serafin,**
pastoral associate

[Watch Stephen share more about their success story.](#)



FEAR OF CHANGE
IS COSTING
PARISHES **TIME**
AND RESOURCES

Parishes are still adjusting to the new realities of the post-pandemic world, and are reluctant to abandon old habits.

FIGURE 3.1 Top 3 Obstacles To Adopting New Technology



PERCEIVED NOTIONS

Many of the data patterns throughout the survey indicate that parish leaders are enthusiastic about using technology to fulfill their mission. Yet, when it comes to allocating budget resources, many find themselves in a position where a small percentage, often less than 10%, is allocated to technology.

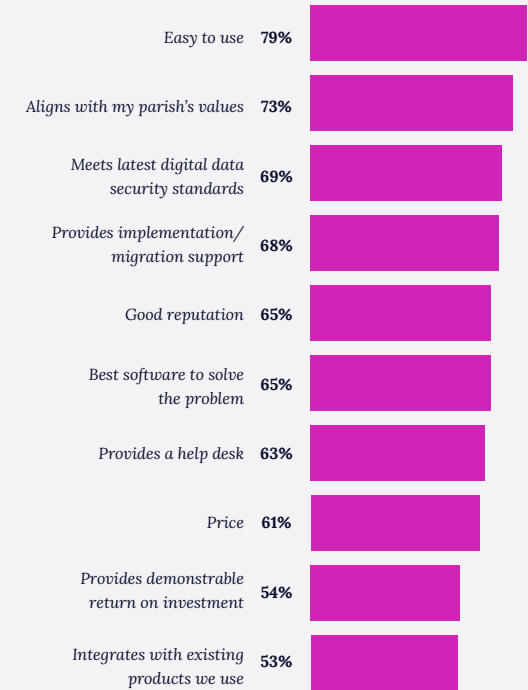
That could be why cost continues to be the primary barrier across all three years of the study, and this year it ramped up more than ever (Figure 3.1). However, when asked to identify important factors when considering new technology purchases, “easy to use” is the most important factor, not price (Figure 3.2).

While decision makers controlling parish budgets want to ensure that every dollar is allocated wisely, they also struggle with the perceived costs of implementation, time, and knowledge.

It’s crucial to recognize that although the initial hesitation slows adoption, parishes are also extremely satisfied with digital tools for background checks, social media, QR codes, online/mobile giving, livestreaming, SMS/texting, mobile church apps, and more.

Despite the initial investments and satisfaction in using tried-and-true tools for their parishes, their unfamiliarity with technology is blinding them from seeing the benefits for their mission.

FIGURE 3.2 Factors Rated “Extremely Important” When Considering New Tech



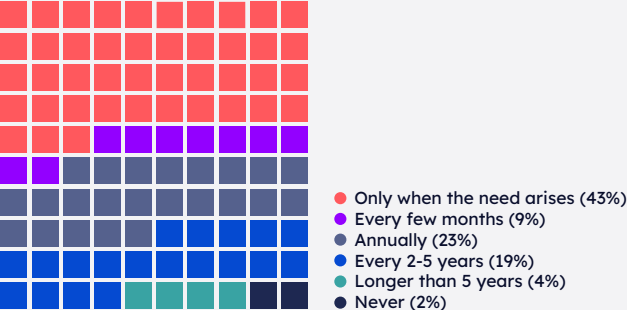
THE PRICE OF DELAYING

When asked how often their parish evaluates new technology, 32% say they re-evaluate digital solutions at least once a year, but 43% chose “only when the need arises” (Figure 3.4). The latter figure indicates that parishes may be reverting to their old habits of viewing technology as bandaids to only be applied as necessary.

Antiquated systems require more time and workarounds, and maintaining them comes at a cost, often sacrificing performance, quality, and a concern that we already know are weighing on leaders today—security.

Slow adoption came at a great cost to parishes who were poorly prepared to weather the COVID-19 pandemic—decreased offertory and engagement, low-quality livestreaming, disconnection, and layoffs. So although decision makers place budget constraints and delay tech evaluations, this year’s group of influencers desire more tools to improve quality, reach, and engagement. With the progress that parishes have already made with hybrid worship strategies and data protection, will decision makers risk losing it all over fears of change? With so much at stake, this trend will be critical to track in future reports.

FIGURE 3.4
How often does your parish evaluate new technology?





CATHOLIC VOICE

Change is hard, but the key to progress is to consistently communicate your mission and how it will ensure your parish's future.

“The value/return we receive from Pushpay’s Everygift™ is fantastic; it covers the entire cost of ParishStaq. If another church is looking at using a cheaper giving solution.... don’t do it; you get what you pay for. Pushpay provides a robust and superior online giving platform and has been the market leader in online giving for many years. EveryGift™ quantifies this added value specifically for our parish.... We were on another online giving platform and had so many failed payments for weird reasons no one could really explain. But these failed payments caused a loss of income for St. Brigid Parish and wasted time, confusion, and frustration for our parishioners and back-office staff. We lived the pain of going with an inferior online giving platform, and it wasn’t worth it. Features like offline conversion and recurring suggestions provide extra value to St. Brigid Parish with no effort on our part. And this value results in additional income, which allows us to focus on our mission to encounter, love, and serve Jesus, one another, and the world.” —**Julie Colman, St. Brigid Church**

Download [The Everygift™ Impact](#) and discover the latest features in digital giving technology designed specifically for parishes.

This year, we're clearly seeing the Church embracing technology. The visionary leaders at the heart of this digital transformation recognize the potential of their parish community becoming so much more than a physical space on Sunday when traditions, faith, and technology intersect.

Piece by piece, tech by tech, parishes are putting together strategies and a plan for their future. If you'd like guidance on piecing together a digital strategy for your parish, take our 7-minute assessment and receive a free custom report that instantly provides you with recommendations to enhance your utilization of technology to support your parish's missional goals.

TAKE THE FREE ASSESSMENT

