



# FACT 2023— United Church of Christ

Study findings and 2020 Comparisons

Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data  
United Church of Christ

# Overview

Aims and Methods

Topics

- Facilities
- Leadership
- Church Activities
- Mission and Identity
- Technology
- Finances
- Pandemic Experiences

# Overview—About FACT 2023

- The 2023 FACT survey is the latest in a series of national, interfaith surveys conducted since 2000
  - FACT surveys have previously been conducted in 2000, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2015, and 2020
- The 2023 FACT survey was especially collected to assess trends among congregations that have emerged since the last survey in 2020
  - The 2023 FACT survey is also part of the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) project
    - <https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/>
  - The next FACT survey will be conducted in 2025
- For more information on the overall FACT survey effort and details on the 2023 data collection, visit [Faith Communities Today](#)

# Overview—UCC Survey Distribution

- Random sample drawn of 1,000 churches
  - 4,603 UCC congregations as of Dec. 31, 2022
- Survey in the field from March 7–April 3
- 296 useable responses received
  - 30% response rate
  - Responses weighted to match UCC geographic prevalence



# Facilities

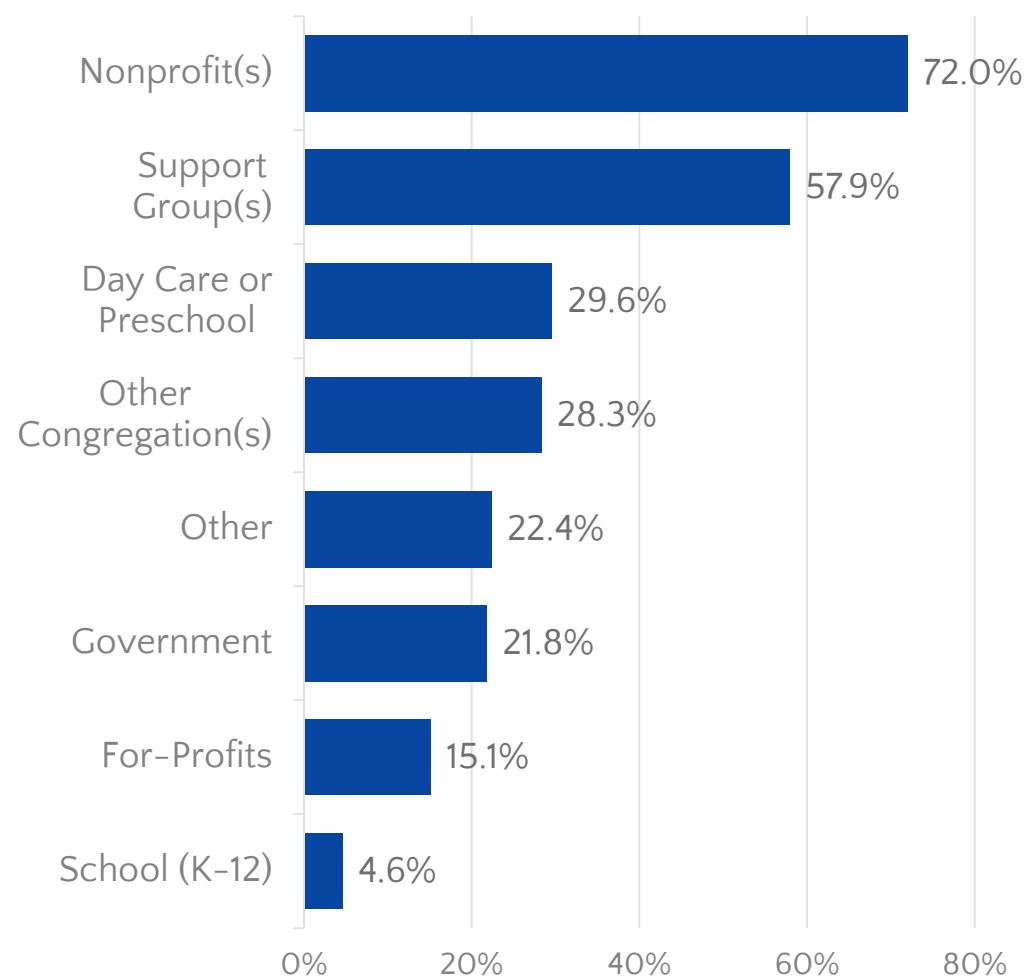
Forms, Uses, and Satisfaction

# Facilities: Uses and Compensation

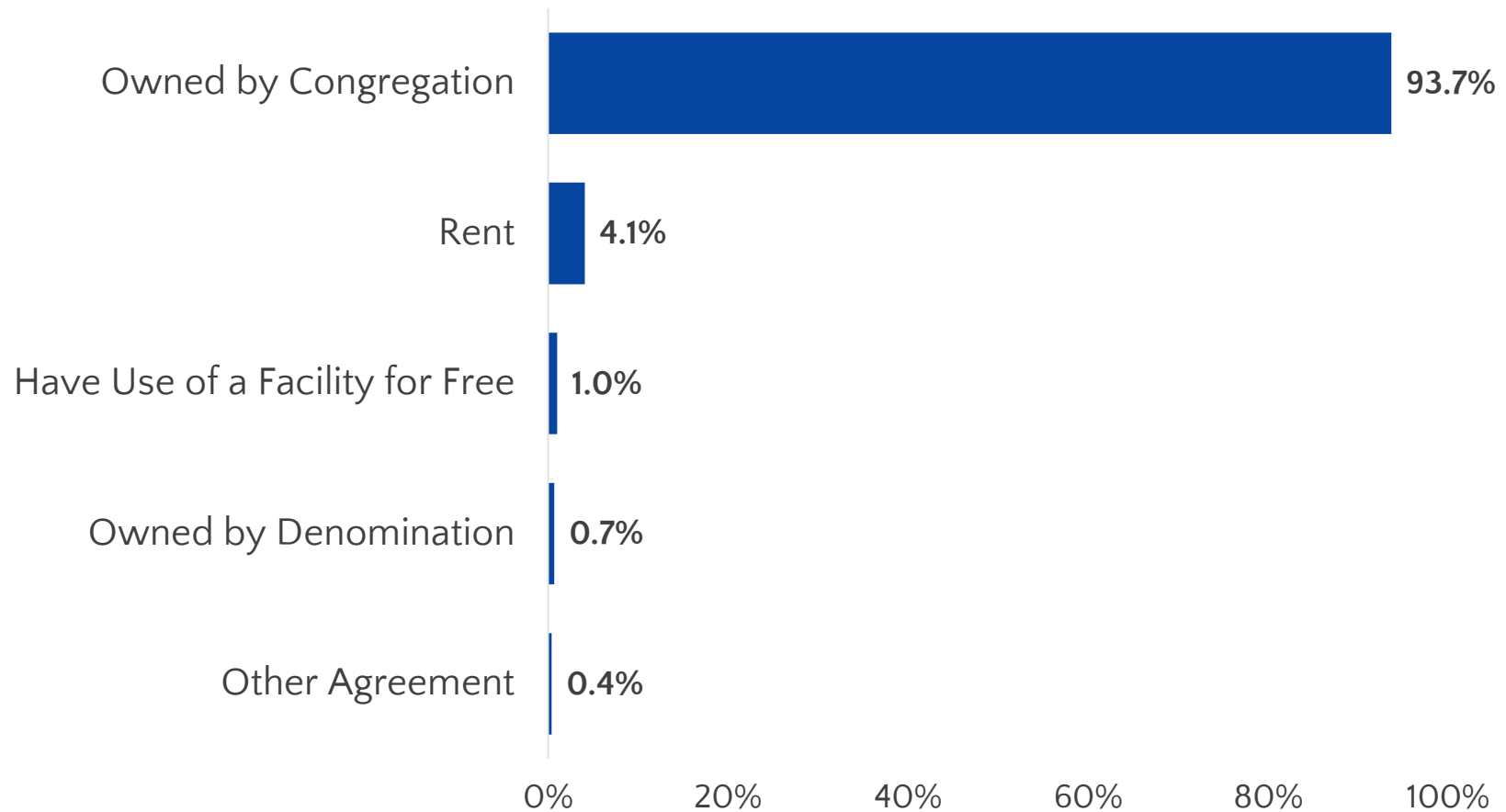
## Use of Space by Other Organizations:

- 70.5% of congregations share space with other organizations
- How Organizations Provide Compensation for Space (organizations could choose all that apply):
  - Rent – 63.9%
  - Free Use – 60.6%
  - Expense Sharing – 23.1%
  - Other – 18.8%

## Organizations Using Congregational Facilities

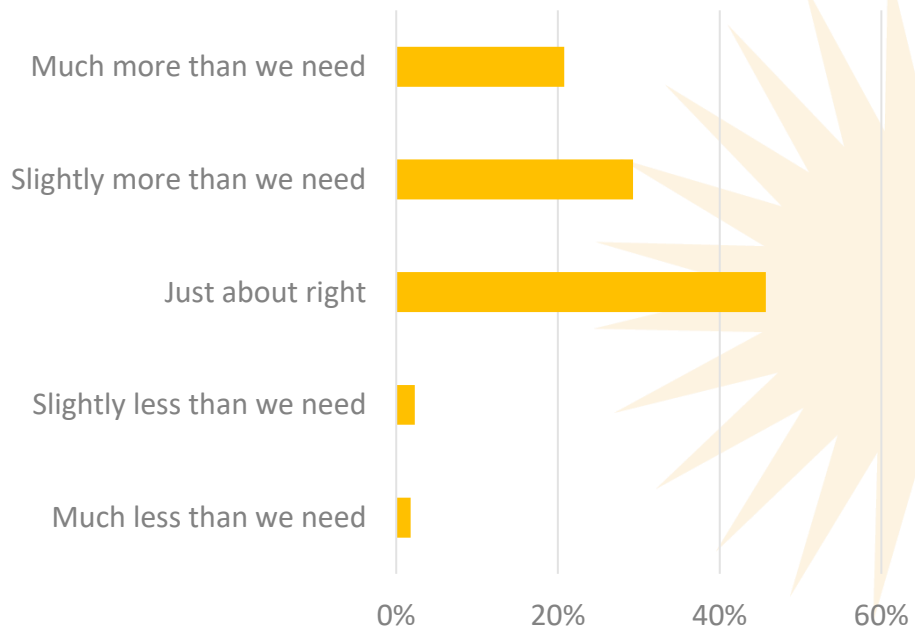


## Which best describes your congregation's relationship to its primary place of worship?

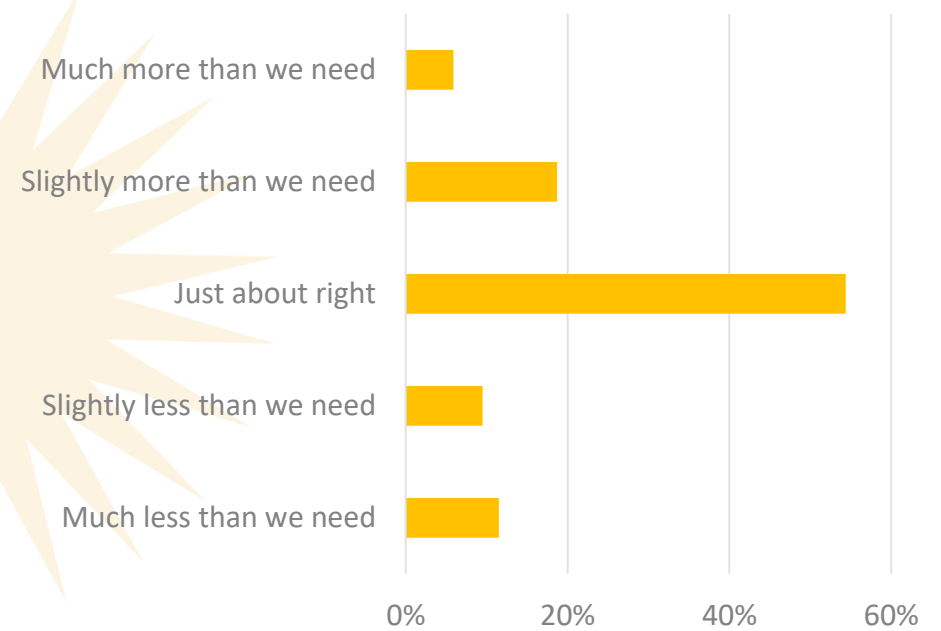


# Facility Satisfaction

## Space for Religious Services/Worship



## Space for Parking





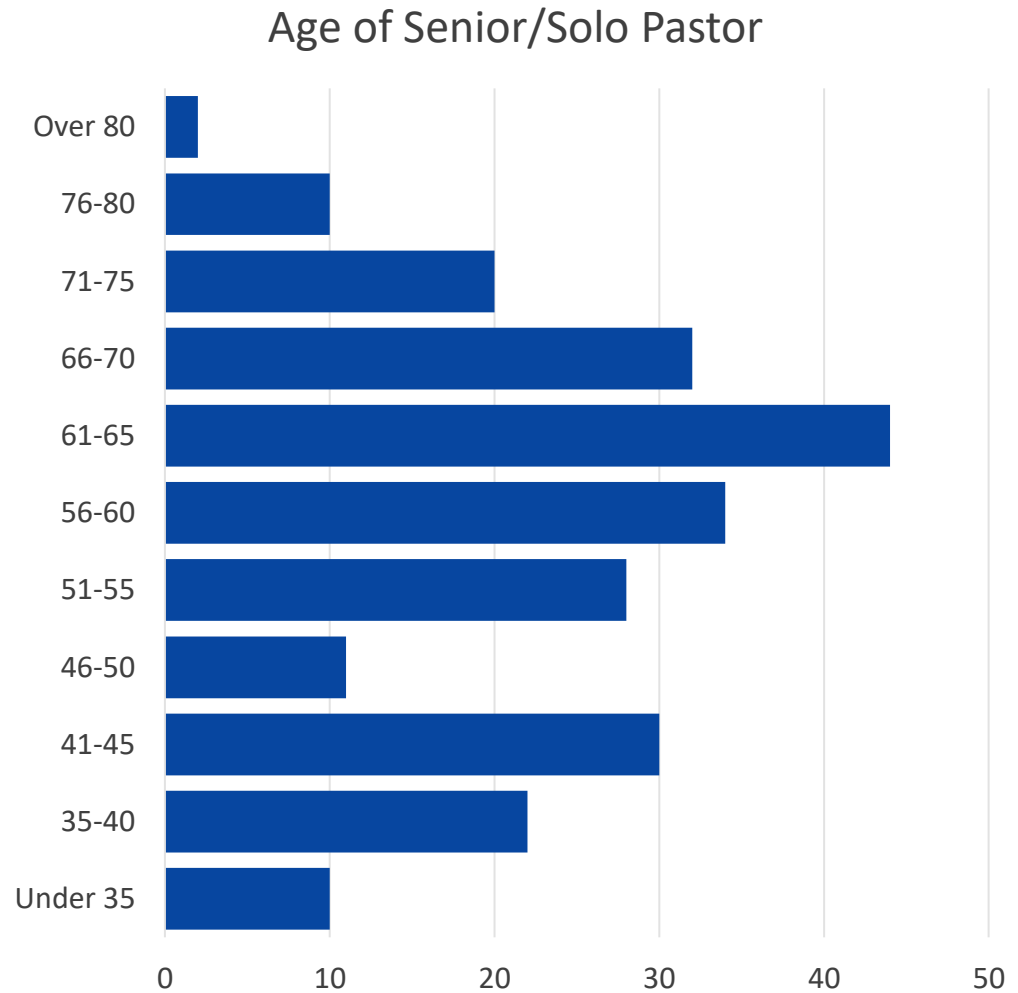


# Leadership

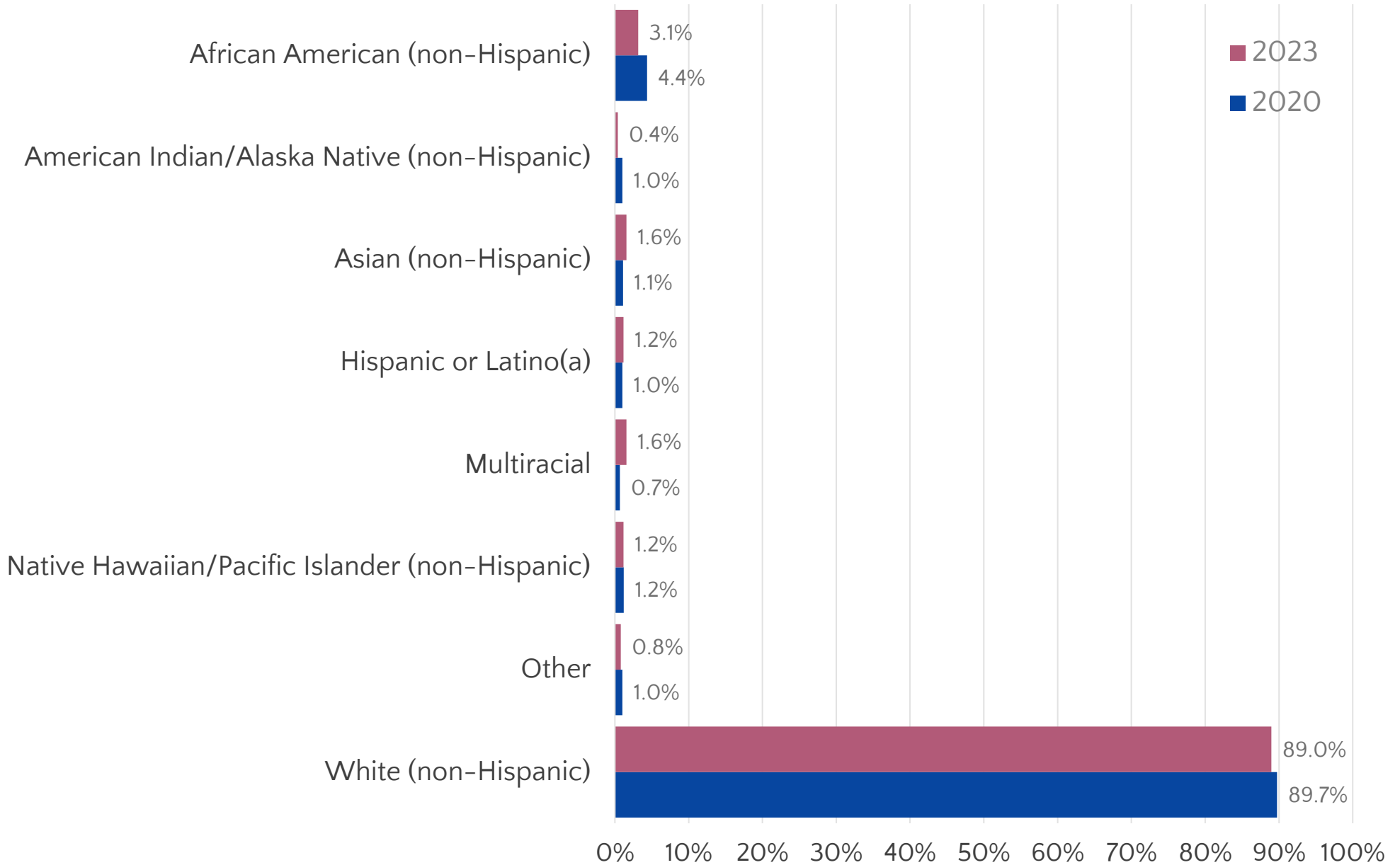
Clergy Characteristics, Fit, and  
Well-Being

# Leadership: Senior/Solo Clergy Characteristics

- Age
  - Average: 57.0
  - Median: 59.0
- Employment status:
  - Full-Time: 55.2%
  - Part-Time: 44.8%
- Compensation:
  - Paid: 98.9%
  - Unpaid: 1.1%
- Median first year of service:
  - 2015
- Part Time Clergy: Average hours worked in congregation:
  - 21.4

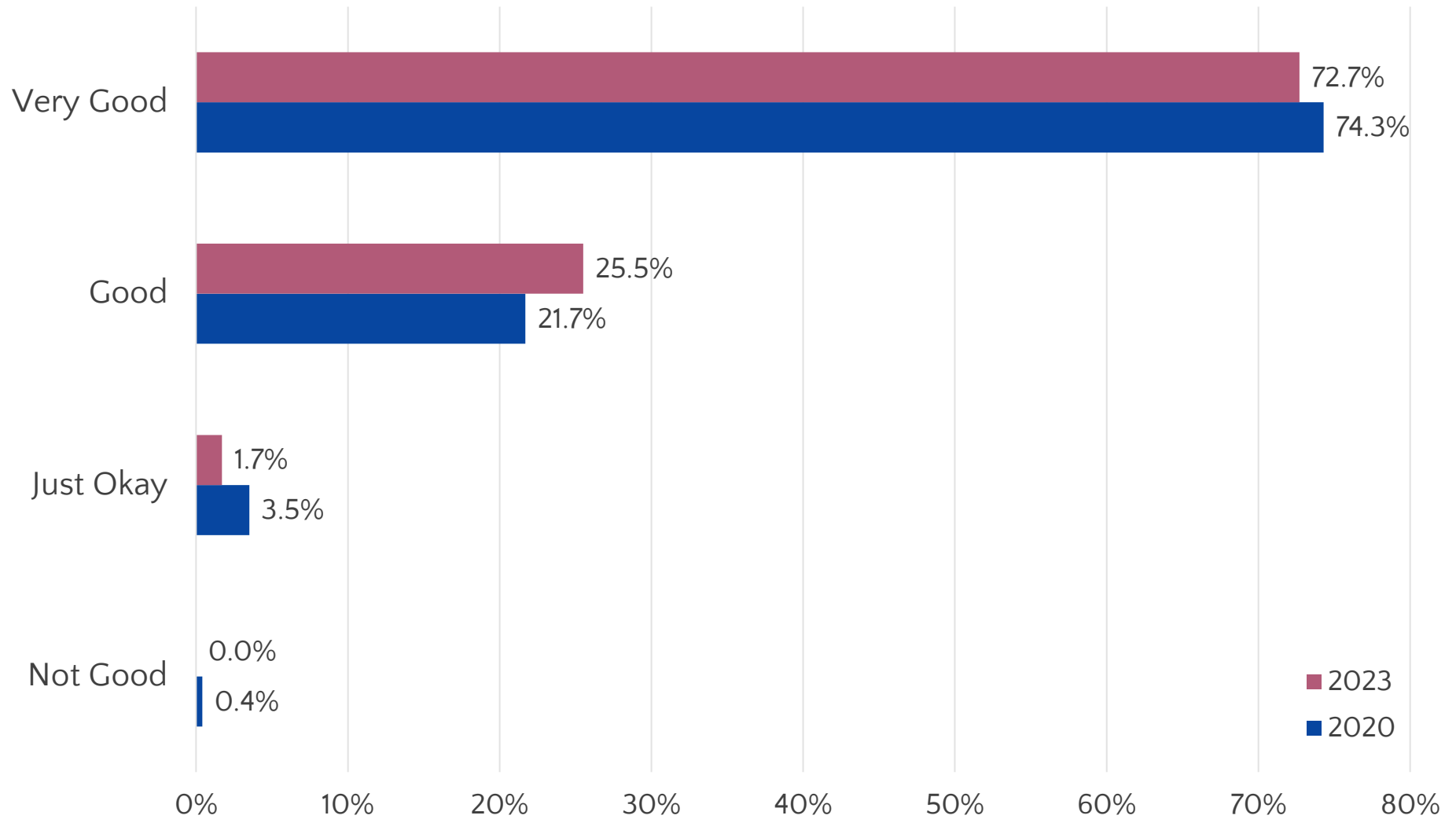


# Leadership: Senior/Solo Clergy Race and Ethnicity



\*Note: respondents could select more than one Race/Ethnicity

# Leadership: “Fit” Between Leader and Congregation

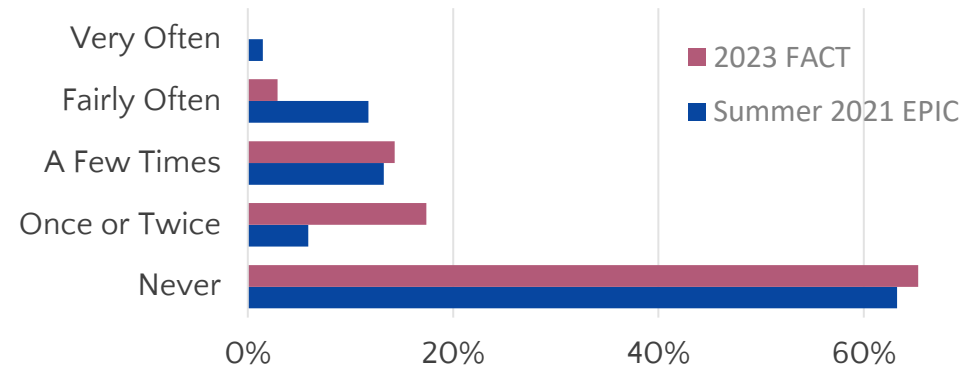


# Leadership: Health and Challenges

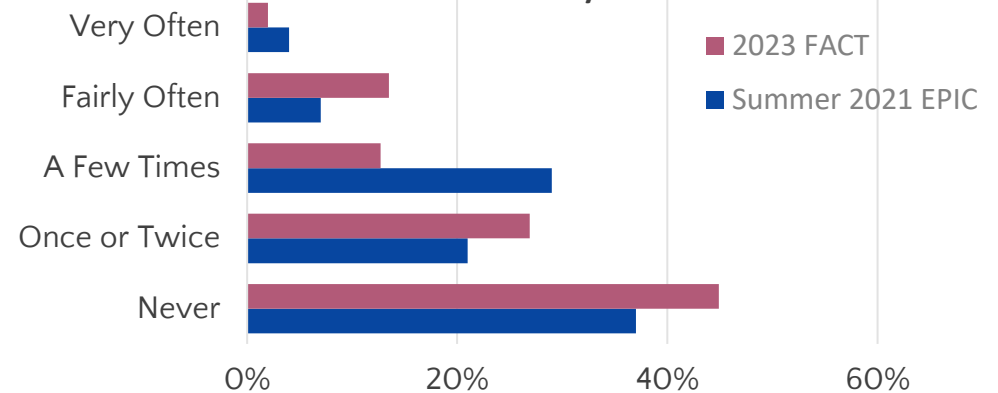
In general, How Would You Rate Your...

- Physical Health:
  - 7.3/10
- Mental Health:
  - 7.6/10
- Spiritual Health:
  - 7.7/10
- Relational Health (i.e., Your Relationships with Other People):
  - 7.9/10
- Financial Health:
  - 7.2/10

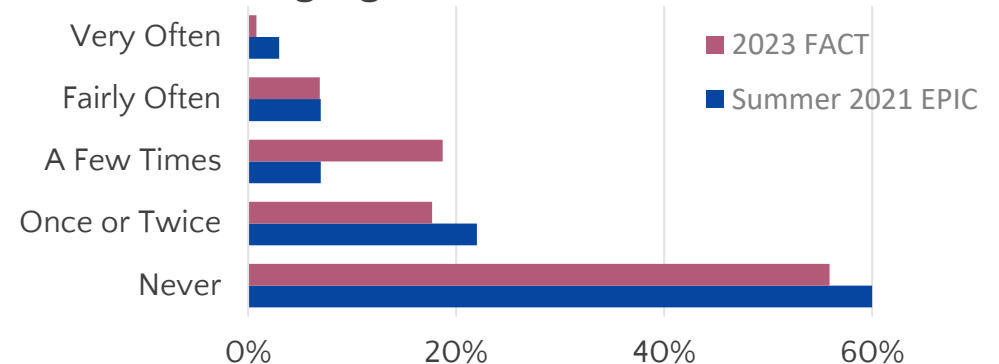
Since the start of 2020, how often have you:  
Doubted that you are called by God for ministry



Seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry



Seriously considered leaving this congregation for another one





# Church Activities

Attendance, Demographics, and  
Programming

# Activities: Worship

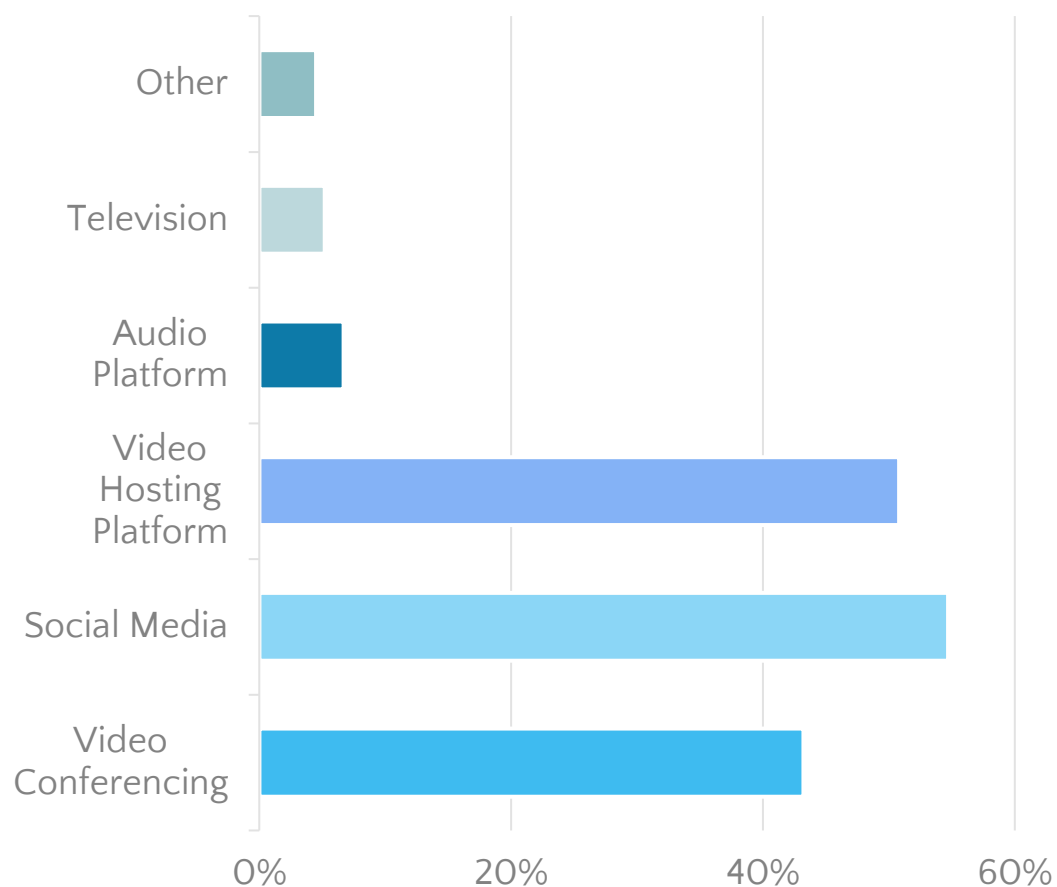
## Average In-Person Attendance

- 2023: 47.9
- 2020: 67.1
- 2018 (2023 Estimate): 65.5
- 2015 (2020 Estimate): 77.4

## Percent Offering Virtual Worship

- 2023: 85.8%
- 2020: 38.2% (live streaming)

## Platforms Used, 2023



# Activities: Participant Characteristics

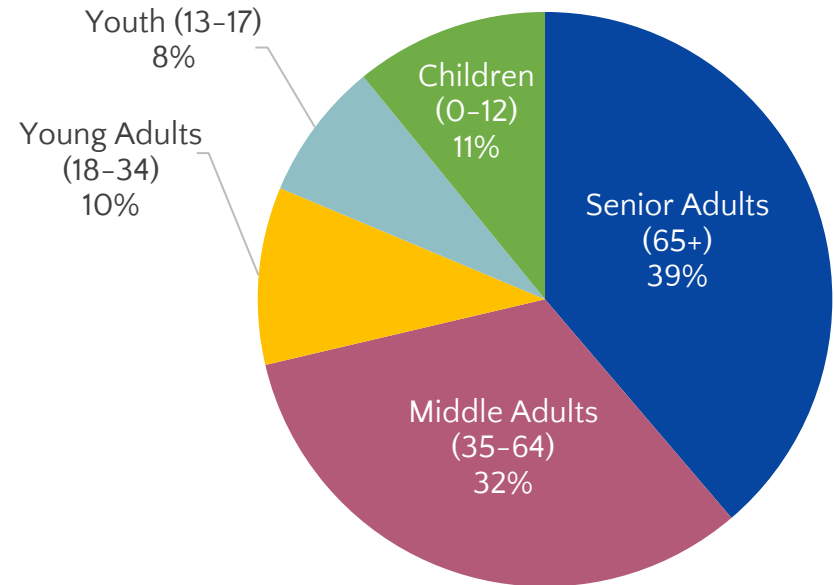
## 2020

- Number of Regular Participants: 98.2
- Percent Female: 62.3%
- Percent Volunteering Regularly at the Congregation: 53.5%
- Are New to the Congregation in Last Five Years: 16.7%

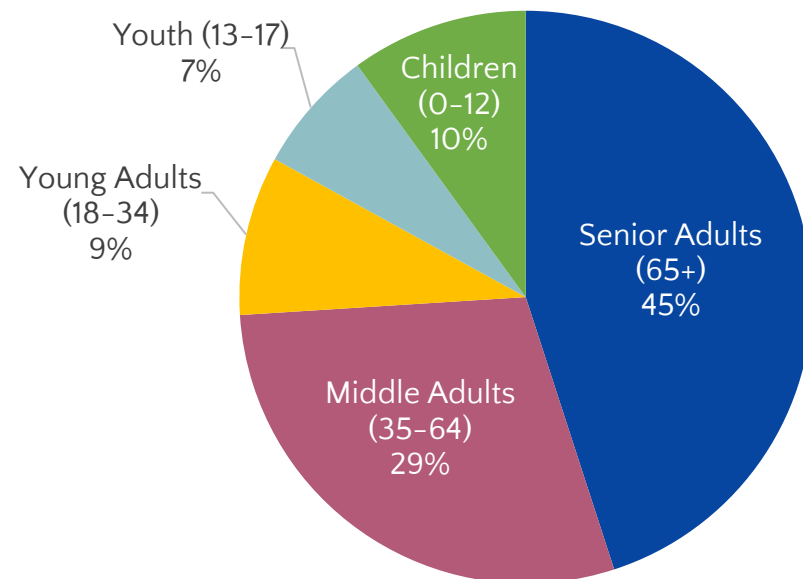
## 2023

- Number of Regular Participants: 68.0
- Percent Female: 62.7%
- Percent Volunteering Regularly at the Congregation: 45.0%
- Are New to the Congregation in Last Five Years: 11.5%

Average Regular Participants, 2020

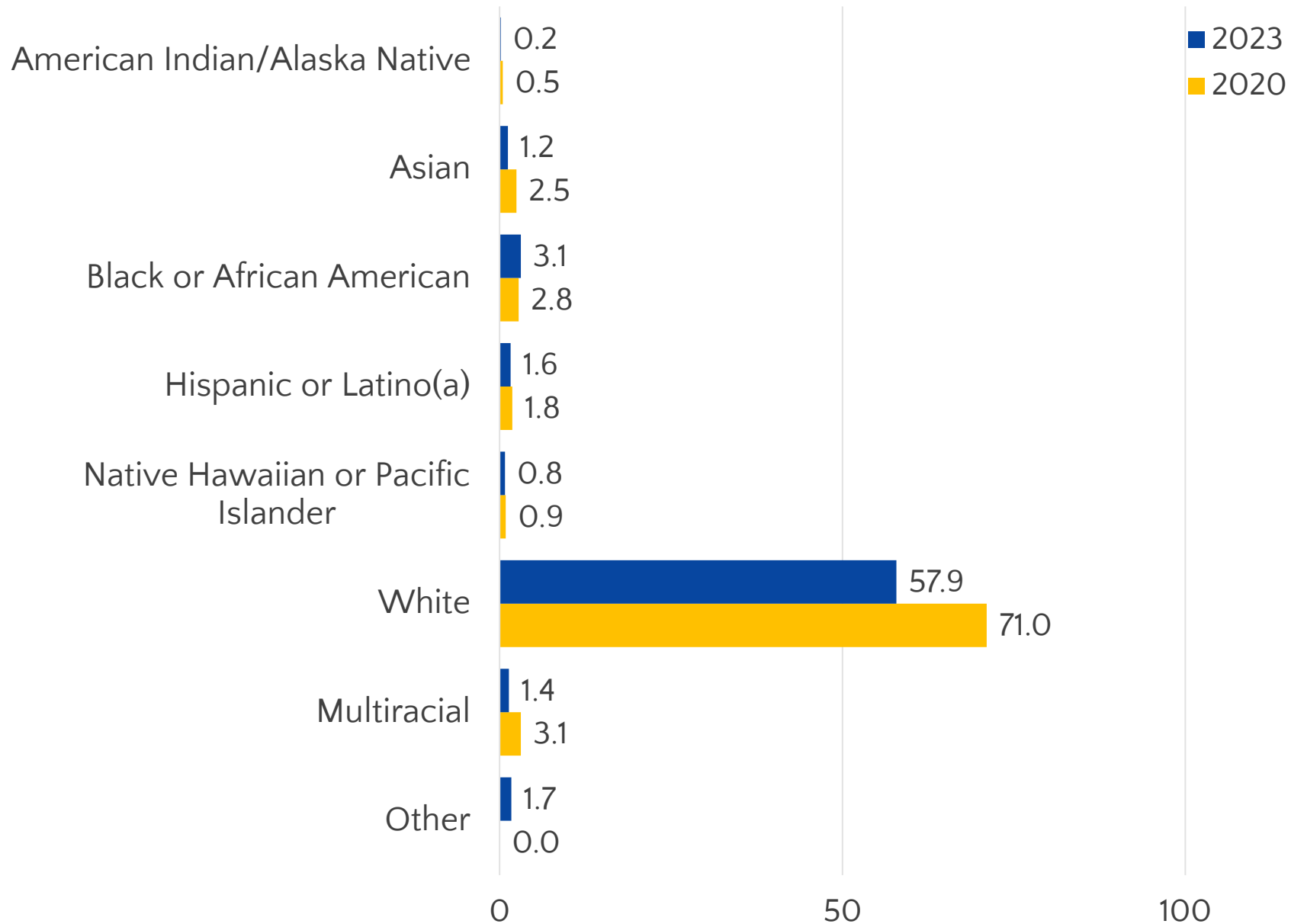


Average Regular Participants, 2023





# Mean Regular Participants: Race and Ethnicity



# Activities: Programs Offered

	2020		2023				
	No	Yes (a lot or a little)	No	Yes, In-Person	Yes, Online	Yes, Online and In-Person	Yes, Any
Prayer or Meditation Groups	36.6%	63.4%	47.5%	25.3%	14.0%	13.2%	52.5%
Religious Education for Children	24.7%	75.3%	32.6%	62.9%	1.5%	3.0%	67.4%
Religious Education for Adults	17.7%	82.3%	17.7%	49.2%	11.3%	21.8%	82.3%
Youth (13-17) activities or programs	52.7%	47.3%	51.9%	45.2%	0.9%	2.0%	48.1%
Young adult (18-34) activities or programs	74.5%	25.5%	78.2%	19.0%	1.8%	1.0%	21.8%
Senior (65+) activities or programs	48.5%	51.5%	49.0%	44.2%	2.3%	4.5%	51.0%

# Activities: Programs Offered

	2020		2023				
	No	Yes (a lot or a little)	No	Yes, In-Person	Yes, Online	Yes, Online and In-Person	Yes, Any
Social justice/advocacy groups	50.8%	49.2%	60.9%	24.4%	3.4%	11.2%	39.1%
Preschool and/or daycare center	82.8%	17.2%	77.5%	21.5%	1.0%	0.0%	22.5%
Fellowship/community -building events	N/A	N/A	7.7%	78.7%	2.2%	11.4%	92.3%
School (Primary or secondary)	N/A	N/A	97.1%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Elementary School	92.3%	7.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School	94.8%	5.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community service activities	9.3%	90.7%	25.5%	69.4%	2.9%	2.2%	74.5%
Prison ministry	N/A	N/A	95.1%	4.4%	0.5%	0.0%	4.9%



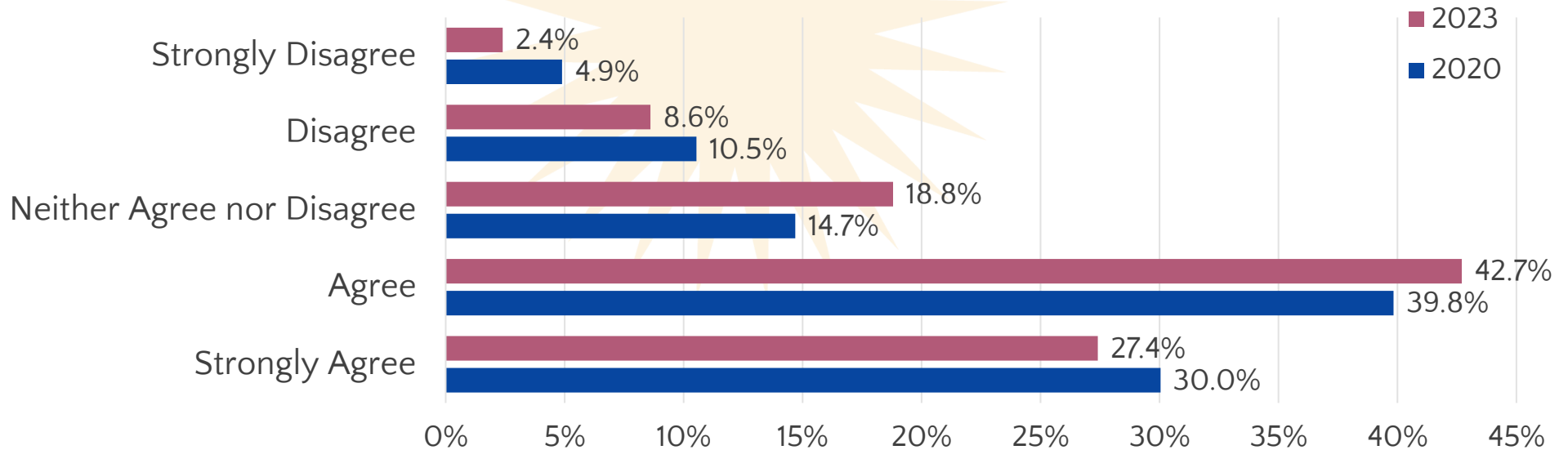
# Mission and Identity

Purpose, Vitality, and Community  
Involvement

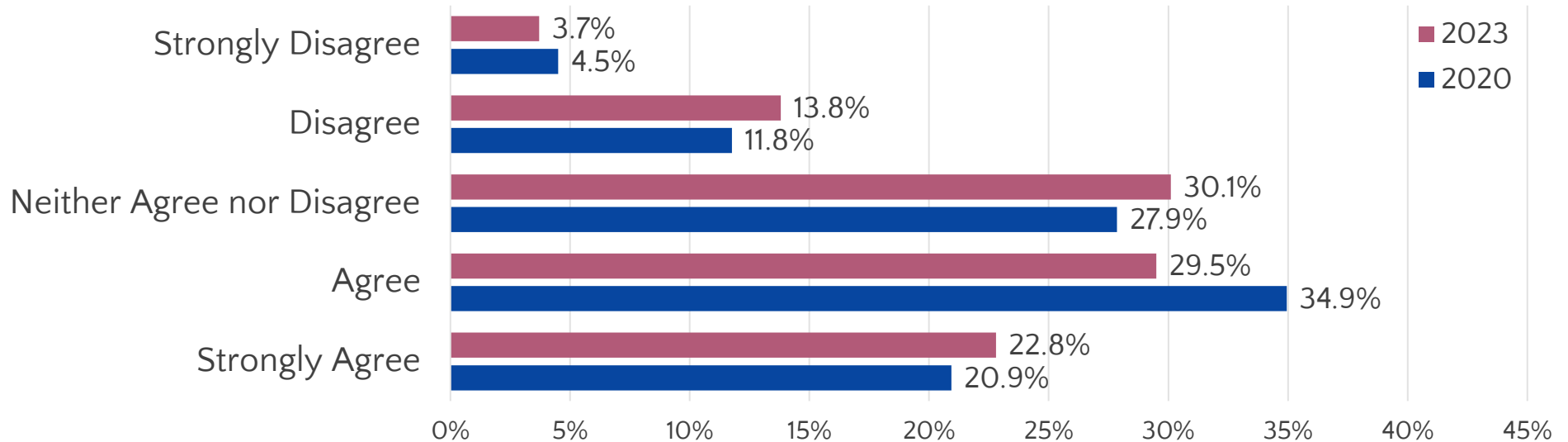
# Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

## Has a Clear Mission and Purpose



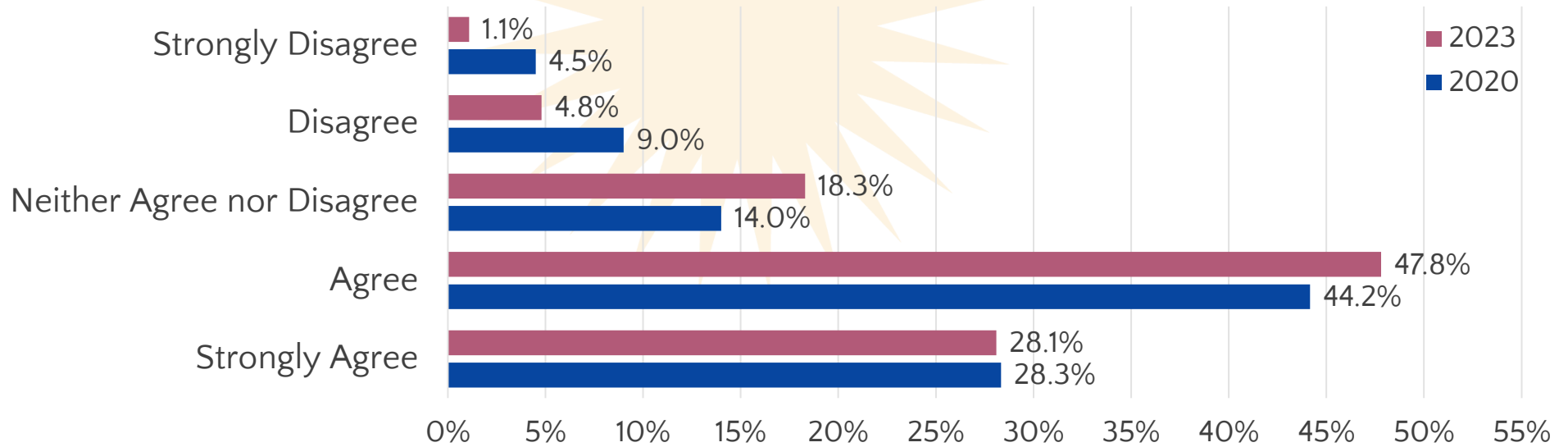
## Is Striving to be Diverse



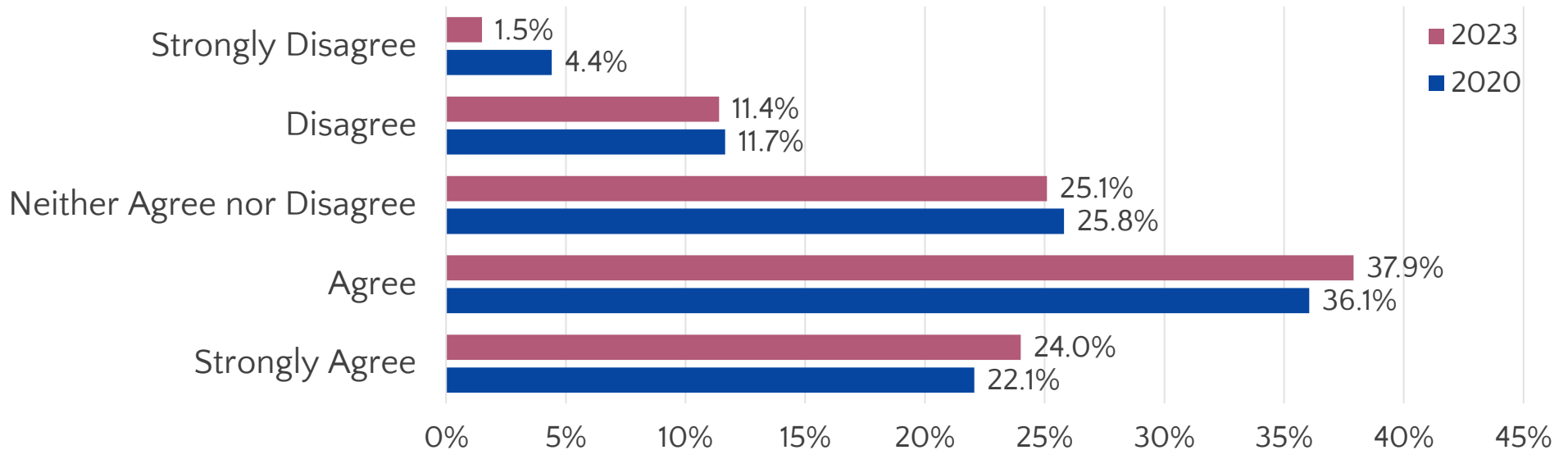
# Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

Is Good at Incorporating New People into the Congregation



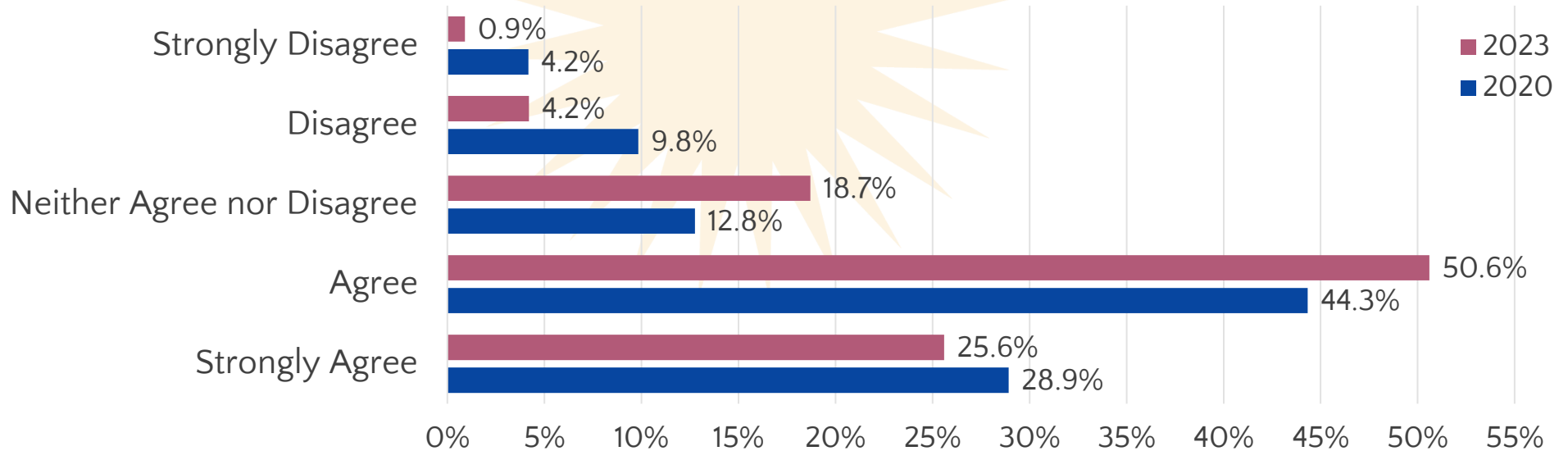
Is Actively Looking for New Members



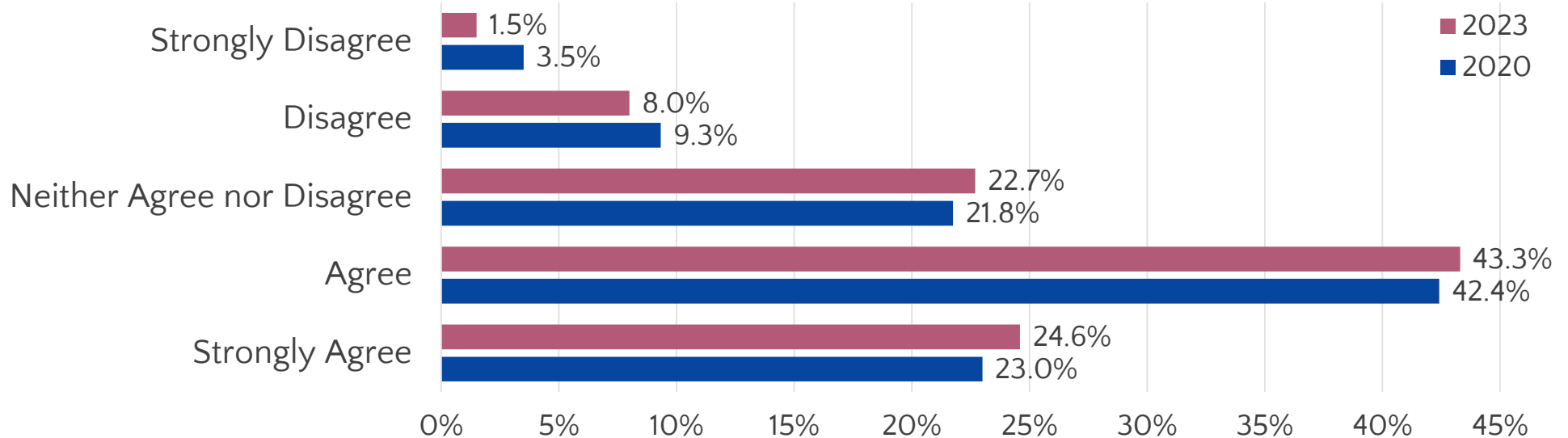
# Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

## Is Spiritually Vital and Alive



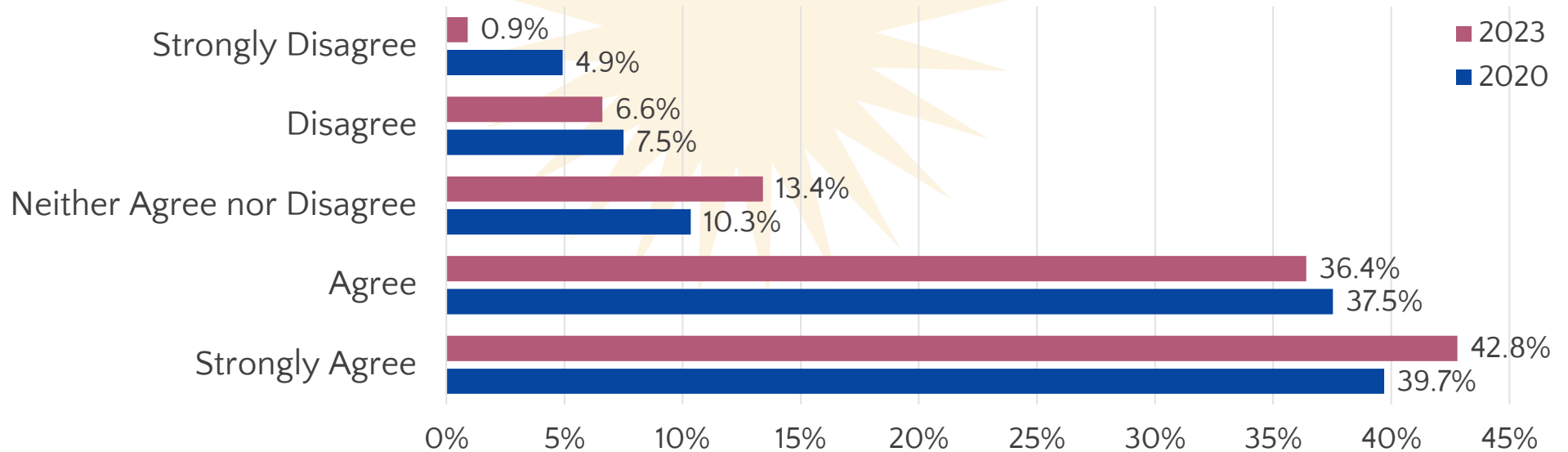
## Is Willing to Change to Meet New Challenges



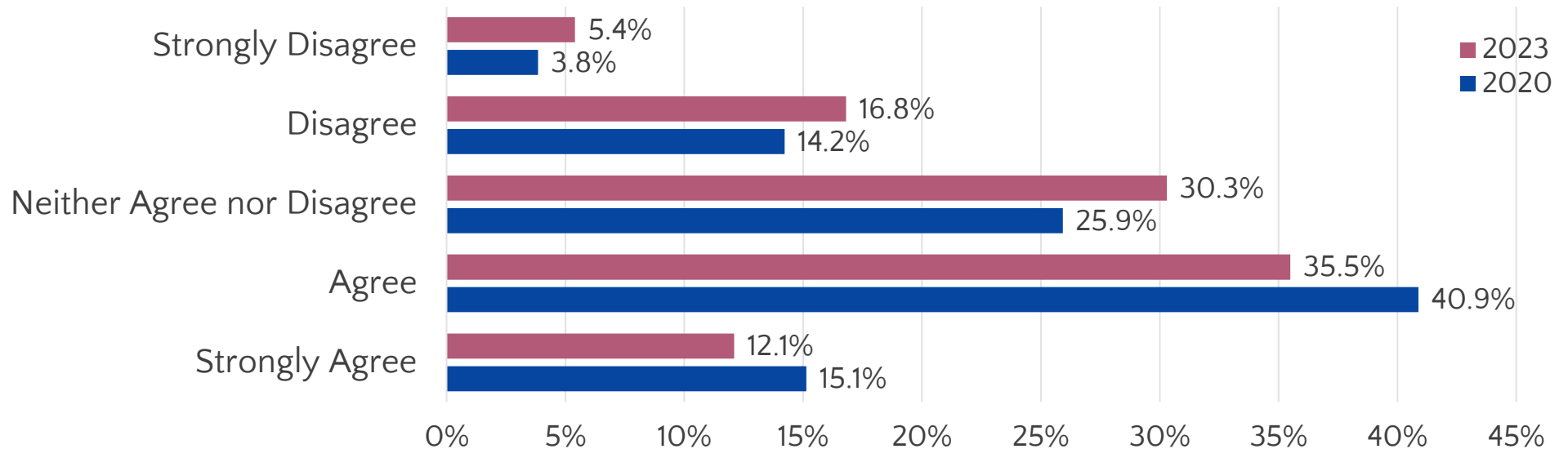
# Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

## Is Actively Involved in Our Local Community



## Participates Actively in the Wider ICC







# Technology

Uses, Platforms, and Trends

# Technology: Tools and Platforms

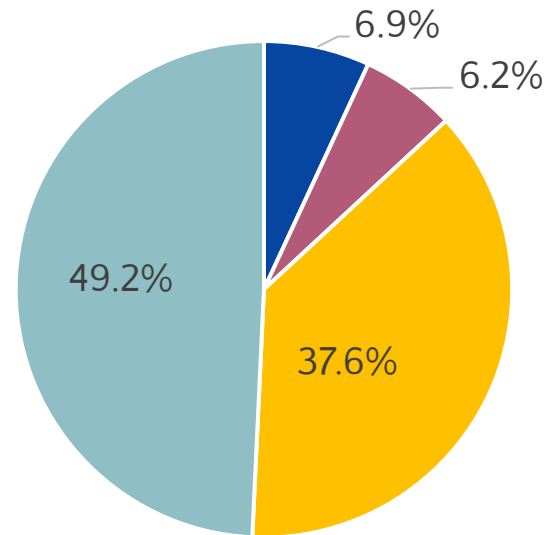
## Frequency of Use:

- A few times a year
- Approximately monthly
- Approximately weekly
- Do not use

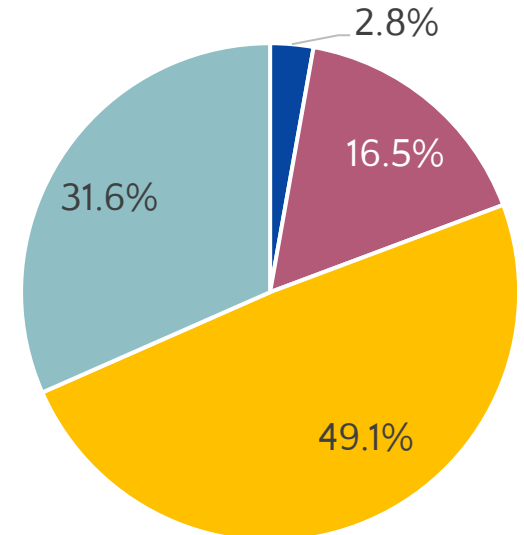
## Percent New Since the Pandemic:

- Online Archiving: 14.9%
- Online Giving: 12.0%
- Email: 4.1%
- E-Newsletters: 6.5%

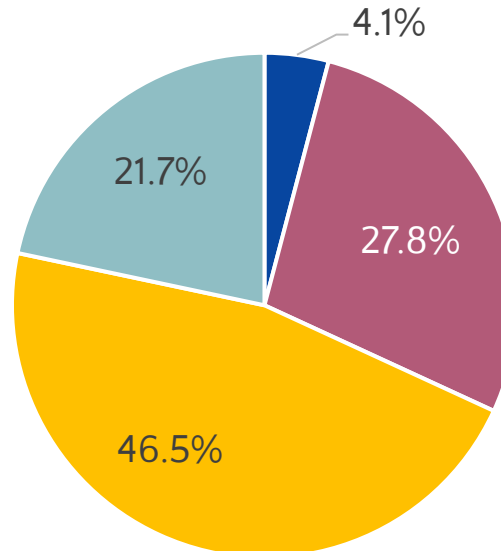
### Online Archiving



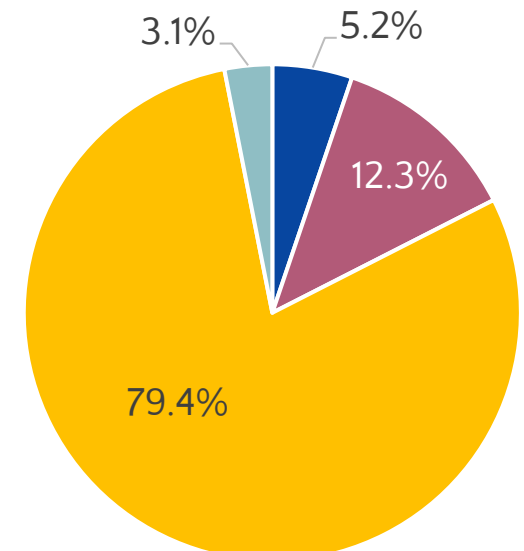
### Online Giving



### E-Newsletter



### Email



# Technology: Tools and Platforms

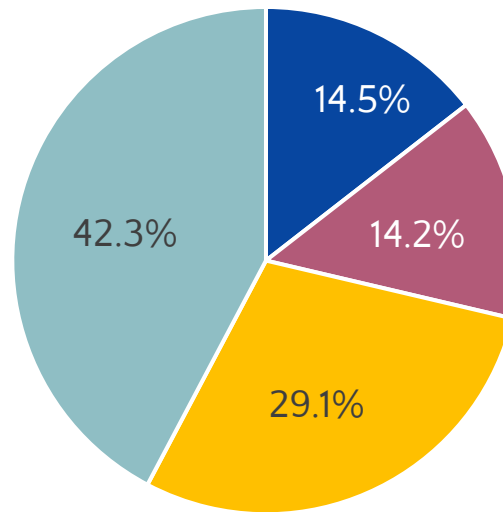
## Frequency of Use:

- A few times a year
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- Approximately weekly
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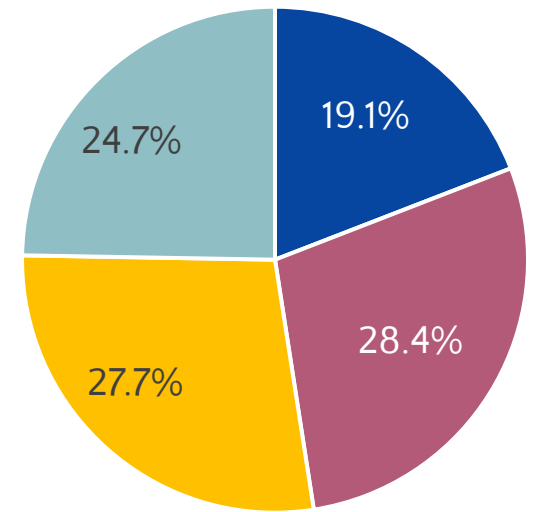
## Percent New Since the Pandemic:

- Online Meetings, Small Groups: 29.4%
- Online Meetings, Administrative: 36.7%
- Social Media, Event Planning: 8.9%
- Social Media, Connection and Care: 10.5%

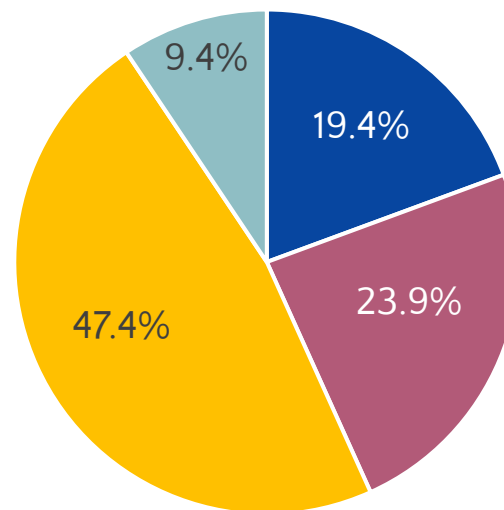
### Online Meetings, Small Groups



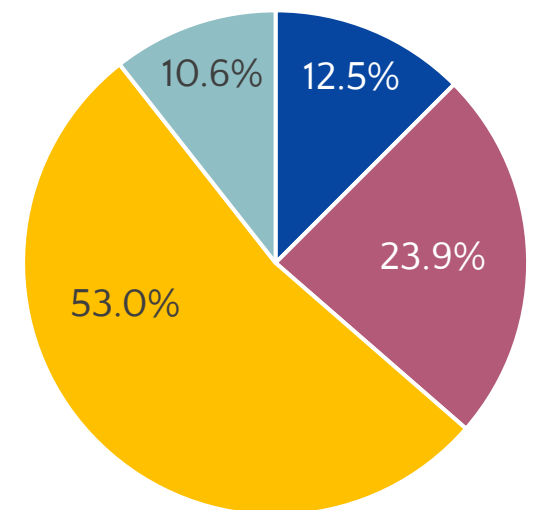
### Online Meetings, Administrative



### Social Media, Event Planning/Ads



### Social Media, Connection and Care



# Technology: Tools and Platforms

Average Percentage of Regular Monthly Giving Received Through Online Giving: 24.8%

Approximate Percentage of Participants Donating Online: 22.7%

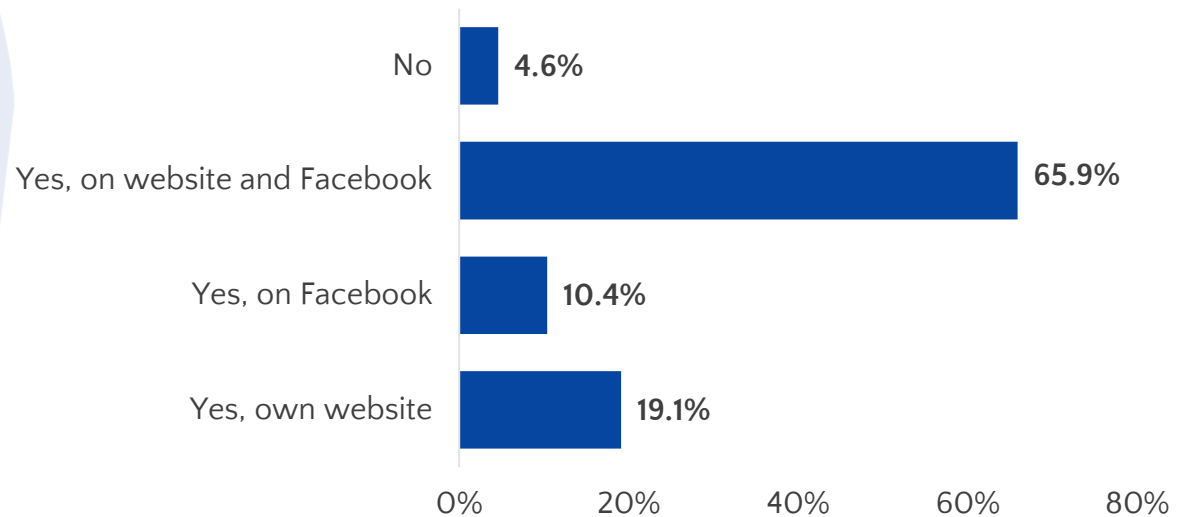
2020

- Percent with Wi-Fi Access: 79.7%
- Percent having Website: 82.0%

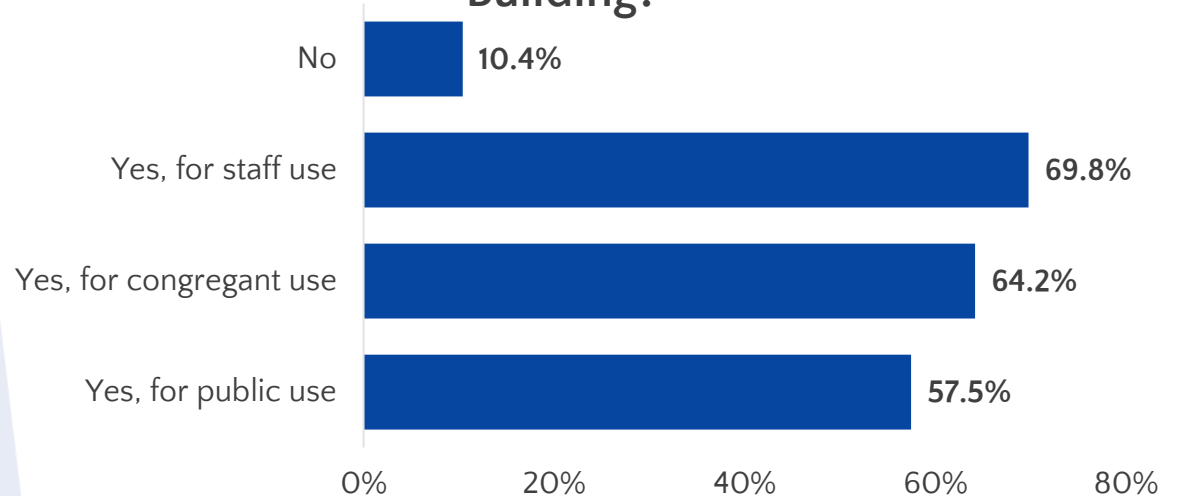
2023

- Percent with Wi-Fi Access: 89.6%
- Percent having Website: 85.0%

## 2023: Does Your Congregation Have a Web Presence?



## 2023: Do You Have Wi-Fi Access In Your Building?





# Finances

Expenditures, Revenues, and Sense of  
Financial Health

# Finances: Revenues and Expenditures

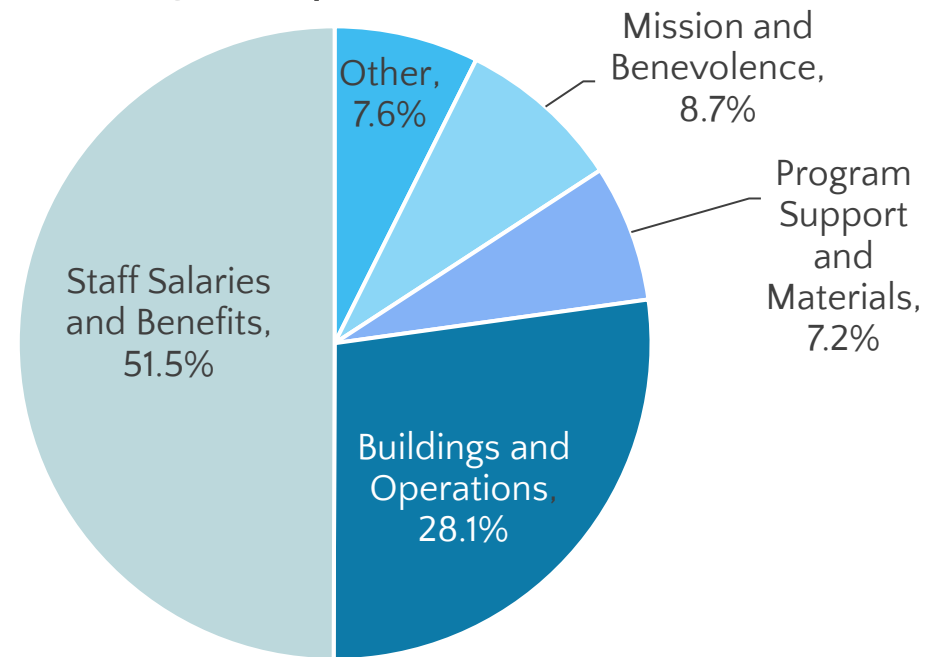
## Average Total Revenues:

- 2020: \$323,442.91
- 2023: \$210,816.12

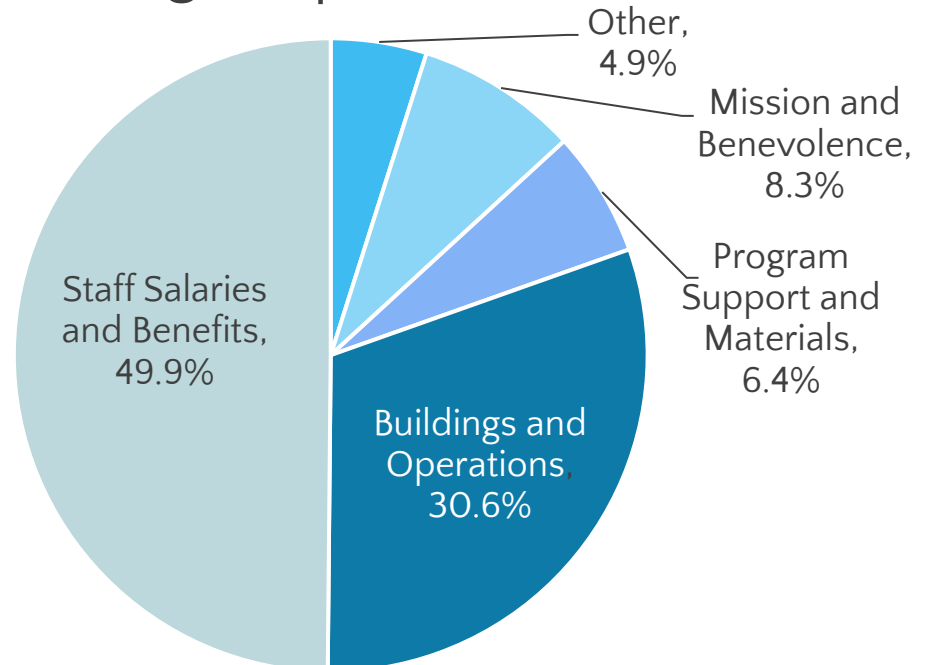
## Average Total Expenditures:

- 2020: \$205,883.69
- 2023: \$241,006.46

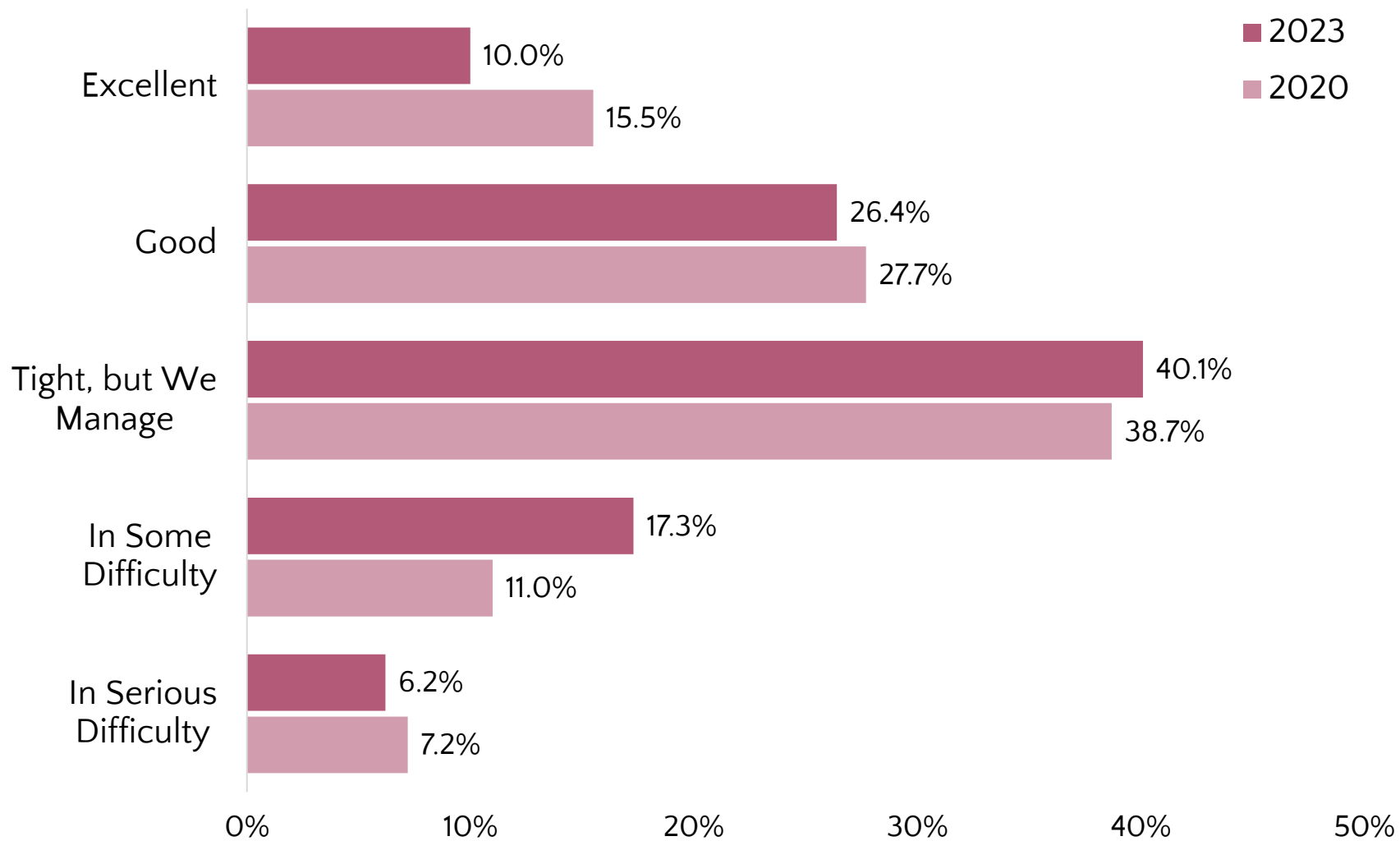
## Average Expenditures 2020



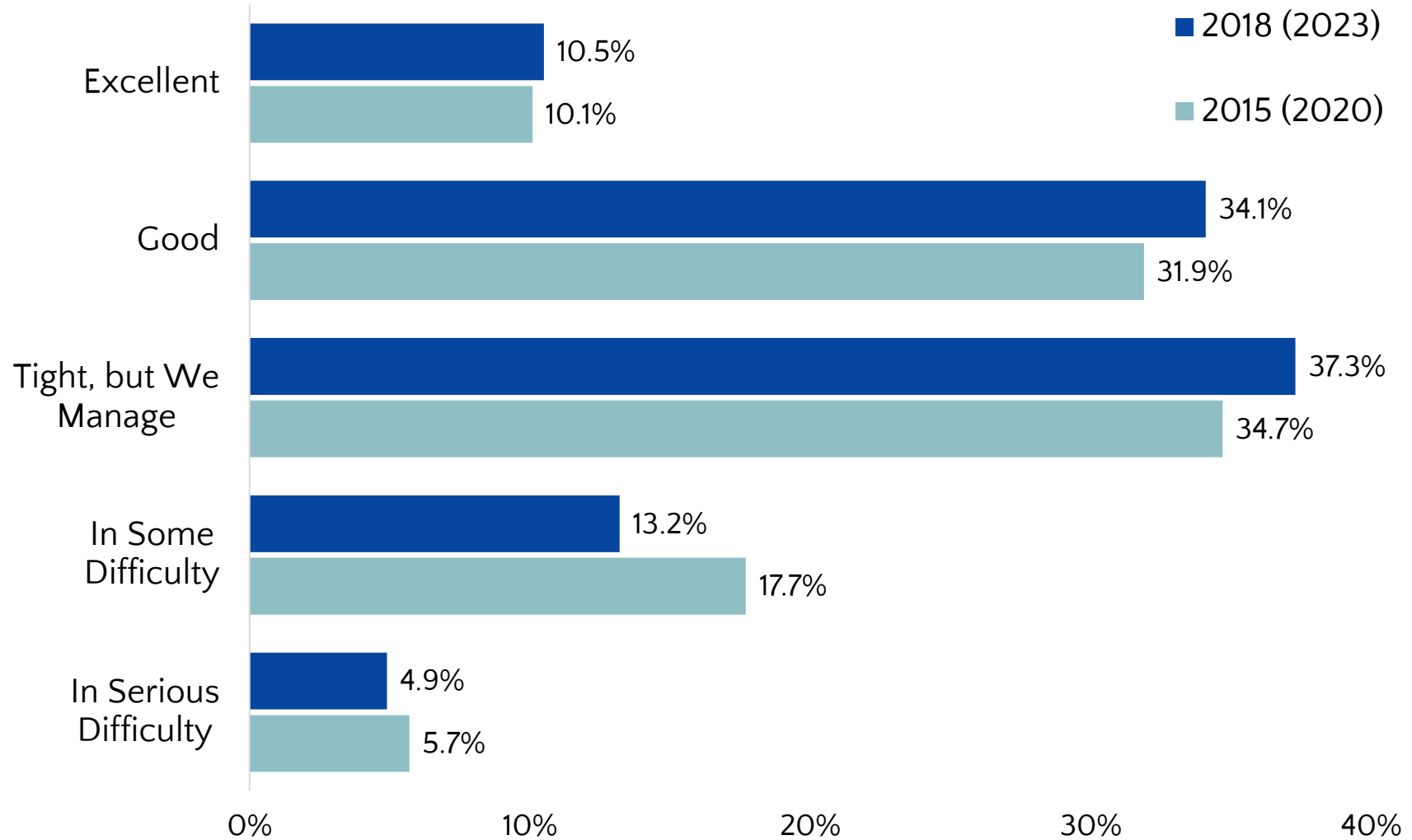
## Average Expenditures 2023



## How Would You Describe Your Congregation's Financial Health Today?



## How Would You Describe Your Congregation's Financial Health Five Years Ago?







# Pandemic Experiences

Challenges, Successes, and Future  
Outlook

# Pandemic Experiences: Concerns and Successes

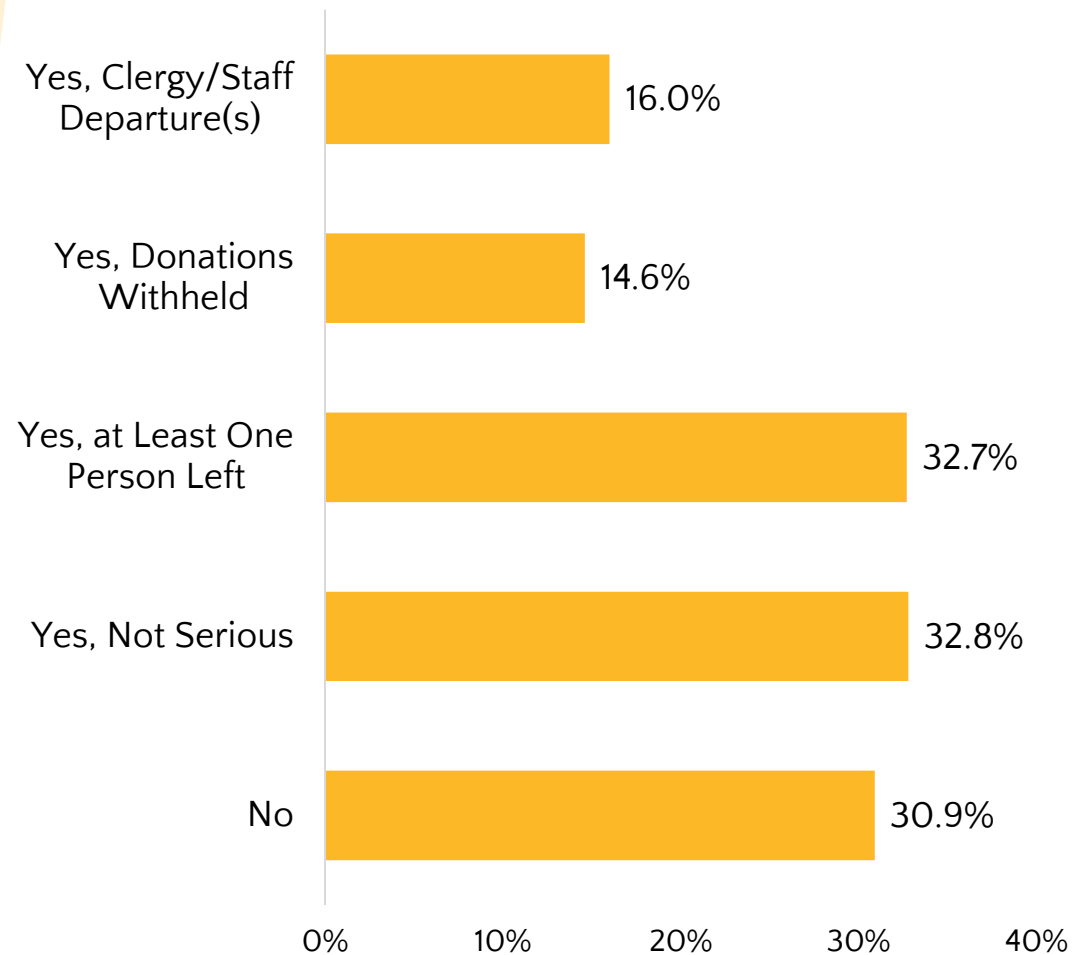
## Most Frequently Named Concerns for Future

- 2020:
  - Membership/Attendance Levels
  - Finances
  - Aging Membership
- 2023:
  - Membership/Attendance Levels
  - Finances
  - Aging Membership

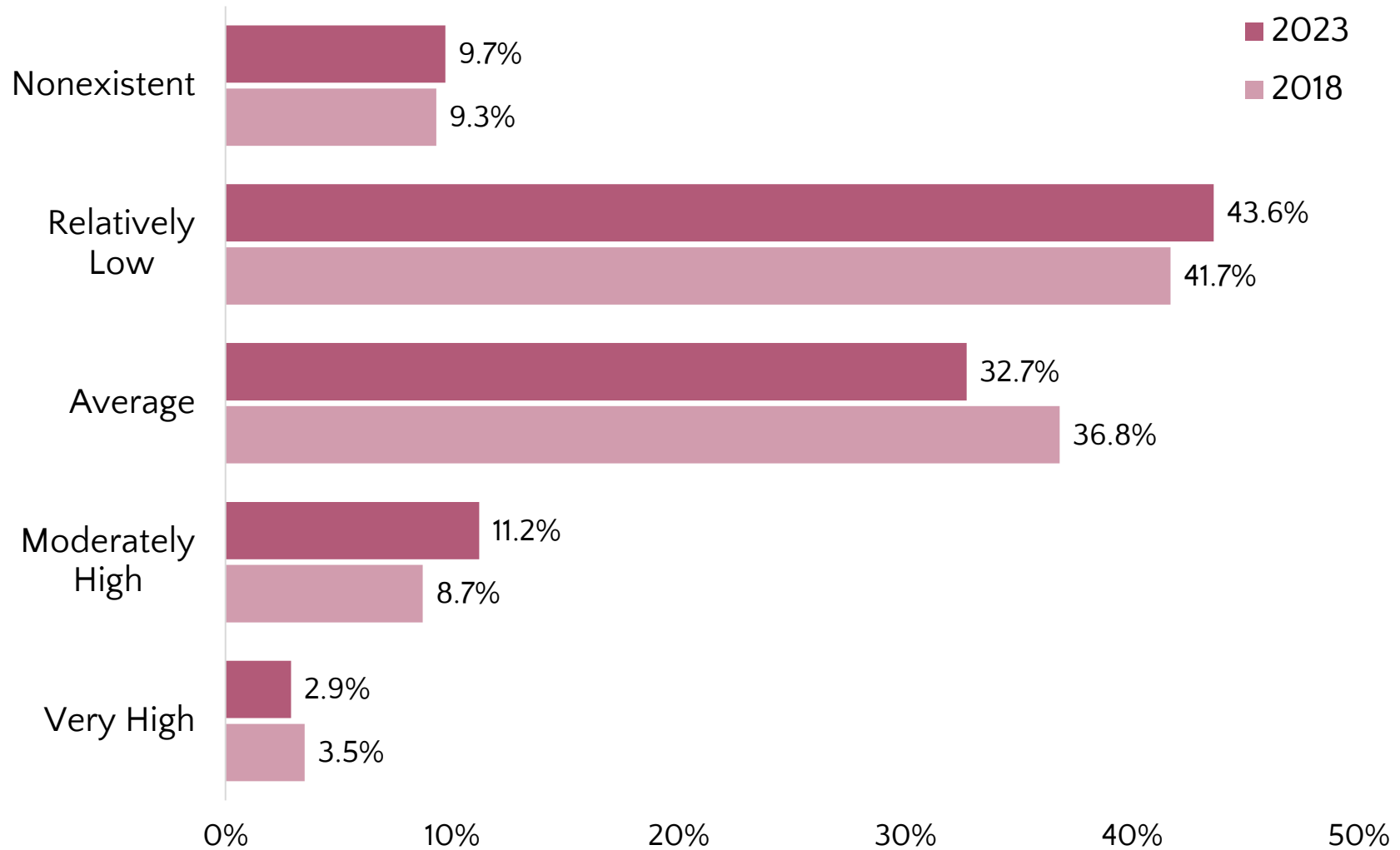
## Most Frequent Points of Success

- 2020:
  - Openness, Welcoming Attitude
  - Fellowship, Mutual Support
  - Activity in and Impact in Community
- 2023:
  - Fellowship, Mutual Support
  - Openness, Welcoming Attitude
  - Activity in and Impact on Community

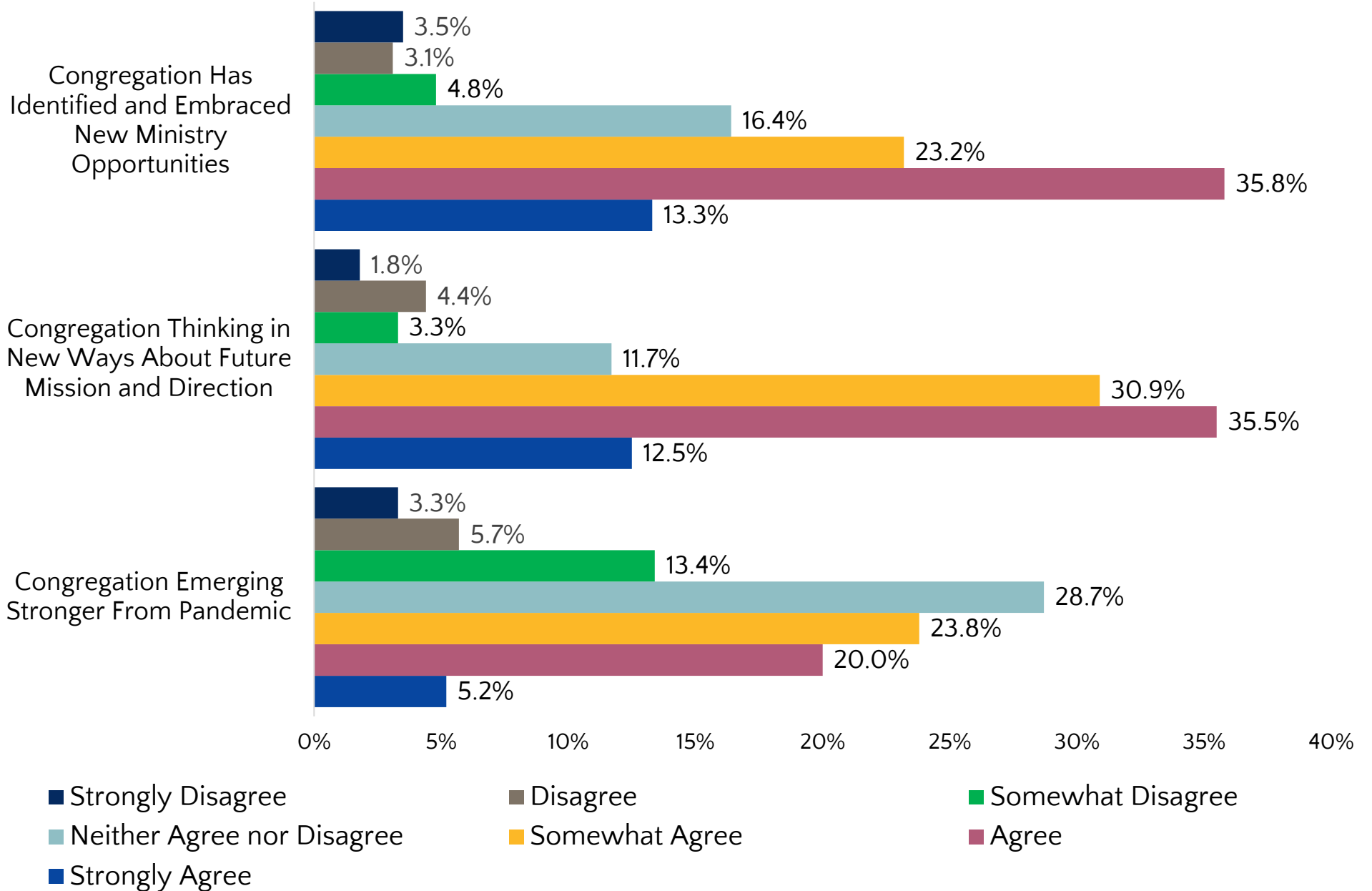
## Since the Start of 2020, has Your Congregation Experienced any Disagreements?



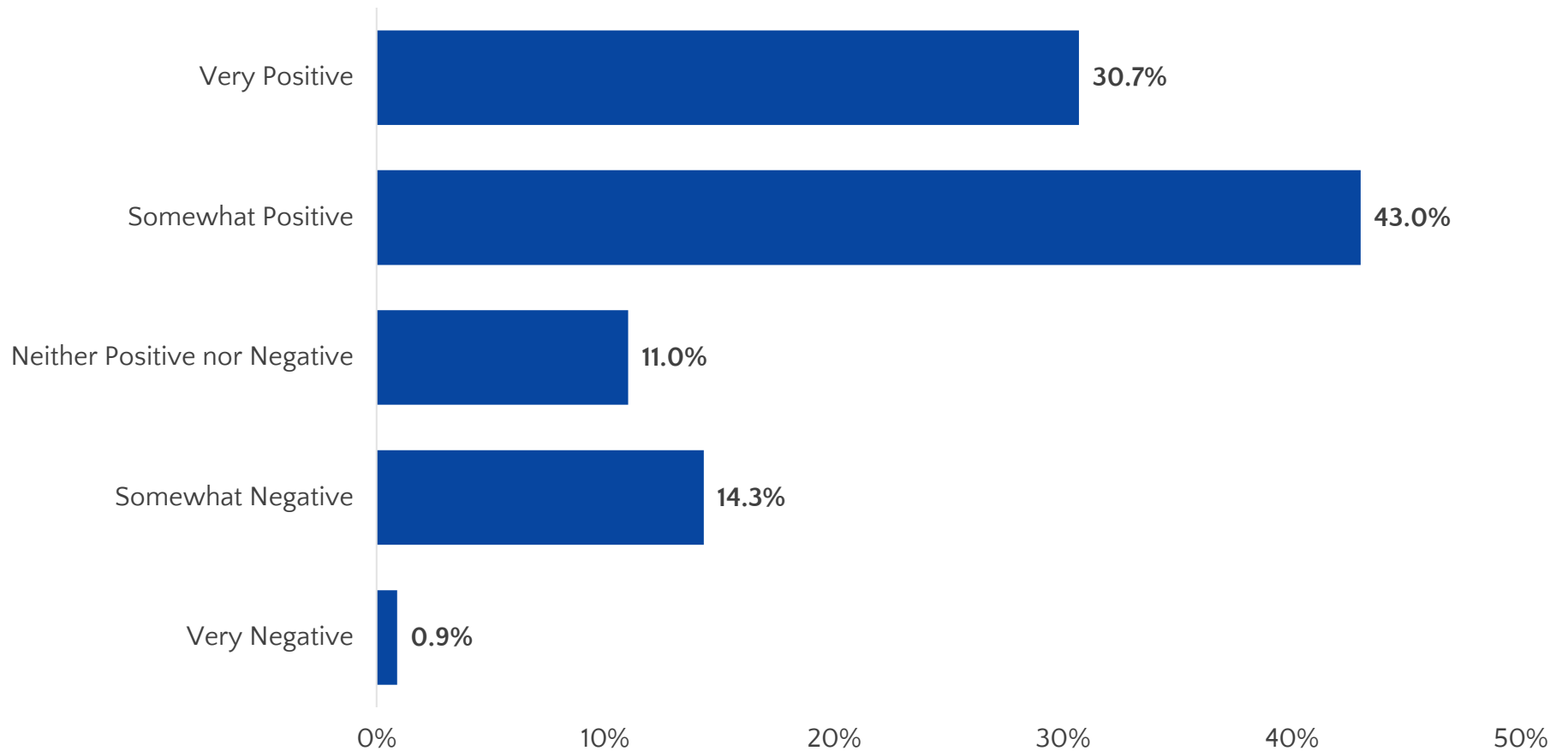
## How Would You Rate the Level of Tension in Your Congregation Surrounding Social and Political Issues (Excluding COVID-19) Now Compared to 2018?



## Changes Since Pandemic



# What is Your Current Outlook on this Congregation's Future?



# Additional Information and Resources

Faith Communities Today

- [Partners](#)
- [News](#)
- [2020 Report](#)

[Hartford Institute for Religion Research](#)

[The Association of Religion Data Archives](#) (The ARDA)