

FALL 2016

# THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST: A STATISTICAL PROFILE

WITH REFLECTION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERS

RESEARCH FROM THE UCC CENTER FOR ANALYTICS, RESEARCH AND DATA (CARD)

# QUICK SUMMARY OF UCC STATISTICS

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## MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

CONGREGATIONS: 5,032\*  
MEMBERS: 914,871  
AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP: 183  
AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 74  
AVERAGE CONFIRMATIONS: 6  
AVERAGE CONFESSIONS: 6  
AVERAGE TRANSFERS IN: 5  
AVERAGE REAFFIRMATIONS: 7  
AVERAGE DEATHS: 5  
AVERAGE TRANSFERS OUT: 4  
AVERAGE CHILD BAPTISMS: 4  
AVERAGE ADULT BAPTISMS: 2  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM: 43%  
YOUTH PROGRAM: 19.4%  
OPEN AND AFFIRMING: 25.7%  
ACCESSIBLE: 83.9%  
WEB URL/WEB PRESENCE: 65.3%

## RACE/ETHNICITY BY CONGREGATION

WHITE/EURO-AMERICAN: 84.9%  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN: 4.6%  
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER: 3.8%  
HISPANIC/LATINO: 0.4%  
NATIVE AMERICAN: 0.5%  
BI-RACIAL/MULTI-RACIAL AND OTHER: 4%

## STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES\*\*

AVERAGE BASIC SUPPORT: \$5,709 - 75.4%  
AVERAGE SPECIAL SUPPORT: \$2,248 - 76.2%\*\*\*  
AVERAGE TOTAL OCWM: \$9,212 - 84.5%  
AVERAGE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: \$644 - 65.4%  
AVERAGE NEIGHBORS IN NEED: \$399 - 56.3%  
AVERAGE CHRISTMAS FUND: \$542 - 51.1%  
AVERAGE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH: \$258 - 40.1%  
5 FOR 5 CHURCHES: 31.9%  
AVERAGE OTHER GIFTS: \$11,522  
AVERAGE OPERATING EXPENSES: \$168,400  
AVERAGE TOTAL INCOME: \$\$231,610

\* The number of congregations increases to 5,117 if Schedule 1 and 2 congregations are included.

\*\* Calculations on Stewardship and Finances include Schedule 1 and 2 churches. Averages are calculated among giving congregations only and exclude congregations that did not give in that particular category in 2015.

\*\*\* Special Support refers to financial gifts for any UCC agency and/or organization. This figure includes funds sent through Conferences and Associations, as well as funds sent directly to UCC-related organizations.

## INTRODUCTION



The United Church of Christ is a dynamic, evolving movement of people and institutions across location and time. The contents of this booklet attempt to provide a deeper understanding of this movement, though what is articulated in these pages provides only a narrow view of a much broader landscape.

Statistics—basic numerical facts about a particular organization or body—present specific bits of information to assist humans in illuminating the past, realizing the present, and envisioning the future. As such, this profile provides a general statistical overview of the state of the denomination—past and present—along with “Reflections,” questions for local church leaders to apply this data to their particular contexts for the purpose of visioning future possibilities. In addition, there are three “Special Report” sections highlighting research conducted in the past year—the first on emerging trends in ministerial authorization and leadership, the second on UCC students in theological schools, and the third on highlights from the Faith Communities Today 2015 National Survey of Congregations. As always, this report provides a closer look at overall church location, size, membership, ministerial demographics, and stewardship and finances.

Information for the profile was drawn primarily from data reported through the UCC Data Hub annually for the production of the *UCC Yearbook & Directory*. We hope you enjoy this edition!

THE CENTER FOR ANALYTICS, RESEARCH AND DATA (CARD)  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## UCC CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS

At the end of 2015, the United Church of Christ reported 5,032 congregations with a total of 914,871 members. Overall, the membership of the UCC represents less than one percent (0.6%) of total U.S. congregational membership and is concentrated in the Great Lakes, Middle Atlantic, and New England regions of the country.

## UCC CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS BY REGION

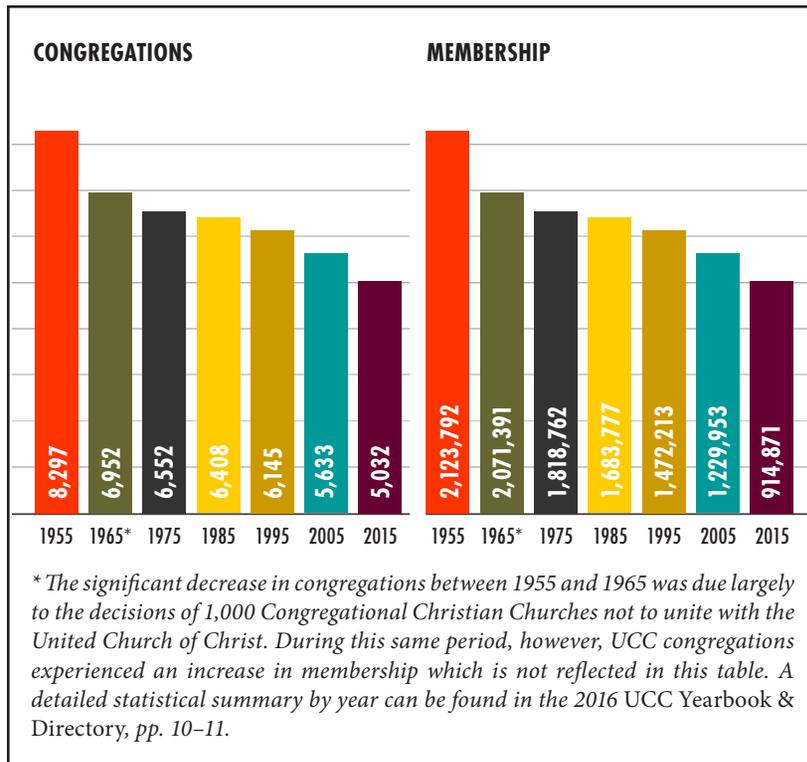
REGION	CONGREGATIONS	% OF UCC	MEMBERS	% OF UCC
Great Lakes	1,183	23.5	273,567	30.0
Middle Atlantic	1,012	20.1	181,931	19.9
New England	1,041	20.7	181,434	19.8
Southern	415	8.3	73,315	8.0
Western	635	12.6	83,170	9.1
West Central	720	14.3	120,215	13.1
Non-Geographic	26	.5	1,239	.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,032</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>914,871</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*A 2015 detailed list of congregations and membership statistics by Conference can be found in the 2016 UCC Yearbook & Directory, p. 7.*

### REFLECTIONS

Is the term “membership” a beneficial way of appropriately counting all of the people connected with a congregation? Besides membership, are there other ways that individuals associate with your church? What terminology do you use to describe these associations? How might that participation be tracked or measured over time in order to more accurately represent the number of people affiliated with a congregation?

### UCC CONGREGATION AND MEMBERSHIP CHANGES BY DECADE (1955-2015)\*



### 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 2000 to 2010 alone, the UCC encountered a net loss of 696 congregations and 318,897 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 the past five years (2011-2015), 195 congregations were removed from denominational records. Congregational decline has slowed in recent years, however. In 2006 and 2007, the UCC experienced a loss of nearly three congregations per week on average; but from 2008 through 2015, only one congregation was eliminated from denominational records per week on average.

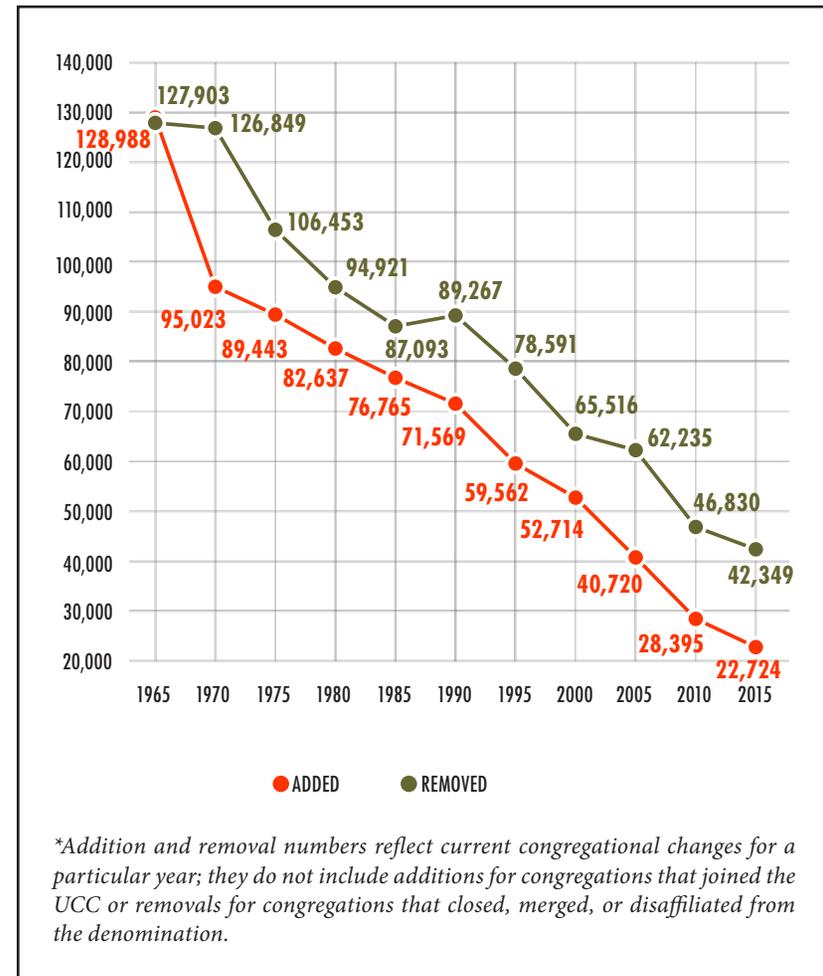
In total, 100 congregations received standing and were added to the UCC over the last five years. On average, a new congregation (a church that received standing, affiliated, or merged with another congregation) was added every 2 1/2 weeks.

## 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 denominational records for a number of reasons including death, transfer of membership to another denomination, or updating of church membership records.

The difference between UCC members removed and added was greater in 2015 than in 2010, though it was not the greatest difference on record. Since 2005, however, the difference has increased on average when compared to previous years.

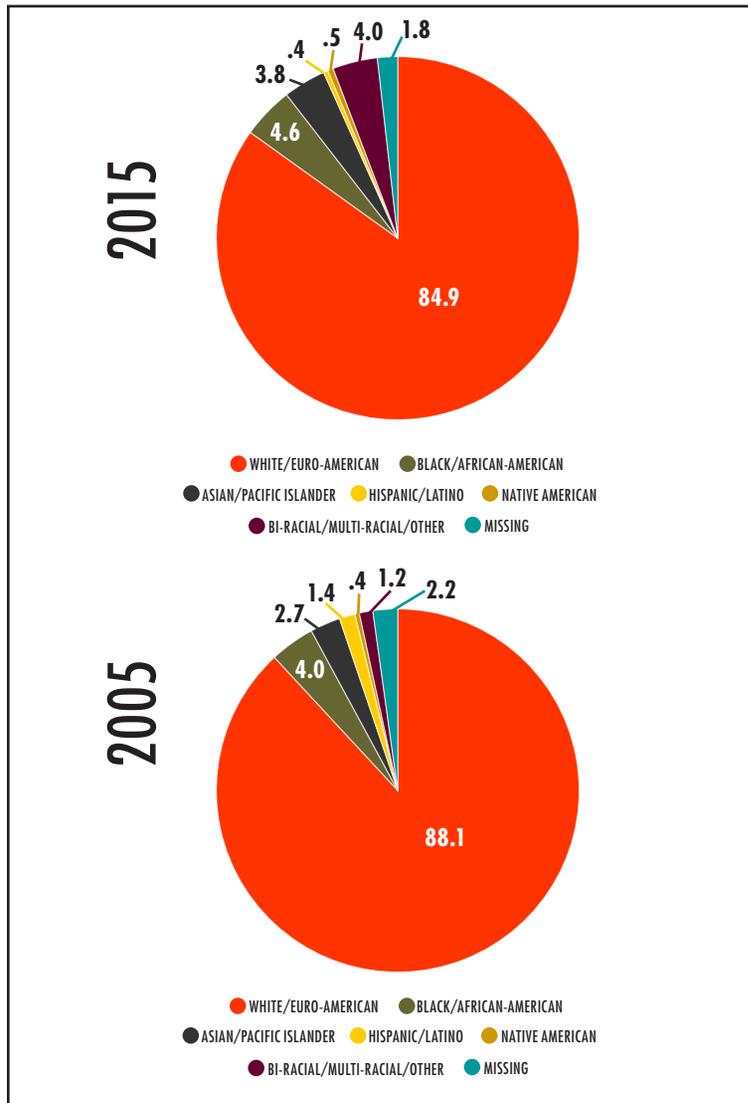
MEMBERSHIP ADDITIONS AND REMOVALS OVER TIME (1965-2015)\*



### REFLECTIONS

How has your membership or worship attendance changed over the last decade? How has the landscape of local churches changed in your community or region? How many new congregations have appeared in your area in the past ten years, and what characteristics do you notice about those churches? How many congregations have closed, merged, or changed denominational affiliation?

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



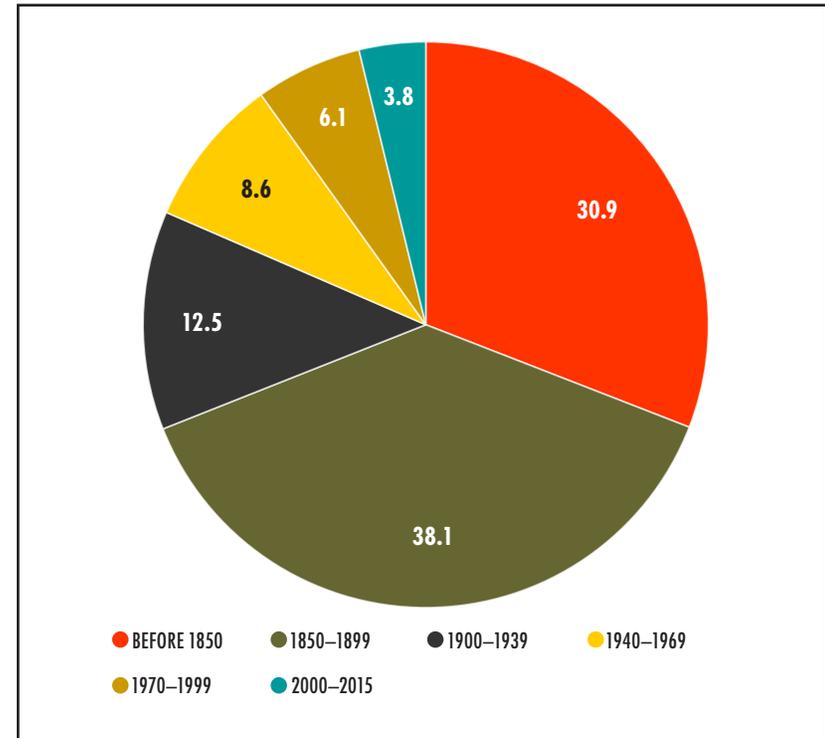
### CONGREGATIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

A significant 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 primarily White/Euro-American congregations decreased from 88.1% in 2005 to 84.9% in 2015; and the percentage of Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial and Other congregations increased from 1.2% in 2005 to 4.0% in 2015. In addition, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander congregations increased to 3.8% in 2015 from 2.7% in 2005. One cause of this shift 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 their overall percentage. This is also coupled with the fact that newer UCC congregations tend to be more racially/ethnically diverse.

## CONGREGATIONS BY DATE OF ORGANIZATION

While the UCC has only been in existence since 1957, many of its congregations were founded by predecessor denominations. Over two thirds of churches (69.0%) were organized before 1900. Two out of ten congregations (21.1%) were organized between 1900 and 1969, and one in ten (9.9%) were organized in the last 45 years. Over time, the percentage of the UCC’s newer churches is slowly increasing while the percentage of older churches is slowly decreasing.

UCC CONGREGATIONS BY DATE OF ORGANIZATION (PERCENTAGE)

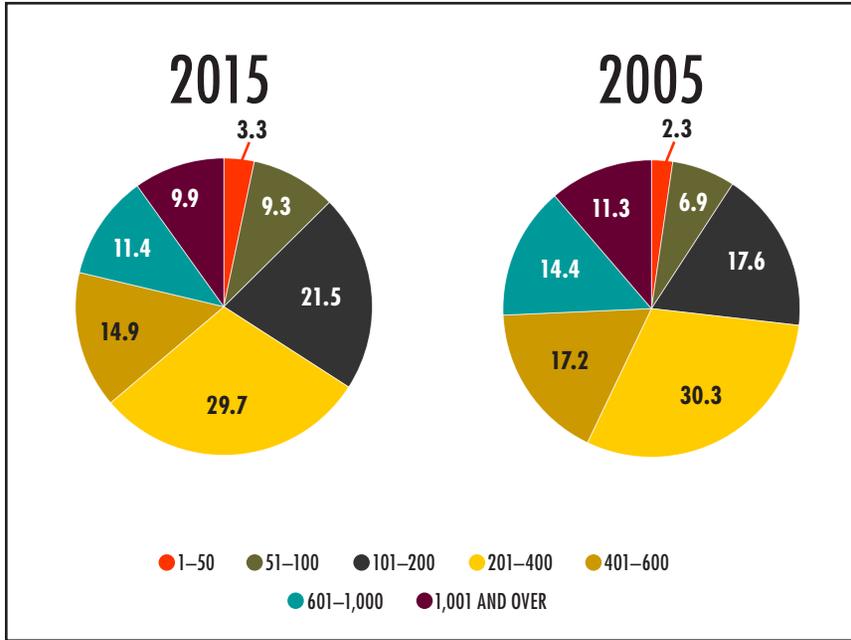


## CONGREGATION SIZE BY MEMBERSHIP

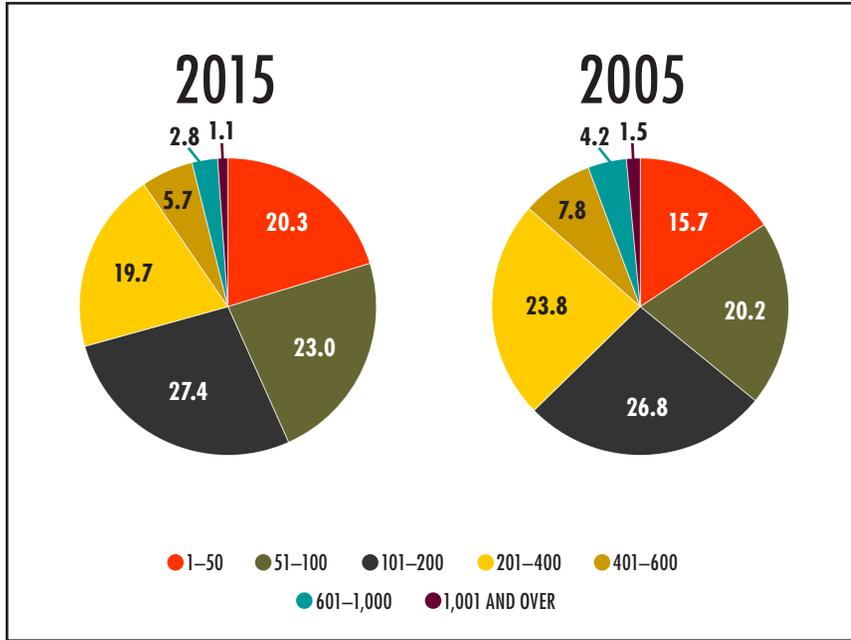
Nearly three in ten UCC members (29.7%) belong to congregations of 201-400 members, and this figure did not change significantly over the past decade. However, an increased percentage of UCC individuals held membership in smaller churches over this same time period, with 34.1% of all members attending congregations with 200 or fewer members in 2015 compared to 26.8% of all members in 2005. This trend is expected to continue in future years.

As a result, the number of smaller membership UCC congregations increased over the past decade. Four in ten congregations (43.3%) reported a membership of 100 or fewer, compared with 35.9% in 2005. Congregations with 101-200 members increased slightly since 2005, from 26.8% to 27.4%.

**PERCENT OF UCC MEMBERS BY CONGREGATION SIZE**



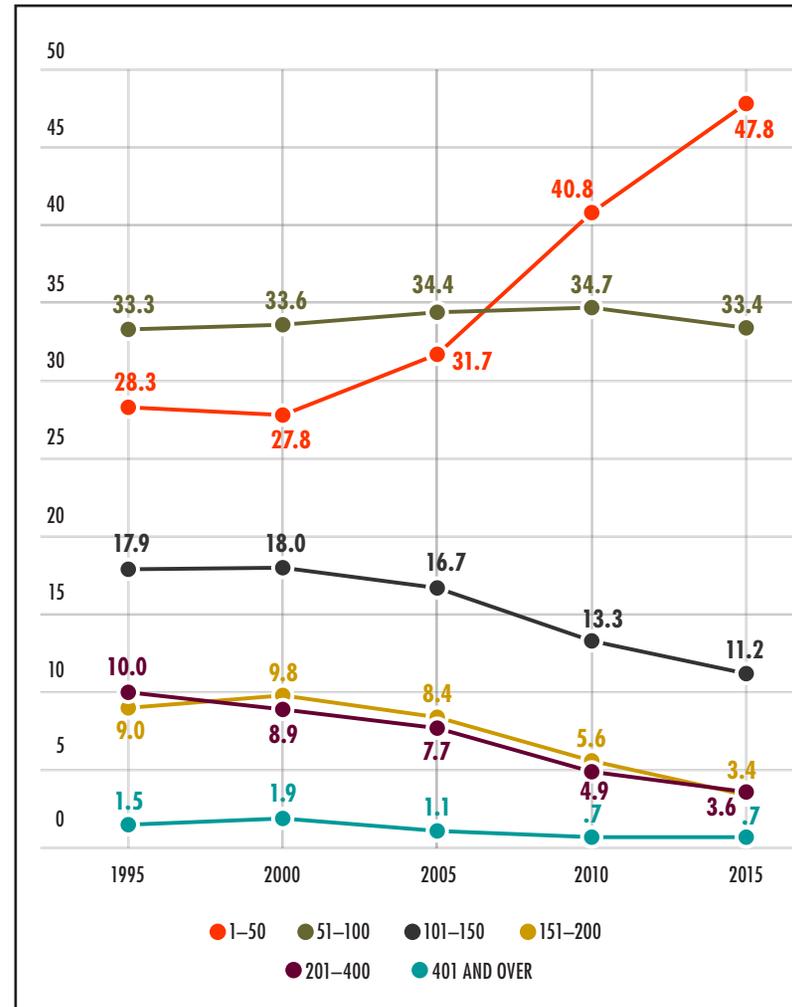
**PERCENT OF UCC CONGREGATIONS BY SIZE**



## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

When considering worship attendance figures rather than membership size, even more congregations are categorized as smaller churches. In 2015, eight in ten churches in the UCC (81.2%) had a weekly worship attendance of 1–100, which was an increase of 15.1% from ten years ago. Over time, the percentage of congregations with greater worship attendance numbers has decreased steadily, with the most dramatic decreases occurring in congregations of 101–400 worship attenders over the last 20 years. As a result, nearly half (47.8%) of all UCC congregations now have a weekly worship attendance of 1–50 individuals.

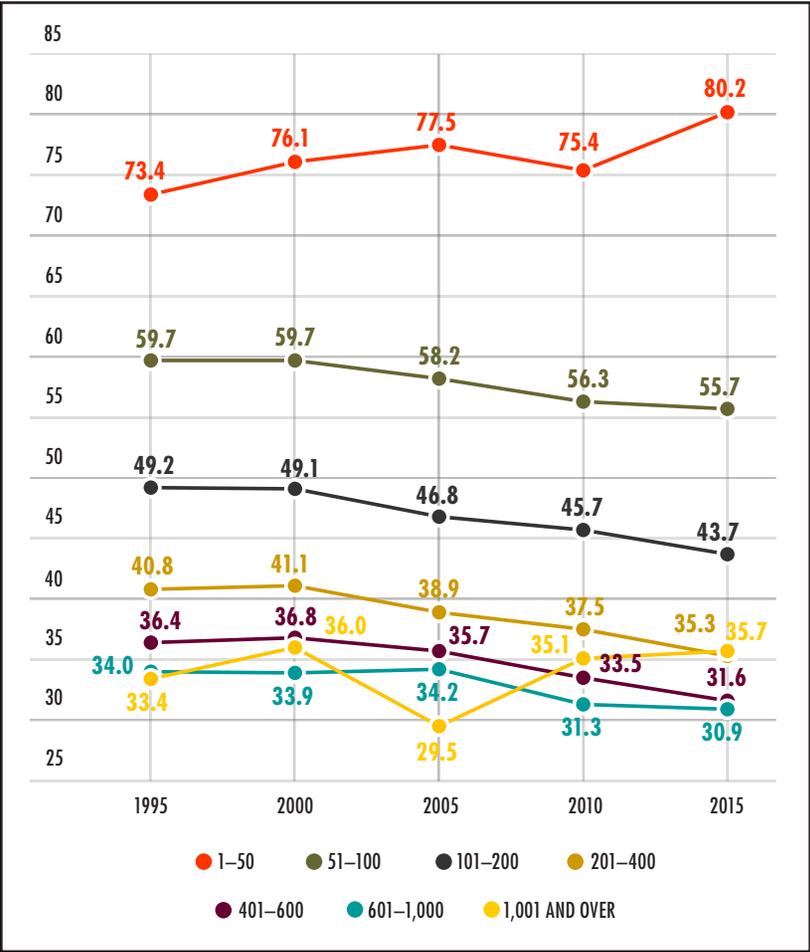
PERCENT OF UCC CONGREGATIONS BY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE



### REFLECTIONS

What does the increase in smaller church worship attendance signal—a greater desire for relationship and connection in smaller groups, the decrease in weekly worship attendance to a few times a month, or the overall shift in the ways people worship and participate in congregational life (or all of the above)? Are there other reasons? What are you noticing in your congregation and community?

**AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF WORSHIP ATTENDANCE TO MEMBERSHIP BY SIZE**



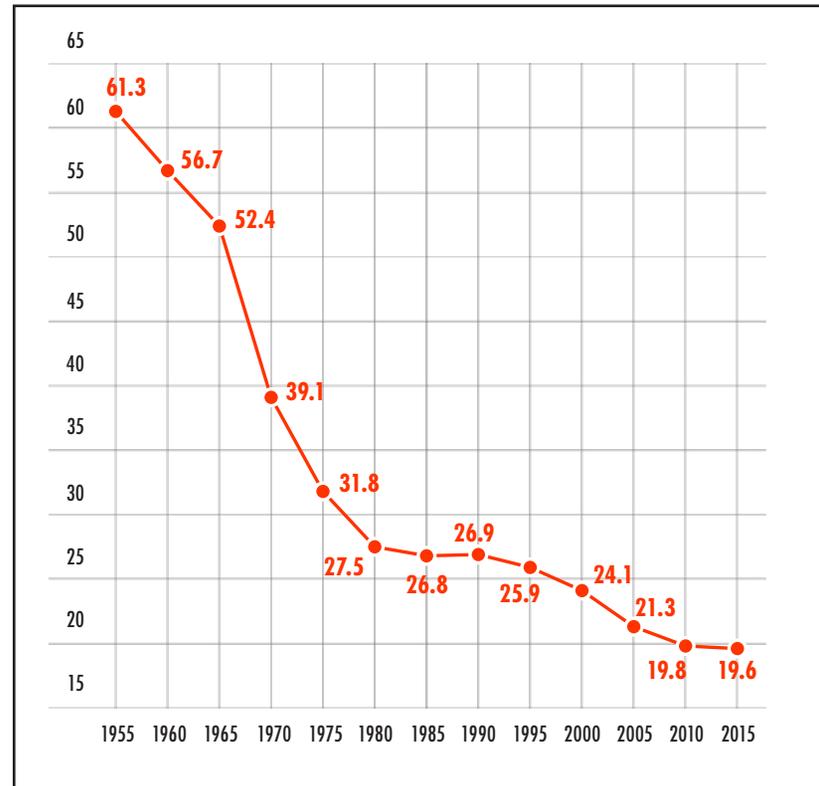
**WORSHIP ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

The relationship between worship attendance and membership is shifting incrementally over time. From 1995 to 2015, decreased percentages of people attended worship when compared to total congregational membership, except for the smallest and largest membership congregations. On average, 73.4% of a 1-50 member congregation’s total membership attended worship on a weekly basis in 1995. In 2015, an average of 80.2% of members attended weekly worship for the same size congregation. Overall, a greater percentage of members regularly attend worship in smaller congregations when compared with larger congregations, which suggests that the nature of relationships in smaller versus larger congregations may affect overall participation rates.

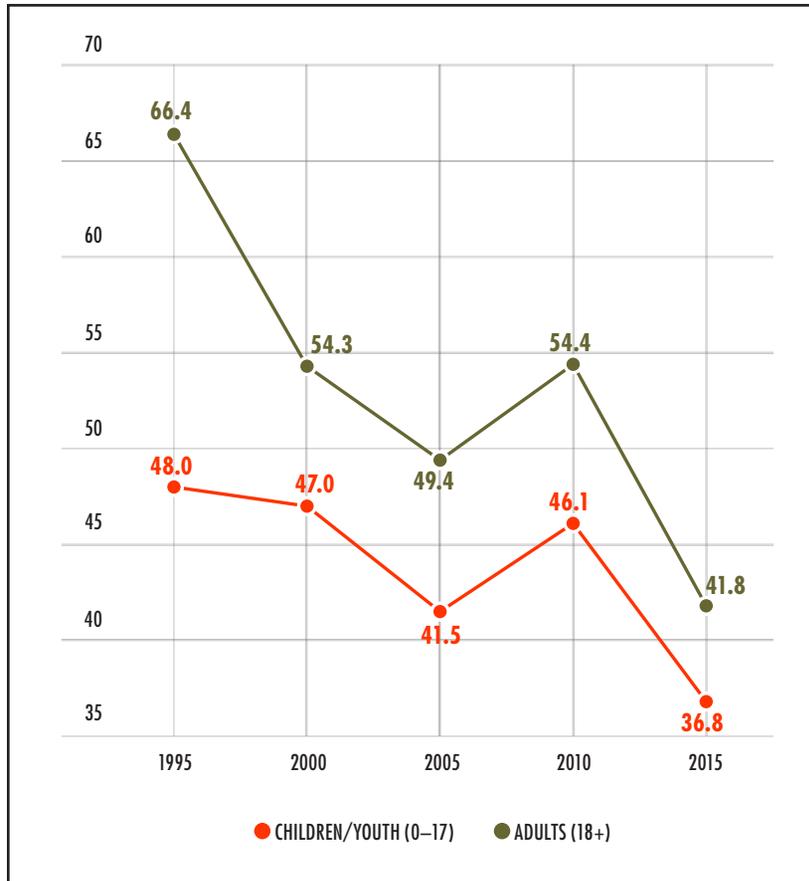
## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION

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. While this decline is not surprising, it is interesting to note that overall participation/enrollment rates, when computed as a percentage of total membership, has decreased significantly from the 1950s and 1960s but has not dramatically changed in the last decade (from 21.3% in 2005 to 19.6% in 2015). Currently, percentages indicate that roughly two out of every ten people in the UCC are participating in these types of programs, at least in the traditional sense.

PERCENTAGE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION PARTICIPANTS TO TOTAL MEMBERSHIP (1955–2015)



**PERCENTAGE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION  
AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE TO TOTAL PARTICIPATION/  
ENROLLMENT (1995–2015)**



When comparing participation/enrollment with average weekly attendance figures, even fewer children and adults participate in Christian Education/Faith Formation programs on a regular basis. Since 1995, the gap between enrollment and attendance has increased incrementally, meaning that smaller percentages of total participants in Christian Education/Faith Formation programs are attending these programs on a weekly basis. These patterns match average weekly worship attendance patterns, which have also decreased over time.

In general, adult Faith Formation programs are attended more regularly than children/youth programs. This may be due to a number of factors including competing interests for young people’s attention on Sunday mornings, the overall decline in numbers of younger people in congregational life in general, and increases in the diversity of family situations around divorce and co-parenting.

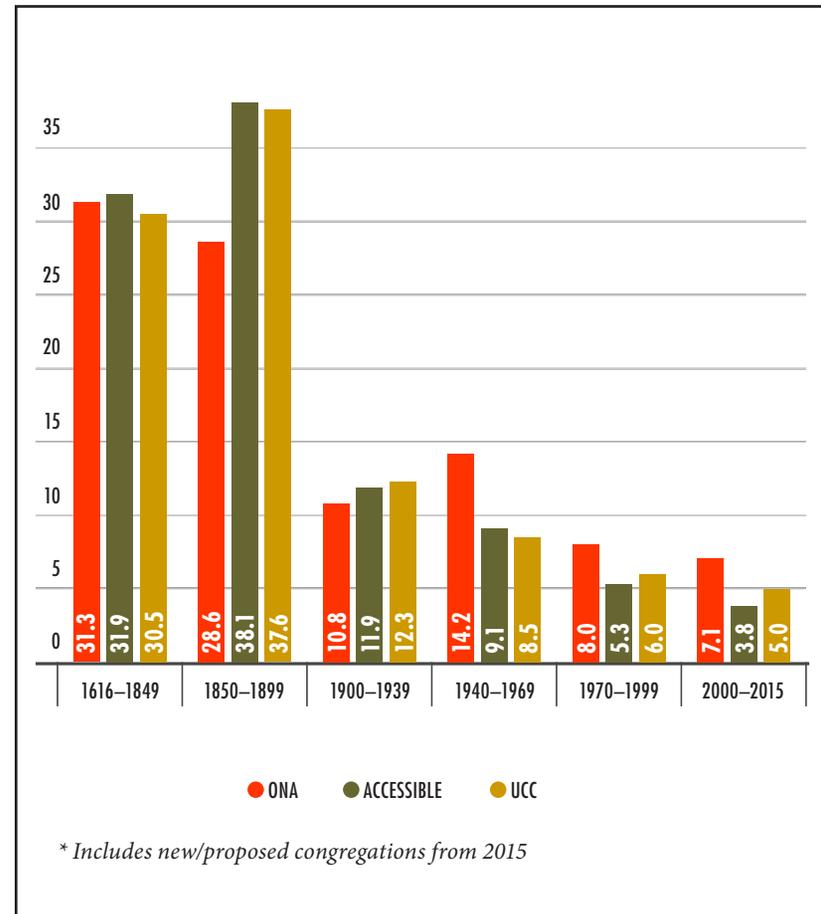
## CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATIONS

From 2009\* to 2015, there was a 52.8% increase in the number of Open and Affirming (ONA) congregations in the United Church of Christ, from 853 churches (15.6% of all UCC churches at the time) to 1,304 churches (25.1% of all UCC congregations in 2015). The majority of congregations that are ONA tend to be organized prior to 1940 since the majority of all UCC congregations were organized in this time period as well. More than one-third (34.9%) of congregations organized since 1970 are ONA. Older congregations, organized prior to 1970, are less likely to be ONA. Less than 25% of these older congregations are ONA.

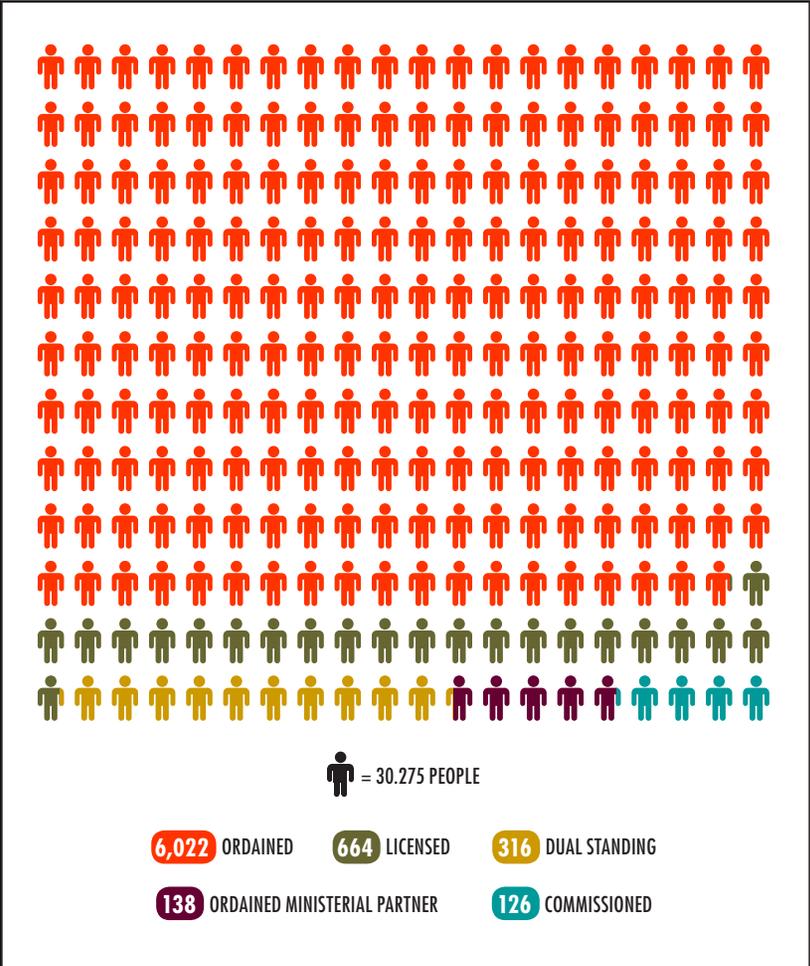
Roughly eight in ten congregations (83.3%) self-identify as being accessible to individuals with disabilities. While the specific types and degrees of accessibility among these congregations are not known, it is interesting to note that congregations organized before 1970 identified as accessible at greater percentages (85.2% of total churches) than congregations organized in the years 1970-2015 (72.5% of total churches).

\* ONA data for 2010 was unavailable, so a six-year period was analyzed rather than a five-year period.

## COMPARISONS OF OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) AND ACCESSIBLE CONGREGATIONS TO TOTAL UCC CONGREGATIONS BY YEAR OF ORGANIZATION (PERCENTAGE)



### ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED AUTHORIZED UCC MINISTERS



### UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

As of December 31, 2015, there were a total of 7,266 active (non-retired) Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ (Ordained, Licensed, Commissioned, Dual Standing, and Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing). Ordained Ministers were the largest percentage of active ministers reported (82.8%); and Licensed Ministers comprised the second largest group of Authorized Ministers (9.1%). Eight ministers also hold standing in the Congregational Christian Church.

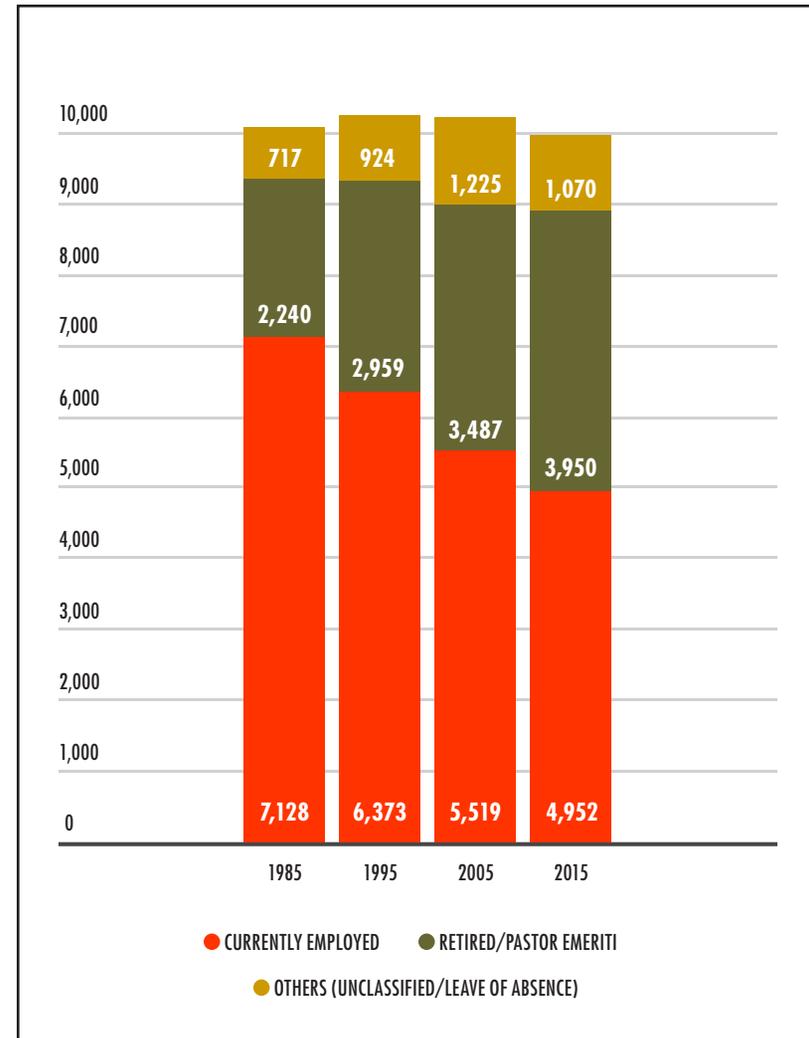
## SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS

At the end of 2015, 9,972 Ordained Ministers in Full Standing were reported, including Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti. Of those 9,972 Ordained Ministers, one-half (49.6% or 4,952) were employed, with 71.5% (3,540) of those employed actively serving in a local church (either a UCC church or non-UCC church). Over one-third (39.6% or 3,950) were Retired Ministers or Pastor Emeriti, and 10.7% (1,070) were unclassified (ministers who did not hold a position at the time of Yearbook production or whose position had not been reported at that time) or were on a leave of absence.

See Appendix A for a detailed summary of Ordained Ministers by classification.

From 1985 to 2015, Ordained Ministers decreased in number by a net total of 113 (1.1%). While currently employed Ordained Ministers decreased by nearly one third in the last three decades (-30.5%), unclassified / leave of absence Ordained Ministers increased by nearly one half in the same time period (+49.2%).

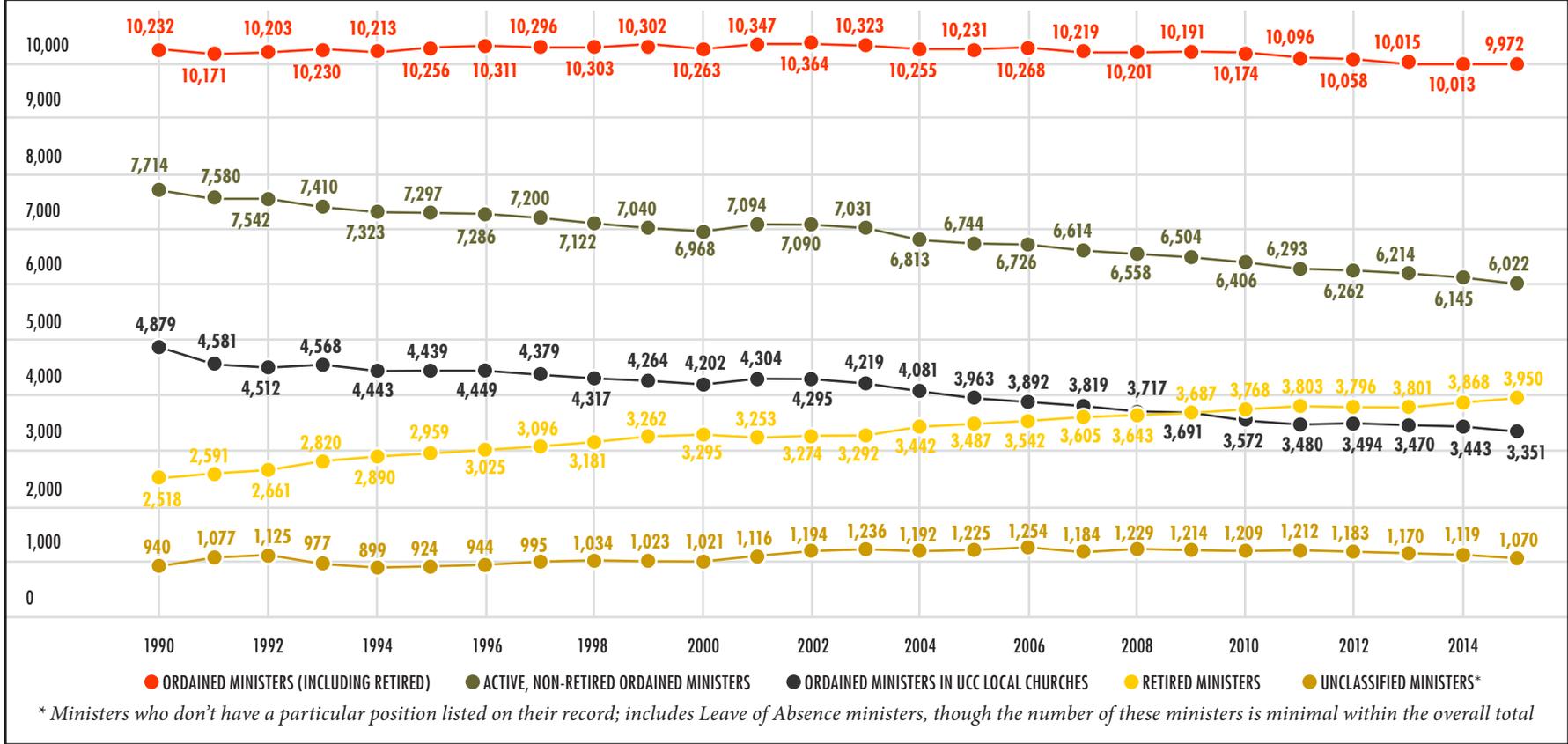
## SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS



# TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY OVER TIME

Over the last 25 years, the number of Ordained Ministers has remained relatively stable, though there are slight incremental decreases in more recent years. In addition, the number of Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti has increased steadily. Interestingly, in this same time period, the number of Ordained Ministers serving in local congregations decreased at steadily similar rates due to overall congregational and membership decline. If past trends continue, which are predicted to be the case, there will be no clergy supply shortage in future years, even though retirements continue to increase.

## TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY (1990-2015)



## UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

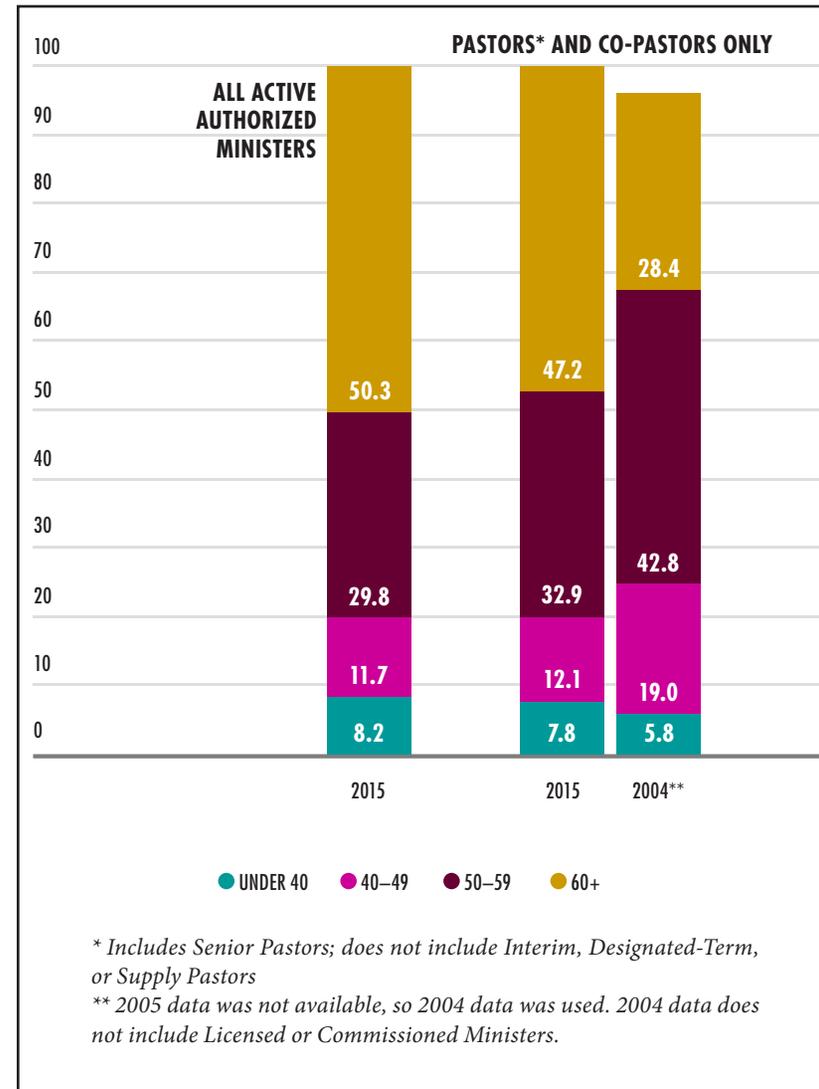
Statistical information regarding Authorized Ministers in the denomination reflects an increasingly aging population. When all active (non-retired) Authorized Ministers were considered, one half were age 60 and above (50.3%) and over one-fourth were 50-59 (29.8%), making 80.1% of all active ministers age 50 and over. When measuring changes over time, the percentage of pastors and co-pastors under 60 decreased in the last eleven years from 67.6% to 52.8%, while pastors and co-pastors 60 and over increased significantly (from 28.4% in 2004 to 47.2% in 2015).

### REFLECTIONS

What is the approximate age range of your pastor? Think about the individuals who have previously served as pastors of your congregation and their approximate ages when beginning and ending their calls with your church. Do you notice any patterns?

On another note, an increasing number of second-career, third-career, and retired individuals are entering seminary and becoming ordained. How do you envision that this might impact the UCC and other similar traditions in the future?

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



## UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The majority (88.0%) of all UCC Authorized Ministers identify as White/Euro-American, with 12.0% identifying as non-white. Among the various types of authorization, Ministers with Dual Standing were the most racially/ethnically diverse group with three in ten (32.6%) ministers listed as non-white. Commissioned Ministers and Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing were the least racially/ethnically diverse authorization groups, with no Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, or Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial ministers listed within denominational records.

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

RACE/ETHNICITY	ORDAINED	LICENSED	COMMISSIONED	DUAL STANDING	ORDAINED MINISTERIAL PARTNER STANDING
White/Euro-American	89.3	82.8	91.3	67.4	91.7
African-American	6.8	8.1	7.8	13.1	5.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.3	4.7		16.3	
Hispanic/Latino	1.0	1.8	.9	2.4	2.8
Native American	.1	.8		.4	
Bi-Racial/Multi-Racial/Other	.5	1.8		.4	

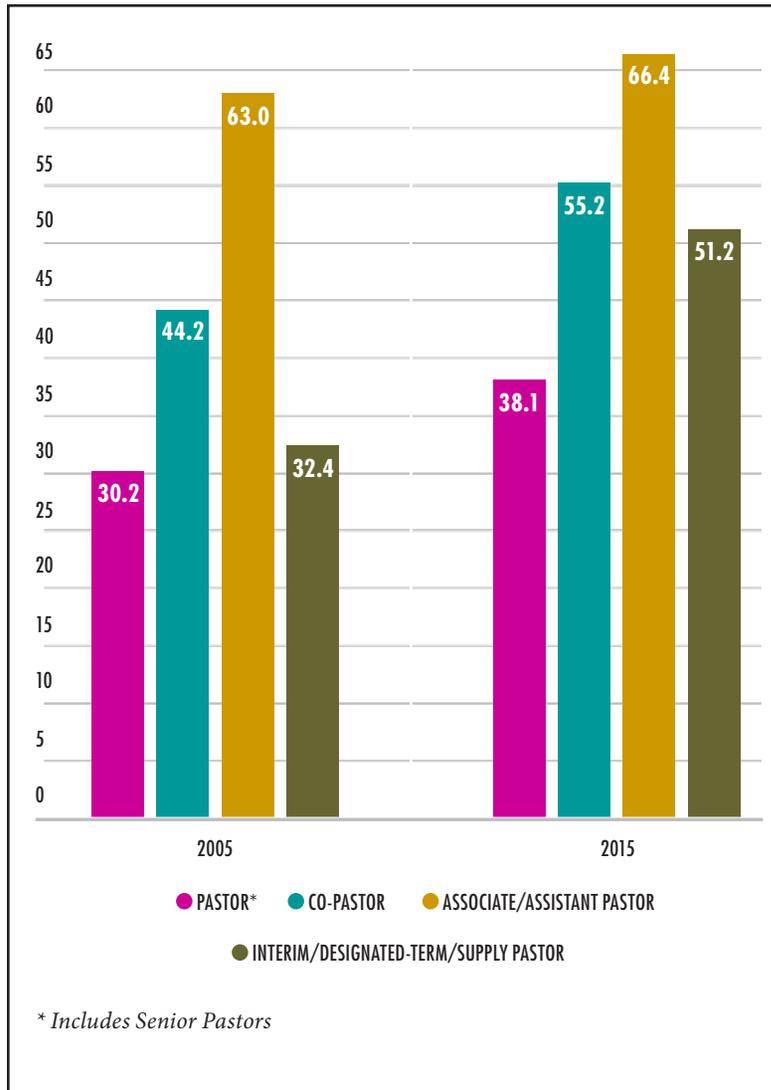
## UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

Approximately 50.9% of active, non-retired Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ identified as male, 49.0% identified as female, and 0.1% identified as transgender/gender-variant. There were more male ministers than female ministers within each authorization category, except for Commissioned Ministers, of which there were nearly four times the number of females compared to males.

### GENDER OF ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

AUTHORIZATION	FEMALE	MALE	TRANSGENDER/GENDER-VARIANT
Ordained	2,988	3,012	7
Licensed	282	359	0
Dual Standing	97	205	1
Ordained Ministerial Partner	62	71	1
Commissioned	99	25	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,528</b>	<b>3,672</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>N = 7,210 (Missing = 56)</i>			

**PERCENTAGE COMPARISON OF PASTOR POSITIONS HELD BY FEMALE ORDAINED MINISTERS**



**UCC FEMALE MINISTERS IN LOCAL CHURCHES**

The number of active female Ordained Ministers increased significantly over the last decade, from 31.9% in 2005 to 49.0% in 2015. Over one-third (38.1%) of all local church pastors (including senior pastors) are female, compared with 30.2% ten years ago. Over half of co-pastors (55.2%) and interim / designated-term / supply pastors (51.2%) are female, and two-thirds (66.4%) are associate / assistant pastors.

**REFLECTION**

What do you make of the significant increase in the number of female interim and supply pastors over the last decade? Does this increase point toward the continuing challenges that females face with regard to equal access and opportunity for more settled pastoral positions? What other factors might be affecting these dynamics?

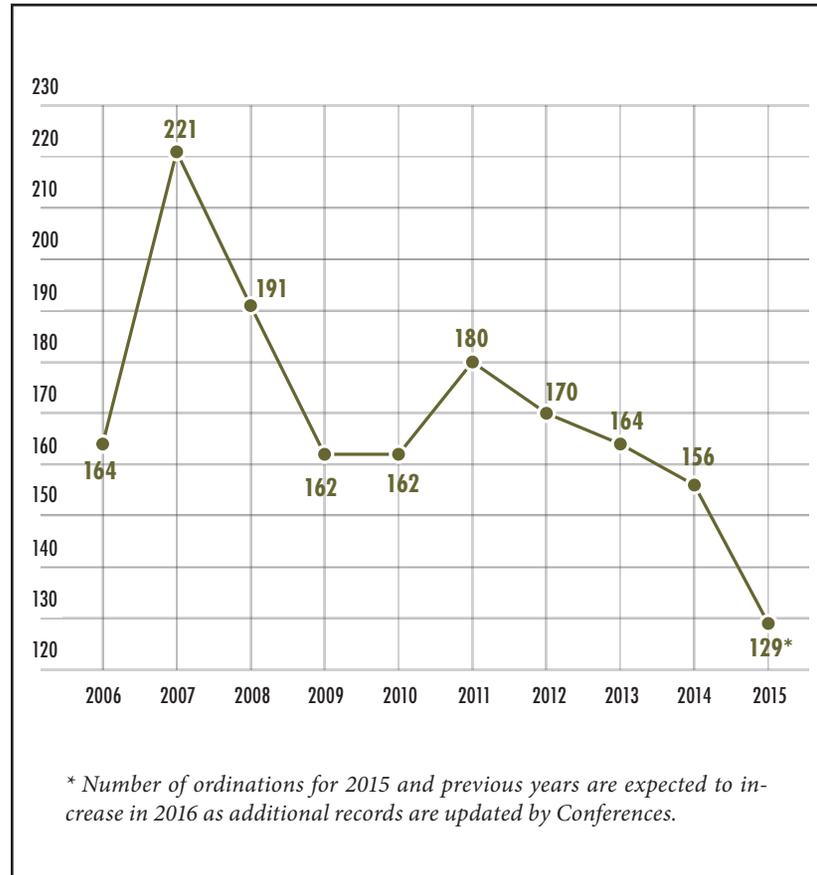
## UCC ORDINATIONS AND MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT

The number of ordinations per year decreased over the past decade from 164 in 2006 to 129\* in 2015. Throughout this time period, the 2011-2015 annual average of ordinations was 160 compared to the 2006-2010 annual average of 180 ordinations. When reviewing trends over the past several decades, however, ordination numbers fluctuated in similar ways; and it is yet to be seen whether this recent decrease signals a continuing trend.

As of December 31, 2015, there were 728 active Members in Discernment on record within the denominational database. Members in Discernment (or MIDs) were concentrated within larger Conferences, as is to be expected, with Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Ohio Conferences reporting 27.7% of the total number of MIDs.

In terms of gender, females comprised 63.8% of the total number of MIDs (a greater percentage than that of current female Authorized Ministers). Members in Discernment were also more racially/ethnically diverse than current Authorized Ministers with 19.3% identifying as non-white (compared with 12.0% of Authorized Ministers identifying as non-white).

UCC ORDINATIONS (2006–2015)



## UCC LOCAL CHURCH FINANCIAL TRENDS

Local congregational expenses increased over time while income decreased. Operating expenses for an average local congregation in 2015 was \$168,400, a \$1,594 average increase from 2014. Average total income for a local church in 2015 was \$231,610, a \$769 increase from 2014. Both the average expenses and income for local congregations increased in the last decade from \$140,647 and \$195,749 in 2005, respectively.

In 2005, Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) giving represented 5.8% of a local congregation’s total expenditures. This percentage decreased to 4.3% of a local church’s total expenditures for 2015.

Overall expenditures for congregations of the United Church of Christ decreased from \$934,824,110 to \$928,668,423 in a period of four years (December 31, 2011 to December 31, 2015), a 0.65% decrease. This figure fluctuates annually, with some years experiencing increases in overall expenditures.

### TOTAL EXPENDITURES

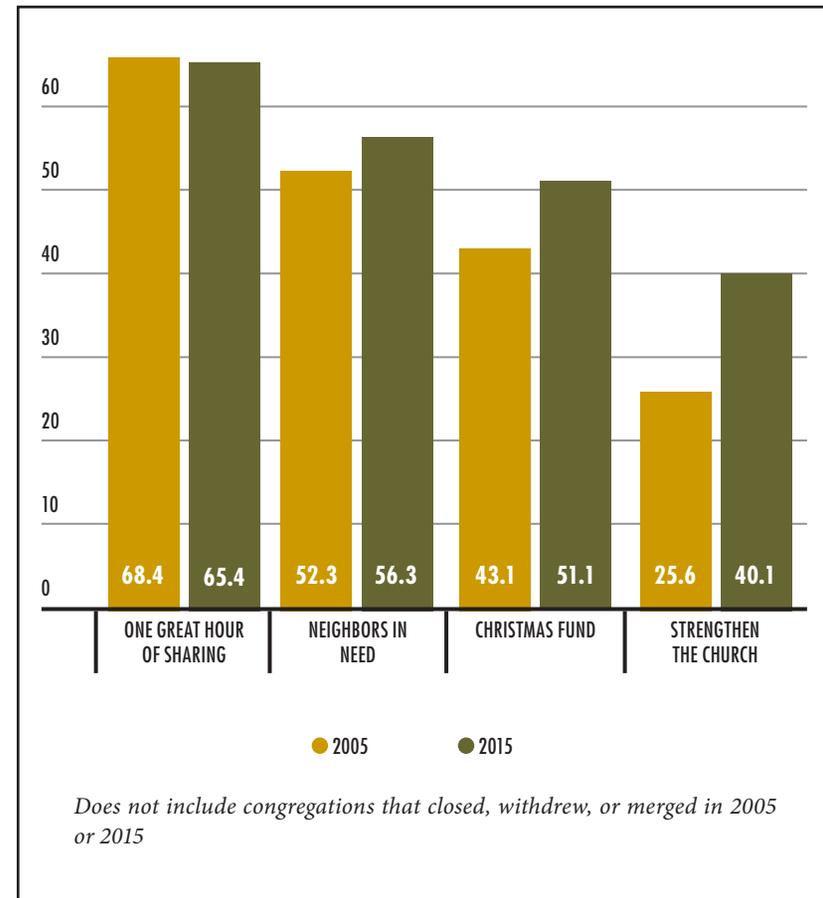
EXPENDITURE	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Current Local Expenses	\$824,425,695	\$822,342,667	\$818,905,166	\$808,288,492	\$816,999,755
Total Mission Support	\$62,556,317	\$63,466,950	\$63,327,328	\$60,886,340	\$67,741,866
Capital Expenses	\$41,686,411	\$64,729,352	\$41,524,595	\$43,630,120	\$50,082,489
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$928,668,423</b>	<b>\$950,538,969</b>	<b>\$923,757,089</b>	<b>\$912,804,952</b>	<b>\$934,824,110</b>

## UCC STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION SUPPORT

Totals for wider church stewardship and giving by local congregations of the United Church of Christ decreased over the past several years; however, there were increases in the number of congregations participating in special offerings.

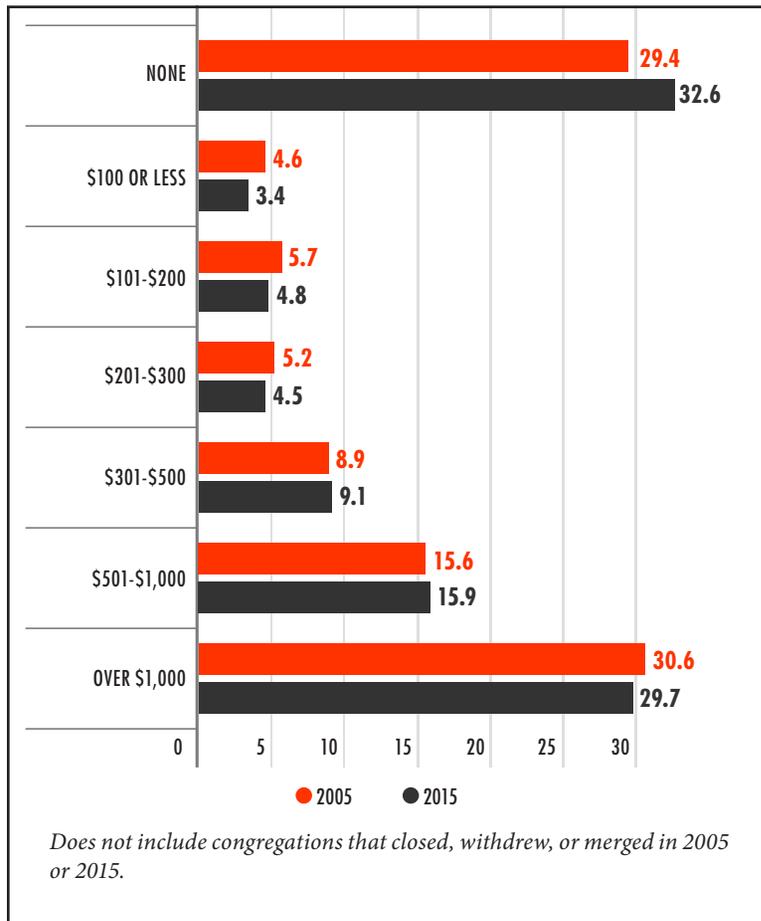
For special offerings giving from local congregations, each offering experienced an increase in the percentage of participating congregations over the past decade, except for One Great Hour of Sharing which declined slightly. In 2005, 52.3% of churches participated in the Neighbors in Need offering; participation increased to 56.3% in 2015. Even more striking, 25.6% of congregations participated in the Strengthen the Church Offering in 2005; and in 2015, 40.1% participated in this offering, a 56.6% increase over the past decade.

LOCAL CHURCH OFFERINGS PARTICIPATION (PERCENTAGE)

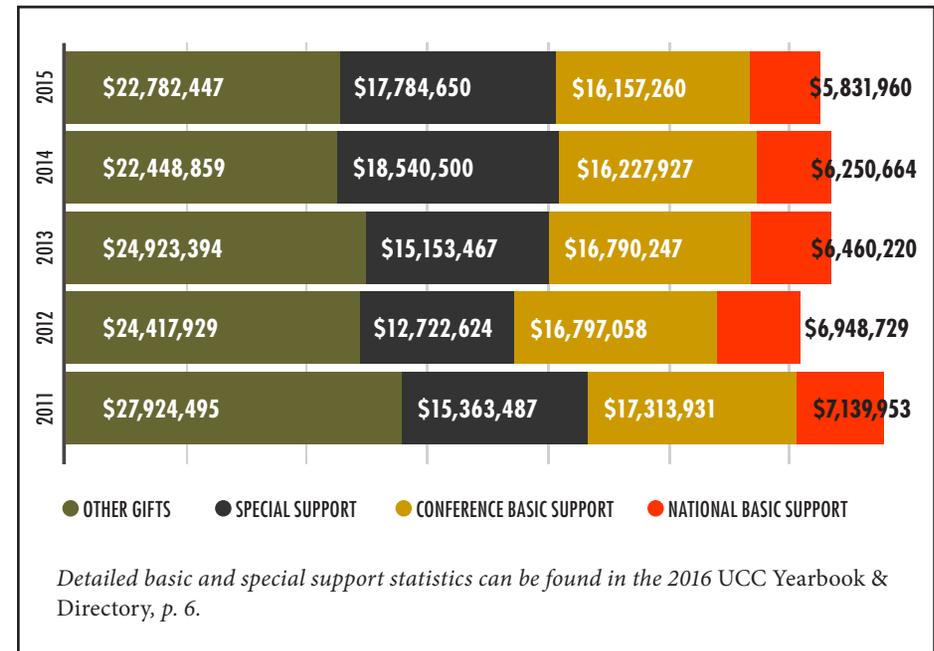


In overall mission support, the total decreased from the previous year by \$910,633 (-1.4%). Other gifts increased by \$333,588 (+1.5%) while special support, conference basic support, and national basic support decreased. Since 2011, national basic support and other gifts experienced the greatest decreases (-18.3% and -18.4%, respectively); and conference basic support decreased by 9.3%. Special support, however, experienced a significant increase since 2011 (+15.7%).

### UCC CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL OFFERINGS (PERCENTAGE)



### TOTAL MISSION SUPPORT



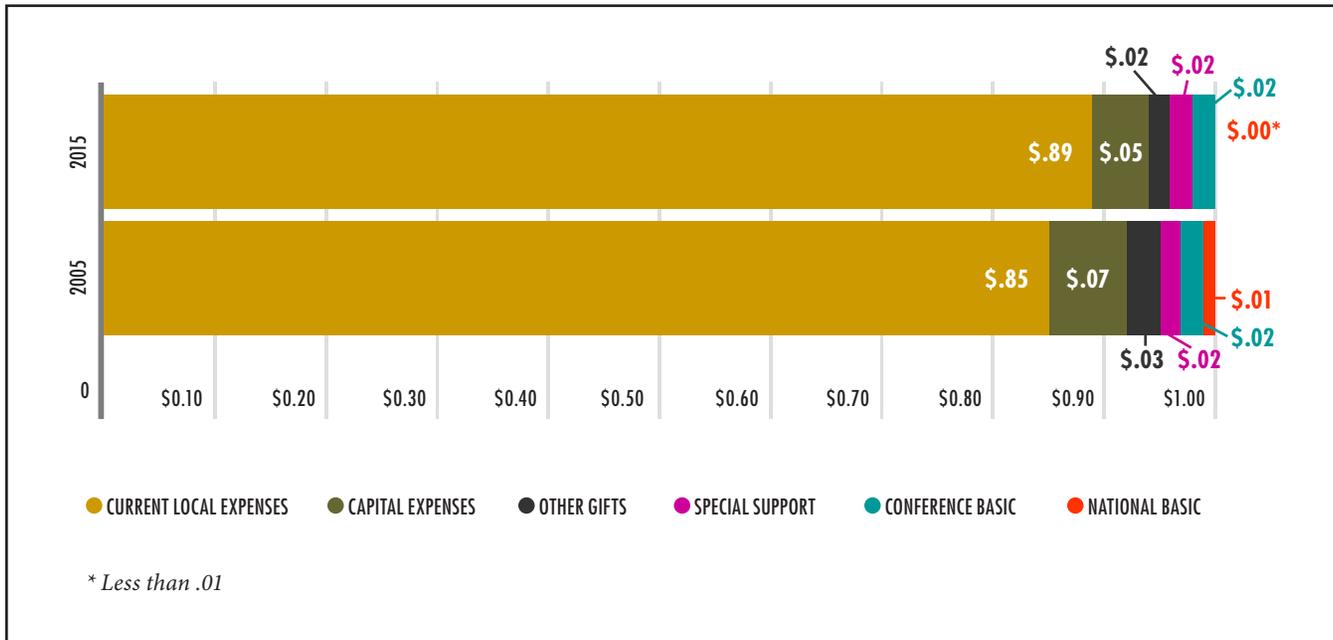
#### REFLECTIONS

Does your congregation participate in the UCC's special offerings or provide other support through your conference or the national setting? Were there any special appeals that your congregations supported this past year? What do you notice in these overall mission support trends that is similar to or different than your own congregation's trends?

## THE CHURCH DOLLAR

In the last decade, the distribution of the church dollar experienced some noticeable shifts. Current local expenses increased by \$.04, and capital expenses decreased (with minor fluctuations from year to year). Special support and conference basic support remained the same, and national basic support decreased to less than \$.01 on the dollar.

### CHANGING DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCH DOLLAR

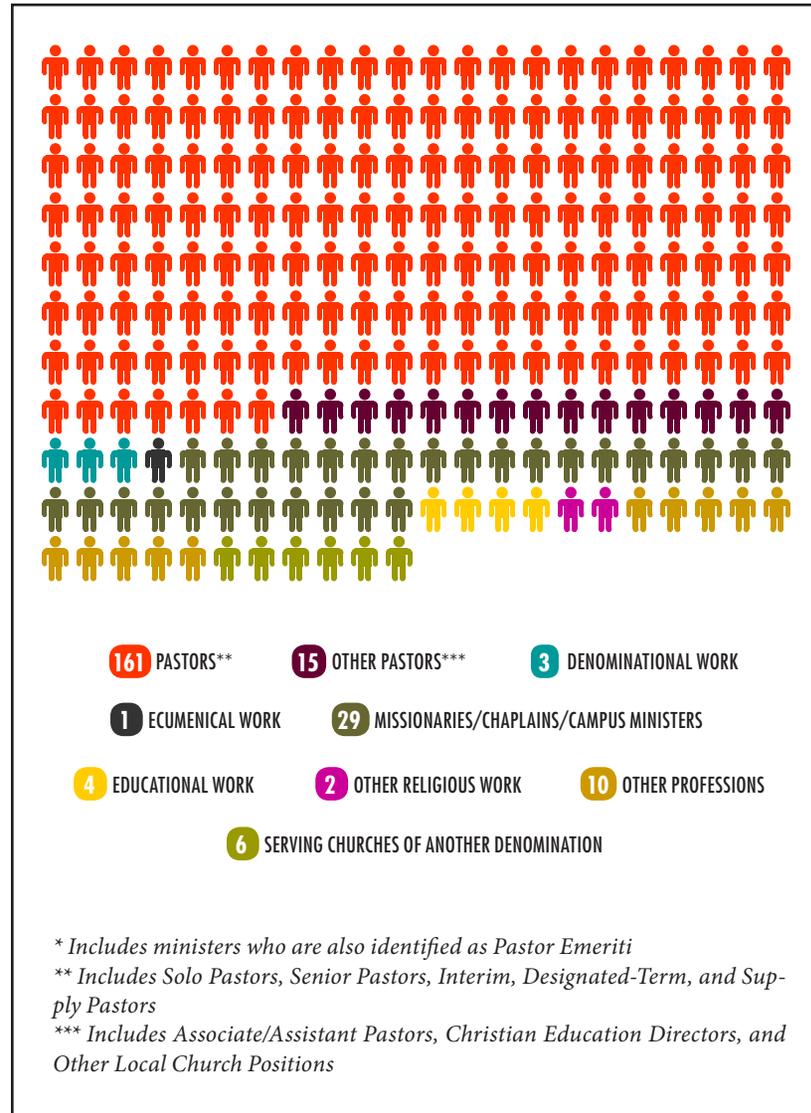


#### REFLECTIONS

With increased demands on local churches to maintain buildings and provide salaries for pastors and other staff, how does your congregation balance internal expenses versus mission giving to the wider church and other organizations? How do your vision and/or mission inform the decisions your church makes around its budget?

## SPECIAL REPORT: EMERGING TRENDS IN MINISTERIAL AUTHORIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

### RETIRED ORDAINED MINISTERS IN ACTIVE MINISTRY ROLES\*



### RETIRED ORDAINED MINISTERS IN ACTIVE MINISTRY ROLES

While most ministers do not engage actively in ministry upon their retirement, a few continue to serve in a number of authorized ministry roles in local churches, association and conference settings, and specialized ministries. Denominational records indicate that there are approximately 231 Ordained Ministers that are identified as having another position in addition to their Retired/Pastor Emeritus position (5.8% of all Retired/Pastor Emeriti ministers).

The majority of positions reported for Retired Ordained Ministers are local church positions (76.2% of all total active retired positions). Interestingly, some continue to serve as chaplains and pastoral counselors within various organizations. A few retired ministers serve congregations of other denominations. While these statistics do not describe the total contribution that Retired Ordained Ministers make to the overall life of the denomination within a multitude of volunteer leadership roles, the data suggests that these ministers continue to serve in authorized roles as a gift to the wider church.

## LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Data from the latest annual church Yearbook reporting cycle was examined in order to understand the dynamics of local church leadership. Approximately 4,263 individuals were listed in the primary leadership role for each UCC congregation. For the other 769 congregations that did not list a primary pastoral leader, they may have been in the search process and not had a leader at the time of reporting, or had failed to report a leader in recent years. However, the number of congregations that did report a pastoral leader provided a large enough sample for generalization about all primary pastoral leaders and congregations in the UCC.

Even still, not all of the primary leaders were identified as pastors within their congregations. While over eight in ten (85.3%) were settled pastors (senior, solo, or co-pastor), 13.0% were interim, designated-term, or supply pastors. In a few instances, Pastor Emeriti, assistant or associate pastors, or other local church staff served in the primary leadership role.

## PRIMARY CHURCH LEADERSHIP BY POSITION

POSITION	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
Pastor	78.9	3,364
Senior Pastor	4.7	199
Co-Pastor	1.7	74
Interim Pastor	9.2	392
Designated-Term Pastor	1.6	68
Supply Pastor	2.2	92
Pastor Emeritus	.4	16
Assistant/Associate Pastor	.9	39
Other Church Position (Christian Education Director, Youth Minister, Music Minister, etc.)	.4	19

**PRIMARY CHURCH LEADERSHIP BY AUTHORIZATION**

POSITION	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
Ordained	71.3	3,039
Licensed	10.9	466
Dual Standing	6.2	263
Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing	2.3	98
Authorized by Another Denomination	4.1	175
Layperson	2.8	118
Privilege of Call	1.1	46
Member in Discernment	1.0	41
Commissioned	.1	6
Seeking Privilege of Call/ Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing	.1	4
Other (Standing Terminated, Resigned, Suspended)	.1	7

In examining authorizations of primary congregational leaders, 71.3% were Ordained, 10.9% were Licensed, and 8.5% were Dual or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing. Interestingly, 4.1% were authorized by another denomination, and 2.8% were laypersons.

Laypersons serving as primary congregational leaders were more racially/ethnically diverse than any category of Authorized Ministers, with 33.8% of all laypersons identified as non-white. Ministers authorized by another denomination were more diverse than most categories of Authorized Ministers (24.7% identified as non-white). In terms of gender, both laypersons and ministers authorized by another denomination were predominantly male (70.3% and 66.8%, respectively).

## SPECIAL REPORT: UCC PRESENCE IN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Data was retrieved from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) to learn about UCC students across the country. For school year 2015-2016, there were 492 M.Div. students in 66 ATS-accredited schools who self-identified as UCC. Ministerial non-M.Div. students numbered 42 among 21 schools, and other students (M.A., D.Min., Ph.D., Th.D., etc.) numbered 370 among 66 schools. The percentages of full-time and part-time UCC students were unavailable.

Over the past decade, M.Div. enrollment has decreased steadily from 735 in 2006-2007 to 492 in 2015-2016 while Ministerial Non-M.Div. enrollment has remained relatively steady over that same time period. A general decrease in enrolled students within other degree programs also occurred in the past decade. While there seems to be little fluctuation in the number of schools attended for those who identify as UCC, their numerical presence within these schools is less significant today.

Unfortunately, demographic data for UCC enrolled students was unavailable from ATS.

### UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ATS ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (2006-2016)

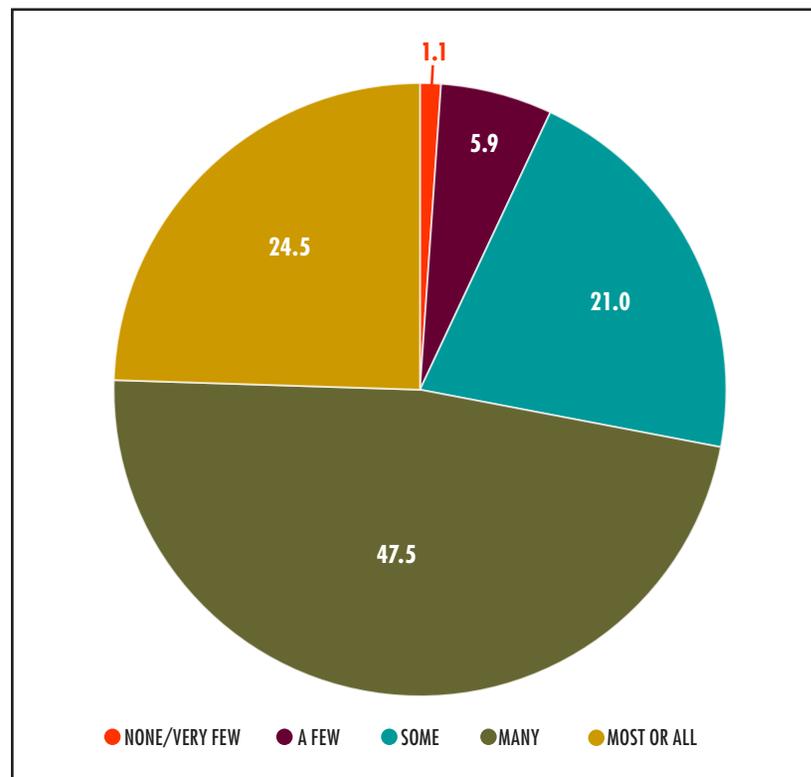
YEAR	MDIV		MINISTERIAL NON-MDIV		OTHER		TOTAL SCHOOLS
	N	HC	N	HC	N	HC	N
2015-2016	66	492	21	42	66	370	89
2014-2015	69	482	20	44	55	219	87
2013-2014	76	520	22	36	66	257	96
2012-2013	75	781	17	179	66	644	92
2011-2012	78	575	14	27	62	457	91
2010-2011	79	571	12	22	61	341	91
2009-2010	79	613	24	67	65	394	96
2008-2009	75	623	20	34	62	338	89
2007-2008	76	689	18	35	67	402	92
2006-2007	73	735	20	36	65	421	90

*N = Number of schools*  
*HC = Head count*

## SPECIAL REPORT: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY 2015 NATIONAL SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONS

In early 2015, the United Church of Christ participated in the Faith Communities Today (FACT) National Survey of Congregations to look at religious life in America. The survey was completed by 910 UCC congregations (17.7% of all UCC churches) through a well-informed leader (a pastor, staff members, church administrator, or lay leader). The following are a few highlights of some of the findings from this survey. Additional results on various aspects of congregational life can be found at [www.ucc.org/research](http://www.ucc.org/research).

### CHURCH PARTICIPATION USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY CONGREGATION (PERCENTAGE)



### TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

When looking at results on the use of electronic technology in UCC congregations, nearly half (47.5%) of churches indicated that many of their participants are daily internet or social media users in their everyday lives. Nearly one quarter (24.5%) indicated that most or all church participants use the internet or social media in their everyday lives. For congregations in which some, a few, or very few/none of the participants use the internet in their daily lives, these churches tended to have an average of 1-50 people in weekly worship and were more likely to be located in areas with populations of less than 50,000 people.

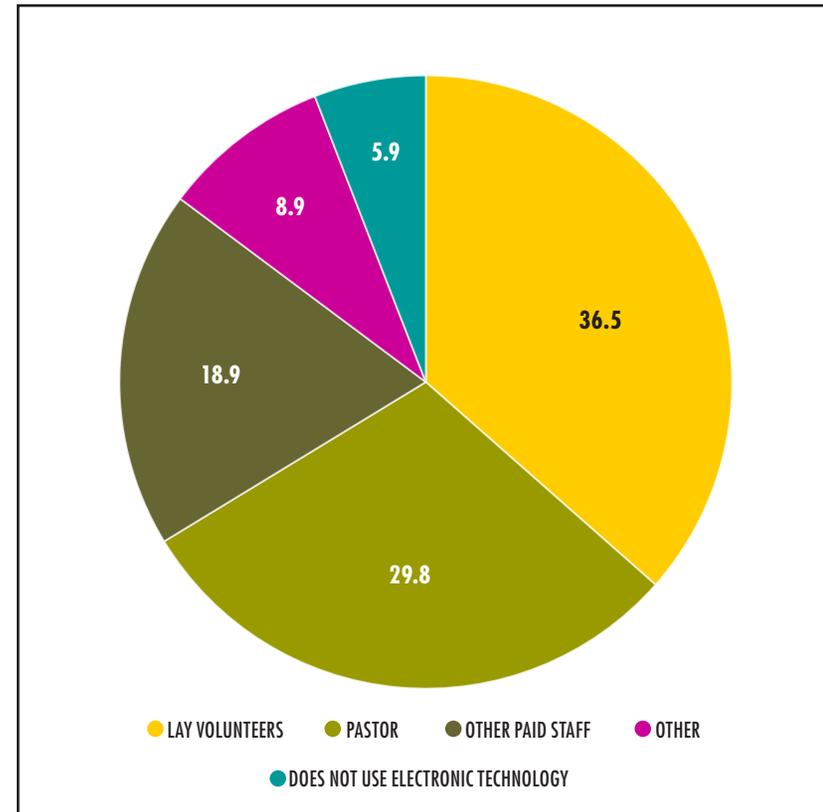
Nearly 9 in 10 congregations (87.4%) utilized email. The second most-frequently used technology tools—at approximately half of all congregations—included e-newsletters (54.3%), Wi-Fi access in church buildings (54.1%), websites (52.6%), and Facebook (45.7%). One in five congregations (20.1%) utilized texting for communications; and a number of other tools

were used less frequently including automated prayer requests (16.4%), on-line giving (9.4%), blogs (5.6%), online meetings (3.5%), and Twitter (2.8%).

Primary responsibility for a congregation's technology management tended to rest with the pastor (29.8%) or lay volunteers (36.5%). Nearly 6% of congregations indicated that they do not use electronic technology at all.

The majority (over 70%) of survey respondents reported believing that modern communication technologies are a necessity for ministry; and 20% believed that electronic technologies aren't really crucial for the congregation's vitality or success.

### PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONGREGATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (PERCENTAGE)



## SMALLER CONGREGATIONS

Nearly half (47.8%) of all UCC congregations have 50 or fewer people in attendance at worship each week, and nearly eight in ten (81.2%) have 100 or fewer people in weekly worship. Because of these statistics, it can be concluded that the United Church of Christ is a denomination of smaller congregations. When comparing these smaller congregations to churches that have an average weekly worship attendance of over 100 people, the following characteristics and attributes were discovered about the UCC's smaller churches:

- Possessed greater percentages of older adults (age 50 or older) and smaller percentages of younger people (including children and youth)\*
- Were less likely to have changed worship styles in the past five years\*
- Placed greater emphasis on developing denominational loyalty in Christian Education/Faith Formation programs; also celebrated denominational heritage as part of the congregation's mission and identity
- Possessed an identity of their church as being a close-knit family\*
- Was slightly more likely to have considered changing denominations or becoming independent in the last 10 years
- Had fewer church participants who were daily internet/social media users\*
- Had fewer church participants who were involved in evangelism and outreach to new people\*
- Were more likely to have a majority of participants possessing conservative theological outlooks\*
- Were less likely to have grown in average weekly worship attendance over the last five years\*
- Were more likely to have an older female pastor\*
- Were more likely to have a part-time and/or bi-vocational pastor, as well as a shorter-tenured pastor\*
- Adapted less readily to change/not as willing to make changes\*
- Were less likely to have a website or use electronic technology or internet/social media\*
- Were more likely to be a newer congregation
- Were more uncertain about their future as a congregation\*
- Located in less populated geographic areas\*



*All characteristics with an asterisk (\*) were statistically significantly different than what was reported for congregations with an average weekly worship attendance of over 100 people.*

## APPENDIX:

### SUMMARY OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ORDAINED MINISTERS BY CLASSIFICATION (2006–2015)

CLASSIFICATION	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Pastors*	3,410	3,339	3,258	3,264	3,167	3,064	3,049	3,017	2,975	2,903
Other Pastors**	482	480	459	427	405	416	445	453	468	448
Pastor Emeriti	297	259	219	191	182	153	194	128	199	199
Retired	3,245	3,346	3,424	3,496	3,586	3,650	3,602	3,673	3,669	3,751
Denominational Work	182	172	162	158	188	147	148	137	138	140
Ecumenical Work	38	41	42	42	46	43	40	40	37	35
Missionaries/Chaplains/Campus Ministers	606	637	641	670	684	714	714	720	755	798
Educational Work	178	177	176	169	157	148	148	150	145	138
Other Religious Work	66	66	74	75	80	76	71	79	78	78
Other Professions***	326	322	315	292	278	285	265	250	238	223
Serving Churches of Another Denomination	184	196	202	193	192	188	199	198	192	189
All Others****	1,254	1,184	1,229	1,214	1,209	1,212	1,183	1,170	1,119	1,070
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,268</b>	<b>10,219</b>	<b>10,201</b>	<b>10,191</b>	<b>10,174</b>	<b>10,096</b>	<b>10,058</b>	<b>10,015</b>	<b>10,013</b>	<b>9,972</b>

\* Pastors includes Senior Pastors

\*\* Other Pastors includes Associate / Assistant Pastors, Youth Ministers, Directors of Christian Education / Faith Formation, Ministers of Music, and Other Local Church Positions

\*\*\* Other Professions includes health and welfare workers in UCC insitutions and pastoral counselors

\*\*\*\* Unclassified and Leave of Absence

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*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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