



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



A STATISTICAL PROFILE

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



QUICK SUMMARY OF UCC STATISTICS

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

CONGREGATIONS: 4,603
MEMBERS: 712,296
AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP: 156*
MEDIAN MEMBERSHIP: 99
AVERAGE IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 52
MEDIAN IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 37
AVERAGE CONFIRMATIONS: 1.2
AVERAGE CONFESSIONS: 1.3
AVERAGE TRANSFERS IN: 1.3
AVERAGE REAFFIRMATIONS: 1.3
AVERAGE DEATHS: 3.9
AVERAGE TRANSFERS OUT: 1.3
AVERAGE CHILD BAPTISMS: 1.3
AVERAGE ADULT BAPTISMS: 0.2
OPEN AND AFFIRMING: 36.2%
ACCESSIBLE: 86.8%
WEB PRESENCE: 71.2%

RACE/ETHNICITY BY CONGREGATION

WHITE/EURO-AMERICAN: 83.1%
AFRICAN AMERICAN: 4.8%
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER: 4.0%
HISPANIC/LATINO(A): 0.3%
NATIVE AMERICAN: 0.6%
BIRACIAL/MULTIRACIAL: 6.7%
OTHER: 0.5%

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

AVERAGE BASIC SUPPORT: \$3,941
AVERAGE OTHER UCC GIVING: \$2,368
AVERAGE TOTAL OCWM: \$6,309
AVERAGE ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: \$371
AVERAGE NEIGHBORS IN NEED: \$189
AVERAGE CHRISTMAS FUND: \$204
AVERAGE STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH: \$98
5 FOR 5 CHURCHES: 24.0%
AVERAGE OTHER GIFTS: \$11,533
AVERAGE OPERATING EXPENSES: \$185,053
AVERAGE TOTAL INCOME: \$246,676

**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.*

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. Starting in 2020, 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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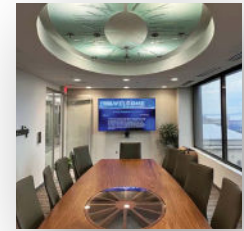
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INTRODUCTION



Are you curious about how your church compares to others within the United Church of Christ (UCC)? Do you enjoy charts and research graphics? Have you wondered about the activities of the UCC's various partners and ministries? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this Statistical Profile is the right place to be!

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.

This resource provides a numeric snapshot of the people, churches, and communities that are part of the UCC. In it you'll encounter fascinating trends and patterns that give a fuller picture of the evolving vibrancy of the various contexts of the UCC.

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.

Information for the profile primarily comes from data reported through the UCC Data Hub annually to produce the *UCC Yearbook & Directory*. In addition, there are 19 Special Reports highlighting various areas of ministry within the UCC.

We hope you enjoy this edition!

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

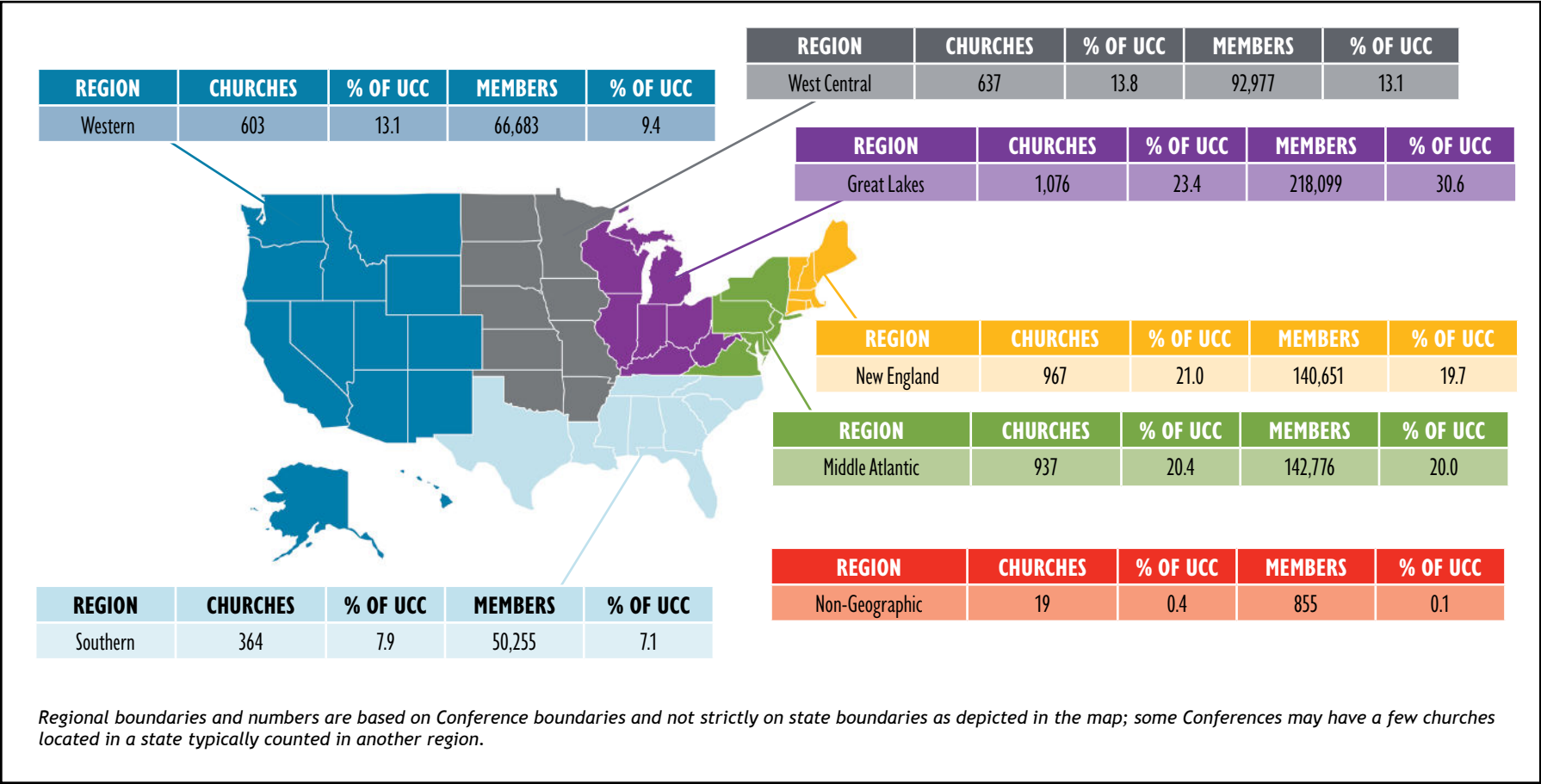
CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS

At the end of 2022, there were 4,603 congregations in the United Church of Christ with a total of 712,296 members. The UCC’s congregations represent about 1.3% of total U.S. congregations* while the membership of the UCC represents slightly less than one half of one percent (0.44%) of total U.S. religious adherents* and about 0.21% of the U.S. population.** UCC membership is concentrated in the Great Lakes, Middle Atlantic, and New England regions of the country.

*2020 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	11.9 (549)
Massachusetts	7.1 (325)
Ohio	6.9 (318)
Illinois	6.3 (291)
New York	5.1 (235)

TOP FIVE STATES: UCC MEMBERSHIP

STATE	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER)
Pennsylvania	13.6 (97,008)
Illinois	10.1 (72,178)
Ohio	9.9 (70,743)
Massachusetts	7.3 (52,041)
Connecticut	7.0 (49,749)

A detailed list of congregations and membership statistics by Conference can be found in the 2023 UCC Yearbook & Directory, p. 6.

In examining the distribution of congregations by state, 11.9% 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 (37.3%) 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 (48.0%) reside in the top five states by membership. Membership has become slightly more concentrated in these top five states over the past three 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 7.0% 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 have the last few pandemic-informed years impacted 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?

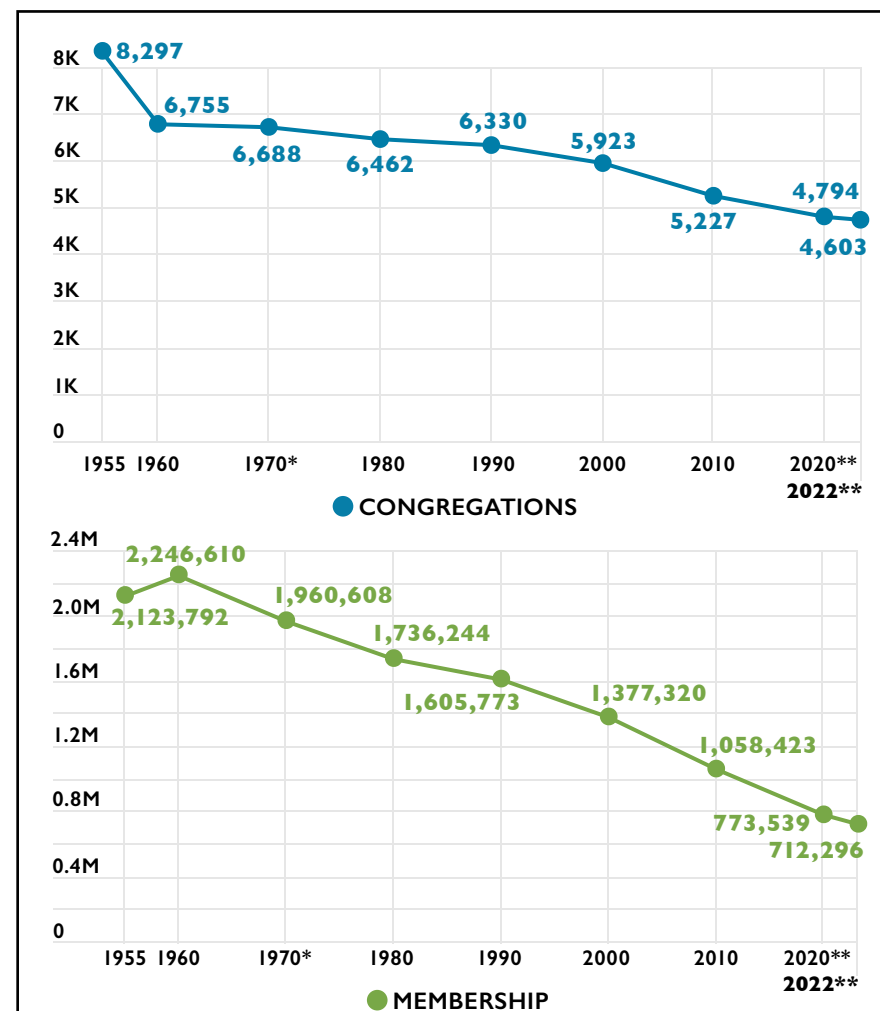
GROWTH AND DECLINE

Similar to other Protestant denominations, the UCC has experienced a decline in the numbers of congregations and members in recent decades. From 2012 to 2022 alone, the UCC encountered a net loss of 551 congregations and 286,610 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 2022, 128 congregations were removed from denominational records. This was a 50.6% increase from 2021, when 85 congregations were removed from denominational records; some of this increase over 2022 is related to a new policy from the UCC's Board of Directors that removes churches from records after two years of being marked inactive unless the Conference requests an extension or otherwise updates an inactive designation. Since this was the first year the policy was enacted, the number of inactive churches removed is not expected to be as high in subsequent years; future years of data collection will demonstrate whether removals return to previous levels: 72 in 2020, 43 in 2019, 85 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). Resulting from the higher number of churches removed in 2022, the loss rate was higher than previous years—2.45 congregations removed from denominational records per week on average. While this rate was higher than in 2021 (1.63 congregations per week), the rate remains below that of 2005-2007.

Over the past year, 6 congregations have been added to denominational records (this includes churches that received standing, affiliated, or merged with another congregation), which is a decrease over the prior year, when 15 congregations were added. In total, 57 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 month.

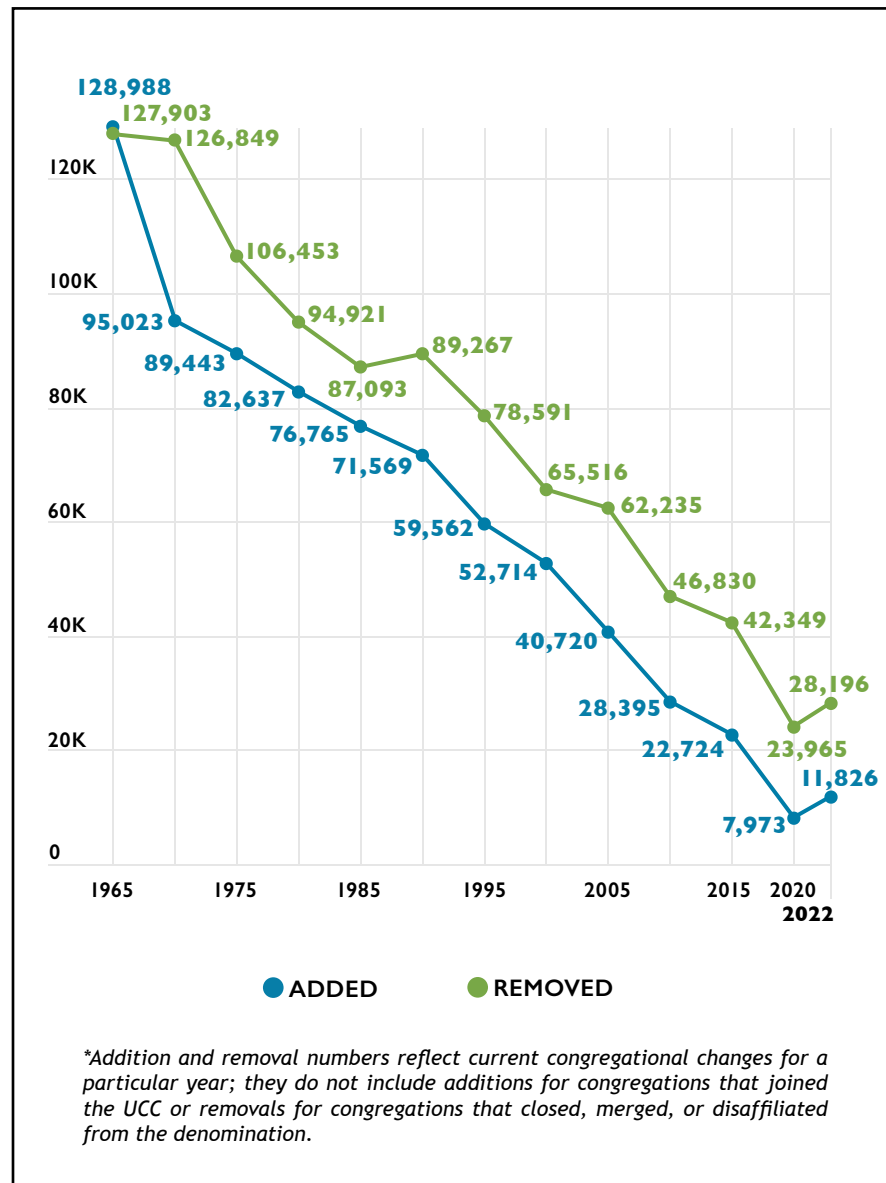
UCC CONGREGATION AND MEMBERSHIP CHANGES BY DECADE (1955–2022)*



*There was a significant decrease in congregations between 1955 and 1965 that was due largely to the decisions of 1,000 Congregational Christian Churches not to unite with the United Church of Christ. During this same period, however, UCC congregations experienced an increase in membership which is not reflected in this table. A detailed statistical summary by year can be found in the 2023 UCC Yearbook & Directory, pp. 10-11.

**Data for 2020 and 2022 was likely impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

MEMBERSHIP ADDITIONS AND REMOVALS OVER TIME (1965–2022)*



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 2022, there was a net removal of 16,370, which is similar to last year (16,454) 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. Smaller numbers of members were added in 2020 (7,973) and 2021 (8,421) compared to other years—likely an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic—but this trend reversed in 2022 with 11,826 members added, possibly a reflection of new ways of attracting and including members through virtual worship.

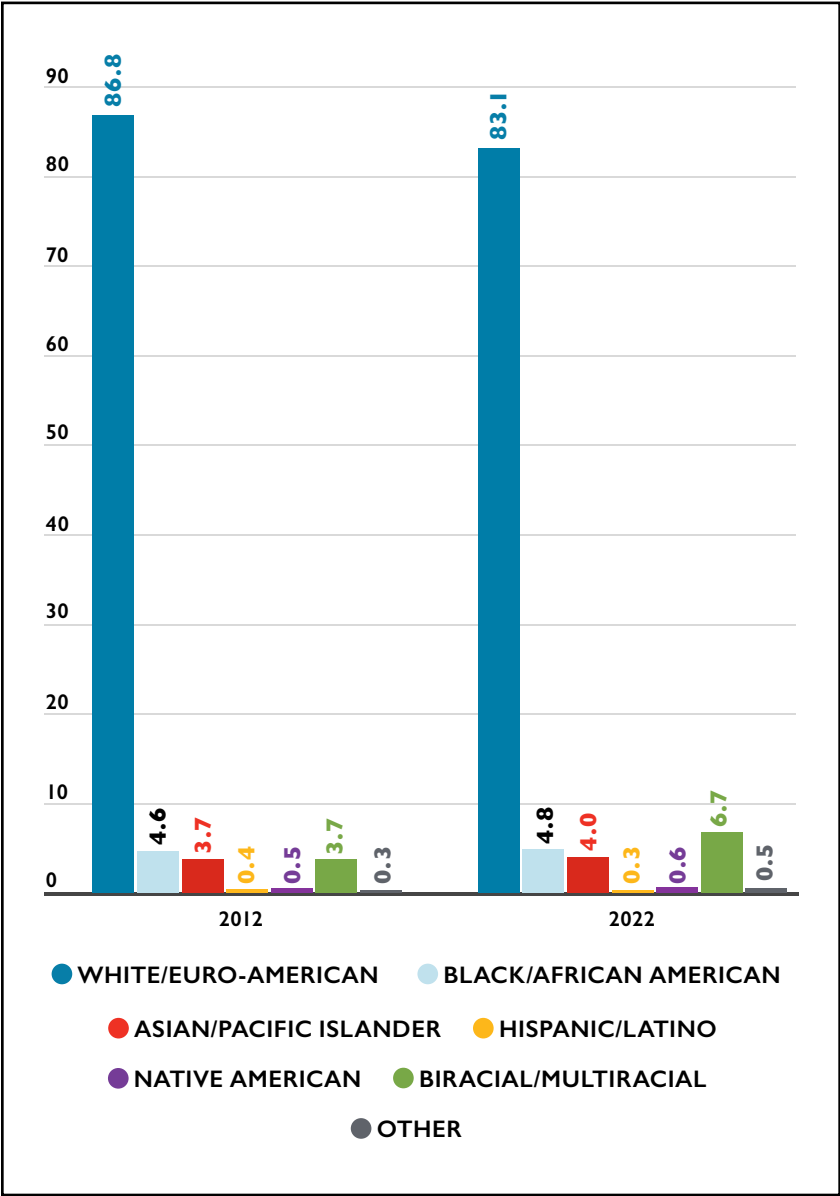
REFLECTIONS

How have your church's membership and worship attendance changed over the last decade? In what ways have the last three 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?

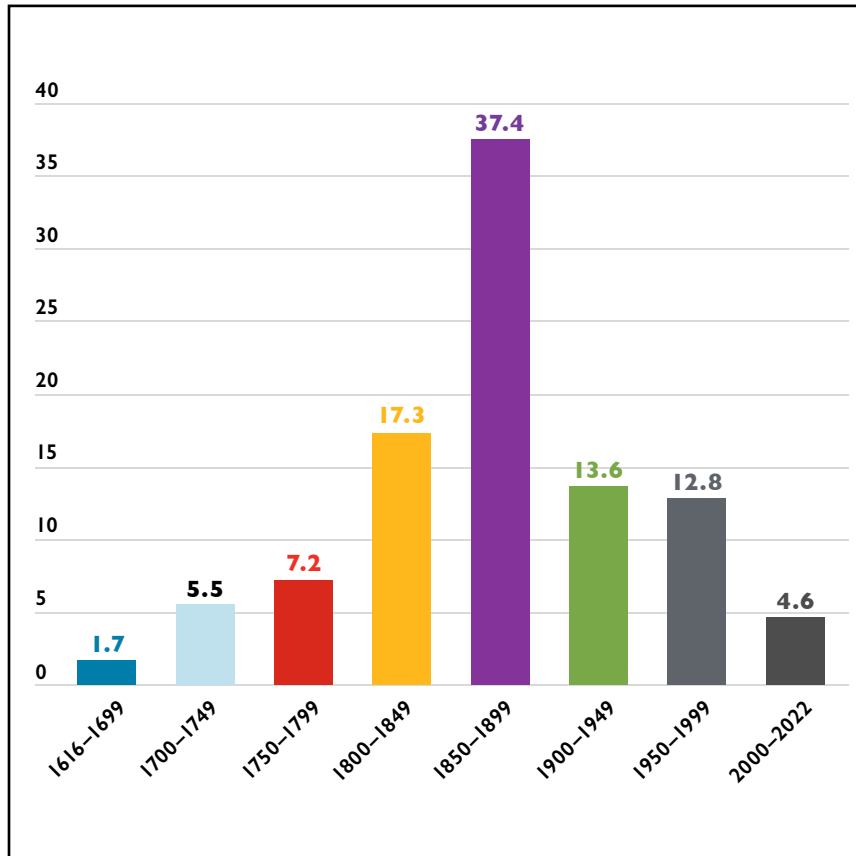
CONGREGATIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

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 86.8% in 2012 to 83.1% in 2022. During this same time frame, the percentage of Biracial/Multiracial congregations increased from 3.7% in 2012 to 6.7% in 2022 and Other congregations increased from 0.3% to 0.5%. In addition, the percentage of Black/African American and Asian/Pacific Islander congregations each increased by 0.2% and 0.3%, respectively, during this time period. 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)



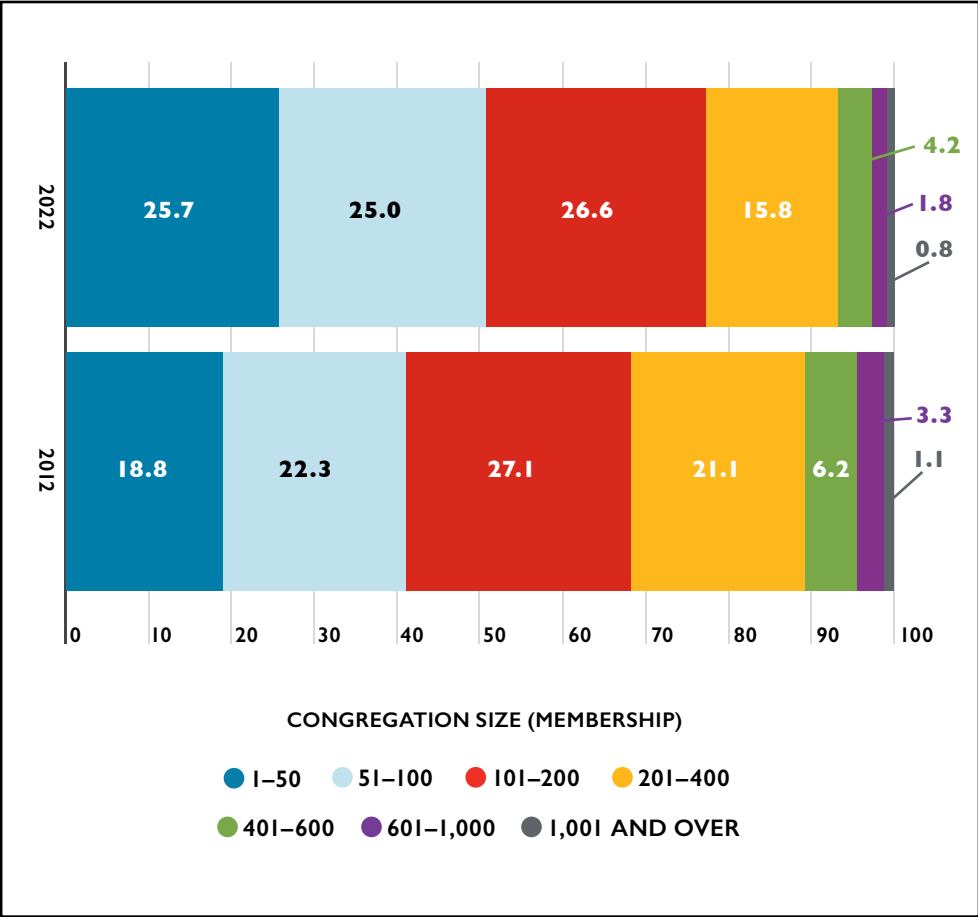
CONGREGATIONS BY DATE OF ORGANIZATION

While the UCC has only been in existence since 1957, many of its congregations were founded by predecessor denominations. The vast majority of churches (85.0%) 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 1874.

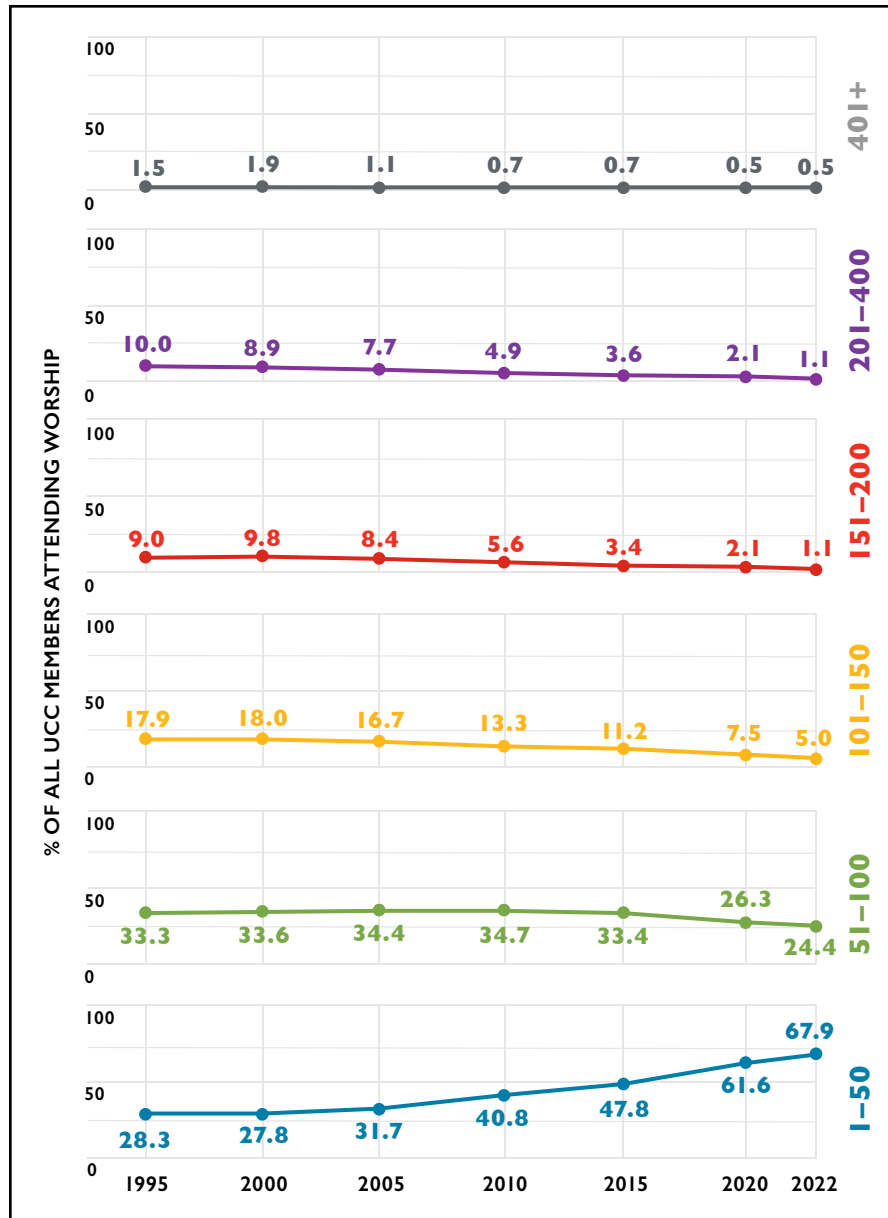
CONGREGATION SIZE BY MEMBERSHIP

The vast majority (93.1%) of UCC members belong to congregations with 400 or fewer members with half (50.7%) attending congregations with 100 or fewer members. This reflects an overall trend within the UCC of membership being increasingly concentrated in smaller churches; in 2012, 89.3% of UCC members belonged to churches with 400 members or fewer and 41.1% 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 18.8% to 25.7% of members since 2012, and churches with 201-400 members, which have decreased from 21.1% to 15.8% of members since 2012.

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 2022, over 90% of churches in the UCC (92.3%) had a weekly worship attendance of 100 or fewer, which is 16.8% higher than in 2010 and 30.9% 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 congregations of 101-400 worship attenders since 1995—from 36.9% of congregations with worship attendance in this range in 1995 to 7.0% of congregations in 2022. As a result, over two thirds (67.9%) 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 specifically 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 2022, 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? What worship trends have you noticed in your congregation and community? What new worship practices adopted during the pandemic continue to linger in your church? Which ones have you let go?

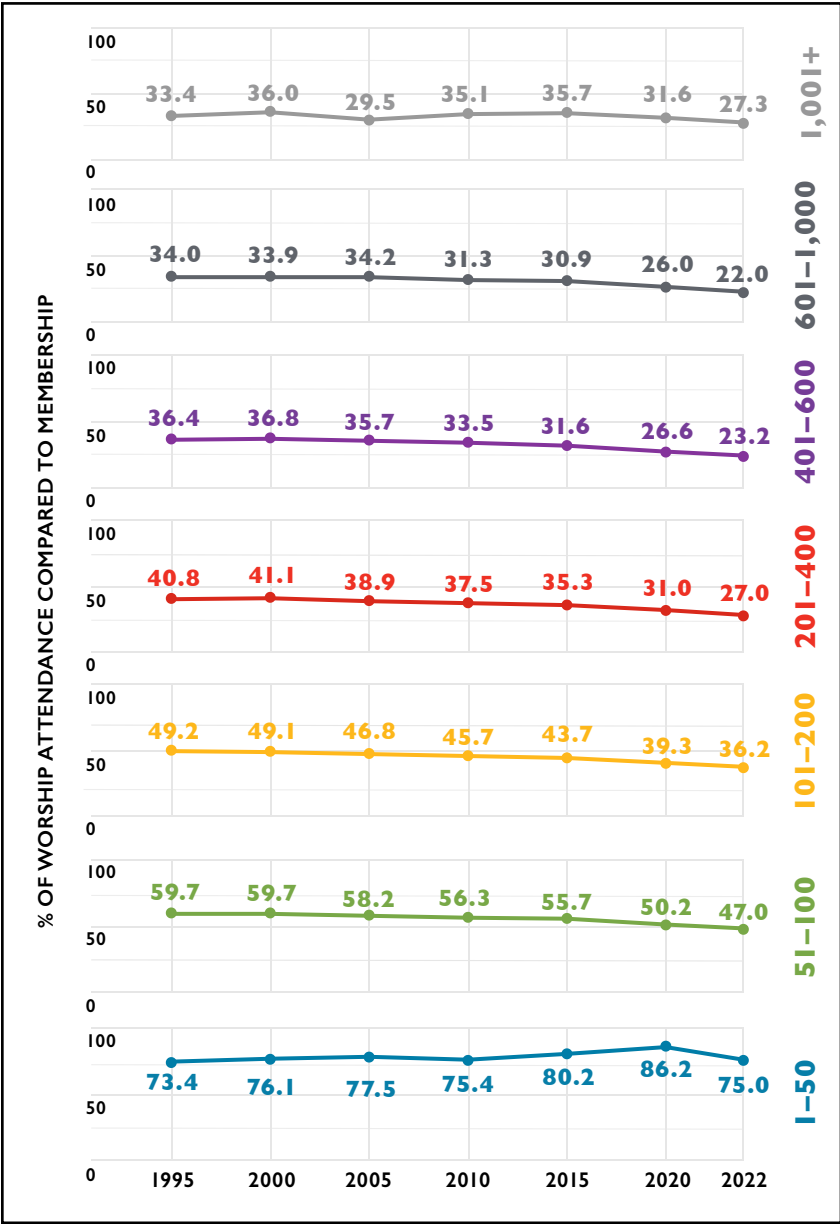
IN-PERSON WORSHIP ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The relationship between in-person worship attendance and membership continues to shift incrementally over time. From 1995 to 2022, the proportion of people attending in-person worship services compared to membership has notably declined, with two exceptions—the largest churches, which have effectively remained stable with a small decrease, 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 27.3%. 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 is currently at 75.0% in 2022. 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 rapid increase in online worship since 2020, some members and other individuals may be participating in worship online, which is not reflected in these numbers (see page 33 for a more detailed analysis of online worship).

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 attending for 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	24.8%	75.9%
51–100	33.6%	85.8%
101–200	41.9%	91.0%
201–400	45.2%	97.1%
401–600	41.5%	96.4%
601–1000	56.3%	97.5%
1001+	36.3%	94.7%

CONGREGATIONAL DESIGNATIONS

Since 2005, there has been an 177.5% 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 1,665 churches (36.2% of all UCC congregations in 2022). ONA designations generally tend to be more common as church membership size increases; however, the proportion of churches with 1-50 or 51-100 members continues to grow every year.

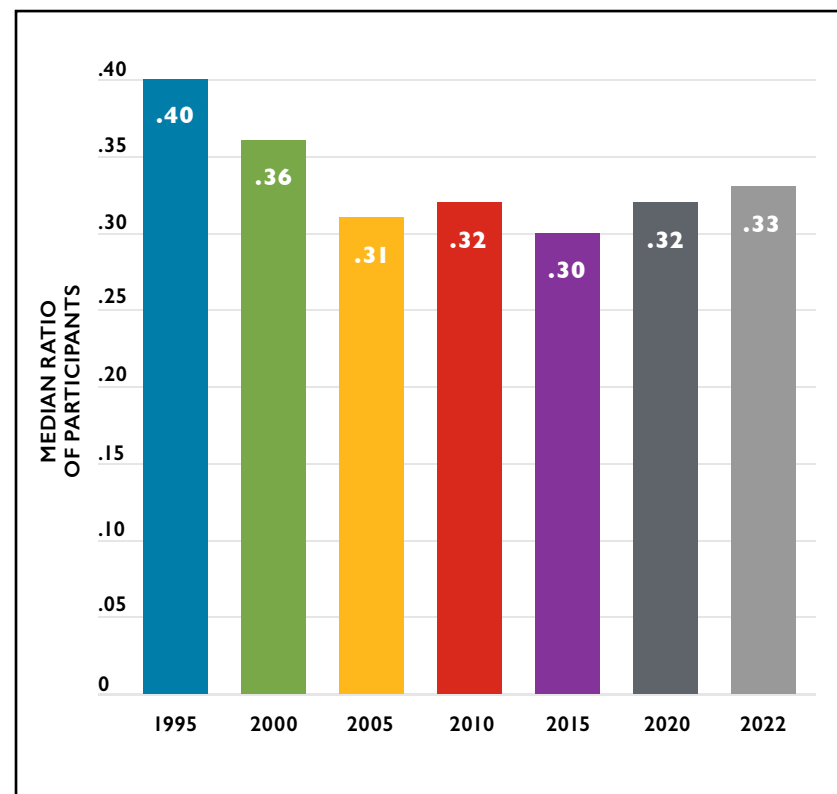
Self-reported accessibility also tended to increase with church size. While the specific types and degrees of accessibility among these congregations are unknown, it is possible that these figures partly reflect the resources churches have available to address the accessibility of their space.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/ FAITH FORMATION

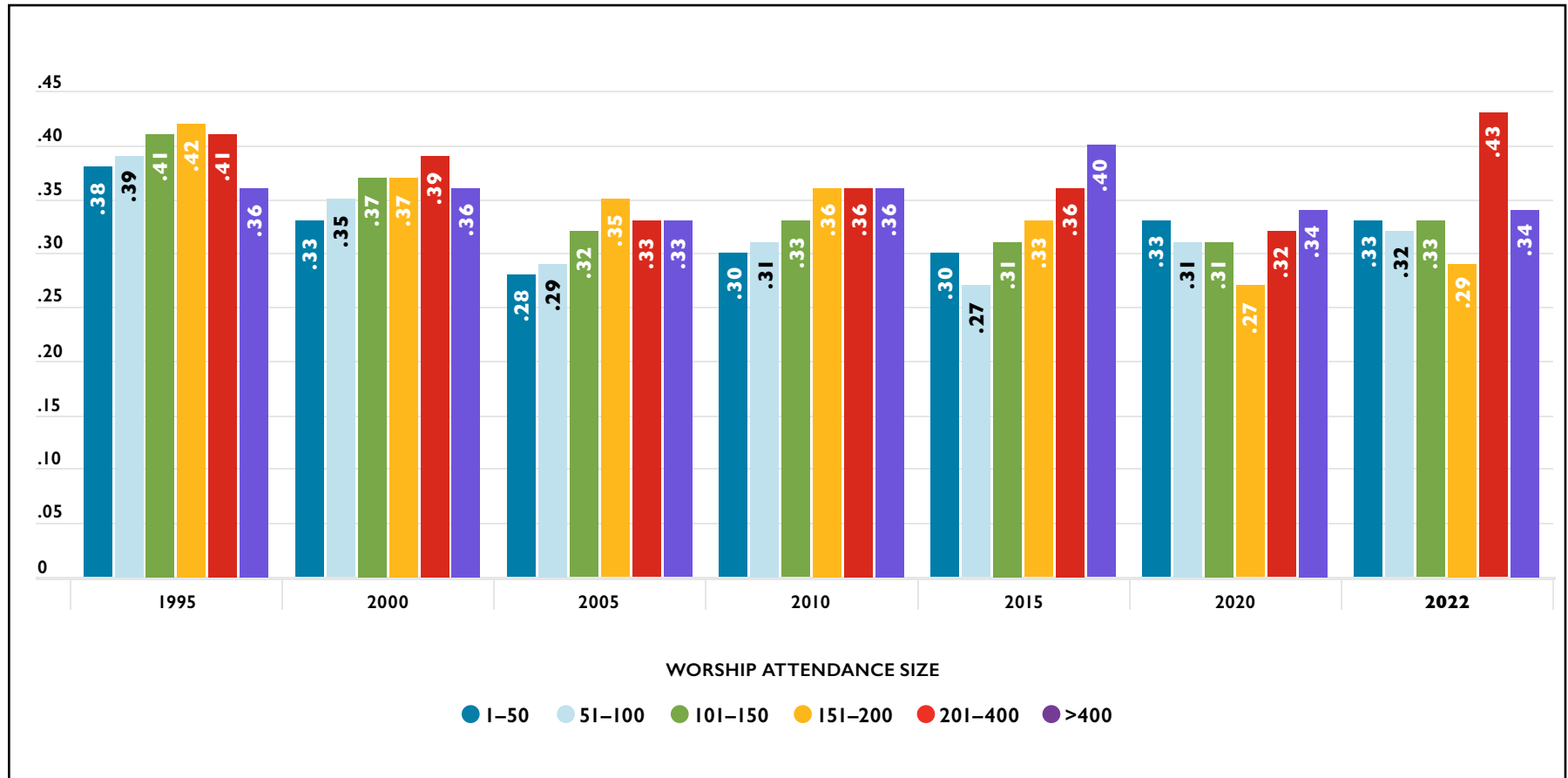
Since the 1950s, enrollment and attendance numbers for Christian Education/Faith Formation programming (also known as Church School or Sunday School enrollment in previous years) has been declining along with membership numbers. When thinking about Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance in terms 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 0.30 and 0.32 percent when comparing 5-year increments (the ratio actually increased slightly to 0.33 in 2021 and remained at this level in 2022). 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 had been unusually large decreases in Christian Education/Faith Formation enrollment in 2020 (a net change of -19,903) and 2021 (a net change of -15,668) compared to 2019 (a net change of -7,164)—most likely a result of the pandemic—2022 was much closer to 2019 levels, with a net change of -6,718. In addition, the median ratio of attendance has remained similar to previous years.

In comparing Christian Education/Faith Formation attendance to worship attendance by church size, ratios are fairly similar across church sizes except for churches with 151-200 attendees, which had the lowest ratio (0.29) and churches with 201-400 attendees, which had the highest ratio (0.43).

MEDIAN RATIO OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/ FAITH FORMATION ATTENDANCE TO WORSHIP ATTENDANCE OVER TIME (1955–2022)



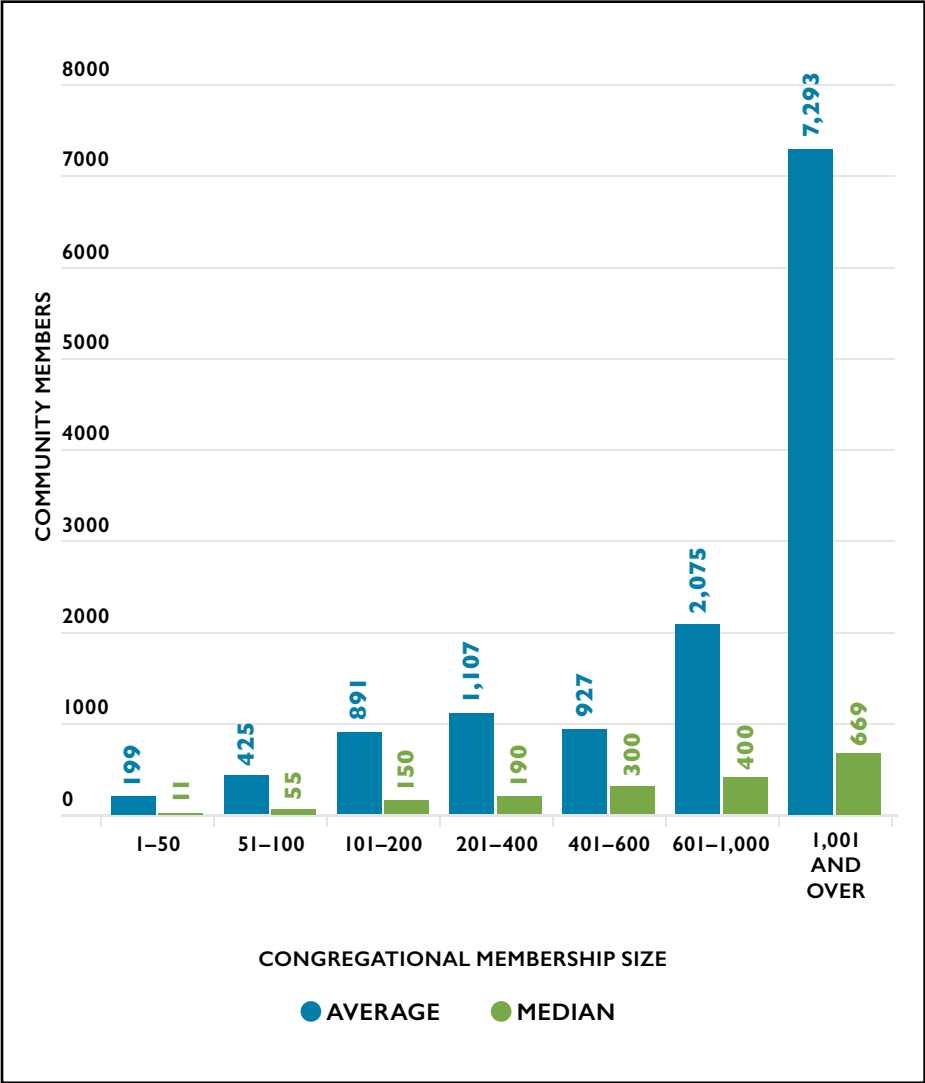
RATIO OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION ATTENDANCE TO WORSHIP ATTENDANCE (MEDIAN) BY CHURCH SIZE



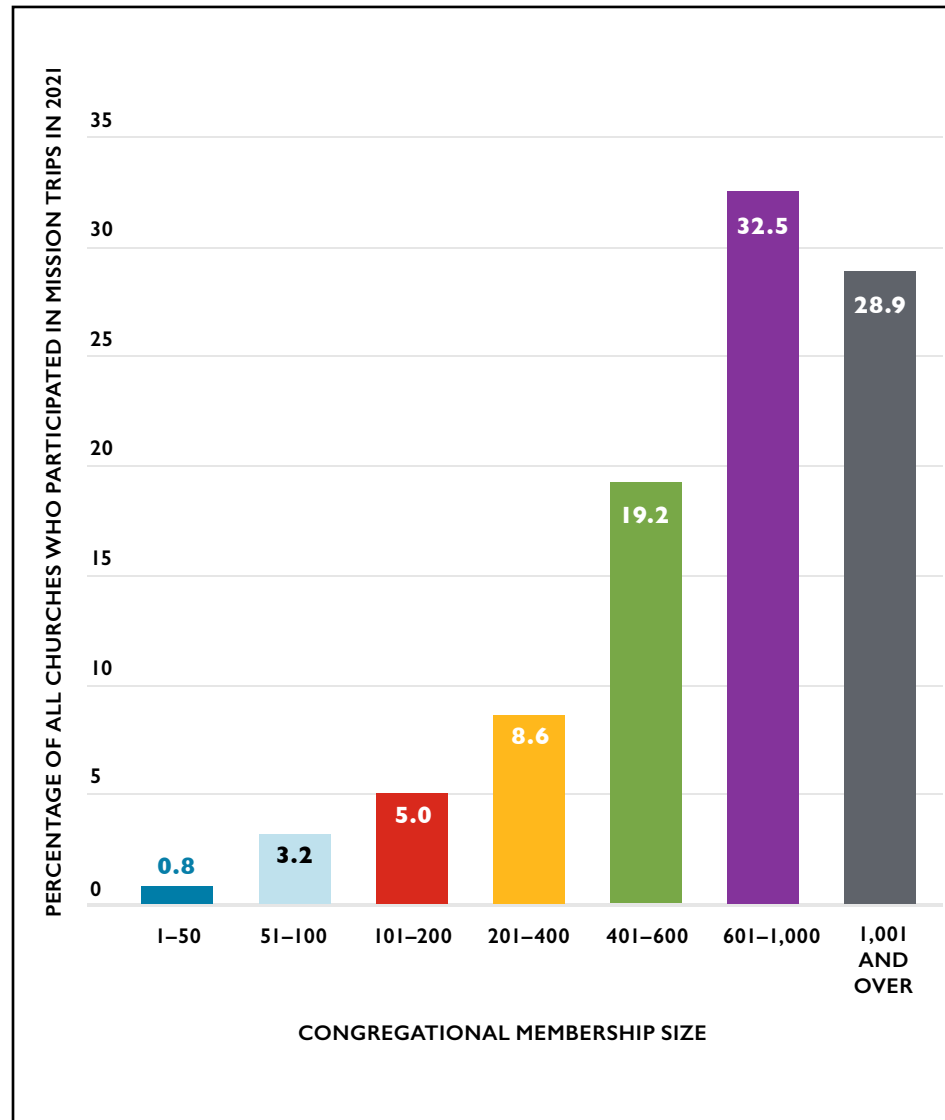
CONGREGATIONAL OUTREACH

Congregational reports indicated that an average of 762 community members and a median of 85 community members were impacted by each local church’s outreach activities and initiatives in 2022. The total number of community members engaged in 2022 was 1,409,570 with 40.2% 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 may reflect the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregations’ opportunities to engage with their communities in addition to a lowered response rate from congregations for annual data submission (58% in 2019 and 53% in 2022). 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. See this year’s special report, “Church Communities by the Numbers: Outside Organizations and Volunteers” on pg. 41 to read more about how our congregations engage with their communities.

AVERAGE AND MEDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED BY CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP SIZE IN 2022



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 2022, 241 (5.3%) congregations reported that members had participated in these types of trips. This represents an increase over the same figures from 2021 (145 or 3.1% of congregations participating) and 2020 (116 congregations or 2.4% participating) but this remains much lower than the last pre-pandemic figures from 2019, when 574 congregations participated in mission/immersion/service trips. Among churches that did report participating in mission/immersion/service trips in 2022, the largest churches (400+ members) most commonly engaged in this activity, which may reflect the amount of resources increasingly required to engage in such activities, particularly during times of economic uncertainty.

LOCAL CHURCH FINANCIAL TRENDS

Average operating expenses for local UCC congregations in 2022 was \$185,053, a \$8,333 (4.7%) average increase from 2021. Average total income for a local church in 2022 was \$246,676, a \$10,006 (4.2%) average increase from 2021. The last year an increase was observed in average total income was in 2017. The past several years have all seen a decrease in total income. Over the past decade, both the average operating expenses and income for local congregations increased from average amounts—from \$161,271 in expenses (a 14.7% increase) and \$211,273 in income (a 44.0% increase) in 2011.

In 2011, Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) giving represented 4.0% of total local church expenditures. This percentage decreased to 3.2% of total local church expenditures in 2022.

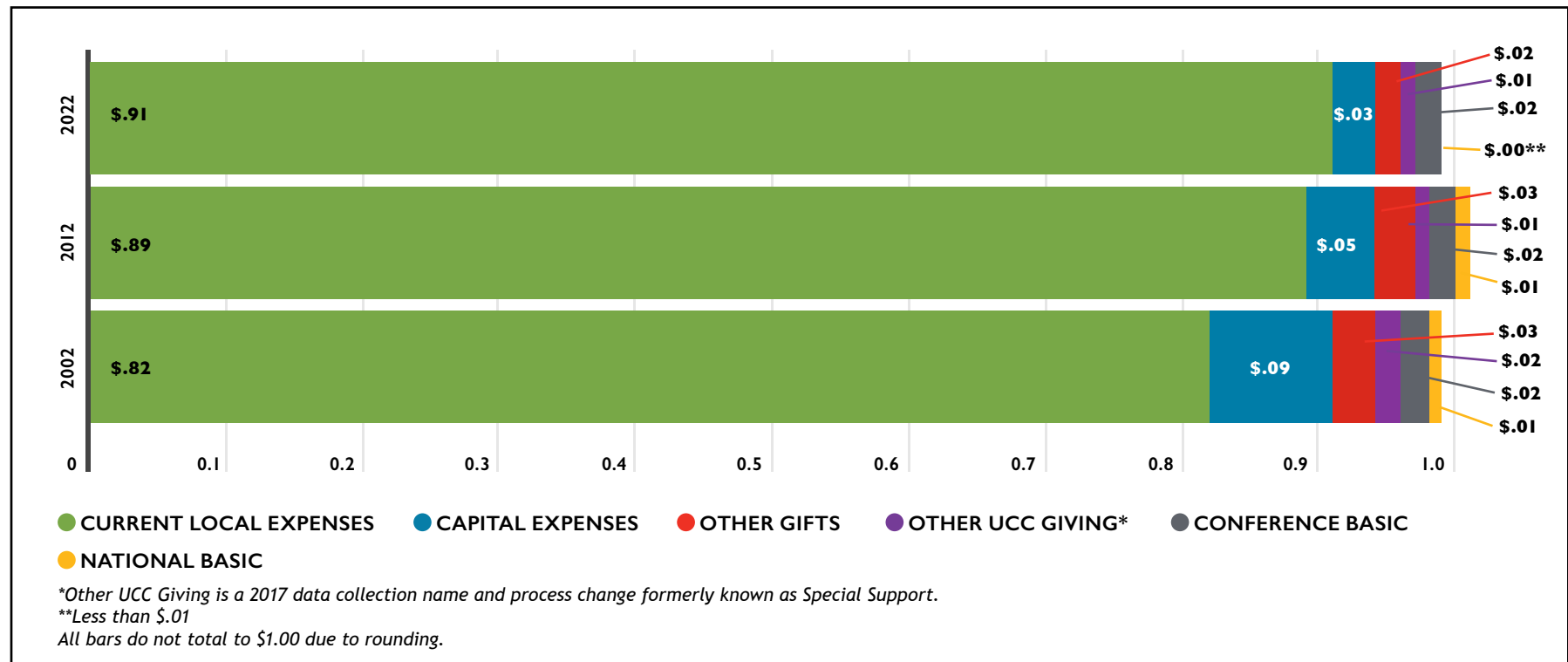
TOTAL LOCAL CHURCH EXPENDITURES (2018–2022)

EXPENDITURE	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Current Local Expenses	\$856,790,219	\$865,208,873	\$802,588,216	\$807,964,727	\$826,814,588
Total Mission Support	\$54,910,992	\$51,535,392	\$46,095,281	\$44,631,304	\$48,271,601
Capital Expenses	\$55,852,902	\$50,254,926	\$34,893,962	\$27,893,391	\$29,444,453
TOTAL	\$967,554,113	\$966,999,191	\$883,577,459	\$880,489,422	\$904,530,642

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 \$.09 while all others have decreased or remained steady. All types of UCC Giving (Conference Basic, National Basic, and Other UCC Giving) have decreased or remained 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?

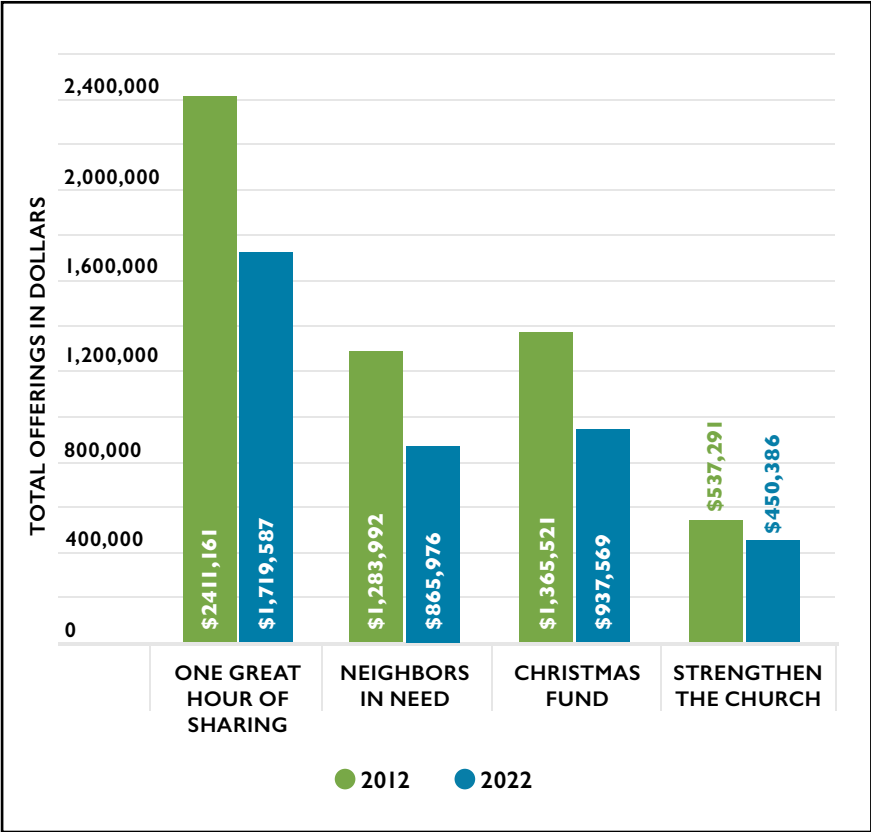
STEWARDSHIP AND MISSION SUPPORT

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 continued to increase. This is a trend we have been seeing since 2017.

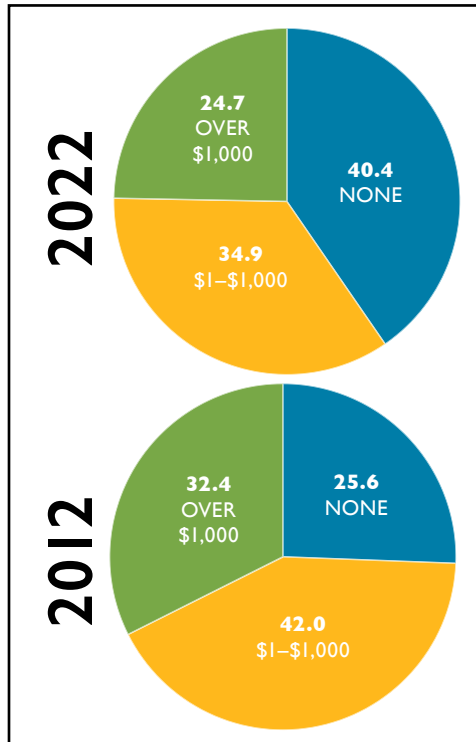
In terms of dollars given, all the Special Mission Offerings have seen a decrease this year compared to 2012. The total giving to all Special Mission Offerings in 2022 decreased by 29.8% when compared to 2012. This is comparable to the decrease seen from 2011-2021 (31.0%). While these are not as large of a 10-year decrease as seen from 2010-2020 (48.4%), it is still quite larger than seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic: the decrease from 2009-2019 was 11.7%. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may be continuing to contribute to this decline.

Total Mission Support for 2022 increased from the previous year by \$3,640,297 (8.2%); this is the first time Total Mission Support giving has increased since 2013. However, it has decreased 12.1% since 2018. 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. The 2022 edition showed giving changes appeared to be returning to levels seen prior to 2020. Other Gifts and Other UCC Giving have both nearly returned to the level seen in 2019.

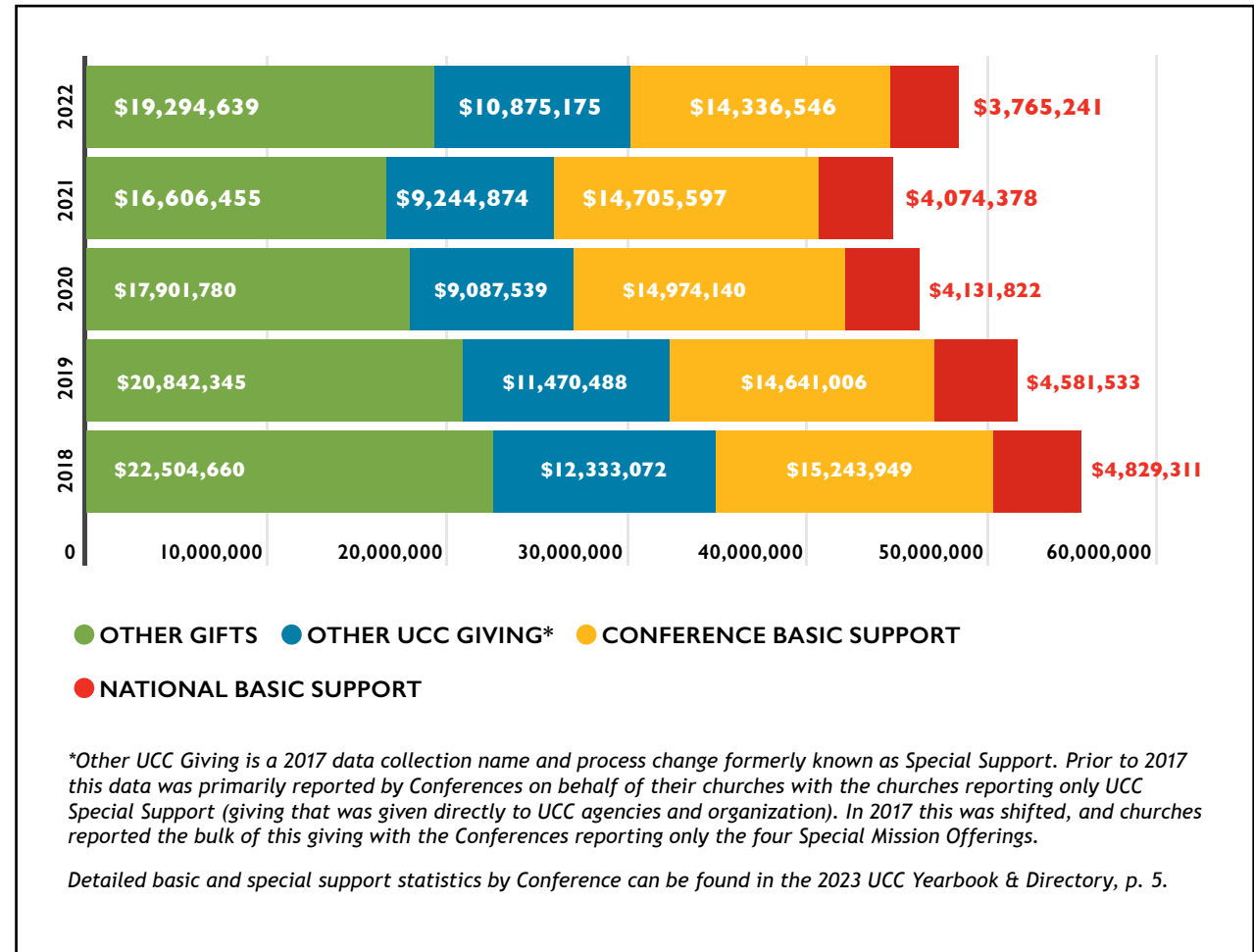
LOCAL CHURCH SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS



PERCENTAGE OF UCC CHURCHES CONTRIBUTING TO SPECIAL OFFERINGS BY DONATION SIZE



TOTAL MISSION SUPPORT



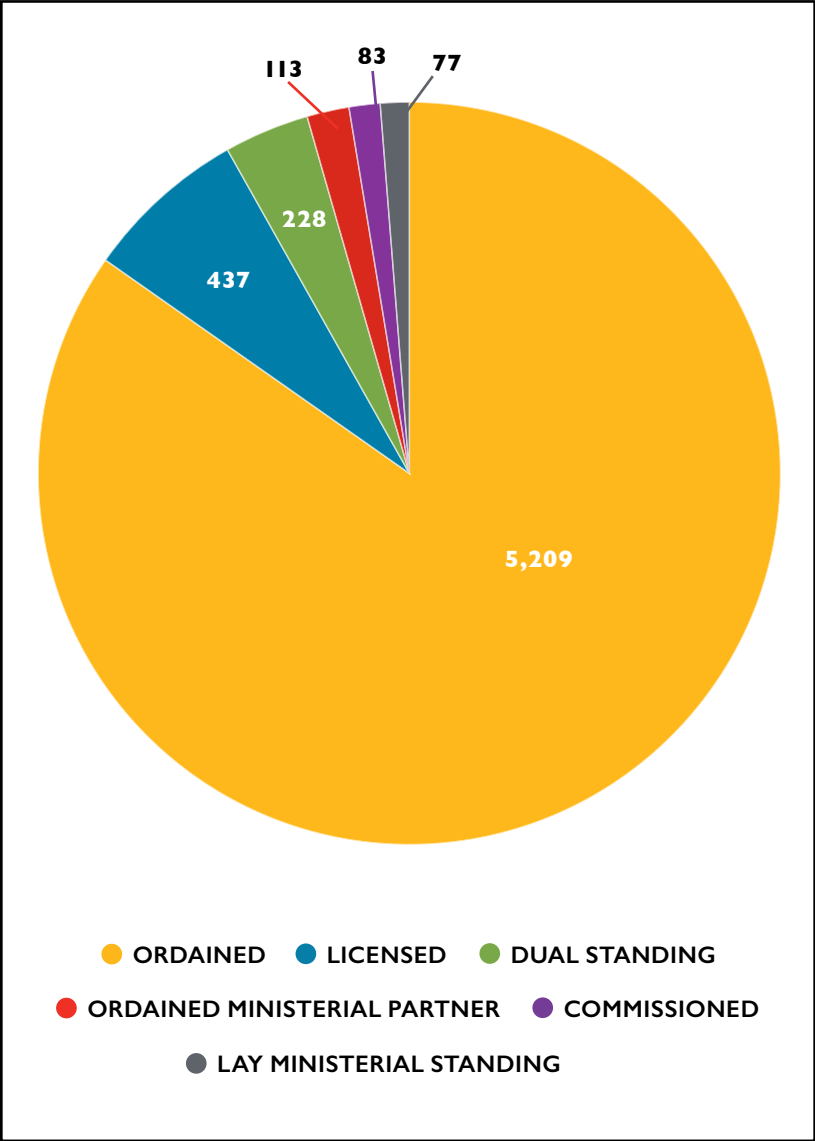
REFLECTIONS

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 have the last few pandemic-informed years impacted your church's giving?

SUMMARY OF UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS

As reported for 2022, there were a total of 6,147 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 (84.7%); and Licensed Ministers comprised the second largest group of Authorized Ministers (7.1%). In addition, two active, non-retired ministers hold standing in the Congregational Christian Church.

ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED AUTHORIZED UCC MINISTERS



SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS



SUMMARY OF UCC ORDAINED MINISTERS

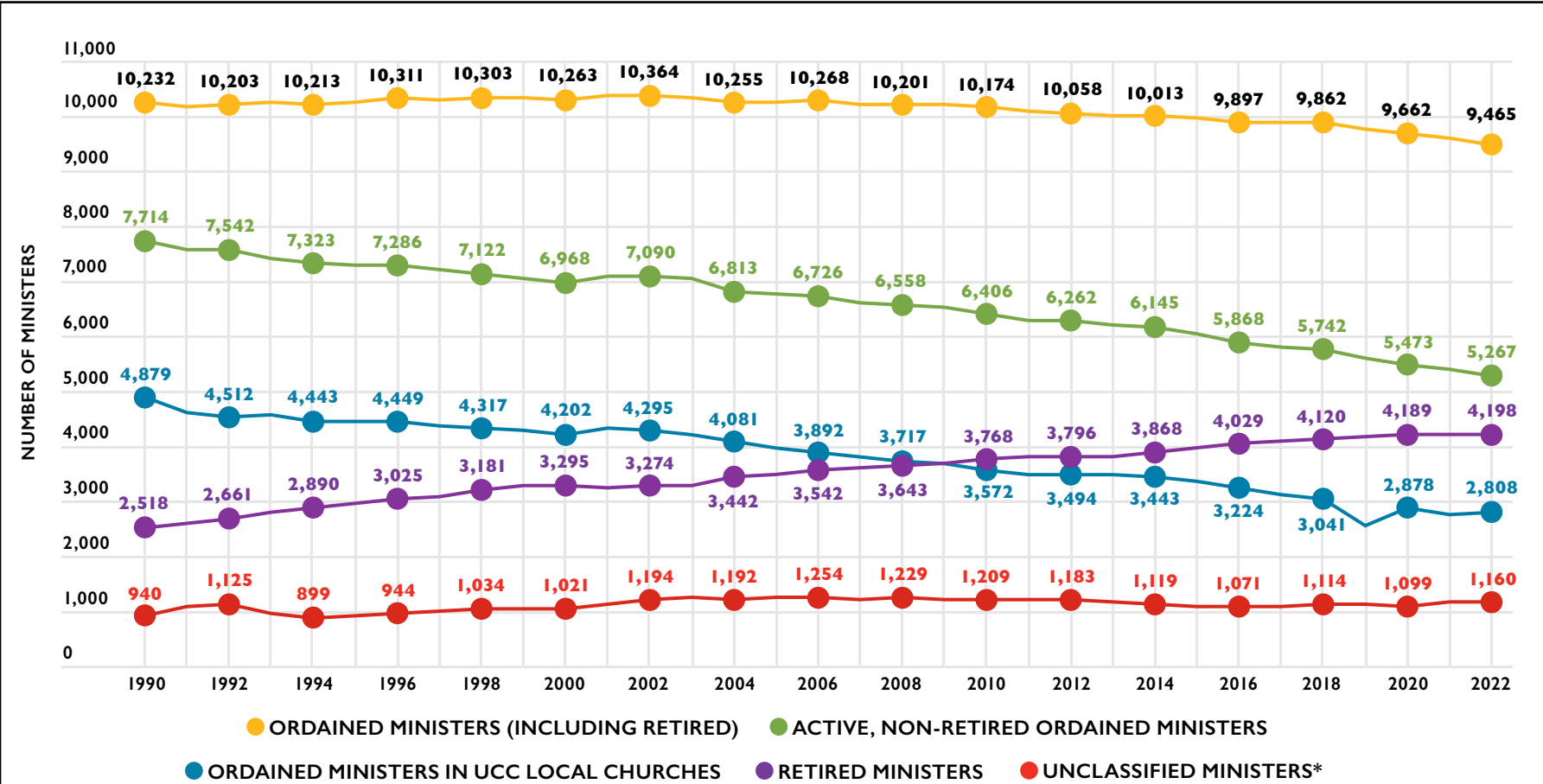
At the end of 2022, there were 9,465 reported Ordained Ministers in Full Standing, including Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti. Of those 9,465 Ordained Ministers, nearly one-half (43.4% or 4,107) were employed, with 68.4% (2,808) of those employed actively serving in a local church (either a UCC church or non-UCC church). Four out of ten (44.4% or 4,198) were Retired Ministers or Pastor Emeriti, and 12.3% (1,160) were unclassified (ministers without a reported specialty at the time of Yearbook production) or were on a leave of absence.

Over the last 37 years (1985 to 2022), Ordained Ministers only had a numerical net decrease of 620 (6.1%). However, the number of employed Ordained Ministers decreased by over one third (42.4%), while Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti saw an increase of 87.4% over this same 37-year period.

TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY OVER TIME

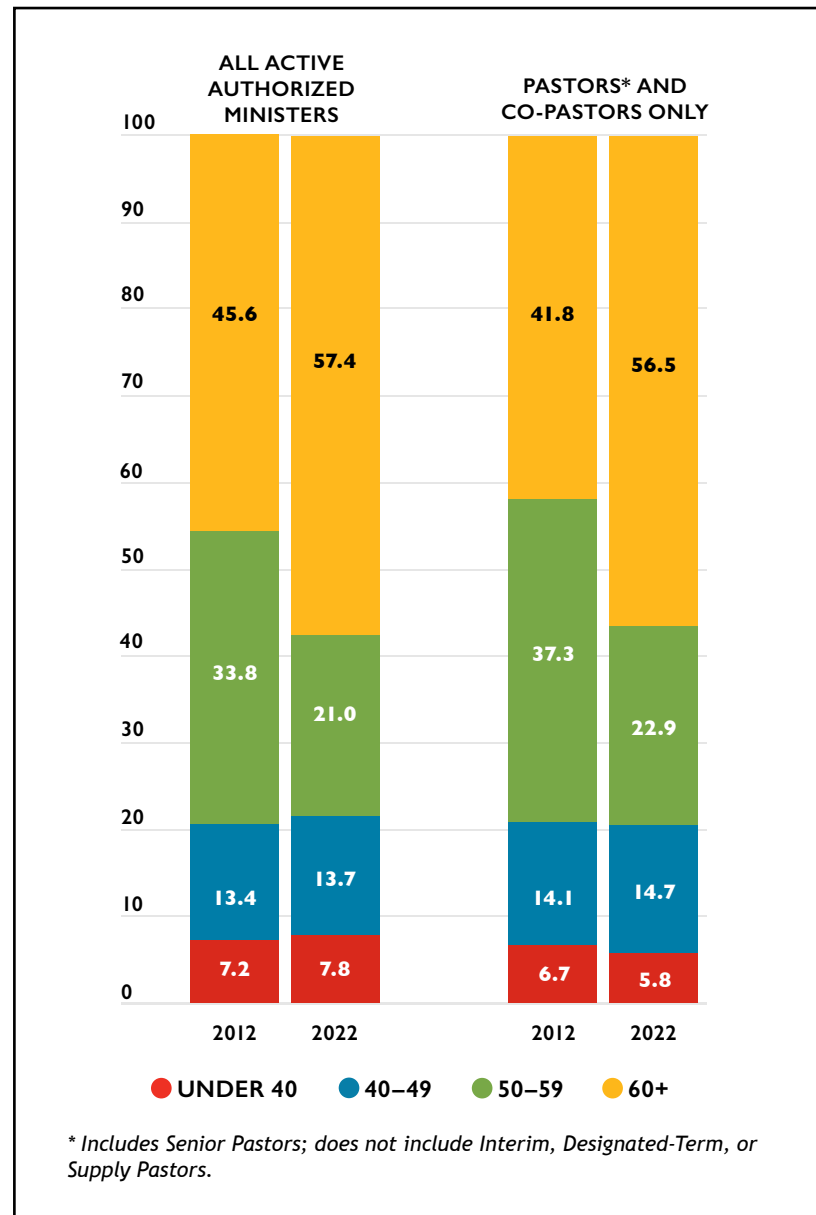
Since 1990, the number of Ordained Ministers has remained relatively stable, though there are slight incremental decreases in more recent years. At the same time, the number of Retired Ministers and Pastor Emeriti has increased steadily. Notably, since 1990 the decline in ordained ministers (7.5%) has been much smaller than the declines in congregations (27.3%) or membership (55.6%) during the same time frame.

TRENDS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY (1990–2022)



* 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 (57.4%) and over three-quarters (78.4%) were 50 and older. Local Church Pastors and Co-Pastors are increasingly comprised of the oldest clergy in the UCC, with over half (56.5%) of all congregations in 2022 being served by Authorized Ministers aged 60 and above while only 41.8% were served by this group in 2012. The number of congregations being served by clergy under 50 has remained relatively stable.

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 (84.2%) of all active, non-retired UCC Authorized Ministers identified as White/Euro-American, with 15.8% 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 (33.3%) ministers identifying as non-white. Ministers with Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing were the least racially/ethnically diverse authorization groups, with only 7.0% identifying as non-white.

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

RACE/ETHNICITY	ORDAINED (N = 4,556)	LICENSED (N = 319)	LAY MINISTERIAL STANDING (N = 39)	COMMISSIONED (N = 61)	DUAL STANDING (N = 153)	ORDAINED MINISTERIAL PARTNER STANDING (N = 86)	OVERALL (N = 5,214)
White/Euro-American	85.0	78.1	87.2	85.2	66.7	93.0	84.2
Black/African American	10.5	13.8	10.3	13.1	13.7	4.7	10.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.3	4.4	0.0	0.0	17.0	0.0	2.8
Hispanic/Latino	1.3	0.9	2.6	1.6	2.6	2.3	1.4
Native American	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Biracial/Multiracial	0.6	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Other	0.2	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 (8.2% compared to 10.5% of all clergy) while clergy who identify as White/Euro-American were represented at a slightly higher rate among Senior/Solo Pastors (86.2%) compared to clergy overall (85.0%). Associate/Assistant Pastors were notably more racially/ethnically diverse compared to clergy overall, with 31.0% of clergy self-identifying as non-white compared to 15.0% 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	86.2	82.7	69.0	92.5
Black/African American	8.2	14.7	24.9	4.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.7	1.3	2.2	1.6
Hispanic/Latino	1.0	1.3	3.2	0.0
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Biracial/Multiracial/Other	0.9	0.0	0.7	1.3
<i>Totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.</i>				

AUTHORIZED MINISTERS BY GENDER

In total, 53.4% of active, non-retired Ordained Ministers in the United Church of Christ identified as female, 46.2% identified as male, and 0.5% 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.

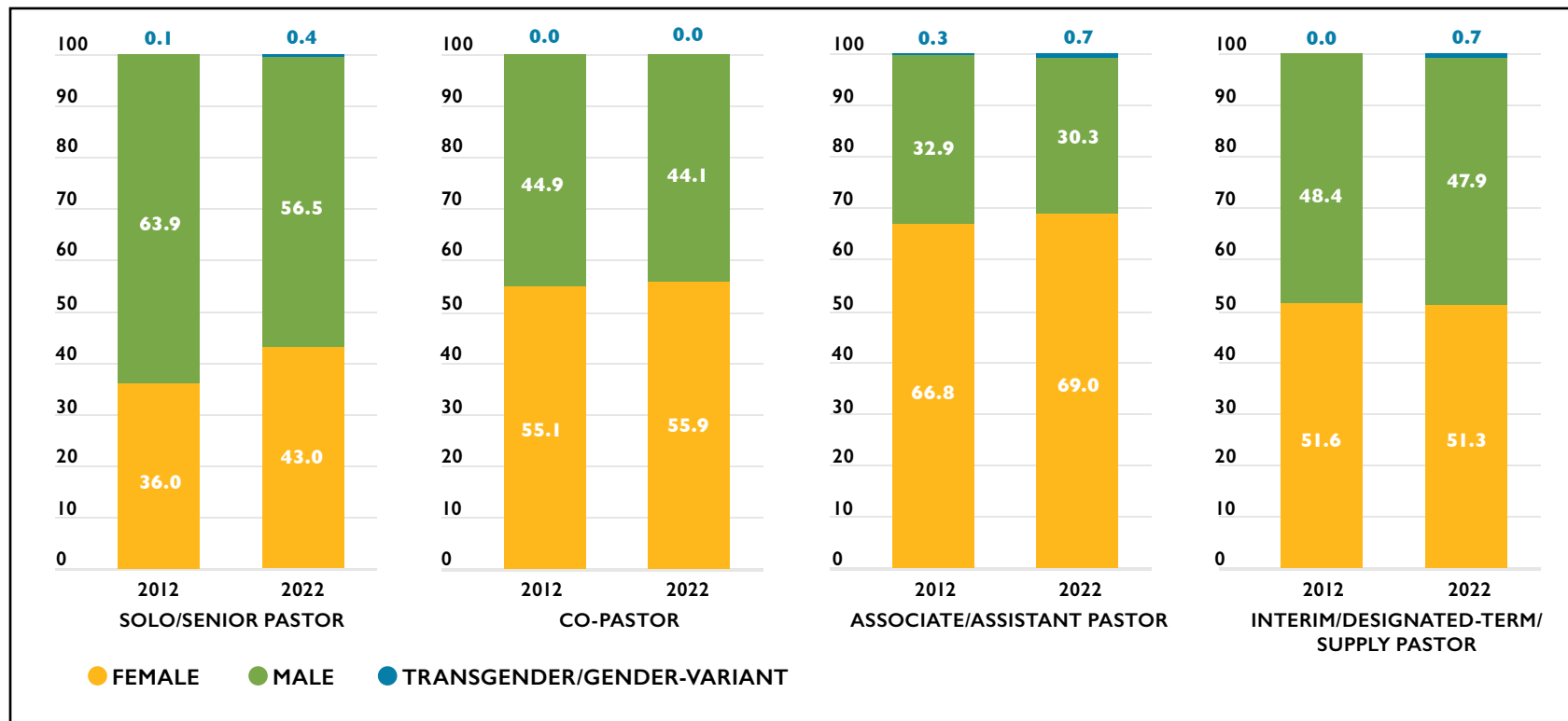
GENDER OF ACTIVE, NON-RETIRED UCC AUTHORIZED MINISTERS (PERCENTAGE)

AUTHORIZATION	FEMALE	MALE	TRANSGENDER/GENDER-VARIANT
Ordained	53.4	46.2	0.5
Licensed	41.8	58.2	0.0
Lay Ministerial Standing	55.1	44.9	0.0
Commissioned	84.0	16.0	0.0
Dual Standing	34.6	65.4	0.0
Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing	55.9	44.1	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 over the past several years. The rate at which females are serving in local church pastoral positions is increasing at a higher rate for Senior/Solo Pastors than any other local church position. The earliest UCC Statistical Handbook from 2000 indicates only 21.9% of Senior/Solo Pastors were female, by 2012 this percentage had increased to 36.0%. Our most recent data indicates females are now serving as Senior/Solo Pastors at a rate of more than four in ten (43.0%).

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 clergy of every gender? What is something you could do today to begin cultivating such an environment?

ORDINATIONS AND MEMBERS IN DISCERNMENT

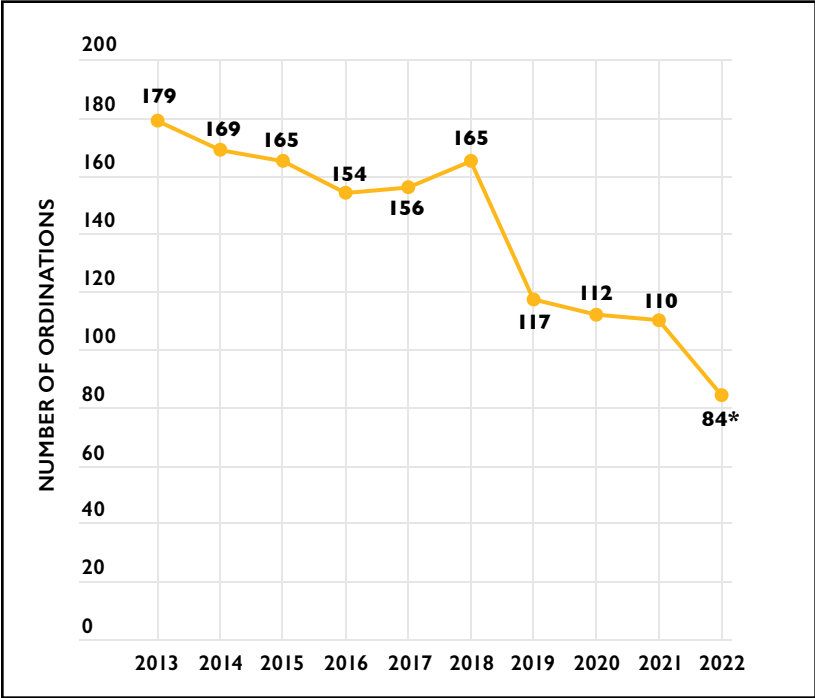
The number of ordinations per year decreased over the past decade. Overall, the number of ordinations has been in decline except for 2018 when there was a notable increase in ordinations over the previous year. When reviewing trends over the past several decades, however, ordination numbers fluctuated 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 2023, there were 609 active Members in Discernment (MIDs) on record within the denominational database. Some regions—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 57.4% of all MIDs, a greater percentage than that of current female Authorized Ministers, which currently comprise 53.4% of all non-retired Ordained clergy. It is important to note that one-third (34.8%) of all MIDs do not have a gender recorded. Members in Discernment were also more racially/ethnically diverse than current Ordained Ministers with 29.7% identifying as non-white (compared with 15.0% of all Ordained Ministers identifying as non-white).

**Number of ordinations for 2022 and recent previous years is expected to increase in 2023 as additional records are updated by Conferences.*

UCC ORDINATIONS (2013–2022)

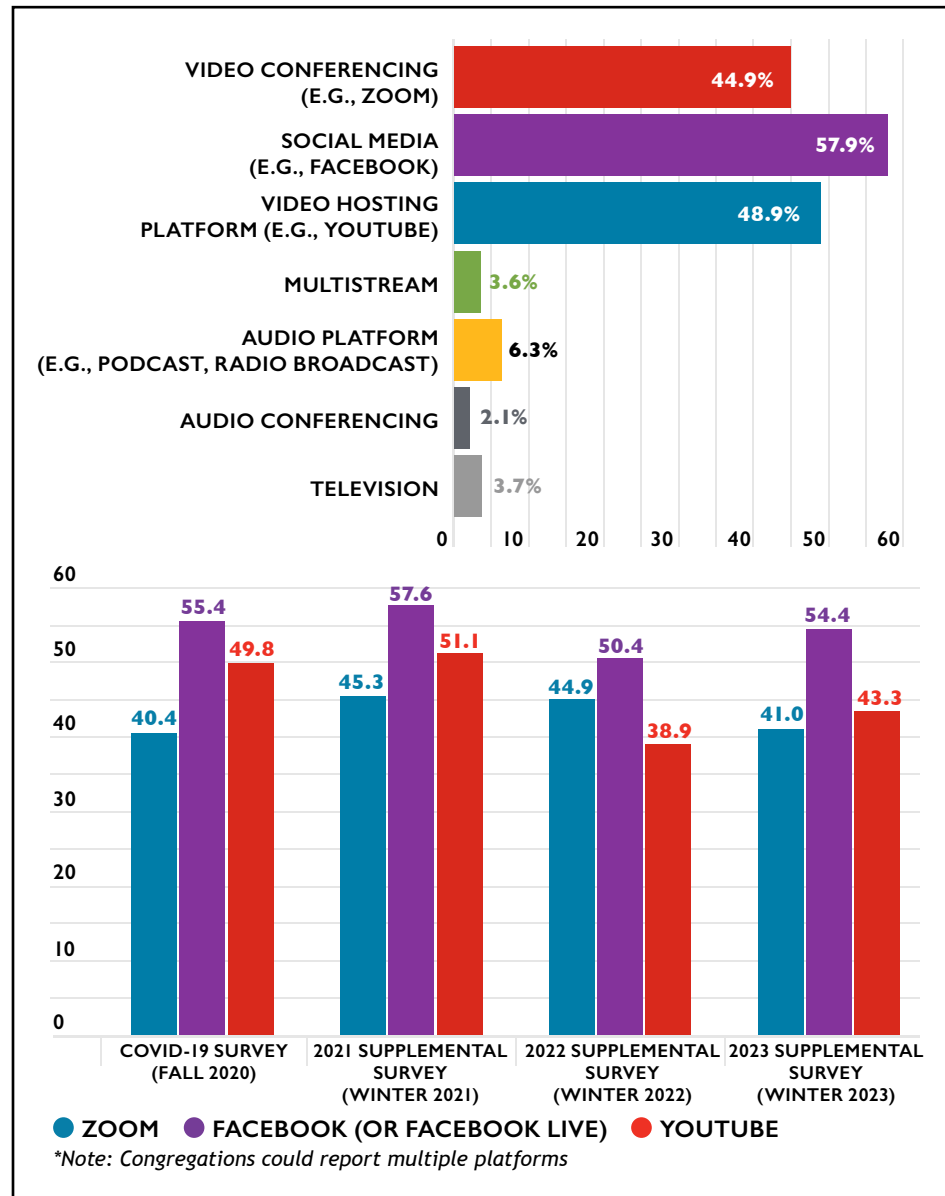


MIDS BY REGION, WITH MEMBERSHIP COMPARISON

REGION	MIDs	% MIDs	% MEMBERS
Great Lakes	156	25.6	30.6
Middle Atlantic	107	17.6	20.0
New England	127	20.9	19.7
Southern	81	13.3	7.1
Western	84	13.8	9.4
West Central	53	8.7	13.1
Non-Geographic	1	0.2	0.1

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT AND THE CHURCH

CONGREGATIONS' VIRTUAL WORSHIP PLATFORM USAGE



VIRTUAL WORSHIP PREVALENCE

One of the most notable changes brought to congregational life by the COVID-19 pandemic was the expansion and ongoing offering of virtual worship. In a survey conducted during the fall of 2020, only 9% of congregations reported offering virtual worship prior to the pandemic; by the winter of 2021, however, 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 the year prior. In 2023, 80.8% of congregations responded “yes.” Among congregations who reported holding virtual worship opportunities, more than 9 out of 10 (91.1%) reported offering these opportunities every week, with an additional 4.2% reporting such opportunities were offered more than once per week.

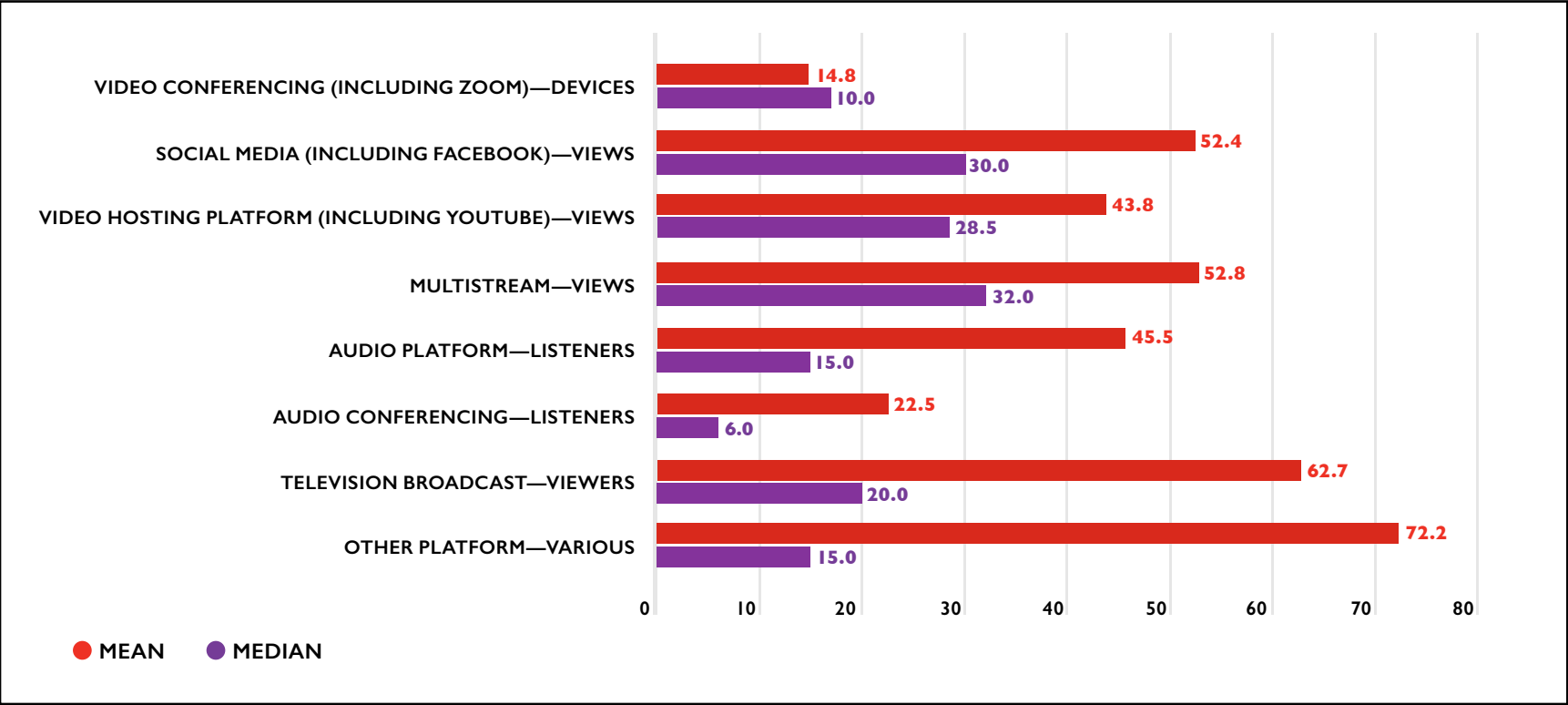
80.7% of congregations holding virtual worship reported streaming their in-person worship service. Zoom, Facebook/Facebook Live, and YouTube were the most commonly used individual platforms reported in 2022, though small numbers of churches used a wide variety of platforms to share their worship services. Even as congregations resume in-person worship, virtual worship is likely to remain a common offering alongside in-person worship, as 96.2% of congregations that held virtual worship in 2022 reported that they are planning to continue to offer virtual worship in the future.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

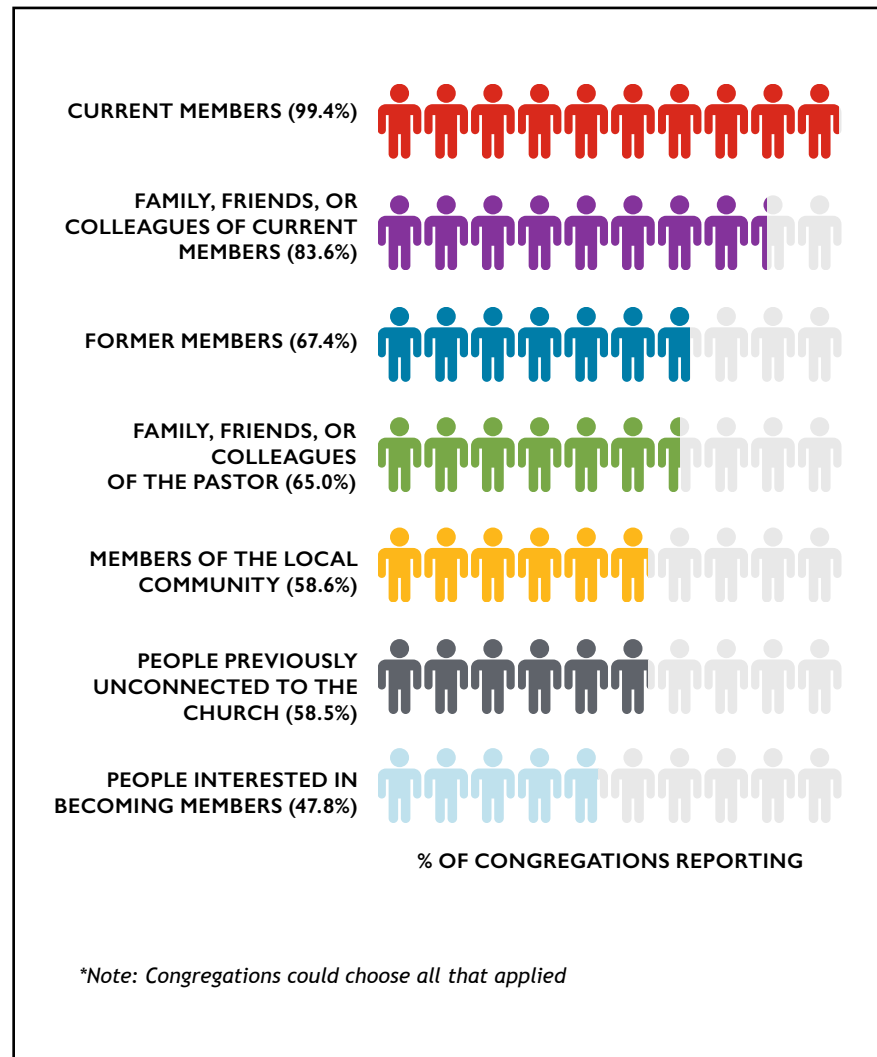
Virtual worship attendance is measured separately from in-person worship attendance because these numbers essentially measure different things. While in-person worship attendance figures represent the number of people present, online worship attendance generally represents the number of devices that 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 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.

VIEWERSHIP BY PLATFORM TYPE



VIRTUAL WORSHIP ATTENDEES



VIRTUAL WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

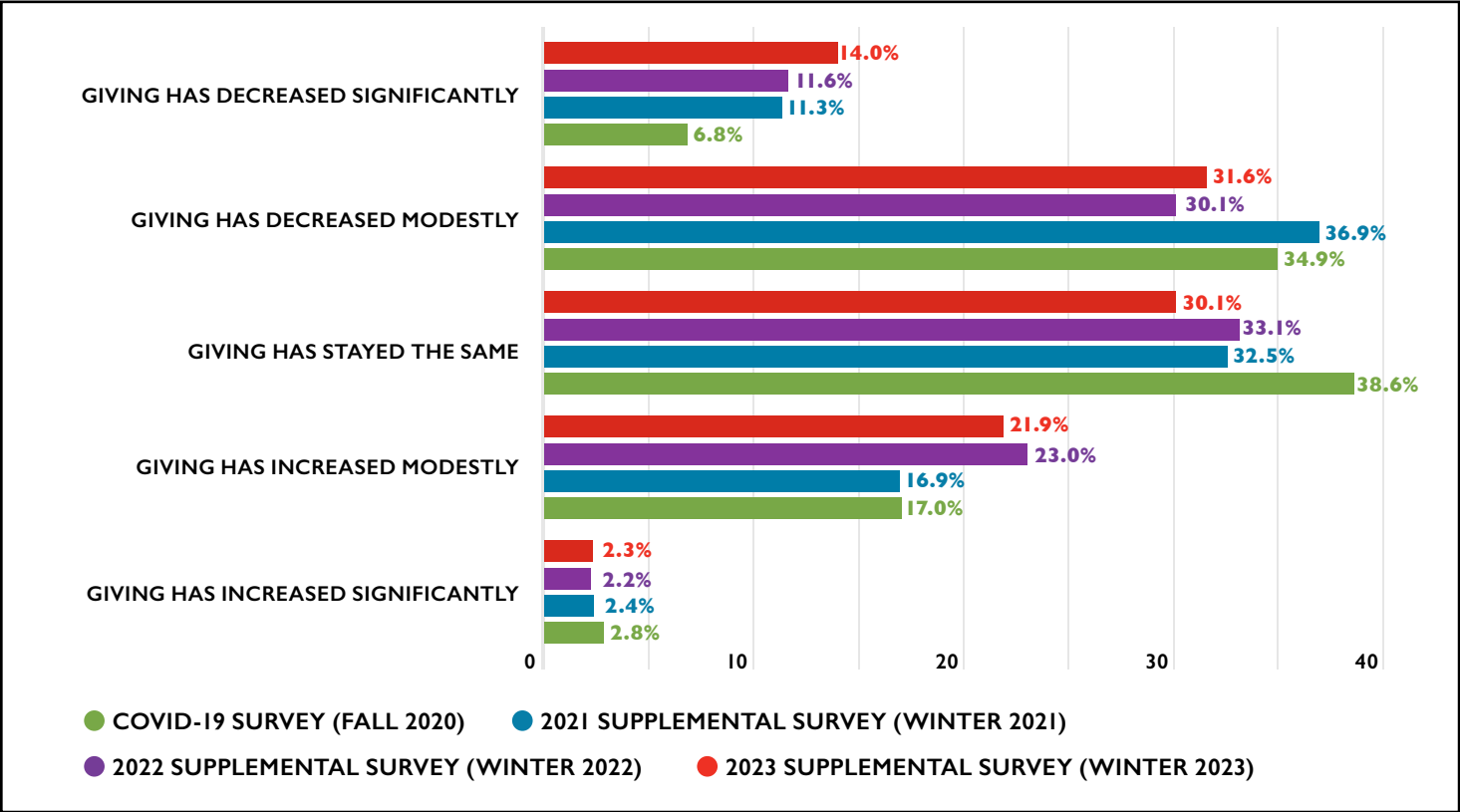
Virtual worship has enabled congregations to welcome new people to their church as well as reconnect with people whom they haven't seen in a while. Among churches holding virtual worship, nearly all congregations (99.4%) reported that current members attended their services. In addition, family, friends, and colleagues of current members (83.6%) as well as family, friends, and colleagues of the pastor (65.0%) also commonly attended congregations' online worship services. Over half of congregations (58.5%) reported that people previously unconnected to their church were attending their online worship services and 47.8% 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

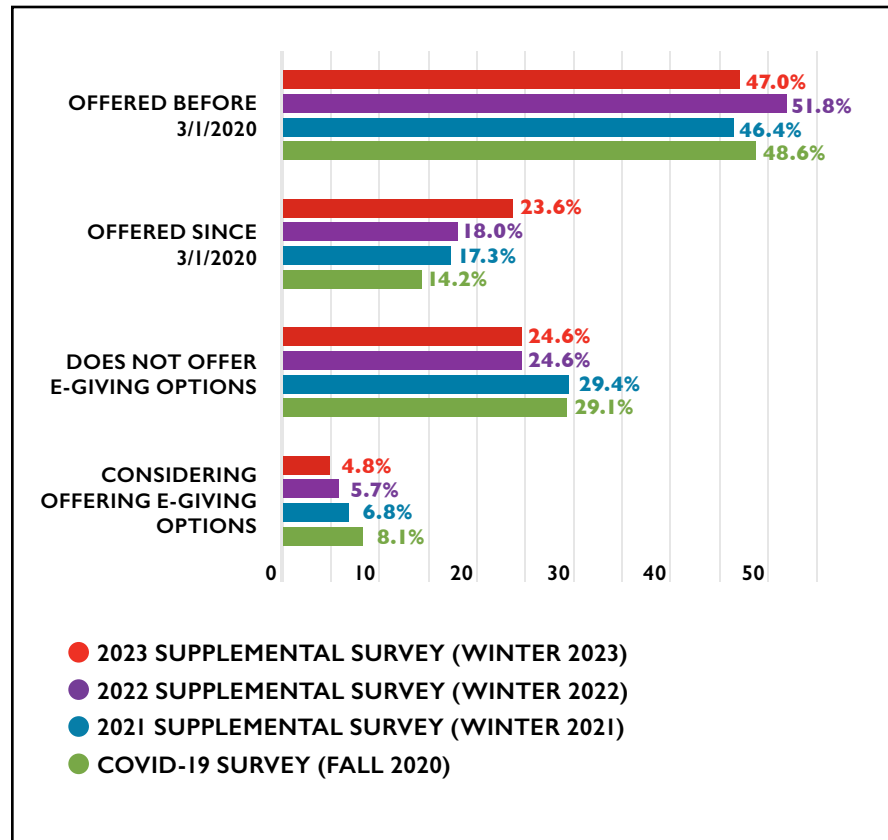
The pandemic has had a variety of financial implications for congregations and these implications have continued to shift over time. Since the 2022 Supplemental Survey, the proportion of congregations that have reported their giving has decreased significantly was higher (increasing from 11.6% to 14.0%), as was the proportion of congregations reporting that their giving decreased modestly (increasing from 30.1% to 31.6%). Taken together, the proportion of congregations reporting that their giving has decreased since the pandemic began is higher (45.7%) than in 2022 (41.7%) but remains lower than it was in 2021 (48.2%). The proportion of congregations reporting that giving has stayed the same decreased slightly (30.1% in 2022 from 33.1%), while roughly a quarter (24.2%) of congregations reported in 2022 that their giving has actually *increased* modestly or significantly during the pandemic (down from 25.2% in 2021). These trends have changed directions a few times between the first COVID-19 survey in 2020 and present supplemental survey, suggesting the impact of the pandemic and changing economic conditions on congregations’ finances is dynamic and experiences have varied widely among churches.

OVERALL GIVING

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



ELECTRONIC GIVING ACROSS CHURCHES



ELECTRONIC GIVING

As congregations have expanded virtual worship opportunities, electronic giving has been a way for people to contribute financially to congregations without being physically present. Around half of congregations (47.0%) reported offering electronic giving options before the pandemic, and now more than seven in ten congregations (70.6%) offer electronic giving. This proportion has not changed much since the initial COVID-19 survey in the fall of 2020 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.

REFLECTIONS

What unexpected pandemic-related challenges did your congregation overcome? What surprising discoveries do you continue to carry forward into your current and future 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?

SPECIAL REPORT: TRENDS IN SEARCH AND CALL

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

The 2021 UCC (United Church of Christ) Statistical Report included a special report on how the COVID pandemic was affecting the Search and Call process. To assess possible impacts, 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 showed no substantial 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. For the 2022 Statistical Report, these numbers were updated and data for how many new positions had been added during the same period were included. The results suggest that 2021 ultimately may have been an outlier, with 2022 figures closer to 2020 numbers than to 2021 numbers, where fewer positions were removed and an even smaller number of positions were added than removed during that time, possibly indicating that there was a smaller than typical number of available candidates for open positions in that particular year amidst a general decline in both positions removed and positions added. This year's report provides an update of this data.

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.

For comparison, the number of new pastoral positions added in the Data Hub over this same period (these pastoral positions include interim and supply pastoral positions) are shown in the table. The line graph gives a more visual representation of the trend.

Over the last 8 years, the number of pastoral positions removed has trended downward, though less so in recent years. 2021—a year theorized to show a greater difference due to pandemic-related effects—shows a marked slowdown in positions removed but is a modest outlier.

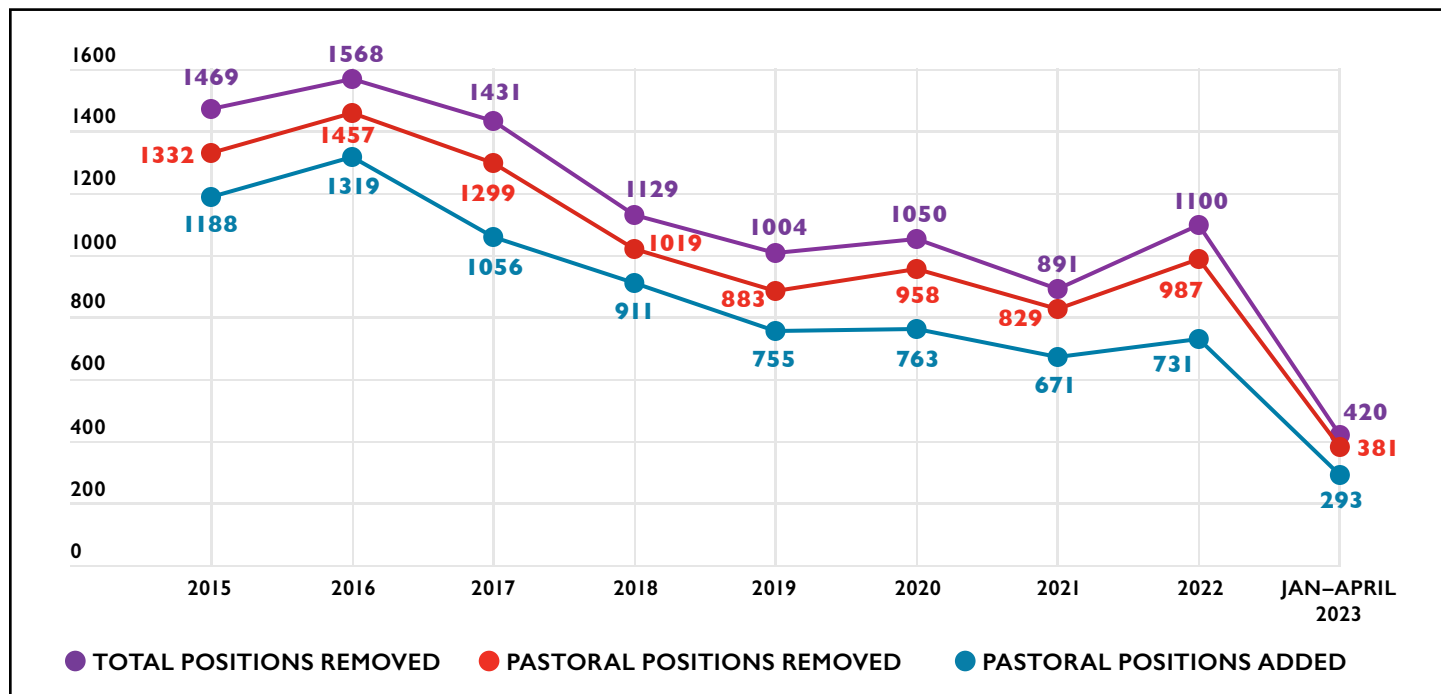
The number of new positions added has also been trending downward and has been lower than the number of removed positions every year since 2015. As pastoral positions conclude, they are not being filled in the same way or at the same rate.

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 are experiencing longer search processes due to this smaller candidate pool.

Overall, these numbers show a new reality emerging in Search and Call. Among other needs, this moment will entail greater patience and creativity as ministry settings seek to fill their open positions.

MINISTRY POSITIONS REMOVED AND ADDED (2015–2023)

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
2022	1100	987	731
January 2023–April 2023	420	381	293



SPECIAL REPORT: OBSERVATIONS ABOUT GIVING IN THE UCC

Contributed by: The Rev. Andrew Warner, Generosity Outreach Officer, Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity, & Communication (OPTIC)

The Development Team of the National Ministries promotes generosity across the United Church of Christ. UCC members and friends give tremendously, providing a witness in the world to our values and transforming lives through ministry and mission. For the following report, we considered giving over the last year and looked at three questions: What philanthropic causes motivate giving, does physically passing a plate increase giving, and how does giving in the UCC compare with giving more broadly. Each is considered in turn.

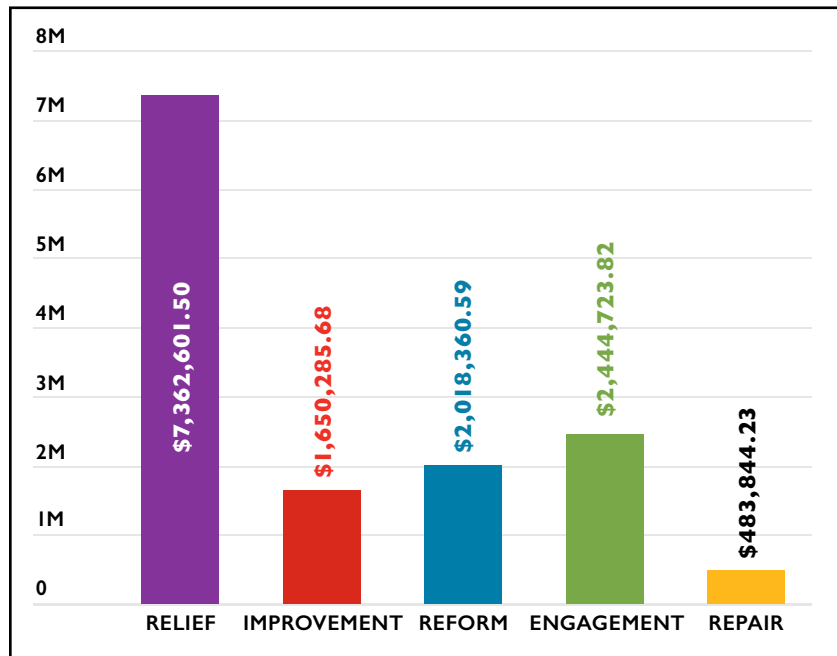
PHILANTHROPIC MOTIVATIONS

In 2006, Elizabeth Lynn and Susan Wisely analyzed giving patterns in the USA, finding five broad motivations: relief, improvement, reform, engagement, and repair (described below). We used these categories to understand the gifts received by the National Ministries in 2022, categorizing UCC giving by type and assessing the total amounts raised in each. Overall, meeting the immediate needs of human suffering motivates most gifts the National Ministries receive.

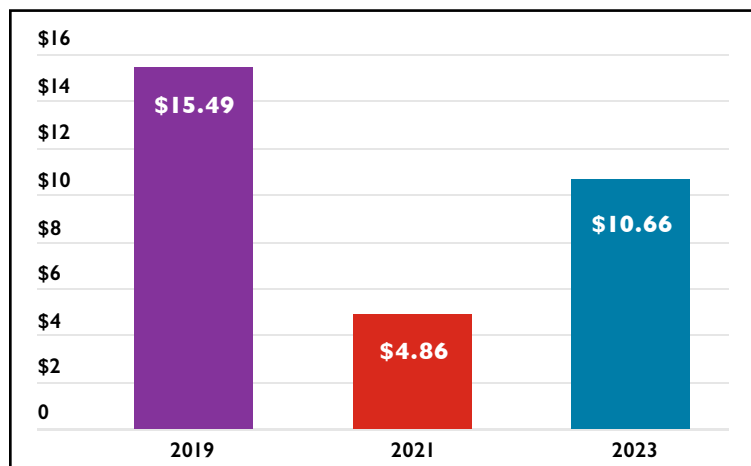
FIVE TRADITIONS OF PHILANTHROPY IN UCC GIVING

LYNN AND WISELY TYPE	DESCRIPTION	CHARACTERISTIC EXAMPLES FROM UCC NATIONAL MINISTRIES
Relief	Giving to alleviate suffering	The tremendous response of our donors to help refugees of the War in Ukraine and other international and domestic disasters, plus further efforts at providing immediate assistance
Improvement	Giving to maximize human potential	Gifts to the Ministers Financial Vitality Initiative and other efforts
Reform	Giving to address social problems	Contributions to Creation Care and other initiatives to improve society
Engagement	Giving to build community	Donations to the Annual Fund and programs to strengthen local congregations
Repair	Giving to mend past harms	Support of the Join the Movement Campaign. This category will likely grow as we move further into the campaign and respond to the General Synod's call for reparations

FIVE TRADITIONS OF PHILANTHROPY TOTAL AMOUNTS RAISED



PASSING THE PLATE AT SYNOD—AVERAGE GIFT PER PARTICIPANT



PASSING THE PLATE

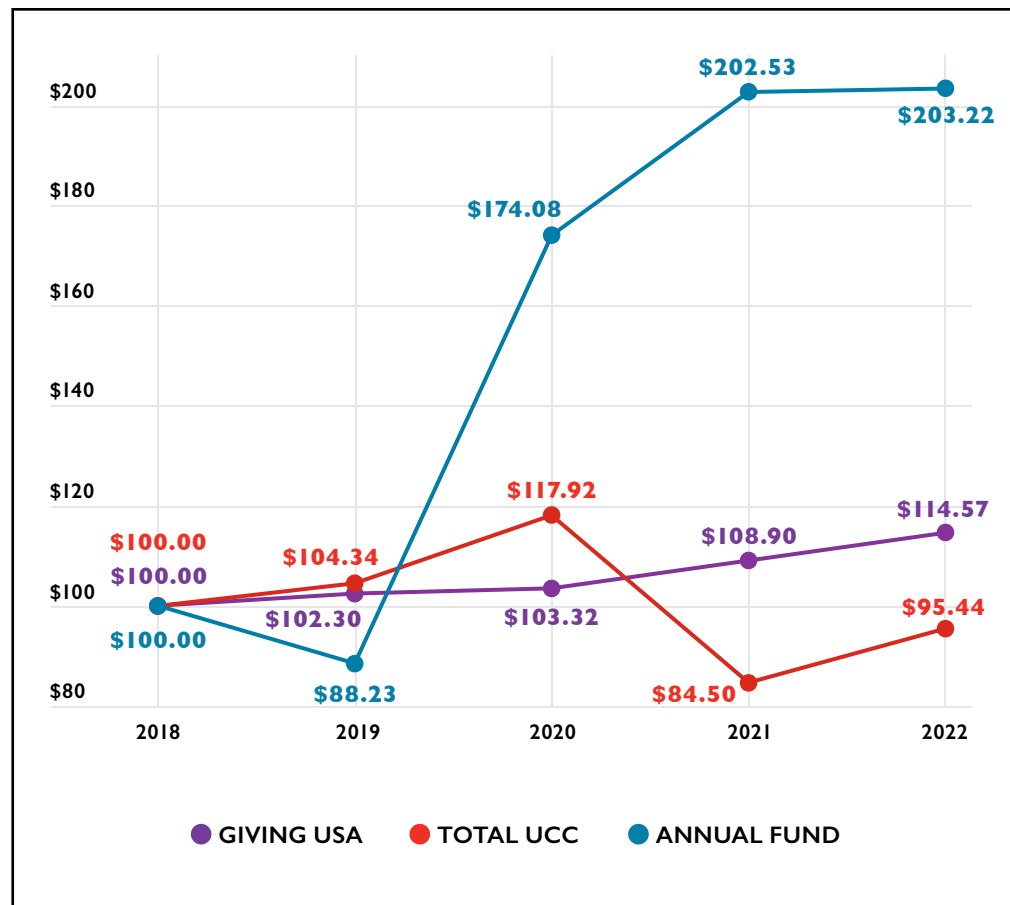
Many congregations moved away from physically passing a plate during worship services in favor of encouraging online giving and providing a drop box for checks or cash. This adaptation reflected concern about passing plates during the COVID Pandemic. Changes in method naturally prompted questions about possible impacts on giving, however. With this in mind, we examined offerings made during the last three General Synods. The Synod context differs from weekly giving in important ways—as a one-time request, for instance, it may be less likely than regular events to prompt attendees to establish recurring online donations. Plausibly, however, trends observed at Synod may generalize to other special events, and mode of giving was among the notable differences between recent Synods. The 2019 Synod took place in Milwaukee with plates passed between participants. The COVID Pandemic moved Synod entirely online in 2021, resulting in online-only giving. By 2023, we could gather again in person, but we did not pass plates this time and instead relied on online giving and drop boxes. Comparing the three, the 2019 Synod featured 50% more contributions per participant than 2023 and over 3 times the contributions per participant of 2021. While the presence of confounds (e.g., differing economic conditions between years) and limits of observational methods prevent us from drawing robust causal inferences, the results are in line with the possibility that plate passing yields greater donations in special event contexts and suggest further study.

BROAD PATTERNS

The [Giving USA Report](#) tracks support to all non-profit organizations in the country. We compared the rate of change in fundraising between the Giving USA's Religion Category, Total Giving to UCC Congregations, and the Annual Fund of the National Ministries. To make the numbers comparable, we used a \$100 gift as the starting point in 2018 and then measured the percentage change over time. While Giving USA found giving to religion increased yearly,

our UCC congregations saw a dramatic increase and then a decrease over this period. 2020 represented the strongest philanthropic support in eleven years, but this decreased in 2021 and 2022. Donors rallied for their churches and then returned to a pattern of slowly declining support. The National Ministries invested resources to promote the Annual Fund and saw a dramatic increase during this period. The difference between the results of local congregations and the National Ministries points to the importance of investing staff and volunteer time in fundraising.

GIVING USA VS UCC EXPERIENCE

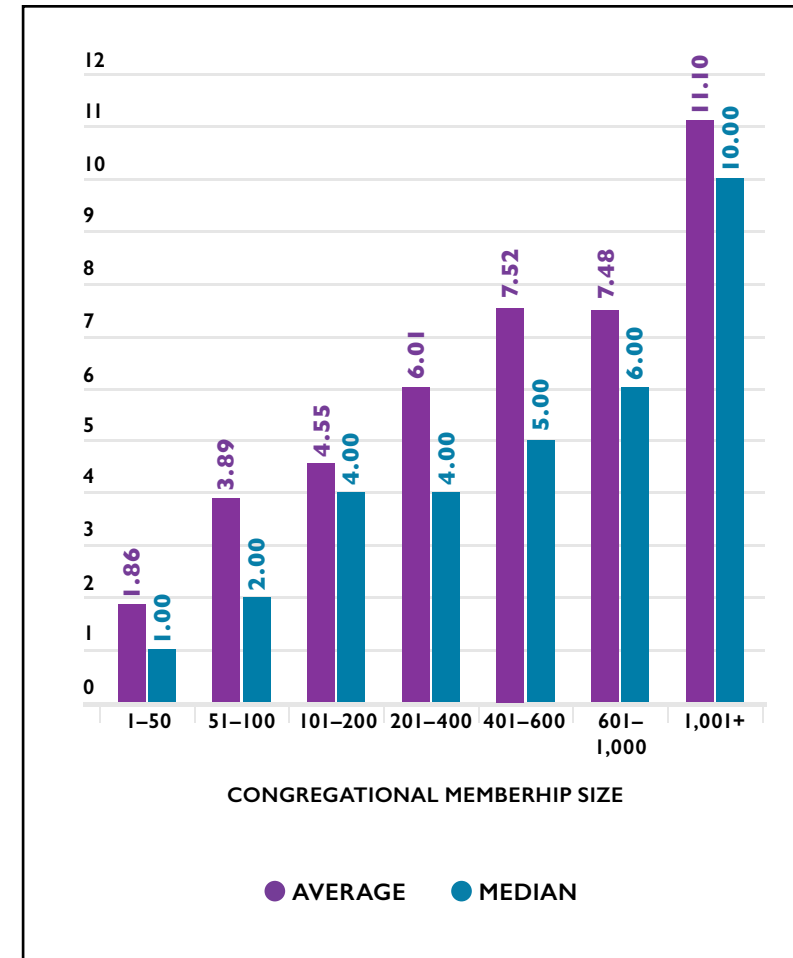


DENOMINATIONAL TRENDS: MEMBERS, CLERGY, AND CONGREGATIONS

**SPECIAL REPORT: CHURCH COMMUNITIES BY THE NUMBERS:
OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS***Contributed by: Erica Dollhopf, Ph.D., Director, Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data (CARDD)***OVERVIEW**

CARDD has continued to find ways to measure the vibrant church communities of the UCC beyond membership and worship numbers. In the 2022 Statistical Profile, the results of asking churches what metrics best described their church community were reported in the Special Report “Church Communities by the Numbers: Beyond Membership and Attendance” (pg. 45-47). While worship attendance and membership continue to be important indicators for many congregations, churches frequently reported that the numbers of outside organizations using their building as well as volunteerism in their church were also meaningful reflections of their communities. As a result, CARDD included questions on the 2023 Supplemental Survey measuring the number of outside organizations using a church’s building as well as volunteerism within the church and their community to better understand what these measures look like across the UCC and assess whether these are measures we should collect on an ongoing basis.

In addition to being widely reported measures of how our churches describe themselves, outside organizations and volunteers are also excellent candidates for continued data collection because they are easily reported in a consistent manner and are comparable across churches. For instance, one can readily compare the number of organizations that use a church’s building but it is harder to compare the number of people those organizations serve when some organizations may reach thousands of people through a weekly newsletter while others may provide daily daycare for a dozen children—both important activities but the widely varying scale of activities makes it difficult to interpret those numbers in a meaningful way across thousands of congregations. Therefore, this year’s supplemental survey data offers a promising opportunity to expand the ways we can tell the story of our churches through data.

**NUMBER OF OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS
REGULARLY USING BUILDING**

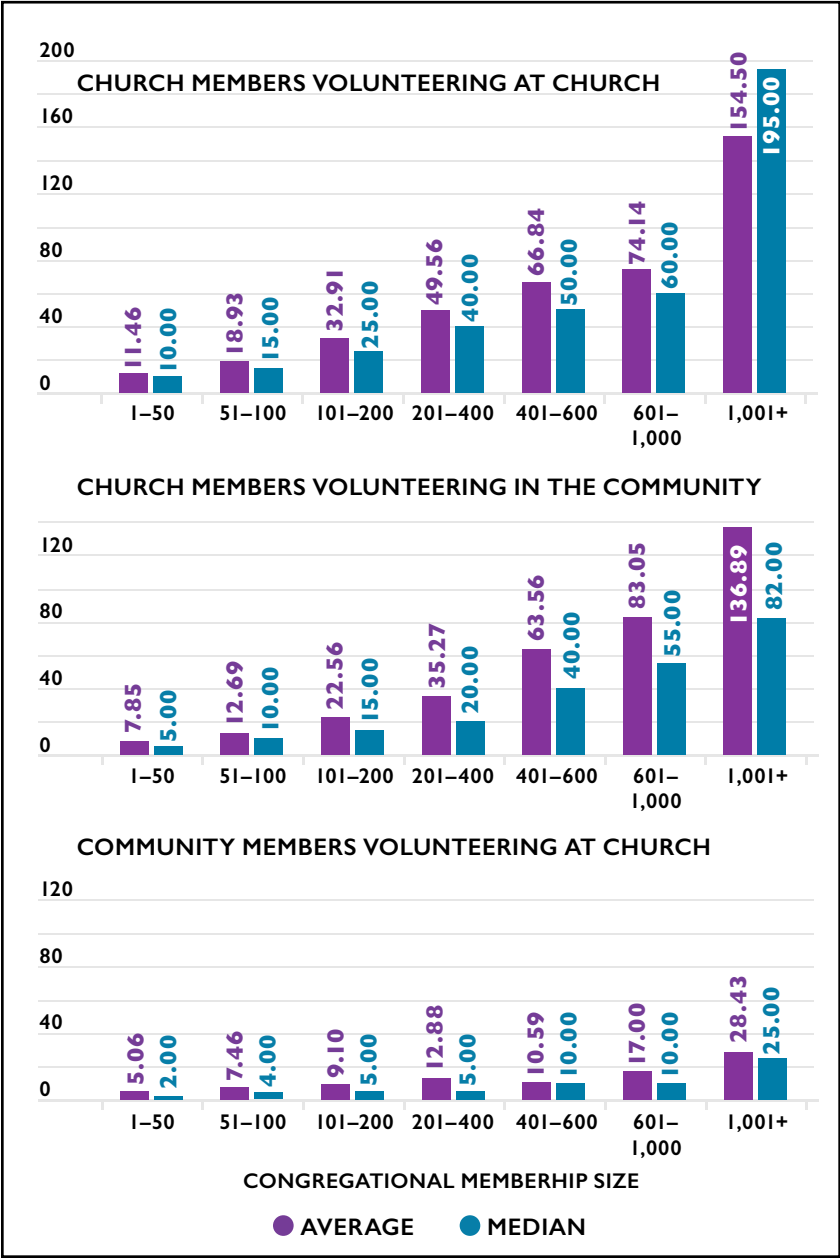
OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Churches were asked “How many outside organizations regularly use your church building?” as a measure of churches’ community engagement. Overall, the mean number of organizations reported was 4.55, while the median was 3.00; when analyzed by membership category, the mean and median generally increased as church membership size increased. This data shows that churches of all sizes are sharing their building with other organizations—whether for community engagement, the opportunity to support community efforts, the opportunity to supplement church income, or simply to share the gift of their space with others. While capturing only one aspect of church life and an aspect of church life that only pertains to churches with a physical building space, this measure is another way of demonstrating the engagement of our churches beyond membership and worship numbers.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism is another way UCC congregations describe themselves, but this measure is somewhat complicated as volunteers can be measured in a variety of ways. For instance, one can be a volunteer associated with a church as a church member volunteering to wash the dishes after coffee hour, as a church member volunteering to serve the weekly dinner at the community center across the street from the church, or as a community member volunteering to make pies for a church’s annual summer picnic fundraiser. Therefore, the survey asked about volunteers in three different ways: church members volunteering at the church, church members volunteering in the community, and community members volunteering at the church. For these measures, the churches generally reported the most church members volunteering within the church (average = 33.27, median = 23.00), then church members volunteering in the community (average = 24.80, median = 12.00), and finally community members volunteering at the church (average = 9.27, median = 5.00).

VOLUNTEERS BY MEMBERSHIP SIZE



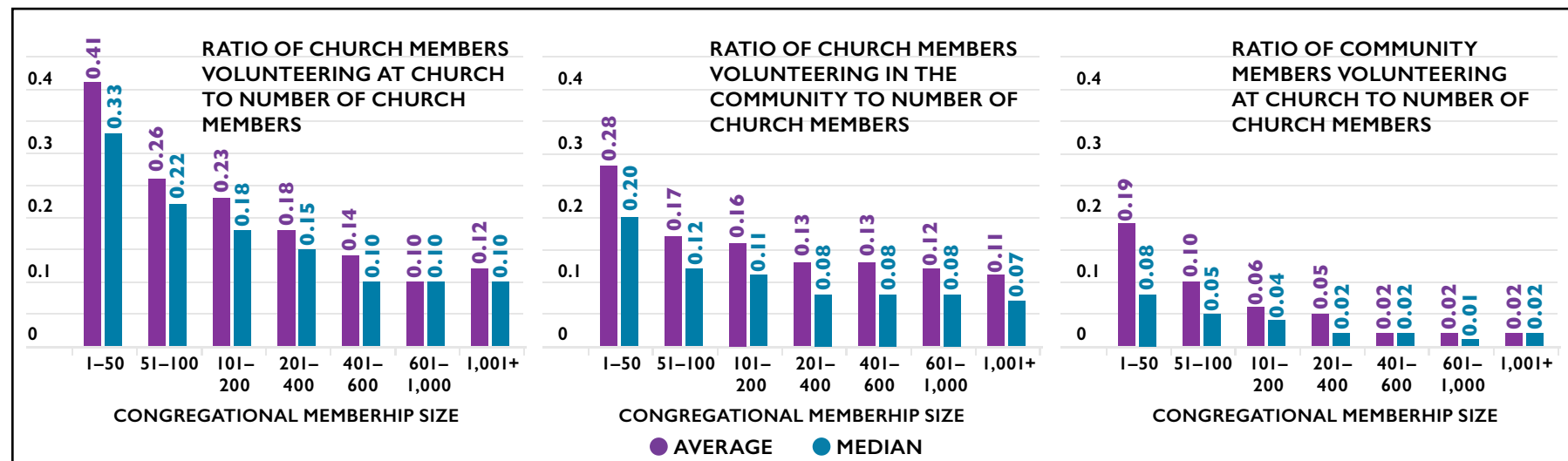
Looking at church volunteers by church membership size, the average and median number of volunteers for each of the three categories scales with membership size—for instance, churches with 1-50 members have an average of 11.46 church members volunteering at the church, while churches with 1,001+ members report having an average of 154.50 church members volunteering at the church. This scaling makes sense, as larger churches would have more people available to volunteer. Looking at the average and median ratio of volunteers to church members, however, reveals a more interesting story. These ratios effectively look at the proportion of church members who are volunteering in some capacity or the proportion of community members volunteering at the church relative to membership. Examining these metrics by church membership size shows that the smallest membership churches actually have the most active volunteers relative to church size, with the highest averages and medians across all categories of volunteers being in the 1-50 membership category. This finding speaks to the strength and vitality of small churches in the UCC and suggests that smaller churches may have a more engaged membership than larger churches. While small churches

may also need to rely on a higher proportion of volunteering members to carry out church activities, the higher proportion of church members engaged in community volunteerism and community members engaged in church volunteerism suggests that this spirit of engagement may go beyond what is needed to keep the church doors open, perhaps indicating the smaller churches and their members are also more connected to their communities.

CONCLUSION

The 2023 Supplemental Survey questions on outside organizations using church buildings and church volunteers revealed useful information that expands our understanding of church engagement beyond membership and worship numbers. The CARDD office will be collecting this data again in the 2024 Supplemental Survey so that we can continue to document these dimensions of congregational life and eventually develop insight into the trends of these figures over time. We deeply appreciate the time and effort of each church to submit their annual Yearbook and Supplemental Survey data and hope that our resulting reporting and analyses will be helpful across the life of the church.

VOLUNTEERS BY MEMBERSHIP SIZE



SPECIAL REPORT: LANGUAGES OF THE UCC

Contributed by: Evan Pence, Ph.D., Research Analyst, Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data (CARDD)

From its inception, the UCC has housed a wide array of congregational traditions, with diverse cultures and practices finding homes within the church. One aspect of this diversity is linguistic. UCC congregants speak a variety of languages, and in many churches, the use of a specific tongue during worship serves to anchor the community to a shared history.

To better understand this diversity and to better serve our congregations, two questions were added to the 2022 Supplementary Survey (conducted January 1st to March 20th): “What languages are regularly spoken in your congregation?” and “What languages does your congregation use in conducting worship services?” Of the 4,724 total UCC churches recorded in the 2022 Yearbook & Directory, 1,348 (28.5%) supplied answers to the first question and 1,347 (28.5%) addressed the second. Unsurprisingly, the most commonly listed language for both was English, which was regularly spoken by 99.6% of responding congregations and

used in worship by 99.8%. Beyond this, however, congregations listed at least 30 other languages or dialects in the “regularly spoken” category and at least 17 separate languages or dialects for use in worship. The 5 most common non-English languages or dialects are listed in the table below.

Notably, the languages listed vary considerably by region and state. The states with the largest proportion of Spanish speaking congregations in the sample were those of the Southwest, with Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona constituting the top three, followed by Florida in the Southeast (a similar pattern emerges in worship usage, with the only difference being that New Mexico precedes Texas in the ordering). American Sign Language (ASL), meanwhile, is widely distributed across the country, with no clear pattern of clustering. As might be expected, the four congregations listing Pennsylvania Dutch as a worship or regularly spoken language were all in Pennsylvania.

5 MOST COMMON NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES IN UCC CHURCHES

REGULARLY SPOKEN IN CONGREGATION		USED IN WORSHIP	
LANGUAGE	CONGREGATIONS	LANGUAGE	CONGREGATIONS
Spanish	32	Spanish	18
Hawaiian	8	Hawaiian	16
American Sign Language	7	American Sign Language	10
Japanese	7	German	5
Pennsylvania Dutch	3	Japanese	4

Perhaps the most striking pattern of regional variation was in Hawaii, where 50% of responding congregations reported at least one non-English language being regularly spoken and over 2/3 reported using non-English language in worship. In addition to Hawaiian, which was regularly spoken at 8 and featured in worship at 16 of the 32 responding congregations in Hawaii (25% and 50% of responding congregations, respectively), churches in the state reported at least 10 other regularly spoken languages and 7 other worship languages. The largest share of these were Micronesian languages (including Chuukese, Kosraean, Marshallese, and Pohnpeian), with additional entries coming from the Polynesian languages (Tongan and Samoan, in addition to Hawaiian itself), the languages of the Philippines (Tagalog, Ilocano), Japanese, and Mandarin. 8 of the 30 non-English languages regularly spoken at UCC churches (26.7%) were reported only in Hawaii, while 7 of the 17 used in worship (41.2%) were unique to the state.

With ongoing efforts in linguistic revitalization and congregational inclusivity, we may hope that the languages of the UCC continue and grow in the years to come.

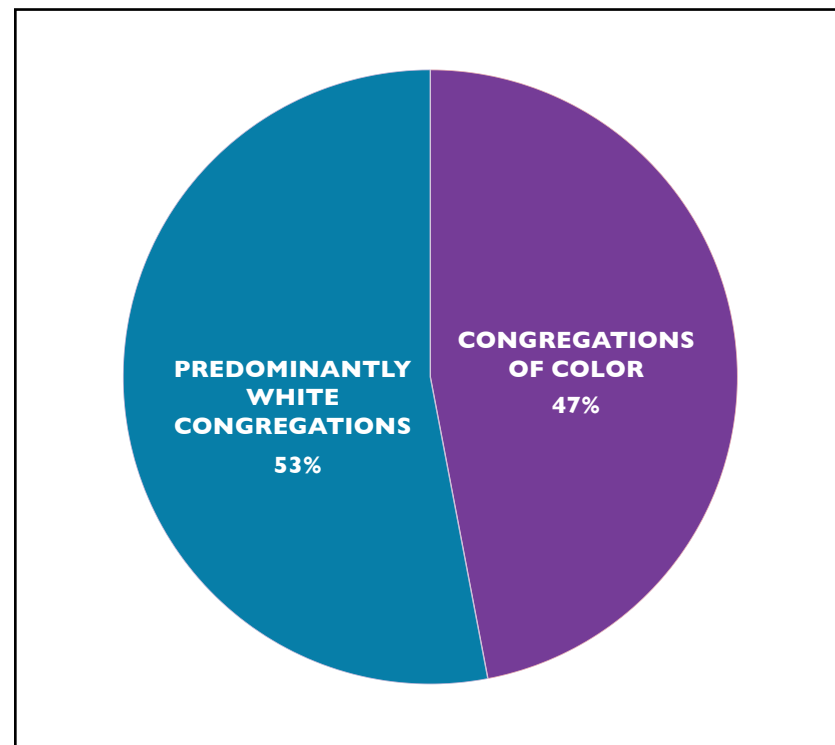
SPECIAL REPORT: CONGREGATIONAL GRANTS 2022

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

Justice and Local Church Ministry of the United Church of Christ joins 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.

RACE/ETHNICITY MAKE UP OF GRANT-RECEIVING CONGREGATIONS



 **\$119,000**
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

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

 **\$225,000**
CONGREGATION ASSESSMENT, SUPPORT
AND ADVANCEMENT TEAM (CASA)

 **\$108,000**
NEW & RENEWING CHURCHES
(PENSION BOARD PARTNERSHIP)

In 2022, we awarded 122 grants, totaling \$601,900. 47% of funds were awarded to congregations of color, 9% to rural congregations, and 47% to congregations that had not received any other financial support from any other source (note that congregations may occupy more than one category).

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 the world.

In closing, hear the words of Rev. Kerry Kirtley, Pastor of Touchstone Community Church UCC, a 2022 grant recipient:

Touchstone is forever grateful for the grant funding that has sustained and grown us. These funds have led to more innovative thinking around our missional work for the next three to five years. We are envisioning a Social Justice Hub space for new organizations in our area, as well as a possible interfaith worship space. Thank you for these funds that are undergirding our efforts to be all that God is calling us to be!

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: 2022 WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE ACTION ALERTS

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

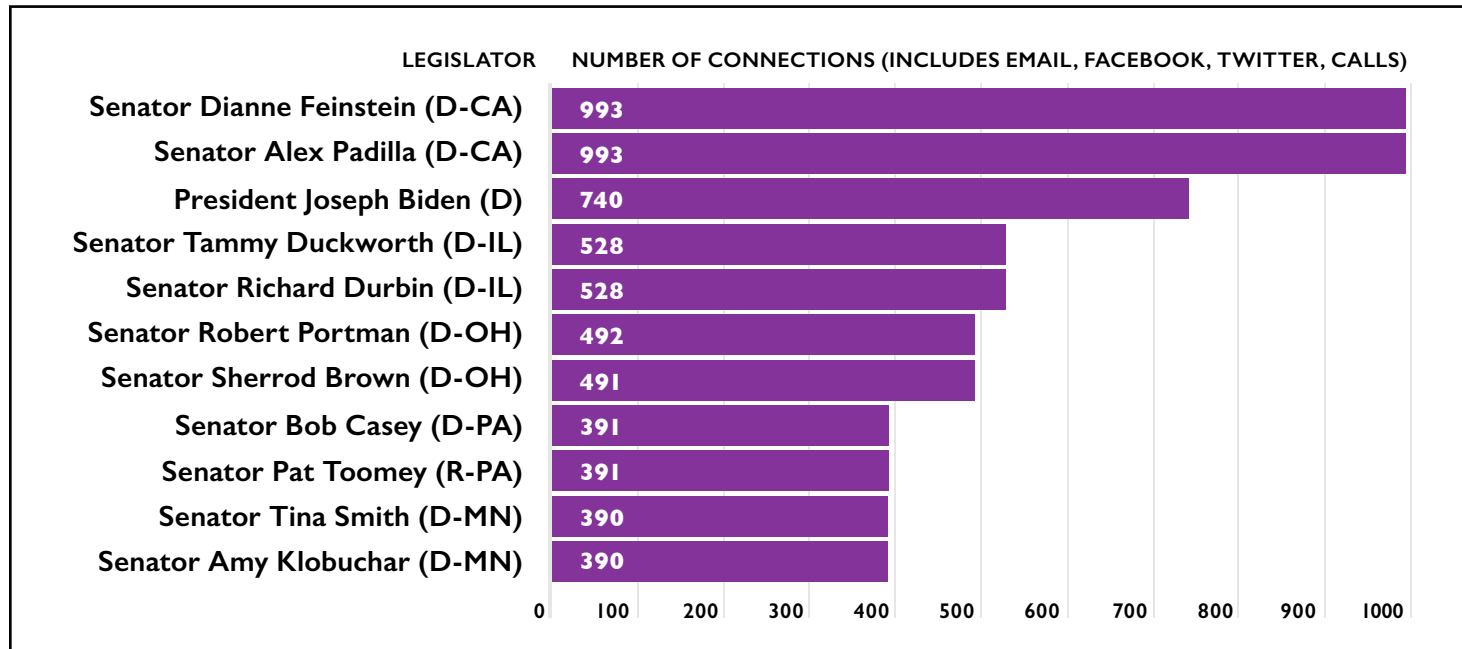
Each week, targeted action alerts are sent out to advocates across the country through the UCC's Justice and Peace Action Network (JPANet). In 2022, 30 alerts were sent out on a wide range of issues. Advocates who took action through our system sent direct emails and tweets to their legislators using language written by UCC staff.

The highest number of actions taken by advocates in 2022 were on the topics of gun violence prevention, humanitarian support for Ukraine, and immigration reform. Specifically on the topic of gun violence prevention, 1,489 advocates took action, sending 4,964 messages to their legislators! In multiple action alerts, UCC advocates called for common sense gun measures like a ban on assault weapons, funding for community violence prevention, closing loopholes on gun sales, and safe storage laws. In February of 2022, the world witnessed as Russia invaded Ukraine. Our advocates showed their concern for human rights and peace globally by advocating in large numbers for humanitarian assistance, a more robust refugee program, and diplomatic efforts to bring about a ceasefire.

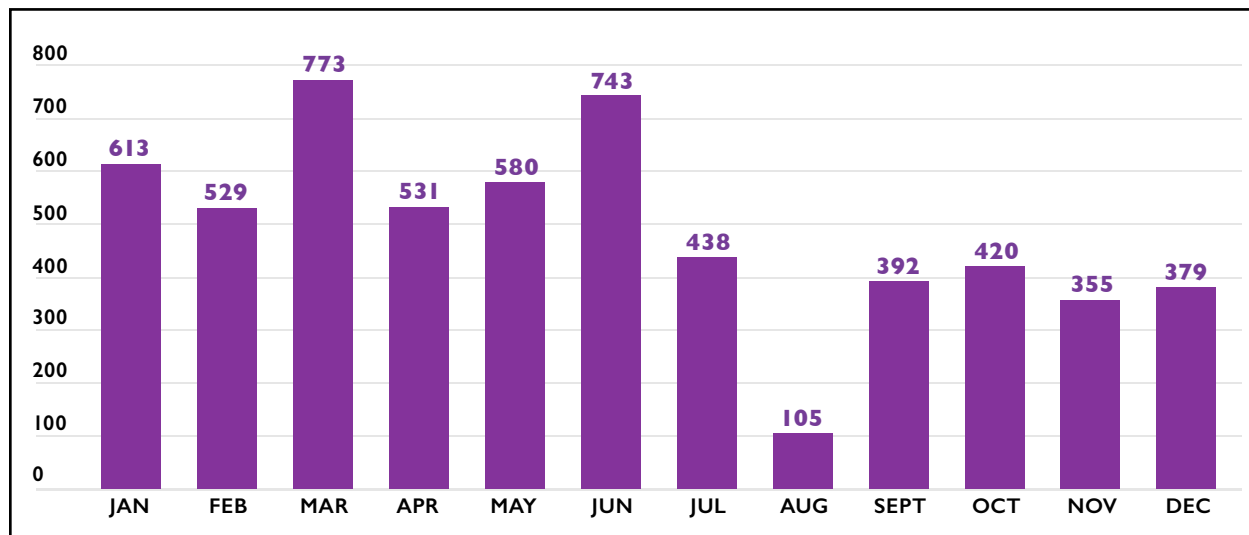
2022 ACTION ALERT ISSUES (DOMESTIC)

ACTION ALERT ISSUES (DOMESTIC)—2022	# OF ADVOCATES BY ISSUE
End Gun Violence (6 alerts)	1489
Ukraine (2 alerts)	539
Pathway to Citizenship (2 alerts)	530
Climate Justice (2 alerts)	487
Support Palestinian Human Rights (2 alerts)	472
Sentencing Reform (2 alerts)	470
LGBTQ+ Justice: Equality Act	318
Human Trafficking	317
Violence Against Women Act	288
Nuclear Weapon Abolition	287
Momnibus: Support Maternal Health	267
Climate Justice: Red Hill	259
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	248
Reproductive Justice	229
Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2022	217
Criminal Justice Reform	199
Indigenous Boarding Schools	199
Human Rights in the Philippines	196
Environmental Justice for All Act	177
Poor People's Campaign Demands	152

TOP LEGISLATOR CONNECTIONS IN 2021



ADVOCATE GROWTH IN 2021



SPECIAL REPORT: GLOBAL MINISTRIES PARTNER PRIORITIES: 2022 ACTION ALERT ISSUES

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

2022 GLOBAL MINISTRY ACTION ALERT ISSUES

GLOBAL MINISTRY ACTION ALERT ISSUES—2022	# OF ADVOCATES BY ISSUE
Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine (2 alerts)	539
Pass H.R. 2590 (5 alerts)	339
Human Trafficking	317
Nuclear Weapon Abolition	287
Just Spending in the Holy Land	199
Philippines Human Rights Act	196
Consistency in International Law	42
Act Against Israeli Impunity	17
Visa Waiver Program	6

In 2022, 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 alerts that had the most engagement from advocates were on the topics of humanitarian aid and support for Ukraine and calling for passage of H.R. 2590. H.R. 2590 is legislation calling for the defense of human rights of Palestinian children and families living under Israeli occupation.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

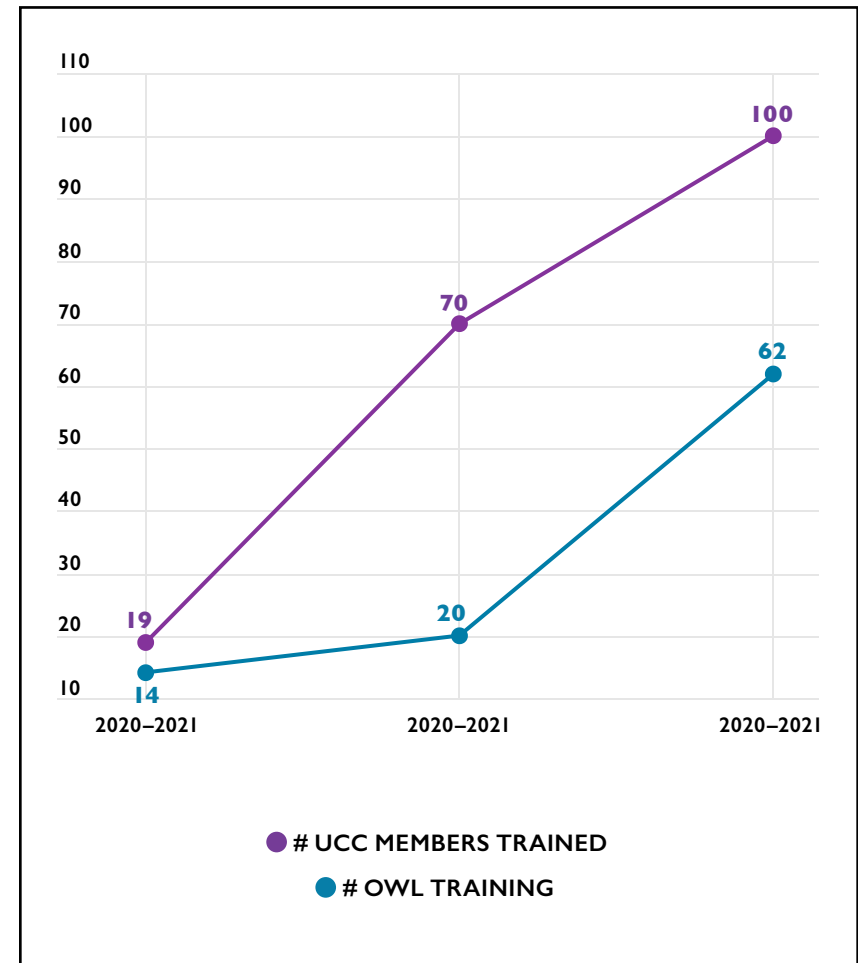
SPECIAL REPORT: OUR WHOLE LIVES/SEXUALITY AND OUR FAITH

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.

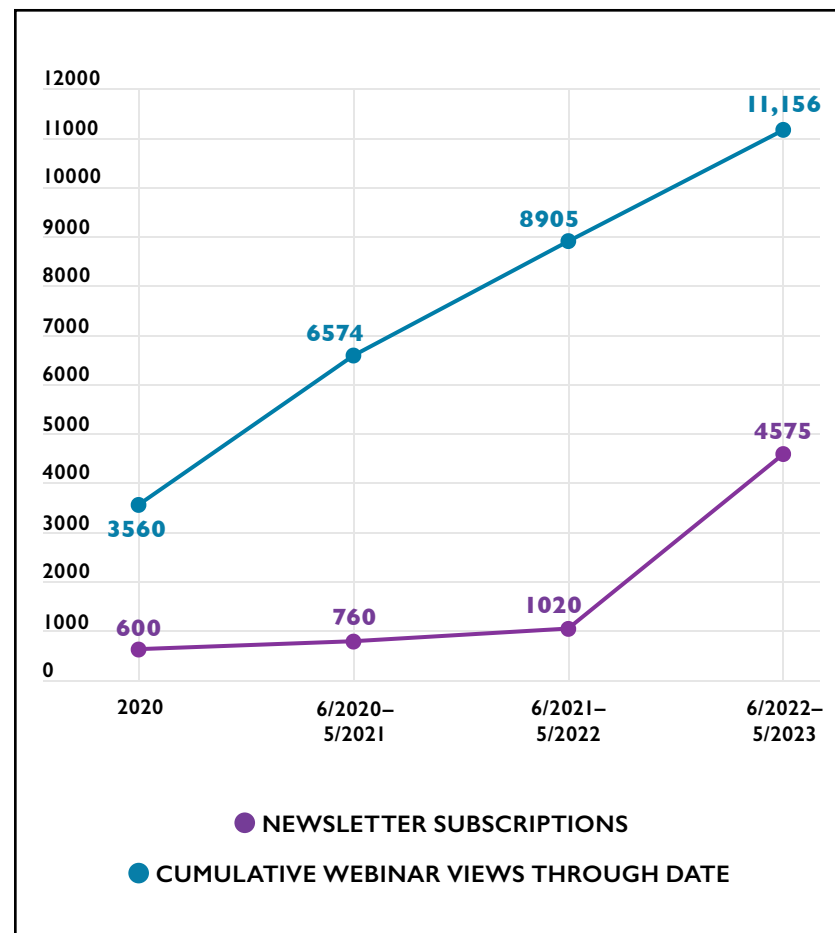
Our Whole Lives in-person trainings are increasing. Quarterly Our Whole Lives webinars continue to be popular as live presentations and as recordings accessed after their presentation, reaching people from 43 states as well as 2 provinces in Canada. There were 62 total trainings between 6/2022 and 5/2023, up from 20 a year ago, with 100 UCC people undergoing training, up from the previous figure of 70.

- Monthly Our Whole Lives: Taking Flight webinars
 - Topics have included:
 - Autism-Inclusive OWL
 - Amazing Amaze! With Rachel Gibson from Amaze.org
 - You Know, Sex with Cory Silverberg
 - A New Breed of OWL; Formatting K-1 and Beyond!
 - Sex on Wednesdays with Martha Kempner
 - The Importance of Continuing Education in Sex Ed with Tanya Bass
 - I Heart Orgasms-Pleasure, Sexual Health, and Consent with Dorian Solot and Marshall Miller
 - Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting
 - Mental Health Awareness While Offering Our Whole Lives

OWL TRAININGS

- Numbers of cumulative views continues to increase with 11,156 the total as of this report. Most watched are:
 - Racial Justice webinar (now required for all OWL training participants)
 - Consensual Non-Monogamy and Faith
 - Sex on Wednesday
 - Gender and Related Language
 - Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators
- Special Initiatives:
 - Trainer's Letter of Agreement renewed
 - Training of Trainers being planned for early 2024
 - UCC Military Chaplains training
 - Sexuality and Our Faith visuals revision in process
- Revisions of curricula:
 - OWL for Grades K-1, 2nd edition published in Jan 2023, New format
 - OWL for Grades 10-12, 2nd edition, in developmental editing
 - OWL for Young Adults, preparing for field testing summer/fall 2023

OUR WHOLE LIVES NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: RACIAL JUSTICE SACRED CONVERSATIONS TO END RACISM (SC2ER) AND JOIN THE MOVEMENT TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE

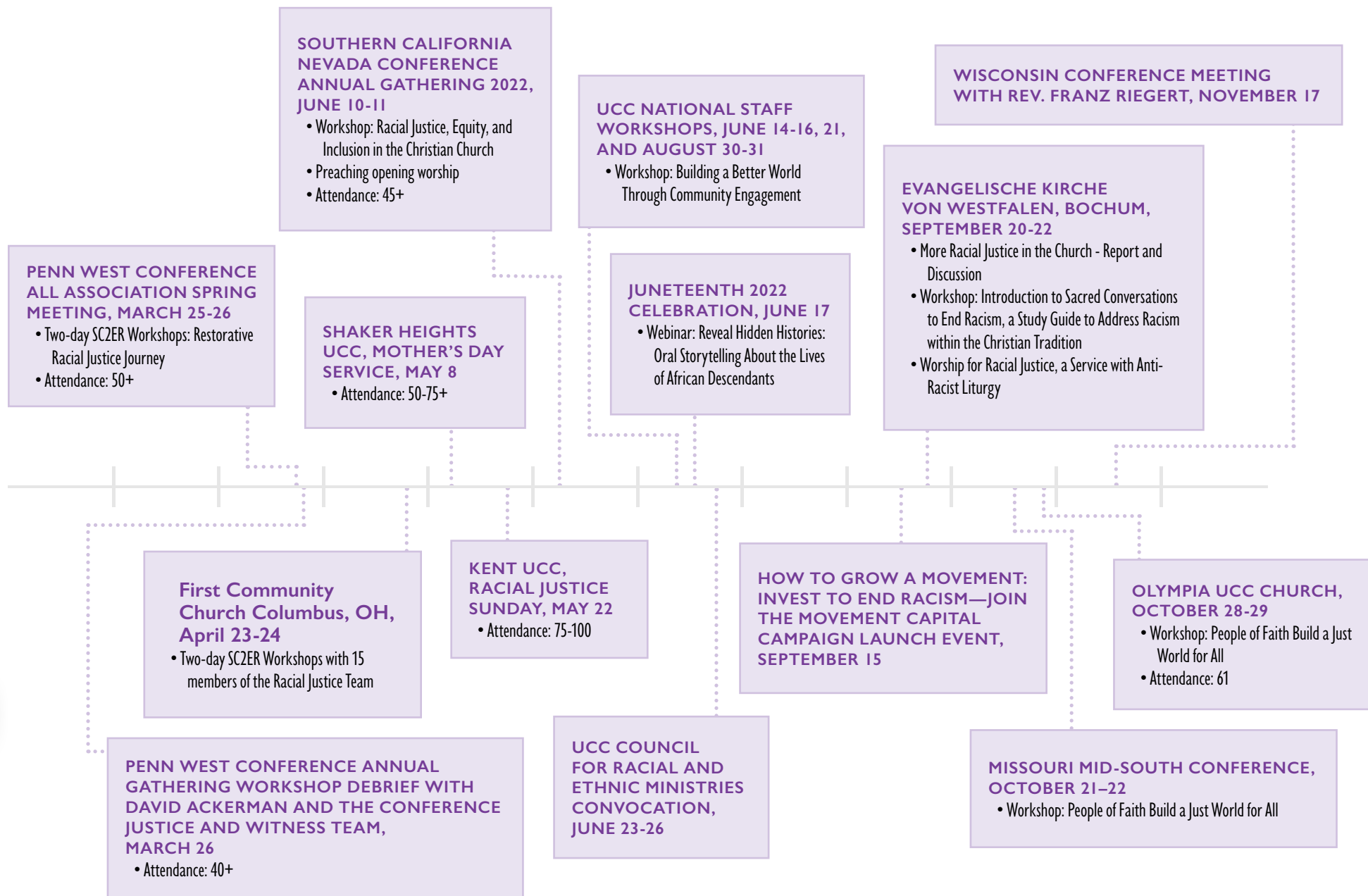
Contributed by: The Rev. Dr. Velda Love, Minister for Racial Justice and Lead for Join the Movement

Racial justice advocacy and activism is still at the forefront of many UCC local churches. This is evidenced by the requests for racial justice and antiracism workshops and training across the country. Since 2020, UCC clergy and lay leaders have been vigilant and committed to creating space for addressing racial injustice, hate speech, and acts of violence against people of color. The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd ignited global responses to racism and white supremacist violence predominately in African American communities. Hate speech and violent attacks also escalated against our siblings of Asian American descent. Racial Justice is a priority because of its long history associated with systemic and institutional policies of oppression, domination, and political and economic repression tactics. There is hope and UCC faith leaders are showing up and learning how to combat racism within their communities and churches. This is good news!

2022 saw the continued growth and development of both Join the Movement (JTM) and Sacred Conversations to End Racism (SC2ER). JTM entered its second year with an advisory and ambassador team of 50 clergy, staff, lay leaders, and facilitators as well as a new Young Adult Working Group. The JTM website was officially launched over the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and on September 15th, it began its Capital Campaign, aiming to fund present work in racial justice and to establish an endowment for the work of future generations. SC2ER, meanwhile, began its fifth year with a new cohort of 35 prospective facilitators undergoing training and education, including 5 from Berlin and Frankfurt Germany. Training is a multi-year process requiring participants to make space for deep listening, relearning, reading, and viewing historical and contemporary resources. Those in the most recent cohort began orientation in March and will conclude their formal training in 2025.

Racial justice ministries this year included well over a dozen workshops, trainings, and speaking engagements, many with 50 or more in attendance. Highlights this year included the Spring Cultural Immersion Conversations with Communities of Asian Descent, held with the Pension Boards-United Church of Christ in response to ongoing attacks upon Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, workshops with the GMP search committee, and a three-day program in Bochum, Germany. A timeline of workshops and speaking engagements is presented on the following page.

WORKSHOPS AND INVITATIONS TO SPEAK AND PREACH



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: JOIN THE MOVEMENT CURATOR*Contributed by: Dr. Sharon R. Fennema, Join the Movement Curator*

Since its launch at General Synod in 2021, the Join the Movement toward Racial Justice initiative and campaign has been engaging every setting of the denomination in sharing stories, taking action, and building movements toward racial justice. We believe that there will be an end to racism, and it is all of our sacred work to make this belief a reality. At Join the Movement, we pursue this antiracist future in a variety of ways.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT IS...A HUB OF ANTIRACIST STORY-SHARING, RESOURCING, AND REFLECTION.

- 25 Stories published
- 20 Resources gathered
- 18 News Commentaries offered

JOIN THE MOVEMENT IS...A NETWORK OF RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT-MAKERS, ALLIES & ACCOMPLICES, AND ANTIRACISM PRACTITIONERS.

- 2500 Subscribers
- 50 JTM Advisory Team members and Ambassadors
- 45 Story-sharers and JTM Writers

JOIN THE MOVEMENT IS...A COVENANT TO FAITH-FILLED ANTIRACIST PRACTICES FOR INDIVIDUALS, LOCAL CHURCHES, CONFERENCES, AND THE DENOMINATION AS A WHOLE.

- 10 original publications/curriculums created and issued, including:
 - Election Season Spiritual Care Package
 - Abolition Advent Calendar
 - MLK and the New Abolitionists: Resources for Worship, Study, Reflection and Action
 - Building Intergenerational Movements: Kid-Welcoming Resources for Racial Justice Sunday
 - Becoming Freedom Schools Toolkit for Parents and Faith Formation Teams
 - Courageous Conversations: A Lenten Antiracism Journey

- Holy Week Journey from Words to Deeds: Practices for Intervening in Moments of Racial Harm Video Series
- “You Can’t Let the Fear Stop You:” Good Friday Prayers in Solidarity with #StopCopCity and #DefendAtlantaForest.
- Faith-based Discussion and Facilitator Guides for How to Be An Antiracist

JOIN THE MOVEMENT IS...A CALL TO ACTION THAT RECOGNIZES THE MOVEMENT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM FAITH COMMITMENTS TO DO JUSTICE AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS.

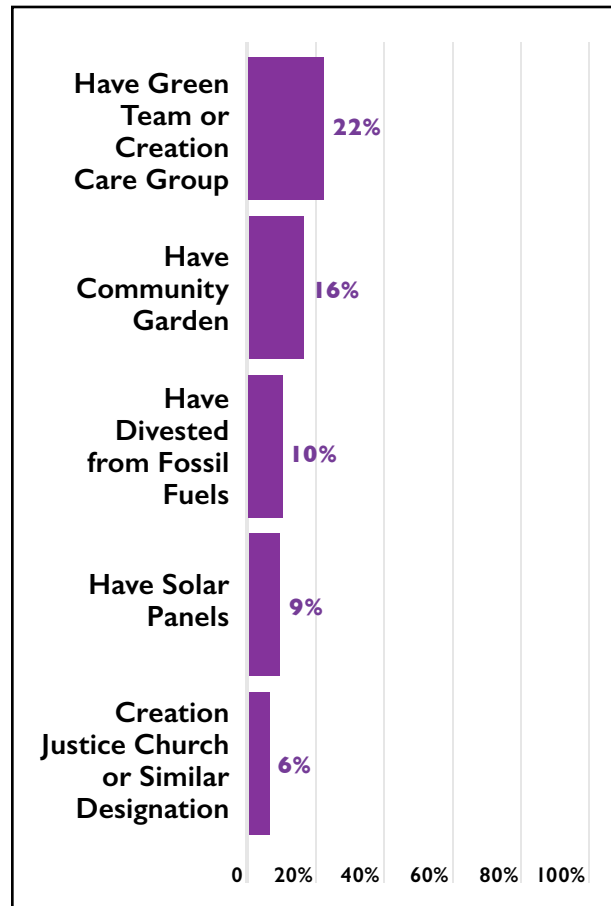
- 4000 Webinar and Event participants
- 500 Abolition Advent Calendar Subscribers
- 100+ All Church Read Groups

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION: A 2023 SNAPSHOT OF THE UCC

Contributed by: The Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, Environmental Justice Minister, Education for Faithful Action Ministries

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION BY CONGREGATIONS, 2022



The care of God's creation is a central calling of Christians that has found unique expression in the life of the United Church of Christ ever since the birth of the environmental justice movement in the 1980s under the leadership of Dollie Burwell, the Rev. Benjamin Chavis, Jr., the Rev. Leon White, Charles Lee, and many others. Now, for the first time, the United Church of Christ is tracking the commitments of our churches in caring for God's creation through an annual survey conducted by the UCC's Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data (CARDD).

While there are countless ways that a congregation can live out its environmental commitments, the survey sought to track some of the most prevalent manifestations. With slightly more than a thousand churches responding to the survey questions, 22% had a green team or group devoted to creation care, 16% had a community garden, 10% had divested from fossil fuels, 9% had solar panels, and 6% had achieved an environmental designation such as the UCC's Creation Justice Church designation.

In accord with past General Synod resolutions and with an awareness that the present climate crisis necessitates action at the federal level of government, UCC churches are also answering the call to care for God's creation by coming together for joint advocacy endeavors. This has been seen most prominently in the UCC's Climate Hope Cards campaign.

In the first phase of the campaign, a denomination-wide art contest for children and youth led to more than 900 submissions from congregations in 44 states and Washington, D.C. The winning artwork from this contest was placed on the cover of 25,000 postcards that were shipped to 152 congregations who had registered to participate in collecting signed cards that will be delivered to the Environmental Protection Agency. This campaign seizes a rare opportunity as the EPA considers updating protections to a level that would save thousands of lives, address societal inequities, and put our nation on course to have a carbon free electrical grid by 2035.

The power of the UCC in championing the care of God's creation can be seen in our local churches and in the immense potential that is realized when our churches come together to seek change.

UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

SPECIAL REPORT: UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES

Contributed by: Alyson J. Breisch, Co-chair, UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team

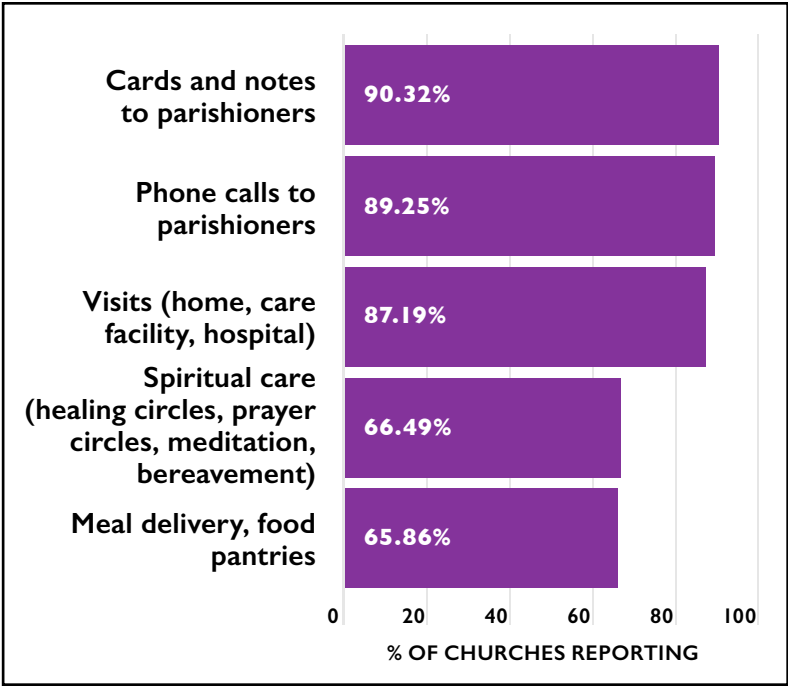
The Wellness Ministries of the UCC has promoted and supported Wellness Ministry programs in local churches, Associations, and Conferences for over 25 years. The General Synod XXI Resolution “Reclaiming the Church’s Ministry of Health and Healing” (1997) called on all UCC congregations, denomination-wide, to implement aspects of wholistic caring for body, mind, and spirit into their ministries as appropriate to the needs of their congregations and the communities they serve. In local churches, Wellness Ministries often serve as the central hub to promote health and wellness and advocate for justice in healthcare accessibility and equality. Local churches conduct multiple ministries ranging from education and nurture, to direct service, to advocacy and empowerment, to pastoral care, counseling, and spiritual support according to the assessed health needs of the congregation.

The UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team had four questions included in the Supplemental Survey 2023 to identify local congregations with Wellness Ministries and obtain information on the span of activities provided. One-quarter of all 1,121 responding congregations reported having a Wellness Ministry. The majority of these were led by lay members of the congregation; only 8.26% reported having a faith community nurse leading these ministries. This affirms an intrinsic aspect of Wellness Ministries—wellness goes beyond the healthcare focus on illness and cure and embraces broader dimensions of wellbeing. Wellness Ministries are achieved by lay leaders developing an expanse of supportive responses to the specific care needs within the congregation.

The types of wellness ministry activities described were expansive, with several reported by more than half of the respondents (see chart). The examples also reflected ministries specific to particular communities of care: the homeless, refugees, prison and jail ministries, youth and after-school programs, LBGTQIA persons, poverty and food desert communities, participation in indigenous ceremonies, individuals with medical equipment, clothing, and personal essential needs.

The Wellness Ministries of the UCC has developed a new health and wellness resource, the [Wellness Ministries Toolkit](#), available on the UCC website for local UCC congregations, Associations, and Conferences. The toolkit provides information for congregations beginning their formation of a Wellness Ministry and also has resources for established programs wishing to expand and enhance their ministries. Access to Section 2 and Section 3 of the toolkit requires sharing contact information by registration which will enable the UCC Wellness Ministries Leadership Team to share content updates.

TOP 5 REPORTED WELLNESS MINISTRIES



UCC PROGRAMMATIC WORK

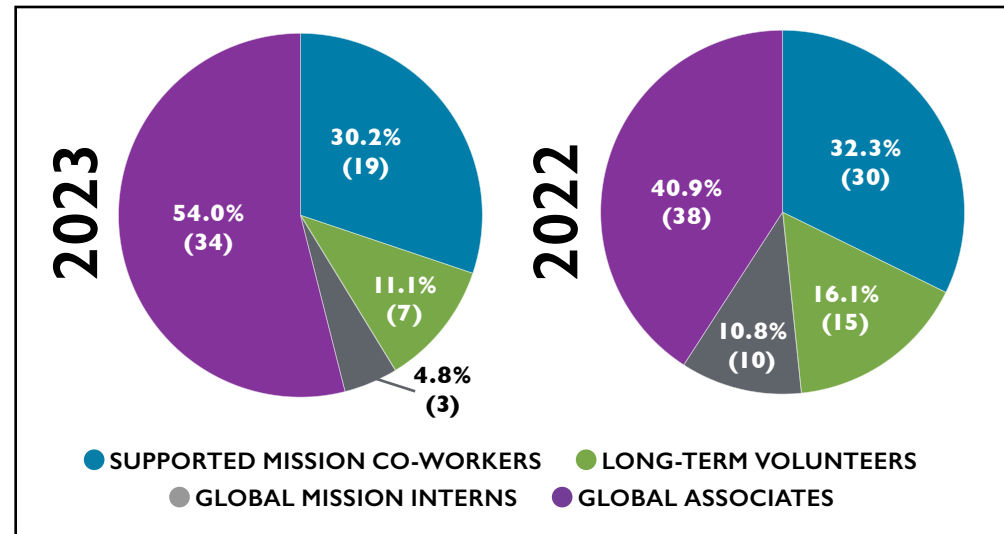
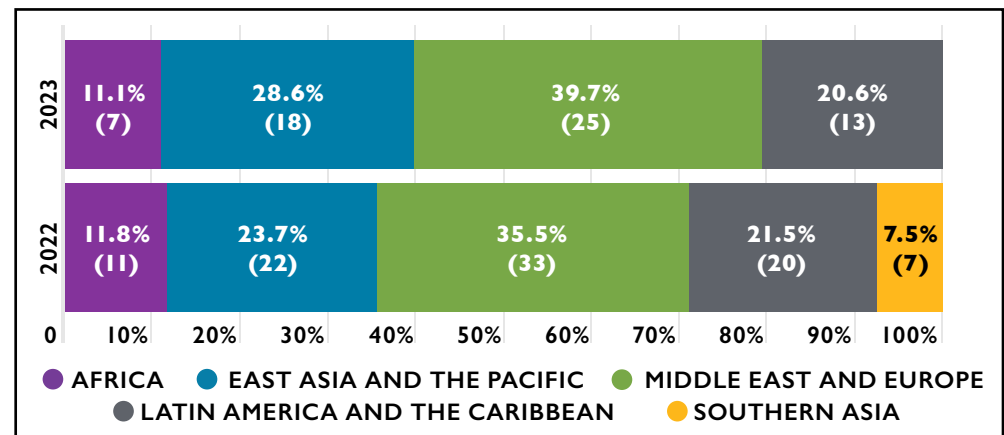
SPECIAL REPORT: MISSION PERSONNEL OFFICE

Contributed by: Donna Cummings, Program Assistant, Mission Personnel, Global Ministries, Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples of Christ and Rev. James Semmelroth Darnell, International Recruitment and Training Coordinator, Global Ministries, Division of Overseas Ministries, 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.

During this period, there were 63 mission co-workers serving in the following categories: supported mission co-workers; long-term volunteers; global mission interns; and global associates. The largest share of fully mission co-workers served in the Middle East and Europe, followed by East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. While five Mission Co-workers served in Southern Asia in 2022, none are presently serving.

Since 2022, the total number of mission co-workers has declined from 93 to 63. This recent decrease has resulted from several retirements, completions of ministry by long-term mission personnel, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to filling mission priority positions. The Mission Personnel Office is actively recruiting candidates to provide mission co-workers needed for mission partners.

PEOPLE IN MISSION: SERVICE TYPES (PERCENTAGE)**MISSION CO-WORKER DISTRIBUTION BY REGION**

SPECIAL REPORT: OPEN AND AFFIRMING COALITION

Contributed by: Rev. Dr. Katrina Roseboro-Marsh, Executive Director

As the Open and Affirming Coalition prepares for its future by identifying a new Executive Director in February of 2023 and appointing a Program Director in May of 2023, the organization seeks to enhance its programming and expand its networks. The Coalition's focus is quality and accountability, rather than quantity and inactivity. The organization's expectation is vigorous and secure growth for its movement. Accordingly, an increase is needed in committed churches, associations, conferences, seminaries, denominations, and organizations to connect their passion for equitable change to our movement. Our guiding principle is to live out UCC's theme of "Making All Things New" alongside our theme "ReNEWability: Reclaiming our Spirit, Replenishing our World." Ephesians 4:24 sums it up well: "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

The number of churches and entities who have publicly acknowledged an Open and Affirming Covenant continues to rise. The previously reported number of 1,714 certified churches since 1985 is now officially 1,818. The Coalition certified 104 congregations since the last submitted Special Report (May 2021 to May 2023). Those 104 congregations are spread out among 26 states and account for 18,753 UCC members.

With the Coalition's support, churches in rural communities that five or ten years ago would not have envisaged affirming their LGBTQIA+ neighbors have been participating in the conversation. Of the 104 churches certified since the last report, 25% of them are the only ONA church within a 10+ mile radius. These congregations are reaching folks anew and providing a beacon of light in their communities.

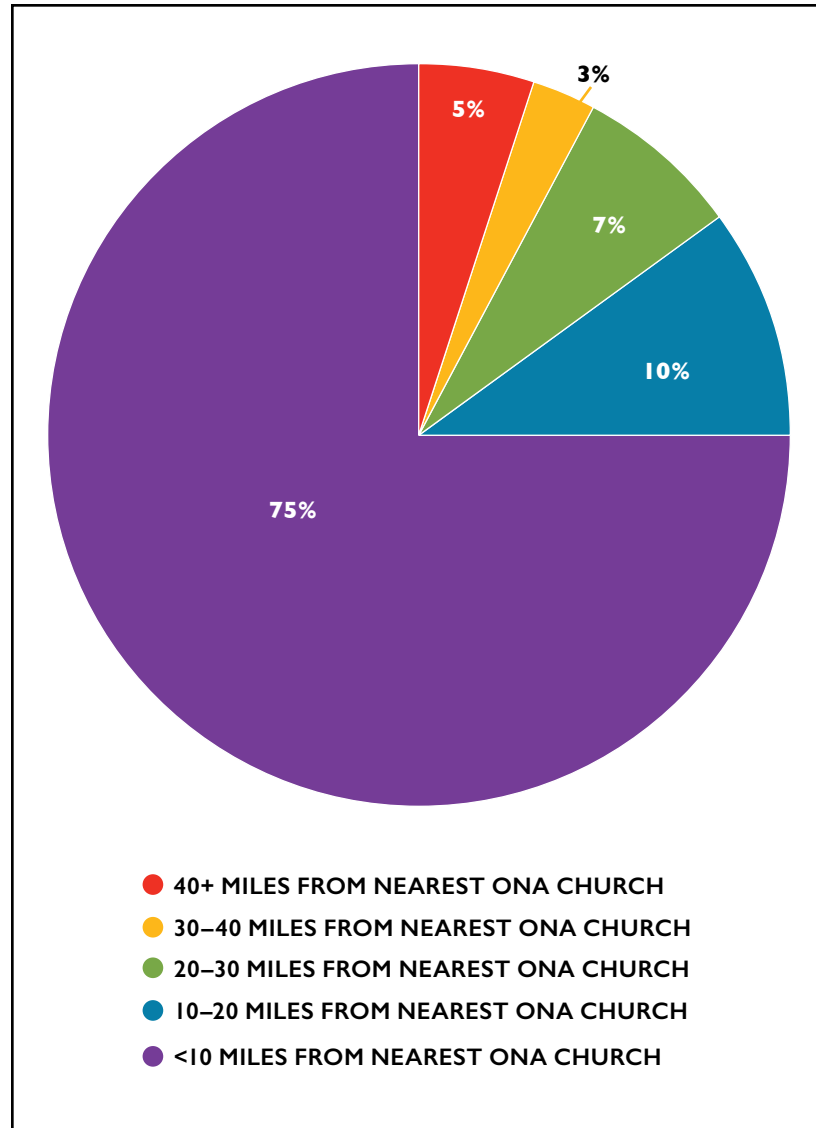
Concerning the total number of UCC congregations, approximately 35% are currently certified Open and Affirming. While 3,000 are not yet ONA, the Coalition is still the fastest-growing LGBTQIA+/SGL affirming church movement in the world. In contrast, it highlights the importance of expanding our reach until the majority of UCC congregations have adopted ONA covenants. Correspondingly, it calls attention to the significance of stretching accountability for implementation of covenant commitments. As reported to the Coalition, 42 UCC churches are currently undergoing an ONA process.

Our webinar series continues to be one of our most essential engagement methods. It is a crucial instrument for the development of the movement, both for supporting congregations through the ONA process and for assisting existing ONA churches in renewing and strengthening their commitments. The topics we covered in 2022 were:

- ONA 101
- ONA Next
- ONA and the Bible
- Experiencing a Transgender God
- Transgender/Nonbinary 201
- LGBTQIA+ Advocacy 101
- One-to-One Conversations about ONA

New and additional programming is being planned for the coming months that will address the pressing challenges facing the LGBTQIA+/SGL community and those faith communities that love and welcome them.

ONA CHURCHES CERTIFIED MAY 2021–MAY 2023



The ONA Coalition movement continues to be funded by individuals, churches, grants, and product sales. The Coalition receives office space from the National setting of the UCC but receives no regular budgetary support from OCWM. The ONA Coalition is governed by a Board that is referred to as our Leadership Team (LT). The LT is currently comprised of five members and one member *ex officio* on behalf of the National Setting, Rachael Ward.

The Open and Affirming Coalition continues to change hearts and minds. Tens of thousands of people have been reached and have made a commitment to the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+/SGL individuals in the life of the church. Every month, new congregations and entities are covenanting together in the name of Christ, who loves and welcomes all. The Open and Affirming Coalition is celebrating 51 years this year, and we look toward the next decades with a call to bravery, prayerful hope, and faithful action.

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

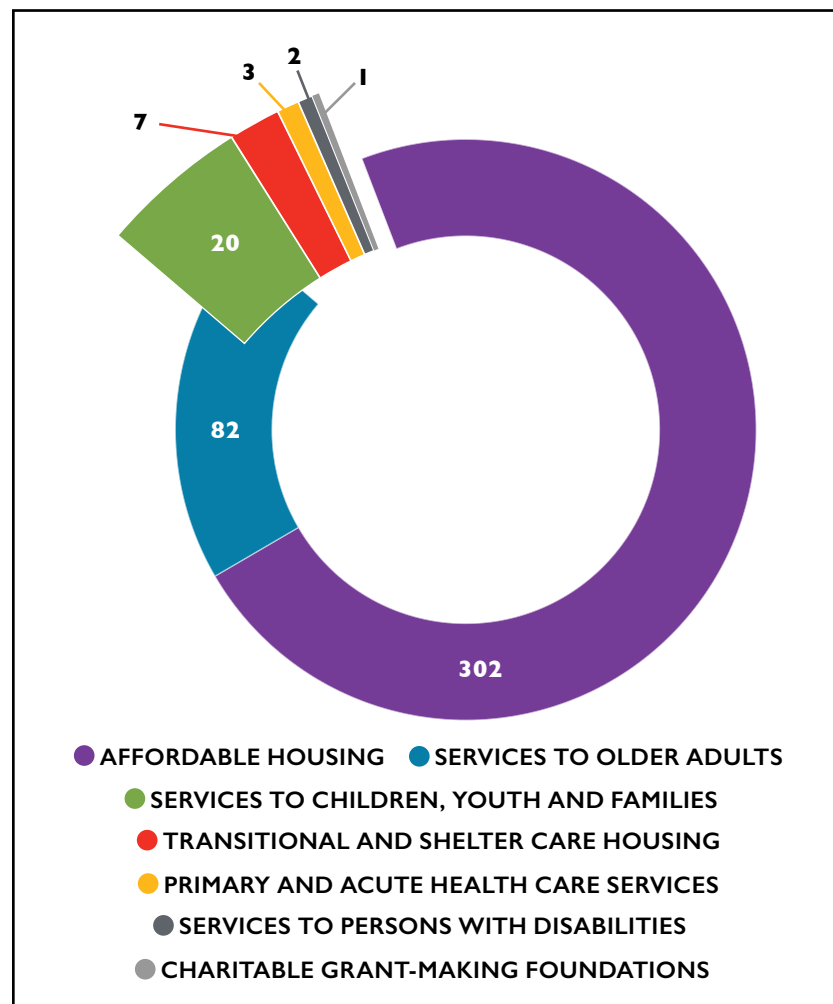
Contributed by: The Rev. George Graham, Vice President, Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM)

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 2022, 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 \$1 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 89,969 people

CHHSM SERVICE CATEGORIES BY MEMBERS, FACILITIES, OR PROGRAMS



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: INSURANCE BOARD'S CLAIM TRENDS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

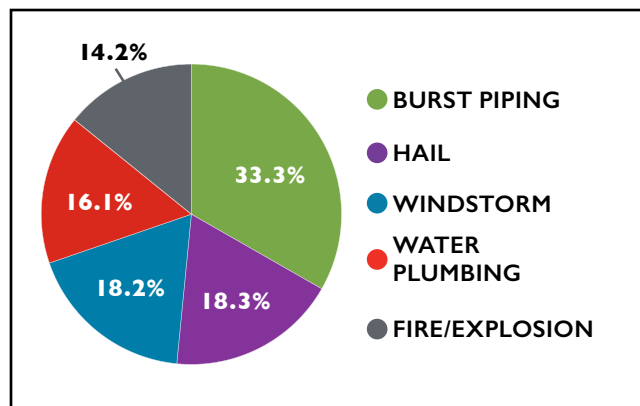
Contributed by: Insurance Board

Despite a return to more business normalcy in 2022 following the global pandemic, the lingering effects of COVID-19 resulted in supply chain shortages and an overheated economy, sparking inflationary pressures across many sectors. Adding to this turmoil, major storms over the past several years, accelerated by changing climate factors, have contributed to a hardened property and liability insurance marketplace. Reporting by the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** describes 2022 as the 6th warmest year on record. According to **Swiss Re**, the largest hurricane in 2022, Hurricane Ian, is estimated to have caused insurance losses of up to \$65 billion. At Insurance Board, we have placed an increased focus on building and property maintenance for ministries as the lack of maintenance has resulted in staggering levels of water damage losses. In 2022, more than 40% of all property claims were related to water damage, representing more than 46% of all property claim dollars spent. As you can see in the chart below, the leading water damage cause was related to burst pipes—claims which are often preventable. To mitigate the incidence and severity of water damage claims, Insurance Board remains heavily focused on deploying water sensor technology to participating ministries. These sensors will alert designated ministry leaders and staff when building temperatures fall below dangerous levels or when moisture is detected. The notification process provides the time necessary to avert an impending water damage event, often preventing catastrophic losses. This year's statistical report highlights water-damage prevention and the positive impact water sensors can have at houses of worship. Additional loss control resources are also referenced.

PROPERTY

Weather-related losses, and losses caused by severe storms in particular, were the majority of the top five property claim causes in 2022. The winter storm in December was the main cause for the high number of burst pipe claims, accounting for 47% of the reported 73 claims and more than \$4.1 million in incurred claim dollars.

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
Burst Piping	73	\$6,318,675.00	\$2,560,530.00	\$86,557.19	\$2,798,000.00
Hail	48	\$3,466,997.00	\$2,690,135.46	\$72,229.10	\$725,000.00
Windstorm	69	\$3,452,292.00	\$1,766,599.00	\$50,033.22	\$1,775,000.00
Water Plumbing	36	\$3,064,661.00	\$2,865,229.11	\$85,129.47	\$1,552,400.00
Fire/Explosion	8	\$2,689,457.00	\$2,245,133.39	\$336,182.12	\$1,155,000.00

Note: Represents 72.56% of the \$26,174,794.00 dollars

For Insurance Board, the December winter storm resulted in higher claim costs in terms of overall severity than Hurricane Ian, which occurred earlier in 2022. The largest claim in 2022 was a church damaged by that winter storm.

LIABILITY

Slip & fall claims continue to occur most frequently; however, claims involving sexual misconduct (SML) have become the costliest in terms of overall and average severity. Slip and fall claims accounted for approximately 34% of all GL (General Liability) claims reported in 2022. The average cost of an SML claim in 2022 was more than \$222,000.

In 2022, Insurance Board had 56 water saves at approximately \$50,000 per save = \$2.8M in overall saves. Insurance Board defines a water save as a mitigated water claim that was reduced as the result of a water sensor notification which alerted a member of the church ministry to the presence of water inside their building. With most water claims being preventable, Insurance Board has partnered with HSB Connected Technologies to offer a valuable early warning system that uses the latest sensor technology. Now, churches can detect water and monitor indoor temperatures that can help avoid a disruptive impact on ministries. Although water sensors have helped with savings on losses, Insurance Board still incurs substantial water claims by insureds. The majority of these claims are plumbing claims, which are largely preventable. Monitoring devices can help to proactively mitigate the size and severity of these claims.

For General Liability claims, in 2022 slip & fall claims continued to occur most frequently and accounted for approximately 34% of all GL claims reported in 2022. Insurance Board continues to encourage preventing slips, trips, and falls at your ministry and to reduce potential hazards for congregants. Hazards appear in a variety of forms. Spills, ice, snow, rain, loose mats, rugs, poor lighting, clutter, cords, poor transitions, and stepladders are some of the most common causes of slips, trips, and falls. Steps and stairwells, slippery parking lots or walkways, sidewalks in disre-

pair, or simply transitioning from one surface to another can also be hazardous. To help with prevention, repair loose handrails and cracked/deteriorating steps, fill potholes and cracks in sidewalks and lots, and enhance church lighting.

Insurance Board is also dedicated to providing resources to the ministries we serve to prevent abuse by partnering with Praesidium, the Nation's leading provider for abuse prevention. Through our partnership with Praesidium, Insurance Board is also able to offer various resources including our SafeConduct™ Workbench, a comprehensive toolkit that assists churches in developing a strong abuse prevention program. Churches can protect their ministry by having proper policies, background checks, and screening. Also, C.A.S.E (Creating A Safe Environment) through Praesidium for example, is a research based, facilitator-led, video training that provides practical solutions to navigate the challenges ministries face daily. This resource is available for Insurance Board policy holders only. For more information about abuse prevention resources please visit our website.

With climate change causing unexpected and severe weather patterns, some states are experiencing conditions like never before. There are steps you can take today that can protect your church now and in the future. To prepare for other water intrusion incidents like severe weather, visit our safety central webpage to learn more about how your ministry can reduce the severity of weather-related damage, including hail as well as tornadoes and hurricanes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Water claims were the number one loss driver for both frequency AND severity in 2022. Water/plumbing, claims accounted for 40% of claims in 2022.
- 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: <http://www.InsuranceBoard.org/safety-central/>

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

SPECIAL REPORT: UNITED CHURCH BOARD FOR MINISTERIAL ASSISTANCE, GRANTS DISBURSEMENT JAN. 1–DEC. 31, 2022

Contributed by: The Pension Boards—United Church of Christ, Inc. and the Rev. Kent Siladi, Director of Philanthropy, OPTIC (Office of Philanthropy, Technology, Identity and Communication)

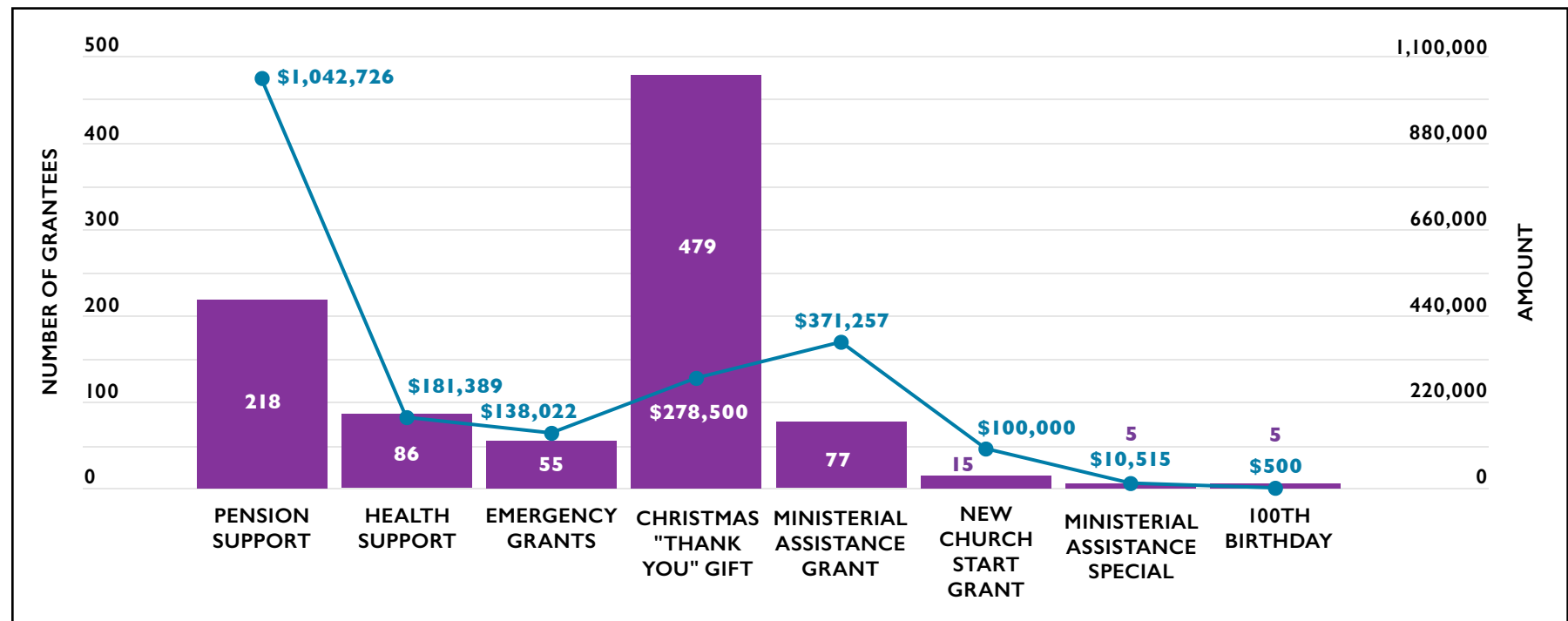
The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA), the philanthropic arm of the Pension Boards—United Church of Christ, operates with a covenantal spirit as it:

- 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 2022, grants supported by the Christmas Fund (see chart below) totaled \$2,122,909. These grants include Pension Supplementation totaling \$1,042,726; Health Benefits Supplementation grants totaling \$181,389; Emergency Grants totaling \$138,022; Christmas

GRANTS SUPPORTED BY THE CHRISTMAS FUND



"Thank You" Gift Checks totaling \$278,500; Ministerial Assistance Grants totaling \$371,257; New Church Start Grants totaling \$100,000; Ministerial Assistance Special Grants totaling \$10,515; and 100th Birthdays grants totaling \$500.

2022 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 2022, gifts to the Christmas Fund totaled more than \$1.2 million.

2022 DIVERSITY IN OUR WORKPLACE INTERIM 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 2022, the Pension Boards published the [2022 Diversity in Our Workplace Interim Report](#) detailing 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. The report also provides year-over-year updates in the areas of governance, social and racial justice, talent acquisition, pay equity, partnerships, and socially responsible investing.

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.

MINISTERS' FINANCIAL VITALITY INITIATIVE (MFVI)

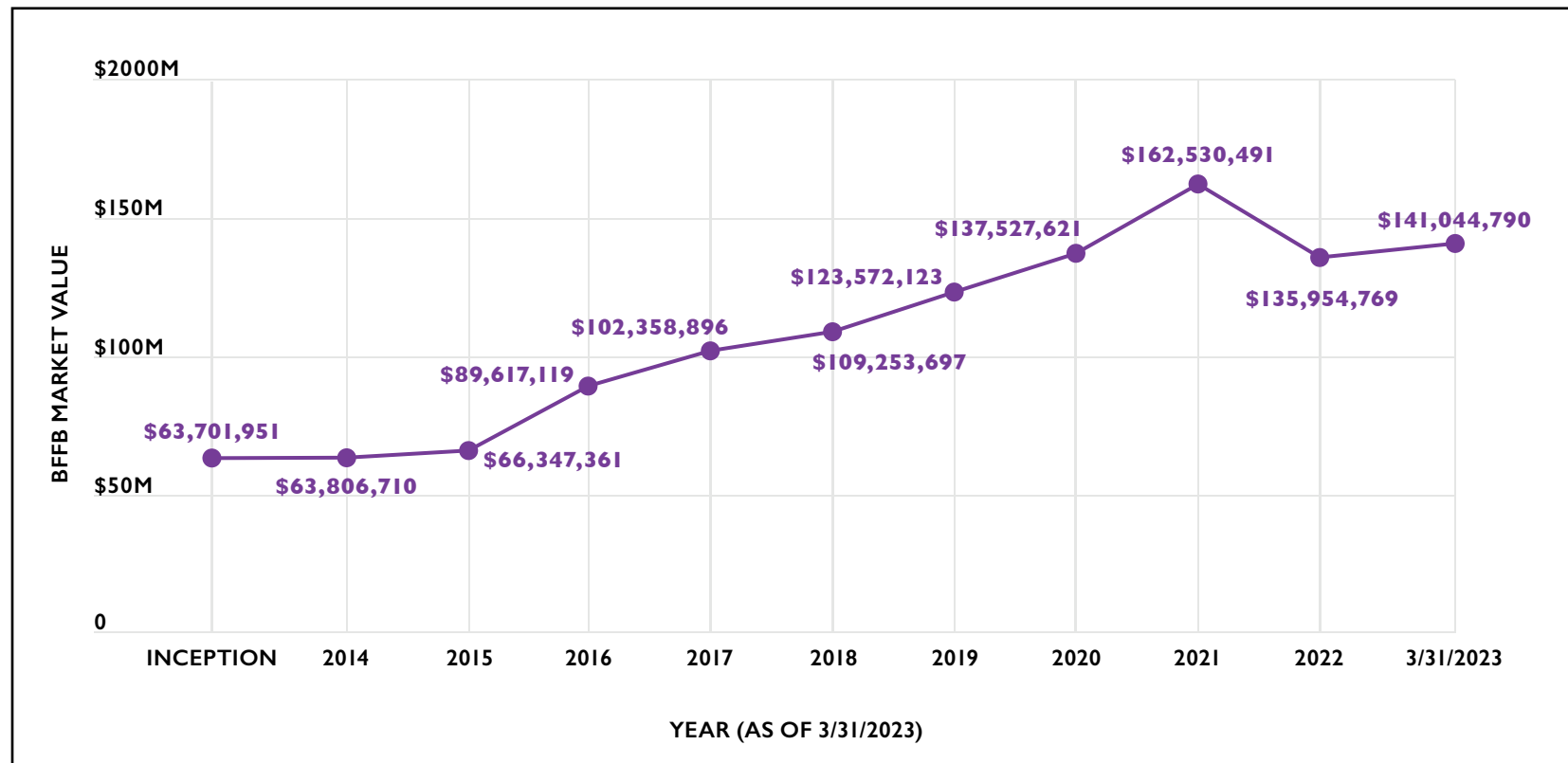
In 2017, the Pension Boards launched the [Ministers' Financial Vitality Initiative \(MFVI\)](#), intended to increase and improve financial wellness among UCC authorized ministers. Five years later, more than 210 church leaders have experienced that relief. The MFVI Program engages a cohort of 60 UCC authorized ministers per year for three years and commits them to three years of personal finance education and no-cost financial planning and counseling through Ernst & Young. MFVI also provides UCC ministers with a yearly financial incentive to help alleviate their debt burden.

REPORTS FROM AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

CLIMATE ACTION: TEN YEARS AND CONTINUING*Contributed by: United Church Funds*

In 2013, when the 24th General Synod passed “Resolution Urging Divestment—Along with Other Strategies—from Fossil Fuel Companies to Address Climate Change,” the United Church of Christ made history as the first denomination to call for the use of investments as a strategy to address climate change. The resolution also called on all settings of the church to employ a “spectrum of strategies” to reduce fossil fuel use and carbon footprint.

This report summarizes how United Church Funds (UCF) has lived out this resolution in its program and work since the adoption of the resolution ten years ago.

BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS BALANCED GROWTH OF ASSETS, 2014–2023

BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS

UCF’s first response to the resolution was the launch of the Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund (BFF), a global equity fund free of investments in corporations that produce or explore for fossil fuels. Subsequently, UCF created the Beyond Fossil Fuels Balanced Fund (BFFB), which added to BFF a fixed income allocation emphasizing “green” and “sustainable” bonds. Both funds are among UCF’s most popular offerings.

BFF was launched with \$20 million from ten “founding investors,” and ten years later, as of March 31, 2023, BFF funds stood at \$141 million, representing investments from 115 clients.

Despite portfolio restrictions, these funds have generated strong returns and have helped dispel the myth that fossil fuel-free investing leads to underperformance. Financial performance for both funds has been in line with their benchmarks and Lipper peer groups. (Full information about these and other UCF funds is provided in the Fund Fact Sheets, available at www.ucfunds.org.)

Moving forward, UCF is updating both BFF funds to align with “Net Zero” goals (cutting greenhouse gas emissions, or GHG, to as close to zero as possible) and a Paris Aligned framework (reducing GHG by 2050 or sooner), while investing in corporations that provide solutions to a clean energy transition.

UPDATED EXCLUSIONARY SCREENS

In 2016 and again in 2021, UCF updated and strengthened its exclusionary screens across all of its funds, restricting investments in companies that are significantly involved in the extraction of thermal coal or oil from tar sands, or companies noted for environmental negligence to air, water, land and biodiversity. UCF also assisted the United Church of Christ Board in updating its Investment Policy Statement to incorporate the same screens in the UCC’s endowment portfolio managed by UCF.

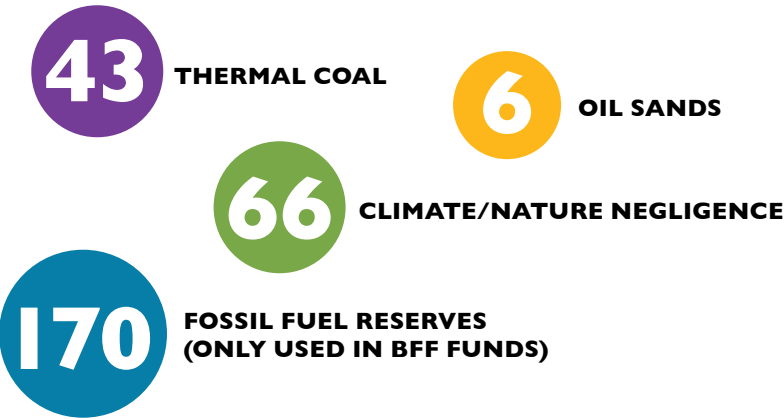
INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE, BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS FUND

AVERAGE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE % AS OF 03/31/23	QUARTER	ONE YEAR	THREE YEARS	FIVE YEARS	SINCE INCEPTION (NOV. 2014)
Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund	6.76%	- 7.54%	16.50%	5.72%	7.69%
Lipper Global Equity	6.27%	-5.83%	14.44%	5.76%	*
S&P 500 Index/MSCI ACWI IMI net, linked (benchmark)	6.95%	-7.68%	15.64%	6.58%	7.92%

Note: All performance results are shown net of fees
** Comparison to Lipper data started in 2018*

RESTRICTED SECURITIES

With these screens, UCF’s—and the UCC’s—overall estimated exposure to corporations with fossil fuel reserves is about 1%.



INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE, BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS BALANCED FUND

AVERAGE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE % AS OF 03/31/23	QUARTER	ONE YEAR	THREE YEARS	FIVE YEARS	SINCE INCEPTION (NOV. 2014)
Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund	5.33%	-6.26%	9.32%	4.42%	4.86%
Lipper Mixed Asset Target Allocation UCF Balanced	4.12%	-6.09%	8.45%	4.28%	*
Current Policy Index 60% MSCI ACWI IMI net, 40% Fixed Income Policy Index (benchmark)	5.46%	-5.97%	8.78%	4.76%	5.16%
<p><i>Note: All performance results are shown net of fees</i></p> <p><i>* Comparison to Lipper data started in 2018</i></p>					

CLIMATE JUSTICE ENGAGEMENT

Since 2013, the work of addressing climate change has evolved and matured beyond simply divestment from fossil fuel drilling and production companies. Today, corporate engagement through face-to-face dialogue and proxy voting has become a significant tool to address climate change. UCF's engagement efforts are magnified through partnerships and strategic networking with other institutional investors, such as ClimateAction 100+ and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility.

Recently, UCF committed to action steps focusing on investment strategy, public policy advocacy, corporate engagement, and engagement with frontline voices from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and low-income communities unequally burdened by the climate crisis. It is our belief that while all of us play a role in addressing climate justice, the most effective response to the climate crisis must come from those communities most burdened by its most dangerous effects. This will be an important aspect of UCF's ongoing responsible investing mission in the years ahead.

CONCLUSION

Since its founding over 100 years ago, UCF has practiced the basic principles of responsible investing, guided by the biblical and ethical principles of the Christian faith and the values and priorities expressed through UCC General Synod resolutions.

With climate change and global warming continuing to pose dire and existential threats around the globe, UCF remains committed to its core mission of responsible investing and to the ongoing and lifesaving work of climate justice—for the sake of a just world for all.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UCF AND RESPONSIBLE INVESTING, VISIT [UCFUNDS.ORG](https://ucfunds.org), OR CONTACT UCF'S DIRECTOR OF RESPONSIBLE INVESTING, MATTHEW ILLIAN, AT MATTHEW.ILLIAN@UCFUNDS.ORG.

SPECIAL REPORT: FINDINGS FROM THE UCC SUMMIT, THE EMERGING CHURCH IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Contributed by: The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, Former General Minister & President, UCC

The United Church of Christ (UCC) held a three-day online summit, “The Space Between: The Emerging Church in a Post-Pandemic World,” from September 19- September 21, 2022. Organized by the UCC’s National Setting, this summit was the first gathering of its kind following the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing church stakeholders together across denominational settings to sense the evolutionary movement of the church in and beyond a period of global crisis. The summit used multiple formats, including worship in the liminal space, plenary sessions, provocative shake-up presentations, unconference discussions, topic-focused confabs, and a pitch forum to support participants’ discernment and communal deliberations regarding the future of the church.

More than 200 participants from every walk of UCC life—lay, ordained, pastors, teachers, church and Conference staff, non-profit leaders, seminary presidents, and those concerned with the evolution of the church—participated in this virtual exploratory offering of large and small group engagement via the UCC’s Frontline Faith platform. Through a pre-event questionnaire, summit registrants were asked to consider two questions:

1. From your experience through the pandemic, what would you share at this event that you believe would be of value to others?
2. What would you most hope to glean from other participants at the event as you seek to lead in the coming years?

Participants’ responses to these questions were aggregated, revealing recurring themes that became the topical foci of the un-conference sessions. Three distinct, though overlapping, areas of interest emerged, resulting in the development of three summit sessions:

- I. The Emerging Church—A Post-Pandemic World
- II. The Emerging Church—Hybridity & Innovation
- III. The Emerging Church—Promising Practices in Local Settings

Strategic inquiry and guided dialogue were used to mine participants’ experiences for wisdom that could strengthen the work and vibrancy of the church, holding space for meaningful exchanges of knowledge, interests, questions, practices, and experiences.

Here is a summary of what we learned about the church’s strengths, vulnerabilities, and fragility.

THE EMERGING CHURCH – A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

RESILIENCY WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC REVEALED TO US ABOUT THE RESILIENCY OF OUR CHURCH AND FAITH COMMUNITIES?	
THEMES	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
Churches are capable of adaptation, innovation and learning new things, and doing so fairly rapidly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The most tech-averse and senior church members learned to use zoom and participated in virtual worship, evidence of an increased willingness to adapt to new technology. ● Congregants adapted to online services, which morphed into hybrid services. ● Churches discovered capacities for change that they didn't know they had. We can do new things when driven by our desire to be in connection with one another and with God. ● Faith overcame fear. People new to Facebook created their own accounts and joined in worship. Some hosted worship via radio with friends in their cars.
Priorities had to be rearranged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities for Christian education were diminished, but mission became a surprising strength. ● Along with worship services, other essential church business had to be conducted in virtual settings.
Tending to relationships remains vitally important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong pre-pandemic relationships kept youth, parents, and other church members connected to the church and greatly influenced capacities. ● Community can thrive in online spaces. There is a need to be more intentional about building community where virtual and in-person worshippers feel valued.
Wider church connections are possible through technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Churches reconsidered what constitutes membership, with many welcoming “non-member” members who faithfully worshipped through streaming. ● The church is not limited by place or space. Worship can happen without a building. ● Creativity, adaptability and UCC denominational offerings helped to foster wider church connections.

FRAGILITY WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC REVEALED TO US ABOUT THE FRAGILITY OF OUR CHURCH AND FAITH COMMUNITIES?	
THEMES	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
Congregational leaders were operating at and beyond full capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastors could not visit congregants, had limited interpersonal interactions, and were unable to perform pastoral care in traditional ways, leaving many in challenging and conflicted pastoral positions. Leaders were charged with developing plans quickly to ensure that worship was not interrupted at a time when it was most needed. This resulted in extraordinary workloads, without benefit of the normal availability of volunteers. Need for pastoral care increased. Burnout became commonplace, along with increased stress, as leaders found themselves stretched thin and struggled to find ways to let things go, rest, and re-imagine.
Among many, there was a growing awareness of, and sensitivity to, mental health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mental health of individuals and the faith community was and continues to be challenged. Social isolation highlighted loneliness as well as fractured relationships in the community. Some older congregants who were not tech-savvy found the transition difficult. This dynamic, compounded by the isolation that older adults often feel and COVID's adverse health impacts, resulted in their experiencing a disproportionate share of the pandemic's harmful impacts. Rituals to process communal and individual grief were very needed.

LASTING CHANGES / NEW NORMS WHAT ARE THE NEW NORMS OF THE CHURCH IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD? WHAT DO WE SEE AS LASTING/DEFINING CHANGES FOR THE CHURCH AND OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES?	
THEMES	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
The use of technology in worship is here to stay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many congregations, engagement in online and hybrid worship and the use of social media to reach members and the broader community have become a staple. Church members are now sharing worship and activity information on their personal pages
The church must cultivate digital and hybrid communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurturing and growing digital and hybrid faith communities requires substantial resources and skills. Church members must learn new ways to tend to relationships and value both online and in-person engagement equally. Beyond worship, churches are hosting meditation groups, spiritual practices, prayer, and study online.
There is a perennial need for inclusivity and accessibility in worship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of technology will continue to transform and expand accessibility while causing new vulnerabilities. The church is being challenged to design spaces for people who operate differently (i.e., have a range of auditory, physical, and cognitive needs).
It is necessary to rethink and broaden criteria for membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online engagement has allowed many churches to connect to broader communities of interest. There is a real opportunity to build the church as a movement for justice. In different church settings, members revised bylaws to include virtual participants in its full life and decision-making processes. Different models of decision-making now need to be considered. Traditional voting models may need to be replaced by models of discernment that build consensus and include everyone in decision-making regardless of membership status.

THE EMERGING CHURCH – HYBRIDITY & INNOVATION

CURATING HYBRID WORSHIP & SACRED SPACES – RECURRING THEMES	
ISSUES: WHAT ISSUES ARE MOST ALIVE FOR YOU WHEN YOU CONSIDER THIS TOPIC?	DESIRED RESOURCES & SUPPORTS: WHAT RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL/HELPFUL TO YOU IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES?
Creating authentic worship for online and onsite worshippers has been difficult without turning church into a performance or an afterthought for online participants.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help cultivating relationships that are key for both onsite and online interactions. ● New options for incorporating music in worship. ● Guidance on encouraging stewardship and faithful giving from online and onsite worshippers. ● Virtual ushers/stewards who are dedicated to the virtual community so that there is equity among audience types.
Getting skilled people to manage technology during worship, fellowship, and other events is a challenge for congregations with limited resources.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sound designs and decisions that translate well for the virtual worship experience among diverse congregations. ● Training and education to develop Digital Ministers that release pastors from this responsibility. ● Access to a denominational website that connects them to resources on how to conduct hybrid worship effectively. ● Funding sources that make the transition to hybrid more affordable in the long-term.
Churches are struggling to find, fund, and staff the right software/platforms and equipment for hybrid worship in light of pandemic-informed worship design.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nuanced resources for vibrant smaller churches. ● Learning from others within and beyond the church who have excelled at early adoption. ● Help identifying and using technical applications so that their churches can engage them appropriately and authentically for their own contexts.

In “Reimagining Membership Beyond Church Walls,” summit participants addressed how conventional notions of church membership and commitment are evolving because of hybridity and digital engagement. Highlights from their discussions are captured in the accompanying table.

RE-IMAGINING MEMBERSHIP BEYOND CHURCH WALLS – RECURRING THEMES	
ISSUES: WHAT ISSUES ARE MOST ALIVE FOR YOU WHEN YOU CONSIDER THIS TOPIC?	DESIRED RESOURCES & SUPPORTS: WHAT RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL/HELPFUL TO YOU IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES?
What it means to be a church member has experienced a cultural shift in these pandemic-informed times and is evolving to consider that people are attending from across states and countries who cannot participate in traditional ways and/or do not hold traditional beliefs.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protocols to review/revise church governing documents in order to expand criteria for membership and reconsider membership through a pandemic-informed lens. ● Resources to help with theological reflection about membership. ● Impactful online spiritual formation resources.
Given hybridity in worship services, nurturing connection across both digital and in-person communities can be challenging.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connection with churches that are doing hybrid worship and connected community well. ● Ecumenical resources about this topic. ● Youth/young adult resources.
In an intentional effort to move beyond the church walls, how do churches get to know their neighbors and help the neighbors get to know them?	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing resources to advertise and promote the church’s presence and mission. ● Information on the best locations (outside of church walls) for hosting community events.

The “Processing Personal & Collective Trauma” session explored how faith communities are helping people individually and collectively respond to the distresses created and exacerbated by the pandemic. Session insights are presented in the table below.

<u>PROCESSING PERSONAL & COLLECTIVE TRAUMA – RECURRING THEMES</u>	
ISSUES: WHAT ISSUES ARE MOST ALIVE FOR YOU WHEN YOU CONSIDER THIS TOPIC?	DESIRED RESOURCES & SUPPORTS: WHAT RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL/HELPFUL TO YOU IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES?
Trauma is omnipresent — all people, regardless of their ethnicity, age, ability, and/or employment, experience trauma during some time in their lives. The pandemic heightened our awareness of the impact of trauma on every segment of society.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to form healthy youth groups, programs, and camps. More volunteers to work with youth and their families. A toolkit and training that helps seniors identify and manage anxiety. Virtual resources at the National Setting to address trauma for community workers and provide train-the-trainer assistance. Capacity-building partnerships with national services and organizations with subject matter expertise.
Leaders need new skills to address trauma and support healing and restoration with their congregants.	DESIRED RESOURCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual resources at the National Setting that provide anonymous support for processing grief. Resources for processing trauma in mind and body, individually, in small groups, and during worship. Virtual options for conflict resolution training Expanded chaplaincy resources. A toolkit and training for helping seniors to identify and manage anxiety. Grief resources, specifically on how to grieve communally and virtually.

THE EMERGING CHURCH – PROMISING PRACTICES IN LOCAL SETTINGS

This session provided an opportunity to further develop the topics presented in sessions one and two. It showcased promising and practical ideas for the emerging church. Pitch presenters who are engaged in cutting edge and transformative practices in local church settings shared their experiences, case studies and lessons learned. Each presentation focused on:

- **Novel Practices**—what presenters have done and why it matters
- **Impacts**—the outcomes that presenters have been able to achieve
- **Drivers of Success**—the critical factors that shaped presenters' outcomes
- **Takeaways**—key insights that presenters developed
- **Recommended Actions**—suggestions for participants to act upon following the summit

Presenters' slide decks and materials are accessible on the UCC's Frontline Faith platform. Substantive questions and issues were captured relative to each category:

Curating Hybrid Worship & Sacred Spaces

- What are best recommendations and practices regarding specific technologies for worship and fellowship?
- How might technologies be used to connect all aspects of the UCC regularly?

Reimagining Membership Beyond Church Walls

- What is the role of online participants in decision making about the life of the church (i.e., MID process, calling new pastors, etc.)
- What are recommended faith formation resources in these shifting times?
- With hybridity, what are the implications for geographical boundaries/barriers as new practices emerge?
- With emerging membership models, how do we assess payment/dues to Conference and National UCC?
- What are the implications of providing pastoral care to people who are online participants of multiple churches?
- Where are examples of new models of church emerging in the UCC?

Processing Personal & Collective Trauma

(This forum invited questions in response to processing personal and collective trauma using a new pilot program featuring the Book of Lamentations as a resource.)

- How could the Book of Lamentations help people work through their trauma(s)?
- Could the Book of Lamentations be used intergenerationally and, if so, how?
- How could this program be scalable and/or offered virtually?

In summary, the UCC's Summit, **"The Space Between: The Emerging Church in a Post-Pandemic World,"** served as a platform for church leaders, members, and others to discern what is possible for the church in a world transformed by COVID. Out of necessity, innovations were tested and iterated, new competencies and perspectives were developed, existing capacities were stretched and stressed, relationships were tended to, reimagined and sometimes released, and the need for care-full responses to grief and trauma were publicly recognized. Taken together, these shifts helped to sow the seeds of a different future for the church. Attending to this future and learning its lessons well are now an ongoing responsibility of all in the church who wish to see both it and its mission thrive.



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