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Contact:  
**PATRICK MURRAY**  
732-979-6769 (cell); 732-263-5858 (office)  
[pdmurray@monmouth.edu](mailto:pdmurray@monmouth.edu)  
**Follow on Twitter: @PollsterPatrick**

## **NATIONAL: MORE HOLIDAY JOY THAN STRESS**

### *Fewer attend Christmas services than in past generation*

West Long Branch, NJ – The good news in a **Monmouth University Poll** of the nation’s Yuletide activities is that most Americans find the holiday season more enjoyable than stressful. However, they like shopping for the holidays a lot less than they used to.

Just under half (44%) of Americans find the holiday season to be more enjoyable than the rest of the year while 27% say it is more stressful. Another 5% say it is both more enjoyable and more stressful and 23% say the holidays are no different than any other time of the year. Lower income residents (38% earning less than \$50,000) are less likely than others (50% earning \$50-100,000 and 52% earning \$100,000 or more) to feel the holiday season is more enjoyable. There are no significant differences in these views of the holiday season based on age or parenthood status.

Nearly all (94%) Americans celebrate Christmas, while 6% celebrate Hanukkah and 3% celebrate Kwanzaa. In fact, 4% of the public celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah. Just 4% do not celebrate any of these holidays. These results are nearly identical to a Gallup poll conducted 25 years ago (96% celebrated Christmas and 6% celebrated Hanukkah in 1990). However, those who celebrate Christmas today are less likely to observe the day’s religious aspects than Americans of a generation ago.

Just over half (53%) of those who will celebrate Christmas say they usually attend church either on Christmas Eve (25%), Christmas Day (11%) or potentially both (17%). But nearly half (45%) say they will not attend religious services. Back in 1989, though, a Gallup poll found that nearly two-thirds (65%) of those celebrating Christmas planned to attend church on Christmas Eve (30%), Christmas Day (19%), or on either day (16%). In the current poll, those age 55 and over (57%) as well as those under 55 who are parents (56%) are more likely than those under 55 without kids (46%) to attend Christmas services.

“Times have certainly changed. Christmas is still a major event on the nation’s secular calendar, but a smaller proportion observes the religious aspects of the holiday compared to a generation ago,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch,

NJ. “People may feel that the season is more enjoyable than the rest of the year, but they do not look forward to holiday shopping as much as they used to.”

About 4-in-10 (39%) Americans who celebrate the holidays report they enjoy shopping for holiday gifts, which is down from nearly 6-in-10 (57%) a generation ago. Currently, 18% enjoy holiday shopping a great deal and 21% enjoy it a fair amount. Another 21% enjoy it somewhat, 18% not too much, and 20% not at all. A 1990 Gallup poll found that 28% of Americans then enjoyed holiday shopping a great deal and 29% a fair amount, while 14% enjoyed it somewhat, 16% not too much, and 12% not at all.

Among those under age 55, there is no difference between the number of parents (42%) and non-parents (42%) who enjoy holiday shopping. However, those age 55 and older (35%) are slightly less likely than younger Americans to find holiday shopping enjoyable.

When shopping for those holiday gifts, it’s best to go with something useful. About 4-in-5 (79%) Americans prefer receiving practical gifts. Just 10% say they want something extravagant under the Christmas tree. Another greedy 5% want both practical and extravagant gifts.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from December 10 to 13, 2015 with 1,006 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

## DATA TABLES

*The questions referred to in this release are as follows:*

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Do you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or none of these holidays? [If YES: Which?]

[Note: Results add to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted]

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
Christmas	<b>94%</b>	93%	95%	95%	94%	93%	96%	92%	94%
Hanukkah	<b>6%</b>	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%	7%	6%
Kwanzaa	<b>3%</b>	5%	1%	2%	5%	2%	3%	2%	4%
None of these	<b>4%</b>	5%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%	2%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>1%</b>	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%

2. Do you find the holiday season generally more enjoyable or more stressful than the rest of the year, or is it no different?

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
More enjoyable	<b>44%</b>	45%	43%	48%	43%	43%	38%	50%	52%
More stressful	<b>27%</b>	24%	30%	29%	27%	26%	31%	26%	25%
(VOL) Both more enjoyable and more stressful	<b>5%</b>	5%	5%	5%	7%	3%	5%	4%	5%
No different	<b>23%</b>	25%	21%	18%	23%	28%	26%	20%	19%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>0%</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

[QUESTIONS 3 & 4 WERE ASKED OF THOSE WHO CELEBRATE A HOLIDAY LISTED IN Q1; n=962, moe=±3.2%]

3. How much do you enjoy shopping for holiday gifts – a great deal, a fair amount, some, not too much, or not at all?

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
Great deal	18%	13%	23%	21%	18%	17%	19%	16%	15%
Fair amount	21%	20%	22%	21%	24%	18%	21%	24%	21%
Some	21%	21%	22%	19%	23%	20%	21%	20%	20%
Not too much	18%	20%	15%	18%	17%	19%	16%	22%	20%
Not at all	20%	24%	17%	20%	17%	24%	21%	18%	23%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%

4. Do you, yourself, prefer to receive practical gifts for the holidays or something extravagant?

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
Practical	79%	80%	77%	82%	75%	80%	80%	84%	78%
Extravagant	10%	8%	12%	10%	12%	6%	9%	8%	11%
(VOL) Both	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%	4%	4%	5%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	8%	5%	3%	6%	11%	7%	4%	6%

[QUESTION 5 WAS ASKED OF THOSE WHO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS; n=940, moe=±3.2%]

5. Do you usually attend church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, or don't you usually attend church as part of Christmas?

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
Christmas Eve	25%	23%	27%	24%	23%	27%	19%	29%	32%
Christmas Day	11%	10%	12%	14%	8%	12%	12%	12%	7%
(VOL) Depends/Both	17%	18%	16%	18%	15%	18%	15%	20%	18%
Don't attend church as part of Christmas	45%	46%	45%	43%	50%	41%	54%	39%	42%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 10 to 13, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,006 adults age 18 and older. This includes 654 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 352 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS			
27% Rep	49% Male	32% 18-34	66% White
42% Ind	51% Female	36% 35-54	12% Black
31% Dem		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			7% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE BY KIDS			INCOME		
		Male	Female	Under 55 parent	Under 55 non-parent	55+	<\$50	\$50-\$100	>\$100
Unweighted N	1,006	492	514	234	287	483	363	286	272
moe	3.1%	4.4%	4.3%	6.4%	5.8%	4.5%	5.2%	5.8%	6.0%

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