

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

December 30, 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, more than 95% of respondents rated most characteristics as acceptable, including any gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual orientation. 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 or would not select someone who could not clearly communicate in the English language.

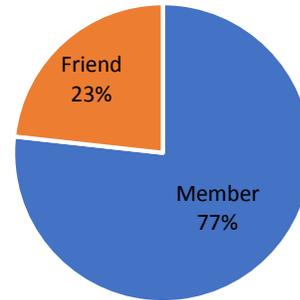
UU Lansing 2018-19 Congregational Survey Report

Surveys included in analysis = 259¹

Q2 – What is your affiliation with the congregation?

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

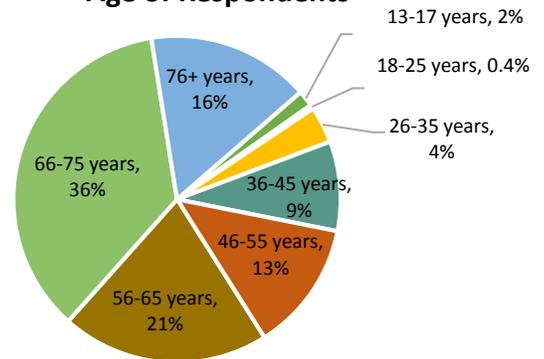
Church Affiliation



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>

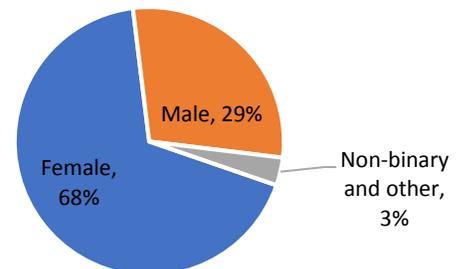
Age of Respondents



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



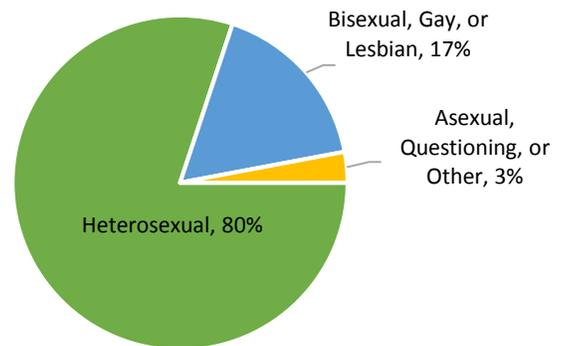
*Binary categories (i.e. female and male) are inclusive of cisgender and transgender individuals

¹ 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>

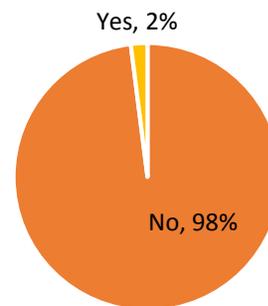
Sexual Orientation



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

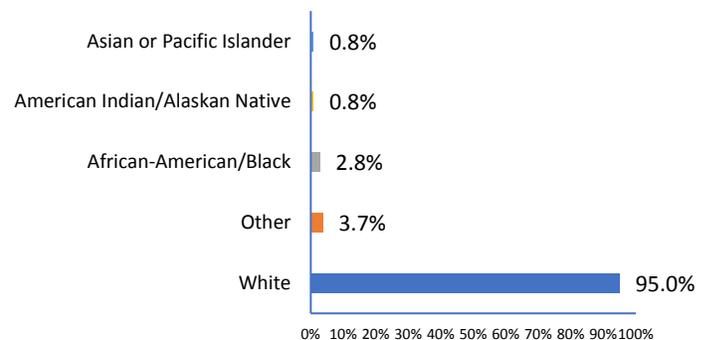
<i>Country or Region of Origin</i>	<i>%</i>
Cuba	20%
Puerto Rico	20%
Not specified	40%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

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

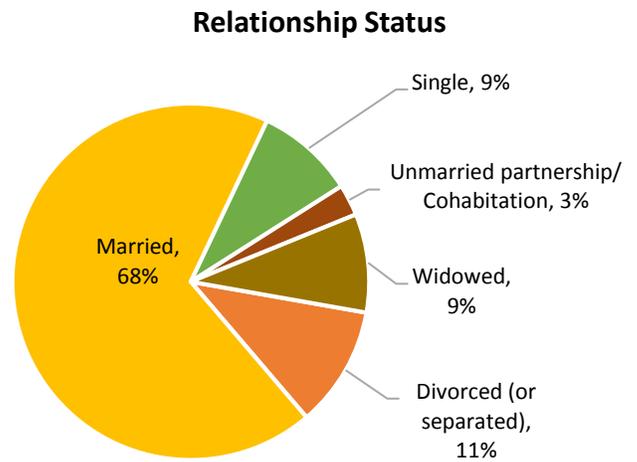


<i>Race (single racial category)*</i>	<i>%</i>
African-American/Black only	2%
Pacific Islander	0.4%
White only	91%
Other only	2%

*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.

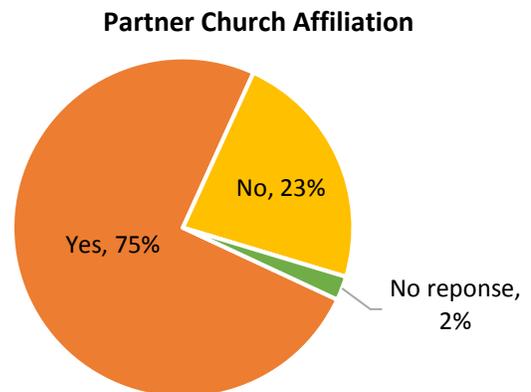
Q29 – What is your relationship status?

<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?

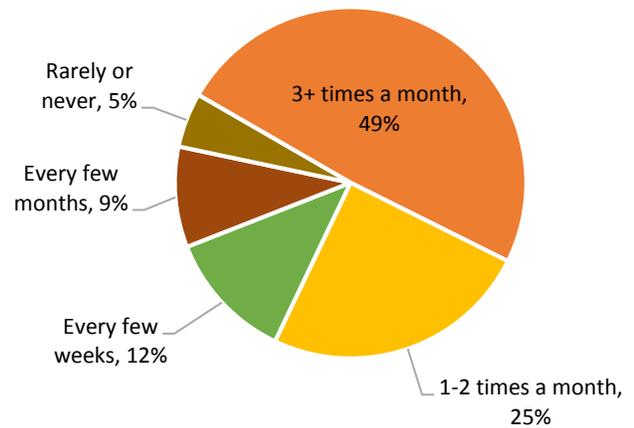
<i>Partner affiliated with church?</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	75%
No	23%
No response	2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



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>

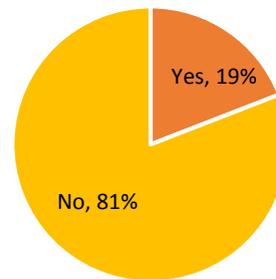
Frequency of Church Attendance



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>

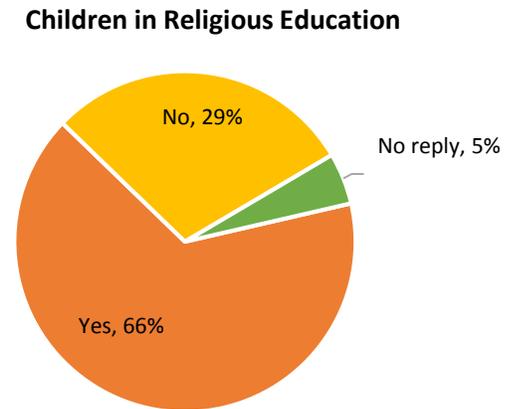
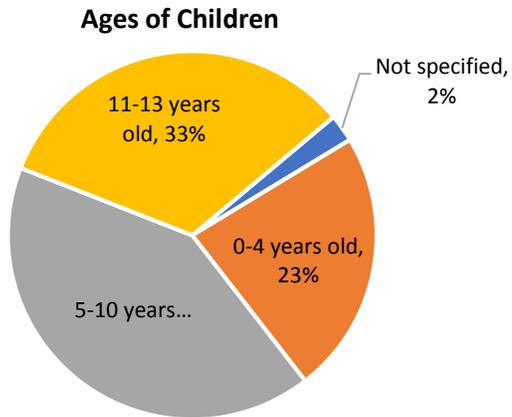
Children in Household



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

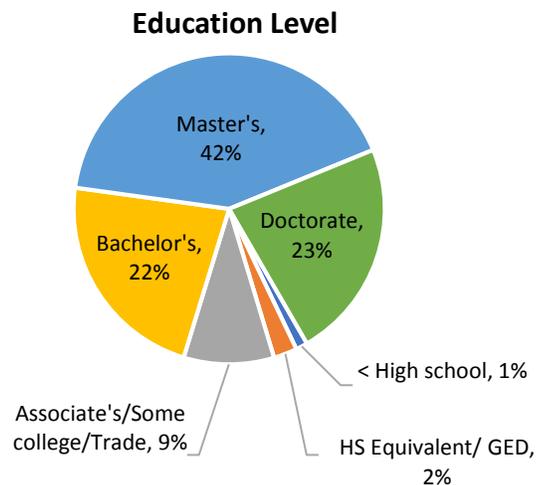
Q34 – For children 18 or younger, please provide their age(s) and indicate if they regularly participate in religious education at UU Lansing.

<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% from 1st 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>



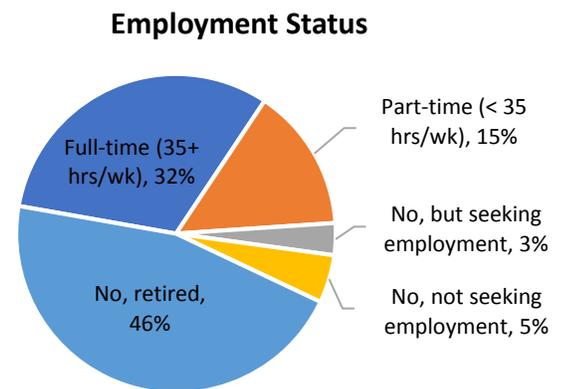
Q35 – Please indicate the highest level of formal education you have completed.

<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>



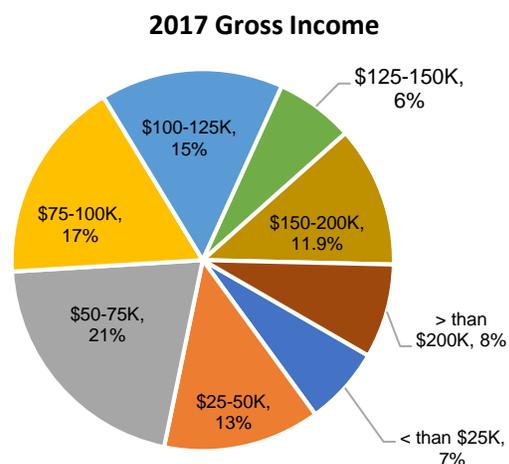
Q36 – Are you currently employed?

<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>

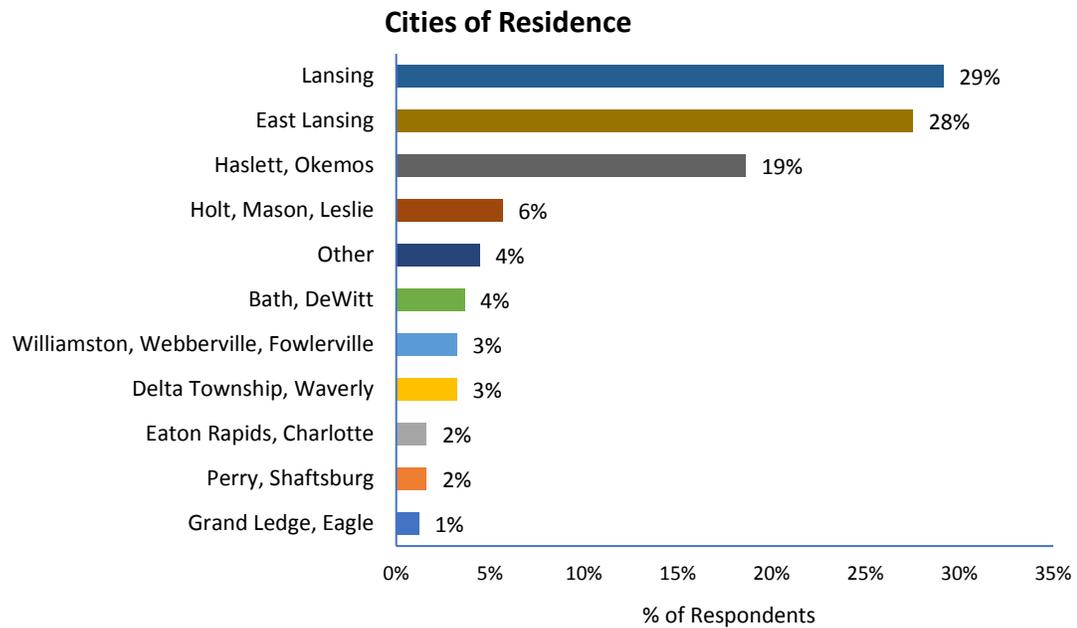


Q37 – What was your gross (before tax) family/household income last year (2017)?

<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>

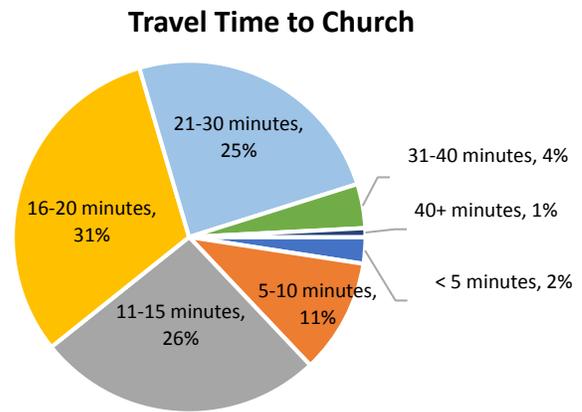


Q38 – In which of the following cities or towns (or clusters of towns) do you live?



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

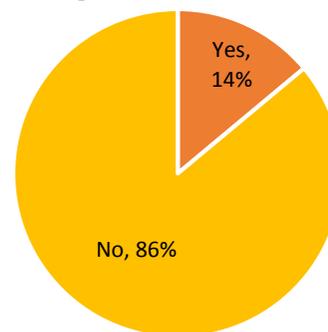
<i>Travel time to Church</i>	<i>%</i>
< 5 minutes	2%
5-10 minutes	11%
11-15 minutes	26%
16-20 minutes	31%
21-30 minutes	25%
31-40 minutes	4%
40+ minutes	1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



Q28 - 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>

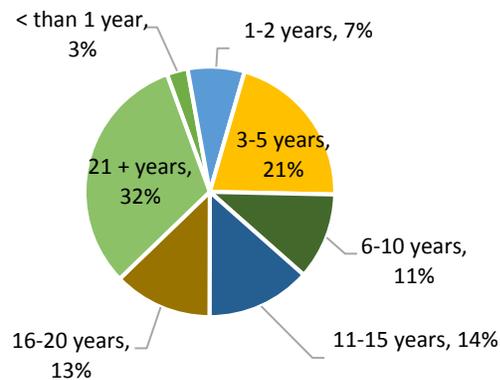
Physical, Cognitive or Emotional Impairment



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

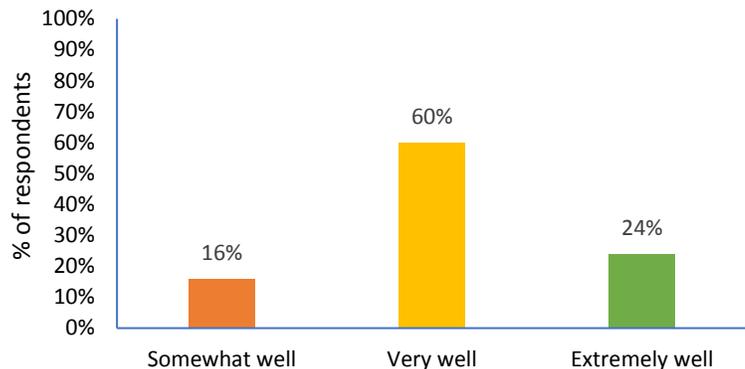


Q5 – If you have been affiliated with UU Lansing for 2 years or less, please indicate how well you think they congregation does at welcoming visitors and newcomers?*

<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.

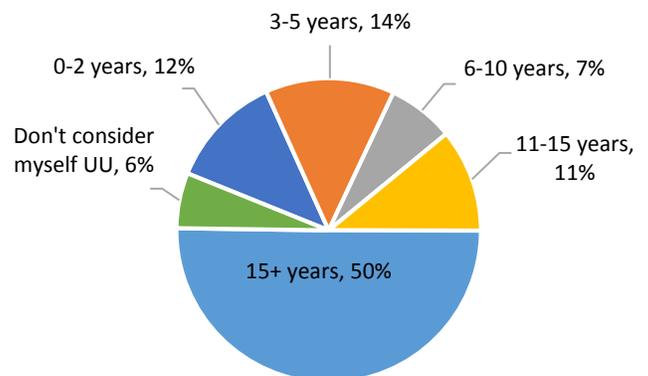
Welcoming Visitors and New-comers



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>

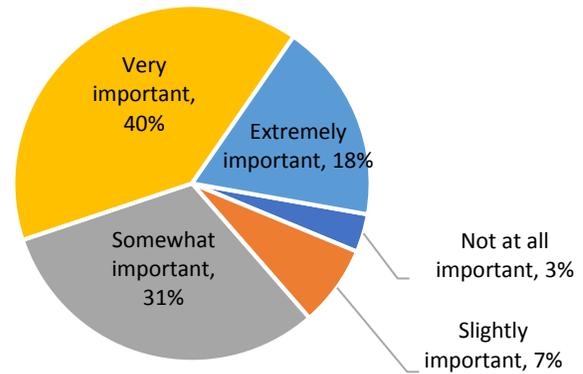
Length of Time As a UU



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>

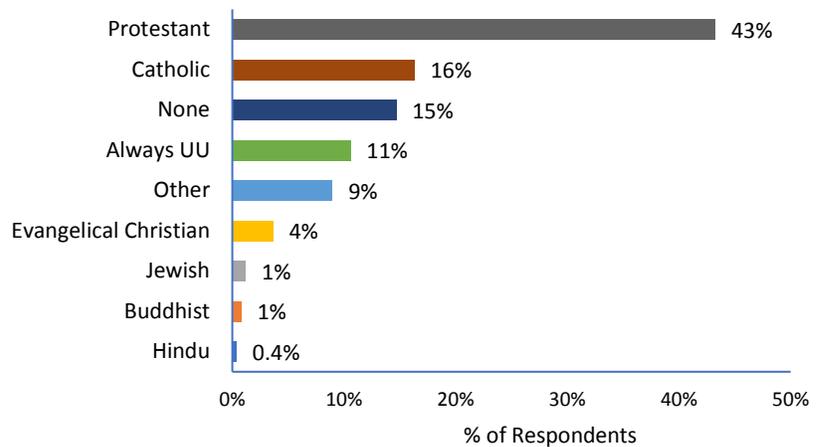
Importance of Affiliation with UU to Self-Identity



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>

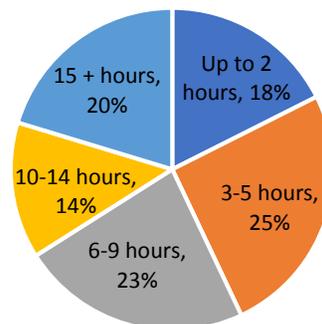
Most Recent Prior Religious Affiliation



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

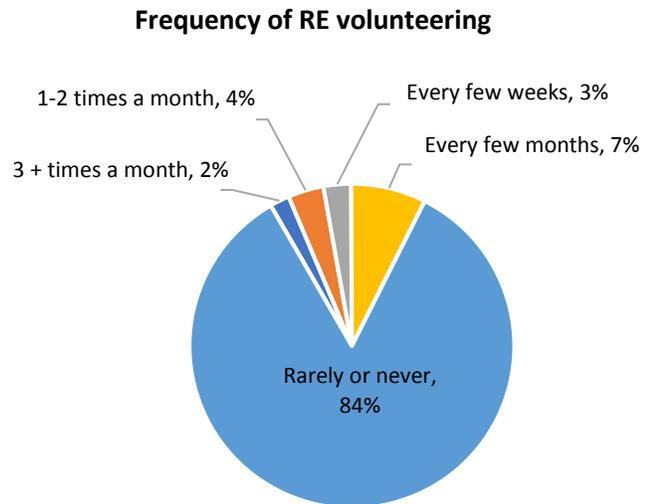
<i>Hours</i>	<i>%</i>
≤ 2 hours	18%
3-5 hours	25%
6-9 hours	23%
10-14 hours	14%
15 + hours	20%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

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?

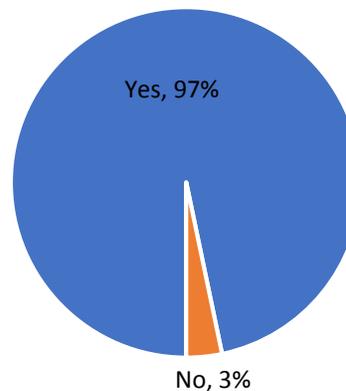
<i>Frequency of RE Volunteering</i>	<i>%</i>
3+ times a month	2%
1-2 times a month	4%
Every few weeks	3%
Every few months	8%
Rarely or never	84%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>



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>

**Agreement with UUA
Non-discrimination Policy**

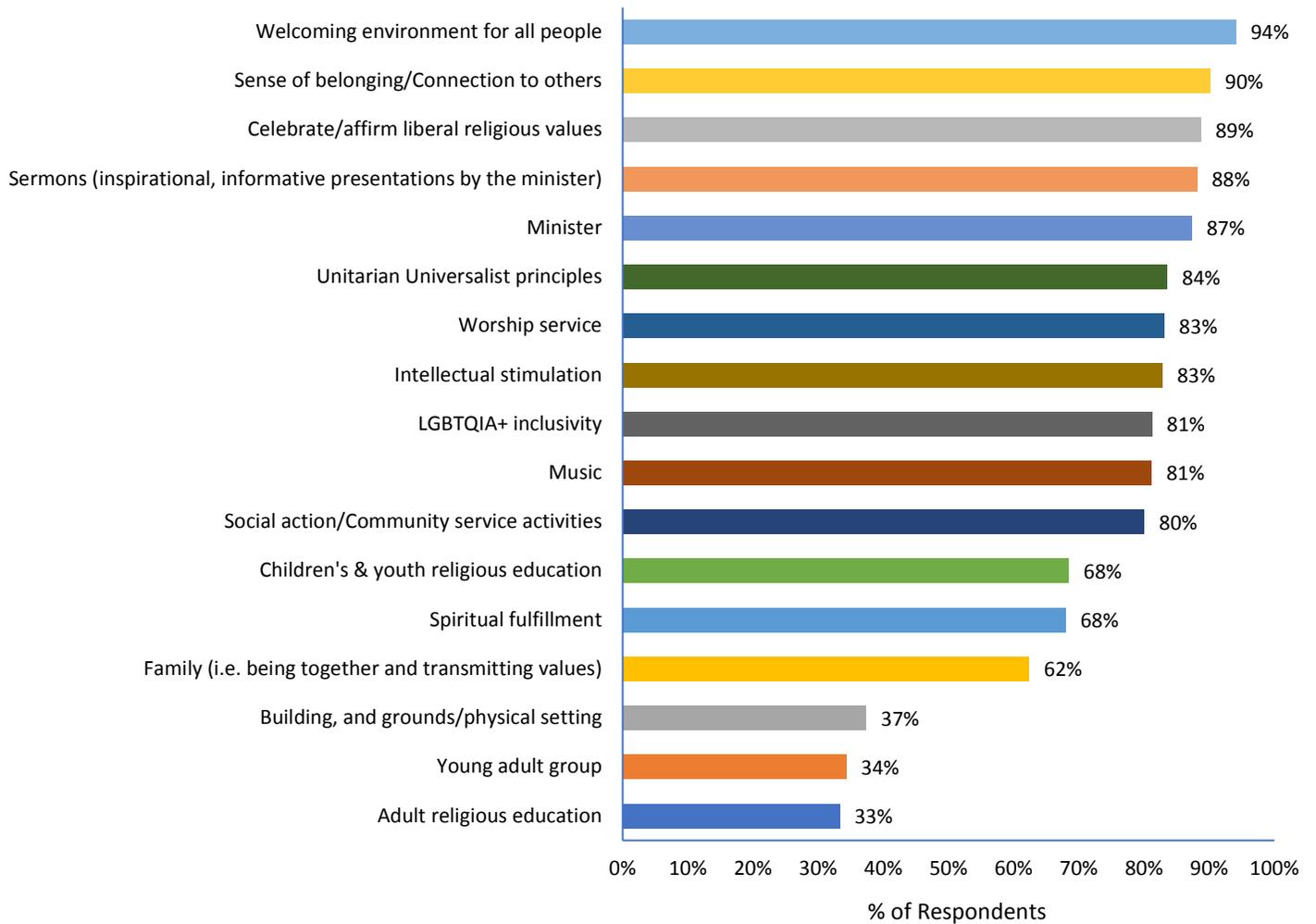


NOTE: All of the individuals (n=8) who answered 'No' provided written clarification stating that they agreed with the policy but hoped the committee would give serious consideration to candidates from historically oppressed groups or would not select someone who could not clearly communicate in the English language.

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.*

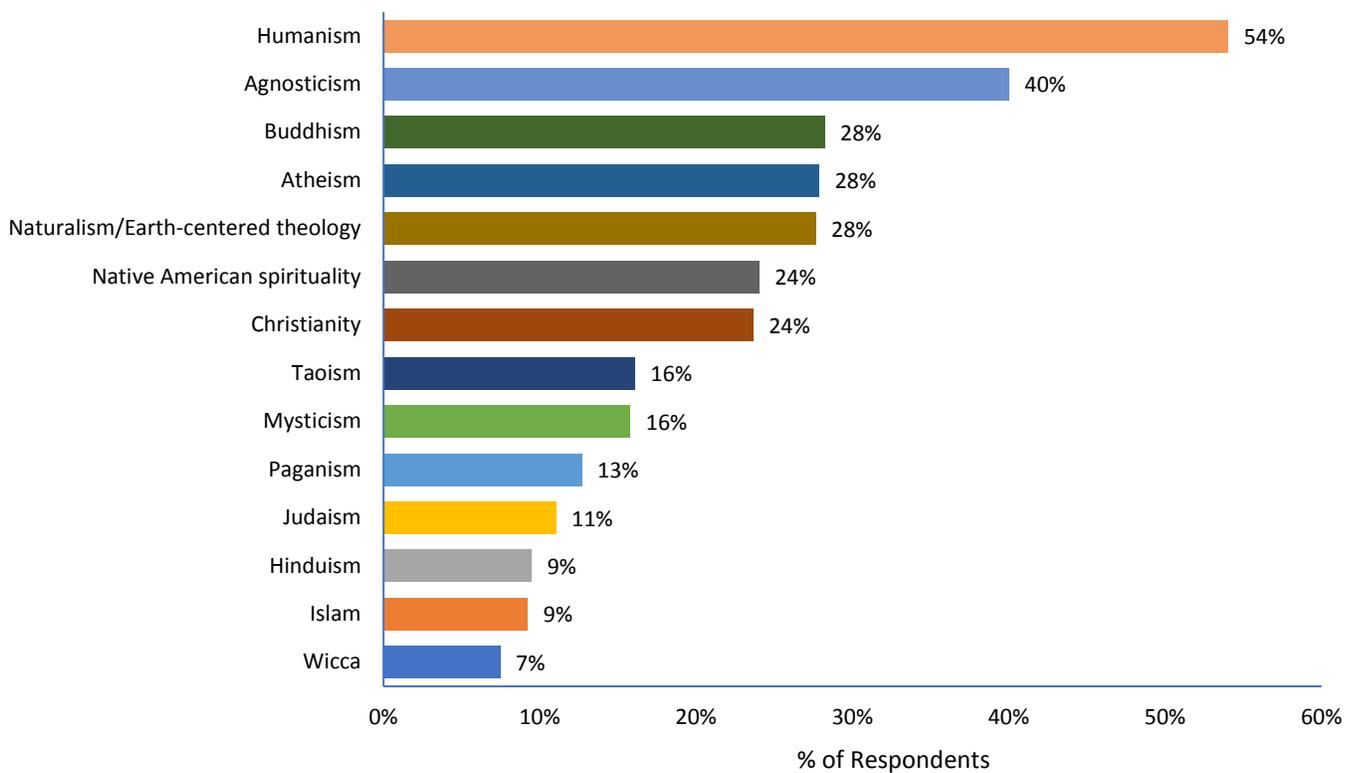
Reasons for Attending UU Lansing



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.*

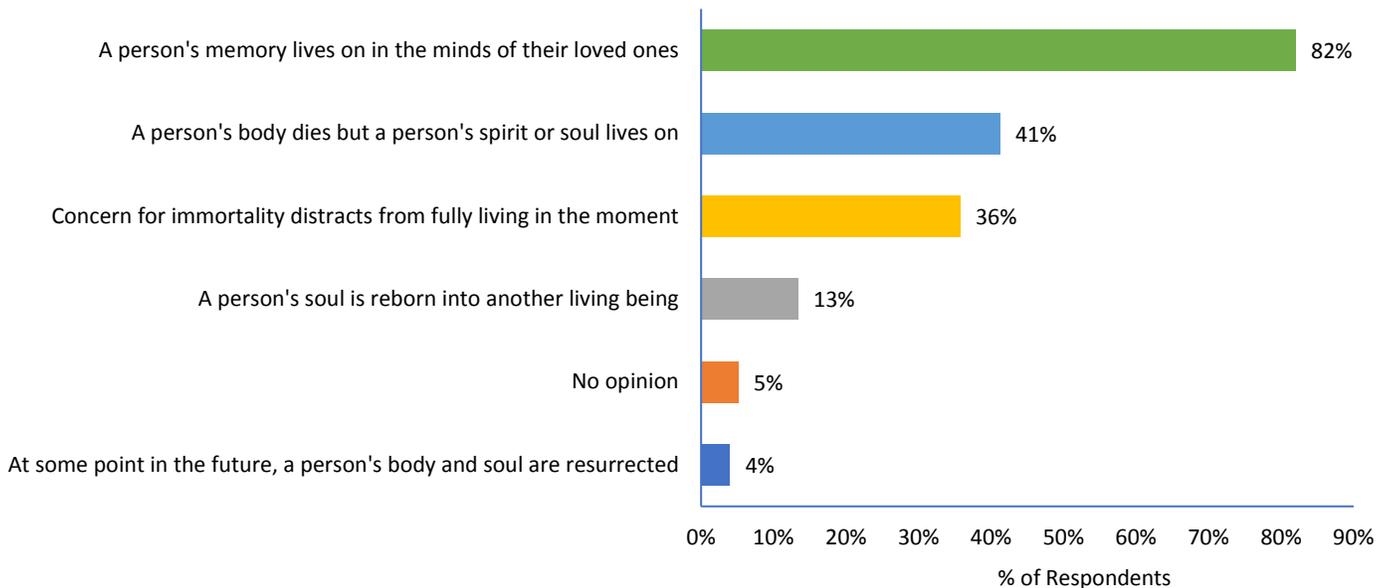
MOST Important Religious/Theological Traditions



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

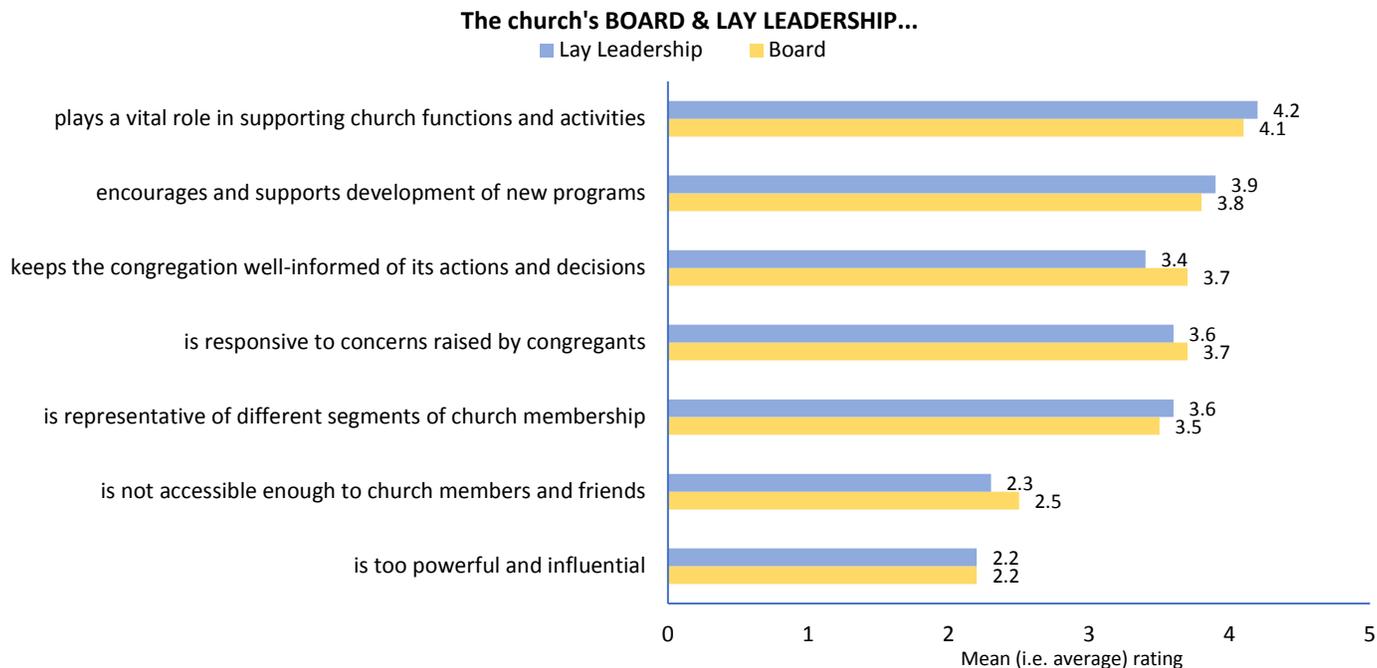
** Percentages were calculated with N=255 (i.e. the number of respondents who indicated at least one belief) as the denominator of the equation. In other words, the number of people who indicated they held each belief was divided by 255 to arrive at a percentage.*

Beliefs About Death and Immortality



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

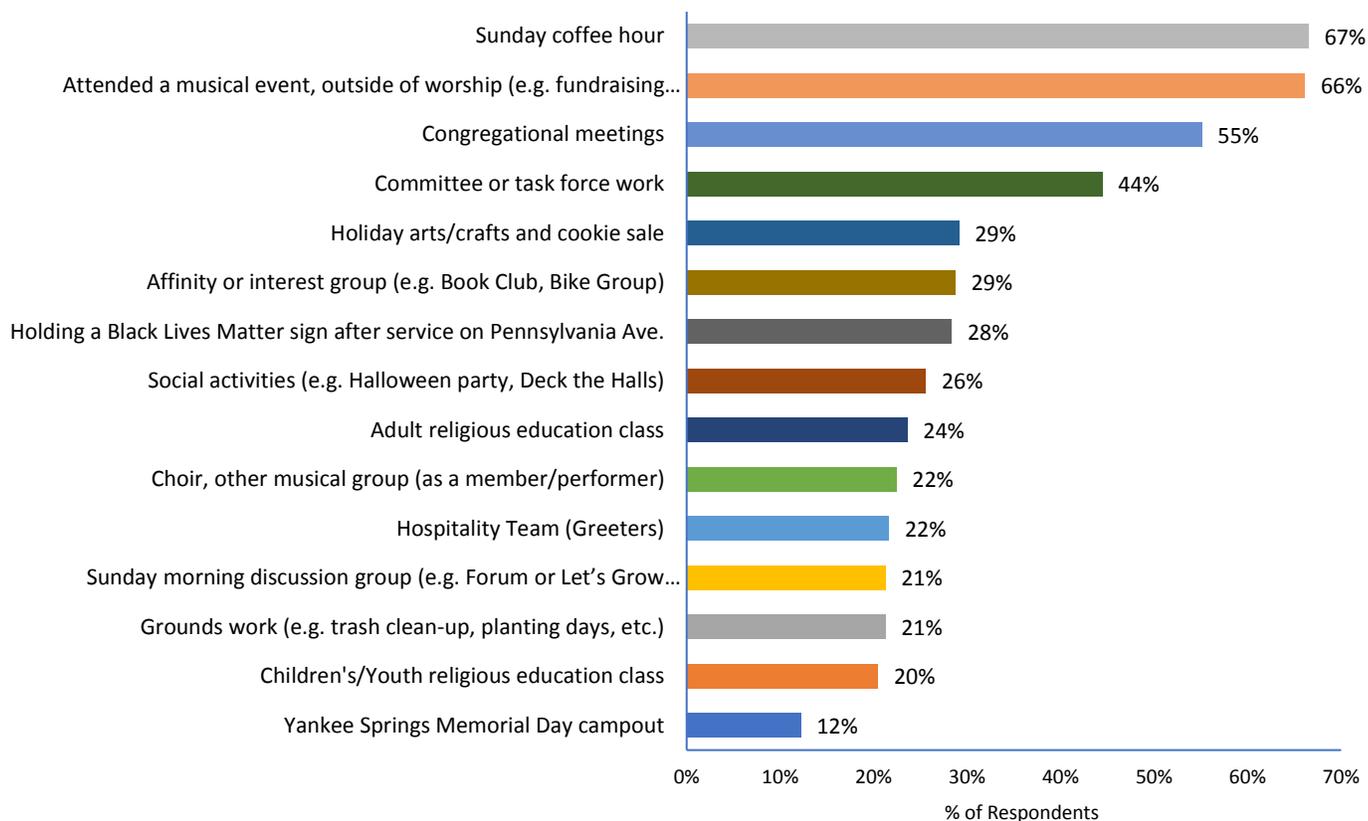
(Rating scale: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neutral/No opinion; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree)



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.

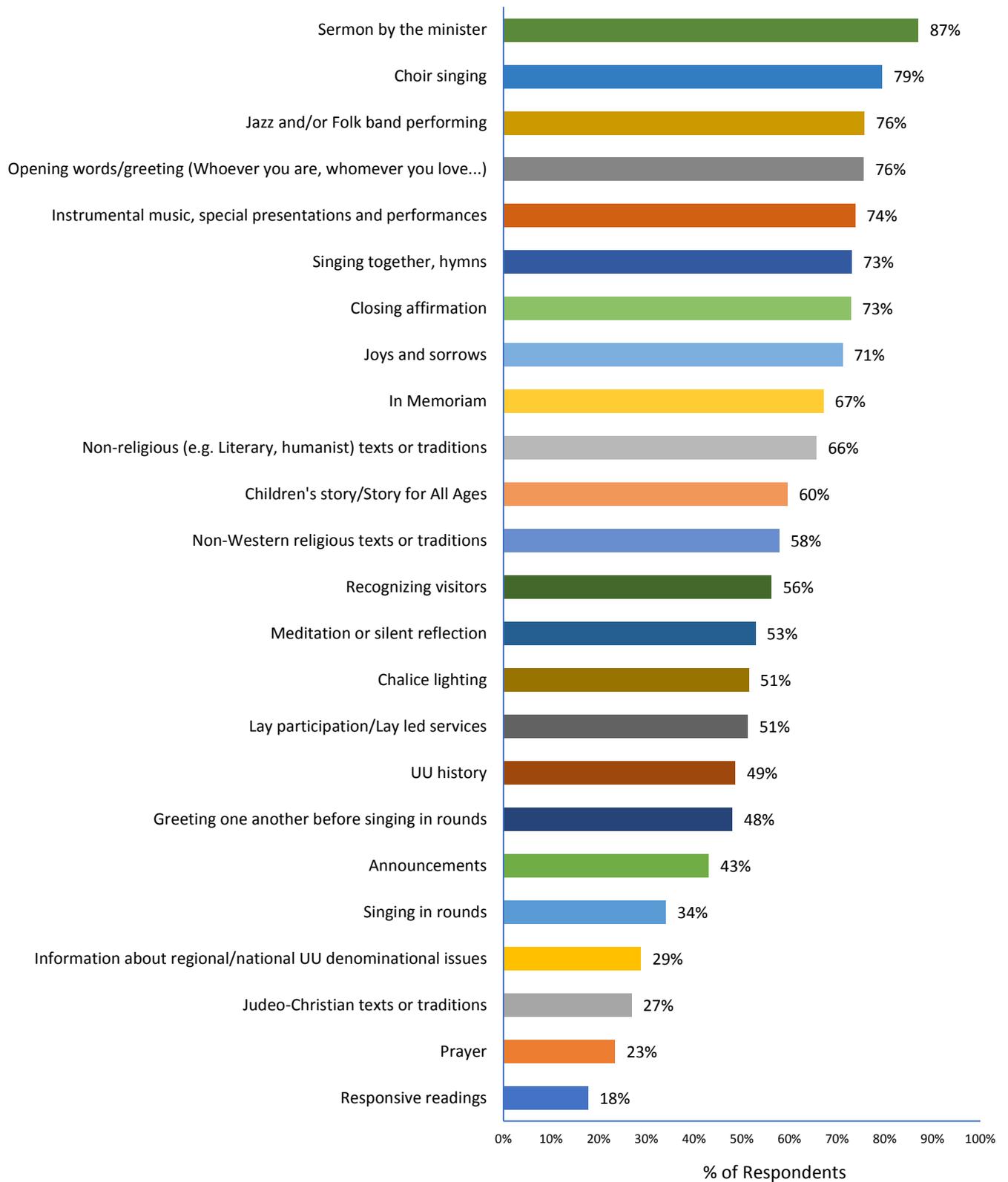
Church Activities in the Last Year



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

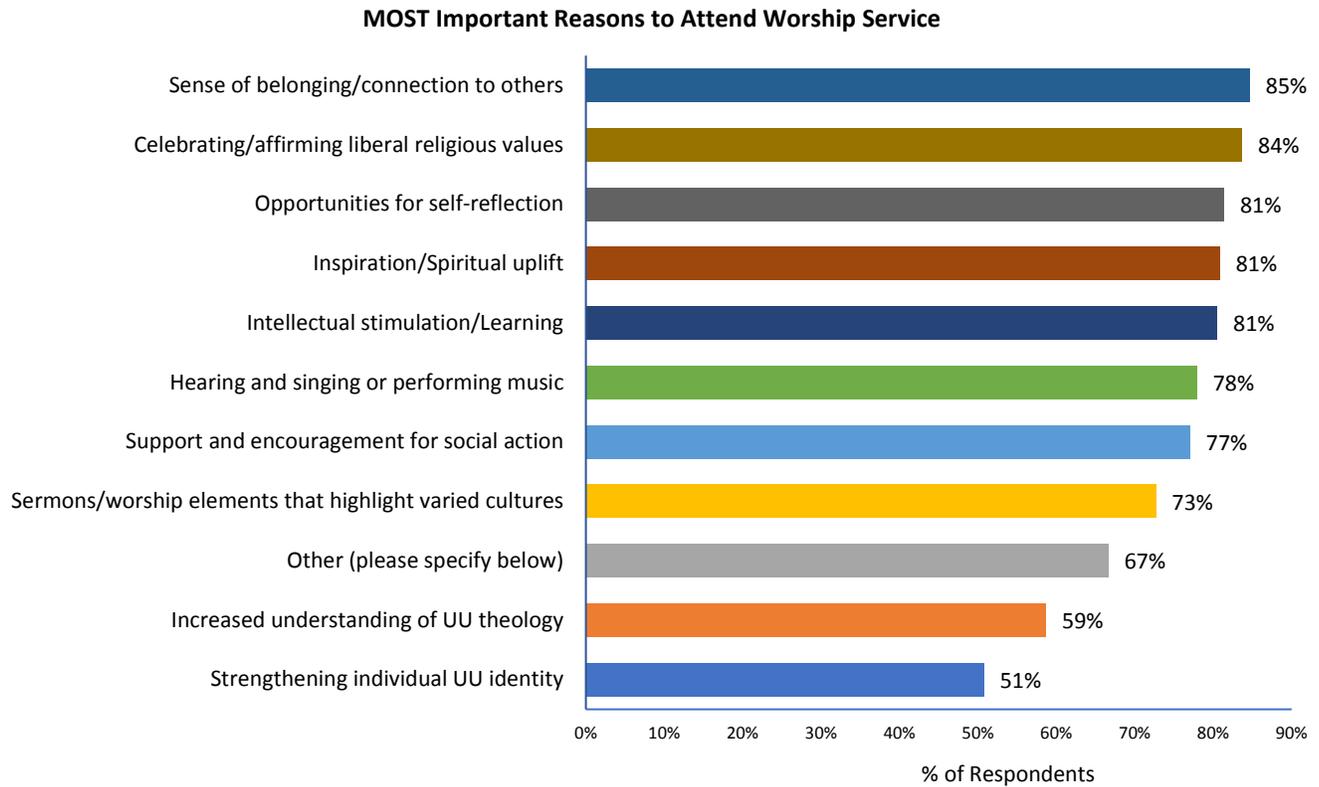
**MOST Important (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very important,” and “Extremely Important” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*

MOST Important Elements of Sunday Worship Service



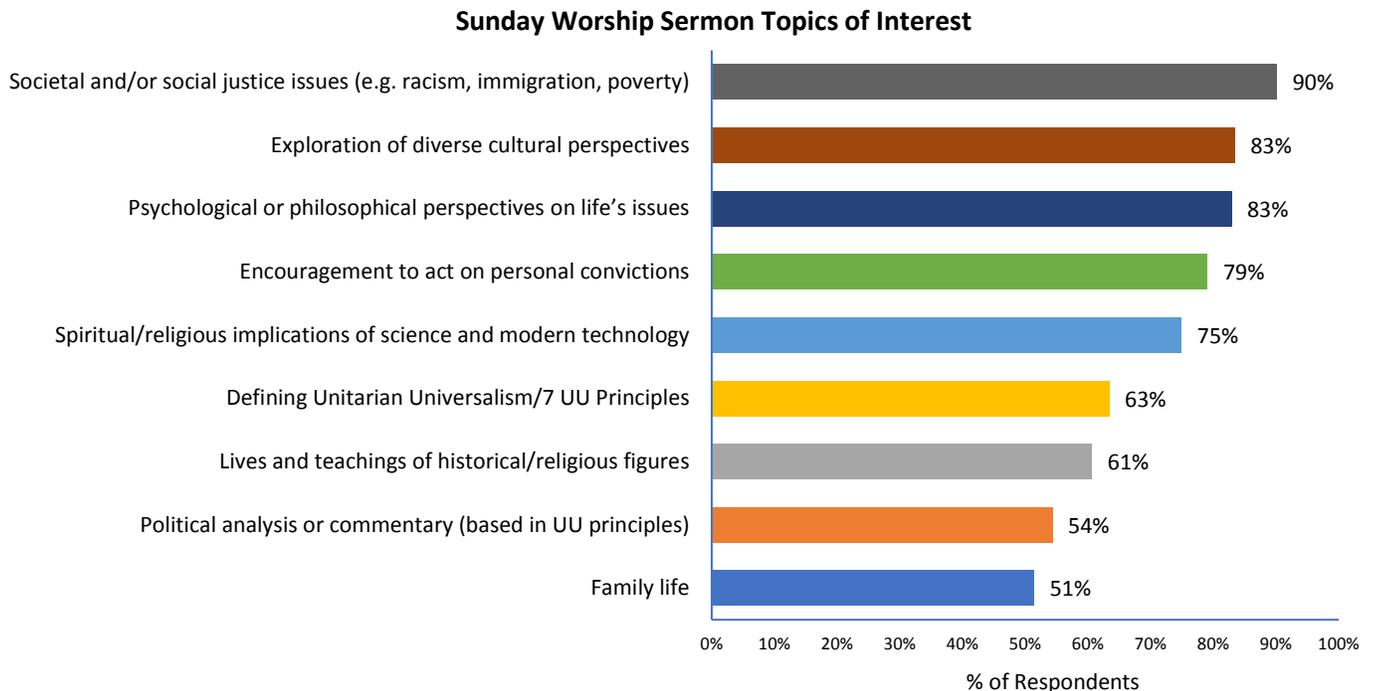
Q16 – How important to you are the following reasons for attending worship services at UU Lansing?

**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?

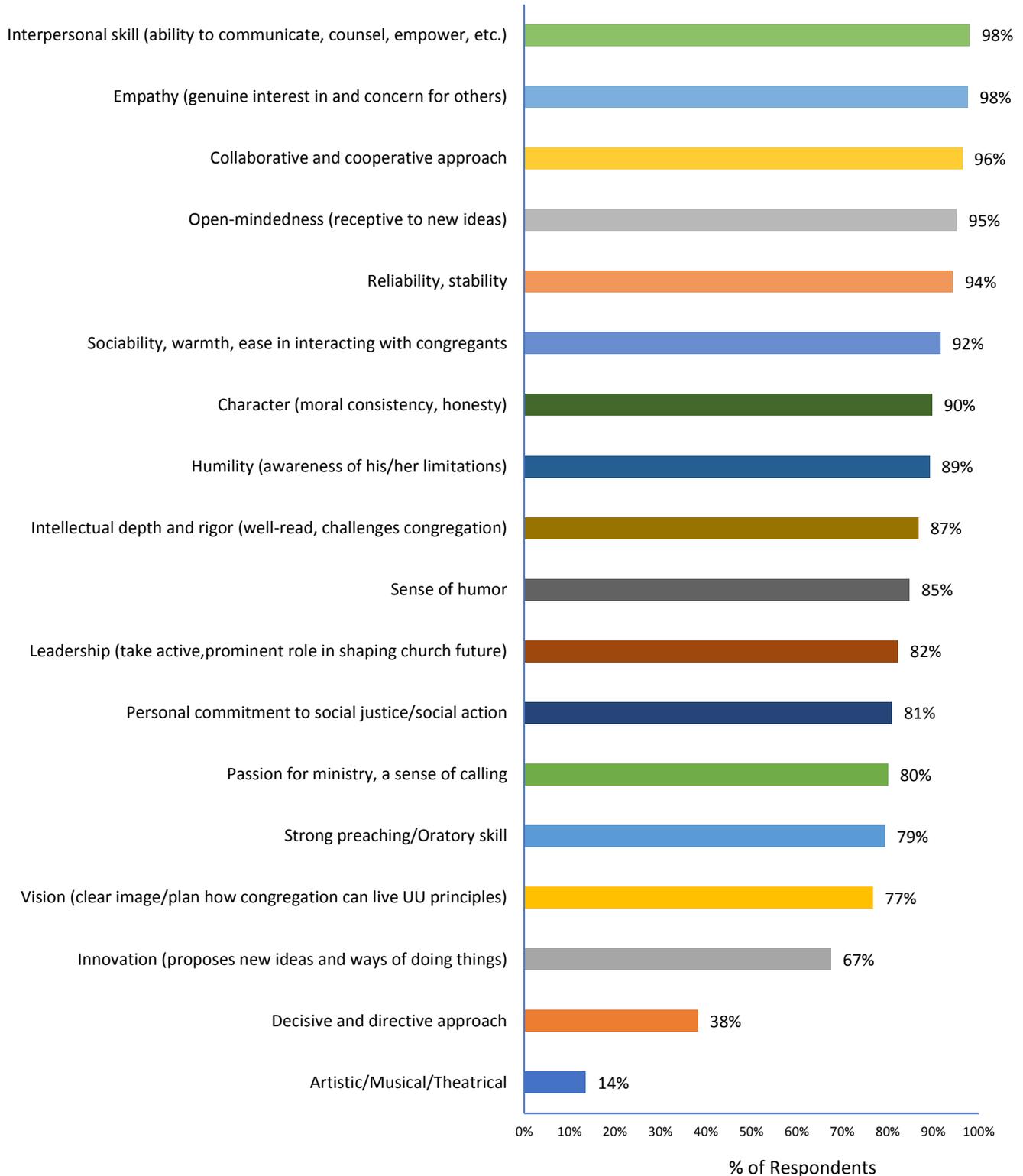
**MOST Interested (percentage) is calculated by adding together the number of respondents who rated the item “Very interested,” and “Extremely Interested” and dividing the product by the total number of respondents who answered the question.*



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.*

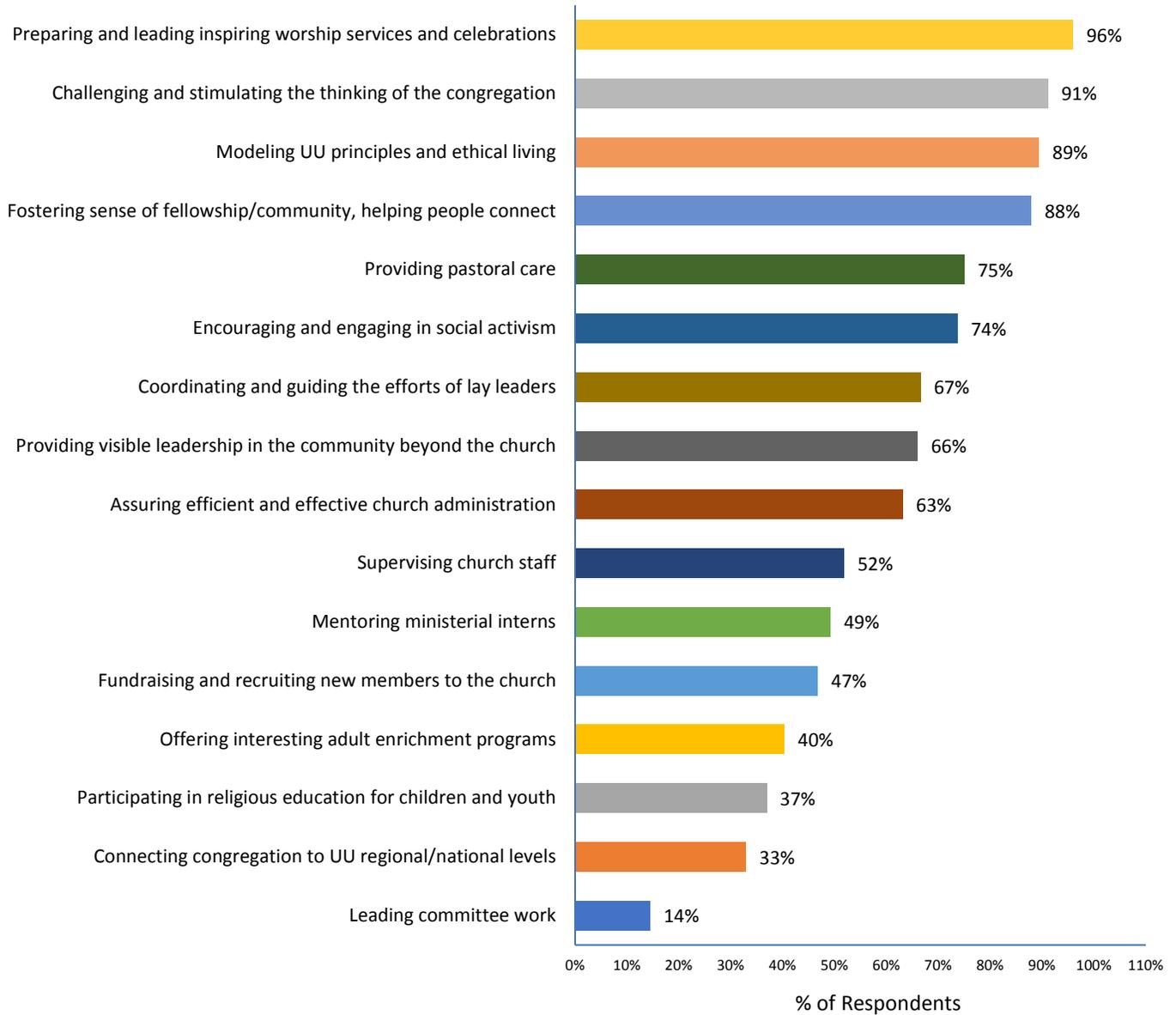
MOST Important Ministerial Qualities



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.*

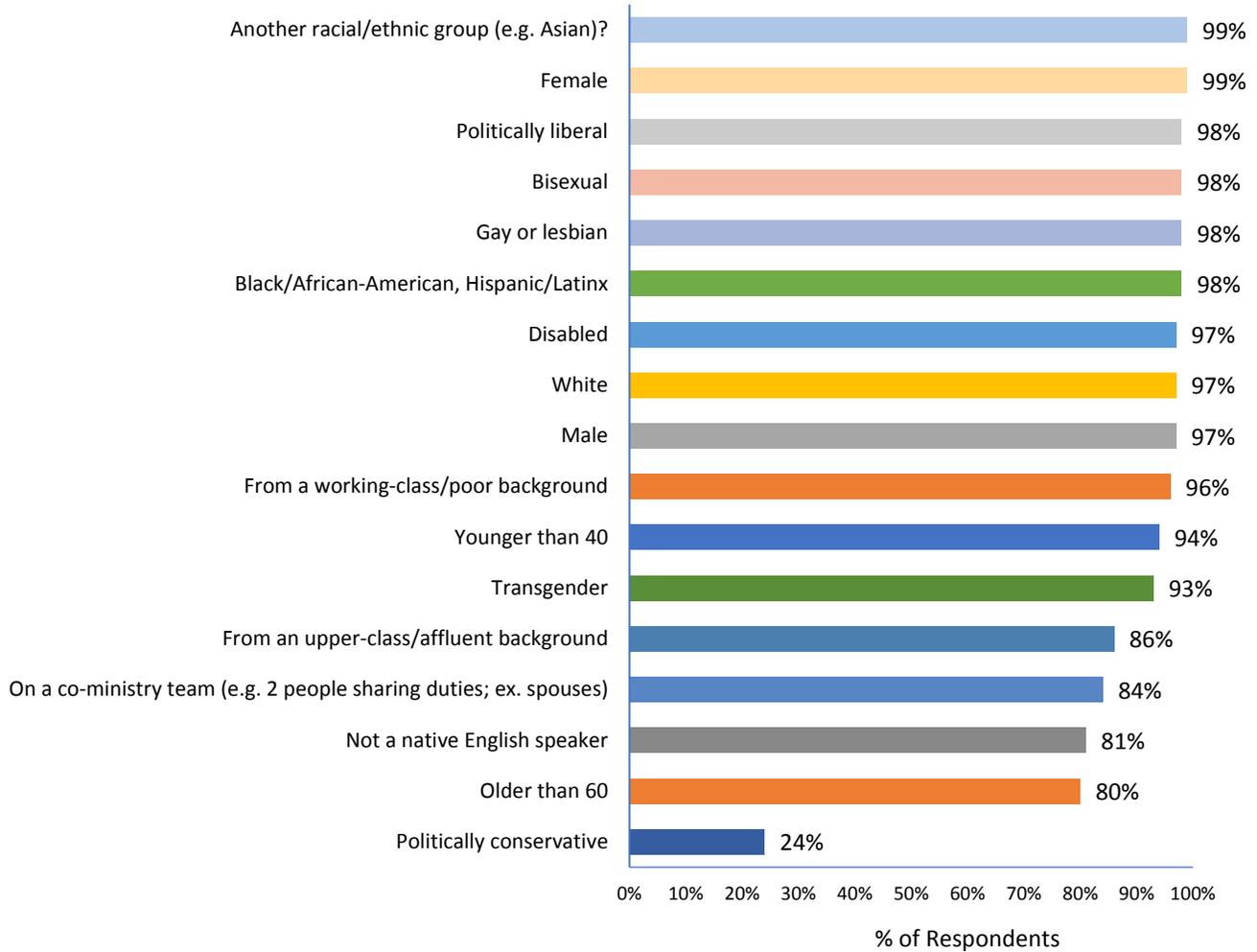
MOST Important Ministerial Roles and Functions



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.*

Approval of Various Potential Ministerial Characteristics*



APPENDICES

Narrative Responses to Open-ended Questions 19 and 20

UU Lansing Congregational Survey – Responses to Survey Question 19

Q19: What current church/congregational strengths, if any, would you like to see maintained or further developed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
ACCESSIBILITY/ ACCOMMODATIONS	3	Accessibility (ASL, etc.); Accommodations for all; I appreciate our commitment to understanding and supporting people with disabilities;
	3	ASL interpreter (x2); Sign language interpretation
ART	2	Art; Support of the visual arts
BUILDING/ BUILDING USE	5	Maintain/improve building: Building (x2); Building (what we've got is great; need to keep improving); Building and ground maintenance could use a boost of volunteer input, but how to attract new participants?; Care and feeding of our new building.
	4	Building uses: Becoming a community center; Being a hub for neighborhood needs; I believe the new building is a big strength and we need to continue to develop how we are going to use the building/space; Use of church by organizations that tie in with our missions
	4	Praise for building: Building is amazing; I love the space; Love the beauty of the physical building and grounds; Nice facility
COMMUNICATION	1	A bit more narrative in the "Splinters from the Board"
	1	Communication channels (newsletter, weekly digest, announcements, tables on Sundays)
COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ ENGAGEMENT	10	Actions that further our interaction with the local community; Closer ties with the South Lansing community; Community engagement (x2); Connection to the community; Connections to the broader community; Involvement w/ the surrounding community; Involvement with organizations outside UU;
	8	Community outreach (x5); Continuing outreach in our community; Increased outreach to ethnic diversity; Reaching out to and connecting with ethnically and culturally diverse groups and neighbors
	6	Assistance/Charity/Support: Assisting our local community; Drives to donate our unwanted items to organizations willing to give them out freely to those in need; Serving the larger community (x2); Ways to reach out to the community to help people is very critical to congregational growth; Working within our new community
	4	English classes; Love it that refugees are using church classrooms for learning English; RDC; Supporting refugees
	2	Community gardens (x2); I feel that a well-planned and welcoming community garden would be very well received
	2	Community leadership; Community involvement as a beacon for social action
	2	I like hearing about the work with the local school; Support for nearby school
	1	Education movies and events
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	12	Diversity: Continuing ways to welcome diversity; (Increasing) Diversity (x7); Diversity in programs and membership (x2); Promoting diversity and inclusiveness; Promotion of diversity, inclusion, and support of those on the margins of society
	3	Awareness/Consciousness-raising: Continue to acknowledge Native (First) Americans during the service along with other "minorities" such as Blacks, etc.; Immersion in the understanding of race, poverty and how white privilege intersects with both...; More attention and support to the Native American experience/struggle, going beyond acknowledging that we are on their land.
	3	Inclusion: Attention to inequalities, tolerance, justice; Being more open to people of color and (sexual?) orientation; Commitment to LGBTQ inclusiveness; Inclusion, diversity of sources for sermon material; Inclusiveness, Welcoming of all; Inclusivity
	3	LGBTQ+: Also keep the balance between advocacy for Gays, Lesbians, etc. with advocacy for other groups; LGBTQ group support; More groups or programs for gay, etc.
	1	Continue to prioritize racial justice

Q19: What current church/congregational strengths, if any, would you like to see maintained or further developed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP/ GREEN SANCTUARY	3	Environmental issues; Environmental support; Seventh Principle practices, Environmental Justice; Green Sanctuary
	2	Earth stewardship education; I like hearing about 'green' initiatives.
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP/ FUNDRAISING	3	Business affairs; Sound financial management; We need to work more on Stewardship
	3	Creative Ideas called upon for increasing wealth within the church; Fund raising activities outside of the pledge drive; Auctions
HOSPITALITY TEAMS	2	Hospitality teams; Hospitality teams are great. Keep them.
INTERFAITH CONNECTIONS	1	Having activities and events that involve other faith communities.
INTERGENERATIONAL INTERACTION	1	I would love to see more events that are intergenerational so that I could meet our children and teens.
LAY LEADERSHIP/ VOLUNTEERISM/ COMMITTEE WORK	8	Lay leadership is a strength (x3), which needs to be continued; Excellent lay leadership; Lots of lay involvement; Member involvement in committees and activities; Strong lay participation; Wide participation by congregants
	4	Leadership development; Engagement of congregants. I'd like to see us find ways to engage folks more on the periphery, and I suspect that might mean getting some other folks to step back
	3	Specific Committees: Also, the Celebrations Committee does an outstanding job and I'm rarely disappointed!; CENJC group functions; Grounds committee
	2	Opportunities to volunteer as a way to give back; Opportunities for everyone to volunteer and be of service
	2	Solid volunteers; We have so many wonderful people who volunteer and take ownership of keeping the church running smoothly. I love that!
LIVING OUR VALUES (Strengths)	4	Growing as a community; Open-minded, willing to grow and constantly seeking feedback; Our ability to come together to discuss diverging views in order to solve problems; Willingness to adapt.
	2	Ability to participate (in) meaningful community action where we put our UU principles in action
	2	Balance of power; Democratic process
	1	I like that we have been living our faith through the many community programs within the church, art shows that are not only beautiful but educational and that we are being socially active through holding BLM signs and have capitol protest congregant turn-out.
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH	2	Continued focus on growth; Growing membership.
MUSIC	25	Music Program (strength to maintain/continue developing): Music/Music program (x23); Music activities; Music groups
	13	Praise for Music Program: Beautiful music from diverse cultures; Continue the excellent music program; Excellent music (x2) as well as varieties of music that inspire; Great music (x2); High-quality music program; I appreciate singing, especially by folk and jazz band; Love the music!; Music program is another strength; Music program is top notch and a big reason why I attend; Music program was great; Vibrant music program
	5	Choir: Choir (x4); Music is very important to me, the choirs and the congregational singing
	3	Musical Variety: Music (all kinds); Music program expanded to include more diversity (less Western European) by introducing black, Hispanic and more soul-filled music. We need to expand our musical comfort zones to create a more diverse congregation; Variety in music; It would be nice to add a children's choir.
PASTORAL CARE	4	More visibility of Pastoral Assistants; Pastoral care (x2); Support for members in crisis through the pastoral care program

Q19: What current church/congregational strengths, if any, would you like to see maintained or further developed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	28	Children's/Youth RE: Children's programs; Continued youth programs and support; Developing youth- they will be the future leaders; Good programs for children including high-school aged; RE and Summer Camps are great!; RE for children/youth (x9); RE Program/Religious Education (x14; described, as "wonderful and strong"); would like more visible social action
	5	Adult RE: Adult education/enrichment (x2); Broaden adult RE offerings; Focused adult classes/gatherings (for example, "death at dinner" or pot lucks); Love the opportunity for teaching & learning skills in special classes; Wealth and economic education
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE/ RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY	4	Accepting all personal beliefs as valid; Openness to all spiritual practices, without demonizing practices less 'liberal' than our own; Openness to all, regardless to spiritual path/journey; Respect and support of eclectic beliefs,
SENSE OF COMMUNITY/ BELONGING	11	Community: Acceptance of one another; Being connected as a community; Camaraderie; Community and unity; Sense of community (x6); Supportive congregation
	1	Feeling of participating with a large family that loves and respects each member and wishes to welcome new members while helping out others in need in this world.
	1	I love the community I have found through the sign language classes.
SERMONS	4	Inspirational/Stimulating: Inspirational sermons; Intellectual stimulation; Intellectually stimulating sermons or presentations; Stimulating sermons
	3	Based in Justice/Principles: Sermons that challenge us to think and/or be a better person; Social justice "sermons" from visitors, Loved having the Catholic Central football players visit; Strong sermon topics based on UU principles
	3	Thoughtful: Clearly delivered, not read, sermons that bear on my life as a person in this city, state, country and world; I appreciate thoughtful sermons; Outstanding minister who gives thoughtful sermons; Worthwhile, intellectual, wise sermons
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY	4	Discussion groups (x2); I enjoyed meeting at individual homes/areas where we could all speak about several different themes or questions that we reflected on during the month or week; I love the idea of forum, but have never participated; Maintain support of small groups
SOCIAL ACTION/ SOCIAL JUSTICE	24	Social justice: A sense of social justice; Affirmation of justice and working for the good of all people is a strength that seems to be growing; Commitment to social justice (x2); Focus on social justice issues and actions; Focus on Social Justice. We should have stayed least a half time staff person to fulfill this important function so we are better able to walk the walk; Social justice (x14, including education, efforts, focus, involvement, issues, programs, projects); Social justice on south side of Lansing; There is an energy for personal and community development related to our social justice work that I want to see harnessed for people; We're also doing more social justice work
	12	Social action: Our work on anti-racism and dismantling white supremacy; Social action (x7) and service; Social activism (action, not just words); Social Justice actions (x2); Strengthen overall Social Action as a church priority
	1	Our passion for social change
SOCIAL INTERACTION/ SOCIAL SUPPORT	10	Connecting members and friends (meeting socializing needs); Group activities; Involving and encouraging people to get involved in a variety of church programs; Love the opportunities for socializing; Opportunities to talk to one another (Forums, classes, book group, Circle Suppers); Providing many ways to be involved, connected; Social activities; Social activities for senior citizens; Social interaction; Talking to someone that you don't know; coffee hour
	3	Coffee hour; Nourishing coffee hour food and fellowship; Social hall/coffee hour
STAFF	7	Praise for staff: (Caring, competent staff; Great; Professional; Strong staff, Strong efficient staff, Strong staff team) (x6); Good working relationship among minister, staff, lay leaders
	1	Growing our staff
	1	Hiring staff with ethnic diversity

Q19: What current church/congregational strengths, if any, would you like to see maintained or further developed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
SUPPORT FOR BLM	3	BLM; Black lives matter action/signs; Black lives matter signs - being seen
RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL PREFERENCES	5	Various: Emphasis on covenant; Focus on spiritualism; Focus on values, community, inclusiveness; I think we have a fairly strong humanist orientation; Maintain the spiritual traditions. I don't need them to be a certain way, but want to know when I walk into the church I will have consistency
	2	A balance of intellectual and spiritual engagement; Would like to see another long-term settled minister that balances the spiritual and intellectual.
	2	Liberal education; Liberal values
	1	Not emphasizing, quoting, or singing songs from Judeo-Christian religions more than all of the other religions and beliefs available for our services.
TRANSPARENCY	2	Board leadership and transparency; Transparency as changes are occurring in the church
UU HISTORY/TRADITIONS	2	Explore information on UU historical figures; UU traditions
WELCOMING NEW-COMERS/ WELCOMING ALL	13	Welcoming: Friendliness; Our welcoming practices; The Welcoming statement every Sunday. It is what brought us back a second time. We wanted to see if you were REALLY following it. Seems you are!; We excel at being a welcoming community but there is always room for growth; Welcoming and accessibility to neighbors; Welcoming atmosphere. Smiles. A break in the week to focus on what truly matters; Welcoming atmosphere/community--it's a friendly, welcoming place to be (but need to improve making it this way for all); Welcoming congregation (x2); Welcoming environment for those who need a church home and community; Welcoming inclusiveness to LGBTQ individuals; Welcoming posture; Welcoming warmth
	7	Welcome ALL ('all' included in comment): Be welcoming to all; Connecting & welcoming of all; Feeling of welcoming to all; Welcoming (all dimensions); Welcoming to all; Welcoming environment for all people; Welcoming to all- Nothing needs to change in current style
	5	Newcomers and Visitors (explicit reference): Connecting with newcomers; I think we're doing better at welcoming new people in our new and larger location; Noticing people and helping them feel a part of things quicker; Welcoming visitors
	4	Openness ('Open' included in comment): Open and inclusiveness; Open congregation; Openness of the church to everybody; Openness to greet different people
WORSHIP SERVICE	10	Praise for Worship Service: I am quite pleased with the services that I have attended; Inspiring worship services (x2); Quality Sunday services (x2), love the...; Strong well-planned Sunday services; Sunday service (x2); Well-crafted Sunday services with thought-provoking words (and music and visuals); Uplifting/meaningful services
	5	Specific Elements: Closing affirmation; Joys and sorrows; Opening words/greeting; Thematic annual approach to worship; Time for silent meditation after inspiring words
	6	Congregational participation during services; Involve more lay people in presenting. There are some good speakers among us; I would like to see sermons and faith statements by members more; Lay involvement in services; Lay led services (x2) and music groups; Interaction between congregation and pulpit

UU Lansing Congregational Survey – Responses to Survey Question 20

Q20: What current church problems or issues, if any, would you like to see addressed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
BE MORE WELCOMING	3	Elitism; Overemphasis on intellectualism and cultural elitism. Too much deference is given to the college educated; Living up to the principle of being a welcoming congregation
	2	More discussion about what it means to be a welcoming church and what changes we are willing to make in order to be that; More work on what it means to be a welcoming community in a non-intellectual way
	2	So very hard to get connected as a new person or a friend; The congregation is so large that I have difficulty finding people to socialize with after the service
BUDGET/FINANCES	16	Budget & Finances, general: Budget deficit; Budget issues (X4); Budget/financial constraints that keep us from fully living our mission; Church budget is an issue this year, maybe subtle education on all of the things that are needed to keep our church going; Finances (x3); Financial stability (X2); Money (X2); Sound financial practices; We don't seem to be able to make our budget
	5	Need for sustained stewardship efforts: Build an inspired stewardship team to build the spirit of generosity within the congregation; Offering more specific programs to help members succeed in their personal lives, such as financial management throughout all stages of adult life, which would encourage greater stewardship, mentoring. This issue is becoming more salient as the middle class shrinks; we have less room to use our assets and income unwisely if we are to thrive; Stewardship/overall level of giving; We desperately need to enact year-round stewardship, develop new leaders on a continual basis, and grow our staff to meet the needs of the church and congregation; We need a year-round, on-going Stewardship committee; We have come a long way in raising the overall level of financial support for our church community, but we could be and do so much more if ALL members gave more of what they can. We need a vibrant group/committee to be thinking about nurturing stewardship and fundraising throughout the year
	2	Too many appeals for giving: Balancing the budget without emergency appeals each year; Constantly asking for more money
BUILDING/ PHYSICAL PLANT	8	Specific Problems/Suggestions: Better kitchen storage/ fellowship hall area; Broken couches in the middle school room; Develop peaceful, calming, reflective area in memorial garden; Expand hearing loop system to include choir area; Install a baffle in sanctuary; Playground/play scape/outdoor facilities for children (x2); Solar panels to reduce costs, provide renewable energy; Sound system
	2	Better utilization of the potential of our building both to serve the community and (secondarily, in the process) possibly to generate revenue; What to do with the unfinished part of building
COMMUNICATION/ COORDINATION of ACTIVITIES	2	Clarify Policies and Procedures: Better and easier processes getting events and programs approved through program council; There should be an orientation process in place to make sure new members or anybody who is interested to get acquainted with the organizational (and governance) structure.
	9	Communication: Better reporting back to congregation on decisions, organizational issues Communication; Communication between committees needs big work. We have quite a ways to go addressing tough issues, like racism, because of conflict avoidance; Communication is somewhat haphazard; Keep members informed each month of Board discussions and actions; More communications on what's happening in committees, program council, etc.; Need better systems of communication; More transparency in decision making
COVENANT GROUPS	2	I would like to see covenant groups reconvened; Lack of covenant groups

Q20: What current church problems or issues, if any, would you like to see addressed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION/ DE-CENTERING WHITENESS	24	Diversity (lack of, need to increase): Continued efforts at attracting a diverse congregation; Creative Ideas called upon and implemented for increasing diversity within the church; Develop ways to increase diversity or connect w/ diverse groups, churches; Develop a larger culture (of?) diversity; Diversity (x2); Growing a more diverse congregation. Creating activities/affiliation groups where minorities (POC, LGBTQ folks) within the congregation can connect with the church; continue to work out our inclusiveness of diversity, with regard to a wide variety of parts of identity (including, but not limited to race); I would like to see a focused effort to attract more non-white congregants; I would like to see more churchwide workshops like 'beloved conversations' to help the congregation with issues surrounding bias training, lgbtq+ issues, immigration issues, and women's issues. It creates understanding and community trust; Inclusion of more males in church services; Increase diversity in race and class, including helping people to feel truly included and important to the church; Increased sensitivity and awareness to racial injustice within our church and the community as a whole; Lack of diversity (x2);; More diversity in terms of race and age (young adults); More non-white membership; Our learning how to truly be inclusive, transparent, and accepting of all; Racial and economic class sensitivity;
	7	Addressing white-centeredness/Anti-racism work: Clearer identification and attention to the degree to which UUCGL represents mostly white culture; Development of an intentional ongoing program to help us dismantle white supremacy within UU Lansing (various opportunities for white people to do their own work); Our work on anti-racism and dismantling white supremacy; Proactively teach our whole congregation how to own our white privilege (for those of us who do experience it) and the damage it does moment to moment to others; Racial justice; White Privilege, White Male Privilege; UU commitment to anti-racism
	3	Perceived internal barriers to diversity: Ensuring that the voices of ALL identity groups are listened to, with no identity group forced to the margins; I think we gloss over an inherent conflict between not wanting to appeal to only well-educated higher income, and yet still wanting to pay staff competitive salaries and have programming that takes staff to provide. I think we need to be comfortable with being liberal and intellectual – nerdy; Thinking we are more open to diversity then we really are. We say we want diversity, but we really want people that look diverse, but think the exact same as us
EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES for LEADERSHIP	8	Need for leadership development: Develop a better process for finding volunteers developing their potential as lay leaders; Domination of lay leadership (committee positions/chairs) by a very limited number of people (x3); Lack of systematic development of lay leadership, A few individuals do great stuff but get burned out; More leadership development (x3), and volunteers for various programs & activities
GOVERNANCE	4	Better congregational structure; Examine current governance structure—so that it's more “mission-driven” and enhances communication between board, program council (and committees) and the congregation as a whole; Less duplication and more transparent system that allows operations (lay and professional staff) to be governed by a board or trustees that sets policy, but doesn't mix themselves up in operations; Rebalanced church governance and operations
MEMBER/VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT	8	Need to improve volunteer engagement/variety of opportunities: Better follow up when member volunteers for an activity More people involved in volunteer work and missions of the church. Need more volunteers in the classrooms; Opportunities to get involved; Volunteerism is hampered by low expressed expectations; Would like more opportunities to volunteer one day at a time, not on Sundays
MEMBERSHIP GROWTH	5	Attracting more members; Development of a plan to expand membership or if such plan exists, publicize it better; Getting the word out about what we offer to the greater Lansing area to engage with more people and increase membership; Membership growth; We need more outreach to people who might really love our church. We need to welcome visitors; Offer covenant groups again.
MUSIC PROGRAM	2	More upbeat music: Better upbeat music; Music - more upbeat and diverse less "churchy"
OUTREACH	4	It was my understanding that we moved to our present location to become more active in the south Lansing community, I see very little of that happening; It would also be good to have more activities or programs that would bring in young people and/or community member even if they aren't UU affiliated; More outreach, to be widely known as a regional leader in liberal religion; Outreach
	1	Social media platform, streaming services

Q20: What current church problems or issues, if any, would you like to see addressed in the immediate or near future?		
Theme/Topic	# of Responses	Written Comments
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2	Improve Youth RE: The absence of any REAL social justice, anti-racism work in RE. Our kids have been treated as passive and delicate when they are neither. Over the time I volunteered in RE, I NEVER saw a lesson plan that I thought even began to foster an understanding of racism, bias, discrimination, prejudice in any meaningful way; Would love to see the RE classes be more organized and have high schoolers follow a curriculum
	2	Adult RE; More classes focused on education, growth, and stewardship
SOCIAL JUSTICE/ SOCIAL ACTION	1	A cohesive Social Justice committee
	1	Environmental sustainability, Reproductive rights
	1	Increased participation in larger community in terms of social justice issues; Lack of social activism (too much emphasis on words, not deeds), outreach to the south Lansing community
STAFF ISSUES/STAFFING	5	Need more staff/new minister: Adding more staff consistent with our growth in attendance; Custodian; I've heard that there needs to be more paid staff, more help in the office in order for our congregational goals to be met. I would like to see that addressed; Need more staff (or regular, reliable volunteers)
YOUTH MINISTRY/ ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE	6	Also, losing young people. Disconnect between youth and adults; We are an aging church that, in practice, is not always particularly appealing and inviting to young families -- Children are rarely a part of the service, except for token moments and events; It would be nice to see more children/young adults involved in the service, even if just for a few minutes; More involvement of young adults and young people in general in governance and leading programs and/or worship; Strategy to invite younger members and diverse members; Youth ministry
	1	More intergenerational interactions