News
Analysis



(Photo by Samuel Martins/Unsplash/Creative Commons)

Yonat Shimron

View Author Profile

Religion News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

March 4, 2026

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

President Donald Trump has repeatedly encouraged more religion in the public square.

" We're bringing back religion in our country, and we're bringing it back quickly and strongly, " Trump said at a National Day of Prayer event last year.

Many federal departments have held prayer services or Bible studies. Trump created a task force to eradicate anti-Christian bias, and his Supreme Court appointees continue to deliver for Christian conservatives and their allies.

But according to a new Gallup Poll, there's been no significant change in the importance of religion to Americans and church attendance continues to decline.

The percentage of Americans who say religion is "very important" in their lives has leveled off at 47% in 2025. (It's been up or down 1 percentage point since 2021.)

Religious service attendance reveals a picture of steady decline. A majority of U.S. residents — 57% — say they rarely or never attend religious services. (By comparison, in 1992, only 42% said they rarely or never attend services.)

"I think this is another piece of evidence about how there is no religious revival happening in America," said Ryan Burge, a political scientist who is professor of the practice at the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis. "There's nothing here that would represent any sort of major reversal or significant change in the trajectory of religion in America."

Most polled groups have experienced declines in the percentage who say religion is "very important" in their lives. Among the biggest declines was the percentage of Black Americans who say religion is "very important" in their lives. Between 2001 and 2005, 85% of U.S. Blacks said religion was very important, compared with 63% in 2021-2025, a whopping 22 percentage point drop over two decades.

Among the groups that experienced virtually no decline were Republicans — 66% said religion was very important to them 20 years ago and 64% of Republicans said the same last year. (Democrats fell from 60% to 37% over the past two decades.)

Advertisement

But Burge said that although Republicans continue to say religion is very important in their lives, their self-reported church attendance has dropped.

"They like the idea of religion — that hasn't changed — but they don't actually go as much," Burge said. "So it's sort of like a symbolic religion."

The number of men who said religion was "very important" in their lives fell from 51% over the past 20 years to 43%, an 8 percentage point drop. Even more significant, the number of women who say religion is "very important" fell from 66% to 51% over the past two decades, a 15 percentage point drop.

That suggests the gender gap is closing. Women are still more religious than men, but the importance of religion is falling fast among females, suggesting the gender gap may eventually disappear, if trends continue.

The question about the importance of religion was based on telephone interviews conducted between May and December 2025, with a random sample of 2,019 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 states. That question had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The finding on religious service attendance was also based on telephone interviews, this one of a far larger sample of 13,454 U.S. adults. It showed weekly attendance at religious services dropped to 31%, down from 44% in 1992.

Young adults are particularly less likely to participate in religious services, with 61% seldom or never going.

That presages a particularly gloomy prospect for religious institutions. Gallup suggested generational replacement may lead to a long-term trajectory of decline.

According to the report: "Younger adults are both less likely to identify with a religion and less likely to attend services, reshaping the nation's religious landscape as they constitute a growing share of the population."