



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

A STATISTICAL PROFILE

2022

2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022

WITH REFLECTION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS
RESEARCH FROM THE UCC CENTER FOR ANALYTICS, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT, AND DATA (CARD)

QUICK SUMMARY OF UCC STATISTICS

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

CONGREGATIONS: 4,724

MEMBERS: 745,230

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP: 160*

MEDIAN MEMBERSHIP: 101

AVERAGE IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 52**

MEDIAN IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 36**

AVERAGE CONFIRMATIONS: 1.1

AVERAGE CONFESSIONS: 0.7

AVERAGE TRANSFERS IN: 0.9

AVERAGE REAFFIRMATIONS: 0.9

AVERAGE DEATHS: 3.9

AVERAGE TRANSFERS OUT: 1.2

AVERAGE CHILD BAPTISMS: 1.2

AVERAGE ADULT BAPTISMS: 0.2

OPEN AND AFFIRMING: 34.6%

ACCESSIBLE: 86.2%

WEB PRESENCE: 70.4%

RACE/ETHNICITY BY CONGREGATION

WHITE/EURO-AMERICAN: 83.4%

AFRICAN AMERICAN: 4.9%

ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER: 3.9%

HISPANIC/LATINO(A): 0.4%

NATIVE AMERICAN: 0.6%

BI-RACIAL/MULTI-RACIAL: 6.4%

OTHER: 0.5%

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

AVERAGE BASIC SUPPORT: \$3,985

AVERAGE OTHER UCC GIVING: \$1,962***

AVERAGE TOTAL OCWM: \$5,946

AVERAGE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: \$321

AVERAGE NEIGHBORS IN NEED: \$198

AVERAGE CHRISTMAS FUND: \$209

AVERAGE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH: \$111

5 FOR 5 CHURCHES: 25.6%

AVERAGE OTHER GIFTS: \$9,792

AVERAGE OPERATING EXPENSES: \$176,720

AVERAGE TOTAL INCOME: \$236,670

**Unlike in the Yearbook, this number reflects the average only among churches with reported membership numbers as compared to the average across all churches. As a result, the denominator for this calculation is slightly lower, resulting in a slightly higher average.*

***The COVID-19 pandemic likely continued to have a widespread impact on in-person worship attendance figures for 2021 and may have impacted other categories of data as well*

****Other UCC Giving is a 2017 data collection name and process change formerly known as Special Support. Prior to 2017 this data was primarily reported by conferences on behalf of their churches with the churches reporting only UCC Special Support (giving that was given directly to UCC agencies and organization). In 2017 this was shifted and churches reported the bulk of this giving with the conferences reporting only the four Special Mission Offerings.*

Note: Calculations of church quick stats have changed since 2019. Previously, the averages were calculated only among churches that reported non-zero numbers of confirmations, confessions, etc. This year's calculations include churches that reported a "0" for the averages in order to more closely represent these figures across all churches. Other Gifts, Operating Expenses and Total Income do not include \$0 in the computation of their averages.

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INTRODUCTION



Who are the people, churches, and communities that are part of the United Church of Christ (UCC)? The answer to this question has changed over time and remains vibrant and evolving. The COVID-19 global pandemic that started in 2020 disrupted various aspects of life in and beyond the church. Years later, it continues to affect who we are and how we are called to be a united and uniting denomination.

This resource is an attempt to bear witness to that evolving vibrancy by providing a numeric snapshot of the broader landscape that makes up the various contexts of the UCC. You'll encounter fascinating trends and patterns that aim to capture who and how we are in this particular timeframe.

Throughout the profile, you can find "Reflections," which are questions to assist local church leaders in applying this data in their specific contexts. They can help facilitate conversations for the purpose of visioning future possibilities.

Statistics, for some, are a foreign language. For others, they're familiar and comforting, even. Whether you're at either edge or somewhere in between, we hope the statistical tidbits presented here will provide a general overview of the denomination and assist us in illuminating the past, realizing the present, and envisioning the future. In addition, there are 28 Special Reports highlighting various areas of ministry within the United Church of Christ.

Information for the profile primarily comes from data reported through the UCC Data Hub annually to produce the *UCC Yearbook & Directory*. We hope you enjoy this edition!

THE CENTER FOR ANALYTICS, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT, AND DATA (CARDD)
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

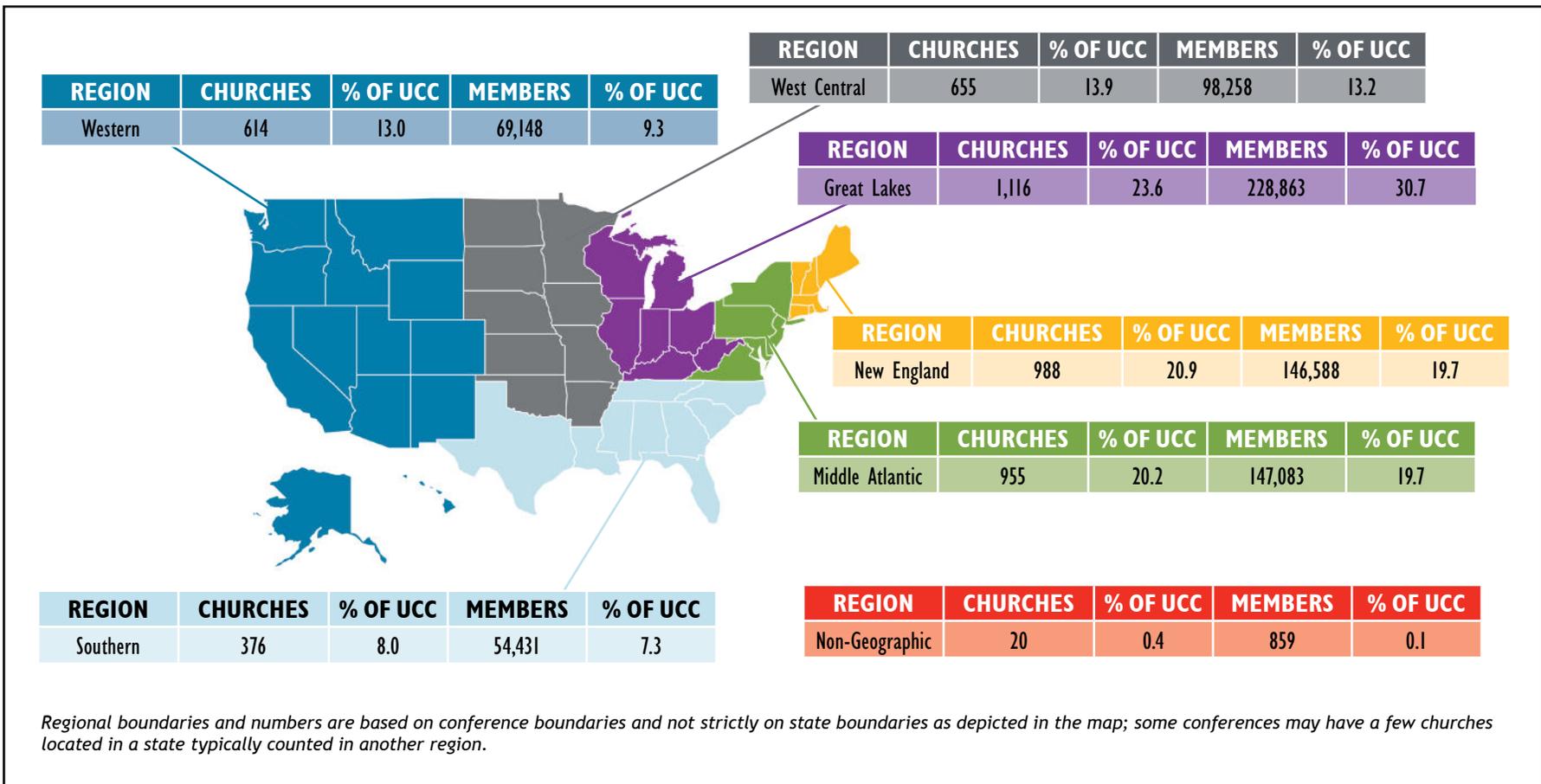
CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS

At the end of 2021, there were 4,724 congregations in the United Church of Christ with a total of 745,230 members. The UCC’s congregations represent about 1.4% of total U.S. congregations* while the membership of the UCC represents about half of one percent (0.49%) of total U.S. religious adherents* and about 0.22% of the U.S. population.** UCC membership is concentrated in the Great Lakes, Middle Atlantic, and New England regions of the country.

*2010 U.S. Religion Census <http://www.usreligioncensus.org/>

**U.S. Census <https://www.census.gov>

UCC CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS BY REGION



TOP FIVE STATES: UCC CONGREGATIONS

STATE	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER)
Pennsylvania	11.8 (556)
Massachusetts	7.0 (332)
Ohio	6.9 (324)
Illinois	6.7 (316)
New York	5.1 (240)

TOP FIVE STATES: UCC MEMBERSHIP

STATE	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER)
Pennsylvania	13.4 (99,576)
Illinois	10.4 (77,134)
Ohio	9.8 (72,795)
Massachusetts	7.2 (53,616)
Connecticut	7.1 (52,606)

A detailed list of congregations and membership statistics by Conference can be found in the 2022 UCC Yearbook & Directory, p. 6.

In examining the distribution of congregations by state, 11.8% of all UCC congregations were located in Pennsylvania, which reported the greatest number of congregations. In total, the top five states with the most congregations contained over one-third (37.5%) of all UCC congregations.

Membership, as with congregations, was concentrated largely in the Middle Atlantic, Great Lakes, and New England states. Nearly half of UCC members (47.9%) reside in the top five states by membership. Membership has become slightly more concentrated in these top five states over the past two years, with 47.1% of membership residing in these states in 2019. Notably, the churches in the states with the highest number of churches do not necessarily have the highest number of members. For example, Connecticut only has 4.8% of UCC churches, but has 7.1% of UCC members, while New York has 5.1% of UCC churches but only 3.8% of UCC members. This indicates that churches in Connecticut, on average, have a larger membership than churches in New York.

REFLECTIONS

What does membership mean for your church? How do the sustaining changes in a pandemic-affected world impact the ways people connect with your church? How are individuals who are not included in the membership figures interacting with your church? How else might you measure these people's participation in ways that better reflect how people engage with your church? What other ways could you capture how the people in your community are directly or indirectly connected to or impacted by your church?

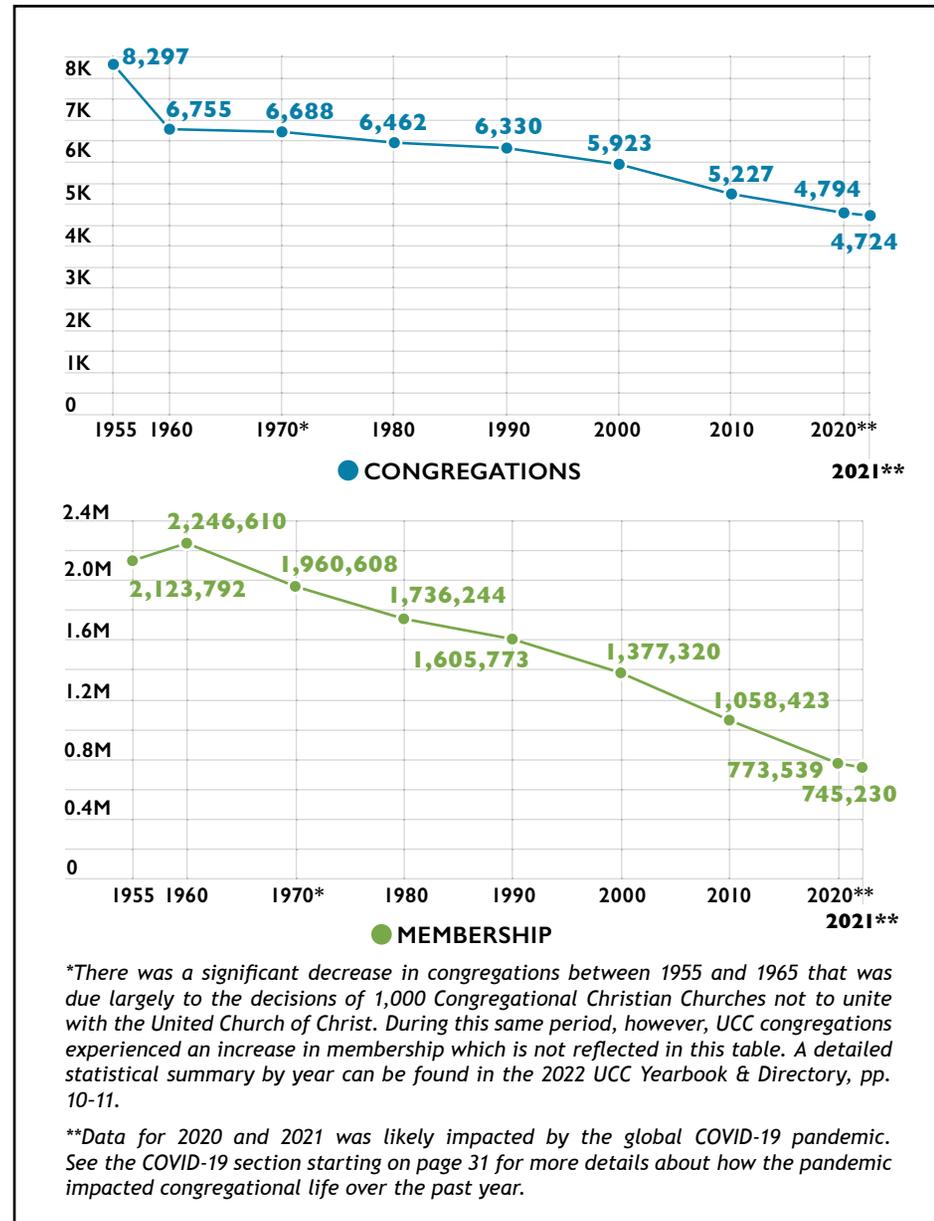
GROWTH AND DECLINE

Similar to other Protestant denominations, the UCC has experienced a decline in the numbers of congregations and members in recent decades. From 2011 to 2021 alone, the UCC encountered a net loss of 470 congregations and 254,785 members. Some of this decline, however, began prior to the formation of the denomination in 1957 as the number of congregations steadily decreased despite membership increases in the UCC’s early years.

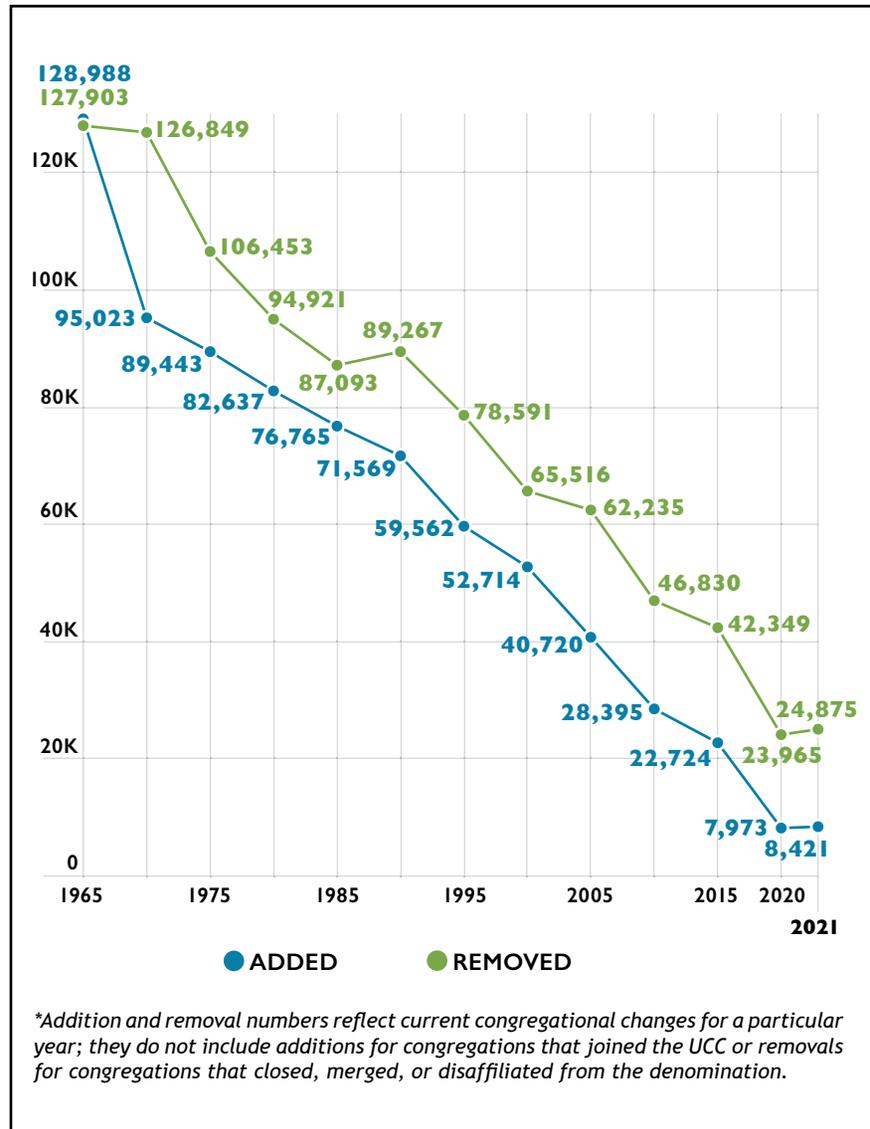
In 2021, 85 congregations were removed from denominational records. This was an 18.1% increase from 2020, when 72 churches were removed from denominational records. These numbers are similar to the number of removals in previous years; while 2019 had an unusually low number of churches removed (43), 85 churches were removed in 2018 and 74 in 2017. From 2005 through 2007, the UCC experienced a loss of nearly three congregations per week on average (mostly as a result of General Synod’s resolution regarding same-sex marriage). In the past year, however, the loss rate has been about one and two thirds (1.63) congregations removed from denominational records per week on average; this is slightly higher than the rate for 2020 (1.38 congregations per week).

Over the past year, 15 congregations have been added to denominational records (this includes churches that received standing, affiliated, or merged with another congregation), which is an increase over the prior year (12 congregations added). In total, 77 congregations received standing and were added to the UCC over the last five years, which is equivalent to a new congregation being added about every three weeks or slightly more than one and a quarter congregations being added every month.

UCC CONGREGATION AND MEMBERSHIP CHANGES BY DECADE (1955–2021)*



MEMBERSHIP ADDITIONS AND REMOVALS OVER TIME (1965–2021)*



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND DECLINE

In general, the number of members removed each year exceeds the number of members added for that same time period. Members are removed from congregational records for several reasons including death, transfer of membership to another denomination, or updating of local church membership records.

The net difference between UCC members added and removed from congregational membership rolls has continued to decline as total membership has decreased. In 2021, there was a net removal of 16,454 members, which was somewhat higher than the past two years (15,992 in 2020 and 12,341 in 2019) but consistent with other recent previous years (16,302 in 2018 and 16,600 in 2017) and less than earlier points in the 2010s (19,625 in 2015 and 18,435 in 2010). (Note that net loss figures represented here are different than the net change figure represented in the *UCC Yearbook & Directory*, which is based on total membership.) Over time, the number of members added and removed have both declined although the net loss contributing to this decline has generally become smaller. The particularly small number of members added in 2020 compared to other years is likely an effect of COVID-19; this number rose slightly in 2021 and future years of data will demonstrate whether this is part of a long-term trend.

REFLECTIONS

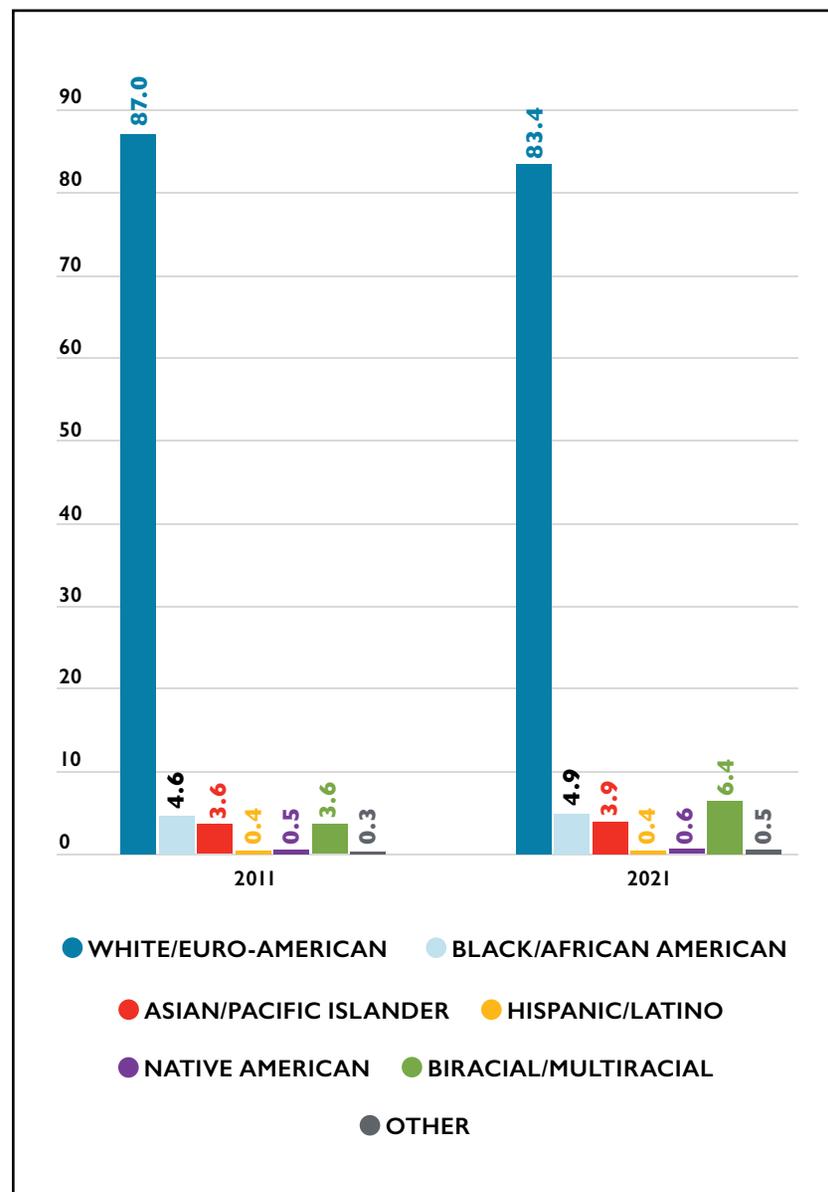
How has your church's membership and worship attendance changed over the last decade? What trends in the last 10 years have you noticed at other churches in your community? In what ways have the last two pandemic years impacted churches closing, merging, or changing denominational affiliation? How do these closed, merged, changed affiliation, and new churches compare to the existing churches? Have new churches opened in your area despite the pandemic? What trends have you noticed in non-church organizations in your community, such as schools and nonprofits?

CONGREGATIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

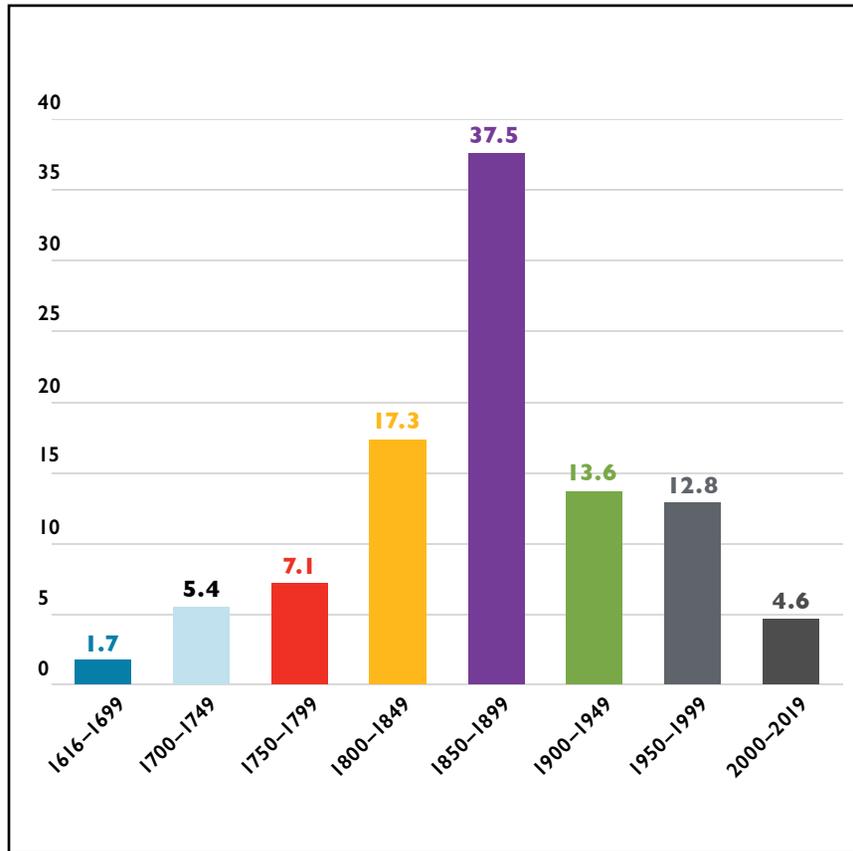
A substantial majority of congregations in the UCC self-identify as White/Euro-American (meaning that most members of a congregation belong to that particular racial/ethnic group). Over time, however, the UCC as a whole is becoming more racially/ethnically diverse. Over the last decade, the percentage of self-reported primarily White/Euro-American congregations decreased from 87.0% in 2011 to 83.4% in 2021. During this same time frame, the percentage of Biracial/Multiracial congregations increased from 3.6% in 2011 to 6.4% in 2021 and Other congregations increased from 0.3% to 0.5%. In addition, the percentage of Black/African American congregations increased from 4.6% in 2011 to 4.9% in 2021 and the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander congregations increased from 3.6% in 2011 to 3.9% in 2021. The proportion of Native American congregations also increased slightly, from 0.5% to 0.6%.

One cause of these shifts over time may be due to the fact that the majority of congregations that close, merge, or disaffiliate with the denomination are primarily White/Euro-American congregations, thus decreasing the overall proportion of these congregations, while newer UCC congregations tend to be more racially/ethnically diverse.

UCC CONGREGATIONS BY RACIAL/ETHNIC SELF-IDENTIFICATION (PERCENTAGE)



UCC CONGREGATIONS BY DATE OF ORGANIZATION (PERCENTAGE)



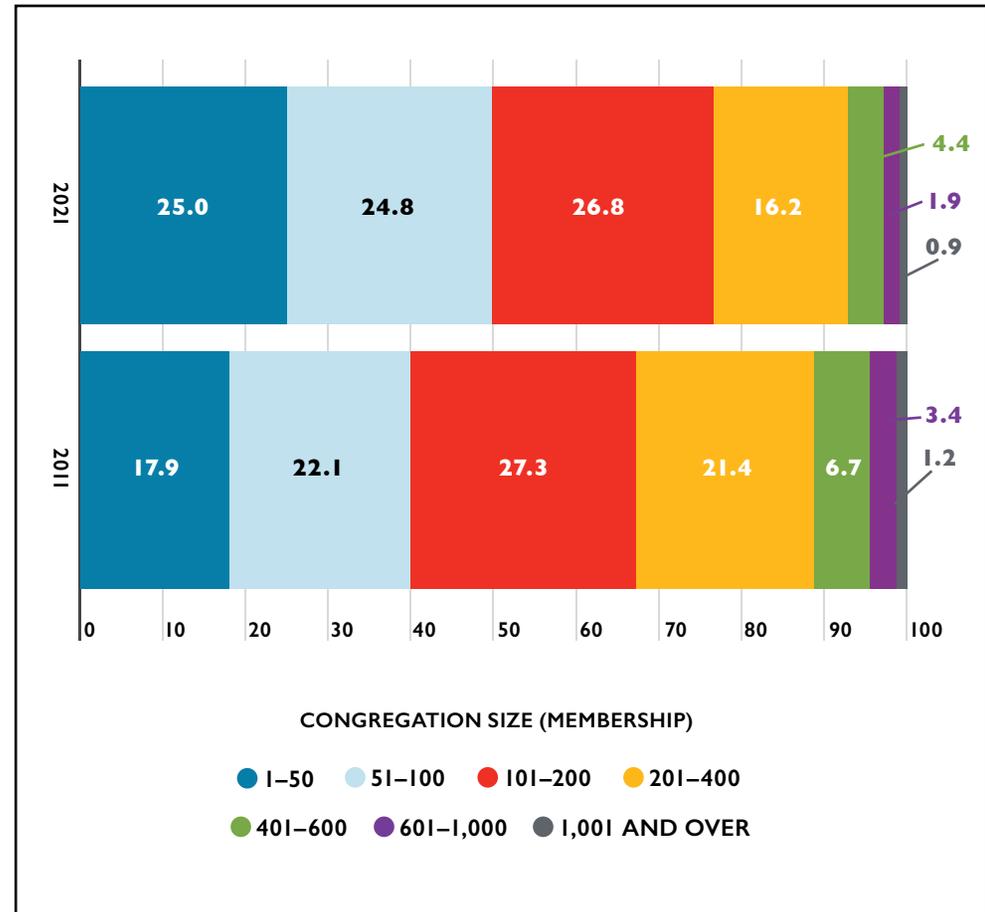
CONGREGATIONS BY DATE OF ORGANIZATION

While the UCC has only been in existence since 1957, many of its congregations were founded by predecessor denominations. The vast majority of churches (84.9%) were organized before the UCC's founding year. The latter nineteenth century (1850-1899) was the most common founding era for UCC churches while just under 1 in 20 UCC churches (4.6%) has been founded in 2000 or later, a percentage that has been increasing steadily. The average founding date of congregations is 1873 while the median founding date is 1875.

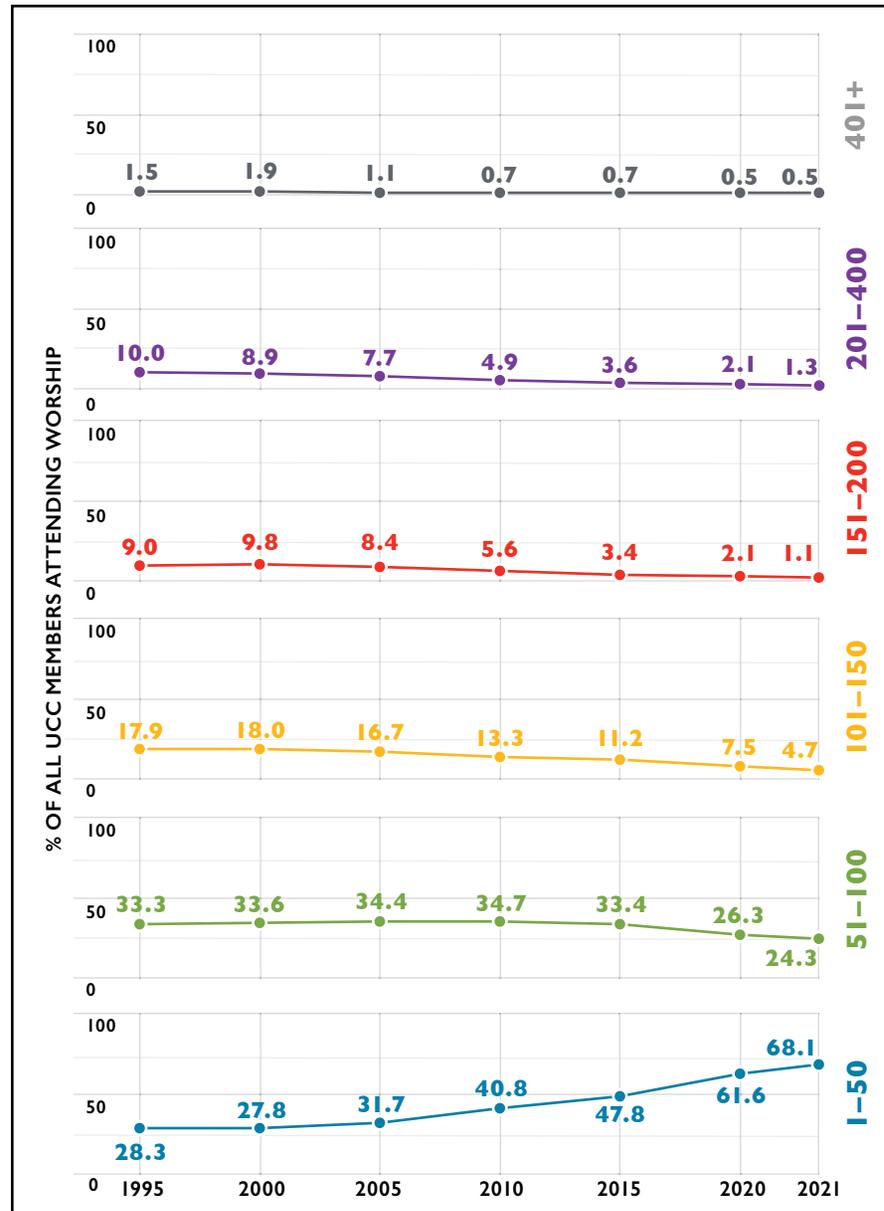
CONGREGATION SIZE BY MEMBERSHIP

The vast majority (92.8%) of UCC members belong to congregations with 400 or fewer members with half (49.8%) attending congregations with 100 or fewer members. This reflects an overall trend within the UCC of membership being increasingly concentrated in smaller churches; in 2011, 88.7% of UCC members belonged to churches with 400 members or fewer and 40.0% belonged to churches with 100 members or fewer. The biggest changes in the past 10 years have been in churches with less than 50 members, which have increased from 17.9% to 25.0% of members since 2011, and churches with 201-400 members, which have decreased from 21.4% to 16.2% of members since 2011.

PERCENTAGE OF CHURCHES BY CONGREGATION SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF UCC CONGREGATIONS BY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE



IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

When considering worship attendance figures rather than membership size, even more congregations are categorized as smaller churches. In 2021, over 90% of churches in the UCC (92.4%) had a weekly worship attendance of 100 or fewer, which is 16.9% higher than in 2010 and 31.0% higher than in 2000. Over time, the percentage of congregations in the highest worship attendance categories has decreased steadily, with the most dramatic decreases occurring in the three categories spanning congregations from 101 to 400 worship attenders since 1995—from 36.9% of congregations with worship attendance in this range in 1995 to 7.1% of congregations in 2021. As a result, over two thirds (68.1%) of all UCC congregations now have a weekly worship attendance of 1-50 individuals.

While these shifts toward smaller worship attendance have been present for decades in the UCC, the restrictions on gathering size many churches faced for in-person worship during the COVID-19 pandemic may be partly responsible for the increases in the 1-50 category in 2020 and 2021. Also, the widespread practice of virtual worship during the pandemic may have also impacted in-person worship attendance patterns. For information on virtual worship attendance in 2021, please see page 31.

REFLECTIONS

How does weekly in-person worship attendance usually shift in your church throughout different times of the year? How do the pandemic years continue to affect your church's typical patterns of in-person worship attendance? In what ways does the worship experience differ among a smaller group compared to a larger group? What worship trends have you noticed in your congregation and community?

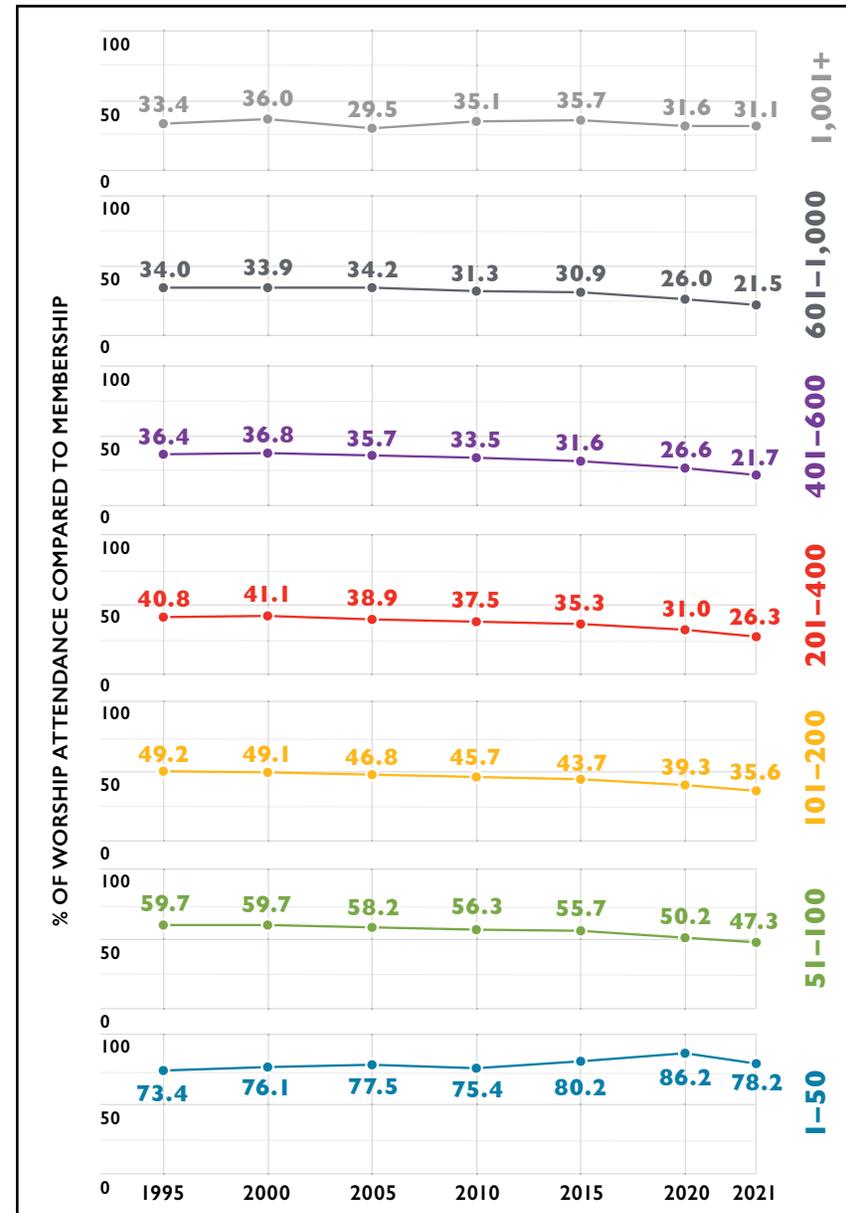
IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The relationship between in-person worship attendance and membership continues to shift incrementally over time. From 1995 to 2021, the proportion of people attending in-person worship services compared to membership declined, with two exceptions—the largest churches, which have effectively remained stable, and the smallest churches, which have overall seen an increase. In 1995, churches with 1,001+ members reported on average that 33.4% of the number of people attended in-person worship compared to the total membership; while this figure has risen and fallen in the subsequent decades, the current figure is 31.1%. On average, in 1995 there were 73.4% of people attending in-person worship compared to the overall membership of a 1-50 member congregation; this percentage has also vacillated over time but had currently risen to 78.2% in 2021. The overall patterns suggest that a greater share of members may attend in-person worship in smaller congregations than larger congregations, though this cannot be known for certain, as those who attend in-person worship may not all be members. In addition, given the restrictions many churches faced for in-person worship during the COVID-19 pandemic, the attendance for in-person worship in 2020 and 2021 may have been limited for health and safety reasons.

REFLECTIONS

Are the people who worship at your church the same as or different from the people who are members? How much do local, national, and/or global events shape participation and attendance at your church? Are there particular days or worship events that people are more likely to attend? Are non-members who attend worship looking to join a church, just visiting your area for a short time, or are there other reasons? How do you know?

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF WORSHIP ATTENDANCE TO MEMBERSHIP BY SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) AND ACCESSIBLE CONGREGATIONS BY MEMBERSHIP SIZE

MEMBERSHIP	ONA	ACCESSIBLE
1–50	23.4%	74.6%
51–100	31.8%	84.9%
101–200	40.3%	90.8%
201–400	43.9%	96.8%
401–600	39.8%	97.1%
601–1000	54.4%	95.6%
1001+	45.0%	97.5%

CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATIONS

Since 2005, there has been an 171.0% increase in the number of Open and Affirming (ONA) congregations in the United Church of Christ, from 600 churches in 2005 (10.9% of all UCC churches at that time) to 1,626 churches (34.6% of all UCC congregations in 2021) being ONA. The proportion of ONA churches with 100 or fewer members, however, continues to grow each year.

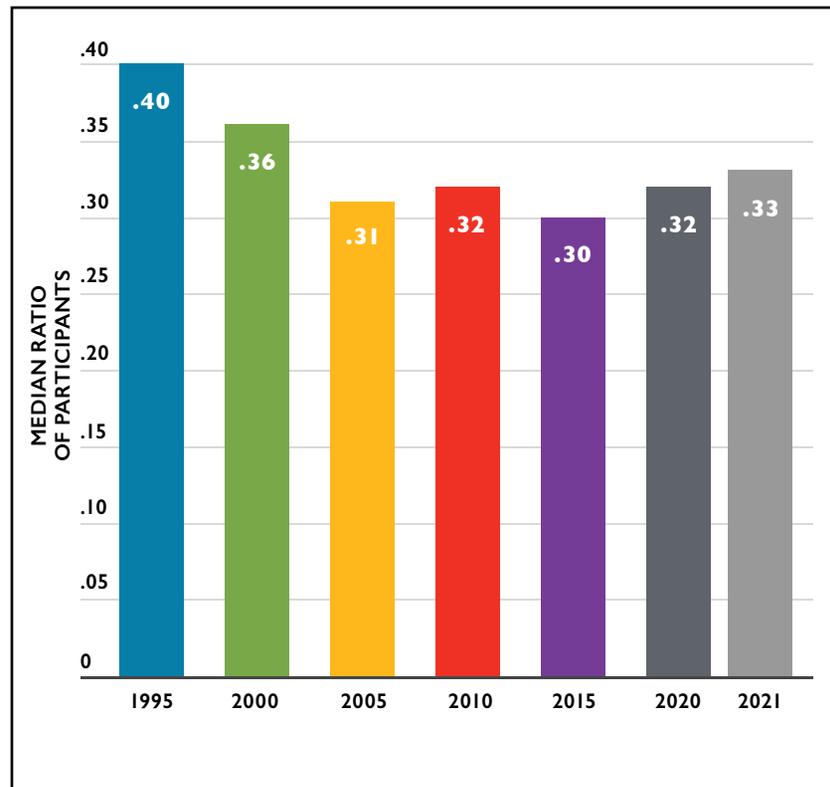
Self-reported accessibility also tended to increase with church size. While the specific types and degrees of accessibility among these congregations are unknown, it is possible that these figures partly reflect the resources churches have available to address the accessibility of their space.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/ FAITH FORMATION

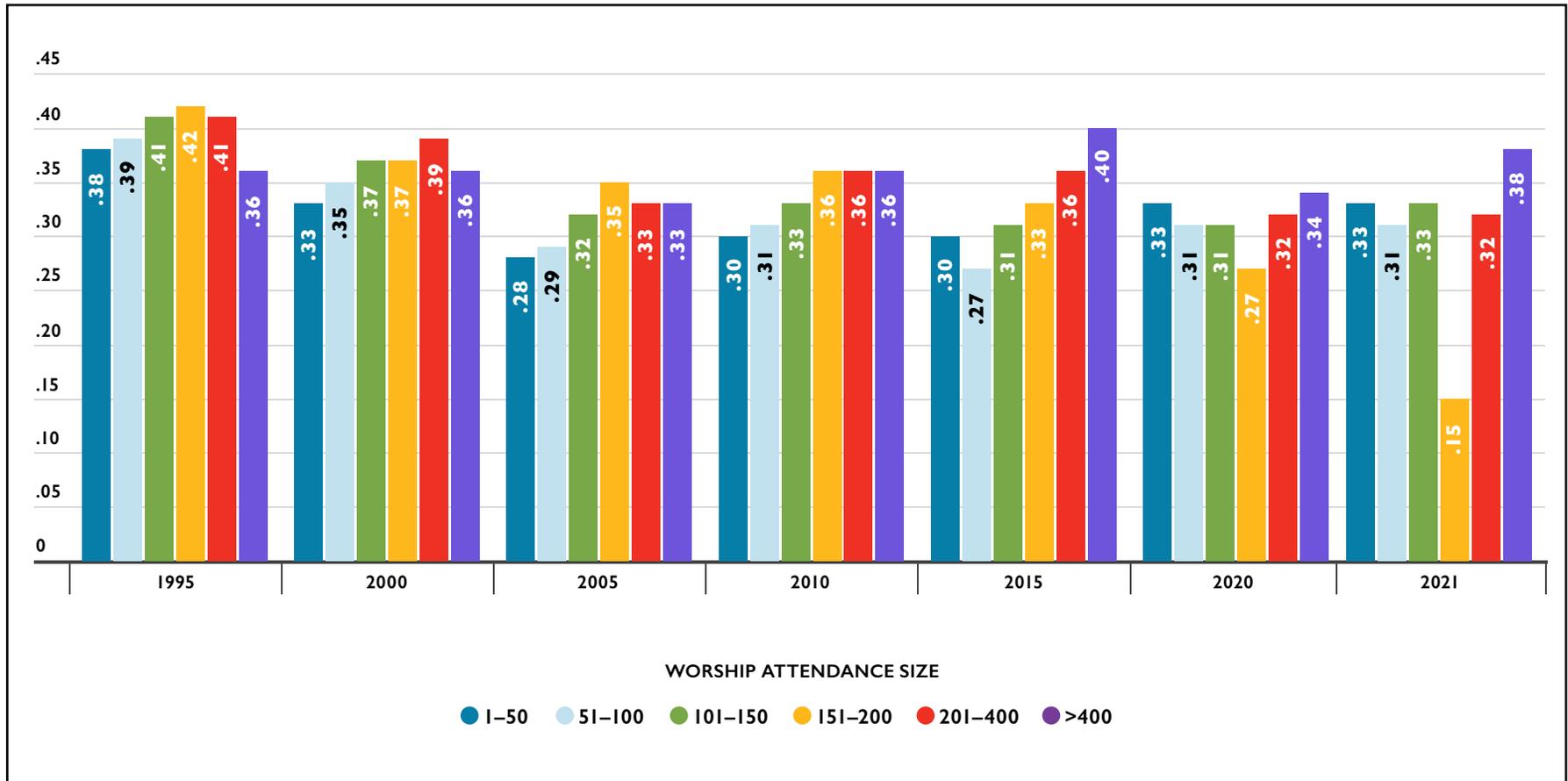
Since the 1950s, enrollment and attendance numbers for Christian Education/Faith Formation programming (also known as Church School or Sunday School enrollment in previous years) has been declining along with membership numbers. When thinking about Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance in terms of all the people who may be present on a Sunday morning (i.e. in comparison to worship attendance), the median percentage of Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance compared to worship attendance has been quite stable since 2005, hovering between 30-32% when comparing 5-year increments (2021 actually shows a slight increase in the ratio to 0.33). This suggests that just under one third of people who attend worship services also attend Christian Education/Faith Formation programming, though these categories may not perfectly overlap in practice. While there have been unusually large decreases in Christian Education/Faith Formation enrollment in 2020 and 2021 (a net change of 19,903 in 2020 and 15,668 in 2021 people compared to 7,164 in 2019)—most likely a result of the pandemic—the median percentage of attendance remained similar to previous years.

In comparing Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance to worship attendance by church size, the smallest and the largest churches tend to have the highest ratios of Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance to worship attendance. This may be due to different factors: smaller churches might have higher ratios due to the close connections among congregations that are common in these congregations, while larger churches may have higher ratios due to capacity for organized programming.

MEDIAN RATIO OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/
FAITH FORMATION ATTENDANCE TO WORSHIP
ATTENDANCE OVER TIME (1955–2021)



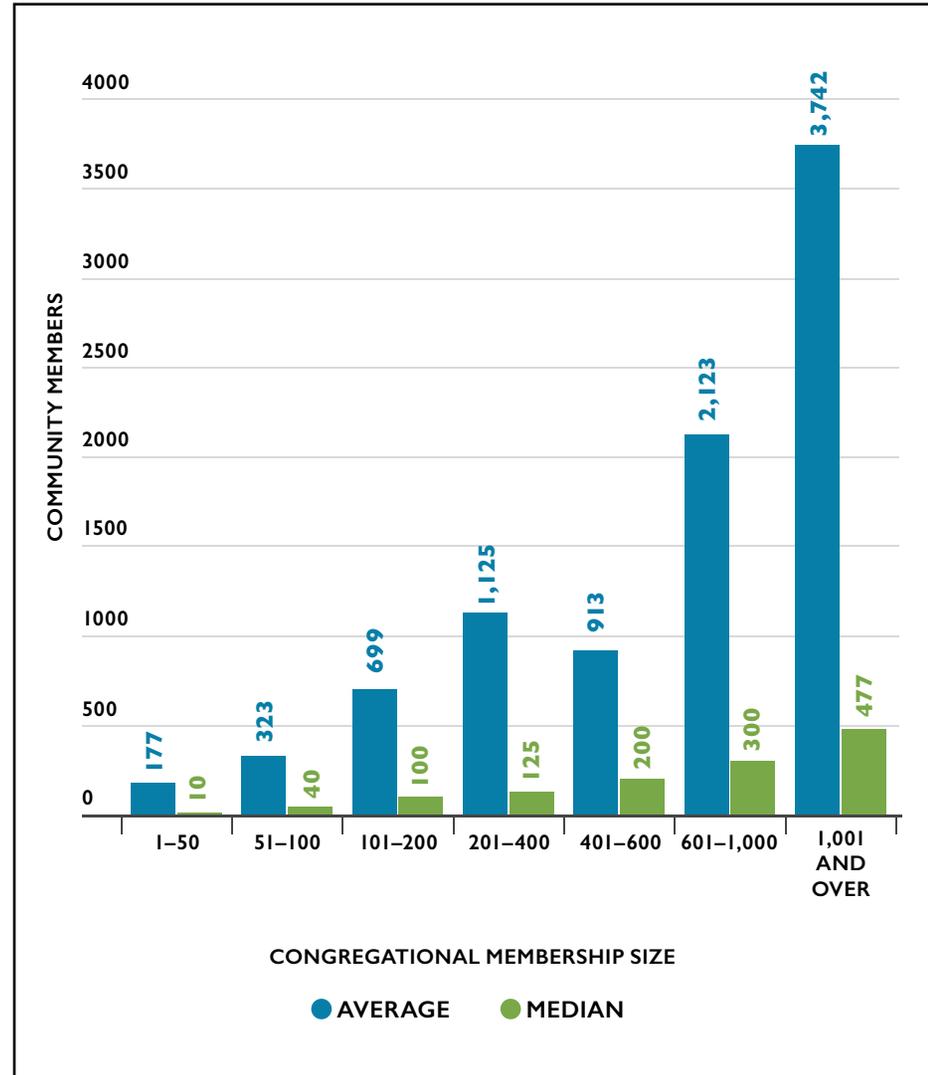
RATIO OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION ATTENDANCE TO WORSHIP ATTENDANCE (MEDIAN) BY CHURCH SIZE



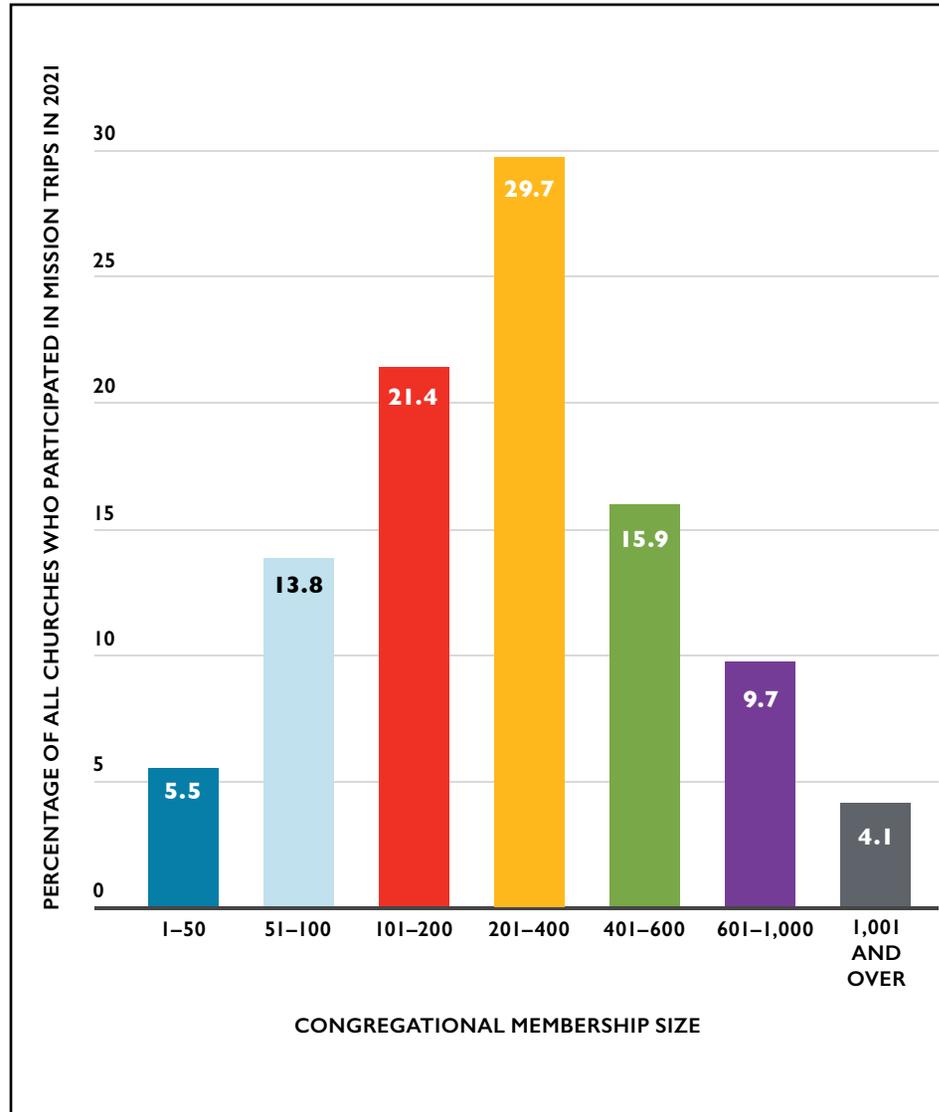
CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH

Congregational reports indicated that an average of 671 community members and a median of 70 community members were impacted by each local church’s outreach activities and initiatives in 2021. The total number of community members engaged in 2021 was 1,221,322 with 38.5% of congregations reporting. This continues to be lower than the 47.2% of congregations who reported engaging 2,055,868 in 2019 (38.8% of congregations reported engaging 1,211,038 in 2020), which likely reflects the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregations’ opportunities to engage with their communities. The average number of community members is notably much higher than the median, which suggests that some churches may have a particular focus on community outreach or may engage in types of outreach that tend to engage more people than other types of outreach.

AVERAGE AND MEDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED BY CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP SIZE IN 2020



DISTRIBUTION OF CONGREGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN MISSION TRIPS BY MEMBERSHIP SIZE



MISSION/IMMERSION/SERVICE TRIPS

Since 2014, congregations have been asked to report whether members participated in a U.S. or international mission/immersion/service trip. In 2021, 145 (3.1%) congregations reported that members had participated in these types of trips. Given the widespread travel restrictions due to COVID-19 in 2021 and limited opportunities for virtual mission/immersion/service trips, this low rate compared to 2019, when 574 congregations participated in mission/immersion/service trips, is not unexpected. While still much lower than the 2019 figures, the 2021 figures are slightly higher than those for 2020, when 116 congregations (2.4%) reported participating in these trips. Among churches that did report participating in mission/immersion/service trips in 2021, mid-sized churches most frequently engaged in this type of activity, with churches of 101-400 members conducting half of all these trips.

LOCAL CHURCH FINANCIAL TRENDS

Average operating expenses for local UCC congregations in 2021 was \$176,720, a \$3,786 (2.2%) average increase from 2020. Average total income for a local church in 2021 was \$236,700—a \$16,195 (-7.3%) average decrease from 2020. Both the average operating expenses and income for local congregations increased from average amounts reported over the past decade—from \$161,943 in expenses (a 9.1% increase) and \$212,399 in income (a 11.4% increase) in 2011.

In 2011, Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) giving represented 4.3% of total local church expenditures. This percentage decreased to 3.2% of total local church expenditures in 2021.

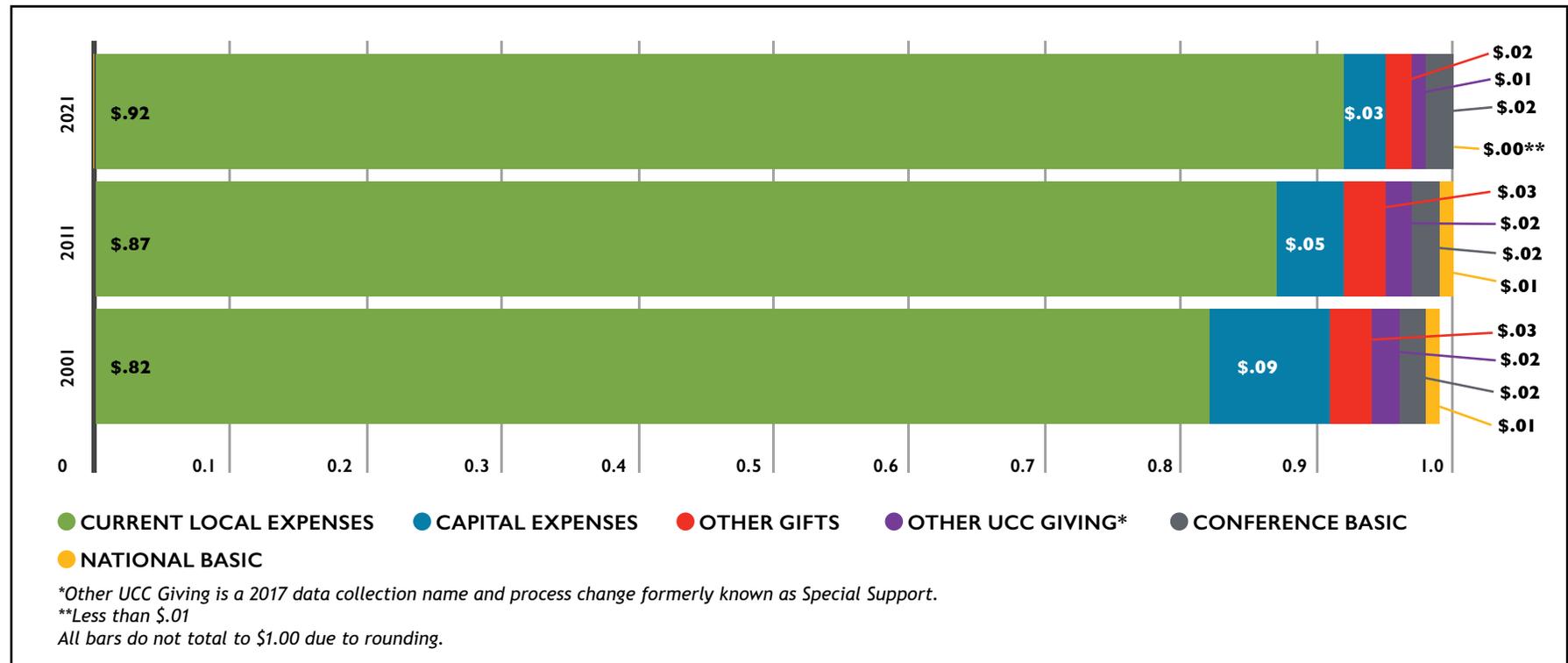
TOTAL LOCAL CHURCH EXPENDITURES (2017–2021)

EXPENDITURE	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Current Local Expenses	\$850,592,022	\$856,790,219	\$865,208,873	\$802,588,216	\$807,964,727
Total Mission Support	\$58,151,694	\$54,910,992	\$51,535,392	\$46,095,281	\$44,631,304
Capital Expenses	\$55,196,673	\$55,852,902	\$50,254,926	\$34,893,962	\$27,893,391
TOTAL	\$963,940,389	\$967,554,113	\$966,999,191	\$883,577,459	\$880,489,422

THE CHURCH DOLLAR

In the last two decades, the distribution of the church dollar has experienced some noticeable shifts. Current local expenses have increased by \$.10 while all others have decreased or remained steady. All types of UCC Giving (Conference Basic, National Basic and Other UCC Giving) have decreased or remain unchanged in the past 20 years.

CHANGING DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCH DOLLAR



REFLECTIONS

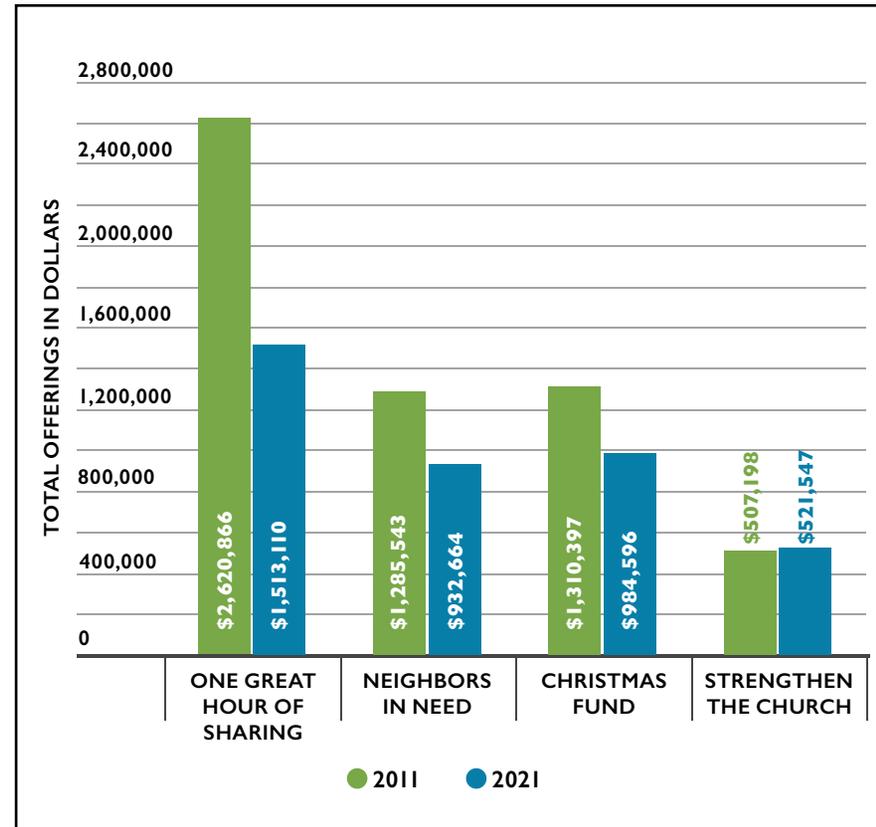
With increased demands on local churches to maintain buildings, provide salaries and benefits for pastors and other staff, and respond to needs in the community, how does your congregation balance between internal expenses and mission giving to the wider church and other organizations? What might someone learn about your congregation by only looking at the financial summary? How do your vision and/or mission inform your church's decisions about its budget? In what ways would you consider modifying your budget to represent your mission and values more accurately, if at all?

STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION SUPPORT

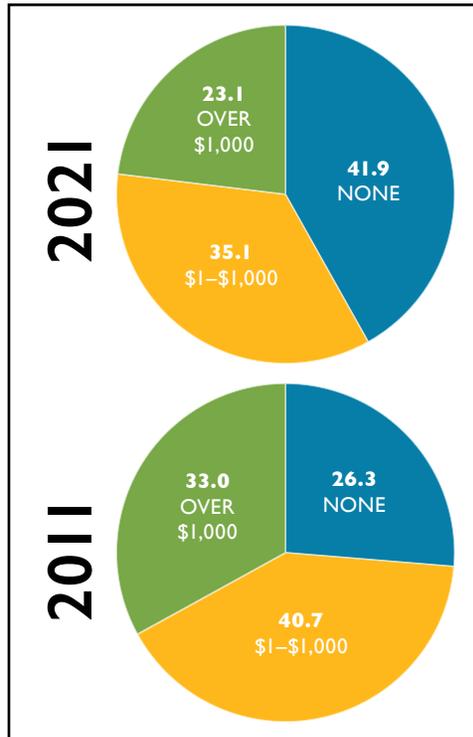
Totals for mission support and giving by local congregations of the United Church of Christ decreased over the past several years. Over the past decade, the number of churches that have not given to any Special Mission Offering has increased. In terms of dollars given, all the Special Mission Offerings have seen a decrease this year compared to 2011, except Strengthen the Church which has seen an increase of 2.8%. The total giving to all Special Mission Offerings in 2021 decreased by 31.0% when compared to 2011. While this is not as large of a 10-year decrease as seen from 2010-2020 (48.4%), it is still quite larger than seen from 2009-2019 (11.7%). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may be continuing to contribute to this decline.

Total mission support for 2020 decreased from the previous year by \$1,463,977 (-3.2%) and has decreased 23.3% since 2017. The data reported in the 2021 edition of the Statistical Profile indicated larger than usual changes in giving over the previous year. For example, there was a 10.6% decrease in Total Mission Support from 2019 to 2020 while the yearly changes observed in 2018 and 2019 were 5.6% and 6.1%, respectively. This year the giving changes appear to be returning to levels seen prior to 2020. Other UCC Giving increased 1.7% in 2021 compared to 2020.

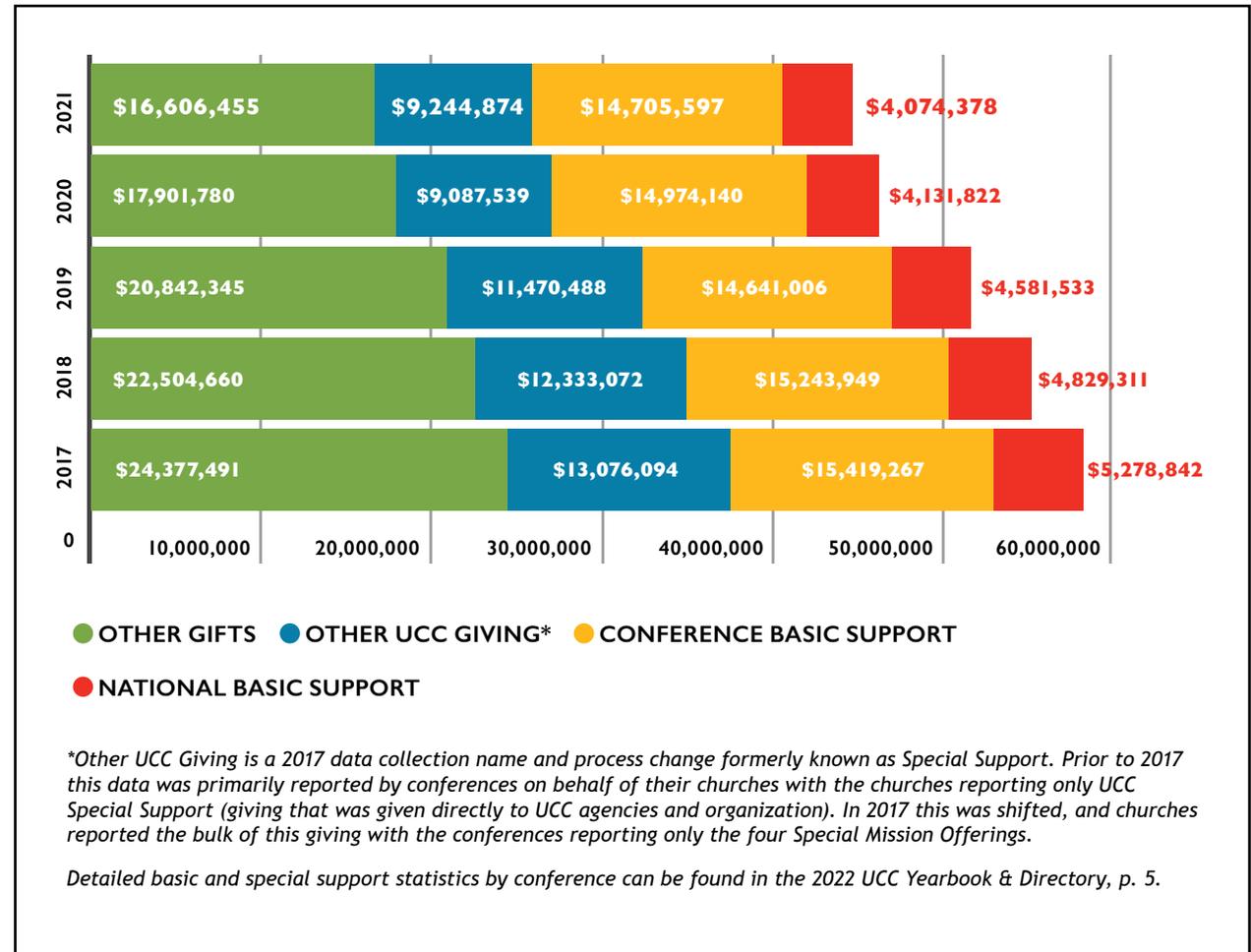
LOCAL CHURCH SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS



PERCENTAGE OF UCC CHURCHES CONTRIBUTING TO SPECIAL OFFERINGS BY DONATION SIZE



TOTAL MISSION SUPPORT



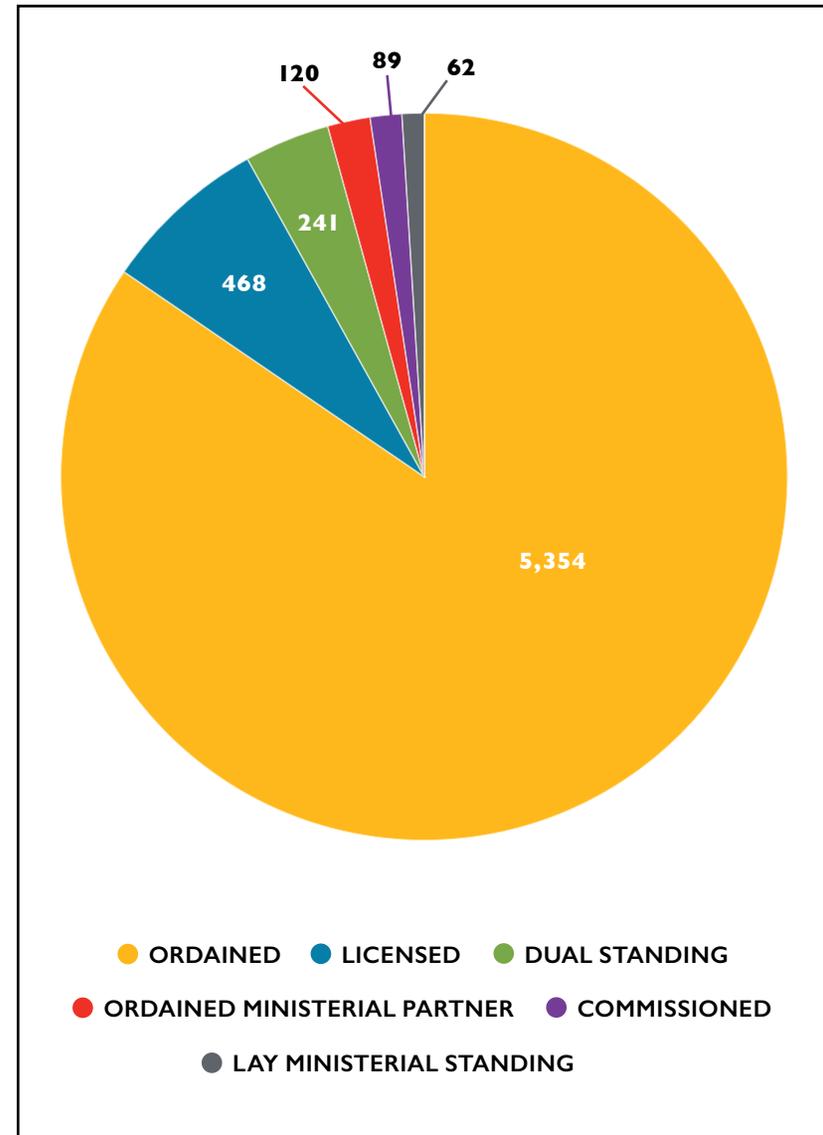
REFLECTIONS

How do these overall mission support trends align with or differ from your own congregation's trends? Which special offerings of the UCC—through your Association, Conference, or the National Setting—did your congregation support? Were there any other special appeals that your congregation supported this past year? How has the pandemic impacted your church's giving?

SUMMARY OF UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

As reported for 2021, there were a total of 6,334 active (non-retired) Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ (Ordained, Licensed, Lay Ministerial Standing, Dual Standing, and Ordained Ministerial Partner). Ordained Ministers were the largest percentage of active ministers reported (84.5%); and Licensed Ministers comprised the second largest group of Authorized Ministers (7.4%). In addition, one active (non-retired) minister holds standing in the Congregational Christian Church.

ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED AUTHORIZED UCC MINISTERS



SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS



SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS

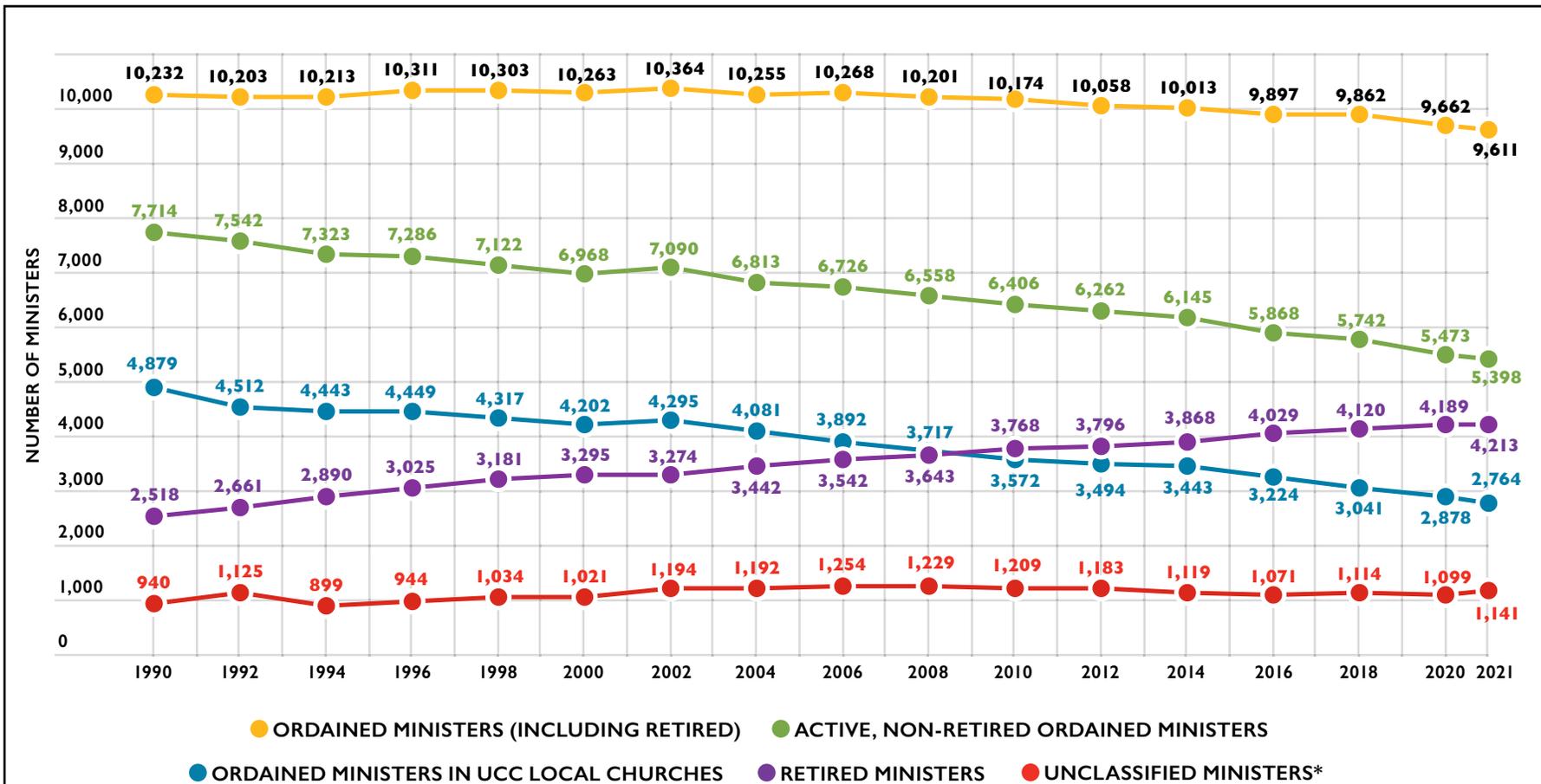
At the end of 2021, there were 9,611 reported Ordained Ministers in Full Standing, including Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti. Of those 9,611 Ordained Ministers, nearly one-half (44.3% or 4,257) were employed, with 69.0% (2,939) of those employed actively serving in a local church (either a UCC church or non-UCC church). Four out of ten (43.8% or 4,213) were Retired Ministers or Pastor Emeriti, and 11.9% (1,141) were unclassified (ministers without a reported specialty at the time of Yearbook production) or were on a leave of absence.

Over the last 36 years (1985 to 2021), Ordained Ministers only had a numerical net decrease of 474 (4.7%). However, the number of employed Ordained Ministers decreased by over one third (-40.3%), while Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti saw an increase of 88.1% over this same 36-year period.

TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY OVER TIME

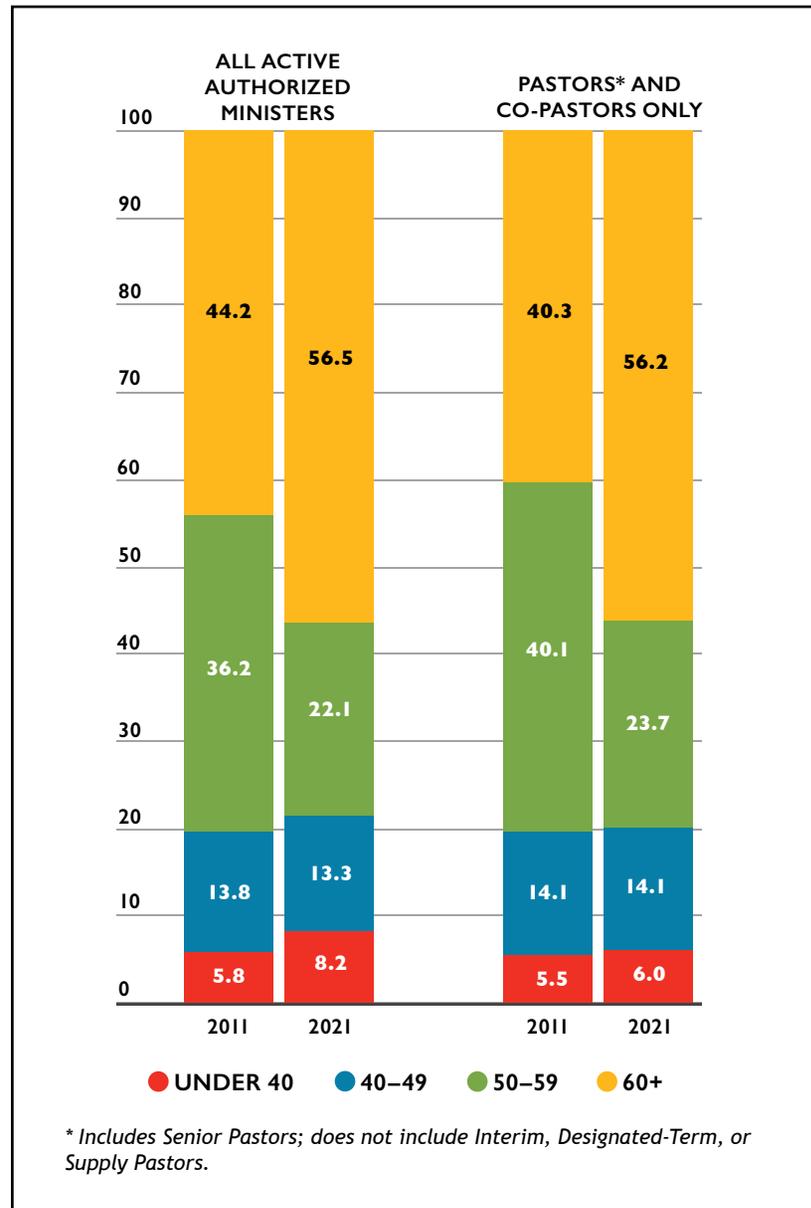
Since 1990, the number of Ordained Ministers has remained relatively stable, though there are slight incremental decreases in more recent years. At the same time, the number of Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti has increased steadily. Notably, since 1990 the decline in ordained ministers (-6.1%) has been much smaller than the declines in congregations (-25.4%) or membership (-53.6%) during the same time frame.

TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY (1990–2021)



* Ministers who don't have a particular position listed on their record; includes Leave of Absence ministers, though the number of these ministers is minimal within the overall total.

ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY AGE (PERCENTAGE)



AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY AGE

Data regarding Authorized Ministers in the denomination reflects a population of predominantly older clergy. Over one half of all active (non-retired) Authorized Ministers were age 60 and above (56.5%) and over three-quarters (78.6%) were 50 and older. Local church pastors and co-pastors are increasingly comprised of the oldest clergy in the UCC, with over half (56.2%) of all congregations in 2021 being served by authorized ministers aged 60 and above while only 40.3% were served by this group in 2011. The number of congregations being served by clergy under 50 has remained relatively stable, although notably the proportion of congregations served by clergy under 40 has actually increased in the past 10 years, from 5.8 to 8.2% of congregations.

REFLECTIONS

How do the presented trends relate to the trends in your church? What patterns have you noticed in the approximate ages of the pastors who have served your congregation? As retirees and second- and third-career individuals increasingly enter seminary and become ordained, how do you anticipate this might impact the UCC and other similar traditions in the future? What are ways you can prepare for such an impact?

AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The majority (84.6%) of all active, non-retired UCC Authorized Ministers identified as White/Euro-American, with 15.4% identifying as non-white. Among the various types of authorization, Ministers with Dual Standing continue to be the most racially/ethnically diverse group with three in ten (31.7%) ministers identifying as non-white. Commissioned Ministers and ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing were the least racially/ethnically diverse authorization groups, both in terms of having the highest rates of clergy identifying as White/Euro-American and reflecting the fewest racial/ethnic categories.

UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY RACIAL/ETHNIC SELF-IDENTIFICATION (PERCENTAGE)

RACE/ETHNICITY	ORDAINED (N = 4,732)	LICENSED (N = 347)	LAY MINISTERIAL STANDING (N = 34)	COMMISSIONED (N = 65)	DUAL STANDING (N = 164)	ORDAINED MINISTERIAL PARTNER STANDING (N = 95)	OVERALL (N = 5,437)
White/Euro-American	85.4	79.3	85.3	87.7	68.3	93.7	84.6
Black/African American	10.2	11.8	8.8	12.3	12.2	4.2	10.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.3	4.6	2.9	0.0	16.5	0.0	2.8
Hispanic/Latino	1.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.1	1.4
Native American	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.1
Biracial/Multiracial	0.5	2.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Other	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2

Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

ORDAINED MINISTERS IN LOCAL CHURCHES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Regarding racial/ethnic representation in local church pastor positions, different patterns emerge based on position. Among senior/solo pastors, clergy who identify as Black/African American were proportionally under-represented (7.8% compared to 10.2% of all clergy) while clergy who identify as White/Euro-American were represented at a slightly higher rate among senior/solo clergy (86.5%) compared to clergy overall (84.6%). Associate/Assistant Pastors were notably more racially/ethnically diverse compared to clergy overall, with 29.4% of clergy self-identifying as non-white compared to 15.4% of all active, non-retired Authorized Ministers.

PERCENT OF LOCAL CHURCH PASTOR POSITIONS OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

RACE/ETHNICITY	SOLO/SENIOR PASTOR	CO-PASTOR	ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT PASTOR	INTERIM/DESIGNATED-TERM/SUPPLY PASTOR
White/Euro-American	86.5	82.7	70.6	93.8
Black/African American	7.8	14.7	24.4	3.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.5	1.3	2.0	1.2
Hispanic/Latino	1.2	1.3	2.3	0.0
Native American	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Biracial/Multiracial/Other	0.9	0.0	0.7	1.2

Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY GENDER

In total, 52.7% of active, non-retired ordained ministers in the United Church of Christ identified as female, 46.9% identified as male, and 0.4% identified as transgender/gender-variant. This is a notable shift from the early 2000s, when according to the 2003 UCC Statistical Handbook only 27% of all Ordained Ministers identified as female. Among other categories of Authorized Ministers, Licensed, and Dual Standing ministers proportionately identified more often as male, while more than 4 out of every 5 Commissioned Ministers identified as female.

GENDER OF ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS (PERCENTAGE)

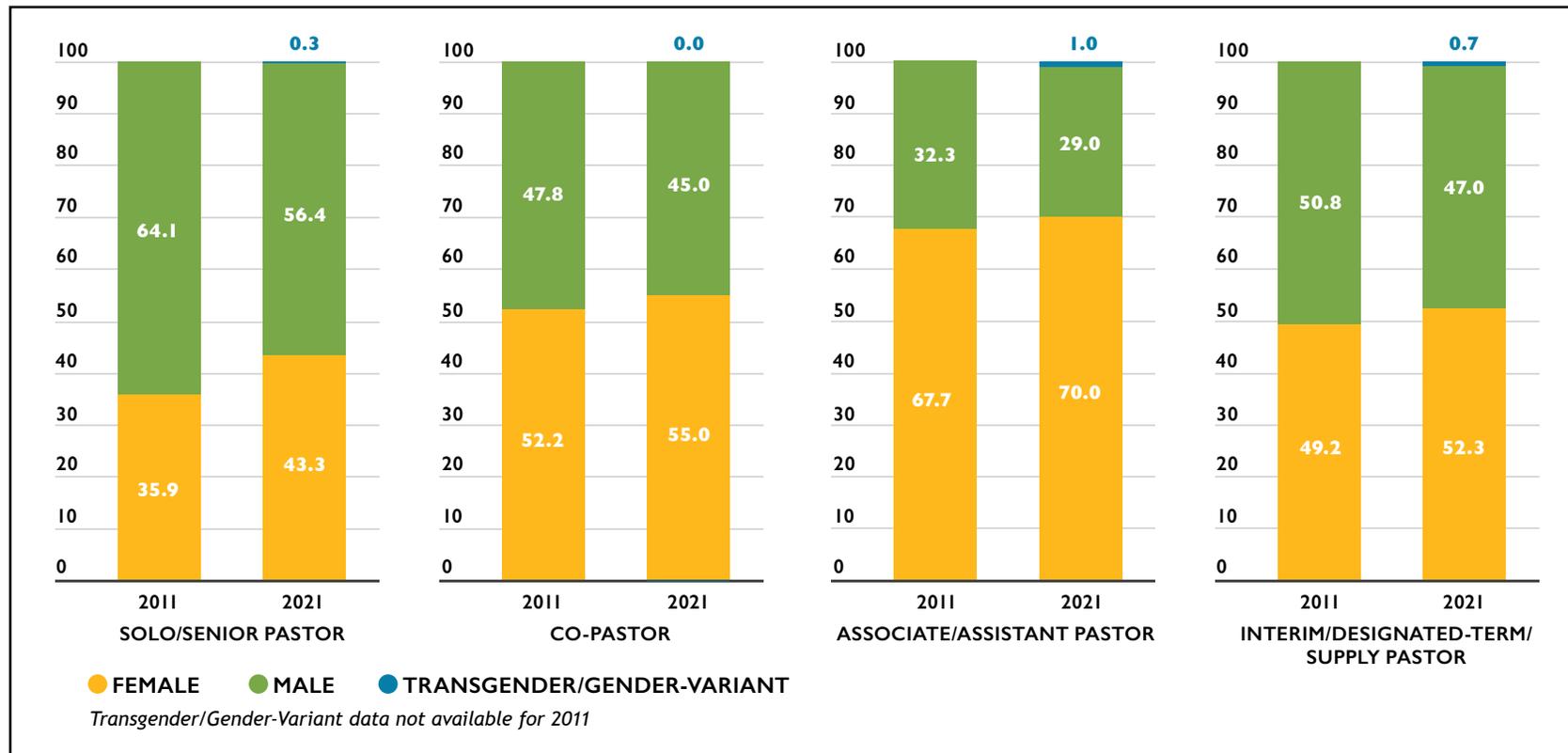
AUTHORIZATION	FEMALE	MALE	TRANSGENDER/GENDER-VARIANT
Ordained	52.7	46.9	0.4
Licensed	40.7	59.3	0.0
Lay Ministerial Standing	50.0	47.7	0.2
Commissioned	83.9	16.1	0.0
Dual Standing	34.5	65.5	0.0
Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing	56.5	43.5	0.0

Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.

ORDAINED MINISTERS IN LOCAL CHURCHES BY GENDER

The percentage of active, non-retired female Ordained Ministers serving in local UCC church pastoral positions has continued to increase, from 28.7% in 2004 to 47.6% in 2021. Slightly more than four in ten (43.3%) senior/solo pastors identified as female in 2021, compared with 28.7% in 2004 and 35.9% in 2011. Over half (55.0%) of co-pastors and interim/designated-term/supply pastors (52.3%) and over two-thirds (70.0%) of associate/assistant pastors identified as female.

LOCAL CHURCH PASTOR POSITIONS OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS BY GENDER



REFLECTIONS

What social trends could be driving the increased proportion of female clergy overall? Why might female clergy be underrepresented in senior/solo pastor positions? How can call processes and church policies create expansive welcoming and supportive environments for all clergy? What is something you could do today to begin cultivating such an environment?

ORDINATIONS AND MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT

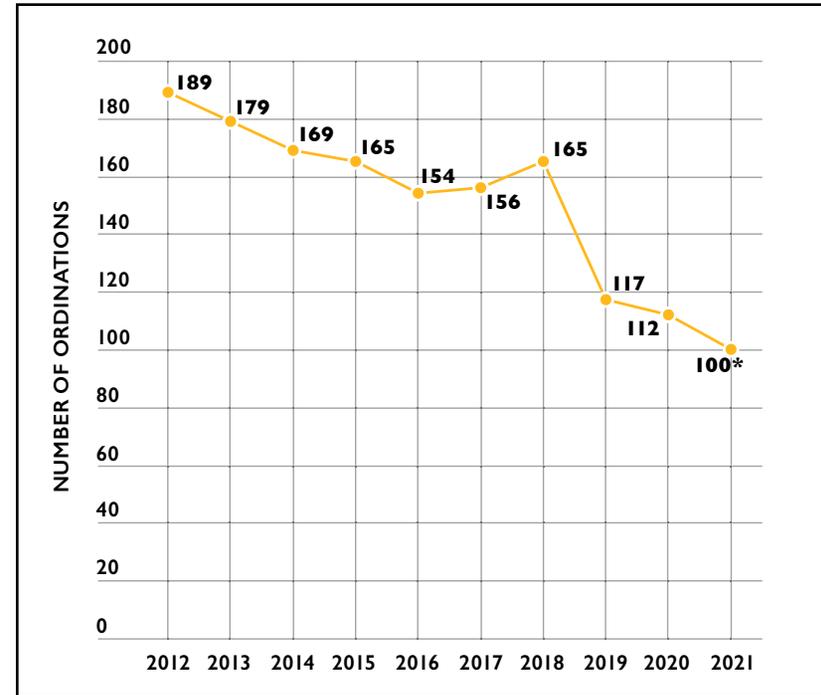
The number of ordinations per year decreased over the past decade from 189 in 2012 to 100 in 2021.* Overall, the number of ordinations has been in decline except for 2018 when there was a notable increase in ordinations over the previous year. When reviewing trends over the past several decades, however, ordination numbers fluctuated in similar ways; there is a distinctive downward trend; however, there are years when numbers increased more than 5% and began the downward trend again.

As of May 2022, there were 606 active Members in Discernment (MIDs) on record within the denominational database. Some regions—New England, Southern, and Western—had proportionally more MIDs compared to their overall membership proportion in the UCC.

Among MIDs who report their gender identity, females comprised 60.6% of all MIDs, a greater percentage than that of current female Authorized Ministers, which currently comprise 52.7% of all Authorized, non-retired clergy. It is important to note that nearly one-third (31.4%) of all MIDs do not have a gender recorded. Members in Discernment were also more racially/ethnically diverse than current Authorized Ministers with 27.2% identifying as non-white (compared with 15.4% of all Authorized Ministers identifying as non-white).

*Number of ordinations for 2021 and recent previous years is expected to increase in 2022 as additional records are updated by Conferences.

UCC ORDINATIONS (2012–2022)

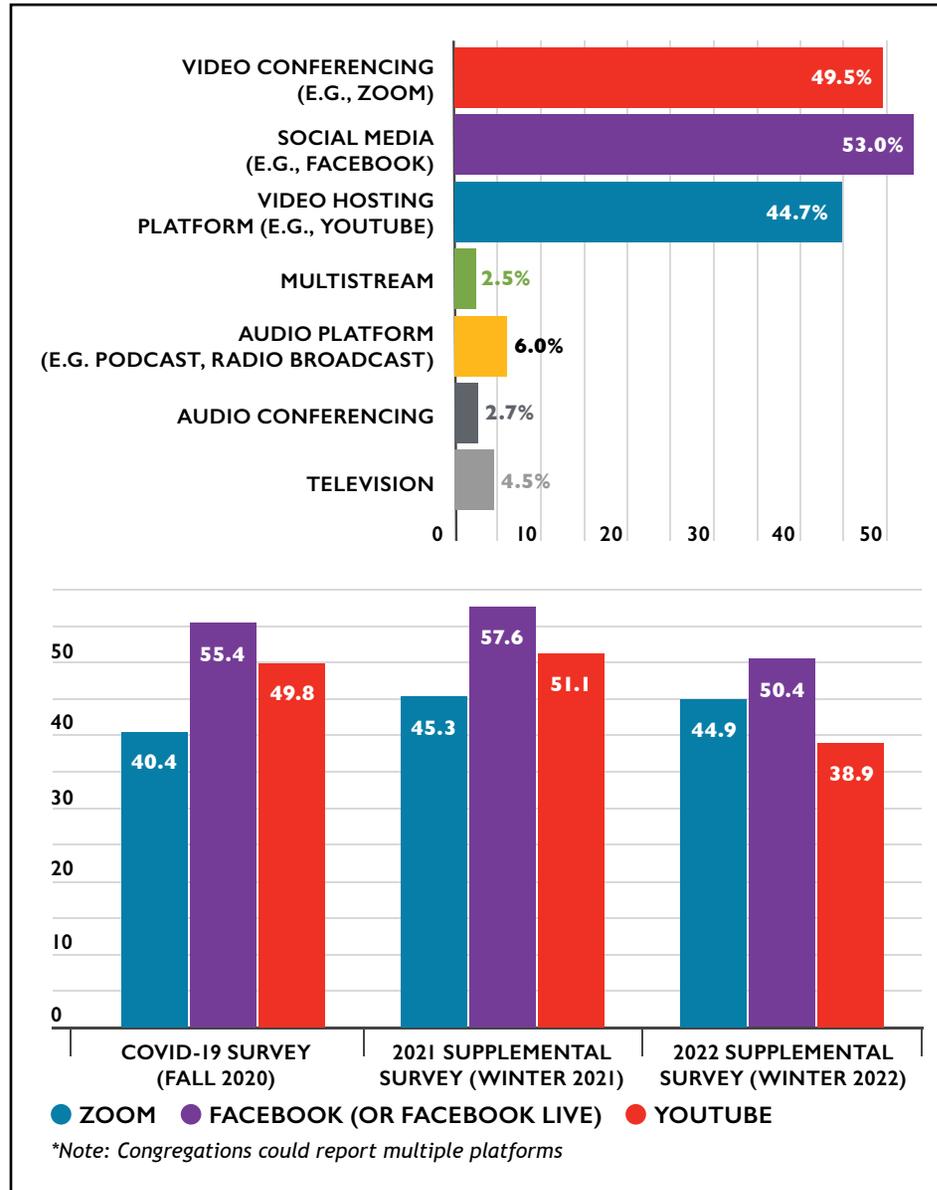


MIDS BY REGION, WITH MEMBERSHIP COMPARISON

REGION	MIDs	% MIDs	% MEMBERS
Great Lakes	154	25.4	30.7
Middle Atlantic	103	17.0	19.7
New England	135	22.3	19.7
Southern	76	12.5	7.3
Western	93	15.3	9.3
West Central	44	7.3	13.2
Non-Geographic	1	0.2	0.1

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE CHURCH

CONGREGATIONS' VIRTUAL WORSHIP PLATFORM USAGE



VIRTUAL WORSHIP PREVALENCE

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt and reshape congregational life in the UCC. One of the most notable changes to congregational life was the expansion and ongoing offering of virtual worship at a level never before seen. In the UCC's first COVID-19 survey, conducted in the fall of 2020, 9% of congregations reported offering virtual worship prior to the pandemic; by the winter of 2021, 91.3% of congregations reported offering virtual worship at some point during the pandemic. Recognizing that virtual worship has quickly become a regular feature of church life, this question was rephrased in the 2022 supplemental survey to ask congregations if they held virtual worship at any time in 2021, to which 88.7% of congregations responded "yes." Among congregations who reported holding virtual worship opportunities, nearly 9 out of 10 (89.1%) reported offering these opportunities every week, with an additional 5.8% reporting such opportunities were offered more than once per week.

These virtual worship opportunities may be live (76.4% of congregations), pre-recorded (26.5%), or recorded at a live worship event (in-person or virtual and available later for replay) (52.8%) (note: congregations could report all options that applied). 69.1% of congregations holding virtual worship reported streaming their in-person worship service. Note that the reporting of platforms was updated for 2022 to capture platform by broad category (such as video conference or social media), given that attendance tends to be counted similarly within categories but not necessarily between categories and also so that the data will continue to be meaningful in the future even if and when individual platforms change. Zoom, Facebook/Facebook Live, and YouTube were the most

commonly used individual platforms reported in 2021, though small numbers of churches used a wide variety of platforms to share their worship services.

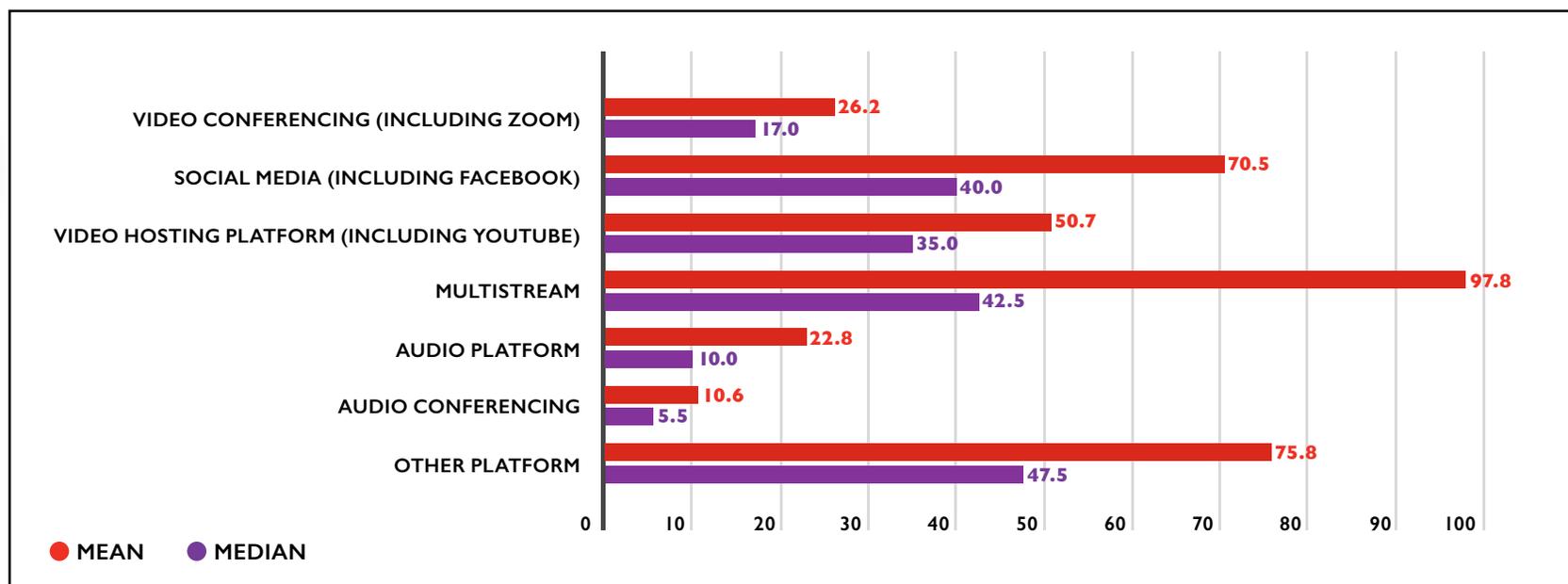
Congregations most commonly used Zoom, Facebook/Facebook Live, and YouTube as platforms for sharing their virtual worship services, with congregations increasingly using multiple platforms for their services over time. Even as some congregations have been able to resume in-person worship, virtual worship is likely to remain a common offering alongside in-person worship, as over 8 in 10 (83.6%) of congregations that held virtual worship in 2021 reported that they are planning to continue to offer virtual worship beyond the pandemic.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

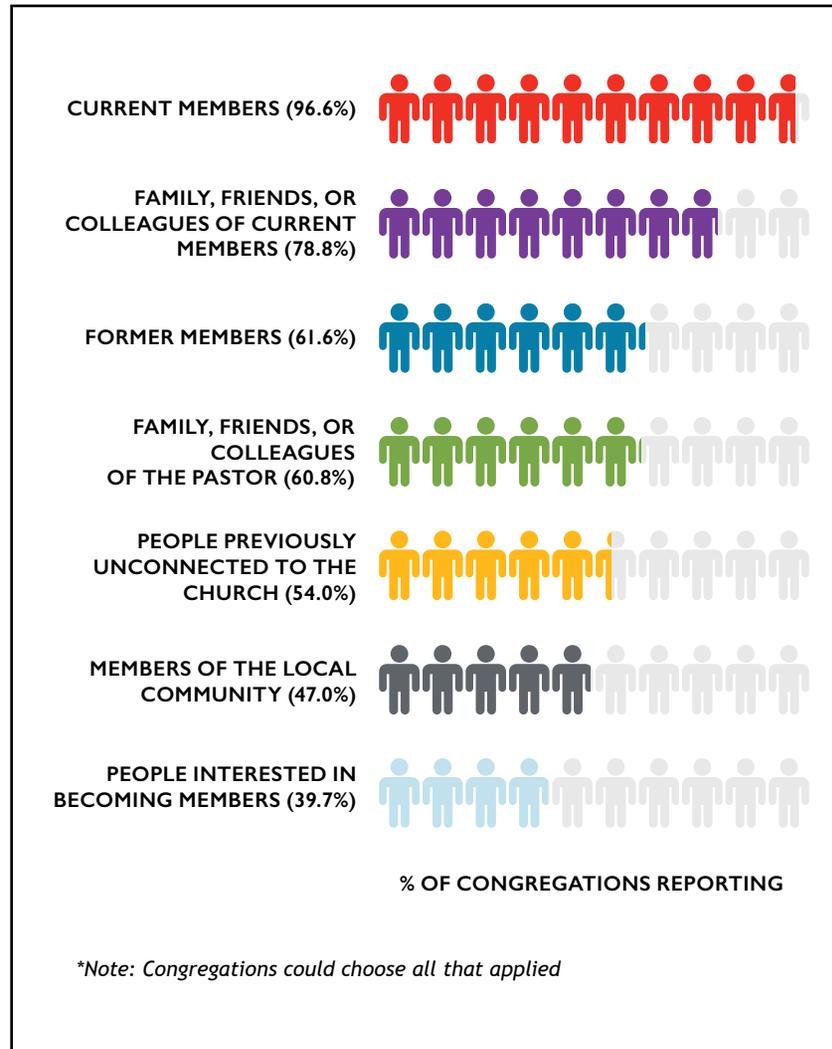
Virtual worship attendance is measured separately from in-person worship attendance because these numbers essentially measure different things. While in-person worship attendance figures represent the number of people present, online worship attendance generally represents the number of devices that have connected, as multiple people may be viewing worship on a single device, or a single device may connect multiple times. In addition, different platforms have different ways of measuring viewership, which is why attendance is measured separately for different platforms.

Given that virtual worship will continue to be a part of church life for the majority of UCC congregations, CARDD will continue to collect this data going forward. While currently the Data Hub is not equipped to collect this data, once CARDD has determined the most reliable

VIEWERSHIP BY PLATFORM TYPE



VIRTUAL WORSHIP ATTENDEES



way to capture virtual worship attendance for the future, this data will be directly reportable into the Data Hub along with the rest of a church's annual data. In the meantime, this data is being recorded in the annual Supplemental Survey, where it is attached to church ID so it can be part of a church's long-term records.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

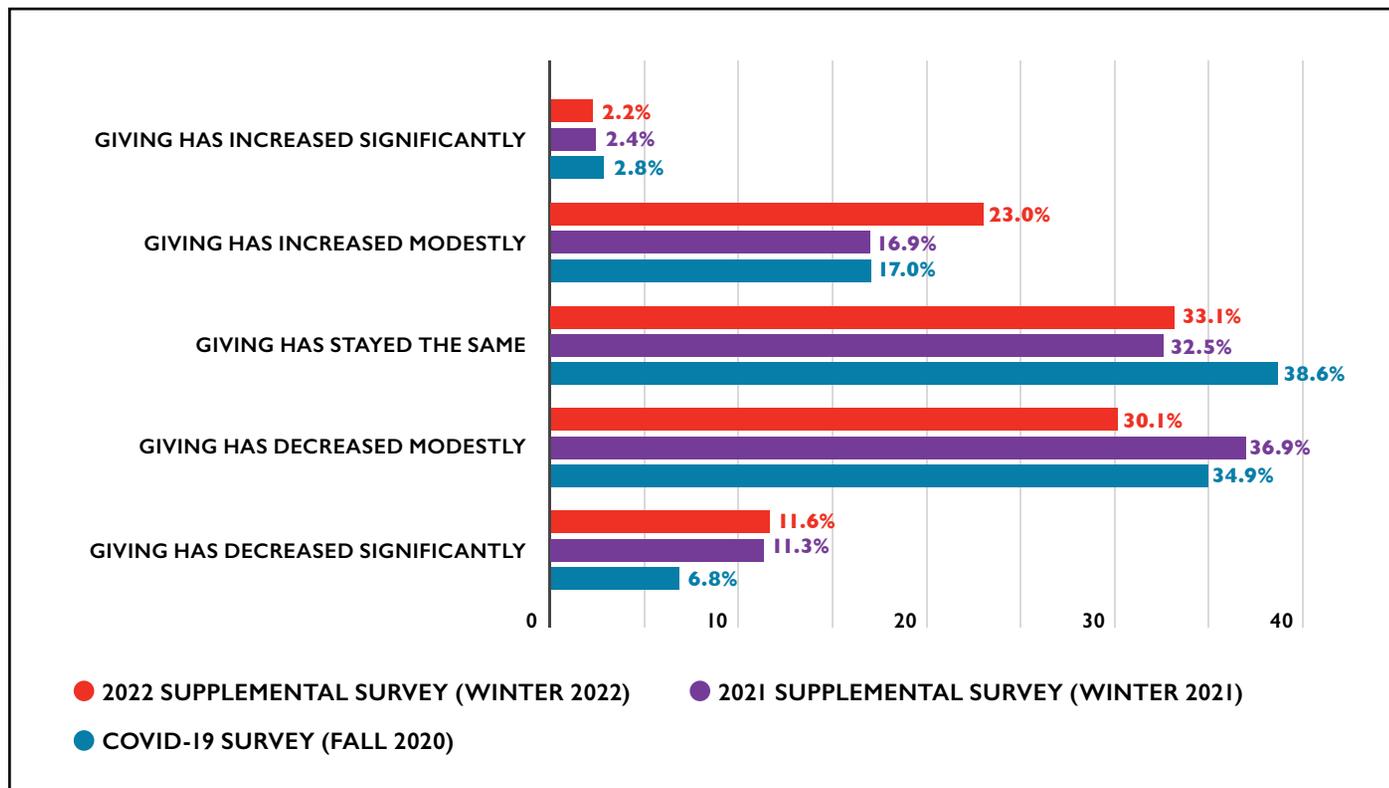
Virtual worship has enabled congregations to welcome new people to their church as well as reconnect with people whom they haven't seen in a while. Among churches holding virtual worship, nearly all congregations (96.6%) reported that current members attended their services. In addition, family, friends, and colleagues of current members (78.8%) as well as family, friends, and colleagues of the pastor (60.8%) also commonly attended congregations' online worship services. Over half of congregations (54.0%) reported that people previously unconnected to their church were attending their online worship services and 39.7% of congregations reported that people interested in becoming members were attending online worship services, suggesting that virtual worship may be a way many congregations can and are engaging in outreach.

THE PANDEMIC IMPACT ON CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES

The pandemic has had a variety of financial implications for congregations and these implications have continued to shift over time. Relative to the 2021 supplemental survey, the proportion of congregations that have reported their giving has decreased significantly was slightly higher (increasing from 11.3% to 11.6%); however, the proportion of congregations reporting their giving decreased modestly was lower (decreasing from 36.9% to 30.1%). As a result, the proportion of congregations reporting that their giving has decreased since the pandemic began is now closer to 4 in 10 (41.7%) rather than nearly half (48.2%) that reported this in 2021. The proportion of congregations reporting that giving has stayed the same increased very slightly (33.1% in 2022 from 32.5%), while nearly a quarter (25.2%) of congregations reported in 2022 that their giving has actually increased modestly or significantly during the pandemic (up from 19.3% in 2021). These trends have changed directions between the first COVID-19 survey in 2020 and the 2021 supplemental survey, suggesting the impact of the pandemic on congregations' finances is dynamic and experiences have varied widely between churches.

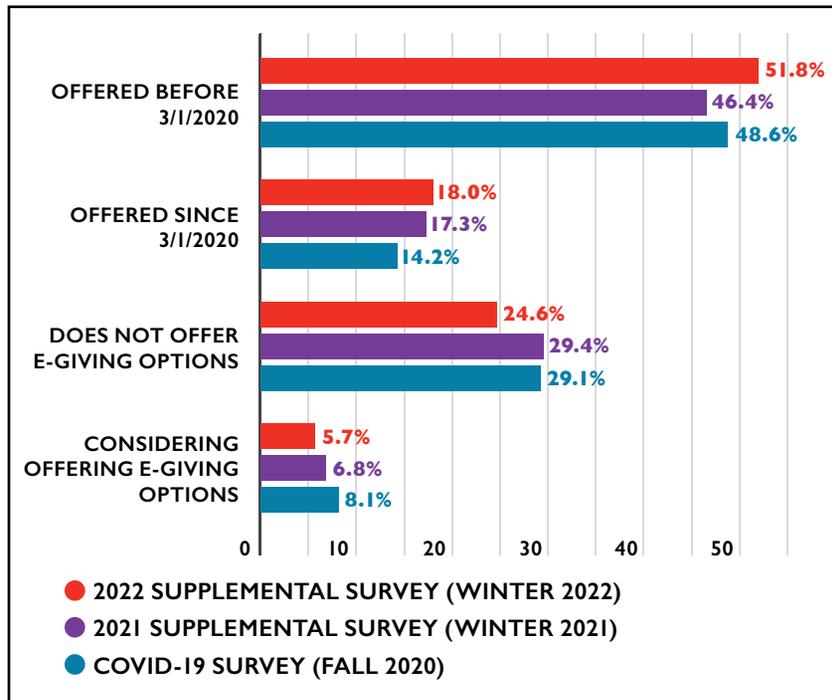
OVERALL GIVING

How has giving in your church changed since COVID-19?



ELECTRONIC GIVING

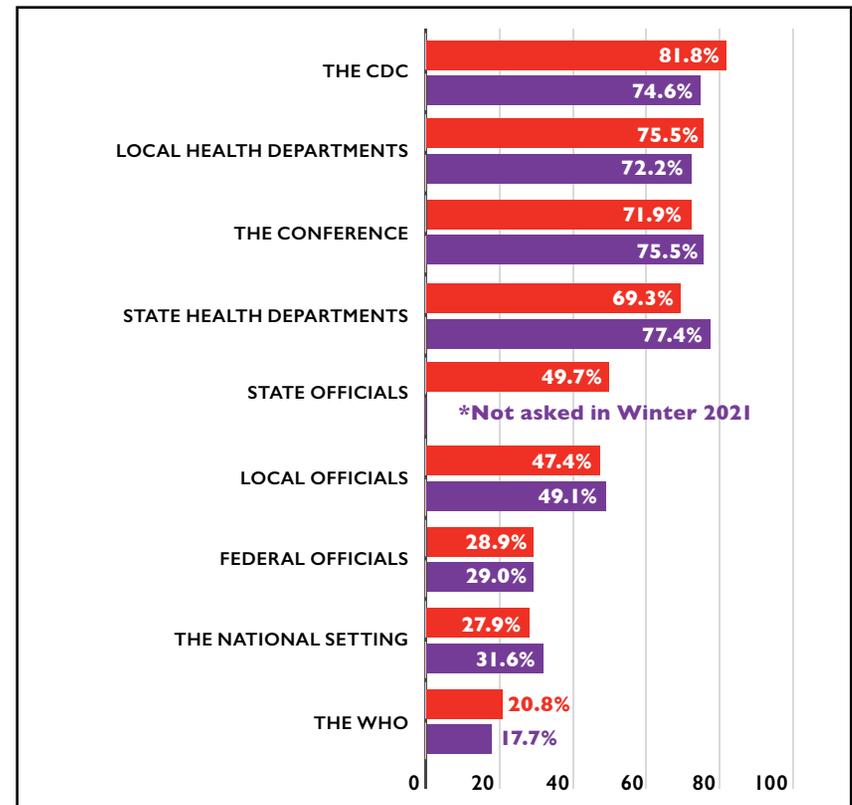
Electronic giving has been a way for people to contribute financially to congregations without being physically present and amidst health and safety concerns. Over half of congregations (51.8%) reported offering electronic giving options before the pandemic, and now about seven out of ten congregations (69.8%) offer electronic giving. This proportion has not changed much since the initial COVID-19 survey but has slightly increased over time, suggesting that churches that adopted online giving as a result of the pandemic did so early on. Churches most frequently reported using Vanco/Realm, PayPal, and the church website for electronic giving; other options reported being used include Tithe.ly, Venmo, Breeze, or payments directed by givers from individual banks.



IN-PERSON WORSHIP PRACTICES

For the 97.7% of UCC churches that reported holding in-person worship services during 2021, a wide variety of decisions had to be made about practices amid an ongoing pandemic. Congregations most frequently sought guidance from the CDC, local health departments, their conference, and state health departments. Notably, over seven in 10 (71.9%) congregations mentioned seeking guidance from their conference offices, underscoring the particularly important role Conference offices have served for congregations.

FROM WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOURCES DOES YOUR CHURCH GO TO FOR DECISION-MAKING GUIDANCE REGARDING IN-PERSON GATHERING FOR WORSHIP?



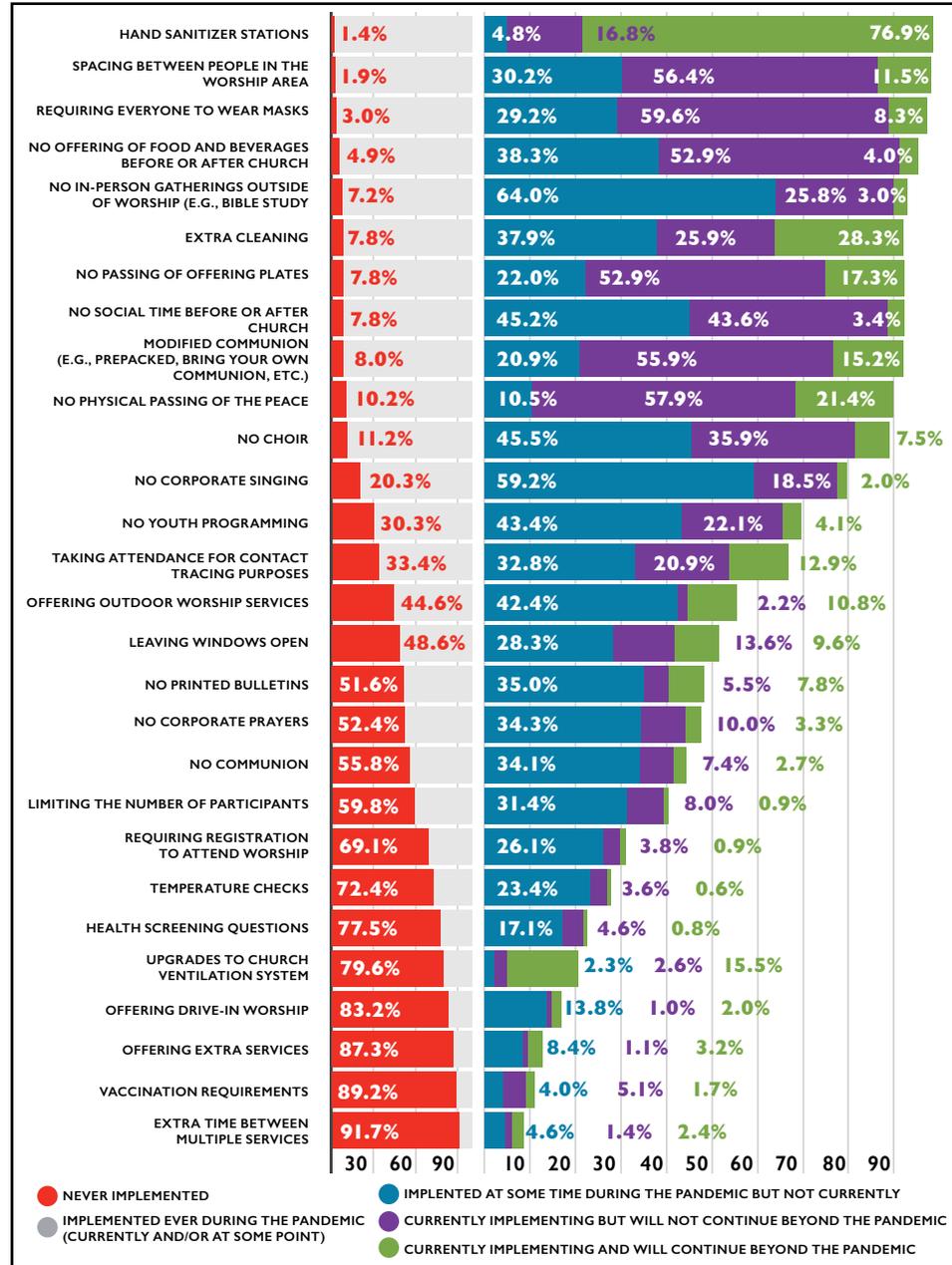
gations during the pandemic. Congregations also reported seeking information from a state level council of churches, congregants/friends/etc. who have training in public health, experts in academic settings outside the congregation, a non-expert congregational team or leader(s), other state-level officials, and other experts and institutions.

Throughout the pandemic, congregations have not only faced decisions about whether and when to hold in-person worship, but also under what conditions. Congregations have reported implementing a variety of practices to curb the spread of COVID-19 during the pandemic, most frequently reporting having hand sanitizer stations, spacing people in the worship area, requiring everyone to wear masks, and not offering food or beverages before or after church. Given the ongoing complexity of pandemic decision-making, this year congregations were asked whether a particular practice was never implemented, implemented at some time during the pandemic but not currently, is currently implementing but will not continue beyond the pandemic, or is currently implementing and will continue beyond the pandemic.

REFLECTIONS

What unexpected pandemic-related challenges did your congregation overcome? What surprising discoveries do you intend to carry forward into your post-pandemic church practices? Where might you begin recalibrating previous norms to make room for your new discoveries? How have your pandemic learnings transformed your church's culture, if at all?

WHAT MEASURES ARE YOUR CHURCH PRACTICING FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICES?



PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: THE CHURCH IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Contributed by: the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, UCC General Minister and President

What follows is a reflection on the State of the Church two years into our collective effort to adapt during a global pandemic.

While much research has been done to try and tell the story of our church and our leaders through this season (some of which is contained in this publication), this report is based on my personal experiences. During the pandemic, I have conducted one on one conversations with Conference Ministers every quarter. I spent time on my sabbatical driving around the country and sitting one on one with clergy and asking them to tell me the story of the last two years. I have interviewed chaplains and members in discernment and congregational leaders, all in an effort to get a full picture of how the church is coping.

These are a few of my reflections based on those experiences, out of which some clear themes have emerged.

To begin, I note that although there is a collective weariness that is almost universal, our leaders are largely willing to do whatever it takes to get through this and, remarkably, often energized by what they recognize as an invitation to architect or birth something quite different on the other side of this shared experience.

With but a couple exceptions, the clergy I visited with talked about what they learned in and through this time about which there was some mixture of pride, curiosity, excitement, and/or confidence and hope.

Examples of this include:

- A church that hired a clinical psychologist to come in one day a week to help members deal with mental fatigue because of the pandemic, only to realize they needed them on staff full time to also help their neighbors cope with their stress.

- A church that used storage in their building to house a new food pantry because of the families that lost jobs that needed ways to feed their family.
- Many churches that used virtual platforms to start Bible studies and adult classes that, even after people started gathering in person, could only continue successfully by holding to the virtual platform.
- Many churches who reported the joy of having college students remain active in the worship life of the church after they left for college - a rather new phenomenon.
- Churches who attracted new members from geographies well beyond the limits of what driving to church afforded them.
- Choir directors who learned to use video platforms to create multi-voice performances virtually.
- Using Zoom worship to organize conversation with the pastor in worship AFTER the sermon was preached.
- Setting up game nights on Zoom, holding cooking classes online, doing mid-week meditations on Zoom.
- Entire search processes completed in virtual spaces with new pastors called to serve without ever meeting the members in person.

There is so much more to list here - innovations explored by leaders who had to create their way through the crisis.

If you ask our leaders, they will talk about being tired, depressed at times, working longer hours, having to completely redesign not just worship but how they prepare for and execute worship, needing to develop skills overnight that they were never taught in seminary.

They will also talk about what excited them about the challenges, the collective ability to create new pathways to vitality in the midst of this, a new tolerance for change from previously risk averse and change resistant members, forgiveness for mistakes made, and the deep appreciation for continuing to show up every day of every week in spite of the fatigue and the challenges and the grief.

By and large, the leaders I have spoken with are proud of themselves. They are proud of their churches. They are proud of their members.

They learned that we have a higher capacity for change than we anticipated.

They learned that even when the change comes by circumstances we cannot control, the Holy Spirit will bless us through them.

They learned that there is nothing in the church that cannot be changed so long as the gospel is preached and the kingdom proclaimed.

They are aware that as we emerge from this pandemic we will need to attend to the grief while at the same time we must collectively discern what we experienced, what we learned, what we discovered that is going to change what we do differently going forward - and not out of reluctance but out of curiosity, not with fear but with hope, and not facing fierce resistance but accompanied by witnesses who have seen the Spirit remain active in and through the pandemic.

In other words, while we may have (a.) all made early adaptations reluctantly as this began; (b.) agreed to make changes with a sense that once this ends we will all go back to life as we knew it and (c.) entered into this time of rapid change fearing the worst in terms of membership losses, church closings, clergy burnout, and drops in giving, we (d.) accept the adaptations we made as gifts, glad for what we learned and the fruit they bore; (e.) committed to using what we learned in order to amass a whole array

of new tools for evangelism; and (f.) leaving this time of rapid change committed to architecting a future that wasn't available to us before it started.

I end my time of reflection on the state of the church offering a single word in response to what I have learned so far: gratitude. I have deep gratitude for all leaders who accepted the call to adapt; who endured long hours; who visited the sick at the risk of their own health; who were open to recognizing the movement of the Spirit in the midst of great grief; and who now enter our next season weary but committed to a call to preach the good news everywhere and rejoice in all circumstances.

PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: “BEING THE CHURCH” & ITS EPIDEMIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Contributed by: Joshua E. Tucker, MPH—Former Data Analyst, CARDD

In May of 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 41.4% of Americans had received their primary series of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.¹ One year later, over 76% of American adults are fully vaccinated. Still, the significant progress made over a relatively short period of time cannot betray the toll(s) wrought by SARS-CoV-2: To give a sense of scale, for each UCC member, 1.3 Americans have perished, and cumulative mortality is projected to reach over 1.15 million by August 1. Still, as progress continues to be made, UCC clergy, leaders, and congregants must proactively keep in mind the following as they serve their communities: infectious disease emergencies (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) are likely to grow in frequency as climate change progresses.^{2,3} In other words, the UCC, from individual congregations to the National Setting, will likely grapple with another public health emergency in the coming years or decades. Therefore, as we work to build and strengthen community amongst people of faith across the United States and the globe, we must consider the epidemiological implications of “being the Church.” Using publicly available CDC data, a hypothetical, “*what if*” epidemiological portrait of the pandemic in the US since May 2021 can be fashioned for the UCC’s reflection.⁴

The spread, containment, and mitigation of pathogens such as SARS-CoV-2 are dependent upon a population’s distribution.⁵⁻⁷ Hypothetical COVID-19 incidence (Table 3) between May 2021 and the middle of April 2022—estimated with an epidemiological tool termed the *standardized incidence ratio*, or SIR (Table 2)—would have been somewhat different in the US if the population’s geographical distribution were similar to the UCC’s members’. As depicted in the Figure, hypothetical COVID-19 incidence would have been greater last October (+11.3%), November (+30.3%), and

December (+22.8%) but somewhat lower in the August (-30.3%) lead-up to and subsequent peak (-8.5%) of the Delta variant’s transmission. The hypothetical incidence of COVID-19 at the peak of the Omicron variant’s transmission would have been largely similar (+0.2%) to that observed. Unfortunately, hypothetical COVID-19 mortality could not be estimated in this analysis as states have not uniformly reported death counts since March 2022.

TABLE I. 2022 REGIONAL POPULATION STRUCTURES OF THE UCC⁹ & US.

REGION	UCC MEMBERS (%)	US (%)
Great Lakes	30.7	16.1
Middle Atlantic	19.7	17.6
New England	19.7	4.5
Southern	7.3	29.4
Western	9.3	23.7
West Central	13.2	8.6

TABLE 2. SIR FORMULA.¹⁰⁻¹²

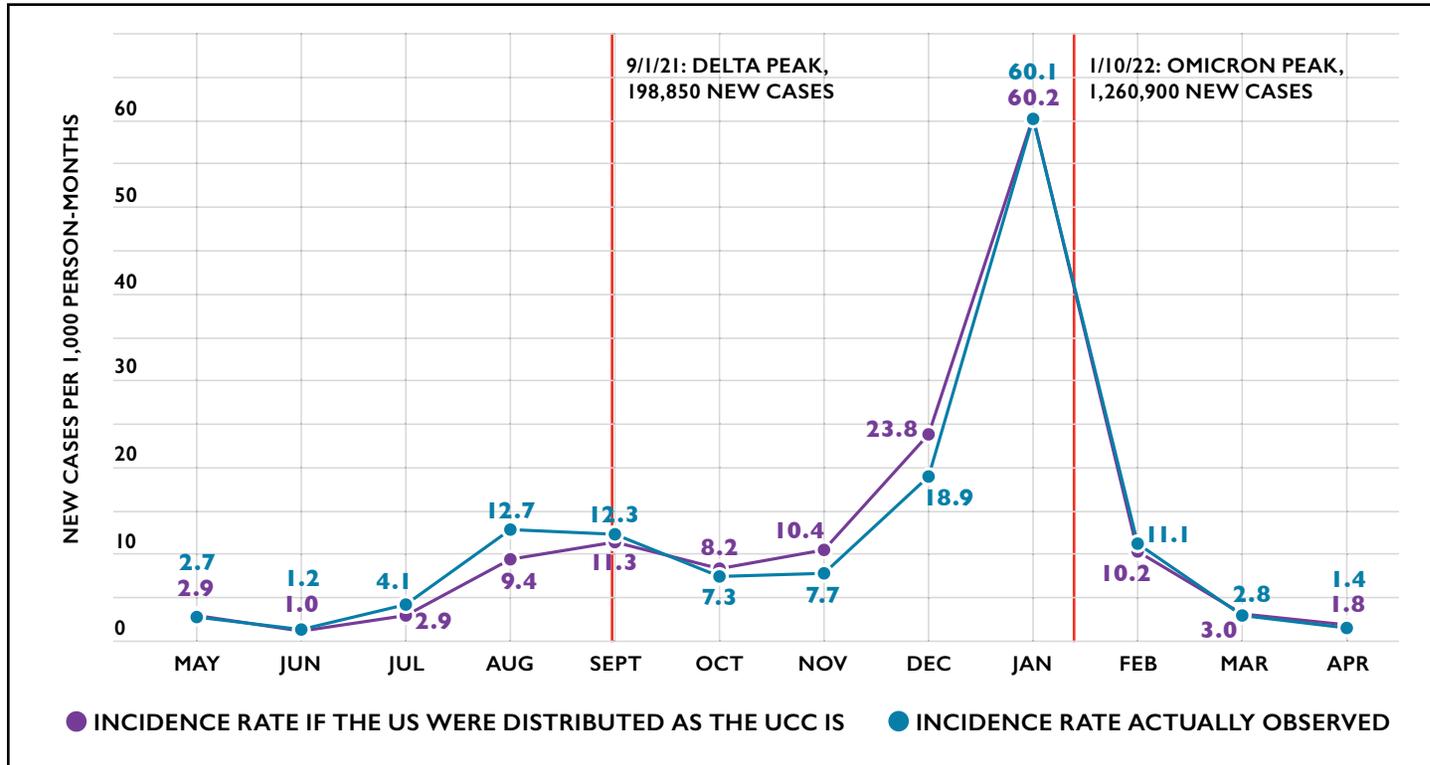
EPIDEMIOLOGICAL MEASURE	INTEGRAL FORMULA	
Standardized incidence ratio (per 1,000 person-months)	$\frac{\sum_{k=1}^M D_k}{\sum_{k=1}^M t_k \lambda_k}$	Where M = distribution of region, t_k = person-time, D_k = observed events in cohort to the k^{th} cell, & λ_k = rate for $k \dots M$

TABLE 3. MONTHLY SIRS, MAY 2021-APRIL 2022

MONTH	SIR
May	2.9
June	0.97
July	2.9
August	9.4
September	11.3
October	8.2
November	10.4
December	23.8
January	60.2
February	10.2
March	3.0
April (-4/16)	1.8

In sum, this report demonstrates that the ongoing ambition of the American Church—to expand its reach into communities and bring new faces into churches—is complicated with regard to public health. *To be the Church* is to be in community with one another, and, therefore, being the Church is a matter of public health. Going forward, *what are steps we can take now to prepare for the next emergency? What does the UCC have to say about public health?* Although it is tempting to leave the answers to these questions to the future, “prevention is preferable to cure.”⁸

COVID-19 INCIDENCE BETWEEN 5/1/21–4/16/22



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PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: ASSESSING CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY DURING TURBULENT TIMES: DATA AND OBSERVATIONS FROM OUR WORK IN THE FIELD

Contributed by: the Rev. Cameron Trimble, CEO, and the Rev. Dr. Anna Hall, Director of Research and Development, Convergence

When we at Convergence realized that no current church assessment captured all the things we needed to know to help congregations, we designed a research-and practice-based assessment to measure all of the following crucial dimensions for understanding congregational vitality:

- Participation and engagement
- Communications
- Finances
- Facilities
- Leadership status
- Demographics
- Change skills
- Welcome skills
- Leader/Member outlook
- Spiritual practices
- Conflict skills
- Community engagement
- Neighborhood demographics
- Nearby congregations

Our complete and ongoing research review, details on development, and our full research report can be found [here](#). Since 2017, we have conducted 39 congregational assessments, surveying over 4500 congregational members/participants and congregational leaders, located across the US and Canada, across main-line denominations, and ranging in size from less than 20 current members/participants to over 2000.

PANDEMIC IMPACTS

We completed our first “pandemic-era” assessment with a church in April 2020. This was the first-time coronavirus was mentioned in survey comments as something that could hold back a congregation’s vitality. To address the unprecedented new situation, we evolved our questions and language to reflect the changed reality of church life during the pandemic. Due to this continual evolution and customization for some congregations, we can only provide non-generalizable snapshot data on what we saw in churches during the pandemic. However, what we saw in the 21 churches we assessed during the pandemic seems worth sharing.

OPTIMISM

Optimism about the future of individual congregations dipped in 2020 and 2021 but may be rebounding. On the question, “Please answer the following questions true or false: On the whole, I am excited about where our church is heading”—Prior to the pandemic, 66% of respondents agreed with this statement. During the pandemic, we saw declines in optimism to 56% in 2020 during the pandemic, and 46% 2021, but a strong rebound to 67% in the early months of 2022.

CHANGE SKILLS

Congregations became more change-ready during the pandemic. Of churches who answered, “Do you agree or disagree? Our congregation: Is always ready to try something new”—Prior to the pandemic, 68% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that their congregation was always ready to try something new. In 2020 during the pandemic, 76% of respondents agreed. In 2021, 73% of respondents agreed. In 2022 to date, 85% of respondents have somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement.

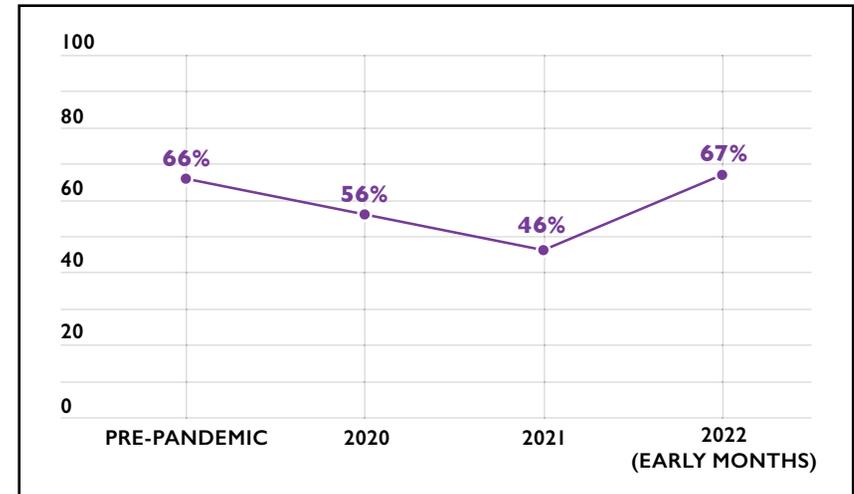
After a dip during 2020 and 2021, respondents in 2022 perceived their fellow members as increasingly willing to change to achieve shared goals. Of churches who answered, “Please answer the following questions true or false: The members of our church are willing to change in order to achieve our shared goal”—Prior to the pandemic, only 55% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that their fellow members were willing to change. In 2020 during the pandemic, 52% of respondents agreed. In 2021, 49% of respondents agreed. In 2022 to date, 68% of respondents have somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement.

ENGAGEMENT

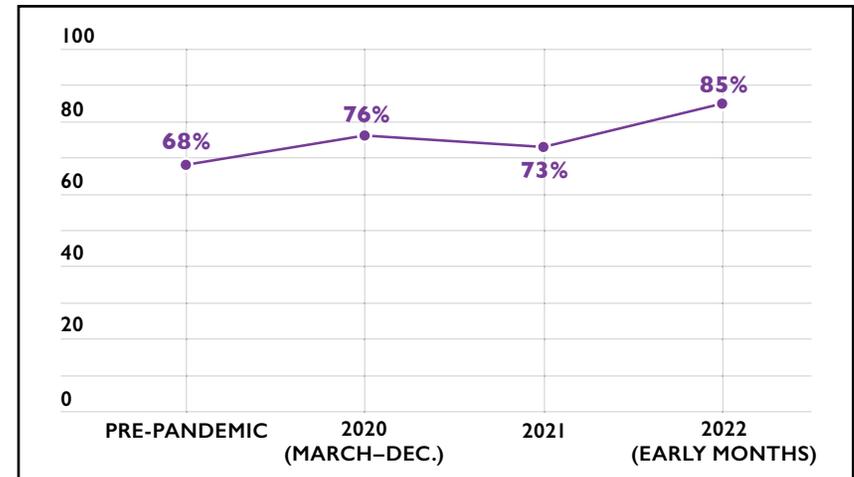
Digital engagement activities by churches and participation in them by members increased during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, online offerings were only mentioned occasionally. Most accessibility conversations revolved around worship times, not delivery methods. In 2021, 100% of the congregations we assessed were providing some form of online worship. Several congregations were not yet meeting in person again at the time of our work with them. By 2022, 100% of the congregations were using both online and in person methods of gathering.

Beginning in 2021, we asked respondents, “In the past five years, I have engaged with this congregation through: Online events only, Face to face and online events, Face to face events only, or Other (please specify).” From 2021 to 2022, we saw an increase from 5% to 8% of respondents who had only engaged with their

OPTIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE

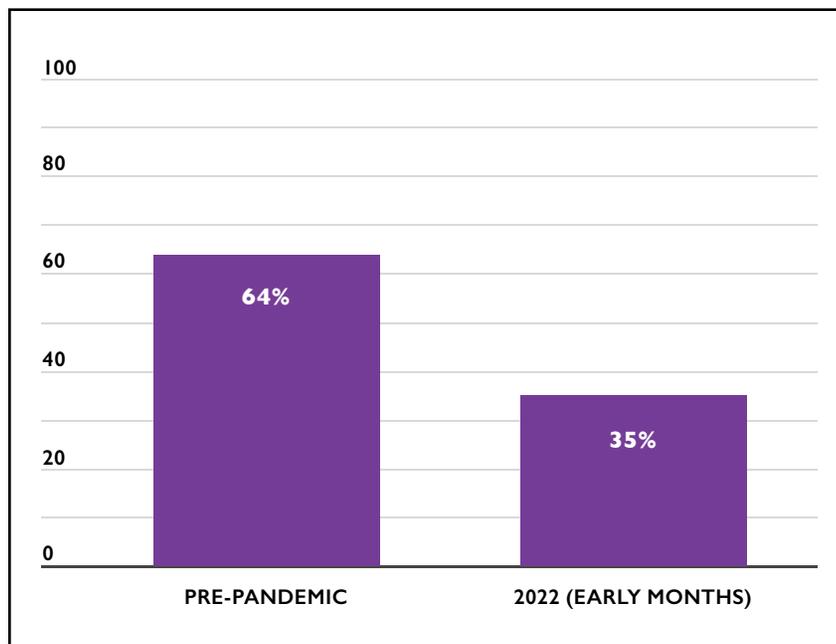


OUR CONGREGATION IS ALWAYS READY TO TRY SOMETHING NEW



congregation online and never in person. We also saw an increase from 83% to 89% of respondents who had engaged with their congregation online at least sometimes.

ATTEND WEEKLY



The percentage of respondents participating in their congregations weekly has declined from 64% before the pandemic to 35% in 2022.

The percentage of congregational participants who were volunteering, average volunteer hours per survey respondent, and average volunteer hours per volunteer also declined sharply during the pandemic and are only now rebounding slightly in some areas. In a sample of churches we assessed before the pandemic, 63% of survey respondents were volunteering in church and community during the 12 months before taking the survey, with 101 average volunteer hours per respondent, and 160 average hours per volunteer. In 2021, the churches we assessed saw only 48% of respondents volunteering in church and/or community in 2020, with 25 average volunteer hours per respondent in 2020, and over 45 average hours per volunteer. In 2022 so far, the churches we assessed have had only 40% of respondents volunteering in church and or community in 2021, with 28 average volunteer hours per respondent in 2021, and over 70 average hours per volunteer. Examples of this change can be seen in two churches that were asked to report volunteer hours from both 2020 and 2019. These congregations' respondents indicated a 23% to 53% decline in their volunteer hours from 2019 to 2020.

FUTURE VITALITY

The pandemic effects on the congregations we assessed included decreased worship participation and volunteering, a dip in optimism, and improved change skills. Of those, we see signs that optimism may be returning to pre-pandemic levels or higher. However, lowered participation and volunteering levels will significantly affect the feeling of decline in struggling congregations. The long-term effects of these pandemic impacts will only be known over time.

DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS, MEMBERS, CLERGY, AND CONGREGATIONS

**SPECIAL REPORT: CHURCH COMMUNITIES BY THE NUMBERS:
BEYOND MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE***Erica Dollhopf, Ph.D., Director, Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data***OVERVIEW**

In CARDD, we seek to tell the stories of our congregations through the data we collect. We collect much of this data annually in preparation for the Yearbook & Directory and we are so appreciative of all the work our churches do to gather this data so we can analyze and interpret the broader trends unfolding across our congregations. Congregational membership and average worship attendance are two metrics we collect every year and are among the lenses we use to understand what congregational life looks like presently and how it has changed over time. While membership and worship attendance numbers tell us quite a bit, we know that there are a lot that these numbers don't tell us about the life, mission, and spirit of individual congregations and that just as much - if not more - happens at church during the week as it does on a Sunday morning. Knowing this, CARDD has been exploring the question: what additional measures, beyond membership and worship attendance, can help to more fully tell the stories of our congregations?

METHODOLOGY

Capturing data that meaningfully conveys congregational life in a way that is comparable across congregations, though, can quickly become a quandary. How do you compare a ministry that hosts an annual festival for 2,000 people to a ministry that provides daily childcare for 8 children? Or a ministry that serves 500 meals a week to a ministry that sews and distributes 20 quilts a year? This is all meaningful, important work but it is challenging to interpret these numbers as trends across congregations. We have a wonderful array of ministries in our churches attuned to specific community needs but what these ministries are and what they do may vary widely from church to church. In the last two

years, CARDD has been engaging in conversations with stakeholders across the life of the church to understand more deeply how we can usefully expand the data we collect to include dimensions of church life beyond membership and worship attendance.

One of the ways CARDD has explored this topic is through the 2022 Supplemental Survey to the Yearbook & Directory data collection. We wanted to hear directly from churches about the measures that best represent their community, so we asked: "Please tell us about a measure that best describes your church community. For example, members, worship attendance, people who show up to a meal, people who help members move apartments, people who showed up at a protest the church organized, the number of groups who use the building throughout the week, etc." 1,401 congregations submitted complete responses to the 2022 Supplemental Survey, which represents about 30% of all UCC congregations in 2022 but about 58% of all congregations who submitted Yearbook data in 2022 (51% of UCC congregations submitted Yearbook data in 2022).

To analyze this data, the open-ended responses submitted to the aforementioned question were coded using grounded theory to develop the coding scheme. Grounded theory uses the actual responses to develop categories rather than using pre-determined categories to code the data. Only the first three categories listed in a given response were coded; while some churches mentioned more than three measures, the first three were assumed to be the most salient. Notably, some of the categories that emerged from the responses could overlap in the sense that one act could be measured from a variety of perspectives. For instance, a ministry that serves meals to the community could be measured through frequency of the event, number of volunteers, number

of meals served, or number of people participating in the event. The category applied to a specific response reflected the language of how the respondent reported the measure. Also, it is important to mention that just because a church didn't mention a specific category doesn't mean that they don't engage in this type of work; rather, the church may choose to measure their congregation's ministries in other ways or don't record this particular measure.

FINDINGS

From the responses, 14 distinct categories of measuring church community emerged.

- The most commonly mentioned category was worship attendance (in-person and/or virtual), with nearly 40% of congregations reporting this as a measure that best described their community.
- The next most frequently mentioned category was the number of organizations that use the building (including other congregations, nonprofit organizations, etc.) - over 25% of congregations reported this as a measure that best described their congregation.
- About 1 in 5 congregations reported the number of volunteers (22.7%) and membership (20.2%) as a measure that best described their congregation.
- Between 10-15% of congregations named number of events hosted (e.g., dinners for the community, weddings, etc.) (14.1%), number of people served through outreach ministries (both church and community members) (13.1%), pledging/giving (13.0%), and items donated/given away (e.g., lbs. of food, bags of clothes, number of diapers, etc.)

OTHER FINDINGS:

- Congregations regularly mentioned in their responses how the pandemic has impacted some of what their church have been able to offer, particularly regarding programming and groups using the building. In many cases, the pandemic resulted in the creation of new programs in response to a community's needs, such as takeaway meals to address food insecurity.
- Overall, many churches have an incredible scope of engagement with their community, far beyond what one might expect from their worship or attendance numbers.
- The results suggest that congregational thriving and engagement are possible regardless of church size and budget, which is consistent with vitality research findings.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Reading about the abundant ministries of our congregations and the spirit of generosity and community-mindedness that permeated the responses was an honor and also quite exciting! Having this vital input from congregations is enabling CARDD to develop questions for the Supplemental Survey in 2023 that will let us gain a deeper understanding of how some of these categories could be relevant and useful measure for congregations going forward as well as how widespread these measures could be used among churches. Notably, some of the measures mentioned in this analysis are measures that CARDD already collects, such as membership, worship attendance both in-person and online, and giving. CARDD is grateful for the input of our congregations into these explorations, and we hope that the resulting data we collect in the future will be an even better reflection of the diverse, dedicated, and vital congregations that are part of the United Church of Christ.

CONGREGATIONS' REPORTED MEASURES THAT BEST DESCRIBE THEIR CHURCH COMMUNITY

MEASURE	PERCENTAGE OF CONGREGATIONS REPORTING MEASURE
Worship	39.5%
Organizations that use the building	27.1%
Volunteers	22.7%
Membership	20.2%
Number of people who participate in church activities outside of worship	15.3%
Events hosted (e.g. dinners for the community, weddings, etc.)	14.1%
People served through outreach ministries (both church members and community members)	13.1%
Pledging/Giving	13.0%
Items donated/given away (lbs. of food, bags of clothes, number of diapers)	12.2%
Other	7.4%
Programs/classes offered	7.0%
Protests	1.6%
Unsure	0.9%
Social Media Reach	0.4%

DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS, MEMBERS, CLERGY, AND CONGREGATIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT BY UCC CONGREGATIONS

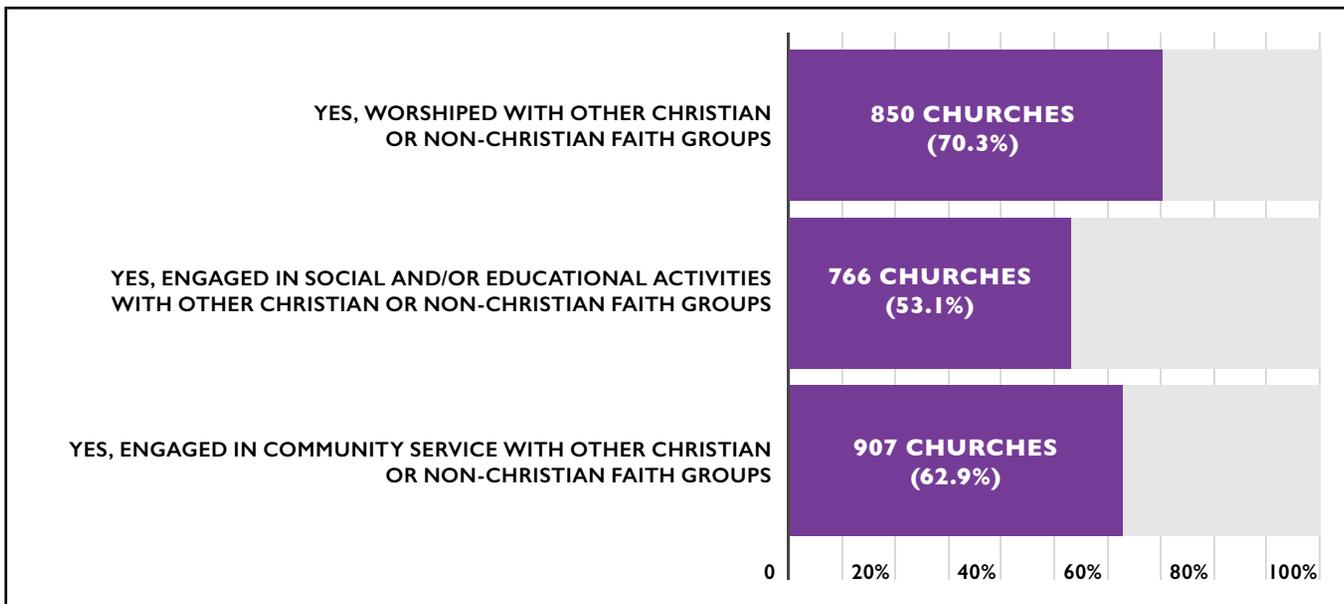
Contributed by: the Rev. Mark Pettis, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Manager, Wider Church Ministries

The United Church of Christ was born out of the Christian Unity movement of the early 20th Century. The denomination’s commitment to ecumenism has remained strong throughout the life of the UCC. Lived out through full communion partnerships, mission and advocacy partnerships, and participation with several ecumenical organizations, the UCC remains deeply involved in the work of Christian Unity.

Similarly, the United Church of Christ has a long history of interreligious engagement. The denomination participates in several interreligious dialogues through the National Council of Churches and maintains partnerships with institutions of varying faiths through national and international mission engagement. In 2019, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted an Interreligious Statement, reaffirming the denomination’s commitment to this important work.

This commitment to ecumenical and interreligious ministry is not a focus lived out solely through the denominational expression of the United Church of Christ. Local congregations have a long history of ecumenical and interreligious engagement as well, with some relationships dating back beyond the birth of the UCC in 1957.

2020 FACT SURVEY: UCC ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH ACTIVITY: DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, HAS YOUR CONGREGATION BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ECUMENICAL OR INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES?

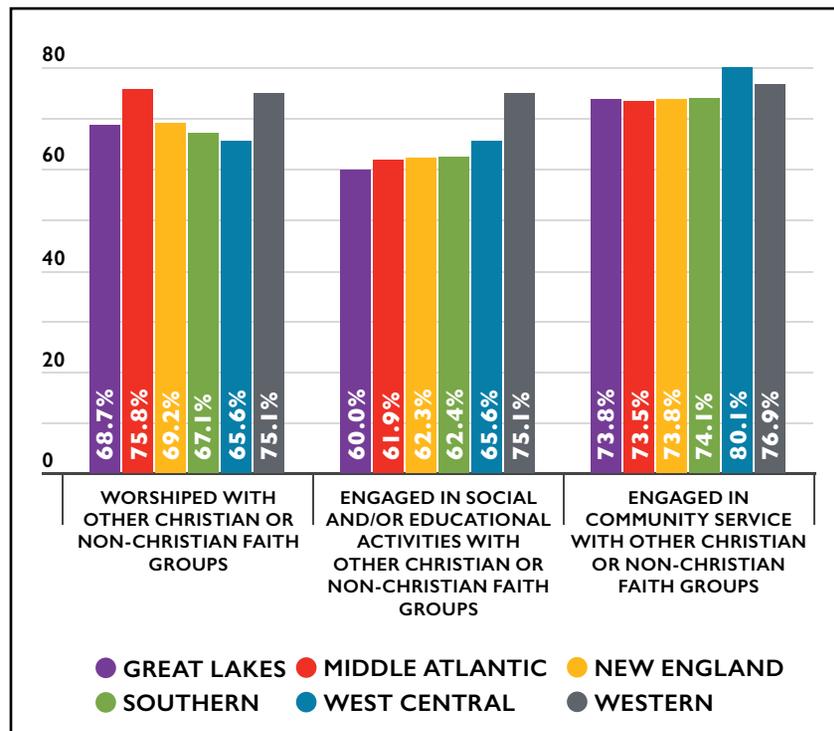


Faith Communities Today is a series of ongoing research surveys and practical reports about congregational life, conducted and published by the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, a multi-faith group of religious researchers and faith leaders. The United Church of Christ is a Faith Community Partner of Faith Communities Today, meaning that UCC congregations are included in the research. The results shared in this special report reflect data collected in the 2020 FACT Survey specifically from United Church of Christ congregations across the entire denomination.

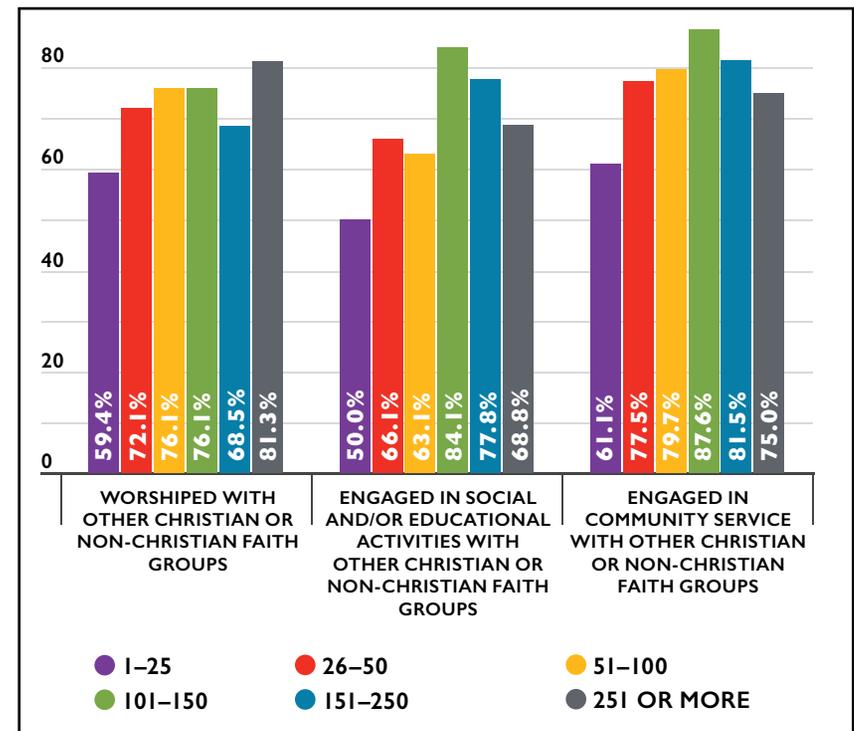
The UCC 2020 FACT Survey data demonstrates the ongoing commitment to ecumenical and interreligious engagement among UCC congregations, with more than 70% of congregations reporting that they have worshipped with another faith community (Christian or non-Christian) in the past year, more than 60% reporting that they have engaged in community service with other faith communities, and more than 50% reporting that they have engaged in social or educational activities with other faith communities.

The churches of the United Church of Christ continue to live out these denominational values of ecumenical and interreligious engagement, seeking greater expressions of the unity that exists between all God’s people.

2020 FACT SURVEY: UCC ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER GROUPS BY REGION



2020 FACT SURVEY: ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER GROUPS BY MEAN WORSHIP ATTENDANCE



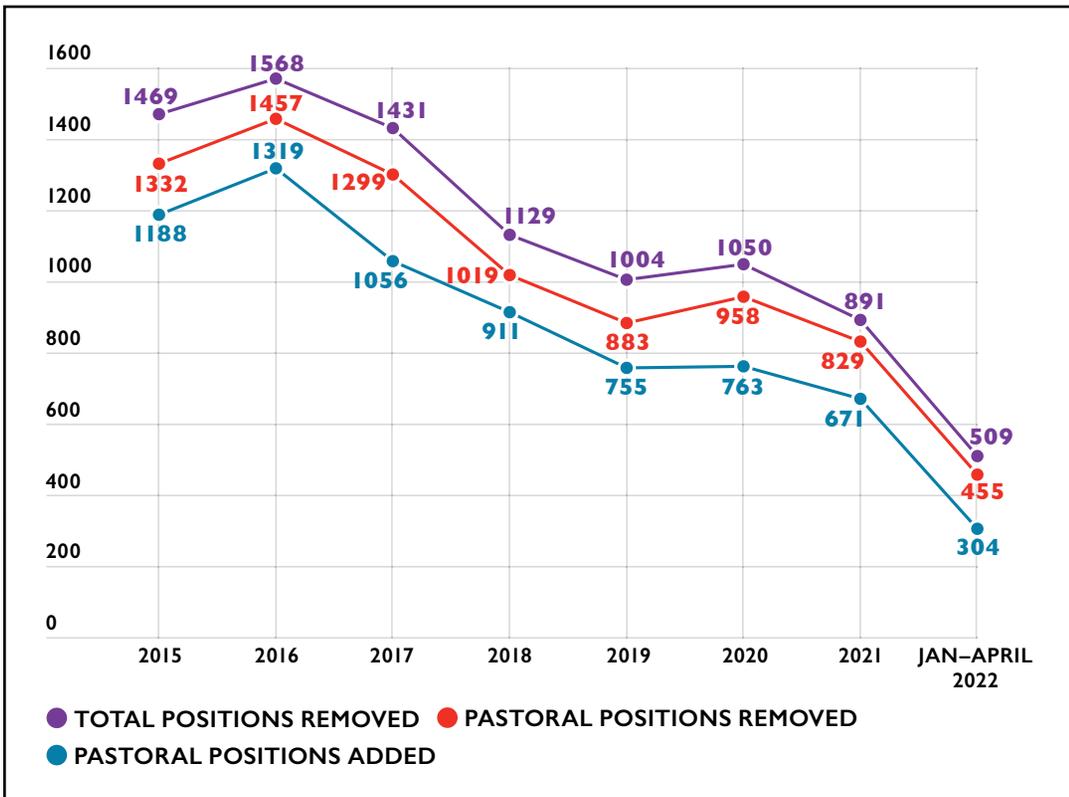
SPECIAL REPORT: TRENDS IN MINISTRY RESIGNATIONS

Contributed by: the Rev. Jeff Nelson, Minister for Ministerial Calls and Transitions, Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Team (MESA)

The 2021 UCC Statistical Report included a special report on how the COVID pandemic was affecting the Search and Call process. To analyze these possibilities, records of concluded pastoral positions were pulled from the UCC Data Hub from March 2020 through April 2021. For comparison, the same data was pulled from 2015-2019.

The results for last year’s report showed no significant rise in positions removed over the course of March 2020 through April 2021. Numbers for these months were not noticeably higher than the average for the previous five years. However, the question as to whether there would be a notable difference in these numbers a year later has been a point of interest, and this year’s report serves as an update.

MINISTRY POSITIONS REMOVED AND ADDED (2015–2022)



YEAR	TOTAL POSITIONS REMOVED	PASTORAL POSITIONS REMOVED	PASTORAL POSITIONS ADDED
2015	1469	1332	1188
2016	1568	1457	1319
2017	1431	1299	1056
2018	1129	1019	911
2019	1004	883	755
2020	1050	958	763
2021	891	829	671
January 2022–April 2022	509	455	304

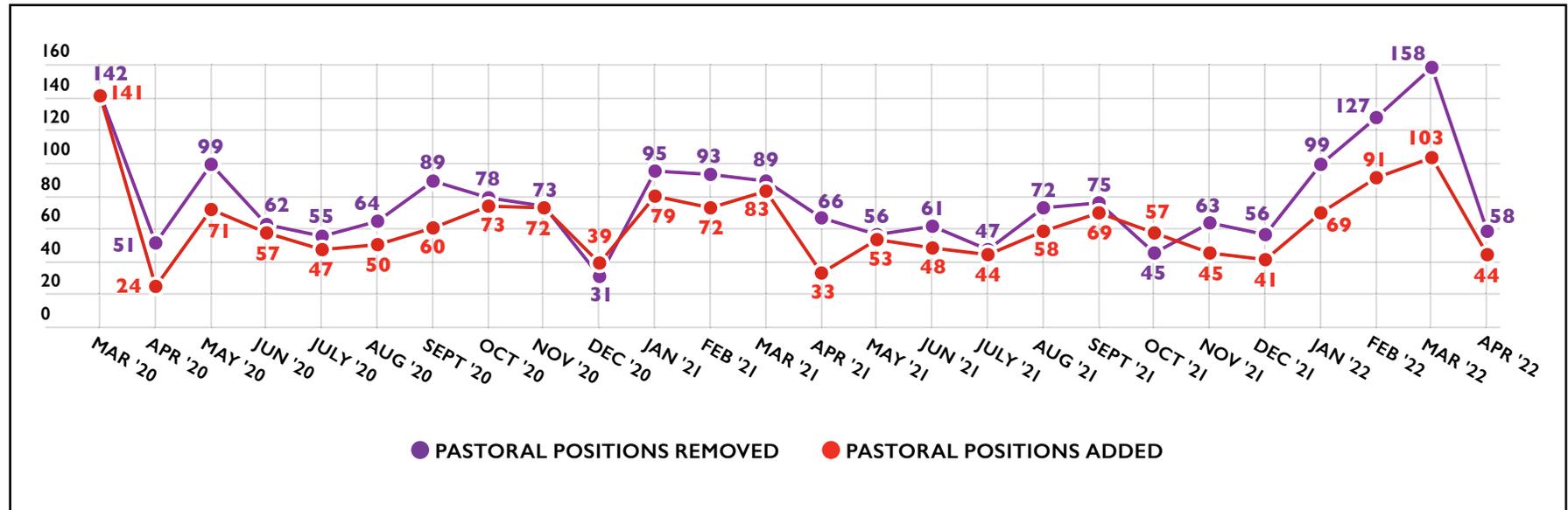
Several caveats apply for this analysis. First, the month in which a ministry position was recorded as ending in the Data Hub only reflects when a Conference staff person was able to log that information and not necessarily when the position concluded. Second, the results could not be parsed out to account for retirements, position eliminations, deaths, and other factors.

As an additional data point for this year’s report, the number of new pastoral positions added in the Data Hub over this same period have been included (these pastoral positions include interim and supply pastoral positions). The results are shown in the table and accompanied line graph below.

The graph below breaks down how many removed positions were recorded each month from March 2020 through April 2022, as well as how many new positions were recorded during that same time.

In general, the number of pastoral positions removed has been trending downward. However, the number of new positions added has also been trending downward and has been lower than the number of removed positions every year since 2015. As pastoral positions conclude, they are not being filled in the same way or at the same rate.

PASTORAL POSITIONS REMOVED AND ADDED FROM MARCH 2020–APRIL 2022



There could be several possibilities for this. First, there could be fewer open positions available due to downsizing or restructuring of church staff, e.g., the elimination of a position after a minister's departure. Second, the pool of candidates for local church positions may be shrinking as Members in Discernment seek non-pastoral positions (a special report on Ministers in Specialized Settings may give more insight to this), or current authorized ministers opt for other employment, take a leave of absence, retire, etc. Finally, ministry settings may be taking more time in the search process due to pandemic-related factors, which may be a component in the decline in numbers since March 2020 but would not help explain the decline before that time.

Overall, these numbers show that both removed and new ministry positions have been declining for many years, and the pandemic timeframe has not produced an unusual disruption to these rates. If the 2022 numbers in the first table keep at their current pace, they have the potential to be the first exception in some time. That will be something to consider at this point next year.

DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS, MEMBERS, CLERGY, AND CONGREGATIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: CHAPLAIN IMPACT

By Rev. Stephen Boyd, Minister for Ministers in Specialized Settings and Denominational Endorser, Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization Team (MESA)

The United Church of Christ has ministers serving in a variety of contexts beyond the Local Church. The most well-known category of clergy serving in non-parish settings are chaplains - ministers who serve in hospitals, schools, prisons, the military, or other institutions and provide pastoral care and support to a wide variety of folk. The United Church of Christ is proud that 767 ordained ministers serve in chaplaincy contexts, representing almost 8% of all authorized ministers in the UCC. Chaplains are represented in all thirty-six Conferences.

Chaplaincy is a special form of ministry that involves the ability to serve in diverse contexts with individuals of many different faiths or no faiths, and to participate in culturally diverse and challenging settings while representing the United Church of Christ in a non-evangelistic manner. Many times, chaplains work in high-stress contexts such as military deployment, hospitals, and disaster areas. Hospital and hospice chaplains minister not only to patients, but also to families and to fellow staff (and sometimes their families, too). These chaplains have been serving and leading on the front lines of the ongoing COVID pandemic, serving in even more stressful situations than normal with grace, care, and honor.

Military chaplaincy in the United Church of Christ requires endorsement by the Denominational Endorser, who acts on behalf of the denomination and in the interest of the needs of the military. The Rev. Stephen Boyd has filled that role since 2011. This process is separate from the ordination or authorization process and can only be completed after a minister has already been ordained for at least one year. The process for government endorsement requires a comprehensive background check, interviews with the Denominational Endorser, interviews with one's

Committee on Ministry, and deep shared discernment of all parties. The UCC presently has 50 military chaplains serving in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. They serve on Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard. Additionally, there are 10 seminarians endorsed for Chaplain Candidate Programs while attending seminary, 19 chaplains serving in the Veterans Health Care and an additional 10 chaplains endorsed and approved to serve in the VA System.

Spotlight on Military Chaplaincy: *The Rev. Ryan Byers is a chaplain in the United States Air Force serving at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, a health facility for members of the military, their families, and veterans that includes a Level I Trauma center for the entire community. On a previous assignment at Scott AFB in Illinois, he was deployed to Operation Allies Welcome - a historic mission to resettle tens of thousands of Afghani refugees into the United States. And at Dover Air Force Base, Rev. Byers co-piloted the military rollout of Our Whole Lives (OWL), using the high school and young adult curricula to provide a comprehensive, spiritually-based human sexuality education to the military. Rev. Byers is a fully-non-restricted chaplain, meaning he is willing to minister to all members of the military and can work with chaplains of any tradition. Of his ministry, Rev. Byers shares: "I love how diverse the population is. When I meet with members of my squadron, I'm intrigued by the variety of stories I hear. People have a way of confounding my expectations in the best ways. Also, most of these servicemembers are very young. Whereas among my clergy colleagues in the UCC, I'm among the younger folk, in the Air Force I'm one of the oldest people there. I serve people from all over the USA and even immigrants and children of immigrants who choose to serve in the military." He*

also encounters a large number of LGBTQ servicemembers, and he always makes clear the extravagant welcome of the UCC and his gratitude for their presence in the military.

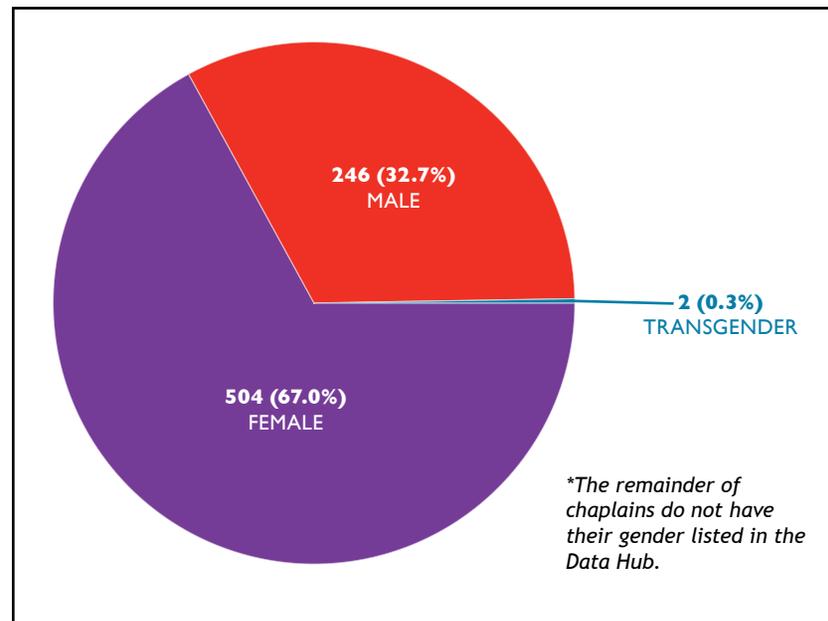
Professional endorsement is handled by Committees on Ministry who act on behalf of the entire denomination. Professional endorsement requires three years of ministry experience, with at least one year being post-ordination; it also requires a background check and interviews with the Committee on Ministry to discern that the individual is called and committed to chaplaincy as a vocation and would represent the United Church of Christ faithfully in multifaith contexts.

The vast majority of chaplains (581 ministers) serve in health care facilities. Others serve in correctional facilities, schools, or other institutions. Of this number, 456 chaplains are endorsed for professional chaplaincy. Some chaplains have not yet pursued endorsement, either because their role does not require it or they do not yet have sufficient experience, or because there is not an appropriate professional agency that oversees their chaplaincy specialty.

Spotlight on Professional Chaplaincy: *The Rev. Dr. Danielle Buhuro is a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Supervisor in Chicago, Illinois and the founder and director of Sankofa CPE Center, LLC. Sankofa CPE is an innovative organization that provides accredited training for chaplain candidates, including those who have non-seminary formation plans. Sankofa CPE also offers an on-line CPE program in conjunction with Eden Theological Seminary. Of her work, Rev. Dr. Buhuro says, “Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is an educational resource that offers care to help students remythologize their theological construct to deepen their understanding of their pastoral identity and enhance pastoral competence. ‘Remythologizing’ is a strategy highlighted by Katie Cannon in Womanist theology by which persons can redefine or reinterpret their theological dogma to expand their relationship with the Divine. In CPE, the peer group and supervisor assist*

students in ‘remythologizing’ their views of God through empathy, education, and empowerment. This leads to students experiencing personal, professional, and spiritual transformation.” In preparing ministers and Members in Discernment for the work of chaplaincy, Rev. Dr. Buhuro invites folk to engage in the work of “Sankofa,” looking back in order to move forward.

UCC CHAPLAINS BY GENDER



Both endorsement processes are articulated in the Manual on Ministry, and members of the Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) ministry team are available to work with candidates and Committees on Ministry to facilitate this process. The MESA team speaks for the entire denomination when we offer our profound gratitude for the ministry of all our chaplains. We hope that Associations and Conferences will find ways to support these leaders as they navigate the extraordinary challenges of this season of ministry.

DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS, MEMBERS, CLERGY, AND CONGREGATIONS

SPECIAL REPORT: WHERE OUR UCC CONGREGATIONS CALL HOME: RURAL, TOWN, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN CONGREGATIONS

Contributed by: the Rev. Roberto Ochoa, M.Div., Minister for Ethnic Inclusion and Congregational Support for Rural and Small Churches, Faith Education, Innovation and Formation (Faith INFO), Justice & Local Church Ministries (JLCM).

Where do congregations of the United Church of Christ call home? Is it rural, town, suburban or urban? In the United Church of Christ, congregations can be found everywhere. In my role as Minister for Ethnic Inclusion & Congregational Support for Rural and Small Churches with the Faith Education, Innovation and Formation (Faith INFO) ministry team of the Justice and Local Church Ministries, I have been working with Conference and local congregational leaders to discern the state of UCC congregations in rural and small-town communities.

The newly organized UCC Coalition for Rural and Small Town Identified Ministries¹ have found that defining what is rural, town, suburban, and urban can be elusive and often depends on various understandings of contexts for geographical space and population density in the United States. For example, Yuma, Arizona is defined as an urban center with an estimated 2020 population of 203,247.² However, the closest metropolitan urban center is Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico (50 miles away) and the closest U.S. city is San Diego, California which is 147 miles away. Alhambra, CA with a population of 84,647, abuts Los Angeles, boasting a city population of almost 4 million. Given this, which city, Yuma, or Alhambra, is the more urbanized?

In geographical measurement, consider Montana: a total square mileage of 147,000 and a total population of 1.084 million. The largest city is Billings with 109,550. In comparison, the Boston, MA metro square mileage is 4,500 with a population of 4.6 million, which includes rural/suburban communities like Winthrop (18K), Sudbury (18K), Hingham (23K), and Dedham (24K). Do these communities lose their rural/town identities because they are classified to be within a metropolitan area of an urban center? Is being

rural, small town, suburban, and/or urban a collective state of mind based on historical and other cultural contextual dynamics?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service:

“The Census Bureau defines an urbanized area wherever it finds an urban nucleus of 50,000 or more people. They may or may not contain any individual cities of 50,000 or more. In general, they must have a core with a population density of 1,000 persons per square mile and may contain adjoining territory with at least 500 persons per square mile. Urbanized areas have been delineated using the same basic threshold (50,000 population) for each decennial census since 1950, but procedures for delineating the urban fringe are more liberal today.

The same computerized procedures and population density criteria are used to identify urban clusters of at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 persons. This delineation of built-up territory around small towns and cities was first introduced in 2000. According to this system, rural areas consist of open countryside with population densities less than 500 people per square mile and places with fewer than 2,500 people.”³

Future reports merit a closer and more in-depth study of communities with less than 2,500 people and what defines differences between rural, town, suburban, and urban communities. For more detailed information on the various classifications the U.S. Census Bureau used to define rural, town, suburban, and urban please go to <https://www.census.gov>.

For this report, population was broken down in four categories:

- Communities of less than 25 thousand.
- Communities of 25K-300K.
- Communities of 300K and less than 1 million.
- Communities of over 1 million.

A total of 4,753 UCC congregations were studied to determine the community population of each congregation based on 2019 population estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The study shows that:

- 64.4% of all UCC congregations can be found in communities of less than 25 thousand.
- 25.5% in communities between 25k and less than 300K.
- 7.1% in communities between 300K and less than one million; and
- 3.0% of UCC congregations are in urban centers of more than one million.

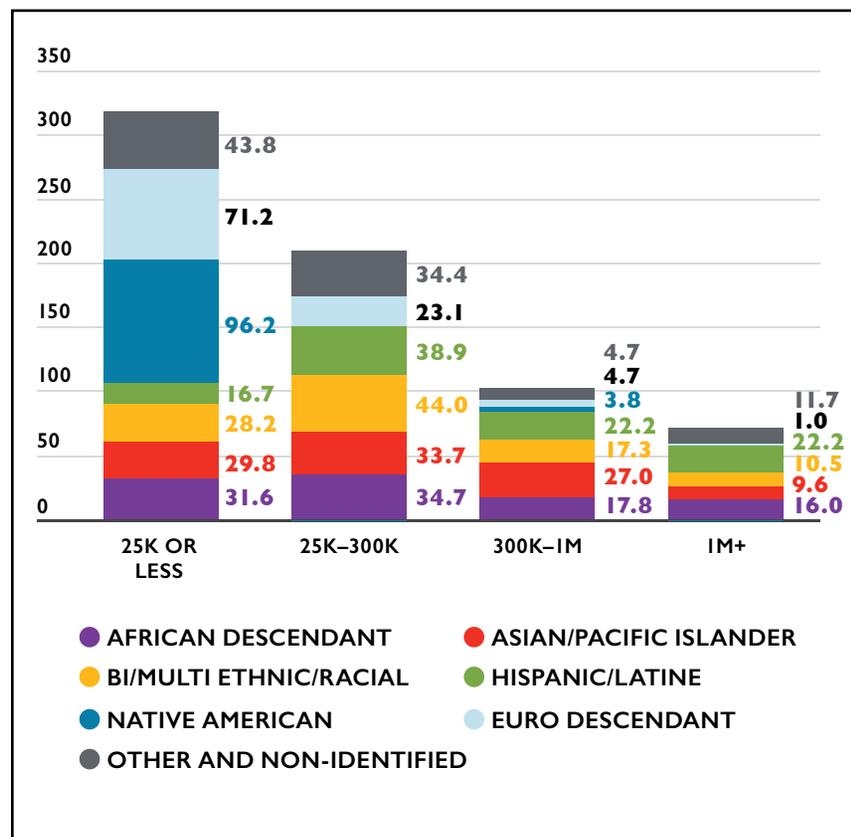
When considering congregations that identified uniquely with racial or ethnic identity, *most are in communities of less than 300K*:

- 66.2% for African Descendant.
- 63.5% of Asian/Pacific Islander.
- 55.6% Hispanic/Latine; and
- 72.2% of congregations that identify as Bi/multi-ethnic, racial.

A higher number of Euro Descendant (94.3%) and Native American (96.2%) UCC congregations are found in communities with less than three hundred thousand residents.

Note: Congregations identified as “other,” or which did not list an ethnic/racial identity, make up 78.1% of the congregations in communities under 300K

UCC ETHNIC IDENTIFIED CONGREGATIONS & COMMUNITY SIZE



QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

Given this study, where do you see you and your congregation in this graph? How does your congregation and community define their locale identity?

What questions, lessons and opportunities come to mind for the United Church of Christ?

How can this data be useful for the future of UCC's congregations, Associations, Conferences, and National Setting in how we work together for a Just World for All?

This information will help inform the work of Faith INFO in its various ministries of congregational support and resourcing, youth and young adult ministries, the gospel arts and worship and community engagement, especially in working with UCC constituents such as the UCC Coalition for Rural/Small Town Ministries and in the development of a revised UCC Manual on Church currently in process.

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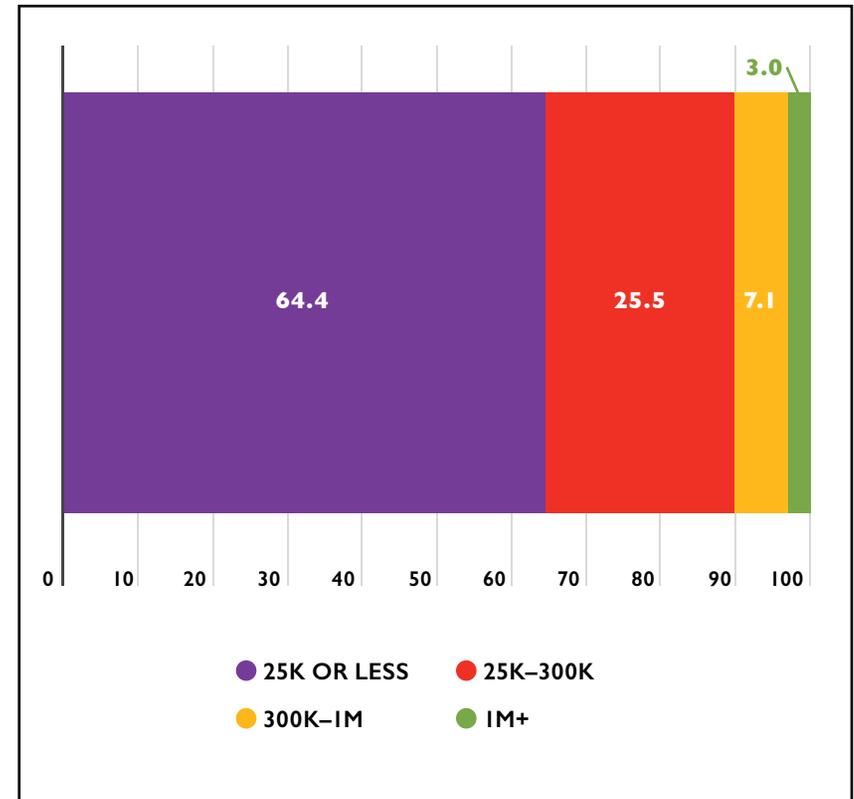
REFERENCES:

¹For more information regarding the coalition see the Facebook group: [UCC Coalition for Rural Ministries](#)

²Source for population and area sq. milage: U.S. Census Bureau

³What is rural? <https://www.ers.usda.gov/classifications/what-is-rural/>

PERCENTAGE OF UCC CONGREGATIONS & COMMUNITY SIZE



SPECIAL REPORT: CHURCH CEMETERIES, COLUMBARIA, AND MEMORIAL GARDENS

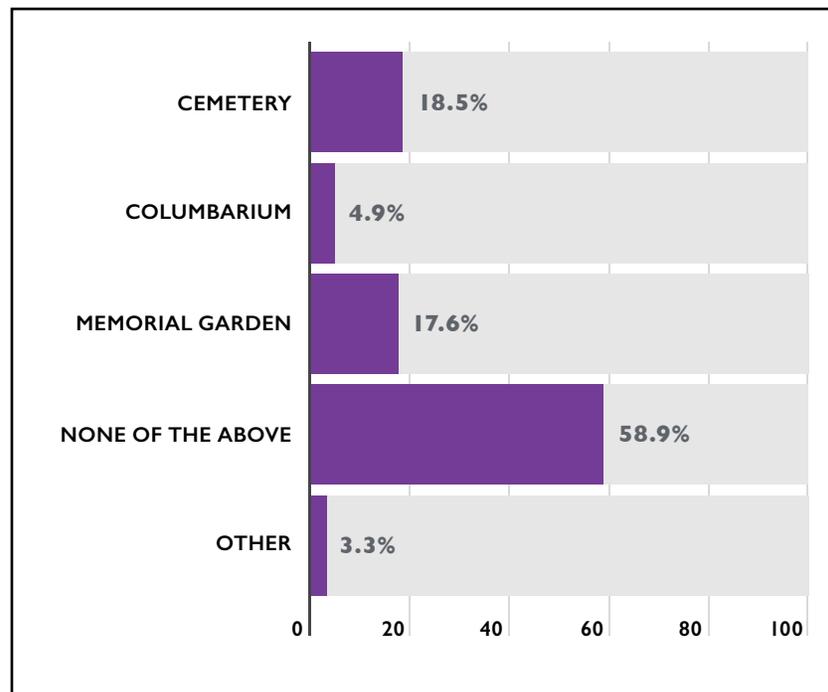
Contributed by the Rev. David Schoen, Minister for Church Legacy and Closure, Church Building & Loan Fund

In a 2022 Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data supplemental survey, UCC congregations were asked what kind of burial and memorial options they offered from the following selections, a cemetery, a columbarium, a memorial garden, none of these, and/or another option. Of the congregations that responded, 62 (11.3%) reported having a combination of two of the three options, and only 3 (<1%) offered all three options. Some churches responded they had historic cemeteries that were no longer available for new burials. Looking deeper at these congregations with the annual data housed in the Data Hub, churches with cemeteries tend to be rural and have smaller average worship attendance, whereas the churches with memorial gardens and/or a columbarium tend to be in urban areas and have larger average worship attendance.

The other memorial options that churches reported include: a pergola with memorial bricks, memorial and celebration trees, quilt banners, memorial and prayer benches, a cancer victims and survivors memorial cross, memorial walkways, books of remembrance, labyrinths, memorial mini-stone memorial garden, memorial funds, memorial plaques, and a memorial installation of the members who were slaves or of African descent who were not buried in marked graves.

During the pandemic, the rate of cremation in the United States increased to 57.5% in 2021, replacing other burial practices. It is projected that by 2025, the rate of cremation will be 64.1%.¹ With the increase in cremations, more churches may choose to offer memorial gardens or a columbarium.

DOES YOUR CONGREGATION CURRENTLY HAVE A (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY):



Church closures have also increased. The increase of closed churches impacts congregations with cemeteries, columbaria, memorial gardens, etc. A cautionary guideline from the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut states, “Simply put, it is impossible to predict today what parishes will be thriving and in what locations 30 or 100 years from now. As a necessary result, we cannot predict the long-term future of any memorial garden.”² This cautionary concern would apply to any church with or considering the different burial options in this report. Churches offering burial options need to have a plan and policy for what happens in case of a change in the church location or status

REFERENCES:

¹Cremation Association of North America: Industry Statistical Information <https://www.cremationassociation.org/page/IndustryStatistics>

² Guidelines for Memorial Gardens in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut

CONFERENCES WITH THE GREATEST NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS WITH BURIAL OPTIONS

CEMETERIES	MEMORIAL GARDENS	COLUMBARIA
Pennsylvania Southeast	Southern New England	Rocky Mountain
Wisconsin	Michigan	Southern New England
Missouri Mid-South	Wisconsin	Hawaii
Penn Northeast	Central Atlantic	Heartland
Illinois South	Florida	Illinois
Penn Central	New Hampshire	Missouri Mid-South

SPECIAL REPORT: DIGITAL PROGRAMMING SYNOPSIS AND LEARNINGS

Contributed by: Jennifer White, Project Manager for Digital Events, Faith Education, Innovation, and Formation (Faith INFO)

Through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Faith Education, Innovation, and Formation (Faith INFO) recognized how important gathering digitally is to so many people across the life of the denomination.

The value of connecting with UCC Members directly, both in presentation of what is learned through participating in the series, as well as the experience of togetherness in the comments proved to be invaluable to our wider community. **This report will illuminate some of the teaching themes, witness, audience, and learnings of our digital programming from 2021.**

Our digital gathering deepened in 2021 and sought to create pathways for a sustainable digital National ministry. We were inspired by your questions, comments, and suggestions. They came in via the chat while we were live, as well as emails, calls, and survey results. You were wonderfully outspoken, and we definitely heard you.

We know that many churches in the UCC and beyond would not have access to the digital platforms or skill to host services online, and that it is our work to help both teach and create opportunities to be in fellowship, learn and worship together. We were comforted in seeing the [FACT 2020 National Survey of Congregations: Congregations' Largest Sources of Concern & Pride](#) results matched the conversations we were having with you, our core our audience.

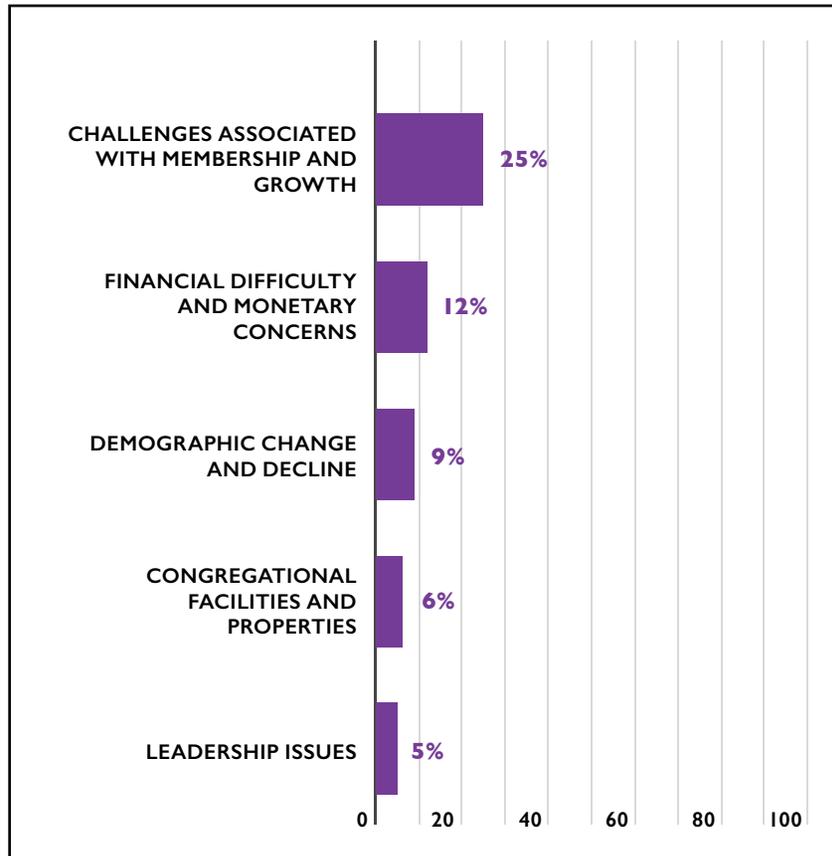
Faith Communities Today is a series of ongoing research surveys and practical reports about congregational life, conducted and published by the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, a multi-faith group of religious researchers and faith leaders, which includes the UCC. The survey had approximately 15,000 respondents.

As we continued through 2021, Faith INFO oriented our work through two main series of events: **Tuesdays for Nurture** and **Thursdays for the Soul**. Soon, we realized that we were not alone in the creation of digital content from the national setting. There were other longstanding series running and a few new ones: [OWL](#), [Creation Justice](#), [Our Faith Our Vote](#), [HIV & Faith](#), [Wednesdays with the World](#).

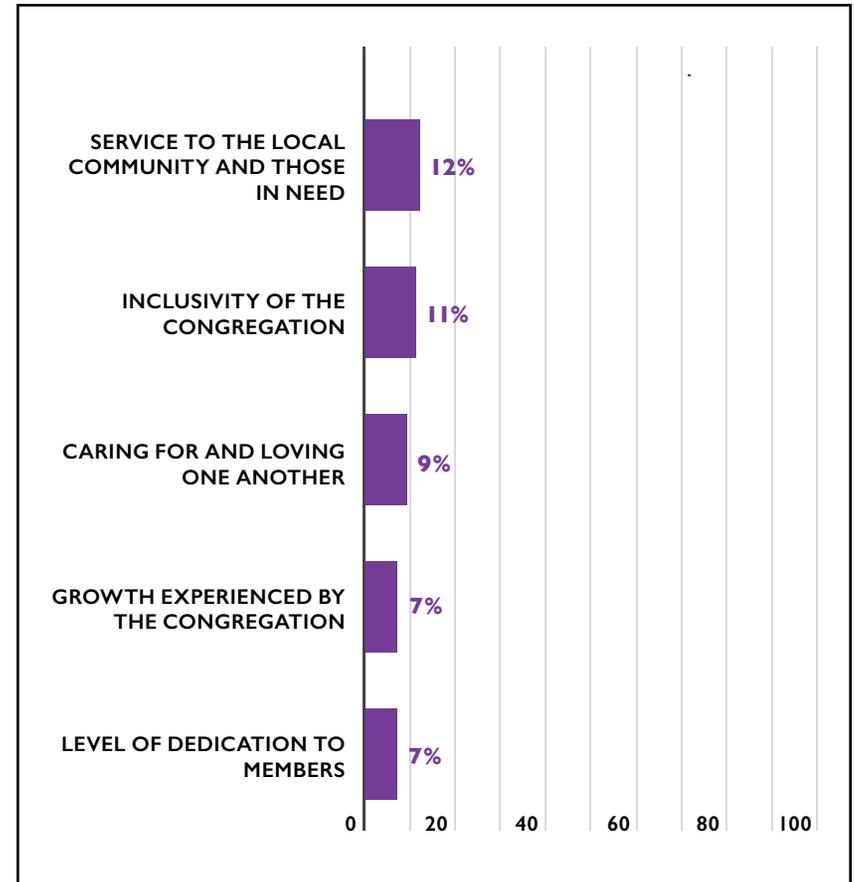
THINGS WE TRIED IN 2021:

- Bi-weekly emails including all the webinars hosted by the National setting to keep you up to date.
- We created a [Digital Programming Webpage](#) for you to be able to easily find your favorite series. We even took the time to create a [Library](#) that allows you to search by topic of interest!
- We shifted from a paid company to using Zoom's built-in auto transcription option because it was far superior to the paid service and free.
- We maintained diligent copyright licensing for all music and content in the series.
- Added resources used in sessions to the YouTube description for you to find and reference as needed.
- Cross training for staff to provide the same high-quality programming you deserve.
- Create community.
- Draw the circle wide (draw it wider still)—more hosts, more guests, more wisdom leaders.

FACT 2020 SURVEY: MOST COMMONLY EXPRESSED CONCERNS



FACT 2020 SURVEY: GREATEST SOURCES OF PRIDE



Overall, we had about 30,000 people register for 117 webinars for **Tuesdays for Nurture** and **Thursdays for the Soul**. Of those 117 sessions, 17 were live reruns.

We have worked diligently to ensure the countless resources in our digital programs are available to support local congregations who are actively bringing our Church, and the world, towards the world God imagines for all of us. We record every conversation and have curated them on the [UCC's YouTube channel playlist](#) for use in congregational learning and worship. Local Churches have used these sessions as a form of devotional, to have hard conversations, to initiate community change, to worship, to grieve, to learn and more.

We explored themes such as:

- Voting Rights
- Mental Health
- Innovation in Congregations
- Equity and Equality
- Supportive Networks
- Synod
- Music and Worship
- Tik Tok/Social Media
- Sexuality & The Black Church

What's the Hype? These sessions gathered a wider than usual audience because of their topic or noteworthy guests:

- [National Call for Prayer and Vigil](#)
- [What Shall We Say to These Things? Crafting a Social Gospel for the 21st Century](#) Featuring Mama Ruby Sales
- [Building Back Hope: A Service of Release & Renewal](#) Featuring Rev. Fr. Otis Moss III, Valarie Kaur and Rev. De. Jacqui Lewis

● [Church-Based Reparations](#)

We also touched on each of your topics of interest in “The State Of” sessions:

- [The State of the Children](#) Featuring *Rev Dr. Starsky Wilson*
- [The State of Seminary Education](#) Featuring *David Vasquez-Levy, Pacific School of Religion, David Rowe, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Deborah Krause, Eden Theological Seminary, Stephen Ray, Chicago Theological Seminary, and Sarah Drummond, ANTS at Yale University*
- [The State of the Children](#)
- [The State of Rural Churches & Communities](#)
- [The State of Global Refugees, Migrants and Asylum](#)
- [The State of the Church](#) Featuring *Bishop W. Darin Moore*
- [The State of the Poor](#) featuring *Bishop William Barber*
- [State of Creation](#) *Rev. Jim Antal*
- [State of Women](#)
- [The State of Black Bodies in the US](#) Featuring *Dean Kelly Brown Douglas*

Finally, we conclude the report by offering immense gratitude to each audience member and every guest participating and using the content. It is because of your support, through your presence, encouragement, and wisdom that we can do this very necessary work together. The generous donations to the Annual Fund of the United Church of Christ continue to help us prioritize our digital programming, in service towards the local congregations of the United Church of Christ, and our shared vision of a Just World for All. To you, for everything, thank you.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: 2021 CONGREGATIONAL GRANTS

Contributed by: the Rev. Dr. Aaron Wade, Minister for Congregational Granting, Faith Education, Innovation and Formation (Faith INFO)

Justice and Local Church Ministry of The United Church of Christ join conferences and other ministries of the national setting in providing funding grants to support ministry. Our area of focus strengthens the health and vitality of our congregations, specifically in the areas of congregational missional outreach, congregational operational support, new and renewing churches, and support towards pension/health/ dental support for new and renewing church pastors. In addition to the already changing landscape of ministry that causes congregations to need grant support, the prolonged impact of COVID-19 has increased economic challenges for many of our churches.

Our goal is to release resources with the least amount of red tape while maintaining fiscal accountability and donor intent. In 2020 we launched a common application for congregational grants, allowing eligible applicants to submit one application for a maximum of four initiatives simultaneously. Currently the common application services Congregational Assessment, Support, and Advancement (CASA), Neighbors in Need (NIN), Emergency Operational Support, and New and Renewing Congregations Pension Support for pastors. To ensure equity, three priority areas were identified: rural congregations, congregations of color and ethnic minority, and congregations that have not obtained funding from any other sources.

In 2021, we awarded 89 grants, totaling \$603,000. 35% of funds were awarded to congregations of color, 10% to rural congregations and 46% to congregations that had not received any other financial support from any other source.

In the final analysis, we were able to offer support that had meaningful impact on our congregations wrestling with the shifting landscape of church and rising obstacles presented in these unprecedented times in our nation and world.

In closing, hear the words of Rev. Rhina Ramos, Pastor of Ministerio Latino, UCC, a 2021 grant recipient:

“Thank you to Justice and Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ CASA for awarding Ministerio Latino–Latino Ministry New and Renewing Church funding to support our work to the LatinX and LGBTQ Community. Your support makes our work possible to help LGBTQ LatinX immigrants. Muchas gracias!”

IMPACT REVIEW:

 **\$603,000**
TOTAL GRANT DISTRIBUTIONS

 **146** TOTAL APPLICATIONS INITIATED

 **89** GRANTS APPROVED

 **21** CONFERENCES IMPACTED

BUILD IMPACT OVERVIEW:

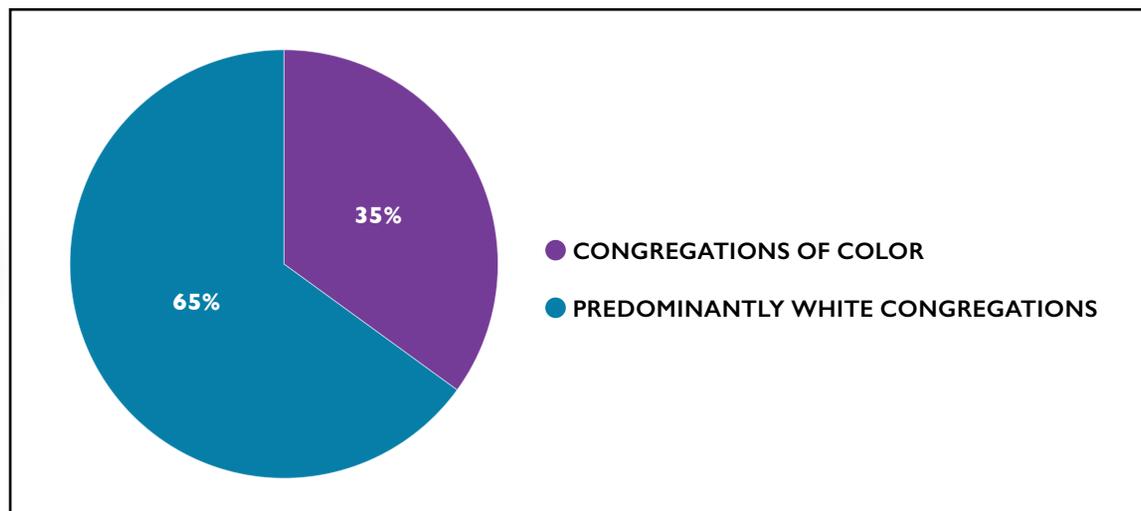
 **\$100,000**
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

 **\$150,000**
NEIGHBORS IN NEED

 **\$253,000**
CONGREGATION ASSESSMENT, SUPPORT AND ADVANCEMENT TEAM (CASA)

 **\$100,000**
NEW & RENEWING CHURCHES (PENSION BOARD PARTNERSHIP)

RACE/ETHNICITY MAKE UP OF GRANT-RECEIVING CONGREGATIONS



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: UCC JUST PEACE CHURCHES

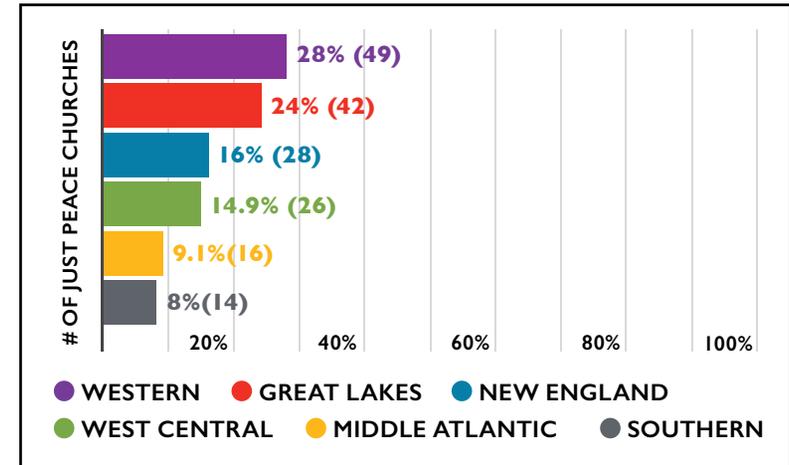
Contributed by: the Rev. Michael Neuroth, Policy Advocate for International Issues, Justice and Local Church Ministries

The United Church of Christ was the first Christian denomination to declare itself a “Just Peace Church” in 1985 through passage of the General Synod pronouncement “[Affirming the United Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church.](#)” This pronouncement articulated the UCC’s position on war and peace distinct from the historic approaches of crusade, pacifism, or “just war.” Grounded in UCC polity and covenantal theology, Just Peace was defined using the biblical vision of God’s Shalom and as the “interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence.” Just Peace is a continuing call for UCC churches to address systemic injustice using non-violence and [Just Peace approaches](#) with a prophetic hope that “Peace is Possible.”

Over the years, UCC congregations passed their own Just Peace statements or covenants, echoing the values articulated in the 1985 pronouncement. “Just Peace” has become one of eight church designations or “[Just World Covenants](#)” that churches can affirm as an act of public witness and commitment. Alongside the [designation process](#), a UCC “Just Peace Network” has emerged over the past decade to walk alongside churches in the designation process and deepen the UCC’s witness as a justice-doing, peace-seeking church. This Just Peace Network has also called for the recognition of “[Just Peace Sunday](#)” each September as a means of public proclamation. More information on the UCC Just Peace Network, and how to [become a Just Peace Church](#), can be found here: <https://www.ucc.org/just-peace-dc/>

Currently there are an estimated 175 Just Peace Churches on record in the United Church of Christ. Since such records were only kept sporadically over the years, the Just Peace Network is currently working with local congregations, Conference offices, and the CARDD office to update this list to get a more accurate picture of the number of Just Peace Churches. The current directory of churches is available online [here](#). If you have updates to this list or have interest in pursuing a designation as a Just Peace Church, contact [Rev. Michael Neuroth](#).

UCC REGIONS WITH JUST PEACE CHURCHES



TOP 6 CONFERENCES WITH JUST PEACE CHURCHES

UCC CONFERENCE	# OF JUST PEACE CHURCHES
Central Pacific	29
Southern New England	18
Minnesota	14
Heartland	10
Indiana-Kentucky	9
Michigan	9

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: 2021 WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE ACTION ALERTS

Contributed by Jessica Quinn, Online Communications Specialist, D.C. Office

Each week, targeted action alerts are sent out to advocates across the country through the UCC’s Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANet). In 2021, 44 alerts were sent out on a wide range of issues. Advocates who took action through our system sent direct emails and tweets to their representatives using language written by UCC staff.

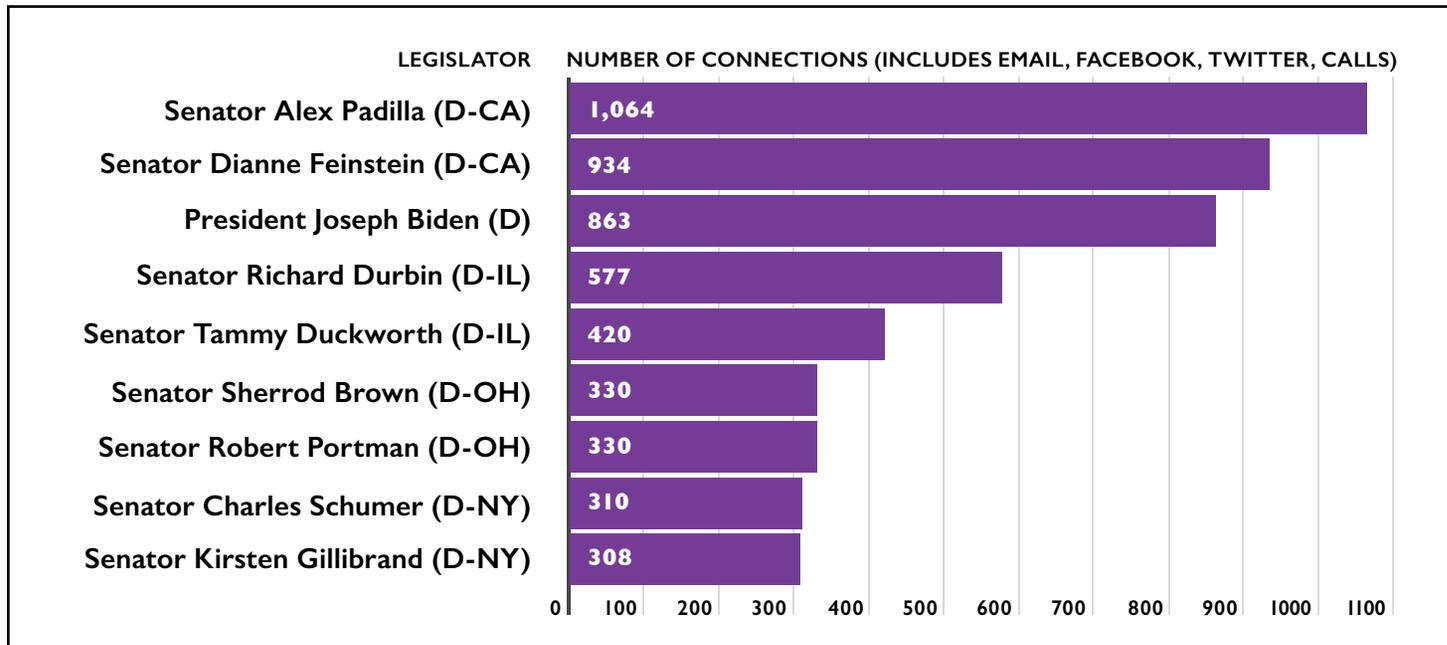
On domestic issues, 30 alerts were sent through the JPANet. Of those, the highest number of actions taken by advocates in 2021 were on the topics of voting rights, reproductive justice, gun violence prevention legislation, and the violence against women act. Specifically on voting rights, 1,753 advocates took action, sending 4,593 messages to their legislators! Another issue that gained much advocate attention was the Violence Against Women Act. Over 600 advocates took action to urge legislators to reauthorize the bill, which joyfully passed in March of 2022!

Throughout 2021, our nation battled repeated attacks of voter suppression and LGBTQ+ discrimination at state and local levels. Sadly, the fight is not over as we look to 2022, but our advocates continue to show up and take action for federal protections and equity for all.

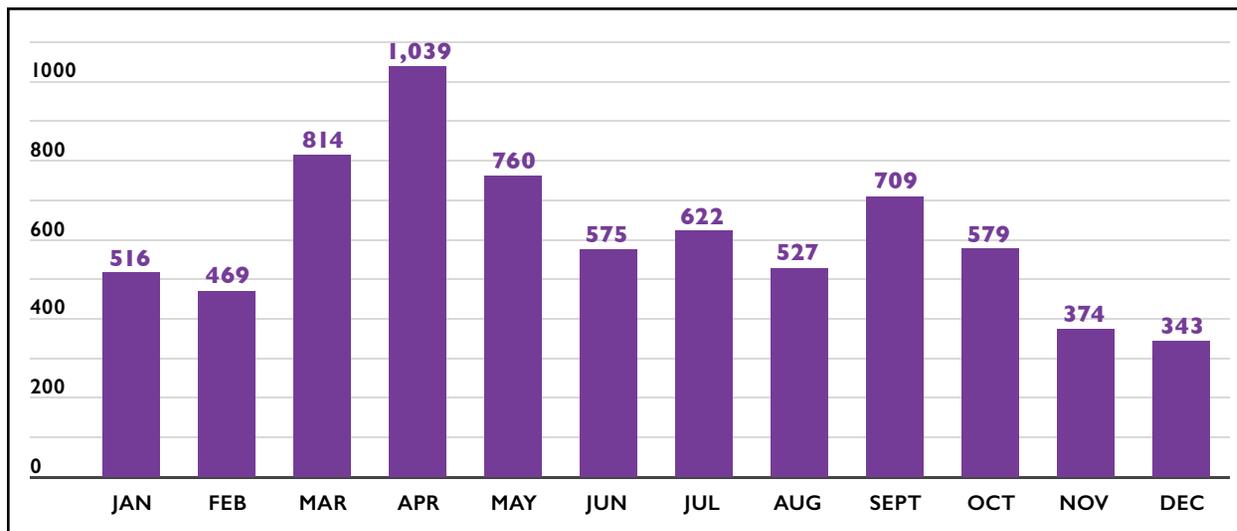
2021 ACTION ALERT ISSUES (DOMESTIC)

ACTION ALERT ISSUES (DOMESTIC)—2021	# OF ADVOCATES BY ISSUE
Voting Rights: For The People Act (2)	718
Reproductive Justice	653
Bipartisan Background Check Legislation	615
Violence Against Women Act	605
Voting Rights: Freedom to Vote Act (2)	556
Equitable Vaccine Access (2)	537
Voting Rights: JLVRAA	479
Philippine Human Rights Act (2)	471
LGBTQ+ Justice: Equality Act	408
Refugee Protections for Afghans	387
For The People Act	365
Support for Haitian Refugees	338
Pathway to Citizenship	318
Cease Violence in Gaza	312
COVID Relief	297
Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2021	297
Human Trafficking	293
Reparatory Justice (H.R. 40)	266
Housing Justice	245
Re-Enter Iran Nuclear Deal	239
PRO Act	234
Build Back Better	229
American Jobs/American Family Plan	200
Reconciliation	195
Indigenous Boarding Schools	178
Food Insecurity	156
Veterans (VCFCA)	133
Condemn Anti-Asian Hate	100
End Student Debt	49
No Death Penalty	39

TOP LEGISLATOR CONNECTIONS IN 2021



ADVOCATE GROWTH IN 2021



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: GLOBAL MINISTRIES PARTNER PRIORITIES: 2021 ACTION ALERT ISSUES

Contributed by Jessica Quinn, Online Communications Specialist, D.C. Office

2021 GLOBAL MINISTRY ACTION ALERT ISSUES

GLOBAL MINISTRY ACTION ALERT ISSUES—2021	# OF ADVOCATES BY ISSUE
Equitable Vaccine Access (2)	537
Stop Evictions in Jerusalem	492
Philippine Human Rights Act (2)	471
Support Refugee Protections for Afghans	387
Cease Violence in Gaza	312
Human Trafficking	293
Re-Enter Iran Nuclear Deal	239
Hold Israel Accountable for HR Violations (2)	159
H.R. 2590	89
Terrorism Designation for HR Organizations	88
Fund Medical Needs	80
Restore Funding to UNRWA	78
Equitable Vaccines for Palestinians	48
Re-Enter the JCPOA	13

In 2021, there were 14 alerts relating to global issues, informed by our Global Ministries (UCC and Disciples) partners. These alerts include the 3rd Thursday alerts for a just peace in Palestine-Israel. Advocates who took action through our system sent emails and tweets directly to their representatives using language written by UCC staff.

The issues which had the highest number of advocates were (1) fighting for equitable global vaccine access amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) a call to halt evictions of Palestinians from Jerusalem. In addition, advocates also took strong action to support refugees from Afghanistan as U.S. troops withdrew from the country.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES

Contributed by: the Rev. Dr. Velda Love, Minister for Racial Justice and Lead for the Join The Movement Campaign, and Dr. Sharon Fennema, Join the Movement Curator & Griot

RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Racial Justice Ministries provides multiple opportunities for denominational staff, local churches, conferences, and associations, and affiliated UCC partners to participate in dialogues, education, trainings, advocacy, and activism towards dismantling racism. Racial justice work involves an inward interrogation of biases, prejudices, internalized white supremacy and internalized racism beliefs, and overt racist behaviors.

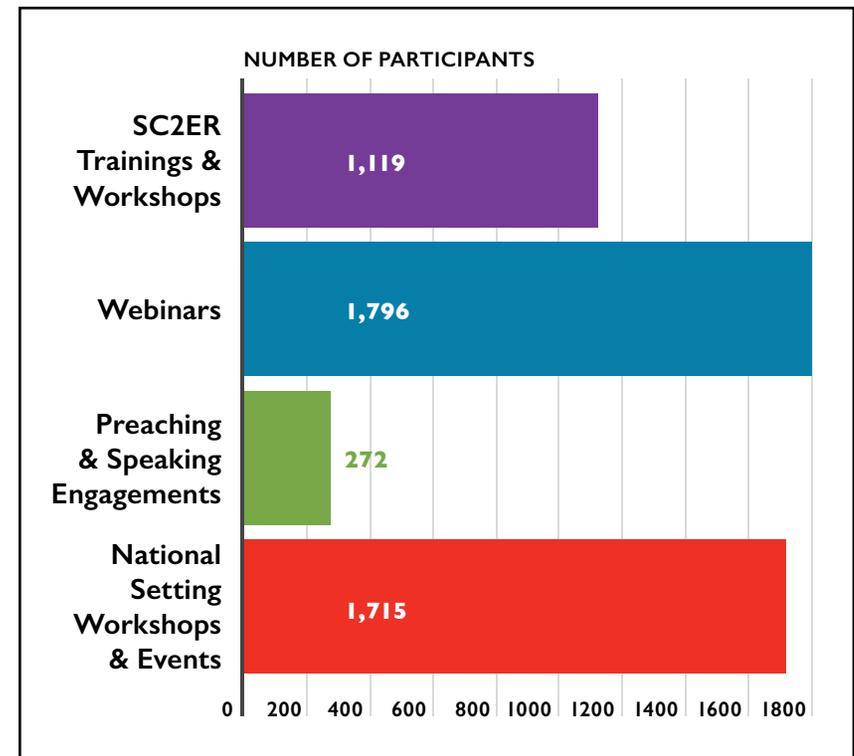
The approach to racial equity and inclusion is an invitation for participants to learn within community settings the impact of over 500 years of structural racism resulting in government policies, institutional acts of injustice, and individual acts of harm and violence toward predominately communities of African, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latin, and Native descents. We have engaged with nearly 5,000 participants through workshops, trainings, and webinars over the last year.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE

The United Church of Christ is a denomination that advocates for all people to live without threats and acts of violence. The human family is sacred, deserves to flourish, and experience God’s abundant blessings.

The UCC embraces the traditions of the first century church which began as a movement of committed believers sharing the Good News and teachings of Jesus to build a Just World for All.

IMPACT & OPPORTUNITIES OF ENGAGEMENT (2021–2022)



The murder of George Floyd, May 2020 by Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer, ignited a global protest for black lives. Floyd's murder was one of many in 2020 against African Americans. Asian American and Pacific Islander communities were falsely blamed for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attacks on our siblings of color across the nation must be stopped. The hate against communities of color must end. The movement for racial justice cannot be separated from faith commitments to do justice and love our siblings and neighbors.

Join the Movement toward Racial Justice was featured [as a new campaign initiative](#) during General Synod 33. Over the next three years stories will be featured on the [Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice](#) webpage.

Dr. Sharon Fennema is the Join the Movement Curator. Sharon will be collecting and posting stories that come from the heart of our denominational leaders, local churches, and national and global partners. Stories will represent cultural expressions, lived experiences, and local advocacy and activism toward ending racism.

Stories formed by faith are necessary for the continued growth of the Christian church nationally and globally. Stories will inspire others and people will know that we are Christians rooted in love—living out loud toward a Just World for All.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: JOIN THE MOVEMENT CURATOR

Contributed by, Dr. Sharon Fennema, Join the Movement Curator & Griot and the Rev. Dr. Velda Love, Minister for Racial Justice and Lead for the Join the Movement Campaign

Join the Movement toward Racial Justice is an antiracism initiative and campaign in the United Church of Christ, working for the transformation of racism in our world so that we might foster lives of flourishing for all. JTM engages every setting of the UCC, from local churches to global partners, with the goal of expanding our practices of antiracism and strengthening our capacities as partners and participants in the burgeoning racial justice movements of our time. We are not only a hub of story sharing, resourcing, and theological reflection that people can access to support and inspire their racial justice work, but we are also a network of racial justice movement-makers, allies & accomplices, and anti-racism practitioners working to build and amplify our collective power to move toward racial justice.

JTM NETWORK STATISTICS (NOVEMBER 2021-MAY 2022)

- 880 JTM Subscribers
- 20 Story-sharers and Writers
- 50 Advisory Team Members and Ambassadors, including:
 - Conference Ministers
 - Associate Conference Ministers
 - Local Church Pastors
 - Local Church Leaders
 - Activists and Advocates
 - National Staff Members
 - UCC Partners

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS JTM WEBINARS (NOVEMBER 2021–MAY 2022)



290

STORYTELLING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



706

**DESCENDED FROM THE PROMISED LAND
FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION**

JTM CURATOR PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS (NOVEMBER 2021–MAY 2022)

	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Advent Movement Themes Workshop, Foothills UCC Los Altos, CA	16
Women’s Retreat First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto, CA	25
Reimagining Youth Ministry Opening Worship	200
Racial Justice for Clergy Training, Northern California Nevada Conference	30
Rise Up, Lean In: Joining the Movement toward Racial Justice Workshop, Heartland Conference	25
Practicing Abolition: Intervening in Moments of Racial Harm Workshop, First Christian Church of Concord, CA	20
Valedictory Charge, Commencement, Pacific School of Religion	428

JTM CURATOR FACILITATION SUPPORT (NOVEMBER 2021-MAY 2022)

- Sacred Conversations to End Racism Trainings—Bi-monthly
- Sacred Conversations to End Racism Facilitator Meetings—Monthly
- SC2ER Workshop, Penn West Conference—65 participants
- SC2ER Workshop, UCC Pension Board—80 participants

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS)

Contributed by: the Rev. Dr. Monica Dawkins-Smith, Executive Associate, Wider Church Ministries

OGHS DOLLARS AT WORK & OGHS TOTAL OFFERING (2017-2021)

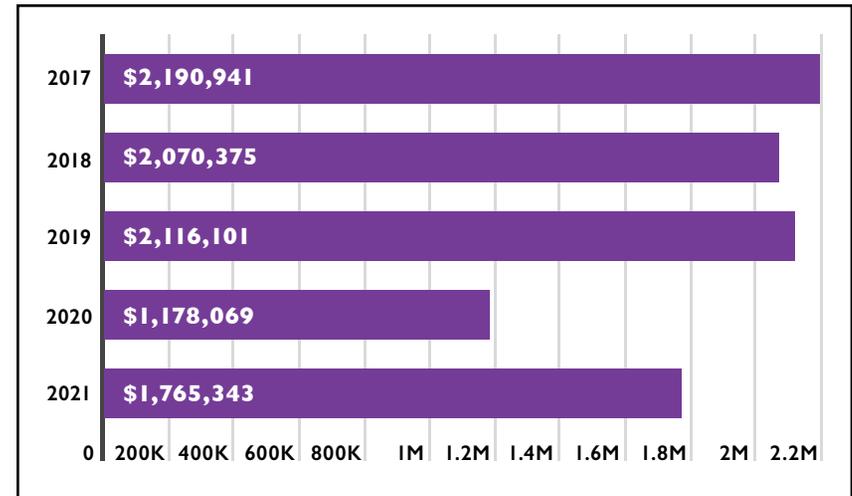
Funds collected from the One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering, and other special funds, are used by Wider Church Ministries to fulfill the United Church of Christ’s commitment to respond to a variety of international and domestic concerns by providing advocacy, sustainable development resources, long term disaster recovery support, humanitarian aid and assistance for refugee and asylum seekers. We can accompany families as they rebuild their homes and lives through our collaborative partnership with churches and organizations like Church World Service (CWS), Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance and World Council of Churches (WCC).

Stories and reports bear witness to the transformative and life sustaining impact of our support through international programs in five (5) Global Ministries regions -- Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East/Europe, and Southern Asia -- under the guidance of Global Ministries Area Executives working in collaboration with global partners.

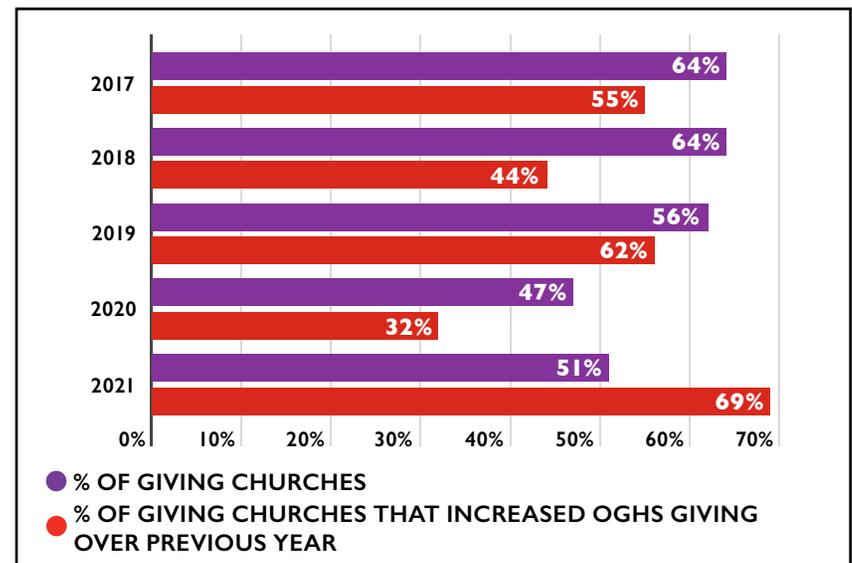
After several years of distributing over \$2 million in funding annually, the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 precipitated a substantial (44%) decrease from the previous year in OGHS funding. This resulted in a reduction of available resources across all programs and created a year-end deficit. Remarkably, the increased giving from over two-thirds of churches that give regularly to OGHS resulted in a modest rebound in the 2021 offering.

Amid despair, through your generosity, the United Church of Christ continues to stand with partners in solidarity and mutuality to provide much needed support to communities in need, offering reminders of God’s love to nurture hope.

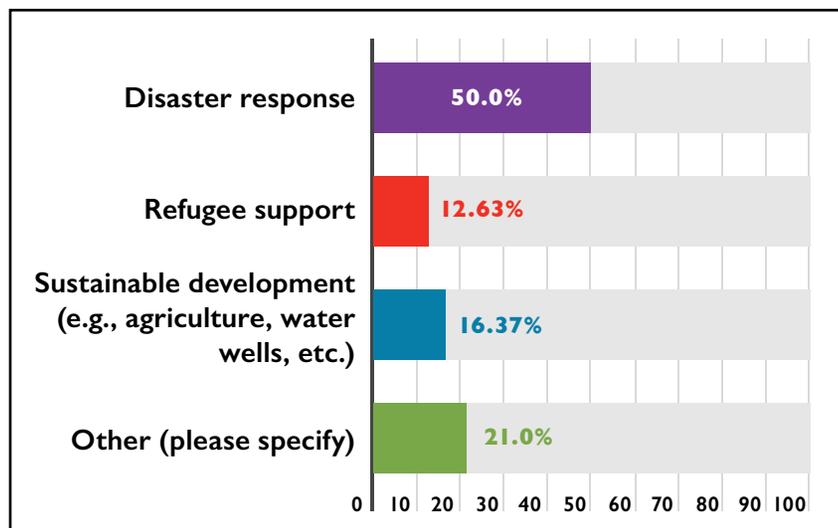
OGHS TOTAL OFFERING (2017–2021)



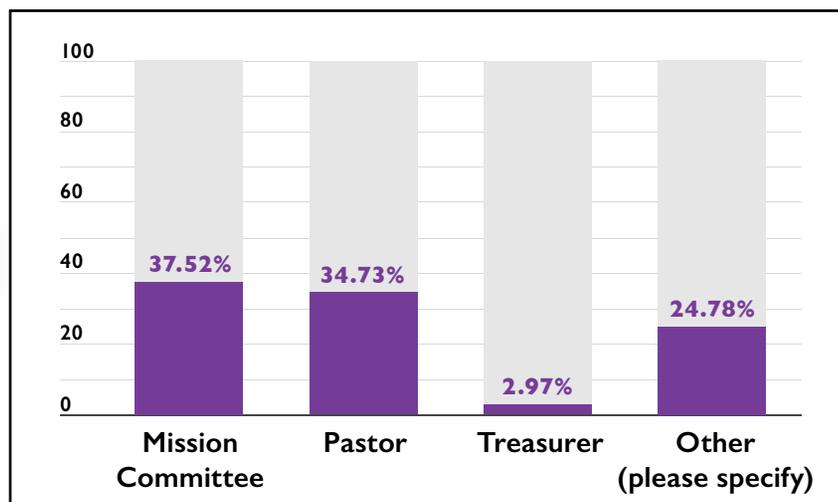
5 YEAR CHURCH GIVING (2017–2021)



WHEN ASKED “WHY DO YOU GIVE TO OGHS,” WHAT WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT?



WHO HAS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING THE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING IN YOUR CONGREGATION?



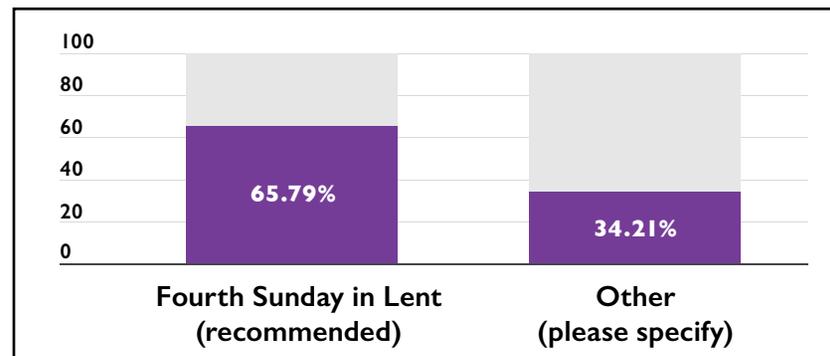
OGHS CHURCH GIVING (2017-2021)

The COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in fewer giving churches and fewer churches with increased giving over the previous year. However, the downward trend was reversed in 2021 with as many as 69% of giving churches showing increased giving over the previous year.

OGHS SURVEY (MAY 2022)

A survey was sent in May 2022 to learn when and how UCC congregations engaged with the OGHS offering. While the majority of churches that responded to the survey received the OGHS offering on the recommended date, some churches extended the opportunity to give through the entire month of March. Other dates included the months of April, May and special Sundays like Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Respondents most frequently named disaster response as their “why” for contributing to the offering, followed by “other”, which included “all of the above” with an emphasis on where help is urgently needed. In addition, the mission committee and pastor are most commonly responsible for OGHS promotion within congregations. Other responses for who was responsible for OGHS promotion included: administrative assistant, church secretary, office manager, stewardship committee, outreach committee, elders and deacons.

WHEN DO YOU RECEIVE THE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (OGHS) OFFERING?



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: ENCUENTROS LATINX PROGRAM 2020-2022

Contributed by: the Rev. Rhina Ramos, National Coordinator for Proyecto Encuentros, Health and Wholeness Advocacy Ministries (HWA)

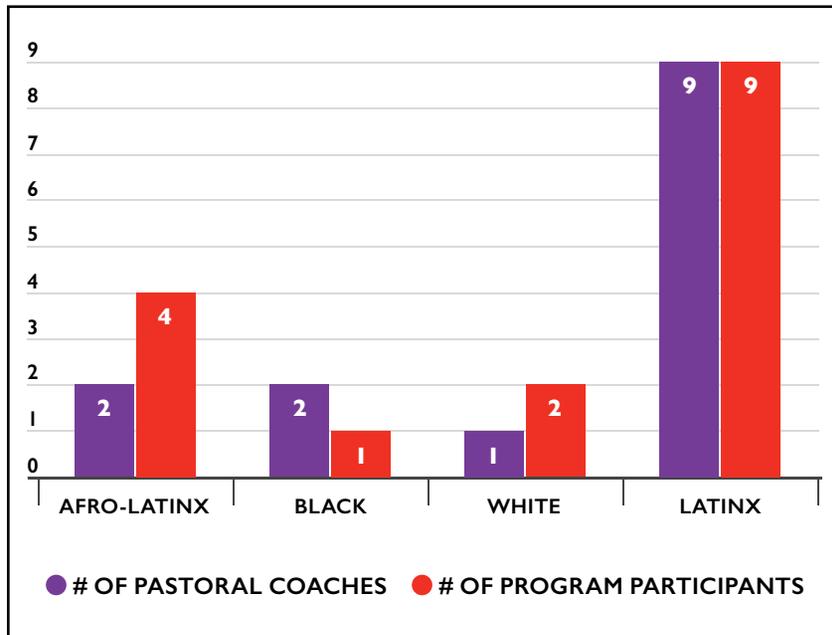
Encuentros Latinx is a program funded by the Carpenter Foundation and run by the National UCC. It exists to create visibility for Latinx LGBTQI within historically white churches. It creates educational materials, relevant programming, and opens doors for this community in mainstream UCC congregations.

PASTORAL COACHING PROGRAM

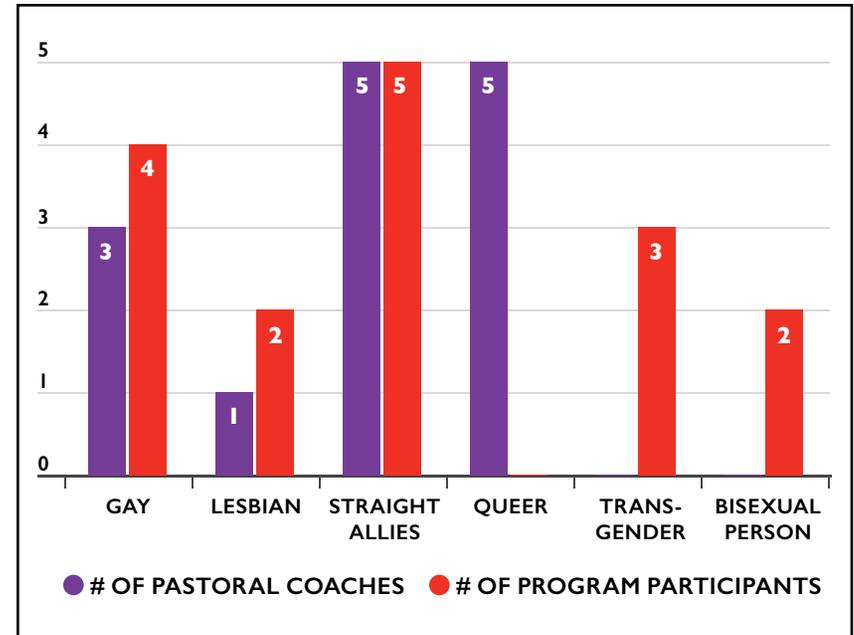
In 2020, Encuentros Latinx launched a Pastoral Coaching initiative to support UCC clergy and Members in Discernment. The main goal of the initiative is to create support that respond to the specific needs of clergy of color as well as to accompany the efforts of white clergy to make their congregations more inclusive.

In an evaluative session done in February of 2022, former coaching recipients reported they were well matched, found the coaching to be supportive, valued the experience, and understood the journey they were on. Participants felt their coaches were accessible and connected

PASTORAL COACH & PROGRAM PARTICIPANT: RACE/ETHNIC IDENTITY REPRESENTATION (2020)



PASTORAL COACH & PROGRAM PARTICIPANT: LGBTQI IDENTITY REPRESENTATION (2020)



with them all while sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The coaching was crucial for discerning next steps in their spiritual journey and provided a safe space to vent and be heard. Participants also felt that the coaches brought experience, wisdom, and cultural competence to the work with them. It was key to have coaches who understood the complexity of intersections of faith, culture, and religion. Participants gained tips for their spiritual well-being as well as how to navigate working in white congregations while being Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) clergy. Finally, participants were challenged to think creatively, inviting them to see different perspectives, helping them to set healthy boundaries, and supporting them to remain authentic.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The majority of committee members were recruited during the General Synod of 2019. Eleven people joined and their demographic make-up as follows: 4 Afro-Latinx, one mixed, 5 Latinx, and 1 White ally. In the LGBTQ spectrum, they identified as: 4 gay, one non-binary, three lesbians, one bisexual, and one straight ally. They served for the first two years until the end of 2021 when four members transitioned out. Committee members and have written 10 [reflections for our blog](#), facilitated toolkit workshops, and led the program's podcast.

In 2022, we enlisted five new committee members: two transgender men, one straight ally, and two lesbians, two identify as Afro-Latinx and the rest as Latinx.

VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

Once we went virtual due to sheltering in place, our programming was key in keeping us connected. We conducted special programming for Christmas, Holy Week and other important celebrations of our culture and history.

- **Encuentros Latinx Podcast:** Our goal is to uplift the voices that speak of our different intersections, spirituality, and faith: being Latinx, being queer, being Afro-Latinx, etc.. Taylor Ramage, an Advisory Committee member, is the host and has recorded twenty-four episodes to date; we recently hit one thousand downloads.
- **Virtual Toolkits Workshops:** We led four workshops, with four different church groups on how to use our LGBTQI welcoming toolkits, in total, we reached forty people, 75% of the participants were Latinx.
- **Black Lives Matter Discussion:** Furthering our effort to remain current with our mission to include marginalized sectors in our denomination, and in response to George Floyd's murder, we held a virtual conversation in August 2020 with twenty-two participants to acknowledge the unspoken anti-Blackness often present in the Latinx community. As a result, we included a new piece in our anti-racism toolkit entitled "Latine, who is Latine." This piece addresses the invisibility of Black Latines when we talk about the Latinx community.
- **Christmas Posadas:** Our first Posadas Navideñas in December 2020 attracted seventy participants. The virtual event elevated Latinx culture, included music in Spanish, and bilingual reflections on Hope during the Pandemic. It was our first time providing simultaneous interpretation in Zoom. Our second Posadas Navideñas in December 2021 had twenty-five participants.

- **Virtual Good Fridays:** Our first celebration was in April 2021, attracting thirty participants. This virtual service was led entirely by members of the Advisory Committee. In 2022, we produced a YouTube video and had ten views.
- **Pulse 5th Anniversary—June 2021:** This was one of our best virtual activities and one of major importance. We held a virtual remembrance to commemorate the tragedy that occurred in Orlando 5 years ago where forty-nine people were victims of a hate crime at the Pulse Club. Our YouTube video had 185 views. One of the songs played at this service of remembrance was shared thirty-seven times on Facebook on the day of the anniversary, June 12th.
- **General Synod—June 2021:** Encuentros Latinx presented two workshops: “When Privilege Enters the Room” and “Decolonizing Faith.” We had seventy participants.
- **Colectivo and Encuentros Latinx joint Latinx Heritage Month Celebration—October 21:** We had twenty participants in this virtual celebration. This event was used to launch Colectivo de Latinx Ministries and outreach for the first assembly. We collaborated to also introduce Encuentros Latinx to other Latinx folk in the UCC. The keynote speaker was Lorraine Cenicerros, the first Latinx appointed to be Conference Minister of Kansas-Oklahoma Conference.
- **North America Women’s Pilgrimage—International Women’s Day—March 8, 2022:** With the World Church Council, we participated in a two-day program to address the intersectionality of oppressive systems, including how they are mirrored in the life of the church, with particular attention being on how they have played out in the lives of Black, Latina, Indigenous, Asian, and White women.

- **San Romero Celebration—March 2022:** Encuentros Latinx put together the first UCC virtual celebration to honor El Salvador’s faith martyr, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, killed in El Salvador in 1980. We had thirty live participants and 50 YouTube views.

Learn more about the work of the Encuentros Latinx program and access our resources, including [Virtual Toolkits](#).

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: OUR WHOLE LIVES/SEXUALITY AND OUR FAITH

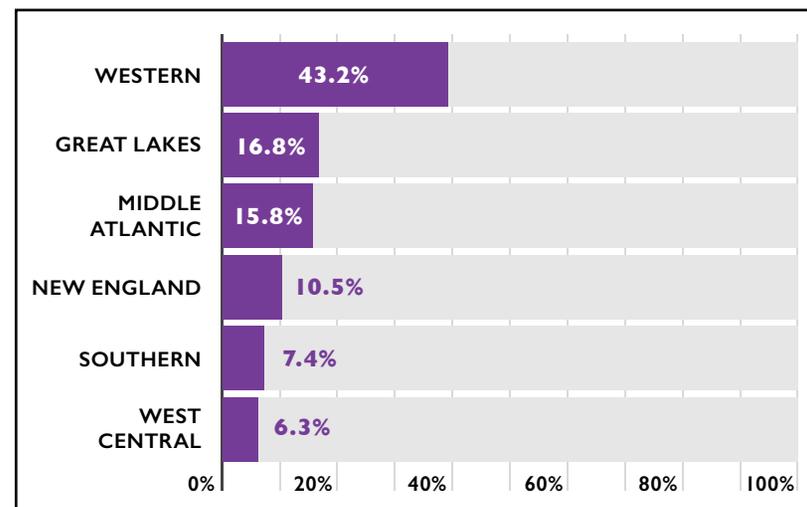
Contributed by: the Rev. Amy Johnson, UCC Minister for Sexuality Education and Justice

Our Whole Lives & Sexuality and Our Faith are developed and maintained by a partnership between the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association. We work together to create and update curricula, train, and equip approved trainers to train facilitators, and create and update the facilitator training process.

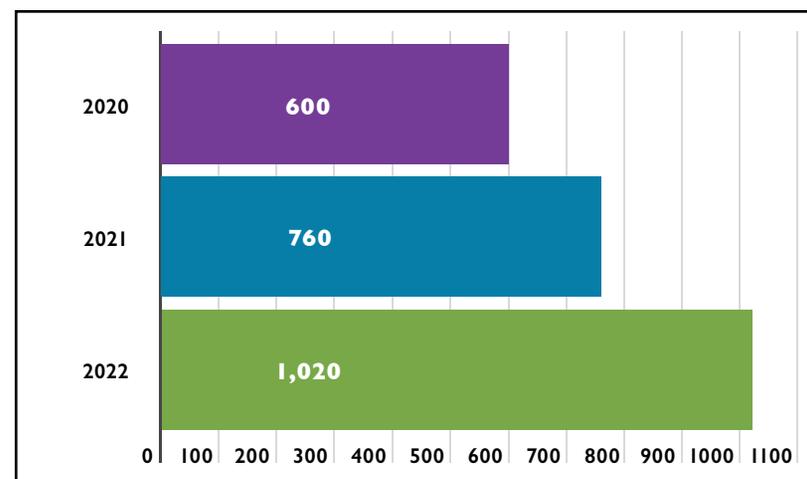
Our Whole Lives in-person trainings are slowly beginning again. In the last year, we have also begun an online training program open to UCC and UUA participants only. We have completed seven trainings at the time of data submission, and we have trained almost 100 people in 28 states. This is in addition to in-person trainings.

- Quarterly Our Whole Lives newsletter subscribers is at 1,020, a 35% increase from last year.
- Monthly Our Whole Lives: Taking Flight webinars continued.
 - Topics have included:
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Restarting OWL Programs
 - Why We Do the Things We Do
 - Online Training
 - OWL Revisions Status
 - Under Your Wing Video Series for Parents of Young Children
 - OWL for Older Adults
 - Building an OWL Program from the Ground Up
 - Addressing Anti-LGBTQ+ Initiatives
 - Numbers of views total is 1,614. This does not include additional views of past webinars.

OWL ONLINE TRAINING PARTICIPATION BY UCC REGION



OUR WHOLE LIVES NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS (2020–2022)



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE PILGRIMAGE PROGRAM

Contributed by: Lorna B. Hernández, Director, Global Ministries

The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program encourages and assists congregations, regions, conferences, and other related organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and the United Church of Christ in the United States to visit and join international partners in their work for justice, reconciliation, and peace. Mission pilgrimages are transforming experiences through which participants receive and share God’s love while walking with international partners, sharing their joys, and understanding their challenges.

COVID-19

In 2021, the Program continued to experience a direct impact from the pandemic of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. All pilgrimages in 2021 were postponed to prioritize the health and safety of pilgrims and international partner organizations.

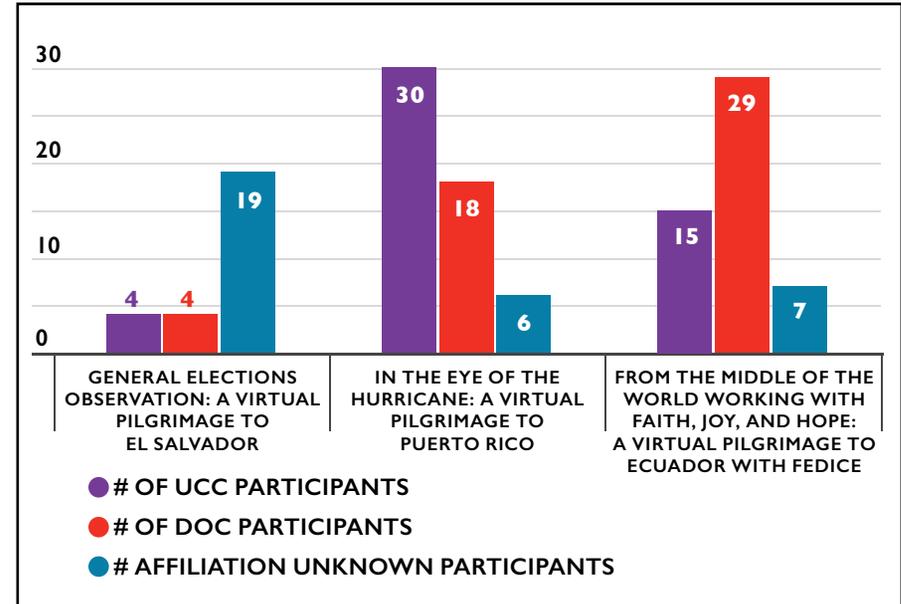
VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGES

The Program remains strong in its commitment of bringing people together to love and support one another as God’s children, and new opportunities for virtual pilgrimages developed as an alternative to traditional, in-person pilgrimages. The chart on this page shows the variety of participants that gathered online.

Three virtual pilgrimages were offered in 2021:

- General Elections Observation: A Virtual Pilgrimage to El Salvador February 28, 2021: Participants from churches in the United States and Canada, and partner organizations in Venezuela, Cuba, and Uruguay, observed the electoral process in El Salvador and accompanied our siblings there. Dozens of people from churches affiliated with the Ecumenical Forum of the Latin American Council of Churches trained for weeks to observe and report the right to vote of Salvadorans in this election. Participants joined virtually through Zoom and Facebook Live.

VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE PARTICIPATION



- In the Eye of the Hurricane: A Virtual Pilgrimage to Puerto Rico July 26-August 3, 2021: Participants explored the effects of climate change through the lens of Hurricane María and learned about how colonialism and racism play important roles in the current socio-political situation of the island. Participants immersed themselves in the work, witness, and hope of AMANESER 2025.
- From the Middle of the World Working with Faith, Joy, and Hope: A Virtual Pilgrimage to Ecuador with FEDICE November 10-19, 2021: Participants joined in the work and witness of the Ecumenical Foundation for Development, Integration, Training, and Education (FEDICE). From the middle of the world, FEDICE works with indigenous and rural communities by promoting human development, creating jobs, and improving family income.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: MISSION PERSONNEL OFFICE

Contributed by: Lorna B. Hernandez, Acting Mission Personnel Executive, Global Ministries

Taken from: 2021 Annual Report to Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Through the Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), mission co-workers are participating in ministries of critical presence around the world. They are engaged in a variety of ministries including theological education, leadership and community development, human rights, and health, children, and pastoral ministries.

A total of 101 Mission Co-workers served 42 countries in 2020, with service in the following categories: fully supported Mission Co-workers; Global Service Co-workers (long-term volunteers); Global Mission Interns; and Global Associates. Mission Co-workers served in the following areas: Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southern Asia.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, nine mission co-workers were evacuated from their sites of service.

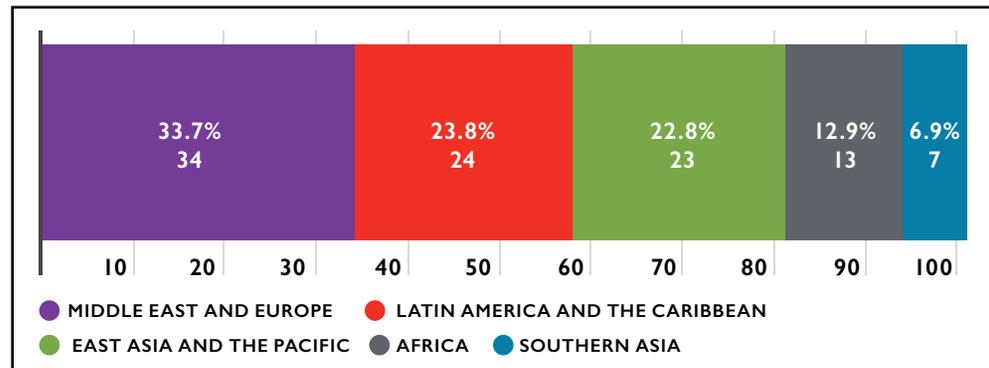
HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021:

- Twelve Fully supported Mission Co-workers were appointed or re-appointed
- Four Global Service Co-Workers (one year or longer) were appointed or re-appointed.
- Seven new Global Mission Interns were appointed through Week of Compassion
- There was one person appointed in the Short-term Volunteer program. This program was limited due to COVID-19.
- Fourteen Mission Co-workers and Global Mission Interns were involved in a ministry of presence through missionary visits and relationship building in new virtual frameworks. Presentations of their partners and their work have been taped and placed on the website along with sermons from many who preached.
- There were presentations in 71 Disciples of Christ churches and 67 UCC churches covering 18 Regions and 24 Conferences.

2020 PEOPLE IN MISSION: SERVICE TYPES (PERCENTAGE)



2020 MISSION CO-WORKER DISTRIBUTION BY REGION (PERCENTAGE)



REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: HIGHLIGHTS ON COUNCIL FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE MINISTRIES (CHHSM)

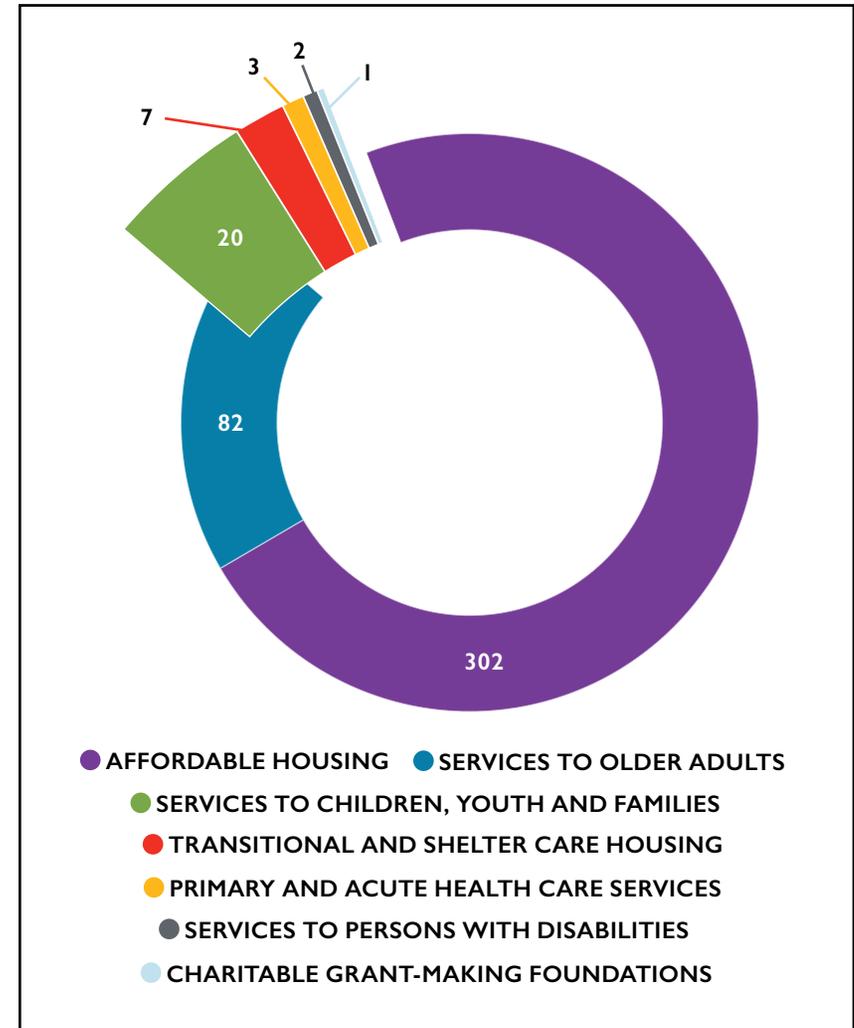
Contributed by Paula Barker, Senior Executive Assistant for Events and Administration

Each year, we catalog the incredible impact that CHHSM’s 75 corporate members make together toward creating a more just, caring, and compassionate world as they do the healing and service ministry of Jesus Christ through 417 facilities and programs affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

In 2021, CHHSM ministries:

- Served 3 million individuals including: 14,594 children; 11,915 youth; 18,064 families; 34,364 older adults; 1,549 veterans; and provided ambulatory health care to over 2.2 million people and acute care to 720,800 people
- Operated 35,044 residential units, including: 21,506 affordable housing units; 10,237 independent living units; and 3,301 assisted living units
- Operated facilities with 6,065 beds providing acute, skilled nursing, and memory care
- Provided residential and non-residential services to over 350 people with developmental disabilities
- Utilized 18,772 volunteers who provided 198,295 hours of service
- Provided \$2.5 billion in uncompensated and charity care
- Received \$62.5 million in charitable contributions
- Expended \$13.6 billion for operations with revenues of \$14.2 billion
- Maintained capital assets with a replacement value of \$15.5 billion
- Employed 87,969 people

CHHSM SERVICE CATEGORIES BY FACILITIES/PROGRAMS



FINANCIAL TRENDS

Over the last decade, CHHSM organizations saw an increase in all financial categories except for charitable contributions received from 2011, where there was a decrease of \$38.5 million. Keeping in trend with previous decadal data, uncompensated/charity care totals increased significantly by more than \$2 billion from 2011 to 2021.

CHHSM TEN-YEAR FINANCIAL TRENDS (2010–2020)

CATEGORY	2011	2021	+/- CHANGE
Expended for Operations	\$7.3 billion	\$13.6 billion	\$6.3 billion
Charitable Contributions Received	\$101 million	\$62.5 million	-\$38.5 million
Uncompensated and Charity Care	\$182 million	\$2.5 billion	\$2.3 million
Capital Assets with Replacement Values	\$4.6 billion	\$14.2 billion	\$9.6 billion

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CHHSM, ITS MEMBERS AND SERVICES VISIT THE WEBSITE WWW.CHHSM.ORG AND FACEBOOK [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHHSM/](https://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHHSM/)

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: DEMYSTIFYING THE BORROWING PROCESS FOR CHURCHES

Contributed by: Maria C. Coyne, President & CEO, UCC Cornerstone Fund

Do you know what kinds of things a lender like the UCC Cornerstone Fund looks for to approve a loan to a church or other faith-based organization? If you have ever applied for a personal or business loan, you may have heard of the “4 Cs of Credit” - and much the same for a church or faith-based organization. As a reminder, typically the 4 Cs refer to the following:

- **Capacity**—your ability to pay back the loan; debt to income or sometimes called cash flow
- **Collateral**—what real estate, property, or investments can you pledge to secure the loan?
- **Capital**—what other assets do you have that could be used to repay the loan?
- **Credit**—what has your history been with managing other debt or finances?

Sometimes people will add in other “Cs” such as:

- **Character**—in business this refers to the strength of the owner or leadership of a company
- **Conditions**—what are the general business conditions surrounding the industry of the business?

Before we discuss how this translates for churches, you should know that since our founding in 1993, the Cornerstone Fund, through the help of its investors, has supported more than 700 local churches and other nonprofit organizations with low-cost financing, totaling more than \$300 million.

Now back to how these credit basics apply to churches! Based on the Cornerstone Fund Underwriting Guidelines, we consider the following metrics:

Let us start with “**Capacity**” because that may very well be the most important metric, in that we never want to lend money to any organization that does not have the ability to repay. So, to determine if there is enough cash flow to service the debt in addition to other ongoing expenses and obligations, we first look at the “debt to income” ratio, and would want to see a ratio of 33% or less. So, for example, if your annual debt service (the total of all 12 months’ worth of loan payments) is \$15,000 and your average total annual income is \$120,000, then your debt-to-income ratio is 12.5% and well within our guidelines. But if your annual debt service is \$50,000 (for a larger loan) then your debt-to-income is almost 42% and higher than our guidelines recommend.

Another indicator of capacity is the “debt service coverage ratio.” With this ratio we take net annual operating income (after all other expenses) and divide it by the total annual debt service and look for a relationship of 1.1 or greater, which gives us an indicator of the cash available to service the debt. So back to the example of \$15,000 annual debt service—in this case we would be looking for net operating annual income of \$16,500 or greater. In some cases, especially when churches use a \$0 balanced budget, or if pledge cards are collected to support the new payment, this metric will not accurately reflect the church’s ability to pay. When you work with a lender that understands churches, like the Cornerstone Fund, you can be assured that we will see this.

As far as “**Collateral**” goes, if you are pledging your building or other property, we look for a “Loan-to-Value” of 75% or less. Meaning if your loan is for \$75,000, we would want the property to have a value of \$100,000 or more, and there are several ways we can value the property without the expense of a full appraisal. Appraisals are required for larger loans. If you want to avoid taking

a mortgage and have securities to pledge to secure the loan, we look for a value of 110% of the loan amount in pledged securities. So, if your loan is \$100,000, we would secure it with investments/securities of \$110,000. This is in case there is any change in value or loss of value if the securities must be liquidated.

In terms of “**Capital**” our guidelines consider how many months of payment reserves you have on hand. Ideally, we look for at least 24 months’ worth of payments as a capital reserve that the church might have in savings or other investments.

Lastly, if we were to lump together **Credit/Character/Conditions**; our Underwriter would look at the following elements (this part is as much art as science):

- Has this church had debt before and how long did it take them to pay it off? Did they hit any bumps in the road and how did they handle it?
- What is the expertise of the church clergy and lay leadership? Have they engaged the right people with the right knowledge to help lead through the project that is being contemplated?
- What are the trends within the congregation? How engaged are their members in the life of the church? Is there a vibrant online community? What is their connection to the larger community and how does their ministry impact their community?

Do all our borrowers always meet all our guidelines?—frankly, no—but we look for other mitigants to find a way to make the loan work for them and us. This is flexibility that a lot of community and commercial banks do not have.

Churches are always curious as to how they compare to other churches. Looking at the financial information provided by churches we have financed over the last five years, we can make the following observations:



FOR MOST CHURCHES, PLEDGES & OFFERINGS ARE TYPICALLY THE LARGEST SOURCE OF INCOME AND ACCOUNT FOR BETWEEN 60-90% OF THE INCOME

The average for our clients is 72%.



THE MOST COMMON SECONDARY SOURCES OF REVENUE/INCOME:

- Bequests/Endowment Income
- Rental of building/Facilities
- Leased building or steeple - lessors such as daycare, conservatory, cell tower, solar



ON THE EXPENSE SIDE:

- Largest expense typically is personnel (salary + benefits) ranging between 21% and 79% and averaging 52%
- “Programming” (ministerial work) is typically the second largest expense
- Building expenses range between 9% and 51% but most are in the 10-20% range; we tend to see 30%+ as a red flag - this could indicate that too much money is being spent on the building and not enough on ministry; or the church might need an energy audit; or some other underlying issue needs to be addressed. We also see 10% and less as a red flag - this could indicate that not enough is being spent to adequately maintain the building, and deferred maintenance issues may be looming.

WE REALIZE BORROWING CAN BE COMPLEX. LET US HELP SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS FOR YOU AND DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO US AT INFO@CORNERSTONEFUND.ORG OR CALL 888-UCC-FUND (822-3863).

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR MINISTERIAL ASSISTANCE, GRANTS DISBURSEMENT JAN. 1–DEC. 31, 2021*Contributed by: The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ, Inc.*

The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA), the philanthropic arm of the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ, operates with a covenantal spirit as it:

- provides direct financial support and compassionate responses to authorized ministers, lay church employees, and their surviving spouses/partners, in times of urgent need and personal crises.
- administers and raises funds for leadership initiatives that promote faithful and fruitful ministry across the United Church of Christ.

In 2021, grants supported by the Christmas Fund include Pension Supplementation grants totaling \$1,104,479; Emergency Grants totaling \$150,338; Health Benefits Supplementation grants totaling \$177,600, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks totaling \$254,000.

2021 OCWM & DIRECTED GIFTS BY DONORS

THE CHRISTMAS FUND has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. The Christmas Fund provides emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower income retirees. The Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross is managed by the Pension Boards. In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund totaled more than \$1.4 million

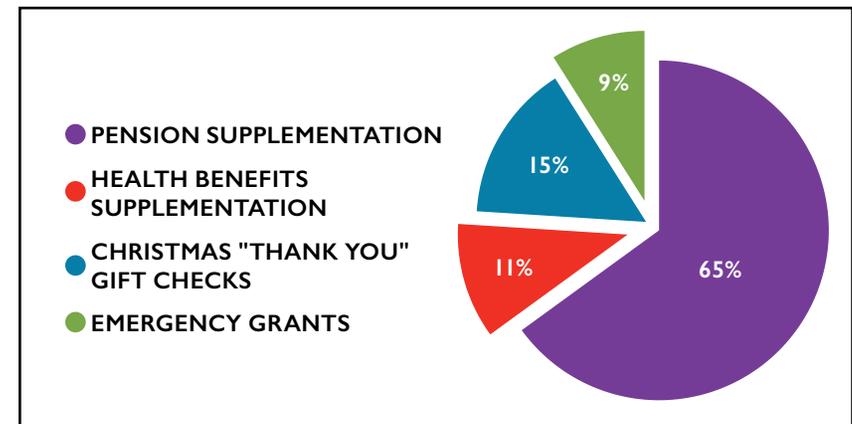
2021 DIVERSITY IN OUR WORKPLACE, A DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION REPORT

The Pension Boards staff of 85 caring professionals serving the United Church of Christ represent and share the cultures of more

than 30 countries and speak 19 languages! In 2021, the Pension Boards published its inaugural [2021 Diversity in Our Workplace](#) report—a diversity, equity, and inclusion report that details the progress made with its talent acquisition efforts, hiring and retaining top talent from underrepresented groups, while building upon the Pension Boards' highly diverse staff.

2022 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

In 2022, the Pension Boards published its [2022 Sustainability Report](#), which speaks to an internal review and audit of sustainability and the social and environmental responsibility of the Pension Boards. Utilizing Principles and Practices for a Just Economy, a document the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility uses to evaluate the sustainability of corporations as a guide, the Pension Boards catalogues and evaluates its ongoing commitment to the values of faith and finance, and to the well-being of the planet.

GRANTS SUPPORTED BY THE CHRISTMAS FUND

SPECIAL REPORT: CHURCH BUILDING & LOAN FUND: CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATION

Contributed by Church Building & Loan Fund

ABOUT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH BUILDING & LOAN FUND

The vision of the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund (CB&LF) to reinvent the concept of “church” by equipping church leaders to advance the Gospel mission through innovative uses of buildings and space created through unique partnerships, inventive church operating models, revenue-generating, faith-driven enterprises, and the application of impact-driven metrics. We seek to create a just world for all as we dramatically increase economic, social, environmental, and spiritual vitality, especially in neighborhoods across the United States where poverty obstructs abundant life for all people.

The mission of CB&LF is to assist new and renewing United Church of Christ congregations and other Christian congregations and organizations regardless of sect or denominational affiliation, that are planning to buy a first church building or land site, or who want to construct, renovate, or develop a church building, school, parsonage, or other church-owned real estate that advances the mission of the Church.

Beyond our loan programs we offer additional and expanding programs and services to assist congregations impact their local communities by seeking to increase the economic, social, environmental, and spiritual vitality of their neighborhoods. From Visioning, Strategic Planning & Implementation, to Leadership Development, Facility Re-Purposing Consultations, Church Closure and Legacy Planning, Stewardship Programs, Financial Feasibility Studies, and Capital Campaign Services, CB&LF helps churches plan, raise, finance, and build transformative projects.

PLAN & RAISE IMPACT:



\$1,225,000

2021 CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS FUNDS RAISED

\$17,033,031

TOTAL RAISED FROM CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS (2010-2021)

2021 LEADERS TRAINED THROUGH CONSULTING AND CAPACITY BUILDING SERVICES

979



2021 LEADERS TRAINED THROUGH LEGACY AND CLOSURE PROGRAMS

146

2021 LEADERS TRAINED THROUGH PARTNERS IN BUILDING PROGRAM

152



\$196,837

MISSION FUNDING GIFTED FEES (2015-2021)

49

MINISTRIES FUNDED BY GIFTED FEES (2015-2021)

FINANCE IMPACT:

\$47,178,505.32

TOTAL AMOUNT OF LOANS PROVIDED (2014-2021)

\$12,877,417.82

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PARTICIPATION LOANS (2014-2021)

\$13,429,400.00

FUNDING APPROVED IN 2021



10

CONGREGATIONS FUNDED IN 2021

80

NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS CURRENTLY FUNDED

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS & INNOVATIVE CHURCH REAL ESTATE PROJECTS

Contributed by Church Building & Loan Fund

PARTNERS IN VISION

Our Partners In Vision (PIV) program offers planning and consulting services for major projects involving church property. We help churches create resourceful, sustainable, creative, and mission focused plans. Additional assistance is provided through project management, pre-development, and repurposing unused or underused church owned property. Our goal is to strategically plan complex projects and chart a course for real estate in transition.

- In 2021 we continued to celebrate the vibrant and expanding work of Molo Village in partnership with St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Louisville, KY. www.molovillagecdc.org
- Also in 2021 we approved four new applications with churches on redevelopment projects with a combined projected development impact for community transformation of \$36,650,000. The coming years will see the furthering of these church's mission and ministry in and to their communities.

ADESE FELLOWSHIP

A catalytic experience for emerging entrepreneurs who renew the Church's mission to create a just world for all.

The Adese (from the Amharic language to renew, pronounced ah-deh-say) Fellowship is a year-long, ecumenical program that engages participants in self-discovery, theological reflection, and business development as they create enterprises that help their communities follow the way of Jesus and live into God's economy. This groundbreaking fellowship maximizes the business acumen and entrepreneurial capacity of participants to launch scalable and sustainable ventures that counter systemic poverty.



18 2021 APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

55 2016–2020 APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

671 ACRES OF CHURCH PROPERTY SERVED BY OR DEVELOPED THROUGH PIV PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

249 BUILDINGS SERVED BY OR DEVELOPED THROUGH PIV PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT



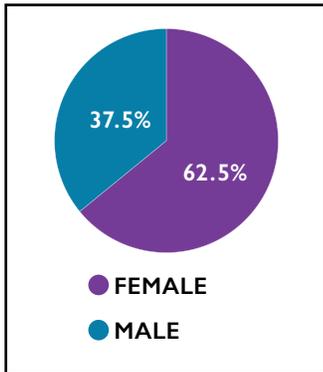
\$11,311,730

DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS COMPLETED IN DIVERSE LOW-MODERATE INCOME COMMUNITIES

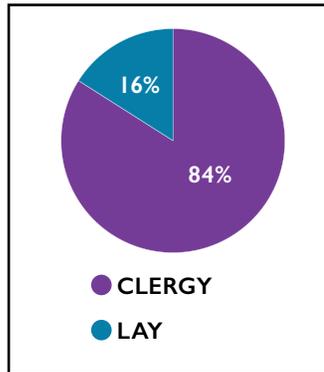
\$36,650,000

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PROJECTED IN DIVERSE, LOW-MODERATE INCOME COMMUNITIES THROUGH APPROVED PIV APPLICATIONS

ADESE COHORT FELLOWSHIP GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS (2018–2021)



ADESE COHORT FELLOWSHIP CLERGY STATUS DEMOGRAPHICS (2018–2021)

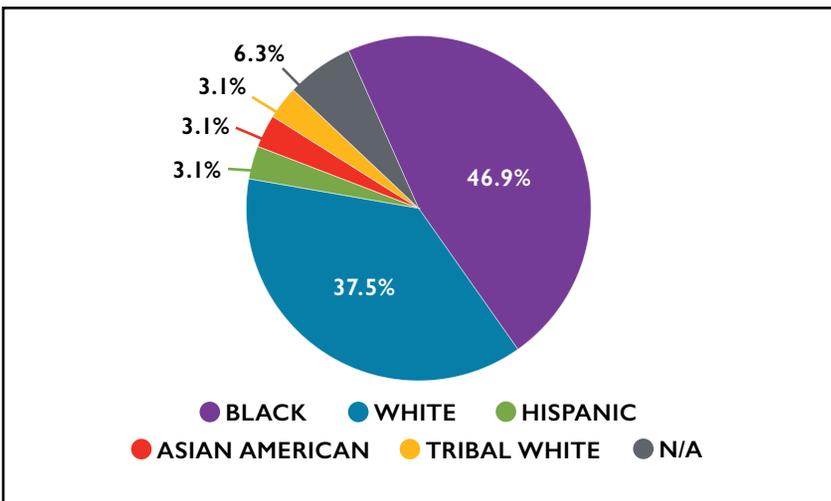


Adese Fellows fashion a faithful approach to economics as they critique the dominant system and create another way. Participants apply to the program to advance a concept or early-stage venture, at the heart of which is the biblical call to bring good news to the poor. Adese Fellows reform and reinvigorate the church through their innovation.

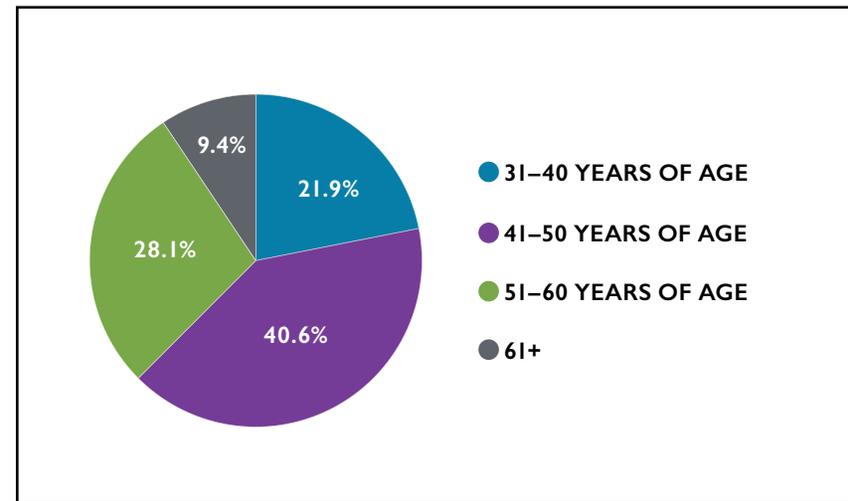
ADESE COHORT FELLOW DEMOGRAPHICS

Adese Fellows welcome and leverage difference. The cohort of participants are laity and clergy. They come from rural and urban locations and are different in age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability. What they share is a passion to engage at intersections, most especially faith and enterprise.

ADESE COHORT FELLOWSHIP RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS (2018–2020)



ADESE COHORT FELLOWSHIP AGE DEMOGRAPHICS (2018–2020)



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CB&LF, OR TO INQUIRE ON THEIR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, VISIT THEIR WEBSITE: CBLFUND.ORG

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: TRANSLATING FAITH INTO RESPONSIBLE INVESTING: THE GROWTH OF ESG INVESTING

Contributed by: United Church Funds

Over the last two years, there has been a spectacular increase in investments that focus on or include environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. Climate change and social justice are among the primary motivators for investors seeking to create impact and achieve returns, going well beyond the traditional - and lone - consideration of financial return. This report examines the recent explosion of ESG investing universally, as well as the ways in which United Church Funds, on behalf of its clients, have participated in and contributed to that growth.

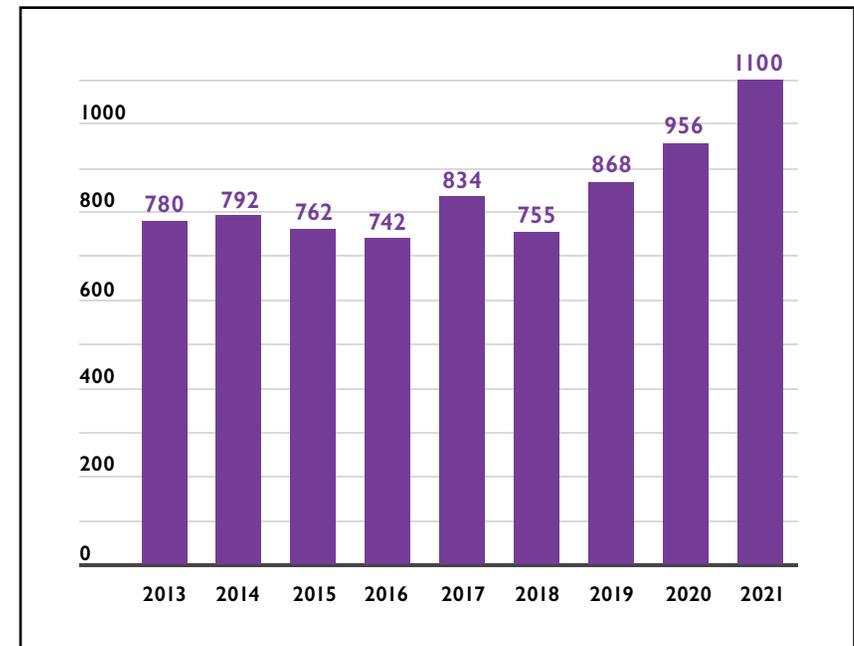
A LEGACY OF RESPONSIBLE INVESTING

Long before ESG entered the common vernacular, United Church Funds (UCF) was practicing the basic principles of responsible investing since its founding over 100 years ago. UCF has been guided by the biblical and ethical principles of the Christian faith generally, and by the values and priorities expressed through General Synod resolutions and pronouncements specifically. At the end of 2021, UCF was managing \$1.1 billion of assets for 1,100 clients in 11 professionally managed and responsible funds.

THE GROWTH OF ESG INVESTING

According to some estimates, nearly one-third of all global assets under management carry some form of ESG mandate. This is not new but continues a long and rapid increase over the last 25 years. The Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment (US SIF) estimates that in the U.S. alone, at the end of 2020, total investments incorporating ESG factors stood at about \$18 trillion. While 2021 figures have yet to be released, we expect to see even more growth and a continuation of the overall trend into coming years. At UCF, a similar trend in the rapid growth of interest in ESG investment has played out over the last decade, and especially so in recent years. To illustrate this, it is helpful to understand that UCF carries out its sustainable and responsible investing activities through five “tools.”

GROWTH IN UCF ASSETS (IN US \$ MILLIONS)



FIVE TOOLS IN A RESPONSIBLE INVESTOR TOOLBOX

1. **Manager Selection** with proven performance and commitment to responsible investing, diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI)
2. **Invest in High Impact Ventures** that seek to solve social and environmental problems
3. **Corporate Engagement** with the companies in which we invest, holding them accountable for their actions
4. **Proxy Voting** to support fairness in executive pay, corporate transparency, and DEI
5. **Screening** out companies that do not respond to engagement or are incompatible with our faith inspired values

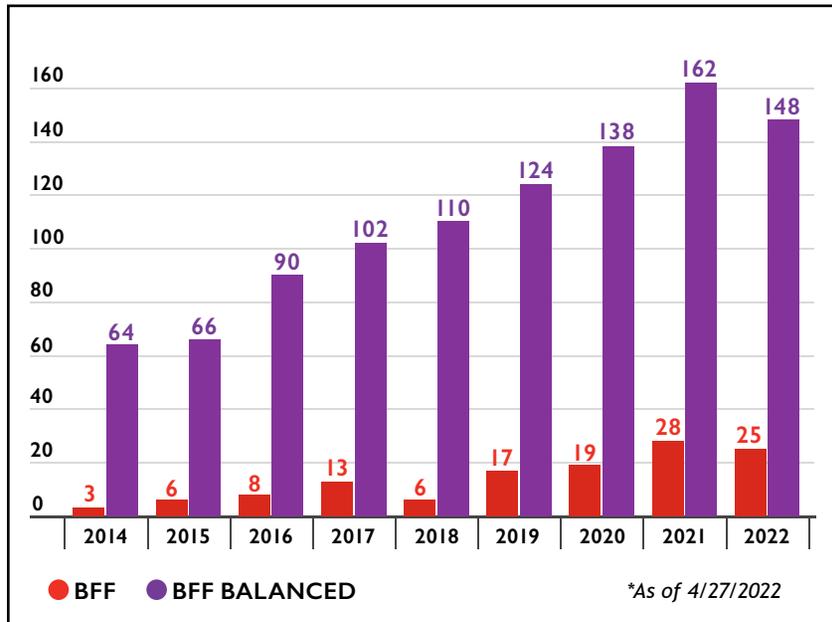
Shareholder engagement and proxy voting are two areas where there have been major surges brought on by ESG-aware investors. UCF’s level of corporate engagement has increased over the last few years. The figures below show UCF’s current level of engagement. These numbers represent increases over previous years, reflecting the overall surge in corporate engagement. For many of these engagements and resolutions, UCF works with partners such as ClimateAction 100+ and the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility to amplify our voice.

INVESTING FOR A NET-ZERO WORLD

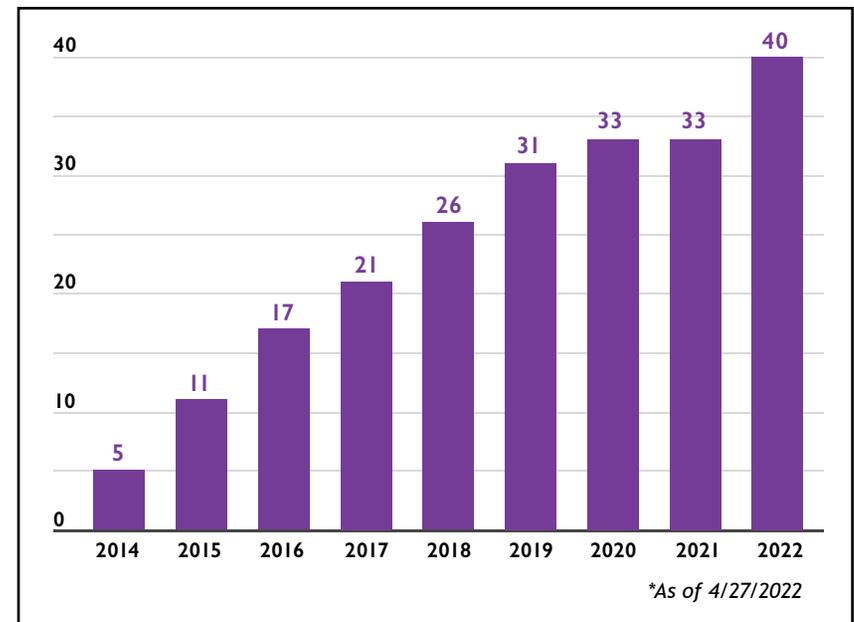
The widespread fossil fuel divestment movement is a prime example of the spectacular growth in ESG investing. The Global Fossil Fuel Divestment Commitments Database reports that while the first three years of the campaign (2012-15) netted 181 public commitments, that number has grown to 485 in the most recent three years. Total assets under management of institutions committed to divesting from fossil fuels is now up to nearly \$40 trillion. During this period and complementing this trend, UCF, in 2014, created the Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund (BFF) as part of a response to the UCC General Synod resolution, “Urging Divestment - Along with Other Strategies - from Fossil Fuel Companies.” BFF is a global equity fund that provides access to developed market and emerging market countries and seeks to eliminate exposure to companies with fossil fuels reserves. Since the fund was first introduced eight years ago, UCF has seen 131% growth in BFF assets and 566% growth in the number of BFF clients.



GROWTH IN ASSETS (IN US \$ MILLIONS)



GROWTH OF CLIENTS



More broadly, UCF employs ESG-related screens across all of its investments, directing managers to exclude corporations involved in extraction of thermal coal or oil from tar sands, or whose practices call into question worker safety, human rights, greenhouse gas emissions and water use.

IS SUSTAINABLE INVESTING HERE TO STAY?

At the start of 2022, the combination of high inflation, extreme market volatility, and global disruption caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has led some to question if ESG investing has reached its peak and if investors’ appetites for sustainable investing are waning. At UCF, we believe that despite current global and economic challenges, the trend in and the need for ESG investing will continue to gain traction as more investors become aware of the larger importance of considering positive social or environmental impact.

UCF remains committed to our basic mission of responsible investing by actively engaging with corporations on their ESG performance and providing optimal returns for mission. This commitment includes a number of ESG issues, especially systemic racism, human rights, global warming and environmental degradation. Regardless of how global trends wax or wane, UCF is committed to serving the mission and values of the UCC and all other faith-based clients. As such, we remain committed to responsible investing and ESG engagement that create a more just world.

TO DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ESG INVESTING THAT WE DO AT UCF, VISIT OUR WEBSITE, [UCFUNDS.ORG](https://ucfunds.org), OR CONTACT OUR DIRECTOR OF RESPONSIBLE INVESTING, MATTHEW ILLIAN (MATTHEW.ILLIAN@UCFUNDS.ORG).

SPECIAL REPORT: INSURANCE BOARD'S CLAIM TRENDS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

Contributed by: Insurance Board

As the pandemic began to slow in 2021, claims experiences due to severe weather activity continued to impact the insurance industry. According to **Swiss Re**, extreme weather in 2021 brought above-average claims to global insurers. In addition, weather-related disasters in 2021 caused \$145 billion in damage according to the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**. For Insurance Board, the top claim category also shifted from fire in 2020 to water damage in 2021, followed closely by severe windstorms. Water claims include claims from weather as well as interior plumbing and exterior water intrusion exacerbated by property defects and deferred maintenance. A considerable amount of windstorm damage related to Hurricane Ida and Winter Storm Uri, primarily impacting Louisiana, Texas and the Northeastern U.S. Uri caused damage to utility infrastructure resulting in flooding, extreme cold and freezing. This year's statistical report highlights claim trends and initiatives to help ministries mitigate their risk of losses.

PROPERTY

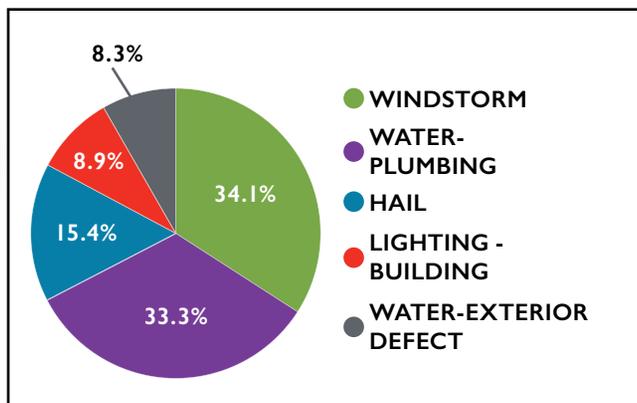
Total losses related to bad weather/freezing in Texas and the amount of water damage related to the Texas property claims: \$4,829,172—40 claims

- Water damage claims: 238 claims—\$9,376,107 in incurred losses

Hurricane Ida, one of the most powerful storms to hit the U.S. delivered days of misery and destruction in Louisiana on the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

- Hurricane Ida—\$2,626,799 in incurred losses.

PROPERTY TOP 5 CAUSE PERCENTAGE (BASED ON INCURRED DOLLARS)



PROPERTY TOP 5 CLAIM TRENDS

CAUSE	CLAIM COUNT	INCURRED DOLLARS	PAID DOLLARS	AVERAGE INCURRED DOLLARS	LARGEST LOSS
Windstorm—05	104	\$6,657,752.00	\$5,026,929.52	\$64,016.85	\$2,950,000.00
Water-Plumbing—11	106	\$6,502,946.00	\$5,770,106.84	\$61,348.55	\$790,000.00
Hail—06	37	\$3,004,411.00	\$2,142,985.95	\$81,200.30	\$667,000.00
Lighting - Building—04	19	\$1,730,067.00	\$867,367.82	\$91,056.16	\$1,355,000.00
Water-Exterior Defect—09	64	\$1,622,117.00	\$1,591,634.57	\$25,345.58	\$475,000.00

LIABILITY

Slips and falls and other general liability claims continue to be our most frequent liability claim type, roughly 59% of all liability claims reported in 2021. Professional Liability claims (D&O, EPL) continue to be our most expensive liability claims. The average Professional Liability claim cost = \$13,405.

To prepare your ministry in 2022 and beyond to avoid preventable claims, the following tips in these various categories are suggested to assist your ministry.

To prepare for [severe weather](#) visit our [safety central webpage](#) to learn more about how your ministry can reduce the severity of weather related damage. Whether it's wintry weather conditions or spring storms, [extreme wind](#) can create situations that threaten your church building and cause severe damage in a matter of minutes if you are not adequately prepared. This is true for [hail](#) as well as [tornadoes](#) and [hurricanes](#). In reference to property claims, lightning was the next category outside of wind, hail & water in terms of severity. Incurred dollars were \$1,728,494.00 for 2021.

Insurance Board is dedicated to providing resources to the ministries we serve. By partnering with [Praesidium](#), the Nation's leading provider for abuse prevention, Insurance Board is able to offer various resources including our SafeConduct™ Workbench, a comprehensive toolkit to assist churches in developing a strong abuse prevention program. By taking part in our program and utilizing these resources, churches can protect their ministry against potential abuse. Proper policies, [background checks and screening](#), and state of the art training are available to ministries. [C.A.S.E \(Creating A Safe Environment\) through Praesidium](#) for example is a research based, facilitator-led, video-based training that provides practical solutions to navigate the challenges ministries face daily. For more information about abuse prevention resources please visit our [website](#).

As far as the General Liability claims, in 2021 most were slip & fall claims due to ice/snow on parking lots and walkways. Common examples were parishioners or visitors slipping on ice in a parking lot while leaving a church event; or a parent picking up a child at a church school and slipping on ice in the parking lot while exiting a car. [Preventing slips, trips, and falls](#) at your ministry is imperative as our church homes are full of potential hazards for our congregants. These hazards come in a variety of forms, including: steps and stairwells, slippery parking lots or walkways, sidewalks in disrepair, or simply transitioning from one surface to another.

In 2021 Insurance Board introduced the Legal Helpline and established a page on our website called the [Legal Corner](#), a service provided in partnership with United Church of Christ's Conference Attorneys, to assist ministries in need initial advice from a real attorney. Insurance Board's Legal Helpline provides an initial free consultation and direction on next steps. If the issue requires additional professional guidance, our legal team will direct ministries to a reputable resource close to their location. Visit the link below to submit a question. In addition, Sample Legal Forms are available for review as ministries works to build ministry specific legal documents. Finally, the EPL Pak® Premier is an exclusive HR tools for policyholders and an industry-leading loss prevention resource.

[Submit your inquiry and a legal professional will respond.](#)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The top three property claims drivers of 2021 were water/plumbing, windstorm, hail storm related claims.
- Insurance Board encourages ministries to keep their building, grounds, and people safe by regularly inspecting properties, and preparing for inclement weather.
- Ministries can access loss control resources on our website at: www.InsuranceBoard.org/safety-central/

As a financial ministry, Insurance Board is committed to helping churches lower their risk. If one church has a massive claim it can affect all churches across the program. While many claims are beyond the control of the insured, there are several claims that are preventable. Our goal is to help churches lower their risk of claims so that we can lower the cost of insurance for all of the participating ministries we serve.



Visit our webpages for statistics, reports and other resources

www.ucc.org/research

www.ucc.org/assessment_resources

www.ucc.org/research_archived-reports

www.ucc.org/research_statistics-and-reports

Follow our Blog “Vital Signs and Statistics”

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