

Nebraska Annual Social Survey Snapshot:

What role does religion play in Nebraskans' lives?

Religious services are more frequently attended and religious beliefs play a bigger role among older, rural, Republican, born-again Protestants

By Amanda Ganshert & Kristen Olson
May 2025

A survey of 2,232 Nebraskans conducted between July and November 2024 asked respondents “Do you consider yourself to be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, or something else?” and “Would you describe yourself as a born again or evangelical Christian, or not?” Respondents could answer Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon/Latter-day Saints, Atheist, Agnostic, Nothing in particular, or specify another religion. For this report, Agnostic and Atheist answers are combined, Jewish, Muslim, Mormon/Latter-day Saints, and another religion are combined, and Protestants are broken out into born-again and not born-again Christian.

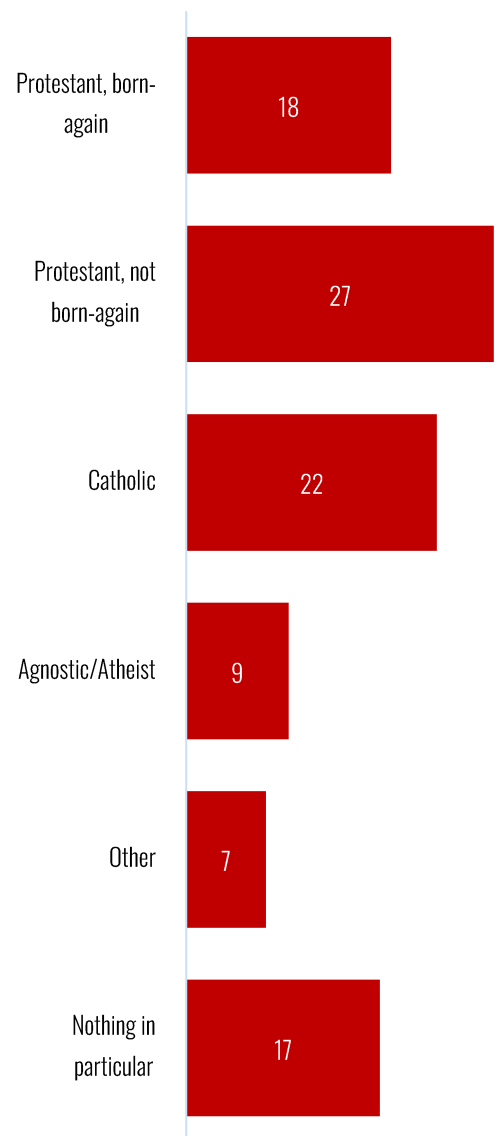
Overall, 18% of Nebraskan adults identified as Protestant, born-again, 27% as Protestant, not born-again, and 22% as Catholic. Nine percent identified as agnostic/atheist with 17% reporting nothing in particular. Only 7% identified as another religion. Due to small sample sizes in subgroups, the remainder of this report will only focus on Protestant, born-again, Protestant, not born-again, and Catholic.

Respondents were also asked “How often do you attend religious services?” Response options have been combined into several times a week, once a week, and nearly every week; about once a month, several times a year, and about once a year; and less than once a year and never. Large differences in religious service attendance exist across religion, age groups, urban and rural areas, political parties, income levels, and marital status.

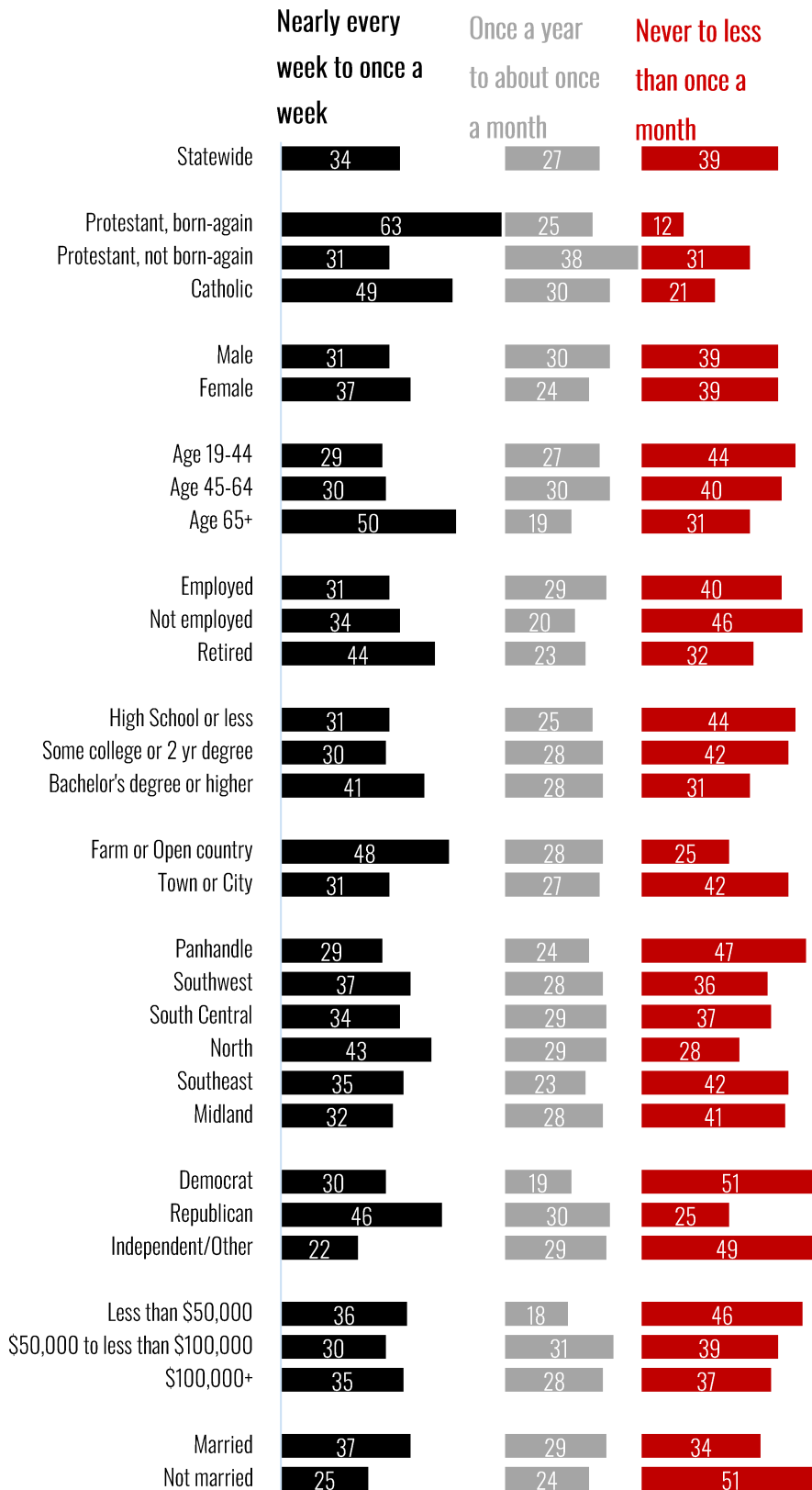
The majority of born-again Protestants (63%) attend services nearly every week or more, as well as about half of Catholics (49%). Fewer non-born-again Protestants attend services this often (31%), with many of them attending services about once a month or less (69%).

Among adults aged 65 and older, 50% report attending services nearly every week or more, compared to only 30% of adults aged 45-64 and 29% of adults aged 19-44. Many adults aged 19-44 report attending services less than once a month or less (44%), a rate that is significantly lower than the 40% of adults aged 45-64 and the 31% of adults aged 65 and older who also report attending services this frequently.

Religious Affiliation



How often do you attend religious services?



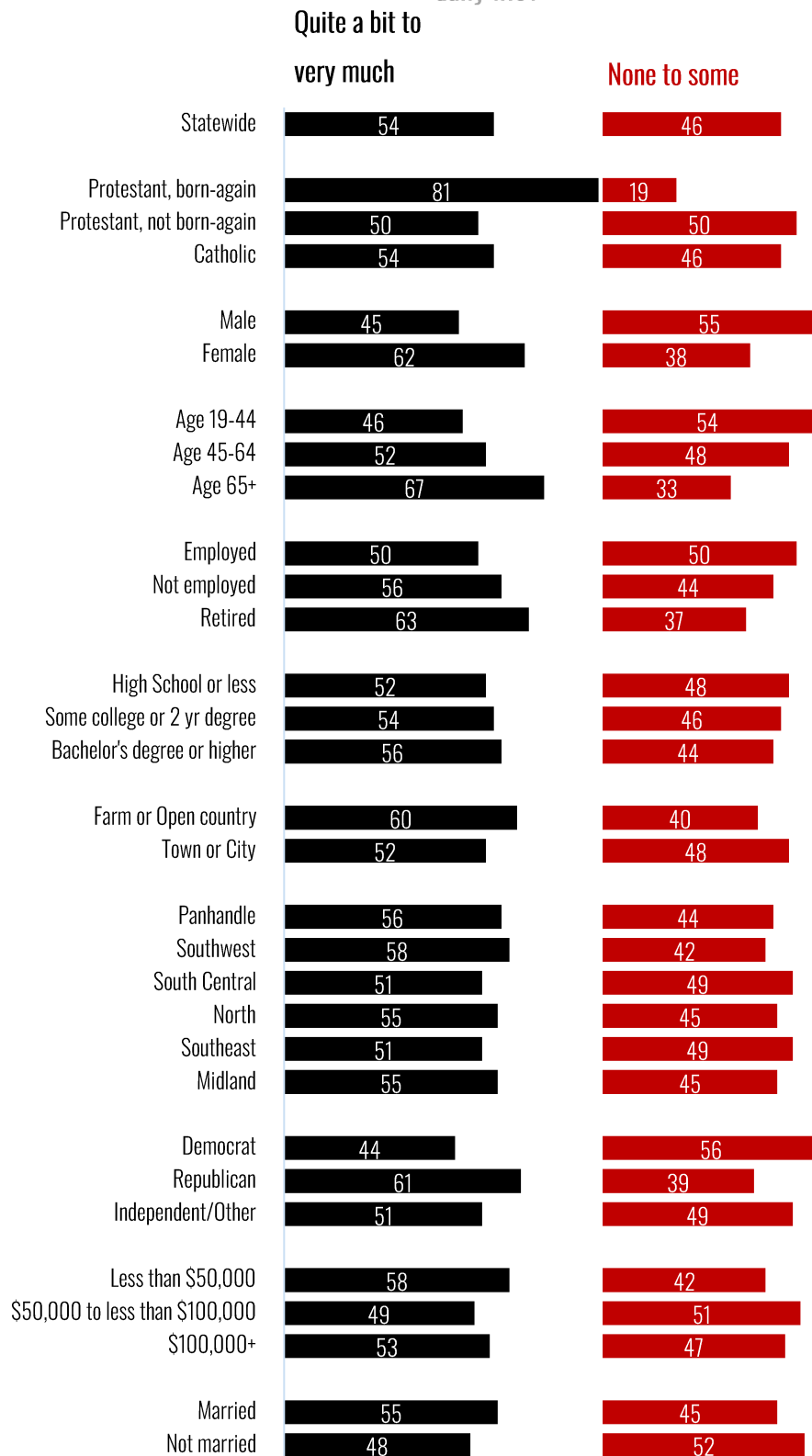
Similarly, large differences in religious service attendance are reported across urban and rural areas. While 48% of Nebraskans living on a farm or in the open country attend services nearly every week or more, only 31% of adults living in a town or city reported the same. Similarly, only 25% of respondents living on a farm or in the open country report attending services less than once a year or less while 42% of adults living in a town or city report the same lack of attendance.

Notable differences in reported religious service attendance also appear among political groups. About half of Democrat (51%) and Independent/Other (49%) respondents attend services less than once per year or never, while only 25% of Republicans report this, a significant difference. A plurality of Republicans attend services nearly every week or more (46%).

Variation also exists across marital status. Significantly more married adults (37%) attend services nearly every week or more, compared to 25% of unmarried adults. Over half (51%) of unmarried adults attend services less than once per year or less, while only 34% of married adults report this.

Respondents were also asked "In general, how much do your religious or spiritual beliefs influence your daily life?" Response options were combined into two categories - very much and quite a bit versus some, a little, or none. Four-fifths (81%) of born-again Protestants report their beliefs influence their daily life quite a bit to very much, significantly more than non-born-again Protestants (50%) and Catholics (54%).

How much do your religious or spiritual beliefs influence your daily life?



Religious or spiritual beliefs play a role in women's daily lives more than men's, with 62% of women reporting quite a bit to very much influence compared to 45% of men. Age also plays a role in how much religious beliefs influence daily life – 67% of adults aged 65 and older reported religious or spiritual beliefs affecting them quite a bit to very much, which is significantly higher than adults aged 45-64 (52%) and adults aged 19-44 (46%).

We see a similar pattern among political party as we did with frequency of attending religious services. Republicans (61%) report that religious or spiritual beliefs influence their daily life quite a bit to very much, which is much more than both Democrats (44%) and Independent/Other (51%).

Data Source and Methodology The Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS) is an annual statewide concurrent mail and web survey conducted by BOSR with multiple clients. NASIS uses an address-based sample of adults aged 19 and older (Nebraska's age of majority) and asks adults with the next birthday to participate in the survey. The 2024 NASIS consisted of a 16-page paper questionnaire that was administered by mail with an option to complete by web to a sample of 10,000 Nebraska households. Data were collected from July to November 2024 with an AAPOR Response Rate 2 of 23.2% (n=2,232). Overall estimates have a margin of error of $\pm 4\%$. Significantly separate groups are reported from statistical tests with $p < .05$. The full methodology report can be found at <https://bosr.unl.edu/nasis>

WHO ARE WE? BOSR has been conducting survey research and providing research assistance to University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty, departments, administrative units,

students, and various government agencies and non-profit organizations since 1964. Operating as a 'one-stop research shop,' BOSR develops and manages mail, web, telephone, in-person, and mixed-mode surveys with academic rigor.