2015 Faith Communities Today
National Survey of Congregations:
Preliminary Findings

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

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

www.faithcommunitiestoday.org
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

- Rural area or open country: 16%
- Village or town with a population of less than 10,000: 31%
- Small city or large town with a population of 10,000 to 50,000: 23%
- Downtown or central area of a large city with a population of 50,000 or more: 6%
- Older residential area of a large city with a population of 50,000 or more: 12%
- Older suburb around a large city with a population of 50,000 or more: 10%
- Newer suburb around a large city with a population of 50,000 or more: 2%
Worship

- Organ/piano: 81% (FACT 2010), 73% (FACT 2015)
- Visual projection equipment: 17% (FACT 2010), 25% (FACT 2015)
- Reading or performing by children or youth: 23% (FACT 2010), 27% (FACT 2015)
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%)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement with Other Faith Traditions</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worship services</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational or fellowship activities</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service activities</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Are We Demographically?

Age Groups

- Senior adults (65+)
- Adults (50-64)
- Adults (35-49)
- Young Adults (18-34)
- Youth (13-17)
- Children (0-12)

- 41.8%
- 22.5%
- 13.3%
- 10.3%
- 6.2%
- 5.9%

[Graph showing the percentage distribution of age groups]
Who Are We Demographically?

Racial/Ethnic Identification of Church Participants

- 86.2% White/Euro-American
- 4.7% Asian American/Pacific Islander
- 3.9% Black/African American
- 2.4% Biracial/Multiracial
- 2.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 0.4% Native American/Alaskan Native
LGBTQ Participation in Congregations

FACT 2010: 4.0%
FACT 2015: 6.6%
Participants’ Use of Technology by Congregation (Average Percentage)

- None/Very Few: 1.1%
- A Few: 5.9%
- Some: 21.0%
- Many: 47.5%
- Most or All: 24.5%
**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

FACT 2010
FACT 2015

Clear mission and purpose
3.60
3.80
3.83
3.86
3.93

Spiritually vital and alive
3.56
3.59
3.60
3.63
3.68

Working for social justice
3.48
3.68
4.09

Like a close-knit family
4.04

Celebrates its denominational heritage
3.63

Wants to be racially and culturally diverse
3.43
3.55

FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
FACT 2015
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources, particularly of energy and finances</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of unifying and energizing vision or direction</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of workable, concrete models that provide realistic, but vitalizing alternatives to the status quo</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong resistance from some members</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders not wanting to be too far ahead of the congregation</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Factors Leading to Change

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Serious</th>
<th>Serious, Some People Left</th>
<th>Serious, Withheld Donations</th>
<th>Serious, Clergy Leader or Staff Left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td></td>
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**Congregational Leadership**

- **One pastor with no associate pastors**: 77.0% (FACT 2010) vs. 74.7% (FACT 2015)
- **Senior pastor with one or more associate pastors**: 17.0% (FACT 2010) vs. 17.3% (FACT 2015)
- **Co-pastors**: 3.0% (FACT 2010) vs. 5.5% (FACT 2015)
- **No pastor at present**: 0.0% (FACT 2010) vs. 2.5% (FACT 2015)
Congregational Leadership by Gender

- Male: FACT 2010: 66.0%, FACT 2015: 60.6%
- Female: FACT 2010: 34.0%, FACT 2015: 39.0%
- Transgender/Gender-Variant: FACT 2010: 0.0%, FACT 2015: 0.5%
Bi-vocational Pastors

Vocational Status of UCC Pastors (Percentage)

- Not Bi-vocational: 75.4%
- Bi-vocational by choice: 4.9%
- Bi-vocational by circumstance: 9.7%

Bi-vocational Settings of UCC Pastors (Percentage)

- Secular: 62.1%
- Ministry related: 37.9%
The Future

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

- 19.6% Blue
- 33.8% Orange
- 22.7% Purple
- 7.8% Red
- 13.0% Dark blue
- 3.2% Brown
**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?

God is still speaking,

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

+ UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST +
THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE
Thank You!

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