United Church of Christ Report
Flourishing in Ministry | February 7 – 28, 2017
United Church of Christ Report

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Our Research Project

The Wellbeing at Work Program (WAWP) is a team of researchers who are exploring what makes work a life-enriching versus life-depleting experience. We focus on the helping and caring professions. Our goal is to learn how to help these individuals flourish in the important work they do. The WAWP has three key elements:

- **Flourishing in Ministry** is our research on the wellbeing of clergy. We study the lives and ministries of women and men in Christian ministry spanning Roman Catholic, Mainline, Evangelical, and Historically Black religious traditions.

- **Caring for Caregivers** is our research on international humanitarian and global health professionals. We travel around the globe to study wellbeing in action among the men and women who serve poor, vulnerable, and marginalized people.

- **WorkWell** is the practice-oriented part of the Wellbeing at Work Program. Here, we strive to provide research-based insights and tools that organizations, leaders and helping professionals can put to good use in their daily work lives.
The Wellbeing Survey

This report is part of collaborations between The United Church of Christ and the University of Notre Dame Wellbeing at Work Research Project, the Lilly Foundation and Templeton Religion Trust. The purpose of this project is to learn more about the well-being of UCC pastors and ministers.

We asked a variety of questions about both life in general, as well as life at work. The results of the survey are not intended to be exhaustive. We hope this report provides an overview of what it means to flourish and sacrifice.

Our survey questions are research-based and include questions about life satisfaction, self-evaluation, social support, resilience, and faith.

We are able to report results from those who responded to the surveys. There may be something inherently different about employees who opted out of the survey. People who are interested in taking the survey may visit our web portal at https://wellbeing.crc.nd.edu/user_signup/signup/. Please use the referral code UCC. You will receive your own wellbeing assessment and you will contribute to our growing understanding of wellbeing among UCC pastors and ministers.
MEASURE DEFINITIONS

DAILY WELLBEING MEASURES

- **Fit**
  - A measure of the respondent’s knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully fit the demands of the work role

- **Satisfaction with Work Life**
  - A measure of the respondent’s global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with his/her life

- **Job Satisfaction**
  - The respondent’s global level of satisfaction with his/her work life

- **Burnout**
  - A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity

- **Resilience**
  - A measure of bouncing back in response to adversity, as well as having the capacity to choose a vital and authentic life

- **Satisfaction with Life**
  - This scale measures global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life

- **General Happiness**
  - A measure subjective happiness relative to self and peers

- **Experienced Stress**
  - This measure assesses the degree to which a person experiences negative challenges, fatigue, and mental exhaustion at work. It captures a person's overall assessment of the stressfulness of their work.
FLOURISHING MEASURES

- **Authenticity at Work**
  - This is a measure of unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one’s daily enterprise.

- **Job Engagement**
  - This measures positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption

- **Thriving**
  - Respondent's self-perceived success in important areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism

- **Relationships**
  - This series of questions intends to develop an understanding of respondent's amount and type of social support they receive from family, friends, and work colleagues and supervisors

- **Spiritual Wellbeing**
  - This series of questions asks questions about your experiences of transcendence, and focused in particular on the extent you feel your core life values and beliefs shape your daily life

- **Work Family Balance**
  - This measure captures the extent to which a person feels their work has a negative impact on their home life and also the extent to which home and family issues tend to spill over negatively into work

- **Work as a Calling**
  - A measure to assess if individuals feel called, hard-wired, or destined to live into their current work role
MEASURE DEFINITIONS

PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

- **Emotion Regulation**
  - This measures the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed.

- **Proactivity**
  - Measures a personal disposition toward proactive behavior.

- **Self-Control**
  - These questions assess a person's willpower which is their capacity to control their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

- **Core Self-Evaluation**
  - This measures a basic, fundamental appraisal of one's worthiness, effectiveness, and capability as a person.

- **Financial worries**
  - We have found that actual levels of income and debt are less important for wellbeing than are a person's sense of their financial condition. These questions assess the extent to which a person experiences worries and stress related to their income and personal finances.
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

Demographics & Other Specifics
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Gender

- Female: 42%
- Male: 57%
- Other: 1%

Marital Status

- Living with a partner: 71%
- Never Married: 12%
- Divorced: 5%
- Married: 9%
- Widowed: 2%
- Separated: 1%
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

What best describes your current position if serving in a local church?

Which best describes your ministry position if not serving in a local church?
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

How many different churches do you serve at this time?

The pie chart shows the distribution of the number of churches served. The majority (93%) serve more than 5 churches, while 5% serve 3 churches, and 1% serve 1 church.

How many different churches have you served?

The bar chart illustrates the number of churches served by a certain number, with the following distribution:
- 16% have served 1 church
- 22% have served 2 churches
- 18% have served 3 churches
- Other categories (4 to 13 churches) make up the remaining 35%

This suggests a significant portion of respondents have served a limited number of churches.
What is the size of your church in terms of average attendance at worship? Please indicate the size of your largest church if you serve more than one local congregation.

Other than you, how many paid staff, full- or part-time, are employed by your congregation?
What percent of the total time you spend on ministry activities is allocated to each of the following activities? (Percent of time spent on each task, total = 100%)

Pastor Hours - On average, how many hours a week do you work at your ministry job?
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

Do you consider your work in ministry full time or part time?

- 68% Full time
- 32% Part time

Length in Ministry

- 51% 1 to 5 years in other occupations
- 31% 6 to 10 years in other occupations
- 19% 11 or more years in other occupations
DEMOGRAPHICS & OTHER SPECIFICS

When did you first seriously consider that you were called to ministry?

- 31% When I was 18 years old or younger
- 22% When I was between 19 and 22 years old
- 20% When I was between 23 and 20 years old
- 15% When I was between 30 and 40 years old
- 12% When I was 41 years or older

Did you work full-time at other occupations before entering your ministry position?

- 73% Yes
- 27% No
In the past year, how often have you seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry?

- 47% Never
- 27% Once or twice
- 18% A few times
- 5% Fairly often
- 3% Very often
Daily Wellbeing Analysis
MINISTRY FIT AND CHALLENGES

Thinking about your current church and your current role as a pastor, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- The things that I value in ministry are a good match with the things that matter most to me.
- My personal religious values and beliefs match my current church’s religious values.
- My way of being a pastor is a very good fit for the expectations my congregation.
- There is a lot of disagreement between me and my congregation about the best way to serve.

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

The things that I value in ministry are a good match with the things that my current church values in ministry.

My personal religious values and beliefs match my current church’s religious values and beliefs.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

My way of being a pastor is a very good fit for the expectations my congregation has for the kind of pastor they want.

There is a lot of disagreement between me and my congregation about the best way to do things.
Satisfaction with Work Life scale represent your current experiences at work. We also asked you to compare your current experiences to your ideal of work-at-its-best.

Satisfaction with Work Life: Focusing only on your experiences in your ministry and the work aspects of your life, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

In most ways, my life in ministry is close to my ideal.

The conditions of life in my ministry are excellent.

I am satisfied with my life in ministry.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

Job Satisfaction is the measure of respondent's global level of satisfaction with their work life.

Job Satisfaction Mean By Gender

Job Satisfaction: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- I feel satisfied with my role in ministry.
- Most days I am enthusiastic about my ministry work.
- I find real enjoyment in my ministry work.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

I feel satisfied with my role in ministry.

---

By Gender

Female

- Strongly Disagree: 24%
- Disagree: 9%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 13%
- Agree: 54%

Male

- Strongly Disagree: 25%
- Disagree: 9%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 13%
- Agree: 53%
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

Most days I am enthusiastic about my ministry work.

---

By Gender

---

Female

Male
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

I find real enjoyment in my ministry work.

---

By Gender

**Female**
- Strongly Disagree: 36%
- Disagree: 8%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 11%
- Agree: 54%
- Strongly Agree: 9%

**Male**
- Strongly Disagree: 33%
- Disagree: 11%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 3%
- Agree: 53%
- Strongly Agree: 3%
Burnout measures a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity.

Burnout: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- **Strongly Disagree**: 9% 13%
- **Disagree**: 14% 23% 32% 36%
- **Neither Agree nor Disagree**: 23% 23%
- **Agree**: 29% 23%
- **Strongly Agree**: 6% 5%

- **It happens more and more often that I talk about my ministry work in a negative manner.**
- **During my ministry work, I often feel emotionally drained.**
- **I usually feel worn out and weary after my ministry work.**

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
It happens more and more often that I talk about my ministry work in a negative way.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

During my ministry work, I often feel emotionally drained.

---

By Gender

**Female**
- Strongly Disagree: 6%
- Disagree: 9%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 29%
- Agree: 22%
- Strongly Agree: 35%

**Male**
- Strongly Disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 29%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 24%
- Agree: 30%
- Strongly Agree: 10%
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

I usually feel worn out and weary after my ministry work.

---

By Gender

Female

Male

---

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree
Resilience is a measure of bouncing back in response to adversity, as well as having the capacity to choose a vital and authentic life.

Resilience: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- I can deal with whatever challenges or problems come my way.
- I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship.
- I can achieve goals despite obstacles.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

I can deal with whatever challenges or problems come my way.

---

By Gender

Female

- Strongly Disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 19%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 10%
- Agree: 69%

Male

- Strongly Disagree: 3%
- Disagree: 18%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 11%
- Agree: 68%
I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship.

---

By Gender

Female

- Disagree: 1%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 1%
- Agree: 64%
- Strongly Agree: 29%

Male

- Disagree: 1%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 4%
- Agree: 68%
- Strongly Agree: 26%
I can achieve goals despite obstacles.

---

**By Gender**

**Female**
- Strongly Agree: 65%
- Agree: 29%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 6%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly Disagree: 29%

**Male**
- Strongly Agree: 68%
- Agree: 24%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly Disagree: 24%
SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

Satisfaction with Life measures global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life.

Satisfaction with Life Mean by Gender

Satisfaction with Life: This next series of questions asks you to step back and think of your overall life, including work experiences and your life outside of work, your home life and the other, non-work, aspects of your life. As you consider your overall life or your life in general, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

The conditions of my life are excellent.

By Gender

Female

Male
DAILY WELLBEING ANALYSIS

I am satisfied with my life.

---

By Gender

---

Female

- Strongly Disagree: 24%
- Disagree: 9%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 13%
- Agree: 54%
- Strongly Agree: 1%

Male

- Strongly Disagree: 23%
- Disagree: 10%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 11%
- Agree: 55%
- Strongly Agree: 1%
General Happiness is a measure of subjective happiness relative to self and peers.

Happy - In general, I consider myself:

Happy - Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:
Stress - Overall, how much stress do you experience in your ministry work.
Flourishing Analysis
AUTHENTICITY AT WORK

Authenticity at Work - This is a measure of unobstructed operation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

My ministry work gives me my strongest feeling that this is who I really am.

---

By Gender

Female

- 36%
- 6%
- 12%
- 45%

Male

- 31%
- 1%
- 6%
- 15%
- 48%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

When engaged in my ministry work, I feel this is what I was meant to do.

---By Gender---
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I feel more complete or fulfilled when engaging in my ministry work than I do when engaged in most other activities.

---

By Gender

Female
- Agree: 42%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 20%
- Disagree: 9%
- Strongly Disagree: 29%

Male
- Agree: 40%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 19%
- Disagree: 9%
- Strongly Disagree: 1%
Job Engagement measures positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

*For the full description please see individual graphs below
Most days in my ministry work, I feel strong and vigorous.

By Gender
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

My ministry work inspires me.

---

By Gender

Female
- Strongly Disagree: 28%
- Disagree: 10%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%
- Agree: 59%
- Strongly Agree: 2%

Male
- Strongly Disagree: 25%
- Disagree: 12%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%
- Agree: 60%
- Strongly Agree: 12%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

In my ministry work, I have grown and developed a lot as a person.

---

By Gender

**Female**
- Strongly Agree: 61%
- Agree: 36%
- Neutral: 3%

**Male**
- Strongly Agree: 56%
- Agree: 41%
- Neutral: 2%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

In my ministry work, I continue to learn more and more as time goes by.

---

By Gender

**Female**
- Strongly Agree: 62%
- Agree: 36%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 2%
- Strongly Disagree: 1%

**Male**
- Strongly Agree: 53%
- Agree: 44%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 2%
- Strongly Disagree: 1%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Most days, I have difficulty managing all of the things I have to do at work.

---

By Gender

---

Female

- Strongly Disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 7%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 26%
- Agree: 33%
- Strongly Agree: 21%

Male

- Strongly Disagree: 7%
- Disagree: 25%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 23%
- Agree: 39%
- Strongly Agree: 7%
I often feel overwhelmed by the amount of work I have.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

When I am faced with a bad situation at work, I do what I can to change it for the better.

By Gender

Female

Male

Neither Agree nor Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

When I am faced with a bad situation at work, it helps to find a different way of looking at things.

By Gender

Female

Male
Thriving measures essential aspects of psychological wealth including the extent to which you feel that you have strong, positive, supportive relationships; whether you feel a rich, spiritual dimension in your life; and the degree to which you experience work or other major life activities as positive and fulfilling.

Thriving Mean By Gender

Thriving: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- My ministry work is deeply meaningful to me.
- I am optimistic about my future in ministry.
- Most days, I feel what I do in my ministry work is valuable and worthwhile.
- I have a clear sense of purpose in ministry work.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

My ministry work is deeply meaningful to me.

---

By Gender

Female

- Strongly Agree: 36%
- Agree: 62%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%

Male

- Strongly Agree: 43%
- Agree: 52%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 1%
- Disagree: 4%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I am optimistic about my future in ministry.

---

By Gender

---
Most days, I feel what I do in my ministry work is valuable and worthwhile.

By Gender

Female
- Strongly Agree: 55%
- Agree: 37%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly Disagree: 2%

Male
- Strongly Agree: 59%
- Agree: 28%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 9%
- Disagree: 3%
- Strongly Disagree: 3%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I have a clear sense of purpose in ministry work.

---

By Gender

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Female

- Strongly Disagree: 37%
- Disagree: 11%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 3%
- Agree: 49%
- Strongly Agree: 3%

Male

- Strongly Disagree: 4%
- Disagree: 13%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree: 35%
- Agree: 48%
- Strongly Agree: 4%
Relationships - The next question asks about the kinds of social support you experience, both those that are related to your ministry, and those that you might think of outside your ministry life. Please think about your overall experiences with each of the different kinds of social support. Please indicate the extent to which you feel truly cared for, accepted and supported by each of the following relationships. Some relationships may fit in multiple categories.

Relationships measures the respondent's amount and type of social support they receive from family, friends, and work colleagues and supervisors.
**FLOURISHING ANALYSIS**

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**By Gender: My Spouse/Partner**

**Female**
- Not at all: 70%
- A little bit: 2%
- A moderate amount: 5%
- Quite a bit: 23%

**Male**
- Not at all: 71%
- A little bit: 3%
- A moderate amount: 6%
- Quite a bit: 20%

---

**By Gender: Other Family**

**Female**
- Not at all: 32%
- A little bit: 2%
- A moderate amount: 9%
- Quite a bit: 16%
- Extremely: 41%

**Male**
- Not at all: 31%
- A little bit: 2%
- A moderate amount: 10%
- Quite a bit: 18%
- Extremely: 39%

---

**By Gender: Non-Clergy Friends**

**Female**
- Not at all: 30%
- A little bit: 6%
- A moderate amount: 19%
- Quite a bit: 43%

**Male**
- Not at all: 19%
- A little bit: 10%
- A moderate amount: 26%
- Quite a bit: 43%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

--- By Gender: Clergy Friends ---

--- By Gender: My Congregation ---

--- By Gender: Denomination Leaders ---
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

Spirituality, Religious, Personal Beliefs

Spirituality Mean By Gender

Spirituality, Religious, Personal Beliefs: To what extent do your spiritual, religious, or personal beliefs:

- Give meaning to your life?
- Guide you in your daily life?
- Give you strength or help to face challenges in life?
- Help you to understand difficulties you or other people experience?
- Help you experience harmony in your life?
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Give meaning to your life?

By Gender

Female
- Not at all: 86%
- A little: 13%
- Moderately: 2%
- Very much: 15%
- A great deal: 2%

Male
- Not at all: 79%
- A little: 17%
- Moderately: 3%
- Very much: 15%
- A great deal: 2%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Guide you in your daily life?

--- By Gender ---

Female

Male
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Help you to understand difficulties you or other people experience?

---

By Gender

---

Female
- Not at all: 75%
- A little: 4%
- Moderately: 21%
- Very much: 4%
- A great deal: 7%

Male
- Not at all: 61%
- A little: 7%
- Moderately: 32%
- Very much: 4%
- A great deal: 4%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Help you to understand difficulties you or other people experience?

By Gender

Female
- A great deal: 68%
- Very much: 26%
- Moderately: 5%
- A little: 1%

Male
- A great deal: 62%
- Very much: 29%
- Moderately: 8%
- A little: 1%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Help you experience harmony in your life?

--- By Gender ---
How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study?

Intrinsic Beliefs: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

The prayers I say when I am alone carry as much or more emotional meaning as those said by me during services.

It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious meditation.

I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Transcendence: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I often experience awe or wonder in my life.

I experience a connection with all of life.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I believe that on some level my life is intimately tied to all of humankind.

I experience the presence of God, a higher power, or a spiritual essence.
Religious Coping: Think about how you try to understand and deal with major problems in your life. To what extent is each of the following involved in the way you cope:

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.

---

By Gender

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FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I work together with God as a partner.

---

By Gender

---
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

---

By Gender

---

Female

- Not at all: 3%
- Somewhat: 9%
- Quite a bit: 22%
- A great deal: 65%

Male

- Not at all: 3%
- Somewhat: 1%
- Quite a bit: 11%
- A great deal: 54%
- Don't know/Not applicable: 31%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I try to make sense of the situation and decide what to do without relying on God.

---

By Gender

---

Female

Male

---
Work Family Balance: How often have you experienced the following over the past year?

- **Almost never**
  - My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home: 8%
  - Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life: 20%
  - Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my mini...: 30%
  - Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life: 44%

- **Less than once a month**
  - My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home: 12%
  - Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life: 25%
  - Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my mini...: 31%
  - Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life: 28%

- **Once a month**
  - My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home: 20%
  - Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life: 19%
  - Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my mini...: 15%
  - Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life: 15%

- **Several times a month**
  - My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home: 44%
  - Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life: 25%
  - Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my mini...: 18%
  - Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life: 10%

- **Almost every day**
  - My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home: 15%
  - Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life: 2%
  - Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my mini...: 4%
  - Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life: 2%

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

My ministry work reduces the effort I can give to activities at home.

---

By Gender

Female
- 46%
- 19%
- 8%
- 10%
- 17%
- 12%

Male
- 41%
- 11%
- 9%
- 15%
- 24%
Stress at work has a negative impact on my home life.

By Gender

Female

Male
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Personal or family worries and problems distract me when I am doing my ministry.

---

By Gender

---
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

Stress at home has a negative impact on my work life.

By Gender

Female

- Almost never: 27%
- Less than once a month: 10%
- Once a month: 17%
- Several times a month: 45%
- Almost every day: 2%

Male

- Almost never: 29%
- Less than once a month: 14%
- Once a month: 11%
- Several times a month: 3%
- Almost every day: 43%
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

WORK AS A CALLING

Work as a Calling is a measure to assess if individuals feel called, hard-wired, or destined to live into their current work role.

Work as a Calling Mean by Gender

Work as a Calling: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- My current work feels like my calling in life.
- I feel like I was created or destined for my work.
- I was drawn to my work by God or a power outside myself.
- I have a clear understanding of how my work is a life calling for me.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

My current work feels like my calling in life.

I feel like I was created or destined for my work.
FLOURISHING ANALYSIS

I was drawn to my work by God or a power outside myself.

I have a clear understanding of how my work is a life calling for me.
Personal Factors Related to Wellbeing
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotions - Overall, how would you characterize the feelings and emotions you experience most days in your ministry work.

Emotion Regulation measures the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay spontaneous reactions as needed.

Emotion Regulation Mean by Gender
Emotion Regulation: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

*For the full description please see individual graphs below*
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

---By Gender---

Female
- Strongly Disagree: 11%
- Disagree: 4%
- Neutral: 26%
- Agree: 58%

Male
- Strongly Disagree: 9%
- Disagree: 5%
- Neutral: 31%
- Agree: 55%
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in.

By Gender

Female

Male
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

---

By Gender

---
Proactivity: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- **No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen.**
- **I excel at identifying opportunities.**
- **If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.**
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

SELF - CONTROL

Self Control Mean By Gender

Self-Control: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- I am good at resisting temptation.
- I have a hard time breaking bad habits.
- I wish I had more self-discipline.
Core Self Evaluation: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Core Self Evaluation is a measure of basic, fundamental appraisal of one's worthiness, effectiveness, and capability as a person.

- I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.
- When I try, I generally succeed.
- I complete tasks successfully.
- Sometimes I do not feel in control of my work.
- Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
- I am filled with doubts about my competence.
- I determine what will happen in my life.
- I do not feel in control of my success in my career.
- I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

FINANCIAL WORRIES

Financial Worries Mean By Gender

Financial Worries: Please think about your current financial situation. How often would you say ...

*For the full description please see individual graphs below
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

You worry about your personal or household finances.

---

By Gender

---
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

You feel you cannot provide well for yourself and any financial dependents...

--- By Gender ---

Female:
- Never: 9%
- Seldom: 13%
- Sometimes: 28%
- Often: 15%
- Very often: 16%

Male:
- Never: 9%
- Seldom: 11%
- Sometimes: 27%
- Often: 16%
- Very often: 37%
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

Your financial problems interfere with your work or your non-work/family life.

By Gender
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

How difficult is it for you to live on your total household income right now?

Financial Strain

- Not at all Difficult: 51%
- Somewhat Difficult: 36%
- Difficult or Can Barely Get By: 2%
- Very Difficult or Losing Proposition: 3%
- Extremely Difficult or Impossible: 8%

Do you receive income from your ministry work?

- Yes: 97.34%
- No: 2.66%
PERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO WELLBEING

Is the income from your ministry work alone sufficient to meet your family needs?

Financial Needs

![Pie chart showing 65% 'No' and 35% 'Yes'.]
Wellbeing Measure Averages
## WELLBEING MEASURE AVERAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Measure</th>
<th>Averages for UCC</th>
<th>Average for all (PASTORS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIT</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Work Life</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Life</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Happiness</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Engagement</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriving</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A score 3 or lower is of concern – action should be considered.
A score above 3 – 4 is moderate.
A score above 4 is good and considered flourishing
Qualitative Analysis
In analyzing the qualitative responses to the surveys, we noted eight reoccurring themes. Our report here is the pure, objective, grounded theory approach to analyzing the responses.

We leave it to further conversation between United Church of Christ leadership and our core team of researchers to implement positive changes that may lead to lasting positive change among The UCC Church pastors and their families.
THEME 1: Financial Strains

Many pastors who responded to the survey reported having suffered from financial strain or stress. This is often due to already existent financial stresses on the church as a whole, and is considered a problem by pastors only in so much as it prevents them from fulfilling their calling to the fullest.

Research in Practice

What are some ways that church can support pastors and their families? While a church cannot suddenly change a salary, perhaps there are ways to inspire congregations to support pastors in qualitative or indirect ways, like buying groceries and making dinners. Money is a difficult subject, but plays a huge role in the effectiveness of a pastor. In our research, we find that the income many pastors receive is not adequate to provide for their living needs. In addition, pastors may find that their current salary does not provide the resources required to meet future needs such as an emergency, their children’s education, or their own retirement. Financial strains undermine all of the different dimensions of wellbeing. As such, addressing pastor compensation, debt, and other financial challenges can boost clergy wellbeing significantly.

“Doing well in ministry but not making enough money to pay off student loan and other debt from seminary.”

“Financial pressures are weighing me down.”

“I am a fulltime pastor being paid a part time salary. There is no additional support being offered to supplement income by my denomination... I love what I do in ministry work because I feel I am as connected to it as the skin I’m in but I need for it to support me.”

“I am working with multiple churches so I have multiple roles/ and able to cover expenses but it is physically draining. No one congregation is adequate to pay me a full salary.”


**Research in Practice**
Pastors often struggle with managing the demands of ministry, which often fall outside of a typical 9 to 5 workday. Often, these work-life challenges are not shared with congregational leaders. We find that, if both the pastor and lay leaders are willing to engage in a productive conversation, a simple exercise can help. First, the pastor and lay leaders work together to generate a list of all responsibilities and activities that are currently undertaken by the pastor. Next, the lay leaders rank these in terms of importance to the church. At the same time, the pastor ranks these same activities in terms of (1) importance for the church, (2) how equipped or capable the pastor feels in undertaking the tasks, and (3) how central or important the activity is to the pastor’s sense of calling. Finally, bring the lists together. Discuss how to help the pastor focus on those activities everyone agrees are important. Provide support for these activities when the pastor feels less capable or when they are less central to the pastor’s call. Finally, agree on how to deal with or eliminate those low-importance activities that still require the pastor’s time.

“The combination of very serious issues/challenges that my spouse and I are facing with children, grandchildren and my aging parents are the greatest difficulties for me.”

“I am new to ordained ministry, as a solo minster. I am guided by a clear sense of "rightness" in my calling and in my current congregational setting. I am also a new father. So it’s been a learning curve to manage my various responsibilities at work and at home, and balancing my own needs. There is evidence I am indeed improving in doing it all with less stress and self-doubt and with more joy. As far as everyone else is concerned, I'm getting positive feedback.”

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**THEME 2: Relationships**
The wellbeing of a pastor’s spouse or partner, children, and extended family seem to have a high correlative relationship with that of the pastor himself/herself. Stresses on these relationships can usually be attributed to three factors: health, finances, and work-life balance.
THEME 3: Calling

We have seen that all ministers feel “called” to their work in some way or another. Ministry is a vocation in the truest sense of the word. However, events often take place that cause pastors to question their calling, and whether they want to continue their work. Temporary periods of questioning a calling are not unusual nor are they a concern. However, our research shows that longer-term doubts about one’s calling can dramatically undermine wellbeing. Burnout is sometimes a prelude to doubting one’s call. The combination of burnout and doubts may be one of the most powerful detrimental experiences for clergy.

Research in Practice

The Flourishing in Ministry team is developing a set of resources that can help rebuild and sustain a positive sense of calling. These resources will become available in the coming months. We have found that simple approaches can have powerful positive effects. Pastors, who doubt their calling would likely benefit a great deal from having candid conversations with caring, compassionate peers. Having the opportunity to explore why one is doubting with a caring person can yield deep insights into the challenges that have created that doubt. Another helpful tool is to write one’s life story, especially about the challenging and difficult periods. Like conversations with caring others, this writing process gives pastors an opportunity to step-back from life and gain perspective.

“Interpersonal and organizational conflict (usually not involving me directly, but I end up playing the mediator) are the things that provide stress and cause me to sometimes question my calling or consider leaving this particular ministry setting.”

“For the first time in my tenure at this church I feel like I am finally doing ministry rather than just putting out fires and protecting my job.”

“I get great satisfaction from seeing people grow and change through their engagement with the church, but frequently get discouraged at the lack of change in my members, their lack of vision beyond week-to-week survival, their general "stuckness". I am in a place of discerning whether to continue at my current call or seek another call - but I feel rock solid in my commitment to pastoral ministry.”
THEME 4: Congregation
The nature of a minister’s relationship with his or her congregation plays a huge role in clergy wellbeing. The congregation plays a huge role in her sense of enjoyment, success, and potency. When a pastor has a good, strong relationship with her congregation, she feels a higher sense of job satisfaction than if she’s struggling to connect or provide for the congregation.

Research in Practice:
We find that pastors can learn a lot from each other about how to work with and care for difficult lay members and challenging congregations. Pastors need a safe, secure venue in which they can share openly. The presence of experienced pastors who are willing to be vulnerable and share their own difficult experiences can be especially helpful. The goal of these sessions is less about telling pastors what to do, and more about giving them a space to reflect on their own experience. Having done so, other pastors can support developing creative solutions that fit each pastor’s unique ministry context.

“I love my job. It is a calling, and I won the lottery for pastors with the church I serve.”

“I fell called by God to do what I am doing and I am blessed by Him. That is what my calling is all about.”

“I am enjoying the highest "job satisfaction" of my twenty-eight year career in ordained ministry. The courage to provide leadership into these new areas has totally shifted my sense of satisfaction, purpose and call. My "secret" has been to adopt a "let's give that a try" approach to worship.”

“I am passionate about what I've been called to do and am inspired by God to continue to care for people and to work for justice and compassion for all God's children. I am fortunate my congregation supports me in this endeavor.”
THEME 5: Retirement or Transition

The transition to retirement is something that ministers either dread or look forward to. Other transitions play a huge role in the life of a minister as well, including transition into ministry or from one parish to another.

Research in Practice
How can parish staff communicate effectively with ministers concerning transition and retirement?

“Reaching full retirement age this year; planning on retiring from parish ministry next year; truly wondering about how I will continue some form of ministry during retirement.”

“My life and work are in great flux at the moment, which makes it difficult to answer these questions well since part of the joy in my life is starting up a ministry that isn't off the ground yet.”

“I am in discernment about my current church and possibly moving to another parish.”

“I have loved my full time work in ministry but am feeling a bit tired and closer to retirement. Wouldn't change it for the world!”
Research in Practice

How can ministers maintain two positions, while at the same time keeping their congregation and parish as a priority? Would parish staff and pastors benefit from a more open conversation about part-time and bi-vocational work?

“I am working with multiple churches so I have multiple roles/and able to cover expenses but it is physically draining. No one congregation is adequate to pay me a full salary.”

“I still work full-time in a non-ministry position, while doing ministry part-time. My non-ministry work is only a source of income. My ministry work is a passion that fuels my very being. It makes me whole. I am fond of saying that one job pays my bills but sucks my soul/the other one heals my soul but doesn't do so much for my bills. It's actually a pretty good mix. And I feel that it makes me a more effective pastor.”

“I have a non-ministry full time job which allows me to do the type of ministry I feel called to do without worrying about finances.”

“As a second career clergy person, I have income other than that from my ministry and as one who had an entire career prior to divinity school and this calling, I feel as if all paths taken in my life have led to this point and that I am now living into what God intended for me all along.”

THEME 6: Part-time or Bi-Vocational

Many pastors who responded to the survey are bi-vocational with, at least part-time, but oftentimes full-time secular careers. While this in itself is not a problem, many pastors are forced to have two ‘careers’ because they need to financially support their families.
Research in Practice

Many pastors would benefit from the opportunity to participate in high-quality stress management training. The best approaches cover either cognitive-based stress management or mindfulness-based stress management. Trainings such as these will not only reduce stress, but they will boost overall wellbeing. A second tool is a daily mindfulness/contemplative practice. There is a large and growing body of research on the many benefits of mindfulness practices. Contemplative prayer and lexio divina are just two examples of the many different options available. Even as little as five minutes a day can be restorative. Finally, some pastors may need professional counseling support. Creating a culture that encourages engaging counseling is a start. Additionally, some pastors may need help in finding and paying for therapeutic counseling.

“While I am very satisfied in my ministry, there are times when I experience self-doubt or anxiety. I think that may come from perfectionist tendencies in my past, while in reality ministry is messy and always incomplete.”

“Struggling with seasons of depression after a traumatic church experience. Now in a new call, experiencing some hesitancy towards this new congregation.”

“As one in a caring profession, and someone who has a big heart, I find it so challenging to care for others and for myself at the same time. Often caring for my congregation, most specifically the conflict, sucks the life out of me.”

“My stress as a pastor boils down to three factors in this order; inadequate income, lack of time doing what I really want to do as a pastor (hands on ministry), lack of strategic clarity and progress in church growth and vitality.”
THEME 8: Restorative Niches
Pastors who take the time to meditate, walk, read, pray, and find mentors (among many other options for restoration), seem to have a more positive outlook related to ministry. Many persons in the caring professions have a tendency to sacrifice self for the greater good of the people whom they serve. This can lead to negative sacrifice and psychological well-being suffers.

Research in Practice
How can leadership set an example of taking time out of the day to reflect and rejuvenate? How can we encourage pastors and their families to do the same? How can pastors learn about unique restorative niches from each other?

“My husband and I just returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with our pastor and some members of our church. It was a wonderful, deeply spiritual experience which I continue to process. My heart, mind and spirit are still in the Holy Land!”

“I have had a spiritual adviser for the last 10 years and it has been a game changer for me... Those who I find to have a healthy view of ministry all have a spiritual adviser.”

“Have a Clergy Community of Practice and meeting monthly with a Bowen Discussion Group are key to my well-being and ability to be clear and relatively non-anxious in my leadership to the congregation.”

“It's difficult for me to imagine being happier in ministry or in my life. My ministerial partner and my life partner are both sources of strength, wisdom and great blessing.”
Distribution of Topics

Relevant Topics Expressed

- Part-time: 63
- Finances: 136
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- Practice Self Help: 44
- New Call/New To Ministry/Transition: 47
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Count
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