

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

2022 Ministerial Search Survey Results

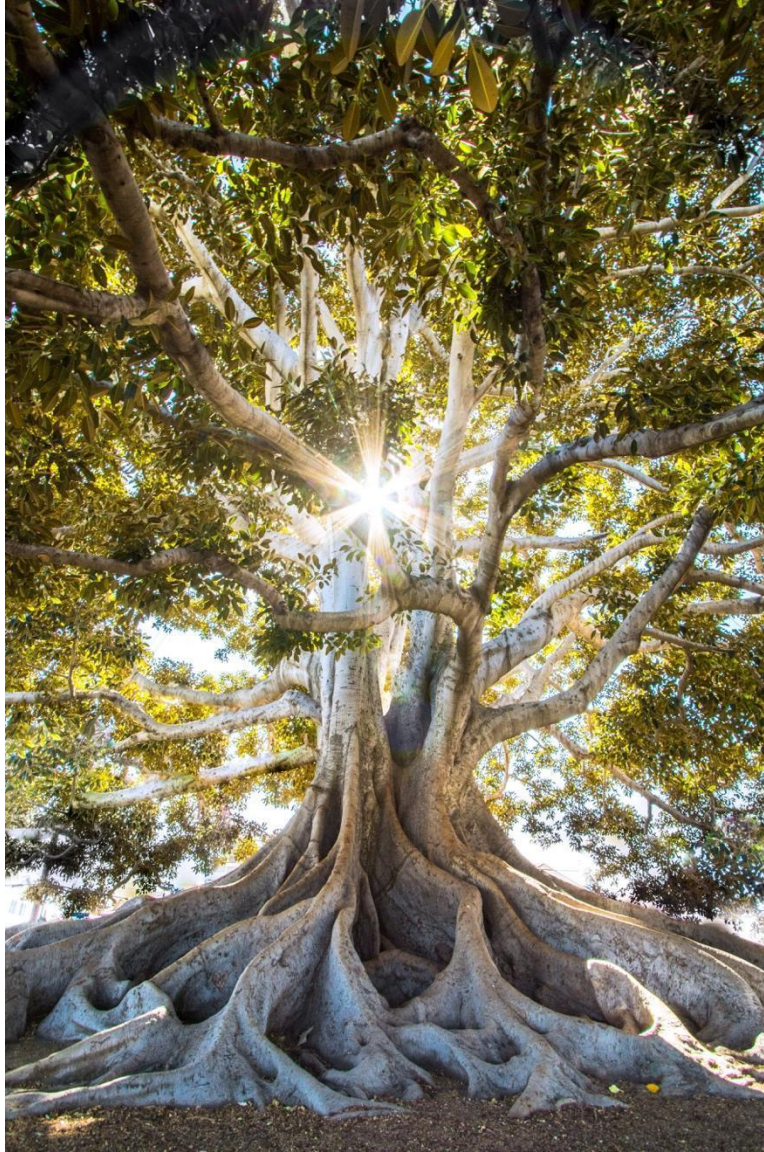


Photo by Jeremy Bishop (Unsplash, 2022)

Survey results from the UUCUC Congregation (September 2022). Compiled by the Settled Search Team (SST): Janet Revell Barrett, Wendy Graves, Chris Hannauer, Tanja Hodges, Pat McClard, Dave Sharpe, and Angela Urban

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Note: Throughout the survey, the last church year refers to the period between August 2021 and May 2022.

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1 Your Relationship to UUCUC

1. During the last church year, approximately how often have you participated in UUCUC Sunday Services (online or in person), either as an attendee, as staff, or as an REE teacher?

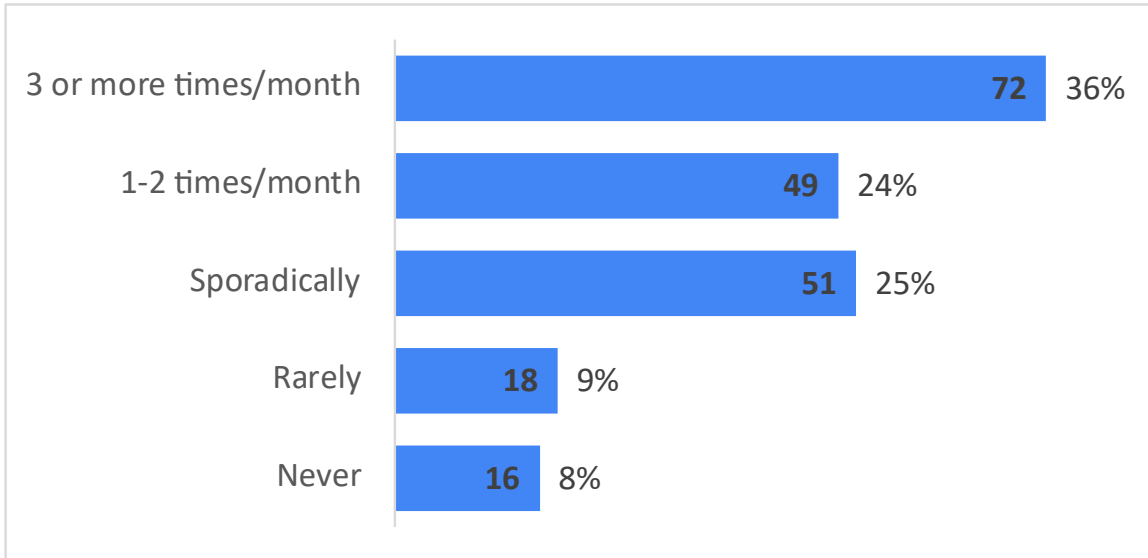


Figure 1. Participation in UUCUC Sunday Services: 202 respondents and 206 total responses.

2. During the times that services were available in hybrid format, how often did you choose to use the online option?

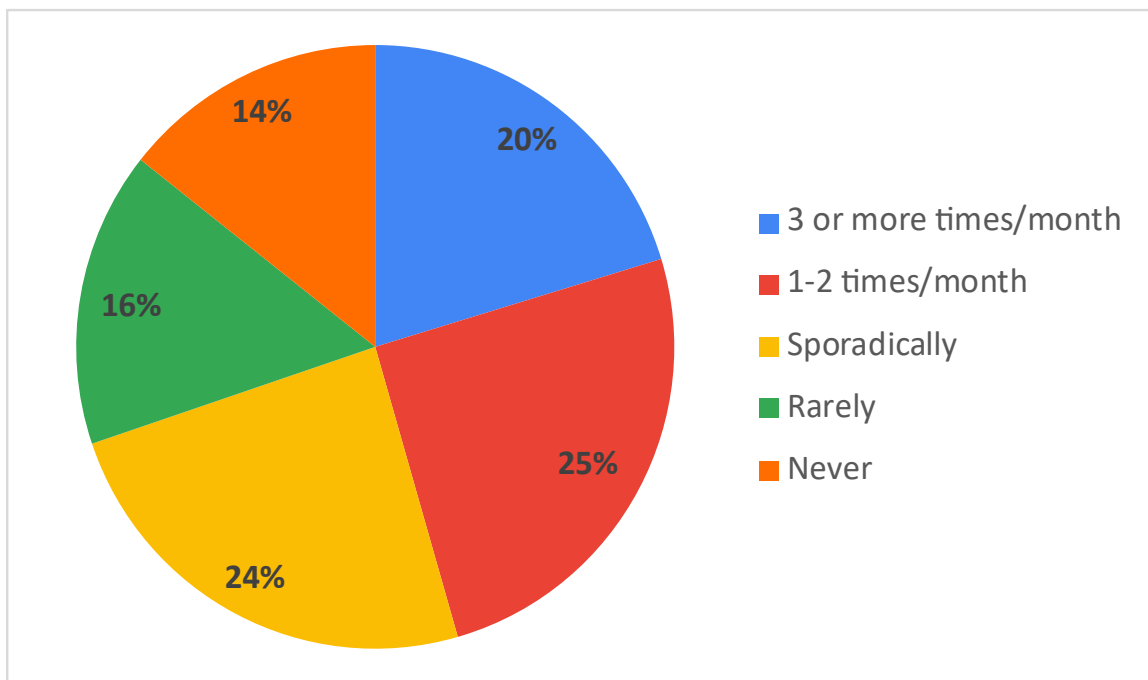


Figure 2. Participation in online services during hybrid format: 202 respondents.

3. What has been your strongest connection to our congregation during the locked down phases of the pandemic?

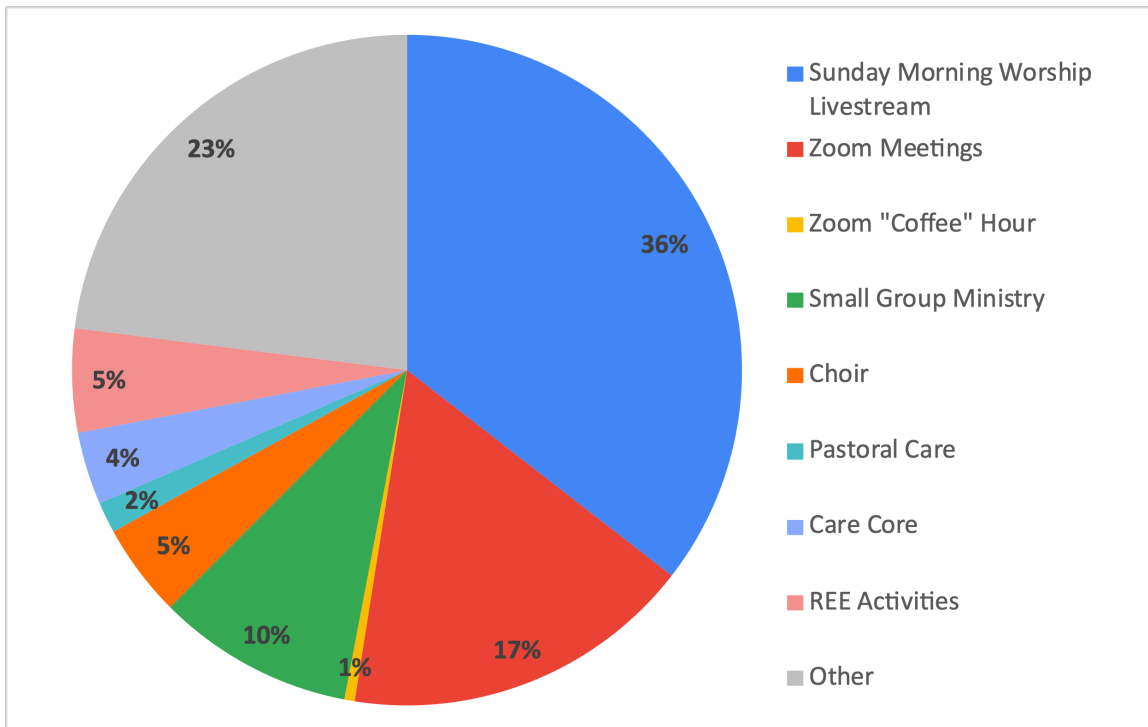


Figure 3. Strongest connection during lockdown: 200 respondents, plus additional responses for “other” listed below.

Other. A total of 46 responses were received as other and summarized as follows:

Soul Matters (multiple responses); Parent Support Group (multiple responses); Small group such as Meditation Group, Mindfulness Group, and Old Men’s Group (multiple responses); Immigrant Justice team and Social Action Council activities (multiple responses); Caregiver Group; E-News and hearing from others (multiple responses); FB posts from ministers and members; Other musical activities; Playing/recording music for use in online services; Regular visits with church friends; Committees (that met on Zoom); Auction Committee and events; Zoom happy hours; History – It’s my church; Worship committee/helping with services; Hospitality duties; I didn’t really connect with the congregation at all during the pandemic; I chose not to answer; I don’t feel connected; I hadn’t gotten connected to the church yet. Started checking it out the last two months; Just started attending; I joined post-lockdowns; I pulled back all together when an in-person option wasn’t available; I was living out of state during the lockdown; I was not a member nor a resident of Illinois; Face to face service; Occasional hello at the grocery store, but no structured church.

4. At this stage of the pandemic, how are you most likely to connect with our Sunday programming?

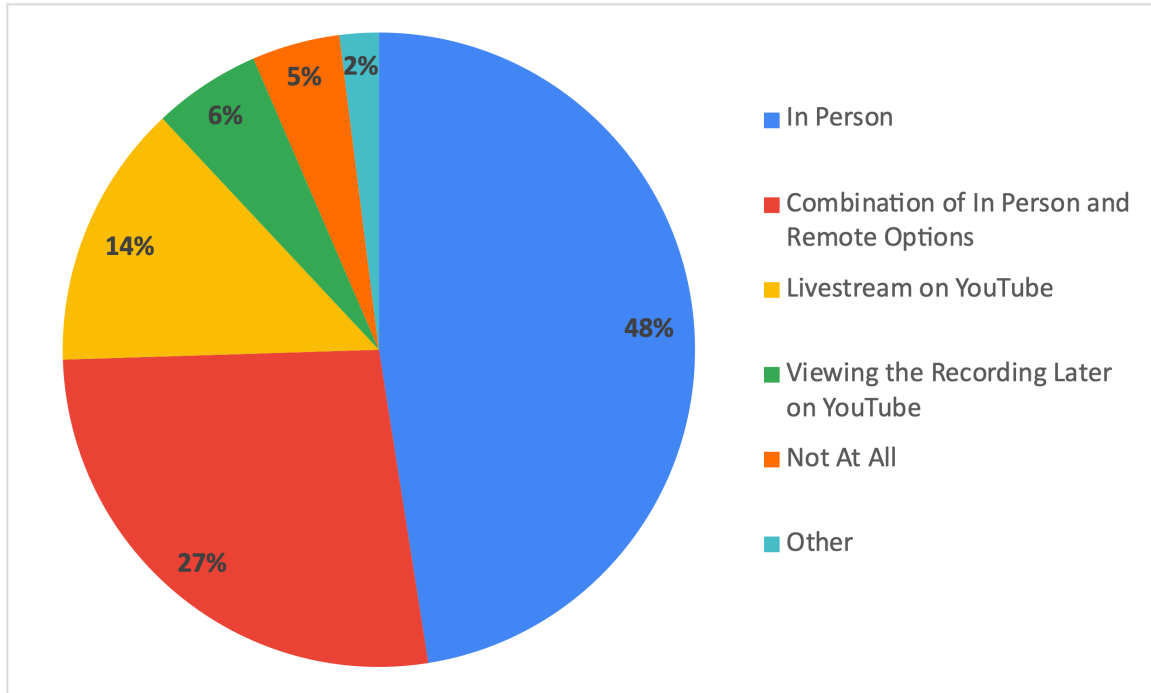


Figure 4. Connection with Sunday programming: 200 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 4 responses were received as other and summarized as follows:

Intend to come back in person but so many things get in the way; Masked and in person; Once in a while; Thinking about returning to in-person services.

5. Which factors were important in bringing you to this congregation initially?

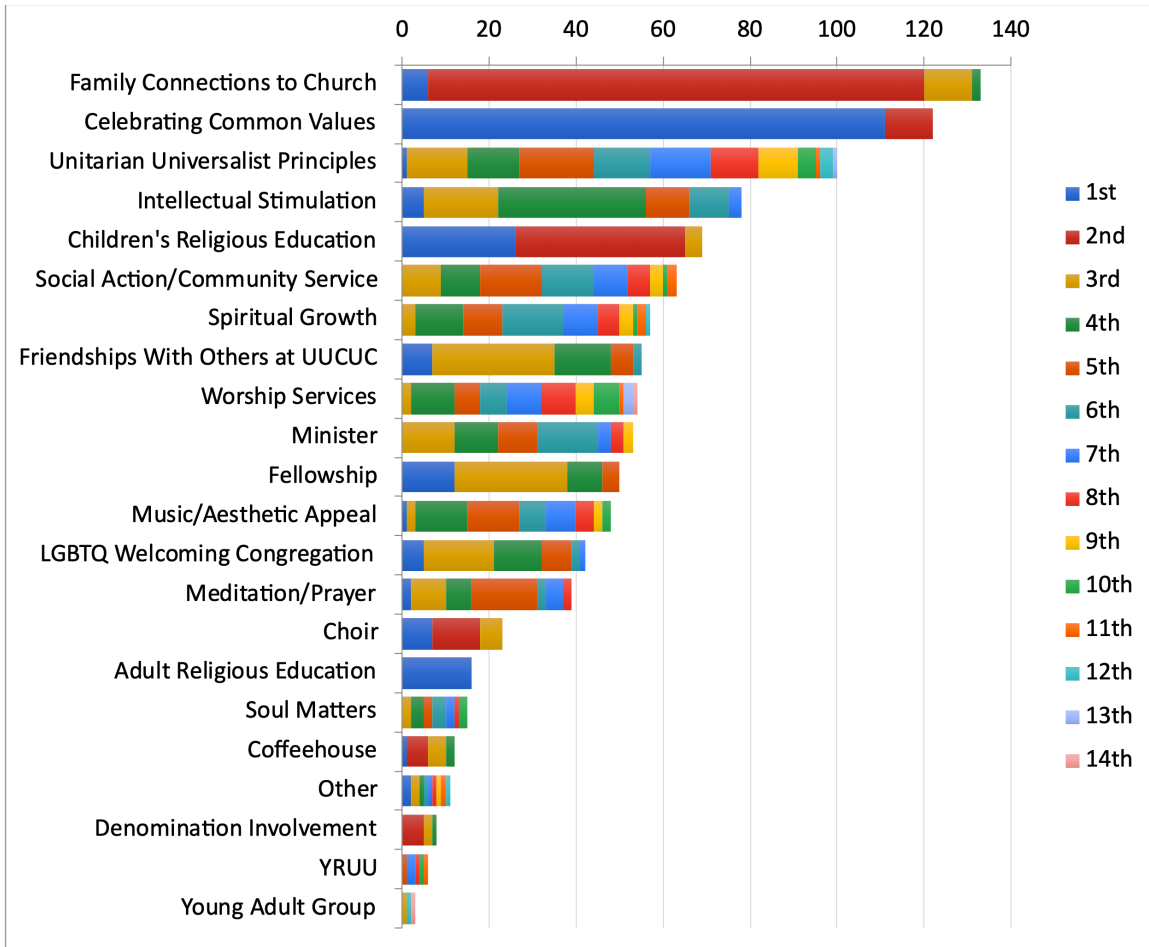


Figure 5. Initial factors that brought you to the congregation: 202 respondents and 1,057 total responses listed by number of responses and order of importance (1-14) with 1 being the highest importance and 14 being lowest in importance (but still deemed important since it was listed), plus other.

Other. A total of 9 responses were received as other and summarized as follows:

Previous membership elsewhere; I am a “misfit toy” so this is a good place for us; Florence’s meditation classes on campus and the OWL program for my kids; Florence; Women’s group; Involvement with racial justice activities; Being in community with like-minded people; Got married in the church; Rev. Sally has been a great reverend and friend.

6. In which of the following church activities have you participated/attended during the last church year and how often?

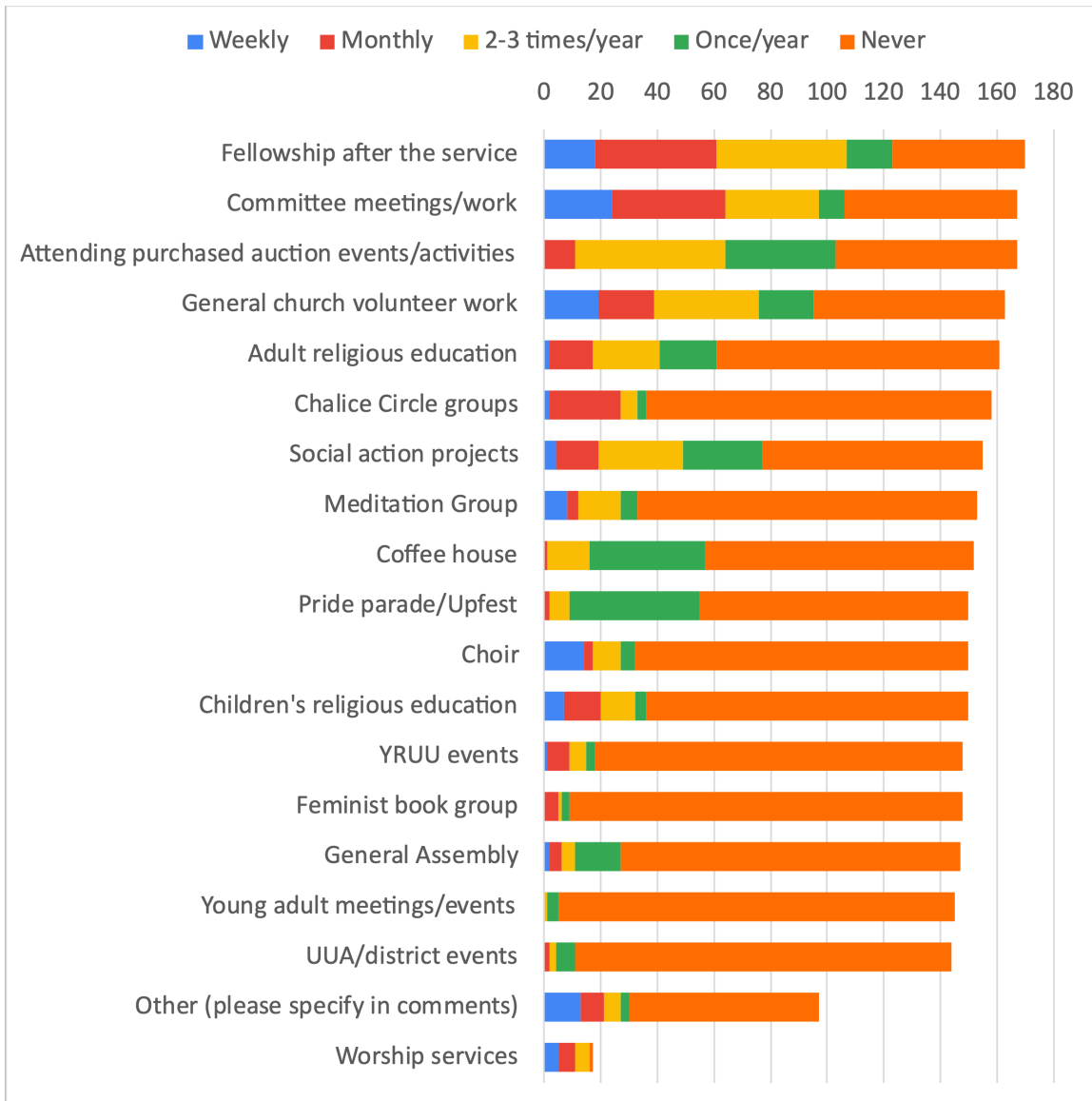


Figure 6. Participation in church activities: 170 respondents and 2,742 total responses ranging from weekly to never and other.

Other. A total of 52 additional responses were received and summarized as follows:

Soul Matters; UU Happy Hour; Popcorn Theology; Writers Group; Immigration Task Force; Hospitality Teams; Women’s Lunch Group; Reproductive Justice Team; Care Core Meals and Transportation; Music Committee; Sunday online and outdoor meditation; Senior men’s group; Racial Justice programming; Bridge group; Parent Support Group; Auction planning and implementation; Memorial service support; Partner Church Initiative.

7. Combining all of the ways you are involved with UUCUC (attending, participating, doing church work, etc.) about how many total hours per month, on average, do you dedicate to UUCUC?

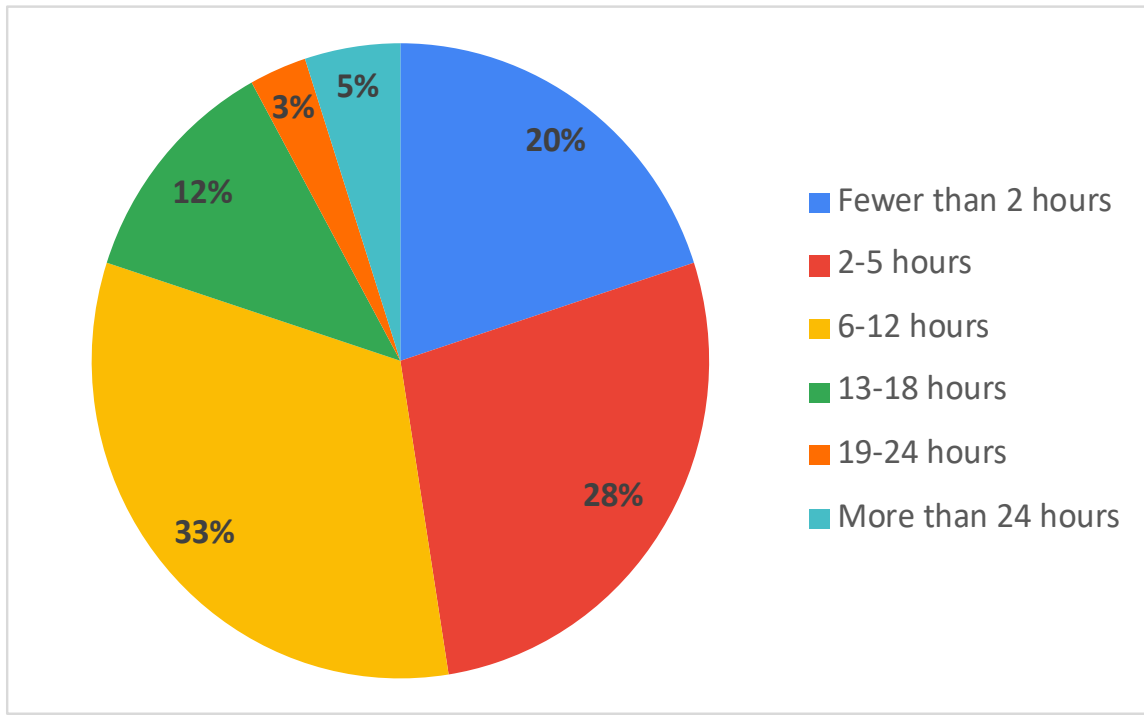


Figure 7. Total hours per month dedicated to UUCUC: 200 respondents.

8. Which of the following reasons for attending worship services are important to you?

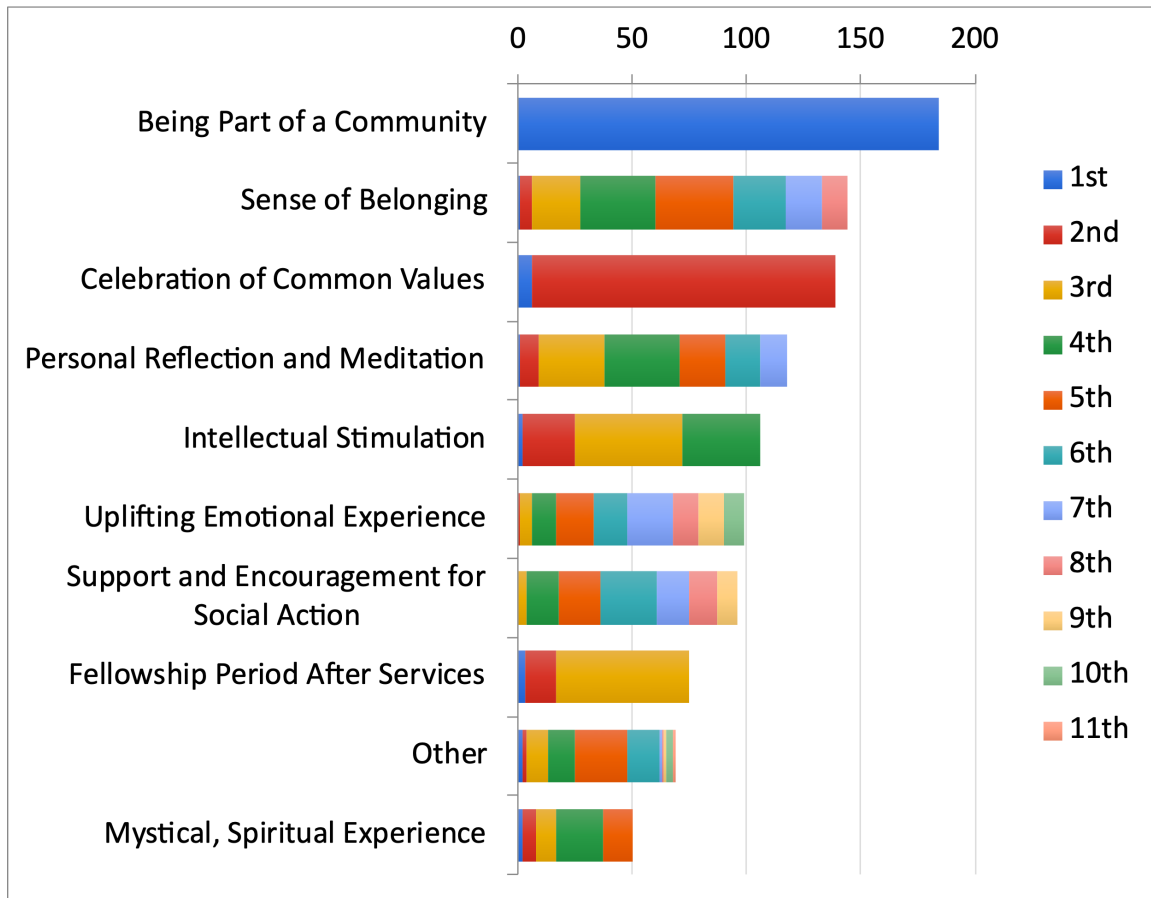


Figure 8. Reasons for attending worship services: 201 respondents and 1,080 total responses listed by number of responses and order of importance (1-11) with 1 being the highest importance and 11 being lowest in importance (but still deemed important since it was listed). For example, someone may have selected (1) Being Part of a Community, (2) Celebration of Common Values, (3) Intellectual Stimulation,..(10) Uplifting Emotional Experience, and (11) Other. Someone else may have selected (1) Being Part of a Community and (2) Celebration of Common Values.

Other. A total of 72 additional responses were received and summarized as follows:

Spiritual experience (50 responses); Music/live music/singing/hymns (9 responses); Family; Raising children with good values and critical thinking; More reflection than meditation; People to meditate with; Making friends; Being in a beautiful sanctuary; I have found another spiritual path and not sure I will continue with UU and UUCUC; Indoctrination of daughter in UU principles; I have the only computer that can run the sound system; Dealing with sadness and confronting the unknown of Trump and COVID; The calm feeling it brings in my week even if for a short time.

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree. Our congregational leadership is...

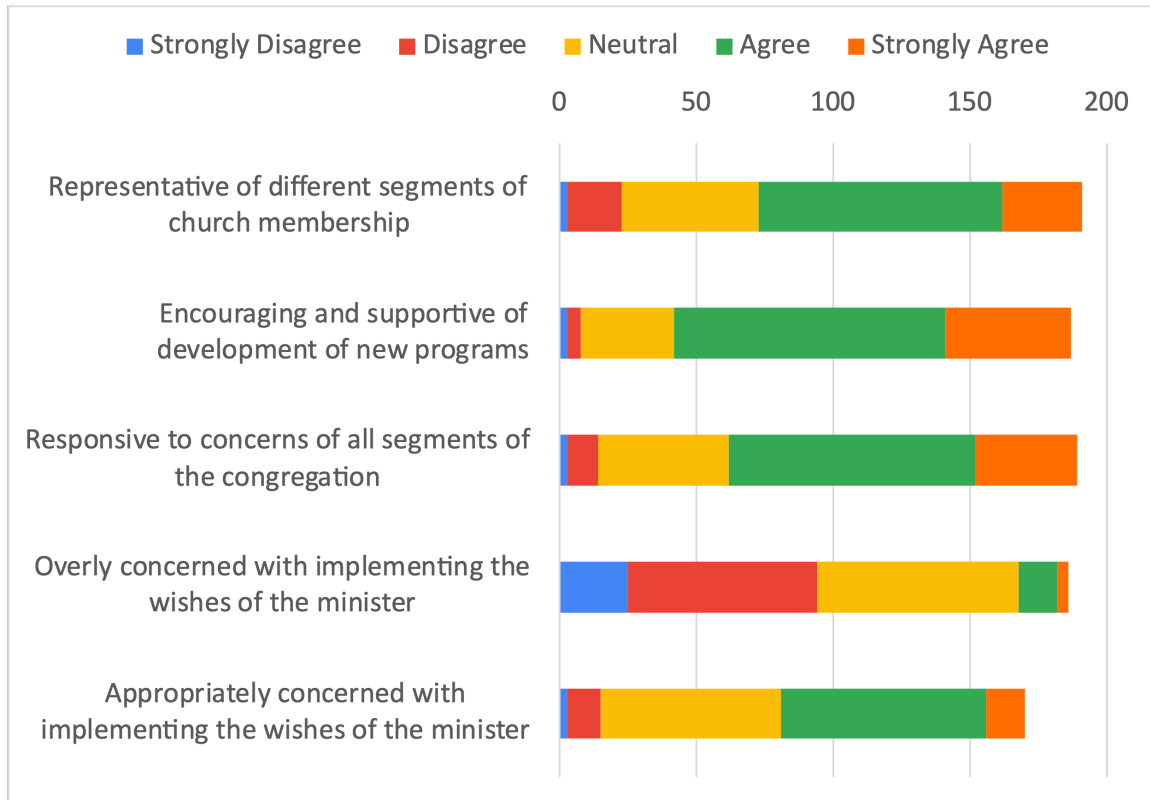


Figure 9. Our congregational leadership: Up to 191 respondents and 923 total responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

10. What are your feelings about our membership growth?

200 respondents ranging from favorable to unfavorable.

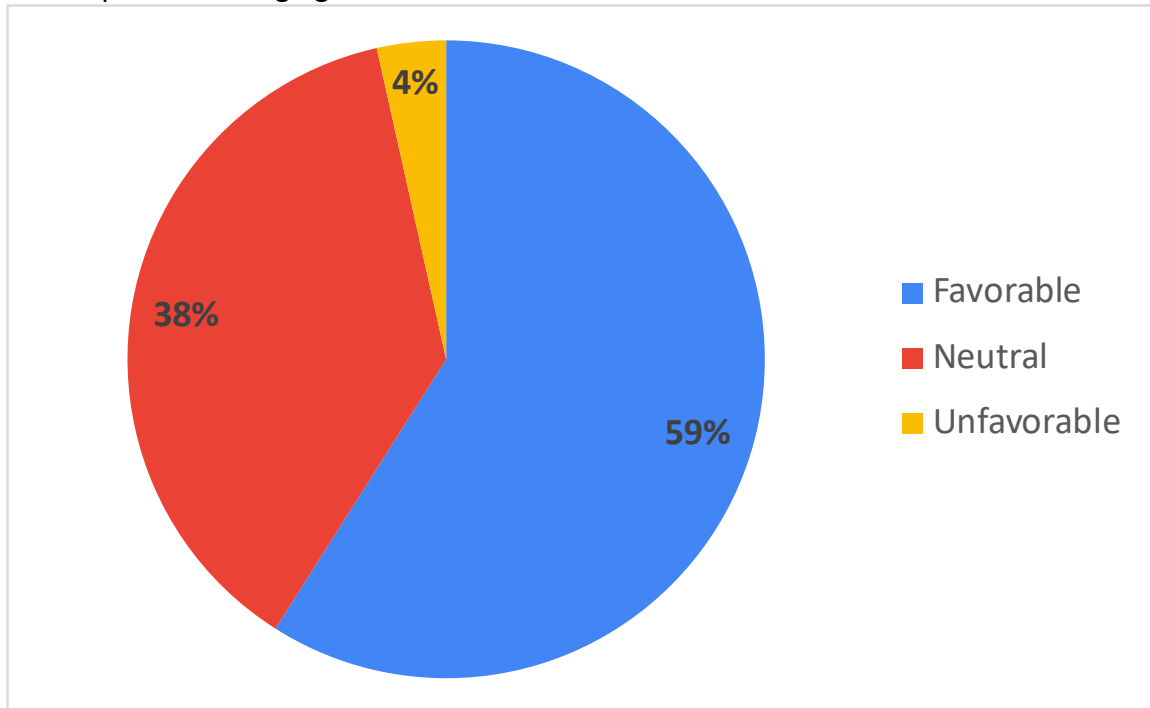


Figure 10. Membership growth: 200 respondents ranging from favorable to unfavorable.

List comments or concerns about your feelings on our membership growth. A total of 95 long-form responses were received and summarized as follows:

- There is a general feeling of positivity towards growth....But not “too much” growth. Growth in members, growth in community outreach, growth in diversity, growth in religious practice/non-religious practice, growth in inter-church-community connection are some types of growth mentioned.
- Some people are concerned that we don’t really know who we are as a result of the pandemic and the fact that we no longer weed the membership rolls.
- Some people are concerned we will lose something in our nature if we grow “too much.”

Sample Responses

- Although I feel favorable, I don't think our current facility can sustain large growth.
- I believe we are currently approaching the member numbers we had when the church was at its higher numbers many years ago, before most of our current members were with us. Generally having more people join is such a very positive thing! However, with rapid growth certainly comes some growing pains, and I think we are experiencing that. Trying to rapidly adjust to serve a larger

- congregation by adding a lot more staff resulted in a lot of energy going towards staff management and fundraising to support having/keeping staff members during the pandemic, which has also been a time of stress and rapid change. It's been a lot to keep up with and figure out how to balance all these needs.
- I want to see our membership grow and diversify. However, our building will not be adequate to handle the growth. This leads to a concern for changes in building capacity.
 - I'm not in favor of growth simply for growth's sake ("small is beautiful"). But I'm not against growth if more people are inspired to join us. I would be loathe, however, to give up our current building should we grow tremendously.
 - We should be welcoming to those who want to be a part of us, but not use time and money on recruitment. Personally, I am much more comfortable in a small to mid-sized church where the congregation has much of the responsibility and does much of the work, not paid staff.
 - There are many more UUs in our community than currently know about us. I feel it is our duty to evangelize our church. The lack of a membership coordinator is making membership growth more challenging. In the past, the congregation specifically wanted this staff member, and it was a keystone for multiple Generosity drives: not maintaining staff as a MC is thwarting the congregational will in this regard.
 - Before the pandemic, I felt there was a "myth of growth" in place -- as soon as we stopped weeding the Voting Member List, our "membership" numbers grew, but I don't think actual active membership grew. It did not shrink either; we had strong new participation and energy and continued to welcome new members, but we also had the usual attrition of people leaving town, etc.
 - Due to ongoing, reality-based concerns about discrimination of minority groups, the nondiscrimination stance that is publicly evident at UUCUC indicates a good probability of membership growth.

11. State your level of agreement with the following statement: I feel our church building meets our current needs.

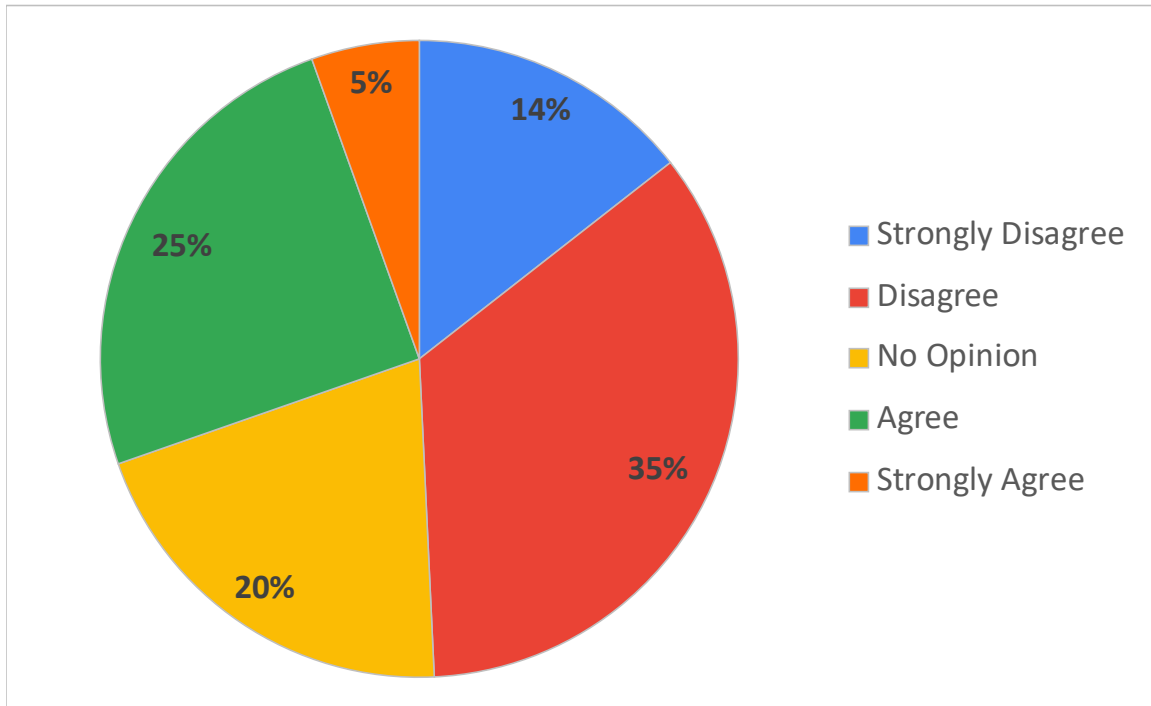


Figure 11. Church building: 201 respondents ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Please explain why you feel that our church building meets (or fails to meet) our current needs. (Skip this question if you have no opinion on this matter.) A total of 139 long-form responses were received and summarized as follows:

- It is not an accessible building for limited mobility folks. The Fellowship Hall is noisy and getting too small to host all the activities we like to have. The RE wing is falling apart. No air conditioning in the sanctuary. We don't have room for much growth. Would like a better space to host immigrant families and do other social justice work.
- Poor accessibility and parking.
- Sanctuary doesn't accommodate expected membership. Accessibility is inadequate, staff need office space.
- We must make improvements in accessibility.
- With careful attention to ADA, renovations would be appropriate.
- Sanctuary can't be used in the summer. Deferred maintenance poses a risk. We are fortunate to be close to a diverse population and public transit.
- Enjoy the building but it has limitations for growth.
- Our church building has its limitations, but there is so much history associated with it that I would be very reluctant to move to a new church.

12. What current strengths does our congregation possess that you would like to see either maintained or developed in the immediate future?

156 respondents answered in long-form and are summarized as follows.

- Welcoming, inclusive, openness, sense of community
- Social justice/environmental justice
- Caring staff/keep Sally
- Adult REE and small groups (Soul Matters enhances REE program)
- Care Corps/outreach with the congregation
- Volunteers/people willing to do the work/committed group who genuinely enjoy each other
- Music program
- Open to new ideas
- OWL/Youth REE
- (Singular responses) . . . Not strong enough on pastoral care, weak on spiritual disposition, right minded but overly invested in political issues
- Ample generosity; willing to give time and money
- How we welcome and introduce new members
- No friction that creates cliques or bodies of opinion
- “Knee jerk progressivism”
- Strong leadership
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Sense of historic place
- Growth mindset congregation

13. What are the main things you would like the congregation to accomplish or get involved in within the next three to five years?

143 respondents answered in long form and are summarized as follows.

- Interdenominational bridges
- More fully staff REE; hire DRE; revive children/youth REE and strengthen adult REE
- Attract and retain a settled minister
- Attracting younger crowd
- Increase number of teachers/programs
- Connecting at a deeper level
- Diversity, less Christian influence
- Conflict resolution/personal accountability
- Financial stability
- Future building plan; including a/c in sanctuary; accessibility
- Make UU a hub for social action
- Revive Green Team/sustainability efforts; more social action
- Racial diversity within the congregation
- Offer worship services outside of Sunday

2 Your Religious and Spiritual Life

14. In addition to Unitarian Universalism, what faith traditions have been important in your religious development?

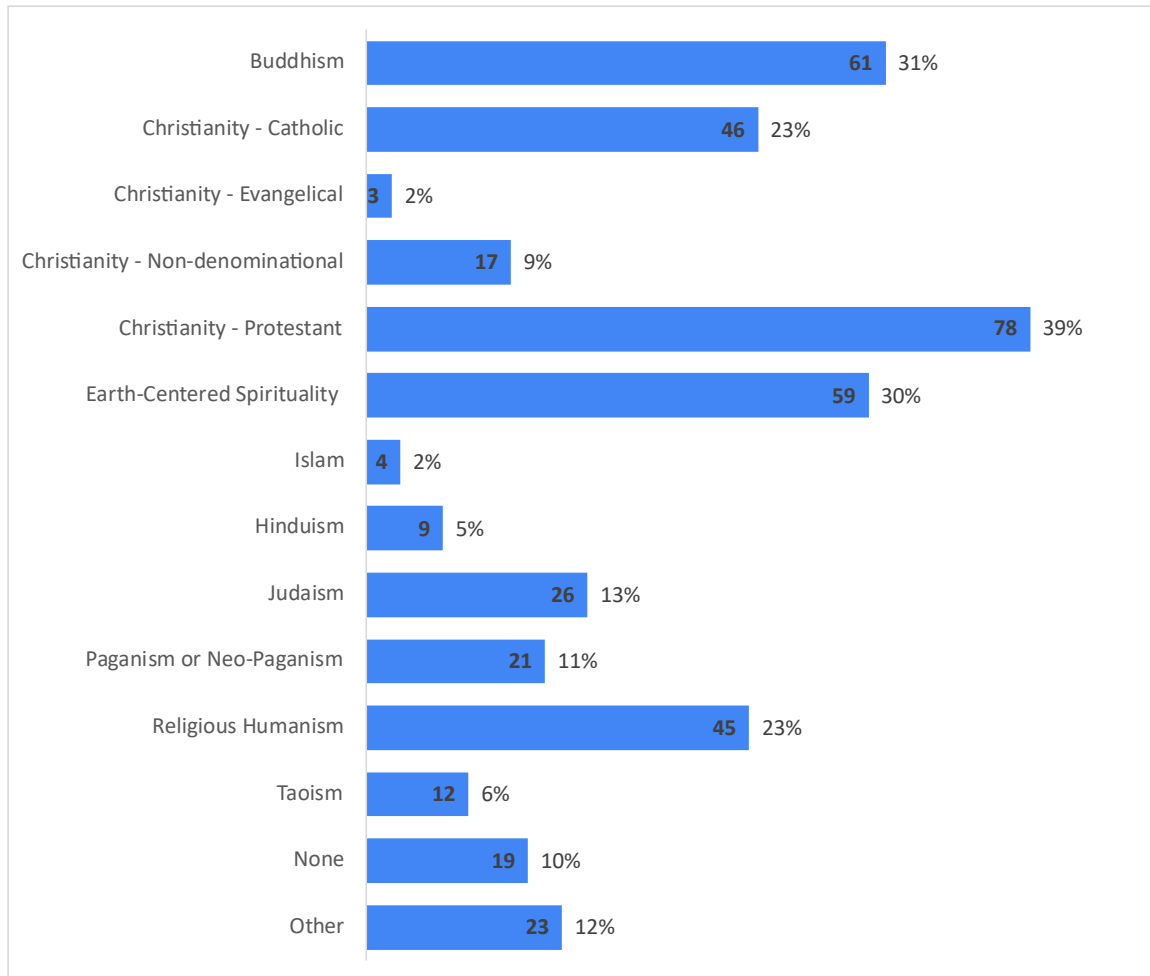


Figure 12. Other important faith traditions: 199 respondents and 423 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 23 long-form responses were received and are summarized as follows:

Humanism/Secular Humanism/Non-religious Humanism; Garden variety Humanism; Quakerism; Born Unitarian and still Unitarian; Raised UU but extended family all historically Lutheran; 3rd Generation UU; Atheism; African Traditional religions; Ojibwe spiritual practices; Baha'i Faith; Sufism; Sikhism; Witchcraft; Stoic philosophy; Christianity – Orthodox; Christianity of a reformist nature outside of Catholic, Evangelical, or Protestant traditions; The British Empiricists especially Hume and Russell; My own.

15. Which most closely corresponds with your belief about immortality?

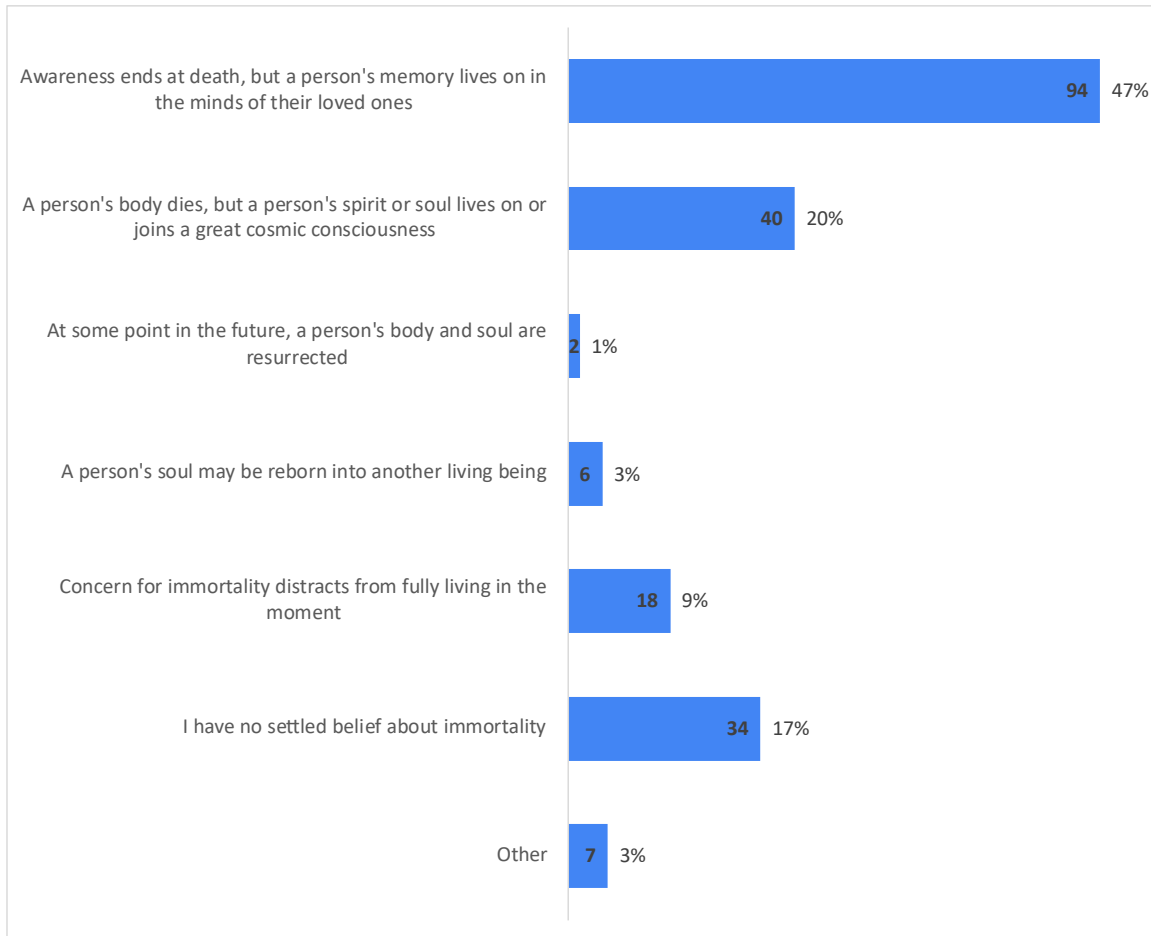


Figure 13. Belief about immortality: 201 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 7 long-form responses were received and are summarized as follows:

Concern with life and death is created by the limitations of how we experience time but is largely irrelevant; Heaven/Hell; I believe in the creator, who is god. I am still learning about life, death, and everything else; I have no particular beliefs related to immortality. I assume that there is not immortality of our souls; I lean towards you die and that's it but honestly how would I know; The cycle of life/death/new life resonates; You are dead.

16. How often do you engage in the following religious practices?

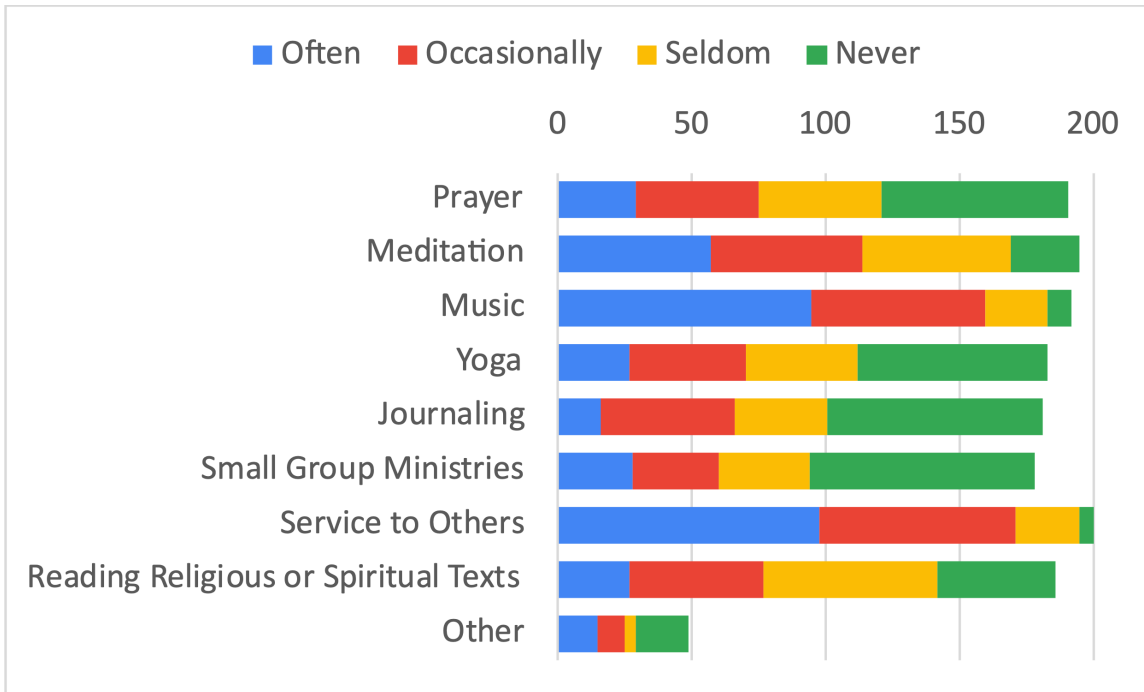


Figure 14. Engagement in religious practices: 200 respondents and 1,555 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 46 other responses received, plus 35 additional long-form responses were received and are summarized as follows:

Discussing faith in therapy, with friends; Spiritual awareness through nature; Exploration of ethical dimensions of many issues; I wouldn't classify any of my practices as religious or spiritual—mental health-centered is close; Pagan ritual; Conversations, drawing from religious writing and discourse for my writing; Sitting in nature; Intentional social interaction as a religious practice; Mindfulness; Dance; Walking in nature; Social activism; Tai Chi; I do find Judeo-Christian ethics, which I try to practice not because I expect immortality but because I find it correct; I am not very spiritual; Writing to shut ins on behalf of Care Core—those in the hospital and others dealing with personal conflict; Community service as a spiritual responsibility; Reading, reflecting, discussion, lighting candles; Al-Anon Conference-Approved literature and speaker audios; Nature walks and contemplation; Birds; Qigong practices; Taoist Tai Chi; Deep listening; Watching lectures and video on YouTube about religions, philosophy, modes of thought; Mindfulness, especially when my toddler is draining my patience or I'm feeling nervous about work; Development with science of awareness of presence of feelings/emotional system as integral without life forms, such as the circulatory system; Edging toward scientific awareness of the Soul; Making art and knitting; Communing with nature.

17. Diversity, equity, and access are widely shared goals for many organizations. Where does the church fall short? Where should we place our efforts? What should we look for in a new minister committed to these goals?

146 respondents answered in long form and are summarized as follows.

Sample responses:

- We have a lot of "university diversity" but very little that reflects the rest of our community, specifically, Black and Latinx. We need more direct community service to change that.
- We're awfully white and privileged. Diversity (economic, racial, ethnic) could help us be stronger and more aware of what is happening outside our church. I'd like to see a new minister interested in helping us move towards these goals - not just say it, do it.
- We are a predominantly white, educated, financially stable, liberal group. As such, it is challenging to meet the needs and attract a more diverse group of people. We should look for a minister that will help us be welcoming and who will engage a wider group.
- The building doesn't provide adequate access, and I feel a new minister should feel this is very important. Diversity, equity, and inclusion can take many forms but is still possible in a fairly homogeneous congregation such as ours. A new minister should be interested in leading us to rise up in those areas (where I feel we are languishing a bit). Certainly a new minister should be well aware of Widening the Circle of Concern and want to help us address some of our inadequacies, including truly living into the 8th principle that we adopted as a congregation and in addressing accountability in our systems, policies, bylaws, constitution (eventually).
- We only have a handful of non-white members. I think we need to cast a wider net promoting our beliefs and services within the community to attract a more diverse membership. A minister with professional or volunteer experience promoting diversity would be ideal.
- Like most other UU congregations, our membership has limited racial/ethnic diversity. While we should welcome racial/ethnic diversity, I don't think we should focus here, however, because the problem is too difficult. I think the new minister should prioritize other issues.
- Our church is solid at (gently) teaching ourselves about racial justice issues and anti-racism, and we are willing to provide financial support. We're less effective at making ourselves uncomfortable, including getting out into the world to do the work of anti-racism. BIPOC people within our congregation do still face some (often unconscious) racial bias. I also think racial justice work within and outside of our church has been relegated to the Racial Justice Task Force, and those members are burned out on the work. I'd like to see a new minister encourage us to embrace being uncomfortable as an important aspect of our growth. I'd like to see a minister getting out there in the community.

- Our church is excellent at engaging white upper middle class folk. We are also great at gender diversity. I think we need to grow in our inclusion of BIPOC folk. I would also like to see even more diversity of religious traditions brought in. Florence brought some of the Zen Buddhist traditions which were nice; let's see what others we can bring in.
- The church is quite strong in the “popular” DEI areas of race, sexual orientation/identity, women's issues, etc. However, there is less acceptance/inclusion for those with different ways of thinking about various lifestyle things like parenting approaches, family and more general lifestyle approaches, and politics. There seems to be little acceptance and even insult toward the least bit of conservative attitude in any of these areas. There is also not as much emphasis on accommodating individuals with various types of disabilities and little understanding of neurodiversity. All in all, however, the church makes strong efforts to be inclusive, this is just a daunting task!

Singular responses:

- I question just how “diverse” the membership really is. For example, I am personally against abortion, but I sense I am in the vast, vast minority on this among the membership, and it's posing a barrier towards my fuller participation at UUCUC. I've been a UU for over 20 years, but I don't feel I “fit” in this particular church anymore; I'm uncomfortable with how knee-jerk liberal it seems to be. I know the ministers say everyone is welcome, but I sometimes think they need to add the caveat “unless you're against Roe v Wade”. I don't know what to suggest to make this situation better, but it saddens me.
- The pronouns are getting a bit annoying. The land acknowledgement is getting old—I can go to any church to get a guilt trip and to be told that I am a sinner.
- I believe our congregation continues to fall short in diversity as it pertains to race, and this is an area we should continue to try to unpack and address. We have taken some actions, and I believe there have been good opportunities provided for us to learn more about ourselves and our biases, and to look more deeply at and understand structural and systemic racism. . . An example...we passed the 8th principle well over a year ago, and yet it still isn't included on our orders of service where there other 7 are printed every week. Why? There has been a lot of growth in diversity as it pertains to gender identity and sexual orientation. . . Something I personally have noticed is feeling somewhat of an outsider because I am not wealthy. There is a lot of talk by congregants about their 5th cruise of the year, the major gifts of various individuals, the amounts of our pledges that is then gifted to support other organizations, and on. Sometimes there seems to be an assumption that everyone in the church is very financially sound. A lot of messages of give, give, give (\$). Never “if you are struggling with food insecurity, know you are welcome to visit a free little pantry hosted by a church friend” or other like messages. Ever. I don't live paycheck to paycheck, but the “wealth only” culture can even make me feel uneasy on a somewhat regular basis. I can't imagine anyone who is really struggling

financially feeling comfortable here over time. . . We need to look for a minister who is ready to help catalyze us in our journey towards these goals, and who can at the same time be a stabilizing and united force when the congregation has a lot of divergent ideas about the various paths towards accomplishing these goals.

3 What We Value and Need in Worship Services

18. How often would you like the minister to preach?

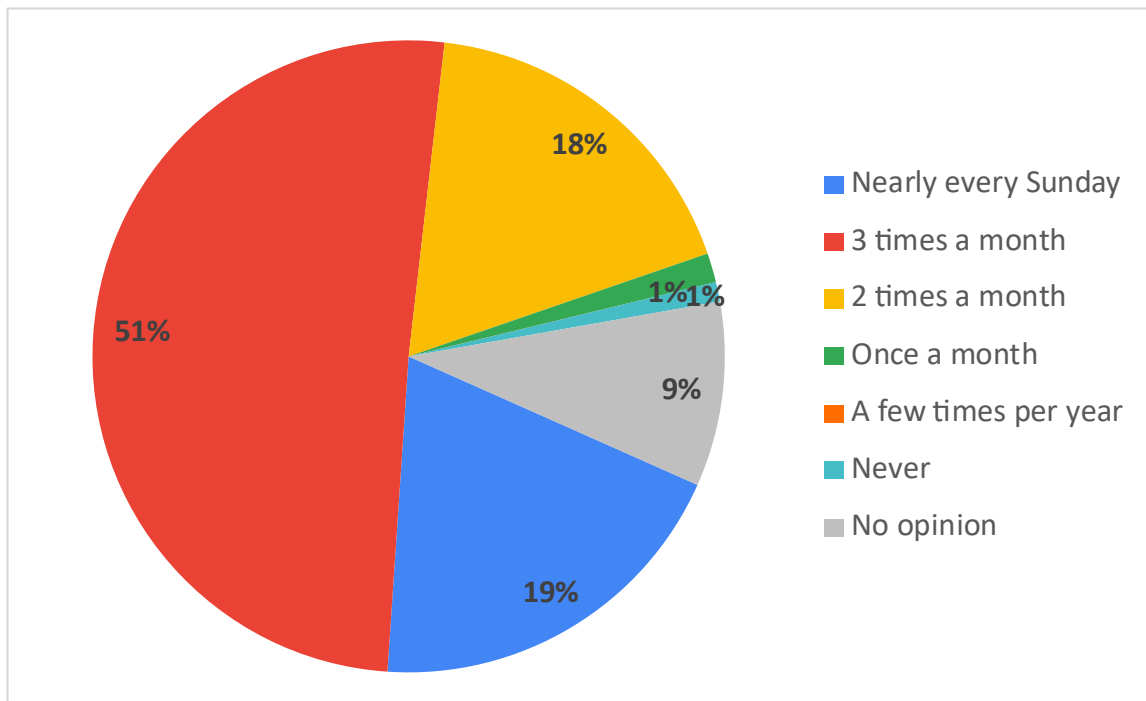


Figure 15. Minister-led services: 201 respondents ranging from nearly every Sunday to never/no opinion. There were 0 responses for a few times per year.

19. How often would you like a guest minister or other speaker?

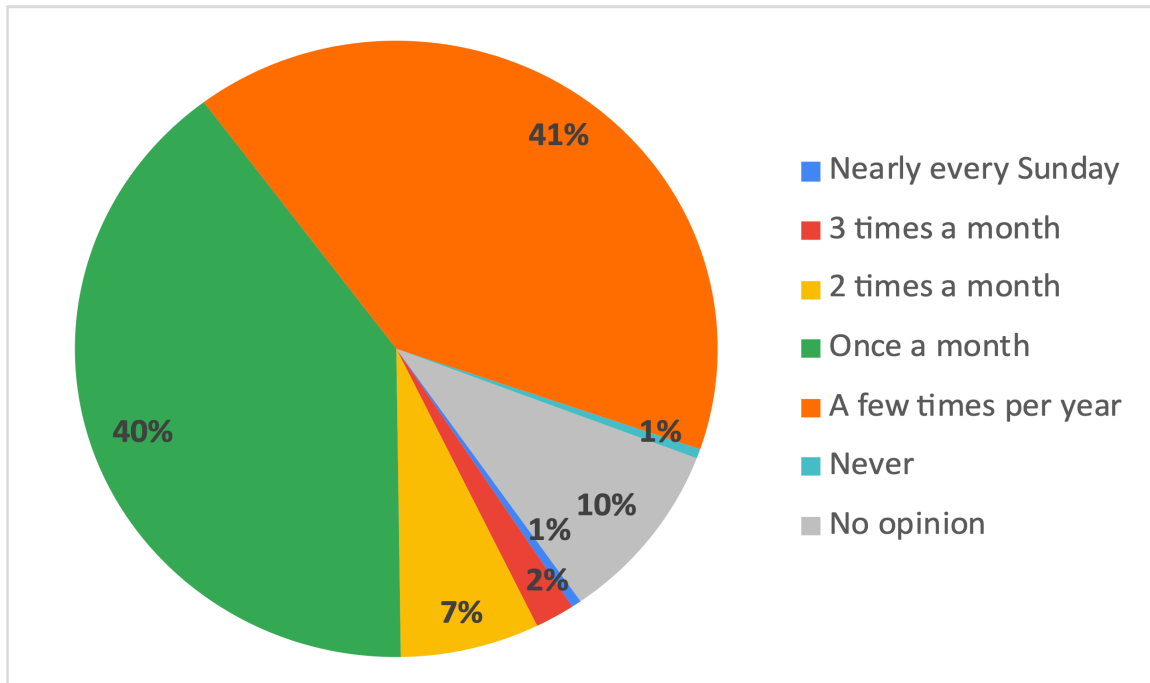


Figure 16. Guest speaker-led services: 200 respondents ranging from nearly every Sunday to never/no opinion.

20. How often would you like the Sunday service to be designed and presented by one or more church members, rather than the minister?

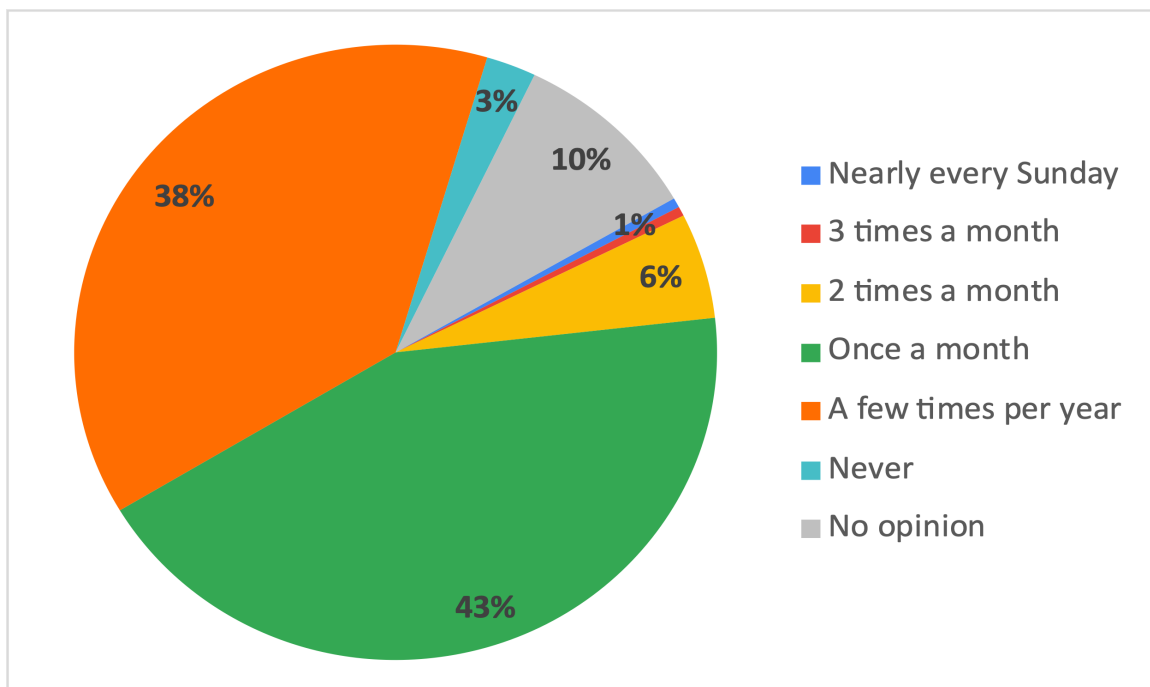


Figure 17. Lay-led services: 199 respondents ranging from nearly every Sunday to never/no opinion.

21. How important to you are the following parts of a Sunday worship service?

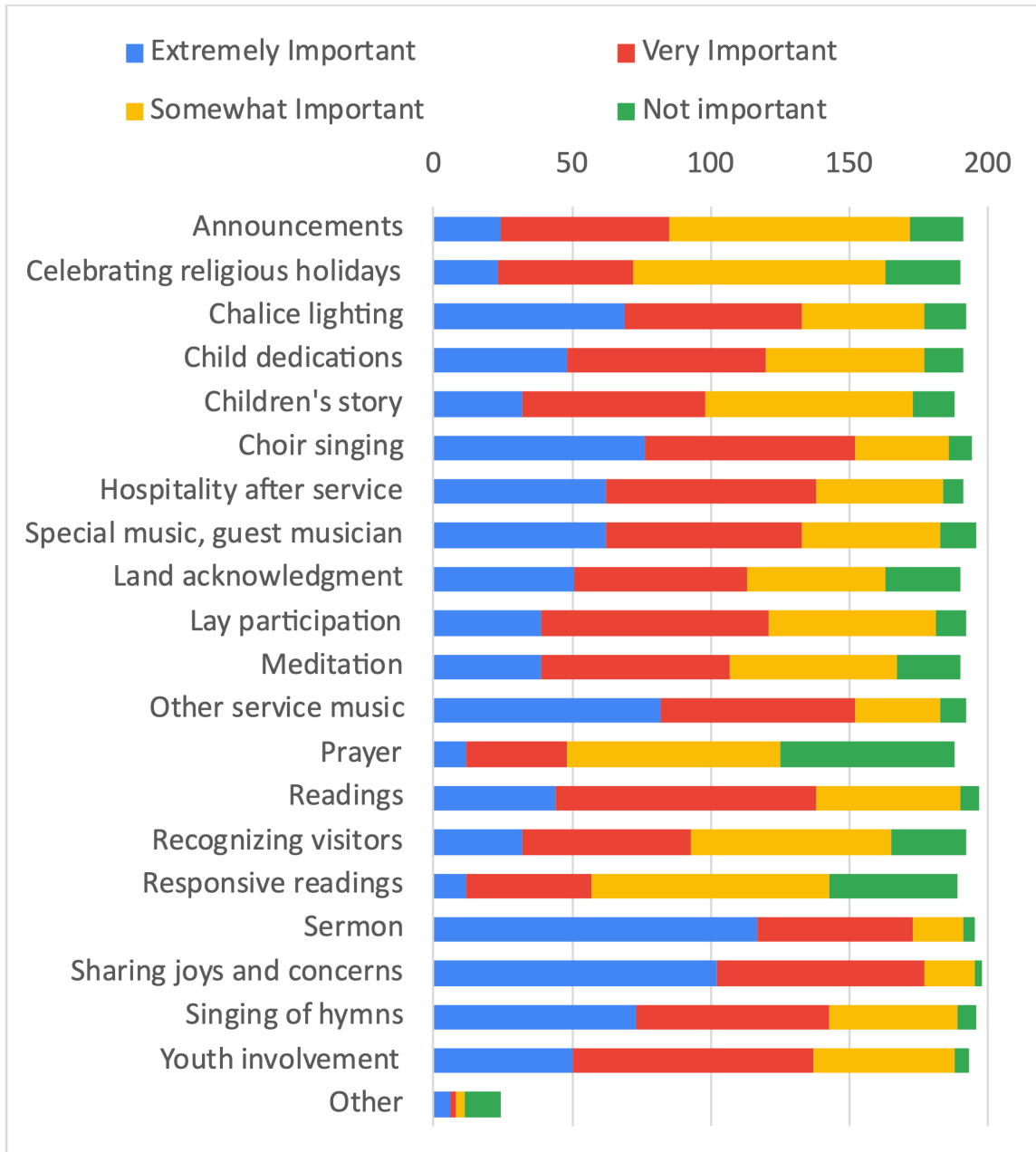


Figure 18. Parts of Sunday service: 198 respondents ranging from extremely important to not important and 3,869 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 24 other responses were received with long-form responses and are summarized as follows:

- Honestly, I miss the liturgical services I experienced in my former Christian days, in which the whole congregation was jointly participating in a service and the

knowledge that other churches around the world were doing the same. That connection was important to me.

- We are a covenantal faith yet we do not recognize our own covenant as a congregation and with each other unless the committee/group/team you are serving with happens to include it.
- Shake it up every now and then.
- Several times a year I'd like to have specialized services inspired by other religions, e.g. Native American rituals, Hindu festivals, or Pagan holidays.
- I am accustomed to the old-fashioned service with a minister leading, choir singing, occasional solo musician or musical group, excellent pianist.
- Children's involvement at least one Sunday a month.
- I'm more likely to engage with a service that is not explicitly religious, but I rarely choose to participate in the service itself. I recognize its importance to others and in community-building— I'm just an introverted atheist.
- Joys and concerns could be moved to the UU e-news.
- A friend at another church in town said they have stopped having an offering since not everyone can give that way and it is so public whether or not you put \$ into the plate (and how much). I love the shared offering concept and understand the church and highlighted charity need money and not doing an offering runs the risk of not getting it other ways. But I think this is something to consider.
- I that having more discussions and involvement opportunities on Sunday afternoons and immediately following worship service would be very helpful, since people are already present and don't have to make separate times or meet over Zoom later during the work week.
- I'd like services that felt less stilted - our patterns are so predictable and leave very little room for creativity or difference week to week.
- Beautiful space.
- I appreciate when we have a "series" of Sundays that are related in some way— either thematically or organized around a series of questions.
- Testimonials and Reflections by members of the church about their experiences in topical issues like racism, the MeToo movement, psychological struggles, etc. are very important to me.
- Learning about monthly UUCUC designated charities and opportunity to make a charitable contribution to important organizations that I once knew nothing about.
- Youth/child activities don't involve us directly, but they are important for the church to grow and welcome families.
- I really love youth/child involvement every so often, but I think it's overkill to do every Sunday. I also think we overpack our services with unnecessary things and then we don't have enough time for a sermon.
- Ringing the bell.

22. How important to you are these various sources of inspiration for Sunday worship services?

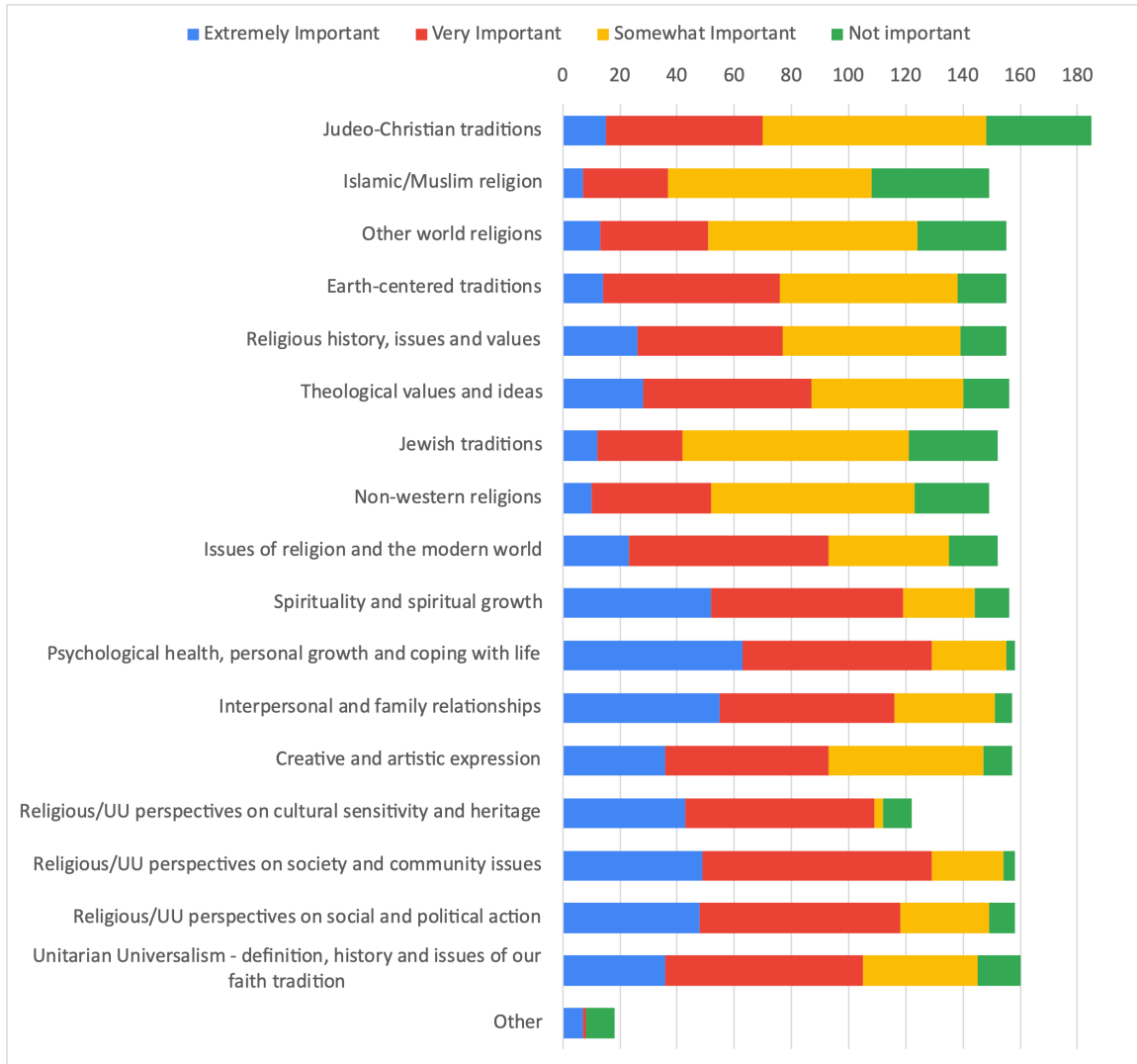


Figure 19. Sources of inspiration: 185 respondents ranging from extremely important to not important and 2,652 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 18 other responses were received with long-form responses and are summarized as follows:

UU perspectives on the social scientific facts and ethical aspects of major issues of the day. I would like the congregation to feel less Christian. I appreciate the inclusion of other faith traditions; I may be less interested in non-religious sources of inspirations (psychology, political action, cultural perspectives), as these are already part of my daily life. Secular literature and art; humanism and feminism.

23. How important to you are these Sunday worship service objectives?

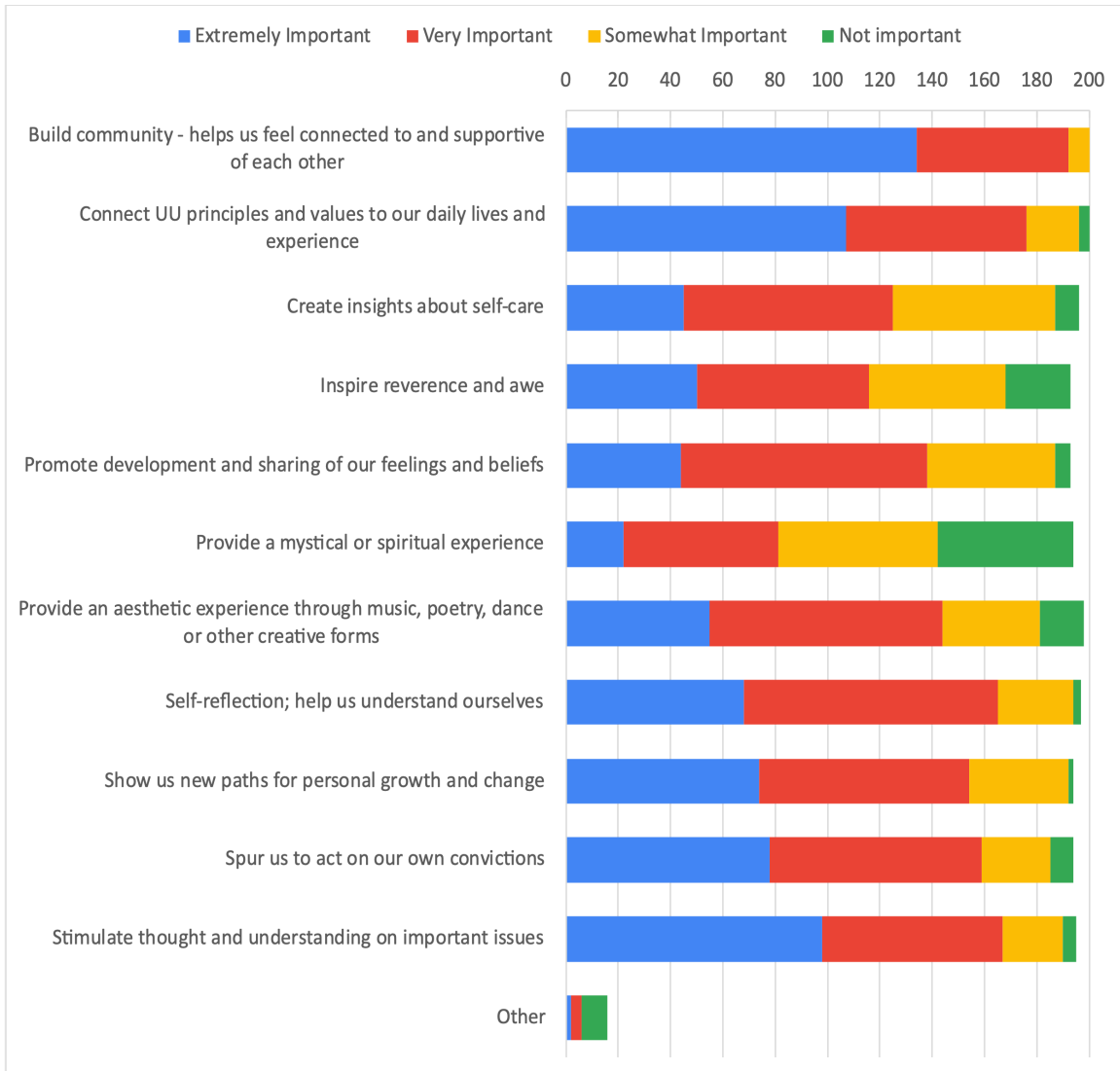


Figure 20. Sunday worship objectives: 200 respondents ranging from extremely important to not important and 2,170 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 16 other responses were received with 10 long-form responses summarized as follows:

Connect us with our history and that of other faiths. Create safe space/sanctuary from outside world to allow us time to reflect on these goals. I came when Axel was giving consistent and thoughtful sermons that I enjoyed listening to; the shift to mostly lay and somewhat scattered presentations has not been good for me.

24. In what ways has the addition of online worship opportunities affected your experience with the church community?

151 respondents answered in long form and are summarized as follows.

Sample responses:

- It's definitely more convenient, but I don't think it encourages the building of community with other members to the extent that in-person worship services and fellowship do.
- I'm able to join [online] even when not able to in person; so more likely to attend. I feel better about being a more inclusive community
- I think the addition of an online option is an excellent way to reach people who might not otherwise be able to attend. With that said, I also feel like having parts of the service via video in the in-person setting feels a little impersonal. With THAT said, it also makes it possible for us to draw from a wider pool of presenters/participants (is that a word?), so obviously I have mixed feelings. Mostly positive, though.
- It held our Church together during Covid.
- I've gotten lazy and barely attend at all. Usually when I turn on the livestream it's in the background while I do other things. My connection to the service has largely been lost.

Singular responses:

- Online worship is extremely important for me because our congregation does not welcome folks with mobility challenges.
- It's enabled me to at least witness the weekly services. I apologize for digressing right now, but I wish UUCUC would modify its masking policy, making face coverings optional. I know many other CU churches have done so, including one where the vast majority of its members are over age 65. If that church sees no problem with allowing non-masked people through their doors, I don't understand why UUCUC is being so rigid. I have attended a few live services and it's been an off-putting experience: I've recognized no one, and no one has made an attempt to recognize me. I know I bear some responsibility for that, but it's made me feel very awkward. I'm grateful for the online service option since that's the only way I feel able to "attend" now.

4 The Minister We Seek

25. A variety of roles and responsibilities comprise a minister’s work. Each minister has to prioritize these aspects of ministry, and thus their time. Rate their importance for our next minister – with 1 being low priority and 5 being high priority.

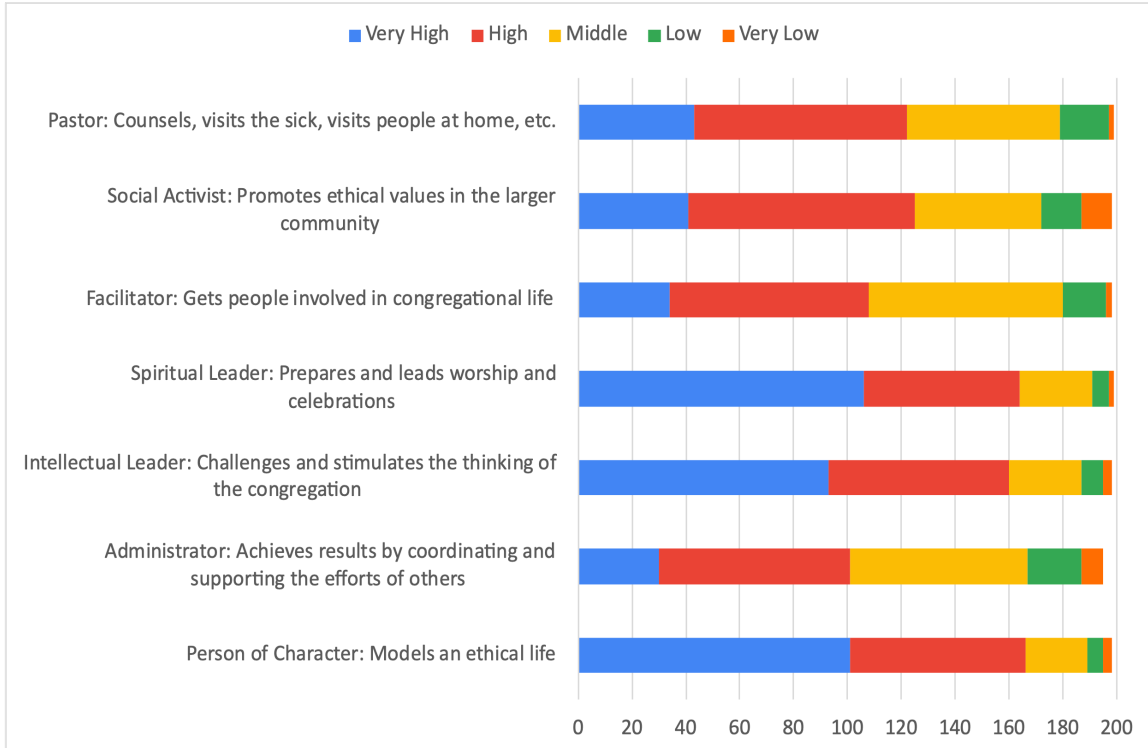


Figure 21. Roles and responsibilities as a minister: 199 respondents ranging from very high to very low and 1,385 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 22 long-form responses were received and are summarized as follows:

Visible, friendly welcoming presence. One who can address conflict, as a mediator. Administrator: the coordination needs to be accomplished by collaboration, with both staff and lay leaders. Adaptable and open to change. A lead minister who inspires and empowers congregants to do their best to live UU lives. Memorial services, support for families in the aftermath. Weddings and pre-marriage counseling. According to the ancient text of the Tao Te Ching, the best leader is the one who masters the work without most people realizing the leader even exists.

26. Which of the following qualities do you think are the most important for the Search Committee to consider in screening ministerial candidates? (Select up to 4)

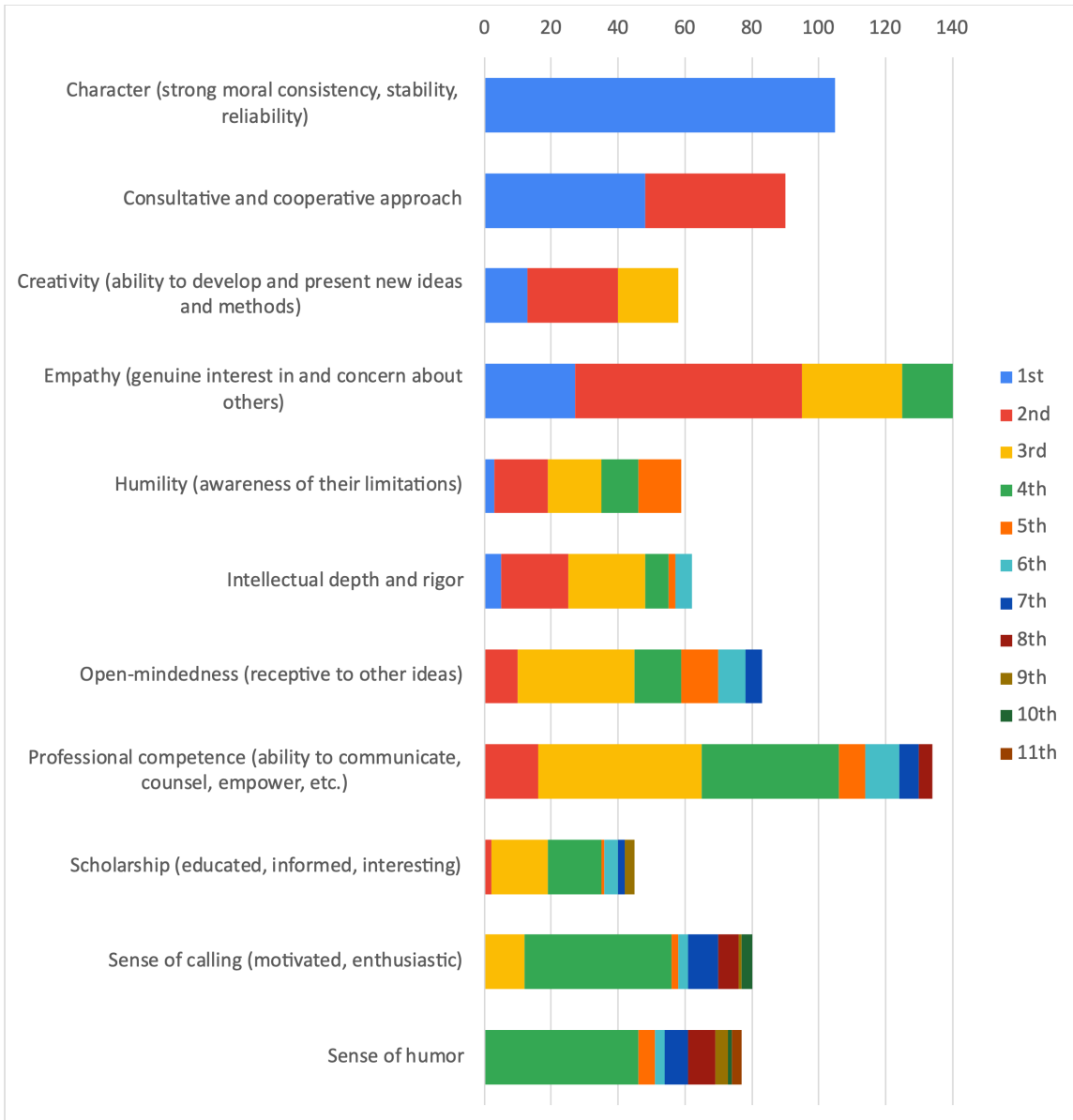


Figure 22. Traits of a minister: 201 respondents and 933 total responses listed by number of responses (selection was not limited to 4 and many chose to check up to the total 11 listed) and order of importance with 1 being the highest importance and 11 being lowest (but still deemed important since it was listed).

27. Please consider this statement for the questions that follow: It is UU tradition and this congregation's historical practice that the minister have freedom of the pulpit.

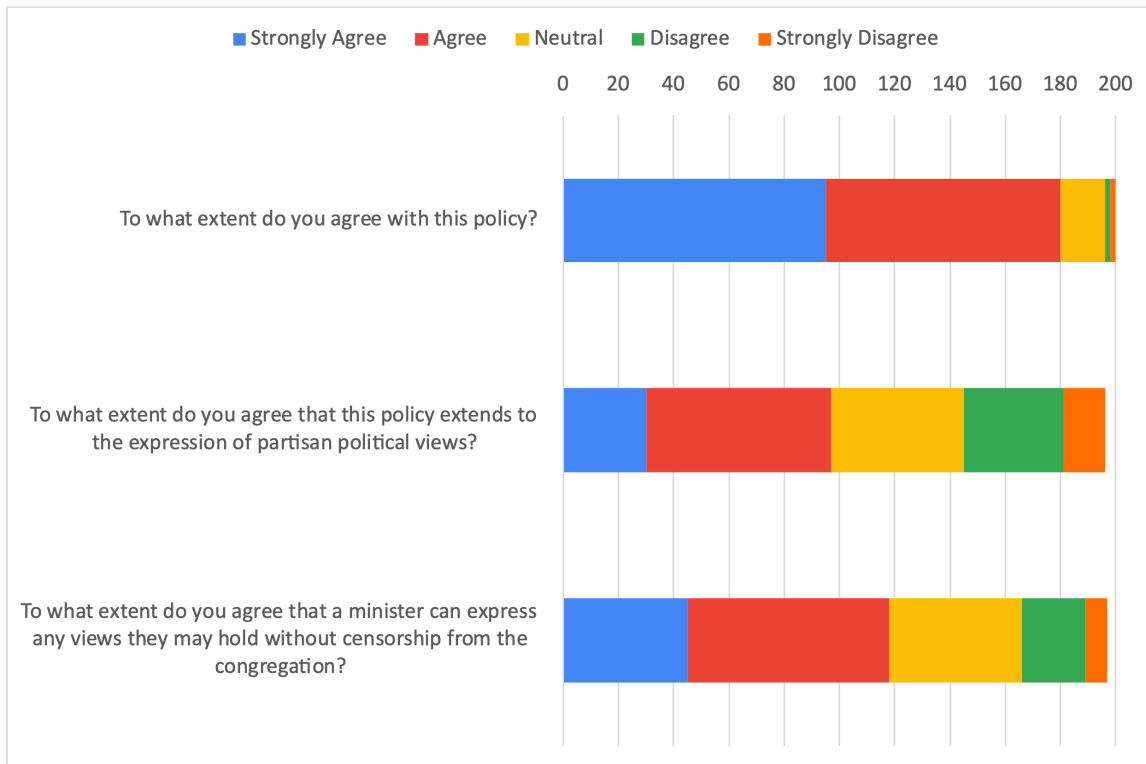


Figure 23. Freedom of the pulpit: 200 respondents ranging from very high to very low and 593 total responses.

28. What predominant style of ministry would you prefer in our next minister?

The following definitions were provided:

Facilitator: The minister as go-between; Promotes connections among people and groups within the church to help them function more effectively and make progress.

Pastor: The minister as chaplain; By virtue of their spiritual and moral gifts, the minister becomes an influential counselor to individuals and to a strong lay leadership.

Prophet: The minister as visionary; Envisioning a future of promise, the minister inspires the congregation and the larger community to pursue it.

Steward: The minister as city manager; The minister monitors details of congregational life and operations and provides management consultation as needed to keep things running smoothly.

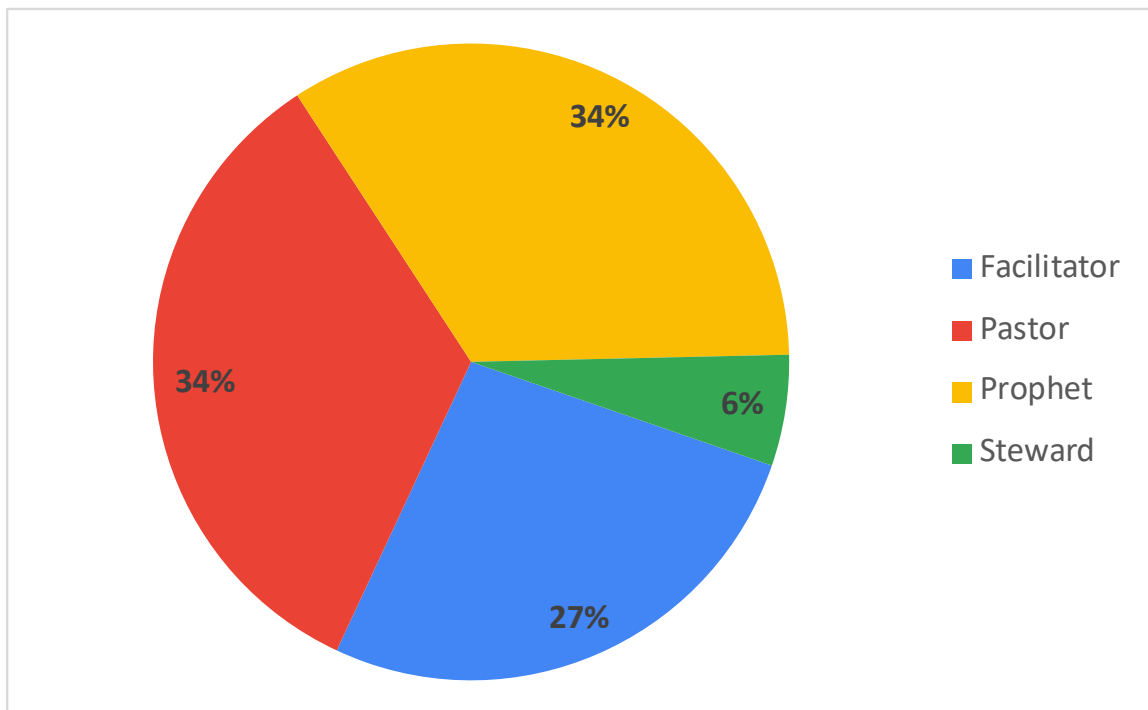


Figure 24. Style of ministry: 195 respondents ranging from facilitator to steward.

29. How important are these various ministerial functions to you?

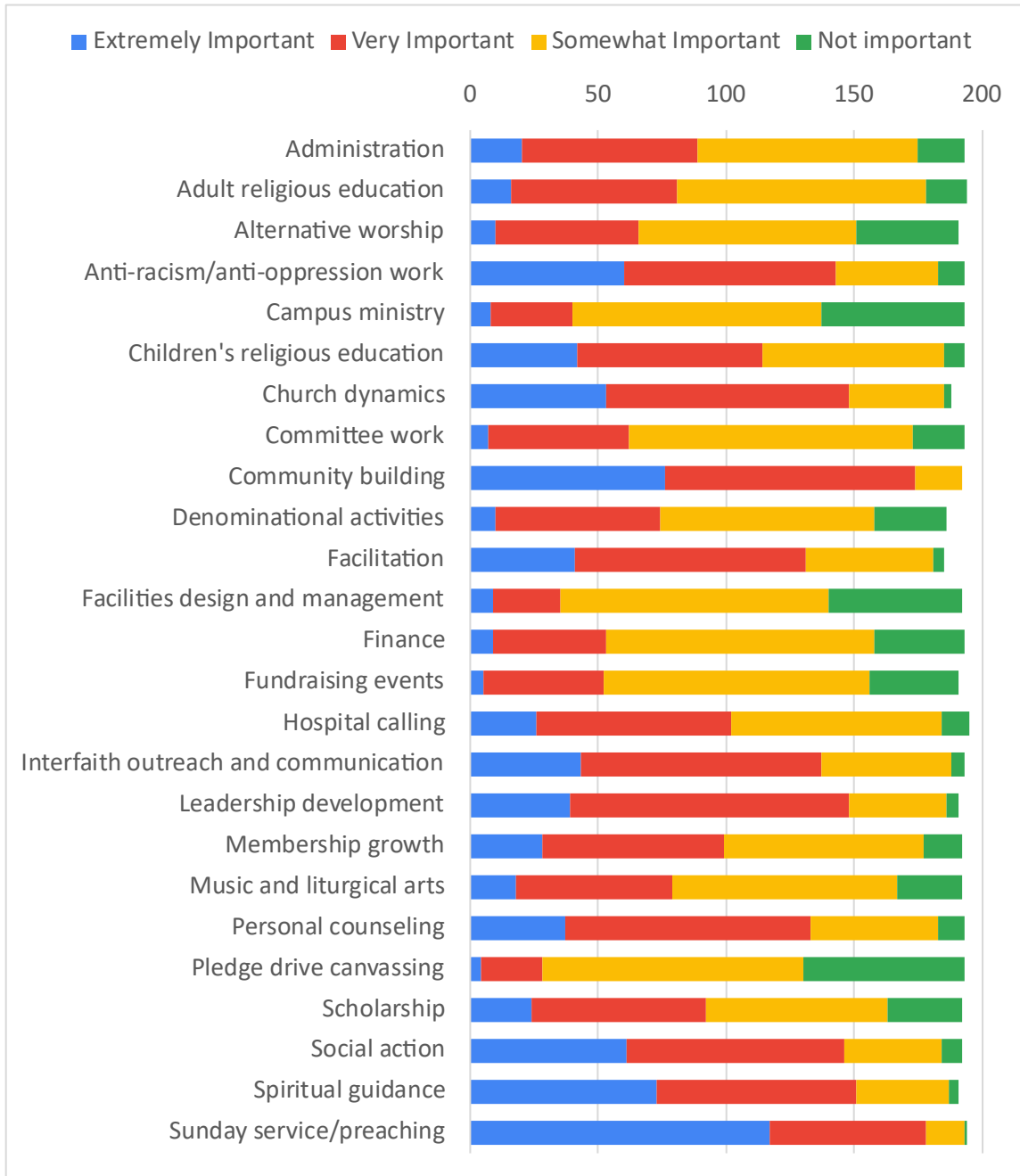


Figure 25. Ministerial functions: 195 respondents ranging from extremely important to not important and 4,795 total responses, plus other.

Other. A total of 11 long-form responses were received and are summarized as follows:

Visionary/prophetic tendencies. Our lead minister cannot do everything that needs to be done. It is critical they lead by example and inspire UUCUC’s shared ministry team of clergy and laity. Acting as a trusted servant.

30. What responsibility should the minister have for the day-to-day administration of the church?

The following definitions were provided:

Member of Executive Team: The minister should be a member of the executive team which has overall responsibility. The other members are the Board President, the Treasurer, and the Administrator

Little Responsibility for Administration: The minister should have little responsibility for administration and be mostly concerned with the religious life of the congregation

Chief Administrator: The minister should be the chief administrator, with all staff reporting directly or indirectly to them.

Collaborative between Minister and Board: Administrative responsibility should be shared collaboratively between the minister and the board.

No opinion. This is for the board and the minister to work out.

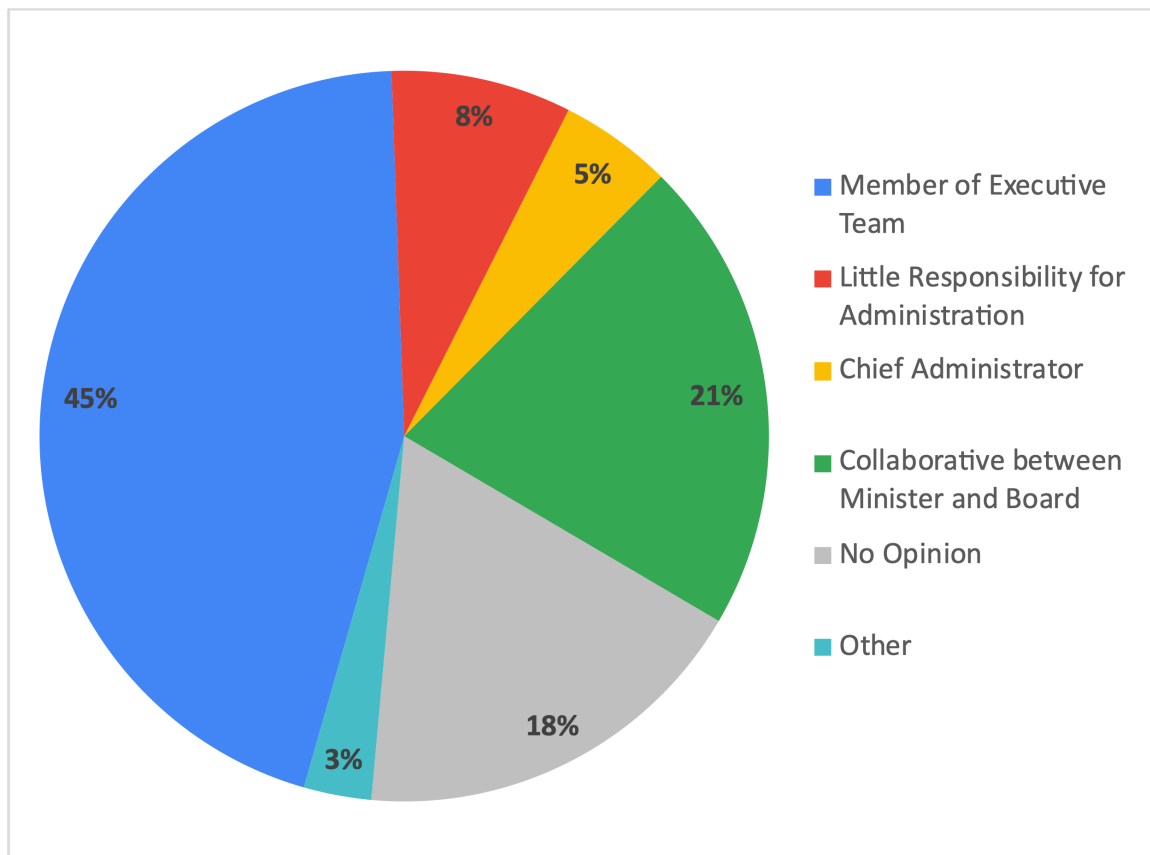


Figure 26. Administration of church: 200 respondents ranging from member of the executive team to collaborative between Minister and Board, plus no opinion and other.

Other. A total of 6 responses were received as other and are included as follows:

- A mixture of 1 and 2 [Chief Administrator and Member of Executive Team] would be best. So, the buck stops with the executive team but day-to-day staff management falls to others (s).
- First and foremost, must be good at preaching and the religious aspects of the job. If they are good at other things, great, but other staff and lay leaders can do the other tasks as well.
- I don't know enough about what worked and what didn't work with Florence as chief of staff. I have heard mixed results. Essentially, I want a system that works, is sustainable, and is collaborative.
- I like the second option above [Member of Executive Team], but also believe that this is an issue that the new minister and the Board should work out themselves.
- The congregation has to be respectful of the minister's time and not expect too much or they will get burned out.
- We have an Administrator on staff...no need to double up.

31. What current church problems/issues concern you?

110 respondents answered in long-form and responses are summarized as follows.

Sample responses:

- We're awfully white and privileged. Diversity (economic, racial, ethnic) could help us be stronger and more aware of what is happening outside our church. I'd like to see a new minister interested in helping us move towards this goal—not just say it, do it.
- Accessibility of the building; graying of the congregation; figuring out who we are post-COVID; the dearth of volunteers/lay leaders.
- I think we've got our fingers in too many social justice pies. I think we have grown the staff size past the size of sustainability for the number of pledging members we seem to have. I worry that our leadership “bench” seems pretty shallow (no people lining up to take over these committees).
- There are so many restrictions due to COVID still.
- Accessibility.
- I'm concerned that people have disengaged during the pandemic and may never re-engage. I'm concerned that the workload, both volunteer and staff, is increasing beyond our ability to keep up without burning out both the volunteers and the staff. I'm concerned that volunteer work is done by a small core of the same people; we need to figure out how to get more people involved.

Singular responses:

- Readjustment post-pandemic except the pandemic is still here so. . . Argh.
- There are occasional incidents of people being shut down and not heard that are not common but are extremely concerning when they do happen. I think we

- have some general cultural issues of listening too much to the leadership, including the minister, and having people be reluctant to speak up.
- Stopping the total fear of COVID; Viruses and Flu are always going to be around; Mandatory Masks all the time indoor limit communication; We are not an intensive care unit!!
 - As I've somewhat mentioned already, I don't feel especially welcome here anymore now that I've become more conservative on several issues. The obvious answer would be finding a more compatible church, but I'm not at all comfortable with "God talk" either, so I'm between a rock and hard place. I'm definitely more comfortable with UUism than with traditional Christianity in general, but this particular church is becoming too "extreme" for me. I'm a hybrid, kinda like UUCUC services at the moment, but it's not a happy way to be...

32. What qualities (professional skills/expertise and personal) should our next minister possess?

121 respondents answered in long-form and responses are summarized as follows.

Sample responses:

- Approachable, gets excited about people and life, willing to problem solve and figure things out, open to new ideas, visible in the community.
- Expresses gratitude, compassion, kindness, tolerance, flexibility.
- Visionary, outward reaching, build a larger community.
- Must have excellent communication skills, high emotional intelligence, intellectual curiosity, a sense of humor, empathy, organizational skills, public speaking skills, knowledge of a variety of religious traditions and a willingness to learn more and bring them into the service.
- Scholarly, intelligent, warm, caring, organized, able to deliver a professional, well-crafted sermon.
- I think we need a seasoned, UUA credentialed minister as our congregation tends to do church very well and has a strong and passionately committed group of lay leaders as this is deeply embedded in our culture.
- Sense of humor.
- Strong motivation to preach challenging sermons. They need to address the major issues of the day of which there are many, not just the culture wars. For example, the implications of climate change and effectiveness of policies to cope, the nationwide threat to the survival of our democracy, guns and death rates from crime, the inequity of access to education and to adequate health care, etc. There are ethical dimensions to all these kinds of problems; a UU minister should have an interest in researching the social scientific facts and then developing the ethical dimensions of the various solutions.
- Strong grounding in varied religious thoughts, traditions, ideals, actions.

- Strongly ecumenical, knowledgeable in UU and Judeo-Christian history and in environmental issues, some expertise in counseling and interest in our individual members.
- Warmth. Engaged with children/youth. Collaborative and willing to delegate. Active in social and/or environmental justice causes.
- Mature, ethical and with an open and curious mindset.

33. Describe the worst mistake your new minister could make.

126 respondents answered in long-form and responses are summarized as follows.

Sample responses:

- Instituting changes before getting to know usual customs and become familiar with prior work done by church leaders on vision and mission.
- If I had to choose, it would be using a racial slur or using derogatory terms for people.
- Lack of interest in individuals.
- Ethical violation.
- Ignoring the needs of the membership.
- Alienating the board and congregation by being a know-it-all.
- Coming in and changing the dynamics of lay leadership and staffing too quickly, without first becoming familiar with the current dynamics.
- Changing everything to fit their style all at once in the beginning. Not listening to the congregation and deciding on changes on their own.
- Being too "religiously," not taking into account the agnostics and atheists among the congregation.
- Change things in our church too quickly to their habit and liking. We've had so many changes over the last 4 years that I think we need help in finding and re-establishing "our ways" again. Maybe we can evolve together towards a mutually agreed upon new normal.
- Showing preference for engaging with some members of the congregation and ignoring others.
- Failing to dream big—this congregation in this community has HUGE potential.
- Failing to recognize the initiatives and commitments of UUCUC members that bring us together now; Failing to urge us in new directions that could further the spiritual and communal growth of the community.
- All of the ministers, both settled and interim, that I have seen over the past approximately ten years have made "mistakes" and all will. Clearly violating a UU principle, I suppose, might be cause for concern. However, those things I have seen as "mistakes" have really helped me to grow in my understanding of what this difficult role of UU minister is about and to be more understanding and

forgiving as a person so unless there is something egregious I am not particularly concerned about this.

Singular responses:

- A minister who calls out members of the congregation or even members of the community from the pulpit is making a big mistake.
- Getting violent (not just raising voice), or perhaps, getting intimate with a member's partner.
- Dishonesty with the congregation or individuals: stealing from the church, or using their position in a way that harms someone vulnerable.
- Strong partisan preaching. Disrespecting veterans, which has been the case in the last few years. We come from a Judeo-Christian society mostly, but any mention of Christianity seems to be in poor taste.
- Embezzling money or, if married, having an affair with a church member.
- Having an affair with a member of the congregation...because it can destroy the congregation.
- To be a Trump supporter and a racist evangelical.

5 Demographics—Background Information About You

34. What is your affiliation with the congregation?

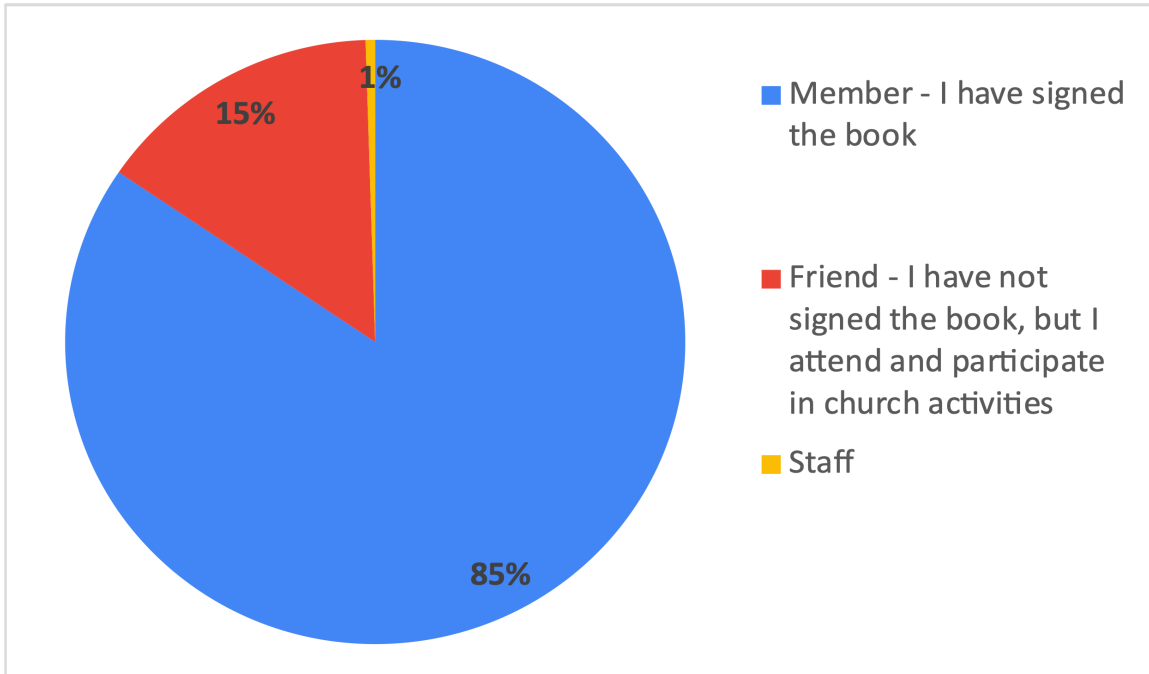


Figure 27. Congregation affiliation: 200 respondents.

35. How long have you been associated with the congregation?

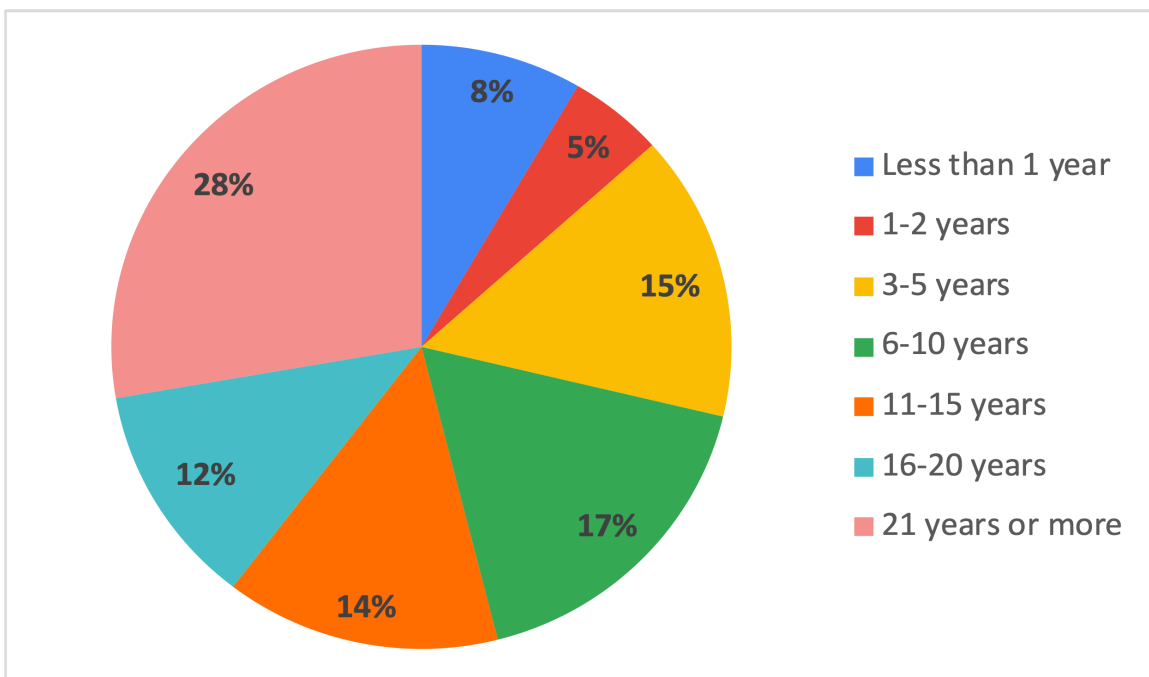


Figure 28. Length of association: 202 respondents ranging from less than 1 year to 21 years or more.

36. Thinking back to a time when you have been unwell and/or grieving, to what extent did the congregation reach out and offer support to you?

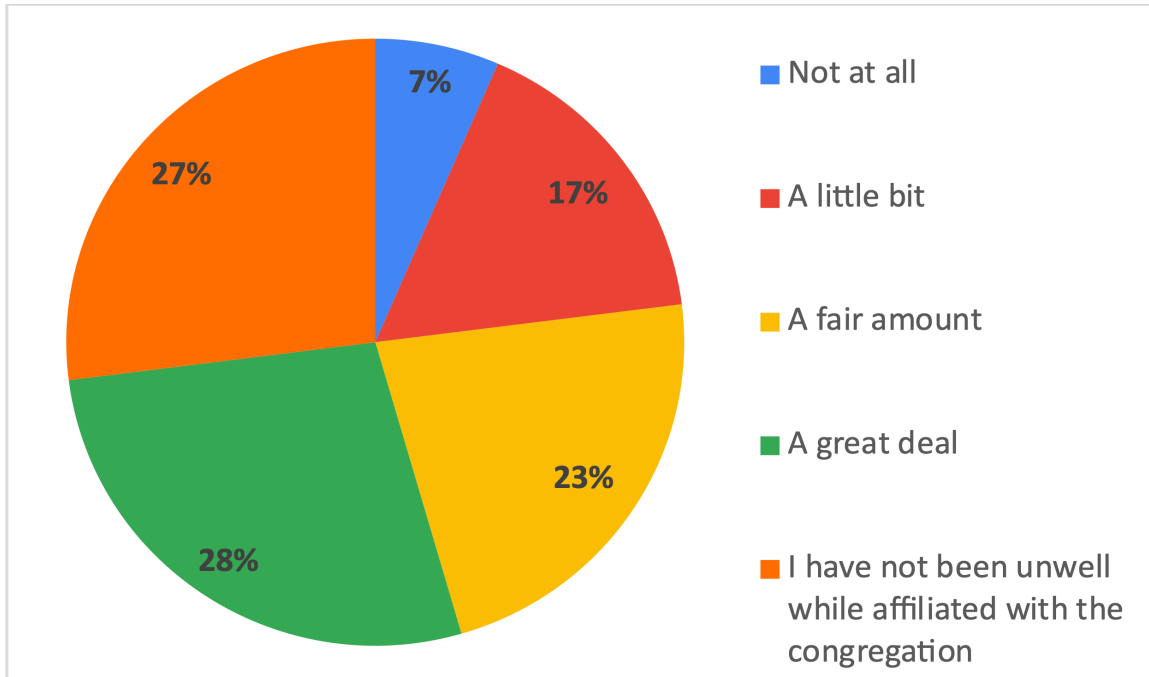


Figure 29. Extent of support: 200 respondents ranging from not at all to a great deal, plus not unwell while affiliated with the congregation.

37. What is your age?

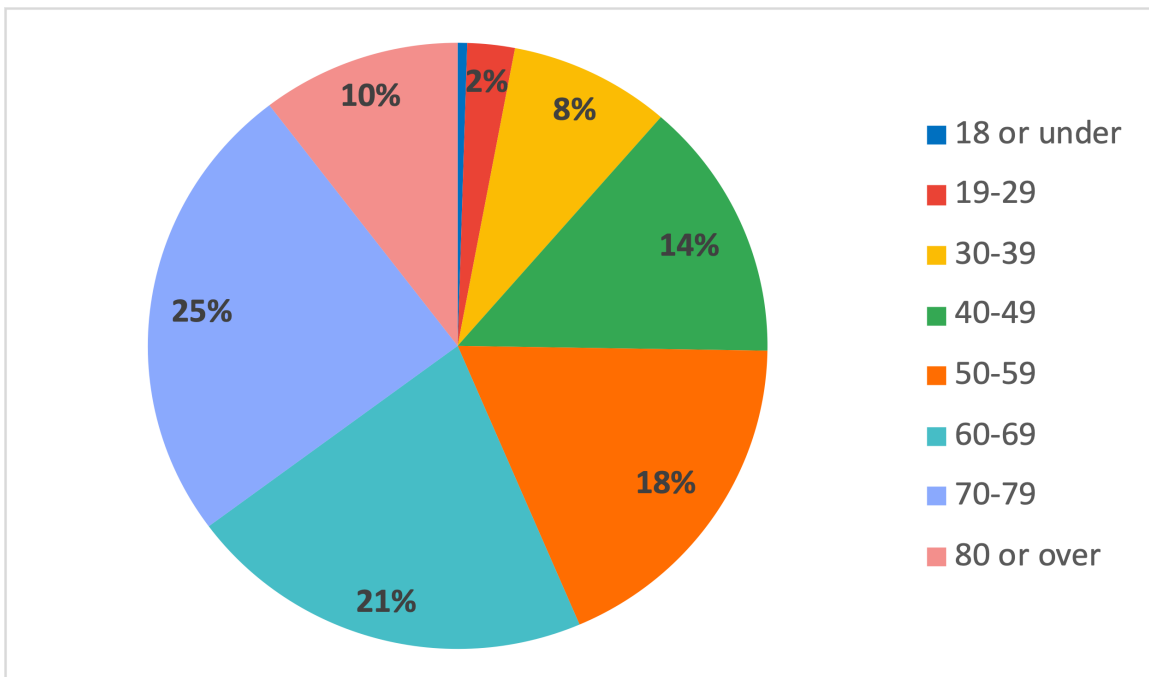


Figure 30. Age: 202 respondents ranging from 18 or under to 80 or over.

38. How many years have you been a Unitarian Universalist?

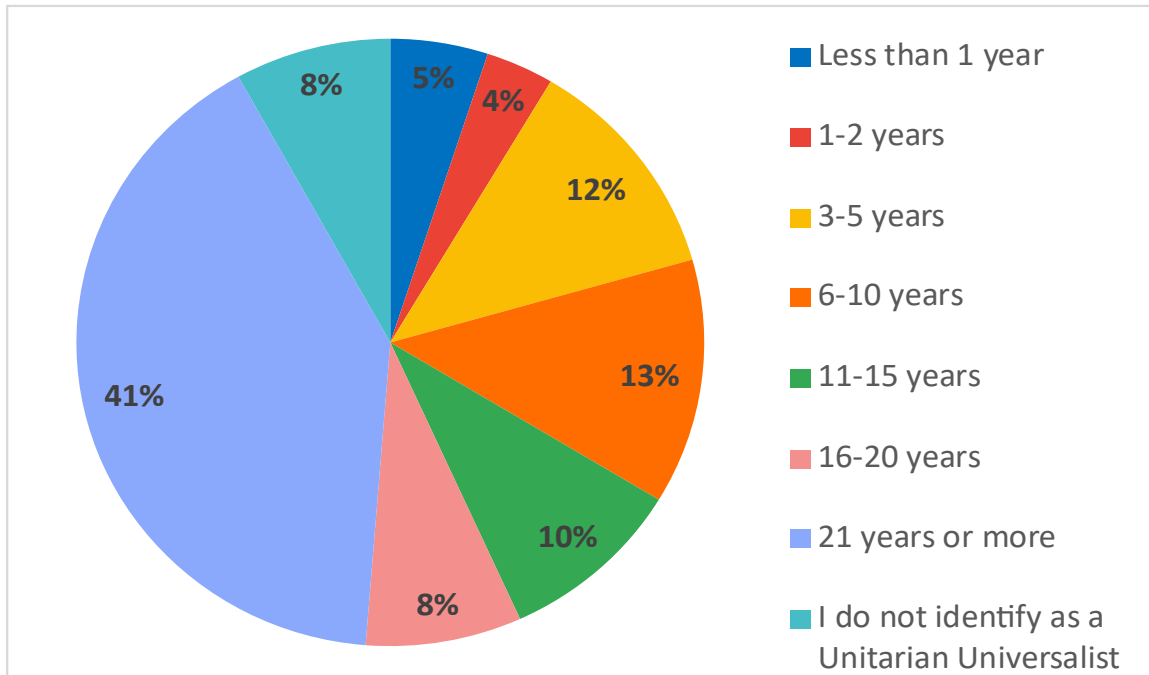


Figure 31. Years as UU: 199 respondents ranging from less than 1 year to 21 years or more, plus not identifying as UU.

39. What was your most recent prior religious affiliation?

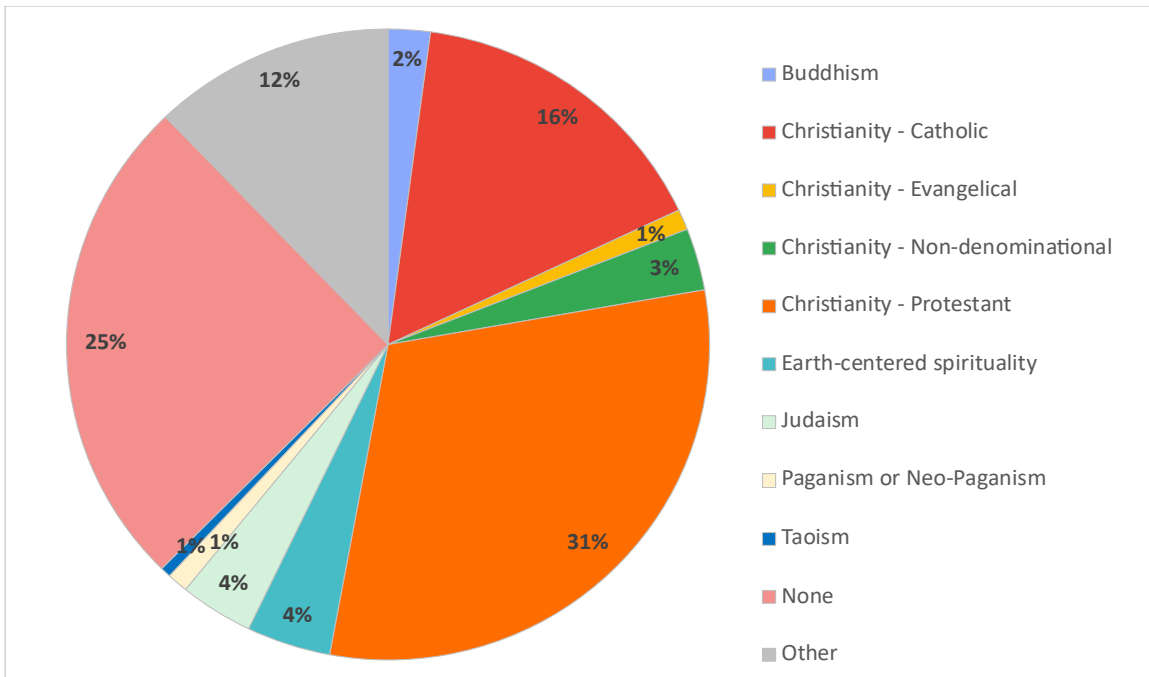


Figure 32. Prior religious affiliation: 189 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 23 responses were received as other and are summarized as follows. In addition, there were long-form responses received, also summarized:

UU (multiple responses); Atheist (multiple responses); Quaker (multiple responses); Agnostic and influenced by multiple religions (Hinduism, Sikhism, Sufism); Secular Humanist; Garden variety Humanist, but raised Methodist; I currently identify as Jewish (i.e. Judaism is my current affiliation, not prior affiliation); Raised Catholic, then did not identify as religious for years; Raised in a Protestant church, but never joined; Unitarian; Unity; Al-Anon/Alateen; Christian Science; Scientologist (weird dude – get to know me).

Long-form other (singular responses):

- A small Christian movement outside of Catholic, Evangelical, or Protestant traditions.
- Al-Anon member since 1987 and Alateen sponsor for several years prior to 2015.
- As a very young child, I had some affiliation with a non-Unitarian Protestant denomination. More recently, I have had some affiliation with the local Jewish community but never was a formal member. I also had some somewhat sporadic involvement with Quakerism, but this was less recently.
- Christian Science.
- Christian - Orthodox.
- For the record: I've had to avail myself of assistance from Care Core since joining UUCUC, and they have been wonderful. I'm very grateful for their existence and kindness.
- Have not identified as currently Catholic since I was a teenager.
- I am a Baha'i - for the past 54 years.
- I currently identify as Jewish (i.e., Judaism is my current affiliation, not prior affiliation).
- I have never been involved in organized religion. My husband and children are Jewish.
- I was raised Methodist but renounced them in the '80's. I'd been using AA as my spiritual growth center until I came to UU.
- It's not a prior affiliation. It's a concurrent identification.
- Lifetime UU.
- Protestant as a child.
- Quaker.
- Raised in a UU fellowship.
- Secular Humanist, raised Methodist.
- UU for decades.
- N/A

40. How much is your affiliation with this congregation and/or Unitarian Universalism a source of strength and/or comfort to you?

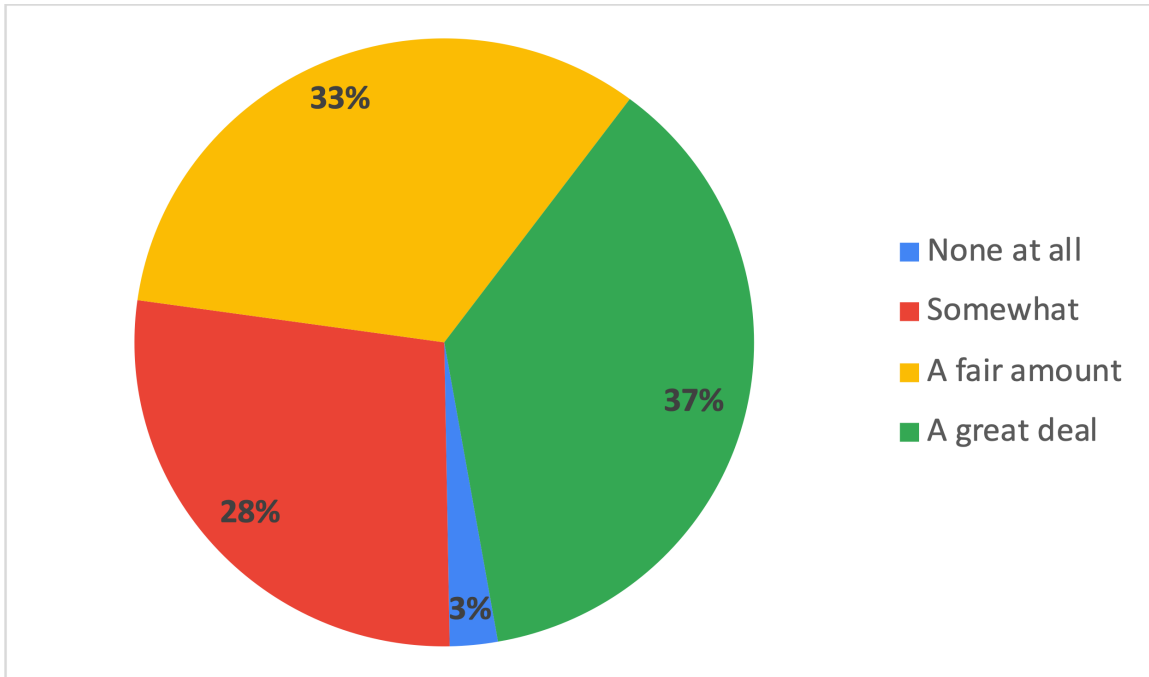


Figure 33. Source of strength: 200 respondents ranging from none at all to a great deal.

41. What is your gender identity?

200 respondents, plus other.

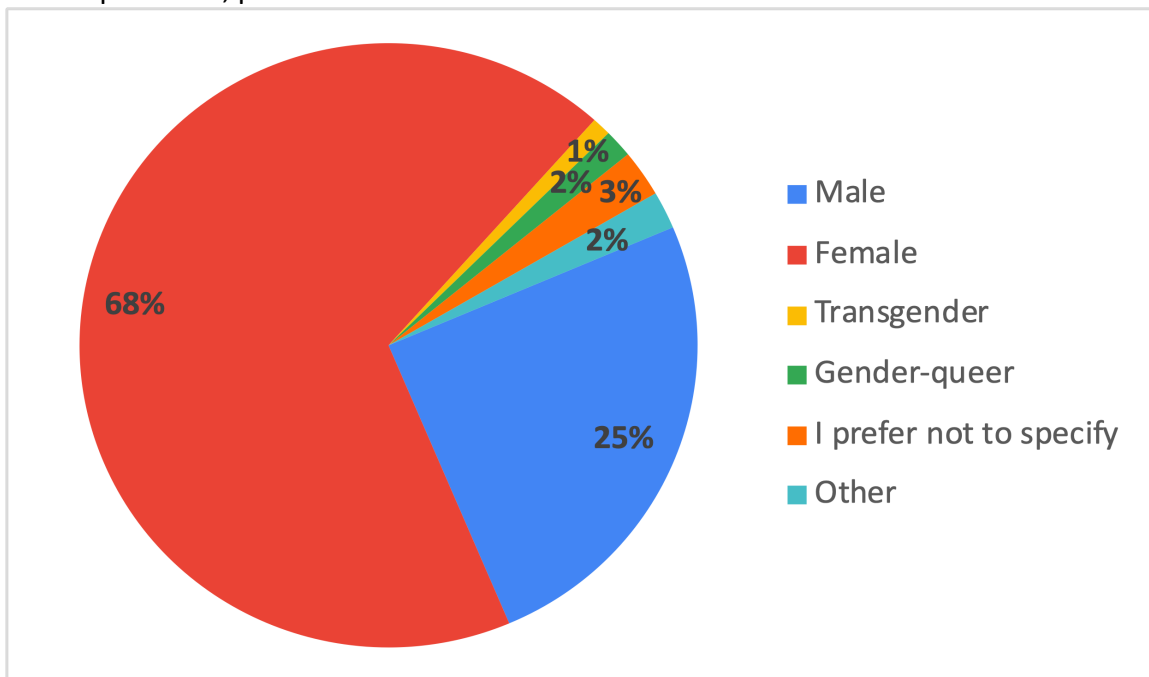


Figure 34. Gender identity: 200 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 6 responses were received as other and are included as follows:

- Gay
- Intersex
- Non-binary (and concerned that wasn't an option)
- Socialized as male, but ideologically non-binary
- Woman (male/female is sex, not gender)
- N/A

42. What is your sexual orientation?

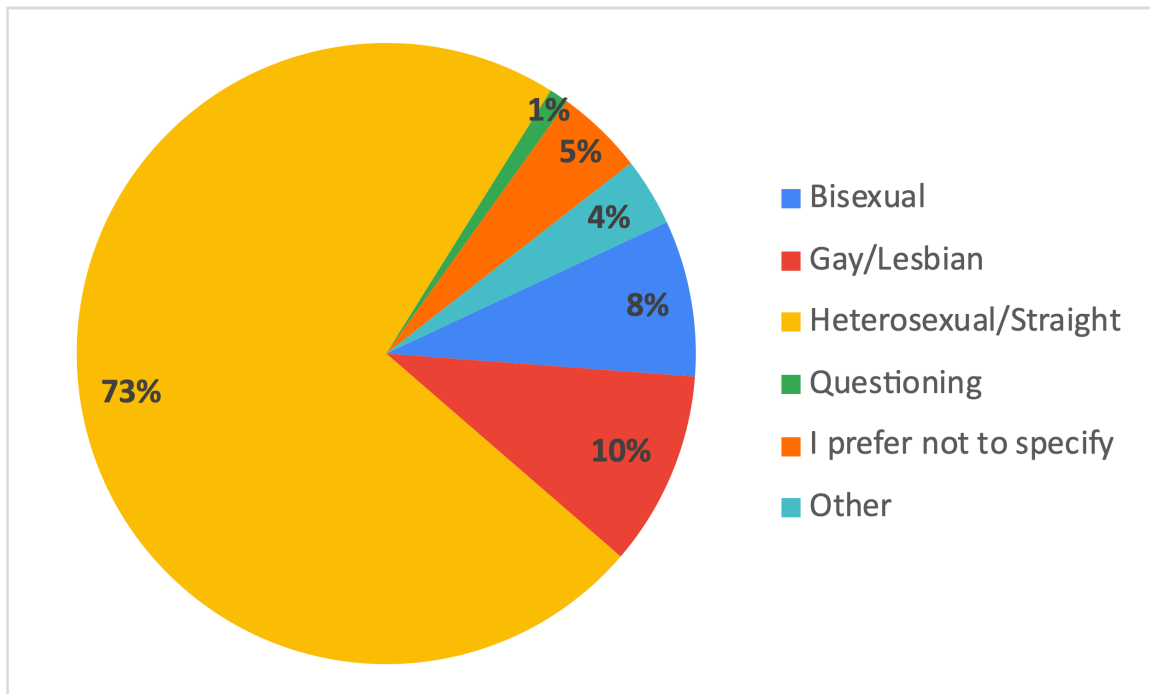


Figure 35. Sexual orientation: 197 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 9 responses were received as other and are included as follows:

- Asexual
- Do we even need this question?
- Homosexual
- I'm homoromantic asexual
- It's complicated. I feel straight, but I may be an Ace.
- Pan
- Queer (and concerned that wasn't an option)
- Some combination of hetero, asexual, with openness to pan
- N/A

43. What is your current marital status?

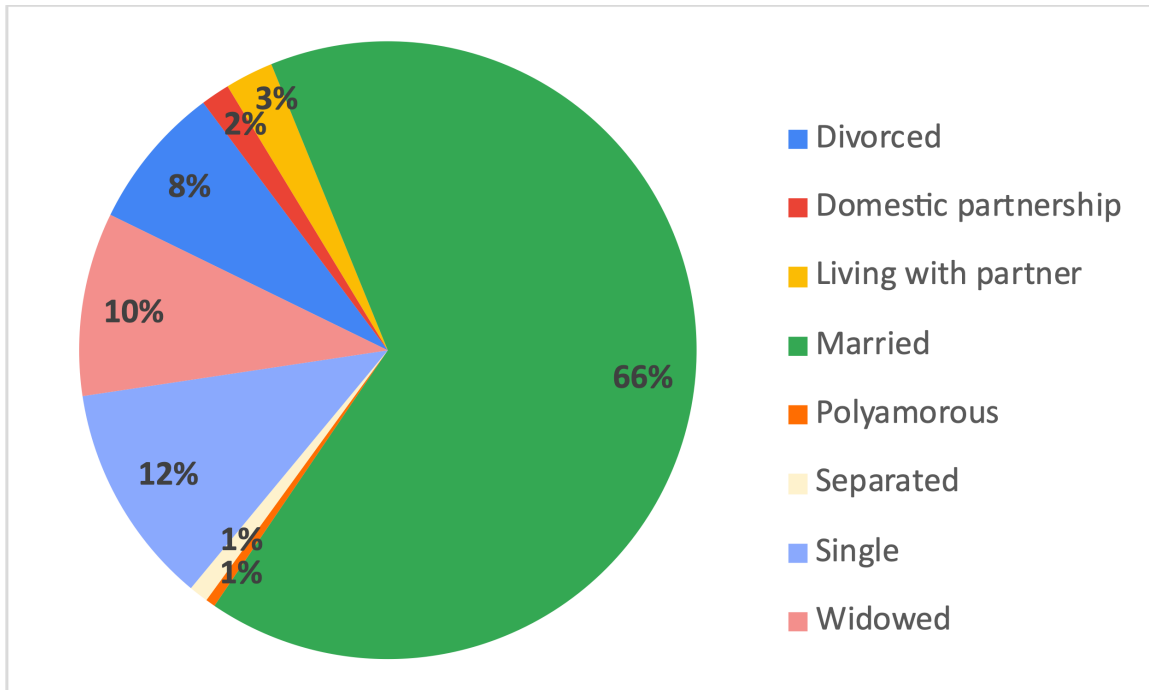


Figure 36. Marital status: 198 respondents.

44. Is your spouse/partner affiliated with the congregation?

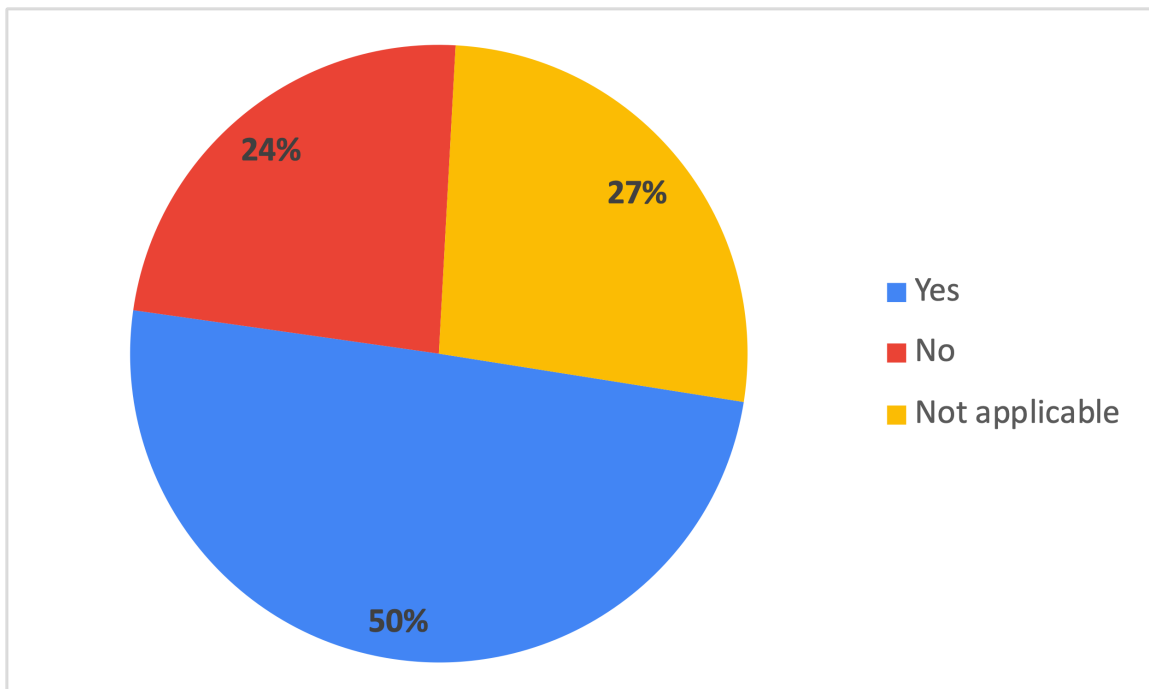


Figure 37. Spouse/partner affiliation to UUCUC: 199 respondents.

45. What is your ethnic/racial background?

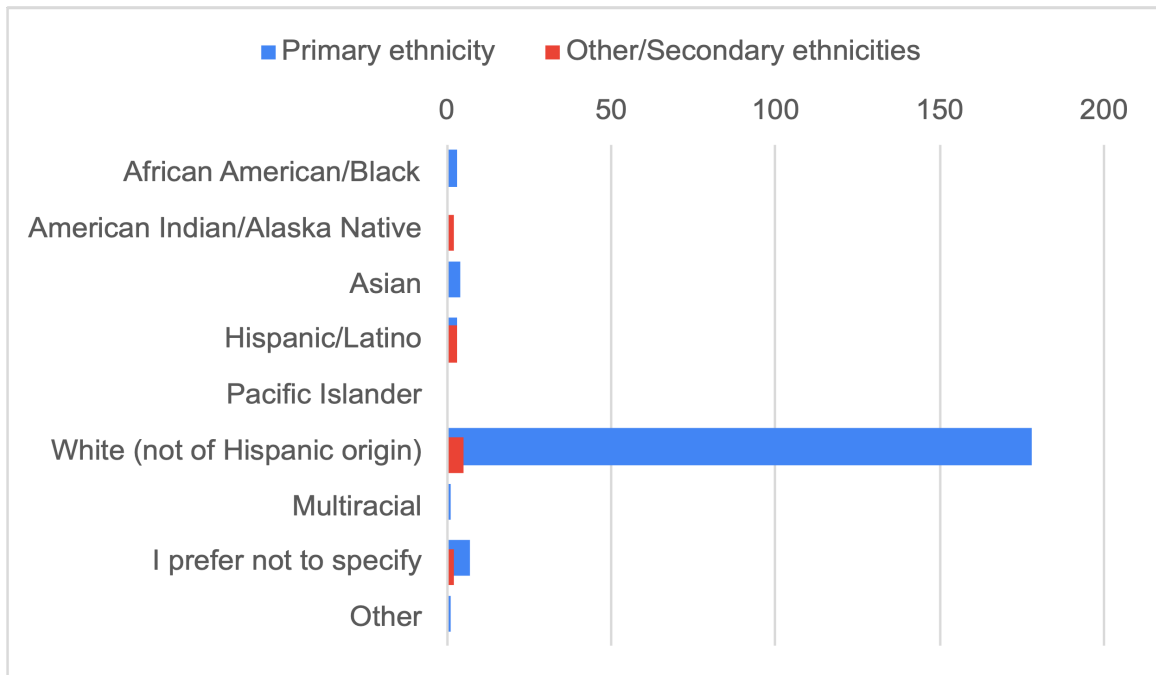


Figure 38. Ethnic/racial background: 181 respondents with a total of 209 responses.

46. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check highest level)

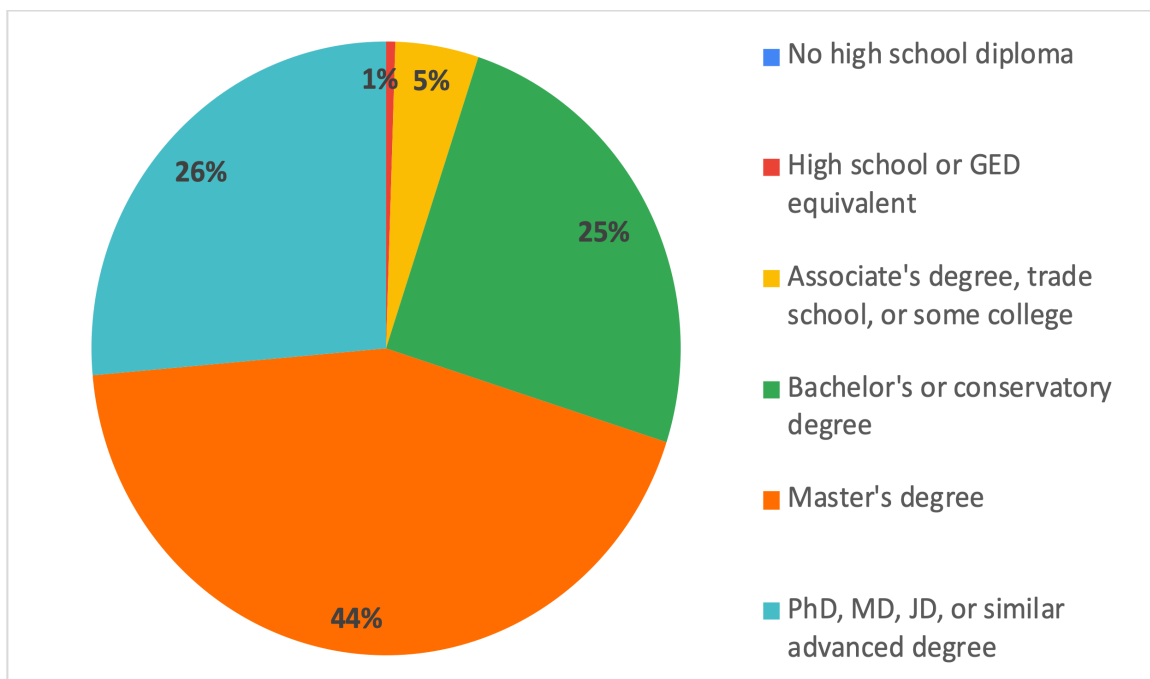


Figure 39. Highest level of education: 197 respondents.

47. Employment – At what level are you currently employed? (Check one)

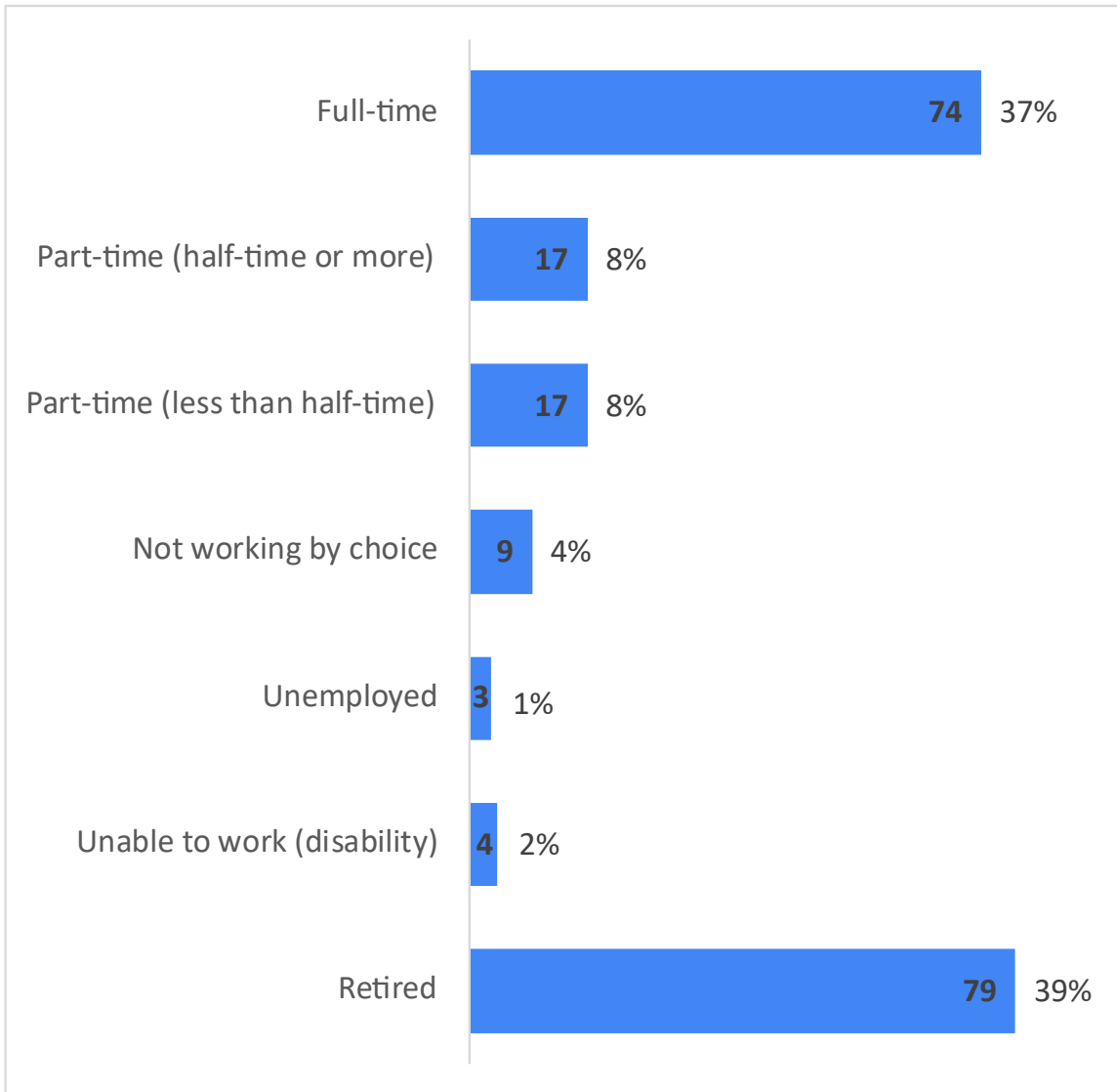


Figure 40. Employment: 201 respondents with 203 total responses.

6 Demographics, Continued

48. Please identify your household role:

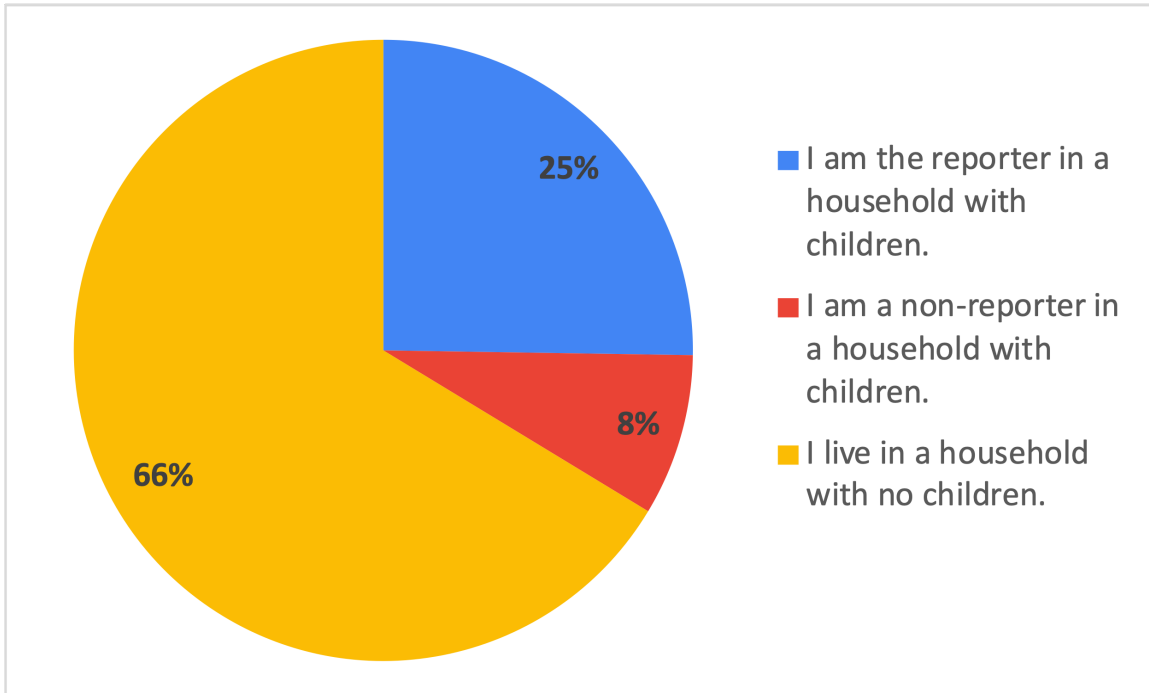


Figure 41. Household role: 202 respondents.

49. If you have children, please indicate which categories they would fit in. If you do not have children or are a non-reporter, please skip this question.

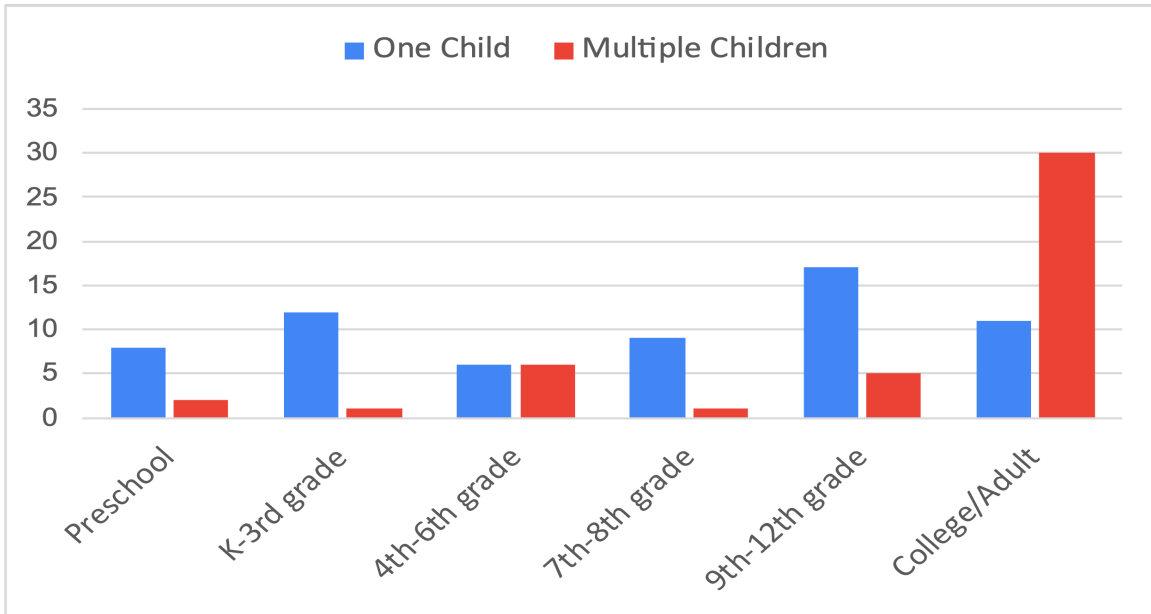


Figure 42. Category of children: 41 respondents with 108 total responses.

50. What was your total gross family/household income before taxes last year?

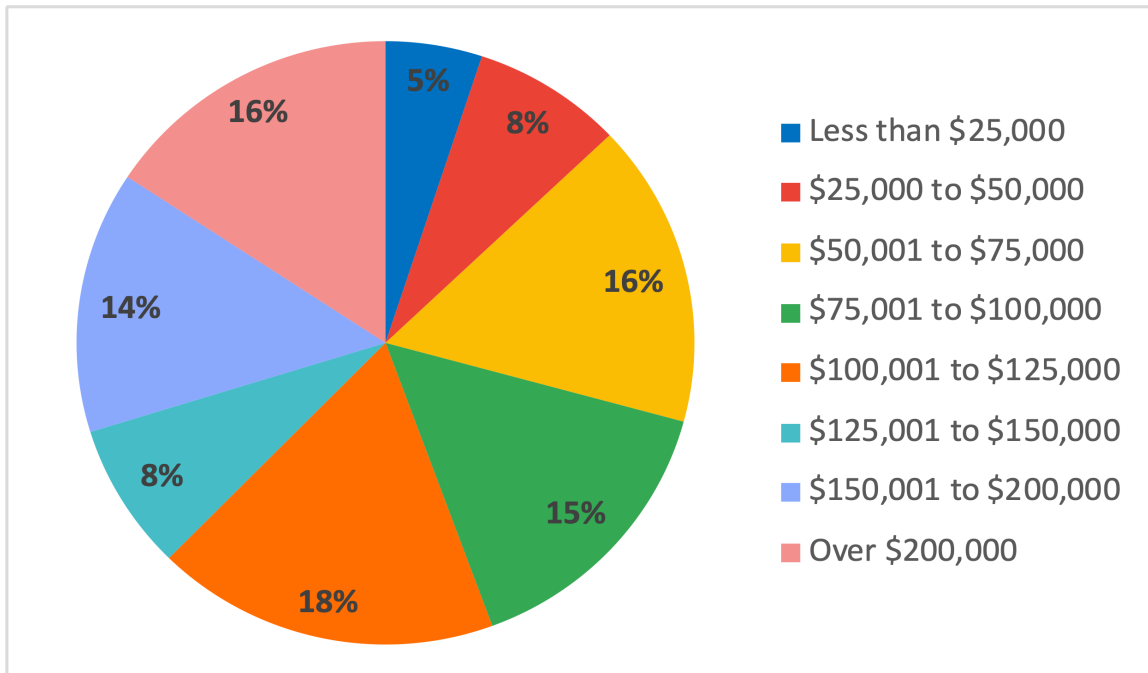


Figure 43. Gross family/household income: 178 respondents, plus other.

Other. A total of 8 responses were received and are summarized as follows:
I will not disclose this information; Choose not to respond.

51. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: My affiliation with this church or Unitarian Universalism is central to my identity as an individual.

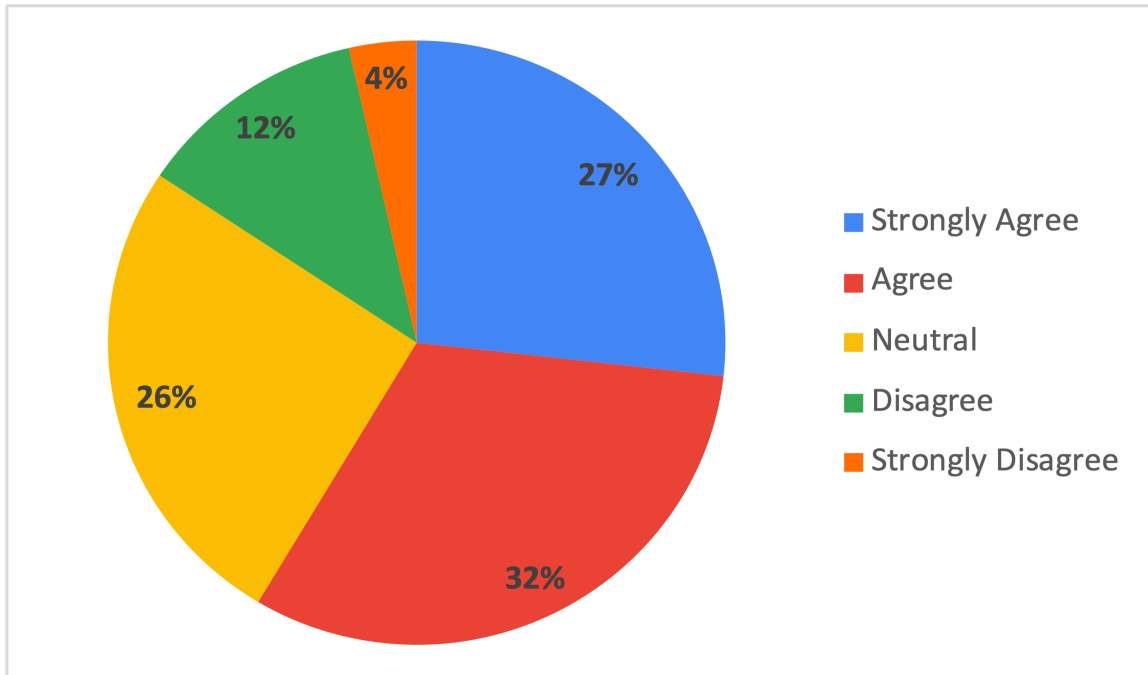


Figure 44. Affiliation as central aspect of identity: 198 respondents.

52. About how long does it take you to travel to the church from home?

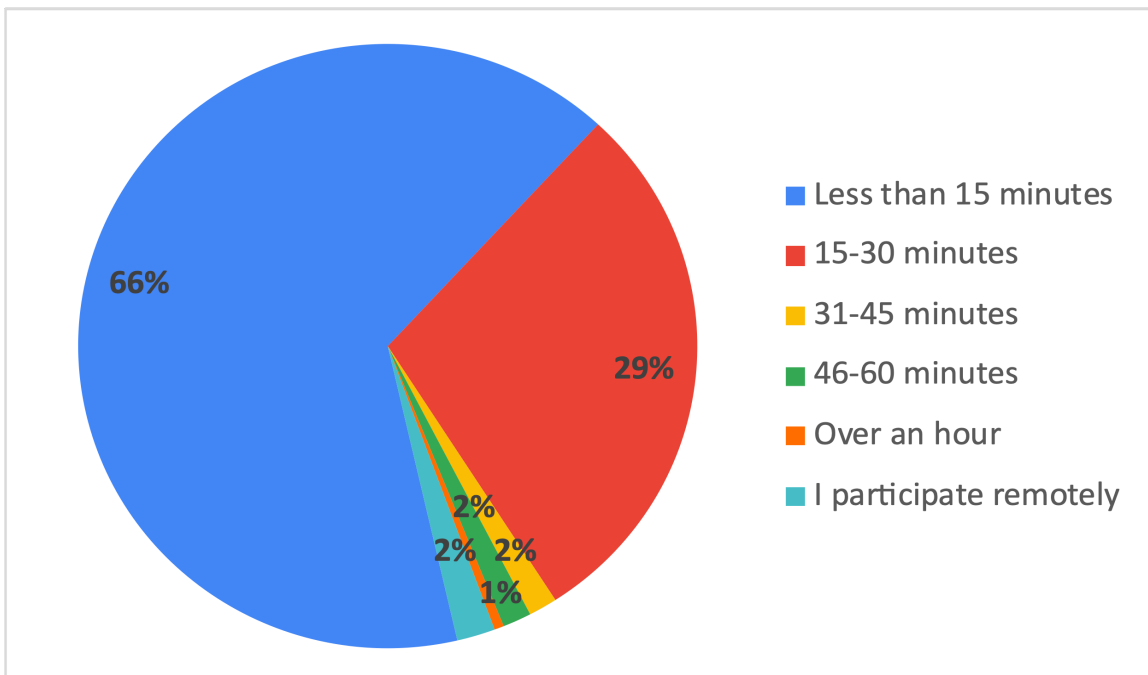


Figure 45. Distance from church to home: 200 respondents.

7 Additional Considerations

53. What special issues should our Ministerial Search Committee consider as they screen potential candidates?

Sample responses:

- A candidate's support for marginalized groups and willingness to encourage their participation.
- We are a congregation that is straddling two worlds - pre pandemic "normal" and now trying to figure out if we are going to look back to safety and comfort or reach forward to an uncertain and unknown tomorrow. We truly need a minister that will help us figure this out as we establish our new "normal" post pandemic.
- This is a congregation that is grieving, due to multiple pandemics and the loss of Florence. This needs to be acknowledged and attended to, and we also need a leader who will move us forward.
- Given the numerous leadership transitions we have experienced in recent years (minister, DRE, choir director turnover), it would be beneficial to engage a minister who is experienced in all aspects of ministry (e.g., worship, religious education, social action, administration) and likely to remain with UUCUC for multiple years.
- Our congregation needs guidance, assistance, and support in coming back together as a strong and generous community. I have attended most of the online services, but these are far less impactful than being present in the church with other congregants. I think this "coming back together" is a high priority for our new minister.
- To the extent that they can, the potential candidate's wisdom derived from life experience, the lessons they have learned while leading other congregations, their strong sense of social justice and determination to challenge inequity, their compassion, their eclectic interests and capacities, their level of respect for working with persons from multiple backgrounds and with various points of view.
- Would love to see someone who can inspire introspection, growth, and involvement without being incendiary.

Singular responses:

- We need to try to attract an experienced minister, strongly motivated to preach intellectually challenging and interesting sermons, with abilities to lead, who is mainstream in sexual and UU religious orientation and also interested in the opportunities and quality of life in a university town. That is, we don't need someone low on the learning curve and inexperienced in the ministry, or someone who has few intellectual interests, given our location. The challenge is to develop the ethical insights of the major national and personal problems of the day while challenging the congregation to explore solutions.

- Let's not pick the most charismatic person this time.
- They will be a minister to the congregation not just a social action cheerleader. The church is a complex living religious organization.
- I miss Axel. I miss his professorial sermons and how much I learned from him. I wouldn't mind a minister with a little more heart, but I would really love a minister who educates on religious and philosophical topics.
- I am not aware of how we found Axel and Elaine. They seemed to have been a perfect fit for our congregation.

54. What other points or perspectives do you want to share?

Sample responses:

- I think this church has a unique perspective I haven't witnessed in a religious organization before. I think the country would benefit if more people participated in this type of church, and thus I'm eager for this community to thrive and grow.
- Change is inevitable; you can't please everyone all the time; trust the process; and thank you all so much for your commitment of time, energy, passion, and caring as you do this sacred work.
- There has been focus in the past on the University community and the students there by our church. I believe that we should instead be focusing on the students at Parkland College: they are more likely to stay within the surrounding community (and potentially become long-term members of our UU community), and are more likely to be from an under-served demographic (under-served by us; younger, poorer and more diverse than our current congregation) from within our community.
- Children's programs and robust participation of families with children, especially queer families, was what brought us to the church and what is most important to us. Being raised in faiths antagonistic to queer folks we want to bring up our children in an actively welcoming faith tradition.
- The ministerial search process will help UUCUC to continue pathways of spiritual growth, community service, and relevance as a liberal community in difficult times. May the decisions the search team encounters along the way help to establish these pathways for the future.