

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing  
2018-19 Congregational Survey Report  
prepared by  
The Ministerial Search Committee**

**December 8, 2018**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Survey Methodology

In the fall of 2018, the seven-member Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing initiated information gathering activities as part of their charge to find a new, settled minister. Among those activities was implementation of a congregational survey, intended to gauge church attendees' views and feelings on religion, church life, and desirable qualities for an incoming minister.

The survey was administered online September 30 through October 14 of 2018, hosted on the SurveyMonkey® website. It was available as a paper survey for members who felt more comfortable participating in that way. Members and friends of UUCGL, 13 years of age or older were eligible to take the survey, and participation was completely anonymous. By the survey's closing date, 236 online surveys had been submitted, 230 of which were deemed sufficiently complete to include in analyses. Twenty-nine (29) hard copy surveys were also collected, all of which were completed, which brought the total number of surveys for analysis to 259.

The survey was divided into three sections. *Section 1* focused on respondents' involvement with the church and their religious/spiritual beliefs and practices. *Section 2* included questions regarding what respondents value in a minister, as well as their priorities for the work of the next settled minister. *Section 3* included demographic questions about the respondents, their families and households.

## Respondents

Selected items from the last section of the survey give a good, overall view of the respondent pool. **Members** outnumbered **Friends** by roughly 3 to 1, accounting for 77% of respondents. More than half of respondents (58%) have been **Affiliated with UU Lansing** for more than 10 years. **Female** (68%) respondents far outnumbered **Male** respondents (29%), and a small number of respondents identified as **Non-binary** (3%). A review of the church's directory suggests the ratio is closer to 60/40. **Age** was reported by category, and responses reflected what is widely known about UUs, that we are an older denomination. Respondents who are 66 to 75 years old made up the largest single age category with over a third of all respondents (36%). There was only one young adult (18-25 years) respondent to the survey, and nine 26 to 35 year old respondents. Five respondents (2%) indicated they are of Hispanic/Latinx **Ethnicity**. Of the 242 respondents who reported **Racial Identity**, 235 selected a single race, 223 of whom indicated they are white (though 2 of them reported Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity). Nineteen (19) respondents reported **Non-white** racial identities or backgrounds (7 in combination w/ white).

## Religious/Spiritual Beliefs and Behaviors

Respondents shared a wealth of information about their religious and spiritual influences, their reasons for attending UUCGL, and elements of worship they find meaningful.

Among the **Most Important Factors in Respondents' Choice to be Affiliated with UU Lansing**, reported by respondents were:

- Welcoming environment for all people
- Sense of belonging/Connection to others
- Celebrate/affirm liberal religious values
- Sermons (inspirational, informative presentations by the minister)
- Minister
- Unitarian Universalist principles
- Worship service
- Intellectual stimulation
- LGBTQIA+ inclusivity
- Music
- Social action/Community service activities

The **Most Important Reasons for Attending Worship Services** (at UU Lansing) included (from most to least important): 'Sense of belonging/connection to others', 'Celebrating/affirming liberal religious values', 'Opportunities for self-reflection', 'Inspiration/Spiritual uplift', and 'Intellectual stimulation/Learning'.

The **Most Important Specific Elements of a Sunday Service** reported by respondents (from most to least important), included: Sermon by the minister, Opening words/greeting (i.e. “Whoever you are, whomever you love...”), music (performed by various groups), Closing affirmation, and Joys and sorrows.

While the majority of respondents who reported a **Prior Religious Affiliation** were Christian (Protestant – 43%; Catholic – 16%; Evangelical – 4%), few indicated that Christianity is a primary influence on their religious/spiritual lives today. Among the **Most Important (Current) Religious or Theological Influences**, Humanism was the most frequently cited. Others included (in order of most to least reported): Humanism, Agnosticism, Buddhism, Atheism, and Naturalism/ Earth-centered theology.

### **Preferred Qualities/Characteristics and Functions of a Prospective Minister**

Three multi-item questions addressed respondents’ preferences and priorities related to the prospective minister, as well as a question to gauge endorsement of the UUA’s non-discrimination policy in hiring of settled ministers.

Six (6) **Ministerial Qualities** were rated as ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’ by 90% or more respondents, including (in order of most to least important):

- Interpersonal skill (ability to communicate, counsel, empower, etc.)
- Empathy (genuine interest in and concern for others)
- Collaborative and cooperative approach
- Open-mindedness (receptive to new ideas)
- Reliability/stability
- Sociability (warmth, ease in interacting with congregants)

In response to the prompt, “I would personally approve of the congregation calling a minister who...” followed by a list of 17 **Potential Demographic and Descriptive Characteristics**, 80% or more of respondents rated 16 of the 17 characteristics as acceptable. Among the highest ranked were ‘female’, ‘politically liberal’, ‘gay or lesbian’, and ‘African-American or Hispanic/Latinx’. The only characteristic that was widely rejected was ‘politically conservative’.

Among the **Ministerial Roles and Functions** most highly endorsed by respondents were ‘Preparing and leading inspiring worship services and celebrations’, ‘Challenging and stimulating the thinking of the congregation’, ‘Modeling UU principles and ethical living’, ‘Fostering sense of fellowship/community’, and ‘Providing pastoral care’.

Respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the **UUA’s Non-discrimination Policy**. Each of the 8 respondents (3%) who did not affirm the policy, provided written clarification stating that they agreed with the policy but hoped the committee would give serious consideration to candidates from historically oppressed groups.

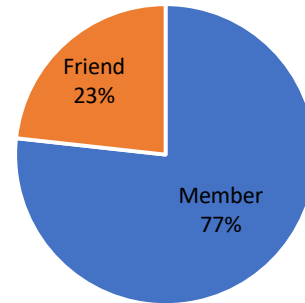
# UU Lansing 2018-19 Congregational Survey Report

Surveys included in analysis = 259<sup>1</sup>

## Q2 – What is your affiliation with the congregation?

Affiliation	%
Member	77%
Friend	23%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

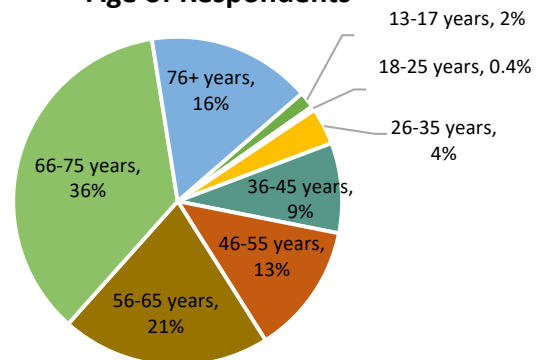
Church Affiliation



## Q25 – What is your age?

Age categories	%
13-17 years	2%
18-25 years	0.4%
26-35 years	4%
36-45 years	9%
46-55 years	13%
56-65 years	21%
66-75 years	36%
76 years or older	16%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

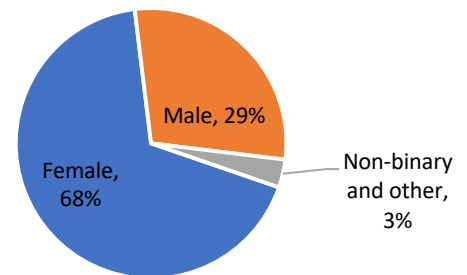
Age of Respondents



## Q31 – With which gender category do you identify most closely?

Gender*	%
Female	68%
Male	29%
Non-binary and other	3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Gender of Respondents

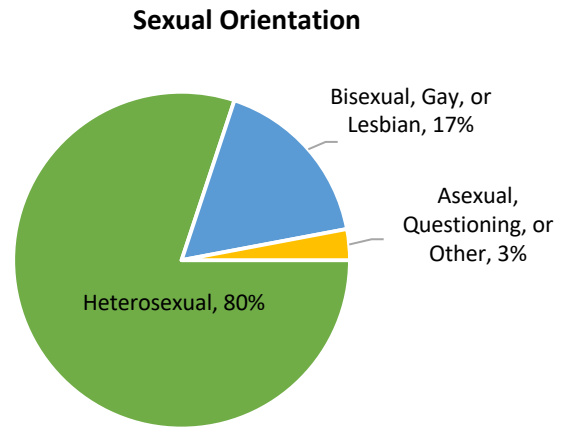


\*Binary categories (i.e. female and male) are inclusive of cisgender and transgender individuals

<sup>1</sup> Percentages for each question were calculated with the number of respondents who answered that particular item as the denominator.

**Q32 – Which of the following most closely describes your sexual orientation/identity?**

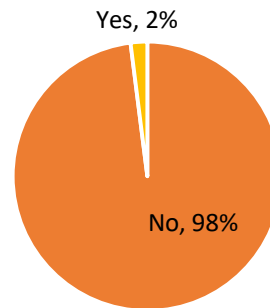
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	<i>%</i>
Heterosexual	80%
Bisexual, Gay, or Lesbian	17%
Asexual, Questioning, or Other	3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q26 – Are you of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin?**

<i>Hispanic/Latinx/Spanish</i>	<i>%</i>
No	98%
Yes	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Ethnicity**



**Q26a – Please specify your country or region of origin**

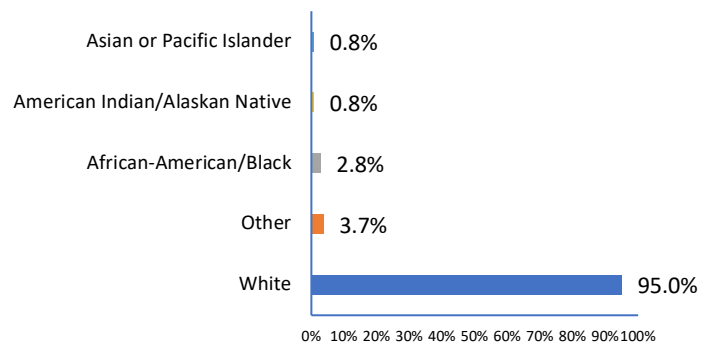
<i>Country or Region of Origin</i>	<i>%</i>
Cuba	20%
Puerto Rico	20%
Not specified	40%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Q27 – What is your racial background? (select all that apply)**

<i>Race</i>	<i>%</i>
African-American/Black	3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.4%
White	95%*
Other	4%

Because respondents could select as many race categories as they wanted, the percentages add up to more than 100%.

**Racial background/identity**

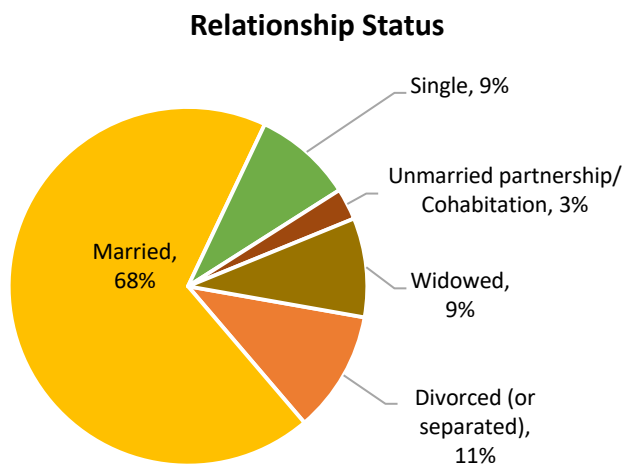


<i>Race (single racial category)*</i>	<i>%</i>
African-American/Black only	2%
Pacific Islander	0.4%
White only	91%
Other only	2%

\*Of the 242 people who provided racial identity information, 235 selected only one racial category (though 6 of them selected “other” as their only race). This second table displays this data. No respondents selected ‘American Indian/Alaskan Native’, ‘Asian’, or ‘Middle Eastern/North African’ as sole racial identifiers, hence, they are not presented in the second table. The final graph represents a simple division of survey respondents into white only and non-white (in combination with white or not) categories.

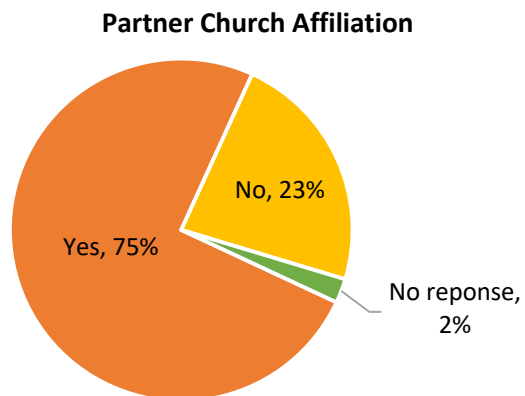
**Q29 – What is your relationship status?**

<i>Relationship Status</i>	<i>%</i>
Divorced (or separated)	11%
Married	68%
Single	9%
Unmarried partnership/Cohabitation	3%
Widowed	9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q30 – Is your spouse/partner affiliated with the congregation?**

<i>Partner affiliated with church?</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	75%
No	23%
No response	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

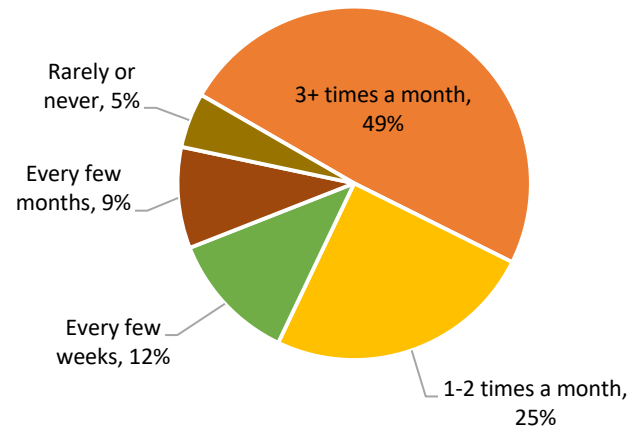


**Q1 – During the last year, approximately how often have you attended worship service at UU Lansing?**

<i>Frequency of attendance</i>	<i>%</i>
3 or more times per month	49%
1 or 2 times per month	25%
Every few weeks	12%

Every few months	9%
Rarely or never	5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

### Frequency of Church Attendance

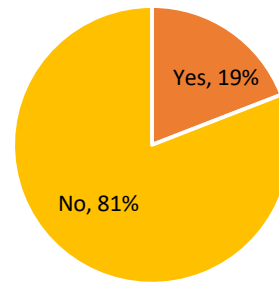


**Q33 – Do you have children who are 18 years of age or younger?**

<i>Children?*</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	19%
No	81%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

*\*47 adult respondents reported 82 children. It was not possible to know if any children were reported by more than one parent.*

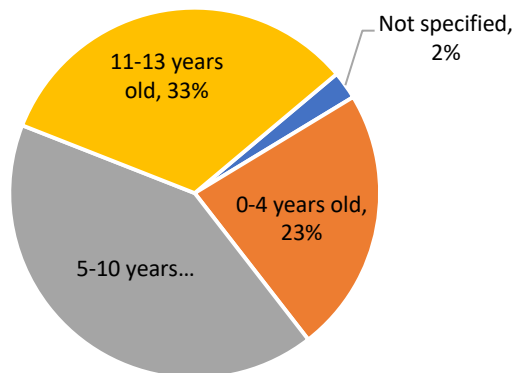
**Children in Household**



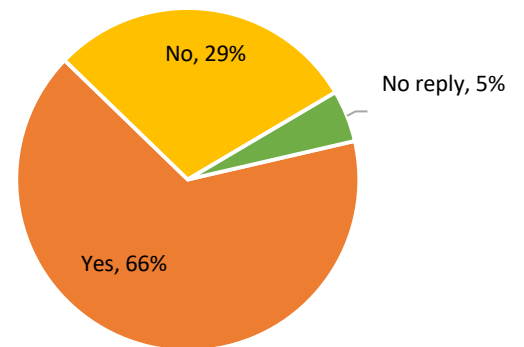
**Q34 – For children 18 or younger, please provide their age(s) and indicate if they regularly participate in religious education at UU Lansing.**

<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% from 1<sup>st</sup> Column in RE</i>
Not specified	2%	100%
0-4 years old	23%	74%
5-10 years old	41%	74%
11-13 years old	33%	48%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>66%</i>

**Ages of Children**



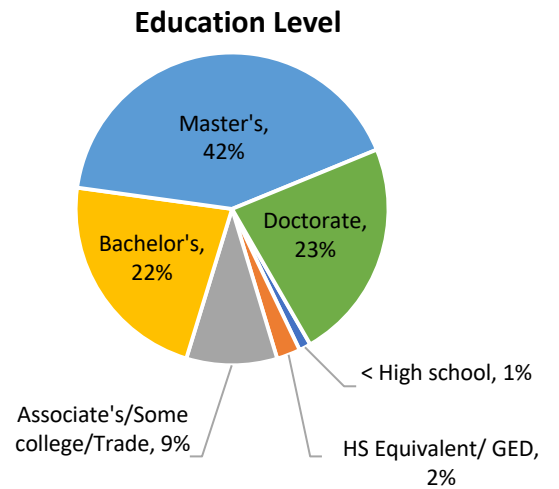
**Children in Religious Education**





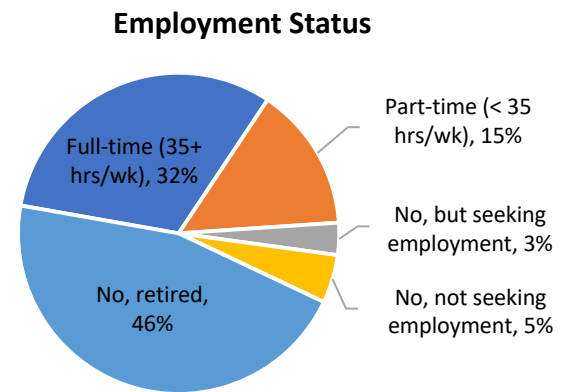
**Q35 – Please indicate the highest level of formal education you have completed.**

<i>Education level</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than high school	1%
HS or GED equivalent	2%
Associate's/Trade/Some college	9%
Bachelor's	22%
Master's	42%
Doctorate	23%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



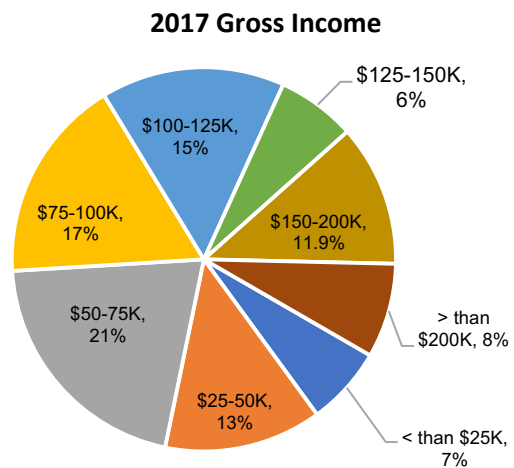
**Q36 – Are you currently employed?**

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes, full-time (35+ hours/week)	32%
Yes, part-time (34 or fewer hours a week)	15%
No, but I am seeking employment	3%
No, and I am not seeking employment	5%
No, because I am retired	46%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

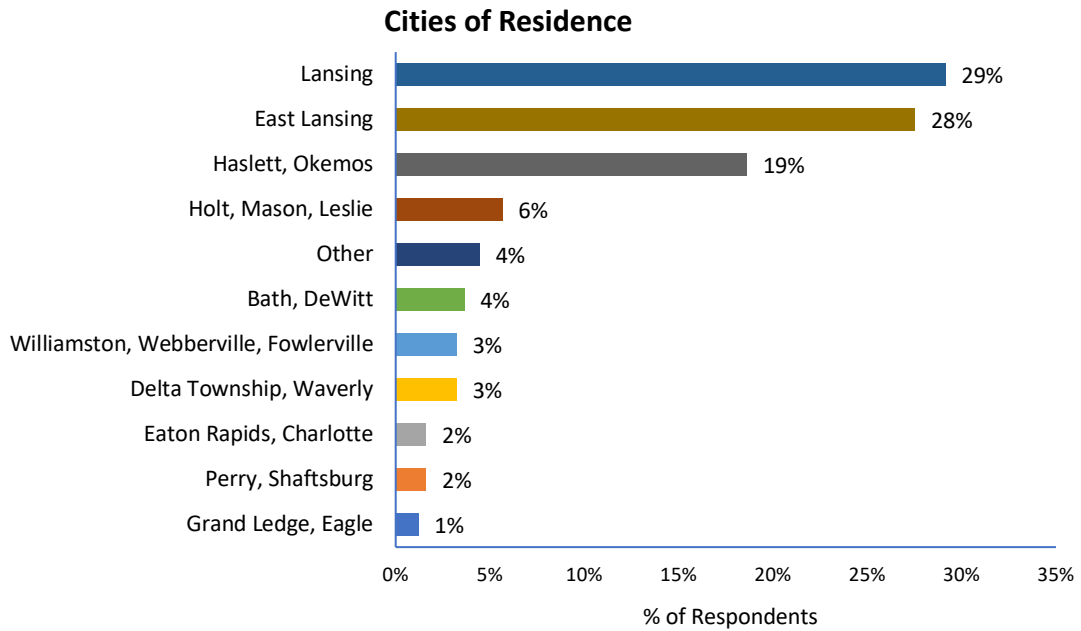


**Q37 – What was your gross (before tax) family/household income last year (2017)?**

<i>Income level</i>	<i>%</i>
< than \$25,000	7%
\$25 - \$50K	13%
\$50,001-75K	21%
\$75,001-100K	17%
\$100,001-125K	15%
\$125,001-150K	7%
\$150,001-200K	12%
> Than \$200,000	8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

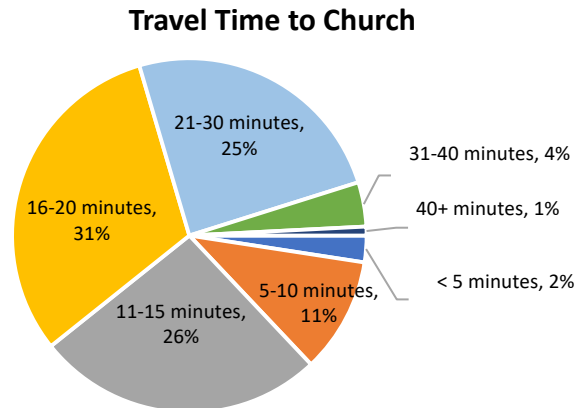


**Q38 – In which of the following cities or towns (or clusters of towns) do you live?**



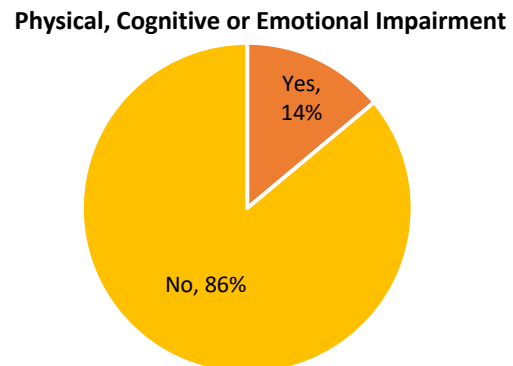
**Q39 – About how long does it take you to travel from your home to the church (one way)?**

<i>Travel time to Church</i>	<i>%</i>
< 5 minutes	2%
5-10 minutes	11%
11-15 minutes	26%
16-20 minutes	31%
21-30 minutes	25%
31-40 minutes	4%
40+ minutes	1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q38 - Do you have any physical, cognitive or emotional impairments that make it difficult for you to participate as fully in church life as you would like?**

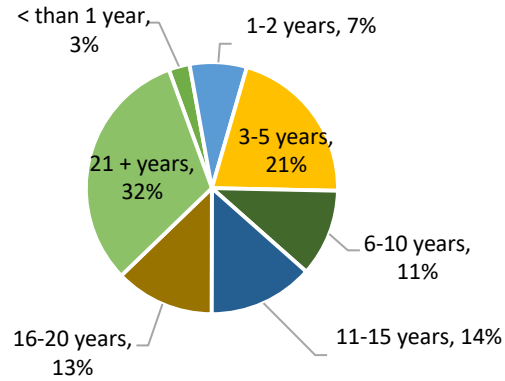
<i>Impairments</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	14%
No	86%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q4 – How long have you been affiliated with UU Lansing?**

<i>Length of affiliation</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than 1 year	3%
1-2 years	7%
3-5 years	21%
6-10 years	11%
11-15 years	14%
16-20 years	13%
21 + years	32%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Length of Affiliation with UU Lansing**

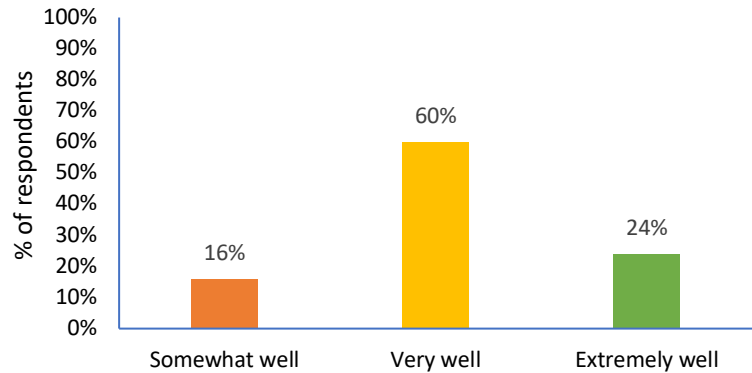


**Q5 – If you have been affiliated with UU Lansing for 2 years or less, please indicate how well you think they congregation does at welcoming visitors and newcomers?\***

<i>Greeting new-comers rating</i>	<i>%</i>
Not at all well/Poorly	0%
Slightly well	0%
Somewhat well	16%
Very well	60%
Extremely well	24%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

\*Analyses for this question was limited to data from respondents who indicated they have been attending UU Lansing for 2 years or less.

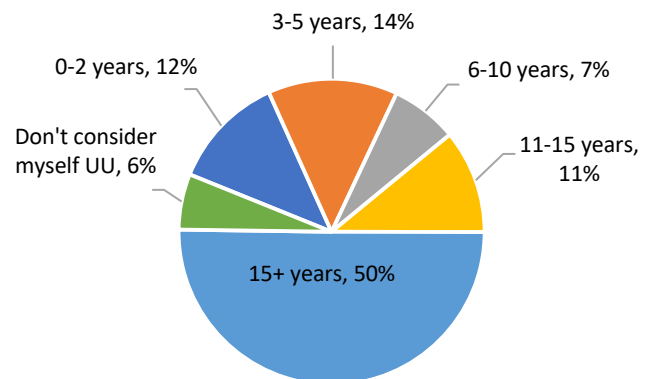
**Welcoming Visitors and New-comers**



**Q6 – How long have you been a Unitarian Universalist?**

<i>Length of time as UU</i>	<i>%</i>
0-2 years	12%
3-5 years	14%
6-10 years	7%
11-15 years	11%
15+ years	50%
Don't consider myself UU	6%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

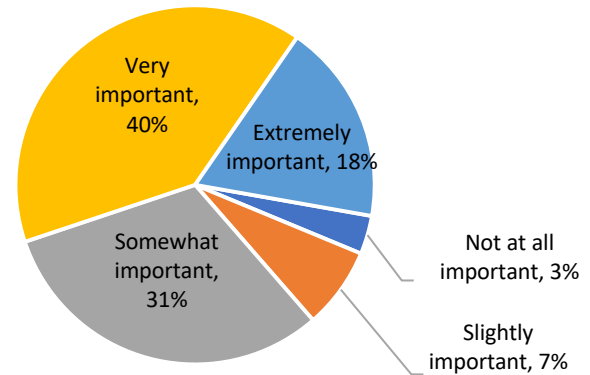
**Length of Time As a UU**



**Q7 – How important is your affiliation with this church (or with Unitarian Universalism) to your identity as an individual?**

<i>Importance</i>	<i>%</i>
Not at all important	3%
Slightly important	7%
Somewhat important	31%
Very important	40%
Extremely important	18%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

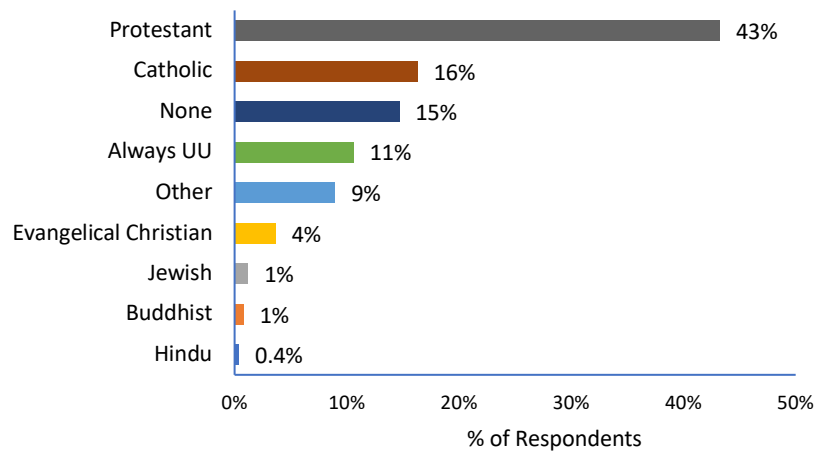
**Importance of Affiliation with UU to Self-Identity**



**Q12 – What was your most recent prior religious affiliation (if any)?**

<i>Category</i>	<i>%</i>
Protestant	43%
Catholic	16%
Always UU	11%
Evangelical Christian	4%
Jewish	1%
Buddhist	1%
Hindu	0%
Other	9%
None	15%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

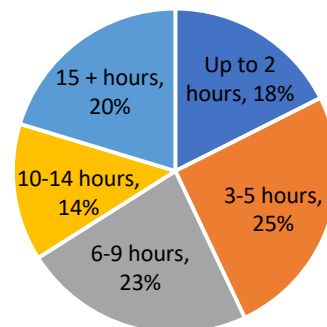
**Most Recent Prior Religious Affiliation**



**Q9 – How many hours a month (avg.) did you participate in church activities in the last year?**

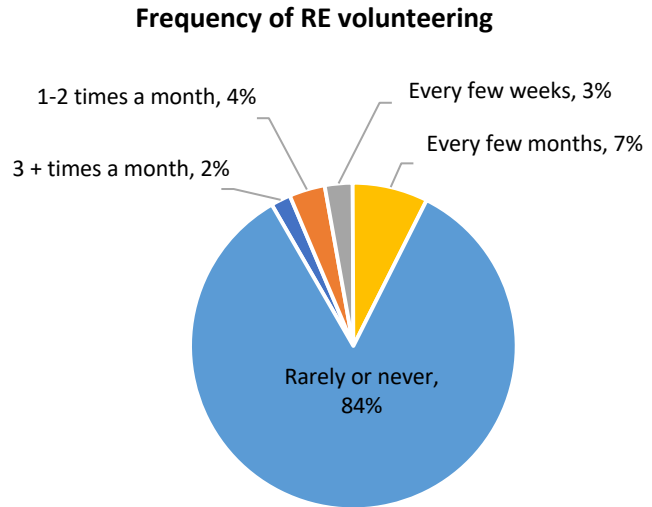
<i>Hours</i>	<i>%</i>
≤ 2 hours	18%
3-5 hours	25%
6-9 hours	23%
10-14 hours	14%
15 + hours	20%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Average hours per month participating in church activities in the last year**



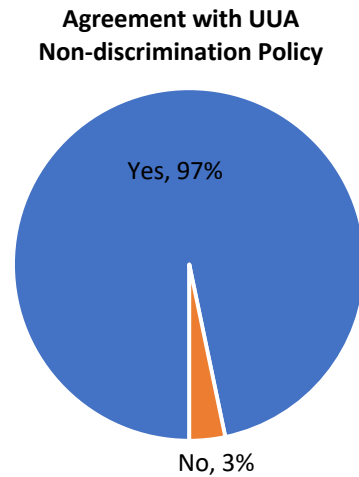
**Q10 – During the last year, approximately how often did you volunteer as a children's/youth RE leader or assistant?**

<i>Frequency of RE Volunteering</i>	<i>%</i>
3+ times a month	2%
1-2 times a month	4%
Every few weeks	3%
Every few months	8%
Rarely or never	84%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q24 - Do you agree that our church should follow the UUA's equal opportunity policy states churches are to implement "ministerial settlement procedures without discrimination because of race, color, disability, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin"?**

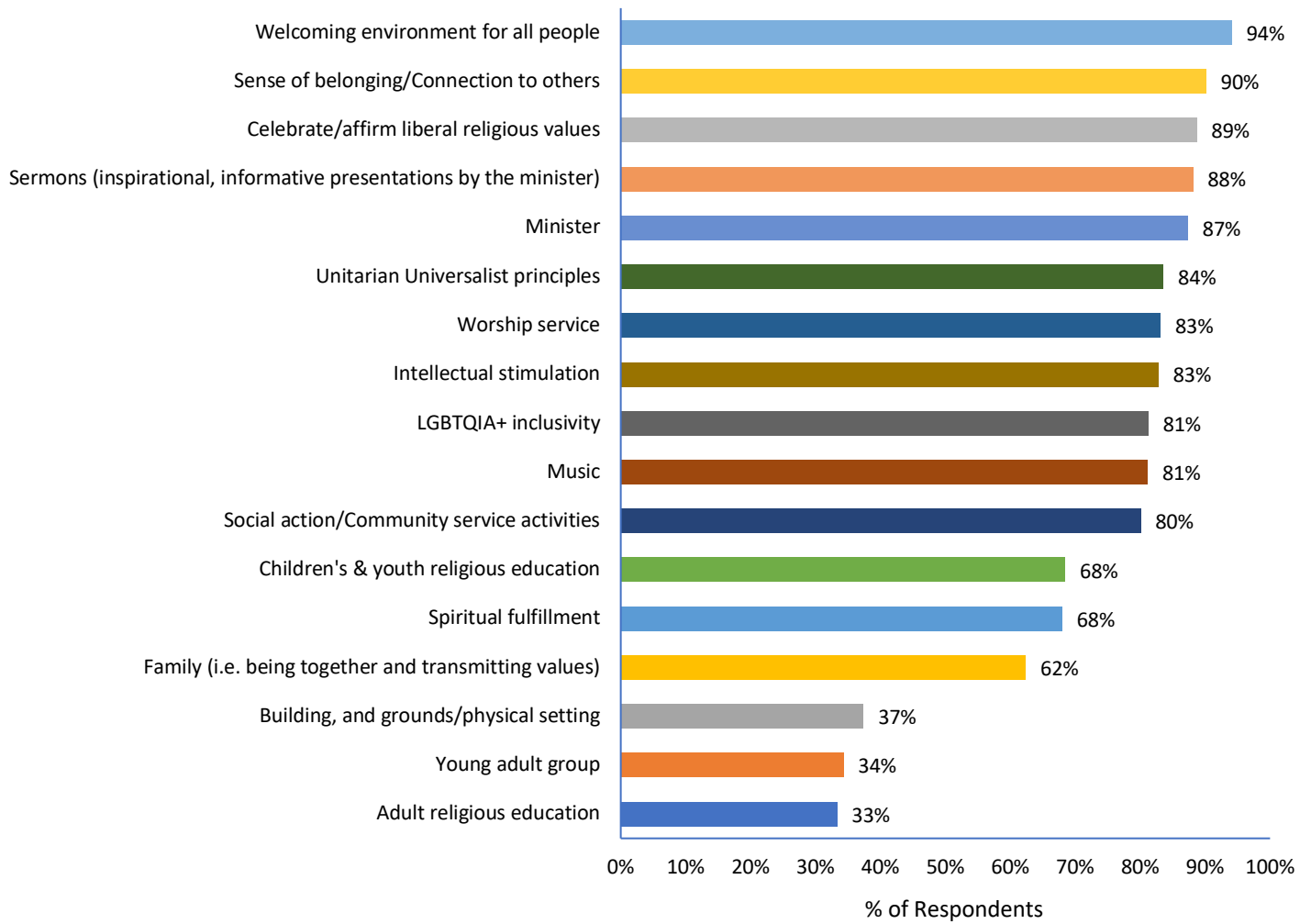
<i>Agreement</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	97%
No	3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



**Q3 – How important to you are each of the factors listed below in your choice to be affiliated with UU Lansing?**

*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

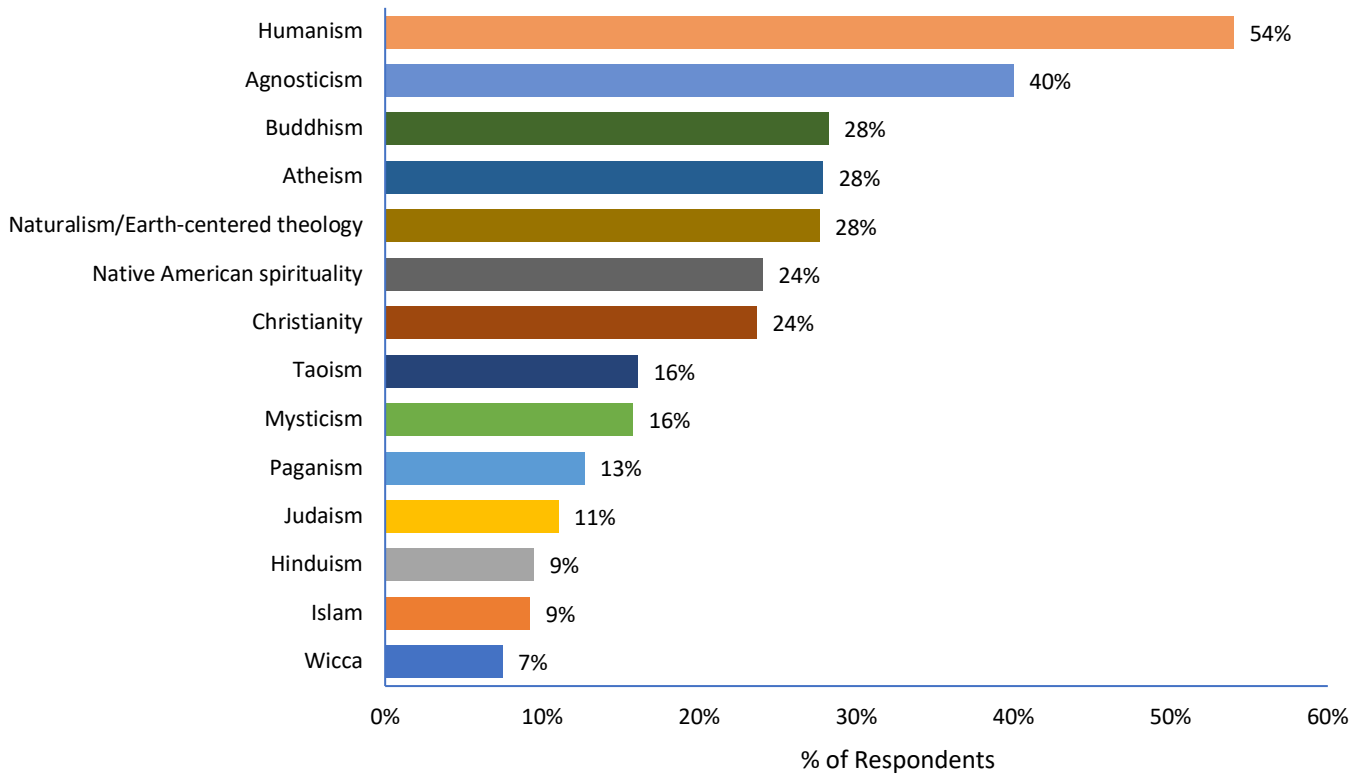
**Reasons for Attending UU Lansing**



**Q11 – In addition to UU, how important to you are the following religious/theological perspectives or traditions to you?**

*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

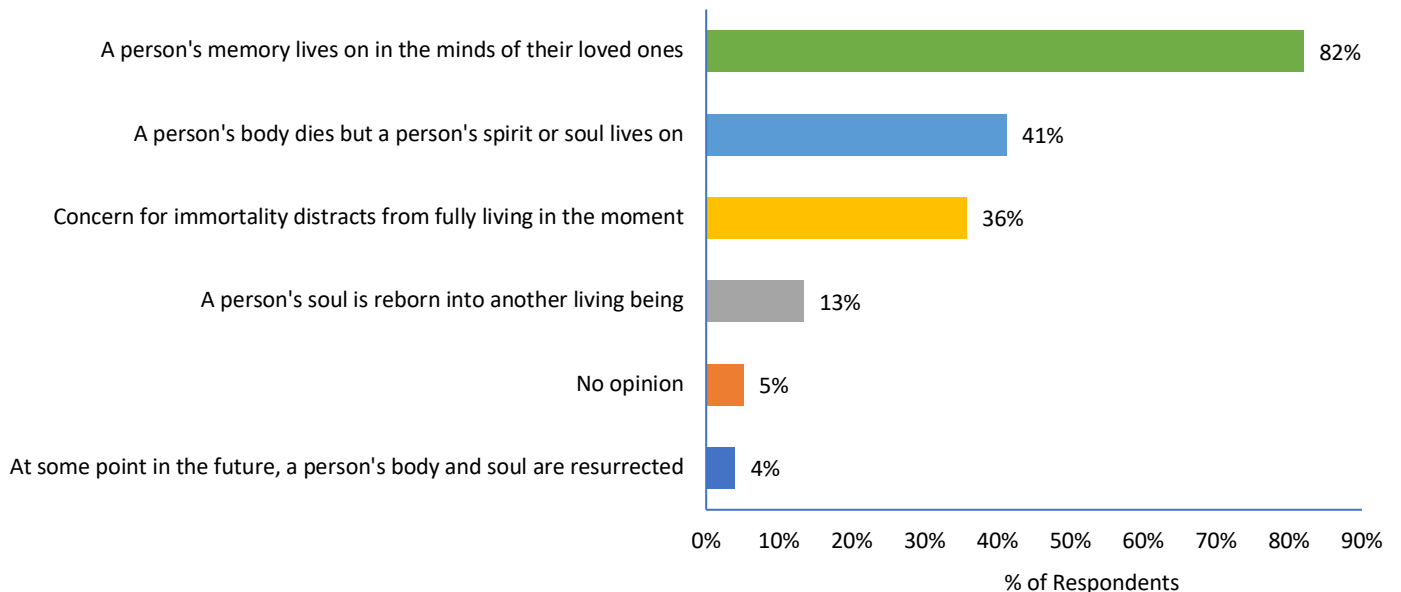
**MOST Important Religious/Theological Traditions**



**Q13 – Which statement(s) below reflect your beliefs about death and immortality? (select all that apply)**

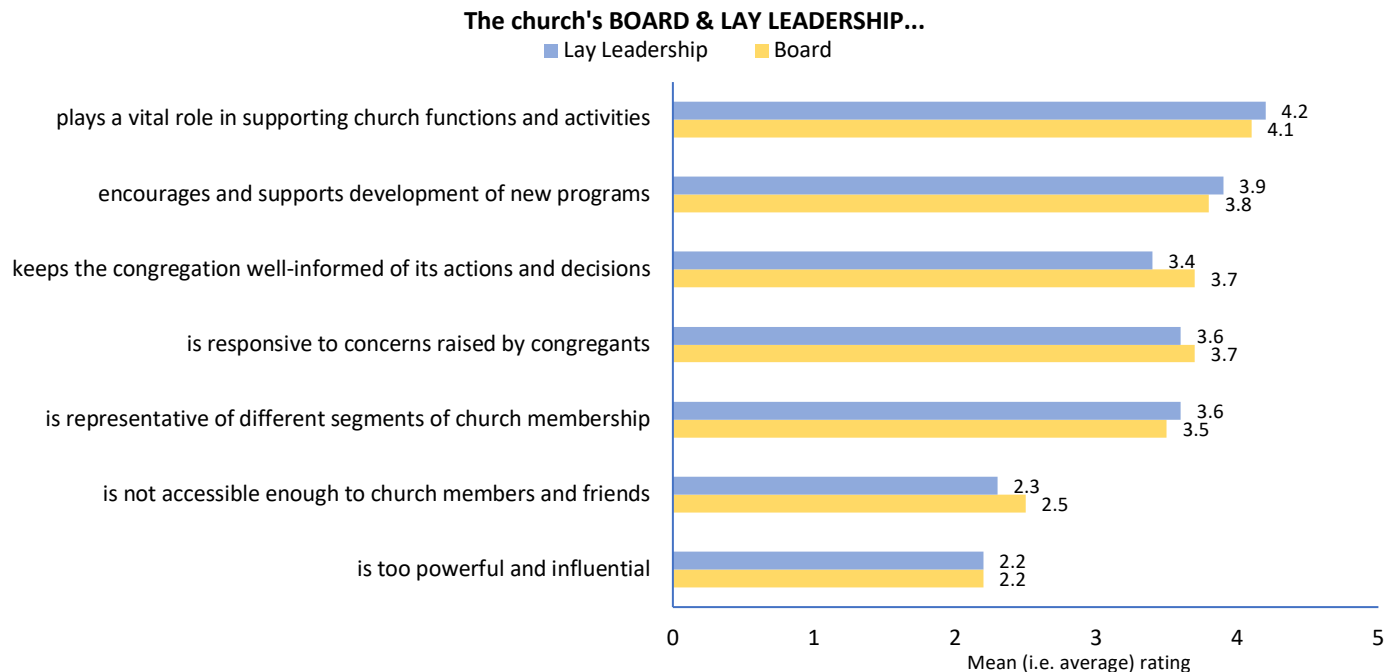
*\* Percentages were calculated with N=255 (i.e. the number of respondents who indicated at least one belief) as the denominator of the equation. In other words, the number of people who indicated they held each belief was divided by 255 to arrive at a percentage.*

**Beliefs About Death and Immortality**



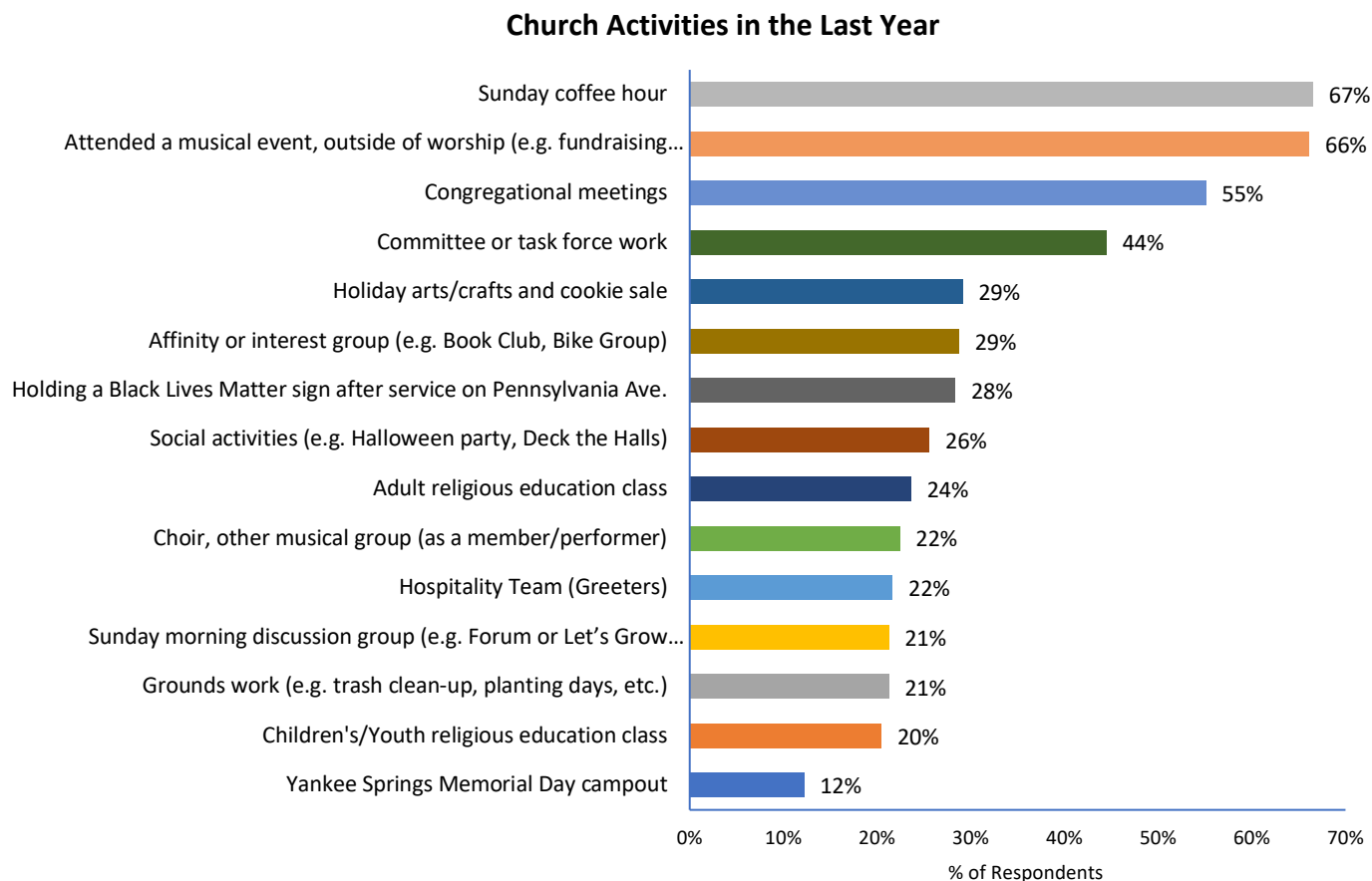
### Q14 & Q15 – The church’s BOARD and LAY LEADERSHIP...

(Rating scale: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neutral/No opinion; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree)



### Q8 – In which of the following church activities have you participated in the last year? (select all that apply)

\* Percentages were calculated with N=254 (i.e. the number of respondents who indicated at least one activity) as the denominator of the equation. In other words, the number of people who indicated they engaged in each activity was divided by 254 to arrive at a percentage.

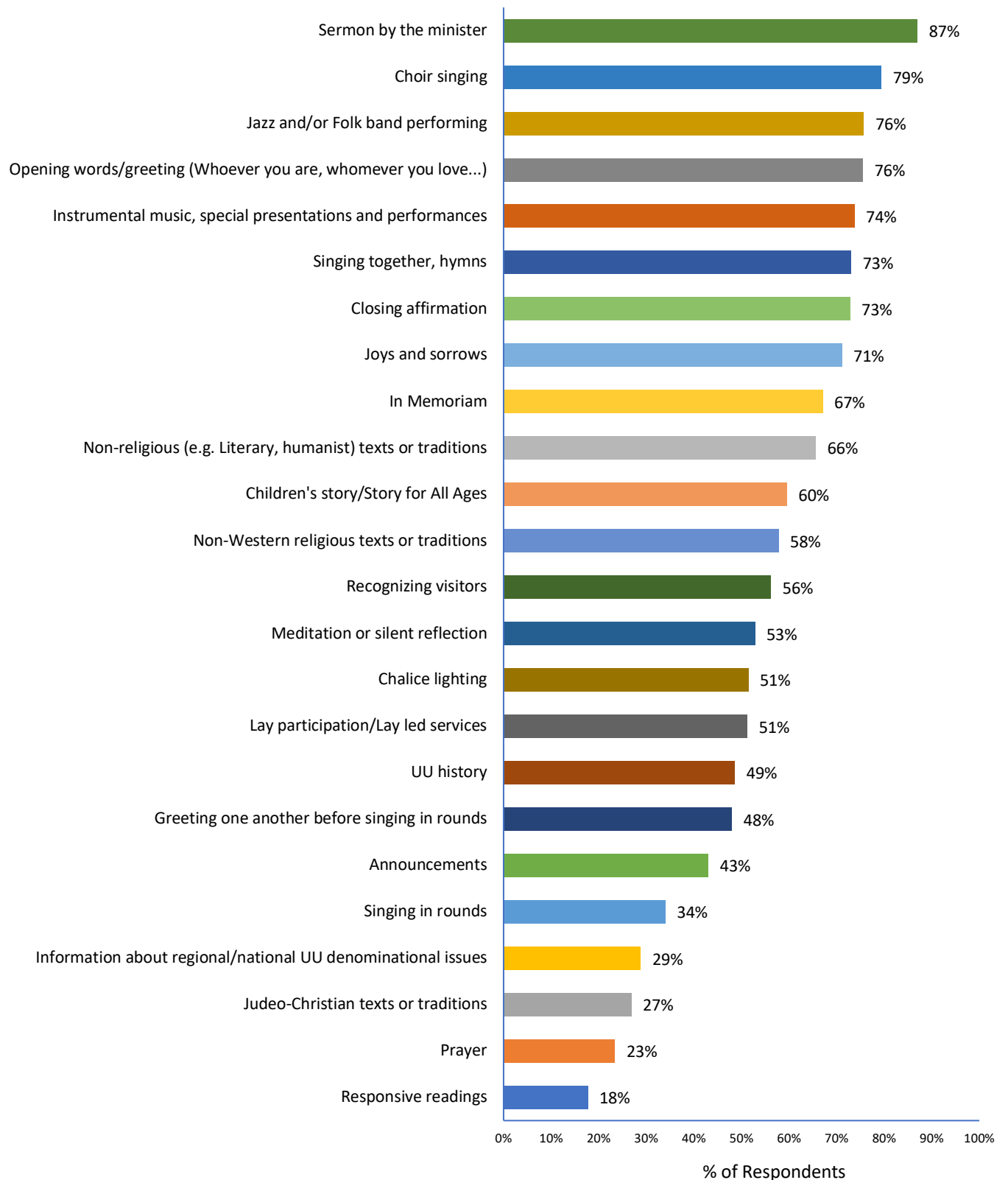




**Q17 – How important to you are the following specific elements which may be part of a Sunday worship service?**

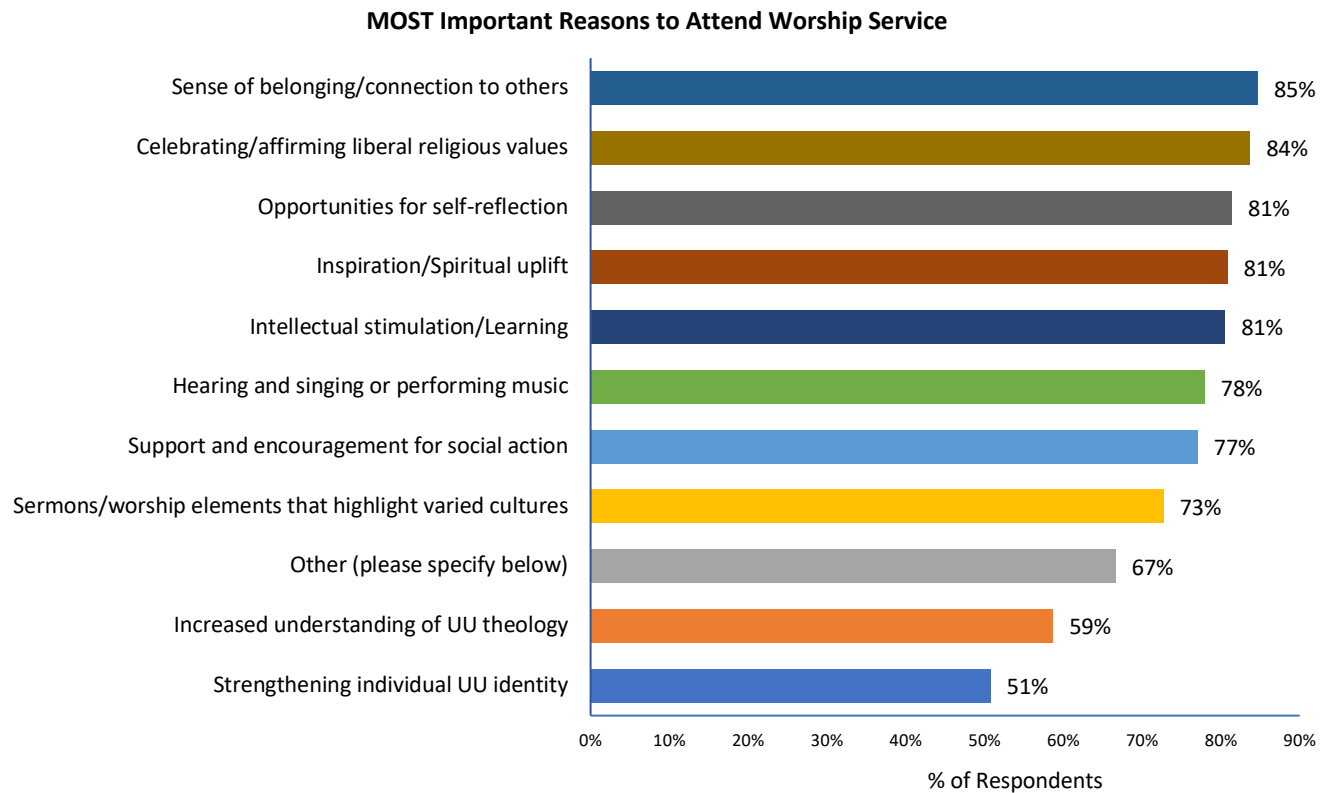
*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

**MOST Important Elements of Sunday Worship Service**



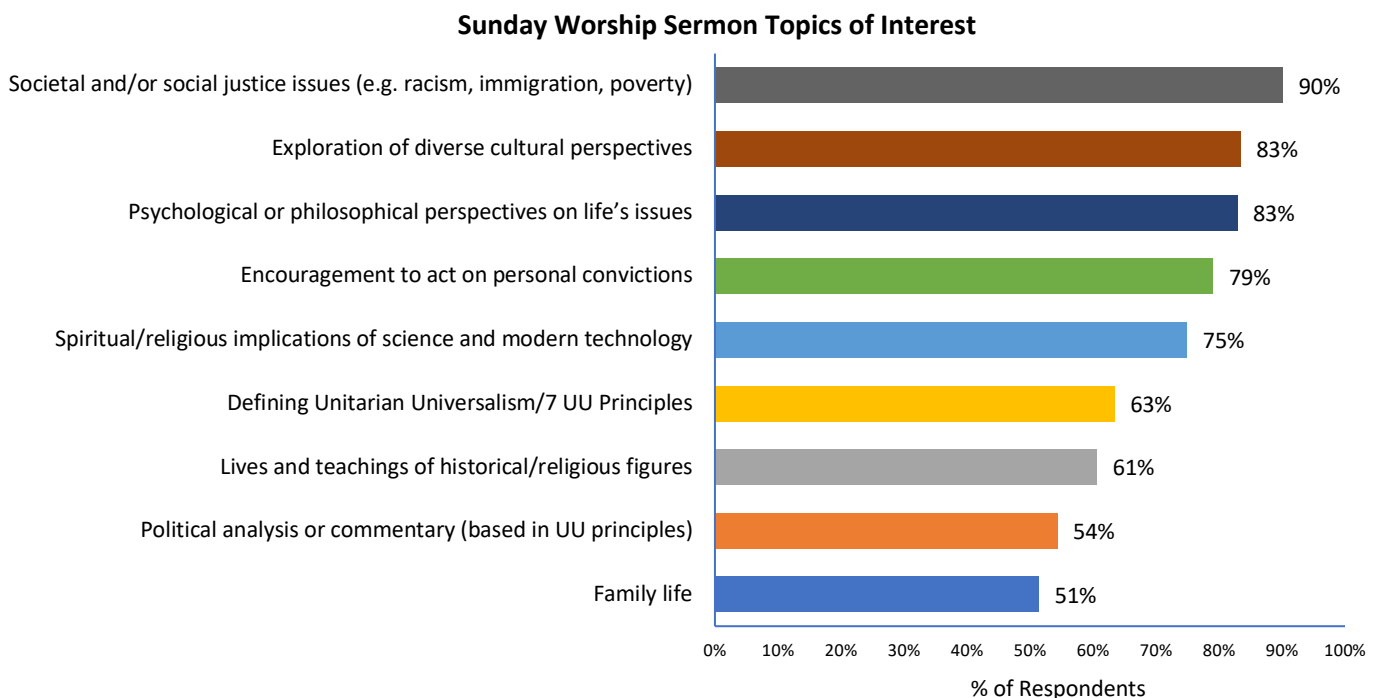
**Q16 – How important to you are the following reasons for attending worship services at UU Lansing?**

*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*



**Q18 – How interested are you in the following topic areas or issues, which may be the focus of a sermon or main spoken presentation, during Sunday worship services?**

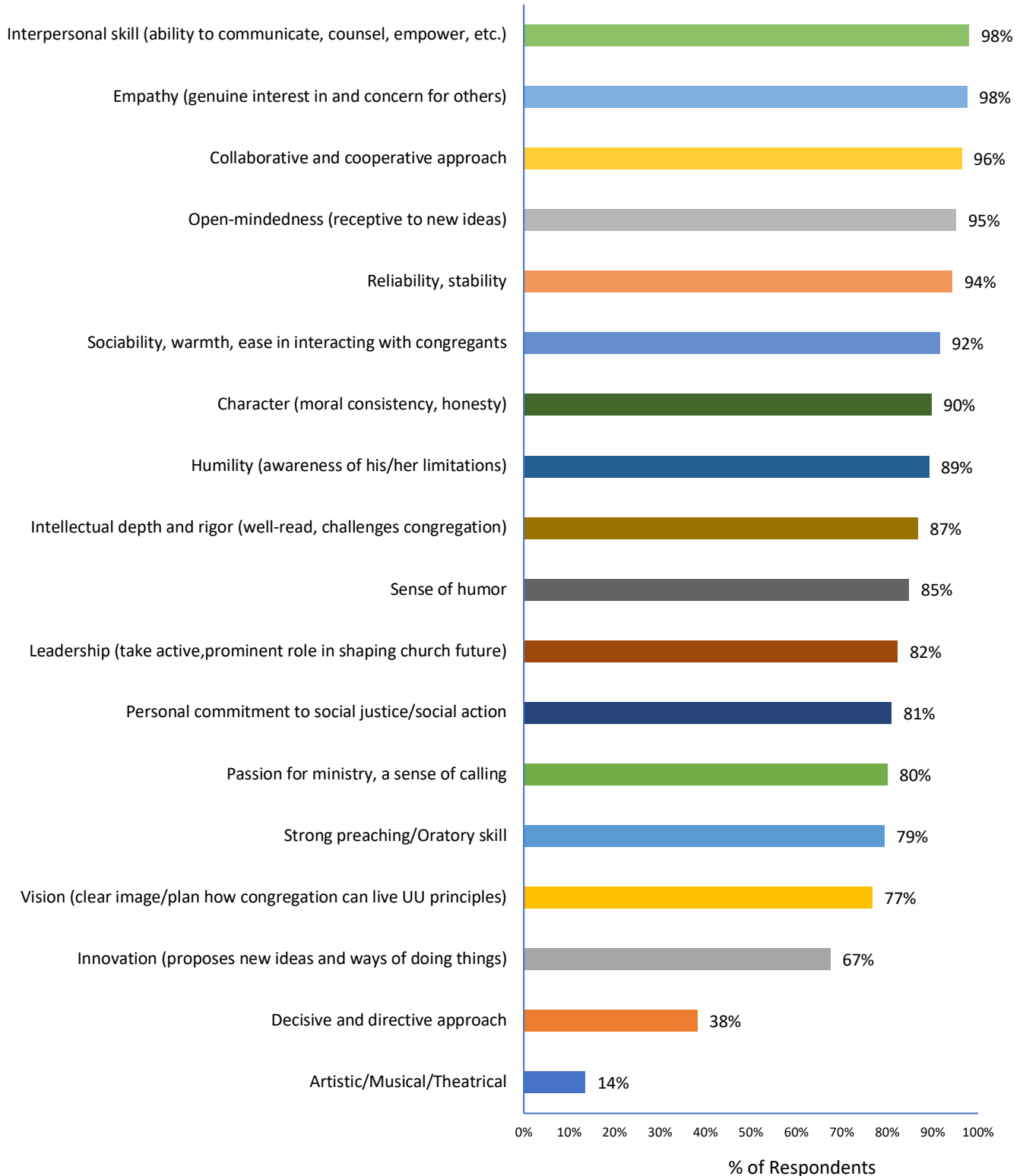
*\*MOST Interested (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very interested,” and “Extremely Interested” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*



**Q21 – Recognizing that no candidate will have ALL of the qualities we might desire in a minister, how important is it to you that our next minister have the following qualities or characteristics?**

*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

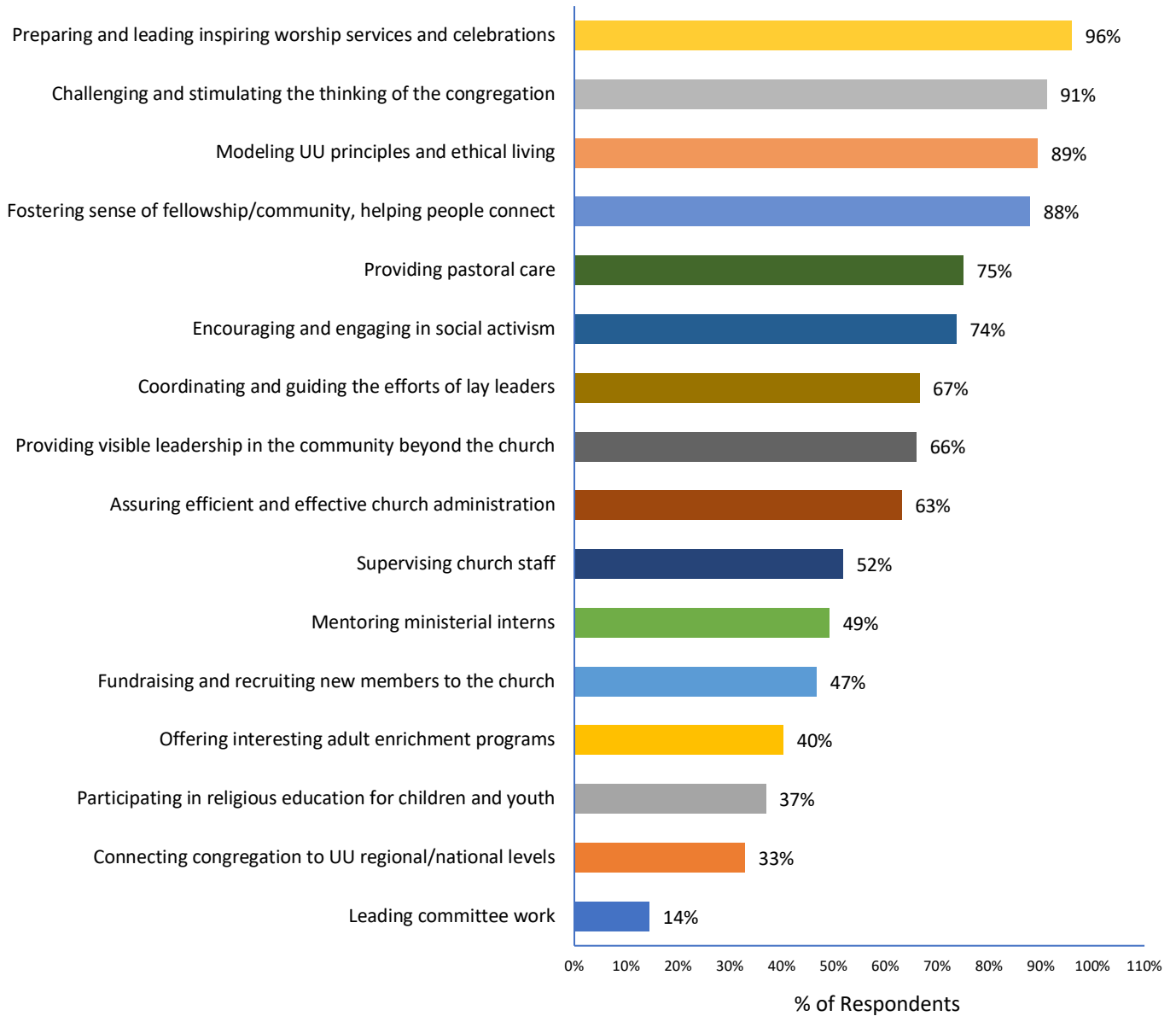
**MOST Important Ministerial Qualities**



**Q22 – Each minister must prioritize from among a variety of roles and functions. How important to you are the following roles/functions for the church's next minister?**

*\*MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item "Very important," and "Extremely Important" and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

**MOST Important Ministerial Roles and Functions**



**Q23 – I would personally approve of the congregation calling a minister who is...**

*\*Approval (percentage) was calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Strongly agree,” “Agree,” and “Neutral/No opinion” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question. The decision to include those who rated the item as “Neutral/No opinion” was made based on the number of respondents who indicated they rated all or most of the items in this way because all characteristics are acceptable to them. Comments indicated that respondents wanted the most qualified candidate, without regard to any particular demographic identifier.*

