

2015 FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY NATIONAL SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

United Church of Christ
Center for Analytics, Research
and Data (CARD)

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



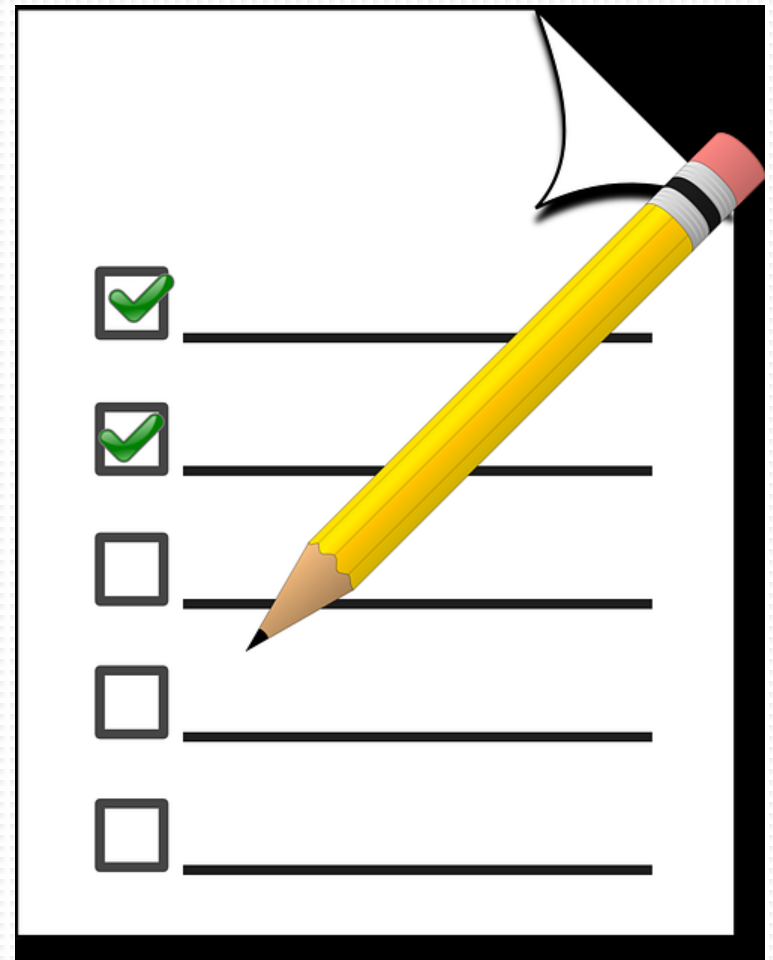
OVERVIEW

- **What is FACT?**
- **Who participates in FACT?**
- **How does the UCC participate in FACT?**



METHODS

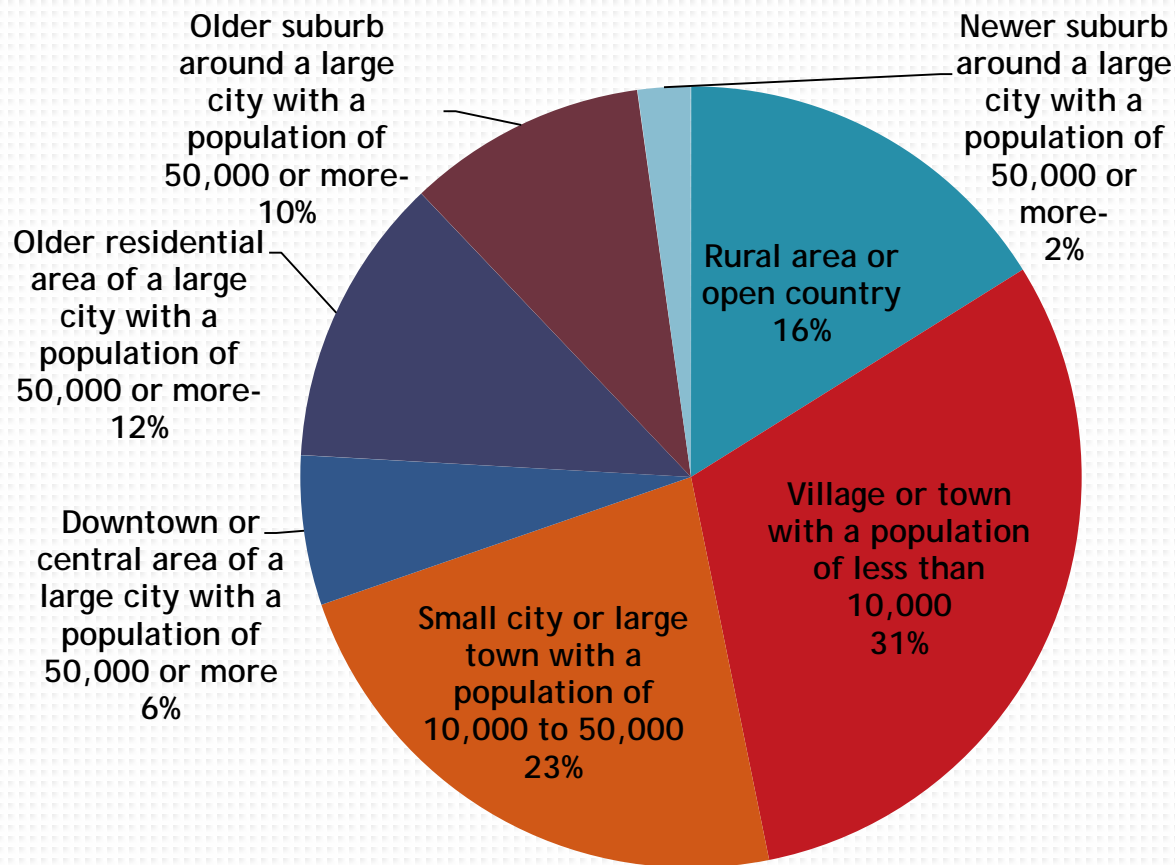
- Sampling process
- Survey dissemination
- UCC response rates



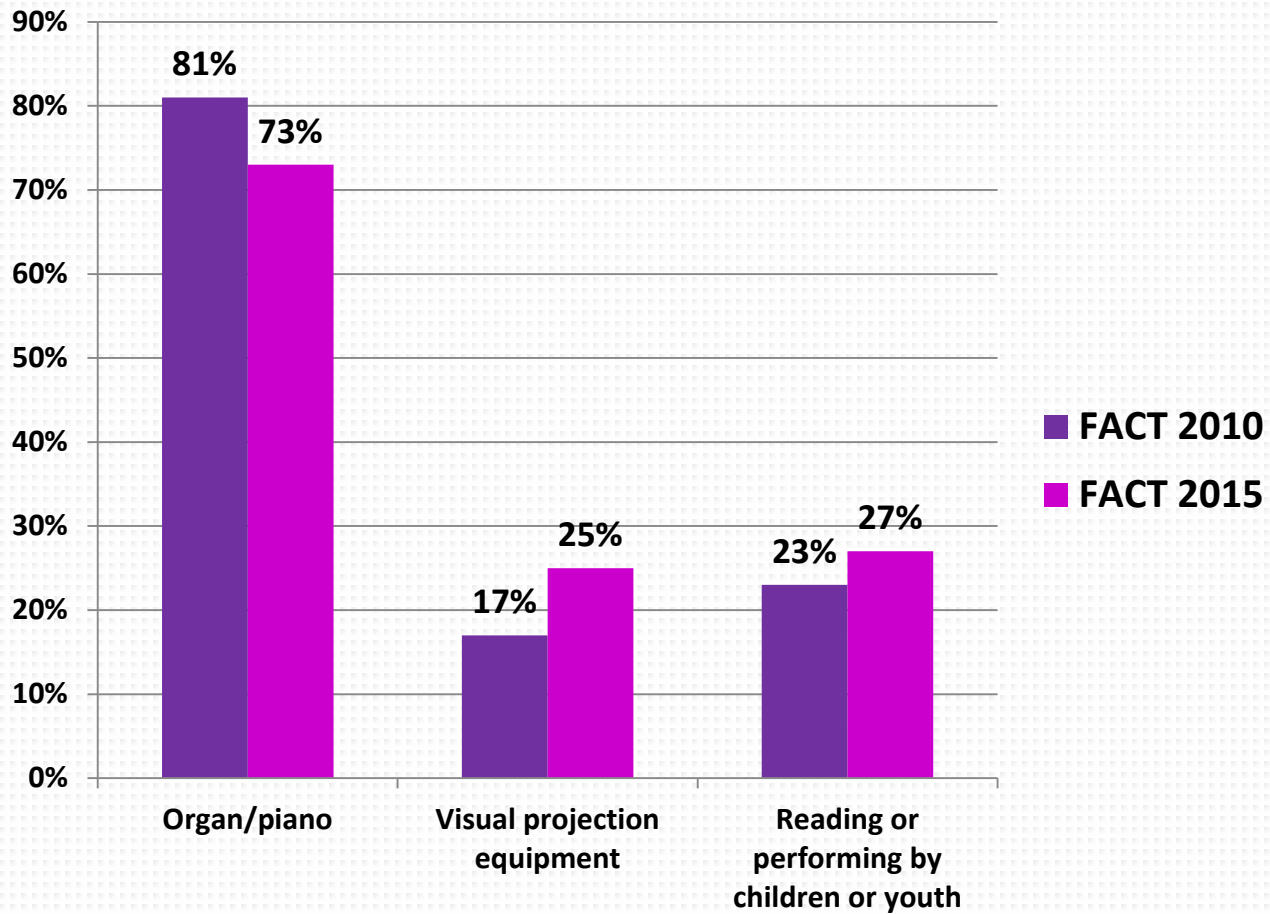
SURVEY TOPICS

- Worship
- Faith Formation
- Technology Use *(2015 special section)*
- Vitality, Mission and Identity
- Community Outreach
- Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships
- Young Adult Ministries *(2015 special section)*
- Finances
- Lay and Ministerial Leadership
- Conflict and Change
- Building Use

CONGREGATIONS AND THEIR SETTINGS



WORSHIP



WHAT IS WORSHIP LIKE IN UCC CHURCHES?

It is often:

- Thought-provoking (85.4%)
- Filled with a sense of God's presence (85.1%)
- Nurturing of people's faith (84.3%)
- Joyful (79.5%)
- Inspirational (79.0%)
- Reverent (69.0%)

It is less often:

- Intergenerational (54.1%)
- Innovative (33.7%)

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

A Lot of Emphasis:

- Community service activities (69.3%)
- Fellowships or other social activities (63.0%)
- Music programs (56.3%)

Not As Much Emphasis:

- Bible, Scripture, or theological studies (other than Sunday School) (36.4%)
- Youth (ages 13-17) activities or programs (27.0%)
- Prayer or meditation groups or spiritual retreats (15.2%)
- Young adult (ages 18-34) activities or programs (7.1%)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION

High Priority:

- Engage members in nurture and fellowship (74.1%)
- Inspire members to express their faith in life (72.6%)
- Teach about love and justice toward others (71.5%)
- Nurture belief and trust in Jesus Christ (71.1%)

Moderate / Low Priority:

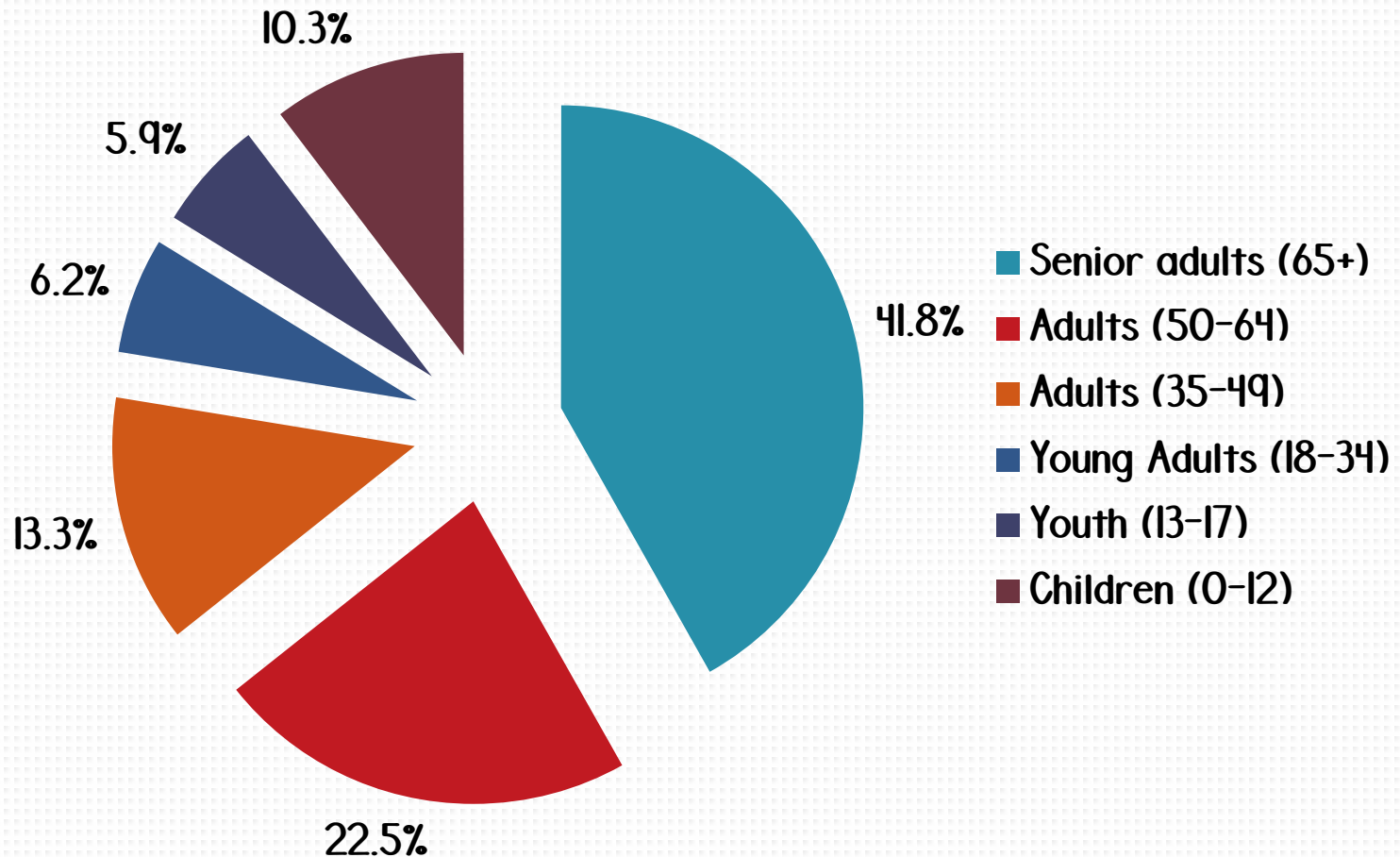
- Acquire knowledge of the Bible (53.8%)
- Develop congregational loyalty (21.6%)
- Develop denominational loyalty (8.4%)

INTERFAITH ACTIVITY

Involvement with Other Faith Traditions	2015	2010
Worship services	23%	19%
Educational or fellowship activities	22%	14%
Community service activities	30%	23%

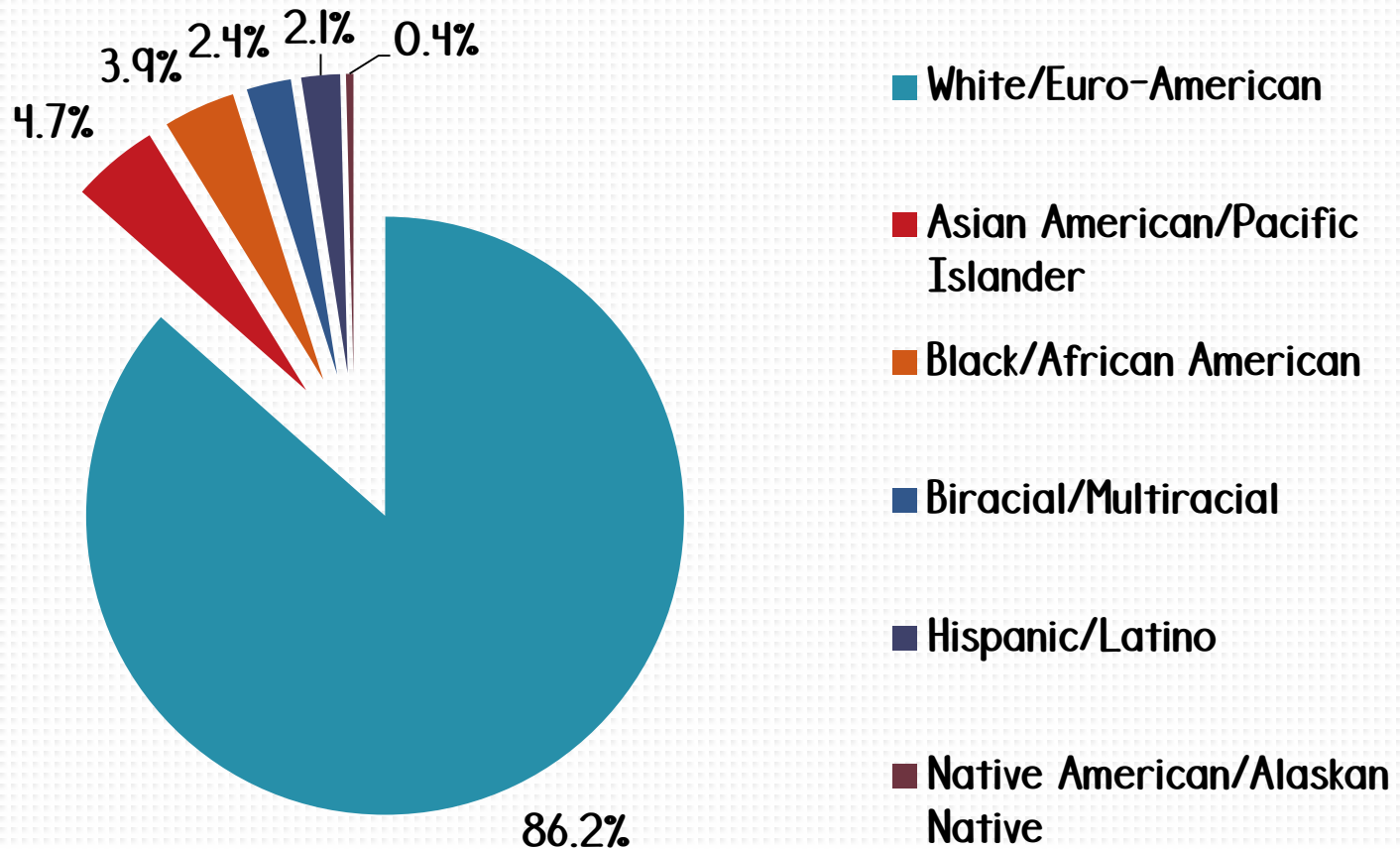
WHO ARE WE DEMOGRAPHICALLY?

Age Groups

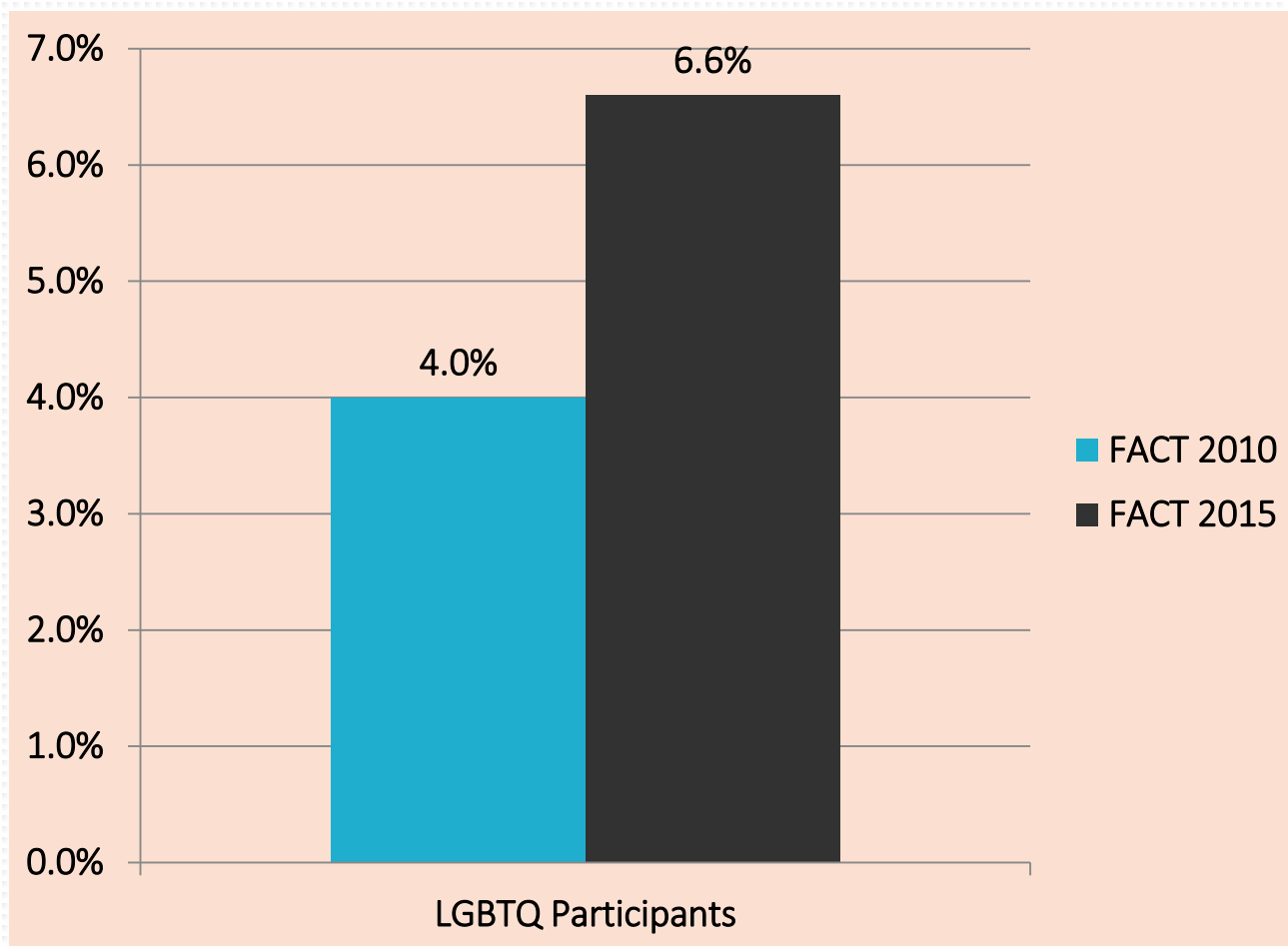


WHO ARE WE DEMOGRAPHICALLY?

Racial/Ethnic Identification of Church Participants

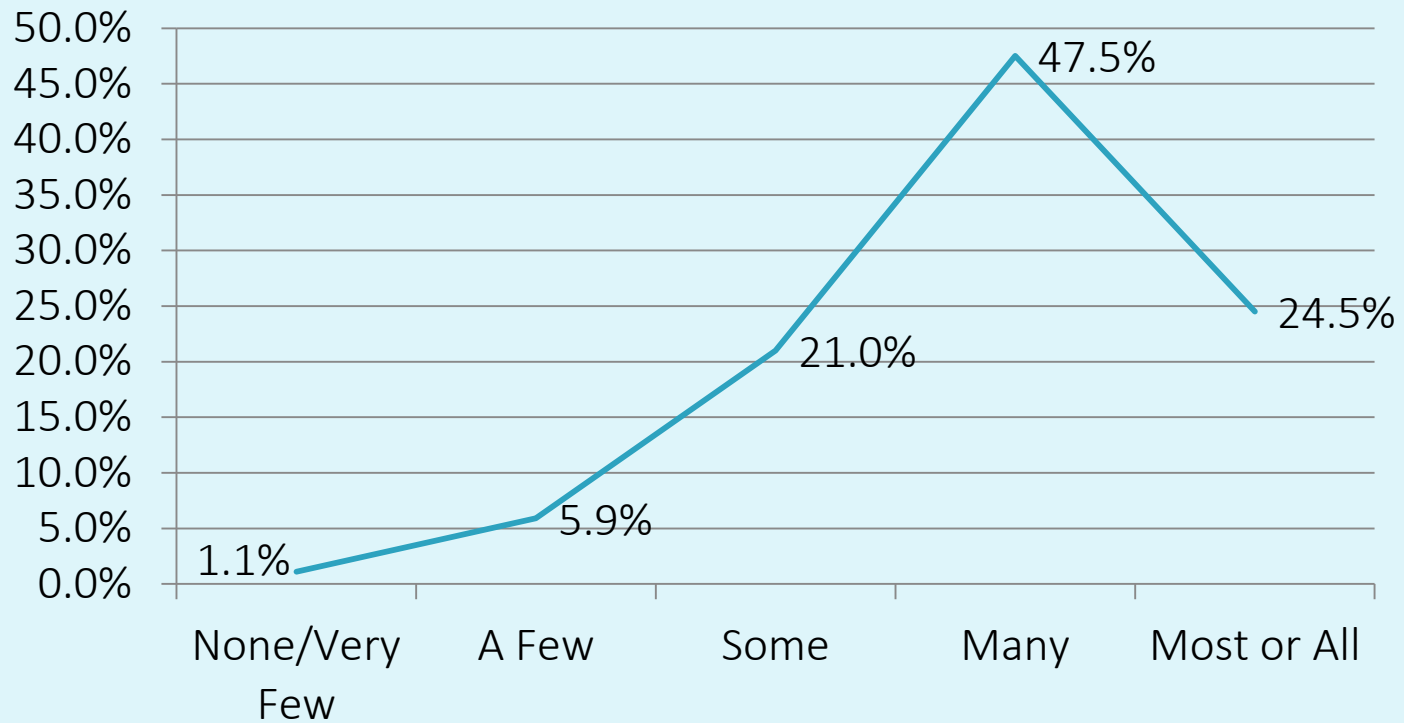


LGBTQ PARTICIPATION IN CONGREGATIONS



TECHNOLOGY USE

Participants' Use of Technology by Congregation
(Average Percentage)



TECHNOLOGY USE

Most Utilized Tools:

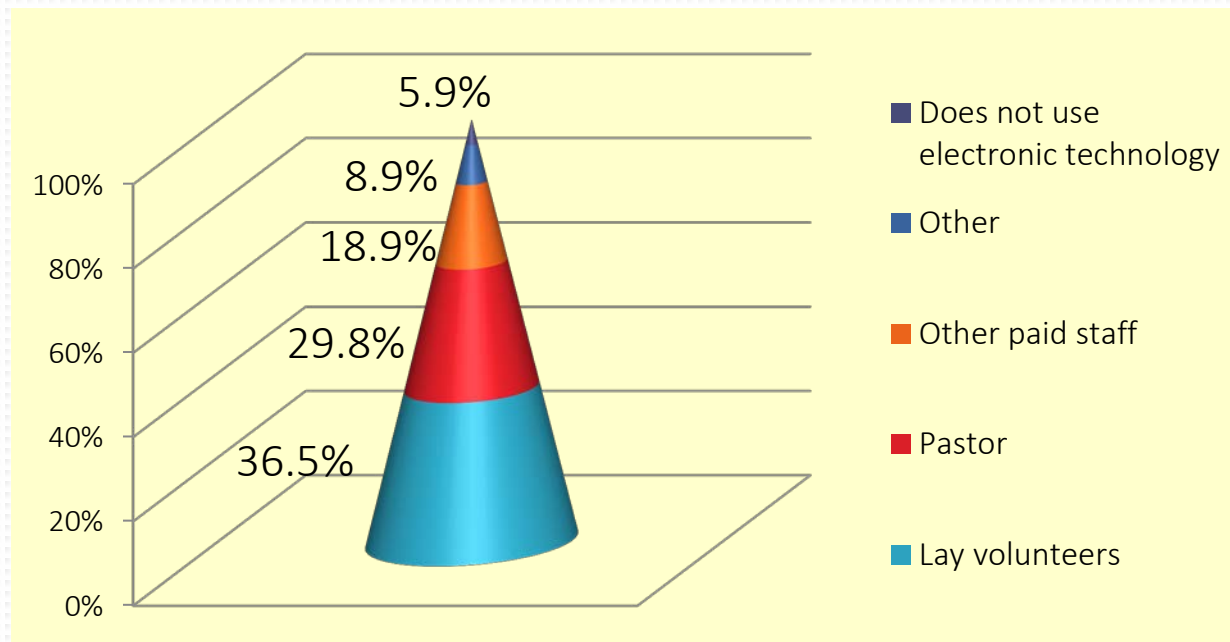
- Email (87.4%)
- E-newsletters (54.3%)
- WiFi access in building (54.1%)
- Website (52.6%)
- Facebook (45.7%)

Least Utilized Tools:

- Texting (20.1%)
- Automated prayer requests or phone contact (16.4%)
- Online giving (9.4%)
- Podcasts (5.9%)
- Blog (5.6%)
- Sermon live stream (4.0%)
- Online meetings (3.5%)
- Twitter (2.8%)
- Other social media (Pinterest, Yelp, Tumblr, etc.) (2.1%)

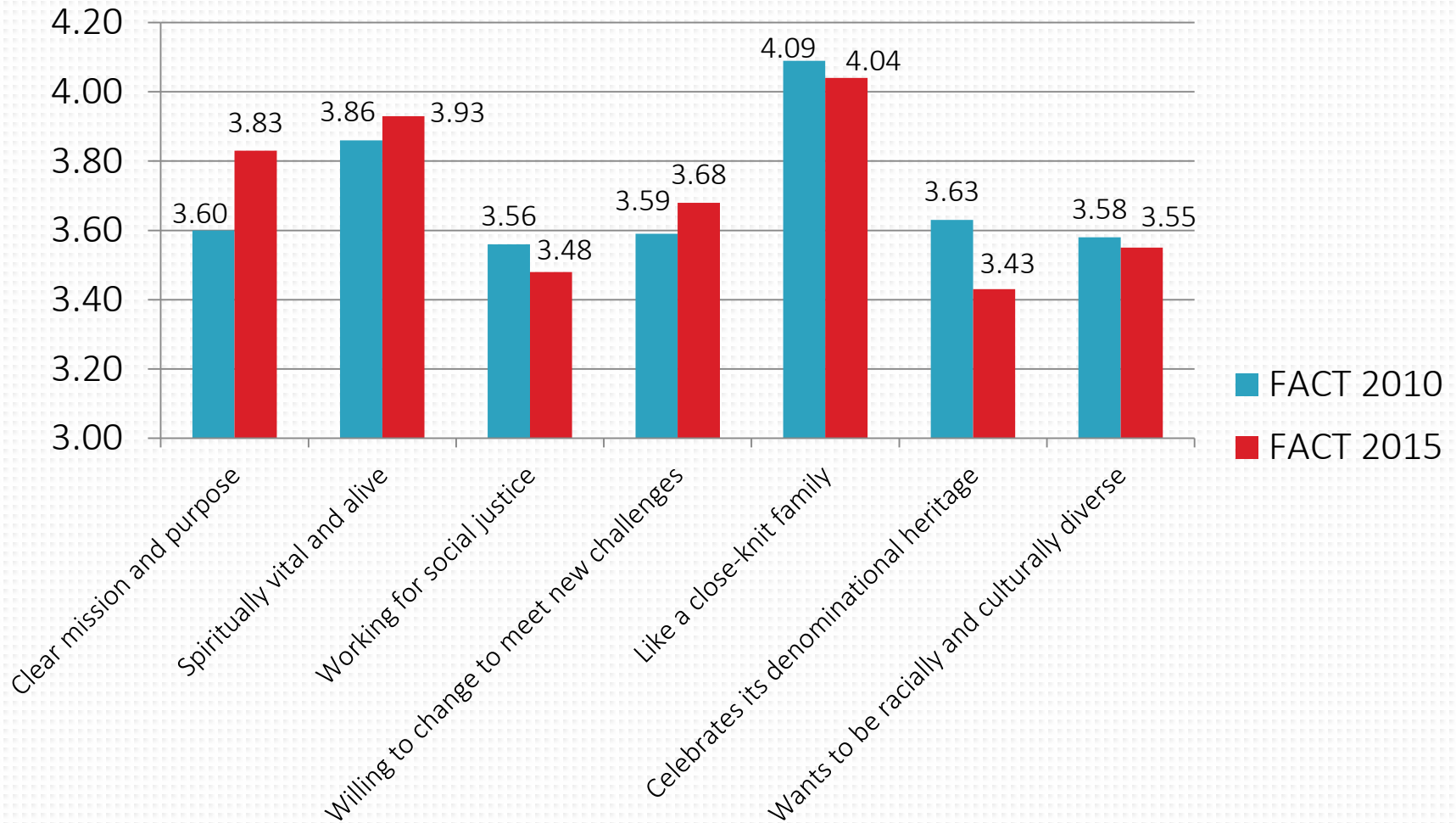
TECHNOLOGY USE

- Primary responsibility for electronic technology

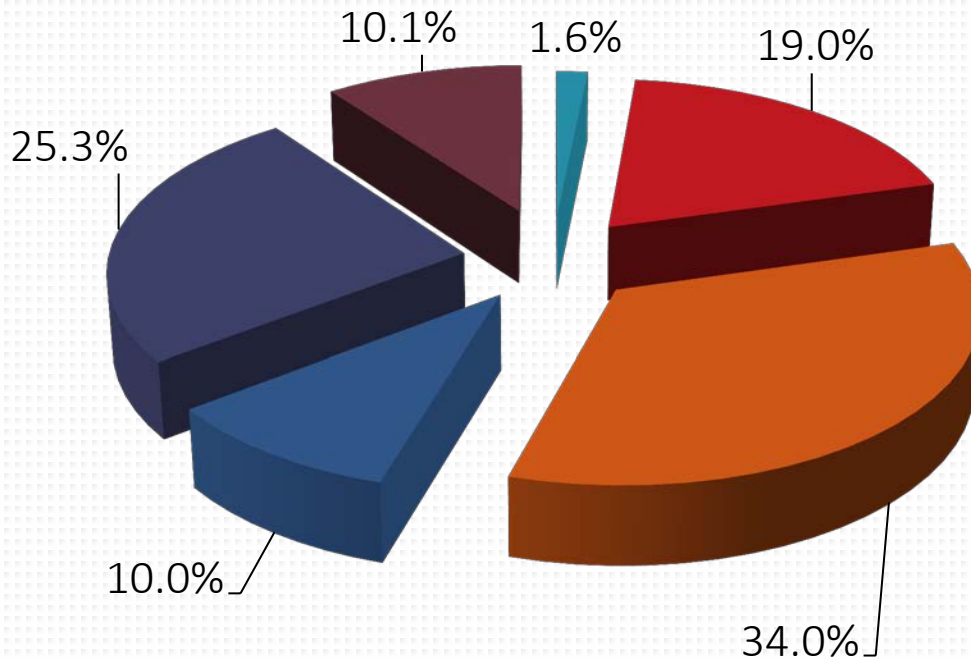


- Feelings about technology use

MISSION AND IDENTITY



CHANGE



- We are where we need to be and do not need to change.
- We need to change to increase our vitality and viability, but the congregation does not seem to realize it and/or doesn't want to make the necessary changes.
- We are slowly changing but not fast enough nor significantly enough.
- We are fortunate enough to be doing pretty well without having to think about significant changes.
- We are doing pretty well making the necessary changes.
- We pride ourselves on our embrace of—and success in—consistently changing to improve and adapt.

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

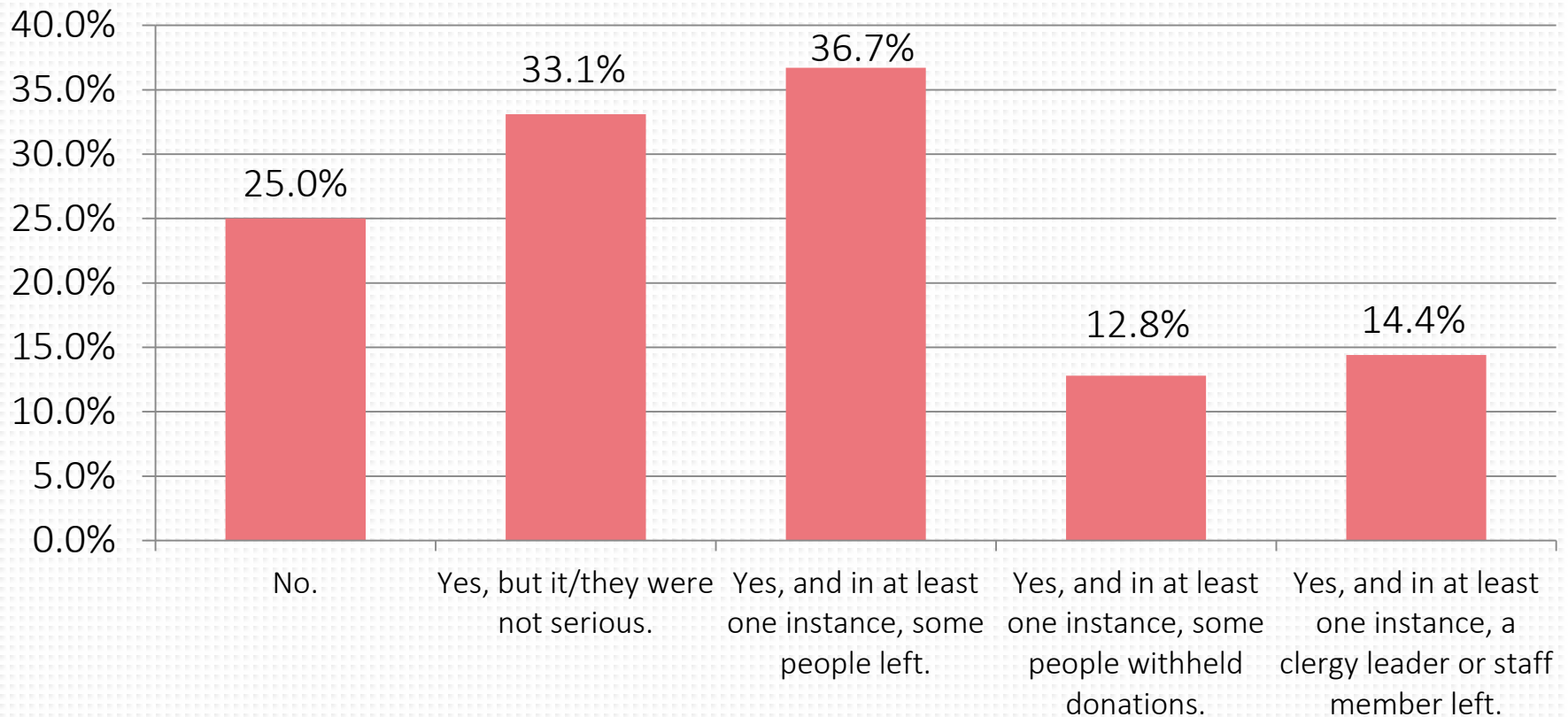
Barrier	Average Rating
Lack of resources, particularly of energy and finances	3.15
Lack of unifying and energizing vision or direction	2.79
Lack of workable, concrete models that provide realistic, but vitalizing alternatives to the status quo	2.79
Strong resistance from some members	2.51
Leaders not wanting to be too far ahead of the congregation	2.16

FACTORS LEADING TO CHANGE

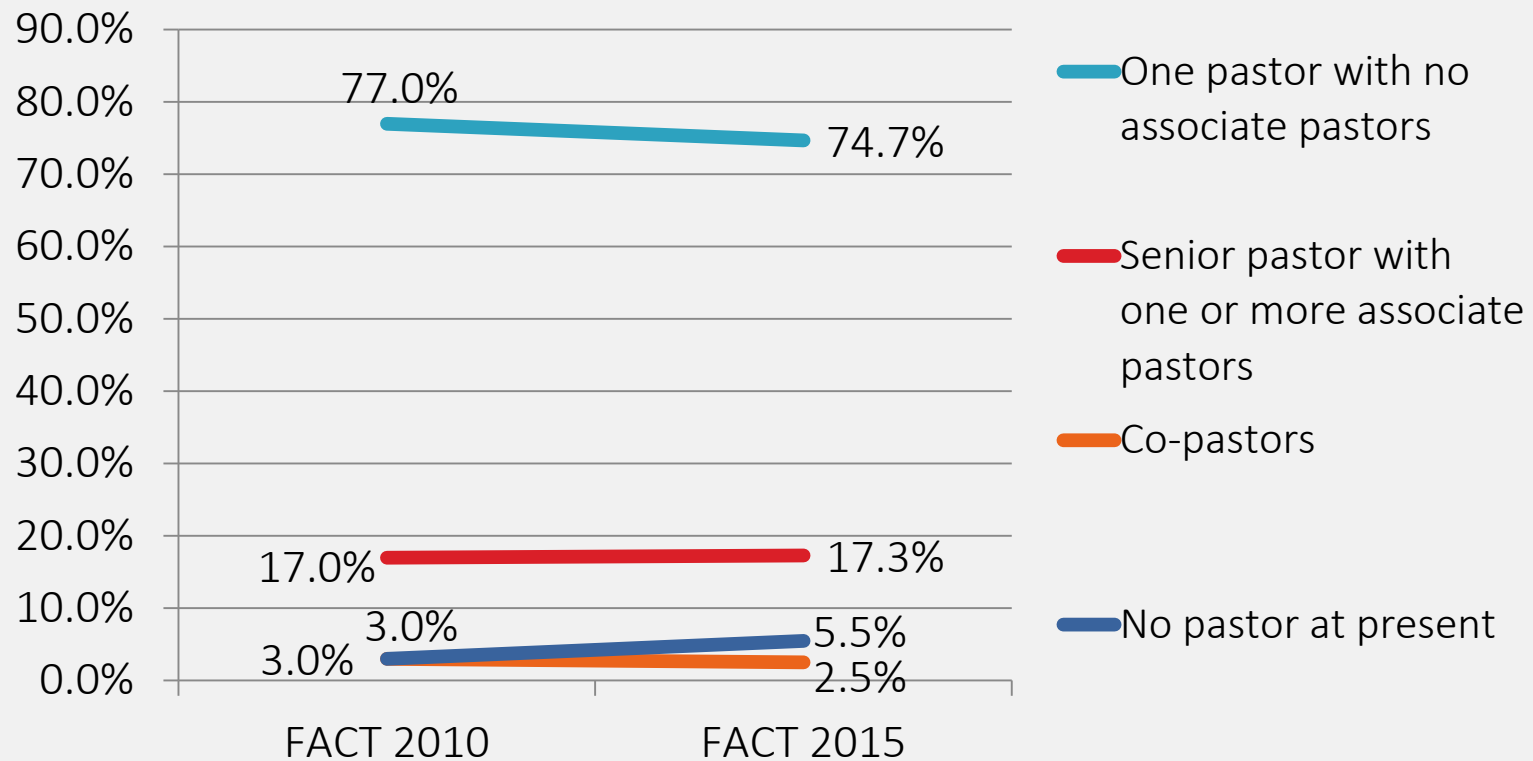
Factor	Average Rating
Assistance from the denomination (advice, money, etc.)	2.09
Leadership with training and expertise in leading change	2.09
Familiarity with concrete models that provided realistic, vitalizing alternatives to the status quo	2.02
Rigorous assessment and planning study of the congregation and its community	1.97
A crisis or opportunity that left no choice but to change	1.79
Assistance of an outside consultant or program	1.33

CONFLICT

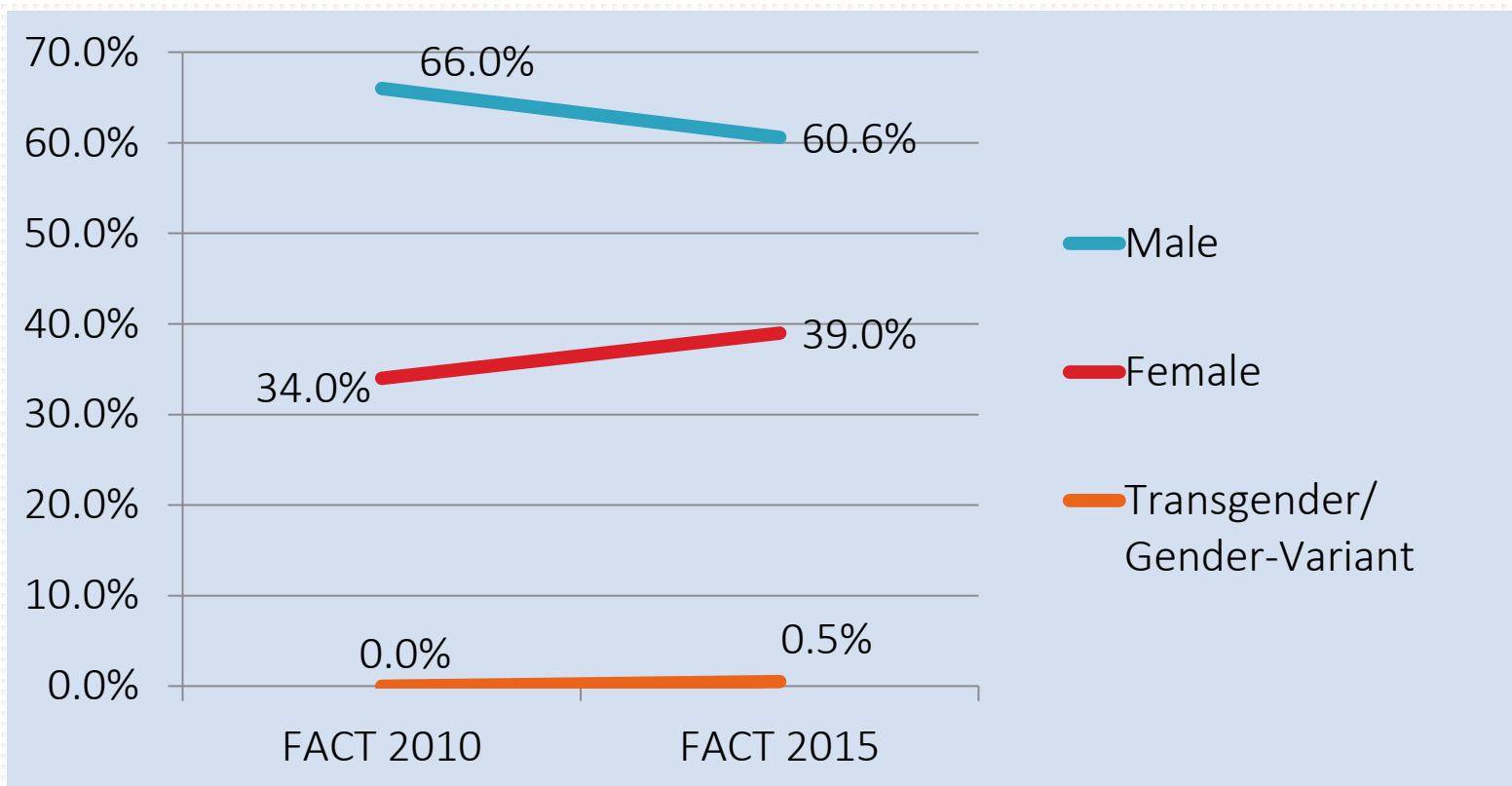
Has your congregation experienced any conflicts in the past five years?



CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP

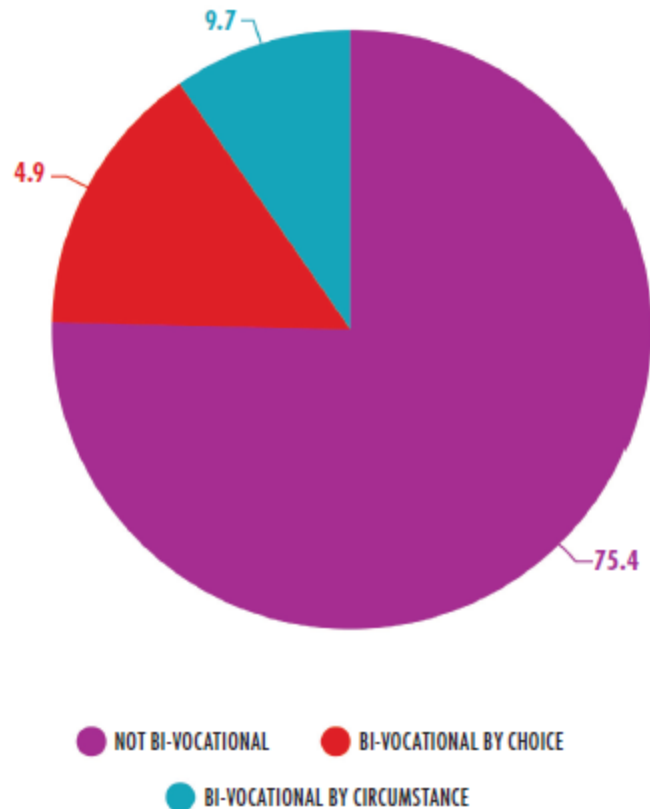


CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP BY GENDER

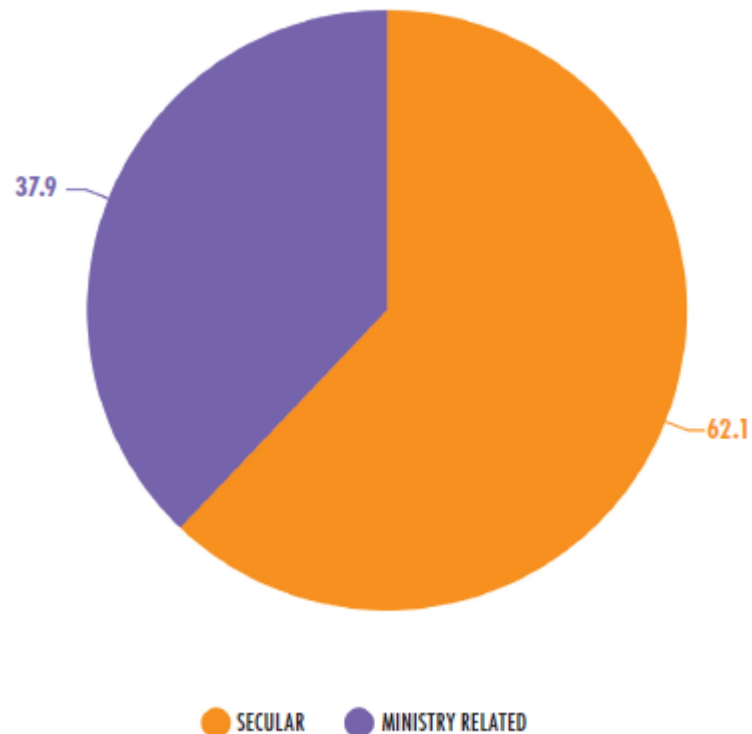


BI-VOCATIONAL PASTORS

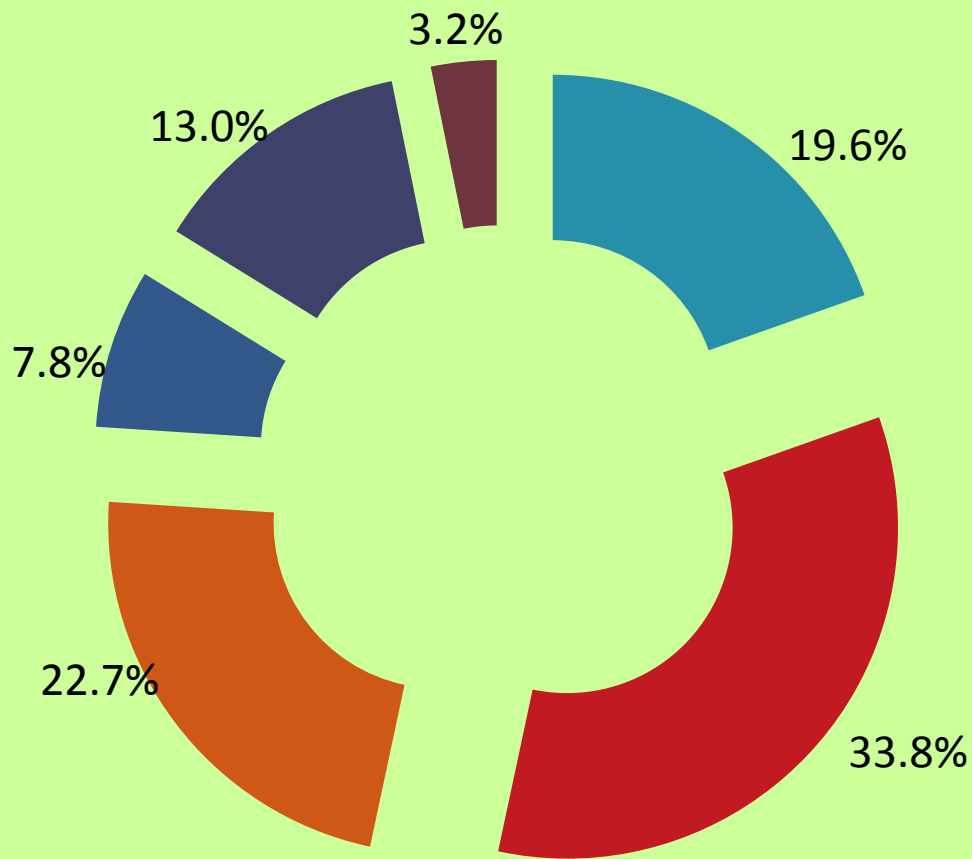
VOCATIONAL STATUS OF UCC PASTORS (PERCENTAGE)



BI-VOCATIONAL SETTINGS OF UCC PASTORS (PERCENTAGE)



THE FUTURE



- We are thriving and this should continue.
- We are doing okay and this should continue.
- We are doing okay now, but the future is very uncertain.
- We are struggling, but the future clearly looks better.
- We are struggling, and that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
- We are not sure this congregation will survive much longer.

ADDITIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

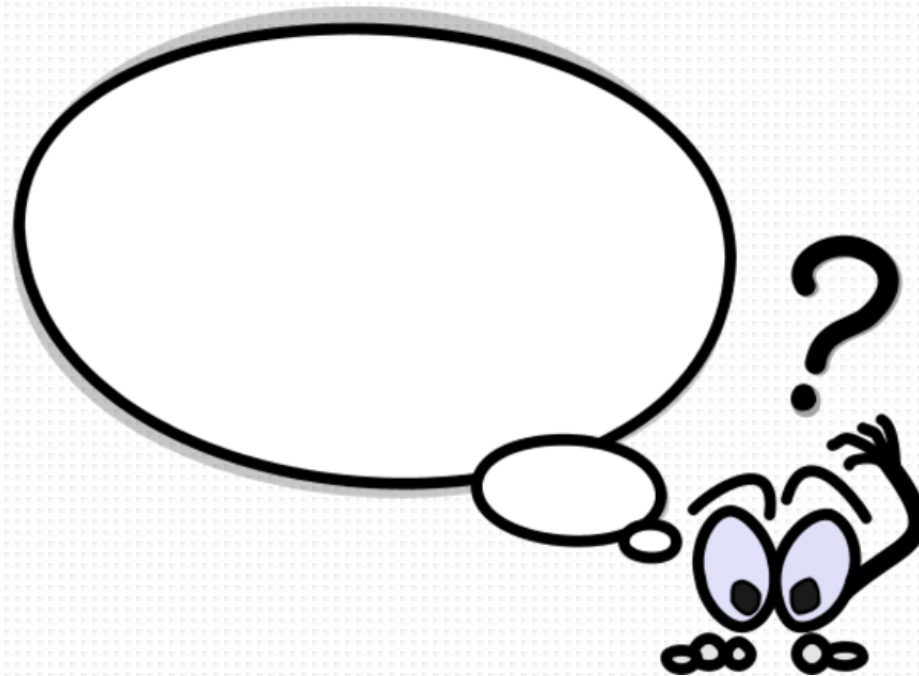
www.ucc.org/research

- “FACTs on ...” Stats Sheets
 - One-page PDFs on various aspects of congregational life
 - Posted to the website over the next year
- 2015 UCC Statistical Profile
 - Results on Young Adult Ministries and Congregational Leadership

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Which findings most resonate with your congregation's experiences?
- Which findings do not resonate with your congregation's experience?
- How might your congregation utilize these findings for ministry planning?

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?



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THANK YOU!

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